

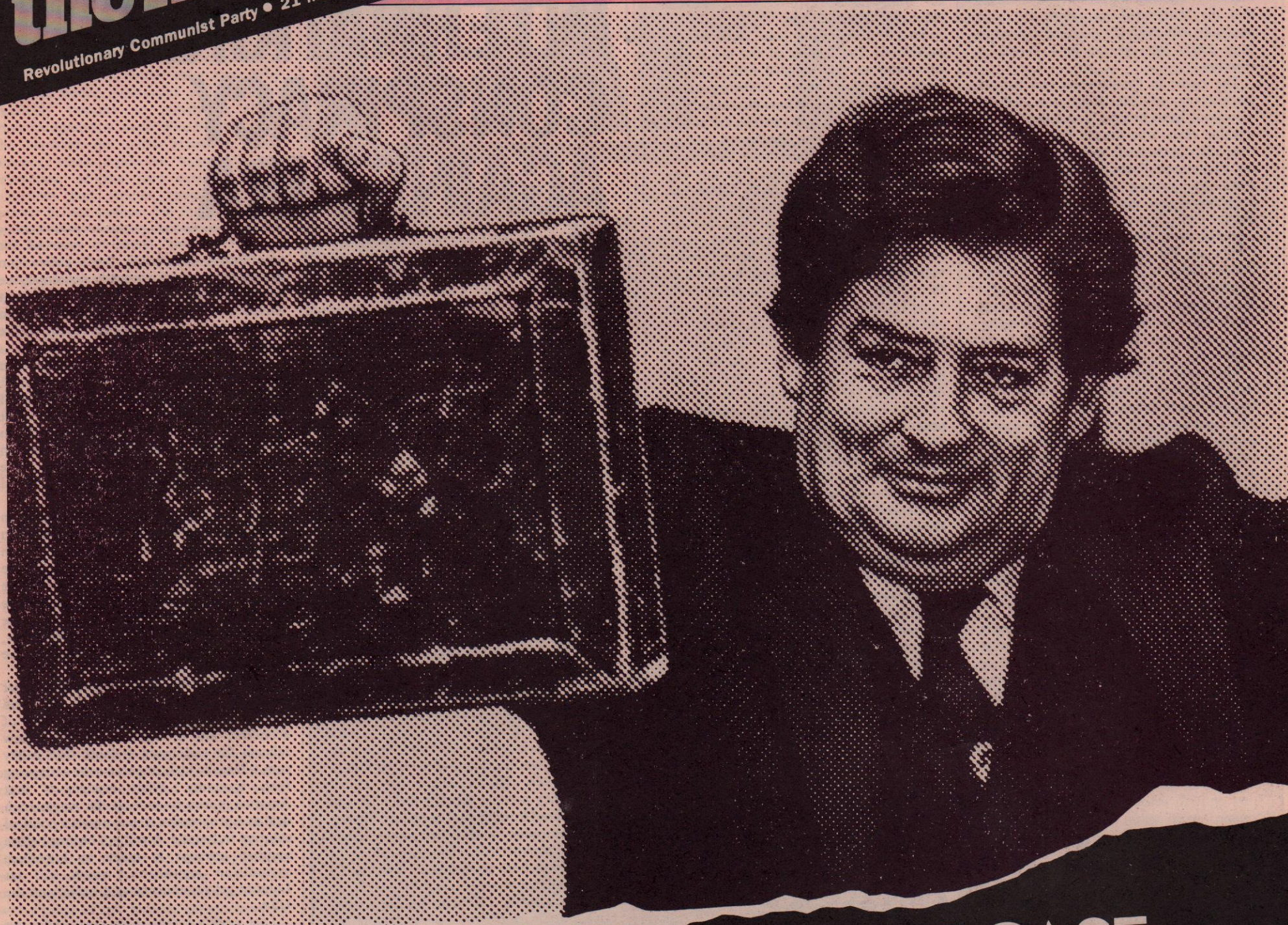
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12



AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE

Aggravated burglary

THE DEMISE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The victory of the right in the French assembly elections confirms the demise of European social democracy. The Socialists did not perform as badly as expected and the right's divisions give Mitterrand some room to manoeuvre (see page 8). But a right-wing majority, supplemented for the first time by a contingent of extreme racists from the Front National, now controls the French assembly. The outcome of the poll confirms that the Mitterrand era, which began so hopefully with the left's electoral triumph in May 1981, has ushered in a period of reaction.

The events in France show that the old institutions of the European labour movement have become a liability for the working class. The French Socialists, and their allies in the trade union leadership and the Communist Party, scored a victory in 1981 by putting forward a radical programme that promised to reverse the decline of French industry and cut unemployment. But within a year, as the failure of the left's economic remedies became apparent, the government turned to a ruthless programme of austerity. Mitterrand became a Thatcherite, instituting a drastic shake-out of industry and major cuts in working class living standards.

Mitterrand's turn to the policies of the right confirmed that the measures of state intervention in industry and welfare, which have sustained official labour movement parties throughout the post-war period, have reached the end of the road in the recession of the eighties. Such policies can no longer bridge the gap between the demands of the capitalist system and the needs of the working class. The Socialist Party has survived in government by becoming openly pro-capitalist. But it has alienated its working class supporters. Its continued influence serves only to demoralise workers and to subvert resistance to the bosses.

The same process is at work throughout Europe. Since the early eighties socialist parties have been busily adjusting their political outlook to the realities of managing capitalism in the recession. Today's socialist leaders, from Kinnock in Britain to Gonzales in Spain (see page 8), are vigorous apostles

of 'after-Japan' style productivity drives. They celebrate the virtues of the capitalist market system. In the process left-wing groupings like Militant in Britain, which until recently formed an acceptable part of the social democratic party machine, have become the target of vicious witch-hunts. The new business unionism, which in Britain has emerged in the most extreme form in the scabbing operation mounted by the EETPU at Wapping, is rapidly gaining ground throughout the continent.

Social democracy has outlived its usefulness. The leaders of the old labour movement are preoccupied with trying to hold together their disintegrating institutions. As workers have discovered that their unions and socialist parties are at best ineffectual in fighting the bosses, and at worst complicit with them, they have abandoned their old loyalties. The only way that the leaders of the trade unions can guarantee the survival of their own machines is by proving to the employers that they can be of use in containing working class revolt. For socialist party leaders, survival means seeking to broaden their electoral appeal to the middle classes. The socialist goals inscribed on the banners of the old unions and in the programmes of the labour parties have long been consigned to the museum.

These days the old values make only the occasional appearance — in eulogies to deceased socialist leaders like Olof Palme, or in the senile ramblings of former socialist heads of state like Germany's Willy Brandt. For practical politicians like Mitterrand or Gonzales, or those aspiring to high office like Kinnock, hard headed capitalist realism is the order of the day.

The outcome of the French elections shows that the collapse of social democracy has opened a chasm between the working class and the old parties to which it once looked for leadership. In the absence of a revolutionary alternative that space has been filled by a growing right wing, nurtured by working class demoralisation and by a deepening mood of insecurity among the middle classes. Unless the influence of social democracy is broken this process will continue, deepening workers' demoralisation and paralysis. Social democracy is dead — it is up to us to turn the tide.

'PRUDENT AND CAUTIOUS'

As we go to press, the details of chancellor Nigel Lawson's budget are still locked away in his battered case. But we can predict certain aspects of its contents with absolute certainty. It will do nothing to create jobs or to make life easier for the unemployed. It will do nothing to improve living standards for all the people whose wages have stagnated over the seven years since Thatcher came to power. It will do nothing to restore the cuts in housing, health and social security imposed by the Tories since 1979.

It has been predicted that the chancellor will introduce a 'prudent and cautious' budget. This seems a safe prediction. Not only have the Tories nothing to offer to the working class, they have precious little to offer to their own supporters either. Lawson

may fiddle tax levels and thresholds a little, but he will not reduce taxation in the dramatic way promised by Thatcher back in 1979. Nor will he relieve the burden of public expenditure on private enterprise, even though it is even greater now than when the Tories took office.

The debate around the various options open to the chancellor reveals that there are no financial solutions to the mess British capitalism is in. The fate of Lawson's budget will be decided by the outcome of the Opec talks on oil prices in Geneva, rather than by the debate at Westminster. The longer term fate of British capitalism is in our hands.

We're all off to the seaside for Easter, so there will be no *tns* next week. We'll be back on 4 April.

THE REAL ANGLO-IRISH DEAL



REPUBLICAN
BRENDAN
McFARLANE FACES
EXTRADITION FROM
HOLLAND

INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY AGAINST IRA

The arrest of Evelyn Glenholmes in Dublin last week makes clear the real terms of the Anglo-Irish agreement; the Irish government gets handshakes in Belfast, while the British government gets Irish republicans handcuffed and delivered to its doorstep. The British authorities want Glenholmes extradited to face charges connected with IRA bombing campaigns. If they succeed, which seems likely after the Irish government signed the European 'anti-terrorist' convention, she will be the first republican shipped from Dublin to stand trial in London.

Thatcher's Dublin lackeys and Western allies are ganging up to defeat the fight for Irish freedom

The day before Glenholmes' arrest, Dominic McGlinchey was sentenced to a 10-year jail term in Dublin, for shooting at Irish policemen who raided and arrested him in March 1984. Hours after that arrest, McGlinchey became the first republican to be extradited from Dublin to Belfast. He was later re-extradited to stand trial in the South, after a Northern Ireland appeal court embarrassed both governments by clearing him of murder charges.

It was a fitting comment on the Anglo-Irish deal that the persecution of Glenholmes and McGlinchey should coincide with the fourth meeting of the British and Irish authorities in Belfast, at the new conference established by the accord. Behind all the bluster about the conflict with the Unionists, the purpose of Thatcher's deal with Dublin is to isolate the Irish republican movement and to undermine the struggle to liberate Ireland from British domination. Far from endangering the constitutional Union between Britain and 'Ulster', the agreement represents an extension of British law into the Republic of Ireland.

After 60 years of posing as an independent country, the Irish Free State is today being exposed as little more than a British satellite. Its government and legal systems were designed at Westminster, and they remain at the disposal of the Crown's campaign against republicans.

First, in 1982, a Dublin court jailed Gerard Tuite for IRA activities in Britain. Then McGlinchey was extradited to stand trial in Northern Ireland's no-jury Diplock courts. Now Glenholmes looks set to be packed off to Britain, to face the baying bloodhounds of the British yellow press and

the sort of 'fair' frame-up reserved for republicans. Meanwhile Irish police gun squads have set up a security system on the Southern side of the Border that complements perfectly the armed camp on the Northern side, described on the centre pages of this week's *tns*.

But the conspiracy against Irish freedom fighters stretches beyond the 'British Isles'. The Anglo-Irish agreement has the status of an international treaty. It has lent diplomatic credibility to British rule in Northern Ireland, enabling other Western powers to portray the IRA as the legitimate target of a campaign against 'international terrorism'.

Last Tuesday two republicans, Brendan McFarlane and Gerard Kelly, appeared in an Amsterdam court threatened with extradition to Britain. British police have hunted them since they took part in the Great Escape from Northern Ireland's Maze jail in September 1983. The court case should last until next week. However it ends, a precedent for arresting republicans on the Continent has been set.

Meanwhile, president Reagan and other American 'friends of Ireland' are also getting in on the act, offering £170m of economic aid to back up Britain's new scheme for stabilising Ireland. The paltry sum will make little impact on the collapsing Irish economy. What matters is that America is seen to endorse the Anglo-Irish deal as a progressive step towards a political solution in Ireland. It will not be long before another attempt is made to introduce extradition legislation, which will let London get republicans sent back from the USA.

Last week's events show that, under the cover of the accord, the imperialist powers and their sidekicks are getting together to wage war on the Irish liberation movement. All of the differences among Western governments are forgotten when it comes to defending one of their number against a mortal enemy like the IRA. We need to take the same internationalist approach to uniting behind those battling for Irish freedom.

There is much international sympathy for Irish freedom fighters. But that sentiment is weakest in the country that matters most — Britain.

In the coming months, the Irish Freedom Movement will be going flat out to build opposition to the Anglo-Irish deal among British people, by exposing it as another attempt to pacify Ireland under John Bull's heel. And if any attempt is made to extradite Irish republicans to Britain, we will be organising public protests. The Irish Freedom Movement aims to break the conspiracy among the real international terrorists — the Western statesmen who unite to support oppression in Ireland and around the world. For details of campaign activities, ring 01-729 0414.

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Women

Everybody feels a sense of outrage at the horrific catalogue of sexual abuse of women that now fills the newspapers and the television news. From girls of seven and eight to women of 78, it seems that nobody of the female sex is safe from the brutal perverts at loose in society. We all feel a deep sympathy with the victim of the Ealing vicarage rape and the little girls like Colette Gallacher and Leonie Darnley, whose alleged murderers appeared in court last week. We feel an equally intense anger directed at the rapists, whether they are violent burglars or twisted doctors and vicars, and a strong desire for retribution. The media focus on rape and violent crime makes every woman feel vulnerable — and ensures a positive response for any proposal offering more protection against attack.

