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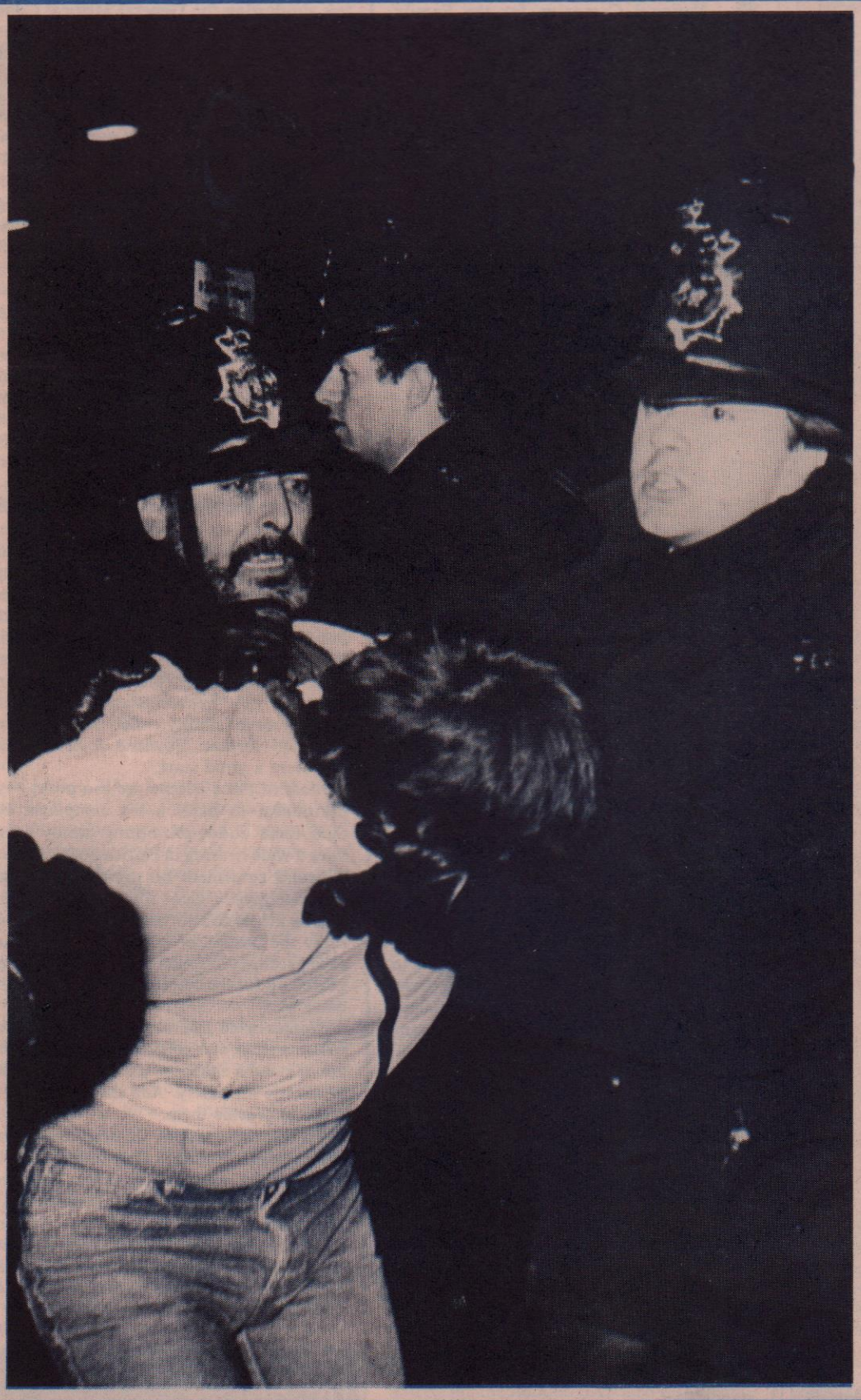
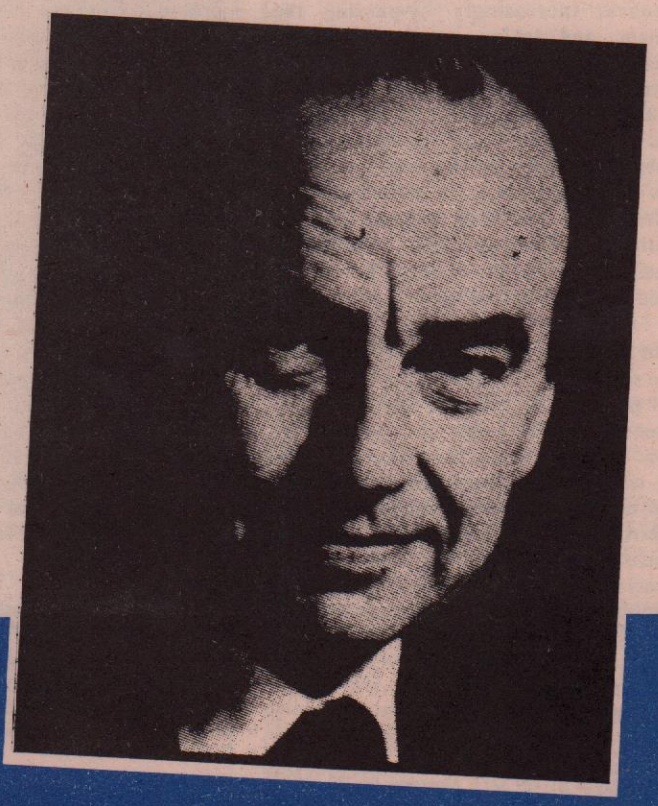


DAVID ROURKE

OUR UNIONS HAVE HELPED THE BOSSES MAKE MILLIONS

IT'S ABOUT TIME THEY STARTED FIGHTING FOR OUR RIGHTS



No to scab unionism - see pages 2 and 4

the next step

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NO TO SCAB UNIONISM!

On 19 August 1900 the men working for the Taff Vale Railway Company in South Wales came out on strike for a two shillings a week rise. The general manager immediately contacted William Collinson's National Free Labour Association, which supplied squads of strike breakers. The scabs proved ineffective. Some were intercepted by the union, offered hospitality and persuaded to return home, others were beaten up by pickets. After the employers were forced to back down, they sued the union for damages. In an unprecedented court case, the railworkers' union was heavily fined in a ruling which effectively made strike action illegal.

The events at Wapping in recent weeks indicate a return by the employers to the class war methods of the turn of the century. However, the unions' response to the new employers' offensive has been moulded by the experience of the past 50 years, in which the bosses have generally refrained from using scabs and the courts in their dealings with the unions.

By the twenties, the 'free labour' associations had virtually disappeared. The employers preferred to recognise trade unions and to negotiate with union officials over wages and conditions in a framework protected by the law. Rather than trying to smash the unions, they sought to use them as a buffer between employers and workers. In the prolonged economic stability of the post-war years, this approach flourished. Trade union leaders became respected national figures and union officials and workplace representatives contained conflicts within a network of procedures and agreements.

The much-vaunted organisational strength of the British labour movement is a product of this period. The foundation of this strength, however, was the goodwill of the employers. The two key factors in the expansion of union membership — the closed shop agreement and the check-off of union dues from wages — were both largely introduced on the employers' initiative.

ILLUSIONS OF STRENGTH

What the union leaders regarded as a source of strength, the employers regarded as an investment in stable industrial relations. The re-emergence of scab unionism in the eighties results from a dramatic shift in the employers' strategy in conditions of recession.

Over the past decade British bosses have gradually adopted a more confrontationist approach, increasingly by-passing the officials, and taking on the workforce directly. This change of policy in a climate of insecurity generated by mass unemployment has had a shattering effect on the working class movement. The union leaders' desperate attempts to cling on to the old ways have rendered them more and more ineffectual in defending jobs and working conditions. Finding their traditional organisations useless, workers have been forced to seek their own survival as best they can.

For many workers it now seems to make more sense to try to raise wages by winning local productivity bonuses, than it does to pursue an overall wage rise through the union. To workers who have been forced to seek work as part-timers, sub-contractors, or in other forms of self-employment, the solidarity of the labour movement has become meaningless. As each success against the unions has made the bosses bolder, the break up of the unions and their traditions has been accelerated. Picket lines have long become merely token and scabbing is now commonplace.

The miners' strike was the last gasp of old-style trade unionism against the new-style boss tactics. The coal board bosses made clear their contempt for negotiation and compromise and went all out to crush the miners. The miners' union divided between supporters of traditional militancy and those who considered that their only hope lay through accepting the bosses terms and pursuing productivity bonuses. The bureaucratic policies of the NUM leadership ensured that this division deepened and that the tendencies towards fragmentation, which were strongest in the Notts area, became consolidated and finally emerged in the form of the UDM, a fully-fledged scab union.

The current print dispute is not so much a continuation of the miners' strike as a brutal confirmation that the old trade unionism is dead. The Fleet Street unions are the clearest example of the weaknesses of 'strong organisation' and 'militant traditions' in the British labour movement. The strength of the print unions is based on the narrowest sectionalism and thinly disguised collaboration with the employers.

ROTTEN TRADITIONS

Over the past year all the print unions have responded to growing management pressure by signing sweetheart deals with the bosses and entering bitter feuds with the other unions. In its explicit collaboration with Murdoch's scab operation at Wapping, the electricians union is now extending similar methods from the new technology sector into the print.

In tackling the menace of scab unionism two key points must be recognised. First, the UDM and the EETPU are scab unions. They have gone a significant step beyond the traditions of class collaboration that have long prevailed in the British labour movement. In their abject capitulation to the employers and their rejection of any sort of anti-employer activity, they have taken the long established trends towards company unionism to their logical conclusion. Second, the scab unionism of the UDM and the EETPU is only a symptom of the deeper malaise of British trade unionism. It simply gives an organisational focus to the disintegration of the old labour movement and the collapse of solidarity that has resulted from the impact of the recession.

The lesson of the miners' strike, confirmed by the print dispute, is that we cannot fight the new employers' offensive by clinging on to the old traditions. The class struggle has forcefully revealed that the traditions are rotten. The defence of the working class today demands new methods and new forms of organisation to fight class collaboration in every union — see page 4 for details.

The Taff Vale dispute had one very significant consequence. Recognising the need for a wider political response to the employers' attacks, trade unionists flocked to join a newly formed political party which offered to advance the cause of the working class. That party was the Labour Party. The miners' strike and the print dispute — and the role of the Labour Party in them — show the urgent need for a new working class party. But this time let's make sure we don't get fooled again.

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AFTER GILLICK

VALERIE RICHES

GERARD VAUGHAN

A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST WOMEN

Last Tuesday brought the launch of a National Campaign for the Family sponsored by Family and Youth Concern, a high-powered collection of new moralists. It is supposed to shore up pro-family, anti-sex ideas, after the law lords voted against Victoria Gillick's campaign to outlaw the pill for under-16s. It is another example of the exponents of 'Victorian Values' churning out hypocrisy and bigotry to attack women's right to contraception, childcare and abortion facilities.

The National Campaign for the Family kicked off with a London meeting, attended by about 100 middle-aged moralists and boasting an impressive platform. A brief survey of what they had to say gives a flavour of the prejudices that now pass for informed opinion on the right.

The new moralists are already out to make attacking women's rights a big issue in the next election

First up was solicitor Jeremy Lee, to announce the intention of forming an action committee to 'protect children from contraceptive advice'. For the moral rearmers, education about the pill is dangerous and ignorance is bliss; presumably unwanted pregnancies are an added bonus for 'blissfully ignorant' girls.

