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ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE PUBLIC ORDER BILL

Police with submachine guns at Heathrow as the Tories
public order legislation goes through parliament

THEIR LAW AND ORDER

The appearance of police carrying submachine guns at Heathrow airport is an ominous sign of the build-up of state repression in Britain. At the beginning of January the Police and Criminal Evidence Act came into effect, marking a significant extension of police powers in matters of search, arrest, detention, interrogation and provision of evidence. This week the new Public Order Bill receives its second reading in the house of commons. This proposes wide-ranging controls over meetings, marches and demonstrations to be enforced by the police.

The Tories have skilfully manipulated public fears about terrorism and crime to justify a clampdown against any threat to their system. They have taken advantage of the historical success of the British establishment in presenting its repressive apparatus not as what it is — the protector of the position of a privileged minority — but as the defender of the interests of the whole community.

The police force was formed in the early years of the nineteenth century to protect the growing mass of property owned by the emerging capitalist class from the growing mass of people who had no property at all. It was extended to enforce the stability of a society based on exploitation and oppression.

POLICING THE CRISIS

The role of the police in fighting crime has always been their key to winning wider acceptability. Everybody feels vulnerable to being robbed, burgled, assaulted or raped and everybody likes to feel that they can turn to the police for help. The media and the police themselves go to great lengths to present an image of concern for the individual victim of crime and a determination to pursue perpetrators of criminal acts. The fact that the police are ineffective in protecting ordinary people against crime weakens but does not destroy this carefully constructed atmosphere of trust.

The role of the police as the agents of the capitalist class is revealed in response to any wider threat to the system. Striking workers who have encountered the police on picket lines have soon discovered that they can be relied upon to take the side of the employers. However the low level of social conflict in Britain in recent decades has allowed the police to cultivate an image of being fair and impartial. The upsurge in violent picket-line confrontations and inner-city riots over the past few years has exposed the coercive function of the police that always lay behind the 'friendly bobby' image.

One policeman summed up the change in an interview with a national paper last week. 'Policing a shire county used to depend on three people — the village bobby, the teacher and the vicar. Between them they would have the place sewn up. Today the teacher is on strike, the vicar is in CND and the bobby clocks off after eight hours.' He might have added that the bobby is likely to go off then for special firearms training or for overtime dealing with pickets or riots.

Clive Soley, the Labour Party's home affairs spokesman, said last weekend that Labour must 'reclaim the law and order issue' from the Tories. He proposed an extensive programme of crime prevention and measures to make the police 'accountable' to committees set up by local authorities.

Labour's crime prevention proposals indicate a simple 'if you can't beat em, join em' response to the Tories' success on the law and order issue. Indeed Labour politicians point out the rising crime rate under the Tories and the overflowing prisons, and claim that their policies would be even more effective in fighting crime.

Labour's proposals to make the police 'accountable' are an attempt to cling on to the myth of the police as the servants of the community. Labour's experts on the police claim that the growing legal powers, centralised organisation and technological sophistication of the police remove them from any form of control. In fact the opposite is the case. The increasingly coercive character of the police shows that the police are firmly under the control of the British establishment. As the police tool up with submachine guns, CS gas and plastic bullets to fight on behalf of the British ruling class, the Labour left is still dreaming about a return to Dixon of Dock Green.

Calling for police accountability is not merely the pursuit of an illusion. It is a dangerous diversion which undermines labour movement resistance to the real danger of police repression. Police liaison committees and police monitoring groups are widely funded by the GLC and other state agencies because they perform a useful service for the establishment. They integrate activists into the system, provide a safety valve and a source of intelligence for the police.

BEATING THE POLICE

How then should we respond to the build-up of police repression? First, we should make clear that the law and order issue cannot be 'reclaimed' by the labour movement. We should expose the Tories' use of the issue as a device to justify police terror and reject the whole debate. More police powers are no answer to the problems of crime experienced by working class people. The only possible outcome of the whole public controversy about crime is more punishment for the working class.

Second, we should reject the futile quest to make the police more accountable. They are already fully accountable to the people who recruit them, train them, pay them, and organise them to deal with any resistance against the system.

Third, we should take steps to curb state interference in the affairs of the labour movement. Calling an end to all use of the courts in internal trade union matters would be an important step forward.

Trade union officials — even left wingers in the miners' union — have undermined resistance to the courts by themselves turning to the law to resolve internal disputes. Appeals to the authorities to ban fascist meetings and demonstrations have paved the way for wider curbs on the right to demonstrate.

Finally, the labour movement should refuse to allow itself to be pushed around by the police. We should organise our own demonstrations in such a way as to prevent police interference and refuse to allow the courts to restrict our rights to assemble and protest. They may have the guns, but we've got the numbers.



Rally for Irish freedom NO BRITISH SOLUTION

Saturday 1 February 6.30 pm

Manning Hall University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1

ALL OUT ON BLOODY SUNDAY

The January meeting of the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party discussed the situation in Ireland since the Anglo-Irish agreement and decided to make the mobilisation for the Bloody Sunday commemoration demonstration in London on 2 February the main focus of party activity this month.

The central objective of the agreement signed by British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and Irish Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald last November is to stabilise British rule over Ireland. The deal accepts Dublin's right to be consulted over matters affecting the nationalist community in the North. In return it secures recognition of Britain's division and domination of Ireland from moderate nationalist representatives on both sides of the Border.

The Anglo-Irish deal has been presented as a step towards peace and harmony in Ireland. In reality it provides a cover for increased repression of the nationalist community. The wave of arrests of Sinn Féin activists (see opposite) and the deployment of an extra 550 troops in the Border areas reveal the true purpose of the accord.

The remarkable unity among all political parties in Britain in support of the Anglo-Irish deal is a measure of the importance of the issue to the British establishment. The Irish War is the greatest single threat to the integrity of the United Kingdom and the stability of the British state. Whatever their disagreements on other issues, the Tories, Labour and the Alliance parties are firmly agreed on the need to contain the menace of the Irish War and crush the Irish national liberation movement.

The Revolutionary Communist Party gives its full support to the fight for national freedom in Ireland. British rule over Ireland is the central obstacle to social progress in the whole country. Britain's partition of the country and its military occupation of the Six Counties has long frustrated Ireland's economic development and fostered strife among its people. The expulsion of the British Army and the removal of the structures of British domination is necessary before there can be any significant advance towards peace and prosperity.

Our demand for 'Troops out now' sums up our recognition of Ireland's right to national independence and our repudiation of the British occupation. We reject any British political initiatives in Ireland, because Britain can make no positive contribution to the Irish people apart from getting off their backs.

British-sponsored talks, agreements and assemblies can serve no other purpose than to attempt to secure British domination. Hence we insist on 'No British solutions' as another key slogan around which to organise Irish solidarity activity in Britain.

The anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972, when British soldiers opened fire on unarmed demonstrators and killed 14 people, is a good occasion on which to mobilise opposition to the continuing British occupation. After 14 years British troops are still stomping the streets of Ireland, still harassing and intimidating nationalists, and still shooting to kill.

This year's Bloody Sunday demonstration is being organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland and its supporters. Labour Party activists' main concern is not to mobilise Irish solidarity activity, but to limit the damage done to the Labour Party by its current support for the Tory deal and its past record of support for British terror in Ireland.

The Labour Committee on Ireland is critical of the Tories' Anglo-Irish deal, but would welcome British interference in Ireland under a future Labour government: 'We would welcome and endorse any move by any government that took one step toward ending the war in Ireland'. The only move by any British government that would take a step towards ending the war would be the immediate withdrawal of British troops. This course of action is specifically rejected by the Labour left.

The Labour left seeks to use the Irish issue to the Labour Party's sectarian advantage. The Bloody Sunday commemoration is not the property of the Labour Party. It is vital that the voice of genuine opposition to British imperialism is heard — and we intend to make sure that it is. Join the anti-imperialist contingent on 2 February and join the real fight for Irish freedom.

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WHATEVER THE ANGLO-IRISH DEAL SAYS...

YOU CAN'T REFORM A POLICE STATE

LOYALIST MPs LIKE IAN PAISLEY MAY BE STAGING BY-ELECTIONS IN PROTEST AT THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT. BUT THE LOYALIST POLICE THINK THE ACCORD IS THE BEST THING SINCE PLASTIC BULLETS. MICK HUME REPORTS FROM IRELAND



TWO LOYALIST POLICE HAMMERING ONE NATIONALIST — DEMOCRACY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

It's not a free country any more,' whined the woman in the fox fur sipping tea behind me at Heathrow last Wednesday, as she surveyed that morning's front-page stories about the airport's new machine gun security squads. An hour later I was in Belfast's Aldergrove airport, watching Royal Ulster Constabulary men wave automatic weapons about as they have done for years. Machine guns aren't news in Belfast, because Northern Ireland really isn't a 'free country'. It's a British police state. And no diplomatic deal or by-election can change that.

This was my first trip over since the accord, so I was on the look out for 'reforms'. Maybe it was my eyesight, but I couldn't see any. The bus from Aldergrove to the centre of Belfast was still stopped within 100 yards at an RUC gunpost. When we hired a car in the city we were still videoed for the police. And as we drove out to Derry every nationalist town was still dominated by the local RUC fortress, a mass of metal, brick and barbed wire. (Except in Toomebridge, where the fortress was redesigned by the IRA before Christmas and is now largely built out of plastic sheets).

When I turned on the car radio I could still only get interference from the towering RUC surveillance aerials. But when I tuned in to BBC Radio Ulster I noticed a difference. Instead of an RUC spokesman defending his force, I heard somebody from the Irish police singing the praises of the RUC. Just as he started marvelling at the professionalism of RUC road-blocks, we were pulled up at a police barrier on the bridge across the River Foyle into Derry. And I had to agree that the machine gun attached to the RUC man leering at us looked pretty professional.

Down in the Derry Sinn Fein office, the talk was of the RUC and the elections

Loyalists have called to oppose Thatcher's accord with Dublin. The police had just gone on a rampage down Bishop Street, beating down people's doors without cause or warning. 'The woman was watching television, she'd have let them in if they'd knocked,' said Sinn Fein councillor Barney McFadden, 'but they just put a sledgehammer through her front door instead. Now let's see what John Hume has to say about his Anglo-Irish agreement.'

Moderate nationalists, like Social Democratic and Labour Party leader John Hume and Dublin ministers, have spent the last two months claiming the new accord is going to reform police and Army repression in Northern Ireland. The RUC themselves have a much more realistic appraisal of the Anglo-Irish agreement, as they told the 18 leading republicans arrested recently in dawn swoops across Northern Ireland. 'They said the Anglo-Irish deal was just an extension of their powers to repress nationalists and republicans here in Ireland,' remembered Sinn Fein councillor Hugh Brady. And Derry Sinn Fein chair Gerry O'Hara agreed: 'The RUC interrogators told me they were very happy with the increased leeway they're going to get through the accord.'

