Contributions

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A. SIVANANDAN

All that melts into air is solid: the hokum of New Times*

New Times is a fraud, a counterfeit, a humbug. It palms off Thatcherite values as socialist, shores up the Thatcherite market with the pretended politics of choice, fits out the Thatcherite individual with progressive consumerism, makes consumption itself the stuff of politics. New Times is a mirror image of Thatcherism passing for socialism. New Times is Thatcherism in drag.**

Inevitably – since New Times' gestation in *Marxism Today* was marked by the latter's preoccupation with finding an electoral riposte to Thatcherism, in oppositional politics, taking a cue from Tory successes at the polls to formulate a programme for an anti-Thatcherite coalition of forces.[1] What was it about Thatcherism that appealed to such vast cross-sections of people? How could it be turned to Labour's benefit? How should Labour itself change in terms of principles, policies, pacts, in order to wrest the electorate from Thatcher?

There was an appreciation in these questions of the massive changes that Thatcherism was bringing about in society while Labour was still sulking in a troglodyte past, but, as yet, there was no

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* Dedicated to those friends with whom, out of a different loyalty, I must now openly disagree.

** I am interested here in the 'economic, social and political shape' of New Times as presented in the special issue of *Marxism Today* (October 1988) and elsewhere, not in the eclectic manifesto for New Times as presented to the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

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understanding of the basis on which the Tories were able to carry these changes through. The answers owed not a little, therefore, to the Tory vision of change and tended to appropriate those areas in which the Tories were operating successfully (markets, share-ownership, council housing) to see how they could be re-cast in a Leftish mode or mould. There was no understanding, that is, that the 'ideological hegemony' that *Marxism Today* was so quick to construct for Thatcherism was based on the Tories' instinctive and profound understanding of the sea-change in capitalist society issuing from the technological revolution in production, and of the consequent need to give people direction, guidance, ballast, 'assure them of certain certainties'. Labour was adrift, rudder-less, its moorings in the working class unhinged by the dissipation of the class itself, and hanging on to the driftwood of trade unionism, while Thatcherism charted an assured and defiant course through troublesome seas. 'Authoritarian populism' only explained why Thatcherism had found a hold among the people, but not why people were prepared to put up with it.

There was no attempt on the part of *Marxism Today* to rethink society from the ground up in terms of marxist analysis – no attempt to rethink marxism itself on the basis of the new liberatory revolution in the production process. But, then, they had already arrived at a re-interpretation of marxism down a different route: through a disillusion with Soviet Communism and a leaning towards its revised mode in Eurocommunism. The first acknowledged the failure of 'actually existing socialism' to enlarge bourgeois democracy and enrich individual freedom, and the second subscribed to the view that the only way the working class was ever going to capture power in advanced capitalist societies was through bourgeois electoral politics and not through violent revolution. The split within the CPGB, with the 'old guard' taking the *Morning Star* (the party newspaper) and the new appropriating *Marxism Today* (the party journal), signalled the change in the journal's direction towards a politics of the possible. But as yet it did not know quite what it stood for or where it was going. What was its philosophy? How did it see the world? Throwing out revolution and class-war empirically was all very well, but where was the ideological under-pinning for it? What was the journal's constituency? To whom was it speaking if no longer to the working class? Where would it locate itself, find domicile?

In the beginning . . .

The philosophy came from the theoretical practitioners whose own disillusion with communism and marxist orthodoxy sent them back to re-examining the original texts in search of the true marxism,

re-interpreting them for our times and setting up schools of thought, in the process, to interpret the re-interpretations and to announce, through sundry disciplines and theories (philosophy, linguistics, semiotics, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, deconstruction . . .), the consummate and conclusive finding that reality itself was a matter of interpretation, construction, presentation – of words, ideas, images. 'Philosophers', they might have said with a nod to Marx, 'have interpreted the world; our task is to change the interpretation.' And in an information society where 'the word is . . . as "material" as the world'[2] and a consumer society where the mode of presentation is all, their claims found a ready home in a 'with-it' *Marxism Today*.

The ideology, along with the constituency, came from another strand of intellectual marxism* which provided theoretical confirmation that economic determinism and class reductionism were non-marxist and things of the past. The economic base did not determine, even 'in the last instance', the ideological and political superstructure. They were all more or less 'autonomous instances', 'articulating' with each other, influencing and being influenced, in all sorts of 'conjunctures'. Politics, therefore, was a matter of positioning in and through and vis à vis these conjunctures – and culture was the mode in which such positioning was expressed. Hence there was a cultural politics (as distinct from a political culture) or, rather, all sorts of cultural politics which, having challenged all sorts of 'social blocs' in civil society, would at some auspicious moment of time come together in a network of alliances heralding the transition from capitalism (to what they are not sure). Accordingly, the agent of change in the contemporary world was not the working class – which, in any case, had ceased (if it ever was) to be a class for itself and was therefore incapable of revolution – but the new social forces such as women, blacks, gays (and, soon, greens) who were themselves informed and impelled by the politics of the person. Later, the 'new marxists' would try to usher in a dimension of class through the backdoor of 'the politics of difference' but, for the nonce, it was the new social forces, irrespective of their differing class personae, which were the carriers of the new socialism or, rather, the trackers of the transition.

These, at any rate, were the building blocks of new marxist arguments, refine them how they would. How they put them together, from time to time, as required by various 'conjunctures', would of course differ from the way that I have played around with them here. But that is the great strength of this sort of autonomy: it allows you to be ad hoc, opportune, open-ended, pluralist. The only thing you have

* I am not interested here in distinguishing the various strands of marxism or in periodising their appearance(s).

got to be sure of is your identity – and there was a politics around that too, autonomous of course, that you needed to construct, but to that anon.

As for domicile, location, *Marxism Today* was to find these in the thinking of a Left intelligentsia eviscerated of class and the counsels of a Labour Party thrashing around for a showing at the polls. In France and Italy the Eurocommunists were parties in their own electoral rights, but in Britain *Marxism Today*, having broken with the 'stalinists', had no comparable base – nor, presumably, having broken so violently with the theory and practice of the vanguard party, could it countenance one. Labour, besides, was the established party of socialism. The point was to influence it, infiltrate it or, more accurately, 'hegemonise' it. (Old marxists infiltrate, new marxists 'hegemonise'.)*

Thus, New Times was born in the throes of political pragmatism under the sign of cultural theory bereft of economic reasoning. And the last proved disabling of the whole project. For, in throwing out the tool of economic analysis along with the ideological baggage of economism, the new marxists were unable to bring to New Times the understanding that all the seismic changes in society and culture that they were so adroitly and bravely describing stemmed from (and in turn contributed to) the revolutionary changes at the economic level, at the level of the productive forces, brought about by the new technology. Here was an ongoing revolution, the size, scope, comprehensiveness of which had never been known in the history of humankind and it was passing the Left by – till Thatcherism inadvertently brought it to their notice. And even then what the Left understood was the scientific and technical magnitude of its achievements summed up in Sir Ieuan Maddock's phrase that electronics had replaced the brain as once steam had replaced muscle. But its sociological size – that Capital had been freed from Labour – had escaped the Left altogether. The Labour Party was too sunk in its own stupor of trade unionism to see that the working class was decomposing under the impact of the new forces of production and that old forms of Labour organisation were becoming frangible.

The old marxists were, similarly, too wedded to orthodoxy to see that the old relations of production were disintegrating and new ones being born in their place. They had for so long been fighting for the emancipation of Labour from Capital that they could not bear to think that it was Capital that was now being emancipated from Labour.[3] So ensconced had they been in their own beliefs and dogmas and sentiments that they were fearful of venturing out into a changing world and taking it by the scruff of its neck.

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* If the Militants were the moles, *Marxism Today* were the cuckoos.

And the new marxists, who had daringly abandoned all such fears and inhibitions and acknowledged and celebrated the cultural and social changes that were going on, were unable, because of their premature apostasy, to connect them concretely with the emancipation of Capital from Labour or root that emancipation in the economic basis of production. Instead, they held up the changes to justify their apostasy.

Determinacies

So that when *Marxism Today* finally came to acknowledge the importance of economic change for an understanding of New Times (in the special issue of October 1988), the economic was still given only a walk-on part on to the 'post-Fordist' stage. 'Coming to terms with New Times', wrote Martin Jacques in the editorial, 'means first understanding what New Times are, what they mean . . . At the heart of New Times is the shift from the old mass-production Fordist economy to a new, more flexible, post-Fordist order based on computers, information technology and robotics.'[4] But there the concern with the economic ceases – for 'New Times are about much more than economic change. Our world is being remade.' Yes, but how? 'Mass production, the mass consumer, the big city, big-brother state, the sprawling housing estate, and the nation-state are in decline: flexibility, diversity, differentiation, mobility, communication, decentralisation and internationalisation are in the ascendant.' That's fine as a description of what's going on, but where's the analysis? 'In the process our own identities, our sense of self, our own subjectivities are being transformed. We are in transition to a new era.'

Of course 'we are in transition to a new era'. Of course things are changing radically. And of course these changes are not just at the economic level. But the changes in society, culture, politics cannot just be juxtaposed with the economic; the economic cannot just be 'read off' from them any more than they could be read off from the economic. They derive from the economic – still.

Or take Stuart Hall's listings in his 'Brave New World' article[5] – one on the economy and the other on the 'broader social and cultural changes'. The first itemises 'a shift to the new "information technologies", more flexible decentralized forms of labour process and work organization; decline of the old manufacturing base and the growth of the "sunrise" computer-based industries; the hiving-off or contracting-out of functions and services; a greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation, on marketing, packaging and design, on the "targeting" of consumers by lifestyle, taste and culture rather than by the Registrar General's categories of social class; a decline in the proportion of the skilled, male, manual working class, the rise of the

service and white-collar classes and the "feminisation" of the workforce; an economy dominated by the multinationals, with their new international division of labour and their greater autonomy from nation-state control; the "globalisation" of the new financial markets, linked by the communications revolution; and new forms of the spatial organization of social processes'. Brilliant, clear, to the point, exhaustive: all the elements of the 'post-Fordist' economy are there.

The 'social and cultural' list, general here, but worked out in the course of the article, lists 'greater fragmentation and pluralism, the weakening of older collective solidarities and block identities and the emergence of new identities associated with greater work flexibility, the maximisation of individual choices through personal consumption'.

There is, of course, no causal connection here between the two, the economic and the social-cultural. They are 'associated', they may even be seen to be walking hand in hand, but the one does not follow from the other, influence the other, make the other possible. What is it that makes for 'greater fragmentation and pluralism' (List 2) unless it is the fragmentation of the working class and hence the obfuscation of class in general? And how has that been brought about if not by 'a shift to the new "information technologies"; more flexible, decentralized forms of labour process and work organisation; decline of the old manufacturing base and the growth of the "sunrise" computer-based industries; the hiving-off or contracting-out of functions and services' and a 'decline in the proportion of the skilled, male, manual working class, the rise of service and white-collar classes and the "feminisation" of the workforce' (List 1) – changes, that is, in the mode and relations of production? (Let's keep the old terminology for now because the new is yet to be born with the new post-Fordist 'system'.)

How have 'the older collective solidarities and block identities weakened' (List 2) except through' the decline of the old manufacturing base', the rise of 'more flexible, decentralized forms of labour process and work organization', and 'the hiving-off or contracting-out of functions and services' (List 1)? And how have these come about if not through 'the shift to the new technologies' which enables Capital not only to do away with mass production lines and the mass employment of workers on the same factory floor but to move the workplace itself around, from one cheap labour pool to another, as required by profit and the market. (Note how, in his refusal to be 'determinist', Hall leaves out of his reckoning the massed up workers of the Third World, on whose greater immiseration and exploitation the brave new western world of post-Fordism is being erected, and cannot be persuaded back to them even when the item on 'multinationals with their new international division of labour' resonates with their presence.)

Similarly, 'the emergence of new identities' (List 2) cannot just be 'associated with greater work flexibility' (List 1); it is largely made possible by greater work flexibility which in turn is made possible by the new technology. And 'the maximisation of individual choices through personal consumption' (List 2) comes also from retailers' ability to lay 'a greater emphasis on choice and product differentiation, on marketing, on packaging and design, on the targeting of consumers by lifestyle, taste and culture . . .' (List 1) based on computerised information and supply systems which allow them to gear supplies to taste, demand and time.*

And what is this 'spatial organization of social processes' Hall is talking about which exists apart from the spatial organisation of economic processes?

All the significant social and cultural changes that we are passing through today are similarly predicated on economic changes.[6] To try to understand New Times without understanding that fundamental relationship is like trying to comprehend nineteenth-century society and culture without understanding the industrial revolution that gave rise to it. We are living through similar times where everything is being shaped, influenced, conditioned by the revolution in the productive forces.** Economic determinacy might be said to have flagged with the economic decline and 'class failure' of inndustrial capitalism in its last decades and to have been discredited by the success of 'the cultural revolutions of the 60s, 1968 itself . . .' and the 'theoretical revolutions of the 60s and 70s – semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism . . .' (which Stuart Hall assures us were, along with feminism and psychoanalysis, 'key episodes in the passage to "New Times" ').*** And all of this may have confirmed the theoretics that the economic was one of several ('autonomous', 'articulating') 'instances'. But today, when Capital has come out of its crisis, refurbished, regenerated and radicalised by the revolution in the productive forces – and Capital is nothing if not an economic project – how can we overlook the crucial role of the economic without offering hostages to Capital? Even as individuals, how can we here, now, caught on the crest of that revolution, impacted by it on all sides, believe that the

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* Robin Murray says as much in his article 'Life after Henry (Ford)' in the same issue, but, judging from the attention he gets from his fellow contributors, he must have been inserted in the interests of pluralism.

** 'The entire industrial revolution enhanced productivity by a factor of about 100 . . .' but 'the micro-electronic revolution has already enhanced productivity in information-based technology by a factor of more than a million – and the end isn't in sight yet'.[7]

*** Stuart Hall must have found it difficult to include the black struggles of this period in his 'key episodes' (despite their being the precursors and inspirers of the feminist movement) because they combined the struggles of a people and a class: rooted the cultural and the political in the economic.

economic shapes nothing? Even the question of personal transformation, the 'reforging of ourselves as individuals', and our preoccupation with our identities stem from the upheavals occasioned by the economic revolution of our times. Yes, we are being re-made, but if we overlook the occasion for that re-making, we overlook those myriad others who are being un-made by the self-same revolution.

The economic determines 'in the last instance' still – but shorn of its class determinacy. For the very revolution that restores the base/superstructure relationship to something like its former importance is also that which does away with the working class in its pristine form, shape, size, homogeneity of experience, unity of will, clout, and emancipates Capital from Labour. And the more Labour tries to hold Capital in thrall by withholding its labour, the more Capital moves towards its emancipation through yet more information technology, yet more labour-less productive regimes, yet more recourse to the captive labour force in the periphery. The relations of production, that is, have changed with the changes in the level of the productive forces: information (in the sense of data fed to computers, robots, etc.) increasingly replaces labour as a factor of production; Capital no longer needs living labour as before, not in the same numbers, in the same place, at the same time; Labour can no longer organise on that basis, it has lost its economic clout and, with it, whatever political clout it had, whatever determinacy it could exercise in the political realm. What is crucial here is not that the productive forces have altered the balance of dependency between Capital and Labour, but that they have altered it so radically as to allow Capital to free itself of Labour and yet hold Labour captive.

And that is what moves the terrain of battle from the economic to the political, from the base to the superstructure and appears to throw 'the language of politics more over to the cultural side'[8] and render the subjective important. However, the battle itself is neither about culture nor about the subject, but – still – about the ownership and control of the means of production and the exploitation of workers. Only now, the centre of gravity of that exploitation has shifted from the centre to the periphery and, within the centre, to peripheral workers, home workers, ad hoc workers, casual, temporary, part-time workers – all the bits and pieces of the working class that the new productive forces have dispersed and dissipated of their strength. Exploitation has not gone out with class determinacy or inequality and poverty with the working class as we know it. The battle is the same as before – only, it needs to be taken on at the political/ideological level and not at the economic/political level.

Thatcher's real lessons

Mrs Thatcher saw the time and seized it. That was her genius. The productive forces were pregnant with a new economic and social order. Labour and labourism blocked its passage. It required Mrs Thatcher to take a knife to the unions before the new order could be born. And with that deft bit of political surgery, she determined what course the new economic order should take, whose interests it should serve. And she sold it to the people in a clear, simplistic ideology that spoke to their self-interest and their self-esteem in a time of deep uncertainty and pother – with the help of a press which was itself dying for change and knew it could get it only from her. The time brought forth the woman. And she cast the time in her image.

The new marxists, in addressing Thatcherism as an electoral and ideological phenomenon, failed to give sufficient importance to the economic and social order it was constructing. Themselves predisposed towards a politics of position, their aim was rather to align the Labour Party with the new class of skilled and semi-skilled workers who were replacing the old Fordist mass worker, the expanding clerical and office workforce of the service sector which was replacing industry as the locus of employment and the new social forces that were increasingly replacing class constituencies.[9] These were the people who could swing the electorate Labour's way. What were their demands and aspirations? How should Labour refashion itself to meet the claims of the new share-owning working class? How could Labour be made to relate to the new social constituencies, such as women, blacks, greens, etc., which had no 'clear-cut class identity'? 'The whole point of Thatcherism as a form of politics has been to construct a new social bloc . . .' Could Labour do the same? Could it abandon its traditional class perspective and accept that a social bloc has to be 'constructed out of groups which are very different in terms of their material interests and social positions'. And could these 'diverse identities' be welded together into a 'collective will'? Thatcherism in its second term 'did not make a single move which was not also carefully calculated in terms of this hegemonic strategy. It stepped up the pace of privatisation. But it took care, at every step, to harness new social constituencies to it, to "construct" an image of the new share-owning working class, and to expand the bloc, symbolically, around the image of choice.' Could Labour relate to the fact that 'increasingly, the electorate is thinking politically, not in terms of *policies*, but of *images* – not that policies don't matter but that they don't 'capture people's imaginations unless constructed into an *image* with which they can identify'. If Labour was going to become the majority party in any deep sense, it had to find a strategy for modernisation and an image of modernity; instead of rallying and

mobilising the past, it had to find a 'convincing alternative scenario to Thatcherism for the future'.

There is an outline of a programme here for Labour to win over the constituencies on which 'Thatcherism's electoral hegemony continues to rest', but it is not one that speaks to the needs of that third of the nation that Thatcherism has dispossessed, which after all is socialism's first constituency. And (hence?) there is no reference to the ideological shift that Labour would have to make to accommodate these new constituencies, though ideology, we are told, is 'critical' to the construction of new social blocs. What, in any case, is this (new) ideology that could relate to the interests of the new constituencies and the underclasses – and are the new social forces a classless monolith? Or (alternatively?)* is there a 'hegemonic strategy' that needs to be builded around images that would 'expand the bloc symbolically' – for, 'elections are won or lost not on so-called real majorities but on (equally real) symbolic majorities'. These images, would they be the same sort of images around 'choice', around a new share-owning working class, etc. that Mrs Thatcher constructs? And how shall these speak to the dispossessed, how capture their political imagination? Or are there alternative images/policies that Labour can construct which can still keep it socialist at heart?

How, again, should Labour relate to the race, sex, gender-based social movements? On what terms? What is so profoundly socialist about these new social forces is that they raise issues about the quality of life (human worth, dignity, genuine equality, the enlargement of the self) by virtue of their experiences as women, blacks, gays, etc., which the working-class movement has not just lost sight of but turned its face against. But if these issues are fought in terms of the specific, particularistic oppressions of women qua women, blacks qua blacks and so on, without being opened out to and informed by other oppressions, they lose their claim to that universality which was their particular contribution to socialism in the first place. And they, further, fall into the error of a new sectarianism – as between blacks versus women, Asians versus Afro-Caribbeans, gays versus blacks and so on – which pulls rank, this time, not on the basis of belief but of suffering: not who is the true believer but who is the most oppressed. Which then sets out the basis on which demands are made for more equal opportunities for greater and more compound oppressions in terms of quotas and proportions and that type of numbers game. That is not to say that there should be no attempt to redress the balance of racial, sexual and gender discrimination, but that these solutions deal not with the politics of discrimination but its arithmetic – giving more weightage to women here and blacks there and so rearranging the

* The writings of the new marxists are so non-committal as to make definition difficult.

distribution of inequality as not to alter the structures of inequality themselves. In the process, these new social movements tend to replace one sort of sectarianism with another and one sort of sectional interest for another when their native thrust and genius was against sectarianism and for a plurality of interests.

Equally, what is inherently socialist about the issue-based new social forces such as the Green and Peace movements is the larger questions they raise about the quality of the environs we live in or whether we live at all. But to the extent that the Green Movement is concerned more, say, with the environmental pollution of the western world than with the ecological devastation of the Third World caused by western capitalism, its focus becomes blinkered and narrow and its programmes partial and susceptible to capitalist overtures. Or, to come at it from the opposite direction, it is precisely because the Green Movement overlooks the centrality of capitalism and imperialism in the despoliation of the planet that it overlooks also the narrowness of its campaigns (the US Greens attack 'addictive consumerism' while ignoring the inability of whole sections of the population to consume at all) and the limitation of its vision (the German Greens boast that their movement is 'neither to the right nor to the left but in front').[10] And for that self-same reason it fails, too, in its claim to connect the global and local, the collective and the individual – and therein fails its own trust and promise.

So, too, does a Peace Movement which does not, for instance, see that to preserve the world from a holocaustal nuclear war also involves preserving the Third World from a thousand internecine wars sponsored and financed by the arms industry of the West.

There are simple, basic connections to be made here within and between the various movements. They are connections which are organic to socialism, but they can only develop if the new social movements open themselves out to the larger social issues and to each other; move out in a centrifugal fashion without losing sight of the centripetal – move out, that is, from their particularities to the whole and back again to themselves, enriching both, in an unending traffic of ideas, struggles and commitments; weave the specific and the universal into a holistic pattern of socialism which, so far from failing the parts, continues to be informed by them.

But that is not how the new marxists visualise the new social forces. They do not ask what it is in the philosophy and practice of these movements that needs to be constantly reviewed and rectified if they are to make a continuing contribution to a modern progressive socialism. They do not seem to accept that there can be contradictions within and between the movements or that their practice often plays into the hands of capitalism and is therein negated. Instead, they tend to romanticise the movements – feminism especially, as though in a

backlash of socialist guilt, romancing the feminine now where once they romanced the class – regarding them as the catalysts or, in their language, 'the leading edge' of change.* Perhaps they needed to, as a tactic, as a gun trained on the male, heterosexual citadels of socialism. But it is one that has backfired precisely because it has not looked to its own fallibility. It is not enough to ask what it is that the new social forces bring to the socialist movement without also asking what it is within these movements that could be corrupting of socialism.

But then, the axes on which the new social movements revolve are single-issue and identity-based politics which are of themselves self-defining and enclosed particularities tending to burrow into themselves for social truths and answers. Identity politics, in fact, seems to claim that the struggles of the self over its various personae – social, sexual, gendered – are by their very nature (for one does not struggle alone) social and political struggles: they impinge on how society regards women, blacks, gays, etc. and challenge the prevailing mores and ideology, in a sort of metaphysical dialectic between the personal and the political. The laboratory of social change, it would appear, is the self, but the self is also in the world and so the world changes with the changing of the self and the self with it.

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards . . .[11]

Eliot was also a dialectical metaphysician.

The new politics

Politics is not just out there any more, says Rosalind Brunt – in study groups and meetings and vanguard parties – but here in the person, in 'the continuous making and remaking of ourselves, and ourselves in relation to others'.[12] It is in the way people experience the world through 'the many, and increasing, identities it offers: . . . a colour, a gender, a class, a nationality; "belonging" to a family, having a child of your own; relating to colleagues, friends, comrades, lovers.' It can no longer be said that there is a politics outside ourselves – politics is in the person – or that to be political is to talk about '*the* system, *the* state, *the* working class, *the* Third World' – everything is political. 'What people do as political acts', remarks Beatrix Campbell in the same issue of *Marxism Today* (with a caveat that she is possibly being 'trivial here'), 'is they read, they buy, they refuse to buy, and they commit all sorts of acts which are about participation in the culture. It's only nut-cases in ever declining political organizations who think the only political act is to go to a meeting.'[13]

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* In pursuing 'the leading edge of change', the new marxists ignore the basis of change.

Power, for Brunt, is 'not simply a force coming from above and governed by one set of people, the ruling class'. Power is everywhere and 'it operates horizontally as much as vertically, internally as well as externally'. Even sex, goes on Rosalind Brunt paraphrasing Foucault, 'so far from . . . being a natural, biological given, central to our identity . . . is socially and culturally constructed and has a history brimming with power points . . .'. But 'where there is power there is also a "multiplicity of points of resistance", particularly in the way that historical identities are constructed – in 'reverse discourse', for example, where a homosexual subject, say, can 'start to speak on his/her own behalf, and begin to shift to another, more "empowering" discourse that describes an identity that transcends the original vocabulary of pathology and illness. Hence the self-defining movements of "gay" and "lesbian" politics – a defiant and celebratory "coming out" . . .'[14]

That, according to the new-timers, is what is exhilarating about New Times: the shift to the subject, the personal, the individual. Everything is in our hands now. We are not determined by 'impersonal structures', 'objective contradictions' and 'processes that work "behind men's (sic) backs".'[15] We are not conditioned by class, class is no more – the working class certainly, not as we knew it, anyway – and the dominance of production relations has gone with it. Everything has been thrown on to the cultural side. 'All interests, including class ones', says Stuart Hall, 'are [now] culturally and ideologically defined.'[16] That is where the struggle is. That is where we challenge the various power blocs in civil society. And 'far from there being no resistance to the system', Hall assures us, 'there has been a proliferation of new points of antagonism, new social movements of resistance organised around them, and consequently, a generalisation of "politics" to spheres which hitherto the Left assumed to be apolitical: a politics of the family, of health, of food, of sexuality, of the body.' Or, as Beatrix Campbell puts it, 'there's a plethora of collective comings and goings in what you might call "civil society" that are outside the political system.'[17] There is, that is, not just one power game any more but several, and not just one political line but a whole lot of political positions – and hence 'a politics which is always positional'.[18]

And personal. Because the personal is the political. And personal politics is also about the politics of consumption, desire, pleasure – because we have got choice now. New Times affords us choices, all sorts of choices, of how we dress, eat, live, make love, choices of style, design, architecture, the social spaces we occupy. The individual has been opened up to the 'transforming rhythms and forces of modern *material* life'. Commodified consumption? Maybe, but 'have we become so bewitched', asks Stuart Hall, 'by who, in the short run, reaps the profits from these transactions and missed the deep democra-

tisation of culture which is also a part of their hidden agenda? Can a socialism of the 21st century revive, or even survive, which is wholly cut off from the landscapes of popular pleasures, however contradictory a terrain they are? Are we thinking dialectically enough?'[19]

Equally, are we thinking socialist enough? And what, in any case, is this dialectic about materialism which is not itself materialist? Should we become so bewitched by 'the deep democratisation of culture' that we miss out on those who reap the profits from 'these transactions'? How do you gauge democratisation – by its spread or the spread of effective choice – and how deep is it that it deprives a third of the population of such choice? And why 'in the short run'? Because profit is short and culture long? Or because subversion is a commercial proposition only in limited runs and the transactors know when to call the tune, change the demand, 'democratise' some other (reactionary) bits of culture. In an age of 'designer capitalism', as Robin Murray terms it, who 'shapes' our life-styles? Who still sells us the ideas that sell us the things that we buy? Who lays out for us 'the landscapes of popular pleasures'? Should we not be suspicious of those pleasures which, even in a post-Fordist era, tend to be turned out like hamburgers, mass-produced and mass-oriented? Should we not, instead, find pleasure in being creative in ourselves and in our relationships with others now that we have got the time to be creative in? Can a socialism of the 21st century survive which does not develop landscapes of creative leisure for people to be human in?

