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Revolutionary Communist Party Weekly 15 April 1988 40p

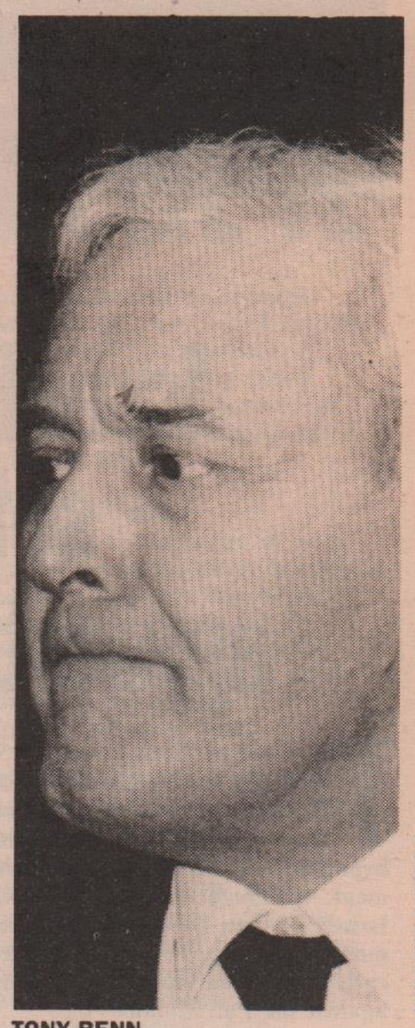
Labour candidates are no match for Thatcher

WE NEED NEW LEADERS



Pandora Anderson

NEIL KINNOCK



Pandora Anderson

TONY BENN

THIS week brings the first cash cuts in welfare benefits for 50 years. The Tory government has embarked on the most far-reaching capitalist offensive in living memory. There has never been a more pressing need for an effective opposition movement. Yet the election contests in the Labour Party confirm that the old opposition cannot answer the question of leadership posed by the political struggles of today.

What are the Labour leadership candidates from left and right offering the working class?

SOMETHING OLD:

In his challenge to Labour leader Neil Kinnock, Tony Benn has plenty to say about past battles but little to offer in the fight for the future. What is Benn's strategy for reversing the setbacks being suffered by our class? 'I can't think of a single victory that did not begin with a defeat,' he says, 'whether you are talking about Dunkirk followed by VE Day or the Tolpuddle Martyrs followed by the repeal of the Combination Acts.' Benn's leadership strategy thus amounts to the observation that those who lost in the past sometimes won in the end. The problem of how we get from one to the other in today's conditions does not figure in his backward-looking worldview.

SOMETHING NEW REALIST:

John Prescott is trying to capture soft-left and union support to unseat deputy leader Roy Hattersley. Prescott is linked with trade union bureaucrats who have adapted to the New Realism of bowing before the employers. He recently made an attempt to settle the ferry dispute, after being invited in by job-slashing P&O boss Sir Jeffrey Stirling, who described Prescott as 'a total realist' who 'knows exactly what we are talking about'. Prescott might understand the needs of a company which will sack thousands to make a profit. But so far as the needs of the working class are concerned, all he can offer is 'a crusade to change the function of the deputy leader' of the Labour Party, — hardly the stuff to make the Tories turn tail.

SOMETHING BORROWED FROM THE BLUES:

Kinnock and Hattersley, meanwhile, continue with their mission to adapt Labour policies to the Tories. They have already endorsed 'market forces' — capitalism — as the most 'efficient' way to run society. Their latest plans include an open acceptance of permanent mass unemployment, by dropping their paper election promise to cut the jobless total by one million in two years.

None of these candidates are worthy of our support in the contest for the leadership of the working class. We need a new opposition party, which can lead us into the battle against the Tories without either hiding in the past or adapting to the Thatcherite mood of the present (see pages 8 and 9).



Israeli state backs settler pogrom against Palestinians

The death of Tirza Porat, a 15-year old Jewish girl from the West Bank settlement of Elon Moreh, has exposed the hypocrisy of the Israeli establishment. Although she was the first Israeli civilian to die in the four-month uprising, her death led to calls for even more repression against the Palestinians.

Tirza Porat was on a 'nature ramble' with 17 other Israelis near the Palestinian village of Beita. Such *tiyulim* (trips) are designed to instil patriotic values and a love for *Eretz Yisrael* ('The land of Israel', including the West Bank and Gaza) in high school students.

The heavily armed party would undoubtedly have been seen as a threat by the Palestinian villagers. When the Arabs found out the hikers were from Elon Moreh, one of the most thuggish of the Jewish settlements, their anger would have been intensified. Youths from the village threw a few stones at the Israeli party as it approached. One security guard responded by firing 30 rounds from his M16 automatic rifle at the Palestinians, while the other opened up with an Uzi sub-machine gun. They killed two Palestinian youths, increasing the toll of at least 150 who have already died in the uprising.

JEERED

Initial reports claimed that the Israeli teenager was killed by a rock thrown by a Palestinian. This was seized on by right-wing Israelis, who demanded still harsher measures against the Palestinians. When prime minister Yitzhak Shamir attended Tirza Porat's funeral, telling the mourners that 'God will avenge her blood', he was heckled for being too soft by the settlers. General Amran Mitza, seen as a political liberal but the man who commands Israel's forces in the West Bank, was also loudly jeered.

A leaked report from the Israeli army revealed that Tirza Porat died from shot-gun wounds inflicted by one of the Israeli security guards. The report was critical of the organisation of the outing, and blamed the Israeli settlers rather than the Palestinians for the confrontation. All this made not the slightest difference, of course, to the official and unofficial reaction.

The young girl's death swelled the seething tide of hatred against the Palestinians which has been increasing ever since the uprising began. The Israeli army blew up the homes of 13 villagers from Beita, at least eight of them after the investigation results were leaked. The authorities decided to deport eight more Palestinian activists from the occupied territories. Meanwhile outraged Israeli settlers are planning a mass return to Beita village this weekend.

WEAPON

Although they might disagree with mainstream Israeli opinion about the methods required to deal with Palestinian resistance, the 70 000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank are an armed wing of the Zionist state. Some Israeli commentators have criticised the over-zealous settlers for being a drain on the army's resources. Nevertheless, the settlements are subsidised by government grants, supported by most politicians and protected by the Israeli army. They are yet another weapon in Israel's arsenal of terror against the Palestinians.

Daniel Nassim

WESTERN HYPOCRITES AND ARAB HIJACKERS

The British media have given a blow-by-blow account of the successive stages of the hijacking of the Kuwaiti Boeing 747 to Iran and Cyprus. As we go to press, the crisis is still unfolding. Two Kuwaiti hostages have been killed and there are rumours of an SAS operation to storm the plane. Every news bulletin relates the latest twist and turn in the negotiations.

ISOLATION

By focusing on the tense scenes on the tarmac at Larnaca airport the media removes the hijacking from the context of the struggle for control of the Middle East. The Western powers always like to discuss the problem of terrorism in isolation from the conflicts which have given rise to it. Thus there has been scarcely any discussion of the background to the hijacking.

This would reveal that what the West labels 'terrorism' is a reaction to Western intervention in the Middle East.

The background to the latest hijacking is the imprisonment of 17 Arab militants in connection with bomb attacks on the US and French embassies in Kuwait in December 1983. These bombings were organised by Shiites, at a time when American, French (and British) troops had invaded Lebanon to crush Shiite resistance to imperialist interference. Other Shiite actions included the suicide car-bombing of the US marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983, a blow which hastened the US withdrawal from Lebanon in 1984.

The current crisis must therefore be seen very much in the context of the West's attempt to stabilise the imperialist order in the Middle East by stamping out resistance from the Arab masses. The demand of the Boeing 747 hijackers for the release of the 17 Arabs imprisoned in Kuwait has featured in several hijackings in recent years, and in the kid-nappings of Westerners in Beirut. The identity of the hijackers is not yet known, but they are believed to have connections with Shiite organisations in Lebanon.

It is not surprising that the Kuwaiti rulers, who are Sunni Muslims, have become a target for reprisals. The Kuwaiti regime has always taken a hard line against Shiite militants, and is closely tied to the Western powers.

Both Britain and the USA have used the excuse of protecting Kuwaiti tankers to justify their current warship patrols in the Gulf.

The Western powers have divided and redivided the Middle East for more than a century; they hijacked the whole of Palestine from the Palestinian people; they installed the illegitimate Zionist regime in Israel; they created the sectarian state of Lebanon; they have robbed the masses of the Middle East of their rights; they are the cause of every act of violence and bloodshed. They have no right to preach to the oppressed about terrorism.

TORIES SOW DIVISIONS

Health workers need united action

AFTER months of playing into the Tories' hands, the leaders of the NHS unions are now complaining about the government's attempts to divide the health workers.

Now that the Tories seem set to fund the nurses' pay award in full, the union chiefs fear that they will do so at the expense of other NHS staff. Figures leaked to the press indicate that more than 200 000 ancillary workers and 12 000 professional and technical staff can expect a pay rise of 4.8 per cent. By agreeing to fund the full award to the nurses the government hopes to split the ranks of health workers, and by restructuring and regrading the nursing hierarchy it intends to splinter the nurses too.

'If the government thinks it can divide health workers by buying off nurses it is very much mistaken,' stated Cohse official Colm O'Kane. In fact the Tories have every reason to be confident. Union leaders like O'Kane have greatly aided the government's divide-and-rule strategy through their special pleading approach. From the start of the health dispute, the officials emphasised that the issue at stake was not health workers' pay but funding of patient care. They depicted nurses as ministering angels who deserved more charitable treatment, highlighted the special needs of particularly skilled sections of the service, and left the mass of ordinary nurses, technical and ancillary staff on the sidelines. This was an invitation to the Tories to pursue their divisive pay strategy. Now that the government has accepted the invitation, and the unions leaders' approach has divided and demoralised the opposition, they are accusing the Tories of not playing fair.

How can we challenge the divisions among the health workers and unite our forces against the Tories? The answer is by emphasising what we all have in common — the need for a big pay rise and for a big improvement in working conditions. A set of demands to maintain decent living standards and working conditions could provide the basis for overcoming the divisions that have long paralysed effective action in the health service. Unity around such demands could mobilise a powerful force against the Tories. If a million health workers were united, Thatcher would soon be compelled to concede to our demands.

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Pandora Anderson

'UNPLEASANT': ROY HATTERSLEY

LABOUR'S LEADERSHIP CONTEST

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

What is the election contest inside the Labour Party about?

Tony Benn insists that his challenge to Labour leader Neil Kinnock is about 'policies, not personalities'. Yet his most frequently expressed complaint is against the 'autocratic' style of the Kinnock leadership team. John Prescott, on the other hand, makes no bones about the narrow basis of his challenge to Kinnock's right-wing deputy Roy Hattersley. It is, declares Prescott, not about policies but about personalities — to be precise, it's about the fact that Hattersley is unpleasant.

The insubstantial character of the leadership campaigns reflects the lack of a coherent political strategy on any wing of the Labour Party today.

Benn has begun his campaign by turning in typically stylish performances on television. But the relaxed and assured media-pose which Benn assumes cannot disguise the lack of any content in his campaign. He is keen to complain about Kinnock adopting Thatcher's attitude of 'Tina' — 'There Is No Alternative'. But he is less forthcoming in offering any alternative policies which could refute Kinnock's claim. Indeed, in practice Benn has accepted the logic of 'Tina'. On BBC television on Sunday he admitted that he kept quiet during the general election campaign and allowed Kinnock to monopolise Labour politics, because he believed that this offered Labour its best chance of winning.

MEANINGLESS

Benn's campaign today is not a belated political challenge to Kinnock's leadership. It is simply an attempt to rally the divided and demoralised forces of the old Labour left. Asked what he stands for, all Benn can point to are meaningless generalities about the need for 'democracy' in Britain and lectures about the past. He has plenty to say about the Labour governments of the forties, sixties and seventies, but nothing to offer ordinary people for the nineties. At a time when the capitalist class is organising an unprecedented offensive against our rights and living standards, Benn's rambling tour of the monuments of the British labour movement is redundant.

John Prescott's decision to rejoin the fray and challenge Hattersley says much about Labour today. His campaign has immediately marginalised that of Eric Heffer, Benn's running-mate on the Campaign Group ticket, indicating the hard left's lack of influence.

It has also stirred up the internal conflicts among Labour leaders and exposed the shaky state of the party machine.

Prescott hopes to use his trade union connections to mobilise some block votes against the deeply unpopular Hattersley, as a symbol of the disquiet over the Kinnock clique's shift away from the unions. But Prescott is at pains to point out that he has no political differences with Labour's drift to the right.

Once Prescott declared his intention to challenge Hattersley for purely personal reasons, speculation immediately began about whether other Labour leaders with no distinct political outlook, like shadow chancellor John Smith, would also throw their hats into the ring. Kinnock, meanwhile, has sided with Hattersley, making the deputy leadership election a test of his authority. None of these people has any political differences, because they don't have a meaningful idea between them.

RUMBLINGS

They are all prepared to see Labour adapt further to the Thatcherite climate in British politics. Their argument is about who should preside over that process. The rumblings against Kinnock which underlie the deputy contest suggest that, not only does he lack a political programme to give his party a sense of purpose, but he has not even got the strength of character to hold things together organisationally. Labour has had ineffective political leaders before. But it has rarely been led by people who lack the presence even to keep their own shadow cabinet members in line.

The election contests are a further embarrassment for the Labour Party.

This is not, as Kinnock claims, because they distract attention from the party's alternative to Thatcher. Rather, the empty campaign exposes the non-existence of any such alternative within Labour's ranks. While the candidates continue swapping woolly platitudes and personal insults, Labour's policy lacks any direction and is being dictated by the pull of middle class public opinion. This week the press leaked top-level proposals that will take Labour even closer to the Conservatives, by dropping such paper policies as the commitment to cut unemployment by one million and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

If Labour's election contests are about anything, it is the irrelevance of this party and its internal preoccupations to the real needs of the working class today.

'NO POLITICAL DIFFERENCES': JOHN PRESCOTT



Pandora Anderson

POLL TAX EVASIONS IN SCOTLAND

Poll tax registration forms began dropping through the letter boxes of Scottish households this week. The Scottish TUC (STUC) took the opportunity to launch its latest 'five-stage' campaign against the tax. The 'all-Scottish' campaign includes Labour, Scottish Nationalist and Liberal councillors — the same councillors who voted to send out the registration forms and opposed calls to defy the Tories' poll tax law.

The campaign-by-stages approach is guaranteed to demoralise opposition to the poll tax. The first stage involves a 'return to sender' gimmick, where people are advised to send the form back with requests for more information and enquiries about rights of appeal. The tactic is not designed to stop the implementation of the poll tax. It is simply a ploy to foul up administrative procedure in council offices.

This approach is hypocritical as well as ineffective, a point underlined by a confidential memorandum from Labour-controlled Strathclyde regional council's assessors' department obtained by *tns*. The memo makes clear that the same party which is pretending to oppose the poll tax is piling the pressure on its snooper squads to get results:

'It is essential that the duties allocated be undertaken with the utmost diligence and quite frankly, anything less will not be acceptable or tolerated. Poor and sub-standard work will or may result in termination of employment or withdrawal or reduction of payment.'

In public local Labour leaders posture about opposing the poll tax, in private they are busy knocking the poll tax police force into shape. In their commitment to carry through the dictates of Tory law, Labour leaders will brook no insolence from its victims. The memorandum goes on to point out how local councils intend to use snoopers to gather evidence against individuals and drag them through the courts to get them to pay up.

