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ENGINEERS NEED TO UP THE ACTION NOW

TELECOM STRIKERS MUST HEED **WAPPING** WARNING

SEE PAGE 3

Telecom

The strike at British Telecom is a vital contest between a determined management and a powerful group of workers. The winner will be the side which is best prepared to pursue its aims. BT managers have made their position clear. They will not make concessions, they will stick out for victory, and they will brand any phone engineer who tries to hit their system as a criminal. The union leaders have failed to match management's single-minded will to win. National Communications Union chief John Golding spent the first day of the official strike trying to persuade the employers to do a fudged deal. He saved his spite for strikers, echoing management's condemnations of those accused of sabotage. This half-hearted attitude to industrial action is no way to beat bosses whom Golding himself has described as 'pig-headed'.

The strikers need to up the action now by

organising to shut down the phone system. That would soon make the employers change their tune. A coordinated campaign of disruption could involve a range of tactics from jamming switchboards to occupying the exchanges. Instead of organising such action, union officials boast that their members are not militants and emphasise the 'responsible' character of their picket lines. This may be good for the NCU leaders' media image. But it is of little use to strikers up against militant managers who are out to break them.

Now is the time for the strikers to raise the stakes. So far management has enjoyed the initiative in the dispute and the engineers have been forced to respond. But a disruption campaign argued for and run by the rank and file could quickly swing things around. BT would find it is hard to act tough when their industry has been closed down around them.

Kinnock's police state

Last Saturday night leading Labour Party left wingers turned up at the Wapping anniversary rally, to call on sacked print workers and their supporters to elect a Labour government. While they were speaking, riot police were beating seven bells out of demonstrators, trampling them under horses' hooves and spraying them with dye to make arrests easier. On Monday the leader of the Labour Party appeared on television to condemn the Wapping violence as 'hideous'. He wasn't speaking about the genuine violence of the police, but about that of imaginary 'provocateurs' on the picket line. The fact that the left's candidate for Downing Street supports uniformed police thugs against workers fighting for their jobs sums up the prospects for ordinary people under any future Labour government.

Events at Wapping, the showtrials of black youth from Broadwater Farm and the banning of a TV documentary about a spy-in-the-sky provide fresh evidence of the Tories' determination to reorganise British society along military lines. From the picket line to black inner-city estates to the skies, they are willing to use paramilitary police and draconian laws to silence any opposition. Margaret Thatcher's public support for Manchester police chief James Anderton, who claims that God told him gays belong in a cesspit, shows the bigotry and malice that lie at the heart of modern Toryism.

Meanwhile, the Labour leaders react to each new example of state repression or censorship with spineless servility. They have demonstrated that any opponent of the system would feel the hand of the police state just as hard if they were in office.

Alongside his pro-police line on Wapping, and his visit to inspect the British troops occupying Ireland, Neil Kinnock has come out in favour of the Tory ban on the spy satellite documentary made by *New Statesman* journalist Duncan Campbell. His only complaint is that the government did not do the job properly. The implication is that under Labour such bans would be slapped on faster and harder — and presumably the Special Branch would not have waited for Campbell to come home before kicking in his front door.

A few weeks ago, the *New Statesman* was being criticised as too moderate for dumping

Kinnock's non-nuclear defence policy and coming out in support of nuclear missiles. Yet Kinnock now agrees with Thatcher that the harmless magazine is the latest 'enemy within'. No matter how fast you move to the right, you can be sure that the Labour leader will get there before you.

Neil Kinnock's recent attempts to outdo the Tories as a patriotic statesman and supporter of law and order have made little impact on the opinion polls. Few voters are impressed by his Winston Churchill impersonation and his quibbling with Thatcher over the finer points of police repression. But Kinnock's increasingly right-wing antics have not shaken the left's commitment to campaign for his election. The left's promise of support for Labour come what may is little more than a suicide note for those worried about war and civil liberties.

If we accept that the contest in British politics is just between Thatcher and Kinnock, we are allowing two supporters of the state's security forces, two enemies of striking workers, to compete for control over the machinery of repression. There will be nobody left to take a stand against the violence and victimisation that the authorities now rely on.

What chance is there for the working class if we passively offer our support to a party whose leader uses the worst example of police terror against trade unionists since the miners' strike as an opportunity to tell the nation of his heartfelt support for the boys in blue? What hope is there for the people of the third world if the British left lines up behind a man who believes in Britain's right to use everything from spy satellites to nuclear-powered submarines to protect its holdings around the world?

The Revolutionary Communist Party is not prepared to leave Kinnock to speak for the labour movement. We believe that the working class must have its own voice on the vital issues being debated in the run-up to the general election. That's why we are campaigning for *The Red Front* — a platform for working class unity (see pages 6 and 7). It is a focus for pulling together all those who are not ready to submit to repression, censorship and militarism, no matter which party leader is pulling the power levers.

Defend George Roucou

ALL OUT ON 6 FEBRUARY

Next Friday's Manchester march to defend black trade unionist George Roucou against deportation is an important test of anti-racism in the labour movement

Today George Roucou is a shop steward in the building workers' union, Ucat, at Manchester council. He lives with his common law wife Kim and their children. If the home office has its way, he will soon be unemployed and homeless, somewhere in the Seychelles. The authorities have come up with various excuses for deporting Roucou, from the fact that they lost his passport to the breakdown of his first marriage. But the real reason he has been victimised is that he is black in Thatcher's Britain.

Workers Against Racism supporters have joined the George Roucou defence campaign to stop him being bundled on to a plane back to the Seychelles. The campaign has won support from many labour movement bodies. It's big initiative is a work-time march in Manchester next Friday. Organising a weekday demonstration has meant persuading people to stop work in support of black people's right to be in Britain.

Roucou supporters have gone out to workplaces and union meetings to argue for workers' solidarity with the victims of British state racism.

The activists arguing for George Roucou have confronted racist sentiments head-on and forced trade unionists to take sides. Either people accepted the victimisation of black people as part of the British way of life, or they stood up for Roucou. The experience of having this debate out has confounded those who insist that the working class is inherently racist. The George Roucou defence campaign has proved that, if we don't dodge the issues, we can win an important minority of trade unionists to the cause of active anti-racism.

Roucou's supporters quickly discovered that there were no short-cuts to winning the

argument in a workplace meeting. Even if they hadn't raised the central issue of black people's rights, the racists surely would have. 'We don't want blacks coming over here and breeding like rats' was the most virulent racist response they got. They responded by refusing to concede an inch, insisting that even if the authorities had branded Roucou an 'illegal', they would still support him.

After serious and sometimes heated discussion, some workers recognised the need to make a commitment to anti-racism. As one Ucat member put it: 'The man is under attack because he's black. We can't let this happen.'

The majority of Ucat members in the depots are unlikely to come out on 6 February. But the significant minority that do, and the Nalgo town hall members and other trade unionists who join them, will be living proof of the potential for mobilising workers against state racism. Stopping work for Roucou will be a new departure for the anti-racist struggle in Britain. If you're a trade unionist anywhere in the North-west, you should be there to show solidarity with a black worker under attack.

Charles Longford



David Rourke

Defend George Roucou! No more deportations! Demonstrate: 6 February

Assemble 12 noon at All Saints, under Mancunian Way, Manchester. March through the city centre to the town hall, Albert Square

Union abandons strike against race checks

Last week the Tories threatened legal action against the civil servants' union CPSA over dole office strikes against 'ethnic monitoring' in Leeds and Birmingham. The union officials turned tail and ran.

The episode underlines the need to organise opposition to the race checks at rank and file level.

The department of employment served a writ on the CPSA on the grounds that their action was not part of a trade dispute. CPSA officials took legal advice, and decided to comply with Tory orders by withdrawing official support. The strikers found this out from the local media. Their officials didn't even bother telling them they were being left in the lurch.

'We've sabotaged the scheme anyway' claimed one Handsworth striker. 'But that's because we knew we could strike with union backing. Now the officials' weak-kneed response has left us high and dry. It makes you wonder what we pay them for.'

The officials' climbdown follows their refusal to campaign for proper action against 'ethnic monitoring'. Since last October they've known about the government's latest plans to use dole office workers

to collect information on black claimants and pave the way for further attacks on their right to benefit. But the officials waited until two days before the scheme was due to start before sending down a leaflet opposing it.

In the areas the Tories were targeting — Leeds, Birmingham, and Nottingham — union officials gave members the impression that the only drawback to 'ethnic monitoring' is the extra work involved. They avoided arguments about the racist role of the Tories' schemes, and left union members in the dark about how to oppose them. It was no surprise when this dishonest attitude failed to win active opposition to the race checks from many workers.

The Tories are right on one thing: arguments about 'ethnic monitoring' cannot be treated as an ordinary trade dispute over working conditions.

The checks are part of a racist surveillance operation, and must be opposed as such. If CPSA members vote to set up an independent political fund in this week's ballot, building rank and file opposition to the Tories' racist manoeuvre should be the first campaign it is used for.

Mari Leneghan

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ENGINEERS NEED EFFECTIVE ACTION

PULL THE PLUG ON BT!

Striking British Telecom engineers need to hit management hard and fast if they're to win the battle over wages and working conditions

The quickest way to win a strike is to shut down the employers' industry and stop their flow of profits. Britain's striking telephone engineers are in a position to do just that, and to turn back management's attempt to impose tough new working conditions alongside a five per cent wage rise.

British Telecom managers have been coming across very cocky on the television. They have boasted that their new technology, backed up by the scabbing antics of managerial staff and others, can keep the system running despite the national strike. The electronic System X, TXE4 and System Y exchanges are designed to run for years without a total breakdown, thanks to their duplicate sets of equipment.

If we're to wipe the smug grin off management's face, Telecom workers cannot afford to wait patiently on picket lines outside the exchanges and hope that something breaks down behind BT's locked doors.

If strikers wait for the phone network to 'die a natural death', the initiative in the dispute will remain in management's hands. But if they get organised to shut the system down now, the engineers can unnerve BT.

Telecom engineers know better than anybody how to pull the plugs on the phone network. They know how the system works from the exchanges through the thousands of miles of vulnerable cables. By putting their knowledge and ingenuity to work, engineers could cause maximum disruption with minimum effort and make a quick

victory a real possibility.

If it is to be effective, the campaign of disruption must be organised and argued for by rank and file engineers. Winning widespread support for such action is vital. The strikers must be prepared to cope with the backlash it would prompt from management and the right-wing media. Unless activists have out the arguments for organised disruption, publicity about 'a handful of extremists sabotaging the strike' will tend to strengthen the moderate mood among other engineers.

The strikers need to get themselves organised now to campaign for a coordinated effort at bringing BT down off its high horse.

We have already seen the sewer press running scare stories about how the striking engineers are endangering the lives of the old, the weak and the sick. This is rich coming from the supporters of a government that is prepared to let pensioners freeze to death. Any casualties caused by the strike should be blamed on the employers who provoked the dispute. Telecom engineers should decide what constitutes emergency cover, make sure that they — and not management — keep control of it, and close down all other telephone services.

