

tns
the next step

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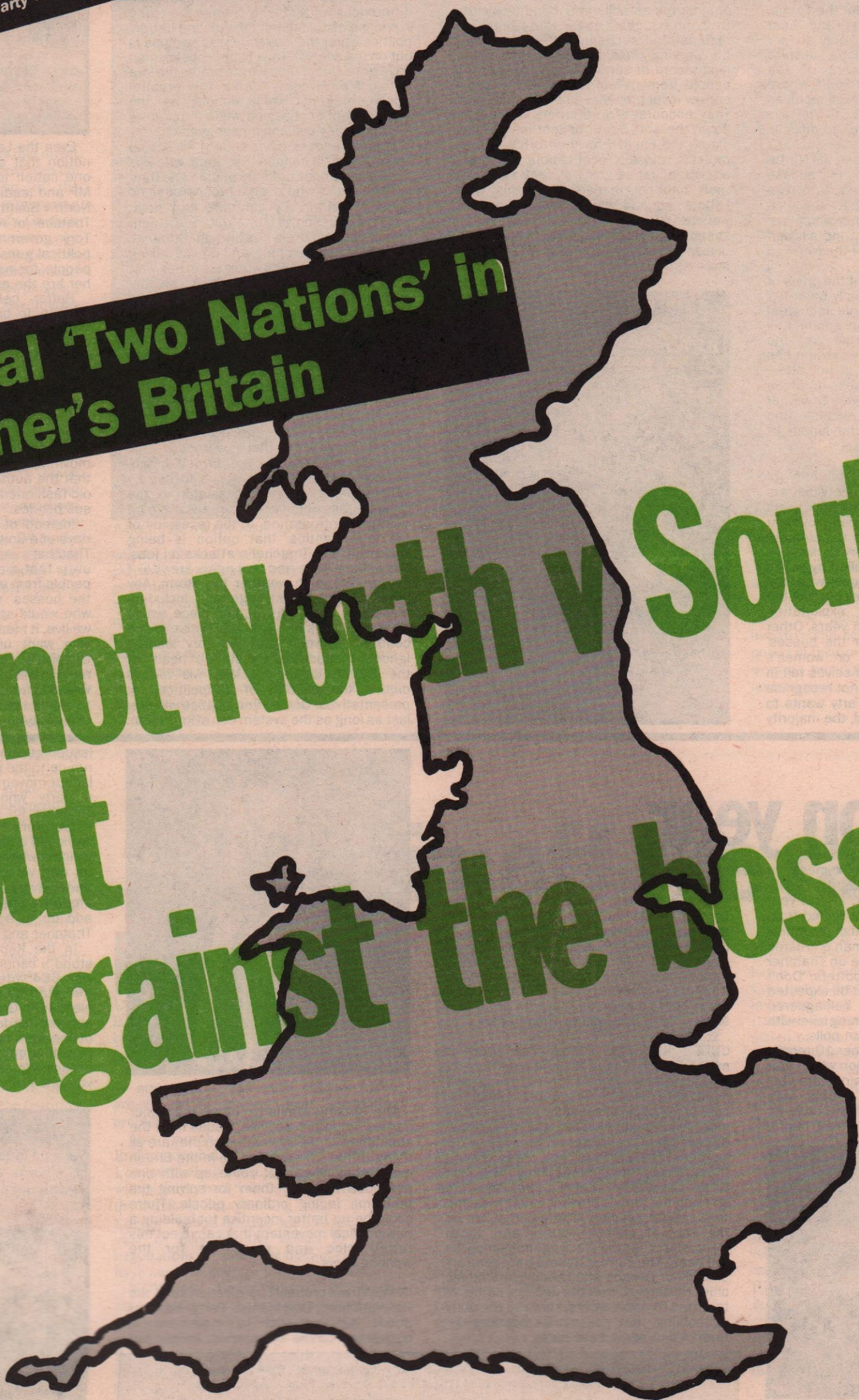
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**The real 'Two Nations' in
Thatcher's Britain**

**It's not North v South
but
us against the bosses**



We are two nations

THIS WEEK the government is finally publishing a long-suppressed report which exposes the big gap between unemployment in the North and the South of the 'United Kingdom'. It confirms that Scotland, Northern England, Wales, the Midlands and Northern Ireland have together suffered 94 per cent of all job losses under the Tories. The South-East, South-West and East Anglia, meanwhile, have lost only six per cent of the disappearing jobs, despite being home to 42 per cent of the population. One place in the South where this news will be particularly well received is Bishop Stortford, where the Labour Party leaders are meeting this week to discuss their pre-election plans.

The Labour leaders like to use the North-South employment divide to accuse Thatcher of splitting Britain into two nations. They point out that she has cosseted the southern regions which are the bedrock of Tory support, and allowed the old Labour strongholds of the North to go to wrack and ruin.

The harsh consequences of the crisis of British capitalism have certainly been felt most keenly in the traditional industrial areas, as the manufacturing sector has been savaged under Thatcher. Yet the important divide which the recession has exposed in modern Britain is not along geographical, but social lines. It is the divide between those who have to labour for a living — the working class — and those who live royally off the labour of others — the capitalist class.

THE DOMINATION of a tiny minority of capitalists over the rest of society distorts and degrades the lives of ordinary people throughout Britain. The unemployment concentrated in the North is the clearest manifestation of this. But every worker with a job is exploited and controlled by profit-hungry capitalists. Even those with the safest jobs in the most secure corner of the South-East have felt that exploitation intensify over the last seven years. Other brutal aspects of life under the bosses' system, such as racism or women's oppression, have made themselves felt in the eighties. These evils do not recognise the line which the Labour Party wants to draw across the map. Indeed, the majority

of Britain's black population suffers its share of police persecution and racist violence in London.

Those, like the Revolutionary Communist Party, who recognise that the worker/capitalist confrontation is the one which counts, seek to unite the labour movement against the establishment and its system. By contrast, the Labour Party highlights regional and sectional differences within the working class. Labour leaders have a long record of stirring up divisions among people from different areas, to mobilise narrow local prejudices behind their party. They encourage Northerners to complain about the 'soft' South, or Scottish people to blame the English for their problems. The radicals who run local Labour authorities are often just as guilty of sectionalism as their national leaders. Only this week, Labour council chiefs from the North warned Kinnock that they would not support the re-establishment of the GLC unless he promised to give their regions more autonomy too.



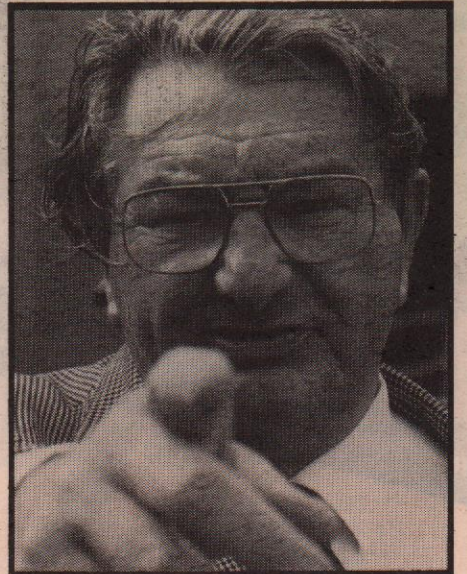
The result of all this is to exacerbate the divisions among working class people around Britain, making it easier for the authorities to keep control by playing us off against each other, and harder to unite the labour movement against its enemies.

WHEN THE question of class divisions is raised, Labour leaders go pale and change the subject. They have no interest in highlighting a conflict that could challenge the structures of the system. Instead, Labour chiefs seek to reconcile the working class to its status as an exploited mass under capitalism. The same politicians who manipulate geographical differences will suddenly change their tune and pose as the champions of 'one nation' politics when the issue of class struggle is put on the agenda. Thus Labour spokesmen have gone out of their way to praise the late Harold Macmillan, a former Tory premier whose methods they uphold as the embodiment of peace between the classes — which they call consensus politics.

Labour leaders have sought to set up Macmillan as a genuine Tory gent, who was concerned about ordinary people and their problems and who ruled a prosperous and peaceful Britain. By contrast, they point out, Thatcher shows contempt for the poor and the unemployed, has brought Britain to the edge of bankruptcy, and proved willing to trample on anybody who gets in her way.

It is ironic that Macmillan, an unexceptional politician who ruled over the beginning of Britain's decline from the late fifties, should now be taken to the Labour Party's bosom. While the Britain which he proclaimed had 'never had it so good' was a very different place to that now suffering under Thatcher, both leaders served the same capitalist class. The difference lies not in the prime ministers' respective personalities, but in the economic conditions under which they governed.

In Macmillan's day the British establishment still had some scope to rule by consensus, making concessions to the working class where necessary and avoiding outright confrontation. In the recession of the late eighties, that option is being squeezed out. Thatcher's attacks on jobs, the welfare state and civil rights are vital if her system is to weather the storm. Any other establishment dignitary, including Macmillan, who was in her place would have to do the same. Labour's romanticised contrast between the two Tory leaders ignores the fact that the state of health of the British capitalist class will always dictate the policies of its political representatives. One nation politics will only last as long as the system can afford them.



Even the Labour left is infected with the notion that class-ridden Britain could be one nation today. Eric Heffer, a Liverpool MP and leading left-wing exponent of the North v South argument, last week accused Thatcher of rolling back the gains of past Tory governments, and of 'turning her political guns against sections of her own people, for instance trade unionists who, to her are the enemy within'.

Heffer believes that, because they happen to be born on the same island, trade unionists are really Thatcher's 'own people'. Thatcher, on the other hand has a very clear idea of who 'her own people' are: the rulers, defenders and supporters of the existing order. She serves them by branding their opponents as enemies within, terrorists and criminals, and treating them accordingly. While she makes war on us, those who claim to represent the labour movement can only cry 'foul' and complain that the authorities are not playing by the old-fashioned rules of British consensus politics.

Instead of fretting about the good old days of a united Britain, we need to match Thatcher's attitude to looking after our own. That means trying to unite left-wing people from every region in a battle against the bosses' system, and silencing those who would split us up according to where we live. It means having no truck with those who want us to make peace with our exploiters and oppressors. While power rests in the hands of a capitalist clique who will lie to us, cheat us, starve us and beat us to keep control, Britain can only be two nations.

Election year

THE MOST notable New Year message came from Bryan Gould, the Labour Party's election campaign organiser. After a year in which the Tory government reeled from crisis to crisis and the British economy went from bad to worse, the man entrusted with getting Labour fit to take on Thatcher could only tell his party's supporters: 'Don't panic'. At a time when it might be expected to streak away from the beleaguered Tories, Labour finds itself running level with the government in the opinion polls.

The close-run race to Number 10 recalls the run-up to the 1979 election which first put Thatcher in power. Yet things are very different today. In 1979 Labour was carrying the burden of five disastrous years in office, while the Tories had a fresh bagful

of radical policies and promises. Today they have exhausted all their ideas for stopping British industry sliding into oblivion, while the slide accelerates. Yet the Tories are able to hang on in the polls because of their success in selling their clapped-out policies to the opposition parties. Labour and the Alliance are finding it hard to convince people that they could do any better when all they can do is tout second-hand versions of Thatcherism.

