

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

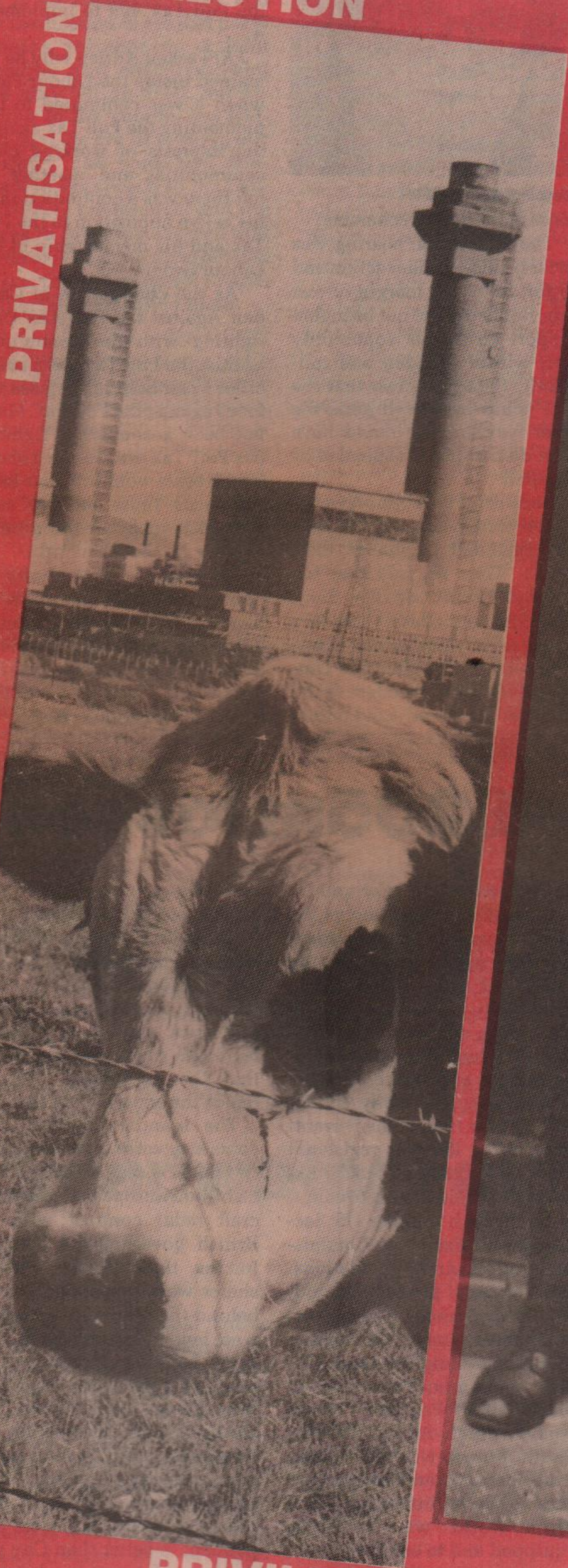
Revolutionary Communist Group

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THATCHER'S

POLLUTION



PRIVATISATION

CORRUPTION



REPRESSION

POVERTY



RACISM

UNEMPLOYMENT

PRIVILEGE

ENVIRONMENT

SOLIDARITY
PRICE

£1

LAWSON'S GAMBLE
FAILS page 2



LABOUR PARTY



fit to serve capitalism
page 3

SOCIALIST
GERMANY



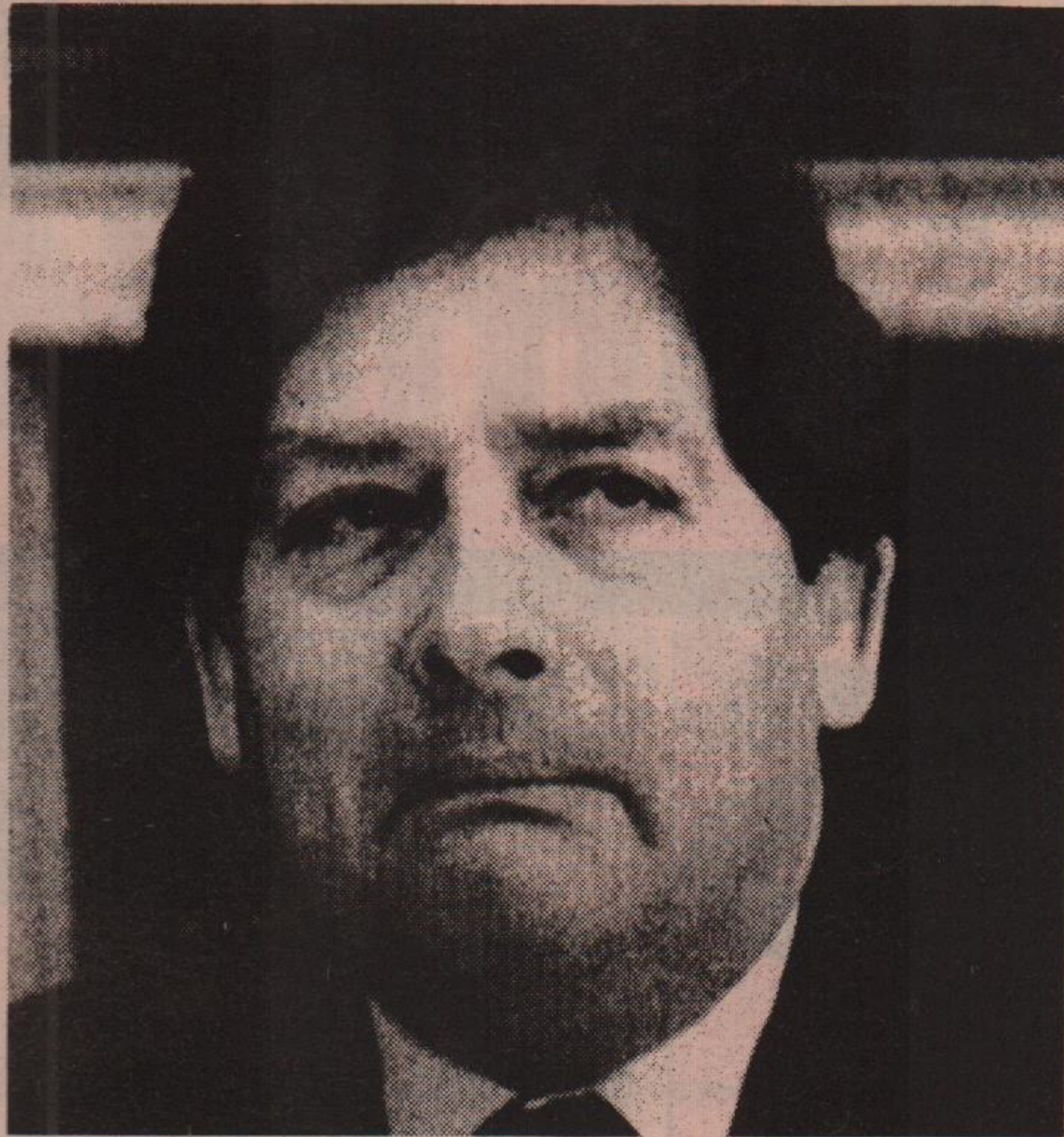
Privileged deserters
page 4

RUC/UDR collusion
with death squads
page 6

ECOLOGY &
SOCIALISM
The irreconcilable
differences between the
greens and socialism
page 8 & 9

CHE GUEVARA
on transition to
socialism page 10

NAMIBIA
the exiles return
page 16



Lawson's gamble fails

DAVID REED

At the end of September Chancellor Lawson was telling bankers and finance ministers at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund that large balance of payments deficits do not matter in a world of unconstrained capital flows. Britain had just announced the third worst monthly balance of payments deficit on record of nearly £2bn in August. There was, he argued, no reason for pressure on the pound. A week later, this latter day King Canute was soon to be heavily doused in the cold water of reality.

The August deficit of £2bn was £500m more than the markets expected. A visible trade deficit of £2.3bn was offset by an estimated invisible surplus of £300m (revised downwards by £100m). The visible trade deficit over the last three months at £6.75bn was the worst on record. The balance of payments deficit already at £13.9bn is running at an annual rate of over £20bn. After the trade figures were announced the stockmarket fell sharply, the FT-SE index closing 23.5 points down at 2336.1. For the next week the Bank of England was forced to intervene every day in the currency market, spending some \$2bn, to prevent a run on the pound and another rise in interest rates. It was to little avail. The pressures were far too great and as soon as the expected rise in German interest rates took place on 5 October, UK interest rates were increased by one per cent.

Interest rates rose to 15 per cent, the eleventh increase, and a doubling of interest rates, since May 1988. Base rates are now at the highest level since November 1981. Real rates (base rate less inflation) are now 7.7 per cent, more than four times the rate when the government came into office in 1979. The FT-SE index lost 42 points immediately after the rise was announced and closed 30.5 down on the day at 2281.6. £6.5bp was wiped off shares, one of the biggest one day falls this year. Further rises in the base rate could

still be necessary to stop a run on the pound.

This rise in base rates will force a further rise in mortgage rates of between 1-1.25 percent. This will mean a rise of about £30 per month on a mortgage of £40,000. Those with a £60,000 mortgage, the average new loan taken out by homeowners in the South East, will have to pay nearly £55 a month more, bringing their repayments to around £645 per month. This is £216 per month more than they were paying at the end of May 1988. Millions of householders will withdraw their support from the Tories at the next election unless the economic situation dramatically improves.

Every one per cent rise in interest rates adds a further £250m to industries' costs. The mortgage rise alone is expected to lead to an increase in inflation of about 0.5 percentage points. Wage rises will have to increase in the next pay round as workers attempt to compensate for this increase. A serious squeeze on profits is inevitable with the resulting fall in investment and output. Unemployment will rise as the British economy drifts into recession.

The Tories gamble has failed. In spite of North Sea Oil the long term decline of British manufacturing industry has not been halted. On the contrary it has accelerated. Long term capital continues to flow out of Britain and the balance of payments deficit continues to be financed by short term money only attracted by the very high interest rates. It is a vicious circle. Without the high interest rates the deficit will not be financed and the short term money can be withdrawn at a stroke with devastating consequences for the British economy. But high interest rates and long term capital flows ensure that insufficient capital is invested in British industry to make it internationally competitive. As a result, the trade deficit grows.

The British economy has now returned to the normal stop-go pattern of the 1960s. Only this time it threatens to be much worse. Today the deficits are much larger, the 'go' periods are much shorter and this particular 'stop' starts with at least two million unemployed. ■

POLL TAX

Warrant sales go ahead in Lothian

LORNA REID

On 3 October Labour controlled Lothian Regional Council refused to rule out the use of warrant sales in the recovery of unpaid Poll Tax. Rejecting a proposal by

Councillor William Hardie of the SNP calling on the council not to carry out warrant sales, the council commissioned a report on the legal discretion available to councils with regard to recovery procedures.

The decision was greeted with loud protests and chants from the Lothian Anti-Poll Tax Federation. The police were called to remove the protesters. Earlier in the week Labour councillors attempted to remove seats from

the public gallery in the council chamber to prevent protesters from attending the meeting. They were forced to abandon their plans following protests from Tory and Democrat councillors. ■

Camden councillors defeat Labour Group sell-out

Labour controlled councils in England and Wales are also pressing ahead with the implementation of the Poll Tax. Labour councillor ADRIAN STATES (Camden, London) spoke to FRFI about his fight against Labour-controlled Camden Council's decision to implement.

'On 25 September councillor Angie Birtill and I attended a disciplinary hearing arranged for the Labour Group plus the executive of the Local Government Committee to discuss taking disciplinary action against us because on 17 July we voted against implementing the Poll Tax at a full council meeting.

'Last year, without any debate within the Labour Parties, the communities or the trade union movement in Camden the decision was made to buy the computers and to establish the personnel to run the Poll Tax. It was only in July this year that the matter came before the full council. Previously there had been a Labour group meeting and by a majority of 20 to eight the decision was to implement.

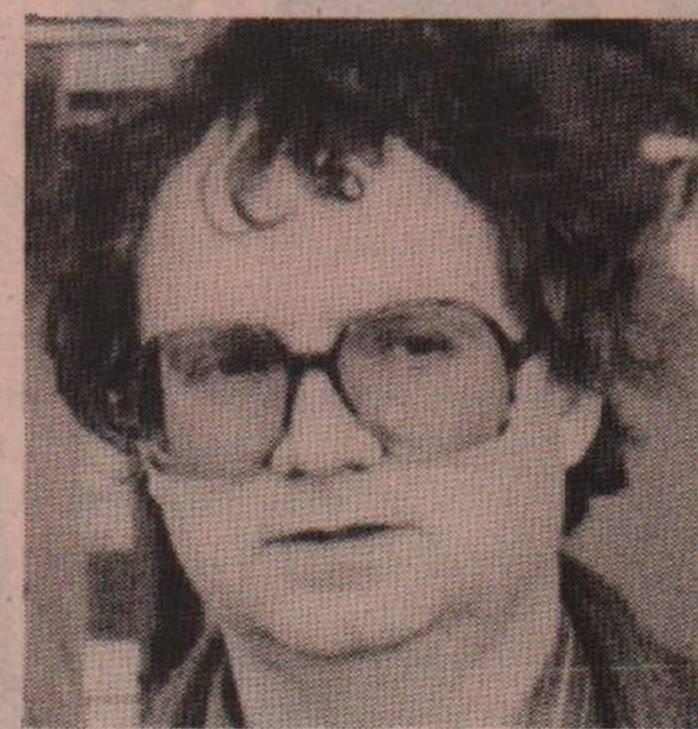
'On 17 July Angie and I decided that we could not vote for implementation. At the meeting I said I could not vote for implementation and gave my reasons why. A recorded vote was taken without any debate from anyone else and the result of that vote

was 35 councillors, 25 Labour and 10 Tory, voted to implement the Poll Tax and spend £2m on implementation and only Angie and I voted against. By forcing a vote, it exposed the Labour group's betrayal of the working class: it exposed their collaboration with the Tories.

'Disciplinary action was to be taken against us because we had broken standing orders, as we did not adhere to the previous Labour group decision to implement the tax.

'Before the date of the hearing we contacted as many people in each of our wards - Angie's being Kilburn ward and mine being Swiss Cottage ward - for support. We gained support from women's groups, black and ethnic minority groups, Irish community groups, trade unions, tenants' associations, organisations and individuals.

'On 25 September a 100-strong lobby took place outside the town hall. Just prior to the hearing that lobby came into the town hall and waited outside the



Councillor Adrian States

doors of the council chamber.

'The vote at the hearing was 22 for no disciplinary action and 20 for action - a margin of just two. But had there not been that support from the community both within Camden and outside it, then it is clear that the vote could have well gone the other way and we could have been disciplined: suspended or expelled.

'Because of the support we received certain councillors, I am sure, decided to change their minds. They realised that the community in Camden don't know the subtleties of standing orders as to whether one obeys them or not. All they are concerned about is the effect of the Poll Tax on them. Councillors

also realised that next May there are local elections so they wouldn't want to create the impression, although they have done so already perhaps, that they are disciplining the only two councillors who voted against the Poll Tax.

'The outcome was a clear victory for the community in Camden. It is a clear sign that they want Camden council to fight the Poll Tax, not to implement it.'

FRFI asked Adrian why he remained inside the Labour Party when it was committed to implementing the Poll Tax against the interests of working class communities and whether he felt there was a contradiction in his active opposition to the Poll Tax and his membership of the Labour Group.

'As the chairperson of Camden Against the Poll Tax I am fighting with the community against the Poll Tax. As a councillor I can help to increase the focus against the Poll Tax. Had I not been a councillor fighting the Poll Tax within the Labour Group there wouldn't have been that focus, those letters of support, that lobby or the articles written in the local press. By supporting the community in Camden but at the same time remaining in the Labour Group, being consistent with my views of support for the people who elected me, I see no contradiction in my position.' ■

The Ferranti sting - £205m losses

DAVID HOWARTH

Scandal and crisis hit Britain's second largest defence electronics group, Ferranti International, forcing it on 11 September to suspend share dealings, postpone its Annual General Meeting and indefinitely abandon plans to pay its shareholders dividends (which were due the following week). The decision was taken after the board of directors were led to 'suspect significant irregularities'. For 'significant irregularities' read fraud on a massive scale, one of the largest in business history: investigations have shown that £205m of stocks and debtors will have to be written off. The scandal is a major embarrassment to City of London bankers and the Government (since the largest part of Ferranti's UK operations are defence contracts for the MoD).

The root of the crisis lies with Ferranti's US subsidiary, International Signal and Controls (ISC) Technologies (a harmless name for a secretive arms producer which specialises in arms sales to the parts of the world, mainly the Third World, which the US government doesn't want to be seen to be directly involved in) and ISC's former

chairman James Guerin.

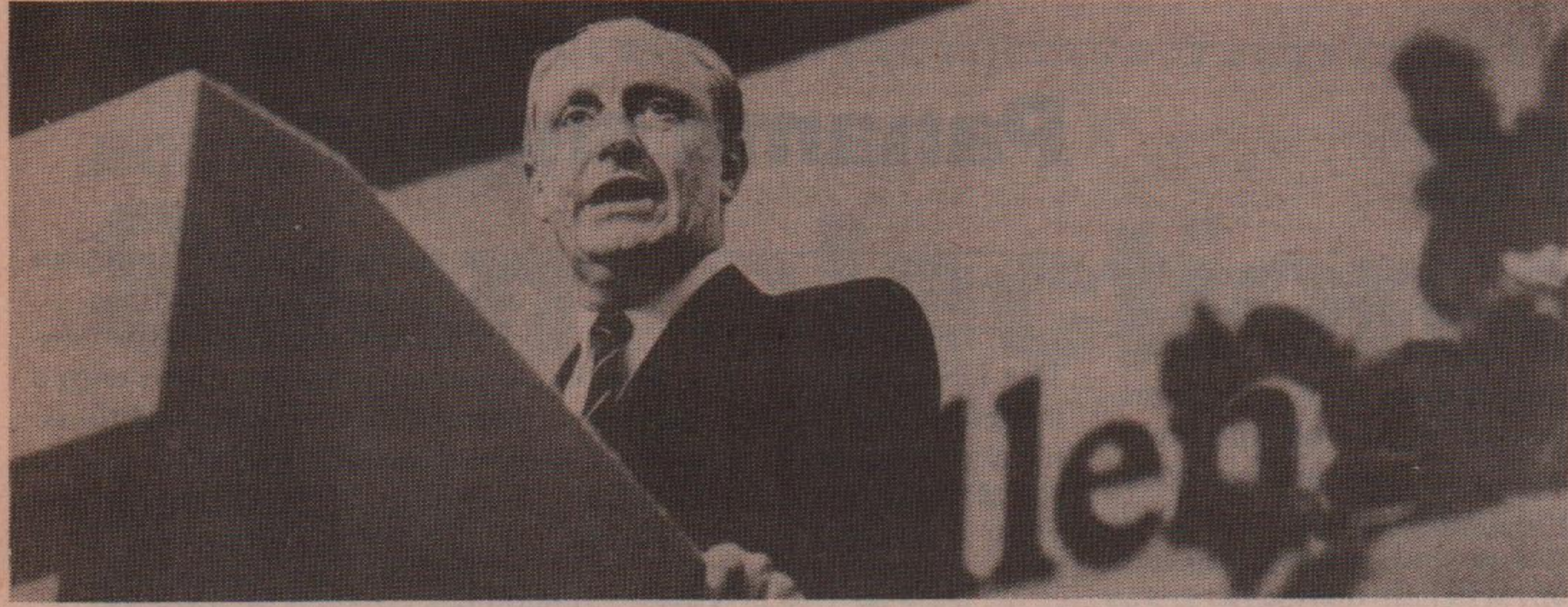
Ferranti acquired ISC Technologies two years ago for £420 million, despite warnings that everything wasn't all right with ISC. James Guerin managed to persuade the Ferranti directors to go ahead with the acquisition after accountants had given the ISC books the all-clear, even though they could not confirm contracts since the customers details were secret. Two years later Guerin had disappeared from the scene having sold his 32 million Ferranti shares for £26 million, a trail of scandals involving him having been unearthed. Ferranti's crises are due to a non-existent contract with Pakistan for £150 million, and Guerin paying tens of millions of pounds into bogus subcontractors. James Guerin, ISC Technologies and related companies in the US have a long list of scandals behind them, with more now being discovered, including Pentagon bribery and corruption, up to four separate FBI investigations (one of which concerns allegations that ISC has been breaking the US embargo on arms sales to South Africa), Italian secret service investigations and many grand jury hearings against them.

Why then did the Ferranti board decide to buy ISC? Given that there were warnings against it from 'reputable' financial

sources, why didn't Ferranti investigate ISC's affairs more? It's hardly plausible that the directors were naive, or fell for the charms of James Guerin. It's more likely that they wanted to get a share of the loot from the shady but lucrative market of international arms trade, through a subsidiary far away in the USA. At the time of the Ferranti acquisition, ISC was registered with the London Stock Exchange to avoid having to comply with much tougher US Securities and Exchange Commission disclosure regulations. ISC's range of products included cluster-bombs, electronic bomb-fuses, missiles, missile propulsion equipment and military communications sold to places like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Taiwan, South Korea, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates and Iraq, to ensure highly profitable 'local Third World' wars could be equipped and to enable governments to retain military power to keep their own populations at bay. ISC made a fortune supplying Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war even though the US operated an 'official arms embargo' to both sides. Guerin is understood to be politically sympathetic to the apartheid regime and is well connected with individuals employed by Armscor, the sophisticated state owned South

African arms manufacturer. ISC companies had 'a regular flow of trade with a variety of South African companies' according to a former insider, and on at least two occasions US customs sent back shipments destined for South Africa on the grounds that the equipment did not match the export licences.