The fate of the strike could well be decided in its early stages. Let's make sure the decision goes in the workers' favour, by pulling the plugs on the arrogant provocateurs in BT management — and fast.



ENGINEERS CAN GIVE BT 'ADVANCE NOTICE' OF THEIR WILL TO WIN BY CLOSING DOWN THE SYSTEM.

WE DON'T WANT ANOTHER WAPPING

Telecom engineers who started their national strike this week should study the harsh experience of the print workers at Wapping. They spent the anniversary of their dispute last Saturday booing their union leaders and being attacked by riot police. After suffering and struggling outside Fortress Wapping for 12 months, the embittered print workers are still sacked, and still standing outside.

Telecom workers can avoid a similar fate by learning some quick lessons.

The Wapping dispute and the Telecom strike were both provoked by employers trying to tighten the screw on their workforces. Rupert Murdoch moved his operations to his scab-run new-tech plant at Wapping and sacked 5500 workers. BT has tried to make engineers agree to work however, wherever and whenever management dictates, and suspended or locked out those who took protest action.

Both sets of employers adopted a hardnosed style and raised the stakes. Meanwhile, the union leaders they face have sought to soft-soap management back into negotiations and to keep the lid on their members' militancy. The dire consequences of this mismatch between ruthless employers and equivocal union officials are clear at Wapping. The dangers are already becoming apparent in the Telecom strike.

PREACHING PASSIVITY

Print union leaders have not tried to mobilise their members for an all-out challenge to Murdoch. Instead, they have sent the sacked workers to march up and down outside the Wapping plant three times a week, while the unions plead with Murdoch to come back to the negotiating table. As a result Murdoch's managers have been sitting snugly inside their fortress, banking £2m profit a week and throwing out the occasional insulting 'offer' in an effort to buy off the print workers. The strikers have been left to stew at the gates. Their officials'



WAPPING ONE YEAR ON LAST WEEK: DON'T WAIT FOR THE RIOT POLICE. START UPPING THE ACTION

refusal to organise effective picketing has exposed them to the sort of police rampage we saw last Saturday. Their numbers have dwindled to a core of 2000 bitter activists who have been let down at every turn by their leaders' lack of guts.

The engineers' National Communications Union, led by former Labour executive member John Golding, has shown equally little enthusiasm for effective action. While management went for the kill, Golding tried to placate his members with token overtime bans and staggered 24-hour strikes. He has only been dragged into a national strike by the employers' provocation and the engineers' determination. Even now, he has no plans

for making the strike bite by disrupting the system.

Before the strike had even officially started, Golding condemned any of his members who might commit the 'crime' of interfering with the BT network.

The NCU leadership says that its sole aim is to negotiate a deal with BT, and has called on management to show some 'common sense' and 'get round the table'. Are we to see a Wapping re-run, with engineers whiling away hours on ineffective picket lines outside exchanges which are still working, while Golding and Co chase management around trying to do a deal? The fate of the Wapping strikers is a brutal

reminder of where such a passive response to management aggression leads trade unionists.

Unless the strike is hitting BT hard, any deal Golding might negotiate would be on the employers' terms — like the shabby sell-outs which print union leaders have three times tried to foist on to Wapping strikers. It would be unlikely to protect his members' conditions for long. The sort of 'common sense' NCU leaders display in talks with BT has not stopped the loss of 21 000 jobs since 1981. Golding ends every statement on the strike by swearing that he wants to make BT 'efficient and profitable'. That can only mean accepting a tougher regime for the workforce.

DON'T HOLD BACK

Telecom engineers have started with some of the determination of Wapping militants. Just as the print workers threw out every dirty deal offered by their officials, so the phone workers have voted down BT's terms by majorities which Golding admits shocked the NCU chiefs. Now they need to learn what Wapping strikers have discovered over the year: trade union leaders who prefer common sense chats with management to discussing strike strategies with members cannot be trusted to deliver the goods.

Telecom engineers can't afford to spend demoralising weeks on picket lines being taunted by scabs and management and possibly brutalised by police. They need to up the action now. To do that, they need to get organised to control their own strike through rank and file bodies.

They need to coordinate a campaign of disruption (see above). And they need to reach out for solidarity from other workers in the communications system. Clerical workers have already been locked out for refusing to cross picket lines. The scene is set for widening the battle against BT management.

Wapping shows that the working class cannot afford to waste a week, never mind a year, waiting for something to turn up.

BLACK YOUTH PARALYSED

WHAT HAPPENED TO TREVOR MONERVILLE?

Trevor Monerville is lying partially paralysed in a hospital bed. At the end of five days in the custody of the police and prison authorities he needed brain surgery. This was how John Monerville found his 19-year old son in Brixton prison:

'I was profoundly shocked upon seeing my son after five days, and seeing the injuries he had sustained during that time. On touching his head, which was extremely sore and covered with bruises, making him cringe back in pain, I also noticed a severely blackened, puffed-up and perforated left eye. His right eye was fixed in an abnormal position and could not focus on me whilst I was talking to him.

'The inside of his mouth was perforated and covered in blood and his jaw was swinging to the right. His left shoulder and the back of his head were heavily bruised. His chest was heavily bruised also, and his ribs, especially on the left hand side of his body, showed signs of severe bruising. The bruising also extended to his thighs and buttocks. His legs from his knees to his feet were covered in congealed blood and scabs. His feet, above and below, were covered in round bruising marks.

'He told me he had severe pains all over his body, acute headache and abdominal pains. His hair was covered in dry vomit and his condition was extremely distressing for him and me.'

Trevor couldn't speak except to ask, 'Why did they arrest me, the bastards?'

Until he found his son half-dead in Brixton prison on 5 January John Monerville hadn't seen him since New Year's Eve, when Trevor went out with his aunts. He left them at 1.30am. From here we have to piece together what happened to Trevor from some dubious police statements, the custody record from Stoke Newington police station, scrawled police surgeons' reports, and evidence from hospital neurosurgeons.

Why did the police arrest Trevor?

Chief superintendent Peck claims that Trevor was found asleep in a car at 10.40pm on 1 January by a member of the public who called the police. They arrested Trevor for suspected criminal damage and took him to Stoke Newington police station. Police claim they only found out who he was on Saturday 3 January, after fingerprint tests. On 3 January Trevor went to Highbury magistrates court to be remanded in custody at Brixton prison.

The police story of Trevor's arrest and detention doesn't explain how what started as a case of alleged criminal damage involving a car, ended up as a case of brain damage.

When and how was Trevor paralysed?

According to the custody report police removed Trevor's clothing hours after his arrest. Since Stoke Newington police are not noted for their modesty, they could not have failed to see that he had a serious head injury, black eyes, swollen legs, bruises and cuts all over his body — if he already had them. Within 12 hours of his arrest Trevor went to hospital and saw three doctors. They found nothing wrong. By Friday 2 January, Trevor was still well enough for the custody report to record that it took six police officers to 'forcibly' fingerprint him. All available evidence points to Trevor being maimed after he entered Stoke Newington police station.

The police have failed to provide any credible explanation of Trevor's injuries. In a note to hospital doctors dated Sunday 4 January, police say that on 3 January Trevor was taken to King's College hospital 'with

Trevor Monerville looks like he's been in a car crash. He hasn't. He's been in Stoke Newington police station. Joan Phillips ploughs through police documents to find out what happened

head injury since January 1'. So the police were implying that they knew Trevor had his awful head injury when they arrested him. Yet it does not appear in their custody record, and the doctors don't seem to have spotted it.

A couple of days later, chief superintendent Peck changed the story. Peck told Hackney MP Brian Sedgemore that the first he knew of any 'alleged severe blow' to the head was when he read a letter from the MP on 8 January. Until then, Peck claimed, police believed Trevor had a 'brain tumour', diagnosed on Trevor's second visit to King's College hospital on 6 January. Peck said police were 'desperately sorry' for Trevor, but 'It's the doctors who made the big mistake.'

There was no mistake. Trevor has not got and has never had a brain tumour. Nor did he have an accident.

Trevor's injuries point to a beating. Medical evidence from neurosurgeons at Maudsley hospital seems to confirm this. According to Dr Strong Trevor's head injuries are consistent with a blow to the head with an instrument, rather than an accidental fall — 'The picture is of a fight and assault.'

It is impossible to make sense of the police statements, but it is clear, from the custody record and doctors' reports, that Trevor became seriously ill after he was forcibly fingerprinted by six police officers at 8.06pm on 2 January. An hour later he saw the doctor, whose notes reveal the first signs of abuse — 'R. pupil appears dilated, discoloured L. eyelid'. Trevor was rushed to hospital. Back in the station he saw the doctor again. By the next morning Trevor could not walk. The magistrate at Highbury court had to go to Trevor's cell to remand him. That evening Trevor was rushed to hospital and back to prison. By Sunday Trevor was incontinent. On Monday he had three 'epileptic fits'. By Tuesday he was 'totally inert'. On Thursday he had brain surgery. What happened in the fingerprint room?

Why did the police mislead Mr Monerville?

At 3pm on 1 January John Monerville reported his son missing at Stoke Newington police station. He went back the next afternoon and showed police a photograph. They still said Trevor wasn't there — but by then he had been inside for at least 17 hours.

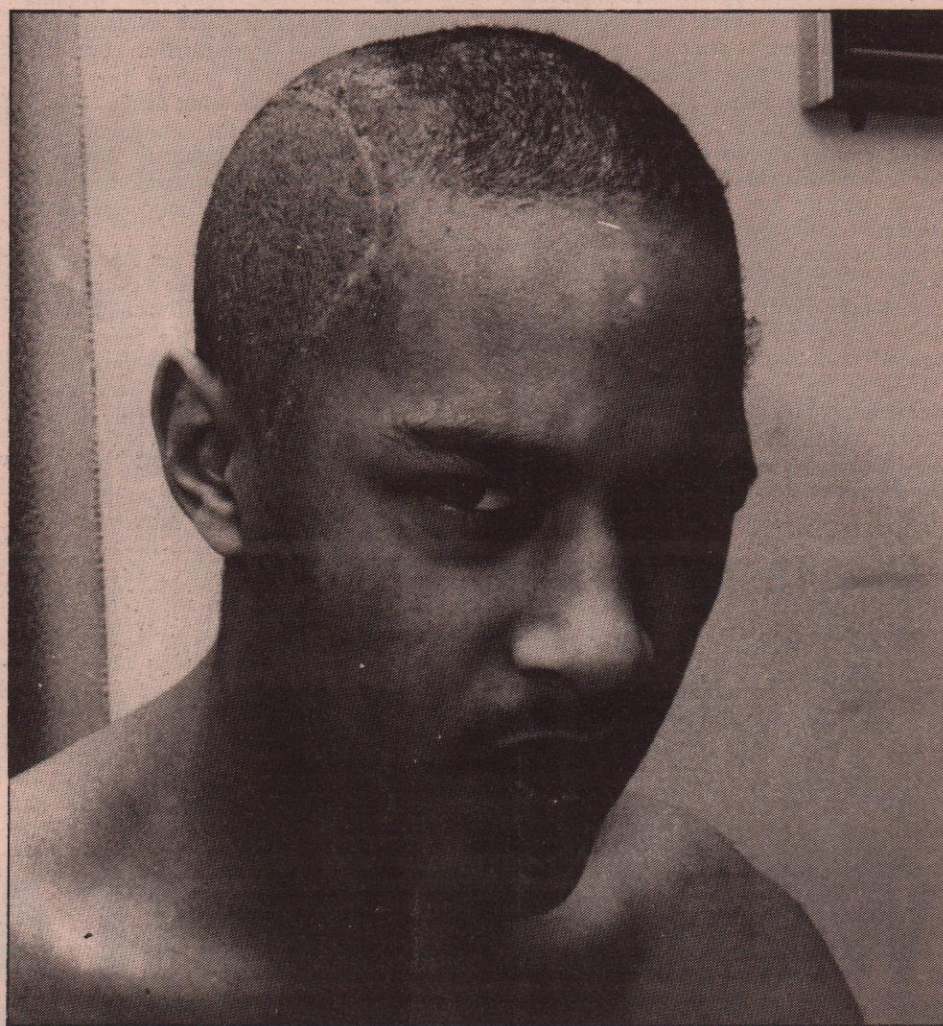
Why were Trevor's clothes destroyed?