'If the police say we killed Mickey Mouse, that's good enough for the British authorities'

Listen to what the RUC wants from Thatcher's deal with Dublin, and you'll understand why Loyalists are wrong to say the accord undermines British rule in Northern Ireland. The RUC told Gerry O'Hara they expected to get 'internment both sides of the Border, so it could be very effective, and they expect to get a 10-mile hot pursuit zone on the other side of the Border, so they could go South and not have to tell the garda (Irish police).'

The Irish authorities claim they now have the power to change Northern Ireland's repressive legal system. But in a British police state, the British police can make up the law as they go along.

When the RUC raided the republicans' homes, they insisted that the law allows them to hold people under house arrest. It doesn't, but they did it all the same. And when the police had finished pulling up people's floorboards and wrecking bedrooms, they carted off seven elected representatives and 11 Sinn Fein workers without any charge or evidence. 'They don't need any evidence whatsoever,' says Hugh Brady, 'They can make up a story that some person killed Mickey Mouse, and that would satisfy the British authorities.'

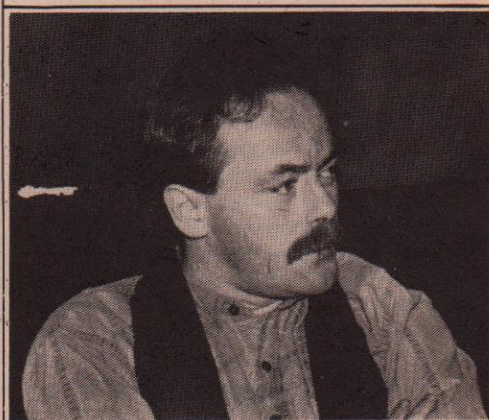
Speaking of Mickey Mouse stories, how about the charges brought against two Sinn Fein councillors when the other 16 were released? Seamus Cassidy from Dungannon has been charged with possessing 'explosive substances' — an old Ulster Defence Regiment flare he's kept as a memento of the war for years. And Tommy Carroll of Armagh has been charged with possessing information likely to be of use to 'terrorists' — a picture of a republican protest which includes the unattractive features of an RUC man who wandered in front of the camera. The Anglo-Irish accord might abolish the Flags and Emblems Act, which makes flying Irish flags illegal. But it won't stop the Crown police using their unofficial Photos and Souvenirs Act to jail opponents of British rule.

Now all this might surprise those who believe the British government is sincerely seeking a just settlement in Ireland. But it comes as no surprise to many nationalists in Northern Ireland.

'The people of republican areas have nothing but contempt for the deal,' says

Brady, 'because we've had so many repressive measures, this is just another attempt to defeat the struggle here.' Hugh Brady has been arrested 41 times under emergency laws, usually being held for seven days each time, yet has never been charged with anything. He has been shot at by a drunken RUC officer and held for two years on the word of supergrasses. The RUC have promised him that worse is to come under the new arrangements with Dublin: 'They told me that every month in 1986 I can expect to spend one week in police custody, and at the end of 1986 I'll be dead.'

Other republicans arrested in the recent swoops got a similar taste of how peaceful life is going to be after the new accord. Gerry O'Hara was beaten about the head while being interrogated. And Margaret Boyle of Strabane Sinn Fein was abused until she vomited blood, told that her three children (who had been left alone in her house) would be run over, and threatened first with rape, and then with assassination by the SAS. Yes, says Thatcher, we are bringing peace nearer in Northern Ireland. God only knows what her idea of war would be like.



HUGH BRADY

Of course, police states can also control the media. While he was held, Hugh Brady was accused of a shooting that happened during another of his stays in police custody. When the RUC discovered this, they got very embarrassed with the prospect of a high court hearing pending, and released him. Then they got on to their media friends to ensure their cock-up wasn't covered outside the immediate area. So the deal with Dublin not only guarantees that nationalists can continue to enjoy the democracy of a British police state, it also ensures that they retain the best British traditions of a free press under police supervision.

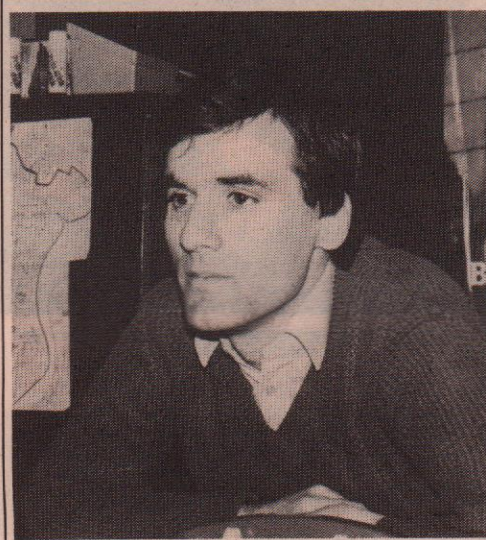
As next week's elections come closer we can expect to hear Paisley ranting about sell-outs and conspiracies while the Tories and John Hume talk about peace and justice. Don't listen to them. Britain's deal with Dublin is about defeating the fight for Irish freedom. The raids and arrests are aimed at disrupting Sinn Fein's electoral efforts and placating Loyalist opinion.

The British authorities are still out to brand republican representatives as 'terrorists'. Loyalists can rest assured that Westminster is committed to keeping its Northern Ireland police state intact. Ask Hugh Brady — if you can catch him on one of his rare days of freedom, in a state where police carrying machine guns were yesterday's news 60 years ago.



Some people have more money than sense. The capitalist class is in dire straits, but it's still shelling out millions on a defunct helicopter company. And a Welshman in the Dire Straits rock group is giving thousands to bail out Swansea soccer club. If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, send your spare cash to us. Then we won't have to sell out to foreign consortiums or turn our office into a car park.

Rush donations to our fighting fund at BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques payable to RCP Association.



GERRY O'HARA

Labour movement

NOTTS MINERS OUT ON THEIR OWN

'WE NEED A REAL UNION'

As the leaders of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers met their co-thinkers in the electricians' union last week, membership of the official National Union of Mineworkers in Nottinghamshire reached rock bottom. The coal board claims that official NUM membership has sunk to less than 1000, though the NUM still claims 5000. Notts miners who supported last year's strike to the end and who have stuck with the NUM through the UDM breakaway are now isolated and disorganised.

The coal board has done everything to encourage the scab union. It has withdrawn recognition from the NUM in the Notts area and pit managers will negotiate only with the UDM. The employers have effectively barred NUM representatives from carrying out union business in work time. Management has threatened to sack activists for campaigning in support of the national union. At Ollerton management called in security men to evict an NUM activist who was handing out leaflets at the pit-head. The coal board's aggressive campaign has put the NUM on the defensive and demoralised rank and file militants.

The Notts miners need fighting policies, not a choice between the two ways of collaborating with the employers offered by the breakaway and official unions, argues Grant French

But the coal board is not the biggest problem facing Notts militants. Their own union has effectively abandoned them. 'At national level they just shout "scabs" at Notts,' says one miner from Ollerton. 'That's no good, we're trying to convince them to come back, but they think the national union doesn't want them.' Even NUM stalwarts are bitterly critical of their leaders for turning their backs on the Notts area and leaving rank and file miners to battle on alone. 'There's no real leadership given against the UDM,' says another miner from Bilsthorpe. 'We might as well give up now for all the help we're getting.'

The only thing the NUM has done to keep its numbers up in Nottinghamshire is to send out recruiting forms for retired miners and widows.

Unfortunately many former strikers and current NUM officials in the Notts area share the blinkered approach of the national union. Paul Whetton, an NUM official and left-wing Labour Party activist from Bevercotes, assures us that the UDM has no future. 'I can't see this union lasting as long as the Spencer breakaway in the thirties. I hope that within two years they will have blown themselves out.' But most Notts miners do not share this complacent attitude and cannot afford to wait around for two years to see if Whetton is right.

The Notts NUM leaders are waiting for the courts to tell the coal board that it must recognise the NUM. When this happens, they argue, miners will flock back to the NUM. The experience of the courts in the miners' strike should have taught the NUM officials that they cannot rely on the judges to defend the union. Yet they keep returning



NOTTS AND YORKSHIRE MINERS CONFRONTED LABOUR MP FRANK HAYNES OVER HIS SUPPORT FOR SCAB UNIONISM ON SATURDAY'S RCP PROTEST

to the courts pleading for mercy from the bosses.

Left-wing officials at Welbeck say that pro-UDM miners will come back to the NUM because the national union knows how to negotiate grievances and has the experience on issues like health and safety. The NUM might have the edge on the UDM when it comes to negotiating compensation claims. But Notts miners will not go back to the NUM because they think they will get a better deal if they lose their arm in an accident. They will rejoin the NUM when they are convinced that it can give them a fighting chance of winning. The only way to rebuild effective trade unionism among the Notts miners is by challenging the traditions of collaboration common to both the NUM and the UDM.

In practice there is little to distinguish the two miners' unions in their approach to basic industrial issues. Electricians' leader Eric Hammond justified his joint seminar with the UDM leaders on the grounds that the policies discussed had been in line with the energy policies of both the NUM and the TUC.

The leaders of both mining unions are united in their commitment to securing a viable future for mining. They are divided only over how best to achieve their common objective.

The UDM has opted for open collaboration on any terms with the bosses. The NUM may still consider using

industrial action to exert pressure on the employers over the terms on which collaboration takes place. But the difference is only one of degree. Hence the TUC can contemplate conciliating between the two unions and NUM leaders can talk openly about linking up with the UDM in a new federation in the coal industry.

Rank and file miners cannot take a step forward without challenging the whole framework of collaboration that has long restrained anti-capitalist initiative among the miners. Activists in the Notts area need to mobilise the widest support — among UDM as well as NUM members — for a new programme of fighting policies.

Many former strikers still make a principle out of not talking to UDM members. It is understandable that feelings of bitterness still run high as a result of the strike-breaking role played by many Notts miners in the strike. But these sentiments cannot be allowed to continue to act as a barrier to rebuilding union organisation.

The self-imposed isolation of many Notts militants avoids tackling the urgent problem of winning over the mass of Notts miners who are not incorrigible supporters of scab unionism.

Fifty per cent of Notts miners came out on strike at the start of the year-long battle, and most kept faith with the overtime ban until the end. Many had grave reservations about breaking away from the NUM but felt forced into this position by the bureaucratic

posturing of the NUM leadership. They joined the UDM more out of hostility to Arthur Scargill than because of their devotion to the policies of Roy Lynk.

One striking miner from Ollerton is convinced that a strong campaign could win many miners back: 'I would say that at this stage half the miners are hardline UDM — that is anti-Scargill and anti-militant — and there are therefore a lot of waverers who could go either way.' Another militant from Bevercotes agrees: 'With the UDM hardliners we've no chance. But at our pit we had 600 men on strike at the beginning of the strike, we've got to win them back.' Winning them back requires a new approach on the key issues of productivity, pay and the Labour Party.

