

## THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN

BENEFIT

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# Tories publish new anti-union Green Paper: SCABS' CHARTER

**BANNING of the closed shop and legal protection for scabs are the major proposals of last week's Green Paper 'Trade Unions and their Members'. Proposed Tory legislation will:**

- GIVE the right to scab even where a majority has voted for strike action. Strike-breakers who cross picket lines would receive legal backing.
- REMOVE union immunity from industrial action to establish a closed shop. From now on, any dismissal for non-membership of a union, even where there is an 'approved' closed shop, would be automatically deemed 'unfair' in law.
- REQUIRE all officials to stand for election, even where this contradicts union rules. NUM President Arthur Scargill is the prime object of this proposal, along with Rodney Bickerstaffe of NUPE and Ken Gill of TASS.
- PROVIDE high compensation for expelled trade unionists. The changes proposed would allow an individual expelled from his union for working during an industrial dispute to seek compensation 'at a deterrent level' from the Employment Appeal Tribunal.

The proposals — designed to tighten even further the screws on the unions — are based on the experience of the miners' strike and the year-long Wapping struggle.

As Tory Paymaster General Kenneth Clarke said

last week, if these latest plans had been in operation at the time of Wapping, any SOGAT member could have got a court order restraining the union from calling a strike without a ballot of the membership.

The National Union of

### BY THE EDITOR

Journalists would have been unable to discipline those members who continued working in defiance of union instruction.

In future all those responsible for conducting union affairs would be deprived of the capacity to breach the terms of court orders.

It is intended that there should be a statutory duty on trade union trustees to prevent funds being used in defiance of the court.

The fact that the Tories are proposing a new round of legislation to build on the 1984 Trade Union Act proves one thing: that they have not been able to defeat the working class.

Apart from the miners and printworkers, many other sections of the union movement have also shown their willingness to fight the Tory government.

The teachers have refused to give in to state-imposed attacks on conditions and the removal of collective bargaining rights — forcing Education secretary Ken-

neth Baker to impose his deal.

Last week's thirty thousand-strong student demonstration in London underlined the determination of large layers of the student population to oppose the destruction of higher education.

The Tories' latest wave of attacks against the unions is due entirely to the cowardice of the trade union and labour leaders. For seven years they have, in effect, collaborated with their Tory masters.

### Refused

They allowed the miners to battle for a year against the state, sparing no efforts to force them back to work. For a year they refused to take action against the scab EET-PU at Wapping.

The Wapping struggle contained vital lessons for the entire working class. Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins called off the struggle because their unions faced bankruptcy under already existing anti-union laws.

By their actions such leaders have said in advance how they will respond to this new round of legal attacks. They will accept them as meekly as they did previous ones.

The Labour leaders have already made clear that any future Labour government will retain much of the Thatcher anti-union legislation.

Last week the TUC general council spent its entire meeting discussing its financial plight. Nothing was said about the Tory Green Paper.

The trade union movement is more than financially bankrupt. Its leaders are more interested in the income they get from their members than they are in fighting Thatcher and the state.

Without that fight, no defence of the unions as independent bodies able to represent the interests of their members is possible.

The Tories lyingly claim the Green Paper is a move to 'give the unions back to their members'. Their purpose is

the exact opposite.

They want to place trade unions under the direct control of the capitalist state and strip union members of any rights whatsoever to determine policies or control their leaders.

Arthur Scargill has announced that he stands for a movement throughout the NUM to restore the union to its members, to establish an annual conference on the basis of delegates from every pit.

This call must be supported as a first step. The question of union democracy is one not only for miners, but is of concern in every union. Scargill's call deserves consideration and discussion throughout the entire working class movement.

Democracy in the unions is inseparable from the struggle for revolutionary socialist policies throughout the working class and a systematic campaign to demand that the union leaders break completely from the capitalist state — whether a Tory or a Labour government is in office.

# Déjà Vu

THE REAGAN administration is tottering on the very edge of collapse with the impending resignation of White House chief of staff Donald Regan. Whether the President himself can survive the Tower Commission's findings is also in doubt. His immediate future may depend on the television speech he is to give this week in response to the publication of the Commission's report, the first of a series of investigations of the US-Iran-Contras tie-up.

For the first time during his presidency, Reagan's popularity has slumped to the point where a majority of Americans now believe him to be a liar. The day that the Tower Commission reported, it was disclosed that America had secretly enlisted the help of the South African government to provide military help to the Contra forces in Nicaragua. Former CIA chief William Casey was directly in charge of the operation, carried out while Congress was debating the issue of economic sanctions against Pretoria. It seems certain that vice-President George Bush was implicated in these illegal operations.

Since the news of the Administration's secret dealings with Iran first broke on 3 November last year, America has plunged into a crisis surpassing the Watergate scandal which brought about Nixon's downfall. Irangate is in fact far more serious than Watergate, involving as it does a tangle of international ties — in South Africa, the Middle-East and elsewhere.

The casualties suffered in the course of the unfolding Iranian arms scandal are already devastating, even before Donald Regan's almost certain departure. CIA chief William Casey has escaped further investigation of his activities in South Africa and elsewhere after the sudden development of a brain tumour.

Former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane is still in hospital following a vallium overdose which the police interpret as a suicide attempt. These departures come after the enforced resignations of Admiral John Poindexter and Colonel Oliver North.

A somewhat bizarre entrant into the growing scandal is Ms Fawn Hall, 27 year-old former secretary to Lt Col North. She came on stage just as she broke off a fifteen month romance with the son of prominent Contra leader Arturo Cruz — a man on the North payroll.

Last week, in return for immunity, she began to divulge, many say betray, the Colonel's secrets. She has already admitted re-typing, with alterations, four key White House documents to prevent the originals being found by probing officials. The carbon of the originals has been found and they re-inforce the widespread belief that North did his best to cover up the role played by his superiors.

She also admits helping North to shred a series of documents. She promises to play a similar role to that taken by Rose Mary Wood who 'accidentally' erased vital passages from White House tapes at the time of the Nixon crisis.

The leadership of the ruling class of the most powerful imperialist power is in a state of near-paralysis which expresses the weakness of the capitalist class world-wide. The Thatcher government, in particular, has been intimately implicated in all Reagan's policies, including the bombing raids on Libya aimed, it is now revealed, at killing Colonel Gadaffi.

Kinnock chose last week, to announce yet another fawning visit to Reagan to convince the Americans that their interests are safe in the hands of a Labour government — which speaks volumes about what the working class can expect from a government headed by Kinnock.

# Scargill lashes Tories' coal privatisation plans

BY GEOFF PILLING

A TORY plan to privatise the coal industry has been bitterly condemned by NUM president Arthur Scargill.

Last week the Tory-dominated Commons Energy Committee agreed that for the moment the coal industry should remain nationalised — but only till it's restored to profitability.

'We accept the government's argument that it would be better to wait until the coal industry is more viable before proposing its partial or wholesale privatisation', said the Committee.

Under its plans all coal reserves would be vested in the Crown and the nationalised industry would have to apply like any private firm for permission to open new workings.

Scargill immediately re-

called the warnings he had issued about Tory plans:

'Over the last five years,' he said, 'I have warned that this government intended to slash miners' jobs by over 70,000 and axe at least 70 pits as a first move toward privatisation.'

'During this time the government have consistently denied that this was their intention.'

'But the publication of today's report demonstrates that they have been guilty of duplicity and of lying to both Parliament and the British people.'

The NUM would do every-

thing in its power to oppose privatisation, Scargill added.

● Serious differences surfaced last week between Arthur Scargill and South Wales miners' leaders over the proposed new pit at Margam, West Glamorgan. Scargill insisted changes in working hours demanded by British Coal must be discussed with the NUM before Margam could go ahead.

The opening of the pit is strongly supported by the South Wales leaders, though British Coal are demanding a six-day working week in return for the necessary investment.

South Wales NUM president Des Duffield attacked some of Scargill's remarks as being not very helpful, adding that when British Coal put forward a proposition deserving consideration the union leadership should not engage in trench warfare.

Golden Wonder. . .

## 'CRISP FIGHT'

BY JANE LYNCH

WELL over 200 workers from the closure-threatened Golden Wonder Crisp factory in West Lothian packed Braxburn Community Centre last Saturday to hear messages of support and solidarity from speakers throughout the labour and trade union movement.

Shop steward Ruby Hillson told me before the meeting what a devastating effect the closure would have on the workforce and the community.

She pointed out that, in an area where 10,000 jobs had already been lost in recent years, the predominantly female workforce were in many cases the family breadwinners.

So they would fight tooth and nail to protect their families and their community.

Senior shop steward Dave Mackay, who later chaired the meeting, welcomed the coverage by Workers Press and stressed that, given the history of defeat in the area, the unionised workforce (T&G, with engineers in both EETPU and AEU) were well aware of their need for support.

The audience heard how earlier attempts to address the workers had been thwarted by plant management, who would not allow into the factory even such prominent personalities as Labour MP Robin Cook

### Record

The shameful behaviour of Dalgety — owners of the plant for only three months — was exposed. Their record, even by today's standards, is a particularly callous one.

In December Dalgety warmly thanked the workforce for their performance — and hardly more than a month later announced the forthcoming closure.

A week after the closure was announced, Dalgety boasted in the 'Financial Times' of a 20 per cent rise in profit — to £10.5 million a year!

The factory recently accepted a £250,000 regional development grant.

Dalgety are refusing to sell the plant and machinery, saying the competition might harm them. In other words, they have such confidence in the Broxburn plant's ability to produce quality crisps that even the phenomenal amount they would have to pay in redundancy would not match the

drop in profit that such a strong rival would cost them.

Dalgety refused a proposal by the Labour-controlled Local Authority Enterprise Board to promote a local buyer, funded by that Board, who would even look into the feasibility of producing a different food product at the plant.

Dalgety's refusal to entertain this proposal underlines their total lack of concern for the workers and the community.

Dalgety have offered the workforce an extra £1,500 on their redundancy payments should there be no strikes at the plant.

Dalgety refused to open their books, even when assured that the local authority would provide and pay for the accountant.

### Deceit

The workers listened to this diary of deceit with growing anger and determination, and when Jim Swan, Trades Council chairman and ex-convenor at BL, Bathgate, read out a resolution for the coming STUC conference which pledged help, advice, and support, the applause was deafening.

Both Swan and Ina Scott (also ex-BL) urged workers not to make the mistakes they had made.

'Don't strike', they pleaded, 'and don't just occupy.'

In contrast to Euro-MP Dave Martin — who assured workers that Labour Party members were 'not here to suggest the way forward but to offer support for whatever decision is taken' — they urged the workers to follow the example of the Upper Clyde shipbuilders and, more recently, Caterpillar and stage a work-in at the factory.

Unlike their task at BL, the workers at Golden Wonder had only to find 'tatties and oil', said Swan. Everything else they needed to produce crisps was there, ready to be used, and the Scottish people would prove a willing market for crisps produced by them.

Swan ended by warning the workers to watch for the 'mysterious buyer' who would suddenly appear at the eleventh hour to save the factory.

Past experience had proved that these saviours were a seven-day wonder.

This advice must be taken further. The Labour Party have pledged every support to these workers, and they should now demand that a future Labour government nationalise the plant.

Links must be made with

## Growing support for Caterpillar

TRADE unionists from all over Scotland will join a mass demonstration in Uddingston, near Glasgow, this Saturday in support of the month-long occupation of the local closure-threatened Caterpillar tractor plant.

The Scottish TUC have circulated member unions to send delegations to the march through the town, which will culminate in a rally outside the factory, to be addressed by local MPs.

Joining the protest will be a contingent from the Golden Wonder factory in West Lothian, itself facing shut-down.

A three-man delegation from the Caterpillar factory in Grenoble, France, will also take part, cementing the international links already made between the Scottish workers and their European counterparts.

A warm reception is

assured from the local community, who have rallied enthusiastically to this stand against even greater unemployment in the area.

'We have been refused nothing here', a strike committee member commented this week.

'Cheap butchers' meat, free haircuts, free fish suppers — everything has been made available to a Caterpillar worker.'

Workers at the steel plant at Ravenscraig have donated £1,000 to the occupation this week, and the Scottish TUC asked for regular levies from trade unionists to maintain the fight.

Caterpillar workers have been supported on the occupation rota this week by TASS union members at the factory who were narrowly defeated in a motion to back the sit-in.

Saturday's march assemblies at the Uddingston station car park at 11.00a.m., and moves off at 11.30a.m.

# AIDS victims locked up!

REAL purpose of the AIDS antibody test was highlighted in a newspaper report this week.

Positive results are leading to young people being locked up without trial.

'The latest "case" I know of is a pregnant girl of 16,' said Professor Norman Tutt, former leading child-care adviser to the DHSS. 'She had a blood-test and medical inspection.'

### Infected

'This revealed she had been infected with the AIDS virus. They have put her into a secure unit to stop her spreading the disease.'

The locking up of people under 18 years of age because they are HIV anti-

body positive has apparently been going on in England for more than six months.

This practice is a blatant attack on young peoples' rights, since they all have to be released on their 18th birthday.

'They can keep the children locked up only until they are 18. After that they have to let them go,' Tutt went on.

It is a traumatic experience to find you are antibody positive, without being locked up because of it.

This is only one example of the abuse of the test.

Unless you have symptoms of AIDS, or are considering having a child, the test is of no value whatever. It will only be used as a 'hit list' to attack people for being drug users, promiscuous, or homosexual.

Caterpillar in Uddingston and UK Optical in Ayrshire. Already plans are afoot for Golden Wonder to join Caterpillar in their lobby of Parliament on 5 March.

This link must be widened to include a joint campaign of action within the trad-

union movement, with the setting up of support groups and the organisation of strikes and demonstrations.

The whole working-class movement must stand firmly behind these threatened workers.

# Hicks reunion: 'We're not defeated'

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

'I WENT in prison on 5 December, 1986. No bars and no walls appeared to me until 5 February, when I heard my general secretary selling all of you out.'

That was the message from jailed Wapping strike leader and SOGAT NEC member Mike Hicks to hundreds of sacked printworkers outside SOGAT offices in London last week, the day he was released after serving 80 days in prison on the Isle of Wight for alleged 'police assault' on the picket line.

'We have a duty, all of us, to find ways and means of now winning this dispute another way. Who knows — that other way may build up to the day when we return to those gates at Wapping, but this time with our banners in front of us marching ourselves in to take the jobs that are rightfully ours.'

He told the crowd that he remained innocent of the charge. 'Everyone who was there that night knows it,' he said.

He talked about the Prison Officers' Association dispute. 'I read in the papers that they've now got a new fresh start which Maggie Thatcher has presented them. I said beware the Greeks bearing gifts — Maggie's now out to screw the screws.'

'What you did for that 13 months will go down in history as an outstanding act of courage of ordinary men and women.'

Hicks' friend and fellow NEC member Bill Freeman said: 'While you have been inside our people have suffered a major setback, but one thing they're not is down-hearted and we're going to carry on with one means or another, not just to beat Murdoch but to beat this government that puts in these laws.'

'What we've got to do in our union is we've got to give our union back to the membership and we've got to make Brenda Dean fall in line — or move over. That's got to be part of the struggle in front of us.'

'We want people who are going to stand fair-square with the workers.'

Tim Hennessy, well-known among the strikers for his

'Wapping Post' salesmanship, finished the rally by declaring his opposition to the police, comparing them to the police in South Africa.

Afterwards, printworkers and supporters went for a celebration drink. I spoke to Mike Hicks, his family and closest comrades, many of them being 'Morning Star' supporters.

Asked about his jailing, Hicks replied: 'The significance of jailing me is, I work in a big team, a great team of many men and women fighting for their livelihoods and fighting for their future, supported by some great people.'

## Team

'But any team that loses its centre forward with a broken leg on the day before a big cup final is weaker for the loss of that centre forward. When they took me out, all they did is took the centre forward out. The rest of the team tried to play on, but without the centre forward they couldn't score the goals they needed to score.'

'As far as I'm concerned we are going to carry on the dispute in a different way, and at the end of the day we'll make sure that the Murdoch's of this world are answerable to the British people, the British working class, one way or the other.'

Tim Hennessy told Workers Press: 'Mike Hicks should never have been in prison in the first place. To me Mike Hicks is a gentleman and if he's the kind of person we've got to fill our prisons with, then God help us.'

'He was fitted up from the start. What they were trying to do was to demoralise him, and through that demoralise the printers. What they didn't realise was that it would make us far more determined. The thing is that our National Executive did the dirty on us and pulled the rug out.'

'It's good to have him back and it's lovely to see the man.'

His close friend, and fellow SOGAT NEC member Bill Freeman told us: 'Many people in the movement get coned by the right-wing when people get jailed under things other than the anti-union laws. The right-wing



tried to argue that this was just ordinary criminal law.

'You have to determine whether it's political or not. Mike's ability to hold the masses of people at Wapping together, despite police provocation, despite the actions of the scabs, was a threat and that's why he was taken out.'

'The more the Tories cut them down, the more others rise up in their place. When the establishment go on the rampage like they are now, when they finally have to resort to all brutal measures, we know that's a sign we are on the advance.'

'If they have to resort to that they're desperate. Three or four thousand printers will be raising their families with an understanding which they never had before. The more they cut us down the more we will rise up.'

'We're not defeated, we're betrayed, we're bitter, but we're not defeated.'

**HICKS' daughter Carolyn expressed her appreciation for the sacked printworkers and their supporters and denounced the frame-up.**

'I'm very proud — he was put away for something he didn't do. I am very proud of the people who stood behind him and I feel sad for the people who have lost their jobs, my thoughts are with them and their families.'

Mike's brother Pat attacked the way his brother was jailed and insisted his innocence. 'I can assure you the printworkers of London are still in dispute and they will be until they get into Wapping and organise it back into printing trade unions.'

He praised the family for standing by Mike while he was in prison. 'He was framed by the police and we'll continue to defy the laws of this land as long as Thatcher's in power, to see that the workers win their rights and we get rid of

Thatcher — and get Britain on the road at least to a Socialist Great Britain.'

Pat Hicks thanked Workers Press for interviewing him and for 'all the support your paper's given to the dispute and will do in the future to other disputes.'

'Wapping Post' editor John Grogan outlined the significance of Hicks's conviction to Workers Press.

'The conviction of Mike Hicks has illustrated once again that the laws of this country are slanted against the rights of trade unionists and workers. The essential corruption of capitalism and the judiciary are allied to achieving the desires of a government that was elected by a minority.'