When Trevor was dumped at Brixton prison he was wearing only his shorts and jumper — and these were destroyed. Stoke Newington police at first confiscated the rest. What have they got to hide?

Why have the police dropped the charges?

On 8 January the police dropped all charges against Trevor without an explanation. Why — unless their story is made up?

Trevor Monerville may never recover mentally or physically from his ordeal. Doctors say it will take five years to assess his injuries. His father told me that he would not talk about his son's past 'because I've got to accept Trevor as he is now, I cannot get the old Trevor back, so I will not discuss the old Trevor.' The family and friends of Trevor Monerville have to accept 'Trevor as he is now', but they won't accept a police cover-up. They want their questions answered.



TREVOR MONERVILLE SUFFERED BRAIN DAMAGE AFTER FIVE DAYS IN POLICE AND PRISON CUSTODY

Inside Stoke Newington police station

'Never run in the dark in Stoke Newington', warns Hugh Boatwain in his poem 'Cut up Dub'. Stoke Newington police station has become a symbol of violence for black people in East London.

1971: ASETA SIMMS, a middle-aged black woman, died after receiving multiple injuries to the head in Stoke Newington police station. Police blamed her death on drink, but police doctors said the swellings and bruising over her head looked like the result of a beating. The coroner returned a verdict of 'death by misadventure'.

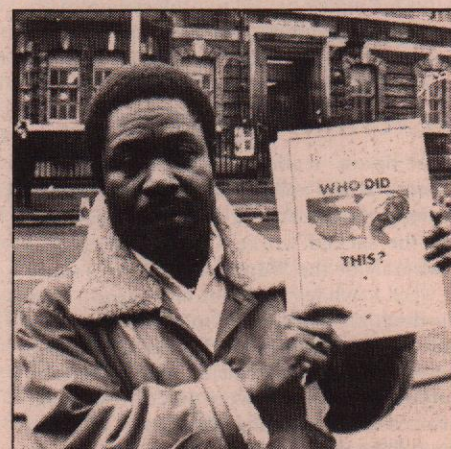
1976: Just after midnight 17 police officers burst into the home of a Jamaican couple, DAVID and LUCILLE WHITE, 'looking for stolen goods'. The Whites offered no resistance, but were kicked and beaten with truncheons. Police dragged the Whites to Stoke Newington station and charged them with assault. Six years later a judge awarded £51 392 damages against the police for inflicting 'a catalogue of violence and inhuman treatment'.

1978: Racists stabbed 19-year old MICHAEL FERREIRA in Stoke Newington High Street. His friends helped him into the police station. But the police were more interested in interrogating him and his friends than in saving Michael's life. He died in the ambulance on the way to hospital.

1981: NELLIE KNIGHT and her daughter JENNIFER called the police over a dispute with their neighbours. They were arrested,

racially abused and beaten by Stoke Newington police. The Knights were charged with doing police grievous bodily harm.

1983: 21-year old COLIN ROACH was found dead, shot through the head, in the entrance to Stoke Newington police station. Police responded to protests which followed with brutal force and mass arrests. The annual police report claimed that 'Deceased walked into police station in possession of a sawn-off shotgun which he later used to commit suicide in an interview room.'



JOHN MONERVILLE OUTSIDE STOKES NEWINGTON POLICE STATION

A discredited system

BEHIND THE CITY SCANDALS

The crisis in the City of London exposes the bankruptcy of British capitalism

The Tories have tried to pass off the latest spate of City scandals as the antics of a handful of cads. But the shady deals, speculation and corruption exposed by the Guinness row reflect more than a bit of over-enthusiastic thieving by a few City whizz-kids. The scandals are just a symptom of the deep malaise afflicting the whole economic system. Today capitalism only survives through fancy footwork in the financial markets.

The current round of crooked dealing results from the merger and takeover boom which has swept Britain and America. The £2.5 billion buy-out which gave Guinness control over Distillers was one of a spate of takeovers which totalled a record £15 billion last year. The vast sums of money moving around the markets provide plenty of scope for sticky fingers. The situation is made for insider dealers like Boesky, Collier and other sharks who manipulate slush funds worth hundreds of millions and operate in the shadowy world of secret nominee Swiss bank accounts.

The merger boom has taken off because capitalists have few other profitable things to do with their money.

The decay of their system has forced down the profitability of industry, making investing in plant and machinery an unattractive prospect. This is particularly true in Britain, the oldest and most decrepit of the big capitalist powers. Instead, financiers have got into takeover bids for existing firms, which can often produce a quick profit for little effort. This boom has been fuelled by easy credit. The role of credit in the economy today is at the centre of events within the City's Square Mile.

OUT OF CONTROL

Capitalists use credit to keep their system running when real levels of profitability say it is time to pack up. Credit has become more and more important during the post-war years. Since the capitalist crisis began to bite in 1973, it has been largely responsible for making sure that the wheels of world industry turn at all. At home, companies have borrowed heavily to ride out the storm and consumer credit has stimulated demand. Abroad, Western money-men have lent vast sums to third world countries trying to industrialise. But despite its short-term benefits, the credit explosion only stored up problems for the future.

Credit cannot solve the underlying problem of low profitability. By keeping clapped-out concerns going and stretching the system, it only serves to reproduce the problem on a bigger scale. The third world debt crisis which rocked the West in the early eighties shows the dangers. Yet the authorities have to extend credit further to lubricate their rusting economic machinery.

Instead of retreating from the looming financial crisis, the bosses have had to invent new ways of generating artificial funds and to abolish old regulations which restricted their international dealings. The takeover boom, deregulation and the City's Big Bang are all features of a financial scramble in which mounds of paper money are getting further out of control.

MONEY MAGIC

One example of the phoney character of capitalist enterprise today is the growth in *fictitious capital*. Governments and companies issue bonds to borrow money from the public. These creditors' notes are then used like cash, as the basis for further lending. The borrower has the money raised, the eventual holders of the bonds use them as collateral, and the same money is 'magically' reproduced several times over.

A house of cards is a stable structure compared to the financial markets today.

In their thirst for credit, financiers on both



'PSST, WANT TO MAKE SOME EASY MONEY?': THE CRISIS HAS REDUCED THE BUSINESS WORLD TO A GAMBLER'S DEN

sides of the Atlantic have pushed governments to deregulate their affairs, and allow them more freedom to wheel and deal around the world. There has also been a boom in new and more complex financial institutions and arrangements, blurring the distinction between banks, stockbrokers, industrial firms lending to others and big stores operating credit cards.

FIT FOR BURNING

The central role of credit in today's economies has created openings for the sort of speculation that has recently hit the headlines. Companies have to speculate to survive. The crisis of capitalism has reduced the business world to a gamblers' den. Only a thin and fast-moving line separates successful speculation from law-breaking and the cry of 'scandal'. Guinness and its merchant banker, Morgan Grenfell, were

both recently applauded as fine examples of British enterprise for pushing the rules to the limit. Now they have overstepped the mark and been scapegoated by their fellow financial sharks. The methods remain the same; one day you're a success, the next you're a crook.

The important lesson from the recent crop of City scandals is not that some capitalists are crooked. We should take it as read that they will all play as dirty as is necessary to survive. The scandals give us a glimpse of what a sordid mess the employers' way of running the world has become. They show that the financial sector on which the British economy now relies exists on a badly organised series of swindles and sleights of hand. The 'free enterprise' system now rests on a pile of paper that passes from back-hand to back-hand. It is fit for the bonfire.

Phil Murphy

DEFEND LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS

Victims of the Aids scare

While the Aids scare fills the gutter press, the authorities are stepping up their assault on homosexuals. Last week Margaret Thatcher dropped the neutral tone of her government's Aids leaflets. She came out in support of James Anderton's full-blooded anti-homosexual bigotry. On Saturday police wearing surgical gloves raided a gay pub, the Vauxhall Tavern in South London, and arrested 11 people — for drunkenness.

Two activists from the Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement spoke to *ms* before a public meeting organised by Birmingham RCP last week. They were among the nine gay men and three lesbians arrested and held in jail for a week over Christmas, for protesting outside the home of a Tory councillor who had called for gays to be gassed as a solution to Aids.

Many people on the left have expressed shock at the way we were treated. But we accept such harassment and victimisation as routine. The Tories and media have created conditions where lesbians and gays come in

for "queer-bashing" because of the Aids hysteria. In Britain today, if you challenge the most evil homophobia — on the scale of genocide — you risk being criminalised and imprisoned.

'A political response that can defend our rights is long overdue. It's not just an optional extra alongside any safe sex campaign. It's a matter of survival for us.'

The discussion at the meeting centred on the government's safe sex campaign. The speaker from the LGYM branded it 'a complete distraction' which would be counter-productive because it ignored the issue of homosexual oppression. 'Every gay has to take personal decisions about their lifestyle and how it affects their health. But to focus a public campaign against Aids around personal decisions that are common sense is ludicrous.' For the RCP, Don Milligan emphasised our responsibility to cut through the campaign's phoney concern about public health, and to focus our energies on defending lesbians and gays from the growing attacks on their rights.

THE PROPAGANDA WAR

HUMAN RIGHTS

'One of our first priorities on the return of a Labour government will be to restore trade union rights at GCHQ' declared Labour's shadow employment secretary John Prescott, at a rally on the third anniversary of the government's ban on union membership at its Cheltenham spy centre. Prescott condemned as 'shameful' last week's dismissal by the European Commission of Human Rights of the civil service unions' appeal against the ban. The Strasbourg court upheld the government's case that it was no violation of human rights to ban unions in occupations vital to 'national security'.

