

LIVING MARXISM

December 1988 No2 £1.50

**Who's free in the
market economy?**

INSIDE: MARX ON FREEDOM • WHAT IS THATCHERISM? • ZIONISM

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(Cover photo of North Sea oil rig worker by Gemma Forest)

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**LIVING
MARXISM**

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The 'dependency culture'

NOT OUR NANNY

Why does the Tory government want to make the jobless join workfare schemes, make students take out loans rather than getting grants, make single mothers less eligible for benefits, and move towards making pensioners take a means-test? To save the state money and fiddle the figures? Not a bit of it. According to Conservative ministers, these policies and the other cuts in welfare spending are designed to free the British people from the scourge of 'the dependency culture' and its partner in crime, 'the nanny state', so as to let us stand on our own feet. It is ironic that these arguments are put about by the representatives of a ruling class which is more dependent than anybody on state support and the services of others.

Royal parasites

Every member of the British establishment depends upon getting other people to do the dirty work for them, and getting the government to foot their bills. Take the worst example of dependent parasitism, the royal family. The state which doesn't want to nanny working women by providing decent nurseries is more than willing to pay for a full-time nanny while the Duchess of York jets off to paddle around the Antipodes. The Queen is a pensioner. She is also the richest person in Britain and the wealthiest woman in the world with,

according to *Money* magazine, assets totalling £3286m. The state applied no means-test before nannying her to the tune of £4.3m last year, thus enabling her to maintain the army of skivvies and horse-faced hangers on, on whom she depends for her status.

But it's not just the royals. The entire capitalist class is dependent on ordinary people to work and produce wealth for it. Margaret Thatcher's favourite entrepreneur, Richard Branson, is said to be a 'self-made man' who has earned his millions by the sweat of his own brow, a one-man industry like some sort of modern Robinson Crusoe. The difference is, however, that Crusoe's lonely toil got him a hut, a hat, some fruit and a few fish. Branson has an international airline, a huge record company, and a wide-ranging business empire. The contrast may not be unconnected to the fact that, while Crusoe only had Man Friday to kick around, Branson can depend upon several thousand employees to slave away for him, including teenage shop assistants whom he pays a princely £40-odd a week.

One-man show?

Sir Ralph Halpern of Burton's is supposed to be another hard-working symbol of the enterprise culture, who earns every penny of his £1.3m a year salary. Nobody mentions what the 32 000

people who work for him are doing while he is carrying the company single-handedly.

Pensioners or YTS conscripts experience the state more as a workhouse overseer than a nursery nanny. The authorities save their acts of supportive kindness for the capitalist class. For example, the Tories presented their privatisation programme as a cure for the sickness of state intervention. In fact it has been a government give-away to big business.

Bargain for BAe

As part of the sell-off of the Royal Ordnance works, the Tories knocked down a piece of prime land to British Aerospace for just £3.5m. The BAe asset-strippers are preparing to close down the factories which stand on it (which will mean the small matter of 2000 redundancies), and resell the real estate for a cool £500m. And despite the privatisation ballyhoo, ailing British industry is still dependent on state support to survive. Just about the only dynamic areas of British manufacturing are those companies which receive massive government defence contracts. The defence-dominated radar and electronic capital equipment sector is the only electronics sector in which exports still outstrip imports. Meanwhile, we are told to fend for ourselves.

When it comes to doling

out punishment, the state shows the same selective attitude about who it nannies and who it knocks on the head. In 1987, social security 'fraud' by hard-up people trying to make ends meet cost the authorities £500m; they launched 14 000 prosecutions to get the money back or send the offenders to jail. Over the same period, tax evasion cost the state £5000m; it took just 20 big-time frauds to court, and allowed the rest to hide behind the aprons of their nannies in the accountancy profession. When working class people gather to protest on demonstrations or picket lines, the state sends the riot squad in to drive them away. When the Tories held their political gathering in Brighton in October, the state sent in the riot squad, the SAS and the Royal Navy to hold their hands.

Hypocrites

The genuine culture of dependency in Britain can be found among the members of the capitalist class. They rely on our labour, and on their nanny state's economic and political power, to protect their privileged position in society. The hypocritical lectures they give us are designed to save some money on the welfare state, so that they can concentrate more resources in their own hands.

The only thing which ordinary people can depend upon in the end is each other. The Tories might tell each of us we can become a Richard Branson and make our own way in the world. But the way in which the working class has made gains worth having is by organising together, and using our collective power to wrest concessions from the employers and the state. After all, why should we be dictated to by people who need a nanny to stick up for them?

Linda Ryan

Andrew Calcutt

ABOVE: Police show striking Liverpool postworkers how the nanny state treats naughty workers

VOTING FOR NOBODY

It's a long way, geographically and politically, from Washington DC to Govan, Glasgow. Yet the US capital and the Scottish constituency have something significant in common. Last month, each was at the centre of an election in which the overriding impressions were of impotent politicians and an apathetic public. As a result, new Republican president George Bush was prodded through the White House doors by just 26 per cent of those Americans eligible to vote, while new Scottish National Party MP Jim Sillars caught a train to London on a ticket bought by only 29 per cent of Govan's total electorate.

caricature in the vacuous Bush-Dukakis bunfight. Moreover, it has now spread from the USA into just about every corner of the capitalist world, as recent elections elsewhere reveal.

Bush sought to sell himself by avoiding issues and striking Reaganesque poses surrounded by the Stars and Stripes; just as, in the French presidential election earlier this year, François Mitterrand campaigned by imitating General de Gaulle against a backdrop of the Tricolore; which was very similar to the way in which Margaret Thatcher spent last year's British general election in Churchillian mood, waving the Union Jack. Whatever they said in between the photo-opportunities and celebrity-studded appearances, they said nothing very much.

● Many blame the media, and especially television, for turning modern electoral struggles into unattractive beauty contests. No doubt the TV companies have played a willing part in the process. But if the candidates had a vibrant message to convey to the electorate, they could surely find no better way to get it across than through saturation TV coverage. Instead, they have usually been happy to go along with the image game, because what policies they do possess are about as exciting as Dan Quayle's war record.

There are two main reasons why leading Western politicians tend to stick to banalities and safe themes like patriotic bluster today. One is their lack of any answers to the growing problems of the international capitalist system, as the world economy inches inexorably towards a major new recession, and their post-war political structures start coming apart. The US expression of this crisis of ruling class strategy is dealt with on page 26, in an



Bush: posing in front of the flag

article on post-election America. But it is a much more widespread malaise, afflicting governments and opposition parties alike in all of the major Western nations.

The second reason is the lack of working class pressure on the political process, of the kind which could force the problems facing ordinary people into the electoral spotlight. The way in which mass unemployment can be blithely passed over by politicians everywhere, as an unfortunate but permanent fact of life rather than a live issue, is indicative of the lack of a working class voice in the debate today.

● The exclusion of ordinary people from any real role in politics finds reflection in the rising abstention rates. Judging by the recent election results, 'We-don't-want-any-of-them' is the fastest growing political party in the Western world, breaking records all over the place.

At about 50 per cent, the turn-out in the US presidential election was the lowest since the early twenties when Calvin

Coolidge was elected president; Bush now looks set to challenge Coolidge's longstanding record as the least charismatic and inspiring president of the twentieth century. At 60.2 per cent, the turn-out in Govan was the second lowest in a British by-election since the Second World War. At 66 per cent, the turn-out in the first round of the French general election in the summer was an all-time low. Elections are becoming more and more a matter of middle class politicians from the right and the centre addressing middle class voters.

● The growth of abstentionism, and the declining enthusiasm with which working class people who still vote drag themselves down to the polling-booth, does not mean that our people are unconcerned about the state of society. There is plenty of anger about. In Britain this year, major strikes over jobs, pay and conditions have involved carworkers, seafarers, postworkers and others, alongside the ongoing unrest in the health service.



Sillars: 71 per cent say no

The emptiness of recent election campaigns across the Western world, and the growing trend for voters to abstain, says much about the lack of a dynamic alternative in politics today. It advertises the pressing need for the new perspective which Marxism can provide.

The universal complaint about the American election was that it was all image and no issues, with plenty of balloons and five-second 'sound bytes' on the evening news, but a distinct shortage of politics on the electoral agenda. This sort of presidential campaigning, in which the contestants emphasise style rather than substance, has been around in America for some time. But it reached the point of

The approach of the poll tax has infuriated thousands in Scotland. In France, mass public sector strikes against state spending cuts have shaken the Mitterrand regime. America might not have experienced the same scale of industrial action, but there too you will find widespread and unmistakable bitterness about factory closures, falling living standards and so on.

The problem is that those who want to protest have no collective voice. Their action is fragmented; a strike here, a demonstration there, and countless outbursts of personal anger, in a disconnected series of short-lived sparks. There is no organised force to bring them together and make their opposition count, no focus through which their ill-feeling can be turned into a political factor. There are only the plastic, posturing images of lifeless political parties, all offering similar—and similarly uninspiring—programmes. And while working class dissent remains an incoherent rumble beneath the surface of political life, the mainstream parties can carry on with this charade.

● One option which some people are taking as an alternative to abstaining is to cast a protest vote. This is what happened, for example, in Govan. Here the protest was not just against the Tory government; the Conservative Party was never a factor in the by-election. It was first and foremost against the Labour Party, which is widely considered to have let down the Scottish people through its failure to stand up to the Tories and its complicity in implementing the poll tax via Labour-run local authorities. The Govan result was a telling sign of the irrelevance of the entire political process to many ordinary people today, as thousands lumped the Labour opposition together with the government and dismissed them both as useless.

A protest vote can rattle a few nerves in high places and make some headlines. But it is by nature a token affair, little different from abstaining in its long-term effect. Voting for a third party without raising a new voice in the debate usually means supporting the same old politics in a different guise. Thus the Govan voters who deserted Labour ended up supporting the



Scottish National Party, which has much in common with the Labourist tradition and has often proved as willing to impose the poll tax where it influences local councils. The difference is only that, because the SNP has less influence than Labour, it is less directly implicated in the failures of the system.

● A similar process was at work in France in the summer elections. Thousands of working class voters were disenchanted with the move by Mitterrand's Socialists towards the political centre, and the president's attempt to stitch up a deal with the right. Many of them changed horses and voted for Communist Party candidates as a protest. But the French Communists have an even longer record than the Socialists of attacking and betraying working class interests. They were able to pose as an alternative only because they have been out of government long enough to avoid being blamed for the latest let-downs.

The exclusion of the working class from political debates inevitably leads to confusion, and enables misguided ideas to gain influence among ordinary people. The lack of a clear and independent class

perspective has often meant that frustrated workers lash out against the wrong targets. So some Scots blame the English, rather than British capitalism, for their problems. In America, many workers have proved receptive to the arguments popularised by Democratic Party politicians like Jesse Jackson, who blame Japanese competitors rather than US employers for job losses and wage-cuts. The first thing that needs to be done, if we are to bring some working class pressure to bear on the system, is to clarify the issues facing us. This is the task to which *Living Marxism* is dedicated

● Clearing up the confusion will involve creating an intellectual alternative. It will mean developing and disseminating the ideas which can inspire ordinary people to get involved in political activity, and give them a clear vision of what needs to be done to achieve their aims. Of course, ideas alone will change nothing. Real change will come only when working class people make themselves felt by taking organised action outside the sham system of parliamentary politics. But we can begin by turning *Living Marxism* into the political focus for those who want to fight, using it to

establish an intellectual perspective which will identify the independent interests of our class in every situation. Without such a focus around which opposition forces can be pulled together, no amount of disparate protest action will make very much difference. That is a lesson we would do well to learn from the strikes and campaigns of the past few months.

Abstaining is not enough. It can be a legitimate response; we would not hesitate to recommend it, for example, in a narrow contest between Bush and Dukakis, Thatcher and Kinnock, or Sillars and a Labour candidate. Yet abstentionism always smacks of passivity. And passive protest is something the authorities can safely ignore. It falls short of the sort of pressure required to shove working class concerns into the centre of the political ring.

To go beyond the limitations of abstentionism will necessitate giving people a fresh perspective, one which can activate their instinctive distrust of established politics. The aim should not be to see the working class re-assimilated into the circus which passes for a political process in the capitalist world today. It should be to embark on a new orientation altogether.

The first step along that road is to give clarity and a collective voice to the angry, the disenchanted and the outraged, who are presently dispersed among the silent millions of working class people. With your help, *Living Marxism* can become the mouthpiece for their interests, a source of intellectual inspiration, and a monthly shock to the system which expects us to put up with choosing from among a dull collection of political poseurs once every four or five years.

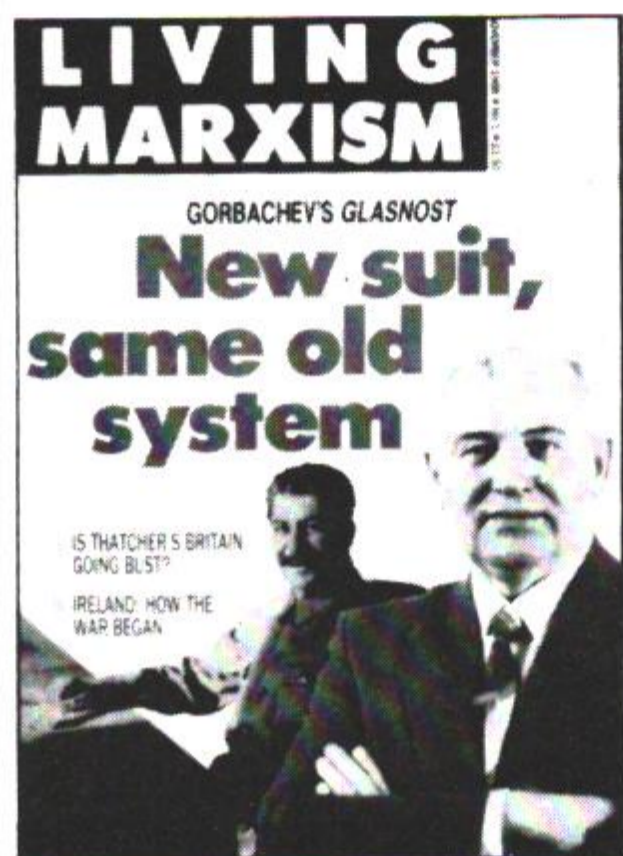
JOIN THE DEBATE

Living Marxism forums are being organised around the country to discuss the issues raised in the review. This month's forums will focus on the 'Whose freedom?' article (see page 7), and will be held in the first fortnight of December.

If you want to take part in the debate about the future of left-wing politics, ring (01) 729 0414 today for details of the forum taking place near you.

LEFT:
Mitterrand:
using the
media to say
nothing
much

Letters



JUST IN TIME!

From the amount of interest in *Living Marxism* in Edinburgh it would seem that a considerable number of people have no illusions in the new-style Labour Party. The appeal of 'individual socialism' is not the widespread phenomenon we are led to believe. The arrival of *Living Marxism*—and not before time—offers a new political focus to express the interests of the working class.

The clarity and depth of analysis in the articles in *Living Marxism* provide a means to discuss the necessity for revolutionary politics. You can't change the world just through a journal, but *Living Marxism* presents us with an opportunity to explain that neither Marxism nor the working class is dead, and that the fight for socialism is not a pipe-dream.

Mortydd
Edinburgh

I must write to tell you how much I enjoyed reading *Living Marxism*. It's the best left-wing, radical magazine I have read for ages, very interesting and informative. I would be interested to find out more about the RCP's weekly newspaper *the next step*.

Mark
Grimsby

'POST-FORDISM' AND THE PHILISTINES

Your criticisms of 'post-Fordism' are fatally flawed by your failure to offer any alternative explanation for Thatcher's success. You can quote Karl Marx defining capital as an unchanging 'social relation' all you like, but you cannot deny that social and political identities in Britain have been totally transformed since the seventies. A process of genuine significance has clearly been at work, and the post-Fordist argument seems to me to be the nearest thing we have to a rational explanation.

Leave aside the intricacies of Marxist theory for a moment. I don't need to be a social scientist to appreciate that when more people own their own homes, can buy shares (whether they actually choose to or not), earn good wages and are offered an ever-expanding range of consumer interests, they will be inclined to take a different stance on issues than their parents did in the days of back-to-backs and mass factory production. In part, the success of the Thatcher revolution has been built on the left's failure to appreciate these alterations in the way

capitalism works. By falling into the same trap, *Living Marxism* has got off on a bad foot.

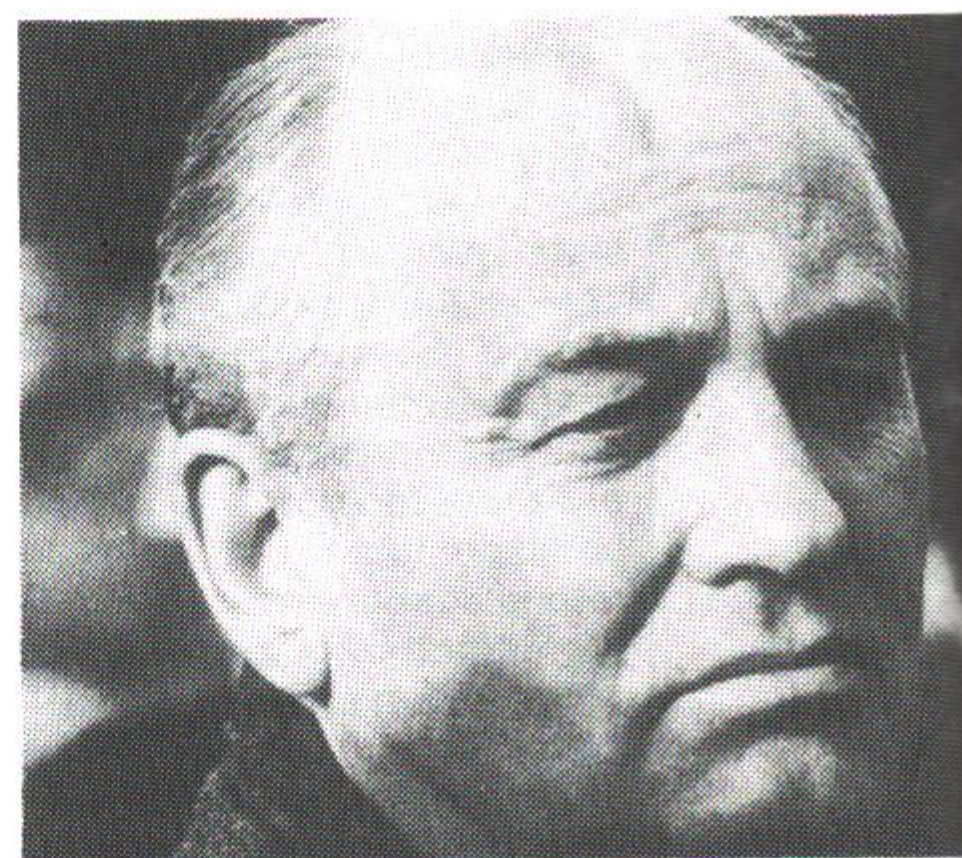
Jean May
North London

I liked the first issue of *Living Marxism*, especially the Freeman/Forest critique of the 'post-Fordism' analysis. It made a welcome change from the crude way in which the 'hard' left usually tries to dismiss the ideas of those you call the rethinkers.

The ideas behind the post-Fordism theory—about capitalism having entered a new dynamic era based on individual consumption, about the working class no longer being the body to change society etc—are very influential, and very dangerous. But it's no use just screaming 'Wot about the workers?' at these people, as many have tried to do. I even read one attack on the rethinkers recently in a left-wing journal which complained that they go on about post-this and post-that, but never mention the post strike! This is precisely the sort of philistine reaction which allows the post-Fordism theorists to come across as the deep-thinking intellectuals of the movement.

It was a pleasant surprise, then, to find your writers tackling the rethinkers on their own intellectual terms. The left has been divided for too long between pseudish academics and activists who eschew serious analysis. At first glance, *Living Marxism* holds out some hope of crossing this divide and initiating a more sophisticated discussion of the issues facing working people. It may be too much to hope that an under-resourced organisation like yourselves can keep up this standard, but I hope so anyway.

David Carr
London



GORBACHEV: NO STALIN

As one who has been part of the socialist and peace movement for many years, I feel that I must take issue with the implications of the front cover and Frank Richards' article on the Soviet Union in November's *Living Marxism*. It is not helpful, and not very honest either, to put Mikhail Gorbachev and Joseph Stalin together under the headline 'New suit, same old system'. Far be it from me to suggest that Gorbachev is perfect, but he's no Stalin either.

Look at the record. Stalin opened the gulags, forced millions into collective farms, and did a deal with Hitler under which he promised to supply Germany with strategic aid in time of war. Gorbachev has said he will release political prisoners, allowed people to participate more in the enterprises where they work, and negotiated with Western leaders (none of whom is a Nazi), to start disarmament. The difference ought to be apparent to the most hardened anti-Soviet writer—as indeed it is, if you read what the Tory press has to say on the subject.

Whatever we might think about this or that policy, I think we must all start by agreeing that the world is a safer and more peaceful place under *glasnost* than it ever could have been in the midst of Stalin's terror. It seems to me, in these dark days of GCHQ and *Spycatcher*, that we could even do with a bit of *glasnost* here in Britain.

Joseph McCrae
Lancashire

We want to hear your views, and your criticisms of the contents of *Living Marxism*. Write to: The Editor, *Living Marxism*, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

Individual rights and class politics

Whose freedom?

Mike Freeman allows Karl Marx to answer his critics

The cry 'freedom' and the assertion of vigorous individualism have traditionally been associated with movements of the right. The slogans of 'free enterprise' and the 'free market', and the defence of individual liberty against the incursions of the state and the trade unions, have become central themes for the rulers of the Western world in the Reagan/Thatcher era. What is new is that these same themes have recently been adopted by the left, as a key feature of the 'rethinking' taking place in the British labour movement in response to the apparently unshakeable ascendancy of the Thatcher regime.

