

# Workers Press

18p

PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY  
Saturday April 5 1986 Number 18

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## MORRIS RALLY THURSDAY

FURNITURE workers at the Morris factory in Glasgow, who have been on strike for ten months against dictatorial management tactics and for the right to union representation, are holding a public meeting this Thursday, April 10th.

The meeting starts at 7:30 pm at the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. All trades unionists are invited to discuss how the campaign in support of the strikers, who have been sacked by their anti-union boss, can be stepped up.

## Attack on 'Express' printers

NEGOTIATIONS are still going on over management demands for sweeping job cuts at United Newspapers, who print the 'Daily Express', the 'Sunday Express' and the 'Daily Star'.

Agreement was reached last week with the National Union of Journalists. Its members voted 473-89 to accept 160 job cuts and a longer working week for sub-editors.

Bill Miles, national officer of the SOGAT print union, said agreement was close with his union's chapels, but talks would continue over the weekend.

Negotiations are also going on at the Glasgow-based 'Daily Record' and 'Sunday Mail', owned by Mirror Group Newspapers, where journalists and printworkers returned last week after a three-week dispute.

The unions have agreed to negotiate voluntary job losses and increased working hours.

In return Maxwell has withdrawn demands for compulsory redundancies and given guarantees that chapel officials will not be victimised.

The unions' willingness to accept job cuts follows the wholesale sacking of printworkers at the 'Times' and 'Sunday Times', 'Sun' and 'News of the World'.

The campaign against Murdoch is being boosted by a printworkers' march, setting off from his Glasgow plant, at Portman Street, Kinning Park, from a mass protest this Saturday from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

TUC regions and the print unions will organise pickets of TNT depots, rallies and demonstrations in support of the thirty sacked printworkers on the march. They arrive in London on May 3.

# LABOUR PURGE BACKFIRES

BY BILL HUNTER

THE Labour Party leadership's attempt to purge twelve members, who are accused of being 'Militant' supporters, has run into deep trouble in Liverpool.

The National Executive Committee's investigating team said that the expulsions would be carried out 'according to the party's rules and the principles of natural justice'. It came to grief when a court found that the expulsions were precisely contrary to 'natural justice'.

The NEC has suspended the Liverpool District Labour Party and appointed two temporary full-time officers, who could control the reconstituted DLP and council group on the Transport House bureaucracy's behalf.

They set up a Temporary Co-ordinating Committee of Constituency Labour Parties and affiliated organisations, particularly to conduct selection of candidates and run the May council election campaign.

They had expected the twelve to be expelled by the time the committee was formed — but the walk-out by left-wing NEC members torpedoed that plan. So the new body defiantly elected Tony Mulhearn, one of the twelve and chairman of the now-disbanded DLP, as the committee's chairman.

The purge could always be organised another way, were it simply a question of altering the procedure to satisfy the courts which are now being used to block the expulsions.

What makes the big difficulties for Kinnoch and the witch-hunters on the NEC is a deep-seated division in the Labour Party and trade unions.

The underlying tension is between the rank-and-file and Labour and trade union bureaucracy, rather than between Kinnoch and the 'Mili-



Labour leaders' expulsion moves against Tony Mulhearn (left), Derek Hatton and their supporters on Liverpool City Council have collapsed

tant' supporters. This tension finds sharp expression on Merseyside with its militant traditions, and its workers ravaged by the decline of capitalist industry.

At the Labour Party conference Kinnoch was able to pour sarcastic scorn on councillors delivering redundancy notices to 30,000 Liver-



pool council workers. Those in Liverpool who saw only the mistakes and opportunism of the 'Militant' supporters and other councillors, were simply grasping an excuse to support Kinnoch. They avoid taking a position on the principle question.

This stance is taken by the so-called Liverpool Labour

Left, who refuse to fight the witch-hunt while concentrating on issues which, even if important, are secondary none the less.

The Liverpool Labour left, grouped around 'Tribune' comprise on Merseyside what is vaguely termed the 'soft left', whose function has become to help Kinnoch prepare for a right-wing labour government.

Their first meeting, called with the avowed intention of bringing together all the non-'Militant' socialist left in the Labour Party, rallied two or three hundred. Numbers rapidly declined when the movement centred solely on anti-'Militant' grievances and supported the NEC witch-hunt.

The inquiry was planned by the right-wing trade union and labour leaders as part of

TURN TO PAGE 2



EASTER IN BELFAST: These girls' enthusiasm for the parades commemorating the 1916 Dublin uprising was greater than their fear of the British army. Report and more pictures, centre pages.

## ★SOGAT★NGA★AUEW★NUJ★ NATIONAL MARCH & RALLY

SUNDAY 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1986

IN SUPPORT OF PRINTWORKERS  
IN DISPUTE WITH MURDOCH

Rally Trafalgar Sq.

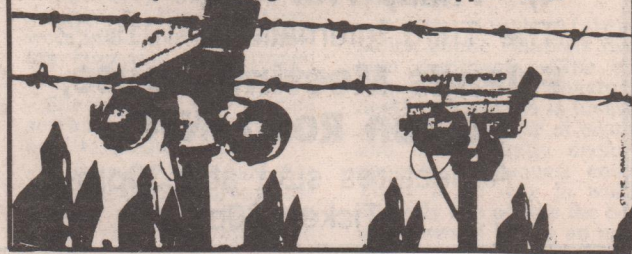
3pm

Speakers will include

Brenda Dean SOGAT, Tony Dubbins NGA  
Harry Conroy NUJ, Jimmy Knapp NUR  
Alan Sapper ACCT, Barbara Switzer TASS  
Rodney Bickerstaffe NUPE  
Diane Warwick AUT, Arthur Scargill NUM.

MARCH to WAPPING moves off 5pm  
led by 6,000 SACKED PRINTWORKERS  
Rally, 7.30 Wellclose Sq. Wapping, E1

TRADE UNIONISTS & SUPPORTERS are OFFICIALLY  
★ requested to give MAXIMUM support ★





# FIGHT AGAINST UDM SCABS

HEALY'S discredited sycophants are waging a characteristically dirty smear campaign against WRP members in the National Union of Mine-workers.

They charge us with encouraging miners to join the UDM.

Those of us who were physically beaten by the police, locked up in their cells, in some cases have lost their jobs, and in all cases suffered the hardship of a year's strike, dismiss these charges with the contempt they deserve.

However it may be constructive for the labour movement in general for us to explain the nature of our accusers.

On October 12, 1985, the central committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party was faced with a choice, either accept corruption within its leadership or reject and expose it publicly.

Healy was charged on three counts. First, that misusing his position of leadership, he sexually abused a large number of female comrades in the party. Second, that he had employed systematic violence against party members. Third that he had slandered members of the movement, accusing David North, secretary of the American Workers League of being a CIA agent.

No-one can claim to be a revolutionary unless he fights corruption in the lead-



**BY DAVE TEMPLE**

WRP CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND SECRETARY OF THE WRP MINERS' FACTION

ership of working class organisations wherever it occurs.

The duty of the central committee was made clearer by the disgusting nature of Healy's crimes. Incredibly whilst no-one denied Healy's guilt, 11 members of that committee voted against even charging him.

Unable to face their own members, Healy and his small band of followers left the WRP and formed their own bogus WRP and printed a bogus News Line.

They then proceeded to use the capitalist courts to try to drive the party's companies into bankruptcy.

None of these 11 have any history of leadership in the working class.

They consisted almost entirely of full-time professionals: the vexatious litigants Vanessa and Corin Redgrave, ex-Fleet Street journalist Alex Mitchell, ex-public schoolboys Vevers and Rudder.

Perhaps this motley middle-class group expect we miners to overlook the fact that the NUM was also driven into receivership by the Tory courts.

The solicitors Redgrave used to try and drive our printing and publishing companies into receivership were the same as were used by the Nottinghamshire leaders of the UDM.

Miners will draw the correct conclusion: that these people are a corrupt anti-working-class sect.

Unnecessary as it will undoubtedly appear to those who know our reputation in the NUM and at the risk of being pedantic, let us state once again our attitude to the UDM.

The WRP is implacably opposed to the UDM which is nothing more than a company organisation conceived by the unholy alliance of the NCB, the Tory government and the reformist former leadership of the Nottinghamshire area of the NUM.

We are totally opposed to any miner joining this outfit no matter how isolated he might find himself at his colliery.

Such is the onslaught of the NCB on the conditions of all miners that we are confident that any such isolation will be shortlived.

Where miners who are loyal to the NUM find themselves in pits where miners are split, in the inevitable struggles that must be waged to defend themselves we urge them to appeal to the members of the UDM to join them in these struggles.

In such joint struggles the collaborationist nature of the UDM leadership will be exposed and members won back into the ranks of the NUM.

To any worker with an ounce of trade union experience such a policy is natural and is already being prosecuted by the Notts NUM.

Only dishonest hacks like Rudder and Mitchell would attempt to distort such a policy for their own corrupt ends.



'Those of us who suffered the hardship of a year's strike ... dismiss these charges with contempt'

## Attack on Libya stepped up

THE United States Sixth Fleet may have withdrawn from the Bay of Sirte, but imperialist action against the Libyan revolution is being intensified. Reagan's aggression last week can now be seen in the context of his world-wide strategy of 'Rambo-ism'.

Reports from Washington indicate that 'Stinger' shoulder-fired ground-to-air missiles are being supplied to the South-African backed Unita forces in Angola and the Contras fighting to overthrow the Sandanista government in Nicaragua. 'Stinger' is super-sonic and guided by an infra-red homing device.

US Under-Secretary of State Michael Armacost last week said that the administration's policy was to send the most up-to-date military support to all 'sources of resistance to outposts of Soviet influence'. Until recently, it was usual for such forces to be supplied with weapons bought from Eastern Europe, so that US direct involvement could be denied if necessary.

Last week, the Cairo press revealed that the Egyptian government had been approached by the US government three times this

year, with a promise of financial and logistical aid in return for Egyptian military action against Libya.

The report stated that these offers had been spurned by the Mubarak government, no friend of the Libyan regime.

Last week's Newsweek magazine, in the course of its usual slanders against the Libyan government and Colonel Gaddafi, said that the Sixth Fleet was ready to hit a range of targets in Libya, including oil pipelines and storage facilities.

