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## Our New Year message to Thatcher and Kinnock



Chris Black (Jetzeit)

# They ain't seen nothin' yet

Our plans for '86  
-see  
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# Their policies and ours

**A**t the beginning of 1986 the divergence between the policies of the Labour Party and the policies required to defend and advance the interests of the working class is much clearer than it was 12 months ago. Until last March the miners' strike and the widespread support it won within the labour movement kept some pressure on the Labour leadership. That was why the Labour leaders regarded the miners' strike as 'a wasted year'. It delayed the evolution of the Labour Party's image as a respectable alternative party of government.

The defeat of the miners has taken the pressure off the Labour leadership. Neil Kinnock and his advisers have since enjoyed a free hand to make Labour acceptable to middle of the road public opinion. The process of the realignment of the left to accommodate to the party's shift to the right has greatly strengthened the leadership's position. Last year Kinnock was forced to acknowledge the hostility towards the system of workers engaged in a bitter industrial struggle. This year he is free to impose an increasingly coherent middle class programme on an increasingly fragmented and demoralised labour movement.

The Labour leadership has made concession after concession to establishment pressure. Every concession means a further retreat from the measures workers need to deal with the challenges thrown up by decaying British capitalism. Every move towards electoral respectability clarifies the gulf between the Labour Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party and emphasises the urgency of building an alternative working class party to Labour, and fast.

## Jobs

The Labour leaders long ago decided that it is unrealistic to promise a substantial reduction of unemployment under a future Labour government. Kinnock and his colleagues have made it clear that they regard full employment as an unattainable goal. Labour's commitment to restore profitability in British industry means that a future Kinnock government would offer no better future to most young people than they face under the Tories.

- For the Revolutionary Communist Party, full employment is not a pipe dream but a vital necessity for the working class. In this society every worker needs a job as the only way to guarantee any sort of decent survival. While capitalists only provide work if they can exploit workers to make profits, we fight for a job for every worker irrespective of

their profits. Fighting unemployment is crucial to maintain living standards and to build up the unity and strength of the working class movement. The fight against unemployment exposes the need to get rid of a system that can only survive by maintaining up to 20 per cent of its workers in enforced idleness.

## Wages

The collapse of resistance from the Transport and General Workers' Union indicates Kinnock's success in uniting the party around a policy of wage restraint in the cause of boosting capitalist profits. The last Labour government used such a policy to achieve the sharpest fall in living standards for a generation. In the economic climate of the eighties Kinnock's incomes policy would mean even more drastic austerity measures.

- The RCP is resolutely opposed to all policies of wage restraint. We reject in principle the notion that workers should make sacrifices to bail out the bosses. The crisis results from the workings of the profit system, not from workers' attempts to make sure that wages rise in line with inflation. We need policies to increase wages — not policies to hold them down.

We are in favour of workers, and those who are not working whose livelihoods depend on wages, getting together and working out what we need to ensure a decent living. Our aim then is to force the bosses to pay up. If individual employers reckon that they cannot afford to pay a living wage, it is up to them to get their colleagues who run the state to bail them out. How they do it is their problem — our problem is to work out how to put sufficient pressure on them to force them to pay up.

## Welfare

When he was Labour's education spokesman in the early eighties, Kinnock stated that a future Labour government could not promise to make good the cuts in the schools imposed by the Tories. This has become the theme of Labour policy in all areas of the welfare state. The Labour Party is keen to claim the credit for past welfare reforms, but even more keen to avoid making any promises to restore spending in the health service, social security, housing or any other area of social provision.

- The RCP is in favour of extending

the social services. In every area of welfare workers get a shoddy second rate service. We need to get organised to identify the provisions that we need and to force the state at national and local level to provide them.

## Rights

The Labour leaders have gone along with the Tories' law and order drive. They have put up only token opposition to the Police Act which comes into force this week and the new public order legislation which is currently before parliament. The Labour Party has promised that it will not repeal the anti-trade union laws introduced by the Tories over the past five years.

- The RCP rejects any further restrictions on civil liberties and all state interference in the affairs of the labour movement. We are in favour of the widest extension of democratic rights because this provides the most favourable climate for anti-capitalist organisation and for showing that the oppressive features of British society result, not from particular laws, but from the capitalist system itself. The internal failings of the labour movement must be sorted out by the labour movement itself, not by state legislation and the capitalist courts.

## Oppression

The Labour Party remains formally committed to repealing Tory anti-immigration legislation. Yet when Thatcher accused the Labour Party of favouring an end to all immigration controls last year, the party's senior spokesman on race replied 'codswallop'. Any immigration laws Labour repeals will be replaced with new regulations that will be equally oppressive for black people. The Labour Party also proclaims its commitment to the rights of women and of gays. Yet when it comes to an attack on women's rights under the guise of the embryo experimentation issue or the anti-gay hysteria over Aids, Labour vacillates and indulges the backward prejudices in its own ranks.

- The RCP is committed to fighting all forms of racism and sexism. We have taken the lead in organising workers' defence against racist attacks and in campaigning against all immigration controls as the only basis for defending the rights of all black people. We have campaigned against Powell's embryo bill, Gillick's attempts to restrict contraception

and for better nursery provision to allow women to participate more fully in society. We have stood up against the current wave of attacks on gays resulting from the Aids scare, particularly when these have come from inside the labour movement.

## Ireland

The Labour Party's formal policy of support for Irish unity was effectively abandoned last November when the party voted solidly for the Tories' Anglo-Irish deal that ratifies the partition of Ireland. The handful of left wingers who voted against the deal advertised their views only in Ireland and in fringe hard left papers in Britain.

- For the RCP support for the cause of Irish freedom has always been central. We put top priority on support for the Irish liberation struggle because it is the single greatest threat to the stability of the British state. When the British labour movement takes its position in solidarity with the Irish people, it will be in a vastly stronger position to take on the common enemy.

## War

The Labour Party has moved steadily away from its image as the party of nuclear disarmament to become a party that openly supports British militarism. While Labour remains hostile to US bases in Britain, it is solidly committed to the Nato alliance as well as keeping options open on closer military cooperation with Europe. Its opposition to nuclear weapons is increasingly expressed in terms of support for conventional rearmament.

- The RCP is opposed to all forms of British militarism. We oppose both conventional and nuclear rearmament and all alliances among the imperialist powers. We are particularly concerned to mobilise against British military interference overseas, most notably in Ireland, but also in the South Atlantic, the Middle East, Africa, anywhere.

The Labour Party claims that its policies are realistic. From the point of view of the British establishment they may be realistic, but for workers they are utterly unrealistic. The policies of the RCP on the other hand provide a practicable basis on which workers can defend their position in 1986. To those who say our policies are impossible, we say that if it is impossible for the capitalist system to provide people with an existence free from poverty, oppression and war then maybe it's time to start fighting for a better system. If you want to stop retreating and start fighting to win in 1986, maybe it's time you joined up.

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# REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

Our plans for '86

## It's time we took the lead

**A**nne Burton, the Revolutionary Communist Party's national activities organiser, talks to *tns* about the party's assessment of 1985 and plans for 1986.

### What sort of a year was 1985 for the RCP?

'If you look back to this time last year the RCP was just one of a number of left-wing groups around and a lot of people couldn't really see much difference between them all. I think 1985 has changed that. Other groups have split, crumbled and generally declined in influence as they have been sucked in behind Neil Kinnock's attempt to knock the Labour Party into shape for an election.

'On the other hand we have made our mark in a number of areas. For a start we launched our paper as a weekly last April and that has done a lot to change the way we work. It's given the party a clear focus for its work from week to week and provided members and supporters with a clear line in response to the issues of the moment. It has also attracted a new layer of people around the party, raising the profile of our activity and boosting party membership.'

### What would you say were the most important achievements of party work over the year?

'I would single out our propaganda work around various "moral panics" and our campaign against the miners' scab union in the coalfields. When Kate Marshall's pamphlet *Moral panics and Victorian values* was published in May some people said, "What's all this got to do with revolutionary communism?" We have tried to use our paper and our activities to respond to public concerns about moral issues — often by redefining the issues and pointing to the consequences of establishment propaganda.

'The politicians and the media have gone from one issue to another all year — first it was test-tube babies and embryo experimentation, then it was Victoria Gillick and under-age sex, next the focus on child abuse, then back to sex and violence on television again, and Aids all the time. They constantly tried to promote women's role and responsibilities as mothers and carers in the family, justifying an even more oppressive position for women in British society.

'Another effect of the morality debate was to create a general climate of restraint, justifying firmer measures of state repression to deal with deviations from the norm. Press hysteria about sex extended into wider social problems — drugs, football hooliganism, terrorism, crime. We pointed out that all these debates point in one direction — towards more interference by the police and the courts in people's lives. The announcement of the new public order legislation and its draconian powers last month was the inevitable outcome of this process. Publicising and campaigning against all forms of state repression — and the propaganda used to justify them — was an important focus for the RCP in 1985 and will continue to be in 1986.'

### Why do you think the campaign against the Union of Democratic Mineworkers is so important?

'Our campaign against the UDM has shown that RCP politics can provide a practical way of rebuilding the unity and strength of the working class movement. This is one example of how things have turned around over the past year. Our call for a national ballot in the early stages of the miners' strike and our consistent criticism of the strategy

of the union leadership made us unpopular among many militants and when the strike ended back in March we were pretty much isolated.

'But now that all Scargill's bluffs have been called and everybody can see the consequences, our credibility has increased. While many militants still see our position as simply sound tactical commonsense rather than as a fundamentally different approach to the struggle for jobs, we have won some respect for our consistency. And now that we are taking the lead in the fight to stop scab unionism by strengthening rank and file activity and control in the NUM we are winning wider support for our approach.'

### What is your main criticism of RCP activity in 1985?

'We're too slow! When you look at the state of British politics — especially at the confidence of the ruling class and the defeatist outlook of the old labour movement — you can see there is a great urgency to build a new working class party and great scope for getting on with it. But RCP members and supporters are sometimes influenced by the conservative outlook and low expectations of the traditional left.

'For example a lot of our supporters who turned up to the Irish Freedom Movement conference in Manchester in November were really surprised there were so many people there. It was almost as though they didn't quite believe what we have always said — that the old British left notion that it's "too difficult" to win support for the Irish liberation struggle was a myth.

'We are still not fast enough at responding to events or at picking up on arguments that are influential among workers. Much of our activity tends to carry on in a routine of paper selling and meetings and demonstrations without really trying to connect with and politicise the revolt against the system that is felt and expressed in different ways by many people. That's the most important thing we've got to change in the coming year.'

### What are your priorities for 1986?

'Now that we have more or less established the party our next step is to push forward and really challenge the leadership of the labour movement in the unions and the Labour Party. This is going to become more and more important as the general election gets nearer, and it's going to become more and more difficult as the pressure to support Labour against the Tories grows stronger and stronger.

'We have got to show people the direct conflict between the campaign to elect a Labour government and the immediate needs of the working class. Kinnock has shown that he will stop at nothing to get elected — he will crush the left, ditch the sacked and imprisoned miners, make a deal with the unions to restrict wages, make no promises to reduce unemployment, restore trade union rights or repeal other oppressive Tory legislation. But workers need action now on these issues — not the promise of betrayal in the future.

'We are planning to stand a substantial number of candidates in the general election whenever it comes. This will enable us to make a direct challenge to the Labour Party and to take advantage of the whole election campaign to get RCP politics across to a wider audience. We'll probably be standing some candidates in the local elections in May, depending on local circumstances, as part of the build-up towards the general election. Work around elections will be important in building up and extending our existing network of branches and supporters' groups.'