POLICE PR JOB

But we should be careful not to let our outrage cloud our judgement on the issues raised in the public debate about rape. Why have the police, politicians and the press suddenly become so concerned about violence against women? Who benefits from the clamour for more extensive police powers, more repressive legislation, the restriction of the jury system, longer sentences and stricter censorship? The answer is not women, but the system that treats women as second class citizens and sex objects.

Our natural anxiety and concern about rape is being manipulated to create a climate of opinion favourable to the introduction of harsher state repression.

The police have chosen the rape issue to launch a major public relations exercise. After the police attacks on black women that provoked riots last year in Brixton and Tottenham, a series of cases of unprovoked police assault have recently given the police a bad press. Rape offers a way of restoring the police's battered public image.

Women are angry about rape — but we should reject calls for more policing, harsher sentencing and stricter censorship, argues Kate Marshall

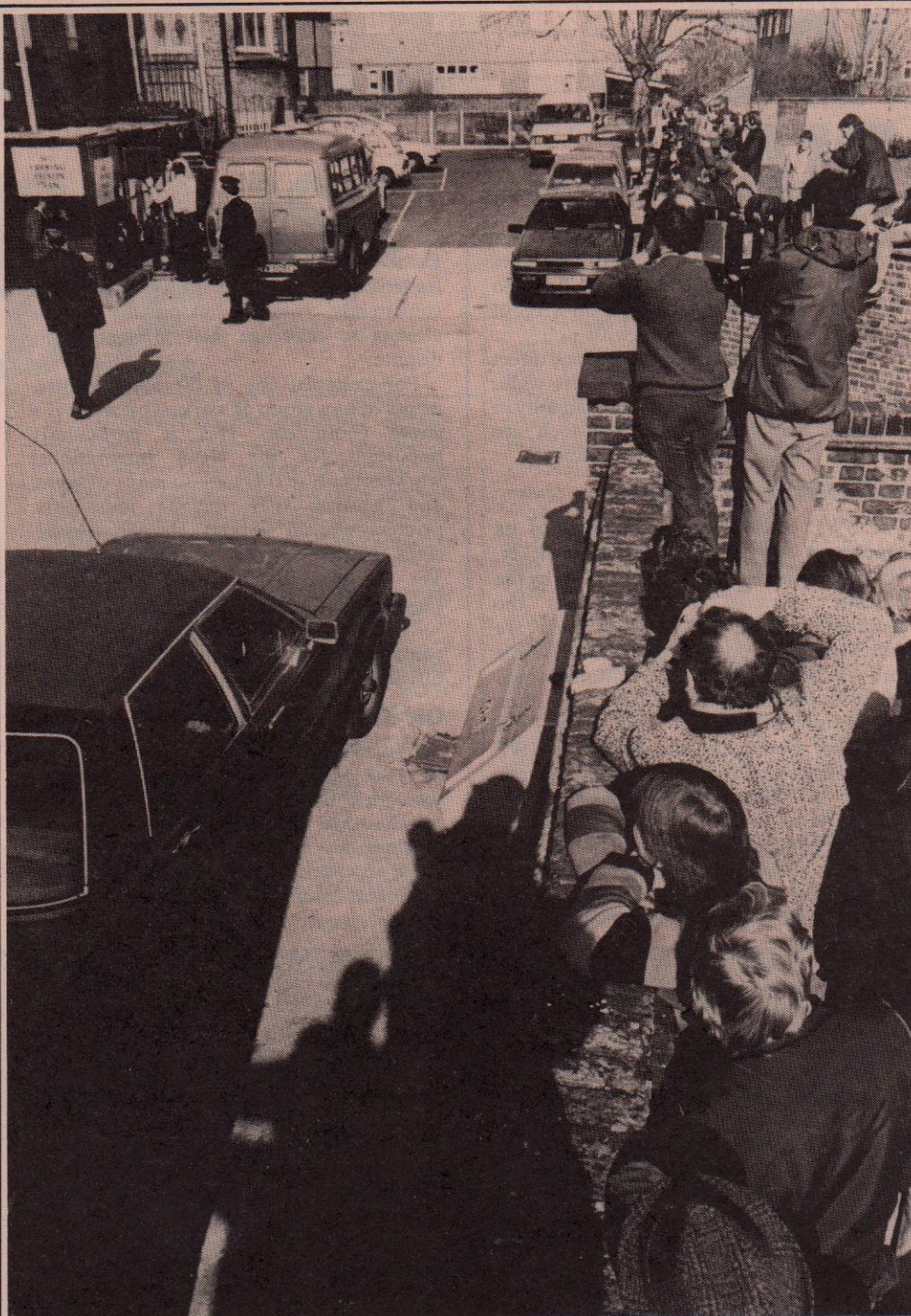
In the past the police and the courts had a reputation for being unconcerned about rape. They were regarded as being more sympathetic towards rapists than their victims. As recently as 1983 a television programme showed hostile police interrogations of rape victims. Magistrates were notorious for belittling rape and ordering juries to take the woman's account with a pinch of salt. Rapists' defence lawyers devoted their cross examinations to trying to expose the loose sexual behaviour of the victim.

Now all this has changed. Incident rooms featuring wall charts and computer terminals appear on news bulletins, to prove that rape is treated as a serious crime. The police have widely publicised new 'examination suites' where women police officers deal sympathetically with rape victims. Magistrates have learned to tone down their sexist statements, and lawyers are no longer allowed to drag the sexual history of the victim into court.

Last week the police announced a major increase in the incidence of rape. According to their figures, rapes are up by 29 per cent nationwide and 57 per cent in London. But statistics on rape, like crime statistics in general, are to a large extent artificial. They register the extent to which the authorities want to make an issue of any particular crime. The rise in the rape statistics obviously reflects the fact that the police have begun to encourage victims to report rape, rather than any real increase.

On the day police announced the wave of rapes created in their own computers, Metropolitan police chief Kenneth Newman

REPRESSION WON'T STOP RAPE



MEDIA VULTURES COVER EALING RAPE COURT CASE TO TICKLE THE PUBLIC'S FANCY

appeared on television saying that his force could do a better job if they had more resources. The home secretary immediately promised 3000 more police officers for London.

Consoling rape victims is today's equivalent of helping old ladies across the road. By presenting an image of concern over a problem that touches all women, the police can win support for building up their forces.

Extra police will make no difference to the incidence of rape, but they will come in handy in Brixton or Tottenham — or Wapping.

The politicians too have seized on the rape issue. Like the police, the Tories have suffered a recent loss of public prestige.

Hence they have eagerly taken up the rape epidemic, and the equally spurious crime figures, and used them as extra ammunition in their populist campaign to restore family values and strengthen the forces of authority in society. Thatcher has deplored rape as 'a uniquely barbaric crime', caused by 'a decay in discipline including self-discipline'.

The Tories are well prepared to provide discipline in the form of longer jail sentences for anybody who seems deficient in this virtue. They are also keen to make it easier to secure convictions by reducing the scope of jury trials. Last week's press furore over a rapist who was acquitted of the murder of Leonie Darnley, by a jury which was quite properly not informed of his record of

sexual offences, came at just the right time for the Tories' attack on the jury system.

When it comes to law and order and family values, the leadership of the Labour Party hates to get left behind by the Tories. The fact that the Ealing vicarage was only down the road from Neil Kinnock's home gave him the ideal opportunity to get his sanctimonious statement in first. Labour's shadow home secretary Gerald Kaufman criticised the government's record on law and order and appealed for an 'anti-crime' budget this week.

LUDICROUS LEFT

While Labour leaders tried to outdo the Tories in their commitment to the police and the family, the left added its own proposals. Left-wing Birmingham MP Clare Short demanded that right-wing Tory attempts to restrict pornography in the media be extended to cover photographs of naked women in the tabloid press. She claimed that such images contribute to the increase in rape and violence against women. It is unfortunate that the only left-wing voice to be heard in the debate should sound such a ludicrous note.

Rape was even more common in Victorian England, when men were lucky to catch a glimpse of a passing female ankle, than it is today when topless models appear daily in the press. Calls for more censorship only invite wider state restrictions on publications of all sorts, and trivialise the whole discussion about rape.

For much of the press, rape reports provide titillation and boost sales. Detailed accounts of rape cases provide vicarious enjoyment for readers — with the extra thrill for *Sun* readers of a photograph of the Ealing rape victim. It is even more sickening when papers blame women for their own degradation. Last week the *Daily Mail* identified the origins of deviant sexual behaviour in 'mothers who all too frequently seek sexual variety, freedom from the irksome responsibilities of the home, and put self before child'. While the old 'she asked for it' theory blamed the individual victim for rape, this new theory puts the responsibility on all women who seek some escape from the straitjacket of family life.

MEN'S PROPERTY

The *Daily Mail* makes explicit the anti-women thrust of the media focus on rape. It seeks to use violence against women to justify restricting women even more rigidly within the family. But what will this do to protect women from rape? Contrary to the impression given in the press, most rapes are not carried out by tattooed strangers lurking in remote and shady places. Rapists are usually husbands or boyfriends, and other more or less close relations, friends or acquaintances. Most rapes take place indoors, often in the victim's own home, within the sanctuary of the family.

Rape is the ultimate degradation of women, in a society which relies on the degradation of women to survive. In a world which treats women as child-bearers, child-rearers, housekeepers, and cheap workers, the sexual abuse of women is an inevitable part of everyday life. In legal terms women are still regarded as men's property and rape in marriage is no crime.

Without economic and social freedom, women are constantly obliged to have sex without consent: being a woman often means not having the right to say no.

All the proposed measures against rape will do nothing to make women more secure against sexual violence. Indeed more repression and the greater regimentation of family life can only make matters worse. The only practical response that is worthy of our abhorrence of rape is to fight for women's liberation from imprisonment in the capitalist family.

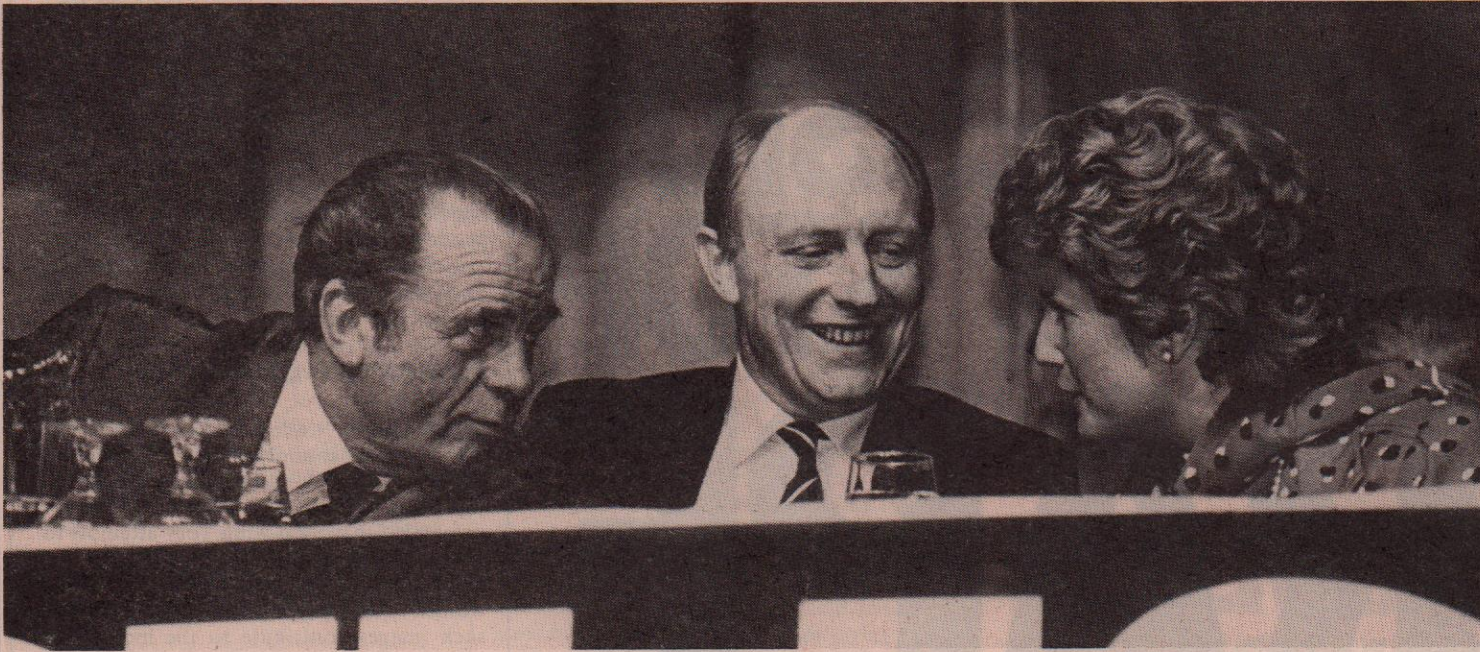
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Labour movement

THE LEFT AND THE PRINT DISPUTE



'WHEN SHALL WE THREE MEET AGAIN?' PRESUMABLY, THE NEXT TIME THE LEFT TURNS OUT TO GIVE STANDING OVATIONS TO TODD OF THE TGWU, KINNOCK AND DEAN, AS THEY DID AT WEMBLEY LAST WEEK

THE CHARADE OF SOLIDARITY

One real mass picket, which involved many thousands of workers from different sections acting together to stop Murdoch's lorries, would teach many printers that militancy *can* win,' writes *Socialist Worker* editor Chris Harman. For the Socialist Workers' Party, the mass pickets called by the print union leaders at Wapping provide the central focus of its intervention in the struggle to reinstate the 6000 workers sacked at Murdoch's News International.