UNDER KINNOCK, Labour has tried to match Thatcher's tub-thumping patriotism, her hardnosed support for the police, and her determination to save British capitalism. Labour's policy conference this week is intended to emphasise the distinctive appeal and freshness of its ideas. Yet Labour's leaders are not even fooling themselves. Prominent Labour MP Jack Straw admits Thatcher's influence in shaping his party's present outlook, saying that Labour policies 'acknowledge, as on the sale of council houses and social ownership, that the clock cannot simply be run back'. The current debate between Tory chancellor Lawson and Labour's economic chief Hattersley, over the decimal points of tax rates for top-earners, sums up the petty squabbling that passes for political differences in parliament today.

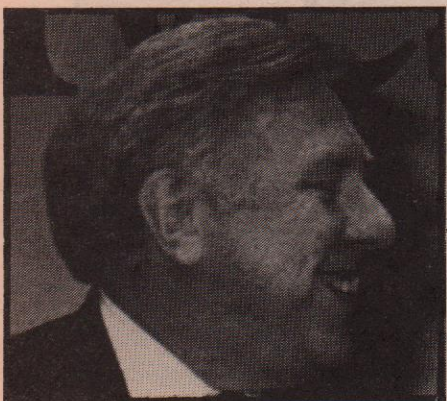


The striking similarity of all the major parties' impotent policies results from the stagnation of the system which they are all trying to run. The top people in the British establishment cannot come up with one new idea between them for solving the problems facing ordinary people. There could be no better incentive for building a new political movement that can reject this rotten bloc and stand up for the working class.

IN WHAT will probably be election year, the Revolutionary Communist Party has set about building such a movement in opposition to the old parties. As political

issues become more sharply posed in the run-up to the election, we cannot allow the labour movement to be misrepresented by a party whose leader is jostling with Thatcher for a foothold in the swamp of establishment politics. That's why we have launched a campaign to unite all those left wingers who want the working class to have its own voice in the debate. We want to unite every such group and individual around a basic platform of demands that add up to a decent life for those whom Thatcher and Kinnock ignore.

In the Knowsley North by-election, we stood a candidate on such a platform and won 664 votes. Now we hope to build on that start by contesting the important by-election in Greenwich. This promises to be an even harder battle. But, with the future of the working class at stake, we have to take this opportunity to challenge the old parties. We ask for your support, and make you one promise. We are not panicking.



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RAILWORKERS' STRIKES

FRANCE: ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Militant action by French railworkers has forced Jacques Chirac's government to make big concessions on pay and conditions.
Sabena Norton reports.

Last July France's new right-wing premier Chirac promised that before the end of 1986 France would possess a 'new system of values'. But the government's attempt to run a Thatcher-style regime with heavy-handed attacks on living standards and civil rights has provoked working class resistance on a scale not seen since 1968. The national rail strike which began on 19 December has forced the government to abandon plans to impose a new productivity-linked pay system on the railways.

The railworkers' success shows that direct action by the rank and file can force even the most arrogant government on to the defensive. Other workers are now preparing to follow their example and defy Chirac's three per cent ceiling on public sector pay rises. The threat of wider strike action has provoked panic in the French establishment. Over the past week the franc has plunged, forcing the Bank of France to raise interest rates in a bid to stop money flowing out of France. After nine months in office it seems Chirac may have to eat his words about changing French 'values'.

The secret behind the remarkable success of the railworkers' action is the strength of rank and file control over the strike movement.

For months French public transport workers on the railways, the Paris metro, the airways and in the docks have taken sporadic action to resist attacks on jobs and conditions. Their campaign has not been organised by the official unions, but by local groups of rank and file workers. When the government moved to impose flexible working hours in the public sector last month, railworkers' anger erupted into a national strike.

'THE FIRST TIME'

Instead of waiting for the union leaders to act, militants in key rail depots and stations took the initiative themselves and set up national rank and file committees to coordinate the strike. It has been run from the *coordination nationale* based in Paris South-East, the *coordination inter-regionale* based in the Gare du Nord station in northern Paris, and regional strike committees in the provinces. This independent organisation has given the railworkers the strength to put pressure on the government. It has shocked the authorities and official union leaders alike.

Reports from La Mouche rail depot in the southern region of Lyon, give a glimpse of the strikers' determination and solidarity. All but 20 of the 520 workers have joined the strike. The strike committee meets every morning before the daily mass strike meeting. 'Even at three in the morning there are always 15-20 pickets on duty', says one of the minority of unionised workers at the depot — a loyal member of the Communist Party-controlled CGT union. 'The most militant are the young, mostly those we have never seen at a union meeting before. In my 23 years on the railway this is the first time I've seen strike committees.' Like many unionised railworkers this CGT supporter has been stunned by the militancy of his non-union workmates. 'I'm a bit afraid', he added, 'that the non-unionised will dictate us their terms.'

KEEP CONTROL

The union machines, by-passed by the strike movement, have had to adapt to rank and file pressure to keep abreast of the struggle.

The moderate CFTC, one of the smaller unions on the rails, was forced to revoke its support for the government's pay offer of two per cent after its members joined the strike. Other unions have reluctantly backed the strikers' demands in an attempt to regain



PARIS: THE TRAIN NOW ARRIVING AT PLATFORM ONE ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE

control. Only a week ago, the CGT was prepared to accept a 'suspension' of the government's pay scheme as a satisfactory end to the dispute. Now it has called on all its members in the public sector to help the railworkers win all their demands on wages, conditions and hours. This is a union which did nothing to defend its members against the cuts introduced by the left-wing Mitterrand government in the five years up to March 1986.

Its newly-discovered militancy shows how much pressure the action of rank and file workers has put on the top union officials.

As the confrontation between railworkers and government enters its fourth week, Chirac's only option is to open negotiations with the unions to bring the strike to an end. He ignored the union leaders in his attempt to dictate terms. Now the government is seeking their services as pliable negotiating partners who will agree to a com-

promise deal.

The key question now facing the railworkers is whether they will be able to keep control of their strike, or whether they will allow the union leaders to regain the initiative and head it off. Having tasted the power of their own organisation, the French workers must now resist all attempts to undermine it.

Britain: off the rails

In Britain, management has put railworkers on the defensive. British Rail will try to wipe out 1500 drivers' assistants' jobs this month, and London Underground's cost-cutting scheme for 1987 is based on massive redundancies and pay-cuts. Thousands of railworkers are waiting for union officials to lead a counter-attack.

But this waiting game has only two winners — management, and union officials whose priority is to preserve their negotiating procedures, not our jobs.

Last month the National Union of Railwaymen balloted its 14 000 members on London Underground. The result this week will probably be a 'yes' for strike action. But the NUR is not planning action to stop London. Union officials want to use a 'yes' vote to persuade the bosses to restart negotiations — along the lines of talks that have cost 500 000 rail jobs in 40 years.

NUR chief Jimmy Knapp only wants management 'to talk in the proper negotiating spirit'. But NUR members like Dave from north London know from experience that 'the negotiating spirit keeps the officials' jobs and loses ours'. Unlike Knapp, Dave and his colleagues have nothing to



JIMMY KNAPP

gain from talking on management's terms.

Many NUR members expect nothing from the officials' strike-ballot charade. But activists have not yet worked out an effective alternative. Some NUR left wingers are calling for 'our leaders to use the vote to organise strike action'.

But as long as union officials remain the focus of attention for the rank and file, there can be no effective action against London Underground management.

'If we leave the next move to union officials, we'll be playing into management's hands' said Denis, a shop representative at Cockfosters depot. 'We want open meetings involving rank and file members of all London Transport unions, to decide what action to take, and how to organise it.'

Officials from Aslef, the train drivers' union, have already signed away 1500 drivers' assistants' jobs. But young militants at St Pancras and King's Cross British Rail stations have begun to take matters into their own hands. They are arguing for train drivers to take solidarity action with them on 19 January.

The most militant drivers' assistants are not veterans of union procedures. They are young workers who refuse to let union structures override their need to defend jobs. Now they must go beyond the confines of their union, and approach members from all the unions in British Rail and London Transport.

United under rank and file banners, railworkers in Britain can follow the French example, and put their employers on the defensive.

THE FREE MIKE HICKS CAMPAIGN

No LEGITIMATE TARGETS

Mike Hicks is the ninth printworker jailed for his part in the Wapping dispute. Yet his is the first case to be publicised by the Labour Party and trade union leadership

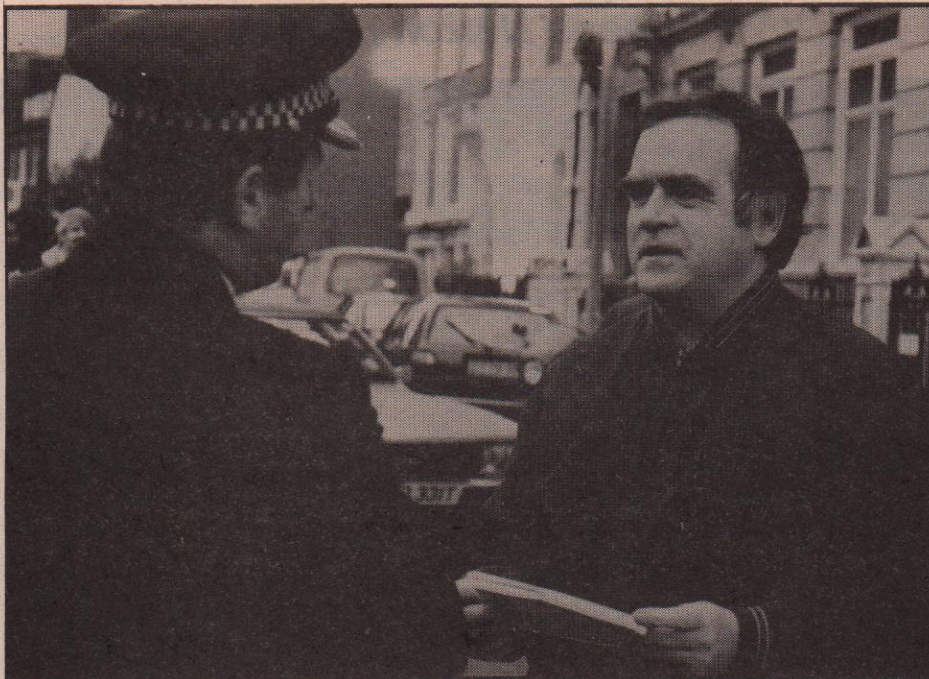
Print union leader Mike Hicks spent Christmas and New Year in Camp Hill prison on the Isle of Wight. His imprisonment is the *cause celebre* of the official labour movement. But for the Labour Party and trade union leadership, 'Free Mike Hicks' means upholding the tradition of collaborating with the police on picket lines, instead of defending the right of strikers to resist paramilitary police and bosses' courts.

Since the start of the News International dispute on 24 January 1986, senior Sogat steward Hicks has been chief marshal for nearly 100 demonstrations outside Rupert Murdoch's Fortress Wapping. 'Hicksey' is the best-known face on the Wapping picket line. His pole position in the year-long print dispute won him a seat on Sogat's incoming national executive. He is also chairman of the Communist Campaign Group of hard-line Stalinists.

