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the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party • 20 March 1987 • 30p

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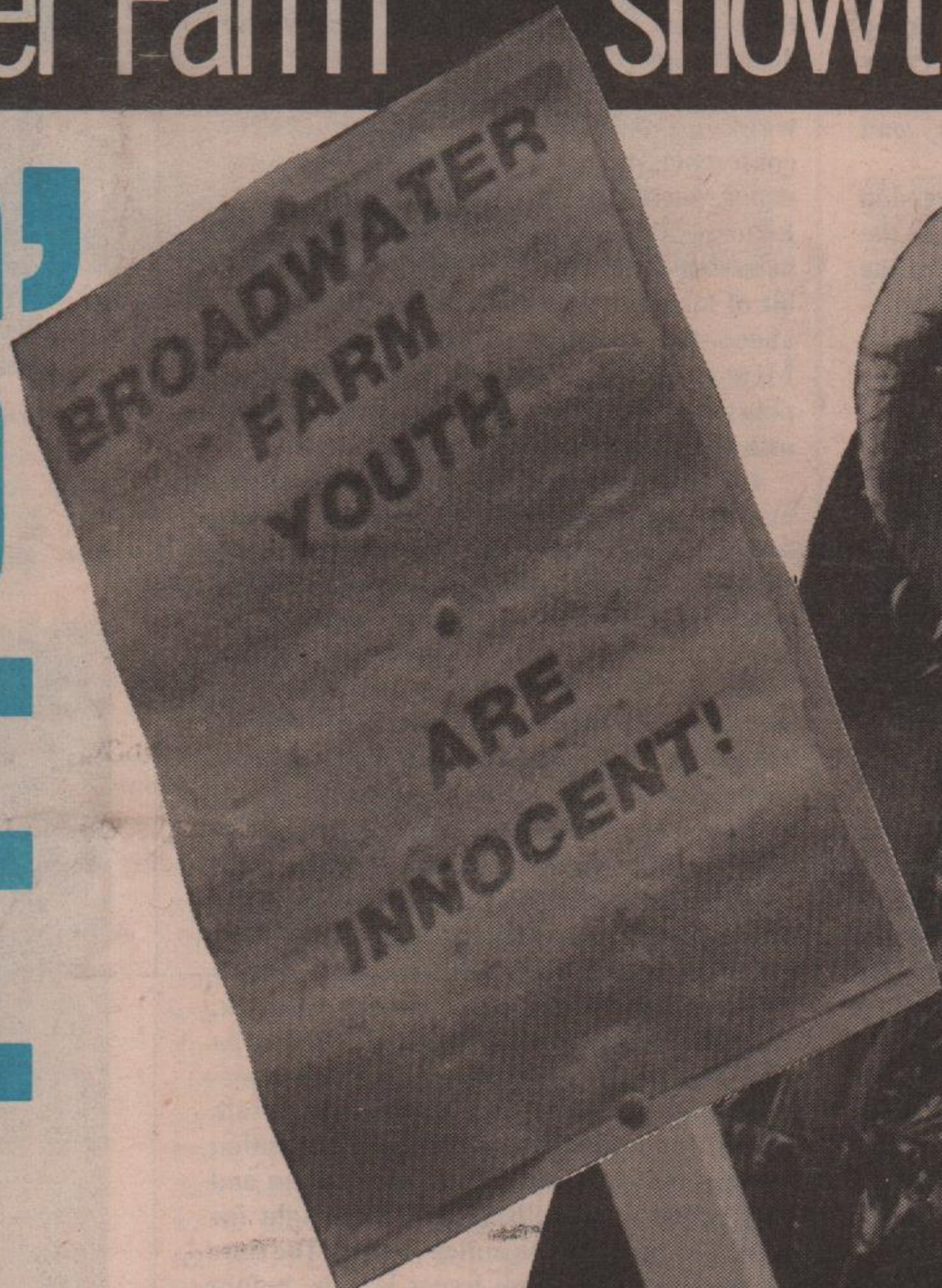
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Broadwater Farm showtrials

RACISTS' REVENGE

In the final days of the Old Bailey showtrial of three men charged with murdering PC Keith Blakelock, *Lynn Rawley* spoke to another black youth from Broadwater Farm whom police tried to frame for the killing



'When I was in the police cell they beat me up. They came into my cell in the morning and beat me up. Then they came back in the afternoon and beat me up again, just kicking and punching and pushing me around.'

'Then they took me upstairs, told me to stand against a wall and asked me what I had in my top pocket. But before I could answer, this policeman punched me in the stomach, then elbowed me and walked away. Then he turned around, elbowed me in the chest, grabbed hold of my head, shoved it against the table and then rubbed it into the table. He said that if I didn't answer their questions they were going to hit me some more.'

Peter Grey is black. But there any similarity between him and the muscle-bound, Mohican-shaved Mr T from the *A-Team* series ends. Yet last October, the police decided he was the machete-wielding Mr T lookalike whom they claimed had

organised the violence on Tottenham's Broadwater Farm estate a year earlier. On the strength of this 'identification', they arrested Grey for the murder of PC Blakelock.

Grey's case shows up the corrupt system of violence, intimidation and lies which the police have used to fit up the black community on the Farm, since the night of ferocious street-fighting that followed the death of black woman Cynthia Jarrett during a police raid on her home in October 1985.

Grey was arrested inside Tottenham magistrates court. He had only gone to watch his friend's trial. But the police decided he was another likely candidate for their courtroom charade. So they pulled him out of the public gallery, took him down to the cells, whisked him off to Wood Green police station and told him he was being charged with murdering the policeman.

'They told me I was this character "Mr T" who

was meant to have murdered Blakelock. I started laughing, I couldn't believe they were saying that. They held me for three days, then put me on curfew. While I was held they never let me talk to anyone or see a solicitor.' The police did make sure that Grey saw plenty of knuckles, elbows and boots, close up. They used force to make him sign a statement and put him on trial at the Old Bailey, charged with causing an affray.

'Before my case started the judge told the officer in charge of me that I should be locked away and treated rough. I was locked up between every session. I was allowed to see my barrister once in the whole trial. It was obvious the judge never liked anyone on my side. You know, he kept making my barrister apologise to the jury. On the last night the judge sent me to Ashford remand centre. He knew I was going to be found not guilty so he thought he'd make sure that I had a hard time of it, extra punishment.' (Continued on page 2)

Labour's crisis

Chancellor Nigel Lawson will be handing out a few pence in tax cuts this week. The good news for the Tory government ought to end there. On all sides, Thatcher's outfit is beset by unsolved problems and potential embarrassments that should have settled its hash in the opinion polls. Yet it is winning.

In the last week alone, the government has been exposed as incompetent and dishonest in an Australian court. It has suffered another humiliating by-election result in Truro. It has faced more strikes by teachers disgusted at its imposed pay deal and no-strike threats. It has been implicated in Reagan's Irangate gun-running to Contra terrorists in Nicaragua. It has seen its boasts about falling employment rubbished by top economists. Meanwhile the Labour Party launched its electoral ace, promising to reduce unemployment by one million in two years. The net result of all this trouble for the Tories and publicity by the Labour Party was that the Conservatives pulled nine points ahead in the latest poll — their biggest lead for 29 months.

Despite Lawson's rather sweaty impression of a sugar daddy handing out goodies in the budget, there is no increase in support for the government. Tory support is holding reasonably steady at around 40 per cent. Recent changes in the polls really reflect the fluctuating fortunes of the SDP/Liberal Alliance and Labour's continuing slump. The Alliance is currently improving its standing while Labour sinks to its desperately low base of support at the last election. Both are promoting moderate middle class policies. But the Alliance is presently better able to pull its potential audience together. Because nobody expects it to be anything other than moderate and middle class, the Alliance does not face the contradictions crippling the Labour Party.

Labour's internal rows, over everything from defence to the 'loony left' and lesbian and gay rights, all stem from the tension between the party's formal links with the labour movement and its leaders' accommodation to pressure from the capitalist class. Labour runs councils which have made gestures of support for homosexual rights, while its leader makes anti-gay statements in Catholic papers. It is the official 'party of the peace movement', but its former prime minister James Callaghan asked the Americans for Cruise missiles and its present leader drives a tank on TV (see pages 6 and 7). The resulting conflicts and incoherence are destroying the credibility of Neil Kinnock's attempt to present Labour as a party of government.

Liverpool

The disqualification of 47 Liverpool Labour councillors by the law lords is an outrageous attack on democratic rights. Every member of the labour movement should be angered by the spectacle of the capitalist courts turfing out representatives elected by ordinary people. Yet opposition has been muted.