'This will continue until people first of all realise they are being victimised by the government and by the establishment and other elements who, internationally, want to capitalise upon the workers' efforts.'

## TERRY FRENCH

JAILED miner Terry French from Betteshanger Colliery in Kent was released from Northeye Prison in Sussex last Monday morning.

French is one of the many miners jailed during the strike of 1984-1985.

While he served two years and one month of a four year sentence in four different prisons, his wife Liz continued the work which she and Terry did in the miners' strike. She regularly speaks at workers' public meetings and was a regular on the News International demonstrations at Wapping.

Terry French's first comments to colleagues waiting for him outside the jail were 'Let's go — there's work to do.'

## 'STAR' DEADLOCK

BY ALAN CLARK

TALKS between management and National Union of Journalists officials aimed at ending the dispute at the 'Sheffield Star' newspaper have collapsed.

The dispute — over the introduction of new technology without a union agreement — is now in its third week. The 100 locked-out journalists were asked to sign an agreement which the NUJ has already rejected.

In a blatant attempt to split the journalists, management have proposed that this agreement be the basis for reviews of individual contracts.

## BAN LIFTED

THE TUC and Labour Party have decided to lift their ban on all News International papers and journals as well as allowing journalists who scabbed on their colleagues to attend their conferences from now on.

## A Labour prime minister praises Murdoch

BY LYN BEATON

AUSTRALIA'S Labour Prime Minister Bob Hawke last week assured Australians that their most vicious export, international labour-basher Rupert Murdoch, was — despite any rumours to the contrary — a good Aussie cobbler.

When Murdoch relinquished his Australian citizenship last year in favour of an American one which enabled him to buy a US media conglomerate, he made clear that his only attachment is not to nationality, but to ever greater profits.

Eager to assure the international bourgeoisie of his willing co-operation, Bob Hawke tried to sell Murdoch to the Australian working class by assuring them that Rupert's true Aussie spirit was shown when he was seen barracking for Australia re-

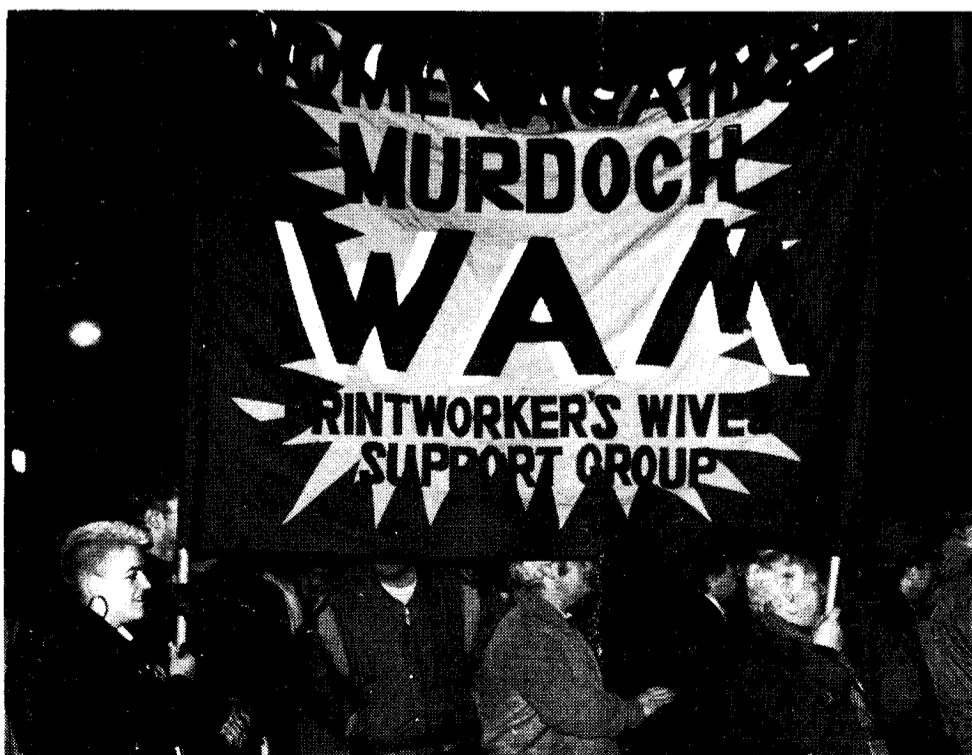
cently in the Americas Cup.

Before becoming leader of the Labour Party, Hawke was president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. But while Murdoch has his own brand of internationalism, Hawke's clearly doesn't extend to solidarity with fellow trade unionists.

Nor does it extend to his own party, which was sacked from office in 1975 after a plot in which Murdoch was involved up to his neck.

Perhaps Hawke thinks that his assurances about Murdoch's national spirit will prevent workers at the latest Murdoch acquisition, the Melbourne-based 'Herald and Weekly Times', from defending themselves when he attacks their conditions of work.

Hawke's praise for Murdoch is a warning to all those in this country who think a Labour government will do anything other than collaborate with attacks on workers and trade unions.



LAST Saturday night, women from WAM (Women Against Murdoch) marched and demonstrated at Wapping.

About 50 people, mostly wives of sacked printers from News International, met at Tower Hill and marched behind their banner down the Highway to the gates of fortress Wapping.

The demonstration was peaceful with no incidents and lasted about an hour.

# Sanctuary is the only weapon

**COMPETING with the South African government in hypocrisy and cruelty, the Home Office has ordered the deportation of Rajwinder Singh, a 29-year-old Sikh who is epileptic and has been mentally handicapped since birth.**

Defying this order, Rajwinder and his family have taken sanctuary in the Guru Nank Sikh Temple in Wakefield.

Rajwinder has no blood relatives in India willing and able to provide him with care and supervision.

Mr Gurdere Singh, Rajwinder's father, has lived in this country for 20 years.

**BY MARTIN RALPH**  
Immigration officials allowed Rajwinder's mother and brother Kulevant into the country in 1980.

The family have visited Rajwinder on six occasions in the last six years, at tremendous expense. Rajwinder came here in 1986 and the family want him to stay.

Speaking on behalf of Rajwinder's campaign at the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign meeting on 22 February, Mushtaq Kashmir said: 'All legal means have been used and all our appeals to the Home Office to allow Rajwinder to stay have been turned down.'

'He has shown a way to

fight back against the immigration system of this country. Hundreds of people are being deported each month and in the near future many more may be seeking sanctuary.

'What is unique about this case is the use of the mosque or Sikh Temple. This has received the support of the Asian community.'

'Sanctuary was used in 1982 but the police and immigration officials entered and took the person. Now we have the backing of the community.'

'Sanctuary is a weapon in the hands of the masses. It is a weapon they are going to use.'

'We should exchange information between all the campaigns to help develop this weapon.'

'If they use an army to get

Rajwinder we cannot stop them, but otherwise they can try any dirty trick and we can match them.'

More information is available from Rajwinder Singh Defence Campaign, c/o BYO, 40 Cornwall Road, Manningham, Bradford.

A joint campaign against all immigration laws and deportations has also been set up, supported by 25 groups.

The campaign demands an end to all the racist immigration laws that divide families, and defends the right to stay of Rose Alaso and her son Brian, Khurum Azad, Viraj Mendis, Genevieve Reynolds, and Rajwinder Singh.

For more information on this joint campaign write to Harehills Place Community Centre, Harehills Rd, Leeds LS8

## Ipswich victory

BY CHRIS BAILEY

WORKERS at Cranes Engineering, Ipswich, went on strike last week in defiance of advice from their shop stewards' committee.

A majority of the shop stewards had recommended acceptance of an offer of 3 per cent in the annual wage claim.

When a majority of workers rejected this the senior shop steward resigned and made it clear that he would not lead a fight for any further increase.

About 600 of the 800 workers at the factory then walked out.

The factory has been notorious for low wages and the lack of fight from the union leadership. Many of the strikers had not even been recruited into the union.

In one shop, 25 women walked out leaving the shop steward working!

As a result of the walk out management raised their offer to 5 per cent which the workers accepted.

A number of former shop stewards have resigned and new elections are being held to replace them.

The strikers were back at their workplaces yesterday but were still refusing to carry out any work because management was backdating the wage rise for the 200 workers who did not strike and not for the strikers.

The strikers are demanding that the back money for the 200 be paid to a local hospital charity — in the name of the workers, not the management.

Their demand is supported by many of the workers who did not strike but who recognise that it was the strikers who got them the increase.

## Keeping out fascists

BY RICHARD KNOTT

EXETER Anti-Fascist Action, at its first meeting on 16 February, agreed to mount a determined campaign to stop the planned celebrations of the tercentenary of William of Orange's landing.

In its wisdom, Exeter's Labour-led City Council has decided to spend £60,000 on this event 'to promote tourism'. These celebrations will clearly act as a point of attraction for fascists and racists.

The National Front and British National Party use any opportunity to prove they are the true 'friends of British Ulster' and make every effort to link themselves with the Orange Order.

This obscene group held a demonstration in Bridgewater last year in which it terrorised the local community for a day.

Exeter AFA will also be monitoring and countering fascist activities in the area.

## DEATH DURING ARREST

BY VICTOR STOCKPOLE

**WEST MIDLANDS police shed crocodile tears over a man who died after a struggle with police officers.**

The police were attempting to arrest Clinton McCurbin in Wolverhampton on Friday 20 February on suspicion of a cheque card fraud.

The Police Complaints Authority appointed Detective Chief Superintendent David Cole to investigate McCurbin's death.

If it is to be another cover up I would advise him not to bother.

Witnesses feel intimidated and frightened by any inquiry conducted internally by the police force and are reluctant to give any information concerning the McCurbin incident.

Simeon Green, of Wolverhampton Community Relations Council, said that five witnesses saw McCurbin on the floor with the officers on top of him.

'They said the policemen held him face down, one had his hands cupped under his chin while the other was kneeling on his back, and then he went limp and lifeless.'

'One of the witnesses stepped forward and said: "You're killing him, you're killing him," and was told to get out.'

'Don't feel sorry for the two officers, Pc Michael Hobday, aged 29, and Pc Neil Thomas, 23, who were treated for shock and are now on sick leave. No doubt the officers were congratulated for a job well done.'

Green, who went to the shop shortly after the death, said police told him McCurbin had been 'hyped up' on drugs and had a heart attack while being 'restrained'.

A post mortem indicated that Clinton McCurbin had not taken drugs. His uncle, Mr Lascelle, said Clinton was a strong boy who never had a day's sickness in his life, not even a common cold, and concluded: 'I think they used excessive force.'

Community leaders are calling for an independent public inquiry.

The only shred of a past criminal record the police could hold against McCurbin was a conviction for assault on his employer when he was laid off.

Youths, both black and white, fought with riot police, expressing their anger, after the killing of McCurbin.

Throughout Friday and Saturday last week there were confrontations with the police — and 38 arrests.

## Police and Economic League

ON 16 February Granada Television's World in Action programme reported on the activities of the Economic League, an organisation which keeps files on 250,000 left-wingers and sells its information to private companies so that they can screen job applicants.

Revealed for the first time in the programme was the close co-operation between the League and the police.

In a secretly filmed interview, Alan Harvey, a League representative in North Yorkshire, admitted that the League hands over all its information to the police — and that in return the police give the League access to their files to check on car number-plates, criminal records, etc.

During the interview Harvey named the Workers Revolutionary Party, several Labour politicians, and the Communist Party.

The records held by the League are often inaccurate, and the programme highlighted several cases of people entirely unconnected with politics who had been blacklisted — one just for having a Russian-sounding name.

On another occasion the League said it would take an inaccurate name off the list only if the company involved could supply six more to replace it.

● The Economic League, formed in 1919 purely as an anti-socialist organisation, sells its information to companies on the basis that it holds records on all extremist groups. But this is not the case.

In the late 1970s DRG, a company that uses the League's services, asked about a Michael Salt. The League phoned back, saying he had no connection with extremist groups.

Several weeks later, an angry DRG official phoned the Economic League to say that this man was not only an active National Front member but had previously stood with the National Front in a Battersea South council election, under his real name.

If he had been standing for the WRP, or for the Communist Party, the League would have known about it instantly.

## Silent night strikers' thanks to supporters

WE WERE affected throughout the dispute by anti-trade union laws and a Tory government.

But we can in no way minimise the fact that since the General Executive Council of the Furniture Timber and Allied Trades Union (FTAT) withdrew official backing from our dispute on 19 December 1986 it has become impossible to continue with the strike, although we were having great effect until that date.

We feel strongly that a grave injustice has been done, not only to the Silent-night Strikers but to the trade union movement as a whole, when a group of workers fighting for basic trade union rights can be deserted by their own union and the

**By TERRY BENNETT, one of the leaders of the 20-month Silentnight strike. The strikers voted to end the dispute at a mass meeting on 9 February.**

TUC.

From the many, many letters of continuing support we have received in the strike office it is evident that a vast proportion of the trade union and labour movement also feel this injustice.

The appeal we submitted to FTAT against the GEC decision to withdraw backing from our dispute was in fact prevented from going to an appeals committee by a meeting of the GEC.

Silentnight strikers will now be applying for jobs, perhaps without success because many 'activists' will

now be unemployable in the area in which they live.

Future support for these strikers, although deserved and desperately needed, will be sparse indeed.

May we take this opportunity to thank all who have shown us solidarity and support throughout our dispute.

It is very much appreciated and will never be forgotten by the majority of the Silentnight strikers.

The strikers are now discussing setting up a campaign group for workers in struggle.

The aim is to give as much support, solidarity, assistance, and encouragement to fellow trades unionists as the strikers have received themselves.

Solidarity forever!

## Trade unionists join Non-Stop picket

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

THE South African Embassy resounded to calls of 'free all political prisoners, free Nelson Mandela' on Saturday 21 February.

One hundred trades unionists from all over Britain travelled to London to demand that the apartheid regime release the political detainees it has imprisoned under the state of emergency.

Peter Gibson, chair of the London Bus Committee, Peter Windeler, from Stockport Trades Council and representatives from Lambeth and Birmingham Trades Councils spoke about the deliberate campaign by Botha to behead the South African revolution by imprisoning, torturing and murdering South African Trades Unionists.

All those on the picket agreed that this racist embassy must be closed until there is a regime in South Africa which reflects the majority of the South African working class.

Why is it that the Labour Party and the TUC do not fight for this policy.

The picket was organised by the 'Campaign for Trade Union Sanctions Against Apartheid'.

The trade union picket joined with the Non-Stop Picket by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, who also spoke of the necessity for the British working class to take action through workers' sanctions to assist the South African working class to smash the apartheid regime.

## MP to name Nazis

LABOUR MP Greville Janner has said he will name six alleged Nazi war criminals living in Britain, unless the government takes some action.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd admitted this week that the six, among 17 listed by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre, are living in this country.

But Hurd told MPs in the all-party group on Nazi war criminals that no criminal proceedings could be taken against those identified, because the offences were committed in the Soviet Union before the accused obtained British citizenship.

Researchers from the Wiesenthal Centre arrive in Britain on Monday and will see Hurd.

Former Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees said legal advice showed criminal prosecution would be impossible, because the Genocide Act 1969 did not allow extraterritorial jurisdiction.

But the men could be stripped of British citizenship if it were shown they had obtained it by fraud, or that their citizenship 'would not be conducive to the public good.'

## FREE THE FRAMED IRISH PRISONERS

PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 18 March 7.30p.m.  
Cariton Centre, Granville Road, London NW6  
(Tubes: Kilburn Park, Queen's Park, Buses 36, 6, 16, 16a, 32, 8 and 176)

For a public inquiry into the beating and framing of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four!

## Police under scrutiny

HOW the police treat Irish people in Britain will be the subject of a one-day conference in Deptford, south London, on 28 February.

This conference on 'Policing the Irish Community' and related issues is being organised by the London boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham in association with the Irish in Greenwich Project and the Lewisham Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG).

There will be speakers and workshops on such topics as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, strip-

searching of Irish prisoners, and the use of plastic bullets.

Speakers include Jim McCabe, from the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets, whose wife Nora was killed by a plastic bullet in Belfast in 1981.

The Conference will produce recommendations to be submitted to local authorities and other bodies.

Creche facilities will be provided along with access for the disabled. The conference opens at the Albany Centre, Douglas Way, Deptford, SE8 4AG, at 10a.m.

# AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION

## 'The state of the union'

**WHEN Brenda Dean called off the Wapping printworkers' picket, the argument she advanced was that to defy the court action from News International would result in the seizure of the assets of the union and thus destroy the union.**

This argument has been the main theme of the trade union leadership, with the honourable exception of Arthur Scargill, ever since the Tories began their all-out attack on the unions. For these leaders the unions are equated with their financial assets.

Nowhere has this viewpoint been more firmly advanced than in the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU).

The late Terry Duffy, when president of the union, continuously pointed to the fight against the Industrial Relations Act engaged in by the engineers over the Con-mech dispute in 1974 — one of the most important in the union's history.

It was a fight on behalf of the whole working class, resulting in the defeat of the Tory government and the collapse of the Industrial Relations Act.

Duffy, however, constantly bemoaned the fact that the dispute had almost bankrupted the union. He used this as an argument to comply with the Tories' anti-union legislation.

The total bankruptcy of this argument, the continuing theme of the Brenda Deans of this world, is now totally exposed by the present state of the engineering union.

What emerges clearly in the latest AEU full-time officers' briefing 'State of the Union' is that the central asset of a union is its membership.

Workers join a union and make sacrifices for that union only insofar as that union fights for them against the employing class.

All the financial assets of the union ultimately rest on this. The right-wing leadership of the AEU has brought the union to the verge of bankruptcy by its capitulation to the Tory government and the employing class.

The union now faces a 1986 de-

BY CHRIS BAILEY  
AEU Divisional Committee member D.C. 21

ficit of £2.5 million which is growing. 'Without action,' says the briefing, 'every penny of the union's financial assets will have been spent by the end of 1989 leaving only our property to continue to finance massive growing deficits.'

The central problem, it continues, is the loss of 2 million jobs in manufacturing since 1979 'as a result of government economic policies'.

Engineering workers from Lawrence and Scotts, La'bour Pumps, Hindle Gears etc. would certainly have something to say about that statement. The loss of jobs in engineering is not just a result of government economic policy: **It is a result of the total failure of the AEU leadership to fight the effects of that policy or to support those workers in the industry who have fought.**

As a result of the decline in engineering, the briefing continues, the number of members has declined from 1,309,553 in 1979 to 974,904 in 1985. In fact, even this stated decline in membership is dubious.