Lee was followed by Captain Shaw Clifton, legal adviser to the Salvation Army. Clifton attacked the law lords' verdict against Gillick, asserting that young women do not have the 'wisdom and insight' to judge for themselves on sexual matters. Bigots like Clinton judge themselves to have the necessary qualities to dictate what young women do, thanks to the 'wisdom and insight' gained from dressing up in a dowdy dark blue uniform, banging a tambourine and selling the *War Cry*.

Next on was Gillick herself, figurehead for the campaign. She described a fantasy world in which there was no television, illegitimacy or rape — she claimed to have lived in this world in the fifties. Then she outlined the creeping evils of the last 25 years; from 'value-free sex education' to teenage magazines promoting 'tawdry narcissism', and the way state funding for clinics had promoted promiscuity.

Gillick's solution was to make parents replace the government as arbiters of moral standards.

She was against state intervention and insisted that the government must cut off funds for 'clinics who profit from contraception and abortion'. She had nothing to say about the capitalists who profit from denying women their rights to an equal role in society. And she was not opposed to government intervention if it meant ministers supporting the General Medical Council's move to restrict access to contraception.

After Gillick came John Scotson, GP, representing Doctors for the Family, who wanted a return to 'natural laws' of strict behaviour, which pre-dated Christianity and had been 'recognised by Pagans'. Does this mean it's goodbye Victorian Values, hello Neanderthal Norms? Apparently not; Scotson stressed the campaign's message must be that 'we care' about families, while the left are all into compulsory wife-swapping — an accusation whose Victorian character can be judged by the fact that Marx and Engels made fun of it in their *Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

The final two speakers were heavyweights; Family and Youth Concern secretary Valerie Riches, and former Tory health minister Gerard Vaughan. Riches wanted to educate people — 'from the cradle to parliament' — to 'postpone gratification', take responsibility for their actions and 'not rely on the state to pick up the pieces'. She sought to 'affirm the truth': family planning meant self-gratification, abortion meant murder and contraception meant under-age sex. Vaughan wanted to put Riches' ideas into action: publishing a 'Manifesto for the Family', ensuring that the family is a priority for all parties in the next election, cutting off state cash to family planning clinics, and stopping the welfare state undermining family responsibility. He thought Tory minister Norman Fowler's social security cuts were a good start.

Most of these people are too pompously puritanical to build a big campaign. But their ideas about promoting family values have a wide hearing in British politics. There is broad agreement on the need to curtail contraceptive rights for young women, restrict access to abortion, and make women carry the burden of cuts in the health and social security systems. As the moralists get geared up for the coming general election, so must we.

Women need free access to full abortion, contraception and childcare facilities if they are to stand a chance of participating equally in the life of society. And the state must be made to provide them.

To win those rights, we need to confront the capitalist morality that influences Neil Kinnock as well as Margaret Thatcher. Despite what Dr John Scotson says, communists don't oppose the National Campaign for the Family because we 'don't care'. We are against it because we care enough about women's rights to reject every attempt to make them carry the can.

Gina Edwards

RCP

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TROOPS SHOOT TWO IN A WEEK

'YOU TELL THEM IT WAS MURDER'

BRITISH TROOPS SHOT DEAD TWO IRISHMEN LAST WEEK; ONE IN COUNTY DERRY ON TUESDAY, THE OTHER IN DERRY CITY ON SATURDAY. *MICK HUME* WENT OVER FOR THE FUNERAL OF THE FIRST VICTIM

Francis Patrick Bradley was 21 last Friday. When I walked into the Elk Bar on the Hillhead Road, County Derry, that afternoon, it was full of his friends drinking to him. But Bradley wasn't with them. He had spent his twenty-first birthday being buried — another Irish victim of a British SAS assassination squad.

An SAS shooting draws a sharp line between nationalist supporters of Irish freedom and Loyalist supporters of British rule. I had got to the graveyard that morning via the village of Castledawson, a local Loyalist stronghold. It looks like every Protestant outpost: just one grim, grey street where the only colour is the faded paint on the Union Jack kerbstones. It was snowing when I arrived. But then Castledawson looked like the kind of place where it should always be snowing.

LAUGHING POLICEMEN

The Loyalists I asked for directions couldn't have cared less about the butchering of Francis Bradley. No, they said, they didn't know of any St James' church, and they were very busy polishing a brass doorknob, or putting up posters for the football club barn dance, so could I stop bothering them. The local Protestant paper put Bradley's execution on a par with the shooting of a mad dog caught worrying sheep.

Of course, other Loyalists did come to the funeral; Royal Ulster Constabulary men, who brought machine guns instead of mass cards.

They surrounded St James' church, near the dead man's Newbridge home, and laughed out loud as Francis Bradley's distressed family carried the coffin up the hill from their farmhouse, past 2000 mourners lining the lane. Even after Bradley was buried, the uniformed vultures hovered around the cemetery having fun. The Geordie soldiers and Castledawson police I passed, parked near the church, were having such a good time that their landrovers rocked about like caravans full of courting couples. The snow that blew in through the open back doors didn't seem to dampen their delight at the death of a young Irishman.

'YOU BASTARD'

Nobody was laughing in the Elk, when I found my way down to the nationalist bar after the funeral. The regulars there were Bradley's people. He had spent the previous Saturday in the bar, watching the Barry McGuigan fight with them. And he had been killed just yards away, near the next house along the Hillhead Road. 'Those bastards' were the first words I heard, as I pushed my way into the packed public bar. They were directed at the laughing policemen. 'You bastard' was the next thing I heard, as I ordered a drink. That was directed at me, by one bitter local who decided my accent made me at worst an SAS man, and at best a Brit. He was restrained by others, who saved their hatred for the hooded SAS men responsible for ripping Francis Bradley apart behind the outhouse up the road. They told me the truth about the shooting.

BRITISH ARMY JUSTICE FOR THE IRISH — SHOOT THEM FIRST, LAUGH AT THEM LATER

JOE BOATMAN

The few lines the London papers gave Bradley's death repeated the Army's version of events: he had been shot while on a 'terror mission', after which two other 'terrorist suspects' were arrested and two rifles recovered. But the Elk regulars thought that story stank worse than the cow dung caked on the country roads around the cemetery where they had buried him that morning.

'When you write it up for your paper', said Pat, the bar's bouncer, 'you be sure and tell them he was *murdered.*'

People told me Pat the bouncer was not a man to be easily moved. But he was well worked up over Bradley's death: 'The IRA hasn't claimed him, nobody's claimed him, and they always claim their own. He had no more guns on him than I have now. The British Army just wanted a body that night, and they got young Francie's.'

Donna appeared from behind Pat's shoulder. She had seen Bradley 10 minutes before he died. 'He was joking and laughing, like always,' she remembered. 'Francie was the last person who would have been involved. He was 20, but he looked about 14. He couldn't have harmed a fly walking across that bar.' That didn't stop Bradley being harassed by the British security forces, like every other nationalist youth. 'The RUC picked him up just before Christmas,' said Donna, 'And when he came out he said to me, "Jesus, Donna, I'm scared to walk out of my house, they told me I won't see my twenty-first birthday." And he didn't.' 'That's one thing about those bastards,' said Pat. 'They keep their promises to Irish people.'

THROUGH THE NECK

What about the 'terror mission' Bradley was supposed to be carrying out on the night he was butchered? 'He was up at that house to buy a car part!' said Pat. 'The other two they arrested were the boy who lives there, he was indoors with the flu, and another innocent fella. The guns were just planted to make it look right.' 'That third fella was my uncle,' interjected Lawrence, who had been listening from a bar stool behind us. 'He was just driving into the cafe next door. I suppose they thought he might have seen the shooting, so they pulled him in to keep him quiet.'

Somehow 'shooting' doesn't seem enough to describe what the SAS did to Francis Bradley.

'They didn't just kill him,' said Pat: 'First they shot him in the legs, so they got him down. Then they beat him up, they smashed his jaw and his nose. And then, when they'd had their fun, they shot him through the neck. A man wouldn't do that to a dog. The murdering bastards...' The rest of his sentence was lost, as he banged down his glass and threw up his hands. Donna took over: 'They left his body lying there from 10 at night 'til 11 the next morning. When they gave him up I'd never seen a corpse like it. You couldn't recognise him, with his teeth all smashed out and his mouth just filled in by the undertaker. It effected people round here something awful, them doing that to an innocent boy like Francie.'

The nationalists who live around Newbridge will never be the same again. 'I've never seen people here so united,' Pat told me, as they gave me a lift up to Magherafelt to catch a bus back to Derry. 'Francie wasn't a Provo, because there were no Provos in this place. But soon there'll be 40 or more. The young fellas used to just be out for a good crack. Now they want to do something to get the Brits back for Francie. People are saying, "If that's British justice, it's about time they tasted some Irish justice." '

'THEY'LL PAY'

We drove past the death scene. All that was left as evidence of the bloody event was a piece of white tape attached to a fence, where the security forces had closed the road for a day after Francis Bradley's death. But the memory of a dead boy's face with his teeth beaten out will ensure that people like Donna and Pat, and hundreds of others, never forget what happened behind that house — or what government ordered it done.

On Saturday morning I caught a train out of snowbound County Derry. That evening 24-year old Tony Gough was shot through the neck by British troops in Derry city, as he tried to give them a 'taste of Irish justice' by attacking the Fort George RUC/Army fortress. Gough was claimed by the IRA. As we go to press, his people are preparing for his funeral — another young Irishman for the undertakers, another good laugh for the British forces of occupation, and another murder to inspire his friends and neighbours to hit back. 'The SAS had their day when they murdered Francie,' Pat the bouncer had told me in the Elk, 'But we'll have ours yet. Somebody will make them pay.' I hope the price is right.

STRATEGY IN THE PRINT DISPUTE

MEETING MURDOCH'S CHALLENGE

The print union leaders' approach to the Wapping dispute amounts to a surrender to News International boss Rupert Murdoch; the Revolutionary Communist Party offers a fighting response to his challenge to the working class.

PADD MORRISON

PRINT UNION OFFICIALS COOPERATED WITH POLICE CHIEFS TO KEEP SATURDAY'S PROTEST PEACEFUL — AND INEFFECTIVE

Helen Swift outlines the way forward in the battle of Wapping

● **Tea and sympathy**

The main contribution of the print union leaders to the fight to win back 6000 lost jobs has been to provide a mobile canteen for the Wapping pickets and to launch a national poster campaign. Union officials have cooperated closely with the police, to make sure that the pickets at Wapping make no attempt to disrupt Murdoch's scab operation. The whole thrust of the unions' campaign is to avoid any direct action which might lead to conflict with the scabs or the police. The union leaders hope to beat Murdoch by winning public sympathy for the plight of the sacked workers and approval for the unions' moderate methods.

Token pickets are not simply ineffective, they are demoralising. Even if the unions succeeded in getting public opinion on their side, Murdoch would not be obliged to reinstate the sacked printers. Only direct action which disrupts the Wapping scab operation can put Murdoch under the sort of pressure necessary for him to restore jobs.

● **Action and solidarity**

The first priority is for the sacked workers to get together in a strike committee that cuts across union divisions. This would be a vital first step towards overcoming the sectional traditions and bureaucratic structures that are such a barrier to effective action in the print. A united rank and file committee would provide a power base from which to appeal to fellow print workers in Fleet Street to stop the national press — before they are picked off one by one, by press barons eager to follow Murdoch's example.

A workers' strike committee could also cut across union officialdom to appeal to workers in other unions — in transport, post and telecommunications, gas and electricity — to take action to shut down Wapping and disrupt Murdoch's distribution chain. Linked with a boycott of the Murdoch press (see page 12), this approach would soon force Murdoch to choose between re-employing the sacked workers and closing down his titles.