The isolation of the Liverpool councillors is a sign of the right-wing times in the labour movement. But it is a situation which the councillors themselves helped bring about. Although they were penalised for their opposition to Tory restrictions on council spending, the Liverpool left wingers never really fought for their avowed aims in the working class. They stuck to the traditional bureaucratic methods of British Labourism,

Labour is panicking as the media start discussing what will happen after its 'inevitable' election defeat. There is much soul-searching among Labour supporters on both left and right about what changes they need to make to stand a chance. But because both sides agree that getting Kinnock elected is the priority, his team can call the shots over the radicals. As it scrambles for survival, the Labour leadership is set to adapt even more blatantly to the demands of the establishment.

Already this week we have seen top Labour spokesmen dismissing the discussion of lesbian and gay rights as a 'sideshow', and replying to accusations that their defence policy is unpatriotic by boasting about their plans to amass tonnes of conventional weaponry. Roy Hattersley is coming clean about Labour's phoney jobs scheme, reassuring businessmen that Labour's plans will cut their costs while leaving 'less money' for decent wage rises.

Kinnock's call for 'self-discipline' at the weekend's Scottish Labour Party conference indicates that the left is to come under increased pressure to keep quiet. Leading left wingers show every sign of behaving themselves as instructed. Today a bit of kite-flying by the scab *Sunday Times*, about the prospect of right-wing Labour MPs resigning if the left spoils Kinnock's plans, is enough to scare top Labour radicals into taking a vow of silence.

Keeping quiet about Kinnock's crimes against socialism will do nothing for the working class. The Tories are vulnerable, but the left's willingness to bow before Kinnock's windy rhetoric lets the ruling class off the hook. When the working class most needs a voice to shout down the insults, injustices and lies of Thatcherism, Kinnock will reduce labour movement politics to a feeble echo of ideas that belong to the Tory Party.

If we get sucked into the debate about resolving Labour's crisis, the working class will go down with Kinnock. The aim of the Revolutionary Communist Party is to keep our class afloat as a political force. That's why we are campaigning, not for Kinnock, but for *The Red Front*. We want to build *The Red Front* into an active bloc of left wingers who have got more important things to talk about than tax cuts or Labour's election prospects — 'loony' things like lesbian and gay rights, anti-militarism, a real fight for jobs, or opposition to police racism. The time to speak out on these issues is now, before they are crushed beneath the wheels of Kinnock's old banger of an electoral bandwagon.

conducting their affairs in cabals and committee rooms, trying to balance the books, and treating the thousands who marched against the cuts on Merseyside as a passive stage army.

The result was a growing mood of resignation among workers who had the will to fight, but were left kicking their heels while councillors did deals with Swiss bankers and pulled low stunts like issuing 30 000 redundancy notices to their workforce. Isolation and defeat was the only possible consequence of this sort of scheming. The fate of the Liverpool 47 should be a warning to the left that loud talk and quiet compromises are no match for the power of the capitalist class.

(Continued from page one) The jury threw out the cooked-up prosecution case against Grey, after police 'witnesses' muffed their stories and failed to produce photographs which they claimed showed Grey looking like Mr T. Grey's barber testified that he had never had any such haircut, and the jury returned a unanimous not guilty verdict.

Grey's case was one of a series of Broadwater Farm showtrials that comes to a head this week, with the verdict in the Blakelock murder trial. Three youths have already been acquitted of the killing, after police were shown to have bullied, brainwashed and bribed people to get their 'evidence'. Three more will learn their fate this week. They are the victims of a police attempt to cover up the truth about their racist regime on Broadwater Farm, by concocting a spurious 'criminal conspiracy' among black people. But those like Peter Grey who were on the estate the night that Cynthia Jarrett died know the truth.

'When I first heard about Cynthia Jarrett I was watching television and everyone went quiet. We thought it was really bad, I mean what had she done to anyone, she was just a black woman. Later I was going past on a bus when I saw this fire and jumped off to have a look. This was before seven. There were loads of police. Youth were throwing bricks and bottles at the police but the police were giving as good as they got. They were throwing the stuff back, and every now and

then they'd rush into the crowd and grab someone — not to arrest them, but to give them a good hiding. The papers said it was just us attacking the police but it was a fight between two sides.

'We were just walking around watching. But when we tried to get off the Farm we realised that the police had it all sewn up, they'd completely blocked the Farm off. They must have planned all this before because it was still early. It's obvious the police started the whole thing off because there was no reason why they should all have been on the Farm as early as they were, and no way they could have barricaded it off so fast unless they planned it all beforehand.'

Black youth like Peter Grey have put up with years of daily harassment from the police. Now he hears policemen on TV talking about taking 'revenge'. 'When the police say revenge it means grabbing people off the street, beating them up, kicking their doors down and arresting them. I don't know if there will be another riot but there's going to be enough trouble. People should stand up and say this thing shouldn't happen. That would be really good. Mind you, it would be better if lots of people, you know not just black people, stood up and got used to saying what the police are really like.'

'People say that the police help people, but they've never helped an old black lady across the road on Broadwater Farm.'

TREVOR MONERVILLE CAMPAIGN

Don't talk to the police



WAR SUPPORTERS TURN THE HEAT ON THE POLICE LAST WEEK

Last Wednesday 300 people turned up to hear assistant police commissioner Wyn Jones outline plans for a new police liaison committee in Hackney. The audience had to pass a protest organised by the Family and Friends of Trevor Monerville. They were calling for a boycott of the meeting, because they say there is nothing to discuss with the police so long as the force refuses to explain how Trevor Monerville emerged from the custody of Stoke Newington police with brain damage in January.

Hackney councillors, including police committee chair Tommy Shepherd and his support unit staff, passed the protest to debate with the police. Inside Shepherd complained about the undemocratic nature of the meeting, but still appealed to the police to cooperate with the council in setting up a consultative committee. He did not mention Trevor Monerville's name.

The Labour spokesmen have got their priorities all wrong. Even if the meeting had been democratic and chaired by Shepherd, it would have been a mistake to go ahead with it. Consulting with the police will do nothing to change the daily reality of police harassment for the black community in Stoke Newington and Hackney.

While they are consulting in one room, the police will be bashing out the brains of a black youth in another.

The Monerville campaigners, including Workers Against Racism supporters, entered the meeting to end it once it became clear that the councillors had ignored the protest. They protested loudly until Annette Monerville, Trevor's aunt, was allowed to tell his story. She said the family wanted no consultation with a police force which refused to admit responsibility for Trevor's horrific injuries, or to answer the Monervilles' questions.

It was surprising that Labour councillors failed to mention the Monerville family's grievance against the police. Ten days earlier, police committee support unit worker Unmesh Desai had attended a Monerville campaign meeting and argued vigorously against the proposal for an immediate demonstration, on the grounds that a publicity campaign was needed first. Why did Desai not take advantage of the opportunity to get that campaign going on Wednesday, by speaking up for Trevor Monerville? The supporters of Hackney council who call for consultation with the racist police, dismiss the idea of demonstrations and then keep quiet when they claim to want a big publicity splash, are seriously undermining the impact which the Monerville campaign could make.

Keith Tompson

Publisher Revolutionary Communist Party, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX © copyright

Printer MPS Ltd, 159 Acre Lane, London SW2

Annual subscription rates • Britain and Ireland £19 • Europe £24 • Middle East and North Africa £26 • America Asia and Southern Africa £27 • Australasia £32 • Libraries, institutions £30.

All cheques payable to Junius Publications Ltd.

Circulation 01-729 3771. Newsdesk 01-729 3771. Correspondence to The Editor, the next step, BCM JPLTD, London WC1N 3XX. ISSN 0144 350 X 20 March 1987. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

IRA WARNS CROWN FORCES

'Keep away from our funerals'

Tory minister Nicholas Scott said that the IRA bomb attack on the funeral of a Belfast policeman 'plumbed new depths of depravity'. But abusing Ireland's dead and attacking republican funerals is official British policy

An IRA statement which claimed responsibility for last week's bomb attack had a blunt message for the Crown forces: 'If you want to bury your dead, then keep a dignified distance from republican and nationalist funerals.' It was a response to the twisted tradition of the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary wrecking Irish republican funerals. Even in death the British war machine is merciless in its treatment of Irish nationalists.

Have you ever been to a funeral where you can't hear the priest reading the last rites over the grave for the noise from the helicopter hovering overhead? Have you ever had to hide your grief from the video-cameras seeking out every face in the funeral crowd? Have you ever followed a coffin surrounded by armoured landrovers, while paramilitary police with machine guns shove the mourners about as if it was a forced march? Have you ever been stoned by the police as you stand in silent memory of a teenager shot by an SAS assassination squad?

If the answer is no, then you have probably never been to a funeral in the Irish war zone, where the British occupation forces regularly run riot against republican mourners.

Being late for your own funeral is no joke in nationalist areas of Northern Ireland. It happened to Mary McGlinchey, wife of jailed republican Dominic, last month. Her family told the authorities they wanted a private funeral. They got a public dose of RUC depravity instead. RUC thugs followed the family as they brought the body back home, surrounded the house, stayed all night, swamped the start of the funeral, pushed their way through mourners and provocatively marched alongside the coffin. They stopped a long queue of cars from following the coffin, delayed the funeral service by more than an hour, and baton-charged the mourners in the cemetery.