PRETENCE

The STUC strategy steers clear of any tactic which might bring the official labour movement into a collision with the law. The other stages of the campaign involve asking politicians to amend the poll tax bill for England and Wales in parliament, asking councils to give the minimal cooperation in introducing the legislation, asking churchmen and other dignitaries to front a summer protest jamboree. The official opposition to the poll tax is characterised by its cringing respect for the law and its hypocritical pretence at defiance.

STUC general secretary Campbell Christie admitted that there were differences within the 'all-Scottish' alliance against the poll tax. For instance, the Scottish National Party has raised the possibility of organising a campaign of non-payment of the poll tax. This has caused consternation among the other parties. But given that SNP councillors have capitulated to the law in similar fashion to their Labour colleagues, Christie is 'nonetheless confident of all-party agreement'. When it is a choice between upholding or breaking the law, all sides of his Scottish alliance will opt for constitutionalism against confrontation.

The *Smash the Poll Tax Campaign* is building support for a campaign of non-implementation in Glasgow. The first step is to organise collective resistance to registration. We will be protesting at a meeting of the council's snooper squads on Monday. If you want to get involved in this kind of direct action get in touch with the campaign at: PH8 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow. Come to the lobby at 5pm on Monday 18 April, Borough Court Halls, 40 St John Street, Glasgow City Chambers.

Fran Donald

How to beat it

UNITED action by council workers who are being told to implement the community charge and working class people who are expected to pay it is the only way to beat the poll tax.

- ***ACTION NOW***
Building a campaign of non-implementation does not mean waiting until the tax is about to be levied before we do anything. We must use the registration process to start building opposition to implementation now.

- ***COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE***
Many people will express their anger by destroying registration forms or filling them in incorrectly. But it would be far more effective if people who want to fight the poll tax got together in their own areas to agree on a collective response to registration and to discuss how to build a non-implementation campaign. If we act together we can maximise our impact.

- ***BREAK THE TORY LAW***
A commitment to defy Tory legislation and defend those victimised for non-payment or non-implementation must be the starting point for effective opposition to the poll tax.

- ***NON-COOPERATION***
Council workers drafted in to process poll tax registration should refuse to cooperate. We should demand their redeployment into departments which are understaffed and overworked. All victimisations should be vigorously fought.

- ***DEALING WITH SNOOPERS***
Council workers should release information about when snoopers are going to hit certain areas so that local anti-poll tax groups can organise against them. There are many ways in which we can keep them from coming back. We should be clear that people who accept the blood-money of 40p for every filled-in registration form are making a conscious decision to scab on the working class. They should be treated accordingly.

NEW READERS START HERE

RCP
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

What we fight for



The working class in Britain and throughout the West has suffered a series of setbacks in recent years. These setbacks have strengthened those who argue for moderation, 'realism' and a strategy of defensiveness. The Revolutionary Communist Party takes a different view.

We believe that these setbacks are the responsibility of the old parties and union machines of the official labour movement. In Britain the Labourist tradition has exhausted itself and can no longer relate to even the most modest aspiration of the working class. The exhaustion of Labourism in no way undermines the potential of the working class to change the world.

The RCP is committed to the construction of an independent working class movement. Only a movement which recognises that the interests of workers are irreconcilably opposed to those of the employers can fight effectively in the struggles ahead.

◆

For the RCP, working class politics cannot be reduced to trade unionism or the affairs of the workplace. Workers must take a stand on every issue and express an independent point of view if we are to liberate ourselves. The fatal flaw of British Labourism is that it restricts workers' horizons to economic matters, while it allows the employer class to monopolise political debate. Workers must define every problem from our point of view and fight for the rights of every section of society if we are to constitute a politically independent class.

While the RCP supports the fight for real reform or improvements in the lives of working class people, we believe that no durable gains can be won within capitalism. The RCP argues that the overthrow of capitalism provides the necessary precondition for the liberation of the working class and of society as a whole.

The British state exists to protect the wealth and privilege of the capitalists. The aim of the RCP is the destruction of this institution which maintains the conditions for exploitation. We believe that the state cannot be used for any progressive ends. The attempt to use the 'soft' side of the state — local government, inner-city partnership, police authorities — simply legitimises the state as a whole and thereby strengthens the authority of the main coercive instrument of the capitalist class.

The RCP believes that workers have no nation. British workers share the same interests as the exploited in other countries. British workers have nothing in common with the employers and must resist the appeals of patriotism and chauvinism. As internationalists we recognise that the enemy is at home. Since Britain remains an imperialist power around the world, the only international role it can play is that of the oppressor.

The class struggle is inextricably linked to the struggle against imperialism. The RCP supports all anti-imperialist struggles. Workers who live in the imperialist heartland have a special duty to back those fighting against the British oppressor. Thus we fight for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and for Irish self-determination. We opposed Britain's colonial war in the South Atlantic, and support the return of the Malvinas islands to Argentina. We oppose British and Western interference in the Middle East. We support the destruction of the Zionist state in Palestine and of the apartheid regime in South Africa. We uphold the same principles in every struggle against imperialism. The RCP is a fervent opponent of all forms of British militarism, nuclear, and 'non-nuclear' alike.

The RCP believes that the fight against oppression is central to the construction of an independent working class movement. Workers must defend the oppressed if we are to fight for our own liberation. This is why the RCP is wholeheartedly committed to the fight against racism. The struggle for the emancipation of women is another fundamental issue for the working class. We unreservedly oppose any form of discrimination against lesbians and gays and call for the decriminalisation of homosexuality. Workers must take a stand on these issues, not out of altruism, but because it is in our class interest to fight for the fullest extension of democratic rights.

◆

Workers need combat organisations capable of defending our interests. The existing organisations of the labour movement are singularly unsuited for this task. The RCP believes that the Labour Party is a bosses' organisation that should be fought and exposed. Despite its working class constituency the Labour Party has always followed the dictates of the capitalists. Whenever Labour has been in office, it has always betrayed the hopes of workers. The RCP is against giving any electoral support to Labour. Workers need a party that is 100 per cent our own and only responsive to proletarian interests.

The existing trade unions are heavily bureaucratised and incapable of representing the aspirations of their members. The RCP argues that rank and file trade unionists should fight to take control of the movement. Trade unionists should organise across the workplace and industry and demand that we run our own affairs. Rank and file committees organised on an industry-wide basis could ensure that the unions truly belong to their members.

The RCP's aim is social revolution in Britain and internationally. We believe that this perspective is no less essential in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union than in the West. Only the working class has the capacity to liberate humanity. Our job is to contribute practically to the realisation of this objective.

POLICING THE FAMILY

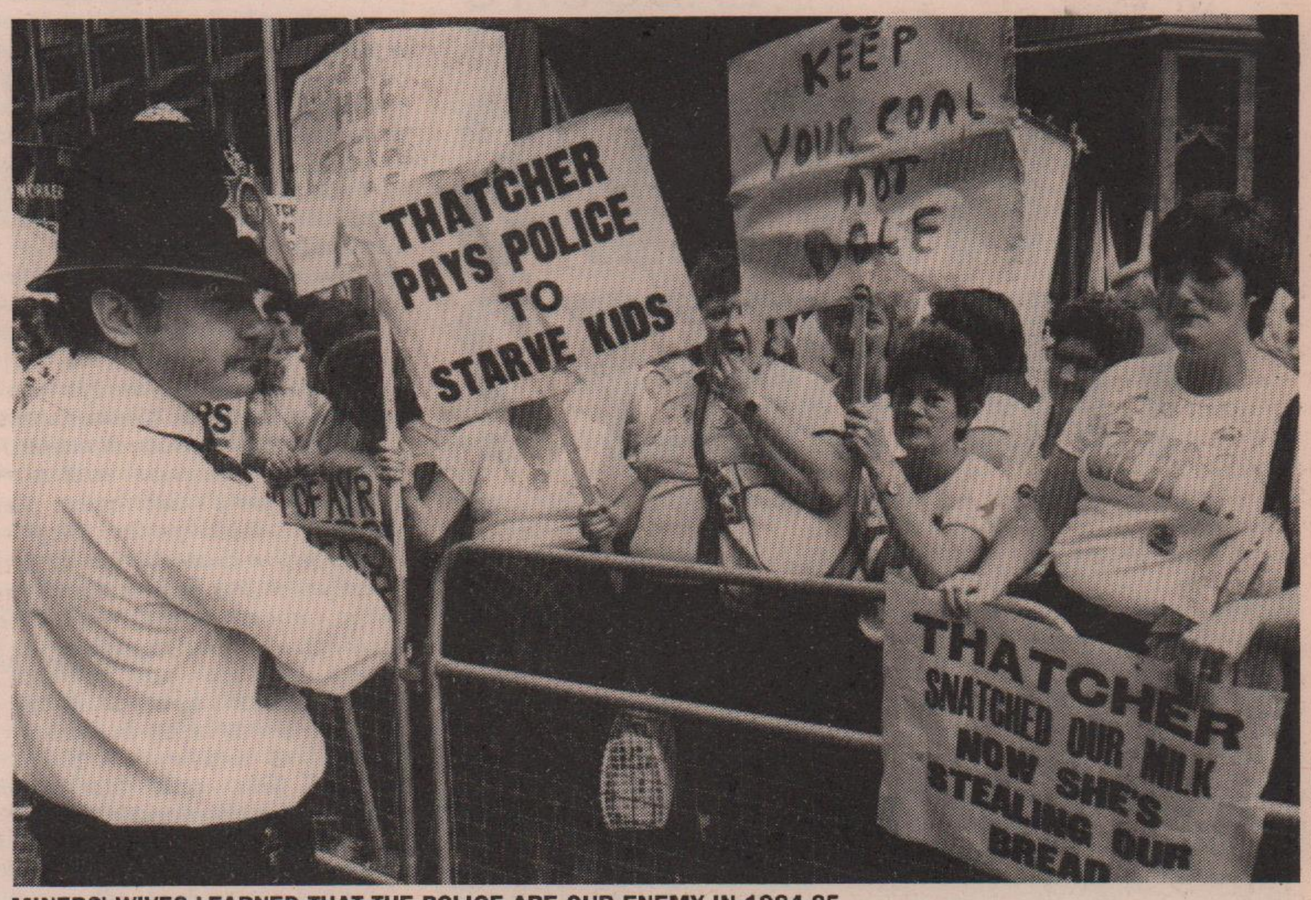
MORALS AND MISCARRIAGES

• 'A woman's place is in the home,' declared Bedfordshire chief constable Alan Dyer last week. 'The sooner some of these women realise that being a housewife is a full-time job,' he went on, 'the sooner we could get some of these lawless children off the streets.' Following in the footsteps of Manchester's moral policeman James Anderton, Dyer has taken it upon himself to be a mouthpiece for Thatcherite rectitude.

By blaming working mothers for the supposedly rising crime rates, the Tories are encouraging people to take individual responsibility for sorting out society's problems. They know that most working class women have no choice but to work to make ends meet, and that it is unrealistic to expect them to give up their jobs to become full-time jail-keepers for their kids. But they are keen to present juvenile delinquency as a problem more pressing even than that of unemployment or poverty, and to encourage parents to develop an unhealthy preoccupation with the moral welfare of their children.

• Mrs Karen Young, a pregnant housewife from Blyth in Northumberland, discovered that staying at home won't protect working class families from police violence. At 6am on 27 March a dozen police officers smashed down Mrs Young's front door with a wooden post while she, her husband Colin and their daughter Sarah Jane were asleep. The police claimed they were hunting for coal supposedly stolen from nearby Bates Colliery which was shut down after the miners' strike. They proceeded to drag Colin out of bed before taking him away, and then set about his wife.

The police pinned Karen Young against a wall by her throat, threw her on the sofa repeatedly and shouted abuse as they pushed her around. She fled to her mother's home, and the house was burgled while she was away. She developed abdominal pains four hours later, was admitted to hospital the next day and miscarried a day later. Her husband has not been charged with any offence.



David Rourke

MINERS' WIVES LEARNED THAT THE POLICE ARE OUR ENEMY IN 1984-85

A WEEK IN THE IRISH WAR

Beginning this week, Mark Reilly will round up events in the struggle for Irish freedom, to help counter the distortions which play an important part in British government propaganda

• **SUNDAY 3 April:** At the annual rally in Belfast to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising, Sinn Fein spokesman Martin McGuinness declared that the IRA would not cease its military activities, 'even for a moment' until it achieved its objective of Irish self-determination, free from British influence.

• **MONDAY 4 April:** Amid speculation that a conference involving all constitutional parties in the Six Counties was on the cards, born-again Loyalist 'moderate' Peter Robinson MP told a rally in East Belfast that 'the coffin, not the conference table' was the place for the IRA.

At the conference of the Irish Distributive and Allied Trade Unions, union leader John Mitchell refused to withdraw his allegations of trade union complicity in relocating industries from nationalist to Loyalist areas of the North.

• **TUESDAY 5 April:** US senator Joe Kennedy, son of Robert, on a tour of Ireland to promote the Social Democratic and Labour Party and to improve his own credentials among Irish-American voters, came face to face with the British occupation. The brief exchange said more about the British state's attitude than the weeks of hot air about progress towards a political solution.
Soldier: 'Why don't you go back to your own country?'
Joe: 'Why don't you go back to yours?'
Soldier: 'This *is* ours.'

• **WEDNESDAY 6 April:** An IRA booby-trap explosion killed a member of the Ulster Defence Regiment near the Fermanagh/Cavan Border. He was the sixth member of the UDR to be killed this year.

Senator Kennedy continued his tour of the Six Counties. Near Derry, a Royal Ulster Constabulary man incensed by his impertinence to the squaddie, grabbed his gun holster rather than shake hands with the American. The Democratic Unionist Party also refused to speak to him. For his part, Kennedy refused to speak to Sinn Fein. But he discovered, as many have before him, that there is no middle ground in the Irish War.

• **THURSDAY 7 April:** A Gibraltan count rejected an amateur photographer's request that police return his film of the assassination of three IRA volunteers by the SAS. State lawyer Ken Harris told the court that it was 'very much in the interests of security that these pictures should not be revealed.... The safety of certain personnel is very much in peril.' Fear of IRA retribution against the British gunmen is very much greater than the possibility of an official inquiry.

A UDR major was injured in a gun attack at Clogher, County Tyrone. Minutes later, shots were fired at an RUC man in the village.

the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party weekly No 14 Editor: Mick Hume

THE PRINCE AND CLASS POLITICS

ON Monday night's *Panorama*, former Tory Party chairman Norman Tebbit attacked Prince Charles for toying with 'dangerous' ideas about unemployment and inner-city regeneration. Tebbit's assault on the heir to the throne shows that the Tories don't care whose toes they tread on in the drive to redefine the acceptable limits of political debate. The government is demonstrating how far it is prepared to go to banish all dissent. We should heed the warning about the sort of no-nonsense opposition that will be required to stop it.

The aggressive behaviour of Tebbit and other top Tories has puzzled many media commentators. In the past, a government in the position now occupied by the Thatcher regime would have been relaxed and confident. After all, it is only nine months since the election in which the Tories won a parliamentary majority of more than 100 seats. Since then, their position has been further strengthened by the collapse of the opposition parties into a state of impotency and turmoil. Yet the Thatchers and Tebbits still feel the need to lash out at all those who question them, as if their backs were to the wall. This is not just a demonstration of Tebbit's bloody-mindedness. It is a reflection of the Tories' understanding that they are operating in new conditions, in which they cannot afford to respect old rules.