Dave Rourke (Jetztzeit)

### 'Last year we began to make our mark — this year we take on the Labour Party'

### What do you say to people who say that standing in elections is a sell-out to parliamentarianism?

'That for us, standing in elections is not a question of principle, but of tactics. We make very clear that we have no faith in parliamentary democracy. Indeed our object in standing is to emphasise this point and to broadcast the view that the only way workers can win anything from this system is by fighting for it. We could make this point even more effectively if we had a few MPs at Westminster.

'The problem in Britain is that many people — including many who hate the Tories and want to get rid of the whole system — still have some faith in parliament and some sympathy for the Labour Party as a lesser evil than the Tories. Even a lot of people who condemn all politicians today will find themselves sneaking out and voting Labour when the pressure grows in an election campaign. This is especially true for a lot of left-wing anti-parliamentarians who generally draw the line at opposing Labour's parliamentary campaigns. Standing against Labour at the polls is the best way of challenging both parliamentarianism and Labour Party politics.'

### What other plans has the RCP for the coming year?

'Over the next 12 months we aim both to grow substantially and to consolidate our existing core of members and supporters. We have a young and rapidly growing membership and this puts a premium on education and training. I mean this not in a book-learning sense, though that has an important place, but in a wider sense of ensuring the fullest political development of our membership in the course of intervening in the class struggle. We have to make sure that our practical activity in fighting racism, in trade union work, in building Irish solidarity work, in work on the issue of women's rights, and all the other areas of party work is consciously directed and has

the effect of politicising everybody involved.

'We are also planning to launch a new theoretical journal and our book on the Soviet Union is now ready for publication. It should be in the shops by March. These projects are tremendously important in raising the general level of discussion of key theoretical and political issues both in the party and beyond. Establishing theoretical hegemony over the traditional left is a crucial part of the struggle for political leadership. We intend to make this year's Preparing for Power summer school an even better focus of discussion and debate around the issues raised in the journal and the Soviet Union book than it has been in the past.'

### When you look at the feeble and fragmented state of the left, don't you feel that the project you have outlined is a bit daunting?

'There's certainly plenty to be done, but I think our plans are quite realistic. We don't look over our shoulders much, because the traditional left is very much a thing of the past and really irrelevant to the issues of 1986. Our strength lies in our political independence and in the fact that we know it's up to us to make things happen in 1986.'

# RCP

The Revolutionary Communist Party is going places in 1986. We need your help to get there. We want to extend our national network of branches and supporters, improve the quality and quantity of *tns*, begin publishing a regular theoretical journal, and produce a new range of propaganda. But we are short of money.

We want to thank all our readers and supporters who made such generous donations in 1985 and urge you all to start the New Year by making regular monthly donations to our fighting fund. Start a standing order or send us the money each month. Rush donations to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques payable to RCP Association.

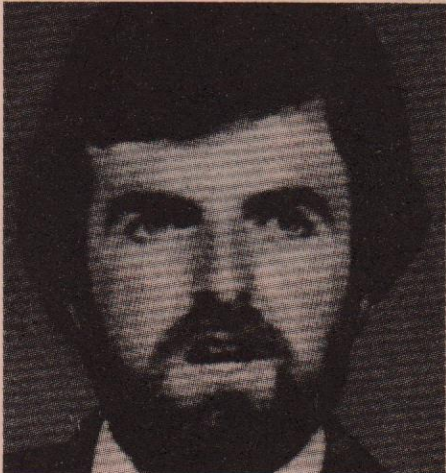
# IRELAND

*Swoops on Sinn Fein expose deal with Dublin*

## Brits hit their real Irish targets

**T**he arrest of 18 leading Sinn Fein members last week and the sending in of 550 extra British troops this week show that the real aim of the Anglo-Irish agreement is to strengthen British rule in Northern Ireland, not to bring about closer Irish unity.

The 18 top republicans were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act last Saturday in swoops across Northern Ireland. They included elected Sinn Fein assemblyman and vice-president Martin McGuinness, councillors like Hugh Brady from Derry, Brendan Curran and Brian McCann from Craigavon and Brendan Curran from Newry, and Gerry O'Hara, the chair of Sinn Fein in Derry. As we go to press only one has been charged. Seamus Cassidy, an elected member of Dungannon council, has been accused of possessing an 'explosive substance'. The 'bomb' in question is an old British Army flare.

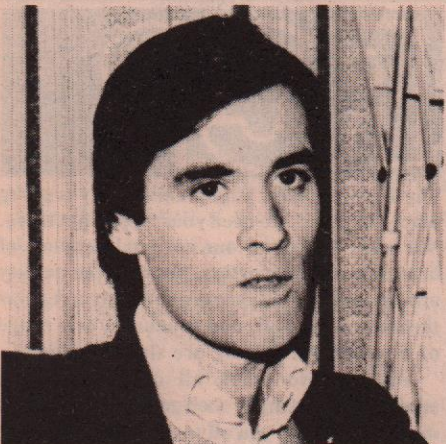


Arrested: ex-MP Owen Carron

The anti-Sinn Fein swoops were a calculated attempt to undermine the republican effort in this month's parliamentary by-elections, brought about by the resignations of all 15 Unionist MPs in protest at London's deal with Dublin. The raids followed the arrest of leading republican Owen Carron just before Christmas. Carron, a former MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone and Sinn Fein's election organiser in the council polls last May, would have been a key figure in the coming election campaign.

The British authorities claimed the arrests were linked to the republican movement's stated intention to bring down the London-Dublin deal. But leading Loyalists have also pledged to make the agreement inoperable. In pursuit of this goal Loyalists have fought with police and attacked Northern Ireland secretary Tom King in full view of television cameras. Yet there have been no dawn raids on Loyalist districts. The different treatment given to Loyalist and republican protesters shows that the real victims of London-Dublin diplomacy are those fighting for Irish freedom.

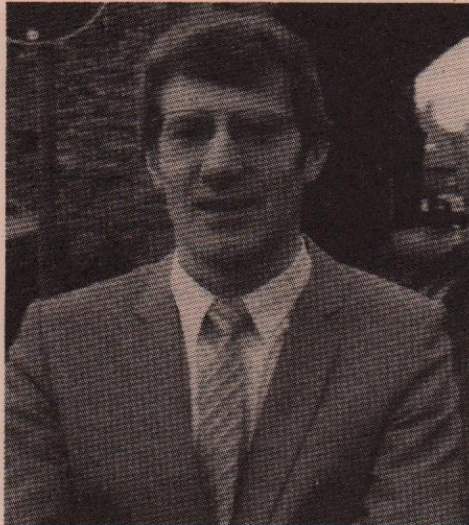
The Anglo-Irish agreement aims to consolidate Britain's grip on its Northern Ireland colony by increasing security co-operation with the Southern government against the IRA. In return Dublin has been



Arrested: Derry Sinn Fein chair Gerry O'Hara

### New Year Quiz \* New Year Quiz

## WHICH ONE IS THE TERRORIST?



In 1985 both of these elected representatives in Northern Ireland were banned by the BBC as 'extremists'. Both swore to smash the new Anglo-Irish agreement. But only one was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act last week. Which one?

### CLUES

- The one on the right carries a gun. The one on the left doesn't.
- The one on the right is protected by men wearing paramilitary uniforms and toting machine-guns. The one on the left isn't.
- The one on the right boasts that he wants to see his opponents dead. The one on the left doesn't.

### ANSWER

The one on the left was arrested last week under British anti-terrorist law.

### EXPLANATION

The one on the left is Martin McGuinness, elected Sinn Fein representative, who opposes

the Anglo-Irish deal because he is a supporter of Irish independence and wants an end to British interference in his country. In the eyes of the British authorities, this makes him a 'terrorist'. (After all, he already has one conviction in a British court — for treading on a policeman's foot.)

The one on the right is Gregory Campbell, elected Democratic Unionist Party representative, who opposes the Anglo-Irish deal because he believes that shooting Irish nationalists and treating the Dublin government as an alien and hostile power is the only way Britain can crush the Irish liberation movement. In the eyes of the British authorities, this makes him a democrat who must be protected by paramilitary police, not arrested by them.

Easy when you know the rules, isn't it?

given a few seats on toothless 'consultative' committees which the governments hope can convince Irish nationalists that there is a peaceful, constitutional way to achieve justice under the British occupation.

The Loyalist leaders object to the Anglo-Irish deal because they have been excluded from the diplomatic process and denied a place in the new political forums. To mobilise popular support from their community, they have portrayed the scheme as the first step in a behind-closed-doors sell-out. The British government, they claim, aims to undermine the Union with 'Ulster' and hand the Loyalists over into a united Ireland.

Because the Loyalists' basic demand is for an effective display of Britain's will to rule in Northern Ireland, the authorities have no need to use force against them. All Britain has to do to calm the fears of the vast

majority of Loyalists is to prove that it remains committed to crushing the republican movement. Last week's arrests and this week's troop reinforcements will go a long way towards dampening down the anger of Loyalist people, if not of politicians like Ian Paisley. Only 200 turned out to join Paisley on this week's Loyalist march against the Anglo-Irish accord.

The Loyalists' campaign against the agreement is an irritation to the British authorities which could cause a degree of instability, but can never threaten British rule in Belfast. The republican struggle to break the new repressive alliance between London and Dublin is of a different order. It poses a fundamental challenge to every British-built institution throughout Ireland. That is why the Irish and British governments are united in the battle to beat the IRA.

### FIGHTING FOR IRISH FREEDOM

The Irish Freedom Movement is holding three open discussions in London on what's happening in Ireland and what we can do in Britain. All start at 7pm in the Oxford Arms, corner of Camden High St and Jamestown Rd (Camden Town 0).

- Friday 10 January: Will Paisley's by-elections wreck Thatcher's deal?
- Friday 17 January: How is the Irish War hitting the South?
- Friday 24 January: How can we build support for Irish freedom in Britain?

*Rally for Irish freedom followed by late night knees-up*  
**Saturday 1 February**  
**6.30pm**  
**University of London Union**

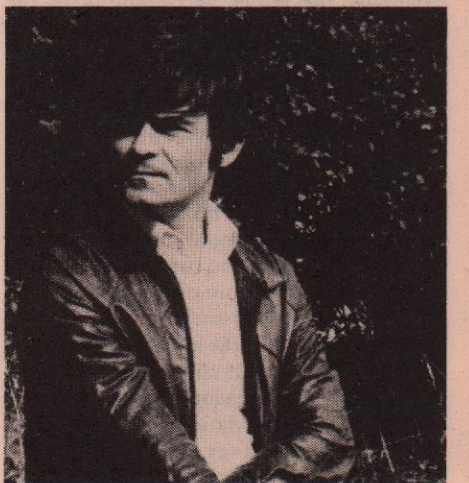


Arrested: councillor Brendan Curran

When the agreement was signed, Dublin politicians, and the moderate nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party in the North, claimed it would allow Dublin to restrain the repressive powers of the British security forces. But when the Crown forces dragged 18 Irish nationalists off to jail last week, a Dublin official only stated it would be 'quite inappropriate' to comment on such 'standard police procedure in Northern Ireland'.

The Dublin government has intervened in only one issue involving security matters in Northern Ireland since the November deal. Last week Irish foreign minister Peter Barry appealed to two republicans, on hunger-strike against their convictions on the uncorroborated word of supergrass Harry Kirkpatrick, to give up and accept their fate at the hands of their British jailers.

Yet London and Dublin are as far as ever from beating the national liberation movement. The extra troops shipped in this week are not merely a sop to the Loyalists. They are needed on the front line of the war to cope with the IRA's renewed campaign along the Border.



