

tms
the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party • 18 April 1986 • 30p

Britain backs Reagan
We back Gadaffi
HANDS OFF LIBYA!
Demonstration Sunday 20 April

Assemble 1pm, Speakers' Corner
Hyde Park, London
March to US Embassy, Grosvenor Square
Rally Trafalgar Square



The real mad dogs

HANDS OFF LIBYA!

Tuesday's air strike on Libya by 35 US F1-11 fighter-bombers was a barbarous act of war directed against a feeble third world country by the world's leading capitalist power. Early reports indicate hundreds of civilian casualties in residential areas of Tripoli and Benghazi. The fact that this raid was launched from US bases in Britain with the full backing of the British government makes this atrocity a particular concern for the British labour movement.

Reagan's murderous assault on Libya — the second within a month — follows a prolonged propaganda war against Libya and the country's leader, Colonel Muammar Gadaffi. Reagan has labelled

Gadaffi a mad dog and described him as 'flaky' and a barbarian. In Britain, politicians of all parties and the media have echoed US condemnations of Gadaffi as the driving force behind 'world terrorism'.

Gadaffi is the leader of a small, sparsely populated and generally impoverished African country. Even the American authorities, who have excelled in 'discovering' evidence of communist subversion to justify US interference in Central America, have failed to come up with any convincing links between Libya and recent terrorist incidents in Berlin or around the Mediterranean.

The Gadaffi bogey is an American invention to provide a pretext for the

USA to display its military might to upstart Arab regimes and restive European allies alike.

The USA lost face in the Philippines, it is losing control in Central America, and its influence in the Middle East is waning. Reagan could do nothing to save his old pal Marcos, he is struggling to keep the Contras going in Honduras, and his allies in Israel and Egypt are facing increasing internal turmoil.

For a bully looking round for a victim on whom to vent his frustration and show the world he still packs a punch — what better target than Gadaffi? Reagan's racist abuse of Gadaffi and his military escapades around the Gulf of Sirte have rallied patriotic support for his admini-

stration at a time of considerable economic and political difficulty.

The British establishment too has used the Gadaffi bogey to stir up chauvinist anti-Arab sentiment and to bolster up its popularity. The revelation that the miners received donations from the Libyan trade unions during last year's strike was regarded as the employers' greatest propaganda success. On Tuesday Tory foreign secretary Geoffrey Howe cited the incident in which a British policewoman was killed in a shooting incident between rival Libyan factions in London two years ago to justify British complicity in the

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THE OSSIE O'BRIEN FACTOR

Who? You may well ask. Ossie O'Brien was the man who won the Darlington by-election for Labour in March 1983 in a campaign which became the model for Labour in the Fulham poll last week. Following only weeks after the crushing defeat of Labour left winger and gay rights activist Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey, the party fixers were determined to project a different image in Darlington.

O'Brien was sold to the voters as a moderate middle class candidate, with deep roots in the local area and a respectable family life. The party's elder statesmen — James Callaghan, Denis Healey — were welcomed in Darlington, and left wingers like Tony Benn and Eric Heffer were told to stay away. John Cunningham, now a front runner in Kinnock's shadow cabinet, acted as O'Brien's minder.

The formula seemed to work. After a run of defeats, Labour won the seat and a triumphant O'Brien set off for Westminster hailing a turn in Labour's fortunes at a time when everybody knew that a general election could not be too far away.

After Darlington, Fulham. Nick Raynsford faithfully followed the O'Brien approach. He hugged the middle of the road, spurned the left and won the by-election. Arriving at Westminster by Thames riverboat, Raynsford was greeted by a jubilant Kinnock and Labour activists were ready to believe that their party leader might after all soon be in a position to form the next Labour government.

Our early prediction of an SDP win in Fulham turned out to be wildly mistaken. We underestimated the polarisation of the constituency between incoming up-market homeowners who remained loyal to the Tories, and local working class voters who stuck with Labour. In recognising the increasing volatility of British politics, we also underestimated the strength of the established party machines. In constituencies where the Alliance starts out a poor third, the old Labour/Tory mould can prove durable. The SDP candidate had more trouble than expected with the record of the Liberals on Hammersmith council. He ended up being squeezed between Tory and

Labour candidates who had little difference with Alliance policies.

Raynsford's 3500 majority was a good result for Labour. Yet before Labour activists rush to prepare their grant applications to a reprieved GLC, they should take a more sober look at Kinnock's prospects of arriving in Downing Street. On the evidence of Fulham he still has a long way to go. The by-election followed the most disastrous period in Thatcher's fortunes. The Westland and BL fiascos and the Heseltine and Brittan resignations have tarnished the government's authority. As the economy slides into ruin, the Tories have more or less given up trying to pretend they can do much about it.

By-elections generally present an exaggerated picture of national trends. Yet the 10 per cent swing to Labour in Fulham would still leave Kinnock short of an overall parliamentary majority. Given the Tories' problems, Labour will have to do much better than it did last week to convince the world that its general election bandwagon is on the move.

The Tories came second in Fulham, but they can afford a sigh of relief. Despite all the government's recent difficulties, the swing against the Tories was no more than the average in by-elections during the present parliament. The Tory vote held up well against the Alliance, a key factor if the Conservative Party is to retain middle class support, particularly in the south, in the next election.

The Alliance was the undoubted loser in Fulham, managing to increase its share of the vote by only one per cent from the poor 18 per cent it held at the general election. The by-election result confirms that the future of the Alliance is not in the hands of David Owen and David Steel, but depends on the success or failure of the two major parties. The lesson of Fulham is that where both can mobilise their traditional constituencies and avoid major cock-ups, the prospects for the third force are dim.

Whatever happened to Ossie O'Brien? He lost his seat in the Tory landslide of June 1983, only weeks after his historic by-election victory.

VOTE RCP ON 8 MAY

This week the Revolutionary Communist Party opens its campaign for the 8 May local government elections. For the first time people in most British cities will have the chance to vote for a party which views the democratic process not as an instrument of change, but as a device for rallying support for the politics of change on the streets, in the workplace, in the home, throughout society. We present our candidates on pages 10 and 11.

The early response to our campaign has been overwhelmingly positive. In the Pontefract area, for example, where we played an active part in the miners' strike and in the campaign against the scab union, we are running six candidates. Many local people — especially miners — are cynical about the old parties. They have endured the full force of Tory policies and they were sickened by Kinnock's refusal to back the victimised and imprisoned miners.

The only people who seem enthusiastic in supporting Labour are the left-wing paper sellers who are usually critical of Kinnock, but have now become Labour's most active

canvassers. It is even more bizarre that the same hard left activists accuse the RCP of selling out by standing in local council elections.

The left's reaction underlines the need for RCP candidates in local and national elections. For years working class people have had to choose between voting Labour or staying at home. After experiencing nothing but promises and betrayals from Labour, many have become cynical about politics altogether.

Our candidates are not giving credibility to the state's institutions by standing: councils and parliament are already widely recognised as legitimate governing bodies. We are saying that the only way for people to get what they need is by organising against the system. We are putting forward a new set of policies around which to organise. A vote for the RCP is a vote for action, not an alternative to it. If you want to get involved in our campaigns, get in touch with Ann Burton on 01-729 0414, or write to the address below.

WORKERS FACE SACK FOR OPPOSING RACISM



IN HACKNEY TOWN HALL OR THE HOME OFFICE, RACE CHECKS ARE RACIST

DON'T TRUST THE COUNCIL

Nalco members at a Hackney firm face the sack for refusing to cooperate with the Labour council's plans for ethnic monitoring — better described as race checks.

They work for Outset, a market research outfit specialising in surveys among disabled people, which manages a project funded by Hackney council and the Manpower Services Commission. In February the council made any further funding of the project conditional on the workers implementing race checks, which would involve recording the 'ethnic origin' of those surveyed. Outset staff voted unanimously not to comply with this instruction.

Last week management sent them letters by recorded delivery, claiming to have 'discovered' instances where workers had not completed the ethnic monitoring question. Each worker was invited to attend a review of the matter which would instigate disciplinary procedures. If workers did not attend the review, management would assume 'that you have chosen to exercise your option of terminating your contract of employment with Outset'.

Twenty Hackney workers fighting the Labour council's ethnic monitoring scheme are up against both the bosses' threat to fire them, and their union officials' attempt to contain their struggle

Outset workers oppose the race checks because the scheme is a racist surveillance exercise, as Kenan Malik, one of the threatened workers, explained: 'Since the introduction of the 1981 Nationality Act, the authorities have been keen to introduce ethnic monitoring. The Act provided them with the means to keep a check on all blacks in Britain, and ethnic monitoring provides the means to carry this out by giving the authorities detailed information about black people.'

Left-wing Labour councils like Hackney insist that ethnic monitoring can help them combat racial discrimination, by telling them how many blacks there are and what they need. But such data cannot help the council provide decent jobs and services for blacks. Because Labour councillors accept the spending constraints imposed by the system, the best they can do is to give blacks

a bit more of the few resources available. Ethnic monitoring is the means to 'share out the misery', as one Hackney councillor put it, in a more equitable way. At present 17 per cent of Hackney council jobs — almost 1400 — are unfilled. Unfreezing these jobs would be a far more effective way of providing jobs for black people.

But ethnic monitoring is not just ineffective in fighting racial discrimination. The information collected is always used against black people.

This is as true of information collected by local authorities as it is of information collected by the home office. Hackney council itself has given the anti-terrorist squad the names of 2000 Irish tenants. And radical Labour councils often let police snoopers have the information and hide-outs they need to check up on black tenants. 'The councils cannot be trusted,' says Kenan Malik. 'That is why the race checks must be opposed by local government workers as well as by workers in central government departments.'

PLAYING GAMES

After Outset workers received the threatening letters last week, they voted unanimously to strike until management withdrew them. But on Monday, before the action began, a left-wing shop steward came up with an alternative that sidelined the struggle.

He convinced the members that they should go through the proper channels: wait until their action was endorsed by the executive of Nalco's all-London voluntary organisations branch, attend the disciplinary hearings this week, and sign a procedural agreement with management. This would allow them to take their case to the government's arbitration service, Acas, and to spin out the dispute until the project ends in three months time. And this, the steward insisted, would let the workers say that they had never implemented the race checks.

As the Outset dispute continues, Kenan Malik and other Workers Against Racism supporters are still pushing for direct action against the council's scheme and management's threats. 'We can't beat the checks by playing games to spin out the procedures,' says Malik. 'We won't have won the argument against them, and the next time the scheme is introduced we'll be back where we started. The only way we can win a real victory is to take action now to defend our jobs, and to get other council workers to show solidarity with blacks by refusing to implement the checks.'

'Instead of waiting for the union to do something, we need to campaign among the rank and file to force the union to take a stand against the checks — and against the councils that use them to reinforce racist discrimination.'

Racism

POLICE PERSECUTE BLACKS

RACIST CRIME WAVE



POLICE OCCUPIED NEWHAM LAST SUMMER — AND THEY'RE STILL THERE TODAY

A wave of propaganda about crime is being used to justify a police clampdown on young blacks in inner-city areas

The drug menace is the latest form of criminality which the British establishment is trying to blame on black people. The official investigation into last year's Handsworth riots concluded that they were instigated by drug dealers. In fact the revolt was provoked by a brutal police assault on a young man, following a series of raids and incidents of intimidation. Now the police are using the

government's nationwide campaign against drug abuse to provide the cover for stepping up harassment of blacks.