The scandal couldn't have come at a worse time for Ferranti, which is seeking to secure a £2 billion European Fighter Aircraft radar contract with the British government's backing. In the three weeks Ferranti shares were suspended, frantic behind-the-scenes negotiations were held to secure rescue deals from banking institutions to head off a take-over, especially from foreign competitors. This seems to have worked for the time being, with Ferranti shares re-opening at 47.5p (which although 35 per cent down from the price when they were suspended, is better than City predictions of 'anything between 0p and 50p'), but with Ferranti required to raise £100m by disposals, as well as finding a £150m injection of funds, the future is unsure for Ferranti and its 17,000 British workforce after the first day of trading saw 115 million shares (15 per cent of the total) change hands. It won't be easy to find a cure for this sting. ■



The Labour Party Fit to serve capitalism

BOB SHEPHERD

'It is an encouragement and an inspiration to see this party coming together on a joint position and objectives, and not only telling itself, but exuding that we are fit to serve our country'. So said Neil Kinnock in his speech to the Labour Party conference, and the week in Brighton showed that Labour is gearing up to be fit to serve the interests of British imperialism if called upon.

On Monday the Labour Party dropped its paper commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. When the conference then voted in Bruce Kent's motion to reduce military spending to the West European average Kinnock displayed his democratic credentials by saying he would ignore the decision.

On Tuesday it was Kinnock's opportunity to display to the ruling-class his servility in his speech to conference. As Roy Hattersley put it: 'It was the speech of a prime minister in waiting'. The message of the speech was clear, don't worry, Labour won't rock the boat. In the words of Kinnock, 'Everyone should understand that if we set ourselves the task of doing everything that is desirable, we will do nothing that is significant.' After giving Kinnock a standing ovation the conference then passed resolutions calling for a comprehensive benefits system and the linking of pensions with average earnings, desirable maybe but not I think on Kinnock's significant list.

Tuesday was also the day of the black sections debate, where once again the racist paternalism of the Labour Party was clear to see. Kinnock is totally opposed to black members of his party organising themselves, and in opposition to the demand to set up black sections put up a resolution to set up stooge organisations which white members could join but not lead. As one black delegate put it, this was 'the choc-ice compromise'. This racism was too much even for a Labour Party conference and the resolution was defeated. Also defeated was a resolution calling for the setting up of effective black sections. Once again black people in the Labour Party are being denied the right to organise, and as the Labour Party prepares itself to be 'fit to serve the country' there can be no doubt that the interests of black people will not be served by Kinnock or the Labour Party.

On the Wednesday the conference refused to repeal all of the Tories' anti-trade union laws. A resolution which called for unions to be allowed to organise 'without external influence' was defeated, and in its place the conference supported the new policy review documents, 'People at Work', and a motion calling for the replacement of the Tory laws 'by a fair and positive framework' of new laws.

The TUC at its conference at the beginning of September had called for the repealing of the anti-union laws, and the return of union immunities in industrial action. Yet it was the trade union block vote itself which voted down the resolution call-

ing for their repeal and supported the policy review.

As Bill Jordan leader of the AEU put it, 'co-operation, problem-solving, sitting down together' is the way forward for workers and employers, and the policy review will ensure that this approach prevails. Attacking Arthur Scargill he said 'this party is a party of law-makers, not law-breakers.' The success of the TUC in its efforts alongside Kinnock to make Labour, 'fit to serve the country' was shown when arch-scab Eric Hammond speaking in support of the policy review said, 'this has been the best week of my life'.

The Labour Party conference began by dropping unilateralism and went on to oppose black sections, to support anti-trade union laws, to oppose non-payment of the poll tax in its quest to be 'fit to serve the country'. This rejection of any pretence to be socialist was reinforced at the beginning of the conference with the dropping of Ken Livingstone from the Party Executive. Livingstone with his opposition to Kinnock on the question of Ireland and nuclear disarmament was an embarrassment to Labour's new image, he had to go. With him went any hope the remnants of the left in the Labour Party had of having any influence on Labour Party policy.

The Labour Party is 'fit to serve the country', it isn't a fit party for socialists to be members of. The time is now to meet the challenge and break with Labour! ■

Broadwater Farm invaded

SUSAN DAVIDSON

The policies of former Police Commissioner Kenneth Newman continue to be carried out by the present boss Peter Imbert. Just three days before the so-called 'drugs-raid' in Tottenham, Imbert stated that 'A professional police-force cannot tolerate racism or sexism'. A brutal and provocative Northern Ireland style occupation of the estate and surrounding streets was then mounted in the full glare of 'photo-opportunity' publicity.

This public humiliation and assault on a black and working class area in the name of fighting drugs is a blatant continuation of Newman's policy of targeting and criminalising sections of the community in order to warn and control the rest.

The presence of community observers, television cameras, the press, legal advisors etc. to watch this pantomime of 'law and order' enforcement carried out by 700 police in riot-gear and armed with everything from guns to axes shows that Imbert the soft-spoken is as vindictive as Newman was vicious in carrying out ruling class interests.

The raid was planned as a police reply to the following: first it is the anniversary of the murder of Cynthia Jarrett by Tottenham police. In the demonstration that followed PC Blakelock was killed as police attacked the protestors; second, just five days before the Police Complaints Authority announced that it is to press charges against the officer who headed the investigation into Blakelock's death, Detective Chief Superintendent Melvin.

No drugs or dealers of any sig-

nificance were caught or found. Indeed, so farcical were the results that it has been put around that the real villains received a tip-off from some source or other.

The tragedy remains real enough, however, for those framed by Melvin's investigation, especially Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghup, serving life sentences and for all who suffer at the hands of the racist, sexist Met police.

STOP PRESS

Winston Silcott has been moved to Wandsworth Prison on a month 'lay-down', or solitary. We expect that he will then be returned to Albany Prison in the Isle of Wight. Please do continue to send letters of support to Winston and enquiries to the Governor, registered delivery. Winston's number is B74053.

Tory education

Working class Asian children in Hackney and Tower Hamlets unable to attend school as there are no teachers to teach them. Crumbling and dangerous school buildings in every British city.

Classrooms starved of books, equipment and resources. A teacher working in an inner city mid-

dle school in Bradford looks at the education in Tory Britain.

Ten years of Thatcherism have already severely worsened and undermined the education of working class children. Now as the nineties approach, Tory plans for education, as outlined in the 1988 Education Reform Bill, are coming to fruition. Together, the various measures will have a cumulatively devastating effect on the future of education.

The kernel of the Tories plan is to abolish forever free, universal educational provision and access (itself a myth under capitalism), and replace it with a two-tier, polarised school system, in which children will quite literally be 'classed'. The ruthless values of the capitalist market will be applied to education - schools will be expected to operate as separate competitive units, offering their services to the consumer (parents), who will have a wide 'choice' of products. In practice, this 'choice' will only be available to a few - the affluent and comfortable middle classes. Working class communities will be left with a third-rate (or worse) school system for their children.

Central to this masterplan is the introduction of a national curriculum for all pupils aged 11-16 in England and Wales. Sadly, a great many teachers and educationalists have immersed themselves in the frightening quantity of national curriculum documents sent to schools, and are discussing the advantages and deficiencies of them. The reality is being missed behind what the writer Michael Rosen has called this 'smokescreen of discrimination'.

A minority of schools, in well-off areas, will indeed deliver the National Curriculum and 'academic success'. Underfunding will ensure that the majority of schools will deliver the National Curriculum badly or quite simply, not at all. Schools will be expected to seek and raise additional funds to provide the very basics of educational provision - an impossibility for schools in poor areas.

Actually the National Curriculum will not be followed by all children. Private schools will

not be required to teach to it, nor will the new City Technology Colleges, funded by industry for 'selected children', who will only have to have 'regard to it'. Formal testing at 7, 11, 14 and 16 is an integral part of the National Curriculum. Results, to be published in 1992, will serve as 'performance indicators' in deciding which schools are deserving of additional funding. Pupils and schools will be ranked by their test results. Inevitably, for many children the tests will demonstrate to them their 'failure'.

The schools curriculum now being proposed, although touted as broad and comprehensive, is in fact extremely narrow, conformist and tightly controlled. Innovation must by law be approved by the Secretary of State.

It does not address the needs of Britain's black communities. There is no mention of issues of racism and gender inequality. Languages spoken by millions in our communities, such as Urdu, Turkish, Arabic, Bengali and Punjabi are not even regarded as 'modern foreign languages'. They and their speakers are relegated to second-class status in the school curriculum.

The interim report of the History Working Group is most revealing. Our children can be expected, nay forced, to study castles and cathedrals 1066-1500; yet there will be no place to learn about the two imperialist world wars, the Amritsar massacre, the opium wars in China, Irish history and significantly the Nazi Holocaust.

Since 1945 there have been over 150 wars, Kurdish people are being gassed, children are tortured in prisons, trade unionists are shot dead for demonstrating on May Day and black people are attacked in Britain every day. This is no time to forget about Fascism.

Under the guise of 'choice', local authorities are to be banned from restricting admission to schools. 'Popular' and 'successful' schools will as a result attract further resources from the government and hand-outs from industry. Other schools will be allowed to deteriorate further.

It is inevitable that the exercise of parental choice on racist grounds will also grow, as seen recently in Dewsbury and at Lidget Green in Bradford.

Yet even these measures are not sufficient to ensure the success of the Tories' plans. Financial control of school budgets will be devolved to schools and their governing bodies. These budgets of course will be tightly squeezed as the poll tax bites.

'Successful' schools in well-off areas will be able to attract better teaching staff by offering higher salaries and 'merit' pay. Inner city and estate schools will be starved of funds and will not be able to afford experienced teachers (because of their higher salary levels) a decent library or computers, let alone even think about repairing that unsafe roof and damp walls.

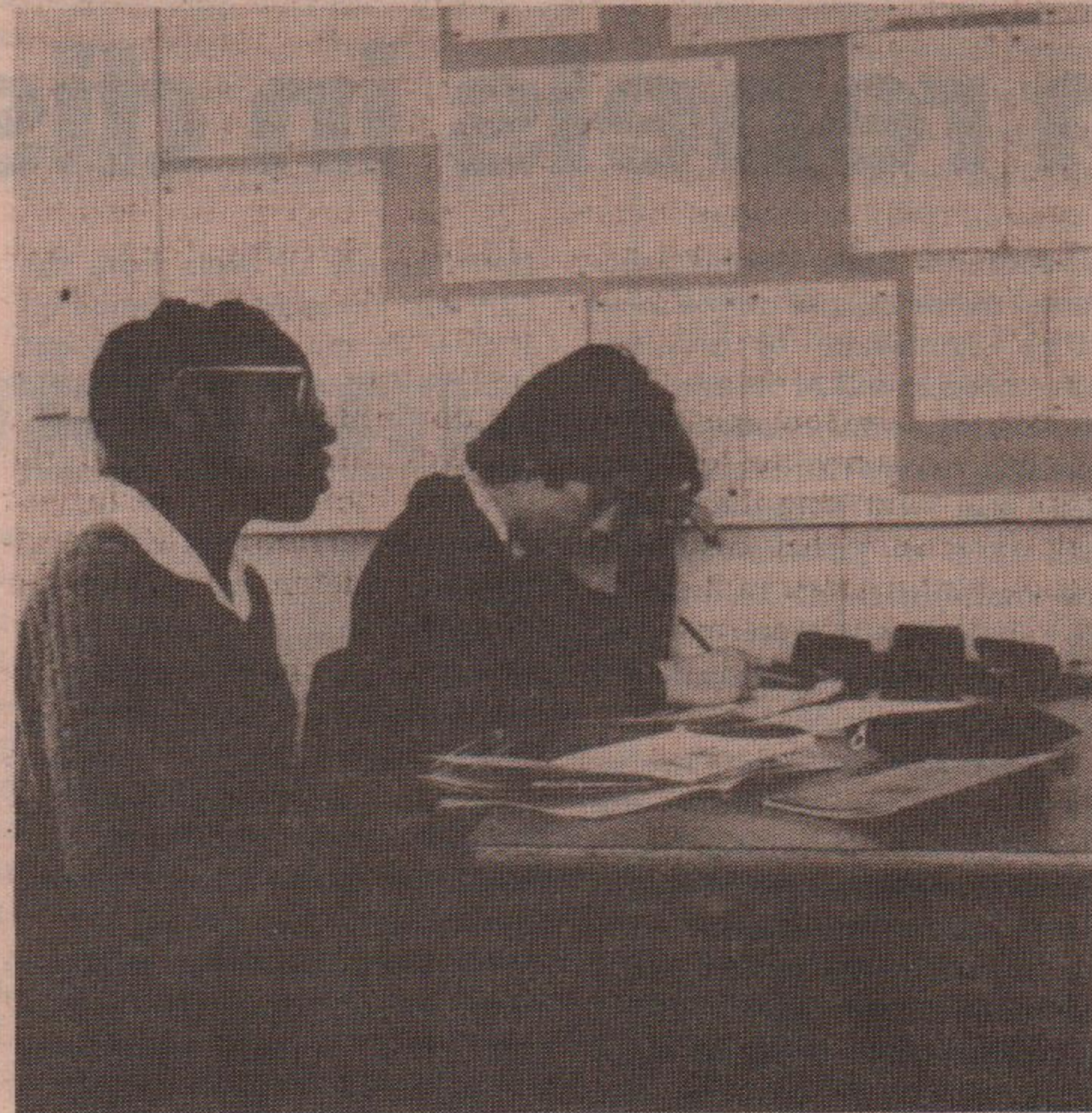
Under this system of local financial management, the Forest School in Nottingham, an 11-16 comprehensive in a working class black area, will only have enough to pay the teachers salaries. This is just one example!

Faced with this threat to education, the teaching unions and predictably the Labour Party has offered no kind of fightback whatsoever, and put any faith in them doing so is quite dangerous.

The NUT, ostensibly on the 'left' of the unions, has been more concerned with renovating their London offices, redesigning the union logo to present a friendly image and providing financial services to the membership. Industrial action to defend pay levels or indeed education itself is OUT - this might damage the Labour Party's electoral chances. The Labour Party's spokesman on education, Jack Straw, has proclaimed that a Labour Government will not reverse the National Curriculum, will not abolish private schools, will support formal assessment testing and will promote specialist city schools (City Technology Colleges and Magnet schools in practice if not in name). The Labour-controlled Birmingham Council has already torn-up a 'no-redundancy' agreement.

A recent survey has estimated that 30,000 teaching jobs will be lost when schools control their own budgets. We can expect Labour councils to be sacking teachers, just as they are implementing the poll tax in Scotland.

In 1867 Marx wrote, 'The more enlightened part of the working class understands that the future of its class, and, therefore, of mankind altogether, depends on the formation of the rising working generation.' This is a lesson that sections of the British working class, steeped in opportunism, has yet to learn. Education, along with health care, safe drinking water and democratic rights are not 'services' that the capitalist state provides for the working class, but rights that must be fought for or they will simply cease to exist. ■



GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Privileged deserters

EDDIE ABRAHAMS

In the past weeks the bourgeois press has been filled with obnoxious lies and lurid propaganda directed against the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) in particular and communism in general. The 60,000 people (expected to rise to 100,000 by the end of the year) who have deserted the GDR have been depicted as courageous freedom lovers making a run for the clean and invigorating air of West German democracy. They are presented as refugees fleeing a vicious, stifling regime which is stubbornly resisting the reforms necessary to humanise the country. This is a total pack of lies.

The majority of those leaving are from the professions - doctors, lawyers, architects - or are skilled workers. These strata even under the socialist GDR enjoyed a privileged life. They do not represent the 16.7 million citizens of socialist Germany who even according to the bourgeois and staunchly anti-communist *Financial Times* 'do not want to risk



This wasn't in the brochures: East Germans living it up in the West

losing what they have'.

What they have constitutes a fine testimony to the achievements of socialism which the bourgeoisie want to destroy with their 'reforms'. In the GDR, according to the *FT*, the people enjoy 'the highest living standards in eastern Europe and shops are 'better stocked than anywhere else in eastern Europe.' 'Most East Germans... clinging tenaciously to massively subsidised transport and housing and 'ludicrously cheap basic foods and services' including 'the good provision for working women with children (better in

some respects than West Germany...'). Lest people think that the deserters are fleeing intense political persecution, let us refer again to the *FT*: 'cafés are crowded with well-dressed citizens who criticise loudly and without a trace of fear the leadership's rose-coloured reports of success on all fronts.' It is hardly surprising that the majority of the GDR's citizens do not wish to join the 'freedom run' to capitalist Germany.

The fact is that the deserters who enjoyed privileges in socialist Germany, represent a breed of selfish and greedy petit-

bourgeois who have succumbed to bribery. They have been enticed to West Germany with promises of even more privileges. They are being welcomed with open arms only because West Germany has a shortage of skilled labour and because these deserters will help depress wages as a whole. Our 'freedom lovers' do not care that the socialist state which educated and trained them at state expense still needs them. All they care about is more privilege for themselves.

In Germany some of the deserters will make it and acquire even more privileges. They will be blind to the fact that in 'democratic' Germany 2 million people are unemployed, blind to the fact that foreign, particularly Turkish, workers are treated worse than animals, live in abysmal poverty and have no political rights. They will not care that 'democratic' Germany has a repressive and ruthless bourgeois state machine to suppress workers who may organise to defend their own interests. They will not care that West German capital thrives by sucking profits from oppressed nations. ■

TREVOR RAYNE

The US government is determined to destroy the Panamanian government, remove General Noriega, and reverse the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties that will give Panama full control of the Canal and remove 14 US military bases and intelligence facilities in 1999. Quite apart from Panama's strategic location, Panama is now thrust into a critical struggle between imperialism and the Third World.

Should the US succeed in its objectives it will have reasserted its right to intervene throughout Latin America, when the Nicaraguan revolution and Latin American nationalism have seriously challenged that right. Further, it will have shown that it can isolate any Latin American opposition by dividing the continent's own ranks. The continent owes \$430 billion, had an economic growth rate of 0.6 per cent last year and an average of 460 per

cent inflation. It is becoming an area of revolutionary battles.

US strategy is to wear the Panamanian economy down with a barrage of economic sanctions. The economy has shrunk by a fifth since 1987 and unemployment is now 30 per cent. This has split the government's base, the Panama Defence Forces.

The US government views the 3 October failed coup attempt, the second in two years, with mixed feelings. On the one hand Bush was seen as dithering, not sending the 12,000 US troops stationed in Panama into action in support of the coup attempt, but on the other a significant set of middle-ranking PDF officers had broken rank. So far, the Pentagon and CIA reckon that Noriega still retains sufficient military and popular support to make an open armed intervention by US troops dangerous. A protracted guerrilla war may develop, in which case Latin America could well close ranks against the Yanqui imperialists. ■

Bush's phoney war

TREVOR RAYNE

'The total package is more suitable for conventional warfare than the kind of struggle we are waging here against narcotics traffickers': Chief of the Colombian National Police. The National Police carry out 90 per cent of anti-drug operations, but 85 per cent of the US government's \$65 million emergency aid has gone to the Army.

You don't have to probe very deeply to discover that the 'War on Drugs' is not what Bush, Thatcher and Co would have us believe. The \$65 million could be earned in seventy seven days at US cocaine prices, nine days at British prices by a single one of the hundreds of Medellin cartel laboratories across South America. It is an extension of the CIA's Condor Plan, initiated under Reagan, to cloak anti-communist operations in the guise of combatting drugs. Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama and

the guerrilla struggles in Peru and Colombia have been targeted. Seven teams of US military advisers are currently operating in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

On the US domestic front 70 per cent of the \$7 billion drug war fund is allocated for law enforcement: prison construction funding is to be doubled. Half the current one million US prison population are incarcerated for drug related crimes. The period of Reagan's 'War on Drugs' saw the number of US prisoners almost double, but still cocaine surpluses reduced the retail price to a fifth of its 1982 level. Phone tapping, mail opening, paramilitary police raids are all increasing amidst the war hysteria, but their targets are in the ghettos not in the boardrooms of the \$150 billion a year businesses.

'US government policy on drugs adds up to a prison state for black America and a Vietnam war in the Andes' remarked one US observer. *FRFI* will take a closer look at the 'Drug War' in its next issue. ■

No peace in Cambodia

JONATHAN COHEN

Ten years ago, the Vietnamese army intervened to support an uprising in Cambodia (Kampuchea), and quickly swept across the country, toppling the Khmer Rouge government and so ending five years of genocide. On 26 September this year, Vietnam fulfilled its promise and withdrew the last of its troops from Cambodian soil. Cambodia must now hold its own against well-armed terrorists based in Thailand. What does the future hold for the long-suffering Cambodian people?

'The rebirth of Cambodia has been a miracle', said Vietnamese General Nguyen Van Thai. A miracle indeed. During the Vietnam war, the Cambodian countryside was devastated by US blanket bombing. The 'communist' Khmer Rouge,

who overthrew the US puppet Lon Nol in 1975, soon embarked on an ultra-left regime of repression against the people. The towns were emptied and all townspeople forced into agricultural labour on starvation rations. Intellectuals, doctors, teachers and anyone who made the slightest complaint - over a million people of all ages - were killed. When, with Vietnam's help, Pol Pot's brutal Khmer Rouge were driven out, and a new, genuinely socialist government established, the imperialists sought to inflict further suffering on the Cambodian people. As thousands died from post-war famine, the imperialists banned official aid to Cambodia, leaving it to charities like Oxfam to provide what 'drops in the ocean' they could muster. The bulk of development aid came from the Soviet Union and its allies. The imperialists instead lavished food and military

aid on the Khmer Rouge and on anti-communist forces based in Thailand, so helping them to consolidate their grip on the refugee camps and turn them into recruiting grounds for their 'contra' forces. The United Nations refused to recognise the new Government, and instead gave the UN seat to a bandit alliance of the Khmer Rouge and two anti-communist groups. China not only connived in the diplomatic isolation of Cambodia, but also provided generous military aid to the Khmer Rouge and launched a brutal invasion of northern Vietnam. Its continued support for the Khmer Rouge must be condemned.

Nevertheless, the Cambodian Government has succeeded in rebuilding the economy and now has an army and militia ready to defend the country on their own. The 'contras' have held no territory inside Cambodia - they depend entirely on

Thailand's permission for them to use refugee camps as military bases, and have not gone beyond border shelling and dispersed guerilla operations. Thousands of soldiers and civilians have been maimed by the 'contras' land-mines. Now that the Vietnamese army has left, we can feel fairly confident that the army and militia will hold their ground and the Khmer Rouge will not return to power. Vietnam has said it might intervene again if necessary. However, the Chinese and imperialist-armed contras will now be able to step up their terrorist attacks, and a civil war of greater or lesser intensity will continue for the foreseeable future. Thailand is the 'contras' safe haven, so until great changes occur in Thailand itself, Cambodia's open wounds will continue to bleed. ■

'Cambodia: Year Ten', a TV documentary by progressive journalist John Pilger, will be broadcast on 31 October.