New Times also sets great store by the feminist concept of the personal is the political. But how that concept has been interpreted (because it lends itself to such interpretation) and used has led to disastrous consequences in Left local authority politics, especially as regards race, and in the fight against racism generally. By personalising power, 'the personal is the political' personalises the enemy: the enemy of the black is the white as the enemy of the woman is the man. And all whites are racist like all men are sexist. Thus racism is the combination of power plus prejudice. Remove the prejudice and you remove the cutting edge of power; change the person and you change the office.

Hence the fight against racism became reduced to a fight against prejudice, the fight against institutions and practices to a fight against individuals and attitudes. And those Left councils which carried out anti-racist policies on this basis found themselves not only ineffectual but open to the accusation that their approach to the collective good often ended up in individual injustice. The McGoldrick affair – where a white headteacher was suspended because her alleged (personal) racism was said to stand in the way of Brent Council's wholly valid policy to recruit more black teachers – was a case in point. Another was the lesson introduced into some Racism Awareness Training

(RAT) classes whereby people were so sensitised to the pejorative use of the term 'black' that they baulked at asking for black coffee. Which then gave credence to stories such as the one broadcast by the *Daily Mail* that Haringey Council had banned teachers and children from singing 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' in its schools as it was racist.[20]

All of which went to create the image of the 'Loony Left' which, as Stuart Hall so rightly says, bolstered 'Thatcherism's hidden "moral agenda" around those powerful subliminal themes of race and sex' and helped her win the election.[21] But if, as Hall insists, the Left is to learn from its mistakes, it must also be said that it was precisely the 'policies' arising from the personal is the political 'line' (around 'those powerful subliminal themes of race and sex') that played into the hands of the Right and provided them the modicum of truth necessary to sustain the Loony Left image in the public mind.

The 'personal is the political' has also had the effect of shifting the gravitational pull of black struggle from the community to the individual at a time when black was already breaking up into ethnics. It gave the individual an out not to take part in issues that affected the community: immigration raids, deportations, deaths in custody, racial violence, the rise of fascism as well as everyday things that concerned housing and schooling and plain existing. There was now another venue for politics: oneself, and another politics: of one's sexuality, ethnicity, gender – a politics of identity as opposed to a politics of identification.

Carried to its logical conclusion, just to be black, for instance, was politics enough: because it was in one's blackness that one was aggressed, just to be black was to make a statement against such aggression. If, in addition, you 'came out' black, by wearing dreadlocks say, then you could be making several statements. 'The one which I think is important', declared a black intellectual in a radio programme recently, 'is the statement it makes to the white people that I have to deal with as a professional, as a scholar, as a historian and other things which I do, and it tells them that there are certain things they can't do to me because I have a power behind me that they can't comprehend.'[22] Equally, you could make a statement, by just being ethnic, against Englishness, for instance; by being gay, against heterosexism; by being a woman, against male domination. Only the white-straight-male, it would appear, had to go find his own politics of resistance somewhere out there in the world (as a consumer perhaps?). Everyone else could say: I am, therefore I resist.

Of course, the individuals who could leave the black community to its problems and mind their own were those who were not directly affected by them: the emerging black middle class of functionaries and intellectuals. The functionaries found commitment, if not profit, in ethnicity and culture, the intellectuals found struggle in discourse.

That way they would not be leaving the struggles of the community behind but taking them to a higher level, interpreting them, deconstructing them, changing the focus of struggle on the sites of another practice, theoreticist this time.

The flight of the intellectual, however, is not confined to the black community – that is a particular type of flight: new, raw, immediately noticeable, because the blacks have achieved some sort of upward social and economic mobility only in the last two decades or so. It is part of a larger, smoother, more sophisticated flight of Left intellectuals from class – a flight that was already intimated in the philosophical excursions of theoretical marxism and the politics of Eurocommunism but found objective justification in 'post-Fordism' and the disintegration of the working class.

The new class

From then saying 'farewell to the working class' to electing themselves the new agents of change in 'new times' was but a short and logical step. For the shift from industrial to post-industrial society or, more accurately, from industrial to information society did not just remove the industrial working class from its pivotal position but threw up at the same time a new information 'class'. Since, however, information operated differently at two different levels: at the economic, as a factor of production (information in the sense of data fed to computers, robots, etc.), and at the political, as a factor of ideology, so to speak (information as fed to people), the combined economic and political clout of the old working class also got differentiated – with the economic going to the technical workers and the political to the 'information workers', the intelligentsia. And in a society 'overdetermined' by the political/ideological, the intelligentsia, who had hitherto no class as such, had come into their own. Except that the Right intelligentsia knew that the means of information were in the hands of the bourgeoisie and they were merely the producers of ideas and information and ideology that kept the bourgeoisie in situ, while the Left intelligentsia were convinced that the ideas and information and ideology they produced would overwhelm, if not overthrow, the bourgeoisie itself.

Every mode of production, as Marx has said, throws up its own classes. Capitalism is still the 'mode' in his sense, but the method of production has undergone such qualitative change as to shift the balance of influence between the economic, political, ideological instances and, with it, the balance of class forces. In today's post-industrial society that balance has shifted to the middle classes and its most vociferous wing, the intelligentsia, who as purveyors of information, ideas, images, life-styles find themselves in an unusual position

of power to influence the way people think and behave – or, as the new marxists would put it, the way the 'subject' is 'constructed' and, since ideologies 'work on and through the subject', the way politics is constructed too. For the New Times intelligentsia this means dragging marxism with them to their own intellectual terrain, altering the battle-lines to suit their bent and equipment, engaging in wars of position that never lead to a war of overthrow or 'manoeuvre', challenging not the coercive power of the state but altering the ideological hegemonies in civil society, not through the instrument of the party as before but through the construction of alternative social blocs that would coalesce existing Left/centre parties. Central to the project, of course, are the new social forces.

But the mode is still capitalist, the struggle is still against its coercive power as embodied in the state. The working class might have disintegrated, but the bourgeoisie has, for that very reason, got stronger. There is still exploitation and oppression and hunger among the vast majority of the world's population. There is poverty and unemployment right here, in our midst, that arises from the unequal distribution of wealth.* That again is in the hands of the state, held there by the state.

There may well be all sorts of 'resistance to the system', as Stuart Hall suggests, in civil society today, all sorts of new social movements and 'a politics of the family, of health, of food, of sexuality, of the body'.[24] And they may even succeed in pushing out the boundaries of individual freedom. But the moment they threaten to change the system in any fundamental way or go beyond the personal politics of health, food, sexuality, etc., they come up against the power of the state. That power does not need to be used at every turn, just to intimate that it is there is sufficient to change the politics of the new social forces, personal politics, to a politics of accommodation.

Civil society is no pure terrain of consent where hegemonies can play at will; it is ringed around, if not with coercion, with intimations of coercion – and that is enough to buttress the system's hegemony. It is only in challenging state power that you expose the coercive face of the state to the people, sharpening their political sense and resistance, providing the temper and climate for 'the construction' of more effective 'social blocs'. Conversely, you cannot take on the dominant hegemonies in civil society without at some point – at the point of effectiveness, in fact – falling foul of the system.

It is inconceivable that we should go on talking about resistances in

* In May 1988, 8.2 million people in Britain were dependent upon supplementary benefit. In the year 1988/89 tax cuts for individuals in the richest 1 per cent of tax payers were £22,680 per person, a sum greater than the total income of any single person in the bottom 95 per cent of the population.[23]

civil society and ignoring the power of the state when Mrs Thatcher has used exactly that to limit the terrain of civil society, keep government from the people, undermine local democracy, abrogate workers' rights, hand over water to businessmen, make education so narrow and blinkered as to make the next generation safe for the Tories.* The Greater London Council (GLC) might have succeeded in constructing all sorts of social blocs and movements (the pride and joy of the new marxists) to challenge Tory hegemony, but all that Mrs Thatcher had to do was abolish it. The abolition, though, might have been stayed if the social blocs and forces that the GLC had generated and/or supported had a politics that could have opened out to each other and formed a solid phalanx of resistance to the encroachments of the Thatcherite state. Instead, their politics of position only helped them to take it lying down.

Nor is civil society an even terrain of consent, a plateau of consent, with no 'cliffs of sheer fall'. It drops sharply for the poor, the black, the unemployed. For them, the distinction between the mailed fist and the velvet glove is a stylistic abstraction, the defining limit between consent and force a middle-class fabrication. Black youth in the inner cities know only the blunt force of the state, those on income support (8 million on today's count)[25] have it translated for them in a thousand not so subtle ways. If we are to extend the freedoms in civil society through a politics of hegemony, those who stand at the intersection of consent and coercion should surely be our first constituency and guide – and a yardstick to measure our politics by. How do you extend a 'politics of food' to the hungry, 'a politics of the body' to the homeless, a 'politics of the family' for those without an income?** How do any of these politics connect up with the Third World?

The touchstone of any issue-based or identity-based politics has to be the lowest common denominators in our society. A women's movement that does not derive its politics from the needs, freedoms, rights of the most disadvantaged among them is by that very token reformist and elitist. Conversely, a politics that is based on women qua women is inward-looking and narrow and nationalist and, above all, failing of its own experience. So too the blacks or gays or whoever. So too are the Green and Peace movements Eurocentric and elitist that

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* The interests of the state and of the government, declared the Attorney General, later Lord Chancellor, after the Ponting case, are identical.

** In 1985, 15.42m people (10% of the population) were living in poverty or on its margins, a rise of 33% since 1979. Families with children experienced a steeper rise in poverty than other people on low income, 6.45m people in families with children (26% of all families with children) were living in poverty or on its margins, an increase of 55% since 1979. In 1987 there were 107,000 households who were homeless; 64% were households with dependent children; 14% had a member who was pregnant. (*Poverty*, Summer 1988 and Winter 1988/9.)

do not derive their politics from the most ecologically devastated and war ravaged parts of the world. Class cannot just be a matter for identity, it has to be the focus of commitment.

But even if, as the new marxists have it, class is only one of a subject's many identities, it is still his or her class identity surely that makes a person socialist or otherwise. What makes for that identity may be an individual's direct experience of hardship, or it may stem from one's capacity to see in his or her own oppression or oppressions as a woman, a black, a black gay, etc., the oppression of others, or it may derive quite simply from 'the truth of one's imagination'. But unless it informs and underlines the subject's other identities, the politics of identity becomes a narrow, sterile, self-seeking exercise. You don't have to live in poverty and squalor to be a socialist, as Beatrix Campbell so derisorily implies,[26] but the capacity to identify yourself with those who do, helps. By the same token, the 'politics of pleasure', which the new marxists warn us we must not knock, could hardly be one of socialism's priorities – nor the pursuit of personal gain its morality. Class, even as metaphor, is still the measure of a socialist conscience.*

But there's the rub. The new marxists do not see the self as something forged in and forging the struggle to change the world, but as fragmented identities inhabiting different social worlds, 'with a history, "produced", in process. These vicissitudes of the subject have their own histories which are key episodes in the passage to new times' such as 'the cultural revolutions of the 1960s . . . feminism's slogan that "the personal is the political" . . . the theoretical revolutions of the 60s and 70s – semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism – with their concern for language and interpretation'.[27] And it is this 'return of the subjective with a vengeance' that New Times proudly presents.

The 'return' of the subject to the centre of the political stage brings with it, of course, the politics of the subject: individualism, consumption, choice, the market, sexuality, style, pleasure, 'international humanism'.

The big waffle

Individualism, for New Times contributor Charlie Leadbeater, is what the Left now needs 'at the core of its vision of how society should be organised' – a 'socialist individualism', of course, a 'progressive individualism', an 'expansive individualism', a 'democratic individualism' even, in contrast to Mrs Thatcher's 'constrained, narrow, materialistic individualism'.[28] Labour and the Left had abrogated

* From the point of view of the new marxists, of course, this may well sound like a class reductionism of the mind.

individual rights and choices through statism, and Thatcherism had seized upon them to construct its own vision of society. It was time now for the Left to re-appropriate the individual – an individual with responsibilities, however, not just rights. For 'if the Left stands for one thing, it should be this: people taking responsibility for all aspects of their lives'. No more nanny state, no more asking 'what can the state, the council, the professionals, do to solve this problem for people'. Should this sound like Thatcherism, Leadbeater hastens to assure us that, in addition to individual responsibility, there would also be collective provision. But how, if not through the state and local authority – and for whom, if not the needy? And are we then not returning to the 'theological collectives . . . of state and class'? Through 'intermediate collectives', answers Charlie Leadbeater, composed perhaps of 'individuals, private initiatives, even companies . . .' operating within a 'space' provided and regulated by the state.[29] But how is this different from Heseltine's compact for the inner cities?

The individual must also have choice, in consumption, life-style, sexuality and so on, because 'the dynamic area of most people's lives is where they can assert their difference from others'. There's 'new marxism' for you, and yet the old man whose name they take in vain said that it was 'only in community with others' that the individual has 'the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions, only in community . . . is personal freedom possible'.

But that apart, the question of choice in Leadbeater's scheme of things does not emerge from the position of the choiceless, those deprived of choice, deprived of purchasing power. It relates, in the first instance, to those who already have and stresses, therefore, the importance of the market in delivering choice. When Leadbeater does turn to the problems of the less well-off, it is to tag on feeble provisos to market solutions, such as regulating competition, or to offer up sundry collective actions which are themselves 'conceived and expressed individually'.

The stress on the individual leads Leadbeater to the market and Thatcherism, the anxiety not to be found out leads him to 'collectivism', and he ends up as a man divided against himself in 'individually-based collectivism' – i.e., as a social democrat. At one point he even goes beyond 'collective action' to mention 'redistribution', but it is not the redistribution of wealth. That, though, would have been to shift the centre of gravity of new marxist argument from consumption to distribution – which, after all, is where socialism begins. The fulfilment of choice in an unequal society is always at the expense of others and is, in that, a negation of choice, of freedom.

It is in Stuart Hall's writing, however, that consumption reaches higher, even more lyrical, levels and requires to be quoted at length if only for its poetry. If 'the preoccupation with consumption and style'

appears trivial, he warns us, it is 'more so to men, who tend to have themselves "reproduced" at arm's length from the grubby processes of shopping and buying and getting and therefore take it less seriously than women, for whom it was destiny, life's "work". But the fact is that greater and greater numbers of people (men and women) – with however little money – play the game of using things to signify who they are. Everybody, including people in poor societies whom we in the West frequently speak about as if they inhabit a world *outside* of culture, knows that today's "goods" double up as social signs and produce meanings as well as energy. There is no evidence that, in a socialist economy, our propensity to "code" things according to systems of meaning, which is an essential feature of our sociality, would *necessarily* cease – or, indeed, should.'[30]

I don't understand the last sentence and even the previous one seems meaningless to me – or it is in 'code'. But what 'social signs' do 'today's goods' have for the poor in 'poor societies' except that they have not got them, the goods. And what 'meaning' or 'energy' do they produce except that those who have do not give and those who haven't must take? Who are these people who, in our own societies, 'with however little money play the game of using things to signify who they are' unless it is those who use cardboard boxes under Waterloo Bridge to signify that they are the homeless? They know who they are: they are the poor and they do not have 'things' to play games with. It is they – both men and women – who think, who know that 'the preoccupation with consumption and style' is trivial. And Hall's bringing in male sexism in matters of 'shopping and buying and getting' does not elevate consumption any higher. If, on the other hand, what Hall is trying to say is that poor people find meaning, express themselves, in 'consuming' the goods they can't afford precisely because they are poor, that again is special pleading to bring consumption closer to the heart of socialism.

Consumption is also where Robin Murray, alas, stubs his socialist toe. He first, like the other New Timers, excoriates the Left for being reluctant to take on the question of consumption. And like Stuart Hall, in another passage to New Times, Murray too develops a powerful argument for those movements in civil society which have taken on the market and the state over those issues of consumption where 'the social and the human have been threatened': such as 'the effects of food additives and low-level radiation, of the air we breathe and the surroundings we live in, the availability of childcare and community centres, or access to privatised city centres and transport geared to particular needs.'[31] But he cannot help singing a paean to the market: 'which local council pays as much attention to its users as does the market research industry on behalf of commodities? Which bus or railway service cuts queues and speeds the traveller with as much care

as retailers show to their just-in-time stocks?' One would have thought that the motive of market researchers and retailers alike was profit, not use value.

With 'the return of the subjective' has also gone the notion of imperialism out of new marxist reckoning – the ravaging of the Third World, the exploitation of its peoples, the theft of its resources, ecological devastation. The Third World is no longer out there as an object of struggle; it is here, in the minds of people, as an anodyne to consumption, in the personal politics of the subject – an object of western humanism, the occasion for individual aid, a site for pop culture and pop politics. The 'famine movement', the new marxists call it,[32] 'people aid' to the Third World – making the plight of the Third World come through to people through mass gigs, mass runs, telethons – mass culture at the service of 'mass politics' – the politics of selfish consumption relieved by relief for the Third World – altering, if not the fate of the Third World, the views of government to alter the fate of the Third World – (governments tied up with multinational corporations, governments governed by multinational corporations) – altering people's politics, lifting people's horizons 'beyond even the boundaries of Europe, to Africa . . .' – a mass movement for the moment, initiated not by the Left but outside it – by caring people – by pop stars who put ' "caring for others" on the map' of rock culture (because 'every fan knows how much it costs a star to give a free performance . . .') – millionaire pap merchants effecting a peaceful transition for the young from pap culture into pap politics.

'Who would have guessed in 1979, or even perhaps in 1983', ask Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques writing in 1986, 'that the plight of the Third World would generate one of the great popular movements of our time?' And not just that: 'with the rise of the Band Aid/Live Aid/Sport Aid phenomenon, the ideology of selfishness – and thus one of the main ideological underpinnings of Thatcherism – has been dealt a further, severe blow'. In fact, 'the famine movement's capacity to mobilise new forces', especially the youth, has 'helped to shift the political centre of gravity'.[33]

On the contrary, all that it shifted was the focus of responsibility for the impoverishment of the Third World from western governments to individuals and obscured the workings of multinational corporations and their agents, the IMF and the World Bank. Worse, it made people in the West feel that famine and hunger were endemic to the Third World, to Africa in particular (the dark side of the affluent psyche), and what they gave was as of their bounty, not as some small recompense for what was being taken from the poor of the Third World. And, in the language of the new marxists (more or less), a discourse on western imperialism was transmogrified into a discourse on western humanism.

What New Times represents, in sum, is a shift in focus from economic determinism to cultural determinism, from changing the world to changing the word, from class in and for itself to the individual in and for himself or herself. Use value has ceded to exchange value, need to choice, com-munity to i-dentity, anti-imperialism to international humanism. And the self that new timers make so much play about is become a small, selfish inward-looking self that finds pride in life-style, exuberance in consumption and commitment in pleasure – and then elevates them all into a politics of this and that, positioning itself this way and that way (with every position a politics and every politics a position) into a 'miscellany of movements and organisations' stretching from hobbies and pleasure to services.[34]

A sort of bazaar socialism, bizarre socialism, a hedonist socialism: an eat, drink and be merry socialism because tomorrow we can eat drink and be merry again . . . a socialism for disillusioned marxist intellectuals who had waited around too long for the revolution – a socialism that holds up everything that is ephemeral and evanescent and passing as vital and worthwhile, everything that melts into air as solid, and proclaims that every shard of the self is a social movement.

Of course, the self is fragmenting, breaking up. But when in Capital's memory was it never so? Capital fragments the self as it fragments society, divides the self as it divides labour, develops some aspects of the self at the expense of others, encourages specialisation, compartmentalises experience and hands it over to professionals for interpretation, conceptualisation, and keeps the self from becoming whole.

Up to now we had the homogenising influence of class to hold us together, but this, as the new marxists so rightly point out, was a flattening process, a reductive process, mechanical, and as destructive of the creative self as Capital.* That influence of class is gone from us and all its comforting, stultifying adhesions of procedures and organisation. There is nothing 'objective' to hold us together, our selves are let loose upon the world, and even the freedoms won in that great period of industrial working-class struggle are being threatened.

The emancipation of Capital from Labour has left a moral vacuum at the heart of post-industrial society, which is itself material. The 'universalist' bourgeois values which Bill Warren wrote about – 'equality, justice, generosity, independence of spirit and mind, the

* 'Capitalism . . . destroys the human possibilities it creates . . . Those traits, impulses and talents that the market can use are rushed (often prematurely) into development and squeezed desperately till there is nothing left; everything else within us, everything nonmarketable, gets draconically repressed, or withers away for lack of use, or never has a chance to come to life at all.' (Berman, *All that is solid melts into air*).[35]

spirit of inquiry and adventure, opposition to cruelty' – and which sprang precisely from the creative tension between Capital and Labour are endangered by Capital's emancipation. The Factory Acts which took children out of work and women from the mines and gave them the light of day, the Education Acts that opened their minds out to other worlds and the world, the Public Health Acts which stopped the spread of disease and plagues – all came out of the tension, the hostility between Capital and Labour.

Freedom of speech, of assembly, the right to withhold one's labour, universal suffrage, sprang not out of bourgeois benefice but from working-class struggle. All the gains of the period of industrial capitalism were the creative outcome of social contradictions – the heart of dialectical materialism. The welfare state was its apotheosis.

Those contradictions are not as eloquent any more. The 'service class' of the post-industrial society which has displaced the working class of industrial society does not contest Capital but is accommodating of it and secretes a culture of accommodation, a petit-bourgeois culture. Where once the tension between the bourgeoisie and the working class produced 'bourgeois' culture and 'bourgeois' freedoms, the lack of tension, of hostility, of 'class hatred' even, produces a petit-bourgeois culture and petit-bourgeois values.

But there are still the values and traditions that have come down to us from the working-class movement: loyalty, comradeship, generosity, a sense of community and a feel for internationalism, an understanding that unity has to be forged and re-forged again and again and, above all, a capacity for making other people's fights one's own – all the great and simple things that make us human.

Communities of resistance

Where those traditions have taken hold and come alive today are in the struggles of the people in those spaces that Thatcherism and new marxism alike have obscured from public view: in the inner cities, among the low paid and the poor, in the new underclass of home-workers and sweat-shop workers, casual and part-time workers, ad hoc and temporary workers, thrown up by the putting-out system in retailing, the flexi-system in manufacturing, and the hire and fire system in the expanding service sector, and among refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers: the invisible workers who have no rights, no claims, no roots, no domicile and are used and deported at will.

By their very nature and location, the underclass are the most difficult to organise in the old sense of organisation. They do not submit to the type of trade union regimen which operates for the straight 'official' workforce – but they come together, like villagers, through hearsay and common hurt, over a deportation case here or a

death in custody there, to take on the immediate power of the immigration officer or the police and to go beyond it, if that's where it takes them, to oppose the power of the state itself as it presents itself on the street. They come together, too, over everyday cases of hardship to help each other's families out, setting up informal community centres to help them consolidate whatever gains they make. These are not great big things they do, but they are the sort of organic communities of resistance that, in a sense, were pre-figured in the black struggles of the '60s and '70s and the insurrections of '81 and '85.

Broadwater Farm was such a community. Relegated to a concrete ghetto and deprived of basic amenities and services, jobless for the most part and left open to crime, the inhabitants of the estate came together to create a life for themselves. They set up a nursery, provided meals and a meeting-place for pensioners, established a recreation centre for youth and built up, in the process, a political culture that resisted police intrusion and proceeded to take on the judiciary and the press over the mistrial (the press trial in fact) of Silcott, Braithwaite and Raghip.

In 1979 the whole of Southall – Asian, Afro-Caribbean, white, the young, the old, women and men, shop-keepers and householders – shut shop and went off to demonstrate against the incursion of the National Front into their town and were savagely beaten up by the police. Hundreds were injured when mounted police and riot police charged into the crowds – and Blair Peach, a white anti-racist campaigner and teacher, died at the hands of the Special Patrol Group. But that death did not die in the memories and campaigns of white groups and black organisations who took up the question of police accountability and brought it to the attention of a larger and larger public. From these campaigns came the setting up of local police-monitoring groups and council police committees. People were alerted now to the deaths, especially of young blacks, in police or prison custody, and from that has grown a distrust of inquest procedures and the demands for public inquiries in their stead. In April 1989, on the tenth anniversary of Blair Peach's death, activists from all over the UK and Europe gathered in Southall to commemorate his memory and pledge themselves to his legacy of struggle against racism and fascism.

It was also from the failure, well-night wilful, of the police to protect working-class Asian families from racial harassment and attack, following Mrs Thatcher's 'this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture' pronouncement, that the call for the self-defence of the black community arose. And when a few months later Judge Argyle imposed savage sentences on the Virk brothers for defending themselves with spanners and jacks (they were

repairing their car at the time) against the unprovoked attack of a racist gang, the Asian community, elders and youth alike, realised that it was as futile to look to the judiciary for justice as it was to the police for protection. From that 'self-defence is no offence' campaign sprang similar campaigns – in Newham, for instance, on behalf of Asian youth who had defended young children against racist attacks on their way from school (the case of the Newham 8). Which in turn raised the question of the pastoral role of teachers in protecting children against racial harassment.

The most celebrated of these campaigns arose from the defence of Manningham against impending fascist attack by twelve young Asians (allegedly) armed with molotov cocktails. They were charged with conspiracy, a charge so wholly disproportionate that it outraged ordinary people and brought to the defence campaign support from a whole cross-section of groups – women, gays, students – who had hitherto not made the 'racial attack' issue their own.* Meetings across the country, regular newsletters and mass marches were to alert communities everywhere to the issues involved: problems in policing, attacks by fascists and racists in black areas, racism and political bias in the criminal justice system, a wish by the state to smash militant black organisations. It was the success of the community defence campaign as much as the legal representation in court (which was itself 'changed' by the community) which got the twelve acquitted.

These campaigns in turn were to strengthen the resolve of local authorities to outlaw racism, from council housing for instance. And in November 1984 Newham Council took the unprecedented step of evicting a white family, the McDonnells, for persistent harassment of their black neighbours.

Similarly, the issue of deportation and of the rights of children to join their parents, taken up by trade unions and legal and civil rights bodies, were initially raised by women's organisations – black and white. And from these issues the realisation arose that the question of deportation and children's rights had got to be seen and fought in the larger context of the quality of family life generally – and gave rise to the campaigns over child benefit, unsavoury surveillance by the state of marriages (to make sure they were not bogus), the racist and sexist nature of nationality laws and the 'internal', unseen, unknown, unaccountable control of black families – via the police, education, welfare and social services.