Since they came to power in 1979, the Tories have been contending with the chronic weakness of British capitalism. The last Labour government had made a start combating the effects of the recession which set in from 1973, by holding down wages and cutting public spending. But the profit system was in dire straits when Thatcher crossed the threshold of Number 10. The Tories recognised that the capitalist class could no longer afford to abide by the conventions, such as extensive government-employer-union cooperation, which had characterised the post-war British system. They broke from the tradition of class peace known as 'consensus politics', and adopted more direct methods of domination. The trade unions, local government, the unemployed, oppressed groups and anybody else who didn't fit the bosses' bill have since come under the hammer, as the government attempts to rearrange society on terms more advantageous to the weakened capitalist class.

The superficial boom of the past couple of years helped to disguise the deep-seated economic problems facing the British establishment. But it only postponed the day of reckoning. The Crash of last October marked the effective end of that respite, and signalled the drift back towards full-blown world recession. The Tories need to go much further if their class is to weather the storm. This explains the government's increasingly open discrimination against ordinary people and in favour of the capitalists, as demonstrated in last month's budget and this week's vicious cuts in welfare benefits.

Against this background, the Tories cannot afford to rest on their political laurels just because the official opposition has gone into a state of paralysis. They have to create a new and even harsher climate in which they can force through unpopular policies. Thus the Tories need to keep up the attack against all of the old ideas and institutions, to recast the mould of British politics in their own image and stamp the authority of the ruling class on every aspect of society. Their aim is to militarise and brutalise British politics to the point where all dissent from the Thatcherite view can be condemned as unpatriotic subversion.

The Prince of Wales has now joined the growing list of traditionally non-political dignitaries and bodies which the government has sought to bring under its influence. No stone of the old and 'soft' structures of society can be left unturned if the Tories are to build their Brave New Britain on a firm foundation of capitalist common sense. This is why Tebbit and other hardline ministers have spearheaded the attack on traditional pillars of the British establishment which have dared to question their new methods. The Church of England and the BBC have already been savaged. (Tebbit's success in taming the Beeb was reflected in his use of *Panorama*, the primary target of his venom in the past, to launch Monday's anti-Charles campaign.) Now the Tories have gone for the Windsor clan, to make it absolutely clear that nothing can be considered sacred.

What is it about Prince Charles, popularly seen as a sensitive wimp who talks to plants and not to his wife, that has so upset the government? The prince's pet causes are the environment, architecture, and the inner cities. He has begun espousing these causes publicly and in liberal terms. He recently told a meeting of American architects that 'if the money motive for development is the only serious force in urban renewal, then we shall not succeed. Building is about more than just money and market forces.' This sort of speech does not quite qualify the prince for the title of Bolshevik firebrand. A few years ago, it would have been accepted as fair enough on all sides of the house of commons. Today, however, it is viewed with suspicion as a challenge to the Thatcherite orthodoxy.

The crime of Charles has been to imply that unemployment, bad housing and pollution are social problems with social causes, which society has a responsibility to solve. This is anathema to the Tories. They have presented all social problems as symbols of the nation's moral decline, brought about by the crimes of individuals. They have elevated the notion of individual responsibility into an article of faith. It has served as the basis for cutting social and health services, excusing attacks on collective organisations like the unions, and justifying the grab-what-you-can methods of modern bosses.

In the last week alone, Thatcher has attacked unemployed people who are too idle to work for low pay, her social services minister Nicholas Scott has told single parents that their families will now have to support their children, and a police chief has blamed women who go out to work for rising crime rates (see opposite). This is all part of the cult of individual responsibility, blaming the oppressed for their own plight and absolving the system. In suggesting that communities might be more important than an individual capitalist's financial returns, the naive Charles has unwittingly sinned against the new morality. Tebbit rubbed this point in on Monday, suggesting that the prince's 'dangerous' and almost 'socialist solutions' were a product of the fact that the heir was 'jobless' and 'has not been able to take responsibility for anything' himself.

What a Tory animal like Tebbit thinks of a redundant royal like Charles is, in itself, of no interest to the working class. Its significance lies in the signal it sends out about the sort of government we are now up against — one which is playing by new rules and which respects only the laws of the marketplace. The additional problem we face, however, is that the official opposition refuses to recognise how far things have gone. Each time the Tories seek to undermine an established institution, the leaders of the Labour Party rush to defend the ruins of the old order. They have upheld the spurious 'independence' of the Church and the BBC. Now they are defending Charles against Tebbit. In its desperation to hang on to the past practices of British politics, the Labour Party has become a conservative squire to the Prince of Wales. If this is all the opposition we have got, the government is assured of an easy victory in battles like those over benefit cuts and the poll tax.

'It should not be a political issue' was how Labour's rural affairs spokesman David Clark responded to the Tebbit attack on the prince's behaviour this week. This is the voice of the past, which still believes that there are certain things which a gentlemen does not discuss in public. But Tebbit is no gentleman. He is a representative of a capitalist elite which must now politicise every issue on its terms, break all of the old taboos and bring everybody from princes to paupers within the scope of its class struggle for survival. It is a war now, and there is no point asking the authorities to return to the methods of polite diplomacy. We must organise to defeat them.

There is only one perspective from which we can match Thatcher and Tebbit. That is by emulating their contempt for the outdated institutions of British capitalism. We need feel no loyalty towards the BBC, the C of E or, least of all, to the royal family. They are all servants (if temporarily surly ones) of the class which holds us in chains. Our only interest is in defending our people. To do that, we need to organise the working class under its own banners to meet the Tories in a no-holds-barred struggle for power.

The problems facing the working class are social problems, brought about by the exploitative workings of the capitalist system. The solution to them lies through collective action by working class people against the government and the system it protects. There is no room today for sentimentality or nostalgia about the good old days of consensus politics. They weren't good, and they are gone forever. The working class has every interest in breaking free from the stifling constraints of the old consensus which reconciled us to the capitalist order, and in engaging in the sort of open struggle which the Tories now seek. Our class has the power to win that struggle. But only if it fights behind a clear political strategy based on an understanding of what is at stake.

If we join the Labour Party in hiding behind Prince Charles and dreaming of the past, we will lay ourselves open to a sustained assault of which social security cuts are only the first stage. But if we step out into the class struggle and fight for the future, Tebbit and the panicky Tories could really have something 'dangerous' to worry about.

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SOUTH AFRICA

BOTHA—INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST

Photographs of veteran ANC activist Albie Sachs crawling from the wreckage of his blasted car were splashed across British papers last week. Sachs was critically injured by a bomb planted in his car in the Mozambican capital of Maputo. Nobody doubts that South African agents planted the bomb and the apartheid regime has not bothered to issue a denial. The attack is only the latest South African atrocity in Mozambique. Apartheid president PW Botha's MNR terror gang has reduced the poverty-stricken country to a state of starvation and near collapse.

The murderous attack on Sachs is part of a general escalation in South African attacks on opponents at home and abroad. In the face of criticisms from the far right that his government has gone 'soft' on the black resistance movement, Botha has moved fast to reinforce his image as a hardliner.



THE LONG ARM OF THE APARTHEID STATE REACHED OUT AND MAIMED ALBIE SACHS IN MAPUTO LAST WEEK

• Last month South African assassins shot and killed the ANC's Paris representative Dulcie September in a street shooting in the French capital.

• South African hit-squads murdered seven people in neighbouring Botswana over the past month. Most were bystanders shot down or cut to pieces by exploding grenades. The Botha regime has justified the carnage on the grounds that its agents were in hot pursuit of alleged ANC masterminds, Solomon Molefe.

• Last month ANC exile Mazizi Maqekaza was hospitalised in Lesotho with gunshot wounds after a run-in with the Lesotho police in which one of his comrades was killed. The Lesotho government has been openly pro-South African since a military coup organised by the Botha regime overthrew former prime minister Leabua Jonathan. Police guarding Maqekaza in hospital placed his bed beneath a large window, making it simple for South African assassins to execute him in a burst of automatic gunfire later that night.

• In a parliamentary statement which was blunt even by South African standards, law and order minister Adriaan Vlok admitted that 105 people have died in police custody over the past year. Fifty of these were said to have committed suicide — a euphemism for detainees murdered under interrogation — while eight were allegedly shot 'attempting to escape'. These figures were released the day before the South African police force celebrated its 75th anniversary in a blaze of publicity. Botha is now more concerned with boasting a hardline image at home than with cleaning up his brutal reputation abroad.

Despite the embarrassment its brutality sometimes causes its allies in Europe, South Africa is likely to continue its campaign of terror against opponents of apartheid. Besides a few token complaints from European governments, Botha can rest assured that there will be little comeback whatever he gets up to. There are even suspicions of collusion by Western governments in atrocities like the shooting of Dulcie September, for which nobody has yet been apprehended by the French police. The Botha regime remains the ultimate guarantor of Western investments and influence in southern Africa and no Western government wants to undermine its capacity to police the region.

Russell Osborne

Deportation battles in West Germany

FIVE West German flight personnel working for Lufthansa are trying to establish a legal right to refuse to assist in deportations. The five, members of the transport workers' union OTV, refused work on flights used to deport refugees from West Germany to their country of origin. Their union is now backing a suit in the Labour Court, seeking a ruling which will allow them to refuse to work for reasons of conscience.

Lufthansa flies many deportees and extradited prisoners out of Germany. Security personnel put the victims of German immigration law on the planes, often forcibly. The Lufthansa employees suspect that deportees are imprisoned and persecuted when they are dumped back in the countries from which they sought to escape. Many are arrested and taken away immediately upon landing — few are ever seen again. The Lufthansa personnel want nothing to do with this inhuman process, and are seeking protection against victimisation.

Meanwhile, West German interior minister Friedrich Zimmermann has drafted proposed changes to the immigration rules which will mean more handcuffed passengers on Lufthansa flights to the third world. Zimmermann's proposals centre on the idea that the 'public interest' must always come before the 'affairs of foreigners' — that is, the West German state has the right to do as it sees fit with immigrants.



AUF WIEDERSEHEN?

'DEGRADES'

Under Zimmermann's draft plan the 'right to settle' would no longer be the automatic consequence of a certain length of stay in the country, but would be the exception. After an immigrant had lived in West Germany for up to eight years, the authorities would decide whether he could stay or be deported. Only children under six years of age would have the right to join their parents in West Germany; the authorities could use their discretion to decide the fate of those aged between six and 16.

Zimmermann also wants to extend the list of reasons for deportation, to tighten up state control over immigrants. Anybody who 'degrades' the Federal Republic or the 'constitutional organs of the state or the laender' could be deported. Immigrants who have claimed unemployment benefit for more than a year are also in danger; until now only those living on benefits permanently have been liable for deportation.

It all adds up to a charter for more deportations and tighter political control over the lives of immigrant communities. Zimmermann's plans are likely to cause another row in the coalition government. But whatever the fate of these specific proposals, they certainly indicate the increasingly racist direction in which the West German state is moving.

Fenna King



GORBACHEV: 'GUARANTOR'

No peace in Afghanistan

As we go to press, it appears that an agreement to withdraw 115 000 Soviet troops from Afghanistan might be signed on Thursday. Afghanistan and Pakistan would sign the accord, with the Soviet Union and the USA as 'guarantors'. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev says that his troops would begin to leave on 15 May.

No real headway was made during the past six weeks of negotiations in Geneva, but the Kremlin has been trying hard to salvage an accord on troop removal by the 13 April deadline. The USA has been the most intransigent participant in the talks, reflecting its reluctance to lose the propaganda advantage provided by the presence of the 'evil empire' in Afghanistan. Even if the signing comes off, a lasting settlement seems beyond reach.

Firstly, the unresolved internal conflicts mean that no paper deal can bring peace to the country.

The mujahideen rebels have already denounced the deal because it maintains the pro-Soviet Najibullah regime in power. The resistance fighters, themselves split into seven rival factions, remain united in their opposition to any form of Soviet-influenced government in Kabul. They vow to continue fighting. But if a Soviet withdrawal begins, the conflict between them over the future direction of Afghanistan will undoubtedly increase. The Muslim 'traditionalists' are now talking of bringing back the exiled Afghan king, while the 'fundamentalists' favour a more Iranian-style Islamic republic.

UNSTABLE

Secondly, the strategic importance of this unstable region means that outside interference will continue whether an agreement is signed or not.

If some Soviet troops start to leave, Gorbachev could still send them straight back in if renewed fighting breaks out. Moscow has refused to accept Washington's demand that it stop all assistance to the Najibullah regime after troops come out.

The Americans will not guarantee any accord which denies them the right to arm the mujahideen, whom they see as proxy forces. The US call for 'positive symmetry' reveals that the last thing the White House has in mind is peace. 'Positive symmetry' means that the USA will increase its military supplies to the mujahideen to match continued Soviet deliveries to Najibullah.

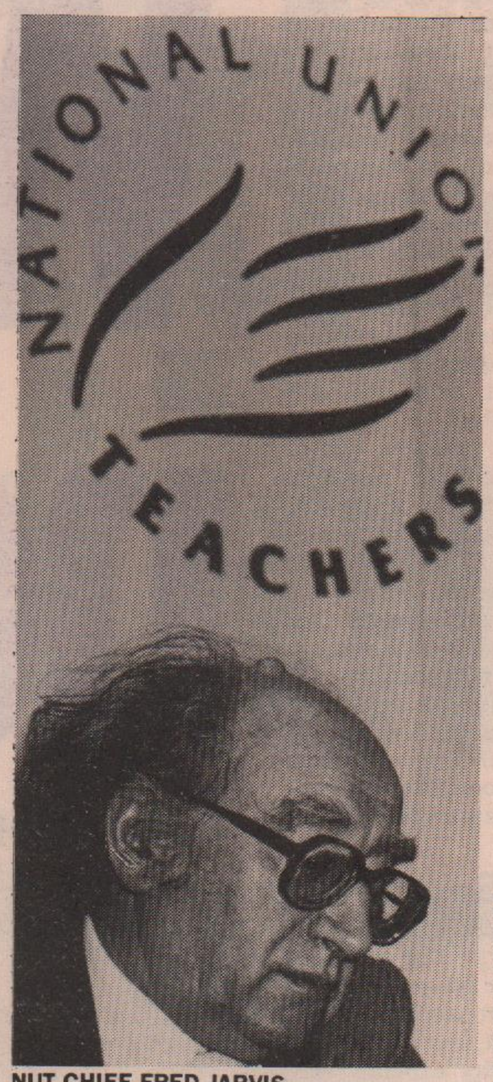
No agreement can paper over the deep cracks in divided Afghanistan and the turbulent region. If anything, the tensions caused by a history of Western domination and exacerbated by the Soviet invasion will increase in the near future.

James Malone

TEACHERS AGAINST THE CLAUSE

I TOOK part in the debate about the Clause at last week's National Union of Teachers' conference. The motion proposing opposition to the Clause was moved by a lesbian teacher who pointed out that, in speaking out at conference, she was putting her job on the line. She received a standing ovation from delegates, and the right-wing leadership of our union found it very difficult to argue for capitulation to the Clause in such an emotionally charged atmosphere. At this point we ran out of time but returned to the debate on the last day of conference.

