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the next step

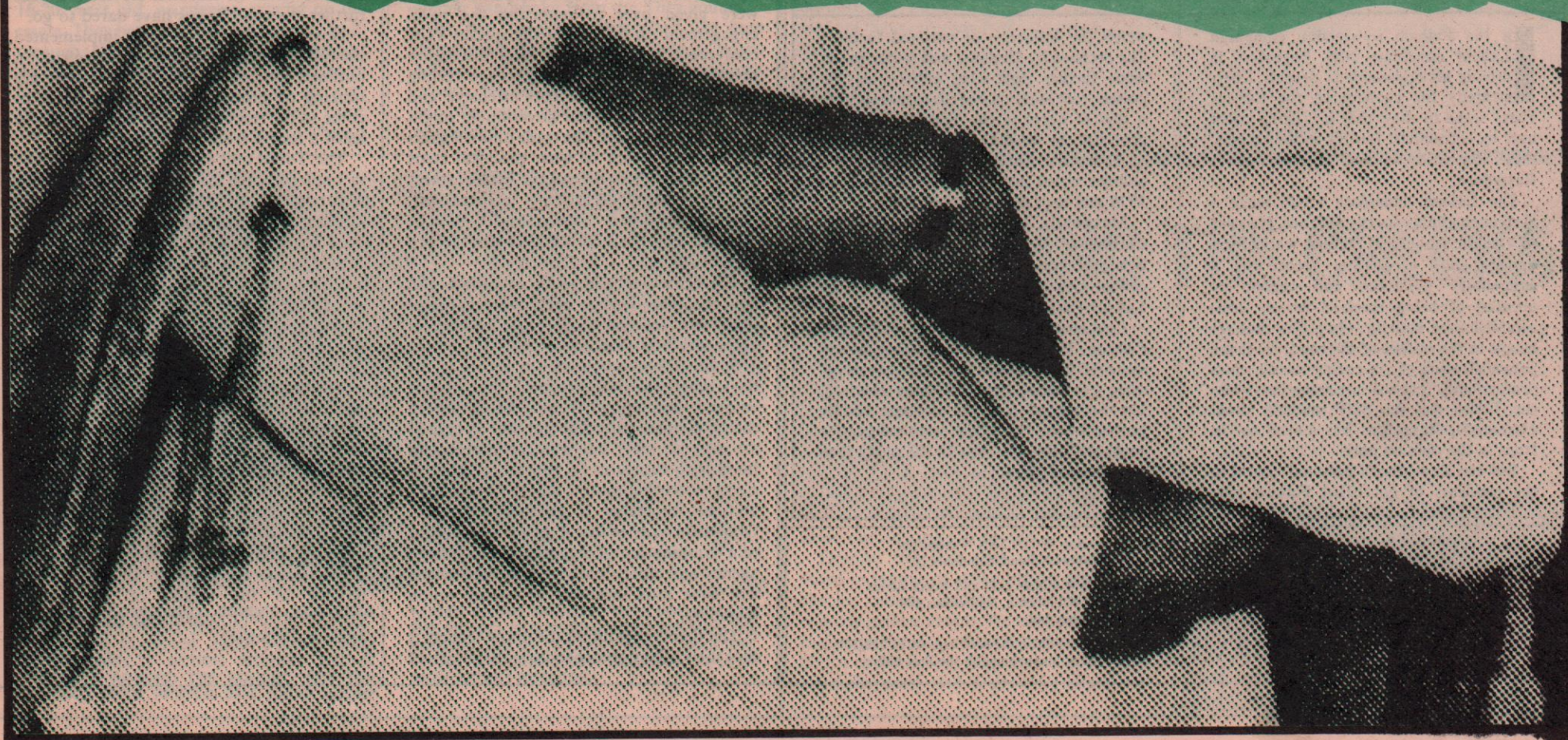
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13



Gadaffi

Scapegoat of the Western world



the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party weekly • 4 April 1986 • No 13

THE GADAFFI FACTOR

Libya's Colonel Gaddafi has become the all-purpose Western bogeyman. In January *Newsweek* magazine commented that President Reagan's officials were 'so keen for a fight that they openly worry that Gaddafi might thwart them by temporarily lying low'. It predicted Reagan might strike at Libya within 'six to nine months'.

The event that triggered the US strike against Libya last week, only three months after *Newsweek's* prediction, had nothing to do with Colonel Gaddafi.

On 20 March the house of representatives, the lower tier of congress, voted narrowly to reject Reagan's request for \$100m to fund the right-wing Contra guerrillas, fighting against the radical regime in Nicaragua from bases in neighbouring Honduras. This setback followed the refusal of both houses of congress last month to agree to Reagan's defence budget unless the president accepted substantial cuts.

Within hours of the news of US military actions in the Gulf of Sirte, representatives of both major parties were queueing up to express support for the president's action against the Libyan regime. Reagan's request for aid for the beleaguered Contras was subsequently approved by the Senate, and now returns to the house of representatives. Within days of sinking a few Libyan ships and shelling a Libyan base, Reagan should receive full backing for his war in Central America.

The British establishment is always keen to get in on any anti-Gaddafi campaign. Like Reagan, Thatcher has her problems at home. She welcomes any opportunity to stir up public animosities against 'extremists' anywhere. Intrepid investigative journalists soon discovered some good angles on the latest Gaddafi scare. Trainee Libyan pilots at the Oxford air training school near Kidlington were identified as potential 'suicide squads'. Radical groups in Britain who attended an anti-imperialist conference in Tripoli were also identified as potential agents of Libyan terrorist attacks in Britain.

In the USA and Britain the authorities have had considerable success in using Gaddafi to stir up chauvinist sentiments. Over the past five years, Reagan has often invoked the 'Libyan menace' to justify more repression in America or armed

action abroad. In Britain coal board boss Ian MacGregor recently said the 'discovery' of a connection between Gaddafi and Scargill during the miners' strike was what gave the bosses the propaganda advantage. Allowing for exaggeration, there is no doubt that scapegoating Gaddafi has been useful for the Western rulers in strengthening their hand against enemies both without and within.

In reality, as we have consistently pointed out, Gaddafi is a fairly typical leader of a fairly typical third world country. 'Libyan terrorism' is a myth manufactured by the politicians and media of the West. In January *Newsweek* admitted that the evidence linking Libya to the Palestinian bomb attacks at Rome and Vienna airports was at best 'circumstantial'. In fact the evidence suggested a Syrian involvement, but 'the last thing that the administration wanted to find out was that Syrian president Assad might have to share some of the blame for the attacks'. Why? Because Washington is trying to encourage Syria to play a part in its wider Middle East diplomacy.

Setting up Gaddafi as a psychopathic terrorist is a cynical device to justify Western barbarism in the third world. But scapegoating Gaddafi is not without its dangers for the West.

Reagan's method of playing foreign policy issues for domestic purposes is a high-risk strategy. Deploying the vast firepower of the sixth fleet against the feeble forces of Libya may impress American patriots, but it unites the Arab world in support of Gaddafi and embarrasses Washington's allies in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It makes the Middle East even more unstable, and it draws attention to America's loss of control of the crisis in Central America.

The biggest risk in creating third world bogeys is that, instead of joining in the chauvinist chorus like cringing Democratic or Labour Party politicians, people in the West might begin to identify with anti-imperialist movements in the third world. We want to wreck the West's attempts to stir patriotic and racist prejudices against leaders like Gaddafi. When workers in the West recognise that they have more in common with the people of Libya and Nicaragua than with Reagan and Thatcher, the scapegoating will stop.

FULHAM SWAMP

In the Fulham by-election campaign Labour candidate Nick Raynsford is driving his opponents to despair. Their strategy for challenging the Labour Party seeks to show that it is being taken over by extremists. But try as they might, they can find nothing extreme about Raynsford.

The Labour candidate would make a perfect candidate for the Alliance. He went to a public school and Oxford, works for a quango, has a sterling record as a community politician and cannot be accused of being involved in any anti-establishment activity. On policy matters he sits in the middle of the road. He is the personification of the caring middle class professional. It is not surprising that while the Tories and the SDP mumble about extremism, Raynsford has stayed out in front in the opinion polls.

But can Raynsford's personal appeal to the residents of gentrified Fulham out-

weigh the influence of national factors? The decision by Thatcher and Tebbit to put aside further right-wing policies on the unions, rent controls and education reflects a loss of nerve in the Tory ranks. They proclaim the resolute approach, but seem to have lost confidence in the extremist policies which put the Tories in power in 1979 and kept them there in 1983.

Meanwhile Neil Kinnock is giving a convincing demonstration of his own incompetence. Would you trust a man who cannot kick a dozen Militants out of the Labour Party to run the country?

Last month we predicted an SDP win in Fulham. The difficulty of choosing among three SDP candidates will obviously cause some confusion among Fulham electors, but the retreat into the swampy middle ground by the two major national parties could still give the edge to the party that was founded there.

UNIONS AND THE LAW



THIS IS THE ONLY 'POSITIVE LEGAL ACTION' WORKERS WILL GET

ACTION NOT LEGISLATION

Rupert Murdoch has given the unions a terrifying demonstration of using the courts to destroy workers' rights. He set up his Wapping plant as a separate company, provoked his workforce into going on strike and immediately secured an injunction against 'secondary' picketing. Within days he persuaded the courts to bankrupt the print union Sogat for continuing to picket the plant, and to stop any sympathetic action elsewhere. Whereas 10 or even five years ago, the courts were rarely involved in strikes, today almost all disputes end up before the beaks. Now that the right to fight itself is under threat, how can we best defend it?

While the employers attack, our leaders dream of a Labour government giving the unions legal protection

The legal onslaught has put the union leaders in a panic. Fortunately for them the nation's television channels and newspapers were given over to reporting the royal engagement on the day of the special TUC conference on legislation. The discussion revealed that the union leaders are reeling under the impact of the Tory offensive, and hoping a future Labour government might come to their rescue. The trade union leaders had no discussion of what practical steps they could take to defend the 6000 workers sacked by Murdoch at News International. Nor did they discuss what measures could be taken to help the miners still victimised and imprisoned.

The discussion was solely concerned with how the union leaders could best guarantee their own survival in the new climate of aggressive litigation.

Some union leaders want to return to the days when the law accepted that unions enjoyed 'immunity' from prosecution in their activities. Others accept that Tory laws are here to stay, but want to supplement them with measures to guarantee 'positive rights' to strike, picket, have a closed shop and be reinstated if unfairly dismissed. Others are worried that if they reduce unions to a combination of personnel management agency and citizen's advice bureau, workers will have little incentive to remain union members.

The theme that unites the union leaders is that their salvation depends on the return of

a Labour government. This is strange because the last Labour government did much to get the unions into the mess they are in today. Between 1974 and 1979 Labour devised a network of laws to tighten state control over industrial conflict. It presented its employment protection and health and safety laws as an extension of state protection of trade union rights.

In fact these laws shifted a wide range of issues from the sphere of collective action by workers against employers, into the world of individual cases in courts of law. The Labour government substituted the judges for workers' action in every workplace conflict.

When the Tories came to power in 1979, they took advantage of the paralysis of militancy resulting from Labour's laws. The shift towards the more coercive use of the law began even before Thatcher's election victory. At the height of the winter of discontent in February 1979, Labour ministers got together with TUC leaders to draw up a 'concordat' of restrictions on trade union militancy. This voluntary code carried the thinly veiled threat of legal enforcement. It also included most of the anti-union measures — against strike action, picketing, the closed shop, for pre-strike ballots — later introduced by the Tories. Indeed in its proposals for restricting the right to strike in essential services, it went further than the Tories have dared to go.

Now that the Tories have implemented the full programme of anti-union legislation outlined by Labour, the union leaders are looking to another Labour government to come to the rescue. They would do better to learn a lesson from the Tories.

The Tories and employers moved slowly in implementing the anti-union laws. They understand that the law itself decides nothing — what matters is the balance of class forces. They skilfully used the public debate around the anti-union laws to create a climate hostile to the unions. And they picked off unions one by one in industrial conflicts. Only once they were sure they had the unions on the run did they risk using their laws.

The labour movement too should recognise that the fate of anti-union laws will not be decided in parliament or in the courts, but in the workplace and on the streets. The right to fight in defence of living standards will never be defended by a party that has done so much to undermine workers' resistance to the employers' offensive. It can only be defended by workers marshalling their forces, repudiating all state interference in the affairs of the labour movement, and organising direct action against the bosses.