After a regular Saturday night demonstration at Wapping in April, plainclothes police launched a dawn raid on Hicks' home. He was bailed to appear in court in early December, when he stood trial for an alleged assault on police inspector Norman Surridge. Hicks was said to have pushed a megaphone into Surridge's face. At the end of a three-day hearing at Southwark crown court, judge Alwyn Davies sentenced Hicks to 12 months imprisonment, with eight months suspended.

This savage sentence angered thousands of printworkers and other rank and file trade unionists. Many militants recognised the need to oppose all police action against pickets and elected union representatives. But the campaign to 'Free Mike Hicks' has been orchestrated by union and Labour Party officials, who have other reasons for backing the chief marshal of Wapping.

A few days after Hicks began his sentence, the Labour Party's national executive committee passed an emergency resolution calling for his release: 'This meeting condemns the arrest and imprisonment of Mike Hicks, a Sogat member with a long history of organising liaison with the police;



THE GREAT LIAISER: SOGAT LEADER MIKE HICKS' COSY CHATS WITH POLICE HELPED DEMOBILISE WAPPING PICKETS

this meeting demands his immediate release, and calls upon members of the party to campaign for this to be done, with emphasis on explaining the factual background to the case'.

The Labour leaders are backing Hicks only because he spent most of last year 'organising liaison with the police' and keeping the lid on the Wapping dispute.

Whenever strikers' militancy looked set to break out of the routine of marches past Wapping, Hicks was there to 'liaise' with the police. Cracking jokes, singing songs and calling on strikers to abstain from uncivilised behaviour i.e. fighting back against police attacks, were all part of Hicks' repertoire for defusing printworkers' anger. Even Labour leader Neil Kinnock could endorse the Hicks-approach to picketing, without risking his appeal for middle class votes in the forthcoming general election.

For Kinnock, 'organising liaison with the

police' is what trade unionism is all about. He's not the only one. In defence of Hicks, the *Morning Star* commended 'his strenuous efforts to stop pickets reacting to police violence', while picket coordinator Bill Freeman praised 'Mike's peace-keeping role' at Wapping. Right and left-wing officials agree that labour movement leaders are there to keep the peace, and keep disputes within official channels. To keep control over the labour movement, they need more men like Mike Hicks.

But they do not want to know about trade unionists whose behaviour goes beyond 'liaison with the police'. Kinnock kept quiet about the 1000 arrests made in the first 10 months of the Wapping dispute; Hicks is the first jailed printworker championed by left-wing officials. Their lips are sealed on the subject of eight printworkers who served jail sentences before him. If you overstep the 'peace-keeping' mark, even elected office in

the labour movement is no guarantee of official support.

Six months ago, Sogat member Davey Payne was sentenced to four months imprisonment for allegedly attacking a scab driver with a soup tureen. Besides being a trade union activist, Payne is also a Southwark Labour councillor. But Labour and union leaders said nothing against his sentence; and when printworkers marched past Southwark town hall in support of Payne, none of his fellow-councillors were there to call for his release.

The official labour movement only acknowledged Payne when he won his appeal. Other printworkers who have not been 'vindicated' by the bosses' courts have remained silent casualties of the year-long Wapping war. Their support for the News International dispute broke the rules of the official labour movement as well as the bosses' law.

By ignoring their plight, Labour and union officials have effectively conceded that they are legitimate targets for the police and the judges.

Labour leaders are at pains to point out that their support for Hicks does not mean they are taking a stand with all strikers against the riot cops. The NEC wants the campaign for Hicks' release to have an 'emphasis on explaining the factual background to the case'. In other words, don't alienate public opinion, explain that he's innocent, and keep politics out of it.

NO COLLABORATION!

But rank and file trade unionists cannot afford to ignore the political implications of Hicks' imprisonment, or of the jailings which preceded it. Over the past year union collaboration with the police has demobilised Wapping pickets, and laid them open to vicious attacks. The set-piece pushing and shoving which characterised past confrontations between police and pickets is now history. The Tories have beefed up the law and tooled up the police to break trade unionists. Attempts to compromise with the authorities' new headline approach only invite merciless reprisals — even against 'liaisons' like Hicks.

Wapping has taught thousands of trade unionists to reject their officials' policy of letting the police arrest 'legitimate targets', whose 'crime' is fighting for their job. It has also confirmed our need to reject the Hicks-Kinnock tradition of collaboration with employers and their police protectors. We must oppose all arrests and jailings, along with officially-backed deals which preserve union rules and cost us our jobs.

That means campaigning to get Mike Hicks out of jail — and to throw his politics out of the Wapping dispute.

Andrew Calcutt

HOW NOT TO FIGHT HOUSING CUTS

Labour defeats Lewisham strikers

Kalbir Shukra and Malcolm Ball took part in the recent dispute between Nalگو and Lewisham Labour council. Their experience contains important lessons for anyone who has to contend with Labour in power — in the town hall or Downing Street

In November, 1500 Nalگو members began indefinite strike action, after our demands for safe working conditions met with disciplinary action and threats of a lockout by 'caring' Lewisham council. Five weeks later Nalگو branch officials led us back to work, declaring the dispute 'a draw without the gains we'd hoped for'. In other words, they got the negotiations they wanted. All we got was defeat.

A series of assaults by tenants had prompted workers in the council's Housing Advisory Centre to call for the installation of fixed protective screens. Lewisham council refused their demands. Other Nalگو members who backed HAC staff were sent home without pay. Within weeks, all of Lewisham Nalگو was on strike.

Nalگو officials saw the dispute as a temporary hiatus in their friendly relationship with the council.

They saved their anger for members of the public, 'who should be automatically prosecuted' for assault. We took a different view. We argued that assaults on HAC staff were the result of housing cuts in Lewisham, carried out by a Labour council acting as agent for central government. Tenants who refused to cross our picket lines confirmed that hitting out at HAC workers was a symptom of frustration at the housing crisis in Lewisham. We argued that installing screens was a necessary, temporary measure. But the main task was to unite people on both sides of the counter against the council's cuts.

Branch chair Ken Terry recommended that our 'political' arguments be ruled out of order. But while our officials only allowed us to talk about security screens, the council set out to use the dispute to undermine resistance to 'decentralisation' — ie its 68 per cent cut in the housing budget. Seeking to re-establish friendly relations with our employers, our leaders insisted that the screens and the cuts were separate issues.

Their strategy depended on lobbying the council as a potential ally.

But we needed solidarity action by other workers AGAINST the council. The fact that 12 Nupe members joined our strike and some lorry drivers refused to cross our picket lines showed that the arguments for joint action against our employers could

have been effective — if only we had been allowed to put them. Instead, Nalگو officials ran the strike on sectional lines, while officials from other unions jumped at the chance to settle old inter-union scores, some by recruiting Nalگو scabs.

The main brake on the strike was the cosy relationship between union officials and Labour employers. Left wingers made matters worse. Labour left wingers tried to blur the distinction between workers and their council employers, while the Socialist Workers' Party refused to argue against a secret ballot used by union officials to slow down the momentum of the strike. Reliant on the old labour movement structures, their sympathy for radical Labour employers and union officials allowed the bureaucrats to keep control of the dispute.

But our setback at Lewisham shows that without effective opposition to the collaborative political tradition of the official labour movement, we can't even win a few screens in the workplace — never mind decent housing for all.

Complicity between Labour and trade union officials will be an even more widespread problem if Labour wins the next election. Now is the time to start dealing with this problem. Our only chance of success is to argue for united action against all cuts, whoever's implementing them. Lewisham workers who want to help build that opposition to the cuts should phone 01-729 0414 for details of a meeting we are organising to plan our next move.

BARKING ROAD AND BROADWATER FARM

Carnival of racism

The debate that ended the anti-racist year of 1986 centred on the 'golliwog'. Anti-racists blasted elite toy-sellers Selfridge's and Hamley's for continuing to stock the offending toys, but rejoiced at the news that the creatures had been deleted from a new edition

of Enid Blyton's Noddy stories. The 'golliwog' is undoubtedly a racist caricature. But campaigning for its abolition is a caricature of anti-racism. While the 'golliwog' debate polarised opinion among West End toy magnates, racists wreaked terror on blacks in the

East End of London. And while the Commission for Racial Equality acquitted the censored editions of *Hurrah for Little Noddy* of any taint of racism, the courts were incarcerating black youth from Broadwater Farm on trumped-up charges.

A question of survival

When you open shop you've got to prove you can survive'. A Thatcherite proverb about how to make it as a small businessman in a cold capitalist climate? No — the start of one man's story about racist gang warfare in East London. Asian shopowner Ezaz Hyat spoke to Newham Workers Against Racism organiser Dave Clark about surviving.

Ezaz Hyat's Southern Fried Chicken shop sits at the Canning Town end of Barking Road. It is surrounded by shops which, as Hyat explained, have not 'survived'. 'The Seagull Turkish restaurant had to close after two or three months. Didn't last long, just closed and went away, it wasn't worth it. The Indian restaurant up the road has been closed down and the one opposite here next to the Odeon had a fire after a month. I've heard that it was caused by a petrol bomb. The Indian restaurant next to the estate agents, "they" went there but they refused to pay up, "they" attacked them and completely ruined the place.'

The 'they' that Hyat refers to is the Croydon Road gang, a fraternity of racist thugs who paid him a visit when he opened shop seven months ago.

Hyat called the police after the gang threatened to wreck the shop. 'They said "that's not what we're here for"'. Hyat got his friends round. 'Two minutes after they arrived two police cars with dogs were outside and a minute later a van full. The head of East Ham police station came down.

'He warned us "if you hurt one of them it will cause a gang war and we'd have to arrest the whole lot of you". He was saying don't fight them.'

After more trouble and no action from the police Hyat banned the gang from his shop. 'Then one guy came for protection money, saying he could stop it. I said I'll solve my own problems. He said "they'll petrol bomb this place, the boys are very bad, you don't know them". He then drove off to Croydon Road.

'Half an hour later they were moving across the road. One had a cricket bat, others bottles of petrol bombs. One shouted "come on, Paki, over here". A boy ran and threw a petrol bomb, it landed outside, a second one landed near the entrance to the shop and exploded. We called the police and they disappeared.'

'POLICE DO NOTHING'

The police arrested one of the gang, but it didn't stop the trouble or the death threats. A few weeks later the gang attacked one of Hyat's relatives Mubasha Lone and his son Naeem with sticks and knives. Father and son escaped with their lives thanks to Hyat's assistant manager, Dalton.

Hyat and his friends want some action against the racists. 'The other shopkeepers are scared, they know the police aren't going to do anything. It's everyone for themselves, they're scared that if they do anything they'll get it. I would maybe be the same, but my relations got hurt. We are not sitting quiet

about it.'

Local Labour councillor Judy Jorsling came down and advised Hyat to tell the police and put him on to the council's police monitoring unit. Nothing happened until Workers Against Racism organised a meeting with Hyat, his relatives and friends.

There was sympathy for our approach of organising local action against the racists. Given the scale of the problem we need to build up a hard core of support in the area.

It really is a question of survival now for Ezaz Hyat. Organising an effective anti-racist movement is a life or death matter.