Meanwhile, the exchanges between Washington and Moscow illustrate well the contrast between the aggressive stance of the US imperialists and the meekness

of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Soviet spokesmen are bleating about a worsening of relations with the US, compared with the outcome of the Geneva summit. They are worried over the prospects for a new summit meeting this year, which they want to take place in Europe. State Department officials, on the other hand, make it clear that they have little interest in such a meeting.

The 'exercises' of the Sixth Fleet can therefore be best understood as part of Reagan's efforts to push Gorbachev and Co. into a deal in which the Soviet role would be to muzzle the forces of revolution in Africa, Asia and South America.

### NEWSDESK

NEW NUMBER — PLEASE NOTE

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## LIVERPOOL

CONTINUED FROM P.1

the beginning of a thorough turn-over of Labour organisations throughout Merseyside. In St Helens and Knowsley as well as in Liverpool, Labour Party organisations have been suspended.

In Knowsley, the Labour bureaucracy is protecting right-wing Labour MP Robert Kilroy-Silk from deselection as parliamentary candidate. There is a feeling

in the Labour Party and trades unionists in Kirkby, which is part of that constituency, that the party will stay suspended until June at least, after which it will be impossible to vote Kilroy-Silk out.

(Kilroy-Silk is the Labour Party parliamentary spokesman on penal affairs. During the long bitter months of the miners' strike when miners were being clubbed, harassed and arrested, Kilroy-Silk asked questions in parliament about the length of prisoners'

hair in HM penal institutions!)

The NEC is to conduct a separate investigation into student Labour clubs in Liverpool and the Women's Council is being reconstituted. The inquiry team has already proposed an examination of Liverpool Labour Party affiliated organisations 'in depth', particularly the T&GWU and the GMBATU.

Like the trade union bureaucracy which is making a capitulatory adjustment to the anti-trade union laws, the NEC of the Labour Party is driven to bureaucratic measures against rank and file democracy.

With a retreat before a capitalist attack upon the independence of the working-class organisations it is inevitable that the bureaucracy has to undermine rank and file democracy.

The reformist leaders have not one policy to fight back against the whole range of Tory policies which are meant to meet the economic problems of British capitalism by selling off state assets, creating a speculative bonanza, a pool of cheap labour among youth and shackling the trade unions.

The difficulties which the Labour party leaders have encountered in carrying out their purge of Merseyside parties expresses a profound groundswell of opposition to the preparations of Kinnock and company for a Labour or coalition government which will act for capitalism in crisis.

## Workers Revolutionary Party LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE MARXIST MOVEMENT

4). Friday 11th April

The Third International 1919-22

Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, NW1

All lectures start at 7.30pm

Ticket: 60p

## Silentnight halted

EASTER brought a boost for the 10-month-long strike from the Silentnight company in Lancashire. The strikers and their supporters have forced the introduction of short-time working at the Barnoldswick factory.

'This is a tribute to the leafletting campaign nationally and the activity of support groups. Without them the strike could not have continued,' shop steward Stephen Burns, on duty in the strike office, said this week.

Production at the factory was halted for Easter week — a blow against management because short-time working is virtually unknown in the company's 38-

year history.

A substantial annual trading loss is expected to be reported by Silentnight soon, say strikers. Since Christmas particularly, orders have fallen.

The leafletting campaign against Queensway and the Co-op is being stepped up as the strike approaches the 11-month mark. Coinciding with this, Keighley trades council has invited the Silentnight strikers to take part in a special march and rally on Saturday May 17.

Assembling at noon in Lund Park, the march will proceed to a rally at Cliffe Castle with prominent labour and trade union speakers.

A new leaflet being circulated by the Silentnight strike office points out: 'We have been on strike since June 10, 1985, sacked since July 22, 1985, for fighting for our trade union rights.'

A tribunal pre-hearing verdict has gone against the strikers on a split vote. The leaflet says: 'Whilst not coming as any major surprise, it serves to emphasise the strict interpretation of the Tory laws. It makes no significant difference to the strike. We are still fighting on.'

The strike office can be contacted at 9 Frank Street, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire BB8 5AE. Telephone 0282-816709.

# Sit-in backs Lambeth councillors

AT MIDNIGHT on Wednesday thirty-one duly elected Labour Councillors of Lambeth were disqualified from public office.

The notion that the courts could further be used in the interest of local government against the government's rate-capping measures had been abandoned. No appeal from Lambeth to the High Court was made against the substantial surcharges arising from not setting a rate in early 1985.

Thus Labour councillors in Lambeth who had delivered their promises of non-compliance with punitive spending limits were removed just prior to the council elections of May 8th.

Their last council meeting on Wednesday set up a three-

BY EDMUND HALL  
LAMBETH NALGO MEMBER

person special sub-committee headed by a new Mayor, all elected in by-elections after the surcharge period. This committee aims to act as a caretaker administration until May, in protest against the disqualification of all other Labour councillors.

Lambeth unions, together with those from other boroughs, notably Hackney, occupied the town hall for twenty-four hours during a one day strike. They hung an occupation banner on the clock tower.

All the Lambeth unions have adopted policies of non co-operation with any attempts of a minority council to lower budgets. Such

attempts will meet with industrial action.

A two-year joint policy between councils and unions, had run its course and although important alliances, understandings and organisations had been developed, and although no reverse or set back is acknowledged, statements and support that were pledged at the beginning of the campaign have not been removed. The fight for local government for greater resources for the inner city for the development of full local democracy is continued.

After the council meeting the new mayor Kingsley Smith unveiled a commemorative plaque. He read out each name of the 31 councillors, each one having made, and is to make a contribution to the labour movement.



Pickets at Lambeth Town Hall during the 24-hour occupation

## JURY CHANGES:

### working class the victim

WHILE the lessons of the miners' strike continue to reverberate throughout the labour movement, the ruling class and its state have an urgent need to clamp down on workers' basic rights. It is in this light that we need to see the government proposals announced in the White Paper 'Criminal Justice: Plans for Legislation' last month.

One of the tasks of the criminal courts during the miners' strike was to criminalise the miners and justify the violence done to them by the police. Unprecedented illegal actions by the police such as stopping flying pickets hundreds of miles from their destination on the grounds that a breach of the peace might occur when they arrived were rendered lawful by the Court of Appeal when challenged.

#### Families

As the miners' strike continued and developed in intensity, the frenzy to imprison and intimidate miners and their families increased.

The 'Battle of Orgreave' was a major turning point in the strike, but the organised violence against the miners needed the approval of the law and it was a major embarrassment to the government when the Orgreave trials collapsed.

On almost every occasion that the police had to justify their actions before a jury, the charges were thrown out. The response was simple. Abolish jury trials.

Of course, no-jury Diplock courts of the type used in Northern Ireland for all ma-

nor offences cannot be imposed without an intensification of the class struggle itself. The new White Paper proposes a start.

Jury trials would be abolished for common assault, driving while disqualified and taking a motor vehicle without the owner's consent. The experiences of the miners' strike show that the particular offence of common assault is the one which should most concern trade unionists.

Common assault is the off-

ence whereby a person is put in fear of being physically injured by actions or threats of another. For instance, if a striking printer on the Wapping picket line was to shout: 'I'll break your neck, you scab', that would make him liable for a charge of common assault.

At a trial before a jury, the defence could put forward the context within which the remark was made. A jury could then consider the real nature of why the charge

was brought, whatever the judge's direction.

Nobody with any experience of the Magistrate's Court, with its inbuilt presumption that only words of truth fall from the mouths of policemen, will imagine that similar doubts will concern magistrates.

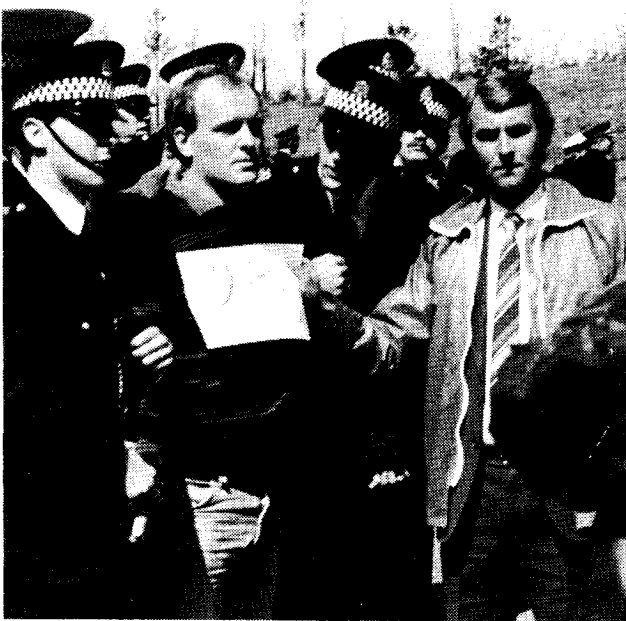
Conviction and sentence — for assault, the maximum is six months imprisonment or £2000 fine — will follow charges as sure as night follows day.

#### Jurors

The other major change proposed in the White Paper is the abolition or reduction of the right of peremptory challenge of jurors. At present each defendant can object to three jurors without giving a reason.

In multi-defendant cases this can have the effect of completely changing a jury. There is sufficient evidence of Special Branch involvement in the selection of 'safe' juries for politically sensitive trials to suggest that the abolition of the peremptory challenge would remove an important hindrance to conviction.

It is important that those lawyers who assisted the miners during their struggle should now bring their experiences into the labour movement as a whole. Printers support groups in particular should make contact with firms of solicitors who acted for the NUM, and where possible invite them to speak about the state's armoury which still has 20 miners in prison.



'Unprecedented illegal action' against miners, like this instant photographing of arrested pickets at Hunterston docks

## SOUTH AFRICA POLICE BARBARITY

THE following news item is taken from the South African 'Weekly Mail' newspaper. It is powerful ammunition for boycott unionists fighting to boycott South African goods.

AN ALEXANDRA schoolgirl this week told how she watched a young man trying to stuff his intestines back into his stomach after a policeman shot him at point-blank range at the height of last week's uprising in the township.

The pupil's account is one of two sworn affidavits collected by the Alexandra Crisis Clinic on the death of 18-year-old Jerry Mthembu on Monday, February 17.

The schoolgirl, 16, said: 'On February 17, while standing in 17th Avenue, I saw Jerry, who was standing behind a corrugated iron fence a few metres away.

'A Caspir came by and a while South African policeman spotted Jerry.

'Jerry saw him notice him and he knelt down to hide because he realised he was in danger,' the schoolgirl said.