Afghan rebels in disarray

VIRMAN MAN

President Najibullah's government, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), has demonstrated that it is capable of both military and political survival. The defeat of the siege of Jalalabad was a triumph over counter-revolution. Now the Mojahedin rebels, directly backed by Britain, America and Pakistan in contravention of the UN Geneva agreement of April 1988, are left demoralised and in complete disarray.

With winter approaching, the Mojahedin forces are resorting

to sporadic assaults and long-range rocket attacks on the main cities. Hundreds of civilians have been killed or injured and thousands made homeless in the shelling. Two-thirds of Jalalabad has been reduced to rubble. 60% of Kabul's children are malnourished. The nature of imperialist-backed counter-revolution has been revealed - a war against the people.

As the PDPA consolidates its position, so disagreements and fights have broken out between the various Mojahedin factions. Some of the Mojahedin commanders refuse to move forward and attack the towns and cities, and are opposed to the killing of civilians. Others, realising that

their supply of arms from the CIA and Pakistan is endangered if they do not attack, carry out their forays with no clear battle plans, advancing and retreating over the same territory day after day.

The disputes between the Mojahedin groups are fuelled by jealousies amongst field commanders for preferential treatment from the so-called interim government based in Pakistan and have led to armed confrontations. In the north, a Hizb-e-Islami group ambushed a Jamiat-e-Islami troop, killing 31.

Battles between the two factions have claimed more than 300 lives. Further south two groups have been fighting for

control of a crossing on the Helmand River. Lorries bringing ammunition from Pakistan to the Helmand region - an opium poppy growing district - return bearing opium. Control over this crossing brings rich pickings.

So badly has the fighting progressed for the reactionary forces that Benazir Bhutto sacked the head of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence, who was responsible for ordering the attack on Jalalabad. Meanwhile, the US envoy - Peter Tomsen, a Vietnam veteran - is trying to unite the Mojahedin factions. However, as the Afghan Ambassador to Cuba has stated, 'The United States can order Pakistan about but not Afghanistan.' ■

I ♥ US - Yeltsin

EDDIE ABRAHAMS

On his recent trip to the USA, Boris Yeltsin, 'the Soviet Union's leading radical' proudly flaunted his anti-communism. Asked about communism he replied 'Let's not talk about it. Communism was just an idea, just pie in the sky. We should keep our eyes on it, but not try and implement it here on earth.'

Communism he added 'might be taking things too far'. Instead of communism, Yeltsin wants US style capitalism which has, he believes, '200 years of democratic experience' and is 'a very healthy society'. ■

A 'democratic' and 'healthy' society indeed... genocide against the American Indians, slavery, expansionist wars against Cuba and Mexico, racism, the KKK, political assassinations, the CIA and FBI, the Vietnam war, support for the fascist contras in Afghanistan and Nicaragua, unemployment, poverty, crime, drugs...

Yeltsin is an agent of capitalism and imperialism. Yet opportunistically echoing the Soviet people's opposition to exorbitant party privileges he has succeeded in building himself a wide popular base. Let us hope that Soviet communists will prove capable of exposing his man before he does real damage. ■

SOUTH AFRICA

Sham election defied

CAT WIENER

On 6 September South Africa's white 13 per cent went to the polls to elect their chosen representatives of white minority rule. The imperialists were quick to claim the Nationalist Party's narrow majority as a victory for de Klerk's programme of 'reform', a step on the road to South Africa's international rehabilitation. But behind the charade, the truth for South Africa's black and voteless majority was writ large on the streets of the Western Cape, where a savage police crackdown left 29 dead and hundreds injured on election night.

In the weeks preceding the racist elections, we witnessed a defiance and mobilisation amongst the black masses that had not been seen since the uprisings which swept the townships in 1984-5. From the beginning, the most intense militancy was in the Western Cape, particularly Cape Flats, where black youth fought the police with stones, petrol bombs and barricades, and the whole community was mobilised behind them. The spark spread: by the week before the elections, barricades of burning tyres had gone up in

Eldorado Park and Kliptown, and police were met with fierce resistance when they moved in against protests all around the country, including in Pretoria itself. Effigies of F.W. de Klerk and 'Coloured' parliamentary stooge Hendrikse were burned in Lenasia. Throughout South Africa, black schoolchildren boycotted classes and staged protest marches, and there were protests in black and 'coloured' universities. Over the election itself, this action was boosted further by the mass stayaway staged by 3 million black workers, part of a campaign jointly called by COSATU, NACTU and independent trade unions. In the PVW triangle, the stayaway was almost 100 per cent, and in the Eastern Cape and Durban, 80 per cent. The 'tricameral' system was exposed as a farce, as a successful boycott campaign ensured that a mere handful - 12 per cent of those eligible - turned out to vote for 'Coloured' and Indian stooge parliaments. In Lenasia, less than six voters were registered, and, in Arena Park, not a single vote had been cast in the first 40 minutes.

Faced with the uprisings in 1985, Botha imposed a draconian State of Emergency; on 6 September, 'reformer' de Klerk's response to the crisis

was identical: brutal repression. The police waded into Cape Flats with dogs, sjamboks, tear gas and live ammunition. Children were shot in the face, a 16-year-old pregnant woman was killed, a 69-year-old woman was left headless, her corpse riddled with bullets.

The unrest threatened to explode into widespread uprising. De Klerk already knew that even the most barbaric repression could not keep the lid on for ever, and even State of Emergency censorship could not prevent news of the massacre from getting out - particularly when Lieutenant Gregory Rockman, a 'coloured' policeman, blew the whistle. He accused riot police of 'acting like wild dogs' and said, claiming that hundreds of police officers felt as he did, 'Our people have been oppressed long enough... I'm not prepared to take the oppressor's role'. De Klerk could not afford to lose the loyalty of the black police force, who are ultimately the only force that stand between the white minority and the black masses. Nor could he afford to let the resistance spread. At the same time, they are coming under massive pressure from their imperialist backers to stabilise the situation in South Africa, for quite different reasons.

Thatcher and her cronies are concerned, not about the repression meted out to the black majority, but about the obstacle this presents to imperialism's interests in the region.

De Klerk was left with little choice. Thousands were mobilising to march in protest against the killings. Whatever he did, the marches would go ahead. To attempt to prevent them would have meant a repeat of the election night slaughter on a mass scale; the consequences of which the apartheid regime could not afford. And so he legitimised the march. In the context of the State of Emergency, for tens of thousands of black people to march through the streets of Cape Town while the police stood aside was a tremendous victory. The Cape Town example was quickly followed in Johannesburg and other major cities. The victory at Cape Town is a double-edged sword. It has taken the movement into the white cities demanding equality. At its head are leading clerics Tutu and Boesak who are committed to ending apartheid. These are the forces which have ample international backing and the tacit support of imperialism to publish their case. After the Cape Town demonstration, Archbishop Tutu described it as 'a victory for peaceful protest'. But it was less a victory for peaceful protest than a concession wrung out of the regime by the uprising in the Cape.

The imperialists are all racing to achieve a solution in South Africa which opens up the continent to their interests. They want to see the cruder manifestations of apartheid reformed away, so that they can welcome back the prodigal son. The US is already talking about lifting sanctions against South Africa. What the South African racists and their imperialist backers will not allow is liberation for the black masses of South Africa. In the coming period the question will be whether the movement in South Africa can be persuaded, or forced, to accept less than this. Those who want liberation are going to have to fight for it. Those who argue that liberation can be achieved through peaceful means are peddling a dangerous myth; ultimately, it is those who cling to this myth who will hold the movement back - or find themselves left far behind. ■

British Terror

PAM ROBINSON

Recent weeks have seen the RUC campaign against the youth stepped up. Joint Army/RUC house raids continue, as do sectarian attacks by Loyalists.

On 2 September in Crumlin Road two loyalists rode up on a motor bike and shot Paddy McKenna dead as he stood outside a local shop. The killing was the sixteenth this year by loyalist death squads. The difference this time was that undercover British soldiers pursued the killers and shot one of them dead. It is claimed that the soldiers just happened to be in the area. Few people believe this and instead see it as a cynical attempt to take the pressure off British forces facing exposure of their links with loyalist groups.

On Sunday 10 September the RUC held three Tyrone teenagers for three hours using blackmail and threats in an attempt to recruit one of the three to inform on his own family.

Hugh Toner of Belfast exposed the methods the RUC used against him to try and force him to become an informer: he was arrested in 1988 by the RUC for 'joyriding'. The RUC offered to drop the charges if he supplied information on named Republicans. They also threatened to 'tell the IRA' if he did not cooperate. They also tried to bribe him with money.

Raymond Hamill, a shopkeeper in Lurgan exposed RUC tactics used against him. On 4 August 1988 Hamill reported a break in at his shop to the RUC. The RUC said they could make good the thousands of pounds

worth of losses in return for information. When he refused he was continually harassed with the RUC and Army mounting guard on his shop. He also received threatening phone calls.

Tuesday 12 September. The Army moved on to farm lanes. Tyrone with heavy digging equipment and bulldozers digging up concrete roads and fields. They went on to dig spy posts six feet deep and thirty to forty feet long ditches behind the spy post ditches. Concrete posts were strewn about the area. On Saturday 16 September when the residents came out to organise to repair the damage caused, the Army watched from overhead helicopters whilst foot patrol fired plastic bullets at the residents.

On Wednesday 27 September Gerard Kelly, a local mural artist, left Belfast to go to the US to work on a Pathfinder mural. On his arrival he was arrested by the FBI and accused of falsifying his travel documents, a crime which carries a prison sentence of up to five years. Protests about his arrest should be sent to: Andrew J Moloney, US Attorney Eastern District, 22 Cadman Plaza East, Brookland New York 11201.

A young Dutchman staying with a family in Springhill was arrested by the RUC and accused of rioting. When the mother of the family went to the RUC barracks to collect the family visit she was told that he was not to be seen on the streets for 48 hours or both of them would be arrested. The RUC said the family were responsible for their visitor's behaviour whilst he was staying with them. ■



Whose election? On 6 September over a thousand anti-apartheid demonstrators held up traffic in Trafalgar Square for three hours in a demonstration called by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group to protest against the white-only elections in South Africa. A huge banner demanding black majority rule was unfurled in the middle of the road. Rhythm and Blues band Ruff, Ruff and Ready and Samba band Batucada Mandela provided the music, and demonstrators danced in the street with placards calling for freedom in South Africa.

CITY AA AGM

A spear against imperialism

City AA's AGM on 23/24 September opened with a speech by convenor Carol Brickley, leading member of the RCG, which set City AA's perspective for the coming year in the context of an escalating struggle in South Africa. She made it clear that in the coming period the imperialists will be going all out to persuade the world that apartheid is at an end and South Africa fit to be readmitted into the international capitalist brotherhood. City Group's task will have to be to oppose that imperialist offensive, to re-educate people about

what the real issues are - the right of a nation of black people to determine their own future - and to focus on stepping up the fight for sanctions and the boycott. In keeping with this, she put a motion calling for City Group to embark on an education programme over the coming year, to enable it to understand what are likely to be crucial developments in the struggle.

The major debate at the AGM was on the question of Namibian ex-detainees. The WRP put a motion calling for a 'Labour movement enquiry' into the activities of SWAPO. This was strongly opposed, and a counter-motion from the RCG, reiterating support for all those fighting for liberation in Namibia, rejecting foreign intervention and calling for the full facts to be laid before the Namibian people so that they can determine their own future, was overwhelmingly carried.

A high moment was when City Group member Ross Galbraith, one of two workers sacked by Granby Plastics for refusing to handle a South African order, addressed the AGM. City

Group gave him a standing ovation and unanimously passed a motion in support of the courageous stand he and fellow-worker Gary Sheriff have taken in solidarity with the struggle in South Africa.

A programme of action was agreed for the coming year, focusing on a mass demonstration on 24 March, and a new committee elected to help make City Group, in Carol Brickley's words, 'better organised, better focused... a big spear in the side of imperialism'. ■

Séamus Twomey

An appreciation by Sean Mac Stiofáin

The late Séamus Twomey gave a lifetime of service to the struggle for a 32 County Irish Republic. He joined Fianna Eireann in 1936 and the Army in 1937. He was interned for more than six years from 1939 to late 1945.

He came to prominence in 1969 before the pogroms of August that year where he was one of the first to appreciate the need to organise the defence of nationalist areas in Belfast. He was foremost in the vital work of reorganising the Republican movement in Belfast and, following the split in 1969, he was appointed Adj of the Belfast Staff. In September 1971 he was appointed O/C of the Belfast Brigade - the spearhead of the IRA. In the spring of 1972 he was co-opted onto the Army Council: the collective leadership of the movement. In August 1972 he was elected chairman of the Army Council. In March 1973 he was appointed Chief of Staff, a position he held until August of that year when he was arrested and imprisoned in Mountjoy.

He and two others, JB O'Hagan and Kevin Malloy, escaped from jail in an audacious break out and remained an active member of HQ Staff: first as A/G and again as C/S from December 1974 until he was again arrested in Dublin in 1977. He

was sentenced to eight years in the Special Court in Dublin and served well over five years in Portlaoise prison until his release in 1982. He had a long and painful illness which he fought in his characteristic way; rallying on several occasions but in the end even he had to obey the order to leave this life.

He was buried with full Republican honours in Milltown cemetery on Friday 15 September 1989. The media in the Twenty Six Counties played down the size of the funeral.

I knew Séamus very well in the 1970-1973 period. He was a good friend and a loyal comrade. He was a very good person to talk things over with in an informal way. He could get heated and did, but never at Army Council meetings; he was uneasy about the 1972 truce but accepted the need to meet the British government reps in order to reiterate the basic national demand of the Irish people - that the Brits withdraw from Ireland.

He did not get angry at our meeting with Whitelaw in July 1972, when he spoke he did so with dignity and discipline. Within two days he had to face up to British troops when they broke the truce in Lenadoon on 10 July. What a pity that he will not see the fruits of his great contribution to the Republican cause. ■

Hypocrisy over Deal

Government, media and Labour Party attempts to whip up anti-Irish hysteria in the wake of the Deal barracks bombing seem to have fallen rather flat. Perhaps even to British ears the increasingly hysterical denunciation of 'psychopaths' and 'cowards' by British politicians sound rather thin - especially so, given that the news of British forces' collusion with loyalist death squads has dominated front pages over the past month.

The Deal bombing by the IRA, killing ten Marines, inflicted the greatest loss of Army personnel ever in a single attack outside Ireland. Because the dead were bandmen, the British establishment immediately cried 'foul', 'not cricket'. Strange that they do not say this when children are killed with plastic bullets in Ireland or when the unarmed Gibraltar three were shot in cold blood last year. The IRA are apparently supposed to play by a different and more difficult set of rules than British forces. Deal was a military target and those killed were soldiers. The IRA have repeatedly warned that they will strike such targets. As to the allegation that it was a soft target, it should be recalled that the IRA is tiny in comparison with British forces. Do the British seriously expect them only to attack the most heavily

'Everybody believes in something and if they believe in something enough I suppose it's fair enough.'

Royal Marine sergeant David Duxbury-Williams on the IRA, whilst in hospital recovering from injuries received in Deal attack.

fortified and guarded establishments?

British embarrassment rose when it was revealed that private and apparently ineffectual security firms were employed to guard the barracks. The free market and privatisation have arrived at the Ministry of Defence. And of course it was this that the Labour Party seized on. The government had 'let our boys down'. Any cheap jingoism is preferable for the Labour Party than facing the real issue: the Irish people do not want British rule and are fighting for self-determination. They did not choose violence, it was forced upon them. As the IRA said: 'Mrs Thatcher recently visited occupied Ireland with a message of war at a time when we want peace. Now, in turn, we have visited the Royal Marines in Kent but we still want peace and we want the British government to leave our country.'

Police harassment

JIMMY BROSNEN

FRFI has been told that on 30 September 20 van loads of police toured Cricklewood, North London, home to a large Irish community, arrested Irish men as they left the pubs, held them in cells for up to four hours, questioned them on their personal details and released them without charge. One Irish man discovered that £5 was missing when his property was returned. When he inquired about it he was told by

police that it had been 'donated to the benevolent fund for 10 dead bandmen'. In the week following police have entered pubs in the area, harassing the people there.

An increased police presence has also been noticed in Kilburn High Road and Fulham Broadway, both home to Irish communities.

Following the IRA bombing of Deal barracks the metropolitan police are increasing their intimidation of London's Irish community.

Adams in Brighton

TERRY DOWDING

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams defied the Labour Party leadership when he addressed a fringe meeting in Brighton last week. The meeting called by the Labour Committee on Ireland was attended by over 400 people - supporters of the RCG were present. It was held on the first anniversary of the broadcasting ban, which censors representatives of Sinn Fein and the IRA.

The meeting was unanimous in condemning the ban and likening it with the racist South African regime who also brook no opposition. Mick Gosling of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom said he was there to call for support for a Day of Action on 19 October at Broadcasting House. Eric Smalley of the Guildford 4 Campaign called for Labour Party support

for the appeal, due to start on 8 January 1990 (how much notice Kinnock and crew will take remains to be seen). Jeremy Corbyn MP called for British withdrawal from Ireland. Ex-MP Joan Maynard echoed Jeremy Corbyn and added that 'while Ireland is not free, we are not free'.

Gerry Adams repeated his statement on the Deal bombing, in reply to lies from MPs and the media, he stated 'We want an end to all violent deaths arising out of the present relationship between our two countries.' He talked of the long conflict between Britain and Ireland, about the PTA, plastic bullets, internment, paid perjurers and the murder of the Gibraltar three. Commenting on the ban he said 'How long will it be before all newspapers and television are censored.' It's six years since Gerry Adams last spoke in Brighton, and the struggle for Irish freedom goes on. ■

RUC-UDR collusion with loyalist death squads

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The flow of revelations about loyalist access to UDR/RUC files seems to have reached a climax with a claim that RUC files on more than 200 Republicans had been passed to loyalist groups. This claim, from the so-called RUC 'Inner Circle', was made to an *Irish News* deputy editor who was shown files on 233 Republicans. As loyalist groups have vied with each other to produce evidence of their close links with the RUC/UDR - something usually kept under close wraps - it has become clear that they are up to something.

The most likely explanation is that they wish to put the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland into a corner: they know and he knows that the British state cannot rule in Ireland without the RUC/UDR, the official armed wing of Loyalism. Equally they know that he is committed to the hated Anglo-Irish Agreement. By showing their hand so brazenly they are forcing the issue.

The British government will come under pressure from Dublin to be seen to be doing something to reform the RUC/UDR. The government will be unable to do any such thing and indeed would not wish to. This was graphically shown when after the row about the UDR passing on information to loyalists who murdered Laughlin Maginn, Margaret Thatcher rushed to the Six Counties to visit and fulsomely praise the UDR: praise for a force one hundred of whose members have been convicted of sectarian offences including murder.

The UDR has also now been equipped with plastic bullets for the first time. Dublin is being forced to make unhappy noises and the Anglo-Irish Agreement is being shown not to be worth the paper it is written on - which is just what the Loyalists wanted.

In the murky waters of loyalist activity, often riddled with British intelligence plots, it is possible that something even more convoluted is going on. Whatever the explanation, the latest revelations serve to confirm what nationalists have known for years - that the RUC/UDR/British Army work hand in glove with loyalist paramilitary organisations. In the case of the UDR and of the RUC the daytime uniform is often exchanged for a mask at night. But not just personnel are shared. Information, where people live, who they know, what they are suspected of, what time they get home, what car they drive - all this is passed on to loyalist killers. If the RUC cannot put somebody in gaol or kill the person directly then it can be left to loyalist terror groups. The latter become especially active whenever there is a feeling in the loyalist camp that Britain is 'going soft' on Republicanism. Thus there has been an upsurge in loyalist terror since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. In the past 20 years over 500 nationalists, mostly randomly chosen, have been mur-



Above: Thatcher with the UDR: 'that very, very, very brave group of men'. Below: the RUC



dered by loyalist death squads.

The loyalist revelations have been greeted with a flurry of 'concern' from the camp of constitutional nationalism. After all, one of the main benefits the SDLP and Dublin said they would gain from the Agreement was a measure of reform of British forces and the judicial process. But nothing at all has changed. As if this was not embarrassing enough for them there are now these latest irrefutable proofs of the unreformability of the RUC/UDR. Of course, they have known, as has anybody with any knowledge of the Six Counties, of the close links between official and unofficial terror. But they have now to pretend to be surprised and outraged. As Gerry Adams said:

'The expressions of shock, surprise and disbelief... have introduced an element of farce into a serious and tragic matter.'

It is, however, farce with a purpose - to continue the tired pretence that something can be done about the RUC/UDR. How can it? The Six Counties is ruled by Britain on the basis of loyalist support. It is only the Loyalists who will support the personnel for a police force whose primary duty is the suppression of nationalist resistance. How can this conceivably be reformed? It cannot. The only answer is for British imperialism, the prop of Loyalism, to be driven out of Ireland.

An *Phoblacht/Republican News* has amassed a very telling diary of the activities of the UDR over the past years. We reprint parts of this below and ask how any serious person could express surprise at the latest evidence of UDR collusion with loyalist terror. The *An Phoblacht/Republican News* report covers 1972-1987. For reasons of space we are including only 1980-87.

UDR collusion 1980-87

1980

September

Former UDR member John Summerville of Dungannon was charged with killing three members of the Miami Showband and with the murder of Patrick Falls who was shot dead in a pub near Coalisland in November 1974. He was a member of the UDR at the time of the offences. He was found guilty and sentenced to 35 years in prison.

October

UDR members David Lyons and Matthew Martin of Lame were charged with another man of possession of guns with intent and conspiracy to rob Lame FC in 1974. Lyons was an intelligence officer in the UVF and was charged also with UVF membership and receiving instructions in the use of firearms.

Dundonald UDR member Seamus Ruddock was jailed for 2½ years for assault with intent to rape.

continued on page 7

1982

February

Former Belfast UDR member John Peacock Boyd McConnell was jailed for five years for possessing six home made guns, 4,000 rounds of ammunition, sub-machine-guns and rifle magazines.

