

tms

the next step

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Ireland: Loyalist strikes and British frame-ups pages 2,3

Fulham: Tory troubles and Alliance 'alternatives' page 4

Wapping: Murdoch's moves and Dean's defeatism page 5

French elections: Mitterrand and the new left page 8

10

Why Labour's
economic plans
can't create jobs -

See pages 6,7



DAVID ROUPKE

DANGER

KINNOCK AT WORK

PEOPLE POWER

Throughout the West politicians and the media have celebrated the departure of president Marcos of the Philippines, and the inauguration of his successor, Cory Aquino. The mass demonstrations of 'people power' in Manila over the past two weeks have been hailed as a key factor in effecting the transition from a brutal dictatorship to a democratic regime.

The rulers of the West, especially in the USA, which has long been the power-broker in the Philippines, have reason to be pleased with the outcome of months of turbulence which culminated in the February elections. Although Marcos has been a bastion of US influence in South-east Asia for many years, his record of repression and corruption provoked growing opposition and instability at home. By the time of his departure, guerrilla revolt was simmering in 63 out of 72 provinces, and the middle classes and substantial sections of the business community and army were alienated from his regime. The problem was to transfer power to a new government, without risking even greater disturbance to the established order.

The Aquino government is little more than the previous administration, minus Marcos. It includes prominent former Marcos supporters alongside respectable opposition figures. It is staunchly pro-capitalist and pro-US. One of Aquino's first moves was to promise not even to consider the future of US bases in the Philippines before 1991. Reagan, who continued his old pals act with Marcos to the end, can congratulate his team in Manila for its role in helping to install such a sympathetic regime. The greatest advantage of the new regime over the old is that, at least for the moment, it enjoys considerable popular support.

The displays of 'people power' in the Philippines showed the capacity of the working class and the oppressed to transform society. The mass demonstrations, that prevented Marcos from deploying his armed forces against the opposition, offered a glimpse of the

potential of the working class to overthrow the established order. Yet so far 'people power' has stopped a long way short of tackling the basic source of exploitation and oppression in the Philippines. Indeed it has been harnessed by a ruling class alternative to Marcos. It is significant that Western glorifications of 'people power' did not begin until this potentially explosive force was safely under the control of the Aquino machine.

The success of the Aquino team in rallying mass support owes much to the feeble leadership of the working class. The radical Bayan movement, which incorporates the major independent trade union federation KMU, proved incapable of putting forward a coherent strategy in the recent elections. Most of its leaders defected to the Aquino camp. The strength of the Communist Party lies in the countryside, where its New People's Army has waged a fairly successful guerrilla struggle against Marcos' demoralised forces. Its urban front organisation, the New Democratic Front, boycotted the election.

Aquino's Laban party succeeded in attracting considerable support from workers and peasants by adapting to the narrow anti-Marcos, anti-American outlook of the radical parties, and outflanking them through its vigorous election campaign. The church — particularly its liberation theology wing — plays a key role in mediating between the masses and the Aquino regime, which enjoys the blessing of the conservative hierarchy.

But things are not as rosy as they appear for the USA and its new Filipino stooges. The economy is in ruins, and the new regime will face great difficulty in reconciling the demands of 'people power' with its commitment to the system of 'crony capitalism', built up under Marcos. If the spirit recently displayed by the masses on the streets was matched by a programme for overthrowing Filipino capitalism, Aquino's Western backers would soon lose their enthusiasm for 'people power'.

OLOF PALME

It is not often that the passing of a Western statesman is mourned both in Moscow and Washington. Yet after the assassination of Sweden's premier Olof Palme last weekend, the Soviet Communist Party congress stood in a minute's silence. Meanwhile Reagan paid tribute to 'a man who made compassion a hallmark of Swedish policy'.

Palme is remembered as a symbol of international peace and reconciliation. He criticised both France in the fifties and the USA in the sixties for waging war in Vietnam. He campaigned for a nuclear-free zone in Europe, for an end to apartheid in South Africa, and in support of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Together with German social democrat Willy Brandt, he published the North-South Report, a scheme for alleviating third world poverty. Palme appeared as the conscience of a barbarous world order — the good guy in the rogues' gallery of Western leaders.

The position of Sweden in world affairs allowed Palme to act as a patron of liberal causes. Like other smaller European

countries, Sweden has prospered as a participant in the world capitalist order while leaving the dirty work of policing the system to big powers like Britain, France and the USA. Hence Swedish capitalism has acquired a benevolent image, although it exploits workers at home and abroad just as much as the more aggressive world powers. Palme's pacifism reflected the fact that a small country like Sweden depends on diplomacy rather than muscle to defend its stake in the world.

Palme's death has a symbolic significance. For 50 years of almost uninterrupted social democratic government, Sweden has been the dreamland of stable and popular capitalism. But today even Sweden cannot escape strife at home and international tension. Before his death, Palme introduced a three-year pay freeze, provoking the first major strikes in decades. At the same time his government boosted military spending. It is not surprising that Palme's violent end has sent a shudder through the West. If Sweden is no longer safe, what chance is there for Spain or Belgium...or Britain?

LOYALIST STRIKE



IAN PAISLEY'S POSITION IS UNDER THREAT

BRITAIN SAYS NO TO 'ULSTER'

Monday's 24-hour strike by Loyalists in Northern Ireland was to be a united show of strength against the Anglo-Irish agreement. But the picket lines could not hide the growing tension and divisions within the Unionist camp. It is becoming clear to all that the Loyalists cannot make the British authorities ditch the deal with Dublin they signed in November.

Monday's events — the solid support from the Belfast shipyards, the displays of bravado at Ballylumford power station, road-blocks in Loyalist strongholds — were predictable enough. More interesting was last week's row among leading Loyalists, that led to the strike.

Thatcher will not give in to Loyalist protests like this week's strike

Democratic Unionist Party boss Ian Paisley, and Official Unionist Party chief James Molyneux, had gone to Downing Street to confront Margaret Thatcher. They soon emerged in conciliatory mood, claiming that Thatcher had promised them more say in Northern Ireland affairs. This change of heart indicated that their objection to the agreement was their exclusion from the negotiating process. But the new Paisley/Molyneux line did not impress Loyalists in Belfast, who had believed their leaders' earlier bluster about 'smashing the agreement'. They forced the Unionist chiefs to do another about-face, dismiss Thatcher's proposals, and call a 12-hour protest strike for Monday.

Both Unionist party leaders are now under real pressure. Molyneux has been attacked by his respectable middle class supporters for backing a strike. Paisley has been criticised by those who pose as hardliners among his supporters, led by his deputy Peter Robinson, for being too moderate. For almost the first time in his career as the top bigot in 'Ulster', Paisley has come near to slipping down the road to oblivion that traditionally awaits Loyalist leaders who stray too far from their fire-and-brimstone roots. Meanwhile, Molyneux tried to appease his supporters by condemning violence, and Robinson was outflanked by an unofficial Loyalist committee which unilaterally extended Monday's strike to 24 hours.

The turmoil among Loyalists reflects their growing sense of frustration at their inability to sway Thatcher. Polls suggest many Protestants may be resigned to the agreement. A militant minority will express their desperation through force. But there is still no groundswell of support for all-out action against the deal.

Commentators who compared Monday's strike to the 1974 Ulster Workers' Council stoppage, which brought down a British scheme for power-sharing in Northern Ireland, must have been banking on British people having short memories. Even the petrol bombs and barricades on display this week bore no comparison to the dark days of 1974, when the Loyalist paramilitaries took control of essential services, and masked men promised to blow up cars crossing picket lines. Like the '24-hour general strikes' now familiar on the Continent, Monday's effort was more a gesture of Loyalist sympathies than a serious attempt to make a political impact.

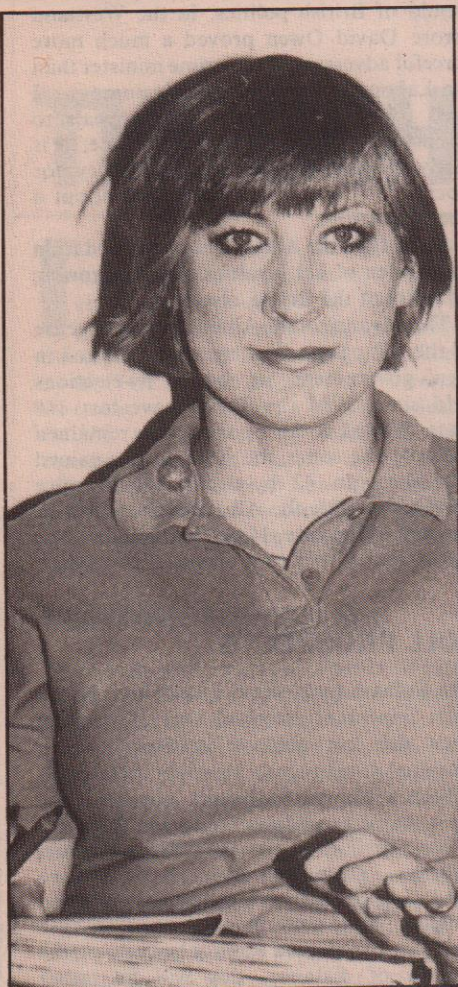
A key difference between 1974 and 1986 is the attitude of the British establishment. Twelve years ago significant sections of the British elite — including the BBC and, most importantly, the Army chiefs — were willing to back the Loyalists against the Labour government. This time the authorities, excepting a few Tory eccentrics, are united behind the Anglo-Irish agreement. They appreciate that the success of Thatcher's deal with Dublin, in tightening cross-Border security and undermining the republican movement, is crucial to containing the war in the North. There is no sign that the Army would object to moving against the Protestant paramilitaries. The Loyalists can achieve little without some support from the British sponsors who built their Northern Ireland power base, and who guarantee their privileges over nationalists in the colony of Northern Ireland.

NATIONALISTS SUFFER

There will be more short, sharp protests like Monday's strike in the period ahead, especially as the marching season starts in Portadown on 31 March. But Thatcher and her Northern Ireland secretary Tom King are unlikely to be moved. King will carry on trying to get some form of devolved government going by the year's end, which he hopes can give an air of legitimacy to British rule.

After Monday, the conflict that really counts in Northern Ireland remains the one between the British state and the republican fighters for Irish freedom.

As the situation becomes more unstable, nationalist supporters of Irish freedom will suffer from all sides. If the Protestant paramilitaries turn to violence, nationalists will be on the receiving end. And the extra British troops, sent in to supervise Monday's events, will soon be pursuing the sort of activity that recently put two young Irishmen in their graves. When the security forces clashed with Loyalists at last year's Portadown march, both sides saved their most vicious outbursts for the nationalist counter-demonstrators. This year's marching season promises a bloodier repeat performance — unless the British shoot-to-kill squads assassinate enough nationalists to placate the Loyalists before then.



TERESA CUSHNAHAN HAS A FILE FULL OF SYMPATHETIC LETTERS ABOUT PAUL HILL — NOW SHE WANTS ACTION

PAUL HILL HAS BEEN JAILED FOR HIS NATURAL LIFE, SPENT 1438 DAYS IN SOLITARY, BEEN TORTURED AND SEEN HIS FAMILY TERRORISED BECAUSE HE'S...

GUILTY OF BEING BORN IN BELFAST

One October evening in 1974, when I was 14, police pulled me off my pushbike at the first road-block they had ever set up in my hick Surrey hometown. They were looking for the IRA members who had just bombed two pubs, up the road in Guildford. I wasn't one of them, so the law let me go. Others were not so lucky. Four people who had as little to do with the bomb attack as I had were arrested, convicted, and are still suffering in jail, 12 years on. One of them is Paul Hill.

In the vocabulary of the British authorities, 'political prisoners' are people persecuted in the Soviet Union, Libya or Latin America. But Paul Hill is a political prisoner a bit closer to home — in Hull. Over the last 12 years, he has received the special treatment reserved for those branded as 'Irish terrorists'. 'When I saw him the other day', Hill's aunt Theresa Cushman told me in her north London home last week, 'he was really wretched-looking. They're torturing him in Hull, trying to destroy him. They want him to come out of there in a coffin.'