Arrested: councillor Brian McCann

Last year the Royal Ulster Constabulary lost 23 officers, its highest casualty rate since 1976. Since the accord was signed, the IRA have attacked six RUC stations with guns, bombs and mortars. The IRA rang in the New Year by blowing up two RUC officers in Armagh. Its military campaign has stretched Britain's ability to police Northern Ireland, even with overt co-operation from Dublin. The pressure is such that the authorities North and South of the Border are having trouble getting their repressive machines into the same gear. So far two republicans put on trial in Belfast after being extradited from Dublin have been freed through faulty evidence, to the great embarrassment of both governments.

No matter how many amiable meetings they have with Dublin ministers or how far they manage to placate the Loyalists, the British authorities enter 1986 no nearer to winning the Irish War than they were when the troops first invaded 17 years ago. The new assault on Sinn Fein shows that more intense repression remains Britain's only option for keeping its tyrannical grip on the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.

Phil Murphy

# Blacks get the blame and the bullets

AT THE END OF 1985 Bradford headmaster Ray Honeyford was finally forced to take early retirement after a long battle over his racist views. Meanwhile Bernie Grant, the radical black leader of Haringey council, was voted the most popular black politician in a poll conducted by the *Caribbean Times*. But these images of a flourishing anti-racist climate create a wholly false impression of the realities of life for black people in Thatcher's Britain over the past 12 months.

Honeyford became the hero of the right-wing establishment last year. He was portrayed as a courageous defender of beleaguered white society against sub-British culture and the intolerant anti-racist rabble. Grant provoked establishment hysteria and earned the nickname 'the high priest of violence' when he refused to condemn the Tottenham riot and said that the police got 'a bloody good hiding' from local black youth.

The press won public approval for its portrayal of Honeyford as a misunderstood force for good and Grant as a force for evil, emphasising the establishment's success in the propaganda war over the issue of racism.

The response of the establishment to two events — the arrival of Tamils fleeing pogroms in Sri Lanka during the summer and the riots of September and October — underlined the shift in state strategy. More overtly than ever before, mainstream establishment politicians tried to pin the blame for British society's problems on the back of the black community.

When Tamil refugees sought sanctuary in Britain the government and media shifted debate away from the problems faced by these persecuted people, to stir up public prejudices that immigrants were a threat to Britain. Home secretary Leon Brittan blamed immigrants for declining public services, emphasising 'the strain that a substantial number of immigrants can place on existing resources and services in this country'. The *Sun* translated Brittan's message into plain English — 'Keep those Tamils out of here.' And keep them out they did, while stirring up wider anti-immigrant prejudices aimed at every black in Britain.

## Criminals and scroungers

Norman Tebbit hammered home a similar point about the riots in a December parliamentary debate. 'From whatever causes the problems arose', he said, 'they are more difficult to deal with in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society than in a mono-cultural society of single racial origin.' In other words, 'No blacks — No riots'. The Tories' message throughout 1985 was that blacks are a scourge on British society.

The establishment justified its racist strategy by branding blacks as criminals. 'Tamil terrorists' and 'Bangladeshi passport forgers' were the big scare stories. Reports on the riots blamed black drug pushers, muggers, looters and rapists for the trouble. Where policemen were injured it was the work of 'barbarians' and 'murderers'. The barbaric tactics of police who sparked the riots by beating and shooting their way through black ghettos were not up for debate.

While the government's propagandists sought to isolate the black community as a bunch of criminals and scroungers, the police and immigration officials at the sharp end of state racism spent 1985 sticking the boot in.

Immigration controls have been tightened and enforced more harshly than ever before. A month after the Tamil scare the home office announced new moves to prevent women joining their husbands in Britain. Apart from tougher laws, the Tories introduced unofficial measures to keep 'unwelcome arrivals' to a minimum. A secret home office document revealed that queues were deliberately being kept at record levels in the Indian subcontinent, to avoid introducing 'a more obviously discriminatory system' which could embarrass Britain abroad.



The authorities used police terror to get a grip on ghettos like Brixton (above)

In the first nine months of the year more than 8000 people were held in immigration detention centres. Detention is often indefinite and there is no right of appeal. Deportations rose by 13 per cent and the number of people refused entry soared by 23 per cent to 17 355. And while the Tories tightened immigration controls, blacks who managed to get into Britain faced fierce treatment at the hands of the authorities.

The sharp end of the campaign against the black community is the policing strategy in the inner cities. 'Community policing means turning a blind eye to crime,' argued Tory MP Eldon Griffiths after the riots, calling for more brutal police action. The old Lord Scarman approach of trying to contain black revolt, implemented after the 1981 riots, has failed to stabilise the inner cities. The authorities now aim to confront black anger with everything from more police powers to plastic (and real) bullets.

Throughout 1985 most of the anti-racist

movement and the left have been in retreat. Labour Party politicians have played a particularly scurrilous role in reinforcing the racist climate. Apart from defending individual constituents, Labour MPs have failed to challenge the immigration clampdown. Even left wingers joined in the Tory hysteria against what they called 'tribal' and 'criminal' behaviour in the riots. The radical anti-racist movement has become one big quango, corrupted by state hand-outs and incapable of biting the racist hand that feeds it and keeps it going as a sop to black anger.

The retreat of the left on the issue of racism has given the Tories a powerful weapon against the whole of the working class. In 1986 we can expect that they will move even further to extend their propaganda war against blacks on to the streets.

This will be an unavoidable challenge to all anti-racists to stop making concessions and come out fighting.

John Pearson

## WORKERS AGAINST RACISM

# Taking on the racist state

WORKERS AGAINST RACISM has been taking direct action throughout the year against the British state's hardline racist tactics.

- Workers Against Racism met the attempts to whip up hysteria around Tamil immigration head-on. 'Immigrants don't cause unemployment,' was the message of WAR activists up and down the country. We organised protests outside the home office demanding 'Tamils must stay' and lobbied local councils to house the refugees.
- WAR made it clear in street meetings and protests nationwide that the riots were the response of the black community to the systematic racism that passes for their everyday lives, and not the work of 'criminals' or outside agitators.
- At a protest outside New Scotland Yard in October WAR confronted Labour MPs over their support for the police force and the racist laws it enforced. In particular we were protesting at the police harassment of victims of racist attacks.
- WAR supporters have been at the forefront of organising to defend Asians against the spate of racist attacks in East London. At Daneford school in Tower Hamlets, we've pushed for direct action to deal with racists terrorising Bangladeshi pupils. In East Ham, WAR is organising defence of Chandra Kant who has suffered four years of attacks while the council and local police monitoring groups stood by. In Leyton, Choudhury Rehmet had put up with two years of attacks on his home until action

by WAR and local people in November ended his ordeal.

Not all anti-racists share our view that the state is the agency which enforces racism. For us the problem of racism is not just the twisted opinions of a few individuals, but the product of a society where black people have the status of second class citizens. Although this view was vindicated in 1985 many anti-racists still concentrate all their efforts against extreme racist individuals.

Ray Honeyford was singled out for one of the most active anti-racist campaigns of the year. Yet Honeyford is not alone in espousing racist ideas about British being best — the whole education system promotes the same patriotic outlook. The campaign was reduced to calling on racist authorities to sack a racist. In the process Honeyford was transformed from a nobody into a national figure.

The narrow outlook of many anti-racist groups means that they see the state as part of the solution. Police racism is put down to individual racist policemen, not the racist laws they enforce. Anti-racists often demand police action against National Front marches or racist attacks. The recent spate of prosecutions of prominent fascists paves the way for the wider use of the state's new public order legislation against real opponents of the system.

We can only build an effective anti-racist movement by organising ourselves to confront every thug and every state body. That is the message Workers Against Racism started to get across to a wider audience in 1985, and will carry into 1986.

# THE PROPAGANDA WAR

## THE YEAR OF THE TERRORIST

'The overwhelming, perhaps insuperable, difficulties for the Western powers in building a moral barrier against terrorism today is, that since 1939, the world has seen nominally civilised states deploy terrorism again and again, where this has seemed expedient.' Thus writes Max Hastings, the man who celebrated Britain's military conquest of the Falklands Islands, in this week's *Sunday Times*.

Hastings' hand-wringing over the difficulties of squaring the moral values of the British establishment with the inconsistent quality of its moral outrage over different manifestations of 'terrorism' came at the end of a violent year.

The Palestinian bombings at Vienna and Rome airports at Christmas were the latest of a series of hijackings, explosions and shootings associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict that involved the entire Mediterranean basin. In South Africa the ANC stepped up its guerrilla campaign and in Ireland the IRA continued its war against Britain. Perhaps the most alarming incident of the year for the moralists of the media was the French government's bombing of the Greenpeace ship in a New Zealand harbour — the first major 'terrorist' incident between two Western powers.

Hastings sums up the mess the terrorists have caused for middle class morality. The traditional view that all life is sacred has taken some hard knocks since 1939 — not least last year. The apologists for the system proclaim the sanctity of the individual and a series of inalienable rights. But the inescapable reality is that the governments of the West proceed in a manner which suggests that human life is expendable according to their political convenience. The activities of state authorities suggest that nobody at home or abroad has any rights if they come into conflict with the system.

Every 'terrorist' attack that threatens the interests of the Western powers provokes the pundits into indignant assertions of moral principles — 'the use of violence for political ends is always unjustified', 'the end cannot justify the means', etc. But, as Hastings is forced to admit, it is difficult to sustain this lofty moral tone when it becomes apparent that Reagan condemns the PLO only to praise the contras in Nicaragua, or when Thatcher denounces the IRA but backs the guerrillas in Afghanistan. Establishment morality provides an increasingly threadbare cloak for political expediency.

What sort of response should we make to terrorist incidents? We cannot base our response on the revulsion everybody feels at the sight of mutilated bodies in an airport lounge or of the tiny coffins of children being borne to their graves. Television images of terrorist atrocities are a potent force, evoking universal horror and fear among those closer to the danger. Yet cut every human being and they bleed, even Hitler's corpse would have been a gruesome and revolting sight.

Our morality is based on our judgement of whether actions contribute to the progress of society towards greater freedom and equality. We recognise that the existing system is sustained by violence and that anybody who stands up to defend their rights against it will meet its awesome destructive power. We defend the right of those fighting the system to use the methods they consider likely to be effective. And we repudiate the hypocrisy of those like Max Hastings whose moral principles are at the service of the most barbarous terrorists in human history.

## Scab unionism - not just the miners

THE BREAKAWAY OF THE Notts miners from the NUM and the formation of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers are widely regarded as exceptional developments. In fact several strikes over the past few years have led to similar breakaways from other unions.

### • Royal College of Nursing

The 1982 health workers' strike led to a sharp rise in recruitment to the nurses' professional association. Over the previous decade more and more nurses had abandoned old prejudices and joined other hospital workers in Nupe and Cohse. But the experience of ineffective industrial action, token days of action and badly organised picketing and emergency cover created widespread disillusionment with the unions. The final sell-out of the strike led many nurses to conclude that striking would get them nowhere and they joined the anti-strike RCN, which grew in size from 162 000 in 1980 to more than 245 000 today.

### • Association of Professional Ambulance Personnel

The ambulance workers went through a similar experience to other workers in the health service and many drew similar conclusions to the nurses. The professional ambulance drivers' union has grown rapidly in size since the early eighties as ambulance drivers have left existing health service unions. The scab union claims to have recruited more than 25 per cent of British ambulance staff (4500 out of 17 000) in four years.