It is a community of women again, predominantly middle-aged women, which has helped keep alive in Britain the issues of Israeli

* Amongst those who sat in on the trial each day was a young white home-help. Her anger and commitment was later to be channelled into a series of biting cartoons in the Institute of Race Relations' publication *How Racism Came to Britain* (which the Secretary of State for Education then tried to ban from schools).

terror in the Occupied Territories, protested against the treatment of women Palestinian prisoners, collected funds for the children detained during the *intifada*, confirmed their fellow women in Israel in their struggle against the occupation. Week in and week out for two years a Women in Black picket stands each Saturday in silent protest outside the Israeli airlines office in London – informing people, collecting signatures, arguing the issues with passersby. The irony is that these women are for the most part Jewish women and that the catalyst for their movement came from a realisation in Jewish feminist circles that their politics of identity was too narrow, historicist and self-indulgent – and betraying of a sisterhood that should embrace Palestinian women as well.

Recently, the campaign to prevent the deportation of Tamil asylum-seekers to the UK involved a fight between the judiciary and the Home Office over their legitimacy. But the whole issue of the would-be-refugees, tortured by the Sri Lankan government, brought up Britain's role in the training of the armed forces and intelligence networks of repressive regimes and the implications of tourism into such countries. And when two Tamil asylum-seekers working (for want of work permits) as night security guards in a Soho amusement arcade were burnt to death, the issue became one about the super-exploitation of a new rightless, peripatetic section of the working class and led to an exposé of the profits made by the leisure industry.

It was, again, the migrant workers and the Refugee Forum which fought for the rights of Kurds who had to flee Turkey in 1989. The feeding, housing, clothing of the Kurds, help with translation, appealing for the right to remain, were all undertaken by community groups themselves. Outrage over arbitrary detentions and deportations by the Home Office (which led to the self-immolation of two Kurdish asylum-seekers) brought out various migrant and black communities on to the streets in demonstrations and meetings.* Just as in the case of the Tamils, the Kurds too threw up crucial issues which the 'movement' had to embrace: the conditions of work in East London's sweat-shops (where the Kurds found employment), the use of chemical weapons (by Iraq) on the Kurds, Britain's collusion through Nato with Turkey's armed forces and, therefore, its harassment and torture of the Kurdish minority.

The joint struggles of refugee, migrant and black groups in Britain not only help to sustain the links between racism and imperialism and between racial oppression and class exploitation, but have also been at

* These are not the party-hacks' meetings that Beatrix Campbell inveighs against but practical meetings to work out rotas for volunteers at community centres, panels of lawyers to take up cases, etc.

the forefront of the attempts to build a network of European groups against a new European racism[36] in the run-up to 1992. And only last month (November 1989) activists from black settler groups, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers based in Holland, Germany, France, Denmark and the UK came together in a conference in Hackney to launch a Communities of Resistance Campaign across Europe.

All these activities may constitute a 'miscellany of movements', 'a plethora of collective comings and goings' outside mainstream party politics, as the new marxists describe them. But there the resemblance to anything they have in mind ceases. In the first place, these are collectivities, movements, that issue from the grassroots (if the term may still be used) of economic, social and political life, from the bare bone of existence, from people who have nothing to lose but their chains, nothing to choose but survival, and are therefore dynamic, open, organic. They are not inward-looking, navel-gazing exercises like identity politics or narrow self-defining particularities like single-issue politics. They do not, in other words, issue from the self but from the community, not from choice but from need and are organic in the sense of sharing a common life.

Secondly, these movements do not stop at the bounds of civil society or confine their activities to its boundaries. They know from experience that beyond civil society lies the state, behind civil society lurks the state, on every street corner the state, at the Job Centre and the town hall, in the schools and at the hospital, whether demanding your rights or asking for guidance or just trying to lead an ordinary family life – local state or central, it matters little, as Thatcherism goes on eroding local authority, except that that too is now their fight. The struggles stretch from civil society to state and back in a continuum, effecting material changes in the life and rights of ordinary people and extending, in the process, the bounds of civil society itself.

Thirdly, what these movements throw up, by their very nature, are not diverse cultural politics but a multi-faceted political culture which finds authority in practice, tests theory in outcome, and works towards a wider political movement commensurate with our times, but unrelenting still of its struggle against Capital. The point is to overthrow capitalism, not to join it in order to lead it astray into socialism.

Hence and fourthly, these movements have little sympathy with the notion of the personal is the political because this has tended in practice to personalise and fragment and close down struggles. The personal is the political is concerned with what is owed to one by society, whereas the political is personal is concerned with what is owed to society by one. The personal is the political is concerned with altering the goal posts, the political is personal is concerned with the

field of play. The personal is the political may produce radical individualism, the political is personal produces a radical society. The personal is the political entraps you in the self-achieving, self-aggrandising life-style of the rich, the political is personal finds value in the communal life-style of the poor.

Finally, there is an unspoken morality about these movements which stem from a simple faith in human beings and a deep knowledge that, by himself or herself, the individual is nothing, that we need to confirm and be confirmed by each other, that only in the collective good our selves can put forth and grow.*

This means that to come to consciousness of one's own individual oppression (which the new marxists so eloquently point to as a sign of new times) is to open one's sensibilities out to the oppression of others, the exploitation of others, the injustices and inequalities and un-freedoms meted out to others – and to act upon them, making an individual/local case into an issue, turning issues into causes and causes into movements and building in the process a new political culture, new communities of resistance that will take on power and Capital and class.

Moralistic? Morality is material when it is forged on the smithy of practice into a weapon of ideology. 'If you want to know the taste of a pear', a Chinese saying goes, 'you must change its reality by eating it.'

* Whether this is a 'moral agenda' in the electoral way the new marxists speak of it I do not know, but it is certainly the basis of another morality than Thatcher's and one that she would want to abolish along with socialism.

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CHRIS SEARLE

Race before wicket: cricket, Empire and the White Rose

For C.L.R. James (1901-1989)

'Nothing that ever came out of England has had such an influence on character and nation-building as this wonderful game of ours.'[1] Thus began a very influential book on the sport of cricket, written in 1926 by M.A. Noble, a celebrated Australian cricketer who had toured England with his national team in 1899, 1902 and 1905. It was perhaps fitting that Noble should invite no less a prestigious figure than Lord Harris to contribute an introduction to his work. Harris, as well as being an ex-captain of the England cricket team, was an ex-Governor of Bombay and, during his governorship (1890-95), successfully established cricket as an integral part of an imperialist culture that was designed to create a class of colonised Indians fashioned as English mimics and devotees of the Empire.

For Harris, cricket was at the centre of the imperial ideal. It represented a new way of life and set of mores which he saw as necessary to impose on the 'chaos' of India and places un-English, an approach to social organisation that combined civilised 'manliness' with teamwork and a binding respect for the hierarchy of the rule book. Cricket was an essential and symbolic part of imperial order and manners. So Harris commends Noble's book, *The Game's the Thing*, not as a sporting commentary or simply a book about cricket, but as a 'complete treatise' of 'wise advice' and 'maxims' for young people about the 'practice' of the sport and 'its etiquette, its influence and its

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morality'. In his own powerful way, this arch-imperialist and one man cricketing institution presaged the insight of the Trinidadian C.L.R. James some three decades hence: 'What do they know of cricket, who only cricket know?'

For cricket, being born of Empire, was also a vehicle for instituting and instilling Empire – and making clear exactly where the centre of Empire was. Even as Australia (in the absence of any black cricketing nations with national sides before the present century) became England's first and oldest 'enemy' on the cricket field,* cricket also reflected the imperial jingoism that infected the British people throughout the Boer wars. In 1902, the Australian cricket team touring England was the subject of this taunting little ditty in the London *Evening News*:

> Does your circulation fail, Kangaroo?
> Got a frost-bite in your tail, Kangaroo?
> Do you find it hard to play
> When it's hailing half the day,
> And it's even cold for May, Kangaroo?[2]

Yet for boys like myself, born into English lower middle-class households with cricketing fathers, cricket could never only be 'just a game'. It signified something overarching, religious, almost totemic, which proved you were a part of the English design. Other cultures would have ikons, crucifixes, portraits of heroes or saints affixed to their walls. An English cricketing family might have, as we did, a wooden plaque into which these words were carved:

> And when the one great scorer comes
> To write against your name:
> He writes not that you won or lost,
> But how you played the game.

That was the way it began for those within the red of the Empire: to play and love cricket wherever you lived was to believe in the spirit of England, to applaud Empire (for all cricketing countries and adversaries were Empire, whether it was Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, the West Indies or the newcomers of Pakistan) and to abide 'fairly' by the decisions that were dispensed by the chief umpire in the sky and mediated, of course, through Westminster.

Imperial illusion and racist reality

1989, and how has this grand imperial illusion been transformed?

*Despite the white-managed tour of black Australian cricketers to England in 1868, Australian cricket teams were composed of cricketers from white-settler backgrounds.

Fourteen English cricketers – all except one who have played for England, three of whom who have captained the national side – are, as of January, preparing to tour racist South Africa, now isolated from world representative cricket because of the campaigning energy of anti-apartheid activists and the opposition of black cricketing nations. Each player is to receive in the region of £80,000 to £100,000 for his services, with the captain, Mike Gatting, who asserts that he 'knows nothing about apartheid', reported to be receiving £200,000. As a British black player, Norman Cowans (whose county captain is Gatting himself), bowls for his county, Middlesex, against Hampshire in the semi-finals of the Nat West competition at Southampton some two weeks after the tour was announced, racist jeers of 'black bastard, black bastard' accompany his run-up. He is bowling against the South African batsman, Chris Smith. The match is being nationally broadcast live. As the abuse is transmitted across the nation and is plain to hear in living rooms from Bournemouth to Newcastle, the commentators make no comment.* The week before this match, Norman Cowans had bravely declared against the tour, almost a lone English professional cricketing voice: 'I think South Africa has an evil regime and I want no part of it. I would never take the South African blood money.'[3] Thus, Cowans is continuing the defiance shown by Caribbean players like Malcolm Marshall and Viv Richards, who had turned down the inducements of US $1m and US $1.5m respectively, for a proposed tour of South Africa in 1984.[4]

Racism in cricket is not, of course, a new phenomenon, although insults like those hurled at Cowans have become a part of the landscape of the game only over the past decade. During the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, when the imperial torch shone at its brightest, the 'golden age' of cricket produced K.S. Ranjitsinhji and, later, his nephew, Duleepsinhji – Indian aristocrats playing for Sussex and England who, with their exotic image, had a large and popular following among British cricket lovers. One writer at the time referred to ' "the Ranji" matches, "Ranji" railway-bar sandwiches, "Ranji" bats, deckchairs, hair restorers and so forth', so great was Ranjitsinhji's fame and profile.[5] ' "Ranji" cast his magic over all his team: we

*Almost all the English radio and television cricket commentators have cordial links with South Africa and its white cricket authorities. Jack Bannister managed the first unofficial tour of white cricketers after South Africa was banned from the international arena in 1968; Trevor Bailey and Fred Trueman have featured on promotional videos for the white South African Cricket Union and Christopher Martin-Jenkins was Master of Ceremonies at one of their banquets; Tony Lewis has broadcast for the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Brian Johnston, the veteran radio commentator, announced Gatting's tour on the 'Test Match Special' (1 August 1989) by declaring: 'They are merely following their profession' (see John Booth, 'The Voice for South Africa', *Cricket Life International* (October 1989)).

saw them in the glow of his Eastern splendour.'[6] Thus wrote the most famous English cricket writer of all, Neville Cardus, in his *Autobiography*. Yet even the princely Duleepsinhji found himself barred from playing for England against South Africa in 1929 after one test match, when the South African authorities objected to his presence. As Learie Constantine, the brilliant Trinidadian cricketer of the inter-war years, later declared in his autobiography, *Cricket in the Sun*, the 'South African politicians could not face the risk of a century being scored against their team by a coloured man'.[7]

Norman Cowans, the son of Jamaican immigrants, growing up in Britain during an era of open racism – in city streets as well as government departments – also received less than 'Ranji-type' adulation at Southampton in 1989. He, too, found himself faced by something less than Lord Harris' cricketing virtues of 'etiquette' and 'morality'.

The Caribbean game: a cricket of resistance

Cowans' principled and determined position against the degradation of his sport arises from a long struggle of Caribbean cricketers in the Caribbean itself and now in Britain.* It is this struggle that has been a major factor in transforming cricket from a game played and controlled by white English and colonial elites, to a sport carrying the aspirations of national independence and democratic ownership. In the Caribbean the organisation of the game mirrored the social and economic structure. From 1928, when the West Indies played their first test match against England, to 1960, when the first black captain, Frank Worrell, led the international side in Australia, white men of dubious cricketing ability had been appointed by the West Indies cricketing hierarchy as captains. This controlling coterie, composed of plantocrats, professionals and merchants, to a man white or a generous part of white, represented a class fearful of successful black endeavour. Len Hutton, the England captain of the Caribbean tour of 1954-5, recalled how Jamaican whites drilled into the English players on the tour how important it was that they should defeat the now predominantly black West Indies side.[8] The continued supremacy of the race depended upon it. Learie Constantine had written how such attitudes and the systematic exclusion of black players with the preference for whites had 'rotted the heart out of our cricket' and hoped that 'before I die I shall see a West Indian team, chosen on its merits alone, captained by a black player, win a rubber against England'.[9]

*Another voice of protest has been that of Gladstone Small, the black Warwickshire and England fast bowler, who criticised other cricketers who 'don't really consider the wider issue of oppression' in South Africa (*Cricket Life International* (October 1989)).

As the black working people of the British-ruled islands of the Caribbean grew in confidence, organisation and militancy throughout the 1930s, they found their heroes and symbols on the cricket field. There was Constantine, but there was also George Headley of Jamaica, whose entry into international cricket came alongside the influence of another outstanding Jamaican, Marcus Garvey. As Michael Manley has written, Headley was 'black excellence personified in a white world and in a white sport'.[10] Headley took the black masses with him into the heart of Caribbean cricket, and the conjunction of his genius and the awakening of black resistance in Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica in 1937-8 meant that cricket became a black man's game and the challenge was on against the white interests who controlled it. By 1950, Caribbean cricket had triumphed in the centre of Empire as the West Indies team defeated English cricket at its powerhouse, Lords. The batting trio of Everton Weekes, Frank Worrell and Clyde Walcott and 'spin twins' Sonny Ramadhin and Alf Valentine created the 'Victory Test Match' which the calypsonian Lord Beginner sang about – and which was celebrated by elated West Indians throughout the Caribbean and Britain.

> When Washbrook's century was ended
> West Indies voices were blended –
> Hats fly in the air
> People shout and jump without care,
> Applause was the scenery,
> It's bound to go down in History!

In the early 1950s, Constantine prophesied in his otherwise anecdotal book, *Cricket Crackers*, exactly how determined the Caribbean people were to become about their cricket:

> They were still fairly patient about it but they had made up their minds that it was going to be changed even if they had to change it by strikes and other unpleasant matters . . . Cricket is the most obvious and some would say glaring example of the black man being kept 'in his place', and that is the first thing that is going to be changed.

Thus, accompanying the movements for independence in the Caribbean islands that followed during the next decade, there also came a demand for a black cricketer to lead the West Indies team. This grew to a mobilisation of press and popular support, marshalled by the Caribbean Marxist, C.L.R. James, whose *Beyond a Boundary*,[11] published in 1963, not only documented the Caribbean-wide campaign which led to the appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the regional side, but also stood as a classic statement of the link between emergent nationalism, anti-colonial struggle and sporting culture.

The popular upsurge created by these events grew stronger as the West Indies cricket team of the 1960s all but re-created the game with its phenomenal and original approach to the dynamics of the sport. Batsmen like Gary Sobers of Barbados and Rohan Kanhai of Guyana,[12] and the fast bowling Barbadian combination of Wesley Hall and Charlie Griffith – plus the off-spin of the Guyanese Lance Gibbs – established the West Indies cricket team under the captaincy of first Worrell and then Sobers as the world's strongest and most spectacular cricketing force. These were no longer the carefree 'calypso cricketers' of past caricature led by a white amateur, but a disciplined, brilliant unit led by one of their own. For what was being achieved went far beyond mere style. Here was a cricket of resistance and assertion, which mirrored an entire people coming into their own, rejecting colonial divisions imposed upon them and bringing a new confidence and will for cultural construction. Along with this capacity to improvise and forge new skills and stroke play, which characterised, for example, the batting of Kanhai, came the regional – and worldwide – creativity of the national liberation struggles, particularly those, as in Malaya, Kenya, Ghana and the Yemen, which struck out against British imperialism. In Berbice, Guyana, cricketers such as Kanhai and Basil Butcher came out of the same mass movement (generated by Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party) which also produced, for example, Martin Carter's *Poems of Resistance*. The Indo-Caribbean inventiveness of Sonny Ramadhin's left-arm spin and Samuel Selvon's nation-language novels sprang out of the same southern Trinidad. The Barbadian brilliance of Worrell, Sobers and Hall was a part of the same anti-imperialist cultural momentum that produced writers like George Lamming and Edward Brathwaite. When Charlie Griffith bowled his devastating yorkers at the English batsmen in the 1960s, they carried, too, the force of the words of Stokely Carmichael, born in Trinidad, or of Malcolm X, whose mother was a Grenadian. Lloyd and Richards were the contemporaries of Walter Rodney and Maurice Bishop; Michael Holding came from the same Jamaica as Bob Marley: their different beauties flourished during the same years.

All these associations may have been implicit, but they were expressed within the power of Caribbean cricket and its grounding principle – in Constantine's words – 'To attack is to defend.' When Gordon Greenidge, for example, set down his cultural anger, he used cricket as his form: 'I hit the ball, therefore, as a form of revenge, a personal vendetta against the ball. When I smite it into the distance I think back to all the pain I have been caused and vow to do the same again as soon as possible.'[13] Joel Garner, brought up by his grandmother who warned him of the class and racist forces that would be pitched against him as he grew older, saw these emerging in some of

the elite administrators of the Barbadian game, and it made him determined to defeat them: 'the mysterious "they" that Gran had spoken about began to take definite shape; and although I began to grow increasingly angry at "them", I tried to break through their barriers by serious application to my game.'[14] Cricket could never be a mere pastime or weekend affectation for the black players of the Caribbean. It was a means of struggle, and achievement through it a powerful expression of Caribbean progress and nationhood.

Blackwash

Such success made the sport even more important to the black people of the Caribbean. On Barbados beaches and street intersections, on cliffside terraces on the eastern Caribbean islands, on bush paths in Guyana – where young boys had to play straight or risk losing their ball in the thick undergrowth – cricket became even more of a regional obsession. In Petit Martinique, the second sister island of Grenada which rises from the sea rock-like and vertical, the one tiny section of flat land by the jetty and beach has been groomed into a cricket ground. The giant Barbadian fast bowler, Joel Garner, in his moving and finely written autobiography, *Big Bird Flying High*, finds that there is a little demon called 'Crickus' who lives in the heart of Caribbean life, along with the children playing with a breadfruit ball and the weekend cricketers making their pitches of dry donkey or cow manure rolled into the earth. And as Bridgette Lawrence wrote, describing the Barbadian childhood of Roland Butcher, the first black Caribbean-born cricketer to play for England, 'cricket is such a strong component of life in the West Indies that it is never far from the surface. It appears in every facet of life in the Caribbean and binds the islands together like no other force. Children are weaned on the game and it becomes imbued in the psyche.'[15]

As the West Indies consolidated their domination of world cricket in the late 1970s and 1980s, largely through the batting of Antiguan Viv Richards and Barbadian Gordon Greenidge, the skilful and unifying captaincy of Guyanese Clive Lloyd and a formidable battery of the fastest bowlers in the world – including Andy Roberts of Antigua, Jamaican Michael Holding, Guyanese Colin Croft and Barbadians Joel Garner and, later, Malcolm Marshall – they then had to face accusations that they were playing in an unfair, 'intimidatory', way. British cricket writers and administrators – in particular, after the 'blackwash'* victory over England in all five test matches in 1980 –

*During the last test match of the 1980 series at the Oval Cricket Ground in London, Caribbean supporters produced a large banner ironically proclaiming BLACKWASH across it. In cricket parlance, 'whitewash' is when a team suffers a loss in every match of a test series.

began sullenly to complain that the relentless use of fast bowling by the West Indian team was against 'the spirit' of the game and was too much for an opposition to endure. They had short memories. England had won an infamous test series in Australia in 1932-3 by the 'bodyline' strategy of continuous fast bowling aimed directly at the body. The main weapon, then, was Harold Larwood, an ex-Nottinghamshire miner who was at that time the world's fastest bowler. Learie Constantine, who faced him during West Indian tours of England, wrote a rejoinder about his experiences of that era that reflected prophetically upon the fearful and sometimes racist bogus criticisms of the English critics of the West Indies speed attack that were to come in the 1980s:

> When we played Notts during that tour [1928], Larwood sent ball after ball so near our men's faces that presently some of them kept away and their wickets began to fall. We did not complain. If we could not make fours off that sort, it was our fault, not Larwood's. But we *did* resent the blindness of some of the critics who professed to see danger in those balls when we put them down, and none when English players bowled them.[16]

There is no doubt that for some English and Australian cricket 'experts', sunk into the conservative traditions of the sport, the prospect of an exceptionally fast Caribbean man with a cricket ball carries the same threat as a rebellious, anti-imperial black man with a gun. They want him suppressed, disarmed – he fits nowhere into their rules and ways of the game and only challenges them. The advent of the West Indian fast bowler, from Roy Gilchrist's unfettered pace in 1957 to Malcolm Marshall's strategic, thinking deliveries in 1988, has been the most symbolically powerful image of Caribbean cricket and the triumphs of its sporting culture.

Yet there were setbacks and losses, too, within Caribbean cricket. In 1970, cricketing giant Gary Sobers, West Indies captain and the most talented all-round player the game had ever known, visited what was then Rhodesia to play in a special tournament. During his trip he met prime minister Ian Smith, at a time when Zimbabwean liberation forces were in open armed struggle against the illegal and racist regime. Sobers later claimed that he 'knew nothing of politics at the time',[17] and it took the legal skills of his own Barbadian prime minister, Errol Barrow, to try to extricate the all-rounder from international embarrassment, by writing for him a cleverly-worded letter expressing regret without apology. Then, in 1983, a group of some of the Caribbean's finest cricketers were tempted to tour South Africa, led by Lawrence Rowe, a prodigious Jamaican batsman who had scored a triple century against England. While most of the national team remained untainted, some considerable players – like

Alvin Kallicharran* of Guyana and Collis King of Barbados – succumbed and a heavy cloud of indignation and shame fell over the region's cricket: South Africa's destabilisation of black people crossed the Atlantic and infected the Caribbean.

The most positive response came from Grenada's revolutionary government during its last year of life, which, while 'condemning this treacherous sell-out to the oppressors of our brothers', recommended that all Caribbean governments, as well as cancelling immediately the passports of the mercenary cricketers, should 'confiscate on their return the earnings from the South African venture and turn this over to the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) to help finance the anti-apartheid and national liberation struggle in Southern Africa'.[18] Such exemplary measures were not taken, despite the regional sense of disgust and betrayal, but future attempts at recruitment of some of the most talented Caribbean cricketers were roundly rejected. It is to the eternal credit of players like Joel Garner and Malcolm Marshall – both of whom had known very little money in their families and who had spent their youth, as Marshall put it, 'unemployed with no realistic chance of getting work'[19] – that they rejected such corrupting propositions as those made to them by officials of the white South African Cricket Union.

The bite of Apartheid

If the South African overtures created confusion and some betrayal within the structures of Caribbean cricket, the few black British cricketers playing in the English county championship were even more isolated and vulnerable. Surrounded by white team-mates, many of whom coached and played regularly in South Africa during the winter months with the full encouragement of their own Cricketers' Association,** and subject to the racist taunting of crowds in places like Leeds, Northampton and Southampton, they lacked the racial and cultural solidarity of their Caribbean counterparts. The humbug 'morality' preached by Lord Harris was nowhere to be seen. In 1981 Geoff Boycott, the Yorkshire batsman who scored more runs in test

*In August 1989, Kallicharran himself became the target of racial abuse from sections of the crowd whilst playing for Warwickshire at Northampton (see *Daily Mail* (4 August 1989)).

**The Cricketers' Association – the 'trade union' of English cricketers – was put on a firm financial footing after receiving cash from the Transvaal Cricket Union in 1973. Over 100 current members have passed their winters and supplemented their incomes, either playing or coaching in South Africa. Neal Radford of Worcestershire and England, for example, has played for both Transvaal and the South African Army (see *Cricket Life International* (October 1989)).

cricket than any other Englishman, publicly promised Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the English tour of India in 1981 that he would never play in South Africa again. Even while he was actually making this promise, Graham Gooch writes in his book, *Out of the Wilderness*, [20] Boycott was arranging recruitment, with clumsy subterfuge, for the subsequent 'rebel' tour of South Africa (which included Gooch himself, as captain) a few months later.

The organisation of the tour, financed by the Holiday Inn hotel multinational (which also has powerful interests in the Caribbean), reads like the plot of a spy novel, with the top English cricketers all being clandestinely approached, and (according to Gooch) only David Gower and Ian Botham turning down the offer because of principled positions against apartheid. Feted, wined and dined in 'five-star comfort' by the white racist elite of South Africa's cricketing establishment and paid £45,000 each for their 'work', this was what Gooch called the 'big, brave concept' of breaking through the cultural and sporting boycott of South Africa. Gooch sought to vindicate himself by declaring that he was simply a cricketer pursuing his trade, that there was generally strong support in England for him (illustrated by right-wing parliamentarians like Lord Chalfont, the South African government's most prominent House of Commons lobbyist, John Carlisle MP, and the 'Freedom in Sport' organisation). He also claimed that he was snubbed by the 'coloured' cricketers represented by the South African Cricket Board – an affront he described as a 'reversal of apartheid' – and, anyway, why give more than a thought to the black population, for to 'suddenly hand over control to the blacks could create a situation of pure farce'.

It is not just that black English cricketers have to play alongside and against men with such views, but that the English cricket authorities appoint them as captains of their national team – as Gooch was appointed in 1988. John Emburey, also a profiteer of tours to South Africa and an active campaigner for Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, was appointed during the same season.* Under such pressure, two black British cricketers, Roland Butcher (who plays in the same county team, Middlesex, as Gatting and Emburey) and Philip de Freitas, were tempted to join Gatting's party to South Africa in 1989. But, responding to the counter-pressure of indignation across British black communities (with Cowans playing an important persuasive role in the case of Butcher, his Middlesex team-mate), the two players withdrew just over a week after the touring party was

*Gooch was re-appointed, this time to lead the English tour of the Caribbean during the winter of 1989. On the day of his appointment (8 September 1989), twenty-five black South Africans were killed in Cape Town as they protested against the 'whites only' national elections

announced. The incident demonstrated, however, the influences that surround black players in the English county game.