INSPECTING THE RACISTS' CALLING CARD IN BARKING ROAD

Stop the showtrials

The New Year brings no respite for those who stand accused of resistance to police racism on Broadwater Farm in October 1985. The showtrials which started last summer are set to reach a climax early this year when six young men (three aged 13, 14, and 15) will stand trial accused of the murder of PC Blakelock.

The six had a taste of what is to come early in December when the courts jailed a man who urinated on the memorial marking the spot where Blakelock died. Keith Wint got six months for 'outraging public decency'.

But the real outrage is that perpetrated by the courts against the youth of Broadwater Farm.

On 5 October 1985 Broadwater Farm erupted in anger against the police force which terrorised to death black mother Cynthia Jarrett. In the months that followed the police and the courts began to take their revenge. Paramilitary police swamped the estate, terrorised residents, arrested, interrogated and tortured more than 200, and forced confessions from their victims. Some 75 defendants were put on the conveyor belt to stand trial.

Simon Macminn was the first to be convicted. Macminn got seven years for throwing stones and stealing two cans of soft drinks. He denied the charges and argued

that police beat his confession out of him. Lester Sween and Paul Keyes each got five years for affray. All three had their sentences reduced later.

Clifton Donaldson got five years for throwing a stone. He confessed after police threatened to implicate him in the murder of Blakelock. Nicky Jacobs got eight years for throwing bricks. The police had no photographic evidence.

The damning description was that the culprit had 'negroid features and woollen hair'.

Some defendants were luckier. Haslan Muller, Stephen Edwards and Peter Grey were acquitted after the defence exposed police lies and beatings. Gary Potter's jury failed to reach a verdict after learning that the chief police witness against him had been found guilty of brutality and falsifying evidence against another black youth.

Politicians, police and courts have conspired to criminalise a whole generation of black youth for fighting for their rights. We need to spread resistance to the showtrials and build a movement in solidarity with their victims. Join Workers Against Racism supporters on the defence campaign's Old Bailey picket, 14 January 12-2pm.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

FOR THE RECORD

Last week Tony Benn challenged Lord Hailsham to 'come clean' about the 1956 Suez invasion, after Cabinet papers released under the 30-year rule revealed that the Lord Chancellor, then First Lord of the Admiralty, knew of Britain's collusion with France and Israel in the attack on Egypt. After the Cabinet releases we are all wiser about Tory dirty dealing over Suez. But the equally ignominious role of Benn and his party has yet to be recorded.

In July 1956 Egypt's radical nationalist leader Colonel Nasser nationalised the British-owned Suez canal in an assertion of independence from the West. The Tory government led by Eden launched a campaign of chauvinist and racist abuse against Nasser. British, French and Israeli ministers met in secret in Sevres to work out their war plans. On 29 October Israel attacked Egypt, bombing Alexandria and Port Said, and the next day Britain and France announced their intervention.

During the Suez crisis the left perfected its three-point procedure for dealing with imperialist war — defend Britain, defame the enemy, demand diplomacy.

The Labour Party under Hugh Gaitskell condemned the invasion, but flinched from going on the offensive for fear of being called unpatriotic. Gaitskell was all for action, short of war, against Nasser. The left too was keen to be seen to keep the British end up, arguing that war was against British interests in the region. Benn and Bevan were two of the staunchest patriots of 1956. Benn stressed his concern to uphold British interests in the Middle East and protect British life and property in the region. He argued that war with Egypt would be 'without purpose and without hope and it would bring disgrace, dishonour and possibly disorder to Britain.' Bevan blasted Nasser for cutting Britain out in Suez. He said that just because the Suez canal was 'an imperialist project from the beginning', that gave Egypt no right to use the canal 'in her own narrow national interest.' It was Britain all the way for Benn and Bevan.

The left played a major part in turning Nasser into an international hate figure of Gadafi dimensions. Bevan used his mouthpiece *Tribune* to tell the Egyptian leader 'It must not be all "take" Mr Nasser.' Joining the chorus of Conservative condemnation of Nasser's anti-British action, Bevan raged, 'If the sending of one's police and soldiers into the darkness of night to seize somebody else's property is nationalisation, Ali Baba used the wrong terminology.' Nasser was portrayed as an aggressive Arab upstart with expansionist pretensions. The atmosphere of contempt and hatred for the Egyptians, created by the Tories and endorsed by the Labour Party, persuaded many Labour voters to back the invasion.

After playing the pro-British, anti-Nasser card the left called for an international initiative by the United Nations to settle the dispute. 'Law not war' was its slogan. While Israeli forces blitzed the Egyptians, Benn could only question the legality of the invasion, arguing that it contravened article 51 of the UN charter. The left's cries for diplomacy betrayed a deep sense of concern to uphold Britain's reputation in an area of the world where it still wielded tremendous influence.

Since Suez the left has implemented its three-point patriotic plan whenever Britain's rulers have gone to war — over the Falklands in 1982 and last year over Libya. It is ironic that the 1956 Tory government should be called to account for its war crimes against the people of the Middle East by a man whose radical brand of British nationalism has undermined opposition to Britain's imperial exploits from Suez to the South Atlantic.

the next step has taken some big strides itself over the last few years. Five years ago, when I wrote my first article for *tns*, the paper was a sort of literary equivalent of a gangly adolescent, still trying to find its feet. It was a 16-page monthly review, produced in an evil-smelling semi-detached house in Streatham and sold in just three or four major cities. Today it has matured into a 12-page weekly newspaper (soon to be extended to 16), produced in well-appointed offices on the edge of the City of London and sold in towns and cities across England and Scotland. We are now near to selling our one millionth copy, and the paper's standing and influence has grown alongside its circulation — though nowhere near as much as we would have liked.

Yet despite these changes for the better, the song you get from many left-wing people remains the same when you ask them what they think of *tns*. The paper, they tell us, always was and is still too distant from the ideas and interests of ordinary people.

I came across this argument yet again last week, at a New Year's Eve bash in a council hutch in Hulme, Manchester. I was talking to a bloke with an original and incisive approach to dealing with political problems. When a lecturer in political theory told him that Karl Marx couldn't be any good because he had 'scrounged' off Frederick Engels, he had a novel answer: 'I told her "Sod this" and went home'. But when it came to the subject of *tns*, he was soon back in a more familiar groove. 'I agree with a lot of what your paper says,' he admitted, 'but the way it's written now, it's not going to catch on with many people. I left it in the canteen at work once, and the blokes just said "What the f— is this?" It didn't mean anything to them, they just worry about mortgages and holidays.'

This is a complaint that any *tns* supporter will have heard many times. Its conclusions are wrong, yet it does touch on perhaps the worst shortcoming in the paper today, and the one that we are looking to our readers to help us rectify; our failure to connect sufficiently with the concerns of our audience.

NOT NATURAL

But before we get on to that, let's establish why our critics are wrong to suggest that we're wasting our time trying to push *tns*. The 'common sense' argument that we can't get a hearing because most people are not communists now turns a present-day fact into a fatalistic vision of the future. It underestimates the political and intellectual capacities of ordinary people, and their ability to resist the ideas put about by the establishment and its press — if a credible alternative is on offer.

People often mistake the temporary ideological defeat which the Tories have inflicted on the labour movement for some trait of 'human nature'. In truth, there is nothing 'natural' about working class people being preoccupied with personal and family problems like mortgages and holidays and uninterested in left-wing politics. The current climate of opinion is the result of more than 10 years hard work by the propagandists of the British establishment, aided and abetted by the leaders of the Labour Party.

The combined effects of five grim years under the last Labour government, the way Labour and

the left have crumbled before Thatcher, and her skilful manipulation of people's fears and insecurities have taken a heavy toll. Labour's failures have helped to destroy popular support for the ideas of collective action associated with the old, discredited labour movement. Thatcher's successful scaremongering over everything from sex education to street crime has helped to drive people back into the apparent security of their homes and families. Once their horizons are reduced to the front door, worries about their bills and children take precedence over wider political matters. This is a genuine problem for us. But it has not been brought about genetically, or through an act of God. It is the result of a prolonged and successful political struggle by the authorities and their apologists. It can be reversed through a similarly determined and ruthless struggle by their opponents.

MARXIST MIRROR?

Even during the dark Thatcher years, large groups of workers who were supposed to 'just worry about mortgages and holidays' have proved willing to endure long struggles against the government and employers. The miners, the printworkers and even the teachers have all stuck their necks out against the excesses of the system. The problem each time has been that the politics of the leaders dominating their disputes have led them into a dead-end. With each drawn-out defeat, it has become more difficult for workers to see a way ahead. But there is still fight there for us to tap, if our paper can establish a reputation for coming up with the answers.

As we have often argued in *tns*, the most significant factor in the Tories' political success to date has been the lack of any opposition leaders willing to give as good as they get. Building such a leadership, by showing people that with the right approach it is possible to fight for jobs and rights now, is the task our party has set itself. The job of *the next step* is to get that message across. But how?

The first thing we have to do is to identify our audience. Here, too, the 'you've no chance' brigade make a



Taking *the next*

Mick Hume, who takes over a week, appeals to our readers for improving the

mistake by taking too superficial a look at what's going on in society. They fail to distinguish sufficiently among different people, and lump the entire working class together as a reactionary mass. Thus some conclude that the only way to get ordinary people to read and understand *tns* is to reduce it to a sort of *Daily Mirror* with Marxist leanings, that can relate to 'public opinion' as it exists today.

Anybody who has sold *the next step* will know that there is really no such thing as a unified 'public opinion'. In an hour's selling on a street corner in any city, you will meet some out-and-out reactionaries frothing about one-way tickets to 'Russia', some idiots who tell you that 'My next step's down the pub' and make you want to slit their throats with their own razor wit, and some hardline Labour Party supporters. But you will also meet those who are seriously concerned about what's happening to the working class, cynical of the establishment's propaganda campaigns, and looking for some new solutions. These are the people to whom our paper is addressed. Far from 'watering it down' into a communist comic, we need to ensure that *tns* is even more thorough, with the depth to analyse their political problems and to thrash out some solutions.

KEY CONNECTIONS

While this group is still a small minority, today's conditions are ripe for making it a growing one. Hard-up British bosses and ministers now have to exercise their control in a way which suggests that British democracy and justice are not all they have been cracked up to be — for example, they are jailing union officials they would once have wined and dined (see page 4). In response, more people appear willing to question the rules and conventions of capitalist society. We don't suggest that you pencil any dates for an uprising into your 1987 diary, but developments like the vote of 664 which the RCP candidate achieved in the recent Knowsley North by-election do indicate the real possibilities which exist for spreading revolutionary ideas through *tns* today. There is now more chance of organising that core of people around the politics of *the next step* and raising an oppositional pole in British politics than there has been since the Second World War.