'NOT HUMAN'

Wrecking funerals is not the only way the RUC abuses the dead. It is now common practice to leave the bodies of Irish freedom fighters lying around for hours to horrify their relatives and deter their comrades.

It was five o'clock in the morning on 23 February 1985 when SAS assassins pumped 117 bullets into the bodies of IRA volunteers Charles Breslin, Michael Devine and his brother David in Strabane. The inquest into the killings, now running for nearly seven weeks, heard how the three republicans lay dead in the field where they fell for hours. The bodies were only removed after 200 people fought with RUC men guarding the field and local women threatened to go in whether the police used guns or not. The RUC returned in force later that week to harass the huge march that followed Charles Breslin's coffin. 'There were 50 RUC men at



INVASION OF THE BODY-SNATCHERS: POLICE PROVOKE FUNERAL CLASH

our front door and hundreds more in the streets,' said brother Joe Breslin. 'They wouldn't let the funeral out until we took the IRA gloves and beret off the coffin. They were kicking mourners from behind. Then when the funeral march got started, the police were throwing stones at the people watching.'

Defacing and degrading the dead and their families is another RUC ritual.

Peggy O'Hara told *iris* how the RUC disfigured her dead son's face and threatened to dump his body on the street. Patsy O'Hara was the third hunger-striker to die fighting for political status at the age of 24 on 21 May 1981. 'After he died the RUC said they were taking him up to Omagh instead of home to Derry,' remembers Peggy. 'They phoned up and said if we didn't come and get Patsy's body they would dump it outside the door.' When she saw her son, she was shocked: 'Patsy had a beautiful face, he was a wild, wild handsome boy. But now his nose was broke and his face covered in cigarette burns. They did it to him after he was dead. Even in death they couldn't leave him alone.'

The parents of IRA volunteer Charles English had to suffer similar abuse after their son was killed when his rocket launcher exploded in his face in August 1985. The RUC and the British Army tried to make Michael English identify his son through a car window, where they left his body lying for seven hours. 'It was an exercise to degrade the body and shock me,' says Michael English. 'I said, "You can let him lie there and the only people you're degrading are yourselves, because you're proving you're not human."'

At the inquest into his son's death in January this year, Michael English accused

the RUC of trying to cause the maximum suffering to his family: 'I'm sure the bodies of RUC men are not left on public display for seven or eight hours.' The day after Charles English died the RUC came to pay their 'last respects' to his family. They stopped at the door to sing 'One less Fenian, one less Fenian, blew himself up, collected him up in a bag'. The RUC kept up their obscenities all day.

RUC GHOULS

Lynne Brown (nee Fleming) from the nationalist enclave of Gobnascale on the Loyalist side of Derry will not forget the day her cousin Kieran was buried, after he drowned trying to escape from a British Army death squad in December 1984: 'All of our men's funerals are bad. But the worst was Kieran's. I'd never seen anything like it, the police just laid into everybody there. The pall-bearers had to run with the coffin to get away, they were passing it over people's heads to keep Kieran from the police. They only escaped by taking the coffin on to some waste ground.' The RUC had organised a reception committee to greet the mourners before they got to the nationalist side of the city: 'When we crossed the bridge to the cemetery, the RUC made us walk along the lower level while the Loyalists like Gregory Campbell were on top, laughing and jeering and spitting at us.'

The RUC have even taken to harassing nationalists on visits to the graveyard.

For more than six months in 1986 the RUC in Dungannon, County Tyrone hounded Kevin and Ann McGuckin every time they visited the grave of their two infant sons, revving up car engines and shouting abuse. 'Anyone who does what the RUC are doing to us,' said Kevin McGuckin, 'well, to call them animals would be an insult to the animal kingdom.'

The arrogant hypocrites of the British establishment demand the 'right' to bury their dead in Ireland, under the Union Jack and with full military honours. Yet they dare to deny the Irish people the right to honour those who have fallen in the struggle for freedom from British domination. But the bullying, body-snatching tactics of the Crown forces have not broken the nationalists' determination to salute their dead soldiers. Anybody who has seen 100 Irish women using umbrellas to shield IRA men from British cameras, as they fire a salute at a comrade's funeral, would appreciate the truth in Michael English's defiant message to the RUC thugs who abused his dead son: 'I said, "Eventually you'll have to take him out and give him back to me, and he'll be buried in the proper manner. And there's nothing you can do about it."'

Joan Phillips



THE LAST SALUTE: IRA VOLUNTEERS HONOUR THEIR WAR-DEAD

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

HARVEY

There are many reasons why it would be good to see Harvey Proctor, the Tory MP for Billericay, forced out of public life. His alleged homosexuality is not one of them. With the tabloid press in full cry about about scandals involving rent boys and spanking sessions, Scotland Yard has presented a dossier on Proctor to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Unfortunately, it now appears likely that these allegations could force Proctor to stand down before the next election.

Harvey Proctor is one of the new generation of Tory MPs who arrived in Westminster in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher first came to power. He expresses the prejudices of Thatcherism in a particularly pure and obnoxious form.

Proctor is well known for his virulent racism and his support for proposals to encourage the 'repatriation' of black people from Britain. It is not clear where he would repatriate the majority of black people who were born in Britain, but no doubt some of his former political associates on the fascist fringe would be ready with suggestions.

In 1984 BBC's *Panorama* programme 'Maggie's Militants' exposed Proctor's links with a number of anti-semitic and fascist organisations. Like other right-wing MPs who were exposed, Proctor initiated legal proceedings. But unlike them, he withdrew when it appeared that court hearings might discredit him further.

Proctor is a loyal supporter of British terror in Ireland. In fact last August he helped to shelter a lawyer suspected on involvement with Loyalist paramilitaries. The lawyer was on the run from police in London after passengers in his car pulled guns on police when they were stopped for questioning. Like many of the Tory young turks Proctor is now an ardent supporter of reactionary militias, such as the Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua and the Unita mercenaries in Angola.

When it comes to questions of women's rights, Proctor is pro-life — that is, in favour of invoking the rights of embryos and fetuses to justify suppressing abortion rights. When it is a matter of law and order, Proctor is anti-life and pro-hanging.

Proctor's views on these issues have been widely publicised. Yet his racist, sexist, pro-imperialist and generally bigoted pronouncements have attracted little controversy. There have been no media campaigns to denounce his policies and question his sanity. Such treatment is reserved for Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill or Deirdre Wood. Proctor's prejudices are too close to the mainstream of Thatcher's Britain to attract much comment.

Now Proctor has become a target of abuse, not because of his politics, but because of his supposed sexual proclivities. The press are full of revelations about naked Arab youths under the bed in his holiday hotel in Morocco. These follow the confessions of an old pal found wandering outside Proctor's London flat at 3am in his underpants, and tales about rent boys and spanking sessions.

Some radical moralists will point to Proctor as a symbol of Tory hypocrisy at a time when the government's Aids campaign is promoting sexual restraint. This dangerous response plays into the hands of anti-gay reaction. Our response should be to defend Proctor all the way against the anti-gay witch-hunt — so that we can destroy the influence of the anti-working class politics he represents.

He is an old man now' was how 69-year old Labour foreign affairs spokesman Denis Healey dismissed 74-year old former prime minister James Callaghan, after the misnamed misery 'Sunny Jim' had attacked Labour's non-nuclear defence policy in parliament. Callaghan may no longer qualify for a Labour Party Young Socialists card. But the striking thing about last week's row was how a 30-second speech by one elder statesman could put the Labour leadership under more pressure on its defence policy than thousands of youthful left wingers have done in the last year.

A closer look at Neil Kinnock's non-nuclear policy reveals that it is a plan to rebuild the British armed forces into a more efficient 'conventional' killing machine. It shows that the left has got a lot more to complain about than has a dyed-in-the-wool warmonger like Callaghan. But, as the battle for Downing Street heats up, Labour left wingers have adopted an attitude of wartime unity behind Kinnock's impersonation of Churchill. They are keeping their heads down in the trenches and offering no public criticism of Kinnock's rearmament strategy.

Kinnock has tried to get Labour defence policy into patriotic shape since Callaghan last denounced the party's plans for nuclear disarmament during the 1983 election campaign. Then, the Tories routed Labour by depicting its defence policy as a subversive gift to Britain's enemies. 'Like your manifesto, Comrade' said the Saatchi and Saatchi posters.

Kinnock has spent four years trying to improve Labour's image as a party that can be trusted to run the establishment's military machine.