While these events were happening, a delegation from South Africa's Mass Democratic Movement (including Krish Mackerdhuj, president of the South African Cricket Board) arrived in England to attempt to persuade Gatting and his party to pull out of the tour. 'Our message is simple', they said. 'These tours will set back our efforts to develop non-racial sports. They will give comfort to the apartheid regime and its supporters. They will undermine our struggle to create a non-racial and democratic South Africa.'[21] Bill Morris, the black deputy general-secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union, wrote an open letter to Gatting. It declared: 'If you decide to go to South Africa, the hurt that will cause to the opponents of apartheid and the damage it will do to the prospects of other sportsmen will never be forgiven or forgotten. It will permanently overshadow your success on the cricket-field. Is that how you would really wish to be remembered?'[22]

Meanwhile, anti-apartheid activists picketed cricket grounds at Sheffield, Cheltenham, Derby, Southampton, Lords itself and other venues where the cricketers from the touring party were playing, and the people of South Africa, through their own Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), continued with their campaign of defiance of apartheid's racist laws. As South African police arrested 113 women hospital orderlies during a Cape Town protest on 22 August and tear-gassed a peaceful demonstration of black children, a union spokeswoman – being dragged away to detention – spoke out: 'We are protesting against our pay, against the way they treat us like dogs and against the government's plan to make worse laws against the trade unions.'[23] On the same day, the tour organisers secured another recruit, Greg Thomas, the Northants fast bowler. 'It will be a big disappointment not to be able to play for England,' he was quoted as saying – referring to the ban against representing England for five years imposed against the tourists by British cricket authorities – 'but financially there was no question what to do.'[24] It was an echo of the contention of Yorkshire fast bowler Paul Jarvis: that he had to go on the tour, because he needed the money to pay the mortgage on his new house. That was the present condition of Lord Harris' vision of the 'etiquette, influence and morality' of the imperial game.

Black newcomers

With the exception of the Caribbean islands and the *maidans* of Indian cities like Bombay, there is probably no place in the world where cricket is played with so much fervour as in the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire, in the north of England. Lancashire in particular, has

attracted a large number of black players who have been employed as professionals for the league clubs. From Learie Constantine employed at Nelson in 1929 to Viv Richards at Rishton in 1987, the Lancashire leagues have been ambivalent hosts to black players. Constantine played when it was a rarity to find black cricketers, indeed black people, in the cotton towns of Lancashire. Although he encountered 'colour bars' in hotels and racist petulance among cricket administrators, he found the people warm and hospitable and, when he decided to leave, 'could not walk half a mile in the streets without being stopped literally hundreds of times by all sorts of people I didn't know from Adam: men, women and even youngsters begging me to stay'.[25] The Nelson Old Prize Brass Band rendered 'Abide with Me' for Constantine in the interval of Nelson's first match after his decision to leave the club was announced. But that was the era when a black cricketer was an exotic, unthreatening figure. By the 1960s, when immigration acts, emergent fascist groups and Enoch Powell were beginning to make life harder for the larger numbers of black people in the north of England, conditions were somewhat different.

In 1960, Basil D'Oliveira, a cricketer from Cape Town who was classified by the apartheid apparatus as 'coloured' and who had achieved brilliance while playing on the rough matting pitches of the 'coloured' league of Western Province, arrived in England. After the intervention of cricket commentator John Arlott, amongst others, he had been offered a contract playing as a professional for Middleton, in the Lancashire League – which was worth £450 for the entire season. When it was discovered that he still had to find £200 for his passage, his fellow cricketers in Cape Town banded together to collect enough money to make it possible for him to reach England and start a professional career. This was to take him eventually to county and international level (as a player for England, of course, not South Africa) and he became the reluctant catalyst for South Africa's eventual isolation from world competitive cricket when its government refused to accept his inclusion in the English touring side of 1968. In his autobiography, D'Oliveira explicitly denied he was writing a 'political' book – as Arlott wrote in his introduction, 'any time since 1960 a single word from him on apartheid would have been dynamite'.[26] But his book tells of the 'unrelieved depression' of trying, as a black stranger to England and English cricket, to cope with his new conditions in the northern industrial town that was his new home. 'I could think of nothing else except hide', he wrote. And later, when his wife arrived to join him and they would go to the cinema, he was always conscious of hostility from the people around him: 'We always thought they were staring at us and muttering to each other: "What are those people doing here?" Often my right arm would have bruises the following morning where my wife gripped me so hard.'

Keeping the White Rose white*

Yorkshire has proven to be an even more unwelcoming territory for black cricketers. For, unlike Lancashire, whose county side has frequently included black players like Patrick Patterson from Jamaica and Wasim Akram of Pakistan and whose captain for a number of years was Clive Lloyd, Yorkshire County Cricket Club retains a birth qualification which has helped to exclude black players from selection for the 126 years of its history. As Neville Cardus (a Lancastrian) once wrote: 'The joke about Yorkshire cricket is that for Yorkshiremen it is no laughing matter. It is the possession of the clan and must on no account be put down, or interfered with by anybody not born in the county.'[27] In a post-imperial era, where much of the chauvinism of Empire and nation has been transferred to a regional or city jingoism – which itself has been fanned through the parochial fervour of football team worship – the notion of the Yorkshire 'birthright', far from withering away, has grown stronger. In 1987, the rumour that the Yorkshire club was considering 'signing' West Indian captain Viv Richards to play for the county side was greeted by aghast ex-Yorkshire cricketers like Fred Trueman as a crime. Trueman later threatened to tear up his membership card of the county club if an 'overseas' cricketer ever played for Yorkshire.

In his history of Yorkshire cricket, *We Don't Play it for Fun*,[28] author and cricket commentator Don Mosey reveals the archaic yet still current bigotry that lies behind this notion of the 'clan'. Speaking as a Yorkshireman, Mosey muses: 'If lesser mortals, unfortunate enough to be born on less hallowed ground, do not really understand our point of view, then that's their problem.' Calling Yorkshire players 'the chosen people of cricket . . . the pleasure has come from being the best', Mosey's rhetorical humour is at least half-serious, and illustrates the restrictionism and narrowness of mind that is fertile soil for racism. This became clear in the particularly crude terms of Yorkshire Tory MP John Townend in August 1989, as the fascists of the British National Party were planning their anti-Muslim march through Bradford. Speaking of the British Muslims who had protested against the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Townend declared: 'They should be told they have the answer in their own hand – go back from whence you came.' He continued, 'Have we been so debilitated that the English have lost their voices and no longer think of themselves as the sole possessors of England?'[29]

On the day the 1989 tour of South Africa was announced, Ray Illingworth, ex-Yorkshire and England captain, revealed another ugly

*The White Rose is the traditional emblem of Yorkshire and Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

aspect of this institutionalised prejudice: 'We've been dictated to by these countries overseas for too long. I don't blame these players, they have to look after their families and their own future.'[30] The same week, a group of Yorkshire football supporters, wearing the colours of Leeds United, were seen fleeing from the scene of the murder of a young Spanish waiter, Jesus Moreno, in San Antonio, Ibiza, a favoured haunt for drink-crazy young 'Brits' who proudly wear T-shirts with such legends as 'You Hate Us, and We Don't Care' and whose holiday pleasure consists of fomenting drunken brawls, vandalising streets and restaurants and insulting local people.[31] This brutality of thought has also found its way on to the Leeds cricket terraces at the county ground of Headingley. Viv Richards was almost brought to resist physically the racist insults hurled at him there when playing for Somerset against Yorkshire in 1986, and in the previous season, black Gloucestershire and England fast bowler David Lawrence described the hostility he met there from the local Yorkshire crowd:

> It makes me sick when I hear Yorkshire committee men saying they have the best, most loyal supporters in the world; that there weren't any racist fans in the crowds. It's absolute rubbish. I was standing on the boundary line and there was a whole section calling me all the names under the sun. They called me nigger, black bastard, sambo, monkey, gorilla, they threw bananas and I had to take these insults.

While playing against the Australians at Bristol during the same summer, he received a letter with a Yorkshire postmark which declared: 'Don't shout yer mouth off nigger, you won't be welcome next time, Nig Nig.'[32]

Such sentiments, of course, are not restricted to Yorkshire cricket supporters. In Bradford, a city close to Leeds, Asian young people have been brought to using cricket bats as a means of self-defence against groups of marauding white youths who have threatened their neighbourhoods and screamed abuse at their community.[33] The point is that the institutionalised Yorkshire chauvinism, such as that proclaimed through the 'birthright' policy of Yorkshire cricket, buttresses the root causes of such violence and racism. There has never been a black person who has played for Yorkshire. You need to have been born in the county. Thus, the thousands of young black people who have come to live within its boundaries, having been brought there as children by their immigrant parents to live in places like Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Halifax – even if they had arrived in these cities as babes in arms – are barred from playing cricket for Yorkshire. Even though exceptions have been made for aristocrats who captained the county side like Lord Hawke

(born in Lincolnshire) and a number of other players, there is no room for black Yorkshire residents born outside Yorkshire. Devon Malcolm, who came to live with his family in Sheffield from Jamaica when he was 16, and who went to a local college and played cricket for a local club, had to 'cross over' the county boundary to play county cricket as a fast bowler for Derbyshire, from where he gained international recognition for England in August 1989.

Such a situation is absurd and tragic, not only for black young people within the county growing up as Yorkshirewomen and Yorkshiremen, but for Yorkshire cricket itself. For its players in the past were instrumental in transforming the game from the property of the southern aristocrats and middle classes into a sport with a genuine working-class orientation. Whereas in southern England, cricket is still mainly the preserve of suburbanites and men in white collars in Yorkshire it is a game loved and played predominantly by working people, organised through leagues and village and works sides. Players of extraordinary and original ability like George Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes – both from the village of Kirkheaton near Huddersfield, the first who worked as a wirer for a hand-loom weaver and then in the dye-works, the second as a railwayman before turning professional – contributed to changing the entire character and constituency of cricket in the early part of the twentieth century.[34] Unfortunately, they, and hundreds of other players like them, including Sutcliffe, Leyland, Hutton and Fred Trueman from the mining village of Maltby in South Yorkshire, never challenged the Yorkshire chauvinism so embedded in its county cricket.

A part of the struggle

The first black cricket players that caused interest in Yorkshire were the members of the Australian Aboriginal side who toured England in 1868. When they arrived to play a match at York, they were excluded from the luncheon tent on the grounds of race. A contemporary balladeer turned this event into verse:

> Now Gents should be Gents and not snobs,
> But I am sorry to say,
> The Yorkists refused the blacks to lunch
> Until they done that day . . .[35]

Although 'this untoward event was the cause of much criticism and many comments', as a Yorkshire contemporary wrote, it set the direction for the relationship between Yorkshire County Cricket Club and black cricketers which in some basic ways has not changed since.

In August 1989, David Sheppard, the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool who played cricket for England during the 1950s, wrote the following about South Africa in *The Cricketer*:

> Any substantial numbers of boys cannot have facilities because the Group Areas Act confines black people, coloured people and Asian people to inadequate land. Providing good cricketers needs an unbroken chain – boys' cricket, village and park cricket, good club cricket, first class cricket. Those of us who have lived and worked in the inner cities in England know how difficult it is to give opportunities to boys in areas where good club cricket is only to be found at a distance in another kind of suburb.

Sheppard is correct to liken the situation in South Africa to Britain in this regard. In the inner-city areas of England, where black young people are most numerous and their appetite for cricket is at its strongest, resources for the sport are at their most pathetic. Only one in twenty schools in inner London, for example, plays regular inter-school cricket fixtures and there are few innovative attempts by local councils to remedy this. A notable exception is the Haringey Cricket College, which has developed a number of talented young black cricketers of both sexes.[36] Recently, I played a match in a neighbourhood park in Sheffield where the majority of residents are of Pakistani descent. Of the twenty-two players and two umpires, all were white, while the vast majority watching were black young people. The Yorkshire club's claim is that such young people have 'a certain insularity'[37] that stops their involvement in the leagues. Brian Close, one of its most famous committee members and another ex-county and England captain, tells black cricketers that they 'must integrate into the top leagues'.[38] Yet, when the Yorkshire County Cricket Club opens an 'Academy of Cricket' in Bradford, despite the thousands of black Yorkshire youngsters, many of them with a deep attachment to the game – particularly those from the Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean communities – no black prospect could find a place amongst the eleven apprentices initially taken on at the 'Academy'. And this, even though clubs like Hanging Heaton have produced very talented black players, through the coaching of professionals like prominent international stars Abdul Qadir and Dilip Vengsarkar.[39] Thus, when journals like the *Sheffield Weekly Gazette* blandly declare that 'There are no charges of racism to answer. Rather, there is some dismay at Headingley that no coloured player has yet proved good enough to graduate to county level',[40] they receive a cynical response by black cricketers, as do the promises of 'ethnic days' for talent-spotting, to be organised by the Yorkshire county club.

The 'integration' arguments have proved very unconvincing. In its efforts to join the South Riding League, Sheffield's Caribbean Cricket Club has been turned down *twice*. First, it was told that its pitch was not up to the standards of the league. Then the league, satisfied with the pitch at last, decided that the *team* itself was below standard, even though, in its second letter of application, the club secretary

maintained that in recent years at least six of the club's players had been transferred to clubs playing in division one of the league, and two others had moved straight into the stronger Yorkshire league, with one of these going on to play for Derbyshire in the county championship. Neville Roe, a white businessman who has supported and sponsored the Caribbean CC, is very critical of the way in which the league and its white clubs treat black players: 'They will accept a couple of blacks in the team – like a quick bowler or fast-scoring batsman – but it seems to me that there is prejudice against a whole team of blacks playing and socialising in their own way.'[41] When Paul Miller, a Caribbean CC player, joined the prestigious Sheffield United Club and became its sole black player, he felt estranged and neglected – as he had when he was the only black member of the Yorkshire Colts side: 'I was just there to make up the numbers. I never got any encouragement or coaching. I was never welcome.'[42]

With this pressure, it is not surprising that talented black cricketers living in Leeds, who play for regular league sides on Saturdays, prefer to play in their own league – the Quaid-e-Azam League – on their Sundays. Likewise, Owen Gittens of the Caribbean CC asserts that 'Sport is a very important way in which we can improve the lot of our own people',[43] and the club has become the fastest-growing sports club in Sheffield.

The daunting obstructions faced by black sporting organisations like the Caribbean CC are not restricted to bureaucratic obstacles, lack of interest, discouragement and non-recognition of their players' talents. In 1987, a series of attacks on their newly-established ground in Ecclesfield near Sheffield began. First, the clubhouse windows were smashed, then broken glass was scattered over the pitch. In 1987, an arson attack caused £8,000 worth of damage to the roof and the club tractor was destroyed. Then, in 1988, the club scorebox was also burned to the ground. The groundsman, who has worked at the ground for thirty years, had never before encountered trouble of this kind.[44] Although the South Yorkshire police dismissed these attacks as 'petty vandalism', Caribbean CC member and local council race equality officer Mike Atkins concluded that they were further evidence of the 'endemic racism' in Yorkshire and its cricket. This attitude continues within the ruling circles at the county club level. The *Yorkshire Post* reported on the club's October 1989 general committee meeting in the following way: 'In the "out tray" went Captain Phil Carrick's proposal to strengthen the team by signing players from outside the county boundaries. There was no support at all for an overseas import, and there were only three representatives in favour of signing "foreigners" born in England.'[45]

Yet, despite – and because of – the history of this most contradictory and ambivalent of games, black cricketers all over the world play on, at the most basic but most essential level of their clubs and

leagues, sparking an essential part of their national culture – whether in Karachi, Barbados, Soweto, Sydney or Yorkshire. For those communities in struggle, cricket – the imperial game – is transformed and becomes a part of the struggle.

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KEITH WITHALL

How not to tackle racism on TV

One aspect of British racism is the representation of minorities, especially black people, on the main television channels. The images range from the derogatory to out-and-out stereotype. Or there is nothing. Many black people complain bitterly about the insults, caricatures and silences of black life on the little box. A small minority of white people complain with them, while the majority would appear to have their prejudices confirmed and endorsed by most TV programmes.

However, while the bulk of small-screen output is rightly characterised as unthinkingly racist, there are a few programmes that hold themselves out as questioning and critical. Unfortunately, their very rarity value tends to screen them from critical analysis. While a number of writers have examined the silences and absences of TV about racism, we also need to look carefully at the small proportion of programming that offers a counter view.

* * *

The average adult in Britain watches about twenty-six hours of television a week. Most children watch over thirty hours, exceeding the time they spend in a schoolroom. The range of programmes is phenomenal: news, politics, entertainment, films, music – even minority hobbies like antiques. When those who go out to work come home, TV provides a 'comprehensive' view of British and world

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society. Consuming this viewpoint would appear to leave little time for anything else, certainly not alternative or opposing viewpoints.

The voice in which this world is presented to the viewer is a populist one. People who know, explain and report the world for the good of all, or at least for the majority who are good citizens. The voice is neutral and objective; it is this voice that opens discussion and asks the questions and it is important that we viewers both participate and respond. But what does this approach signify when the subject of discussion is television itself, in a supposedly self-critical mode?

In June 1988, BBC *Network* broadcast a studio programme about racial stereotyping on TV.[1] For forty-five minutes a studio audience was invited to air and discuss the medium's shortcomings. Anna Ford, a very popular and well-established broadcaster, chaired the programme. An ordinary member of the public was invited to set the tone and content by making a short video on the topic, with BBC assistance. The audience included a large number of black people, TV professionals from both the BBC and IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority), and white critics. Here, in the persons of this selected group of 'ordinary' people, the viewers were invited to confront TV, in the persons of a few programme-makers, on its treatment of black people.

While the programme appeared to encourage criticism, participation and openness, these actually took place within very closely defined limits. Take, for example, the constructed nature of the audience. This carefully selected studio group, including many professionals, was presented as typical, average – a selection of the viewers at home.

Moreover, the group was carefully controlled by the authoritative presence of Anna Ford, who moved the microphone, and thus the argument, as she thought fit. For example, the only mention of class and gender saw the boom microphone speedily lifted and transferred across the floor to safer questions. Most importantly, there was an underlying consensus between audience members, TV professionals and most critics about the perceived problem. This consensus revolved round 'reforming' the errors of television. The paragon of good practice to which it should aspire was *The Cosby Show* which featured in the introductory video and in a number of comments. Only one mildly critical voice questioned its relevance to anti-racism in Britain. In the US *The Cosby Show*, which reproduces the mores of white middle-class sit-coms, is miles away from the experience of the mass of black people. In Britain it is even further away.

This appearance of participation in and self-criticism of TV is a recent development. When the BBC enjoyed a broadcasting monopoly, the approach was still that laid down by Lord Reith: people were given what the establishment considered good for them. In the

1950s this meant an almost complete absence of images of black people from the screen. There were the occasional quaint news reports about 'new arrivals', but, overwhelmingly, TV programmes were for and about white people. Throughout the 1960s, TV continued to follow where the establishment consensus led. As increasingly racist immigration legislation was passed, and racist views were given credence and respectability in politics, TV took on the themes of immigration control and the black presence. Its approach was exemplified by the BBC's *Questions of Racism* programme which focused on the views of Enoch Powell and implied that the problem was black people.

However, the growth of support for the far Right, whose anti-black and anti-immigration propaganda flourished in this climate, appears to have caused some concern within the establishment and a few palliative measures were introduced. Thus, while the media continued to display blatant racism, they also exhibited contrary traits which aimed at some form of assimilation. So, with the 1970s, came programmes which both aimed at and featured black people (admittedly usually on the fringes of programme schedules). Now, in the 1980s, TV provides both programmes for 'black audiences', like *Network East* and *Bandung File*, and mass audience programmes which feature black people, the most recent being *Shalom Salaam*.

This has created the growth of a distinct black group among TV professionals. And both black and white liberals in the media have started to develop strategies that they believe will open up TV to the voices of black people. But the bias of these programmes is invariably towards an interpretation of racism as a personal affliction and not a problem of a white-dominated society or system – and aims, therefore, to address and 'convert' individuals by making them aware of their racism rather than question institutions.[2]

One of the most influential, significant – and highly touted – programmes to emerge from this context is *The Black and White Media Show*. For the programme-makers, many reviewers and a large number of race relations trainers *The Black and White Media Show* appeared as a small but effective counter-blast to TV racism. But, like much liberal argument, the programmes failed to challenge the underlying ideology of the TV institutions, and thus, while presenting a list of criticisms and complaints about television, they really failed to get to the heart of why TV in Britain so consistently insults or ignores black people and other minorities.

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The Black and White Media Show Part 1 was first shown in August 1985. It was repeated alongside the first showing of Part 2 in 1986.[3]

Both programmes (each lasting some fifty minutes) attracted over four million viewers, around the figure for *Panorama*. They were repeated again, in December 1989. Their format was to provide viewers with examples of TV extracts which were subjected to criticism by a panel of 'experts'; these experts included some members of the TV audience. The programmes were presented not only as an offering by the TV institution itself in self-criticism, but also as an exercise in which the viewers were invited to share. According to the then current *Radio Times*, 'This programme offers a chance to assess extracts from comedy and drama programmes, and to test some of your own attitudes.' This would appear to have been the guiding assumption for the programme-makers as well:

> One of the significances of *The Black and White Media Shows* is that they are not the work of outside pressure groups, nor are they criticising other organisations and institutions for racism: they represent a model for attempting some self-monitoring – they are made in a spirit of self-reflection by the BBC as an institution.[4]

Already in these comments are clearly indicated both the invitation to audience participation, characteristic of 1980s television, and the concentration on individual attitudes. There is also the unspoken presumption of dispassionate neutrality, of value free, and ideologically free, comment. For Michael Grade, then Controller of BBC1:

> at the end of the day, the real solution is . . . the greater employment of black people, making programmes. And the first influx of graduates, if you like, into television, are beginning to come through now to senior positions of editorial responsibilities. There's not enough people like that in the industry.[5]

This emphasis on viewers' attitudes and individual programme-makers was reiterated in a number of ways in both programmes. The nub of Part 1 was not an analysis of racism in any of the institutions of society, but statistics of prejudice among the white population and the supposed interrelation between TV and attitudes. Stated the commentary:

> Well, to quote from research findings: television both reflects and affects attitudes; focuses and reinforces assumptions about racial matters. It legitimises and perpetuates negative perceptions of black people. And, to the extent that it portrays stereotypes, it contributes to a culture of racism accepted implicitly by the TV audience.

In both programmes the meaning attributed to 'racism' contributed to this emphasis on individuals. The term was never defined in a

formal way, but was described by a number of the programme's experts, 'So there is no colour problem. There is a white prejudice problem . . . ' They talked of black 'disadvantage' in education, housing, social security and employment; of white people 'suffering from a deep, unconscious prejudice which we've not succeeded in eliminating from ourselves'. Key words in these definitions are 'white prejudice problem', 'disadvantage', 'unconscious prejudice'. 'Disadvantage' carries the implication of reducing 'unequal opportunity' for 'ethnic minorities' by improving the lot of some individuals; 'unconscious' and 'prejudice' conjure up individual attitudes, individual guilt and individual remedial action.

The viewers are left to draw out what anti-racism means in the same roundabout way, through two programme extracts. The commentator tells the viewer: 'Some fictional soap operas now clearly see it as their job, not simply to reflect prejudice, but deliberately to counter it.' The *Albion Market* extract features racist graffiti, with a sympathetic character referring to the fight against Nazism in the 1930s; *East Enders* refers to racism in terms of the Nazi extermination camps. Thus, anti-racism becomes a problem of dealing with evil men and evil attitudes and, implicitly, one foreign to Britain and British society.

This ideological standpoint also limits the view of racism it presents by a series of omissions or silences in the programmes. One of the points made in passing is whose voice should be heard, a point raised by Professor Parekh à propos the IRA. At no point in this discussion of racism is any mention made of one of the oldest variants – anti-Irish prejudice – though two indirect references to Irish people and the occupation of the Six Counties appear in programme news extracts. The armed occupation is, of course, taboo in the British media, with continual censorship of news and discussion from the Six Counties and, in 1988, an outright ban on Sinn Fein spokespersons. But there is no investigation of one of the state agencies most closely implicated in this censorship. The state-appointed governors of the BBC and IBA and their managers are hardly visible in the programmes, except for the occasional reference to 'the top corridors of power' and the appearance of Michael Grade. There is no discussion at all of the role and ideology of this group.

That, of course, is not the only omission. Significant for any discussion of racism is scrutiny of the police and their relations with black people. But though they figure quite prominently in the programmes, they are not treated at all critically. The only 'expert' allowed to remain anonymous is a police officer. He appears, states his point of view and is gone. Media discussion of police harassment and police racism are entirely absent. Yet the programmes were shown in the same year as the seizure of TV footage of police/black confrontations in the St Paul's area of Bristol, and the two shootings of

unarmed black people by police officers.

The question of how the media depicts fascists and racists is passed over in silence. Yet one of the chosen topics among the extracts, the dispute at Imperial Typewriters in Leicester in 1974, crucially involved a fascist/racist organisation, the National Front. Instead, we get references to the Nazis, a phenomenon that dates back fifty years and a whole decade before the large-scale migration to Britain of black people. Coverage of immigration, too, as all critical viewers must be aware, is frequently based on unquestioned and racist assumptions, resulting in racist portrayals of black people – even when, sometimes, the subject is their harassment at the hands of the immigration authorities! But this, too, is ignored.

Significantly, the programmes make virtually no attempt to relate the oppression inflicted via racialisation to that inflicted via gender (the two specific mentions of 'disadvantage for women' in Part 1 notwithstanding); nor do they attempt to draw out the interconnection of race and class – class is mentioned only once, in Part 1, and simply as an additional disadvantage to race. It is clear, but not commented upon, that the majority of the people in the programme extracts are from the most oppressed sections of the black communities. But just as the class nature of the television establishment is unremarked, so is the class nature of those who are treated most negatively by it.

* * *

One of the methods of criticism adopted by the programmes is to examine the hidden messages in the examples of TV racism being studied. Yet they fail to offer any self-examination of their own hidden aspects, or even to give the viewers overt information for such an examination.

One noticeable feature, for example, is the use of the authoritative voice-over. This recurs throughout, placing and commenting upon extracts, interviews and representations. Despite the claim that it 'allows the viewer to be your own TV critic', this obtrusive voice repeatedly points out what is considered the relevance of each input. The voice appears to be white and middle class (female in the first programme and male in the second) – a standard voice of television. In neither programme is the voice-over commentary announced or identified. The name of the reader only appears in the end credits. Yet the voice is very powerful, providing both comment and essential information.

In Part 1 it declares: 'So there is no colour problem, there is a white prejudice problem, confirmed by Home Office figures and Mrs Thatcher's government white paper on black Britons.' In Programme

2 it states the nature of the problem: 'Some viewers wanted more reference to the lack of equal opportunity, identified by Lord Scarman as a basic cause.' This voice-over, accompanying film of Brixton and of black people, informs us, via the authority of Lord Scarman, what is the *real* issue.

The commentator is unseen, as is usual in TV programmes. But she or he is joined by a group of highly visual and vocal participants, who appear at various stages to provide information, explanation and comment. These are the experts. We know they are experts because they are presented with titles describing their position and status – head of media studies, professor of philosophy. And they are displayed as experts, most sitting behind a desk, an obvious symbol of authority. Bob Ferguson (head of media studies) opens and closes extracts with a flick of a button on a video recorder. And Michael Grade's power is exemplified by the battery of TVs playing away behind his desk. Of course, more voices make for more viewpoints. But it is clear that in *The Black and White Media Show* the extent of any deviance is strictly limited. The interviews of these experts were filmed and edited. No admission of this fact appears in the programme, but it is clear from disjunctures in the dialogue that cuts have been made. In Part 2, two separate self-contained interviews (with Peter Gill of *TV Eye* and Professor Parekh) are intercut to give the effect of a studio discussion. This is common in current affairs, but as well as disguising the editing hand of the programme-makers, it plays upon the audience, as if drawing it into a discussion rather than letting it take in two separate (in time, space, etc) points of view.

The selection of voices for the programmes is also hidden from the viewer. In *The Black and White Media Book*, largely based on the programmes,[6] it becomes clear that the common link between all the commentating voices is, apparently, an involvement at some level with RAT, or racism awareness training, as a solution to (individual) racism. Thus, there is a common viewpoint among the participants which would seem to set effective and unspoken limits on discussion and disagreement.

