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WAGE SLAVERY - FOR NO CHANGE

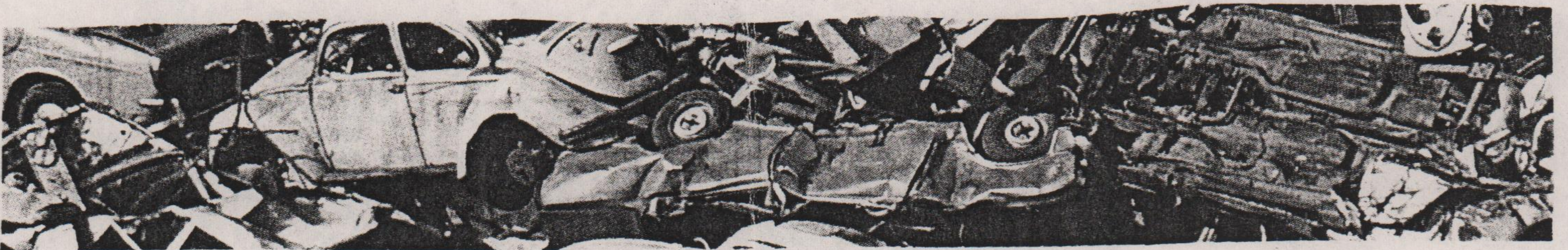
A TEXT FROM THE 80's

The other day I was sorting through the piles of assorted magazines, papers, pamphlets, leaflets etc etc which always seem to accumulate in the homes of aspiring revolutionaries, usually crammed into carrier bags at the bottom of drawers, the back of shelves, under beds etc etc.

Amongst all this stuff I came across one leaflet from the 80's the text of which I thought deserved to resurface because :-

1. It presents coherent anti-capitalist ideas in a way which has some chance of being relevant to the vast majority of people who aren't well-versed in the occult sciences of economic and political theory.

2. As I write there is a general election in the air - the squalid soap opera of capitalist politics is about to reach one of its pathetic climaxes. So it is a good time to re-read "WAGE SLAVERY - FOR NO CHANGE" which is not only a fascinating slice of "history" (how long ago is "the 80's"?) but also says just about everything there is to say about Labourism in particular and reformist politics in general.....



WAGE SLAVERY - FOR NO CHANGE

In the swinging 60's everyone could have a job, and everyone hated their job. In the 70's the workers hardly worked and the rulers could hardly rule. That's why in the 80's jobs are rationed - to make us appreciate them more. As well as a way of getting rid of uncompetitive technology, the poverty and isolation of the dole has been the ruler's means of dividing, demoralising and intimidating the masses, who had begun to dangerously discover their power against the misery of work, of exploitation.

The 'English Disease' (suffered by capital, enjoyed by workers - the world over) - i.e. resistance to work (absenteeism, sabotage, and all forms of direct solidarity) is conveniently ignored by the ideologists of the Left. That's because the Left represents those wage labourers who still identify with their allotted role in the running of the World Market, who still see the means of survival imposed on them as 'dignified'. Fearful of the refusal of 'The Dignity of Labour', and even more terrified that increasing sections of the jobless are resisting all political representation (which many visibly did in the riots of '81), they can only patronise their would-be voters with the carrot of future forced labour for all (London Labour Briefing has even called for the defence of the notorious Youth Training Schemes against the government's cuts).

The Good Guys of the Left wish to inherit the world market and further rationalise alienation minus (some of) its Evil anomalies. For those who wish to be saved by the Good Guys, the enemy's apparent enemy seems a friend. Those resigned to false alternatives always have to choose sides to avoid taking sides. All those who try to adapt to and reform the alien economy, like the Saatchi & Saatchi ads, just want to be accepted because of their promises of a better future, because of their 'good intentions' - a convenient mask over the brutal anomalies they perpetuate in their present practice. If the jobs the Left are creating in the present are

anything to go by, our future in their hands will be as bleak as anything the Right could concoct. Like the big increase in the employment of fares inspectors on the tube. Or the massive boom in vacancies for riot cops in Effra Parade in Brixton. Or the mounting prospects for those seeking a job smashing and bricking up squats in various Labour-controlled boroughs. Or the rising possibilities for those whose ambition has always been to become a concerned socialist bailiff, evicting council tenants who don't pay their rent, whilst crying tears of compassion for their plight.

