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After Brighton
**THE NEW TORY
AGENDA**
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REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY WEEKLY

21 OCTOBER 1988

40p

After Spycatcher

THATCHER'S SECRET STATE

THE law lords' decision to lift the two-year ban on media reporting of *Spycatcher* has been hailed as a victory for the freedom of the press. But, behind the scenes, the Tories are pressing ahead with plans to silence their critics.

The forthcoming Official Secrets Act will close legal loopholes exposed by the drawn-out wrangling over Peter Wright's revelations of MI5 dirty tricks. The new act will replace the woolly and redundant Section 2 of the old one, with a precise and far-reaching definition of what can be revealed. It will make it a crime to report many aspects of what the British state is up to at home and abroad. The fact that MI5 tap strikers' phones, or that MI6 is involved in covert terrorist operations in the Middle East or Ireland, will become state secrets.

The Tories are taking steps to button the lips of all state employees. They plan to impose new contracts on civil servants, demanding a lifelong commitment to silence. Those breaching these contracts will risk prosecution and loss of pension rights.

The 'freedom of the press' is under sustained fire. The Tories are setting up new media watchdogs and gagging opponents. Northern Ireland secretary Tom King is considering banning press and television interviews with the IRA to stifle dissenting views on the British occupation. Media

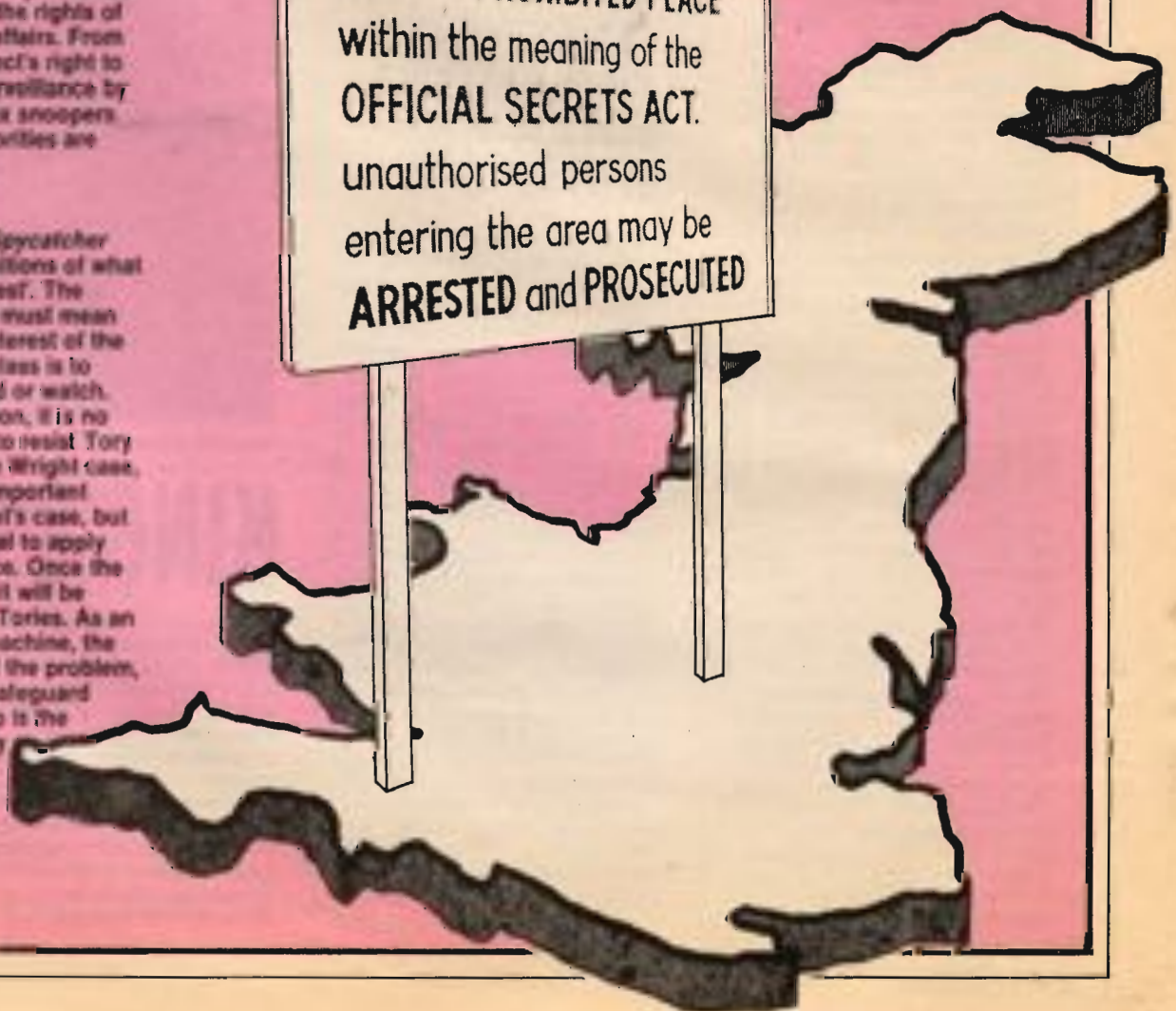
bosses have wilted before the Tory offensive, and are introducing stricter and stricter self-censorship.

While the government strengthens the secret state, it is extending the rights of officialdom to pry into our affairs. From proposals to amend a suspect's right to silence, to the increased surveillance by social security spies, poll tax snoopers and police videos, the authorities are watching our every move.

Much of the debate about *Spycatcher* centred on conflicting definitions of what constitutes 'the public interest'. The Tories have spelt out that it must mean 'the national interest'—the interest of the capitalist state. The ruling class is to judge what we can say, read or watch.

Despite last week's decision, it is no good relying on the courts to resist Tory censorship. Throughout the Wright case, top judges upheld several important principles of the government's case, but ruled that it was not practical to apply them in this specific instance. Once the law has been tightened up, it will be easier for them to back the Tories. As an arm of the capitalist state machine, the courts are ultimately part of the problem, not the solution. Our only safeguard against creeping censorship is the organised power of ordinary people who refuse to be silenced in the interests of the state's spying and execution machine.

This is a PROHIBITED PLACE
within the meaning of the
OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.
unauthorised persons
entering the area may be
ARRESTED and PROSECUTED





★ **Saturday 8 October:** Having escaped the clutches of British justice once this year, Patrick McVeigh is arrested by gardai in Dundalk in the South. McVeigh was the subject of an unsuccessful extradition case in August, when a Portlaoise court rejected a warrant for his extradition to the North. The gardai release McVeigh again, but await the legal nod from the authorities before making another attempt to extradite him.

Loyalist leader Ian Paisley resists attempts by the Royal Ulster Constabulary to postpone a tiny counter-demonstration against a civil rights commemoration march. The civil rights march in Derry on the twentieth anniversary of the start of the present war attracts about 1500 nationalists. While RUC officers harass the republican demonstrators, they make little effort to stop Paisley getting on the bonnet of a police landrover to wave the Union Jack.

★ **Monday 10 October:** The Northern Ireland Office denies allegations from Sinn Féin that republican prisoners at Long Kesh were assaulted by warders following the IRA execution of Brian Armour, vice-chair of the Northern Ireland Prison Officers Association. Such reprisal beatings are traditional when republicans score a victory over their British captors.

A Portlaoise court orders the extradition of James Fergusson, one of the republicans to escape from Long Kesh in 1983.

The Crown opens its case in the trial of three Irish people charged with conspiracy to kill Tory Northern Ireland secretary Tom King. As in most Irish showtrials the verdict is a foregone conclusion, every section of the British establishment having decided that the three are part of an 'IRA gang'.