Kinnock has retained the paper commitment to send back US Cruise missiles, decommission Britain's Polaris nukes and cancel the order for the Trident system from Washington, as a last nod towards his radical 'peacemongering' past. But he has devoted most of his energies to repainting Labour policies in a garish red, white and blue. We have seen him driving around in a tank on television and promising the Labour conference that he would 'die for my country', while his party political broadcasts have featured so many tank battles and scenes of military glory that 'Join the Professionals' would have been a more appropriate last-frame invitation than 'Join the Labour Party'. The militaristic drift of Labour's non-nuclear defence policy is summed up in the overstuffed publicity pack launched earlier this year, *Modern Britain in a Modern World*, the centrepiece of which is the pamphlet, *The Power to Defend Our Country*.

On each page of the defence pack, the old prejudices of Cold War propaganda jostle for space with the worldview of the Field Marshals and Empire-building statesman who are repeatedly cited in support of Labour policy. It swears Labour's loyalty to Nato, describing this gentleman's club for generals and other sadists as 'a partnership of democracies to defend democracy. A source of strength'. It advises Nato chiefs to adopt a 'no first use of nuclear weapons' policy in order to fob off the peace movement. Otherwise, says Labour, there is a 'real danger' that Western anti-nuclear movements might 'develop into more general disquiet about Nato'. And that would never do, would it?

If Nato is wearing the white hat, then the Warsaw Pact has to have on the black one. The defence pack takes Labour's endorsement of the myth of the Soviet threat to a new low. It is no longer enough for the Labour Party that Nato should be as well armed as the Warsaw Pact. Now Kinnock's team wants the West to have superiority in conventional weapons. 'It is axiomatic,' announces a section subtitled 'The Labour Approach', 'that if an enemy is to be deterred from attack, it has to be faced with the prospect of defeat. To do so under our strategy requires land, naval and air forces that could inflict that defeat.'

It is also 'axiomatic' that a Labour Party which bases its policies on the need for the West to 'defeat' the Red 'enemy' is part of the problem, not the solution, for anybody concerned about peace.

The non-nuclear part of Kinnock's policy is presented in terms which any Tory could understand. According to Labour, nuclear weapons are an inefficient and over-expensive way to go about blowing people away. If Britain is to keep up its imperialist role in the world, the defence pack argues, it will have to kiss goodbye to the costly, useless Bomb. This is how it lists Britain's present military responsibilities:

The left passed this at last year's Labour conference...

'Conference calls upon the Labour Party in its peace and its other campaigns to stress the need for a planned transfer of public spending from weapons to welfare and industrial development.' (Passed with a four million vote majority)

Now it tells us to support this...

'For the cost of four Trident subs and the American missiles, Britain could buy: 90 Type 23 Frigates, or 100 Oberon Class diesel-electric submarines, or 500 Tornado aircraft, or 500 Harrier aircraft, or 10 000 Challenger tanks, or 50 000 Exocet missiles.' (From Kinnock's *Modern Britain* publicity pack)

Mick Hume gets behind the latest row over policy to attack Neil Kinnock's plans for con

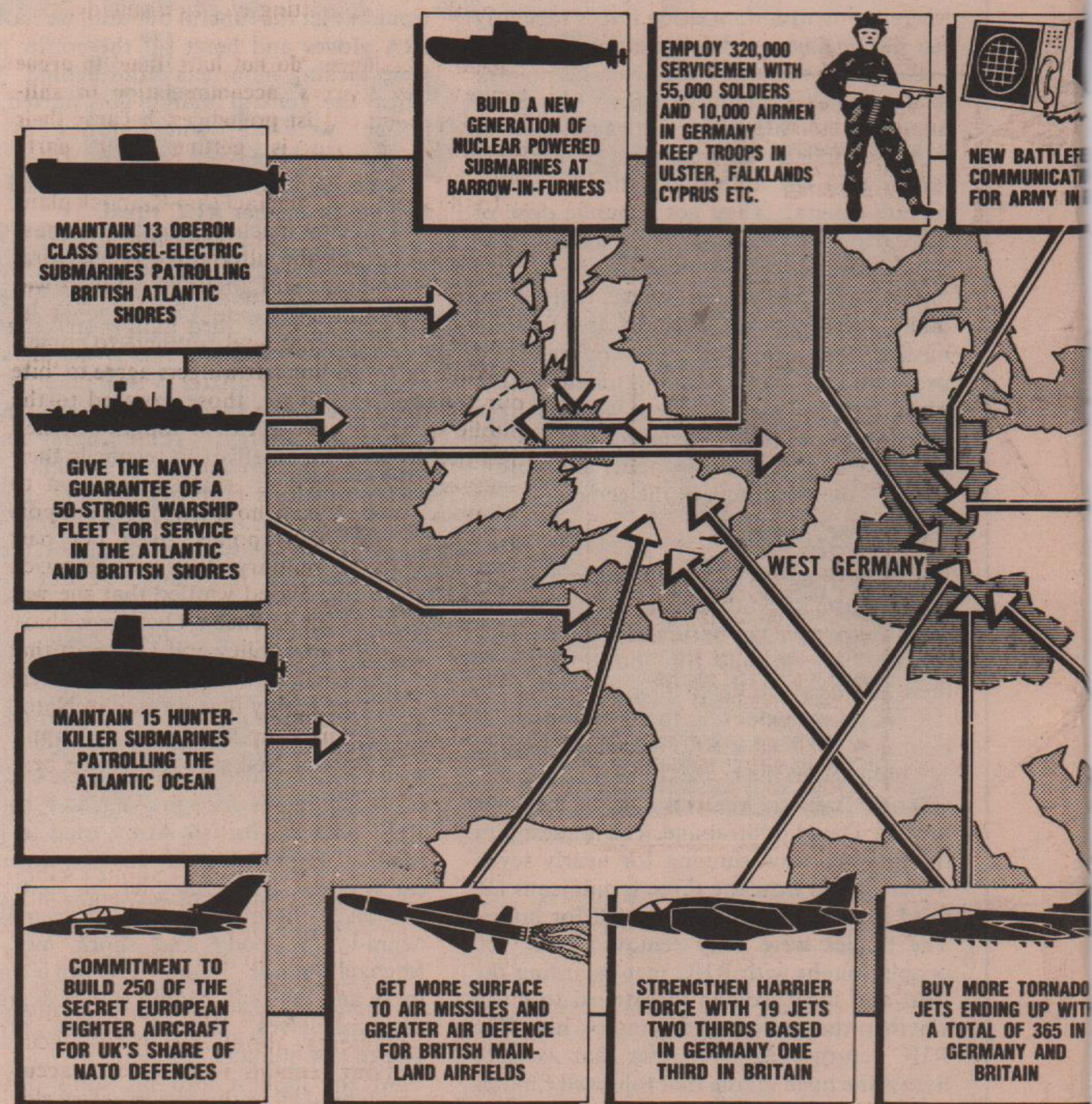
- Quite rightly, we are committed to the air and sea defence of our own island
- Rightly too, we are committing troops and airpower to the central front in Europe
- Beyond that we are responsible for the naval protection of the Atlantic sea lanes
- We have retained a general responsibility for military action outside the Nato area, most notably in relation to the Falkland Islands
- But we are also trying to remain one of the five nuclear weapon nations of the world.

So according to Kinnock's version of socialist internationalism, it's alright for the British authorities to defend 'our own island' (including, of course, that bit of 'our' island which happens to be part of the island of Ireland), to have thousands of troops lurking with intent to invade in Europe, to commit acts of piracy in the Atlantic, to rampage around the third world, and to occupy the Falkland Islands against the wishes of their rightful owners, the Argentinian people. 'But', the Labour document finally draws the line at over-stretching Britain's arsenal by trying to maintain a nuclear capability on top of all the other expensive business of Empire.

In fact the Tories already spend 85 per cent of their huge defence budget on conventional arms. But Labour attacks the Tories for 'cutting' spending on conventional weapons in favour of nukes, with a vigour it has rarely displayed when opposing cuts in the NHS or council services. The leaflets accompanying the *Modern Britain* pack produce such shock-horror revelations as the fact that 'The Royal Navy will have insufficient ships' — and could never mount an operation like the Falklands again.' The thought that there might never be another massacre like the sinking of the *Belgrano* is a painful one for the patriots in the Labour leadership. They promise to spend all the money saved by scrapping Trident not, as those who are naive enough to believe in Labour conference decisions claim, on hospitals or houses, but on all manner of conventional weaponry (see above).

Kinnock's 'spend, spend, spend' promise to the military chiefs contrasts with Labour's pledge to cut defence spending in the run-up to the last four general elections.

But Labour leaders are still keen on getting value for money. Their defence documents insist that Britain's procurement policies 'must move back towards simple, cheaper and more reliable weaponry. All the evidence of modern warfare suggests that this is the most effective way of fighting wars.' The 'evidence' which Labour spokesmen have gathered from such examples of 'modern warfare' as the slaughter in the Gulf (more than a million dead and not a nuclear weapon in sight) has convinced them that you can get more bodies to the pound by buying cheap conventional weapons.