March

County Down UDR member Thomas Watson was fined £100 for unlawfully discharging his firearm and with having tampered shotgun cartridges.

April

UDR member Brian Roberts of Belfast was charged with the murder of Liam Canning who was shot dead walking along Alliance Avenue on 9 August 1981. The killing was claimed by the UFF. Roberts also faced three charges of attempted murder and admitted firing into the Ardoyne area. Roberts was found guilty and received a life sentence.

May

A UDR member Michael Doherty whom the police believed was a UVF member was charged with possessing three rifles, a silencer, six magazines and ammunition. He was jailed for ten years.

1983

September

Castleberg UDR member Robert Buchanan was charged with attempting to wound Strabane man, Charles McGowan. This incident happened at a border checkpoint when shots were fired at a car which failed to stop. Buchanan was acquitted in 1984.

December

UDR members Niall Latimer, Noel Bell, Walter Roleston, James Hegan, Alfred Allen, David McMullan and Colin Warton were charged with the murder of Adrian Carroll in November 1983 for which the Protestant Action Force claimed responsibility. In April 1984 McMullan was allowed to attend his battalion training camp. In February 1984 Walter Roleston had the murder charge withdrawn and was released. Bell who was to give evidence against Roleston and the others withdrew his evidence. In May 1986 Warton had the murder charge dropped and was released. In June David McMullan was acquitted of all charges. Hegan and Allen were given life for murder along with Latimer and Bell.

UDR member Geoffrey Edwards of Drumadd Barracks, County Armagh, was charged with the murder of Peter Corrigan, shot dead in Armagh in October 1982. He also faced four counts of attempted murder including that of Seamus Grew. He was jailed for life on 19 charges including murder.

1984

January

Former UDR member William Orr and Stephen Watson received jail sentences from five to seven years for the manslaughter of John McConville.

February

UDR member Albert Purdy and three other men were charged with UVF membership. Purdy was charged with possession of a machinegun. Purdy was given a four year recorded sentence for firearms offences.

UDR Greenfinch Patricia Ann Whyte was charged with attempting to murder a woman at a flat. The woman was stabbed in the chest. Whyte was granted bail.

April

County Fermanagh UDR member Robert Kenny and another British soldier Mark Edward Trotter were charged with the murder of Martin Love, a Catholic from Enniskillen who was shot dead on 9 April. The UFF claimed responsibility. Both received life sentences for the murder. Kenny also received another prison term for armed robbery and collecting information.

May

North Antrim UDR members Alistair McKendry and Paul Alex-

ander were jailed. McKendry for armed robbery and UVF membership and Alexander for possession of a gun and ammunition.

June

Former UDR member Frederick Neill was jailed for life for the murder of a Catholic man in Belfast. Neill was jailed along with five other men on charges of UVF membership, armed robbery, having guns and explosives and for five sectarian murders.

July

UDR member Thomas Montgomery and former member Martin Connelly and two other men were charged with falsely imprisoning and assaulting a 17-year-old Catholic youth. Montgomery and Connelly received a two year suspended sentence.

1987

January

Ex-UDR member Alexander Blair of Belfast pleaded guilty to possessing four machine guns and ammunition with intent in 1976 while a serving UDR member. He was given a seven year recorded sentence.

February

Former UDR member John Edward Newell was jailed for six years for the rape of a 20-year-old woman, and was given a three year sentence to run concurrently for the sexual assault of a 11-year-old girl.

Two UDR members Samuel Ferris and Keith McClelland and two other men were charged in connection with a raid on a UDR base in Coleraine on 26 February in which 170 rifles and pistols were taken. Both the UDR members were also UDA members.

March

Ballymena UDR member David Crawford and another man were found guilty of possessing 28 weapons and thousands of bullets. Both had been storing weapons since 1974.

A UDR member Cyril Rainey of Ballymena pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of James Galway in 1982 as well as pleading guilty to UVF membership, having guns, robbery, training others in the use of firearms and the collecting of information for terrorists. Rainey was O/C and training officer for the UVF in the Ballymena area. He was also a member of an intelligence unit in the UDR and gave the material from the UDR files to the UVF. Rainey drove Lenny Murphy (Shankill Butcher) and James Galway to a building site where Murphy shot Galway dead. Rainey was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment. He was sentenced along with 12 other men, four of whom were UDR members.

UDR member William Gilchrist was given a suspended sentence along with four other men for offences connected with the UVF.

UDR member Maurice Allen was given a four year recorded sentence for firearms offences. Other UDR members sentenced that day were James Johnson and Albert Purdy.

Of the 20 men arrested in Ballymena in 1983-84 in connection with crimes committed by the UVF eight were UDR members.

UDR member Robert Wiley was jailed for 5½ years for the rape of a 17-year-old girl. Wiley used his gun to force the girl into his car.

May

UDR member Paul Peacock was charged with the murder of Jack Keilty and possessing two weapons on different dates under suspicious circumstances. UDR member Jeffry Harris was also charged in connection with the shotgun which Peacock was charged for. Peacock was sentenced to five years imprisonment and Harris got a 12-month suspended sentence.

UDR Greenfinch Joanna Garvin of Belfast was charged with supplying loyalists whom she knew to be UVF members with photographs and details of suspected republicans. ■

The struggle for rights in Kashmir and Ladakh

LETTER FROM JOHN MALONEY

I'm sitting in a Buddhist temple in a remote mountain town called Leh, 12,000 feet up the side of the Himalayas. Ladakh, the isolated state of which this town is the capital is presently the centre of severe political conflict. The reported basis of the turmoil is given as discord between the indigenous Buddhist community and the Muslim traders who are following the tourist dollars from the Kashmiri Valley in the hills.

The reality of the problem is decidedly less complex than the veiled excuses given outside the immediate area. Following the 1947 partition of India this hilly region fell under the control of the Jammu and Kashmir state government. Given the frontier position of both the Kashmiri and Ladakhi areas the Indian government wanted to maintain a very strict control over the direction the people were likely to take. The mainly Muslim population of the Kashmir tended to a great extent towards Pakistan. Not wanting to lose influence and control over the rich and fertile valleys of this northern region the Congress Party government of India installed a puppet controlling authority. The leading family in the same set-up today maintain an almost monarchy like leadership over the administration of the state. The Chief Minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah having attained his position has been rigorously sustained since partition.

Severe discontent with the corruption and election rigging has given rise to outbreaks of violence and unprecedented tension in the areas. A Muslim United Front has been set up as a direct challenge to the central government and its puppet outfit in the state, leading to sporadic outbreaks of violence, explosions and shootings. The catalytic effect of CIA backed Pakistani subversives in the area is also having a distinctive sway on the outcome of the problem.

The central government solution to the problem so far has been to introduce into the already saturated area more and more troops to quell any signs of discontent manifesting itself into something more substantial. The subsequent repression, as per normal, is having the opposite effect and whereas all along the Kashmiris only wanted more control over the running of their own affairs, they are now veering towards Pakistan or some form of independence.

The basic call for the true recognition of one man one vote has now been overshadowed in the light of the repressive public safety laws and other acts which are very similar in nature to the PTA in Britain.

While the central and state governments were busy dealing with the various border conflicts and internal strife over the years this area tended to a great extent to be ignored both politically and financially and almost forgotten by the outside world. This position generally suited the peaceful, agricultural-based feudal-run Buddhist community whose allegiance was more



The photograph shows a Pakistani soldier standing by an anti-aircraft gun on the disputed border between India and Pakistan in northern Kashmir. The area described in the letter has been a major source of friction between India and Pakistan since 1947. Artillery battles are frequent.

reserved for the God-King figure of the Dalai Lama who maintained them in their pacifist and accepting roles.

This of course led to an immense neglect of an already backward and barely self-sufficient area of wilderness of little or no interest to anyone save those struggling to eke their survival out of the harsh terrain.

In 1974 the area was opened to tourists for the first time, which initially brought subtle changes to the lifestyles of the people but more importantly awakened in the local people an awareness of the neglect they had been suffering at the hands of the uninterested and corrupt administrators.

The people of Ladakh have for years been clamouring for some form of regional autonomy which is a logical result of the failures of India's governments to recognise in them a right to a separate identity and a sense of belonging by granting them proportional political and economic share. The fact that the small farmers, workers and craftsmen haven't been allowed the benefits of a sanitary water supply, proper schooling for their children and a say in the running of local affairs in the light of the extra and substantial tourist money is coupled with a significant awareness of their rights to such a basic standard of living. The reason for the overflow of these demands on to the streets has given the authorities a perfect cover for repressive action by branding the whole affair as nothing more than a religious conflict and communal violence. The government has responded to this excuse by subjugating the people to a total curfew and beating them off the streets.

The flashpoint to the present crisis took place on 7 July when the people took to the streets to protest at the attitude of the mainly Muslim traders coming up from the Kashmiri valleys during the tourist season and milking the area dry. Their real grievance being against the Kashmiri government who adopt

a similar policy of draining the area without returning the benefits to the indigenous population. The anger manifested itself against the profit-mongering traders in the form of some shop burning and stoning of Kashmiri buses and taxis. The government responded by drafting in huge consignments of army personnel and equipment, and shooting, teargassing and baton charging the demonstrators off the street to an indefinite curfew.

The official reasons for the outbreak were given as altercations between different religious communities which are totally unfounded as a 15% Muslim community has always lived in this inaccessible spot quite contentedly with the Buddhist majority and needless to say have suffered the same grievances as them all along. The outburst had a very distinct nature and was channelled against capitalist elements trying to squeeze too much out of an already over-taxed people.

The present situation is very tense, an eerie silence hangs over the town and a suspicious air looms over a people subdued by fear. Untold numbers of alleged atrocities are reportedly being carried out by the Indian armed forces and Kashmiri police drafted in to curtail the situation. Indiscriminate beatings, entering homes late at night and multiple arrests have taken place of leading members of the Ladakhi Buddhist Association. To combat that and attempt to secure the release of their leaders, an all out boycott of the government institutions has been called. It's been almost totally effective with the never too reliable water and electricity supplies now crippled, no public transport and administration of the area at a total standstill.

The government has responded by arresting over 1000 workers and holding them in cramped, temporary jails. The people are persisting, they demand the release of all prisoners, the withdrawal of the oppressive forces, a recognition of their

right to manage their own affairs and an equal share in the benefits of whatever this barren landscape has to offer.

In the meantime life continues, as do the arrests, beatings, the shootings, the lack of amenities, the shortage of basic foodstuffs and the curfew. The tenacious grip of the people to struggle on in the face of forces amassed against them only leads on to hope that they choose the egalitarian and socially progressive solution to the effects imposed on them by the domination of outside elements over their affairs. The danger is that Buddhist monks who have in the past been a great voice of the people, to a great extent, are attempting to sway them in their direction. The monks and their monasteries have benefited greatly from government handouts. Large sums of money have in the past inexplicably disappeared without otherwise should have been invested in public amenities. The area is not staunchly religious by any means and the role of the monks is being seriously questioned within the ranks of the youth.

Everywhere you go there tend to be groups of soldiers just standing around watching everyone. They rarely bother with the few tourists that still venture here, but the sheer number of them indicates that they are about to relax things in the area. With some foodstuffs in short supply, transport badly affected and cold weather closing in it looks like it's going to be a tough winter up here.

It's amazing that such intense poverty can be so concealed from the majority of travellers. You have to take to the opposite ends of the earth to those which the guide books and the tourists tell you are the best. You get a view of a totally different meaning to the words 'colourful' and 'exotic India of extremes'. You tend to become numb to the suffering and squalor around you, but there's no way you can forget it or escape it. ■



This article continues *FRFI's* discussion of the rise of environmentalism and the attitude of socialists to this. A fundamental questions which the left must deal with. For this reason we are pleased to publish it, although *FRFI* does

Ecology and Socialism

The seemingly irresistible rise of environmentalism both in Britain and elsewhere, concretised by the Green performance in the European Community elections in June, has thrown all established political organisations into some confusion. The issues themselves are nothing new – ecology has been moving to the forefront of radical politics for two decades – but the last year has seen them gain a new urgency.

For many on the Left, the emergence of a radical party to the left of Labour that is capable of gaining a mass vote has offered a temptation to jump the green bandwagon alongside the Tories, the Labour policy reviewers, even the National Front (who now have their own 'ecological' group, Greenwave). Despite all the talk of a new agenda based on green socialism, however, there remains a fundamental and irreconcilable difference of philosophy between ecology and socialism.

HUMANITY AND NATURE

That difference lies in the relationship between humanity and nature, a relationship that is critical to both green and socialist ideologies. For some ecologists, 'Marxism, like Islam, is a Judeo-Christian heresy' (Lynn White Jnr, 'The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis' in G de Bell ed. *The Environmental Handbook* New York, 1970), drawn from the *Genesis* creation myth in which God places human beings at the summit of creation, having power over all other life; human society is seen as engaging in a process of moving towards perfection/divinity, a process in which the rest of nature is peripheral. Here, claim ecologists, is the arrogance of humanity which has brought us to the current environmental crisis.

For socialists, however, today's world is the product of a protracted struggle by humanity against the limitations of nature; the relationship is not static – as depicted in *Genesis* – but dynamic. The critical phase in that struggle came with the development of agriculture, with the conscious attempt to plan for the future provision of food and to reduce the day-to-day pressures of finding sustenance. That phase of development in human social organisation produced, and was strengthened by, a psychological transformation in humanity, evident in the move from earlier religious beliefs in nature goddesses to a belief in gods that transcended and controlled nature. Marilyn French's account of the dawn of agriculture stresses the significance of the *idea* of control, the assigning of a religious value to a human attribute. The birth of agriculture, she argues, coincides with the birth of male-dominated religion:

'Because women had for millennia been associated with nature, had been seen as having special relation with it to which men were

marginal, the new value [of control] gave men a centrality and power they had previously lacked. In addition, since the new god was transcendent, having power over nature without being touched by it, those who worshipped him claimed the same position: as their deity had power over the earth, men had power over creatures of the earth, animals and women. (Marilyn French, *Beyond Power: Women, Men and Morals* London, 1986)

The division of humanity between men and women and the power structures that resulted thus reflected the initial decisive split between humanity and nature. Women were perceived as being more 'natural', part of an old order, while men held the hopes of the future and the building of a new world.

Throughout human history, the same division has been mirrored and multiplied – the oppressed have always been projected as being inherently more 'natural' than the dominant forces of society: the forces of progress, of science and of technology. The relationship between humanity and nature thus interacts with the subsequent class and other divisions in society, justifying and legitimising oppression, racism and imperialism.

For greens also, and particularly for deep ecologists, the birth of agriculture is the turning point in human history – the moment when human beings consciously began to assert control over nature, thus denying the essential interdependence of humanity and the environment. The process of destruction may not have begun until the North European agriculture revolution with the move away from scratch-ploughs, but the seeds for the present course of destruction are there in the alienation from nature. It is this that must be combated.

Ultimately, such a doctrine is doomed to failure – it requires an enormous shift in the mass consciousness, a rejection of the unique role of humanity and a denial of the

basic human experience of life. Nonetheless, it may in the short term acquire some form of legitimacy which socialists must be prepared to challenge. The division of humanity and nature is a double-edged development, bringing not only the oppression of women and the justification of racism but also the material and cultural benefits that, in a fair society, could enrich the entirety of the human world. The solution to humanity's problems does not lie in the facile dismissal of such benefits, nor can the culture/nature dichotomy be resolved through the exclusive emphasis on natural 'values'. Socialism, on the other hand, does not disown the long struggle against the dictatorship of nature, but instead fights for the unity of all humanity in the continuing campaign for justice and freedom.

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE STATE

But while deep ecology is unlikely to make any long-term progress, the more conventional forms of environmentalism which argue for the safeguarding of natural resources for future generations, are surely going to play an ever more central part in mainstream politics. Such arguments are, of course, to be welcomed, since they are essentially based on the socialist principle of equality, albeit extended to allow for a temporal dimension. And in a genuinely environmentalist politics, this emphasis on equality has a global dimension that has all too often been absent from British socialism.

The current demand for green policies, products and programmes, however, jeopardises the radical edge of environmentalism. The establishment response to an ecology that actually challenges the very foundation of capitalism is to so distort green proposals that, far from environmentalism informing every other area of politics as Greens propose, it is instead broken up and its less controversial and least threatening elements subsumed into the ideal

Picture left: Thousands were chemically maimed at Bhopal

WYN TURNER raises some of the
not share all of the views expressed.

and

of the free (or slightly regulated) market.

Green politics is no longer an optional extra, but an integral part of giving the capitalist renaissance an acceptable face and thus ensuring its survival.

At its most sophisticated, this can be seen in the rise to prominence of John Patten's advisor at the Department of the Environment, Professor David Pearce, with his image of a system in which the environment can be given an economic value, thus allowing one to balance the books between destroying irreplaceable natural assets and the creation of profit - 'We can get a monetary handle on these things.'

And the response from within the Labour Party is similarly to try to neutralise the green challenge without engaging its arguments. The soft Left adopt an attitude of green social democracy, calling for the use of tax reforms as a way of penalising companies and industries that offend against the environment, for central government to take a direct role in the planning of new industries, for trade unions to participate in planning - but all of it within the framework of a market economy, whose existence is unchallenged.

Meanwhile the Labour Left strives to establish the connections between environmentalism and pre-Marxist forms of socialism, drawing on, for example, the writings of William Morris and the co-operativism of Robert Owen. In reality, however, the abandonment of the co-operativist option by mainstream British socialism left the nascent green socialist movement to ally itself to the anarcho-pacifist tradition, where it remains to this day: environmentalism has more in common with Tolstoy and Gandhi than it does with any branch of the Labour Party. There is no likelihood whatsoever of the Labour leadership abandoning its entire history of centralised bureaucratic industrialism in favour of a libertarian community-based network that would replace the State in a green world. However much the Socialist Conference talks of the need for a new vision of a decentralised, co-operativist socialism, it is clear that the Labour Party is not the means to that end.

ENGAGING GREEN ISSUES

Despite the differences that exist between ecology and socialism, it should go without saying that the warnings of impending environmental catastrophe are relevant to everyone, and demand to be given a high priority in any political analysis. Whilst the timescale of the current crisis is unclear (the Friends of the Earth were warning in 1969 that humanity had only five years to clean up its act), the issue is clearly pressing enough to adopt an ultra-radical position that the environment

can only be safeguarded in the context of a socialist revolution either in Britain or throughout the world (the WRP's 'ecology is just a bourgeois diversion'). Equally, however, socialists cannot afford to prioritise environmentalism to the exclusion of socialism (the Communist Party's 'New Fad for the New Times').

The critical question in relation to environmentalist strategy is the role of the State in achieving real change. The Greens are in a contradictory position of believing in the dismantling and decentralising of the State, whilst simultaneously working to try to force concessions from it: thus begging the question of why, if the centralised State can be used as a vehicle for progress, we should seek to remove it? The performance of the Greens in the EC elections is likely to heighten this contradiction; where the Green Party previously could only really be seen as a pressure group masquerading as a political party, the knowledge that it might be possible to achieve some electoral success has held out the hope that political power can be conquered within the traditional structures. Obviously such a task is extremely difficult in Britain's electoral system, but the victory of the Realto wing within the Gruenin indicates the way that Greens here may choose to go - alliances and coalitions with mainstream reformist parties in an attempt to wield some political influence may have been ruled out for the present by the British Greens but they are sure to return.

From a socialist perspective, such an approach is doomed to failure since it is based on a false analysis of where power is located in a bourgeois democracy. Once it is recognised that the secret State, operating through the civil service, the military, the financial institutions, the judiciary, industry and the monarchy and justified by the mass media, is the true seat of power, then any pretensions to seek progress through the electoral framework that conceals the State are clearly shown to be futile. The anti-authoritarian side of ecology implicitly recognises this, though its voice is often inaudible in the reformist clamour of those demanding change at any price. Socialists must stand firm on the principle that this State will never be the agent of progress, that it is inherently incapable of reforming itself and that it must consequently be swept away.

But there are areas of common ground that can usefully be explored beyond environmentalism's parliamentary ambitions. The areas for analysis and action that ecology has produced must be taken up.

Socialists must argue, for example, alongside radical Greens, that transnational companies are the major enemies of both the environment and humanity. Even if Britain, either alone or in the company of other West European countries, elected a Green government, its actions would be limited not only by the State but also by the fact that the transnationals would simply export their attacks on the environment in their quest for profits. The exploitation of the South - the effects of which are made visible in both human and environmental terms in single events such as the Bhopal chemical massacre as well as in the continuing deforestation of South America and the Pacific islands - is beyond the control of single governments. If humanity is to survive (let alone progress), it is imperative that the power of the transnationals be destroyed. Here environmentalism can be expanded from its immediate area of concern to merge with the more established Left theme of support for those fighting for self-determination. To take one specific case, the blow that would be struck against the economic imperialism of the transnationals by the socialist liberation of South Africa would have positive ecological as well as political effects.

Similarly the campaign against nuclear power, if put into the context

of the wider military-industrial complex, can be a meeting point for socialists and environmentalists in a more powerful way than has existed before. The fight against nuclear power and the exposure of its links with nuclear weaponry, by focussing attention on the influence of the military machine, offers possibilities of reducing its authority to the benefit of the entire world.

Perhaps less obviously, the attacks by environmentalists on the role of the Catholic Church in blocking effective birth control programmes offers the possibility for socialists to broaden the attack into an assault on the reactionary role played by Catholicism throughout the world and an analysis of the role played by superstition in the hindering of social and political progress.

Most importantly, the political establishment must not be allowed to seize the issues of environmentalism. The emerging conventional 'wisdom' is that the real threat to the future of the world comes from developing countries - a racist position being espoused by those who have spent the last decades doing their utmost to exploit the Southern nations. At the same time, the Western establishment is congratulating itself on the rush towards capitalism by East Europe, thus opening new markets for companies eager to offload products considered too sensitive for ecologically-aware consumers in the West.

The connections between cultural, economic and military imperialism and the threats to the environment need to be made explicit and campaigns around the issues built, preferably in conjunction with Greens. The effects could be twofold - to develop the public consciousness of the continuing role of imperialism in the world, using current Green awareness as a springboard, and simultaneously to protect and extend the radical perspectives of environmentalism as the lure of power becomes ever more manifest in a drift to the centre.