The proposal to replace union rights won and sustained by collective organisation and action with a framework of 'positive rights' guaranteed by the courts is the centrepiece of Labour policy on union laws. Events at GCHQ show the dangers of trade unionists putting their faith in the judiciary.

The Strasbourg decision confirms the hollowness of the concept of 'human rights'. As is generally the case in human societies divided into classes, there are two conflicting sets of rights at issue at GCHQ. There are the rights of the capitalist state to command total loyalty from those engaged in military, policing and intelligence activities on its behalf. And there are the rights of workers to organise collectively to defend their wages and working conditions.

'Between equal rights,' wrote Marx, 'force decides.' In January 1984 the Tory government, without any consultation, announced a ban on union membership at GCHQ. It offered £1000 to every worker and threatened disciplinary action, including the sack, against anybody who refused to comply. The immediate response was a spontaneous walkout by civil servants throughout the country. This collective action could rapidly have forced the government to restore union rights at GCHQ.

However, the union leaders feared the consequences of major disruption. They restricted industrial action to token protests and urged the GCHQ workers to seek redress through the courts. Instead of fighting back against a ruthless government, they settled for pleading for mercy from the judges.

The unions' strategy reached the end of the road long before their case was finally thrown out last week. Within weeks of the government's original announcement, union membership at GCHQ was smashed. There are now 45 beleaguered union members in a workforce of 7000. The judges have upheld the rights of their colleagues in government to destroy trade union rights. The legal process has undermined the potential that existed to resolve the issue through industrial action at the beginning of the dispute.

Will a future Labour government honour its promise to the GCHQ workers? After Neil Kinnock's declarations last week of his willingness to take repressive measures in the interests of national security, we cannot hold out much hope. The clause on which the European Commission dismissed the GCHQ appeal allows the restriction of union rights in the armed forces, police and in 'the administration of state'. This clause was specially included in the human rights convention in 1950 on the request of Clement Attlee, prime minister in the post-war Labour government. In 1948 Attlee had launched a purge of left wingers in the civil service — on the grounds that they were a threat to 'national security'.

THE RED FRONT

UNITING WORKERS

Last week we published an open letter from the British left, appealing for support for a slate of candidates on a platform in the general election. **Mike Freeman** of The Red Front and takes up some arguments against

There are two reasons why we have decided to take the initiative in launching *The Red Front*.

First, the accelerating decline of British capitalism means that drastic measures will be required to preserve it, whichever party wins the general election. Rallying a core of working class militants who are ready to defend living standards and liberties against further Tory attacks or an inevitable Labour betrayal has become an urgent task. The aim of *The Red Front* is to forge a current in the labour movement which is prepared to fight back against both the employers and the next government, whether it is led by Margaret Thatcher or Neil Kinnock.

Second, we have decided to launch *The Red Front* because the RCP lacks the resources and influence to mount an effective nationwide challenge to the existing leadership of the labour movement. The object of *The Red Front* is to pull together left-wing organisations and individuals around a platform of basic working class demands in a way that the RCP could not hope to achieve alone.

★ LEFT UNDER LABOUR'S UMBRELLA

The Red Front aims to promote working class unity around policies which express our urgent needs at a time of mounting crisis and repression. In more favourable circumstances we would go all out to win unity around the full programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party. However, because Marxism has been an alien ideology in the British labour movement for so long, many people are susceptible to anti-communist prejudices. These prejudices are often expressed in the most virulent and sectarian form by Labour Party supporters, in an attempt to shrug off left-wing criticisms of Labourism.

By putting the platform of *The Red Front* to the fore, we are emphasising the anti-capitalist and anti-Labour elements of the RCP programme. The capitalist media and the apologists for the labour bureaucracy on the left will try to marginalise our campaign by stirring up bigotry against the RCP. But the issue is not whether or not people support the RCP. It is whether or not they support the four demands of *The Red Front* (see box).

Above all *The Red Front* is a challenge to the

left. It is a challenge to choose between promoting the unity of the working class and uniting with the Labour Party around a divisive, pro-capitalist, anti-working class manifesto.

The Red Front is not another attempt to regroup or realign the left. Left-wing organisations in Britain have a long history of trying to overcome their isolation and weakness by linking up with one another and with other movements — students, women's groups, anti-racist campaigns, CND, anti-apartheid, the greens, the lesbian and gay movement, etc. The organisation towards which all such initiatives lead, especially at a time when there is little scope for pressure groups to work independently, is the Labour Party. Labour is the umbrella organisation of the British left.

The drift of the left into the Labour Party swamp reveals that it has given up any attempt to give a lead to the labour movement through its own activities. The inevitable result is that the left succumbs to the more powerful influences of middle class campaigners and labour bureaucrats. The pathetic spectacle of Militant leaders proclaiming their undying commitment to the unity of the Labour Party as they are expelled from it is the most extreme illustration of the left's subservient mentality. The quest for unity on any terms inevitably leads to the further fragmentation of the working class movement.

★ WHERE DOES THE LEFT STAND?

Nor is *The Red Front* an attempt by the RCP to impose take-overs or mergers on other left-wing organisations, in the familiar manner of City conglomerates. *The Red Front* is simply an electoral bloc, a slate of candidates standing on an agreed basic platform for the purposes of the forthcoming general election only. If Labour was challenged only by the RCP, many Labour supporters would try to dismiss us as an extremist sect. (Ironically this is an argument used most aggressively by left-wing entrists who are themselves being witch-hunted under the Kinnock regime.) The advantage of *The Red Front* is that, by involving other organisations and individuals, it can limit the scope of such scurrilous polemics.

Our aim is to focus on the policies of *The Red*

Front — and to counterpose them to the policies of the Labour Party. The Labour Party aims to replace collective struggle by trade unionists with individual reliance on the courts. Kinnock praises the traditional family values which keep women down at home and at work. By upholding immigration controls Labour puts white Britons before black people and immigrants. While Labour divides the working class on these key issues, *The Red Front* unites. Where does the left stand?

★ UNITE AGAINST THE SYSTEM

Is *The Red Front* reformist? It is ironic that this accusation is being levelled by those who will be calling for a vote for Labour in the election. The platform of *The Red Front* is not a revolutionary programme but a series of policies which can help to pull the working class together to face up to the capitalist offensive. Nor is our platform reformist: it does not appeal to the capitalist state to implement socialism.

Anybody can draw up a list of proposals which are more revolutionary than those on offer from other parties. However, the platform of *The Red Front* is not distinguished by the extremism of its demands. Its distinctive feature is the role it can play in uniting the working class in the struggle against the capitalist system.

The Red Front is a modest step towards building a working class movement that can overthrow capitalism. Without it the working class will be forced to retreat even further and will become even more disorganised and defensive.

Is *The Red Front* too simplistic? Some say that everybody is for jobs, decent living standards, civil liberties and peace. While this may be true in the abstract it is beside the point. Very few are prepared to take a stand in defence of these basic demands. Indeed many, including most left wingers, are prepared to give their support in the election to a party that will not stand up for the basic needs of the working class.

In recent weeks Kinnock has made it clear that a future Labour government would make little impression on the number of unemployed, and that it would restrain wages and public spending. In response to both the Australian M15 trial and last week's *New Statesman* story

about Britain's spy satellite, Kinnock has boasted that he would take a tougher line than the Tories in suppressing civil liberties in the cause of national security. The enthusiasm for frigates, fighter-bombers and tanks displayed by Labour's latest policy statement on defence is a horrifying warning of the danger of a future Kinnock government to the lives and liberties of the peoples of the third world.

The object of *The Red Front* is not to issue revolutionary demands, but to put forward policies which emphasise the necessity of taking a stand on the side of the working class, and of fighting back against any attempt to impose austerity or intensify oppression.

Does *The Red Front* strengthen illusions in the electoral and parliamentary process? Again, this is an accusation that lacks punch when it comes from those whose alternative is to support Labour, a party which is wholly committed to electoralism and parliamentarianism. Putting forward *The Red Front* as an electoral bloc is simply an acknowledgement that most people in Britain regard the general election as the central arena of politics. It is impossible to be a serious contender for the allegiance of the working class without challenging its existing loyalties in the electoral sphere.

We recognise that the widespread preoccupation with elections and parliamentary debates restricts the scope of the class struggle. Hence our intervention in the election seeks to show that what we really need is direct action in the here and now, not a vote every five years and a choice among a collection of broadly similar mainstream parties. But it is impossible to redirect workers' energies from the ballot box to the wider class struggle without entering the electoral fray. Without *The Red Front* the left will be reduced either to trailing along as usual with Labour, or to cursing it impotently from the sidelines.

★ UNITED FRONT REVISITED?

Is *The Red Front* a return to the United Front tactic pursued by the international communist movement under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky in the early twenties? No. *The Red Front* has come into existence in quite different

G THE NG CLASS

Revolutionary Communist Party to
of candidates on a common
outlines the case for
inst it

circumstances with much more limited objectives.

In the early twenties the international communist movement was made up of parties formed in most European countries in the upsurge of the class struggle that followed the end of the First World War and the success of the Russian Revolution. When the capitalist order rallied in 1921 and the old social democratic parties of the labour movement began to revive, the communist parties had a solid base of support among the most militant and anti-capitalist sections of the working class. The existence of a vanguard in the international working class organised in the communist movement provided the basis for the United Front tactic.

★ FORGING A VANGUARD

Through United Front work the communist parties aimed to draw the social democratic organisations into joint activity to defend the working class against a more confident capitalist establishment. The object was to show in struggle that the communists could provide a consistent lead to the working class, while the social democrats would always compromise with the established order. The communists, who had already won the vanguard of the working class, used the United Front to reach out and win over the mass of workers from the influence of reformism.

In general the United Front failed to achieve its objectives. Instead of winning the masses from reformism, the communist parties themselves increasingly came under reformist influence. This process was accelerated by the emergence of the Stalinist leadership in the Soviet Union in the mid-twenties. The consequences — the defeats suffered by the international working class in the twenties and thirties and the virtual extinction of Marxism as a force in society after the Second World War — still dominate the outlook of the labour movement.

Today there is no immediate prospect of Marxists winning mass influence in the British labour movement. The central task is not to win the masses, but to create a vanguard in the working class that can provide the basis for rallying mass support at a later stage. Thus there is no basis for the tactics of the United Front, which presume the existence of an

organised proletarian vanguard. But there is considerable scope for an initiative such as *The Red Front*, which aims to accelerate the emergence of an anti-capitalist current in the labour movement.