Both the UDM and the NUM have gone along with the coal board's schemes for raising productivity. In the NUM's militant Yorkshire stronghold men are being driven like dogs as pits compete to top the productivity league. Pits like Thoresby in Nottinghamshire are breaking all records. While the productivity bonus is 30 per cent down on five years ago, output is up 25 per cent. Miners in both coalfields tell horror stories about the rising accident rate.

Miners have no interest in working harder to help the coal board balance its books — or in dying to help the bosses make higher profits. We should fight for a nationally agreed basic wage for all miners and pay increases that are not linked to productivity.

The Notts split has caused serious embarrassment and potential electoral problems for the Labour Party in Nottinghamshire. Pro-NUM miners argue that Labour should distance itself from the UDM. Pro-UDM miners say that Labour should drop the NUM and align itself with the Notts majority. But why should miners fight to be represented by a party which is interested only in miners' votes, not their livelihoods?

Both the UDM and the NUM are courting the Labour Party, but Labour has never defended miners' interests. The last Labour government closed more pits than Thatcher and Labour's present programme promises only more of the same. The Labour Party failed to support the miners during the strike and Neil Kinnock has promised he will do nothing about the victimised and imprisoned miners if he ever becomes prime minister.

Miners would be better off dumping the Labour Party and fighting for policies that can protect their interests.

Notts miners have a hard battle ahead to rebuild real trade unionism. But if they appreciate that fighting company unionism in Nottinghamshire means transforming the NUM as well as getting rid of the UDM, the Notts miners will rise again.

CHILDCARE CUTS

WOMEN NEED NURSERIES



State provision of nursery care for pre-school children is on the way out. Kate Marshall reports

Apart from private arrangements like the upper class nanny and the working class granny there are two main sources of childcare — the nursery school, run by the department of education, and the local authority nursery, run by the department of health and social security. Both are being cut.

A local authority is legally obliged to educate children between the ages of five and 16. In the past many have offered some schooling to three- and four-year olds. Nursery schooling has freed some women from some of the burden of childcare and allowed them to return to work without waiting for their children's fifth birthday. But there is no legal requirement on councils to provide nursery schooling — hence it has now become a prime target for cuts.

In Clwyd, north Wales, a progressive policy of offering nursery education to all four-year olds and 84 per cent of three-year olds is under threat. The Labour-controlled education committee has responded to

central government cuts by axing facilities it is not legally bound to provide.

Local authority day nurseries are not so easy to cut without intensifying the social problems spawned by the recession. Nevertheless, despite huge waiting lists, provision has remained static since 1979. Recently released figures show a significant decline in some areas and marked regional variations. Tory-controlled shire counties like Shropshire and Gloucester have made major cuts. Some Labour-controlled councils are resorting to the same tactics. South Tyneside, Bolton, Oldham, Trafford and Newham are making working class women pay the price for their failure to fight the cuts.

We should refuse to support Labour councils which don't accept that childcare is something that all women need. And we should campaign everywhere to press local councils to provide sufficient nursery places so that every woman who wants to get a job has the opportunity to do so.

HESELTINE REVEALS ALL



The resignation of Tory defence secretary Michael Heseltine, after the cabinet row over rival rescue bids for Westland helicopters, has revealed three things: the depth of the crisis afflicting British capitalism, the troubles in the Tory Party, and the miserable state of Labour's parliamentary opposition

INDUSTRY NEEDS HAND-OUTS

Heseltine's dramatic departure from Thursday's cabinet meeting, in a storm of accusations and counter-accusations about Thatcher's authoritarianism and his own opportunism, may have grabbed this week's headlines. But the real reason why the British establishment is tearing its hair out could be gleaned from two less-publicised pieces of news: the sharp rise in unemployment and the increase in interest rates. These symptoms of economic collapse expose the broader crisis of British capitalism, which has sent the authorities into a spin over Westland — a firm which is, as one paper put it, 'intrinsically rather unimportant'.

The battle for Westland has become important because it reveals the tensions rising within the ruling class.

The war of words over Westland has been presented as a clash of principle between 'free marketeer' trade and industry secretary Leon Brittan, who has said the company must be allowed to accept the American rescue bid on commercial grounds, and the 'interventionist' Heseltine, who argued the government should get stuck in and ensure the rival European consortium had a chance of succeeding. In fact both sides are well aware that the government must intervene to keep this company, and the economy, alive.

Heseltine has gone, but it is Brittan's blustering about how 'market forces must decide' that has really been exposed as hot air. He has leant on British Aerospace to pull

out of the Continental consortium. And he knows that, whoever takes over the firm, the government must buy Westland machines if the helicopter outfit is to survive the recession.

Brittan's vision of individual dynamism and initiative rebuilding industry is a real example of Victorian values — it's 100 years out of date. Modern British capitalism remains moribund. Every Tory understands that its decaying base cannot hold up unless the state provides political and economic props. The current debate is not about principles but presentation. Brittan wants the establishment to maintain the hardline Thatcherite atmosphere of austerity to encourage further cuts and closures. Heseltine wants a different climate where the state shows itself willing to help the capitalists cope. But alternative packaging of Tory policies cannot solve the system's problems.

Whatever the end result of the prolonged haggling over the helicopter firm, there is no future for Westland in particular or British capitalism in general. The economic instability now shaking the pillars of the establishment shows that it is time to replace them and their outdated way of running the world.

TORIES FEAR DEFEAT

The crisis in the Thatcher government has highlighted how significant sections of the Conservative Party are starting to panic about their electoral prospects.

Thatcher's harsh policies over the past six years have been the only real option for keeping British capitalism alive in the dog-

eat-dog climate of world recession. But the bitter consequences of the Conservative approach, in terms of unemployment, industrial collapse and social unrest, have outraged many traditional Tory supporters. The Tories have been in a deep trough in the opinion polls for months and a growing band of establishment dissidents has begun pushing for a shift in policies as the only hope of the Tories holding on to power.

Thatcher now finds herself almost as unpopular as she was in the early years of her administration. Then, she was able to triumph by mobilising patriotic support around the 1982 South Atlantic War — the 'Falklands Factor'. Today she has little prospect of repeating that success, and she seems to have no short-term route back to public popularity.

Heseltine may be arrogant, but he is no fool. He has long been a leading opponent of the Thatcher line within the Tory leadership. He has made no secret of his life-long ambition to make it to No 10 Downing Street by his fifty-fifth birthday — now just three years away. It seems that he has been weighing up whether his prospects as a leader-in-waiting who could pick up the post-Thatcher pieces would be best served in or out of this increasingly unwanted government. Last week he finally decided the backbenches were the best place from which to make his bid for power. He resigned, depicting himself, Thatcher and Brittan as the good, the bad and the ugly faces of Toryism.

Heseltine has presented the rift as being about obscure principles to do with the need for collective cabinet government. This is nonsense. British cabinets have always been autocratically-run institutions. But it provides a respectable excuse for the man the tabloids call 'Tarzan' to start beating his chest in a campaign to replace Thatcher at the head of the Tory table.

Watching Tories tear themselves to pieces is always an uplifting experience. But it shouldn't be seen as a spectator sport. If we really want to take advantage of the Tory Party's troubles over helicopters and everything else, we need our own party to put them all to flight.

DENZIL DAVIES LIVES!

This week Denzil Davies shot from obscurity to tell the world that he is the Labour Party's defence spokesman. He then announced meekly that he supported the Heseltine position on Westland and disappeared from view once more.

The way Labour has hung on to Heseltine's coat-tails throughout the Westland affair illustrates that it has nothing positive to offer the working class.

The Labour Party has backed Heseltine and other Tory 'wets' on the need for more state intervention in the economy. But the wettest Conservative appreciates that the precondition for state initiatives is tightening the screw on the working class. Governments invest not out of charity, but out of concern with the health of the capitalist system. When they spend money they expect the best return possible, at the expense of workers' wages and working conditions. Labour's pro-Heseltine approach to the economy is a recipe for reducing our living standards.

Kinnock's only attempt to expose Thatcher has been over her refusal to 'honour' the conventions of British cabinet government. Almost alone in Britain, the Labour leadership retains the quaint illusion that power is exercised through parliamentary and cabinet procedure. This makes it incapable of organising against the people who pull the real power levers in British society — the capitalist class and its state agents. Supporting Tory wets is no way to defend workers. We need to mobilise our own power if we're to make the most of the capitalists' crisis of confidence that has sent Heseltine on to the backbenches and Westland into the headlines.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

POPLAR FRONT

This week 80 Labour councillors from Liverpool and Lambeth are appearing in the high court threatened with surcharge and disqualification from office because of their defiance of Tory deadlines for setting a rate last year. The march to the court in support of the councillors was headed by the Poplar Rates Revolt banner. But how do today's Labour councillors measure up to their forebears?

In 1919, a time of working class upsurge throughout Europe, the East London borough of Poplar elected a radical Labour council. As the employers fought back and gained the upper hand in the early twenties, unemployment rose and hardship grew. The Poplar councillors led a militant struggle to maintain living standards in the area.

The Poplar struggle won some short-term victories. To keep the rates down the councillors withheld revenues due to the central authorities. After six weeks' imprisonment they won a degree of equalisation of the burden of unemployment benefits (then paid out by councils) between poorer and richer boroughs. At a time when wages everywhere were being forced down, they kept up council workers' wages and the level of unemployment benefits.

But these gains were short-lived. As the labour movement went down to a series of defeats, the advances won by the councillors went by the board. Poplar too was forced to cut wages and benefits. People in Poplar, like workers in the unions, increasingly looked towards a future Labour government to improve their position.

Poplar leader George Lansbury went into parliament and after Labour's 1929 victory took his place in the cabinet. In response to the 1931 slump the Labour chancellor proposed cutting unemployment benefit by 20 per cent. For the left Lansbury suggested a 10 per cent reduction, but the trade union leaders could not accept such drastic cuts and the government collapsed. The hopes of Poplar ended in this squalid betrayal by the Labour Party in government.

Today's Labour councillors have little in common with the Poplar leaders. The Poplar councillors were mostly middle-aged workers, veterans of the class struggle in the unions, in the wider political struggles of the revolutionary groups that finally merged in the Communist Party, and in the campaigns for women's rights and Irish independence. Today's councillors in Liverpool and Lambeth are mostly young professionals, veterans only of committee room wrangles over whether to cut services or increase the rates.

The Poplar councillors were class fighters who fought long and hard against the system. The councillors of Liverpool and Lambeth gave up their fight at the first obstacle. They are facing penalties in the courts, not because they fought and lost, but because they agreed to come quietly at the first hint of confrontation. Poplar councillors were imprisoned for carrying out practical policies of defiance which brought tangible benefits to local people. Liverpool and Lambeth councillors are being penalised for their rhetoric.

In the twenties people had no experience of the Labour Party in government and it seemed reasonable to trust Labour. Today's Labour councillors have had the chance to learn from the experience of eight Labour governments — and they still put their faith in the next.

