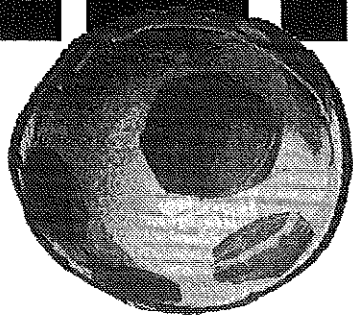


**RECLAIM**

**THE**

**GAME!**



***Militant Labour***

**£1**

## *Militant Labour's football charter*



- A choice to stand or sit to exist at all grounds.
- Bond schemes to be scrapped and replaced by proper democratic membership schemes.
- Ground improvements to be carried out in every stadium to make every ground safe and comfortable. The necessary money to come from the return of tax revenue from football and the profits from the pools. (Pools companies should be taken into public ownership).
- Admission prices to be reduced. the prices to be decided by the fans, with minimal charge for under 11s, half-price for 11- 18-year-olds, OAPs and the unemployed. Same prices for 'away' fans.
- Stop fascists from distributing or selling literature outside or inside grounds.
- Decent facilities for women and disabled fans at all grounds.
- Free creche facilities for all children whose parents require it.
- Clubs to be taken out of the control of big business and to be brought under the democratic, elected control of fans, players, club staff and locally elected government.

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## ***Join Militant Labour today!***

*Yes, I want to join Militant Labour*

Name.....Tel No.....

Address.....

Return to: 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Tel 081 53 3311.

If you want copies of *Reclaim The Game* to sell at your ground, write to the above address. Make cheques payable to 'RTG.'

Read *Militant*, the weekly socialist paper of Militant Labour, only 40p.

# Reclaim The Game

By  
John Reid

**Dedicated to all those who ever stood on  
the terraces... especially the Loft**

*Thanks for extra material and inspiration to John Hird, John Viner, Pete Jarvis, Sean Hurl, Gary Martin, Pete McGreal, Darryl Kavanagh, John Bulaitis, Mick Suter, Russ Green, JW Wood, Bobby 'Penalty King' Keetch, Rodney, Stanley, Daphne Biggs, QPR, Alan, Ann, Josie, Mary and Joseph.*

**First edition August 1992**

**Second edition September 1992**

**Third edition August 1993**

**This edition August 1994**

**Printed and published by Militant publications,  
3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Tel 081 533 3311.**

**Books and magazines to read:**

*The Football Grounds of Great Britain* by Simon Inglis

*Sing When You're Winning (The Last Football Book)* by Steve Redhead

*Shooting To The Top* by Rodney Marsh

*A Kick Up The R's* (QPR fanzine) Editor, Dave Thomas

*The Glory Game* by Hunter Davies

*Only A Game? The Diary Of A Professional Footballer* by Eamon Dunphy  
(with Peter Ball)

*The Best Of 'Foul' 1972-75* Foul Publications

*When Saturday Comes.*

All of the above heavily influenced *Reclaim The Game*...no idea is original!



From Tom Watts *The End*.

*If you know your history...*



The way football is portrayed, you'd think it's always been run as a big business enterprise controlled by local businessmen, property tycoons and millionaires.

The origins of most football clubs are rooted in the working class. Arsenal started off as a works team from the munitions factory at Woolwich, West Ham by workers at Thames Ironworks and Manchester United by railworkers from Newton Heath.

Other teams came from the local community or church groups. Celtic were formed originally to support soup kitchens amongst the impoverished Catholic community of Glasgow's East End and soon became a focal point of local pride and achievement.

Historically, then, football has its origins in the working class community and if it is to survive as the game we love, it needs to be reclaimed by working class fans.



Spurs fan outside the High Court, summer 1993.

about how best to win our game back. We would like your comments but above all, take up the fight to reclaim the game at **your** club.

### *Who owns your club?*

The image of a football director or chairman as a made good second-hand car dealer, or a successful scrap metal merchant, has long since gone.

Satellite TV, sponsorship, banks of executive boxes etc. now means that owning a Premiership club is now big business, a prestige operation.

From *The Sunday Times* list of Britain's richest 500 people:

**No.24 Jack Walker Steel Blackburn Rovers** £400 million (m), last year £320m.

'The £22m he's injected into Blackburn Rovers seems at last to be producing a team with Championship potential under the inspired, charismatic leadership of former Liverpool boss Kenny Dalglish.

But it's small beer for Walker, who sold his steel stockholding business to British Steel in 1989 for £330m. With his property interests and an expand-

Labour. We believe that the fight to democratise football is linked with getting rid of big business within it and in our everyday lives. The same people who destroyed the North Bank, the Kop and the Holte End decide whether or not your workplace stays open or closes.

The success of the fight against ID cards, in which Militant Labour members were involved, showed the power fans have to change the game.

We hope *Reclaim The Game* will kick off (pun intended) debate among fans



Fans' protests helped to save Fulham from a merger with QPR.

ing airline, Jersey European Airways, plus the investment income generated by the cash from British Steel, we rate Walkers' wealth at £400m."

**Joint 33rd David Thompson Finance His son, Richard, handles his business interests including QPR.** £300m. Last year, £300m.

Thompson, a former Smithfield meat trader who built up the Hillsdown food group before selling his stake for £300m in the late 1980s, now has most of his business interests handled by his son, Richard, via the family business, Thompson Investments.

This is growing into quite a sizeable business in its own right, worth a turnover of £59.5m in the year to March 1992 and profits after tax of £1.3m. It spans food, leisure and property and is growing rapidly."

**No 367 Francis Lee Waste paper and football Manchester City** £30m, first year in top 500.

"Lee is the chairman of Man City and a former City and England player. But his money-making skills came to light at Bolton Wanderers. He drove an old lorry around the town collecting waste paper for recycling.

He sold the firm for £8m in 1984 but still runs it and owns shares worth £5.7m. He also owns a company that paints motorway crash barriers. Lee has extensive racing interests and a stud farm."

## *Big business and the Premier League*

Now that the Premier League is with us, there is a danger that the big clubs will go on to form a new British league, with clubs like Celtic, Rangers, Aberdeen and Hearts in Scotland or even a European league with live coverage every night on satellite TV.

The future for the smaller clubs isn't rosy. Clubs will still be able to gain promotion to the Premier, but the standards demanded of them in terms of all-seater stadia, capacity and attendances will mean that many of them won't be able to afford it. Kidderminster Harriers were barred from the League over the state of their ground.

Martin Edwards, Man Utd's chief executive, spelt out the future for clubs excluded from the Premiership: "...eventually, some will have to go part-time." This means redundancies for many of the league's 2,000 full-time professionals, 1,200 youth trainees and thousands of back room staff.

The FA is dancing to the tune of the 'big five' clubs and sponsors like Coca-Cola, Carling and Sky Sports who dictate the dates and times of matches to be screened. Their claim that all these changes will benefit the national teams is only a smokescreen to hide their real motive, profit.