In other areas, the Left clearly needs to learn from the connections made by the Greens. The fact that it took the Greens to point out the part that the consumption of meat and cash crops played in the exploitation of the South is to the discredit of the Left. It is precisely this ability to link personal action with global concerns that has ensured the relevance of environmentalism and its success amongst radical youth.

It is then crucial for the Left to ensure that the revolutionary implications of ecology are not lost as the mainstream attempts to assimilate the issue. Anti-imperialism, anti-racism and anti-capitalism are all implicit to a greater or lesser extent in ecology, but they are vulnerable in the search for compromise, and are potentially threatened by the Left as well as the Right.

Many socialists, for example, heralded the refusal by dock-workers to handle cargoes of toxic waste as a major victory. Whilst any linking of workers' action with environmentalism is to be applauded, the absence of an anti-imperialist dimension in the wider struggle means that such cargoes are liable to be dumped in southern countries made desperate for foreign capital by the pressures of the international market, but lacking any facility for disposing of the waste.

If the potential of environmentalism to challenge the establishment is to be realised, it is imperative that the Left fights to uphold the basic principles of socialism, whilst seeking to unite the campaign for a sustainable world with the struggle for the emancipation of the international working class. Today more than ever, the old self-serving nationalist tradition of British socialism is no longer simply a millstone around the neck of the British worker but a reactionary and dangerous trend that threatens life throughout the world. ■

FIGHT FOR THE FOREST

Fight for the forest. Chico Mendes in his own words, Latin America Bureau, £2.95, 96pp.

At 5.45pm on Thursday 22 December, Chico Mendes was assassinated in the doorway of his home in Xapuri, Acre, north west Brazil.

Chico Mendes was President of the Xapuri Rural Workers Union, member of the National Council of Rubber Tappers, member of the national council of the Trade Union Congress (CUT), an activist in the Workers' Party (PT), and committed to the defence of the Amazonian ecosystem. At the time of his death he was 44 and married with two young children. *Fight for the forest* is the last major interview given by Chico Mendes just weeks before his death.

Fight for the forest outlines the growth of the organisation of the rubber tappers in the last two decades and in particular the great contribution of Chico Mendes in building the structures of self-organisation and defence against the destruction of the rain forests.

Chico Mendes was born into a rubber tappers family. The traditional rubber estate (*seringal*) operates on a system of debt bondage. During the rubber boom at the turn of the century the rubber tappers (generally men from the semi-arid north east escaping the droughts) were obliged to remain single, forbidden to plant food for themselves and obliged to sell their rubber at artificially low prices to the *seringal*. Illiterate and innumerate, they were permanently at the mercy of the rubber estate owners (*seringalistas*).

In many parts of the western Amazon this system remains unchanged, although in the area around Xapuri the *seringalista* has given way to the rancher. In the region around Xapuri, the 1970s and 1980s have seen a growing conflict between ranchers clearing the forest for pasture and rubber tappers facing eviction and loss of livelihood.

In his words Chico Mendes explains the struggles of the rubber tappers, first to learn to read, write and become numerate and as a result of their growing awareness of their exploitation and the destruction of the rain forests by the ranchers, the growth of their own trade unions and the physical defence of the rain forest.

Through *Projecto Seringueiro* (the Rubber Tapper Project) rubber tappers and their families were educated and enabled to run the first extractive reserve on the Cachoeira estate.

In 1987 Cachoeira was bought by Darli Alves da Silva who tried to drive out the 60 families of rubber tappers who had lived and worked on the estate for generations. Chico Mendes used all his powers of persuasion and leadership to convince the rubber tappers of Cachoeira to stay where they were and Darli issued death threats against him. In the second half of 1988, the federal government sought to defuse the situation by signing expropriation orders for three extractive reserves including Cachoeira, where 6,000 hectares were allocated to the rubber tappers.

The victory for the rubber tappers was also the death sentence for Chico, as the family of Darli Alves sought to avenge their defeat. The attempts on his life became systematic and on 22 December 1988 he was murdered.

Chico Mendes devoted his short life to fighting for the rights of the rubber tappers and for the future of the rain forest. He refused to give in to the intimidation of the ranchers and government officials who wanted to make fast bucks out of the rain forest. Equally he refused to cooperate with right wing elements of the church and the workers party who feared for their own interests above the interests of the rubber tappers.

Fight for the forest is a powerful book and highly recommended.

Lorna Reid



Against the 'market socialists' of his day Che conducted a vigorous ideological and political battle. He sought: '... socialist formulas rather than capitalist formulas to solve problems, because before we realise it capitalist formulas can begin to corrupt us and contaminate us.' During the debates he developed a superb defence of Marxism ('that towering doctrine') and of Marx's *Capital* ('a monument of the human mind'). Together Che's contributions constitute a solid foundation for a communist standpoint on the transition to socialism.

PLANNED ECONOMY - A FOUNDATION OF SOCIALISM

Most socialist countries are today resorting to market mechanisms hoping these will boost production where the centralised planned economy failed. In tandem petit-bourgeois revisionists, many inside socialist countries, are calling into question the very necessity and even the feasibility of a centralised and planned economy to build socialism.

A dominant theme of this book is its defence of the planned economy against those singing loud and gaudy praises to the capitalist market. Tablada correctly argues that in the anti-capitalist revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the planned economy are inseparably linked. The planned economy is the only means by which humanity can overcome the anarchy of capitalism. It is the only way that humanity, instead of being subjugated by the process of production, can acquire mastery over it and consciously direct it towards socially desired ends. It is therefore the only way in which the immense majority of humanity can overthrow the terrible burden of exploitation, oppression, poverty, hunger, and misery which is its lot under capitalism. As Che put it:

'... centralised planning is the mode of existence of socialist society, its defining characteristic and the point at which man's consciousness finally succeeds in synthesising and directing the economy towards its goal: the full liberation of the human being in the context of communist society.'

Che rejected the use of market mechanisms because they undermine the planned economy and give greater freedom for the operation of the capitalist law of value. As a result, they facilitate the development of capitalist tendencies within socialist countries. Proponents of 'market socialism', today triumphant in Poland and Hungary, and spreading rapidly in other socialist countries, were peddling their wares back in the early Sixties. He had to fight theoreticians from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union who claimed that the law of value and the market are not uniquely capitalist but have universal validity and can be used within the plan to develop socialism. On the contrary he retorted angrily, 'The law of value and the plan are two terms linked by a contradiction and its resolution.'

The law of value is a historically determined feature of commodity production and finds its fullest expression in the anarchy of the capitalist market, in the exploitation of the working class and the plunder of oppressed nations. It has nothing in common with socialism. The law of value is but the manner in which economic equilibrium is established - spontaneously, unconsciously - in capitalist society. In socialist society equilibrium is established in the interests of society, by the majority, through the plan - in a conscious and rational manner.

Che was not however a dogmatist or an ultra-left and recognised that whilst imperialism lasts and socialism is yet in its early stage of development, the law of value would continue to exercise its influence, particularly through the international capitalist market. But unlike our

Carlos Tablada's *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* is a splendid and welcome polemic against the petit bourgeois notion of 'market socialism' now gaining ascendancy in many socialist countries and among opportunists in imperialist nations.'

Between 1963 and 1965, Cuban communists conducted a major debate on the problems confronting the Cuban economy. Che Guevara, then Minister of Industry, made enormous theoretical and political contributions to this debate. Through a detailed examination of these, Tablada demonstrates that the resort to 'market socialism' - the law of value, market forces, competition, material incentives and private enterprise - to overcome economic crises in socialist countries threatens the very foundations of socialism itself. EDDIE ABRAHAMS explores the issues.

The TRANSITION to SOCIALISM - the theoretical heritage of Che Guevara

modern revisionists he did not see this as a blessing to be multiplied. The law of value was an 'umbilical cord tying the new society to the old' and should be suppressed by the systematic development of the conscious power of the centralised and planned economy.

THE PARTY, THE MASSES AND DEMOCRACY

Che coupled his defence of the planned economy with an insistence that in the period of transition, political and ideological leadership by the working class vanguard organised in the Communist Party remains indispensable. Without such a party, committed to mass democratic participation and guided by the most advanced theory and the highest moral values the planned economy would fail and socialism would remain in constant danger.

Che rejected the revisionist view that economic production could be separated from the production and reproduction of communist social relations and consciousness. Whilst the centralised economic plan was an indispensable foundation for socialism, the Communist Party could not reduce its role to the technical and administrative organisation of the economy and material production. 'We

cannot arrive at communism through simple mechanical accumulation of quantities of goods...' Che wrote, adding that: 'Building socialism... combines work and consciousness - expanding the production of material goods through work and developing consciousness.'

The planned economy and socialism would develop successfully only if it ran parallel with the development of a new communist social consciousness. However, such a consciousness, while requiring a planned economy as its base, does not flow from it automatically. Developing communist values and principles, developing the 'new communist person', will only flow from the conscious ideological and political work of a communist leadership.

The leading ideological and political role of the communist party is particularly necessary given the deeply ingrained petit-bourgeois selfishness and individualism we inherit from capitalism and the incredibly difficult objective conditions in which socialism is being built, encircled as it is by imperialist powers bent on its destruction.

Success in the combined task of developing the planned economy and creating a new communist consciousness - ie building socialism -

requires the vanguard party to work to actively involve the masses in political, social and economic life, for:

'Building socialism is based on the work of the masses, on the capacity of the masses to be able to organise themselves to better guide industry, agriculture and the country's economy.'

Only if the party remains 'in constant and permanent touch with the masses', will it really be capable of representing their interests and leading them. Only in such a relationship with the masses will a communist leadership succeed in coping with the enormous and difficult challenges and problems of building socialism.

These elementary lessons need repeating a hundred times in light of the bitter experience of honest communists in Poland, Hungary and other socialist countries. In many cases, Communist Parties having lost any connection with the masses, have become vehicles for pro-capitalist elements eager to resort to 'capitalist formulas'. As a result the socialist planned economy and the development of that new communist consciousness necessary to defend socialism has suffered irreparable harm.

CAPITALIST MECHANISMS AND COMMUNIST CONSCIOUSNESS

Che Guevara's opposition to the use of 'capitalist formulas' thus took into account not just their adverse effect on the planned economy but also their negative ideological and political effects. In debate against opponents in Cuba and other socialist countries, Che argued that a narrow technical and administrative approach to economic planning put at risk ideological and political factors vital for socialism. Tablada puts the issue very effectively: 'Seeking purely economic gains could lead to the application of methods that produce short term results at the expense of mortgaging the revolution's future through the steady erosion of the process of developing consciousness.'

One example of this is the offer of material incentives to increase production. In the short term this may raise production, but only at the expense of creating a new social consciousness. Che opposed material incentives. The idea of rewarding individuals with material incentives to boost production serving collective ends was a contradiction. It could only help sustain individual selfishness and greed. Material incentives:

'come from capitalism and are destined to die under socialism. (They) are remnants of the past... (and) will play no part in the new society that is being created.'

Che believed that:

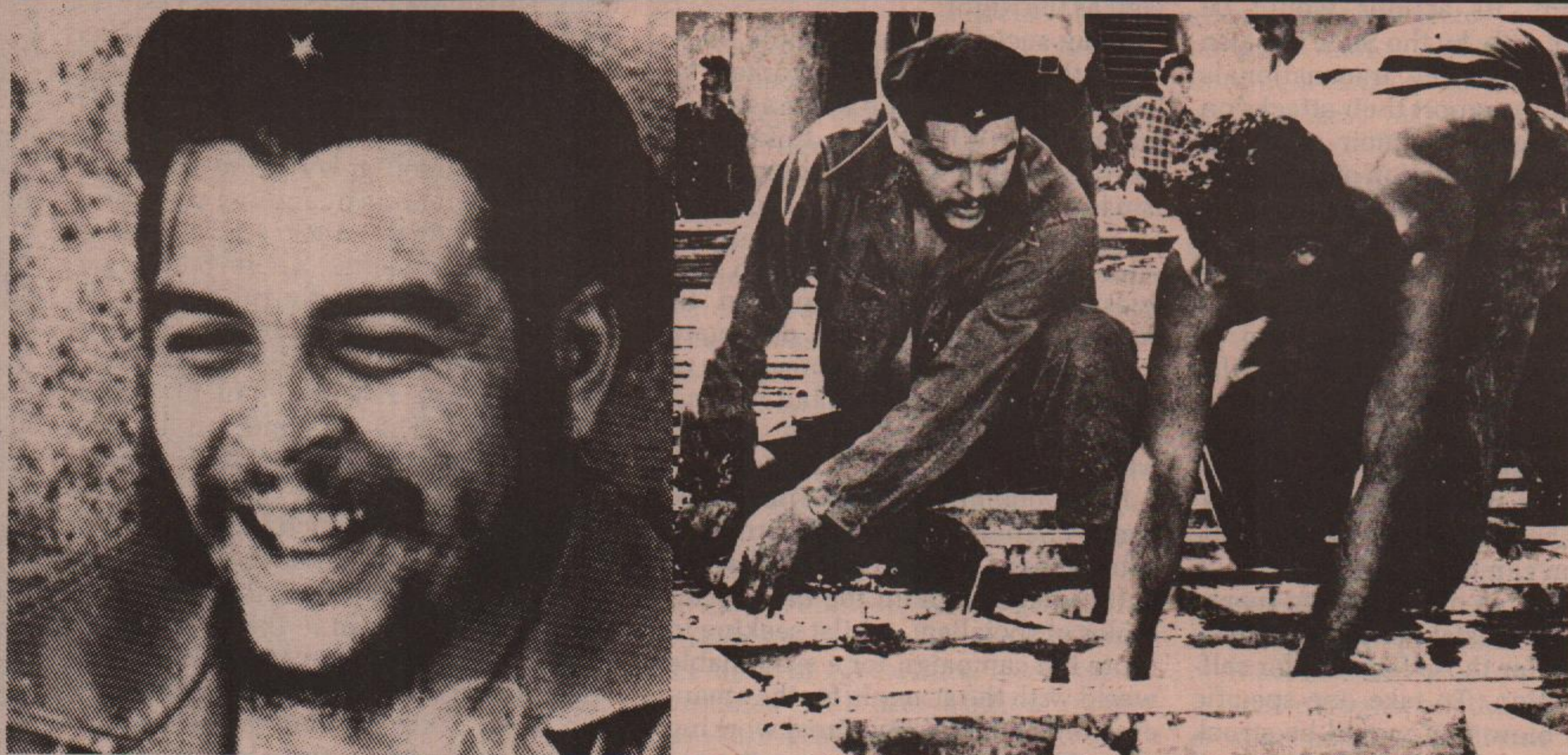
'The role of the vanguard party is precisely that of raising as high as possible the opposing banner, the banner of moral interests, of moral incentives...'

Che recognised, however, that in Cuba, given the backward economy, there unfortunately remains an objective need for material incentives to ensure effective production. However, he was 'reluctant' to use them and always attempted to offer them in a social not individual form.

The dangers of treating economic production and economic planning as a purely administrative and technical matter were evident to Che. In countries with a backward economy, suffering imperialist encirclement and weighed down by decades of imperialist and capitalist oppression, the temptation for quick economic results easily lends itself to adopting 'capitalist formulas'. But these threaten centralised economic planning, the foundation of socialism, and undermine communist social consciousness. Together, such developments guarantee the survival and growth of pro-capitalist tendencies and ambitions within the socialist countries themselves, presenting long term dangers to their very survival.

It was within these parameters that Che Guevara advanced his many concrete proposals for dealing with Cuba's economy. This book sets forth in some detail Che's Budgetary Finance System for the planned economy, his wage system which takes into account 'facts of consciousness', his views and proposals on money, on voluntary labour, on the necessity for Communist Party members to have the highest moral standards and principles, on the need for a new international economic order and on the absolute necessity for revolutionary internationalism.

This review has covered only a small portion of the ideas and issues raised in this book. It is recommended to all comrades following developments and debates in the socialist countries as it throws light on the theoretical and practical issues confronting the socialist movement today. Tablada's merit and great strength is that in exposing 'market socialism' as a theory, he relies not on Che's undoubted revolutionary authority but on the presentation of his theoretical and political ideas - whose brilliance and profoundness is confirmed by their relevance today.



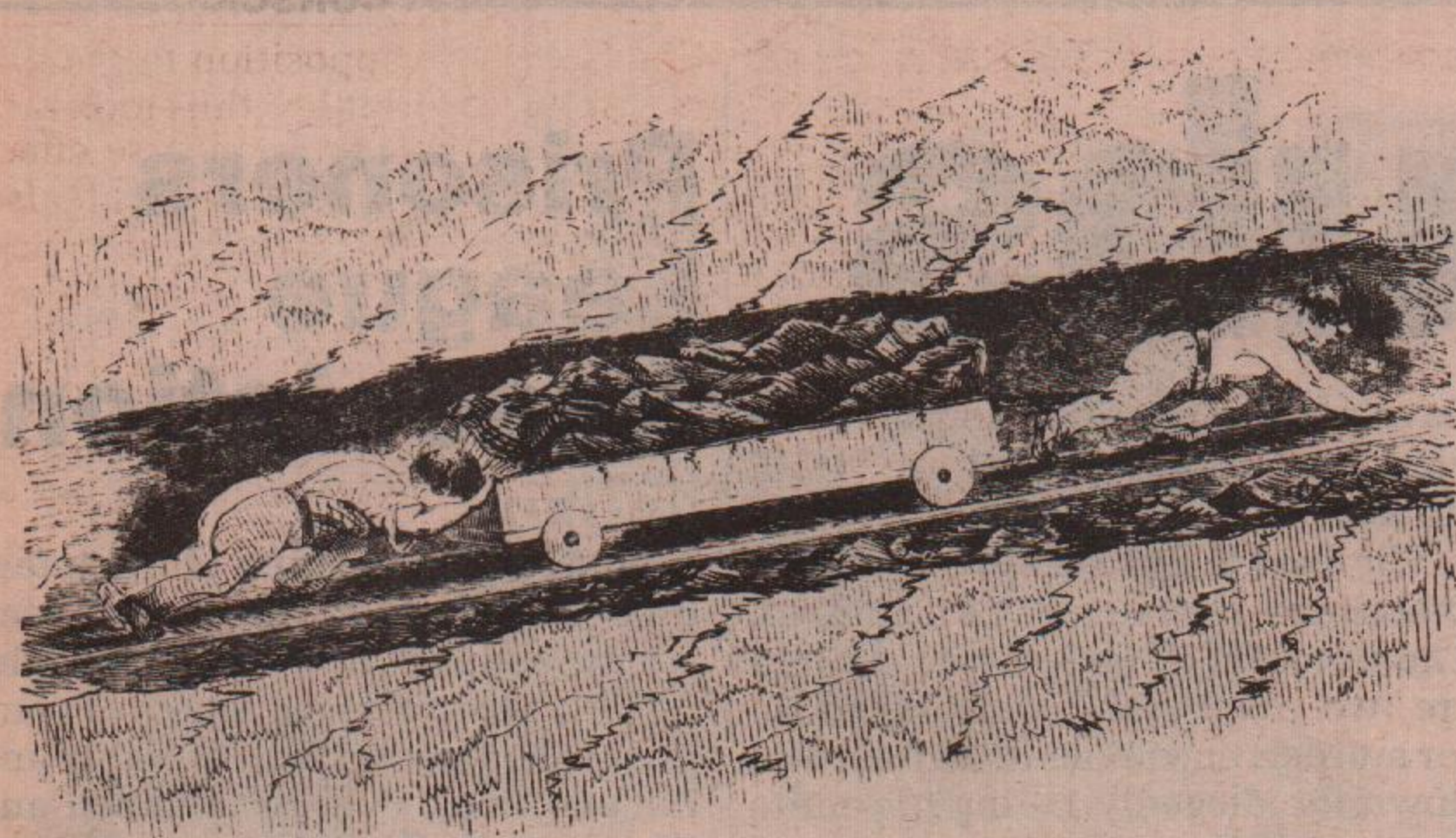
Che Guevara (1928-1967) was one of the most remarkable revolutionary leaders to emerge from the Cuban revolution. Born in Argentina in 1928 he abandoned the possibility of a very privileged life and joined Fidel Castro in the guerrilla war against the Batista dictatorship in 1959. In socialist Cuba he served as President of the national bank and as Minister of Industry. After 1965 he resigned his official positions and went to Bolivia to open a new guerrilla front against imperialism. In 1967 he was captured and murdered by the Bolivian army. His writings, his dedication, his commitment and self-sacrifice continues to inspire all those fighting for socialism.

The most accessible selection of Che's writings is *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution: Writings and Speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara* published by Pathfinder Press.

* Pathfinder Press, 1989, 286 pp., £8.75



The bloody origins of capitalism



Child slave-labour working in coal-mines in appalling conditions - Britain of the 1830s.

'While the cotton industry introduced child-slavery into England, in the United States it gave the impulse for the transformation of the earlier more or less patriarchal slavery into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact the veiled slavery of the wage labourers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal'. Karl Marx, Capital.

TREVOR RAYNE

In his analysis of the origins of capitalism, Marx challenges the elitist and racist assumptions of the bourgeoisie's ideologues.

'... The accumulation of capital presupposes surplus value; surplus value presupposes capitalist production; capitalist production presupposes the availability of considerable masses of capital and labour power in the hands of commodity production ...'

From whence, then, comes capital and the mass of labour power - from primitive accumulation:

'an accumulation which is not the result of the capitalist mode of production but its point of departure'.

Marx mocked the role given primitive accumulation in capitalist economic theory: it played 'the same role in political economy as original sin does in theology'. One set of people, the European bourgeoisie, were saved by virtue of their economy, and became owners who employed labour power. The other set, other races and the working class, damned by ignorance and idleness, became the workers who sell their labour power. In a free market the industrious are bound to succeed in any trade and so it was, according to the bourgeois ideologues, that the European, and, in particular, British capitalists won fair and square.

Marx showed that capital, far from emerging out of fair trade, was wrenched into being by violence:

'The historical movement which changes the producers into wage-labourers appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and the fetters of the guilds, and it is this aspect of the movement that alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these newly freed men became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production ... And this history, the history of their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of fire and blood.'

Such was the birth of capitalism in Europe, but overseas:

'The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These

idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation'. Karl Marx, *Capital*.