THE WAR



GAME

This is how the West plays for power in the third world. Players need a big supply of arms, a vast amount of money and preferably some experience in the gentle arts of media manipulation, political intrigue and mass slaughter

1

Choose a target country, preferably one which is small, weak and easy to bully

The USA's choice of the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada — population 100 000 — as a place to display its world-beating military might in October 1983 was hardly to beat. Reagan despatched 3000 marines and paratroopers to occupy the island, establish a pro-American regime and show the people of the whole Central American area who was boss. Nicaragua is another well-chosen US target. One of the most impoverished countries in Central America, it has little industry or military capacity and only three million people. Libya (see page 8) with its small and dispersed population and low level of development is another good choice.

Beleaguered third world countries like Cuba and Angola have also been singled out as targets for US aggression. France has picked on Chad — one of the poorest countries in the world. Britain's choice of Argentina, a relatively developed backward capitalist country, was a poor selection, which caused considerable difficulties at later stages in the game.



'FASCIST' GENERAL GALTIERI

2

Portray the country's leader as a communist, a fascist, or as just plain crazy

Cuba's Fidel Castro is the role model. A larger than life figure with a big beard, a record of guerrilla struggle and a strong line in anti-Western rhetoric, he has served as a focus of US abuse for more than 20 years. Since the US has crippled the Cuban economy with its blockade and Castro turned to the Soviet Union for help, he has been depicted as a stooge of Moscow. The US propaganda machine has had some difficulty casting Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega into the Castro mould, but the best brains in Washington are working on it.

Britain could not plausibly make out that Argentina's General Galtieri was a communist, so he had to be packaged as a fascist. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini was difficult to present as either a communist or a fascist, so he had to take the stage as the sort of Islamic zealot vaguely familiar from school histories of the Crusades. The Western campaign against Libya's Colonel Gaddafi has gone beyond an attempt at political caricature to present him as merely insane.

The prototype for the psychopathic third world leader increasingly favoured by Western War Game players was Idi Amin, who ruled Uganda through the seventies. Amin was depicted throughout the Western media as deranged and savage barbarian, but then he was trained by the British army and installed and sustained in office largely through British influence.

3

Portray the country's people as backward and oppressed and in need of liberation by external interference

The marginalised Indian communities of Nicaragua are a particular concern of US propagandists at the moment. The USA is so concerned for the Indians' plight that Washington is financing, training and equipping mercenaries to devastate their fields and villages, thus freeing them from the domination of the radical Sandinista government.

During the South Atlantic War British commentators, including many left wingers, discovered a sudden concern for the people of Argentina suffering under the tyranny of the military dictatorship. The repressive nature of the regime was used to justify British military intervention against Argentina. This surge of concern for the victims of the junta subsided rapidly on the conclusion of the war. The fate of imprisoned trade unionists and socialists and others in Argentina now excites no more interest in Britain than does repression in any other third world country.

A short memory and a highly selective sense of moral outrage against oppression are essential for good players at this stage of the game. Western commentators who were indifferent to the plight of the Iranian people under the savage dictatorship of the pro-Western Shah of Iran, suddenly became profoundly moved by the suffering of the people under the anti-Western Khomeini. Similarly in Uganda, when the British decided they wanted to get rid of Amin, the press suddenly discovered that the people were oppressed. The press promptly ignored the continuation of similar conditions under Amin's successor Milton Obote who, according to Amnesty International, killed considerably more people.

4

Use propaganda against the target country to strengthen support for your regime at home

The Falklands Factor is the classical gambit. You present the threat to the national interest from the distant foreign target as an issue demanding the maximum display of national unity. Anybody who challenges the spirit of national unity against the foreign menace — for example by going on strike — is depicted as an enemy of the people. Thatcher used this ploy to great effect during the South Atlantic War in 1982. By rallying the nation against the 'Argies' she distracted attention from the failures of the government's policies at home, and swung the Tories from the bottom of the opinion polls to the position from which they won a landslide victory in the 1983 general election.

Reagan too has had considerable success in using international issues to domestic advantage. He used the climate of chauvinist hostility against Iran during the hostage crisis to boost his presidential election campaign in 1980, and his invasion of Grenada gave a powerful boost to his re-election in 1984. Reagan hopes to use his campaign against Libya to bolster the presidency as the US economy again begins to slip.



UGANDAN 'PSYCHOPATH' IDI AMIN

5

Use propaganda against the target country to mobilise support from other Western powers

This is where the game enters a more difficult stage. The intensifying competition for spheres of influence in the third world among the Western countries makes it increasingly difficult for them to pull together against a common enemy. This puts greater pressure on the major Western powers to convince their allies of the threat from their selected target.

The British government had great difficulty persuading its allies that they should support its invasion of the Falkland Islands. Their common commitment to keeping upstart third world countries in line served to prevent any major rift in the Western alliance, but there was little enthusiasm for Britain's military adventure. Now that the war is over, the allies refuse to back Britain in United Nations votes on the Falklands.

When it comes to an area like the Middle East where the Western powers are openly vying for influence, the divisions are increasingly out in the open. The USA, with its close ties to Israel, still repudiates the Palestinian struggle. Yet Europeans are generally happy to recognise the Palestinian liberation movement as a means of strengthening their position in the Arab world. Reagan wants to target Libya, but the Europeans want to play the matter down (see page 8). Even in Central America, an acknowledged sphere of US supremacy, the Europeans have promoted the Contadora peace initiative while the USA has kept up the pressure against the Nicaraguans.

6

Go in — but make sure you win

This is the most difficult play of all. Every Western power has its grim memories. The USA recalls its disastrous intervention in Vietnam in the sixties, when a small peasant country humbled the American army and caused major domestic discontent. France remembers its war in Algeria in the fifties, which also caused both military embarrassment and political turmoil at home. And Britain has in Ireland its own reminder that it is easier to invade than it is to come out on top.

The legacy of past setbacks has made the Western allies cautious. They have built up their rapid deployment forces in north Africa, the Middle East, Central America and spread their network of bases. They have extended their conventional and nuclear armouries to cope with warfare in any area of the globe. But they have so far confined their major efforts to places where they are sure they can win — the Falklands, Grenada. The US armed forces put one foot in Lebanon and withdrew in horror. They look at the terrain in Central America and remember Vietnam. Reagan is rattling his missiles at Libya, but is not so confident about how US troops will perform in the deserts of north Africa 4000 miles from home if his bluff is called.

HOW TO STOP THE WAR GAME

Last week Reagan pulled back from direct interference in Libya. But it is only a matter of time before the increasingly aggressive rhetoric of Western rulers is translated into brute military force.

Given the economic decay of the capitalist system, the Western powers can only guarantee their influence in the third world through the exercise of military violence. Whether or not they succeed in plunging the world into a new round of warfare depends entirely on the working class. By organising to expose and disrupt the bosses' military exploits, we can seize the opportunity to prepare for the overthrow of their ramshackle system.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE OPPRESSED

Western diplomatic and military intervention in the third world has one objective: to perpetuate capitalist plunder and oppression. In any conflict between imperialist countries like Britain or the USA, and third world countries, workers must take sides. By supporting the struggles of oppressed countries against the Western powers that oppress them, workers in the West can hasten the defeat of the system that degrades us all.

British workers should welcome any challenge to the might of the British state by the impoverished and enslaved nations of the third world. Any such challenge weakens the grip of the bosses at home and abroad. Fighting for solidarity with third world countries and liberation struggles is also the only effective method of tackling the influence of patriotic propaganda campaigns at home. By arguing for support for the people of Libya, Argentina, Ireland and Palestine against Britain, we can confront nationalist prejudices which depict British bosses and workers as having a common interest. Such a campaign can create a climate in which an outlook that puts the working class first can flourish.

VIOLENCE

The establishment will always seek to mobilise workers' revulsion against bloodshed, particularly where civilian casualties are involved, against people fighting back against oppression. We start by recognising that there will always be wars as long as we live under a system based on capitalist competition, national oppression and class domination — and in all wars civilians will inevitably die. The responsibility for the barbarism and the bloodshed in the world today rests squarely with the ruling classes who have shown that they will go to any lengths of mass terror and genocide to preserve their rule.

In our response to violence we make a clear distinction between military action aimed at perpetuating capitalist barbarism, and military action by oppressed nations fighting against Western domination.

We should emulate the outlook advanced by revolutionary leaders like Lenin, who wrote in 1915, 'If tomorrow Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be just and defensive wars' in which 'any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory "great" powers.'

Our resolute opposition to the violence of the British ruling class must be matched by unhesitating support for the right of nations dominated by Britain to resist the British establishment by whatever means necessary.

THE ENEMY IS AT HOME

During the first world war a significant minority of workers rallied behind the slogan championed by revolutionary leaders like Rosa Luxemburg in Germany and John MacLean in Britain: 'The enemy is at home.' It is a slogan which needs to be revived in the struggle against chauvinism and militarism today.

We oppose the militaristic exploits of Reagan as much as those of Thatcher. But, as the Libyan crisis shows, Britain's rulers also oppose Reagan as soon as US action threatens their own interests. In the thirties British workers' resistance to the war drive was undermined because they hated Hitler more than they hated their own class enemy. This provided scope for the establishment to manipulate anti-fascist sentiments and drag workers into the war against Germany. Instead of fighting their own bosses, workers died in millions supporting them against their rivals abroad.

Today anti-Americanism is beginning to play the role of uniting the British people, workers and employers, against a foreign enemy. As the rift between Europe and America widens, there is a danger that workers will yet again be drawn into taking sides along national lines. When British workers support the British government and British firms against their American rivals, this undermines their capacity to act independently as workers against their employers. Instead of uniting workers from different countries it divides them even further. The slippery slope that begins with workers backing, for patriotic reasons, the European against the American rescue plan at Westland Helicopters, ends up with workers backing Britain on the battlefields of war.

Only by campaigning for the defeat of our own enemy — the British state — can we break the evil influence of nationalism and begin to organise effective resistance to the war drive.

BRING THE WAR TO BRITAIN

In their struggle for survival the bosses have to wage war on two fronts. At home they must drive down living standards and enforce their discipline on an increasingly hostile and rebellious working class. Abroad they must protect their markets and spheres of investment against their capitalist rivals and suppress growing revolt against Western domination.

Even the most powerful capitalist state, let alone a declining imperialist power like Britain, cannot sustain war on two fronts against determined enemies for any length of time. Britain's hopes of survival rest heavily on its ability to neutralise working class resistance at home. This is why the pro-British outlook which unites all sections of British society is of fundamental importance to the survival of British capitalism.

As long as the narrow chauvinist tradition represented by Labour politicians from Neil Kinnock on the right to David Blunkett and Tony Benn on the left retains its influence over the labour movement, Britain's rulers will find it easy to win on the home front. But if workers replace their allegiance to Britain with a commitment to their own class, Thatcher will really meet her 'enemy within'.