"But what about all the good the G.L.C. is doing?" whines the liberal. "Like positive discrimination for minority groups?". 'Positive Discrimination' - say, in housing - in the present conditions of artificially enforced scarcity, can only become a way of discriminating against one section of the proletariat and helping another section. It merely inverts the divide and rule operated by more traditional forms of class power. Why should heterosexual proletarians remain in the housing queue, whilst gays can jump the queue? The G.L.C. obviously doesn't advocate the direct seizure and transformation of territory, of offices, of banks, of university buildings, of hotels, of palaces etc as a method of dealing with the false scarcity of housing - because they know that County Hall might be amongst the first to be taken over. Instead they perpetuate the divisions - and give material reasons for 'straight' proletarians to resent gay proletarians, just as gays have good reason to resent 'straights' in this society. This 'balancing out', under capitalism, shows just what the ideology of equality means: equality of resentment, equality of humiliation, equality of separation. This resentment, intensified by the Left's moral blaming attitude, is repeated in the insulting ads for the G.L.C.'s anti-racism year: "1 million Londoners are getting a raw deal because the other 6 million let it happen". This liberal garbage takes the blame for racism away from the Nation, its frontiers and its institutions - and puts it simplistically onto everyone, regardless of their material position and their choices. In the riots of '81 (Which Ken Livingstone described as "disastrous for the community locally") black and white, gay and 'straight' proletarians discovered true community by attacking directly the "raw deal" they get from this world. Since then, what the Tory's social security race checks and Nationality Acts can't do to prevent such real equality from recurring, the Left's patronising 'positive discrimination' will make up for.

Or take the Great Fares Fluctuation Saga - when the G.L.C. tried to encourage the efficient and rapid mobility of wage-slaves and consumer-slaves through the lonely crowds of London's Public Transport. Even within its own narrow terms, one would have thought that Leftists would've at least threatened mass law-breaking in response to this flagrant insult to 'democracy' - even in its bourgeois forms, an insult which led to 80 extra deaths and innumerable extra fumes and ulcers on the roads these last two years. But no! - on the day London's fares became the most expensive in the world, Ken Livingstone dutifully paid his full fare before the T.V. cameras and said that the way to change this flouting of bourgeois democracy was through.....bourgeois democracy! Frightened that the breaking of the Tory law might encourage the rejection of their own management of the law, they even introduced a big increase in fares inspectors to deal with both those who refused the lawlords' fare prices, and those who refused to pay altogether. Dave Wetzell, the G.L.C. transport bureaucrat who in April '82 had been prepared to go to prison, 6 months later decided that proletarians should be prepared to go to prison for him. And yet Leftists still claim that the G.L.C. is at least a buffer against the harsh force of raw capitalism. With buffers like this we can only expect an endless increase in repeats of the Moorgate disaster!

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Far from acting as a buffer, Left-wing capital is merely the soft face of Right-wing capital. That's why the Left's call for 'Community Policing' has been taken up as Neighbourhood Watch schemes by the Right : either way, it means each person policing the rest in obedience to the laws of the commodity. Since community doesn't exist outside of struggle against this world, Community Policing can only mean policing the 'community' bound together by a 'respectable' submission to property laws. That's why K.L.'s buddy, Ted Knight, sends riot cops against squatters. And also why Ken Livingstone evicted squatters as Chairman of Camden's Housing Committee.

"(the riots) will all happen again. I think you will only get real change in Britain when you link extra-Parliamentary activities of all the groups and their manifestations with a constructive response within Parliament. If you actually think back to what happened in Paris in '68, all that happened by-passed the French Assembly and therefore it all peaked out quickly" - Ken Livingstone, The Face, May 1984.