Socialist Worker presents mass picketing as a strategy which can win if it is pursued sufficiently vigorously. But mass picketing is not a strategy — it is a tactic, and one which is entirely consistent with the overall direction of the dispute by the trade union leadership.

'Only mass pickets can beat him,' runs the banner headline next to a photograph of Rupert Murdoch in last week's *Socialist Worker*. Andrew Calcutt takes a sharp look at the SWP's line on Wapping

As a matter of fact, there have been no mass pickets at Wapping at any stage in the current dispute. From the very beginning the union leaders agreed with the police that the pickets would follow TUC guidelines: six pickets have been allowed to stand outside the Wapping plant. The union officials and the police also agreed that demonstrations could take place at Wapping, but these have been kept well away from the official picket. The demonstrations are kept yards back, separated from the picket by crash barriers, lines of police, and, when necessary, by officers on horseback and in full riot gear.

For the duration of 'mass pickets' the entire area is cordoned off, the local residents put under house arrest and the immediate vicinity of Fortress Wapping is saturated with police. What are called 'mass pickets' are in fact fairly small demonstrations in support of token pickets. The whole event is a performance stage-managed by the union officials, under the overall direction of the police. The sole concern of the union officials at the 'mass pickets' is to prevent

any attempt to break through the police lines and stop Murdoch's lorries. Their aim is to allow the activists to let off steam without getting involved in conflict with police or scabs. They are desperate to avoid any direct action which might prejudice their wider strategy, of appealing for public sympathy in the hope that this will push Murdoch into offering some face-saving concessions.

DEFEATIST STRATEGY

The SWP mobilises large numbers of its supporters every week for the mass picket, but broadly accepts the terms dictated by the officials. *Socialist Worker* echoes the grumbles of the militants as they are marched up and down in the chaotic ramble into which the officials have skilfully turned the 'mass pickets'. 'We're fed up,' write some SWP print workers, in a futile appeal for a change of tactics. On the ground the SWP makes no attempt to break the 'mass pickets' out of the bureaucratic stranglehold. It simply joins in the general confusion, endorsing a charade of solidarity organised, or rather disorganised, by the trade union bureaucracy. *Socialist Worker* has consistently criticised print union chiefs Brenda

Dean and Tony Dubbins for their 'low-key' leadership of the strike. But it has equally consistently avoided making any serious attempt to challenge their conduct of the dispute.

For example, one of the basic requirements of any group of workers on strike is a strike committee. This is particularly important for the News International workers because there are so many of them, and because they include journalists, printers, clerical workers, cleaners, electricians, engineers — all in different unions. Yet the best that *Socialist Worker* can suggest is that strikers in one union — Sogat — should be organised in two separate committees, one made up of chapel (branch) officials and the London district committee.

ON THEIR TERMS

An organisation that once prided itself on its 'rank and file' approach has become so subservient to the union officials that it dares not challenge the bureaucratic and sectional divisions that have long paralysed the print.

The absence of any organisation of rank and file strikers ensures that the union leaders have a free hand to push their defeatist

strategy in the dispute.

The SWP has also been critical of the role of the TUC over Wapping. But this has not prevented it from backing the call from the leaders of the print unions and their supporters in the TUC for the expulsion of the electricians' union from the TUC. There is no doubt that the EETPU has played a treacherous role at Wapping in openly providing scabs for Murdoch. But when the left joins the bureaucrats in pointing the finger at the EETPU, it lets the leaders of the other unions off the hook.

Members of other unions are helping to print and distribute Murdoch's papers — lorry drivers in the TGWU have openly scabbed on the strike. Yet last week TGWU leader Ron Todd had the audacity to appear on a platform with Keith Gebbett, the print worker who was knocked down by a TGWU driver who drove into the Wapping picket line. The left looked the other way.

While the SWP tails the bureaucracy down to Wapping and in scapegoating Eric Hammond, it has nothing practical to say to rank and file workers. It offers wishful thinking: 'If print workers stopped the national papers, the 30 000 print workers could come down to the Wapping picket line and stop Murdoch's papers.' But the only way to get the Fleet Street print workers to take action in solidarity with the News International workers is to break down the sectional traditions of the print unions, the very traditions which *Socialist Worker* upholds as a model of strong and militant trade union organisation.

LEARN THE LESSONS

As long as the SWP is tied to defending the narrow traditions of the print unions, it will be unable to unite all the workers in the print. As for rank and file electricians, the SWP would rather put its trust in Ron Todd and the other 'left' bureaucrats in the TUC, than try to persuade ordinary electricians of the need to fight scab unionism in their own ranks.

The logical conclusion of the SWP's approach to the Wapping dispute is the formation of print workers' support groups around the country. This is where Brenda Dean takes over the miners' support groups and the whole struggle for jobs is degraded into middle class charity work. It is important to recall that it was the failure of the labour movement to provide effective solidarity, not hunger and hardship, that drove the miners back to work.

Murdoch's conduct of the Wapping dispute shows how much the bosses have learned from the miners' strike. The left's response shows that it has learned nothing and is determined to repeat the same mistakes in an even more crass manner. Even more than the miners, the print workers need a strategy that can overcome the fatal grip of the labour bureaucracy over their struggle for jobs. They won't find it in *Socialist Worker*.

BRITISH BOSSES THREATEN BL WORKERS

Last week British Leyland managers used Murdoch-style tactics against members of the transport workers' union. When 700 workers at Unipart, BL's spares subsidiary, began strike action over pay and conditions, the company threatened to sack them all unless they returned to work within 48 hours.

The strike began when Unipart workers at Canley, Cowley and Evesham rejected the company's five per cent pay offer and demands for more job flexibility. Despite the threat of immediate dismissal, many workers were determined to fight for a better deal. When the strike started, Canley convenor John Hughes — recently selected as Labour parliamentary candidate for Coventry North East — told local pressmen, 'We're in this strike to win.'

Meanwhile TGWU official Chris Liddell instructed Unipart militants not to go beyond the law to defend themselves. Hughes echoed Liddell's instructions. But Unipart director Muir Moffat knew that the law allows him to sack all 700 workers — so long as he does not selectively reinstate

anybody. Moffat also knew that the Tories have outlawed effective picketing and he was determined to use the law 'to prevent damage being inflicted on the company'.

The capitulation of the TGWU officials at Unipart to the 'rule of law' — the bosses' law — rubber stamped management strategy. As Moffat's deadline approached, union officials held a meeting at Coventry's Transport House. They decided to respect the law — and betray their members. At a mass meeting the following morning, Hughes called for a return to work, 'with heads held high'. At the same meeting, *ims* supporters called on Unipart workers to fight for the right to strike. 'A law that denies us the right

BL's British managers are joining the bosses' offensive, writes Tom Bruggen

to strike', we argued, 'will never defend anyone but the company.' We also argued for:

- rank and file meetings to ensure the full participation of everybody on strike;
- standing firm on our wage demand and not giving in to what the company says is economical;
- organising effective picket lines and the blacking of Unipart products.

Many workers agreed with our approach, but were unable to swing the majority against the bureaucrats. Labour's John Hughes is opposed to the privatisation of BL and he wants to keep Land Rover British. But his Kinnock-style strategy has failed to stop publicly-owned BL, and its British managers, from attacking Unipart workers. Hughes is surprised when 'callous' bosses use British laws to do what they were designed for — attack workers. As rank and file trade unionists we need to use our organisations to do what we designed them for in the first place — to defend workers' interests, regardless of the requirements of the bosses and the limitations of their law.

THE CITY BOOMS WHILE INDUSTRY GOES BUST



DAVID ROURKE

GAMBLING CLOSE TO THE EDGE

There seems to be no ceiling on share price rises. The *Financial Times* ordinary share index, which registers the prices of 30 leading shares, breaks new records almost every day. Since January share prices have risen by 20 per cent — equivalent to the rise in the previous 12 months, and 1985 was regarded as a good year. Trading in stocks and shares has become frantic as investors rush to stake their cash in the hope of a quick killing while the boom lasts.

But the euphoria of the City is tempered with unease. The current behaviour of the stock exchange and the money markets is just not normal. When interest rates are high, as they have been for some time, share prices usually slump. In these circumstances investors generally prefer to let their capital safely gather interest in the bank, rather than risk losing out on the stock market. While dealers are uncertain about the causes of the current rise in share prices, they are more worried about missing out on today's boom than they are about tomorrow's crash. So they swallow hard and put their money on the table.

FAREWELL, RECOVERY

But why is the stock exchange booming? One thing is certain — it is not because British industry is thriving. The output from Britain's factories has barely recovered from the slump of the early eighties. It is only just getting back to the level it was at when the Tories first came into office in 1979. Nor is there any conviction among investors that an economic upturn lies just around the corner. All the indicators suggest that the recovery long promised by the Tories has already passed, though many could be forgiven for not having noticed.

In fact the success of the stock markets reflects the weakness of industry rather than its strength. Fortunes have been made in the City despite British industry, not because of it.

A number of factors have contributed to the stock market's current vitality:

• deregulation

When Thatcher became prime minister she swore to sweep away barriers to capitalist enterprise. Recognising the difficulties of restoring the entrepreneurial spirit to British manufacturing, the Tories searched for ways

of stimulating the financial sector. Thatcher's first move was to remove restrictions on the export of capital. She complained that access to the stock markets was confined to too few, and threatened to introduce legislation to remove 'restrictive practices'.

But the Tories did not need to resort to the law to persuade their pals in the City to mend their ways. The government has accepted the City's proposals for measures of 'self-regulation', which will open up the market to more dealers and remove prohibitive minimum commission rates.

While the champagne corks have been popping in the square mile of the City of London, British manufacturers are more likely to be turning to the gin bottle for consolation

Competition is expected to intensify, particularly from foreign dealers, when the new rules — 'the big bang' — come into effect this autumn. Stockbrokers and dealers are already hustling to increase their market shares to avoid being squeezed out when the going gets tougher. British financiers are particularly keen on doing deals with foreign bankers and investors to strengthen the financial clout they will need to survive.

• flotations

Last year was a bumper year for companies attracting funds by selling shares on the stock exchange. While high interest rates make borrowing prohibitively expensive, the stock exchange has become a useful alternative source of ready cash. Flotation allows private firms to issue and sell shares in the company. This provides cash for investment or for further speculation. While well-known companies like Laura Ashley and Abbey National have raised millions in this way, many smaller companies resorted to the same device to compensate for cash flow problems.

A number of companies already established on the stock exchange were forced to issue more shares to avoid facing hard-nosed bank managers. Taking a risk on the stock market has become a more attractive proposition than paying back loans at rates which eat into already poor profit margins.

The Tories welcome the expansion of share ownership as a sign of Thatcher's popular capitalism. In reality it reveals that private capitalism is so feeble that it can only raise funds by public subscription, rather than by generating them through private enterprise.

• merger mania

It seems that every day the press reports another take-over bid or merger deal: now even Woolworths is up for grabs. For big conglomerates like Hanson or Imperial, it is easier to swallow up flagging competitors than it is to establish new enterprises or extend existing activities. For smaller firms too, 'eat or be eaten' has become the market motto. Companies are forced to make bids they cannot really afford to ensure their own survival. When profit margins are low it makes more sense to huddle together than to take risks in new areas of investment. The result is that the share prices of declining companies soar, as stockbrokers spot likely targets for take-over bids.

An artificial stock exchange boom, fuelled by the weakness of the rest of the economy, stores up problems for the City in the not too distant future. Yet the policy of looking on the bright side, and turning a blind eye to the inexorable decline of the British economy, now appears to rule within the establishment.

LIVE NOW, PAY LATER

The case of the City-based world tin cartel should be a cautionary tale for the City. After years in which prices had been maintained artificially high, the bottom fell out of the market late last year. The result is that tin prices have hit rock bottom, threatening the livelihoods of tin miners from Cornwall to Malaysia to Bolivia. Much more serious for the City is the fact that the survival of the world metal commodity market in London is now in jeopardy.