The motion included a commitment to defend lesbian and gay teachers who come out to their pupils (the issue in the recent Bradford victimisation), or teachers who provide pastoral support to lesbian and gay teachers or who promote positive images. The executive's amendment proposed deleting this. Their alternative was to declare the NUT's opposition to 'discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation' — carefully worded to avoid confrontation with the law. When a vote was taken (by a show of hands) many of us thought we had defeated the amendment. But the chair declared that it had won. We could have demanded a card vote, but with only a couple of hours of the conference to go we would not have got the result in time to vote on the main motion, and the result would have been no policy at all. The decision was, therefore, accepted reluctantly and we voted on the main motion, which now consisted of the executive's amendment.



Pandora Anderson

NUT CHIEF FRED JARVIS

Only about six delegates voted against.

Should we call this a victory or defeat? Only few years ago lesbian and gay delegates were slow-handclapped at an NUT conference in Jersey, where homosexuality is completely illegal. Last week the fringe meeting on the Clause and speeches in the hall convinced many moderate teachers to vote against the executive's amendment, and we came within a hair's breadth of a policy of non-cooperation with the Clause. There are plenty of teachers who want to fight. No doubt between now and next Easter there will be many occasions when we will find it necessary to do so. Activists have to campaign among teachers to make sure that we win the battles our leaders don't want us to fight.

Jenny
Leeds

IRELAND: NORTH AND SOUTH

THE crisis in Anglo-Irish relations has once again confronted Southern Irish people with the reality of war in the North of their island. The contradictory reactions to this crisis have demonstrated the confusion and ignorance which reigns here after 19 years of conflict.

The shelving of the Stalker/Sampson report and the rejection of the Birmingham Six appeal stirred up an undercurrent of anti-British feeling, which was further aroused by the shooting of Aidan McAnespie and the assassination of the three IRA volunteers in Gibraltar. Yet these feelings have, for the most part, been channelled by the Haughey government into support for the Free State's diplomatic manoeuvres with the British, and have been largely dissipated in the wake of the killing of the two British soldiers in Andersonstown.

The average Southerner is almost as oblivious to the day-to-day realities of war in Northern Ireland as are the majority of British people. Free State censorship and propaganda have ensured that the conflict appears as an endless catalogue of senseless acts of violence, divorced from the pressing economic problems experienced by working people in Dublin, Cork or Limerick.

This indifference was challenged by recent events, first because of the manifest injustice and arrogance of recent British actions, and second because this injustice and arrogance seemed to be directed indiscriminately against *all* Irish people, whether they be 'guilty' or 'innocent' of resistance to the imperialist domination of their country.

The reaction here has varied from anger among ordinary people to whines of injured innocence from establishment pundits. Yet because these varying reactions are underpinned by a common partitionist mentality, Haughey has been able to channel them into support for 'this country' in its dealings with Big Brother next door. It is thus but a short step from the confusion of ordinary people to the hypocrisy of the Fianna Fail government. Take the Gibraltar shootings: three IRA volunteers are 'neutralised' by the British forces; and at the same moment they are 'neutralised' too by our Free State politicians. Alive, they were three 'terrorists' who would have been liable to harassment or imprisonment by the Free State: dead, they become just 'three Irish people', over whom we may shed a tear, as we huddle up to our legitimate representatives in Leinster House.

There is a dire need here for a political perspective which can cut through this shabby sentimentality and expose the roots of the problem: Britain's domination of Ireland, North and South.

Joe Connolly
Dublin


Joe Boatman

FUNERAL OF THE GIBRALTAR THREE

KENYAN MATATUS CRISIS

IT is a testimony to the retarding influence of imperialism in Africa that a bus boycott by freelance van drivers can result in a national crisis. The impact made by the matatus strike here in Kenya is an example of the backwardness that is the legacy of British colonialism.

The matatus are forms of transport which compete with the pathetic Kenya Bus Service (KBS); they range from the smallest of vans to mini-coaches. Vans are fitted with planks of wood to serve as benches. They operate all over Kenya and are owned by anybody who wants to make extra cash. They are relied upon very much given the poor service offered by the KBS in the cities, and the non-existent service in rural areas.

They do not operate a standard fare system. You can pay one price for going to B and another for getting back to A — faced with a walk averaging 15 kilometres most people don't complain. They cram in as many people as possible, and drive at record-breaking speeds to boost profits. They drive recklessly, overtaking in the wrong lane, and brake suddenly if someone flags them down for a lift. Official statistics say 200 lives have been lost since the start of this year: often rural accidents go unreported.

With the elections approaching the government was under pressure to do something about this mess. It proposed a test for all matatus drivers, but given that driving licences can be had at the right price from the authorities, this was seen as a sick joke by most people. But the biggest joke of all was the way the matatus owners turned the tables on the authorities by taking their vehicles off the road. Consequently, on 14 March, there was a countrywide strike. The result was chaos.

That evening president Daniel Arap Moi announced that 13 new buses would be put into service in Nairobi — what about the rest of Kenya?

Edith
Mombasa, Kenya

AGAIN ON AIDS

TUNDE (letters, 8 April) still misses the point of our position on Aids. Did the Aids virus originate in Africa? The answer is we don't know. On the evidence published by scientists and researchers in the field between 1982 and 1987 it appears likely that it did. However, new findings may well prove otherwise.

Speculating about the likely origin of the virus has never been central to our understanding of the epidemic or our political activity on this issue. First, we have argued consistently that the risk of the spread of the disease among heterosexuals in Europe and North America is minimal. Second, we have argued that the government message that 'everyone is at risk' is calculated to intensify hostility towards homosexuals and increase state repression against lesbians and gays.

On both counts we continue to be proved right by the findings of government epidemiologists in North America and Europe, and by the mounting offensive against homosexuals. Aids and HIV infection continue to be concentrated among gay men, intravenous drug users, their partners and babies. There is no sign of the disease spreading outside of these high-risk groups.

Finding out where and how Aids originated will provide vital assistance to the scientists searching for a cure, but for the moment it must remain a matter of speculation. Challenging the oppression of homosexuals will do more than anything right now to slow down the spread of the disease here, and that requires immediate political action. It must mean stepping up the fight for the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

Don Milligan
London

THE CLAUSE AND CENSORSHIP

TORIES on Haringey council are demanding the closure of Reading Matters bookshop under Section 28 of the Local Government Act which bans the 'promotion of homosexuality'.

The witch-hunt against Reading Matters began when the *Sunday Telegraph* said that the bookshop 'encouraged children to read anarchist cartoon books and homosexual propaganda'. The *Sun*, the *Star* and the *Daily Mail* embroidered the story still further. As a result the shop received phone-calls and letters threatening fire-bombs. In March somebody smashed the plate glass windows.

The fact that that a local bookshop has been singled out as a 'homosexual group' because it stocks books dealing with lesbian and gay relationships is a measure of the climate of reaction we are now living through. The fact that Reading Matters is threatened with closure under a section of an act which is not yet in force is a warning of the scale of the attacks we can expect when Section 28 comes into effect at the end of May. It's not just our right to read that's under attack, but our right to express our sexuality. We won't stop until we decriminalise homosexuality and establish the right of lesbians and gays to equal treatment.

Michael Fryer
Haringey

Write to *tns*, BCM JPLtd, London, WC1N 3XX



the propaganda war



Why Thatcher is an Ozalite

WHAT was Margaret Thatcher doing spending three days in Turkey last week? After all, Istanbul is normally a one-night stand at most on the itinerary of diplomatic high-fliers. And Turgut Ozal isn't exactly Mikhail Gorbachev.

It was the first official visit to Turkey by a British prime minister since Winston Churchill went there in 1943. The media made much of the amity in British-Turkish relations, making out that Thatcher had forged a deep bond of friendship with Ozal. But what really brought Thatcher to Istanbul was business not bonhomie. As for Ozal, he was keen to find an ally to back Turkey's application for full membership of the EEC.

Thatcher was chasing contracts for British business, and being none too subtle about it. Dropping a heavy hint about her hopes to see a British firm get the contract for the third Bosphorous bridge (a Japanese consortium built the second one), she told a banquet held in her honour that 'building bridges is one purpose of my visit.' As well as trying to tie up a £200m deal for Rapier missiles, Thatcher was pushing for British firms Marconi, Plessey, Racal and British Aerospace to get the contracts to update the Turkish military's radar fire-control systems and radio-communications. She was also keen to clinch deals for drainage and water supply projects, and a $250m job to drive a nine kilometre expressway through Istanbul's city centre.

HOMAGE

So eager was Thatcher to fill her order books that she was prepared to forget the historical enmity between Britain and Turkey. She even hailed Turkey's founding father Mustapha Kemal Ataturk as 'one of the towering figures of history', and paid him homage at his tomb in Ankara. Kemal Ataturk once was to Winston Churchill what Muammar Gadaffi now is to Margaret Thatcher. As the leader of the Turkish nationalist movement after the First World War, he was the bogey of the British Empire.

Before the First World War the West tried to carve up the Turkish Empire, which sided with Germany when war broke out in 1914. The Turks were defeated on all fronts with the exception of the Dardanelles, where Ataturk led the forces which stopped a British-led invasion and killed thousands of Australian troops at Gallipoli. This humiliation led Churchill to resign from the cabinet. It was only the start of Britain's problems.

The British occupation of Constantinople (Istanbul) after the war revived Turkish nationalism. Led by the hero of Gallipoli, the Kemalists established an alternative capital in Ankara, abolished what was left of the old Ottoman Empire, and declared a republic in 1923. All this was forgotten last week, when the only memories evoked were of Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War, when British and Turkish soldiers fought on the same side against the Russian Tsar.

Ataturk embarked on a vigorous process of secularisation designed to bring Turkey into line with the rest of Europe. In Turkey last week Thatcher endorsed Ataturk's claim that 'the Turks have walked from the East in the direction of the West.' The British were the staunchest opponents of this process when the Turks were allies of Germany. However, now that British leaders think they can gain from closer ties with Turkey, Thatcher has nothing but encouragement for Ozal's overtures to the West.

ALIGNMENT

As far as Thatcher is concerned, Europe no longer ends at the Bosphorous, the water-way which according to the atlas separates West from East. Since last week the British foreign office says that Europe now ends at Turkey's eastern borders with Soviet Armenia, Iran and Iraq. But the only significance the Bosphorous has for Thatcher is that it needs a third bridge. And the reason why Thatcher prefers Turkey to be aligned with the West rather than the East is because she wants it to award the Bosphorous contract to Britain rather than Japan. 'Even though our countries stand at opposite ends of *our* continent,' effused Thatcher, 'I want to see Britain and Turkey reach out *across* Europe to establish a new partnership for the future.'

As a *quid pro quo* for being first in the queue for lucrative contracts, Thatcher had to make encouraging noises about the Turkish application for full EEC membership, praising its indispensable role on Nato's eastern Mediterranean flank. She turned a blind eye to the Turkish regime's grim record on human rights, and even had a formal audience with the Turkish president and former general Kenan Evren, who seized office at the army's bidding in 1980. Thatcher intimated that Turkey's lack of democracy and torture of political prisoners were not barriers to Western approval. To ram this point home Thatcher toured Istanbul's army headquarters. The British entourage even refrained from chastising the Turkish press in public, after they rampaged across the Crimean War cemetery separating Thatcher from her security cortege and her husband Denis.

In the late nineteenth century the British Empire ruled supreme and the crumbling Ottoman Empire was ridiculed as the 'sick man of Europe'. In the late twentieth century Thatcher chokes on chemical fumes opening a gasworks in Ankara in a bid to clinch contracts to overcome the malaise of British capitalism.
Helen Swift

REPORT FROM

Why W new o

Frank Richards explains how every event in the class struggle today points to the need for a revolutionary party

After the stock market crash of October 1987 a deceptive calm prevails on the economic front. The malaise of capitalist industry continues. Big business has tried to avoid facing up to its problems by engaging in speculative ventures. Credit has become an indispensable mechanism for keeping the system going. Sooner or later some painful adjustments will have to be made. At present the consensus is that change should come later rather than sooner, and it appears that the hard decisions will be postponed until after the US presidential election.

The economic recession cannot be postponed out of existence however. Fluctuations in currencies and share prices are symptomatic of the underlying volatility of the capitalist system, despite the appearance of outward calm. One important indicator of the superficial character of the economic lull is the massive influx of capital into the Japanese stock market. Even in Japan, the most dynamic capitalist power, speculation rather than real investment in industry is the order of the day.

RUTHLESS

For all its confident talk, big business is jittery. The capitalist class fears for the future because it understands that another crash could happen at any time. This sense of insecurity explains why the employers are so ruthless in the pursuit of their profits.

In Britain the Thatcher government has demonstrated that it will stop at nothing to defend its class interests.

In recent months Thatcher has taken important steps towards redistributing resources from the working class to the employers. The budget, social security cuts and attacks on services are all designed to strengthen the competitive position of her class. The new proposals on privatisation and the recent blows inflicted on the unions have the same aim. If this trend continues we will enter a new stage of mass unemployment and reductions in living standards.



THATCHER CANNOT AFFORD TO COMPROMISE WHEN THE FUTURE OF BRITISH CAPITALISM IS AT STAKE

Ironically, it appears that the steps taken by the Thatcher regime to strengthen the position of British capitalism are not going to be enough to do the job. British business is not even remotely competitive and is much too heavily dependent on services and the financial sector. It is therefore inevitable that the present wave of attacks on living standards will be superseded by a more protracted and far-reaching assault on the working class. We are living through the early stages of the capitalist offensive.

To defend its privileges the capitalist class requires more coercive laws and a more authoritarian political climate. In the period ahead every civil right which has long been taken for granted will be called into question. The economics of Thatcherism demand a culture of repressive morality, the institutionalisation of coercion and a permanent law and order alert.

FUDGE

Many of the government's opponents have been stunned by Thatcher's audacity. Her inflexible and brutal assertion of the narrow class interests of the employers has surprised those accustomed to the old British way of compromise and fudge. As a result, many people on the left consider Tory policies to be irrational. There is a widespread belief that today's attacks are the product of petty vindictiveness on the part of a selfish group of Tory hardliners.

Such a confused response is not surprising. The government's opponents have accepted the Tories' economic propaganda. They too believe that the economy is strong and that business is booming. If you believe in the British economic miracle then it would appear that Thatcher's miserliness is not dictated by economic crisis but by personal spite. From this perspective only individual malevolence can explain the inegalitarian budget or the squeeze on benefit payments.

The left's failure to appreciate the profound structural problems of British capitalism has led the government's critics to base their opposition to Thatcher on a critique of her selfishness.

THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

We need a opposition

The denunciation of the government as 'greedy' or 'wicked' is misplaced. It implies that another politician or another party could act in a different way. It locates the problems confronting the working class in the psychology of the Tory Party leader rather than in the economics of British capitalism. This confusion is not only misguided, it also leads to political paralysis — because it holds out the hope that if only those in power were less wicked and more benevolent then we could all live happily ever after in a caring, sharing Britain.

SENTIMENTAL

The British left lives in a dream-world, deluding itself that the alternative to the confrontations of the present lies in the conventions of the past. In fact, this is the main theme of the Benn-Heffer leadership campaign inside the Labour Party. Benn's sentimental attachment to the good old days dominates all of his speeches. In contrast to what he portrays as the authoritarian political styles of Thatcher and Kinnock, Benn even had a few good words for the old Tory Party in his speech at Basildon last week:

'Mrs Thatcher has set out to destroy the Conservative Party of Churchill, Macmillan and Heath and re-establish it in her own image — harsh, repressive and unjust — centralising and strengthening the power of the state to silence and crush any dissent and destroy all opposition.'

The rehabilitation of such fiercely anti-working class politicians as Churchill, Macmillan and Heath is the consequence of Benn's reluctance to face up to the realities of today's situation.