SAKHAROV AND HILL

Paul Hill is no stranger to being buried alone in a dark hole. He has spent four years of his 12-year imprisonment in the hell of solitary confinement, sometimes stripped naked in a 'strongbox'. 'I almost laughed when I heard the TV complaining that Sakharov had done 400 days solitary in Russia,' said Theresa. 'Our Paul's done nearly four times as much in Britain.' That includes two nine-month stretches of solitary in the seventies, after Hill was involved in protests against atrocious prison conditions, at Hull and at Albany on the Isle of Wight. Before they locked him up alone

from autumn through to summer after the Hull riot of 1976, the prison screws said goodbye by beating Hill up and down the jail.

'All the prisoners got very badly beaten', Theresa remembers, 'but the Irish prisoners got it the worst. The screws made then crawl around the prison floor on their hands and knees, singing "God Save the Queen".'

Paul Hill has just been moved back to Hull, 'a disgusting, filthy place', says Theresa. He's in a special control unit, and he still bears the scars of the last time the screws decided to 'control' him. In a February letter, Hill told Theresa he won't talk to Hull prison doctors because, 'The only memory I have of medics here was them running alongside me when I was being beaten, shouting, "Don't mark his face!" to the screws.' The move to Hull means Hill has suffered a total of 41 transfers. Keep 'em moving, keep 'em miserable, is the authorities' attitude to Irish political prisoners in British jails.

Irish political prisoners are split into two categories. There are those who were convicted after being caught playing a part in the republican struggle for Irish freedom. And then there are those who have been framed. They are jailed just because they were Irish people, who could be locked up to suit the purposes of the British authorities and their media agents. The six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings are one such group of victims. The Guildford 4 — Paul Hill, Gerard Conlon, Patrick Armstrong and Carole Richardson — are another.

Hill was arrested on the strength of 'information' that sounds like a throwaway remark in a public bar: a British intelligence officer, who knew him in Belfast, said a

photofit picture of a woman issued after the Guildford bombings 'looked like Paul Hill in a wig'. The picture turned out to be of a girl injured in the explosions. But that didn't matter. As Theresa said, 'The authorities wanted someone, so why not Paul? He was Irish, that made him as "guilty" as anybody else so far as they were concerned.'

'WE'LL CHARGE HER'

Hill was arrested in Southampton along with his girlfriend, Gina. He was a 21-year old building worker. She was 17 and two months pregnant. The only 'evidence' on which Hill was later convicted was a statement he signed in police custody.

'He signed that because they deprived him totally of food and sleep for three days, and they hammered the hell out of him,' says Theresa.

'They kept Gina sitting in the front of the police station. Every time they took Paul to be interrogated he had to pass her, pregnant and crying her eyeballs out. They told him, "If you don't sign, we'll charge her with murder." So he "confessed"'. He had faith in the courts then, like an idiot, he thought his statement was so farcical it would just be thrown out. But it wasn't. Instead, as Paul Hill stood in the dock nursing the bruises he had got from yet another beating, he was sentenced to the longest sentence handed down in a British court — the rest of his natural life.

The other three victims who make up the Guildford 4 were arrested soon after Hill, and forced to make statements in the same way. And, as the authorities launched an anti-Irish pogrom, all of Hill's family were arrested or raided. 'They came to all of us, 15 police with dogs,' says Theresa. 'We were

terrified, worried about what people would do to our children, worried about our jobs. They were debating bringing back hanging! My brother-in-law got stopped in a car in a Surrey lane. The police put a gun to his head and said, "We're going to give you what you gave them." They held my 17-year old niece illegally, and told her she couldn't make a phone-call because, "You Irish have got no f—ing rights."'

ARTICULATE IRA

Question: who are the people who know, beyond any shadow of a doubt, who planted IRA bombs? Answer: the IRA. But the British authorities disagree.

At the end of 1975, an IRA active service unit was captured in London after what became known as the Balcombe Street siege. The IRA volunteers made it clear that they, and not the four people convicted, had bombed those Guildford pubs. They outlined every detail of the attacks, even who they had sat next to while planting the explosives. 'I read the statements made by the Guildford 4,' says Theresa. 'They were rubbish, a 10-year old child could have done better. But the Balcombe Street unit's statements were so articulate, everything was dead-on.' In court, the IRA volunteers instructed their lawyers to offer no defence, but to concentrate on proving that they had planted the Guildford bombs. That won Hill, Armstrong, Conlon and Richardson an appeal. But the judges sitting without a jury, Belfast-style, threw it out.

Today Paul Hill still suffers every harassment imaginable at the hands of his British jailers. If he has a jug of water overnight, they spit in it. If he has a pen, they put a dud refill in it. If he has a radio, they play it until the batteries wear out. But they have not worn out his determination to be free.

Theresa Cushman is trying to get politicians and officials to pressurise the authorities over Hill's case. But the British establishment cannot afford to give in easily. Hill was convicted on the basis that every Irish man or woman is a 'terrorist'. The authorities cannot admit that's not true without undermining the whole justification for their colonial war against the Irish people.

'To the police', says Theresa, 'these people were just four wasted lives anyway, they were Irish so they didn't matter. We're sub-human in their eyes.'

BRITISH JUSTICE

In his speech from the dock during the Balcombe Street trial, IRA volunteer Joe O'Connell exposed the tricks of the legal trade through which the court had 'proved' the Guildford 4 were bombers: 'This shifty manoeuvring typifies what we, as Irish republicans, have come to understand by the words "British justice"'. He ended by savaging the 'independence' of the legal system, saying his unit had 'fought to free our oppressed nation from its bondage to British imperialism, of which this court is an integral part.'

Paul Hill had nothing to do with the Balcombe Street volunteers or the Guildford pub bombings. But I wonder if he would disagree with Joe O'Connell's description of 'British justice' for the Irish. As he sits with a water jug full of warders' spit, in the vicious control unit of a dirty little English jail, after 1438 days of solitary confinement, I somehow doubt it.

Mick Hume

STOP STRIP SEARCHES!

As part of our ongoing campaign in support of Irish prisoners, the Irish Freedom Movement is supporting a mass picket of Brixton prison on Saturday 22 March, 11.30am — 1.30pm, to protest against the strip searching of Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer. Join us!

FULHAM BY-ELECTION

THE THIRD MAN

In south-west London the three largest parties are about to undergo an important political test. As soon as Margaret Thatcher names the day, the Tories, Labour and the SDP-Liberal Alliance will officially begin their campaigns in the Fulham by-election. But there is more at stake in Fulham than one seat in parliament. The result will be an important indicator of the balance of party forces before the next general election.

Fulham is a small constituency on the north bank of the Thames, the home of both Chelsea and Fulham football clubs — and the Hurlingham tennis and croquet club. There is little industry — the biggest employer is the Charing Cross hospital. Unemployment stands at 14 per cent, about the national average. It is a predominantly white, middle class, inner-city area in which the proportion of blacks — 12 per cent — is much lower than in most central London boroughs.

In the last decade Fulham's electoral roll has been re-written by thousands of yuppies — young upwardly-mobile professionals. The yuppies are squeezing out the traditional working class population. The proportion of professional and managerial staff living in Fulham is 24 per cent higher than the national average. The number of non-manual workers is 22 per cent above average.

The yuppies have sent the price of ordinary terraced houses soaring over the £100 000 mark. Yet only one third of families in Fulham owns its own home. There is a substantial private rented sector — some five times bigger than the national average. High rents and low standards of repair are commonplace in Fulham's flats and bedsits. The proportion in council accommodation has declined to around the 30 per cent mark, leading to a chronic housing shortage for young working class people. Housing is the only real local issue in the forthcoming by-election.

FAREWELL STEVENSVILLE

The Fulham by-election follows the death of popular Tory MP Martin Stevens. Flamboyantly obese, openly gay and assiduous in courting local support, Stevens succeeded veteran right-wing Labour MP Michael Stewart in 1979. In 1983 he increased his majority to 4789, partly on the strength of the national Tory landslide, and partly through being a bit of a character. His sudden death in January — just when the



AN INFLUX OF YUPPIES MAKES FULHAM RIPE FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Westland scandal was about to break — could not have come at a worse time for Thatcher.

Prospective Tory candidate Matthew Carrington looks an unlikely replacement for Stevens. A 38-year old merchant banker, he has no local roots and seems even to lack the sharpness of a City gent. His Tory central office minders are so nervous about his capacity to perform in public that they

In the forthcoming Fulham by-election Alliance candidate Roger Liddle is the man to watch, writes Andrew Calcutt

have so far declined to let him appear at even the most mundane local functions.

In contrast, SDP candidate Roger Liddle is an enthusiastic, even brash, self-publicist. He is a former northern grammar school

boy, member of the Labour Party at Oxford and founder member of the SDP. He is now a full-time party official and leader of the growing Alliance bloc on Lambeth council. On public platforms he has a tendency to lace his speeches with amateurish comments about 'life not being fair on the poor working class people'. He has a long way to climb: in 1983 a Liberal candidate came third with 18 per cent of the poll, in a well below average Alliance performance.

Labour's Nick Raynsford is a safe but unexciting candidate in the Kinnock mould. He is a veteran quango activist in the housing field. He is also a former local councillor, lives in the area and is married with three children. He aims to present a moderate middle-of-the-road image to capture the yuppie support he needs to take the seat from the Tories. He has a lot of ground to recapture: between 1979 and 1983 the Labour vote slumped from 43 to 26 per cent of the poll.

Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of the main candidates in the Fulham by-election, its outcome will be decided more by national than by local factors.

THREE-PARTY POLITICS

In the past three months there has been an unprecedented drop in the level of support for the Tories. The Westland fiasco, and the government's discomfiture over BL, have exposed the deep-seated insecurity of the British establishment and its traditional party. After seven years of Conservative government, Britain continues to be out-performed in every area by nearly every Western country. Thatcher's 'popular capitalism' has yet to show that it can restore the shaken confidence of Tory MPs, never mind Tory voters.

The opinion polls reveal a rapid decline in public approval for the Tory Party. They also reveal that the official Labour opposition has failed to exploit the collapse of the Tories to its own advantage. In parliament Kinnock's waffle proved ineffectual against Thatcher at her most vulnerable. His attempts to present the Labour Party as 'the party of production', and himself as a grave statesmanlike figure, are unconvincing. The continuing purge against Militant is an attempt to reinforce the party's respectable image, but it simply draws attention to the party's marginal left fringe.

The parallel stagnation of the two major parties has allowed the Alliance to consolidate its claim to have broken the

mould of British politics. In the Westland furore David Owen proved a much more forceful adversary of the prime minister than the Labour leader, and Owen's pompous 'I used to be a minister' image appeals to disenchanted Tories. At the same time, he is ready to write an old pal's obituary for 'social democrat' Olof Palme and adopt a liberal posture.

Since 1983 the Alliance has benefited from the erosion of old loyalties and the growing volatility of the British electorate.

The advance of the Alliance at the expense of the old parties is particularly marked in local government. In council by-elections held since 1984 the Tories have lost 168 seats. While Labour's position has remained virtually the same, the Alliance has gained 205 seats. In 42 by-elections held since December 1985, the Alliance has polled 42 per cent of the vote, 14 per cent ahead of the Tories and 17 per cent ahead of Labour.

POLL PROSPECTS

The Fulham by-election is certain to be the most important electoral trial of strength since the last general election. It is a marginal constituency in which three-party politics will be put to the test. Any one of the three major candidates could win the seat.

For Carrington, however, the task seems hopeless. Once an asset to any Tory candidate, the prime minister has become a liability. While party managers could excuse her from Brecon and Radnor last year on the ground of distance, this will be rather difficult in Fulham. Perhaps they will send her on a tour of the Falklands for the duration of the campaign. And most of Thatcher's ministers are not likely to be much help in doing walkabouts down the North End Road. Apparently lacking Stevens' facility in cultivating community organisations and shaking the right hands, Carrington looks like a loser.