Both programmes privilege certain voices and people. While pains have obviously been taken to ensure a sufficiency of black experts, who are presented as such, the other, often unconscious, prejudices of television appear unremarked. So while most of the experts appear behind desks, we find that one of the women is filmed standing in an office while a phone rings in the background. Presumably this was not intentional, but it reinforces the sexist categories at work on TV. When we come to the depiction of working-class people, the contrast is more glaring. These sequences are, in fact, taken from footage of other programmes. They include a black man interviewed in a car, and a young black woman filmed on the balcony of a high rise flat – not

backgrounds which (though realistic, at one level) endow these interviewees with the 'authority' accorded the experts.

In fact, the programmes visually replicate the social structure they uphold. Comments by Michael Grade are usually accompanied by comments about 'top corridors' and a crane shot to the top of the BBC building; women are found in less grandiose settings, like a secretarial office or pool, and working-class people in high rise flats or working men's clubs. Yet, in the comments on *Panorama* or *TV Eye* we are asked to notice the way the programmes describe people and their surroundings.

It is in discussion of another instance of voice-over that an equally disturbing and unremarked aspect of the programmes emerges. Quite a lot of attention is paid in Part 2 to an edition of *Horizon* entitled 'Are you a racist?' (One of the strategies of Part 2 is to confront programme-makers with criticism of their work, yet again emphasising the role of individuals). 'Are you a racist?' filmed a weekend shared by black people and self-professed racists. The black voices on *The Black and White Media Show* are extremely critical of this production.

In a complex sequence, carefully arranged by cutting from programme extracts to interviews and back again, it emerges that producer Ed Goldwyn's commentary – which had already, in his view, been reduced to the minimum statement he could make by *Horizon*'s editor – was cut further when the programme was repeated. In response, Goldwyn had his name taken off the credits. What was omitted was a concluding statement that 'We must recognise the pain and isolation racism inflicts on black people. We must find a way to change racists' views.'

According to a black woman teacher:

> The BBC or the people responsible for taking that decision [to cut] have missed the whole issue about racism in this society. It makes me wonder how serious they are about combating racism as an institution.

It was Michael Grade's 'personal' view, however, that 'Ed Goldwyn's original script endpiece was fine. I think the edited-down version was fine. I also think that removing it for the repeat was equally fine.' Everything is fine because Michael Grade says so – and he is Controller (or was).

By the end of this section most viewers would probably sympathise with both the dilemma of Ed Goldwyn and the anger of the black teacher. But the problem identified is presented as one of editorial control, and editorial control embodied in individuals. The programme-makers, through their carefully constructed filming, editing and commentary, replicate, for their own viewpoint, the very

practices which are the subject of their investigation. And the self-criticism which they apparently enter into serves, in fact, to deflect the viewer from passing judgment on the BBC as an institution into empathising with the plight of the producer – from the 'racist BBC' to 'poor old Ed' in a few subtle moves. Thus, they construct, through this spurious self-criticism, evidence for their argument that the solution is more right-minded individuals, not basic changes in the structure.

But it is only by addressing the actual make-up of television and its underlying assumptions that it is possible to facilitate viewers' independent critical judgment. Yet the programme-makers never question the rightness of their own assumptions. Thus, in Part 1, the programme contrasts two pieces of news film, one from the BBC, one made by the programme-makers themselves. Both purport to show events round the dispute at Imperial Typewriters in 1974. After the two extracts, and read-over black and white stills from them, we hear:

> Given that many viewers are prone to anti-Asian prejudice, which report is the most responsible journalism? The dramatic pictures of the first appear to tell a story about Asian strikers who are a problem to the police. While the second presents an abuse of white power as a problem to Asian workers.

The language is loaded: 'responsible journalism' presupposes pluralist access to the media; 'abuse of white power' suggests the depoliticised world of racism awareness. Both downplay the political and class dimensions. Neither extract actually mentions the activities of the National Front, which was active around the dispute.

* * *

Initially these programmes – set in the context of an unending stream of negative images of black people – seemed powerfully to redress the balance. Letters in subsequent editions of the *Radio Times* bear witness to the success of the programme-makers in some sort of attitudinal change.

> I was really stunned and shocked by *The Black and White Media Shows* (5 August BBC1). I must admit that I tended to take pride in the fact that I, personally, would prefer to be judged by my character, rather than by the particular religious beliefs in which I was brought up to believe. This splendid programme opened my eyes and made me look at myself again.[7]

The strong combination of exposing racist images, featuring black voices, questioning assumptions stood in clear contrast to the bulk of

transmitted material. But, having 'stunned and shocked' their audience, what did the programmes then provide? Their concentration on attitudes rather than considerations of social justice, etc., gave rise to fairly obvious criticisms of special pleading, as a letter to the *Radio Times* showed: 'No one gets excited if there is poor or inaccurate reporting where white people are concerned. Nor has there been any great protest because the English, Welsh, Scots and Irish have made jokes about each other in appropriate dialects for years . . .'[8]

The narrow concentration on a specific, individualistic interpretation of 'race', directed at people as individuals, did nothing to enable them to question the social relations that make them, as individuals, powerless. The programmes provide what I would describe as a reified concept of race. They divorce it from the concrete social conditions which both support and engender it. Race becomes something nasty which we should feel guilty about, which we should overcome by education. It is equated, by Michael Grade, with obscene jokes. According to Dr Parekh, 'You are trying to lift people, from an inherited and entrenched prejudice to a different level of awareness.' Grade concurs: 'I hope the message of this programme will be debated by the black communities, by the wider audience on BBC 1 and by department heads. And I think it is part of an ongoing process – of being accountable on the air as much as in our own offices – in these matters.'

The underlying pluralist tone conveys the message, that, by all pulling together we can eradicate this undesirable blot on our civilised society. If it is suggested that the very organisation and structure of our society daily engenders these problems, that suggestion is not containable within the limits laid down by the ideology dominant in the media and its commitment to slow consensual change. Even within the terms of slow consensual change, there are question marks. Part 1 of *The Black and White Media Show* ended on the words: 'Questions about the training of white programme-makers, questions about the recruitment and editorial roles of black staff in the media, remain to be examined and answered in other programmes.'

Part 2 was noticeably quiet about further programmes. It may be that even the limited criticisms made by these two programmes are too strong for the BBC. Carl Gardner, in an article which discussed *It ain't half racist, mum* (an Open Door programme on media racism made with BBC assistance), described quite appallingly negative responses from the BBC.[9] He also set out a strategy for a more thorough-going line of attack on racism on television in which, among other things, he asks both for a consciously anti-racist starting-point and standpoint, including radical politics, and (importantly) for the conscious use of alternative practices in the making and presentation of the programmme. Neither these programmes, nor any I know of, have even approached Gardner's requirements.

There is one other area in which the BBC, even in its slow consensual way, might be expected to act – scheduling. But if we look at the programme environment for *The Black and White Media Show*, we find, as a letter to the *Radio Times* pointed out, 'the very next night racism, sexism and soft porn were featured on *There's a lot of it about* (BBC2)'.[10]

Part 2 was shown in August 1986. Only a few weeks later, on 22 September, a programme in BBC schools broadcasting, entitled *What's wrong with Britain*, started out with film of violent confrontation between black youth and police. Yet, the programme actually dealt with Britain's economic decline, including a nostalgic harking back to Isambard Brunel and his iron steamship *The Great Britain*. It is indicative that in a programme about economics, the BBC should draw the link so many people believe to exist between black 'immigrants' and economic decline, a myth that *The Black and White Media Show* passed over silently.

As I have argued above, this ideological standpoint expresses the dominant ideology of television. It is also inherent in the racism awareness approach which appears to be part of the strategy of these programmes:

> Racism is not, as RAT believes, a white problem, but a problem of an exploitative white power structure: power is not something white people are born into, but that which they derive from their position in a complex race/sex/class hierarchy; oppression does not equal exploitation; ideas do not equal ideology; the personal is not the political, but the political is personal; and personal liberation is not political liberation.[11]

Sivanandan's argument points to the need not just to change some attitudes, but to confront the real sources of exploitation and oppression. It is true that, in so doing, there will be changes of attitudes, but to concentrate on attitudes alone is to miss the real problem. As with the bulk of television, *The Black and White Media Show* presents and encounters people as individuals, rather than seeing them as members of classes, class fractions, gender groups and radicalised groups.

There is a hint that some of the programmes' participants hold views different from, and possibly more radical than those offered for the viewers' inspection. We do not know in what way these views may have been distorted in the programmes' construction. Nor can we tell what are the responses of these people to the finished product. They are never asked, at least on screen. Even less do we find out what is the response of all the oppressed black people who flit across the TV screen in these two hours set aside for racial oppression.

What we can be clear about is that the real causes of their oppression continue, that the ideology which both confirms and draws

strength from that oppression continues and grows. The same television in the news over recent weeks has highlighted both unemployment and underemployment, incidences of falling wages, deterioration in housing, in health care, and in welfare benefits. The category of 'immigrant' continues to dominate the screens with case after case of deportation of black people. *The Black and White Media Show* did not open up the debate on racism in the media; it helped to foreclose it. That closure needs to be challenged.

References

1 BBC1 *Network* (7 June 1988).
2 See A. Sivanandan, 'RAT and the degradation of black struggle' *Race & Class* (Vol. 26, No. 4, Spring 1985).
3 Both programmes are available on video from the BBC Continuing Education Department. As we go to press, a third programme in the series has been announced.
4 John Twitchin (ed.), *The Black and White Media Book* (Stoke on Trent, 1988). Based on the shows, it suggests ways of using the programmes.
5 *Black and White Media Show*, programme 2. All quotations are from the programmes unless otherwise indicated.
6 Twitchin, op. cit.
7 Letter to the *Radio Times* (3/9 August 1985), p. 72.
8 Letter to the *Radio Times* (3/9 August 1985), p. 72.
9 C. Gardner and M. Henry, 'Racism, anti-racism and access television: the making of "Open Door" ', *Screen Education* (No. 31, Summer 1979).
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JULIE MATTHAEI and TERESA AMOTT

Race, gender, work: the history of Asian and Asian-American women*

From 1840 until the Second World War, Asian immigrants – first Chinese, then Japanese, and finally Filipinos – were recruited into the western United States (US) and Hawaii as a low-wage, second-class labour force. Unlike white immigrants, they were not seen as permanent settlers and laws specially restricted their rights. Only Asian Americans born in the US were accepted as citizens; the immigrants were permanent 'aliens', and whites were able to pass numerous laws to discriminate against them (for example, preventing them from purchasing lands) simply by referring to their alien status. They faced vicious discrimination from white workers (who resented their low-wage competition and their use as strike-breakers), from white employers (who found them less attractive as they began to form effective labour organisations) and from self-employed whites (who resented Asian successes in small businesses). From the late nineteenth century until the Depression, there were broad-based white movements to try and restrict Asian immigration and even to send migrants back to Asia. In response to these pressures, between 1850 and 1950, federal and state governments passed about fifty laws aimed at restricting and subordinating Asian immigrants. Anti-Asian sentiment culminated in laws excluding further immigration: Chinese

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*An abridged version of a chapter of the authors' book, *Race, Gender and Work: a multi-cultural economic history of women in the United States* (Boston, South End Press, 1990).

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immigration was cut off in 1882 and 1892; Japanese in 1907, 1908 and 1924; Indian in 1917, and Filipino in 1934.

Initially, the numbers of women relative to men were low – one to nineteen among the Chinese in 1860, for example. Employers sought out single male workers, most of whom came as 'sojourners', planning to return home after they had made their fortunes. Although laws and experiences with women's immigration varied between the groups, all faced the difficulty of forming families across the ocean – miscegenation laws prevented marriage with white women – especially when further immigration was cut off. For all groups, it took decades before a sizeable second generation of Asians was born.*

Chinese-American women

In the mid-nineteenth century, the needs of US capitalists for cheap labour coincided with economic crisis and massive dislocation in China, compounded of internal rebellion, loss of peasant lands to large landowners and the Opium wars, in which China was forced to cede territory, including Hong Kong, to the British. To take advantage of the situation, western firms set up a lucrative 'coolie' trade (literally 'bitter labour'), aided by highly-paid Chinese middlemen who recruited workers and contracted them out. While physical coercion was not unknown, most Chinese men came to the US voluntarily, if forced by desperate economic straits, expecting to strike it rich on 'Gold Mountain' (as they called San Francisco) and return.

Chinese workers were especially attractive to US and Hawaiian employers who could contract mainly young, able-bodied men whose children and wives were prevented from joining them. By 1852, 11,787 Cantonese Chinese had come to the United States, only seven of whom were women.[1] Since the costs of producing another generation of workers and caring for the dependants were borne in China, employers could keep wages low, and the men were ideal for migrant farm work, mining and railroad construction, where a mobile workforce was needed. Finally, Chinese men were desirable because of their experience in China, working in 'excavation work in hilly terrain' and in sugar cultivation.

Early Chinese male employment

Chinese men first came to the US in large numbers in the late 1840s, during the Gold Rush; by 1860, they comprised 10 per cent of California's population and almost 25 per cent of its labour force. In

* There is some difficulty in characterising Asians in the US as Asians or Asian Americans. Generally, we will describe immigrants as Asians and second generation and on (i.e. those born in the US of Asian parentage) Asian-American.

the next twenty years, another 105,000 immigrated. Independent white miners had exhausted most lands, and mining companies used the Chinese as contract labourers to search for the dregs, primarily in California but also in other northwest states. A second wave of Chinese workers came to work on the most dangerous segment of the transcontinental railroad, through the Rockies – thousands lost their lives in this work. Chinese men were also employed in San Francisco's woollen mills as a cheap substitute for white workers: 'Stop paying American workmen three dollars a day and substitute Chinamen at a dollar and a quarter, and then you will make money', urged businessman Louis McLane.[2] They were also concentrated in citrus- and celery-harvesting, fishery work and cigar-making, and urban Chinese men could be found in the cigar, slipper, sewing and shoe-making industries.

Although most Chinese immigrants worked as low-paid wage workers, some were able to work for themselves. Some miners, especially the early migrants, laboured independently, even if under debt. In response to the shortage of domestic servants, Chinese men set up hundreds of small laundry businesses in San Francisco. Many were successful in truck gardening and large-scale tenant farming, and others accumulated large amounts of land to farm and ranch. Chinese fishermen in southern California villages successfully exported millions of dollars worth of abalone and shrimp annually in the 1870s and 1880s. In urban Chinatowns, too, there were many small Chinese businesses: 1878 San Francisco boasted grocers, restaurants, apothecaries, fancy goods and jewelry stores, for example. Although women were fewer in number, their unpaid labour as wives was crucial for the success of many of these small businesses.

Wealthy Chinese import-export merchants from the scholar-gentry class formed the elite of nineteenth-century communities in the US. Although they differed from the mass of Chinese immigrants in class, culture and language, they dominated the Chinese political organisations, including the patriarchal clan organisations and the secret societies. Some merchants were also capitalist producers, hiring poor Chinese at meagre wages to produce goods such as cigars and garments. Others became rich by contracting out Chinese workers to white capitalists, or by profiting from prostitution. Merchants' wives lived sheltered lives, cared for by servants and filling their time with decorative needlework and socialising with others of their class.

On the plantations of the Hawaiian sugar industry, Chinese, and later Japanese and Filipinos, were used in large numbers. From the 1850s to 1870s, Chinese men (an estimated 93 per cent of immigrants were men)[3] were the largest group of workers. Many married Hawaiian women, but a few immigration companies did encourage men to bring their wives, with an eye both to using female labour in

the fields and to encouraging stability among the workers.

The majority of women immigrants in Hawaii were Cantonese, many of whose feet had been bound. 'Lily feet', as they were called, were desirable among brides, even though they made walking unassisted very difficult and painful, so women with bound feet performed light work such as cane cutting and stripping. Southern Chinese women, however, did not practise foot-binding, and they worked in the fields alongside their husbands.

The split-household family, the Gum-Shan-Poo and prostitution

In nineteenth century China, marriages were arranged between parents: the couple met on the day of their marriage, and then moved to the husband's town to live with his parents. Village leaders pressured the male emigrant to marry and attempt to conceive a male descendant before he left. The emigrant had to promise to send money for his family and village, and his wife and children remained in his parents' home to guarantee his cooperation with the arrangement.

The migration of Chinese women into the US was kept to a trickle by a combination of factors: the economic motives of family patriarchs in China, the view that it was indecent for a woman to travel abroad, reports of sexual molestation by sailors and anti-Chinese violence in the US, and contractors' and employers' insistence on single men. What Evelyn Nakano Glenn has called a 'split-household family system' was created,[4] and some families remained split through many generations. Thousands of Chinese women led the life of a Gum-Shan-Poo, a 'Golden Mountain lady', married to a man who lived and worked in the US and who returned seldom, if ever.

Most immigrant men were able to send enough money home to keep their families alive, supplementing whatever a wife and children could provide for themselves through subsistence farming or other means. Emigrants who could afford to returned for visits and to father children – boy children often joined their fathers in the US when of age. However, when the flow of money stopped during times of war or natural disaster, families in China were left in dire straits, and 'became refugees or were compelled to sell their belongings, homes, children, or even themselves to stay alive'.[5]

Prostitution of Chinese women in the US developed and thrived within this split-family situation, and it was encouraged by white capitalists, who wanted to keep wives and children from immigrating and increasing labour costs, and by racist whites, who wanted to keep the Chinese from reproducing in the US.[6] In the early years, a few Chinese women came to the US of their own accord and worked independently. Ah Toy arrived in San Francisco in 1849 to 'better her condition', worked as a prostitute, and then became the madam of a brothel of Chinese women.[7] Soon, however, the Chinese secret

societies or tongs took over and organised the lucrative trade – between 1852 and 1873, the Hip Yee Tong imported an estimated 6,000 women (87 per cent of all Chinese women arrivals).[8]

Male Chinese purchasing agents for the tongs went to Canton and Hong Kong to recruit young girls into prostitution. Sometimes the exchange was open: agents bought girls from poor families as outright slaves or under contract for an average of four and a half years. When the contract expired, a prostitute was theoretically free, but other rules, which lengthened the years of contract if she was ill or had a child, made such freedom difficult to achieve. When they arrived in California, the girls were sold to wealthy Chinese as concubines, to higher-class brothels reserved only for Chinese men, or to 'inferior dens of prostitution which served a racially mixed clientele'.[9] Not only the Hip Yee Tong made money on the trade: white policemen were paid off (at $10 a head), white lawyers and customs officials grew rich as increasingly restrictive immigration codes were passed, and Chinatown landlords (over 90 per cent of land was owned by whites) were able to charge brothel owners exorbitant rents.

Chinese prostitutes worked in conditions far inferior to those of white prostitutes. No wages were paid, although gifts could be kept, and in the daytime they were forced to do sewing work subcontracted out to their employers. Those in low-grade brothels lived locked in tiny rooms, often facing dim alleyways, and some were shipped into mining camps, where their treatment was especially harsh.

While many Chinese prostitutes were never able to free themselves, almost all found ways to keep their daughters out of prostitution. White society, however, saw it as natural for Chinese women – 'the Chinese are lustful and sensual in their dispositions; every female is a prostitute of the basest order', said the New York *Tribune* in 1856.[10] Indeed, the immorality of Chinese prostitution was cited as one of the reasons to stop Chinese immigration in 1882, although white prostitution was equally prevalent.

Organised Chinese prostitution began to decline in the 1870s as whites passed laws against it and then ended Chinese immigration in 1882, and as a result of raids by Chinese missionaries. More and more Chinese women were married and worked as homemakers. In cities, they also worked for pay at home, doing laundry or sewing, rolling cigars, making slippers or taking in boarders; in rural areas, they earned income from gardening, fishing or raising livestock. Chinese women were also servants, cooks and farm labourers, and a few fished, mined, ran lodging houses or worked on the railroads.

The Anti-Chinese movement

By the 1870s, US whites began a movement against the Chinese. Town after town passed laws which pushed them out of mining.

Although the essential motive seems to have been economic self-interest, it was combined with virulent racism. An Arizona editorial called Chinese 'filthy', 'heathens', 'disgusting' and 'barbarous'; a Montana journalist wrote: 'We don't mind hearing of a Chinaman being killed now and then . . . Don't kill them unless they deserve it, but when they do – why kill 'em lots.'[11] All over the West they were expelled from small towns and rural areas in what the Chinese called 'the Great Driving Out'.

Sinophobia was also strong among urban whites in California, fuelled by the use of Asian workers as strike-breakers or low-wage competition. The white Workingmen's Party of California led the assault, with 'The Chinese Must Go' as its slogan; it called the Chinese 'the most debased order of humanity known to the civilised world.'[12] Political and labour leaders incited violence – in one of the worst episodes, a white mob attacked the Los Angeles Chinatown in 1871, lynching nineteen people and stealing $40,000 in cash.[13]

White activism resulted in numerous anti-Chinese laws in states and localities, especially in California. Taking advantage of the alien status of Asians, California state laws levied special taxes on them, prevented them from testifying against whites (by declaring them American Indians) and buying land (from 1913 to the 1950s), and legalised their exclusion from public schools, among other things. And Chinese immigration itself was terminated in 1882 by the Chinese Exclusion Act. As a result of such laws and of anti-Chinese sentiment, the Chinese-American community actually contracted from 124,000 in 1890 to a low of 85,000 in 1920, rising again only very gradually, to 106,000 in 1940.[14] West Coast and Hawaiian employers turned to Japan for their cheap labour.

The 1882 Exclusion Act prevented single Chinese women as well as the wives of US residents (except those of merchants) from immigrating, solidifying the sex imbalance. Those sojourners who now wished to send for their wives could not do so. Further, miscegenation laws (in operation until 1967) prevented Chinese men from marrying white women – only a few married Indian, African-American or Mexican women. Most Chinese men who had migrated to the US single could only start a family by going to China, marrying and returning, leaving their wives and future children there. Thus, the split-household family system continued over generations, well into the twentieth century. In one typical family history, a 21-year old college student in the 1980s was the first in four generations of split families to be born in the US.

During the 'Great Driving Out' of the late nineteenth century, many Chinese lost their land and businesses and moved into the urban ghettos, 'Chinatowns'. The proportion of Chinese farm labourers fell, as did the number of Chinese wage-workers in urban areas, as white workers prevented white capitalists from hiring them. Chinese

capitalists could not offer many jobs because white consumers boycotted Chinese-made products. Many Chinese women, however, continued to work as seamstresses, in canning or as domestics – garment work was especially common, some girls beginning to work as young as 7 years of age. In 1938, in the middle of the Depression, Chinese women garment workers employed by the National Dollar Stores organised their own union chapter, went on strike for thirteen weeks and won a contract and better wages and working conditions.

Many Chinese were able to circumvent the restricted labour market by forming small businesses, despite white hostility – in 1937, in San Antonio, Texas, the Chinese community stopped a drive to push Chinese out of the grocery business. Most Chinese businesses were in Chinatowns, but not all – for instance, some Chinese set up small shops in the South to serve blacks, who were refused by whites.

Once Chinese men registered as merchants, they could send for their wives and children. 'Small-producer' families were formed, much like the white family businesses in colonial times. Super-self-exploitation of the whole family was necessary to turn a profit. One Chinese woman from Boston's Chinatown described her family's laundry business in the 1930s and 1940s: it employed all four children and both parents, and the work day was 7am to midnight, six days a week; the children worked the same hours, except for school and a short nap, and did their homework from midnight to 2am.

The Second World War watershed and the new immigrants

The Second World War proved to be a watershed. Since Japan had invaded China in 1931, Chinese Americans, for once, felt a common interest with the US when war was declared on Japan after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, and both women and men served in the armed forces. The labour shortage created by the war forced the US government to prohibit discrimination against Chinese and Chinese-American workers in defence industries. Chinese-American women workers were finally allowed into office work outside Chinatowns. Jobs in the civil service, professional fields and factories also opened up – and the new stereotype of Chinese-American women as obedient 'office wives' was formed.

Political alliance with China and Madame Chiang Kai-shek's visit to the US further eased anti-Chinese-American sentiment. In 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed: Chinese were put under the racial quota system for immigration (allowing 105 Chinese immigrants a year) and Chinese immigrants became eligible for citizenship if they could prove they had entered before 1924, or had come in under the new laws as permanent residents. A later amendment to the 'War Brides Act' also allowed Chinese servicemen, once they had become citizens, to bring their wives and children to the US. Many rushed to

China to marry before the Act expired in 1949.

For five years, almost all the immigrants from China were women and children. Upon arrival, they were interrogated to prove their right to immigrate and some were detained or harassed. In 1948, Leong Bick Ha hanged herself in an immigration detention centre after being held three months there. One hundred Chinese women detainees protested her death with a day-long hunger strike. Finally, in response to adverse publicity and public pressure, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service ended its policy of detaining Chinese immigrants, after over 100 years of the inhuman practice. Subsequent immigration acts – in 1952 and 1965 – eased the sex imbalance in the Chinese American community.

The Chinese immigration of the 1940s and 1950s, however, was small compared to that after the 1965 Immigration Act. The Chinese-American population quadrupled between 1960 and 1985, from 236,084 to 1,079,400.[15] But the specific provisions of the laws created two very different communities: the 'Uptown' and the 'Downtown' Chinese. On the one hand, elite professionals, particularly scientists and engineers, have been actively encouraged by the US government. On the other, a substantial proportion of the immigration quota is allocated to relatives of Chinese already settled in the US – mostly poor, rural Cantonese who had resettled in Hong Kong.

The 'Uptown' Chinese, many of them women, come with considerable resources, and their experiences have raised average income statistics for Chinese Americans, giving the false impression of upward mobility in the US. Actually, the 'Uptown' Chinese were already educationally and socially elevated in Taiwan and China, and have simply transferred that status. And, indeed, discrimination has ensured the downward mobility even of such model immigrants.

The 'Downtown' Chinese, on the other hand, live and work in Chinatowns – where they need not know English – and have revitalised these areas, which had been declining as second-generation Chinese moved out. But garment sweatshops and other Chinatown employment, in restaurants and laundries, are often part of the 'underground economy', unprotected by labour laws. While the garment workers have become increasingly militant, Chinese women have taken the lead in struggles over community control and education in Chinatowns across the US. In Los Angeles, in the 1970s, the Chinatown Education Project won improved education for Chinatown children, and in Boston, Chinese women led the fight for local input into 'urban renewal' plans that threatened Chinatown. Chinese immigrant women organised 'It's Time', a New York City group serving tenants, mostly from the Chinese community, facing evictions, harassment and deteriorating buildings.

Japanese-American women

Japanese workers were not sought until Chinese immigration was stopped in 1882. Although similarities existed between Japanese and Chinese immigration – contract work in Hawaii and on the West Coast, limitations on immigration as a result of US racism, initial unbalanced sex ratios – there were also profound differences. Japanese women were key to these differences, since they came in greater numbers than Chinese women and came earlier in the immigration period.

For the Japanese government, which first permitted and later encouraged emigration to the US, it was seen as a solution to the growing problem of landlessness, while the remittances of the emigrants were looked upon as an important source of income to impoverished families.[16] In contrast to Chinese emigrants, most of those who left Japan were literate, including the women – an education was deemed to make them good wives and wise mothers. Such education had much in common with the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity. As among whites, however, not all women were able to live their lives according to such precepts; for the vast majority of peasants and tenant farmers, backbreaking work for economic survival took precedence over notions of womanhood.