Socialism and Freedom was the

title of Labour frontbencher Bryan Gould's influential book, published in 1985; *Choose Freedom* was deputy leader Roy Hattersley's follow-up last year. The promotion of 'progressive individualism' is crucial to the 'New Times' strategy outlined in the October issue of *Marxism Today* (see 'Post-Fordism': Old ideas for New Times', *Living Marxism*, November 1988). In their concern to keep in touch with a public opinion dominated by the right, significant sections of the left are calling for the abandonment of the traditions of collective organisation and action. They want to replace these ideas with an explicit endorsement of the individualism championed by the

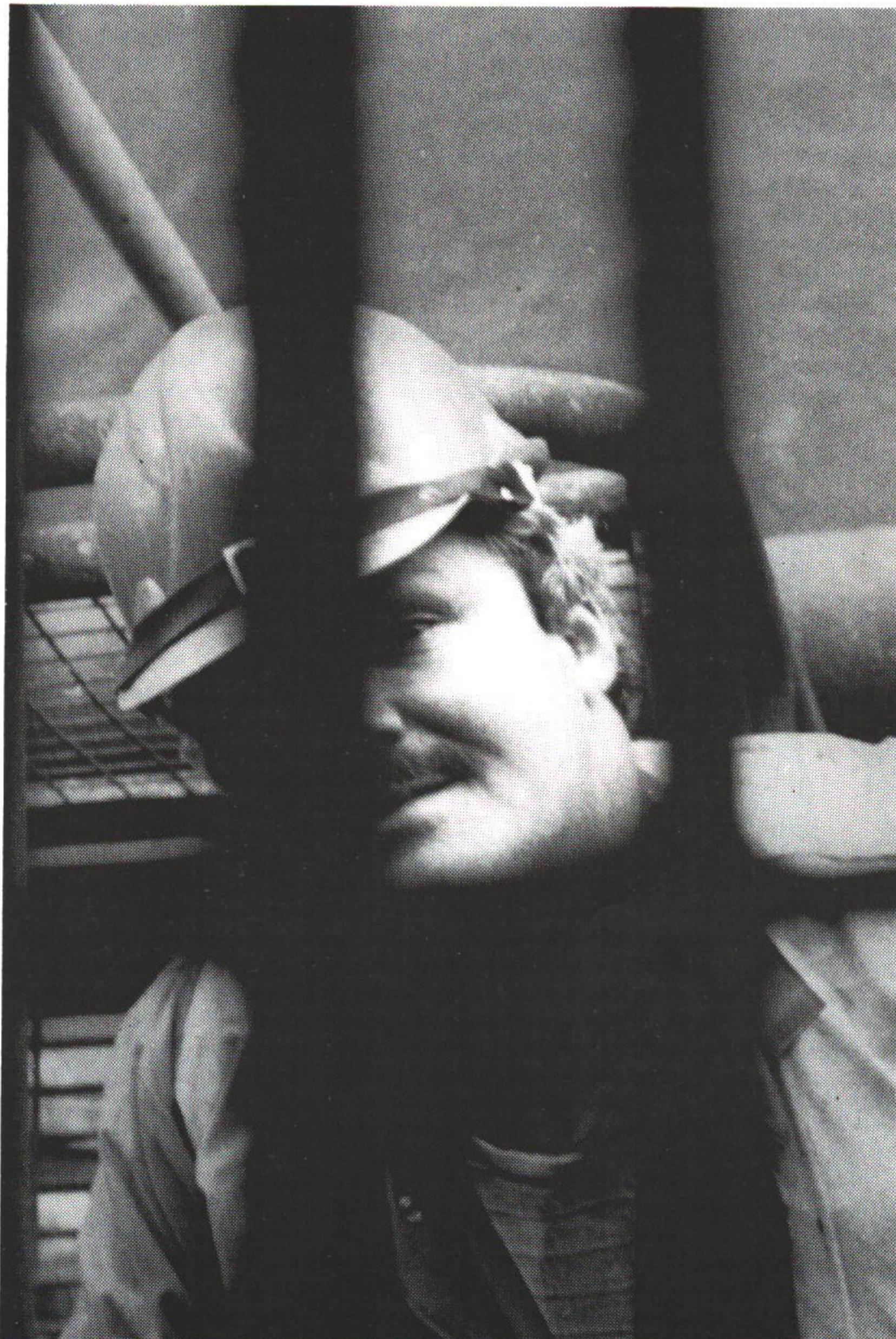
capitalist class. Several common themes have emerged in the writings of the radical rethinkers over the past couple of years.

In place of traditional socialist hostility to the market, there is a new recognition of the role that capitalist competition supposedly plays in enhancing individual liberty. In the past the left looked to the working class movement as the agency of social change and human liberation; today the rethinkers repudiate class struggle in favour of engagement with diverse 'new social movements'. Much of the left has accepted the familiar capitalist prejudice that individual freedom can be better guaranteed by liberal democracy than through socialist revolution.

While the acceptance of the fundamentals of capitalist ideology by social democracy is nothing new, the outlook of many who call themselves 'Marxists' today is alien to the Marxist tradition. Marx was certainly concerned with individuality. 'The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals', he wrote in 1843 (*The German Ideology*, p42). Furthermore, Marx identified 'the free development of individualities....The artistic, scientific development of the individuals in the time set free' by the advance of the productive forces, as the goal of social development (*Grundrisse*, p706). Yet there are stark differences between the Marxist conception of individuality and that of the radical apologists for the existing order of society.

'Gentlemen! Do not allow yourselves to be deluded by the abstract word *freedom*. Whose freedom? It is not the freedom of one individual in relation to another, but the freedom of capital to crush the worker.' (Marx, 'Speech on the question of free trade,' 1848, *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Vol 6, p463)

Freedom and individuality are traditionally associated with the right because they are the classical values of a society based on capitalist production. These values reflect the outlook of the capitalist class and its interest in the unrestricted pursuit of profit. The demands for 'liberty, equality and fraternity' were at the centre of the programme of the



He's free to go to work for the employers—or to go hungry

French Revolution of 1789, and similar demands were raised by the emerging bourgeoisie everywhere. With the ascendancy of the capitalist order, the values of triumphant individualism were established throughout modern society.

What did freedom mean to the new capitalist class? In the first place, it meant freedom from the restraints of the old order, the hierarchy and privilege that sustained the landowning aristocracy and a parasitic monarchy and nobility, and all the duties and obligations of decaying feudalism. The bourgeoisie had to fight for the freedom to buy and sell land and for equal rights to its possession. It had to fight too against the restrictive tariffs of mercantilism, to establish the free trade in commodities that was essential to the progress of capitalist commerce. Above all, the bourgeoisie had to create a free market in the most precious commodity of all—human labour-power—to ensure that capitalists could command more and more resources of labour in the process of capitalist expansion. Hence, the demands for freedom and equality were of fundamental importance to the rising capitalist class, and as its rule became general these ideas became prevalent.

Free to starve

But what does freedom mean for the working class? In modern society the worker is free in what Marx described as 'a double sense' (*Capital*, Vol 1, p166). On the one hand, he is free to sell his own labour-power on the market, in return for a wage. On the other, he is free *from* ownership of any means through which he could make a living in another way. That is, he does not own any land, plant or raw materials which he could use to

produce the wherewithal for a decent existence. The expulsion of workers from various forms of peasant proprietorship or occupation of common land, *freeing* them from ownership of the means of production through enclosures, evictions, etc, was a mechanism for creating a free labour market in the early stages of capitalist development in England. The worker is *free* to sell his labour-power; but if he chooses not to work for a capitalist, he is free to starve.

Although the worker exchanges his labour-power for an agreed equivalent in the form of wages, the capitalist makes sure that the value of the goods workers produce is greater than he pays out in wages and on plant and raw materials. Thus the free exchange between worker and capitalist in the marketplace conceals the extraction of surplus-value in the workplace, the exploitation of the worker in production. The constant repetition of this exchange reproduces the relationship of unfreedom and inequality between capital and labour, the basis of the conflict between the major classes of capitalist society.

Enter capitalism

Marx repeatedly emphasised the historically distinctive character of the concepts of freedom and individuality in modern capitalist society. 'Equality and freedom presuppose relations of production as yet unrealised in the ancient world and the middle ages' (*Grundrisse*, p245). He showed that the very generalisation of freedom and equality, in terms of the private ownership of the means of production and the operation of the labour market according to the law of value, explained the increase of exploitation and inequality in modern society. The unrestricted expansion of capital means the unrestricted intensification of capitalist exploitation.

Marx traced the origins of bourgeois notions of equality before the law and democratic rights to the basic social relations of capitalist production:

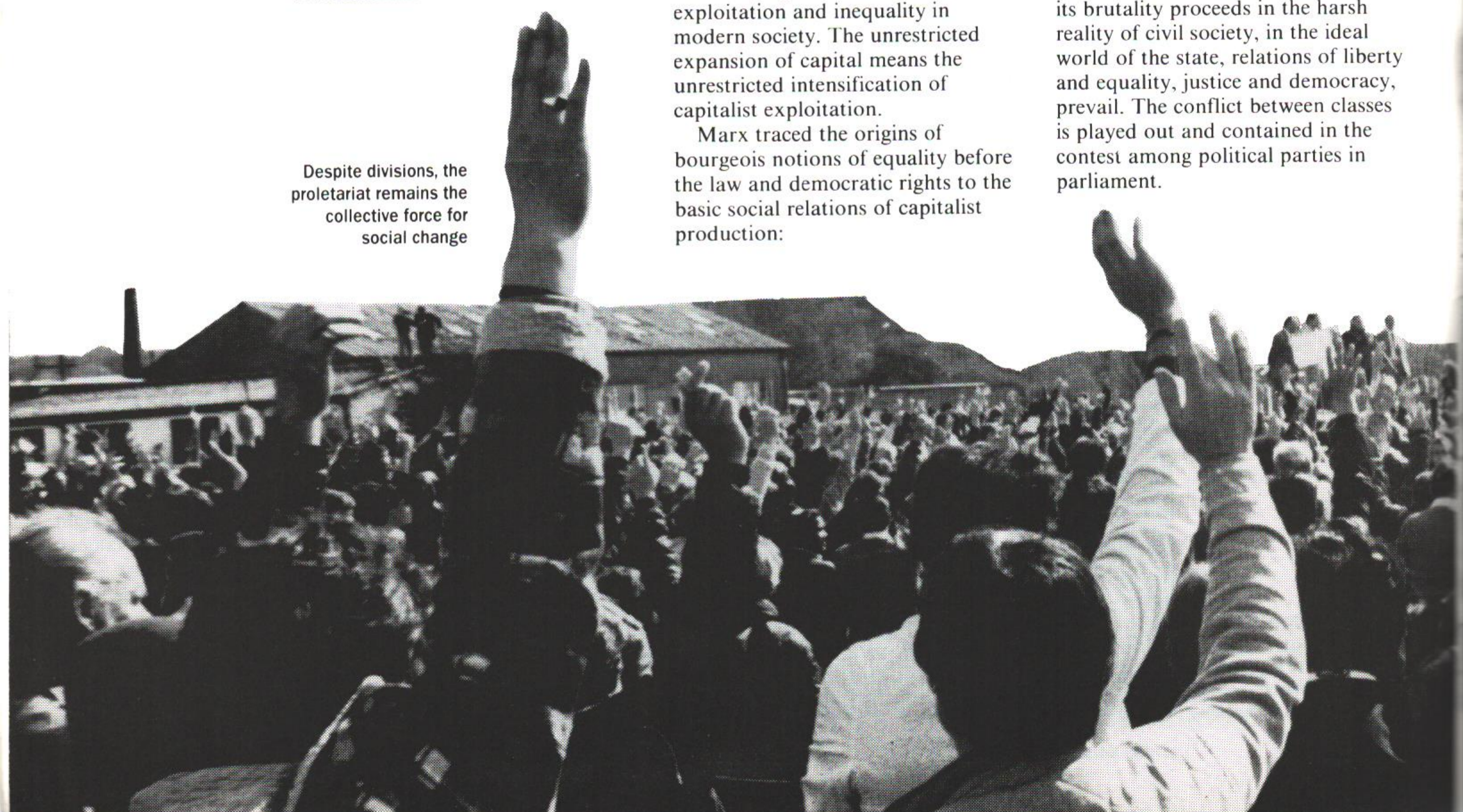
'Equality and freedom are thus not only respected in exchange based on exchange values but, also, the exchange of exchange values is the productive real basis of all *equality* and *freedom*. As pure ideas they are merely the idealised expressions of this basis; as developed in juridical, political, social relations, they are merely this basis to a higher power.' (*Grundrisse*, p245)

The ideas that permeated the legal and political institutions of capitalist society did not fall from the sky or emerge from the minds of brilliant philosophers. These ideas arose out of the particular relationships established among human beings, in the process of producing the material requirements of society at a given stage of development.

In response to the emergence of class conflict in a society based on private property and commodity exchange, the modern state emerged as 'a separate entity beside and outside civil society' (*German Ideology*, p80). Whereas in pre-capitalist society the process of production took place under the direct control of the ruling class, under capitalism the world of production is separate from the political sphere. In capitalist society the relationship between capitalist and worker appears to be free and equal and the capitalist class does not in general need its armed forces to enforce the process of surplus-value extraction. The inherently coercive powers of capital are mediated by free economic relations, which give the impression that politics are autonomous from capital. The result is the characteristic separation of the economic and the political spheres in capitalist society.

While capitalist exploitation in all its brutality proceeds in the harsh reality of civil society, in the ideal world of the state, relations of liberty and equality, justice and democracy, prevail. The conflict between classes is played out and contained in the contest among political parties in parliament.

Despite divisions, the proletariat remains the collective force for social change



The peculiarity of capitalist society is that relations which in *form* appear free and equal, in *content* are coercive and exploitative. Thus, unlike slaves or serfs, who can be in no doubt that they are denied their liberty, 'the totality of a free worker's labour capacity appears to him as his property, as one of his moments, over which he, as subject, exerts domination, and which he maintains by expending it'. (*Grundrisse*, p465). Yet this freedom is illusory:

'In imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental; in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are more subjected to the violence of things.' (*German Ideology*, p84)

Under capitalism workers are not, in general, the victims of the arbitrary tyranny of monarch, landlord and church; yet their lives are now ruled by the world of commodity exchange, the tyranny of the market, the violence, not of lord and master, but of capital circulating in the form of commodities—'things'. The appearance of freedom and independence, which arises from the relations of capitalist production, captivates the defenders of the status quo—and its radical critics.

Today's radical rethinkers don't get beyond superficial impressions of modern society. For Hattersley, the capitalist market, far from being a threat to freedom, is necessary to achieve it: 'Leaving a large part of the economy to be governed and guided by the market distribution is essential to liberty as well as efficiency.' (*Choose Freedom*, p110) Gould argues that the market 'provides the individual worker qua consumer with some element of control and choice over the disposition of his own economic power' (*Socialism and Freedom*, p53). For Charlie Leadbeater in *Marxism Today*, the market is not only the 'best way to coordinate lots of decentralised economic decisions', it can also deliver 'consumer choice', which he sees as a key vehicle for individual liberation ('Power to the person', *Marxism Today*, October 1988).

Leaving aside the dubious idea that the market is an efficient means of regulating economic activity, does it enhance liberty?

Hattersley, Gould and their co-thinkers isolate the sphere of distribution and consumption from the totality of capitalist production relations, and derive their conclusions about the beneficial role of the market from this sector alone. Even accepting this limited purview, the proliferation of 'mountains and lakes' of agricultural products in the West at a time of growing third world famine must raise doubts about the contribution of the capitalist market to either efficiency or justice. The freedom and choice provided through consumption in the market are clearly restricted to those who have the available financial resources. Even for those workers who have been able to enjoy higher living standards in recent years, the market can provide no escape from the daily grind of the wage-labour/capital relationship. This brings us to the most important defect of the radical celebration of the capitalist market.

Forgotten something?

Dazzled by the brightly-lit shop fronts of the world of consumption and competition, the rethinkers have lost sight of the grim reality of capitalist exploitation in factories, workshops and offices. The free market promoted by Thatcher and her colleagues over the past decade has condemned millions to a life of idleness and misery on the dole, conscripted a generation of school-leavers into stupefying make-work schemes, and forced millions more to work harder (more 'flexibly'), in more arduous and dangerous conditions in almost every sector of the British economy. Whose freedom indeed?

Marx repudiated 'the insipidity of the view that free competition is the ultimate development of human freedom', insisting that it was 'nothing more than free development on a limited basis—the basis of the rule of capital':

'This kind of individual freedom is therefore at the same time the most complete suspension of all individual freedom, and the most complete subjugation of individuality under social conditions which assume the form of objective powers, even of overpowering objects—of things independent of the relations among individuals themselves.' (*Grundrisse*, p652)

Again, Marx emphasises the distinctive feature of capitalist society: the interaction among people takes the form of the interaction among commodities, objects which effectively control individuals instead of being controlled by them. When the left celebrates the market, it promotes, not individuality, but its suppression for the vast majority.

No contradiction

To the extent that the rethinkers recognise the persistence of inequality and oppression in society, they attribute these to abuses of the system, which they propose should be curtailed by appropriate state action. For Hattersley, for example, 'society remains unequal and unfree largely because the privileged have held on to their privileges by exploiting their entrenched position' (*Choose Freedom*, p105). He considers that 'socialism requires the use of collective power to increase individual rights and extend individual freedoms' (*Choose Freedom*, p129, see also Gould, *Socialism and Freedom*, p52). Leadbeater argues that the left 'should offer a wider idea of citizenship based on a much more extensive set of rights and entitlements' (*Marxism Today*, October 1988).

The problem of capitalist society, however, as we have seen, is that class domination is not the consequence of inequality ratified by law, but the result of real economic relations mediated by formal *equality* of rights. The notion that passing

Higher pay provides no escape from the wage-labour/capital relationship

David Rourke



laws providing workers with more rights will overcome the ill-effects of capitalist domination and bring the system into line with its own ideals is another reflection of the way class relations are mystified in modern society. Marx commented on 'the foolishness of those socialists...who want to depict socialism as the realisation of the ideals of bourgeois society' and who complain that what is essentially 'a system of universal freedom and equality' has been perverted:

'The proper reply to them is: that exchange-value or, more precisely, the money system, is in fact the system of equality and freedom, and that the disturbances which they encounter in the further development of the system are disturbances inherent in it, are merely the realisation of equality and freedom, which prove to be inequality and unfreedom.' (*Grundrisse*, pp248-9)

Far from being in contradiction with the ideals of equality and freedom, the exploitation of the working class represents the consistent application of these principles within the framework of capitalist society.

In her 1899 polemic against Eduard Bernstein, the German reformist whose every thought today's rethinkers seem destined to rethink, Rosa Luxemburg restated the Marxist position:

'The fundamental relation of domination of the capitalist class cannot be transformed by means of legislative reforms, on the basis of capitalist society, because these relations have not been introduced by bourgeois laws, nor have they received the form of such laws.' (*Reform or Revolution*, p20)

What was necessary was not 'the suppression of the abuses of capitalism' but 'the suppression of capitalism itself'.

From his earliest writings Marx rejected the 'juridical illusion', which maintains that existing property relations upheld by law reflect the 'general will' of society. (*German Ideology*, p81). While acknowledging the importance of law in the emergence, stabilisation and reproduction of capitalist society, he emphasised that 'all elements exist in duplicate form, as civic elements and those of the state' ('Draft plan for a work on the modern state', 1845, quoted in I Meszaros, *Philosophy, Ideology and Social Science: Essays in Negation and Affirmation*, 1986, p202). Behind the façade of capitalist justice and democracy—the state—lies the exploitative process of capitalist production, in the sphere of civil 'civic' society. To achieve human liberation, it is necessary to 'fight for the abolition of the state and of bourgeois society'.

For Marx the struggle for freedom could not restrict itself to demands for political and legislative reform within the state, but must aim to transform the basic social relations of production, in civil society. The objective of the class struggle is thus not merely political, but *social* revolution. This brings us to the second area of current rethinking—the class struggle and the role of the working class.

According to the current issue of the Labour Party's theoretical journal, the class struggle is obsolete:

'Against the background of rising living standards in the West the doctrine of class struggle has long been virtually useless for political purposes....It is hard to see how it is psychologically possible to convince workers rolling along in cars and spending holidays abroad that they belong to an exploited class that is involved in an inexorable historical process that will lead to socialism. Indeed, it invites ridicule.' (B May, 'What's left of the class struggle?', *New Socialist*, October/November 1988).

We will leave aside the glib assertion of working class prosperity after a decade in which real wages have fallen in Germany and the USA and 29m people are out of work in OECD countries, almost the highest level ever. But does the fact that the class struggle is at a relatively low level in the West mean that the working class no longer has a role in history?

Still exploited

For Marxists the fundamental contradiction in capitalist society is that between the drive to develop the productive forces and the social relations of capitalist production. These relations ultimately act as a barrier to further expansion, leading to the tendencies towards stagnation and decay which are clearly evident in the world around us. The class struggle generated by the antagonistic relations of capitalist production is the active force for social change. Because the exploitation of the working class in the production of value and surplus-value is the source of capitalist wealth, the working class can play a strategic role in overthrowing capitalist society. By destroying capitalist social relations it can unleash the productive forces of humanity and establish a new, higher mode of production. The working class is the only social force in capitalist society that possesses the weight and power to carry through the abolition of the old order and the construction of a new one.

It may well be difficult for Labour Party theoreticians to grasp how workers might come to play a revolutionary role in society. Yet, as

Marx emphasised, identifying objective tendencies is more important than conducting opinion surveys:

'It is not a question of what this or that proletariat, or even the whole proletariat, at this moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do.' (*Collected Works*, Vol 4, p37)

While it is not the case that workers have become so prosperous and contented in capitalist society that they are resigned to its continuation in perpetuity, it is true that the working class is divided, weakly organised and lacks political direction. However, a glimpse at the history of the working class movement from the dawn of capitalism to the present shows that workers are constantly forced to organise as a class; that they are repeatedly provoked into resistance against the employers and their state; and that these struggles often erupt into a wider challenge to the legitimacy of the system. (See H Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: The Politics of Social Classes*, Vol 2, 1978, pp33-49.)

It is only necessary to recall the miners' strike of 1984-85, which took place months after the miners were cited by Labour's rethinkers as the best example of once-militant proletarians whose class consciousness had been sapped by higher wages and home ownership. It is not a question of whether or not workers will fight—that is an historic inevitability. For Marxists the question is—how can we ensure the speediest victory?

While some rethinkers question the relevance of socialism to the working class, others want to separate the working class from socialism:

'Socialism is not a class-based doctrine. It need not and should not talk the language of class war; its triumph is not that of a particular class but the achievement of the greatest possible degree of equality and control for each individual over his own life.' (Gould, *Socialism and Freedom*, p106)

It is true that the triumph of socialism—or, to be more exact, that of communism—is not that of a particular class. But this is precisely because the working class 'talks the language of the class war' (and does more than talk!) in the struggle against capital, and through its victory will ensure the triumph, not of 'a particular class' but of the whole of humanity. The working class is the universal class in modern society, embodying the potential to bring into being a society in which class division can, for the first time in history, be



superseded. Furthermore, because capitalist domination provides a framework for reproducing the oppression of women, ethnic, national, religious and other minorities, the working class is able to act as a force for human liberation in general.

'Blood and dirt'

The rethinkers seek to replace the working class with other social forces. The *Marxism Today* theorists point to structural changes in the working class and claim that 'class cannot straightforwardly provide the collective interest for modern socialism' ('Facing up to the future', *Marxism Today*, September 1988). They evade the responsibility of the labour movement to take up the wider struggle against oppression. Instead they emphasise the oppression of women, black people and others outside the workplace, and conclude that socialism 'will need to construct an alliance of social forces, made up of diverse class and social interests'.

Disenchanted with the working class, the rethinkers look to 'new social movements'—'voluntary organisations, community groups, the churches, music and single-issue campaigning groups'; Live Aid and the July '88 Mandela concert at Wembley are approved models. In fact these 'movements' are largely organisational shells within which activists from the traditional left constantly reappear wearing different badges. Few of them are new and even fewer are *moving*, at least in any direction which could be construed as favourable towards social liberation. Those one-off initiatives which involve more people, such as the Mandela bash, do so at the expense of any political input. The left's pursuit of causes which appear to be popular and fashionable—such as third world charity and environmentalism—truly invites the

ridicule with which it regards the attempt to win the working class to socialism. It reveals the left's despair at its own incapacity to connect with the modern working class and its abandonment of the project of socialism.

Can we guarantee that a socialist society will mean more freedom and individuality? The rethinkers are not sure. Hattersley is concerned that 'the active promotion of *total* equality may actually inhibit the freedom that greater equality is intended to make possible' (*Choose Freedom*, p94). Gould worries 'whether, despite the nobility of the end which is sought, the means for achieving it inevitably require the suppression of individual liberty' (*Socialism and Freedom*, p5).

Given the close association between the Labour Party rethinkers and the post-war British state, and that between the Communist Party and the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, a certain defensiveness on this point is understandable. Yet from the perspective of a working class movement confronting British capital which, as Marx reminds us, 'comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt', there is no need whatever to be defensive about questions of liberty and justice (*Capital*, Vol 1, p172).

Whereas capitalist society subordinates all scope for individual creativity to the drive to accumulate, its overthrow will allow the abolition of the arbitrary division of labour that constrains individuality at present:

'For as soon as the division of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced on him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each

can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening and criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.' (*German Ideology*, p54)

The abolition of private property and the existing division of labour also means replacing the 'illusory community' of atomised individuals in capitalist society with a real community of free individuals:

'In the previous substitutes for the community, in the state, etc, *personal freedom* has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an *independent* existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over and against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In the real community the *individuals* obtain their freedom in and through their *association*.' (*German Ideology*, p83)

In capitalist society the only escape from the struggle of one against all is in the 'illusory community' of the state—illusory because the ideals it promotes are negated in the real world of civil society. Capitalism offers scope for creativity and imagination only to the privileged few, and to them only within the unreal world of high culture. For the majority, creativity is stunted by the burden of tedious work, and individuality is restricted in regimented workplaces and soulless housing estates.