### • Federation of Professional Railway Staff

Disciplinary action taken by the National Union of Railwaymen against workers who scabbed on industrial action in support of its 1982 wage claim led to the formation of a scab union on the railways. The NUR leadership was much more decisive in disciplining its deviant members than it was in giving a clear lead to win solid backing for industrial action and in making sure it was effective. However the scab union has not won much wider support among railworkers. Its leaders openly admit that they need another major strike under NUR leadership to drive more railwaymen into their ranks.

### • Professional Association of Teachers

One of the most dramatic consequences of the teachers' prolonged campaign of industrial action over pay is the growth of the Professional Association of Teachers and other scab unions. The familiar round of selective walkouts, token days of action and endless negotiations has proved ineffective in securing pay rises. The resulting demoralisation has encouraged passivity and created a climate in which anti-union prejudices can flourish. Many teachers have concluded that striking is worse than useless and have joined a union defined by its rejection of militant tactics. The PAT has trebled its membership to 30 000 over the past six years, gaining thousands more during the current dispute.

The disillusionment which results from following the policies of the official labour movement has paved the way for the spread of scab unionism.

**T**he decay of British capitalism is producing a deepening split in the working class. On the one side are those workers who have responded to the employers' offensive against jobs, working conditions and trade union rights over the past few years by going on strike, picketing and demonstrating.

Workers from miners to civil servants to hospital workers have displayed great determination and resilience in taking on the police and the courts and the media and all the other allies of the capitalist class. When labour movement organisations have come under attack, these workers have turned to defend them.

On the other side are those workers who have tended to resign themselves to redundancies and mass unemployment and stagnating living standards. Their attitude has been to keep their heads down and hope that they can work things out for themselves and their families. They have generally been reluctant to strike and indifferent to the fate of victimised shop stewards or even to the survival of national labour movement organisations.

*'I've been an NUM member for over 30 years, but not any longer. I'm not anti-union, just anti-Scargill.'* (Miner, Agecroft colliery, Lancashire, November 1985)

*'The way I look at it, when the going gets rough you've got to stick with your leaders whatever they do.'* (Miner, Armthorpe colliery, Yorkshire, November 1985)

The significant trend of 1985 was the decline of traditional militancy and the rise of passivity and disillusionment with the official labour movement. Strike figures hit a 50-year low last year, while scab unionism took off both outside and inside the TUC (see boxes).

### Old-fashioned militancy

Traditional militancy reflects the outlook of the left wing of the official labour movement. Radical union leaders like Arthur Scargill or Jimmy Knapp differ from their more moderate colleagues in their willingness to mobilise industrial action. Unlike the right-wing union leaders they are prepared to call strikes, stand on picket lines and deliver fiery speeches at rallies and demonstrations. The left-wing union leaders appeal to workers' loyalty to old institutions and methods — 'defend our unions', 'respect picket lines'.

Yet the objectives of the left-wing union leaders are little different from those of the other TUC leaders. They too want to return to the methods of consultation and negotiation which the employers and the government have abandoned. They share the commitment of other union leaders to the goal of collaborating with the employers in the day-to-day running of industries and services. This commitment is codified in programmes like the *Plan for Coal* in the mining industry which is approved by both Arthur Scargill and Roy Lynk, the leader of the scab union. The left differs from the right only on the terms of collaboration and over the tactics required to press the bosses to return to the negotiating table.

Over the past few years workers following the lead of left-wing unions and the methods of traditional militancy have met a series of setbacks. Each defeat has led to a lowering of horizons and a reduction of expectations. The failure of the 1984-85 miners' strike marked the culmination of this process. It was the most determined display of militancy behind the most radical of the established trade union leaders. Yet the tactics of the NUM proved no match for those of the coal board and the government. The miners were, for the most part, fighting the class war of the eighties with the obsolete trade union methods of the seventies.



Golden Wonder workers on strike, summer 1985

As a result of the manifest failure of traditional militancy to achieve results, militants have become more and more isolated. Trade union activists have experienced greater difficulty in rallying fellow workers in support of any course of industrial action. Left-wing union leaders have increasingly been exposed as unable to deliver the support of their members for strike action. Left wingers carry on proclaiming the fine principles and traditions of the movement, but to a dwindling audience. Left-wing speakers who churn out the old rhetoric at trade union conferences increasingly seem as old-fashioned as the embroidered banners they use to decorate their platforms.

### New-style surrender

The attitude of resignation among workers reflects the outlook of the more right-wing union leaders. Their response to the aggressive postures of the employers and the Tory government is to make concession after concession in the hope that they will return to the old ways. Some trade union officials are prepared to sacrifice everything that trade unionism stands for — the right to work, the right to strike, the right to decent wages and conditions — if it will guarantee the survival of the formal structures of trade unionism.

*'Things will never be the same again. The right-wing leaders have learned that the price of survival is the end of trade unionism as we know it and the left-wing leaders are discovering that the old methods no longer work.'* (Town hall shop steward, October 1985)

The right-wing union leaders appeal to the so-called 'silent majority' of passive workers who are most directly influenced by the insecurities generated by the recession and by the pressures of the media. Their preference for decision-making by secret postal ballot reveals the right's reliance on the atomisation of workers. They appeal to every worker as an

After a year of

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individual in his or her own home where money worries and media influences are at their strongest. They aim to minimise workers' exposure to collective discussion and debate in the workplace where the influence of the more active workers can have a greater effect.

Right-wing union leaders like Eric Hammond and Gavin Laird affect a trendy, hi-tech image. They claim that their approach is modern, progressive and realistic in an age when the microchip is revolutionising industry. In reality computer technology is having relatively little effect on stagnant British industry. Where it is being introduced, it is being used — like all new technology under capitalism — to intensify the exploitation of the working class. The TUC right may look sharper than the rather crumpled left, but its strategy is even more old-fashioned. While the left is full of nostalgia for



union retreats....

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Saltley Gates and the Pentonville Five — the battles of the seventies — the right looks even further back to the boss unionism of the forties and fifties.

The events of recent years have intensified demoralisation within the working class and greatly strengthened the position of the right wing. The rising tide of redundancies and rationalisations extending through almost every industry and service have made all workers fearful for their jobs. The seemingly endless series of strike defeats has further reinforced passivity. The immediate experience of industrial action has often turned scepticism and indifference towards the unions into downright hostility (see box).

The key to the success of scab unionism is not the charisma of the right-wing union leaders or the propaganda against militancy in the gutter

press or on television. The most important factor in the growing influence of the right is workers' direct experience of the irrelevance of the strategies of the left to the problems of the eighties. Every strike setback has strengthened the right. The main legacy of the miners' strike in 1985 was to encourage the mood of fatalism in the working class. Many workers drew the conclusion that 'if the miners couldn't win what chance have we got?' As the groundswell of anti-Scargill sentiment in left-wing areas shows, the miners' defeat has discredited militancy even among militants.

The split in the working class and the emergence of scab unionism on a wide scale is a serious threat to the labour movement. The question is — how can this threat be tackled?

## No way to fight

The left wing of the official labour movement has virtually conceded defeat to the right. The capitulation of the leadership of the transport and general workers' union — the biggest union and long the standard bearer of the left — over the past 12 months reflects the left's demise. The TGWU ended 1984 by backing down before the courts over strike action at British Leyland. It bowed to media pressure by first re-running its election for general secretary and then reorganising its executive elections. It abandoned its opposition to incomes policy to bring the union into line with the Labour leadership's election plans. The TGWU's acceptance of a no-strike deal at Nabisco and a punitive two-year pay and productivity deal which outlaws unofficial action at Vauxhall completes the evolution of the TGWU into a fully fledged member of the realistic right.

The left-wing trade union leaders are too deeply integrated into the framework of past union-management-state collaboration to be able to break out and organise serious anti-capitalist action by the rank and file. The only opposition they can put up to the drive to make the unions even more subservient to the bosses is to try to cling on to the existing institutions. Hence they limit their opposition to scab unionism to appeals to 'defend the NUM' or to 'preserve the unity of the TUC'. But the existing institutions have run out of time and the left's sentimental attachment to them only acts as a barrier to the wider scale of action required to safeguard workers' interests. The inevitable outcome is that the left steadily loses ground to the right whose position has at least a solid basis in reality — the reality of the bosses.

Two events last month show the direction in which the narrow defence of the existing order

points. The TUC outlined its proposals for 'positive trade union legislation' under a future Labour government. The union leaders reckon that their survival depends on getting Labour back into office and they are desperate to help by demonstrating their respectability. To prove their moderation they have abandoned any suggestion that Tory anti-union laws should be simply repealed wholesale. Instead they are proposing alternatives such as measures to avoid strike action in essential services by 'exemplary industrial relations practices' and 'redrawing the right to picket'. The TUC's alternative to the outlawing of union rights is to renounce them voluntarily. To defend the unions from the bosses the TUC offers to dismantle them itself.

Meanwhile the union leaders are still trying to come to terms with the miners' scab union. But instead of working out plans to isolate the UDM and undermine its influence, the TUC is discussing conciliation talks between the UDM and the NUM. The head of industrial relations at the NUM's Sheffield HQ is openly talking about trying to link up the two unions in a national federation. 'If you can't face trying to beat 'em, join 'em' is the motto that is dragging the entire trade union movement towards scab unionism.

## Fighting back

*'Nobody here is enthusiastic about Roy Lynk's lot, but they've tried Scargill and discovered that he's got nothing to offer.'*  
(Miner, Agecroft colliery, Lancashire, November 1985)

For the Revolutionary Communist Party overcoming the split in the working class means recognising that the institutions and practices of traditional militancy are part of the problem not the solution. The working class can only be united around policies which put forward the interest all workers have in fighting the system. Workers cannot be united as long as they are trying to defend either the interests of the employers in particular industries, or trying to protect the parochial interests of particular sections of the trade union bureaucracy.

Workers' support for traditional militancy, though on the decline, is the most immediate expression of an anti-capitalist sentiment within the working class. The problem is that this anti-capitalist kernel in many forms of industrial action is contained by a thick shell of obsolete traditions, strategies and methods. The object of our intervention in the class struggle is to extract this kernel, make it conscious and give it direction. The events of the past few years — and of 1985 — show that the will to fight is there, but the strategies that can draw the passive majority around the activists and give a lead against the system have been lacking.

Workers' cynicism about militancy and indifference to the official labour movement renders them vulnerable to right-wing influences. It contains a dangerous potential for even further atomisation of the working class. Yet it also contains an instinctive recognition of the irrelevance of the old ways of the labour movement that need not take a right-wing direction. These sentiments are often strongest among workers who are most alienated from the time-honoured traditions of the official labour movement — women, blacks, youth, unskilled workers. These workers have nothing to gain from collaborating with a system that can only survive by exploiting them even more viciously in part-time, low-paid, insecure jobs. While they may not have much interest in saving the TUC, they could be mobilised behind a strategy that offered to unite all workers to safeguard working class interests against the capitalist class.

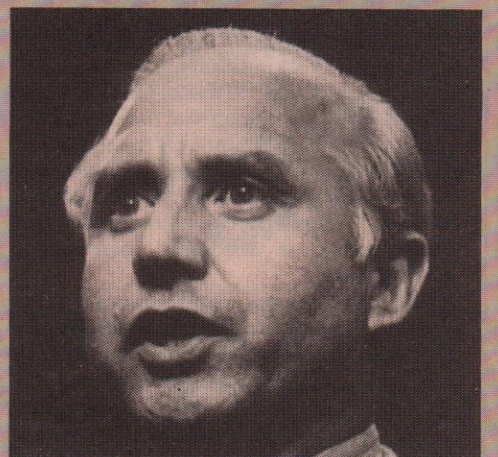
The challenge of 1986 is to relate to both sides of the division in the working class with practical strategies that make no concessions to the realism of the capitalist class or its redundant partners in the outdated labour movement.