● **Talks and deals**

Ever since the print unions got wind of Murdoch's planned move to Wapping, they have been proclaiming their willingness to negotiate. Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins are ready to accept mass redundancies and flexible working conditions. They told Murdoch that they would accept restrictions on the closed shop and on the right to strike. But Murdoch was too busy getting his scab operation into shape even to listen to the cringing pleas of the union leaders.

Since Murdoch launched his onslaught on print workers in January, the union leaders have simply begged for mercy. Only last week the union leaders again pleaded with Murdoch to negotiate, and scurried off to the government's arbitration service Acas on the mere hint of talks, even though Murdoch made clear he would never let the print unions into Wapping.

● **Jobs are not negotiable**

Since Murdoch has made it clear that he has no interest in talking, what is the point of crawling back to be humiliated? While he has declared war on the unions, they are trying to negotiate a truce without any fighting. Any talking on these terms can only mean abject surrender.

We should make clear to Murdoch that our jobs are non-negotiable — so there is nothing for us to talk about. As the only deals he wants are deals which mean giving up jobs, conditions and union rights, we should make clear that there is no scope for any such deals. Instead of wasting time talking about talks, now is the time for action to stop Murdoch's papers, so that *he* is forced to come to *us* for talks. When we are putting pressure on Murdoch's profits, then we will be in a negotiating position.

● **Law and Labour**

The courts have ruled that any action the print workers take which is likely to be effective is illegal. The entire assets of Sogat have been seized and the NGA has been heavily fined and threatened with sequestration. The union leaders have expressed their indignation, but have acquiesced to the judges' instructions. Instead of defying the Tory law in the present, they have appealed for a future Labour government to introduce legislation protecting the right to strike.

● **Fight for the right to fight!**

The use of the courts as an auxiliary arm of Murdoch's scab operation forces print workers either to obey the courts and lose their jobs, or to defy the courts and fight for our rights. The role of the courts over Wapping exposes that the judges are simply agents of the employers. They should have no greater claim on public respect because they try to invest their anti-working class prejudices with the aura of judicial impartiality.

● **Relying on the TUC**

The print union leaders and their supporters throughout the official labour movement have called for the TUC to expel the electricians' union, which helped to recruit Murdoch's scab army at Wapping. The leaders of the TUC and the other big unions want to use the EETPU as a scapegoat for their own failures. Left wingers in the unions would rather campaign against the most extreme manifestation of company unionism than tackle the trends towards no-strike and single-union deals which are rampant in every union. Rather than put the fate of the strike in the hands of the rank and file, they put their faith in the TUC bureaucracy.

● **Relying on the rank and file**

The only force that can fight scab unionism is the rank and file. The EETPU has played a despicable role at Wapping, but the problem of scab unionism goes much further. The Wapping operation involves members of several other unions. The EETPU is the biggest scab outfit, but is far from being the only union to have done sweetheart deals with the bosses at the expense of other unions. We need a rank and file campaign to fight scab unionism throughout the unions. The struggle against scab unionism is particularly important in the EETPU. Militants in the EETPU need the support of activists in other unions in carrying on resistance against their treacherous union leadership.

CHANGING THE EETPU

BREAK THESE ROTTEN TRADITIONS

Last year, when general secretary Eric Hammond came to inaugurate the London Contracting Branch, he was surrounded by 100 members, united in their contempt for his brand of company unionism. But the extent of Hammond's bureaucratic power surprised even the militants. He simply announced he was closing down the branch and walked out of the meeting.

This was one of a long series of branch closures, suspensions and amalgamations designed to remove any challenge to the power of the leadership. Since the sixties the executive has restructured the EETPU and rewritten the rule book to centralise authority. Only last month, at the Xidex computer disk plant in South Wales, the union executive imposed the company's pay offer on the workers — even though they had voted against it.

Although members of the executive are elected, the leadership carefully manipulates the nomination of candidates. On nomination night the officials often swamp branches with loyal supporters, sometimes bribing moderates with promises of a week's 'holiday' at the union's next conference. Even if they are nominated, rank and file candidates are not allowed to campaign within the union. Officials are not elected, but appointed by the executive. The selection procedure includes a thorough political vetting — a record of activity in the right wing of the Labour Party is a valuable qualification.

Left wingers in the EETPU have long campaigned against the right's autocratic regime. But rather than going out to the rank and file, they have tried to work through the bureaucratic structures of the union.

A national conference of left-wing electricians last week condemned their executive council for turning the EETPU into 'a recruiting agency for scab labour'. But how can scab unionism be broken?

When Hammond took over in 1984, the left could only hope that he would 'lead the EETPU back to the centre stage of the trade union movement'. Instead Hammond has moved to complete the transformation of the EETPU into a scab union.

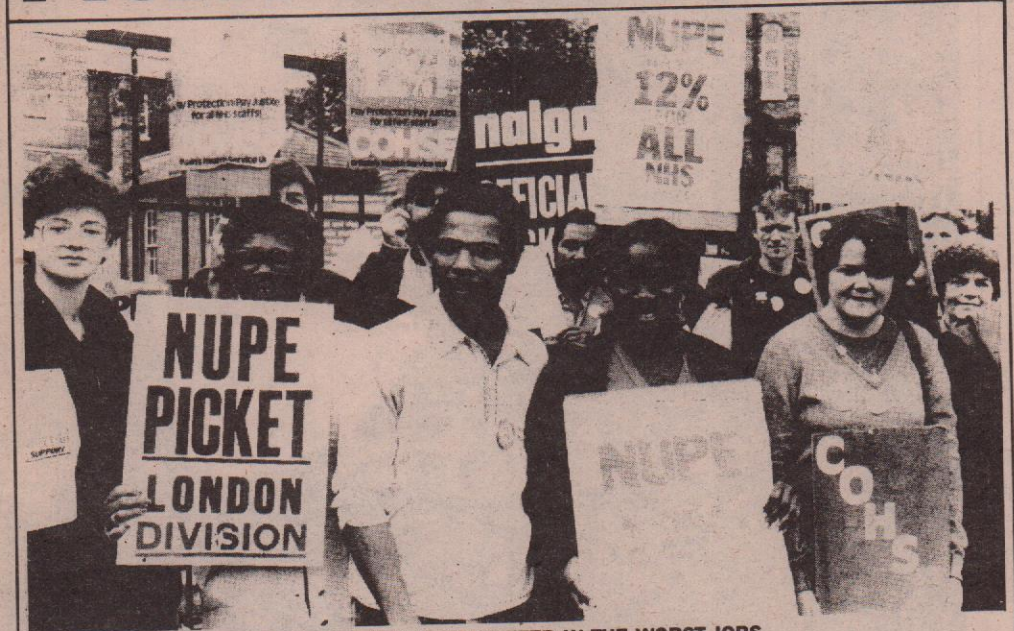
At last Saturday's conference most speakers argued that the TUC should take the lead and 'put pressure on our executive'. The conference ended with a plea for 'a rule book that opens up the possibilities of rank and file democracy'. 'We need a just and honourable solution to the Wapping dispute', preached the chairman, 'which allows NGA and Sogat members to carry out their traditional work.'

Our campaign against the menace of scab unionism must begin from a recognition that the traditions of Fleet Street, like the traditions of the EETPU, are largely responsible for getting us into this mess. To get rid of Hammond and all he stands for, we must break out of the bureaucratic traditions that have allowed the existing leadership to emerge. Last Saturday's conference showed that the broad left in the EETPU has a long way to go.

Andrew Calcutt

DISCRIMINATION IN LIVERPOOL AND LONDON

RACISTS CAN'T FIGHT RACISM



BLACKS WORKING FOR THE STATE ALWAYS SUFFER IN THE WORST JOBS

Gorst, a member of the house of commons select committee on employment, has just 'discovered' what black people in Liverpool have known all along — that Liverpool's Labour council has a racist employment policy. Blacks make up more than 10 per cent of Liverpool's population. But there are just 270 blacks in a council workforce of 31 000. Gorst was joined by other MPs — including Labour's Ron Leighton, the committee chair — in his appeal for the government to take firm action against discrimination in Liverpool.

'Is it possible for the government to intervene against job discrimination in Liverpool?' asked Tory MP John Gorst last week. No, replies ***Kenan Malik***

Tony Millwood, leader of left-wing Hackney council, also called for government action against racial discrimination last week. An industrial tribunal found the council guilty of breaching the Race Relations Act, by turning down three white youths for jobs as apprentice gardeners. The council insisted the jobs were reserved for blacks under its positive discrimination policies. When the tribunal came out against the council, Millwood called on the government to change the law.

Parties across the political spectrum are looking to the government to intervene in the employment of black people. But British governments have *always* intervened in black people's working lives — to sponsor and institutionalise discrimination against blacks in Britain.

● In the fifties governments ran recruiting drives in the West Indies, bringing blacks to Britain to meet labour shortages in low-paid sectors. The government signed 50 agreements with unions to restrict immigrants' employment rights.

● From the sixties governments moved to curtail black immigration. Immigration Acts legalised the treatment of black workers as second-class citizens. A work permit system ensured many immigrants could only work with an approved employer, and could only change jobs with government permission. Blacks could be deported at the government's whim.

● Since the seventies, and especially since the Tories introduced the 1981 Nationality Act based on a Labour Party blueprint, governments have intervened more rigorously in the lives of black workers. Passport checks and 'fishing raids' have become common in workplaces with a large number of black employees. Race checks are now commonplace in all official agencies, from housing offices to doctors' surgeries.

Decades of government intervention have taken their toll. Black unemployment is now twice as high as for whites in every area in Britain. For Bangladeshis and Pakistanis it is more than three times as high. Yet politicians still expect us to believe the state can bail out the blacks at the receiving end of racism.

Tory MP John Gorst's appeal for the state to solve black workers' problems in Liverpool is just a hypocritical attempt to add to the anti-Militant hysteria in the press and parliament. Gorst's record proves he does not give a toss about what happens to black workers. Back in 1977 Asian women workers at the Grunwick factory, in Gorst's constituency, came out on strike in their fight for union recognition. Their boss, George Ward, a pioneer of Murdoch-style strike-breaking, was backed by the right-wing scab agency, the National Association for Freedom, now the Freedom Association. The scabs' biggest backer? Local MP John Gorst. He backed Ward and the police who smashed the strike and put the Asian women out of work.

EVEN WORSE

Yet Labour politicians are prepared to join Gorst in using the race issue as a stick with which to beat Militant in Liverpool. Ron Leighton is a good example. He is outraged at the discriminatory policies of Militant-run Liverpool council, yet he seems indifferent to the discriminatory policies of Newham Labour council in his own constituency. In fact Newham employs even less blacks than Liverpool — only 200 out of a workforce of 11 000 — in an area where black people make up more than 25 per cent of the population. Racial tensions are even worse in Newham than in Liverpool. There has been a series of racist murders, and racist firebombings and other attacks have been regularly reported in *tns* over the past year. Police harassment has provoked a series of campaigns — such as the Newham 7, the Newham 8 and the Pryce campaign.

But Leighton saves his outrage for Liverpool and leaves it to the racist state to fight racism in his own backyard.

While East London Workers Against Racism supporters have battled with racists and faced police harassment in Leighton's constituency, he has called for increased policing. He expects the official channels that have institutionalised racial discrimination to defend blacks. Last year Leighton addressed local anti-racists: 'I can't do anything', he told them, 'because no one comes to see me at my surgery.' When blacks in the audience barracked him, he walked off the platform.