Many AEU branch secretaries fear that head office has been producing membership figures to retain its representation on the General Council of the TUC and strengthen its right-wing alliance with the EETPU on that body.

It is widely estimated within the union that the present membership is more like 550,000.

The main way the AEU leadership has sought to offset the

to remove benefits during this period were challenged. In particular the attempt to stop Section 1 members' superannuation benefit was successfully fought in the law courts by Ernie Jacques, who received widespread support from other rank-and-file members. As a result of this case the union has already had to pay out £400,000 in backdated benefits.

### Benefits

The Executive Council is certainly doing its best to dissuade members from claiming the benefits rightfully owed to them.

For instance, members claiming their backdated sickness benefits have to produce doctors' certificates for illnesses which occurred several years ago, even though the member was accepted as sick at the time and was entered as exempt from subscription payment in the branch records.

If the membership could actually overcome these obstacles and claim benefit it would cost the union 'millions of pounds' — obviously a major factor in formulating the crisis measures proposed in the briefing.

The main proposal is for a massive cut — about 30 per cent — in full-time officials (FTOs) of the union and a further massive increase in subscriptions.

Specific proposals have been elaborated for each area which

This enables changing areas and electoral divisions, resulting in the elimination left-wing opponents.

There have been widespread allegations that the executive is doing just this. In Division 21, for instance, one district secretary and the Assistant Divisional Organiser were not replaced.

The district in question has traditionally returned a left-wing candidate as district secretary and I myself had been runner-up in the election for Divisional Organiser and stood a good chance in the election for Assistant Divisional Organiser.

By concentrating all our votes, the left on the divisional committee was able to secure one National Committee member, usually Ron Halverson, a leading member of the Communist Party.

When we arrived at the last divisional committee we were informed that the district which had not had its district secretary replaced (Halverson's district) had been transferred to another division. The result was a total domination of the divisional committee by the right wing.

The latest proposals from the EC are for Bedford district to be transferred into Division 21, thus strengthening the right wing even further. If this pattern is repeated across the country it would mean a large-scale purge of the left in the union and in particular off the National Committee.

To facilitate this reorganisation of districts through the non-replacement of FTO's, the present proposals call for voluntary retirement by officials. Relatively generous benefits are offered until

the workforce, stopping strikes etc.

Because workers are unwilling to pay for the doubtful privilege of being members of such a union, the management takes over the role of ensuring that workers join the union and collects the money out of their wage packets.

The latest proposals from the AEU executive can only be understood in the context of the present deal being negotiated between the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) and the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) about introducing Japanese-style single-union deals with the employers.

The AEU leadership wants an amalgamation with the EETPU as part of this process. The proposal to negotiate hours on a yearly basis could turn the engineering workers into a casual labour force to be used by the employer when required.

Two of the proposals in the briefing should be seen in this light: the call for a part-time workers' section of the union and the call for 'direct recruitment with General Office allocating new members to branches'.

Direct recruitment by whom? Are Gavin Laird or Bill Jordan now going to go to the factories winning members for the union?

Instead of shop stewards recruiting directly to the branches, this can only mean management ensuring that workers are members of the union with an arrangement to send entry forms to General Office. This kind of arrangement has already been taking place to a certain degree with contract labour.

A fight must be waged throughout the AEU against the proposals of the EC and the present CSEU negotiations with the EEF. Only a union that fights for the membership can reverse the collapse of the union.

One of the first questions that must be answered in such a fight is the role of James Airlie, the only Communist Party member on the present EC. He voted for the proposals and yet is chairman of the 'Broad Left' 'Engineering Gazette'. He also tried to claim that the recent decision of the CSEU executive to continue its negotiations with the EEF was 'really a victory'.

Supporters of 'Engineering Gazette' must demand an explanation from Airlie.

The only clear policy in opposition to the present proposals has been put forward by Jim Bevan in the election for Executive Council member EC 6. It is vital that the whole of the left in the union campaigns for the election of Bevan.

*The central asset of a union is its membership . . . All the financial assets ultimately rest on this.*

financial effects of membership decline has been by increasing subscriptions and cutting benefits.

However, five contribution increases since 1980, raising contributions by a total of 55 per cent, have actually resulted in a decline of income from subscriptions from £17,238,830 in 1980 to £16,805,428 in 1985.

As a result, the contributions were increased further at the beginning of 1986, 10p across all sections — the biggest increase in the history of the union. In the first six months of 1986 this actually resulted in a decline in branch contributions of approximately £100,000. Large numbers of members were clearly refusing to pay their subscriptions!

Attempts by the union leadership

now have to be placed before a rules revision meeting of the National Committee. In practice, however, the EC have now discovered a way of presenting this National Committee with a *fait accompli*.

Under the rules of the union the EC is responsible for calling an election to replace any full-time official who retires. Over the last couple of years, however, they have simply refused to do so for many of the vacant posts. The workload is then redistributed by transferring branches from one district to another. Already 15 FTOs have not been replaced, but the most sinister aspect is the transferring of branches and districts to other districts and divisions.

July 1987 when compulsory redundancy on much less favourable terms will occur if the EC can get its proposals through the National Committee.

The EC's answer to the loss of subscription revenue is that branches are not very efficient for extracting the extra money — the employers are much more effective! They propose to cut down on the branches of the union and get more members on check-off with the employer.

Contained in this question is the whole strategy of the union leadership. It is the strategy of the EETPU in its deal with Murdoch at Wapping: **The union stops fighting for the membership and does deals with the management in which the union becomes the policeman of**



The Con-Mech dispute in 1973-1974 was one of the most important struggles in the history of engineering workers — a fight on behalf of the whole working class against the Tory government and the Industrial Relations Act

## Irish election

FROM PAUL BILLINGS  
IN DUBLIN

**FOR THE fourth time as leader of Fianna Fail Charles Haughey has failed to secure an overall majority.**

The general election in the 26 counties gave Fianna Fail 81 seats — 3 short of a majority.

Fine Gael returned 51 (down 18), Progressive Democrats 14, Labour 12 (down 4 on 1982), Workers Party 4. There are four independents.

The high turnout of 76 per cent traditionally boosted Fianna Fail's working-class vote. This time Fianna Fail's share of first preferences was its lowest ever at 44 per cent.

Labour's vote dropped from 9 per cent to 7 per cent. Its highest ever was 17 per cent in 1971. The Workers Party increased first preferences from 3 per cent to 4 per cent.

Sinn Fein accounted for roughly 2 per cent.

The overall combined vote for leftwing candidates, including 3 of the independents, remained more or less static at 13.5 per cent.

Proportional representation ensured Labour maintained a surprising number of seats — mainly due to transfers from Fine Gael.

The Stalinist Workers Party won 4 seats for 4 per cent while Sinn Fein got none for its 2 per cent.

### Expense

As expected the gains of the Progressive Democrats, the Party of the new right, were largely at the expense of Fine Gael while the Workers Party ate into Labour's vote in Dublin and Cork.

The net result shows no break from traditional voting — except a shift in the middle class to the Progressive Democrats who promised cuts in taxation and public spending.

It remains a complex question as to why the vast majority of workers in a labour force which is one of the most highly unionised in the world votes in the main for a radical-populist capitalist party — Fianna Fail.

A significant factor in this is of course the continuous treachery of Labour, its most recent being the coalition with Fine Gael from 1982 to 1987.

The vote for Fianna Fail was a rejection of the outright monetarist policies of Fine Gael and the PD's.

It certainly was not based on any convictions of Fianna Fail's social and economic programme.

Haughey's main election ploy was the appeal for single party government and the prospect of stable rule which would supposedly allow some vague 'national recovery'. At the same time he admitted agreement with 95 per cent of Fine Gael's economic policy.

As an issue the national struggle did not feature in any significant way.

Haughey's climbdown on the Anglo-Irish agreement was aimed at placating the anxieties of Thatcher and Fleet Street as well as the Free State bourgeoisie. It did not feature as a working class issue.

For Sinn Fein there was no overall advance. In Dublin inner city Christy Burke's 2,500 votes was more than the combined Labour Party and Workers Party vote.

He came within a whisker of taking a seat but lost out in the transfer of preferences.

Although the media isolation and the INLA feud worked against Sinn Fein the main reason for its failure to advance lies in its weakness on socio-economic issues.

It is not seen by the mass of the Irish workers to have an answer to the crises of jobs, emigration etc.

# BRAZIL GIVES BANKERS JITTERS

**BIG BANKS** were holding urgent crisis talks last week after Brazil's 'can't pay, won't pay' decision to suspend interest payments on its foreign debt.

Anticipating reprisals, the Brazilian government said it had moved all assets in foreign banks to 'a safe, unattainable place'.

Essential supplies like oil, wheat, and rice were being stockpiled, and Brazilian oil tankers in foreign ports had been ordered to set to sea before the suspension of payments was announced.

Finance Minister Dilson Funaro also warned 'If the banks take reprisals against us then the remission of profits and dividends will also be suspended.'

Brazil's debts to some big American and European banks, built up when its economy was expanding, are bigger than the total capital of the banks.

In addition, bankers fear several other 'Third World'

countries might be next. Since Brazil's announcement, Argentina, Venezuela and Ecuador have indicated that they might follow the Brazil lead.

In Manila the Philippines government announced that it was considering a plan to cancel next week's debt rescheduling talks in New York with a group of 12 banks.

'We can't go to New York without adequately analysing what these moves imply for the Philippines,' said a central bank official in Manila, speaking of the Brazilian decision.

The Argentine government has announced that it may suspend payment on its \$53 external debt until it wins more favourable terms.

The Brazilian government of President Sarney declared its 90-day debt moratorium in a statement stressing that Brazil would not agree to new debt terms that compromised its economic growth.

'We want to negotiate a formula for paying that

won't prejudice national development, that avoids political instability, recession, unemployment and social crisis', Sarney said on television.

Knowing the likely reaction of of Brazil's workers to bank-dictated austerity measures, Sarney is refusing to let the IMF decide policy, and appealing to popular patriotism. But this brinkmanship could be dangerous.

The debt of colonial and semi-colonial countries is currently in excess of one trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000,000).

The threat of a united stand against the demands of the international banks produced severe falls for seven leading banks including Bank America, JP Morgan, Bankers Trust, Manufacturers Hanover and Chase Manhattan.

British banks most concerned with Brazil's debt are Barclays, Midland and Lloyds.

## CONFRONTATION USA



**WAGE CUTS of \$2.45 an hour have been accepted by American steelworkers' union leaders after the six-month dispute at USX, where there were particularly brutal picket-line confrontations with the Ohio state police, and now USX, America's biggest steel company, is to close four of its plants. The ink was hardly dry on the new contract when the Pittsburgh based company unveiled a 'restructuring' plan which means 3,700 jobs will go.**

Union leaders of the USWA (United Steelworkers of America) had claimed the return to work was a victory which meant greater job security, but now it is clear that the longest dispute in the American steel industry has been sold out. In addition to the cut in the hourly rate, workers have signed away

three holidays, a week of vacation time, and a third of their shift premium.

As workers returned to work at the beginning of February, there were doubts about what the 'job combinations' agreed would mean, and who would be doing what job.

The USX lockout lasted a stubborn 184 days after the workers refused to accept a new contract. In other companies, wage cuts had already been accepted when USX presented a new contract which would have meant much bigger cuts and job losses through contracting out work.

During the course of the lockout, a strong picket was maintained at all the company's steel mills, and trade unionists were hospitalised on several occasions when they tried to stop supplies.

## Maritime strike

**CROWLEY** Maritime, the largest maritime employer in the United States, is on a strikebreaking offensive against the Inland Boatman's Union (IBU — Marine Division of the ILWU), who are on strike coastwide from Alaska to California.

The deckhands and tankermen on barges and tugs on San Francisco Bay went on strike against union-busting and huge take-away demands on 8 February.

Militant members of the AFL-CIO and other unions are outraged that Crowley's chief pool of scabs (aside from management personnel) is being supplied by an AFL-CIO union, the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA).

MEBA officials are not only directing their members to cross IBU/ILWU picket lines to do their jobs as engineers on the tugs,

they are also actively recruiting deckhands to replace strikers!

A leaflet put out by the strikers demands an end to this blatant strikebreaking, and asks all unions to honour IBU/ILWU picket lines.

The strikers warn that if Crowley succeeds in their union-busting, the employers will not move against other workers.

Crowley's demands amount to 50 to 60 per cent concessions from the union, and abolition of the 'hiring hall', the chief victory of the great San Francisco general strike of 1934, when all the maritime unions struck together.

'Only this kind of solidarity among all unions, regardless of affiliation,' say the strikers, 'can halt the downhill slide of give-backs which workers are trapped in today.'

## PAC fighters captured

**SOUTH AFRICAN** Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok claims police have captured five 'Libyan-trained terrorists' with ties to the outlawed Pan African Congress (PAC).

Vlok claimed arms and explosives, as well as items of 'Libyan Defence Force uniforms' had been seized.

'Some of those detained are members of QIBLA, a leftist radical organisation which operates under the banner of the PAC', Vlok said.

He said the group had been thwarted from 'execution of their orders' to attack members of the security forces and other targets.

## CANADA: SCANDALS HIT TORIES

Minister without portfolio Roch La Salle last week became the seventh member of Canada's Tory government to resign because of corruption scandals and 'errors of judgement'.

He stepped down after a television programme's revelations concerning a golf club party where wealthy businessmen paid \$5,000 each in the hope of government contracts.

LaSalle, Minister of Works at the time, was main speaker at the party. He has claimed he didn't know guests were paying.

Conservative MP Michael Gravel, who hosted the gathering, stands trial in March on fifty charges of influence-peddling, bribery, and breach of trust.

Former Industry minister Sinclair Stevens, forced to resign last year, has been under a judicial inquiry into allegations of conflict of interest.

Mulroney sacked Bissonette the next day, and ordered a police investigation.

On January 19, Oerlikon sued Bissonette business partner and prominent local Tory Normand Ouellette for return of \$970,000 from the land deal, which the company claimed he'd had without its knowledge.

Since Bissonette became a minister in 1984, Ouellette had run a trust looking after his interests in ten companies.

While Tory leaders have been busy selling their favours and trying to make sure government office doesn't leave them out of pocket, Canadian workers have not fared so well.

There are over 1.2 million out of work, ten per cent of the workforce. Real wages fell in 1986 for the tenth year in a row, and average pay settlements at 3.4 per cent were the lowest in twenty years.

The government's growing unpopularity was shown in a recent opinion poll which gave the Conservatives only 23 per cent, as against 42 per cent for the main opposition Liberals, and a big increase to 33 per cent for the New Democrat Party (NDP), Canada's Labour Party.

Big trade union struggles in Newfoundland and Alberta have been reflected in political gains for the NDP in these two provinces, where previously it had little support.

While the Canadian working class seeks its political voice through this party, Ed Broadbent's reformist NDP leadership looks for deals with the Liberals. It has come up with a corporatist perspective of replacing the class struggle with an 'equal partnership' of employers, union leaders and the state.

## SHOPWORKERS FIGHT, O.K.!

**OVER 10,000** members of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) have been engaged in strike action since 18 December 1986.

The strike, for wage increases at OK Bazaars, has spread to 137 stores throughout South Africa. It is the biggest retail strike the country has ever seen.

OK Bazaars (1929) Limited, a subsidiary of the giant Anglo-American Corporation, is the largest retail company in South Africa with about 23,000 employees and 202 stores. It also has outlets in Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

In October 1982 workers at a warehouse and stores in Johannesburg went on strike demanding an increase of 80 rand per month. They were all dismissed after refusing to return to work before negotiations started.

Threats of widespread strike action and a consumer boycott won reinstatement for the sacked workers and proper negotiations.

During 1986, the relationship between CCAWUSA and OK Bazaars rapidly deteriorated as a result of workers' frustration with low wages and poor working conditions and because of the aggression and contempt shown at all levels towards workers, their rights and the union.

From September 1985 to September 1986 approximately 2,000 individual dismissals were recorded.

Believing many dismissals to be unfair, CCAWUSA appealed against them, but

as a rule the appeals were rejected by the management.

In February 1986 a call for a national strike against the dismissals was averted by a court interdict lodged by OK Bazaars. At the same time the company promised to review the dismissals.

However, the company only reinstated a handful and refused an offer of arbitration.

Workers are demanding 160 rand a month across-the-board increase, and 450 rand per month minimum wage. They also want 20 per cent staff discount (at present staff have 10 per cent and management 25 per cent discount).

Since the beginning of the strike, dozens of workers have been badly assaulted by the police, while hundreds have been arrested.

So far the union has had to pay out 90,000 rand in bail alone.

Picketing is only allowed with one person at the entrance to stores or alternately 'surrounding' the store with pickets 25 metres apart from each other.

Even then bye-laws and any possible pretext are used to arrest pickets.

In a statement, CCAWUSA say:

'Politically the workers on strike have received an education second to none and their determination and discipline has won the respect of South Africa's exploited and oppressed working class and youth. The support being received from all sectors proves that.'

# Will the Soviet Union 'rehabilitate' Trotsky?

SOVIET authorities in the past month have released numerous political prisoners. Following the release of 140 — jailed for so-called 'anti-Soviet agitation' — came 'pardons' for Jewish activist Josif Begun and psychiatrist Anatoly Koryagin.

Demonstrators supporting Begun were savagely attacked on the streets by thugs. Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Anatoly Gerasimov denied these were KGB men, claiming they were just 'hooligans' and 'vigilantes'.

While welcoming the release of prisoners, reforms 'granted' like 'pardons' from on high, can also be taken away. The question of who controls the workers' state, like who controls the Moscow streets, has to be decided.

For the Soviet working people to decide their future, it is vital they reclaim their history.

'... there should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or literature,' Mikhail Gorbachev told Soviet media bosses on 13 February.

'On the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution of ours, those who made that revolution must not be pushed into the background. People must be educated in the example of those who laid down their lives for the revolution and socialism.'

Among those who made

the October Revolution was Leon Trotsky, who headed the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which launched the insurrection. Subsequently he was Commissar for Foreign Affairs, then Commissar for War, organising the Red Army to beat off the armies of counter-revolution.

Exiled, and eventually murdered by order of Stalin, Trotsky was also written-out of official Soviet history, even to the point where, as shown here, photographs were retouched to try and erase his place along with Lenin as leader of the Revolution.