# Company unionism ~not just the electricians

THE LEADERS OF THE electricians and the engineers have promoted an explicit commitment to collaboration with management on any terms within the TUC. The TUC's capitulation to the right reflects the extension of the influence of the philosophy of company unionism over the entire trade union movement.

The leaders of the EETPU and the AUEW have pioneered no-strike deals, single union sweetheart agreements with bosses and an open endorsement of Tory measures to widen state interference in the unions. Electricians' leader Eric Hammond celebrated the TUC's December decision to abandon disciplinary action against his union for defying TUC policy and accepting government funds for ballots.

At the same time Hammond has criticised the TUC for its decision to censure unions which do single-union, no-strike deals without the consent of rival unions. But Hammond need not worry, the TUC has already surrendered to no-strike deals just as it surrendered on ballots. As Hammond is never slow to point out, the TUC was among the first to offer the employers a no-strike deal in return for union recognition — at the government's GCHQ spy centre in



No-strike pioneer Gavin Laird (AUEW)

1984. He also notes that every major union which has attacked the engineers and the electricians for doing sweetheart deals has made single-union and no-strike agreements itself.

The white collar engineering union Tass for example is a leading left-wing critic of the EETPU and the AUEW. Yet it is actively pursuing single union, no-strike deals in the hi-tech sector. Tass has run into conflict with white collar unions such as Astms and Apex, as well as with the EETPU and the AUEW. The print unions — NGA, Sogat, NUJ — have slammed the electricians for their preparedness to sign a legally binding no-strike agreement at Rupert Murdoch's News International plant in Wapping. But at a meeting of the TUC printing industries committee in December the three unions agreed that they 'should be prepared to negotiate agreements to avoid disruption of production'. The three unions do not object in principle to no-strike deals, but they do object to the EETPU muscling in on their patch.

As the union leaders, right and left, fight it out among themselves in the scramble to save their skins the working class is paying the price in job losses and worsening conditions.

The world in 1985

## Plenty of peace talks, no peace

In 1985 there was no major military showdown like the Falklands War in 1982 or the US invasion of Grenada and the war in Lebanon in 1983 and 1984. Instead the Western powers tried to contain conflicts by diplomatic means in a year of peace talks and talks about peace talks. But diplomacy provides no way out of the spiral of chaos unleashed by the worldwide capitalist recession.

The USA — still the world's strongest policeman — spent the last 12 months trying to strengthen its weakening grip on world affairs. The key problem confronting the USA and its Western allies is the devastating impact of the world recession on third world countries, which makes the exercise of political control more and more difficult. At the same time the Western alliance itself is suffering from the growth of rivalries among the capitalist powers.

The failure of the US-backed invasion of Lebanon taught Reagan that armed intervention can be counter-productive. In 1985 damage limitation rather than rash assertions of military might became the dominant theme in US foreign policy.

### Central America

In Central America US foreign policy has run into a rut. Over the past five years more than 100 000 people have been killed in US-sponsored wars in Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. Yet although the USA and local right-wing rulers have turned much of the region into an armed camp, they have not succeeded in restoring stability.

Unemployment rates of 40 to 50 per cent, falling export prices and spiralling inflation have produced economic collapse and social unrest. In Honduras thousands of workers employed in US-owned Standard Fruit banana plantations and packing plants went on strike in September, closing down the banana port of La Ceiba for a week. In El Salvador public sector workers organised major strikes against wage cuts during the autumn. In Guatemala riots against price and fare increases in September forced the government to back down.

In Mexico, the only fairly stable country in the region, working class unrest has begun to provoke alarm. 'Thank God for the earthquake,' said one official in September, 'It will take people's minds off the economic crisis long enough for us to undertake measures they would not have otherwise accepted.' Despite ferocious repression the whole region is becoming increasingly uncontrollable.

The USA has no easy solutions to the crisis in Central America. It is now five years since Reagan launched his proxy war against the radical Sandinista government in Nicaragua. But last year the Nicaraguan regime managed to throw back the contra

guerrillas. In El Salvador the Duarte government, installed after US-sponsored elections last year, faces a revival of left-wing guerrilla activity. Since 1983 the Guatemalan army has doubled in size and launched blanket bombing attacks on insurgent areas. Yet the guerrillas have managed to hit back, attacking army installations and paralysing transport in rural areas. Duarte's military and political failures are provoking growing unease in establishment circles.

In Guatemala the USA has equally grim prospects. During the November elections — after 31 years of military rule — the army prohibited voting in rural areas for fear of sabotage by left-wing guerrillas. In a desperate bid to regain control of the countryside the Guatemalan armed forces have forced a million peasants into civil defence corps and deported at least 60 000 to 'strategic villages'.

The Reagan administration has tried to contain the crisis in its 'backyard' through diplomatic manoeuvres. The elections held in Guatemala and Honduras in November and the forthcoming poll in Costa Rica are part of a strategy of 'democratisation' aimed at neutralising opponents of its right-wing client regimes. 'The trend among the USA's allies in the region', noted a recent survey, is 'for the military to retain firm control of security with a plausibly centrist government talking about reform'. But these manoeuvres only expose the impasse of US policy. The depth of the crisis in Central America ensures that repression remains the only option for capitalist survival.

The failure of the Contadora initiative shows the limited scope for diplomatic solutions. The scheme was launched by Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama two years ago, in an attempt to restore peace in Nicaragua. The Reagan administration backed the initiative because it seemed a useful addition to US attempts to isolate the Sandinistas. The Contadora group applied pressure on Nicaragua to open negotiations with the right-wing contra insurgents and drafted a peace plan which proposed cuts in Nicaraguan arms and troops while maintaining the US military presence in the region intact.

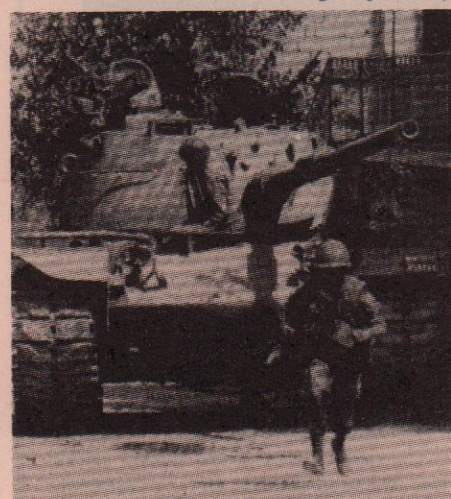
But the Sandinistas have steadfastly refused to surrender to these terms. Despite every American initiative, the Sandinistas survive and left-wing guerrilla movements still threaten the neighbouring regimes. The Contadora countries are becoming frustrated with the failures of American strategy. Apprehensions about military stalemate and further economic dislocation have produced growing disenchantment with the US government among its local allies.

The USA regarded the formation of a

Contadora 'support group' including Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay last autumn as an ominous event. Coming in the wake of Latin American attempts to pull together against the IMF's drastic measures for the debt-ridden continent, the move provoked fears that the Contadora initiative might turn into a forum for anti-Americanism. A state department report leaked to the press in September noted that the USA would 'prefer to see Contadora collapse rather than come to an agreement unacceptable to the US' and recommended 'an active diplomacy now to head off efforts at Latin American solidarity aimed against us'. As tensions increase, the USA's diplomatic tactics are becoming increasingly ineffective.

### The Middle East

Last week's Palestinian attacks on Israeli air travellers show American attempts to stabilise the Middle East through diplomacy



Tanks and talks in the Middle East

have been no more successful than in Central America. The US-backed Middle East peace plan launched by Jordan and Egypt a year ago has been used by the West to apply pressure on the Palestine Liberation Organisation to abandon the struggle against Israel. Western leaders hope that by playing on Arab leaders' desire for stability — and their need for Western money and arms — they can isolate and crush the Palestinian movement.

Yassir Arafat's renunciation of armed struggle outside the Israeli-occupied territories and his repudiation of recent Palestinian bombings and hijackings indicate that the US strategy has achieved a measure of success. But there is a long way to go. Already the peace process has become a focus for power struggles among the leaders of Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The problem for the West is that Mubarak, Hussein and Assad are not interested in pleasing the West, but in strengthening their own fragile regimes.

Western policy in the Middle East has become a mere holding operation, visibly lacking in long-term coherence. From the West's point of view, the merits of the peace process are dubious. Western observers have noted that, if anything, it has provided the PLO with a lifeline after its military defeat in Lebanon. It has become the focus for attempts by Arab leaders to develop a common response to the crisis in the region — a development which would further isolate Israel, the West's regional ally.

The fragility of the imperialist order means that in the Middle East as much as in Central America Western intervention tends to produce an increasingly widespread and unpredictable backlash. In 1985, for the first time, the Middle East conflict began to disrupt America's relations with its Mediterranean Nato allies. The hijackings of the past few months sparked off severe tensions between the USA and Italy, Greece and Malta over US anti-terrorist tactics. On balance, rather than containing the Middle East conflict, Western action in the region over the past year has tended to widen it.

### The new world

In the early eighties the world's trouble-spots were fairly predictable. Over the past year it has become more difficult to discern any corner of the third world that can be regarded as stable.

The uprising against the apartheid state in South Africa is a serious threat to Western domination in the African continent. The government's state of emergency and its media censorship have done nothing to bring the situation under control. Continuing rioting in the townships together with a higher profile of military activity under the influence of the African National Congress, in a climate of deepening economic insecurity, point to a continuation of the conflict on an even wider scale in 1986. Western politicians and investors are in the forefront of demands for talks between the regime and the black community as a means of safeguarding the West's enormous stake in apartheid. But South Africa's black workers know that the apartheid regime is beyond reform and must be destroyed.

In the rest of Africa the fragile structures of post-colonial rule are falling apart under the pressure of economic decay and famine. Military coups in Nicaragua, Guinea, Uganda, Sudan and Liberia over the past eight months show how difficult it has become to sustain stable capitalist rule in the impoverished continent. In the Philippines the Marcos regime, America's most important remaining client in South-east Asia, faces a popular mass uprising led by guerrilla insurgents. Meanwhile in Latin America, traditionally one of the more prosperous and stable spheres of Western domination, the grip of local rulers is slipping as economic chaos provokes growing working class unrest.

Military and diplomatic manoeuvres are two aspects of the capitalist powers' attempts to halt the accelerating breakdown of their system. The uneven results of Western peace initiatives over the past year show that Western attempts to control the slide into chaos are destined to fail. Military conflict on a widening scale is ultimately the only option for imperialist survival.

The Western peace processes contain real dangers for the workers of the third world. While they appeal to popular yearnings for an end to bloodshed, they seek only to stabilise a world order built on exploitation and oppression. Western peace talks will never bring peace to the world. That can only come when the imperialist world order is overthrown through the combined action of workers in the third world and the West.

Sabena Norton



More conflict to come in South Africa



Tell them about your diplomatic solution for Central America, Mr Reagan

# REVIEWS

## PAT FORD'S TOP 10 FILMS OF 1985

### The year of the gay Chinese muscleman

Having compiled my top 10 films of 1985, I brought to mind, in keeping with the gravity of the undertaking, some words of Wim Wenders in *Tokyo-Ga*, his engaging tribute to the Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu. He says that 'the essence and purpose' of cinema is 'to present an image of man in our century, a usable, true and valid image, in which, above all, he recognises himself but from which, above all he may learn about himself'. A bit light on the need for laughs (and heavy on the gender) but you can see what he's getting at.