## *All-seater stadiums*

In the wake of Hillsborough, the Taylor report recommended all-seater stadia. The vast majority of fans oppose them because they mean higher admission prices and fewer places at grounds.

In 1991, the Institute of Structural Engineers produced a detailed report which concluded that terracing **can** be safe. Surprise, surprise, the government ignored it. Germany, in its bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals, has included a request to keep some terracing at all venues.

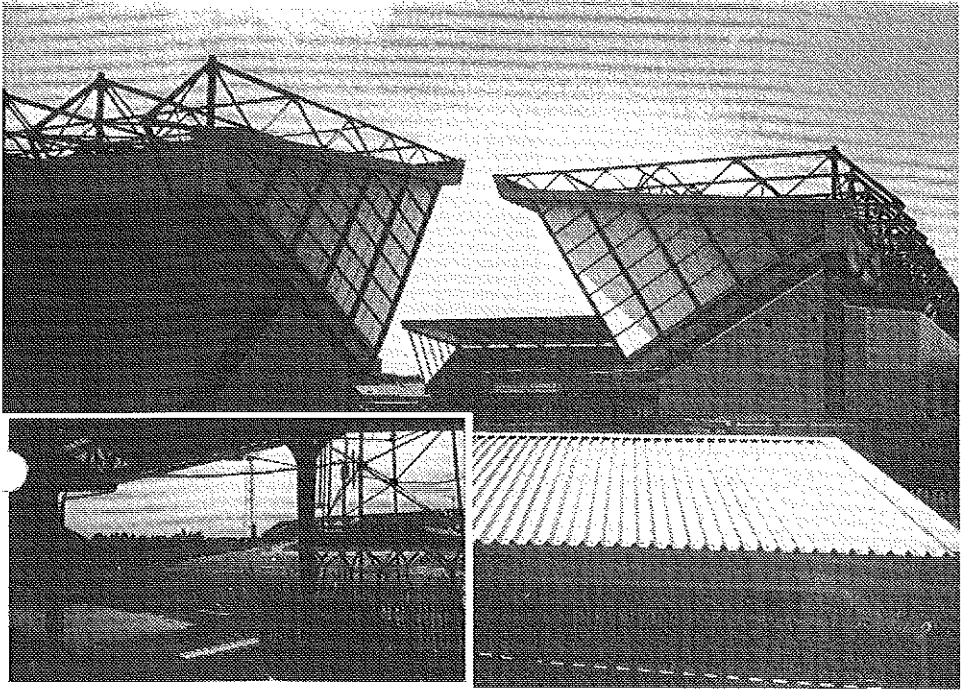
The Hillsborough tragedy happened because of the way fans were fenced in and criminal police negligence. The FA contributed to the disaster by allocating Liverpool, who had the most fans, the smaller terrace. That terrace 'loaded' from the back. If it had been a side-loading terrace, the disaster could not have happened.

All-seater stadiums are not necessarily safe. The Bradford fire tragedy happened in a stand with wooden seats. If there was a fire in the seats, it takes longer to evacuate than the terraces. The implementation of all-seater stadiums has already meant sharp rises in ticket prices. Many working-class people who used to see football as a central part of their weekend are being driven away by higher prices. If this continues, it could mean the end of football as a traditional working-class sport.

There should be no increase in prices to pay for new seating and safety improvements. The money's already there. Fans paid more through the turnstiles in **one** season than previous Football League sponsors Barclays did over three.

The millions of pounds taken out of football in tax by the government has





The New Den and inset, Cold Blow Lane.

to be ploughed back into the game. The pools companies should be nationalised, with the millions generated by them put back into the game at every level.

Directors are always pleading poverty, yet they are never short of a few bob or the odd Rolls-Royce. Football's financial books must be opened for all fans to see where their money goes.

### *Who owns the grounds?*

Fans are the biggest sponsors of the game and yet we do not own the grounds. Businessmen in the past bought football clubs to give them added prestige just as they would buy a big house. Some might have appeared genuinely interested in football, as was the case with Elton John at Watford and now Walker at Blackburn.

But more and more of them are buying clubs and especially their grounds, to speculate on the property market or to asset strip the club by selling its best players.

At a number of clubs, directors take a large cut of the profits and even cream off a percentage from transfer fees. In effect, they're stealing from the loyal fans and players. To avoid this, football clubs and grounds must be taken out of the hands of these sharks.

Clubs and grounds should be owned and controlled by the fans, players

and local community. Grounds could then be used all year round as an affordable facility for the benefit of the community. In Italy, the majority of grounds are already municipally owned.

## *The bond schemes*

The bond scheme was the biggest con trick of all. Fans who had already paid hundreds of pounds to watch their team and collectively contributed millions of pounds to the game, were asked by Arsenal and West Ham directors to pay £800- £1,500 on top of their season ticket to guarantee them a seat.



From Tom Watts *The End*

12 Newcastle didn't learn from Arsenal and West Ham's experi-

ence. They attempted to introduce a bond scheme. Hundreds have protested, with a meeting of over 600 Newcastle fans in the close season and the setting up of an independent supporters' club.

Arsenal, West Ham and Newcastle have had large crowds for donkey's years and they had the cheek to turn around and say fans must pay for ground improvements. What have they done with the millions of pounds they've raked in over the years?

Fans are being asked to pay thousands of pounds in Bond Schemes but will be given no say in the running of the club. Arsenal fans have been kicked in the teeth with the destruction of the North Bank, which was the popular end for working class fans. Fans don't want Bond Schemes. We don't want all-seater stadiums. We should have a choice whether we stand or sit at games.