She said the Caspir stopped and the policeman jumped down and went 'straight' to Jerry where, without speaking, he pointed a firearm at him and shot him in the stomach.

'As Jerry was shot he screamed. His intestines were falling out and he held his stomach and jumped over the fence,' she said.

She said she also started screaming and pulled Jerry next to a house window.

A second witness said that when she peered through the window after hearing gunshots she saw one man

trying to pull a young man along.

'He stopped because his intestines were falling out and he tried to put them back.'

She heard a shot and saw that the man as dragging the youth had been shot in the leg.

'He ran around the corner of the house and I opened the kitchen window and he jumped in. Another shot was fired and the bullet went through the window into my kitchen door,' the witness said.

The man, identified as Alfred Radebe, hid under the bed in her bedroom. A black policeman came into the bedroom, the woman said, and asked where the man was.

'He saw Alfred's legs sticking out and he shot him in the other leg.

'I was terrified and started screaming. After pulling Alfred from under the bed more policemen came in and removed the spent cartridges.'

Radebe was then dragged by the collar to a waiting ambulance, she said.

The witness said that when she went to the Hillbrow hospital she was told that Radebe was in the operating theatre and there was a possibility that he might lose both legs.

● The South African police public relations division comments: 'The circumstances of any unnatural death of a person is investigated as a matter of course and is eventually decided upon by an inquest court. There is no way in which anybody can escape the consequences of killing an innocent human being.'



# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE DUVALIERS

IN THE wake of the overthrow of the hated 'Baby Doc' Duvalier regime in Haiti, our correspondent ESTELLA SCHMID outlines the violent history of one of the poorest countries in the world.

In this second of two articles she deals with the oppression and exploitation of the Haitian workers and peasants under Duvalier.

When Jean Claude Duvalier, nick-named 'Baby-Doc', came to power in 1971, the economy was in a state of stagnation with the agricultural sector devastated for lack of investment.

His political achievement was to hold the support of the black urban middle class and the middle peasant landowners, who were rewarded with an increased role in the bureaucracy and given new opportunities for enrichment.

'Baby-Doc' set up a system of arbitrary personal control over the nation's finances.

Since 1980 the continually widening gulf between the corrupt and luxurious life style of the ruling class and the wretched conditions of the mass of people has produced further tensions. Forty people died in food riots in May 1984.

The mainstay of political control under the Duvalier dictatorship has been the notorious and feared VSM or Tontons Macoutes ('bogeymen' in the Haitian French Creole language), a paramilitary force of killers and thugs, responsible to the President.

Members are trained by the armed forces, they do not receive salaries and consequently practise widespread extortion of cash, goods and crops.

About 9,000 strong, the VSM were primarily responsible for the mass killings, jailings, torture and disappearances, which wiped out or brought to heel political opposition, trade unions, student organisations, the church and the press.

The principal torture centre is the Casernes Dessalines, headquarters of the civilian secret police.

In 1984 'Baby-Doc', faced with spreading mass revolts, issued a decree banning all political activity. In the forefront of opposition to Duvalier were the youth. The immediate trigger for the wave of mass demonstrations which forced the humiliating departure of 'Baby Doc' was the death of three youth during a demonstration in Gonaives, the country's third largest city in December last year.

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. The urban ruling class elite in Port-au-Prince, including a reported 200 millionaires, live in luxury air-conditioned villas with swimming pools and servants.

## Slime

Meanwhile 90 per cent of the population live in conditions of destitution and squalor.

At least 200,000 people live in the shanty towns set in a sea of foul slime. The slums house 60,000 people per square kilometre. More than 10,000 homeless people sleep out on the streets at night.

Concentration of wealth and employment in Port-au-Prince has worsened the split between the city and the rest of the country and accelerated the rural underdevelopment.

In the countryside people live on the edge of starvation. Illiteracy is around 80 per cent, infant mortality is estimated at 130 per 1,000 and life expectancy is below 50. Tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases relating to inadequate nutrition and insanitary living conditions are widespread.

Women are enduring the most horrendous oppression and suffering. Many die dur-



More than a hundred Haitians, fleeing the Duvalier regime in 1980, cling to a sinking sailboat off the Bahamas

ing pregnancy or child-birth as a result of inadequate health facilities.

They also work on the peasant smallholdings and, under the widespread practice of 'placage', a male farmer may have a principal wife and one or more women. Peasant women are also mainly responsible for transport and marketing.

Over the past two decades rural poverty has driven hundreds of thousands of people to Port-au-Prince in search of food and work. Taking advantage of the abundant supply of labour, about 240 mainly US-owned companies have set up assembly plants in the Port-

au-Prince area since the early 1970s, employing around 60,000 people, mostly women, at slave wages.

Haiti is the world's largest producer of baseballs, exporting 15 million a year. These are produced by women at the Rawlings Sporting factory at a rate of 30-40 per head a day, for a wage of \$3.00.

The growth of the assembly industries has led to the government projecting Haiti as the 'Taiwan of the Caribbean', but the number of jobs these industries have created has been insignificant in relation to the extent of unemployment and poverty throughout the country.

## Bulwark

For most of the 29 years that the Duvalier dynasty ruled, US imperialism saw Haiti as a bulwark against the spread of communism in the region.

Haiti was a US strategic asset. It controls the windward passage which separates the island of Hispaniola (which houses the Dominican Republic and Haiti) from Cuba. At present the security of the passage is ensured by the US base at Guantanamo in Cuba.

But should it be lost, Haiti and the Dominican Republic would be of crucial importance to the US. Just how important was demonstrated in 1965 when Lyndon

Johnson sent the Marines into the Dominican Republic.

US imperialism has come to regard the Caribbean as its sphere of influence. At a time when the Monroe Doctrine has become the guiding light of US policy towards the Americas, strategic considerations loom above all others.

The Grenada intervention, the aerial bombing of villages by US backed government forces in El Salvador and the effort to funnel increased support to the Contras in Nicaragua all provide evidence for this.

The US has consistently condoned the brutalities of the Duvalier regime; the military oppression and the economic enslavement, specially in the shanty towns of Brooklyn, Boston and Les Salines.

Six weeks after the abrupt end of the despised Duvalier dynasty and Jean-Claude Duvalier's dash to France, the hatred of their regime shows no sign of abatement.

The six-man military-civilian junta, dismissed by many Haitians as 'Duvalierism without Duvalier' because it includes key figures from the old regime, is facing a serious political crisis after its attempt to smuggle into exile some of the fallen Duvalier regime's most notorious figures: the escape to Brazil of the former secret police chief, Colonel Albert Pierre.

Protesters attacked the houses of two of Colonel Pierre's infamous predecessors, Luc Desyr and Elois Maitre and the home of the former Interior and Defence Minister Eduard Berrouet, who was a leading member of the Tontons Macoutes militia.

The Junta has tried to appease Haiti's impoverished masses by making token changes, while trying to stave off significant reforms. But the workers, peasants and students who toppled the Duvalier regime are now demanding substantial political changes.

Students in Gonaives, where the wave of protest against Duvalier began, are circulating petitions calling for the Tontons Macoutes to be dissolved. They are demanding the prosecution of all those guilty of crimes against people and embezzlement of public funds; recovery of money stolen from the Haitian state; reductions in prices and taxes on basic necessities, and higher wages for workers, peasants and teachers; free functioning of trade unions and political parties and a date for general elections.

Clandestine trade union organisations have also begun to surface and function openly. A recent strike shut down the Haitian American Sugar Company's mill in Port-au-Prince. The police intervened against this strike, the first to take place since Duvalier's flight. The strike was supported by the CATH.

## Exiles

Most politically active forces who had been driven into exile, are now attempting to return. The Haitian delegates at the Managua Conference agreed that a key test of the new government would be whether it allowed the unconditional return of all political exiles.

'The Haitian struggle lacks a fundamental element, as we have learned from the Sandinista revolution', said Pierre-Charles. 'It lacks a political-military vanguard that can take power. And the return of the political exiles will be crucial to building a united revolutionary movement.'

In supporting and defending the Haitian Revolution against imperialism and its apologists, Trotskyists must insist that there is no national road to socialism anywhere.

We live in a world in which the struggles of the world working class are interconnected and that each national struggle is but a particular expression of the universal death agony of imperialism and presupposes the necessity for a world revolution to lead the socialist struggle forward to victory.

This places the responsibility for the Haitian Revolution on the Trotskyists that we must advance the creation of a genuine revolutionary working-class party in Haiti today.



PAPA DOC DUVALIER . . . The US has consistently condoned the brutalities of the Duvalier regime

# A defeat for reformism not the working class

THE ELECTIONS of March 16, 1986 brought to an end the longest period of 'left' government in France's history. It is now possible to see, as a completed process, a reformist attempt to overcome the capitalist crisis which could only be at the expense of the working class.

The way has been opened for further attacks on the working class by a hard-nosed rightist government which has only a bare majority in the National Assembly and will look for back-up from the racist National Front which gained 35 seats.

The election confirmed the decline of the Communist Party which won less than 10 per cent of the votes and thus, in electoral terms, was back where it had been in the 1930s.

Over 21 per cent of the electorate failed to vote at all; for many that was a vote of no confidence in parties and politicians of 'left' and right.

There is no doubt that economic questions were uppermost in the minds of electors as they have been throughout the life of the Socialist government elected with a substantial majority in May, 1981.

That vote expressed the desire for a change after long years of right-wing government and opposition to the austerity policies of Prime Minister Raymond Barre. A leading economist, Barre applied textbook recipes to the crisis aiming to restore a balance in foreign trade and in the budget.

BY TOM KEMP

government assumed that it was this policy which was the problem and it initiated, instead, one inspired by Keynesianism.

Government spending was increased and more civil service jobs were created. A cosmetic job was done on unemployment by bringing down the retirement age to 60, enabling some workers to go on premature retirement at 55 and bringing many of the youth unemployed into 'training' schemes and thus counting them as being in full-time education.

What seemed like a 'left' measure was taken with the nationalisation of seven of the major industrial and financial groups. This was another illusion.

## Illusions

The former shareholders were handsomely compensated with government bonds and state nominees were put on the boards. Otherwise nothing changed.

The object of the exercise was to assist the restructuring of French industry through concentration into bigger units and to give it more muscle in world competition.

State ownership was intended to assist this strategy, helping French firms to win back part of the foreign market — over 30 per cent of which was held by foreign imports — and to compete more successfully in the world market.