What sort of composite image then is conjured up by my favourite five: *Blood Simple*, *Dim Sum*, *Letter to Brezhnev*, *The Terminator* and *The Times of Harvey Milk*? A gay Chinese muscleman murderously paranoid about being trapped in Liverpool? Yes, as I face up to 1986, I can relate to that.

The darkest of the bunch — *Blood Simple* — is a compelling noir thriller from the brothers Ethan and Joel Coen. Set in the sweaty Southern states, shot in the most lurid and shadowy hues, it oozes guilt, suspicion and fear. Life may be cheap in loser's America but when it gets down to the nitty-gritty (and this film does) all involved pay a terrible price. This is murder most physical, most intimate, and the victims won't lie down even when they're in the grave.

*Dim Sum* by contrast, and you'd probably need it, is an affectionate account of the affairs of a Chinese American family in San Francisco. A mother and her adult daughter negotiate with wonderful restraint and tenderness a joint path between their different expectations and ambitions — a gap both generational and cultural as the mother looks back to China and the daughter to American ways. If it sounds a bit dull and worthy, it isn't. It is a fascinating and amusing film. Wayne Wang keeps his camera still and the pace quiet, punctuating his observation of their domestic

lives with one-off shots of the city outside. Engrossing.

For all its sentimental scousery *Letter to Brezhnev* scores because of its sheer energy and spirit as the two Kirkby girls take the town by the scruff of the neck and find it wanting. Directed by Chris Bernard and written by Frank Clarke this is a bit of escapism that really knows about what it is escaping from. Hilarious dialogue and memorable performances from Alexandra Pigg and Margi Clarke (a Madonna of the Mersey).

*The Terminator* is James Cameron's bullet-paced sci-fi adventure featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a mixture of man, machine and muscles. Two characters from the future fight it out in the present to make sure that they have a future. The ingenious plot (for further variations see *Back To The Future*) is matched by ingenious sets and effects, especially the indestructible monster whose prolonged demise is both hilarious and terrifying. It's nice too to see people making their own history.

Finally, *The Times of Harvey Milk*, a moving documentary on the man elected in 1977 to San

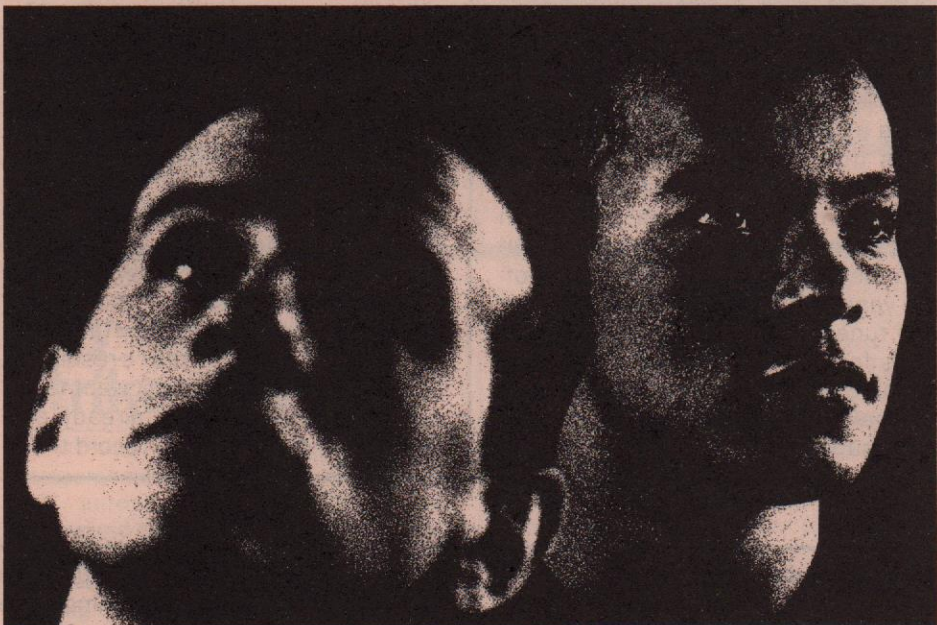
Francisco's city hall on a gay ticket, and within a year slain by a right-wing political opponent in a fit of pique. Within hours of the death 45 000 people were on the streets in a candlelit tribute to Milk and to fellow victim, the liberal mayor George Moscone. The film dwells on Milk's achievements and on how his murderer ended up serving just five and a half years in prison because of 'diminished responsibility', a verdict which understandably led to ferocious riots.

My five runners up are *Back To The Future*, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Prizzi's Honour* and *Pumping Iron II - The Women*. A final film that deserves a mention (it is not included because it showed only at the London Film Festival) is Elem Klimov's *Go and See*, a stunning account of German atrocities in Byelorussia in 1943 when more than 627 villages and their inhabitants were systematically destroyed. Told through the shell shocked eyes of a young boy, it is the most powerful evocation of a country engulfed by war I have ever seen. Not to be missed if it goes on general release in '86.



The twain meet on Merseyside in *Letter to Brezhnev*

## KENAN MALIK'S TOP TWO RECORDS OF 1985



Fine Young Cannibals wonder who this Kenan Malik bloke is

### The year of hype

*Psychocandy*, The Jesus and Mary Chain (Blanco y Negro)  
*Fine Young Cannibals*, Fine Young Cannibals, (London)

From Madonna to Saint Bob 1985 was the year of hype. Perhaps no band lived more on hype than The Jesus and Mary Chain. 'What they are doing now is very dangerous,' proclaimed Rob Gretton, manager of New Order. Comparisons with the Sex Pistols were not slow in coming. 'The scene is a lot heavier now than when the Pistols started,' continued Gretton. 'There's been riots in the streets, more violence at football matches, and they're attracting that crowd.'

Even the band's name was calculated to provoke the Bill Grundys of this world. They produced a single — *Jesus Sucks* — knowing full well that their record company would refuse to release it. Their gigs were chaotic 10-minute bashes ending in mayhem, often with the band smashing up the stage. They became big for

everything apart from their music. They were the sort of band everybody loves to hate.

And yet...in 1985 The Jesus and Mary Chain produced three stunning singles and finished the year with an album to match. *Psychocandy* will come as a shock to anybody who has only seen them live. It's accessible — there is even a hint of melody. Comparisons with the punk movement of the seventies are misplaced — their roots are in the sixties. Like Lloyd Cole and the Commotions, another band that broke through last year, they make more than a passing nod to Lou Reed and the old Velvet Underground.

So forget the hype, forget that they're John Peel's favourite band — the music more than makes up for it.

Fine Young Cannibals are the other major success story of 1985. After two superlative singles — *Johnny Come Home* and *Blue* — comes the debut album. It doesn't disappoint. Over the past 12 months there has been much mining of the soul archives — from Otis Redding to Tommy Hunt — but like the singles, the album is very much a product of the eighties.

Two thirds of the Cannibals, guitarist Andy Cox and bassist David Steele, used to play with The Beat. Also included on the album is another Beat member, Saxa, the veteran saxophonist. But the real star is singer Roland Gift, who was doing the rounds with pub bands before joining the

Cannibals. His extraordinary voice and phrasing lift the band beyond any contemporaries.

Nostalgia for the black music of the fifties and sixties has become very fashionable. But if you think the jazz/soul revival starts with Paul Weller and ends with The Working Week, take a listen to Fine Young Cannibals and you might change your mind.

Between them, The Jesus and Mary Chain and Fine Young Cannibals have given us the best of '85 in both singles and albums. If somebody tells me that '86 will produce two more bands of similar quality, I would gladly suffer another year of Wham, Duran Duran spin-offs and Top of the Pops.

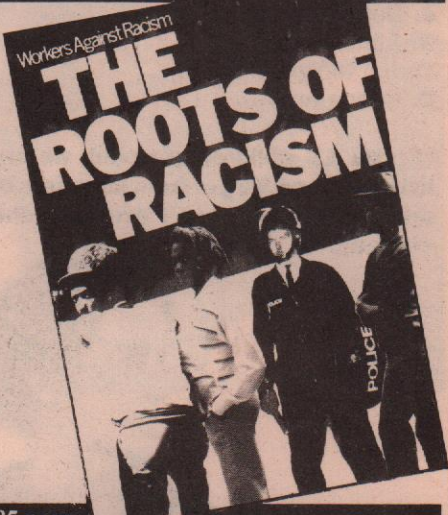
### CHANGE CHANNELS

*Frickley — the changes* (a series of five films, Monday-Friday BBC2) examines the life of the mining community around Frickley, West Yorkshire, in the aftermath of the year-long miners' strike. Striking miners, women from the support groups, scabs and others are included in what promises to be an interesting series. 'Steve's story' on Monday starts in Armley prison where Steve is held for two months after being arrested on a picket line, before being released on 'exile conditions' which prevent him travelling within 50 miles of home.

*Greece — the hidden war* (Monday Channel 4) is a new series starting this week about the Greek civil war. The first programme highlights Britain's role, its plans to retain a 90 per cent stake in Greece after the Second World War, and its decision to send in troops against the popular Greek resistance forces. Churchill ordered in the troops as if 'you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is taking place'. As one RAF man in the programme makes clear, 'I thought we'd come to liberate the Greeks. But within what seemed to be a short space of time we were actually killing them.' A familiar story.

Other highlights of the week include *From the inside — the unions* (Thursday Channel 4) which looks at the day-to-day operation of the unions in Tyneside. And don't miss the Dangerous Brothers (Rik Mayall and Adrian Edmondson) performing 'Dante's Towering Inferno' on *The Best of Saturday Live* (Saturday ITV). A new series of *Spitting Image* starts (Sunday ITV).

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# STEPPING OUT IN '85

## Quiz of the year

In 1985, who said...

(1) 'If I was a Falkland Islander now I'd take to the boats.'

- A. Derek Hatton
- B. Simon Le Bon
- C. Jim Molyneux
- D. Prince Andrew

(2) 'My 10 children are cold, we are living on food we got from members of our own family. I can't even sell the chateau.'



- A. Victoria Gillick
- B. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh
- C. Ex-emperor 'Diamonds' Bokassa of the Central African Republic
- D. Lord Gowrie

(3) 'I say blessed are the rich because they have already inherited the Kingdom of God.'

- A. Margaret Thatcher

- B. The Bishop of Durham
- C. Cliff Richard
- D. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

(4) 'We have arrived here without the assistance of Sinn Féin and we shall not require their assistance in the future.'

- A. Tom King
- B. Bob Geldof
- C. John Hume
- D. Barry McGuigan

(5) 'I can't sit on this volcano any longer.'

- A. Aileen Jennings
- B. Clive Ponting
- C. Princess Michael of Kent
- D. Eddie Veale

(6) 1985 was the year when a mystical force moved religious statues in Ireland. But what phenomenon caused statues of all the following to move in Ireland in recent times?

- Queen Victoria
- Edward Carson
- Admiral Nelson
- Major General Gough
- King William of Orange

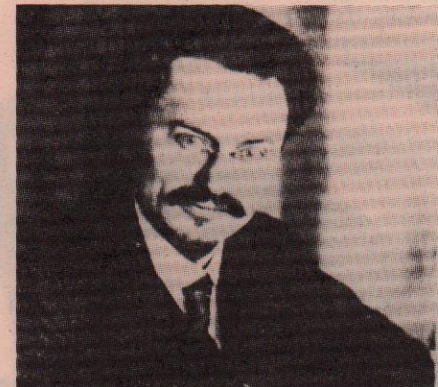
Not necessarily in 1985, who said...

(7) 'The character of a child is revealed and formed by its play.'