Back in the seventies the police invented the crime of mugging when they first decided to get tough with black people. The police and the press got together to proclaim a startling increase in violent street crimes in Britain's black ghettos. The message behind the artificially created wave of muggings was that young blacks were to blame for violent crime.

THE REAL ISSUE

Labelling black people as criminals is central to the British establishment's drive to contain the threat of revolt in inner-city areas.

Everybody is afraid of being robbed and nobody sympathises with drug dealers. By making a spurious connection in the public mind between various sorts of crime and black people, the police and the media have created a climate of opinion which supports

a campaign of terror against young blacks.

The view of the Revolutionary Communist Party is that whereas crime is not a burning issue for the working class movement, racism is. The wave of public concern about crime, drugs and violence against women and children has been stirred up by the British establishment as part of its law and order drive. There is little hard evidence to suggest any great increase in these social menaces — the statistics can be manipulated to illustrate whatever trend the authorities choose to emphasise. But there is plenty of evidence to prove that racist attacks — by the police, immigration officials and ordinary racists — are on the increase.

Candidates from the RCP and Workers Against Racism standing in the council elections in Newham, Peckham and Bristol will be campaigning against the criminalisation of black youth, and mobilising workers' defence against all forms of racism. See pages 10 and 11 for details.

Newham police riot

One recent Monday afternoon, 120 baton-waving policemen chased 35 black youths down Upton Lane in Newham. The police caught up with David in Whytevale Road: 'They held me so tight I couldn't breathe.' Pinned down by three policemen, he was head-butted and batoned over the head. When he got to West Ham police station he had a big lump on his head, a bruise over one eye, a cut over the other, and handcuffs biting into his wrists.

The police rampage began after the young blacks gathered to protest outside Forest Gate police station. Police had picked up a local black youth during an anti-drugs stop

and search operation, and held him inside for two days, charged with possessing cocaine and heroin. His mates turned up to protest because they are sick of the constant stop and search harassment, the police surveillance and the plain clothes policemen trying to buy them drinks in local pubs.

Sledge explained how the trouble outside the police station began. 'The police were provoking people and abusing us, then more arrived in a van and then they charged us.' Sledge was chased into a betting shop by four policemen. 'They pointed at me saying I had punched a sergeant in the face. They grappled with my arm and forced it behind

my back. They got handcuffs and cut my wrists.' Joe and Wayne had been playing pool in Lestor's, a local club. When they went outside to see what was happening, they were roughly arrested. Now they and half a dozen others face charges varying from obstruction to assault and actual bodily harm.

Newham's Labour council backs the police anti-drugs drive. But the drugs scare is just a pretext for repressing the black community. After their rampage, police dropped the drug charges against the man they had originally detained.

Alex Farrell

Repression in Bristol

• Bristol police, in association with the social security offices, have devised a new way to brand blacks as criminals. Any young black suspected of making false claims risks being arrested for 'pimping'. Seven who didn't sign on at the right time are now in jail on remand, charged with 'living off immoral earnings'.

• In a recent pub attack one Asian was stabbed in the back and his brother sustained a broken ankle. The police detained them both without any medical attention. Police then arrested their father — who had not been present at the incident — and charged him with wounding.

• Early morning house searches have become part of life for some black families. One woman has been raided 17 times in two years. Police have tranquilised her Doberman and torn up floorboards.

• When police were stoned and a panda car burned out as they tried to make an arrest in the St Paul's area recently, the local press proclaimed 'mob rule' and accused the police of going soft because they had been forced out of the area. Given the climate of racism and systematic harassment of black youth, revolts of this sort are inevitable.

Jan Austin

Drugs panic in Peckham

At 1pm last Thursday police cordoned off Peckham Road. They claimed there had been a bomb scare, but events soon revealed the real purpose of the road-blocks.

One hour later vanloads of uniformed and plain clothes police launched a series of raids in Peckham Road. They stormed into the Britannia pub and arrested half a dozen people. They raided a nearby betting shop and a record shop. All black male passers-by were stopped, questioned and, if they resisted, pushed into the police van. A removal van parked in the street turned out to be a specially hired black maria for transporting prisoners to various south London police stations. In all police held around 15 people.

AT THE BOTTOM

Tensions are running high in the area. Black people have nowhere to go except the Britannia and a few local shops. Now they are not safe there. The council closed their community centre last year, while the law launched a community policing scheme — 'to get information today to arrest us tomorrow' says Cedric, bitterly cynical about the community approach.

The pretext for the Peckham raids turned out to be drugs. The operation revealed a few small bags of cannabis worth a few pounds. 'Whether or not we sell drugs we'll still be harassed,' says Orlando. 'As long as black people stay quiet about being at the bottom of the pile then the media and the government can say to everyone else, "If blacks can take it so can you." That's why all this harassment is directed at people at the bottom'.

Kalbir Kaur



We need your help to tide us over until our first cheque from Colonel Gaddafi arrives. Rush donations now to our fighting fund at BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques payable to RCP Association.

THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

STILL SECTARIAN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Some bricks and bottles make bigger news than others in Ireland. When IRA supporters riot against the Royal Ulster Constabulary, it warrants one paragraph in the press. But when Loyalists lob rocks at RUC officers, it's headline news. The difference reflects the unique character of Northern Ireland's police force.

The RUC bears little resemblance to the constabularies which control London or Glasgow. Nor, despite its machine guns and armoured vehicles, is it just a paramilitary police force on the Continental model. The RUC is a Loyalist militia — the armed wing of the Protestant population. More than 90 per cent of its members are Protestants. The Crown employs them as professional bigots to brutalise the Catholic, nationalist community, and to ensure Ulster remains part of the 'United Kingdom'. When Loyalists start shooting at the RUC, it seems to go against the history of Ulster policing.

'The poor old policeman is piggy in the middle again,' complained a Royal Ulster Constabulary man last week, as both the IRA and Loyalists attacked his colleagues. Mick Hume disagrees with him

The idea of a Protestant police force was first suggested by war minister Winston Churchill in 1920. Then, the British authorities were waging a war to keep the whole of Ireland under Crown control. The fight for Irish freedom had been concentrated in the south and west of the island, where the British forces were at full stretch trying to contain the IRA. When the struggle spread to the north, Churchill suggested that Lloyd George's government should look to the loyal Protestants to police their areas.

'What would happen', he ventured, 'if the Protestants in the six counties were given weapons and...charged with maintaining law and order and policing the country?' Churchill's brainwave soon became British strategy. The Ulster Volunteer Force, an illegal Loyalist paramilitary force reformed after the First World War to defend the Union by terrorising Catholics, was stuffed into makeshift uniforms and renamed the Ulster Special Constabulary. The criminals carried on attacking Catholics, but with the British government's blessing. After Ireland was partitioned and the province of Northern Ireland established in 1921, the gang evolved into the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

From the first, the RUC existed as the armed expression of Loyalist power. Britain built Northern Ireland as a sectarian statelet, where its Protestant allies enjoyed privileged access to jobs, houses and political positions over the Catholic community. The province's first prime minister announced that Ulster's Stormont assembly would be 'a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people'.

The RUC's job was to keep the sectarian set-up intact, by repressing nationalists who sought Irish unity and independence from Britain. Its rules on who were decent citizens and who were criminals differed from the



GUESS WHICH FOUR ARE BREAKING ULSTER'S LAW

state's normal standards. For the RUC, a person's innocence or guilt hung on whether they saluted the Union Jack or the Irish tricolour.

Those who opposed British rule were automatically outside the law in Ulster, as Unionist leaders told the British authorities in discussing the new force's operational and recruitment policies: 'No rebel who wishes to set up a republic can be regarded merely as a "political opponent", but must be repressed.' They insisted that 'appointments to the constabulary should all be those who are prepared to accept this new form of government'. There could be no question of asking Ulster constables 'to act as mediators between those holding loyal views and those desirous of establishing a republic'.

For almost 50 years after Partition, British governments turned a blind eye to the sectarian excesses of the RUC, accepting that internment without trial and public flogging were necessary to keep Northern Ireland under Crown control.

ORANGE LAW

The Stormont parliament is now long gone, and Northern Ireland is run directly from Westminster. Yet no British government has altered the basic role of the RUC. When Northern Ireland erupted in August 1969, as the RUC led Loyalist attacks on nationalist districts, the Labour government sent in the Army to 'uphold law and order'. But, as Labour minister Richard Crossman revealed in his diary, top cabinet members like James Callaghan and Denis Healey had no intention of challenging the sectarian legal system: 'Callaghan and Healey both reminded us that our whole interest was to work through the Protestant government.' One naive cabinet member asked the telling question: 'Does law and order mean whatever the RUC, who are Protestant Orangemen, define as law and order?' No answer is recorded, but we can picture Labour's leading statesmen quietly nodding their heads.

Upholding law and order in Northern Ireland has always meant protecting British rule and Protestant privilege. Nationalists have seen the RUC as an alien force. Unlike

any British police force, it has to police without the consent of a sizeable minority of the population. This explains why RUC men carry high-velocity rifles rather than high-pitched whistles. As RUC chief Sir John Hermon admits, nationalists in Northern Ireland do not ask the RUC the time of day: 'We subscribe wholeheartedly to the concept of community policing. Sadly we do not enjoy the freedom to carry out this important role without armed back-up in some areas'. The RUC can only carry out community policing in its own, Loyalist, community.

Yet today the RUC itself is under attack from Loyalist bigots. These tensions reflect the reforms Westminster has introduced in Northern Ireland since 1969, to try to improve the image of British rule. The RUC has been re-equipped and retrained as a more efficient anti-nationalist force. But it has also undergone cosmetic

surgery to try to convince the world that it is impartial. The Anglo-Irish accord brought this process to a head and inflamed Protestant opinion.

Since 1976 British governments have upheld the 'primacy of policing' in Northern Ireland, presenting the Irish War as a case of British police pursuing Irish criminals. This means that the RUC often replaces the British Army in the front line of the war.

Last year the IRA killed 23 RUC officers and just two British soldiers. The RUC has built its own assassination squad, the E4A, in the image of the SAS. And it carries out most raids, arrests, and plastic bullet attacks suffered by nationalists. One of its favourite games today is to baton charge republican funeral processions.

But the British authorities have also tried to make the RUC more acceptable to moderate nationalists and British public opinion. The RUC has had to make conciliatory gestures, like running 'Blue Lamp' discos, and has arrested Loyalist paramilitaries as proof of its even-handedness. The Anglo-Irish accord threatened to take these reforms a step further. To undermine nationalist support for the republican movement, the British authorities dropped heavy hints about RUC officers being forced to swear an oath of impartiality. And the police have had to re-route and ban provocative Protestant parades through Catholic areas.

MORE BRUTALITY

None of this has altered the sectarian roots of the RUC. But it has incensed hardline Loyalists, and caused the attacks on RUC men.

The Loyalists' complaint against the RUC is very different from the hatred for the police felt by many nationalists. Nationalists oppose the RUC as a repressive power enforcing foreign rule in their country. Loyalists normally support the RUC for the same reason. They want more police brutality, not less, so long as it is directed at the traditional Catholic target. Their fear is that the RUC might stop behaving as a body of Protestant bigots. But there is no danger of that.