Thus rationalisation and sackings continued both in the already nationalised enterprises and those now taken over. Some business elements backed the take-overs which still left the state in control of only 17 per cent of industry.

The expansionist measures taken in 1981-1983, when the rest of the capital-



CITROEN WORKERS: bargaining power undermined by unemployment

ist world was in recession, met with opposition from the international financiers as well as most French capitalists.

The result was that imports were sucked in, exports were hit and there were runds on the franc. The franc was devalued three times, losing about 20 per cent of its value against the German mark.

The jobless totals continued to mount, the inflation rate was still high and the expectation that the government would somehow be able to raise living standards proved illusory.

The government had to put its policy into reverse from 1983, returning to financial orthodoxy along lines familiar under the Barre regime.

The experiment in Keynesianism proved to be an abject failure. Government spending could not solve the problems of French capitalism or provide a substitute for socialist measures.

Basically the problem was how to restore profitability and, from the budget for 1984, this became the government's main preoccupation.

It meant 're-structuring'

industry by contracting the old, unprofitable sectors and building up the high-tech and more modern sectors. This meant the loss of jobs and the decline of whole regions.

The most profitable industries were capital-intensive, creating relatively few new jobs. Productivity continued to rise as industry resorted to more intensive methods of work or installed new machinery.

Meanwhile, for workers, the menacing unemployment totals undermined the bargaining power of the trade unions, whose membership continued to fall. Government policy aimed to keep wages down while raising social security contributions and cutting benefits.

Within a year or so of the 1981 election the popularity of the Socialist-Communist government had slumped to a low level. The return to a policy of austerity hit the middle class through increased taxes and the 'floating voters' who had voted for the Socialists now swarmed back behind the right-wing parties.

## Racism

Meanwhile, the orchestrated whispering campaign that it was all the fault of the immigrants, tacitly supported by the right-wing press, brought mass support for the racist National Front led by ex-paratrooper and torturer, Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The election of March 16 gave it 2.7 million votes, only a few thousand less than the Communist Party.

The continued decline of the Communist Party and the rise of a racist movement which has won support not only from sections of the middle class but also from some former Stalinist voters

were confirmed by the election.

Undoubtedly the Communist Party has lost that grip on the working class which was its great source of strength throughout the Gaullist period and into the 1970s.

## Analysis

A detailed analysis of the crisis of French Stalinism would require an investigation of the changes in the working class, the faded image of the Soviet Union, the tactical mistakes of Georges Marchais, the demoralisation of the cadre and the cumulative effects of past betrayals on the party's credibility.

It was unable to fight effectively against racism because of its own unprincipled attitude towards workers of foreign origin who make a substantial (and voteless) section of the working class.

It was unable to lead big movements or even to preserve its traditional positions in local government, large-scale industry and the trade unions.

It now attracts few intellectuals or students and its youth movement is a skeleton of its former self.

Most important, of course, is the shrinkage of its mass base and the loss of that authority which made it a force to be reckoned with in French political life.

Many of its former supporters have either turned to the Socialist Party or don't bother to vote and, in some working-class districts, Le Pen had garnered some former CP votes on a blatantly anti-immigration platform.

The rise of the National Front can be attributed most of all to the crisis of leadership in the working-class movement.

The inability of the reform-

mists and Stalinists to safeguard jobs and living standards, to improve housing or defend past gains as embodied in the social security system, the indexing of wages to the cost of living and trade union rights have caused disillusion and bitterness.

The racists have gained most by exploiting the fears of sections of the middle class, ready to blame immigrants for economic insecurity and the social disintegration which results from the crisis of capitalism. Immigrants provide visible and defenceless scapegoats. Racism divides the working class and saps its strength.

The new right-wing government is a coalition with its own divisions and contradictions. Undoubtedly, as part of its attempt to revive French capitalism it will launch a new onslaught on the working class. The alarm bells have to be sounded and preparations made to deal with the most vicious attacks.

Meanwhile, the position of President Francois Mitterrand — a Socialist president with a hostile National Assembly — remains anomalous.

Mitterrand, a consummate tactician and careerist, up for re-election in two years' time evidently hopes that by then the right will have discredited itself. He can be expected to make shady deals with the right-wing parties to remain in office.

The working class must take note of these preparations and manoeuvres in the camp of the class enemy and prepare its reply. For this its most urgent need is the building of a revolutionary party able to re-arm it politically and provide the leadership in the struggles ahead.



MITTERRAND

Control of the money supply and the credit flow aimed to combat inflation and keep the franc strong while holding down wages. The result was that unemployment continued to rise and stagnation continued.

When the Socialists came to power, they, and their Stalinist allies, underestimated the severity of the economic crisis and mistook its nature. Above all they failed to see that the French economy was now more closely integrated into the world market than ever before and thus the autonomy of the French government was strictly circumscribed.

It could either break with capitalism and take the socialist road, which required an appeal to the working class to use its strength, or it could bow to the laws of capitalism which meant a further attempt to resolve the crisis at the expense of the working class.

There was never any doubt about the course it would take. Neither the Socialists nor the Stalinists had any intention of leading a revolution in 1981.

Instead of the Barre policy, inspired by monetarism, the Socialist-Communist



French coal miners march through Paris 1984, placard reads 'For full employment, rather miner than unemployed'



# COMMENT

by Geoff Pilling

## Americans change tune on oil crisis

THE amazing sight of US vice-president George Bush this week pleading with the Saudi Arabians to stop the slide in oil prices shows that a new stage has been reached in the world oil crisis.

As recently as November last year world prices stood at \$30 a barrel. In February this year, when they had dropped to \$15 a barrel the US was still taking a strong 'free market' approach to the determination of oil prices.

It regularly condemned the OPEC cartel for attempting to regulate world prices.

With prices now at \$10 and the prospect of a further drop to as low as \$5, vital US oil and financial interests are now immediately threatened and a different tune is being played.

Whether the new tune will have any effect is doubtful.

As an OPEC official said 'The US cavalry is trying to ride to the rescue, but the massacre is already well under way.'

The reason is simple. Around one-third of the almost 9m barrels a day produced in America is unprofitable when world prices fall below \$10.

The 1.7m barrels produced in Alaska cost \$9 a barrel to produce, not taking into account capital costs. The oil produced in US 'stripper wells' ranges from \$9 to \$16. Should oil prices continue to fall much of this production will close down.

Important sectors of US banking, heavily involved in the financing of domestic oil production, would be thrust into severe difficulties should this happen.

With falling oil prices, imports into America are bound to rise, further worsening an already drastic balance of payments deficit. Already there has already been a big cut-back in exploration and development activities which must increase the future dependence on imported oil.

The Americans are also deeply worried about the wider implications of plunging oil prices on the international banking system. Oil producing debtor countries, with Mexico to the fore, are faced with ruination should current oil prices persist.

Many of the Middle Eastern states have also built up their economies on the boom in oil prices over the last decade and many of them will be forced to cut back their development plans and imports as their revenues from oil collapse.

In the case of Britain, a further drop in oil prices will also have severe consequences. It would make North Sea oil production prohibitively expensive and certainly face many producers with bankruptcy.

The Tory's budget strategy would be thrown further off course. At \$10 a barrel, North Sea revenues to the government would plunge to £3bn compared with the £6bn estimated in chancellor Lawson's budget or the £11.5bn received in 1985-86.

The Tories are making a lot of noise about the benefits lower oil prices will bring to British exports costs.

They ignore the fact that the main gainers from falling oil prices will be the Japanese.

They depend on imported oil more than any industrial nation and will therefore gain most from falling oil prices.

Far from gaining, Britain's share in world exports is certain to fall as a result of these recent developments which will bring a further slashing of production and increase in unemployment.



Thousands of spectators line the Falls Road as the commemoration march heads for Milltown cemetery

# EASTER IN BELF



The army maintained a provocative presence throughout last Saturday's march



Marchers assemble outside the Sinn Fein office, under an impressive mural. Note the street-name has been changed in honour of the RPG anti-tank weapon

# AST

## FROM HILARY HORROCKS IN BELFAST

HUNDREDS of families lined the Falls Road in Belfast last weekend as the Sinn Fein annual Easter parade marched to the city's Milltown cemetery.

The demonstration, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Dublin uprising, took place under heavy surveillance by the RUC and British troops, and for a tense few minutes at the start of the parade marchers were held up while occupation forces decided whether to allow them to proceed.

Tricolours, flags bearing the starry plough emblem and flute bands led the parade into the Republican plot in the cemetery, where thousands gathered among the gravestones, again under the watchful eye of the British army, to hear tributes to the nationalist martyrs.

A delegation of Workers Revolutionary Party members from Scotland and the north-east, together with members of the Irish Socialist League, took part in the parade.

An Easter statement from the Provisional IRA, read out by a young man hidden from view, saluted the sacri-

fice of those who had died or were imprisoned for their part in the fight for freedom.

'The British government fears that the Republican movement has the power to bring about a United Ireland, the fulfilment of the 1916 proclamation,' he said. 'We now address this fundamental question to the working class, women and youth: what kind of future do you want?'

'If you want Ireland for the people now is the time to join

our fight.

'We have no time for sectarian division,' the statement continued. 'Our war is not with the Protestant Irish people, but with Britain.'

The speaker stressed that the Republican movement had 'no intention of lying down and forgetting the British presence,' despite the wishes of the Catholic Church and the SDLP.

Mitchell McLoughlin, chairman of Sinn Fein councillors in the six counties,

appealed for a united front of workers, small farmers, the poor and professionals to build a socialist united Ireland.

He urged Protestant workers to break from the Loyalist ascendancy and join with the Catholic working class in this struggle.

The proclamation declaring the 1916 provisional government was read to the crowd, and wreaths laid at the graves of IRA volunteers.

At a separate wreath-laying ceremony in the morning, members and supporters of the Irish Republican Socialist Party paid tribute to Irish National Liberation Army fighters who have fallen victim to the British army and the Official IRA.

Close attention from the occupation forces prevented the Belfast crowd witnessing the traditional rifle salute by an IRA colour party after the orations.

But in Derry, three IRA men appeared from the crowd and fired a volley with hand-guns. Crowds of youths racing out of the cemetery there fought with soldiers and policemen and the men escaped.

A young British soldier was struck in the face by a sniper's bullet.

The 1916 commemorations will climax with a national march in Dublin this Saturday.