The response to the current fall in world oil prices is a good indication of the 'live now and hope for the best' philosophy that now seems to guide Britain's capitalists. Forecasters friendly to the government have proclaimed falling oil prices as Thatcher's life line, heralding a moderate boost in growth, a slight fall in interest rates and inflation, and even a modest drop in unemployment — and all in time for a general election in late 1987 or early 1988. In reality the fall in oil prices exposes the fact that only North Sea oil has slowed the collapse of British capitalism. Businessmen blindly hope that lower fuel costs will boost British industry, and ignore the fact that foreign competitors are much more likely to benefit.

It will take more than cheaper oil to make British manufacturing competitive and profitable. Meanwhile the speculators have little else to do with their cash than gamble it on the stock exchange.

GAMBLERS' GOVERNMENT

Sooner or later City brokers are going to have to stop playing games and face realities. Share prices are riding high, but the yield on investment in shares is stagnant. Dividends are running at an average four per cent, the lowest since 1972, reflecting the fundamental problem of low profitability in the British economy. As soon as a few dealers get scared, the bubble will burst and the share values will plummet in a scramble to sell. The regular exposure of multi-million pound frauds such as those at the Johnson Matthey Bank and at Lloyds, as well as the endemic everyday swindling, could seriously undermine confidence in the City and help to precipitate a sudden slump.

The fact that the government which promised to liberate British enterprise has come to rely on gamblers and speculators, merely underlines the weakness of the Tories' economic strategy. The booming stock exchange reflects the decadence of British capitalism, and the urgent need for running society as something better than a rich man's poker game.

Helen Simons

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

'NO PLATFORM'?

First immigration minister David Waddington got showered in saliva at Manchester University; then John Carlisle, MP for Luton and Johannesburg, got his finger broken at Bradford; next Darlington Tory Michael Fallon got smacked in the mouth at Sunderland Poly; and now John Vincent, professor and *Sun* journalist, has been barracked by students in Bristol. The debate about allowing 'no platform' to exponents of extreme right-wing views rages again in the colleges and the media.

The 'no platform' controversy first arose in the late seventies, when left-wing opponents of the National Front decided its racist policies were so objectionable that any public expression of them should be prevented. This approach won support from anti-racists, while being condemned by establishment figures for violating the principle of 'free speech'.

At the time we took a different view from both sides. We opposed the 'no platform' approach to the National Front because it focused attention exclusively on the most extreme manifestations of racism and chauvinism, and proposed to deal with a political problem by organisational measures. Focusing on the marginal National Front distracted attention from mainstream prejudice in British society, which was a much more serious threat to black people. In our view the 'no platform' position was an ineffective method of combating the widespread influence of racism. Worse, it invited the authorities to take action against the fascists, thus giving a radical stamp of approval to measures of state repression which could equally be used against the left.

We were quite prepared to take direct action against groups that threatened black people or the labour movement. Indeed we began to organise workers' defence against racist attacks, whether they were carried out by fascists or ordinary racists. We also made sure that meetings and demonstrations were properly protected against disruptions. It is significant that left-wing organisations that ardently proclaimed the 'no platform' line turned a blind eye to racist attacks and, on several occasions, allowed their own meetings to be broken up by fascists.

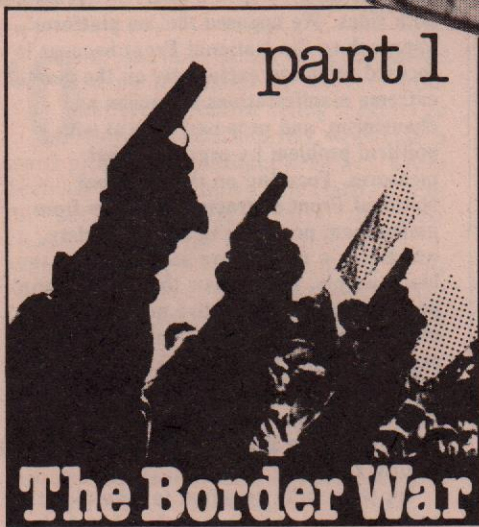
The 'no platform' approach has recently been widened to include Tories and *Sun* journalists, as well as both anti-semitic and Zionist speakers. The result is a furious debate between the 'no platform' and 'free speech' positions. This is the sort of artificial debate on which student union meetings and conferences thrive.

The radical position is an impulsive outburst of liberal moralism which seeks to sweep away distasteful views, rather than confront them politically. The moderate view rests on a more considered argument of the traditional liberal principle of the freedom of the individual.

It is not surprising that the moderates are winning the argument. Last week *Mirror/Socialist Worker* columnist Paul Foot came out unequivocally 'on the side of free speech and free argument'. But as anybody who works for Robert Maxwell should know, 'free speech' in our society is a meaningless abstraction. The capitulation by past supporters of 'no platform' to the slogans about 'freedom', which the establishment has always used to justify its freedom to exploit and oppress, is the logical outcome of the liberal anti-fascism of the seventies. A policy which once appeared to be the most militant response to the National Front is now exposed as an emotional spasm.

Where the bandits

Mick Hume starts a series of reports from the IRA strongholds of 'Bandit Country' with a ride around the legendary village of Crossmaglen, South Armagh



part 1

The Border War

It's a long way from the Belfast talks between the London and Dublin governments to the war-zone of South Armagh. The officials have congratulated each other on tightening cross-Border police cooperation. But the smugglers and IRA men of South Armagh go about their business as if the Border dividing Ireland didn't exist. The Anglo-Irish conference has refused to abolish the Flags and Emblem Act, so it's still illegal to display the Irish tricolour in Northern Ireland. But green, white and gold flags continue to fly over each South Armagh village. And while the bureaucrats in Belfast boast of promoting tourism, the breathtaking scenery of South Armagh is blighted by armoured British Army outposts dug in along every hilltop.

If you want to know why there is a war in Ireland, take a trip to Crossmaglen, the most famous (or infamous, depending which side you're on) of republican villages. Any fool could see that the foreigners there are the men in British uniforms. In Britain, taxi drivers might tell their passengers anti-Irish jokes. But the gags our guide threw over his shoulder, as he drove us around the winding roads near Crossmaglen, were all anti-British — anti-British Army, that is.

'There's this paratrooper taking his first jump,' he said as the car bumped round another bend. 'They decide to throw him in at the deep end and make him jump over South Armagh. So he jumps and starts pulling ripcords, but nothing happens. As he panics and gets nearer the ground, he sees another British fella flying up towards him. "Hey," says the paratrooper, "do you know anything about parachutes?" "No," says the other one, "but do you know anything about meat cans?"'

For the uninitiated, the one flying skywards is a British bomb-disposal expert who has found, like many before him, that all is not what it seems in South Armagh. A meat can, a hay-bale, a bicycle or a bush can turn out to be an

IRA bomb. And the locals are the last people who would let the Brits know about it.

Our driver, escort and story-teller was Jim McAllister, the republican elected as the local member of the 'Ulster' Assembly. We travelled through South Armagh to meet him in Crossmaglen market square, along roads broken into as many bits as the little hand-built walls that fence the farms. The shattered road surface results from Army strategy.

Why should the British authorities bother with repairs, when their security forces don't use the roads, for fear of driving over something that will give them a puncture to remember. As far as the Army is concerned, a helicopter really is the only way to travel here.

Crossmaglen market square is supposed to be the biggest in Ireland. But judging from the tentative way they picked the spots to place their feet, it is not nearly big enough to suit the Yorkshire soldiers who were spinning to face first this way, then that, as we drove up alongside them. They have good reason to tread gingerly; by the mid-seventies around 30 troops had been killed near Crossmaglen, 17 of them in the square itself.

A siren screaming from the village turned out only to be the local fire brigade. But if it had been an air-raid warning it wouldn't have seemed out of place, alongside the beat of the British Army helicopter hovering overhead. The joint Army/Royal Ulster Constabulary fortress behind the square is the first 'police station' I've ever seen with an orange windsock blowing above it. It welcomes you to a corner of the 'United Kingdom' where the Queen's armed

forces are so scared to travel that they even have to helicopter their dustbins away to be emptied.

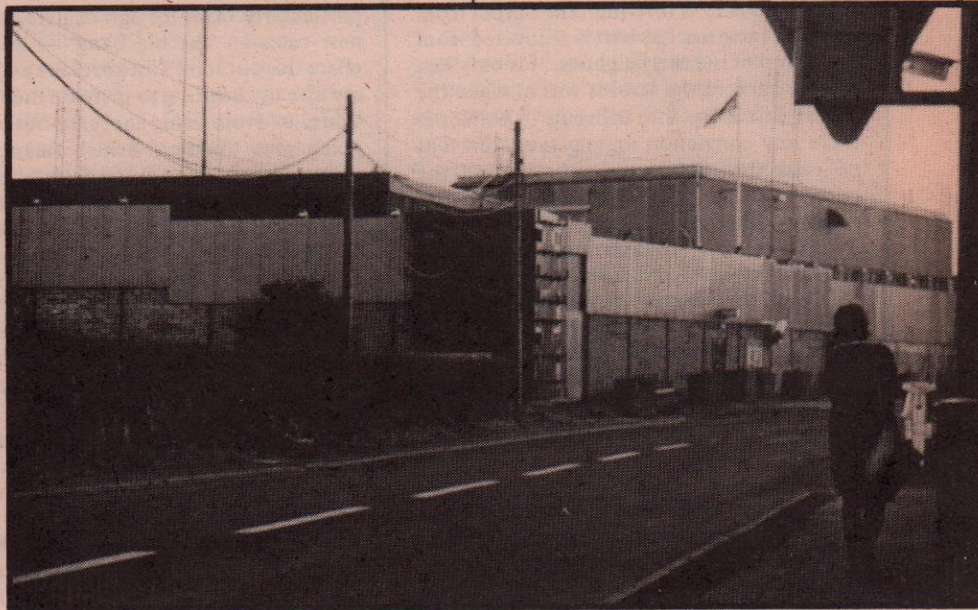
We waited for Jim McAllister in the Glen cafe, across the square from the striking black statue which the locals, who paid for it and put it up, call simply The Man. It's dedicated, in an inscription by John Behan, to 'all praised and humble heroes who have willingly suffered for your unselfish and passionate love of freedom'. The vandals of the British Army have added their own comment on the heroes of the Irish freedom struggle, by chucking less-than-poetic paintbombs across The Man and the phoenix below him.

The Glen cafe serves a fair plate of fish and chips, a rare sign of anything British being accepted in Crossmaglen. Not that the Brits stationed in the village would ever get a taste. No shop will serve troops. Even the Vietnamese boat people who are proprietors of the square's Chinese restaurant have learnt that a 'No Brits here' policy is the secret of business success in South Armagh. And if you can't keep politics out of shopping, there's no chance of keeping it out of sport. The cafe wall carries a poster for the next home game of the Crossmaglen Rangers Gaelic football team, which has been campaigning against the British Army since it took to landing helicopters on the pitch during matches.

'When the Brits say "Bandit County"', Jim McAllister told us as we set off, 'they mean republican country. The parts they really fear would easily cover 100 square miles here.'

The Army has surrounded republican South Armagh with four big bases, at Newtonhamilton, Forkhill, Bessbrook and Crossmaglen itself. The one at Crossmaglen is a twentieth century castle, layer after layer of steel upon brick upon reinforced concrete. It houses the helicopter pad, an imported police force, an average of 100 soldiers, low-level videos that watch the square, four towering radio aerials, and a wooden pole propping up cameras powerful enough to survey the surrounding countryside.

'They started expanding the barracks in the seventies', says McAllister, 'and that's only what you can see. We reckon a lot more of it must be underground, judging by the amount of



YOUR FRIENDLY LOCAL POLICE STATION, CROSSMAGLEN-STYLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE BOATMAN

are British soldiers

building materials they took in there. The convoys would come in 40 lorries at a time. To get them through they had to spend three weeks clearing the roads for landmines and all, and put troops in every field for 12 miles, up to Camlough.

Up in the hills, we came across an even more militaristic example of British building. A fortress at Forkhill lay away to our left. And on the right, watching over it, stands a solitary mountain covered in red scrub. Thick forest stretches away behind it. But at the front, the clifftop is edged all along with barbed wire, from behind which stare the stony eye-slits of a big British Army pillbox, bristling with guns and hi-tech surveillance gear. That image of a British bunker dug high into an Irish hill tells the story of South Armagh with a power no amount of British propaganda can match. It begs to be compared with any occupied area of the third world, from an Israeli gun emplacement on the West Bank to a French foreign legion outpost in north Africa. It says this a battlefield — with, in the eyes of the British Army, an emphasis on the field.

'The Brit patrols won't even land on the roads,' says McAllister. 'They get flown in two or three fields away from where they're to set a checkpoint. Then they walk across and stay about 20 minutes. They don't hang about too long, they've learnt that lesson.' They've also learnt not to use existing gaps in hedges — choice targets for landmines — but to cut a fresh way through each time. 'That's partly done on purpose to annoy the farmers,' says McAllister.

'They think if they can get the people fed up enough, they'll tell the IRA to get out of it. But there's no sign of that.'