The conclusion which the government's opponents refuse to countenance is that there can be no return to the past.

The decline of liberalism and the rise of authoritarianism are symptoms of a society that is increasingly polarised. It is precisely because the capitalist class can no longer afford to compromise that so many of its policies appear brutal and greedy. Instead of fantasising about the fifties and sixties, we have to prepare for a protracted offensive, greater polarisation and more intensive class conflict.

UPHEAVAL

Despite the climate of political reaction, more people have involved themselves in struggle in the past few months than at any time since the miners' strike. Nurses, miners, carworkers and seamen are only the most prominent examples of workers involved in industrial disputes and other forms of action. At the same time there has been a series of well-attended demonstrations over issues such as the Alton Bill and the Clause. This response indicates that a significant section of society is prepared to fight and is ready to consider radical alternatives.



LIVING IN THE PAST: BENN AND HEFFER

The positive potential shown in the recent struggles provides Marxists with a new audience for their ideas. But this potential radicalisation will not develop spontaneously. The experience of the past few months reveals that any movement of resistance faces major political obstacles, which it must overcome if it is to be effective.

The main problem evident in all the recent protest movements has been the influence of conservatism. This conservative political climate is not new. But there is one feature of today's mood that is a development on the past: the acute awareness of the lack of an alternative to the ruling political orthodoxy.

ABSENCE

Since the June 1987 general election even the semblance of political opposition has collapsed. During the past nine months the Labour Party has been conspicuous by its silence. The union leaders have devoted most of their energies to avoiding confrontation, and have made it clear that they are not prepared to take on Thatcher. This manifest absence of any alternative has had the effect of strengthening the mood of conservatism in recent months.

We should be aware that never before this century has there been such a vacuum in parliamentary politics.

The lack of a tangible alternative has meant that the struggles of the past few months have been fragmented from the start. The reluctance of the official labour movement to get involved only confirmed the worst fears of every political activist. It did not prevent people from fighting, but it did encourage them to moderate their demands and their action. For the first time in living memory the class struggle has lacked a political focus — even a Labourist one.

Without a political focus, the resistance petered out. The disintegration of the NHS campaign showed that even having public opinion on your side is no substitute for having a coherent political alternative. Predictably, even those who fought back became influenced by the climate of conservatism and low expectations.

DWINDLED

At the individual level these problems registered most acutely. The most angry and active sections of our class soon discovered just how isolated they were. Many activists in the NHS soon discovered that with each week that passed the numbers prepared to fight dwindled. At the outset they felt they were part of a movement, but by the end they were painfully aware that they belonged to one of several small groups of individuals.

For many activists, involvement in struggle has become synonymous with isolation. The very act of fighting back has highlighted the difficulties involved in resistance. There is a danger that the positive experience of fighting could turn into a negative conclusion that nothing can be done. The other danger is that having sensed isolation once, activists will moderate their objectives in an attempt to close the gap between themselves and their colleagues.

COHERENT

In the present climate it is vital that we project a full and coherent alternative. Our experiences in the NHS dispute, in other strikes and in the Alton and Clause campaigns confirm that we must promote the Revolutionary Communist Party as an alternative and not simply relate to the specifics of the struggle.

Those involved in struggles do not merely have to consider the specifics of their experience — they have to weigh up the broad political questions.

'Is there an alternative?' 'Will anybody fight for us?' The way in which individuals conduct themselves in specific struggles is determined largely by their assessment of broad political patterns. In recent months it has become clear that the absence of a broad political alternative has influenced the course of every single movement of resistance.

The main job of the party in its public work is to shield individual activists from the negative effects of their isolation. This is possible only if we provide our audience with a broad analysis of the present period so that individuals can situate their experiences and make sense of them.

FOCUS

We should appreciate that in every situation that people find themselves in today, they will be forced to go beyond the specifics of their own particular experience. In every confrontation people will not be able to avoid the fact that the working class has no organisation of its own that is prepared to fight. Every individual militant, every group of workers, will have to think about what it means to have to go it alone. The role of the party in this situation is to provide a focus through which the experience of specific struggles can become the property of the working class as a whole.

At a time when the general trend on the left is to look backwards and to equivocate on all the major issues, revolutionaries must point out the dangers of this approach. As a party and as individuals, supporters of the RCP must become the most single-minded advocates of class struggle politics. This is not a theatrical gesture. It is an approach consistent with the growing polarisation of British society, and the only alternative to a futile search for the non-existent middle ground.

Our arguments and politics must relate to the heightened sense of isolation which comes with activism.

The RCP has to show that this is a political problem and like all problems it will yield to a solution. The solution lies with the activists themselves. The revolutionary party is the organisational instrument through which activists can enter into a relationship with each other and cease to operate as isolated individuals.

UNTENABLE

RCP supporters must learn to promote the party as something of direct concern to all those who want to fight. Too often our supporters are inhibited about stating the obvious — that unless we build a revolutionary party, individual struggles are going to remain isolated. In the past, when Labour appeared as a plausible alternative, such inhibitions were understandable. A year ago the argument that Labour was the only realistic alternative for the working class was a difficult one to answer. Today only the most incorrigible Labour hack would attempt to defend such an untenable position.

Instead of being defensive about the need to build a revolutionary party, we should go on the offensive and demand to know 'Who else is going to fight?'

It would be unrealistic to declare the RCP as an alternative to the Tories: real alternatives are forged in the heat of the struggle. At present the RCP is in the business of fighting for an alternative. In practical terms that means we are trying to organise those activists who see the necessity for class politics. The RCP can provide the organisation and the arguments which are a necessity if those who want to fight are going to win the support of others.

RCP supporters have an excellent opportunity to put the party's analysis into action. Our party has a unique grasp of the present situation. Unlike the old British left we understand that there can be no going back to the past, and that there is no prospect of middle-of-the-road options in the near future. The period ahead is one of growing class conflict. Without a working class alternative, such conflicts will be one-sided affairs. But it doesn't have to be that way. If the will to fight is fused with a Marxist outlook on the world then we can put Thatcher and her class on the run.



FORD STRIKERS COULD NOT FAIL TO BE INFLUENCED BY THE CLIMATE OF CONSERVATISM

JAPAN AND THE TIGERS TAKE ON THE WORLD

THE PACIFIC AGE

Daniel Nassim argues that the growing economic power of the Pacific Basin will have a profound effect on global politics

The Pacific is the ocean of the moment. Experts and pundits have pointed to the surge in economic growth there, away from the traditional centres of the capitalist world on either side of the Atlantic. Yet few so far have grasped the political implications of this economic shift.

Japan is at the centre of the emerging new order. The Asian superpower can expect benefits and challenges from the Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) of East Asia known as the 'four tigers' — Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The USA faces stiff competition from these upstart powers and a shift in its own economic centre to the west coast.

It is not possible to predict precisely how these trends will develop, but it is certain that they can only result in a challenge to the world order established in 1945.

The main Pacific economies experienced phenomenal growth in the sixties and seventies, when growth rates for Japan and the NICs never fell below 8.5 per cent per year. In contrast growth rates for the USA, Western Europe and third world countries outside Asia averaged between 2.5 and three per cent. Another indication of the growing importance of the Pacific is the shift of trade flows to the USA. In 1960 US trade with the Pacific region was only half its trade with Europe; by 1980 it was about even; in 1982 it was 109.5 per cent of European trade.



KING

Japan is the indisputable economic king of the region. Its output is roughly the same as the other five regional centres combined (see box). The massive US deficit on trade with Japan is striking proof of the Asian giant's strength. Economic squabbles between Japan and the USA have become commonplace. In the past they focused on trade, today conflict centres on high technology. The USA is already dependent on Japanese microchips to drive its latest computers and, even more alarmingly for Washington, to control advanced weapons systems. American 'techno-nationalists' are now worried about losing their lead in biotechnology, new materials and 'artificial intelligence'.

If Washington is making less of a fuss about Japanese trade, this is simply because it is more concerned about competition from the NICs. Former Democratic presidential contender Richard Gephardt grabbed the headlines when he alleged South Korea indulged in unfair trade practices. He claimed that a Chrysler K car which sells for $10 000 in the USA costs a cool $48 000 in South Korea. American businessmen have good reason to fear the four tigers: their trade surplus with the USA grew by 427 per cent between 1980 and 1987, while the comparative figure for Japan was only 202 per cent.

The Asian NICs are not only a threat to US business, they are a source of anxiety in Europe too.

The EEC's combined surplus is projected to fall to about half of that of the East Asian NICs by 1989. With the US erecting more trade barriers, Asian goods could be diverted to Europe. An OECD study estimates that by next year the exports of the four tigers will be worth 80 per cent of Japan's.

Thailand could soon join the club of booming East Asian states. Its manufacturing industry is now larger than the traditionally strong agricultural sector. Thai workers turn out Nike shoes, Arrow shirts, semiconductors and toys on slave-labour wages, and Thai exports to the USA have boomed over the past year.

The Pacific Age has brought significant changes within the USA, whose industrial centre has switched from the east to the west coast. In 1986 Los Angeles became the top US manufacturing centre. Trade flows between California and Japan and those between California and the NICs are the largest in the Pacific. California's top three trading partners are Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, and eight out of the top 10 are in the Pacific. Signs of California's Pacific connection are most visible in Los Angeles. The city boasts the largest concentration of Japanese, Filipinos and Koreans outside their home countries, and almost 1000 Japanese companies operate there.

INTIMATE

Developments within the emerging economic centres have altered relations between them. On a regional level improved communications and new institutions are developing. The airline market is growing rapidly and a fibre optic telephone network is being laid across the sea-bed. Japan is pressing for the Asian tigers to be allowed to join the OECD, the club that includes the world's richer nations.

Apart from Japan's intimate ties with the USA, it is developing closer relations with its neighbours.

Taiwan and South Korea depend heavily on Japanese parts for their cars and electronic goods. Meanwhile the rising yen is giving Japan a greater incentive to invest abroad. Japanese investment is not only flooding into the NICs but also into many other Asian countries. Japan is the largest foreign investor in Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, and the second largest after the USA in Singapore and the Philippines.

Investment abroad could dramatically change Japan's relationship with the rest of the world. Foreign investment in some of its mineral-rich neighbours — like Indonesia and Australia — helps Japan secure its sources of raw materials. Given the lack of resources on the Japanese mainland this is of particular importance to Tokyo. A recurring nightmare for US planners is the combination of Japanese capital and the vast pool of cheap labour in mainland China.

Japan has also sought to increase its influence through economic aid. This year Japan is set to become the world's largest aid donor, with $10.4 billion going abroad, mostly to Asia. Since its constitution, imposed by the USA after the Second World War, forbids Japan to have military forces far from home, aid is an important mechanism for spreading its influence.

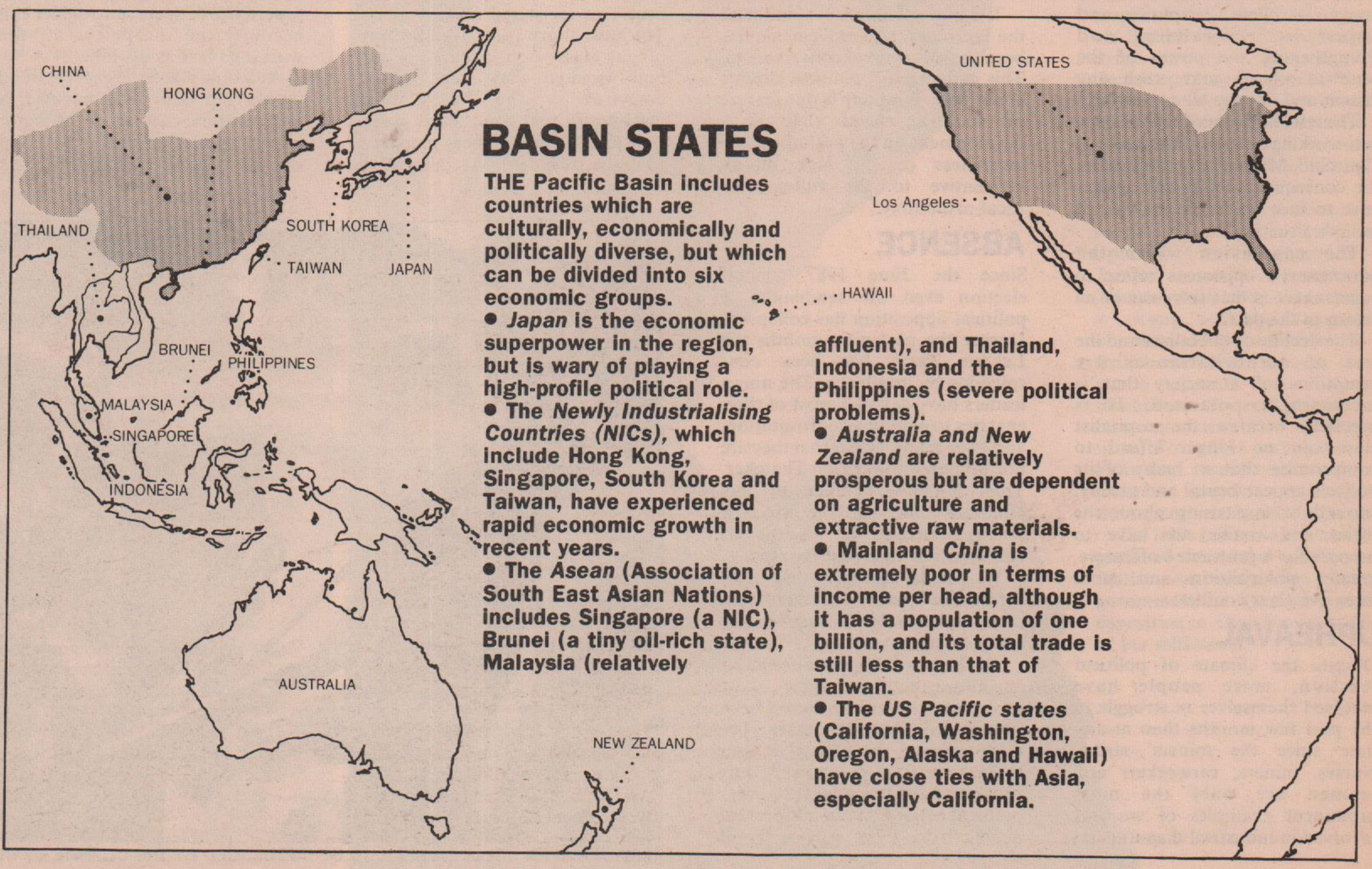
FEAR

But Japan's relationship with its neighbours is far from trouble-free. The most obvious source of tension is straightforward economic competition. Most third world countries stand no chance competing with an economic giant like Japan, but while their strength should not be overrated, the four tigers are potential rivals.

Asian countries have good reason to fear the prospect of Japanese military expansion in the future.

Korea was occupied by Japan between 1910 and 1945, and the 700 000 Koreans living in Japan are denied citizenship rights. Japan also occupied Manchuria in China before the Second World War, and even now some Asian countries look favourably on the USA for driving out Japan during the war. With Japan emerging as the world's third largest spender on defence, after the USA and the USSR, its neighbours are acutely conscious of its other potential strengths.

We cannot anticipate exactly how the complex pattern of alliances and rivalries in the Pacific will develop. But we can say that the emergence of new economic centres will have a profound political effect both inside and outside the region.



BASIN STATES

THE Pacific Basin includes countries which are culturally, economically and politically diverse, but which can be divided into six economic groups.