★ **Tuesday 11 October:** An RUC man is shot dead by the IRA while working at an ice-cream parlour on the Lisburn Road, Belfast.

★ **Wednesday 12 October:** Home secretary Douglas Hurd tells the Tory Party conference in Brighton that a new Prevention of Terrorism Act would make it an offence to handle IRA money. He warns Labour leader Neil Kinnock that 'anyone with a grain of leadership in him would see that this was a matter for national unity and not party politics'.

★ **Thursday 13 October:** The satirical magazine, *Private Eye*, reports that one witness at the Gibraltar inquest received threatening phone-calls after being interviewed by Special Branch detectives. Robert Mordue was visited by detectives after telling two people at work that he had seen the murder of Sean Savage. The caller, who spoke with an English accent, called him a 'bastard' and warned him to stay away from Gibraltar. Mordue is ex-directory and only the Special Branch knew that he was to give evidence at the inquest.

★ **Saturday 15 October:** Two men, including a Belfast commander of the Ulster Defence Association, James Craig, are killed in a gun attack on a pub in the city. Craig is believed to have been responsible for the Loyalist organisation's racketeering. The killings are claimed by the Ulster Freedom Fighters, a name used by the UDA itself when murdering Catholics, indicating that they were part of an internal Loyalist feud. Mark Reilly

The Aids debate

NEVER TRUST A TORY

Tory minister David Mellor greeted the publication of new Aids figures with the claim that up to 25 per cent of London's gay population were HIV positive and 9000 people would die of Aids in the next 15 years. The truth is that the spread of HIV infection in Britain has begun to slow down, and the numbers falling ill with Aids is declining. During 1986 and 1987 HIV tests revealed up to 2200 new cases each year. The total for 1988 looks set to be less than 1200 new cases, contradicting the Office of Health Economics forecast of 3000 new cases for 1988.

RARE

Since the early eighties just 12 heterosexuals who were neither intravenous drug users nor haemophiliacs have contracted Aids in Britain and Northern Ireland. This is 0.6 per cent of all Aids cases. Over the same period 36 drug users, two per cent of Aids cases, have developed the disease. At present 9242 people, or 0.16 per cent of the population, are known to be infected with the virus (DoH, 11 October).

HIV infection and Aids continue to be rare conditions in Britain, presenting the heterosexually active population with few risks.

With a cumulative total of 31 Aids cases per million people, the British epidemic ranks ninth in a list of European countries prepared by the *Pearson Institute*. With 65 780 reported Aids cases, the USA has the most serious problem. But even in America the exponentially rapid growth of the early years of the epidemic has given way to a substantial slowdown in new cases of HIV infection and Aids-related illness. The proportion of gay men hit by Aids is declining. Intravenous drug users are a growing proportion of those infected, while heterosexuals who are at no other risk account for less than five per cent of US cases.



There are lies, damned lies and David Mellor's figures

Developments in Britain are following this pattern. The rapid growth has stopped, the rate of infection is declining and the proportion of those infected who are gay is beginning to fall. In 1985, 96 per cent of all Aids cases were gay; by September 1988 it was 82 per cent. This slowdown is largely accounted for by the decline of new cases being reported by gay men. This is not due to the government's safe sex campaign, but to an awareness of the danger presented by the virus that spread throughout the gay scene during 1983 and 1984. Openly gay men started to take precautions against the virus as friends and lovers fell ill and died. They had an advance warning, provided by the devastating impact of the new disease on homosexual men in America.

It takes around seven or eight years of HIV infection to provoke the onset of Aids. The decline in the number of gay men falling ill with Aids suggests that the spread of infection started to slow long before the government launched its safe sex campaign in November 1986. The campaign was based on three assumptions: that the rapid early growth of the disease would continue for years; that the entire population was equally at risk as infection spread beyond the high-risk groups; that only changes in sexual behaviour—sticking to one partner or using condoms if you couldn't—would stem the rate of infection.

On all three counts the government was wrong. The high growth rate has not continued, there has been no significant spread of

infection beyond the high-risk groups, and there is no sign that most people's sexual behaviour has changed.

What has changed is the situation of lesbian and gay people: for the worse.

The safe sex campaign succeeded in frightening millions, not into changing their sexual behaviour, but into having a go at homosexuals. The official promotion of the Aids panic was part of a broader re-assertion of traditional morality. Its effect was to create a climate of persecution against homosexuals, leading to more victimisations at work and harassment on the streets.

PREJUDICE

Many on the left fell for the government's safe sex propaganda, and failed to confront the anti-homosexual prejudice behind the pretence of neutrality. People who would not normally believe a Tory minister if he told them the time of day, suddenly began spouting official sermons about safe sex. Even now, when it is clear that the safe sex campaign has set up lesbians and gays for attack without doing anything to stem the spread of Aids, the left still calls for more concerted government action.

Aids will finally be dealt with by advances in medical science. In the meantime, any strategy which intensifies public hostility towards those most at risk from the disease can only exacerbate the problem. Our attitude to the Aids panic today is the same as it was when the debate began; we reject the claim that a campaign and fight for equal rights for lesbians and gays. The new statistics confirm that this approach was right all along, and that Tories who will lie about everything from nurses' pay to unemployment figures cannot be trusted as guardians of our health.

Don Milligan

DEFEND THE HOLLOWAY ROAD 30!

THE court cases involving the Holloway Road 30 are now on. Most were arrested when thugs attacked the internment commemoration march organised by the Irish Freedom Movement in London on 6 August. The police, who had harassed marchers throughout with riot vans, allowed right wingers to attack the demo with bottles and stones. When stewards defended the march, police waded in to arrest marchers. Most have been charged under the Tory Public Order Act. It is vital that we win these cases to defend the right to protest against the Irish War.

We need funds to fight these frame-ups. Show your support by rushing in donations (payable to the Holloway 30 Defence Fund). Get your trade union/student union/political group to pass motions in support of those arrested. Send donations to: Holloway Road 30 Defence Campaign, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.



Tory cuts killed 31 people in the King's Cross fire

KING'S CROSS WHITEWASH

THE verdict of 'accidental death' returned on the 31 victims of the King's Cross fire was a whitewash. The coronor told the jury that there was 'no place for a verdict of unlawful killing'. Whatever the jury might have thought, the Crown prosecution service had already decided that London Regional Transport would not be prosecuted for the disaster caused by cuts in the underground system.

Even before the tragedy, cutbacks in cleaning and maintenance staff had led to 18 tube fires. In King's Cross, lack of staff allowed dust and grease to build up under an escalator, turning the only exit from the station into a powder-keg. LRT have cut back on safety to fund investment in the new ticket collection system, allowing management to make still more staff cuts.

The coroner refused to let

Matthew Scott, counsel for the relatives of those killed, put these facts to the jury. They were directed to consider only the immediate cause of the fire. But speculation about whether someone dropped a lighted match only serves to shift the blame on to an unnamed individual. It obscures the fact that LRT's quest for profit has turned every underground station into a death-trap. James Heartfield

One year after the Crash

HAUNTED BY BLACK MONDAY

Was last October's world stock market Crash the sign of recession to come?
James Malone answers the question which has been haunting the capitalist world

After the October Wall Street Crash, the American president tried to calm the stock markets: 'The main point I wish to emphasise is the fundamental soundness of the great mass of economic activities.' The US Federal Reserve cut interest rates and pumped money into the financial system. By the New Year share prices had revived a little, politicians said that the Crash hurt only the greedy speculators, and now things were back to normal.