Even if you have the money, your

Capitalist
society
subordinates all
individual
creativity to the
drive to
accumulate

ABOVE:
The working class can
free women from
domestic drudgery



The most ardent proponents of free enterprise are also strongly in favour of state repression

freedom to choose a lifestyle is restricted to those few on offer through high-street shops and a tightly-regulated mass media. The limits of experimentation are defined by trendy but safe magazines like the *Face*, *Arena* and *I-D* and Channel 4, which is now as scared of showing male and female genitalia as it is of interviewing Gerry Adams. Mary Whitehouse's campaign for media censorship, David Alton's bid to restrict abortion rights, the Section 28 attack on the rights of lesbians and gay men—these movements define the narrow limits of liberty in Britain today.

Under communism, however, when the state is overthrown together with the exploitative relations it sanctions, real individualism can flourish in a society which has cooperation at its heart. The process of making a revolution is the most creative activity in modern society because it can unleash the individuality of the masses that is constantly frustrated under capitalism. Experimentation will no longer be constrained by the tyranny of wage-labour, the shortage of resources and the ever-present menace of state repression.

Strongarm state

It is striking that the most ardent capitalist proponents of free enterprise and the free market are also strongly in favour of state repression and militarism. Over the past decade Western rulers have championed the ideology of vigorous individualism at the same time as building up their police and armed forces to play a more coercive role in enforcing capitalist rule. This paradox reveals the commitment of the capitalist class, not to upholding freedom in the abstract, but to defending its own freedom to exploit the working class at home and abroad.

The rethinkers are oblivious to the rise of the repressive state and the danger it represents to the working class and to the oppressed sections of society who are often the first victims of state terror and the reactionary

bigotry it sanctions. *Marxism Today* rethinker Charlie Leadbeater proposes a novel conception of the capitalist state in the era of Thatcher and Reagan:

'The image of the state's role should be founded on the public park: a publicly-provided, regulated space, in which a range of private activities are possible. Some the state will provide directly (boats on lakes); many others may involve companies (ice cream vans) or simply individuals doing what they want with the state's help (sunbathing).' ('Power to the person', *Marxism Today*, October 1988)

No mention here of the riot police storming the recreation areas, nor of the immigration officials policing the perimeter fence, nor of the nuclear missiles stationed on the bowling green. For the rethinkers the state is a benign agency which 'simply' helps individuals to do what they want in an environment of harmony and tranquillity. In reality the state is the agency which enforces the rule of the capitalist class at the expense of the freedom and individuality of the majority of people in a deeply divided and antagonistic society.

Marx recognised the necessity for a transition phase between capitalist and communist society, sometimes referred to as socialism, or the lower stage of communism. He indicated that to compensate for the inherited defects of capitalism, 'right, instead of being equal would have to be unequal'. In a society in which scarcity remained a problem, it would be necessary to discriminate positively in favour of needy individuals.

Marx emphasised that 'right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby' ('Critique of the Gotha Programme', *Marx and Engels Selected Works*, p320). Only in the higher stage of communism, 'after the productive forces have...increased with the all-round development of the individual,

and all the springs of the cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!"' (pp320-21). There will no longer be any need to enforce an equal standard and there will be no conflict between the self-realisation of one person and that of the rest of society.

The rethinkers have found hope for the cause of liberty in the capitalist market, and they have lost faith in the working class as the agency of socialist transformation. Hence, it is not surprising to discover among them a new interest in ethical motivations for reforming the system (see Hattersley, p125). Perhaps this is why the Communist Party lists the churches among its favoured 'new social movements' and why no major left platform now seems complete without a few bishops or at least some lesser clerics. If there is no objective basis for getting rid of capitalism, and the only social force capable of doing the job is dismissed as too small, too divided and too backward, then prayer may indeed be the sole remaining consolation.

Marxists have no time for such strategies of despair. Our faith in the future is grounded in the objective tendencies of capitalist society and in our confidence in the capacity of the working class to make history:

'Communism is not for us a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things.' (*German Ideology*, pp56-7)

But will communism curtail freedom and individuality? 'Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation.... And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.' ('Manifesto of the Communist Party', *Marx and Engels Selected Works*, pp48-9)

Let us remind the Marxists of 1988 of the basic proposition with which Marx and Engels concluded their Manifesto in 1848:

'Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win!'

ABOVE:
If the state is 'a public park', these must be the deckchair attendants

The Prince Charles controversy

ARCHITECTS OF THE PAST

Is Prince Charles 'a genuine, sensitive friend of architecture' (*Financial Times*), or an eccentric with a 'disembodied chocolate-box image of "architecture"' (*Guardian*)?

The prince's television documentary, *Charles: A Vision of Britain*, has evoked strong reactions on both sides. He seems to be the people's choice; 67 per cent of those polled by the *Sunday Mirror* backed his criticisms of modern architecture. The professionals were less pleased. Leading post-modernist architect James Stirling was so angry at Charles' description of his Mansion House scheme as 'a 1930s wireless' that he almost returned his Royal Gold Medal. Discreet grumblings of dissent were even heard from that august (and increasingly angst-ridden) body, the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The debate rages on.

Ugly Docklands

The BBC film showed the royal personage posing awkwardly in a wide range of architectural settings, from damp-infested tower blocks to the crass commercial ugliness of the London Docklands project. Charles dwelt on the all-too-visible horrors of post-war redevelopment, and appealed for architects to make good the damage they had done now that Britain is undergoing an apparent building boom. The mistakes of the past, he said, should be avoided by reasserting 'spiritual values' too long ignored by modern architecture. Man 'is more, much more, than a mere mechanical object whose sole aim is to produce money', claimed the prince, and his 'desire to build in harmony and sympathy with God's creation on this Earth' must be encouraged.

Easy target

The prince's criticisms of modern architecture may sound fair enough. But then, he has picked an easy target. Britain's major cities are in an advanced state of decay. The country faces a housing crisis unparalleled since thousands of servicemen returned to bombed-out cities after the Second World War. Since the late seventies, state expenditure on housing has fallen to almost nothing.

Thousands are homeless in the big cities; many more live in council flats where the rents are rising almost as fast as the estates are falling down.

The current speculative building boom, centred on south-east England, shows no sign of altering the British landscape for the better. The next generation of architectural monstrosities is already growing up. The drive to make a rapid return on investment, before the credit-fuelled economic boom ends, is likely to produce a new wave of jerry-built architecture at least as tacky as that of the fifties and sixties. But this time it will be on an even grander and grosser scale.

The developers planning to build 648 000 square metres of offices as part of London's King's Cross Station redevelopment expect profits of more than £1 billion. The Canadian developers Olympia and York hope to make even more out of their million-square-metre Canary Wharf scheme for Docklands. The centrepiece of this hot-potch of buildings will be a 260-metre stainless steel tower—the tallest office block in Britain.

Cheap and miserable

The prince's video homily will have no impact on the financiers behind this outburst of architectural vandalism. The 'Victorian prisons, hardened missile silos, assembly halls for secret police and glass stumps' he so picturesque describes are not just the product of architects

with an unsound attitude to the environment. Rapidly built, shoddy architecture is what the market dictates. Building big and doing it on the cheap with borrowed money is profitable. While Charles mumbles on about 'spiritual values', the massive financial institutions which dominate construction today are concerned only with the earthly value of their sprawling assets.

The prince's practical prescriptions are even more laughable than his moral appeal to the construction magnates. His great-great-grandfather, Albert, built workers' cottages in Kennington Park for his subjects. Now the prince plans to follow his example by erecting three model villages in Dorset, designed by Leon Krier, to show how to 'build in our countryside without spoiling it'. The new communities are intended to allow residents to walk from home to work, schools and shops, eliminating commuting and reducing car journeys. Krier and the prince aspire to create a contemporary model in the tradition of enlightened Victorian capitalists, who built toy villages to house workers and, supposedly, to raise up the unwashed masses from the mire of drunkenness and Godlessness.

Forward France

Recoiling in horror from big city blight, Charles looks back to an idealised past for the technology and architecture he considers appropriate to a Constable-style setting. Unfortunately, rural idylls are affordable and accessible only to the very rich in modern Britain. The rest of us are expected to put up with what the ruling class considers good enough. The only concession builders might make to the Charles lobby will be to



The royal innocent dreams of rural idylls

emphasise a tendency already apparent in British architecture: the superficial grafting of historical forms—'curves and arches, courtyards and porches, spires and columns'—on to the same poorly planned and constructed buildings.

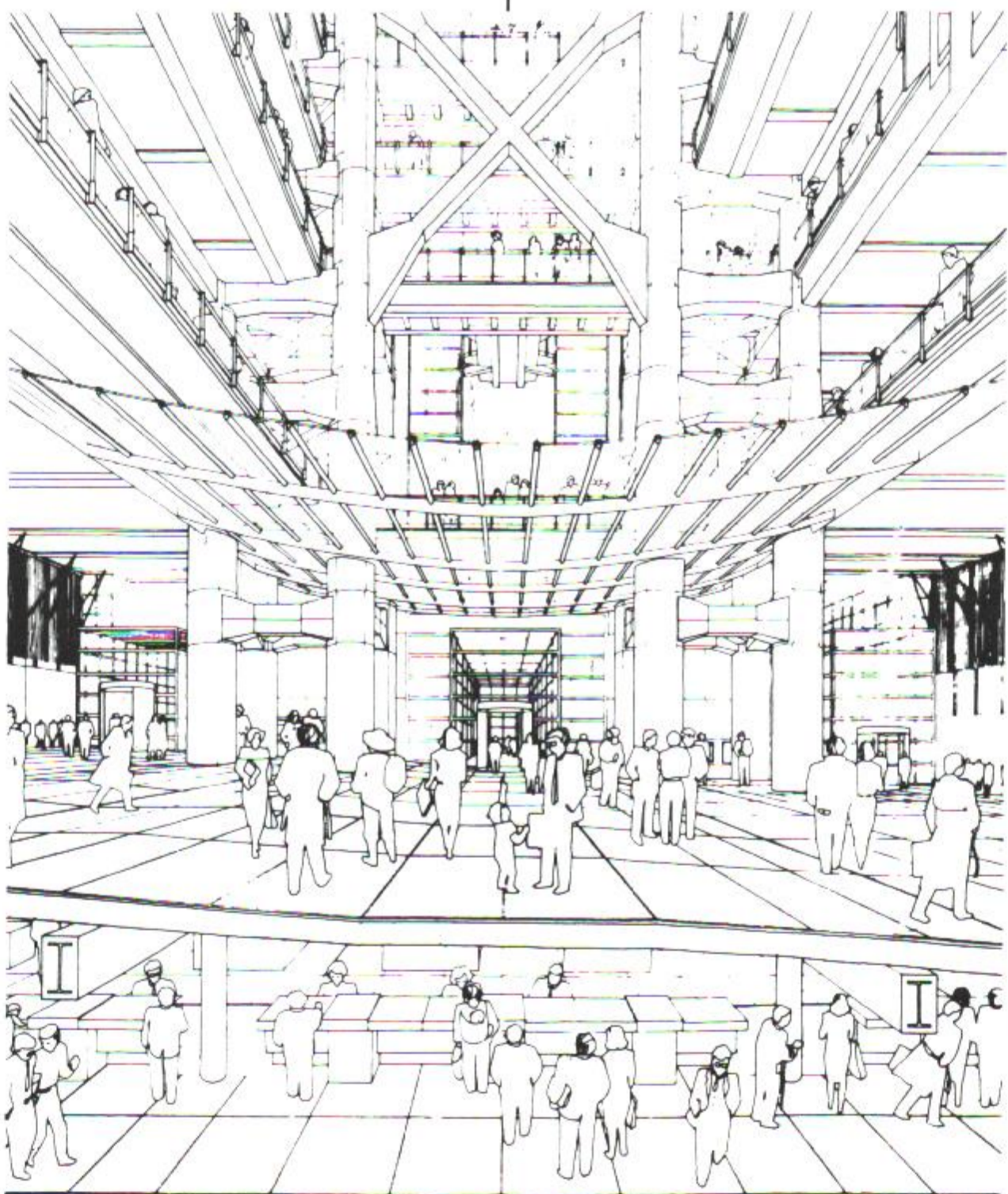
The prince and his sycophantic coterie will never understand that human progress is not just about conserving what exists. Progress must mean the development of new ideas and technologies, and radical experimentation at the extremities of what is possible—even within the constraints of a decaying system. In France, a new avant-garde architecture flourishes under the otherwise reactionary regime of François Mitterrand. Modern architects are widely admired, and France's new generation of prestige buildings has become a major public attraction. In his Institute of the Arab World, Jean Nouvel has produced one of the most sensational hi-tech buildings of today. A giant glass wall is made up of light-sensitive retinas which open and close according to the brightness of sunlight outside.

Backward Britain

Ironically, Britain boasts some of the most innovative architects in the world, whose achievements are recognised everywhere except at home. In Hong Kong, Norman Foster recently won international acclaim for completing the most technically advanced (and most expensive) office building ever built. But, as architect of the King's Cross redevelopment, he faces a tirade of ill-informed abuse from those who want his proposed glass station replaced by a neo-classical building. Foster has yet to get a major project off the ground in Britain.

The debate provoked by Prince Charles indicates that, when it comes to architecture, the backward British establishment prefers taking refuge in the past to facing the future, just as it seeks to impose Victorian values on everything else in late twentieth-century society.

Russell Osborne



Zionism and anti-Semitism

Escaping the 'bloody trap'

Frank Richards examines an issue that causes widespread confusion

Zionism is the subject of a long-running controversy on the left, and the cause of the most heated debates in student politics. The issue is clouded by emotion, making it hard to discern where passion ends and objective analysis begins. All sides of the debate are party to this confusion. Left-wing defenders of Israel are often influenced by guilt about the Holocaust; they apply a double standard, and treat the actions of the Zionist state more sympathetically than they would those of other regimes. Left-wing opponents of Israel, meanwhile, sometimes attack Zionism in a fashion that barely conceals an underlying anti-Semitism. Marxists must take a step back from such unworthy emotions. It is essential to approach this problem from a perspective which consistently opposes both Zionism and anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism has deep roots in capitalist society. Although the capitalist class claims to uphold the ideals of freedom and equality, in practice it has never been able to grant these rights to all. Since the nineteenth century, anti-Semitism has acquired a modern form in Europe. Although there is sometimes little public sign of anti-Semitism, it tends to come back into view during periods of social crisis.

Today, anti-Semitism is not a force

in British society. It is certainly unimportant compared to the virulent xenophobia that the British right directed at the Jewish people around the turn of the century, as evidenced in publications like Joseph Banister's *England Under the Jews*, written in 1901:

'No Jew is more of a hero among his fellow tribesmen than one who can boast of having accomplished the ruin of some friendless, unprotected Christian girl. Owing to this fact, the male members of what is probably the most lecherous breed in existence have in every country acquired such a vile reputation among working women, that English servant girls who desire to preserve their respectability can seldom be persuaded to take service in Jewish families.'

Banister's ravings about 'Yiddish gorillas' were happily accepted as good coin among the English upper classes in Edwardian times. Today such sentiments are confined to extreme right-wing publications with no influence; the better-known modern caricatures of Jews, like Maureen Lipman's character in the Telecom adverts, are mild by comparison.

Although anti-Semitism lacks the respectability it enjoyed in the past, it would be wrong to conclude that it

has disappeared. The unpopularity of former Tory home secretary Leon Brittan, for example, was considerably enhanced by innuendo about his Jewishness. Across the Channel in France, anti-Semitism represents a significant force. Jean Marie Le Pen's Front National has given a contemporary expression to old hatreds.

No way in

Many liberals express surprise that, after the horror of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism can still influence some people in the West. They are confused because they see anti-Semitism as an irrational prejudice which has no place in a modern capitalist society. In reality capitalism continually recreates the conditions for discrimination, and throws up barriers to the full assimilation of Jewish people into society.

The recognition that assimilation was not a viable option first prompted people like Theodor Herzl, Moses Hess and Max Nordau to assume leadership of the early Zionist movement in Europe. In the late nineteenth century they had seen their attempts at assimilation knocked back by Christian society. This rejection led them to conclude that Jews needed their own homeland if they were to survive as a people.

At the turn of the century Zionism was a relatively marginal movement within the European Jewish community. Most middle class Jews were committed to making their way in the world through assimilation. There was also a progressive current among working class Jews influenced by Marxism. Many socialist Jews understood that the solution was neither assimilation into capitalist society nor the separatist option of Zionism. They saw the key to the liberation of Jewish people as a working class revolution, to overthrow the system which perpetuated the conditions in which anti-Semitism could thrive.

So, in the early years of this century, there were three distinct strands within the Jewish community: a small minority of Zionists, middle class assimilationists, and a growing socialist movement within the working class. How was Zionism transformed from a minority viewpoint into a defining Jewish response?

Where to flee to? Zionism grew with Hitler's rise



'Events may well transform Palestine into a bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews.' (Leon Trotsky, 1940)

The policy of assimilation was destroyed by the growing momentum of anti-Semitism. A wave of pogroms in eastern Europe at the turn of the century was followed by the far more insidious development of fascist and other far-right movements in central and western Europe. In the decade following the Russian Revolution of 1917, capitalism suffered a profound crisis which provoked a major right-wing backlash. Although the main targets were the organisations of the working class, attacking the Jews also provided a convenient focus for popularising reactionary ideas. In this atmosphere of heightening hostility to all things Jewish, the option of assimilation lost credibility.

Jewish progressives experienced a setback around the same time, with the defeats inflicted on the international working class in the twenties and thirties. After 1917 the outlook of internationalism, of workers' unity across national and racial lines, had inspired millions and countered anti-Semitism. But within a few short years internationalism was undermined by the hammering which the workers' movement took in the capitalist world, and by the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union.

By the late twenties there was an obvious lack of working class solidarity with Jews. In Stalin's Soviet Union, anti-Semitism was on the way to becoming respectable. Worse still, many of the Stalinised European Communist parties had begun adapting to the growing current of anti-Semitism. By 1930, the German Communist Party was keeping its Jewish leaders off public platforms, for fear that the Nazis might accuse it of being unpatriotic! It was hardly surprising, then, that many Jewish workers became disillusioned with socialism and that internationalism began to lose its appeal.

Zionism's rise

This was the background to the growth of Zionism as a dominant influence within European Jewry. As Hitler moved towards mastery over Europe, the alternatives to Zionism seemed exhausted. The growth of the Nazis, and the rise of anti-Semitism to the status of government policy, provoked a predictable yearning for safety and security, strengthened the sense of Jewishness, and seemed to vindicate the Zionist argument. Zionists had always insisted that anti-Semitism was endemic in Christian society and that Jews could only survive in their own homeland. The Nazis' every step served to strengthen the case for Zionism.

A handful of Marxists correctly pointed out that anti-Semitism had nothing to do with the homelessness of the Jewish people. They argued that the tensions inherent in the capitalist form of social organisation

perpetuated anti-Semitism, and that the salvation of the Jewish people depended on the overthrow of that system. With perspicacity, Leon Trotsky warned in July 1940 that the 'future development of military events may well transform Palestine into a bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews'. Given the defeats suffered by the workers' movement and the terrible growth of the Nazi threat, Trotsky's words went unheeded. In the days when the genocide machine ground on at Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen, who could believe that Zionism would lead to Israel bombing Beirut and putting down a Palestinian *intifada* in the occupied West Bank?

Biblical myths

For Marxists, the Zionist response was flawed from the start. First, it is an inappropriate way of fighting anti-Semitism. Second, once Zionism is put into practice it necessarily becomes oppressive, since it attempts to solve the Jewish problem at the expense of another people.

Zionists try to endow their perspective with legitimacy by appealing to the Bible and history. These claims are entirely spurious. The Jewish people of today owe their origins to the dispersal of their forebears among many different societies around the world (usually called the Diaspora), rather than to any connection with ancient Israel. As Abram Leon convincingly argues, in every respect, only a mythical appeal links modern Jewry to the biblical Palestine (A Leon, *The Jewish Question*, 1970). The Zionist claim to Palestine is as arbitrary as that of the Rastafarians to Ethiopia.

Jewish Zionism is a variant of the separatist and exclusivist reaction to oppression which is common among many persecuted minorities. For example, the contemporary black separatist movement interprets racism as an inherent feature of whiteness, in the same way that Jewish Zionists equate anti-Semitism with gentiles. It is an understandable response, but a dangerous one. In each case the exponents of these separatist views turn isolation into a virtue, as they try to sidestep discrimination rather than overcome it. The first important argument against Zionism, then, is that it rejects the perspective of fighting anti-Semitism in society.

New oppressors

Zionism rests on the conviction that Jews have no place in gentile society, so they should leave and set up their own homeland. As a result Zionists inadvertently lend weight to the classical anti-Semitic view, which also argues that Jews ought not live among Christians. The anti-Semitic and Zionist arguments converge around the theme that Jews are 'abnormal' people.

In abandoning the struggle against

anti-Semitism, Zionists perform a disservice to Jewish people. Unlike Zionists, communists are committed to fighting anti-Semitism and all forms of racism. We recognise that so long as one section of society remains oppressed, no section can aspire to true liberation.

The second argument against Zionism is that, if its perspective is implemented, it becomes a force for oppression itself. It is not possible to set up a Jewish homeland without violating the basic rights of another people. Zionist apologists have always argued that there was nothing oppressive about establishing the state of Israel. According to Zionist mythology, Palestine was more or less empty before they arrived. As Israel Zangwill conveniently put it, Palestine was a 'land without people, waiting for a people without land'.

In fact the creation of Israel had much in common with Western colonialism. The new Jewish homeland could not be built without forcibly expelling the indigenous Palestinian population. A persecuted minority from Europe thus turned into a new oppressor in Palestine. Nobody—not even the victims of the Holocaust—has the right to oppress another people.

The reactionary character of Zionism is underlined by the fact that Israel can only survive as an ally of Western, and especially American, imperialism. The oppression of the Palestinian people necessarily breeds resistance. This resistance has forced Israel to become a garrison state, which must continually wage war against Arab peoples. Israeli militarism suits the need of the imperialist powers for a policeman in the Middle East. This alliance places Zionism in the frontline of the imperialist struggle to dominate the Middle East.

Reasonable Israel?

Today many more people are critical of Israeli militarism, and even some Zionists find it hard to stomach Israeli atrocities in Lebanon or the West Bank. They object that these actions go against the noble principles of the state's founding fathers. These criticisms fail to appreciate that, for Israel, militarism is not a policy option which could be dispensed with. It is rooted in the very foundations of the Zionist project. Israel is an artificial, imposed state which can only stand on Palestinian soil by force of arms. It cannot act 'reasonably' and compromise with Palestinian demands. If Israel were to concede that a disputed area like Jerusalem or the West Bank is not Jewish by right, it would beg the question of why Haifa or Tel Aviv should be considered sacred, since Israel has equally little claim to these parts of Palestine.

With each passing decade, Israel has to become more militaristic to



Bob Gannon

From oppressed to oppressor: the Zionist state survives by force of arms

survive. Within Israel, society becomes more reactionary and less secular. Since its existence is justified by mystical appeals to the past, any attempt to construct a more enlightened brand of Zionism is doomed. On the world stage, Zionism feels at home with the most reactionary regimes. South Africa, another artificial society, is Israel's natural ally.

Twofold trap

Marxism rejects any alternative which seeks to preserve Israel on a more rational foundation. Israel breeds oppression by its very existence. The destruction of the Zionist state is the precondition for any progressive solution. We oppose all forms of oppression; therefore, we resolutely support the right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination. The denial of this right is the central issue in the Middle East. There can be no progress or peace until the Palestinians are able to decide their own future.

But we also oppose Zionism because of its destructive consequences for the *Jewish* people. Trotsky was right to say that Israel would turn into a 'bloody trap' for the Jews. The Zionist project exacts a high price in Jewish blood in Palestine, and around the world. By focusing all attention on Palestine, Zionism has undermined the capacity of Jews to fight the menace of anti-Semitism as it re-emerges elsewhere.