The bosses' drive to war can be curbed by opening up the second front in the class war in Britain. Forcing the ruling class to fight its battle for survival on the streets of Britain, instead of abroad, is the best way to tame the imperialist beast.

Sabena Norton

REAGAN RAISES THE STAKES

GADDAFFI EXPOSES WESTERN DIVISIONS

Reagan has accused Libyan leader Gaddafi of being not only 'a barbarian' but also of being 'flaky'. He has sent the US fleet to harass Libya, frozen Libyan assets in the USA, ordered 1500 US citizens in Libya home and imposed other economic sanctions against Libya. But his appeals for European leaders to follow suit have fallen on deaf ears. While it may suit the USA to swing its weight around in the Middle East, the European powers have too much to lose by endorsing this high risk aggressive strategy.

Ever since Gaddafi closed US bases and expelled US military advisers from Libya shortly after taking power in a military coup in 1969, he has been a target of American hostility. In the seventies Libya took advantage of a favourable international oil market to develop its feeble domestic economy. The Gaddafi regime used oil revenues to finance development projects and social reforms, strengthening popular support at home. Gaddafi tried to enhance his international prestige by attempting, largely unsuccessfully, to promote closer relations with other Arab countries, and by supporting liberation struggles in Palestine and elsewhere. Both his domestic and foreign policies provoked the wrath of the USA.

The USA's attempt to rally a joint Western offensive against Libya has already backfired, exposing tensions within the Atlantic alliance

- In 1977 the USA listed Libya with Cuba and North Korea as 'international terrorist states' and discreetly encouraged an Egyptian border incursion
 - In 1981 American intelligence agents launched a black propaganda campaign about Libyan 'murder squads' in the USA and plots to assassinate the president; Libya was officially declared an enemy and US destroyers shot down two Libyan fighters in the Gulf of Sirte
 - In 1982 Reagan banned all Libyans in the USA from studying nuclear physics, lest they develop the capacity to nuke Washington
 - In 1983 the war in Chad provided another pretext for stepping up the pressure as Gaddafi's army took sides in the long-running civil war on Libya's southern border
 - In 1984 the siege at the Libyan embassy in London, which followed a series of conflicts between pro-Gaddafi and anti-Gaddafi factions in Britain, provoked another upsurge of Western hysteria directed against the 'whacky colonel' and his regime
 - In 1985 Libya got the blame for sheltering Palestinian guerrillas responsible for a range of operations around the Mediterranean. Reagan blamed the mysterious 'Abu Nidal' and Gaddafi, his alleged godfather, and endorsed a full mobilisation of the Egyptian army at the Libyan border in December.
- The Christmas bombings at Rome and Vienna airports provoked a new offensive against Libya in the opening days of 1986. Even *Newsweek* admits that, 'Washington had evidence linking Abu Nidal more closely to Syria than to Iran and Libya, but chose to emphasise the Gaddafi connection' because, as a top US expert put it, 'Libya is fair game to take a crack at.' In the early eighties



THE 'MAD' COLONEL: GADDAFFI'S SUPPOSED DEMENTIA MAKES HIM FAIR GAME FOR REAGAN

Reagan leaned on Exxon and Mobil to withdraw their Libyan oil operations, cut US aid and discouraged trade. He now aims to persuade European powers to impose similar sanctions against Libya.

America's strategy is to raise the political temperature in the Middle East by using issues of trade and investment to exert muscle against enemies and leverage on allies. The USA aims to politicise economic relations — and Gaddafi provides a convenient pretext. In this way the USA can compensate for its declining competitiveness in overseas markets with its superior military strength.

Unfortunately for Reagan, Europe's interests in north Africa and the Middle East run directly contrary to those of the USA.

The European powers have generally been happy to join in the general Western hysteria against Gaddafi. The British government has reaped considerable benefits from promo-

ting anti-Libyan prejudices. The death of a policewoman outside the Libyan embassy before the siege in April 1984 provided a useful focus for national unity against the menace of 'international terrorism'. It has helped to justify the build-up of repressive legislation and the deployment of more coercive methods of policing to deal with internal threats to the establishment from blacks or striking workers. Yet even Britain refused point blank to join Reagan's sanctions against Libya last week.

Unlike the USA, the European powers have a major economic stake in north Africa and the Middle East. Britain, France, Italy and Germany rely on the region not only for oil but for crucial investments and trade outlets. It suits the USA to maintain a degree of instability in the area as a pretext for US political intervention. But this is a direct threat to European interests which above all seek to preserve stable conditions for

capitalist exploitation.

The clash of interests among the Western powers was already apparent over the war in Chad in 1983. The USA wanted to keep the war on the boil to justify its interference. The French wanted to cool the whole matter down to maintain their own position and keep the USA out. While for the USA strategic considerations come first, for the European powers first priority must go to economic matters. Hence the universal rejection in Europe of Reagan's proposed economic sanctions against Libya last week. Fomenting anti-Arab prejudice at home is one thing; cutting off vital business interests to advance US ambitions is quite another.

Libya is little more than a pawn in a sordid superpower game. Ever since the country was created in the carve-up of Africa among the European powers in the years before the First World War it has been the victim of imperialist manoeuvres. It was first dominated by Italy, at the behest of the British who wanted to maintain it as a buffer between French and British Africa. It remained under Italian control until the end of the Second World War when it was occupied by the British to thwart French ambitions in north Africa. It was only after prolonged wrangles at the United Nations that Britain was forced to recognise the independence of Libya under a puppet monarchy. The involvement of US as well as British troops in propping up the new regime confirmed the new balance of forces in the region.

The development of Libya's oil reserves in the sixties and seventies enabled it to break out of its earlier status as one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet its oil boom was short-lived. Libya has been hit hard by the contraction of the world market since 1979. The population of less than four million, mainly poor farmers and herdsmen, is scattered over a large area of which more than 90 per cent is desert. Libya remains a poor country.

Libya is vulnerable and a good target for US bullying tactics. But it would not be as easy to invade as Grenada or the Falkland Islands. Any Western interference in Libya would inevitably provoke an anti-Western backlash across the Arab world, possibly bringing down a number of pro-Western regimes which already face considerable internal tensions.

Behind Reagan's anti-Gaddafi rhetoric the insecurity of the imperialist world is increasingly difficult to hide.

Helen Swift

ANTI-ARAB HYSTERIA

There are around one million foreigners in Italy, some from other EEC countries, but most from Tunisia, Morocco, Yugoslavia and other Mediterranean countries, including the former Italian colony of Libya. Under a law passed in the fascist era in 1931 local police chiefs have the power to pick up, detain and deport foreigners living in their area, but Italy has no comprehensive system of immigration laws.

Announcing plans for systematic immigration controls, interior minister Scalfaro said last week that Italy was now in the front line of international terrorism. He noted that during 1985 there were ten terrorist incidents in Italy, only one of which was committed by an Italian.

The menace of 'foreign terrorism' provides the pretext for tightening up internal controls.

Since the El Al attack the newspapers have been full of special features designed to show that Arabs are dangerous criminals. The top people's daily *Corriere della Sera* publishes detailed statistics on 'Arab crime' and claims that in 1985 'only ten provinces out of 94 in Italy have been immune from the contagion of Middle Eastern delinquents'. This is the quality press! The popular papers provide interviews with taxi-drivers, shopkeepers and old ladies who claim that the criminals who have robbed, burgled or mugged them were probably Arabs.

An Arab commentator living in Italy told *ms* that the police have anticipated the introduction of anti-immigrant legislation by rounding up and deporting hundreds of Tunisians and Moroccans. In Genoa 440 Tunisian passengers on a ship were refused permission to land. At frontier posts Arabs are being refused entry unless they have proof of a job or a course of study. 'Only blonde tourists are now being allowed into Italy,' he says.

In Rome last week two young Arabs were hauled off the No 74 bus when a nun screamed, 'Help! Help! Those Arabs are

carrying guns.' When an angry crowd dragged them away to the police station they were found to be unarmed. Slogans have appeared painted on walls around Rome accusing Arabs of taking Italian jobs and houses and demanding that they be kicked out.

Immigration is turning into a key issue in Italian party politics. Republican Party leader Spadolini is in the forefront of the anti-Arab campaign, vying with the right-wing Christian Democrats for the racist vote. Socialist Party prime minister Craxi is keeping his head down. He cannot afford to lose right-wing support by taking a liberal stand on such a sensitive matter. The powerful Communist Party also ducks the issue. It argues that the issues of terrorism and immigration should be kept separate — the former to be dealt with by appropriate repression, the latter to be seen as a social problem.

The proposed new immigration legislation will meet a degree of opposition when it finally reaches parliament. But by then it will be too late. The climate of anti-Arab sentiment will have already isolated immigrants and allowed the police to enforce strict internal controls. The time to organise against immigration controls and against attempts to criminalise any section of the working class is now.

Annette Jenkins

Following the guerrilla attack on the El Al check-in at Rome's Fiumicino airport on 27 December an ugly mood of racism is sweeping Italy

REVIEWS

VICTOR GRAYSON'S DOWNFALL

THE BRITISH DISEASE

David Clark, *Labour's lost leader: Victor Grayson*, Quartet £9.95

Ever since his mysterious disappearance in 1920 the fate of left-wing Labour politician Victor Grayson has been a source of controversy. His downfall has been variously attributed to drink, mental instability and suppressed homosexuality. But, as David Clark's book reveals, Grayson's capitulation to chauvinism at the time of the First World War exposed his central political weakness.

Grayson was elected MP for Colne Valley in a dramatic by-election victory in 1907. In his maiden speech Grayson defied convention to launch an uncompromising attack on the British establishment on the unemployment issue. Grayson was equally forthright in his denunciations of the Labour leaders. 'I leave the house with pleasure,' he told them in October 1908, 'You are traitors to your class, you will not stand up for your class, you are traitors.' Grayson was a brilliant orator who attracted thousands to open-air meetings. But his election manifestos contained conventional Labour policies, proclaiming



the dubious achievements of the parliamentary Labour Party.

The outbreak of war split the labour movement. The leaders of the Labour Party took a neutral pacifist position on the war. Small groupings of revolutionary socialists adopted an intransigently anti-war position. On the other hand trade union leaders like Ben Tillett and Will Thorne took a staunchly patriotic, pro-imperialist stand. This view was endorsed by an influential group of socialists, including Henry Hyndman, a former leader of the revolutionary left, and Robert

Blatchford, editor of the popular radical paper the *Clarion*. Grayson, who worked on the *Clarion*, gave his support to the chauvinist camp.

Grayson broadcast the patriotic message far and wide — even going on tour in Australia and New Zealand. In November 1916 he joined up with the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces and fought in the frontline trenches in France. Injury brought Grayson back to England where he continued his anti-German campaign. In 1918 he condemned the German people who 'have been for 30 years educated in a scoundrelly and brutal gospel which is dictating their conduct in this war'.