Raynsford will be hoping that his expertise in the housing field will pay off in bedsitland. He will be hoping too that, while a hard-core of working class support will stay with Labour, his soft, caring image will win over some of the yuppies. Tony Benn, Denis Skinner and Eric Heffer will be invited to attend a special seminar in the Outer Hebrides for the fortnight, while the faceless Johns (Smith, Prescott and Cunningham) mount the Labour bus to show the people how harmless the Labour Party really is. In a pitch for the youth vote, Red Wedge is ready with plans for a constituency gig once the election date is announced.

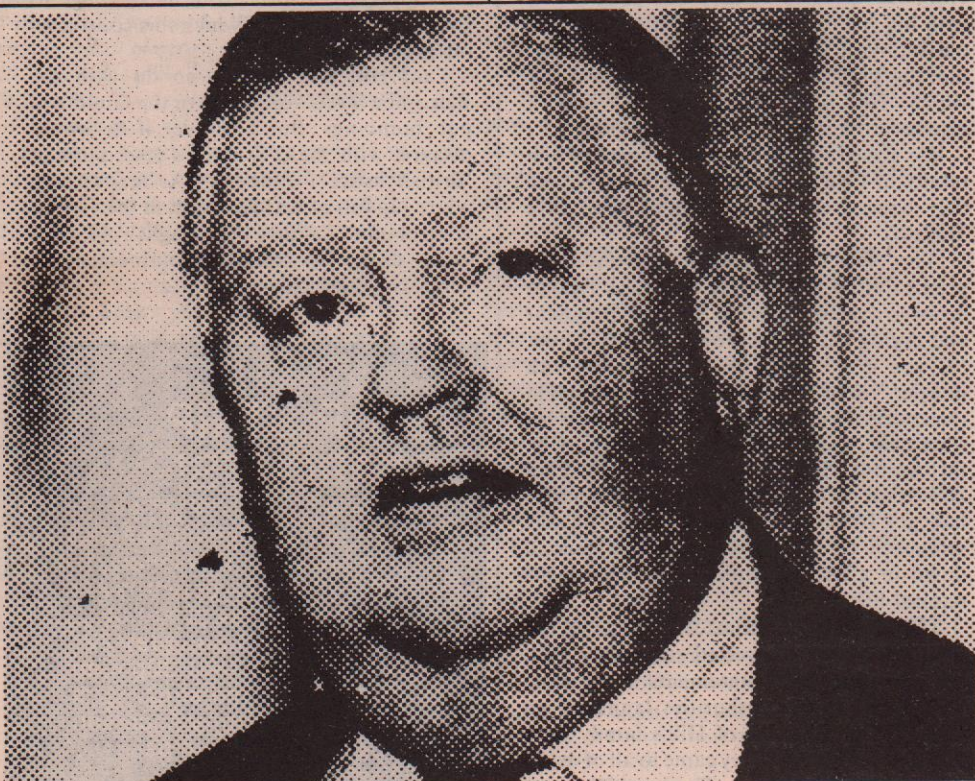
But can Raynsford turn the tide for Labour? Early local opinion polls show him well out in front. But, as Harold Wilson said, 'A week is a long time in politics,' and, as Margaret Thatcher says, 'The only poll that counts is the one on election day.' Given the changing character of the constituency, the long-term decline in Labour's base, its lacklustre national leadership and bland candidate, Labour looks like coming second.

A USELESS 'ALTERNATIVE'

Liddle is well placed to take Fulham. His strongest card is the fact that his party is something new. In Fulham, as in the rest of the country, many people dislike the Tories and especially their leader. Yet many who are hostile to the Tories have little faith in the Labour Party. For middle class people it is tarnished by its associations with Arthur Scargill and Derek Hatton. For working class people it is tarnished by its record in national and local government — and its impotence in opposing the Tory onslaught.

The SDP bears no responsibility for past or present policies, either at Westminster or at Hammersmith and Fulham council. As a representative of the SDP side of the Alliance, Liddle will probably escape responsibility for the antics of Simon Knott, maverick leader of the Liberals on the local council, and for his colleague Robert Mulcahy, currently under investigation for corruption. Barring accidents, Liddle should be shortly returned to represent the non-Tory anti-Labour party in parliament.

He will be useless to the working class of south-west London. But until we've built an opposition that can beat the three-party trick, he's the only sort of 'alternative' British politics will provide.



TODAY'S TORIES LACK THE CHARISMA OF LATE MP MARTIN STEVENS

THE GCHQ ROAD TO WAPPING

In December 1983 the government announced its intention to ban trade union membership at its GCHQ spy centre at Cheltenham. The response of the civil service union leaders, coordinated by the TUC, was to inform the government that they would accept a no-strike deal at GCHQ as the price of retaining union membership. When Thatcher dismissed this offer, they embarked on the sort of campaign that has now become the model of official union resistance to attacks on union rights.

MARTYRS' MEMORIALS

The union leaders staged a series of rallies around the country, culminating in a special anniversary commemoration. The celebration of the abolition of union rights at GCHQ now seems to have become an annual event, on a par with the Tolpuddle Martyrs' march. From the beginning, the union leaders made no serious attempt to restore union rights. The spontaneous mass walkout throughout the civil service when the original decision was announced — which showed the way to put pressure on the government — was restrained by the union leaders. As they delayed and vacillated, the revolt lost momentum.



BRENDA DEAN

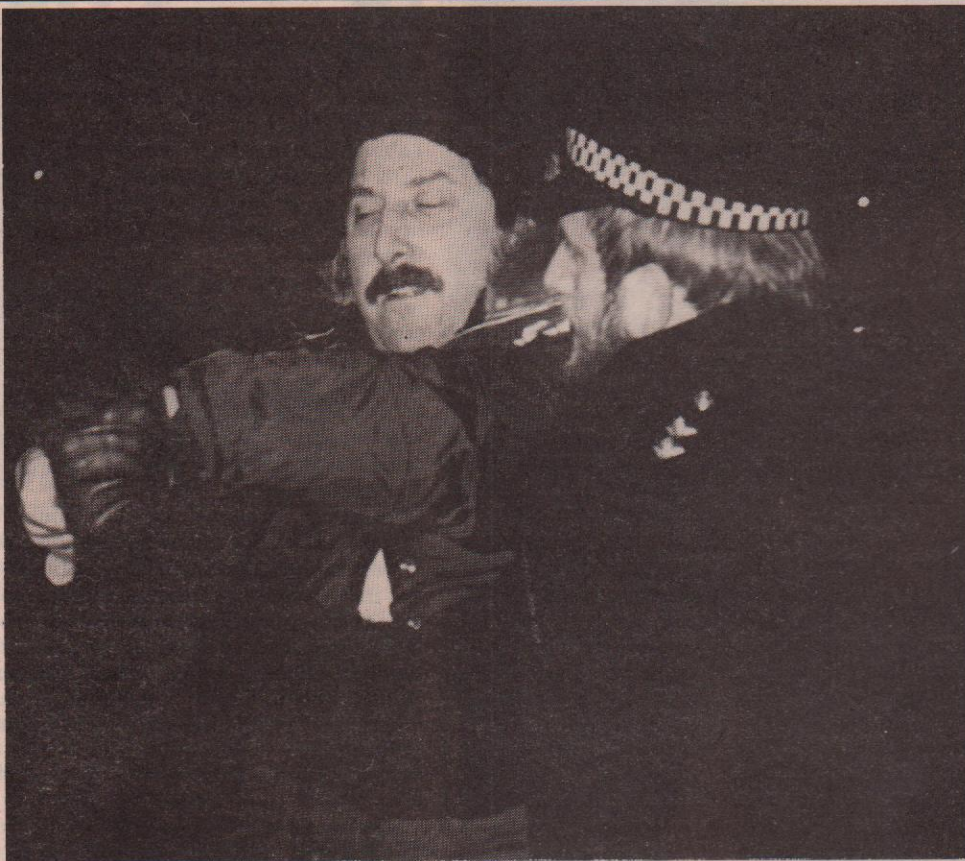
The print union leaders seem to be more concerned to make people feel sorry for them than they are to win the battle against Murdoch

Once the anger had subsided, the TUC started posturing about 'days of action' if anybody was sacked at GCHQ. Given that the handful of workers who remained union members were no threat, the TUC's bluff was never called. 'We are harmless, pathetic creatures who have been shamefully abused by the Tories,' is the union leaders' message over GCHQ. 'Don't worry about trade union rights — just feel sorry for us,' is their appeal to the British public. In the current dispute in the print, union leaders are following the same strategy.

PRINT SURRENDER

When Rupert Murdoch's plans to transfer production of his papers from Fleet Street to Wapping became known to the print union leaders last year, their first response was to rush to meet his demands. A delegation, headed once again by TUC leader Norman Willis, offered to accept up to 4000 redundancies, flexible working conditions and what amounted to a no-strike agreement. But Murdoch was not interested in making deals — his aim was to smash the print unions.

Yet our union leaders are not people to take a kick in the teeth for an answer. They are ready to crawl back for a fresh humiliation.



POLICE ARREST WAPPING PICKETS WHILE UNION LEADERS APPEAL FOR MERCY

Weeks after press baron Murdoch has sacked more than 5000 workers and launched his scabbing operation, the union leaders will still go back for more. However, the union leaders have put most of their effort into trying to swing public opinion behind their cause. Union officials have ensured that the pickets at Wapping don't try to stop scabs going in, or newspapers coming out. They have carefully disorganised mass pickets, to make sure that there is no attempt to disrupt the scabbing operation. They have even discouraged miners and other trade unionists from joining the picket lines, in case they lose control.

The print union leaders' main initiative is a poster campaign featuring a sentimental appeal for sympathy for the child of one of the printers. They have also announced a series of rallies. It is not yet certain whether plans have been made for the anniversary commemoration of the day Murdoch smashed the print unions. But if the union leaders carry on down the GCHQ road, they will soon be sending out invitations to the bureaucrats and the bishops. They could invite the Red Wedge team, book the Albert Hall and make a real occasion of it. Perhaps they will link up the GCHQ workers, the miners, whose strike anniversary is this week — and the Addenbrookes hospital workers, abandoned last week by their union leaders after 16 months on the picket line — and organise an annual 'Defeat Day' demonstration.

DEAN'S DESPAIR

Print union leader Brenda Dean wants to turn the fight for jobs and union rights into a moral crusade. 'This is a very principled dispute,' she says in a recent interview, because the unions are on 'high moral ground'. In Dean's view the fact that the print workers have been savaged by a ruthless employer justifies the unions' strategy of trying 'to get the message quietly across to people'. How can people help? asks Dean's interviewer. Dean replies: 'They could help us first of all by boycotting Mr Murdoch's titles. Secondly, they could help us by lending support in speaking out at all levels. Denigrating what the EETPU have been doing. Supporting us at Labour Party meetings. Joining us on the rallies and the meetings we are going to have up and down the country. Vocally expressing how they feel about the way our people have been treated.'

Apart from boycotting the *Sun*, which is the

most elementary form of trade union solidarity, Dean's proposals are either misdirected or simply pious gestures.

Dean's suggestion of 'denigrating the EETPU' was made before EETPU leader Eric Hammond agreed to join the print union leaders and the TUC last week in a joint approach to Murdoch. The fact that Hammond could be so easily readmitted to the fold, after collaborating in Murdoch's scab operation, shows that the other union leaders differ little from his approach. Dean's advice to sympathisers to go to rallies and 'speak out' won't help the print workers get their jobs back.

Another representative of the print union Sogat, writing in this week's *New Statesman*, sums up the fatalism of the official labour movement. After detailing Murdoch's brutal treatment of the print workers, Jean Sargeant ends with a bitter message for Murdoch: 'As for my personal redundancy, Mr Murdoch, you've worked hard for it. Perhaps you need it more than I do. Feel free.' This is the spirit of resignation encouraged by the sort of leadership offered by the British trade union movement.