Zionism has not solved the Jewish question. It has simply created the Palestinian question. The struggle against the state of Israel and for the

self-determination of Palestine is the point of departure for solving these two problems.

During the past decade the British left has adopted a bizarre attitude towards the issues of Zionism and anti-Semitism. While the left has done little to organise positive action in defence of the Palestinians, it has spent an inordinate amount of time denouncing Zionism. This is particularly striking in the world of student politics. In recent years a main focus for left-wing students has been to label Zionists as racists and, as such, to argue for a 'No Platform' ban on Zionists organising or speaking at colleges. Let's examine the issues raised by this campaign.

In 1975 the general assembly of the United Nations voted to brand Zionism as 'a form of racism and racial discrimination'. This resolution has become the standard justification for describing Zionist and Jewish student societies as racist. How valid is this interpretation?

Is it racism?

Zionism cannot be crudely reduced to racism. As an idea or a political outlook, Zionism is in substance a nationalist ideology. Like all nationalist ideologies it is separatist and reactionary. But it is no more inherently racist than black separatism or Catalan nationalism.

Only when Zionism is put into practice does it acquire a racist component. Zionism as a form of settler colonialism, embodied in the state of Israel, is necessarily racist, because it is based on oppressing the Palestinian Arabs. The all-round

institutionalisation of racist policies directed at non-Jews in Israel, from the Law of Return to bans on Arab ownership of land in parts of the state, is well-documented.

In making a distinction between Zionism and its practical implementation, we do not imply that one is better than the other. After all, it is the nationalist separatism of the Zionist outlook which is implemented as a racist project. We draw the distinction only to reject the narrow view that Zionism is just another form of racism.

Suspect motives

In particular, we would suggest that the attempt to ban Zionist or Jewish societies on the grounds that they are racist is ill-conceived. It is worth asking why Jewish societies have been singled out for special attention. If left-wing student groups are so concerned about oppression in the Middle East, surely they would want to devote their time to organising action in defence of the Palestinian people's democratic rights? They would have mobilised campaigns to counter the chauvinist hysteria which the Western imperialists have whipped up by branding Arabs as 'terrorists'. They would have organised demonstrations to defend Libya when it faced the Anglo-American air-strikes in 1986. Strangely, whenever these opportunities to demonstrate concern about Middle Eastern matters have arisen, much of the student movement has been conspicuous by its absence.

The demand for 'No Platform' is a retreat from political struggle

Perhaps the student left is motivated less by concern for the plight of the Palestinians than by a burning desire to fight racism? If this is so, it is odd that Zionism should be picked out for such special attention. There is plenty for students concerned about racism to do here in Britain. If Jewish societies are indeed racist, they are hardly unique. Are the Young Conservatives any less racist? Is the student body as a whole so immune from racism that Jewish societies constitute the only, or even the biggest, problem? Those who genuinely want to combat racism would find their hands more than full once they tried to deal with the home-grown British variety. More to the point, the relative dearth of forceful action against racism in Britain calls into question the motives of those who concentrate their fire on accusing Jewish student societies of racism.

In these circumstances, the 'No Platform' campaigns against Zionist or Jewish societies are at best a diversion based on a double standard. So far as we know, there have been no similar campaigns against Tory and Labour student groups on the grounds that their parties support racist British institutions like immigration controls or paramilitary policing. At worst, these campaigns represent an adaptation to anti-Semitism. By applying a standard to Jewish student societies which they would

not use against others, the 'No Platform' campaigners invite accusations that they are picking on Jews. Whatever their true motives might be, their campaigns can fight neither racism nor the oppression of the Palestinian people.

In any case, the demand for 'No Platform' is a retreat from the political struggle. If Zionists are a problem they should be defeated with political arguments, not dealt with by bureaucratic manoeuvres like bans. Administrative measures do not provide political clarity. By its nature a ban restricts the debate and breeds confusion. The left's preoccupation with censorship, and its consequent failure to carry the arguments against Zionism within the wider student body, has added to the difficulty it now faces in getting progressive policies on the Palestinian question passed in student unions.

Encouraging official bans on political grounds also sets a dangerous precedent. Once it becomes legitimate for the authorities to ban student societies, the left will be the ones to suffer. In capitalist Britain, bans are inevitably more likely to be used against progressive movements than reactionary ones. If the left creates a climate in which calling for censorship is a central feature of political discourse, it will be ill-prepared to counter the Tory government's use of the same measures to stifle political dissent. The ban-happy left has already been

caught out by the Tories' attempt to 'No Platform' such critics as Irish republicans and lesbian and gay groups. The way to counter this offensive is through open campaigning for democratic rights, rather than naively demanding that the bans be turned against supporters of the status quo.

Taking sides

Those who want to contribute to the cause of progress in the Middle East need to adopt a perspective which is resolutely anti-imperialist. The practical way to do so is to fight against Britain's reactionary role in the region. The West's attempt to criminalise Arab freedom fighters as 'terrorists' demands an urgent response. It has helped to make anti-Arab prejudice rife in Britain today. We must expose this imperialist propaganda unequivocally if we are to give positive support to Palestine.

Finally, the left should recognise that it was the lack of proletarian solidarity with the victims of anti-Semitism which allowed Zionism to dominate Jewish communities. One step towards defeating Zionism is by fighting all manifestations of the anti-Semitism which perpetuates its appeal among Jews. Another step towards that goal is by showing consistent and active support for the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

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December 1978

LABOUR'S WINTER... THATCHER'S SPRING

A wave of industrial militancy swept Britain in December 1978. Over the next four months, thousands went on strike for higher pay in what became known as the 'winter of discontent'. The general view of what happened is captured by top pundit Anthony King:

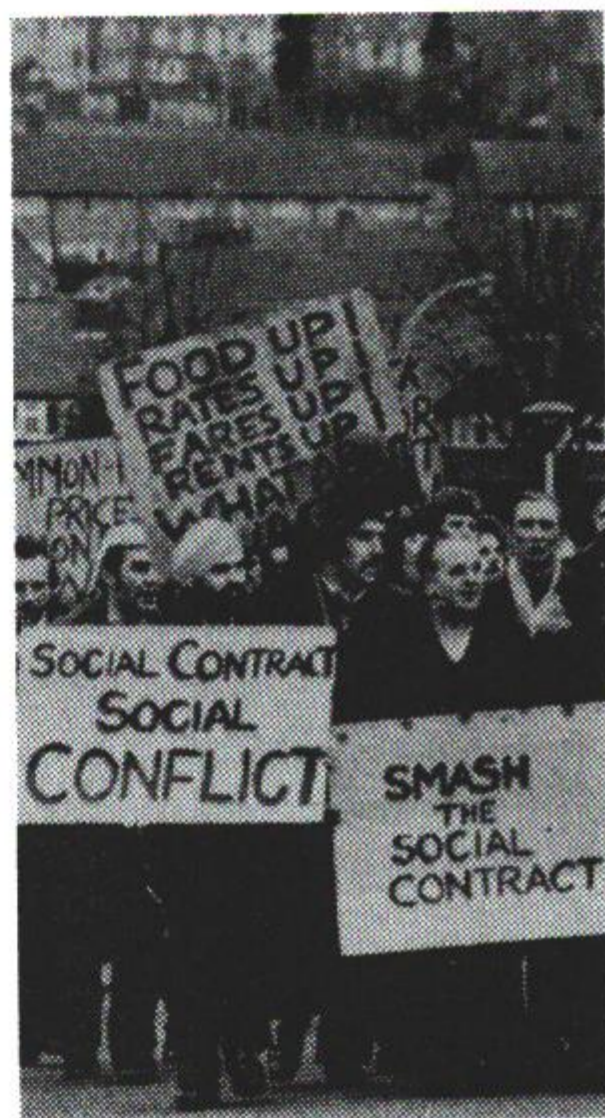
'Operations were postponed and hospital wards closed because NHS supervisory engineers and laundry staffs went on strike. The shelves in supermarkets began to clear because of a nationwide strike of lorry drivers. A strike of tanker drivers resulted in shortages of petrol in some parts of the country. The winter of 1978-9 was one of the worst in recent British history, but because of another strike by local authority manual workers the roads were often left unsalted and ungritted. In the north-west of England, a strike of gravediggers left the dead unburied, with corpses stored in ever-increasing numbers in temporary mortuaries.' ('Politics, economics and trade unions 1974-79', in HR Penniman (ed), *Britain at the Polls*, 1979)

It's a familiar story that has featured in a thousand Tory speeches since 1979. Yet the picture of national chaos drawn by commentators like King exaggerates the disruption caused that winter, and misses the point about why it has come to be regarded as an important political milestone.

The events King describes did not, as his cataloguing style might suggest, hit Britain all at once and last all winter. They took place at different times, in different places, and lasted short periods. The events of 1978-79 were often pretty tame in comparison to the strikes which shook Edward Heath's Tory government from 1970-74. The winter of discontent caused no power cuts, no states of emergency and no three-day working week.

The winter of discontent is remembered as so significant because of the Labour government's reaction to the strikes. It was the winter in which James Callaghan's government paved the way for Margaret Thatcher's war on the unions.

The strike wave was a response to four years of government wage controls and public spending cuts. In



September 1978, even the Labour left paper *Tribune* had to concede that the number of full-time workers taking home less than supplementary benefit had more than doubled under Labour. The Labour government provoked the winter of discontent by imposing the biggest cuts in living standards since the war—and then it blamed the unions for the consequences. Labour leaders launched a tirade of anti-union propaganda. Callaghan attacked Nupe hospital pickets for engaging in 'free collective vandalism', and warned unions which possessed 'monopoly power' not to 'abuse their great strength'. The Thatcherite bogeys of 'picket line bully-boys' and 'union power' were first popularised by a Labour prime minister.

Strike-breakers

The Labour government threatened the unions in a stop-at-nothing style that Thatcher has since made her own. When the lorry drivers' strike started, home secretary Merlyn Rees told the commons that he was 'ready to call on the assistance of the services, or to proclaim a state of emergency' to break it. Rees carried out his threat in the ambulance crews' dispute. From February-March 1979, Labour used troops, police and volunteer scabs to undermine the strike.

Labour concentrated the public's mind on what it portrayed as the problem of trade union power. A Gallup poll taken during the winter asked people who was the most powerful man in Britain; 52 per cent said Jack Jones, leader of the transport workers' union, while 34 per

cent opted for the prime minister. Not surprisingly, the need to curb the unions became a major issue in the run-up to the May 1979 general election.

The anti-union climate which Callaghan had begun to create encouraged the Tories to take a harder line themselves. In the early seventies they had burned their fingers on anti-union laws, when a massive backlash of industrial action wrecked Heath's Industrial Relations Act. Even after Thatcher became party leader in 1975, the Tories remained cautious. Their 1977 policy statement recognised the dangers of moving too fast against the unions, and emphasised the need for voluntary agreement between the government and the union leaders.

On a plate

The Labour government and the TUC gave Thatcher her chance to up the stakes, when they announced their Concordat in 1979. This joint agreement urged union officials to get their members

wonder', Thatcher presented the case for statutory controls on trade unions.

Today, anti-union laws are looked upon as one of the defining features of the Thatcher years. Yet it was only after the winter of discontent and the Concordat that the idea of an immediate legal crackdown on the unions found its way into the Tories' draft manifesto. In the May 1979 election the Tories proposed legislation to enforce pre-strike ballots, end the right to strike in public utilities, and change the law on the closed shop and picketing. These were all key objectives of Labour's Concordat. Callaghan recalls how the Concordat identified 'three areas of concern to the government, namely secondary picketing, the maintenance of essential services and greater flexibility in the closed shop' (*Time and Chance*, 1987, p539).

He does not mention pre-strike ballots, but the Concordat was explicit: 'Union rules should provide for strike ballots to be held'.

As the rubbish piled up, the Tories smelt victory



back to work, and to prevent further strikes breaking out. Where workers were taking unofficial action, the Concordat said that 'unions should take energetic steps to get a return to work'. As for official action, union chiefs should recognise 'that strike action should only be taken in the last resort'.

By the time of the Concordat, most of the winter strikes were coming to an end. But the Concordat played an important role for the Tories. Once the leaders of the Labour Party and the TUC had agreed that the unions needed taming, Thatcher's Tories felt free to launch their full-scale assault. Arguing that the winter of discontent showed the ineffectiveness of voluntary agreement, and that the Concordat was 'a boneless

The Tories only had to crank up the anti-union campaign a notch or two, and translate the Concordat's themes into law.

During the winter of 1978-79 the Labour government provoked the unions into a conflict, blamed them for causing it and laid the basis for the Tories' anti-union laws. This marked a turning point in official attitudes towards trade unions. For decades the unions had been looked upon as a legitimate and powerful interest group, consulted by prime ministers, invited on to government bodies and listened to by employers. Labour's attitude to the winter of discontent handed Thatcher a stick with which to beat Callaghan in the election, and the unions afterwards.

Jon Hann

What's Thatcher's secret?

The missing link

Joan Phillips questions the left's longstanding fascination with 'Thatcherism'

What is the secret of Margaret Thatcher's success? The British left has spent the past decade seeking an explanation for the Tories' political dominance. Many have been unable to avoid the conclusion that Thatcher really must be the exceptional figure her supporters say she is. Over the years, it has become widely accepted that Thatcher's own attitudes and ideology have been the biggest factors in the reshaping of British politics.

From 1979 the theme of Thatcher-as-history-maker was taken up and given intellectual appeal by a group of left-wing writers and academics. They advanced an analysis of Thatcherism as a unique ideological phenomenon, quite distinct from previous methods of capitalist rule. In one form or another their 'Thatcherism' thesis has become part of the left's political furniture, and has also exerted considerable influence over the mainstream media.

More recently these same radical writers have sought to underpin the

Thatcherism theory, claiming that the success of the New Right reflects profound changes in the nature of capitalist society. They argue that the advent of a new era in production and consumption, characterised as 'post-Fordism', has eroded old working class identities; people now see themselves as individuals, leading diverse lifestyles through the choice they exercise in the marketplace. This transformation of society, claim the Thatcherism theorists with hindsight, created the conditions for the New Right to transform politics. The post-Fordism analysis has quickly joined the basic Thatcherism thesis to make up the worldview of much of the left.

The striking thing about these explanations is that they attribute Thatcher's success to factors beyond the control of the left and the labour movement, be it the awesome power of Thatcherite ideology or the

evolution of society itself. The implication is that the opposition has been almost powerless to resist the rise of the New Right. The one avenue which the left-wing rethinkers seem reluctant to explore is the role played by the last Labour government, and the Labour opposition since 1979, in creating and sustaining the Thatcherite ascendancy. For those who have operated in Labour's orbit over the years, raising such matters would bring the reasons for the rise of the New Right uncomfortably close to home. Yet if we examine the role of Labourism, we can discover the missing link in the developments of the past decade, and suggest an alternative explanation to the Thatcherism thesis.

A few months before Thatcher came to power in May 1979, with the Labour government in crisis, left-wing theorists were already arguing that the Tories' advance was based on the extraordinary appeal of their

Does she stand for a class—or stand in a class of her own?

Gerard Livett



ideas. The concept of Thatcherism was first advanced by sociology professor Stuart Hall, who described it as a form of 'authoritarian populism' ('The great moving right show', *Marxism Today*, January 1979). This was soon supplemented by *Marxism Today* editor Martin Jacques, who defined Thatcherism as 'a new kind of global rightism'. After the Tories' second election victory in 1983, the debate about the Thatcher mystique took off in a big way among those eager to find an explanation for Labour's devastating defeat.

For a debate which has fixated the left for years, the Thatcherism thesis is notably incoherent. It has come to mean different things to different people. Let's summarise the Thatcherism thesis, as developed during the past 10 years.

In a book which brought together the Thatcherism theorists in 1983, Hall and Jacques defined Thatcherism as a distinctive political force, combining original and established elements: 'It managed to marry the gospel of free market liberalism with organic patriotic Toryism.' (S Hall and M Jacques (eds), *The Politics of Thatcherism*, 1983, p10) In economics, Thatcherism emphasised the virtues of the market and individual initiative and the iniquities of state intervention and bureaucracy. In politics, it based a populist appeal on themes like patriotism, law and order and the family.

Of the people

The left-wing theorists of Thatcherism claim it has had a singularly broad political appeal. For them, its novel marriage of an aggressive religion of the market and choice with an appeal to reactionary prejudice has enabled the New Right to establish a 'popular bridgehead' in the working class. 'This translation of a theoretical ideology into a populist idiom', Hall has maintained, 'was a major political achievement' (*The Politics of Thatcherism*, p28). For Hall, Thatcher's flair for translating her vision of a free society 'into the homespun idioms of daily life' was such that this ideology achieved a 'deep penetration into the very heartland of the labour movement' ('Whistling in the void', *New Socialist*, May/June 1983).

The new left rethinkers have consistently emphasised the novelty of Thatcherism and the radicalism of its strategy. What we are witnessing, Hall argued in his first article on Thatcherism, is a move towards 'an exceptional form of the capitalist state' ('The great moving right show'). So what prompted this extraordinary departure in Tory politics?

Hall and Jacques have located the rise of Thatcherism in 'a struggle for hegemony' within 'the dominant bloc', as the New Right took on the Labour Party and the moderate

Conservatives. They regard 1975, when Thatcher became Tory leader, as the 'climacteric' in British politics. Once the ascendancy of the New Right was consolidated, its mission was not simply to attain governmental power, but to recast the political mould.

Thus Hall has described Thatcherism as an attempt to develop 'a form of hegemonic politics', by winning the ideological debates on one front after another, destroying old ideas and class identities. The ultimate aim of this battle for the hearts and minds of the British people has been to construct a 'new social bloc' embracing all classes. The New Right has tried to unite this bloc by presenting people with a 'philosophy of life'. Hall believes that the Thatcherites have won wide support for their powerful images of a new share-owning, home-owning democracy of individual consumers exercising choice.

Seize the times

For the theorists of Thatcherism, the New Right has shifted the terms of debate so fundamentally that the left must either adapt to the new times or die. We must move on to the Tories' terrain, address the neglected ideological dimension of Thatcherism, and 'win back' themes like patriotism and individualism for the left. And since Thatcherism is qualitatively worse than any other political trend, we must mobilise anti-Thatcher alliances with everybody from the churches to Conservative dissidents.

The left-wing rethinkers claim that their analysis of the development of right-wing thinking over recent years is designed to pinpoint what is new and specific about the times in which we live. It is ironic, then, that they should discuss Thatcherism entirely outside of time and space.

Since 1979, their approach has separated the changes in Conservative Party policy from the changing needs of the economic system which those policies are designed to run. Their narrow concentration on the right's ideology has led them to divorce Thatcher's ideas from the demands of capitalism in the seventies and eighties. The implication is that these ideas have acquired a timeless power of their own, almost a mystical quality, separate from society. The problem, however, is that in principle the ideas associated with Thatcherism are not new. What is new is their success in modern British politics. To make sense of the Thatcherite phenomenon, we cannot just focus on the themes of Tory policy. We need to understand the political and economic circumstances in the real world which have made ideas that were long confined to the fringe so attractive to the establishment, and so effective against the opposition, over the past decade.

In debating other radical academics about his concept of 'authoritarian populism', Hall admitted that his concern was with ideology alone and justified the separation of politics from economics in his work:

'It addresses, directly, the question of the forms of hegemonic politics. In doing so, it deliberately and self-consciously foregrounds the political-ideological dimension. Thatcherism, however, is a multi-faceted historical phenomenon, which it would be ludicrous to assume could be "explained" along one dimension of analysis only.' ('Authoritarian populism: A reply to Jessop et al', *New Left Review* 151, 1985)

Hall insists that it is legitimate to analyse ideology in autonomy, and believes that it is necessary only for the other 'dimensions' to be placed alongside his partial concept of authoritarian populism for the analysis of Thatcherism to be complete. But for Marxists, it is impossible to fragment theory into discrete dimensions, study them in isolation, and then tack them together to produce an all-rounded understanding. Any aspect of a problem can only be properly understood by placing it in the fullest social context. The consequences of Hall's approach are apparent in his work on Thatcherism. By looking at phenomena in isolation from each other, he has ended up stressing the internal features of the object of investigation—Tory ideas—and downplayed the external pressures which have shaped them.

Afterthoughts

In recent months, Hall and his co-thinkers claim to have balanced out their analysis and established the objective roots of the New Right's ideology, with their definition of the post-Fordist era. But this won't wash. They defined Thatcherism by concentrating on ideology, for the most part in separation from society. Now, 10 years on, they are trying to jam their latest observations on economic and social trends underneath their original ideas, to prop them up. This afterthought cannot alter the one-sidedness of the Thatcherism thesis. The fact remains that they spent the best part of a decade developing an analysis of bourgeois ideas with little reference to the developing needs of the capitalist system—and they insist that this analysis stands. The attempt to use their post-Fordism thesis as a back-dated justification for their Thatcherism one looks more like a cover-up than a coherent, all-rounded analysis.

Even when the rethinkers turn their attention to the outside world, they are overwhelmed by their impressions of what is happening on the surface of society, be it the new

RIGHT:
Thatcher can only be understood by looking at James Callaghan's Labour government

Thatcherite economics are an instinctive, pragmatic response to the problems of capitalism

trends in commercial design or the changing lifestyles of some people. This makes their analysis a hostage to superficial shifts, and therefore inherently unstable. For example, their recent celebration of the post-Fordist era as a new age of capitalist dynamism based on individual consumption is already being challenged by the crackdown on the consumer credit boom and the approach of another recession in the capitalist world.

How does the Thatcherism thesis stand up if we set it in a broader context? It soon becomes clear that Thatcher's ideas are not unique. She is distinguished by her effectiveness rather than the novelty of her policies.

The new left describes Thatcherism's neo-liberal economic policy, with its emphasis on the market and dislike of state intervention, as if it were a novel departure and a coherent philosophy. Yet Tory strategy has been much more a pragmatic and hand-to-mouth response to the problems of British capitalism, than the execution of an intellectually consistent blueprint.

At various times, Thatcher's Tories have pursued policies of deflation, rationalisation, curbs on the welfare state and privatisation. But they did not invent these policies. In many respects Thatcherite economics are a variant of those pursued in Britain back in the twenties, or (with more rigour) in contemporary Chile under General Pinochet. Even right-wing commentators make no claim for

Thatcherism as a novel economic experiment. *Financial Times* journalist Peter Riddell has noted that the economic policies now associated with the Tories were pioneered by the last Labour government: 'If there has been a Thatcher experiment, it was launched by Denis Healey.' (*The Thatcher Government*, 1983)

They're all at it

Thatcher's economic policies are essentially an instinctive response to the problems of a capitalist world which, despite the short-lived upturn of the past couple of years, remains stuck in the long-term recession that began 15 years ago. As such, they have been more or less matched by every West European government. Samuel Brittan, brother of Thatcher's former minister Leon and another *Financial Times* journalist, noted this trend in 1985: 'Western governments, whether called Conservative as in Germany or Socialist as in France, have found their way towards Thatcherite economic policies.' The advanced stage of economic decay in Britain might have made the Thatcher government a pace-setter in pursuing counter-crisis measures, but as the recession catches up with Britain's international competitors similar policies are being implemented throughout the West.

The idea of a distinct Thatcherite economics doesn't hold much water. What about the second leg of the Thatcherism thesis, the notion of the New Right's uniquely populist appeal?

Thatcher has certainly sought to mobilise support by appealing to emotions which are meant to transcend the class divide. Yet this sort of Tory populism is as old as the party itself. The National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations was formed in 1867 with the express purpose of mobilising popular support for the party, at a time when sections of the working class were getting the vote for the first time. The Tories have long championed reactionary ideals in a bid to win support from the more backward sections of British society. For example, the Tories of the early twentieth century appealed to national pride in Britain's imperial role. The Conservatives were portrayed as steadfast defenders of the British way of life, declaring their determination not to 'see the honest Britisher turned out by these scourgings of European slums' (R McKenzie and A Silver, *Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England*, 1968, pp59-60). This outpouring of xenophobia in the 1905 debate on the Aliens Bill more than matches Thatcher's demagoguery about the British nation being 'swamped' by black immigrants.