He must be right; how else could local IRA units have overcome all the hardware the British authorities have thrown against them, and created a climate in South Armagh where the 'official' security forces have to sneak about like...well, like bandits? 'They know their country, and they know their people,' McAllister affirms. 'Here, the IRA is at home.'

CAT AND MOUSE

People at home don't like uninvited intruders hiding in their back garden. All of the Army's 'Big Brother' equipment cannot disguise the fact that they are under observation by local people who want them out of it. We passed the Drummucavell hills, which the British respectfully call the 'Golan Heights'. 'Back in the mid-seventies', McAllister told us, 'some Brits spent three solid months in a "secret" dug-out up there. Then they left it for just half an hour, and when they came back it blew up on them. They thought they were watching us. But somebody was watching them.'

It seems as if every field in South Armagh holds a similar story of IRA ingenuity. In this one, an Army and police patrol spent all day looking for a bomb, at the end of which the RUC inspector gave up and sat down — on top of the well-concealed explosives. In that one, a paratroopers' patrol was hit with a landmine. The survivors found what they thought was the bomb's command wire, pulled it — and detonated another mine that finished them off. And so it goes on, across the countryside where



LEFT HAND IN THE NORTH, RIGHT IN THE REPUBLIC: EAMONN LARKIN AT CAMPBELL'S HOME

the British forces of occupation have suffered casualties among their highest in Ireland.

The two big IRA operations around Crossmaglen this year have both been on the Monogue Road: one a landmine that caught an Army patrol, the other a spectacular 20-minute shoot-out in which an IRA 'flying column' exchanged 2000 rounds of ammunition with the SAS. The British authorities insist no troops were killed in either attack. But local people have learnt that the British authorities are liars. 'Very frequently, after an IRA operation, the Brits say "no casualties". Then you hear mysterious "news" reports about soldiers being killed in car crashes in Germany, on exercise in Belgium, or up a mountain in Scotland — anywhere but in a gunfight in South Armagh!'

Such stories don't diminish local people's pleasure at something like the gun battle with the SAS. 'No problem, there'd be a fair share of delight. People like to see nice, clean operations against the British Army out in the country. Most of them would say well done to the IRA boys for a thing like that.'

It's easy to understand why the community around Crossmaglen would say well done to anybody who strikes a blow against the British forces. After all, the occupying Army has wrecked their roads, trampled their fields, raided their homes, destroyed their economy and split their country. The Border sums up the imposed character of British rule. There is no sense to it. It divides houses, runs through streams so narrow you don't notice you've stepped over them, and criss-crosses the countryside. Its irrational route carries the hallmark of arrogant British bureaucrats deciding, with a stroke of the pen, what country Irish people are allowed to live in.

As we drove along, McAllister would announce: 'We've just crossed the Border again.' How did he know? 'The tarmac's changed colour.' Then there was the shop at Courtbane. It is in the South, but the road outside it is in Northern Ireland. So if you buy anything there, and carry it outside, you're smuggling. 'There are maybe 15 or 18 roads that cross the Border around Crossmaglen', said McAllister, 'but only one of them has an Army

checkpoint. The rest are all "unapproved roads", and it's illegal to cross the Border there. Mind you, nobody takes any notice of that.'

But, I asked him, haven't the Brits blown up or blocked off the unapproved roads? 'Oh yes, all the time. But it only lasts a day or two. If they blow a road up, the people fill it in. If they block one up, we move the barriers.' So that's what they were — the yellow-striped concrete blocks on the way into Crossmaglen, heaped at the side of the road like rubbish awaiting collection.

Smuggling goods across the unapproved roads is an old and still-booming business. 'With it being a British Border and British law, smuggling is a respected profession in these parts. When I was a youngster we used to read these British story books, where the brave children catch the evil smugglers. It used to puzzle us why they would want to catch the smugglers. In South Armagh, the smugglers are the men you get your meat from.'

We drove up to the Moira Pass to meet Liam Campbell, a man who's suffered more than most under the burden of the British-built Border. 'There's two Army outposts on the hill up here,' said Jim McAllister as we climbed above the villages. But there weren't two outposts — there were four. 'They've been busy expanding since I last looked,' he said. 'Look at them, like pimples across the country. There must be 20 or more in these hills.'

Liam Campbell was away at work. But his neighbour, Sinn Féin councillor Eamonn Larkin, came rumbling along the road on a tractor to meet us. 'Just passed through two miles worth of Brits and RUC, going door to door down there,' he announced. The Crown forces were conducting an illegal census. 'They come round and ask you how many children there are in the house, what's the dog's name, that sort of thing,' explained McAllister. Over tea and homemade bread by his big farmhouse range, Eamonn Larkin told us Liam Campbell's story, then took us round the corner to see the scene of the crime.

'SOMEBODY'S WATCHING THEM'

'Liam's excluded from the whole "United Kingdom" under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. If he sets foot in Northern Ireland, he can be arrested and jailed for three years. Now his house is in the South, but the Border runs down the middle of the road outside. So when he drives down the left hand side of the road on his way to work, he's OK, he's in the South. But when he drives home, up the right hand side of the same road, he's in Northern Ireland! To obey the order properly, he couldn't leave the house.'

Campbell lives in constant fear that the troops perched on the hill above his home will one day come down, to drag him across the road and away to jail. Army helicopters swoop ominously low overhead every day. 'Once they landed in a garden on the wrong side of the road without knowing it,' Larkin told us. 'We went to call the Gardai (Irish police) to have an international incident, but the man living there was too angry to wait, he went out and told the Brits to clear off.'

Back outside the Larkins' farmhouse, Jim McAllister was surveying the roller-coaster countryside of republican South Armagh. 'It's nice to look at, but it's hard enough to make a living out of it. It's mostly bad land, if it's not rocky then it's muddy.' In the distance the odd figure moved about the fields. Perhaps they were farmers tending their land. And perhaps they weren't. Last May, a few 'farmers' left a tractor standing in one of those fields. It turned out to be the launcher for home-made IRA mortar bombs that rained down on the Army emplacements. 'It's like a cat and mouse game out there,' McAllister reckoned. 'The British troops are always trying to find dug-outs they can hide in, and the local people are always out "looking for cattle", trying to find the Brits.'

That's the way it is in South Armagh, a country where everything has been strangely twisted by an artificial Border and by the British gunmen guarding it.

It is littered with landmarks and legends of the fight for Irish freedom. There's the leaning electric pylon blown up by the IRA to spoil a British scheme for running electricity over the Border. (Other felled pylons were quickly cut up and carried off by locals 'to make sheds or whatever was needed'.) There's the little cottage

outside Crossmaglen which always flies the Irish tricolour — 'except during the Falklands War, then they flew the Argentinian flag'. And there's the house at the end of a track where once lived Art McAlinden.

'Art was an IRA man in the forties, the fifties, the sixties, the seventies, and if he'd lived he'd be one now,' McAllister told us. 'He was interned back in the days when the police used the cat to beat republicans. They came to his house once looking for him because an RUC man had been shot up at Lurgan. "Is he dead?" asks Art's father. "No," say the police. "Then what are you looking for Art for?" Art wouldn't have missed, you see.'

'I remember in the pub one night they were taunting him about the ghosts of Brits and RUC men that must be about in South Armagh. "What will you do going home tonight Art", they said, "if you meet the ghosts of those two policemen shot down your road last week?" "If I meet those ghosts", says Art, "I'll beat the shite out of them." When you've struggled with the boulders, the Border and the Brits all your life, you don't scare easy.'

We left McAllister at his home village of Cullyhanna, beside a monument to Captain Michael McVerry who, in three short years in the seventies, made the IRA around Crossmaglen the most feared force the British Army had to face. Its solid stone is etched with bold black and gold inlay, spanning the well-kept sanctuary set aside for the man the monument remembers as 'one of Ireland's noblest sons', 'killed in action by British forces of occupation at Keady RUC barracks, 15 November 1973'. I doubt if there is another memorial to a single soldier like it in Ireland, if anywhere in these islands. It is a reminder of the respect felt for Irish freedom fighters in South Armagh.



JIM McALLISTER AT McVERRY'S MEMORIAL

'In the end', said Jim McAllister as we bid him goodbye, 'I think the reason the IRA has done so well here, and lost so few, is the nature of the country. People have always had to rely on themselves and each other. There's no industry, so apart from those with a bit of land, people here pursue the official occupation of a "Guinea-hunter". That's someone who goes out in the morning to try to make a guinea where he can, to feed his family. So South Armagh teaches you how to survive — and how to stick it out together.'

'Even those people who don't like the IRA wouldn't help the Brits. If they see an IRA man coming down the road, they might wish he wasn't there — but they wouldn't have seen him.'

We hadn't seen any either as we toured around Crossmaglen. But the British spotter plane that escorted us out of Cullyhanna, the helicopters, the fortresses and the gunposts were proof enough that the unseen soldiers of the Irish liberation struggle were there. And, like the man said, they're at home.

STOP STRIP SEARCHES!

The Irish Freedom Movement is supporting a protest at Brixton jail, this Saturday 22 March, to oppose the strip-searching of Irish prisoners Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson. Join us, 11.30am-1.30pm



BRITISH GUNPOST AT FORKHILL — SOUTH ARMAGH SUMMED UP

SPAIN VOTES TO STAY IN NATO

GONZALES COMES OUT ON TOP

Socialist Party leader Felipe González first promised to submit Spain's membership of Nato to the test of public opinion during the 1982 election campaign. Spain's recent entry into the alliance attracted widespread popular condemnation. The Spanish ruling class has long relied on the support of its capitalist allies abroad to keep it in power. In the thirties Nazi Germany backed General Franco in the civil war. Hitler helped to install the brutal dictatorship which survived until Franco's death in 1975. After the war Spain came under US sponsorship, which continued through the succession of right-wing regimes that presided over a cautious transition to democracy in the late seventies.

ANTI-AMERICANISM

Spain's entry into Nato was widely regarded as evidence of the continuing influence of the pro-American sections of the former Franco establishment over the new regime.

By adopting an anti-militarist, anti-American stance, the Socialist Party was able to project itself as a radical alternative to the old politicians of the right and win 10 million votes. Gonzales' appeal to patriotic and anti-Franco sentiments helped to neutralise the Communist Party. The traditional party of the Spanish left was pushed to the sidelines, gaining only four per cent of the poll.

The Socialist government's victory in last week's referendum reveals the confidence of the Spanish establishment and the disarray of the left

Yet Gonzales' populist election gesture led to the greatest gamble of his political career. Having assumed prime ministerial office, he abandoned his opposition to Nato. But, given the strength of hostility to Nato and the USA, he could not refuse to hold the promised referendum without losing popular support. The Socialist government desperately needs popular support to push through the austerity measures required to stabilise the ailing Spanish economy. Leaving the Nato issue open to the verdict of the ballot box was a risk that had to be taken, to preserve stability and the authority of the Socialist Party. In the event Gonzales won a 52.5 per cent vote in support of the Nato alliance, in a poll which many believed might lead to his downfall.

GONZALES GAMBLES

The majority 'Yes' vote is a real triumph for Gonzales, and a tribute to his considerable political skill. In the run-up to the poll, Gonzales shrewdly set out to undermine the anti-Nato campaign by redefining the terms of Nato membership. The ballot paper assured Spaniards that Nato membership would leave Spain nuclear-free and outside the alliance's military structures. It also promised that the government would press ahead with negotiations to reduce the US military presence.

Gonzales' strongest card was Europe. Playing on anti-American feeling, and on hopes for economic improvement attached to Spain's new status as an EEC member,



WHILE THE LEFT RIDICULES REAGAN, GONZALES CAN GET ON WITH SAVING SPANISH CAPITALISM

Gonzales declared that a vote for Nato was a vote for Europe. 'To vote against Nato is to defend the existing link with the USA and to choose to be separated from Europe,' he said. In the last week of the campaign he drove home the point, painting a grim picture of economic and political chaos after a 'No' vote.

Gonzales' confident posture disoriented both his right-wing and left-wing opponents. Leading right-wing politician Manuel Fraga called on his voters to abstain, to cut the 'Yes' vote and embarrass the Socialists. But right-wing voters turned out en masse in defiance of Fraga's manoeuvre. The television announcement by King Juan

Carlos that he intended to vote was a body blow to the right's boycott. The fact that there was little doubt that the monarch would vote 'Yes' gave added impetus to the Gonzales camp.

Gonzales' greatest asset has been the incoherence of the Spanish left. The weakness of the anti-Nato campaign was that it shared the conservative approach characteristic of peace movements across Europe. Its appeal was neither anti-militarist nor anti-capitalist. Instead it projected a strident anti-Americanism, and a naive faith in the progressive potential of a 'neutral' and independent capitalist Spain. This approach was expressed most

coherently by the Communist Party which dominated the campaign. It jumped on to the anti-Nato bandwagon in a last-ditch attempt to halt its own demise.