'HOW LABOUR WILL DEFEND BRITAIN', PUBLISHED IN LAE KINNOCK'S WAR PLANS MEAN SENDING SUBS, WARSHIP ALL OVER THE WORLD AND KEEPING 'TROOPS IN ULSTER, F

The willingness of a former supporter of the British Bomb like Denis Healey to defend Kinnock's non-nuclear policy against Callaghan is often seen as a radical shift in Healey's position. But if Healey has moved, it is into the driving seat of Labour's defence policy. All Labour's arguments are now couched in terms favoured by this veteran fighter for British imperialism.

In a recent interview, Healey explained that Labour only opposed nuclear weapons because, in a world where superpowers with 50 000 nukes between them were discussing disarmament, Britain's small nuclear arsenal was irrelevant. 'On the other hand,' he pointed out, 'I think that the cost of the Trident system would mean such savage cuts in our conventional forces that

we would be incapable of meeting situations which actually could arise.'

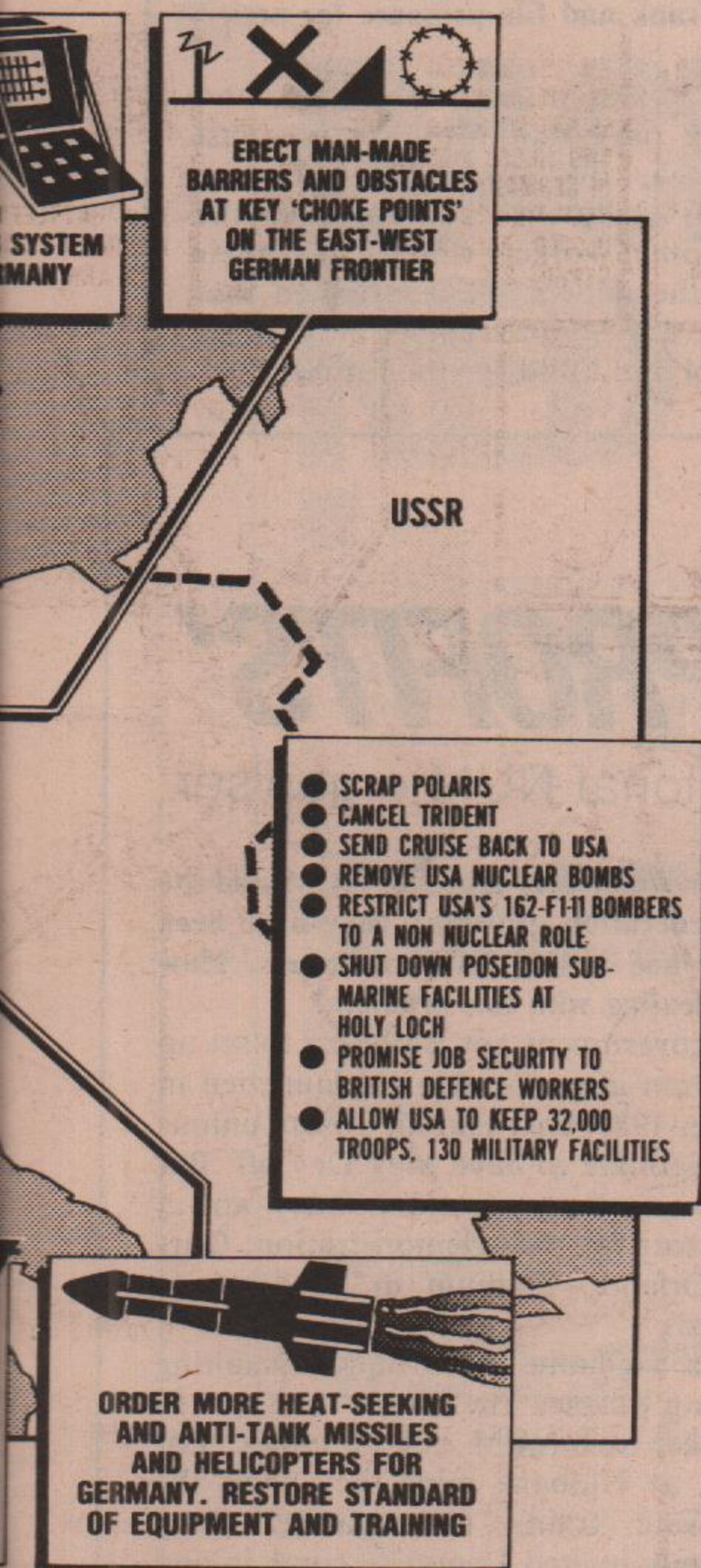
We can predict the sort of 'situations' which Healey wants Britain to be prepared for from his past record, as a member of Labour governments which used 'conventional' torture and death squads to uphold Britain's authority from Aden and Oman to Ireland.

While Healey sets the pace, the left tags along quietly behind. The meekness of the Labour left's reaction to its leaders' breathtakingly gung-ho display of gunboat politics has allowed right wingers like Callaghan to monopolise anti-Kinnock criticism.

'What are we to make of it all?' asked the despairing Labour CND chair, Joy Hurcombe, when *Modern Britain* was published. 'The

Kinnock, who needs than?

Labour's defence conventional warfare



OUR PARTY NEWS No1: S, JETS AND MISSILES KLANDS, CYPRUS ETC'

response from Labour Party members', she noted, 'has been a horrified silence.' The emphasis here is on the silence. Leading Labour left wingers have kept their displays of horror for their own private forums. In public, they have kept a stiff upper lip and said nothing about Kinnock's preparations for a non-nuclear bloodbath. 'Careless talk costs votes' is the message that Kinnock has sent out to his troops in the constituencies, and the left has obeyed. It is prepared to watch while Healey rubs his hands at the prospect of stockpiling non-nuclear weaponry — and of using it in the third world.

The arguments behind the left's grudging submission to Kinnock's rearmament plans have been best summed up in *Chartist*, the

journal of the soft-left Labour Coordinating Committee. After admitting that Labour Party members were 'shocked' by the militarism in Kinnock's publicity material, *Chartist* ascended to the emotional plane and argued that it doesn't really matter what socialists *think* of the policy, the important thing is what the voting public *feels* about it:

'On the left we will have to bite our tongues. A large proportion of the population still (quite wrongly) see the Soviet Union as a threat to Britain and Western Europe. We do not have time to try to change their minds. We must mount a defence campaign which talks in terms of increasing our conventional capacity, strengthening the armed forces and making a greater contribution to the conventional defence of Europe if need be....

'Above all we will have to convince people that they will *feel* safer without nuclear weapons and US nuclear bases. We will have to start right now. Committing national suicide is no defence — neither is committing *electoral* suicide.'

Labour left wingers 'do not have time' to argue against their leaders' accommodation to anti-Soviet, pro-imperialist prejudices, because their overriding priority is getting their party into government.

In the left's book, the fact that Kinnock plans to create a military machine capable of mass murder is OK, if the alternative is 'electoral suicide' for Labour. So Labour left wingers will stand aside and hold Kinnock's coat while he shapes up for international conflicts to come.

While most leading left wingers agree to 'bite our tongues' in private, those exposed to the public spotlight have got their tongues twisted and tied in knots in an effort to reconcile their own radical views with their resignation to Kinnock's line. Asked how she could support her party's pro-Nato policy given her past opposition to the military alliance, Greenwich candidate Deirdre Wood waffled that she was 'not defensive about defence': 'I believe we have a good Labour Party policy and I support that policy. My personal views are at this moment mixed. I am quite happy that we stay in Nato.' She might be a mixed-up kid, but she's 'happy' to stick with Nato if Neil says it's for the best.

The left's refusal to challenge Labour's sabre-rattling has allowed Kinnock to adapt his policy at will, and to throw down a 'more patriotic than thou' challenge to the Tories. But the Labour leadership has found that this is no easy task. Having conceded the Conservatives' central arguments about the perils facing Britain, Labour remains vulnerable to accusations that it would leave the nation defenceless by taking away the 'nuclear deterrent'. Kinnock has come under increased pressure from the right to ditch his non-nuclear posture. He has discovered that what Callaghan describes as the attitude of the Soviet leaders — 'they would pocket any concession you give, say thank you very much and give nothing in return' — is actually a fair summary of the British establishment's style.

However far Labour goes down the road to rearmament, the authorities will insist that it goes further and faster.

Kinnock's commitment to dump nuclear weapons has always been more symbolic than real. It stands in the tradition of Harold Wilson's promise to do away with Polaris before the 1964 election. Four Labour governments later, the missiles are still in place. But today, the Labour leader is so desperate to appease the military establishment that he would gladly accept a go-out from his anti-nuclear enthusiasm even before polling day. Recent developments in superpower diplomacy may provide the excuse for him to continue the American, French, British, Soviet

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's offer to scrap all medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe has created the prospect of a paper disarmament deal with the USA. This means that Cruise missiles like those at Greenham Common are now on the international negotiating table. It would be all too easy for Kinnock to say that this is not the time to jog elbows at Geneva by sending back Cruise when they are under discussion as part of the wider 'peace process'.