GOLD, SUGAR AND SLAVERY

'Gold is a wonderful thing! Its owner is master of all he desires. Gold can even enable souls to enter paradise'.

Marx cited Christopher Columbus' letter from Jamaica dated 1503. Right from the start Europe's 'enterprise' in the Americas was a matter of capital accumulation. Gold and silver flowed across the Atlantic. In Europe the circulation of metal coins multiplied up to tenfold during the sixteenth century. Commodity production increased, and the means to dispose of vast amounts of wage labour grew.

Perhaps three million American Indians were enslaved by the Spanish in the first half of the sixteenth century, four hundred thousand in Nicaragua alone. Ninety per cent of central Mexico's thirty million people were slaughtered or perished from European diseases. Whole peoples were exterminated for gold and silver. Replacements were ordered from Africa. As many as one hundred million Africans were captured and traded by Europeans in three hundred years. As late as 1800 one in five died on the Atlantic crossing. Captain John Hawkins was rewarded by Elizabeth I with a ship, the *Jesus*, and a knighthood for his initiative in launching England into slavery. His coat-of-arms bore a representation of an African in chains.

Plantations supplemented mining profits. Barbados was England's first sugar colony, commencing production around 1640. In fifty years fifty thousand slaves were transported to this tiny island. Between 1650-1807 approximately three quarters of a million Africans were brought to Jamaica as slaves. By the end of the eighteenth century the Caribbean was transferring capital equivalent to ten per cent of Britain's entire income back to the 'mother country'. It was precisely the expansion of the world market in sugar and cotton that Marx saw ever worsening the conditions in which the slaves were held:

'But in proportion as the export of cotton became of vital interest to those (southern USA) states, the overworking of the Negro, and sometimes the consumption of his life in seven years of labour, became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. It was no longer a question of obtaining from him a certain quantity of useful products, but rather of the production of surplus value itself'. (*Capital*).

That surplus value fuelled the

European bourgeoisie and the Industrial Revolution. James Watt, inventor of the steam engine 1763, expressed his gratitude to the slave owners who funded his experiments. Barclays Bank and Lloyds have their origins in the slave trade. Shipping, insurance, banking, industry and agriculture were all stimulated by slavery. Bristol, Liverpool, Nantes, Dieppe, Bordeaux, Marseille, Seville, Boston and New York all grew up on and flourished from the proceeds of slavery. Africa was depopulated, its metal and cloth industries destroyed, trade routes abandoned and people scarred with war and underdevelopment which is felt down to today. Such was the legacy of the 'European civilisation-mongers' as Engels called them.

KING COTTON, KING CORN AND OPIUM

In the opening passages of the *Communist Manifesto* 1848, Marx and Engels exhilarated in the revolutionising powers of the new bourgeoisie:

'All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face, with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.'

As capitalism raced across the globe so:

'The plains of North America and Russia are our corn fields; Chicago and Odessa our granaries; Canada and the Baltic are our timber forests; Australasia contains our sheep farms, and in Argentina and on the western prairies of North America are our herds of oxen; Peru sends her silver, and the gold of South Africa and Australia flows to London; the Hindus and the Chinese grow tea for us, and our coffee, sugar and spice plantations are in all the Indies. Spain and France are our vineyards and the Mediterranean our fruit garden; and our cotton grounds, which for long have occupied the Southern United States, are now being extended everywhere in the warm regions of the earth.'

W S Jevons, economist of rising British capital writing in *The Coal Question* (1865)

'the cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls ... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois method of production ...'

Marx and Engels hated the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie and the violent injustices of their system, but they saw it as a higher form of production and precondition for the agent of its undoing, the emancipation of humankind, the proletariat. By its very revolutionising of the means of production, capitalism outlived its need for plantation slavery, and in so doing strengthened the position of the US working class. The plantation proved too costly and inflexible for capitalism's new production methods.

By the 1830s slave cotton amounted to half US exports. Much of it came to Britain and left for India as cloth. In 1850 India absorbed an eighth of Britain's total exports and a quarter of its cloth. The British textile industry employed an eighth of the workforce and earned a twelfth of the national income. Of the British bourgeoisie's interest in India, Marx observed: 'the aristocracy wanted to conquer it, the moneyocracy to plunder it, and the millocracy to undersell it.' The 'milocracy', industrialists, sought to have cotton production transferred from the southern (US) states to India, and transfer the Atlantic trade to wheat from the newly settled prairies of the (US) Northwest. The campaign for the abolition of the Corn Laws was to this end. By 1849 all of India was con-



quered. With the abolition of the slave trade, 1833, India also provided a source of cheap, mobile labour, some of which was transferred to Ceylon's plantations.

When the US Civil War broke out in 1861 between the southern slave plantocracy and the northern states it was little wonder that the British bourgeoisie divided: in 1838 50 per cent of the bonds of the Cotton states were held in London. Marx and Engels supported the northern states,

'In the United States of America, every independent workers' movement was paralysed as long as slavery disfigured part of the republic. Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin. However, a new life immediately arose from the death of slavery. The first fruit of the American Civil War was the eight hours agitation, which ran from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California, with the seven-league boots of the locomotive'. (*Capital*)

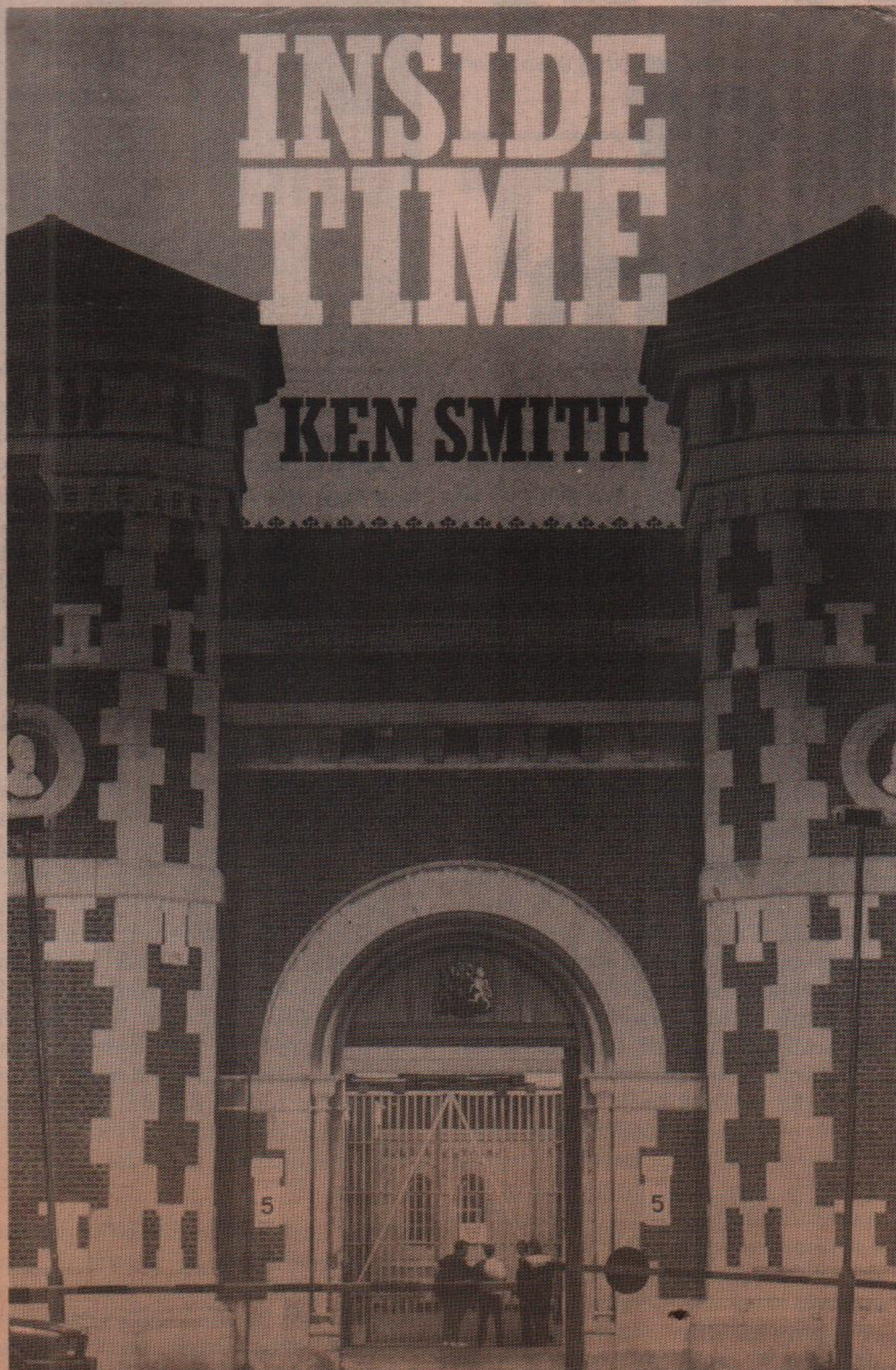
The Civil War forced up the price of cotton and shortages occurred. Lancashire textile workers were thrown out of work. Public health surveys remarked upon how improved the workers looked now they could get some fresh air and light, and how edifying it was to see Lancashire girls finding the time to sew. Government employed doctors were despatched to estimate the minimum nutrition necessary to ward off starvation. Egyptian cotton exports rose tenfold during the War. India's were soon to follow.

From 1856-58 the British capitalists had fought the Second Opium War against China. Britain and India had a trade deficit with China. In order to pay for imports of tea, silk and silver the British East India Company promoted opium cultivation in India for export to China. When the Chinese resisted, the *Economist* of the day argued that the export of opium was a right of free trade. Opium revenues, it argued, were necessary to make good the trade imbalance with Australia (gold) and the USA (cotton). Writing in the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1853 Marx predicted

'it may seem a very strange, and a very paradoxical assertion that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and their next movement for republican freedom and economy of government, may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire (China) - the very opposite of Europe - than on any other political cause that now exists - more even than on the menaces of Russia and the consequent likelihood of a general European war'.

Marx had traced the global interconnectedness of capital, and the blow he predicted in China reverberated around the world to Europe and the USA. His analysis was a forerunner of Lenin's concept of imperialism and the need to support the oppressed nation's rights to self-determination. ■

Inside the Scrubs



Ken Smith went to Wormwood Scrubs in 1985. He remained there for two years, not as a prisoner, but as Writer-in-Residence. *Inside Time* is the story of his experiences. NICKI JAMESON reviews *Inside Time*.

He introduces his topic in a way designed to attract the lay reader:

'Prison. The word is a frightener to keep the rest of us on the straight and narrow. We think of prisons and we confront dark mysteries we'd be safer not to explore. Prisons are the dungeons in our fairytales and legends, and part of our defence from them is to mythologise them and their inhabitants.'

This is a very middle-class perspec-

ive. In a country with 50,000 people in gaol, anyone who is poor, working-class, black or politicised is bound to have at least one close friend or relative who either is or has been behind bars. Regular contact with the harshness and monotony of the British prison system even as a visitor is a wonderful dispeller of fairy-tale notions. What is more, despite depicting his own role at Wormwood Scrubs as that of outside observer, reporter, impartial bystander, Smith

is judgmental. He is preoccupied with remorse and with details of the most horrible murders. He continually links 'criminal' and 'crime' and therefore finds it hard to consider the men inside and their behaviour there dispassionately.

This said, *Inside Time* is a fascinating book. The author's job was to encourage writing and work with anyone who wrote. He discovered, as I did when I was imprisoned in Holloway, that 'writing poetry is not considered at all odd in here' and many who would never dream of putting pen to paper outside, see poetry as an invaluable means of self-expression.

Prisoners' writing may cover many topics but it is inevitably dominated by one theme - that of prison itself.

Ken Smith's book is packed with facts about the history of Wormwood Scrubs and the whole British prison system, fascinating details such as the description of the former women's wing in the Scrubs which is now the men's life wing and where the cells are slightly smaller than anywhere else in the prison. He uses prison slang freely but explains the meaning of the less immediately comprehensible terms. Every facet of prisoners' experience is explored: remand, special units, parole, transfer, education, work, rule 43 (where he is not quite clear regarding the difference between 43a - solitary 'for one's own protection' and 43b 'Good Order and Discipline.') And the factual details build up into a picture which is supplemented by evocative imagery:

'I was trapped inside a great sealed beehive, with all the bees, and none of them able to get out and all of them angry. The hive was a great yellow barn, its walls divided tier upon tier into cells, the octagonally shaped doorways of the honeycomb repeating regularly along the perspectives of the landings, and everywhere the bees and their ready stings. And no honey.'

The second section of *Inside Time*, 'Living in my Head,' was not written by Smith although the style is deceptively similar, but by a prisoner serving life who uses the pseudonym Dave Wait. (From a dream he had of release and a voice calling him from the gate, 'Dave, wait!' which made him turn back, knowing it was not over.) This section gives a firsthand picture of long-term imprisonment and includes a fascinating account of escape and eventual recapture, thumbnail portraits of several of

Dave's fellow prisoners and an inside view of 'Britain's Alcatraz,' HMP Albany.

The book's last section, 'Songs of Innocence' contains its best chapter. The innocent whose stories are told are two petty criminals stitched up for murder, one upper-class man sent down for allegedly killing his entire family, and Paul Hill. It goes without saying that those who are innocent of the acts of which they have been convicted suffer yet more than those who admit their actions but the treatment they receive goes beyond the obvious and into the realms of sheer psychological torture. The innocent man is classed in prison either as psychopathic and deliberately devious or as unable to face the memory of his crime and therefore repressing it; this prevents recommendations of his early release: 'The dead weight of the system presses him down.'

'The only suggestion it can make is that he act guilty in order to get out in due time; acting otherwise he impedes the very process that would eventually free him.'

Paul Hill tells his story in his own words. It is not the well-known history of his frame-up for the Guildford pub bombings, but the account of his time in prison. He is aware, political and articulate. He knows why he was framed: 'It was a warning to the Irish community not to get involved in any part of the war in Northern Ireland.' And he describes 13 years in gaol, 45 changes of location, 1500 days in solitary, participation in two major uprisings at Hull and Wormwood Scrubs, unrelenting victimisation and maltreatment because of who he is and because he has stood up for his rights and those of other prisoners.

Although Ken Smith lets him have almost the last word in the book, I can't help wishing that he had listened a little bit more to what Paul Hill is saying. Because in the end, after two years 'inside time' he is still a liberal, 'a doubter,' still someone who doesn't like prisons and the treatment of prisoners but sees in it a hopeless inevitability. He does not analyse what is meant by 'crime' in modern British society and makes only passing reference to the relationship between imprisonment and poverty. He doesn't like the system which he depicts so accurately in this detailed patchwork of facts and anecdotes, but he is not prepared to confront it either.

INSIDE TIME by Ken Smith
Published by Harrap £12.95.

Prisoners League Association

Dear *FRFI*,

Since the publishing of the intentions of the PLA, there has been strong support from many people. The PLA has received letters of complaint about racism and brutality and ill-conditions at Winson Green and Wandsworth as well as complaints about bad food and intolerable conditions at other prisons.

The PLA would like to hear from any person who is prepared to picket a prison where racism, brutality and conditions are rife. The PLA have in mind the following prisons to be picketed as soon as possible: Armley, Wandsworth, Walton and Winson Green. However, if you are not able to picket there are other ways you may be able to help the PLA. Prisoners themselves have to play a major role and can join the PLA and strongly support its protests.

The government has taken no action against brutality; screws continue to display their national front tie pins on prison landings and now three screws who were charged with brutality have gone back to Armley and of all the prison organisations, not one has acted or expressed great concern about what really goes on in prisons. Well, comrades; it's enough that they have brutalised us and on occasions murdered our brothers. There are now 50,000 of us and it's time we united. Write now to the PLA. United we stand - divided we fall.

Domenyk Noonan, Prisoners League Association
3 Althouse, Cheetham, Manchester.

PRISONERS BIRTHDAYS

- 31 October: **Harry Duggan**, 338638, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX.
1 November: **Roy Walsh**, 119083, HMP Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leicester, LE16 7RP.
5 November: **Sean Kinsella**, 758661, HMP Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS.

STOP PRESS

As we were going to press *FRFI* received a phone call from two prisoners in Hull Special Unit.

This unit has a history of barbarity and oppression. In April this year an exercise-yard protest was broken up by a C and R squad (the new MUFTI). And it is now normal practice to use such squads at the slightest (or no) provocation. The unit is in a terrible condition: unpainted walls are covered in blood and excreta.

Paul Ross has just arrived at Hull, having been transferred from Full Sutton in a body-belt. At Full Sutton earlier this year, he and Phil May climbed on to the roof in protest against bad conditions and food and continual harassment, and to highlight the case of another prisoner, John McGranaghan, who has been in gaol since 1981 on rape charges despite a wealth of conflicting forensic evidence. His situation has been highlighted in the book *Miscarriages of Justice* by Bob Woffenden and featured in several national newspapers.

We hope to carry more detailed articles both about John McGranaghan and about the Hull Special Unit in a future issue of *FRFI*.

The brutality of Barlinnie

In June, July and August of this year I was incarcerated in the Barlinnie prison's punishment unit where the brutality and degradation inflicted upon me and my fellow prisoners gave me great cause for concern.

The punishment unit at Barlinnie is run in such a way as to bring about maximum physical and mental deterioration in a prisoner. Prisoners are confined in their cells 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are denied the right to exercise and the right to religious worship. Prisoners in the punishment unit are not even allowed to attend the prison church on Sundays. These violations are enforced by the prison authorities to bring about total isolation.

Cell doors are opened one at a time to ensure no prisoner even catches a glimpse of his fellow prisoners. In my

months in Barlinnie punishment unit, I was not able at any time to communicate with any other prisoner except by shouting out of my cell window for which I was repeatedly punished.

Slop-outs are at random to confuse us; one, sometimes two every 24 hours. On several occasions I received only one every 36 hours. Slop-outs are limited to roughly ten minutes to ensure prisoners are confined in the cells as much as possible. They are so infrequent that prisoners have to empty their chamber pots out of their cell windows when they overflow. If

caught they are punished.

Prison officers constantly try to intimidate prisoners by various methods, one of which is by wearing riot gear at all times. Meals are brought to the cells by a large gang of prison officers wearing crash helmets and boiler suits. Although I saw no violence towards prison officers in the unit, they still wore the riot gear which I therefore have to assume is purely for intimidation purposes.

Under this inhumane regime prisoners do inevitably crack up but when this happens they are not removed from the unit but given drugs to keep them silent within it. One particular prisoner has been held in these conditions for eight months and, as far as I know, still is.

I regularly heard the screams of prisoners being brought into the unit

by violent prison officers. I personally saw a prisoner being dragged naked past my cell window into the unit. He was being badly assaulted by a gang of prison officers and I heard him plead with his attackers to leave him alone which was met by laughter from the prison officers. He was then given drugs to knock him unconscious.

Britain claims to be an upholder of human rights, forever lecturing other countries about their violations. The British government is just as guilty of such violations, the only difference being that Britain keeps them better hidden.

Does the public know or care that such brutality is being carried out within British prisons?

Jimmy Dickson
(now in Full Sutton)

REVIEWS



The FSLN enters Managua

legendary figures, killed in 1976,) whose courage and example were an inspiration to the FSLN, it is through his eyes and the glasses he wore that the vision speaks, enabling others to see into the future. For with eyes like his,

'seeing will be like hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and seeing anew: loving. For loving is the only sense that is all the senses'

so that

'You will see that now Sandino isn't a man but a road, a path with scorched grass and the cicadas ordering silence: 'There a people go clandestine'

What these poems bring us close to – and Valle-Castillo's sequence echoes that of the *Canto Epico* – is the heroism and tenderness of revolutionary commitment. For while Somoza and his US backers talked of terrorists, and invested millions in the machinery of oppression, it was ordinary men and women who answered them in the excess of love for a country that had never been theirs except in the roots of the flowers of Nicaragua, 'the green green of the northern mountains', the soil they worked and the promise of the sun. Such heroism isn't wise. But it could make love out of poverty and murder, it could defy the torturers and strengthen the dispossessed in their struggle for their rights; and it gave them belief and the power to fight for themselves. And though this vision may seem to us only a distant myth and to US imperialists a source of mounting irritation and perplexity, to Somoza it was an irresistible agency of defeat. Dying for the future in a world in which poverty rules is to us a dream from the absent Third World. But these people made their world something immeasurably more than a dream. But out of political conviction, the vision of quotidian heroism and tenderness, comes a poetry of love, these songs for the dead. And through them *The Nicaraguan Epic* honours the making of that vision and invites us to share it, be part of it, help to keep it going. ■

Christopher Hampton

Katabasis can be contacted at 10 St Martins Close, London NW1 0HR.

Christopher Hampton is the author of a volume of poems, *A Cornered Freedom* (Peterloo Press, 1980). He is also the author of *Socialism in a Crippled World*, (Penguin, 1981) and *The Penguin Radical Reader*, (1984). He is a lecturer at the Polytechnic of Central London.

■ Cuba lives on!

Cuba: the Test of Time, Jean Stubbs, Latin America Bureau, 1989, £3.95.

Cuba: the Test of Time gives many examples of the advances which socialism has brought to Cuba. These are resounding refutations of the current attack on Marxism. Life expectancy has risen from 57 in pre-revolutionary 1958 to 74 in 1988. Illiteracy and malnutrition have been wiped out. Day care centres where working mothers can leave their children are available throughout the island. Factories have extensive facilities: one in Havana has its own gymnasium, sauna and video room; another provides readings for the workers – an hour of news and an hour of a novel a day.

Equally striking are the numerous examples given of Cuba's outstand-



May Day in Havana, 1988

ing internationalist spirit: 300,000 Cubans have served in Angola; 3,000 Cuban physicians currently work in some 30 different countries; international schools and universities provide education for the youth of the oppressed nations.

But *Cuba: the Test of Time* also shows how thirty years of imperial pressure – from the US-backed invasion at Playa Giron to the supplying of asymmetrical ball-bearings to wreck Cuban machinery – has limited Cuba's development and threatened its advances. Continued support from the Soviet Union and other COMECON countries has protected Cuba from the worst effects of the imperialist blockade.