In the Moscow trials of 1936-7, (see review page 10), the exiled Trotsky was the main defendant, the 'arch-conspirator'. The Stalinist Inquisition brought the judicial murder of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, — all the best-known names in Bolshevik leadership.

On the anniversary of the trials, a committee has been formed in London to campaign for the rehabilitation of these victims, and restore their rightful place in history.

'We must not forget names and it is all the more immoral to forget or pass over in silence large periods of the life of the people, who were living, believing and working under the leadership of the Party for socialism', Gorbachev said on February 13. 'History must be seen for what it is.'



The Official Version: One of the many examples of history being 'doctored' to boost the image of Stalin as the great Soviet leader

Revolutionaries like Trotsky gave their lives in the struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Revolution. How far

can the present-day Soviet bureaucracy go in admitting the truth about its history, without endangering its prospects?

## Devoted Fighter

THE PHOTOGRAPH of one of the leading defendants in Stalin's show trials of the 1930s has appeared for the first time in an influential Soviet journal.

'Literturnaya Gazeta' carried an article by V. Dobrokhov, chief lecturer in Party History at Gorky University, illustrated by a picture of Nikolai Muralov, shot by Stalin's GPU executioners after the Radek-Piatakov Trial in 1937.

Dobrokhov's article declared 'We must not improve or worsen history . . . Saying nothing is not the best way out.'

Not perhaps a surprising statement for an historian, in any other context.

But Muralov, who had 'confessed' to being a member of Radek's fictitious 'Trotskyite parallel centre', has never been mentioned in the USSR since. His brother, Alexander, an important but less prominent Communist, who died in prison in 1938, was 'rehabilitated' in 1966.

Nikolai Ivanovich Muralov, born in 1877, joined the Bolsheviks in 1903. A leader in the Party in Moscow, he was a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which organised the 1917 insurrection there. Subsequently, he was the Red Army Commander in the Moscow district, and worked with Trotsky in the Third Army and on the Eastern Front.

He was a member of the Left Opposition from 1923. He was expelled from the party in 1927, and exiled to Siberia in 1929. He later dropped out of the Opposition, and out of politics generally, but never openly capitulated to Stalin.

At the trial in January 1937, this devoted fighter for the October Revolution and Soviet power was forced to 'confess', among other things, to leading a Siberian conspiracy to sabotage the Soviet railway system.

Trotsky regarded him as one of his closest friends. 'Not a politician', he told the Dewey Commission in 1937, 'a revolutionary soldier . . . a heroic personality . . . my friend, my companion in hunting . . .'

Dobrokhov is certainly right: saying nothing is not the best way out. The problem for the Soviet bureaucracy is, whether there is a way out at all.

## Canon challenges Israeli government

ANGLICAN Canon Riah Abu el-Aswal, of Nazareth, banned from travelling abroad by the Israeli government, for supposed 'security reasons', is planning a new challenge to them:

Either charge me with what I'm accused of, or stop interfering with my rights.

The canon has told friends he fears that by repeatedly making accusations against him of 'PLO links', based on secret 'evidence', Israeli authorities may be setting him up as 'fair game' for some sort of violence.

Canon Riah, a leading member of the Progressive List for Peace, was banned from leaving Israel last July. He was about to go on a lecture tour of Europe and the United States.

The Israeli Interior Ministry has used Defence Emergency regulations taken over from the British mandate to impose its one year ban.

The Progressive List, formed jointly by Israeli Jewish and Arab groups, campaigns for peace negotiations with the PLO, Palestinian self-determination in the occupied territories, and equality in Israel.

Replying to protests from church figures and peace groups abroad, Israeli Attorney General Joseph Harish says Israel as a 'democracy' has a right to protect itself against individuals acting 'in a manner endangering state security'.

'Although publicly Canon Riah Abu el-Aswal appears to advocate Israeli-Palestinian co-existence, there is firm information

that he planned to use his travel abroad to make contacts with the PLO and to raise funds for PLO purposes in Israel.'

Harish says the PLO is a 'terrorist organisation' which 'has never wavered from its declared objective of the elimination of Israel'.

Replying to letters from the Episcopal Church in the United States last year, the Israeli embassy in Washington accused the canon of 'exploiting' his position as a clergyman to bring in funds 'for subversive purposes that no country, no matter how democratic, would or could sanction.'

Canon Riah has commented that the only 'subversive' and 'terrorist' purposes for which he sought to raise funds were kindergartens, community centres and youth work run by his church and the Progressive movement. All the funding for these programmes was fully reported and accounted for in accordance with Israeli law, he adds.

The Israeli Attorney General suggests that 'if Canon el-Aswal is able to refute the evidence against him', he could challenge the Interior Ministry's ruling in the Israeli High Court.

But his letter also admits implicitly that much of this 'evidence' was 'classified material', and says Regulation 6 which the Ministry used is only implemented 'when a normal court proceeding would endanger the sources of information.'

Canon Riah pointed out in October that in preparing an approach to the High Court, his lawyers were not allowed

to see the information against him nor to know who had provided it.

Now, writing to friends in England, Canon Riah says that in view of the Attorney General's serious allegations, 'my attorneys and I are planning a public challenge to Mr Harish.'

SYRIAN troops and tanks moved into Beirut to 'restore order' last week, after months of siege against Palestinian refugee camps by the Syrian-armed Amal militia.

The Syrian intervention came after left-wing and nationalist Lebanese fighters had inflicted heavy blows on Amal in a week of heavy fighting in the Lebanese capital.

Under the pretext of concern for hostages, the US government and its allies — including Israel — were tacitly encouraging Syria's Assad to keep his tanks rolling into Beirut's southern districts, where several militant groups such as the Hezbollah are active.

There were reports of Sy-

## 'Close the gate!'

THE ISRAELI government is reported to have asked the United States to refuse entry to Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union.

The move comes as Zionist organisations are renewing campaigns for Jews to be allowed to leave the USSR, on the assumption they will be heading for Israel.

## 'Ivan' enjoyed smashing skulls

THE UKRAINIAN SS guard nicknamed 'Ivan the Terrible' enjoyed his work as a concentration camp murderer for the Nazis, a witness told the Jerusalem court trying John Demjanjuk last week.

61-year old Treblinka survivor Pinhas Epstein, identifying Demjanjuk as 'Ivan', said he could still tell his walk from the camp days.

'He was there all the time, gouging eyes, cutting off girls' breasts, lopping off ears, standing back and en-

joying his handiwork', Epstein said.

'He looked at it with enjoyment, the crushed skulls, the smashed faces, looking as though he had done such a tremendously good job. I can't find a word in the human language to describe him.'

Demjanjuk, extradited from the United States, has denied being 'Ivan'. The defence has claimed the notorious camp guard was killed during a prisoners' uprising in Treblinka.

## Syria's tanks roll while statesmen 'talk about talks'

riean troops closing down offices of left-wing and nationalist groups. The Druze-based Progressive Socialist Party reported several of its members had been taken away.

Amal leaders were said to be highly satisfied. An Amal unit celebrated by re-opening fire on the long-suffering Shatila refugee camp.

Syrian troops were not sent in to 'keep the peace' but to help the Syrian regime's proteges out of trouble.

In fact, from the start of the camp sieges, Palestinian leaders were convinced the hand behind Amal was that of Syrian president Assad, and that behind him stood an imperialist conspiracy to carve-up Lebanon and smash the PLO.

As the tanks rolled last week, new diplomatic moves were made to bring about an international conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices.

In Brussels, twelve EEC ministers issued a statement supporting a conference, to include 'the parties concerned and any other able to make a direct and positive contribution'.

This followed receipt of a letter from Soviet leader Gorbachev setting out his ideas for the proposed conference. The Soviet Union has campaigned for a UN conference to include both Israel and the PLO, as well as Arab states and the superpowers.

### Talks

Israel and the United States have both insisted that any peace talks should be strictly between Israel and the Arab states. Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir is sticking to this line, at least until his far-right Herut party's conference is over.

Foreign Minister Peres went to Cairo last week for talks with Egyptian officials.

Egypt has endorsed the Soviet conference call.

Labour's Peres is as opposed as Shamir to recognising the PLO's rightful place in any peace talks. He hopes that by appearing to adopt a more conciliatory pose towards a conference in principle, Israel can avoid isolation, and possibly even persuade Soviet leaders to ditch the Palestinians in the interests of great power diplomacy.

A decade ago, when it looked as though the PLO might take its place at a Geneva conference whether Israel liked it or not, the civil war in Lebanon intervened to derail the process.

Behind current talk about peace talks, the imperialists, the Israeli government, and Arab rulers like Assad are determined that the people who have suffered most from Middle East war will not have their say in securing a real peace.

# THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN

## MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

MESSAGES of support for Phil Penn continue to arrive at Workers Press from Britain and abroad. They invariably condemn the actions of the Torrance-Healy group in supplying the only police witnesses in the case that led to Phil's jailing.

We hear from Sandra Penn, Phil's wife, that he is in good spirits and very cheerful. He is presently working in the Wormwood Scrubs kitchens from 6.30a.m. till 4.00p.m. He has asked Sandra to say to all those who have written to him that their letters have been much appreciated.

Dear Phil,

SORRY about the delay in writing but I was gutted. As Sandra will have told you, I did not find it easy knowing that all mail is censored.

Sandra tells me that you are coping and not wasting your time.

Looking on the positive side, your experience will put an edge on you and make you sharper — which will benefit you in the future.

Having said that, I am not recommending half a stretch in the Scrubs as part of cadre training.

I will close now and look forward to having the crack with you when you are released.

Sandra and yourself are a credit to the Workers Revolutionary Party and your class and I am proud to be counted as one of your comrades and friends.

Take care, Phil, I will see you on the out.

Best wishes,

Des (Warren)

P.S. Is it true that you pass your old suits on to Derek Hatton? (private joke)

**WE CONDEMN** the role of the Healy/Torrance group in conspiring with the forces of capitalist law and order to convict and jail Cde. Phil Penn, member of the WRP and trade union and political activist.

At a time when the policy of British imperialism is resorting to 'super-grasses' to legitimise the incarceration of Republican and working class militants and is coming under increasing condemnation by trade unionists in Britain, this action by the News Line group is a calculated insult to these fighters.

It is a conscious betrayal of a fundamental principle adhered to by genuine socialists and the working class movement — resolving our differences without the intervention of the class enemy.

By their unscrupulous participation with the machinations of the judiciary and police they are, in effect, in solidarity with every frame-up of a trade unionist, every crack of a police-baton on a strikers' head, every sequestration of a union's funds, etc.

Through this act of revenge against a political opponent who was prominent in the fight to expose the reactionary practices of Healy and his supporters and to expel them from the WRP, the Healy-Torrance group stand revealed as craven political cowards motivated not by any spirit of class resistance to Thatcherism but by their own narrow sectarian needs.

We fully support the demand of Workers Press to have the case of these anti-socialist thugs and narks put to the only court that counts — the working class movement.

P. Billings, M. Kenny; J. Larragy (Irish Workers Group); A. Conway (Peoples Democracy), Dublin

I MUST express my consternation which is shared, I am certain, by all my comrades on the arrest and imprisonment of comrade Phil Penn, which I have just learned about from Workers Press.

We knew comrade Phil from our discussions early in December in Paris.

We know him as a sincere and fraternal comrade participating in the discussions with a seriousness and frankness strengthened by the struggles led against Healy and his group.

The physical attack of this group against Phil was already in itself a scandal, but even this is surpassed by the cynicism of recourse to the bourgeois court in order to have him condemned.

It is the duty of all Trotskyist organisations of the Fourth International, not only to condemn vigorously this gang, but also to ban it from the workers' movement.

Gangsterism is incompatible with membership of the working class movement and in the great task of building, of reconstructing, the Fourth International.

This issue is one of the most important in distinguishing us from all those who try to compromise the vanguard by the methods of the gangster and the provocateur.

I ask you to forward to comrade Phil and his family all our best wishes and fraternal Trotskyist greetings.

Michel Varga

(Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International)

AS A reader of Workers Press and sympathising with all true members of the international Trotskyist movement as well as with the workers of the world fighting for their rights, which the capitalist system tries to smash, I wish to express my single and modest support to Phil Penn, wrongly imprisoned!

This is my friendly message to him, to his wife Sandra and to his family and comrades.

Marie-Jeanne Guermant  
Brussels, Belgium



AT OUR February meeting, the Booksellers and Stationers branch of USDAW decided unanimously to condemn the use of the courts by the News Line group in the jailing of Phil Penn.

We further agreed to raise the question in all the labour and trade union bodies to which our branch is affiliated.

Andrew Burgin,  
Secretary

**NUPE ILEA Schoolkeepers' Branch**

THIS, the NUPE ILEA Schoolkeepers' Branch, condemns the action of members of a bogus party calling itself the Workers Revolutionary Party (who publish the News Line newspaper) in acting as police witnesses against Brother Phil Penn who was subsequently jailed on a charge of assault for 12 months, eight of which were suspended.

The branch has therefore agreed to boycott the publications of this organisation, especially its daily paper, the News Line.

On the same basis that we treat Murdoch's scab publications, we also ask the Labour group of the ILEA to add their support and recommend that they support our boycott.

Carried unanimously.

I WAS shocked to read of the imprisonment of Phil Penn. What was even more distressing was the fact that a group of so-called 'workers' colluded with the state to bring about the sentence in the first place.

In the Wapping dispute we have experienced the treachery of the print union leaders.

The difference between that leadership's treachery and the treachery against Phil Penn is that neither Dean nor Dubbins professed to be members of the revolutionary party.

Many rank-and-file printers I have spoken to have totally re-assessed their opinion of this 'party' since this incident.

Best wishes and solidarity to Phil Penn.

John Lang  
Sacked print worker

### What you can do

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn etc. Phone 01-274 7271 for details.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. 10 Ducane Road, London W12
- Send messages of support to Workers Press. We will have a special section.

Dear Comrade Phil,

THIS note is just to add my support and solidarity to you and my condemnation to the News Line group.

They are a truly degenerate bunch and, when they accuse people in the labour movement of being state agents, they are totally hypocritical.

Your jailing is bitter confirmation that those who took Healy's side in the WRP split were defending corruption. The near-fascist ideology that Cliff Slaughter spoke of has become a near-fascist practice.

A group that shows such a willingness to co-operate with the police can no longer be considered a part of the labour movement.

The News Line group have broken the most basic principle of working class unity; but a courtroom judgement does not decide revolutionary principles and that is why we cannot be beaten by these methods.

Hoping for your swift release.  
R. Knott

## An open letter to rank-and-file members of the group which publishes 'News Line': from the Political Committee

# FORCE THE HEALY-TORRANCE GROUP TO

Dear Comrades,

### Police Witnesses and Principles

ONE of our comrades, Phil Penn, is in jail and your organisation provided the only police witnesses in the case. It is a long-established principle in the working-class movement that political differences are never regulated in bourgeois courts or by reliance on the police.

This is not the first time leaders of your organisation have acted in this way. Six of them appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield Crown Court in January of this year after an incident between members of your organisation and the International Communist Party. On this occasion the court did not believe them and the

defendant was found not guilty.

After a demonstration at Wapping on 3 May 1986, Phil, who was on his own at the time, was attacked by four members of your organisation — Richard Price, Eric Rogers, Paul Williams and another man. They knocked him to the ground and Richard Price attacked him with banner poles. Unfortunately Eric Rogers' eye was damaged in the fracas. Phil Penn was the only one arrested.

The background to these events is as follows: In 1985 Gerry Healy, leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, was expelled. He was charged on the following counts: systematic sexual abuse of female party comrades, physical violence against party members and slanders against a leading member of a Trotskyist organisation in the United States. He refused to appear

before the Party members to answer these charges, and has since disappeared from public life. Phil Penn is part of the majority that expelled Healy.

Those of us who expelled Healy from the Workers Revolutionary Party in October 1986 were, for a long time, party to much of his anti-communism and we have never sought to hide this from the working class movement. It is not a crime to make mistakes, even serious ones. But it is a crime, and a grievous one, to lie about such mistakes and refuse to struggle in practice to overcome them.

We are working with others in the international Trotskyist movement to analyse our history, overcome the unprincipled past of the movement and take our place in the ranks of those striving to build the Fourth International as the

party of world socialist revolution.

Healy was supported by Vanessa Redgrave, Corin Redgrave, Sheila Torrance, Alex Mitchell, Ben Rudder, Simon Vevers, Penny Bloor, Ray Athow, John Eden, Frank Sweeney, Dave Oatley, Ray Efford, Linda Efford, Paddy O'Regan, Claire Dixon, Richard Price, Paul Feldman, Ian Harrison, Stuart Eames, Chris Eames, Dave Gilbert, Corinna Gilbert, Sue Laird, Judith White, John Graham, Jim Kane, Graham Fenwick, Bill Rogers, Eric Rogers, Roberta Colling, Steve Colling, Slav Colling, Paul Williams, Mark Harrison, Frances de la Tour, Kika Markham, Tom Kempinski, Mick Blakey, Mary McEntegart, Kay Riddick, Billy Cummins, Jean Kerrigan, Kathy Hilton, Kathryn Davies, Mair Davies, Wilf Downing and Martin Booth.

The leaders of this group shielded Healy from the membership although they knew the charges against him to be true — and he never denied them. Instead they called their own conference, and set themselves up as a bogus 'Workers Revolutionary Party', publishing a daily paper, 'News Line'.

Sheila Torrance and the Redgraves have never dared face the working class on the question of Healy. Sheila Torrance told some that the charges were false; to others she admitted they were true, but said that Healy's so-called 'personal life' did not matter.

But the practices of leaders of the movement most certainly do matter, and Healy's actions involved a fundamental break with Marxism and communism. He used the membership for his own

sexual and personal gratification and in so doing destroyed many members, especially amongst the youth.

Acts of this kind cannot be hidden from the light of day for ever. Nor can they be kept from the working class. The same abandonment of revolutionary principles which led Sheila Torrance, the Redgraves and others to lie about and cover up for Healy in 1985 caused them to attack their opponent, Phil Penn, in 1986 and, as police witnesses, put him behind bars in 1987.

Contrast this with the fact that when Phil Penn was again attacked by members of your organisation in Leicester on 8 June 1986, this time with a club and a knife, the police wished to prosecute, but Phil — who was again on his own at the time of the attack — refused to act as a



# THATCHER'S BRITAIN

**THE GOVERNMENT** will next month publish statistics which confirm the greatly increased death rates around the nuclear power plants.