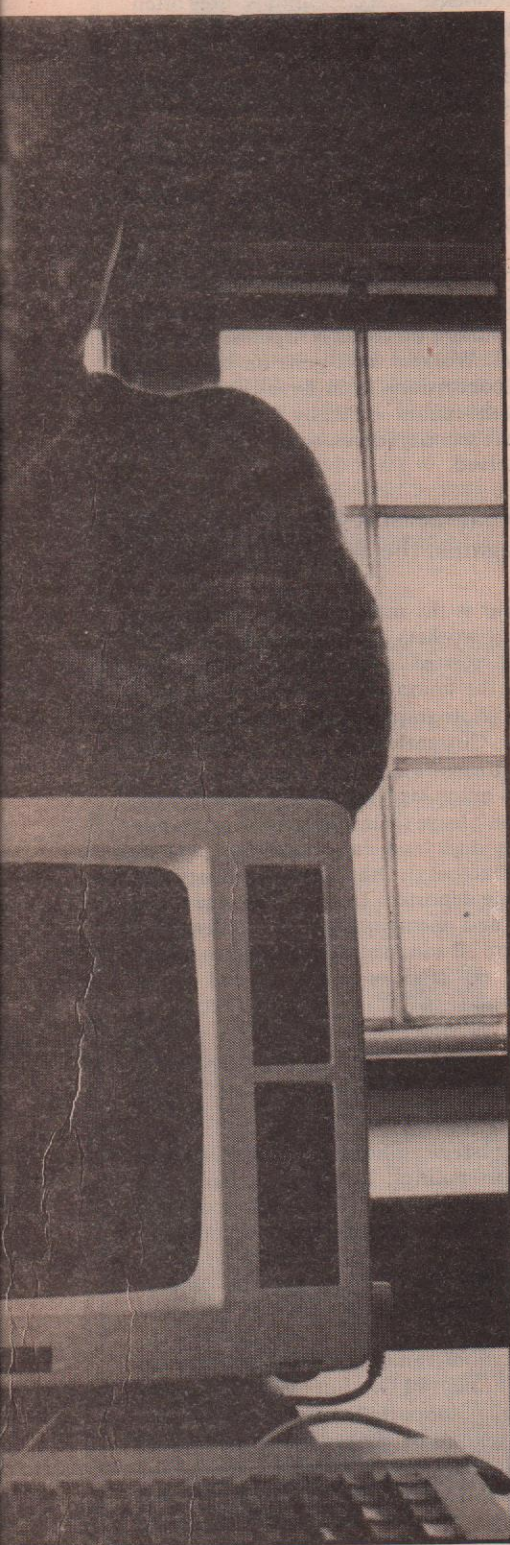
But if our left-wing critics are wrong to write off the prospects of popularising *the next step*, why is the paper's influence still marginal? There are several reasons which we



can identify. The most pressing is the paper's inconsistency in keying in to the important debates and worries which preoccupy the more political people. This problem has nothing to do with any need to reduce the paper's politics to 'an acceptable level'. It is about the need to present our arguments in a way which confronts our audience's concerns, and redirects them towards an anti-capitalist conclusion. The key to overcoming this difficulty lies in establishing a more active relationship with our readers and sellers, and getting them to give us more feedback on the arguments and ideas they come up against when selling *tns* or arguing for its politics in their area.

Step into 1987

As editor of **the next step** this year, we want you to play their part in our plans for the paper this year



like the press barons, have little interest in the opinions of the mass of their audience. These journalistic guardians of the existing order are concerned only to keep in step with the thoughts of those to whom they are accountable — the capitalist class. Thus all the thousands of viewers' letters sent to the BBC make no impact, but one rude note from Norman Tebbit has the controllers reeling. Since the Tory Party chairman complained about 'left-wing bias', the BBC news has shifted sharply in favour of the government. This is the only sort of 'audience participation' which the established media are concerned about.

tns NEEDS YOU

Things are very different for us at *tns*. We are not prepared to let Tebbit or any of his peers dictate the political agenda. Unlike the frauds in Fleet Street, Wapping and Broadcasting House, we do not want to humour people with a charade of 'consultation'. We want to involve them in a genuine debate about the way forward against the Tories and the employers. Without such a dialogue, the paper will always be in danger of losing touch, and our movement will remain confused and unsure of the best route forward. If it is to connect with left-wing people's concerns and cohere their views in a movement that can count on the national political stage, *tns* must be written against the background of the widest possible discussion between the paper and those involved in all sorts of struggles.

Our problem in 'connecting' is really a reflection of the gap between the basic content of a political issue, and the particular form in which it may appear in a specific situation. For example, our editorial team is well-enough equipped to write articles which explain why we identify the Labour Party as a barrier to achieving ordinary people's aspirations for a

better life. But when it comes to presenting that case sharply enough to cope with the particular circumstances of a solid Labour constituency in Scotland or a Tory marginal in the Midlands, writers based in an office in London cannot cope alone. We need a constant input of the information and experiences which our supporters are picking up in their localities if we are to produce a paper that will serve their needs on the ground.

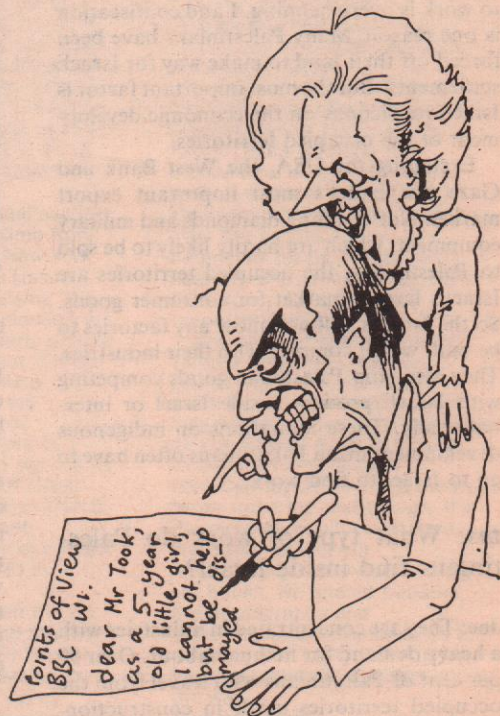
Without that pressure from our supporters, it is too easy for the *tns* editorial board to become lazy in working through an idea and present our politics in an offhand way that can cause problems. During the Knowsley by-election campaign, for instance, our shorthand demand for the police to be removed from housing estates caused unnecessary unrest among local people who hated the police, but who thought that we were suggesting some sort of lawless Wild West scenario for their neighbourhood. If this problem had been brought to our attention earlier by supporters having the argument out on the doorsteps of Kirkby, we could have helped clear up the confusion with a more detailed explanation of our ideas on working class people taking control of their areas away from the police and into their own hands.

EARS TO THE GROUND

We need our supporters to get into the habit of corresponding with the paper, sending us information and anecdotes on local events. This sort of input can make all the difference between sharp propaganda that wounds our opponents and blunt bluster that will only club our readers unconscious. Even more importantly, we need to know more precisely what working class people around the country are thinking and saying about each new political issue that arises, and about our intervention in it. This is the only way we can guarantee that the paper appears relevant to the audience we are after. As the run-up to the general election brings a spate of manufactured issues dreamt up by the old political parties — Labour Party 'extremism', the pros and cons of Nato etc — we need to be more finely tuned than ever to the subtleties of the arguments being had out in the pubs and on the buses of Britain.

We are relying on our readers to keep their ears to the ground on the paper's behalf.

This does not mean that we should emulate the BBC-Tebbit relationship. The BBC can repeat by rote what Tebbit tells it because the ruling class is keenly aware of where its interests lie — in duping the working class and keeping society under control. *the next step* cannot afford to echo prevailing ideas in the labour movement because the working class is not so keenly aware of where its interests lie. Our job is to go beyond people's superficial understanding of events, unearthing the exploitation and oppression which operate beneath the surface of the system. We need to challenge the narrow view which even left-wing people can take of political twists and turns. But we can't redirect anybody if we don't know which way they are walking now.



Getting our supporters involved in improving our paper must start now. In 1987, *the next step* will be at the centre of the party's intervention in the debate around the forthcoming general election. In order to give us the depth and flexibility which this project requires, we plan to extend the paper to 16 pages within the next few weeks. It will have a new design, more space for covering news stories, and a stronger features section. Other left-wing papers and publications have gone through facelifts recently, some recruiting top radical designers to gloss up their front covers and spray the latest typefaces across their articles. The problem they face is that, beneath the bright images, their papers are still full of the same old boring Labour Party politics.

The new *tns*, like the old one, will have no such problem. Our politics have the freshness and excitement that is the exclusive property of those who reject all the old rules and demand that society changes to suit their needs, instead of bowing to the demands of the existing decrepit system. All we need now is to find some more and different ways of getting our ideas across to the audience we are after. Our aim for this year is to turn *the next step* into the paper that everybody who is serious about challenging the authorities feels they have to read, argue about and sell. Whether we succeed or not depends a great deal on you.

Yesterday Streatham, tomorrow the world!



These days, of course, it is very trendy for establishment media people to talk about the need to get their readers or viewers 'involved' in producing their papers or programmes. Even boring Bill Cotton of the BBC has now taken to making personal appearances on our television screens, assuring us that the corporation wants to know what YOU want to see. The new daytime TV schedule includes a televised phone-in (?) where one of Esther Rantzen's former *That's Life* sidekicks points at the camera, Kitchener-style, and tells you that 'This is YOUR programme, the programme YOU produce.' It is an unconvincing set-up, and rightly so. The people who control the BBC,

INSIDE THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

ISRAELI APARTHEID

1986 ended amid growing Palestinian unrest on the West Bank and a brutal crackdown by the Israeli authorities. **Daniel Nassim** spoke to Joe, who works with Palestinian unions, about life for workers from the West Bank and Gaza under the Israeli heel

tns: This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. What's life like now for Palestinian workers in the occupied territories?

Joe: Over half of those with jobs work inside Israel. If you take away the self-employed, farmers, shopkeepers and doctors the number of Palestinians who travel to Israel to work is overwhelming. Land confiscation is one reason. Many Palestinians have been forced off their land to make way for Israeli settlements. But the most important factor is Israeli restrictions on the economic development of the occupied territories.

Excluding the USA, the West Bank and Gaza are Israel's most important export market. Not counting diamonds and military equipment, which are hardly likely to be sold to Palestinians, the occupied territories are Israel's largest market for consumer goods. So the Israelis will not allow any factories to be built which compete with their industries. They also stop Palestinian goods competing with Israeli produce inside Israel or internationally. These limitations on indigenous development mean Palestinians often have to go to Israel to find work.

tns: What type of work do Palestinians find inside Israel?

Joe: They are concentrated in industries with a heavy demand for manual labour. Over 50 per cent of Palestinians who travel from the occupied territories work in construction. Within industries the Palestinians are at the bottom of the economic ladder. If you go to a chicken slaughter house for example, the people who do the weighing, grading and packaging are Israeli workers. The people who take the feathers off, take the chickens apart and cut the animals off the bone are Palestinians.

tns: How do the Israeli employers and state maintain this discrimination?

Joe: You have to look at the structure of it first. Palestinians from the occupied territories are employed through the government labour office, which has a passbook system similar to South Africa. It is illegal for Palestinians to work inside Israel without a permit and there are road blocks to check on Palestinians from the occupied territories entering Israel.

There are also many thousands of illegal workers inside Israel. These are often picked up on a casual basis from Israel's early morning 'slave markets'.

Palestinian workers are paid far lower wages than Israelis and receive few of the benefits. If you work through the government labour office you pay the same deductions as a Jewish worker, but receive little in return. There are 12 benefits provided by Israel's national insurance institute. Only three are available to Palestinians and these are difficult to obtain.