Grayson denounced British workers who demanded higher wages, and compared strikers who reduced their output to robbing a soldier of ammunition as he was going into battle. He told a public meeting in Middlesbrough that the 'honour of this nation' would never be vindicated until Germany had been 'thrashed and then punished'.

Nobody knows what happened to Grayson after his disappearance in 1920. But his political disgrace took place long before his personal demise. This book is well worth reading not only because it tells the truth about Grayson, but because it shows how nationalism can undermine even the most radical critic of the system.

Joan Phillips

FILM

AN AMERICAN BULL IN CHINATOWN

The Year of The Dragon, Michael Cimino (director)

In his new film Michael Cimino continues the exploration he began in *The Deer Hunter* and *Heaven's Gate* of what it means to be an American. Stanley White of Polish stock, a Vietnam veteran and Action Man cop takes charge of New York's Chinatown district. A vicious feud is on between the young and the old in the Chinese community and Stanley promptly declares personal war on Chinatown, to the consternation not only of the triads but also of his own more pragmatic superiors.

Stanley's *Magnum Force* mania has little to do with the fact that tourists are having their spare ribs served with generous helpings of bullets, or indeed with the fact that living conditions for many of the Chinese are deplorable and should be alleviated by the application of some all-American law 'n' order. This is how Stanley (Mickey Rourke picking up the De Niro mantle with great assurance) sees it. The real reason is that Stanley is a mess — because of Vietnam, because of his disintegrating marriage, because

he's not sure where he himself fits in.

His racism is highlighted by his affair with rich kid cum TV reporter, Tracy Tzu (Ariane), a Chinese American who is not above being used by Stanley to stir things up for Joey Tai (John Lone) the new, young ruler of Chinatown. Stanley raves on about 'the enemy' (he doesn't distinguish between the Vietnamese and the Chinese), about the media (defeatist then, parasitic now) about the lack of a will to win, about the system breaking down and about how much he 'cares'. This is pure Rambo, and it brings home how much that film built upon the redemption of the war veterans which began (in a more complex and challenging way) in *The Deer Hunter*.

Stanley's wife, Tracy and the other policemen all comprehensively and expressly condemn Stanley for the obsessive and destructive force that he is. He shows signs of conversion — witness his growing relationship with Tracy, his study of things Chinese and his realisation of the systematic oppression of the Chinese in America. 'No one remembers in this country,' he says, and is surely remembering his own history too. There is a crucial failure however to render either Stanley's predicament or any change which might (or might not) be occurring interesting or convincing in itself. This failure is based on the way in which the narrative inexorably propels the obnoxious character forward as hero, and in the way the outcome of his struggles with both Joey and Tracy inevitably has the effect of vindicating his own approach.

It is as if the police thriller form has got the better of Cimino. He took the Western by the scruff of the neck in *Heaven's Gate* and gave it a thorough shaking with class and race. In both *Heaven's Gate* and *The Deer Hunter* his heroes are no saints, but they are situated by plot and above all by the unusual forms of those films. Explosive bursts of action are accompanied by long reflective sequences, episodes are clearly marked out in time and space. In *The Year of The Dragon* however the rogue cop (quite a traditional figure now) goes about his business in an essentially undisturbed and traditional way. Relentless action is all.

The film is structured around three funerals. The opening one is a typically magnificent Cimino set-piece (if not quite as breathtaking as the weddings, dances and railheads of his earlier work). The close-up of the mounted police chief's head encased in helmet, chin-strap and shades and the intercutting between the funeral and yet another murder are early signs that Cimino retains his formidable touch. The pitch thereafter never falters, only now and again moving up a gear for a really bravura shoot-out or chase. It is a powerful and thoroughly exciting film (perhaps a shade gross for some tastes) but there is insufficient space to deal adequately with the issues Cimino insists on raising.

It was impossible to forgive *The Deer Hunter* for presenting the Vietcong as the evil torturing enemies of decent boys, but at least that film contained a devastating account of crumbling confidence and disillusionment at home. In *The Year of The Dragon* the Chinese community ends up as a perilous backdrop for Stanley's angst even though Cimino may have wished to give a vivid and sympathetic account of their place in America. That's what happens when you start worrying about the policeman as a victim (before him it was the soldier) as opposed to those really on the receiving end.

Pat Ford

NICARAGUA

BEING A GUERRILLA IS NO GAME

Omar Cabezas, *Fire from the mountain*, Cape £5.95

Omar Cabezas is now a minister in the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. This is his compelling account of his training as a guerrilla in the Nicaraguan countryside in the early seventies.

Cabezas, whose guerrilla name was Eugenio, was born in Leon the former capital of Nicaragua and chief university town. He first showed his promise as a political leader in Leon's militant student movement at the end of the sixties. The guerrilla movement against US-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza and his brutal National Guard was then capable of only limited actions against individual Somocistas and landowners.

Cabezas makes no attempt to romanticise the life of the guerrillas. The overwhelming impression is of the mud, filth, hunger and disease which dominated the life of the early guerrilla bands. Cabezas himself suffered for months from mountain leprosy, a condition which opened up deep ulcers in his ankles making it impossible for him to move without pain and for which the guerrillas' medic had no remedy.

Nor is there any mythologising about the social life of the guerrilla bands who usually numbered 10 to 15 men entirely thrown on their own resources. Loneliness and boredom were constant problems. New recruits had to be steered for their confrontations with the Guard by commanders who were just as brutal and demanding as the Guard's own officers.

The force with which Cabezas tells his raw tale of life as a guerrilla makes the warmth of his story all the more astounding. Without romanticising the armed struggle, Cabezas renders his description of the unspoken comradeship, the pain at the death of Tello the trainer who forced him beyond the limits of endurance, and the sentiments of popular support all the more authentic. *Fire from the mountain* is an insider's account of the agony and the ecstasy of the struggle for freedom.

John Johnson

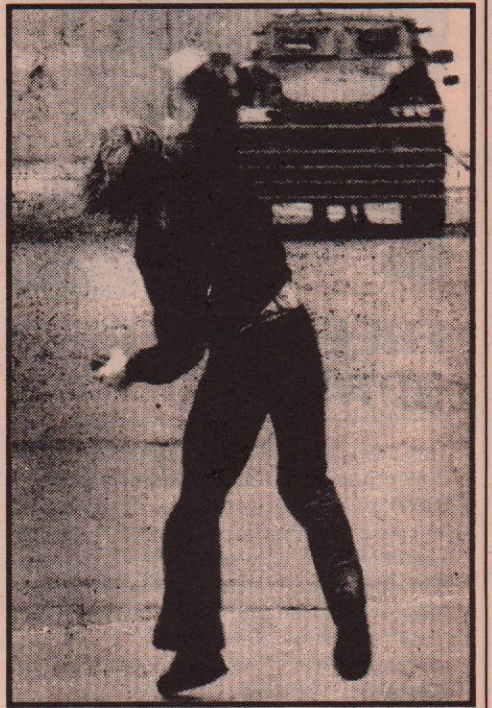


CHANGE CHANNELS

The Eleventh Hour (Monday Channel 4) offers a chance to see one of the first Soviet features, Lev Kuleshov's 1924 *The extraordinary adventures of Mr West in the land of the Bolsheviks*. Made at a time when currency shortages and a Western trade embargo made film production in the USSR extraordinarily difficult, *Mr West* uses the conventions of Hollywood silent comedy to ridicule the portrayal of the Soviet Union in the Western media.

On the eve of the by-elections in Northern Ireland forced by Loyalist politicians to demonstrate Protestant hostility to the Anglo-Irish agreement *Diverse Reports* (Wednesday Channel 4) interviews Protestant workers in Belfast to find out why they oppose the deal.

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• **Black blood on British hands**, Charles Longford's survey of the struggle in South Africa, the role the British establishment is playing and the role the labour movement could play. **£1.50 plus 60p p&p**

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LETTERS

STEPPING OUT



CHRIS BLACK

FREE NURSERIES NOW!

I am a single parent and a student at Thames Polytechnic and I'm attempting to live on £3000 a year for two people. I can't go out and get a part-time job to earn extra because I can't afford a babysitter. I pay £29 a week rent, £10 gas and electric, and then how am I supposed to feed and clothe two people?

At Thames Polytechnic a nursery campaign has been publicised as the executive's priority for the year. But students haven't been organised to take any action at all to get a nursery. The campaign consists of a women's officer to organise fund-raising. We've all been asked to fork out £5 out of our own pockets for a nursery fund. The nursery campaign at Thames has been going on for 12 years.

A women's committee now exists and has received from the board of directors £20 000 to decorate a room on the grounds and assurances that funding for the running of the nursery will be found elsewhere. The directors don't want to take responsibility, so the only way we'll be able to get decent nursery facilities is to force them. A day of action has now been called for 27 January. But it is conceived as a fund-raising day. I suggested getting some effective action going on that day and demanding funds, but the women's committee think the governing body is some kind of benevolent set-up which we should work with.

Half-way through last term I had to stop attending college because I couldn't afford a babysitter anymore. Now I've been going to college for one day a week when there's the once-a-week morning creche. But the women's officer could give me no guarantees that this is going to continue to operate. It looks like I'll have to give up college. I've tried the social, but you can't get a nursery unless you're a childbatterer. Social services have said to me my circumstances would have to change drastically to be eligible. It's enough to make you batter your kids.

I tried locally in Peckham Copplestone Day Centre, but that's already got 80 applicants on the waiting list and apart from the social services nurseries for deviants, the only other ones are attached to schools which take three-year olds upwards. My daughter's two. You can't get a childminder for less than £30 a week, and they're usually women who can't get a nursery themselves.

What I want to know is how the RCP would deal with this situation. I know what the women's committee and executive will say if the RCP does anything and that is the RCP are trying to take over the campaign. The way I look at it, perhaps if the RCP got involved we might get something done. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Kim Pepper
Peckham

THE NIGHT WORK QUESTION

The Tories are fighting 'sex discrimination'. That is, employment under-secretary Peter Bottomley has told the TUC that he has started overhauling the sex discrimination laws. The Tories intend to scrap the part of the Factory Act which limits the night work

women are allowed to do.

Protective legislation has been the target of a lot of radical sounding criticism. It has often been argued that women should have the 'right' to be exploited on an equal basis with men by working with heavy weights and toxic materials, doing night work or mining etc. Our aim should be to fight for the extension of protective legislation, to include men too. This is the approach that Karl Marx advocated in his lifetime. And it's as valid today as it was then. The TUC response to the Tories' latest attack on women's rights makes various radical noises but unfortunately offers no effective way of defying them. The unions correctly note that women are under pressure to do night work due to the lack of daytime childcare facilities. But instead of campaigning for more nursery resources, they are up in arms about the fact that employers haven't asked whether women wish to work night shifts or not!