The report, by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, is wrapped in the language of officialdom. It points out that high incidences of deaths from leukaemia and other cancers near the power stations cannot be proof of cause and effect.

It says that cancer rates in general are not found to be higher near the plants — but particular types of cancers, including liver cancer and lymphomas, as well as the already well-documented child leukaemia rates around Sellafield, are shown to be clustered around the plants.

The uneven pattern of particular cancers suggests to the report's authors that clustering occurs by chance. But many cancer-types are connected with other localised environmental hazards, and it is therefore a convenient red herring in this study to look at cancer rates overall.

HILLINGDON Tory Councillors are reported to have spent £500 in air fares so that one of its members could come back in order to vote against a Labour proposal to launch plans for new creche facilities in the borough.

They flew him home (and then back again) from holidaying in Tenerife — but it turned out the trip was unnecessary as a Labour councillor was ill. He was flown out again, all at the rate-payers' expense.

**WHEN FLEET** street reported last week that train drivers are to be eligible for compensation when passengers throw themselves under their trains, many of them left out the fact that there are now about 400 desperate people who commit suicide this way each year.

**GOVERNMENT** cash restrictions are forcing cut-backs in community programme schemes such as the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.

The association, which provides temporary work of up to 12 months for former offenders, and claims a success rate of placing 1 in 4 in permanent jobs, employs in the region of 17,500 people in England and Wales.

In North Tyne the scheme will face a reduction of 25 per cent. Similar cuts will affect places like Huddersfield, Birmingham Aberystwyth and Essex.

'SOME secretaries feel as though they are just an extension of the machine', reports a recent survey.

'Lack of role clarity' among computer operators in offices was the most important cause of stress, according to Manchester-based academics Howard Khan and Gary Cooper.

Other stress symptoms associated with new office technology include: skin problems, greater demands on eyes, back and arm muscles, higher levels of fatigue and monotony, faster work pace, increased smoking and more slip-shod work from employers who imagine the new technology will automatically make everything right.

**ABERDEEN** University and University College Cardiff are threatened with closure or bankruptcy.

Cardiff has been refused grant aid and told by the Department of Education and Science to 'put its house in order'.

Whilst its non-professional staff have passed a motion of no confidence in the head, Dr 'Bill' Bevan, the Council and students at University College are standing by him as the man who has resisted attempts to impose cuts.

**SECRET** trials, where cases are referred to by means of a serial number, not by name, have begun to appear in the course of the past 12 months.

At the Old Bailey last week three such cases took place.

This new procedure is part of the sweeping powers which came into effect under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which allows police to investigate sensitive material e.g. financial accounts and journalists' material.

**IS FOOTBALL** only a game? Last week the city loan sharks heard the news that rate-capped Hackney council may be forced into a sale-and-leaseback of the largest open space in the area, Hackney marshes, where up to 110 amateur football games can take place at any one time.

Meanwhile Marler Estates announced their plans now they have cornered the market in West London FA clubs. Craven Cottage is to be a site for £200,000 houses, while Fulham and Queens Park Rangers may be forced into a merger. Marler also own Stamford Bridge, home of Chelsea.

And up in North London, Tottenham Hotspurs are trying to help their finances by arranging with a finance company to offer season tickets on HP.

# TRICKS!

**THE TORY** MP for Southend East acted as go-between for the Ministry of Defence and former British army officer Major Fred Holroyd, claims the Sunday Times.

Teddy Taylor MP denies the allegations, which include a claim that he promised to obtain £150,000 compensation for Major Holroyd. Taylor has written to the Press Council and says he is consulting a lawyer about the matter.

The Sunday Times claim that Major Holroyd was forced to resign after opposing an MI5 assassination policy directed at 'suspected terrorists' in the north of Ireland.

He was sent to an army mental hospital but later re-

leased and told there had been a 'misunderstanding'.

Holroyd, along with Collin Wallace, a former Ulster colleague, has stated publicly that in the early and mid-1970s, MI5 had a policy of murdering opponents of the British state in the north of Ireland, and that a conflict between MI5 and MI6 broke out in this period.

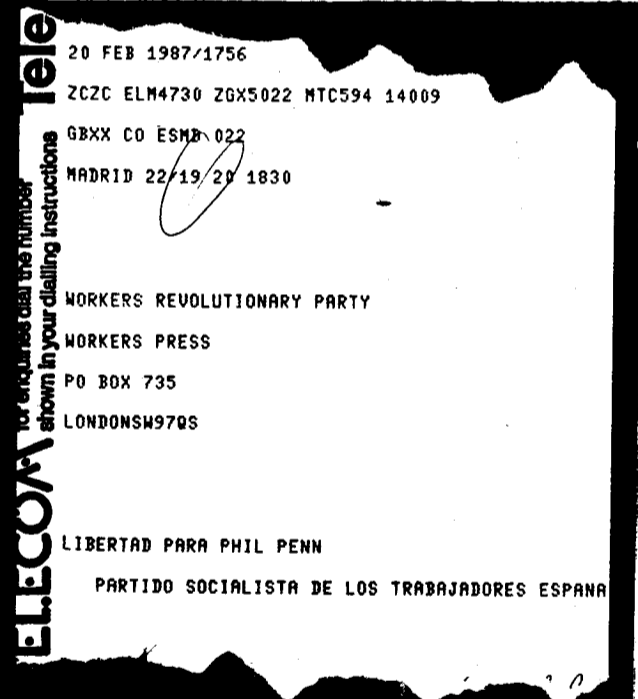
Both have also confirmed Peter Wright's claim that MI5 attempted to de-stabilise the Labour Government between 1974 and 1977.

Meanwhile a tape recording prepared by Holroyd and Wallace is to be distributed to MPs by Dale Campbell-Savours.



... do. . .

in your union branch, trades council, support group, copies of the circular letter explaining the case. 7055, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, WAE (registered post is best). for Phil and reports which we can print in Workers column each week while he is behind bars.



ABOVE is a telegram from the Socialist Workers Party of Spain, which arrived in our office on February 20. The message is short but clear: 'Freedom for Phil Penn'.

**THE RESOLUTION** set out below, for the attention of the rump's 'News Line', was carried unanimously at the Crawley AEU branch meeting of 13/2/87

THIS Crawley branch of the A.E.U. is disgusted to learn the news that Phil Penn, a respected member of the WRP/Workers Press, has been imprisoned for a period of 12 months, 8 months suspended, for defending himself against a physical attack made on him by members of the bogus WRP.

This branch further condemns other members of your organisation, calling themselves socialists, for crossing class lines and co-operating with the police.

WE instruct that you condemn those members in a statement in your News Line.

**ON BEHALF** of the Azania Solidarity Campaign I send you our complete support in exposing the ugly, vile co-operation of the 'News Line' supporters with the police.

We abhor the collaboration of the so-called socialists of the 'News Line' with the police and the state.

The workers' struggle to defeat imperialism and capitalism can never be defeated by filthy 'supergrass' rats.

We send our solidarity greetings to Comrade Phil Penn and his family.

Comrade Penn — we support you and we salute you for your principled refusal to collaborate with the police.

We know that you will rejoin the revolutionary struggle soon. We need you in our struggle.

Yours fraternally,

Dipak Basu

for Azania Solidarity Campaign

## Statement by the Political Committee of the Workers League (USA)

**PHIL PENN**, a member of the British Workers Revolutionary Party, has been found guilty on trumped-up charges of assault as a result of lying allegations made by supporters of Gerry Healy.

He has been given a 12-month sentence, eight of which have been suspended, which means that Penn will serve four months in prison.

Penn's conviction arises from an incident which occurred on May 3, 1986, when he was involved in an altercation deliberately provoked by Healy's supporters.

Two days earlier, Healy's News Line had printed defamatory statements directed personally against Penn. At a May 3 demonstration, Penn was set upon by four of Healy's supporters.

The case against Penn was based entirely on collaboration between Healy and the capitalist state. In the courtroom, all the evidence against Penn was given by members of Healy's 'rump' WRP.

In October 1985, Healy was expelled from the WRP after evidence came to light that he had been involved in the systematic sexual abuse of female members of the organisation.

After the WRP Central Committee voted by a two-to-one majority to bring charges against him, Healy never attempted to defend himself.

Instead, knowing all the allegations to be true, he disappeared from sight and then organised a split inside the WRP and the International Committee.

Unable to fight his opponents politically, Healy has

resorted to provocations of the most reactionary character. Only last month, Healy sought to convict a member of the International Communist Party, the British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, on phoney charges of assault similar to those brought against Penn.

However, despite the urgings of the judge, a Yorkshire jury rejected the allegations and acquitted the comrade.

It is a measure of Healy's degeneration that he now employs the very same methods that were used against him by Joseph Hansen, FBI agent and long-time leader of the American Socialist Workers Party, in the 1960s.

In the so-called Tate Affair of November 1966, Hansen staged a provocation in order to have Healy labeled as a violent man. This is precisely what Healy is now doing against his opponents.

It is a political outrage that he should collaborate with the state to jail a worker like Penn who has been a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party since it was founded in 1973.

During those years he worked long hours for the movement — often directly under Healy's personal supervision.

Those who have followed the political struggle that the Workers League and the International Committee have waged against the WRP during the past year will know that we have absolutely no sympathy for the views of Penn and the organisation of which he is a member.

Moreover, we must note that Penn himself played an entirely dishonourable role in the events leading up to the February 8, 1986 split of the WRP from the International Committee.

He was personally among those who stood by and supported the use of police to bar members of a legitimate minority faction from attending the eighth national conference of the WRP.

These experiences notwithstanding, the Workers League, as a matter of principle, emphatically and unconditionally denounces the sentence against Penn and calls upon all class-conscious workers to demand his immediate release from prison.

Reprinted from 'The Bulletin' of 17 February 1987

● While we are pleased to place the Workers League's position on Phil Penn on record, this does not imply any collusion with the slander of Joe Hansen or with many of the other points made.

We intend to comment on this statement in our next issue.

# Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party NO ANSWER!

police witness. The case could go forward.

Although Eric Rogers, Kay Ridick and Mary McEntgart were police witnesses, they alone are not responsible. This action was undoubtedly planned and instigated by Healy, Torrance and the political committee of your organisation. In fact 'News Line' carried an anti-political and provocative attack on Phil Penn three days before the Wapping attack.

We are asking you to insist on accountability from your leaders, not as trade unionists are insisting on their leaders accounting for their actions. We realise that many new members of your organisation may be confused about what they are told about Healy's expulsion. But you should not have to suffer the political anger of the working class that will now

break over your heads for the reactionary practices of your leaders.

Those who disagree with members of your organisation being put up as police witnesses should make your opposition known in the working class just as you should ask Sheila Torrance to explain her remark about Phil Penn at Wapping on Saturday 7 February. She said: 'He should have got longer.' Can you stomach such rank anti-communist behaviour? A communist leader does not act on hatred and revenge, but on Marxist principles.

If you have the slightest doubts about these events, if you are in the least degree dissatisfied with the explanations you are being given, follow them up. Look into history. Read about these things. Principles are the bedrock of the

movement; they cannot be traded for opportunist alliances and protection of those who are wrong. Wapping has again shown that if principles are traded (in this case the right to free trade unions) the working class alone will suffer.

We make this appeal to you: take notice of those in the labour movement who can explain the basic principle that you must never use the police against other members, even if you have fundamental disagreements. No doubt you have regard for the basic principles of the working class movement. Leaders must be accountable. We invite you to discuss these matters with us.

Yours fraternally,  
Political Committee, Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press)

# CAUGHT IN THE ACT

**In fact all the majority of the Fourth International wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supported the workers of Budapest against the bureaucracy and the Soviet army in October-December 1956. It completely identified itself with their struggle.**

WHO is this stout defender of the revolutionary Hungarian workers' councils? This brave fighter for the political revolution? None other than Ernest Mandel, head of the main revisionist centre claiming allegiance to the Fourth International, the Unified Secretariat. This touching profession of faith appeared in a letter to Workers Press, weekly paper of the WRP in Britain, published on 1 November 1986.

Mandel's declaration was a reaction to a letter in the 13 September edition by Cyril Smith, unmasking the capitulation of the organisation which is led today by Mandel, before the Stalinist bureaucracy, in the name of the 'theory' (evolved by Pablo, its leader in 1956) of the so-called 'dual nature' of the bureaucracy, which attributes to it the capacity of 'self-reform'.

In his reply Mandel takes offence, protests and accuses Smith of distorting history, of dealing in gossip, of ignoring 'documentary proof of public declarations'. But the Mandel of 1986 has a short memory. I will try to refresh this faulty memory with the aid of documents published by Mandel himself and his leadership. Let us hope these sources are sufficiently 'documentary', even if at that time Mandel was using the pseudonym Ernest Germain.

## Poland 1956: a 'good' revolution

The position of the International Secretariat (forerunner of today's Unified Secretariat) in 1956 can be summed up as follows: in Poland there had been a victorious political revolution, thanks to the revolutionary leadership of the 'communist' party of Gomulka, whereas in Hungary the revolution was defeated through the lack of such 'revolutionary' leadership. Also, the spontaneous movement of the

Hungarian workers was dangerous and provided the 'pretext' for the military intervention by the Kremlin troops.

This position contains the essence of the tendency we call Pabloite (with or without Pablo): they say the new revolutionary leadership will come from the bureaucracy — therefore confidence should be placed in the Stalinist bureaucracy, or at least in one of its sections, and mistrust shown towards workers. It is a refusal to fight for revolutionary leadership.

From the beginning of 1956, the first signs of a workers' uprising were beginning in Poland: strikes in the factories which culminated, on June 28, in a mass demonstration against the stopping of wages at Poznan, an important industrial centre.

The police, sent by the bureaucracy, opened fire on the demonstrators. Many were killed, among them a child. The workers armed themselves. Eventually, it was only through the intervention of officer cadets that the revolt was put down so savagely.

The crisis grew in the ranks of the Stalinist party. Gomulka was taken back into the party on 21 October, and with the consent of the Russian delegation led by Khrushchev himself, was elected first secretary. He declared himself in favour of freedom, of workers' councils to run the factories, etc.

By making apparent concessions, the Stalinist bureaucracy succeeded in Poland where it had failed in Hungary: it disarmed and demobilised the growing political revolution, avoided the independent organisation of workers' councils, put across the illusion that under Gomulka a new era was beginning, and for a few years made acceptable to the Polish workers the reform of the bureaucracy in place of a struggle

for the victory of the political revolution.

What was the reaction of the 'Trotskyists' Mandel and Co.? To fight against these illusions, attempt to unmask these 'reformers', say to workers — believe only in your own strength, as Trotskyists we know the Stalinist party cannot be reformed, they are trying to lead you into a trap: the 'liberals' of today will be your executioners tomorrow, build the party of the political revolution, the Fourth International?

No, not a bit of it! Mandel and Co. behaved like fervent adherents of these illusions, once again staining the flag of the Fourth International, of Bolshevism. This is what they said:

'The Polish working class, led by this oppositionist communist tendency, has snatched a first magnificent victory in the political revolution against the bureaucracy . . . the unforgettable rally where Gomulka addressed 300,000 workers in Warsaw . . . All who saw this rally on television or at the cinema saw images which recalled the faded photographs of another October in another heroic city, which has become legendary . . . October 1956 in Poland was the first decisive victory of the political revolution against the bureaucracy, the logical continuation of October 1917, the magnificent revenge of the revolutionary proletariat and of the Bolshevik-Leninist ideas after 35 years of humiliation at the hands of the Stalinists.'

This is how Mandel/Germain was writing in 1956 (E. Germain: 'The Political Revolution in Poland and Hungary', Fourth International No.10, 12 December 1956.) In fact, what hope did these Polish workers have of a ready-made 'oppositional communist tendency' which was the 'continuation' of

WORKERS PRESS publishes here Part One of an article from 'Combat International', November-December 1986, journal of the Opposition Group for the Continuity of the Fourth International. In this article, JANOS BOROVI criticises the policies of the Unified Secretariat (USec). He draws parallels between their Pabloite policy of 1956 and today. The greatest fault of the Unified Secretariat, he says in an introductory paragraph, is not that they have made mistakes but that they have refused to correct them publicly.

October 1917? In such a situation, we must assume that the Fourth International is redundant, since its role is fulfilled . . . by Gomulka.

Alas, that's not all. Mandel goes further: he praises 'the surprising honesty of Gomulka in speaking of the country's economic difficulties, which contributed to the extraordinary reception he (Gomulka) won among the Polish masses. One word of bitter truth after years of official lies (emphasis in the original) was a word of freedom'.

In fact, why be critical, since according to Mandel, it is the Polish proletariat who 'chose leaders who would co-ordinate the irresistible forward thrust (of the political revolution)'. (Ibid p.22) This sudden transformation of the Stalinist party into a revolutionary vanguard was not only Mandel's idea. Intoxicated by what it believed to be a concrete realisation of its theories, expressed since 1951, on the 'dual nature' of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the entire leadership of the revisionist centre sang enthusiastically in unison.

In the preparatory theses for the 'Fifth World Congress of the Fourth International' entitled 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism' (Fourth International Nos. 1-3, March 1957), we read that 'the leftist tendency associated with the centrist faction of Gomulka in the overthrow of the Polish Stalinist CP leadership, can be considered, above all in its youth section, as a cell of the new revolutionary Marxist leadership (my emphasis, JB) now emerging in the Polish proletariat.'

But let Mandel finish: 'This Polish "merchandise" will be sold and resold to communists and workers throughout the world, and the Fourth International will not be the least of the forces to use it.' (Ibid pp 22-23)

'Polish merchandise', as Mandel so quaintly puts it, will indeed be

'sold' by opportunists all over the world. The sale has gone on ever since 1956. It consists, as Mandel admits, in looking for substitute leaderships: Stalinists in the East European countries, petty-bourgeois in the capitalist countries (CP/Socialist Party governments in western Europe, the ANC in South Africa, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, etc.) and in doing everything to subordinate to them the revolutionary movement of the masses.

The Pabloites do not try to hasten the explosion of the crisis-ridden Stalinist bureaucracy, to facilitate the split from Stalinism of genuine oppositionists within the Polish Communist Party. No, on the contrary, they want to reinforce their illusions about the possibility of reforming the Stalinist apparatus through the influence of enlightened bureaucrats (in this instance, Gomulka).

Instead of aiding the advance of the political revolution in Poland in 1956, instead of posing at every stage the problem of the building of a new revolutionary leadership, Mandel and Co. cried 'victory!' and said to workers: you have won, it isn't worth looking further, because the 'Trotskyists' tell you so.