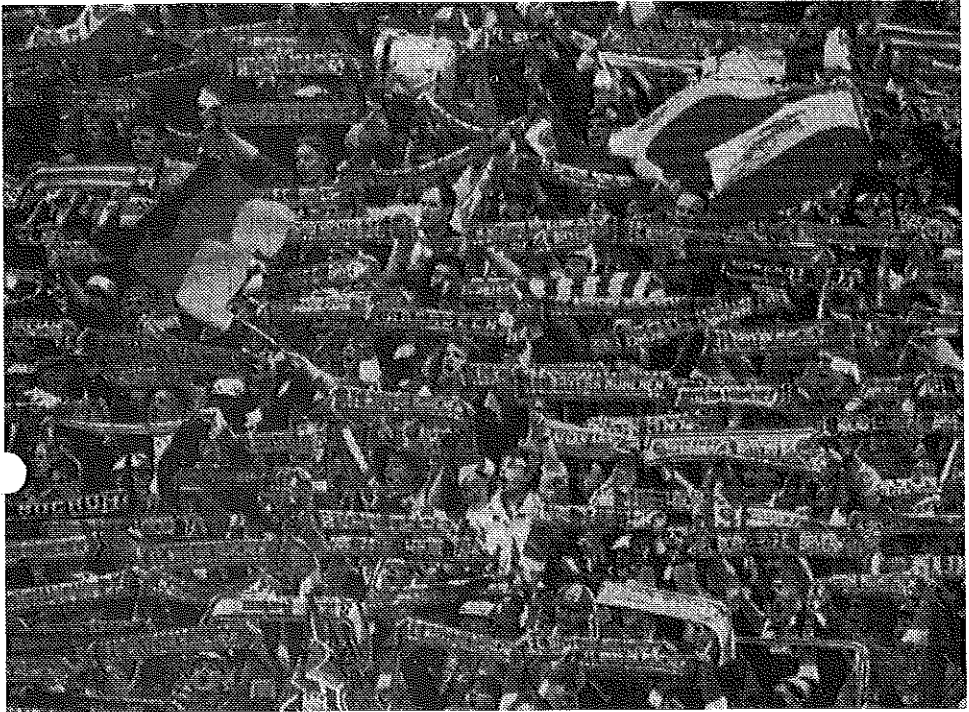
## *Ground sharing*

During the property boom of the 1980s, developers became increasingly involved in football. Their motivation was not the good of the game but quick profits out of buying and selling prime sites, which many grounds occupy, for re-development.

Ground-sharing and club merger proposals came from this new breed of directors, such as the late and unlamented Robert Maxwell. He once proposed merging Reading and Oxford United and call them Thames Valley Royals!

Fans are against leaving their home grounds when they are not consulted and local tradition and friendly rivalries are not taken into account.

For example; even though Stamford Bridge, the home of Chelsea, is just



Try doing this sitting down!

down the road, Fulham fans would not contemplate sharing a ground with their local rivals.

### *Crystal balls*

*Foul* magazine, the granddad of fanzines, writing almost 20 years ago - although over the top in only seeing family interest as middle class - seem to have had a crystal ball, in their humourous but serious warning about the 'cleansing' of the terraces.

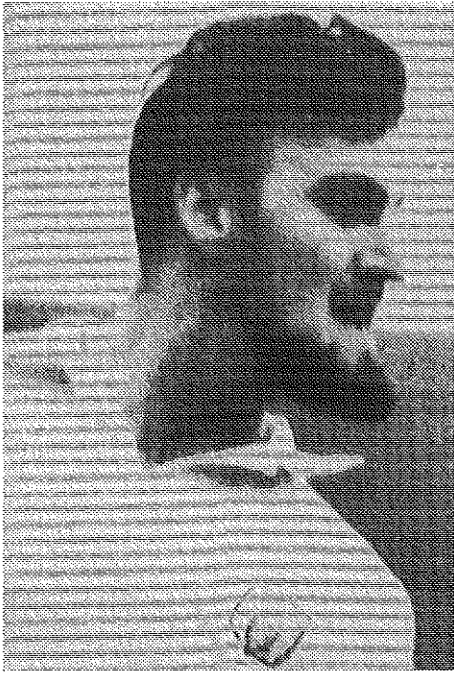
"The more we try and make the middle class frightened of coming to games, the more they are excluding us, fencing us in and restricting our movement on the terraces.

"So bad is this getting that they have put up barriers on the Kop to stop that famous, glorious surge. What next? A ban on singing? No scarves allowed? No standing room? It's coming unless we do something about it."

"What the hell is this we keep hearing about 'family football', 'more seated accommodation', and 'restrict movement on the terraces'? Is this the fate of football in the future?

"The game seems to be turning its back on the real supporters in favour of the season ticket family and their admittedly greater money.

"But will mum, dad, auntie Doris and the kids go to a game in the middle



There was an old man called Michael Finnegan...

of winter at the other end of the country when there's a rail strike on? Will they hell!"

"...Gordon Jago and Jimmy Hill will destroy football if allowed any sort of administrative power. Their utopia is a spotless concrete bowl lined with thousands of little plastic seats, lots of clean toilets, a restaurant, a sports complex, piped music and 22 clean cut, goal hungry young zombies playing the game in a spirit of friendship and sportsmanship on a plastigrass pitch.

"They want matches which end in 7-7 draws watched by packed crowds of middle class parents who have each brought their 2.4 children, who cheer enthusiastically every goal, applaud every exhibition of skill from the opposition and who go home afterwards in their family saloons, all agreeing that they've been thoroughly entertained.

"Bollocks to their visions. It's on those cold, forbidding terraces that you find the central nervous system of football from which the adrenalin rises and the lifeblood flows."

## *Sponsorship*

The Sky Sports deal means big business dictates when matches are played. In the 1992-93 season, QPR played their first league game against Man City on a Monday night and their second game the following Wednesday. With travelling, it meant that players had less than a day to rest and treat injuries. For the away fans, it meant inconvenience in taking time off work.

Sky is only available to a minority of people, so football is taken from the mass TV audience to accommodate those with satellite dishes. Sky have already increased their charges for football on top of rental and may soon even charge for individual matches.

To stop this blatant extortion, Sky and all TV companies should be brought under public ownership with democratic workers' control and management.

In the USA, American football deliberately avoided going onto satellite/cable and stayed on the public service stations like NBC because they knew that to do so would kill off interest in the game.

Sponsorship also gives the clubs an opportunity to rip off the fans - by changing sponsors regularly, the strips have to change, so fans (many of

them young) will go and buy the new outfit, at a cost of £30-£40 for a new team shirt.

## *How football should be run*

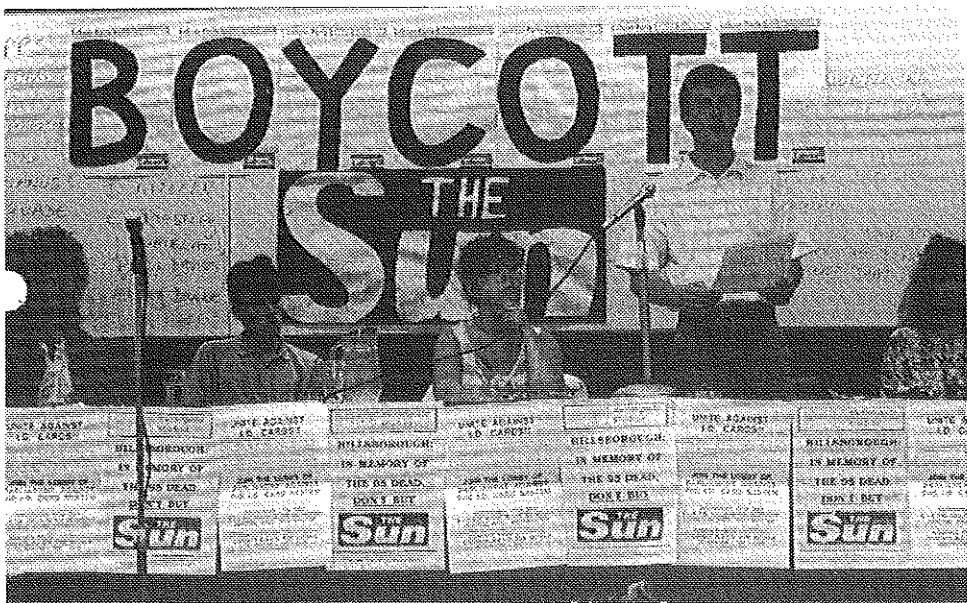
We the fans can force change. The campaign by the Football Supporters Association and the Campaign Against ID cards, which organised thousands of fans against the ID card scheme with demonstrations at matches, meetings of fans at different clubs and a lobby of Parliament, helped force the government to abandon the scheme.