That was after Black Tuesday, on 29 October 1929. Few recognised the Crash for what it was. Only in retrospect was 1929 seen as the start of a descent into economic depression, social upheaval and, eventually, world war. By mid-1932, share prices stood at a tenth of their pre-Crash level. A year later US gross national product was two thirds of what it was in 1929 and one in four American workers were unemployed. The US slump was exported around the world.

One year after Black Monday, on 19 October 1987, it seems as if history is repeating itself. At the recent meeting of the International Monetary Fund in Berlin, finance ministers noted that since Black Monday the West has experienced the 'fastest growth in years'. The US economy is set to grow by four per cent, and the Japanese by six. The consensus is that the Crash had no lasting effect on the world economy. Tory chancellor Nigel Lawson says it was simply a 'grotesque over-



Crashed out: Black Monday rocks the City

reaction', while others swear that faulty computers were to blame for wiping billions off share values.

A measure of stability has returned over the past year. After Black Monday the central banks lowered interest rates and pumped

billions into the financial system to prevent the stock market disorders extending to the rest of the economy. When the dollar plummeted to a post-war low in the New Year, these expansionary monetary moves were redoubled. Governments have spent

\$140 billion this year to prop up the dollar and stop the US trade deficit throwing the world economy into turmoil.

The major powers have decided that stability must be maintained at any cost until after the US presidential elections next month.

Despite ministerial posturing about a buoyant world economy, the economic problems behind the October Crash have not gone away. Stock markets around the world have not recovered to any great degree. One set of bad figures on trade and the money supply can send New York or London reeling. Last month the Taiwanese stock market, the third largest in the world after New York and Tokyo, had a \$30 billion 'meltdown'. Felix Rohatyn, the renowned US investment banker and economic adviser to the Democrats, warns of a 'gigantic financial house of cards' waiting to collapse.

The root causes of the Crash remain. The US trade and budget deficits are still a major source of instability in the world economy. Some commentators argue that world trade imbalances are improving. Yet the surplus trade accounts of Japan and West Germany have continued to rise. The latest monthly US trade deficit of

over \$12 billion shows that America is heading for a hefty \$140 billion deficit this year. As the world's largest debtor, the USA needs to do the impossible: achieve a trade surplus to meet the burgeoning interest payments on the debt.

FRIGHTENED

The policies instituted last year to rescue the world economy have increased the prospect of capitalist collapse. Easy money and deregulated financial markets have encouraged a stunning amount of company borrowing since the Crash. American and British companies in particular have been borrowing, not to invest in new plant or machinery, but to buy up shares and finance takeovers. High-risk forms of credit creation, such as junk bonds, have been used to fuel the dog-eat-dog response to the Crash. The financial sector is now highly susceptible to any slowdown in industrial output, which could provoke a wave of bankruptcies of firms unable to meet their debts.

This is on top of third world debt, which is once again becoming a major worry.

It is the same story when it comes to consumer credit. High-street spending is fast outpacing the company sector's productive capacity. The fact that companies, particularly in America and Britain, have responded by inflating prices rather than investing in new capacity shows their lack of optimism about the future. In the case of an uncompetitive capitalist power like Britain, the spending spree has led to a boom in consumer imports. The resulting trade deficit now rivals that of the USA in terms of the recessionary threat it poses.

Before the Crash, capitalist leaders worried about the deflationary effects of rising interest rates. On 19 October 1987 their worst fears were confirmed. Now the worry is about the economy 'overheating' as a consequence of the post-Crash monetary explosion. Today interest rates are rising again in an attempt to halt inflationary pressure. The past few months bear an uncomfortable likeness to those preceding Black Monday.

Whether or not there is another crash, another recession is certain. After the 1929 Crash the capitalist class refused to believe that its system was crumbling. After the 1987 Crash the ruling class is haunted by the past and frightened for the future.

Tories set trap for nurses

£138m MORE WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH



Demanding decent pay for all

Tory health minister Kenneth Clarke won a standing ovation at the Conservative Party conference when he announced an extra £138m to fund the new pay system for nurses. But nurses have nothing to cheer about. The new grading system imposed under the pay review is an obstacle to winning decent pay in the health service.

FRONTLINE

The review body on nurses' pay was the linchpin of the Tories' cost-cutting strategy in the health service. Set up after the 1982 strike by ancillary staff, technicians and ambulancemen, it aimed to exploit sectional divisions among health workers. Government ministers argued that nurses, in the frontline of patient care, were special cases who should be rewarded for their caring services. The rapid growth of the scab Royal College of Nursing shows how successful the government has been in promoting

divisions between nurses and other health workers.

These divisions are being extended by the review body's regrading proposals. The new clinical grading structure makes individual qualifications the criteria for awarding pay increases, and discourages nurses from taking collective action with other health workers to fight for decent pay for everyone in the health service. The effect of this has been to open up new divisions between nurses and ancillaries, and also to open up competition among nurses themselves. Thousands of nurses now realise that only the elite of the nursing profession can expect to gain anything substantial from the new grading system.

ASSAULT

The government's decision to provide more money for the regrading exercise is not a concession to the demand for decent pay in the health service. It is a pragmatic move to speed up the implementation of

the grading system and thus clear the decks for an all-out assault on health service spending. By agreeing to go most of the way in meeting the demands of the union leaders for more funding, the Tories are now in a strong position to blame the unions if the new negotiations break down before the Christmas deadline.

REJECT

From the start *tns* argued that the regrading system could not be used to the advantage of nurses, 'no matter how much money the Tories put into it' (19 August). A pay system which divides nurses from other health workers, and invites individual nurses to compete for a pay rise, cannot be made to work in our favour. After months of wasting our time waiting for the outcome of negotiations, we should reject the whole divisive system, and fight to unite all health workers around what they have in common: the need for decent pay and conditions.

Tony Kennedy

LIVING MARXISM

Many people regard Marxism as an outdated dogma with little to offer in relation to understanding the world today. Our aim in this series of discussions is to demonstrate that Marxist theory is a tool for analysing and transforming society. The next three sessions are as follows:

25 October: The roots of racism
1 November: Marxism, art and culture

8 November: On war and peace

The meetings take place every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm at the University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1.

Tickets are £5 (£3.50 unwaged) for the course or £1 (50p unwaged) per session. For reading lists phone (01) 729 0414 or write to Living Marxism, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

The Yugoslav authorities have been forced to cancel all leave in the face of growing student and worker unrest in the southern republic of Montenegro. In the Montenegrin capital of Titograd, police used clubs and tear gas to disperse demonstrators calling for the resignation of local leaders. A wave of unrest has swept the country over the past year, but the latest events threaten to tear the country's federal Communist Party apart.

As the Central Committee prepared for a crucial meeting in Belgrade this week, leaders of the republics of Serbia and Slovenia were rowing in public. *Politika*, the Belgrade party newspaper which backs Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, attacked the Slovene party for supporting the police action in Titograd. The Slovene party accused the Serbian party of manipulating demonstrators by fomenting Serbian nationalism.

The tensions within the leadership largely result from an upsurge of working class resistance, after years of relative peace.

Marshal Tito's achievement after coming to power in 1945 was to reconcile the country's 16 nationalities, by suppressing all opposition and introducing economic reforms. For a while Tito's 'self-management socialism' allowed for relative prosperity. Since the Stalinist party monopolised political power, however, reform was strictly limited. Without genuine workers' democracy, self-management degenerated into bureaucratic farce. When Tito died in 1980, economic decay was well-advanced, and the political cracks were beginning to show.