For the benefits of young militants, let us remember this: from January 1957, in the middle of the bloody repression in Hungary, the 'unforgettable' Gomulka invited Hungarian workers to support the Kadar government: in October 1957, Polish oppositionists began to face exclusion from the party as a new wave of strikes and demonstrations erupted: in April 1958, Gomulka declared strikes illegal and the subordination of workers' councils to the Stalinist party . . . and in December 1970, when the working class revolted once more, it was the same Gomulka who gave orders for workers' blood to be spilt in the Baltic ports.



Workers in Poznan surround a tank during the uprising in 1956

# Mediaeval origins of anti-Irish racism

BY BERNARD FRANKS

NUMEROUS academic historians have recognised in Elizabethan attempts to conquer and settle Ireland the basis of subsequent colonial operations in the New World, Africa and elsewhere.

Several have argued that English rule in Ireland should not be studied merely in terms of this stepping-stone effect but as the primary example of English imperialism in operation.

In his article 'The Origins of English Imperialism' (History Today, February 1987) London School of Economics lecturer John Gillingham expresses the view that the formative period was much earlier, in the reign of Henry II.

All the Elizabethan official pronouncements on the Irish — as a wild and backward people whose uncivilised state positively justified a savage war of conquest and a subsequent suppression of their language and culture — were present 400 years earlier in the mid-1100s.

Gillingham remarks: 'This is crucially important because it means that these imperialist attitudes are much more deeply ingrained than people realise.'

He quotes from works widely available in the middle ages by Gerald of Wales, who had visited Ireland in the entourage of Prince John. For example:

'They do not devote themselves to the manufacture of flax or wool, nor to the practice of any mechanical or mercantile art. Dedicated only to leisure and laziness, this is a truly barbarous people. They depend for their livelihood on animals and they live like animals.'

Gillingham comments: 'What we have here, in the 12th century just as in the 16th, is an ideology of conquest. Given that the Irish were barbarous it followed that they could be legitimately dispossessed.'

He traces the gruesome continuity of savagery against the Irish; from the English government bounty on the heads of Irishmen,



One of the xenophobic sketches of Irish life by Gerald of Wales (1146-1223): Irish navigation — two men in a coracle, rowing in opposite directions

which paid Piers Bermingham £100 for 30 O'Connor heads in 1305, to the policy in Ireland of the arch-colonialist Sir Humphrey Gilbert who is reported by a

owne tente so that none could come into his tente for any cause but commonly he must pass through a lane of hedges'. Henry II's invasion force

However, throughout the period their control was gradually extended as castles and fortified towns were built, shires created, Irish law replaced with English and revenues mulcted to pass on to the English crown.

Meanwhile, derogatory writings and cartoons continued to appear, as justification for suppression, robbery and murder, forerunners of the anti-Irish jokes and slanders which are part of the armoury of British imperialism to this day.

A complementary article in the same journal examines the founding and development of the East India Company in the 1600's and its significance to the inroads made by British imperialism into the Asian sub-continent.

Both articles will be of value to anyone concerned over these issues.

History Today, February 1987. £1.40 from newsagents and booksellers.

*Derogatory writings and cartoons continued to appear, as justification for suppression, robbery and murder: fore-runners of the anti-Irish jokes and slanders which are part of the armoury of British imperialism to this day.*

chronicler to have commanded in 1579 that:

'the hedges of those which were killed in the daie should be cutte of from their bodies and brought to the place where he incamped at night and should there bee laied on the ground by eche side of the waie ledyng into his

of 1171 is described as an overwhelmingly large one by the standards of the time.

It comprised 500 knights, 3-4,000 archers and a huge range of back-up materials which it needed an armada of 400 ships to carry.

In all cases the mediaeval Kings failed to complete the military conquest of Ireland.



The conquering power: the submission of Turlogh O'Neale to Elizabeth I's Lord Deputy Sir Henry Sidney. However imperialist attitudes had already been established in the early 1100s during Henry II's reign

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IN SO FAR: £2,289.09

FEBRUARY'S bills have been huge — can you send extra for the monthly fund? We have already raised the usual £2,000 for February, but in December and January we were short.

Next week we will report the final total for February, and the start of the March fund.

The battle to cover the costs of our paper is continuous, and we depend on the contributions coming in each day.

Please send donations to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

### £15,000 Special Fund

IN SO FAR: £10,502.84

THE Workers Revolutionary Party Special Fund is being used to pay for the preparation for an International Conference of Trotskyists to re-organise the Fourth International planned for later this year.

We thank members and supporters for the response which brought the first £10,000 in by the target date. The total we have asked for is £15,000 — and it is now coming in very slowly.

● Send contributions, large or small, to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

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Trade Union ..... Age (if under 21) .....

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# LETTERS

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

## More on the Vietnamese Trotskyists

HOW DID the Fourth International's leaders react to the slaughter of the Vietnamese section?

Al Richardson and Sam Bornstein say: '... When the news of 1945 came through to Europe the initial reaction of the leaders of the International Secretariat was to support the Stalinists'. (Last week's Workers Press).

Must we conclude, then, that our movement was so degenerated by 1945 that it could not raise a whimper about the massacre, that it supported the assassins?

No.

Al and Sam tell us that 'Socialist Appeal' reported in July 1945 (wrongly) that a majority of Vietnamese Stalinists had been won to the Fourth International.

Is there proof that this was anything more than mistaken information?

Then Al and Sam point out that Trotskyists published, in November 1945, the enthusiastically pro-Stalinist comments of Daniel Guerin.

I will add that in early 1946, Trotskyists participated in an anti-colonialist conference in Paris, advancing no criticism of Ho Chi Minh.

This uncritical attitude was a serious mistake, from which we can learn.

But comrades made it not knowing the terrible fate of the Vietnamese section.

Definite news of this massacre, in October 1945, did not reach Europe for at least nine months.

There was a reaction: Trotskyist leaders of the Vietnamese immigrant workers in France met Ho Chi Minh and demanded an explanation for the massacre.

His reaction — feigned sorrow for Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau and a repeated warning that political opposition would not be tolerated — was reported re-

cently in 'Chroniques Vietnamiennes' and published in English, in December last year by 'Socialist Organiser'.

Ta Thu Thau's death, Ho's reaction and the Saigon massacre were all publicised by the Fourth International Secretariat when they received news of them.

The Fourth International's mistake was not that it 'supported the Stalinists' when the news came through — but that it failed to learn the lessons of the Vietnam experience and so simply continued with largely, but not totally, uncritical support for Ho against France.

There was no mention of the Saigon massacre in the FI's second congress resolution of 1947 — that was what justifiably incensed Natalia Trotsky.

What happened in 1951 with regard to Mao's repression of the Chinese Trotskyists was quite different.

Pablo deliberately suppressed news of this.

Here was liquidationism with its hand round the FI's throat: there was a reaction to that, too, from S.T. Peng and others.

There is a difference between serious mistakes and that sort of treachery.

**Simon Pirani,**  
*WRP, Glasgow.*  
P.S. A question for P. Conlon (*Workers Press*, January 31).

Which 'left bourgeois Government' did the Vietnamese Trotskyists 'critically support'?

I only know of their critical support for Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam in its military struggle against French imperialism from 1947.

(This was two years after the working class, and the Trotskyists, had faced repression by the French and the Stalinists).

What course of action would P. Conlon have advised?

## Frenzied Orange

I THOUGHT the following account would be useful in the discussion on Ireland.

At the 1973 Conference of Shopworkers' Union (USDAW) Vivienne Mendelson, a delegate from the South East London branch, and a well-known member of the Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the Workers Revolutionary Party) moved the following resolution, which had been fought for throughout the work of SLL members in the union, and was known to be our policy:

'This ADM notes that British imperialism continues its brutal terror campaign against the working class in

Ulster and has extended it into the Irish republic. This campaign of repression and murder, unemployment and intolerable conditions will not be ended until the Tories are driven from office by the united action of the British and Irish working class.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to campaign for: (a) An immediate end to internment, an end to tortures and the release of all political prisoners, both in the north and south of Ireland. (b) The immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ulster. (c) The repeal of the Offences Against the State Act. (d) A

general strike to force the Tories to resign and the return of a Labour Government pledged to a socialist programme. (e) A socialist united Ireland.'

This was opposed for the Executive Council by Mr D. Wylie, a full time organiser in Northern Ireland, and finally a Mr C. Friell of Glasgow moved 'next business,' which was carried with about three hands going up against.

The previous year Vivienne Mendelson had moved a similar resolution, and she was physically assaulted in the lobby of the conference hall where she was selling *Workers Press*. The 'Orange' delegates were frenzied — interrupting her speech, and demanding that she be silenced.

She did ask at the time — where were all the broad left supporters? And indeed it was a good question.

**Dot Gibson**

## Simon Bolivar Brigade

THE Unified Secretariat (USec) in 1979 condemned their (at that time) own members from the 'Bolshevik Faction', as 'sectarian adventurers' for building the Simon Bolivar Brigade (SBB).

The aim was very clear: They wanted to hide their liquidationist practice with regard to their own small section in Nicaragua, which had been ordered by the 'International Secretariat' to dissolve itself into the FSLN.

The Morenista LIT proudly use this wrong accusation 'sectarian' and the fact that the SBB had been kicked out by the Sandinistas for some political differences to conceal their opportunistic policy.

Without openly saying so, they want to give the impression that the construction of the SBB by the Colombian PST was the adequate

way to build up a revolutionary party.

Although it must be said that the SBB fought bravely and they did some good political work (such as building trades unions in Bluefields) — that this is a big lie! (Politically speaking). (See 'El Socialista' No. 163-4, Revista del Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores).

Certainly we could discuss the formation of an International Brigade as an integral part of the united front and certainly one could send one if you have the resources.

And on the other hand we never deny sending our comrades in 'other' countries to openly fight for the revolutionary programme!

But tricky Moreno did both and neither.

First they recruited for the Brigade on a confused basis: 'Por la reconstrucción de Nicaragua paralos trabajadores' (For the rebuilding of the country by the workers and the poor) which corresponded with the centrist programme for Nicaragua of the PST: 'Gobierno Sandinista sin capitalistas' (For a Sandinista government without capitalists).

Then they want this to present as their everlasting fight against 'Pabloism' and the building of a Trotskyist party in every country!

Another part of their politics is their showing-off. They are always the biggest and the best!

In January 1980 the 'Bolshevik Faction' gave a written report for their members and sympathisers, 'The Argentinian PST, its struggle for the construction of work-

tion of the democratic regime, the illegal and systematic use of force and the concentration of power in individuals.

When the South African government totally removed people's right to legitimate dissent, liberation organisations were driven to armed struggle.

When the Metropolitan Police will not permit me to take part in a non-violent protest, they, on behalf of the British state are surely taking responsibility for the continued escalation of violence in South Africa and in Britain.

**Mike Burgess**

## US/Nazi collusion

I WAS especially interested in Charlie Pottins' article 'Nazis in Britain' (*Workers Press*, 14 February). It reminded me of the days of 1944 to 1948, what Charlie Pottins says is the exact truth.

Five years ago I had the opportunity to look at a top secret file relating to the Belgians who had helped the Nazis during World War II. In it I found many names of people still well known today, although they are in their 80s now.

The most interesting thing I found was a horrible photograph taken by an American commander when they got to Dachau. On the back of the photo was a note (typed and signed by the US commander).

The note said: 'It is prohibited to give or show this document to the West European press.'

I expect the United States had already decided to help some Nazi war criminals to escape. I knew for a long time that the US government used these criminals as spies and as anti-communist propagandists.

In fact, the USA came into Europe with a view to firstly, save their economy, and secondly to fight the Nazis.

It is clear what Charlie Pottins says:

'The British, US and French governments were ready to revive militarism in West Germany, along with the big capitalist bosses who had backed Hitler, and with the help of Nazi officers, in preparation for war with (against) the Soviet Union.'

Up to that they were very afraid of the west European workers who were ready for the Socialist Revolution. Most of us wanted it, especially the youth (I was 18-19 then).

But most of the adults — tired with two wars — said to us: 'it's enough, try to get a job to rebuild Europe!'

Maybe we have done it... but for the capitalists!

Only a few never surrendered. What do you do when you are a small number? All of us are now in our early sixties. Should the youth of today need us, we will be at their sides.

To be a revolutionary is not easy, of course. Most of us have experienced that through our lives, our jobs.

Still more, we say, 'forward to the Socialist Revolution!'

**Marie-Jeanne Guermant**  
*Brussels*

## Violence: whose responsibility?

AT 7p.m. on Wednesday 11 February I became the 95th person to be arrested whilst non-violently protesting against apartheid on the Non-Stop Picket which has been outside the racist South African Embassy since 19 April 1986.

At Bow Street Magistrates Court on the morning of Thursday 12 February I pleaded not guilty to charges of Highway Obstruction, and

obstructing the police.

I must appear again at Bow Street at 11a.m. on Thursday 19 February at which time I expect the magistrates to set a date for the trial.

I am a member of the Humanist Party and of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

The Humanist Party clearly rejects: the violation of human rights, the substitu-

### LISTINGS

Listings are published free by WORKERS PRESS for organisations within the Labour movement. Please send details of any function or event you want to advertise to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Friday.

**MARXIST FORUM: Marxism and the Labour Party** Monday 2 March, 7.30pm at Rising Sun Pub, Harlesden Road, Willesden, NW10. Speaker: Peter Firmin (Socialist Viewpoint).

**WRP West of Scotland Branch Discussion Class: What is Marxism** Tuesday 3 March 7.15pm at Woodside Halls, Glenfarg Street off Maryhill Road (near St George's Cross). Further classes to be announced.

**A SOCIALIST PLATFORM MEETING/SOCIAL on 'War and the International'** A discussion on

the history and problems of the Trotskyist movement in Britain. 7.30pm Saturday 28 February, Duke of York Pub, York Way, near Kings Cross Station

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

**CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR)** Weekly planning meetings are held every Tuesday at 7.30pm, Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All are welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938)

**RAGGED TROUSERED CABARET** NUJ Surrey/South London Newspapers Benefit. Friday 27 February, 8.00pm at The

Secombe Centre, 42 Cheam Road, Sutton Surrey. (£3.50) Featuring: Thundering Typhoons; John Hegley; Jenny Eclair and Pr Murray

**RAGGED TROUSERED CABARET** Lewisham Labour Club, Limes Hall, Limes Grove, SE13. Sunday 1 March at 12.30pm. All Women programme to precede International Women's Day: Sheila Hyde (black comic); Fiona Thurston (acoustic guitarist); Berni Cunnean (peoples poet).

**NICARAGUA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN** Club Sandino, 144 Upper Street, Islington, London N1. Set up by the Campaign, this new club will be opening on 5 March. For details ring 01-608 0686

**THE GUILDFORD FOUR** Public Meeting, Manchester Town Hall (Basement Theatre), Saturday 28 February at 1.00pm. Speakers

include Annie Maguire, Lisa Asten and Errol Smalley

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

**SOCIALIST DISABILITY ACTION GROUP** Public Meeting, Wednesday 4 March at 6.15pm-8.00pm. House of Commons, Room 6

**FROM RESISTANCE TO REBELLION** An exhibition of Asian and Afro-Caribbean struggles in Britain. February 3-28. Dame Coley House, Ben Johnson Road, Stepney, London E1 (01-790 9077). Exhibition goes on to Multicultural Education Centre, Leeds, 7 from March 2-13 (0532 623 448).

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

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

**CAMPAIGN FOR TRADE UNION SANCTIONS AGAINST APARTHEID** Picket South African Embassy, Saturday, 21 February, 2.00-4.00pm. Release All Political Detainees in South Africa

**GEORGE ROUCOU DEFENCE CAMPAIGN** Lobby Appeal Hearing, Friday 13 March at 9.30am, Aldine House, New Bailey Street, (across the Irwell), Manchester. Bring your banners!

**SUPPORT THE WHEELERS WORKERS** March and Demonstration, Saturday 28 February, assemble 12 noon, Queen's Square, Brighton. Organised by T&GWU Regional Committee

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

# Build the Fourth International

## Response to call for International Conference

A LETTER FROM THE LIT  
(INTERNATIONAL WORKERS LEAGUE)

WE ARE writing this letter for two reasons. The first is to thank you for what you did in relation to Comrade Nahuel Moreno's death.

Your message of condolence and your immediate response by organising a memorial meeting, inviting all the Trotskyist organisations, moved us profoundly. We are also very thankful for the individual messages sent by Comrades Hunter, Slaughter, Fryer and others.

We think that Comrade Moreno's death has united us more than ever. His death has posed to both you and us the common task of resolving the crisis of leadership of the revolutionary movement and the Fourth International, a crisis that has undoubtedly been deepened by Comrade Moreno's departure.

As Comrade Slaughter put it in his speech during the memorial meeting on 2 February 1987, Comrade Moreno's death has put on us additional responsibilities because we all have to help to cover the gap left by his death.

The second reason for this letter, not at all unconnected with the first, is to answer your call for an International Conference of Trotskyists to advance the task of reorganising the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

The International Secretariat (IS) of the International Workers League (Fourth International), after a meeting where your call was fully

discussed, has decided to support it and to work closely with you to make sure that your initiative receives the widest support and success possible.