Unfortunately, as well as abandoning the ID scheme, the government accepted the recommendation in the Taylor Report for all-seater stadiums, which was included due to a deliberate misunderstanding of the reasons for the Hillsborough disaster.

It didn't happen because of terracing, it happened because fans were penned in, not only by perimeter fences, but also by fences running down the middle of the terrace, which meant that when there was a crush, fans couldn't move to the side.

A few years earlier, in the FA Cup semi-final between Spurs and Wolves at Hillsborough, a similar tragedy nearly occurred. The authorities learnt nothing and 96 Liverpool fans died because they were penned in like animals.

We saw a glimpse of the solidarity between fans as a result of the tragedy when collections were held at every ground and over £1m was raised for the dead fans' dependents.



Merseysiders boycotted *The Sun* after its disgraceful lies following Hillsborough.



Reconstruction of the terraces has led many less well-off fans to be priced out.

This the real face of football - not the isolated hooligan problem, which is blown out of all proportion, to fill the pages of *The Mirror* and *The Sun* and even the 'serious' press.

All-seater stadiums have brought higher prices and have meant that fans, who see football as a social occasion, where they meet up on the terraces as a group to enjoy the chants and rivalry with the other team's fans, have suffered. This is as much a part of the occasion as the match itself. Fans have been forced to sit down and unless a block of seats can be reserved together, they get separated.

In many cases this is killing the atmosphere at grounds. Many people will stop going once their ground is all-seater regardless of the price, which, if it goes up to £18-£20, will exclude thousands more fans and will destroy football as a working class spectator sport.

We demand that a certain percentage of the ground should remain for the fans who want to stand. Terracing can be as safe as seats if the clubs spend the money to make them safe.

### *Governing body*

A democratically elected governing body is required to run football. This should be on the basis of each club balloting their members to elect their

representative and the PFA and staff electing one delegate per club.

This would create a truly democratic governing body which would have the interests of football and not the motive of profit at heart.

## *Admission prices*

Prices should be limited to a reasonable amount - £15 to £20 is a rip-off. Prices for children under 11 should be nominal, otherwise a whole generation will be lost to the game.

School students between 11 and 18, OAPs and the unemployed should only pay half-price for both terracing and seats. The supporters' clubs should be involved in discussions on price rises and away fans should be charged the same as home fans, with half-price for children.

## *Democratic control*

At the moment, unelected boards run the different football clubs. If we are to reclaim the game then a democratic structure is needed. Fans, players, club staff and the local community should all be represented on a club's board.

We would recommend that the fans, who are football's biggest sponsors, should, through their official and unofficial supporters' clubs (where they represent a significant number) initiate a democratic club membership.

This would elect a third of the board. The players and staff should elect the second third of the board, with the final third being elected by the local elected authority, because the local community should be represented to ensure club facilities are used for their benefit.

Most clubs were originally formed by working-class people. We must regain control of our clubs before they're destroyed by the ruthless quest for profit.

## *Anti-racism and fascism*

Racists and fascists are still present in football, especially at England internationals. Racist chants are a negative and destructive trend in football.

Many of the country's best players are black, which has helped to attract black youth along to matches. Racist chants will drive these fans away.



In many cases, these chants are started by one or two fascists or racists trying to stir things up. An ongoing campaign needs to be launched to drive these scum out of football.

In the 1970s the National Front targetted football grounds to spread their poisonous ideas. At Tottenham, with a supposedly large Jewish support, a Spurs Against The Nazis group was started.

Non-Jewish supporters wore skull-caps in solidarity with Jewish fans. Leeds Utd, in tandem with the city council, who own Elland Road, had a successful anti-racist campaign involving fans and the local trade union movement, which went some way to rid the club of its racist image.

They said racist chanting at Elland Road was unacceptable. Other clubs should take this up.

In Britain and Europe fascists are again attempting to infiltrate grounds. Here, the NF and British National Party (BNP) are distributing their material at matches.

Fans at Celtic, Newcastle, Chelsea, QPR and elsewhere have produced anti racist/anti-fascist material as have St. Pauli in Hamburg, Germany.

18 This material should highlight that the BNP and NF stand for the same ideology as Hitler - for the extermination of trade unions, Blacks, Jews, Irish, disabled, gay and lesbians and every minority.

It should also explain that racism divides black and white workers and that the only way to obtain decent housing, education and full employment is for all workers to unite in a struggle against the real enemy - the big business system, which exploits **all** workers, black and white, and which forces us to live in lousy housing, put up with poor education and throws us out of work.

Racists and fascists must be isolated. If clubs fail to deal with them then fans should take action to physically stop the fascists from peddling their filth.

Known fascists and persistent racist chanters should be banned from all football grounds. But we can't rely on the courts. At Selhurst Park, currently shared by Crystal Palace and Wimbledon, over the last two seasons, the police lost every prosecution for racist chanting and abuse when they came to court.

## *Action against racism*

More and more black players are receiving sustained racial abuse from a small minority of fans at a number of grounds. Millwall, in last season's play-offs against Derby County, being the worst example, when the two black Derby players were the brunt of sustained racist abuse and were eventually substituted by the manager for their own protection.

While his intentions were undoubtedly honourable, it's not right that the victims of abuse should be taken off, it's the fans who are abusing the players who must be dealt with.

Fans and players, together, must mount a campaign to tackle racism head



on. The fans on the terraces should isolate and deal with racists. The players, through the Professional Footballers Association, (PFA) should take action through leafletting the crowd, articles in the programme and maybe even stopping play every time one of their fellow black professionals receives sustained abuse.

Racism is rife at some clubs and amongst some professionals, with tales of black players getting abuse from fellow players. The PFA should discipline any members found guilty of racist behaviour.

Everton FC seem to have a policy (hopefully changed by the time you read this pamphlet) of not signing black players. No wonder a minority of their fans chant 'Everton are white' and abuse visiting black players. Also, attitudes in the past stereotyped black players.