Today Yugoslavia is an economic disaster. Last year the republics of Macedonia and Montenegro and the autonomous province of Kosovo declared themselves bankrupt. All are in the most backward southern part of the country. Inflation is

Yugoslavia

'THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE'

running at 215 per cent, the foreign debt is \$21 billion and more than a million are unemployed. As journalist Cedo Zik explained in the Zagreb publication, *Start*: 'The effects of collapse may not look too dramatic, since we do not have a stock exchange and people are not throwing themselves out of windows, but everybody knows that we have become the sick man of Europe.'

In May the government agreed a harsh austerity package with the International Monetary Fund. This fuelled runaway inflation, slashed living standards and provoked widespread unrest. More than 1000 strikes have broken out this year, with workers taking their protests on to the streets, invading govern-

ment buildings and demanding the resignation of corrupt officials.

Economic decay follows a rough north-south divide, along which opposing nationalist camps in the Yugoslav bureaucracy now align themselves.

The more prosperous northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia, and the autonomous province of Vojvodina, enjoy living standards akin to those of Western Europe. In the poorest southern republics of Montenegro and Macedonia, and the autonomous province of Kosovo, many earn a third of the average northern wage. Here eight million Serbs, the largest group in a population of 23m, harbour long-standing resentments at being

Eight years after Marshal Tito's death, the unitary state he created from the ruins of the post-war Balkans is falling apart



The north fears that Milosevic's plans would damage prosperous areas by forcing them to subsidise the south. The south is concerned that decentralisation would mean more subsidy cuts and result in increased unemployment, ruin and upheaval.

Lacking an economic solution which does not threaten their own position, bureaucrats north and south have channelled working class resistance in a nationalist direction.

VOCAL

Milosevic has tried to harness nationalist sentiment to strengthen Serbia's position in the federation as well as his own challenge for the national leadership. He has encouraged Serbian resentment against Albanian separatists in Kosovo and led giant nationalist demonstrations. Tens of thousands of Serbs and Montenegrins now travel the country demanding Serbian control over Kosovo as well as the other autonomous Serbian province of Vojvodina.

Slovenian nationalism has taken a different form. Disgruntled at having to subsidise Yugoslavia's poorer regions, Slovenians have become vocal in their criticism of the Serbian-dominated national army. A campaign against the military led by the Slovene Communist youth paper, *Mladina*, culminated in the trial of three journalists and a soldier earlier this year.

How long can the bureaucrats ride on the wave of nationalist revolt before it sinks them? While he has become the figurehead of the movement, even Milosevic cannot be certain of staying in control. Although they have been derailed by chauvinist demagoguery, Yugoslav workers remain a mortal threat to the Stalinist bureaucracy which has monopolised power for 40 years.

Russell Osborne

DON'T IGNORE REALITY

JULIE HARVEY and DAVE MIDDLETON (letters, 14 October) claim that *tns* is 'too enthusiastic about writing off the institutions of the working class'. They point out that most workers 'still support the Labour Party', that 'the number of workers in trade unions has remained relatively stable', and that 'workers' institutions have remained intact'. Pretending that little has changed ignores the reality of the modern class struggle.

The Labour Party was never 'an institution of the working class'. It was created as an institution of the labour bureaucracy. Today, the gap between what the Labour leadership wants to do (support Tory cheap-labour schemes, champion the capitalist market etc) and the interests of ordinary workers is wider than ever. Few have any enthusiasm about voting Labour; the vast majority do so by default, because Kinnock is presented as the only alternative to Thatcher. Left wingers who have spent 80 years arguing that Labour is a 'class party', instead of trying to destroy its influence, carry much blame for this.

LETTERS



Ford workers on strike: showing courage but facing isolation

Simply quoting 'relatively stable' union membership figures misses the point. Millions of workers have 'joined' modern unions via sweetheart deals done between the bureaucrats and the bosses. Many don't know what union they are in, and very few have any stake in it. And in the South, where most workers now live, the official labour movement barely exists. The widening gulf between the union bureaucracy and most of the rank and file is evident on many political issues and in every dispute. The unions might be 'intact' on paper; but they are mostly empty shells, which have proved all but useless to nurses, seafarers and many others.

This means it is pretty inevitable that struggles

will take a defensive form, whether on wages or gay rights. We cannot ignore these struggles. But we can't just applaud them either. All the struggles this year have been fragmented, isolated and dominated by conservative outlooks. We need to create a new focus that can bring them together in a coherent class movement. That means totally rejecting the traditional methods of the official labour movement, which have only discredited the idea of class struggle, and starting to build anew. It seems to me that what *tns* is 'enthusiastic' about are the prospects of doing so, as the Labourist institutions, which have dogged our class, decline.

Jim Wright
London

ANIMAL TRANSPLANTS

ORGAN transplant surgery is not a modern miracle and the surgeons are not mystical gods. The result is both human and animal suffering. Transplanting of human hearts has a low success rate as the body's defences reject the foreign heart, necessitating the use of anti-rejection drugs with dangerous side-effects. As for transplanting animal organs into

humans, two-week old 'Baby Fae' died 21 days after receiving a baboon's heart. This is what is in store when these horrific transplants begin.

As for people being superior to animals, animals don't drop bombs, pollute the sea or exploit or abuse each other. No amount of animal butchery will make the working people enjoy as long and healthy lives as the more privileged. Human and animal rights go hand in hand, and are *not* opposing factors.

Susan Taylor
Liverpool

DIVIDING CIVIL SERVANTS

THIS week CPSA members at the Central Office of Information narrowly rejected strike action over the imposition of a Local Pay Addition (LPA) upon typing and secretarial staff. LPAs are supposedly paid on an ad hoc basis to ease problems of staff recruitment and retention. But we see them as a way of breaking up the union by giving some staff a pay rise whilst denying it to others in the same office. The members wanted *all* CPSA grades to receive an LPA in line with union policy.

The LPAs were announced in July. I and other left wingers wanted a branch meeting to be

held in mid-August, but we didn't get one until September. The matter dragged on. Our branch chair tried to smear the left, describing us to right-wing general secretary John Ellis as 'a little to the left of Lenin', and subsequently accusing us of ballot-rigging.

CPSA grades constitute only a quarter of COI staff, and some members were not sure we could win a dispute. Nevertheless, many wanted to fight. However, we can't call upon our members, who earn low wages, to refuse more pay. The LPAs are designed to fragment the national pay structure by focusing members' activity at a local level. If

we call for all members to receive an LPA, we will help management destroy the national pay structure, as members will see local action as the way to win pay rises. This idea has already gained popularity as a result of the failure of recent national pay campaigns.

LPAs can only be defeated by a national pay campaign. The 1987 campaign gave a glimpse of the power the civil service unions can wield. We must organise now for the 1989 campaign.

Paul
London

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

the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party Weekly

21 October 1988

Editor: Mick Hume

'THERE is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families.' So said Margaret Thatcher last year. In her big speech to the Tory conference last week, however, she announced her full support for the concept of 'the community'. The difference between her idea of society and of community is more than a matter of semantics.

In refuting the existence of 'society', Thatcher rejects any notion of a collective body in which people operate as part of the whole. The 'community' which she offers in its place is depicted as a disparate and loose collection of individual, responsible citizens. Most importantly, in Thatcher's community of citizens, there is no such thing as the organised working class.

The Tories have put a lot of effort into popularising the idea of individual choice and responsibility. They have developed it to justify their attacks on the welfare state, and to undermine any notion of collective organisation, such as trade unionism.

Lately the government has sought to put this approach into a slightly softer focus, to deal with worries about rampant individualism creating 'the greedy society'. Home secretary Douglas Hurd's talk of the need for 'active citizenship' is one aspect of this; Thatcher's emphasis on the community is another. But the reactionary content of their crusade for individual responsibility remains unchanged. Yet sections of the left, in the upper reaches of the Labour Party and around *Marxism Today*, have now taken up the themes of citizenship and community, and claimed them as progressive policies.

What has the doctrine of individual responsibility, now known as active citizenship in the community, meant during the Thatcher years? It has justified wholesale attacks on the provision of state services. The government's support for 'community care', for example, is designed to make women in the home, rather than NHS hospitals, carry more of the burden of looking after the sick, the elderly and the disabled. Edwina Currie's campaigns to stop northerners eating chips and to get the elderly knitting woollies serve a similar purpose. Her aim is to absolve the system of responsibility for social problems, like the poor health of working class people or the suffering of impoverished pensioners, and to get individuals to carry the can.

The crusade for individual responsibility also has a more general political purpose. It helps to fragment the working class by turning us in on ourselves. It seeks to persuade people to see themselves as members of small family units, preoccupied with personal problems, rather than as part of a social force concerned with wider issues in the world outside. Thatcher's vision of 'the community' involves an assortment of separate families, with wide lawns and

CITIZENS ALL?

narrow minds, who might just worry about what happens a few doors down the street. The Neighbourhood Watch schemes, combining parochial suspicion and prying with support for the police, are Thatcher's ideal community bodies.

There can be no doubt that these ideas are entirely reactionary. Yet the left has proved incapable of dealing with them. Some have retreated into upholding the old welfare state as a 'socialist alternative'. Other left wingers have adapted to the Tory emphasis on individualism. Neither approach holds out any hope of inspiring active opposition to the Tories.

The traditional left of the official labour movement, gathered around figures like Tony Benn and Eric Heffer, rejects the Thatcherite idea that we are all individual citizens, and insists that Britain is still riven by social divisions. This is undoubtedly true. Their idea of a 'collective' alternative, however, is that old-fashioned state intervention in health, welfare and economic matters can correct the imbalances. But this contradicts the bitter experience of the welfare state and nationalised industries endured by people in modern Britain.

The working class will not take up cudgels on behalf of the state institutions which have served it so poorly. The old left's preoccupation with the failed state interventionist policies of past Labour governments has discredited socialism. It has allowed New Realists like GMB chief John Edmonds to ridicule anti-capitalism as the preserve of 'two venerable gentlemen of pensionable age [Benn and Heffer] stomping the country to persuade us to return to the manifesto of 1945'.

The 'new left' around the Labour leadership and *Marxism Today* recognises the antiquated inadequacy of the Bennites. Yet it has no genuine alternative. It has thus tried to appropriate the theme of 'active citizens in the community' for the left. It has ended up accommodating to Tory prejudices.

Marxism Today, and the Labour leaders whom it feeds, argue that the left should become the true champions of 'the community' and responsible 'citizenship'. They claim that this is a novel adjustment to the 'New Times'. In fact it is a throwback to an imaginary ideal, just as useless and outdated as Benn's state socialism. Labour executive member and star of *Marxism Today* round-tables, David Blunkett, sums this up:

'We need to compete with what the

Tories are saying on citizenship by remembering that it was our people who came together to provide education and childcare, to look after elderly people, and to make it possible for hospitals to run.'

This sort of nostalgic nonsense about looking after your neighbours is all grist to the Tory mill. The subject of traditional values is one which Thatcher has used to great effect in her propaganda war against 'modern permissiveness'. Any attempt to contrast the virtues of the past to the vices of the present gives credence to her reactionary campaign. The debate about citizenship and community is a case in point. As the *Financial Times* noted last week, the theme accords with Thatcher's attempt to impose the backward, strait-laced values of the corner shopkeeper throughout British society:

'It is very much in line with Mrs Thatcher's middle class values, based on neighbourhood and family and deferred gratification. Indeed, by all accounts, her father, the late Alderman Roberts of Grantham, was an early paradigm of the active citizen.'

We cannot hope to mobilise a movement against the government by trying to steal the mantle of the Grantham grocer.

The practical proposals which follow from the 'new left' analysis show the consequences of its concession to the right. Writing of the need for a left-wing 'social citizenship' in the latest issue of *Marxism Today*, Charlie Leadbeater suggests that 'childcare provision could be built up from the informal networks which abound among women'. In other words, we should turn a necessity into a virtue, let the state off the hook so far as providing decent childcare is concerned, and make women themselves fill the gaps. It sounds remarkably like the

Tories' arguments for 'community care' and 'individual responsibility', dressed up in sham radicalism.

There is much that is new in British politics today. The Tories have certainly shattered the old consensus behind the welfare state, and exposed the tired ideas of traditional left-wing Labourism. Yet there are also fundamental features of society which remain intact; the class divide is the most important of these.

We are not all individual citizens in a community. We are members of social classes. The basic division is still between a minority of capitalists who control the means of production, and a majority of workers who have to sell their ability to labour for a living. No individual worker can win lasting gains simply by staking a claim to citizenship. The capitalists will laugh in the faces of left wingers naive enough to try it. The only way we can achieve a better life is by using our collective power to take what we need from those who exploit us.

We need to counterpose the idea of a collective fight for democratic rights and resources to the notion of individual citizenship. This does not mean looking to the state to act as a progressive agent on our behalf. It means recognising the state as a capitalist body which we must organise against, to wrest what we require from the ruling class as part of the struggle against its degrading system.

This is no time for nostalgia, either of the Blunkett or the Benn variety. It is time to shape up for the struggles of the nineties. To do that, we need a political outlook which can apply the principles of working class politics to a changing situation. We need to construct a Marxist worldview adequate to our times, to show that the politics of revolution are more relevant than ever. The first thing we need is our new in-depth review, *Living Marxism*, which hits the streets next week (see page 6 for details).

Breaking New Ground

Conference organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party

Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October
Caxton House, 129 St John's Way
London N19 (Archway tube)
Registration 10am Saturday 22 October

Breaking New Ground is an opportunity to apply a Marxist analysis to the problems facing the working class today. Why do the Tories appear so invincible and the left so weak? What is Britain doing in Ireland? Why has Gorbachev become the pin-up of the

Western world? How can we deal with the problem of racism?

These issues and many more will be debated in workshops over the weekend.

If you want to come along, register now. Tickets cost £5.

Make cheques payable to RCP Association and send to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX. Contact Lesley Banham on (01) 729 0414 for details.

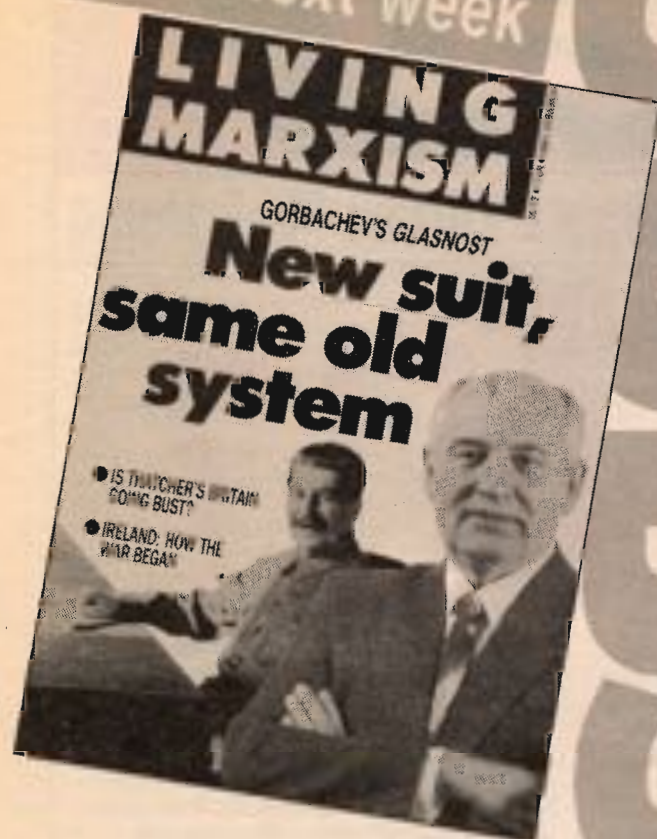
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Out next week



We hope that all readers of the next step will subscribe to our new monthly review, *Living Marxism*, which will be on sale from November.

Living Marxism will set out to fill the intellectual vacuum on the British left, by providing an in-depth analysis of political trends in Britain and internationally. The most striking problem on the left today is the dearth of new ideas. For a decade the Tory government and the forces of the right have dictated the political agenda.

The Labour Party leadership has responded by adapting to the Thatcherite times and espousing the policies of New Realism. Many on the left have retreated into the past, and given up trying to project a radical alternative which can get to grips with the problems facing the working class today.

We cannot hope to regain the ground which the working class has lost unless we start winning the battle of ideas. *Living Marxism* will be a powerful weapon in that battle. It will allow us to analyse the issues of the moment in a more all-rounded way than is possible in a weekly newspaper. It will allow us to conduct a more rigorous critique of each specific debate, and to approach each issue from the wider perspective of the struggle for power in British politics.

Most importantly, *Living Marxism* will give us the scope to present a positive revolutionary alternative to the old ideas, with a breadth of analysis which can convince the most political members of the working class of the need to join the struggle for a new movement.

The launch of *Living Marxism* has consequences for the next step. Producing *Living Marxism* and our theoretical journal *Confrontation* to the high standard required will stretch our editorial and production resources. For the time being it will mean producing a shorter weekly paper.

Since it was launched in 1985, *tns* has become a leading force on the left of British politics. It has put forward a distinctive working class perspective on issues from Gorbachev, through the Gulf War to the Alton Bill, Aids, the Clause campaign, and on industrial disputes at Wapping, Dover and in the NHS. The paper will continue to play an important role for the party, allowing us to respond to events on a weekly basis and spearheading our interventions in many situations.

We are sure our readers will welcome the addition of a monthly review to complement the arguments in *tns*. *Living Marxism* will be a big bonus in carrying the arguments for a revolutionary alternative further still. You can assist us in that endeavour by subscribing to *Living Marxism* and selling it to your friends and workmates.

The Tories in Brighton

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

The Tories can afford to be smug about sweeping aside the opposition, argues Joan Phillips, but they can do nothing to stop their system spinning further out of control

Senior Conservative politicians were warning of the dangers of complacency even before the Tory Party assembled in Brighton for its annual celebratory conference. But the government has every reason to be confident about its unassailable position, after the opposition parties turned in performances ranging from the desultory to the disastrous over the summer conference season. Margaret Thatcher arrived at the seaside for her fourteenth conference as party leader and tenth as prime minister, with not a rival in sight and with a runaway lead in the opinion polls.

BOAST

The ritual triumphalism of Tory conferences is a symptom of the party's dominance of British politics. For 10 years the Tories have dictated the political agenda.

Thatcher's great achievement has been to vanquish the opposition by capturing the ideological battlefield.

The most striking feature of the conference season has been how all the opposition parties have embraced the keynote concepts of the Thatcher era. David Owen, Paddy Ashdown and Neil Kinnock took turns to proclaim their commitment to the free market, social citizenship and individual choice. Every aspiring prime minister now accepts that to have any hope of power they must put a tick next to the political initiatives the Tories have made their own.

Indeed, this was the meaning of Thatcher's boast in her closing speech to the conference: 'The Conservative Party occupies the common ground of British politics. And this is where the great mass of the British people have pitched their tents.' This might be an over-estimation of the popularity of Tory policies, but it is an accurate assessment of how they have been appropriated by the opposition parties.

ILLUSION

For the moment at least, the Tories have good cause to feel secure. But the government's victories against its rivals have often served to obscure its defeats on the economic front. The fatal flaw of the three Thatcher terms is the government's failure to reverse the decline of British capitalism. On this score, smugness is wholly out of place.

Tory fixers might be able to stage-manage a standing ovation for chancellor Nigel Lawson; but it is not so easy to keep up the illusion that the creation of the biggest trade deficit in history is an economic miracle.

For all their boasts about a booming and prosperous Britain, the Tories have been unable to overcome the effects of recession. British industry trails far behind its international competitors, with manufacturing only now reaching its previous highpoint of 1974. All this has been temporarily hidden by the boom in the financial services sector. But having been financed by the growth of speculation and credit, it is only a matter of time before the Tory bluff is called.

The easy credit, tax-cutting strategy has rebounded on the government in the form of a record trade deficit. Promises of prosperity and tax cuts, the staple of Tory propaganda, have now been put to question by a series of interest rate hikes. At Brighton both Lawson and Thatcher sought to hide their blushes behind bluster about winning the battle against inflation.

By insisting that bringing down inflation must be the priority of economic strategy, Lawson hoped to divert attention from more



Thatcher: tough but untested

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pressing economic problems. Because it has been such a central theme of Tory propaganda, the fight against inflation is a convenient smokescreen behind which to hide what are really crisis measures. The focus on inflation—which, to Tory economists, means wages—also has the advantage of scapegoating the working class for the crisis of the system. The chancellor's biggest nightmare is not rising inflation rates, which rose by 0.2 per cent to 5.9 per cent last month and are set to go on rising, but slumping trade figures.

POWERLESS

According to the Treasury Economic Modelling Club, the UK share of world trade in manufacturing dropped to 6.9 per cent from 7.5 per cent in the first six months of 1988. The government's interest rate hikes, designed to curb consumer demand and thereby cut imports, are not a positive move to make British industry more competitive. They have been dictated by worsened financial markets threatening to turn Britain's underlying lack of competitiveness into a balance of payments and sterling crisis.

In practice the Tories know that they have no solutions to the problems of British capitalism.

This is why there were no new economic policies on offer at Brighton. A year after the world stock market crash, the vulnerability of the British economy to fluctuations in the world market is clearer than ever, and the Tories are powerless to prevent a slide into recession.

The emphasis of political commentators on the shift in Tory concern from the economic sphere to the social arena confirms the government's lack of an economic strategy. By focusing discussion on social issues, Thatcher hopes to distract attention from mounting economic problems. Even here, however, ministers are running into difficulties, scraping the bottom of the barrel for some new ideas.

Many of the new policy initiatives were neither new, nor were they policies in any real sense. The idea of the 'active citizen' has been aired throughout the summer, and telling people to be a good neighbour is hardly a political policy. The new vogue for 'environmentalism' is a purely opportunist attempt to clean up the Tory image, although it is difficult to see how setting up litter-free zones in Tory-controlled boroughs will win the green vote. While most of the new Tory proposals are stale and insubstantial, they do have a clear political purpose.

REACTION

Even policies which touch on economic affairs have an unmistakable ideological intent. Thus, the government is forced to press ahead with its privatisation programme to sustain the myth of a thriving popular capitalism. But there are diminishing political returns in selling off British Steel which requires massive foreign investment to be successful; or in trying to get people excited about being able to get their hands on a few shares in the sewerage business. The largely propagandistic character of the privatisation drive is best exemplified by Cecil Parkinson's pledge to privatise British Coal. The auctioning of such an unprofitable concern is hardly likely to inspire the world of private enterprise. But it will be a grand finale to the Thatcher regime's political triumph over the miners.

The rationale behind the Tory proposals is to strengthen the climate of reaction which the government has created in recent years.

All the topics of discussion in Brighton—law and order, welfare scroungers, family morality, responsible citizenship—were carefully chosen. By establishing an atmosphere of censorship and restraint, the Tories are softening up the

working class for the attacks to come.

The debate about law and order has always had pride of place in the Tory ideological offensive. The government appreciates that even though it has nothing new to offer its rank and file critics, keeping public opinion constantly focused on law and order is vital for the success of its political offensive.

As well as the usual announcement of more resources for the police and prison services, home secretary Douglas Hurd said that he would press on with plans to introduce electronic tagging for remand prisoners. This initiative is widely considered to be unworkable, but serves a useful purpose in accustoming people to the increasing regimentation of society.

Coming after a series of legal measures which have increased police powers, such initiatives are an ominous sign of how the state is improving its capacity to control every aspect of our lives. Combined with the Tory offensive against sex and violence in the media and demands for more censorship of what we read and watch, all this adds up to a concerted campaign to undermine civil liberties and basic rights. The government was embarrassed by the law lords' decision to lift the two-year ban on media discussion of *Spycatcher* half-way through the conference, but the whole affair was a success for the Tories in creating an atmosphere of censorship throughout society.

FEAR

The discussion on the welfare state and social security also has a policing dimension. Employment minister Norman Fowler announced the creation of a new task force to mount a big offensive against benefit cheats. Claiming that a significant number of claimants either did not want to work or were working on the side, he outlined plans to increase the number of fraud investigators. Social security minister John Moore also warned that new legislation would be introduced to toughen up the availability-for-work test for those claiming benefit.

The focus of Tory propaganda on welfare scroungers is designed to create a climate of fear among the unemployed, and to criminalise the victims of the capitalist system.

As well as taking the opportunity to rant about dole cheats, Moore launched into a tirade against single-parent families. He declared that single parents were abusing the system and undermining the family unit, and took particular exception to teenage women who supposedly get pregnant to get a guaranteed income and a council flat. In their concern to reinforce traditional values the Tories now seize every opportunity to preach their prejudices about the immorality of deviating from family life. (This can sometimes be embarrassing when Tory ministers do not practice what they preach, and have their extra-marital affairs splashed all over the tabloids at the start of every conference.)

ONSLAUGHT

By promoting a series of moral panics about everything from teenage sex to unmarried mothers, and drug abuse to football hooliganism, the Tories are encouraging people's private preoccupations. This has the effect of fragmenting the working class into thousands of private family units and preventing people from seeking collective solutions to broader social problems resulting from the crisis of the system.

The notion of the active citizen, which is supposedly an innovation in Tory thinking, is nothing new at all. According to media commentators, the Tories have latched on to the idea of active citizenship as an antidote to the excesses of Thatcherite individualism. In reality active citizenship is a variation on the

theme of personal responsibility which has long been a government obsession.

This became especially clear in Douglas Hurd's speech which brought together all the familiar homilies of recent years: 'The game of dodging responsibility has to stop. Parents have to teach their children responsibilities as well as rights. Schools have to put self-discipline and respect for others at the heart of the curriculum. Broadcasters have to consider the effect of their programmes, particularly on the young.' Far from being a reaction against rampant individualism, the notion of active citizenship is a reaction against collective provision which is entirely in keeping with the Tory onslaught on the 'nanny state'.

RHETORIC

In the absence of any radical policy departures, government ministers fell back on attacking the old targets of Tory demonology. The problem was that there is nobody much for the Tories to use as a whipping post these days. The left in the Labour Party has been trounced into oblivion by Kinnock; and John Biffen found it necessary to declare that 'we can't live forever with our rhetoric that the Labour Party is in the hands of extremists'. The local government left has moved so far to the right that the 'loony' label is singularly inappropriate; and Tony Newton's tirade against the 'irresponsible financial policies and bureaucratic obstruction of posturing councils' seemed far-fetched in the light of the savage cuts being implemented by most Labour authorities.

Thatcher devoted a section of her closing speech to an attack on the IRA, the one enemy within which can be relied on not to go away.

The conference performance left the overwhelming impression that the government has exhausted itself. The debate on the economy underlined the lack of a strategy for saving British capitalism from approaching recession. Ministerial policy pronouncements were little more than confirmations of unimpressive initiatives already in progress. The hyped-up social agenda revealed a party bereft of new ideas: Thatcher had to send her speech writers away to redraft her leader's address several times before she accepted the final lacklustre product.

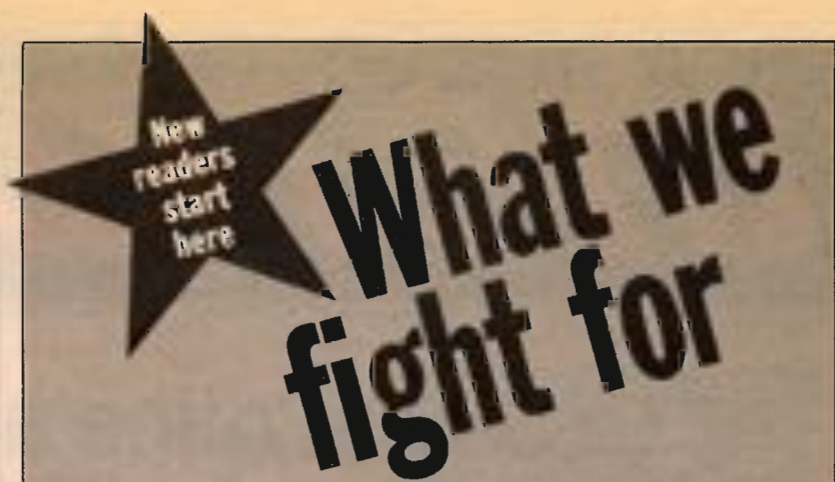
INEPTITUDE

The Tories can get away with such a shoddy performance because there is nobody in the opposition to touch them. We have made the point many times before in *ms*, that the Tories are only as strong as their opponents allow them to appear. Even if the government ran into serious problems with the economy it is likely that it would be able to survive largely unscathed given the ineptitude of the opposition parties.

From our point of view there is every reason to be optimistic about the future.

The only thing which the Tories have got going for them is their grasp of the importance of hegemonising the ideological struggle. So far they have relied on political intuition to force their opponents into submission. Looking back over the past decade it is possible to say that the government has had an easy ride. After 10 years the Labour Party has yet to put the government under pressure, despite countless opportunities to build on popular resentment against Tory policies.

At a time when the Tories are facing their toughest test as the economy spins out of control, the opportunities for forging a coherent opposition to the government are better than ever before. The lesson of the last 10 years is that if we prepare our side to confront the ideological offensive we will be well-placed to wipe the smug smile off the face of British Toryism.



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 political 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 reform and improvements in the lives of the working class, we believe that no lasting 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 capitalist class. The RCP aims to destroy the state, which maintains the conditions for exploitation. We believe that the state cannot be used for progressive ends. Any attempt to use the 'soft' side of the state such as local government, inner-city partnerships, or police authorities, lends legitimacy to the entire state apparatus. It can only strengthen the authority of the capitalists' coercive machine.

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 an anti-imperialist struggle. Workers who live in the imperialist heartlands 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 the 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 industrial basis could ensure that the workers truly belong to their unions.

The RCP's aim is social revolution in Britain and internationally. We believe that this perspective is more 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.

If you would like to discuss these issues further, please write to: RCP, 2nd Floor, London WC2N 3XX, or phone (01) 292 3414.

the next step

Lily and Edwin Kandial, their son David, his girlfriend Sandra and three friends decided last month to go on one of London's famous boat trips down the Thames. They hoped to spend a few hours on the river, have a quiet drink and a dance. Unfortunately for them four racists made the same journey. The racists followed the Kandials everywhere, abusing them. 'Pakis get everywhere', they told the other revellers. 'You get a better class of company in McDonalds.'

It was some relief to the family when the boat finally docked. But the Kandials' problems had just begun. When they went to get a taxi, the racists followed, taunting them, shouting 'Fucking Pakis, fucking poofs'. 'Why are you doing this?', asked Mrs Kandial. One of the racists slapped her across the face. He then took a swing at Edwin and knocked him unconscious.

By the time Edwin came round some minutes later, no less than 30 police had arrived. But someone had forgotten to tell them that the Met is now an 'anti-racist' organisation. They pounced on David Kandial and arrested him for causing actual bodily harm to one of the white youths. The supposedly injured racist was sitting on a nearby wall, smoking a cigarette with a smirk on his face. After taking David to Cannon Row police station, the police raised the charge to the more serious one of causing grievous bodily harm.

When Edwin asked the police why they hadn't arrested the louts who had attacked his wife and knocked him out, they told him to 'piss off'. After going to hospital, Edwin went to bail his son out and to make a statement about the incident. The police told him they weren't interested in his statement, refused to let him see David and manhandled him out of the station. David was detained for 13 hours and is due to appear in Bow Street magistrates court on 24 October.

'My son is being charged with an offence which I consider to be totally unjust', says Edwin. 'He was just trying to save me from being beaten to death by this gang. Yet, when the police arrived on the scene, out of all the crowd they arrested him and him alone. Tell me where is the justice, is this not racial prejudice?'

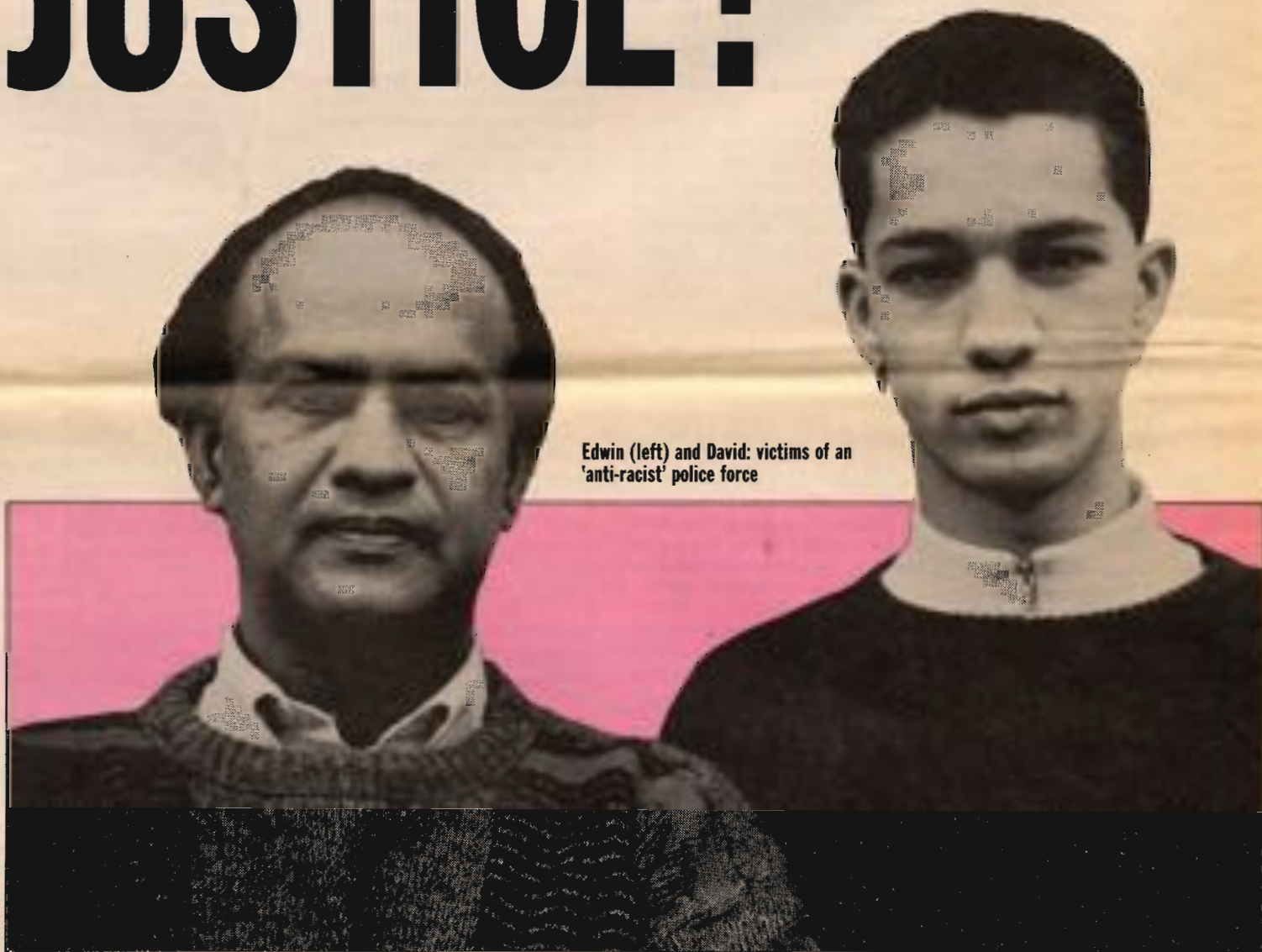
The message from the police seems to be 'If you're black, it's a crime not to allow yourself to be beaten up by racists'. Workers Against Racism is demanding that all charges be dropped, and is fighting to make sure that the police don't get away with this frame-up.
Keith Tompson

Julius must stay!

Last week *tns* reported on how the home office is trying to deport Julius Alexander. Julius was born in St Vincent, but has lived in Britain for four years. He lives with his fiancée, Maureen, and her two daughters, Beverley and Joanna. Julius also has another daughter, Jannicka, who was born in this country. His mother, two brothers and his sister are all British citizens and have lived in London for many years. Yet, according to the home office, Julius is a 'visitor' who has 'overstayed' his welcome. Workers Against Racism is fighting for Julius' right to stay in Britain. If you want to get involved in the campaign, phone WAR on (01) 729 0414, or write to BM WAR, London WC1N 3XX.

Police arrest victim of racist attack

'WHERE IS THE JUSTICE?'



Edwin (left) and David: victims of an 'anti-racist' police force



Julius Alexander

PENGUIN SPECIAL

KEITH TOMPSON

UNDER SIEGE

RACIAL VIOLENCE IN BRITAIN

With an introduction by John Piger



UNDER SIEGE: RACIAL VIOLENCE IN BRITAIN TODAY

Keith Tompson
Introduction by John Piger
£3.99 plus 61p p&g
ISBN 0-14-052391-X

Written by Workers Against Racism national organiser, Keith Tompson, *Under Siege* describes in graphic detail the reality of racial oppression in Britain today—from racist attacks to police harassment, from deportations to job discrimination. Tompson shows how racism has become such a key feature of life in Britain. He also looks at how the authorities have tried to undermine black resistance since the uprisings of 1981, by creating a network of quangos which have often served to disorient the anti-racist movement. He outlines how racism can be fought and warns of the dangers if racial oppression goes unchallenged. *Under Siege* is essential reading for anyone interested in understanding racism and how to fight it.

Under Siege is available from all good bookshops and Junius Publications. To order from Junius, make cheques payable to Junius Publications Ltd and send to BCM JPLtd, London WC1N 3XX, or phone (01) 729 3771.