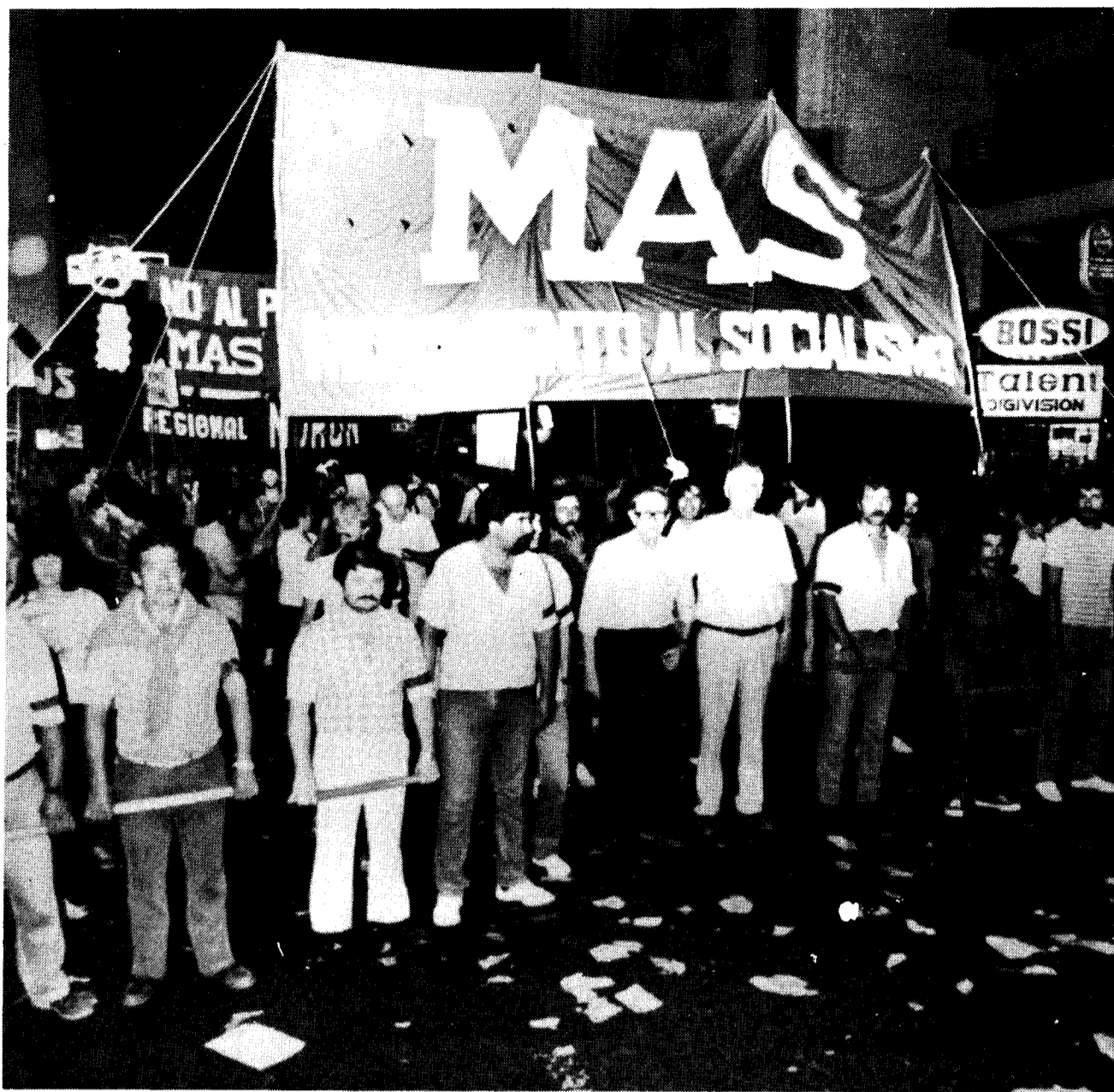
The IS has taken this position on the following considerations:

1. We consider your initiative in calling the International Conference a serious attempt to reinforce the process of reorganising the Fourth International, through engaging in common struggle all those orthodox Trotskyist forces, among them the Workers Revolutionary Party, which has marked the continuity of the Fourth International through their fight against imperialism, social democracy, Stalinism and revisionism in the ranks of our movement.

Your attempt will be fruitful as long as those participating in it come together determined to build an international organisation, a world party. Your proposal for forming a co-ordinating and organising committee for the conference, and the conference itself, are very important proposals in that direction.

We don't propose that this conference should be a mere chatting club initiative, or just a clearing house for past differences. We see your proposal as a serious undertaking of the most serious of tasks: resolving the crisis of leadership of the Fourth International.

2. We are in general agreement with the 10 points proposed in your call as the basis for attendance at the International Conference. Of course, we could formulate



The Argentinean section of the LIT, the MAS (Movement to Socialism), dominated a huge march in Buenos Aires last December against the Argentine government's planned amnesty for military torturers and murderers. At the head of the contingent were the late Nahuel Moreno of the LIT and Bill Hunter of the Workers Revolutionary Party

them in a different way and some of them undoubtedly need further clarification.

But we are also convinced that the discussion process leading to the International Conference will be the proper place and the opportunity to deal with these clarifications.

We see all this process as the continuation of the relationship established by Comrade Moreno's trip to England and the subsequent visits from your Comrades to our organisation.

Comrade Moreno's firm understanding was that there were no obstacles at all between you and us that would prevent an honest, frank and thorough discussion.

Comrade Moreno's trip to England and other countries was his last, and we believe successful, attempt to reorganise the Fourth International, a task that was always on the top of his agenda.

Despite the fatalism and scepticism of a few, and the overt desires of social democrats and Stalinists of all

stripes, the Fourth International lives and its continuity is expressed in the very existence of revolutionary Trotskyist organisations in many countries of the world and in the struggle to build them in every country.

This is the very heart of the Permanent Revolution and the Transitional Programme since a programme cannot survive without the existence of the subjective factor, a revolutionary world party struggling to fuse such programme with the mass movement of the working class.

3. The struggles of the working class are national only in form, but international in content. From that flows the inescapable need for an international based on the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

Against this need is only national-Trotskyism, and every notion of federationism, which in the present epoch of worldwide revolutionary struggles can only lead towards methodological degeneration, adaptation and

opportunism (or, the other side of the coin, sectarianism).

We are witnessing today the most revolutionary epoch of human civilisation under capitalist rule, the epoch of revolutions, wars and struggles against exploitation and oppression.

We are witnessing the effect of gigantic struggles that are shaking the world. (South Africa, Philippines, Central America, Palestine, Eastern Europe, China, etc.)

We are witnessing the awakening of the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries. The heroic British miners' strike has not only shaken the foundation of the Tory government in England but also opened the road for the French, Spanish and other proletarians of Europe.

We are witnessing the profound crisis of the social democratic and Stalinist apparatuses as a consequence of these struggles. The weakening of these counter-revolutionary apparatuses far from difusing has accelerated the revolutionary upheaval.

We are also witnessing the political crisis of the United States hegemonic imperialist power and that of its allies, a continuation of its chronic economic crisis.

The situation has reaffirmed not only the historical need of Trotskyism and its programme, but has posed the burning question of the reorganisation of the Fourth International as an absolute priority.

There is no time for hesitation or scepticism, it is time to grasp the opportunity opened up to us all by the action of the working class and the oppressed around the world.

Only the prolongation of the crisis of leadership of the working class, that is reduced to the crisis of its revolutionary vanguard, has prevented the working class from achieving total victory. As in 1938, when the Transitional Programme was written, the objective conditions are not only ripe, they are rotten ripe.

The Fourth International was prevented for many years from playing the role

of catalyst in the resolving of the crisis of leadership in the working class because of the action of revisionists in our ranks, starting with Pabloism. But the fight against Pabloism, initiated in 1953 has never stopped and today is stronger than ever.

Our struggle today is to unite all those who represent the continuity of that struggle. Your call for an International Conference can be and should be a decisive step further in that direction.

4. The International Secretariat of the IWL(FI) has decided to publish your call for an International Conference in several languages and in our international magazine (Correo Internacional).

We have also started consultations as to what could be our best contribution to the development of your call, which we consider from now on our own, with our sections in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, United States, Portugal, Spain, France, Greece, Germany, Sweden, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and militants of our current in outer countries.

The question of your call for the International Conference is already placed at the top of the agenda of our next meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC).

We invite the WRP to send an observer delegation to that meeting with the objective of participating fully in that discussion.

From now on, the IWL(FI) will closely collaborate with and consult with the WRP leadership as to the best way to advance the common task of reorganising the Fourth International. Further proposals and concrete joint activities will be presented by our representatives.

With the warmest Trotskyist greetings,  
Mercedes, Jesus,  
Patricia  
For the International Secretariat of the International Workers League (Fourth International) 17 February 1987

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## PERSONAL COLUMN

## Frank Ridley's 90th birthday

READERS of the third volume of Trotsky's 'Collected Writings and Speeches on Britain' will recall his pungent 1931 criticism of F. A. Ridley, who briefly supported the Left Opposition and prematurely suggested the formation of a Fourth International.

Indeed Frank Ridley, whose 90th birthday was celebrated at the Conway Hall last Sunday, has some claim to be regarded as the first British Trotskyist.

Sunday's gathering, chaired by Ellis Hillman, was described by an optimistic speaker as 'one of those remarkable oecumenical occasions'.

And where else, one wondered, but at a tribute to a veteran of Ridley's vintage, could be found 98-year-old Fenner Brockway (according to whom Ridley was probably 'the most knowledgeable person in the whole of Britain'), Stan Newens, Al Richardson, Walter Kendall, and assorted anarchists, SPGBers, and other stalwarts of the fragmented left — all happily, if only temporarily, united?

There was a message of greetings from C.L.R. James, who is a mere 86, and the Mayor of Camden, dressed all in red, brought a bunch of red flowers.

The sore thumb, so to speak, in this variegated assembly was the impatient Stalinist Jack Gaster, who prudently refrained from anything more provocative than some bland reminiscences of the St Marylebone ILP in 1928.

Since Gaster helped to take the 'Revolutionary Policy Committee' group out of the ILP into the Communist Party seven years later it was probably just as well that his recollections stopped short where they did.

The editorial note on Ridley in the above-mentioned Trotsky volume is right to indicate that his contribution to British Trotskyism was short-lived and limited; but it does him an injustice when it dismisses his subsequent writings as exclusively concerned with secularism.

To be sure, Ridley edited the 'Freethinker' in the 1950s, and has always been a doughty campaigner in the best freethought tradition.

But his most enduring contribution to knowledge has been as a proletarian historian.

Some of his books remain unpublished. As one of Sunday's speakers said, 'the Establishment has done him down'.

Academics hate nothing so much as a non-academic who knows more than they do, especially when he takes the side of the poor against the rich; and professorial jealousy and disdain lie behind many a rejection slip.

A speaker who praised Ridley's modest lifestyle as an example for today's young socialists said he swam in the world of learning like 'a whale in an ocean infested by sharks'.

I haven't read all Ridley's many published books, by any means. Of those I have read, my favourites are 'The Assassins' (1938), a tour de force of learning and wit which Socialist Platform Ltd are hoping to republish if they can raise the money; and, above all, 'The Revolutionary Tradition in England' (1948), an overview that brilliantly anticipated many of the findings of later research.

Another aspect of Ridley's career has been his oratory. He was one of the great Hyde Park speakers in those far-off days before they put the railings up and made Speakers' Corner a mere token of 'free speech'.

Ridley has always been kind and helpful to younger seekers after knowledge. Over 20 years ago, when I was writing a social history of contraception, he took me to Woking to meet the last surviving relative of Charles Knowlton, secularist author of the birth control pamphlet whose republication by Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant led to their trial for obscenity in 1877.

At 90, Frank Ridley is still hard at work. His latest pamphlet, 'Talking of the Devil', was published last year. It is unlikely to be his last.

## When a Bruce needs a trepanning

DAVE BRUCE may not have a weekly column, but he certainly has a sharp

pen (Letters, 21 February). It's a pity he stabs with it instead of using it to shed light.

Let him first of all get it into his head that the questions which aroused his anger were asked in good faith.

That I should have confessed my lack of understanding of a difficult text and dared to ask some questions about it makes him so angry he can't believe I was in earnest.

So he starts from the assumption — rather an unfriendly one, it seems to me — that I was being sarcastic and playing the pedagogue.

There was a time when I pretended to understand things I didn't really understand. I even, sometimes, had the chutzpa to write about them.

Those days have gone for good. I for one no longer pose as a theoretician.

I didn't pretend not to understand Norah Wilde's letter, I really didn't understand it — or, at any rate, a large part of it. Richard Goldstein said he did, so I asked him for help.

From Bruce's false assumption springs his patronising suggestion that Wilde should come to me for instruction.

Has she nothing to teach me?

She may not be the best writer in the world — though, judging by her letter last week, and her article on page 8 of the same issue, she's by no means the worst one, either; and on this evidence it's clearly Bruce, not I, who is belittling her, when he calls her 'less articulate'.

But I wasn't out to 'correct' her orthography, syntax, or punctuation. 'Ye Gods', indeed! I was asking about meaning.

Wilde wrote on 24 January at a higher level of abstraction than I am able to follow. If her ideas have substance and validity, can they not be expressed in simpler, more concrete, more accessible terms?

To ask this question is not to make a 'personal attack'. Nor does it display partisanship on a trivial issue.

Equally misplaced is Bruce's presentation of Wilde as a delicate plant that needs to be shielded from the withering blast of criticism.

A woman who, by joining a revolutionary party, shows herself robust enough to face the class enemy, is not going to be silenced by me, and it's demeaning her to suggest otherwise.

It's disgraceful to accuse me of trying to silence Norah Wilde, and outrageous to draw an analogy with the jailing of Phil Penn. Bruce should be ashamed of such a poisonous amalgam, which I deeply resent.

His slur that I turn a blind eye to the use of racist terminology by my friends (Workers Press had already distanced itself from 'Londonderry' — was I really required to drive the point home?); his crudely anti-intellectual tilt at 'literary reviews'; his condescending 'public school' lesson in etiquette: these too are disgraceful, and discredited, methods of controversy.

To shower a questioner with such angry, contrived flappoodle is sadly reminiscent of what has been called 'barbaric Trotskyism', and illustrates clearly one of the obstacles to the growth of the revolutionary movement in Britain.

Let me not mince words. Bruce's letter reflects a certain body of opinion both inside and outside the Workers Revolutionary Party. For Workers Press to have an independent columnist is viewed by some with deep suspicion and hostility.

I didn't, as it happens, 'take the privilege of a column for myself'. I was invited to become a contributor to Workers Press. And in fact it was none other than Dave Bruce who originally invited me to do so.

The one condition I made when I accepted was that I should be independent.

As soon as my independence shows signs of becoming real rather than declaratory Citizen Bruce — with strong anger in his heart and a weak pun in his headline — rushes in to guillotine it if he can.

Goldstein, to his credit, doesn't set himself up as a one-person Committee of Public Safety but calmly gets down to the job of answering my questions (well, all but one of them) and asks me a straight question in return.

I'll give him a straight answer next week.

PETER FRYER

## ROBSON'S CHOICE

SCANNING the pages of 'Radio Times', Screen Two's offering this week caught my eye. It is entitled **Heaven on Earth**: 'The promise of a sweet life in the New World turns sour for a group of young immigrants'.

It is a story of four Welsh orphans transported to Canada at the turn of the century ('bricks for Empire building') based on the memoirs of some 100,000 British children 'who helped build the new Canada'.

These children suffered mixed fortunes, it is true, but how did the plight of the worst-off compare with that of the children their forebears dispossessed 250 years before?

'Children in Iroquois society,' wrote historian Howard Zinn, by way of example, 'while taught the cultural heritage of their people and solidarity with the tribe, were also taught to be independent, not to submit to overbearing authority.'

'They were taught equality in status and the sharing of possessions. The Iroquois did not use harsh punishments on children; they did not insist on early weaning or early toilet training, but gradually allowed the child to learn self-care.'

'All of this was in sharp contrast to European values as brought over by the first colonists, a society of rich and poor, controlled by priests, by governors, by male heads of families.'

'For example, the pastor of the Pilgrim colony, John Robinson, thus advised his parishioners how to deal with their children: "And surely there is in all children . . . stubbornness, and stoutness of mind arising from natural pride, which must, in the first place, be broken and beaten down; that so the foundation of their education being laid in humility and tractableness, other virtues may, in time, be built thereon."

The Iroquois — the communalists — were all but wiped out by the English colonists.

Any hardships meted out to the Welsh orphans in the 'New World' were essential features of a system of human exploitation based on private property imported from the 'Old World'.

\* \* \*

On **Saturday**, at 8.15p.m., part-three of the lack-lustre **Pioneers of Socialism** (C4). BBC screens part-one of Ingmar Bergman's wonderful **Fanny and Alexander** for the second time (9.30p.m. — BBC2). If



MICHA BERGESE in 'The Company of Wolves', Film on Four presentation on Channel 4, Thursday 9p.m.

you saw it last time around, keep your powder dry and see Berman's classic 1955 comedy, **Smiles of a Summer Night**, at 11.05p.m. (BBC2). If not, watch both and suffer the consequences.

At 3p.m. on **Sunday** you can see the delightful **Bringing up Baby** (BBC2) with Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn directed by Howard Hawks. At 10.05p.m. the final part of **The Search for El Dorado**; on BBC2, **Heaven on Earth**, the play already referred to.

On **Monday** there is **Birds of the Sun God** (8p.m. — BBC1), in the series **Wildlife on One**, and **Can Aids be Stopped?** (8.10p.m. — BBC2), a Horizon presentation. For a bit of light relief try **Crosstalk** (10.10p.m. — BBC1).

File on 4 presents 'People Power' or 'People's Army'? (**Tuesday** 7.20p.m. — Radio 4): Max Easterman reporting from the 'enemy strongholds of the New People's Army in the Philippines. **First Tuesday** (10.40p.m. — ITV) looks again at the 1974 Guildford and Woolwich bombings in **The Case**

**That Won't Go Away**, while the NATO saga, **Questions of Defence** (11p.m. — BBC1) looks back at the 'emotional' debate surrounding the Enhanced Radiation Weapon — the neutron bomb.

On **Wednesday** at 8.15p.m. (Radio 3), a guitar recital by Turibio Santos Villa-Lobos' 12 Studies to mark the centenary of the Brazilian composer's birth. At 9.25p.m. (BBC2), part-two of the Fay Weldon comedy, **Heart of the Country**.

Neil Jordan's film, **The Company of Wolves** is on Channel Four at 9p.m. on **Thursday** and immediately afterwards, at 10.45p.m. (C4), the Maysies brothers documentary, **Running Fence**, about the artist Christo. If you want to check how far down the slippery slope bourgeois art has travelled, don't miss it!

**Friday** offers a veritable orgy of feature films — unfortunately they all overlap. I will list them in order of performance: **The Elephant Man** (10.25p.m. — BBC1); **The Stranger** (11.20p.m. — C4); **The Black Windmill** (11.50p.m. — ITV)

## The Zircon Film

IT MAY seem strange to review a programme that has been banned from television and is therefore unlikely to be viewed by most Workers Press readers. However, the subject is highly topical at the moment.

The film is being shown around the country by various groups; the showing I went to was organised by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and Lambeth Council.

The film starts with the whole basis of the Zircon conspiracy: that the satellite, which costs £500 million, was paid for by hiding it in the Ministry of Defence budget.