But COMECON cannot provide all the imports Cuba needs: machinery and materials vital for Cuban industry and agriculture, commodities for popular consumption. Without these imports productivity falls which threatens the Cuban state's ability to defend its people's living standards.

The problems of staving off this threat are described: the use of market forces to stimulate productivity led to corruption and undermining of socialist principles; in 1986 a crash in the price of the island's main hard currency exports, oil and sugar, forced Cuba into debt to pay for imports.

Now Cuba has turned to the moral incentive, to the voluntary brigades of the 1960s, to the example of Che Guevara. The book does not speculate how successful these measures will be. It aims only to show what it calls the 'contradictory pushes and pulls' which have made socialist advance in Cuba so difficult. ■

Sarah Ricca

■ Freedom poetry

The Nicaraguan Epic, Carlos and Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy and Julio Valle-Castillo, translated by Dinah Livingstone, Katabasis, £5.95, 158pp.

Since 1989 marks the 10th anniversary of Nicaragua's 'New Time', this splendidly produced book is more than just a book of poems. In celebrating the energy, passion and commitment of those who fought for the FSLN in the years leading up to 19th July 1979, it records the epic struggle of the people of Nicaragua, the history of a revolution, and its survival against the enmity of the richest nation on earth.

Most of the poems of the *Canto Epico to the FSLN* and of Julio Valle-Castillo's *Nicaraguan Vision*, interspersed with historic and often poignant photographs, are short, direct and lyrical in tone; and as elegies honouring the courage and tenderness of the men and women who died, they speak with an immediacy that has in it something of the liberating impersonal vision of their sacrifice. Indeed, these songs to the dead are dedicated to the living everywhere and (as an incentive) to the defiant spirit of revolutionary action, a future the Sandinistas have already made available to the Nicaraguan people.

All the poems of the *Canto Epico*, conceived as a song-cycle by its authors Carlos and Luis Enrique Me-

gia Godoy, and of Julio Valle-Castillo, are here in the original. And set beside them Dinah Livingstone has provided her own delicately realized translations, done with real feeling for their intimacy and energy. It's not just that she knows the poems; she has herself been to Nicaragua, invited to participate in last year's poetry festival; and her sympathy and commitment to what the revolution signifies in real terms is demonstrated also through other work, and particularly her translation of poems by Ernesto Cardenal, published in 1988 by Journeyman Press as *Nicaraguan New Time*.

As you read these poems from Spanish into English and back again, you see the faces, sense the presence of the particular histories of people intent on the realization of a vision that mattered more to them than their lives. It's a vision remote from anything we can imagine here in late-capitalist Britain, where self-interest rules; and yet it strikes home in poem after poem in both parts of this joyous collection – and with particular impact in Julio Valle-Castillo's 21 poems, where the sensate immediacy of revolutionary experience functions at a deeper level, through metaphor and image, to transform the witness of those who died into a record of beginnings.

In the remarkable title poem for instance, on Carlos Fonseca, (one of the

■ The politics of Malcolm X

Malcolm X, The Last Speeches, Edited Bruce Perry. Pathfinder Press, £5.75

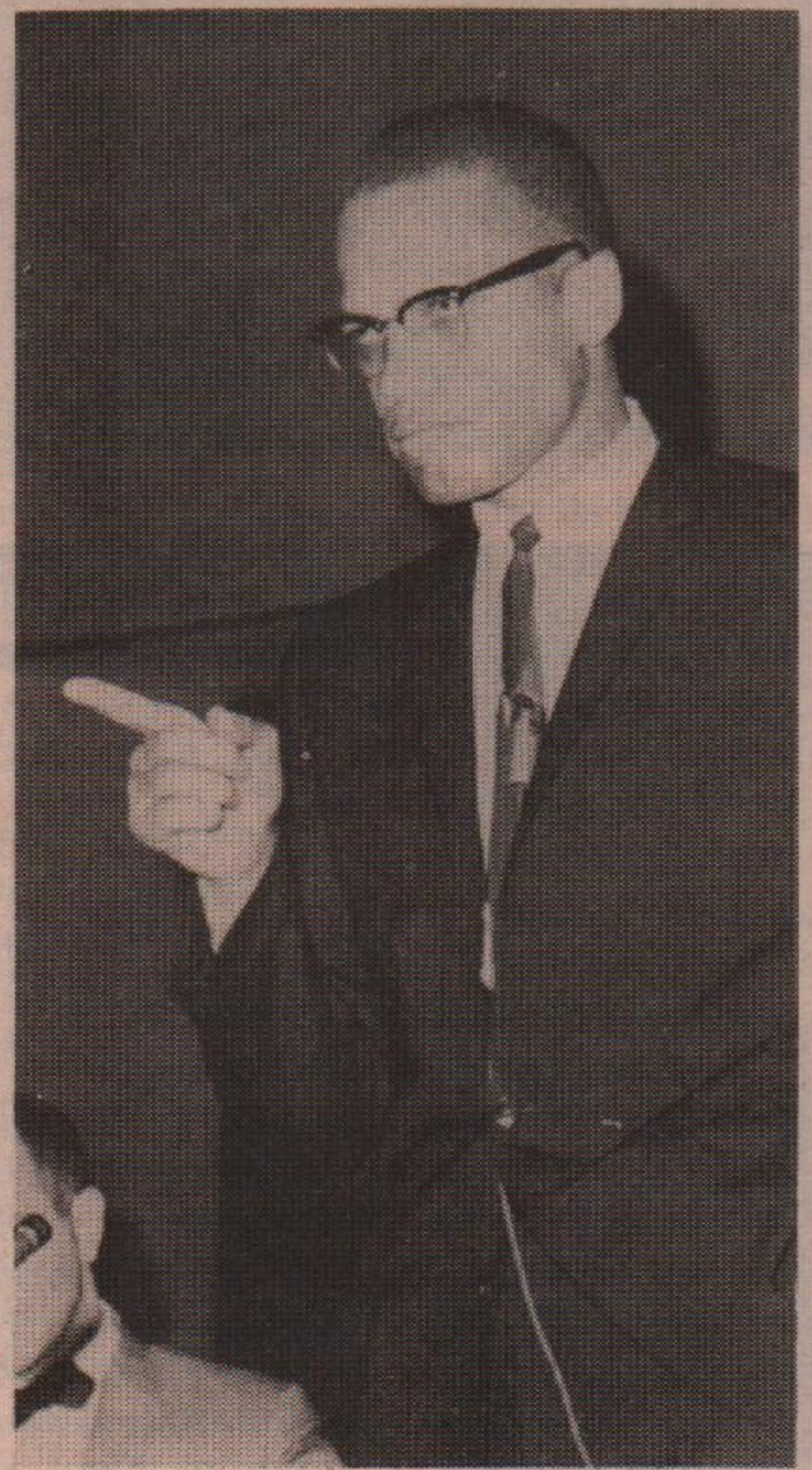
For those who have read *That Last Year of Malcolm X, the Evolution of a Revolutionary* (George Breitman) and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Malcolm X and Alex Haley), this book will be a welcome addition to the political history of the black leader. Compiled from tapes, *Malcolm X, The Last Speeches* fills in several blanks in previously published material.

Malcolm X said, 'My life is a chronology – of change'. From a youth misspent in petty crime and prison, he became a leader of the Black Muslim separatist movement, and hated target of white reaction. It was a dramatic change in his life, but the dynamic of his political involvement led to further crucial change: it forced him to confront both the petty bourgeois politics of the Black Muslim sect and its reluctance to deal with the realities of oppression for black people both in the USA and

worldwide. In 1964 he broke with the Black Muslims to form his own organisation. In the same year he travelled to Africa to meet Pan Africanist and revolutionary leaders. On 14 February 1965 he was shot dead by members of the Black Muslims.

Last Speeches illuminates the last period of his life and his move towards revolutionary politics. It is a pleasure to read. Here we have the unique voice of Malcolm X. He is the leader who is humble before the amazing events of the Civil Rights movement which culminated in the summer of 1963 in the Battle of Birmingham (Alabama) when thousands of school students were marched to prison. He is the reasonable man in the unreasonable world of injustice and racism. He is the voice of the people, yet risen above the people by his consciousness and commitment. He says, 'I'm the man you think you are... If you want to know what I'll do, figure out what you'll do. I'll do the same thing – only more of it.' ■

Susan Davidson



■ The racist press

Daily Racism: the Press and the People in Britain, Runnymede Trust, £3.50.

Paul Gordon and David Rosenberg have put together an important indictment of the racism of the British press during the 1980s. By selective reporting, lurid sensationalism, distortion, stereotyping and downright lies, the right-wing tabloids promote powerful negative images of black people in Britain.

The tabloids have said that immigrants pose a threat to the material well-being and cultural integrity of native Britain; that they compete unfairly for houses and jobs, scrounge off a welfare state built upon native taxation and bring violent crime and debilitating drugs to the streets of the inner city; that, as in 1981 in Brixton or 1985 in Handsworth, their inveterate delinquency has exploded into 'orgies of arson and looting'.

The authors show how the press presents black people as a problem and promotes solutions which evade the realities of British racism. The press peddle the racist view that those not yet arrived must be kept out by increasingly draconian immigration laws and those already here should either seek repatriation or surrender their distinctive identity. Anti-racist programmes which seek other solutions are portrayed by the press, either as misguidedly implying the existence of British racism or as provoking the very racial tensions they are intended to prevent.

In tabloid analyses, it is black people who have produced racism and who sustain it by their 'threatening presence' and 'incorrigible separateness'. White British society is portrayed as having done no more than react in understandable ways to intolerable pressures. Physical attacks on black people become explicable and excusable and opponents of

cultural plurality as Ray Honeyford and Eric Haly become either glorious martyrs or chivalrous white knight cutting down a menacing black dragon. Racism is accorded respectability: the irrational become reasonable.

The bourgeois broadsheets of the liberal middle-classes have not done much to counteract such influences. By failing to present evaluations of black minorities on their own terms by ignoring the rich and varied inner lives of minority societies, by marginalising the central concerns of black people, and, most of all, by failing to mount a sustained and powerful campaign against such pillars of racism as the immigration laws, the bourgeois press has allowed racism to achieve an alarming buoyance.

Seeking a deeper explanation of press racism, Gordon and Rosenberg find it in the balance of power in British society. The white middle-classes, their dominance founded on slavery, imperialism and economic exploitation, have found in the mainstream press a mouthpiece for their own narrow range of interests.

I have only one argument with the book. Gordon and Rosenberg tend to portray the press of the 1980s as the creator of popular racism. In reality working-class people have been conditioned by their masters over the last two hundred years to see the immigrant outsider, whether Jewish or Irish or Black, as a threat to some mystic national identity, and to view the inhabitants of empire as their social and cultural inferiors. The masters of the press today know well enough that in dealing with questions of race there is a large profit to be made from an appeal to the ingrained nativism, xenophobia and racism of the British people. ■

Bill Williams

FRFI READERS AND SUPPORTERS GROUPS

MANCHESTER
Imperialism's offensive against the German Democratic Republic
Wednesday 11 October, 7.30pm., The Millstone, Thomas Street, Off Tib Street, Manchester City Centre.

Manchester Readers and Supporters Groups are held every fortnight. For more details contact Manchester FRFI, PO Box 80, Manchester M60 1RY

LIVERPOOL
Crisis of world socialism
Wednesday 11 October, 7.30pm, LEU Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.

LONDON
A new path for Socialism.
For details contact FRFI.

For details of FRFI Readers and Supporters Groups in your area please contact FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

JUSTICE FOR THE WINCHESTER THREE

Public meeting organised by the Winchester Three Campaign

Thursday 26 October, 7.30pm, Manchester Town Hall.
Speakers include: Paddy Hilliard (Vice chair of NCCL), Tom Walsh (Federation of Irish Secs.), Prisoner's relative.

SMASH APARTHEID! SMASH FASCISM!

Sunday 12 November
Defend the Non-Stop Picket as the National Front march through central London. **Mass rally 10am, outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London WC2**

All day and all night. Details from City of London Anti-Apartheid Group (01-837 6050).

MARCH AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM!

Sunday 12 November:
Assemble 12.30pm sharp
Northumberland Avenue, off Trafalgar Square. March to the Cenotaph at 1pm sharp

MURDER ON THE ROCK

HOW THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT GOT AWAY WITH MURDER
BY MAXINE WILLIAMS
64pp, £2.50 plus 40p p&p

A full exposé of the murder of the three IRA volunteers in Gibraltar last year and the subsequent cover up. The evidence amassed in the booklet has been confirmed by recent revelations from the Spanish police and other sources. The British government committed murder and got away with it.

MURDER ON THE ROCK tells you how they did it and who were their accomplices.

Reviewed in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*: Murder on the Rock 'sets these killings in the context of shoot-to-kill and skilfully gathers the threads of the story from what had to have been the simultaneous planning of both the shootings and the cover up - it's the factual story, well told' in *Troops Out* - 'If like me, you had known that most of what got out about Gibraltar was a pack of lies, but had been unable to untangle it all, this account of the extent and success of the government's efforts could leave you feeling pretty sick and frightened. Highly recommended' in *The Irish Post* ... lights a candle - not in veneration at any shrine but rather for the purpose of setting fire to those newspapers which co-operated in the cover up.'

Published in May, this new booklet had sold 1500 copies within a month. Can you afford not to read it?

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- A movement must be built in Britain in solidarity with the struggling peoples of Ireland, South Africa, Palestine. Help us to do this - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built here in Britain which stands with the oppressed fighting racism, repression and poverty. Help build this movement - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built which challenges and defeats the treachery of the opportunist British Labour and trade union movement - **Join the RCG!**

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TERRY O'HALLORAN MEMORIAL FUND

The RCG has launched a Memorial Fund to commemorate Terry's life and contribution to the political movement in Britain.

Terry played an important part in fighting for the rights of prisoners. The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund will be used to provide books and publications for prisoners at their request.

We plan to produce a special book plate for each book.

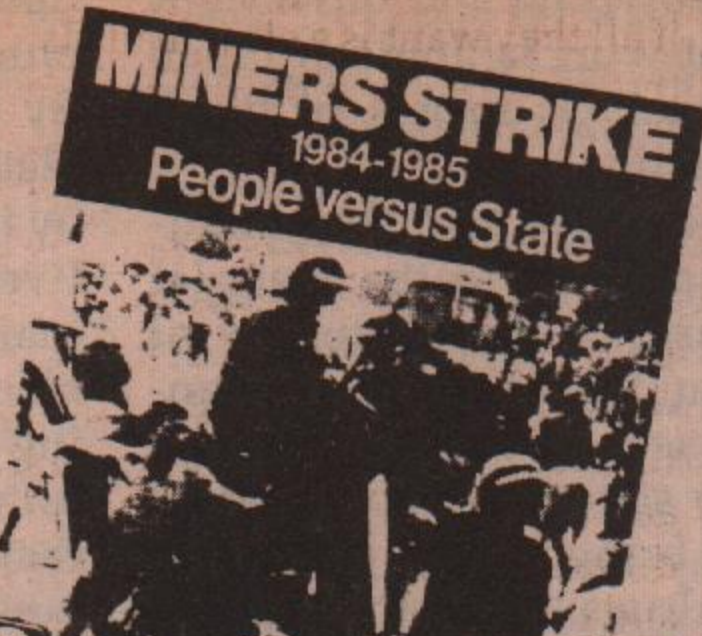
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Viraj Mendis Life or Death? Edited by Eddie Abrahams and Viraj Mendis. 48pp, £1.50 plus 30p p&p

NEW PUBLICATIONS:
A new path for socialism? Revolutionary renewal in the Soviet Union and Cuba. By David Reed and Trevor Rayne. 21pp, £1.00 plus 28p p&p.

Value and Price in Marx's Capital by David Yaffe. A Revolutionary Communist reprint. 19pp, £1.00 plus 28p p&p.

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ORGANISE with FRFI

Defending Marxism

LORNA REID

In September RCG members and supporters gathered at dayschools in London and Manchester to discuss 'The crisis of world socialism'. Their purpose was to equip our comrades to defend socialism against the reactionary tirade of ignorant and dishonest 'argument'.

Eddie Abrahams and Trevor Rayne placed the development of the socialist countries in their historical and economic context and explained the changing relationship between imperialism and socialism. Examining recent developments, in Hungary and Poland in particular, the discussion led to the acknowledgment of the vital role of a conscious communist party capable of coping with severe problems without making concessions to imperialism and to pro-capitalist trends which exist in the socialist countries.

Unfortunately in many socialist countries, the Communist Party has become isolated from the working class and has been infiltrated by pro-capitalist elements eager to collaborate with imperialism. Much of their 'market socialist' reforms merely serve to allow imperialist

capital a foothold in the socialist camp.

It is in this context that the dayschools discussed the contribution being made by the Cuban communists and Fidel Castro in particular. In rejecting 'market socialism' as a panacea for the ills of socialist countries and in highlighting the crucial role of the communist party in communist ideological and political work, the Cuban communists offer a revolutionary starting point for all dedicated to fighting for and defending socialism.

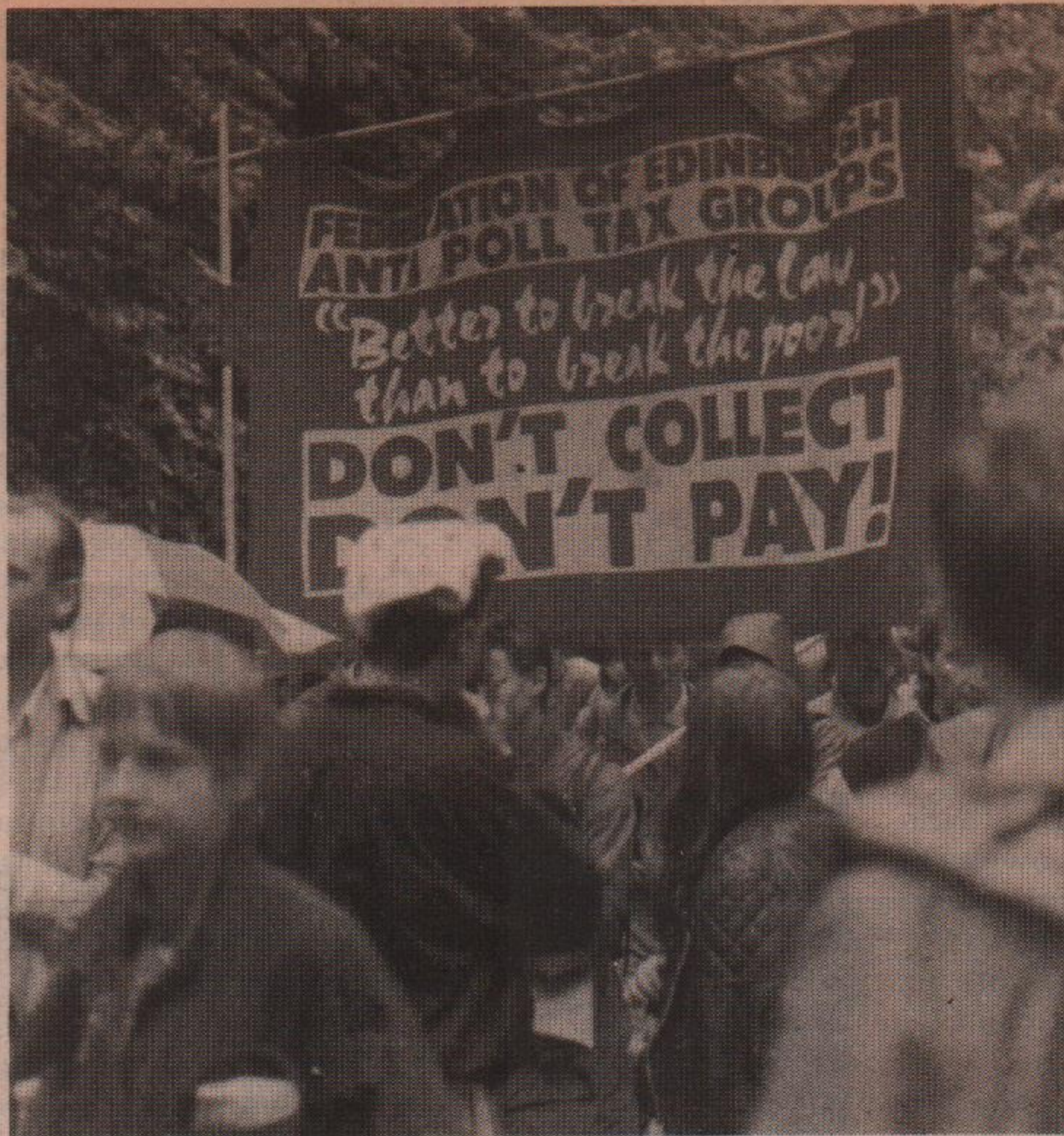
Whilst the socialist countries face enormous difficulties, only the faint-hearted and reactionaries who have no serious Marxist understanding of capitalism, imperialism and socialism can speak of the 'end of socialism'. In the socialist coun-

tries and in the Soviet Union in particular, the existence of a strong working class will ensure serious resistance to those who wish to restore capitalism in the socialist countries. Meanwhile, our duty in the imperialist countries remains to build a new communist, anti-imperialist force to put an end to British imperialism itself. This will be our main contribution to the defence and advance of communism internationally.

These and other topics of discussion ensured that our comrades and supporters were more confident in their analysis of the crisis of socialism in the world today but also understood the necessity for constant assessment and research into the different forces at play both within the socialist camp and the imperialist camp.



Fighting the Poll Tax



RCG members chaired and spoke at two successful local anti-Poll Tax public meetings in September. In Bradford, 60 local people attended the Gillington and Heaton Anti-Poll Tax group. One of our comrades enthusiastically supported the group's campaign for non-payment which the RCG had argued for in earlier meetings. We also intervened in the discussion on the role of the Labour Party, pointing to their anti-working class collaboration with the Poll Tax and argued for a grass roots campaign which involved the community in militant resistance.