No matter how many Loyalist marches are banned or how many moderate nationalists are won to sympathise with the police, the conflict that counts will be between supporters of Irish freedom and the RUC.

The existence of Northern Ireland as a British province cannot be reconciled with the aspirations of Irish nationalists. Catholics will always be outside Ulster's law. As one RUC man complained at a meeting of the Police Federation, the Anglo-Irish accord is designed 'to appease people in this community who never have or never will uphold law and order'.

Behind today's talk about token reforms, British policy towards the RUC has remained unchanged from Churchill through Callaghan to Thatcher. The authorities arm the Protestant people to police Ulster, and nationalists get their law and order out of the barrel of a British gun.

POLICE CRIMES

The Royal Ulster Constabulary has a bloody history of attacking Catholic civilians. The old Ulster Special Constabulary carried out horrific reprisals, like that perpetrated in June 1922 after the IRA shot British statesman Sir Henry Wilson. The next day a lynch mob of Ulster police drove into the Catholic village of Cushendall, County Antrim, and opened fire on a crowd in the street. Then they dragged three Catholic youths up an alley and butchered them. The Northern Ireland authorities claimed the police had been fired on, and no charges were brought.

Today, the tradition of off-duty reprisals has been passed on to the Ulster Defence Regiment, which was formed after the RUC's 'B' Specials reserve was abolished in 1969. Five members of the UDR are now on

trial for shooting a deaf Catholic council worker in the back of the head.

The modern RUC tends to carry out its killings on duty. No nationalist of any age is safe.

In December 1982 an RUC hit-squad blasted two 17-year old Catholic youths apart with machine guns and shotguns at a farm in County Armagh. One died instantly, the other was crippled — and charged with possessing arms to cover up the RUC outrage.

In November 1983 the RUC arrived at a post office in County Tyrone to confront armed raiders. The robbers had gone, so the police opened fire on the Catholic customers instead, killing a 77-year old woman. This is the sectarian police force's equivalent of helping old ladies across the road.

LESSONS OF POUNDSWICK



MANCHESTER'S LABOUR COUNCIL HAS LET THE RIGHT DICTATE TEACHERS' AIMS

Eighteen Manchester teachers are still suspended from Poundswick high school in Wythenshawe, for refusing to teach five pupils accused of daubing school walls with obscene slogans about their colleagues. The dispute has prompted Manchester teachers to call a campaign of selective industrial action in the run-up to the 8 May local elections. Now it threatens to break into the elections themselves, as two Liberal candidates are standing on a 'Poundswick Parent' ticket. They expect to win votes by opposing the Labour council's suspension of the teachers.

Teachers can only defend working conditions by organising against the government and councils that attack their rights.
Keith Tompson reports from Manchester

The suspended 18 are members of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers. The union's dispute with the city council has been coming to a head since last June, when the Poundswick teachers first refused to teach the alleged obscene graffiti artists. The head teacher suspended the boys, and the governors recommended their expulsion.

But in September, the council's education sub-committee came out against the teachers' action and the governors' decision, and ruled that the boys should return to normal schooling. Since then the row has raged on. As teachers were suspended without pay, 99.5 per cent of their colleagues voted for protest strike action, and thousands marched through the city behind the slogan 'Save Our Standards'.

The debate about the Poundswick affair

has thrown up two responses, one from the left-wing Labour council and one from right-wing crusaders for a return to the education system of the past. Neither offers any way forward for teachers.

The Labour council's approach is summed up by councillor Peter Keenlyside, member of the education sub-committee and supporter of the left Labour news sheet *Socialist Organiser*. Keenlyside has tried to justify suspending the teachers by blaming them for the crisis: 'The decision to send teachers home is not one socialists would take with any enthusiasm, although given the state of affairs in the school it is difficult to see what other action could be taken....In reality the dispute is a wholly reactionary one.'

Keenlyside's approach depicts the guilty pupils as hapless victims of society who cannot be held responsible for their actions. So teachers should just sit back and suffer the consequences — presumably until Neil Kinnock arrives in No 10, to put the world to rights and end the evils that brutalise working class youth. The best advice Manchester's socialist council can offer teachers is to deal with abuse at work by acting the Christian and turning the other cheek.

LABOUR LIBERALS

The Keenlyside position on Poundswick is the approach of the social worker and the middle class liberal. It ignores the fact that teachers are a section of the labour movement, with the right to demand decent working conditions in which they don't get sexist and racist abuse thrown at them. The council's outlook seeks to justify anti-social behaviour, and denies the victims any right of defence. The logical outcome of this approach is to sack teachers who refuse to put up with such filth — which the left-wing council has come very close to doing.

With the Labour Party offering such flabby liberalism, it is no wonder that the right has been able to channel teachers' action in a reactionary direction.

The anti-council 'Save Our Standards' campaign reflects the outlook of the new right-wing moralists, who see more discipline as the solution to social problems.

The Freedom Association, a notorious scab outfit that finances strike-breaking operations, has promised to donate £1000 to the campaign and to cover any legal costs incurred by suing the council. Head teachers are keen supporters of the campaign because it upholds their 'right to manage' their schools — and their staff.

It is ironic that Labour councillors should condemn the dispute as reactionary, as they are to blame for its right-wing direction. When the only choices on offer are either to sympathise with the teenagers who abused the teachers, or to defend the decision to expel the culprits, it is obvious which one will win wider public support. Only a fool — or a dyed in the wool liberal — could see the pupils as the victims and the teachers as the problem.

If they are to salvage something from the Poundswick mess, Manchester teachers must reject both options now on offer and plot an entirely new course. Teachers must fight to force Manchester city council to reinstate the 18 suspended Wythenshawe staff. They should dismiss the notion that anti-social behaviour should be tolerated. But they must also ditch the current 'Save Our Standards' campaign.

The repressive climate created by demanding more discipline and upholding head teachers' 'right to manage' can only be to teachers' disadvantage. It will be used to justify tougher controls over teachers as well as pupils. At a time when the Tories are discussing the introduction of teacher appraisal, which will allow them to discipline teachers they deem inadequate, we have to take a stand against all attempts to tighten management's regime in the schools.

The big problems facing teachers in Poundswick, and throughout the country, are not caused by declining moral standards. They are due to the government's attempt to restructure the British education system so that it is cheaper and better suits the needs of British capitalism.

TORY STANDARDS

Spending restrictions mean many schools are already collapsing about the occupants' ears, while parents have to pay for textbooks. Last year spending on defence outstripped education spending for the first time in 20 years. Yet the Tories need to go much further with their plans to cut the cost of education. Their latest money-saving schemes include under-funding the new GCSE exam, and creating 'Crown schools' in the inner cities. This will give central government direct control over spending on these schools, cutting out the inner-city education authorities which have spent too much for the Tories' liking. There is also talk of encouraging the speculators in the City of London to finance top-flight education establishments, while the state presides over a collection of crumbling schools for those outside the elite.

Tory education secretary Sir Keith Joseph justifies his policy on the grounds that it will raise standards in the important sectors of the education system. Teachers cannot resist Joseph's hatchet-job by echoing his appeal for a return to a mythical age of discipline and dedication in our schools. Instead of joining right wingers behind 'Save Our Standards' banners, teachers have to organise to defend their working conditions, and to win the resources the Tories deny them.

Education promises to be an important issue in the run-up to the next general election. Revolutionary Communist Party candidates in Manchester's local elections are intervening in the Poundswick affair to put our approach across. We must have nothing to do with the moral crusaders who pretend tighter management discipline is in teachers' interests. And we must turn the heat on the Labour council whose liberal outlook has built the right-wing campaign more effectively than the Freedom Association could ever have done.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

PAGE 3

Have you got your 'Save Page 3' lapel badge yet? Or a car sticker to show your support for the Sun's 'Save Our Sizzlers' campaign? You could stick it on your Cortina window, next to 'Windsurfers do it standing up' and 'Honk if you had it last night'. Why is the Sun mobilising wankers? Should we support Labour MP Clare Short's attempt to ban displays of topless models in the national press?

Clare Short is a left-wing MP who wants pictures of semi-naked women banned from the papers, on the grounds that they lead to an increase in rape and violence against women. Opposition from Tory MPs was predictable. 'I wish I looked like Samantha Fox, and so does my husband,' claimed Edwina Currie.

Nicholas Fairburn (whose wife agrees with him) said, 'Most sex crimes are committed against children and old women. A picture of a nubile girl is not going to make someone rape a 90-year old.' And Robert Adley claims that 'if a man gets hot and steamy, these pictures act as a release, not a stimulation to rape. I thought the debate was a hoot and I had lots of jokes about Wapping and knockers up my sleeve.' These comments, ranging from the puerile to the nasty to the bizarre, prove the Tory Party is full of idiots. But that shouldn't drive us to back Clare Short. Her approach also trivialises women's oppression.

Rape and violence against women is a serious issue. But rape, violence and degradation can only be fought by freeing women from domestic drudgery, imprisonment in the home and economic dependence. As the Sun itself points out, rape is not caused by men looking at pin-ups. Rape was as common in Victorian times when women's bodies were constantly hidden from public view, and during the fifties when strict censorship prevailed.

In any case rape is not the issue here. The present media and police obsession with rape has been orchestrated to legitimise more spending on law and order and attacks on women's rights. Short's emphasis on rape, rather than the less shocking aspects of women's oppression — poverty, unemployment and the lack of childcare and abortion facilities — lends support to the moral majority.

Norman Tebbit's argument that permissiveness leads to the breakdown of the family and violence in society is strengthened by Short's approach. Juvenile jokes about knockers aside, many Tory MPs sympathise with Short and are prepared to back her Bill. Had she instead drawn up a Bill to guarantee more nurseries or rights for part-time workers, she would have challenged the moral consensus instead of endorsing it. And had she won support for such a Bill, it could have made a real difference to women's lives.

If Page 3 vanished tomorrow it would make no difference to women's lives. It might undermine the Sun's position in the tabloid circulation war. But it would strengthen the state's hand for imposing more extensive censorship. More censorship would particularly affect lesbians and gay men, whose sexuality is already considered obscene by the authorities. It would give the state greater powers to define obscenity — not only could many classic novels and plays be banned, but so also could publications like *Republican News* or *tns*.

The working class must develop its own definition of obscenity. Every page of the Sun is obscene. And its management's ban on trade union rights is an offence to our standards.

Tony Benn bows to Nick Raynsford

LABOUR'S OLD RADICALS RETIRE

The absence of the left from the Fulham by-election campaign confirms that it has accepted a position on the margins of British politics, where its main concern is with its own survival



Tony Benn used to argue that the reason why the Labour Party had lost popular support was that it had moved away from its traditional socialist principles. According to Benn, the way for Labour to revive its fortunes at the polls was not to promote a more moderate image, as recommended by the party leadership, but to present the electorate with bold socialist policies and a vigorous campaigning party. The left's absence from the by-election campaign in Fulham shows that it does not really believe its own rhetoric.

Instead of engaging in real political battles, Benn has been busily organising a circus. He has invited senior diplomats from the American and Soviet embassies in London to take part in a public discussion on East-West relations in his Chesterfield constituency this weekend. The Chesterfield summit can only be a farcical re-enactment of the stage-managed Gorbachev-Reagan exchanges, with no consequences at international, national or constituency level. It reveals the retreat of the left from politics into showbiz.

NAVEL GAZING

The left has grudgingly accepted the view of the party leaders that it is an electoral liability. Ever since Kinnock's humiliation of Derek Hatton and Arthur Scargill at last year's party conference, the various factions of the left have bowed to the leadership's terms. Prominent left wingers in parliament, and the far left groups outside, have restricted their activities within the limits imposed by the leadership. As a result, the left has become even more preoccupied with internal matters, and even more remote from important issues in the real world.

The narrow organisational focus of the left's activity reveals its increasingly inward-looking character. The most dramatic initiative ever taken by the hard left Campaign Group of MPs was last month's walkout from the national executive meeting, over attempts to discipline prominent members of the Militant Tendency in Liverpool. The Campaign Group never took such decisive action over the refusal of the national executive to back the miners against police attacks in 1984; there was no walkout over the Labour leadership's shameful end-

orsement of the Tory Anglo-Irish deal in November.

The hard left's showdown with Kinnock took place not over any of the long list of policy concessions he has made to the Tories, but over the cherished rights of factions to organise within the Labour machine.

Even then Eric Heffer, Campaign Group spokesman, was at pains to point out that the seven had stormed out of the executive meeting, not because they supported Militant in any way, but because they considered that the proceedings violated 'natural justice'. For Labour's hard left, a high court judge's ruling on how the hearing should be conducted came before any political considerations.

The rest of the left has followed the Campaign Group in making a priority of opposing the expulsion of a dozen Militants from the Labour Party. A collection of Labour's radical factions has even produced several issues of a broadsheet entitled *Witch Hunt News*. Nothing is more important to the left than defending its protected corner inside the Labour Party.

This week's conference of the Militant-sponsored Broad Left Organising Committee in the unions will be devoted to rallying resistance against further attacks on Militant from the Labour leadership. Any discussion about how to defend workers against attacks from the employers will have to be fitted in after the main business of Militant self-preservation. Over the past three months Militant leaders have toured the country speaking at rallies against the witch-hunt. These have been organised in an attempt to hold Militant's forces together without further antagonising the Labour leadership.

Militant rallies have avoided sensitive constituencies like Fulham, and cities like Liverpool, Coventry or Bradford where Militant has sitting or prospective MPs. In these areas Militant has adopted a low profile, in the hope of avoiding further conflict with the leadership and further expulsions. In Liverpool the national speaking tour has had the added bonus of keeping Derek Hatton out of the city, where he is regarded even by Militant supporters as a serious liability in Labour's council election campaign. Militant activists are happy to push the hapless non-Militant council

Fulham: the left comes nowhere

Ten days before the Fulham by-election, Labour's Nick Raynsford was asked to comment on Derek Hatton's imminent arrival in Fulham. Would Raynsford join Hatton in addressing a Labour Party Young Socialists meeting in Fulham that week?

Raynsford responded testily. 'I will send a message to tell him he's not welcome,' he said. 'I will not speak on a platform with Derek Hatton, and I do not welcome his involvement.' Then Raynsford remembered the date — 1 April. What a good April Fool joke it was — the very idea that the left might hold a meeting during the campaign! Joining in the merriment, Raynsford recovered his composure — and his campaign resumed its confident stride.

Well before 1 April, Labour declared Fulham a no-go area for left-wing policies. The hard left would have to soften, or keep out.

Party canvassers were required to reinforce Raynsford's moderate middle class image. Respectable campaigners like Glenys Kinnock and agony aunt Claire Rayner were welcome in Fulham. Soft leftie Ken Livingstone was welcomed, a little more warily, and carefully balanced on the campaign platform by heavyweight Denis Healey.

PROFESSIONAL MODERATE

For the hard left, only Dennis Skinner made the three-mile trip from Westminster. His brief contribution to the campaign comprised a low-key visit to Labour's Fulham headquarters, and an unreported canvass. He left Raynsford's campaign as he found it — slick, professional and moderate.

Labour's tactics stymied the opposition. Alliance officials complained that there was nothing wrong with Raynsford. On election night, SDP loser Roger Liddle implied he would still be in the Labour Party 'if it were full of nice

chaps like Nick'. Some Labour supporters, though euphoric at their party's victory, were less than happy about the middle-of-the-road campaign. One commented that 'there have been no concrete policies: what we have said about unemployment, for example, amounts to nothing'.

At the beginning of March, when Raynsford's campaign was warming up, Tony Benn addressed the miners' strike commemoration rally at the Albert Hall. 'The Labour national executive', he said, 'won't build a new society. We will have to build it ourselves. Don't wait for permission.' But when Kinnock denied him permission to speak in Fulham, Benn stayed silent. His only public involvement in the Fulham campaign was to write a letter to the *Guardian* saying he had taken part in it. The letter, published after the announcement of Raynsford's victory, did not specify what his contribution had been.

SOCIALISM ON THE SHELF

It is only three months since Benn's left-wing constituency party published the Chesterfield manifesto. Hailed by the left as a significant contribution to socialism, it listed 'certain rights which must be won and maintained' including 'the right to useful and satisfying work'. Benn declared that 'the only way is to present a real vision and fight for it consistently'. The Fulham by-election was a chance to present the left's vision and programme to the public. But Benn accepted the Kinnock-Raynsford brush-off and the Chesterfield manifesto stayed on the shelf.

Local left wingers were told to keep a low profile. Raynsford's campaign newsletter reassured voters that 'the few extremists that do exist are being firmly dealt with by the party.' Militant supporters who usually proclaim their

indefatigable activism at election time were conspicuous by their absence. Individual Militant supporters were allowed to campaign for Raynsford if they dropped their militancy.

Left wingers outside the Labour Party acted in sympathy. The local Socialist Workers' Party organiser said that 'we ask people to vote Labour, but at the same time we let them know they won't get anything out of it'. The SWP too kept out of public view lest it embarrass Raynsford: it limited its local activity to calling a meeting on the 'Socialist alternative to Kinnock', timed to begin 90 minutes before polling finished.

HOLDING THEIR PEACE

In his victory speech Raynsford said that the Fulham vote would put Kinnock on the road to Downing Street. Ten minutes later he crossed the Fulham Road to join his celebrating supporters at the Hibernia club. While the party faithful hailed the new MP, Raynsford addressed his audience as 'comrades', a word not heard during the campaign. This was his only concession to the largely left-wing London activists. The rest of his speech remained safely within the limits of Kinnockite orthodoxy. When the DJ played Cliff Richard's 'Congratulations', Labour's dancing activists congratulated each other on the undisputed victory of the right.

Labour's right wing dominated Raynsford's by-election campaign, and the left accepted its terms. When Labour's leaders decided that left-wing policies would be a vote-loser, the left agreed to keep quiet.

The Fulham by-election was a challenge to left wingers — a challenge they left unanswered.

Instead of arguing for their policies, they chose self-imposed silence. They played their part in turning Labour's left into an April Fool.

Andrew Calcutt

PADD MORRISON

leader John Hamilton to the fore. Coventry Militants had to travel to Birmingham to see the Hatton show while Militant councillors were discreetly lobbying the right-wing Labour group on the council, which had previously excluded them from its ranks.

Even left-wing organisations outside the Labour Party have accepted that the dispute between a leadership determined to convince the public of its respectability, and a faction which upholds a fairly moderate version of Labour's programme, is of some wider importance.

The Socialist Workers' Party has fly-posted the country proclaiming its concern to defend the Labour left against Kinnock, organised numerous meetings on the same theme and written a series of open letters proposing unity with Militant. The left never asks the question — what difference does it make to the working class whether Militant pursues its Labourist policies inside or outside the Labour Party?

MACHINE POLITICS

The left's preoccupation with organisational matters goes beyond the issue of Militant. Pick up any left-wing paper and you will find articles by Vladimir Derer of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. After more than a decade of agitation over the terms of the party constitution, Derer has now discovered that 'the powers given to the NEC under clause II(3) of the constitution are also in urgent need of revision'. This has something to do with suspending local parties like Liverpool, a matter which Derer also wants dealt with by a new appeals tribunal. He concludes with the familiar contact address for those seeking model resolutions for October's party conference.

You will also find articles by activists such as Marc Wadsworth of the Labour Party Black Sections National Committee, or Ann Pettifor of the Labour Women's Action Committee. Wadsworth reports that 37 black sections have now been set up and that 11 prospective black parliamentary candidates have been selected — half in winnable seats. Pettifor announces that the June Conference of Labour Women has decided to elect five representatives for the national executive, in defiance of the rule that says only the full party conference — that is trade union block votes — can elect women to their reserved places on the national executive.

Labour's black sections and women's campaigns appear to be indifferent to Labour Party policy affecting blacks and women. Black sections campaigners do not campaign to change Labour's policy of support for racist immigration controls, or its approval for police harassment of black youth. Labour women's activists have made no attempt to challenge the parliamentary party's consistent refusal to take a clear stand on the abortion issue.

In reality there is nothing left-wing about these campaigns — they are simply groupings of individuals concerned to strengthen their own position, through factional intrigue and the manipulation of resolutions, committees and conferences within the Labour machine. But that is what the term 'left' has now come to mean.

The irrelevance of the traditional left is most forcefully exposed when it is confronted by the inescapable realities of the class struggle. Rupert Murdoch's lockout of 6000 print workers at Wapping is the most recent example. The Campaign Group's immediate contribution was to introduce a Bill into parliament calling for Murdoch to be deported as an 'undesirable alien'. Such ideas reinforce the chauvinist prejudices of the print unions and strengthen the hand of the state when it comes to getting rid of other 'undesirable aliens', whether they are political activists or 'illegal immigrants'.

BILLS AND BENN

Through skilful use of commons questions, Militant MP David Nellist has 'revealed that the razor wire fence around Fort Murdoch at Wapping does not have the required planning permission from the local authority'. While Murdoch rallies the resources of the state, Labour's most extremist MP looks to the by-laws of Tower Hamlets council to defend the unions.

Outside parliament the rest of the left has obeyed the instructions issued by the print union leaders, turning the fight for jobs and union rights into a charade of token gestures and appeals for public sympathy. The left has mobilised for 'mass pickets' that the union leaders have turned into disorganised rambles with all the fighting spirit of a funeral march. The left's response is a few grumbles and calls to increase the numbers. The left's latest cause is

the National Council for Civil Liberties report on the nuisance to local residents resulting from Murdoch's strike-breaking operation. But bleating about the inconvenience caused by Murdoch will do nothing to restore jobs or union rights at Wapping.

The left generally prefers to avoid issues in the real world. With his Campaign Group supporters, Tony Benn has drawn up a list of around 40 private member's Bills which have no chance of receiving parliamentary time and are divorced from any public campaign. The only purpose of Benn's Bills is to let the world know that he and the Campaign Group are still in business. They also confirm the parliamentary focus of the left's activities.

TOO BUSY

Other members of the Campaign Group have more esoteric concerns. Tam Dalyell is still living off the glories of the *Belgrano*, pursuing the case of Hilda Murrell, the 78-year old rose-grower he thinks was murdered by the security forces in the course of the cover-up. Following his revelations about the Johnson Matthey Bank, Brian Sedgemore is preoccupied with corruption in the City, though he missed the first meeting of the committee on the Financial Services Bill because he was having his portrait painted. Anticipating that he is next in line for the inquisition after the Liverpool Militants, David Nellist is sponsoring a campaign to introduce a Hungarian teaching method for disabled children in the Midlands.

Meanwhile unemployment rises, trade union rights are being ravaged, black people are subjected to mounting racist attacks and women are the targets of a propaganda barrage designed to reconcile them to an expanding role in caring for children, the elderly, the sick and disabled — not to mention men — in the home. But the left is too busy with internal affairs for matters like these. Two examples illustrate the traditional left's abandonment of important political issues.

The only candidate to make Ireland an issue in the Fulham by-election was the eccentric Loyalist Boyd Black, who scraped home somewhere between Captain Rainbow and Screaming Lord Sutch. The Labour left — which has its own Irish committee — had an ideal opportunity to publicise its opposition to

the Anglo-Irish agreement and its support for a united Ireland. But the left goes to some lengths to keep these positions secret, or at least to confine them to obscure journals and internal conferences. When top Kinnock aide John Smith declared that Ireland was not to be an issue in Fulham, the left agreed to hold its peace. Loyalist revolt, sectarian murder and state harassment of republicans raged for the duration of the campaign, but the left accepts the Westminster consensus that Ireland should be kept out of British politics.

Or take the current Western offensive against Libya. For months the press has been filled with chauvinist and racist abuse of Colonel Gaddafi, while the British government has given moral and intelligence support to Reagan's attacks on Libya. The left's papers report these events, but they have no consequences for its propaganda or activity. When it comes to international issues, Denis Healey, Labour's veteran right-wing leader, lays down the line, and the left hurries off to polish up its resolutions for the next party conference. When World War Three breaks out the left will still be campaigning to 'democratise' the Labour Party.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

A recent pamphlet sums up the plight of the hard left. *Which way forward for labour?* is the product of the trade union rump of the Communist Party, reformed as the Communist Campaign Group since the wet *Marxism Today* faction took over the party last year. It recommends that the left take a stand around the old alternative economic strategy, upholding free collective bargaining, nationalisation and withdrawal from the EEC.

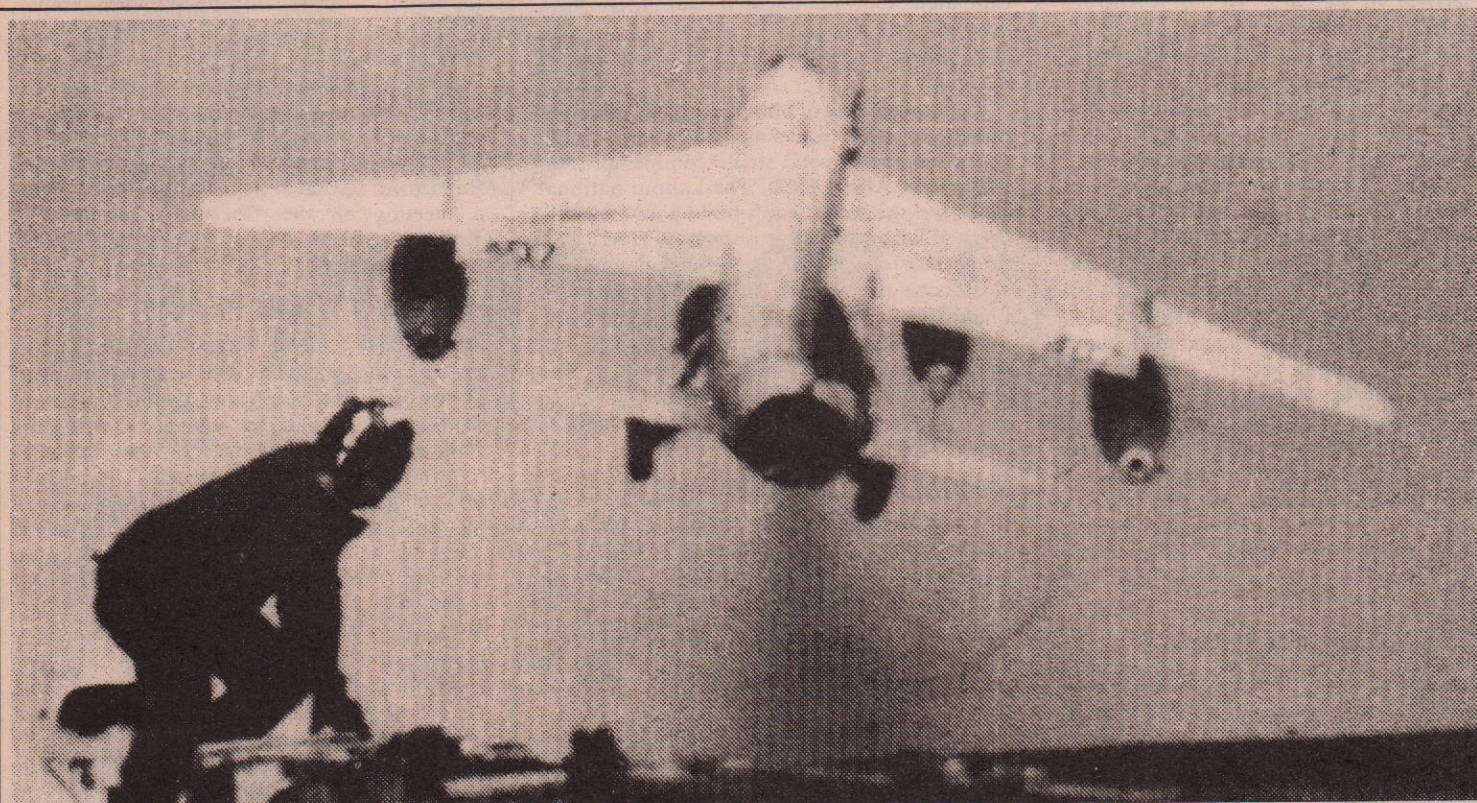
While Kinnock re-fashions the Labour Party into an SDP Mark II for the eighties, the traditional left takes refuge in policies which were discredited in the seventies.

The retreat of the old left from the pressing political issues of the present confirms the urgency of building a movement that puts the interests of the working class before its own internal squabbles, and campaigns on issues which can unite and strengthen the working class in the struggle for a new society.

Mike Freeman

THE USA GOES TO WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

DEADLY GAMBITS



TARGET LIBYA: US JETS IN THE GULF OF SIRTE

After recent bomb attacks on a TWA flight between Cairo and Athens, and on a disco frequented by US servicemen in Berlin, Washington wasted no time looking for evidence about the culprits. Citing obscure 'intelligence reports' of Libyan involvement, Reagan despatched the gunboats of the sixth fleet on a new offensive against Gadaffi, only weeks after US strikes on Libyan targets around the Gulf of Sirte. 'International terrorism' once more serves as a pretext for the world's top imperialist state to show its military might in the Middle East.

Ever since Reagan became president in 1981, he has relentlessly promoted Gadaffi as a bogey figure. By depicting Gadaffi as the psychopathic mastermind behind world terrorism, Reagan has won popularity at home — and put pressure on Western Europe to support a more interventionist brand of foreign policy.

But the purpose behind sending the biggest naval task force since the Falklands War into the southern Mediterranean has little to do with stopping bomb attacks on civilian airliners or discos in European cities. Vice-president George Bush explains the real objective of US policy as 'to exert the US right to conduct naval and air exercises in every part of the globe'. Given its economic and military weakness and its isolation from the more conservative Arab regimes of the Gulf, Libya is the ideal target for Reagan's attempts to show the world that America is still the boss.

ROLLING NOWHERE

In the early months of 1986 the USA has suffered a series of setbacks in the international arena. Loyal US stooges Baby Doc Duvalier in Haiti and Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines were ousted by popular uprisings. Both had to be rescued from their own peoples by US forces, and taken into protective custody to enjoy their ill-gotten gains in exile. The reopening of hostilities against Libya reveals Washington's determination to win a foreign policy success to compensate for its recent humiliations. Hence Reagan has stepped up support for right-wing forces in Honduras, Angola and Afghanistan and sharpened his attacks on Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet Union.

'It is the foreign policy of a zealot, not a statesman,' according to the liberal *Observer*, echoing wide West European alarm at America's renewed drive to 'roll back' Soviet and left-wing influences in the third world. The problem facing the US establishment is

that, behind all the hype, it finds it increasingly difficult to sustain its global influence — never mind 'roll back' anything.

For five years Reagan has ranted about the menace of communism in Central America and terrorism in the Middle East, to compensate for America's declining influence in the world. But his failure to produce results has further undermined America's credibility. Neither the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua nor Gadaffi's government in Libya has been overthrown, despite the concerted attempts at destabilisation by the Pentagon.

James Wood reports on Reagan's latest offensive against Gadaffi

The USA's aggressive posturing and armed interference in Central America and the Middle East have heightened anti-American sentiment in the third world. After last month's border clash between US-backed Contras in Honduras and Nicaraguan forces, a high ranking official in Honduras told the press that his government never felt threatened militarily by the Sandinista incursion. He complained that the US response was 'exaggerated', 'just part of Reagan's campaign to approve aid', and that it might plunge Honduras into war. This disclosure by America's key ally in the region — which provides the vital bases for the Contra campaign — reveals the difficulties facing Reagan's attempt to 'roll back' the Sandinistas.

American prospects in the Middle East also appear gloomy. Last November it seemed that Reagan had scored a big success, when he persuaded Egyptian president Mubarak to mobilise his armed forces for a show of force on the Libyan border after the hijacking of an Egyptian airliner. But US hopes of using Egypt as its policeman in the Middle East have dimmed since the outbreak of internal disorders in Egypt this year.

Recognising the need to accommodate anti-American and pro-Arab feeling, Mubarak has distanced himself from Reagan's campaign against Libya. Two weeks ago he sent a trade delegation to

Moscow to restore Egypt's formerly friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

The triumph of 'people power' in the Philippines showed that, under the pressure of mounting social unrest, America's client states in the third world are slipping out of its grip. Reagan's strident rhetoric and his gunboat diplomacy are designed to create a sense of purpose in US foreign policy at a time when its general incoherence is clear to third world insurgent and European ally alike.

In the early years of the Reagan presidency, foreign policy was guided by the pragmatic distinction formulated by US United Nations representative Jeane Kirkpatrick between 'authoritarian' and 'totalitarian' dictatorships. In the former camp were premiers like Marcos and Duvalier, who were deemed to be entitled to US support. Into the latter camp fell Nicaragua's Ortega and Libya's Gadaffi, who deserved to be deposed at the earliest opportunity. However, since the events in the Philippines and Haiti, the USA has discovered a new distaste for reactionary regimes. This, it hopes, will pacify domestic and European critics of US militarism.

REAGAN DOCTRINE

In a speech last month promising action to defend 'freedom' around the world, Reagan promised that the USA would now oppose right-wing third world dictatorships as much as left wingers. To show that he meant it, two weeks ago Reagan sponsored a United Nations motion condemning the brutal Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. Meanwhile US television featured meetings between American officials and opponents of the US-sponsored dictatorship of Chun Doo Hwan in South Korea. A new 'Reagan doctrine' was declared.

The shift in US foreign policy indicates that Washington now admits what has become an incontrovertible fact: that many of America's client dictatorships in the third world are no longer viable. Reagan's pompous 'doctrine' shows that, to maintain a semblance of authority, the US leadership is forced to make a virtue of necessity. By distancing themselves from old allies like Pinochet or Chun, and trying to take some credit for easing in the new regimes in Haiti and the Philippines, US leaders hope nobody will notice that the ring of client regimes through which America controlled key areas of the world has now disintegrated.

The big factor behind America's international crisis is the depth of the crisis of the

US economy, and the extent of economic decay in the third world. The world recession makes assertions of US power more necessary than ever, if the USA is to live up to its role as a global policeman.

However, the weakness of the US economy, and the sheer scale of social and political dislocation in the third world, make it more and more difficult for the USA to play a policing role.

In 1985 the USA's trade and budget deficits reached record levels. The collapse of its share of world exports, increasing penetration of the US market by foreign imports and soaring state expenditure are symptoms of the decline in America's competitiveness. To protect the home market, American leaders have to resort to protectionist measures, not only against more dynamic imperialist rivals like Japan, but even against a growing number of developing and newly industrialising countries around the world.

T-SHIRTS AND PASTA

The irreverent treatment George Bush received during a recent visit to Turkey highlights the link between America's economic malaise and its political decline. Flouting the usual diplomatic etiquette, Turkish premier Turgut Ozal used a banquet laid on to welcome Bush to launch a blistering attack on US import barriers against Turkish textiles. Undignified public squabbles between the USA and Portugal, Turkey, Brazil and South Korea over t-shirts, pasta, cereals and steel indicate the extent of America's decline.

The American crisis provokes growing tensions in the US establishment over the direction of government strategy. Bitter rows and resignations among White House and Federal Reserve Bank officials over the budget, interest rates and the soaring cost of US military expenditure, reflect this mood of uncertainty.

Last week the collapse in oil prices provoked serious disagreements within the Reagan administration. While Bush felt the development was a 'threat to national security' because it threatened to destroy Texan oil producers and destabilise the credit system, White House spokesman Larry Speakes proclaimed the benefits of lower oil prices for industry.

In a more bizarre turn of events, Federal Bank chair Paul Volcker was indicted by White House right wingers, for fighting inflation too hard by keeping interest rates too high. In their attempts to unseat him and propel America into a Keynesian cheap-money recovery, the conservatives saw their man, Fed vice-chair Preston Martin, resign in a blaze of publicity. Reagan has not yet faced a crisis of confidence on the scale of Thatcher's Westlands debacle. But the underlying trends are the same.

BLUFF CALLED

The continuing haggle between the White House and congress over Reagan's Central America policy exposes the tensions in the US establishment. When even state governors refuse to allow the National Guard forces under their command to participate in US military manoeuvres in Honduras — as eight of them threatened to do last week — confidence in US foreign policy is evidently wearing thin. Reagan's opponents always back down as soon as he plays the anti-communist card or waves the Stars and Stripes at Gadaffi. But persistent dissent over funding the Contras' dirty war shows that, in the absence of real results, the credibility of the government's foreign policy is strained.

Reagan's achievement has been his ability to neutralise his critics, and hold his administration together, by focusing attention on the twin menaces of communism and terrorism.

However, as Washington's overseas problems pile up, the limitations of this strategy are being exposed. Reagan's bluff has been called too many times and he is now forced into putting on a show of strength. By bullying Libya, the USA hopes to reassert its status as a world power. In so doing, however, it makes the imperialist powers of Western Europe more resentful. As America and Europe squabble over who really runs the Mediterranean, the ordinary people of Libya will be the victims of Reagan's latest offensive.

REVIEWS

REDS AGAINST WHITES

How the Bolsheviks beat the Brits

Christopher Dobson and John Miller, *The Day We Almost Bombed Moscow: the Allied war in Russia 1918-1920*, Hodder and Stoughton £12.95

At the end of the First World War, the young Bolshevik regime in Russia faced a combined military assault by Britain, France, America and Japan. Supporting the counter-revolutionary White Russian forces, the Allied powers set out to crush the Russian Revolution before it spread West.

Dobson and Miller approach this little known war from a political position somewhat to the right of the *Reader's Digest*. All nationalities appear as caricatures: the British are the bravest, the French cowardly, the Japanese sneaky, the Americans naive and, as for the Bolsheviks — they were unspeakable barbarians.

The book is rescued by the authors' rigorous research into the British intervention, which contradicts their own prejudices about the war. The evidence forces them to concede that the Whites had all the cards stacked in their favour, but still lost the war to the Reds.

Dobson and Miller publish the first full account of the mutinies in the Yorkshire regiment and the Royal Marines in Murmansk and Archangel. The British commanders were eventually forced to ship tanks to Russia, not for use against the Reds, but to quell insubordination and revolt in the British-occupied areas. The authors admit that the war was lost because of



THE RED ARMY DERAILED THE ALLIES

disaffection among British troops.

The Tommies generally disliked the Whites. Some thought the Whites and the Reds

'as bad as each other'. But some went further and supported the Reds. The authors reveal that some of the best soldiers in the intervention armies backed 'the

Bolos', as they called the Bolsheviks. Sergeant Silver Parrish, an American soldier in Archangel, described the Whites as 'a clique of bloodsucking, power-loving, capitalistic, lying, thieving, murdering, Tsarist army officials'. 'The majority of the people here are in sympathy with the Bolo', he admitted, 'and I don't blame them. In fact I am nine tenths Bolo myself and they all call me the Bolo leader and my platoon the Bolo platoon.'

This 'Bolo leader' drew up a resolution demanding to know why the Allies were fighting the Bolsheviks. He was threatened with court martial and execution. Two weeks later he was awarded the British Military Medal, for 'exceptional initiative and good judgement in action', by General Ironside, the intervention chief.

Dobson and Miller are right to say that the Allies would have stood a better chance without the hated Whites. But dissension in the ranks was not the sole cause of their defeat. The authors' prejudices blind them to the extraordinary achievement of the Bolsheviks in creating, in one short year, an army fit to take on the world.

A 'tragic farce' was how one British participant summed up the war. Until this book was published, it was a farce all but forgotten in Britain. Read it, and see how the world's most powerful empires were beaten by the courage of a young revolution and the sympathy it evoked among the troops of its deadliest enemies.

Andy Clarkson

junius publications



Trade union rights

The Labour Party's new charter of trade union rights proposes to uphold the rights of individual workers as opposed to the collective rights of trade unions. But the only reason workers formed trade unions in the first place was because they recognised that the protection of the rights of the individual enshrined in the law provided no real protection for the rights of the working class. Only by organising collectively against the employers have workers been able to enforce their rights at work. The role of the courts at Wapping and during the miners' strike shows that the law remains an instrument for use by the employers against the working class.

Labour's charter is a capitulation to Tory anti-union propaganda. The right of an individual to join a union is also the right of the freerider not to join a union. The right to go on strike or picket is also the right to break strikes or cross picket lines. Labour's charter of workers' rights is a scab's charter that can only compound the damage the Tories have already inflicted on the unions.

The law can never protect workers' rights — only collective working class organisation and action can stop the employers' ruthless quest for profits at any price. This is the approach recommended in *Taking Control*, Mike Freeman's handbook for trade unionists.

£2.95 plus 85p p&p

Also available from Junius

Moral panics and Victorian values, Kate Marshall's pamphlet takes on the new moralists and puts forward the case for women's liberation. £1.50 plus 40p p&p

The Irish War, the Irish Freedom Movement handbook, looks behind the kidnappings, bombings, shootings and riots that have persisted for 17 years in Northern Ireland and calls for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. £2.95 plus 85p p&p

The Roots of Racism, the Workers Against Racism handbook, looks at the history and current reality of racism in Britain and outlines our approach to fighting it. £1.95 plus 40p p&p

Preparing for Power, the programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party, our platform in the local council elections and our perspective for building a new order in Britain. 30p plus 20p p&p

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No Surrender, Peter Smith (director)

At least running through *Boys From the Black Stuff* there was a good dose of passion and fight, most memorably represented in Bernard Hill's Yosser and Julie Walters' struggling housewife. In Alan Bleasdale's new film, *No Surrender*, we're back on blighted Merseyside but the sentimentality and fatalism which lapped away at the earlier work are now in full mawkish flood. It is significant that the central character is cast as a bemused but benign observer of the mad world around him, because it is a role which Bleasdale obviously covets for himself.

Michael Angelis is Mike, the new manager of a desperate nightclub in some distant, derelict reach of Liverpool, far past the metal-shuttered job centre. His first night is New Year's Eve, and somebody has booked in the OAPs from a local Orange Lodge and an equivalent party of Irish Catholic pensioners, not to mention a cast of musicians, magicians and comedians — variously gay, pathologically nervous and sub-punk.

Out the back the old manager is being beaten to a pulp for the usual misdemeanours, and a Loyalist terrorist is hiding in the toilets. Bernard Hill is the bouncer and Joanne Whalley the barmaid, Mike's only allies, and that in a backhanded sort of way. But as Ray McNally and James Ellis lead the toothless Protestant and Catholic factions into battle there's little either they, or the anti-terrorist squad, can do. The cast is magnificent, in particular Angelis, who registers every outrage with the most perfect timing, and Whalley, who shines out of a small and weak part.

Bleasdale calls the film a 'deadpan farce' and the idea is that while we are laughing we are to ponder ruefully the depths to which a combination of age, bigotry, poverty and brutality can sink the human condition, and then marvel at the rehabilitation made possible by some hearts of gold. There are some good



laughs, and the mixing of forms such as farce and naturalism produces some good perspectives, both grim and humorous. But even on this level the one-liners are not quite funny enough, the absurdity of human behaviour not sharply focused enough (Alan Bennett could teach him a thing or two), and the plot too contrived and schematic for a sufficiently anarchic flavour.

Bleasdale is hailed as the writer who cares about and knows about the victims of Thatcherism, but what is most striking about this film is the sheer superficiality of his view. It is not just the gratuitous use of the Irish War as a metaphor for human blindness (yet again). Misery is reduced to individual or collective madness, or worse whackiness, which can only be gigglingly comprehended as a

sort of surreal nightmare. Then, having savoured the ghastly spectacle (and of course relished that good old Scouse gallows wit), we are invited to wallow in the glow of some glib, easy gestures which are supposed to release us from its grip.

Mike, for example, stands tall when he says 'I may be a nobody, but I'm nobody else's nobody' and the leading Orangeman phones home at midnight to wish his Catholic (!) son-in-law a Happy New Year, never having spoken to him before. There's a couple of

solutions for you. Boast about your powerlessness and O'phone home why don't you. It makes you wonder what the working class and the Irish people have been doing all these years.

I read somewhere that Bleasdale, for all his success, refuses to make the usual move to London. That doesn't stop him from being deeply patronising towards the inhabitants of Liverpool. He passes himself off as a hard observer of and doughty fighter for the people. No Surrender? He gave up before he started. Pat Ford

SEX and the single woman

HISTORY OF SEXUALITY

Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930*, Pandora £5.95

Books by radical feminists often have their moments. In this book, Sheila Jeffreys issues a refreshingly blunt challenge to the cult of motherhood that is now so popular among liberal feminists. But her prejudice against men and heterosexual sex is so extreme that it makes her reading of history suspect.

Jeffreys portrays the middle class 'social purity' campaigners of the 1880s, spinsters who regarded sexual intercourse as a social evil, in a positive light. She celebrates as early manifestations of feminism what were reactionary religious justifications for celibacy and male self-control.

Most moral purity campaigners were anti-women and anti-working class. They opposed prostitution and child abuse on the grounds that it undermined the Victorian family. Celibacy or lesbianism were not freely available options for women: circumstance rather than choice dictated whether they got married or remained single.

Jeffreys asserts that 'the dependence of women upon

men in heterosexual relationships has provided the foundation stone of male domination'. In fact women's inability to select lesbianism or independence from men is based on economic and social inequality. Our sex lives reflect, rather than cause, our oppression.

The chapter on lesbianism provides an incisive account of establishment debates on homosexuality in the twenties. According to the house of commons, there were three ways of dealing with lesbians. They could be 'stamped out' by the death penalty, they could be 'got rid of' by being locked up in lunatic asylums, or they could be ignored. The honourable gentlemen took the third option. They dropped any attempt to introduce anti-lesbian legislation, fearing that it might introduce 'into the minds of perfectly innocent people the most revolting thoughts'.

In her conclusion Jeffreys tries to distance herself from today's equivalent of the nineteenth century sexual reformers — the Mary Whitehouse/Lord Longford brigade. But her book shows she has more in common with them than she likes to think. Kate Marshall

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

OUR CANDIDATES

LAMBETH
TULSE HILL



Yasmin Arnould



Growing up in Belfast and London, Yasmin Arnould has experienced police repression and racism at first hand. Working for the GLC she has learned that municipal socialism is just another way of running the system. She has been active in radical black politics and the women's movement and in the cause of Irish freedom.

LAMBETH
FERNDALE



Kunle Oluremi



Kunle has lived in south London for most of his life and worked at the GLC until it was abolished last month. He was an active trade unionist and shop steward. As a student he was involved in radical black politics. Since joining the RCP he has played an active part in Workers Against Racism.

LAMBETH
TOWN HALL



Nigel Myers



Born in Tooting and brought up in Lambeth, Nigel works in a local hospital. A former Labour supporter, he began to have doubts when the last Labour government used troops against hospital workers. When Labour backed the police during the 1981 riots he joined the RCP to play an active part in its anti-racist work.

LAMBETH
LARKHALL



Don Milligan



Don has lived in Lambeth for six years. A well-known campaigner for gay rights, Don played a leading role in the *Fightback* campaign against redundancies at the GLC. He lost his job with abolition last month. Don intends to carry on fighting for workers' rights through the election campaign and after.

NEWHAM
UPTON

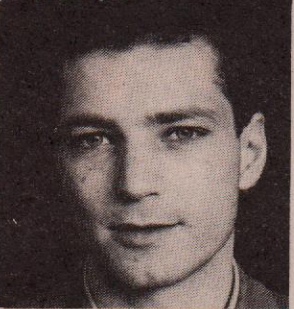


Kenan Malik



Kenan Malik has been active in the anti-racist movement since the late seventies. He has since played a leading role in organising against racist attacks, opposing race checks in dole offices and job centres, and in fighting discrimination and deportations. He is currently national secretary of Workers Against Racism.

NEWHAM
FOREST GATE



Alex Farrell



A carpenter by trade, Alex joined the RCP when he was a shop steward in the building workers' union, angry at the 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' collaboration between unions and management. He is currently organiser of East London Workers Against Racism.

RCP

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CLASS STRUGGLE IS
THE ONLY PROMISE OUR
CANDIDATES MAKE

HACKNEY
LEABRIDGE



Denis Ryan



Born in London, but brought up in Dublin, Denis Ryan has worked in telecommunications in Ireland, Britain and Germany. He currently works for an electronics firm in London. He is well-known as a trade union activist and as a campaigner for Irish freedom.

HACKNEY
RECTORY



Kerry Andrews



Born in Liverpool, Kerry Andrews came to London after two years on the dole to look for work. After working in a variety of jobs she became a student at North East London polytechnic. She also became active in campaigning against racism and for women's rights.

SOUTHWARK
ST GILES

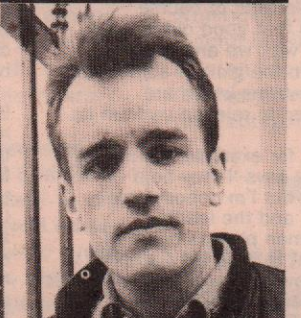


Kim Pepper



Kim Pepper is a single parent with a three-year old daughter and is a polytechnic student in south London. She has lived in Peckham for three years and has been actively involved in campaigning for nursery facilities in the area.

ISLINGTON
SUSSEX



Ed Branigan



Film maker Ed Branigan first became involved in the RCP through working on a film about Ireland. He subsequently became actively involved in the Irish Freedom Movement, the RCP's Irish solidarity campaign. He has made videos about Ireland and racism as well as playing an active part in practical campaign work.

WHITE CITY &
SHEPHERD'S BUSH



Fiona Foster



Trainee journalist Fiona Foster first became involved in the RCP at the time of the Irish hunger-strikes in 1981. She has since become well-known as a campaigner for Irish solidarity. At present she is campaigning in support of the two Irish women prisoners who are subjected to daily strip searching in Brixton jail.

BRIGHTON
HANOVER

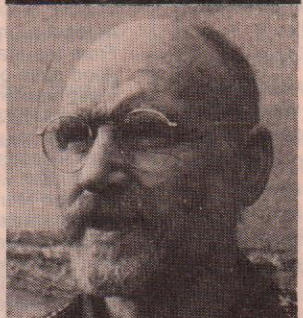


Mark Whittaker



Mark has lived in Brighton for nearly 10 years. After doing a variety of jobs in the catering sector, he helped set up a food co-op three years ago. The co-op's failure to provide decent wages convinced him that co-ops were no solution to problems of low pay and job insecurity, so last year he joined the RCP.

BRISTOL
ASHLEY

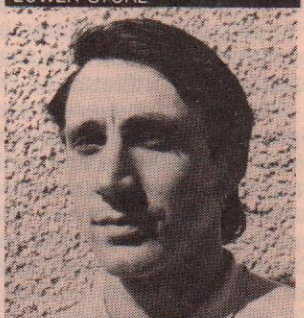


Jim Walker



Jim Walker has lived in Bristol since before the war and is a veteran trade union activist. He is a member of the TGWU and a member of the executive committee of the trades council. He has been involved in numerous industrial disputes, but has particularly fought to bring political issues — women's rights, racism, Ireland — into the trade union sphere.

COVENTRY
LOWER STOKE

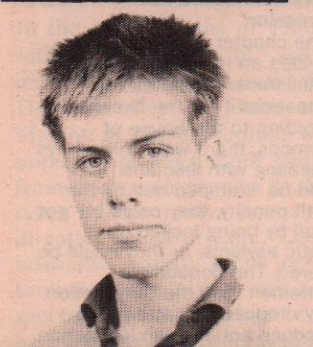


Tom Bruggen



An amateur middle weight boxer, now a student at Lancaster poly, Tom Bruggen has become well-known as a local activist. He protested against social security snoopers and against race checks in the dole offices and hospitals. He backed the miners last year and is currently supporting the print workers.

BIRMINGHAM
HANDSWORTH



Richard Ardern



Birmingham-born Richard is well-known for his anti-racist activity. He was involved in the campaign against the victimisation of Zak Mills at BL's Longbridge and in Mohammed Idrish's fight against deportation. He has also opposed racism on YTS schemes and the introduction of plastic bullets into Birmingham.

LIVERPOOL
MELROSE



Carol Taggart



Carol Taggart is an unemployed print worker, originally from Belfast. She is a well-known campaigner for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Over the past year she has opposed Liverpool council's policies of empty rhetoric and cuts. She has also been active in supporting the Wapping strikers.

NEWCASTLE
ELSWICK



Dave Clark



Dave Clark is an unemployed member of Usdaw, the shop workers' union. His first political activity was with Workers Against Racism, the RCP's anti-racist campaign, in Manchester. Since moving to Newcastle he has been involved in campaigning against cuts in the health service, organising solidarity with workers in South Africa — and print workers at Wapping.

NEWCASTLE
BENWELL

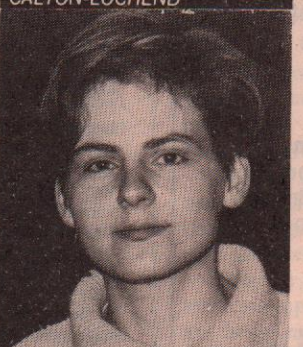


Claire Foster



Originally from Deeside, Claire Foster became disillusioned with the Labour Party over the closure of Shotton steel works. She was a founding member of Workers Against Racism in Coventry and was also active on women's rights issues. In Newcastle she has campaigned for contraception and abortion facilities and for gay rights.

EDINBURGH
CALTON-LOCHEND



Eve Anderson



Eve has recently moved to Edinburgh from Liverpool where she was a well-known activist. She played a leading role in last year's campaigns against the attempts by Victoria Gillick and Enoch Powell to restrict women's rights to contraception and abortion. She is also an active supporter of the cause of Irish freedom.

GLASGOW
QUEEN'S PARK/CROSSHILL



Alison Hill



Alison has lived in Govanhill for three years and is currently working on an MSC scheme looking after handicapped children. She has played a leading role in campaigning against racism and in support of women's rights to contraception and abortion. She is also an active supporter of the cause of Irish freedom.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

PONTEFRAC T SOUTH



Danny Lees



Power worker Danny Lees helped to organise solidarity pickets during the miners' strike. Danny and his wife Linda were active members of the Labour Party before resigning in disgust over the party's betrayal of the miners. Danny has since played a central part in the miners' next step campaign and other RCP activities.

PONTEFRAC T NORTH



Steve Roberts



Steve Roberts, who works at Prince of Wales colliery, spent time in Armley jail during the miners' strike. With his wife Janet, Steve was involved in the Labour Party and in the Nevison support group. Shocked by Labour's refusal to defend the jailed miners, Steve left to play a leading role in the miners' next step campaign.

KNOTTINGLEY



Joe Watson



Joe Watson was born in Ireland and has worked as a contract worker on construction sites around Europe. He now lives in Pontefract and is unemployed. He has a long record of activity in the cause of Irish Freedom. He is now working in the miners' next step campaign.

SOUTH ELMSALL



Keith Hammond



Keith Hammond works at the Prince of Wales colliery and is well-known locally as an activist. He was arrested several times during the miners' strike and served time in Armley jail. He has suffered further police harassment as a result of his activity in the miners' next step campaign, which he helped to found at the end of the strike.

SOUTH KIRKBY

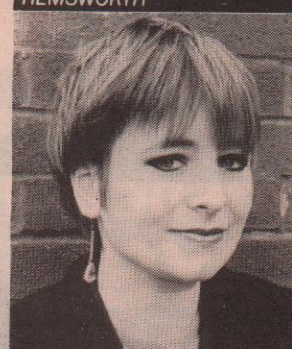


Toby Banks



Toby Banks is out of work and sick of the failure of all the old parties to do anything about unemployment. He joined the Labour Party when he was at school but left because 'it was just a talking shop'. He joined the RCP because 'they were the only people offering a fighting alternative'.

HEMSWORTH



Jenny Midwinter



Jenny Midwinter is an active member of the National Union of Teachers in Leeds. During the miners' strike she was involved in the Middleton miners' wives support group and helped organise pickets at local power stations. She is well-known locally as a campaigner for Irish freedom and women's rights.

LEEDS HAREHILLS



Emmanuel Oliver



Born in Hackney in East London, Emmanuel's early experiences of racism led him to join Workers Against Racism, the RCP's anti-racist campaign. Since moving to Leeds he reckons that racism is 'probably the most important local issue'. He's standing to focus attention on racism and the need to fight it.