The benefits Palestinians are ineligible for include the unemployment allowance and a supplement Jewish workers receive if they have more than two children. The Israeli state does not want to encourage Palestinians to have big families!

tns: How do the 'Socialist Zionist' institutions, the Histadrut and the Kibbutzim, discriminate against Palestinians?

Joe: The Histadrut is a peculiar institution which is both Israel's second largest



END OF YEAR UNREST: PALESTINIAN YOUTH TAKE TO THE STREETS

employer and the trade union federation. The way discrimination works is that Palestinians are technically temporary workers so they are not eligible for the benefits permanent workers can get.

Solel Boneh is Israel's largest construction company and part of the Histadrut. It employs thousands of Palestinians, but pays its permanent (Jewish) workers three times more than its temporary (Palestinian) workers. Although the government pretends to encourage equal treatment there is nothing which obliges employers to pay equal wages.

The Histadrut as a union also discriminates against Palestinians. Every Palestinian who works through the government labour exchange pays a tax to the Histadrut to represent them. But Palestinians are not entitled to vote in Histadrut elections or sit on its committees.

tns: What about the Kibbutzim, do they employ many Palestinians?

Joe: Yes they do. Without Palestinian labour the Kibbutzim and the Moshavim (co-operative farms) could not harvest their crops. Palestinians also do most menial work in Kibbutz factories.

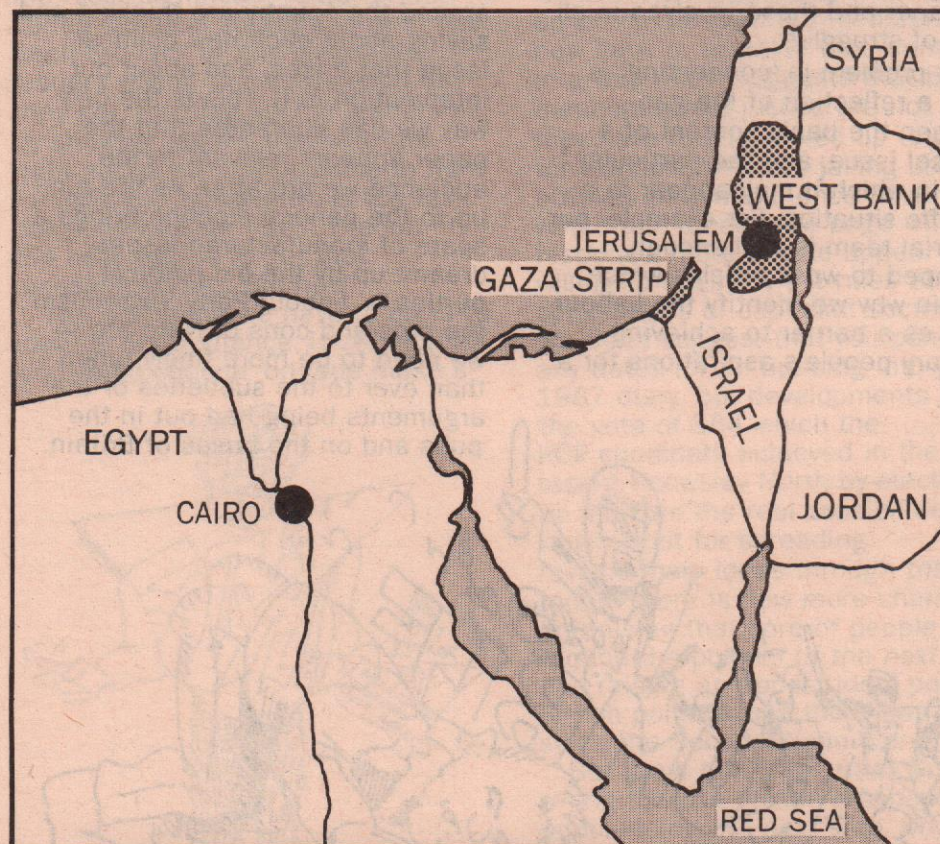
Kibbutzim make Palestinians stay in

awful conditions. By law, Palestinians from the occupied territories are not allowed to be in Israel between midnight and 5am. But rather than travel for hours every day Palestinians often sleep in their workplace.

Palestinians who work on Kibbutzim usually have to sleep in the fields, if they are lucky covered with plastic sheeting, in chicken coops or wherever else they can find. When a Moshav provided housing for Palestinians the government and the Kibbutz movement forced it to back down by threatening to cut off its water and fertilisers, and block its access to the market.

tns: What about the Palestinian unions?

Joe: The Gaza unions were only allowed to re-open in 1979 but were frozen at 1967 levels. Legally you can only be a member of a union if you were one in 1967. The level of repression is well illustrated by a union which recently sponsored a boys' football team. The Israeli army arrested the whole team. During interrogation, the boys were told that being a member of the team was the same as being a member of a union, and being a member of a union was the same as being a member of the PLO and if you are a member of the PLO you are going to prison!



WEST BANK ... 800 000 PALESTINIANS
GAZA STRIP ... 500 000 PALESTINIANS

Israel has tried to ensure the Gaza unions are only puppets. In 1979 the Israelis re-appointed the man who was president of the union in 1967 (Abdel Rachman Daadabi). In the meantime he had become a factory owner with a plant inside a Jewish settlement. But although he is totally discredited among Palestinians the Israelis insist the unions work through Daadabi.

In the past two years activists have begun to recruit workers illegally into the unions. The Israeli authorities have warned Palestinians that if they continue to recruit illegally they will be closed down. When the Palestinians selected their own union spokesman he was imprisoned by the Israeli authorities.

The West Bank unions are slightly freer than those in Gaza and more representative of their members. They represent workers to Palestinian employers. Most enterprises in the West Bank only employ six or seven workers and few employ more than 50. Palestinian unions put pressure on employers to collaborate on wages and conditions. But for nationalist reasons unions are often reluctant to put too much pressure on Palestinian employers. They feel that if a Palestinian firm is put out of business it will only be replaced by an Israeli one.

tns: Do West Bank trade unions defend workers against Israeli employers?

Joe: There is no place where Palestinian unions negotiate with an Israeli employer. But the unions do covertly organise workers in Israel. Workers have gone on strike and forced concessions from Israeli employers. But if the union officially supported the strike the security forces would immediately get involved.

tns: What measures have the Israelis used against the West Bank unions?

Joe: Fear is the main weapon. They try to make the workers afraid of joining. They've recently started parking a military van outside the union office and if anyone goes in they photograph them and take their ID number. Currently three or four West Bank union offices are closed by the military. Over a dozen union leaders are under town arrest (they can't leave their town or village, go out between dusk and dawn or participate in political activity). Others have been arrested and some deported. Union offices are often raided and membership lists confiscated. These are all administrative measures which require no trial or evidence and allow no appeal.

tns: Do the unions take up broader political questions?

Joe: The Israeli authorities forbid the unions to discuss politics. In the West Bank and Gaza you cannot talk about economic factors without bringing in the occupation. Organising workers is itself a threat to the occupation. The Israelis use the unions' political work as a pretext to close them down.

The unions cannot explicitly say they are part of the PLO. But virtually every Palestinian supports the organisation. The unions tend to be divided along the lines of the main PLO groups. There are unions for each major economic sector which are generally redivided along political lines. There are Fatah-led (mainstream nationalist) unions and others led by representatives of more left-wing groups such as the PFLP and the DFLP. But there is a great deal of overlap — especially where particular unions have got a reputation for being effective.

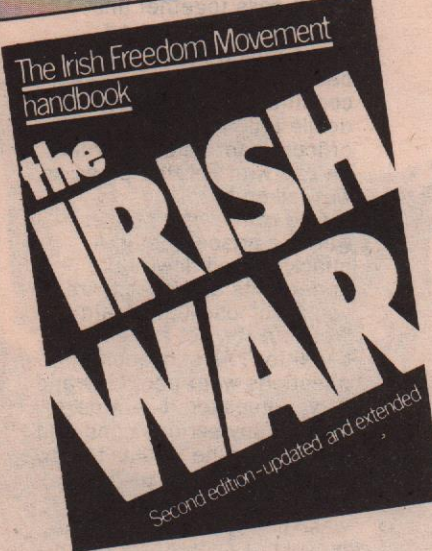
tns: What do you see as the future prospects for Palestinian unions and workers?

Joe: Unions are still relatively new in the West Bank and Gaza. But in the twentieth year of occupation attitudes are hardening. People are seeing the need to fight for conditions in the here and now as well as supporting the national struggle.

The unions are optimistic and energetic. The recent round of violence has given people more energy. They feel more powerful and more determined to resist the occupation.

REVIEWS

READ THIS!

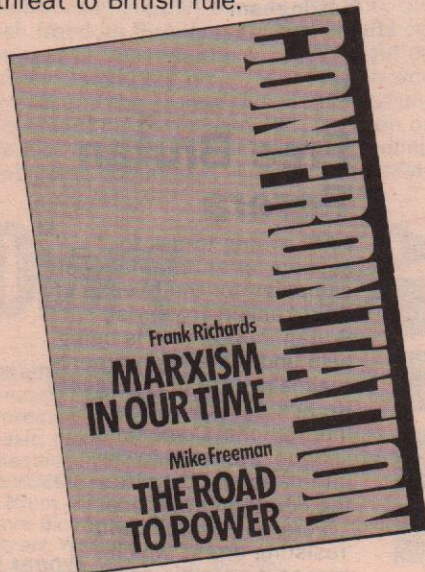


What about the Loyalists?

The Irish War
The Irish Freedom Movement
handbook
£2.95 (plus 85p p&p)

The New Year brings renewed opposition from Ulster Loyalists to the Anglo-Irish agreement. Last week Loyalist leaders James Molyneux and Ian Paisley launched a petition to the queen demanding a referendum on Thatcher's deal with Dublin. The door to door collection of signatures is a good excuse for another bout of bigotry and intimidation against Irish nationalists.

After more than a year of Loyalist protests, most people in Britain are still in the dark about the purpose of the accord and hard pushed to explain why it has provoked such a backlash. *The Irish War* cuts through the confusion about the relationship between the British warlords and their Loyalist allies and explains why British diplomacy is no threat to Loyalist supremacy, and Loyalist protest no threat to British rule.



New opposition

Confrontation
The theoretical journal of the
Revolutionary Communist Party
£2.95 (plus 50p p&p)

All parties are preparing to put their policies to the test in election year 1987. The Revolutionary Communist Party is no exception. Our journal *Confrontation* outlines how we intend to build a new opposition to the established parties, with articles on the origins of our party and the place of revolutionary theory in the class struggle.

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THE LIFE OF A GREAT REVOLUTIONARY

Trotsky: the movie

David King, Trotsky: a photographic biography, Basil Blackwell, £19.50.

This is a wonderful book. Expensive, yes; but there are 336 pages of photographs here, and they are images you will want to return to again and again. As David King says the whole thing is organised like a documentary film, so with countless hours of viewing this is a bargain.

King is the world's foremost collector of Soviet political photography, as well as a considerable graphic designer in his own right. Those familiar with

his large-format paperback with Francis Wyndham, *Trotsky: a Documentary* (Penguin 1972), or with *The Great Purges* (Basil Blackwell, 1984), his study of Stalin's terror, will have seen some of these pictures before. Those lucky enough to have King's epic, *Stalin*, published in Italian by Rizzoli will have seen most of them. Nevertheless there are many that are entirely new. King, who co-operated with Frank Furedi on *The Soviet Union Demystified*, deserves our thanks again.