A contribution to the discussion

by Brian Dempsey

# Homosexual rights

HOMOSEXUALS, like women, blacks and religious minorities are not a class-based group.

Trotsky wrote strongly against women's oppression, against racism, and anti-semitism. Few have tried to tackle the issue of sexuality from a Marxist viewpoint.

There are, of course, homosexuals at all levels of society. The image of a camp middle-class queen has taken hold because homosexuals at the top (e.g. Rock Hudson) have the resources to cover their sexual activities. Working class homosexuals had very little scope to explore their sexuality or to 'practise' it.

In the 1970s, however, a growing number of working class and radicalised middle class homosexuals organised in groups such as the Gay Liberation Front to try to attack society's idea of homosexuals.

These elements turned largely to 'reformist' groups on the left. The high point of this movement was the very successful Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners group who raised money and campaigned for the miners throughout the strike.

The practice of LGSM broke down a great deal of the fears of the miners and their communities about having homosexuals on their side. The NUM, amongst many others, supported the 'Gay Rights' resolution which was passed at the Labour Party conference last year.

The main group operating as an exclusively political organisation today is the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay rights. Members of LCLGR I have spoken to have said that although they do not have a great faith in the Labour Party leadership — who would? — they can see no alternative to the Labour Party in the fight for freedom of sexual expression.

What is the basis of homosexual oppression? The fundamental reason that homosexuals are oppressed by capitalism is that, to maintain production, the capitalist requires not one generation of wage slaves but many who will have nothing to sell but their labour power. Part of a workers' wages are paid to him, not for his own survival, but for his children who will become the next generation of exploited.

Anyone therefore who takes their wages but does not spend it on raising future wage slaves is 'stealing' that portion of their wages in the eyes of the capitalist.

The economic reasons, of course, are now obscured by many years of misinformation and bigotry. The fears and loathings of the working class are real and should not be ignored.

This economic foundation was built upon by the church who stated that homosexuals were sinful, by the medical profession who said that homosexuals were mentally ill and deviant, and by parliament who said that homosexuals were, by definition, criminal. So there we have it — sinful sick and criminal.

The family has played a great role in trying to stifle struggle against capitalism. Trotsky wrote: 'The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called "family hearth" — that archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution in which the women of the toiling classes performs galley labour from childhood to death'. (Revolution Betrayed page 144, Pathfinder Press).

## Family

The family is the 'servicer' of the exploited; it is in the family that workers are fed, clothed, sheltered and nursed and the care of the working class falls heavily on the shoulders of working class women.

Women in families are forced to work day in and day out doing tremendous amounts of work for no pay at all. Without the family capitalism could not exist.

As Trotsky says: 'it is impossible to move to socialism without freeing the women worker from the bondage of family and household'. (Women and the Family page 46, Pathfinder Press).

It is obvious that people who choose a homosexual lifestyle automatically come into conflict with capitalism. In times of recession, workers are required not to look at their class needs but to concentrate on their isolated family and start from these needs.

The press have developed 'panic buttons' to isolate workers in their families: Gay Plague, Black Looters, Loony Left and Greenham-Lesbian-Soviet-spies.

Forget the closed schools,



PHOTO: LGSM

The active support of lesbians and gays for the miners' strike broke down the hostility of the working-class movement

reduced social security payments, closed hospitals, nuclear war, unemployment and slave labour (YTS) — the real danger is from radical Lesbian feminists and from Homosexual males legally having sex at 18 instead of 21 years of age!

Homosexuals who demand the right to live without oppression are challenging the very pillars of capitalism. It is not the subjective dislikes of the ruling class that homosexuals are battling.

No amount of 'reasoned' argument will change this aspect of society. The only way that we can have our basic rights is by changing society.

The WRP in the past bowed to G. Healy's subjective bigotry and refused to allow membership rights to homosexuals.

Many members had an appalling attitude to the struggles of homosexual activists. This has to some degree changed but the WRP membership cannot change their outlook without understanding the background and implications of 'Gay Liberation'.

Three main issues are at the forefront of the struggles of homosexuals.

1. Consent: The age of consent for homosexual males is 21 as opposed to 16 for heterosexuals. This is a law which openly discriminates against homosexuals. Although it is commonly ignored, many people have been prosecuted for having sexual relationships with men who are over 16 but under 21.

2. AIDS: The press is using AIDS as a means to whip up hysteria against homosexuals instead of trying to find

a cure or a prevention.

The ruling class have blamed the 'habits' of the victims. Medical people involved with haemophiliacs have gone on TV to say that they should be compensated as they are innocent victims. Obviously 'poofs' are not.

3. Censorship: Two things here. Firstly, a number of bookstores, notably 'Gay's the Word', are being dragged through the courts under the customs laws.

Many of the books complained about have been on sale openly for years. Many are American editions of books already published in this country. The Customs can stop these editions because they were being imported. The Customs seem to have decided that any book on homosexual issues is obscene.

## Censorship

Secondly, the Churchill Bill to censure TV programmes etc. Although we should state our opposition to pornography, we must not let the capitalist courts decide what we can and cannot see. Any strengthening of the capitalists' means of limiting publishing and TV programmes must be opposed on principle.

How then should our work reflect the change in attitude in our party? We should work with groups such as LCLGR, LGSM and support the Gay Pride marches and the struggles against Tory councils which discriminate against homosexuals. It should be pointed out to people in these struggles that the only way real changes can be made is by ridding us of capitalism. Homosexual

rights can be put forward as transitional demands.

I would suggest as a starting point:

1. Lowering the age of consent for homosexuals to 16.
2. A cure or prevention for AIDS regardless of cost.
3. No discrimination against Homosexuals in the work place.
4. No censorship by capitalist courts.

With the possible exception of point (1) these de-

mands cannot be won under capitalism and can be the basis for developing a Marxist understanding of homosexuality. Marxists must challenge the bigotries caused by capitalist ideology, to which all are prone. Perhaps one of Healy's hacks would like to answer to the labour movement over their violent attacks on homosexuals. But regardless of what Healy's rump may choose to say, this discussion must go forward within the WRP.

## REVIEW

**Hypatia's Heritage: A History of Women in Science from Antiquity to the Late Nineteenth Century.** By Margaret Alic. Women's Press, £4.95.

ARGUING that women have always been healers, surgeons and midwives, Margaret Alic has researched the role of women in science from the practical activities of the earliest primitive gatherers to the advanced mathematicians of the nineteenth century.

Some of the women scientists she discovered were feminists, but most simply got on with doing research. Some published anonymously,

# Women and history

ly, some submerged their work in that of male colleagues, and only a handful of them have been accorded their proper place in the history of science.

Alic's style is laborious, and the book not an easy read, but she has undoubtedly done the groundwork for future writers to find out more about 'Woman the Discoverer.'

**The Disinherited Family by Eleanor Rathbone.** Falling Wall Press, £7.50.

SUFFRAGETTE, Liverpool city councillor and subsequently Independent femin-

ist MP, Eleanor Rathbone campaigned for the rights of wives and mothers. This book was published in 1924, both a survey of existing conditions and a powerful argument for family allowances.

She set out scales of benefit that would represent adequate sums paid to women as of right.

The scale of benefits introduced in 1946 did not give women the independence she had insisted was their right, and the book is more than just a period piece in its approach to the requirements of women bringing up children.



ELEANOR RATHBONE



Irish Solidarity Movement

**Armagh -  
Brixton!**

**Stop  
Strip-Searches  
Now!**

## DEMONSTRATION and PRISON PICKET

Speakers include: Dr Maire O'Shea (recently acquitted of conspiracy charges under the PTA); Liz Hill (relative of Paul Hill, Guildford frame-up victim).

**Saturday 5 April, assemble 11.30am**

**Kennington Park (Oval Tube)  
Demonstrate against strip-searches  
Join the march to a picket of Brixton Prison  
(1pm onwards)  
Speeches • Songs • Solidarity**

**Stop the strip-searches**

## PICKET

**Every Saturday, 11.30am - 1.30pm  
Brixton Prison, Jebb Avenue SW2**

Against the strip-searching of Martina Anderson and Ella o'Dwyer, and also in support of the women in Armagh Jail who are undergoing similar treatment. Support this important campaign organised by the Irish Prisoners Appeal, Women and Armagh and the Troops Out movement.

**A picket is held every Saturday outside Brixton jail.**



# Trotskyist youth under attack

## HISTORY OF THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS PART 3: 1937

AFTER the Stalinist betrayal, the Trotskyists in the Labour League of Youth managed to bring out a paper, the 'Youth Militant'.

They called on the disbanded NAC (National Advisory Committee) to call an unofficial national conference and defy the NEC, and so separate itself from the Labour Party.

It considered this only a temporary measure, as it called to campaign amongst the working class later to re-affiliate. In the meantime they criticised Labour Party policy but worked hard in the election campaign of that year, harder than most of the reformists or Stalinists.

The Stalinists said the LLY could only regain its rights by limiting itself to party 'donkey-work'. They publicly attacked the Trotskyists call for a 'Declaration of Independence', and in the January 1937 issue of *Advance* they said: 'We must not admit defeat by breaking away from the party.'

Along with this came a



Working-class youth organisations sent volunteers to fight fascism in Spain

massive attack on the Trotskyists themselves at a special Young Communist League meeting on Trotskyism, which coincided with the second of the big Moscow Trials, where leaders of the October Revolution were accused of being agents of Hitler and plotting with Trotsky.

The Trotskyists in the LLY were called 'fascist wreckers' in *Advance*, and the next few issues were devoted to a massive attack on the Trotskyists; for example, in the March 1937 issue the editorial board, including (now Lord) Ted Willis wrote:

'There is no place for Trotskyists in a live movement just as there is no place for boils on a healthy human . . . Turn them, lock, stock and barrel, out of the Labour movement'

The most important issue faced by all young socialists at that time was the Spanish Civil War. Franco's fascists were backed by Germany and Italy, while the Russians helped (but not very much) the Republican Coalition, in which the Communist Party was the major force.

All left-wingers, including the Trotskyists, sent volunteers, medical aid, etc. for the Republicans and called

for 'Arms for Spain'. The Trotskyists also pointed out that the Russian bureaucracy was leading the Spanish Communist Party to defeat, preventing the Spanish working class from carrying out a revolutionary war. This was not 'Unity for Victory' as the Stalinists said, but doomed the working class to defeat. This was much too complex for most people to understand, and the Stalinists used this as a basis for a renewed attack on the Trotskyists, the Permanent Revolution and objective thought on Spain.