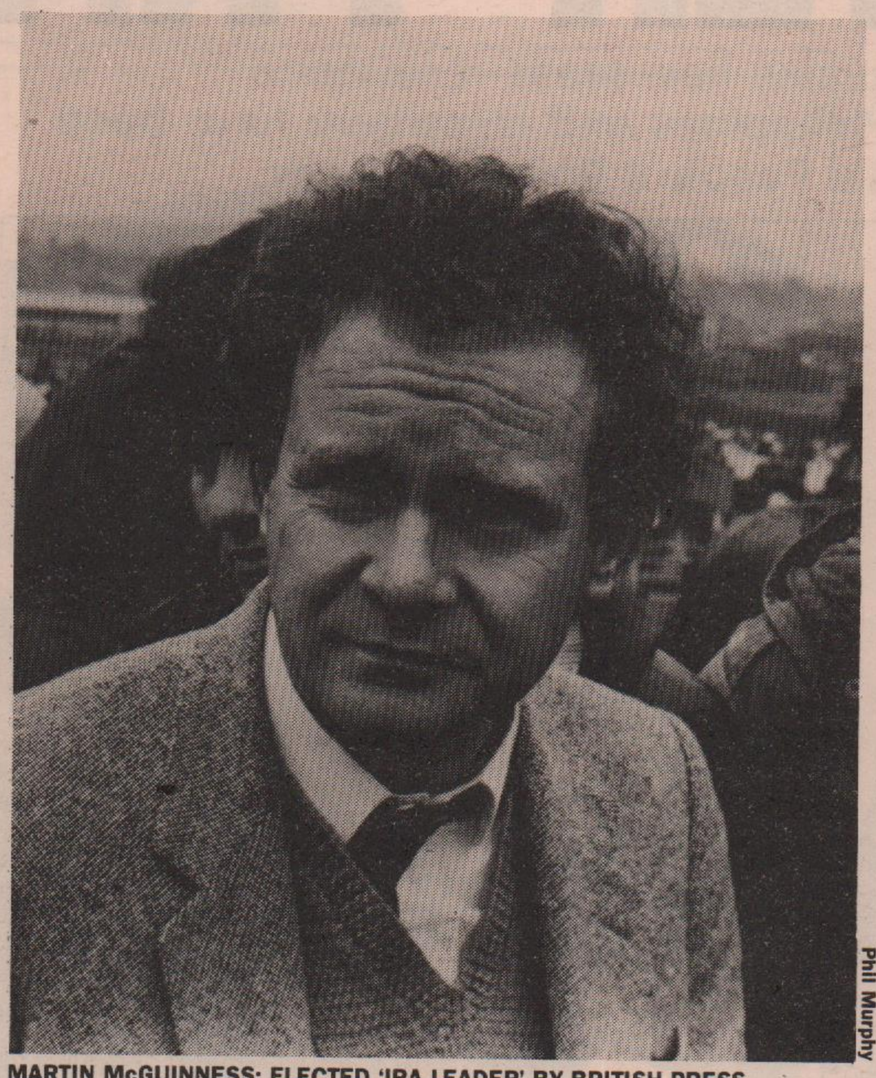
- ***Japan* is the economic superpower in the region, but is wary of playing a high-profile political role.**
- **The *Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs)*, which include Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, have experienced rapid economic growth in recent years.**
- **The *Asean* (Association of South East Asian Nations) includes Singapore (a NIC), Brunei (a tiny oil-rich state), Malaysia (relatively affluent), and Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines (severe political problems).**
- ***Australia and New Zealand* are relatively prosperous but are dependent on agriculture and extractive raw materials.**
- **Mainland *China* is extremely poor in terms of income per head, although it has a population of one billion, and its total trade is still less than that of Taiwan.**
- **The *US Pacific states* (California, Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii) have close ties with Asia, especially California.**

BRITISH MEDIA DREAM OF IRA CEASEFIRE

KITE-FLYERS FOR IMPERIALISM

Mick Hume looks at British attempts to stir up divisions within the Irish republican movement

'Provos join secret talks for end to campaign of terror' announced a recent headline in the *Sunday Times*. The article claimed that, at three meetings held this year, leading representatives of Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party had discussed the conditions for a permanent IRA ceasefire. It also claimed evidence of a serious split within the leadership of the Irish republican movement, between the political 'doves' led by Gerry Adams and the military 'hawks' under Martin McGuinness. The theme has since been picked up and pursued by various British commentators.



Phil Murphy

MARTIN McGUINNESS: ELECTED 'IRA LEADER' BY BRITISH PRESS

TROUBLE

These stories have less to do with reporting facts than with flying kites, to see which way the wind is blowing among Irish republicans. The aim is to make trouble within the republican movement, and encourage a split which might produce a tendency open to reaching some sort of political accommodation with British imperialism.

It is significant that the *Sunday Times* article which set the tone for media comment was written by Liam Clarke, who has a real axe to grind against the IRA. He is a former member of the old Official republican movement, which split from the Provisionals in 1969-70 and has since deteriorated into the moderate and viciously anti-republican Workers Party. Clarke's facts are as foggy as his motives are clear. For example, as evidence of a developing split within the republican leadership, he cites the fact that Gerry Adams has publicly named Martin McGuinness as 'the head of the IRA'. He fails to mention that this was a tongue-in-cheek remark to a small boy at the recent Belfast funeral of IRA volunteer Kevin McCracken — a remark probably directed at the flapping ears of British reporters, in an attempt to wind up the hacks who have often accused McGuinness of occupying that position.

DEMOCRATIC

Leaving Clarke's well-known personal prejudices aside, what is all the kite-flying about? It is part of a well-tested colonial strategy of divide-and-rule which Britain has employed around the world.

During long decades of Empire-managing, British imperialists have become adept at manipulating the tensions inherent in any national liberation movement.

National self-determination is a basic democratic demand over which no one class has a monopoly. This means that many different sections of an oppressed nation can support the demand from different perspectives. Thus national liberation movements are made up of contending class forces. Various wings of the movement will express differing degrees of hostility to imperialism, and have their own aspirations as to what they wish to achieve. Bourgeois nationalists in an oppressed nation may only want to establish a politically independent national capitalist base which can take its place in the imperialist-dominated world order. A working class wing of an anti-imperialist movement, however, would be more likely to view national liberation as only one aspect of a wider struggle for social liberation from capitalist exploitation. The aim of Britain's classic colonial strategy has been to locate and exploit such tensions.

The imperialists seek to split the liberation movement, hoping to draw a moderate wing into a political compromise and make it easier to isolate and hammer hardline elements. Many 'independent' regimes in former colonies were installed in this fashion. The final de-colonisation deal signed by the more pliant leaders of various liberation movements in Africa and Asia was done on terms advantageous to the departing colonial power, over the dead bodies of thousands of militant workers and peasants.

PARTITION

In the past, the British authorities have also had some success in helping to bring about splits within the Irish national movement. Back in 1914, John Redmond's bourgeois wing of the Irish Volunteers bowed to British pressure, effectively accepted the partition of Ireland and gave support to British imperialism in the First World War. In 1916 further conflicts within the Volunteers isolated those who took part in the Easter Rising, including James Connolly's working class Irish Citizen Army. In 1921 the British under Lloyd George ended the Tan War by signing the partition treaty with the compromising wing of the middle class republican leadership. This provoked a civil war, which ended with the defeat of the anti-Treaty forces by the Free State government backed by Britain. The consequences of that split sent militant republicanism to the sidelines of Irish politics, until the crisis of 1969 and the arrival of British troops on the streets led to the emergence of the modern IRA.

The British authorities would dearly love to reach another political accommodation with the opposition today that could end the present phase of the Irish War.

This explains the preoccupation of press and political commentators with kite-flying about splits and fissions in the republican ranks. They are always seeking to cultivate a supposedly 'dovish' wing of the republican movement, and to encourage a shift away from the armed struggle towards more mainstream political activity. In applying this old-fashioned colonial trickery to the Irish War, however, British imperialists are faced with two serious problems.

RESISTANCE

First, the level of resistance among the nationalist community, which sustains the republican struggle. And second, the fact that Northern Ireland's incorporation within the British state rules out the sort of deals done in other colonies.

Today the British pundits have decided to set up Gerry Adams as the man most likely to do a deal. Tomorrow they may well move on and attribute the quality of compromise to some other republican leader. But whoever they pick on as the target of their propaganda, it will make little difference in itself. Even if he wanted to, no individual could corrupt the struggle against British rule while popular resistance remains intact. Take a hypothetical situation where the British authorities manage to find a republican leader willing to accommodate them and ditch the struggle. There is nothing to suggest that he would be able to carry the core of IRA support with him. Every trend in republicanism which has sought to play down the struggle against British imperialism over the past 19 years — most notably the old Official movement — has ended up isolated and discredited among the nationalists of the Northern war zones.

As in any liberation movement, the Sinn Fein leadership is not a free agent. It is the present representative of a collective demand for freedom arising from among ordinary nationalists. Events around the recent negotiations confirm that it is not about to come running at a signal from the *Sunday Times*. The details of the confidential talks between Sinn Fein and the moderate SDLP are, of course, unknown. But at Easter commemoration marches held on the day that Clarke's piece appeared, both Adams and McGuinness sought to make clear that an IRA ceasefire was not on the agenda. McGuinness assured his audience in Belfast that the IRA would not cease its armed struggle 'even for a moment' until Irish self-determination has been achieved.

HOSTILITY

This is what republican supporters want, and expect, to hear. Contrary to reports in the British press, the killing of two soldiers at an IRA funeral has not created any 'wave of revulsion' in republican West Belfast. The people there have learnt that such acts of war are inevitable so long as the British occupation continues. They do not regard the Sinn Fein/SDLP talks as some sort of short cut to ending the conflict, and neither are they prepared to settle for the sort of sham settlement which the British government would like to achieve. Recent polls indicate that 81 per cent of Northern nationalists believe that the Anglo-Irish agreement, the Tories' proudest political achievement in Ireland, has made no difference to their circumstances.

Their hostility to British interference is what brought the IRA into being, and what sustains the struggle.

Faced with similar resistance in its far-flung colonies of old, Britain proved prepared to grant formal independence, on terms which would leave its economic and political interests there more or less intact. But this compromise, often called the 'Zimbabwe solution' is ruled out in Ireland by the second distinctive feature of the struggle; the unique relationship between the British state and its oldest colony.

The Six Counties are incorporated within the 'United Kingdom' itself — that is, within the jurisdiction of the British state. The British ruling class cannot grant unity to Ireland voluntarily on any terms, because it would mean dismantling the existing structures of the British state. This would have important repercussions throughout the 'UK'. It would do irreparable damage to the state institutions which guarantee the authority of the British establishment on both sides of the Irish Sea.

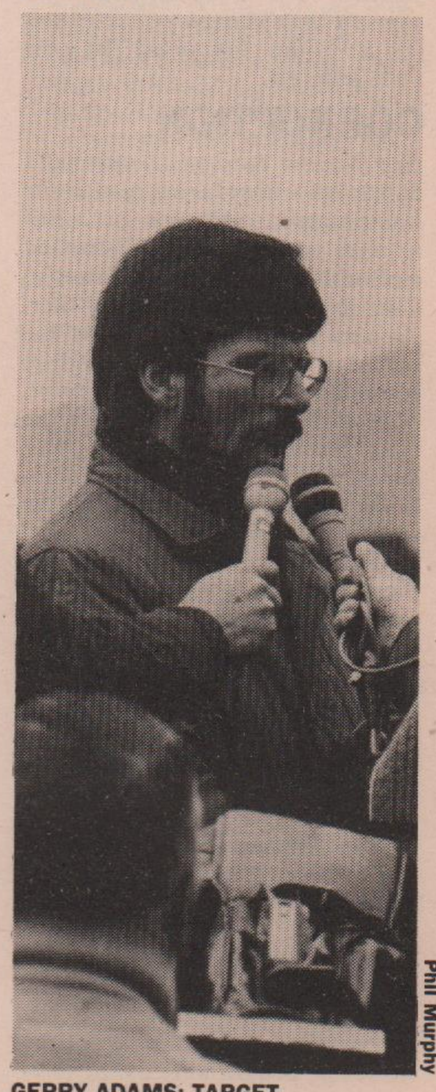
CONTAIN

In other words, whereas withdrawing from overseas colonies was a sufferable blow to the prestige of the British capitalist class abroad, withdrawal from Ireland would represent a mortal blow to its power where it counts most — at home. This is why the British state will not leave Ireland until it is forced out. It closes the door on any compromise political solution, and ensures that the cycle of oppression and resistance will continue.

In these circumstances, the best the British authorities can hope to achieve through their political manoeuvres is to contain the republican struggle.

Their kite-flying about splits and accommodations has a more modest aim than in the past. It seeks to disrupt the republican movement, undermine the morale of its supporters, and hype up the prospects of a diplomatic solution. This approach has helped to limit active support for the republican struggle within Ireland. But it has not succeeded in 'politicising' the war, by drawing hardline nationalists away from the armed struggle.

Any real British success along these lines would be dependent on crushing the spirit of resistance among the nationalist people themselves. And that is a goal which the authorities are no closer to reaching now than they were 19 years ago.



Phil Murphy

GERRY ADAMS: TARGET

FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO SOUTH KOREA

THE 'PEOPLE'S POWER' FRAUD

Russell Osborne explains how mass resistance movements in the Philippines and elsewhere have been derailed by the USA's People's Power strategy.

Filipino president Corazon Aquino has been hailed as a champion of freedom and democracy by Western commentators. As the successor to Ferdinand Marcos, Aquino is said to have transformed a brutal military dictatorship into People's Power, and created a model of Western-style democracy in the third world. The USA's *Time* magazine voted her Woman of the Year in 1987.

People in the Philippines have a radically different perception of Aquino's attributes. For millions of urban workers and rural peasants, People's Power has become a bitter joke. A recent report by Amnesty International compares the brutality of the Aquino regime with that of Marcos, and the 'democrat' does not come off any better than the dictator.

WARLORDS

In the cities the 'salvage' squads which assassinated trade unionists in the bad old days under Marcos have been superseded by official police and army outfits carrying out an anti-communist crusade. In the countryside local warlords still conduct a ruthless campaign of terror against peasants demanding land reform.

The major demands of the mass popular movement which sent Marcos packing — for land reform and for the removal of US bases from the country — are as far from being met as ever.

Most Filipinos eagerly backed the popular movement which swept Marcos from power in 1986. As financial scandal undermined the regime and the guerrillas of the New People's Army began to pose a serious military threat, Marcos' supporters at home and abroad became increasingly anxious about stemming the mounting disaffection and unrest.

The crisis of the Marcos regime had begun in 1983, when the dictator's longstanding rival, Benigno Aquino, returned to the Philippines from exile. Marcos interpreted Aquino's home-coming as a sign of his own impending demise, and in time-honoured fashion had him eliminated on arrival at the airport. Coming after this blatant political execution, open electoral fraud by Marcos supporters in the presidential contest with Aquino's widow Corazon was too much even for a firm Marcos fan like Ronald Reagan. The USA withdrew its support and Marcos was removed in a coup organised by his own generals.

CORRUPTION

The Aquino dynasty traditionally had as little popular support in the Philippines as Marcos did. But with a sophisticated US-backed electoral machine and a powerful Catholic hierarchy behind her, Aquino was able to create the impression that her regime commanded widespread support. Most importantly, she received the tacit backing of the mass popular alliance — the National Democratic Front — which had led the resistance to Marcos.