Observed Peter Ball in the now defunct magazine *Marxism Today* in 1983: "...Ten years ago...Clyde Best of West Ham (was) the only black footballer appearing regularly in the First Division and the widespread prejudice within the game held that black players lacked the moral and physical toughness, the 'bottle,' in football jargon, to survive in the Football League."

In 1981, John Bond, then manager of Man City, said of Dave Bennett: "Like a lot of coloured players in this country...you pull your hair out with them...they drive you mad...he's got so much ability, so much potential."

Or Ron Atkinson on Brendan Batson, his player while at Cambridge Utd and West Bromwich Albion, said of him to millions on TV: "he had, typically, a chip on his shoulder."

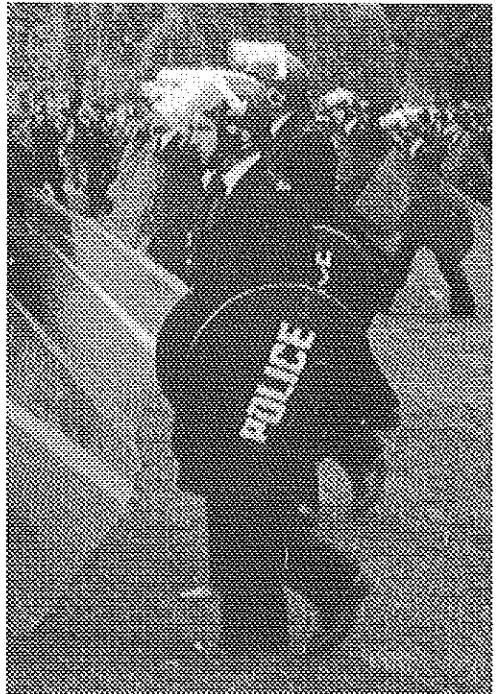
## Hooliganism

The press say that hooliganism is a massive problem, something that never happened in the past, but it's not a recent phenomenon. In 1885, Preston North End players were trapped on the field by 2,000 'howling roughs'.

After beating Aston Villa 5-1 they were attacked with stones, sticks, umbrellas and spittle. One player (Ross) was laid out by a missile!

The violence that occurs at football is negligible. Only 2,995 people were arrested last season (source: *The Guardian*) from a total attendance of around 23 million. That's less than 0.008% of those attending!

Any incident is whipped up out of all proportion by TV and the news-



papers, whereas the hundreds and thousands of matches that take place without any trouble do not get a mention.

It would be naive to think there is no problem with hooliganism, but it's a relatively small one. It is not a football problem, but society's.

The miserable social conditions which exist for young people in Britain, including unemployment, sadly means that (for a small minority) one of their only ways of getting excitement is to organise attacks on visiting supporters.

If football didn't exist they would probably organise a ruck in the town centre. Luton once banned away supporters for a number of years, yet violent crime in the town centre went up by 14%.

## *Policing*

The policing at grounds also needs to be monitored and controlled by the fans. Many ejections from the ground occur for very trivial things and the police attitude to fans can be very confrontational both inside and outside the ground.

Stewards, under the control of the supporters' club, should be used inside the ground with the away fans being in charge of their own stewarding.

The police would only be called into the stadium if requested by the ground stewards. This would reduce the tension inside the grounds and further reduce the already low number of arrests.

## *Players*

Steve Perryman said in *The Glory Game*: "I talk about going to work and people laugh, they think you just kick a ball about on a Saturday afternoon."

John Allen, in the ancient fanzine, *The Leveller*: "The popular image, heroes of the working class getting rich quick for working one and a half hours a week, and the entrenched attitudes of the game's governing body, the Football League, (an autocratic body of employers - club chairpersons who look after the game in their spare time) have resulted in feudal working conditions for professional footballers.

"Treated as fleshy capital, investments who only think through their feet, they are unable to change jobs without their current employer demanding cash from their would-be employer. No other worker in Britain suffers such restriction of movement."

Or Eamonn Dunphy from *Foul*, in the early 1970s:

"The image of the professional footballer as a glamorous show-business type surrounded by pretty girls and flash cars is firmly implanted in most people's minds. I know him more accurately as the deeply insecure family man or the tearful failed apprentice. Getting that image across is what the PFA, the players' union, should be all about.

"And while it's often said that the trade union movement in Britain is too powerful the equation between union and power in football contains an element of black comedy. The PFA is a small organisation...we have, in fact, practically no say in the game's decision-making process and very little consideration of the player's point of view.

Consequently, our conditions of employment are such that a reincarnated 19th century mill-owner would be gratified to see that restrictive practices, so dear to his heart, are alive and well in football.

"Men can still be bought and sold in the market place, apprentices are callously dismissed on completion of their apprenticeship and the possibility of retirement through injury...looms over every game..."

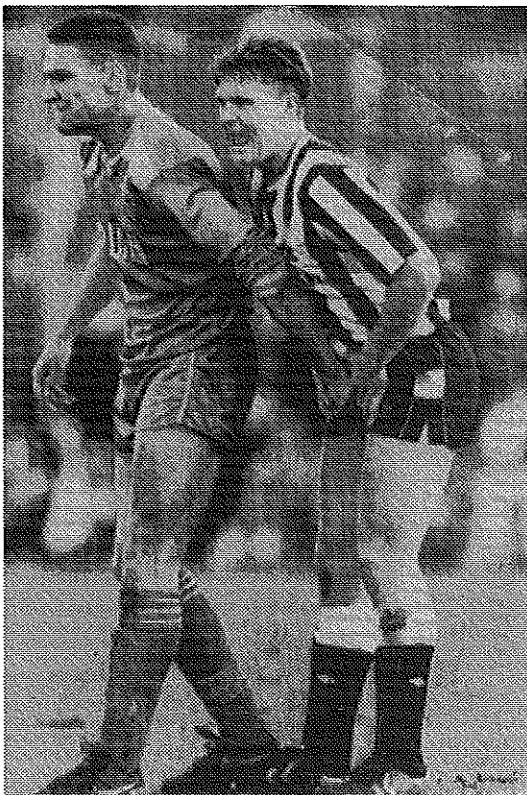
The position for the vast majority of players is very uncertain. The advent of the Premier League could mean many clubs disappearing. Aldershot went two years ago and the eight players left on the books went straight on the dole without any compensation.

In the lower divisions most players are low-paid workers. Even in the top divisions players only have maybe five or six years at the very top and then face 35 years until retiring at 65, many of them without any other skills.

YTS schemes are not the answer. What's needed is proper football apprenticeships with the chance to carry on further education and to use their training and talents in coaching and physical education in the community. The PFA should fight for these schemes.

The transfer system should be scrapped. Players shouldn't be tied to a club, they should have freedom of movement. A system of compensating smaller clubs for the development of players would have to be introduced to stop the bigger clubs snapping up every promising player.