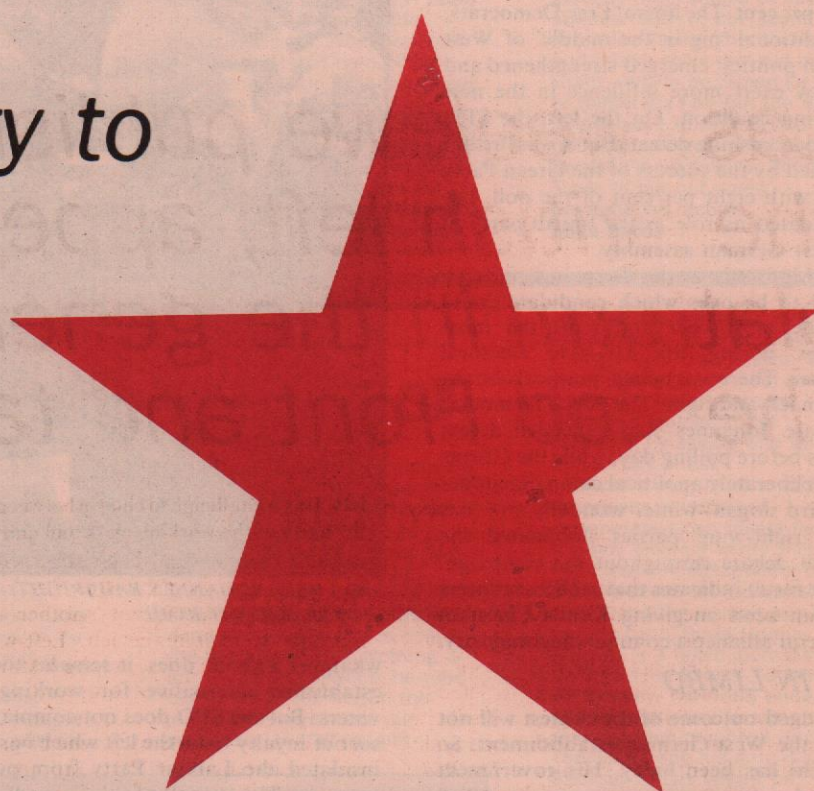
By challenging Labour at the polls *The Red Front* can play a key role in forging a vanguard in the working class. For years left wingers have criticised the leaders of the Labour Party and denounced their betrayals. But when it comes to a general election the left invariably closes ranks around the leadership. Left wingers bite their lips, swallow their pride, choke back their criticisms and troop out to vote Labour. Recognising that the carping criticisms of the left are more fraternal advice than an attempt to put forward a real alternative, the leadership can usually tolerate them.

The Red Front cuts through the cosy coexistence of the left with the labour bureaucracy. It is impossible to rally working class resistance against the system, today or in the future, without putting forward a clear alternative to Labour *now*. Those who call for unity against the Tories or a vote for Labour are not offering any alternative in the present. They are telling people to put their trust in the traditions of the past and wait for some alternative in the future.

★ GIVE THE WORKING CLASS A VOICE

The Red Front serves notice that the struggle to build a new working class movement cannot be relegated to the sphere of academic critiques of Labour's programme or put off to the future. It needs to be built today in the context of the central focus of British politics — the general election.

At present the labour movement is being drawn together under the grey banner of Kinnock's Labour Party. The survival of the working class through the next few years depends on exposing this specious unity and forging a new unity of the most highly political sections of the labour movement, a unity around the pressing demands of the working class, under the red banner of *The Red Front*. If you agree, fill in the box on page 11 and join the battle to give the working class a voice of its own in the election debate.



A PLATFORM FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY

■ WORK OR FULL PAY

To survive in capitalist society everybody needs either a job at a living wage, or the same level of income in the form of benefits. We cannot afford to go poor just because employers cannot make enough profit out of our labour, or because the state cannot afford to maintain our living standards. What constitutes a living wage? This can only be decided by wage-earners and those who rely on benefits. We reject all state attempts to regulate wages by means of incomes policy.

■ DEFEND UNION RIGHTS

We stand for the repeal of all laws that restrict the rights of workers to take action in defence of working class interests. We reject all restrictions on striking, picketing and solidarity action. We reject all state intervention in strike ballots, union elections or any other labour movement activity.

■ EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

We are in favour of the widest extension of civil liberties and for equal rights for all. We reject all measures which strengthen the power of the capitalist state and extend the interference of its repressive forces in society. We repudiate attempts to criminalise sections of society as a

way of winning public approval for more repression.

We oppose discrimination against women at work and call for the establishment of free nurseries, available all day for children of all ages, to free women to go out to work. We demand free abortion and contraception on demand.

We oppose discrimination against black people in all spheres of society. We call for the repeal of all restrictions on immigration which divide the working class and give official approval to racism.

We reject the Aids panic as a propaganda campaign designed to take advantage of a fatal disease to proscribe homosexual activity and bolster conventional morality. We defend the rights of lesbians and gay men to full equality in society.

■ 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.

A FUDGED RESULT

THE REAL CONTEST IS TO COME

The confused results of the West German election will make life difficult for chancellor Kohl.

Sabena Norton reports

The election was a victory for the moderate centre in West German politics. Chancellor Helmut Kohl had his wings clipped, as the electorate cut the Christian Democrat vote by five per cent. The liberal Free Democrats, the traditional 'pig in the middle' of West German politics, emerged strengthened and can now exert more influence in the new right-wing coalition. On the left, the SPD avoided a crushing defeat. But it was further weakened by the success of the Green Party which, with eight per cent of the poll, has consolidated its role as the fourth party in the West German assembly.

The big battle in the German campaign seemed to be over which candidate could swill the most beer and scoff the most sausages during the US-style electoral jamboree. There was no real political contest between left and right. The Social Democrat candidate Johannes Rau conceded defeat months before polling day, while the Greens ran a deliberately apolitical campaign under the weird slogan 'winter wonder'.

The right-wing parties dominated the political debate throughout the campaign. But the result indicates that moderate voters were not keen on giving Kohl's Christian Democrat alliance a commanding majority.

SPD IN LIMBO

The fudged outcome of the contest will not please the West German establishment. So far Kohl has been lucky. His government presided over an economic upturn which took off at about the time when the right ousted the Social Democrats from office in 1982. Last year, for the first time in almost a decade, West Germans experienced a rise in real wages. At two million, unemployment is high, but it's not rising. The relative stability of the German economy has allowed Kohl to avoid making big cuts or staging dramatic confrontations. But this year the economy is set to go into reverse and more drastic measures will be needed to boost profits.

Yet the delicate balance of power in the new parliament limits Kohl's freedom of action.

As we go to press it is not possible to fathom the full implications of the elections. But it is certain that they settled nothing. The real struggle over the future direction of West German politics lies ahead.

This makes the disarray of the SPD particularly important. Since its defeat four years ago the SPD has been in political limbo. It has been unable to decide whether to move right, Kinnock-style, to adapt to the shift in German politics, or left, to rebuild its support among the radical and discontented people who have drifted towards the Green Party. Faced with this dilemma, the SPD was in a mess before the election campaign began.

Rau, a right winger, was chosen to lead the party's campaign on the strength of his performance in regional elections in his home state of North-Rhine Westfalia in 1984. But his selection was opposed by a significant section of the party hierarchy, including SPD chairman Willy Brandt, who favour a shift to the left to cut the ground from under the Greens. Rau was running for office with at best half-hearted support from his party.

The SPD has been unable to emulate the British Labour Party's attempt to regain lost ground by shifting sharply to the right. Kinnock could adapt to establishment pressure, safe in the knowledge that,



SPD LOSER JOHANNES RAU (RIGHT) HANDS IT TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT VICTOR HELMUT KOHL

whatever Labour does, it remains the only established alternative for working class voters. But the SPD does not command the sort of loyalty from the left which has so far insulated the Labour Party from political pressure. The growth of the Green Party on its left flank limits the SPD's room for manoeuvre. It has opened divisions in the SPD which are unlikely to be resolved unless the Greens are destroyed or neutralised.

The elections indicate that the trend towards the dissolution of the traditional right-left political divisions, which has been at work throughout Western Europe in the

eighties, takes a different form in West Germany.

This is because the West German left was never very powerful in the first place. Ever since the Federal Republic was founded after the war, West German politics has been dominated by a deep conservatism. All parties, including the SPD, endorsed the notion that the new Germany was a neutral society, where class antagonism had given way to a benevolent 'social partnership' between employers and workers.

The SPD occupies the same formal place in West German politics as Labour does in

Britain. But the SPD has little in common with Labour's image as a working class party, built through the British party's close links with the unions. The SPD was rebuilt after the war when the organised working class had been destroyed by fascism. It never acquired a distinctive left-wing programme, but developed into an establishment party. It expressed the outlook of the new professionals and administrators who were created during the boom in the fifties and sixties. Although the 'Sozis' were the target of vicious red-baiting by the right, the SPD never considered itself as anything other than a more enlightened and efficient defender of West German capitalism.

There has been no real left-right antagonism in West German politics. Opposition to the existing order has always been consigned to the political fringe. Given the conservative and unresponsive character of the SPD, opponents of the system have always had to organise outside the official political arena. They have taken to the streets, or thrown bombs, or organised the local action committees which were at the centre of radical political activity during the seventies. The Green Party grew out of the diverse strands of West German radicalism because there was no 'official' left-wing alternative.

NEW OPPOSITION NEEDED

The elections showed that the moderate political consensus which has held West Germany together is starting to fray at the edges. The SPD has lost control on the left, and Kohl's alliance is divided between moderates and hardliners.

There is trouble beneath the bonnet of the Mercedes republic.

The campaign embittered the old feud between CDU moderates around Kohl and Strauss' hardline Bavarian CSU. Strauss has often accused Kohl of being soft on their liberal coalition partner, the diminutive Free Democratic Party. Kohl rewarded FDP leaders with cabinet posts, leaving Strauss to stew in Munich. In the run-up to the poll Strauss attacked the coalition for giving way to the FDP on everything from Star Wars to law and order.

So far Strauss has been regarded as a bit senile. But things begin to look different when economic growth is projected downwards, and industry is clamouring for harsher measures to tackle West Germany's declining competitiveness. Strauss' broadside against the 'wet' right may have overshot its target. But there is little doubt that, after the elections, a turn to more hardline economic and social policies is on the cards.

The outcome of the elections underlines the weakness of the left. The Greens reflect the diverse strands of radicalism in the Federal Republic. But they cannot direct these forces against the system. A new anti-capitalist left is needed to take on the right and end the fudge in West German politics.

INKATHA'S MURDER CAMPAIGN

APARTHEID'S STOOGES STRIKE AGAIN

Last Wednesday night a dozen armed men leapt from a white mini-bus in the Natal township of KwaMakhuta and stormed the home of local United Democratic Front supporter, Victor Ntuli. They banged off a barrage of automatic gunfire that left 12 people dead, among them seven children asleep in a back room.

The apartheid propaganda machine and KwaZulu homeland leader Gatsha Buthelezi blamed the KwaMakhuta Massacre on African National Congress guerrillas. After all, they pointed out, the gunmen used Russian-made AK-47 rifles. Few local people were taken in. They know that using Russian weapons is just another trick in the dirty war being fought by the 'Amabutho', gangs of armed thugs from the Zulu movement, Inkatha.