By 1910, there were over 72,000 Japanese in the continental US, mostly educated young, single males who worked as unskilled labourers on the railroads and in the mines, as gardeners or laundrymen, as 'houseboys' in domestic service or as field hands. Conditions for the field hands were harsh, and many workers died from the heat, beriberi and tuberculosis. According to one account from the 1890s: 'During those days around Fresno, labourers did not even carry blankets. They slept in the field with what they had on. They drank river water brought in by irrigation ditches . . . If they ate supper, it consisted of flour dumplings in a soup seasoned with salt.'[17] Nearly all these agricultural workers were recruited by Japanese labour contractors who earned high incomes by charging the workers not only a daily commission, withheld from their wages, but also medical fees and service fees for sending money back to families in Japan.

Some 'Issei' (first-generation immigrants) were able to set up small businesses, including laundries, hotels and stores, catering primarily for Japanese clients who faced discrimination by white-owned businesses. And by 1900, there was a sizeable number of Japanese sharecroppers and tenant farmers.

Issei women, prostitution and 'picture brides'

During the early years, most Japanese migrants were men – in 1900, there were twenty-five Japanese men for every woman. Most women immigrants came as part of families and worked in agriculture, as

domestic servants and alongside their husbands in small family businesses. The most common form of non-agricultural employment for Japanese women was domestic service.

However, as with the Chinese, the unbalanced sex ratio made prostitution a thriving business. The first reports of the presence of Japanese prostitutes date back to the 1880s.[18] Many of the women were abducted or tricked into coming; others were sold into prostitution by their impoverished families. Once they arrived in the US the women were often held in bondage by *amegoro*, pimps who used physical intimidation and lived off their prostitutes' earnings. Prostitution was fairly strictly segregated by race: *Hakujin-tori* catered to whites, *Shinajin-tori* to Chinese and *Nihonjin-tori* to Japanese.

In the 1890s, San Francisco and Seattle newspapers began to publish a series of sensationalist articles about the presence of Japanese prostitutes. The Japanese government adopted a number of measures to stem their immigration to the US, fearing that exclusionary measures would be imposed on the mass of Japanese immigrants, as they had on the Chinese. Japanese student leaders in San Francisco petitioned the Japanese Foreign Ministry, claiming the women were 'a blot on our national image and national morality' and that 'if this notorious vice spreads, America will adopt measures against us in the same manner as she did formerly against the Chinese'.[19] However, Japanese leaders' attempts to protect their communities by dissociating themselves from Chinese immigrants failed and Japanese workers and farmers became the targets of racist violence and agitation. In 1907, the Japanese government was finally forced by the US to limit the emigration of Japanese men, and entry was closed to the unskilled. But the entry of wives and relatives was still permitted. With the exclusive immigration of Japanese women, the ratio of men to women began to fall, and by 1920, 34 per cent of the Japanese immigrant community was female.[20]

Of the women who entered the US between 1909 and 1920, over half – an estimated 23,000 [21] – were 'picture brides' who had never seen their husbands. The picture-bride practice was a variation on the traditional Japanese marriage form, in which families selected marriage partners for their children using go-betweens. The picture brides tended to come from the same backgrounds as the men they married, who, typically, were approximately ten years their senior and had lived in the US for a while. The Japanese government regulated the practice of photo marriage in a number of ways: men were required to show evidence of stable employment and have savings of anywhere from $800 to $1,000 – labourers were ineligible until 1915. The brides had to pass physical examinations and be no more than thirteen years younger than their husbands.

Women became picture brides for a number of reasons. Most obeyed their parents, since 'to refuse would have been an act of filial

disobedience, a grave moral offence';[22] others came to help their families by remitting money back to Japan. One traveller described her thoughts:

> gazing upon the rising majestic Mount Fuji in a cloudless sky aboard the ship, I made a resolve. For a woman who was going to a strange society and relying upon an unknown husband whom she had married through photographs, my heart had to be as beautiful as Mount Fuji. I resolved that the heart of a Japanese woman had to be sublime, like that soaring majestic figure, eternally constant through wind and rain, heat and cold. Thereafter, I never forgot that resolve on the ship, enabling me to overcome sadness and suffering.[23]

When they arrived, picture brides, having been subjected to degrading inspections, saw their husbands for the first time at the station. Until 1917, the US government did not recognise photo marriages as legal, so group marriages were conducted on arrival. Once outfitted in uncomfortable western clothing, picture brides followed their husbands to their new homes. According to Evelyn Nakano Glenn:

> Some went to remote labour camps that were built for railroad workers in the Mountain states, coal miners in Wyoming, sugar beet field hands in Utah and Idaho, labourers in lumbering camps and sawmills in Washington, and fish cannery workers in Alaska. Others, particularly those who stayed in California, went into the fields where their husbands tilled the soil as tenant farmers. In addition to working alongside their husbands, women in labour camps and farms often drew their own water, gathered wood to cook and heat the house, and fought to keep dirt out of houses that were little more than shacks . . . Women whose husbands resided in urban areas were more fortunate. They too worked long hours and kept house in crowded quarters, but conditions were less primitive, and the presence of an ethnic community eased their adjustment.[24]

Although most marriages were stable, some women deserted their husbands, often for another man. Accurate figures are impossible to obtain, but such desertion was common enough to feature frequently in the Japanese press. The close network of Japanese associations (local and business associations, language schools, temples, churches) which regulated and controlled community life were often involved in apprehending such couples, eager to uphold the strict moral tone of the community and concerned that such incidents reflected badly on the Japanese in general.

Then, in 1920, the picture-bride practice was ended, in response to a new wave of anti-Japanese sentiment – the brides, it was claimed by

one Californian senator, were breeding a new generation of US citizens who would take over agricultural land.[25] The Japanese associations and the Japanese government stopped issuing passports to picture brides – and over 24,000 single male Issei were left stranded in the US without possibility of marriage, since the vast majority of them could not afford to return to Japan to find a wife.[26]

Agriculture and economic advance

Women played a key role in shaping the economic status of Japanese America, since their presence made it possible for Japanese Americans to enter agriculture. The unpaid family labour of women and children 'allowed Issei truck farmers to compete effectively with white farmers, enabling them to gain a dominant share of the produce market'.[27] The Japanese success in agriculture was impressive: from thirty-seven Japanese farms in California in 1900, the number grew to over 1800 by 1910. By 1920, Japanese farms produced one-third of the truck crops in California. This success was the result of a labour-intensive, high-yield style of farming, very different from most of California agriculture, which tended to use more machinery and larger plots of land, and generated low yields.

This success was threatened in 1913 when California and other western states passed a series of laws banning aliens 'ineligible for citizenship' from purchasing land or leasing it for more than three years. But Japanese agriculture continued to expand between 1914 and 1920, largely because Japanese bought land in the names of 'Nisei' (the second generation, born on US soil and, hence, US citizens) or through land companies set up to circumvent the ban. The passage of yet another law, in 1920, aimed at plugging these loopholes, led Japanese farmers to develop a variety of new strategies to stay in agriculture. Besides forming land companies and issuing stock to Nisei or other US citizens, some Japanese farmers found Nisei middlemen to lease land and then hire them as managers or foremen. Others entered into oral agreements with landowners, who publicly hired the Japanese farmer as an employee, but privately permitted them to sharecrop or tenant farm. Whites entered these arrangements for economic reasons: Japanese farmers were so skilled at intensive cultivation that they were able to pay higher rents and achieve higher yields – in essence, they paid a 'racial rent premium'.

The Second World War and the aftermath

Japanese Americans had achieved great economic success by 1940, but bitter times were ahead. The bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941 set in motion a war not only between Japan and the US but also against Japanese Americans in the US. Immediately, their economic assets were frozen and hundreds of community leaders were rounded up and detained. Then, in February 1942, the 'evacuation' of 110,000 Issei

and Nisei from the coastal areas of Washington, Oregon and California was authorised on the grounds of potential sabotage and espionage. (During the course of the war, not one such incident was ever reported.) In one week families had to dispose of possessions, close up businesses and report to a temporary assembly centre. Farmers who had invested years of painstaking effort in raising orchards from seedlings had to sell them quickly, at low prices. Once they arrived at the assembly centre, Japanese Americans were tagged like luggage and transported to ten 'permanent relocation camps' in Utah, Arizona, Colorado, California, Wyoming, Idaho and Arkansas.

The camps, which held an average of 10,000 people each and were situated in desert or swamp areas where temperatures fluctuated between freezing and boiling, were surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by armed guards. Camp life was extraordinarily difficult. Families lived in tar-paper barracks divided into rooms housing an average of eight people. Walls did not reach the ceiling, latrines and showers had few or no partitions, and all meals were eaten in large communal mess halls. Adult internees were expected to work, for very low wages, at jobs such as cooking, farming, teaching and providing medical care.

Despite these conditions, Matsumoto suggests that camp life produced some aspects of equality for Issei and Nisei women[28]. And since they were now able to meet young men on their own, Nisei women moved further away from traditional Japanese practices of arranged marriages. Also, the war had generated such a severe labour shortage that the War Relocation Authority, which oversaw the camps, soon began to let internees leave to do domestic, agricultural or factory labour. Issei parents were reluctant to let their daughters go, but their hopes for the future rested on the Nisei generation, and so women were able to leave for schooling and on work releases. Although most work release requests were for domestic servants, Nisei women also found clerical and factory jobs. Some internees left to join the armed forces. Nearly 3,000 Nisei men from the camps joined other Hawaii and US Nisei in the segregated 442nd Combat Team, which became the most highly decorated combat unit of the war,[29] while 100 Nisei women joined the Women's Army Corps.[30] White newspapers refused to print the names of the Nisei war dead.

In 1945, the War Relocation Authority ended the West Coast exclusion and began closing the camps. By then, over a third of adult internees had already left. Japanese Americans returned to a dramatically altered way of life. Much agricultural land had been lost, along with businesses and homes, and whites in many of their former home towns greeted them with signs warning 'No Japanese Welcome'. Thus, the end of internment also saw the end of the highly segregated Japanese America, concentrated in the Pacific Northwest and in Japanese-owned or operated businesses. Although many remained

on the West Coast, others dispersed across the US: some of those who had been relocated to the Midwest or the East remained there; others found that their small farms had been displaced by competition from huge corporate farms; still others left the Japanese ghetto in cities like San Francisco and Oakland to disperse throughout the city.

The ban on Japanese immigration was lifted in 1952 with the McCarran-Walter Act (the Japanese quota, however, was only 100 persons); this act also struck down racial barriers to naturalisation, making those born in Japan but living in the US finally eligible for US citizenship. The 1965 Immigration Act further opened up immigration to Asians by eliminating the quota system, but, in contrast to the Chinese-American and Filipino-American communities, the Japanese-American community has not experienced a huge second wave of immigration in response to the Act.

The Japanese America of the 1970s and 1980s is dramatically different from that of the prewar period. Most Japanese Americans do not live in ethnic ghettos, and although they continue to experience discrimination and racist violence, they rank in the upper middle class economically.

Filipina-American women

A major cause of Filipino migration to the US prior to the Second World War has been the US colonisation of the Philippines from 1898 onwards, which followed centuries of Spanish colonisation. The US used the islands for agricultural export crops, as Spain had done before, and also as a growing market for US manufactured goods. Already, by the early years of the twentieth century the Filipino economy was in a shambles, following years of fighting and epidemics of cholera. Land ownership became increasingly concentrated and poverty, landlessness and tenancy grew in the rural areas. Along with the English-language public schools set up by the US, the stage was set for the first wave of Filipino migration. But whereas Chinese and Japanese immigrants were 'aliens', their colonial status made Filipinos US nationals, with the right to immigrate freely to the US. At the same time, they could be kept at the very bottom of the economic hierarchy because they were not allowed to naturalise unless they had served in the US navy.

Apart from recruitment to the Hawaiian sugar plantations after first Chinese and then Japanese immigration had been halted, Filipinos sought an education in the US. In the early 1900s, an estimated 14,000 Filipino young men, backed by the immense financial sacrifices of their families, came to study, most working as domestic servants to pay their way. This group of young Filipino men was joined, in the 1920s, by 16,000 from Hawaii and 9,000 from Asia. Of the 24,000 Filipinos who entered California between 1925 and

1929, only 1,300 were women. Most Filipinos found jobs at the bottom of the economic hierarchy: in agriculture, as servants, in hotels or restaurants, or in the Alaskan canneries.

Women, family and work

There were very few Filipinas in the US until the Second World War: in 1930, the male/female ratio was 14 to 1.[31] Perhaps the most important reason was that employers preferred single men (although, in response to worker unrest and strikes in 1920 and 1924, planters – supposedly to calm the workers – shipped in about 3,000 Filipinas). Also, Filipinos planned to return home; indeed, many did. Another factor was the different family structure in the Philippines, compared to China or Japan. When a Filipina marries, her ties with her blood family remain equal in importance to those with her husband's families. Hence, Filipinas may have been unwilling to migrate as part of a nuclear family – many waited for their husbands in the Philippines, similar to the Chinese Gum-Shan-Poo. Most Filipinos and Filipinas were Catholic as a result of Spanish colonisation, and divorce was unacceptable. Men who were successful financially tended to return home to their wives and families or to marry; those who stayed in Hawaii or in the continental US tended to remain single, often forming stable households together and paying prostitutes or 'taxi-dance girls' for their company.

White racism against Filipinos was organised by the anti-Asian movement. At a 1930 House Committee on immigration hearing, Fred Hart of Salinas claimed: 'The Filipinos are poor labour and a social menace as they will not leave our white girls alone and frequently intermarry.'[32] Whites verbally harassed Filipinos on the streets, calling them 'go-go' and 'monkey', and refused to allow them in their restaurants, barbershops, cinemas, swimming pools and tennis courts.

In the Second World War, young Filipino Americans were drafted and others found work in war-related industry. In Hawaii, planters contracted them out to war industries, but paid them their former wages and pocketed the difference. One tangible result of the war was an Act in 1946 which finally allowed Filipinos who had entered the US before 1934 to naturalise, thus giving them the right to vote for the first time and freeing them from the restrictions of the Alien Land Laws.

Some new immigration, especially of women, accompanied these changes. During the war, many men in the Philippines had enlisted in the US navy, even though they were confined to stewards' jobs. Many of these veterans applied for citizenship when a 1942 Act of Congress permitted foreign veterans to naturalise. Then the 1947-amended War Brides Act allowed Filipino-American citizens who had served in the

war to bring wives in as citizens. Filipinos, often in their 50s and 60s, returned to the Philippines to find wives.

Many Filipinas were, by this time, eager to come, convinced by colonial ideology that 'all Americans were beautiful and rich and that America must be like heaven'. Most wives ended up working in agriculture or in canneries with their husbands on the West Coast, as domestic servants in cities, or in family businesses. Large numbers of Filipinas came to the US after the Second World War, some as the wives of white servicemen who were stationed in the Philippines: over 63,000 arrived between 1950 and 1980.[33]

The third wave of Filipinos, following the 1965 Immigration Act with its provisions for Filipino immigration – for family reunification, or for professional workers – has created a bipolar income and job distribution among new immigrants, similar to that experienced by the Chinese. Family reunification provisions have allowed the relatives of present Filipino Americans to join their families. Most of these are poor, although many have basic education in English from their Philippine schools. The other, highly visible group of Filipino immigrants, however, is made up of well-trained scientific professionals for whom demand had grown sharply in the US during the 1960s, particularly medical personnel, many of whom are women. However, severe institutional discrimination ensures that they earn far less than their white counterparts, so that the economic situation of these professional Filipino immigrants is far from rosy.

War brides and the sexploitation of Asian women

Apart from the institutionalised racism and high levels of racist violence meted out to Asian communities generally, Asian-American women have faced a special kind of discrimination. The US involvement in wars in Asia – the Second World War in Japan and the Philippines, the Korean War and the Vietnam War – and US bases in those countries have placed generations of US non-Asian servicemen in contact with Asian women, mostly as prostitutes or tea-house girls. Amerasian children abound in Korea and Vietnam, ostracised by the local communities. Many of the 200,000 Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Filipino women who married white US servicemen and came to live in the US, many on military bases, lead difficult lives, due to language difficulties, lack of familiarity with US ways and psycho-social isolation. Many husbands, far from assisting their wives' efforts to adapt, become abusive or disenchanted; unaware of their legal rights, wives have been divorsed without their knowledge, lost financial support and custody of their children and even faced deportation.

Thousands more difficult relationships between new immigrant

Asian women and white men have been produced by the recent growth of the mail-order bride industry, which supplies Asian women as wives to non-Asian US and European men. Unlike long-distance arranged marriages or wife-sales of the past, which located wives of the same racial/ethnic background as the men, the mail-order marriage business is centred on the presumed difference of Asian women from US women. One survey of the men involved found that they 'see the women's liberation movement as the cause of their problems. They start with certain negative stereotypes of American women as aggressive, selfish, not family oriented. Then they add positive stereotypes of Asian women – family centred, undemanding, untouched by women's liberation.'[34]

The women involved, mostly extremely poor Filipinas, respond to advertisements placed by agencies in local newspapers which offer prospective husbands in the US (and in Europe). The agencies compile catalogues with the women's pictures, descriptions and addresses, which they sell to US men for about $150; the men write to the women who interest them, 'fall in love by mail', and marry. An estimated 2,000-3,000 US men find wives in this way each year. Many mail-order brides complain of beatings by their husbands, but fear deportation if they ask for help. Siriporn Skrobanek, a founder of the Women's Information Center in Bangkok, Thailand, views these marriages as 'another form of economic exploitation of the periphery by the centre, one which is so intensive that women in the peripheral countries have to sell their labour and sexuality to men on a commercial marriage market'.

The sexual stereotypes of Asian women affect Asian-American women in the economic and legal arenas. As Germaine Wong points out:

> The men who used Asian-Pacific women as prostitutes very likely feel today, consciously or not, that Asian-Pacific-American women are beneath their dignity; that we do not value ourselves because we are 'willing' to sell ourselves so cheaply; that we are only good for meeting their base needs; etc., etc.
>
> The men who saw Asian-Pacific women in places like tea houses may have come to expect us to be good, faithful, uncomplaining, totally compliant, self-effacing, gracious servants who will do anything and everything to please, entertain, and make them feel comfortable and carefree. All of this they had for 'free' when buying drinks or a meal; in present-day circumstances they expect this behaviour to come 'free' for the salary paid in exchange for work performed. They expect Asian-Pacific women to be like this 'by nature'; it is part of the charm of the Oriental culture.[35]

These stereotypes reinforce Asian women's segregation in office work. Assuming Asian-American women to be particularly pleasing and unaggressive, employers deny them pay rises and claim they lack the leadership qualities needed for executive jobs. These stereotypes have also led to sexual harassment of Asian-American women by police, and women reporting such incidents do not receive justice from the courts because of 'the prostitute stereotype'.[36]

* * *

Asian patriarchal practices, white society's racism, and the special sexploitation of Asian women have led increasing numbers of Asian American women to become active in Asian civil rights organising, in Asian women's movements, and in Asian lesbian and gay groups. They face many impediments: hostility from Asian men (who criticise Asian feminists and lesbians for destroying Asian community solidarity), the racism of white women (few of whom have any knowledge of the history or present status of Asian American women), vast differences among them (from ethnicity and language to class and sexuality), and the needs of many Asian American women, still, to focus on economic survival. Nevertheless, Asian American women have started Asian women's studies courses and study groups; writers' groups, such as the Pacific Asian American Women's Writers West; health and mental health projects and advocacy groups, such as the Pacific Asian Shelter for Battered Women in Los Angeles and the Asian Pacific Outreach Center in Long Beach; and regional feminist organisations, such as the National Organisation of Pan Asian Women, the National Network of Asian and Pacific Women, and Asian American Women United. Asian lesbians have formed political networks such as ALOEC (Asian Lesbians of the East Coast), which has created a slide-show of Asian lesbian history in India, China and Japan. Further, Asian feminists have begun to join in coalitions with other feminists of colour, in spite of historical differences and antagonisms.

In her 'Letter to Ma', Merle Woo tells her:

> Do you realise, Ma, that I could never have reacted the way I have if you had not provided for me the opportunity to be free of the binds that have held you down . . . ? Because of your life, because of the physical security you have given me . . . I saw myself as having worth: now I . . . see our potential, and fight for just that kind of social change that will reaffirm me, my race, my sex, my heritage. And while I affirm myself, Ma, I affirm you.[37]

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Notes and documents

UK commentary

The Guildford Four: English justice and the Irish community

After fifteen years wrongful imprisonment in English gaols, the Guildford Four – Patrick Armstrong, Gerard Conlon, Paul Hill and Carole Richardson – were finally freed on 17 October 1989 when their convictions for the IRA pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich were quashed by the Court of Appeal. The Director of Public Prosecutions had decided not to sustain the convictions, after major irregularities had been uncovered in the ways police had obtained their original confessions.

The four had been arrested and charged with murder and other offences arising out of the bombing of two pubs in Guildford in October 1974, in which five people were killed. Hill and Armstrong were also charged with murder arising out of a similar pub bombing in Woolwich a month later. These bombings were part of a major IRA campaign on mainland Britain (which also included the Birmingham pub bombing in which twenty-one people died) and which continued beyond the arrest of the four. The Guildford Four received life sentences, the trial judge noting that had it not been for the abolition of capital punishment they would have been sentenced to hang. The four had always strongly asserted their innocence and insisted that their confessions had been obtained by force. A lengthy campaign had been waged for their release.

Race & Class *spoke to Gareth Pierce, solicitor for Gerard Conlon and other Irish prisoners, about the case and its implications, and about the policing of the Irish community in Britain.*

Race & Class: On what evidence were the Guildford Four convicted?

Gareth Pierce: In a nutshell, they were convicted solely on the basis of statements they had signed, all of which were nonsensical, self-contradictory and contradictory as of one against the other. They were four very vulnerable young people, held in police stations for extended periods of interrogation, clearly with no knowledge of what had actually gone on in the bombings, prompted by the police to try and coincide with each other in their statements, but stumbling around in their inability to know anything significant. The police were content to prosecute on that basis. They trimmed the potential for a proper investigation by sticking to what they'd got, signatures on the bottom of confessions. They didn't hold any identification parade, even though they had good and clear potential identifying witnesses. They ignored the fact that many other people who were implicated in the statements asserted their innocence and couldn't be charged – or, if they were, the charges had to be dropped – which should have shown that the confessions were unreliable. What the defendants always said about the way the police had conducted the interviews has been supported by evidence that has now emerged about fabricated interviews.

R&C: A number of junior police officers who interviewed the Guildford Four may face criminal charges. Does the responsibility for these wrongful convictions rest with them?

GP: No. It's now clear that not just the police but the prosecuting authorities, including the DPP, suppressed evidence which was at the heart of the defence, including an alibi witness who said Conlon was in Kilburn at the time of the bombing – they knew Conlon couldn't trace witnesses himself. And they suppressed forensic evidence which showed that Guildford and Woolwich were part of a pattern of bombings which had continued after these four were arrested. Peter Imbert [then a detective superintendent in Scotland Yard's Bomb Squad and now Metropolitan Police Commissioner] interviewed the Balcombe Street defendants* and he interviewed the Guildford Four. You can't think that anyone with any intelligence could have interviewed the two groups – one a disciplined IRA 'active service unit' and the other, four rootless young people picked virtually off the street – and concluded that they were in any way connected. Yet, according to what I've read, Peter Imbert believed both lots of confessions. Everyone who had a hand in these prosecutions bears some responsibility.

*An IRA active service unit arrested in December 1975 after a five-day siege, who admitted the bombings at Guildford and Woolwich.

R&C: Why did this miscarriage of justice take so long to correct?

GP: The main responsibility for the past twelve years lies with the Court of Appeal, which failed to order a retrial in 1977 when the Balcombe Street bombers came forward. It was clear that a jury would then have acquitted the four Guildford defendants. But the Court of Appeal wouldn't have it. It usurped the defendants' right to a retrial by pretending it could listen to evidence in a subjective way like a jury. But you can't split a trial in that way, by allowing a jury to hear half the evidence and three Appeal Court judges, not equipped in any way to be considered the peers of the defendants, hearing the other half. That simply doesn't constitute a fair trial.

R&C: Gerard Conlon said on his release, 'If you're Irish and you're arrested on a terrorist, political type of offence, you don't stand a chance.' What do you think he meant by that?

GP: In almost every aspect of our treatment of Irish detainees we're in breach of international human rights law. The right to a fair trial is guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights, and under the UN Conventions on Human and Political Rights. These Conventions are permanently violated in trials where Irish suspects are alleged to be involved in political offences. The process begins immediately after arrest. The period between arrest and charge is used to spew out a string of prejudicial publicity about the alleged offence. By the time the suspects are charged, the whole potential jury pool will have had it implanted in their memory. But it doesn't stop there: then the security aspect of appearances at court takes over. The press regularly report the massive security presence. At magistrates' courts, you see police officers with pump-action machine guns literally posing for the cameras. There are always helicopters – or, in one case, a special new million-pound spy plane which circled round and round above the court. Then you have sniffer dogs dashing around the court very conspicuously, jumping up at the jury and barking.

R&C: So media comment undermines, or prevents, a fair trial of Irish defendants on political charges?

GP: Yes, the security operations are carried out very much with an eye to the media, which lap them up. But judges, too, refuse to take steps to mitigate unfairness or prejudice. The Winchester case is a good example. Three young people were arrested in 1988 when they were camping in Wiltshire, and charged with conspiring to murder Tom King [then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland]. They appeared first in a court that had been hastily rigged up in the middle of a police station. We were told that only one of the local magistrates would sit on the case – the rest were either too frightened or were

friends of Tom King.

When the case came to Winchester for full trial in October 1988, the combination of pressures on the jury were absolutely unparalleled. The trial was set to start on the first day of the Tory party conference, which was going back to Brighton for the first time after the bomb there. So you had joint headlines for the trial, shared headlines, about the return of the Tory party conference, and the plot to blow up the Tory party conference, and the plot to kill Tom King, all in one go. Also, the judge refused to move the trial, although Winchester is a garrison town – the only one where a majority of regiments which have served in Northern Ireland have their headquarters. The trial took place immediately after two serious incidents – one in Northern Ireland, where a coach-load of soldiers had been blown up, all of whom came from the Winchester regiment; and the other was the Mill Hill bombing, where a soldier from near Winchester was killed. So you had a trial taking place in a town which was deep in mourning, with memorial services immediately prior to the trial, and with pictures of the regiments in the local newspapers. Some of this could easily have been remedied by changing the date or the place of trial. The judge refused to do either.

On top of this, immediately after the defendants had emphasised that they were exercising their right to silence by not giving evidence in their own defence, Tom King, the alleged victim in the case, had an impromptu press conference and announced that he was abolishing the right to silence in Northern Ireland – implying silence equals guilt equals terrorism. That received massive coverage all night on television, with support from numerous ex-judges like Denning [former Master of the Rolls]. The jury couldn't have escaped seeing it. And here were three people in the middle of attempting to provide their defence. Again, the judge wouldn't order a retrial, wouldn't discharge the jury, and the three were convicted.

R&C: Judges should be the guarantors of a fair trial. Do they serve this function in Irish cases?