Next Week: Part 4. 1938-1939. The end of the LLY.

# Sal Santen, rebel

Sal Santen Rebel.  
directed by Rudolf van den Berg.

A WHITE-HAIRED old man walks by the dyke near his home. Fading sepia photos in a family album bring memories, a few official documents fill in details, a train journey to Paris, with the possibility of meeting an old comrade, brings some tension. What will they say after all these years?

Santen was the leading Dutch militant of the Fourth International, founded on the premise that the crisis of humanity is a crisis of proletarian leadership.

As a young socialist in the 1930s, feeling the effect of capitalist crisis in his own family, and witnessing the failure of social democracy and Stalinism to stop Hitler, he turned to the Trotskyist movement.

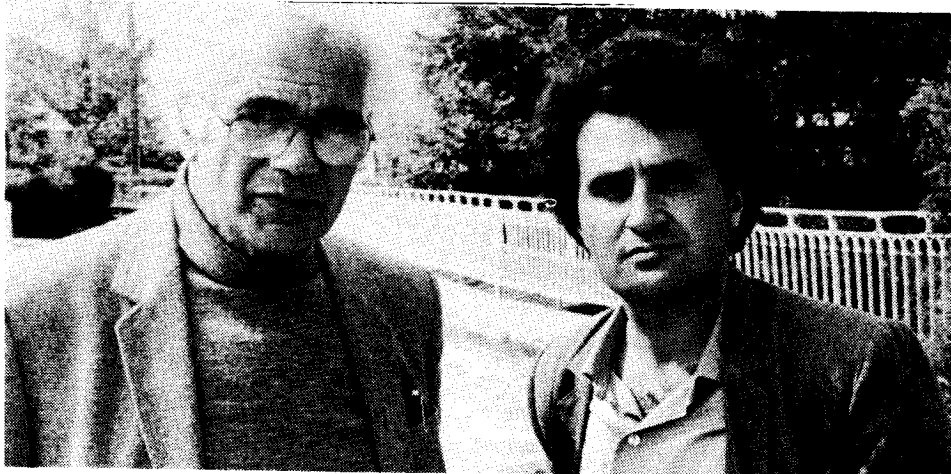
At the end of the war, when others tried to rebuild personal lives, or pursue careers, he had bolder horizons. 'He couldn't just settle down and get a job,' explains wife Bep, 'he couldn't.'

Santen's political work took him away from his family, to France, to South America, and in 1961, to a Dutch jail, together with his comrade Michael Raptis (Pablo).

Looking for some new focus of revolution, they were overjoyed when the Algerian FLN leaders came to them for help.

The CP's refusal to help the Algerians was added reason.

'The honour of the labour movement was at stake.' And when the Algerians



SAL SANTEN (left) and director RUDOLF VAN DEN BERG

## FILM REVIEW

asked them to arrange forged documents, Santen was ready for that too.

He remembered the war and occupation. 'I knew what lack of papers could mean to family and friends.' Others had risked their lives forging papers for him.

The Algerian link was seen by the Pabloites as an opportunity to participate in the revolutionary experience.

For Pablo himself, this was to lead to participation in the new Algerian government as aide to Ben Bella, who still praises the help.

Santen still regards himself as on the side of the oppressed, though he broke his links with his old comrades twenty years ago.

It is not a break he can have found easy.

'Ending my revolutionary activities was a sort of failure,' he says.

It was not just the 'press-

ures' of capitalism that broke him, at least not directly.

'My own comrades succeeded where my enemies failed.'

Fascinated by the interface of personal and political, (another of his films concerned a Palestinian artist's return from exile, his feelings and the reactions of others), director Rudolf van den Berg tries to understand this break, not so much in terms of this or that passing difference, but of the relationship between the two, Raptis and Santen.

Santen says he still regards Raptis as a revolutionary theoretician and leader, but no longer as a friend. He feels that Raptis used him, then deserted him.

'I can no longer submit to the will of those who look down on me, who use me when they want, and forget me when they don't.'

Santen, more human, modest, seemingly more rooted in the working class, and Raptis, more bourgeois, more full of himself — even, says their defence lawyer Smeets, 'slightly feudal.'

Asked whether he sees himself as successor to Trotsky, Raptis, posed before a map of the world, swells visibly and finds it hard to say modestly that this is a bit exaggerated.

He has described Santen previously, his comrade and fellow prisoner, as once his 'greatest friend' in the movement.

Told that Santen is in Paris, he shows no eagerness, even curiosity, to meet him. He dismisses the visit with a smart-assed remark that Santen should find the city interesting.

Some young people were complaining after seeing the film at the NFT recently that there had not been enough about 'the differences'. Maybe not. But van den Berg certainly depicts the difference.

Charlie Pottins.

## MATGAMNA AND WRP

THE QUESTION of whether anti-Zionism is equivalent to anti-Semitism is a principle which has not been answered in Mr Sean Matgamna's letter to the Worker Press.

Matgamna's position over the anti-imperialist national bourgeoisies of Libya and the national liberation organisations like the PLO is familiar. It is called ultra-leftism, and it is a position that he does not take by accident. It is consistent with other centrist organisations in the Labour Party (aka Militant Tendency).

They opportunistically denounce the self-sacrifice, heroism and bravery of the oppressed people fighting for self-determination and against imperialism in their homelands, in favour of the ultra-left formula of 'class against class'.

While we are on the subject of selling principles, what principles were sold to

accommodate Matgamna's wretched organisation to the Zionist right-wing of the Labour Party?

The empty propaganda formula of Matgamna's 'class against class' ignores the task of building a Trotskyist section in these countries, and ignores the historical stage of development of the classes and the class struggle in these countries.

Yes of course the WRP under Healy made mistakes in relation to the nationalist bourgeoisies and national liberation movements; the question of Iraq was a crime, not a mistake.

But we have already declared that we are willing to fight to overcome this. The expulsion of Healy was the beginning of that process.

Is Matgamna prepared to overcome his unprincipled position that anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism? Has Matgamna's organisation the political backbone to challenge the pro-Zionism of the Labour Party?

Will he now retract his smear of the WRP being anti-Semitic?

What is his attitude to the NUM receiving money from Libya? Should they denounce themselves? Are they now outside the labour movement?

I feel the major difference between our party and Matgamna's group is that we are analysing our history for the source of the degeneration under Healy in order to correct our position, while Matgamna, unable to break from his fixed conceptions, and ultra-leftism towards the oppressed nations' right to defend themselves against imperialism, waits for exonerated for his anti-communist methods and capitulation to Zionism.

Kevin Townsend,  
Newcastle YS

## Youth work appeal

AFTER the departure of the Hylandite 'YS National Committee' two months ago, strategy, tactics, programme and policies for future youth work can only be drawn out through collective discussion throughout the party involving party members, supporters, unemployed, youth on YTS schemes, and trade unionists.

Please send all your ideas and experiences of youth work to Youth News, Workers Press, 21b Clapham Old Town, London S W 4 OJT.

**NON-STOP** OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA  
HOUSE TRAFALGAR  
SQUARE

**PICKET**

■ RELEASE  
NELSON MANDELA  
■ RELEASE ALL SOUTH  
AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

■ CLOSE DOWN THE RACIST SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY

**19 APRIL DEMONSTRATE**  
Assemble 2pm  
Bidborough St, Nearest tube  
Kings Cross.

**MARCH TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE TO START THE  
NON-STOP PICKET AT 4PM**

CITY OF LONDON ANTI-APARTHEID GROUP Tel 837-6050 FOR DETAILS



## LETTERS

## Our 'own' history

JOHN SPENCER (Workers Press, March 15) says: 'I certainly don't share the view that the WRP has some proprietary interest in its own history. Nobody has any title deeds to history. It belongs indifferently to everyone . . .'

This same misunderstanding is also reflected in the headline to Cyril's letter: 'Historic significance of Healy's expulsion', as also when comrade Spencer says: ' . . . Healy . . . (and) . . . his organisation was never more than marginal to the life of the international working class'.

When we say this was 'our' history, what is meant is that 'We are the product of this history, and not some other.' We are not products of any or all history indifferently, but this one above all. We are not talking of its 'historic' significance for 'the international working class' but of its significance for us.

Comrade Spencer's position is like that of those who accuse Marx of 'ethnocentrism' because he was centrally concerned with the history of Western philosophy, not Chinese or Indian, for instance.

It was not because he regarded European philosophy as greater than Oriental at all, but because he himself was a product of that history, and not some other.

We do not presently have a conviction that the cadre of the International Committee of the Fourth International sections is superior, or more qualified than others, to build the FI. But it is the cadre of which we are a part and with which we shall build the FI.

In order to come to a correct, non-Healyite, understanding of our relation to the working class and other political organisations, we have first to begin with this cadre, and not some other. That is what is meant by 'revolutionary practical activity'.

If we begin as if 'Healy . . . (and) . . . his organisation was never more than marginal to our life then we delude ourselves. If we set out as if we were the product of all history indifferently, then we begin blindly.

Andy Blunden,  
Melbourne

## Save St James'!

WANDSWORTH Health Authority has been told to cut its finances each year for the next ten years.

Their main proposal to meet this financial target, set by the South West Thames Regional Health Authority, is to close St James' Hospital Balham, from April 1st 1988.

Staff at both St Georges and St James have been told

by official letter not to 'regard themselves as being in an advantageous position owing to their current places of work.'

In other words no job will be safe, and some will be lost altogether.

There is a further recommendation to shut Atkinson Morley Hospital, Wimbledon, in the mid-1990s, moving neurosurgical services to a new phase '2B' of St George's redevelopment — as yet unbuilt. The plan is

also to develop the borough's services for the elderly on the Maybury Street site, next to St Georges.

NUPE and COHSE, the two main health service unions represented at St James, are co-ordinating their efforts to stop this closure — but it is up to everyone to be aware of what is happening to the NHS. Join the fight! Save what is, after all, your hospital!