The Communist Party's anti-Nato manifesto promised that 'Spain could remain neutral, following a path of progress, social and cultural welfare, as in countries like Sweden and Austria'. Other left-wing groups, which do not share this faith in capitalist neutrality attempted to give the movement a more radical flavour. But by failing to challenge nationalist and reformist ideas they allowed these views to dominate the movement.

The anti-Nato campaign served only to expose the paralysis of the Spanish left. Instead of providing a positive anti-capitalist direction to workers' anger against Socialist austerity and militarism, the campaign dissipated that potential.

SUBSERVIENT PARTNER

Neutrality is not an option for Spanish capitalism. Nor are neutral capitalist countries any more progressive than aligned ones. Wealthy powers like Sweden or Switzerland can afford to remain aloof from imperialist alliances while reaping the profits guaranteed by Western military might. The assumption that Spain could do likewise reflects a failure to grasp the gravity of the crisis facing Spanish capitalism. Spain is one of the weakest capitalist nations in Europe. Spanish capitalism can survive only as a subservient partner of the big European powers, Germany, France and Britain, in the framework of the EEC.

Gonzales has a shrewd grasp of the weakness of Spain's position. His pragmatic strategy presents the only realistic option for Spanish capitalism. The Socialist government has pursued a ruthless drive to get the Spanish economy in gear to compete in the EEC. This has resulted in unprecedented levels of unemployment and poverty, and fierce attacks on trade union rights. Spanish foreign policy amounts to offering slavish support for the interests of the Western powers, in the hope of gaining the best possible terms in economic relations with the EEC.

Gonzales' main strength has been the absence of any coherent working class alternative. The mass demonstrations against Nato showed the potential to build an anti-capitalist movement in Spain. The first step towards building it is to destroy the nationalist outlook which paralyses the anti-Nato movement.

Sabena Norton

FRENCH ELECTION RESULTS

AN UNSTABLE STALEMATE

The indecisive outcome of the assembly elections reflects the contradictory processes at work in French society. Five years of Socialist government have provoked a dramatic shift to the right and the revival of reactionary middle class forces. At the same time the austerity policies of the Mitterrand government have left French workers bitterly disillusioned with their traditional parties.

The respectable right-wing parties — Jacques Chirac's Gaullist RPR and Giscard d'Estaing's UDF — won an absolute majority in the national assembly. Yet their share of the vote, slightly more than 40 per cent, was less than predicted and their resulting majority of seats — around 40 — is narrower than they might have hoped. The right is also fairly evenly divided between the two big parties, and the ambitions of the rival party leaders are a potent source of tensions within the anti-Socialist opposition.

The Socialist share of the poll — 31 per cent — indicated a major setback for the left, but it could have been a great deal worse. With nearly 200 seats, the Socialists remain the largest single party in the assembly, a

factor which gives Mitterrand some room to manoeuvre.

The greatest casualty of the election was the Communist Party. Long the party of the working class, the Communists slumped below 10 per cent, their worst electoral performance for more than 50 years. Georges Marchais' party has been discredited by its early collaboration with the Mitterrand regime, and its inability to mobilise any effective resistance to the government's programme of mass redundancies and falling living standards.

The most significant breakthrough of the

The French left has collapsed, but as Mitterrand bargains with the leaders of a divided right, a period of instability is inevitable

election was that made by Jean Marie Le Pen's extreme right Front National. Winning almost 10 per cent of the vote, it gained 33 seats in its first national parliamentary contest. In Marseilles, once a Socialist stronghold, it won a quarter of the poll. It also polled well in some working class suburbs of Paris, despite the thuggery of its campaign which left one Socialist Party supporter dead. The growth of this openly racist movement into a force which wields considerable influence in parliament is the most alarming product of the Mitterrand era.

In France, unlike anywhere else in Europe, the inability of the traditional left-wing parties to show a way out of deepening economic and political crisis has initiated the emergence of a fascist trend.

Socialist president Mitterrand must now 'co-habit' with a right-dominated parliament. The traditional left has lost the support of the working class and the middle classes lack the confidence to take a firm grip on French society. If the forces of the right are not to resolve this stalemate in their favour, French workers need a party of their own to break the stranglehold of all the parties of the past.

junius publications



The Roots of Racism, the Workers Against Racism handbook

Housing officers in the London borough of Tower Hamlets were recently sent on special 'race awareness' training courses, after the authorities discovered the sort of attitudes that were commonplace among officials allocating council accommodation. Many expressed the view that Bengalis should be housed together on the worst estates, as they were 'dirty, noisy and potential sources of social conflict'. Others believed that Bengalis were not entitled to modern flats, because 'they would turn them into slums anyway'.

But staff running the anti-racist course discovered considerable 'resistance' to attempts to change the officers' attitudes through encounter groups and role-play techniques. The officials returned to carry on the borough's long-established racist housing policies.

For Workers Against Racism, racism is not so much a state of mind as a social force. Overcoming racism requires a political struggle against the racist structures of British society, not liberal sermons. The first step is to get a clear grasp of the origins of racism and how it acquired its modern forms.

The Roots of Racism provides this, and a strategy for taking on racists on the streets, at work, or on the council — and for beating them. It costs £1.95 plus 40p p&p from Junius Publications, address below.

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WOMEN IN KENYA

Colonial rules

Muthoni Likimani, *Passbook* Number F47927, Macmillan £6.95

This collection of seven essays shows what life was like in Kenya during the state of emergency imposed by the British colonial regime in the fifties. Likimani's narratives expose the hypocrisy of British politicians who today condemn the brutalities of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Botha and his thugs could have taught Kenya's British rulers little about the techniques of repression.

Likimani reveals colonial oppression as it was experienced by the people of Kenya. She does not dwell on the freedom fighters who took up arms to expel the British from Kenya. She concentrates on life in the villages where most of the population still lived. In the revolt that raged across the countryside after 1952, many villages were transformed into concentration camps. Inhabitants suffered stops and searches, raids, arrest, interrogation and torture.

Repression, as Likimani

shows, had the opposite effect to that desired by the British. It increased popular support for the guerrillas, dubbed the Mau-Mau by the British authorities, after the Kikuyu word for 'important' which headed posters and leaflets. For instance, Githii, one of Likimani's characters, was 'just a quiet man that people did not bother', a man who 'would not make a good Mau-Mau, he did not even make a good loyalist'. Githii discovers through his experience in the British courts that his attempt to avoid trouble will not save him from the wrath of the authorities. As a member of the Kikuyu people who provided most support to the guerrillas, he is branded a Mau-Mau supporter. He realises that the only way to achieve his ambition of a quiet life is to drive the British out of Kenya.

Likimani shows the limitations imposed on women's involvement in the liberation struggle by the heavy burden of work they had to carry out, inside the home and in subsistence farming. Women were restricted to preparing food and sheltering fugitives. The defeat of the Mau-Mau allowed the colonial authorities to hand over to a house-trained elite of British-educated nationalists, who ensured that things remained much the same for women, and for most Kenyans, after the British left.

Caroline Price



A MAU-MAU GUERRILLA FACES BRITISH GUNS

ELECTION FICTION

The end of satire

Pete Davies, *The Last Election*, Andre Deutsch £8.95

'England is a toilet and they've run out of Harpic.' The last election is drawing closer and television is showing snooker day and night, between advertisements for the Money Party, which is heading for another crushing victory over a non-existent opposition socialist party. Pete Davies' report from the front line of the election of the future races through this scenario, filling it with people living relatively comfortable lives at a time when the unemployed means the general public. Hospitals have become cities of the dead, and the 'red towns' of northern England and Scotland are under more or less permanent martial law.

Wally Wasted, the nation's hero, is a television snooker commentator. It's a good job and he'll do anything to keep it. Wally goes too far, fading the thin veneer of democracy a little too early for the Money Party's liking by exposing the token 'opposition' voice on TV, a rival

snooker commentator, as a pornographer.

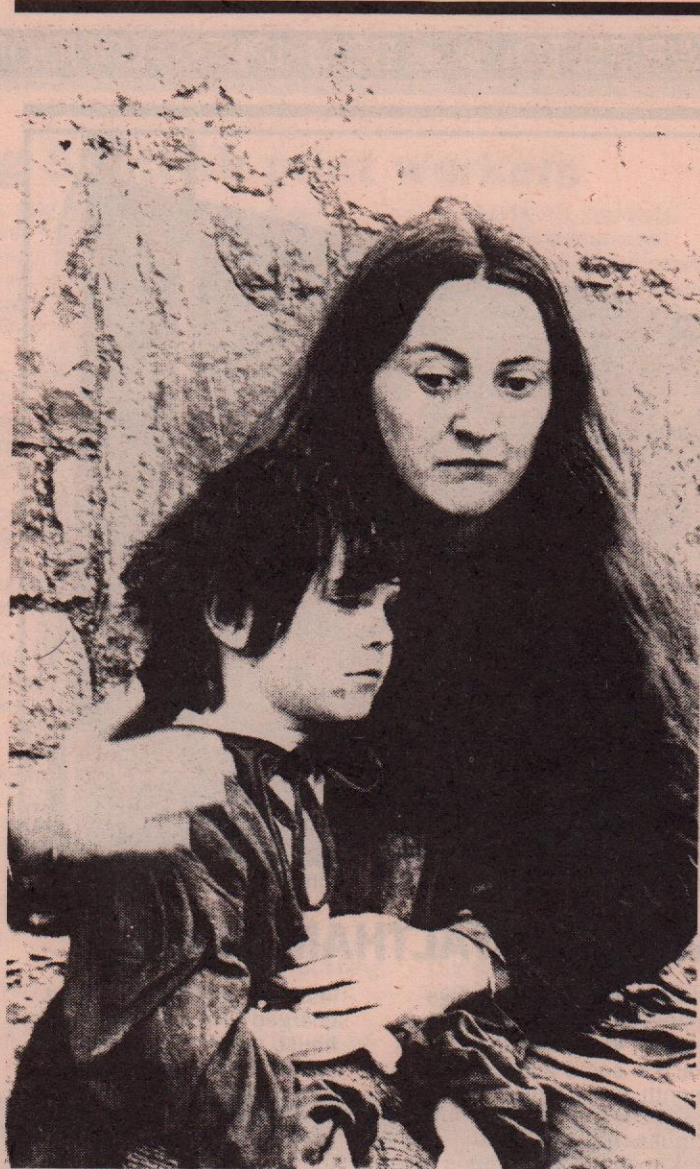
Grief, Wally's tenant, runs The Barn in Bermondsey, London's premier nightclub. He manages it grace of the Money bureaucracy, and for as long as he's prepared to shop drug dealers to Bludge, the ugly policewoman who emerges as the novel's most sympathetic character. Grief and Bludge uncover a plot to kill old people — 'a burden on society' — by mass prescribing a pill to speed up the ageing process, while making those who take it feel young. Revolted by the cynicism of those in power, Grief, his girlfriend, and inventor of the pill Moses Brandt, decide to assassinate Money Party leader Nanny.

Davies' novel reeks of the despair of the middle classes, faced with rulers whose attempts to salvage their system provoke resistance. The resistance of workers in 'the red towns' is present throughout *The Last Election*. Yet the only resistance that matters to Davies is heroic action by the central characters. When that fails, the novel retreats into a shell of cynicism which offers no comfort either to the characters or to the reader.

The irony of *The Last Election* is that its satire is not really satire. The world Davies depicts is not sufficiently removed from daily life to contrast today's reality to its own absurdity.

John Johnson

REVIEWS



IRISH FREEDOM FILM

Epitaph for Anne Devlin

Anne Devlin, Pat Murphy (director)

This is the second feature written, directed and co-produced by Pat Murphy and like her first, *Maeve*, it centres on a woman and her experience of the republican struggle. In Belfast in the seventies, Maeve felt all she could do was withdraw to London, away from the suffocating male politics of her past. In Dublin in 1803 Anne Devlin, a young country girl from Wicklow, eagerly joined Robert Emmet's conspiracy to stage an uprising, posing as his housekeeper.

The new character represents a welcome shift. It was difficult to sympathise very deeply with Maeve, the art student, and her problems. She was not, it should be said, presented uncritically, and the feminist gesture involved in actually making such a figure the subject of a film was in any event (perhaps unintentionally) undermined by other forces in the film, and indeed by Maeve's own utterances.

In *Anne Devlin* Murphy chooses a woman active in the republican cause, but repeats the gesture in a muted form by reversing the received version. She places Emmet and company in the background and Anne's private story centre stage. Anne acts not out of selfless adoring love for Emmet (there was no love affair) but from her own fierce and intelligent convictions.

The film is however more than this. It also recovers from history a story of indomitable human courage and resistance. Despite being set in 1803, it resonates more effectively with the Ireland of today — particularly through the circumstances of the women in Armagh prison. Emmet's uprising was an absolute fiasco and Devlin was soon with the others in Kilmainham jail.

Through torture and interrogation she never uttered one word against her comrades.