The Aquino family is well-known for corruption and brutality in the rural fiefdoms which it controls, but the NDF's endorsement of its leading lady lent credibility to the new regime.

The NDF's approval of Aquino encouraged the Filipino masses to put their trust in the new president's vague promises of reform. With a little help from her friends in America, Aquino successfully harnessed popular resentment of Marcos behind a People's Power movement which offered some hope of change.

Instead of experiencing a real transformation of Filipino society, however, people were asked to be content with seeing one ruling elite take the reins from another. A succession of attempted military coups has since led Aquino to move even further to the right in an effort to placate her critics. The concessions which Aquino has made to the generals and rural warlords mean that life for the average Filipino is even worse than it was under Marcos.



GENERAL NAMPHY: THE US IDEA OF A 'DEMOCRATIC' ALTERNATIVE TO BABY DOC IN HAITI

Unfortunately, the Filipino experience is far from unique; from Sudan to South Korea the USA has had a hand in similarly managed transitions.

• Sudan

In 1985, widespread popular resistance to Sudanese president Jaafar al-Nimeiry spurred the army into action. Nimeiry fled to Egypt and new military rulers took power.

• El Salvador

The right-wing warlord Roberto D'Aubuisson was elected head of the national assembly in 1982, but pressure from the USA prevented him from assuming leadership of the country. In 1984 he was defeated by Christian Democrat Napoleon Duarte in the presidential election. In this way the El Salvadorean regime managed to retain a slightly more appealing image, despite the fact that the army never ceased its brutal counter-insurgency strategy. D'Aubuisson's Arena party has recently achieved a majority in the national assembly once again.

• Haiti

Events in Haiti followed roughly the same pattern as in El Salvador. Dictator 'Baby Doc' Duvalier and his associates fled the country in 1986 leaving behind a regime headed by General Namphy and other Duvalierists. After bloody and fraudulent elections, the Namphy regime was succeeded by the equally corrupt regime led by Leslie Manigat, which has resisted the thorough purge of the state demanded by opponents of the Duvaliers. Haiti continues to be ruled by a brutal military, and the USA can rest assured that a takeover by a more popular regime has been averted for the moment.

• South Korea

In the first real presidential election for 16 years, Roh Tae Woo replaced dictator Chun Doo Hwan of South Korea last year. Roh is now being feted as a democrat and defender of civil liberties, but his record tells another story. He is a former general, an ally of Chun and a supporter of the 1979 coup which started the current round of dictatorship.

DEBACLES

All these successful change-overs have depended not on chance but on calculation. Reagan's accession to the presidency precipitated important strategic changes in US foreign policy. Reagan's aim was to avoid a repeat of past debacles in Vietnam, Iran and Nicaragua.

The defeat in Vietnam did great damage to US prestige, the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 was a further blow to American standing, and the collapse of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua in the same year was the final straw. These developments encouraged a rethink by top US policy-makers.

In Vietnam and Iran the demise of the pro-American orders had a devastating impact on the balance of power across entire regions.

The USA did not simply lose individual allies when its puppets were deposed; given that it had been so closely identified with the old rulers, the loss of US influence was complete. Reagan's advisers argued that potentially explosive situations had to be stabilised, by taking pre-emptive action to smooth the transition to a new regime.

In Washington a debate began about how the USA could have prevented Ayatollah Khomeini from coming to power in Iran. The problem for US rulers was not just that the Shah had fled Iran, but that his whole regime had crumbled. It was generally agreed that the USA should have been able to get rid of the Shah without sacrificing the regime. The conclusion of this foreign policy review was that in future the aim should be to hold back mass resistance movements, until such time as a more popular, but pro-American, ruler could be installed.

In the ideal situation, elements from within the ruling regimes would switch allegiances at the last minute and put themselves forward as an alternative leadership. This would guarantee the continuity of the existing state, while at the same time ensuring popular support for a fake opposition.

The experience in Nicaragua, where the USA supported dictator Somoza until the last minute and in so doing accelerated the rise of the anti-American Sandinista regime, reinforced the lesson of Iran. In retrospect, many foreign policy experts argued that had the USA withdrawn support from Somoza and forced him out earlier, the 1979 Sandinista takeover might have been avoided.

Reagan learned the lessons of the Carter era and began to experiment with a new strategy.

This experiment has proved singularly successful, establishing new pro-American regimes in five countries. In all these cases, dangerously unpopular dictators have departed but pro-American puppets remain in place. How did the USA succeed in Sudan, El Salvador, Haiti, the Philippines and South Korea, when it failed in Iran and Nicaragua?

• Sudan

When the Sudanese military staged a coup during Nimeiry's conveniently timed visit to Washington, US officials dissuaded the deposed president from attempting to return to Sudan. They then arranged asylum for him in Egypt and secretly offered their support to the new Sudanese regime.

• El Salvador

Pressure from Washington discouraged D'Aubuisson from taking the presidency of El Salvador in 1983 and tempered the more extreme activities of the death squads. Despite the growing influence of rural guerrillas, the Duarte government managed to keep things more or less under control.

• Haiti

Duvalier's departure from Haiti was the result of sustained US arm-twisting. He and his entourage left for a comfortable foreign exile in a US-chartered plane.

• The Philippines

The Reagan administration was reluctant to see off its loyal ally in the Philippines, but given the vital strategic role of US naval and air force bases at Subic Bay and Clark in the Pacific, it never really had any choice. US officials groomed a replacement regime in readiness for the time when Marcos would have to go. Although Aquino's assassination on his return from exile in the USA upset Reagan's plans somewhat, once it became clear that Marcos could not hold

on to power much longer, Corazon Aquino took her husband's place as head of state. The USA had successfully overseen a hand-over of power from one section of the Filipino ruling class to another.

• South Korea

What really worried US foreign policy strategists about the situation in South Korea was the anti-American character of the opposition to the Chun Doo Hwan dictatorship. The USA came to be seen as the most important prop supporting the Chun regime, and even the more moderate sections of the opposition began to express resentment about US interference in the region. As the demonstrations grew more militant, US officials encouraged Chun to draw moderate oppositionists away from the mass protest movement and involve them in minor parliamentary reforms.

Chun had at first attacked constitutional opposition as illegal and a threat to national security. The collapse of the Marcos regime was a timely warning, and Chun was forced to agree to presidential elections. Chun's hand-picked successor Roh Tae Woo won easily due to a split opposition, electoral fraud and assistance from big corporations like Hyundai and Samsung which mobilised hundreds of thousands of their workers in his support. Roh has already distanced himself from the old dictatorship by adopting mildly populist measures against big business and initiating a campaign against high-level corruption.

GROOMED

In all these situations the USA pursued a twin-track approach. On the one hand it withdrew support from leaders whom it had previously sponsored, on the other hand it groomed a suitable replacement ruler throughout the crisis that ensued and smoothed the departure of the former leader.

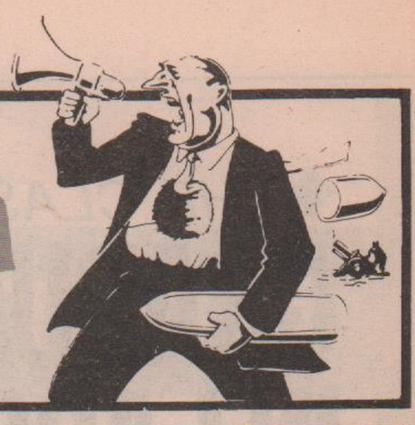
The USA discovered that it was relatively simple to neutralise the popular protests and public debates which accompanied the transition from one regime to the next. Invariably the masses had no organisation through which they could express an independent point of view or organise themselves as a coherent opposition. As a consequence mass resistance was pretty easily contained and channelled into support for new pro-American regimes.

Fortunately the durability of the People's Power strategy is strictly limited. It is only a matter of time before the masses realise that they have been cheated and demand real change as they are now in the Philippines. The next time the question of power is posed the working class must take it. The task confronting the masses of the third world is not simply one of overturning the ruling political clique, but of getting rid of the ruling class altogether.



AQUINO PROVIDED A BREATHING SPACE FOR THE ARMY TO REORGANISE ITS REPRESSIVE MACHINE

the propaganda war



The truth about Jesse

LET us, as they say across the Atlantic, cut the crap. The Reverend Jesse Jackson is not going to be the next president of the United States. True, he will not lose November's presidential election — but only because he will not even be the Democratic Party candidate. And it is very unlikely that he will make it on to the ticket as vice-presidential candidate. The sooner the US and British left face up to these facts, and the reasons for them, the sooner we might stand a chance of truly revolutionising the political scene in the way that they claim Jackson has done.

There is an oft-stated opinion among American and British radicals that the thing preventing Jackson succeeding is the fact that the press keep saying he is unelectable. It's not, they claim, a problem of popular racism; after all, Jackson is winning white working class votes. The liberal establishment over here has also pointed out that there seems to be no racial barrier to Jackson's progress. The *Independent* is even of the opinion that white attitudes towards Jackson are 'awesome examples' of 'positive discrimination'. The paper is particularly impressed by the way in which the other candidates have handled Jackson with kid gloves.

It is certainly true that the other candidates have not been harping on about the colour of Jackson's skin, or telling him to get back to Africa, or asking him to sell them a slice of water-melon or shine their shoes. But that is hardly an indication of an absence of racism.

UNSPOKEN

Democratic candidates like technocrat front-runner Michael Dukakis are not rednecks running for county sheriff in the Deep South. They are sophisticated machine men who understand that there are two good reasons for not banging the racist drum. Firstly, their stricken party needs all the black votes Jackson can muster in November. And secondly, it would be unnecessary. Everybody *knows* that Jackson is black. In a society in which every institution is underpinned by an unspoken racist code, that is sufficient to ensure he will not win. As infamous racist leader JB Stoner once put it, 'When the constitution said that all men were created equal it wasn't talking about niggers.'

Whatever the media does or does not say, the strength of racist tensions in US society ensures that Jackson is unelectable. These tensions may have been publicly played down so far in the campaign — not least by Jackson himself, who has taken every opportunity to distance himself from militant anti-racism. But they have come to the surface in the approach to next week's important New York primary. Jackson's own record of anti-semitism, and of branding the city as 'Hymietown' have given racists like New York mayor Ed Koch a good excuse to declare that 'Jews would have to be crazy to vote for Jackson.'

So Jackson can't win. But why should we want him to, anyway? Barbara Ehrenreich of the Democratic Socialists is full of awe for the way in which Jackson has apparently managed 'to reach out to black and white Americans with a message that is both politically liberal and class militant'. Tony Benn has also pointed to Jackson as an example of how a left-wing candidate can do well. They must have been listening to a different Jackson 'message' than the American public.

Jackson has done better than anybody could have predicted in winning white votes. But this has a lot to do with the appalling quality of the other Democratic candidates, and nothing to do with any radicalism on his part. Polls show that many of his white votes have come from old-fashioned middle class liberals who are disenchanted with the yuppie style of Dukakis and Co. Jackson has also attracted some white working class support — not through challenging conservatism, but through pandering to the traditional prejudices of US society.

SHARKS

What is 'politically liberal' about Jackson's strict moral attitudes towards women, the family and homosexuals? Or his full-blooded support for the anti-drugs panic which has served as the excuse for a racist state crackdown on minorities in the USA? (Indeed, one reason cited by some whites for supporting Jackson is his promise to deal with 'the black drug problem'.) As for the idea that Jackson is a 'class militant', the man is so moderate that he does not support the idea of redundancy payments! His programme is way to the right even of Kinnock's Labour Party, and of the old liberal Democratic policies of the sixties.

Jackson has managed to connect with the disillusionment of those who have lost out under Reagan, and the anxiety about the coming recession. But he has done so by championing the cause of 'the ordinary folk' of small-town America — businessmen, farmers and workers alike — against Wall Street sharks and foreign competitors. His economic nationalism and homespun populist philosophy fit easily into the reactionary traditions of US politics.

It is a sign of how far Reagan has shifted the political climate to the right that Jackson could be seen as any sort of radical. And it is a sign of the desperation of the old left on both sides of the Atlantic that he should be hailed as a working class saviour. Instead of indulging itself in semantic debates about whether calling Jackson unelectable is a self-fulfilling prophesy, the left should set about challenging the deep-seated racism which prevents the emergence of a truly class militant movement in the USA.

Linda Ryan

◆THE CLASS OF '68

GRADUATES IN LABOURISM

Tariq Ali, *Street Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties,* Collins, £12.95

1968 was remarkable in the history of the left because it was the year when world Stalinism lost the paralysing grip it had held on the working class since the twenties. In France in particular a major social upheaval took place which threatened the regime of de Gaulle and panicked the Western establishment. Tragically the new left thrown up at the end of the sixties never managed to replace Stalinism with a coherent revolutionary alternative. Tariq Ali's autobiographical memoir of the sixties provides not only an entertaining account of his own extravagant life and times, but also sheds some light on how the radical movement in which he played a leading role went wrong.

The major influences are all here. The Vietnam War with its David versus Goliath struggle, the influence of black radicalism in the USA, the failures of Stalinism and social democracy to provide answers to the emerging economic crisis and the working class unrest that it provoked. These were the factors which led Ali and tens of thousands of others to reject the political establishment and look for new solutions. They came up with everything from 'alternative lifestyles' to Trotsky. Ali reminds us that it was dope smoking that united the radical coteries of London artists and intellectuals with the disaffected GIs in Vietnam, rather than any coherent critique of US imperialism.

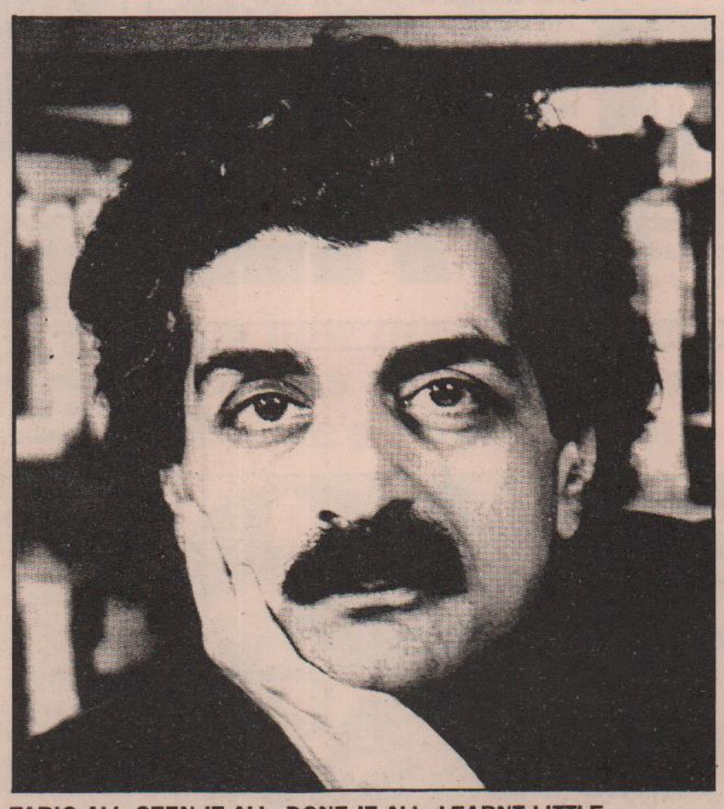
◆

The Trotskyism that became popular came in two versions. One glorified the peasant struggles of the third world and downplayed the working class in the West. The other tended to reduce all political issues to the level of trade union struggles. But the weakness of the new left was expressed most clearly on the question of organisation. In their haste to reject Stalinism, the radicals of '68 dismissed all notion of party discipline as well. Ali reserves his harshest criticisms for those who tried to maintain, even in a caricatured form, the necessity for a party and for strong organisation. In its place Ali promotes what he calls the 'refreshingly undogmatic' approach of the new left, which amounted to the live and let live attitude which has characterised British radicalism.