We begin with unfamiliar tableaux of the man, his family and his first wife, Alexandra, at the time of their exile to Siberia in 1900. Then there are little vignettes of the founders of



THE EXILED TROTSKY SHOWING OFF HIS SNOEK



LENIN HAVING A LAUGH WITH TROTSKY AND KAMENEV IN MOSCOW

Russian Marxism, including Vera Zasulich, Yulii Martov, Pavel Axelrod and also Parvus, the originator of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. It is a pleasure to put faces to these names. From King's archives it is clear that the Russian Marxists were snappy dressers. On trial with the St Petersburg Soviet in 1906, Trotsky and his comrades sported three piece suits, watch chains and immaculate collars, ties and moustaches. A meeting of People's Commissars, chaired by Lenin and held late in 1918, brims with style and leather briefcases.

They had international support, too. King prints a sublime front page of the two cent New York Yiddish daily *Vorwarts* (issue number 71631), eulogising 'the Russian-Jewish revolutionary'. A German Communist Party picture postcard was captioned 'Leader of the Revolution! General Trotsky.' Look, too, at the international editions of Trotsky's writings: *Where Is Britain Going?* (1925) put out by the Communist Party of Great Britain, *My Life* (1929) in Dutch, Spanish and French, and Trotsky's tribute to his murdered son Leon Sedov (1938) in Chinese.

The contrast between the art of Trotsky's heyday and that of Stalin's is striking. Red Pepper, a caricaturist of the twenties, invited admirers to build up hilarious identikit composites of

Marx, Lenin and Trotsky by switching beards, spectacles and pipes. Like other top designers after October, Popova featured Trotsky in her work as a symbol of the Red Army hi-tech. But by 1930 all this had changed: Stalin's artists grin to the camera, proud of their propaganda float depicting Trotsky running at the heels of world imperialism.

There are other gems too — fresh glimpses of his speech in Copenhagen in 1932; snaps by Farrell Dobbs showing him surrounded, as ever, by maps; several shots of the 300 000 Mexicans who saw his casket after the assassination; and, poignantly for us, on his desk near the end of his life a copy of GDH Cole's *British Trade Unionism Today*.

Although the introduction by Tamara Deutscher and the commentary by James Ryan provide useful background and biographical detail, they certainly do not provide a reliable guide to Trotsky's contribution to revolutionary politics and theory. Never mind the text though, it's the pictures which count here. We often neglect our revolutionary history beyond the set books. We should treasure the photographs and memorabilia which enable us to preserve that history as fully as possible. David King shows the way.

Gemma Forest



TROTSKY SALUTES THE RED ARMY AS IT SETS OFF FOR POLAND

VANESSA REDGRAVE IN THE WEST END

Exorcising the establishment

Ghosts, Henrik Ibsen, Wyndham's Theatre

In less than 150 minutes *Ghosts* covers religious hypocrisy, intimations of incest and prostitution, the razing of a newly built orphanage, syphilis and euthanasia. Typical of a whole series of *Dynasty* perhaps; small beer for an episode of *East Enders*. In 1881 however, when it was first published, *Ghosts* provoked widespread controversy. It wasn't the syphilis and euthanasia which stirred respectable opinion to hysteria, it was the truth of the play's dissection of society.

As was the custom, a published text of the new play was available before it was performed. Despite, or because of, concern that Ibsen's earlier

work, *The Doll's House*, appeared to endorse immoral conduct and subvert decent values, the text was eagerly awaited. The leading Norwegian theatre critic branded it the most loathsome thing that he had ever witnessed. Such was the outcry that the first performance of *Ghosts* had to take place in Chicago before an audience of Scandinavian immigrants.

The action takes place in the drawing room of Mrs Alving, the widow of a retired sea captain and court official. Her examination of her own life and her realisation of the destructive consequences of past evasions — ghosts — lie at the heart of the play. Mrs Alving sees how her life was destroyed by the primitive taboos and prejudices that pass for conventional morality; she sees too her own culpability in the loss of what she holds dear. These insights

give her the strength to reject the past and embrace the light of a morality wedded at least to emotional honesty. This was all too much for bourgeois society.

Vanessa Redgrave plays Mrs Alving with an emotional range and a subtlety of control which are simply stunning. One moment she is the giddy mother doting on her darling son, Oswald. The next she is brutally abrupt with a bemused pastor (a superb Tom Wilkinson playing frank hypocrisy this side of caricature), as she explains that the orphanage was a way of settling accounts with the memory of her libertine husband. At the end she wrenches the sympathy from our guts as she realises that the long-suppressed passion and tenderness of her nature can now never bear fruit.

The orphanage burns, but this is only part of the accounting

with the past. Oswald learns that the syphilis rotting his brain is not the result of his own life as an artist in Paris but the sins of the father visited on the son. He extracts from his mother — who had hidden his father's nature from him and now reveals that the woman Oswald loves is his own half sister — the chilling promise to kill him when he loses control of his faculties. As the sun rises and breaks through the blinds Oswald does indeed lapse into premature senility or return to childhood; Mrs Alving exorcises the ghosts and ends his life.

Ibsen was hammering at the gates of the twentieth century. His naturalism was a formative influence on the young James Joyce. His concern for the emancipation of women and his rage at the suffocation of youth make this play contemporary. This fine production by the Young Vic company, directed by David Thacker, can be seen at London's Wyndham's theatre until 24 January, but the translation of the text by Peter Watts can be bought in Penguin at any time.

Alan Harding



1984: POLICE ARE STILL FIGHTING THE PICKET LINE BATTLES IN YORKSHIRE

Season's beatings for miners

PONTEFRAC miners received three Christmas presents.

18 December. The Labour Party chair of the police authority calls for cooperation with the police, police contact points on the estates to reduce crime and build on the 'progress' made in relations since the miners' strike.

19 December, am. After a dispute about incentives which has lasted for three days the NUM official orders a return to work, proposing increased productivity and a breaking of production records to 'force' the coal board back to the negotiating table, claiming 'there's no pressure on the management while we're on strike' and offering to show the men how to dig coal more efficiently. The men go back, the union gets a place at the negotiating table, the miners are defeated and confused at management's easy victory.

19 December, pm. Police based next to the hall where the morning's meeting was held raid the ABA, the local pub the miners use. Many of the miners get arrested and badly beaten. They are jailed on remand over Christmas, or curfewed. One miner shopping with his wife in town is arrested and beaten up.

New Year's Resolution: Beware caring Labour councillors, production-mad union leaders, community police and going shopping with your family.

**Local miner
Pontefract**

Bloody Sunday

JOHN CABLE'S report (28 November) on the appalling behaviour of the Sheffield Troops Out Movement regarding the 1987 Bloody Sunday march is incorrect in one respect. To judge by leaflets which have at last appeared the march will be about British withdrawal from Ireland and not Plastic Bullets/Strip Searches/Hillsborough as you state. The confusion is understandable given the TOM's secretive approach to organising, the conflicting reports which have arisen locally and the fact that some groups are concentrating on 'themes'

such as plastic bullets by the TOM ('not needed here') and strip searches by the Women and Ireland Group.

The TOM here have had a meeting with Labour council leader David Blunkett about the march. They claim not to have given any assurances to him, but the sanitised nature of their mobilising committee implies a tacit deal to keep out anyone who might cause the Labour establishment any embarrassment. There has also been a rumour campaign alleging that republicans such as ourselves are in the RCP.

This is plainly not the case and the lies are intended to provide some shred of justification for the exclusion of republicans and communists from the

organisation of the march. In effect they are upholding Blunkett's ban for him. We have important political and organisational differences with the RCP, but the important thing now is that those like the TOM who have pretensions to building a 'broad' movement will have to accept that you cannot build by excluding people.

Despite our differences with the TOM we shall support the march on the basis of the withdrawal demand, and urge republican supporters to form a contingent to promote the campaign for Irish prisoners' demands. Our very presence on the march and rally will show our contempt for those who would silence us.

**Mike Martin
For Sheffield republicans**

Sinn Fein shorn

SOME of your readers have jibed at criticisms of Sinn Fein. One jibe (letters, 28 November) was that Gerry Adams would not be seen taking beer and sandwiches in the purlieus of Downing Street. Well, Adams *did* talk with the representatives of the tail-end of Empire in the vicinity of Cheyne Walk as long ago as 1972. Heath surrendered virtual state-power over the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland to the Provis. The IRA ballsed things up by being too obviously anti-Prod: they tried to drive Prod-proles out

of the Lenadoon area.

Shorn of the glamour of being in the Apostolic Succession from the First Dail and therefore the legitimate government of Ireland, what are the Provis? They are a Catholic-nationalist group who on the one hand whinge about the shortcomings of the (Brit) welfare state, and who on the other hand kill Prods, mainly because the said Prods want to remain in the said Welfare State, and out of the nasty, backward, politically corrupt and emphatically Catholic state to their South.

The history of the Provis in regard to the Free State is shameful. Even when it would not have bruised the Catholic

consciences of the freedom fighters to change the state and society for the better they did damn all. The classic example of this is the volunteer who was praised by his parish priest at his grave side for being passionately Pro-Life. In other words he campaigned on the wrong side on abortion.

Now that Sinn Fein has joined the real political world and does not mystify itself with the dead generations, would it be possible for revolting Brits like yourselves to take them and the people of Ireland seriously, and get down to some real analysis of the situation — even socialist analysis?

**Sean McGouran
Belfast**

Lesbians and gays jailed

TWELVE lesbians and gays aged 17 to 25 were arrested on a protest outside the house of Bill Brownhill, a Tory councillor living in Himley, South Staffordshire. Comrades will remember his proclamations about Aids, and his Final Solution of gassing gays and lesbians. Our action was carried out on the evening of 21 December. We unfurled banners, distributed a leaflet and chanted. The police arrested us under the 1936 Public Order Act — originally passed to stop Mosley's British Union of Fascists from marching.

We have all been remanded in custody for seven days. We are being held as punishment for being militant lesbians and gays and for opposing a fascist. Concretely what we did was sit down with a lot of garden gnomes for 20 minutes. The police solicitor reported that we were chanting such obscenities as 'Gas the Nazi'. Which begs the question — isn't 'Gas the Gays' obscene or a breach of the peace?

Five of us are in Winslow Green. Four comrades under 21 are in Brockhurst. We don't know where the three women have been taken. Our spirits are good right now. Throughout our detention we demanded our phoney 'rights', shouted defiance and encouragement in the

face of much racist, sexist and pro-Nazi abuse; and here in prison we have been put in cells together and have got books to read. Some prison officers aren't bad, though this is conditional on us being docile little queers; other officers pantomimed turning on gas with heating pipes as we walked by.

One of the first hurdles was the prison doctor. A quack peered down our underpants and asked 'Are you a homosexual'. I said 'Yes, but it's not a medical condition'. All subsequent questions were about VD and — you guessed it — Aids. If we had any serious condition like asthma he wouldn't know or care. He asked us 'Have you ever had Aids?' If this wasn't simply meant to provoke it shows how much he knows.