GP: In a trial there should be an attempt to put the individual and the state on a parallel footing. In Irish political cases, every aspect of official power that can be brought to bear on the individual is brought to bear, from the interrogation process onwards, with the willing and uncritical assistance of the press, who behave shamelessly. But there's no sanction applied by judges to stop that, or to stop police behaving in the way they do. So the judges themselves become part of the process by refusing to exclude improperly obtained evidence and by allowing the prosecution, for instance, to amend indictments after closing speeches, right at the end of the trial, when they realise there's a fatal flaw in the prosecution case. There's been a succession of the

most appalling judicial decisions, and not just fifteen years ago. It can't be said there was just a bad patch going on in 1974-5; this is regular practice. Every form of unfairness is deliberately applied.

R&C: Going back to the start of the process, the detention of suspects. Are there any measures used specifically against Irish suspects?

GP: Most, if not all, Irish prisoners who are arrested are detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which was introduced as an emergency, one-year measure in the wake of the Guildford and Woolwich bombings in November 1974. Renewed every year since, it has now been made permanent, and the British government has defied a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights which recently declared it illegal. The PTA gives police the power to hold people for up to seven days without charging them. Until the Police and Criminal Evidence Act came into force in 1986, people detained under the PTA had no access to a lawyer for the whole seven days (now they have access after 48 hours).

R&C: What are the effects of long periods of detention under the PTA?

GP: People who have been through that process, particularly if they were detained for seven days, have been subjected to the most extreme forms of coercion. While we're ostensibly in the middle of a debate about whether we retain a suspect's right to silence or not, in actual fact the right to silence has effectively been abolished for those detained under the PTA since its introduction. People who have emerged tell me that they come to welcome the periods of interrogation, because at least they're going out of the cell to talk to a human being. They don't have anything in their cells to stimulate them. They're not given books, newspapers, anything to distract them from their predicament. People are disoriented: usually the lights are kept on day and night; the food is always the same, whatever the mealtime it's always baked beans and an egg. There's no knowledge of what time it is; in the interview rooms the clocks are removed or covered over. Usually, they're not given a change of clothes, no toothbrush or toothpaste, nothing to shave with, so they feel dirty and degraded and self-hating and defeated, unable to respond to the situation with any stamina. A group of about thirteen students were detained for seven days at the time of Airey Neave's death.* They were never charged, and there was no evidence that they were involved in anything whatsoever. After their release, almost all of them dropped out of college; a couple of them have had nervous breakdowns; several of

* The Conservative Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, he was killed by a car bomb in 1979.

them had alcohol problems for years after; and one of them committed suicide. All of that was a result of the trauma of interrogation.

R&C: How is the Irish community affected generally by measures such as the PTA?

GP: People are regularly stopped as they come in and out of England. Police, customs or immigration have far wider powers of questioning at points of entry than inside the country. They can demand that passengers satisfy them that they aren't in breach of an exclusion order or involved in whatever it's suspected they may be involved in. The right to silence doesn't apply at all, or the right to know what you're being asked about. The likelihood of being stopped affects the whole of the incoming and outgoing Irish community, North and South; it makes an entire community in transit suspect. England and Northern Ireland is supposed to be one country, but for these purposes it isn't. And these powers are directed at a population which, in the North, is suffering from nearly 70 per cent unemployment and so is forced to disperse itself, migrate for work constantly; single men, in particular, come to England to work for a period and then go home again.

It's the only section of the British population I know which is in fear of travel in that way. People who are not involved in anything ring me all the time just to say they're planning to travel and would it be all right if their families or friends have my number, to ring me if they don't appear at a particular time off the ferry. It's like a form of kidnap. People just disappear – the authorities don't give out information about where they are or what's happened. I can think of families who have been desperately ringing every hospital in London and Belfast, and only finally finding out that the person's been arrested. Nobody else experiences this form of horror, this perpetual fear. Everyone's haunted by the memory of Guiseppe Conlon, who came to England when his son, Gerry Conlon, was arrested, and then was arrested and detained, and himself died in an English prison. That's the fear of everybody travelling, that that could happen to them.

R&C: You mentioned exclusion orders – what are they?

GP: They're another part of the punishment inflicted on the Irish community by the PTA, whereby, without ever being told why, you can be excluded by executive decision – not judicial but executive – either from England to Northern Ireland, or from England and Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland. You are simply served with an exclusion order. The right of appeal consists of an interview with an assessor appointed by the Home Secretary, who is not allowed to inform you why you're being excluded. Then you get a letter saying

whether the appeal's been successful or not, and most aren't. In fact, most people are too demoralised to appeal. The effect of an exclusion order is that whole families are separated, with the majority living in England and one member excluded, not allowed to come into England. This can go on for decades. People can be in prison here, serving very long sentences, and members of their families can be excluded when they've come in to visit them, so that they'll probably never see that member of the family again.

That's one reason why we haven't ratified the Protocol of the European Convention which provides for freedom of travel within the boundaries of the country. We can't ratify it because we're in breach of it.

R&C: Can you tell us roughly how many people are affected by these powers you have described?

GP: In 1985, the last year for which official figures were provided, 55,000 people were stopped and examined. We believe the numbers have increased since then. There have been something like 7,000 people detained for up to seven days under the detention provisions since the PTA was introduced. Several hundred people have been made the subject of an exclusion order.

R&C: Can we turn to the treatment in English prisons of Irish people alleged to have committed political offences?

GP: Some Irish prisoners have been appallingly treated. One example is the Birmingham defendants* who were beaten in the most brutal way when they went into Winson Green prison to await their trial. During that period [1974-5] the physical safety of Irish prisoners, before or after conviction, could not be guaranteed. That was not the only example. Now there are different forms of maltreatment, which are as serious – mainly the use of isolation and sensory deprivation.

R&C: Does that include solitary confinement?

GP: Many Irish prisoners are subjected to immensely long periods of solitary confinement. Paul Hill served over 1,000 days – three years – in solitary confinement. Seemingly endless forms of punishment are applied with no explanation, either '10/74', which is being moved to another prison without explanation, or Rule 43, solitary confinement for 'good order and discipline'. It's an administrative imposition which cannot even be raised before a disciplinary hearing of the board of visitors or the governor. There is no opportunity to be given reasons

* The Birmingham Six were convicted of killing twenty-one people in the bombing of a Birmingham pub in 1974. They have had two appeals rejected, despite widespread belief in their innocence.

or contest the allegation. For example, Brendan Dowd, one of the Balcombe Street defendants, who admitted they had done the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings, gave evidence at the appeal of the Guildford defendants in 1977 and was criticised by the judges for his poor memory on certain issues. They discounted much of his evidence. But he had been in solitary confinement almost continuously for two years prior to giving his evidence, and therefore his memory and his ability to communicate had been severely damaged.

R&C: Is this kind of treatment confined to men, or are women prisoners subjected to it as well?

GP: The use of isolation particularly affects women. One of the Winchester defendants, Martina Shanahan, was housed at Risley Remand Centre in Cheshire – the authorities felt she couldn't be housed anywhere in the south of England, even though that's where her trial was taking place, that's where her lawyers were and her co-defendants. She was extremely isolated. Her family could only travel on rare occasions. She was not allowed association with other prisoners. The prison authorities didn't speak to her. She was even stopped from looking out of the window of her cell at other prisoners on exercise. It was a form of sensory deprivation. Psychiatrists brought in at the time of her committal for trial found that her IQ had sunk to 77, which is barely borderline. She had been – is – a very bright young woman. She had lost the power of communication. She was very young – only 22.

The sexual vulnerability of women is exploited too. Two other women, in Brixton, were subjected to such repeated strip searches that a psychiatrist said that they would not be fit to stand trial because of the trauma that this constant searching caused them. In neither case was the court prepared to order any alleviation of their conditions, or grant bail so that they could face trial in a proper mental state.

R&C: Are there special prisons for Irish political prisoners?

GP: They are not acknowledged as political prisoners, although they're all Category A, that is, prisoners to be held in conditions of maximum security. Women are again in a peculiarly bad situation. There's only one prison which houses Category A women prisoners, which is Durham, a vile old Victorian prison. There is totally inadequate exercise, fresh air, showers, stimulation, education, association. Women in Durham have an extremely high incidence of gynaecological problems, an excessive number of hysterectomies and so on, and that must be because of the stress and trauma and unhealthy conditions. So, on top of serving a sentence, there's a danger that the women will be unable to bear children when, eventually, they come out, which is a grotesque additional punishment.

As for the men, they are moved around from prison to prison, with no reasons given and without prior notice. One prisoner I know has been moved 60 times during his sentence. Every time his family in Belfast has worked out how to get to a prison, what's a bed-and-breakfast place they can stay at, what bus to catch, he's gone somewhere else. And prisoners have been moved in the middle of a family visit often enough for you to think it can't be accidental or a mistake. So the family comes over for its one visit a year, and in the middle of the visit the prisoner is taken out, or they come back after lunch and he's been taken away, and for two days his parents aren't told where he is, and he's at the other end of the country. It's a form of sentencing the families, in a sense more savagely than the prisoner.

R&C: There have been campaigns for Irish prisoners to serve their sentences in Ireland. Have they had any success?

GP: For fifteen years Irish prisoners have been petitioning to go back to prisons in Ireland for the duration of what are usually very long sentences. They could easily be housed in prisons in Northern Ireland. There are empty prisons, or prisons with empty spaces there. Other prisoners regularly get transferred, including Loyalist prisoners, non-Republican prisoners alleged to have committed offences for political reasons, and British army personnel convicted of offences in Northern Ireland are moved back to be near their families. Yet prisoners who are Republican, or believed to be Republican, are discriminated against. There seems to be a deliberate policy here, to break down the ties, to break up marriages, to act as an extra deterrent and punishment. Families can't afford to come on visits more than two or three times a year, and the trip is difficult and long. Marriages break up that you don't think would have if there had been regular contact. Children grow up whose only knowledge of their father has been fifteen years of traumatic travel. A lot have behavioural disturbances. Elderly parents can't visit any longer, or die. It's the families who suffer; for the prisoner, being in prison is its own punishment. The whole process seems to be a violation of the right to family association, a right acknowledged by the Prison Rules which emphasise maintaining long-term contacts with prisoners' families towards eventual rehabilitation and release.

The irony of all this is that they're not recognised as political prisoners: the attitude of the Prison Department, the prosecutors and the judges is that these are criminals and must be treated as such. But, at the same time, everything that's done to them is loaded, and discriminatory, and different.

R&C: Does the Guildford verdict give you hope that other cases, particularly involving Irish and black defendants, may be reopened?

GP: There is never going to be the same opportunity for correcting some of the obvious wrongs in the system. It takes a cataclysmic disaster to wake people up to how badly things can go wrong. One consequence of this might be a recommendation that no longer should there be convictions obtained on uncorroborated confession evidence. There are many cases where the police have been determined to gain convictions from an investigation where there is no forensic, photographic or identifying evidence and where there is an intense temptation and opportunity for police to keep people in custody for lengthy periods and then to rely on their confessions. The most recent case which should immediately be reopened is that of the Broadwater Farm defendants.* I'm most familiar with the case of Engin Raghip , which is like a mirror image of that of the Guildford defendants. He is someone who was ill, he was psychologically disadvantaged in the police station, he was of a very low intelligence level. He was held and interrogated for a period longer than the European Court has said is consistent with fair detention and a fair trial, and his conviction was based on a signed confession which for several months even the police didn't regard as a confession to murder. Probably, the conviction of Silcott, which was on even less evidence – effectively, uncorroborated evidence of police officers – and that of Mark Braithwaite are very similar. The processes by which all three were convicted involved pressures very similar to the Irish political cases – the need to convict someone for the killing of a police officer, and the media interventions. It may be that their cases will have to be looked at by a body different from the Court of Appeal.

The moment is ripe for the Home Office to commission research, for MPs to insist that a Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs discusses the matter. There is not just the opportunity, there is a demand that that opportunity be taken.

Beit Sahour: a Palestinian village

19 September 1989, 9.00am: fifty Israeli soldiers and tax officials arrive at the shop of Mr George Beshara Mas'ad in the village of Beit Sahour in Israeli-occupied West Bank. Unable to force their way in, they go to the house of Mr Mas'ad's brother, Elias. They are met by Elias's wife and mother. The women protest that this is not the house the soldiers are looking for. The soldiers beat the women and lock

* Three black men – Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite – were convicted in 1986 of the murder of a police officer during the 1985 uprising on the Broadwater Farm estate, London.

them in a room. One soldier rips out the telephone while the others strip the house of all its furniture. According to Israel's defence minister, Yitzak Rabin, the purpose of the confiscation is 'to teach the residents a lesson about the consequences of tax evasion and civil disobedience'.[1] Two hours later, the soldiers and officials leave. An ambulance is called – the mother of George and Elias, a woman in her late 60s, has suffered a stress-induced heart attack.

Since 19 September, dozens of homes and shops in Beit Sahour have been broken into by the Israeli army. According to Al Haq, the Palestinian human rights organisation, the tax raids 'are of a wholly extraordinary order of violence and savagery'.[2] The village's men and, particularly, women are being viciously assaulted. Their property – manufacturing equipment, domestic appliances, cash, jewelry – is being carried away with no regard to its precise value or the sums of tax outstanding. The dispossessed Palestinian families are made to stand opposite their houses and watch as their livelihoods are destroyed. Eye-witnesses report wide-scale pillaging by the soldiers.

Such wholescale confiscation of property for tax purposes by an occupying power is illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Al Haq has alerted consular representatives to this fact and asked them to intervene on behalf of the residents of Beit Sahour. But the raids continue. On Saturday, 14 October, sixteen households had their property confiscated.

I spent two days in Beit Sahour in August 1989 – five weeks before the raids. The current Israeli repression was anticipated. This piece began as a memoir, a brief moment in the *intifada*. It is now a testimony to a Palestinian village.

Beit Sahour itself is a small village of 12,000 people. Cut into the mountains that fall away from Bethlehem, its stone-built houses rest on natural terraces like sandmartins' nests. Since Israel's occupation of the West Bank in 1967, its traditional agrarian economy has given way to light industry and the slow proletarianisation of its people. A typical village – its scenery that of the West Bank, with its scrub, olive trees and dry-stone walls that lace the hills – yet, even before the current confiscations, Beit Sahour had entered into the folklore of Palestinian life so that its name – like that of Deir Yassin, Karameh, Sabra, Chatilla – resonates in the Palestinian collective memory. For it is here that the *intifada* – the mass Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation and rule – has reached its highest stage of development. To many Palestinians, Beit Sahour *is* the *intifada* – its most potent symbol. Why?

The struggle against taxation

In January 1988, three weeks after the *intifada* was born, Beit Sahour declared itself a 'liberated zone': 'neither Zionist law nor Zionist time

would be recognised'. To celebrate this event, 10,000 of its villagers marched on the local Israeli tax offices and, en masse, tore up their identity cards. The military authorities' response was swift. The village was curfewed for ten days; individuals were rounded-up and imprisoned, and properties were confiscated. Over the last twenty-three months these reprisals have intensified. Today, Beit Sahour is a closed military area with nightly curfews and all telephone lines cut. Yet 80 per cent of the villagers have still not paid their taxes:

> We wanted to show that the collection of taxes by a military occupier is illegal under the Geneva Convention and that Palestinian taxes are used to finance the occupation. They are not used for Palestinian services. The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has become an increasingly profitable concern for the Israelis.[3]

Under international law, the licence to levy tax by an occupier is subject to the condition that all such revenue be returned to the occupied people in the form of services. This is Israel's claim – monies collected from the Palestinians redound to them in the form of education and health provision. There are reasons to doubt it.

Since the military occupation, Palestinians have been forced to pay a bewildering array of new taxes. In addition to income tax, they pay VAT and a 'special' tax on cars. Palestinian institutions, including charities and orphanages, have to pay 17 per cent tax on all imports. Since the *intifada*, the measures have increased. Income tax has risen from 7 per cent to 39 per cent, and there is now an '*intifada* tax', ranging from 400jd (Jordanian dinars) to 900jd per month. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, revenue from this tax will be used to pay for shatter-proof windscreens on Israeli settlers' cars – hardly an 'essential service' for the Palestinians.[4] Within Israel, Israelis pay only some of these taxes and none at the same rate.

At the same time, Israeli expenditure on Palestinian education and health has been curtailed. Since 1967, there has been an absolute cut in the number of Palestinian hospital beds, despite the fact that the occupied population has almost doubled. For sixteen of the last twenty-two months all West Bank and 50 per cent of Gaza schools have been closed, during which time Palestinian teachers have received reduced or no salaries. If Palestinian taxes are being used for anything, then it is for the increased military expenditure brought about by the *intifada*. If not for this, then the money must flow directly into the Israeli economy. If neither, then taxes are being imposed as punishment. The Israeli government refuses to publish its budget for the occupied territories.

The Palestinian/Israeli dialogue: 'Guests can sleep; occupiers can't'

It is not only from mass actions of civil disobedience that the notoriety of Beit Sahour stems. The village has also become the site for a series of dialogues between Palestinians in the West Bank and Israelis.

In May 1988, Beit Sahour residents issued invitations to representatives of the Israeli Peace Now movement, a broad umbrella grouping which grew as a protest against Israel's invasion of Lebanon. The initiative evolved out of the 'new situation' created by the *intifada*:

> For 40 years, there has been a process of 'mutual de-legitimation' between Palestinians and Israelis – we have been working with ghosts and stereotypes of each other. But the *intifada* has created new realities. The PLO now recognises Israel. And 95 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza accept a two-state solution.

A conference was organised based on the theme 'Guests, not occupiers': 'guests can sleep, but occupiers can't'. The meeting – the first between Palestinians and the Israeli 'Peace Camp' on West Bank soil – had two preconditions:

> Firstly, the participants had to accept as a principle the division of the land of Palestine – that the separation of the two peoples is now historically inevitable. Secondly, that the discussions are based on personal, not official, contacts. Only the PLO can conduct official negotiations on behalf of the Palestinian people.

The meeting was a success. A march was organised in which Peace Now activists walked from inside the green line to Beit Sahour. Members of Yesh Gvul – a small campaign of Israeli conscripts who have refused to serve in the occupied territories – visited the village. More importantly, the meetings aided developments within Peace Now which led to the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people and to the acceptance of the two-state solution as the only durable basis for peace. Future joint events were planned.

In September 1988, twenty-five Israeli religious groups were asked to spend a weekend in Beit Sahour. The meeting – a series of discussions and fact-finding events – was entitled 'Let's break bread, not bones'. 'We thought the biblical image was appropriate. After all, it is Israeli army policy to break bones.'[5] On the first day the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) declared Beit Sahour a military zone – nobody could leave or enter the village. Some Jewish representatives had, however, already arrived. A Palestinian teacher explained what happened:

> The IDF told the Jews that we planned to kill them. But the Jews

> refused to leave. The army then issued a military order instructing them to return to Israel. But the Jews still refused. You see it was a Saturday and they would not travel on the sabbath. We said to them: 'You will have to decide which law you follow: God or Mr Rabin's'. They chose God's.

But the weekend did not go ahead. Apart from military obstacles, the Palestinians saw also political constraints: 'We realised that we were preaching to the converted or to the ineffectual. We wanted real interlocutors – representatives of mainstream Israeli opinion.' To this end, invitations were sent out to both Likud and Labour MPs. All the MPs declined. 'This was at a time when Peres went on record as saying that he would talk to any Palestinians from the occupied territories.'

This effectively brought to a close the Palestinian/Israeli rapprochement started by the villagers of Beit Sahour. For those in the West who believe in a negotiated settlement, the conclusion drawn from the experience by the Palestinians does not make for comfortable reading:

> Despite its disproportionate coverage in the western media, the Israeli Peace Camp is a totally marginalised phenomenon. Since the *intifada*, Israeli public opinion has swung massively to the right. The choice is not between Shamir and Peres or war and peace, but between Shamir and Sharon – between whether the Palestinians are to be expelled today or cowed into bantustans of cheap labour to be expelled at some point in the future.

'Harvesting our best flowers'

Beit Sahourians are, like most Palestinians, a people 'in love with education'. From a population of 12,000, Beit Sahour has fifteen PhDs, fourteen MAs and 'hundreds of BAs' – the highest ratio per population in the West Bank, and, very likely, the highest ratio in the Arab world. Then there is industry. Beit Sahour is renowned for its mother of pearl, its glass and its citrus produce. 'We are a very industrious people.' Walk into a Beit Sahour kitchen and you will find a carpenter's. Sit on a terrace and you notice that the garden is actually a dairy. Beit Sahour exudes 2,000 years of Palestinian history. Every skill, every gesture carries a weight of historical precedent and presence. It is this that so draws Israel's thunder.

In May 1988, a Beit Sahour resident – a biology professor – was interned for six months in the Ansar 3 detention camp in the Negev desert. The case received international coverage and outrage. Not because of the professor's destination – over 10,000 Palestinians have now passed through the sands of the Ketziot, and some have died there – but because of his 'crime'. He was punished for planting tomatoes in his backyard: 'The Israelis said to me: "Who are the

tomatoes for?" I said, "The village." The soldiers uprooted the plants and arrested me.'

To the Palestinians, the international outcry was surprising. The Israeli reaction was expected. For the professor's case highlighted what has become the central strategic issue of the *intifada*. The Palestinians call it 'disengagement' or self-reliance – the conscious, political removal of all Israeli influence from all spheres of Palestinian life:

> Before the *intifada*, we were losing our best people – between 1967 and 1987 20,000 Palestinians emigrated from the West Bank. Today, we have 13,000 unemployed graduates. Self-reliance is not simply about reclaiming our land; it is about reclaiming our people. We will not let Israel harvest our best flowers.

In Beit Sahour, disengagement takes many forms. Its small, scattered gardens produce and preserve food to free the community from dependence on the Israeli economy, and to sustain the village during periods of curfew. Its people practise a 'revolutionary asceticism': 'We buy Palestinian alternatives to Israeli goods; where there are no alternatives – we go without.' They are rediscovering a Palestinian heritage and cultivating a resurgence of Palestinian arts and crafts. For the first time in years, Palestinian shopkeepers stock and sell cypress, grape, animal feed and Palestinian linen – products that embody a millennium of Palestinian industry and which are grown and woven, literally, in people's backyards.

These activities are conducted through the village's popular committee, a de facto democratic council that organises everything from 'guard committees', which defend the village from incursions by the IDF, to 'popular education classes', that operate when the military authorities close Palestinian schools. The committee links up with others which represent Palestinian towns, villages and camps and whose tendrils spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In and through such structures has grown the new Palestinian nationalism and the new Palestinian movement that embodies it – the United National Leadership of Uprising (UNLU) which, jointly with the PLO 'outside', directs, coordinates and leads the *intifada*.

For Beit Sahour, politics is just one more craft, a way of life, like glass-making:

> You know there is a parallel between glass-making and politics. We have excellent glass-makers in Beit Sahour. You put the silica into the furnace and blow until the lava slithers into a form. You then withdraw it so that the form cools and hardens. Why is this like politics? Because a glass shows you a real reflection of your life. But the process shows that it is possible to transform a mix of sands into

the most delicate of vases or the sharpest of blades. In Beit Sahour, we show both the real and the possible.

Israel says that the strategies of self-reliance and boycotts are having minimal impact on its economy. Evidence is hard to come by, but the sheer scale of Israel's repression in villages like Beit Sahour, particularly in recent months, gives the lie to this apparent complacency – so do the new fighters in the cock-pit.

In July 1989, the Israeli government installed General Yitzhak Mordechai as military commander for the West Bank. He was perceived to have the right pedigree: a hero of the Yom Kippur war, commander of all infantry and paratroop forces during the invasion of Lebanon, for the last two years Mordechai has been in overall charge of the Gaza Strip where, until recently, repression has generally been regarded as being more severe than in the West Bank. His ideal of the Israeli soldier is simple: 'He leaves the moral issues to others – his duty is to get on with the job.'[6] The 'duty' was spelled out by his mentor, Prime Minister Shamir, in January 1988: 'Our task is to recreate the barrier of fear between Israel and the Arabs, and to put the fear of death into the Arabs.'

In the last few months, the 'task' has been to crush all manifestations of self-reliance and to instigate the mass incarceration of Palestinians. Mordechai has stated publicly that he wants 30,000 Palestinians permanently detained (there are currently 10,000 'administrative detainees'), and he has chosen Beit Sahour as the test-case.

Israel's current terror against Beit Sahour was heralded in July 1989 by an attack on its 'clinic'. The clinic was the village's jewel. It employed doctors, nurses and pharmacists, and tended between sixty and 120 patients a day. It ran a 24-hour emergency service and offered specialist provision in minor surgery, X-rays, cardiology and psychotherapy. It was a democratically run experiment, basing itself on people's health needs and accountable to them: 'We saw it as a model for the health service in a future Palestinian state. We had the professional expertise in the village – a pharmacy, unemployed doctors and nurses – so we thought, "Why not?".'

The IDF raided the clinic and confiscated its entire medical stock. Particular care was taken to remove rare, expensive and modern drugs. Six of the clinic's staff were arrested and taken to see Mordechai: 'We said, "Why this raid? We are curfewed. There are no demonstrations." He replied, "It's not your demonstrations that concern us; it is your organisation".'

A state needs borders, not stones

'The difference between before and after the *intifada* is that before we existed; now we want to exist. That is the difference.' In Beit Sahour,

the talk is all about the *intifada* – its origins, achievements and future:

> Unlike the Ottoman and British occupations, the Zionist settlement is permanent. They are not going to leave. The *intifada* represents the belated recognition of this fact. It is exactly what it appears – Palestinians inside the occupied territories taking things into their own hands.

But can a strategy of self-reliance lead to national self determination? The answer to this is unequivocal:

> No, the *intifada* cannot achieve de facto self-determination. To say so ignores the national question – the question of a Palestinian state. And for a state you need borders, not stones. The *intifada* was about dependency, then separation and now it is about control.

The *intifada*'s achievements cannot be judged by conventional political yardsticks. The *shubab* – the 'occupation generation' of Palestinian youth who constitute the core of the uprising's activists – have taken on the IDF and neutralised it:

> The psychological cost to the Israelis is very great. Last week, in Gaza, an Israeli soldier committed suicide after beating a Palestinian child to death. When an Israeli arrests you, the soldiers argue among themselves. I am not talking about arguments between conscripts, but between conscripts and officers. We are the ones with the martyrs; but they are losing their heads.

The choice is stark: 'Today we know we must risk everything, give everything, because tomorrow we will have nothing left to give.'

It is this new, urgent sense brought about by the *intifada* that makes questions about its length or extent meaningless. You may as well measure the sky. How long can the *intifada* be sustained? 'How long will the West continue to support Israel?' How long are you prepared to struggle? 'A hundred years.' The Palestinians are not joking. After 700 deaths, 46,000 injuries, 60,000 detentions, no one should doubt their capacity for sacrifice for the land left to them – two remnants that comprise less than 30 per cent of historic Palestine.

Beit Sahour has one other distinguishing feature. Raised in the shadows of Bethlehem, it is a very Christian village. As you snake between its red-tiled houses and well-kept gardens, you find as many churches as mosques. Spires interweave with minarets, icons tangle with Koranic script and the ubiquitous red, green, black and white graffiti – the new lexicon of the *intifada*. If Beit Sahour 'has no sectarian differences and never has had', it yet possesses a biblical frame of mind. Its people think in parables, in simple metaphors that convey the moral gravity of their existence: 'The *intifada* is not gold; it

is fire – it warms but can sometimes burn.' Since the *intifada*, one parable has been on everybody's lips. The one where 'the last shall be first . . .'. 'We have perhaps relied too much on our good reputation. The *intifada* must increase the cost to Israel.'