Joan Phillips

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WAR BREAKS OUT IN BRADFORD

Arif Javaid is a 'magical entertainer', living with his parents and sister on a council estate in Heaton. They have been attacked three times in three months — bricks and concrete blocks were thrown through windows on every occasion. Arif says the attacks are worst for his elderly parents: 'The second time it happened my dad was ready to move out and go back home. It has really made a difference knowing that Workers Against Racism is in the area.' His story could be repeated, with minor variations, by dozens of Asian families in the Bradford area.

'War must not be permitted to break out,' warned a recent editorial about rising racial tensions in the Bradford Telegraph & Argus. But, as Manjit Singh reports, Bradford Workers Against Racism and the city's black community are already at war with the racists

The attacks are said to be the work of local youths. As one middle-aged white resident told *us*, 'You often see a group of white kids, 16-20 years old, wandering around on the estate. They beat up Asian kids as they walk through the estate to get a bus home.' Another agrees: 'One night I came out to find these lads having a go at my car, smashing the lights and that. When I came out they said, "Sorry mate, you're white."

I'd have clobbered them if I'd caught them — I've smacked a few racists in my time.'

In the week before the end of term, Asian pupils in Bradford and Keighley were expecting trouble. Over the past few months racist attacks inside and outside local schools have shot up. The racists are on the rampage at Grange upper school, Thornton, Fairfax, Highfield and Belle Vue. Racist violence reached such a pitch just before Easter that pupils were sent home early on the last day of term.

When Workers Against Racism supporters went to Belle Vue boys' school in Haworth Road to provide protection on the last day of term, we found the area crawling with police. One teacher described the situation in the school as 'horrendous'. Two days earlier the racists had come down in force with knives and bottles, and there were running battles with Asian youths on Haworth Road. Police arrested five Asian youths, two from Belle Vue school. 'There's been trouble on the streets all week,' said one worried parent. 'Youngsters have been openly walking about with martial arts weapons and knives.'

HONEYFORD FACTOR

The emergence of racist Bradford headmaster Ray Honeyford as a national figure in 1984 goes some way to explaining the racist climate that now prevails in the city. Honeyford hit the headlines when he publicised his racist views on 'the problems of multi-cultural education' in a right-wing journal. 'Honeyford out! Racist out!' was the chorus that greeted the racist headmaster every morning, as he passed the ranks of outraged parents and students. The two-year campaign to oust Honeyford ended last December when he accepted a £160 000 golden handshake from the Tory council.

By that time Ray Honeyford had been transformed from a nobody into a heroic defender of Britain's beleaguered national culture. He brought racism in Bradford out into the open and gave it the stamp of respectability.

'Honeyford, Honeyford, Honeyford' chanted football fans, when Bradford's Asian mayor — already snowed under by pro-Honeyford mail — appeared at a Bradford City match in Grimsby. For the first time a headmaster replaced goalscorers as a football crowd's hero.

The vocal 'Sack Honeyford' campaign was supported by local groups including the council-funded Asian youth movement and the community relations council. They ran a determined campaign, but made the mistake of calling upon a Tory council, with a long record of racial discrimination, to take disciplinary action against a racist headmaster.

BLAMING BLACKS

A closer look at the council would have shown that less than three per cent of the workforce is black, although blacks make up 13 per cent of Bradford's population. Only 696 blacks have benefited from the council's 'equal opportunities' policies, out of a workforce of 24 000. After the Honeyford affair, the council is so keen to keep the lid on racial tensions that its race relations officer has told the press not to report racial strife in the schools. Now rumours abound that Honeyford is coming back — to campaign for the Tories in the local elections.

It is not surprising that racism is rife in a city which has always treated black people as second-class citizens. The first of Bradford's 62 000 blacks arrived in the early fifties to be exploited by local mill-owners. They got a grim welcome from the Tories, the Labour establishment and the trade unions. Tory and Labour politicians have since blamed blacks for taking British workers' jobs. Police raids and 'swamp' operations in and around the Lumb Lane area of Manningham have criminalised the black community.

So far there has been no serious challenge to the racist climate that exists in the city. Only Workers Against Racism has begun to stand up to the respectable racism that has

led to a reign of racist terror on the streets. We have organised door-to-door canvassing in areas of high racial violence like Heaton, defence of Asian families under siege, and protection for black students at trouble-torn schools. At a public meeting before Easter 60 people turned out to listen to local people's accounts of racist attacks — and to discuss the anti-racist action promoted by Workers Against Racism.

Our approach is to deal with racist attacks by organising workers' defence. Only a local Labour Party supporter objected, and told us to consult the police. Ram Choudhury told him that talking to the police was a waste of time. He described how he and his friends took a bus to Keighley to go to the defence of Asian pupils under attack at Greenhead grammar: 'The police stopped the bus and told us to go home.' Ram's friend Sayeed Shah, who goes to Thornton school, came to the meeting to ask for War's help in taking on the racists. 'I agree with what you say,' he told us, 'It's the only way to deal with them. I only heard about this meeting yesterday and I thought it was going to be good. Now I know it is — and I'm going to get my mates involved.'

GROWING SUPPORT

Our anti-racist action has provoked a hostile press response. 'Ban these vigilantes,' says the *Telegraph and Argus*. 'Public risk,' declares the *Yorkshire Post*. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* accuses War of stirring up trouble at Bradford schools like Belle Vue, where the racists have been on the rampage for weeks.

Yet even this paper has been forced to acknowledge that the growing support for Workers Against Racism reflects the popular resonance that exists for our direct response to the problem of racial violence.

Workers Against Racism is a campaign that aims to mobilise working class action against racism. Organising effective defence of the black community against racist thugs is essential to protect black rights and forge a united workers' movement. It is about time the war against racism broke out.



A BLACK COMMUNITY COPPER HAS BEEN DOWN AT MORPETH SCHOOL, EAST LONDON, TRYING TO DISSUADE ASIAN PUPILS FROM TAKING DIRECT ACTION AGAINST RACIST VIOLENCE AROUND THE SCHOOL. BUT THE BENGALI BOYS PREFER OUR IDEAS ABOUT

TAKING ON THE RACISTS. 'WITH YOU OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL AND US ORGANISING INSIDE, THE RACISTS ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE,' SAYS ONE, 'LOCAL PEOPLE ARE NOT PREPARED TO PUT UP WITH RACIST RUBBISH.'

WRECKING THE CHECKS

The Manpower Services Commission's plan to introduce race checks into 150 job centres for a two-week test period in mid-March ran into active resistance, from members of the civil service union CPSA and supporters of Workers Against Racism. Five workers in Hackney, two in Leeds and one in Fulham were suspended for refusing to operate the checks and more than 700 of their fellow workers came out on strike in protest.

Despite the fact that union members voted in favour of strike action against the checks, union leaders have refused to endorse protest action. We intend to take the campaign against 'ethnic monitoring' to the CPSA conference in May. At a time of rising unemployment and a growing climate of

racism, the authorities can only use such information to discriminate against blacks. If you are a CPSA member and you want to fight racism from the state and from the union, then get in touch with Workers Against Racism immediately at BM WAR, London WC1N 3XX.

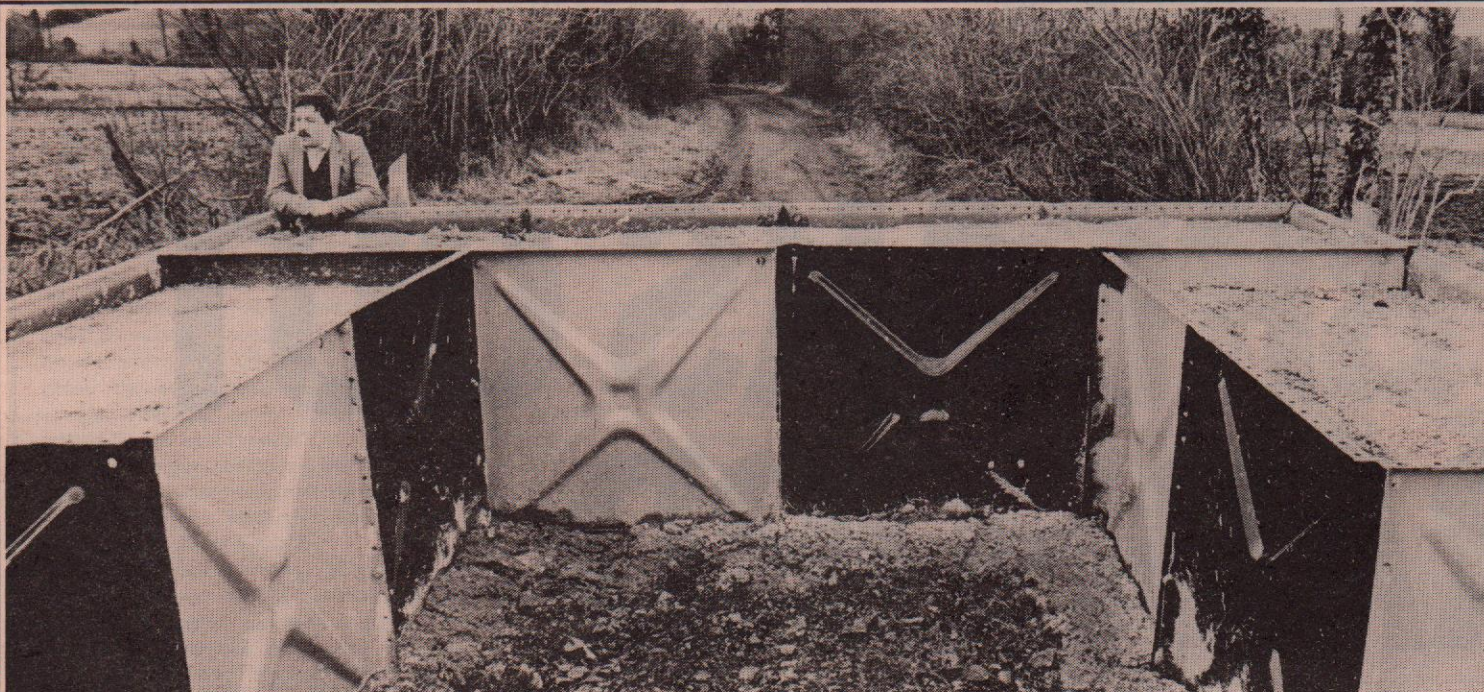
RCP

The authorities want your cash to repair their banquet hall at Hampton Court. We want it to build *us* into something workers can get their teeth into.

Rush donations to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques payable to RCP Association.

Ireland

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE BOATMAN



BRITISH STEEL AND CONCRETE BLOCKS THIS ROAD INSIDE THE REPUBLIC AT CLONELLY BRIDGE

PITCHFORK LAW

Barry McGuigan is not the man he used to be. So say many in the Irish Border country where he began his career of punching people. 'He's a sore subject,' republican Tony McPhillips told us at his shop in Newtonbutler, County Fermanagh, just a left hook over the Border from McGuigan's Clones home. 'When he won the title in June, it was a grand piss-up. But the last time he won, it was like a ghost town.' It seems the 'Clones Cyclone' has become too much of an anti-IRA windbag for the liking of Fermanagh fight fans.

'He told the *Daily Star* he used to cycle through "Bandit Country" to his boxing club, and how he rode past a farm up the road here where the IRA butchered two men to death. Anybody from these areas knows the British Army did that. But McGuigan let the British muck press use him to make propaganda. People here don't want a lot to do with a man like that.'

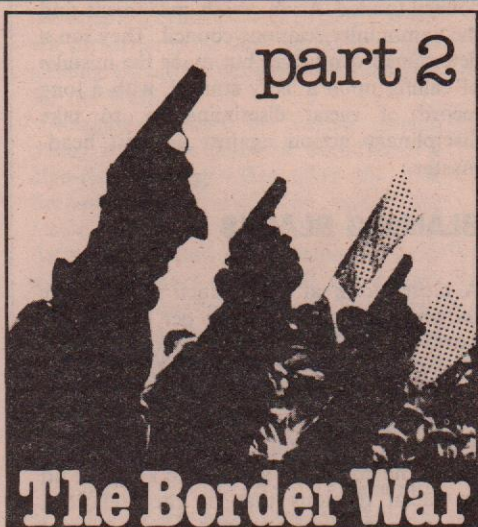
Those killings were the 'Pitchfork Murders', an act of British Army savagery in October 1972 that still shocks Fermanagh's farming community. We were in Newtonbutler the day after the mother of Andrew Murray, one of the victims, finally got £16 000 compensation. McPhillips thought that was 'piffle', for the loss of a boy who died of bad luck — the bad luck of labouring for local farmer Mickey Naan, the night the Army came to end Naan's career as a civil rights activist.