This is a fine, thoughtful film which requires and rewards a little patience. Murphy has no qualms about taking her time and letting her painterly images seep in. The careful compositions (often in blues ranging from the lightest, steeliest grey to the deepest black, and recalling the early Picasso) establish superbly the tense world of the heroine and its dominant mood of watchfulness and care. The steady pace for the most part sustains our interest, as in the extraordinarily long and intriguing scene as Anne wanders around Emmet's house (here Robert Boyle's economically used score comes into its own), absorbing every inch of it and of the change which has come upon her life. Brid Brennan gives a characteristically powerful performance in the role which was written for her.

Pat Murphy is a bold director, as the adventurous techniques of *Maeve* showed (not all of them successful). In *Anne Devlin* the bold concentration on Anne seems a little strained at times and we have some difficulty in conjuring up a convincing sense of the hectic and violent events which are for the most part happening off screen. There is also a certain faltering towards the end, as if Murphy was uncertain how to finish the piece.

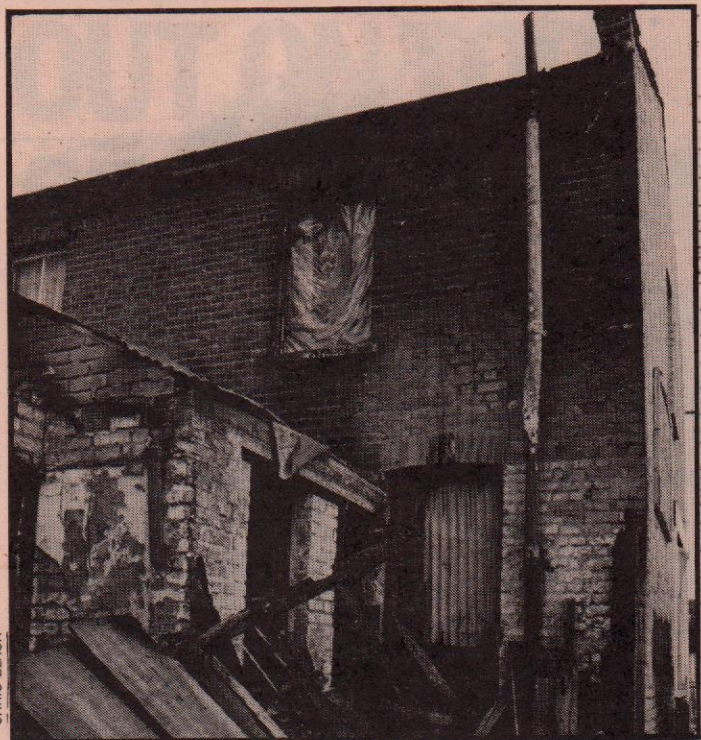
Anne Devlin's determination arose from her own experience. She witnessed first hand the bloody defeat of the United Irishmen's rebellion of 1798. More than 30 of her extended family were in prison by the end of 1803, all of them committed republicans. Again and again she refers her oppressors to the record of their barbarity.

'Let no man write my epitaph', said Emmet from the dock (not in this film of course), 'until my country takes her place among the nations of the earth.' Ignoring the spirit of his plea, people have never stopped speaking of him since. Nobody could now object to this tribute to an equally worthy freedom fighter.

Pat Ford

LETTERS

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



ANOTHER ASIAN HOME GUTTED BY RACISTS

WAR IN WALTHAM FOREST

THE Waltham Forest Nalگو in-house paper is giving East London Workers Against Racism some publicity this month. In an article on combating racism the author argues that 'the solution lies not in supporting groups like Elwar....What is needed is more action by police against the perpetrators of these attacks and police accountability to a police authority.' This in a week when Sohail Ghani, one victim of 28 racist arson attacks in Waltham Forest

last year, appeared in court charged with burning his own house down. The history of police 'action against the perpetrators of these attacks' in Waltham Forest has been one of intimidation of the victims. Nalگو are prepared to invite more harassment because they refuse to face racism as an issue which we can, and must, deal with ourselves.

Amanda Kent
Nalگو shop steward
Waltham Forest

FULHAM BY-ELECTION

I THOUGHT Andrew Calcutt's prediction of an Alliance win in Fulham was pretty bold, especially when Labour is so far out in front in all the polls (*tns* 10). It is true that there has been a big influx of 'yuppies' into the area, and this is more likely to favour the Alliance. But I think you underestimate the substantial traditional working class population, which will help Labour. Martin Stevens had many working class voters who may now opt for Labour rather than the Alliance. The fact that Labour has the most skilful political operator of all the candidates is another important factor.

Your article emphasises

the importance of national, rather than local factors in the by-election and that is fair enough, given the amount of national attention it is certain to receive. But even going on national trends, Labour should have the edge. Put it like this: if Labour can't win Fulham, Kinnock might as well retire now and save himself the humiliation of a general election.

One final point. Given the RCP's recent declarations of parliamentary zeal, why don't you throw your hat into the Fulham ring and give Nick Raynsford something serious to worry about?

Maureen Ward
Hammersmith

SEXISM AT WORK

RAPE is the new big issue for the right-wing moralists and the gutter press. But how can we challenge sexism and backward views in society? Two examples of my own experience as a shop steward indicate an alternative way.

The first was the problem of a number of girly calendars around the offices. We discussed this at our stewards' meeting and while sanctioning guerrilla raids in the evening, we discussed the need to challenge the views behind these ideas. Very soon the new attacks on abortion rights became known and we took round a petition arguing why attacks

on women's rights were an issue for all workers.

The second case was the holding of a strip show at the council's social club by the manual unions. Some Labour Party members of my union wanted the Labour council to ban them. What we eventually did was to support a counter-protest on the evening and then really slaughtered the manual unions' reps at the next joint union shop stewards' committee. As far as I know that was the last time they tried to organise such a 'social' event.

Pat Hughes
Leeds

HACKNEY LIBRARIANS SOLD OUT

ON 4 March 1986 a mass meeting of library workers decided to return to normal working and re-open the libraries in Hackney, which they had shut for over four months. This followed an agreement between Nalگو branch officials and the council. But this agreement did not include the right of Nalگو members not to do the work of vacant posts, nor the reinstatement of deducted pay, nor the removal of the threat to victimise workers by deductions of pay in the future.

This sell-out signalled our defeat. We fought long and hard to defend our right to fight for jobs and against the planned cuts in library services. The council are more determined than ever to ride roughshod over workers. Any council worker who steps out of line in the future will have their pay deducted.

Everyone who opposes Murdoch's lockout of printers should equally condemn Hackney council for adopting similar tactics. The only difference is one of degree. The council has deducted 30 per cent of librarians' wages whereas Murdoch deducted 100 per cent. If Nalگو loses this battle, the council will be more confident in the future to go all the way against any council workers who fight for what we need.

We need action that will stop or severely disrupt the running of the council, if necessary by an all-out strike. But how can this be done when the Nalگو branch leadership concedes defeat, and prefers to go to the council for concessions rather than convince and

argue with its members for the need to step up action?

Branch officers blame us, saying that members won't go on strike. No one in their right mind will go on strike and face the full might of the council, the police and the courts behind union leaders unprepared to lead a fight. Branch officers sound very militant talking about the need for strike action in two or three weeks time. But how can it be achieved unless a strike is being argued for now?

The choice is clear. We carry on as we are and watch the unions crumble or we organise ourselves to wrest control of the unions from the doom and gloom merchants. The stakes are high. It's our right to fight for both our jobs and the services that the government and the council are out to cut. Behind all the words in this dispute was the council's intention to cut back the number and range of library services, such as branch libraries and children's reading sections.

What we need is short-lived and effective action that wins. What is the point in marathon disputes that result in us losing out in pay, conditions or whatever else? We can discuss what form the strike action should take, and how to make the council pay for it, once we have won the argument to fight with other council workers. We have only ourselves and other council workers to rely on to win.

Chris Broadhead
Sarah Mosedale
Dermot Kennedy
Hackney Nalگو librarians

FAREWELL OLOF

YOUR obituary on Olof Palme was very apt. It went behind the media tributes and demolished the illusion of Sweden under Palme as a tolerant and caring capitalist democracy. But it's not only strikes dispelling the Swedish illusion — racism is now running riot here as well.

Out of a population of eight and a half million, there are now over a million immigrants, including Finns, Poles, Yugoslavs, Bengalis, Algerians and Turks. The Finns are the most numerous but they don't face the racism directed at the other immigrants.

The 'non-Germanic' immigrants, or 'Black Heads' as they are known, are ghettoised in specially designated suburbs of the

major industrial towns. They are subject to official document checks and risk deportation if they cannot prove they are working, in which case their wives are banned from joining them. In Stockholm, for instance, they are in danger of being attacked anywhere outside the 'Shazam', their area, and are confronted everywhere with racist slogans on walls and in subways. Government policy is currently moving towards compulsory repatriation, backed by the growing popularity of the chauvinist idea of the 'Nordic Man'.

This might be a fitting epitaph for Olof Palme: Swedish liberalism, RIP.
P Michael
Stockholm

LAST POST

A LETTER in last week's *tns* told of job cuts planned in the Post Office, but management aren't even waiting that long in my branch. This week three people were sacked for bad attendance. In response the union officials pinned up a notice, washing their hands of any responsibility for defending these workers by siding with the bosses in

calling them 'sloppy'.

When challenged they claimed it was only 'common sense' and advised that it was better to be safe than sorry. When our own representatives can't provide basic safeguards against the employers, who can blame workers for not turning in?

Postle
Manchester

STEPPING OUT

Denzil Davies is the Labour Party's defence spokesman. He also needs a bit of personal defence, against rude punters asking him awkward questions, if his performance on a public platform in Leeds last week is anything to go by. Denzil doesn't know what causes wars, but he knows they do tend to 'break out'. He suspects the First World War started because somebody shot somebody else. He thinks the Labour Party's crushing defeat in the last election may have had something to do with defence and the Falklands War. Then again, he thinks it might not have done. On the other hand, it probably did, because people in Wales didn't care about unemployment, only about defence (Welsh miners please note). He knows some sceptics say Labour's defence plan is anti-American. He says it isn't but 'I wish it was'. He knows some others say it's illogical for Labour to have a non-nuclear defence policy while remaining committed to Nato. He thinks they are logical to say it's illogical, but 'the world's not as we would like it'. And he knows something about Labour's tradition on defence, because historian Alan Bullock wrote a book about the party's former foreign minister Ernest Bevin, and Denzil has read 'a bit of it'. The onset of world peace seems imminent.

Not so very far away, on another Labour Party platform, David Blunkett — the witch-hunter's broomstick — has been heard complaining about his colleagues on the home policy committee of the national executive. He says he has proposed four times that they organise a weekend away in the wilds for the party to discuss what it means by 'socialist values', but none of the other philistines has shown the slightest bit of interest. Elsewhere, Labour employment spokesman John Prescott replied to hecklers by asserting his claim to left-wing fame; apparently he is Denis Skinner's landlord. Perhaps Blunkett would have more success if he called a conference on 'property values'.

The *Sun* (yes, I'm still reading it in a library) stepped up the propaganda war against Wapping demonstrators this week, with a piece headlined 'Sun pickets make life a misery for kids'. It claims the protesters at the plant are keeping children on a nearby estate awake with the megaphones and so on, and the youngsters are falling asleep at their school desks. I don't know why the *Sun* thinks this is a problem. Surely the girls and boys are better off in bed all day, seeing as how our schools have been turned into bordellos/com-munes/drug clinics by the recent epidemic of 'Playground sex games', 'Irresponsible Red teachers' and 'Heroin behind the bike sheds'?

Eamonn McCann — former Derry civil rights activist, now television columnist in *Socialist Worker* — is having trouble with his other employer, the *Irish Sunday World*. Every week, they deface his page of the paper with pictures of naked women or stories about same. This week they have stooped a little lower. Beneath his column — 'Eamonn McCann: Politically Speaking' — is a snap of a scantily-clad young woman clutching two Teddy Bears. The caption reads 'Eamonn's my Teddy boy' and explains how Maria 'says she'd really love to snuggle up to our Eamonn. In fact she'd even give her Teddy Bears the day off to go picnic with him....Lucky ol' Eamonn!'. Lucky ol' Eamonn indeed — lucky the *Sunday World* isn't sold much over here. Be a bit embarrassing for the Socialist Worker sellers at Wapping, wouldn't it Eamonn? Politically speaking, I mean.

EDDIE VEALE

THE PARTY PAGE

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



DAVID ROURKE

Why we're at War with the racists

This week party supporters joined Workers Against Racism in defending Asian students under attack at Morpeth school, and protesting against the new round of race checks in job centres (see page 12). Most parties do little about fighting racism. But the RCP makes it a priority.

Racism is a big issue in British politics because the media make sure that racism is introduced into everyday political debate. Anti-black prejudice is a vital component of the Tories' law and order campaign. All of today's social problems, from unemployment, to bad housing conditions, to health service cuts, are blamed on immigrants 'taking what's ours'.