There are many workers in the print and in other industries who are not prepared to give up their jobs, surrender their trade union rights and satisfy themselves with pleas for mercy. They know that speaking softly from 'high moral ground' makes not the slightest impression on bosses like Murdoch. They recognise that an ounce of trade union solidarity action is worth a ton of public sympathy. To win at Wapping, we need to tell the union leaders to stop their surrender talks with Murdoch and scrap their anniversary plans.

We need to stop trying to sway middle class public opinion and start organising working class direct action to hit Murdoch where it hurts. We need:

• a workers' strike committee

The locked-out workers in different unions need to be brought together in one strike committee which can start organising real rank and file resistance.

• A national print strike

If the print workers are not going to be picked off paper by paper, the time for action is now: a national print strike would put pressure on all the newspaper barons to preserve jobs and conditions.

• Shut down Wapping

A total blockade of Murdoch's plant through coordinated trade union action which hits the scab operation at every level would soon force him to concede to our demands.

Helen Swift

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

NOT CRICKET

In 1882 the *Sporting Times* published an obituary for English cricket, noting that its ashes had been taken to Australia after its first victory over the Marylebone Cricket Club. The next year England won the series in Australia. Two Australian ladies burnt the bails used in the match, and sent the ashes to the headquarters of English cricket at Lord's, where they remain to this day. But the damage had been done: the wild colonial boys had beaten the poms at their own game. Things would never be the same again.

Current events in the Caribbean show that English cricket has been going downhill ever since. As well as its now regular ritual slaughter by the West Indies, the England team has endured periodic defeats by India and even the staggering blow of a test defeat in Sri Lanka. Ironically, it seems that the only team England can now beat is Australia. As Jimmy Greaves, the voice of the plain English bigot, put it before last summer's Australian series, 'It's going to be a close one this, they're both rubbish.'

Cricket is a barometer of the national decline because it has long expressed England's assumed national superiority. Behind its sophisticated facade, cricket is a vicious, ruthless game. It embodies the special British sense of fair play familiar to colonial peoples all over the world. The snobbery and chauvinism of English cricket has led the former colonies to take intense pleasure in defeating England. The vulgar behaviour of Australians like Lillee and Marsh and the pointed calypsos of supporters of the West Indies have rubbed salt into the wounds.

What really sticks in the throat of the cricketing establishment is that English cricketers can no longer live on the same field as their former pupils. The stiff upper lip has given way to the bloody nose — and to outbursts of ill-concealed prejudice. As usual the *Sun* expresses these sentiments in their crudest form. Last week it reported that West Indian fast bowler Patrick Patterson, had 'gone back to his cage for some raw meat', after a devastating spell against the England batsmen. They could dish it out in the colonial past, but they can't take it.

Several strategies have emerged to deal with the national disaster in the West Indies. One is to blow up small protests against the England players who have played with their old chums in South Africa, in the hope that this might serve as a pretext for withdrawing the team from the threat of 'terrorism'. But the nearest the England players are likely to get to experiencing terrorism is the sight of a West Indian bowler unleashing another ball in their direction at 90 mph.

They also tried to keep the series off television, hoping that nobody would notice the national humiliation. Now that the authorities are to show edited highlights, they have resorted to another device. These clips will be used as evidence for the emerging theory that these West Indies chaps are not playing the game.

Forgotten is the Bodyline tour of 1934, when England's bouncers were unleashed on the Australians. But the patriotic defenders of fair play have yet to explain how West Indian bowlers, who supposedly did nothing but aim at the body, managed to clean bowl six English batsmen in the second innings of the Jamaica test. Like every bad loser, the English just want to take their stumps home.

LABOUR'S PLANS

'A new partnership — a new Britain' is the title of Labour's plan for national reconstruction. Taking 'efficient, effective production' as its overriding objective, it outlines four central themes:

● Investment

Labour would set up a national investment bank to boost British industry, investing in key manufacturing sectors to revitalise the base of the British economy.

● Reflation

A £5 billion investment programme would aim to stimulate the economy by reviving public services, creating jobs and increasing demand.

● Planning

Kinnock looks to an 'enabling state' to coordinate an economic plan, directed at the redevelopment of the nation's economic infrastructure.

● Partnership

A national economic summit would bring together industrialists and trade union officials, politicians and civil servants at national level. In the workplace Labour would promote schemes of 'industrial democracy', to promote close cooperation between employers and workers. Labour promises to replace the 'confrontation and social division' of Thatcher's Britain with 'a new sense of common purpose'.

THE PARTY OF PRODUCTION

Neil Kinnock proclaims his enthusiasm for Japanese-style capitalism, and Labour Party broadcasts feature him touring British industries promoting 'the party of production' as the solution to Britain's economic collapse. But does Labour's team offer a realistic alternative for British capitalists?

● The profit barrier

Under any future Kinnock government, Labour's desire for higher investment in British industry would inevitably come into conflict with a basic law of capitalism: capitalists only invest in enterprises which will yield a profit. British capitalists have long been reluctant to invest in British industry because it offers such low rates of return. After Kinnock moved into No 10, any sensible British capitalist would continue to invest in more profitable outlets abroad, or speculate in the City, rather than risk investing in stagnant British manufacturing.

Labour's dream investment bank is based on models from Japan and West Germany. In these countries, state institutions have played an important role in mobilising large investment resources and restructuring industry. But the precondition for this strategy is high levels of profitability in industry, to attract investors. Ever since dictatorship, war and post-war repression destroyed effective working class organisations, capitalists in Japan and West Germany have enjoyed high rates of return, giving them a competitive edge over their old adversaries in America and Europe.

Any attempt by a Kinnock government to persuade capitalists to defy the dictates of their system, by investing capital in unprofitable enterprises, will fail. Kinnock could only create suitable conditions for his national investment bank by putting the British working class through the sort of experience endured by workers in Germany and Japan.

● Another profit barrier

Labour's plans for using government spending to promote economic growth will hit another inherent problem of the profit system. All government funds are ultimately derived from the profits generated in industry. Squeezing out more revenue, through various sorts of taxation, can only make low profits even lower.

As British manufacturing is not competitive, higher government spending would be more likely to benefit Japanese car-makers and American computer firms, than to boost domestic industry. Pumping more government money into a moribund economy could only push the balance of payments further into the red and fuel inflation.

● Plan fantastic

Labour's scheme for planning the British economy also contradicts the laws of capitalism. In capitalist society the market brings producers and consumers together, ensures the allocation of resources to profitable sectors and the decline of unprofitable enterprises, and generally enforces the rules of the system. This may be a chaotic way of organising society, but this is capitalist 'planning'.

It is possible for a government to take over planning the economy, but only by suppressing the operation of the market and expropriating private capital. As the Labour Party has no plans for instituting a system of workers' management, its schemes for planning British capitalism must remain at the level of fantasy. You can't have your market and plan it.

In fact, Labour's talk of planning is less a quaint reminder of its socialist traditions, and more an expression of its determination to modernise the British economy through government intervention.

● Partners in crime

There is little distinctive about Labour's proposals on investment, reflation and planning. As Roy Hattersley recently told a meeting of British businessmen, these are areas in which there is 'considerable overlap' between the policies of the Labour Party and those of the Confederation of British Industry. He might have added the leaders of the Alliance parties and Tory dissidents like Michael Heseltine and Edward Heath. The only distinctive contribution the Labour Party can offer to the British establishment is its unique ability to deliver the support of the working class for its programme to save British capitalism.

'Most important of all', Hattersley explained, was the fact that under Labour 'the economy would benefit from the increased emotional involvement of employees in the company'. He quoted with enthusiasm a study of West German industry which had shown that increased workers' participation had led to 'an absolute increase in productivity per worker of 15 per cent'. Labour's major claim to the respect of British capitalists is that it can persuade the labour movement to accept more intense exploitation, and make sacrifices to keep them in business. Kinnock's major change in Labour strategy has been to shift the focus of collaboration between workers and employers, from national to workplace level.

The details of Labour's policies are of no great significance — everybody knows they will not be implemented. What matters for the establishment is that Labour has signalled its willingness to do whatever it is told.

The bosses have only to decide whether, after Thatcherism and mass unemployment have humbled the official labour movement, they still need the services of their old junior partner — and whether it can still deliver workers' acquiescence to austerity.



LABOUR'S INDUSTRY SPOKESMAN JOHN SMITH

Why Labour's economic plans won't work

IF NEIL KINNOCK RULED BRITAIN...

The Labour leadership's purge of Militant shows its determination to display a respectable face at the polls. But if Neil Kinnock won a general election, what would life in Britain be like? *John Pearson* paints a grim picture



ROY HATTERSLEY

THE PARTY OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

'Let us work together — Labour's way out of the crisis.' Sounds familiar? This is not in fact the heading of one of the glossy leaflets in Kinnock's 'jobs and industry' pack. It was the title of Labour's manifesto in the February 1974 election, which brought Labour back to power after four years of Tory government under Edward Heath. 'It is about cooperation and conciliation, not conflict and confrontation,' was how Harold Wilson explained his party's policy to a nation in turmoil as a result of a miners' strike that had forced the government to put most of industry on a three-day week.

Labour's Social Contract offered to get things back to normal through cooperation between government and trade unions, and investment and planning through a national enterprise board. It insisted on the need for an incomes policy and, as a sweetener, promised welfare reforms and industrial democracy in the workplace. It was a programme which won considerable respect within the British establishment, rattled by the trade union revolt against Tory attempts to push down living standards and curb rights. It also won widespread support in a labour movement beginning to feel the impact of the recession. What was the outcome?

● Wage restraint

By September 1977, the *Economist* could celebrate 'the biggest recorded fall in the average Briton's real disposable income for over a hundred years: worse than anything that happened in the thirties'.

● Public spending

In response to the deepening crisis of the British economy in 1976, Labour chancellor Denis Healey adopted the tight money policies later championed by the Thatcher team. Between 1976 and 1979 he imposed public spending cuts amounting to nearly £5 billion: schools, hospitals and other welfare services were badly hit.

● Unemployment

When Labour came to power the number of people out of work was 600 000. Within months the level was accelerating upwards. It passed the one million mark in early 1976 and topped 1.5 million in 1977. For many, 'working together' with Labour came to mean not working at all.