If big business did not control football then the money spent on transfer fees could go into developing the stadia and improving the pay of players and staff.



Vinny gets to grips with Gazza's fleshy assets.



Players proved in their ballot three years ago that they are interested in the livelihoods of their colleagues in the lower divisions, voting to strike by over 90% to make sure money from TV revenue still goes to smaller clubs.

The vast majority of players came from smaller clubs and feel solidarity with the lower division players. The PFA needs to build on this solidarity to ensure the revenue generated by football is shared out fairly.

### *Maradona - A performer for big business*

Diego Maradona is perhaps, after Pele, the most gifted player who ever lived.

He was in a class of his own as an inspirational team leader. From the age of nine Maradona was owned and controlled by big business. The so-called doctors at every club he played for gave him painkillers and steroids so he could perform. They masked his agony, causing him to do more damage to his injury-ravaged body for a few more bucks.

Surely these drugs are more performance enhancing than cocaine, or the alleged cocktail of drugs Maradona was on, who, like Gascoigne, Best and Greaves came from a poor working class background.

They all earned large sums, but, like all working class people, their talents have been bought and sold as commodities.

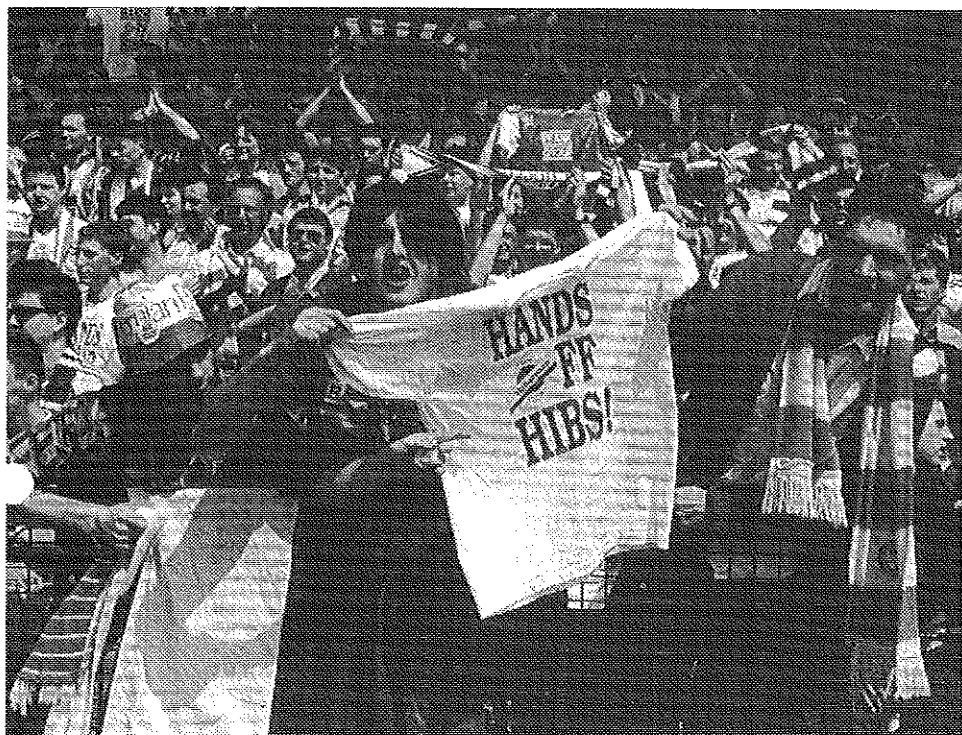
As socialists we should have sympathy for sportsmen like Maradona, Best and the great Mohammad Ali as victims of the big business profit system.

### *Facilities*

Priority has to be given to people with disabilities. The clubs shouldn't stick them altogether in a pen but attempt to integrate fans with disabilities with the rest of the crowd.

This means that all facilities, including toilets, should be accessible to all.

All grounds should provide match commentaries for blind people who want to attend.



Fans in Scotland have also had to fight against merger plans.

Clubs are always saying they want football to be a family game, but the facilities that exist for women at grounds are barbaric. Decent food, not just the soggy hamburgers, should be available at an affordable price. All fans, men and women, should be involved in deciding what facilities are provided.

Creches should be freely available. (mind you, kids should be inside the ground at as early an age as possible).

## *Scottish football*

In the mid-1800s, football became very popular in Scotland. It soon spread to industrial Glasgow, where it really took off. On 9 July 1867, Scotland's first club, Queens Park, was formed.

For the first few years games were few and far between. In 1869, against Hamilton, Queens Park won by four goals and nine touchdowns, which shows that, similar to England it took a long time for football to develop into two distinct games, Association football and rugby football.

Amateurs Queens Park dominated Scottish football for 20 years, as Scotland prohibited professional football until 1893. Since then, Scottish football in the main has been dominated by the two Glasgow teams,

Rangers and Celtic.

Support in Scotland for football is fanatical. The nation which produced the world's first professionals still produces a rich crop of talented players - and also the best managers for English football.

The peak achievements were Celtic's European Cup win and Rangers and Aberdeen winning the Cup Winners Cup.

## *Welsh football*

The birthplace of Welsh football was a mining village, Chirk in north Wales. Schoolmaster TE Thomas, who was also a Welsh FA administrator, played a part in introducing 49 future Welsh internationals to the game, including the legendary Billy Meredith, a former Chirk coal miner, who played at the highest level in the English League for 30 years.

He captained Manchester City to the 1904 FA Cup Final and played for Manchester United in their 1909 Cup win. The team instigated the very first players' union, which they planned to affiliate to the TUC.

24 So seriously did the FA take this threat, that, for the start of the 1910 season they drew up new contracts for all professionals which outlawed joining the union. Meredith first played for Wales in 1895 and played his last game in 1920, a 2-1 win over England.

1921 was the peak of Welsh football, with six Welsh clubs playing in the League - Cardiff City, Swansea Town, (now City) Wrexham, Newport County, Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare Athletic. In 1923/24 Cardiff missed the championship by goal difference (on today's goal difference they would have been Champions). In 1927 they became the only non-English club to win the FA Cup in a 1-0 over Arsenal (anything to do with Arsenal having a dodgy Welsh keeper?).

## *Northern Ireland*

The first organised game in Ireland was between Caledonian FC and Queens Park in Belfast in 1878 and the Irish Football Association was formed in 1880.

Northern Irish sides have been far more successful than those of the Republic. Linfield reached the last eight of the UEFA Cup in 1967. Glentoran reached the European Cup Winners' Cup quarter final in 1974.

Glentoran came close to glory in 1967/68 when they drew 0-0 and 1-1 with Benfica, going out on the away goals rule. Benfica went on to lose in the final to Manchester United.

Northern Ireland have been very successful in the World Cup, reaching the quarter finals in 1958. In 1982 a 1-0 win over Spain and two draws enabled them to win Group Five. A 4-1 defeat by France ended hopes of a Semi-Final place. Northern Ireland has produced great players - George Best, Pat Jennings and Danny Blanchflower.

## *Irish football*

Organised football came to Southern Ireland in 1883 with the formation of the Dublin Association Club. Ireland's fight for freedom from British rule led to the formation of the Republic of Ireland in 1921.

The Football Association of Ireland was formed in 1923. This was opposed by the British Football Associations and remained an issue until after World War II.

Dublin's Shamrock Rovers are Ireland's most successful club side. The Irish national team entered the World Cup before any of the British sides.

In 1934 they were eliminated at the qualifying stage on goal difference. They lost 1-0 to Spain in a qualifying play-off. In 1982 they failed to qualify on goal difference.

In 1988, Ireland beat England in the European Championships (Ireland were the first side from outside Britain to win on English soil, beating England 2-0 at Goodison Park on 21 September 1949).

## *British isolation*

25

Although England is the birthplace of modern football and played a major part in spreading the game internationally, they shunned international tournaments for years, because of a 'We are superior' attitude.

England stayed out of the first three World Cups (which they probably would have won). In fact, the 'home countries' withdrew from FIFA in 1928.

By the time England entered the world arena they were behind the rest of the world in skill and technique and in the 1950 World Cup were humiliated 1-0 by the USA.

England had the same attitude to the European Cup. Chelsea were refused permission by the League to enter the first European Cup competition in 1956. Manchester United ignored the League a year later, becoming England's first representatives.

As far as introducing international tournaments and the development of a world football body goes, the accolades go to Switzerland, the home of UEFA and FIFA, and to France, who introduced the World Cup in 1930, or the Jules Rimet trophy, as it was known then.

## *Women's football - history and future*

Women's football was founded in the 1890s when Nettie Honeyball pioneered the game with her touring team. In Scotland in the same decade, a travelling team, under the management of Lady Florence Dixie, was formed.

From its inception the establishment did not like the idea of women playing football and on 23 August, 1902, the FA council banned 'ladies' matches.

It wasn't until WW1 that women's football boomed. Dick Kerr's Ladies

(Preston) was formed in 1917 to raise money for a military hospital.

After the war they toured the country playing to large crowds, including one of 53,000 at Everton's Goodison Park. But in December 1921 the FA again banned women's football at their grounds.

Local women's football still continued but did not flourish again until the 1960s, when England's World Cup success led to another boom in the women's game.

In 1969 the FA finally recognised women's football. The Women's FA was formed and recognised by the FA in 1971. That year England had 44 women's clubs. By the end of the decade this number had increased five-fold.

TV coverage of women's football in the late 1980s gave the game an added boost. Thousands of young women now play football, with many forcing their way into school teams, that is, in those schools where the backward idea of either segregating boys' and girls' football, or even preventing girls playing at all, has been stopped.

In the USA, 'soccer' is massively popular amongst young women, where thousands now play the game. The USA are the current women world champions.

English women's football has progressed, with Doncaster Belles and Arsenal Ladies playing to a very high standard, but it still lags way behind Europe and the USA.

If football club's facilities were owned by the local council they could then be used for training sessions for local teams, including women's teams.

Clubs that have organised these sessions have had a massive response from women. Already, more and more women are attending football, in many cases groups of young women going together.

But football grounds need to be more welcoming, with better facilities for women.

## *Terrace atmosphere*

In the closed season we have seen the destruction of the Kop, the Holte End and many other great terraces. These 'ends' created a great atmosphere, thousands stood together, sang together, shared jubilation, anger, pain and ecstasy, identity and comradeship, not as an individual but as part of a mass.

The humour and ear-bursting noise was not only hilarious and intimidating but could reduce many a visiting player of the opposition to a quivering wreck.

The terrace atmosphere and comradeship (especially at away games) played almost as big a part to turn me to football as the game itself (or more specifically, QPR) - football's soul will disappear with the destruction of terraces.

With all-seaters, there is always one clown who arrives late so as he stumbles to his seat he blocks your view, he's also usually been down the pub all morning, so he's up every ten minutes shuffling past you to go to the toilet



(OK, I promise to arrive early and drink less next year).

## *Fanzines, supporters' power and politics*

In recent years there has been a mushrooming of fanzines. They are a humorous addition to the turgid overpriced official programmes.

They allow fans to offer an alternative to club policy and have acted as an organiser to many of the campaigns including the anti-ID card campaign, the anti-Bond scheme and the anti-all-seater movement.

The Football Supporters Association (FSA) should become the body that all fans work through. We can use this body as a political voice for football fans to take our democratic demands up with clubs and politicians.

Arsenal and West Ham fans showed the mood that exists in football to fight back with their massive campaign against the Bond scheme.

Charlton fans, in their fight to get back to the Valley, even stood as the Valley Party in local elections and got 14,838 votes in 60 council seats.

## *Early history*

27

The last three decades of the last century saw the development of rules very similar to those of today.

The Football Association was formed in 1863, when eleven clubs met at The Freemason's Tavern in London. The FA brought together the numerous and conflicting rules in existence and formed a unified body for association football.

In 1871, they introduced the FA Cup to popularise the game (the first winners were The Wanderers).

Soon, there was conflict between amateur and professional players (the first 'pros' were Sheffield-based Scotsmen John Lang and Peter Andrews, who had moved south in 1876).

In England, Professionalism was 'legalised' in 1885, but the pro-am conflict came to a head when the Football League was set up in 1889.

It was the coming together of the amateur, mainly public school game in the south and the northern/midland working-class game which forged the present laws.

Football was spread throughout the world by Scottish and English engineers and soldiers. That's why the two Milan clubs are known by their Anglicised name rather than Milano.

## *Early history II*

The game that football developed from was Shrove Tuesday football. These 'games' involved whole villages, the aim being to get the ball from one marked out area (goal) to another miles apart.

Roman soldiers introduced the game (Harpastum) to England and a varia-

tion is still played in Ashbourne, Derbyshire. Similar games introduced by the Romans exist in Brittany and Italy (Ancient Greece had a similar game, Episkyros).

Football was initially frowned upon. A proclamation by King Edward II in 1314 forbade on pain of imprisonment the playing of football in city streets.

Richard II (1389) was worried his subjects were neglecting archery practice on account of football. Similar prohibitions show the game's popularity in Scotland. In 1583 one commentator described football as characterised by 'murder, homicide and great effusion of blood.'

Football was a massively popular game and gradually evolved over the centuries to the game we know and love today.

## *Football - a man's game?*

The people who run football have always tried to exclude women from playing the game and have used stereotyped images to back up their arguments.

28 Those at the very top are the biggest obstacles to women entering the game. The late Ted Croker, former football supremo, when interviewed on an Open University programme on women and sport, described to an astonished interviewer that one of the reasons women couldn't play football at the same level as men was because of the shape of their chests.

These backward ideas prevail in football to try to preserve the age-old tradition of men playing football and women staying at home to do the cooking and wash the kit.

Rodney Marsh, when asked on Channel Four women's football programme what he thought of women playing football, said he thought women should be at home cooking the dinner.

The men who run football even went to the law courts to prevent Theresa Bennett's claim to be registered as a member of a boy's (amateur) football team.

Not surprisingly, the verdict went against the young woman as football: "did not come within the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975."

Lord Denning declared when hearing the case that the law would be: "exposing itself to an absurdity...if it tried to make girls into boys so that they could play in a football league...football is a game (in) which the average woman is at a disadvantage to the average man because she has not got the stamina or physique to stand up to men (or)...the strength or stamina to run, to kick or tackle."

## *Laws of the game*

The first set of rules was the Cambridge University code, drawn up in 1848. They differed from the FA rules published in December 1863 in that they permitted more handling.

There were differences between these 'London' rules and the 'Sheffield'

rules. London clubs had a throw in, while Northern clubs kicked the ball in (so maybe FIFA are attempting to go back to the original rules after all).

There were also different offside rules. This was resolved in 1877. The two-handed throw-in was introduced in 1882 and the penalty kick in 1890. Goalkeepers were allowed to handle the ball anywhere on the pitch until 1912, when they were restricted to the penalty area only.

Until 1913, defenders only had to be six yards from a free kick (seems refs still operate the old law).

So, the laws have evolved over the last century quite dramatically. This may continue, with talk of bigger goals, re-introduction of the kick-in for the throw in, four quarters rather than two 45-minute periods.

Sadly, many of these changes are being talked of to fit in with the needs of commercial TV and the big sponsors.

## Conclusion

We have outlined how football evolved from a game which used to be a scrap between two villages and was frowned on by the powers that be at the time, into the beautiful game which was at first developed primarily by working men. It was they who instigated the rules and formed teams to compete against each other.

The game became hugely popular. For the first time, small businessmen took it over for monetary and prestige reasons and today, big business is in control and is totally transforming professional football.

Marketing and merchandising are the aim. Maximise the profits, drive away the working class fans through inflated ticket prices.

Wearing your club shirt, you can watch the game on Sky or on cable, both of which are owned by the same businessmen who are want to entice the well-off yuppies into the grounds to swell the coffers.

Interestingly, football was encouraged as cheap mass entertainment by the authorities to regulate the thousands of men in their working clothes who used to swarm out of work on Saturday mornings and go straight to football.

That's why organised league football developed in the industrial North and

**FOOTBALL: Home Office deny 'problem'**

## Fans fear police threat to protests

FANS' demonstrations, witnessed last season from QPR to Celtic, are threatened by the Criminal Justice Bill, the Football Supporters' Association warned yesterday, writes Henry Winter.

The FSA fears the legislation, which goes before Parliament in October, will increase the powers of police to intervene in protests such as the sit-downs at Loftus Road and football-related demonstrations outside the High Court.

"The Bill is a threat to fans' fundamental right of peaceful protest," Adam Brown, of the FSA, said. "Take the situations at Manchester City and Celtic last season where fans were protesting — in order to protect the essence of their club. The Bill will affect things like that."

Mike Slocombe, who is coordinating the FSA-backed campaign, said: "Fans are ringing me up all the time worried by what the Bill could mean. Things like 'stop and search' in Clause 76, when the police don't have

reason to, sit-ins which could be seen as aggravated trespass, and any form of protest outside the ground which could become illegal. Under clauses 63/64 of the Act, some forms of peaceful protest will become a criminal act.

"The Bill is broad and vague but gives police a massive chance to make life hell for fans. We feel it's not up to a policeman to decide if a football protest should go ahead."

The Home Office dismissed such fears. "The fans are wrong, there is no problem with any form of peaceful protest," a spokeswoman said. "Only if there is violence or severe social disruption will it be used. It gives police the power to act a little quicker.

"If there is a sit-in at a ground, the owners can ask them to leave. If they don't, they can call in the police but the police cannot get them to leave without an eviction order. Providing the fans' protest is peaceful and they are not breaking any law, they can get on with it."

Midlands.

The idea was to congregate thousands of us in one place, allowing us to let off a bit of steam, have a swear, have a fight and take our minds off the crap we get from our bosses at work. Now the bastards who grind us down at work, who cut our wages and threaten our jobs have taken over our clubs.

We as socialists believe we must link our battle to sack club boards with the struggle to sack our boards at the workplace, to replace the anarchy of the profit system (capitalist) with a system democratically owned, controlled and run by the majority in society, the working class (a socialist system).

The government's legislation could still be used against football fans. There is still talk about re-introducing legislation to bring in ID Cards. On top of that the Criminal Justice Act will not only be used against youth enjoying themselves at raves but could be used against us at our own grounds if we participate in a peaceful demonstration against 'our' chairman/board or manager.

## 30 Campaign

We must organise in the FSA and through the supporters' clubs and fanzines for the policies outlined above. We must reclaim our game.

To quote from Simon Inglis' *The Football Grounds of Great Britain* in reference to Arsenal's history:

"Until the turn of the century it had been run essentially by exiled northern working men still closely connected with the Woolwich Arsenal.

"But the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 meant more overtime for the men and less time spent on the football club, which soon ran into debt. The organisers had never wanted it to become a proprietary or capitalist club."

Arsenal directors and the owners of all clubs in Britain should note the history of our beautiful game. Football came from the working class. The only way it can survive is if it goes back to its roots.

Let us fight to reclaim the game as a working class sport owned and run by fans, players and the local community.

## *The fans united will never be defeated!*

Militant Labour has led major campaigns, leading 18 million poll tax non-payers, which forced the Tories to back down in the biggest civil disobedience movement in British history, leading to the demise of Thatcher, its architect. We were also heavily involved in the campaign against ID cards, which forced Thatcher into a U-turn.

We fight nationally and internationally in every struggle by working class people. Our aim is to put an end to the international system of exploitation known as capitalism and to transform society. We believe socialism is the future. Join us in building a society where working people democratically control their own lives.



**"Reclaim The Game is possibly the most revolutionary football publication on the market at present, and deals with such topics as sponsorship, all-seater stadiums, big business and the Premier League and women's football."**

**From *You Wot!* Torquay United's alternative fanzine.**

**"Using *Reclaim The Game* as a model, we intend to put out a similar publication over the next few months... thanks again for your help. When we produce our pamphlet, modelled on *RTG*, we'll send you a copy. Good luck!**

**While it's bloody awful to realise that across the miles there are other people having to fight the same rotten battles as us, it's also gratifying that they are fighting."**

**Barbara Sullivan, Secretary, *Fight For Football*,  
Victoria, Australia (Aussie football).**