This was breaking a previous agreement by the MoD to reveal to a parliamentary committee the true identity of any purchases over £250 Million, no matter how secret they were. The agreement was made after the MoD hid the cost of a £1 billion refit programme for the Polaris missile.

The most entertaining part of the film is when Duncan Campbell interviews Professor Sir Ronald Mason, chief scientific advisor for the Ministry of Defence.

After talking for a while about the technical problems of information gathering, etc., Campbell throws in a question about the Zircon satellite. Mason's jaw drops and several seconds of stunned

**The Zircon Film (banned by the BBC). Being screened by various groups.**

silence follow. He then says: 'I don't know what you are talking about' — obviously caught completely off guard.

The MoD's campaign of secrecy about the Zircon satellite was absolutely minimal. The programme shows how the government hid it as the third satellite in the Skynet military communication series, similar to the way the US hid the Corona photographic satellite by putting a monkey on it, claiming it as an experiment to see how space affected animals.

The Zircon 'cover story' was blown when British Aerospace distributed a press release about the third Skynet satellite, giving its orbit as geostationary (it is always above the same point of the Earth) at 58 degrees east.

This is strange, when the other two Skynet satellites are both above the Atlantic, giving communication between all NATO countries. What makes it stranger is that the position 58 degrees east is the ideal place for a listening satellite to spy on Soviet communications.

When a space expert phoned the MoD to check on the Skynet position, they said the position was a secret. When he explained it was printed on a British Aerospace

press release, he was told that the satellite was put there because of the large military presence in Hong Kong, and that it would 'save on telephone bills'! (At this point, the whole audience erupted into laughter.)

Even if you were to believe that excuse, there is further evidence. Since all satellites have different positions and velocities, each needs its own ground dish to receive information from it. At the recently completed Skynet ground base, there are only two dishes. When Plessey, who built the complex, were asked where the third dish was, they said they were not allowed to say.

The lack of security for this project was obvious. The government were keeping the project secret not from the Soviets, but from the British people, who would have to pay for it. The Soviets would know if a strange satellite suddenly appeared above them doing nothing but listening that it could only be for spying.

However, the MoD would find it harder to justify spending £500 million on a satellite to peep into Soviet walkie-talkie conversations. When Duncan Campbell comes along and exposes the whole thing they are in danger of being exposed in front of the British people.

If you get a chance, go and see this film. It is an excellent insight into our 'secret society'.

Jolyon Ralph

# MARXISM & SCIENCE

Workers Press plans to start a science column. Here DAVE PELMAN shows why Marxists need to study science and outlines some developments we will be reporting on in future articles.

## WHY SHOULD the paper of a Marxist party carry articles on developments in science and technology?

The great Marxists gave particular attention to developments in natural science (physics, chemistry, biology). Marx even wanted to dedicate Capital to Charles Darwin.

Engels retired early in order to master as much of the science of his day as possible, producing, as a result, 'The Dialectics of Nature'.

Lenin wrote 'Materialism and Empirio-criticism' and once said that he would have chosen to study physics had he not chosen the life of a revolutionary. Trotsky wrote a great deal about scientific developments in his day.

Why was this the case? Were they eclectic dilettantes fascinated by the wonders of nature? No. They saw developments of natural science as intimately connected with the possibilities of a socialist society.

I want therefore to suggest some basic reasons why we in the Workers Revolutionary Party should pay close attention to the revolutionary developments in science and technology that are taking place today.

**1. The study of the method and techniques of scientific enquiry are important for clarifying the correct scientific approach to the building of a revolutionary party. This is a profoundly scientific question as Lenin taught.**

Although it is most sharply expressed on the level of the development of scientific theory, there is also the need for a revolutionary scientific practice.

Only by consciously struggling for a proper scientific approach to theory and practice can we negate the years of Healyism with its profoundly anti-scientific method borrowed from mediaeval clericalism; the infallible guru/divine catechising his disciples, brutalising those intrepid followers who might for a fleeting moment question his omniscience in matters of theory and omnipotence in matters of worldly power.

The rise of modern science has forever put an end to such religious quackery and intellectual chicanery as the norm for acquiring knowledge of the world.

There can be no infallible teachers in a scientific community.

In fact the central dialectical logic of scientific method is precisely to seek the weaknesses in existing theories by testing them in practice in order to negate them into better ones.

In this cause no-one's opinion is sacred; even the humblest practitioner must be listened to.

For instance some of the greatest scientists such as Michael Faraday started their careers as technicians rather than professional scientists.

Of course to pursue a complex scientific programme it is necessary for the group of people that make up a scientific research team to agree, after intense debate and discussion, on a co-ordinated plan of attack on the particular problem.

Only after some time when the original strategy has been found to be inadequate in the light of the new experimental results (practice) is the need for modification of the research programme considered.

It may mean only a small

shift of emphasis, or a completely new approach, but this must be agreed collectively by the scientific research group.

Meanwhile there is maximum discussion of every result of practice at each stage. Its significance for theory is analysed but with the acceptance of the necessity to work to a co-ordinated programme.

This is, in terms of party building, the scientific method of democratic centralism.

Every single member of this party must in this sense act as a scientific socialist.

From the conscious participation of every party member in this way will come the growth in effectiveness of the party as a whole in the achievement of its central goal, revolutionary proletarian leadership.

**2. In order for party members to fight for leadership in the working class it is necessary to be able to explain to workers the significance of the new developments in the productive forces for the relations of production.**

It is this fundamental dialectic, the impossibility of the productive forces being developed harmoniously within the social relations of a class-divided society, that is the scientific core of Marxism.

This proposition is a thousand times more clearly true today than it was in the time of Marx and Engels.

It is necessary for comrades to grasp in as much technical detail as possible the revolutionary developments in science and technology now taking place:

To be able to show the workers how such technology would be able to transform the nature of work, to properly plan production on a world scale to satisfy everyone's need.

And then to show how, under capitalism, this has led to the very opposite, to mass unemployment and starvation, the very threat of species' annihilation through nuclear war or the exhaustion of the material underpinnings of the biosphere.

**This is not a question that requires moral indignation but scientific understanding.**

It is therefore surprising that so many political groups claiming the title Marxist spend little or no time educating themselves and analysing the developments in the productive forces.

The bourgeoisie do not make this mistake.

**3. In order to consciously prepare to put an end to capitalism it is important to understand its historical origins scientifically.**

In fact the rise of the bourgeoisie was closely associated with developments in natural science.

The epoch of the birth of capitalism was contemporary with the rise of modern scientific method and theory — they were intimately connected.

The triumph of the mechanics of Galileo and Newton was connected with the central problem of mercantile capitalism, navigation.

Newton showed that the rules governing falling apples also controlled the movement of the planets.

The invention of calculus provided the necessary mathematical machinery for the accurate computation of planetary trajectories in relation to the earth.

Scientific navigation thus became possible.

The developments of a scientific understanding of energy, its transformation and controlled release was part of the rise of industrial capitalism.

In order to create better



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industrial processes it was necessary to understand how to transform matter from one form into another and to create entirely new substances (chemistry).

This further necessitated the understanding of the fundamental constituents of matter (atomic theory) and the field-like forces between such particles (electromagnetism).

The modern era in physics, beginning at the start of this century, saw the rise of the profoundly dialectical theories of Quantum Mechanics and Relativity.

This birth was contemporary with the beginning of the decline of capitalism.

These theories have led to an elucidation of the inner dynamics of atoms and their constituent particles as well as to an understanding of how to release the energy locked up in an atomic nucleus.

These theoretical developments have resulted in a rich variety of technologies and tools for both the further investigation of the fundamental laws of matter-in-motion (physics) as well as almost all other sciences.

The invention of silicon chips, lasers, x-ray machines, electron microscopes, neutron spectrometers and many other tools have enabled revolutionary advances to be made in fields such as chemistry, molecular biology, the science of materials, and even in mathematics itself.

However, as will be shown in future articles, the marvellous theoretical edifice of modern physics has at its base fundamental philosophical problems.

Whereas Newtonian mechanics led to a graspable world outlook almost immediately, quantum theory has been fraught with philosophical anguish from the start.

Its great founders, Planck, Einstein, de Broglie and others could not accept the interpretation of its symbolism and attempted to find a way out of the philosophical dilemma.

Recent developments in instrumentation have confirmed the non-causal, uncommonsensical implications of the theory.

**4. An increasing number of scientists are recognising that the new frontier of fundamental science is associated with understanding the processes involved in human cognition.**

This is starkly posed by the possibility of creating massively parallel processors that will, in the not too distant future, compare in complexity with the human brain.

Thus possibilities open up for understanding what are the materialist foundations of mathematics itself and scientific thought in general.

As Trotsky remarked to Soviet engineers in 1926:

... scientific and technical thought is approaching a great turning-point, that the revolutionary epoch in the development of human society will be accompanied by a revolutionary epoch in the sphere of the cognition of matter and the mastering of it. ... Unbounded technical possibilities will open up before liberated mankind.

# Come Clean!

**Tuesday Feature: Trial by System. Written and presented by Norman Moss, Radio 4, 8.30p.m. 24 February**

EVERY DAY, Gorbachev's campaign for 'glasnost' — 'openness' — pushes the Soviet bureaucracy closer to the problem of coming clean on Soviet history. Their difficulty is this: how can they avoid clearing the names of the victims of Stalin's monstrous purges?

Not to declare the innocence of the leaders of the revolution of the crimes to which many of them were forced to 'confess' in the 1930s is to put in question the meaning of all Gorbachev's policies.

But to make that move must open up the whole issue of Stalin's betrayal of the revolution and raise for discussion the policies of Stalin's opponents, above all of Trotsky and his supporters.

In the Radio Four programme on Tuesday, writer Norman Moss presented his dramatised account of the trial of March 1938 as a commentator devoid of understanding.

Only one aspect of the trial, the last of the three major Moscow show-trials staged by Stalin, appeared, and the programme gave no idea of the political meaning of even that one.

Moss began with a quotation from Orwell's 'Animal Farm', and ended with the obligatory reference to Koestler's 'Darkness at Noon'.

Koestler's psychological rubbish is still being used to prevent any real under-

standing of the motivation of the defendants in the trials, of the powerful forces which drove Stalin to stage them, or of the obstacles which to this day have stopped Stalin's successors revealing the truth about them.

Moss's presentation told us how Krestinsky withdrew his confession in open court, how Bukharin fenced with the infamous prosecutor Vishinsky, and how he tried to dissociate himself from the more ludicrous of the accusations — putting nails in butter or plotting Lenin's assassination — without actually denying his guilt in general.

**But none of this really makes sense without the knowledge that Bukharin and his group had supported Stalin against Trotsky in the 1920s.**

The other group of defendants, led by Rakovsky, who had actually been associated with Trotsky before capitulating to Stalin, were never mentioned at all.

The defendants were old revolutionaries — Bukharin for 30 years, Rykov for 40, Rakovsky 50 — but they had been politically destroyed by Stalin before they had fallen into the clutches of the GPU.

Only thus could torture

and the threats to their families have broken these communists.

Many thousands of Trotsky's followers perished in the massive blood-purges of that time without giving in to the GPU 'interrogators'. Only Trotsky's analysis of the bureaucracy and the degeneration of the October revolution offers any way to explain the nature of these events.

Stalin, as the leader of the anti-communist bureaucracy which had usurped power within the workers' state, had to try to destroy all opposition to his rule.

The trials, and the campaign of vile slander which accompanied them, were an essential component of this work.

In particular, they were vital for Stalin's foreign policy. He had to assure his imperialist allies that they no longer needed to fear Soviet support for revolution abroad.

There is no doubt that years on, the question of trials is still throwing bureaucracy into crisis. Whether they are now for to tell the truth or not, issue must raise the questions of the nature of bureaucracy, its parasitism, its relation to the workers' state, and the necessity of the Soviet workers to free Soviet society from their rule, and re-establish Soviet democracy.

Cyril Smith

# No hint of socialism

BY DAVE DOWSETT

AT LONG last the Labour Party has produced a policy document on transport for a future Labour government, entitled 'Fresh Directions'.

Nowhere in this 27-page document is there any mention of either the working class or socialism.

The former are presumably lumped together in the term 'the people'. The latter isn't even hinted at.

Key to the whole document is that the Labour Party recognises that adequate resources are vital — but qualifies this by admitting that under a Labour government these resources will be 'limited'.

In other words, this is a paper policy only, which a Labour government won't be able to implement.

Bearing this in mind, there is a radical change from the chaos being created by the Tories.

But one important factor is missing, of course: who should have control of the transport system?

The document admits that the Department of Transport (DoT) needs to be 'restructured'.

To advise a future Labour Government on this restructuring a new National Transport Authority would be set up with a staff of 20-30.

This Authority would have some representation from public transport users, but transport workers aren't mentioned and the Authority would have no statutory powers.

Throughout the section on public transport the great boast is that there will be consultation with users' representatives and staff.

But consultation is not the same as control.

It will be only too easy for the planned National and Regional Authorities to consult with users' committees and workers, listen to their views, and then do something in complete opposition to their suggestions.

The document states that those responsible for transport policy must be directly elected.

In London, transport would be one of the functions of a new, directly elected strategic body.

Local (or Regional) authorities would have to cover all relevant areas of transport and produce five-year plans incorporating integrated passenger transport plans and road traffic plans.

Again, the authorities will have to consult with local communities, transport managers and staff — but there will be no control for these groups except perhaps the transport managers.

A Labour government is pledged to repeal the 1985 Transport Act, but there are no immediate plans for bringing the National Bus Company back into public ownership except where local councils want to purchase or repurchase privately owned companies — and then only if the owners are willing to sell and the councils can raise the finance.

British Rail will have to prepare a 'rolling plan' in conjunction with the newly-structured DoT and National Transport Authority, again merely consulting local users' committees and the rail trade unions.

There will be increased finance for passenger rail transport 'within available resources', although BR would have the right to borrow and do deals with money lenders.

Promises are made that under Labour trains would run on time, fares would be affordable, and staffing levels would be improved.

There are also pledges to increase main-line electrification and reverse the run-down of BR Engineering.

In road haulage, safer conditions would be imposed. Labour plan also to expand the use of inland waterways.

Local authorities would have to produce Road Traffic Plans in tandem with their Passenger Transport Plans, and would be expected to improve traffic

flow, especially in urban areas.

'As quickly as possible' tends to be a euphemism in Labour policy for 'never'. Nevertheless — as quickly as possible — the lead in petrol would be phased out and attempts made to improve driving standards by giving insurance discounts to those who pass the advanced driving test.

Labour pledge to phase out road tax on private cars and replace this with increased tax on petrol, so that those who use cars more, or have cars that are heavy on petrol, would pay more.

A real bonus for the working class will be the strengthening of consultation between airports and air users! But there is no talk of renationalising British Airways.

Instead a Labour government would buy back a controlling interest.

The policy document also states that a Labour government would support International action against the use of shipping flags of convenience; institute tax incentives for scrapping old ships and building new ones in UK shipyards; and create a new state-owned ferry company.

If it's not too late to stop the building, Labour also pledge to set up a public inquiry into Channel tunnel plans.

If a future Labour government did in fact implement all the policy in this document it would indeed mean a fresh direction after all the years of decline.

Socialists are bound to support these reforms.

But with the Labour Party admitting all the way through that their policies depend on enough finance being available, it is unlikely that more will be done than removing the worse Tory excesses — especially since Labour cling to paying out huge compensation to bring companies back into public ownership.

The document ends with the promise that 'Labour will put people first'.

What they never learn is that they have to put the working class first!

# STUDENT MARCH

## 'We won't stand a loan'

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

'EDUCATION for the masses — not the \*\*\*\*\* ruling classes', was the chant that filled the air last Saturday when more than 25,000 angry students marched through London in opposition to Tory plans to destroy student grants and replace them with loans.

The demonstration followed a series of attacks from the education authorities on the National Union of Students.

The high point of these attacks was at Sussex University where the union has been fined £65,000, bankrupted and is having its activists victimised by university administration for organising an occupation in protest about the 'loans' plans.

Carol Thompson from North East London Polytechnic told Workers Press: 'The student loans are oppressive and will turn the education system into an elitist state. We will fight against the loans because the working class, ethnic minorities and women have a right to education.'

Inner London Education Authority leader Frances Morrell, speaking from the platform, said a future Labour government would re-introduce student grants, but Carol said: 'I want to fight now.'

Tess Gill from 'Action For Benefits' concluded: 'The long term aim of the government is to ensure that no student will be able to claim benefit.'

London student Simon Last felt the struggle could not be won while remaining inside the law. 'We'll have to organise illegal marches which contravene with the new Public Order Act — which basically stops us from saying what we like to whom we like.' He said that the NUS leadership was 'talking a lot but not doing anything real'.

### Arrest

A confrontation between demonstrators and NUS officials resulted from an arrest of a demonstrator by the police. A mass sit-down chanted: 'We want Andy back', while the march organisers pleaded: 'Let a solicitor sort it out.' The sit-down soon developed into a confrontation with the police



Police in action during last Saturday's demonstration

who indiscriminately pushed around and arrested whoever they wanted.

The battle the students are waging is a decisive one. The loans system threatens to completely wipe out any chance of young working class people acquiring any academic skills. It is part and parcel of the Tory and Labour Parties' plans to create huge resources of slave labour. There is no guarantee that a Labour government would re-introduce the grant system if elected, and even if it did, it would only be a temporary measure.

NUS President Vicky Phil-

lips does not seem to realise this. At the rally after the march, she said: 'We remind this government that 6.2 million young people who have never voted before will be entitled to do so at the next general election. The government upsets and ignores these new voters at its peril.'

Phillips, along with others in the NUS leadership are prepared to put the future of the education system, won through many years of class struggle, into the hands of Kinnock and Co. who, if elected to power, will continue the Tory policy that is smashing it up.

This political treachery must be answered by all sections of youth, students and workers through strikes and occupations in the schools and the broadest campaign possible to bring together all those forces fighting against the destruction of the education system.

### Support

Students must learn from the experiences of the struggle against the Chirac government in France. The victory of the French students arose from strike leaders

being made accountable to the strikers through regular mass meetings and a turn towards the rest of the workers movement for support. A similar situation is being echoed through the Spanish student movement.

This is absolutely necessary if the Thatcher government and its 'loans' policy is to be defeated. A political struggle against the politics of Phillips and company, must be waged throughout the NUS leadership if the victory of the French students over the Chirac Government is to be complemented with a victory in this country.



Students turned out in tens of thousands to march against 'loans' — despite National Union of Students leaders' lack of enthusiasm for the fight.