BRIT RIPPER

After Monday's clash at Portadown, the leaders and liars of the British establishment are up on their 'peacekeeper' pulpits, lecturing Loyalists about the evils of violence. But the British Army can more than match Loyalists when it comes to hacking Irishmen in half. 'When we heard about the boys being pitchforked at the farm', McPhillips remembers, 'there was speculation about Loyalists having done it, but nobody suspected the British Army. The truth would never have come out but for the Yorkshire Ripper.'

Remember 1980, when everybody was on the look-out for the knifeman living next door? 'There was an ex-soldier in Britain who read about the Ripper, and thought he had the same style as the pitchfork job,' McPhillips explains. 'He knew the guilty soldiers and feared one might be the Ripper. So he walked into a police station and told the story, and the two Brits got life sentences.' The British authorities always claimed the murderers — Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders — were off-duty. 'That was a lie, they were on a patrol, they'd just been briefed about what "suspects" to see, at Newtonbutler police barracks. There was a cover-up at the barracks, like you'd expect around here.'

The Royal Ulster Constabulary barracks at Newtonbutler, a green painted garrison



What have Barry McGuigan, the Yorkshire Ripper and cock-fighting got to do with the Anglo-Irish agreement? Mick Hume went to County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, to find out

with a fresh pile of sandbags at the window, still sends out Army and police patrols to tramp through the Aughanahinch farmyard where the pitchforking took place. 'I've had the RUC rifle boys through here this week,' said Sinn Féin councillor Vincent McCaffrey, who now owns the farm. There are new sheds these days, and the white stone cattle byre where Mickey Naan was butchered like a bullock is empty. But the cow-dung covering the yard ensures the atmosphere is much the same as it would have been on that October night. ('I hope you wiped your feet before you came in,' said McCaffrey.)

An old stagecoach track cuts across the yard. These days, the highwaymen creating havoc up and down it are employed by the British Crown. 'That's the way the murdering soldiers came', Vincent McCaffrey pointed up the track, 'and that's the way they still come.' Does he talk to the troops trampling through his farm? 'I had a debate with a few a while back,' he smiled. 'They wanted to know why they were being shot at. So I told them.'

They shouldn't have had to ask. The British media made much of the fact that the soldier recently killed in County Down had only been in Ireland four days. But British forces have

killed, jailed and terrorised the people of places like South Fermanagh for centuries.

In 1921 the British built an artificial Border across the area. Fifty years later they blocked off all but two of the local cross-Border routes. Both 'open' roads have British Army checkpoints at the Border. And now, under the Anglo-Irish deal, the British government's Dublin puppets deploy their police and troops along the Southern side of the line dividing Ireland. Fermanagh folk are forever tripping over men armed to the teeth — either the bullies of the British Army and RUC, or Irish detectives in Humphrey Bogart mags, with machine guns slung over their shoulders. Shooting back at the Army seems the least local people could do.

SATELLITE STATE

Driving through bracken-covered country to the Border, we passed signs that are a sick British joke: 'Roads liable to subsidence.' They are indeed — because the British Army keep blowing them up.

I doubt if the editors of the Highway Code would recognise the other road sign on a rough lane leading South — 'Crater ½ mile ahead'. As promised, a half mile ahead, yards before the Border at Clonelly Bridge, you meet a ditch dug by Army explosives. It has been half filled in by angry Irish people, who want to travel in their country without foreign troops creating craters half a mile ahead. In reply, the British Army built a barricade across the bridge — four cubes of yellow and black steel, filled with concrete. But they didn't build it wide enough. So the security forces added another U-shaped steel and concrete structure behind the original. The only thing is, its backside sits on the wrong side of the river, over the Border in the South.

Now some governments would be up in arms over such an 'infringement of sovereignty'. But the Irish government has no sovereignty to squeal about.

The Anglo-Irish accord affirms that Dublin is a satellite state, which will do what it can to help Britain win the war against those fighting for Irish freedom. So there is silence over the illegal barricade at Clonelly Bridge. After all, what's an ugly great road-block, that looks like a liquorice all-sort, between friends?

'Friends' is not the word that springs to the minds of nationalists in South Fermanagh when you mention either the British or Irish authorities. People supporting Irish freedom get raided, harassed and arrested on both sides of the Border. 'You can't get through a checkpoint without having your car pulled to pieces,' says Tony McPhillips. 'They'll do anything to harass you. They took a video tape off me at the Border the other day. It took me a week to get it back. I told them, "Next time you want to borrow one, it'll cost you a pound a night."'

On the other hand, both British and Irish security forces can now cross with impunity to chase republicans about on either side of the Border. 'There's an infamous blaggard Inspector in the Gardai (Irish police), who comes over here to do his drinking,' says McPhillips. 'He hangs round the pubs sniffing for information. And he goes to all the cock-fights down South. The fights are illegal. But he doesn't go to raid, or to gamble. He's after intelligence among the feathers.'

The feathers have certainly been flying on the Northern side of the Border this year, as the IRA concentrates much of its opposition to the Anglo-Irish agreement in Fermanagh. While the British Army tries to undermine resistance, the IRA puts mines under the security forces. We drove through Maguire's bridge, a Loyalist enclave where the IRA recently shot an RUC man and, accidentally, a barman who got in the way, in the Talk of the Town pub. 'There was no sympathy round here for that pub,' says McPhillips. 'In our bars people only said they were surprised that place didn't get hit long ago, it's a well-known police haunt.'



VINCENT McCaffREY

Vincent McCaffrey agreed. 'People here support the Army,' he said — and then, remembering he was talking to an Englishman, 'The Irish Republican Army, I mean.'



TONY McPHILLIPS

McPhillips, who often gets carted off to be interrogated at Gough Barracks, has one reservation about the IRA's campaign of bombing British patrols: 'When they're taking me off in a police car, I sometimes think, "Jesus, what if some of the boys set off to stick a mine under this car?"' he laughed. The security forces have had similar thoughts. But they don't seem to think it's funny. So they've abandoned armoured vehicles in favour of helicopters and unmarked cars.

Yet even then they're not safe, as it's not just IRA landmine experts who get stuck into the occupying forces in South Fermanagh. Newtonbutler sounds like a lively place to be on a Saturday night.

'There's one particular RUC thug who's always throwing his weight about,' McPhillips told us. 'He came into the pub here last year with a few soldiers and started threatening the landlord. There was a local man standing there, a six foot five farmer. He picked this policeman up, kneed him between the legs, and threw him into a corner. One of the Brits started laughing, until somebody stuck a bottle round the back of his head. Then all hell broke loose.' This, as they say, was no isolated incident. A couple of years back Newtonbutler drinkers chased an Ulster Defence Regiment patrol out of the village in a hail of beer bottles.

People in republican South Fermanagh might have gone off their local hero. But when your opponent is an occupying British Army using pitchforks rather than padded gloves, and you've got people prepared to give the British gunmen as good as they get, who needs Barry McGuigan?

RADICALS WITHOUT A CAUSE



STRUGGLE IS OUT OF STYLE FOR SURCHARGED COUNCILLORS

Today it is well worth asking, 'What is the British left fighting for?' During the past year, and especially since the 1985 Labour Party conference, the left has been in headlong retreat. Since Neil Kinnock challenged Militant and Scargill from the conference platform, the left has succumbed quietly. There has been no counter-offensive as there might have been 10, or even five, years ago.

During recent years the left has involved itself in a variety of campaigns. It pursued campaigns to democratise the Labour Party, or to fight rate-capping in local government, or supported single issue campaigns like CND. Now, for the first time, the left has nothing to campaign around. After the demise of the local government campaigns and Kinnock's crack-down inside the Labour Party, the British left has found no new substitutes.

The political paralysis of the British left is partly due to the fact that its policies have been discredited. After the Liverpool fiasco, where the left-wing council finally put its faith in the courts and Swiss bankers rather than the working class, radical left politics have been exposed as all talk and no action.

NOT THE MINERS

An even bigger problem for the left is that its policies have failed to connect with the real world. The artificial character of left-wing ideas often verges on the grotesque.

Squeezed out from the dispute at Wapping by the print union leaders, the left has taken to imitating tactics used during the miners' strike. It has advocated support groups, women's demonstrations and appeals to the community. It never occurs to the left that there are no communities of print workers, and the tactics that corresponded to life in the pit villages are entirely inappropriate to the dispute at Wapping.

Reliving the miners' strike is simpler than facing reality. The Socialist Workers' Party now tries to distinguish itself by arguing that it is the party that opposes ballots. The SWP is so concerned to promote this image that its explanation of all setbacks suffered by the working class, from the debacle in Liverpool to defeats in industry, is the scourge of the ballot. Instead of learning from its mistake during the miners' strike, where it echoed the NUM leadership's refusal to consult miners on the conduct of the dispute, the SWP simply compounds it.

Liverpool council balloted its workforce over strike action. It lost the vote and the struggle. The NUM refused to ballot its members. It still lost the strike. Neither defeat was caused by the issue of the ballot.

Both were due to the politics of the people leading the fight.

In themselves, ballots decide little. Of the 105 pre-strike ballots held under the 1984 Trade Union Act in the past year, 76 resulted in a vote for strike action. However, as far as the outcome of these disputes is concerned, the result of the ballot has made no difference. In every case the union bureaucracy remained in control and the working class paid the price. It is not the ballots, but the union leaders and their policies, that are responsible for workers' setbacks.

The left's present identity crisis results from its subservience to the leaders of the old labour movement, argues Frank Richards

The SWP should promote itself as the party that is fiercely against ballots — and against confronting the existing leadership of the trade unions.

To be fair it is inaccurate to accuse the left of not involving itself in any campaigns. To keep busy and find something for its supporters to do, the left has launched a series of promotions in defence of itself. Militant is busy defending itself from the witch-hunt, the SWP is busy defending Militant, while everybody else is busy defending the surcharged councillors from Liverpool and Lambeth.

The days when the left talked of defending the working class, let alone leading the working class, are long gone. Such matters have been overtaken by the instinct for survival. That's why the left has directed so much of its energy towards the courts. Surcharged councillors and Militant activists have taken leave of the class struggle and opted for the drama of the courtroom. While this is of dubious benefit to the working class, business is booming for the radical lawyers.

It is a sign of the times that the left has no shame about deploying the capitalist courts for its survival. It appears that this is not a matter for discussion, since the left does rather better in the capitalist courts than in the class struggle. Derek Hatton's ramblings about 'natural justice' represent the new

theoretical insights of Labour's Marxists. Nevertheless, the *Guardian* is impressed:

'Militant is the one group within the Labour Party that has sufficient resources to fight expulsions through the courts, and the tendency has recently won a string of legal actions against Constituency Labour Parties in Stevenage, Ipswich and Cardiff, which attempted to expel Militant supporters.'

It is very much the SWP's misfortune that Militant prefers to rely on the courts rather than the SWP for its survival. The SWP is not only the party that hates the ballot, it is also the most committed defender of Militant. Again the SWP is not a little out of touch. In all seriousness, one of its activists recently wrote, 'Militant members have been branded criminals by the courts but, speaking from my own experience, the Liverpool Labour council has provided jobs and houses, they have made socialist policies a reality.' Such flattery probably even brings flushes to the cheeks of a hardened hype-artist like Hatton. But, 'at the end of the day', as Hatton would say, he and his colleagues have far greater sympathy with the *Guardian's* interpretation of events than that of *Socialist Worker*.

NEW ORDER

Organising campaigns on behalf of itself provides no long-term solution to the British left's identity crisis. The basis of this crisis lies in the left's relationship with the labour bureaucracy.