A top Kinnockite thinker, Peter Kellner, suggests just such a course of action in this week's *New Statesman*, and advises Kinnock to make the 'we won't kick out Cruise' statement now. He admits that the hard left might complain, but says that's just 'too bad' for them. For Kellner, what matters is that such a policy switch might 'block off the Tories' ability to taunt Labour as being anti-Nato'. It is suitably ironic that the only time a left-wing journal has made any impact on the Labour defence debate has been when it advises Kinnock to crawl even more abjectly before the warmongers of the Western alliance.

To answer the question posed by Labour CND, what are we to make of it all? The first thing we must do is reject the reactionary principles which unite every top politician.

To date, the debate has been conducted in terms dictated by the Tories. All sides accept that defence is 'the first duty of government', and the argument is confined to different schemes for protecting Britain's interests. But the interests at stake are those of British capitalists, not of ordinary people. The British armed forces exist to ensure that the ruling class can have its way. They deal with political threats to the power of the British authorities, such as the liberation struggle in Ireland or Argentina's occupation of the Falklands, and they stand by to protect British bosses' huge overseas holdings in every corner of the globe. Nato is the wider umbrella which upholds the interests of the Western powers.

In the context of a fiercely competitive world order, where each capitalist class is fighting tooth and claw to survive at the expense of its rivals, 'defence' can only mean war and aggression for a declining power like Britain.

Since the Second World War, the British armed forces have launched almost 50 bloody interventions overseas. With the Western world suffering an economic recession, there is plenty more to come.

We have no interest in entering the squabble over whether nuclear or conventional weapons are the best way to protect British capitalism around the world. Nor can we allow the electoral ambitions of the Labour Party to serve as the excuse for turning a blind eye to the military build-up. Anybody who is sincere in their concern about peace has a responsibility to speak out against every act of armed aggression, and every plan to increase the West's menacing arsenal. We must start by opposing the conventional wars being fought by the capitalist powers today — especially those that are waged under the Union Jack.

As Kinnock comes under increased pressure from the establishment, and Labour's electoral prospects get increasingly gloomy, the left is being pressed harder still to keep quiet and conform to the party leaders' line. This is a recipe for disaster. It will allow the Tory militarists a free hand in deciding what is and is not an acceptable attitude to 'defence'. It will leave Kinnock free to reduce the labour movement to an appendage of Nato. And it will expose the people at the sharp end of Britain's defence policy, from Ireland to Argentina, to the unwanted attentions of the Crown's conventional armed forces.

Opposing Western militarism is a central aim of *The Red Front*, which we are campaigning to build into a bloc of left wingers who are prepared to take a stand against Kinnock's party.

The Red Front's platform for working class unity includes a demand to 'Stop the war drive' (see box). That is an aim with which no socialist could disagree. The difficult question today is how we go about fighting for it. It is time the left accepted that the chauvinism and conventional war plans contained in *Modern Britain* and promoted by the Labour leadership can only take us closer to more military conflicts. Our one hope of organising resistance tomorrow is to bring together a core of committed anti-militarists today, under the banner offered by *The Red Front*.

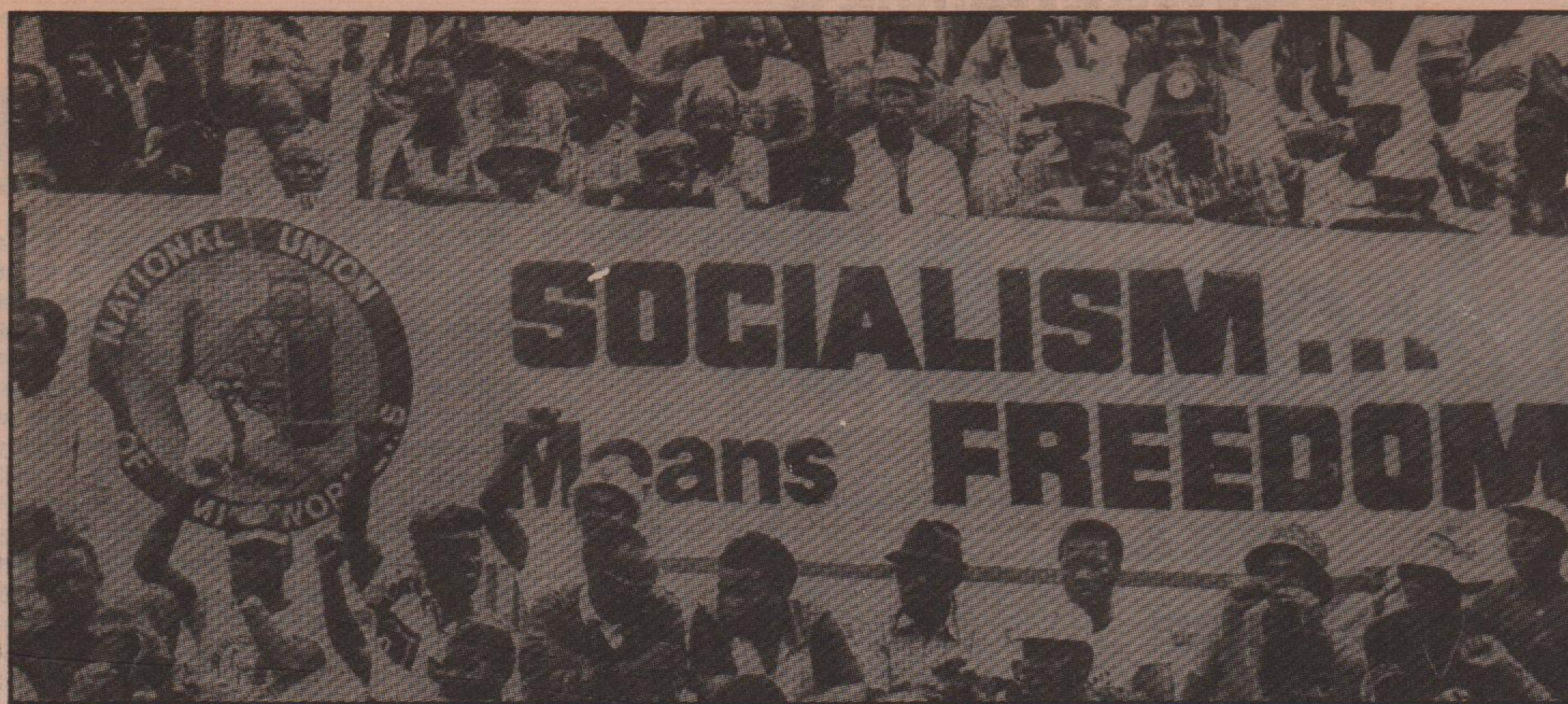
Kinnock's non-nuclear defence policy is no answer to the Callaghans and the Thatchers. It is no solution to the pressing problems of war and oppression around the world. We can achieve nothing by appeasing the blood-thirsty British authorities. If we want peace, we must fight against war today. Supporting *The Red Front* is a way of showing opposition to those who dress up their aggressive military designs in talk about 'defending our island', and a step forward in defending our class.

THE RED FRONT

• Stop the war drive

We oppose all forms of militarism, both conventional and nuclear, and all alliances among imperialist powers, particularly Nato. We condemn Western military interference in the third world and support countries such as Argentina or Libya against imperialist aggression. We support anti-imperialist struggles, especially those of the Palestinians in the Middle East, black people in South Africa and liberation struggles in Central America. We place a particular priority on supporting the fight for freedom in Ireland.

BACK THE RED FRONT — TURN TO PAGE 11



BANNERS BEARING THE MESSAGE OF FREEDOM AT THE NUM CONFERENCE IN JOHANNESBURG

MINERS IN CONFERENCE

'1987: THE YEAR WE TAKE CONTROL'

In our second South Africa exclusive, **Mark Wilson** reports on the struggles of the black miners who have warned president Botha to call off his state of emergency or face a national strike

Number 3 shaft at Vaal Reefs Goldmine in the western Transvaal seems peaceful. There is little to indicate that this has been the scene of violent clashes which have left nearly 50 dead in the last few months. But the atmosphere in the hostel compound nearby is tense.

A week ago an *induna* (supervisor) was killed. 'We don't know what happened,' says a National Union of Mineworkers shaft steward, 'but 14 miners are still in jail because of the killing. Nobody knows if they were responsible.' Uncertainty and suspicion are a daily part of miners' lives under the state of emergency.

For a year, South Africa's mining bosses have encouraged divisions among the miners, using vigilantes to incite violence between different language groups and break the power of the union.

'Safety in the mines is deteriorating badly. We need a workers' defence committee that is answerable to us and our union,' says the steward. 'We don't trust management with our lives any more. The mine security forces are vicious. They use teargas, rubber bullets and live bullets, in that order. Removal of mine security is crucial to peace. They are responsible for organising Russians (vigilantes) from outside to fight the workers.'