Under chief Buthelezi, Inkatha is running a vicious campaign of murder and intimidation against anti-apartheid activists like Ntuli. They have been aided and abetted by the state forces who are happy to stand aside while Buthelezi has their opponents shot, beaten and burnt.

Buthelezi fears that the wave of black resistance sweeping South Africa will undermine his monopoly of power over six

million Zulus, and disrupt his relationship with the apartheid authorities. Inkatha is a corrupt patronage machine. In return for acting as the apartheid state's stooge, it has been granted influence and control over government jobs in KwaZulu. But Buthelezi's rural power-base has been challenged by increased militancy among urban blacks. He has responded by sending vigilantes to hunt down and hack up political activists.

Last year Inkatha formed a scab union, Uwusa. In this guise, Inkatha heavies murdered 11 Hlobane coalminers in an attempt to break a strike led by the National Union of Mineworkers. Elsewhere shop stewards and militants have been murdered or driven out. The state has backed Buthelezi's thugs, arresting black militants to make way for the scab union.

Militants who have seen enough damage done to their comrades and organisations are demanding action to beat off Inkatha. Where Inkatha attacks have been resisted their 'Amabutho' have been routed. At the National Education Crisis Committee conference in Lamontville, Inkatha was repulsed and seriously embarrassed. This set an example for joint defence work between trade unionists and youth groups in



BACKING BOTHA: CHIEF BUTHELEZI the townships.

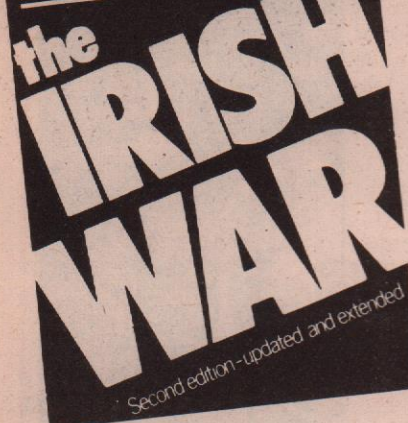
Inkatha's violent response to the resistance movement shows that its reactionary influence is weakening. When workers and youth organise to take it on, Inkatha can be beaten.

Russell Osborne

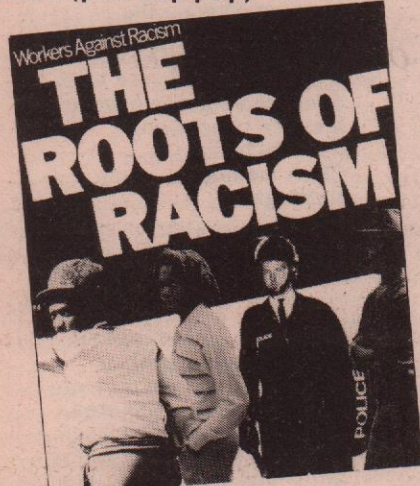
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● INDEPENDENTS IN POP MUSIC

Little acorns



HALF MAN, HALF MORRISSEY

C-86, Various artists,
Rough Trade/NME
Records and Tapes

There are some good black dance records in the charts, jazz is moving to centre stage, African and Latin music still enlivens the fringe. But mostly it is boring. With bands like A-Ha joining Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet there's a feeling that music has come full circle in the decade since the punk explosion.

The white pop/rock mainstream is all vapid air-brushed production-line pop (the above plus Red Box, Kim Wilde, etc), and time-serving rock performers (Phil Collins, Eric Clapton, and vile heavy metal cockrock has mutated again). The only real vitality comes from the low budgets of the independent record labels.

TALENT SCOUTS

The indie scene has been important since 1976. The punk do-it-yourself ethic led to a spate of small record labels. Some launched bands to greater things, others catered for specialist tastes such as reggae or dub. Rough Trade is the most prominent these days, charting with bands like the Smiths (who have now moved to EMI). Manchester's maverick

Factory Records does well too, especially with New Order.

There is not the big divide between corrupt multinationals like CBS and EMI and worthy indies which many of the latter would have us believe. Virgin was an indie once and Island too. Many of the small companies also link up with the majors to solve their big problem — getting their more successful clients widely distributed. It makes sense for avant-garde outfits like EG (Penguin Cafe Orchestra, Eno) and Some Bizarre (Test Department, Psychic TV) to have arrangements with the likes of Polydor, CBS and Phonogram. CBS handle Matt Johnson's band The The (whose album *Infected* cut a swathe through pap pop last year), but they remain with Some Bizarre. These deals confirm the indies' role as talent scouts for the big companies.

NOSTALGIA

The parlous state of the music industry (falling sales, stagnating creativity) has given the indies their chance. Helped by the success of the Smiths, and John Peel's championing of new bands, more indie bands surfaced and flourished in 1986 than at any time since the demise of punk. From Scotland: Jesus and Mary Chain, Shop Assistants, Soup Dragons, Close Lobsters; Yorkshire: Housemartins, Wedding Present, Age of Chance; the Midlands: Fuzzbox (moving from Vindaloo to Warner Bros), Pop Will Eat Itself; the South-east: Flatmates, Talulah Gosh; Merseyside: the

late Half Man Half Biscuit.

C-86 is a collection of noises made by various of these hopefuls, distributed by the NME and Rough Trade. Energy and enthusiasm abound but the limitations of the indie pop scene are also apparent. Most of the music looks backwards — either to glorious '76/'77 (Buzzcocks clones are too numerous to mention), or to the sixties (Velvet Underground, Doors, Beefheart, Byrds, even psychedelia). Few have even noticed exciting present-day sounds (funk, hip-hop, African music, etc) in the way that, for example, Cabaret Voltaire or 23 Skidoo did a few years ago.

NEW ROMANTICS

Despite their zest and zaniness the C-86 gang are guitar-loyal traditionalists almost to a person. Allied to this, and a certain student/greatcoat/fanzine mentality, is a kind of Luddism. Synthesizers are horrible and unnatural (in fact they were pioneered by Human League on an indie label), thinking big is bound to corrupt, and looking to sources outside the indie ghetto is risky if not downright unthinkable. A cottage industry ethic seems to have stunted much of this scene's potential. Stump, the Bodines and others show that not all youth want to be Simon Le Bon or Samantha Fox. But too many do still want to retreat into a romantic, self-absorbed cocoon. Myself, I'm waiting for Rough Trade to put out a new Easterhouse record.
Mike Harris

● FILM ON CENTRAL AMERICA

Fear and loathing in El Salvador

Salvador, Oliver Stone
(Director)

Since 1980 the United States has delivered more than \$2 billion to president Duarte's government in El Salvador. In the same period right-wing death squads have murdered over 50 000 civilians, including Archbishop Romero and four American nuns. We are told the situation is much improved now. Official figures admit a current civilian murder rate of 2000 per year, or six per day. The FMLN-FDR (Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation and the Revolutionary Democratic Front) is battered but unbeaten, killing or wounding 1100 government troops in the first nine months of last year, as the civil war continues.

Richard Boyle was a photojournalist there in 1980-1, and he has co-written this action-packed film with Oliver Stone. Not for the first time do we follow a Westerner abroad and watch his eyes opened by the barbarities perpetrated in the cause of anti-communism. As in *Missing*, *The Year of Living Dangerously* and *Under Fire* the more our hero becomes embroiled the more angry he

becomes. There is something absurd about an American journalist lecturing the local CIA men on how he loves America more than they do ('I'm left-wing but no communist'), and accusing them of betraying America's values ('freedom and democracy'). As a liberal *cri de coeur* however Salvador is a powerful film.

This is Stone's debut as director, but he wrote *Midnight Express*, *Scarface* and *Year of*

the Dragon. These last two were notable for their pace and their grossness, qualities which Stone brings to Salvador in large measure. It is not a subtle film. Real vultures nestle in the branches above journalists snapping away on mounds of dead bodies. But this is one of the film's strengths. Nothing is left to the imagination, he rubs our noses in the horror, the journalists' voyeurism, our voyeurism. He falters only



THE 'MANIC' RICHARD BOYLE (JAMES WOODS) AFTER A STORY IN SALVADOR

occasionally into plain heavy-handedness, as when Major Max ('Major Bob' D'Aubuisson, the psychopath Duarte beat in the 1984 'elections') sets up Romero's murder in the cathedral by asking who will rid him of this priest.

It was a neat twist to cast the Americans as a pair of degenerate slob, losers fleeing a yuppie America where they just can't make it, descending on a country where the booze is dirt cheap and the women won't answer back. Boyle (James Woods) is a failed journalist and Dr Rock (Jim Belushi) a failed disc-jockey. Their only endearing characteristic is the same manic energy which propelled Hunter S Thompson and his drug-crazed attorney to Las Vegas, on another mission of subversive journalism (the parallel is, like everything else, widely signalled).

El Salvador is tougher than Boyle remembered it. But even if he hadn't fallen in love with a local girl (of course), this pair would have ended up on the right side. With Boyle's thick skin and loud mouth they soon end up at the heart of the war too, with a crazed photographer who dreams of matching Robert Capa's classic war photo (not knowing it was a fake). Little ironies like this, together with superbly neurotic performances by Woods and Belushi, make this a cut above most films of the type.

Pat Ford

● THE FINANCIAL WORLD

Funny money

Susan Strange, *Casino Capitalism*, Blackwell, £7.95

Frank Welsh, *Uneasy City*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £12.95

Lazy year ended with Sid disappearing up a Scottish mountain, and 1987 began with an appeal to jump aboard Concorde and buy British Airways shares. We are all supposed to have an interest in the business world now, but few of us have more than a dim understanding of the insider trading scandals, let alone the more esoteric world of international finance.

Uneasy City, subtitled 'An

insider's view of the City of London', is by a banker. It is an elegantly written guide to the structures and scandals of the City, in the context of the demands for statutory regulation. Will our gas shares be safe without it? *Casino Capitalism* is by an international relations professor and former *Observer* journalist, and seriously examines the development of the global financial system. International credit involves literally trillions of dollars, and so has a profound effect upon all of us. Will the system survive?

Strange details the growth of global credit since the early seventies. She argues that this explosion results from the deregulation of financial markets

and new trading technology, and now underlies the problems of the world economy. She believes that the US government can save the world by restraining domestic credit and regulating the international economy. The dollar, she maintains, is still the accepted currency of international commerce. This may be true but the dollar's credentials depend on the slowly but surely declining power of the USA.

The real driving force behind the boom in international credit is declining profitability. As profit rates in the West have fallen governments have deregulated markets to allow vast flows of capital to find more lucrative outlets. Sometimes capital has ended up in new points of production in the third world, but more commonly it finds its way to quick speculative deals.