What this cost will be, nobody can say. But what is clear is that the current assault on villages like Beit Sahour is not merely about the crushing of a tax boycott nor the confiscation of Palestinian property. Rather, Israel intends to extinguish the image of a people who in their industry, their mixed religious composition, their democratic spirit embody the antithesis of itself; a people whose nationalism, ironically, offers a vision of human solidarity that stretches beyond ethnic, religious or state divides. Palestine, in every sense, is the inverse of Zionism.

In the Arab world, the Palestinian struggle has always embodied this democratic, non-sectarian vision. With the *intifada*, to this vision has been added the concrete ideal of socialism. In villages like Beit Sahour, only one class leads – and that is the class which acts, which, in the fullest sense of the word, makes. In Beit Sahour, a Christian simplicity hides a militant, materialist consciousness. The struggle of coloniser and colonised, violence and non-violence, leads to a dialectic that twists things into their opposite.

Flowers

I left Beit Sahour from a house whose porch was draped in bougainvilleas. Between the flowers, children appeared – children with radiant, completely devastating smiles. They tug at your shirtsleeves and proffer bunches of V-for-victory salutes. I climb the long, winding path to the main Bethlehem road cosseted by them and chaperoned by two Palestinian women: 'We had some trouble here. Last week, three Shin Bet agents dressed as tourists entered the village and shot five of our people.' I said that the *shubab* – these flowers – would protect me. 'You misunderstand. The children were not waiting to greet you. They were gathering stones.'

London GRAHAM USHER

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2 Al Haq, Press release No. 31.
3 Much of the source material for this article is from original interviews conducted with Beit Sahour residents in August 1989. For security reasons, quotations from these will not be attributed.
4 *Jerusalem Post* (19 August 1989).
5 In February 1988, defence minister Rabin instituted a policy of 'force, might and beatings' to crush the *intifada*.
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Book reviews

Patriotism: the making and unmaking of British national identity (3 volumes)

Edited by RAPHAEL SAMUEL (London, Routledge, 1989). Vol. 1, 397pp; Vol. 2, 339pp; Vol. 3, 332pp. £12.95 each

Patriotism arose initially from the anger of a group of British socialist and feminist historians at the fervour with which the 1982 war for the Falklands/Malvinas was sustained, and from their dismay at the impotence of 'the anti-war half of the nation'. Their response has been to seek out the roots of that patriotic fervour, and of the Left's uncertainties about patriotism, by undertaking a series of explorations into the 'making and unmaking of British national identity'. In so doing, they examine that difficult but crucial territory of the emotions, identity and culture that the Right has re-colonised at the very point that sections of the Left thought that they had made it their own. An important and much needed book, then, were it not for the fact that the anger of 1982 has been dissipated, that the war itself is absent from these pages, and that it is extremely difficult to find one's way through three long introductions, fifty-seven contributions and their welter of conflicting images, experiences and positions.

A pity – because the authors are, in some ways, well qualified for the task they have undertaken. The History Workshop group with which they are associated is well suited to the task of engaging with popular emotion and identity, with the subjective as distinct from the objective aspects of society. It is concerned with 'people's history', or 'history from below', rather than those forms of academic history that look down from above. In Samuel's words, 'Politically it was anti-bureaucratic, privileging the unofficial, the informal and the spontaneous against institutional forms of power.'

It is this orientation that is the source of both the strengths and the weaknesses of the volumes. For, as the investigation of patriotism moved on from an initial workshop on the Malvinas/Falklands

conflict, Samuel notes that he became aware that 'people's history' was also part of the problem: 'In economics it was concerned with domestic industry rather than overseas trade, in politics with home affairs, in culture with the indigenous and "organic". History Workshop, though notionally internationalist, shares many of these biases.' Nonetheless, there are two important respects in which these volumes deepen our understanding. First of all, they draw our attention to a range of patriotisms. The essential part of the ideological grammar of patriotism, they argue, is that it exists in the singular only. To begin to talk of patriotisms is to open up the possibility of radical or revolutionary patriotism as well as the reactionary variant. The possibility of radical patriotism is raised in two contributions by Christopher Hill, in which he considers, though not uncritically, the experience of the seventeenth-century English revolution.

Once the possibility of a plurality of patriotisms has been established, one can then enquire, as do a number of contributors to the first volume, how 'patriotism' has been turned from radical to reactionary uses. And it is still possible to ask, as Anthony Barnett does in the only chapter with substantial reference to the Falklands/Malvinas war, whether even a radical patriotism can be adequate for internationalism in an era of capitalist restructuring on a global basis.

The second way in which the symposium deepens our understanding is by exploring the ways in which other collective identities – age, class, ethnicity, attachment to place or region of origin, politics – have been co-opted by the dominant identity of the 'nation'. There are, for example, two important contributions in the final volume on attachment to place or region of origin (Jill Franklin, 'The liberty of the park' and Alex Potts, ' "Constable Country" between the wars') that engage with the contradictions presented by deep emotional identification with the English countryside – between, on the one hand, the landscape seen as aesthetic and, on the other, 'the land' as a site of production.

Once one seeks, though, to take this plethora of insights into different identities or 'difference', into understanding current social change in a way that can contribute to liberatory action, some serious obstacles are encountered. First, with the exception of some contributions on education – notably 'A defence of national history' by Alun Howkins, 'True romances' by Carolyn Steedman and 'Village school or blackboard jungle' by Ken Worpole – there is virtually nothing that addresses itself to *what can be done*, even in the field of cultural policy. A second and related point is that the approach to the psychological dynamics of collective change is in the main fragmentary and untheorised. The important exception here is Carolyn Steedman's 'True romances', in which she explores, through work with children, the implications of the fact that working-class children do, at times,

dream of 'kings and queens'. We do, as Steedman argues, need to 'understand the substructure of desire and intention that underlies our own historical practice.' It is, therefore, all the more unsatisfactory that an enterprise that emphasises the subjective elements in history should contribute so little to the understanding rather than to the mere recording of them.

Third, History Workshop has mistakenly assumed that it can bypass the anti-racist debate. 'Determined to liberate ourselves from these psychodramas of the Left,' Samuel tells us, 'in which one set of whites accuses another of being racist or . . . "white liberals", we set out to integrate the papers from black historians with those of others.' One is relieved to hear that it was eventually discovered that 'bracketing Reggae with Cecil Sharp in the section on national music' was not a satisfactory move. It is, however, even less satisfactory to bracket together A. Sivanandan, John Rex, Stuart Hall and the various writers associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies as 'radical black [a term that, in any case, does not apply to John Rex] writers and theorists of "race relations" ', as Stephen Howe does in his chapter on 'Labour patriotism, 1939-83', unless some awareness of significant differences between their positions, both in general and towards 'race relations' is shown. Some of the excesses of the anti-racist debate cannot be avoided by avoiding its substance. What happens if one is foolish enough to seek to float by above the follies of others is that one soon falls back into follies of one's own – in this case into a kind of 'knowing' 'multi-culturalism'. And this happens despite the attempt by History Workshop to dismiss that term itself: ' "multi-culturalism" is as much a fiction as the idea of a unitary national essence'.

'Unitary or essentialist notions' are also eschewed. According to the editor, the attempt to escape them governs yet another of this (somewhat chaotic) collection's lines of direction – for example: 'We had to take more seriously the proposition that Britain is a land peopled by minorities and that the English, except as a figment of the patriotic imagination, do not exist.' This direction appears to take the form of a series of ever decreasing circles. Behind each apparent unitary notion or essence History Workshop finds smaller ones: 'The divisions within the "black" community, both generationally and ethnically, seem as notable as those which discriminate against them.' Behind the divisions within racism, they find divisions within blacks, and so on ad infinitum. Once again, 'difference' is the name of the game. What begins with an emphasis on the subjective and the personal, not counter-balanced by a stress on the collective and social, ends, logically, here.

But is there the hope, at least, that one could spin oneself out of this vortex of difference? Not, it appears, by re-creating collective endea-

vour. 'Such hope as there is', Howe resolutely concludes, 'lies in abandoning the totalising aspiration, in recognition of plural subjectivities, plural identities . . . Perhaps it [the Left] should instead begin with the fact of a mosaic of subjectivities.' Whilst acknowledging that there are 'immense difficulties inherent in the task of formulating any coherent, potentially hegemonic programme on the basis of that mosaic', he puts his faith in the 'new social movements'.

We need to pause here in order to consider the intellectual basis of these twists and turns, undertaken in order to escape the tyrannical power of the unitary notions that state and capital seek to impose. We are told that the 'aim was deconstructive'. Once History Workshop had worked its way out of the imposed totalisations of 'the nation' and of the one and only true patriotism, it has allowed itself to be caught up in the modish intellectual practice of deconstruction, of taking everything to bits. Now, one stage in any analysis *is* to take what we are presented with apart. We do not, however, make a practice of stopping there. Nor do we assume that only the bits are 'real' and that what we were first presented with is 'imaginary'.

The second move is to suppose that the bits are either static – they form, in Howe's image, a 'mosaic' – or that they are incapable, in the main, of rising to anything better than localised swirls and eddies. No big movements in history; all attempts at totalisation lead to totalitarianism.

There is, however, a third move for those for whom the pleasures of deconstruction begin to pall, the cult of 'the new'. We are in 'new times', so hope lies in 'new social movements'. That old social movement, labour, is passé. There was, of course, within marxism and elsewhere, once thought to be a form of logic that could – without sinking into chaos or even, necessarily, into dogma – handle the fluid contradictions that are at play behind the apparently rigid oppositions of unity and difference, totalities and elements, even old and new. It was known as dialectics, or dialectical logic – but that was long ago. Dialectics, too, is old and, it goes without saying, passé. Now there are new games to play and movements that move without a sense of direction.

There is, however, an alternative formulation trying to push its way through the fashionable celebration of novelty, difference and plurality in these volumes. Occasionally, within all the multi-culturalist festivities, there are signs of an anti-racist perspective and sense of direction. Samuel, as editor, chooses to end the first two volumes with contributions that do make use of unitary notions such as black experience, capitalism itself, or its recessions and restructuring, and the notion of a British path towards liberation. Madge Dresser's account of the struggle against the colour bar on Bristol's buses in 1963 deploys some of these. And at the end of the second volume Hanif Kureishi also uses unitary notions without embarrassment. He invites

white Britons to disabuse themselves of their ideas about the tolerance of British society and to develop instead 'a fresh way of seeing Britain and the choices it faces; and a new way of being British after all this time'. This is a unitary notion that includes difference. And to make use of it requires a decision about direction. Such a decision

> is not one about a small group of irrelevant people who can be contemptuously described as minorities. It is about the direction of British society. About its values and how humane it can be when experiencing real difficulty and possible breakdown. It is about the respect it gives individuals, the power it gives to groups, and what it really means when it describes itself as democratic.

One could begin to connect such an account with Christopher Hill's opening chapter in the first volume, in which he distinguishes between the oppressive weight of British history – from which, of course, 'the people' cannot be entirely dissociated – and the achievements of 'the people':

> We are what we are, and our community is what it is, because of centuries of past scufflings and struggles – for religious toleration, for juries, for the vote for men and women, against child labour, for shorter working hours, for trade unions and cooperatives, against censorship, for peace.

It is all too clear that such struggles need, in many cases, to be renewed, extended, deepened and developed. In some cases, that is already happening. It should be clear, too, that a patriotism or sense of national identity in which it is assumed that these civic virtues or the struggles that produced them are uniquely British is dangerously far from the truth.

However, if there is to be a British dimension to these struggles, successful action will depend on a grasp of the forms that these 'scufflings' take and have taken, the residues and possibilities that are embodied in British history. It is a struggle to which black people bring their own experience and their own sense of the land in which they reside. Whether one calls that grasp of those forms and sense of the land 'patriotism' is a matter of emotional identification and of rational choice. But it will certainly involve, at one level, the re-making of the sense of national belonging and identity and of the nature of power. And the success of that will depend, in part, on our knowledge of, to use the book's subtitle, 'the making and unmaking of the British national identity'.

Christopher Hill's relatively simple vision of the shame of Britain as

opposed to the achievements of the British people, Steedman's sense of the contradictions of popular 'desire and intention', Kureishi's humanism, the bitterness of the black busmen, all these insights and commitments have to work their way through the contradictory complexities of the 'heritage'-conscious nomadic capitalism that Samuel sought to portray in that long introduction to the first volume.

If we are not to be side-tracked once more into reactionary forms of patriotism, we have got some very deceptive chains to lose. Some of these deceptions have been imposed by a stage in capitalism which celebrates and appropriates as it empties and distorts the traces of the past. And some of these deceptions are self-imposed in these volumes and elsewhere through succumbing to modish intellectualisms that claim to chart these misty waters. We *can* shake ourselves free if, instead of succumbing to cults of 'the new', and 'difference', we hold on to, extend, deepen and develop what is usable, valued and to be valued, in the heritage(s) and practices that capitalism seeks to appropriate and negate. Only in that way can we lose our chains. Only in that way is there a world that we can win.

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From Beirut to Jerusalem

By SWEE CHAI ANG (London, Grafton Books, 1989). 302 pp. £3.95.

Malaysian-born Swee Chai Ang recently came to the United States, drawing upon her six months' service as an orthopaedic surgeon in a Gaza hospital to alert Americans to the horrors sustained by their tax dollars. Asserting that Israeli repression was underreported in the American papers, she told of Israelis storming a ward to arrest one of her patients as he was gaining consciousness after an operation, and of soldiers throwing Palestinians off rooftops. Her remarks were under-reported.

As the *intifada* fades from the press, US congressmen extol Shamir's proposed election plan as another manifestation of Israel's robust democracy and peaceful intentions. They seem, as ever, indifferent to the use being made of the more than $8m which the US supplies Israel on a *daily* basis. Could they remain indifferent if they were supplied with copies of Dr Ang's book – and somehow made to read it?

From Beirut to Jerusalem would tell them of the journey of discovery made by a British-trained doctor whose world view was initially much like theirs – 'the state of Israel was the fulfilment of

Scriptural prophecies'; 'the word "Palestinian" had an unpleasant ring to it'; the PLO was 'an Arab group which hijacked passenger jets, planted bombs and hated Jews' – but whose sensibilities are a world apart.

When Dr Ang volunteered to work in Beirut after watching the invasion of Lebanon on television and failing to understand how God's Chosen People could dump phosphorous bombs on civilians, she knew virtually nothing of Palestine. She did know what it meant to be stateless (the Japanese Imperial army made her parents refugees), but her sympathies lay entirely with the victims of Nazi oppression whose state seemed a victory for humanity and justice. She arrived in Beirut as PLO fighters – 'terrorists' to her – were being evacuated from Beirut, and assumed that now the Lebanese and Palestinian civilians would be left in peace by the Israelis.

Once in Beirut, a chance meeting took her to work in a Palestine Red Crescent Hospital called Gaza in the middle of Sabra refugee camp and on the edge of Shatila, where Lebanese and even some Jewish families made their homes alongside Palestinian exiles. She was amazed to discover that hospitals under the aegis of the 'terrorist' organisation treated one million patients per year free of charge, making their services available not only to Palestinians but to everyone in need. She also found out that the Palestine Red Crescent hospitals and clinics had been the special targets of Israeli bombing raids during the invasion.

Within weeks of her arrival, on 15 September 1982, the Israelis invaded West Beirut and orchestrated the butchering of Sabra and Shatila's inhabitants. Dr Ang experienced the massacre from the basement of Gaza Hospital, where she operated for seventy-two straight hours on the victims. On 18 September she and the rest of the medical staff were ordered out of the hospital. The Palestinians among them were killed; the foreigners were escorted past heaps of bodies being crammed by bulldozers into mass graves.

The shock she experiences as she realises that many of the 2,000 people who were turned out of Gaza Hospital where they had sought refuge were among those who were hideously tortured and then massacred is conveyed with a chilling poignancy. From her grim awakening among the mutilated corpses of Sabra, there was no turning back for Dr Ang:

> I knew for sure that if I were Palestinian, I would have been slaughtered like everyone else . . . To be alive, to have survived, meant that I had a duty to speak up on behalf of those who were dead . . . to speak on behalf of those alive and suffering every mortal day, in silence, without voice. Not to lend my voice to those I had grown to love over the past few weeks would be a crime. I was not only a survivor, I was also a witness.

But few were interested in hearing her voice. Her 'open letter' alerting the world to the massacre got no response in Britain; the press said it had 'no news value'. She was unable to get an interview with reporters 'because I was from the Third World, a coloured woman' – and had no credibility in their eyes. Other British and European medical volunteers, who had never bothered to visit the camps, told her that she was endangering them and that she should just do her work and stop making provocative anti-Israeli statements.

She persisted, travelling to Jerusalem to give testimony before the Kahan Commission. Across the 'green line', in the company of a Jewish American anti-Zionist, she discovered that 'every house is built on top of someone else's house. The whole society here is built upon injustice.' By this stage in her education she was canny enough to understand that she would be written off as a 'PLO sympathiser' at the Kahan 'investigation', which was designed to show the world the 'excellence' of Israeli democracy.

Undeterred, she returned to Britain to publicise the plight of camp survivors, living in the rubble of Sabra and Shatila with winter approaching. Again, no reporter would interview her – 'Who in Britain would want to hear about some refugees 3,000 miles away from a strange, ethnic Chinese, woman doctor?' But she discovered that the British people would listen. Within months she had addressed hundreds of meetings in schools, universities and churches, and had organised the financial backing for Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

When she returned to Lebanon in the summer of 1985 in response to the Amal militia's war on the camps, she took with her greeting cards presented by twenty-four mining families in the Miners' Support Group in Yorkshire. The greeting cards were placed on the notice board of the General Union of Palestinian Women in the Shatila camp, alongside the photographs of their martyrs. 'The British press scorned the ending of the strike as a "defeat", but my Palestinian friends in Shatila camp called it a victory. Their reasoning was simple: any group who could hold out for a whole year under those conditions won a great victory.'

What Dr Ang's book finally conveys is an understanding of the many intangible victories the Palestinian people have won while the world has conspired in their annihilation. When, a few days after the massacre, the surviving children of Sabra and Shatila smile and make the 'V' sign to her as they stand in the rubble of their homes, this is a victory; when the people of Shatila and Bourj el-Brajneh resist for two years attempts to bomb and starve them into submission, this represents a great victory – a victory over fear. Shatila finally fell, but not before its survivors had received word that the people of Gaza were rising up against the Israeli occupation: 'After laying the

foundation for the uprising, Shatila was demolished. But the physical survival of Shatila is not the point. Shatila lives in the hearts of every one of us.'

Dr Ang's book ends with a description of the *intifada*, and the conditions which nourished it. Her journey of awareness has taken her this far:

> The Palestinian-Israeli conflict exists because Israel could only be created over the destruction of Palestine and the expulsion of its people. In 1988, the State of Israel celebrated forty years of existence; while the Palestinian exiles remembered the loss of their homeland. For Israel to flourish, all traces of Palestine had to be obliterated. The wounds inflicted by Israel go on festering; Israeli bombs cause death and destruction; torture and mutilation in Israeli detention camps, such as the Ansar camps, will take more than a lifetime to fade from the memory. And Israelis complain that the Palestinians refuse to 'recognise' the State of Israel. After being forced to give up their country, their homes – even their lives – the Palestinians are being asked to surrender their souls to the victors.

Swee Chai Ang has written a moving testament to the Palestinians' refusal to surrender their souls, which is all the more effective for the author's initial ingenuousness and simplicity of vision. It is hard to imagine anyone who reads it remaining immune to its message, except those whose souls have already been bartered away, and who don't really want to know.

Boston NANCY MURRAY

Nunca Estuve Sola

By NIDIA DÍAZ (San Salvador, UCA Editores, 1988). 242pp.

In the final pages of her prison memoir, *Nunca Estuve Sola* (I was never alone), Nidia Díaz, an FMLN *comandante* in El Salvador's resistance movement, sketches the history of her participation, beginning in the early 1970s, in her country's political struggle: 'When I joined the organisation, I always believed that I would be clandestine, that my name would never be publicized.' On 18 April 1985, however, comandante Nidia (Maria Valladares M. de Lemus) was wounded and arrested in an army helicopter raid on FMLN guerrilla bases in the mountains of San Vicente. Her captor was a *yanqui*, a North American adviser to the Salvadorean armed forces. According to Maria Lopez Vigil's introduction to this prison account, Nidia Díaz, unlike thousands of prisoners in El Salvador before her, survived

capture and detention, 'because of the happenstance of being taken prisoner in a conjuncture where it was not convenient to kill captives'.

Some six months before her capture, Nidia Díaz had participated prominently in the historic meeting at La Palma between representatives of the combined Salvadorean resistance organisations, the FMLN-FDR, and president Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democratic government of El Salvador. This charged encounter (with FMLN-FDR leaders in exile returning to the country with promises of 'safe passage'), which was to open the way for longer-term political negotiations between the government and its popular and armed resistance, saw instead the elements of an FMLN-FDR peace proposal blocked by the Duarte government. At one point in her prison story, Díaz reflects on this thwarted exchange: 'So many times I've asked myself why we dialogue with the government, why we continue fighting to dialogue with an enemy like this one'. But she immediately goes on to answer her own question: 'What is happening to you, Nidia? We dialogue because we are dedicated to peace, because we believe in a political solution to the conflict. One after another, we have presented initiatives for dialogue.'

The issue of 'dialogue' structures Nidia Díaz's account of her 190-day prison experience, from her capture on 18 April by the '*yanqui*' to her release on 25 October as part of a prisoner exchange for Inés Duarte, the kidnapped daughter of El Salvador's president. The 'dialogue' takes different forms, from psychological torture and interrogation, to verbal abuse by her guards, to press interviews with both pro-government and independent journalists, and each, in turn, contributes to the political detainee's own examination of how to reconstruct an oppositional political stance within the extreme structural constraints imposed by incarceration.

The prisoner's interrogation, using both information obtained from collaborators and the threat that she, too, is now seen as a traitor, seeks first of all to elicit from her a betrayal of her *compañeros* and the present and future plans of the resistance organisation itself. Under the pretence of informing her relatives of her whereabouts, the interrogators demand information about her family. 'Go to the front,' she tells them, 'that is my family.' On another occasion, visiting government officials insist that they have come not to interrogate her, but to have a conversation, *platicar*. 'Why, then,' she demands, 'don't you remove my blindfold?' Trained interrogators say that they want her life history, but Nidia Díaz's biography is itself a story of the Salvadorean resistance. Later still, she refuses to cooperate with the prison doctor, Bottari, who claims to need background information from her for a book he is writing about a 'guerrilla who gets tired of fighting'. Her vigilance, however, is challenged by Vazquez Becker,

who maintains that he is doing a study of 'women's participation in the struggle'. To at least one press conference, Nidia Díaz denounces her captors and the conditions of her detention. At another, recognising her interlocutors as pro-government reporters, she demands, 'Why have you come to pose the same questions as my interrogators?' Her final interview is held aboard the plane transporting her, the other released prisoners and evacuated wounded guerrillas to Panama and on to Cuba.

What emerges out of these different encounters is a political counter-discourse – one that, through its engagement with the personal itinerary of the *guerrillera* and the historical trajectory of the Salvadorean resistance, challenges the very premises of the ostentatious rhetoric of democracy sponsored by United States military aid that underwrote the Duarte government's continued repression of the people of El Salvador.

Nunca Estuve Sola is part of a lineage of prison memoirs from El Salvador that Nidia Díaz herself refers to as being her only previous experience of political detention. Salvador Cayetano Carpio's *Secuestro y Capucha*, written in 1979, tells of his detention as a political activist and union organiser in the early 1950s. In 1976, Ana Guadalupe Martínez, a leader in the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), which in 1980 joined with other organisations to form the united FMLN-FDR, was arrested and detained in El Salvador's secret prisons until her release in an exchange for the abducted Salvadorean oligarch, Roberto Poma. *Las Carceles Clandestinas de El Salvador*, written by Guadalupe Martínez in 1980, is the combined story of her imprisonment, the kidnap and the political debates of strategy and aims within and between the Salvadorean resistance organisations in the mid-1970s.

The three texts constitute an important dimension, written from out of political detention, to the history over the last four decades of organised struggle against a succession of brutal dictatorships in El Salvador. The additional dimension in *Nunca Estuve Sola* to the 'dialogue' between political detainee and the state's prison apparatus is a popular one, the participation of representatives of international and Salvadorean human rights organisations and prisoner associations, from Amnesty International and the International Red Cross, to Tutela Legal and COPPES (Committee of Political Prisoners in El Salvador), evidence of an enlarged mass mobilisation and the impact of political detention on the society as a whole. The publication of the name of Nidia Díaz, like the publication of her prison memoir *Nunca Estuve Sola*, testifies again to the critical significance of 'dialogue' in terms of popular political resistance.

University of Texas at Austin BARBARA HARLOW

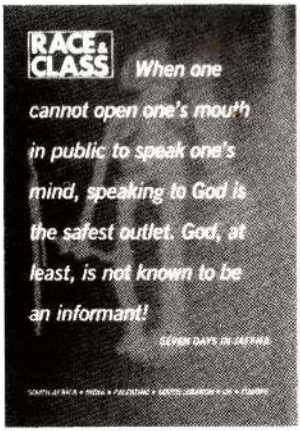
Richard B. Moore: Caribbean militant in Harlem; collected writings 1920-1972

Edited by W. BURGHARDT TURNER and JOYCE MOORE TURNER. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press and London, Pluto Press, 1988). 324pp. £16.95

Reputations that rest on word of mouth can be ephemeral and disappear too easily into the mists of time. This book will ensure that Richard Moore is neither forgotten nor dismissed by present or future generations. It is a collection that is all the more essential because Moore's reputation and influence were based on his extraordinary oratorical skills. A Barbadian who steamed into New York on the *SS Cuthbert* in July 1909 when he was just 16, Moore was to have a profound influence on radical thought in Harlem. In his long years of political activism he made inspiring speeches focusing on furthering economic and political independence as well as dignity and pride among all people of African origin. Amongst his more fundamentally formative contributions was his determined campaign in the 1950s and 1960s to educate the American public in appropriate semantic distinctions between terms such as 'Negro', 'Afro-American' and 'black'.

The speeches, letters and other writings of this indefatigable opponent of racial injustice have been garnered and organised by his daughter, Joyce Moore Turner, and her husband, W. Burghardt Turner. Almost half the book is taken up with an informative and fascinating introduction that charts Moore's career as a committed socialist and member of organisations such as the African Blood Brotherhood. While becoming more and more politically active, he worked in a variety of jobs that not only paid the rent but also gave him experience of the conditions in which men worked in Harlem. He fought for the reduction of exploitation and segregation and was undeterred by setbacks. He argued unsuccessfully against the extradition of Claudia Jones, the left-wing Harlem agitator who was to have a special impact on black life in England, but continued to attack right-wing paranoid oppression. His life work of seeking for Caribbean independence and unity was a never ending mission and his successes and failures are well charted in this illuminating book. Speeches written for large meetings and articles penned for journals such as the racial liberationist *Freedomways* (that sadly brought out its final issue only two years ago) are infused with the power of well-informed anger. This was a man who could catalyse action as well as raise consciousness. This is a book that bears witness to a visionary who could well be inspirational for future generations.

University of Keele MARY ELLISON



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