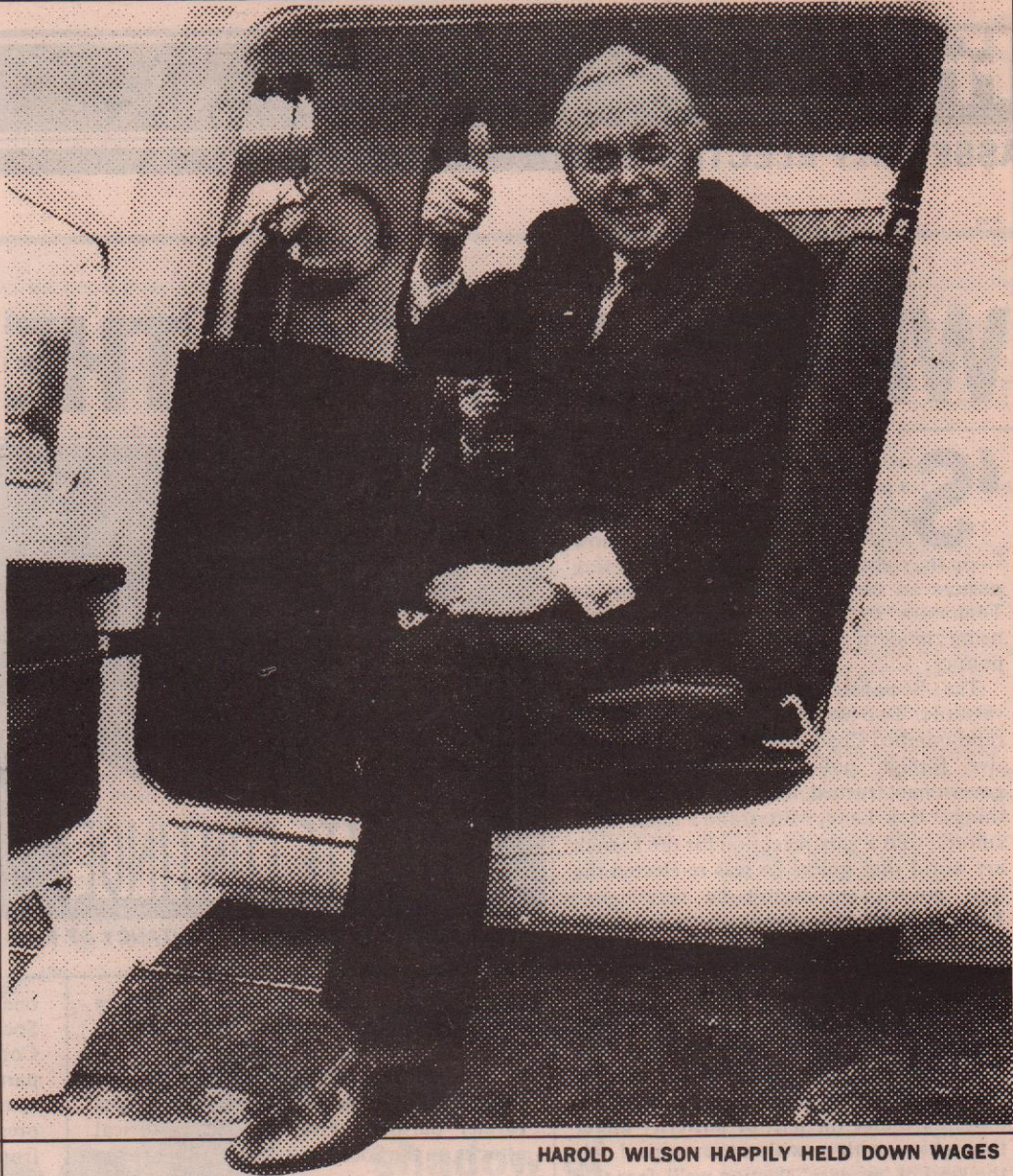
● Trade union rights

The Labour government sent in the army to break strikes by refuse disposal workers, firemen and ambulance workers in 1977 and 1978. Finally, in the notorious winter of discontent, the Labour government took on the lowest paid public service workers in the health service and local government, to show its determination to quell the revolt against its austerity policies.

In face of continuing militancy, Labour set about drawing up legislation to curb the right to strike in essential services — a plan that went further than any law yet imposed by Thatcher.

In the 1979 general election the Labour manifesto pleaded that 'now, more than ever, we need Labour's traditional values of cooperation, social justice and fairness'. After five years of Labour's traditional values it was not surprising that millions of workers did not want to know: the Tories won a decisive victory.

In the seventies Labour's Social Contract solution to the crisis led to serious setbacks for the working class. The consequences of a similar programme in the eighties could be catastrophic.



HAROLD WILSON HAPPILY HELD DOWN WAGES

LEFT ALTERNATIVE AUSTERITY

What sort of resistance would the left put up to Kinnock's austerity socialism? The recent retreat of the left from the programme of full employment, redistribution, nationalisation and major welfare reform it put forward in the seventies suggests that it would cause few problems for the leadership.

In a significant article in *Tribune*, Ian Willmore expresses the left's new enthusiasm for the basic structures of capitalist society:

'Even the Labour left must now know that there are many great advantages in having efficient markets in the economy; they are flexible, they enable preferences to be expressed, they take many economic decisions out of the political sphere.'

When professor Stuart Hall writes in *Marxism Today* that there is 'no way in which a socialism for our times can evade the terms of reference of the forms of social and economic organisation which currently dominate the centres of advanced production in the modern world', he is trying to say the same thing — that the left must accept that capitalism is here to stay, and try to make the best of it.

'We must be sure that Labour will achieve the possible,' declares Frances Morrell, radical leader of the Inner London Education Authority, meaning 'the possible' within the constraints imposed by British capitalism in terminal decline.

The clearest measure of the left's accommodation to Kinnock is its line on unemployment. 'We've shifted from strategies for full employment to challenging mass unemployment,' confesses Tony Benn. Willmore puts it more forcefully: 'Isn't it about time the democratic left owned up to the fact that we won't be able to create more than a few hundred thousand new jobs?' The left has accepted that full employment is a thing of the past and that, under a Labour government, at the very least between three and four million people will still languish on the dole.

The left has also come to accept the need for austerity policies and wage restraint under a Kinnock government.

Leading alternative economic strategist Sam Aaronovitch is worried that a Tory electoral defeat would 'release an almost irresistible wave of expectations and militancy'. He agrees with Kinnock and Hattersley that hard and tough decisions will have to be taken. 'A Labour

government, concerned to reinvigorate the economy' would have to implement an incomes policy. Redistribution would have to take place not only between capitalists and workers, but also to a 'substantial' degree, 'among working people'.

Other left wingers have cheered Kinnock's retreat from radical elements in Labour's old programme. Kinnock toady Peter Hain compliments his leader on being 'quite prepared to lead on policies where he senses the need for damage limitation, such as reducing expectations on renationalisation or endorsing union balloting'. In other words, Kinnock's acceptance of Tory privatisation and anti-union laws receives the left's stamp of approval.

Some Labour Party academics are critical of Kinnock's overt pro-capitalist posturing. Militant's Oxford guru Andrew Glyn, and Communist Party hardliners Ben Fine and Laurence Harris, have conducted a rearguard defence of the old alternative economic strategy. But what is still regarded as the hard left is softening fast. As they too accept the horizons of British capitalism, their critique of Kinnock is limited, and their alternative amounts to singling out the least objectionable aspects of Labour's programme and calling for more of the same.

While Labour wants reflation by £5 billion, the left intellectuals demand £10 billion. They regard Labour's planning proposals as too feeble, and call for a more ambitious programme of government controls. They want industrial democracy that amounts to workers taking responsibility 'in the management of enterprises and in the running of their workplaces'.

Labour's economic programme cannot be improved by giving it a radical shove. The problem is not that it does not go far enough, but that it is going in the wrong direction.

Doubling the money pumped into the British economy would not necessarily benefit the working class. Calling for bolder planning measures simply reveals that the left has more illusions than Kinnock himself in the ability of a Labour government to plan a system it does not own. And more extensive 'industrial democracy' in British industry, so long as it is under capitalist control, simply means more extensive collaboration in exploitation.

THE PARTY OF AUSTERITY

'We're going to need 15 years of consistent policies', claims Kinnock, 'and a great deal of patience will have to be exercised.' He says that 'resources will be limited, and hard decisions must be made to prevent those resources being frittered away'. What Kinnock is really saying to his working class supporters is 'don't expect anything but hardship from a future Labour government'. Hattersley is more explicit about the consequences for the working class of Labour's hard line:

'I think we will be very tough.... We cannot go back to the old days when we were weak minded... We can't do it on pay, we can't do it on investment, we can't do it on public spending.'

While Labour's leaders soft soap the bosses, all their 'hard' and 'tough' talking is saved for the working class. They have already used their backdoor connections with the unions to win approval for a policy of holding down wages under a future Labour government. They have made clear that there will be no major increases in spending on welfare. They have carefully avoided any commitments to restore the cuts in public spending imposed by the Tories since 1979.

The most significant promise of austerity is Labour's acceptance of permanent mass unemployment.

All Kinnock's advisers agree that Labour's promise in the 1983 campaign to reduce unemployment to below one million in the lifetime of a Labour government was unrealistic. The best that Labour can now offer to the five million people out of work is an investment programme to create 750 000 jobs. Even these jobs, to be established strictly according to the criterion of profitability, will be just like any other low-paid government scheme which offers cheap labour as an alternative to unemployment.

Labour's final promise is to preserve most of the framework of Tory anti-trade union laws that allow state interference in the labour movement to forestall any resistance. Labour's recent offer of a positive 'right to strike' conceals its endorsement of a framework of legislation which allows the courts to intrude into wide areas of union activity. Nearly 20 years after Harold Wilson's Labour government first tried to restrict union rights, Kinnock offers to complete the process under the next Labour government.

Today's Labour leaders are not waiting until they get into office to proclaim the austerity message — they're doing it already.

WHAT'S LEFT OF THE LEFT?

'Socialism died about five years ago,' a journalist from a popular liberal paper told me last week. 'Being modern is what it's all about now — on the right, left and centre.' The election posters on the streets of Paris — 'Living Tomorrow' or 'France Forever' — suggest being modern means not talking about politics.

The Socialists' campaign is the most versatile. Two weeks ago president Mitterrand bombed Chad, highlighting his aggressive foreign policy. Last Monday the government turned its attention to loftier things. Jack Lang, Mitterrand's minister of culture, told a gala reception for the French art world that unless he was re-elected the next government 'won't be very sexy'. Perhaps Kinnock's campaign team should take a trip to Paris to learn the art of modern electioneering.

The French Socialist Party has shifted so far to the right that most traditional left-right party differences have vanished. The elections reflect the narrow policy options on offer in today's conditions of recession: austerity under the left, or austerity under the right — with or without sex appeal. It's the kind of 'modern' election we'll face this side of the channel some time before June 1988.

The workers I spoke to, as we shivered and waited for a bus outside the Citroen works at Aulnay-sur-Bois, felt that whoever gets in, it won't change a thing. 'If we vote Socialist we get the right anyway, now they're cohabiting,' one middle aged worker said, using Mitterrand's phrase to describe a



IT'S A LONG WAY FROM THE MILITANCY OF MAY 1968 TO MITTERRAND'S 'MODERN' SOCIALISM



the police force. So at least some workers can make a living out of beating the rest of us up.

Since quitting the government the Communist Party has had trouble dealing with its former partners. First it tried rhetorical attacks on the Socialist 'traitors'. But at least

one third of Communist voters support the Socialists too, and aren't keen on the Communist Party's radical outbursts. So the party has moderated its approach. As a candid central committee member told the press, the Communist Party has 'moved not from a zig to a zag, but is trying to maintain

itself simultaneously in the zig and in the zag'.

The choice presented to French workers by the established parties is what we can expect to get from them here: distinctly unappetising.

As next week's French elections approach, it's hard to tell left from right. *Sabena Norton* reports from France on left responses to the Mitterrand era

post-election coalition between right and left. His mate said he always voted left, but 'these days you can't tell what's left any more.' Another worker walking past overheard us. 'The elections?' he said, making an awesome noise in his throat, from whence emitted something nasty which landed at my feet, freezing into a solid lump. These people just aren't 'modern'.

The Socialist Party, on the other hand, is a thoroughly modern outfit. It was formed in 1971 by middle class politicians who wanted to fill the gap between the right and the Communist Party, and taken over by Mitterrand as a machine to serve his presidential ambitions. By creating a non-communist left, Mitterrand tapped a big electoral reservoir of left-wing voters who were sick of the Communist Party, and middle class voters wanting a change from the right.

But to win the 1981 presidential elections he also needed the support of the Communist Party — which he got by adopting the reform policies of the old party of the left. From the start the Socialists' commitment to the left was only tactical — which is why Mitterrand has found moving right particularly painless.

The last five years have reduced the Communist Party to a rump. It helped Mitterrand into power, joined his government, supported him for three years — and lost half its members and votes. Now the Communists' distinctive contribution to the election campaign is the proposal — you guessed it — to create one million jobs in two years. Where? Well, building works... and in

Lutte Ouvriere, the largest left-wing group in France, is trying to present an alternative to the bankrupt traditional left. Lutte Ouvriere is standing candidates in more than a third of France's 97 departments. We spoke to two of them — Jean Louis Gaillard, candidate in Seine-St Denis on the outskirts of Paris, and Roland Szpirko, who heads the Lutte Ouvriere slate in the Oise region.

Like left-wing groups in Britain, Lutte Ouvriere gives insufficient importance to the struggle around broad political issues like racism and imperialism. Lutte Ouvriere underestimates the need to challenge the narrow trade union outlook of the existing labour movement — a tradition which serves to restrict the horizons of workers' activity. But let's see how revolutionaries in France are trying to use the elections to present a much-needed alternative to the old left.

tns: What do you say to people who use the familiar argument that standing against the left means helping the right?