As leader of Hackney's left-wing council, Tony Millwood represents another tradition of Labour Party politicians expecting the state to combat racial discrimination — this time the local arm of the state in the town hall. His council has been a pioneer of the positive discrimination policies which were last week condemned by an industrial tribunal. Hackney claims its policy has created jobs for blacks. But apart from jobs on race relations quangos, funded by central government, the proportion of blacks in the workforce has grown no faster since the new policy was introduced three years ago.

SHARING MISERY

Hackney has tried positive discrimination policies at a time when it is cutting the direct labour organisation, maintaining high levels of unfilled vacancies and generally putting the squeeze on jobs. The council has recently been in dispute with refuse disposal workers, parks department workers and the libraries have been closed since before Christmas — all because of its austerity policies. Instead of creating jobs for blacks, it has tried to give them a slightly larger slice of a shrinking council job market.

The inevitable consequences of a policy described by one local councillor as 'sharing out the misery' were fully realised when the three white youths were turned down for gardening jobs. The backlash, now ratified by the tribunal, has thrown the council leadership off balance: Millwood now appeals to the government to legitimise his anti-racist posturing.

The whole affair exposes the fact that token anti-racist policies, in the hands of a council prepared to cut jobs and services, can only intensify racial divisions while making no significant impression on discrimination against blacks.

WAY TO WIN

We do not need toadies like Gorst and Leighton to tell us that Labour councils and trade unions are complicit in racial discrimination. Workers Against Racism has been campaigning on both issues for years. Nor do we need any more anti-racist gestures that provoke a white backlash without making any serious attempt to challenge racism. State bodies which have fostered racism cannot play any useful role in fighting it. The only way to ensure that blacks get a fair chance of employment is for the unions themselves to combat discrimination in the workplace. Workers Against Racism stands for workers' direct action against all forms of racism. This is the only action that can be effective, and the only sort of action that can build unity between black and white, instead of deepening divisions.

Next week Workers Against Racism is holding a special day of discussion in East London. Questions of discrimination and council and government policy, and many other aspects of racism will be open to debate. Come along!

Council of War

Racism — how to fight it

Sunday 9 March 11am — 5pm

Fairholt House Aldgate High Street, E1

Details from WAR, BM WAR, London WC1N 3XX, or 01-729 0414

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

NUCLEAR POWER – YES PLEASE!

The spate of leaks from the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant in Cumbria has given rise to a storm of protest against nuclear power. There is no doubt that generating energy from nuclear fission is potentially dangerous for workers in the industry and for anybody who may be contaminated by its waste products.

Equally, there is no doubt that the capitalists who run British Nuclear Fuels with the over-riding aim of making profits cannot be trusted to protect their employees or their neighbours. From Aberfan to Bhopal, history shows that we should assume that all the bosses' assurances are lies, and that the vigilance of workers' organisations is the only guarantee of our health and safety.

Yet, there is an irrational side to the furore over Sellafield. The most highly publicised recent incident may have resulted in the slight contamination of two workers at the plant, but within limits widely considered acceptable. The 440kgs of purified uranium said to have been 'leaked' were deliberately discharged into the Irish Sea, where the effect will be indistinguishable from thousands of tonnes of naturally occurring uranium.

Compared with other ways of generating energy, nuclear power has an undeniably superior record of safety. In the four weeks that Sellafield has been in the headlines more than 50 miners have died — some as a result of accidents, and many more from pneumoconiosis and chest diseases. Other industries are even more dangerous than coalmining — on average eight building workers are killed every month. Yet the nuclear power industry — in which not a single fatality has definitely resulted from exposure to radioactivity — is at the centre of public controversy.

It sometimes seems as if certain people want to latch on to the issue of safety in the nuclear power industry when they are looking for a soft target, or for an excuse for not tackling a real menace in society.

Take Garret FitzGerald, the Irish premier who expressed 'deep concern' about radioactive waste being discharged into the Irish Sea during his chat with Margaret Thatcher last week. When there is a war going on in his country — a war in which the forces of his host shot dead two young Irishmen last week — the biggest menace coming out of Britain that FitzGerald can find to complain about is (probably harmless) nuclear waste.

Or take Arthur Scargill, a strident critic of the nuclear power industry. His real concern is the threat of nuclear power to the position of coal as Britain's major source of energy. But it has been the coal board, not nuclear power, that has destroyed miners' jobs. And it is the coal board's drive to raise productivity and profits that is driving up the accident rate in the pits. But it is easier to jump on the anti-Sellafield bandwagon than it is to fight the coal bosses.

Supporters of Greenpeace, CND and the Labour left are united in their hostility to Sellafield. To drum up support in hard times they prey on fears and prejudices against any scientific advance. But the problem is not nuclear power, which offers tremendous possibilities of cheap, safe energy. The problem is the capitalist system that prostitutes every technological advance to its squalid quest for profit.

The inability of the Tories to overcome the deep-seated malaise of the British economy has precipitated a major crisis of confidence in the government. The result has been two ministerial resignations, a precipitous decline in public respect for the prime minister and a grave sense of insecurity within the Tory ranks. The most damaging consequence of recent events is that Thatcher has been increasingly forced to take pragmatic decisions to guarantee the survival of the government — measures which contradict the fundamental tenets of Thatcherism.

● **laissez-faire**

A central theme of Thatcher's election campaign in 1979 was her commitment to roll back the frontiers of state intervention. A new Tory government would liberate private enterprise from the interfering state and set free the spirit of the market.

'Do you realise that we have just spent two hours discussing the affairs of a company whose total assets are only £30m?' Thatcher is said to have inquired of her cabinet colleagues after a long drawn out session on Westland before Christmas. It was certainly a pertinent question given that the government was publicly committed to non-intervention. From this early stage to the last act, the whole affair has revealed that non-intervention is a sham. The government's action in referring United Biscuits' bid for Imperial Tobacco to the monopolies commission has allowed Lord Hanson a clear field to take over Imperial. This is clearly the government's final pay-off to Hanson who played a vital role — at considerable expense — in clinching the government's goal of a Sikorsky rescue for Westland.

ALMS FOR INDUSTRY

The simple fact is that the spirit of free enterprise is so feeble among British entrepreneurs that it cannot survive without government support.

Even the discreet marriage between GKN and the British Steel Corporation, which is expected to take it out of the public sector later this year, cannot be consummated without £55m of public money. The furore over British Leyland (see opposite) only draws attention to the fact that without massive state subsidy the British motor industry would have collapsed long ago. The best efforts of nearly seven years of Thatcherism have just about managed to get British manufacturers back on to their knees, so that they can beg for more state hand-outs as an alternative to selling out to foreign competition.

● **privatisation**

Thatcher has consistently proclaimed her commitment to reducing the size of the public sector by returning as much of it as possible to private ownership. Privatisation has been pursued as a means of promoting competition and enterprise.

EMPTY TREASURY

Thatcher's recent decisions to sell off the gas and water boards have blown the gaffe on privatisation. The British gas industry is a monopoly which will not be broken by privatisation — not much competition there. In the water boards there is not only little scope for competition, there is very little for enterprise either. Thatcher's recent sell-offs simply reveal the government's desperate need for quick cash to compensate for the fact that public spending is out of control.

● **public spending**

Removing the burden of public expenditure on private enterprise was another of the crusading calls of Thatcherism on the rise. The Tories were going to shake out the public services and cut taxation to encourage private enterprise.

Six years later public spending is higher than ever and so is taxation. Thatcher can now be heard proclaiming that we have more doctors, more nurses and more spending on the health service than ever before. Spending on the health service has increased, and spending on social security to keep four million unemployed on the dole has increased even more. The extra cost of the military and police forces for fighting the government's enemies at home and abroad has also helped to blow the treasury's budgets. Thatcher's attempt to make a virtue out of her failure to implement a policy of austerity exposes the impasse the Tory government has now reached.

SUCCESS STORIES

A glance at the Tories' success stories reveals just how insecure their grip on the British economy has become.

● **The City**

Britain now makes more in 'invisible' earnings in banking, insurance and finance than any country in the world. But even this success story is a reflection of the lack of dynamism of any other sector of the economy. All the indicators show a frantic level of activity on the stock exchange: just like in the twenties industrial stagnation is paralleled by a buoyant stock market.

In the absence of any other profitable investment outlet, financiers turn to speculation.

The Tories have done much to boost share prices. Since they came to office they have lifted restrictions on the City. The financial services bill currently going through parliament will speed up this process. The recent spate of company flotations — Laura Ashley, Body Shop, Wellcome — and mergers have also boosted share prices. Flotations have become a popular way for companies to raise cash rapidly without incurring interest rate charges. The merger boom is a sign of companies trying to overcome the lack of internal growth by taking over other firms.

BURSTING BUBBLES

Moves to deregulate the City are also a threat. Many investors fear the 'big bang' when the new rules come into effect in October. The City will not only be opened up to British brokers, but also to foreign investors. The British stock market risks being ravaged by American speculators. The future of the jewel in the Tories' crown is also threatened by the spate of scandals — Johnson Matthey, Lloyds — which threaten to undermine the prestige that has allowed the City to continue to play a role in world finance out of all proportion to the weakness of the domestic economy. The City of London is a bubble that could very easily burst.

● **North Sea oil**

The Tories have capitalised on the success of North Sea oil by boosting government revenue through taxation. But success in the North Sea has proved short-lived. Oil production is now in decline and the world glut has depressed prices by up to 30 per cent. This has not only reduced profits and revenues, it has also deterred the exploration of new fields.

Government revenue from oil is expected to drop from £11.5 billion to £7.5 billion, drastically curtailing the scope for tax cuts in the impending March budget. Since 1981 the Tories have used oil to compensate for all the weaknesses of the British economy. The loss of revenue resulting from the decline of North Sea oil is likely to have an adverse effect on trade, the balance of payments and government spending.

BUDGET OPTIONS

The Tories face the coming budget with a narrow range of options. Last November chancellor Nigel Lawson gave up all pretence of trying to control the money supply — long a central target of 'monetarist' policy. The figures were so far off target that the government simply scrapped the target and allowed pragmatism to take over.

Thatcher and her ministers still proclaim that profits, investment, output and trade are all increasing. And it is true that compared with the trough of 1979 to 1981, all these factors register an improvement. But this was the blackest moment for British capitalism in modern history and the recovery from these depths has been so sluggish that, by all these criteria, the economy has yet to recover the position it was in before the recession struck. The Tories used to claim great success in controlling inflation, but prices in Britain are still increasing faster than among competitors, and they are expected to increase even faster. Unemployment is now rising so fast that even the Tories' continual attempts to fiddle the figures can scarcely keep up with the increase.

SCAPEGOAT SHORTAGE

In previous years the Tories had a ready alibi for their economic failures: they could blame the previous Labour government, the Argies or the miners. This year scapegoats are not so readily to hand, and, while the wets and the opposition parties can offer no alternative beyond a return to policies which have already been discredited, the government is in a much more unstable position. It is time their difficulties were compounded by a real opposition which made clear its recognition that the only solution to the crisis of British capitalism is to get rid of the whole rotten system and build a new one. *Helen Simons*

DAVID ROURKE

THATCHER ON THE RO

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PATRIOTISM AND PROFITS

The government's plan to sell off Land Rover and British Leyland's truck division to the US giant General Motors makes good sense from a capitalist point of view. Land Rover has a glorious history of equipping repressive regimes throughout the third world with sturdy vehicles for patrolling restive areas, as well as for providing Sloane Rangers with the ideal Home Counties tourer. But it has run into stiff competition from Japan in a world market in which the supply of heavy duty four-wheel-drive vehicles now far exceeds demand. Yet, while Land Rover is just about holding its own, Leyland trucks is a disaster area: last year it lost £60m and its accumulated deficit is more that £500m.