Doubtless K.L. identifies with those involved in May '68 who did push the wildcat General Strike and Occupations Movement into a parliamentary direction - the French stalinists in the Communist Party. With the Right, the C.P. managed to seize the initiative and to lie, manipulate and herd the movement back into the estranged isolation of the T.V. and the ballot box (two capitalist cons that Ken Livingstone is fond of using): these specialists were obviously helped in this by the fact that in May '68 the vast majority of proletarians had still only developed pretty limited initiatives, perspectives and made mistakes of their own, and that, despite having launched a movement in which the Left, as usual, were left behind, they largely failed to assert any decisive opposition to the Left. This is a mistake the rioters of '81 started to go beyond. For instance, when the Militant Tendency's Clair Doyle spoke of the riots as "understandable but inexcusable" she was howled down. She was further silenced by the repeated chorus "Bigger cages, longer chains!". Nevertheless many of those who have given the Leftists the boot have got the boot of the State back in their faces - as in Effra Parade in Brixton in March this year, when Ted Knight (Labour leader of Lambeth Council) called out the riot cops, equipped with water cannon, to evict squatters. Or in Bologna in Italy, K.L.'s favourite municipality, which he regards as a centre of "dynamism" (The Face, May '84), where in 1977 the Italian C.P. dynamically called out the tanks and the cops to crush the massive autonomous movement against work, sacrifice, authority and mediation. Those who, "on behalf of others", seek to use the institutions capital presents as being the basis of power will inevitably use such forms to crush those who seek to destroy this power.

"If they gave up some of their pen-pushing and bureaucracy, they could get officers back on the streets dealing with crime - including the sale of drugs" K.L. reported in the News of the World, July '81, during the riots.

"Black kids support what I said about the police, and when I walk down Kilburn High Road, people shake my hand" K.L. in 'Not...' August '81.

"I feel... a degree of regret that Marshall did not push on and abolish the G.L.C. because I think it would have been a major saving and would have released massive resources which could have been put to much more productive use" K.L. 11.3.79

"If you are a member of the public trying to get something done, trying to defend one of your rights, this (The G.L.C.) can be a very powerful body to fight against, but in terms of using it positively it is a very difficult and reluctant machine to use" K.L. , The Face, May 1984.

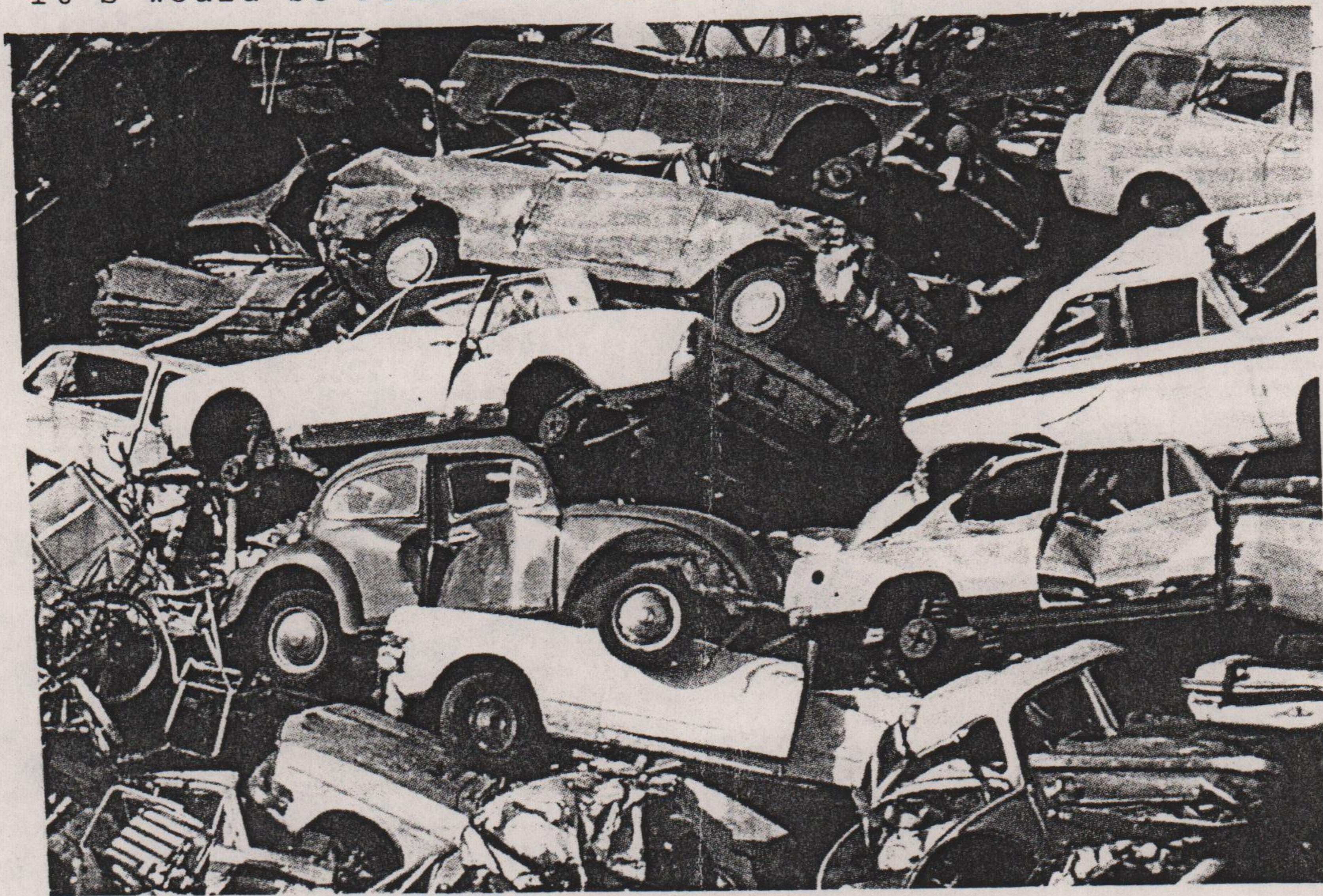
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"The fact that you have skills at....manipulation in politics...does not alter your class" k.L.,The Face,May '84.

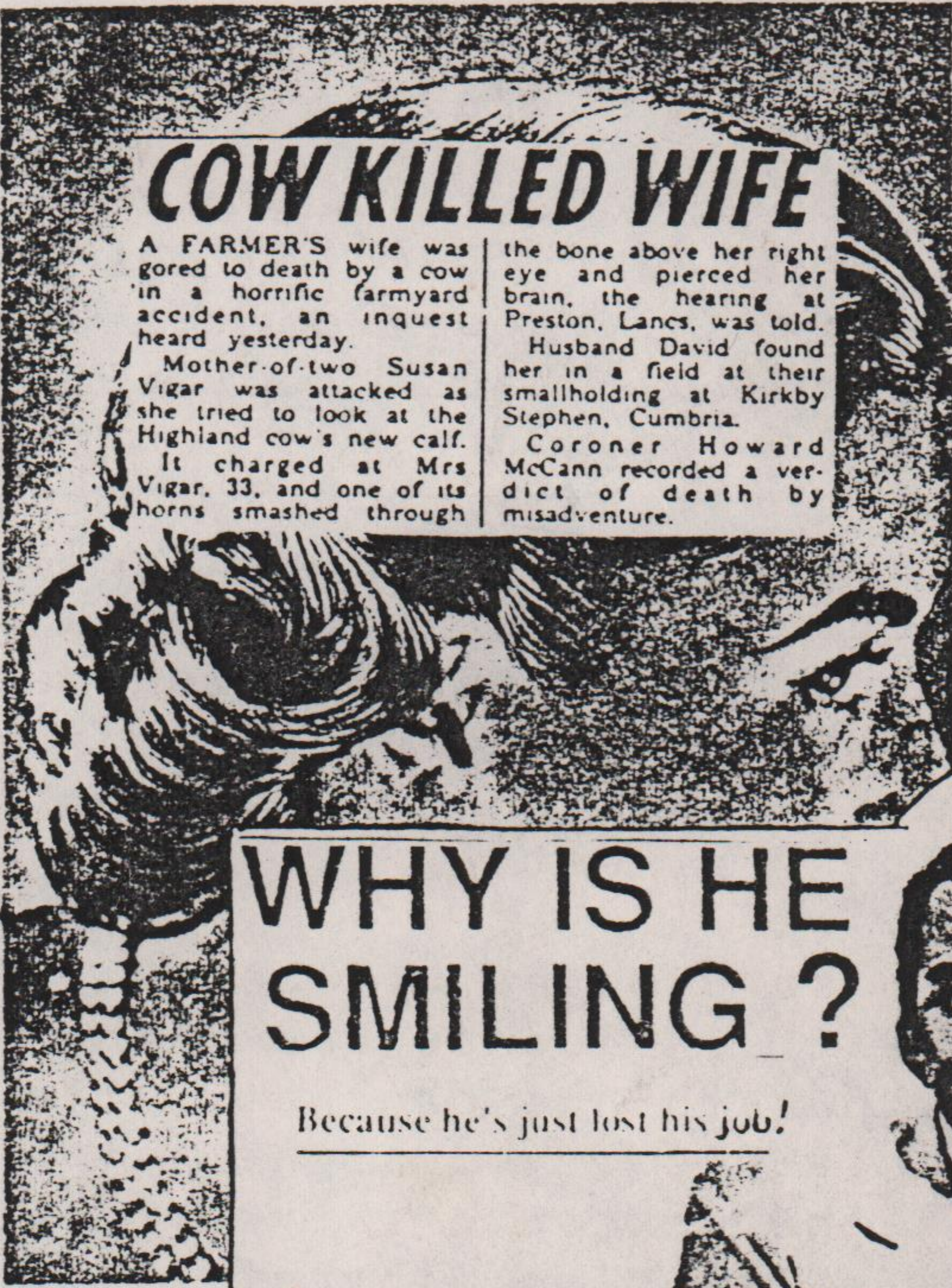
Livingstone's nice guy mediocrity,with it's self-consciously reasonable tones and gestures,is a superficial style of 'honesty',hiding the inevitable hypocrisy of his bureaucratic position,a position that makes irrelevant all his guilty proclamations of working class credibility. Nevertheless,he serves as a model,for those proletarians who don't want to face and confront their misery,of polite dialogue with the rulers of the Old World,at a time when large numbers of proletarians are rejecting such respectful 'criticism' by angrily taking the streets.K.L. - and all those who identify with his'ordinariness'-can only speak the contradictory language of the rulers,the language of manipulation and of commodity calculations,the language of two-faced bullshitters,who say and do one thing one moment and say and do the opposite the next.

"At the moment people's confidence has been so damaged by Thatcher that the first thing we must do is give them their confidence back and show them that you can actually improve things,that things can get better.... I think that things will get better in the 1990's ; you might get a Labour government in the late Eighties.But the next 3 or 4 years;really grim,really bad....I enjoy life immensely....It is so fantastic.There cannot be another job except Prime Minister that can be as rewarding and personally satisfying as this one.I have just loved it..."K.L.,The Face, May '84.

Those for whom life in the present is "really grim" can only get their confidence back by attacking all those who immensely enjoy their present niche within this society,whether their name is Thatcher,MacGregor,Prince Charles or Ken Livingstone.Thatcher has stated that she had her worst 10 nights sleep during the riots of July 1981 : she won't be the only one with insomnia when proletarians start to wreck the Left-wing of capital - and all it's would be Prime Mini-stars,and not just it's Right-wing.



January 1992.....year minus one press,P.O.Box 71,Hastings,E.Sussex.....
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COW KILLED WIFE

A FARMER'S wife was gored to death by a cow in a horrific farmyard accident, an inquest heard yesterday. Mother-of-two Susan Vigar was attacked as she tried to look at the Highland cow's new calf. It charged at Mrs Vigar, 33, and one of its horns smashed through

the bone above her right eye and pierced her brain, the hearing at Preston, Lancs, was told. Husband David found her in a field at their smallholding at Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. Coroner Howard McCann recorded a verdict of death by misadventure.

Danger times for catching COLD

HEED THESE WARNINGS! Pushed into sea

The armed forces commander of Malta, Brig John Spiteri, was hit on the head with his own sword and pushed into the sea by 200 Socialist Party supporters during a "Freedom Day" parade. — Reuter.



Silence in court

A Cleveland woman, convicted of stealing cash and jewellery, had her mouth taped shut on a judge's order after shouting at the hearing. — AP

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Mrs Thatcher, November 1987
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