Roland: We reply that it's the government of the left which has carried out the policies of the right for the past five years. It's because this government betrayed workers' hopes that the right presents a major political force today. The Socialists have argued that working class sacrifice is inevitable in a period of crisis, that to talk about 'making the rich pay' is unrealistic, and that we have to be 'modern'. Today they call anyone who wants to defend the working class a 'moaner'. We're standing in the elections to challenge this trend. The government says, 'If you're left, you must vote for us — otherwise the right will come in. We may be bad, but they're worse.' Well, in France we call that frightening people with the big bad wolf. They hope that people are so frightened they'll think it's better to be hit on the head by the left than by the right. It's not us who are helping the right. We want to give coherence to left-wing ideas.

Jean Louis: Maybe we won't win a lot of votes. But what matters is that 10, 15 or 20 per cent of the working class will hear us, who will listen and will see that there is a policy of the left, a revolutionary approach. That will help us go forward after the elections in building a revolutionary party.

tns: What about the Communist Party?

Roland: What we hold against the CP is that, although it could have achieved a lot, given its influence among militants, it did nothing. Today, having quit the government two years ago, they say they're the party of workers and of struggle. But when it mattered they did nothing.

I work in the car industry. In 1983 the CP had a lot of influence among Talbot workers. When they went on strike to fight redundancies, the leaders of the CGT (the CP's union) used the strike for a political demonstration. They wanted to show that the CP can smash a strike. The leaders and the CP activists on the shopfloor did their best to finish off the strike. That defeat affected workers everywhere. Workers said if they can't fight redundancies in a big plant like Talbot, then there's nothing we can do. The CP has been the principal cause of demoralisation in the working class.

tns: Would you agree that the CP has fostered a patriotic outlook among workers? How do you confront that problem?

Jean Louis: The CP has a nationalist ideology and identifies with France. For years it has put up posters saying 'Produce French', which many naturally take to mean 'French workers first' — the slogan of the extreme right. This approach is a big problem, because it divides the working class.

But the main problem with the CP is that it supported the government's austerity programme and spread ideas about the need for workers to make sacrifices. That way it disarmed workers more than through its nationalist ideas.

Roland: Nationalism is the CP's way of making peace with the system, of saying that as Frenchmen workers also have interests in common with the bosses. The CP believes the priority is to defend the French economy. To fight those ideas it is necessary to make propaganda about internationalism. But we believe the only real way to fight them is to show the superiority of our politics in struggle.

tns: Racism is a big problem in France today. Yet Lutte Ouvriere doesn't seem to make anti-racist work a priority. Why?

Roland: Fighting racism isn't a question of anti-racist agitation as such. Workers who

accept racist ideas won't be persuaded by logical argument, but by pressure. If they come up against workers who oppose them, then they go quiet. The best way to fight racism is to re-create confidence among left-wing workers. Racism declines if workers' morale increases.

tns: But what about discrimination, police repression, racist attacks, the refusal of work or residence permits?

Jean Louis: A movement like ours fights against all injustices against workers, be they French or immigrant. It is our responsibility to defend immigrants against the things you have mentioned. But the best way to combat racism is to re-create confidence among workers.

tns: In the 1981 presidential elections you called for a vote for Mitterrand in the second round. With hindsight, don't you think that encouraged workers' illusions in the Socialist Party?

Roland: It is true that in 1981 and in 1974 we called for a vote for the Socialists. We denounced Mitterrand's politics, but at the same time expressed our unity with the sentiments of the working class. In elections it is not a question of transforming workers' consciousness, but of providing them with the opportunity to make a political statement. Once we are a big party we will be able to try to change the outlook of the working class. Today all we can do is allow the militant minority to make a political statement. In 1981 the little political credit we had was that we spoke the same language as the militants. Today we address the minority who are already critical of the Socialists and the CP.

Jean Louis: In 1974 and 1981 we were still small and faced a powerful CP which said that Lutte Ouvriere wanted to help the right. Today things are different. We have shown where we stand and people can no longer say we are right-wing.

Roland: And in 1983 in the second round of the local elections we called on people not to vote Socialist, but to abstain, because the reality of what the left are about had become apparent. Therefore there was no longer any need for compromise. The workers had begun to see the reality of a left-wing government.

junius publications



Kate Marshall, *Moral Panics and Victorian Values: women and the family in Thatcher's Britain*. Fully updated second edition, still only £1.50 plus 40p p&p from Junius Publications (address below).

This week marks International Women's Day. In its origins, the day belongs to working class women. It commemorates a working women's march in Russia in 1917, which sparked the February revolution and precipitated the crisis which brought the working class to power, in the Bolshevik revolution that October.

We want to reclaim International Women's Day for women struggling against the system: for the miners' wives now passing the anniversary of their strike, for the black women fighting uniformed thugs who terrorise their families from Tottenham to Soweto, for the Irish republican women being strip-searched in British jails at Armagh and Brixton, and for women everywhere denied their rights by brutal bosses and their state agents.

Moral panics and Victorian values sets out a distinct, working class approach to the problems confronting women today. It arms workers with the arguments to expose the establishment's propaganda war against women. Winning the battle of ideas, about everything from abortion to Aids, is a vital first step towards freeing women from the burden they will carry on International Women's Day, as on every other day of the year.

Also available from Junius

The Roots of Racism, the Workers Against Racism guide to the struggle for black rights in Britain, explains the strength of modern racism and sets out a strategy for overcoming it. **£1.95 plus 40p p&p**

The Irish War, the Irish Freedom Movement handbook that has won a wide audience for its examination of the parties and policies that shape the face of Northern Ireland, cutting through the confusion created by British propagandists. **£2.95 plus 85p p&p**

Taking Control, Mike Freeman's handbook for trade unionists, gives the information and analysis essential to militants trying to cope with the current crisis in the labour movement. **£2.95 plus 85p p&p**

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EGYPT

Islam against Mubarak

Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh*, Al Saqi £5.95

Last week's rioting by Egypt's conscript special police force has sent a shudder through the Middle East. As the most powerful of the front-line Arab states in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Egypt is the key to America's strategy for stabilising the region. But the police riots show how, today, 'the most stable state in the Middle East' has been destabilised by mass unemployment, industrial unrest and agricultural stagnation.

Gilles Kepel's *The Prophet and Pharaoh* is useful in assessing the role Egypt's Islamic underground might play in the

crisis. Kepel gives a thorough account of the development of radical Muslim politics in Egypt during the rule of president Mubarak's predecessor, Anwar Sadat. He charts the rise and decline of the Islamic fringe in Egypt in the seventies, as Sadat vacillated between repressing the Muslim radicals and trying to integrate the more moderate sects.

Kepel's level-headed account is an antidote to the anti-Islamic hysteria stirred up in the West. For Kepel, the history of the radical Muslim movement in Egypt is one of failure.

The Muslim radicals' finest hour was on 6 October 1981, when Lieutenant Khalid al Islambuli assassinated Sadat, in full view of the world's television cameras, at a military parade commemorating the 1973 war with Israel. Pirate videos of the assassination changed hands for large sums of money. But the popular welcome for the assassination of Sadat did not alter the marginal influence of the group responsible. The rising they staged to coincide with the

assassination was easily crushed.

Successive Egyptian regimes have maintained cordial relations with leading clerics. This has isolated the radicals, leaving them vulnerable to waves of repression and imprisonment. Egypt's radical Muslims have made little headway even among the merchant classes, whose interests they have traditionally articulated.

Kepel's most potent observations, and those most pertinent to the current crisis, concern the origins of the radical Islamic movement. Many of its leading writers and activists were imprisoned under the rule of Sadat's predecessor Nasser, the charismatic founder of the modern Egyptian regime in the fifties. This experience taught them hatred for the promises of Nasser-style radical nationalism and its secularising tendencies. Kepel also observes that many Islamic radicals in Egypt were influenced by the sort of communism they learnt at French universities in their youth.

These factors help explain the potential for growth of the radical Islamic movement, as the Egyptian economy nosedives and the Mubarak regime is forced to accommodate more openly to the USA and Israel. The movements that in the past offered an alternative to Islam — nationalism and communism — are thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the masses.

There is no evidence that Islamic radicals are behind the police riots. But, as Bernard Lewis notes in his introduction, when people in the Arab world revolt against their despotic rulers, their protests will assume the forms that are closest to hand. Mubarak has less of a base in Egyptian society than either of his predecessors and his regime is likely to become more and more unstable. As the masses take to the streets they may well accept the leadership of the radical Muslim groups — unless a serious political alternative presents itself.

John Johnson



BLACKS IN BRITAIN

Through closed eyes

Prafulla Mohanti, *Through brown eyes*, Oxford University Press £9.50

'I did not believe the sun could shine so brightly in England.' The childlike quality of Profulla Mohanti's opening sentence in this account of his life in Britain recurs throughout the book. Mohanti was born in the village of Nanpur in the Indian state of Orissa. His earliest wish was to visit England, an ambition he achieved in 1960 by emigrating after qualifying as an architect. His first impressions of life in Britain form the most engaging part of Mohanti's book. Everybody has difficulty adjusting to a new culture when they first arrive in a foreign country. The difference between Nanpur and Surbiton was immense.

Mohanti gives a delightful account of seeing the 'big fat babies with round pink cheeks' lying in 'trolleys'. More vivid is his ironic description of the rituals of Christmas in England. He was also fascinated by television. He particularly liked *Dixon of Dock Green*, which reminded him of 'the policemen I had met on the streets of

London and went out of their way to help'. Mohanti's approach is assisted by his simple staccato style, which gives each impression and story an air of childlike wonder. But this quality of unworldly innocence, initially bracing, soon becomes merely tiresome.

Mohanti's book is most notable for what it leaves out. He arrived in Britain in the aftermath of the race riots in Notting Hill and other parts of England, when white racists attacked blacks on the streets and in their homes. Two years after he emigrated, the government introduced the first of Britain's immigration laws. Mohanti lived through a rising tide of racism in Britain. What is more, he lived in the East End of London, a storm centre for the growth of racial conflict. Mohanti himself was badly beaten by a gang of racists outside his house. Yet in the 70 pages he devotes to describing the East End, he hardly refers to racism.

For Mohanti racism is a tiny dark cloud in an otherwise bright British sky. His solution is to urge the British to rediscover the values of the village, and to admonish racist demagogues like Enoch Powell for forgetting Christian charity. Mohanti is alienated from the experiences of most black people in Britain. Through brown eyes, Britain is a much more menacing place than the innocent world of pink babies and friendly policemen Mohanti describes.

Kenan Malik

BELFAST STAGED

In the shadow of the gunmen

Joyriders, Christina Reid, Tricycle Theatre

'People always ask us who we are. We are from Belfast, mighty, mighty Belfast,' sing the kids from the Divis Flats by way of introduction. Typical swagger, in typically desperate circumstances. For the four of them in this play this means a place on a Youth Training Scheme — not only the local cheap labour/jobless figures fraud, but also for most of them a compulsory alternative to a detention centre or borstal.

Arthur, steel-skulled and limping, awaits his compensation for the bullets the British Army gave him. (He dreams of being rich and 'the most illegible bachelor in West Belfast'.) Dozy, docile Maureen, is preoccupied with keeping her young brother off glue and out of cars. Tom has a good grasp of communism, but an even better grasp of thieving. Sandra, the survivor of the group, sneers her way through the scheme, 'a frigging government joyride' as she calls it. In charge of the project is Kate, in her thirties and still learning that caring is not enough.

The characters are well conceived (with the exception of Tom) and well played, but even with the muscular Belfast banter, that doesn't make a play. Christina Reid dutifully piles on the pressures of the outside world — unemployment, the Brits, the IRA, the rat-ridden

Divis. But the piece lacks any dramatic focus and at times the development is downright clumsy, through no fault — it should be said — of director Pip Broughton.

Reid undoubtedly respects the spirit and independence of the teenagers as they grapple anew with old problems. But they are also made to serve one or two points of her own. It is Sandra who we feel has her sympathy most (and who has the last word). Sandra's cynicism is shown to be that of a justifiably wary young woman. She is sure that politics for her would mean typing men's letters. She is for herself alone, in very much the same mould as the young heroine of Anne Devlin's *Oneself Alone*, which played recently at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs. That title is the English translation of *Sinn Féin*, and the play puts its meaning at the service of the women of West Belfast, as opposed to the tradition for which the words stand.

The opening scene of *Joyriders* shows us the kids (on a visit to a 'middle class theatre' — geddit?) watching Sean O'Casey's *Shadow of a Gunman*, a play itself concerned with personal identity and political crisis (and essentially the same crisis at that). The comparison does not flatter Reid, and it also reminds us how transfixed O'Casey became with the personal tragedy and the waste he witnessed during the earlier troubles.

Reid displays a similar tendency. When one of the four trainees is killed by the Army, it is Sandra who bitterly recalls the romantic attitudes struck in the O'Casey play. The fact that these attitudes had nothing to do with the death of her friend is lost in what becomes an outburst against commitment or involvement of any kind.

Pat Ford



DIVIS FLATS, WEST BELFAST

LETTERS

WRITE TO: *tns*, BCM JPLTD, LONDON WC1N 3XX

ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID

FOR any trade unionist who was looking to the Anti-Apartheid Movement to organise effective solidarity action against apartheid, Saturday's AAM trade union conference in London must have been a big disappointment. Speaker after speaker told the 400 delegates what they already knew — why they should fight apartheid. What they didn't do was outline what workers in Britain should be doing.

Ron Todd, general secretary of the TGWU and chair of the TUC's international committee, set the scene for the day in his opening speech. He came up with three examples of workers' blacking action. Southampton dockers refused to load military equipment for South Africa last year; Dunne's workers refuse to handle South African products in Dublin; and Portsmouth health workers have boycotted South African food. The fact that these three examples were cited by official speakers throughout the day is a measure of the problem: these are the only actions the TUC and AAM have supported.



Todd pointed out that, before the Southampton workers' action, the AAM had asked the foreign office to stop the export. Throughout the day this was the approach that the AAM had in mind, to try to reconcile the call by many trade unionists for direct action with putting pressure on the government to 'isolate apartheid'.

One Action Against Apartheid delegate from the NGA made it clear that print workers wouldn't ask Robert Maxwell or the government to take action on behalf of the workers locked out at Wapping. She said that the AAM was wrong to expect British bosses or the government to take action in support of black South African workers. Another AAA delegate, from the NUM, received enthusiastic applause after explaining AAA's approach in the pits — to black any company supplying the NCB which had

links with South Africa, by stopping pits if necessary. Many delegates could see the difference: the AAA wanted action by British workers in support of black workers in South Africa, the AAM talked about channelling this action into the dead end of converting the British state into an opponent of apartheid.

As the day dragged on many delegates left demoralised, others approached AAA delegates to find out more about our campaign. We sold out of AAA Action Packs and were invited to speak at AAM branches, trade union branches and public meetings. For anyone else who wants real action, not bureaucratic gestures, join the AAA. Write to us at AAA, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX for Action Packs, and for details of our activities in your area.

Charles Longford
London

EXPOSING THE POLICE

A LETTER in last week's *tns* asks 'why bother with the police complaints procedure?' if we are in general opposed to relying on the procedures of British justice. As this point arises from my complaint against the police, I'd like to explain why I've made it.

I decided to make an official complaint after I was arrested and threatened with charges of armed robbery in Pontefract at a time when I was on a coach to London — the full story is reported in *tns* 8. I want to draw as much attention as possible to the way the police are trying to frame me because of my political activities. The complaint helps to keep the issue in the public eye. I'm not expecting to get anything out of it — that's not the point. The aim is to expose what the police are doing to as many people as possible, so that others are warned and we can organise resistance as they continue victimising activists.

There is a world of difference between using the courts in internal disputes in the labour movement — like Militant — or in an attempt to resist pit closures — like the NUM — and using the complaints procedure to publicise police harassment. Last week Militant again threatened to take Labour's national executive to court over threatened expulsions, and Scargill appealed against the coal board's decision to close Bates colliery in Northumberland, after the independent review body had recommended it remain open. This sort of use of the courts undermines workers' independent initiative and legitimises state interference in the labour movement. Apart from that, we usually lose, like we did in the appeal over Bates.



DAVID ROURKE

STEPPING OUT

■ A meeting on the print strike organised by the NUM. The NUM official on the platform reaches the crescendo of his attack on the Tories: 'Unemployment is being lumped in Labour areas! Bus fares are going up by 300 per cent! A whole generation of kids are growing up who'll never see Barnsley!' Truly, Thatcherism has much to answer for.

● Speaking of Yorkshire transport problems, the police have built a new fortress at South Kirkby with ample space at the rear for riot training and vans. Labour councillor Wayne Jenkins could only object that the station has not been given 'designated status', which means anybody held for more than six hours must be transferred to Pontefract police station. 'How would they get home?' says the Labour spokesman. Grow up, councillor. Anybody who's been in a police station after dark knows your major concern is how to avoid getting transported home — in an ambulance.

■ Mr Charles Oxley is a headmaster and self-styled 'crusader', who is 'launching himself on a no-holds-barred campaign against criminals', according to the *Liverpool Echo*. Oxley is chair of the new National Federation of Campaigners for Law and Order. He says, 'The public is sick and tired of lenient sentences handed out to thugs.' Just which 'thugs' Oxley wants dealt with is clear from two of the campaign's demands: deportation for any immigrant convicted of a criminal offence, and 'making it a serious offence to strike in fire, hospital and ambulance services'. I know a few 'criminals' of this type who would be willing to accommodate Mr Oxley anytime he wants to 'launch himself against' them.

● At the Albert Hall miners' benefit last Saturday night, the most remarkable turn was undoubtedly Labour MP Denis Skinner ('The Beast of Bolsover' — Sun) singing to the accompaniment of Militant MP Dave Nellist on the piano. 'Something's wrong with this mike,' says Skinner, 'Send for Eric Hammond.' He explains that the miners' strike was all about 'Getting to know you' — a suitably tortuous cue for singing that tortuous song. Then he's into 'I hear Thatcher but there's no-one there, I smell Tebbit and his greasy hair', followed by an anti-Mark Thatcher ditty to the tune of 'Here we go', all about 'Will he go, with a spare seat for Murdoch, if he promises to take his mother with him...'. Move over, Sigge Sigge Sputnik.

■ On the subject of those appalling hype-merchants, I hear they've been involved in spitting matches with fans outraged at their racist remarks. I wonder if these are the same radical youngsters who've been spitting at scabs at Wapping? Our photographer complains that they are extremely poor shots, and he has had to have his overcoat cleaned after every trip to the picket line. I suppose it beats being run over by Madonna's Mercedes.

● Soon after the Irish Freedom Movement mobilised by far the biggest contingent on the Bloody Sunday march, the old Troops Out Movement in Nottingham, stung by its embarrassingly low turn-out, sent out letters advertising another meeting aimed at revitalising its flagging fortunes. 'The intention of the meeting', it says, 'is not for us to hear outside speakers, videos etc, but for us to get together and discuss the ways we cannot organise a support group around the question of Ireland.' Funny, I thought they already knew that.

EDDIE VEALE

NUM ABANDONS NOTTS

PAUL Whetton is the latest NUM activist to be victimised by coal board management in Nottinghamshire. As Bevercotes pit NUM branch secretary, he was suspended last week for the 'crime' of advertising an NUM branch meeting. The victimisation of Whetton led to an immediate walkout of both NUM and UDM members at the pit, and he deserves the full support of activists in the NUM and other unions in the struggle for reinstatement.

Whetton's victimisation — and the lack of a national response to it — reveals the

way that the national NUM leadership has left its Notts members out on a limb since the formation of the UDM. Some NUM activists in Notts argue that the spate of victimisations shows that management is 'running scared' of the success of the NUM in the Notts coalfield. But you don't have to look very far to see that the bosses are getting away with it because the NUM leadership has abandoned the NUM activists, and left the coal board bosses to walk all over the miners.

The NUM leaders have not

supported pickets against suspensions and are keeping their heads low to stay in favour with the coal board. As the NUM leaders retreat, it seems more and more unrealistic to rank and file miners to take on the coal board and the UDM. The fight against victimisations means challenging the demoralisation that many miners feel, by opposing the approach of NUM leaders and putting forward a fighting alternative.

Joanne Hayes
Nottingham

ISLINGTON ISN'T WORKING

AS a GLC worker less than one month from the sack I have been busy trying to find another job. Last week I saw an advert for four posts in Islington council's architectural department. Thinking this could be the one for me, I rang up for an application form. It arrived promptly the next day, but the following morning

another letter arrived from Ms M Turbett, director of housing in Islington, regretting to inform me 'that it has been decided not to proceed with the filling of this vacancy'. An apology was added 'for any inconvenience caused'.

I can accept their apology for wasting half an hour of my time, filling in their

application form. But 'socialist' Islington council's refusal to fill vacancies is the same cost-cutting strategy adopted by Tory councils. It amounts to the destruction of jobs, and is more than just an inconvenience for workers, employed and unemployed, in London.

Simon Lewis
South London

CHANGE STRATEGY, NOT STREET NAMES

LAMBETH council's latest gesture of anti-racism and solidarity with South African workers is to re-name local streets and parks with African names.

Changing street names does not change black people's position in society, because it is not an attack on racism. On the other hand, such empty gestures

are useful for Sharon Atkin and Co to build their political careers in the Labour Party.

Nor will the adoption of ANC leaders' names by a local authority further black liberation struggles. Effective solidarity with African workers requires direct action by British workers against British bosses — including Lambeth council.

That's not to say that there aren't occasions when Lambeth council acts on racism: last month the council welcomed a police Swamp operation, which allowed extra plain clothes police to harass black youth in the name of 'law and order'.

Lambeth council worker
South London

THE PARTY PAGE

DEADLINE FOR NEWS AND REPORTS: MONDAY 9AM 01-729 3771

DAVID ROURKE



Backing for Wapping

The government and the employers are using the print strike to consolidate the advantage they gained through defeating the miners. From the start it was clear that this was no straightforward battle between Murdoch and his workers. Yet, while Murdoch has rallied all the forces of the capitalist class — the government, the police, the courts, the rest of the media — the print unions are determined to go it alone. Brenda Dean has told Yorkshire miners and left-wing groups to stay away from Wapping. If the print strike is not to end in a major defeat we need to mobilise the full forces of the working class to meet the employers' offensive.

In recent weeks RCP supporters have been taking every opportunity to build up support for the print workers. In London, supporters have joined the pickets and demonstrations in Wapping, selling *tns* — and our Wapping special supplement — and arguing the need for a different strategy. In the Midlands and in Yorkshire, supporters have joined attempts to stop the distribution of Murdoch's newspapers.

Every branch has targeted rank and file electricians, to discuss the implications of the EETPU leaders' role in Murdoch's scabbing operation. We have also singled out members of the TGWU to

tackle the role of the drivers distributing Murdoch's papers — and the failure of the TGWU to do anything effective about it.

As a way of appealing for solidarity with the strike, we have held 'boycott Murdoch' street protests around the country. These have been a great success — not just because people readily agree to boycott Murdoch papers, but because many stop to buy *tns* and talk about what can be done to help the print workers. As a result of these activities many branches more than doubled their sales last weekend.

However, intervening in the strike has thrown up a number of difficulties. The union leaders have misdirected the energies of workers already involved in the strike (see page 5). Because the officials are interested in making any deal possible as soon as possible, they are not prepared to lead a real fight for the sacked workers. They are much more concerned about containing the pickets behind the police barriers than they are about stopping the lorries. Instead of using the Saturday night mass picket to stop the Sunday papers, they have turned it into a chaotic ramble. This is not because the union officials are inept, but because their strategy rules out working

class action in favour of attempts to sway middle class public opinion.

The influence of the cynical outlook of the union leaders among the Wapping pickets is such that even contingents carrying Labour Party Young Socialist banners get booed as 'outsiders'. All left-wing paper sellers are treated with derision.