General Motors offers a merger with its Bedford operation and access to its vast marketing network. Given that Leyland trucks could not survive independently, and the fact that GM insists on taking the truck division and Land Rover as a job lot, Paul Channon — the Tories' new industry secretary — is faced with an offer that is very difficult to refuse.

POOR RELATION

Indeed the plans revealed at the beginning of the month to sell off Austin Rover, BL's car division, to Ford, also had a sound commercial justification. Austin Rover is just about breaking even after years of massive losses, but it is still falling short of its target of a 20 per cent share of the British car market. This is exactly half the share BL held in 1968 when the company was formed as the culmination of a spate of mergers, and five per cent below its share in 1977 when it was taken over by the state to avert collapse. Last year's share of slightly less than 18 per cent only just beat GM's Vauxhall for second place to Ford's leading position at 27 per cent. Austin Rover claims less than 4 per cent of the European market, a poor seventh behind Volkswagen, Fiat, Ford, Peugeot, GM and Renault.

As neither a large volume producer nor a specialised car maker, Austin Rover faces an uncertain future. It is being squeezed in a trade war between GM and Ford, in which both US firms are prepared to subsidise discounting deals that mean accepting substantial losses on their European operations, simply to gain a higher market share. The rapid progress towards full production at Nissan's Durham plant is the most obvious illustration of the challenge from Japan. Most experts agree that Austin Rover can only survive by linking up with one of the big foreign firms. Ford, whose attempt to do a deal with Fiat recently came unstuck, is eager to take over Austin Rover to consolidate its dominance in the British market and strengthen its European base.

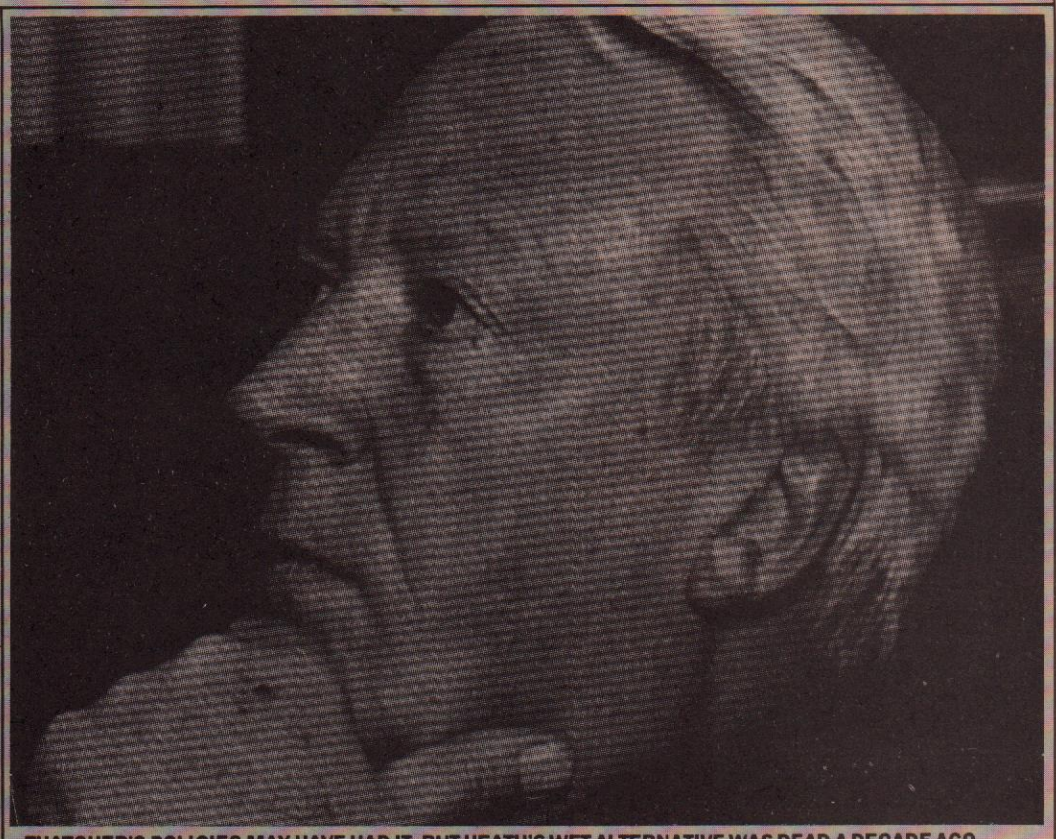
However, a backbench revolt and an anti-American clamour from the opposition forced a government reeling in the aftermath of the Westland scandal to call off its talks with Ford over Austin Rover. Now the same coalition of disgruntled former Tory ministers (and prime ministers), backbenchers in threatened constituencies, and leaders of the opposition parties is demanding a retreat from the proposed sell-off of sections of BL to GM.

'THIS CANNOT CONTINUE'

Banging the British drum may frighten the Tories in parliament, but it is not a sensible policy either for investors in motors or for BL workers.

For the Tories, BL is a British success story. Since 1979 the government has pursued the thorough shake-out of the company begun by BL boss Michael Edwardes under the last Labour government. Some 13 plants have been closed, militants have been victimised, flexible working methods introduced, workplace organisation has been destroyed, productivity has been raised by 200 per cent and the manual workforce has been cut from 120 000 to 38 000. Austin Rover has concentrated production at Longbridge and Cowley and developed a new model range — Metro, Maestro, Montego and the new Rover. Yet it still remains uncompetitive and heavily dependent on government subsidies. How can it be made into an independent profitable company?

Earlier this month the prime minister told parliament that the government had pumped £3.8 billion into BL over the past decade: 'This cannot continue,' she declared. Thatcher is not only concerned to fulfil her election promise that BL would be returned to the private sector. She is also aware that public spending is so far out of control that the government cannot afford to dole out any more to its lame duck motor company. 'We are concerned that BL should be competitive,' Thatcher continued. In the quest for a buyer for BL, Thatcher and her ministers naturally found themselves knocking at the doors of the big US companies which have been operating in Britain for years. Some commentators would prefer a deal with a Japanese firm. But Nissan has just set up its British base, and Honda is quite happy with its existing joint production deal with BL in making the Triumph Acclaim.



THATCHER'S POLICIES MAY HAVE HAD IT, BUT HEATH'S WET ALTERNATIVE WAS DEAD A DECADE AGO

Only a massive injection of capital can revive the British motor industry — but British capitalists just haven't got the cash

Opponents of selling off BL to US companies argue that it is possible to sustain a profitable independent British motor industry. They point out that the concept of the 'world car', a uniform model turned out in millions by international car giants, is now obsolete. Different national circumstances, varying customer demand, and, most importantly, developments in manufacturing technology, have created scope for smaller firms to produce smaller runs of different models without losing mass production economies. The key to the new 'flexible manufacturing system' is the use of computer aided design and assembly-line robots. These can be programmed to make a wide range of different models which can be switched rapidly according to shifting market demand.

While academics wax lyrical about the joys of working with robots, and Labour Party politicians proclaim the virtues of Japanese production methods which involve such high technology, they never ask where the money is going to come from to pay for them. To restructure the British motor industry around the use of robots would require capital investment on a scale that stagnant British industry is incapable of generating. British entrepreneurs who have surplus cash would anyway rather have a flutter on the stock exchange than invest in such a high-risk, low-return outfit as BL.

Enthusiasts for new technology and Japanese levels of productivity always gloss over the hard facts that the introduction of such techniques would also require more mass redundancies, the further intensification of workplace exploitation and the extension of company unionism.

In reality only foreign companies have the capacity to restructure the British motor industry. The Tory government's belated recognition of this fact has given rise to a serious conflict between two central components of the Thatcher image. On the one hand, Thatcher has promoted British nationalism more aggressively than any modern prime minister. She has stirred up chauvinist sentiment against the Argentinians, the Irish — and against blacks. On the other hand, Thatcher has continually proclaimed the virtues of her old dad's corner shop; as she repeated endlessly through the Westland saga, a company's commercial considerations must come first. The final success of the US bid for Westland and the likely sell-off of Land Rover to GM show that, when it comes to the crunch, commercialism rules over chauvinism in the hearts of the British capitalist class.

JOBS NOT JINGOS

While Thatcher puts profits first, her parliamentary opponents take up the Union Jack she has temporarily put aside, and wave it for all they are worth. Heath and his rebel Tories, Kinnock and his 'party of production' and the two Davids join in a pathetic squabble to outmanoeuvre Thatcher on her Falklands flank. Their pie in the sky policy for BL merely offers its bosses an early appointment with the receiver and its workers an early appointment at the dole office. While this display of wounded patriotic pride is irritating to the Tory establishment, it should cause outrage in the labour movement. Unfortunately union officials at BL are prominently represented in the chauvinist chorus. But it was their commitment to a viable British motor industry which led them to accept the disappearance of 82 000 jobs in a five-year period, and all the other humiliations that have been heaped on the BL workforce.

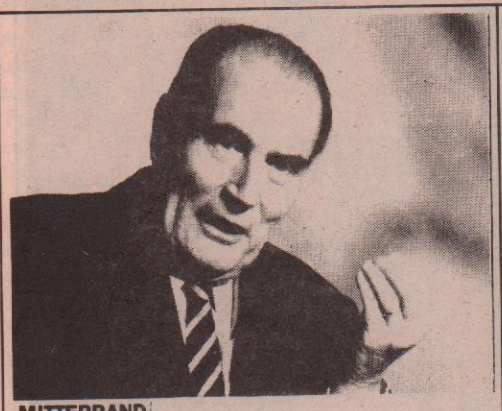
The BL story provides a valuable lesson for the labour movement. It shows that, when it comes to making profits, the capitalists let nothing stand in their way, least of all the patriotic prejudices they sometimes like to stir up to suit their purposes. It shows too that when it comes to defending jobs and conditions, we cannot afford to be distracted by the 'Keep it British' calls of fools and charlatans. Under the capitalist system there is no future for a British motor industry.

More importantly, whether British workers work for British, American, Japanese or any other capitalists, there is no future for us unless we fight against them all, instead of taking sides in their disputes about who should reap the benefits from our exploitation.

France

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

REBUILDING THE RIGHT



MITTERRAND

CHIRAC

GISCARD

LE PEN

BARRE

Under Mitterrand's Socialist government France has been remarkably quiet. Mitterrand has presided over an unprecedented offensive against the working class, but has faced little real resistance. The experience of socialist austerity has paralysed the working class movement and provided new opportunities for the right. The anticipated victory of the right at the polls next month is, paradoxically, likely to make French politics more unstable.

GETTING TOGETHER

After March the French government is expected to involve 'cohabitation' between a left-wing president — Mitterrand remains in office until 1988 — and a right-wing prime minister and parliamentary majority. At a time when bankruptcies are rising, the trade balance is going deeper into the red and the franc sliding, French capitalism desperately needs stable government. The prospect of a descent into volatile 'Italian-style' coalition politics is causing considerable alarm.

The last 10 days have confirmed that the French establishment would be hard pressed to find a more efficient political machine to manage its affairs than the Socialist government.

The right wing is not likely to get the landslide it hoped for in the French general elections on 16 March. *Sabena Norton* reports from Paris

- In Chad Mitterrand ordered an air strike in a provocative display of French militarism
- At Versailles he met representatives of 28 nations for the first 'Francophone Conference' — the French answer to the Commonwealth
- In the upper chamber of parliament senators debated the flexible working hours bill — a Socialist Party measure which represents a drastic offensive on working conditions
- Last Thursday, Channel 5, France's first privatised TV network, started broadcasting — in time to tell the people that the Socialists are as enthusiastic about private enterprise as the right.