This has been happening in Britain for years. As Frank Welsh points out with horror, 10 per cent of all those graduating in 1985 applied to join one firm of

City accountants. It's just about the only business left, and an increasingly corrupt one. Writing in March 1986, Welsh singles out Guinness and Morgan Grenfell for criticism, but it appears that anybody considering anything 'marginal' just goes ahead and does it, so it wasn't an astounding prophecy. Welsh disapproves of all this, but predictably he favours the City being left to police its own affairs — self-regulation.

Welsh sees bigger and blacker stormclouds gathering over the City, particularly through international debt and energy crises. Yet immediate catastrophe is unlikely. Third world debt has haunted pundits since the early eighties, but there have been no spectacular defaults, largely because of fear of the political consequences of putting too much pressure on third world countries. We should concentrate on generating some stormclouds of our own.

Daniel Nassim

Against The Red Front

I DO NOT disagree with any of the analysis of the Labour Party in the next step. However I think you are wrong to stand in elections.

The majority of workers have shifted rightwards, but there is within that a small minority that want socialism. But given the minuscule size of the revolutionary left they correctly see Labour as the only 'workers' party' that can actually oust Thatcher. We must argue with these people — people who supported the miners' strike but now see Labour — not workers' struggle — as the only road open for the left.

How do we reach them? By a battle of ideas at the elections. Ideas that will only reach a few people given that workers aren't (generally) fighting back? Or ideas that lump Labour and Tory together, that don't distinguish between the class enemy (Thatcher) and the class traitor (Labour)?

The election is not just about who has good ideas. It

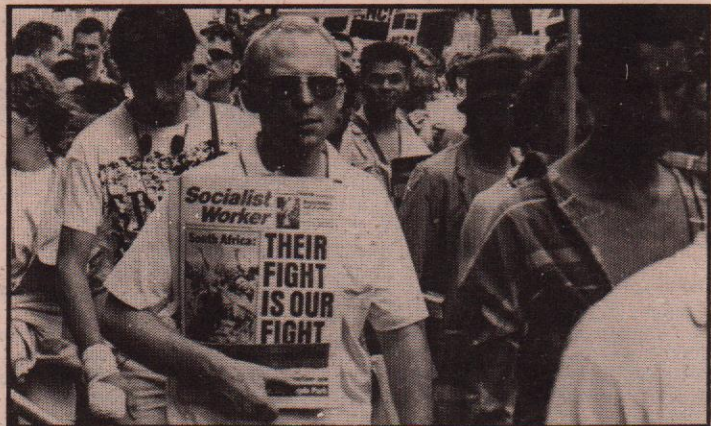
is about the balance of class forces too. It is about relating your theory to the experience of the left audience we're trying to win to revolution. Instead of abstractions we must get out the enemy and expose the traitor. The left who give either active or grudging support to the Labour Party will in reality learn that what we are saying is correct. The theory fuses with practice. People will only break with reformism through arguments connecting with their own experience.

It is far easier to stand on

the podium, beat your breast and denounce everyone else's political impurity. It may be good for the soul but it won't build a revolutionary party based in the working class. In my experience they've always had a healthy suspicion of Jehovah's witnesses!

The Socialist Workers' Party is correct not to stand. It is the right tactic for the period we are in. I won't be joining your campaign, but the SWP's campaign to build a revolutionary party.

Alan Bell
Pontefract SWP



David Rowke

Clotting debate on Ireland

AS a Nalga member, I was asked to put forward a motion supporting the Irish Freedom Movement on the Bloody Sunday demonstration and calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. I took the motion to be seconded to my workplace, a home for mentally

handicapped adolescents run by Coventry social services.

After speaking to my colleagues, and receiving several emotive replies, I was approached by the head of the home, Mr Goddard, a staunch Labour supporter, forever sporting anti-Thatcher slogans — his favorite being 'The Conservative Party is like Devonshire Cream — thick and full of clots.' He suggested that I didn't talk about this issue, as 'I don't want this to affect the people in our care.'

This just goes to show

Labour's clotted attitude to the Irish people's struggle for self-determination — they organise to prevent the building of solidarity in the workplace. I shall continue to wage the battle against the wall of silence both Labour and the Tories have built around Ireland.

Iain Roberts
Nalga, Coventry



Joe Hamilton

Multi-cultural cop-out

JOHN BAHR'S query about the left-wing teacher who opposes multi-cultural education (23 January), shows how the left reproduces the prejudices of the British ruling class. Ask him whether he refuses to study or teach algebra, astronomy or medicine — as modern sciences, they are all Islamic in origin. Or does he use Roman to avoid barbaric Arabic numerals?

When the introduction of cow-greased cartridges set off the Indian mutiny in 1857, because the Hindu troops refused to bite the bullet, the British Raj brutally crushed the Sepoys. They set examples by strapping soldiers to the mouths of cannon and blowing them apart. Would our left-wing teacher abstain on this one? Nowadays young Asians are beaten to a pulp in British jails for refusing to eat pork pies.

The argument that Muslim culture is that of an Asian ruling class misses the point. The culture of all class societies is the culture of the ruling class, and they do not hesitate to promote divisions among those they oppress. But the lesson we should learn from this is the need to fight Britain's imperialist culture at home. Learning about other cultures will not eliminate racism in our society, but such left-wing

opposition to the study of other cultures can only be an adaption to British chauvinism. The working class deserves the best education we can get: Koran, Omar Khayyam, Taj Mahal and all.

Alan Harding
Glasgow (cultural capital of Europe)



I THINK the Bradford debate about whether multi-cultural education is reactionary (letters, 23 January) misses the point. There may be problems with all cultures under capitalism, but some are a lot more reactionary than others. In Bradford today the reactionary culture we should worry about is the British imperialist tradition that oppresses ethnic minorities and preaches racist views in the classroom and the media. We cannot make concessions to the right wingers who argue that Asian people and their cultures are 'alien to the British way of life'. But multi-cultural education just dodges confronting British racism at its roots. The idea that all that is required to get rid of racist stereotypes is to introduce curry and Indian dancing to white school children is a cop-out.

NUT member
Hackney

Ireland

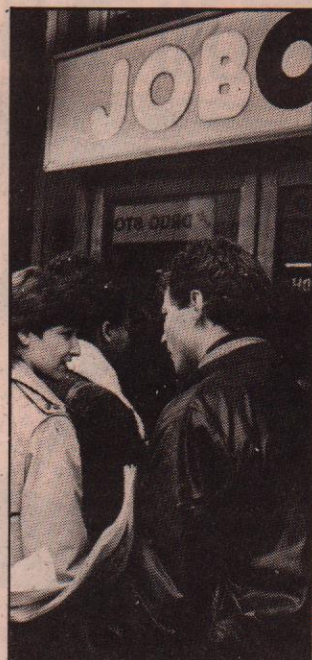
AFTER reading Sean McGouran's letter (9 January) I thought his naive and dangerous views should be challenged. Heath did not 'surrender' power over the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland in 1972. The nationalist community and its armed wing fought long, hard, bloody battles to kick the Army out. The IRA did not 'balls things up by being too obviously anti-Prod' in the Lenadoon area that year. What happened was that some Catholic families tried to move into empty houses vacated by Protestants. The Loyalist paramilitary UDA organised to stop them. The British Army came out in force to support the Loyalist sectarians, using armoured cars to smash lorry loads of Catholic furniture into matchwood. When local nationalists retaliated, the truce between the IRA and the British government broke down. The two sides have been at war almost constantly since. McGouran insults the Irish freedom fighters who have taken on the Army over those years by accusing them of trying to be 'glamorous'.

Floyd Peckham

Wreck the checks

OVER the last two weeks the department of employment has been making a count of all persons of ethnic origin signing as unemployed in Handsworth, Leeds and Nottingham. They have tried to introduce these race checks before but were stopped by the threat of strike action by the CPSA (civil service union). Unfortunately this time our members voted against taking action. This is not because the staff are racists but due to a lack of information and guidance from the union. The only people who gave us encouragement and information were the members of Workers Against Racism who leafleted workers and claimants outside the unemployment benefit offices.

If we are to stop these race checks being implemented across the country and the information being placed on people's claim and on the computer,



David Rowke

we must carry on the campaign. Anti-racist members of the CPSA should pressure the union to take effective action to oppose the race checks on a national basis.

CPSA member
Nottingham

Workers' defence

MARTIN JONES (letters, 23 January) is wrong to suggest that we should organise a squad that can move in to deal with racist attacks like those of the Croydon Road Gang in East London. Workers Against Racism has always been prepared to organise immediate defence of the victims of racist violence, but we are not a bunch of headbangers who like touring London as some sort of A-team. The most

important part of workers' defence is the political campaign to build an anti-racist current in the area where attacks take place. Rushing in, breaking a few arms and clearing off again would not begin to resolve that problem. It would not challenge the racist climate, and would simply mean setting up the Asian residents for a backlash. WAR is here to stay.

Dave Clark
Newham WAR

Condomania

THE article on Aids (23 January) suggested that although the morality campaign was making gains, the Tories' phoney condom campaign would make little headway. I don't agree. If Norman Fowler cannot win the hearts of today's youth, then the design-conscious left can.

Katherine Hamnett's T-shirts and boxer shorts collection with special pockets for your packet of three has received some publicity this week, as have her leather armbands with

Johnny-slots in them. *Marxism Today* is giving away freebie condoms this month. The rubber companies have designed new packets for their sheaths, especially aimed at the discreet woman who likes her handbag to look good. Even *Cosmopolitan* is in on the act, telling its January readers that 'All smart girls carry condoms.' *The Face* is carrying stylish Durex ads, as well-designed as the Fred Perry advertisements.

While the condom has been unpopular since the advent of the Pill the efforts to make it as cultish as 501s and the Zippo are certainly attractive. Effective packaging is well on the way to making the condom as trendy as marriage and babies.

Fiona Ryan
Camberwell



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.

Debating The Red Front

THE OPEN LETTER to the left in last week's *tns* prompted a lot of discussion in supporter groups across the country. It put forward our case for bringing left wingers together around *The Red Front*, a platform for working class unity, in the run-up to the general election.

The letter announced that *The Red Front* was designed to 'maximise the influence of forces prepared to fight for anti-capitalist policies'. By building support for this initiative, we aim to line up all the groups and individuals who agree with the basic demands which the working class needs (see page 7), and who are prepared to fight for them in face of the Labour Party's pro-capitalist policies. Whenever the election comes we want to stand a broad slate of candidates on the platform.

Over the last week we've mailed the open letter to all the left-wing and anti-imperialist bodies on our books, asking them to back *The Red Front*. We await their replies. In the meantime supporters' groups and RCP branches have discussed *The Red Front* and its implications for their local work. *The Red Front* is a new tactic, and we have to experiment to find the best ways of implementing it.

PLATFORM

Anybody who is familiar with the British left will know that calls for unity are common. Many left-wing groups have spent years discussing the need for the left to forget its differences and unite in one big party to make an impact. Today, most of them are finally united in one big party — Kinnock's Labour Party. The political differences they have had to forget are those which separate socialists from the increasingly right-wing Labour leadership. *The Red Front* aims to break with this tradition of phoney

unity and build something of use to the working class.