We must not give in to this climate. We have to keep searching for opportunities to redirect workers' anger against Murdoch into a strategy that can put some pressure on him. At the same time we have to recognise that the day-to-day running of the dispute is firmly under the control of the union bureaucrats, and there is no way we can exert much influence over it. The sort of elementary boycotts and support work that we are able to carry out have obvious limitations. But the most important contribution the RCP can make to the strike is a political one. We must press people to question the political direction of the dispute. Unless the dispute takes a different course, a major setback is now inevitable.

All RCP branches and supporters' groups should organise activities in their local area to point out the implications of the print dispute for the whole working class. We will be continuing our 'boycott Murdoch' street events, as a way of putting our approach across as widely as possible.

Boycott Murdoch!

ALL PROTESTS ARE ON SATURDAY 8 MARCH:
LIVERPOOL: meet 11am, WH Smith's, Church St, city centre

COVENTRY: meet 11am, WH Smith's, Hertford St
BRISTOL: meet 11am, the Hole in the Ground, Haymarket Roundabout
MANCHESTER: meet 11am, Market St
NORTH LONDON: meet 11am, Camden Town tube
AND meet 2pm, Islington Upper St, outside Screen on

the Green
SOUTH LONDON: meet 11am, Brixton tube
OR meet 11am, Women's centre, Peckham High St
WEST LONDON: meet 11am, Fulham WH Smith's, North End Rd
AND meet 2pm, Hammersmith King's Mall

International women's day

NO RETURN TO THE KITCHEN SINK! BOYCOTT MOTHER'S DAY!
The moralists are on the march. The politicians are debating censorship. The doctors are bowing to the pressure of Victoria Gillick's campaign against sex by

tightening up access to contraception. The family is being promoted as though it were an endangered species.

International women's day is a good day to protest against the drive to enslave women to family values, and to assert women's right to an equal share in every area of society. Come and join our celebrations of the struggle

for women's liberation past, present and future!

ALL STREET MEETINGS ARE ON SATURDAY 8 MARCH

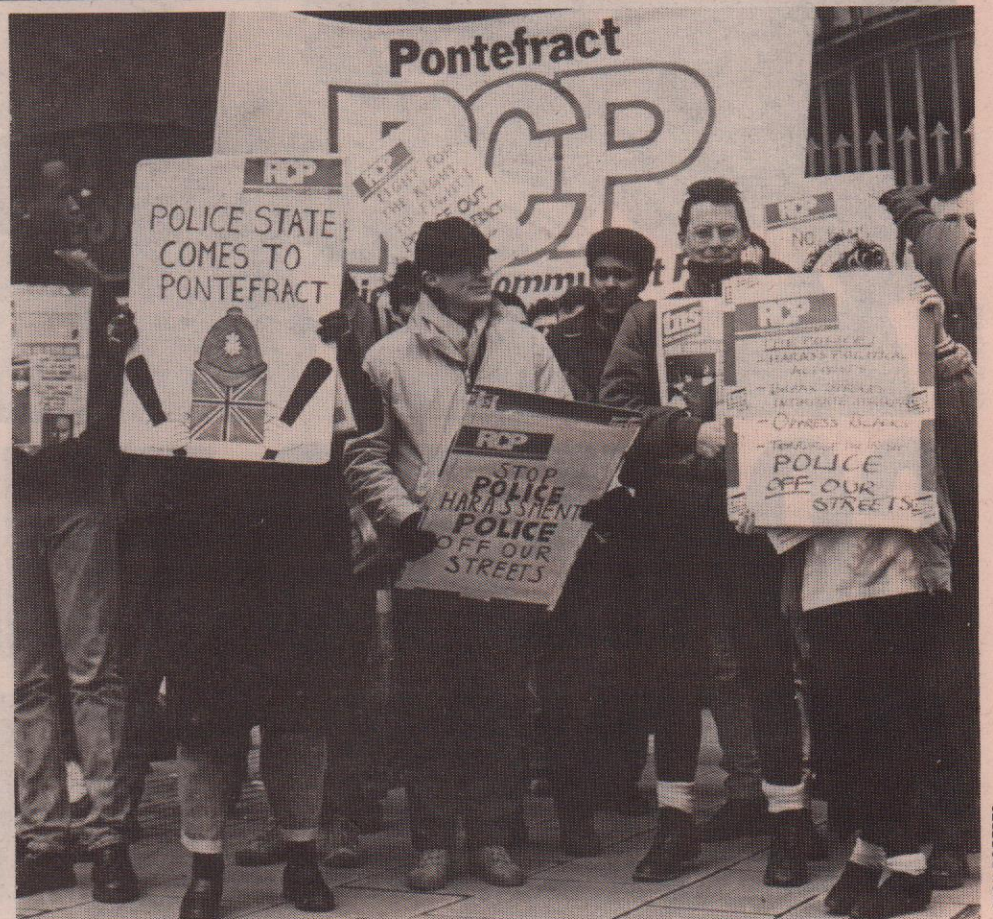
EDINBURGH: meet 11am, Wellington Square
BRIGHTON: meet 11am, Churchill Square
GLASGOW: meet 11am, St Enoch Square
LEEDS: meet 11am, Lands Lane

FOR YOUR DIARY

• **NORTH LONDON:** Thursday 6 March 7.30pm discussion on 'Crisis in the unions', speakers: Surbiton five, GLC Fightback and EETPU activist, The Assembly House, Kentish Town Road, (Kentish Town tube)

• **EAST LONDON:** Thursday 6 March 7.30pm Workers Against Racism video: *I'm not a racist but...* Pembury Tavern, Amhurst Rd, Hackney and at Durning Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate
Saturday 8 March, 11am-2pm **East London Workers Against Racism** street meetings Walthamstow Market Dalston Kingsland Stratford Broadway

• **BIRMINGHAM:** Saturday 8 March 11am, street meeting, Racism causes riots, Chamberlain Square
• **BRIGHTON:** Tuesday 11 March 7.30pm, Public meeting, Who's fighting for gay rights?, speaker: Don Milligan, Sussex University
• **BRISTOL:** Friday 14 March 7.30 pm, Public meeting, Stop racist attacks!, Speaker from East London Workers Against Racism, St Werburgh's Community Centre, Horley Road, St Werburgh



LAST Saturday RCP supporters met in Pontefract for a mass *tns* sale, to protest against police harassment. The police campaign against our sellers has involved arrests, interrogations, and an attempted frame-up for armed robbery. We've replied by disrupting a local police forum and splashing the story all over the press. And on Saturday, police had to keep their distance as the massed ranks of our supporters sold well over 100 papers.

SPECIAL DEAL

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(FULL SUBSCRIPTION RATES ON PAGE 2)

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LONDON WC1N 3XX

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If you want to fight racism...



DAVID ROURKE

COME TO THE COUNCIL OF WAR!

Racism is a growing threat in Thatcher's Britain

- Last month the Tories imposed more restrictions on immigration and the right of appeal. Tory MPs want to cut off benefits for blacks who have lived here less than a year.
- Recent reports have exposed nationwide discrimination against blacks in jobs and housing. Even left-wing employers like Liverpool council have been exposed as racist bosses.
- From Brighton to Glasgow, racist attacks are on the rise. Anti-Asian arsonists recently struck twice in Sheffield. Racist attacks and firebombings reached record levels in East London last year.
- The police still occupy black inner-city areas. They have arrested scores of blacks in Swamp '86 in Brixton. They have used helicopters, guns, sledgehammers and dogs to terrorise people on Broadwater Farm, the Tottenham riot estate. Council workers have come out on strike because of the level of police violence.

The racist offensive has been met with confusion and equivocation among anti-racists. To build a movement that can show solidarity with black people, we need to know what forces are behind the racist upsurge. And we need to start giving the racists as good as they get. The Workers Against Racism dayschool this Sunday aims to do just that. We spoke to some of those coming to the dayschool, to find out why they are getting involved with War's campaign.

Loris Martin is a black woman who has lived in East London for 20 years. For the past two years her family has suffered constant police harassment, and hit squads have rampaged through her house five times. When the phone rings she knows it might mean the police have arrested one of her sons again. Loris told *tns* how the police have treated her eldest son Tony. 'He's been picked up more times than I can count. Every time he gets stripped and beaten, but carefully so they don't leave serious marks. The usual treatment is to crush the soles of his feet. He gets spat at and they shout abuse. They always charge him with drunk and

disorderly conduct. The last time he was in court they beat him up in the cells. When I came to bail him out they kept me in for two hours. They found I had been charged with shoplifting 18 years ago — so they refused to give Tony bail.' Police don't even bother taking Tony to court any more — they beat him up on the street. 'The last time was down Roman Road. Two people passing tried to help my son, and the police threatened them with arrest.'

'I want people to know what they are doing to my sons. I am coming to the dayschool. We can't fight alone. We need to build a strong campaign.'

Dave McLean works in Hackney. He explained how he got involved with East London Workers Against Racism: 'I bought a copy of *tns* and I liked what I read. I wanted to find out what Elwar was up to when it said "get involved". So I came out on one of the patrols to defend Asian pupils at Morpeth School. I was really impressed because it worked. For the first time I felt I had the power to change things. Now I want to find out more. I'm coming to the dayschool because I want to be able to tell

other workers why they should start getting involved like me.'

Sad Miah is a Bangladeshi with a young family who lives on a Bethnal Green estate. For months he has faced attacks from local racists. 'Groups of boys came to shout at me, chuck stones through the window, things like that. Sometimes there were five of them, sometimes 20. Once there were about 40 outside.'

'I contacted the police but they said there was nothing they could do about it. If I caught the boys, then they might do something.'

The attacks used to happen two or three times a week — before Elwar got organised. It's now almost a month since the last attack. 'Ever since Elwar started fighting the racists, the boys have stopped attacking me. It's peaceful now. The way you do things is the best.' Sad Miah is coming to the dayschool 'to tell everyone what happened. I want to tell them about the police, and help Elwar.'

In January *tns* described the horrific knife attack on Dino Patel in Stepney. This week he will be at the War dayschool to support our fight against the racists. 'White people are being told that their problems are caused by blacks. So some of them think getting rid of blacks will make life better. But the real problem we're up against is not white people, but the state. Racists are doing the dirty work for the state. So long as some whites think blacks are the problem, the real enemy will be sitting up there watching us fight each other. If we're going to fight successfully we need to understand where the problems come from. Then we can put our forces together and win.'

Kalbir Shukra is a black activist and trade union militant who has become disillusioned with the traditional anti-racist movement. 'I joined Anti-Fascist Action, because I thought it was a way of networking anti-racist groups. After months of putting energy into the group I found the other members were prepared to come out and heckle fascist paper sellers, but there was no commitment to tackle racist attacks on the housing estates. I contacted Elwar to find out how they organised against racist attacks. But when I tried to get Afa members to take up racism in the same way, nobody wanted to put in the sort of hard work that Elwar supporters were doing.'

'It seems to be an anti-racist campaigner today you need only to agree that racism is morally bad.'

'Afa and other anti-racist campaigns find themselves calling on the police to fight racism and on the courts to be lenient to anti-racists. They end up blaming white people for racism. It means that the black community ends up fighting alone. Only War has a clear understanding that the root cause of racism is not white people, but the British state. And War doesn't just have the ideas, it's also taking action to defend black people.'

If you want to get some fresh ideas about fighting racism, and get in on the action, come to Sunday's Council of War!

RACISM — HOW TO FIGHT IT

Sunday 9 March, 11am-5pm
Fairholt House

Aldgate High Street, E1

Sessions include

- **The racist offensive:** Why have the authorities stepped up attacks on blacks? How have they got away with it?
 - **The roots of racism:** Are white workers to blame? If not, who is?
 - **Keeping the lid on:** How the establishment has tried to silence the anti-racist movement
 - **Workers' defence:** Why should white workers defend black people? Can we rely on the police to take on the racists?
 - **The way forward:** War's plans for the months ahead
- Tickets £2/£1 UB40
Creche available
For further details phone 01-729 0414