The chief beneficiary of this laissez-faire trend over the years has been the Labour Party. Ali makes the point that 'the youth who were now embracing a new form of radicalism were not the least bit interested in the Labour Party.' But as the wave of protests died down the left's failure to create a revolutionary party meant that there was nothing left to offer a coherent alternative to Labour. The left existed as interest groups promoting different aspects of the class struggle at home and abroad. Nobody developed a broad strategy for change in Britain and gave it an organised form. As a result the '68ers never escaped from the shadow of Labourism. That is the legacy with which we are still struggling today, and with which Ali personally and his own political current (the old International Marxist Group) have long since come to terms.

◆

Although it is mostly gossip about the people Ali knew, this memoir is genuinely entertaining. It will be required reading for all salon socialists. There were few places Ali didn't visit in those times — he visited Paris, Hanoi, Prague, Bolivia — and fewer still of the prominent political and public figures of the day whom he did not meet. Obviously a bumptious public school type, he is at the same time quite irrepressible, and if there is humour in a situation he can usually see it. Unless his pomposity gets the better of him, that is; as when he declares that the refusal by him and others to stand up at a student meeting as a mark of respect on Churchill's death 'separated the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks'. It is a little sad that a figure of such energy and talent should have written the forlorn and rambling conclusion of this book. It ends, 'The world is passing through bad times...but hope itself cannot be abandoned.'
Rob Knight

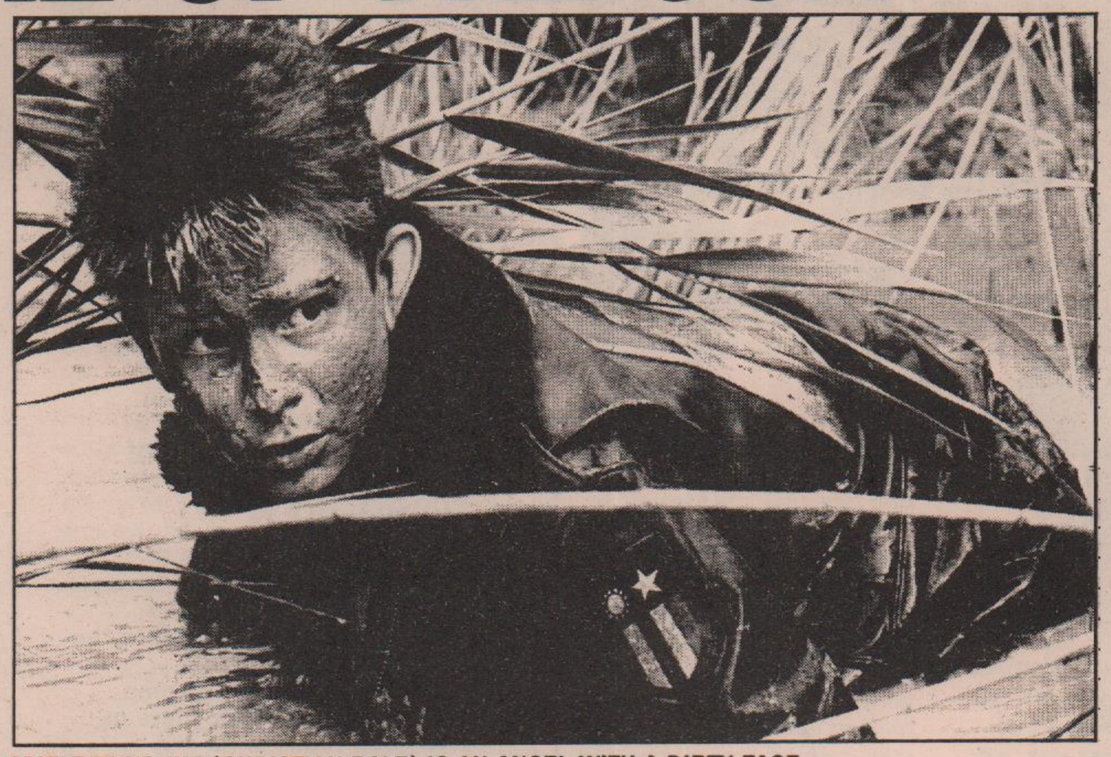


TARIQ ALI: SEEN IT ALL, DONE IT ALL, LEARNT LITTLE

◆STEVEN SPIELBERG AND JG BALLARD

EMPIRE OF THE SUN

Empire of the Sun, **Steven Spielberg (director)**
JG Ballard, *Empire of the Sun,* Grafton, £3.50



SPIELBERG'S JIM (CHRISTIAN BALE) IS AN ANGEL WITH A DIRTY FACE

Shortly after their attack on Pearl Harbour the Japanese, who had already invaded China, finally closed down the International Settlement in Shanghai. This was one of the areas, by now fully westernised, which the imperialist powers had won at gunboat-point as a base for their operations in the region. Those colonials who were still there at the end of 1941 were rounded up into internment camps for the duration of the war. They did not live in the manner to which they were accustomed, and there was a substantial death toll from hunger, disease and maltreatment. It was a bit of a shock to the system.

◆

In his brilliant semi-autobiographical novel, *Empire of the Sun,* JG Ballard provides a devastating account of this experience as seen through the eyes of a pampered 11-year old English boy. Not so much a story of loss of innocence, as loss of confidence both personal and imperial, the novel charts young Jim's grim struggle for survival among an increasingly demoralised and unsavoury adult population. Steven Spielberg and Tom Stoppard, for all their technical skills as director and writer, were not the right team to adapt a book of this sort.

The mood of the novel is dark and shocked, exhausted and almost cynical. Typical is one of the closing images — a drunken group of American and English sailors, having re-entered Shanghai, urinate in unison down the steps of a public building towards a silent but sullen Chinese crowd. Spielberg's sensibility, being inclined to optimism and the sublime, is no match for this. He was obviously attracted to the story by the boy-protagonist, but although Ballard tells the story through Jim's eyes, the childishly candid description again and again exposes more about the adult world than the boy himself realises. This extremely effective ironic device is at the heart of the novel, and the target of the device and real subject of the book is the sordid reality of that adult world.

◆

Spielberg's earlier films have revealed a preoccupation with the family and the wonder of childhood, and despite his loud protestations to the contrary, he has imposed his preoccupations here. The small innovations on the text are significant. At the beginning we have a dear familial scene at the child's bedside, at the end a big hug from his parents. Neither is in the book. More importantly, the boy's quite amoral fascination with the efficient, powerful Japanese and their airplanes (later transferred to the more efficient and powerful Americans) becomes in the film an utterly transcendental, almost religious experience. In fact religion is regularly introduced by the film in the guise of Jim's concern with God. For example, Stoppard has him say of the far-off flash of the atomic bomb, 'It was as if God had taken a photograph,' whereas in the book he says it was 'as if the sun blinked, losing heart for a few seconds'.

As in this case, the film is generally more cute and less profound than the book. The story of the young boy's progress to experience is engaging enough and well-told, and young Christian Bale gives an extraordinary performance as the developing Jim. John Malkovitch is also excellent as Basie, the American bum whose capacity to survive and flourish makes him as much a role model as the decent British doctor played by Nigel Havers. Spielberg directs with his usual assurance, and there are some bravura crowd scenes in Shanghai as its multitudes of coolies and sprinkling of colonials descend into panic and despair. But as it goes through its two hours and more the film loses its way, digressing through some standard POW adventures to hold our interest. As a film about a boy's experience of war, it compares unfavourably with Elem Klimov's *Come and See,* in which the relentless momentum of horror never falters.

◆

Spielberg never captures the full hysteria (never mind the flies and the stench) of the book. The surreal, hallucinatory visions of Ballard's Jim are always more controlled and more picturesque than in the film. Neither do Spielberg and Stoppard capture the subtle insinuations on the decline of imperial Britain with which the book is littered. They spare us in particular the battering which Ballard deals the British character: the years in the camp 'had not given Jim a high opinion of the British'; 'the morose and complicated British' were 'especially good at complaining'; and of the snooty Mrs Vincent (Miranda Richardson), 'he knew that if he starved to death in his bunk she would find a polite reason for doing nothing to help him.'

◆

Ballard's novel is full of references to film itself, whether it be the propaganda newsreels, Hollywood fantasies or the Shanghai studios. For the boy it is a shadowy, fascinating and unreliable force. It gives him 'unsettled dreams'; he is later imprisoned for a while in a deserted cinema; the distracted Mrs Vincent stares at 'an invisible film' on the whitewashed wall of her hut. Spielberg acknowledges this presence in a stunning image of his own as Jim, in desperate flight through Shanghai, passes in front of a vast poster for *Gone With the Wind.* The romantic, enticing havoc on the poster is now a mockingly safe, unreachable haven from the boy's past. It is an effective moment but, unfortunately, one of the few in which Spielberg captures the richness of the original. The film is often enjoyable as spectacle, but for the price of a ticket you could get an incomparable book.
Pat Ford



WAR AS SPECTACLE

TIME TO END THE IRISH WAR

THE recent events in Ireland — the execution of three IRA volunteers in Gibraltar, the murder of three nationalists at Milltown cemetery, and the execution of two British soldiers who drove into the funeral cortege of one of the Milltown three — made many people sit up and take notice.

High-profile media coverage of these events brought the reality of the British occupation of Ireland into thousands of living-rooms in a more shocking fashion than ever before. The TV images called into question the myths that inform ordinary people's perceptions of the war in Ireland — the view that the IRA is nothing but a bunch of mafia-style hoodlums and that the British Army is an impartial peace-keeping force.

When Northern Ireland secretary Tom King spoke on TV after the killing of the two soldiers at the Andersonstown funeral of IRA volunteer Kevin Brady, he expressed concern that republican stewards had been seen to be organising the funeral, searching cars and 'doing the job of the police'. This was a far cry from the image of Irish freedom fighters that the media usually projects — that of the lone gunman or individual bomber who can be portrayed as an isolated criminal.

DOUBTS

For many people who had previously accepted the official view of the issues at stake in Northern Ireland, all this raised many questions and doubts. Sellers of *tns* report that many of their sales over the past fortnight have been to first-time readers curious to find out what's really going on in Ireland. At a recent street sale in Islington five supporters sold 72 copies of *tns* in their lunch-break.

In some branches sellers put together a questionnaire to gauge the popular reponse to Gibraltar, Milltown and Andersonstown. When people were asked how they would describe the situation in Ireland, dozens likened it to South Africa. And nearly everyone, even those who were convinced that British troops should stay in Ireland, described what was going on there as a war.

While many people have been forced to question their ideas about the war in Ireland, this does not mean that they are about to take sides with Irish freedom fighters against the British state. It simply means that the assumptions of large numbers of people have been challenged, and many of them are looking for answers about the 19-year war in Ireland.

We have to take advantage of this new openness about the Irish War, to get the arguments for Irish freedom across to a new audience. We have to turn people's puzzlement about recent events into anger against the British forces of occupation which are the cause of all the violence and bloodshed in Ireland. We then have to turn the anger into organisation, by debunking the myths and explaining the issues.

The Irish Freedom Movement conference this week aims to do just that (see page 16 for details). The conference will provide a forum for people to discuss what's really at stake for the British ruling class in Ireland. We want to debate how best to build a movement in this country that can win wider support for the fight for Irish freedom.

ANGRY

On 6 August the Irish Freedom Movement will hold its annual demonstration to commemorate the introduction of internment without trial in Northern Ireland. We want the march to be a rallying point for everybody who is angry about Britain's role in Ireland, and eager to do something to get the troops out. This week's conference will gather together those activists who will start the work.

We need to spread the word about the march, to get motions of support raised in trade union and student union meetings, and start mobilising ordinary people behind the banner of Irish solidarity. With Ireland high on the political agenda, there has never been a better time for starting to build a movement that can help to end the Irish War.

Anne Burton

MOTION FOR ANTI-INTERNMENT DEMONSTRATION, 6 AUGUST 1988

This union notes:
1 The continued military occupation of Northern Ireland by a force of nearly 30 000 — including soldiers, paramilitary police, the SAS and auxiliaries.
2 The deaths of more than 2500 people since the troops went in 19 years ago.
3 That 9 August 1988 marks the seventeenth anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in Northern Ireland in 1971, when troops dragged hundreds of Irish nationalists into concentration camps.

This union believes:
1 That today Britain uses a different form of internment in Ireland — imprisonment on remand — using no-jury courts, behind the smoke-screen of political initiatives like the Anglo-Irish agreement.
2 That there is a war going on in Ireland as a result of Britain's denial of political independence to Ireland as a whole.
3 That Britain can play no progressive role in Ireland.
4 That the only way to bring peace in Ireland is to support the right of national self-determination for the Irish people and to campaign for the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

This union resolves:
1 To campaign for 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination for the Irish People'.
2 To sponsor the anti-internment demonstration in London on 6 August 1988 calling for 'Troops Out Now' and' Irish Prisoners Out of Jail'.
3 To donate £.....to the costs of the demonstration.
4 To affiliate to the Irish Freedom Movement.

RCP PUBLIC MEETINGS

BUILDING A NEW OPPOSITION

NOTTINGHAM: Monday 18 April, 7.30pm. Mandela Lecture Theatre, Byron Building, Trent Polytechnic, Shakespeare Street

WAKEFIELD: Saturday 23 April, 2pm. Unity House, Westgate

SHEFFIELD: Friday 29 April, 7.30pm. Red Deer Pub, Pitt Street

OXFORD: Wednesday 4 May, 8pm. Committee Room 1, Town Hall, St Aldates

LIVERPOOL: Thursday 12 May, 7.30pm. Trade Union Centre, Hardman Street

WOMEN AND THE NEW MORALITY



NEWCASTLE: Thursday 28 April, 6pm. Open forum: Their Morals Not Ours — Fight for Women's Rights. Education Centre, Trewhitt Road, Heaton

GLASGOW: Monday 25 April, 7.30pm. Policing the Family. Hillhead Library, Byres Road

TAKE SIDES IN THE IRISH WAR



DURHAM: Tuesday 26 April, 7.30pm. Video show: *The Funeral of Larry Marley.* Durham University, Room 143, Elvet Riverside

NEWCASTLE: Wednesday 27 April, 7.30pm. Lonsdale Pub, Lyndhurst Avenue, opposite West Jesmond metro

GLASGOW: Thursday 21 April, 7.30pm. Organised by the Irish Freedom Movement. Govanhill Community Centre, Daisy Street

REVOLT ON THE CLYDE

Glasgow RCP dayschool
Sunday 15 May 1pm-7pm
Govanhill Community Centre Daisy Street



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thenextstep

Irish Freedom Movement Dayschool

TIME TO END THE IRISH WAR



Sunday 17 April

10am – 6pm
North London Polytechnic
Prince of Wales Road
Kentish Town, London NW5
(Camden Town or Kentish Town tube)
£3 waged/£1.50 unwaged
Creche facilities available

Sessions include:

- From Gibraltar to Belfast: Britain's war strategy today
- The problem of Loyalism
- The myth of the 'religious conflict'
- Why Britain stays in Ireland
- Ireland, South Africa, Palestine: British imperialism against the oppressed

TROOPS OUT NOW!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!

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