In response to these attacks there is growing support for the demand for miners to take control of their hostels and conditions underground. This was a key issue at the recent NUM conference in Johannesburg.

POLITICISED

The conference opened with the singing of freedom songs by the 800 delegates, representing South Africa's 360 000 black miners. Two banners flanked the chanting crowd, bearing the slogans '1987: The Year the Mineworkers Take Over' and 'Socialism... Means Freedom'. At the closing rally 15 000 miners crammed into Soweto's Jabulani Amphitheatre. Police seized a giant poster of jailed African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela as militants tried to unfurl it.

The highly politicised conference atmosphere shocked the white establishment.

The NUM, the largest and fastest growing union in the Cosatu federation, committed itself to the political struggle against apartheid and endorsed a programme of action to challenge repression and improve the conditions of its members:

- Miners will launch a national day of strike action unless the state of emergency is lifted.
- They demand that May Day and 16 June (Soweto Day) be paid holidays.
- They want employers to stop deducting

income tax and national insurance from workers' wages. Since workers have no vote this is a system of 'taxation without representation'.

■ The NUM is preparing for strike action in support of a 55 per cent wage increase. Miners will refuse to work overtime to improve their earnings, as they have always been forced to do.

■ Miners want employers to dismantle the migrant labour system which forces workers to spend 11 out of 12 months in single-sex hostels.

The NUM also adopted the ANC's *Freedom Charter*, which has been the programme of the anti-apartheid struggle for over 30 years. This was a shock to the employers and the government. They are

'OUR SWEAT MAKES THEIR PROFITS'

After the NUM conference our *tns* correspondent spoke to a regional NUM organiser

tns: The conference agreed to fight for union control of the hostels. Wouldn't it be better to fight to get rid of them?

X: 'Yes, but we want to control the hostels first, and then we can see what we really need. At the moment the hostels are divided by management along tribal lines. For example all Zulus are in one, all Xhosas in another and all Shonas in a third. Now they have gone even further and have split union and non-union miners. So you get all union Xhosas in one, all non-union Xhosas in another and so on. That way they want to isolate the militants. So when we have a strike ballot, it will be hostel against hostel.'

'We have no say in the running of the hostels. The conditions are very bad — concrete beds, bad food and no privacy. We want them under workers' control so we can start changing them.'

tns: You also want to take control of mine security.

X: 'Yes. In the past when there was a fight the security would just try to restore peace. But now the first thing they ask is "Are you a union member?" All they do is cause trouble. Goldfields of South Africa now has a big security police force which can be moved from mine to mine, as the occasion demands. They come into the hostels and say "We know that room is unionised," and then go in to harass people.'

tns: You also want an end to the migrant labour system. Could you say something about how it works on the mines?

X: 'We don't want the abolition of migrant labour but the abolition of the system. For example, if a white person comes from Zimbabwe for a job, they can stay. But we're shipped back after six or 12 months. The government uses the migrant system to weaken the union. Each miner has his "record of service" card which decides



CLENCHED FISTS FOR FREEDOM

whether he can come back again or not. This can make miners reluctant to join the union.

'The migrant system keeps wages down, because management know they can sack 1000 men one day and get 1000 new workers the next. This makes organisation impossible. Many of our key people are Mozambicans and many shop stewards are from the Transkei. Under the migrant system they can be forced to leave at any time. The whole system is there to disorganise and weaken the workers.'

tns: What about Uwusa, the union that's been formed by Gatsha Buthelezi's Zulu-based

worried, not so much about the specific demands of the charter, but about their own failure to foster non-political trade unionism in South Africa.

Three years of intense conflict in the townships, and fierce repression under the present emergency, have convinced workers of the need for a wider social and political struggle for change.

TWO EVILS

The NUM policy statement passed at the conference says 'apartheid and capitalism are two evils that must be eradicated' and emphasises that miners should assert control over as much of their life on the mines as possible. The union is campaigning to strengthen workers' organisation on the mines, setting up committees to run the hostels and 'defence committees' to curb interference by the bosses' security thugs. At the Soweto rally NUM president James Motlatse issued a warning to the apartheid bosses:

'1987 will be the year when mineworkers will take control. Either negotiations start with the NUM to begin the process of dismantling the migrant labour system and the implementation of workers' control over the hostels, or the mineworkers seize control without the bosses' involvement.'

PRESSURE

Motlatse explained that 'Our organisation has taken a political stance, because in the five years of its existence it found politics were responsible for our problems.' The campaign for a living wage, said Motlatse, was only the first stage of the struggle: 'The crisis in the economy can never be solved by this or any capitalist government, but only by a social system that will wipe out poverty, hunger and disease.'

The unusual radicalism of the NUM leaders shows that rank and file pressure for action is growing.

Worried bosses in boardrooms around the country pray that Motlatse was just talking tough. But the 15 000 chanting militants at Jabulani Stadium and the millions of other workers who will take their lead from the miners are determined that 1987 really will be different: 'The year we take control and build for the future.'

Inkatha movement to stop the NUM and the Cosatu federation growing? They have been attacking and killing NUM members. How are you dealing with this problem?

X: 'The government got Buthelezi to set up Uwusa soon after Cosatu was launched in November 1985. Last year all Cosatu unions had to negotiate to have May Day off. But Uwusa were given a paid holiday and a police escort for their demonstration. Ours in the Orlando Stadium in Soweto was teargassed.'

'Uwusa vigilantes go around assaulting and killing people. The bosses use them to try to keep the NUM out of mines. For example, at Hlobane mine they knew the NUM were trying to organise. They immediately invited Uwusa to come in and work together with the security police to sign people up.'

'The only thing we can do is talk to individual Uwusa members. But this is very difficult because we don't have good access to them. The important point to recognise is that the so-called tribal divisions don't really run that deep. In Natal loyalty to Buthelezi is still fairly strong, but the Zulus in Transvaal are very class conscious. I think the influence of Inkatha is beginning to decline.'

tns: The Western press always gives the impression that there are many 'progressive' employers in South Africa, who would like to see apartheid go. What do you have to say about that?

X: 'It is the companies that are the power behind the government. If Anglo-American, Gencor, Goldfields and the rest went to the government and said "Look, we've had enough of strikes — let's have some change, scrap the Group Areas Act," they'd do it. It's the sweat of the black workers that makes the profits for the companies, and the government and the bosses know it.'

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE AIDS PANIC

PUBLIC MEETINGS

BIRMINGHAM: Wednesday 8 April, 7.30pm, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane
BRADFORD: Saturday 4 April, 2pm, Central Library
BRIGHTON: Tuesday 24 March, 7.30pm, Unemployed Centre, Tibury Place
BRISTOL: Thursday 9 April, 7.30pm, Shepherds Hall, Old Market
COVENTRY: Thursday 9 April, 7.30pm, Biggin Hall, Binley Road, Stoke
EDINBURGH: Thursday 23 April, 7.30pm, Pleasance Theatre, The Pleasance
GLASGOW: Thursday 30 April, 7.30pm, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street

LEEDS: Wednesday 1 April, 7.30pm, Trades Club, Savile Mount
LIVERPOOL: Wednesday 1 April, 7.30pm, Trade Union Centre, Hardman Street
LONDON: Thursday 26 March, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, NW1
MANCHESTER: Thursday 2 April, 7.30pm, Black Lion, Blackfriars Street
NOTTINGHAM: Thursday 26 March, 7.30pm, The Yorker, Mansfield Road
SHEFFIELD: Thursday 2 April, 7.30pm, SCAU, West Street
WAKEFIELD: Thursday 2 April, 4.30pm, Bretton Hall College

BACK THE RED FRONT!

Join our campaign for *The Red Front*, a bloc of left-wing organisations and individuals who refuse to bow to the dictates of the system or the demands of the Labour leadership, and are willing to fight for our class now. Get the arguments for *The Red Front* in the new RCP programme, out now



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LABOUR, THE LEFT AND THE RED FRONT

As the Labour Party lurches from one crisis to the next its capacity for retreat and compromise is becoming clearer. All over the country our supporters have noted that Labour's siege-like mentality in the face of mounting setbacks has thrown the party's left into disarray. Every time Kinnock panics and puts new demands on the left to lower its voice, the left's response is an angry silence.

SHUT UP

As the RCP has long pointed out, with every passing month Labour looks more and more like the other parliamentary parties. The leadership's attack on the 'loony left' and Kinnock's promise that the election manifesto will be even more pro-capitalist than expected are symptomatic of this trend. Many on the left of the party have been forced to shut up or face the wrath of their leadership. Under these circumstances our arguments acquire relevance to those already troubled by the direction in which Kinnock is steering the Labour Party.

We have no reason to mourn the collapse of the Labour Party. The only advantage of having a Labour government would be that such a government would soon show that it is not worthy of the support of the working class. In every other respect there is nothing to choose between the main political parties. A Kinnock government would mark no advance over Thatcher as far as the living conditions of the working class are concerned.