The left-wing rethinkers exaggerate the novelty and philosophical quality of Thatcher's bundle of shopkeeper economics and petit-bourgeois beliefs. They are so impressed that they overestimate the popular appeal of the crusade for 'popular capitalism'. Yet what evidence there is reveals a populace rather less bedazzled by Tory ideology than is the left.

The notion of a significant shift in public attitudes towards the ideals of Thatcherism has little basis in fact. Take the prestigious *British Social Attitudes* report for 1987, which showed that the key factor in Thatcher's third general election victory was not the popularity of Thatcherite values in general, but 'the sharp improvement in the electorate's evaluation of the economic situation between 1985 and 1986' (R Jowell, S Witherspoon and L Brook (eds), *British Social Attitudes: The 1987 Report*). Many people lent pragmatic support to the Tories, based on their immediate perception of an economic upturn, but remained unconvinced about Thatcher's ideological principles. The researchers commented that 'the Thatcher policy revolution has simply not so far been accompanied by an equivalent revolution in public attitudes'.

The 1988 survey, published last month, found still less evidence of the Thatcherite themes of the 'enterprise culture' being embedded in public opinion. Most respondents were unsympathetic to such ideas as tax cuts, less state spending, privatising health services, and the right of share-owners to reap the benefits of entrepreneurship:



'Only a minority of the public embraces these ideas, despite all the exhortations over the last eight years, and despite what even many of Mrs Thatcher's critics would concede are her formidable qualities of leadership. Since 1983 at any rate...British public opinion has actually become more alienated from many of the goals of an "enterprise culture". To the extent that attitudes have moved, they have become less sympathetic to these central tenets of the "Thatcher revolution".' (Jowell et al, *British Social Attitudes: The 1988 Report*)

There is plenty of similar evidence, not least the fact that the Tory share of the vote has fallen slightly in each election Thatcher has won. Ignoring this, however, Hall has persisted in elevating the Thatcher mystique since last year's election: 'Thatcherism continues to hold the high ground because, among large sections of the population (including Labour voters) the political-ideological *thematics* of Thatcherism remain in place' ('Thatcher's lessons', *Marxism Today*, March 1988). Of course the Tories are still in command. But, as there is little evidence of any mass enthusiasm for 'the political-ideological *thematics* of Thatcherism', we must surely look elsewhere—at the failure of the opposition—for an explanation.

Thatcher's crusade does mark a radical departure from the norms of government in post-war Britain. But the reasons for this lie more in the changing needs of British capitalism than in the change of personnel at the top of the Tory Party, or in the changing lifestyles of British voters.

What crisis?

From the first, Hall and Jacques argued that Thatcherism arose out of a 'struggle for hegemony' within the 'dominant bloc' in 'response to crisis'; 'It has been a crisis of the established forms of hegemony, a situation where the old forms of rule, previous ideological assumptions and the established pattern of alliances became increasingly difficult to sustain.' ('Thatcherism: Breaking out of the impasse', *Marxism Today*, October 1979) So there was a crisis of some sort in the Tory Party which allowed the New Right to take shape from the sixties. Powellism, Keith Joseph, Rhodes Boyson and the National Front all apparently anticipated Thatcherism.

This appraisal of changes in the Tory Party is much too subjective. There was a battle, but it was not generated internally. It was fought out in response to external developments in society, primarily Britain's economic decline and the problem of dealing with a well-organised working class. And it was not the first time that the Tory Party has made such an adjustment to changing realities.

The adaptability of the British ruling class has been one of its most important qualities. In the early 1900s, the Conservative Party transformed its identity in response to two pressing new problems; the emergence of the working class as a significant political force, and the problems which the Empire faced in dealing with the rise of international competitors such as Germany and the USA. The transformation of the Conservative Party from an archaic aristocratic club into a modern capitalist machine by the 1920s is testimony to the flexibility of the British ruling class in the face of changing social conditions.

The Tories have always thrown up leaders representative of their times. Within the party, the free enterprise hardliners have coexisted with those who favour more state intervention—the 'one-nation' Tories. Each side has been called on by the capitalist class when its policies suit the system's needs.

In the fifties and early sixties, during the post-war boom, the Tories were led by consensus politicians like Harold 'our people have never had it so good' Macmillan. Their outlook reflected the willingness of the ruling class to continue with large-scale nationalisation and cooperation with the trade unions while the economy fared relatively well. The late seventies and eighties have been the era of Margaret 'there is no alternative' Thatcher. The economic crisis and the social conflict it engendered provoked this change of Tory emphasis. The shift from rule by consensus to confrontation reflected the need of the ruling class to take drastic measures to halt Britain's decline. Thatcher's personal contribution is that her brash style ideally suits the needs of British capitalism today.

First Heath...

The key to understanding Thatcher's place in recent history lies in comparing her government with that of her predecessor Edward Heath, who set out to abandon consensus politics in the early seventies. Heath, too, aimed to curtail state assistance to lame-duck industries; started to scale down tripartite quangos; moved to reduce public spending; imposed an incomes policy; and tried to smash the power of the trade unions. But he failed and was forced into a humiliating U-turn. Heath's final defeat was suffered at the hands of the National Union of Mineworkers in 1974, the union over which Thatcher triumphed 10 years later.

The new left's theorists have trouble reconciling Heath's confrontational experiment with their own contention that Thatcherism is an entirely new development. Once again, they are forced back on subjective explanations. Thus Jacques can observe that Heath

moved from 'a pre-Thatcherite position to a comprehensive corporatist approach', but offers no explanation for this complete reversal. It is almost as if the Tory leader had simply changed his mind when he woke up one morning.

Another rethinker, Andrew Gamble, has asserted that the Heath government 'can be seen as a last attempt to operate within the confines of social democratic consensus'. This is a far cry from the way in which the left judged the Heath government at the time. The



RIGHT:
She's carried the Heath
experiment into the
eighties

year after Heath came to power, Robin Blackburn described him in terms which may sound familiar:

'In formulating a strategy for restoring the fortunes of British capitalism, he intends to jettison the backwardness of British bourgeois politics—its sentimentalism about old friends and old customs—and to exploit the backwardness of the British working class—its parliamentarianism and its economism....

'Though the Heath government's



economic policies will not produce some magical reversal of the decline of British imperialism, they are more likely to eliminate the grosser irrationalities than were the incoherent compound of subsidies, bureaucratic mergers and exhortations employed by all other post-war Labour and Conservative governments.' ('The Heath government: A new course for British capitalism', *New Left Review* 70, November/December 1971)

Blackburn did not advance a theory of 'Heathism', but the basic elements are there. The emphasis is on Heath as a new broom, sweeping away the 'sentimental' post-war methods of political rule and the 'irrational' economics of state intervention.

This is rather embarrassing for those who claim that the Thatcherism thesis is a new analysis of a unique phenomenon. They can only sidestep the problem by rewriting history to turn Heath into a social democrat, or by emphasising the contrasting personal dispositions of the two Tory leaders. The fact that Heath tried to do what Thatcher has done immediately raises doubts about the entire Thatcherism thesis. The question is this: why did she succeed where he failed? The answer lies not in the internal dynamics of the Tory Party, but in the contrasting economic and political climate in which each leader operated.

Too much, too soon

Heath's attempt at a free market, anti-union 'revolution' was premature. When it was elected in 1970, his government recognised that British capitalism could no longer go on in the old way. The conditions which had allowed the authorities to rule through consensus and cooperation had been undermined by Britain's precipitate economic decline. Heath saw the need for more aggressive government, to cut state spending, rationalise industry and tame the unions. In the early seventies, however, this project was a lot easier to outline than to implement.

The major barrier to Heath's planned assault was the working class. Workers were generally well-organised, militant and confident. Unless the working class could be contained, Heath's proposals were doomed. And so they proved to be, as a wave of industrial action destroyed Heath's attempts to hold down wages and impose legal controls on the trade unions. Even the capitalist class was inclined to believe that Heath had jumped the gun. It was not yet prepared for the wholesale rationalisation of industry, a concern which contributed to Heath's infamous U-turn on state support for concerns like Rolls Royce. In 1974, the business community shocked Heath when some leading figures in the

Confederation of British Industry came out in support of a Labour victory in the general election.

The CBI chiefs' belief that Labour might be their best bet proved well-founded. The 1974-79 Labour governments provided the vital link between Heath and Thatcher. Under Harold Wilson and then James Callaghan, Labour educated the working class in the harsh facts of modern capitalist economics. The party's strong links with the union leaders allowed it to get away with measures which would have been considered intolerable under Heath. Labour imposed wage controls, slashed public spending, and presided over the arrival of mass unemployment. When the working class resisted this offensive in the 'winter of discontent', Labour launched an anti-union campaign which paved the way for Thatcher's assault on the labour movement (see page 18).

Labour's contribution

Without the Labour interregnum, Thatcherism becomes meaningless. If Labour had not altered the balance of forces in British society in favour of the employers, there is little reason why Thatcher should have been any more successful than Heath. Labour's economic policies made austerity a way of life for millions, spreading the message which Thatcher has broadcast ever since; that there is no alternative to hard-headed capitalist management. Labour's focus on such issues as union power, family morality, crime and educational standards created the climate in which Thatcher could launch her own, more strident, populist campaign around reactionary ideas. The failure of the Labour government advertised the fact that the old collectivist methods of state intervention in the economy and society were exhausted. The stage was set for Thatcher.

The Thatcher government has exploited the situation it inherited from Labour to the full. It has swept aside the trade unions and the tripartite bodies on which the TUC used to discuss affairs of state. It has instituted a more direct and coercive relationship with the working class. Convinced that it can wait no longer to put its house in order, the capitalist class has given Thatcher the backing it refused to Heath. Thus there has been a change in the establishment's attitude. But it would not have been able to enforce its new attitude unless the political spadework had been done by the last Labour government.

Thatcher's greatest achievement has been not in thinking up new ideas, but in implementing previously taboo policies. Even this has depended above all on the weakness of her opponents. Labour's record in government set the tone for the Thatcher years, and discredited the

There are more people repelled by Labourism than mesmerised by Thatcherism

old alternative. Labour's pathetic performance in opposition has boosted Thatcher's invulnerable image. Since Neil Kinnock became leader in 1983, Labour's shift towards echoing Thatcherite themes has endorsed the impression that she was right all along. This is the factor which the left finds it hard to come to terms with, and has chosen to ignore.

A striking feature of the Thatcherism thesis is its neglect of Labour's contribution to the Thatcherite ascendancy. Rather than seek an explanation for Thatcher's dominance in the irrelevance of Labour's programme to many ordinary people, the Thatcherism theorists make out that a unique set of Tory policies has a mass appeal in the working class. Their analysis is attractive to Labour leaders because it explains the Tories' dominance by reference to factors largely beyond Labour's control. But of what use to the working class is a theory which avoids accounting for the disastrous influence of Labourism?

Off the hook

The rethinkers have explained Labour's election defeats as a consequence of Thatcherism, rather than of the failings of its own political programme. This may have something to do with the key role that these left-wing academics played in formulating that programme in the early seventies. If they studied the working class experience of Labour Party politics, as austerity government in the seventies and uninspiring opposition in the eighties, they would find that there are more people repelled by Labourism than mesmerised by Thatcherism. The more they discover extraordinary powers in Thatcherism, and extraordinary changes in class society, the more they let Labourism off the hook.

After the third humiliating election defeat last year, the Thatcherism school of thought rightly perceived Labour's decline as terminal. Once again, however, its theorists sought to explain this with little reference to the politics of Labourism. They decided instead that Labour's decline reflected the disappearance of the working class as a collective entity, an idea they have now expanded in the analysis of 'post-Fordism'. But the working class has not gone away. Despite the changing jobs they do and lives they lead, the majority of the population still shares the common experience of exploitation by the employers. What has changed is their political perceptions of what is possible—and here, too, the failure of Labourism has been the decisive factor. For example, people's apparent willingness to seek individual solutions to their problems today owes more to the way in which the official labour movement has discredited collectivist ideas than to the appeal of popular capitalism.

ABOVE:
Heseltine is no friend of ours

The theorists of Thatcherism purport to explain the new balance of political forces in Britain through the ability of the Tory far right to key into the new times. By implication, the Tories' success must become a point of reference for any movement which seeks popular support. Hence the need to appropriate the themes associated with Thatcherism. Moreover, if Thatcherism has transformed British society it follows that progressive movements should also seek a new constituency.

The rethinkers have assigned particular importance to the ideological sway of Thatcherism, and argued that 'we must organise on the same terrain if we are to transform it' (Hall and Jacques, *The Politics of Thatcherism*, p39). Despite Hall's protestation that this need not mean swallowing Thatcherism whole, in practice it has led the left to tailor its arguments to suit the prevailing political climate. Shortly after the South Atlantic War, for example, when the reactionary character of British patriotism was paraded in chauvinist outbursts against all things Argentinian, professor Eric Hobsbawm called for the left to



exploit 'the political potential of patriotism' and to 'think more concretely and creatively about national identity and national interests' ('Falkands fallout', *Marxism Today*, January 1983). Similarly today, the Thatcherism theorists are prominent among those who have discovered the liberating potential of the capitalist market (see page 7). They seem so mesmerised by the power of Thatcherite ideology that they find it impossible to imagine an alternative. Instead, they seek to give some progressive shape to political ideas which are more properly associated with capitalist exploitation and oppression.

For the new left, Thatcherism is on the way to cohering a new social bloc, embracing diverse forces in society and cutting across class lines. Thus we require the mobilisation of a broad alliance to defeat it. Hall wants the left to move beyond its existing base 'to generalise itself throughout society, to bring over strategic popular majorities on the key issues' ('Faith, hope or clarity', *Marxism Today*, January 1985). He insists that this does not mean forsaking the working class, only that class politics will take a new form. In fact it has meant seeking alliances with moderate forces on their terms.

Since Labour's third successive general election defeat, the broad alliance sought by the rethinkers has become ever broader. This year, Jacques set their agenda for the future: 'To have any chance of success, the movement of opposition must seek to embrace not only the centre, but also the wets and, for the want of a better expression, the post-Thatcherite wets like Heseltine, in the Tory Party' (*News and Views*, June 1988). The idea that we should design our campaigns so as to curry favour with former defence chief Michael Heseltine—who built Fortress Falklands, led troops into battle against Molesworth peace camp, and was a leading light in Thatcher's cabinet during the miners' strike, among other things—brings out the reactionary consequences of the Thatcherism thesis.

The offensive which Thatcher has orchestrated is not the property of any one nation or party, and least of all any one politician. It is the consequence of the crisis of the capitalist system, which dictates that every Western leader must pursue policies of austerity and repression. Thatcher is an expression of a

universal trend in a particular context. It would be as fitting to talk about Reaganism, Mitterrandism, Kohlism or Gonzalezism, and just as unhelpful. Our identification of Thatcherite policy as the form that capitalist rule must take today means that any politician seeking to manage British capitalism, be it a Kinnock or a Heseltine, would be forced to follow a similar tack. The problem we have to confront is not just a particular government, but the system itself. And it is a basic proposition of Marxism that the one force in society capable of carrying through such a challenge is the working class. We will develop this argument in future issues.

It is certainly necessary to recognise that many things have changed over the Thatcher years. The January edition of *Living Marxism* will largely be given over to analysing some of the important shifts, and the break from consensus politics. One development we can establish here has been the exposure of Labour's role in setting things up for the Tories. This is the missing link that the proponents of the Thatcherism theory cannot come to terms with.

Republicans play racist card

WILLIE HORTON WINS THE DAY

The dominant personality in the US election wasn't George Bush; it certainly wasn't Michael Dukakis. Nor was it the charismatic Jesse Jackson. It was Willie Horton. His name became a Republican battle-cry, and struck fear into the Democrats' hearts.

Willie Horton is a 36-year old black man from Lawrence, Massachusetts, jailed for murder in 1976. In June 1986 he went AWOL after a weekend parole. He was finally caught in Maryland, where he had broken into a white couple's home, assaulted the man and raped the woman. The Republicans used the Horton case to revive the ultimate racist bogey—the black rapist—and to blame Dukakis and the Democrats for letting Horton loose.

Horton became the star of the Republicans' law and order campaign. As governor of Massachusetts, Dukakis

Jackson demanded justice from the racist Democrats



was behind the reform programme for long-term prisoners like Horton. So the Republicans accused him of giving black murderers weekend passes to rape white women. Handbills and television adverts told and retold the story. A TV commercial featured one of Horton's victims pointing the finger at Dukakis: 'For 12 hours, I was beaten, slashed and tortured. My wife was brutally raped. When his liberal experiment failed, Dukakis only looked away.'

A weapon

The Horton theme provided an electoral focus for the powerful undercurrent of racism in the USA. It became the Republicans' main weapon to put white workers off Dukakis. The Democrats res-



ponded by trying to bury the issue. Dukakis didn't even want to admit that racism was damaging him. When one of his campaign aides accused Bush of stirring up racism, Dukakis sacked her. Only at the end of the campaign, when it was blindingly obvious that racism was giving Bush a ticket to the White House, did the Democrats try to confront it. But by then, Horton was fixed in many minds as the main character in the election.

Racism rules

Race has been the dominant issue in American politics since the turn of the century. It is so pervasive that it needs little public discussion. A nod, a wink and a few loaded words are enough to get the racist message across. Racism has been a main source of the remarkable stability which US capitalism has enjoyed throughout this century.

Way back in the 1860s, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels noted that racial and ethnic tensions were the key to the domination of the American working class. Engels remarked that native white workers were encouraged to see themselves as aristocrats lording it over new groups of immigrants. As each immigrant group was absorbed into society, they too would assume a hostile attitude towards the next wave of workers flooding into the USA (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1975, pp419-20).

Once European immigrants had served their time as the victims of discrimination, they could all eventually be assimilated. Only the black population was perpetually excluded from the 'American dream'. Racial divisions were kept alive so that white workers, no matter how poor,

could be reminded that US capitalism gave them some privileges over their black neighbours.

Unstable coalition

The Democratic Party has been most affected by the race issue. It used to be a coalition uniting whites in the south and white workers in the north. When black emigration to the northern industrial cities exploded between the wars, however, the Democrats began to organise northern blacks as well. This was a pragmatic recognition of the fact that the Democratic Party machine could not keep control of northern cities without winning influence among the black urban communities.

The incorporation of the new black electorate into the Democratic Party strengthened its hold over the big cities—but stored up trouble for the future. The Democratic coalition now included the most overtly racist Americans, the southern 'Dixiecrats', and black workers in the north. This was not an immediate problem, since local Democratic politicians could cater for local tastes. In New York, Democrats were liberals; in Mississippi, their fellow party members were hardline conservatives. This arrangement was wrecked in the late fifties and early sixties, when blacks began to demand equality.

To a head

Democratic Party bosses in the north adapted to black demands; their southern counterparts took up the defence of white privilege. The civil rights movement brought the tensions within the party to a head. The Republicans exploited the conflict between white and black Democrats to gain support in the south. Under

Reagan, they also began to erode the Democrats' base among northern white workers. The 'Reagan Democrats' were won over to the Republicans primarily through the appeal of racism.

Democrats decline

The strengthening of the race factor explains the gradual decline of the Democrats during the past two decades. The Democrats still win local elections by telling each regional audience what it wants to hear. But in a national election, the Republicans can always play the racist card to their advantage. They have now won five of the last six presidential elections.

This is why Dukakis was so determined to pretend that Willie Horton didn't exist. The fear of alienating white voters explains the Democrats' clumsy attempts to keep Jesse Jackson off national platforms and keep race off the campaign agenda. In the end Dukakis achieved the worst of both worlds. He failed to attract the racist electorate, and alienated black Democratic voters.

Radical commentators have sought consolation in Jackson's effective campaigning. Some have even suggested that a revival of the civil rights movement is now possible and that Martin Luther King's dream may finally be realised. Such optimism is misplaced. Jackson's message never got far beyond the black electorate. His impact on wider US society was negligible; racism did even more damage to the Democrats than in past presidential elections. In the black community, the initial euphoria around Jackson had turned to disappointed apathy by polling day.

Jackson's sidestep

Jackson was no more effective than Dukakis in tackling racism. He remained within the Democratic machine, demanding justice for blacks from a party which is as racist as the Republicans. Jackson himself tried to sidestep the race issue by concentrating on the drug problem. But in the racist climate, many voters equate drugs with blacks and Hispanics. Jackson's initiative only aided Bush's attempt to put law and order, and the racist assumptions behind it, at the centre of debate. The stage was set for the entry of Willie Horton. So it will remain until racism is challenged in the American working class, and the secret of how US capitalism has remained stable for a century is exposed.

Pat Roberts

LEFT: In US politics, crime-blacks

What will Bush do?

A mandate for nothing

**James Malone
says goodbye
Ron, hello
George, and God
help America**

When Ronald Reagan moved into the White House in 1981, there were high hopes of a new age dawning in America. As Reagan prepares to move out again, his failure to deliver has left millions of Americans fearful of what the future might bring.

Eight years ago Reagan spent the election campaign building up a mythical interpretation of America's decline. He blamed inept presidents, advised by liberal intellectuals with no guts, for the way that the USA had slipped from its post-war position of unrivalled world leadership. For Reagan, the seventies were the 'decade of neglect' so far as America's pride, prestige and military power were concerned.

Reagan's simplistic analysis rejected any explanation which related the crisis of US power to events in the real world. So defeat in Vietnam had nothing to do with the resistance of the Vietnamese people, and America's economic problems were not caused by the decay of US capitalism or the resurgence of rival powers like Japan and West Germany. Instead, the source of all the problems was simply that America had stopped believing in itself.

Reagan promised to put this right by bringing back the traditional, wholesome values which supposedly made America great. He pledged that, under his presidency, the USA would be 'walking tall' in the world again.

A snow-job

It may seem hard to believe now, but the newly-elected Reagan seemed sure of what he wanted and certain of what he was doing. He was able to claim his electoral victory as a mandate for a tough foreign policy, military rearmament, less taxes and more old-fashioned morality. Eight years on, it is clear that the Reagan 'revolution' was largely a snow-job, a massive confidence-boosting exercise starring 'the great communicator' on coast-to-coast TV. His image of America walking tall was shattered when top Reagan aides were caught skulking about the Middle East, trading arms for hostages with the Ayatollah Khomeini. And, as the Reagan era ends, the economic and moral malaise that afflicts America is even more pervasive than it was back in 1981.

The bankruptcy of the Reagan

presidency overshadowed the 1988 election campaign. Neither Republican candidate George Bush nor Democrat Michael Dukakis could come up with a vision to grip the public imagination. The campaign became a game of dodge-the-issue. The candidates' main concern was to avoid being identified with any specific proposals. There was no debate, nor any hint of controversy about matters of substance. The banality of the campaign was only equalled by the banality of the candidates.

The nonentity status of both contestants has been much commented on by the media. Yet by exaggerating the importance of the personalities, these commentators miss the essential point. Neither candidate was wholly to blame for his lacklustre performance. As individuals they were unimpressive, but probably no better or no worse than most American presidential hopefuls. The fact is that any mainstream candidate would have had trouble finding a message to inspire the electorate this year. To put it bluntly, American capitalism has run out of ideas.



The Bush years promise to be anything but a fairy tale

During the seventies, president Jimmy Carter, Reagan's predecessor, finally discredited the liberal policies that had been the staple of American politics since John F Kennedy's day. Now, after the Reagan experience, the policies of the conservative right have also been found wanting. Bush lacks any coherent idea to put in their place. He has won a mandate to do nothing in particular. The political philosophy which the new president brings to office can be summed up as a sincere belief in improvisation and an earnest commitment to play it by ear.

It was predictable that Bush and Dukakis should avoid addressing the problems posed by the decline of American power. The measures required to turn the USA around are so drastic that neither candidate was prepared to put them on the record and risk unpopularity. Bush will inherit an annual trade deficit of roughly \$140 billion, and a federal budget deficit in the region of \$175 billion. And that's just for starters. American capitalism seems to have lost the ability to innovate and to acquire any momentum. The USA is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign capital and foreign technology.

No presidential candidate could expect to survive if he admitted that instead of walking tall, America is on its knees pleading with foreign bankers. By the early nineties, the US foreign debt will top the \$1 trillion mark. Bush could sidestep such awkward issues on the campaign trail, but he won't be able to do so for long once inside the Oval Office. American intellectuals—both liberals and conservatives—are already obsessed with the USA's loss of sovereignty. Harvard economist Benjamin Friedman has spoken for all of the worried 'wise men' of the US establishment:

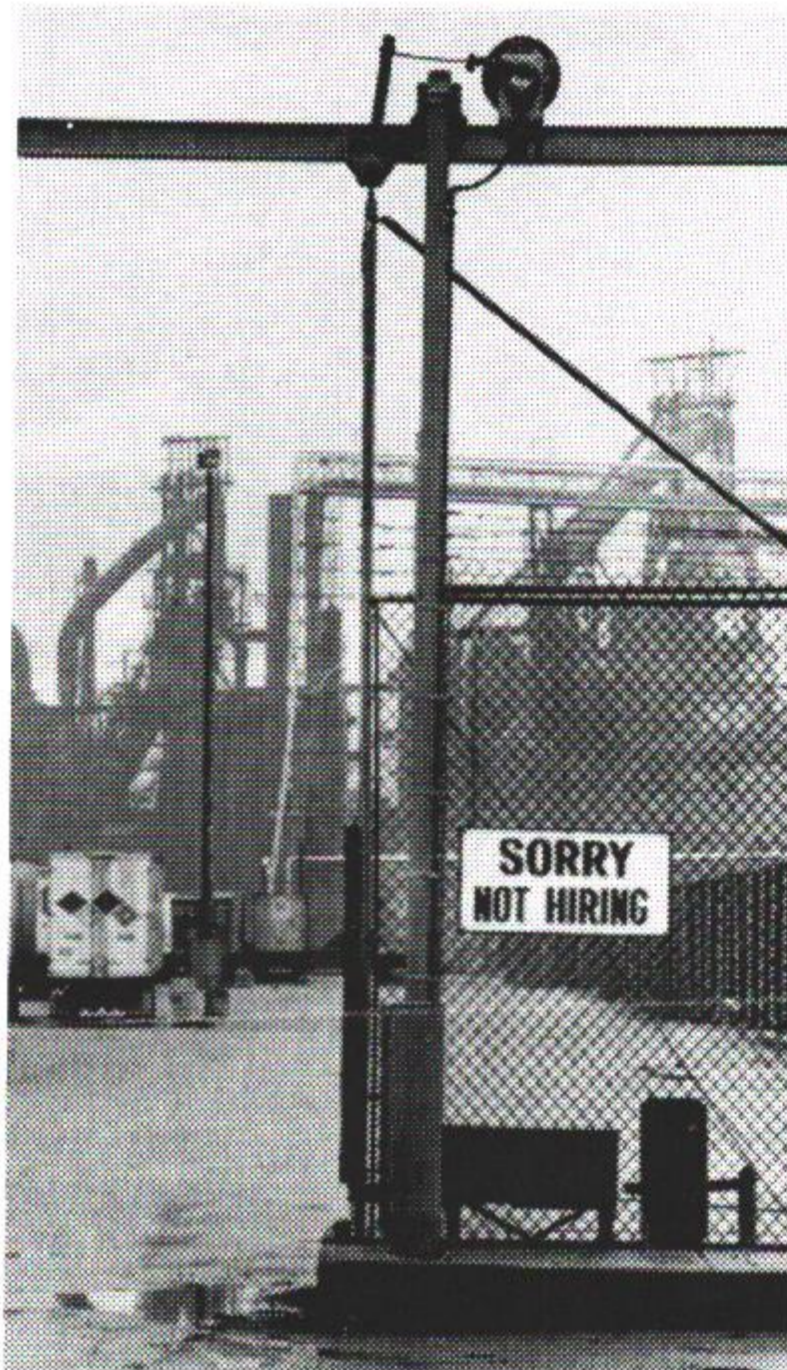
'One grave implication of America becoming a debtor nation is simply our loss of control over our own economic policies.... World power and influence have historically accrued to creditor countries.... But we are now a debtor again, and our future role in world affairs is now in question.' ('The campaign's hidden issue', *New York Review of Books*, 13 October 1988)

The stagnation of the US economy is not a temporary phenomenon. A look at the consequences of the so-called Reagan boom years shows the magnitude of the problem.

● **Industry:** Steel output is down by a third since 1980; four out of every 10 machine tool factories have gone bust since 1981. The US oil industry has yet to recover from the 1986 slump in world prices. The Big Three car producers are losing more of the home market to imports. The USA is

still the world's largest producer and exporter of hi-tech goods, but its lead over Japan is being eroded year by year. American agriculture has suffered too. This year's drought helped cut grain output by nearly a third.

● **Productivity:** The USA remains the world's most productive economy, but its competitors are catching up. The hyped-up productivity gains of the Reagan years were largely due to the least efficient firms going bankrupt, while other companies imposed thousands of redundancies. Productivity rose by less than one per cent in the private sector in 1987. Overall, American investment in new plant and equipment has fallen to its lowest share of national income since the Second World War.



● **Finance:** Credit has expanded enormously in the eighties, stimulating a brief economic upswing—but at a very high price. Total outstanding debt owed by households, business and government has risen from about \$1.5 trillion in 1980 to more than \$8 trillion today. Companies have borrowed less to invest in technology than to make a fast buck by speculating in the equity markets. The credit boom is catching up with the over-stretched financial sector. In 1981 there were seven bank failures; over 200 are expected in 1988, the most in one year since the Great Depression of the thirties. In March, the government had to rescue First Republic Bank, the biggest in Texas (\$35 billion in assets). The largest ever federal bail-out (\$4 billion) narrowly averted a chain-reaction banking disaster across the country.

● **Employment:** Just over 12m jobs were created during the Reagan years. But more than 80 per cent of them were in the service sector, and

most were low-paid. At 5.4 per cent, the official unemployment level might seem low by European standards. Yet more people are out of work now than at any time in US history. Real wages have fallen by 15 per cent since 1973.

Nothing less than a prolonged period of stringent austerity can slow the tempo of America's economic decline. If Bush emulates Reagan and simply throws more money into the economy, it will only destabilise the situation. Credit expansion is fast reaching the point of no return. Giving in to the temptation to buy prosperity with borrowed money for another year would seriously threaten the financial and banking system. Bush will eventually have to deflate, raise taxes and slash government spending. In particular, the survival of American capitalism requires a big offensive against workers' living standards. Reagan has used up the money in the kitty. Bush will need to make workers meet the system's debts.

America's economic crisis also has important repercussions for its standing in the world. The USA's global dominance has been based upon its economic strength. As the international balance of economic power starts to shift away from Washington, Bush faces some hard decisions about what to do in a world he cannot control.

The American establishment is waking up to the fresh constraints on its foreign policy, as James Baker, Reagan's treasury secretary and now secretary of state under Bush, admitted during the campaign:

'The scope of the national security debate has been broadened to include the economic dimension. And I think the reason for that is that the economic domination of the United States, which has long been taken for granted, is, to some extent, now being questioned.' (*Financial Times*, 23 September 1988)

In a pre-election article that sought to shape a bipartisan consensus for the incoming administration, former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance echoed Baker's concern:

'When we served as secretaries of state, only a relatively small portion of our time was spent on international economic issues. Our successors do not have this luxury.' ('An agenda for 1989', *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1988)

The approach of a new international economic recession, in which the USA will be hit harder and challenged more directly than at any time since the Second World War, is now the most pressing issue for US policy-makers.

Instead of walking tall, America is on its knees pleading with foreign bankers

America's need to trim its state budget means that it cannot raise defence spending as much as Washington would like. This is why US politicians now urge their European allies to do some 'burden-sharing' by paying more towards Nato's budget. US defence strategists are being forced to limit their ambitions. They have to focus America's military strength less on the symbolic presence in Europe, and more on dealing with the real trouble-spots in the third world.

'Turmoil and struggle'

The problems caused by the economic decline of US capitalism are exacerbated by parallel political developments in a changing world. 'The post-war period is coming to an end', Kissinger has noted; 'Such periods of transition have always presented opportunities, but also involve turmoil and struggle' ('A memo to the next president', *Newsweek*, 19 September 1988). Bush will soon be suffering such new headaches as Mikhail Gorbachev's diplomatic and disarmament initiatives (which have limited Washington's ability to play the Cold War card), Japan's prominence in international affairs, and a growing hostility to US interference in Latin America and across the third world.

The Bush presidency will be a crucial period for American foreign policy, especially because of Reagan's failure to come to terms with the USA's waning influence. For all Reagan's boasts about 'making America great again', his administration had precious few overseas successes. The 1983 invasion of tiny Grenada by a vastly superior task force was about the best it could do. Reagan rattled his sabre for eight years, but stuck to attacking small,

isolated targets that could not retaliate. The fear of repeating the Vietnam experience, at a time when a weakened USA would be even less able to cope with it, held Washington back from embarking on more ambitious imperialist projects.

The gap between what Reagan promised and delivered in foreign affairs was always wide, and it grew as the years progressed. Take Central America. From the first, Reagan declared his determination to roll back 'communist subversion' there, which he claimed was being spread by Nicaragua. To this end, he sabotaged Nicaragua's economy, sent the CIA to mine its ports, turned large areas of neighbouring Honduras into a huge US military base, and gave millions of dollars (both over and under the counter) to the right-wing Contra terrorists. Yet the radical Sandinista government still stands in Nicaragua. Instead of disciplining other Central American states through his show of strength against Nicaragua, Reagan's failure only strengthened the impression of US impotence. Now Bush will have to contend with other problems in the region, as even Washington's pet dictators like Panama's General Manuel Noriega feel able to snub their US paymaster. The Noriega factor is particularly painful for Bush to talk about, as the new president was formerly a CIA chief who 'ran' the drug-smuggling dictator as a US agent.

Sham crusade

The Reagan years left even more of a mess in the Middle East. Reagan made a major issue out of his holy war against the 'mad mullahs' and other 'Arab terrorists'. But he had to beat a hasty retreat from Lebanon after the US marines were bombed

out of Beirut in 1984. Later, the Irangate revelations showed up his 'anti-terrorist' crusade as a sham.

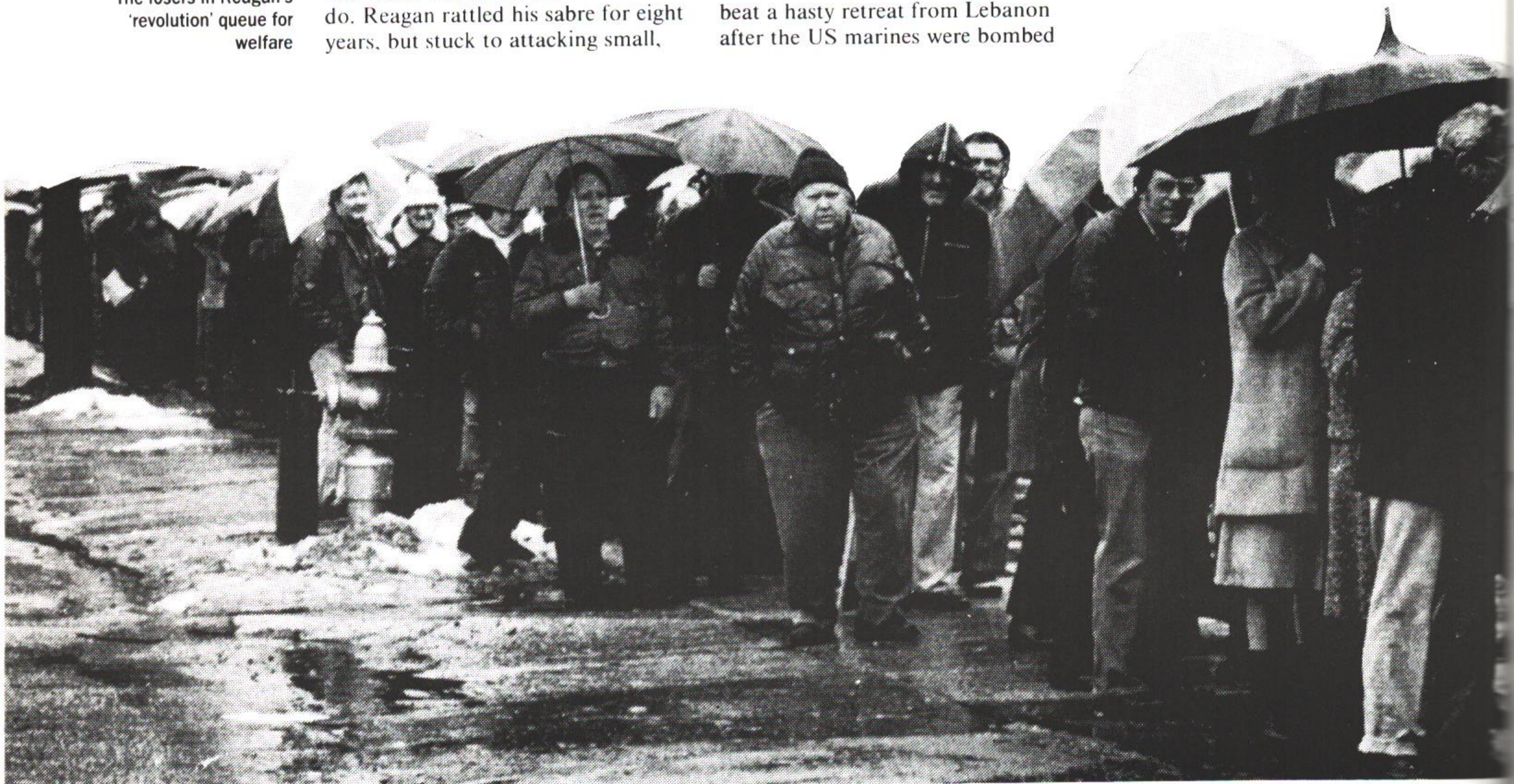
In East-West relations, Reagan did earn a certain distinction; he was the first US president for 30 years whom the world regarded as more senile and reactionary than his Soviet counterpart. Reagan tried to take credit for Gorbachev's extension of *glasnost* into the international arena, arguing that America's position of strength brought the Soviets to the negotiating table. In fact both Reagan and Gorbachev began discussing arms reductions from positions of weakness, each seeking to use the summits to distract attention from domestic problems. In the event, Gorbachev maintained the initiative in the propaganda contest and put Reagan on the defensive. Right wingers in the USA must have wondered if Reagan was the same man they elected, as they watched him embracing the leader of the erstwhile 'Evil Empire'.

Unhappy Alliance

Bush also inherits the leadership of a Western Alliance which is riven with internal tensions. Under Reagan, economic and political disputes between the Western powers, over everything from Nato to trade and the Gulf War, became more open as America's loss of grip became more obvious. Reagan relied on the political and military power of the USA to compensate for its economic problems, and to keep the Allies in line.

During his early years in office, Reagan used anti-Soviet rhetoric to emphasise the need for a united Western bloc under US leadership. He exploited the myth of the Soviet

The losers in Reagan's 'revolution' queue for welfare





The marines left Lebanon, and America's Middle East policy was left in a mess

threat to justify a massive defence build-up, which ensured that America remains the unquestioned military strongman of the imperialist alliance. When Gorbachev's diplomacy undermined this tactic, Reagan resorted to striking statesmanlike poses at US-Soviet summits, as another way of playing up his leadership of the Western world.

Where next?

A degree of stability between rival Western powers has been maintained, with the USA still on top of the pile. But Bush will find that position far from comfortable, as economic competition intensifies and brings far-reaching political repercussions. For example, western European states have taken advantage of the new climate of détente to expand trade links with Moscow, to the annoyance of the USA which wants to monopolise high-technology exports to the Soviet Union. Today's tensions within the Western Alliance are less obscured by East-West conflicts than in the past. When the world's stock markets crashed in 1987, all of the capitalist powers blamed each other; not even Reagan could pretend that Black Monday was the fault of communist saboteurs.

Reagan's failure to manage the various features of America's decline forms the backdrop to the current indecision among US foreign-policy makers. Bush has said little about how he intends to turn things around. In the election campaign he sometimes seemed to stick firmly to

the Reagan line (for example by repeatedly stating his support for the Contras), and sometimes not (as when vacillating over Star Wars). Bush's failure to present a coherent foreign policy was more than an electoral ploy to duck difficult questions. It reflected the uncertainty within ruling class circles as to where the USA should go next.

So far, Bush has not tried to come on strong with the kind of confrontational rhetoric that was Reagan's trademark. America's foreign-policy makers realise that the USA cannot continue to conduct its international affairs in the same way. Reagan's Rambo hype, depicting the USA as a trigger-happy world policeman which would take on all comers, is too risky and embarrassing when they can't guarantee to back it with effective action. Nevertheless, whatever the fears of the foreign policy establishment, the overriding trend in American foreign policy into the nineties will be towards *direct* interference in the third world—which means more, not less, US militarism. These matters have nothing to do with the personalities of presidents. They are about the objective needs of US imperialism.

Making it count

To its frustration, the USA finds more and more that market forces alone will not ensure the pre-eminence of American capitalism at home or abroad. Thus the state has to step in with political and military props to protect its position as the leading power. As the problems

facing American capitalism intensify, the new president will have no option but to adopt even more militaristic policies in the near future.

After Reagan's foreign policy setbacks, the American authorities have been discussing new ways of conducting themselves abroad. But the methods they propose do not discount the use of military force. Instead, they seek to make it more effective. Rather than playing make-believe war games against the Soviet Union in Europe, American strategists are directing their energies towards preparing for third world invasions. In *Discriminate Deterrence*, a major report published this year, a blue-ribbon bipartisan panel of former top foreign policy officials called for a shift in priority away from Europe and towards potential 'low intensity' (ie, third world) conflicts.

When the time comes for him to send the marines into the Middle East or wherever, Bush will be able to take advantage of Reagan's one unquestionable success. Reagan frequently turned foreign policy matters to his political advantage at home. He whipped up widespread chauvinist hostility to Libyans, Iranians, Latin Americans and others, to win public support for the American state and its military adventures. The fact that many Americans blamed the Ayatollah when a US warship massacred 300 Iranian civilians this year was a chilling testimony to Reagan's successful propaganda campaign.

Heroes are back

Thanks to Reagan, American politicians need not feel so threatened by the 'Vietnam Syndrome' at home. As Reagan said in his last State of the Union address: 'Of all our accomplishments, none can give us more satisfaction than that our young people are again proud to wear our country's uniform.' The public outcry against new vice-president Dan Quayle's draft-dodging past might have embarrassed Bush, but it also confirmed that Reagan had repaired much of the damage which Vietnam did to the heroic image of military service in the USA. Bush jumped upon this issue, and many others, to wrap himself in the flag and prove his patriotic support for the exercise of US power then and now.

President Bush has a mandate for nothing in particular, no master-plan for resurrecting America, and a mounting heap of problems. But, like every US president, he has enough ruling class instinct to understand the need for an assault on workers' living standards in times of trouble. And he has the deadliest arsenal in history to help impose himself on world affairs. As Reagan was fond of saying, 'You ain't seen nothing yet'.

US strategists are directing their energies towards preparing for third world invasions

Israel moves right (again)

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

Israel is set to be run by the most right-wing government in its history. In the protracted negotiations which followed the indecisive November election, both the Likud and Labour parties offered big concessions to the reactionary religious parties which now hold the balance of power. This reflects far more than the opportunism of the major parties; it symbolises the ever-rightward shift in Israeli politics. A year after the start of the *intifada* (Palestinian uprising) the Zionist state is further than ever from making concessions. The new coalition seems sure to lay into the Palestinians with renewed vigour.

can be no compromise between the existence of the Zionist state and the Palestinian demand for self-determination.

Israel's Labour Zionist founders created a state which can survive only by discriminating against Palestinians. Israel was a colonial settler state built on Palestinian soil, founded at the expense of the indigenous inhabitants. In 1948, Zionists carved Israel out of Palestine by forcing 750 000 Palestinians off their land. Ever since, the Zionist state has ruthlessly countered any expression of the Palestinians' will to be free.

Israel is inevitably a bastion of reactionary beliefs. A

state. The Labour Zionists created the Histadrut, a huge Israeli business conglomerate which included a 'trade union department'. Labour leaders organised violent pickets to prevent Jewish employers from hiring Palestinian labour, and to stop Jewish housewives buying Palestinian produce. Today the Histadrut still protects the privileges of Jewish workers against Palestinians.

The Six Day War of 1967, when Israel defeated its Arab neighbours and occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights, was a watershed in the contest between Labour and the revisionists. The occupation brought much of the Palestinian working class into the Israeli labour market. Israel's Likud-supporting private capitalists and small businessmen were able to prosper by exploiting cheap Arab labour. Israeli workers could climb upwards on the backs of Palestinians who did the menial jobs. At the same time, the incorporation of Palestinian workers into the economy brought Israel's enemies close to the heart of the state. These factors combined to harden reactionary attitudes, and contributed to the first Likud victory in 1977.

Right turn

The current crisis inside Israel has pushed it still further to the right. For most Israelis, the 12-month *intifada* has confirmed the need to crack down harder on the Palestinians. As Israel's economic problems mount up, much of the Histadrut business sector is threatened with collapse, and thousands of jobs could go. The response of many Israeli workers is to seek to protect their privileges at the Palestinians' expense.

Israel's secular right-wing movement has grown in recent years, around figures like General Rehavam Ze'evi, whose Moledet (Motherland) Party openly demands the expulsion of all Palestinians, and Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose ultra-chauvinist Kach Party was banned from the elections.

The most telling shift, however, is the rise of the religious Zionists. They oppose anything modern, insist on the subordination of women, and are determined to preserve the 'purity' of Israel. They have played a part in every Israeli government. But over the past decade, they have moved steadily rightwards, from an alliance with Labour towards Likud and beyond. This is significant because the religious Zionists' main base is not among orthodox Jews,

but within the predominantly Oriental Jewish working class. The National Religious Party, representing the old establishment, is being superseded by ethnically-based fundamentalist parties. Some religious Zionists also support the fanatically anti-Palestinian Kach.

Moral collapse

Secular Zionism is now well on the way towards becoming a political minority, as the religious Zionists gain influence and the major parties move on to their terrain. The growth of religious mysticism is a product of the crisis of the Zionist state. The longer Israel survives, the harder it becomes to justify its existence. The tragedy of the Holocaust has provided Zionists with their most powerful case. But as Israel lurches from one military adventure to the next, the old arguments about escaping from oppression begin to wear thin. Zionists are forced to plunder biblical myths for arguments to justify their own oppression of Palestine. The election shows Zionism in a state of moral collapse, and taking flight into mysticism.



Israel is in crisis, and mysticism is on the rise

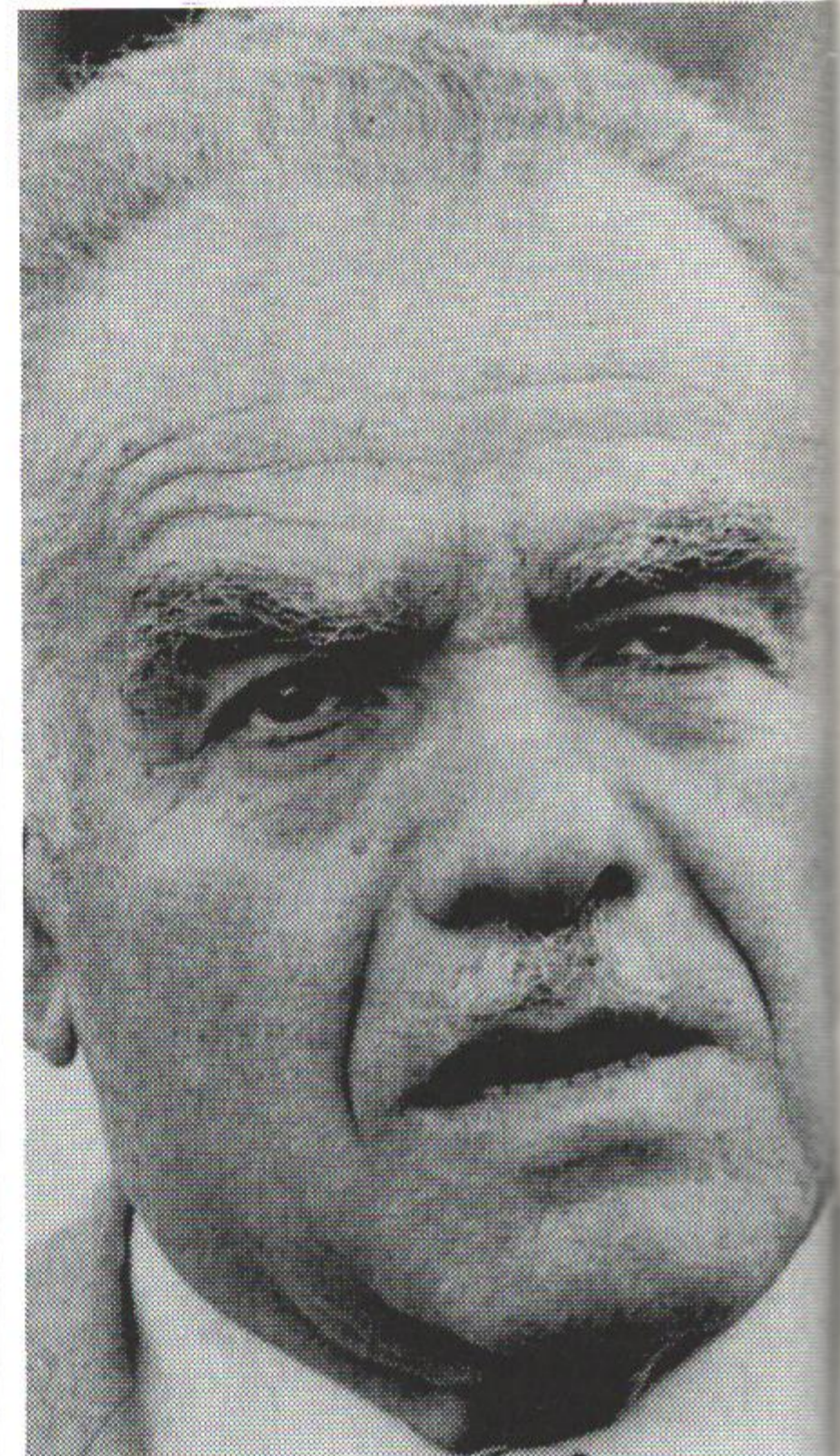
Just how far Israeli opinion has moved can be seen by putting current events in some historical perspective. Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader, used to be known as the spokesman for Zionism's far-right fringe. Now he represents the Zionist mainstream. Zionism has traditionally been split between two main strands. Labour controlled Israel from the foundation of the state in 1948 until the 1977 elections. The election of the first Likud government 11 years ago was hailed as an historic victory for 'revisionist Zionism'. The revisionists earned their name by going beyond the original Zionist programme, and claiming the East as well as the West Bank of the River Jordan for Israel.

Many critics of Israeli policy hope the Zionists can be persuaded to make concessions to the Palestinians. But a look at trends in Israeli politics confirms that there

society built on the oppression of another people breeds the most backward ideas. Ordinary Israelis are brutalised by living in a siege state, on a permanent war footing against the Arab world. Reaction is rife inside Israel. A recent poll showed that 49 per cent of Israelis want all Palestinians driven out of the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and scattered around the Middle East.

Through its 40-year history, Israel has had to take increasingly drastic measures to preserve its artificial existence. The dynamic in Israeli politics has thus moved to the right, from the early years of Labour rule, to the rise of Likud and the revisionists, and now further towards the extreme.

When Israel was founded, Labour began consolidating a reactionary bloc in Israeli society. Labour Zionism aimed to integrate a loyal Jewish working class into the



Yitzhak Shamir: from extreme to mainstream

Zionism has entered an intensely dangerous phase. A society that is prepared to adopt the most repressive customs and laws, and to turn back the clock on civilisation, will stop at nothing to secure its survival. It will give no quarter to its enemies. Those who look to Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians today are swimming against the tide of history.

Daniel Nassim

Acid House and the big E

IS THIS THE PHUTURE?

At the end of a year in which the media have warned anxious parents that the morals of their offspring are threatened by everything from lager and football to gays and all-night TV, the latest great press-inspired panic focuses on Acid House. Today, according to the *Sun/Star/Mirror* version of events, the young barbarians beating at the gates of British civilisation wear 'smiley' t-shirts, are stuffed with the designer drug, Ecstasy, and shuffle themselves silly to the sound of the Acid House beat in sweaty clubs. So what's it all about?

Acid clubs like Spectrum, Love, Trip and Kaleidoscope, mixing records from Phuture, Mr Lee and Jamie Principle, have rejuvenated London's boring nightlife. The music is nothing new. It derives from the electronic dance music of Chicago House, which has filled that city's black and gay clubs since 1984, and from the Continental Balearic beat of Ibiza. House has already influenced mainstream eighties music (Stock Aitken Waterman, Rick Astley, Pet Shop Boys). Now, ironically, the dire records produced by these people have helped House to find a mass British following among those looking for something, anything, that's different from the glossy 1992 Euro-pap epitomised by Kim Wilde, Sam Fox and Sabrina.

No tune

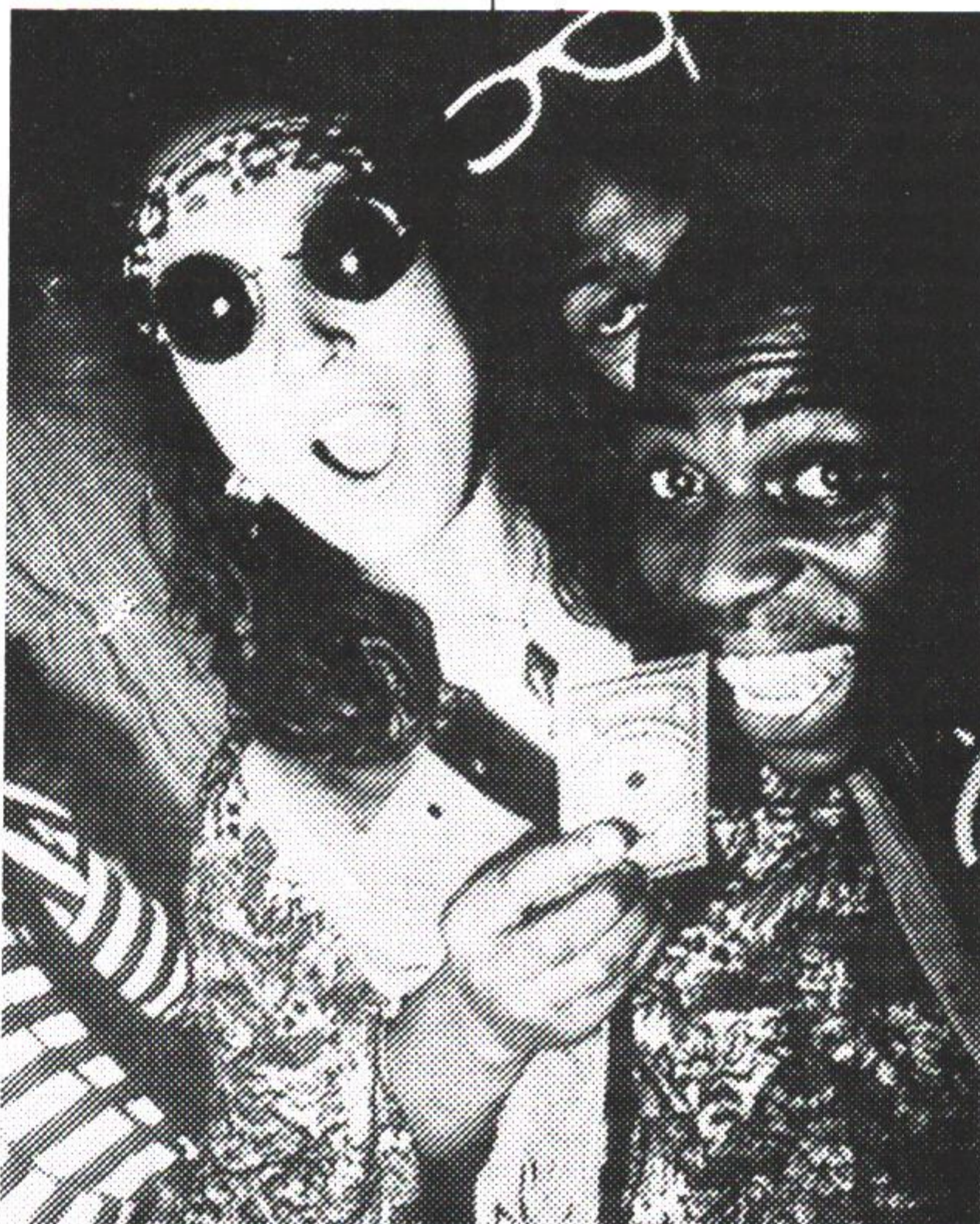
Acid is the latest House craze. To the untrained ear, little seems to separate Farley Jackmaster Funk's *Love Can't Turn Around*, the first House hit in Britain, from Mr Lee's *Pump Up Chicago*, the first Acid success. Both discard the song for soundtrack—drum machine, synths, no pretence of lyrics—and both are up-front dance music. Acid House, with its highly-synthesised, psychedelic, intentionally hypnotic and discordant sound, takes the genre still further away from anything that Alan Freeman would recognise as pop music (not 'arf').

The London clubs have responded to the advent of Acid by liberalising door policies: you have to queue but you won't be turned away for wearing the wrong jeans. Filling dancefloors past the limits allowed by the fire regulations makes big bucks and perpetuates the appeal of Acid. You queue for an hour, pay through the nose,

then walk into a wall of sound that makes Phil Spector's seem paper-thin. With little room to stand, the scene is a manic mixture of the terraces at Millwall and *Apocalypse Now*. The crowd is a sea of waving arms, contorted smiles and sweaty bodies, unlike anything else you'd find in a club, more like a Sex Pistols gig. Dancing is replaced by 'trance dance', a mindless shuffle that has more in common with the panic-pogoing of punk than with stylish back-flips at a soul all-nighter.

Acid is all about atmosphere; tense, decadent and

advert for watery lager can launch a creaky old 'classic' like the Hollies' *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother* to the top of the charts, the writing is on the wall. In 1978 it took 250 000 singles sales to make a British No 1; today it takes 78 000. So a craze that would once have been confined to the cult fringe can now become a badly-needed chartbuster. A testimony to Acid's popularity is its fall from grace with the music press pseuds, who only like what the punters don't. Others with an eye on the main chance have less hang-ups; the soul record



RIGHT: This month's 'enemy within'

irresistible. The beat is loud, a little faster than your heart, and impossible to ignore. There are no wallflowers at an Acid night. You either join the throng or leave. 'Even a straight person can go into one of these clubs and be overcome by the sheer feeling of it', says D Mob's Gary Haisman; 'Atmosphere can be very contagious, and you don't have to know how to do fancy footwork or how to spin three times to get into it'.

We Call It Aci-eed by D Mob was the first hit among many records trying to cash in on the craze. Everyone in 'the biz'—DJs, club-owners, music moguls, record importers—has an interest in selling House, because they are not selling much else. Popular music is in a slump that comes close to the dark days of 1975. When a TV

import shops have moved from black communities to the West End in search of a wider audience.

These days, however, the commercial interests of individual entrepreneurs can clash with the system's wider need to encourage a strictly conformist climate. Acid House has fallen foul of the drugs scare. Having first picked up on the craze in an attempt to win younger readers, the tabloid press quickly moved on to shock-horror stories about the music's association with Ecstasy (the big E in Acid-speak). The media have warned parents to beware of children wearing smiley symbols, blamed Ecstasy for routine punch-ups in suburban discos, and called for the Acid scene to be closed down. The hysteria soon

reached the epidemic proportions which hallucinating journalists claim the drug itself has achieved. Burtons dumped thousands of smiley t-shirts, *Top of the Pops* banned the A-word, the *Def II* TV magazine claimed that the IRA was flooding London with Ecstasy, and owner Richard Branson acceded to the *Sun's* demands by closing down Spectrum, the Acid night at Heaven, Europe's biggest gay club.

Drugs have always been part of the club scene, but the use of Ecstasy has been wildly exaggerated. At £15-30 a trip, its appeal is limited, and the amber nectar has yet to be replaced by the micro-dot. Yet in an age where spreading panic about drug abuse is one of officialdom's favourite ways of preying on public fears and justifying hardline policing, the media have blown up Acid and Ecstasy into a national emergency. The police have taken full advantage of the publicity, launching paramilitary raids and undercover operations against party-goers, and turning a Saturday night out in London into a decidedly bad trip.

'80s speakeasies

Some say the Acid cult recalls the sixties 'Summer of Love', while others see it as part of the eighties 'consumer boom'. But today's fly guys and fly girls, raised in an era of unemployment and reactionary politics, have little in common with the acid-taking flower children of the liberal sixties. Nor, despite the presence of a few yuppie hangers-on, are they well-heeled products of Thatcher's 'economic miracle'. They are the generation of the recession, and Acid is their latest bolt-hole in the desperate search for an escape from a repressive reality. Acid clubs and warehouses have more in common with the illegal speakeasies of the 'roaring twenties' than with Woodstock. The ragtime craze of the Prohibition era in America parallels the mindless Acid cult of the Thatcher years.

No doubt the Acid hype will be short-lived, but House music in general seems likely to survive. House is hardly innovative, but it has its share of pace-setters. Long after the smiley t-shirts are gone, Todd Terry's *Black Riot: A Day in the Life* will live on. The cross-fertilisation with Hip Hop by bands like the Jungle Brothers could at least give Kylie, Sabrina and the bloody awful Wee Pappa Girl Rappas a run for their money.

John Kay and
Emmanuel Oliver

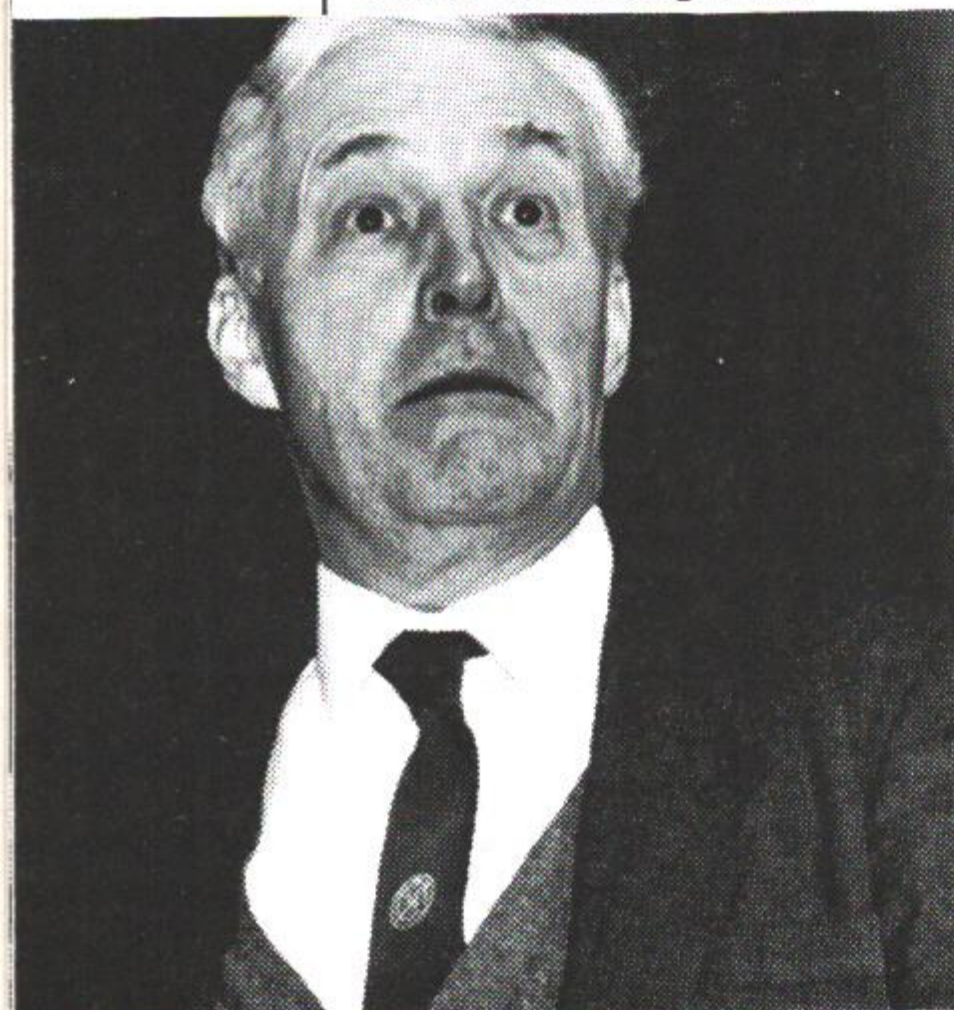
reviews

Diaries of a Labour minister

BIG BENN?

Tony Benn,
Office Without Power: Diaries 1968-1972,
Hutchinson, £16.95

'Wednesday 2nd August 1972. Today I had the idea that I would resign my privy counsellorship, my MA and all my honorary doctorates in order to strip myself of what the world had to offer but whether this would be a good idea, I don't know. It might be ridiculed. But "Wedgie Benn" and "the Rt Honourable Anthony Wedgewood Benn" and all that stuff is impossible. I have been Tony Benn in Bristol for a long time.'



David Rourke

This entry in the second volume of Tony Benn's diaries illustrates neatly several aspects of his character. Here we have his decency, his forthright eccentricity, his nonconformist moralism and, easily missed, his political acumen. It was plain Tony Benn who, in 1981, threw a brief scare into the Labour machine by almost winning the deputy leadership.

It is also a good example of the flashing light-bulb mode of his political thought—by Jove, that's a good idea, I'll have some of that! The diaries expose the absence of any more coherent political philosophy behind the judgement and actions of a man who, during these years (1968-72), was a leading figure in the labour movement. 'Wedgie' was a minister for technology, power and trade in Harold Wilson's second government, a member of the inner cabinet and, from 1971 to 1972, the chairman of the Labour Party.

The diaries are a daily record edited down to a third of their original size. They display a solid Labourist faith in the ability of parliament and the state, properly managed, to deliver the goods. But they give no sense of Benn measuring developments against any firm strategy or objective. This is strange in the light of the signal failure of any significant goods to arrive. The only thing he lifts his head to gaze upon is Number 10. He records what James Callaghan told him in 1971: 'I retain my view that in the long run, you will be the leader of the party', and comments: 'that, of course, suits his book nicely because "in the long run" means after he's given up and he still sees himself, I think, as replacing Harold. Frankly, I think his prospects are not very bright'. Callaghan became prime minister in 1976.

Pay your way

Benn comes over as a pragmatic technician who never begins to question, let alone challenge, the issues he has to confront. Backing the prices and incomes policy of 1969, he simply adopts the traditional employers' logic: '3.5 per cent is what the country can pay itself on the basis of production. If anyone goes above that then somebody

else has less, or we take it away in taxation, or it weakens our export competitiveness and we lose jobs, or we run into crisis and we have another freeze.' He first supports Barbara Castle's proposals for shackling the unions, *In Place of Strife*, but ends up behind Jim Callaghan and the union bosses, largely because he fears that it is 'too big a jump' and 'we wouldn't win assent for it'.

On Ireland there is a startlingly casual entry for 15 August 1969: 'Today we heard on the news that UK troops had been committed to maintain law and order in Derry.' Heard on the news? 'We had discussed this in cabinet before the end of July and agreed that troops could be used so long as the prime minister, the home secretary, the defence secretary and the foreign secretary kept in touch with each other.' That's alright then. In the fuller cabinet discussion four days later, which gets one of the longest entries, Benn professes 'full agreement' with Callaghan's plan to leave the troops in, disarm the 'B' Specials, transfer some power to Whitehall and reform Stormont.

What war?

The discussion confirms the cabinet's unthinking loyalty to the British state. Callaghan sets the tone: 'The Catholics were defending themselves with ferocity, as Jim put it, and it was really because of that fear that the situation had got out of control.' Denis Healey wants to crater the roads to the Republic. Dick Crossman wants to keep bipartisanship with the Tories. Harold Wilson wants (and got) a public statement that 'the Border is not an issue'. Cledwyn Hughes thinks it 'a pity that the Catholics and Protestants can't cooperate a bit more at the religious level'. At least Benn shows an inkling of the scale of the problem: 'I wonder whether people understood how serious the situation was—whether, in fact, this was not the beginning of 10 more years of Irish politics at Westminster which would be very unpleasant.' He doesn't say for whom.

These diaries provide a salutary lesson for any student of power in Britain, especially for those who see salvation in the return of a Labour government. Divided and directionless, this one degenerated into a bickering shambles by the election of June 1970. Wilson was increasingly paranoid about

ministerial plots against him, with increasing reason, according to Benn, and the whole crew was contemptuously buffeted around by civil servants, the City, the gnomes of Zurich, press barons like Cecil King and union barons like Vic Feather (who always kept Benn waiting). And they still expected to win comfortably. The first election result was a big shock: 'In a fraction of a second, one went from a pretty confident belief in victory to absolute certainty of defeat. It was quite a remarkable experience.'

Besides being a grim political lesson, the diaries are also entertaining. Alongside all the titbits about the people and the times, Benn can be funny, intentionally and otherwise, at the expense of himself and others. Guessing which combination applies can be quite diverting. 'Let me tell you something about the British character' he tells the Soviet deputy foreign minister in Moscow. 'Consider the clock, Big Ben. When you look at it, the hands appear to be stationary but inside there is a piece of technology, working away, slowly turning the hands and when you look again in half an hour's time you will find the hands have changed. I am the piece of machinery behind the big clock.' The Soviet minister 'laughed a great deal' at this.

Past it

The real joke is on the declining band who still promote Benn as a political force. Even when the wily old recruiting sergeant of the Labour left unbuckles and vividly recalls the disastrous consequences of supporting his party and its parliamentary road, some are still prepared to back him. They take at face value his explanation in the introduction: 'It was during the period 1968-1972 that my own radicalisation took shape.' We are entitled to query the extent of that radicalisation, given that he soon embarked on another stint in ministerial office with even less power and more disastrous consequences, in the Wilson/Callaghan governments of 1974-79. We should definitely query the state socialist and chauvinist tenor of his current policies, which seem to have lifted much and learned little from the past. If he has any bright ideas of making another comeback, he should beware. This time he will be ridiculed.

John Fitzpatrick

Eisenstein exhibition

A REVOLUTION PORTRAYED

Eisenstein (1898–1948): His Life and Work

Hayward Gallery, London:
29 September–11 December

Cornerhouse, Manchester:
29 December–5 February

In a short article in *Pravda* in 1923 called 'Vodka, the church and the cinema' Leon Trotsky exclaimed with confidence and delight that the cinema would replace both vodka and the church as a popular activity:

'The passion for the cinema is rooted in the desire for distraction and desire to see something new and improbable, to laugh and to cry....The cinema satisfies these demands in a very direct, visual, picturesque and vital way, requiring nothing from the audience; it does not even require them to be literate....It is the most democratic instrument of the theatre....Having no need of a clergy in brocade, etc, the cinema unfolds on the white screen spectacular images of greater grip than are provided by the richest church....The cinema amuses, educates, strikes the imagination by images, and liberates you from the need of crossing the church door.'

If you have seen Soviet films from this period you will understand why Trotsky made such claims for the new medium.

Soviet cinema was imbued with the heady confidence and creativity of a revolutionary society. It sought out the technical possibilities of film, to express the new world that was its subject matter. Nor did it lack for humour; witness Kuleshov's *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, (1924) or Sergei Eisenstein's own description of Mickey Mouse as 'my best friend'.

Eisenstein had been enchanted by the moving image since childhood when he had seen *400 Tricks of the Devil* on a visit to Paris with his parents. He came to film direction via engineering, drawing, design and theatre where he worked under Meyerhold,

the greatest star of the Soviet stage. Eisenstein transferred his allegiance because he saw that it was in the cinema that he could realise his ambition to make revolutionary art: 'What do the masses and the revolution want from the theatre? Only what comes from traditional forms of popular spectacle: circus, fairground attractions. The new theatre must be a sort of "montage of attractions" that is to say, of shock elements that strike and dazzle.' How much more could this be done in the cinema.

This is the story told in the first part of the exhibition. It should have been the prelude to a parade of great achievements, but the rest of the exhibition is a series of fragments. There is no criticism intended here; it is what happened. Eisenstein completed only a handful of films at increasingly extended intervals: *Strike* (1924), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *October* (1927), *The Old and the New* (1929) and *Alexander Nevsky* (1938). *Que Viva Mexico* (1930–31) and *Ivan the Terrible* (1944–46) remained unfinished, along with the countless scripts and treatments which were binned by the Stalinist bureaucrats or the Paramount moguls.

Eisenstein had the dubious honour of being feted in both California and Moscow, and being stopped from making movies in both places. In 1929 Stalin's censors viewed his *The*

General Line with suspicion because of its too-human view of the peasantry. It was adjusted to take account of the new policy on the forcible collectivisation of peasant farming, and came out as *The Old and the New*. The next time he completed a film was *Alexander Nevsky* in 1938. The story of a patriotic Russian prince who destroyed invading Teutonic knights met with Stalin's approval, at a time when the Soviet bureaucracy was looking fearfully over its shoulder at the rising power and ambition of Hitler's Germany.

On his return from the USA in the early thirties, Eisenstein learnt that his most deeply-felt project, *Que Viva Mexico*, had been bowdlerised and shelved. He had a nervous collapse. 'I am suffering from the blow of my Mexican experience. I have never worked on anything with such enthusiasm and what has happened to it is the greatest crime, even if I have to share the guilt. But there are things which have to be above personal feelings. Let's not talk about it any more.' The very few surviving inches of the Mexican film on show at the exhibition are a tantalising confirmation of how bitter the blow must have been.

Without a revolutionary society, revolutionary cinema was embarrassing, dangerous or both. Note the reaction of David Selznik, the head of Paramount, to whom Eisenstein was under contract, on reading his treatment of Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*:

'It was for me a memorable experience. It was so effective, it was positively torturing. When I had finished reading it, I

was so depressed that I wanted to reach for the bourbon bottle. As entertainment, I don't think it has one chance in a hundred. Let's try new things, by all means. But let's keep these gambles within the bounds of those that would be indulged by rational businessmen.'



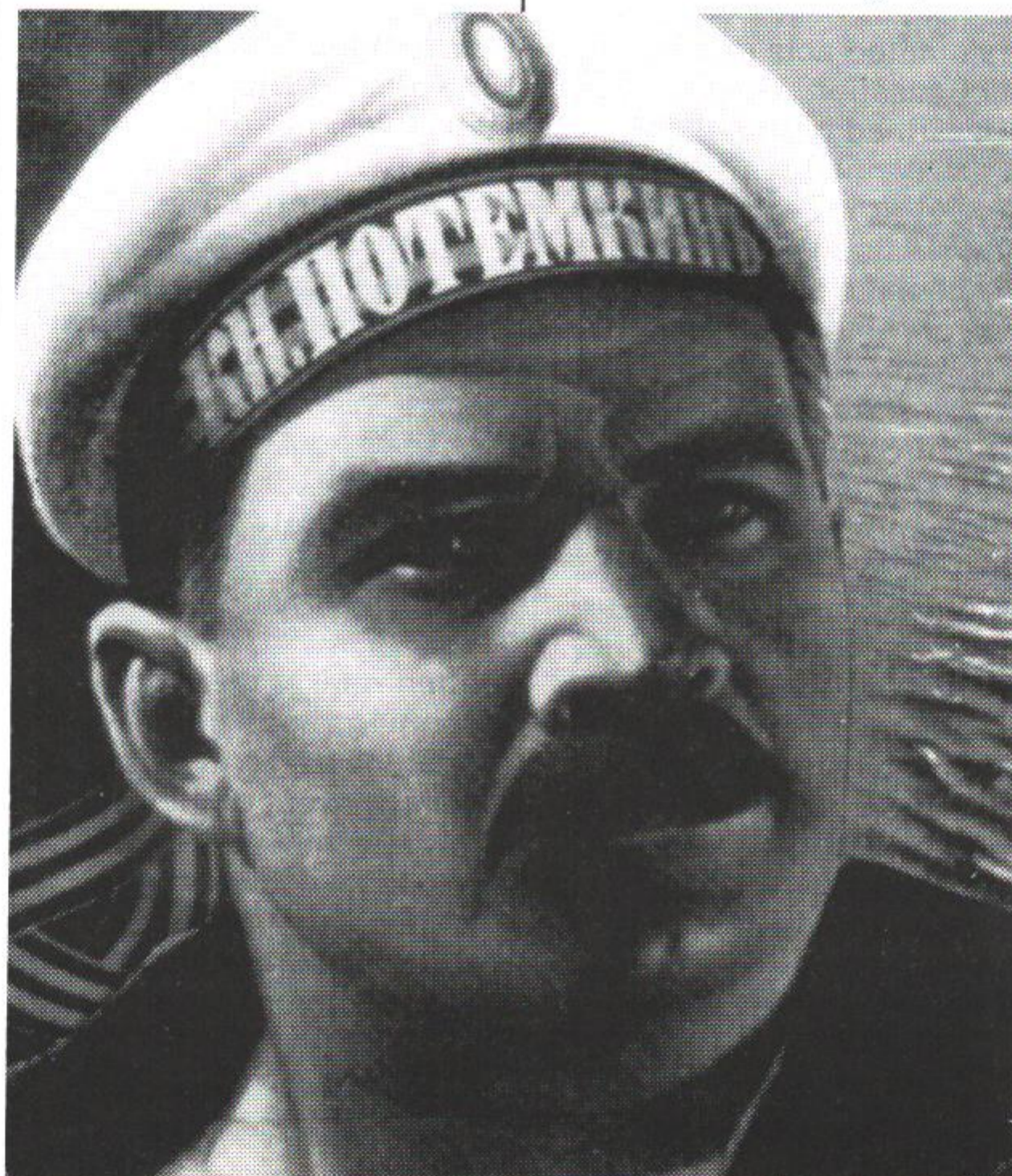
Stalin was more decisive. He told Eisenstein that the last parts of *Ivan the Terrible* could not be released because it was flawed. Stalin's perfectionism was not outraged by Eisenstein's non-naturalist use of colour (although he might have thought that the wrong filter was used). It was not an objection to the combined use of Japanese dramatic technique with Meyerhold's theory of body mechanics. Nor did Stalin object to the incursion of feudal Russia into proletarian culture. The flaw was simple. *Ivan the Terrible* did not show the necessity of killing thousands of people for the sheer glory of Mother Russia in the kindest possible light.

Not even *Battleship Potemkin* is flawless. If you see it you won't care. You will be thrilled by the superb editing, the juxtaposition of images, exact portraiture and revolutionary energy. You will know why Trotsky was so excited by the cinema, and I think you will appreciate this thought of Soviet director Sergei Mikhailovich:

'Imagine a cinema which is not dominated by the dollar—a cinema industry where one man's pocket is not filled at other people's expense; which is not to benefit the pockets of two or three people but the minds and hearts of 150m people.'

Alan Harding

Ivan wasn't Stalin's kind of movie



RIGHT:
Soviet poster
for *The
Battleship
Potemkin*

Ireland 20 years on

WHEN THE LAUGHING STOPPED

Michael Farrell (ed), *Twenty Years On*,

Brandon, £4.95

On 5 October 1968 a 400-strong civil rights march in Derry was brutally attacked by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. If it is possible to choose one date to mark the beginning of the longest phase of the struggle for Irish liberation, then this is as good as any and better than most.

Twenty Years On is a collection of nine articles by people who were involved in the events of that time. Many of the names are familiar: Gerry Adams, Geoffrey Bell, Michael Farrell, Bernadette (Devlin) McAliskey.

The essays are strongest at the level of anecdote. They help give today's generation of activists a good feel for the energy, enthusiasm, courage and commitment which motivated the challenge to

the Unionist regime. Just read Bernadette McAliskey's account of how, as an MP, she listened as Tory home secretary Reginald Maudling 'lied through his teeth' about the murders of Bloody Sunday in 1972; then she crossed the floor of the house of commons and thumped him between those same lying teeth.

The collection also gives a good idea of the political confusion which afflicted the civil rights struggle in the sixties. The demands were moderate and modest. No one called for a united Ireland. Most laughed when a tricolour was produced on an early march. The old IRA of Cathal Goulding and Tomas MacGiolla, which helped set up the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1967, opposed raising the national question as a diversion from its aim of democratising the Six-County state.

Despite the conservative influence of NICRA and the innocence of the youthful marchers, the violent official

reaction to the 5 October march brought the constitutional question to the fore. The British state made it clear that it could not implement the most basic democratic rights for the oppressed Catholic community. It was not long before nationalists drew the obvious conclusions, elevating an end to partition into a prominent demand, and the Provisional IRA into a popular guerrilla army.

Some of the contributors look back now with more nostalgia than determination, and appear to have forgotten the lessons that were learnt at such cost over the past 20 years. This will no doubt make them popular among

those contemporary British commentators who wish the liberation war could turn back into a non-violent protest movement. In Britain, we would do better to heed the advice given to English communists in the early twenties, with which Geoffrey Bell ends his piece here. They were complaining that British workers would regard support for anti-British revolts in Ireland as 'treason'. The leaders of the Communist International in Petrograd replied: 'It must be said that the faster English workers learn to commit such treason, the better it will be for the revolutionary movement.'

Phil Murphy

Civil rights march, 1969



The law and the Irish War

INHERENT INJUSTICE

Anthony Jennings (ed), *Justice Under Fire: The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland*, Pluto Press, £22.50

Barrister Anthony Jennings has done a valuable service in assembling, in *Justice Under Fire*, a detailed picture of the erosion of civil liberties in Northern Ireland. The academic and practising lawyers who contribute to this volume document the emergency powers of arrest and interrogation, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the supergrass system, the Diplock courts and the judicial sanction of shoot-to-kill and plastic bullets. Events overtook the book. In the week following publication the government announced the ban on broadcasting interviews with Sinn Fein, and then the abolition of the right to silence.

All the evidence collected here exposes the true character of British justice in Ireland as legalised repression. The contributors recount how Army and police executions have been excused and even praised in the no-jury Diplock courts, how trials have been calculated acts of political victimisation, how uniformed brutality has been sanctioned by law at every turn. The cumulative impression is of a systematic application of terror rather than any arbitrary series of legal abuses. As lecturer Paddy Hillyard puts it, 'no sooner has one abuse been stopped than another springs up in its place'. The facts suggest that the state itself, rather than the corruption of its individual agents, is the problem. Having made out a case which points in this direction, however, the authors balk at that suggestion.

Jennings says in the introduction that it is 'naive to greet abuses of personal

freedom with cant calls for the abolition of an illegal state'. But it is surely naive in the extreme to believe that anything short of the abolition of the sectarian state will protect the personal freedom of nationalists in Northern Ireland. Of course it is necessary to protest against any attack on civil liberties; but to be effective, each protest must be linked to the struggle against the colonial state itself. The problem lies not at the level of the law, or even at the level of the law-makers. As Hillyard observes:

'The majority of policies which affect the lives of people in Northern Ireland are not made in parliament, but among the higher echelons of the executive, police and Army.'

Unfortunately the contributors lack a clear understanding of what the 'rule of law' to which they often refer is all about. Jennings sees British practice as 'an insult to the very concept of the rule of law'. Even in an advanced capitalist society like Britain, legal rights only disguise social inequalities. But a colonial power such

as Britain cannot uphold the most formal legal neutrality in a police state like Northern Ireland. Professionals who are deeply involved in the legal system may have trouble seeing the wood for the trees (or the war for the law). But we should be clear that the law in the Six Counties is only another expression of the oppressive relationship between the British state and the nationalist community.

At the very start of the book, Jennings quotes General Frank Kitson's infamous remark that British law in Ireland is 'little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public'. That is not the ranting of a criminal psychopath; it is the truth. In policing Irish nationalists who do not consent to its rule, British law can only mean Gibaltars and bans. We should use the many priceless examples of legalised repression included in this book to expose the facts about the British state's role in Ireland, not to demand that the authorities play by the rules they pretend to uphold.

Pat Ford

Reading matters

CONFRONTATION

Abortion rights—the dangers of being defensive
Anne Burton

South Korea's take-off
Tony Kennedy

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IS THERE A SCOTTISH SOLUTION?

The working class and the assembly debate

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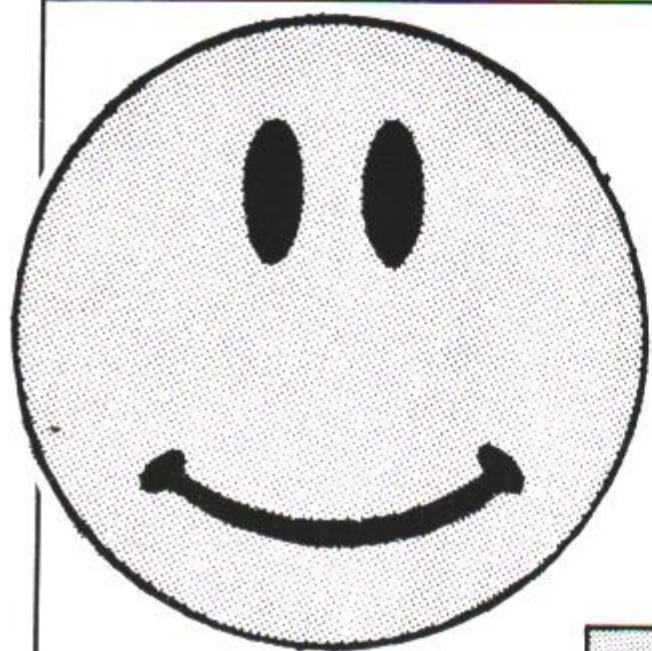
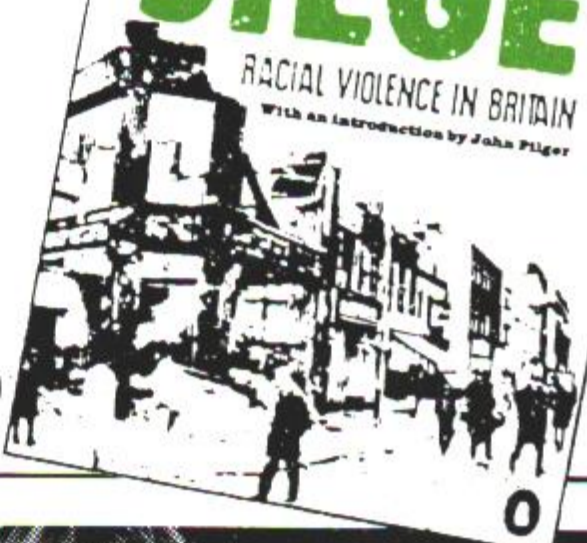
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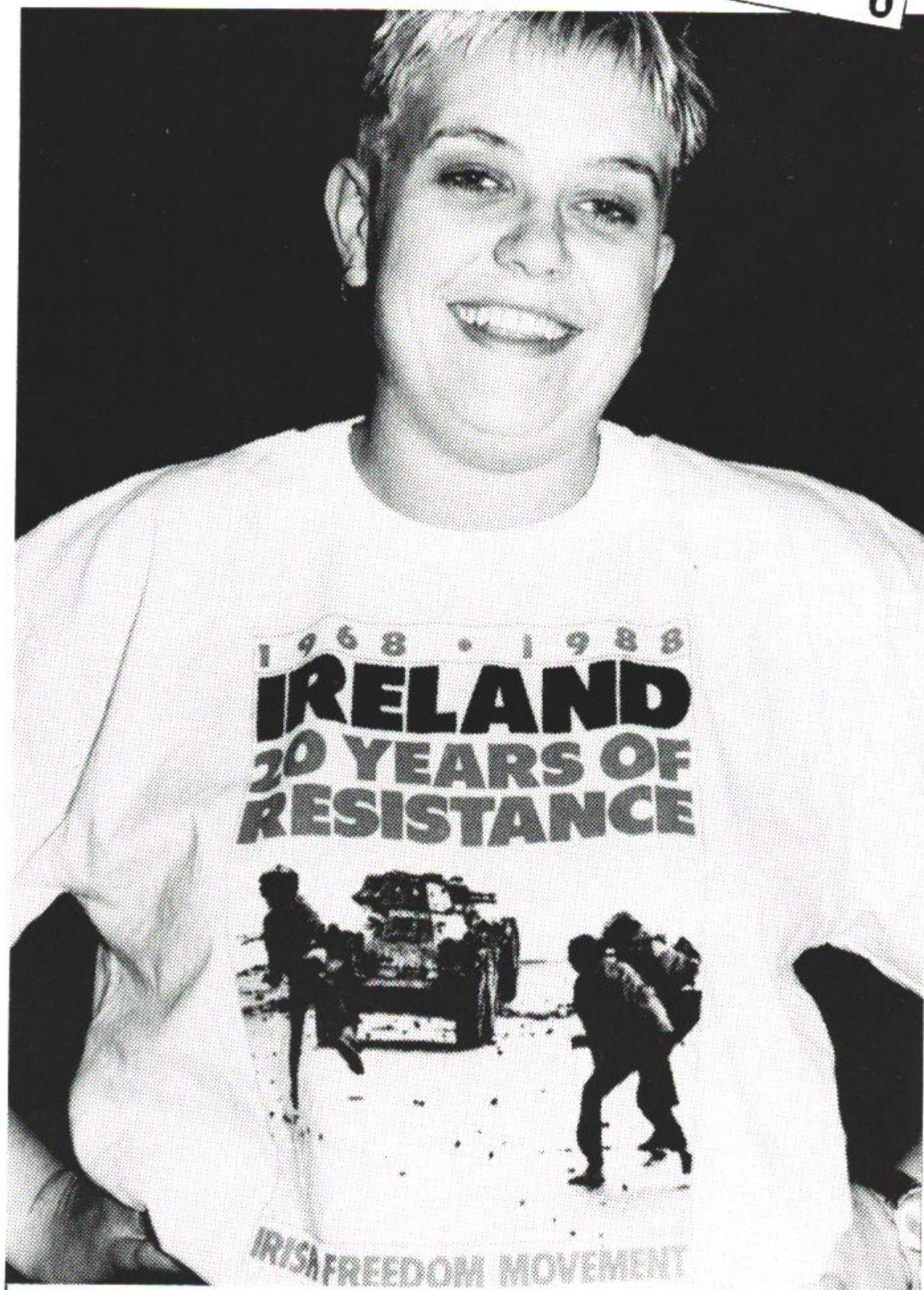
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The secret state

THEIR RIGHT TO SILENCE US

Another civil right—the right to silence—is being taken away by the Thatcher government. A suspect's right to remain silent under interrogation has traditionally been recognised as necessary to protect defendants from police pressure. Now the courts can interpret the exercise of that right as evidence that the accused has something to hide, and is, by implication, guilty. To stay silent or to 'confess' will amount to much the same thing.

The Tories have justified this anti-democratic measure on the grounds that anybody who is genuinely innocent ought to have nothing to hide from the police. To those familiar with the workings of the British legal system, the argument is absurd. Why should anybody arrested by an increasingly handcuff-happy police force want to write the prosecution case for them? The abolition of the right to silence means that a suspect will effectively be considered guilty until proven innocent; and he is meant to give anything which might get him off to the police, so that they can be well-prepared to discredit it in court.

While individuals are to lose the right to silence, the British state is acquiring new rights to silence its opponents. *The right to silence* others is fast becoming a cherished convention of the British constitution. Alongside the erosion of civil rights goes the strengthening of authoritarian control.

The government's recently published white paper, *Reform of Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act*, is symptomatic of contemporary trends. Home secretary Douglas Hurd has the audacity to call the proposed changes to the Official Secrets Act a 'charter of liberty'. Presumably he means the liberty of the state to prevent the publication of embarrassing information. The new proposals are designed to criminalise leaks by civil servants and their exposure in the media. For example, the recently published exposures of phone-tapping by the security forces

and government plans to destroy the system of welfare benefits would be illegal under the terms set out by the white paper.

Hurd's charter of liberty will give the British state extraordinary control over the flow of information. Journalists with information about government deceit and corruption will now think twice about publishing material that risks the attention of the courts. For good measure, Hurd has also decided to ban members of Sinn Fein from speaking on television or radio. The Irish opponents of British rule are on the silenced list and off the air. When detained by the British occupation forces, the same individuals are expected to talk themselves into jail.

It's important to situate these developments in a wider context, and not to focus narrowly on their legal implications. It is unclear whether the new repressive measures will mean major changes in the short term. For example, the existence of the formal right to silence has rarely stopped the authorities convicting those they want to get, with or without evidence. Similarly, British broadcasters have not exactly made a habit of inviting Sinn Fein to put its case during the past two decades. The important

immediate consequence of the new measures is more broadly political; they will reinforce the present repressive climate, and lend extra legitimacy to the state's monopoly on deciding who can speak and who must be silent.

For some time now, the Tory government has sought to limit opportunities for questioning and criticising its policies. It has called into question the right to express dissident views. The hysterical criticisms of the BBC made by the Thatchers and Tebbits are entirely rational. Their objective is to ensure that broadcasters become accountable only to the dictates of the state. The ferocious attack on the Thames TV programme about the SAS executions in Gibraltar, *Death on the Rock*, illustrates the limits of government tolerance today. Television is there to serve the authorities, not to ask embarrassing questions about death squads, spies or any other arm of the secret state.

The new controls on the flow of information aim to familiarise us with the ways of state censorship. Britain is fast becoming the most secretive and repressive nation in the Western world. The new censorship is different from the totalitarian

model used in, say, Hitler's Germany. Tory censorship is selective and targets the more politically sensitive areas of public discussion. Thus most people do not experience its effects directly, which makes it easier for the government to convince some that it is acting in the 'public interest'.

Moreover, the authorities can sustain the pretence of free speech, since it is mainly television and radio which are being subjected to direct government control. Newspapers can still criticise—so long as they don't publish damaging information. But the reactionary character of British newspapers, and the self-censorship which they have displayed over embarrassing incidents like the Gibraltar inquest, mean that the Tories have little to fear from the 'independent' press barons.

For now, the government has good cause to be pleased. The BBC has become a propaganda machine for the Tory Party. Interviews with Conservative politicians are uncontroversial public relations exercises for beleaguered ministers. Aggressive questioning of the prime minister is now unheard of. The Sir Alastair Burnett school of sycophancy is the new model for reputedly robust interviewers like Sir Robin Day. Media venom and spitefulness are reserved for the government's opponents.

In cracking down like this, the capitalist state is not betraying its principles; it is doing what it knows best, and we should expect nothing else from this repressive institution. The tragedy is that the British opposition is meekly allowing it to walk all over them. We do not run TV or radio stations. We do not have the resources to match the Murdochs and Maxwells of this world. But we can at least enter the battle, and confront the arguments used to justify repression and intolerance. Those who are prepared to stand up to reaction can never be silenced. Struggling to be heard has never been more important.

RIGHT:
Tory Tom King
gags Sinn Fein