We are not proposing a joint party. *The Red Front* is a tactical response to the immediate problems which the left faces. It's a way of maximising our forces around a given set of objectives for a given length of time — until the next election. We accept that there are different parties with different politics, but call on them all to campaign together around this clearly defined platform.

Most RCP supporters have been enthusiastic about the initiative and quick to understand its importance. As one London supporter explained: 'I was getting dead scared that they'd call an election and there'd only be a few people arguing for working class politics. It would be like the working class had been wiped off the slate — no one would be talking about it. If we can get people out, canvassing around the demands, it'll make a lot of difference to the number of people who'll find out that there is an alternative to backing the Labour Party.'

STRUGGLE

Other supporters have been dubious and seen problems in *The Red Front*. One explained that she has read and supported *tns* for years because it is so different from the traditional politics of the rest of the left. She couldn't understand why we should now decide to 'grovel to them to help us'. Someone else said they didn't understand how we could have an open letter in the centre of last week's paper appealing to the left to back a joint campaign, but spend a lot of space in the same paper attacking the left for its attitude to issues like Aids.

These views miss the point. We are not appealing to the left to help the RCP, and we certainly won't be toning down or changing the content of *tns* to make

it easier for people to get involved in a joint initiative with us. All we want to do through *The Red Front* is to mobilise the biggest electoral bloc possible against the authorities. To achieve this, we'll have to conduct a political struggle with the left as well as with the right. The left has a long tradition of infighting and sectarianism. If we are to overcome this, we need pointed political arguments that can clarify the needs of the working class and convince people of the necessity to fight for them. Fudging issues and maintaining tactful silences would be easier, but it wouldn't work. We have to be clear where we can stand together with the left, and where we will differ.

DEBATE

It's important to initiate as much discussion as possible around *The Red Front*, both in the working class and around our party. To implement the tactic effectively, the party needs to know the problems and the positive responses which people encounter while fighting for the front. Supporters' groups should continue to discuss its implications for them, and should delegate someone to write up what they think of *The Red Front*. Be honest, raise any problems you have arguing for it. If you can't get to a supporter group, write to *tns* with your qualms, reservations or agreements.

You should now be going all-out to win support for the *The Red Front*. Get it raised wherever you can, and concentrate on convincing people to back the platform and fill in the box (opposite).

In order to implement this tactic we need serious discussion around the issues it raises. We hope to pursue this discussion on the letters page, and on this page. We need to know what you think. Write in and let us know.

Anne Burton



I/we agree to support the demands of **THE RED FRONT** — a platform for working class unity.

NAME

ADDRESS

..... POSTCODE

ORGANISATION

TELEPHONE

Send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX

Diary

BIRMINGHAM: Friday 6 February, 9am. Transport leaves from Cambridge St for George Roucou march in Manchester. Tickets £2.50

GREENWICH: Anybody interested in canvassing for the Revolutionary Communist Party in the forthcoming by-election should contact Rob Knight on (01) 729 0414

LONDON: Thursday 29 January, 7.30pm. All-London supporters' group: Why we say *Troops out now!* Holborn Library, Theobalds Road (Holborn tube)

Tuesday 3 February, 7.30pm. New Living Marxism series starts. This week: Freedom and liberation in Marx. University of London Union, Malet St WC1 (Godge St tube)

NEWHAM: Thursday 12 February, 7.30pm. Public meeting: Racists on the attack — stop them! St John's Church Institute, 27 Romford Road, Stratford

NOTTINGHAM: Thursday 29 January, 7.30pm. Joint meeting with Irish Freedom Movement and Irish Solidarity Group: No more Bloody Sundays! International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd

SHEFFIELD: Friday 30 January, 7.30pm. Bloody Sunday public debate: Irish Freedom Movement, Workers' Power, Sheffield republicans. Raynor Lounge, Sheffield University



- ☐ I want more information about the RCP
- ☐ I want to become an RCP supporter
- ☐ I want to sell *tns*
- ☐ I want to make regular contributions to the RCP
- I want to help set up a new branch in

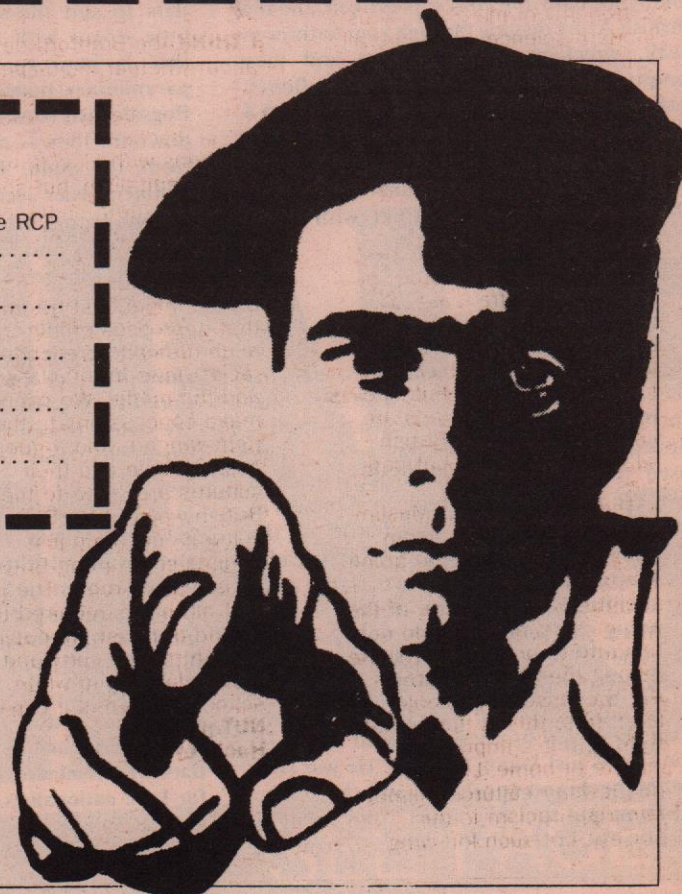
Name

Address

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Send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX

Become an RCP supporter!



the next step

ROSSVILLE FLATS SINCE BLOODY SUNDAY

INFESTED WITH RATS — AND BRITISH SOLDIERS

Fifteen years ago this week British troops murdered 14 Irish men on Bloody Sunday in Derry. Among them was John Wray's brother, shot in the back near the Rossville flats. Wray still lives in the flats — and the British gunmen are still there too

On 30 January 1972 British paratroopers opened fire on unarmed anti-internment demonstrators, and murdered 14 people in cold blood. On that day, the Rossville flats were a refuge from British bullets. Today the flats are still at the centre of Irish resistance. That's why they're being pulled down.

'There are rats running about in the road. The lifts never work. If you have a pram, you have to carry it upstairs or walk half-way round the block to get in. You have to hang around for ages to get repairs done. When you're sitting in your flat you can hear other people's TVs, and more or less everything they say. You've no privacy in your own bedroom.'

John Wray and his wife Donna live in the Rossville flats. His account of paper-thin walls and an endless battle against damp and decay will be familiar to millions of people living on grim council estates in Britain. But the Rossville flats are different. The residents don't just have to contend with rats.

They are also menaced by animals of a different breed, wearing British Army uniforms and carrying automatic weapons.

'Where else would you have the skirting board ripped out, and your windows rubbed out, your bath and your sink broken, and the British Army digging through your bathroom wall, wrecking your furniture and then emptying your tea bags out on the floor?' asks Wray. 'Your repairs may be done on a Monday and they say "Right, we'll go and wreck his house." On Wednesday you'll be ringing up for more repairs. That's the difference — we live in a slum, with added harassment and repression.'

Raids by the Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary are now part of life in Rossville. But there was a time when the security forces could not get on to the estate. In 1969, when Derry's nationalist ghetto was besieged by Loyalist mobs and police, youth used the roof of the Rossville flats as a vantage point for throwing petrol bombs at their attackers. When the Battle of the Bogside ended three days later, barricades were up and 'Free Derry' was declared a no-go area for the agents of the British Crown.

When the Army tried to crush the Bogside's resistance on Bloody Sunday, some of the paratroopers' victims died as they ran back to the flats for cover. Wray explained: 'My brother was killed on one of the streets just facing the flats. He was shot in the back and paralysed, and the soldier came up and shot him again, from about 18 inches. They got one feller trying to go up the

stairs to the flats. They shot him, he fell down the stairs, and they shot him again.

'The flats were a safe place. Everyone was using them. They knew they'd be safe on our side of the barricades.'

Fifteen years later, the monument to the victims of Bloody Sunday stands in the shadow of the flats; and Rossville is still a republican stronghold. Although the Army carries out regular raids, Wray says that 'The soldiers and the police have never liked the flats. They can't go past without getting attacked in some way. The young fellers come in, use the stairways to make petrol bombs, and then hide until the jeeps go past.'

Any Rossville resident, however young or old, is a target for the British bully boys. Last time the Army raided Wray's home 'They searched my baby son — he's six months old.' The raiders can come at any hour. 'They kick your door in at 6am. If you're not at home your house will be wrecked. You're terrified to answer the door at night because you don't know who's standing there using the UVF as a cover name.'

The British authorities have bulldozed and redesigned the whole area around the flats to suit the security forces, replacing little streets with a wide dual carriageway that is hard to barricade and lets the paramilitary police and Army get into the Bogside fast. Now they have begun knocking down the flats — not to rescue the residents from the slum, but to give the British gunmen easier access.

John Hume, leader of the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party, claims that the flats are being demolished as part of a slum clearance programme resulting from the Anglo-Irish agreement. Wray disagrees: 'They're doing it to improve security. They can't afford to have soldiers standing at the door of every flat 24 hours a day. So people are being forced to move to other areas, where there's no bus services and they're just stuck with no friends or family.'

For 15 years, the Wrays and their neighbours have lived under the threat of another Bloody Sunday. 'Some people think it's in the past and will never happen again. But if it suited the Brits to frighten us with another Bloody Sunday, it could happen quite easily. If they think they could get thousands of people off the streets by killing a few, they'll do it again.'

The decay and the dangers in the Rossville flats are a reminder of what British rule means for Irish nationalists.

Last Sunday, Derry people marched to remember the dead of Bloody Sunday and to



YOUNG NATIONALISTS WATCH YET ANOTHER BRITISH ARMY RAID ON THE ROSSVILLE FLATS

call for their murderers to get out of Ireland. This Saturday, the Irish Freedom Movement will be on the Bloody Sunday commemoration march in Sheffield with the same demand. Join us, and help to make sure that

every outpost of the British Empire in Ireland is brought down alongside the Rossville flats.

Joe Boatman

MARCH

AGAINST BRITISH MURDER IN IRELAND
Bloody Sunday demo
Saturday 31 January
SHEFFIELD
Transport details from (01) 729 0414