Three weeks before the poll Mitterrand has, with characteristic tactical finesse, shown that the establishment can rely on the Socialists. Since 1983, when his government abandoned the last remnants of its 1981 reform programme in favour of Thatcherite austerity, Mitterrand has shifted steadily to the right. The Socialists' pro-establishment approach has robbed the right's anti-left campaign of conviction. The government's moderate and patriotic performance has exposed even more sharply the petty factionalism and narrow self-interest which seem to preoccupy leading right-wing politicians.

If the Socialists turn out to do better than expected it will be a result, not of their own popularity, but of the opposition's dismal performance.

Last week Jacques Chirac, one of the leading opposition figures, remarked gloomily that the Socialist Party had 'already come a long way towards us'. He complained that this was why 'a section of the electorate no longer recognises very well what distinguishes us from the Socialists'. The collapse of the left and the convergence of French politics around a patriotic, pro-business and pro-law and order approach presents a major problem for the right.

Soon after the left took office in 1981, the right extended the ideological influence it had begun to build up from the late seventies. French intellectuals, reflecting the outlook of an increasingly insecure middle class, have lost their former interest in socialism. Today political debate is dominated by a 'new liberalism', which consists mainly of an almost pathological hatred of communism and a return to the conservative values of individual initiative, private enterprise and pluralism.

However, the right has so far proved unable to use the shift in popular opinion to forge a coherent right-wing party of government. Indeed the left has succeeded in capturing much of the right's traditional terrain. The extreme right Front National on the other hand has keyed into the deepening mood of insecurity created by mass unemployment and social instability. It has won considerable support for its extreme racist and chauvinist policies. The fragmentation of the respectable right has been a significant factor in the rise of Le Pen's neo-fascist party in local and Euro elections in the past three years. But why is the official right in such a state?

One of the abiding problems of the French ruling class has been its failure to create a stable parliamentary party. Most modern French statesmen — notably Charles de Gaulle — have regarded parliamentary politics with disdain. They have relied on intrigue, patronage and charisma, rather than on party machines. Political parties of the French establishment have traditionally been little more than temporary pacts between rival factions without a coherent ideology or programme.

Today the official right is split into two main parties — Jacques Chirac's RPR and Giscard d'Estaing's UDF. The picture is further complicated by the fact that Chirac and former prime minister Raymond Barre both harbour ambitions to succeed Mitterrand as president in 1988. Because of the bitter power struggles among these politicians, the official right-wing parties have been unable to capitalise as much as they might on the prevailing disenchantment with the Socialist government. In the election campaign there has been no real offensive against the left. Instead the media have focused on sterile disputes among the contending right-wing factions about the pros and cons of cohabitation.

AUSTERITY VARIATIONS

On key political issues — economic and foreign policy, immigration and anti-union measures — virtual unanimity prevails between the parties of the right and the Socialists. One French commentator summed up the situation last week, saying that 'under objective constraints a minor nation cannot have 10 different ways of dealing with its economy', but 'only one or two, with slight variations'. He added that 'these variations are the space which presently separates right and left'.

Whatever their factional squabbles, on the central objective of making workers pay the price for the survival of the system — all the established parties are united.

The Mitterrand administration has performed sterling service for the French bosses. It has carried out the most vicious attacks on the working class in recent memory. The demoralising impact of austerity socialism on the working class has given the establishment some confidence, despite the crisis of its own parties. After 16 March Mitterrand's role will be to hold the ring while the right gets organised to resume more direct control over French politics. This move towards a more open form of reaction can be halted only if workers act independently of the old parties of the left — a matter we will consider further next week.

MARCOS GETS HIS MARCHING ORDERS

PHILIPPINES IN FERMENT

As we go to press, president Marcos of the Philippines clings on to power in a country on the brink of civil war. Cory Aquino and her US backers are hoping she can achieve a peaceful transition to the presidential office, from which she was cheated in the recent fraudulent elections.

Marcos' attempts, since the election at the beginning of February, to make conciliatory gestures towards his opponents have been too little, too late. The armed forces are now all Marcos can rely on — but the events of the past few days have shown that their loyalty can no longer be guaranteed. The biggest blow to Marcos' hopes of survival was the withdrawal of US backing for his regime. As Washington recognised that Marcos could no longer contain public hostility, the US switched its support to Aquino. Last weekend the Reagan administration called on Marcos to hand over quietly to Aquino.

The coalition of moderate middle class politicians loosely united around Aquino also wants a peaceful transfer of power. Aquino, herself little more than a mouthpiece of the anti-Marcos campaign, has even offered to negotiate with Marcos to overcome the impasse. The latest defections from Marcos — which precipitated this week's crisis — were those of a former defence minister and the head of the military, men who had long served under Marcos. The likely inclusion of such figures in any Aquino government suggests that the deference to the USA and repression of the masses characteristic of the Marcos years will continue.

Aquino may turn out to be not much better than Marcos, writes *Andrew Matthews*

The Aquino camp is preoccupied with keeping the mass revolt against Marcos under its control.

Aquino has launched a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience which seeks to contain mass protest and use 'people's power' as a lever to ease the opposition politicians into office. Aquino shies away from street demonstrations because, as she says, 'emotions are just running too high'. Opposition leaders try to turn large gatherings into 'prayer rallies', at which Catholic priests and nuns urge passivity in face of the repression of the pro-Marcos forces.

The main concern of both middle class politicians and their Western sponsors is that, in the present turbulence, the masses' aspirations for a better life could quickly move beyond the opposition's modest ambition to replace Marcos with another pro-capitalist, pro-US regime.

REVIEWS

junius publications

Kate Marshall, *Moral panics and Victorian values: women and the family in Thatcher's Britain* – still only £1.50 plus 40p p&p from Junius Publications, address below. Winston Churchill's censorship bill is moving through parliament. Last week Churchill headed off the revolt of the arts lobby by dropping his 'laundry list' of what would be ruled obscene under his law. Its precise bans on depictions of vicious cruelty, sodomy, masturbation, cannibalism and bestiality could have led to criminal prosecutions against the BBC and ITV over such innocent entertainment as *Jewel in the Crown, I Claudius, The Forsyte Saga* and even *Watership Down.*

While everybody had a good laugh about Churchill's silly bill, it still serves a sinister purpose. It focuses public debate on the depiction of sex on television as a serious social problem, and softens up public opinion for further state interference in the media. The fact that a left-wing Labour MP like Ian Mikardo can propose an amendment to ban soft-porn phone calls, and thus invite such censorship, is a measure of the problem. *Moral panics and Victorian values* rejects Tory preoccupations about sex on TV as a diversion which can only legitimise prejudice and invite state repression.

Three weeks ago Kate Marshall launched the second edition of her best-selling pamphlet. Last week she gave birth to a baby daughter. Both are reported to be thriving — Congratulations!

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THE COOPERATIVE ALTERNATIVE

Off the rails

Charles Landry, David Morley, Russell Southwood, Patrick Wright, *What a Way to Run a Railroad,* Comedia £2.50

Some left wingers have spent the past 15 years trying to construct oases of socialism in the capitalist desert. The desert has usually won: scores of co-ops and 'alternative' ventures have failed. Those that have survived have done so by jettisoning much of their earlier commitment to new ways of organising. More important, the influence of the alternative sector has not stretched as widely as its left-wing partisans first hoped.

It is high time that somebody looked into what went wrong. Learning the lessons of 15 years of failure could prevent further wasted effort and disillusionment. *What a Way to Run a Railroad* disappointingly fails to deal effectively with the underlying problems of the alternative sector. It reads like a case for more of the same but with a bit more common sense. The authors do not even tackle the technical questions about alternative styles of organisation, or more often disorganisation. What contribution did the adoption of leaderless and structureless organisations, parity of pay and conditions of work, and the rejection of hierarchical internal structures, make to the eventual failure of these projects? Perhaps the answers are expected to emerge in a 'non-dogmatic' manner from a few excruciating anecdotes and a chapter on management, but they don't.

A more serious weakness of *What a Way to Run a Railroad* is its failure to grapple with the vision of those who put their energies into setting up and sustaining these institutions. The cooperative pioneers of the sixties and seventies dreamed of reviving a mythical sense of community, hoping to include women, blacks and gays, and later, disabled people. They looked forward to the election of a Labour government with socialist policies with the right amount of internal democracy to ensure that the programme was carried out. The cooperative movement has lost its early vigour in parallel with the party it votes for. Not surprisingly, *What a Way to Run a Railroad* avoids confronting this political problem and limits its critique to the failures of particular alternative ventures.

It is obvious that good financial management, explicit allocation of responsibility internally, clear job descriptions and decent market research are all essential to the success of any organisation whether you want to sell lentils or build a revolutionary party. But if you want socialism, why start by selling lentils?
Annette Jenkins

CRICKET AND REVOLUTION

85 not out

CLR James, Man of the People –an exhibition of his life and work, Riverside Studios, Hammersmith
CLR James, *Black Jacobins – a play*
CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution,* Allison and Busby, £13.95
CLR James, *At the rendezvous of victory: selected writings,* Allison and Busby, £4.95

CLR James was born in Trinidad in 1901; in 1986 he's very much alive and living in Brixton. The years in between have been full. He discussed black self determination in the USA with Trotsky in Mexico in the thirties and Pan Africanism with Nkrumah in Ghana in the sixties. He has played cricket in the Lancashire league, been cricket correspondent for the *Guardian,* drama and literary critic, historian and playwright, and a political activist on three continents over half a century. Whether you agree or disagree with CLR James, there can be no doubt that the Riverside is celebrating the life of a remarkable man.

The exhibition includes films, lectures, and a documentary reconstruction of James' life as well as the first British production of his play *Black Jacobins* since Paul Robeson played the lead in 1936. All this comes at a time when Caribbean politics and cricket — two great passions of James' life — are both in the news. Haiti, the western half of the island of San Domingo, is still suffering the legacy of backwardness imposed by imperialist domination and the West Indians are comprehensively drubbing the England cricket team once again.

In Haiti in 1791 the first successful slave revolt in history took place, leading to the establishment of an independent black republic. These momentous events and the subsequent degeneration of the revolution are the subject of the play *Black Jacobins.* Unfortunately James is not really a playwright: he seems to have simply pasted together a polemic from his manuscript notes. The book itself, however, is a monumental work, a historical study which remains an important contribution to the understanding of political development in the third world.

James returned again and again to the theme of the struggle for a distinctive cultural and national identity in the face of overwhelming economic and political odds. His essays exhibit a wonderful breadth of sensibility to the nuances of the problem of liberation. Look for example at the discussion of Rastafarianism included in his collected writings. He notes that the Rastafarian movement is both 'a vain absurdity' and a revolt by Caribbean people against 'the British culture which dominated them for so many years and which they felt would continue to dominate them'. For James, Rastafarianism is both the opiate of the masses and the cry of the oppressed in its unique Caribbean form.

James not only played cricket to a high standard, but he writes with immense knowledge and fervour on the subject. Some may think it over the top to compare an innings by Rohan Kanhai to the poise of the greatest French poetry, but then cricket is more than just a game. In the West Indies, cricket is about taking on the colonial oppressors at their own game and trouncing them. That's why there was a carnival atmosphere at the Oval in 1976 when Viv Richards scored a double century and the incomparable Michael Holding smashed Greig's stumps to make England grovel. It is also why the current tour — featuring Botham the Briton being made to look rather small — has been effectively censored from British television.

