

When the 'left' doesn't know it is doing the right's handywork

In the wake of the large scale immigration of the 1960s and 1970s, and the rapid internationalisation of the British economy, an intense battle of ideas has begun. Some say that the idea of the nation is outdated. Others think that nationalism is the same as chauvinism. We say:

advance, in any other part of the world, and nobody else can achieve these things for us here in Britain.

It is in this context that we must consider 1992 and the Single European Market. On 31st December 1992 all barriers . . .] frontiers in Europe

and the indigenous population. The idea of "multiculturalism" appears to date from the mid sixties. Roy Jenkins, then the Home Secretary, said of Labour's race relations policy in 1966 it was "not a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity accompanied by

1. Is it true that all cultures are equal? A culture is more advanced than another in as far as it is created and controlled to a greater extent by the working class, in as far as it protects and advances the interests of the working class more effectively.

that when immigrants to Britain adopt the basic, forward thinking aspects of British culture, fight for progress and a halt to the decline, and join trade unions, we welcome them as our class brothers. But when coexistence means accepting backwardness, we must recognise the contradiction, and struggle to reassert the values and gains of our class.

If multiculturalists argue that people are endlessly divided then the so-called 'Anti-racists' take difference and division a step further.

Britain: One Nation One Culture

TO SAY that Britain is one nation with one culture is to risk criticism by the narrow-minded and jingoistic. But to say this is to assert the unity which is so essential to our class.

As Britain has developed, it is a single capitalist economy. It follows that one single working class has emerged. Not necessarily developing at an equal rate, and certainly with differences, but united by an overwhelming commonality of interest - to defend itself against capitalism.

Why is nationalism important to us, the British working class? It means something different for us than for the ruling class. The bourgeoisie has no intrinsic loyalty to or interest in Britain.

It no longer has an interest in protecting its home market. It destroys British manufacturing industry in its war on us, the British working class. It may occasionally revive a disgusting jingoism for a specific gain like during the Falklands War. But jingoism is not nationalism.

For the British working class nationalism equals survival. We can't ship ourselves off in mass to greener pastures which are probably illusory anyway. To survive we need to take control of our future as a collective. We need:

- *control of our economy
- *self-sufficiency - agricultural and industrial
- *control of our politics.

Integrated

We cannot achieve these things in units smaller than our nation. It is no coincidence that we have a National Health Service, a national state education service, nationalised essential industries, British Rail for the whole of Britain. It is in this context that we understand Thatcher's attempts to fragment and destroy.

She is no nationalist. Remember for her there is no society, only individuals. Cecil Parkinson, when asked whether Thatcher had moved away from the concept of one nation to individual selfishness and greed, replied that he didn't understand what was meant by 'one nation'. This is no small move for the Conservative Party to make.

It's not surprising then that 'regionalism' raises its head again under Thatcher. Certainly we in the South East have a special and enormous task before us to oust the Tory majority, but people in the North and Scotland have no room for scorn or complacency. There is no such thing as socialism in one borough or one corner of Britain.

Does this mean we scorn internationalism? Not at all. Our contribution to the forward movement of the international working class must be to rid ourselves and the world of Thatcher. We, as a working class, have no hope of achieving socialism nor even significant social



Photos: Stefano Caprianni (Report)

Black and immigrant workers have long made themselves an integral part of the struggle of the British working class. Belated attempts by both 'left' and 'right' to divide us must be resisted. Photos show an NHS day of action in 1985 (above), and bakery workers fighting for pay in 1979 (below).

will be abolished. All restrictions on the movement of capital between the twelve member states will be lifted.

The Single European Market then will hasten the decline of capitalism in Britain. So why does Thatcher appear also to oppose closer integration? She doesn't. She is quite prepared to forego national sovereignty to release capital from national constraints. What she is unwilling to do is to accept anything which would limit her in her onslaught against the British working class.

Culture

What is culture? I think it is the totality of the experiences, skills, beliefs, customs, organisations, history, values and traditions of a people - in this case the working class of Britain. It has both continuity and change. As the sociologist R.A. Halsey puts it, "Our sameness and our differences are more than just genetic. We are creatures of cultural as well as genetic reproduction. Culture is the sum of the skills by which we live, which are passed down the generations by means other than genetic transmission - our language, science, religion, art and practical knowledge, as well as our material artifacts and social organisations."

This doesn't mean that there aren't differences between British workers. Let's even call them cultural differences. Different conditions prevail in different parts of the country, and aspects of culture have developed differently in response. But these regional differences are minuscule in comparison with regional differences in other countries.

More recently it has become fashionable to stress differences especially between immigrants

cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance."

Immigrants were no longer expected to integrate as rapidly as possible. The idea began to gain credibility that British culture could coexist alongside a mosaic of different culture, and insofar as British culture changed, it would be enriched by an endless array of difference. Multiculturalism is based on three assumptions:

1. All cultures are of equal value.
2. Culture can be transferred from one country to another.
3. The host culture can coexist beside minority cultures and is enriched by them.

Let's examine these assumptions more closely.

2. Is culture transferable? If it is true that culture arises out of physical, organisation and historical phenomena, then it must be true that it does not necessarily transfer.

Multiculturalism

3. Is it true that British culture will not only coexist beside foreign cultures, but be enriched by them? Of course it is true that British culture can be enriched by foreign cultural influences. But multiculturalism asks us to tolerate a force of feudalism, backwardness and intolerance, and accept it as equal to our own culture.

Wittingly or unwittingly multiculturalists accept the Thatcherite ideology of special, individual interests. In response we say



Photos: Mark Rutherford (IFL)

Racists

The anti-racists are today's racists, claiming that workers are separated by differences of interest depending on the colour of their skin. So a few years ago Ambrosine Neale, elected as a Labour councillor in Brent, could defect to the Tories when she couldn't get her own way over introducing black schools, and give control of the council to the Tories.

According to the anti-racist argument a black worker has more in common with a fellow white worker. This is to be expected if, as the anti-racists say, all whites are racist.

The absurdity of the argument comes to a peak with the allegations of 'institutional racism'. There is no distinction between institutions - education is racist because a school encourages parents to phone for an appointment, because some immigrants cannot cope with English. The TUC is as bad as the CBI. So you set up black sections to bring the union under their control: vilify the leadership and do Thatcher's job for her.

And so the ideological battle is lost. Race and not class is the issue; our own trade unions or the Labour Party are the enemies and not Thatcher.

But Thatcher stands against all that is precious and advanced in British culture. She attempts to stand in the path of history.

And so we enter into ideological battle against all those who wish to divide and weaken us. That is why we are Britain one nation, one culture, one class. Thatcher out!

The above article is based on a speech at a recent CPBML public meeting at the Bellman Bookshop.