LEEDS SEACROFT



Eileen McEvoy



A former member of the Labour Party, Eileen says she 'got fed up of all the empty talk' — especially on issues like women's rights. She decided that the only way women were going to get what they needed was by fighting for it. That's why she joined the RCP, and why she's standing for the council.

LEEDS MIDDLETON



Rob Matthews



A former apprentice professional footballer from North Wales, Rob Matthews has lived in Leeds for three years. He was actively involved in the RCP's work in Yorkshire during the miners' strike and subsequently in the miners' next step campaign against the spread of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers.

BRADFORD HEATON

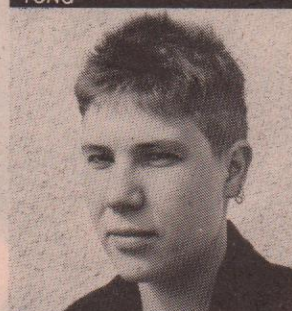


John Bähr



Born in Bradford, John has lived in the city all his life, mostly on the Thorpe Edge estate. He is a bricklayer by trade but has been unemployed since he was victimised for union activities two years ago. He has direct experience of racism, and wants to make sure that anti-racist action is an issue in the election.

BRADFORD TONG



Amanda Kent



A former shop steward in Nalco, Amanda is now unemployed — like 18 per cent of local people. Amanda has been active in campaigns against unemployment and intends to make this a central issue in the council elections. She has also been involved in campaigning against racism — another key issue in Bradford.

BRADFORD UNIVERSITY



Manjit Singh



Born in the Punjab, Manjit came to Britain with his family 20 years ago. At school in East London, he encountered the sort of racist violence which is now rampant in Bradford. He later worked at Ford's Dagenham plant and became active in the union. He also joined Workers Against Racism, the RCP's anti-racist campaign, in which he is now active in Bradford.

SHEFFIELD HEELEY



Steve Brown



Steve Brown is a former shop steward in the hospital workers' union Nupe who has been living in Sheffield for three years. He is now unemployed and he says he sees 'little prospect of either Neil Kinnock or David Blunkett doing anything for the unemployed — so we'll have to do it for ourselves'.

SHEFFIELD FIRTH PARK



Carolyn Pryce



Carolyn Pryce's first experience of politics was in the women's movement. She says she soon got frustrated with the emphasis on 'searching our own souls and other people's to find solutions to the problems of the world'. She joined the RCP because 'it offered action instead of navel gazing'.

SHEFFIELD SHARROW

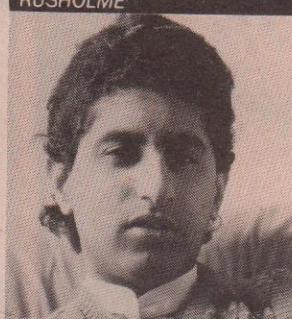


Edmund Price



Bolton-born Edmund followed the family tradition and became an engineering apprentice on leaving school. He also joined the Labour Party, but having experienced the failure of the Labour Party to defend workers' jobs and rights in industry, he joined the RCP in Sheffield last year.

MANCHESTER RUSHOLME



Pardeep Singh



Formerly a shopfloor worker at the Jaguar plant in Coventry, Pardeep is now a student at Manchester polytechnic. He has played an active part in Workers Against Racism, the RCP's anti-racist campaign, supporting people against deportation and opposing race checks in hospitals, dole offices and job centres.

MANCHESTER GORTON NORTH



Mary Ann Malloy



Working as a temporary secretarial worker, Mary Ann has direct experience of how expendable workers — especially women — are when employers no longer need their services. She has been involved in several redundancy disputes, most recently at the local Kaywool factory. She is an active campaigner for women's rights.

STOCKPORT REDDISH NORTH



Ken Lavin



Ken Lavin works in a chemical plant in Trafford Park and is an active member of the TGWU. He has campaigned for many years against redundancies and for better wages and conditions, suffering victimisation for his efforts. He aims to use the council elections to emphasise the need for fighting policies in the unions.

War

STOP RACIST ATTACKS! ORGANISE WORKERS' DEFENCE! Speakers from Workers Against Racism outline our approach to fighting racism.

LEEDS: Wednesday 30 April 7.30pm, Prince of Wales Hotel, Mill Hill (Leeds BR)
MANCHESTER: Thursday 17 April 7.30pm, Black Lion, Blackfriars Street
BRADFORD: Tuesday 22 April 7.30pm, Checkpoint, 45 Westgate
NEWCASTLE: Thursday 24 April 7.30pm, West End Learning and Leisure centre (Well), Elswick Road

ANTI-RACIST BENEFIT

LONDON: Monday 21 April 8 'til late, 100 Club, 100 Oxford Street, W1 (near Tottenham Court Road tube). Workers Against Racism benefit.

Diary

NOTTINGHAM: Thursday 17 April 1.30pm, county hall, Trent Bridge. Protest against police harassment of black youth
LEEDS: Thursday 17 April 12 noon-1.00pm, Leeds university. Protest against the Institute of Directors conference
ISLINGTON: Thursday 17 April 10.00am-12 noon, Islington town hall. Stop police terror! Protest outside council police committee meeting
BRIGHTON: Friday 18 April 10.00am, Sussex university. Protest against police speaker at Family Planning Association conference
Also
Friday 18 April 7.30pm, Sussex university students union. Meeting on moral panics
BRADFORD: Monday 21 April 4pm, Bradford town hall. End Racism in the schools! Education committee meeting
LEEDS: Wednesday 23 April 1.30pm, Leeds town hall. Stop the spreading of racism.

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the next step

GADAFI

No threat to the West



The American government claims its barbarous war against Libya is an act of 'self-defence' against Libyan terrorism. This is strange. When did Libya attack the USA? We have yet to hear reports of Libyan attacks on New York, Washington or Chicago. Where are the bombed US cities and the American civilians maimed and killed by Libyan terrorists? The answer is that they do not exist.

Reagan's claim that Gaddafi is at the centre of a terrorist conspiracy against America and against its European allies is blatant nonsense. Its purpose is to whip up fear and hatred against the Libyan people and to obscure the real objectives behind the war America has launched against them. The USA did not send its bombers to Libya to defend itself against attack.

It sent them to defend its right to terrorise the people of the Middle East and to show people throughout the third world how it intends to deal with any country that dares step out of line.

Colonel Gaddafi is the leader of third world country that has a long history of Western domination — first by Italy, then by Britain and the USA in the post-war years. Despite the development of its oil reserves in the sixties, it remains a poor nation whose problems have been greatly exacerbated by the recent cut in oil prices. Gaddafi has attracted the West's wrath for the simple reason that he has tried to achieve a degree of independence for his country, rather than submit to the dictates of the Western powers and their bankers and generals.

The West denounced Gaddafi as a villain long before terrorism became an issue in Western politics. Ever since he closed US bases and expelled US military advisers from Libya shortly after taking power from a corrupt pro-Western monarchy in 1969, Gaddafi has been a target of American hostility. The fact that the new Libyan government nationalised US-owned oil corporations to launch a programme of economic development and social reform was regarded as a dangerous example of third world insubordination.

In the seventies Gaddafi attempted to win allies in the Arab world to overcome the

problem of Libya's weakness and isolation. The Libyan government pledged its support for the Palestinian liberation struggle and appealed for cooperation among the Arab states to offset Western power in the Middle East. Gaddafi's appeals found little resonance among conservative Arab rulers. Instead they provoked even greater anti-Libyan hysteria in the West.

In 1977 the USA declared Libya to be an 'international terrorist state'. It withdrew its remaining diplomats and sponsored its first military attack. Egyptian forces, discreetly backed by the USA, launched an unprovoked raid on the Libyan border town of Musaad. The USA's campaign against Libya has continued ever since.

The idea that Libya poses a threat to the USA or to any other Western power is preposterous. More than 90 per cent of Libya is desert: the country is inhabited by a mere 3.5 million people, mostly farmers and herdsmen. Libya's brief period of prosperity in the oil boom of the seventies is now a distant memory as US sanctions and falling oil revenues combine to push it into deeper debt and impoverishment. Its armed forces, though expanded in the seventies, are unable to defend the country against US attack — never mind launch an offensive against America and its allies.

Libya has been singled out for US attack, not because it is a threat, but because it is vulnerable and isolated. Reagan aims to show people throughout the Arab world the treatment they can expect to receive if they dare to fight back against Western domination.

The British-backed US attack on Libya is a war aimed at strengthening the grip of the Western capitalists over the whole of the Middle East. British workers must take sides with the Libyan people against Britain and America and help them to kick the West out of the Middle East for good.

Sabena Norton

HANDS OFF LIBYA!

Central London rally
Friday 25 April 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1

HANDS OFF LIBYA!

Continued from front page

American air raids that devastated whole streets in Libya.

The Falklands War revealed that Britain is even more desperate than the USA to prove that it is still a world power. Britain too welcomes any excuse to show the third world that it is still in the big league.

The USA's shift from aggressive rhetoric to armed aggression has caused alarm among its European allies. Monday's meeting of EEC foreign ministers voted to condemn 'Libyan terrorism' and agreed to restrict facilities for Libyan diplomats. At the same time, however, the European powers rejected US demands for economic sanctions against Libya and urged 'restraint on both sides' in the military field.

The European countries are happy to go along with the propaganda offensive against Libya, but they are wary of further US intervention in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. They fear widening anti-Western sentiment throughout the region, and any attempt by the USA to strengthen

its position at their expense. Their new-found preoccupation with the niceties of international law reflects their concern about the changing balance of power in the region. European capitalists are worried about their profits in the Middle East, not the mangled bodies of the people of Libya.

In Britain the leadership of the Labour Party endorses the cynical posturing of the European leaders. Kinnock and Healey have no objection in principle to Western powers brutalising other countries: they have fully supported British militarism in the South Atlantic and in Ireland. They have joined in the chauvinist denunciations of Gaddafi in Britain that paved the way for British complicity in the US strike. When Thatcher denounced the miners for receiving donations from Libya, the Labour leaders added their condemnations.

On Tuesday Kinnock had no words of condemnation for the butchers of Washington and London and no words of sympathy for their Libyan victims. Instead he offered

tactical advice to Thatcher and Reagan about how to go about 'fighting terrorism' more effectively. His main concern was that Reagan's action would strengthen Gaddafi's position in the Arab world rather than undermine it. Reagan and Thatcher and their generals do not need Kinnock's advice about how to go about terrorising third world countries. They are experts.

The British labour movement needs a leadership which can take a firm stand against Western militarism instead of endorsing the chauvinist prejudices used to justify it while quibbling about how it is carried out.

The Revolutionary Communist Party unreservedly condemns the US/British assault on Libya and gives its full support to Libyan resistance against Western attacks, whatever form it takes. The real threat of war and terror around the world comes not from Tripoli but from the imperialist rulers in Washington and London and other Western capitals. Their agents are behind all the bloodshed in the Middle East, in Central

America, in South Africa, and closer to home in Ireland.

The attack on Libya is an occasion for the British labour movement to take a decisive stand on the side of the people of Libya. That is the way to turn the tables on the real mad dogs who bark about terrorism in the West to justify their savage attacks on third world countries they hold in the grip of debt and poverty and backwardness.

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.

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