We now hear that we may be Aids-tested. We are determined to resist this. We simply have no idea whether we are HIV-positive or not, and we oppose any attempts to find out. On a political level we can demand more health and support services, information and research and defend ourselves from state and clinical attacks. On a personal level we can use condoms. And that's the end of it.

We are appearing at Seisdon magistrates on 29 January. Tell RCP!

**Phillip Gore
Prison number W55841
HM Prison
Winslow Green
Birmingham 18**

Beating the 'queer-bashers'

WHAT'S the next step? This is what I asked myself after I and a couple of friends were attacked for being 'queers', as you reported in *tns* 46. Obviously I was very angry, not simply because we'd been attacked, but because in the present political climate such attacks are made more acceptable. The thugs have got away with it and will probably go on and attack other gays. This anger soon turned to frustration because on our own there is very little that we can do.

The hysteria whipped up by the press and the increasing number of attacks on gay men and women are designed to drive us back into the closet, denying our sexuality and keeping our mouths shut.

The time has come to organise the fightback. It is long overdue. How do we organise this fightback? The police cannot help or protect gays who have been attacked. In the eyes of the ruling class and their armed protectors, we are the criminals. Our crime is being gay. You don't ask racists to fight racism do you? Why ask them to protect gays? The Labour Party merely dances to the tune of the moralists on the issue of gay rights.

Jenny Graham (*tns* 46) suggests the next step: a national lesbian and gay rights defence committee needs to be built. This would be a good channel through which gay men and women could express their anger and organise their fightback against the moralists and the thugs on the street who do their dirty work.

The present attacks on gays are political; the Aids panic is political. It is time for socialists, lesbians and gay men who are serious about challenging the political climate, and fighting back, to put down their *British Medical Journal* and take 'the next step'.

**Andy Lennard
Nottingham**

Free Brutan Perera

I AM writing to ask for support for an international campaign for the release of a Sri Lankan Trotskyist, Brutan Perera, who is being held under the Jayawardene regime's state of emergency. He is a member of the International Communist League, affiliated to the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Perera is charged with 'resisting arrest' which carries a possible sentence of 20 years imprisonment, or execution, under the regime's emergency laws.

We are appealing to organisations to attend the weekly picket at the Sri Lankan High Commission, at 13 Hyde Park Gardens, SW7, from noon to 2pm on Thursdays. Also we would like you to write to the High Commission demanding Perera's release.

**S Pirani
Workers' Revolutionary
Party/Workers' Press**

If you would like to respond to any of these points, raise questions or comment on what you have read in the next step you can write to *tns*, BCM JPLTD, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone the letters page over the weekend on 01-729 3771.



David Rourke

Sectarianism and Bloody Sunday

On Saturday 31 January the annual march commemorating Bloody Sunday will take place in Sheffield. In past years this demonstration to mark the massacre of 14 Irish people by British paratroopers in 1972 has been a major date in the calendar of the Irish Freedom Movement. This year there has been uncertainty about whether the IFM should even attend the demonstration.

Despite our record of building large Bloody Sunday contingents and organising many successful initiatives in support of Irish freedom throughout the rest of the year, the Labour Committee on Ireland and the Troops Out Movement have excluded the IFM from the official mobilising committee.

Their excuse is that the groups which now make up the committee (which all operate in or around the Labour Party) know that they will be able to cooperate and work together. The implication is that the Irish Freedom Movement would disrupt the work of those beavering away to build the march.

In fact far from us ever having hindered the annual Bloody Sunday march, it has largely depended on the IFM for its survival. Last year the IFM had the biggest and noisiest contingent on the London march. Our posters and leaflets covered the city. Without our support the march would have gone almost unnoticed.

Given our exclusion from the mobilising committee, some IFM supporters have

argued that we should take no part in this year's demonstration. They argue that Bloody Sunday 1987 is billed to be a token, low-key event which we should not support.

With only a month to go publicity is minimal and only the most fervent Irish activists are aware that a march is due to take place. Some supporters have argued that if the Labour Party campaigns want to go it alone we should let them, and see what they make of it. Others have recommended that we forget the Sheffield demonstration and organise a separate march in London.

While this response is understandable, the IFM's national leadership has decided that the organisation will build and

march on the Sheffield march. The reasons for this are straightforward.

Firstly, it is vital to put the interests of the Irish people before the squabbling of the British left. The Labour left might be willing to jeopardise the size of the demonstration for its own sectarian purposes, by telling people that they are not welcome as organisers, but we are not prepared to play that game.

The Irish liberation struggle needs the largest demonstrations of solidarity in Britain that can be mustered. We have a responsibility to use every opportunity to mobilise support for the struggle against British domination in Ireland. If the official mobilising committee lived up to its name, and spent

more time worrying how to get people on the march instead of conspiring to keep people off it, they would be doing the Irish people a service.

Secondly, given the pathetic state of the demo's organisation, if we abandon the march it will be a tiny, insignificant event. Such a flop could only be to the advantage of the British authorities, who could use a small turnout to 'prove' the lack of any support for Irish freedom among British people.

Thirdly, it is important for us to seize any opportunity to raise the issue of Irish freedom among British people, and the Bloody Sunday commemoration march provides an excellent chance to raise motions of support in colleges, trade union branches and

unemployed groups.

Unless we take this task in hand now we will lose many openings for raising the discussion and winning the arguments for Irish unity and independence. It's already clear that if we don't get on with this job, nobody else will bother.

Despite the destructive sectarianism of the march organisers, the Irish Freedom Movement will be working for the demonstration and all IFM members and RCP supporters are asked to take on what tasks they can to build our contingent. We are setting up mobilising committees across the country to build support for the march. If you want to get involved, call Fiona Foster on 01-729 0414.

Diary

BIRMINGHAM: Saturday 24 January, 11am. Irish Freedom Movement street meeting with music, theatre, speeches. Chamberlain Square
DUNDEE: Tuesday 27 January, 7.30pm. Public meeting. No more Bloody Sundays. Central Library, Wellgate
GLASGOW: Monday 26 January, 7.30pm. Public meeting. No more Bloody Sundays. City Hall, Candleriggs
LEEDS: Monday 12 January, 8am. Lobby. Wreck the race checks. Meet Eastgate UBO to leaflet workers
MANCHESTER: Saturday 10 January, 11am. George Rourke Defence Campaign street meeting. Assemblée Market Street, city centre
NEWHAM: Saturday 10 January, 11am. Workers Against Racism street meeting. Meet Stratford Broadway
SHEFFIELD: Tuesday 27 January, 6.30pm. Lobby of the trades council. Fight for Irish Freedom. Trades and Labour club, Duke Street

Wednesday 28 January, 7.30pm. Bloody Sunday committee public meeting. Speakers from Irish Freedom Movement, Workers' Power, and a Sheffield republican. Sadacca centre, 48 The Wicker

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FROM BLOODY SUNDAY TO THE STALKER AFFAIR

MARCH AGAINST BRITISH MURDER IN IRELAND

This month brings the fifteenth anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the start of another year of armed occupation in the Irish war zone.

On Bloody Sunday in January 1972 British paratroopers shot dead 14 Irish nationalists in Derry city. The date doesn't mean much to many people in Britain who argue that it all happened a long time ago and times have changed. But the 1982 'shoot-to-kill' campaign behind the recent 'Stalker affair' shows why the Irish people haven't forgotten Bloody Sunday.

THE KILLINGS

From Bloody Sunday to shoot-to-kill, countless Irish men and women need no reminder that British rule means bloody murder any day of the week, every week, year in year out.

• Bloody Sunday 1972

As thousands of unarmed anti-internment protestors marched to Free Derry corner on the edge of the Bogside British paratroopers opened fire. Fourteen people died and many more were injured. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Dublin, Derry, Belfast, London and other capital cities to condemn the massacre of Irish civilians.

• Shoot-to-kill 1982

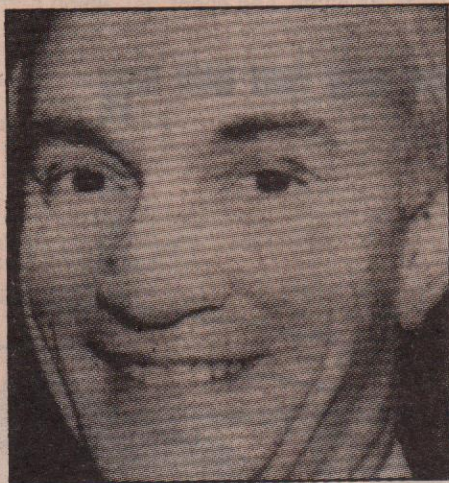
On 11 November 1982 a crack RUC squad pumped 109 bullets into IRA volunteers Gervais McKerr, Eugene Toman and Sean Burns at an RUC 'roadblock' near Lurgan, county Armagh. On 24 November they shot dead 17-year old Michael Tighe who came across a cache of ancient rifles at a farmhouse near Lurgan. On 12 December the squad ambushed and shot to pieces republicans Roddy Carroll and Seamus Grew at Mullaghcreevie estate outside Armagh city.

THE COVER-UPS

After the killings came the reports, the inquiries and the cover-ups.

• Widgery

After an international outcry about the Bloody Sunday massacre the British government called in Lord Widgery to cover up its dirty work. Widgery's report admitted that the 14 dead Catholics had been unarmed and innocent, but mildly concluded that the British Army had been 'mistaken' in shooting them. There was no question of murder. Next they changed the inquest system after the coroner accused the British Army of 'sheer unadulterated murder'. Since 1972 coroners sitting in the Six Counties have been able to name the time, place and cause of death, but they cannot name the guilty party.



• Stalker

Following accusations about assassination



squads in Armagh RUC chief constable John Hermon called in top Manchester cop John Stalker to head an investigation into the shoot-to-kill claims. He wanted a repeat of the Widgery whitewash of Bloody Sunday. But Stalker was a little too keen for Hermon's liking. He was pushed off the job, suspended from the Manchester force after allegations of corruption and finally edged out of the police force altogether. The rumour goes that the Stalker affair was masterminded by the Tory cabinet. All is set for a happy ending with another top cop Colin Sampson on the Stalker trail. Given the Stalker scandal Sampson needs a few token prosecutions, but the RUC officers responsible have already been acquitted of murder charges in no-jury courts.

THE CONGRATULATIONS

British rulers have sanctioned every act of war against the Irish people. After the killings and the cover-ups came the honours and the handshakes.

• Heath

The British government gave the orders to

open fire on Bloody Sunday and Tory premier Edward Heath rewarded the commanding officer Lieutenant-Colonel Derek Wilford with an OBE.

• Thatcher

Last month Thatcher paid a visit to the RUC in Armagh to reassure her men after the Stalker affair and to give her hired assassins a pat on the back for doing a marvellous job.

Bloody Sunday is a day to remember the war crimes committed against the Irish people by the killers and liars of the British establishment. March against British murder in Ireland with the Irish Freedom Movement and make sure that the occupying forces' Sundays are numbered.



THATCHER PLAYS SANTA TO HER OCCUPYING ARMY

**BLOODY SUNDAY DEMO
SATURDAY 31 JANUARY
SHEFFIELD**

for transport details
ring 01-729 0414