- A. Princess Diana
- B. Victoria Gillick
- C. Miriam Stoppard
- D. Leon Trotsky

(8) 'The cinema amuses, educates, strikes the imagination and liberates you.'

- A. Pat Ford
- B. Sir Richard Attenborough
- C. Melvyn Bragg
- D. Leon Trotsky



(9) 'You cannot abolish the family, you have to replace it.'

- A. Germaine Greer
- B. Kate Marshall
- C. Valerie Wise
- D. Leon Trotsky

(10) 'With us civility, as a general rule does not exist but of rudeness inherited from the past we have as much as you like.'

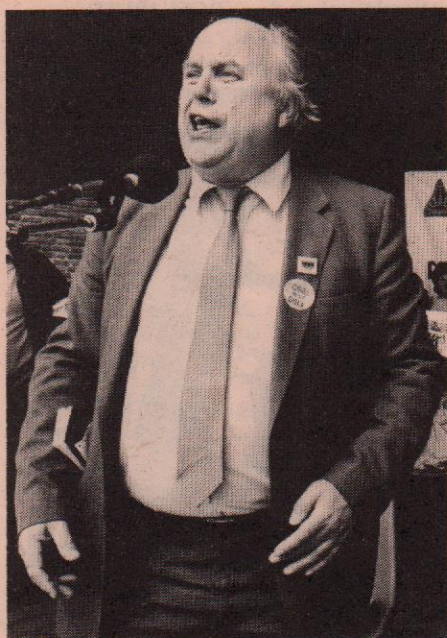
- A. Ken Bates (loud-mouthed Chelsea FC chairman)
- B. Michael Banda (loud-mouthed Workers' Revolutionary Party general secretary)
- C. Mick Hume (loud-mouthed tns journalist)
- D. Leon Trotsky (loud-mouthed Bolshevik)

Compiled by George Sheerin

## Answers

(1) Jim Molyneux; (2) 'Diamonds' Bokassa; (3) Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh; (4) John Hume; (5) Aileen Jennings (the woman who revealed that Gerry Healy was a red in the bed); (6) The IRA; (7) Leon Trotsky; (8) Leon Trotsky; (9) Leon Trotsky; (10) Leon Trotsky.

## A year in the life of a bottomless well of talent



'Is there no bottom to the well of talent that is TUC general secretary Norman Willis?' was the rallying cry of *Stepping*

Out in 1985. Fleet Street gave the TUC chief a bad press last year. But Big Norm has risen in stature with every mention in *Stepping Out*. Thanks to Fleet Street the ordinary man in the street thinks that Norman Willis is nothing but a blustering, blundering bureaucrat. Thanks to *Stepping Out* thousands of tns readers have come to appreciate Big Norm as a man of rare genius.

Alright, so the Big N might have sold out the miners' strike and given up the right to strike at GCHQ. But he made up for it by recording 'a protest song' to the accompaniment of the Grime-thorpe colliery band and the GCHQ union choir.

Fair enough, Norman did a deal with the Labour Party to hold down wages under a future Labour government. But he did stand up for the low-paid at the annual TUC outing to the Dorset village of Tolpuddle, organised around the theme of 'The threat to wages

councils'. (That is, he stood up as opposed to falling over like his predecessor 'Smoking' Len Murray did at the previous Tolpuddle turn-out.)

OK, so Big Norm gave up our right to strike and presided over plunging union membership. But he upheld our right to rhyme when his poems appeared in Writers' Guild publications, and increased a union's membership roll by one (and a big one at that) when he became an honorary member of the guild to mark its 25 years as a trade union.

It's true that Norman never organised direct action against the apartheid regime in solidarity with the South African masses. But he did challenge Bob Geldof for the philanthropist-of-the-year award by penning both lyrics and tune for a Christmas disc to raise cash for Tibetan refugee children in India. (Sadly he was pipped at the post by Shakin' Stevens.)

Perhaps the Big N did nothing to

build labour movement support for black youth who took on the racist state in the riots. But he did give a rousing rendition of 'Onward Christian soldiers' when the National Economic Development Council discussed the Church of England's report on the inner cities.

Maybe the TUC didn't organise solidarity action with workers who went on strike last year. But in Big Norm's own words: 'I want to see the trade unions with good, healthy teeth used only when all else fails, teeth are part of the mouth, and the mouth is for talking and negotiating.' He may be short on solidarity but you can't fault his grasp of anatomy.

And those people who say the Big N is slow and old-fashioned should note the forward-looking fashion in which he made his own New Year's resolution back in September: 'I don't want to get any more boring than I already am.' (Even if he did break it in record time.)

## Eddie Veale's New Year resolutions

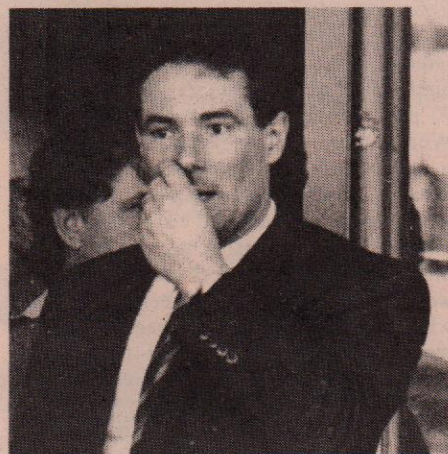


• For Dennis and Margaret Thatcher: to appear in *East Enders*, playing a drunken husband and a wife who hides her dark past — when she broke up his previous marriage — and now survives only as a stripper of assets in public industries

• For Nell and Glenys Kinnock: to appear in a promotional video with Wham singing 'I'm your man/woman/peace activist/trade unionist/trendy teenager/management consultant/apprentice vicar or anything else I have to be to get you to vote for me'

• For David Owen: to continue his campaign to put the Brylcreem back in British politics

• For Derek Hatton: to extend his vocabulary so that the *Spitting Image* script-writers can make the sketch last 10 seconds



• For Archbishop's envoy Terry Walte: to give up mucking about in the third world and get a proper job

• For Ian Botham: to hit less sixes and more Cornish policemen

• For Victoria Gillick: to keep taking the tablets

• For Robert Maxwell: to stop being so self-effacing and think of himself once in a while

• For Ken Livingstone: to announce on abolition day that his campaign to save the GLC was really an April Fool's prank all along



• For Ronald Reagan: just to keep body and nose together for another year

• For Mary Whitehouse: to get Leon Brittan's face banned from television as an offence to public decency

• For Gerry Healy: to maintain the high public profile he has had since the WRP split

• For the Bishop of Durham: to prove that Jesus wouldn't have used plastic bullets

• For John Gummer: to prove that God was in favour of gas grenades



• For Barry McGuigan: to keep his face well covered outside the ring as well as in, so we can't hear him whining about sport bringing peace to Northern Ireland

• For John Hamilton (leader of Liverpool council): to admit that he can't decide anything without his Hatt on

• For Princess Di: to go on a world tour with Richard Branson

# LETTERS

## Hell for home helps

Joe Hall's article (*ins* 34) on the latest pay and regrading deal between the GMBATU and the council employers rings very true to those of us who work for the Labour-controlled city council in Leeds. As I work in the home help section of the social services department I know that GMBATU leader John Edmonds' 'delight' at this latest deal will not be echoed by the domiciliary staff.

We're always told how many women are getting jobs these days and how the male-dominated workplace is a thing of the past. It is true that of the 130 or so home helps covered by our office, only one is male. This has got nothing to do with women's liberation however. It has got more to do with the fact that almost all home helps are part timers and absolutely all of them are paid pin money wages and work in disgusting conditions. The hourly wage for home helps is £2.30 an hour. Only 10 out of

130 work 30 hours or more (the average is 15-20 hours).

I have taken many phone calls in our office from home helps complaining of homes with maggot-infested larders, carpets trodden in excrement, even worm-infested cats behind the settee! In these conditions the women have to cook, clean and iron for a pittance. No wonder only four workers in our section aren't married! Nobody could lead an independent life on that: after work it's back home for more of the same. But while very few men in their right minds would try for such a job, very few women can get anything else.

Home helps in Leeds have already been upgraded. This means that they are now getting 17 pence an hour more. Many have even lost out on higher tax and national insurance. Even the male home help who works the longest hours (39) still takes home £60-£70 after stoppages. And while John Edmonds thinks up more regrading terms the only way to describe a home help's job is 'low-paid drudgery'.

John Parker  
Leeds Nalگو

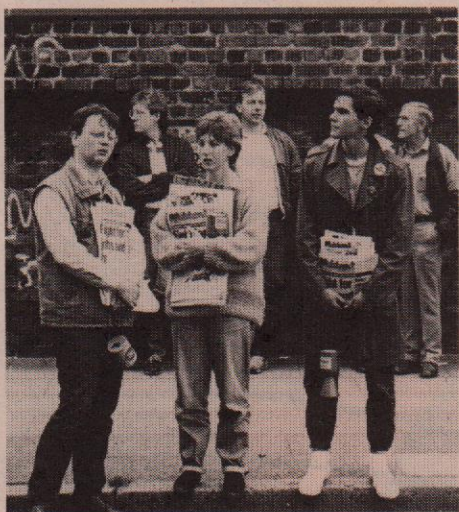
## What's the difference?

I have been getting *ins* for several weeks and I now look forward to reading it every Thursday. I find that I am in agreement with just about everything in the paper which was quite a surprise at first. However, one thing I haven't been able to work out fully is what distinction you make in your approach to the Labour Party and the trade unions.

This really struck me reading your two editorials on the witch-hunt of Militant in Liverpool. I have no disagreements with your approach to the Labour Party or your assessment of Militant. I fully sympathise with your view that 'the internal affairs of the Labour Party are their problem'. But I think it is therefore inconsistent to say that 'the unions are a different matter'. Surely the trade union leaders are even more reactionary than their friends in the Labour Party. So why ignore the shenanigans in the

Labour Party and get upset about witch-hunts in the unions?

Martin Colbert  
London SE17



Dave Rourke (Jettzeit)

## Say no to no-strike deal

Company unionism has come to Hackney! Our union officials in Nalگو are recommending that we vote for a union-management agreement which includes a selective no-strike deal at our next union meeting. The agreement gives the council an open invitation to decide who should scab in any future dispute. If it goes through we won't have a union to speak of anymore.

Our officials are prepared to give up the right to strike in return for a management-controlled closed shop. They are telling us to give up our rights so that they can maintain a shell of a union. But what good is a union that cannot organise effective action to council workers whose jobs and living standards are on the line?

The officials tell us that the UMA will protect the closed shop and strengthen union organisation. What a joke! The agreement gives management complete control of recruitment and funds. The only thing it will strengthen is the employers' ability to attack us. How can we trust employers who are harassing low-paid workers, refusing to pay bonuses to manual workers in the parks division and threatening librarians with pay cuts for refusing to cover for vacant posts! Our officials are telling us to sign away our rights to employers who are trampling them underfoot now.

We want a strong union as well. But we're not going to get it by surrendering our rights to the bosses. We need a union that is 100 per cent solid and 100 per cent independent of the bosses. We should get rid of the present method of collecting union dues — automatic deduction by the employers — and start collecting the money ourselves. This way we'll strengthen the links between the officials and the rank and file and make the union more accountable to its members.

We also need to get rid of a few people. Some of our members are senior town hall managers. They've sabotaged every strike we've ever had. The new agreement formalises their scab status by making them part of the no-strike deal. We've got to kick them out and stand up for our rights. The council is walking all over us and all our officials can do is give up our right to strike. We need a union that wages war on the bosses, not one that makes sweetheart deals. Come to our meeting in Hackney on 16 January (see Come along!) and take control in 1986.