The British left has always been politically subservient to the labour bureaucracy. At times this relationship was masked because a section of the union leadership was willing to give the left some room to manoeuvre. Tony Benn, Ken Gill and Arthur Scargill have all encouraged left-wing activism. But the labour bureaucracy has changed and driven the left leaders to the sidelines. Now Arthur Scargill has been replaced by Brenda Dean, and the left can like it or lump it. The left's response has been predictable. It has no reservations about hanging in there, whatever the cost to its principles. In return the bureaucrats let the left criticise Kinnock, so long as it remains a loyal constituent of the official movement and works for Labour's re-election.

The dispute at Wapping represents a new low in the history of the British left. With every week the left's headlines — 'Mass picketing can work' — sound less convincing. The left has become a willing accomplice in the weekly Saturday night circus at Wapping. The cynical union leaders, whose only interest is to save face and win a few concessions for themselves, at whatever cost to print workers, can rely on the left's acquiescence in this stage-managed affair. Print union officials at the Wapping demonstrations take their orders from the police and pass them on to the left. Meanwhile, Murdoch's lorries keep rolling.

EXIT STAGE LEFT

Wapping shows the British left at its worst. It also provides a compelling argument for revolutionary communist politics. It is impossible to fight Murdoch while the conduct of the dispute remains in the hands of the union leaders.

The union bosses have directed the print workers' anger against other workers, instead of mobilising against the employers. During the first precious weeks of the strike all the anger was focused on the EETPU. Now that the TUC has made a temporary deal with the EETPU, the leaders of the print workers are simply waiting for the right time to implement a sell-out.

At Wapping, the central issue was and remains the political direction of the strike. Unfortunately, only the Revolutionary Communist Party saw fit to struggle to reorient the direction of the dispute. Whatever happens at Wapping, the RCP will be there with class struggle policies. As for the British left, like a stage army it will make a polite exit when called upon by its masters from Congress House and Walworth Road.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

FERGIE HELD

(This report was delayed by the Easter post)

After a wild chase in which police and press pursued her for months around city shopping centres, Sarah Ferguson, Buckingham Palace's 'most wanted woman', has finally been captured by the forces of the British Crown. She is due to appear at Court for the rest of her life.

Miss Ferguson, 26, had been wanted by the authorities since she was spotted acting suspiciously around a plate of profiteroles in the Royal Box at Ascot last year. ('He made me eat them, I didn't want to do it,' she later claimed.) She was finally captured in a blaze of publicity earlier this month.

The government and the Queen are said to be 'over the moon'. They hope her capture will put an end to the career of infamous militarist Andrew 'Mad Ram' Windsor. Informed commentators remain sceptical.

Miss Ferguson, a fiery redhead, emerged from her first Court ordeal surrounded by pressmen and looking flustered. Rumour was rife that, like other Crown captives before her, she would soon be forcibly stripped of her familiar uniform (expensive but ugly imported skirt and blouse) and made to wear the drab off-the-shoulder numbers and sparklers that mark out the young female inmates of Buck House.

An appeal for Ferguson's release from Crown custody was lodged by Burke's Peerage, on the grounds that her papers are not intact. Burke's are outraged by the idea that the Crown could hold on to 'a girl whose private life has, by the traditions of the Royal Family, been not only unorthodox, but well-documented in the national press'. This is thought to refer to Ferguson's past illicit liaison with 'Paddy' McNally who, as head of a failed active service unit of racing car drivers, sent young men out to risk their lives in the hopeless pursuit of glory. Burke's appeal for Ferguson's release fell on deaf ears. The authorities insist that, since the signing of the Charles-Diana agreement, the Crown has lowered its standards of acceptable 'innocence' among women detainees.

Miss Ferguson will soon begin a life sentence of playing tennis, swimming and waving at people. It is thought likely that she will be held, initially at least, in the top-security fortress which now houses 180-year old 'Ma' Windsor, the veteran international tourist responsible for recruiting several young women to the Windsor outfit. Eventually, Ferguson will be permanently housed in a more secluded spot. This should be something like the fortress built for her 'old pal' Diana, the woman known worldwide for her habit of showing her legs while getting out of cars, to distract attention from the violent exploits of her husband, 'Crazy' Charlie Windsor. Only last week he hit the headlines again after launching a vicious hammer attack on his own finger.

But alongside the near-hysterical rapture which greeted Ferguson's final capture, a note of caution is in order. Her predecessor 'Koo' Stark is still at large. And she remains more than capable of exploding the sort of 'Royal weekend in Brighton bombshell' that could set Fleet Street on fire and bring the British authorities to their knees. 'I wish her luck' is Stark's only comment so far on Ferguson's fate. But if the 'overjoyed' British public are to survive the blitz of press coverage in the coming months, we will all need a lot more than that.

RED KEN'S JOB AUCTION

London's ours!' proclaimed Ken Livingstone when Labour won control of the GLC in 1981. 'We can't underestimate the fact that more than any other institution the left has ever got its hands on, the GLC is a mechanism for the redistribution of wealth on a grand scale.' The GLC's main instrument for redistributing resources to create jobs was the Greater London Enterprise Board, set up in 1982.

The London Industrial Strategy, drawn up by handpicked radical academics, emphasised that 'only a large-scale investment programme aimed at key sectors of London's industry will rescue the capital's manufacturing economy from almost total annihilation'. Gleb aimed to provide investment funds to help ailing firms restructure, to encourage new firms, to buy property where business could boom, and to develop 'socially useful' technology.

JOBS AND PROFITS

Gleb tried to reconcile the irreconcilable. It offered workers 'quality jobs', guaranteed by agreements with sponsored companies 'to ensure decent wages, proper working conditions, full trade union access, an equal opportunities policy and the right for employees to participate in the future direction of the company'. And it reassured employers that 'none of this means that Gleb ignores the market or the rate of return'. Gleb emphasised that it was 'concerned with the creation of wealth as well as the distribution'.

But, as Gleb soon found out, the only way to

JOBS

PROMISE:

When Ken Livingstone took over the GLC in 1981 unemployment in London had passed 250 000. He said jobs were the GLC's 'top priority' and announced what he claimed were 'among the boldest and most innovative local authority initiatives ever launched'. The GLC promised to create 10 000 jobs a year by 1985.

REALITY:

The GLC and its Greater London Enterprise Board have created or preserved 2738 jobs, while unemployment in London has risen by 150 000 since 1981. The abolition of the GLC — with which the Labour administration fully cooperated — destroyed between 6000 and 9000 jobs.

make sure employers have a reasonable 'rate of return' — what socialists used to call 'profit' — is by putting the squeeze on the workforce.

Take the case of Walter Howard Design, a low price, high volume furniture manufacturer employing more than 120 workers in Edmonton, north London. Facing a sharp drop in demand and cut throat competition, the company approached Gleb in 1983. By June 1984 Gleb had invested £500 000, the first instalment of an outlay of £1.4m over the next 12 months. But the company failed to thrive and the workforce was put on short time with a substantial loss of income. As things got worse, Gleb took a firmer management hand and pushed through 20 voluntary redundancies. By July 1985 the firm was bankrupt and all the workers lost their jobs.

SWEATSHOP SOCIALISM

The collapse of Walter Howard Design typifies the problems plaguing Gleb's industrial strategy. Around 20 firms which Gleb backed heavily have crashed, as their directors disappeared to the Costa del Sol and their workers signed on the dole. There have been a number of investigations of wily businessmen who have taken the cuddly left financiers from Gleb to the cleaners. Gleb's attempts to promote small businesses by buying London real estate also proved disastrous. It has made ill-advised and naive purchases and is now selling sites to cover losses. Battered by its experience in industry and the property market, Gleb now concentrates on research and development.

The GLC has had more success sponsoring

'workers' co-ops'. The Hillingdon Asian Women's Group pays trainee home workers £1.50 an hour. Such small private enterprises, employing mostly immigrant or women workers at low pay in poor conditions, are a familiar feature of the London economy. Before the Labour GLC they were called sweatshops, now they are regarded as models of small-scale socialist production.

The outgoing GLC boasts that it 'has illustrated, after four years of direct intervention in the economy, what should be done to reverse this collapse. Resources have been limited but the achievement has been considerable.' In spending close to £60m, Gleb has behaved like a down market and incompetent version of the IMF, offering investment in return for programmes of rationalisation and austerity. Yet it can claim some achievements.

The GLC has not only made workers redundant, it has presented a GLC take-over as an alternative to fighting to save jobs. This has undermined potential resistance and further demoralised London workers. It is no surprise that the Tories have decided to keep Gleb on after abolition.

The GLC's job creation drive led to 'Jobs Year '85'. The organisers reckon it 'set a blistering pace of events across the capital'. From gala evenings at the Royal Albert Hall to Porky the Poet at Barking Assembly Hall, 'Jobs Year '85' was 'one of the most successful programmes of popular music and entertainment ever organised by a local authority'. A good time for the people on the quango gravy train — pity about the jobs.

WOMEN STILL SUFFERED WORST

The GLC women's committee was set up in May 1982 'to tackle discrimination against women, and to provide opportunities and resources for them', as well as 'to change women's status and opportunities in London'. On the eve of abolition the women's committee claimed a 'remarkable', 'tremendous' and 'impressive' record. Nursery provision is one area where it claims to have made significant strides on behalf of women.

GLC PRIVATISATION

The 1981 Labour manifesto said 'the GLC believes that nursery places are not a perk, like company cars, but an essential means of allowing parents to work.... Childcare which everyone can afford should be available.'

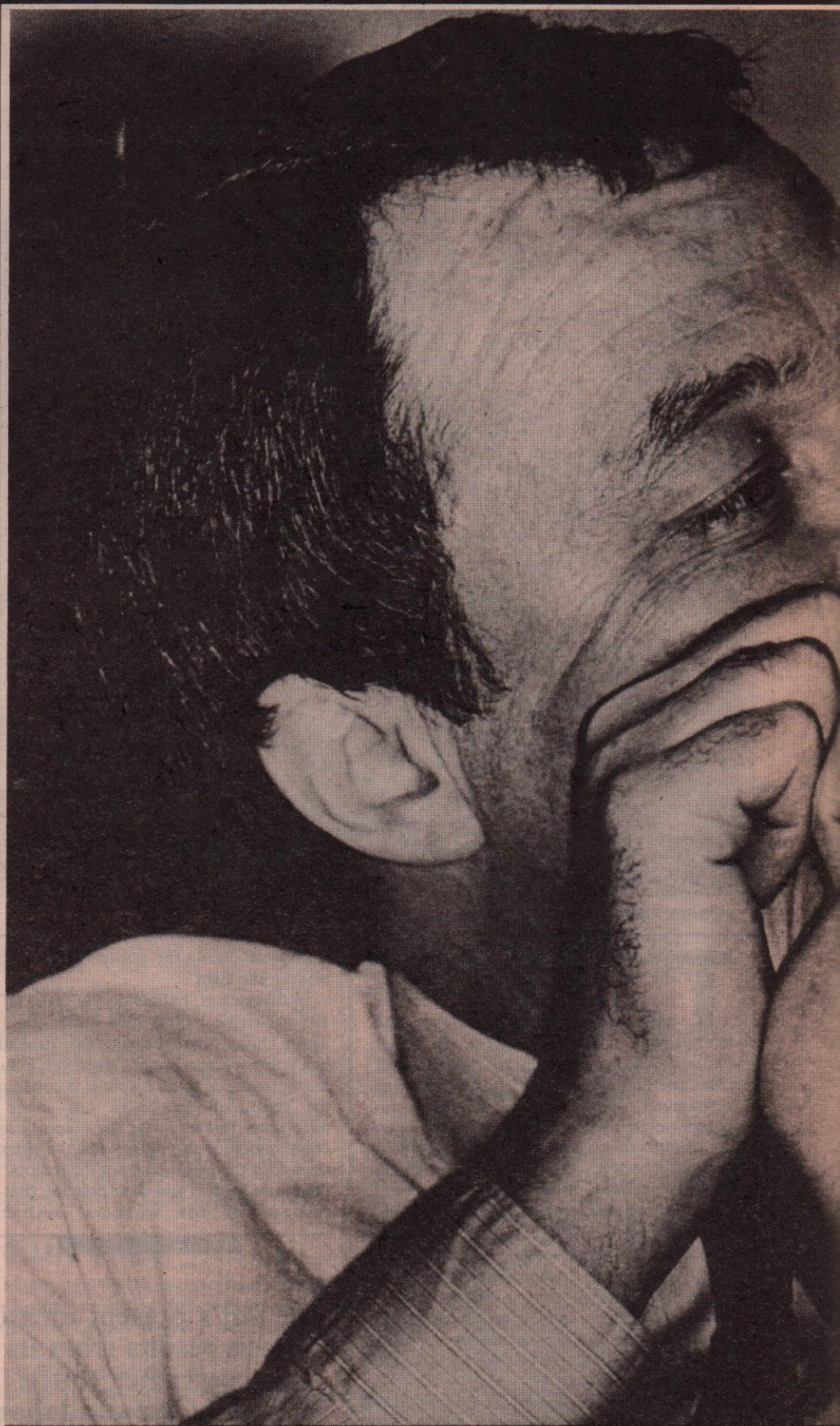
In fact the Labour administration has overseen a drastic cut in public nursery provision in London. Since 1981 the number of full-time places has dropped from 82 per thousand under-fives to 25 per thousand. The cuts have caused a shift from full-time to part-time provision. Total nursery provision has fallen to around 12 per cent of under-fives, yet a recent survey of nursery demand shows 90 per cent of women want nurseries.

The GLC women's committee has helped ease through the cuts in state nursery provision. It has promoted privatised childcare by subsidising what are effectively self-help groups, set up by women to compensate for inadequate public facilities.

Last year the women's committee spent £6m funding 220 childcare projects, providing 2500 childcare places. It has handed out grants to women to set up community day nurseries, perhaps employing one or two full-time workers, but more often encouraging women to take responsibility for their own childcare needs. The GLC's cheapskate nurseries are a bureaucratic cop-out from a serious fight for the facilities women need to give them an equal chance on the labour market.

PAPER CAMPAIGN

The GLC failed even to provide decent nursery facilities for its own workers. It provided 100 day-time nursery places for its 23 000 employees. The GLC boasted of this as an 'outstanding' example of workplace nursery



What did th ever do for

'For all its cock-ups, the GLC was open to new discrimination against blacks and gays; it supported implemented efficient subsidised fares, it developed enterprise and technology.... In short, it signalled the the start of socialism in Britain.' That's how Socialist Anthony Barnett sums up the left's view on the abolition of the Council. But what did the GLC really do for

provision. In reality, because it was only open from nine to five, it was only available to white collar staff, not to manual workers. And because it was located in central London, it was only suitable for car owners who did not have to bring in pre-school children on rush hour tubes and buses. This was good enough for the middle class quango feminists, but it fell far short of the

needs of women workers at the GLC.

As an employer, the GLC never met its own equal opportunities standards. In 1985 women made up only 21 per cent of the GLC workforce. In white collar jobs women filled 17 per cent of senior grades, but more than 55 per cent of lower grades.

The GLC women's committee, like the other



e GLC you?

ideas, it fought
orted feminism, it
d new ideas for local
end of labourism and
t Society intellectual
shed Greater London
chieve?

quangos, produced mountains of bulletins,
leaflets, information packs, policy reports and
handbooks. Yet the women's committee
managed to ignore serious issues like the
deficient facilities for contraception and abor-
tion in London.

There's no discrimination here



Who's fooling who?

Black staff face harassment and discrimination
Why don't you face facts
We welcome all enquiries about our work
Any employee who is harassed or discriminated
against should contact the GLC
Black Staff Committee
GLC
Greater London Council
Confidential advice available from the
Ethnic Minority Unit, House 10, County Hall, SE1
Telephone: 020 7 321 2727
If the Equal Opportunities Unit, House 10, SE1
County Hall, SE1 Telephone: 020 7 321 2727

THE NICE FACE OF RACISM

The GLC's 1984 anti-racist year was one of its best publicised campaigns. It staged reggae concerts, free festivals and a poster campaign with the theme 'Are you racist? You'd be much nicer if you weren't'. But what difference did the GLC make to the lives of blacks in London?

In terms of jobs the GLC made no real impact on the plight of black people. Black unemployment was around 16 per cent in London when Livingstone took over, now it is more than twice that level. Even at the GLC, Labour made little difference to established patterns of discrimination. The proportion of blacks working in County Hall — 10 per cent — was roughly half the proportion in London's population. And blacks stayed at the bottom of the pile, filling 22 per cent of lower paid jobs, six per cent of higher paid.

SLUM LANDLORD

The GLC made some well publicised anti-racist gestures in the housing field. It set up special 'race and housing action teams' and sent housing officers on 'racial awareness' training courses. It promoted a policy of evicting tenants found guilty of racial harassment of their neighbours. Yet the GLC failed to tackle the discriminatory allocation of housing on its own estates — notably in the East London borough of Tower Hamlets, where the GLC controlled the majority of council housing right up to abolition. Several reports have exposed the ghettoisation of Bangladeshis on the most run down estates (Shadwell Gardens, Cable Street) and the selective rehousing of white families in the more modern estates (Glamis, Royal Mint Square).

The GLC's anti-racist gestures did nothing to improve housing for black people. Their only consequence was to provoke a racist backlash

HOUSING

PROMISE:

Livingstone's team promised to restore the GLC's 'strategic' role in providing housing to deal with the shortage of accommodation in the capital.

REALITY:

The GLC transferred most of its housing stock back to the boroughs and co-operated with them in reducing total London council housing by 20 000 homes. It virtually abandoned house-building: new starts dropped from 748 in 1982 to 83 in 1985. The number of homeless has more than doubled to 33 000 households, 130 000 others live in overcrowded conditions, and more than 40 000 council houses are unfit for human habitation.

which intensified the climate of racial harassment on GLC estates.

The GLC police committee was active in the controversy surrounding the riots in London over the past four years. Because it sometimes echoes the complaints of the black community about police brutality and intimidation, the police committee has been condemned by senior police officers and their friends in parliament and the media. The GLC even won some notoriety as an anti-police body. Yet the GLC police committee has only criticised the police in an attempt to foster better relations between the repressive forces of law and order and the blacks whose oppression they enforce.

BLUNTING THE EDGE

The GLC police committee has consistently condemned resistance against the police, and promoted institutional contacts between black youth and the police. Its biggest complaint is the refusal of the Metropolitan police to recognise it as a legitimate representative of community opinion on London policing. This was short-sighted of the police chiefs. By promoting the illusion that the agents of state authority can be made accountable to the people, rather than to their establishment paymasters, the GLC radicals have done much to blunt the edge of popular hostility to the police. By providing grants and political direction to dozens of police committees and monitoring groups, the GLC helped to integrate a layer of anti-racist activists to act as a buffer between the community and the police in potential London trouble-spots.

A MODEL- OR A WARNING?

'The GLC is being abolished because of its socialism,' writes top GLC quango personality Hilary Wainwright in the *New Statesman*. For the British left the GLC was a pioneering enterprise in municipal socialism, which now stands as a model for a future Labour government.

In reality, the GLC shows how the Labour Party's socialism has been redefined as austerity politics wearing a smiley badge.

The left confuses popular hostility to the abolition of the GLC with popular support for

TRANSPORT

PROMISE:

The incoming GLC promised to cut bus and tube fares by 25 per cent and then enforce a fares freeze.

REALITY:

Legal wrangles and financial squabbles culminated in the GLC's capitulation to the courts and to the pressures of austerity. Fares are now back around the same level as when the 'Fares Fair' policy came in — and services are worse. More than 10 000 London Transport workers have lost their jobs. The rest face wage cuts and worse conditions.

GLC-style socialism. Polls demonstrated large majorities opposed to abolition because people resent Thatcher's arrogant restriction of democratic rights to elect local representatives. Many are also opposed to abolition on the grounds that it means more jobs losses and even worse council services in London.

The GLC is popular among London yuppies, the substantial sector of comfortable young professionals in the capital. They are well represented by the quango generation which is the greatest beneficiary and publicist of the virtues of GLC socialism. Hilary Wainwright is a good example of this trend. Wainwright was a prominent left-wing radical in the early seventies. She linked up with professional engineer Mike Cooley to popularise the 'workers' alternative plan' at Lucas Aerospace — a scheme which projected fantasies about a capitalist arms manufacturer making kidney machines, and paralysed resistance to thousands of redundancies. Both Wainwright and Cooley

took their art of presenting disastrous capitalist strategies as bold socialist initiatives to the GLC where they were well paid for promoting similar policies.

The GLC provided quango positions and fat salaries to hundreds of former left-wing activists and radical academics. This kept them out of trouble, integrated them into the Labour machine and turned them into its most capable propagandists.

LABOUR'S BIG LIE

However, no amount of poster campaigns, pop concerts and silly badges could make the GLC popular with London workers. Ask GLC tenants in Tower Hamlets what they think of GLC socialism, and you will understand why there is likely to be an Alliance council in the borough next month. Ask Bangladeshi families living in fear on squalid GLC estates what they think of anti-racist year posters and you will get a bitter laugh. Ask many of the thousands of workers who have lost their jobs at County Hall their opinions on working for a socialist boss, and they will ask you what is the difference

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

PROMISE:

The GLC promised to promote equal opportunities for women, blacks and the disabled. It offered to use its influence through Gleb and its special sub-committees for women and blacks. It set up a contract compliance unit on a grant of more than £1m, to monitor the employment practices of GLC suppliers.

REALITY:

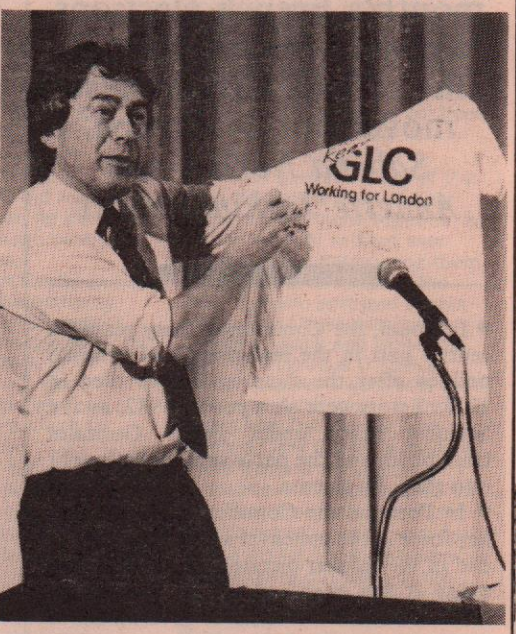
Gleb equal opportunities officer Naomi Wayne admits there has been 'no significant progress' in any Gleb-supported enterprise. A recent Gleb audit of the medium and large size companies it assists found the proportion of women employed was around 40 per cent — the same as the average for all companies in London. Women are still concentrated at the lower end of the wage scale, and few companies conform to equal opportunities standards. Yet no company has been refused a GLC contract on the grounds of discriminatory employment practices. They still discriminate — but, according to one GLC worker, 'the monitoring process is a joke'. The GLC can't check information companies provide or make sure minorities get a fair deal. Evidence suggests that women, blacks and the disabled are worse off at work than they were in 1981.

between a socialist and a capitalist employer.

Wainwright admits that the GLC's struggle against rate-capping, the greatest event of 1985, was a 'campaign based on a lie'. The GLC leaders covered the city in posters, persuaded their employees to support days of action without pay, and made plenty of defiant speeches against the Tories — all in support of a 'no-rate' policy they knew they were not prepared to support themselves.

This cynical exercise sums up GLC socialism. It was radical rhetoric masking a basic deference to the capitalist market and the capitalist courts — media hype based on a lie.

John Pearson



TONY BANKS, GLC RADICAL, NOW REDUCED TO AUCTIONING TACKY T-SHIRTS FOR THE KINNOCKITE TRIBUNE

DAVID ROURKE

INTO THE WILDERNESS



COUNTING HIS BLESSINGS — OR HIS MEMBERS? FRENCH COMMUNIST BOSS MARCHAIS WITH SOCIALIST PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

In the seventies the French Communist Party could win half the votes in the industrial 'red belt' around Paris, and more than a quarter in most cities. Yet last month the Communist vote fell below that of the right-wing Front National in the 'red belt', and it won more than 20 per cent of the poll in only three departments in the whole country. The press is already full of outspoken criticisms of the party leadership and demands for an extraordinary congress are flooding into the centre. But declining popularity and internal dissensions are not peculiar to the Communist Party in France.

The collapse of the Communist Party in last month's French elections signals a wider crisis of the official Communist movement in Europe.
Sabena Norton and Annette Jenkins report

- In Spain, the Communist Party played a central part in the realignment of national politics after the dictator Franco died in 1975. Yet its vote slumped in 1982, as the Socialist Party under Felipe Gonzales triumphed, and the party subsequently split into three fragments.
- In Portugal the Communist Party was a key force in the upheaval which followed the end of the Salazar dictatorship in 1974. Yet today it has been reduced to a marginal influence under the Socialist government of Mario Soares.
- In Greece the Communists have held their

own at the polls and avoided internal strife. But they have failed to take advantage of the growing instability resulting from the austerity policies of Andreas Papandreu's Socialist government.

• In Italy the strongest Communist Party in Europe is in deep crisis. In the seventies it used its substantial influence to prop up a series of right-wing governments. Yet the Communists now face a right-wing offensive against their power bases in the unions and local government, and working class support remains passive.

Since the seventies relatively new Socialist parties have emerged to challenge entrenched Communist influence over working class movements throughout southern Europe. How have the Socialist parties managed to displace the Communists?

RESPECTABLE REDS

The Communist parties have always had a popularity problem. Ever since the Russian Revolution led to the creation of Communist parties throughout Europe, the ruling classes have whipped up anti-communist prejudices to curb their influence. For more than 50 years the Communists have responded to right-wing pressure by trying to prove their respectability. They have promoted policies of moderate reform, and projected a responsible, patriotic image. But they have never overcome the legacy of their link to the Bolshevik Revolution. Hence they have never succeeded in their ambition to become acceptable alternative parties of government in modern capitalist society.

The Communist parties did succeed in building up substantial working class support, particularly where they played an active role in resisting fascist rule (France, Italy) or military dictatorship (Spain, Greece, Portugal). The Communist parties retained workers' loyalty through the dark days of Cold War anti-communism and

repression, and through the subsequent years of economic expansion and a more liberal political climate.

They are now in decline because their moderate policies provide no solution to the problems thrown up by the recession.

The origin of the current crisis lies in the late sixties when trade union militancy erupted across Europe, in response to the first attempts by employers and governments to make workers pay for declining capitalist profitability. In Italy's 'hot autumn' of 1969, a wave of strikes and factory occupations forced the employers to concede wage rises and improvements in working conditions.

EUROCOMMUNISM RISES

The Italian Communist Party was taken by surprise by this upsurge, which took place outside official union and party structures. Party leaders tried to demonstrate their commitment to running the system. They appealed frantically for moderation and vehemently denounced 'extremists' for provoking disorder. In France, the Communist Party leadership responded in similar fashion to the student and industrial revolt which culminated in the events of May 1968.

In the face of working class militancy, the Communists turned to appeal for middle class support. Fearful of growing social tensions, the Communists proclaimed their faith in law and order and capitalist stability. The result was the emergence in the seventies of 'Eurocommunism'.

Eurocommunism was centred on approval for parliamentary democracy and traditional party politics. Eurocommunist theoreticians rejected the aim of working class control over society, and hence the need for a party designed to lead the working class to the seizure of state power. This shift only ratified established trends in Western Communist parties. In the seventies one party after another pronounced its disapproval of the

Soviet system, and even discarded rhetorical references to the policies of Marx and Lenin.

Many left wingers regarded Eurocommunism as a positive development that rejected the negative features of Soviet society and Stalinist politics. In fact the old Communist parties' rejection of Stalinist orthodoxy was no shift to the left. It merely expressed their loyalty to the capitalist order and their craving for respectability.

In the long run the Eurocommunist project was doomed to fail. Why should anti-communists give their support to Communist parties, however much they proclaim their faith in democracy? Middle class voters who oppose the disruptive policies of the right can express their opposition by voting for Socialist parties, whose leaders do not have to answer embarrassing questions about Marx and Lenin, Stalin and Gorbachev. And why should workers continue to support Communist parties which seem to be solely concerned with appeasing middle class prejudices, and compromising with establishment demands for sacrifices from the working class?

The Communist parties have fallen between two stools. Their appeals to the middle classes have fallen on deaf ears. Yet their collaboration with anti-working class regimes has undermined their traditional bases of support in the labour movement.

HISTORIC DISASTER

In Italy in the mid-seventies the Communist Party staked its survival on a direct partnership with the Italian establishment — the 'historic compromise'. This meant the party abstained from any opposition to the ruling right-wing Christian Democrats. With Communist support the government succeeded in imposing drastic cuts in jobs and living standards.

The Italian Communist Party went further than any other in abandoning even the rhetoric of reform. In 1977 it proclaimed austerity as 'socialist discipline'. On abortion and divorce, the party's historical fear of confronting the Catholic Church left it to the right of the more liberal consensus which emerged in the late seventies. It also backed a ruthless anti-terrorist campaign, which led to the mass arrest and imprisonment of left-wing activists.

Whereas in Italy the Communists faced no established left-wing rival, the French Communist Party was confronted by a Socialist Party which emerged from obscurity under the skilful leadership of Francois Mitterrand. In 1972 Communist leader Georges Marchais formed an electoral alliance with the Socialists, and published a common programme. For the Communist Party the alliance presented the only chance of advance in the electoral sphere. For the Socialists it provided a framework within which the new party could apply maximum pressure on the Communists.

The contest between Stalinism and 'democratic socialism' was an unmitigated disaster for the Communist Party. Marchais could make no headway among the middle classes against Mitterrand's more moderate appeal. The Socialists mobilised anti-Soviet and anti-communist prejudice against the Communists with considerable effect. By the mid-seventies liberal intellectuals were leaving the party in droves, and publishing renunciations of their Communist past.

Far from overcoming the Communists' isolation, the right-wing shift of the seventies served only to intensify it.

DESTROY THEM

The inability of the Communist parties to come up with a real alternative for the working class forced them to retreat from the labour movement and seek refuge in a partnership with the establishment. When the Communists' respectable allies turned nasty, they were left with nowhere to turn and nowhere to hide. They have resorted to increasingly unstable tactical manoeuvres — from appeals to anti-immigrant chauvinism to outbursts of militant posturing — in a desperate attempt to recover some coherence.

Battered as they are, the Communist parties remain strong enough to continue subverting the struggle against the system. They can only be destroyed by building a revolutionary alternative.

junius publications



Black Blood on British Hands, Charles Longford

Three weeks since the end of the state of emergency in South Africa, the death toll in the townships and the homelands is running at an even higher level. In coming weeks revolt and repression can be expected to continue as the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising approaches. On May Day workers throughout South Africa will take action in defiance of the apartheid regime.

The Western powers have shown their solidarity with the apartheid regime in the way that counts — by rescheduling the country's debts. All the rhetoric about sanctions has had no effect on the state of terror that prevails in South Africa.

Charles Longford's pamphlet aims to change the direction of the solidarity movement in Britain. Anti-apartheid activists have wasted their time asking South Africa's backers in the British establishment to fight apartheid. It is time we started mobilising the labour movement to take direct action against British capitalists who profit from the super-exploitation of black workers in South Africa. £1.50 plus 60p p&p

Also available from Junius

Moral Panics and Victorian Values
Kate Marshall's pamphlet looks behind the endless stream of propaganda about smack and crack, battered babies, missing children and Aids to examine the consequences for women and women's rights. £1.50 plus 40p p&p

Taking Control, Mike Freeman's
handbook for trade unionists,
outlines practical alternatives to relying on government legislation to defend trade union rights. £2.95 plus 85p p&p

The Irish War, the Irish Freedom
Movement handbook, examines the relations between the Loyalists and the British state, and explains why the real source of the troubles is in Britain. £2.95 plus 85p p&p

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BRITISH TROTSKYISM

A flawed tradition

Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson, *Against the stream: the history of the Trotskyist movement in Britain 1924-38*, Socialist Platform £5.95

This book is truly a labour of love, the kind of work only those deeply involved in their subject could have written. Trotskyist veterans Bornstein and Richardson have done painstaking research, to provide us with a valuable and highly readable account of the formative years of the movement in Britain.

The first chapter goes some way towards explaining the rapid transformation of the British Communist Party in the early twenties, from a movement of revolutionaries into an instrument of bureaucratic manipulation. The political immaturity of the British Communist Party made it dependent on the Soviet bureaucracy from the outset. As a result there was almost no initial opposition to the purge launched against supporters of Trotsky by the Stalinist leadership in the late twenties. Backing for Trotsky's Left Opposition did not emerge in Britain until the early thirties — much later than elsewhere in Europe.

British Trotskyism suffered major political weaknesses from the start. It never seriously set about developing a revolutionary theory adequate to the British situation. Nor did it come to terms with the task of building an independent working class party. Today's left has never broken out of the narrow preoccupation with tactics towards the Labour Party that dogged the early Trotskyists. All the debates and divisions in the movement arose from disagreements over relations between the Trotskyists and the Communist Party, the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party. Throughout the thirties there was not one serious discussion of a theoretical or strategic character within British Trotskyism.

Because they are so much a product of the Trotskyist tradition, Bornstein and Richardson fail to recognise its basic flaw. Their sympathy lies with the tactic of entrenchment and they are opposed to the perspective of building an independent party. This conservative outlook reveals that



LEON TROTSKY

their Trotskyism is more a matter of faith than a practical conviction that revolution is possible in Britain.

Despite their incoherence and lack of vision, the early British Trotskyists demonstrated strength of character and a profound commitment to the working class. For this and their courageous stand against Stalinism they deserve our respect. But revolutionaries

today will not find in British Trotskyism a political tradition on which to build. The inheritors of that tradition — even when they are outside the Labour Party — remain under the political influence of Labourism. The fact that this tradition is still influential on the left today is one reason why *tns* readers should make every effort to read this study of British Trotskyism. **Frank Richards**



'DARLING, YOU'RE SO SMUG AND OBNOXIOUS'

wouldn't she?

For a film which has been acclaimed as the grown-ups answer to brat cinema, the plot is remarkably rosy and the courtroom manoeuvres in particular lack originality or ingenuity. And when I say that the lawyer is also a single mother with two unbearably cute kids, you might begin to see how formulaic the enterprise is. Jeff Bridges is the man in the dock, coming across as smug and obnoxious enough to provoke a grisly fascination in his fate. It is however the impressive Glenn Close, representing him, who does most to redeem what is quite a smug film.

There are several fascinating themes touched on in *Clockwise*, a farce from the pen of Michael Frayn. Most notably he examines the British class system at the self-conscious interface of comprehensive and public schools, and the special tyranny of time for the more obsessive among us. But somehow, and very frustratingly, the good ideas are dissipated along the circuitous route which the state

school headmaster takes to get to the public school conference which, unprecedentedly, he has been asked to chair. You've got it, for once he's going to be late.

Much will be made of John Cleese's performance and at times he does deliver the well-known goods. However, he does not really display enough control, for example he lapses occasionally into pure Fawlty and diminishes thereby the authority which the character must have to make his downfall especially ignominious or hilarious. In addition the pace is not quite headlong or hectic enough for a full farce, nor careful enough for studied social comedy.

There are however some wonderful moments, particularly involving three batty old women who wander around subverting every situation they encounter. Who are the pigs in *Pigs*, you ask? 'You lot live like pigs,' sneers the policeman arresting the squatter for a petty social security fraud at the end of this chilling study of squalor in Dublin today. The line echoes the play *Live Like Pigs* written by

WOMEN AND THE LAW

Rapists on trial

Judith Rowland, *Rape: the ultimate violation*, Pluto Press £4.95

In the current controversy about rape, some women's groups demand that the police and courts stand up for women's rights and take a harder line against rapists. Judith Rowland's book describes her attempts to make the forces of law and order in the USA more accountable to women. She provides a detailed account of four cases she prosecuted, in her one-woman campaign to get a fairer deal for victims by using expert witnesses.

Her cast of characters could have walked off the set of *Hill Street Blues*. Rowland is a hard working district attorney in San Diego, dedicated to prosecuting child abuse, incest and sexual assault cases. Her main ally, the detective in charge of sexual offences, is a rugged Italian American with a heart of gold. The judges are stern but intelligent, fair minded men. The victims are fine, upstanding American citizens — a teacher, a navy officer and a policewoman. The rapists include two psychopaths, a black con man and a socially inadequate alcoholic. They represent the netherworld of petty crime and drugs on the margins of society.

Rowland's faith in the legal system permeates her legal practice and her book. She perpetuates the myth that rape can be dealt with by jailing psychopaths. The establishment figures who run a system that keeps women unequal and vulnerable to rape not only escape criticism, but are raised on to a pedestal.

Helena Kennedy, the British feminist barrister who wrote the preface to this edition, endorses Rowland's approach. She welcomes the recent increase in women reporting rape to the police, and calls on us to follow the example of American feminists in fighting to improve the rape law. The narrow legalistic concerns of the anti-rape coalition that links feminists and the moral majority in the USA have yet to win wide support in Britain. This book should warn us of the dangers of appealing to the authorities, who uphold a society in which the abuse of women is part of everyday life, to protect women from rape. **Wendy Ellis**

John Arden in the sixties, which I dimly remember dealing with the same issues in London. The Georgian house where the half dozen characters have drifted up also helps recall a study of a different collection of Dubliners, by James Joyce, when the Irish state was still a matter for hope.

This is a careful film. It manages to sustain an unrelenting examination of the grim, desperate lives of near dossers (who come together for a short period) without ever celebrating or patronising them as victims. It is certainly the most realistic portrayal of this milieu that I have ever seen.

Shot in black and white, the hand of Thaddeus O'Sullivan (whose excellent work with the camera can be seen on *Anne Devlin* and *The Woman who Married Clark Gable*) is evident in the austere but private atmosphere which pervades the film. The rare intrusions of the outside world — such as a flash from a modern high rise slum on the outskirts of Dublin or the incident with the police at the end — confirm that Cathal Black's observation is not simply that of the social historian. That was evident already from the quiet fury of his tale. **Pat Ford**

THREE FILMS

Murder, farce and squalor

Jagged Edge, **Richard Marquand** (director)
Clockwise, **Christopher Morahan** (director)
Pigs, **Cathal Black** (director)

An expensive American thriller, a thrifty British comedy and a low-budget Irish...well, an Irish short story. And having set it up like that you get no prizes for working out which is the favourite.

Jagged Edge is a glossy courtroom drama, set in the glossy world of San Francisco newspaper editors and their cliff-top holiday homes. It achieves its central purpose efficiently enough — keeping us guessing as to whether the accused actually did murder his wife with a jagged-edged knife. Our interest (which might otherwise wander) in this question is sharpened by the fact that his female attorney is only handling the case and falling in love with him on the basis that he's innocent; well, she would,

LETTERS

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



DAVID ROURKE

SWP CELEBRATES DEFEAT

I ENJOYED Andrew Calcutt's article on the Saturday night charades in Wapping. He was right to attack the Socialist Workers' Party for insisting these token demonstrations should be the high spot of the week for militants. But he should have shown how the SWP's mistakes over Wapping are a development of their errors during the miners' strike.

At the beginning of the strike the RCP called for a national ballot campaign, as the means to win miners away from the union officials' strategy for negotiation, and to break down area divisions within the NUM. This strategy stupefied SWP members, who only opened their mouths to abuse us. They also abused the miners. For a year the SWP refused to criticise Scargill, even though

his strategy was based on using the NUM rule book to deal with political problems, which only ended up making divisions worse. Instead the SWP encouraged the militants' loyalty to their officials, and rubber-stamped the NUM's divisive strategy.

For the SWP the high spot of the miners' strike was Orgreave, where unprotected miners were beaten up by well-armed police thugs. This week's *Socialist Worker* celebrates 'the great mood' after armoured, mounted police rode through last Saturday's disorganised demonstration at Wapping. When will the SWP stop glorifying the union leaders' dead-end tactics that lead to defeat?

Charlie Miles
Yorkshire

MINERS STEPPING OUT

TWO weeks ago a group of miners from Westoe and Wearmouth met to launch the miners' next step campaign in the north-east. We urgently need to fight the NUM's compromises — there are only seven pits still working in our area, following the closure of Bates colliery. The colliery review procedure couldn't save Bates, nor could Scargill's plea in the high court, nor the NUM's appeals to the bosses' moral responsibility.

Some miners are demoralised. Despairing of the NUM, they are taking voluntary redundancy. But the fighting spirit is by no means crushed. Recently 'Red

Westoe' voted to strike if another militant is sacked on a scab's word — despite attempts by NUM officials to block the vote.

At our meeting a Labour councillor recommended we put our faith in traditional methods. But the speaker from Yorkshire miners' next step pointed out how these methods are no use in the new phase of our war against the bosses. The campaign now meets regularly at pits in the north-east. These meetings are the workshop for the weapon we need against the NCB.

George Nash
Newcastle

THE IRISH WAR IN BRITAIN

RECENTLY Sinn Fein activist and student John Carlin completed a speaking tour of colleges in Scotland and the north-east, putting the republican case against the Anglo-Irish deal. The worst opposition he ran into was from 'left-wing' British student hacks.

At one Edinburgh college the 'left-wing' executive told the police that Carlin was coming, at the university some 'socialists' tried to prevent him speaking. To excuse themselves they said his meeting would provoke Loyalists and that, in the context of the Anglo-Irish deal, it would increase sectarianism. In fact they

just didn't want Irish republicans speaking against British imperialism in a British university.

Carlin thought student unions can be an important forum for discussing the Irish War. This is especially true now that the anti-Irish NUS policy has lapsed, after an Irish Freedom Movement intervention at the last NUS conference. At next conference, beginning in a few days, Ireland will be a major topic of debate. Like Carlin's speaking tour in the north-east, this will knock another hole in Britain's wall of silence about Ireland.

Claire Foster
Newcastle

(NEXT TIME) VOTE RCP

MAUREEN WARD (*tns* 11) asks why the RCP isn't standing a candidate in the forthcoming Fulham by-election.

For more than 10 years workers have been leaving Fulham, driven out by rising rents and the yuppies who can afford them. The area is now so 'gentrified' the cafes open for morning coffee — not breakfast — and the public lavatories have been converted into architects' studios. Because of the change in the area's social composition, we have not previously worked there. Had we stood in the by-election, the election campaign would have been our first major activity in Fulham.

However, we are selling *tns* in the districts of Fulham where workers still live. By

the time Thatcher calls a general election we will be well-known in the area, and it will be worthwhile standing a candidate. Meanwhile we are standing in next month's local elections in nearby Hammersmith, where Labour law and order spokesman Clive Soley is the MP. We shall be arguing for police off our streets, unlike Labour's Fulham candidate Nick Raynsford. He was 'on the beat' in Fulham recently, canvassing with TV cops Colin Welland (*Z-Cars*), Anna Carteret (*Juliet Bravo*), and Jill Gascoine (*The Gentle Touch*), arguing for more community coppers. But as they should know, the only decent cops are fictional ones.

Kirsten Cale
West London

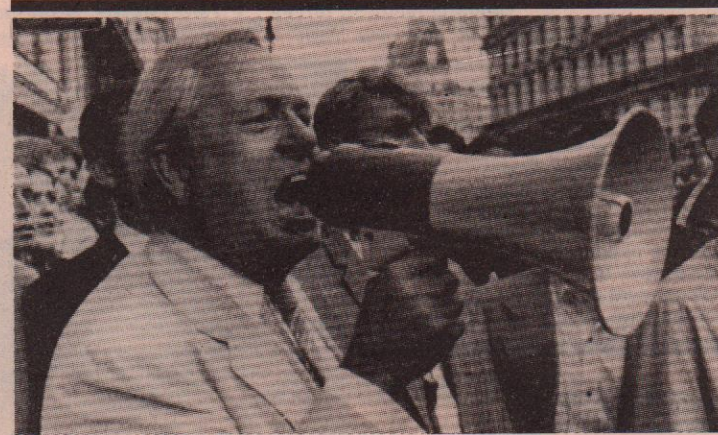
WORKERS AGAINST RAPE?

LATE last night the couple living in the flat below me started arguing. After half an hour I could hear that the woman was being knocked about. I shouted down for the man to stop hitting her — the walls are very thin — but he didn't. After a while I went downstairs and knocked on their door. When the man answered I told him I didn't like what was going on. He told me to get lost, but I

think he stopped hitting her — for one night.

The RCP organises workers' defence against racist attacks. But what about attacks on women? Why don't you start a campaign which would show workers how to stop the violence of women's oppression?

Alan Warren
Halesowen



FRENCH NF CHIEF LE PEN

ATTACK THE RIGHT NOW

IN the French parliamentary elections the National Front won 32 seats and 10 per cent of the vote. In the regional councils the NF has formed a coalition with the Gaullists and Giscard d'Estaing's UDF, which now controls the important posts in all but two regional councils. Clearly the NF are making inroads into French politics — their increasing influence has prompted new prime minister Jacques Chirac to appoint hardliner Charles Pasqua as his minister of the interior. As well as drawing left-wing fire away from his boss, Pasqua's job will be to prove that the traditional French right can be as hard as the new far-right on immigration and law and order.

tns has consistently — and correctly — pointed out that far-right groups in Britain

have no influence at the moment. But for how long? The failure of Mitterrand's Socialist government gave ex-army torturer Jean-Marie Le Pen the chance to lead his party to a position of national prominence. In Britain, whoever heads the next government will preside over a decaying society which could become fertile ground for the British National Front.

Instead of trashing the British far-right as irrelevant, activists should organise to nip them in the bud now. If ever their 'anti-big-business, pro-the-ordinary-man' posture has a chance to take hold, as it has done in France, the far-right will be difficult to deal with. Prevention, as they say, is better than cure.

Terry Hilsden
Woolwich

STEPPING OUT

'How did you get in?' a union official demanded as I wandered around the HQ of Eric Bemrose, a Liverpool printing firm and wholly-owned Rupert Murdoch subsidiary. 'I walked in,' I admitted. He was shocked: 'The police are on the roof, carrying out surveillance.' Were they expecting flying pickets? No — the cemetery at the back of Eric Bemrose is a heroin pushers' haunt, and the rozzers wanted a promotion-winning swoop. It seems Murdoch helps the police nail a few smack dealers, and the uniformed smack-in-the-mouth dealers keep his gates clear at Wapping. If the print union leaders find out about this, they'll go through the roof. Unless the police are still up there, of course, in which case I suppose they'll organise a Wapping-style walk around it.

But you don't have to be a press baron to let the police peepers use your premises. Bernie Grant's left-wing Haringey council criticises the coppers, yet admits that 'cooperation is readily given' when police ask to do a bit of spying on black estates from the safety of an empty council flat. And that's not the latest piece of Haringey hypocrisy. The council has caused a row by switching from black to grey rubbish bags. Talking Drums says this is 'to avoid offending West Indian workers in the cleaning department' because, the council claims, the black bags are 'racially offensive'. Now, isn't that nice? It's only a shame that there are so few black workers in the council cleansing department's Parkview depot to thank Bernie — three out of 25 street cleaners, and three out of 250 'on the dust'. But what black worker needs a job when you've got a grey, racially inoffensive plastic bag to come home to?

Despite the happy hullabaloo about Andy and Fergie, not everybody is singing the praises of the residents of Buck House. A leaflet put out by the shop workers' union Usdaw, campaigning against Sunday opening, complains that an unnamed royal said Asian shopkeepers were 'setting an example of enterprise and consideration for the consumer' by opening late in the evening and on Sundays. 'But,' declares Usdaw, 'not a word was said about the example of a Prince advising shopkeepers and their families and their staff to break the law.' And so it came to pass that the official labour movement became so subordinate to the law, it accused the Windsor clan of being subversive. The bourgeois revolution seems imminent.

Speaking of the happy day on 23 July, here's our Royal Wedding competition. We're looking for the town whose elder statesmen can drag up the most cringing attempt to link the Andy-Fergie fiasco to their manor. The first entry is from Leeds. Some idiot there has discovered a Headingley church wherein lie the rotten remains of the lovely Sarah's great, great, great grandparents, who kicked the aristocratic bucket in 1828 and 1833. If you can beat that, you win a signed photo of *tns* proof-reader Maurice-the-Marker-Pen, who assures me he bears a striking resemblance to the bridegroom-to-be.

Mind you, Maurice might have got his new job on the Communist Party's paper 7 Days before then. After publishing disappointingly few proofing errors over recent weeks, the paper has returned to its former glory. The cover of a recent copy was dated '15 March 1986', while every other page claimed it was only '15 January 1986'. 'Initiative needed' says the first headline. There's no answer to that.