In Tooting, South London, 80 local people attended a Tooting Anti-Poll Tax Union public meeting which was chaired by RCG member Gary Rose and addressed by Paul Foot, journalist and member of the SWP, Lorna Reid for the RCG and

Helen Barnes for the Union. Lorna explained the RCG's support for a broad-based, grass roots campaign against the Poll Tax, independent of the official labour and trade union movement, which puts to the fore the interests of those who cannot pay. The meeting voted unanimously to defend Leo Gilbert who that day had received notification of a £50 fine from Wandsworth Council for failure to register for the Poll Tax. Since then a press conference has been arranged for Leo and a great deal of local interest has been generated. Significantly, Wandsworth Town Hall NALGO, pledged at the public meeting to support Leo as has Leo's student union at Goldsmiths college. Around the defence of Leo the unity between the community and the trade unions, which the RCG has argued is key to the fight against the Poll Tax, is starting to develop.

Fighting apartheid

On 6 September, RCG members joined the 1000 strong City AA demonstration protesting against the racist, white only elections in South Africa that day. It was RCG comrade Richard Roques who was the first to lie in front of cars and buses in order to completely stop all the traffic through Trafalgar Square. Many people followed him until eventually they blocked the whole road in front of the embassy. 360 copies of *Fight Racism! Fight*

Imperialism! were sold to demonstrators blocking the road.

The report of our intervention at this year's City AA AGM is reported on page 5. This month we are joining with other organisations and individuals in commemorating the anniversary of the media ban on representatives of the Republican movement in Ireland. We will also be marching to commemorate the death of Terence McSwiney, who died on hunger strike in Brixton jail.

££££

Our readers' response to our special September fund was very good. We raised £1143. £143 more than our £1000 target. Your donations will go towards ensuring that the work of the RCG continues; our theoretical contributions as read in *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* and our practical activity in the fight against apartheid, the Poll Tax, in solidarity with the Irish people and the oppressed in Britain and abroad.

FRFI needs £500 every month!

We are asking readers to help us keep the price of the paper to 40p waged and 20p unwaged. Act now by sending us your donations to subsidise FRFI, and help us with our political work.

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FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! is the only newspaper which consistently covers the brutality and the fightback within the prisons. FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! goes into nearly 40 prisons in Britain, Ireland and throughout the world. Every month new prisoners write in to ask for the paper to be sent to them.

Each month it costs £66 to send our newspaper into prisoners. A subscription for a prisoner costs £7.50 and prisoners cannot afford to pay this. We are appealing to our readers to take out a subscription for a prisoner, or better still make a regular monthly contribution to our Prisoners Fund (please send for a standing order form)

I enclose a donation of £ _____ to help pay for a prisoners subscription to FRFI. (Cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications)

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Georgi Dimitrov

There has been one anniversary that seems to have passed without any comment. 2 July marked the 40th anniversary since the death of the great communist Georgi Dimitrov.

Dimitrov was a founding member of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1919. In 1933 he was arrested by the Nazis while in Berlin and accused of setting fire to the Reichstag. Refusing defence counsel, he defended himself. Stopped by the court in his final address, he declared: 'No less determined than old Galileo we Communists declare today: "E per si muove!" The wheel of history moves on towards the ultimate, inevitable, irrepressible goal of communism.'

Elected General Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1935 he forged the policy of the Popular Front in the struggle against fascism. After the war he led the Bulgarian working class and peasants on the path to socialism. He also sought to solve the Balkan national question through the formation of a Balkan Socialist Federation, which if conceived may have dealt a death blow to the rise of any reactionary nationalism in the future. His death in 1949 was a great loss to the Bulgarian Communist Party and the international communist movement. Let us not forget the great individuals of the communist tradition. Yours in solidarity Dale Evans

Subscribe to Granma Weekly Review

Many thanks for the pamphlet *A new path for Socialism?* and for FRFI. Obviously I do not agree with all your analysis of problems or I would already be a member of the RCG but one thing I most definitely agree with you on is that the major problem with the left in this country is their eurocentrism.

I was therefore pleased that the pamphlet concentrated on what is essentially a debate between Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party on the one hand and many in the International Communist Movement who appear to be doubting the achievements and possibilities of the socialist system. I was also pleased the way you quote extensively from *Granma*.

For your readers who have not seen it I should explain that *Granma* is the daily paper of the Cuban people published by their Communist Party. Every week a weekly version is distributed internationally in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese giving a summary of the Cuban press and the way it reflects Cuban life and views.

Granma Weekly Review

contains speeches of Cuban leaders (including all the major speeches by Fidel) and reports debates in Cuba on health, education, housing, agriculture and all aspects of Cuban life. It also has well informed articles on history, culture, entertainment and sport. There is a regular section covering events in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For anyone interested in finding out about Cuba, the Americas or the ongoing dialogue Cuban communists are having with the rest of the International Communist Movement *Granma Weekly Review* is essential reading.

It can be obtained by sending a £10 cheque to me for a years subscription stating clearly your name, address and the language you wish to receive it in. Cheques to be made payable to 'BCRC (Granma)'. Unfortunately it will be about eight weeks before the first copy comes through but after that it will drop through your letter box within five to eight days of publication in Havana. For just under 20p a week it is in my opinion invaluable for anyone interested in what is happening outside the boundaries of Europe.

Nick Hegarty
BCRC (Granma)
928 Bourges Boulevard
Peterborough
PE1 2AN

request of the coroner in Brugge, Belgium, who was investigating into the shooting of a British soldier in Oostende in 1988. A weapon found in the car in which Gerard and Gerard Hanratty were travelling at the time of their arrest is supposed to be the weapon used in the attack on the soldier. The Brugge coroner was apparently trying to determine whether Gerard McGeough had been in Sweden after his asylum application was turned down in 1987.

Whether anything was found during the raid that would serve as evidence of this for the Brugge coroner is not known. However, in January 1989 the decision was made to hand over the items of clothing, alleged asylum papers and other personal notes of Gerard, confiscated during the second raid, to the Belgium police.

According to Gerard's lawyer, 90% of the 'evidence' used in the charges filed against Gerard in the forthcoming trial in West Germany now stem from the information drawn from these alleged asylum papers. In these papers, Gerard is supposed to have written about his Republican background in the North of

Ireland. Gerard himself has stated that he has no idea what these papers are nor who they belong to. The papers were handed out under the 'other interests' clause in Swedish Law (Secrets Act) which overrides all other considerations preventing the handing over of personal documents.

It is quite clear from this case that the West German crime authorities are literally scraping the bottom of the barrel in their need to provide adequate 'evidence' for the charges aimed at Gerard McGeough and Gerard Hanratty.

The Ireland Solidarity Groups in West Germany call upon you to join in the international letter writing campaign to the Swedish Prime Minister, Ingvar Carlsson, deploring the actions of the Swedish authorities and asking him to intervene to have the papers withdrawn. Write to: Statsminister Mr Ingvar Carlsson, Sverige Riksdag, Rosenbad 4, S-10333 Stockholm, Sverige. Yours in solidarity,

Elizabeth Palm
On behalf of the Ireland Solidarity Groups in West Germany (Gissen, Freiburg, Gottingen and West Berlin).

building up new traditions and mechanisms of socialist democracy and legality from a very feeble basis indeed.

If comrade Ben thinks that democratic and legal rights are something for which only the bourgeoisie are concerned, then he will have difficulty explaining why workers came out in their hundreds of thousands to support the students' movement in China.

Very disparate forces, then, were united behind the general demands of this movement. It is important to distinguish between the mass of those who took part and the small group of pro-capitalist elements who, with strong backing from abroad, managed to grasp leading positions in the movement's leadership. It is also clear that the Party and Government leaderships were sharply divided,

with one faction (headed by CP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang) seeking to boost the popular movement for its own ends - with tragic results.

The bourgeoisie worldwide has done its best to make maximum anti-China and anti-communist propaganda out of the June events. However, even the bourgeois media have now begun, bit by bit, to back down on their allegations of a 'massacre' of 'unarmed students' in Tiananmen Square. Our main task now as communists must be to nail the lies spread by the bourgeoisie and, above all to fight against the anti-China sanctions which have gained so much support among the liberal and Trotskyist left.

Jonathan Cohen
London

Terence McSwiney Commemoration Committee

October this year will mark the 69th anniversary of the sacrifice of Terence McSwiney who carried out a protest of an almost incredible 78 days on hunger strike before he died in Brixton prison. A committee has been established to commemorate that sacrifice with a march and rally in Brixton on Saturday 28 October.

The committee feels that this is an appropriate occasion on which to point to the fact that Britain continues its war in - and occupation of - Ireland to this day and that as a result of that war over 1000 young Irish people are presently incarcerated as were McSwiney and so many of his comrades before. We feel that there remains the potential today for a strong solidarity movement in Britain, based on the alliance of the Irish community here, other oppressed ethnic minorities and the larger British working class, as was evidenced by the turnout at McSwiney's funeral procession and his lying-in-state at Southwark Cathedral.

This solidarity movement is the only force in Britain which can significantly contribute towards the ending of the war on the basis of 'Britain Out of Ireland' and 'Self-determination for the Irish People'. We have come together in this committee from many

China - democracy is the issue

If all the Chinese workers wanted only a clear lead why was it so difficult to give it? If a clear lead was all that was needed, an order from above all that the masses desired, why oh why must that lead include killing those masses?

If the CCP is the party of the masses why does it do that? Why do the masses, the workers join the demonstrations - one million strong - consider that in London, one in seven of the population - if all they want is a clear lead? Is the rest of the world wrong when it says the students, the workers want democracy ie. political rights? There is nothing abstract for the working class about political rights - there is all the world of difference between the right to vote for your government and the lack of that right - the difference is between democracy and dictatorship. There is no democracy today in China. That is what the struggle is about, not a clear lead.

Certainly democracy means one person one vote. Members of classes other than the working class will be involved. In China that means the majority class (80%), the peasantry will vote. Are socialists against that? Does it really help socialists in the West that they think that for China if not in the West generally?

But then what if the peasantry or the working class vote against the CP - as in Poland, as in Russia with miners strikes - are they to be disenfranchised? What kind of democracy is it if the only valid vote is a vote for the existing power? Is the Western working class going to be attracted by a doctrine which does not allow them to make their own mistakes? Is that the liberation of 'man' that Marx fought for?

So we are told those who vote the wrong way are counter-revolutionaries. Are we to say if the masses, the workers, the peasantry vote that way they are

Write to:

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different organisations to make what we hope will be a significant contribution towards building that movement.

Speakers have been invited from Ireland and the Irish community in Britain, as has a British trade unionist with a record of activity on Irish solidarity. We also hope to have speakers from the Afro-Caribbean community (a large part of which lives in the area) and also from the Asian community. Marching bands from Scotland have promised to attend and there will be a social that evening.

We ask your readers to support us by spreading the word and by turning out in as large numbers as possible on the day. Last but not least, we urgently need funds and we appeal to all to send us individual and organisational contributions to cover our costs in leaflets, posters and transport for our friends from Scotland.

Leaflets, sponsorship forms or further information will be forwarded to those who send an SAE to our address or phone 01-326 4740.

Bégé ann, a chairde (Be there friends!) Beir bua, Diarmuid Breatnach Terence McSwiney Commemoration Committee, c/o Lambeth IBRG, 245A Coldharbour Lane, London SW2.

to be coerced, to be forced to be free?

And for what are they forced to be free? For an economic system which offers less than an alternative. The 'socialist' system offers less than unfettered capitalism - class differentiation the lot - it is a fetter on production. 'For as long as capital has a higher productivity its cheap commodities represent a threat' (FRFI). Do socialists really wish to see the Chinese masses coerced to live under such a fetter? Is this not turning Marxism on its head?

Is not the current crisis of socialism that its working class, its peasantry do not believe in it? Would rather IMF direction of the economy than that of the local CP? The Chinese have an arguable claim to be the greatest civilisation over centuries and feel that in the last 40 years they have fallen further and further behind. Are they not entitled to say that lack of democracy has brought to them such disasters as the great leap forward ie. back, and the cultural revolution and now the massacre in Tiananmen Square?

As the Chinese leadership can offer no alternative to the opening to the West surely they are not to be supported against their 'counter-revolutionary masses'? In communist societies the CP claims the 'leading role'. That meant the political monopoly of power. In a preceding edition of China, FRFI said that inevitably meant corruption, the abuse of power. Was that wrong? Surely not.

We are now in the paradoxical situation that everywhere communist man or woman is in chains yet communism is meant to be the liberation of both man and woman. The tide of revolution has ebbed in the West to a whisper but in the communist bloc everywhere there is a revolutionary situation and what are the revolutionaries of FRFI? Behind Ligachev? John Hales

Namibia: the exiles return

Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO, has returned after 27 years in exile. Thousands welcomed him. Nujoma called for old wounds to be healed:

'My comrades and I returned in a spirit of peace, love and above all national reconciliation'.

The SWAPO leader's message of conciliation covered the economic sphere:

'The business community, which has in the past taken a rather sceptical view of SWAPO's intentions, has reacted with an impressive degree of understanding concerning our agenda for the future of our country'.

Two days earlier the white settlers issued notice they do not accept majority rule. At 9pm on 12 September Anton Lubowski was shot dead at his front door. Lubowski, the most prominent white SWAPO member, was Treasurer of the National Union of Namibian Workers, barrister for the Upington 26 and part of SWAPO's Election Directorate.

The arch-racist Wit Wolwe claimed the assassination. The colonial police SWAPOL arrested Irishman Donald Acheson, a mercenary with loyalist connections. Military power lies in the hands of the South Africans. Although Namibia is under international scrutiny, the racists are conducting a dirty war involving the army, police and paid gangs. ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM looks at South Africa's attempts to derail independence.

SOUTH AFRICA'S DIRTY WAR

Petrus Joseph, a former SWAPO combatant, was captured, tortured and forced into Koevoet. He resigned on 7 February, was immediately arrested, and held for nine days on the charge that he had ammunition from communist sources. In March Joseph, Paulus David and four others obtained a court order restraining members of the security forces from harassment. Paulus David testified that senior Koevoet officers had ordered their men to arrest and otherwise intimidate SWAPO supporters. But the harassment continued. On 1 August SWAPOL entered Joseph's home. At 7am the next day when Petrus Joseph returned he was shot dead.

According to UN Resolution 435 all but 1,500 South African troops are to be withdrawn. Nominally Pretoria complied with this condition in June, except it retained a further 900 troops to assist in air traffic control, and built up its forces in massive military bases in Walvis Bay. The 1,500 troops are rotated at intervals, equivalent to more than 4,000 troops in the field. Occupying forces are further swollen by Unita and the Koevoet counter-insurgency units. Pretoria has 20,000 armed men operating in Namibia with substantial reserves.

Under Resolution 435 Pretoria's administration of law and order is to be under UN supervision. UNTAG could not stop SWAPOL shooting a teacher in Amraalsduin after they had sjamboked and tear gassed his students, or firing rubber bullets and tear gas at dismissed workers 'illegally gathering' at South West Breweries. UNTAG has not prevented convoys of Casspirs terrorising the civilian population. In Kavango SWAPOL sets up road blocks by day and cordons off villages by night. In Ovamboland they raid the voter registration offices, dispersing potential electors and conduct house to house searches.

UN Resolution 640 demands that Koevoet be disbanded. South Africa agreed to confine 1,200 Koevoet troops to base. But there are 5,000 Koevoets. Those that are 'confined' are at base for 8 hours a day only and let out for night raids.



Anton Lubowski

Apartheid's military have a campaign for Winning Hearts and Minds, WHAM, channelled through the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. Ostensibly a political party, the DTA is the creation and instrument of the counter-insurgency strategists. Disbanded SWATF have been hired by the DTA as vigilantes. DTA vigilantes have spread from Ovamboland to Windhoek's Katatura township where they abduct SWAPO election agents, assault and target the homes of opponents.

Ominously, Pretoria has instructed the various units it has 'disbanded', yet which still remain on its payroll, to report for duty in November.

SWAPO'S EX-DETAINEES

42,000 Namibians have returned from exile. The majority have come from SWAPO camps, amongst them two contingents that were previously held in detention by SWAPO. Their reports have had a considerable impact on the election campaign.

They were held 40 at a time in underground pits. SWAPO internal security, headed by Solomon 'Jesus' Auala, alleged the prisoners were South African spies. The methods of torture to secure confessions are reported to include: flogging, skewering with sticks, beatings, solitary

confinement, mock executions, threats of execution of families, burying in sand, electric shocks, suspension in mid air, dragged behind cars, gasoline and other substances rubbed in wounds.

According to the ex-detainees SWAPO Security mutilated women accused of having South African radio transmitters or razor blades implanted in their bodies.

There is no doubt that Pretoria sent agents to spy on SWAPO. What has been questioned is the brutal methods used against fellow freedom-fighters in response to that threat. The Namibian Council of Churches, which correctly locates abuses in the context of a harsh war brought about by South Africa's colonial occupation, has entered negotiations with the former detainees and SWAPO.

SWAPO Foreign Secretary Theoben Guirab said that it was clear that some of the movement's officials charged with interrogation activities had taken the law into their own hands, and if they were found within the movement's structures they would be held responsible for their actions. SWAPO leaders 'don't condone torture under any circumstances', and if SWAPO officers had tortured captives, the leadership was obliged to bring them to account.

Others locate the responsibility

with the SWAPO leadership itself. A group of former detainees wrote *A Report to the Namibian People: Historical Account of the SWAPO Spy-drama*, which argues the internal regime sprang from the movement's strategy and, in particular:

'...the decision by the (UN) General Assembly which recognised SWAPO as "the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people". The doctrine of authenticity led to a negligent complacency on the part of the externally based leadership of SWAPO. The latter shifted their reliance on the masses of our people as the decisive force in the struggle to the international community, thereby alienating the movement from the masses and frustrating the internal leadership and virtually all other patriotic forces inside the country'.

The fate of many SWAPO detainees who did not return is not known. A Parents Committee has been formed to find over 500 missing people. The UN has sent an investigative mission to Angola and Zambia.

A variety of journalists and groupings, from American reactionaries to German Greens and British Trotskyists, have rushed to condemn SWAPO and call for an international enquiry. *FRFI* has consistently maintained the view that it is for the Namibian people to exercise their right to self-determination, which is still denied by apartheid and imperialism. SWAPO's accountability is to the Namibian people. Socialists in Britain can only make a contribution to achieving accountability if they do not interfere in Namibia's affairs and support all Namibians in the fight to rid their country of colonial occupation.

WHO DECIDES?

The elections are due to be held on 6 November. Registration of voters was to be completed by 15 September. 677,000 voters were registered, but the distribution of voters was much higher than expected in certain border areas indicating manipulation of about 15 per cent of the registrations. Karasburg and Keetmanshoop together registered 12,874 more voters than their total estimated adult population. The discrepancy is explained by registrations from South African security force personnel claiming voting rights. In Kavango the DTA has been giving registration cards to UNITA. In Ovamboland, SWAPO's stronghold, registration was 47,000 fewer than adult population estimates. The UN extended registration for one week at SWAPO's insistence.

Louis Pinnaer, Pretoria's direct rule Administrator General and *de facto* government, has issued draft rules for voting. 400 polling stations will be manned by SWAPOL, political parties are disbarred. SWAPOL will mark each voter's registration number on the envelope in which the ballot paper is contained before it is placed in the ballot box, and mark the vote for anyone they deem 'illiterate' - up to 50 per cent of Namibians. The colonial administration will match each ballot against central records before the vote is counted as valid. This procedure, with obvious opportunities for intimidation and corruption of the count, could delay results for a month. Ample time for destabilisation. The UN and all the progressive Namibian parties are disputing Pinnaer's rules.

The election is for 72 members of a Constituent Assembly. On 4 September Pinnaer proclaimed that parties must lodge 2,000 names and addresses, their constitution and R10,000 by 12 September. Nine parties made the deadline, they will win seats proportionate to their share of the total national votes cast (except in

Walvis Bay which South Africa has excluded).

Pinnaer claims control of the finances and administration of the Assembly and has issued a declaration of fundamental rights to be incorporated in the constitution. Pinnaer lays down that all Assembly votes must be carried by 48 out of the 72 members. He will refer the agreed constitution to a review by South African-appointed judges. All this adds up to the assumption of executive and judicial power by the South Africans, irrespective of the vote.

HANDS OFF NAMIBIA!

The Anti-Apartheid Movement argues that Pretoria's strategy hinges on preventing SWAPO getting 2/3 of the Constituent Assembly. This simplistic analysis both covers up for the AAM's disgraceful record of sabotaging support for Namibian patriotic forces other than SWAPO, and underestimates the size of the task confronting the Namibian people if they are to gain national liberation. As always, sectarianism holds back the struggle against imperialism.

Pretoria aims to create a collaborationist bloc, 1/3 of the Assembly, that defends property and privilege and contains the demands of the oppressed whether they be raised through SWAPO or any other party elected to the Assembly. It cannot be argued that patriotic Namibians who contest SWAPO's leadership are playing into South Africa's hands. The concerns of the Parents Committee and former SWAPO detainees for justice and accountability in the liberation movement are legitimate and represent a class pressure from below. *FRFI* holds a non-sectarian position. In *FRFI* 86 we reported the visit to Britain of Hitjevi Veii and Otilie Abrahams, leaders of the Namibia National Front. Hitjevi Veii told a rally in northern Hereroland that the central issue is, 'the return of the land to the people'. The NNF is fighting for a state which, 'should have as its priority the upliftment of the poorest blacks and the abolition of unjust white enrichment... a good government should aim at eliminating poverty and hunger'.

South Africa only accepted the implementation of the UN Resolution 435 plan as part of a package. The strings attached to independence for Namibia were negotiations in Angola and the withdrawal of the Cuban internationalist troops. Jonas Savimbi, leader of Unita, has reneged on the ceasefire agreement he made with Angola's President Eduardo dos Santos.

Apart from the suffering this forebodes for the Angolan people, the consequences of war in Angola for a future Namibia are dire. By virtue of its occupation of Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep sea port, and control of the southern rail link, Pretoria controls Namibia's main trade routes and 98% of all exports and imports. The economy is geared to servicing the imperialists through export of Namibia's mineral and agricultural wealth. An incoming government could escape total economic dependency by diversifying the economy, which could take decades, reclaiming Walvis Bay or by establishing trade through Angola. But Savimbi's bandits lie in wait, completing Pretoria's noose.

All South Africa's moves point in one direction. Whatever the composition of the Constituent Assembly the outcome is intended to be a dependent economy and neo-colonial state structure imprisoning Namibia's first government. No radical programme promoting the interests of the black working class can be implemented unless its bourgeois class enemies within the state are defeated. The hoped for reconciliation is premature. ■