C. Stokes,  
NUPE Morden branch.



Nurse Penny Wright, NUPE branch secretary of St James' hospital, protesting against hospital closures

## Healyism in Greece

Four months after the expulsion of Gerry Healy from the WRP and the International Committee of the Fourth International, his supporters in Greece are in a crisis which appears in the form of the withdrawal of cadres and members, an end to recruiting and the predominance of extreme scepticism about the political future of the centrist party which calls itself the Workers Revolutionary Party, Greek section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The main collaborators of Savas Michael in their factional activities against the Fourth International are:

Teresa Bouki, who is the most cowardly and anti-theoretical element, known for her empiricism and her adaptation to her guru, namely Savas Michael. Even though Teresa Bouki was for many years the representative of the Greek section on the ICFI, she has never made any theoretical contribution.

Stefanos Karabetsis, who

in the past had renounced communism and Trotskyism when he betrayed by signing an anticommunist declaration during his arrest by the junta. Because of this betrayal and his petty-bourgeois character Karabetsis was one of the most hated persons for every honest member of the Workers Internationalist League. For this reason he was excluded from the leadership of the Greek section. However, in spite of this, Savas Michael entrusted him with various international missions!

At the training school of the WRP last September, he engaged in factional activity together with G. Healy against the leadership of the WRP. Due to this contribution, he was promoted by Savas Michael into the leadership of the Greek section.

Michael's clique organised a split in the ICFI on the basis of the cover-up of G Healy's political and moral corruption. He accomplished this by using filthy lies, slanders and demagoguery.

At the Congress which took place in Greece from 22nd to 24th November 1985, at which the Workers Internationalist League called itself the Workers Revolutionary Party, he 'managed' to congregate less than 200 members.

The festive opening of the Congress was observed by 600 people, including the membership.

At the Congress, there was no substantial political discussion, no criticism or self-criticism, whereas all its time was consumed with the launching of slanders and swearing against known cadres of the International.

## US terrorism

The terrorist attack on Libya by American imperialism is something that should not surprise anybody after the atrocities of Nagasaki, Hiroshima and Vietnam, plus all the proxy wars in South and Central America, and the involvement of the CIA in countless countries throughout the world.

Using Reagan's logic, the logic of a war-monger, a part of North Africa has become part of the United States, and to hell with the rights of small countries such as Libya.

Whether Libya has a right to the waters around the Gulf of Sirte is not the point. Libya's claim to the Gulf is certainly far more solid than is that of Rambo Reagan's imperialism.

It has a right to go outside the 'legal' twelve mile limit to defend its territory against hostile actions.

But what must be emphasised is that the episode was

The select star was Vanessa Redgrave, who accused comrades M Banda and C Slaughter and D North of being conspirators and agents, and she specifically said that comrade C Slaughter visited Greece the previous summer in his capacity as an agent and with the cover of his supposed interest in archaeological research and studies.

She said that Greece is the country where all the agents pretend to be tourists.

After that Congress, Michael called himself the General Secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

We must stress, though, that despite the bureaucratic regime which Michael has established, the majority of the party membership is very critical towards the leading clique, strong political questioning is being developed about the situation in the Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain, and the day won't be long when they will cut the bureaucratic cancer of the Healyite clique.

We call upon the Trotskyists in Greece to demand from Michael the formation of an International Investigation Commission similar to the Dewey Commission. We are convinced though that Michael will never accept this, because he is an impudent coward, a liar and a slanderer.

It won't be long before the forces of the Fourth International will be reborn in Greece.

THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS REVOLUTIONARY!

With fraternal greetings,  
from Greece.

## Imperialism and starvation

ON THE invitation of Phyllis Maginnis I am writing in support of her letter.

I believe it is an innovative way of organising on the issue of starvation from a left political perspective.

The danger is that with the individual work of Bob Gelfod taking coverage in the bourgeois press, the issue is being moulded and stifled by the ruling class.

We must never let the masses worldwide forget that starvation in the twentieth century is caused by capitalism, imperialism and colonial exploitation.

We must recognise the third world's need for agricultural aids, technology, etc. — all the developments of western capitalism. What is not needed by the third world is confirmation of their colonial status as the 'white man's burden.'

The national liberation movements have an acid test to prove their willingness to challenge capitalism in the interests of the 'suffering masses.'

Ultimately what it calls for is the building of Trotskyist sections in these countries.

What it necessitates is a struggle against bourgeois governments, multinationals and all agents of capitalist exploitation. Here is a test of revolutionary internationalism.

I envisage an attack on the capitalist system on all fronts, with this issue being only one, for a Trotskyist perspective to win the masses.

Comrade Maginnis is to be congratulated for an audacious use of 'transitional demands' to win the masses to a programme leading to a planned economy, opposed to the bourgeois 'free market economy'.

It is worthy of further discussion to solve that basic problem, how to bring the consciousness of the masses into line with a policy based

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# ROBERT SHAW, REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTER

BY BILL HUNTER

THE recently-elected Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party, at its meeting last weekend, with pride recalled Robert Shaw as a revolutionary fighter. Robert Shaw died on March 22 1980, at the age of 63.

He was killed by a cancer caused by working with asbestos in Merseyside shipyards during the war. Even while he was under sentence of death, less than a month before he died, Bob Shaw was striving with great courage, to use his experiences to rouse workers.

On February 29 1980, he wrote an article in the News Line relating how as a shop steward on Merseyside, he fought to reveal the complete disregard for workers' health and safety in the ship-repair industry.

'For raising the question of joint trades committees to fight on these issues I was chased out of the yard with the connivance of the employers, the state and the ETU under the local leadership at that time of Frank Foulkes, who was a member of the Communist Party.

'The pain of such an illness and certain death results in untold suffering... Workers should write to News Line and state the facts about these killer diseases. The firms concerned should be close down and alternative work provided for workers thrown out of a job by such closures.'

He declared then that this could be done only through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

As a young man before the war, he joined the Trotskyist group called the Workers International League. From then, until he died, the preparation for this revolutionary overthrow of capitalism was the axis of his activity.

He grew up in a middle class family in Nottingham, but was repelled by the contrast between poverty and wealth in capitalist society. Like other young people of the time, seeking policies against fascism and war, he was profoundly gripped by Trotskyism. They were attracted by the central thought in the Transitional Programme adopted by the founding conference of the Fourth International — the

crisis of humanity is the crisis of working class leadership.

As Mickie Shaw writes: 'His actions stemmed from his deep conviction of the necessity to build a revolutionary leadership to lead the working class to power and that it meant devoting one's life to this task. Having set out on this road in this way, that is what he continued to do.' ('Fighter for Trotskyism').

He fought for the independence of the working class during the war, for the principles of Marxist internationalism and opposition to imperialist war. He fiercely conflicted with the policies of Stalinism which condemned strikes and advocated the subordination of the working class to the imperialist rulers of Britain, France and America, who were waging war in the interests of capitalism. He stood firm against the attempts of the Communist Party to whip up a pogrom against the Trotskyists under the infamous slogan of 'treat a Trotskyist as you would a Nazi.'

At the end of the war, he joined with G. Healy in a faction in the Trotskyist movement advocating entry

to the Labour Party. He fought for Trotskyism in Nottingham, Scotland and Merseyside. A large number of comrades in those areas remember his steadfastness and patience and the interest he showed in developing the youth of the party.

In his last article he declared that the overthrow of capitalism would take place 'under the leadership of the WRP'. Had he been alive in 1985 when the struggle broke out in the WRP, he would have unhesitatingly supported the expulsion of Healy and his supporters.

Despite the respect in which he had held Healy in the past (although, like other members, decried by Healy for many years as 'an old propagandist') he would certainly have been repelled and appalled by the revelations of corruption. He would, unhesitatingly, have dealt all the blows he could muster against the Healy clique. With the loyalty to the principles to which he devoted his life, he would have turned with his painstaking method of work, his undoubted talents, his widespread reading, to use his experiences in the continuous task of building a Trotskyist leadership.



Robert Shaw (second from left) campaigning for the Workers Revolutionary Party in the 1974 election at Clydebank

## Cadres: our precious heritage

THE above statement on comrade Robert Shaw, which was written by comrade Bill Hunter on behalf of the WRP Central Committee, was telephoned to the Workers Press last Tuesday by comrade Hunter, and due to an error in our editorial office did not appear in the last issue.

We apologise to our readers for this error, and in this context publish the following letter.

I WAS SHOCKED to find that, on the sixth anniversary of his death, there was no mention of the contribution of comrade Bob Shaw in our paper. This was the first time this has happened since he died.

Comrade Bob died on 22 March 1980 from asbestosis, which he had contracted after working in the Birkenhead shipyards during the war.

When Bob was dying, WRP general secretary Mike Banda wrote to him a farewell letter which, in my view, expressed the vital importance to our movement of comrades like Bob. He wrote:

'Cadres are the most precious things around and as the history of the Bolsheviks showed they are the most difficult to replace. In this profession many are called but few chosen. A cadre is a rare combination of princi-

pled firmness and tactical resourcefulness but above all it is someone for whom socialism is not a form of self-indulgence but a definite and concrete aim to which he devotes his entire life. Well, Bob, that's you.'

It is particularly galling that the Healyite rump News Line had an obscene so-called 'obituary' signed by G Healy claiming to have been Bob's closest comrade.

Considering that Healy was responsible for virtually breaking up Bob's family, as well as politically destroying hundreds of cadres for the party which Bob fought to build, it is appalling — and to

our shame — to see them commemorating his death while our movement did not even mention it.

When I was jailed following the 1972 building workers' strike, I was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. During that experience I found more and more that the CP was not really fighting to expose the conspiracy of the state against the labour movement. It was the WRP which was doing that.

When I came out of prison, it was members of the WRP who came round and discussed with me continuously, even though I argued with them at length.

But the more we argued, and the more I read the books and literature they left with me on the history and role of Stalinism, the more I realised I was being faced with a decision.

Could I continue as a member of the Communist Party, or should I declare myself for Trotskyism?

It was comrade Bob's death which decided me. To my eternal regret, I was never able to meet Bob, but I knew of his work and the way he had dedicated his life to he struggle for principles.

When I was invited to attend his funeral, I knew I could not go there as a Stalinist. The decision was made. I resigned from the CP before going to the funeral, and shortly afterwards joined the WRP.

The contribution of generations of comrades like Bob Shaw to the struggle to build revolutionary lead-

ership for the working class is something which must not be forgotten. Our cadres are the most precious heritage we have — not the buildings, bookshops, printshops, papers, or any of the other appendages. We must get our priorities right.

It is a sign of something which is very wrong in our movement when such things happen. We cannot get to grips with the main fight against the capitalist state unless we can resolve the questions of the building of cadres, the development of leadership and ensuring communist relations in our party.