CLR James has addressed the important issues of our time and participated in the workers' movement all his life. It would be wrong to say that this exhibition does him justice, but it's well worth a visit.
Alan Harding

ANOTHER FAMILY FILM

Young Ones — Japanese style

The Crazy Family, **Sogo Ishii (director)**

Imagine a country where the workers never go on strike, where everybody conforms and everybody gets along nicely thank you very much. You'll be thinking of Japan as many would like us to see it. Now go and see *The Crazy Family* which is a welcome antidote to this sort of thing, depicting a family exploding (at times literally) under the pressures of, well, the family. Not some marginal or oddball lot either, but a family right in the mainstream of modern Japanese life.

On the surface all is hunky dory. Mum is delighted with their new dream house in the suburbs, Dad commutes to his office in the city, Erika is a healthily batty 13-year old preening herself for pop stardom/professional – wrestling, and Masaki is a typically introverted and headphoned student who likes sticking to his room. Grandad's arrival (and lack of departure) stirs things up a bit, but his eccentricity is engaging rather than pathological, at first anyway. The surface doesn't last long. We are soon into the can of worms, or more precisely white ants, as the father's hopes of a happy family future disappear in a dizzying spiral of obsession, paranoia and violence fuelled by all concerned, not least himself.

As a comedy the film is less a bundle of laughs (perhaps some of the gags don't translate well) and more a consistently entertaining succession of bizarre incidents. The camera chases around the crowded house after the combatants, plunging us into the increasingly hectic pace of their lives. With considerable selfishness and vigour, they all pursue their own private ambitions. At the centre is Dad, massively insecure and massively determined to make the family succeed as a family, a condition which is creepily reflected in his drive to root out and destroy the white ants which he finds about the house. The action has the anarchic and outrageous flavour of BBC's *The Young Ones* and soon Dad is excavating the living room floor with a drill to provide space for Grandad.

We have been put on notice recently by Yanagi Machi's *Fire Festival* and by Paul Schrader's *Mishima* that the Japanese are no slouches when it comes to blowing their tops, or in Mishima's case removing it. In *Fire Festival* the father takes a shotgun to his kids when things get too much for him.

In *The Crazy Family* it isn't long before Dad has got the chainsaw out and the rest of the family are tooled up with baseball bats, kitchen knives and army swords. This is not however a tragic work, and even as comedy it gets stretched between farce and real black comedy. It is difficult to get really worried about that chainsaw, and that's what a film like this needs. Compare this film to Claud Farraldo's *Bof!* and *Themroc* or Makavejev's *Montenegro* for more gruelling and grisly dissections of the family.

In the end too Sogo Ishii pulls his punches at the level of the story. Instead of following through the logic of the forces which have forced the disintegration, the whole thing is transformed into something approaching a therapeutic family row. The tensions within the group are displaced on to the dream home itself, as if its destruction and their decampment to the wasteland spaces of the motorways represents some sort of alternative or hope.
Pat Ford

LETTERS

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

DAVID ROURKE

Up against the courts

BY the time you read this letter, the five Laing's building workers whose case was highlighted in last week's *tns* could be in prison. The workers — all members of a bricklaying gang on a site in Surbiton — were sacked four months ago for demanding secure employment and union recognition. Despite a court injunction granted last week, the workers and supporters have defiantly continued their picketing of Laing's prestige British Library site near St Pancras station in central London.

Fighting for the right to work against an employer who blacklists militants has brought these workers up against the full force of Tory anti-trade union legislation. Despite attempts by Ucatt union officials to undermine the rank and file action, the struggle continues.

Trade union bodies from around the country are already giving support. Send messages of support and contributions to the Laing's lockout committee, PO Box 551, London SE5 8SS.

Alex, Ucatt member
London

Free the Bogside 3!

IN the next few weeks the trials of three women will be taking place in Belfast courthouse. Two of the women — Anna Moore and her 18-year old daughter Jacqueline from the Bogside area of Derry — were subjected to beatings and other physical and psychological abuse in Castlereagh two years ago. They have been accused of conspiring to plant a bomb at a British Army disco at Ballykelly, County Derry, in December 1982. Two men have been held at Crumlin Road prison in Belfast on charges arising from this incident.

Jacqueline was pregnant at the time of arrest and her baby was born in prison. The baby was released to the 'liberated' section of the family last summer. The campaign used to be called the 'Bogside two', but Anna Moore's sister was later arrested, making it the 'Bogside three'. The 'Bogside three' have lodged complaints against the Royal Ulster Constabulary for ill-treatment during arrest and interrogation. I hope supporters of the Irish Freedom Movement will give maximum publicity to this latest example of 'British justice' in occupied Ireland.

Congratulations on the Irish Freedom Movement's mobilisation for Bloody Sunday!

Flonnbarra O'Dochartaigh
Derry
Ireland

Why complain to police?

IN the editorial on page two of *tns* 8 you make the point that labour movement organisations shouldn't resort to the law and the courts to resolve disputes on our behalf. On page three you highlight the victimisation by the police of an RCP activist in the NUM and mention he had to resort to the police complaints procedure. You say we shouldn't expect to 'get any joy' from this, but there's still a confusion in your argument. If we shouldn't rely on the courts why bother with the police complaints procedure?

RCP supporter
Liverpool

Labour evictions

I AM a tenant of the Southwark Borough Council and have received a notice of eviction if I don't clear my rent arrears. The letter makes it clear that if I'm evicted I won't be rehoused. Thousands of people are being threatened with eviction after the Labour council's decision to crack down on rent arrears. Our local housing office is only open to deal with rent arrears cases, and not with more urgent problems like repairs. I have no means to clear these arrears. Supplementary benefit is my only form of income to support my wife and two kids. Most of the tenants are in a similar position.

I have always voted for the Labour Party but their attitude has disillusioned me and other ordinary people in Southwark. The Labour Party claims to be the party of the working class but it is acting like the Tories.

Mushtaq Hussain
Southwark

Parliamentary cretinism?

I AGREED with every word of last week's centrespread *(tns* 8) on standing in elections. But I am not convinced that it helps the party's election campaign to argue our position in such a formal way. I have campaigned for the RCP in past elections and I'm standing as an RCP candidate in local elections this May. My experience of past campaigns was confirmed during the election work we have done over the last two weeks. Door-to-door activity requires hard political argument and thorough exposure of the Labour Party.

Our approach has got to be distinctive enough to draw people away from the complacent 'They're all the same anyway'. And we have got to put forward the sort of positive proposals for fighting back that are expected of a party claiming to take the lead. We need a national manifesto to win workers to our side, not 'exemplary' maiden speeches to parliament that pretend we have already won.

Tom Bruggen
Coventry

Anglo-Irish dealings

I AM surprised that *tns* has not yet published a more detailed analysis of the Anglo-Irish agreement, because there are aspects of it that remain puzzling. The Government of Ireland Act (1920), which was the culmination of the long delayed third Home Rule Bill, was brought in piecemeal and it had a provision for a Council of Ireland which envisaged cooperation in the future between Northern and Southern parliaments.

With the continuing restructuring of British and European capital, Partition is long out of date and presents an obstacle to American plans to get the Southern government to relinquish its policy of neutrality and join the Nato alliance.

Does British policy now depend on the middle classes, North and South, beginning to realise their common class interest? With de-industrialisation and severe unemployment weakening the Loyalist economic base, could the lower sections of the working class be pushed into their true class position?

Michael Wallace
London W6

Docs soft on Aids

THE first national medical conference on Aids held in Newcastle last week concluded with a statement that haemophiliacs should get state compensation if they contracted Aids. The justification for this compensation of haemophiliacs, as opposed to gay victims of the disease, was that they contracted the disease through no fault of their own, through contaminated blood transfusions. The obvious implication is that if gays contract Aids it is their own fault and they should not receive any support. This focus on haemophiliacs — a minority of Aids sufferers — allows all the myths and scare stories about Aids to go unchallenged.

The message that 'It's the virus, not the victim' that is responsible for Aids has still not got across to the medical profession. This needs to be spelt out if we're to challenge the sort of hysteria which was typical of public reaction to the conference in Newcastle. On the local Metro radio phone-in that evening a stream of callers demanded stern action to counter 'the gay plague' and that gays and drug addicts should be locked up.

Claire Foster
Newcastle

Natural childbirth OK

WHILST I agree with what Helen Swift is saying in her article 'Wendy Savage on trial' (*tns* 7) about divisive tactics in general, by highlighting the issue at all in the face of cut-backs within the NHS, I must point out that the 'natural childbirth campaign', especially where it is aware of the possibility of childbirth without pain, cannot and must not be regarded as reactionary. It is central to any belief in a utopian future for man/woman kind that our offspring wll do just that — 'spring' out. If it is mystical to know that ecstacy rather than pain is the by-word for childbirth then I remain yours truly, a mystic.

Laura Shaw
East Dulwich

STEPPING OUT

After last week's story about Pontefract police trying to frame Yorkshire miner Keith Hammond for armed robbery, Hammond has received an amusing letter from Chief Superintendent Little, of West Yorkshire police's discipline and complaints department. It concludes: 'As you will understand(?), until the necessary investigation has been completed, the issue cannot be prejudged. But I do regret any event which leaves you with a sense of grievance against the police.' There is no truth in the rumour that Chief Super Little spends his spare time writing this sort of material for his brother, Sid.

●

Speaking of police discipline, Manchester constables were recently called out to deal with drunks causing havoc and setting off burglar alarms at a local disco. But it turned out the St Valentine's Day dance/massacre was being held at the social club, Chester Square – the city's police HQ. And the rowdy revellers were all off-duty rozzers. On the command floor, police found one of their comrades trying to sleep himself sober. He told the investigating officers to clear off, as he was a member of the force's 'Y' department, responsible for...complaints and discipline. If this sort of carry-on carries on, 'Support your local police' could take on a new meaning.

■

Sticking with police matters, last year Japanese police arrested 2.48 million suspects, of whom just 121 were eventually found not guilty. This means the conviction rate in Japan's no-jury courts is around 99.99 per cent, mostly due to the confessions police manage to 'persuade' their prisoners to make. Perhaps this is the Japanese 'social strategy' that Neil Kinnock wants to emulate in Britain. Or perhaps it's an example of the Japanese learning from the Brits. Apparently, the first Japanese book on the IRA has just been published. Previous Japanese publications on Ireland have all been about British imperial strategy, used as textbooks on how to repress people — with, among other things, no-jury courts and police torture centres. Who said capitalism undermines cultural exchanges?

●

Here is a Murdoch gem you will all have missed, because you're boycotting the scab Sun. *(On my honour as a gent, I have only been reading it in a public library.) The most patriotic of gutter papers was sorely upset over the England cricketers' dismal display in the early games of their West Indies tour. So the* Sun *did a splash feature on England's saviour, David Smith, who was flying out to join the team for the first test match. 'YOU DON'T SCARE ME' Smith warned the West Indies fearsome fast bowlers, in two-inch high headlines. Result? He was out for one run in the first innings – and less than one run in the second. Well, they only said he wouldn't be scared. Nobody said he would actually hit the ball.*

■

When I heard Wapping marchers sing the Internationale on Saturday, I thought perhaps the print unions had ditched their traditions of sectionalism and running their trade as an exclusive family club. Then they started singing another refrain: 'I am a printer, I am a printer's son...' It was a nice thought, anyway.

●

Two elderly socialist women overheard chatting at a meeting on Ireland in Nottingham: 'I don't know why they keep on about the IRA blowing people up. They're not as bad as the gas board.' The enemy, as we Marxists say, is at home.

EDDIE VEALE

THE **PARTY** PAGE

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

DAVID ROURKE

Boycott Murdoch!