RETREAT

We should not mourn Labour's demise, nor should we gloat about the disintegration of the left. Our concern is not about the future of the left itself — there is a broader problem at stake. Every time the left retreats and dissociates itself from so-

called 'loony' policies, it helps to foster a mood of resignation in the working class. Every time the left gives up yet another fight it sends out a signal for further retreat. Indirectly this influences the attitude of many militants. The Labour left's own paralysis is interpreted as another argument for holding back.

IRRATIONAL

For the RCP the crisis of the Labour Party represents an historic opportunity for building a revolutionary alternative. At the same time, the crisis contains dangers in the short term. The South Wales miners' acceptance of the six-day week shows that Labour's lack of credibility has undermined people's confidence in class politics and collective solutions. For this reason RCP supporters should ensure that when they get involved in local struggles they address this problem and help militants to come to terms with the present situation.

Over the next few months we should try to open up a discussion, in a comradely fashion, with those Labour supporters who still have some class instincts. Comrades should use the experience of the last couple of months to show the irrationality of their position. In particular we should point out that the left has played a role, however unconsciously, in spreading a mood of doom and gloom in the labour movement.

NO ESCAPE

Of course there are many who will stick with Labour through thick and thin. Comrades should ask them how far they are prepared to go to put Labour in power. 'How far does Kinnock have to go before you are prepared to withdraw your support for Labour?' 'How anti-working class, how anti-gay, how pro-imperialist does Labour have to be before you countenance the possibility

of an alternative?' We have to pose the alternatives in the sharpest possible way to close the avenues of escape.

ORGANISE

In the end the only possible answer the die-hard Labour left wingers can give is that they will stick with Labour as long as it has the support of the working class. This answer, which at first sight appears to make sense, is no answer at all. It reduces the role of activists to mere onlookers in a crowd. It is not always possible to remain with the majority. This is certainly true today when the key task is to organise the minority of active workers so that we can create a credible alternative to Labour in the working class.

Without an organised, class-conscious alternative, Kinnock and his cronies will make all the running. Our role is not as passive observers in a crowd, but as activists out to make revolutionary politics relevant to our class. This requires more than good arguments — it calls for organisation and action. That's where *The Red Front* comes into its own.

IMPACT

By providing an organisational framework for joint struggle, *The Red Front* offers another road to active workers. Those who insist that we've got to stick with the majority miss the point. The minority of activists are already isolated. Staying with the Labour Party does not help them overcome this isolation. *The Red Front* has the potential to bring activists together and, through maximising their impact, increase their influence over the labour movement. Instead of hiding in the crowd, *The Red Front* can help minimise the influence of reaction over our class.

Frank Richards

DIARY

MIDDLESBROUGH: Monday 23 March, 6pm. Labour Party/WAR joint canvass against racist attacks. Meet Maldon Road, opposite West Lane Hospital
NEWCASTLE: Saturday 21 March, 11am. Street meeting: Defend lesbian and gay rights. Grays Monument

Monday 30 March, 4pm. 'Cure Aids not gays' protest at Newcastle Community Health Council. City Hall
PONTEFRAC: Thursday 19 March, 7.30pm. Miners' Red Front open forum against productivity deals. Railway Inn

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TORIES TARGET HOMOSEXUALS

VICTIMS OF THE AIDS SCARE

Having created panic among heterosexuals, the government's Aids campaign is now aiming to target homosexuals

After absorbing the saturation media coverage of Aids, 34-year old Paul Buxton became obsessed with the disease. Last week he pinned a note for his wife on the front door and slashed his arms with a razor. Described at the inquest as 'a happily married man with a two and a half-year old child', Buxton had become 'morbidly preoccupied' with Aids.

Paul Buxton may be the first fatal heterosexual victim of the Aids panic in Britain. There have been several reports of suicides among gay men, and many more cases of pathological depression and anxiety.

By focusing on the risk of Aids spreading among heterosexuals, the mass media campaign has been very successful in spreading the Aids terror throughout society.

Yet the risk of Aids spreading heterosexually in Britain remains minimal. Official statistics on Aids issued last week confirm the point argued in *The Truth about the Aids Panic*: there is no hard evidence that Aids is spreading outside the recognised high-risk categories (see table). Of all the 731 cases recorded in Britain from the beginning of the epidemic in 1982 up to the end of last month, only 25 appear to have been infected by heterosexual contact. Of these only five people actually became infected in Britain.

The British government has launched the biggest public health campaign in history on the strength of literally a handful of cases. Why? Because it wants to use the fear of Aids to promote the Victorian family values that are so important to the British establishment.

'We have always made it clear that it is best to rely on a very faithful, loving relationship,'

declared chief Aids scaremonger Norman Fowler in parliament last week. He was urged by both Tory and Labour MPs to promote this moral message with even greater vigour.

The British Medical Association has given the government's moral crusade the stamp of scientific approval. Its latest booklet on Aids states that 'If you do not have sex until you enter one faithful, lifelong sexual relationship with a partner who has behaved in the same manner — then you cannot get Aids from sexual intercourse.'

The establishment message is that the only guarantee against Aids is chastity before marriage and fidelity after it.

In fact, given that you can't really trust anybody, the only real guarantee is lifelong celibacy. This sort of advice is like saying that the only way to avoid car accidents is by not travelling in cars — and not walking in the street. People could also avoid sports injuries by not engaging in sport, and industrial accidents and diseases by never going to work.

There is no medical basis for the BMA's moralistic propaganda. The current state of knowledge about Aids suggests that the main risks of contracting the virus come from being the receptive partner in anal intercourse with an infected man or from sharing needles and syringes for injecting drugs with an infected person. There also appears to be a small risk of women acquiring the disease through vaginal intercourse with an infected man. Transmission from women to men remains exceptionally rare in the West.

Aids is no threat whatsoever to the vast majority of people in Britain. The danger has been blown up out of all proportion by a government which has consistently shown its indifference to the public health and its enthusiasm for any issue it can use to stir up paranoia and prejudice.

Some medical and political commentators have begun to recognise the low risk of Aids to heterosexuals and the continuing high incidence of cases among gay men. Their response has been to call for more propaganda — and more repressive measures — directed against homosexuals.

'It is about time we concentrated on pointing out where the responsibility for the spread of this disease primarily lies,' Tory MP Patrick Nicholls told parliament last week. Fowler hastened to reassure him that the next stage of the government's campaign would be centred on homosexuals and drug abusers. (It is worth noting that for all the publicity about drug abusers, they make up only two per cent of Aids cases.)

Other Tory MPs called for more aggressive measures. One called for a ban on 'homosexual propaganda in the schools and on television'. Others are demanding compulsory screening and registration: calls for enforced detention in isolation hospitals cannot be far away.

It is impossible to 'target' health education information at gay men. Homosexuals are everywhere, but almost everywhere they are suppressed. The large majority of homosexuals are forced to deny and disguise their sexuality in a society where to acknowledge it openly is to invite ridicule and rejection,

discrimination and harassment. Most gay men are obliged to carry out their sexual activity in a climate of guilt and shame in circumstances of secrecy and fear.

As long as gay men are forced to live underground in society, safe sex propaganda will not stop the spread of Aids. The basic problem is not a lack of information or a reluctance to use condoms: the problem is that homosexuals are oppressed. This is why the Aids scare, because of the anti-gay prejudices it unleashes, is more likely to encourage the spread of the virus among gay men.

The only way to stop Aids is by removing all legal and social barriers to the free and equal participation of lesbians and gay men in society.

We reprint the latest official statistics on Aids in Britain on this page because the facts help to expose the irrationality of the scare. The figures show that we should reject the notion popularised by hours of prime-time television and acres of tabloid journalism that Aids is a major menace to heterosexuals. The facts provide the basis for repudiating the establishment's pro-family propaganda masquerading as a health education campaign.

It is a fact that 88 per cent of cases of Aids in Britain so far have been among gay men. Trying to deny this fact amounts to an attempt to avoid the wave of anti-gay prejudice the media have generated around it over the past three years. For us, the fact that gay men are the main victims of both the virus and the Aids panic points to the urgency of a campaign in defence of homosexual rights.

The Aids facts they refuse to print

Aids cases in Britain up to the end of February 1987

	Male	Female	Total	%
Homosexual/bisexual	640		640	88
Intravenous drug abuser	8	2	10	1
Homosexual and IVDA	8		8	1
Haemophiliac/recipient of blood	35	5	40	5
Child of HIV mother	3	4	7	1
Heterosexual infected abroad	13	7	20	3
Heterosexual infected in Britain	1	4	5	1
Other		1	1	0.2

Not a single newspaper printed the full official figures on Aids issued last week. Why? If everybody knew that only a handful of people have acquired Aids heterosexually in Britain, it would undermine the whole Aids panic and its objective of promoting conventional morality

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