EDDIE VEALE

THE PARTY PAGE

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



ROLLING ON TO THE ELECTIONS

This week we begin campaigning for the 8 May council elections. All our branches are standing candidates, except for Nottingham where there are no elections.

As the build-up to the next general election begins, both the Tory and Labour Parties are suffering a crisis of credibility. This growing political instability makes the local elections a more important focus of attention than ever before. It also provides us with an opportunity to establish the RCP as a national party, offering real opposition to the old politicians and their redundant ideas. So, after lengthy deliberation, our political committee adopted the branches' recommendation that the coming council elections merit considerable party resources.

STRATEGY

We are out to win seats. But the main aim of our election campaign is to present an effective strategy for fighting back, based on our programme *Preparing for Power*. Our programme starts from the recognition that capitalism is in a state of terminal decline, and the only way the employers can survive is by making workers accept lower living standards. Our election intervention will aim to get across the message that

effective resistance must have a clear anti-capitalist thrust. A vote for the RCP will be a statement of intent and determination not to pay for the employers' crisis.

IMMEDIATE

Some of our supporters have argued that local elections are not about real politics, they're about getting the council to fix the drains. This is sometimes true, but local politics usually reflect the main parties' national policies. And we are not short of ways to give immediate, local relevance to our national programme. In Bradford and East London we will concentrate our election work on the councils' lack of response to increasing racist attacks. In Handsworth, Birmingham, we'll be taking up the council's acceptance of the police analysis of the riots. In Newcastle we'll be leading a campaign against the closure of nurseries by the council. And in the Pontefract area we will be taking up the Labour Party's record during and since the miners' strike. Other areas will be targeting their own local issues, but all our campaigns will demonstrate how workers can put our programme of resistance into practice.

Some members of left-wing groups have argued that we are wrong to run

candidates in these elections, because we don't stand a chance of winning and it only makes workers more cynical if left-wing candidates get low votes. We think workers are more likely to be cynical if they see no alternative to Labour's betrayals.

Other left wingers tell us elections represent nothing, and we need to concentrate our energy on the struggles that count, in the workplace and on the picket line. In practice this means the Labour Party is left to 'represent' workers in the political arena — while the rest of the left shouts slogans on demonstrations. This is very convenient for Labour, especially as all the extra-parliamentary activists campaign for a Labour vote anyway. Our programme makes it clear we don't consider elections to be a substitute for the class struggle. But election campaigns can provide a high-profile platform for class struggle politics.

DRY RUN

Our intervention in the May council elections will be a dry run for the general election — when we intend to stand even more candidates. To make that possible we have to register a good vote now. We'll be relying on all our supporters to come out and make it happen.



VOTE RCP!

Our class struggle policies:

• Full Employment

In this society everybody needs a job as the only way to guarantee any sort of decent survival. While employers only provide work if they can make a profit, we fight for a job for every worker irrespective of their profits. Fighting unemployment is vital to maintain living standards and to unite workers.

• A Living Wage

Every worker needs a wage that will ensure a decent standard of living. Those who are unable to work are entitled to benefits equivalent to the level of their wages. We reject in principle the notion that we should accept wage restraint, welfare cuts or any other sacrifices to help the employers resolve their crisis.

• The Right To Fight

The Tory government has made it a crime to fight for the right to work and it is planning to curb rights to assemble and demonstrate in public. We reject any further restrictions on civil

liberties and all state interference in the affairs of the labour movement.

• Rights For Women and Blacks

We demand equal rights for women at work and all-day nursery facilities to give women the chance to work. We call for free contraception and abortion on demand and oppose all attempts by legislation or welfare cuts to restrict women's rights. We have taken a lead in organising workers' defence against racist attacks and in campaigning against all immigration controls. We are opposed to all discrimination against gays.

• Irish Freedom

We give a high priority to supporting the cause of national liberation in Ireland. The Irish War is the single greatest threat to the stability of the British state. When the British working class unites in solidarity with the Irish people it will be in a vastly stronger position to take on the common enemy.

• Peace

We are opposed to all

forms of militarism. We are against conventional and nuclear rearmament and all alliances among the Western superpowers. We are particularly against British military interference overseas, most importantly in Ireland, but also in the South Atlantic, the Middle East, Africa, and anywhere else.

The policies of the RCP provide a practical approach to defending the working class against a mounting employers' offensive. They also point the way forward to a new sort of society.

To those who say these policies are unrealistic, we reply that if it is unrealistic for the capitalist system to provide people with a life free from poverty, oppression and war, then it's time to start fighting for a better system.

To those who want to stop retreating and take the class struggle forward, we say — come and join us! And don't forget — 8 May 1986 VOTE RCP!



STUDENT ALERT

If you're a student going to the April NUS conference, please contact Kerry Andrews on 01-729 0414 — fast. We've got motions on the agenda, fringe meetings and stalls to organise and we need your help.



GET THE ARGUMENTS

To help our supporters become more familiar with our strategy and tactics, we are making available a selection of documents from the 1985 party conference. Although these documents were written a year ago, they anticipate developments in the labour movement and British politics which are only now

taking shape.

These three documents are available exclusively to 'signed up' RCP supporters.

- **Revolution in our time** — perspectives for the RCP
- **What are we defending?** — perspectives for the official labour movement
- **The left**

send £1.50 for the set to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX



DIARY

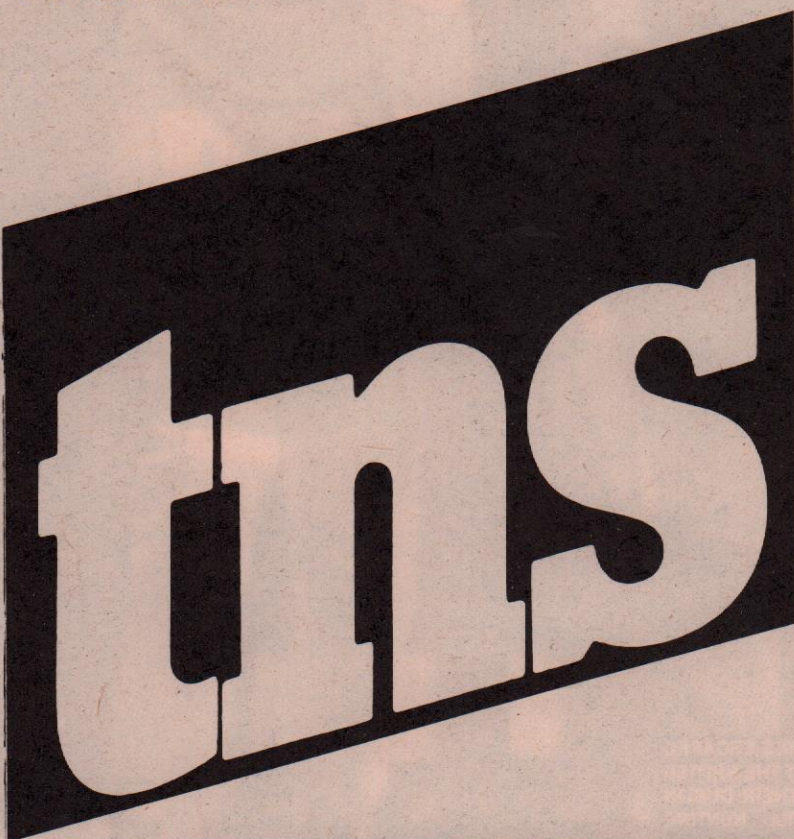
LIVERPOOL: Who needs the Labour Party now? — dayschool, Saturday 3 May. Phone Fenna on 01-729 0414 for details.

NOTTINGHAM: Police off our streets — protest against council backing for police harassment. County council meeting, County Hall, Trent

Bridge, Thursday 17 April. 1.30pm. **SHEFFIELD:** How to beat the racists — public meeting, The Mailcoach, West St, Tuesday 8 April 7.30pm.

LONDON: Workers Against Racism benefit disco. The 100 Club, 100 Oxford Street, Monday 21 April, 8pm 'til late.

SOUTH ELMSALL: Could a revolution happen here? — public meeting, Miners' Welfare, Thursday 10 April 7.30pm.



(FULL SUBSCRIPTION RATES ON PAGE 2)

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the next step

Extradite British troops from Ireland



EVELYN GLENHOLMES ESCAPED EXTRADITION — BUT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND THEIR DUBLIN LACKEYS ARE STILL HUNTING DOWN REPUBLICANS

Early on Monday the Royal Ulster Constabulary clashed with Loyalists on a banned parade through Portadown, County Armagh. And on Sunday the RUC and British troops clamped down on republican marches in Northern Ireland, called to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. Once again, the British authorities are posing as independent umpires in Ireland. They claim they are 'keeping the peace against men of violence on both sides of the sectarian divide'. And once again, the British government is lying through its tyrant's teeth.

Despite their present dispute with Loyalists over the terms of the Anglo-Irish deal, the British forces are in Ireland to wage war

British hypocrites who condemn Loyalist violence are stepping up their terror campaign against nationalists throughout Ireland

against the nationalists and to keep Britain's oldest colony under Crown control.

Compare the treatment the security forces are meting out to Loyalists and to nationalists in Northern Ireland, and you'll see that supporters of Irish freedom are the real targets of British terror.

The media made much of the few plastic bullets fired at Loyalists on Monday. But they don't even mention the frequent plastic bullet attacks on nationalists, like the British Army baton round that smashed the hip of 16-year old nationalist Pauline Divin in Derry only days earlier. She was shot, at point-blank range, yards from the spot where another British soldier murdered 11-year old Stephen McConomy with a plastic bullet in 1981. Nationalists run the risk of being blasted by British plastic bullets — or

lead ones — every time they commit the crime of walking the streets of occupied Ireland.

The authorities justified their rare attempt to ban the Loyalist parade through Portadown on the grounds that it had been taken over by 'sinister elements' and paramilitaries. But there is nothing rare about the sinister paramilitaries of the British security forces banning and disrupting nationalist marches.

Nationalist marchers are now being arrested for taking part in illegal demonstrations (22 were recently charged over last year's peaceful St Patrick's day march in Derry). They are always harassed by police and troops (as they were on the weekend's Easter parades). And they are often attacked by the security forces. (Most recently, the RUC ran riot in Kilkeel, kicking and batoning nationalists after this year's St Patrick's parade.) Even when the RUC tries to keep up an 'even-handed' image by interfering with Loyalist marches, the police will stand aside and let the Loyalist mobs attack nationalists — as they did in Portadown last year, and again on Monday morning.

Loyalists may moan about the 'consultative' role the Dublin government has in Northern Ireland under the Anglo-Irish agreement. But the real aim of the deal, like every other British scheme, remains repressing resistance to British rule, and undermining the republican struggle for Irish freedom.

The failed attempt to extradite republican Evelyn Glenholmes from Dublin, to stand trial in Britain, shows how the Anglo-Irish deal brings the puppet Irish government under closer British control. The spectacle of Irish police arresting a young Irish woman twice and firing shots in the centre of their capital city, all at the whim of the British authorities, kills the lie that the Dublin government is 'independent'. Yet the judge felt obliged to release Glenholmes because of defective warrants, reflecting the pressure the authorities still feel from Irish people in the South who won't tolerate their rulers licking Britain's boots.

STEEPED IN BLOOD

The British authorities are the real force for violence throughout the 32 counties of Ireland. Britain divided the Irish nation, created the Loyalists as a privileged gang of Crown agents, and set up the Dublin Free State as a British satellite. Britain can only control Ireland today by deepening the divisions it has created, and encouraging its allies — North and South — to step up the terror campaign against those struggling for Irish unity and independence.

The only way to end the violence in Ireland is by fighting to free the country from British colonial rule.

That means supporting the nationalist people against the British authorities and the Loyalists. And it means dismissing the hypocrites of Westminster, Dublin, Fleet Street and Wapping, who pretend that British security forces steeped in the blood of Irish people are there to 'keep the peace'. Anglo-Irish agreement or no, the only peace Britain can bring to Ireland is the peace of the plastic bullet and the police baton.

If you want to play a part in ending the Irish War, join the Irish Freedom Movement. Write to BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

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.

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Address _____

Telephone _____

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