I hope that this omission will be remedied as soon as possible.

Des Warren.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

**MARXIST STUDY GROUP**

Every Monday 7.30pm

starting Monday March 17

Student Union  
Strathclyde University  
John Street  
GLASGOW

The first series of discussion will be opened by Alex McLarty (WRP Central Committee) followed by discussion.

Reading: 'Capital' by Karl Marx Volume One chapters 1 to 3.

ALL WELCOME

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY  
Midlands Area

**WHAT IS TROTSKYISM?**

A Day Conference on the History of Trotskyism and its importance today

Saturday April 26, 10am - 5pm  
International Community Centre  
Mansfield Road  
NOTTINGHAM

Speakers: Bill Hunter (WRP Cen Ctte)  
Dave Temple (WRP Cen Ctte, Murton  
Mechanics NUM in personal capacity

For conference details phone Nottingham 619109,  
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# Workers Press

Saturday April 5 1986. Newsdesk 01-720 2000

## STRIP-SEARCH CAMPAIGN

**THE CAMPAIGN** against the strip-search torture of Irish prisoners in British jails takes to the streets of south London on Saturday (see advert p 8).

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer, who have been held on remand since July 1985, are regularly subject to the torture and sexual harassment of strip searching in Brixton prison.

Each Saturday there is a picket outside the prison which has been growing in numbers. Behind the barred windows, the prisoners can be seen waving to their supporters.

The picket raises the question of censorship and demands that the whole labour and trade union movement takes up the campaign against strip searching.

The Kilburn branch of the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Irish Solidarity movement have been joining forces for lively and vigorous street meetings. Passers by, attracted by a load-hailer, have taken leaflets and signed the ISM's petition against strip searching.

All WRP members and Workers Press readers are urged to join the march from Kennington to Brixton prison.



**THE IRISH SOLIDARITY** movement held a meeting in Camden recently to celebrate the acquittal of Dr Maire O'Shea on a charge of conspiring to cause an explosion in the UK.

Among the speakers was Labour MP Joan Maynard. She told the meeting of her wish to see an end to the loyalist veto on any future settlement of the problem in the north of Ireland.

She also said that any future Labour government must pledge to withdraw troops from Ireland and must support the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

Fine stuff indeed. However Ms Maynard also told the meeting that only 109 Labour MPs had voted against the recent renewal of the anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Maynard said she hoped in the years to come more Labour MPs would be voting against the PTA. When, at this rate, can the Irish community expect the PTA to be repealed?

What is to happen in the meantime to the thousands of Irish people who are stopped, arrested and harassed under the PTA on their journeys to and from Ireland and other destinations?

Is the Labour Party going to remain silent and do nothing while an ethnic minority have their rights trampled on, are abused and treated as criminals because of being Irish? I pay tribute to Joan Maynard and the other Labour MPs who voted against the renewal of the PTA.

But where do Neil Kinnock and the rest of the shadow

### COMMENT by Charlie Walsh

cabinet stand on this question?

I would like to remind readers of what Alec Kitson, chair of the Labour Party and a member of the NEC, said at last year's Labour Party conference when referring to Ireland.

### Lies

He said the Labour Party had done everything possible for the people of northern Ireland.

Well yes, the Labour government of 1969 sent the troops into Ireland having spent the previous decades ignoring the plight of the minority Catholic people at the hands of a sectarian government.

The Labour government also sent the SAS into Ireland.

It appointed Sir Kenneth Newman as head of the RUC. Newman is now head of the Metropolitan Police. When questioned about allegations of torture methods used by the police at Castlereagh against Republican suspects he suggested they had burned themselves with cigarettes in order to discredit the police.

Newman learned his trade in the Palestine Police and other former outposts of the British Empire.

# 'We will not renounce armed struggle'

## Glasgow meeting told

PRINCIPLED unity in support of the Irish struggle was the theme of a meeting, held by the Workers Revolutionary Party in Glasgow last week, to commemorate the 1916 Easter uprising.

The meeting, attended by 80 trade unionists, women and youth, was organised jointly with the local Prisoners of War Committee and the Republican Band Alliance.

A message from Ronnie McCartney, a Republican prisoner serving life in Gartree, was read out by his girlfriend Marion O'Reilly.

'The British state claimed the people of northern Ireland would not support the Republicans — until the election of Bobby Sands as MP proved them wrong,' Ronnie wrote.

The Anglo-Irish agreement had not put an end to supergrass trials, plastic bullets and all the instru-

ments of British oppression in the Six Counties.

The Irish political prisoners in British jails were concerned about the plight of their families, who found it impossible to visit them regularly. All requests for transfer to jails in northern Ireland had been refused.

'Like Nelson Mandela, we refuse to renounce the armed struggle,' the message continued. 'We are left with no choice — as long as the British government denies the right to self-determination, the struggle will go on.'

Marion also brought a message from the Belfast-based committee comprising the relatives of Republi-

can prisoners in English jails. Families often faced harassment under the PTA which could result in the loss of precious visiting time.

Chairman Joe Eyre, a member of the EIS Scottish teachers' union, said that the WRP was nailing its colours to the mast on the Irish question, acknowledging that wrong positions had been taken up under the Healy leadership.

Simon Pirani of the WRP Central Committee said it would be pointless for socialists to commemorate the 1916 uprising if they were not prepared to follow James Connolly's example and fight for the victory of the national struggle today.

'Connolly's great contribution to socialism was that he recognised that socialism could never be achieved internationally unless in oppressed nations like Ireland, socialists pursued the struggle for national liberation.'

Connolly had strived for the working class to take the leading role in the national struggle, and when imperialist war broke out in 1914 he had called, alongside Lenin, for the working class to turn it into civil war.

Pirani said a central task for revolutionary socialists in Britain was to drive the reactionary Labour leaders, who participated in the armed repression of Irish Republicanism, out of the leadership of the working

class. This was inseparable from real unity of the Irish struggle and that of the British working class.

Maire O'Shea, from the Irish in Britain Representation Group, who was recently acquitted of conspiracy charges under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, said that the legislation was designed to silence opposition to state terror in Ireland among the Irish community in Britain.

Out of an average of 44,000 stopped every year at ports of entry, only 140 had ever been charged, mostly with trivial offences.

'I was charged with conspiracy, a convenient catch-all for locking up inconvenient members of the public', she said. A massive security operation accompanied her trial: even sandwiches coming into the courtroom had been examined.

The jury had been vetted twice — once by Special Branch and once by MI5 — and were excluded even if they belonged to the Labour Party.

In spite of this, they had acquitted her — a reflection, said O'Shea, of the growing scepticism about 'British justice' in the wake of events such as the Ponting case and the use of conspiracy charges against striking miners.

The climate was now more favourable than ever for winning support for the nationalist struggle — despite the reluctance of trade union and Labour leaders to even allow the issue to be debated.

Greetings were read to the meeting from the Irish Socialist League, and representatives of many socialist groups joined in the discussion concluding the meeting.

# Ireland: Labour's record

The Labour government also appointed Sir Timothy Creasy as head of the army in the north of Ireland. He came with a reputation of brutality learned in places like Oman, Cyprus and Malaya.

Not forgetting of course the appointment of Roy Mason as Secretary of State



ROY MASON (left) organised repression under the last Labour government. To their credit, left-wing MPs like JOAN MAYNARD have voted against renewal of the PTA and other measures.

for Northern Ireland. When it comes to using imperialist jackboot methods against the Irish people, a Labour minister is equal if not more brutal than his Tory counterpart.

The appointment of General Sir Frank Kitson to a post in Ireland in the early 1970s was certainly not opposed by the Labour Party.

The Labour government withdrew Special Category status from republican prisoners of war in the jails of Northern Ireland.

During the hunger-strike,

just before Bobby Sands died, Don Concannon was sent over to Belfast where he openly stated that he and the Labour Party supported Thatcher's stand in refusing to give in to the demands of the hunger strikers.

The last Labour government sought a deal with the Unionist politicians at West-



ROY MASON (left) organised repression under the last Labour government. To their credit, left-wing MPs like JOAN MAYNARD have voted against renewal of the PTA and other measures.

minster in order to stay in power.

These self-same Unionists are equivalent to the white racists of South Africa. In some of their policies they are without doubt neo-fascist. George Seawright believes all Catholics should be burned.

In December 1984 following a visit to the north of Ireland, Neil Kinnock made a statement in which he said he supported the use of the SAS against the nationalist population.

Of course during the min-

ers' strike Kinnock showed where he stood when it came to a conflict between the state and the working class — he stood with the state.

In fact throughout the duration of the strike he consistently condemned so-called picket line violence but never once did he condemn police brutality, horses, riot shields, etc.

Whether it is a question of Ireland or of an industrial dispute the Labour Party in or out of government supports the forces of the state.

The Labour Party as a pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist party is tied hand and foot to the capitalist institutions, whether it is the judiciary, the army or the police force and as such it cannot but uphold such institutions when they come into conflict with the working class as the miners did.

Likewise of course Kinnock told the Lambeth and Liverpool councils to obey the law.

### Traitors

When it came to attacks on the working class, Kinnock didn't give a damn.

If obeying the law meant cuts in services, jobs etc, then Kinnock is all for this. Defending the old, the handicapped, the unemployed, didn't matter at all.

So I'm not surprised that only 109 Labour MPs voted against the renewal of the PTA.

At last year's Labour Par-

ty conference all motions relating to a withdrawal of troops and a united Ireland without the consent of the loyalists were voted down.

The loyalist veto has never been threatened by either the Labour Party or a Labour government.

There are of course many rank and file members of the Labour party and MPs too, who want the PTA repealed and an end to the strip-searching and all repressive legislation. Some do fight for a united Ireland.

Looking back on the experience of previous Labour governments I'm not too optimistic that a future Labour government would be committed to bringing about the reunification of Ireland.

In the war with Argentina the jingoism of the Labour Party was expressed by the then leader Michael Foot in supporting aggression against Argentina.

Likewise when it comes to Ireland the Labour Party have refused to break with the Tories and take a principled socialist position.

As Lenin said, a socialist who doesn't support the oppressed of another country against his own ruling class is not a socialist but a chauvinist.

The Labour Party in or out of government is chauvinistic with regard to Ireland and as such the PTA, strip-searching etc will be allowed to continue and Irish people as a result will continue to be victimised.