Then in characteristic fashion the TUC attempts to turn the issue into a 'Save public transport' campaign, on the grounds that women working nights will have to risk attacks in the streets while walking to work due to cuts in bus services. This really amounts to adding insult to injury. Not only are they avoiding fighting for women's rights, but they are using the issue as a cheap anti-Tory gimmick to bolster the Labour Party's dismal record of fighting the cuts.

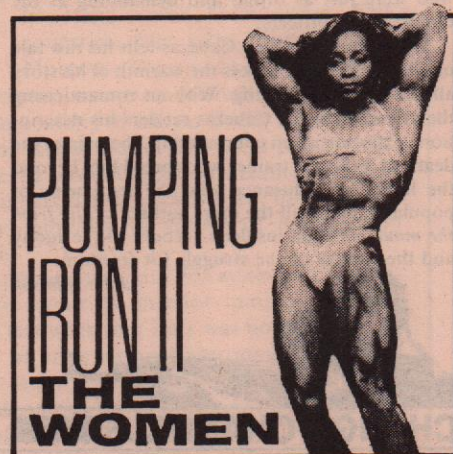
Eileen McEvoy
Leeds

FREE ABORTION FOR FOREIGNERS!

An average of 21 Spanish women have abortions each day in London. They are forced to come here because abortion is illegal in Spain. They are not eligible for a free abortion on the NHS and are forced to rely on the private clinics. Private fees together with the air fare often make it very difficult for students and unemployed women to make the trip. And they have to pay for somewhere to stay in London and have language difficulties too.

Often Spanish women have abortions after 12 weeks which makes them both more expensive and less safe. Delays can be caused by applying for a passport in Spain, making arrangements for flights and by the need for secrecy. Spanish women and Spanish workers should fight for free abortion when required in Spain. But it is British workers' duty to fight for free abortion in Britain for foreign women.

Paula Lucia Gual
North London



TRIVIAL PURSUITS

Last Tuesday I went to my local cinema for an all-women showing of *Pumping iron II - the women* (see review *tms* 34). Far more interesting than the film is the discussion it seems to have generated in the women's movement.

Nearly 300 women attended the showing I went to, and nearly all of them stayed for the discussion afterwards. Some women thought the film was pornographic, some

thought it was an optimistic expression of women's potential. Some thought body-building was good because it made women strong, others thought it was bad because it showed women trying to be like men. One woman suggested that a few women body-builders would not make much difference to the position of women, but others were convinced that the film had struck a blow for women's liberation because it showed women in a positive light. And so the discussion went on in ever shrinking circles. The few voices that suggested there might be more important issues to discuss were drowned out. Most women didn't stay to hear the end of the discussion.

This preoccupation with the image of women and personal aspirations seems to be leading many women activists into a backwater. Whether or not a woman wants to be a champion body-builder should be a matter of personal choice, not a political issue. The problems women face in achieving equality with men in sport or in any other field are real enough. Obstacles far more serious than a panel of senile male judges are continually being thrown in our way. Last year saw major cuts in nursery provision and serious attacks on contraceptive and abortion rights. While feminists bicker about nothing, women who want to fight for real equality have to confront the real obstacles that Gillick, Powell and the like throw in our way.

Wendy Ellis
Lambeth

ANGER ON THE FRONT LINE

At a meeting of Hackney council on Monday 30 black youths disrupted the meeting and forced a 30-minute adjournment. They were from the Roots Pool Project based in the Dalston Community Centre and make up an important part of Hackney's front line in Sandringham Road. The council meeting had been called to consider the issue of racism at the Clapton Park Nursery where an occupation by parents of the children has continued since October last year. The chair and treasurer of the Roots Pool Project took over the meeting and explained the legacy of mistreatment they have received from Hackney council and the history of brutality at the hands of the police.

The council has recently offered to fund their organisation, which undertakes cultural and recreational activities such as a recording studio, training for work and videos. Despite numerous promises from local councillors and officials the only funding they have received has been for 'a table tennis table and dominoes'. They have even received a £1000 grant from Scotland Yard for materials. The recent council offer of money, however, has come with many strings attached. In particular, that they should move out of the community centre and carry out their activities out of sight of local residents.

The uproarious meeting showed the fragility of the council's strategy of buying off a few black militants to contain unrest on the front line. It also showed that this strategy cannot work any longer.

Tony Parker
Hackney

Write to

tms

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Tory home secretary Douglas Hurd has a personal stake in his campaign to bring sex and violence on TV to public attention. Granada is serialising *War Without Limits*, a thriller about lust and terrorism written by...part-time novelist Hurd himself. The book is packed with chauffeurs being shotgunned in the midriff, 'blackened and smouldering' bodies hanging from chimneys, 'rivers of blood' and bodies arching 'convulsively' before 'twitching like a dog in a dream'(?). How does Hurd account for his involvement in this immoral masterpiece? He doesn't — he's 'too frantically busy' to comment. Perhaps he's writing a follow-up about a cabinet full of ministers who get their secretaries pregnant, get stoned off the streets of Birmingham, and develop strange fetishes with helicopters. But that would be pushing fiction a bit too far.

The row over Westland helicopters has really got the British establishment in a tailspin. On the morning of 9 January the top people's Financial Times announced that 'Heseltine flies into calmer weather' — just hours before he started a fresh storm by resigning. No FT — no rash comments.

Speaking of which, this week Labour front bench Clive Soley told the Fabians that, 'Law and order should always have been a Labour issue,' primarily because 'most offenders are working class'. Now Thatcher only says black youth and striking miners are criminals. But Soley reckons all workers are crooks. So Labour really is less elitist than the Tories.

The Militant machine may be dented, but it's still functioning. The Tendency's latest fund-raising scheme is to send its supporters out spivving at Labour constituency meetings, selling souvenir copies of the redundancy notices issued by Liverpool council last year. The asking rate is 20p a copy. If you are offered any, pick one up for me. It seems a small price to pay for a permanent reminder of the day the most left-wing Labour council in the country tried to sack 31 000 workers 'in the cause of socialism'.

British troops terrorising the Irish people have added a new weapon to their armoury. It is an aerosol can, filled with a spray that is guaranteed to beat off attacks from dogs. John Lee, a Tory minion at the defence ministry, has assured dog-lovers that the spray will wear off in 10 minutes. He also says it will not be used 'within range of innocent bystanders'. Very decent of you, John. But when an Army patrol was recently attacked by local canines in the Gbanscale district of Derry, the squaddies fired off a baton round which missed the dogs by a mile — and came within inches of blasting away a seven-year old Irish girl's face. So I suggest John Lee sticks a plastic bullet up his aerosol.

Who says British state corporations have no sense of humour? Some British Rail wit has stuck an advertising poster on the Falls Road in republican West Belfast, bearing the legend 'Brighton Early'. Early? Like 2.54am on Friday 12 October 1984?

My heart has been saddened this week by news of two mercenary transfer deals. Manchester United look likely to sell the remarkable Mark Hughes to a foreign football outfit for £2m. And Joan Phillips is leaving the *tms* editorial board to make her fame and fortune as assistant editor to Eric Box on the *Bristol Bugler*. Truly, the corrupting influence of capitalism has got a lot to answer for.

'LONELY' EDDIE VEALE

Reports



DAVE ROURKE

HATTON'S RAP FAILS TO CONVINCE

The defeat of Labour candidate Anne Hollinshead in the Old Swan council by-election is a devastating indictment of Liverpool's Labour council. In a television interview next day deputy council leader Derek Hatton tried to blame Labour's defeat on the national leadership and the scandal-mongering media, but the Liverpool council leadership must take their share of responsibility for the Alliance victory.

Old Swan ward is typical of inner-city areas throughout Britain. In an area of Liverpool that was once a manufacturing centre there is hardly any industry left. The list of companies which have closed down includes Meccano, Lucas Aerospace and Lyons Maid. Recently Plessey Telecommunications cut its workforce in half and later this year United Biscuits will stop production altogether. Even the local bus depot has been closed.

The Labour Party used to be weak in Liverpool, but alongside the city's industrial decline support for Labour had been on the increase. Old Swan, for example, is part of the Broad Green constituency where Militant's Terry Fields is the MP. In the last council elections Labour's Peter Lloyd won by a clear majority of 1000 votes. But last week's result exposes the vulnerability of the Labour Party in Liverpool. Standing as an SDP/Alliance candidate to avoid the stigma of past Liberal council leaderships in the city, managing director Glyn Parry won a 15 per cent swing against Labour in this solidly working class area.

Like Hatton, district Labour Party vice-chair Terry Harrison blamed the result on 'the highly personal media campaign which will have confused some Labour voters'. Party secretary Felicity Dowling agreed with Hatton and Harrison, and added that the bad weather might have something to do with it. But it wasn't the weather or the witch-hunt that caused 'the confusion'. People in Liverpool have been confused by a council policy which includes issuing 31 000 redundancy notices, a 'no cuts' deal with the Swiss bankers that incorporates £3m cuts, and the unfulfilled promises of more jobs, better services and new houses.

The night before the by-election Felicity Dowling described housing as 'a cracking issue' which would be a great advantage to Labour candidate Anne Hollinshead. Yet although the council employed a contractor to build 81 new houses in Old Swan, the new dwellings comprise less than 1.5 per cent of the ward's housing. Dowling admitted that, 'There are two major tenement blocks that we'll have to do something about,' but didn't mention that 6 per cent of the ward's

houses lack 'basic amenities'. In an area flyposted with advertisements for damp coursing, Labour's housing policy has been as ineffective as every other aspect of municipal socialism.

People who live in Old Swan are well aware that services guaranteed by the council are not guaranteed at all. Even the bins aren't being emptied regularly. Two days before the by-election Labour Party members were leafleting the area with copies of a letter from the city's cleansing manager. Dated 12 December the letter reads as follows: 'Refuse collection in the Old Swan area should be back to a proper weekly frequency in the very near future despite the very bad vehicle availability caused in the main by the lack of a proper vehicle replacement programme.' Since then there has been little change — the council is in no position to provide better services now than it was in 1985.

Some Labour voters still voted Labour because they had benefited directly from council policies. One had managed to get one of the new council houses, another had hung on to a job in the technical college canteen which would have been privatised by the previous Liberal council. But most Labour supporters voted Labour because 'that's what we always have done'. Meanwhile hundreds more turned away from Labour disillusioned by the council's bluster and its confusing policies and bureaucratic methods.

Labour's defeat at Old Swan shows that the overall effect of the council's double-talk has been to deepen cynicism about any sort of left-wing politics. Given their experience of Liverpool council's brand of 'Marxist politics' it is not surprising that many have opted for the Alliance. The way is now open for an Alliance victory at the council elections in May. Hatton and the rest may bluster all they like about Thatcher and Kinnock, and the *Sun* and the *Liverpool Echo*, but they won't fool the people of Liverpool.

Andrew Calcutt



Deadline for news and reports: Monday 9am

Come along!