While the police are trying to keep *tns* off the streets in Yorkshire, we've started a national campaign to keep Murdoch's scab papers off the streets everywhere. Last Saturday supporters throughout Britain went out with placards, petitions and megaphones to explain the issues of the print strike to shoppers. The response was encouraging. In Manchester seven supporters sold 101 papers on a 'Buy *tns* — not the *Sun*' protest, and the branch sold 250 copies in one day. In Newcastle one supporter sold 11 copies of *tns* in half an hour, mostly to workers who wanted to find out our views on rebuilding the trade unions. It proved a good excuse to talk to workers about the problems in their own unions, too.

This week we'll be repeating the action. **ALL PROTESTS ARE ON SATURDAY 1 MARCH** unless otherwise stated:

LIVERPOOL: meet 11am, WH Smith's, Church St, city centre

NEWCASTLE: meet 10.30am, Monument, city centre

NOTTINGHAM: meet 11am, WH Smith's, Broadmarsh

BRIGHTON: meet 11am Churchill Square

LEEDS: meet 11am, Lands Lane, town centre

EDINBURGH: meet 11am, Menzies, Princes St

NORTH LONDON:meet 11am, Camden tube station **AND** meet 2.00pm Islington Upper St, outside Screen on the Green

SOUTH LONDON: meet 11am, Brixton tube **AND** meet 11am, Women's Centre, Peckham High St

WEST LONDON: meet 11am, Fulham WH Smith's North End Rd **AND** meet 2.00pm, Hammersmith King's Mall

EAST LONDON: meet 11am, entrance to Arcade, Stratford Broadway **AND** meet 11am, BR station, Dalston Junction

BIRMINGHAM: Friday 28 February 4.30pm, meet WH Smith's, Union St **AND** Saturday 1 March 11am, meet Chamberlain Square

FOR YOUR DIARY

● **Public meetings**
Could a revolution happen here?
EDINBURGH: Thursday 27 February 7.30pm, Trades Council Building, Picardy Place
MANCHESTER: Thursday 27 February 7.30pm, Black Lion Hotel, Chapel Street
LIVERPOOL: Friday 28 February 7.30pm, AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant
COVENTRY: Friday 28 February 7pm, Hand and Heart, Gosford Street
BRIGHTON: Wednesday 5 March 7.30pm, The Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place

● **BRADFORD**
Protest against police harassment at local police/community forum
Thursday 27 February 7pm, Clayton Middle School

● **SHEFFIELD**
Tell the Labour councillors debating next year's budget we want no rate rises, no cuts and no job losses
Monday 3 March 7pm, town hall

● **MANCHESTER**
Join the mass picket in Mosley to back Kaywool workers on strike against Victorian working conditions.Transport leaves Manchester 7am, Monday 3 March. Phone 01-729 0414.

Supporters speaking

'Why are you an RCP supporter?' Ann Burton asked at last week's London supporters' meeting. Here are some of the answers she got

'I've been reading *tns* for over a year, on and off, but I'd always been a bit edgy about getting further into it. Then about three weeks ago I saw this white bloke selling *Roots of Racism* outside Brixton tube, so I went over to take the piss — I couldn't think what he'd have to say about racism, being white — but I was dead surprised. He told me about a meeting which I went to, which was really good and that was that. It sounded like there was so much going on you couldn't say you agreed with the politics but didn't want to get involved —that'd be copping out.

'That was three weeks ago, now I'm in the middle of setting up a new branch in Peckham. It's a good place to start a branch because it's so obvious the Labour Party is rubbish. The council have started letting the police use flats on North Peckham estate to spy on people who live there. And the councillors are inviting pigs to their surgeries so people can talk to them more easily. Most people round here spend most of their time trying to keep away from the police, especially if you're black. You know they'll only try to set you up. Anyway the first thing we're going to do is set up a campaign against it.

'There's loads of other things we're doing as well. On Saturday I was down at Wapping, on Sunday a load of us supporters had a discussion with a couple of RCP members on Ireland, and I've been out selling *tns* as well.'

So said Sid, one of our supporters at the London supporters' meeting last week. Tracy's also been around for a short time, but soon found herself right in the middle of branch life. Mind you, she nearly didn't get involved at all:'To be honest I was getting very cynical,' she admitted, 'A lot of people kept telling me the left was banging its head against a brick wall, but I couldn't even see the left doing that. Like this morning I was reading in some paper about some Coventry MP who's supposed to be as far left as they come, and his idea of fighting Murdoch is asking questions in parliament about whether he's got planning permission for the barbed wire at Wapping.

It's pathetic and demoralises people. The police are baton-charging picket lines and the Labour Party's consulting surveyors about building rights. That's why I think the RCP can get a lot of new members. There's nowhere else to go — no-one else is fighting.'

Since the new year 238 new people have signed up as RCP supporters. Some of our most active branches have had to set up extra supporters' meetings. The best thing is that a whole wave of new supporters have been persuaded to join by people who've only just got involved themselves. And the number of people writing to *tns* from areas where we don't yet have branches has shot up — we've had to get someone new into our office to handle the extra correspondence. So if you're waiting for a reply, please be patient. And if you're not waiting for one yet, fill in the box on page 12 now.

JENNY MORGAN

Police off our streets!

Last week's *tns* told the story of Keith Hammond, a Yorkshire miner and Pontefract RCP supporter who fell foul of the police during the miners' strike. They've tried to chase him off the streets for selling *tns* ever since. Last week, you'll remember, the Yorkshire constabulary were trying to fit Keith up for an armed robbery which took place when he was on the Bloody Sunday commemoration march in London. This week, just so that Keith didn't feel personally victimised, the police ran in another RCP supporter and charged him with obstruction.

These bully-boy tactics are becoming a big issue. *The Pontefract and Castleford Express* made police harassment of *tns* sellers a front page story, suggesting it's part of a police campaign to drive us off the streets in the run-up to the local elections, in which we will be standing a number of candidates. Yorkshire supporters aren't prepared to take this lying down. On Wednesday 30 RCP activists, joined by other Pontefract left wingers, stormed into the area's 'police forum' — a talking shop for local police and Labour councillors — demanding an end to harassment of *tns* sellers and an end to council links with the police.

It'll need more than the disruption of one meeting to put the police in their place. We've launched a campaign to defend our right to sell our propaganda. The action begins on Saturday 1 March with a mass sale — meet at Pontefract town hall, 11 am. We'll be approaching left-wing activists and local trade unions for their support. And we're asking for yours.

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tns

10 REASONS TO STOP GETTING THE SOARAWAY SCAB Sun

1 Rupert Murdoch has sacked 5000 workers and set up a plant behind barbed wire. He has employed a fleet of trucks to make sure every family in Britain can get soap and scandal for breakfast. Rambo Rupert is out to put workers on the dole, smash our unions, and carry on showing off his talent for turning muck into money.

2 Eric Hammond has helped to provide Fort Murdoch with an army of scabs. Sensible Eric has told the loony lefties to get stuffed and let the electricians get on with doing other workers' jobs and running errands for the bosses.

3 Margaret Thatcher has given the thumbs up to Fortress Wapping. Maggie says 'get rid of those restrictive practices and set Fleet Street free' — and keep backing me for leader of the Tory Party!

4 Kenneth Newman has taken his lads (and lasses!) off their riot-training film set near Heathrow and given them a taste of the real thing at Wapping. Blue Ken, fresh from eating humble pie over the behaviour of his thugs in Islington, is giving them even better equipment to put the boot in down in Tower Hamlets.

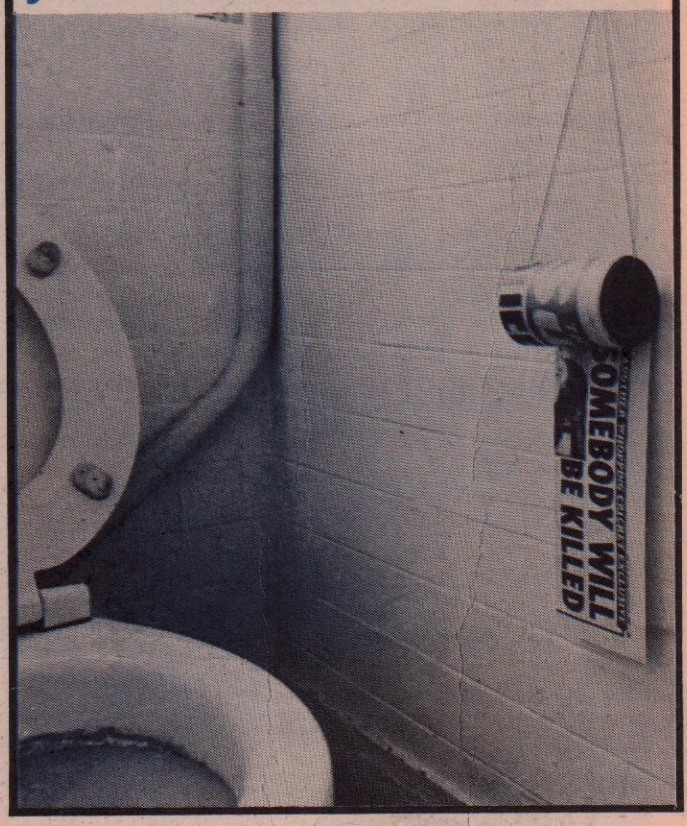
5 Justice Michael Davies has already ripped off the print union Sogat for £17m. And now he wants to do the same to the NGA. Why should these class warriors in wigs be allowed to outlaw anything that hits the employers where it hurts?

6 Samantha Fox might be a working class girl trying to make a living — but that's no excuse for getting into a tank on the side of the scab army. Scantily clad Sam is doing her bit to keep the Sun Bingo going and to boost the morale of the Murdoch forces. But who wants to play Bingo when there's a war going on?

7 Norman Willis and Ron Todd have pledged the support of the big battalions of the TUC for the print workers. But wise-cracking Willis and tough-talking Todd have put less pickets around Wapping than they have hairs on their heads. With these heavyweight donothings behind the print workers, who needs enemies?

● Print workers are braving massed ranks of thugs in uniform to try to stop the whopping strike-breaking *Sun* from reaching your doorstep.

● Here's one suggestion for what you might do with your sensational *Sun*.



DAVID ROURKE

8 Neil Kinnock won't talk to *Sun* journalists, but he hates picketing and direct action even more. Red-baiting Hatton-hating Kinnock wishes the dispute would go away and let him get on with shafting Militant and proving how harmless he is to the British establishment.

9 David Owen doesn't much like the *Sun* but he hates the unions even more. Doctor Death wants the same treatment extending from Fleet Street to the television unions and beyond. Out-Thatchering Thatcher, unctuous Owen won't be happy until he's wearing her crown.

10 The *Sun* is a dirty little newspaper. It stirs up prejudices against women, blacks, gays, the Irish, the French, the working class — anybody who stands in the way of the Tories and their rotten system.

Boycott the *Sun!* Support the print workers!

See page 11 for details of action around the country.

Mark Wilding

RCP

Fight for the right to fight! Find out more about the RCP!

The RCP is a young and growing party. We stand for

- **a job and a decent income for every worker — and for the right to fight back against the system;**
- **rights for women — including the right to work, the right to abortion and contraception and free nursery facilities;**
- **rights for black people — and for workers' defence against racist attacks;**
- **freedom for the Irish people from British occupation and political control.**

Supporters of the RCP meet weekly in most cities in Britain to talk about what's happening and what we can do to change it. If you agree with our assessment of what's wrong, why not join our movement for a new world?

Phone Fenna on 01 729 0414 for details of supporters' groups around the country or fill in the form below.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

TEL _____

Send to RCP, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX