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FREE THE FRAMED IRISH PRISONERS

PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 18 March 7.30p.m.
Carlton Centre, Granville Road, London NW6

(Tubes: Kilburn Park, Queen's Park. Buses 36, 6, 16, 16a, 32, 8 and 176)
SPEAKERS: Maire O'Shea (IBRG), Fr. Bobby Gilmore (Director of Irish Chaplaincy Scheme), Therese Shanahan (Lab. Cllr, Tower Hamlets), John McDonnell (Camden Council policy unit).
For a public inquiry into the beating and framing of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four!

After the South Wales Decision:

A POLICY TO UNITE MINERS

STRENUOUS efforts by right-wing and Communist Party leaders in the National Union of Mineworkers to isolate president Arthur Scargill and undermine his leadership of the union was the background to the executive meeting last week.

Wednesday's meeting in Sheffield discussed the acceptance in principle of six-day working at Margam colliery, South Wales, and decided to convene a special delegate conference to discuss the union's position.

Scargill last week denounced the Welsh decision as contrary to union policy and against union rules — which require that a change in the working week is a matter for national negotiation.

British Coal is already using the Margam decision to try to enforce similar deals throughout the coalfields. Its policy is to attack pit by pit where it thinks a right-wing leadership will accept its demands.

Immediate targets are the Hawkshurst pit in Warwickshire — for which British Coal is to seek planning permission later this year — and Asfordby colliery in Leicestershire.

In addition the board is:

BY GEOFF PILLING

PRESSING for amendment to the 1908 Mines Act which restricts miners to eight hours underground in any 24 hour period. (British Coal also want to introduce nine-hour shifts at three pits in the north east.)

PLANNING to introduce the extended working week retrospectively at the giant Selby complex in Yorkshire.

Such moves will return the miners to 1947, the time of coal nationalisation when the five-day working agreement came into operation. Scargill has warned that the retreat by the South Wales leaders has opened up the way for 24-hour continental shift working and the loss of 20 per cent of present jobs.

While the leadership retreats before the Tories and British Coal, miners have shown that the determination to defend jobs and conditions underlying their year-long strike has in no way vanished.

● Last week work at Britain's biggest pit — Kellingley in Yorkshire — came to a complete halt. The nearly 2,000 labour force at the pit with the biggest coal production in Europe walked out over a disputed contract involving a new Heliminer headings machine. The men objected to the rate of driveage demanded by management. The Kellingley branch defeated overwhelmingly a proposal to continue to negotiate in the dispute.

● The severe erosion of support for the scab Union of Democratic Miners in Nottinghamshire and elsewhere indicates that the Tories were not able to break the NUM despite spending millions of pounds in their year-long efforts.

● Not only miners are on the move. More than 82,000 teachers walked out of schools last week in the first wave of strikes in protest against the Tory government's decision to scrap collective bargaining rights for all teachers. That such an action takes place on the most basic trade union issue after a sustained effort by Thatcher to separate sections of the middle class from the working class again demonstrates that the working class has not been defeated by the present government. (See teachers' statement page 16).

Encouraged by the retreat of the trade union leaders, the Thatcher government has renewed its demands for further cutbacks in coal production to prepare for the industry's privatisation.

Energy secretary Peter Walker last week insisted that the industry break even within two years. Its basic objective must be 'to earn a satisfactory rate of return on its net assets and achieve full financial viability without government support'.

In a written parliamentary reply Walker demanded operating costs be reduced in real terms by 20 per cent, that the industry concentrate on 'low cost production' and that it 'ensure an adequate rate of return on new capital'.

As Scargill has warned, the Tories want round-the-clock working in a few large pits with thousands of miners sacked and communities shut down.

The Stalinist and right-wing leaders have now become the open instrument of this Tory butchery. This is their response to the miners' strike: it has brought them right out into the open as witch-hunters of all those in the working class who organise the slightest resistance to Tory policies.

McGahey and his friends have declared war on Scargill for one reason: because he refuses to bow to the Tory government.

In a thinly disguised attack on McGahey, Scargill said at a Knottingley, North Yorkshire, rally last weekend: 'I'm sick and tired of listening to those advocates of so-called new realism who argue that there is nothing that can be done against Thatcherism. Their policy is apparently the kind of thing that has taken place in South Wales.'

The Stalinist's nominee for the union vice-presidency, NUM Scottish area secretary Eric Clarke, is the mouthpiece of the Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party. In an election statement to the 'Morning Star' last week he declared he would be working 'flat out' for a Labour government so

that more investment could be put into coal.

'I welcome the Labour Party national executive's and Neil Kinnock's declaration for the development of the mining industry, a moratorium on nuclear power, and a balanced energy policy meeting the needs of the power engineering industry, the miners and the nation.'

What a lie! It was the Kinnock leadership who joined hands with the Tories to denounce the miners in the most scurrilous terms when they fought for over 12 months to defend their industry.

Attacks

A Labour government would certainly continue its attacks on the miners from where the Tories have left off. It was the 1964 Labour government of Harold Wilson that began the wholesale closure of pits.

Clarke also said: 'We have to fight off all imports from under-developed countries who are being exploited by the multinationals to undermine the conditions of the industrial workers of our country, and ensure our own supply of indigenous fuel by the development of our own coal industry.'

This is exactly the same type of argument used by British Coal in south Wales.

They demanded six-day working at Margam because these conditions existed abroad, saying without them the South Wales coalfield would not be able to compete.

What policy should miners fight on to defeat these Tory attacks?

● **Reject six-day working out of hand!**

● **Down with all separate area agreements! Defend the NUM as a national union! No return to Spencerism!**

● **For the implementation of the NUM's policy of a four day week with no loss of pay!**

● **The employers will not take the miners pit by pit! For a national rank and file conference to represent every pit and to decide any action!**

● **For workers' control in the mining industry! Only then can the proper deployment of labour, the opening up of new pits, defence of working and safety standards be assured.**

● **Force the Labour leaders to fight for these policies or make way for those who will!**

Unemployed occupy centre

BY PAUL HENDERSON

plans were allowed to go through the unemployed would have nowhere to meet as a body and would be dispersed throughout the town to 'drop in' premises in local neighbourhoods.

'At the moment, this is a place where the unemployed are becoming organised,' they explained. 'Normally unemployment means people are cut off from access to basic resources to make their voices heard. The city council wants to deny us this facility unless we pay for it. We don't agree with their plans, that is why we have occupied.'

A leaflet issued by the occupation points out their aim is to ensure the centre is run by the unemployed for the

unemployed. 'We are not ignorant or unable to make informed decisions about our future,' says the leaflet. 'We are oppressed by property and the human lottery of unemployment.'

Pointing out that the unemployed lack the resources to make real decisions in their lives, the leaflet condemns the council's proposals, made by people 'with no personal experience of long-term unemployment and without consultation with the "experts" (the unemployed).'

● An emergency meeting of Leicester Trades Union Council executive committee late on Wednesday night decided to give full backing to the occupation in line with their policy to support the unemployed.

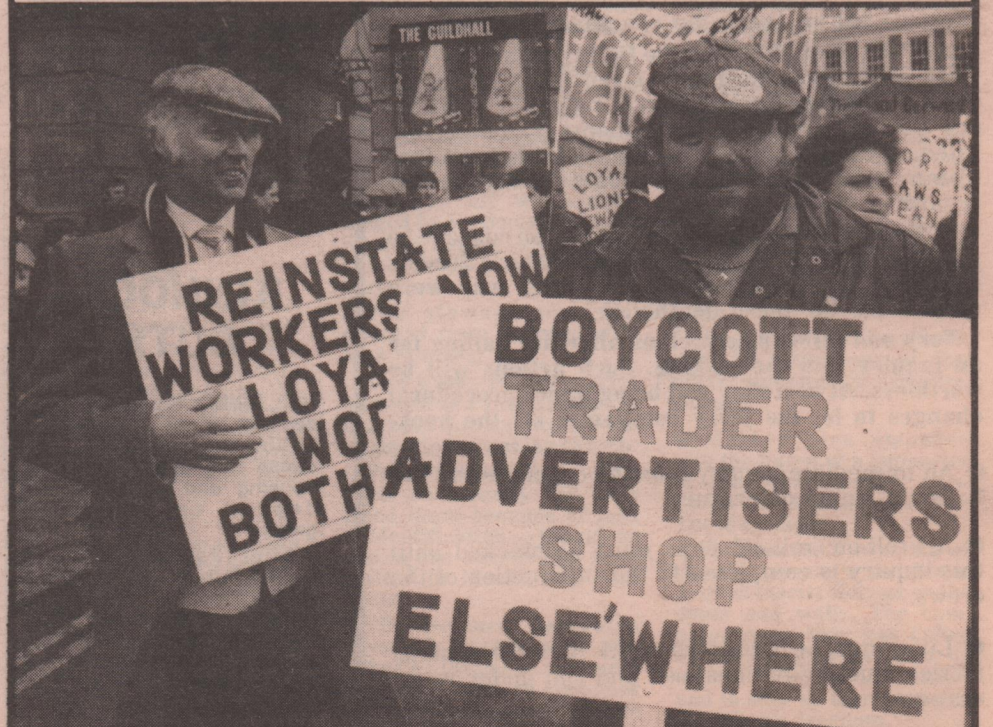
LEICESTER Unemployed Workers' Centre has been occupied in opposition to plans of the Labour-controlled city council to turn large parts of the building into a conference centre — effectively excluding the unemployed.

A meeting of the Recreation Committee voted on 4 March to accept the plan, which also takes management of the centre out of the hands of the present voluntary committee, returning it to the city council.

At the moment, resources in the centre are used extensively by unemployed people and the centre itself has been run in the interest of working-class action, supporting various community activities.

Sarah, Bridget and Mark from the Occupation Committee told Workers Press if the

Derby March — page 16



Free enterprise

THE 135 passengers who drowned with the sinking of the Townsend Thoresen ferry 'Herald of Free Enterprise' were killed not by the poor seamanship of the crew but by the ferry operators' lust for profit. The roll-on, roll-off ferry was designed for faster turnaround of vessels, maximum passenger and vehicle throughput at the expense of safety.

The 'Financial Times' admitted this on Monday 9 March in an article by Kevin Brown:

'The design of ships is in essence a process of compromise between requirements such as cargo capacity, fuel economy and safety. In trying to balance the demands of safety and commercial viability, roll-on roll-off operators have opted to maximise the latter, tilting the scale of value judgements in favour of performance.'

Brown quoted a Strathclyde University Professor of Marine Engineering: 'It would be possible to introduce vertical watertight sections into the open car decks . . . but it would make loading very much slower, and that would affect the commercial viability of the ship.'

The disaster has revealed:

- No watertight bulkheads to keep the vessel afloat;
- No passenger list;
- No emergency lighting in passenger areas;
- No automatic indication on the bridge that end doors are open;
- Dangerous cargoes — in this case cyanide — on passenger vessels;
- Lorry drivers relegated to a bolthole below the waterline which becomes a death-trap in an emergency.

During the last 20 years there have been 217 serious accidents involving this type of vessel. Of these, 35 have sunk, the majority in less than ten minutes.

Roll-on, roll-off vessels first appeared in the 1960s in association with containerisation, which led to the modernisation and rationalisation of the world's ports, docks and shipping, bringing a vast destruction of jobs.

A shallow draught plus a high structure, vehicle decks running the full length of the ship with no watertight bulkheads and doors near the waterline at both ends, have turned these vessels into unstable deathtraps whenever water gets in after a collision or when a door is left open.

Competition is fierce. Last December P&O took over European Ferries in a £286 million deal which included the Townsend Thoresen fleet of 22 roll-on, roll-off ferries.

This gave P&O 52 per cent of the lucrative cross-Channel trade and left it locked in struggle with the giant Sea Containers (Bermuda) Ltd. which owns the recently privatised Sealink as well as Hoverspeed.

Both companies now face the threat of the Channel Tunnel which to be viable must catch the bulk of their trade.

As part of its counter-attack Townsend Thoresen is building two huge new vessels at Bremerhaven costing £85 million each, treble the size of the 'Herald' but on the same open-hanger principle.

Mrs Thatcher — of Sink the Belgrano fame — last week shed crocodile tears. Even more sickening was the cringing supplication of Labour's questioners during Monday's parliamentary discussion, when all they could manage was a futile hope that 'commercial considerations' would not inhibit 'due regard' to safety.

Not one of them had the principles or courage to point out that it was precisely Thatcher's friends following her philosophy to the letter who were responsible for these deaths.

Tory and Labour politicians alike are calling for an inquiry into the sinking. Such actions will be worthless. At best they will bring minor procedural changes to let the ferry companies off the hook.

- An immediate inquiry must be organised by the National Union of Seamen.
- All roll-on, roll-off ships must be blacked until this inquiry is completed to the satisfaction of the crews.
- Lives must be put before profit. All cross channel ferries must be nationalised and run under workers' control.
- A future Labour government must be pledged to implement this measure as soon as it takes office.

STRIP SEARCHES

Trying to break their spirit

BY HILARY HORROCKS

STRIP searching is being used to intimidate politically active women, Isobel Anderson of the Stop the Strip Searches Campaign told a Glasgow meeting last week.

'Strip searching was introduced five years ago, shortly after Sinn Fein decided to contest elections', said Isobel.

'It was the British government's way of saying to women: "If you're going to get active in the Republican movement this is what we are going to do to you".'

Isobel's sister Martina is being subjected to strip-searching torture on an unprecedented scale, as is Ella O'Dwyer.

The two women — serving

life sentences at Durham jail after being convicted at the Brighton bomb trial — are strip-searched with every cell-change, visit, or other excuse devised by prison authorities.

'They are trying to break their spirit, but they will never do it', said Isobel. 'The only message from these prisoners to the British government is: Tíocfadh ar la' ('Our day will come').

Isobel described how a strip-searched prisoner has to expose all parts of her body to prison officers, including turning up the soles of her feet and removing protective padding during menstruation.

Republican women prisoners at Maghaberry jail in the north of Ireland, as well as Martina and Ella, are sub-

jected to this maltreatment.

One prisoner, said Isobel, had resisted strip-searching for two-and-a-half years while imprisoned on remand, and was 'beaten continuously' for that. Then she was acquitted.

Tony O'Mara of the Glasgow Prisoners of War Committee told the meeting that Republican prisoners were the 'heart and soul' of the struggle against imperialism.

'Leadership has always come from the prisons,' he said.

The British labour movement must fight strip-searching and other state repression used against Ireland, said Simon Pirani of the Workers Revolutionary Party and Clydeside Troops Out Movement.

'British Labour leaders help organise the repression against Ireland: the fight against these collaborators must be taken up', he declared.

At the Scottish Labour Party conference this weekend in Perth, a resolution from Stirling Labour Party Women's Section will criticise party leaders for failing to carry out a resolution to campaign nationally on strip-searching.

The resolution asks what is meant by Labour's statement that if elected it will find a 'more humane' method of searching women prisoners.

A picket will be mounted calling on conference delegates to support the resolution.

Patients' money 'borrowed' by Health Authority

BY STUART CARTER

A SCANDAL broke out last week when it was revealed that Salford Health Authority had 'borrowed' £500,000 of patients' money to balance its books.

The Health Authority is predicting a £1.2m deficit on this year's budget on top of an agreed overspending of £700,000.

Effectively the Health Authority is bankrupt until it receives its budget for 1987/88 at the end of March.

Director of Finance, Jack Edwards, has also confirmed that this is the reason why monthly-paid staff will be paid three days late at the end of this month.

The £500,000 has been taken from the accounts of long-stay psychiatric and geriatric patients without their consent and incorporated into the Authority's general funds.

The money will be paid back in the new financial year.

Also last week Salford Health Authority announced that a purpose-built mental health resource centre, Prescott House in Walkden, would not now be opened because the North West Regional Health Authority has withdrawn the funding.

The Regional Authority said it would not provide any money to employ staff until

Salford balanced its books.

This makes a joke of the government's so-called 'community care' policy.

Prescott House was to be the first of a number of centres built to provide community care for psychiatric patients. Salford Health Authority plan to rundown Prestwich Hospital and sell off most of its grounds to a property company for £25 to £40 million.

They claim that this money would be used to provide alternative facilities to hospital. But these recent events have only confirmed the suspicions of hospital staff that the money would be swallowed up to pay the Health Authority's debts.

Also the Authority would have to guarantee the property company that they would hand over the site within the next three years. This is an impossible time table for the resettlement of hundreds of people many of whom have spent 10, 20, 30 years and more in Prestwich.

This is the reality of the government's community care policies. The sell-off of public assets while patients are thrown out without adequate support. No one so far has asked them what they would prefer.

KINNOCK CUTS

NEIL KINNOCK has reportedly decided to cut promises in Labour's manifesto, and stress that more money for housing and education will depend on 'economic growth'.

After Patricia Hewitt's leaked attack on left-wing support for gay and lesbian rights, former Labour prime minister Callaghan has attacked Labour defence policy, to applause from the Tory press.

It was Callaghan who sabotaged Labour's 1983 election campaign by attacking plans to abandon Polaris.

Dulcie Yelland dies at 79

DULCIE YELLAND, veteran of the revolutionary movement, died in hospital on 27 February, aged 79. All who had known her heard the news with deep regret.

Dulcie was one of those never-to-be-forgotten comrades whose principled fight for socialism made everyone who came into contact with her proud to have her as a comrade and friend.

She was never too tired or too busy to take time out to explain to new comrades the role of social democracy and Stalinism.

She fought courageously to unionise factories during World War II, and was always in the front line de-

fending her fellow workers.

As 'Ursula Verity' she was a regular contributor to the early issues of 'The Newsletter', forerunner of Workers Press.

The labour movement has lost a fighter — and Dulcie was fighting to the end. The new generation of communist fighters owes a lot to Dulcie's generation, and she is one of that generation who will never be forgotten.

Our thoughts and best wishes go out to Charlie, David, Steven, and Crispin. N.H.

Cancer test promise broken

TORY Health Minister Norman Fowler's promise to give women a full cervical cancer screening service by the end of the month has been exposed as an empty boast.

Fowler claimed last month that by the end of March, 109 out of 192 health authorities in England and Wales would have a full screening system to help stem the 2,000 deaths a year from cervical cancer.

But a survey last week by Labour researchers revealed only eight of 30 authorities questioned had obtained a computerised system to call women for screening.

Among those still waiting are Leicestershire, Nottingham, Ealing, Paddington, Crewe, Halton, Warrington, Bury, Thameside, and all five Birmingham authorities. Some do not expect to have a system operating until April 1988.

'I don't say that Mr. Fowler is a liar,' Labour health spokesman Frank Dobson commented. 'He is idle, shiftless, and doesn't care.'

Women's Day on Merseyside

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day was celebrated in Liverpool in a number of ways.

At the Merseyside Trade Union Community and Unemployed Resource Centre, before a social in the evening, over 100 women marched through the city as part of 'Reclaim the Night' National Campaign in spite of blizzard weather conditions.

The march had a carnival atmosphere as it proceeded

through the city, gaining supporters and cheers from women leaning out of windows to wave.

Afterwards a social was held for women only where 'The Fabulous Dirt Sisters' played.

Across the water in Birkenhead, over 300 women braved a snowstorm to march to the spot where 21 year-old florist Diane Sindall was brutally raped and murdered last summer.

Leading the torch-lit

march was Diane's mother, Mrs Wendy Sindall. Alongside her were her daughters Carol and Pamela and the sisters of Diane's fiance David Beattie.

The march was organised by Wirral Rape Crisis who laid a wreath in the alleyway where Diane's body was found.

● Shawfield's Community School has been celebrating International Women's Day with displays of women in struggle from all over the world.

Thousands march to protest police murder

'WE don't want any trouble. We want to march peacefully. But if you don't let us — then we will riot.'

That was the message given to hundreds of riot police by a young black woman holding a megaphone on last Saturday's march through Wolverhampton.

The march was a magnificent show of strength by Wolverhampton's black community, who — supported by nearly 3,000 young people from all over the country — were protesting at what the community describe as 'police murder'.

It followed the killing of Clinton McCurbin three weeks ago. He was strangled to death by police arresting him for alleged theft of a credit card.

Because of police attempts to cover up what happened, the community's angry reaction has intensified since McCurbin's death.

When the killing became public knowledge, police told the press that 'heart attack aggravated by drug abuse' caused the death. But the official post mortem stated that 'asphyxia consistent with restraint during a violent struggle' was the cause.

Last Saturday's demonstration was part of one of the many campaigns that have followed state attacks on black communities.

The conclusions of past campaigns of this kind usually add up to the need for 'community policing' in areas such as Broadwater Farm.

'Workers Against Racism' (WAR), played a major role in mobilising for the march last Saturday, only to lead the main body of the march away from the street where

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

McCurbin was killed. This left the attempts of the local black community to march down that street isolated in the face of the riot police.

'The Next Step' (6 March) says that 'unless we teach these hired thugs and killers of the establishment that we will not stomach their attacks on black people, they will continue their campaign of violence.'

This, along with the call for 'community policing' is a wrong conclusion.

'These hired thugs' cannot be taught. And 'community policing' is not going to stop police attacks on black communities'. The capitalist state is racist by nature, and will continue to intensify its racist attacks as long as it exists.

The struggle to unite the workers' movement in defence of black communities is a vital one. The state attacks against black communities orchestrated by the Tory government over the last seven years are no different in essence from the attacks by the apartheid regime in South Africa, and by the Reagan administration in the USA.

The Stalinists and reformist 'left' cannot defend these communities because they see it as a 'British problem' to be resolved inside the framework of capitalism, through peaceful protest.



The right of these communities to use whatever methods are necessary to defend themselves against racist police attacks must be defended. But ending state racist barbarism puts the question of revolutionary leadership onto the agenda.

Trade unionists on picket lines, along with many other sections of the workers'

movement, get the same treatment dished out to them as the black community are getting.

The Workers Revolutionary Party supports a united effort by all these layers of society, carried out in a democratic fashion — from elected defence councils to defence squads — as part of an overall strategy to smash

the reactionary forces of the capitalist state.

Socialism will only be brought about under the leadership of an international Marxist party. The call for an International Conference for the Re-organisation of the Fourth International, recently issued by the WRP, is a major step forward in building such a party.

Another 'Farm' Acquittal

THE acquittal of a third youth arrested and charged with the murder of PC Blakelock, riot and affray, is another blow against the police and the courts in the Broadwater Farm Trials.

The youth, aged 16, was arrested at his school — which teaches pupils with learning difficulties — and taken to a police cell where he was refused access to his mother or a solicitor.

The prosecution could produce not a scrap of evidence

at last Wednesday's hearing.

Mr Justice Hodgson directed an acquittal after stating that the boy's confession to the police was 'inadmissible'.

Consultant psychiatrist Olive Tunstall and Dr Oliver Briscoe told the court that the confession was 'unreliable'.

The accused had been left in a police cell for four hours before he was even interviewed.

When the interview

started, a teacher was asked to sit in with him and was told that the boy's mother had refused to attend. This was a lie.

It has been revealed since that the police never spoke to his mother before the interview started.

'The Farm' residents describe the prosecutions as 'Frame-Up Trials'. Still in court are Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite.

Derby youth battle racists

BY ZBIGNIEW WOJCIK

ON Wednesday night in Derby a group of well organised fascists masquerading as Portsmouth football supporters launched a vicious attack on an amusement arcade in Pear Tree Road, Derby.

The arcade, a meeting place for youth in the West Indian community, was subjected to a barrage of stones and bottles. Inside 40 youths were trapped.

This led to reprisal action by other black youth. During the next few hours they not only fought the racists from Portsmouth but also battled against police.

Barricades were set up and cars turned over.

A photographer from the 'Derby Evening Telegraph' who was attempting to take pictures was attacked and his camera taken from him.

The provocation by racist youth continued after the football match.

The police only turned their attention to the riot when members of the black community retaliated against the marauding racists and defended themselves.

Scandal

A NEW insider trading scandal hit the City of London and Wall Street last Wednesday when a senior London executive of Merrill Lynch was accused of masterminding 'a massive insider trading scheme'. Merrill Lynch is America's biggest stockbroker.

The accused man, Nahum Vaskevitch, the 38-year-old managing director of its mergers and acquisitions department in London, is charged with making more than £2.5 million illegal profit.

He joined the firm six years ago from the prominent city firm Hill Samuel.

The charges have been brought by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission because the deals involved US companies and were transacted in the US.

Immigrant pound

THE Home Office last week confirmed that it is considering buying a roll-on roll-off car ferry in which to impound immigrants.

Brokers acting for Sealink have met officials from the Home Office to discuss the purchase of the MV 'Earl William'.

Currently moored at Weymouth, this is similar craft to the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' which sank off Zeebrugge.

The immigration authorities are said to be 'concerned' that accommodation for immigrants is so appalling.

Workers Revolutionary Party

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No to privatisation!
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We believe we can win this fight but we must make a united stand. All ILEA workers must join in this fight!

Durham Protest

'ISOLATE Apartheid! Sanctions Now!' was the chant of a spontaneous demonstration of over 400 students outside Durham University debating society last Tuesday.

They were protesting against South African acting ambassador Dr Justus de Goede who was speaking to Conservative society students. Many demonstrators come from the cathedral after listening to Desmond Tutu who had been granted the Freedom of the City.

Labour council calls the law

SUNDERLAND'S Labour-controlled council last week called police to evict students from the Civic Centre as they opposed cuts at the local Polytechnic. Hundreds demonstrated outside the Centre which was then occupied by a group of 18 students.

Special branch officers then stood guard on all doors and the council voted acceptance of a rate cut for the town.

The cuts will mean the sack for lecturers, technical and clerical staff, and hundreds of students have already occupied the Polytechnic in protest.

Viraj Mendis steward stabbed

BY JOHN BALLANTYNE

A STEWARD was stabbed in the head on Monday when six fascists invaded the Manchester church where Viraj Mendis has taken sanctuary so he cannot be deported to Sri Lanka.

The attackers were armed with long knives, iron bars, and screwdrivers.

They gained entry to the Church of the Ascension during a church meeting by claiming to be Birmingham supporters of the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign.

Then they began hurling chairs about and damaging the fittings of the church. They ran off when challenged by supporters of Anti-Fascist Action, VMDC, and 'Fight Racism — Fight Imperialism'.

The steward was discharged from hospital with four stitches.

Two weeks earlier a brick wrapped in a racist message had been thrown through one of the windows of the church.

Police arrested six suspects on Monday but later freed them because of lack of identification — though no one in the church had been invited to identify the suspects.

The Defence Campaign says this attack was provoked by the racist comment of Home Affairs Minister David Waddington on the offer to Mendis of a job as

race relations officer with Manchester City Council.

Waddington had described the offer as 'an insult to the people of Manchester'.

Manchester newspapers freely give space to racist letters attacking the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, and the Daily Express ended an editorial with 'Mendis must go'.

There have been three bomb hoaxes, and the telephone wires of the campaign offices at Manchester City Council, and at the church, have been cut.

The VMDC has called on the Home Office to grant Viraj Mendis a work permit and allow him to stay.

They demand that both the Sun and Express publish a written apology and give full right of reply to the campaign.

The night after the attack over 50 supporters of the VMDC turned up to organise defence.

Masked men smashed into the house of a supporter of the Viraj Mendis campaign in Manchester last Tuesday night.

They carved a swastika on the woman's wrist and daubed fascist slogans on the doors and walls. The campaign committee has called on all organisations to oppose this vicious attack and to step up the campaign for Viraj's freedom.

The revolutionary crisis in South Africa and the urgency for the vanguard party

BY A SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTIONARY

LENIN's characterisation of the imperialist epoch as one of wars and revolutions remains fundamentally true.

Every part of the world bears witness to the fact that capitalism, in its death-throes, threatens the whole of humankind with destruction and holocaust (the Middle East, Central America, Southern Africa, etc.).

The central reason that has made it possible for the world bourgeoisie to survive from one crisis to the next has been a profound international crisis of leadership of the proletariat.

The crisis of leadership in South Africa, glaringly manifested in the absence of a revolutionary party, takes on a particular urgency, for of the many flashpoints which indicate the decay and break-up of the capitalist world order, South Africa occupies a unique place.

It has become the most vulnerable link in a moribund imperialist chain.

The South African regime is one

'The role of the subjective factor in a period of slow, organic development can remain quite a subordinate one . . . But as soon as the objective pre-requisites have matured, the key to the whole historical process passes into the hands of the subjective factor, that is, the party.'

(L. Trotsky)

of social crisis. It is at the same time experiencing an acute economic crisis — spiralling unemployment, rampant inflation, monetary instability — as well as a related and profound political crisis — a sustained offensive by the toiling masses and confusion and dissent in the ranks of the racist ruling class.

Its natural class allies, the ruling classes of the advanced capitalist

countries, are finding it more and more difficult to come to its open defence, for integrally part of the economic system which is collapsing all around the South African ruling class is a political system which is rotten to the core and which is based on the denial of even the most basic democratic rights to the majority of the people in the country.

Yet who is the world bourgeoisie to rely on to keep capitalist relations intact in South Africa?

Certainly a black petty-bourgeois nationalist government, like in most parts of Africa, would be an attractive alternative to the white racist rulers (and we have no doubt that given the chance, the African National Congress would gladly fill that role).

Those sections of the black middle class who only a short while ago were still speaking about how 'invincible' the apartheid state is, have been forced to change their views quite radically. The struggle of the students and youth has to be brought into ever-closer unity with that of the organised working class if apartheid-capitalism is to be smashed.

But the social crisis in South Africa is so acute, the longing of the masses for fundamental change so deep-seated, and the apartheid system such an organic part of the capitalist system that such a 'solution' would only reproduce the problem anew.

The ruling classes of the advanced capitalist countries thus have no choice but to support the racist rulers of South Africa (even though this brings them into conflict with their own working classes), and if at times they give the impression that they would 'prefer' to see the petty-bourgeois nationalists in power (ideally sharing power with the liberal wing of capital, both Afrikaner and English), then it is on the implicit understanding that they will be able to exercise the same control over the working masses as is the case now with the Botha government.

The working classes in the advanced capitalist countries must have no illusions that the working class in South Africa is oppressed simply because it is black and the South African rulers are white. The main reason is that capitalism (even more so in the epoch of imperialist decay) is completely incompatible with human rights and democracy.

The British workers are themselves being given lesson after lesson in this — the erosion of their trade union rights, arrests of striking workers, the show of force at Wapping and many more. When democracy begins to interfere with the 'rights' of the bourgeoisie to accumulate capital, they show absolutely no hesitation in dispensing with it.

THE struggle of the toiling masses in South Africa starkly reveals that we live in an era where the fight is not only against a bourgeoisie in a particular country (represented by Botha in South Africa, Thatcher in Britain, Reagan in America), but against the international dictatorship of the world bourgeoisie.

Herein lies the special significance of the South African struggle. It has the potential to internationalise the struggle of the working class like no other country than perhaps Spain in the 1930s.

For the last half-decade, we have been witnessing a rapidly maturing revolutionary situation in South Africa. The necessary conditions for revolution outlined by Lenin are all present, except for the most vital one, that is, the

existence of a revolutionary party that can consummate the process. Lenin's warning thus takes on a particular urgency for the South African struggle:

'It is not from every revolutionary situation that revolution arises, but only from a situation such that to the objective change is added a subjective change, that is, the capacity of the revolutionary class to carry out revolutionary mass actions sufficiently powerful to crush . . . the old government, which never, even in a period of crisis, "falls", if one does not "make" it fall.'

It is a plain fact that the racist rulers in South Africa are no longer able to continue ruling in the 'old' way. As far back as the late 1970s already they were speaking about a 'strategy of reform' to ensure the survival of capitalism.

These 'reforms' eventually came in the shape of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions, a 'new' constitution and local 'self-government' for the people in the townships. Instead of stemming the struggle of the masses, however, this led to a further intensification of their offensive which threw the racist rulers into even further political disarray.

The nature of apartheid is such that it does not permit any 'reforming' which does not challenge the entire socio-economic structure of South African society.

Apartheid is such an integral part of the economic system, that it is not possible to begin 'reforming' it without at the same time destroying the very structures on which the system of apartheid-capitalism rests: the absence of democracy, the 'homelands' system, migrant labour, influx control, urban segregation.

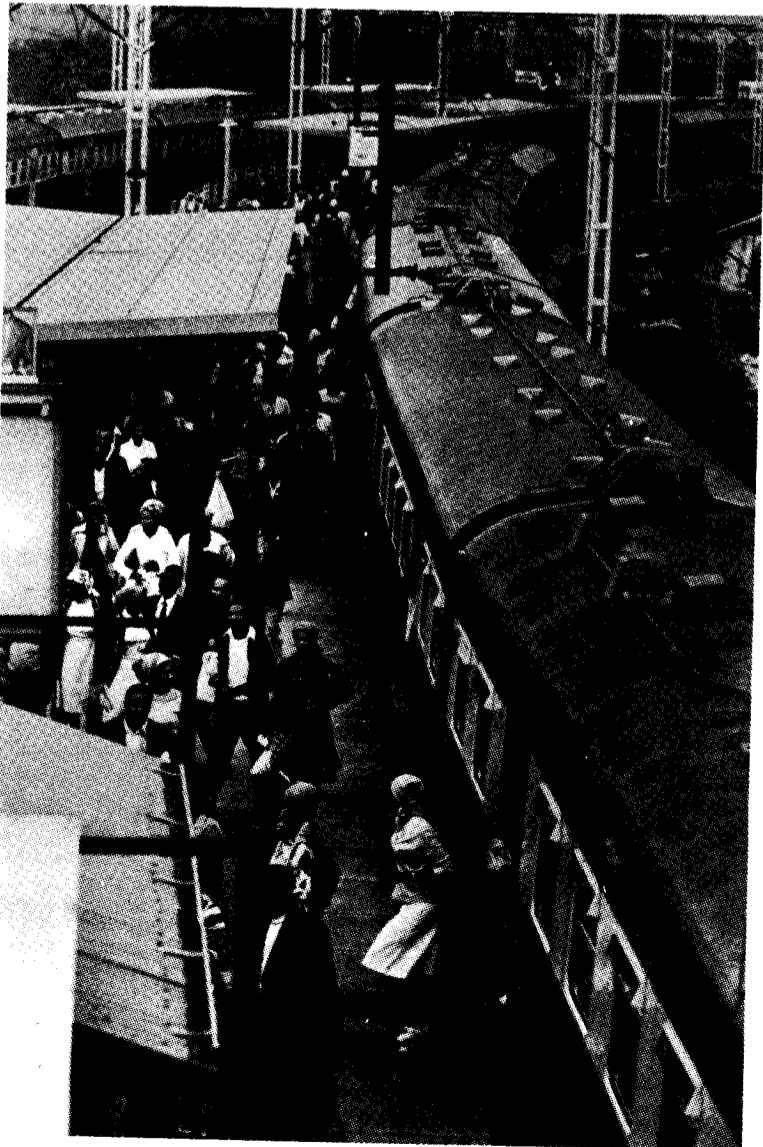
The support base of apartheid is so narrow (the white working class, sections of the white middle class, Afrikaner farmers) that any attempt to reform the system, however superficial or cosmetic, cannot but be seen by them as a serious threat to their very existence.

The 'reform' process has to chart its way between social forces that want nothing less than fundamental change and those that do not want any change at all. The only way this can be done is if it is carried out from 'above'. This means strong government, for even more so than under 'normal' conditions, the state has to 'elevate' itself from the class struggle that is taking place in order to better present itself as the 'saviour of the nation' in this, its hour of peril.

But before 'reform' can take place, political stability has to be achieved. From the outset therefore the 'reform process' contains its dialectical opposite — repression — and it is in this that the gravest dangers for the working class are to be found.

For what else does 'political stability' mean if not beating back the offensive of the working class?

In Botha, the all-powerful Ex-





ecutive State President, we see most of the features of a Bonapartist state.

It is no longer parliament that makes the decisions on how the country is to be run, but special committees which in the last instance are answerable to the State President (State Security Council, Joint Management Committees); the military begins to play an increasingly important and direct political role with the State President and his immediate Cabinet assuming senior positions in the armed forces, and the rallying cry of the beleaguered ruling class becomes that of 'law and order'.

The roots of the nationwide political crisis that the racist rulers face and which has forced them to begin speaking about 'reform' are to be found in the serious and sustained challenge to their rule by the toiling masses.

THE evidence is overwhelming that the working masses of South Africa are no longer prepared to accept capitalist exploitation and apartheid oppression.

Since the Durban strikes of 1973, the working class has been engaged in an almost uninterrupted struggle against apartheid-capitalism. Sheer necessity to defend themselves against the ravages of capitalism has seen greater and greater numbers of workers enter the road of struggle.

In Port Elizabeth, where the closing of factories sees thousands of workers being driven into the ever-increasing army of the unemployed, workers are brought face-to-face with the reality of capitalism in its death agony.

When the OK Bazaars strikers are ruthlessly set upon by the police for attempting to safeguard a proper standard of living, then the extent to which the racist rulers will go to maintain the system of wage slavery is graphically demonstrated to the whole working class.

Attacks on their already im-

poor living standards, chronic unemployment and increasing pauperisation — these are the realities which the working class faces under capitalism.

This realisation lay behind the full-scale support the working class gave to the formation of the trade union federation COSATU. Hardly more than a year old, COSATU has already led a number of significant political strikes — the mighty May Day strike and the huge 16 June 'stayaway' in 1986.

COSATU, which unites over 800,000 workers and draws thousands of other workers into the struggle, has given the workers a new confidence and 'scent' of victory that sends shivers down the spines of the racist rulers.

The formation of COSATU, more than any other event, throws into sharp focus the need for a revolutionary party, for under conditions of capitalist decline the struggle of the working class (as is every day being revealed), cannot be kept within the confines of 'purely' trade union struggles.

Occupations of factories by workers, sit-in strikes — seen by the workers as defensive strategies to prevent lock-outs and scabs — bring the working class into direct conflict with the law of private property and pose in a most point-blank way the question: who is to own the factory, the workers or the bosses?

Only a revolutionary party can transform these defensive struggles of the working class into a revolutionary offensive and convert an embryonic situation of 'dual power' in the factories into a decisive victory for the workers.

No matter how strong COSATU is on the factory floor or how often it emphasises (correctly) that the struggle of the workers in the factories cannot be separated from the struggle of the community, the question of who is to own the factory can ultimately only be answered at the level of who is to control the state (the protector of the system of the bosses).

No trade union at any time in history has succeeded in capturing

state power. Only a revolutionary party can lead the working class to accomplish this.

THE valiant struggle of the organised workers is being complemented by that of the militant youth, who in their tens of thousands in every part of the country have been taking on the might of the apartheid state with courage and heroism unparalleled.

Unless a revolutionary party, firmly based in the mass movement and composed of the most advanced and conscious militants of the working class is built as a matter of urgency and within the shortest possible time, the supreme sacrifices which the masses have made and the courage and heroism that they are every day displaying, will be rewarded with the most cruel and brutal of defeats.

At the root of the struggle of the sons and daughters of the oppressed and exploited — which since the Soweto uprising in 1976 has continued unabated — is their stubborn refusal to accept that the racist ruling class has the right to expect that they become the 'cheap labour' of the future.

The sacrifices they have been prepared to make and the determination they have shown has been the stimulus that has drawn ever-wider layers of the oppressed and exploited into the struggle.

Those sections of the black middle class who only a short while ago were still speaking about how 'invincible' the apartheid state is, have been forced to change their views quite radically.

The struggle of the students and youth has to be brought into ever-closer unity with that of the organised working class if apartheid-

capitalism is to be smashed.

This means the establishment of local organisations in the townships which embrace all layers of the exploited masses — workers in unions, non-unionised workers, unemployed, youth, students, housewives. Only a revolutionary party with cells in every section of the mass movement will be able to achieve this vital unity.

The sustained offensive of the masses has led to the virtual destruction of many of the political institutions that the racist rulers have attempted to foist on them. In many parts of the country these have been replaced by structures which have real potential to become revolutionary organs of workers' self-government.

The area committees, street committees, people's courts, defence committees which the masses have spontaneously created in their struggle against apartheid-capitalism, indicate not only the disdain that the working people have for bourgeois rule, but in a more pertinent way, represent in embryo the soviets that the working class will have to build if their struggle is to be victorious.

Every day the bankruptcy of the ANC-South African Communist Party slogan of 'ungovernability' is demonstrated to the masses in bitter lessons of defeat after defeat.

The masses have already shown that they are no longer prepared to accept apartheid rule. What they want now is to be shown how to struggle for power.

They want to be shown how to transform their area committees, street committees into revolutionary organs that will challenge the rule of apartheid-capitalism. They want to be shown how to link their struggles in the townships with the struggles in the factories in a dynamic and revolutionary way.

They are tired of being used by the ANC-SACP to merely create the conditions (ungovernability) which will force the Botha government to negotiate a new 'deal'. They want to see the fruits of their struggle. Ungovernability must lead to power being seized by them!

These, however, are revolutionary questions which cannot be solved in the absence of a revolutionary party that will guide the struggle through all its various phases and that will bring the last word in revolutionary theory and practice to the toiling masses.

WITH every day that passes, the revolution stands in more danger of being drowned in blood.

The right wing of racism, led by the Herstigte Nasionale Party, the Conservative Party and the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging, terror-struck by the intensity of the struggle of the masses, are demanding that Botha shows he is still in control.

They are threatening to erode his

country which if not tackled as a matter of urgency, will have a serious debilitating effect on the struggle of the working classes.

In the homelands, the surrogate regimes of apartheid-capitalism have been given a licence to murder and maim the working people in the most cruel and bestial manner imaginable. Eager to prove their worth to their racist overlords, these running-dogs of apartheid-capitalism outdo even their masters in their excesses and levels of depravity.

Increasingly the military option is becoming a more attractive solution to the racist rulers than the reform option. Today's 'Bothapartism' is already beginning to give way to tomorrow's more full-blooded fascism.

The one crucial factor that is necessary to take the struggle forward from its present impasse is absent — the revolutionary party. We have already seen that the 'traditional' leadership of the people, the ANC-SACP alliance, is not capable of providing the masses with the revolutionary leadership they require.

Caught completely off guard by the militancy of the masses, they are attempting to use this to force the Botha government to the negotiating table.

Not for them a struggle to overthrow apartheid-capitalism, but compromise. Not for them unflinching faith in the working class, but 'deals' and accommodation with their exploiters and oppressors.

Only a party built on the revolutionary teachings of Marxism-Leninism with a clear programme for the revolution will be able to give the working class the kind of leadership they are so desperately seeking.

Such a party will be able to give the revolution a programme of action that will link the struggle together in all its various and manifold aspects — the struggle of the workers with that of the youth, the struggle of the employed with that of the unemployed, the struggle of the people in the townships with the struggle of the people in the homelands, the struggle of the workers in the factories with that of their counterparts on the land, the struggle of the women workers with the rest of the proletariat.

Basing itself on the most revolutionary class in South Africa, the black working class, the party will be able to unite the oppressed masses in their millions, transform their isolated and regional struggles into a cohesive and national struggle, substitute their spontaneity and 'ad-hocism' with a revolutionary consciousness, and lead the working class to the conquest of state power.

The class struggle in South Africa has reached a critical crossroads.

On the one side we have a thoroughly bourgeois and incorrigibly racist ruling class that is veering increasingly towards fascism as the only means of saving apartheid-capitalism; on the other side we have the toiling masses who have demonstrated again and again that they are prepared to engage the racist rulers in a struggle to the death.

We dare not delude ourselves that the present situation is going to continue indefinitely.

While the racist rulers have not yet succeeded in striking a mortal blow against the masses, every hour that we delay in building the party brings closer the transformation of the revolutionary situation into its opposite — a counter-revolutionary reaction.

Unless a revolutionary party, firmly based in the mass movement and composed of the most advanced and conscious militants of the working class is built as a matter of urgency and within the shortest possible time, the supreme sacrifices which the masses have made and the courage and heroism they are every day displaying, will be rewarded with the most cruel and brutal of defeats.

The major crisis in South Africa thus resolves itself into a crisis of leadership. It is certainly not a question of whether conditions are ripe for revolution, but whether we are ripe for the conditions.

- Forward to the struggle of the working class!
- Forward to the struggle to build the party in South Africa!
- Forward to the re-organisation of the Fourth International!

British Imperialism out of the Malvinas

A NEW chapter in the history of the attacks of British imperialism against Argentina opened on 1 February 1987. The Thatcher government decided to extend its control over Argentinian waters. It is now enforcing a 'right' to dominate seas in a circle of 200 miles around the Malvinas Islands.

The Malvinas Islands were stolen from Argentina in the last century and have been maintained as an imperialist enclave through violence and murder. The islands were taken by an invasion of British troops and through the crushing of a revolt by the Argentinian inhabitants. Their leader, Gaucho Rivero, languished and died in a British jail.

Since then, Argentina has never given up its claim to the Malvinas Islands. It has appealed to every international body. Arrogant, imperialist British governments have time and again refused to consider a demand which has always had enormous popular support in Argentina.

In the last decades, two groups of Argentinian civilians have peacefully occupied the islands and have been repressed by British troops and thrown out of their own country.

The decision of the British government to extend control over waters around Argentina has now been supported by American imperialism and by Japan, Taiwan, and Sweden. It has been supported by the 'socialist' government of Felipe Gonzalez in Spain.

Every member of the working class movement should note well that the list of supporters of British imperialism includes none other than the 'communist', General Jaruzelski, bureaucratic dictator of Poland.

But then, the Stalinist government of Poland is here continuing the support that it gave to the Thatcher government in its attempts to crush the British miners.

While miners were defending their union in the year-long strike, the Polish government, against the opposition of Polish miners in Solidarity, sent scab coal to Britain.

From blacklegging on British miners, the Polish Stalinist government progresses to blacklegging on the Argentinian population.

Meanwhile, Thatcher's government is spending £2 million a day to maintain its military forces in the Malvinas. At such cost to the British working men and women, in jobs and services, is the imperialist presence being maintained.

Through secret negotiations, all the countries now supporting Britain have received permits to fish in Argentinian waters. Further, the Reagan administration has requested military access to the Malvinas islands. There is no doubt Thatcher will grant it.

The British Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press) and the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) in Argentina denounce this new escalation of Thatcher's piracy.

We further denounce the conspicuous silence of the British Labour leaders. This is a continuation of their betrayal of internationalist principles during the Malvinas war when they went along with the jingoism of Thatcher which, it must be said, enabled her to win the election which followed.

A military victory of Argentina over Britain in 1982 would have put the Tories in crisis and disarray. It would have meant a weakening of the grip of the imperialist government over the Irish peoples.

It would have meant a weakening of an anti-working class government in the face of the British working class and particularly in the face of the heroic miners' struggle of 1984-1985.

In the 1982 war, both the WRP and the MAS stood on the side of semi-colonial Argentina against British imperialism. In the case of the WRP, this principled position was taken after an overturn of the first immediate position of the News Line editorial board, backed by G. Healy, then a leader of the WRP.

The News Line declared 'This is not our war' in the first few days, a neutralist position which was overturned in favour of a principled position against British imperialism and in support of Argentine sovereignty.

Today, our two organisations reaffirm our opposition against any and every claim of British imperialism to rule over the Malvinas Islands.

Both the MAS and the WRP extend sympathy to the relatives of British and Argentinian soldiers who died in the Malvinas. The responsibility for their deaths rests squarely on the shoulders of the British imperialist government which provoked the war and its casualties.

The MAS has consistently supported the struggles of the Irish people for self-determination and supports all British working class struggles against British imperialism. Likewise the WRP (Workers Press) expresses international solidarity with the working people of Argentina.

It supports the call of the MAS for the expropriation of all British and American properties in Argentina, without compensation and under workers control, and the demand that the Malvinas Islands be returned, immediately and unconditionally, to the national sovereignty of Argentina.

The WRP and the MAS jointly declare that only the working class of Argentina and of Britain, through their combined struggle, can carry through to the end the task of defeating British imperialism.

Unless they are forced by a determined struggle of the British working class in alliance with the workers of oppressed nations, a future Labour government will make no change in imperialist policy toward the Malvinas, Ireland or anywhere else. **British workers must demand that a future Labour government immediately hand back the Malvinas to Argentina.**

We denounce the Alfonsín government of Argentina which is helping imperialist rule over its own country by refusing to cancel the foreign debt and maintaining secret negotiations with Downing Street. This government protects the former military rulers of Argentina, murderers of the 'disappeared', by granting them amnesty through passing 'final point' legislation.

The working class in Argentina and Britain and of every country must unite in international solidarity to defeat imperialism.

The central need of the working class in every country of the world is for an international, a world party, to co-ordinate and lead all its struggles for the overturn of imperialism and to remove Labour and Stalinist bureaucracies. They need a powerful international association. For that reason the MAS and the WRP share the central fight to re-organise the Fourth International as a world party of socialist revolution.

**Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party
National Committee of the MAS (Argentina)**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

MINERS CHALLENGE APARTHEID STATE

Miners march in Madrid

THOUSANDS of miners from Asturias region, northern Spain, descended on Madrid on 5 March to oppose planned mass sackings in their coalfield.

Police who attacked student demonstrators several times earlier this year, evidently decided on a lower profile when confronted with the miners, who demonstrated their anger outside the Industry Ministry.

The state-owned coal company Hunosa wants to reduce the Asturias workforce of 21,000 by 6,000 jobs in the next six years. The announcement had already brought clashes in the Asturias regional capital, Oviedo, before the UGT and Workers Commissions called the 5 March demonstration.

The Asturian miners have a revolutionary tradition. In 1934 they were in the forefront of an insurrection that was only suppressed by the Foreign Legion after fifteen days of fighting.

During the 1936-9 Civil War, Asturian miners fierced Franco's fascists.

BY VICTOR STOCKPOLE

in the NUM, South Africa's largest and fastest growing trade union, was shown especially at the end of February, when at their fifth annual congress in Soweto NUM leaders unfurled a giant poster of Nelson Mandela, jailed ANC leader.

Their president, James Motlatsi, said: 'We want to tell (President) Botha that our organisation has taken a political stance, because in the five years of existence it has found politics were responsible for our problems.'

Between 1984 and 1987 the racist white state, with their imperialist allies, has found it impossible to smother the resistance of the black masses who have learned important lessons from previous generations in conflict with chiefs in the 'homelands' and the racist apartheid system itself.

Apart from its claims on

THE INCREASING political militancy of South African trade unions in their fight against the racist white state is reflected in the National Union of Mineworkers' demand for a 55 per cent increase in the miners' average pay of £110 a month.

This is at a time when the frightened white racists, supported by black collaborators in the townships and so-called homelands, are going all-out in a frenzied attempt to behead independent revolutionary movements, pressure groups, trade unions and even some church groups.

They wanted to repeat the procedure they employed after the Sharpeville massacre and the Soweto uprising when thousands of political activists were driven underground, murdered by police and rightwing death squads or thrown into prisons and tortured.

But this is in contrast to today's events. The defiance

pay, the NUM is also launching a fresh campaign against the migrant labour system used by the Chamber of Mines to recruit up to 40 per cent of its semi-skilled and unskilled workforce.

Single-sex mine hostels and the induna (tribal headman) shift-boss system are also in the NUM's sight.

'The empire of the mine-owners has been built with blood and sweat and toil of black workers,' Motlatsi told the Congress.

'Many comrades have paid the ultimate sacrifice at the hands of the brutal capitalist system.'

'We will fight every inch of the way to destroy the hostels, induna and migrant labour systems. 1987 will be the year when the miners take control.'

At no time during this mass meeting of 15,000 miners did the police intervene forcefully, which is very unusual for this type of situation.

PLAZA DE MAYO



BUENOS AIRES: Mothers, relatives, wives and sisters of the disappeared and murdered during the Argentina's military dictatorship demonstrate 24 hours a day in front of the President's house demanding that charges be brought against those responsible.

The period in which legal proceedings

over torture, kidnappings and murder could be instituted against suspects came to an end, except for child kidnappings.

In the last weeks hundreds more cases came in. Pressure is mounting for the courts to open many more trials, mainly against the military.

President Alfonsín fears reactions from his armed forces. Already senior commanders have come out against an extension of the period for cases.

Meanwhile, in one recent case, a court heard how an officer gave electric shocks to a young baby in order to extract a 'confession' from the father.

Sri Lanka army shells hospital 'CHILD HOSTAGE' PLOT

SRI LANKAN government forces, stepping up their offensive against the Tamil people, have shelled a hospital in Jaffna, killing patients and nurses.

Tamil liberation fighters say they have intelligence reports that the Sri Lankan army also plans to use schoolchildren as hostages, and possibly human shields, in an advance into the Jaffna peninsula.

The government's National Security Council has discussed a plan whereby a helicopter-borne army commando force would raid schools to capture children, according to a communique from the Liberation Tigers

of Tamil Eelam. Government troops with artillery and helicopter gunships have been fighting all week to regain positions in the peninsula. Air force planes have bombed what were claimed to be 'guerilla strongholds'.

At Navatkuli military camp, after three days of fighting, the army claimed on Monday that it was in control of the area, and could land helicopters safely.

In Vavuniya district, 21 government soldiers were killed in a guerilla ambush, soon after they had set out from Kallady camp on a

'search and destroy' mission, early on the morning of 7 March.

In its desperate effort to crush the liberation struggle, the Sri Lankan army might resort to carrying hostage children on its trucks or helicopters to deter guerrilla fire.

In Jaffna city on the evening of 7 March government artillery and mortar fire in a three-hour bombardment hit the Geneva hospital no less than fifteen times, severely damaging the outpatients department, childrens ward, pharmacy and doctors quarters.

Thirty patients and two

nurses were killed, and some doctors injured. Elsewhere in the port town, more than 50 homes were destroyed and 75 civilians seriously injured.

The attack on the hospital caused a blaze in which oxygen cylinders exploded and vital drug supplies were destroyed.

The Sri Lankan government suspended electricity supplies to Jaffna last week. With food, fuel, electricity and medical supplies all being cut-off, Jaffna's besieged Tamil population faces the danger of starvation and death.

West Germany keeps jobs ban

WEST GERMANY'S Tories intend to keep an official political discrimination policy that has been used to bar left-wingers from jobs as varied as college professor and engine driver.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), a United Nations body, has condemned the Federal Republic's 'berufsverbot' (profession ban) rules as blatant discrimination, and says they violate the ILO convention.

But the Federal Interior Ministry, run by the right-wing Christian Social Union, dismissed the ILO report as 'completely absurd and superfluous,' and said the government intended to keep its guidelines, under which public service job applicants are screened for political loyalty.

Since 1972, about 200 applicants have been refused public service jobs under the 'berufsverbot' rules. The political background of three-and-a-half million people has been placed on files compiled by the secret services.

Among those affected by the bans have been people who had belonged to a communist youth movement, travelled to the German Democratic Republic (East

Germany), or had their wedding announced in a left-wing newspaper.

The ban has mainly hit teachers and civil servants, but others affected included postmen and train drivers.

The berufsverbot guidelines were actually introduced under Social Democrat Chancellor Willi Brandt, although he recently described the loyalty checks as a 'grave mistake'.

Several Social Democrat state governments have been dropping general checks since 1985, after growing public protests.

Like the British civil service rules barring Communists and Fascists from many jobs, and with about the same amount of hypocrisy, the West German guidelines are supposed to bar both 'left-wing and right-wing extremists.'

In fact, almost all the cases known have concerned alleged communists.

Europe's jobless army

UNEMPLOYMENT is growing throughout capitalist Europe. According to official EEC figures, there are now over 17 million registered unemployed in Common Market industrial countries.

There was an increase of more than 500,000 in January, mostly in West Germany and Denmark.

The figures do not include unemployed in Spain, Portugal or Greece. The EEC statistics office says job market figures in these countries cannot be compared with those in the rest of the EEC.

Ex-minister gets 12 years

YEVGENY KONDRATKOV, former Minister for Light Industry in the Soviet Union's largest republic, the Russian Federation, has been sentenced to 12 years in a labour camp for corruption.

Rosa still worries reformists

BY TRUDI JACKSON

SEVERAL Social Democratic Party politicians in West Berlin have come out with a discussion document attacking the 'legend of Rosa Luxemburg' — 68 years after her death.

They still find it necessary to move against the writings of Rosa Luxemburg because they are a justification of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Bolsheviks.

The Social Democrats say there should be no misunderstanding about this: it will bring the liquidation of social democracy and 'free trade unions' as a precondition for the communist revolution in Germany.

They remind readers that in 1918 Rosa Luxemburg wrote:

'Freedom only for supporters of one government, only for members of one party — even if they are ever so numerous — is no freedom, freedom is always the freedom of the one who thinks differently'.

This has been interpreted as anti-Bolshevik, but the SPD statement reminds its members of the historical and political questions of principle.

They say that the fight of some communists against 'Luxemburgism' as a revision of the 'true Marxist-Leninist theory' gave rise to the 'legend of a democratic socialist theory and politics of Rosa Luxemburg'.

The Social Democrats are right: unmistakably Rosa Luxemburg took sides with the Russian Revolution. The proletarian dictatorship holds down the exploiters and oppressors.

Nicked

PRIZES raffled at the policemen's ball in Meppen, West Germany, were found to have been stolen. The goods had been bought cheap from a policeman, now suspected of robbing local shops.

SARNEY SENDS IN THE ARMY

BRAZILIAN troops with armoured vehicles moved into the country's ten oil refineries on Wednesday night to forestall a sit-in by striking oil workers. The army command said it had the go-ahead from President Sarney.

Tanks surrounded the refineries within a day of heavily-armed naval fusiliers being sent into the docks to break a seamen's strike. Using legislation left behind from the former military dictatorship, a labour court had declared the seamen's strike illegal.

The seamen's union said the fusiliers were stopping seamen coming ashore or rejoining their ships. Food and water on some ships were running out because supplies were being stopped.

Forty-thousand Brazilian seamen went on strike a fortnight ago, demanding a pay adjustment to meet recent price increases. The union says Brazil's merchant navy is the worst paid in the world after Ghana's.

The strike halted 186 ships in Brazilian waters and 20, including tankers, abroad.

Oil workers are also demanding pay increases. Sarney's government, fearing the big wages movement after the collapse of its price and incomes policy has only just begun, is using fear of a fuel and food emergency to move against the unions.

Sarney's well-publicised stand for better terms from the bankers has been aimed at creating a patriotic siege atmosphere, the better to force through the bankers' demands.

BRAZIL'S STREET CHILDREN

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

SEVEN MILLION abandoned children. That is part of the price of capitalism in just one country, Brazil.

The shocking figure comes not from any 'leftist propaganda', but from the country's Roman Catholic bishops, who blame Brazil's poverty after years of economic growth directly on the huge burden imposed by debts to the international banks.

In Rio, every month, about 100 children under three years old are abandoned in the streets or hospitals, the church report says.

In Acre (an Amazon state) impoverished mothers sell their young daughters to lorry drivers or gold prospectors as prostitutes.

In Sao Paulo, there are 1,200 gangs of child criminals and between them they have 10,000 firearms.

Nearly a quarter of a million Brazilian children die each year before reaching their first birthday. In one north-eastern state, Parabiá, children under four

make up half the total of registered deaths.

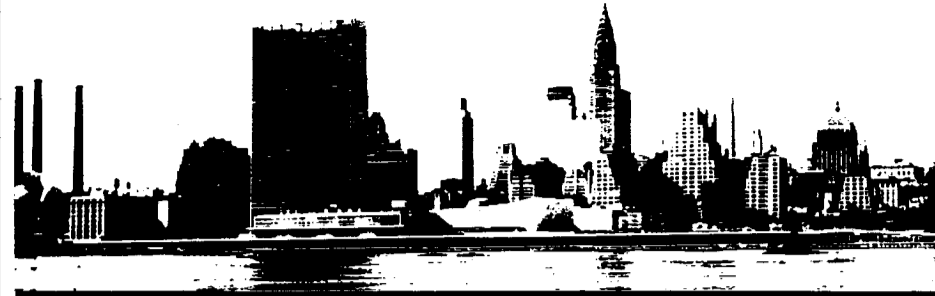
Out of every 100 children who start school at seven years old, only 13 complete the full eight years compulsory education. Education is supposed to be free, but parents have to pay for school-books, pens and pencils, even paper.

Children leave school early to help their families. 'They work in shops and factories, they sell sweets, flowers and trinkets in the streets,' the bishops' report says.

'They shine shoes, they wash cars, they cut sugar cane. They work to help their parents because their wages are low, and for the bosses the children are cheaper.'

Two-thirds of working children earn only half the 'minimum wage' of £42 a month. Children work up to 48 hours for little over £5 a week.

The bishops' report tells of



The Brightest and the Greediest

A KEY figure in Wall Street's great 'insider trading' scandal, Dennis B. Levine, received only a two year sentence and a fine of \$362,000.

The lenient sentence, which means that he will probably serve only eight months in an open prison, was his reward for information which led to the arrest of a number of other top financial executives on fraud charges involving tens of millions of dollars.

Levine made \$12.6 million on fraudulent trading which he will now apparently have to disgorge to the Securities and Exchange Commission, a government watching body which initiated the action against Levine, and at least a dozen major figures from leading stock exchange firms.

They are accused of using information they received in confidence about pending take-overs and mergers to buy and sell shares at huge personal profit. They were in the position of a bookie or a punter who had certain knowledge of who would win the race and acted accordingly.

The practice was well known on Wall Street and many, besides those still awaiting trial, participated in it at great financial advantage to themselves.

'It was like free sex,' a leading banker said. 'You definitely saw the abuses growing, but you also saw an absence of people getting caught.'

At the centre of the practice of 'insider trading' was a group of mainly younger executives driven by a desire to get rich, and quickly. Levine had a flashy new Ferrari and an expensive Park Lane apartment.

The Protestant work ethic was not in evidence. Instead it was a fast world of huge

financial gains obtained by having the right piece of information at the right time, and acting upon it.

As many capitalist fortunes are made in this way it might be wondered why 'insider trading' should be regarded as so reprehensible — when it is found out.

The sheer scale of monopoly capitalism means that when one firm buys out or merges with another there are proportionately massive sums involved for the stock exchange houses which handle these deals. In fact managing mergers and take-overs has become by far the most lucrative part of Wall Street's business today.

The bright young men recruited to carry out these financial manipulations begin with salaries of \$80,000 and upwards. They had every opportunity to see that part of the huge sums they were handling found their way into their own bank account.

Dozens of Wall Street money managers now earn, from 'legitimate' trading, more than \$10 million per annum, according to The New York Times.

With the growth of specialised merger business, not only were the sums involved becoming enormous but it became increasingly difficult, from outside, to distinguish what was permissible and what was felonious.

What it amounted to was that ordinary stock exchange investors, including the big institutions, felt that they were being left out of chances or reaping financial gains, whilst the 'insiders' were building up big personal fortunes.

In fact, especially on the financial markets, a fine hair-line runs between what is re-

garded as above board and what is unethical.

Those able to get away with it by just riding on the right side of the line gain the esteem of their fellows and become the heroes of the financial press.

Those who, in their greedy thirst for gain, step over the line end up by being black-balled.

Much of capitalist dealing these days, and the most profitable part, in the United States, consists of pushing money around, not of founding and building up firms.

Dealing in existing assets, a struggle for surplus value already created, tempts the brightest and most 'enterprising' young capitalists.

Dabbling in 'fictitious capital' brings in the dollars faster than any other kind of business, especially when it takes place just on the wrong side of the law.

Envious speculators without inside knowledge have forced the government to take action, though it was the Reagan administration's policy of 'deregulation' which opened the door for Levine and his like. The whole field of 'insider trading' has brought out a flood of hypocritical condemnation.

In many cases, the scandal on Wall Street reveals the corrupt nature of a system based on unlimited acquisition and accumulation and which demonstrates, in the operations of the stock market, the degenerate and parasitic nature of the capitalists themselves.

GEORGE LORMIN
NEW YORK



Car wash kids of Rio

material issue. Why, they ask, after decades of economic growth, are so many people needy and dispossessed?

It has led them to urge in a Lenten appeal that less of Brazil's wealth go to the international banks, and more be devoted to social welfare.

Their old foe Karl Marx could have explained for them how capitalism works. As for reversing the flow of wealth, that will be achieved by the working people, in exploited countries like Brazil and imperialist citadels of finance-capital like Britain and the US, through combined revolutionary action.

The RCL of Sri Lanka

Statement of the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League

The Revolutionary Communist League, the Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, denounces the jailing of Phil Penn, a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain, and demands his immediate release.

Penn is the victim of a vicious frame-up brought about by G. Healy, the renegade who was expelled from the WRP on charges of systematic sexual abuse of female comrades of that organisation in October 1985 and who now heads a grouping of petty bourgeois political adventurers.

Healy and his supporters deliberately set up the incident which implicated Penn, creating a provocation during a demonstration on 3 May 1986.

Four of Healy's supporters set upon Penn, two days after they had printed a libellous attack on him in their press.

A case was framed against Penn on the basis of this incident by the police and Penn was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment with eight months suspended.

Penn now faces the prospect of four months in prison.

The conviction of Penn was entirely based on the evidence supplied by Healy's supporters and the collaboration between Healy and the police.

The savage sentence on Penn is a blatant case of class justice. The judge who passed the sentence on Penn knew well that Penn is a political opponent of the Thatcher regime and the incidents created by Healy were politically motivated.

This incident exposes the utter political degeneration of G. Healy. Such is his political bankruptcy and cowardice that he is leaning on the capitalist state of Britain to attack his political opponents.

Only a month ago Healy sought to convict a member of the International Communist Party, the British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International on false charges of assault similar to those against Phil Penn.

In this case a Yorkshire jury acquitted the ICP comrade despite the judge's advice to the contrary.

Healy has taken a page directly from the book of Joseph Hansen, FBI agent and the longtime leader of the American SWP, in hatching these conspiracies against his political opponents. In the infamous Tate affair in November 1966, Hansen staged a provocation to frame-up Healy.

Phil Penn is a long-standing member of the WRP who devoted his time and energy for the building of the WRP of which Healy was the leader.

Moreover Penn had worked selflessly to ensure Healy's security for many years. Yet, when Penn declared his political opposition to Healy, he schemed to set the bourgeois state against such a man.

The RCL, notwithstanding its fundamental political differences with the WRP, calls for the release of Phil Penn and appeals to all class conscious workers to demand his freedom.

All resolutions to this effect should be directed to: The High Commissioner, British High Commission, Galle Road, Colombo 3.

Keerthi Balasuriya

As we did with the Workers League of the USA, we place on record the position of the RCL, Sri Lankan section of the ICFI.

This in no way implies any association with their views, especially in the slander of Joseph Hansen as the instigator of the 1966 'Tate Affair'. The Tate Affair was a violent provocation organised by G. Healy precisely to slander Hansen — and the WRP/Workers Press has evidence to prove it.

Similarly, we note that the RCL of Sri Lanka also refrains from denouncing the role of the Torrance group, who supplied two of the three witnesses in Phil's case.

The comments made last week about the Workers League (USA) statement apply also to the remarks of the RCL.

Finally, we do not recommend the sending of messages to the British High Commissioner in Colombo.

THE JAILING

Benefit for Phil Penn

Fury!

BENEFIT NIGHT for Phil Penn and his family was a big success. Saturday, 7 March, at the Lambeth Social Club will be an occasion to recall in the history of our break with the Healy-Torrance clique.

Guests from many other socialist groups and organisations, readers and supporters of Workers Press and the Workers Revolutionary Party filled the club from 7.30p.m. until midnight.

A particularly welcome feature was that of former class-war prisoner, Des Warren: one of the famous Shrewsbury Two building workers. Despite continuing ill-health resulting from the treatment he received while in prison, comrade Des made the 200 mile journey from the north-west to be at the benefit.

Messages of support for Phil were read out by Comrade Richard Goldstein who found himself compering the event, a task he carried out in his usual efficient and relaxed manner. There was also a message

from Phil, (reproduced right).

Phil was of course very much involved in this campaign before he was thrown into prison as a result of evidence volunteered by members of the News Line Healy-Torrance rump.

Comrade Charlie Walsh organised a raffle, with his own brand of gentle persuasion. Proceeds went to the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign.

Sandra Penn came to the microphone and thanked everyone for their support. She was later presented with a bouquet of flowers which she accepted with the assistance of daughter Amy. Amy's little brother Terry was also present to take part in the tribute to his dad.

It was a most enjoyable night; music was provided by Pete the very energetic DJ, plus Irish songs from Kevin, and the folk duo Geraldine Murray and Sid Frisby. Their repertoire contained pieces

such as the Irish rebel song, 'A Nation Once Again'.

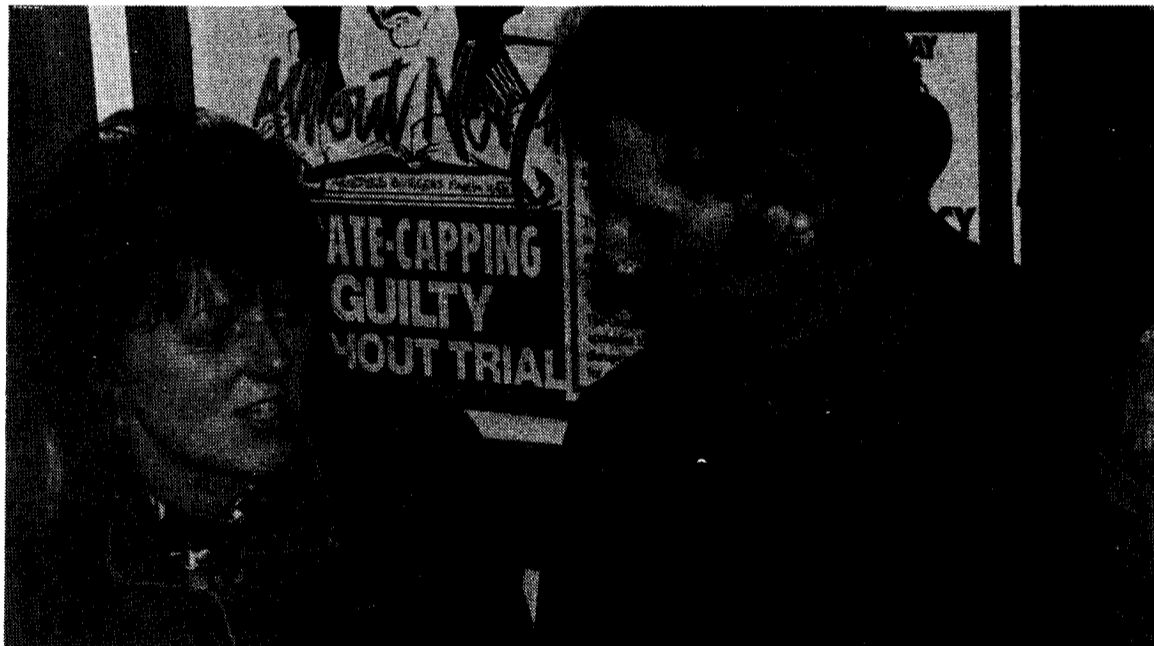
As the atmosphere warmed up the less reserved took to the floor to show off their individual interpretations of break-dancing and latter-day equivalents.

An especial word of thanks should be paid to the many comrades who organised and arranged the mountain of food which was provided by Party branches and who generally made the whole evening work.

His other commitment permitting, Phil Penn would of course have been there in the thick of it. On this occasion, however, he was forced to occupy a back-row in the vicinity of Du Cane Road, West London.

But he was very much with us in spirit and also in the forefront of our thoughts, as he has been since being banged-up.

It was a memorable occasion, Phil. Don't be late for the welcome back celebrations!



Sandra Penn and Des Warren

Make up for every second

Dear Phil, I can see from reading your letter, and the reports that I have had from Sandra, that you are in good spirits.

To make up for every second of your separation from your family, comrades and friends, we have to constantly make clear the reasons why the Healy-Torrance sect collaborated with the police to have you sentenced.

Healy turned his back on the working class and strove more and more to establish unprincipled relations with leaders in the Labour Party and the trade union movement.

Somehow the Party was to gain the confidence and leadership of the working class by having such relationships.

On the other hand, the membership of our party were discouraged, and in many cases deliberately prevented, from activity in the working class.

Torrance was hostile, for instance, to anyone advocating activity in the trades councils, tenants' associations or similar organisations.

Do you remember, Phil, when you were attacked by Healy for daring to join a branch of the T&GWU?

The reason given was that the branch secretary was a member of the Communist Party and your

attendance at this branch was opening the Party to attack from the Stalinists.

And then there was the occasion when Corin Redgrave was elected to the EC of Equity; he was immediately discouraged from attending his union meetings.

We know how comrades were treated if they established a position of leadership in their trade union.

They were accused of having no more than a trade union consciousness.

Not only were we stopped from taking part in the miners' support groups but any comrade who had become active was instructed to leave them.

Since we expelled Healy and his supporters, our Party is striving to reverse this position.

For instance, you took our Party into the Guildford Four Campaign and, just as importantly, you brought this experience into the Party.

Healy and Torrance, because of this, and because once you had decided to oppose them you never swerved from this path, have particular hostility towards you.

The leadership of the bogus WRP consider themselves to be the chosen few and that what has to be done is to simply proclaim that communism is the answer to the problems of the working class. When the masses realise this, of

course, they will be there to give them leadership.

But they are not prepared to take on the contradictions of the revolutionary struggle.

Their non-Marxist position makes it possible for Torrance to criticise the state — for not sentencing you to a longer period in jail.

We expelled Healy and his supporters for their anti-Marxism which Healy's opportunist activities flowed from.

We have a responsibility to explain to anyone who may have been recruited to the bogus WRP, whenever we can, the politics of the split and for them to demand an explanation from their leaders.

We had a very successful benefit night with everyone enjoying themselves.

When Sandra reported that you would like to have attended but had to decline as there were similar difficulties to those you had encountered under the Healy regime, everyone showed they understood what you meant by this.

Sandra, Amy and Terry are all in great shape and are coping very well indeed. Your comrades and friends are giving them full support in every way possible.

Looking forward to seeing you again very soon.

Best wishes, comrade.

Norman Harding

Dear Phil SINCE I read about your imprisonment I've felt a growing fury about Healy and his supporters. They have sunk to new depths.

What struck me was that they have gone for you because of your role in exposing and defeating Healy.

In fact your presence in prison hits them harder than ever.

I also thought of Tony Banda moaning on about the remote possibility that he would be in trouble under the Companies Act.

The Bandas, Healy and Co. all see the state as an unbeatable force. The Bandas are petrified of it and the Healyites run to it to hit their enemies.

Only Trotskyists can consistently fight and defeat it.

Your stand and sacrifice are confirmation of the principled and revolutionary nature of our Party.

Geoff Barr
Exeter

No confusion in the Breakout! collective

WE OFFER our solidarity and condolences on your temporary loss of Phil Penn's services. People in prison see him as a political prisoner and respect him as such and know that he will use this experience to assist the struggle on his release.

The Healy bastards should be boycotted by everyone on the left and ejected from meetings everywhere, as they have already been from meetings in London and elsewhere.

In the unlikely event that Phil, armed only with his camera, attacked the helpless Healyites armed with their banner poles etc. then we must still reject the marks that rushed to the police courts to settle the argument.

In South Africa they would be necklaced, in Belfast such behaviour would result in their being shot — probably dead, certainly in the knee caps at least.

I shan't go into details about what happens in prison or even in the streets of the East End of London and other places, but we must stress very strongly that News Line must be boycotted like the Sun and other pornography and that the police collaborators must at the very least be ignored by everyone who considers themselves to be progressive.

I was on the non-stop picket of the South African embassy called by City Group when News Line people pulled up in a car and attempted to leave a bundle of papers. The reaction of the rank-and-file picketers there was to give them back with some comments about News Line's inability to support the picket with physical presence through the recent cold weeks.

I have seen WRP (Workers Press) on the picket regularly and bump into them all over the place wherever activists are needed, proof that you are doing a lot of work.

Good luck to Phil Penn and his wife and family. Hope the time soon passes and he can get back into the struggle he has dedicated his life to.

In solidarity,
Annie Wakefield
on behalf of prisoners in British, Irish, Dutch and American prisons. 'Breakout! Collective' Prison Activists Support Group

OF PHIL PENN

What you can do...

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn in your union branch, trades council, support group, etc. Phone 01-274 7271 for copies of the circular letter explaining the case.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. L27055, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Ducane Road, London W12 0AE (registered post is best).
- Send messages of support for Phil and reports which we can print in Workers Press. We have a special column each week while he is behind bars.

Australia

The following telegram has been received from John Tully, Victoria Public Sector Fightback Committee, Melbourne, Australia:

6 No socialist can condone behaviour of Healy clique in Penn case.

All tendencies in our Committee demand release of Comrade Penn. 9

Belgium

The Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire (Quatrieme Internationale)/ Revolutionnaire Arbeidersbond (Vierde Internationale) wishes to express its total solidarity with Comrade P. Penn who has been jailed.

We condemn most firmly the provocations of the Healy-Torrance group and we consider their actions as situated outside the workers' movement and more precisely as having nothing in common with Trotskyism.

We send our warmest greetings to Comrade P. Penn, his family and his organisation.

J-P. Goethuys
for the LOR (QUI)/RAB (VI)
Belgium

Socialist Platform

The editorial board of Socialist Platform agreed the following resolution at its meeting held on 13 February 1987:

The editorial board of Socialist Platform Ltd. deplors the use of bourgeois courts in settling political disputes inside the labour movement and calls upon the organisations concerned in regard to the jailing of Phil Penn to appeal to tribunals inside the labour movement to arbitrate on non-political issues and not to resort to the bourgeois state to intervene inside the movement, which it is always eager to do.

B. Thompson
for the editorial board

Chauvinism

WE CONDEMN the News Line/WRP group for their physical attack on Phil Penn on 3 May 1986, and then acting as the only witnesses for the police in jailing Phil Penn earlier this year.

The News Line group has once again crossed the class line by using the bosses' courts and police to attack political opponents in the workers movement.

We note that the pre-1985 WRP under G. Healy's leadership, and its defenders today, the Torrance-led News Line/WRP group, were and are notorious for their use of slander, gangsterism and the bosses' law.

We also note their chauvinism towards women, lesbian women and gay men.

The miners' strike, with the leading role of working class women and initiatives like Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, helped to unite the working class against sexual oppression, but also blew the old WRP apart.

We solidarise with Phil Penn, wrongly imprisoned. We will support any labour movement campaign to force the News Line/WRP group to answer the serious charges against them.

Geoff Palmer
for Left Out
and Lesbians and Gays
Support the Printworkers

Phil says

6 I would like to give a message to the benefit but I don't just want it to be the same simplistic rubbish. I want to stress the importance of the need to understand the contradictory nature of the crisis of capitalism.

We must give priority to deepening our understanding of the laws of capital.

There are two main kinds of con in British jails — those who won't resign themselves to the life of slavery demanded by this system and those who won't resign themselves to a life of colonial domination. Many are framed.

The rise in the prison population is an indirect result of the drive forward of the productive forces. Driven to invest in ever-newer technology the employer sheds his only source of value, his workforce.

Rejecting a life of slavery, many people come into conflict with the police whose job it is to physically enforce the enslaving of the working class. The police have been given a licence to frame and kill by the judiciary. But the job is not so easy. In here the screws are the ones with a moral problem.

I am sure that a great many lessons learned by revolutionaries will be in jail. Our fighting capacity will be enhanced in adversity, but we must know what we are doing. The time to study is now. Conditions in jail won't get any easier!

I want to thank everyone for their support. If my time in jail results in some thought on these questions by more people then it will have been worth it.

Let me know how the benefit went, and say a special hello to all working on the Framed Prisoners campaign. 9

PHIL PENN

Remember the Iraqi CP!

IT COMES as 'no surprise' to us that you were given a prison sentence on the 'evidence' given by the Healy Torrance group.

This anti-communist, unprincipled group, when asked 'What is the going rate now for fingering an Iraqi Communist,' when we were lobbying one of their meetings just after the split in the Workers Revolutionary Party here in Liverpool (the reply coming from Ray Efford) was 'about £100'.

We were referring to that despicable crime of the then Healy WRP of condoning the murder of Iraqi Communist Party members by the Iraqi government and of sending photographs of Iraqi students living over here in Britain to the Iraqi embassy.

So this is not the first time the Healy-Torrance group have collaborated with the state in trying to destroy communist class fighters.

There are big differences between Trotskyists and Stalinism but we will fight out these differences in front of the working class, and it will be the working class who will decide the outcome. We fight

on working class principles, non-collaboration with the state, which is how we will win over sections to Trotskyism.

Let's not forget the Banda group, who also resorted to the state. After months of fighting out differences within the Party, this group removed books from the Party's shop in Liverpool.

The Party, in order to safeguard the remaining stock of books, had to 'break into' our own property because Banda had changed the locks in order to keep Party members out.

The Banda group went to the police and supplied names and addresses of the Party members who were seen inside the shop.

The police investigating the matter decided it was an 'inter-company dispute' and so took no action against our members.

Both of these groups have crossed class lines and do not belong to the workers' movement and should be denounced by all in the labour movement.

Best wishes,
Liverpool Branch, WRP

Principles

WE WERE disgusted to hear of the events surrounding the jailing of Phil Penn. You have set out the facts openly and fully to your credit.

On principle:

1. We condemn all attempts to personalise disputes between Marxists by substituting personal abuse for political argument. The attempt to dehumanise Comrade Penn in the pages of News Line must be condemned. This is a bourgeois method usually found in the pages of the Sun or National Front News etc.

2. Comrades should not act as police witnesses to put other comrades into prison.

We offer our solidarity to Phil Penn and condemn the actions of the comrades of WRP/News Line. We call on the WRP/News Line to immediately expel those members responsible.

In Comradeship,
Revolutionary Democratic Group

Healy — taught by the CPGB

Dear Phil,

I would like to send you greetings and express my solidarity with you.

I also want to give voice to my disgust at the renegade action of the Healy/Torrance group.

No matter what political differences we have, collaboration with the class enemy against others engaged in the struggle for socialism can never be justified.

Some of us, who have known Healy for a very long time, are, of course, not taken by surprise at this action.

I can well recall the threat to sue Ernie Tate in the bourgeois courts when he publicised the physical attacks on him and, even worse, delivering into the hands of Hussein's hangman, members of the Iraqi Communist Party.

Healy, despite his declared Trotskyism, never forgot what he

had been taught in the Communist Party of Great Britain during the 'Third Period' when it was Party policy to attack political opponents physically.

He remained loyal to these practices.

There is no room in the workers' movement for this type of hooliganism.

Yours in comradeship,
Charlie van Gelderen

Phil a tower of strength, but...!

IT WAS with anger and some amazement that I read of the jailing of Phil Penn. How could these so-called Trotskyists conspire with the police and the courts to imprison a dedicated revolutionary like Phil?

It is ironic that I am writing to him in prison as the first time I met him was on the Wigan to London march to Free the Shrewsbury Two, Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson, in February 1975.

Phil was in charge of the crew bus that carried our sleeping bags and food. It was also the ambulance for the injured marchers.

Phil worked 18-20 hours a day driving on ahead making sure we had somewhere to sleep in the night after a long day's march.

Sometimes he brought us our mid-day meal! Not one of the marchers will ever forget his soup. Sorry Phil, you were a great driver but that soup, I can still taste it.

Phil was a tower of strength on the march, always cheerful, willing and able to explain the political

reasons for our march to some of the younger marchers. We in Wigan remember and thank him for his dedication.

I next met him when as part of a group of Wigan building workers we were responsible for starting work on the Workers Revolutionary Party Marxist College at White Meadows, Parwich in the summer of 1975.

Again Phil was working 18-20 hours a day — driving, digging and generally getting in the way of the experienced building workers! He was again a great comrade to have by your side.

I never saw or heard of any of the so-called Trotskyists who were responsible for his imprisonment, during these and later campaigns. All the comrades in Wigan send their regards. We know Phil will come through this with his usual good humour and determination to continue the fight to build the revolutionary party.

Mike Farley
and the Wigan comrades



Looking forward to another bowl of Phil's soup... on the Wigan to London march to Free the Shrewsbury Two in 1975

NURSES: POVERTY PAY

NURSES' concern for their patients is callously exploited: they still get poverty wages and work long hours — often on jobs for which they have not been trained.

These are the findings of a joint report from the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the Low Pay Unit on Britain's half-million nurses and health visitors.

STAFF SHORTAGES in hospitals are so bad that nursing auxiliaries and assistants are constantly forced to do work they are not trained for.

Three-quarters of nursing auxiliaries interviewed specified medical care as part of their duties, although it's not supposed to be. One in six were even involved in ward administration.

Drug distribution, giving injections, carrying out intravenous infusions, taking specimen and urine tests, checking temperatures and maintaining records — all supposed skilled jobs — were done by auxiliaries, unsupervised.

'I'm treated as a general dogsbody. I feel that too much responsibility is placed on the learner nurses

and that we are exploited to a great extent. I am often given the keys and told that I'm in charge until a qualified nurse can be found to take over,' a second-year student nurse told interviewers.

This last complaint — being left alone in charge of a ward — was made by almost half the student nurses interviewed, and 86 per cent of enrolled nurses. Two-thirds of nurses interviewed said their ward or unit was understaffed.

PAY for a basic 37-and-a-half hour week ranges from £82.79 for student nurses (£2.21 an hour), through £81.79 for nursing auxiliaries, £109.32 for enrolled nurses, £124.18 for staff nurses and £154.77 for sisters.

Forty per cent of nurses receive lead-in payments for working with especially difficult geriatric and psychiatric patients: but the extra money, for two-thirds of these, was less than £10 a week.

BY BERNARD FRANKS

Nurses' 1986 pay award averaged 7.8 per cent, but it was paid from 1 July instead of 1 April, wiping out 5.9 per cent of its value. Tax cuts received by those, like nurses, on low pay, were wiped out by the rise in national insurance contributions alone.

Take-home payments have been devastated: a third of nurses interviewed took home less than £70, half under £80 and two-thirds under £90.

Four in ten nurses earn below the Council of Europe's 'decency threshold', currently £123 a week, and urges that this should be made a target in future pay rounds, i.e. a 33 per cent increase on the minimum rate for nursing auxiliaries.

Nurses' pay has declined compared to other workers, says the report: 'even staff nurses with three years training have a basic salary 15 per cent below average female earnings for non-manual jobs.'

The survey hammers the idea that nurses' pay is 'pin money'. 'More than one in three nurses had one or more children living at home, and more than half were supporting an adult.

'Eight out of ten of these had a weekly take-home pay of less than £100 a week, with which to try and make ends meet. Over half the nurses we interviewed were married and contributing to a household income, but their spouses were generally also in low-paying jobs.'

The report reveals a staggering amount of **UNPAID OVERTIME**. Forty-four per



cent of those interviewed did overtime, but only 4 per cent were paid for it. Nurses are supposed to get time off in lieu, but such is chronic understaffing that patients would suffer if nurses took up the option fully.

Emotional blackmail is clearly a key management technique.

This report raises a number of crucial questions about the NHS.

It is not operated by robots but relies on complete dedication from its workers. The undermining of their pay and conditions leads to

widespread demoralisation, and suits the Tory aim of destabilising the service, preparing for privatisation.

And this policy is working. The number of outgoing trained nurses is exceeding the intake of trainees. One-third of London nurses, for example, are considering leaving the NHS, according to the survey.

This opens the door for contract labour in the NHS, and cheap labour schemes such as Project 2000 (see Workers Press, February 14).

There must be no return to

a two-tier health system with fee-paying rich patients and the poor law for the rest, nor any going back to flag-day collections volunteer workers and charity.

Raising nurses' pay is a question of defending the NHS, and all trades unions and communities must be mobilised in their support.

● 'Nursing a Grievance: Low Pay in Nursing'. Available from NUPE, Civic House, 20 Grand Depot Road, London SE18 6SF.

- The NHS has the largest work-force in Europe; half of them are nurses.
- 90 per cent of nurses are women.
- State Enrolled Nurses (SENs) undergo a two-year training period as Pupil Nurses; State Registered Nurses (SRNs) need higher educational qualifications, and during their three-year training are known as Student Nurses. Trainees represent 17 per cent of nurses.
- A quarter of all nurses are Nursing Auxiliaries in acute hospitals or Nursing Assistants in psychiatric hospitals, who have no formal training.

Job Training Scheme is scab labour

BY HUGHIE NICHOL

FROM 1 April 1987, 110,000 youth aged between 18 and 25 will be forced to work for their social security benefits on schemes lasting up to six months.

The government anticipate that 250,000 youth will go through the new Job Training Scheme every year.

The betrayal by the TUC General Council of these unemployed youth marks a new stage in outright collaboration between trade union leaders and the Tory government.

The employers are ecstatic at the prospect of wage-free labour plus the added bonus of £20 per week per trainee and an extra £35 per month as 'agents' fees'.

This is to be funded from the EEC social fund and by diverting money away from existing community schemes.

If this scheme is allowed to proceed unchallenged then every unemployed worker and young person throughout the country will be faced with the prospect of having to work wherever directed by the state for their basic benefit rights.

This is already the case in the United States where the Reagan administration deal with the unemployed with the 'workfree system'.

Families are broken up and children taken into care to force single parents into working for their benefits.

The entire trade union movement must now take on the TUC leadership's treacherous involvement in Manpower Services Commission (MSC) schemes.

The scandalous way in which the TUC have proceeded in the countdown to 1

April, when the new scheme comes into operation, must be exposed to all those who believe the trade union leaders do the best they can under the present Tory government.

The diary shows the completely irresponsible approach that the TUC have towards safeguarding the rights of the unemployed.

January 22: MSC meets. TUC members on the MSC accept the Job Training Scheme, although they 'register their dissent' at youth having to work for supplementary benefit rates.

January 28: Tory government announce increase in Job Training Scheme places from 58,000 to 100,000.

Restart programme to apply to those unemployed for only six months, instead of the present 12 month rule.

February 25: TUC General Council decides by 30 votes to 10 to abandon the unemployed and support the Tories' Job Training Scheme.

February 26: MSC meets, and unanimously approves Job Training Scheme, and its extension to cover 250,000 unemployed per year.

Only one of the TUC representatives on the MSC bothers to attend; the other two are conveniently absent.

These events demonstrate that the TUC is not concerned with the rights of the unemployed.

The MSC includes members from the TUC, the local authorities, the bosses' organisation the CBI and the government.

The TUC and local authority members have a combined majority — which exposes the lack of any Labour Party initiative to defend the interests of the unemployed youth.

Both NATFHE, the college

lecturers' union, and the white collar local government union NALGO, were prominent in their opposition to the TUC General Council approving the latest Tory scheme.

Both unions are campaigning against the Job Training Scheme.

If Labour controlled local authorities followed this principled opposition then none of these Tory schemes could be implemented.

While the national TUC

leaders abandon the fight, local trades councils and trade union members on area Manpower Boards fight a desperate rearguard action to mobilise opposition to the Tory onslaught against the youth.

There are no specific proposals put before the area Manpower Boards because the MSC is still in the process of negotiating with the agents, and the MSC say they are acting under national instructions not to seek the

area Manpower Boards' approval or views, as they did with the Community Programme and Youth Training Scheme.

The vast majority of youth who enter the Job Training Schemes will be referred through the Restart interviews.

Workers Press has already exposed the compulsory nature of these interviews and the connections between the DHSS, Job Centres, Unemployment Benefit

offices and the MSC.

Regional TUCs and Labour parties must be lobbied and picketed in massive area mobilisations of the unemployed and trade unionists.

● In the north east of England these plans area already well under way and a day of action has been called throughout Tyne and Wear to picket Job Centres in every town on Monday 30 March.

Dundee meeting rejects JTS

By ANDY McFARLANE and BRIAN POWERS

AT A public meeting called by local trade unions in Dundee recently, over 100 people — trade unionists, youth, unemployed and Manpower Services Commission 'trainees' — heard an MSC official sing the praises of the government's pilot Job Training Scheme for long-term unemployed.

Then the meeting rejected the scheme unanimously.

Most of the audience had their minds made up about the scheme already, especially those who had been unlucky enough to have taken part in it.

The MSC man may have sensed this. He didn't stay for the rest of the meeting but left after his speech and slide-show.

A more 'human' and, we were meant to think, 'neutral' man from Work Start — the acceptable face of scab

labour — was left to defend the scheme.

The best he could manage was to say: 'JTS as run by Work Start is voluntary, but I'm not claiming that is the case nationally nor once it starts (in earnest) in Scotland.'

'I know of nobody penalised (for refusing to go on JTS) ... Dundee has some very very good YTS, leading to placements.'

He added that Work Start was vital to the functioning of JTS and may pull out of the scheme.

So the Job Training Scheme sounds pretty bad even by MSC standards — as indeed it is.

The pilot JTS has been in operation since November in nine places: Dundee, Billingham, Preston, Huddersfield, Stoke, Port Talbot, Plymouth, Ealing and Crawley.

Dundee Labour Party support the pilot scheme but are now withdrawing support

from its extension.

The MSC leaflet calls it 'a new training programme to help you get back to work'. It boasts that 'the training is free' and 'you get the same allowance as your benefit plus travelling expenses'.

What's more, 'you will be in a much better position to get a job'.

The experiences of a few 'trainees' at the meeting showed how bad the scheme is: not so much cheap labour as free labour.

This is the set-up: you get your dole money as usual, and an employer gets you — and tries to make you work a six-day shift, as in the case of two Dundee hotels that are notorious anti-union establishments.

Some people on JTS have been asked to work overtime. On top of this some have to buy their meals and pay for bus fares.

Opening the discussion, chair John Kydd, district

secretary of the AEU, said an overwhelming majority in the labour movement will be against this scheme.

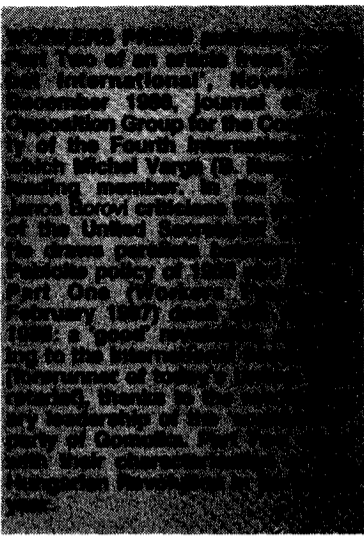
Lord Young had said nobody needs to be unemployed. But could this training replace time-served labour? In organised factories this would be resisted, Kydd declared.

It was time for the trade union and labour movement to call a halt. Those present should go into their unions and fight to oppose the scheme in its entirety.

A T&GWU dockers' convenor, describing the scheme as scab labour, demanded 'no sell out as with the miners'.

A long-term unemployed worker called for closer unity between unions and unemployed. An agreement was needed whereby unemployed workers would not undercut trade union rates and trade unions would give support to jobless people fighting against victimisation.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT — PART II



THE HUNGARIAN revolution did not fit in with the false and opportunist image which the revisionists made of the political revolution. It is for this reason that Mandel set it against the Polish revolution. For him, the latter was 'good' and the former 'bad'.

In Poland, after the Poznan revolt, the revolutionary process had been halted, turned away from its path for several years, the Stalinist party having been able to close its ranks and avoid a confrontation between the working class and the bureaucracy. But in Hungary the political revolution went much further.

Under blows from the masses, the Stalinist party exploded: its repressive apparatus was destroyed by armed workers, the working population organised in workers' councils asserted itself as the dominant force in the country to the point where the government led by Imre Nagy was constantly controlled by them.

It is this dominant position of the working class in the political scene, and its spontaneous movement, which unleashed the hostility of Mandel & Co. towards the Hungarian revolution. For Mandel, this revolution was not 'pure' and 'clean' enough: its 'fault' was not to have submitted to a 'Marxist revolutionary vanguard... of the Gomulka variety.

Mandel wrote:

'Contrary to events in Poland, the Hungarian revolution was a spontaneous explosion. The subtle interaction between the objective and subjective factors, between the initiative of the masses and the building of a new leadership, between the pressure from below and the crystallisation of an opportunist faction from above, at the top of the communist party, an interaction which made the Polish victory possible, was missing in Hungary.'

(*Fourth International* No.10-12, December 1956, p.23).

And there was no 'replacement leadership capable of taking its place at the head of the mass movement,' continues Mandel.

It is true that the Fourth International is not indifferent to the development of an opposition tendency within the bureaucracy, as far as this opposition bases itself on the working-class movement and declares that it will struggle honestly for the defence of workers' gains.

But the Fourth International will not submit itself in any way to such a tendency, even if it is on the far left, because we know that the only force which can achieve a victorious revolution is that which is organised under the Fourth International.

For this reason, Hungarian Trotskyists would have supported the government of Imre Nagy as far as it based itself on the workers' councils and battled as much against the Kremlin as against the restoration of capitalism. But



Hungary: a 'bad' revolution

they would not have entered this government, since Trotskyists would only take part in one government, that of the workers' councils.

It is true that there was no consistent revolutionary leadership in Hungary. But Mandel deplores not the absence of the Fourth International, but that of a Hungarian Gomulka 'at the head of the communist party'! Here we see the bitter hostility of the centrists to the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the masses, a hostility which contrasts vividly with their servility towards the bureaucrats.

We should mention at this point that it is in Mandel's position that we find the root of the Ramos-Assouline group's position. When we defend the Hungarian Revolution — and the Polish uprising of 1980-1981 — they charge us with 'capitulating to the spontaneity of the masses' in East Europe and of being 'conciliators'. But they, like Mandel, put forward the same contemptuous policies — both sectarian and opportunist — towards the political revolution.

Sectarian, because according to them every workers' movement which is not led by the Fourth International is dominated by the dangers which threaten the socialist gains. Opportunist, because these people, instead of fighting inside a movement for the building of parties of the Fourth International, wait for the appearance of 'healthy forces' 'faithful to socialism' in the ranks of the bureaucracy and propose the formation of 'workers' alliances', alliances without principles, between different opportunist tendencies.

It is characteristic of these leaders that they distrust the 'uncontrolled' movement of the masses, demanding at the same time 'freedom for all parties' including the Stalinist party and bourgeois parties in Eastern Europe, while Trotskyists, following the Transitional Programme, only recognise freedom for soviet parties.

The only difference between the Ramos-Assouline leadership of 1986 and the Mandel of 1956 is that at that time, Mandel was explaining relatively frankly his opposition to the workers' councils of the Hungarian revolution, whereas Ramos-Assouline, although following the same political line, hide their true position hypocritically behind the so-called 'defence' of the Hungarian revolution.

This did not prevent them, however, from trying to destroy the Hungarian section of the Fourth International, the League of Revolutionary Socialists of Hungary.

Mandel's position has its own logic. He may well 'hail' the workers' councils in his articles, but he supports them only like a rope supports a hanged man. He distinguishes two phases of the Hungarian revolution. The first is that of the 'united struggle against the bureaucracy' which 'remained within the framework of the socialist democracy' (ibid, p.27). This period, according to him, lasted until the first intervention by the Kremlin troops.

After that, we entered the second phase, that of the 'social differentiation among the revolutionaries', during which there was the 'hesitation of Nagy who only gave in to socialist and democratic demands from October 26: the formation of the new government without workers' representatives — all this greatly increased the mistrust of the masses and hardened the workers' councils who, in practice, controlled the provinces.' (p.27)

One might think that, as a revolutionary, Mandel would welcome this 'hardening' and would mobilise the forces of the international organisation led by him, Pablo, Frank and Maitan, to bring in the Fourth International to counteract the influence of the Stalinist party, which was reorganising itself, and of the other parties (the Socialist Party, the small 'peasants' party etc.) which were growing.

But no! These red-hot 'revolutionaries' did not want to get themselves wet in the whirlpool which is a true revolution. The period which Mandel denounces as dangerous was nothing other than the appearance of workers' councils as an alternative form of government, the beginning of a situation of dual power.

In a revolution, those who do not go forward (or who do not even try to go forward), retreat. This is what happened with this revisionist outfit, who, if they were not already in it, were not very far from the lair of the Stalinist jackals howling against the 'fascist counter-revolution' in Hungary. In that way, they formed an echo to the Stalinists.

'Everywhere reaction profits from reconquered political liberty,' wrote Mandel and, like the Stalinists, he grossly exaggerated the role of the reactionary forces. 'Cardinal Mindszenty, freed from prison, announces the constitution of a Christian-Socialist party,' (p.27) taking up the 'argument' of the Stalinists, without mentioning that this famous appeal was of ludicrously small importance in the face of the determination of the workers' councils.

So Mandel begins his tangled Jesuitical arguments:

'Certainly, one could say that Nagy's concessions go too far, that the denunciation of the Warsaw Pact was a blunder: that the appeal to the United Nations (*made in the face of an imminent Soviet invasion*) was an inadmissible move for a communist' (page 28).

Mandel implies in this way that Nagy is responsible for the Kremlin intervention:

'He should have based himself with more openness and with a greater tactical awareness on the popular elements, the workers and peasants.'

He should, according to Mandel, have behaved like a Trotskyist, even though he wasn't one.

Nagy behaved honestly, according to his own standards: those of a Stalinist breaking with Stalinism under the pressure of the masses. To sum up: Mandel criticises Imre Nagy for not adopting

a policy which Mandel himself was incapable of even proposing, let alone promoting.

In Mandel's head the intervention of the Kremlin tanks was in any case necessary

'if ever this trial of strength (between workers and reaction) turned out badly... But what a difference there is between a Russian intervention demanded by Hungarian workers fighting against reaction, and an intervention against the whole of the people, who fiercely resist it!' (ibid, p.28).

The International Secretariat led by Pablo and Mandel reiterated Mandel's shameful analysis:

'It was up to the workers themselves to show that they would and could defend the socialised regime against the forces of the counter-revolution, by eventually calling to their aid the armies of other workers' states.' (*Declaration of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International on the events in Hungary, 5 November 1956, in 'Dossier of Destalinisation' issued by 'Fourth International'*).

And again:

the 'free demonstrations by every tendency, the reappearance of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois parties, (was) the emergence of counter-revolutionary activities which gave the Kremlin's intervention an appearance of justification and a timely alibi... Nagy and his friends, concerned above all to take in hand once more the leadership of the movement, could only adapt themselves to the development of popular feeling, and enter into open collusion even with the most "liberal" tendencies in the Soviet bureaucracy.' (*Decline and Fall of Stalinism, 'Fourth International' March 1957, p.83*).

We can summarise as follows the position of the Pabloites, without in the least distorting their ideas:

1. The Hungarian workers, led by workers' councils, went too far, the political revolution was too 'dangerous': instead, they should have brought about and/or aided the reform of the bureaucracy.
2. The crushing of the revolution by the Kremlin tanks was, certainly, regrettable, but it was the revolution itself which gave an 'appearance of justification' and an 'alibi' to this repression.
3. Parties of the political revolution, sections of the Fourth International, are not necessary for the victory of the political revolution, since this role can be filled by a 'progressive' wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy.
4. In the absence of an alternative leadership of the Gomulka type, and in the presence of 'irresponsible' elements like the Imre Nagy government (who committed the 'crime' of offending the 'most liberal tendencies of the Soviet bureaucracy') (Trotskyists would say 'Stalinist' bureaucracy), workers themselves should have called for the 'assistance' of the Kremlin's troops.

Here we reach the depths of political ignominy. For Mandel & Co. the Kremlin's army, led by the Stalinist bureaucracy, was capable of something other than drowning the workers' revolution in blood. For them there was (and is) a compatibility between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the interests of the ruling class. This was a concrete expression, at a crucial time for the class struggle internationally, of what it means to attribute to this parasitic caste a 'dual nature'.

Evidently, for the Pabloites, the bureaucracy had not yet passed 'definitively over to the side of the bourgeoisie', since its army was capable of coming to the aid of a workers' councils' revolution in

struggle against the same Stalinist bureaucracy!

The study of 1956 in Poland and Hungary is rich in lessons: it must be deepened. In this article I have merely touched on a huge subject. I hope I have succeeded in demonstrating the political nature of the Pabloite tendency: its capitulation before Stalinism, before the task of revolutionaries which is the building of the party; its opposition to the political revolution, its contempt towards the working class and its struggle for emancipation. All this is a fundamental characteristic of Pabloite politics.

This betrayal of the Hungarian revolution was therefore not an accident, a passing mistake. Mandel & Co. have never made the slightest self-criticism on this subject. Far from it: instead of confronting its own history, the Pabloite tendency, today without Pablo, prefers to falsify it, as Mandel's letter to the Workers Press (published 1 November 1986) proves.

The Pabloism of yesterday and today expresses the pressure of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the Fourth International. As many writers have established during the battle against Lambert's liquidationism, Pabloism grew up on the basis of the physical elimination of the Russian Trotskyist section (and of Leon Trotsky personally) and that of Trotskyists in other countries where the bourgeoisie had been expropriated (Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam).

After World War II, Stalinism did not succeed in destroying the Fourth International, but it did succeed in breaking its worldwide unity on its essential point, the unity between the fighters for political revolution in the east and those for the social revolution in the west.

It is only for this reason that Pabloism could make its appearance and develop. On the other hand, the 'International Committee', born out of the split with Pabloism in 1953, took an entirely different position towards the political revolution in 1956.

It truly rejoiced at the Hungarian Revolution. We direct readers here to two important texts which submitted Pabloite theories to a thorough criticism: Bill Hunter's 'Under a Stolen Flag', May 1957 (published in 'Trotskyism v Revisionism' Vol 3, New Park Publications, 1974), and Stephan Just's pamphlet 'In Defence of Trotskyism' (in 'La Verite', September 1965).

This programmatic battle against the USec's position in defence of the political revolution (in relation to Hungary) was of semi-importance. But we must not forget that the International Committee did not totally rid itself of all traces of Pabloism (as its subsequent history was to prove).

For example, the numerical weakness of its forces does not fully explain the passivity of Trotskyists in the capitalist countries towards the task of intervening, of taking the experience of Bolshevism directly into Hungary in October-November 1956.

Nevertheless, it was only the forces of the International Committee which fought to re-establish the broken unity of the Fourth International. The Hungarian section, a concrete result of this struggle, was founded in 1963 and joined the IC immediately after. Later, Czech, Polish and Yugoslav Trotskyists regrouped around this basis with the help and active participation of the International Committee.

If the International Committee represented in this way the continuity of the Fourth International, because it was fighting to re-establish the world unity between the social and political revolutions, the International Secretariat, then the USec, represented and still represent an attempt to break this unity to the benefit of 'reformed' Stalinism. This is why I invite militants to reject the letter — and the line — of Mandel who covers up his real position in 1956 (and in 1986) and to struggle for the reorganisation of the Fourth International against this centrism.

CONCLUDED

LETTERS

Letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editorial Board. Letters over 500 words will normally be cut. Letters should arrive by first post Monday at: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS, and should include sender's address.

How does science develop? The AIDS test

I AM WITH Dave Pelman all the way when he stresses the importance of natural science for Marxism, the revolutionary party and the working class. However, I am less enthusiastic about some of the arguments he uses.

The rise of modern science, as he says, was closely associated with the rise of capitalism. It involved a bitter struggle against scholastic thinking, which based everything on appeal to the authority of texts officially sanctioned by the Holy Church.

The fight for the conception that true scientific knowledge had to be open to the experimental testing and public debate was a tremendous achievement, and we must never go back on it.

But is this sufficient to explain what science is, and the way it develops? I don't think so. Marx showed that natural science was part of the productive forces, that is, of the power of humanity to pursue the collective struggle to produce its own conditions of life.

Of course, this struggle has grown up within the framework of capitalism. The power of science is forced into the service of private profit. Imprisoned by capital, natural science becomes the enemy of the working class, the producers of wealth.

Within this framework, and increasingly in conflict with it, science continues to expand mankind's potential to control its own life. It will be able to realise this potential, however, only after the liberation of the forces of social production from their distortion and perversion in the interests of capital.

Because it is bound up with the movement of the whole of society in its struggle with nature, natural science penetrates to the heart of nature and obtains objective knowledge of the movement of matter and the material relationships between its infinitely many aspects. Amidst all the erroneous ideas it entertains along its path, science embodies this absolute.

This is the way it appeared to the young Dr Marx, and every Marxist, and especially every Marxist scientist should keep it always in mind:

... when I am active scientifically, etc. — an activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others — then my activity is social, because I perform it as a man. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore what I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being. (1844 Manuscripts)

As Dave must know as well as I do, this way of understanding their own actions is hardly given to scientists as part of their professional training! On the contrary, they are taught in a thousand ways the virtues of bourgeois individualism.

You are something special, you know. Scientific knowledge comes out of clever heads like yours. Keep out of trouble, and away from people like the Trotskyists, and you will be rich and famous, my boy.

So, when Dave tells us that 'the central logic of scientific method is precisely to seek the weaknesses in existing theories', that 'even the humblest practitioner must be listened to', and that every modification of a research programme 'must be agreed collectively by the scientific research group',

my response is to shout: 'Popper!'

Karl Popper's outlook, still invoked by scientists as a description of the scientific method (the philosophers have gone off him these days, I believe) taught that no theory is more than provisional. You can hold it temporarily, but only until something better is thought up.

He was answered by Hegel, over a century in advance, with a simple question: what dogmatic right have you to prescribe that objective truth is beyond us?

It is no surprise to learn that Popper's chief motive in elaborating his conception of science was the need to shake the widespread belief that Marxism can give us objective laws of social development. (The theories of psycho-analysis were his second target.)

By the way, I had another, though related, objection to Dave's article. He seems to have swallowed the fashionable, and in my opinion utterly worthless, notion that the working of computers of some kind will help us to understand the processes of human cognition.

(Like all the adherents of his faith, he tells us that this will happen 'in the not too distant future'. They have been telling us this since about 1960.)

'Artificial Intelligence' is only the latest version of the individualist idea of knowledge, combined with the bourgeois myth that individual humans are just like machines.

I don't care whether we get parallel processors, or any other such electronic development: people are not machines, even though capitalism treats them as such. Human thought is social through and through. Only thus can we understand its objective character.

Scientific knowledge, then, is not produced by individuals or by collections — or even collectives — of individuals. It is an aspect of the history of world society as a whole and its unity and conflict with nature, with its internal contradictions.

And that is why it is valuable to draw the parallels between natural science and the Marxist science of revolution. The struggle to develop the theory and programme of the International, is not our property, but that of the whole of the international working class.

So let us welcome with open arms the prospect of a science column in Workers Press in that spirit.

Cyril Smith

M62 coach bombing

I WAS pleased to see (Workers Press, 7 March 1987) that Anne Maguire raised the case of Judith Ward, framed in connection with the M62 coach bombing in 1974.

This is the most forgotten and ignored of all the frame-up trials which have taken place. Hopefully, however, it will now begin to come into the open.

Not the least valuable part of the Guildford/Birmingham/Maguire campaigns will be if they draw attention to all the other frame-up trials.

Might I suggest that Workers Press publishes article(s) dealing with the M62 bombing trial?

Alan Stanley
Leicester

I MUST take issue with the erroneous conclusion reached by your anonymous correspondent in the article entitled 'AIDS victim locked up' (28 February, page 2).

As far as the writer is concerned, the real purpose of the AIDS antibody test is to lead to young people being locked up without trial. This conclusion was drawn from the case of a 16-year-old girl who had become pregnant while in care and, when tested, was found to be HIV-positive. She was then put in a secure unit, allegedly to stop her spreading the disease.

The report raises a number of issues, not least of which is the history of locking up teenage unmarried girls who become pregnant, a practice carried out regularly in Britain until the 1950s at least. Some women served up to 30 years in long-stay mental institutions for the 'crime' of becoming pregnant.

However, your correspondent displays remarkable ignorance about testing for

the AIDS virus. All blood at present donated to the National Blood Transfusion Service is routinely screened for HIV antibodies in order to minimise the risk, to haemophiliacs and other patients undergoing blood transfusions, of being passed the virus.

Is this a valueless procedure? (Had it been implemented before 1985, there is a good chance that the number of haemophiliacs who have either died of AIDS or are now carriers, as well as their wives and children, might have been spared a great deal of suffering.)

Your correspondent also advises that 'unless you have symptoms of AIDS, or are considering having a child, the test is of no value whatsoever'. This is nonsense.

Once a person has AIDS symptoms, it is too late to do anything for him or her.

It is vitally important, however, that those who are infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, and who do not have AIDS symptoms — and those who suspect they may be infected — should be tested and confirmed as negative or posi-

tive. If positive their current and/or subsequent sexual partners have a right to know and to protect themselves from being passed a potentially lethal disease.

There is a confusion between the practice of testing for HIV, which is done in batches by virology laboratory technicians, and the use made by certain persons in authority of the knowledge of the result of the test. There are difficult ethical problems which, of course, cannot be resolved by the brutal solution of trying to 'isolate' all those carrying the virus.

It is also interesting to note the double standards involved in your correspondent's approach. One wonders if the girl's former partner was also tested — since it is most likely he could have given her the disease, unless she is an intravenous drug user — and what, if any, action was taken in his case.

And why does the correspondent feel that only potential mothers should have the HIV test, and therefore live with the responsibility of knowing whether or not they are seropositive?

Sarah Hannigan
London

On celebrating anniversaries

ANNIVERSARIES of the October Revolution are celebrated by the Stalinists in such a way as to 'justify' their policies.

Does this mean that Trotskyists are wrong to celebrate the same event, in a different spirit? Clearly not. Yet Workers Press seems to take the line that, because 1688 may be commemorated next year by fascists in ways appropriate to their purposes, this historic defeat of a counter-revolution ought to be ignored — nay, condemned — by all democrats and socialists, despite its relevance to the political issues of today.

Of course the defeat of James Stuart's attempted counter-revolution involved harsh consequences for the Irish Catholics who had linked their cause with his.

Incidentally, the name 'Tory' is an Anglicised version of an Irish word meaning 'pursuer', with reference to the bands who carried out massacres of Protestants in 1641. It was applied in England first to supporters of Charles I in the Civil War and then to supporters of his son James II.

Uneven and combined development has claimed its victims in every century. In consolidating their power in the periphery of Russia the Bolsheviks dealt drastically with Moslem 'reactionary nationalists' in Central Asia and Transcaucasia. The massacres carried out by Kokand and Gandzha are still fresh in the folk-memory of the people of those regions.

When Irish Catholic writers denounce what was done in their country in the 1690s they rarely remind their readers that, 70 years earlier, after the Battle of the White Mountain (the Czechs' 'Bohemia'), the same thing happened in Bohemia, but the other way round, when Protestants were despoiled and their property given by the Habsburgs to Catholic adventurers of various origins, including at least one Irishman (Taaffe). This game of historical atrocity-swapping can be played endlessly, but should not take the place of serious political discussion.

As for the matter of Londonderry, you may prefer 'Derry' (why not, though, go all the way and write 'Doire?'), but it would have been ridiculous for me to avoid the form 'Londonderry' in the context of what I wrote.

therefore strange to find them adopting the standpoint of a particular group of nationalists for whom everything has to be subordinated to their own immediate cause.

The tunnel-vision, mysticism and sentimentality of the nationalists in question was already noticed by Engels — who, for his uninhibited remarks about the Czechs and the Croats, let alone the Swiss, would certainly get 'done' for racism in Britain today.

'Ireland still remains the Holy Isle whose aspirations must on no account be mixed with the profane class struggles of the rest of the sinful world. This is no doubt partly honest madness on the part of the people.'

'But it is equally certain that it is also partly a calculation on the side of the leaders in order to maintain their domination over the peasant' (Engels to Marx, 9 December 1869).

Brian Pearce

P.S. A suggestion to opponents of any celebration of 1688: that they protest against the playing of 'Lilliburlero' before the news bulletins in the BBC World Service. Or has that been stopped already?

Property and rape

I HAVE just received the 7 February edition of Workers Press and would like to comment on your editorial, 'Property and Rape', concerning the Ealing vicarage case.

You draw the conclusion that penalties involved (three and five years' imprisonment for rape, compared with 14 years for burglary) reveal that under capitalism 'human life counts for nothing compared with the defence of private property'.

While this is superficially correct, its facile and limited nature suggests that the Workers Revolutionary Party has yet, after all this time, to come to grips with the whole question of the politics of rape and the oppression of women.

Indeed, it is particularly telling that you approvingly quote, then fail to go beyond, the local vicar's own assessment of the case.

The church has, of course, for centuries played a crucial role in the oppression of women, and continues to do so.

The central question in this incident is not the relative value capitalism gives 'human life' in general but the value it gives to the lives of women.

The real implication is that the worth of a woman, as a piece of sexual property, is incomparably smaller than the value of other forms of property.

But there is more to it. Rape, to borrow an expression from Engels, is a 'social instrument of power'. Its victims are invariably female. Because of this, rape goes in the most brutal way to the heart of the double oppression of women under capitalism.

To gloss over this, by using the obfuscation 'human life', is to avoid the political essence of the matter — the subjugation of one sex by another, legitimised by the state.

Marx, Engels and Lenin recognised that socialism was impossible without overturning the existing relations between the sexes.

Given that the WRP so long provided the protected environment for Healy's sexual abuse of women, it has a unique responsibility to take up the struggle against female oppression.

Comrades, you are long overdue with a serious presentation of women — their oppression and emancipation — in the pages of Workers Press.

John Tapp
New Zealand

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 46494. JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 46499. EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637. ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877. GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016. JOHN MCCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715. ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576. PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575. NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence, 879225.	HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638. BILLY GRIMES: SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661. SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418.	LIVERPOOL VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.
PARKHURST HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603. GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882. PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532. TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence, 69204. PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880.	GARTREE HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799. STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence, 758663. JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635. ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083.	DURHAM HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham. MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134. ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.
WAKEFIELD HM Prison Wakefield Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks, WF2 9AG HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636. NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644.	FRANKLAND HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085. BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662. PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034. CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662. EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.	REMAND PRISONERS: BRITTON HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF. MICHAEL J MCKENNEY: L46486 G. (DANNY) McNAMEE: L48616
ALBANY HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087.	LEICESTER HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888. BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380. PATRICK MCGEE: Life sentence, B75881.	WORMWOOD SCRUBS HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE DONAL CRAIG: 4 years.
		INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE: CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree. PAUL HILL: 462778, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs. GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin. JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham. HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree. JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin. BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs. GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland. RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.

The need for an international revolutionary youth movement

THE LATEST development arising from the hugely successful Band Aid appeal is School Aid.

An article in the 'Observer' (22 February) says: 'French and English schools have been collecting money through School Aid. One school collected £7,000 and another an amazing £100,000.'

The enormous support and raising of consciousness amongst the youth through Band Aid is clearly being continued. This poses the political question, however, of what obstacles lie in the way of solving mass starvation in Africa.

The biggest obstacle, for youth who want to do something in Britain, is the Tory government.

These parasites actually taxed the money that was raised for the starving millions by Band Aid.

But the Tories are part of the world capitalist system — along with their friends running the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

Producing things for profit today means condemning millions of people to death, as in Ethiopia and other countries.

In the western capitalist countries it means mass unemployment for youth or cheap labour YTS or other MSC schemes — with no prospect of a proper job.

We must applaud the initiative taken by Band Aid in raising the issue but we must also stress that charity is not the solution.

An international plan, one that takes into account the needs of the whole world — not just one particular country — is absolutely vital if we are to eradicate want from half the planet.

To implement this plan means to fight for world socialist revolution — and end the present imperialist domination and exploitation of the globe.

The Fourth International, based on the internationalism of Marx, Engels and Lenin, was set up by Leon Trotsky to fight for the leadership of the working class — against the degeneration of the Communist International under Stalin's leadership.

It was set up to combat the reactionary idea of socialism in one country, the policy of Stalin from 1924 onwards, and to fight for world socialist revolution.

To smash the capitalist state by armed insurrection is the task facing us today — not the election of a Tory government or one led by Kinnock.

The orientation of our party to youth is absolutely vital, so that we can win large numbers to the party on the basis of our fight for internationalism and the revolution. The need for a youth paper to agitate and organise around these ideas, as well as other issues affecting young people, is crucial.

In the words of the Transitional Programme (page 57):

'The Fourth International pays particular attention to the young generation of the proletariat. All of its policies strive to inspire the youth with belief in its own strength, and its future. Only the fresh enthusiasm and the aggressive spirit of youth can guarantee the preliminary success in the struggle, only these successes can return the best elements of the older generation to the road of revolution. Thus it was, thus it will be.'

John Owen,
Liverpool

PERSONAL COLUMN

Tyneside diary

TO MY regret, I just missed meeting Beatrix Campbell in Newcastle upon Tyne last week. She left the Polytechnic about ten minutes before I got there. She'd been speaking on 'Women — the New Poor', and I'd gone to speak on the history of English racism.

Campbell is one of the most intelligent of Britain's Euro-Stalinists. Her book 'Wigan Pier Revisited' received much attention; she is sometimes to be seen and heard on television; and she is a contributor to that immensely stylish and style-conscious journal 'Marxism Today'.

Her most recent effort in 'Marxism Today' was an interview with Edwina Currie, a Tory Minister whose views, and arrogance are alike repulsive.

Much of this interview was reprinted in the 'Guardian', which frequently gobbles up tasty morsels from the table of 'Marxism Today'.

Campbell's interview plumed Currie, not to the depths, but to the shallows. To persuade a Tory Minister to proclaim that sex is fun is no doubt a scoop of sorts; but to interview Currie in such an essentially trivial way is to blur, if not to cross, class lines.

Campbell is one of those for whom a gender battle is more important than a class one. She seems to believe, with Kipling, that

the Colonel's Lady an' Judy
O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins.

Campbell's apolitical and, at bottom, deferential treatment of Currie is the Euro-Stalinist equivalent of the trendy television portrayal of Margaret Thatcher as housewife pottering about the kitchen of No.10 Downing Street.

I would have enjoyed discussing these matters with a Communist Party member whose 'Marxism' has become so palatable to the 'Guardian', and who was heard to say in Newcastle that she favours a popular front which includes Tory women.

* * *

ANOTHER CP luminary whom I failed to meet while in the north-east was Mick McGahey, retiring vice-president of the National Union of Mineworkers.

But I did hear him speak in Durham, alongside his possible successor Eric Clarke, before an audience of about 100 miners.

Four times as many had turned out to hear Arthur Scargill a few weeks earlier.

McGahey refused to buy a copy of Workers Press as he entered the Durham miners' headquarters. Asked to fork out 25p for a socialist weekly, he retorted: 'I prefer my socialism daily.'

But I could have sworn I saw him, as he sat on the platform, closely scrutinising somebody else's copy.

His method with questioners well-prepared with facts and figures, as Dave Temple was, is to demand: 'Where did you get that from?'

Then, when his questioner cites, as it may be, Robin Page Arnot's history of the miners, or the South Wales miners' paper, McGahey will flatly declare: 'It's not true. It doesn't say that.'

This makes arguing with him rather difficult, as it's no doubt intended to. Perhaps militant miners will have to go to meetings armed with a bag full of books, as barristers attend trials, ready to cite chapter and verse.

* * *

TALKING of barristers, I happened to meet one in a Durham pub who surprised me by suddenly volunteering, out of the blue, the view that the action of the Healy-Torrance 'rump' in putting Phil Penn behind bars had discredited them for all time.

It was he, not I, who brought the matter up. So far as I know he's not a member of any political organisation; and he's certainly a long way away from the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The Phil Penn affair has had an astounding resonance. Revulsion and anger at what was done are unanimous on the left.

While I'm on this subject, let me add that I, like

many others, found Sandra Penn's statement in last week's Workers Press the most eloquent piece of writing I have read anywhere for years.

It was beautifully written and deeply moving — especially when read in conjunction with those words on page 4 of the same issue from what might be called the Fourth International's 1938 birth certificate, about the 'inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice' to be found among women of the working class.

Sandra Penn is a living example of precisely those qualities. And there are thousands like her, among the 'invisible' Asian women who sweep up the rubbish at Heathrow, among the women who punch cash registers all day in supermarkets, among those who pack tee-shirts all night for a pittance in illicit East End sweatshops.

What a force women workers can be, and how quickly they develop in struggle, was shown at Imperial Typewriters, Leicester, in 1974; at Grunwick in 1976; at Futers in 1979; and at Chix, Slough, in 1979-1980.

I hope the International Women's Day statement last week means that the WRP will be fully prepared for the next round of such struggles by women, which may not be far away.

* * *

THERE was a third person I'd have liked to meet while I was in the north-east: Nigel Todd. But unfortunately I didn't have time to do so.

I wanted to congratulate him on his pamphlet 'Black on Tyne: 1860s'. This fine piece of local history-writing was prepared for a workshop on anti-racist and anti-fascist teaching held in Newcastle last January under the auspices of the National Anti-Racist Movement in Education.

Todd is very modest about his pamphlet, which he says is based on only 'a fragment of the local press and biographical sources'.

All the same, he has managed to trace the black presence on Tyneside back to the 1860s. This indicates that the black community was established there at least ten years earlier than that in Cardiff (which, of course, began to flourish as a coal port much later than Newcastle).

Todd has found that one of Newcastle's few restaurants in the 1860s (a 'chop house' in Grey Street) was run by 'a noted black man'; that a stream of black singers, dancers, and comedians performed on Tyneside in the same decade; that the first Australian cricket team to visit England was black (it played in North Shields in 1866 and entertained the crowds with a display of boomerang-throwing as well as cricket); and that the first black cricket team to play on Tyneside was American (it took on a team of 'picked players' from local clubs on Newcastle's Town Moor in 1862, and won).

Todd has also unearthed some fascinating details about a seamen's strike on the Tyne in June 1866, in which black sailors played a prominent part.

Hundreds of seafarers struck for higher wages. They organised mass pickets of ships, open-air meetings, and lively processions.

During this struggle a journalist wrote in the 'Newcastle Daily Chronicle': 'Whatever may be the feeling of the people of America or elsewhere against colour, it is not participated in by our tars, who walk arm in arm with the coloured men.'

Tyneside's early black community, writes Todd, were 'part of an emergent working class, engaged in the enjoyments and struggles of working-class communities on the Tyne'.

And, as such, they 'shared the same kind of treatment given to their white counterparts by Tyneside's police and middle-class magistrates'.

'Black on Tyne' also rescues from obscurity the local anti-slavery campaign during the American Civil War, and the local reaction to the massacre of 439 Jamaicans after the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865.

As Todd remarks in his introduction, 'there remains considerable scope for a more extensive research project'. He is well equipped to undertake it, and I very much hope he will.

Peter Fryer

LISTINGS

Listings are published free by WORKERS PRESS for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Friday.

CITY OF LONDON Anti-Apartheid Group National Demonstration and Rally, Saturday 14 March. Assemble Whittington Park, Highgate (near Archway tube) at 1.00p.m.; march to South African Embassy

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE. For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House in Trafalgar Square, London. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Weekly planning meetings are held every Tuesday, 7.30p.m., Stoke Newing-

ton Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All are welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938)

SOCIALIST HEALTH ASSOCIATION National One Day Conference: A New Agenda for Public Health, Saturday 21 March, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1. 10.30a.m.-4.30p.m.

LABOUR BRIEFING Youth Day School: 'Youth and Sexuality'; Saturday 21 March 10.00am-4.30p.m. For details of venue etc. phone Fran (01-431 0357) or Mike (01-769 6803)

DEFEND THE WOMBOURNE 12 Defend Lesbian and Gay Rights. Planning meetings every Thursday at 7.30p.m., The Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 (Finsbury Park tube)

BRING BACK VICTORIA WILLIAMS! Campaign meetings take place on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month at UCA, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, Acton (7.30 p.m.)

6th INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR Radical Black and Third World books. Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, Kings Cross, 26-29 March. Concerts, readings, exhibitions, films, forums and panels will also be taking place. (Fair events also being held 18-21 March in Manchester, and on 1-5 April in Bradford. Telephone 01-272 4889 and 01-579 4902 for details)

STOP THE NEXT CHERNOBYL! A One Day Conference to discuss the setting up of an Anti-Nuclear Federation, organised by North London Anti-Nuclear Group. Saturday 14 March; 10.00a.m.-5.00p.m., Jacksons Lane Community Centre, Archway Road, N6 (opposite Highgate tube).

DON'T LET THE POA CRUSH YOU: CRUSH THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT March, Saturday 4 April, 1.00p.m. Malet Street, London W1 (further details from CAPOA, 01-274 6655)

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SIMON BOLIVAR INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

ON A recent visit to Argentina, high-ranking officials of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua, including the president of the Constituent Assembly, were asked about the role of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade (SBIB) during the Nicaraguan civil war of 1978-1979.

The journalists who asked the questions were spurred by Argentinian government statements against the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), one of the organisers of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade.

The Sandinista leaders refused to join in the Argentinian government's smear campaign. 'The SBIB fought heroically in the civil war, side by side with us,' they said, adding: 'We ran into political differences with them, and requested their departure, after the overthrow of the Somoza government.'

They declined to comment on their differences with the Trotskyist MAS and the SBIB, on the ground that this would fan the flames of internal political disputes in Argentina.

Controversy has surrounded the SBIB ever since it was founded. The imperialist press; bourgeois governments such as that of Argentina; political opponents of the Trotskyists who organised the SBIB: all have joined

in a strange united front of hatred for this expression of proletarian internationalism.

It is the same in Europe. Here in Britain groups such as Workers Power and sympathisers of the majority of the United Secretariat have joined that united front.

Workers Press has published some of these attacks as a proof that it welcomes debate and an exchange of views. Workers Power and the United Secretariat have not so far reciprocated; they have not found space for a proper defence of the SBIB and its organisers.

The article whose first part we publish this week is reprinted from the February 1986 issue of 'Working Class Opposition', journal of the US section of the International Workers' League (IWL), the Trotskyist organisation responsible for founding the SBIB. The second part will be published next week.

Will Workers Power and the United Secretariat in Britain reprint this article so that every one of their members will know what really happened in Nicaragua in 1978-1979?

Or will they go on attacking the SBIB from the ivory tower of the European radical left, which contemplates the world instead of changing it?

Nicaragua and internationalism

The formation of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade

FROM the 1978 offensive of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) against the National Guard of Somoza, internationalist fighters from different countries fought side by side with the Nicaraguan workers, peasants and students to overthrow the pro-imperialist regime.

Different left and revolutionary organisations throughout the world, but especially in Latin America, sent volunteers to fight on the side of the masses and in military alliance with the Sandinistas.

Hondurans, Mexicans, Costa Ricans, Panamanians, Colombians, Venezuelans, Brazilians, Chileans, Argentinians, Spaniards, and even a few North Americans came to fight Somoza's National Guard.

At the beginning of 1979 the 10,000 strong National Guard was firmly in control of the military situation. Well trained and better armed than the FSLN, it had managed to check the September 1978 offensive and then to mount its own, partially successful, counter-offensive.

Despite the isolation of the Somoza regime in Latin America and the pressure on the Carter administration to halt military aid to Somoza, it looked as if the dictatorship could weather the storm and defeat the revolution.

The FSLN issued a call to the solidarity movement to form international brigades to join the armed struggle against Somoza.

Responding to this call, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) of Colombia and other Latin American Trotskyist organisations, formed the Simon Bolivar International Brigade (SBIB). It fought on the southern

front (on the border of Costa Rica), in the north near the Honduran border, and also on the so-called 'internal front', in reality the organisation of insurrection in the more important cities.

Highly respected by all the combatants during the civil war, some observers give the credit for 10 per cent of all military actions against the National Guard during the period between December 1978 and July 1979 to the SBIB.

Fighting under the military discipline of the FSLN, the members of the Brigade were more often than not sent into the most dangerous battles. They bore the brunt of much of the fighting with the elite of National Guard forces commanded by both 'Commander Bravo' and by Somoza's son.

Many members of the Brigade were killed in these battles, many more were wounded. Often members of the Brigade who were participating in military units composed jointly of SBIB and FSLN members were nominated and achieved military command of those units.

After the victory over Somoza's forces the Simon Bolivar Brigade was responsible for organising more than 100 unions. It waged a resolute and uncompromising struggle against the bourgeois wing of the anti-Somoza insurrection, then led by Eden Pastora, Violeta de Chamorro and Alfonso Robelo.

Today these three are leaders in the Contra forces trying militarily to overthrow the FSLN government.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade proposed that the FSLN form a government without the bourgeois forces and expand and extend the revolution in a socialist direction. Pastora, Robelo and Chamorro were joined in their opposition to

these proposals by the entire top leadership of the FSLN.

On 20 August 1979, while waiting for the appearance of FSLN officials at a meeting called by the FSLN, the non-Nicaraguan members of the SBIB were rounded up by Panamanian National Guard Forces and expelled from Nicaragua.

On the front pages of 'The New York Times', the 'Washington Post', and the imperialist press of the world, the expulsion of the Brigade members was hailed as a show of 'moderation' by the Sandinistas.

Every reformist in the world jumped on the bandwagon of the red-baiting against the SBIB launched by the bourgeois press. Slanders of every kind were levelled at the Brigade, in a Big Lie campaign to revile and discredit the aims and political positions of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade and to conceal its contributions to the Nicaraguan revolution.

This article is a long overdue answer, in English, to those slanders, and also a balance-sheet of the highest expression of proletarian internationalism since the days of the Spanish Civil War.

The military actions of the SBIB

IN JUNE 1979, the coordinating committee of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade met with the General Staff of the FSLN to coordinate military operations on the southern front.

From all perspectives the southern front was the most difficult of all the military operations of the FSLN. Its guerrilla armies were blocked by the elite troops of the National Guard from even crossing the border from Costa Rica into Nicaragua.

Without defeating the National Guard on the southern front, the

FSLN could not proclaim the formation of a provisional government.

In a communique given to the press immediately after the meeting, Commander Felix of the FSLN wrote that the Sandinistas, '... recognised and respected as revolutionaries and Nicaraguans, the Colombian Brigade.'

The communique went on to state that the FSLN had, '... presented instructions for the activities of the Brigade,' (*Nicaragua: Reform or Revolution? Coleccion Polemica Internacional, 1980*).

In a message written a few days after that meeting, FSLN Commander Plutarco Hernandez Sanchez wrote: 'Members of the Brigade have been participating in forming combat lines which are engaged in war actions on the southern front under the command of the General Staff... The campaign that you advance in support of the Nicaraguan struggle is encouraging to those of us who have been confronting the Somoza dictatorship for years.'

'It is also an internationalist demonstration which resumes the best experiences of the liberation struggle.' (*Nicaragua: Reform or Revolution? Coleccion Polemica Internacional page 525*).

Immediately after that meeting, the Simon Bolivar International Brigade militarily regrouped all of its forces in coordination with the FSLN. In a joint effort FSLN and SBIB combatants launched an offensive against the town of Penas Blancas and Sapoa and the city of Rivas, all in the southern part of Nicaragua, on or near the border with Costa Rica.

After a furious battle Penas Blancas and Sapoa fell to the revolutionary forces despite the fact that they were outgunned by the National Guard who used both artillery and aircraft in their

Workers Revolutionary Party Political Committee statement on slanders against the Simon Bolivar Brigade.

THE tasks of Trotskyists in the Nicaraguan revolution is a question of the greatest importance for our international movement.

Comrades there have worked, and work, under fire: their strategy, tactics and programme are tested under the conditions of military conflict with United States imperialism endured by Nicaraguan workers and peasants for more than ten years.

The Workers Revolutionary Party has opened the pages of Workers Press to discussion on these questions and will continue to do so.

We will not, however, allow appalling slanders against Latin American Trotskyists to go unanswered in our paper.

Such abuse — squalid because its authors relied on lies and misinformation; dishonest because it misrepresented the crucial political questions at stake in Nicaragua, politically bankrupt since not a word of it sought to address problems of working class leadership in Nicaragua or anywhere else — appeared in letters from Bernie Hynes (Workers Press, 3 January) and Ralf Carls (28 February).

Both letters attacked the Simon Bolivar International Brigade (SBIB) which was sent into Nicaragua in 1978-1979 by the Bolshevik Tendency in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International led by the late N. Moreno.

The brigade fought in the 1979 revolution and was then expelled from Nicaragua by the Sandinist government. The USFI's support for this expulsion led the Bolshevik Tendency to split from it: today the tendency's forces constitute the International Workers' League (Fourth International).

The Workers Revolutionary Party bore a major responsibility in 1979, particularly in Britain where we were the largest Trotskyist organisation, for blocking discussion about the Brigade. At the time, under the leadership of G. Healy, we ignored the problems facing Trotskyism in Nicaragua and did little more than pass wordy resolutions.

Now having expelled Healy and begun to address ourselves to the major problems facing world Trotskyism, we will participate in full and frank discussion.

We want to make some things clear from the outset:

1. The Simon Bolivar Brigade did not arrive in Nicaragua 'uninvited' or wage an 'armed sectarian campaign', as Hynes claims. Unlike numerous armchair 'Trotskyists' and 'revolutionaries', it responded to a call from the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) for the formation of such international brigades.
2. The SBIB did not 'refuse to accept the military command of the FSLN'. It worked with the FSLN on the southern front, in the assaults on the Leon Masaya and Managua, and in the battle around Colina 50 hill. A number of comrades died in these battles and the WRP will not allow their memory to be insulted by the likes of Hynes.
3. The Brigade never 'raised money ostensibly for the FSLN, which they kept for their own ultra-left manoeuvres'. Such slanders are particularly loathsome since they were not supported by any evidence.
4. The Bolshevik Tendency did not 'want to give the impression that the SBIB was an adequate way to build a revolutionary party', as Hynes claims. The Brigade worked under the military, but not political, control of FSLN commanders; it advocated the formation of working class civil defence committees, the stepping-up of expropriation of the capitalists, and thoroughgoing repression of the bourgeoisie.

Carls naturally says nothing about his perspectives for building a revolutionary party in Nicaragua or of the Trotskyist organisations existing there today, including a section of the IWP(FI).

It ill becomes those who have not had the opportunity of participating in armed struggle to deliver such empty declamations.

We welcome honest political debate on these life-and-death questions but we will not permit Workers Press to become a vehicle for slanders of revolutionaries who risked, and in some cases lost, their lives in the Nicaraguan revolution.

defence. The struggle for the city of Rivas, however, lasted nearly a month.

The revolutionary forces surrounded the city, and sent teams of combatants into the city to clandestinely organise an insurrection.

The final assault and the insurrection were launched simultaneously only days before the overthrow of Somoza on 19 July 1979.

Some of the heaviest fighting in the revolutionary war occurred around Rivas. In those battles a number of Brigade members were killed, including two Colombians, Matio Cruz Morales and Pedro Ochoa, and the Nicaraguan Max Leoncio Senqui, who had joined the Brigade while exiled in Colombia.

Many more Brigade members were wounded in the battle for Rivas.

While this battle was going on, other members of the Brigade were sent to fight with the FSLN to take the city of Leon.

The assault on Leon was carried out by a coordinated attack of the FSLN columns and local militias in the city, who barricaded the most important streets and attacked the National Guards' garrisons from the rear. The battle for Leon cost the revolutionary army almost 200 dead and 500 wounded, including members of the Simon Bolivar Brigade.

In addition to these major battles, the Simon Bolivar Brigade and its members were sent throughout June and July to

participate in dozens of other military actions against the National Guard in the cities of Masaya, Matagalpa, Chichigalpa and others.

By the end of July, the military situation was still very uncertain.

The FSLN was speculating about the possibility of direct United States military intervention. The FSLN insurrectionary units in Managua, the capital, and other important cities were forced to retreat towards Leon and Masaya, which were occupied by the revolutionary forces.

Through Radio Sandino, the FSLN issued a new call for the formation of International Brigades:

'We call upon all the solidarity committees with our people to step up their campaign against the interventionist manoeuvres of the Yankees and their puppets... who see our struggle as a threat to their dictatorships.'

'Every committee in solidarity with our people should put all the registered volunteers in different countries, those thousands of honest men and women who have declared their disposition to fight at our side for peace and freedom, should be put on a state of alert. All those thousands of men and women should be prepared to participate in our struggle... (Broadcast on 23, 25 and 26 June 1979).

TO BE CONTINUED

REVIEWS

They won't take me alive



IN 1970 in El Salvador the Secretary General of the Salvadorean Communist Party resigned his position and left the organisation.

After several years of internal disagreement in the party, he and others decided that it was no longer possible to pursue their 'legal and electoral' line, and that they had to go underground to develop a mass movement and an armed struggle.

This book is the life history of one of the Salvadorean women who committed her life to that armed struggle, and who lost it at the age of 31 transporting weapons for the uprisings of 1981.

Ann Maria Castillo Rivas (known as Eugenia) was born into a religious Nicaraguan family who had fled to El Salvador because of opposition to Somoza.

She developed rapidly through a phase of religious commitment to the conditions of the poor to a consciousness of the necessity for mobilising the masses in an armed struggle.

Many other guerilla leaders of her generation also had the seeds of political education planted by the 'Christian Student Youth Movement'.

Nearly all the leadership of this Catholic youth organisation progressed into the guerilla movement. At a cer-



They Won't Take Me Alive. By Claribel Alegria, translated by Amanda Hopkinson. The Women's Press, £4.95.

tain stage the religious approach to the problems of workers and peasants became deeply unsatisfactory to these dedicated youth.

Statistics abound about conditions in El Salvador. The introduction to this book gives a selection: less than 0.5 per cent of the population owns 37.3 per cent of arable land; only 16 per cent of the economically active population works all the year round; there are less than two hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants; half the national income is awarded to 8 per cent of the population.

Statistics however cannot give the sense of the desperate struggle for daily exist-

ence which leaps from the pages of this book. Eugenia's sister Marta was arrested by the National Guard when she was nine months pregnant, along with others including Eugenia's husband.

She was beaten up, and thrown face down on the floor. Her clothes were lifted up and the soldiers ran their hands over her belly and threatened her with rape. She was blindfolded along with the others and they were beaten on the back with rifle butts.

She started going into labour but said nothing about it to them. In the end she was taken to hospital to give birth under a false name, so that the baby could be put into an orphanage, and she could be taken back for interrogation.

She shouted out her real name and was recognised by hospital workers, who managed to get word to her husband.

A sympathetic doctor arranged for her to have a Caesarean section so her departure would be delayed by a week — the guards insisted on coming into the operating theatre and interrogated her as she came round from the anaesthetic.

Thanks to her courage, and the courage of hospital employees, she survived and was able to give details of others arrested with her.

Those others were subjected to torture personally overseen by Roberto D'Abuissou who became president of El Salvador's constituent assembly in the 'Free Elections' of March 1982.

The lives and the sacrifices of these women guerrillas are explained very simply and un sentimentally — Eugenia rose to become Commander of a major division of the Popular Liberation Forces.

Unlike the majority of feminists in the developed countries, these women wasted no time bemoaning the fact that men treated them as inferiors, nor do they maintain that all women are sisters transcending class barriers.

They are getting on with the job, with the proviso that they fight to educate male and female comrades that women can fight on an equal basis with men. For them the primary object is their struggle.

Perhaps if a few more feminists in the Labour Party and elsewhere were taking up a fight on any issue, let alone sexism, they might find their problems with sexism a bit easier to tackle.

Bronwen Handyside

Inspired by the miners' strike

THE THING about this exhibition is its celebration of the strength of miners in their secret underground world as well as the organised strength they bring with them when they emerge above ground and fight to defend their rights.

Scenes and images inspired by the recent strike naturally predominate thereby enriching the wide variety of materials and methods used.

Outstanding among these is one called 'Fighting Against Conviction'. It shows a circle of miners holding hands and surrounding photos of a hut with anti-Scargill graffiti in the foreground and the headstocks in the background.

Outside the unbroken circle of miners is a broken circle of police.

The small stick-like figures are very reminiscent of the drawings of Australian aborigines, the similarity going beyond mere artistic depiction.

The Miners: Young Unknowns
Gallery, 82 The Cut, London, SE1. Monday, 2 March to Friday 27 March

A photo-collage with overlaid crayon emphasising rare flashes of colour provides another powerful image. Green trees contrast with the rows of black and white pit houses, headstocks and slag-heaps. In the foreground ember shades give a solitary burly miner a cosy warmth, contrasting his colourful individuality with the black and white of crowds of anonymous warriors at rallies.

A couple of small exhibits which hint at the bond between the men and the earth are outstanding. One in particular depicts a miner holding a piece of coal opening to liberate a phoenix which had been fossilised. Or is it perhaps his own flight of fantasy? Whichever, the image is pure magic.

The hardship of the job is not far away, of course. Several pictures vividly evoke fear or suffering, especially of men huddled into the lift cage about to begin their descent into the bowels of the earth.

The exhibition, made atmospheric by the tar-smell of coal-sacks around the gallery, draws its strength from the content of the exhibits rather than from a sense of breaking imaginative new ground. It is certainly well worth a visit.

Disappointing that none of the exhibits were actually by members of mining communities, only from outside 'observers'. The organisers had apparently tried to overcome this but without success.

Also missing is any representation of the communities. In that respect, the exhibition fails to reflect the creativity which the experience of the strike itself unleashed so unforgettably.

Lynn Beaton

Titanic disaster



IT IS more than 30 years since Walter Lord wrote 'A Night to Remember' which was then the definitive account of the night the *Titanic* sank.

Now he has written an equally riveting book which sorts out some of the myths that surround the disaster — and some which his first book encouraged.

He explains how the class system closed off escape routes to the steerage passengers —

The Night Lives On. By Walter Lord. Viking, £10.95.

and why the lifeboats, like the one shown above, rowed off half empty.

He argues about what the band played, and who they were — and why, hired through an agency, they were neither passengers nor crew, which meant their families were at first denied

compensation.

And he shows how the sea-going industry closed ranks around the White Star Line. The ship, says legend, was thought to be unsinkable, was the best that could be produced at the time. Not so.

The *Titanic* was the product of a trend the other way, a trend that for 50 years had seen one safety feature after another sacrificed for competitive reasons.

Manchester theatres

My Mother Said I Never Should. By Charlotte Keatley. Directed by Brigid Larmour. The Contact Theatre, Oxford Road, Manchester.

CHARLOTTE KEATLEY shows in the writing of this play a deadly eye for social detail.

The play revolves around four women living in Manchester and spans four generations of the same family from 1923 until 1986. The insight is unnerving.

What the audience is treated to in this unflinching production is a 'fly on the wall' view of their struggle to live, constrained by the social limitations of twentieth century capitalism.

We discover that Gran was illegitimate but managed to 'marry well' and change from the bleak mills and terraces of Oldham to the leafy suburbs of Cheadle Hulme.

Gran's daughter in turn improves her lot by marrying Ken after the Second World War and settling in Raynes Park, Surrey.

Skipping over Jackie we find Rosie who is 'here and now', the young girl with 'Simply Red' playing on her Sony Walkman.

Aside from blood ties what

binds these four women is their struggle for emancipation.

It is shown in foregoing essentials so that Margaret can have tennis lessons or Jackie's ultimate sacrifice so she can eventually run her own art gallery.

All four actresses, Joan Campion, Jenny Howe, Jane Paton and Michelle Wade must be congratulated on their performances. The set allowed the audience to concentrate on the dialogue.

If you happen to be in Manchester go and see the play... you won't be disappointed.

Dreams With Teeth. By Cindy Artist. Directed by Sheryl Crown. Contact Theatre, Manchester.

THIS PLAY, by a black writer based in Britain, explores the experience of four American girls, the first blacks to be admitted to what had been previously an all-white university campus.

The drama derives from the problem — can blacks legitimately exploit the avenues open through education in a prejudiced system without selling out.

Before us are four diffe-

rent attitudes: the strident militant Frenchie, the middle class black Smitty, the bright quiet girl Max and finally Retta who feels the prejudice deeply but is determined to buckle under and study hard to beat the system.

Behind the play lies the contradiction of the black middle class which although living in Brooklyn is far removed from the ghettos and the working class blacks.

Smitty leaves, presumably unable to attain adequate grades.

Frenchie also leaves, but for a different reason — to start a black cooperative.

This leaves Max and Retta.

We now witness Retta's cultural isolation, while Max drifts towards the company of Heather, a white girl.

Retta starts to show signs of neurosis, rocking to and fro while studying like some starving orphan.

In despair, Max, who studies English literature, calls on Shakespeare to provide her with a solution to help Retta.

The call is a plaintive cry in the wilderness.

Peter Windeler

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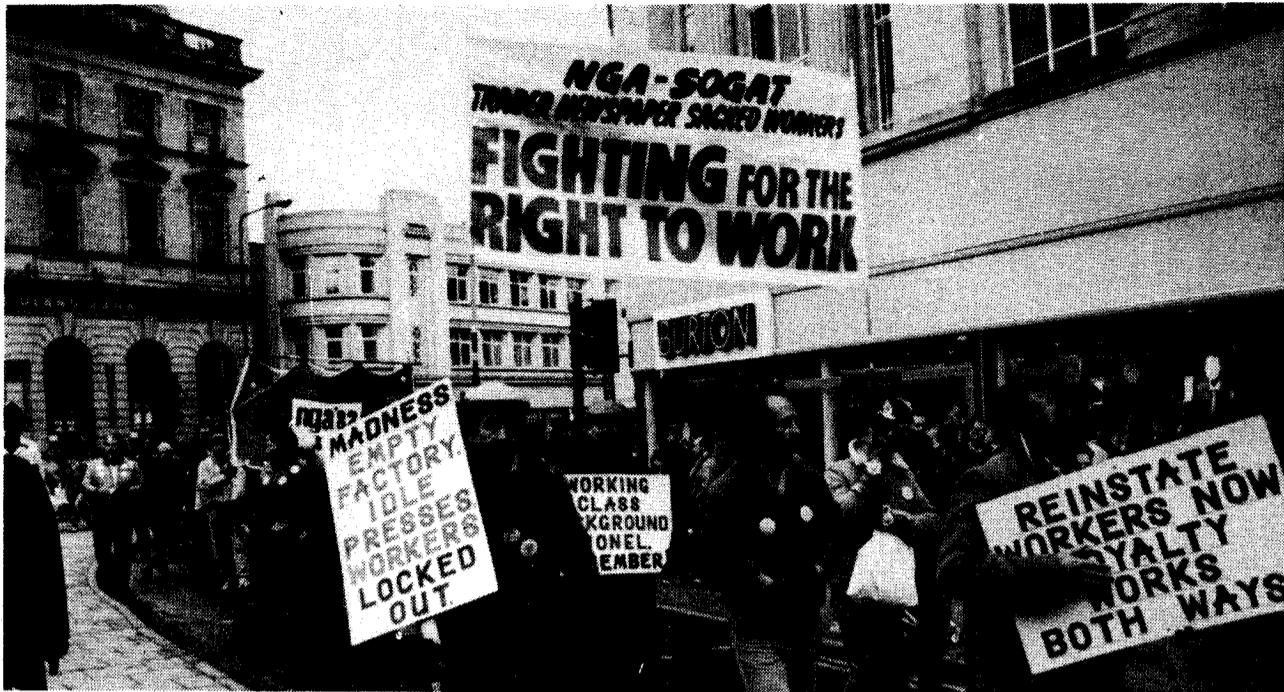
Workers Press

Saturday March 14 1987. Newsdesk 01-733 3058

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WE ARE receiving more material than ever for Workers Press, but we want to hear from even more of our readers. Please send letters, news from your area, reports of the struggles of the work-

ing class, of women and youth, of developments in the Labour Party and Communist Party. . . We also need photographs — phone us on 01-733 3058 and discuss the best way to get them to us.



Sacked Derby printers are FIGHTING MAD!

RON SENCHAK, sacked Father of the Chapel (shop steward) of the Derby 'Trader', pointed to a headline in the paper proclaiming: 'FoC is a madman'.

'They won't put this message out any more,' he declared, 'because we're all bloody mad now — and we won't go away!'

Senchak was summing up at a rally in the Guild Hall on 7 March after a tremendous march through Derby's town centre.

All 82 printers on the 'Trader' were sacked last December. Many of them were notified by the now famous 'Sack-O-Gram' method.

Trader Webb Offset is owned by millionaire Lionel Pickering, who professes to be a socialist and to hold trade union principles.

It's come a long way from its humble beginnings — to the tune of ten weekly 'Traders', five free-sheets for the West Midlands, and an assortment of weekly and monthly periodicals for

trade unions, commerce and industry.

The printworkers were not sacked because of any industrial disruption. On the contrary, there had been no strikes at the plant during its entire history. But Pickering seems to have become an admirer of Murdoch and Shah and is trying to copy their tactics.

His sacking of the printworkers mirrors the actions of the Fleet Street proprietors, but on a smaller scale. The workers' response shows once again their determination to defend their jobs.

Speaker after speaker at the rally condemned Pickering's action.

Roger Smith, member of Derby Trades Council, said the dispute was about the fundamental freedom to organise and belong to a trade union.

Phillip Whitehead, prospective Labour Party candidate for Derby North, said he had stopped writing for the 'Trader' because of the actions of Pickering, who he thought was a friend. 'We

want their jobs back without any preconditions', he added.

Derek Wignal, retired member of SOGAT, brought greetings from his union: 'Printers, like miners, are in the forefront of the struggles now taking place. We must stand up and be counted. We must not let this kind of thing happen here.' Wapping on 24 January had been just like a fascist state.

'The management took a cruel and cynical decision when they sacked the workforce', declared David Bookbinder, leader of Derbyshire County Council and prospective Labour candidate.

'They used the law to sack them and then write to certain individuals and invite them back. What did they do to deserve it in the first

place?

'While the factory lies empty, Pickering is contracting his work out to different printers. If any of these print the "Trader" then this council will stop all its publications to them.'

Greetings were conveyed from SOGAT member Mike Hicks, recently released veteran of the Wapping dispute, and two SOGAT members from London brought greetings from the sacked News International printworkers and the Fleet Street Support Unit.

They criticised the union leaders for their sell-out of the Wapping struggle and capitulation to Thatcher's anti-union laws. The TUC and Labour Party leaders came in for some criticism, as did the Communist Party.

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Justice for teachers!

BY JIM STEAD

A CAPACITY audience of over 5,000 teachers packed the Manchester Free Trade Hall on 11 March to hear union leaders outline their campaign against the Baker legislation.

Fred Jarvis and Fred Smithies, general secretaries of the NUT and the NAS/UWT, spoke for an hour in an attempt to head off the movement of teachers.

Fred Jarvis said: 'We will have a joint campaign against Baker and to restore our fundamental rights.'

However, both leaders avoided any specific mention of the conditions of service, an issue on which they have said they oppose Baker.

They also refused to give any practical details of their new 'campaign'.

Teachers warmly applauded anything that sound-

ed like a call to fight this government.

At the end of the speeches, one teacher from the floor of the meeting demanded to know what practical proposals the union leadership had.

Joan Davenport, the NUT executive member chairing the meeting, said she could not take any questions, and she was closing the meeting.

Looking

Teachers from Greater Manchester came to the meeting looking for a lead, and they found none.

The NUT executive has appealed against the union's decision to give only a warning to the members who led the unofficial strike on 13 January. They want blood.

They have clearly indicated their intention to police if the union membership cannot defeat them.

TEACHERS — Beware the Dean, Dubbins road

BY MICK KING

TEACHERS in England and Wales have again demonstrated their determination to resist Baker's Education Act.

In recent ballots, members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the National Association of Schoolmasters and Mistresses/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT) have both returned overwhelming majorities for action. The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA) ballot is expected to be in favour of action.

Anyone who thought teachers would be easy meat after the miners' strike and the betrayal at Wapping is mistaken.

Teachers have maintained action during the past two years in defence of wages and conditions and in opposition to state imposed settlements and removal of basic union rights that is not just without parallel in education, but is one of the longest disputes in the history of British trade unionism.

The dispute has had its ebbs and flows, but at the end of the day has posed a simple question: are teachers to be denied basic trade union rights by virtue of state imposed wages and conditions?

The struggle to defend wages, conditions and union democracy all hinge on the determination of teachers to struggle and the quality of leadership.

After the farce of the Interim Settlement, the GCSE-examination climb-down and the capitulation over conditions and wages in the ACAS agreement (sold to the NUT by the national leadership, but rejected by a majority of teachers) does anyone really believe that the teachers' present leadership is capable of opposing Baker in more than gestures?

An amendment to a resolution at the national executive that no deterioration in teachers' conditions of service should be accepted was overwhelmingly rejected.

The fight against Baker is also the fight to remove the present leaderships in the teachers' union.

There is a real necessity to build unity in action between all the teacher unions as a first step in the struggle to unite all unions in education.

Both Labour and Tory governments have attacked the education system.

These attacks are part and parcel of attacks on the gains of the working class in the postwar period.

This demonstrates that only the greatest unity amongst all sections of workers together with a principled leadership can defend and advance education and the rights of all workers in education.

Thus the question cannot be resolved within education, and teachers have to take the question to the rest of the working class.

It is not enough to put pressure on the national executives of the teachers' unions. They must be confronted at every turn away from a principled struggle — and in the process the membership must fight to replace them.

Baker

Can anyone doubt that if Baker were to obtain a 'friendly judgement' in the High Court (aren't they all?) which said teachers were in breach of the law, the two Freds (Jarvis — NUT and Smithies — NAS/UWT), along with the leadership of all the other teachers' unions, would follow the path of open betrayal trod by Dean and Dubbins?

Baker has made it known that he wants a no-strike clause in any new agreement — in return for 'free' collective bargaining! The leadership of the NUT has already agreed under the terms of the ACAS deal to police the membership.

Teachers must organise locally and nationally to resist the imposition of the new conditions of service.

They must fight to build organisations such as the Local Association Pay and Conditions Conference (LAPACC) in the NUT.

They must reject those leaders who put the union into the hands of fate in the shape of a possible future Labour government.

The Euro-Communist Party has openly sided with the rightwing leadership of the NUT but any left tendency which does not challenge for the leadership will merely allow the present leaders to sell out.

The lesson of the teachers' struggles in England, Wales and Scotland is that a large section of the middle class has entered the political arena on the side of the working class.

This shows that the major class struggles in Britain are yet to come.