tns
the next step
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Racism – the Marxist tradition p6,7
Gillick and the doctors p5
Bans on Sinn Fein p4
What's going on in Beirut? p8

7

The three party trick

Time for a new deal

tns

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Realignment on the left

'My policies have not changed in any way,' says Ken Livingstone, announcing his resignation from the hard left *Labour Herald* and declaring his loyalty to Neil Kinnock's leadership of the Labour Party. Livingstone is telling the truth. The differences between the Labour left and right are differences of temperament and tactics, not of programme or principle.

The left has always proclaimed its commitment to the policies of the Labour Party conference, the same policies on which the leadership has based its pragmatic adjustments to working within the system. The fact that the left has no distinct programme means that its leaders are destined to follow the same course as Livingstone and many left wingers before him.

The defeat of the miners' strike and the rate-capping fiasco have shaken the confidence of the left. Livingstone's defection to the right follows that of other leading Labour left wingers such as Michael Meacher and David Blunkett. And it comes at the same time as the disintegration of the old Communist Party into broadly a pro-Kinnock soft left and a hard left rump. The result is a spate of calls for a realignment of the hard left in face of the growing ascendancy of the right. Livingstone's former colleagues Ted Knight, Matthew Warburton and John McDonnell have taken the lead in calling for 'a regrouping of the left to challenge Kinnock's road'. They insist that the scale of the capitalist crisis rules out any return to past Labour policies. Instead they demand 'the development of a new socialist programme'. What is their alternative?

Wishful thinking

***Labour Herald's* new programme includes commitments to 'eliminating unemployment by democratically controlling and planning our economy'; to 'tackling deprivation by redistributing wealth and massively investing in the reconstruction of essential services'; and to 'seeking peace by ending the war in Northern Ireland and achieving nuclear disarmament'. In fact this is not a programme at all, but a statement of desirable objectives. Nor is it new — Labour conferences have for years approved these worthy goals.**

The problem is that the achievement of any of the left's ends in Britain in the eighties would require at the very least a massive upsurge against the capitalist establishment, and probably its overthrow. Yet the hard left has no strategy for mobilising such a revolt, and no way of linking resistance to the current attacks on living standards and political rights to the wider struggle against the system. *Labour Herald's* regroupment initiative boils down to 'offering' the weekly paper as 'a vehicle around which socialists in the party can regroup'. It offers a combination of wishful thinking and an organisational device.

Last week *London Labour Briefing* convened a meeting of a dozen Labour Party factions to discuss its plans for a realignment of the hard left. (The *Labour Herald* team were invited but did not attend.) The meeting discussed a five-point plan proposed by the organisers. This included 'joint action to support those in struggle'; 'joint meetings and rallies at conferences'; 'coordination of activities at the Labour Party conference'; 'joint campaigning'; and 'a challenge to the Kinnock leadership'. The *Briefing* proposals avoided any discussion of difficult matters of policy and confined the debate to the left's familiar ground of organisational manoeuvre. The only contentious item was the last — some delegates were vehemently opposed to any attempt to unseat Kinnock and emphasised the importance of working for 'achievable goals'.

The left's 'achievable goals' amount to the same insidious calls for surrender to realism that characterise the Labour leadership. Instead of warning the working class about how far Kinnock's party has moved to the right and how it is already preparing future betrayals, the left urges workers to put their trust in the Labour Party under Kinnock. The only alternative it can offer is its hopes for the future and its joint tactical manoeuvres at the Labour Party conference. It never even asks the basic question — 'what is the point in going to the conference of a party that has no solutions to the pressing problems facing the working class movement?'. The left's subservience to the Labour Party machine ensures that it will be dragged along as Kinnock shapes the party into a vehicle for putting him in Downing Street.

Prepare for power

The narrow tactical character of the left's regroupment discussions exposes its underestimation of the problems and the prospects of the class struggle in Britain today. Every day the existing system reveals its incapacity to offer any future for the majority of people beyond one of hardship and poverty and war. And every day resistance is breaking out, often in the most unlikely quarters. Teachers and school students have defied traditions of professionalism and authority to take action against the government. In Yorkshire and South Wales miners have shown that, even though they were beaten in the strike, they will not tolerate management provocations or the criminalisation of their workmates. The resistance is there, but it lacks coherence and direction. The only contribution of the official labour movement and the left is to create a climate of despair among workers about the possibility of change.

The immediate objective of the Revolutionary Communist Party is to build a party which can give a lead in the day-to-day struggles of the working class and redirect them into a more systematic challenge to the system. Our aim is to get rid of the capitalist system not to save the Labour Party or advance Neil Kinnock's career. We have no interest in manipulating resolutions or candidates through Labour Party committee rooms or conferences, or in reducing political debate to the level of tactics to be pursued in response to the Labour leadership.

We want to see a genuine debate on the way forward for the working class movement. That is why we are holding our Preparing for Power conference in July. The focus of Preparing for Power will be how to build a new working class party that can really take power in the eighties, not how to survive in the shadow of the dying party of the old labour movement.

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Chris Black (reflex)

Militant sent to Coventry: Dave Nellist's supporters couldn't stop Labour's executive censuring the Militant MP

Militant and Labour

'Til death do them part

'If every single supporter of *Militant* was expelled from the Labour Party we would still support it,' said Peter Taaffe at a recent public meeting. Taaffe, the paper's editor, has already been expelled. Militant is so dependent on the Labour Party that it can only respond to the widening purge of its supporters by pleading for mercy. Meanwhile in Liverpool, Militant resorts to calling in the police to deal with black critics of the Labour council.

'Welsh Labour ranks move to left' was the headline to the article in last week's *Militant* reporting on the decision of the Welsh conference to press for the expulsion of Militant from the party. The report humbly recorded that 'the debate on party unity was one of the best of the conference'. It congratulated Roy Hattersley, Neil Kinnock and Larry Whitty who 'all stressed the need for party unity'. It finally observed that it was 'ironic' that the conference should then demand the expulsion of Militant, described fraternally as 'this cancer in the party'. Obviously Labour's spirit of unity does not stretch as far as Militant. The same page reports that members of Nupe 'will be dismayed' to hear that its conference passed by a large majority a resolution backed by the left-wing executive, calling for a purge against Militant. According to its proposer this should 'make Stalin look like a social worker'.

The real irony lay in a third article on the page which reported another attack on Militant, this time from George Wright, described as 'right-wing candidate for general secretary of the transport and general workers' union'. Wright told a meeting at Halewood Labour Club on Merseyside that the way forward for the Labour Party was to get the Militant Tendency out. Militant's reply expressed 'surprise' that Wright should attack Militant, given the loyal support of Militant-run Liverpool council for the TGWU. The irony is that Militant's favourite for the top job in the TGWU — 'left-wing' Ron Todd — is also in favour of the witch-hunt against Militant.

When the Scottish Labour Party recently voted to kick out Militant, the paper pleaded that 'Labour's ranks were assured in 1983 that there would be no far-reaching witch-hunt'. Militant's leaders had understood that if they behaved themselves and made sure that their two MPs did not cause undue embarrassment to Kinnock at Westminster, then the expulsions would stop at the token victimisations of the five editorial board members. But since then the price of Kinnock's respectability has gone up. The media have demanded further action against Militant and he has responded with his usual sense of national duty.

Kinnock's aides have schemed to get anti-Militant resolutions through key labour movement conferences. They have also made sure that no more Militant supporters get selected as parliamentary candidates. Militant's big hope in Scotland failed to get selected last week at Glasgow Provan. David Nellist, one of Militant's two sitting MPs, may yet be de-selected by his local party in Coventry.

However brutally it is kicked in the teeth by the Labour leadership, Militant is a sect defined by its faith in the Labour Party. But the Labour Party in which Militant supporters believe — a mass working class socialist party — has never existed and can never be created out of the existing party.

Militant accuses the witch-hunters of damaging Labour's electoral prospects by removing those in the party who are campaigning most actively for a Labour election victory. It expresses concern 'that such senior members of the Labour Party seem determined to undermine electoral success'. But Kinnock's success in winning middle class votes depends on getting rid of Militant. In its blind pursuit of its dream Labour Party, Militant makes certain of its defeat at the hands of the sordid reality.

●

The Militant-controlled Liverpool council is causing growing disillusionment among council workers and tenants whom it promised a better deal. 'We've got no time for the council in Liverpool 8,' one resident told *tns* last week. 'First they told us there would be no rate rises, then no massive rate rises, and now we've got rate rises and cuts and no repairs.'

Local Militant leaders blame the Tories and complain about smear campaigns run by the Liberals, but many of the council's problems are the result of its own failures. The issue that sparked off last week's trouble was the council's decision to replace its race relations sub-committee with a different committee under a newly appointed Militant-supporting chair — Samson Bond — and an inbuilt Militant majority.

At last week's council meeting the Labour group forced through a resolution to disband the race relations sub-committee in the face of opposition from a caucus of black activists. When 50 black caucus supporters attending the meeting protested, deputy council leader Derek Hatton called in the police. The demonstrators were kicked and punched by both police and the council's own bouncers as they were dragged out into the street. Hatton later described the incident as 'regrettable', but claimed that he had no alternative 'because of the scandalous behaviour of some people in the public gallery'.

In fact the executive of the Militant-controlled District Labour Party had decided several days earlier that the council would call in the police if there was any disruption of the meeting. While the black caucus members were lobbying councillors before the meeting, the police vans were already standing by. Militant now needs the police to protect the council from the anger of Liverpool's black community.

ACTION

Behind the polls

Maggie, David, Neil – out, out, out

The opinion polls put the Tories in third place behind both Labour and the SDP/Liberal Alliance. Is this the beginning of the end for Thatcher?

The Thatcher government looks less confident than at any time since 1981. The emergence of Francis Pym's Conservative Centre Forward is symptomatic of the malaise that afflicts the party. After all the talk of upturn, the economy staggers from bad to worse. Unemployment continues to rise and as prices begin to shoot up again, Thatcher can no longer even claim the credit for licking inflation.

The two main opposition parties are riding high in the polls. Yet it is difficult to detect any surge in support for either Labour or the Alliance. Opposition politicians have done little to put the government on the defensive or capture the public imagination. Indeed, Pym's wets have caused Thatcher more problems than the combined efforts of Kinnock, Owen and Steel. Labour and the Alliance are doing well in the opinion polls because of disenchantment with the Tories rather than any popular enthusiasm for the alternatives.

In terms of the polls the Alliance is doing the best. Since the SDP split from Labour in 1981 and got together with the Liberals it has been the main beneficiary of the decline in popular support for the two major parties. Over the past six months the growth of the Alliance has taken place as a result of the flight of middle class support from the Tories.

Many middle class people have lost confidence in the Tories. Until recently the Thatcher government restricted itself to attacking the working class. Ever since 1979 the government has stuck resolutely to its drive to restore British capitalism at workers' expense. Its campaign of cuts and closures has brought results, but it has not gone far enough to halt the decline of British capitalism. The government now needs to introduce more far-reaching measures. But recent Tory attacks on teachers, lawyers and doctors have frightened the professional middle classes.

The Tory offensive against the unions has provoked conflict and instability. The miners' strike revealed the establishment's increasing reliance on force rather than persuasion, and the resulting polarisation alarmed many middle class people. Many would like to return to the days of consensus when disputes were resolved by negotiation rather than by coercion. There is a growing fear that the government's offensive will backfire and provoke resistance and revolt. The middle of the road Alliance has profited from middle class fears about declining status and growing class conflict.

What about the Labour Party? In the 1983 electoral catastrophe many middle class Labour supporters deserted to the Alliance while a considerable number of skilled workers voted Tory. Many observers believe that Labour's revival is the result of its right-wing face lift under its new leader. Kinnock has certainly made desperate attempts to project a respectable image. Indeed it is becoming more and more difficult to detect any differences among the Labour Party, the Alliance and Conservative Centre Forward. But Kinnock's new-look Labour Party has yet to make significant inroads into the middle classes. Its improved standing in the opinion polls is due almost entirely to the return to the fold of Labour's lost working class supporters.

The demoralisation resulting from five years of the Thatcher government has given a boost to Labour's standing in the polls. But this does not mark any real improvement in its political standing. It registers a consolidation of support by default rather than the party's success in attracting wide approval for its policies.

The Thatcher government cannot be blamed for the crisis it faces. The problems of British capitalism are so profound that there are no economic solutions available to any government. Despite the government's success in reducing living standards, curbing trade union power and presiding over mass unemployment, the capitalist class is weaker than ever before. Thatcher is no more in control of the economy today than she was when she came to power. And nobody now believes that recovery is just around the corner.

Thatcher's famous dictum that 'there is no alternative' is more a statement of fact than an expression of political preference. The problem is that while these policies may be necessary, even politicians more skilful than Nigel Lawson or Leon Brittan could not make them popular. The ultimate penalty for unpopularity is electoral defeat. But the Tories may yet escape this fate. The main source of Thatcher's strength has always been the feebleness of her opponents.

Whatever they do the Tories can plausibly argue that the opposition parties have no viable alternative. Take unemployment. Most of the criticisms of the government's policies amount to pleas that Thatcher lacks compassion. This is because none of Thatcher's critics has any better solutions. Peter Hain, a prominent left-wing adviser to Kinnock, last week warned that a pledge to eradicate unemployment 'within the first term of a Kinnock government, would either be indulging in self-deception or cynically setting up the leadership for an inevitable betrayal'.

A key indication of the government's success is that in policy terms both Labour and the Alliance have shifted closer to the Tories. Kinnock and Owen are both trying to behave like potential prime ministers in the mould set by Thatcher. Thatcher may be unpopular but she has managed to impose her own image on the opposition parties. This means that the initiative remains with the Tories. The opposition parties merely respond to the actions of the government.

If the Tories lose the next election they will have been beaten by the recession, not by the opposition parties. Such a defeat would expose the weakness of the ruling class, but it would also expose the even greater weakness of its opponents. Labour or the Alliance (or both) would merely step forward to take over where the Tories left off. But the defeat of the Tories is far from inevitable. The opposition parties have shown that they cannot inspire confidence or carry conviction. The very existence of the Alliance is simply an expression of the crisis of the two major parties and the inconclusive character of the rivalry between the two major classes of society. Labour lives off its traditions. Its strongest claim on workers' loyalties is that it is the lesser evil of the available alternatives.

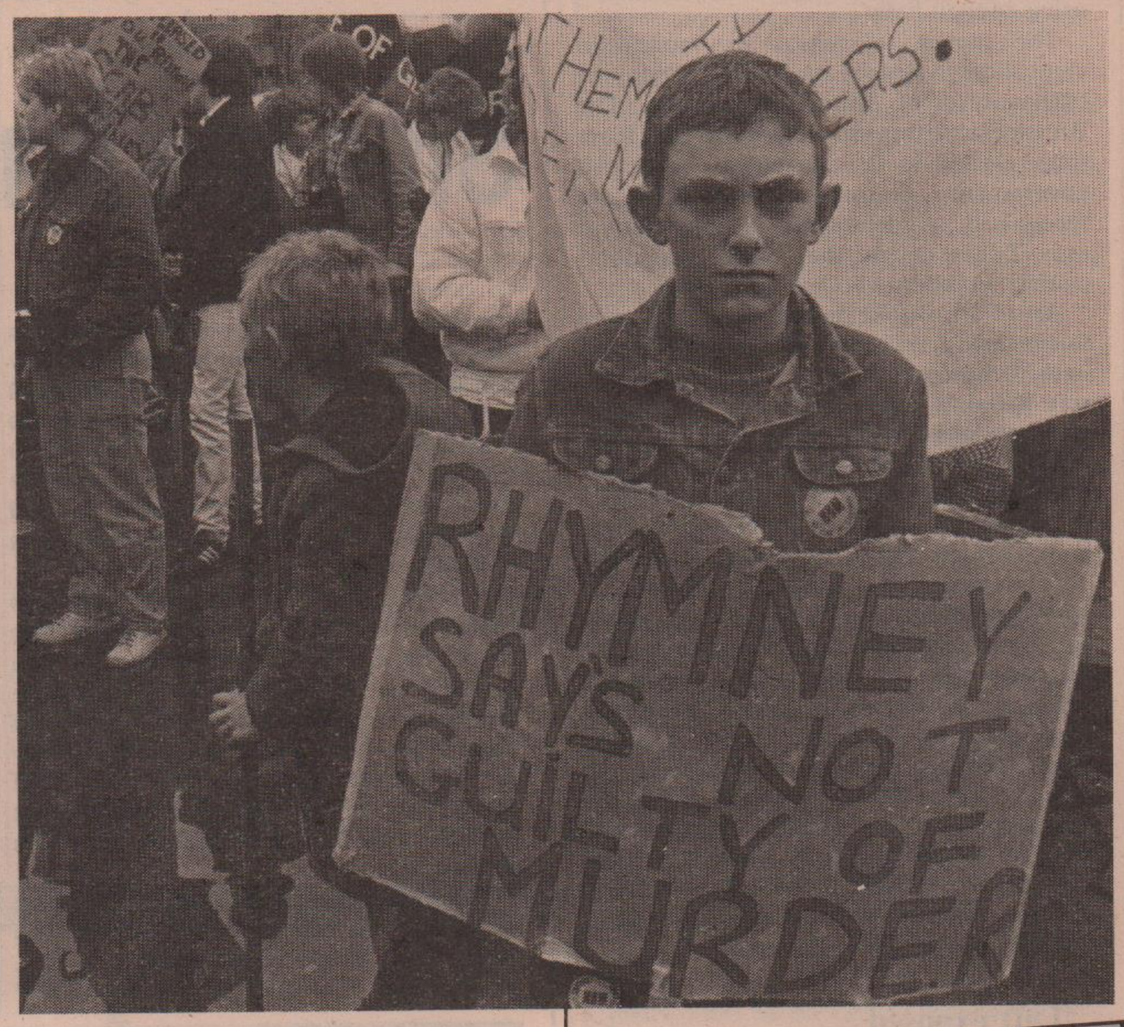
Whichever party is elected workers will continue to face the coercive power of the capitalist class. Labour offers no solutions for the working class. The danger is that a future Labour government will lull the labour movement into a false sense of security before it puts the boot in. But there is an even greater danger at the moment. While millions of workers face up to new attacks, the leaders of the labour movement have already given up on fighting back. They insist that nothing can be done other than work for the re-election of a Labour government at some time in the indefinite future.

The opinion polls reveal the crisis of British politics. But opinion polls, or for that matter parliamentary elections, decide little. It is the balance of power between labour and capital that matters. The fate of workers depends on their strength as a class. That collective strength can only be dissipated in the charade of parliamentary politics. To take advantage of the terminal crisis of the system workers need to assert their independence from all the institutions of the old order, including parliament and all its decadent parties.

Frank Richards

WELSH MARCH FOR HANCOCK AND SHANKLAND

Photographs by Russell Osborne (reflex)



Rev Morgan

Miners out of jail!

'DEAN AND RUSSELL are victims of political pressure. They'd have had more chance of getting off if they were black and Enoch Powell was the judge.' Bev Morgan was one of hundreds of people from Rhymney valley who joined a 2000-strong march through Cardiff last Saturday to protest against the life sentences imposed on local miners Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland for unintentionally killing a scab taxi driver.

Bev Morgan knows the court nailed Hancock and Shankland as a warning to all those who are prepared to fight back against the government and employers. 'They're 21 and for striking for their jobs they're going to spend the best part of their lives behind bars, while the likes of Margaret Thatcher put their feet up and say "Well, I've done my bit for justice." It's disgusting.'

The national NUM leadership has done little to defend the victimised miners. 'Those boys are miners, they were fighting for the NUM and they killed someone. It's not just a local issue, they could have been any two boys anywhere in the country. But where's Arthur Scargill today? Where are they all? Arthur Scargill should be down here with us fighting for them.'

South Wales NUM leader Emlyn Williams showed up at Saturday's rally to tell marchers not to go on and picket the prison because it would cause too much trouble. Hundreds ignored his advice and protested outside the jail. If we are to free Hancock, Shankland and every other miner jailed for defending their jobs we need to build on the fighting spirit of mining communities like Rhymney and force the labour movement to back a national campaign. 'People round here know it's wrong and so long as we've got breath left we'll fight for them. But we need support.'

Kenan Malik

RCP

The Revolutionary Communist Party is short of money. Setting up a new national centre, launching our weekly paper and publishing more books and pamphlets have seriously stretched our resources. We have ambitious plans for the rest of the year — to extend our national network of branches, build up the circulation of our paper, launch a theoretical journal and publish more books. To realise them we need more money.

The RCP gets no money from Moscow, Washington or the GLC. We rely on people who read *tns* and support our objectives to give us whatever they can afford. If you want to contribute to building a revolutionary party in Britain, send your contribution now to Special Appeal, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Please make cheques/POs payable to RCP Association

EVENTS

Sinn Fein witch-hunted

Labour censors can't fight bans

When Sinn Fein's success in getting 59 candidates elected to Northern Ireland's councils was followed by the IRA's success in blowing up four Royal Ulster Constabulary members outside Newry, County Down, supporters of British rule in Ireland decided they had seen enough of the republican movement. Last week brought calls for Sinn Fein to be banned in Northern Ireland and for Irish republicans to be prevented from speaking in Britain.

After the Newry bombing Official Unionist Party leader James Molyneux demanded that the British authorities end the 'obscenity' of allowing supporters of the IRA to sit in council chambers: 'Sinn Fein must be banned and prevented from masquerading like this with its two hats.' Other Loyalist leaders backed the call for a ban.

A day later the British gutter press were furious over plans for a Sinn Fein member to address a Brighton meeting. The media were outraged because the organiser of the meeting, local Labour councillor Richard Stanton, refused to condemn the IRA attack on the Tory cabinet in the town last October. The *Sun* commented that councillor Stanton was 'best left undisturbed beneath a stone'. The *London Standard* reported that Brighton's Liberal councillors were 'calling for a ban on the IRA and their supporters using council halls'.

The moves to censor pro-republican councillors in Britain and Ireland expose the true nature of British democracy. The British establishment demands loyalty from those elected to the institutions of British government. Councillors and MPs are recognised as democratic representatives only if they defend the 'United Kingdom' against anybody who gets in its way.

Above all, British democrats are expected to condemn Irish people who offer resistance to the Crown occupation of their country. The way Britain's rulers see it, if you refuse to condemn Irish freedom fighters you should be denied the rights and privileges of a respectable member of a British council.

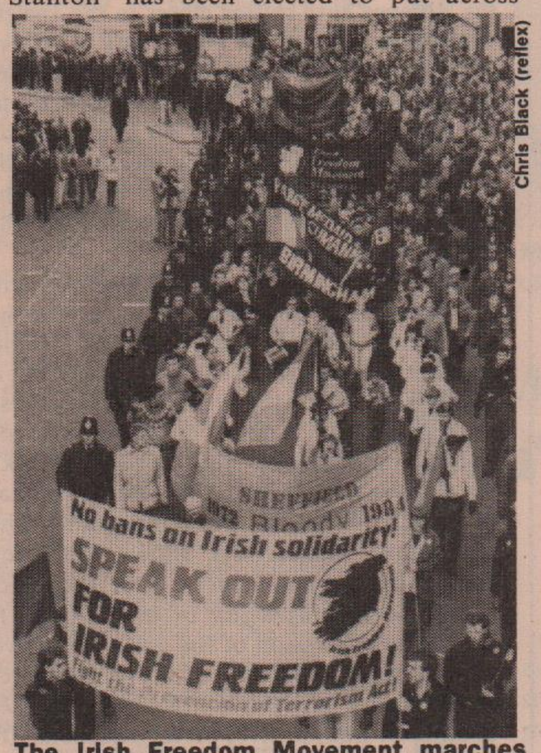
Against the background of this unwritten law of British democracy, last week's threats of a ban posed very different problems for Irish republicans and British Labour Party members. Sinn Fein councillors made clear that they will not condemn IRA attacks to win recognition from the British state which runs Northern Ireland through military terror. The Irish people who elected them to councils across Northern Ireland did so as a sign of support for the IRA's liberation war against the British authorities, and they expect their republican councillors to stand up to threats from Westminster and Unionist spokesmen.

Left exposed

The Northern Ireland secretary Douglas Hurd knows that given the extent of popular support for the republican movement, any attempt to outlaw Sinn Fein would bring thousands of nationalists into direct confrontation with the British authorities. It could only provoke further resistance and make Northern Ireland more unstable than ever. So, while sympathising with Unionist protests about republican councillors, Hurd rejected last week's demands for a ban on Sinn Fein.

Republican councillors are protected from effective bans by their movement's solid base of opposition to British rule. In contrast, Labour councillors like Brighton's Richard Stanton who speak out on Ireland are laid open to state censorship by their own party's support for the rules of British statesmanship and close links with British repression against the Irish.

When Richard Stanton refused to condemn the Brighton bomb last week, his fellow Labour councillors joined the Liberals and Tories in shouting him down. One demanded that he be 'thrown out of the Labour Party'. Another pointed out that Stanton 'has been elected to put across



The Irish Freedom Movement marches against Labour council bans in Sheffield

Labour Party policy and this is not it'. Labour Party policy is to repress opponents of the Irish War — whether they are Sinn Fein members in Belfast or Labour members in Brighton.

In 1974 a Labour government introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act to terrorise Irish people in Britain into silence. In the last 15 months Labour councils have banned Irish solidarity marches in Sheffield and Leicester and threatened to ban similar events in Birmingham. When individual Labour representatives try to break with Labour's anti-Irish tradition, their party will back the authorities against them.

The lesson of the last week's events is that people in Britain who want to be part of a broad movement for Irish freedom rather than isolated individuals have to break with the Labour Party. Yet Labour left wingers have put loyalty to their pro-British party first and allowed the leadership to call the shots on Ireland.

● In May Labour's national agent David Hughes vetoed an apparently harmless motion from the London Labour Party which called for Sinn Fein members to be invited to speak in Britain. Leading Labour left winger John McDonnell attacked Hughes' action as 'an outrageous attempt at subverting democracy'. But what else can the left expect from a party which sent troops into Ireland in 1969 to subvert the Irish people's democratic right to national independence and has backed the British occupation ever since?

● A fortnight ago left wingers applauded Labour national executive member and Sheffield council leader David Blunkett for criticising the arrest of another Sheffield councillor under the PTA. But last year the Labour left was silent when Blunkett banned a Sinn Fein march from the city. The left won't be able to stand up to state repression while it relies on Labour leaders with a criminal record of anti-republican censorship to fight its battles.

If we are to build a movement which can ward off threats of bans and proscriptions, we need to adopt the republican movement's attitude of contempt for the rules of British democracy and its defenders. That means ditching the Labour Party which, as its Northern Ireland spokesman Stuart Bell assured parliament in March, will condemn IRA attacks on the British state 'today, tomorrow and always'.

Mick Hume

BRITISH DEATH THREATS

Stop the Army assassins!

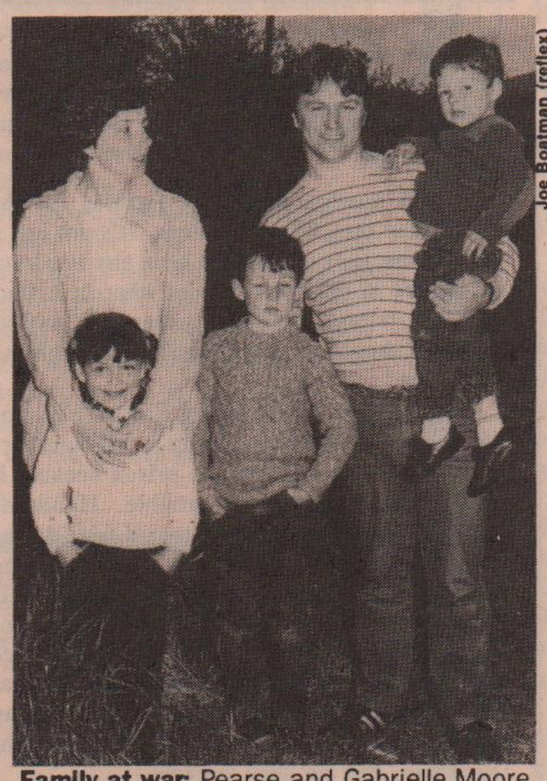
'THIS IS WHAT we expected from the Brits after the elections,' Teresa Moore from Derry told us last week, after her son Pearse had been raided and threatened with death by the British security forces for the third time in two months. The British authorities have responded to Sinn Fein's success in local elections by going out to get known opponents of British rule.

A fortnight ago Pearse Moore told *tns* about his two recent arrests in Royal Ulster Constabulary/SAS raids. The Crown gunmen had warned Pearse he would be dead before his sister's wedding at the end of June. When the paper carrying the interview arrived in Derry last week, eight members of the Royal Anglian Regiment arrived at Pearse's home to remind him he was still a marked man.

While the troops tore up carpets and floorboards, armed police arrived and told them Pearse 'has only got a month to live'. The Moores fear that the 'month to live' threat means the security forces will be back. The raiding troops stood by Pearse's bedroom window to photograph his bed, so they'll know where to aim something more dangerous than a camera. And they made Pearse explain his back door security system, so they'll know how to make secret night calls.

When last week's raid was over, the Army gang tried to hang around in Pearse's house until their transport arrived. He threw them out into the street. But republicans like Pearse Moore won't be safe until every British soldier and policeman is thrown out of every home and street in Ireland.

Phil Murphy



Family at war: Pearse and Gabrielle Moore with their children

DEFEND MAIRE O'SHEA

'An attack on us all'

SINCE BIRMINGHAM doctor Maire O'Shea was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in January, her case has been a central focus of Irish solidarity work in Britain.

Maire O'Shea is a well-known Irish activist who was arrested under the PTA in Liverpool and charged, along with five others, with conspiring to cause explosions. Four frame-up victims are still in custody awaiting next month's committal hearing. O'Shea is out on £50 000 bail.

During the crucial early days of O'Shea's detention, the Irish Freedom Movement picketed the Liverpool jail and court where she was held and organised a demonstration through the city. The Irish Freedom Movement both welcomed the support of the individual Irish activists who turned out for these events, and backed the protests called by other groups. But the weakness of most solidarity organisations meant the Irish Freedom Movement was left alone to shoulder much of the early work in Liverpool and to face police and Loyalist attacks on the planned demonstration.

In recent weeks various individuals and factions, backed by the Irish community weekly *The Irish Post,* have launched a slander campaign against the activities of the Irish Freedom Movement. This campaign has tried to exploit the plight of Maire O'Shea by turning her case into the personal property of particular groups.

Terror Act victim Maire O'Shea

The victimisation of any Irish solidarity activist is too important to be used for this sort of sectarian purpose. As Irish Freedom Movement secretary Meabh Kennedy told *tns,* 'Maire O'Shea's arrest is an attack on us all. The Irish Freedom Movement will continue campaigning in support of every victim of the PTA, no matter what opposition we get from the police, the Loyalists or the people who write poison pen letters to *The Irish Post.*'

CONTRACEPTION RIGHTS

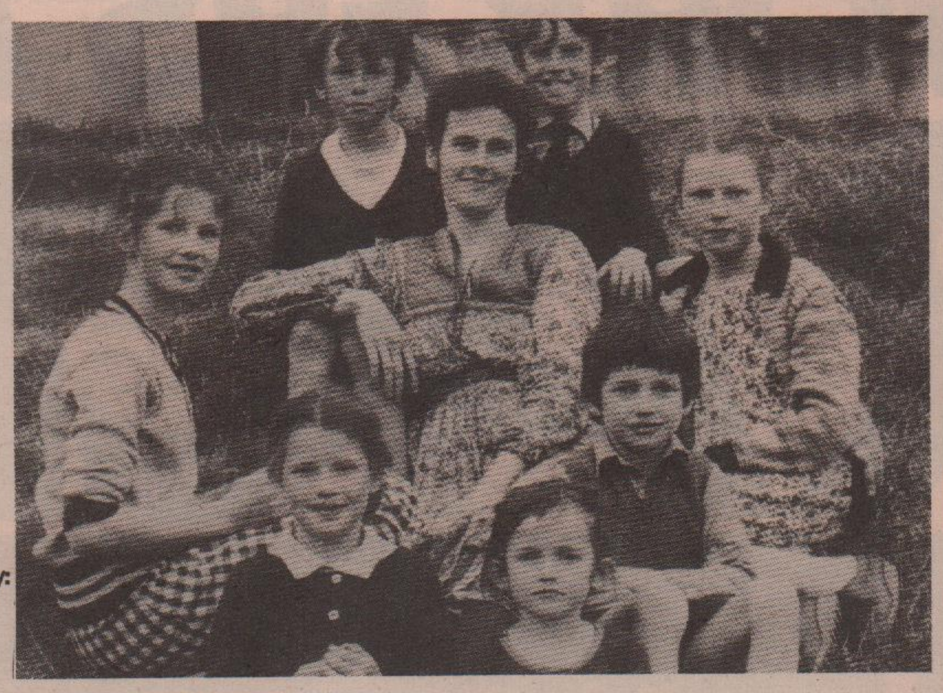
Who's afraid of Victoria Gillick?

DOCTORS AND social workers cannot be allowed to dictate the terms of the campaign to defend women's rights to contraception and abortion, argues *Kate Marshall*.

Last Monday the Brook Advisory Centre disclosed that a high court judge had authorised a 15-year old girl to be given an abortion and contraceptives after being made a ward of court. The girl's mother had refused to agree to an abortion because she wanted a grandchild.

Under the ruling made in the Gillick case in the court of appeal last December, doctors are no longer allowed to give advice or treatment on matters of contraception or abortion. This 15-year old's abortion could only take place after the local authority had taken her into care. Until the appeal by the department of health against the Gillick ruling is heard in the House of Lords next month, this is the only way an under-age girl can get contraception or an abortion.

On Tuesday the general assembly of the Church of Scotland voted for a ban on abortion except where there is a risk to a mother's life. The reverend Stuart Cameron, a missionary in the Bahamas, asked his fellow Kirk elders to imagine telling a girl 'you have been raped by a black man of the most low, moral intellectual background but you have got to carry on and give birth.' But after a heated debate over the question of when a foetus became a human being, the majority decided that rape could not be considered legitimate grounds for abortion. A climate of sexist and racist reaction now dominates debate on the issues of women's rights.



Seven out of ten for bigotry: Gillick minus three of her offspring

Father figures

Victoria Gillick has made her own children the subjects of a legal battle with the local health authority, but her real aims are much wider. 'I am continually aware', she writes, 'that the steady erosion of the status of parenthood...is making the survival of the family as a cohesive unit well nigh impossible.' Strengthening parental authority and restricting sex before marriage are Gillick's solutions to what she identifies as 'the growing social and medical problem of schoolgirl promiscuity'. Her campaign to realise these objectives has widespread backing from right-wing moralists and the churches.

The campaign against the Gillick judgement has been dominated by professionals, by doctors and social workers and counsellors involved in the care of young people or in providing contraception and abortion. They object to the restrictions imposed on their work by the Gillick ruling. But their resistance to the wider attack on women's rights is limited by the way they go along with Gillick's family values.

The British Medical Association and the General Medical Council object to the Gillick judgement because it prevents confidential consultations between a young woman and her doctor and restricts his 'clinical freedom' to decide the best course of treatment.

Doctors argue that they are the real guardians of family values. They insist that the consequence of abandoning the principle of confidentiality will be that some girls at risk will not seek professional advice. Girls will then be exposed to the risks of pregnancy and VD, as well as, in the words of the 1980 official guidelines 'other long-term physical, psychological and emotional consequences'. These problems 'would apply particularly to young people whose parents are, for example, unconcerned, entirely unresponsive or grossly disturbed'. The thrust of the doctors' case against Gillick is that these consequences of the recent ruling 'are equally a threat to stable family life'.

In their concern to protect their professional position, the doctors are pushing forward their role as custodians of the family and its function as what Gillick calls 'a cohesive social unit'. The trouble is that this cohesive function requires the subordination of women and young people within the family.

Pressure from the medical profession is an important influence on the department of health in its attempt to reverse the Gillick decision. This goes against the views of many Tories, including it is rumoured the prime minister herself. The medical profession's case against Gillick has been endorsed by other concerned agencies. The common line is 'they're going to do it anyway, so we'll save a lot more trouble and keep things under control if we put them on the pill'.

The Family Planning Association defends prescribing the pill to a girl under 16 because 'it will save her from pregnancy and further problems with which she could not be expected to cope'. Isobel Reid of the Children's Legal Centre points out that the Gillick judgement will lead to 'more unwanted pregnancies, more late abortions, and the return of back street abortionists'. She accuses Gillick, 'far from preserving the family unit', of putting it under greater stress by denying girls the right to 'a confidential relationship with a doctor'.

The professionals' paternalistic approach reflects middle class prejudices that babies should be born into happy two-parent families, that young (working class) women make bad mothers and that young (middle class) women should be studying for their O-levels.

As well as backing Gillick's pro-family line the professionals go a long way towards approving her pro-marriage prejudices. 'A lot of the girls we see are involved in lasting relationships; they come back years later to show us their wedding photographs,' says one 'family planning' clinic doctor. This is a widespread response to the moralists' complaints about teenage promiscuity. All the experts insist that under their guidance most young people on the pill are engaged in 'steady and responsible relationships', the liberal label for what Gillick calls marriage. The BMA has been at pains to point out that it is 'strongly opposed to premature sexual activity' as part of its wider commitment to upholding family values. Where does this narrow opposition to Gillick leave women who want the right to pursue their sexuality outside the confines of marriage or 'stable relationships'?

The Gillick campaign is part of a wider drive to enforce women's inferior position in society. Health service cuts, scares about the dangers of the pill, legislative measures to protect 'embryo rights' (now given a new lease of life by parliamentary manoeuvres to rescue the Powell Bill) all have the effect of restricting women's access to contraception and abortion facilities. At the same time the Tories and their friends in the media are running a sustained propaganda campaign to promote the family and parental authority. They want to compensate for the lack of respect among young people for the authority of the government.

The fight for women's rights to contraception and abortion is essential to free women from the constant fear of pregnancy and childbirth and allow us to get out to work and play a full part in the life of society. The health service should provide adequate contraceptive and abortion services to women of all ages. They should cater for the special needs of young women with special clinics and better sex education.

It may suit doctors and social workers to give ground to Gillick, to secure their place in a system which increasingly relies on confining women in the roles of wife and mother and all purpose care-giver in the home. But this provides no future for women. Fighting for women's rights means building opposition not only to Gillick, but to the Tory drive to turn the family into a force for controlling women and young people as British society falls apart under the strains of the recession.

GETTING BACK AT GILLICK

Free condoms!

' "SEX AIDS" HANDOUTS for kids' screamed the *Islington Gazette* last Friday. 'Birth control for children banned' reported the *London Standard*. The announcement of stalls to distribute free contraceptives provoked a furore and denunciations across the political spectrum.

Our day of action against Gillick last Saturday had a number of aims. We wanted to build support for the anti-Gillick demo on 23 June, to gather names on our petition calling for free and safe contraception for all and to publicise the attack on young women's rights. A motorcade toured south London and a dozen stalls were set up throughout the London area. We also collected condoms outside chemists to draw attention to the plight of young people too frightened to attend the doctor or too hard up to buy them.

It was the threat of practical action which whipped the police, the press and politicians into action. At several stalls police stood by and threatened to arrest anybody handing out condoms. A man from the *News of the World* came along to write up the sort of 'communist paedophiles snatch condoms for babies' story for which his paper is renowned. A reporter from the *Daily Express* asked to be shown the condoms. It was not clear whether he had never seen them before or had simply been caught short for his Saturday night out.

The politicians responded true to form to the media trivialisation. Islington council leader Margaret Hodge, introduced in the local press as 'mother of four', denounced the stalls and stated 'we certainly wouldn't give them a licence for this, it is quite absurd'. Local SDP leader David Hyams said he found the idea 'crude and disgusting'. Local people disagreed. They identified the real problem as Gillick's ruling and the criminalisation of sexually active young people. We got thousands of signatures, sold nearly a hundred copies of our new morality pamphlet and collected a few 'packets of three' to send to the *Daily Express*.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

'Get back to the International Marxist Group,' screamed an irate right-wing Labour councillor. 'Get back to the freemasons,' screamed an irate left-wing Labour councillor. This unseemly exchange of cat-calling between comrade councillors took place just before Hackney council voted to set a rate last week. Council leader Hilda Kean called on the Labour councillors to cool it and reminded them that they were involved in a 'democratic process' to defeat the Tories.

Labour councillors like Hilda Kean are all for council workers and tenants getting involved in the 'democratic process'. They can be a useful stick to wave at the Tories when you can't get what you want through other means. But they can also be a nuisance and upset the 'democratic process' if they are not kept on a tight leash.

Hilda cooked up a deal with the town hall union leaders to delay the date of surrender to the government and to keep disruptive elements out of the 'democratic process'. Officials on the joint shop stewards' committee occupied the council chamber to stop a Labour/Liberal alliance setting a rate and managed to avoid involving a single worker. When the Labour right condemned this 'outrage against democracy' the union bosses rushed to reassure them that they had no 'intention of stopping the democratic process of the council'.

At the reconvened council meeting left wingers predicted 'violence on the streets of Hackney' if the Tories didn't hand over more money. Would the left condemn it, demanded the right? Before Hilda had a chance to reply she was called on to deal with violence of a different sort. Frustrated members of the public burst into the council chamber to stop the meeting. Hilda's appeals for order fell on deaf ears as skirmishes broke out all over the council chamber. This explosion of anger was all too much for Labour councillor Linda Hibberd who promptly fainted on the floor. Labour mayor Ken Hanson ordered the senior shop stewards to eject their unruly members from the building. The stewards rushed to reassure mayor Hanson that the ringleader was not in fact a trade unionist, but a sacked miner. Mayor Hanson apologised for his mistake.

The following day Labour councillors joined Fleet Street rags in denouncing the 'half-crazed mob of slogan-chanting thugs'. The Labour Party was particularly peeved that the 250 demonstrators included miners and other activists 'from as far afield as Sheffield and Liverpool'. Hilda took no chances when the council met again the next night. A video link-up was installed in the assembly hall to keep the mob at bay. This transformed the live circus in the council chamber into a televised event. Entrance into the council chamber was by invitation only. Behind closed doors the councillors got on with the 'democratic process' and pushed through a 14.7 per cent rate rise. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief and gave a rousing rendition of the Red Flag.

At the end of the 'democratic process' Labour councillors like Hilda Kean can still look forward to a long career in the local government machine. But all that Hackney tenants have to look forward to is a long list of blocked drains, overflowing toilets, leaking roofs and broken lives. With former International Marxist Group members running the 'democratic process' through committee room cabals who needs the freemasons?

THE COMMUNIST TRADITION
WORKERS AGAINST RACISM

If you want to fight racism, you've got to fight the system. That's why Marx, Lenin and Trotsky were the best anti-racist fighters of their generations

Backs to the wall in Detroit: American Stalinists betrayed black workers in the 1943 race riots

LEFT-WING Lewisham council recently spent £6000 on a report and film about the psychological effects of golliwogs. The Greater London Council has plastered the streets of London with posters proclaiming that racism is not very nice. Today anti-racism has come to mean racial awareness courses, multi-cultural education and campaigns against racist advertising.

But there is another tradition, represented by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, which identifies the capitalist system as the target of the anti-racist movement and fights to unite the working class in the struggle against it.

Racism has not always been the powerful and pervasive force in British society that it is today. It has developed in response to the changing character of British capitalism. In the early nineteenth century racism was not a significant social force in Britain. The rapid expansion of the empire fuelled a strident British chauvinism, but this did not immediately assume a racist character. There were, no doubt, many people with all sorts of racial prejudices, but in the absence of any real focus these had little consequence.

Large-scale Irish immigration in the middle of the century provided the first target for a more systematic racism. British employers used the influx of unskilled Irish labour as a means of holding down wages and weakening trade union organisation. They often imported Irish workers to break strikes. The use of the Irish to undermine working class living standards created a ready response for anti-Irish sentiments among British workers. The British establishment took advantage of workers' fears to promote a wider anti-Irish consensus. This gathered force in response to the threat to British rule in Ireland from a succession of revolts during the nineteenth century. The ruling class portrayed Irish people as sub-human beasts to legitimise its use of coercion and to cohere British workers' loyalty to the Crown.

Living in Britain in the 1850s and 1860s, Marx recognised that anti-Irish racism was a mortal threat to working class solidarity. Marx pointed out how the employers used Irish immigration to divide workers and strengthen their hold over the entire working class:

'The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalists maintain their power. And that class is fully aware of it.' (Marx and Engels, *On Ireland)*

Marx understood that anti-Irish racism could not be explained by natural phenomena such as skin colour, but only by the relationship between Britain and Ireland. Britain's dominion over Ireland turned the Irish people into a race apart. He argued that the British working class should oppose anti-Irish racism and support the cause of Irish independence, not as a favour to the Irish people, but to establish its own independence as a class.

Oppressors and oppressed

While anti-Irish racism was peculiar to Britain, hostility to the Slavs was widespread in central Europe. Yet racism only became a popular force in every Western country towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the dawn of the era of world-wide imperialism brought mass migration from the Third World to the West. The earlier enforced mass migration of African slaves to the USA meant that racism had already assumed a systematic character in America. Lenin developed the Marxist approach to racial oppression in an epoch when the world was split between a handful of powerful imperialist nations and a huge number of backward capitalist countries. Imperialism had a major impact on the international labour movement. The colonies provided cheap food and raw materials and led to a tremendous expansion of production. Higher living standards and social reforms helped to secure a consensus of support for imperialism and, for the first time, the ideology of nationalism became a mass force. British workers identified the cause of the nation and the empire as their own because it seemed that their livelihoods, jobs and welfare depended on

Nationalism, and its accompanying notions of the superiority of the colonisers and the inferiority of the colonised, came to exert a powerful influence over the trade unions and labour parties in the Western countries. The leaders of the Second International, which brought together social democratic parties from all over the world in the decades around the turn of the century, failed to challenge the growth of nationalism in the working class. Indeed they encouraged it. In theory they agreed with Marx's warnings that the labour movement should oppose the oppression of other nations by its own nation-state. But for the Second International anti-colonialism was a moral question with no practical consequences.

Under a national flag

Unlike the ruling class, the labour leaders did not advocate a policy of naked aggression. Instead they advocated a colonial policy couched in socialist rhetoric — a positive colonial policy. The Second International's first major debate on the colonial question took place at the 1907 congress in Stuttgart. Led by Dutch social democrat Van Kol, half the conference delegates argued that imperialism could play a progressive role in the colonies. They argued that the colonies were a fact of life and the task of socialists was merely to reform their administration. Other delegates tried to justify the imposition of immigration controls against foreign workers. Lenin, who led the opposition on behalf of the Russian Bolshevik Party, summed up the debate:

'On the question of emigration and immigration, a clear difference of opinion arose between the opportunists and the revolutionaries ....The opportunists cherished the idea of limiting the right of migration of backward, undeveloped workers — especially the Japanese and the Chinese. In the minds of these opportunists the spirit of narrow craft isolation, of trade union exclusiveness, outweighed the consciousness of socialist tasks: work of educating and organising those strata of the proletariat which have not yet been drawn into the labour movement.' (VI Lenin, 'International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart', *Collected Works,* Volume 13)

The combined efforts of Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky defeated the pro-colonial lobby at Stuttgart. But the conference vote against colonialism was more a gesture of token internationalism than a real commitment to take a stand against national and racial oppression. Most delegates underestimated the extent to which pro-colonial sentiments had already begun to undermine the independence of the labour movement. As a result they took no steps to combat the chauvinist trends which Lenin had identified.

The failure of the International to wage a struggle against nationalism and colonialism paved the way for its collapse at the outbreak of the First World War. Given that the labour parties had already accepted the right of their own ruling classes to plunder Africa and Asia, it was inevitable that each would side with its own establishment when they went to war with one another.

During the war years Lenin refined his understanding of the colonial question and put forward the demand for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. This position was the foundation of the struggle against nationalist and racist prejudices in the working class movements of the Western nations. For Lenin the fight against oppression played a crucial role in forging an independent working class outlook and leadership. This understanding informed the colonial policy of the new Communist International which was established in 1919. The Comintern committed all communist parties to 'give active support to the revolutionary movements of national liberation'. It pursued Lenin's demand for the right of nations to self-determination and gave its support to the struggles of black people in America and South Africa.

At its fourth congress in 1922 the Comintern called for support for every black movement 'which tends to undermine or weaken capitalism or imperialism'. It pledged to 'fight for race equality of the negro with the white people, for equal wages and political and social rights'. It argued for a special campaign to unionise black workers and challenge racism among white workers.

The Comintern's stand on the issues of colonial and racial oppression provided the foundation for a truly internationalist working class movement. Two factors frustrated the realisation of the movement's early potential. First, the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union meant that the movement abandoned in practice its commitment to proletarian internationalism. Second, the weakness of the communist parties in the major Western countries soon led them to succumb once again to nationalist and racist pressures.

Stalin's strategy of building socialism in one country meant the rejection of the Marxist and Leninist principle that the working class needed to resolve the world crisis of the capitalist system on an international level. According to Stalin the interests of the working class could be defended within the boundaries of one nation. In the Soviet Union itself, the bureaucracy appealed increasingly to Russian nationalism, which Lenin had relentlessly opposed throughout the history of the Bolshevik Party. In the Comintern, Stalin's purge of revolutionaries from the Western communist parties helped to push them in an opportunist direction.

The rot had already begun to set in at the fifth congress of the Comintern in 1925. Asian speakers complained that the colonial question had been put on ice. The French Communist Party openly admitted that it had dropped its opposition to French imperialism because the French government had adopted a liberal foreign policy. In 1926 the French party responded to a wave of attacks on immigrant workers by demanding 'the prohibition of collective immigration of foreign labour'.

The German Communist Party's answer to the rise of the Nazi Party was to proclaim its own commitment to the nation. Party posters appeared featuring the Soviet star and the swastika. A pamphlet published in 1930 boasted that there was not a single Jew on the central committee of the German Communist Party!

The adoption of the popular front strategy in 1935 exposed the full extent of the Comintern leadership's retreat from anti-imperialism and anti-racism. The bureaucracy now instructed the communist parties to support the 'democratic' imperialist powers against Hitler. They did not take much convincing to make patriotism into official party policy. The American Communist Party's daily paper carried pictures of Lenin side by side with George Washington, and displayed the stars and stripes at its meetings. The communist parties' growing nationalism meant acceptance of colonial oppression. In 1935 the French Communist Party ceased its token support for the Arab national liberation struggle in North Africa.

Trotsky was right

The Stalinist leadership urged the working class to postpone the struggle for socialism and to unite with the ruling class to defend democracy against fascism. But this all-class defence of democracy did not extend to defending the rights of the oppressed. George Padmore, one of the founders of modern African nationalism and a former Comintern official, described how he received a series of directives from Moscow instructing him to stop attacking French imperialism, then British imperialism, then American imperialism. He was finally expelled from the Comintern in 1933.

During the Second World War the Stalinist parties denounced any attempt to fight racial and national oppression as a diversion from the anti-fascist struggle. When resistance to British rule in India broke out into armed struggle in 1942 British Communist Party leader Harry Pollitt denounced the Indian masses. He told them that he 'deplored' the fact that they 'should even contemplate the adoption of civil disobedience'. Fighting for Indian independence, he said, 'could only play into the hands of the Axis powers'. The British Communist Party told the Indian people to postpone their struggle for freedom and give their lives for the empire that was still ravaging their country.

The American Communist Party told blacks that they should put off their struggle for equal rights until after the war. It denounced attempts to fight for the abolition of racial segregation in the armed forces and for equal pay for equal work as 'sabotage of the war effort'. Communist leaders even condemned the moderate National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People for being too aggressive in its demands for equal rights for blacks. In response to the 1943 race riots in Detroit they urged blacks to forget their 34 dead and get back to work immediately. They pointed with pride to the fact that even on Bloody Monday, when racist mobs were shooting up the black ghetto, many white and black workers were working hard together in the munitions factories. According to the Communist Party, the riots were not race riots, but a fascist plot to undermine the war effort.

Throughout this period Trotsky fought a battle in exile to carry on the traditions of Marx and Lenin. In 1933 James Cannon and other leading American Trotskyists had a wide-ranging discussion on racism with Trotsky in Turkey. It ended with their agreement to hold a full debate on the issue in the American movement. But it was six years before another discussion took place, again with Trotsky, who was now living in Mexico. Trotsky condemned his followers in America because they had still to publish a single pamphlet or serious article on the subject. Racial oppression remained a low priority for US Trotskyists. When Cannon presented his definitive *History of American Trotskyism* lectures in 1942 he made no mention of the problem of racism or his party's practical work on the question.

Trotsky continuously urged his followers to fight for the right of self-determination for American blacks. But US Trotskyists argued that black workers were becoming increasingly integrated into the labour movement and that there was no national oppression in the USA. Subsequent debates about whether the tactics Trosky proposed were right or wrong have missed one crucial point. Trotsky's argument for self-determination was not based on a detailed knowledge of black oppression in the USA. He came to this position because he understood that the American left had neglected the fight for black rights and abdicated responsibility for challenging racism among workers.

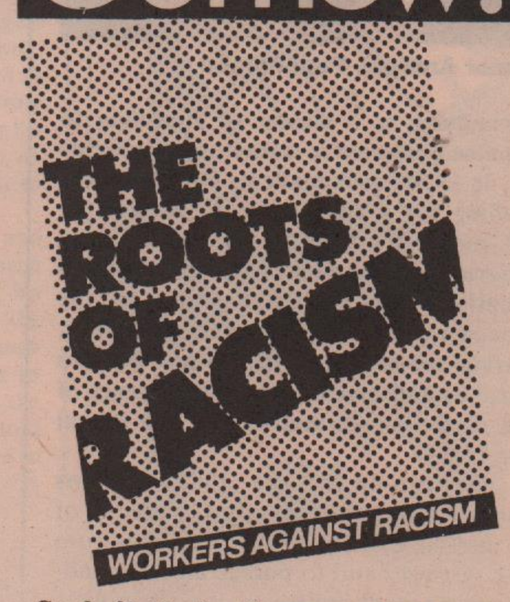
Trotsky understood that a consistent fight against racism was essential to establish a revolutionary working class party in the USA. He may well have been wrong in his advocacy of self-determination for American blacks at a time when mass migration to the northern states and black unionisation opened up wider possibilities for working class solidarity than ever before. Trotsky was right, however, to take the American Trotskyists to task for their neglect of racism and to urge them to make the fight against racism their number one priority. Trotsky understood that racial oppression was a special problem for the American working class which required special measures to tackle it. This was the strength of his position.

The central weakness that Trotsky identified in the American left — its failure to challenge chauvinism and racism in the labour movement — still dogs the anti-racist struggle more than 50 years later. Lenin's advice to the Second International about the need to combat nationalism is equally appropriate today when the labour movement constantly tries to outdo the bosses in its defence of the national interest. And Marx's warning that British workers will never be able to act as an independent force until they break free from their loyalty to the British state is as true today as it was when he was writing more than a century ago.

The urgency of rebuilding the revolutionary tradition of international solidarity against racial and national oppression is every day more pressing. Throughout the Western world working class struggles increasingly take a sectional character. White workers are pitched against immigrant workers in the battle for survival. The international ruling class is united only in its determination to divide and weaken the working class. It is up to white workers to stand up for the rights of black workers and prove that the united strength of the working class is more than a match for the bosses.

Joan Phillips

Out now!



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INTERNATIONAL

Papandreou at the polls

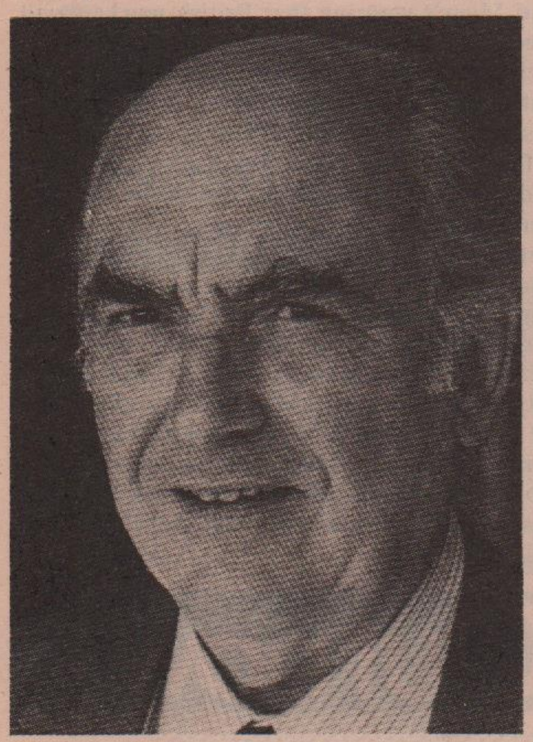
A tragedy for Greek workers

When Greek prime minister Andreas Papandreou toppled conservative president Constantine Karamanlis back in March, he provoked a storm of outrage from the right-wing opposition and calls for an early general election. This Sunday Greece will go to the polls, after an election campaign which has polarised Greek politics more than at any time since the sixties.

The triumph of Papandreou's Pasok, the socialist party, in the last general election in 1981 was the result of an unprecedented degree of national harmony. Papandreou inspired workers, peasants, small businessmen and the professional middle classes with his promise to liberate the country from foreign domination and economic backwardness.

Four years later the harsh realities of recession have narrowed the scope for social reform. Economic stagnation and mass unemployment have eroded the basis for all-class harmony. The political instability highlighted by the electoral contest reflects the growth of class conflict.

Papandreou chose Christos Sartzetakis, a liberal opponent of the earlier dictatorship of the colonels immortalised in the famous radical Greek film 'Z', to replace the conservative Karamanalis as president. This was a wily move. Memories of the CIA-backed Papadopoulos junta which ruled the country from 1967 to 1974 stir nationalist sentiment in Greece. They are also an embarrassment to the Greek right, which has a long record of complicity with foreign intervention and military repression. For most of this century the feeble ruling class in Greece has depended on Western backing for its survival. It has relied in turn on Germany, Britain and most recently the USA. As a result nationalism has long provided a focus for radical anti-establishment parties.



Premier Andreas Papandreou

Papandreou is a master at appealing to nationalist sentiment to attract support for his party. In 1974 Pasok made its political debut by calling for a referendum to abolish the Greek monarchy. Because the royal family was German, it was a hated symbol of foreign domination. The socialist victory in the referendum was a watershed in Greek politics. It marked the decline of the old pro-Western political establishment and the emergence of Pasok as the representative of a new liberal centre trend.

In the run-up to the 1981 elections Papandreou promised to take Greece out of Nato and the EEC, to remove US bases from Greek territory and to pursue an independent 'non-aligned' course in foreign policy. By appealing to popular resentment against American influence Pasok was able to cohere a spirit of national unity and win broad support for the socialist government. This is why foreign policy has become such a key issue in Greek politics. The more popular disaffection with the government's social and economic policies has grown, the more Papandreou has had to rely on focusing public debate on the sphere of international relations.

Greek orthodox capitalism: Papandreou got new president Sartzetakis sworn in to help impose austerity

In the current election campaign Papandreou has embarked on a range of foreign policy initiatives. He has ceremonially re-opened the Greek-Albanian border, which the Greek government closed during the war. He has been on a much-publicised trip to Moscow to demonstrate his government's commitment to neutrality and its independence from the Western alliance.

Much as Papandreou's nationalist and pro-Soviet gestures irritate Washington and London, they cannot overturn the dependence of the Greek establishment on Western economic and military support. This is why the socialist government has done nothing to realise its pledges regarding membership of Nato and the EEC or to remove US bases.

Papandreou's failure to live up to his anti-Western rhetoric has provided the main focus of left opposition to the government. The staunchly pro-Soviet communist party, the KKE, relies heavily on its reputation as the vanguard of the popular resistance during the Second World War. It has put Pasok's retreat from confrontation with the Western alliance at the centre of its criticisms of the government.

Given the difficulties of taking on the West, Papandreou has turned to stirring up longstanding conflicts with Turkey. Chios and Lemnos, two Greek islands less than 30 miles off the Turkish coast, have become the focus of Greek-Turkish tension. The militarisation of the Aegean islands by the Greek government has revived deep-seated animosities between the two countries.

The Greek-Turkish conflict could easily explode into another round of slaughter between two countries which are both the victims of Western domination. After all his big talk about fighting Western interference, sabre-rattling against Turkey is Papandreou's only way of holding on to the patriotic support which sustains his government. Pasok's anti-Turkish militarism shows that, in foreign affairs as much as in its policies at home, the Greek socialist government is moving in a dangerous and reactionary direction.

Four years after Pasok won a popular mandate for radical reforms, nationalism and austerity are all it has to offer. It is not surprising that the right-wing New Democracy anticipates a comeback this Sunday. As the more consistent representative of the right, New Democracy stands to gain from the duplicity, cynicism and indecision of the Pasok government.

Greek workers will wonder whether there is much to choose between austerity under Pasok or under any other party. Papandreou's government has introduced some of the harshest anti-union laws in Europe. It keeps a tight grip on the unions, running the trade union federation much as it used to be run under the colonels. Pasok has presided over the decimation of the country's only major industry — shipbuilding — at a cost of tens of thousands of jobs.

The KKE hopes to win sufficient votes from disillusioned working class supporters of Pasok to be able to claim a place in a coalition government with the socialists. The KKE's policies are identical with the official Pasok programme — nationalisation, withdrawal from Nato and the EEC and the removal of US bases. The difference is that the KKE gives Greek nationalism a radical working class thrust.

The KKE's long record of struggle against imperialist interference, though not untarnished, gives its patriotic claims greater authority. But KKE nationalism also serves to disarm the workers. In its role as a friendly critic of the Pasok government, the KKE has backed socialist austerity and provided a radical gloss for Papandreou's reactionary domestic and foreign policies. Matters can only get worse if this party succeeds in entering the corridors of government.

Four years of Pasok government have shown that the official left spells disaster for the Greek working class. Unfortunately, a genuine working class alternative will not be on offer at the polls on Sunday.

Sabena Norton

LEBANON

Shiites massacre PLO

LAST WEEK HUNDREDS of Palestinians were massacred at the camps of Sabra, Chatila and Bourj-el-Barajnieh in Beirut. In 1982 the same camps were over-run by Israeli-backed Christian militias. This time the attacks were led by the Shiite militia Amal backed by Lebanon's sixth army.

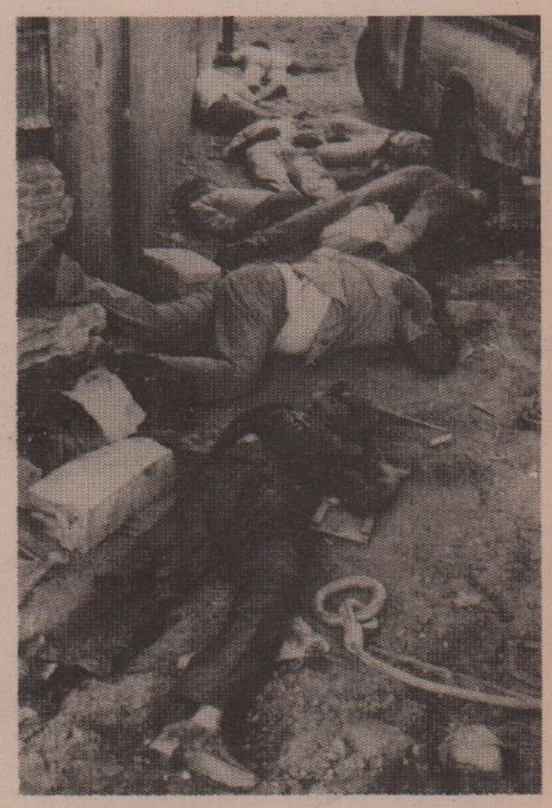
Only last month the Shiites launched an offensive against the retreating Israeli army, which invaded Lebanon three years ago to crush the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Now the apparently interminable factional conflict in Lebanon has taken a new twist as the Shiites themselves try to destroy the PLO in Beirut. What is going on?

Last week's events are the product of the new alignment in the Arab-Israeli conflict which has taken shape in the aftermath of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. The man behind the Shiite attack on the PLO is Syria's president Hafez Assad. Since the expulsion of the bulk of the PLO in 1982 and the subsequent withdrawal of the Israelis, the Syrians have become the dominant force in Lebanon. Today Assad, whose armies control half the country, is the local power-broker. Last week's Lebanese summit, attended by Assad and the leaders of Lebanon's Christian and Muslim factions, confirmed that the Lebanese establishment looks to Syria to restore a degree of stability to the country.

The Shiites' objective is to gain the political power they have been denied under the Christian-Sunni Muslim power-sharing arrangement which French colonial rule bequeathed to Lebanon. The middle class Shiite leaders look to Syria to support their claim for a stake in whatever emerges out of the Lebanese rubble. By flushing the PLO out of Beirut, the Shiites hope to strengthen their negotiating position. Shiite leader Nabih Berri said in an interview last week that Syria and the Shiites were 'fighting together for a new Lebanon'. Both want to make sure that the PLO presents no obstacle to the new order in Lebanon.

Recent factional warfare between Christians and Muslims — and within the Christian camp itself — in Beirut and southern Lebanon, has allowed sections of the PLO loyal to Yasser Arafat to regain a foothold in the country. Thousands of PLO fighters returned to the camps near Beirut and in the south. Arafat has boosted his military presence in Lebanon to strengthen his hand in the current top-level talks on the wider Palestinian-Israeli conflict. But neither the Syrians nor the Shiites are prepared to countenance the re-establishment of a PLO base in Lebanon. This would undermine their own position in the Middle Eastern power game.

Last week's tragic events confirm that the divisions imposed on the Middle East by the Western powers are a formidable barrier to the liberation of the Palestinian and Arab masses. The Palestinians are the main victims of the cynical attempts of Arab rulers to exploit these divisions for their own ends. But the militant Shiite youth, who fought so bravely against Israel in southern Lebanon, are also being sold out by middle class careerists. After driving out the PLO, Syria and its other local allies may yet move to crush the Shiite Amal. The cycle of slaughter and destruction can only be ended if the Palestinian and Arab masses take the fight against imperialism into their own hands.



Beirut bloodbath: Palestinian massacre victims

REVIEWS

STALINISM

Trotsky-bashing

Denver Walker, *Quite right, Mr Trotsky!,* Harney and Jones 1985, pbk £1.00

Trotsky-bashing is a well-established tradition in Stalinist circles. *Quite right, Mr Trotsky!* is a fine example of the genre. In the style of his many predecessors Denver Walker takes the earliest opportunity to inform his readers that Trotsky was not really a Russian revolutionary, but was actually a Jew. His first chapter includes the revelation that 'there was a man called Lev Davidovitch Bronstein, better known as Leon Trotsky'.

In case the reader missed the point, the author is ready with a British example, revealing that the real name of Socialist Workers' Party leader Tony Cliff is Ygael Gluckstein. The same scoop can be found in most issues of *National Front News.*

Walker is convinced that he has a powerful sense of humour. Unfortunately, Walker's humour is like that of the stand-up comics on *The comedians.* He uses the elbow in the ribs liberally to compensate for the lack of a punch line. Closer inspection reveals that Walker's sense of humour disguises his insecurity. The blurb tells us that he is a journalist on *The New Worker.* Now you may never have heard of *The New Worker.* Neither had I before I consulted the *tns* in-house archivist of the left press. It turns out that *The New Worker* is a publication which caters exclusively for the East European market. It is sold by a dwindling band of old-fashioned Stalinists who broke from the Communist Party in the late seventies. Like most Stalinists Walker is preoccupied by the disintegration of the old communist movement in Britain. The old Stalinists find it galling that while they are becoming an endangered species, the rest of the left is showing greater resilience.

Denver Walker's joke-writer

Walker does not like to let facts stand in the way of a joke. His writing displays scant regard for the truth. If the political views of his opponents do not suit his critique he does not hesitate to invent more suitable positions. Readers of *tns* will be surprised to learn that the Revolutionary Communist Party thinks that the Soviet Union is 'a deformed workers' state' or that the RCP is only interested in 'revolutionary communist women'.

Much of Walker's 'information' seems to be based on anecdotes collected in the author's younger days in Bristol. As he has since been advancing his career as a journalist on *The New Worker* he has probably gained little experience in checking facts.

Despite his low life polemics, I can't help feeling that Walker is a rather likeable eccentric. He denounces Trotskyists for using pseudonyms, which he considers 'a rather adolescent desire for conspiratorial practices'. This comes from a man who calls himself 'Denver Walker', formerly known as Eric Box of the *Bristol Bugler!* But Denver or Eric, what does it matter? Students of the psychology of despair will find useful research material in *Quite right, Mr Trotsky!.*

Sid French

ANARCHISM

Not so red as she's painted

Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman – an intimate life,* Virago 1985, pbk £5.95

This is the essential Emma Goldman. It is the story of the woman whom the *San Francisco Call* wanted 'hanged by the neck until dead and considerably longer'. One acquaintance described her as 'the most authoritarian libertarian he had ever met'.

Wexler's vigorous narrative charts Emma Goldman's life from her childhood in Tsarist Russia in the 1870s. She describes her early involvement in the struggles of immigrant workers in New York's East Side in the 1890s and her rise to notoriety after her lover Alexander Berkman's failed attempt to assassinate strike-breaking industrialist Henry Clay Frick in July 1892.

This biography's claim to be 'an intimate life' rests heavily on Wexler's use of a wonderfully explicit exchange of letters between Goldman and her life's 'great, grand passion' Ben Reitman. Wexler's psychoanalytical approach reveals more about Emma Goldman than a more straightforward account. Wexler's warmth for her subject allows her to convey the full sweep of Goldman's political activism and her passionate response to the oppression and cruelty she saw around her. Goldman was outrageous and she was everywhere. She threw herself into campaigns against the draft during the First World War and in support of contraception for women. Both resulted in long prison sentences.

Goldman became a celebrity at the turn of the century with the growth of the Progressive movement. This was made up of respectable Americans dismayed at the human cost of capitalism and alarmed at the growing labour and agrarian unrest. They hoped to head off the threat of revolution by persuading the authorities to introduce moderate reforms. Goldman found the ambience of the 'conversations' organised by groups like the Brooklyn Philosophical Society or the Manhattan Liberal Club more congenial than the growing American labour movement. Wexler does not disguise Goldman's life-long contempt for the working class. She rejected politics in favour of activism. She despised Marx as someone who read and wrote rather than 'doing' anything. She espoused anarchism because it suited her own militant middle class individualism.

Goldman lived for a further 20 years after her eventual deportation from the USA and her arrival in the Soviet Union, where Wexler's biography stops short. Goldman's reaction against the grim conditions that faced the beleaguered Soviet state reflected her earlier political weaknesses. She had no appreciation of the need for centralised political organisation. Even before she arrived her main concern was how she could organise resistance to the Bolsheviks and she soon moved on to live in France. Goldman died in exile embittered and largely forgotten in the USA where she was once a well-known figure. In the sixties a new generation of American radicals went in search of their roots, discovered Goldman, and gave birth to the myth of 'Red Emma'. Wexler's biography goes a long way towards debunking that myth.

John Johnson

Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman: Anarchism as a crutch for the middle classes

CAPITALISM

Once upon a time in America

Michael Drosnin, *Citizen Hughes: the incredible last years of Howard Hughes – in his own words,* Hutchison 1985, hbk £9.95

On my first glance at this book's opening tag from *Heart of darkness* and the author's unintended parody of Mickey Spillane, I thought it must either be an awful book or a compilation of rejected 'B' movie scripts. A closer read of its painful affectation of new journalism confirmed that I hadn't stumbled on a treasure of late night movies.

Here are the life and times of citizen Howard Hughes whose early life is already immortalised in Harold Robbin's *Carpetbaggers.* The richest man in America once made the most expensive film of the early thirties as well as many Hollywood stars and flew airplanes for record distances in record times. He was also a man who came to own Las Vegas and a piece of every major politician for a generation.

The good guys of American politics always liked to refer to Richard Nixon as the 'dark side of the American spirit'. But what could they say when Hughes had both sides on his payroll? As he put it 'try to determine who is the real honest-to-god, layman at the White House....I don't know whom you have to approach, but there is somebody take my word for it.'

Hughes spent the last years of his life lying naked and unwashed in a hotel room in Vegas glued to the TV screen. He was swathed in Kleenex tissues to avoid germs and contamination. And he was surrounded by thousands of memos to his number two Robert Maken. These memos provided Drosnin with the material for his book. Hughes' vast wealth and power were dedicated to preserving his privacy at all costs and preventing nuclear tests in the Nevada desert from rocking his bed. Because president Lyndon Johnson was on his payroll Hughes came closer than anybody to stopping America's nuclear programme.

But this is not the right stuff for heroes and there needs to be some good guys in these mean and dirty streets. They are Drosnin and his anonymous sidekick who goes by the title 'the Pro'. Their mission: to rescue the American Dream. ' "The American people had a right to know." "What does that make me," asked the Pro, "an investigative thief?" "Precisely," I told him. "And the real criminal is Hughes. He tried to steal our entire country." "I don't know," said the Pro taking exception, "I like the guy. You know, I really liked him." '

This book confirmed all my prejudices about American capitalists and American liberal journalists. If you want the language undiluted stick to Chandler. If you want the policy spelt out just watch the news reports from Central America. Forget Michael Drosnin.

Alan Harding

junius publications

'Despite the pill and the permissive age, thoughts of marriage still put stars in most teenaged girls' eyes' concludes the *Sunday People* after its exhaustive researches into 'sex and the teenage girl'. *Moral panics and Victorian values* explains why papers which trade on sex scandals are now promoting family values. £1.50 plus 30p p&p

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LETTERS

Panic-stricken press

Congratulations! The publication of the RCP's pamphlet on moralism is welcome coming at a time of various scandals whipped up by the bourgeois press.

An example in my area is an issue raised by the *South London Press*, our local paper. It concerns a local children's home run by Southwark social services, where apparently there were a number of sexual incidents concerning the teenagers who lived there. In many ways it is a curious issue for the press to bring to light now. The home has been closed and the alleged incidents dealt with through 'the proper channels'. The article in the paper deals, not with the cause and effect of such incidents, nor with substantial facts. Instead the main thrust of the paper's reporting has been aimed at drumming up a sense of public outrage and moral fervour in an effort to discredit all concerned.

In cool analysis the alleged incidents represent no more than the normal sexual experimentation of teenagers either in local authority care or living with their families. The attack therefore seems to be purely ideological and based on two principles. First, teenagers should not indulge in any sexual activity at all. Second, those paid to look after them should stop it. The Southwark scandal is part of a wider campaign by the moralists to regulate and define acceptable sexual activity — illustrated by attacks on abortion rights, an anti-gay crusade and the denial of free and safe contraception to women under 16 without parental permission. The emphasis of the whole campaign is on the sanctity of family life. The logic of the campaign is not only to define acceptable sexual behaviour, but also to control it.

Teenagers do and always will experiment with sex. Yet people such as Victoria Gillick hope that by denying them the means to make it safe such experimentation will stop. Should it continue you can blame parents or guardians for being morally irresponsible. The attitude of the *South London Press* to teenagers is cynical. All they are is another story to illustrate the moral degeneration of our society. Couched in terms of outrage and moral indignation, the article offers more grist to the moralists' mill.

Jane Dixon
South London

Save Labour

I would like to make a few comments on *The miners' next step* bulletin 4. First, on the plus side, the information and approach to what is going on in the coalfields is faultless. Second, on the bad side, I cannot agree with its complete write-off of the Labour Party. I think you should make a distinction between leaders and activists and right and left in the Labour Party. Left wingers like Tony Benn and Denis Skinner gave unqualified support to the miners. The support of branch activists was phenomenal. Our branch had seven major public meetings, a jumble sale raising £40, a clothes and toys collection for miners' wives and kids, weekly street and house-to-house collections, weekly food donations etc. Our branch alone raised £500 and did valuable propaganda work for the miners' cause. All this goes to show that there is scope for united front tactics on immediate practical struggles with Labour Party members.

This brings me to the nub of the letter. The bulletin raises the demands for an end to the political levy and for a politicised NUM. The latter is a good idea, but I don't agree with the first demand. The labour alliance of unions and Labour Party which the political levy embodies may never have been a good idea. But it exists and is it a good idea to help Thatcher break that alliance? It at least gives revolutionaries the chance to argue for democratisation and control. Revolutionaries are small in number (though growing perhaps) and so a united front is necessary. Calling for an end to the political levy to the Labour Party will only help Thatcher smash the party and not help the working class. The labour alliance at least gives socialists the opportunity to show the limitations of labour movement democracy and therefore to speed the emergence of more sensible arrangements. In my view alliance with Thatcher against the labour alliance is no way to take us forward. It is a particular instance of 'sectarianism'.

Finally, I believe a little more on the history and traditions of the whole labour movement in *tns* would be an improvement.

Edward Hepworth
Honley and Brockholes Labour Party
Huddersfield

● This letter has been shortened

Snoopers go home

Last week staff at the department of health and social security in Rusholme, Manchester, walked out in response to the arrival of a special claims control team. The team's function is to target specific groups of claimants such as single parents and the skilled unemployed and persuade them by 'interview and observation' — harassment and intimidation — to withdraw their claims. After a special claims control team hit one DHSS office in Liverpool recently there were more than 60 complaints of harassment.

The CPSA branch secretary at Rusholme Mike Willingham said that members had taken action to defend claimants. He went on to say that a seven-month old report by the department of employment on the economic viability of the special claims control teams had been suppressed, suggesting that they were not cost-effective and the money could be better spent on improving services.

The basic argument that CPSA members have to win is that we must defend any section of the working class under attack from the state. We must therefore oppose the government's tactics, whether or not special claims control squads are cost-effective, and defend claimants against harassment and attempts to reduce their living standards still further. DHSS workers will have to be ready with these arguments and ready to take decisive action. Rusholme's snooper squad should soon be looking for a new home. Keep them on the move.

CPSA member
Manchester

Whose union?

I read last week's letter about the strike by staff at Nalgo headquarters over the sacking of NUJ member and Militant supporter Jim Roberts. The question is how can we Nalgo members show our solidarity with the striking Nalgo employees? Not it seems by holding a branch meeting and passing a resolution offering financial support and demanding reinstatement. The rules apparently forbid it. In Hammersmith Nalgo last week we endured the farce of our branch chair saying it wasn't a branch meeting, he wasn't the chair of it and anything we decided in support of the striking Nalgo workers could not be acted upon.

When I proposed that at least our branch could continue paying 'our' employees even though they were on strike two things were pointed out to us. First, these workers are paid nationally so the branch could not unilaterally decide to pay them. Second, one of the workers was on a temporary part-time contract, was not a union member and was not on strike. 'We can't force people to join the union if they don't want to,' said our shame-faced chair.

The only way Nalgo will be able to defend its members will be if we, not the rulebook, make the decisions about who we support and what action we take on their behalf.

Mary Fletcher
Hammersmith

On buying *tns* last week I was interested to read the letter concerning the dispute over the sacking of Jim Roberts, an NUJ member employed by Nalgo. As a Nalgo steward at Liverpool council I can only express full support for the strike action in support of Jim Roberts' reinstatement. The feeling of Nalgo stewards within my department was reflected in their condemnation of the Nalgo officials' action in sacking Jim Roberts.

A discussion on the issue at a meeting in my department last Tuesday, however, revealed some more fundamental problems facing rank and file Nalgo members. We are constantly held back by our lack of independence from management and from the union hierarchy, which are often the same thing in Nalgo. The manager of our department is the chief shop steward. The 'manager stewards', by virtue of their position, usually determine the direction of most stewards meetings. For instance at the meeting around the Jim Roberts dispute the manager stewards were very reluctant to condemn the Nalgo leaders' action. Only after intense pressure did we get an unequivocal letter of support for Jim Roberts and the workers on strike.

The Nalgo leadership is in the main staffed by former local government managers who have risen to positions of power in the union on this basis. As last week's letter pointed out, council employers such as Derek Hatton use their positions in the union to keep their employees in check. Until we change this state of affairs by kicking the employers out of the union Nalgo members will go the same way as Jim Roberts when bosses like Hatton push through the cuts.

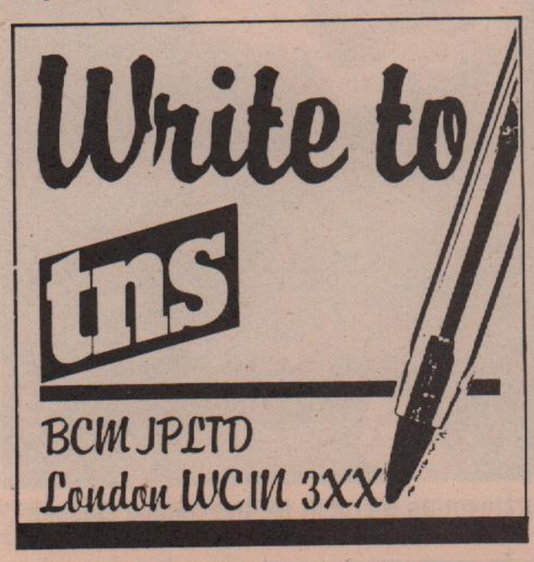
Kevin Laitak
Nalgo shop steward
Liverpool city council

Out of the closet!

At Nupe's national conference last week, RCP supporters took on the fight against the current anti-gay hysteria. Ron Taylor, Boston health services official of gay-bashing fame, had put forward a motion demanding that Nupe withdraw support from homosexual activities to stop the spread of Aids. We called on Ron to bring his filth out of the closet and debate us. Ron kept in hiding, but so did the Nupe leadership.

The national executive declared that there was no time to discuss Taylor's resolution and kept their record of sweeping gay rights under the carpet. Nupe's response to anti-gay hysteria in the media has been to produce a leaflet explaining what Aids is and how to avoid catching it. But defending gays is not just a matter of explaining Aids as a medical phenomenon. It means challenging Thatcher's campaign to bolster the family as a means of social control and as a substitute for welfare provision. To take on Thatcher and the moral rearmers we need to have the debate out in the open. Nupe members need a campaign to stop the anti-gay witch-hunt and to put the union leaders on the spot for turning their backs on gay rights.

Kerry Dean
Nupe, Leeds



STEPPING OUT

For a leading member of the Labour Coordinating Committee, Peter Hain seems a decidedly uncoordinated individual. In a major feature in last week's *New Statesman* Hain rants about the damage done to the party by 'the GLC rates fiasco'. Without pausing for breath, Hain then suggests a model for future Labour campaigns — 'the GLC's brilliant defence of local democracy'! Hain doesn't seem to have a very decisive view about many things. His idea of 'clear, coherent socialist values' amounts to a shopping list of woolly platitudes: 'caring for others', 'tolerance', 'freedom for all' (*That's enough coherent socialist values* — Ed). 'This', Hain ventures, 'can sound rather banal', which must be the clearest insight he has had since he decided that there wasn't much point being in the Young Liberals when he could be in the Labour Party.

●

Hain also offers the bizarre prospect of a future 'radical' Labour defence secretary speaking at CND rallies. But given the way things are going down at CND HQ, it may not be too long before they invite frustrated commando Michael Heseltine to address the faithful. The campaign has recently been busy appointing a new general secretary, after photogenic Mgr Bruce Kent decided the paper work was too much for him. The CND elders chose one Meg Beresford, who is associated with the faction which wants to see CND narrow its aims to achieving a non-nuclear defence policy within Nato, probably involving increased spending on conventional weapons and troops. Her credentials for the job of turning CND into a more respectable establishment outfit include the fact that she is a practising quaker who used to look after sheep for a living. I'm sure there is a punchline here somewhere about Mgr Kent's flock being taken over by a Christian shepherd who would send 'non-nuclear' troops as lambs to the slaughter in the sheep fields of the Falklands. You work it out.

Incidentally, one of the rejected candidates for Kent's job was Dermot Nolan, a leading figure in Irish CND and the left's favourite for the post. In June Irish CND is organising a peace camp at an RAF base in County Down, Northern Ireland, because if the Bomb was dropped there at some future date 'neither Belfast (in the North) nor Dundalk (in the South) would be safe'. The reverend William Beattie of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party displayed a rather more immediate grasp of the relationship between County Down, Belfast, Dundalk and war in Ireland this week. After the IRA blew up four police officers in Down, Beattie insisted that if republican freedom fighters couldn't be caught in Belfast then 'let them be annihilated in Dundalk' by cross-Border assassination squads. While British security forces prepare to step up their murder campaign against Irish men and women, Irish CND complains that 'farm animals are suffering' because of low-flying RAF planes.

●

To Leeds, where Astms took a room at the swish Metropole Hotel for a video show intended to help the union leaders win their ballot on paying the political levy to the Labour Party. Local Astms-sponsored MP Derek Fatchett arrives and starts quoting Winston Churchill in defence of shelling out union dues to Labour. 'They were all gentlemen then' says Fatchett of the Tory leaders of yesteryear. Fatchett insists that we need to pay the levy to make sure that there are some 'sensible politicians' in parliament. Presumably he means Labour MPs who have the standards of Winston Churchill, a warmonger whom it is rumoured lolled about the House of Commons during his declining parliamentary years with his flies undone. Truly, a sensible gentleman for the young trade unionists of today to look up to.

REPORTS

Trouble at Trico

'Don't do anything, you'll only get yourself in more trouble,' Theresa Henri was told by her union convenor Eileen Ward. But 52-year old Theresa couldn't get herself in more trouble if she tried. Three stitches in her lip, a £100 bill for a new pair of glasses and the sack were her punishment for a row at work.

When Theresa wore her new kaftan to work at Trico's west London factory on 11 May she was jeered by her fellow workers. The kaftan was a gift from her daughter's holiday at home in St Lucia. An argument broke out and Theresa ended up getting punched in the face. The next day she was called into the manager's office and sacked. 'I couldn't believe it,' Theresa told us, 'I'd worked at Trico's for 12 years and now I was getting the sack for being abused and assaulted.'

Theresa was a shop steward for two years so as soon as she was sacked she went straight to the AUEW office to get some help. Convenor Eileen Ward told Theresa, 'if you appeal you'll only get the book thrown at you.' But management had already thrown the book at her. They have refused to pay back the £5 deducted from her wages every week for her Christmas bonus. And Theresa, whose husband is also unemployed, isn't getting unemployment benefit because Trico failed to pay her national insurance in her new married name.

Theresa doesn't think she stands much chance of getting her union to do anything for her. Two years ago she had to go to hospital for eight weeks for an operation on her thyroid gland. 'Instead of get well cards from my boss I got two letters threatening me with the sack if I didn't get back to work fast.' Theresa complained to the union, but 'they just sent a letter to management saying I would be back within their six-month limit'. Now Theresa wants the union to show the same enthusiasm for getting her back to work at Trico's fast.

Fiona Foster

NUM women speak out

Jenny Morgan (reflex)

South Kirkby women NUM members

'We're NUM members when it suits them, we're just part of the canteen furniture when it doesn't,' said canteen worker Betty Froggatt from South Kirkby pit in Yorkshire. Her friend Molly Wright agreed. 'We have to flog ourselves to death to get the union to do anything for us.' Betty and Molly read in *tns* about the fight to win equal treatment for canteen women at Yorkshire pits and 'agreed with everything in it'.

Eighteen women in the South Kirkby canteen get paid about £40 a week — less than the lowest paid pit-top workers. They get only three rest days compared to the men's eight and they don't get any home coal or bonus. 'We filled in a form to try to get equal pay, coal and rest days a couple of years back, but it's got no further than the solicitor,' said Molly.

The women resent their second class status in the NUM because they have put their weight behind the men in every dispute at the pit. They were out solid in the 1984-85 strike and they walked out with the men over the recent sacking of two miners. Betty was shocked when one miner told her that the men would not have come out for the women if one of them had been sacked. 'It makes you mad, it makes you want to say you won't come out next time.' But the women don't say it. Instead they want to change the union to make it more accountable to its members.

Two years ago Molly stood in the elections for the branch committee because she thought it was about time that the women had somebody to speak up for them. 'The officials said there was no way I could do it. They even phoned Arthur Scargill.' A lot of ordinary miners canvassed for Molly because they thought she would do more for them than their officials. She got 118 votes, beat two men and came second.

More and more canteen women in the NUM are coming to the conclusion that the only way they can stand up for their rights is to stand in the elections and demand a say in running the union. Get your nominations in now!

Jenny Morgan

Bradford's ancient history

'I stopped being in the union because they stopped collecting my dues,' explained one worker at Shipley's Saltaire textile mill near Bradford, 'they weren't doing anything for me.' Textile workers in Yorkshire are not anti-union, but they don't see the point of paying money to union officials who do nothing but sell their jobs. Management at the Saltaire mill have just announced another 153 redundancies. The bosses have promised to re-locate 60 jobs, but mill-worker Mohammed Younis doesn't believe them. 'I know there aren't 60 jobs at the other mill. Anyhow we need to keep every job we've got.'

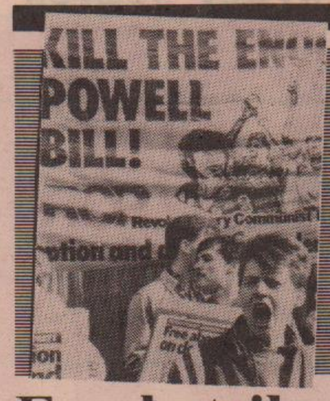
Bradford's textile bosses boast that they have streamlined the industry by getting rid of 58 000 jobs since 1961. Regional GMBATU organiser Joe Kitchen can only boast that there has not been a strike in the industry for 60 years. Kitchen betrayed Bradford textile workers at Crabtree's in September last year when he blocked an occupation of the factory and 44 workers lost their jobs. This time it is the TGWU's turn to give a lead in the fight against redundancies. They have begun by accepting that redundancies are inevitable and asking for the best redundancy pay.

While the union leaders try to 'work something out' with management, the bosses at Saltaire have already offered the mill to Bradford council as a textile museum. Bradford textile workers would be doing themselves a favour if they got rid of part of their ancient history and offered their union leaders the sack. They need new leaders and new weapons to take on the bosses and save their jobs.

Julian Short

Deadline for news and reports: Monday 9am

COME ALONG!



Enoch strikes back

Some people just won't take no for an answer. Parliamentary wheeler and dealer Enoch Powell has found a new way to air his anti-women Unborn Child (Protection) Bill in the House of Commons. Enoch's mate Andrew Bowden, Tory MP for Brighton Kemp Town, has put forward a motion to get the Bill discussed again and 'proceeded with until any hour'. If Powell's Bill gets through it will give rights to embryos from conception onwards and open the door to attacks on women's rights to contraception and abortion. RCP supporters will be discussing how to put the moralists on the run at our conference on 1 June. We will be demonstrating outside Bowden's party headquarters in Brighton two days later to let him know that we are prepared to fight the Powell Bill all the way to get it thrown out.

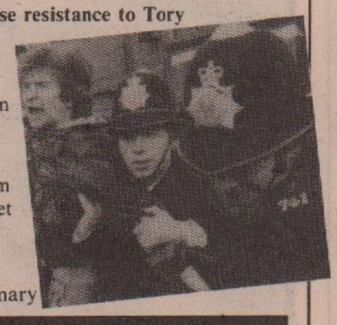
● **Moral panics and women's rights**
A day of discussion and debate on the new morality and what it means for women
Creche and social
Saturday 1 June 10am — 5pm
Polytechnic of Central London
New Cavendish Street W1

● **Strike back against the moralists!**
Block Bowden — join the protest and demand no bans on embryo research and free abortion on demand
Monday 3 June 12.30 — 2pm
Conservative Association Offices
73 High Street, Kemp Town, Brighton

● **No to police state!**
DEMONSTRATE against the Tories' law and order white paper and new police powers

● ***Manchester***
Saturday 1 June 2pm
Greater Manchester Police HQ
Boyer Street

DISCUSS how to organise resistance to Tory restrictions on our rights



● ***Sheffield***
Thursday 30 May 7.30pm
Red Deer, Pitt Street

● ***Manchester***
Thursday 30 May 7.30pm
Black Lion, Chapel Street

● ***Pontefract***
Tuesday 4 June 7.30pm
Turk's Head, near Infirmary

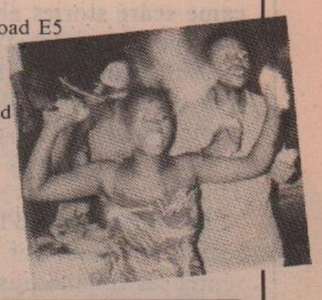
● **Rout the royals**
The mining community of Dinnington is planning a royal reception for Princess Anne.
Friday 31 May 11am
Falcon Way, Dinnington
Transport leaves Sheffield's Paternoster Row, 10am

● **Stop the cuts**
Protest against Tory welfare cuts
Monday 3 June 12 — 2pm
Bush House DHSS Office
Broad Street, Birmingham

● **Revolution in South Africa?**
Are the South African masses about to seize power? What can we do in Britain to help them? Come to the meetings and find out

● ***Bradford***
Wednesday 12 June 7.30pm
Central Library

● ***Hackney***
Wednesday 12 June 7.30pm
Duke of Clarence, Clarence Road E5



● ***Leeds***
Thursday 13 June 7.30pm
Trades Club, Chapeltown Road

● ***Liverpool***
Thursday 13 June 7.30pm
AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant

● ***Birmingham***
Wednesday 12 June 7.30pm
Digbeth Civic Hall

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tns

Law and order scares

TORIES ARE THE REAL THUGS

While Parvaiz Khan was getting his face smashed in at the Old Bailey last week, Fleet Street threw its weight behind the Tory law and order campaign. The papers printed horror stories about football hooligans and heroin epidemics to help justify the increased powers which the police, courts and army need if Britain's rulers are to keep their grip on society.

Last week's jailing of 25 Cambridge football hooligans brought media demands for even harsher measures against 'the animals endangering our national game'. Reports dubbed window cleaner Leslie Muranyi 'the General', a man 'dedicated to organising football violence'.

An anonymous acquaintance described how 'we'd talk about birds and sex, that sort of thing, but all Les wanted to talk about was violence'. Muranyi got five years as the judge warned those who might follow him that 'football violence means loss of liberty'. On Saturday football thuggery was back in the news as police waded into the crowd at the England-Scotland international.

The *Sun* linked the Cambridge football trial to the re-launch of its 'we want justice' campaign demanding longer sentences and harsher treatment for the 'violent criminals' who have turned English lanes into 'streets of fear'. The number one rag published a petition to Thatcher calling 'for life sentences that *mean* life sentences'.

Hot on the heels of the hooligan headlines came scare stories about 'the spread of the scourge of heroin'. 'We see this as the most serious peacetime threat to our national well-being,' was Fleet Street's favourite quote from the all-party Commons committee report on drugs published last Thursday.

The report called for increased stop-and-search powers for the police and life sentences for the pushers. It suggested that the army and air force should be brought in to deal with 'the warlike threat from the hard drugs industry'. Committee chair Sir Edward Gardner wanted the government to hang drug dealers.

Blitz spirit

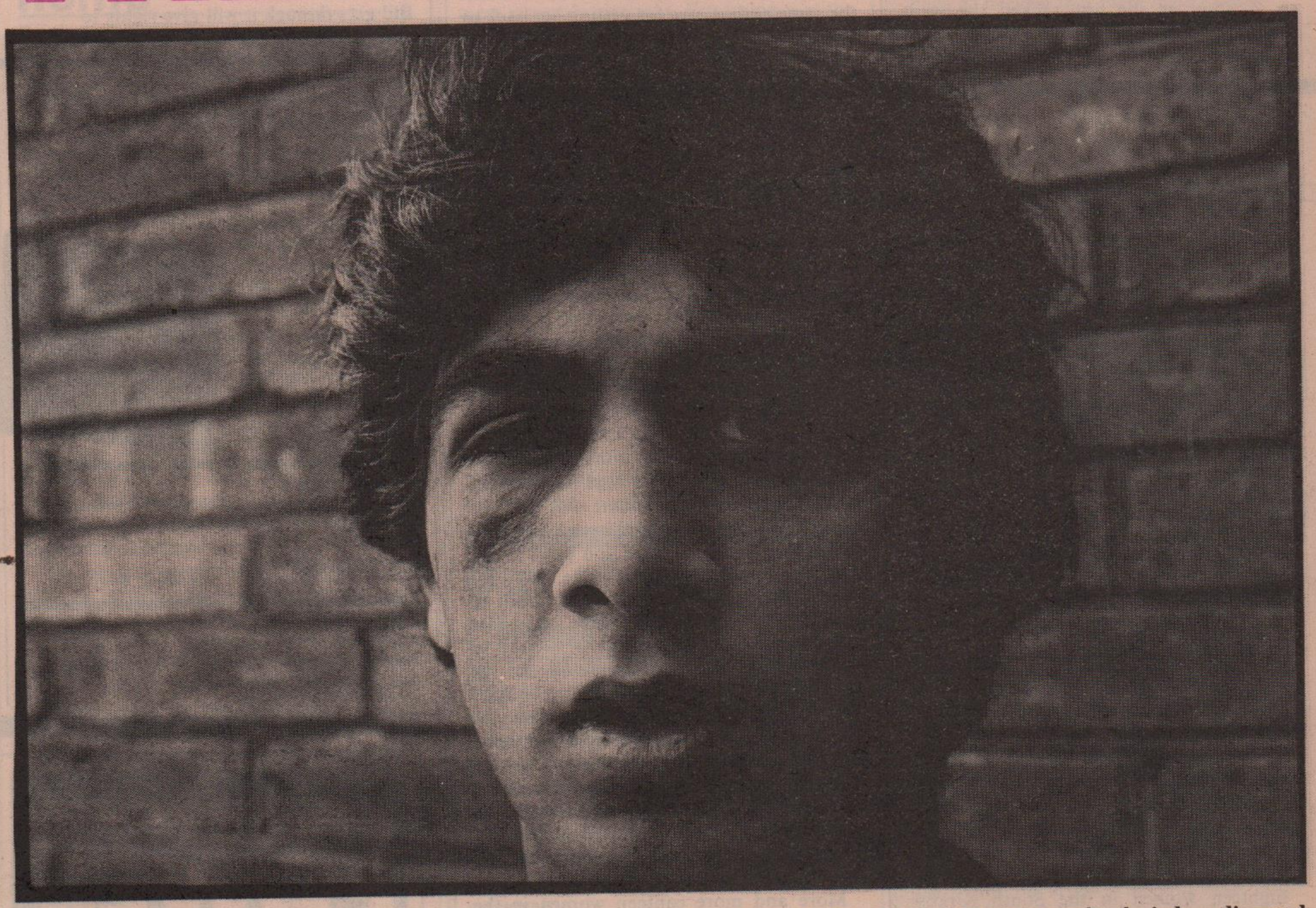
Why have drugs and thugs suddenly become such a focus for media stories and legal action? Certainly not because of any massive upsurge in either football hooliganism or drug addiction.

There have been a few particularly riotous incidents at football grounds this season, but the overall picture is much the same as in recent years. The trouble at last weekend's international match led to less arrests than last year's England-Scotland fixture, and was nothing compared to the scenes when Wembley stadium was all but dismantled a few years back. Similarly, there seems to have been a slight increase in drug abuse, but doctors we spoke to from inner-city areas which are supposed to be the centres of the heroin epidemic reported no significant increase in addiction. The clue to last week's hysteria in the press, parliament and the courts lies elsewhere, in the broader problem of authority facing the British establishment.

The virtual collapse of British capitalism has undermined public respect for the authorities and their institutions of government. Mass unemployment and the terror tactics employed by police and courts during the miners' strike are just two of the factors which have made more people willing to question the system and the right of its police to order them about.

The government is unpopular and in trouble. It needs to create issues which can unite the nation behind the police and parliament and against a common foe. The Tories have made football thugs and drug pushers/addicts the latest targets of their propaganda campaign. They want people to direct their anger and frustration against these 'enemies within', and re-create the Great British spirit of the wartime Blitz.

The Tory propagandists hope to win popular approval for increased state powers by preying on the insecurity among people who fear the consequences of the breakdown of British society. Scare stories about drug-crazed youth and drunken bovver boys stalking 'streets of fear' can get a hearing among people who know the reality of walking home through decrepit, badly-lit council estates.



Andrew Pothecary

This is the face of Tory law and order in 1985. Last Wednesday a dozen prison screws beat up 17-year-old Parvaiz Khan in the cells beneath the Old Bailey court because he refused to break his Muslim religion by eating a pork pie.

Parvaiz Khan was in court along with six other Asian youths — the Newham 7 — charged with conspiracy, criminal damage and affray for resisting racist thugs in East London. When he emerged from the cells with his face beaten to a pulp, the judge adjourned the case for the day but took no other action because 'there are bound to be two sides to any story'. Indeed there are — the side of the brutal forces of law and order which defend the British establishment and the side of those like Parvaiz Khan who stand up to the system and fight for their rights.

But football thugs and drugs are not the *cause* of workers' problems and fears. 'Mindless' aggression and drug abuse are just minor *consequences* of the brutalisation of youth, under a system which condemns them to mindless boredom at work or on the dole. The real problem is the system itself, not its nasty side-effects. When the Tories say they are defending decent citizens against 'anti-social elements', they are trying to pin the blame for the crisis of British capitalism on the victims at the bottom of the social heap.

The only practical consequence of the crackdown on hooligans and heroin will be to strengthen the state's powers of arrest and detention for use against workers, blacks, women or Irish people who come into conflict with the government.

Calls to get the thugs off the streets give police license to move into working class communities. Thatcher's unprecedented decision to force the England-Scotland game to be switched from Wembley to Hampden Park creates a useful precedent for banning assemblies that might create 'disorder'. And the anti-drugs campaign is being used to go in hard against black youth in volatile inner-city areas.

The day before the Commons committee published its report last week, Birmingham police staged a big 'drugs raid' on the black Villa pub in the Lozells area of the city. Local resident Tony was there when the law arrived. 'They just lifted anyone they could,' Tony told *tns*, 'they weren't really interested in the pushers. They cordoned off the crossroads as a "no-go" area. One of the black kids in the pub got his knuckles smashed against the pool table. They just wanted to stir things up and round up the black kids. The bank holiday was coming up and they wanted to make sure there's no trouble.'

Creating 'no-go' areas and 'making sure there's no trouble' from those who suffer at the sharp end of British society is what the law and order offensive is all about. People who want to make trouble for the Tories and their system of exploitation and degradation have to oppose every move to tighten the state's hold on the streets, however well it may be disguised as a campaign to protect the community.

The language of the Tory law and order drive reflects the establishment's concern to reorganise the way the country is run along military lines. 'Now it's war,' declared the *Daily Express* when MPs called for the armed forces to be used against 'the most serious peacetime threat' of drugs. Muranyi 'the General' was supposed to have made Cambridge 'a battleground'. The authorities are drawing up the battlelines. Every debate about law and order now poses one central question: are you on the side of the ruling class and their police or the working class and the oppressed?

The leaders of the official labour movement have succumbed to the law and order campaign. Neil Kinnock has given his support to the police against black youth and football hooligans. On Sunday he backed the *Mirror* group's anti-drugs campaign and supported the use of 'the army, navy and air force' to uphold the law. We need a different political leadership that will stand firm against media hysteria about violence and drugs and fight every attempt to justify the way the police, courts and military are getting ready to defend the system by trampling on people like Parvaiz Khan.