BLACK 'BURDEN'

The establishment insists that blacks are a burden on British society and a threat to British standards of behaviour. The growing climate of racism is a big problem, and not just for blacks. When people turn their anger against blacks, they are ignoring the real root of their troubles — the fact that capitalism cannot deliver the jobs, homes and living standards they need.

Blacks do not sack workers, they are not responsible for the poor standards of council

housing or for stagnating wages and benefits. All these evils are endemic to the capitalist system. Racism divides workers, and undermines resistance against the bosses who benefit from the system that exploits and degrades people of every colour.

NO OPTION

Most left-wing groups see trade union issues as the real class struggle, and regard fighting racism as an optional extra. For the RCP the anti-racist struggle is more important than an industrial dispute. When workers come out on strike they take on an individual employer. When they take action against racism, they are challenging one of the system's central devices for containing and controlling the whole working class.

The experience of going on strike does not automatically change the way workers look at the world. It is quite possible to be very militant against a particular employer, but still share the wider outlook of the British establishment. Our Yorkshire supporters found that some of the most militant miners still believed that immigration controls were needed to preserve British workers' jobs. They accepted that defending their jobs meant keeping blacks out of

Britain.

The 'we're all British after all' sentiment is a danger to the working class. When British workers accept that they have a common interest with British bosses, it can only lead to the acceptance of sacrifices to save 'our industry' from foreign competition. Look at the record of job cuts in the car industry, accepted by patriotic union officials. But capitalist industry is not 'ours' — it belongs to the bosses. And British or not, a boss is a boss, who is only interested in making profits out of us. All workers, whatever their race, have a common interest in taking on the capitalists.

MAXIMUM FORCE

Workers Against Racism is a campaign which aims to mobilise working class action against racism. Its first line of attack is against the nationalist views that lie at the roots of British racism. We are committed to building unity between black and white workers. Unity is essential so that we can mobilise the maximum force against our real enemy, the employers and their state machine. If you want to get involved with War, ring Alex Farrell on 01-729 0414.

Supporting Scottish print workers

Our London supporters sold 200 papers on the latest mass protest at Wapping. Scottish supporters have been backing 600 Sogat members sacked by Mirror Group Newspapers in Glasgow. Mirror boss Robert Maxwell is out to match Murdoch's union-busting tactics north of the border. Maxwell is out to produce an Irish edition of the Mirror at his Daily Record plant at Anderston Quay, and to restructure his Scottish papers to compete with Murdoch and Eddie Shah.

In his determined drive to reshape working practices in recent months, Maxwell has already sacked all journalists and print workers — and taken them back only to announce up to 400 redundancies. Last week he sacked all Sogat members again and obtained a court order against them, threatening to shut the plant and re-open under a different name with a new workforce. He then announced 55 redundancies among 120 journalists.

In response, Sogat members have occupied their workplaces. As one worker told us, 'Maxwell's totally out of order. He's never had a fight from us before but we'll make him sorry this time.' Yet the vacillation of the union leaders has only helped make things worse. Instead of organising all-out action, union officials have begged to be allowed back into negotiations. They have stressed their record of giving in to Maxwell's previous demands.

CUT-THROAT

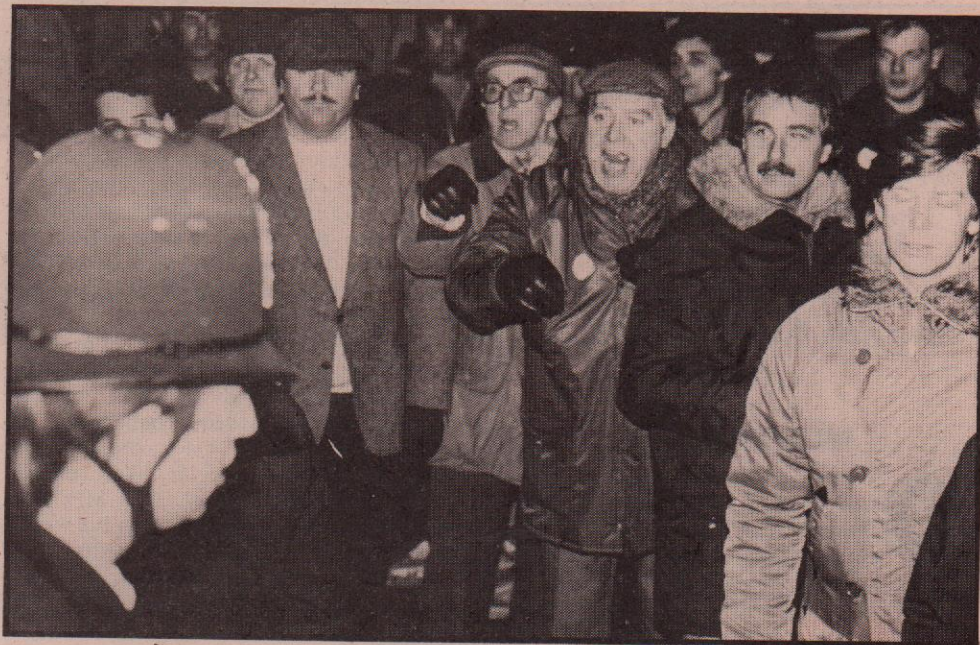
Instead of fighting to save jobs, the officials have pointed out how profitable Maxwell's papers have been, to 'prove' that he can afford to keep workers on. Meanwhile Scottish nationalists have tried to blame Maxwell's behaviour on his membership of the 'English Labour Party'.

Our Scottish supporters have been actively pushing for a different approach. Maxwell's union-busting reflects his position as an employer ruthlessly

pursuing his interests. Whatever the unions' calculations might 'prove' about his profits, Maxwell knows his survival in the cut-throat competition of the modern newspaper industry depends on attacking his workforce.

Anybody trying to manage his capitalist enterprise — whether it is a Czech like Maxwell, an Australian like Murdoch, a born follower of the Aga Khan like Shah, a member of the 'English Labour Party', the 'Scottish Labour Party' or a Scottish nationalist — would have to do the same thing, or go under.

To win, the Scottish print workers need to fight for all-out action at Anderston Quay. We must also stop the production of Maxwell's life line, the Mirror, refuse to accept any redundancies and go for the support of rank and file Fleet Street workers in a united front against the press barons. Our supporters will be continuing the campaign against Maxwell, Murdoch and the rest this week. Join us!



DAVID ROURKE

WAPPING, SATURDAY NIGHT

FOR YOUR DIARY

WHOSE LAW? WHOSE ORDER? PUBLIC MEETING

● NOTTINGHAM: Wednesday 26 March 7.30pm, International Community Centre, Mansfield Road

WHO NEEDS THE LABOUR PARTY NOW? DAYSCHOOL

● LIVERPOOL: Saturday 3 May, phone Fenna on 01-729 0414 for details

WRECK THE RACE CHECKS PROTEST

● BIRMINGHAM: Thursday 20 March 12-2pm, Soho Road job centre, Handsworth

RACISM: HOW TO FIGHT IT PUBLIC MEETING

● MANCHESTER: Wednesday 26 March 7.30pm, Black Lion, Chapel Street

BOYCOTT MURDOCH PROTESTS

● EDINBURGH: Saturday 22 March 11am, Menzies, Princes Street
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the next step

Workers take action against Tory scheme

WRECK THE RACIST CHECKS

Workers Against Racism supporters and job centre workers are taking direct action against a new 'ethnic monitoring' scheme. *Alex Farrell* reports from the picket line

On Monday workers at job centres took action in protest at the suspension of five of their colleagues, who have blacked the government's latest attempt to introduce 'ethnic monitoring'. The walk-outs had begun last Friday, when job centre staff closed 14 offices, backed by sections of the workforce from other job centres, and from unemployment and social security offices.

Management had kicked off the pilot study for its new race checks scheme in 150 selected job centres the previous Monday. Under the scheme, job centre staff are required to categorise 'job seekers' according to their ethnic origin. Five workers at Hackney job centre had already decided they wouldn't do it. Management soon suspended the three who were on duty on Monday, and started suspension procedure against the other two.

'Ethnic monitoring' is a racist ploy. 'The government says the scheme is to help ethnic minorities, but that's a con,' says one of the suspended workers. 'Everything this government has done is against ethnic minorities. The only reason they want these statistics is to attack black people's rights. Getting the survey into job centres is a backdoor route to get it into the benefit offices.' Once the authorities have achieved that, it will be easier for them to stop blacks claiming benefits.

Many blacks already have to produce passports to get anything from health care to housing. Now their right to live on the social security breadline is being challenged. The Tories have banned black people from coming to Britain if they are likely to have 'recourse to public funds'. Tory MPs also want to amend the Social Security Bill with a 'presence test', to cut off benefits from anybody who has lived here less than one year. By identifying black claimants, 'ethnic monitoring' will smooth the way for such attacks.

BULLY BOYS

Working in East London, the Hackney job centre staff already see plenty of evidence of racism. 'We get employers on the phone refusing to take black people,' says the suspended worker. 'Blacks are ghettoised in hotel and catering and the rag trade. It's bad money and long hours.' She reckons that the experience of seeing why employers want to know the race of applicants explains why the Hackney workers led the blacking action.

On the day the action started, Hackney management brought down an area executive and the executive director of the whole Manpower Services Commission to sort out the staff. First they tried soft-soaping the workers. 'After they failed to talk us round they threatened suspension, then they began to carry it out. On Tuesday we were given verbal warnings, on Wednesday it was written warnings, and we were suspended five minutes before the end of work on Thursday.'

The workers showed real resolve in keeping up their action in the face of management's bully-boy tactics — especially as they knew in advance that their protest would be unofficial. Their union, the CPSA, had accepted the terms of the government's scheme before it even began — and against the wishes of many members. 'Our union's official position has always

been opposition to ethnic monitoring except "voluntary self-assessment"', says the suspended Hackney worker. 'When the MSC told the union about the latest scheme, the executive started a "national consultation exercise" among members. That's not a ballot, it's not binding on the officials, it just means asking questions of members in each job centre. In our branch the officers gave members three options to support: indefinite strike action until the race checks were withdrawn, selective strike action during the pilot scheme, or no action.'

The consultation exercise returned a majority of more than 2:1 in favour of strike action among workers in the 150 offices involved. But the union executive has sown confusion and division, by keeping the results secret and doing its own deal with management.

'Before the result of the vote was announced, management offered to put out a few posters and leaflets advertising the fact that the survey was going on, so people would have the option of not cooperating. The minute the department of employment offered this, Peter Thomason (secretary of the CPSA DE section executive) recommended that the national disputes committee accept the deal, because there "isn't enough strength of feeling among the members". The committee accepted that, Thomason quickly told the membership there was no official backing for action — but didn't tell them the result of the vote — and a lot of people got scared of doing anything without the union.'

'VOLUNTARY' RACISM

The union's support for 'voluntary' race checks meant it could not oppose management's new terms for the scheme. But, as the suspended worker explains, there was nothing voluntary about the way the checks were implemented. 'Management have said that if staff "deliberately sabotage" the scheme, for instance if everybody they interview refuses, then they'd be up for discipline. In some offices the sheets are numbered and management can record who's returning all the refusals.'

Abandoned by the national CPSA leadership, it was left to the Hackney workers themselves, backed by Workers Against Racism, to win wider support for action against the checks. On Friday the London Regional Committee of the union's employment section called for protest action against the suspensions. By lunchtime 13

London job centres had taken protest strike action, along with one Sheffield office. War supporters in London, Yorkshire and the Midlands worked over the weekend, to spread the solidarity action this week. 'War's support has been invaluable,' says the suspended worker.

The problem we have faced is that most workers taking action saw it as a token protest against the suspensions, rather than as an all-out attempt to wreck the race checks. But if we are to win unconditional reinstatement for the five Hackney staff, we need to confront management on the issue that started the conflict — the race checks. And if we are to unite the working class against every attempt to divide and victimise us, we still need to smash the government's latest attempt to attack black people's rights.

On picket lines and in offices throughout the areas where action is on the cards, War supporters have been fighting for demands that can win a vital dispute for the whole working class:

- Wreck the checks: no cooperation with management schemes, 'voluntary' or not, that smooth the way for denying benefits to blacks
- No victimisations: full solidarity action in support of anybody suspended or disciplined for refusing to do the racist authorities' dirty work
- For open union negotiations: CPSA members must know everything their officials are up to, to prevent any more backdoor deals, and ensure workers are in control of their own organisations.

RCP

If you like what you read in *tns* become an RCP supporter. We meet weekly around the country to discuss the issues in the paper and to plan action in the local area. Phone Fenna on 01-729 0414 or fill in the form below.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX

Public Meeting
Fighting race checks and racist attacks
THIS IS WAR

Thursday 20 March 7.30pm, Taylor's Free House, Shacklewell Lane, London N16. Speakers include: East London Workers Against Racism, CPSA job centre activists.

Protest Picket
WRECK THE RACE CHECKS

Friday 21 March 12.30-1.30pm, Manpower Services Commission London HQ, 236 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 (King's Cross tube).