Tony  
Hackney Nalگو

## Come along!



Chris Black (Jettzeit)

## Looking forward to '86

The scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers has big plans for 1986. After gaining ground from the official NUM in the Midlands, Lancashire and Scotland, UDM leader Roy Lynk intends to extend his organisation into the NUM's former Yorkshire stronghold. He is claiming a membership of 40 000 and boasts that he will have another 40 000 in 18 months time. The UDM is exploiting the climate of fear and demoralisation that prevails in the coalfields after the defeat of the miners' strike to build a broad base for scab unionism. But the UDM can only go forward if we fail to build a fighting alternative to both the business unionism of the breakaway leaders and the bureaucratic strategy of the NUM.

Supporters of the miners' next step in the coalfields are facing up to the challenge. In the weeks before Christmas we held meetings for

activists in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Nottinghamshire to put the case against the UDM and for a new NUM. Next week we'll be protesting against Frank Haynes, the NUM-sponsored, pro-UDM Labour MP for Ashfield in Nottinghamshire, and holding street meetings in Sheffield, Leeds and Pontefract to rally support for our campaign. Start the New Year as you mean to carry on and come along!

Saturday 11 January 10am-12noon  
Kick out Lynk's Labour lackeys  
Station Street  
Kirkby in Ashfield

Saturday 11 January 11am  
Stop the UDM street meetings  
Sheffield, Fargate  
Leeds, Dortmund Square  
Pontefract, outside town hall

### • Beat back the racists

East London Workers Against Racism is defending a number of Asian families against racist attacks. We need to mobilise wider local resistance to stop the racists. Come to the Elwar activists meetings and get involved.

#### Newham

Thursday 9 January 7.30pm  
Durning Hall  
Earlham Grove  
Forest Gate E7  
(Forest Gate British Rail)

#### Hackney

Thursday 9 January 7.30pm  
Pembury Tavern  
Amhurst Road  
Hackney E8

### • Preparing for Power

We're preparing now for our Preparing for Power annual summer school. Spend a week discussing, debating and enjoying yourself with the Revolutionary Communist Party in London from 25 July to 1 August. Plan ahead and book your holidays now. For further information contact Ann Burton on 01-729 0414



### • Time to take control

Public meeting  
Thursday 16 January 7.30pm  
Speakers

- Rank and file Yorkshire miner involved in the campaign against the UDM
  - Nalگو member from Hackney on what the no-strike deal means for council workers
  - Activist from *ins* on the TUC retreat and how to go forward
- Pembury Tavern  
Amhurst Road  
Hackney E8  
Contact 01-729 0414  
for further information

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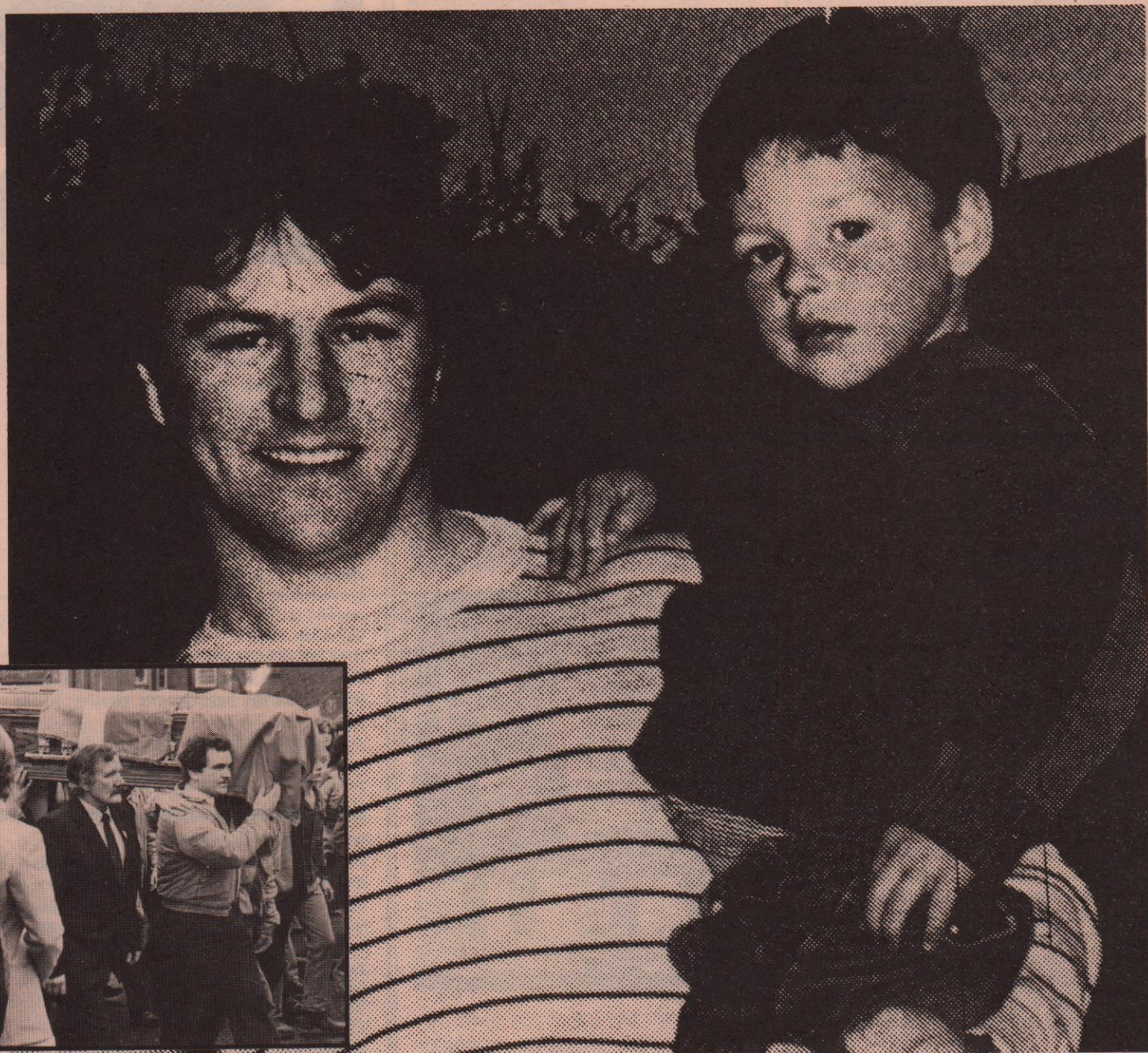
# British hypocrites praise Irish hero

## APRIL 1985

- An SAS assassin tries to shoot Irishman Pearse Moore as a 'terrorist'
- Royal Ulster Constabulary men arrest Pearse, beat him and threaten to kill him
- The British media say — *nothing*

## DECEMBER 1985

- Pearse Moore dies in a fire trying to save his son
- Royal Ulster Constabulary men pretend to cry at the death scene
- The British media say — *'He's a hero'*



Pearse Moore and his son Michael were buried together beneath republican flags

**T**he vultures of the British media can change their description of an Irishman from 'terrorist' to 'hero' overnight without even blushing-Phil Murphy reports.

'Blaze tragedy' was how the *Sun* started its report on a fatal Northern Ireland fire in late December: 'Brave Pearse Moore died with his son Michael in his blazing Londonderry home yesterday. He had already saved his wife and two children.' The pro-Unionist *Belfast Newsletter* echoed Fleet Street's theme with a 'We salute his bravery' eulogy to Pearse Moore. And outside the house where Pearse and Michael died, hardened members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary dabbed their eyes with handkerchiefs.

Pearse Moore was undoubtedly a brave man. As fire engulfed his home in the Galliagh district of Derry in the early hours of a December Sunday morning, his only thought was for his family. He saw two of his children to safety and put his pregnant wife Gabrielle out through a back window, before going back into the fire to try to save three-year old Michael. Their bodies were found together only a few feet from escape through the window.

Yet the emotion and admiration displayed by police and press were really a stomach-churning display of hypocrisy. For the media and security forces who seemed so upset about Pearse Moore's death had spent the last three years hounding, arresting and trying to kill him as a republican supporter of Irish freedom from British rule.

The media may have praised Pearse Moore in death, but they made no mention of his life story. Because to his family and friends in the nationalist community of Derry, Pearse Moore was no overnight hero. He was much more than a brave father who

died tragically. He was a highly-respected republican activist who devoted his adult years not only to his family, but also to the cause of Irish freedom. Nearly a thousand nationalists, including many leading republicans, attended his funeral to follow the coffin draped with the Irish tricolour and Starry Plough. Some who were on the run from the British security forces secretly crossed the Border from the South, risking arrest to pay their last respects to their comrade in the struggle to liberate Ireland.

The media made much of Pearse Moore's dedication to his family. But they did not mention how the family had been torn apart by the British authorities for almost two years, or how Pearse had never seen his dead son Michael until the boy was 20 months old. That was because on the day Gabrielle was due to go into hospital to have the baby in 1982, police armed with machine guns raided the Moore's home and dragged Pearse off to jail. He was charged with being a member of the Irish National Liberation Army and held on the uncorroborated word of supergrass and psychiatric patient Jackie Grimley, until the farcical trial collapsed in November 1983. Throughout the court case the papers branded Pearse a 'ruthless terrorist'. Now they call him a hero. But his refusal to crack during the ordeal of his imprisonment made Pearse Moore a hero to his people when Fleet Street wanted him hanged, drawn and quartered.

In 1985 the media hypocrites who now mourn Pearse Moore stayed silent when a British SAS assassination squad tried to kill him. And the RUC men who wiped away mock tears at the fire weren't crying when they held a cacked rifle to his head, locked him up without charge for several seven-day spells at Castlereagh interrogation centre, and repeatedly threatened to shoot him

dead. In the last months of his life Pearse was often forced to go across the Border to escape harassment from the occupying forces. He rarely slept in his own home, to spare his family from suffering yet another early morning raid by the RUC or the Army. The night of the fire was the first time he had slept at home for more than a week.

Behind all their crocodile tears, the media and the security forces knew the real score with Pearse Moore. They didn't mind exploiting the tragedy of his death for a Christmas human interest story. But in the end they still thought of him and treated him as a 'terrorist'. There were no reports of the republican friends at his funeral. There were no reports of the real tears wept by young and old nationalists alike, as his mother and aunts ended the funeral service by singing the republican anthem, the *Soldiers' Song*: 'Soldiers are we, whose lives are pledged to Ireland.' And there were no reports of how armoured RUC and Army landrovers shepherded the cortege to the city cemetery, only kept back by women mourners linking arms across the road, while an Army helicopter hovered overhead with a high-powered camera and drowned out the graveside service.

**Pearse Moore was a hero for a day in the British and Unionist press. For the rest of his life he was an enemy of the Crown to be hunted and harassed.**

But he was never intimidated into betraying his belief in Irish freedom. And despite the distress caused by his death and the final acts of British harassment that followed, his family retains the spirit of freedom. The Moores have nothing but contempt for the British hypocrites who have tried to convert Pearse from a hate figure to a hero. And Pearse would have felt the same.

Last April he told *tns* about the SAS attack, the RUC death threats and the beatings he got in custody. 'The policeman cocked his rifle at me and said, "Lie down you." I said, "No, you shoot me if you want, I've had enough of this, I'm getting up."' That message to the British authorities occupying Northern Ireland makes a better epitaph to the real bravery of Irishmen like Pearse Moore than anything written by the hacks and hypocrites in Fleet Street or Belfast.

We send our deepest sympathy to Pearse Moore's family. An appeal fund has been set up for his wife and children, and donations should be sent to The Moore Family Appeal Fund, c/o BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

# RCP

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