HOW WORKERS CAN WIN IN 1986

The miners' defeat has led many to draw the conclusion that strike action is ineffective. Scab unions like the UDM among the Notts miners, company unions like the electricians, and maybe Hackney Nalgo, are giving up the right to strike. The engineering union is taking government cash for ballots and the TUC is not going to stop it. If we don't take matters into our own hands now we won't have any unions left by next year.

We can't afford to wait for the Labour Party to come to the rescue. The Revolutionary Communist Party believes that there is an alternative to waiting for Kinnock. That is to build a new party committed to fighting for working class interests now, instead of making concession after concession to the Tories.

Come along to our public meetings in Hackney and Manchester and our Glasgow dayschool to hear our point of view and put your own.

• OUR UNIONS: TIME TO TAKE CONTROL

Thursday 16 January 7.30pm
Pembury Tavern
80 Amhurst Road
Hackney E8

Speakers:

- rank and file Yorkshire miner involved in the campaign against the UDM
- Hackney Nalgo member on what the no-strike deal means for council workers
- activist from tns on the TUC retreat and how to go forward

• SHOULD OUR UNIONS TAKE TORY CASH?

Manchester public meeting
Thursday 16 January 7.30pm
Black Lion Pub
Chapel Street

• WAITING FOR KINNOCK — OR FIGHTING BACK NOW?

Scottish day of discussion and debate
Saturday 8 February 12.00-5.30pm
McLellan Galleries
Sauchiehall Street
Glasgow

- Sessions
- One year after the miners' strike
- Fighting the Tories — a new approach
- Can the Labour Party be changed?
- Fighting back RCP-style in '86

Tickets £1 (50p UB40)
Refreshments and childcare available

• TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!

Why is the RCP opposing the Anglo-Irish agreement? What are the issues in the by-elections in Northern Ireland? How can we advance the cause of peace in Ireland? Why is the anniversary of Bloody Sunday an important occasion to commemorate? Bring all your questions and views on the war in Ireland to our open meetings around the country.

• Sheffield

Wednesday 22 January 7.30pm
The Foresters, Division Street

• Bradford

Wednesday 22 January 7.30pm
Central Library

• Leeds

Thursday 23 January 7.30pm
The Three Legs, The Headrow

• Pontefract

Thursday 23 January 7.30pm
Red Lion Hotel, Market Square

• North London

A series of discussions continues
Friday 17 January 7pm
Will Garret FitzGerald survive the Ulster crisis?
Friday 24 January 7pm
What is to be done in Britain?
Oxford Arms
Camden High Street/Jamestown Road
(Camden Town tube)

• YOU'RE NOT RECRUITING US!

The British army is on a drive to recruit students to terrorise the victims of British imperialism. RCP students will be out to terrorise Colonel BJ Smith in Sunderland and the local barracks in Bradford

• Sunderland

Wednesday 29 January 11am-12.30pm
Careers Block, St Mary's Place
Sunderland Polytechnic

• Bradford

Thursday 23 January 5pm
Bradford Parachute Regiment
Thornbury Barracks, Pudsey Lane End

• ANTI-RACIST RAVE-UP

Newcastle Workers Against Racism
Benefit
The Ground + support + late bar
Wednesday 22 January 7.30pm 'til late
The Red House, 40 Sandhill, The Quayside

• REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY STUDENTS SOCIETY

1985 saw more riots in Britain, more repression in South Africa, more British terror in Ireland, more moral panics to put down women's rights, more attacks on the working class and more cuts in our grants. But all we got from the leader of the National Union of Students at our conference in December was more posturing.

In 1985 Revolutionary Communist Party students mobilised against the racists, organised direct action against apartheid, spoke out for Irish freedom, demonstrated for women's rights, campaigned against scab unionism in the coalfields and stood up for students.

And we're back this year. Not impressed by student politics in the first term? Then join the RCPSS now. Ring Kerry Andrews on 01-729 0414 for more information.

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SUPER-EXPLOITATION IN SUN CITY

ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE PLATINUM MINeworkERS ON STRIKE IN SOUTH AFRICA SPOKE TO *tns* LAST WEEK ABOUT THEIR STRUGGLE



Last Tuesday, security personnel and police with dogs and riot gear forcibly ejected 20 000 black miners, who were on strike for a wage rise, from the Impala platinum mine owned by the General Mining Union Corporation (Gencor) in the artificially created apartheid 'homeland' of Bophuthatswana, home of Sun City. Workers who live in the homeland have been sent home, and those from surrounding areas have been forced at gun-point into buses and repatriated. 'The wages, living and working conditions in Bophuthatswana are the worst in South

Africa. All the miners, 65 per cent of whom are from the homeland itself, live in filthy overcrowded single-sex hostels.' These conditions prevail only a few miles from Sun City, the apartheid regime's showcase international entertainment centre.

The union leader explained how Gencor takes advantage of the special homeland legislation. 'The puppet administration in Bophuthatswana refuses to allow "foreign" trade unions to operate or to be recognised. The law stipulates that only unions which have their headquarters in the homeland can

be officially recognised by the state and employers.'

Because of its wider stand against the apartheid regime the South African National Union of Mineworkers refuses to comply with the homeland legislation. 'This would give *de facto* recognition to the homeland as an independent country,' says the NUM leader. The result is that Gencor has refused to negotiate with the NUM even though it has widespread support among the miners.

Their flimsy excuses about the law are just a thin disguise for the fact that they pay the

lowest wages of all mines in South Africa and force workers to live in the worst conditions. It is super-exploitation in every possible sense.'

Last week's events in Bophuthatswana expose the hypocrisy of South Africa's leading capitalists. Gencor has been in the forefront of big business pressure upon president PW Botha to introduce reforms in the apartheid system. Indeed Gencor's chief industrial relations executive, Naas Steenkamp, served on the government commission that first recommended the legalisation of black trade unions back in the seventies. Steenkamp claims that he is 'immensely grateful to have been associated so closely with the process of reform'.

Yet Gencor still refuses to recognise the NUM as the representative of its mineworkers. The NUM leader involved with the Impala dispute says that Gencor 'is the most intransigent of all the employers' when it comes to negotiations.

Gencor, now South Africa's second largest mining house, displayed its progressive industrial relations policies during last year's miners' strike over wages in September.

- Transvaal Navigation Collieries — 1500 workers forced back to work after being fired upon by police with rubber bullets and tear-gas

- Matla Collieries — 24 workers dismissed from 2000 after strike

- Mareivale — 300 workers forced at gun point into buses and repatriated

- Beatrix — tear-gas and rubber bullets used to break up a 1000-strong strike meeting, seven miners seriously injured, shaft stewards arrested and dismissed with 87 other workers, remaining workers forced to go underground by dogs and sjamboks

- Blinkpan — 1500 workers starved back to work after food was cut off from hostels

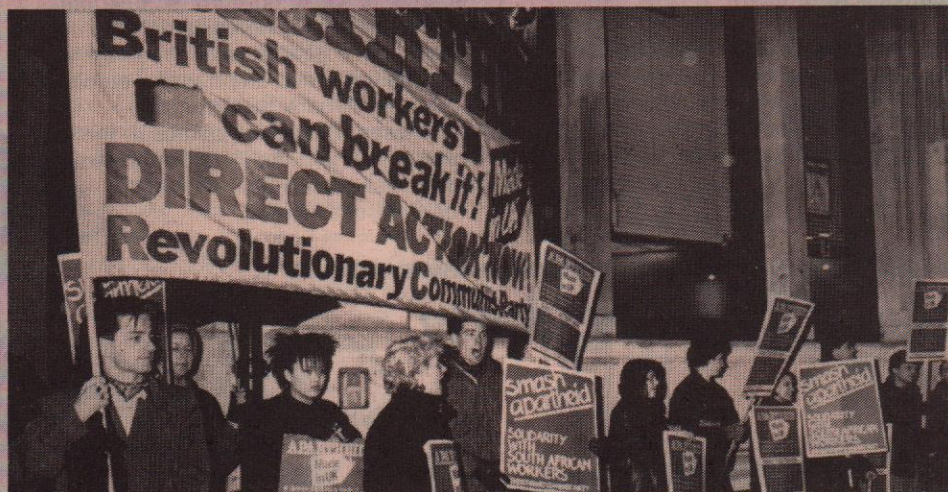
- Stifontein — strike broken by rubber bullets, six casualties and 55 sackings.

The employers' brutal tactics in the current strike at Impala mine and in last year's miners' strike show the emphasis of the South African capitalists' reform programme. They also expose the cynicism of British and American politicians who hold up the progressive initiatives of South African firms like Gencor or Anglo-American as evidence of moves towards reform in South Africa.

The struggles of the black mineworkers of South Africa confirm that the apartheid regime can only survive through super-exploitation and super-oppression. They also reveal that black workers' struggles for decent pay and conditions and for political rights are increasingly taking the form of a challenge to the whole system of South African capitalism.

Charles Longford

GENCOR-THE WESTERN CONNECTION



ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID SUPPORTERS PROTESTED OUTSIDE GENCOR'S LONDON OFFICE

South Africa supplies more than 60 per cent of the world's platinum. It is virtually the sole supplier of the Western motor industry, which has increased its demand for platinum since the enforced reduction in the use of lead as a petrol additive over the past decade. South Africa's major platinum exporters — Gencor and Anglo-American — have established their domination of a competitive world market because of the advantages of cheap and mobile labour conferred by the apartheid system.

The Gencor strike is important for workers in Britain and throughout the

West. This is not because it might lead to higher car prices as a result of platinum shortages, but because it exposes the hypocrisy of Western politicians. It shows that a peaceful negotiated settlement to South Africa's current political upheaval is impossible.

It also shows that the campaign for Western disinvestment from South Africa is misdirected. Gencor has led the drive to take over foreign companies which have left South Africa either because of worsening economic performance or because of political pressure at home. Last year

Gencor brought a coal mine in the KwaZulu homeland into operation after political pressure in the USA forced General Electric to pull out of a proposed joint-venture to develop the deposit. Black miners employed by Gencor's newly-established subsidiary Trans Natal Coal Corporation do not work or live in conditions any different from those at the Impala platinum mine.

In response to last year's miners' strike, Gencor embarked upon its most ambitious recruiting drive in Britain. The company used a coordinated campaign of press advertising and visits to coalfields in an attempt to attract British miners to share in the benefits arising from the super-exploitation of the black workers of South Africa.

Action Against Apartheid picketed Gencor's London office last week. In the coming weeks we will be taking this campaign to the Yorkshire coalfield where we will be arguing for British miners to take direct action in support of their fellow miners. We aim to ensure that working class solidarity action — not a rise in the price of platinum — leads to the reinstatement of all the sacked platinum miners in Bophuthatswana. If you want more information about our plans, or details of the special *Action Against Apartheid* pack, write to AAA, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX or phone 01-729 0414.

RCP



If you like what you read in *tns* become an RCP supporter. We meet weekly around the country to discuss the issues in the paper and to plan action in the local area.

Phone Fenna on 01-729 0414 or fill in the form below.

Name _____

Address _____

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Send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX