

THATCHER'S CHILD VICTIMS

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

ONE DAY OLD Chintu Kumar is the latest victim of Thatcher's drive to break up the National Health Service.

Born with a heart lesion, he was given an 85 per cent chance of survival. He needed an operation, but the shortage of trained nurses meant there was no bed for him in the Birmingham hospital where he was born. He was rushed 100 miles to Liverpool hospital for treatment but died on arrival.

The Liverpool doctors said that he would have lived if his operation had been carried out in Birmingham.

● Five year old Sebastian Fitzpatrick waited two months for his urgently needed heart operation before collapsing and dying at home in his parents' arms. The operation should have been carried out within a week, but the shortage of nurses meant that there was no bed for him.

● This year 24 premature babies have died after being denied intensive care because of shortage of

nurses or equipment, in other words lack of cash. Behind the cuts figures lie thousands upon thousands of stories like these.

Surgeons are having to choose between keeping babies alive who, because of inadequate attention, will survive with severe handicaps, or to condemn them to death by closing beds.

Presidents of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Royal College of Obstetricians last week broke with a centuries-old tradition of dignified silence to plead with Thatcher to provide more resources for the cash starved NHS.

Edwina Currie answered for Thatcher and the ruling class when she said last week on BBC radio:

'I would like to see a growth in the private sector. If people have got the money — and many people have done rather well out of this government — then I would encourage them to seek their health care elsewhere.'

A meeting took place between Tory ministers and the chairs of the 14 English Regional Health Authorities last month. According to reports the chairmen went in prepared to bang the table to get ministers to understand the acuteness of the NHS crisis.

Edwina Currie made it clear that the government was perfectly aware of the size of the problem, that they fully intended to let it get worse, and were preparing to 'ride out the storm'. The chairmen were instructed to avoid dramatic closures of acute hospital services, which tend to cause public outcry. They were told to make the cuts where they 'would not show up so much', by postponing developments such as those for the mentally ill and handicapped.

BBC GAG

THE TORY government's move to ban the BBC from broadcasting a radio series: 'My Country Right or Wrong', is another step in the direction of dictatorial control over the media.

The decision to seek the injunction was taken by the Attorney General, Sir Patrick Maynew.

Rear-Admiral William Higgins, Secretary of the D-notice Committee had previously advised the BBC that there was no danger to national security in this programme.

The terms of the injunction granted by Mr Justice Henry go further than a ban on the radio series. It also forbids any broadcast interviews with security and intelligence officers or any information relating to present or former agents.

Frank Dobson MP said pointed out in the Commons that this means Kim Philby

can appear on Russian television but not on BBC television or radio.

If the BBC is not allowed to mention the names of any former agents, as the injunction would appear to say, we may soon be hearing 'Our Man in Havana', by 'a well known novelist', or watching 'The Moon and Sixpence' by 'another well known novelist'.

But behind the ludicrous postures this government has got into over this and the Wright case, is a deadly serious intent.

Thatcher may shake hands with Gorbachev, but she is still fighting 'the enemy within' — that's us, the working class.

That is why the past role of MI5 is being covered up, to prepare further use of the security services against the labour movement.

And the BBC is being whipped into line to provide this vicious government with an entirely servile media that it wants

French Mandelites back Juquin

THE decision of the LCR, French section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the organisation led by Ernest Mandel, to support Pierre Juquin as presidential candidate in next year's elections, will be the subject of a special article in next week's Workers Press.

Juquin is a former member of the French Communist Party who has broken from Stalinism to the right and is standing on an anti-socialist populist programme.

The LRC is backing Juquin in preference to their own member Alain Krivine. The resolution of the LRC supporting Juquin — carried by 28 votes to 15 — will be reproduced in full as well as unsuccessful amendments moved against the resolution.



Conference on strip searching

Photo: Joanne O'Brien/Format

Workers Press

Summit talks and war preparations

DESPITE all the high-intensity press ballyhoo, the Reagan/Gorbachev discussions had nothing to do with world peace. What took place in Washington was a top level meeting of the leader of world imperialism and the head of the most important of its counter-revolutionary agencies.

The threat of nuclear war could not be reduced by these people, even if they talked for a year. Nothing fundamental is altered by their agreement to cut down the respective missile stocks of the US and the USSR by a small proportion.

For 70 years, ever since the Russian working class first broke the chain of world imperialism, the capitalist leaders — forerunners of Reagan — have continued the fight to destroy the Soviet state. Beaten back in their first attempt by the heroic resistance of the Russian workers and peasants, supported by the international working class, the imperialists have never given up this aim, and never will.

When the Stalinist bureaucracy usurped power from the working class in the 1920s, the counter-revolution heaved a sigh of relief. The anti-internationalist policies of Stalin would at least be working to keep the revolution from spreading, even if they did not destroy it.

In 1933, due to these anti-Bolshevik policies of the bureaucracy, the German working class was defeated, and the way opened for German imperialism to prepare its invasion of the USSR. The Reagans of that time were delighted.

Stalin's answer to this danger was to make counter-revolutionary deals, first with Hitler and then with Churchill, arch enemies of the Russian revolution.

The workers once more beat back the forces of imperialism in 1941-1945, despite the criminal bungling of Stalin and his henchmen. The imperialists at once began the preparation for the third world war, this time with atomic weapons which could devastate the entire globe.

For various reasons, above all because of their ever-deepening economic crisis, the imperialists today would like to reduce their spending on war preparations, whose weight crushes the frail dollar. They see the crisis of the bureaucracy as providing an opportunity for this to take place now.

Gorbachev — Stalin's heir as head of the bureaucracy — must also find a way of lightening the crippling burden of Soviet arms production. At the same time, he must try to head off the movement of Soviet workers and youth, which threatens the existence of the parasitic caste he represents. Increased spending on consumer goods is one way in which Gorbachev hopes to contain the struggle of the working class.

So the Washington Summit was a meeting of the chief enemies of the revolution of October, 1917. Far from being a step towards peace, this was a discussion of ways to preserve the power of imperialism. Apart from arms negotiations, the secret agenda must have included a deal on holding back revolutionary struggles all over the world, above all in South Africa.

But the threat of war arises from the existence of imperialism. Only the completion of the task begun in 1917 can ensure the peace of the world.

To accomplish this means the overthrow of both Reagan and Gorbachev.

NATIONALITY ACT

Threatens rights of black, Asian and Irish people

FROM 31 December 1987 many people will lose their right to register as British citizens even though they have lived here for half a century or were born here.

After that date they will still be able to apply for naturalisation but they will face wide discretionary powers based on consideration of character references, employment data and police records.

They will also have to find at least £170.

At the moment Commonwealth and Republic of Ireland citizens who have lived in Britain since 1 January 1973, or women married to a British citizen before 1 January 1983 and still married to him have a right to register as British citizens — at a cost of £60. That is, if they qualify and pay, they cannot be refused.

That right disappears on 31 December. So what is the significance of not registering for someone in these categories who wishes to continue living here?

No one knows. Those details will appear after the new measures are in force!

Under a Tory government this could well be deporta-

BY BERNARD FRANKS

tion for even minor misdemeanours, refusal of re-entry on leaving the country or repatriation of those without jobs or adequate housing.

The new Immigration Bill, for example, aims to legally restrict the right of spouses and children to join dependents legally settled here and the right of families to be united if proof cannot be shown of adequate accommodation and means of financial support being available without recourse to public funds.

Already Tower Hamlets Liberal council — and shockingly, Camden Labour council — have gone even further along the road of operating a racist repatriation programme.

Many, of course, do not want to register or naturalise as this may lead to loss of citizenship of their country of origin. Trinidad, India and Malaysia, for example do not allow dual nationality.

Many in the immigrant community are rightfully angry that their residence here and the massive contribution they have made to life and work in Britain are not sufficient to automatically confer guaranteed equivalent rights in all respects without requiring formal citizenship.

They consider they have done enough to qualify for equal rights with anyone. However, the Action Group on Immigration and Nationality, in its 'Guide to the British Nationality Act 1981' (the legislation which laid down the 1987 deadline) warns that even birth in Britain is no longer in itself enough to confer citizenship.

Citizen

True, any person born in the UK at any time up to midnight on 31 December 1982 is a British citizen automatically, whatever the nationality of their parents and whether they were here legally or not. But:

'A child born here from 1 January 1983 onwards is a British citizen only if it has one parent, at least, who is a British citizen or 'settled' under the definition given in Section 50 of the Act'.

will on the Republican people,' she said.

'Since 1969, the British have been using torture, various means of social control 24-hour a day surveillance, electronic eavesdropping, biased judges, plastic bullets used to kill children; secret undercover SAS groups roam the Six Counties — the Nationalist communities cannot even bury their dead without interference.'

She went on: 'Strip searching is an extra punishment, for it is telling the prisoner 'We can violate you at will — we are the master'. Strip searching is terror and its advocates are terrorists. In England its targets are anyone who poses a threat to the state.'

'Political oppression is a way of life in Ireland and is becoming a way of life in Britain,' Isobel Anderson added.

Her message was underlined by the next speaker, Janet Clarke, a member of the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign. She recounted the abuse suffered by young black men and women arrested in North London in the aftermath of the uprising in 1985.

Majella Crehan of the London Anti-Strip Search Campaign outlined the political situation that accompanied the introduction of strip searching of women in Armagh jail in the North of Ireland. The hunger strikes of 1981, in which 10 men died, had led to new levels of activity among women and a new cohesiveness in the community.

Strategies such as the supergrass, paid informers policy were introduced to deliberately create a climate of suspicion and to break trust among the nationalist community and strip searching was introduced as a calculated attempt to intimidate and destroy the women in custody and to act as a warning to women outside against being politically outspoken. Campaigns against the

CORRECTION

In Workers Press no. 103, 5 December 1987 in the article 'Stop strip searches' it was stated that Martina Anderson and Ella Dwyer are on remand in Brixton prison. This is not the case. They were both given life sentences in May, 1986 and are presently in Durham prison. Martina and Ella were on remand in Brixton prison from July, 1985 until their trial.

For example, an 'illegitimate' child can only take its citizenship from its mother's side, but if she is not a British citizen or 'settled' the child does not qualify. In this respect: 'A child born in the UK in or after 1983 who is not a British citizen will be subject to immigration control and deportable'.

Those considering whether to register or not should contact their community groups or 'Rights' offices for help in negotiating the minefield that is the new legislation. For initial advice telephone the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants — 01 (outside London) 251 8706.

Application forms for registration are obtainable from: Lunar House, Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 2BY. Telephone 01 686 3441.

One thing is certain, thousands of people will not be registering, because they cannot afford the £60 or because they do not want to give up their present nationality. On this basis the labour movement and community organisations must be ready to defend the rights of ethnic minorities against the racist and sexist onslaught that is clearly being prepared.

policy, she said, did not take off in Britain until Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer's experience in Brixton prison became known.

'Their treatment was so alarming that a new group, the Irish Prisoner's Appeal, was formed to take up the special case of these two unconvicted women and to draw attention to the undeniable torture these women were suffering here in Britain,' added Majella Crehan.

'The fact that there was no mass public outcry against the treatment of Irish Republican women gave the state the confidence to extend strip searching here in Britain so that it became the weapon to be used on women who openly threatened the state.'

She declared, 'What must be recognised is that once again Ireland has been used as a testing ground for ensuring the British state's ability to control its population.'

Brieger Brownlee, a former Armagh prisoner reminded delegates that before the jail was closed a total of four thousand strip searches had been inflicted on a population never higher than 34. Remand prisoners were its main victims; but a woman who had been to hospital for treatment after miscarriage was strip-searched on her return, as was a woman who had just given birth.

The morning session was chaired by Anne Matthews, leader of Southwark Council, while Linda Bellos of Lambeth Council chaired during the afternoon. Mary Grampsie, leader of Hackney Council Women's Group proposed the final resolution.

Full reports of afternoon workshops which discussed various aspects of the campaign against strip searching will be available for all interested parties who will be sent details of the day's proceedings in preparation for the inaugural meeting of the campaign committee planned for Saturday 20 February 1988.

End strip-searching demand

A CONFERENCE in London last weekend unanimously demanded an immediate end to the practice of strip searching.

It warned that this 'degrading and humiliating technique which has been systematically used against Irish Republican women' is being increasingly employed against political activists, black women and youth, lesbians and gay men, at customs, in police custody, in prisons, inside military establishments and even in the street.

Organised by the London Strategic Policy Unit and the Association of London Authorities, the conference in Lambeth Town Hall, agreed that a campaign committee be set up to take forward the fight against strip searching and to organise a national demonstration.

'There is no security justification whatsoever for strip searching, whether it be one strip search, or several hundred', was the unanimous message from nearly 200 delegates representing local government trade unions, women's, black, Irish and Asian groups, peace campaigners, and health service workers.

Messages of support were read from Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer in Durham prison, two republican women who between them were subjected to 800 stripping violations during 11 months on remand in

BY SARAH HANNIGAN

Brixton jail and are still regularly subjected to degradation at the hands of their jailers and from Martina Shanahan on remand in Risley, Cheshire, who is being kept in isolation and strip searched after court hearings. She was arrested near Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King's home in Wiltshire in August.

Isobel Anderson thanked delegates on behalf of herself and Derry Sinn Fein councillor Bodie McGuinness for the invitation to participate. She told the conference that strip searching was introduced in 1982 as a direct response to the willingness of Irish Republican Women to join the fight against imperialism.

'Strip searching was a conscious decision by the British government to impose its

John MacLean remembered

JOHN MACLEAN'S stand against imperialist war and in support of the Russian revolution was recalled by Brotherstone.

Working class leaders today had to be 'accusers of capitalism' as Maclean was, or step aside. His support for the Russian revolution was a living, not an academic, issue.

Brotherstone, a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party, argued against those who said MacLean had either turned to Scottish nationalism, or renounced his communist beliefs in the 1920s.

He should be seen as 'someone whose commitment to Marxism remained intransigent; who was trying to work out how Marxism could be developed in the working class — although he had become cut off from the place where the problem could be discussed on an international scale — the Communist International'.

Deranged

The books of Willie Galacher and Tom Bell, who had been in the shop stewards' movement on the 'Red Clyde', and later became servants of Stalin presented a 'distorted and mechanical' picture; they made the slanderous accusation that Maclean had become mentally deranged.

Historian, Iain Maclean, had repeated this, and G.D.H. Cole had simply written him out of history.

Maclean's decision not to attempt to get acquitted in his 1918 trial, and the fact that he drew attention to his persecution in Barlinnie prison was not because he was paranoid, but because he 'saw his own sacrifice as a means to explain to the working class that Marxists are a different kind of leadership, who will fight to the end to show workers the nature of the state and the struggle against it.'

Lenin

The most important speech of his life had been from the dock 'accusing capitalism of dripping with blood from head to foot'.

Maclean was made an honorary president of the Communist International by Lenin, but never took part in its work. Instead of joining the British Communist Party he set up a Scottish Communist Party.

It is likely that Maclean shared the view of his close collaborator, James Macdougall, who regarded the foundation of the Comintern as 'premature' and regarded 'getting close to the working class' as more important than international questions.

Attention

No doubt his contempt for some leading members of the newly-formed CP also played a part.

But exaggerating Maclean's 'nationalism' was another way that historians tried to dismiss his struggle for Marxist internationalism. His attention to Scottish questions arose from his concern to take the working class forward.

In discussion, Donald Anderson of the Scottish Republican Socialist Party said Scotland suffered national as well as class oppression — a

fact ignored by 'British chauvinists' on the left.

Allan Armstrong, EIS, claimed that Maclean was the only socialist outside Ireland to understand the 1916 uprising; Lenin had been 'shocked' by the rising and from then on had believed that nationalist movements were 'catalysts' to socialist revolution.

Simon Pirani, WRP, disagreed — Lenin and Trotsky stood for 'self-determination of nations' as part of the international socialist revolution. Maclean had envisaged a 'Scottish workers' republic'. This was divided by a chasm from the reformist calls for a 'Scottish Assembly'.

SIMON PIRANI reports the John Maclean Annual Memorial Lecture held in Glasgow and organised by the Lanarkshire Association of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) with the support of Nan Milton, Maclean's daughter, and the John MacLean Society — 90 trade unionists and socialists attended to hear Terry Brotherstone, Aberdeen university lecturer.

Derek Owen, Revolutionary Communist Party, said anything dividing Scottish and English workers was dangerous.

A worker who had been active on the 'Red Clydeside' called for the renewal of Maclean's struggle to explain Marxist economics to the working class. Another said that no progress could be made until workers were 'educated on class lines'.

Nan Milton said that the annual memorial lectures had 'rescued John Maclean from oblivion. His opposition to the war had made him well-known to English workers but he had been convinced that Scottish workers were more advanced.

ACCUSER of CAPITALISM

John Maclean's

Speech from the dock, May 9th 1918

Edited, with a new introduction by Terry Brotherstone

Price 75p

ISBN: 0 86151 073 9

New Park Publications Ltd, 10-12 Atlantic Road, London SW9 8HY. Tel: 01-274 8342

Also distributed by:

Hope Street Book Centre, 321 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 3PT. Tel: 041-332 8881

The capitalist heavyweights battle it out

BY CYRIL SMITH

WHILE CONGRESS gives a poor imitation of some politicians reducing the US budget deficit, world capitalism's economic experts anxiously scrutinise the entrails of goats to decide whether the slump is on the way.

The dollar continues its downward path, so that even their best friends begin to murmur that the Americans don't seem to care. The European central banks put their fingers in the leaky dyke, as their US ally looks on, making vaguely encouraging noises.

Nobody talks any more about the long-delayed G7 meeting of the Finance Ministers of the seven main imperialist powers. What would it have to talk about anyway?

Trotsky explained over 50 years ago that the conflict between Europe and America was central to the development of world imperialism in its epoch of decay. At that time Wall Street was in the process of taking over the leadership of the financial system from the City of London.

The strength of the dollar was the vital prop for the reconstruction of Europe then, as it was after 1945. When the financial crisis hit Wall Street in 1929, this support was abruptly withdrawn, and European economy was left in mid-air. In particular, German industry collapsed, with effects which are only too well-known.

But the crash of 1987 — more precisely, the crash of 1987-1988 — has far deeper significance. For the entire structure of world finance, more completely integrated as a global system than ever before, was already airborne before October 19.

The US budget deficit and the US trade deficit were two major sources of this amazing feat of levitation. But they were

only a part of it. Many private institutions — transnational corporations, banks, Middle Eastern oil magnates and others — were also engaged in littering the globe with masses of paper bearing promises to repay huge sums of money one day.

The stock market crash was a signal of the collapse of this paper balloon filled with fiction. Like the US bonds which make up a large part of the wealth of Japanese and other capitalists, these promises to pay were only fairy-stories for financiers.

So long as nobody questioned the existence of fairies, these bits of paper behaved like wealth, and formed the 'foundation' for the pseudo-prosperity of the 1980s. All the craziness of this epoch of billionaires and mass starvation rested on this flimsy structure.

What happens next? This can't be answered with precision, if only because the way the slump develops will depend on the outcome of hand-to-hand conflicts between powerful chunks of capital.

In the 1870s, Karl Marx considered — but only as a hypothesis — a situation not unlike that of the late 1980s.

'It is evident, however, that this actual depreciation of the old capital could not occur without a struggle... So long as things go well, competition affects an operating fraternity of the capitalist class... so that each shares in the common loot in proportion to the size of his respective investment.'

'But as soon as it is no longer a question of sharing profits, but of sharing losses, everyone tries to reduce his own share to a minimum and to shove it off upon another... How much the individual capitalist must bear of the loss... is decided by strength and cunning, and competition then becomes a fight among hostile brothers.' (Capital, Volume III)

The important question for us today, as the capitalist heavyweights slug it out, is how the working class is to understand this fight, and prepare to bring it to an end by putting all the contestants out of their misery.

We're fighting Thatcher not the Post Office

BY A GLASGOW POSTAL WORKER

take the monopoly away. But one 24-hour strike in Glasgow panicked the management: they were worried they would be left with millions of Christmas letters.

The union leadership at no time contacted our sister union in British Telecom and during the BT dispute they did not approach us.

Thirdly, we know from unofficial strikes at Leeds and elsewhere that it is extremely hard to stop casual workers crossing the picket lines. The union itself instructed Glasgow drivers' pickets to collect 'black' mail when management had threatened them with suspension.

The roots of the present leadership conflict is their acceptance of the Improved Working Methods (IWM) scheme four years ago.

The majority of the union is bitterly opposed IWM but Alan Tuffin, UCW leader, accepted it without even consulting the union's executive. Now we are paying the price.

The Post Office acted in the same way as British industry — introducing new technology, not to improve the job, but to sack some workers and make conditions worse for the rest.

Mechanised Letter Offices (MLOs) revolutionised letter-sorting — and heralded IWM, a pay-and-productivity deal under which workers sell a certain number of their working hours back to the management, receiving bonus for working during previously slack periods, rather than getting overtime. Reorganisation under IWM meant destroying jobs — and when we accepted it we knew that, because of the situation the union had placed us in, we were preventing the creation of new jobs.

IWM also meant bonuses which divided the workforce much the same as the productivity deal in the pits in the mid-70s. Even men on

the highest bonuses (my office has one of the highest in Britain) are the most outspoken opponents of IWM.

Once that agreement was through, the Post Office made one assault after another on working conditions. The most important of these was casualisation — the creation of a pool of part-time labour, taken off the dole and used when the Post Office needs them. This meant virtually the end of the recruitment and training of skilled postmen; the beginning of the end of the sort of postman who regards himself as a responsible servant of the community. In general it meant a deterioration of the services.

It meant lower wages for casual workers — they do overtime for the flat hourly rate, for example. Under the agreement the union does not accept them into any category of union membership.

This is the background to the present dispute — and clear proof of the need for revolutionary leadership to be built in the unions.

MARCH BAN DEFIED

REPORT BY PETER MONEY

THE Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC) successfully defied the ban against marches in Manchester imposed by police chief Anderton, Manchester City Council and the Home Office.

Every Friday evening the VMDC marches from the centre of Manchester to the Church of the Ascension in Hulme where Viraj Mandis has been in sanctuary since December 1985 resisting Home Office attempts to deport him to Sri Lanka.

Weekly marches have been taking place since Douglas Hurd said he would review his decision not to break Mendis' sanctuary.

Support for the marches has been growing; now there is increased police harassment. This has been particularly marked since October when the VMDC joined the Justice for Steven Shaw march against police opposition.

The march on 27 November was declared illegal when Anderton ruled that it was covered by a 9-day ban on marches in Manchester and Salford imposed to try to stop the annual Manchester Martyrs commemoration.

The City Council had agreed to the police request for a Martyrs march ban, but asked for it to be lifted for the VMDC march. The Home Office refused.

Despite this attempted intimidation the VMDC march was the target and most determined yet.

Amongst those on the march was the 6389 Branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Greater Manchester and Cheshire Social Action Branch (voluntary section workers) MSC

and unemployed workers. Prominent on the march were the Women and Ireland Group, Gays and Lesbians, anarchist organisations and the Justice for Steven Shaw Campaign.

The marchers had not got very far when they were called upon to disperse by police with loudhailers. A solid line of police, backed up by contingents of foot and mounted police in the side roads with a string of police wagons stopped the march.

Marchers linked arms and awaited instructions from their stewards; a police photographer took mug-shots of everyone on the march.

Stewards

Police refused to agree to the stewards' request that everyone should leave together to avoid individual arrests. The march stood firm.

Half-an-hour elapsed and the police announced they would allow the march to continue to a nearby site for a rally — no-one would be arrested.

The stewards agreed, the march proceeded and the rally was held.

The VMDC, like the miners before them, have shown that the ruling class may be able to pass repressive laws like the Public Order Act but the working class will not surrender their democratic rights without a fight.

Arrests at anti-fascist protest

FOUR Viraj Mendis Defence Committee (VMDC) members face serious police charges after being arrested at an anti-facist protest in Glasgow.

The Scottish Asian and anti-racist groups organised the march and rally in conjunction with Glasgow Trades Council against the annual British National Party (BNP) rally in the city.

About 100 marchers went on to picket the hotel where the fascists had booked their meeting.

It appears that the BNP were alerted by the police and did not enter while the picket was taking place.

The 30 police protecting their meeting were joined by a chief inspector and the 4 committee members were arrested soon after.

They were held for between eight and ten hours; three were charged with obstruction and resisting arrest; the fourth, who was arrested only when he protested at the treatment of the others, was charged with assaulting 3 police officers.

This charge carries a maximum sentence of 18 months or a £4,000 fine.

One girl was bruised as she was thrown into the police van. The police station where the four were being held was picketed and besieged with 150 telephone calls from supporters, including MPs.

The VMDC are planning a campaign to force the police to drop the charges.

Maskey arrested at Heathrow

ALEX MASKEY, Belfast Sinn Fein councillor, was arrested last week under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

BY CHARLIE WALSH

The Tories, like the Labour government before them, are using the PTA in an attempt to stop political discussion on Ireland and to intimidate the Republican movement.

Maskey, along with other Sinn Fein councillors, has spoken at meetings in Britain organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI) and the Troops Out Movement. He was due to address a Hackney Council Labour Group in November. This was cancelled after the Enniskillen bombing.

But on this occasion Maskey was at Heathrow airport on route to Belfast after a short period of convalescence in Jersey.

He is still under medical supervision for serious injuries received in a murder attempt by Loyalists in May.

Maskey's arrest is part of the orchestrated witch-hunt launched against the Republican movement by the British and Irish Governments in the aftermath of the Enniskillen bombing.

Since the Labour Government introduced the PTA in 1974, it has been used to arrest, harass, and intimidate thousands of Irish people going to and from Ireland and silence those who speak out against British occupation.

Maskey's arrest could cost him his seat on Belfast City Council. A councillor who does not attend meetings for three months is automatic-

ly debarred. Because of his injuries he has been unable to take part in political activity since May.

The City Council meeting was abandoned last Tuesday after attempts, including physical violence, by Unionists to stop Sinn Fein councillors taking their seats. It ended in disagreement among the Unionists themselves.

He told 'Republican News' that, before being issued with the exclusion order, his interrogators introduced him to 'two senior Scotland yard officers' who offered him substantial sums of money to provide information.

He said: 'They made big play about my record and about "my life expectancy not being that long" and they said they could set up a very large pension fund for my family.'

Maskey refused to talk to them and within an hour was issued with the exclusion order.

Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Fein and MP for West Belfast, said that Maskey's detention was part of Britain's anti-democratic attempt to debar him as a Councillor; that it was a further example of the racist and political use of the PTA and an attempt to disenfranchise nationalist voters.

Opposition to the PTA must be highlighted as part of the Irish solidarity struggle in Britain.

ALTON UNDER ATTACK

BY JOHN OWEN

DAVID ALTON, Liberal MP for Mossley Mill, Merseyside, was faced by 100 pickets at his leafy mansion last Saturday. Led by two branches of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO), the pickets were protesting at Alton's crusade to get a Bill through parliament to reduce from 26 to 18 weeks the time for having an abortion.

When Alton sneaked out to his local constituency 'surgery' a march was promptly organised to take the picket there.

A cordon of police soon appeared to prevent the march from reaching Alton and following a few scuffles, the marchers learned that Alton had sped away with a police escort.

The marchers pledged to continue their campaign in defence of a woman's right to choose abortion which is under attack from the Alton reactionary Bill.

Journalists 'Kicked in Teeth'

FOURTEEN journalists from the 'Advertiser North London Group' (ANLG), based at Finchley are on official and indefinite strike following the redundancies of six NUJ members on 2 November.

BY LEO FINLAY

The management gave the journalists two hours to leave the building, bringing in security guards and changing the locks.

They claimed that the reason for the redundancies were on economic grounds, which the chapel feel to be nonsense as the ANLG, comprising seven weekly papers, is highly profitable.

The journalists selected for redundancy have been chosen in the form of a witch-hunt for their union activities both past and present.

A new editor, Jeffrey Steedon, joined the ANLG in July and attempted to make drastic changes to the editorial of the papers and to the working conditions of the journalists, all without proper consultation with the Union.

The chapel were forced into a week-long mandatory meeting when the editor went back on his word to negotiate a new expenses arrangement.

Steedon decided that he would replace much of the good local community news with syndicated features such as Cyril Fletcher's gardening page, Miriam Stoppard's health matters etc.

The journalists who fought for the standards of their own paper were kicked in the teeth in the most callous manner.

The other eight journalists who showed their support were sacked on 23 November.

The ANLG has already received much support from other unions and MPs Ken Livingstone and Bernie Grant, who have both been present on the picket line.

A march, meeting at Woodside Park tube station at 11 a.m., takes place this Saturday 12 December. It will pass Mrs Thatcher's constituency office in Balldards Lane, Finchley.



John Murphy, Assistant Managing Director of AWLG (right) threatening Howard Hannah, sacked News Editor of The Advertiser

HOW LONG BEFORE HUMANS JOIN DINOSAURS?

SCIENTISTS have been puzzling over the sudden appearance in 1979 of a hole the size of the United States of America in the ozone layer over Antarctica.

The ozone layer is a miles deep layer of gas which protects the earth (and us) from the major effects of solar radiation.

Recent evidence has confirmed a suspicion long held by those investigating the phenomenon.

Samples of air taken from planes flying through the gigantic hole confirm an increase of chlorine monoxide which directly causes the drop in concentration of ozone.

Chlorine monoxide appears when chemicals called Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) which are released from spray cans, air conditioning units and industrial processes rise into the stratosphere, 15 to 20 kilometres above the earth, and are broken down by sunlight into forms of chlorine, which destroy stratospheric ozone.

Despite the confirmation that chlorofluorocarbons are solely and directly implicated in the breakdown of the ozone layer, Western governments have refused to put any restrictions on the sale of aerosols or the other processes which produce the chemicals.

The justification used so far has been that there is no direct proof implicating the

CFCs. The real problem is of course the profits of the multinational companies manufacturing these products.

The chasm in the ozone layer widens dramatically every Antarctic spring. The loss of this protective envelope of gas means that more solar ultraviolet radiation will penetrate to the earth, increasing rapidly the rate of skin cancer in humans. It also appears that this is the least of our worries.

The sudden appearance of the gap in 1979 means that atmospheric scientists are becoming increasingly concerned that the atmosphere may respond in a 'nonlinear' fashion to the accumulating effects of human activities. That is that the steady build up of a form of pollution may proceed for

decades without producing a noticeable change in the environment, before triggering a dramatic regional or global change as some critical point is reached. This will hopefully make the British politicians cheerfully pouring millions of gallons of filth into the North Sea sit up and take notice.

Because ozone absorbs incoming solar ultraviolet radiation, it warms the stratosphere. With less ozone the radiation passes through to lower altitudes, and the stratosphere cools. A feedback system could be set up which would switch the whole climate of the Southern hemisphere into a new state which is far colder than today.

How long is it before we humans join the dinosaurs in a cataclysmic extinction?

Danger—MSC at work!

Stockport viaduct railworkers interviewed

STOCKPORT Job Centre is advertising jobs refurbishing the viaduct — work traditionally carried out by members of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR).

The local paper, 'Stockport Express', has refused to publish a protest letter from angry railwaymen and continues to publish the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) scheme advertisement.

Not long ago eight members of the NUR were sacked for daring to publicly criticise British Railways. Workers Press is therefore printing this interview without identifying those interviewed.

* * *

Workers Press: What is the background to this dispute?

Railworker: When it was first reported that Stockport viaduct was to be refurbished the local paper was full of stories about 'The Blackpool Tower of Stockport'. This is a big job — sand-blasting, cleaning, cutting out the bad bricks and replacing them. So we asked whether it was to be contracted out and were told that it was our job over a 10-year period.

By January this year we had completed the first three arches and told the supervisor that the scaffolding could be removed.

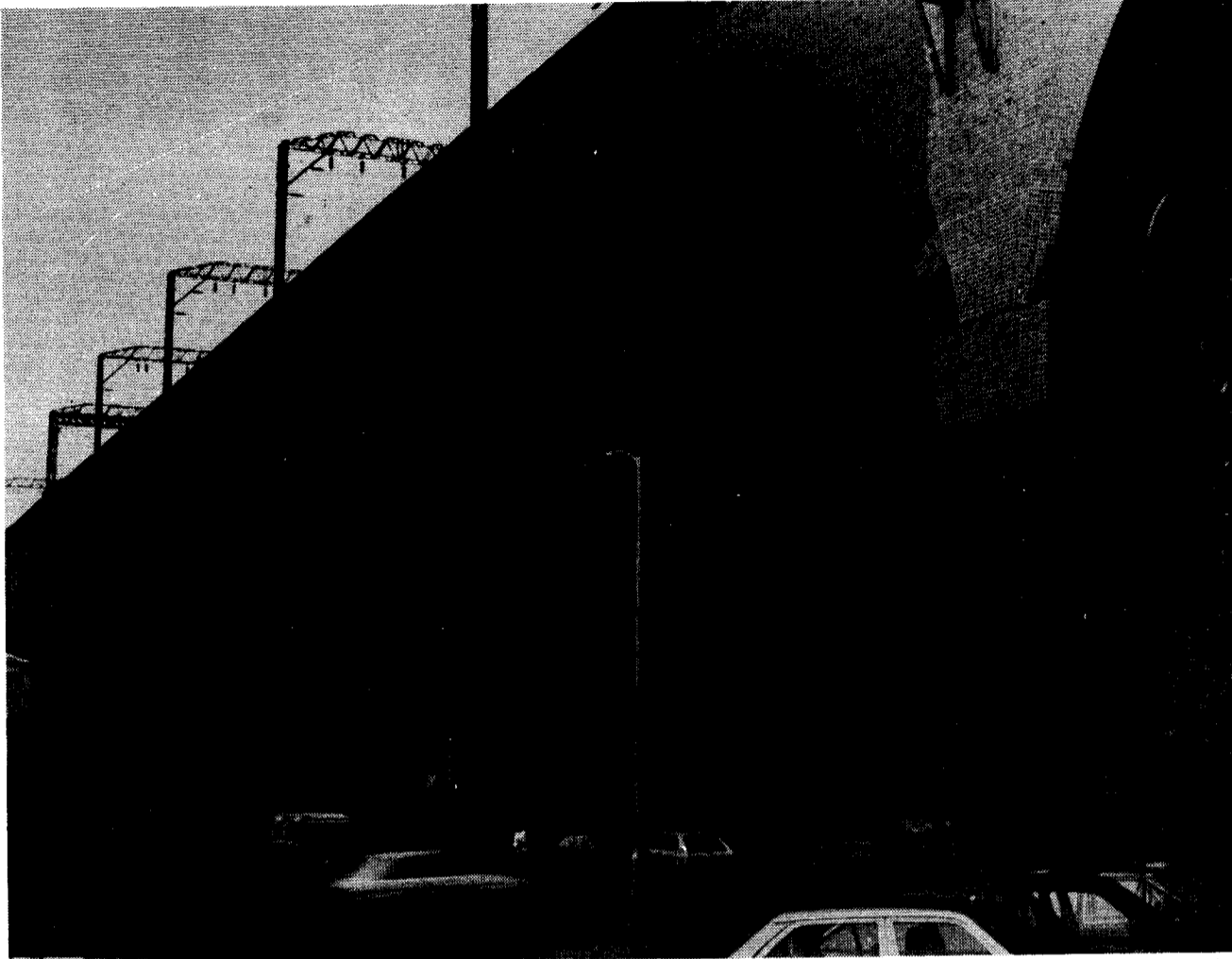
The following night he told us that we would not be doing the remaining arches. A feasibility study was being carried out by the MSC. They were proposing to take over the cleaning and sand-blasting — we would do the brickwork.

That night we read in the 'Evening News' that J. Jarvis and Sons, Contractor, would be doing the whole job including the brickwork, using MSC labour.

You can imagine that we were furious — the supervisor had told us a bare-faced lie. He knew all along that all the work was being contracted out to be done by unskilled MSC youth.

Brickwork is a specialised job. When 'Joe' started on the railways he had already served his time and had been bricklaying for 25 years; even so he hadn't a clue about how British Rail carried out their maintenance work. But he was fortunate — he was taught by two good fellows — and he now knows the job.

That was why he was sent



to work on the viaduct initially. He can do it. That is why we are certain that Jarvis is going to take on cheap labour scheme workers to do the cleaning and sand-blasting, but use his own bricklayers to do the skilled work.

But the viaduct work needs special expertise. 'Joe' has been trained by British Rail for this, and ordinary bricklayers do not have this skill. In any case the work is traditionally for members of the NUR.

Workers Press: How do the adverts describe the job and have the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) and the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) agreed the MSC scheme? Is it the local branches or the national unions?

Railworker: The adverts state: 'MSC work sponsored by Jarvis'. The National Executive Council (NEC) of the NUR has received no correspondence from the T&GWU or UCATT. But locally we have heard that a UCATT member employed by Jarvis has been put forward as union representative on the scheme.

The NEC has written to British Rail expressing our dissatisfaction. The reply was that there had been a feasibility study and the job would not get off the ground because the cost was so great. British Rail would not involve themselves in that sort of expenditure for a cosmetic job. The money would have to come from outside the industry.

Obviously things have been moving in the local press — money has been coming in. We have found that British Rail is putting £250,000 towards the scheme.

Workers Press: Has there been a run-down over the years of maintenance staff?

Railworker: Fifteen years ago the local maintenance workforce was 35. Now we are down to 20. This also includes the merging of another depot, so, in fact, 15 years ago there were 45 doing this work.

Workers Press: What are you calling on the union's NEC to do?

Railworker: They should be writing to the T&GWU and UCATT stating that the NUR is not in favour of the scheme going ahead and they are not

in favour of it going ahead. They should call upon both these unions to withdraw until a scheme has been hammered out acceptable to us.

But our NEC member was told they will not be writing to the other unions, only to British Rail. What effect that will have I do not know!

The whole understanding should be that if one union objects, the scheme comes to a stop. We have made that objection and so the scheme should be brought to a stop. But they lay the criteria down.

Thatcher put down the criteria didn't she?

The main union involved, the NUR, has not been involved in the negotiations. The local MSC panel should not be able to go ahead unless the local NUR branch is happy with the scheme. We are not — so they should withdraw.

We are concerned that MSC workers are to be used to do the dirty work — the drainage work and the landscaping — but we are even more concerned that the actual brickwork is to be done by Jarvis's own men. He's going to make a profit out of the work which is traditionally ours.

We have costed it on the basis of 10 men over 10 years — average wage £10,000 (that's going up to the top). That is £100,000 a year. The MSC is going to spend £4.5 million in two years.

What worries us is that the same contractor is going to do the remedial work on the Ribble-head viaduct, on the Settle-Carlisle line.

British Rail said the line was going to close; they said it would cost £3 million to repair the viaduct and they would not do the work because the line didn't create the necessary revenue to keep it open.

Now we find that J. Jarvis and Sons is doing a feasibility study on that viaduct and he's virtually got the job. This will probably involve MSC workers on a major construction project. There is no way that unskilled MSC people could do that kind of work.

We call on all T&GWU and UCATT members to pass and support resolutions for their unions to back the NUR and insist that they withdraw from these schemes.

At the consultation meeting two official pieces of paper were thrown across to the NUR representatives — they

were headed and signed. On the UCATT one were the rates of pay agreed by that union — £80 maximum and £60 minimum.

Workers Press: Are these the figures advertised in the Job Centre?

Railworker: There are no figures up in the Job Centre. The adverts just tell applicants about the scheme and who is sponsoring it — and that's it.

Workers Press: What support have you got locally against the MSC scheme, other than that from the Stockport Trades Council?

Railworker: The local ward of the constituency Labour Party has passed a resolution of support. The NUR branch secretary has written to Councillor Alan Mabbs, the leader of the Labour group on Stockport Council. He has not replied, but we understand that the local ward of the Labour Party he represents has passed a resolution condemning the scheme along the same lines as the Trades Council. We have also been considering producing a leaflet.

Workers Press: New ground is being broken here isn't it, where traditional NUR work is being done on MSC schemes?

Railworker: When MSC schemes first came in they were used for cleaning canals and constructing adventure parks for the general good of the community. The important feature of this scheme is that the MSC has taken over a job that NUR workers were doing.

We were involved in a scheme which was remedial work on those arches. It was necessary remedial work or we would not have been doing it. Money was there for it to be done, but then British Rail saw an easy way out by getting somebody else to pay for additional work to be done which is being called 'cosmetic'.

There was a basic gang of four or five railworkers. If somebody went to the depot and was short of work, they were put onto the viaduct work. At the week-end there would be ten workers on the viaduct, and the work was arranged so that we were only dealing with so many arches at any one time over a period of ten years.

Workers Press: When did the work start?

Railworker: In January 1986. In fact now we have done the two 'rigs' that they can't get at.

What we are scared of is that say, something comes in the local paper: 'Stockport station needs refurbishing'. Such work is usually done by our department. Now J. Jarvis and Sons will pick up the evening paper and say to themselves: 'We'll contact British Rail and the MSC'.

Here we go again — there's our work gone again. It's going to 'snowball' if we are not careful.

Broad Left: no alternative for engineers

A SPECIAL meeting of the engineering union (AEU) rules revision working party is now considering a proposal from the right wing led executive to reduce the number of EC divisions in the Engineering section from seven to six.

EC Division 2 has been without representation since Gerry Russel's death in June and an election has been refused by the EC. The right wing has no effective candidate for the division.

It was against this charge of gerrymandering that the broad left organised around the 'Engineering Gazette' met last

Sunday.

James Airlie, AEU executive member and leading figure in the Communist Party of Great Britain, was in the chair. He outlined the right wing's plans to maintain control of the union and called for a campaign for democracy and decency. People called for a lobby of the rules revision meeting and of the delegates prior to the meeting.

The widespread opposition to the changes was clear at the meeting but despite the vehemence of the speeches it was clear that this was a 'day out' for the broad left

leaders. A Birmingham member tried to move a resolution calling for regular meetings of the left and an elected body to lead a fight against the right wing.

Airlie immediately told her to save her breath: he was not taking resolutions. Two other speakers echoed her call but while people talked about the left needing a programme to fight on, no one could actually spell out what this should be — other than defending democracy.

Union democracy is necessary to fight for jobs and conditions — embarrassing matters for Airlie, who helped the EC end the Caterpillar sit-in and supported the Ford one-union deal in Dundee.

Speakers pointed out that no meeting of the national broad left had been called for 18

months. The many battles of AEU members had been ignored.

Airlie spent much of his time attacking those officials in the union who have demanded an investigation into all aspects of the unions financial crisis so that its source can be uncovered.

● For an official inquiry into the union's financial crisis.

● Reorganisations to be carried out in consultation with the membership.

● For the removal of an executive that is turning a once powerful engineers' union into a pro-management anti-strike body.

● For the mobilisation of the membership to defend all those in struggle such as the Senior Colman and Keetons strikers — who did not get a look in at the meeting).

BY BOB MYERS

LONDON ARAB'S MURDER

Family seeks 'Mossad agent'

RELATIVES of an alleged Israeli agent, whose name has been linked with the murder in London of Palestinian cartoonist Ali Naji Awad al-Adhami, have said they want to find him, and persuade him to 'come clean'.

Al-Adhami, who worked on the Arab newspaper 'Al Qabas', was shot in west London last Summer, dying later in hospital. There were widespread claims in the capitalist media that he had been targeted by PLO 'hitmen' for a cartoon supposedly critical of Yasser Arafat.

The PLO denied this strenuously. There were also suggestions that some Arab regimes might have resented Al-Adhami's work, or that the Iranian secret service might have ordered the assassination.

What has since come out is that police hunting for Al-Adhami's killer found the name of **Bashar Samara** in the room of a suspect who disappeared.

Samara, a member of the Druse community, from the village of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, was arrested, then deported to Israel.

According to a report in the 'Mail on Sunday' recently, Samara was a top agent of the Israeli secret service, Mossad, who had infiltrated Palestinian circles in Britain.

Now Samara has disappeared from his home village, and his worried family say they are seeking him, to persuade him to 'come clean' about his activity in England.

A second cousin said: 'if he is completely innocent, we will stand by him all the way. If he had a hand in the murder . . . he will be ostracised.'

Vanunu court calls Peres

ISRAELI Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is being subpoenaed to appear as a witness in the trial of nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, charged with treason and espionage for revealing the extent of Israeli nuclear weapons.

Vanunu's lawyer Avigdor Feldman succeeded in getting the Jerusalem court to call Peres, who was Prime Minister when Vanunu was kidnapped last year by Israeli agents, and brought back to face charges.

The three judges in the Jerusalem District Court also agreed to subpoena former Foreign Minister Abba Eban, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign and Defence committee and of its secret services sub-committee.

Knesset speaker Shlomo Hillel would have to serve the subpoenas. It is possible Peres will claim parliamentary immunity.

Vanunu, a former technician at the Dimona nuclear reactor, came to Britain in 1986 to tell the 'Sunday Times' about the extent of the nuclear weapons developed and stockpiled by Israel. He disappeared before the article was published.

Travel

A woman working for Mossad is said to have persuaded him to travel to Rome with her, where he was then overpowered by a Mossad kidnap team, drugged, and taken on a boat for Israel.

Legal sources in Jerusalem said Peres would most probably be questioned ab-

out the way Vanunu was brought back. As Prime Minister, he was also head of the secret services at the time, and would have ordered the operation.

Minister

Co-incidentally, however, it was Peres who as Defence Minister in the Israeli Labour governments of the late 1950s began the close military co-operation with France out of which the Dimona nuclear development came. He has long been regarded as leading promoter of the nuclear weapon policy.

In recent years, Israel's nuclear weapon capacity, officially denied but one of the worst-kept secrets, has involved collaboration with the racist South African regime for raw materials and test facilities. Pretoria presumably received help in return with its own weaponry.

Frank Barnaby, a former Aldermaston nuclear scientist and head of the Stockholm Peace Research Institute, testified in Vanunu's defence last week. He said Vanunu's exposures had greatly helped efforts to halt

Fascist's feet didn't touch ground! W Indian workers chase out Le Pen

FRENCH National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen was flown back to Paris last Monday, in a sorry state, after trying to lead a delegation of fellow far-right Euro-MPs to the French West Indies.

The fascist leader, an ex-paratrooper and torturer of Algerian freedom fighters, was scared to even get off his plane when it landed at Guadeloupe, because angry demonstrators were waiting to protest his visit.

In Martinique, workers at the Hotel Meridien had heard who was coming and walked out on strike saying they would not serve the fascist. As Le Pen's Air France jumbo approached the island's Fort de France airport, 3,500 demonstrators were waiting. They overwhelmed police and invaded the runway.

After circling five times, while the frustrated fascist cursed his enemies, the pilot

decided to make for Guadeloupe instead. Meanwhile some of the 400-odd holidaymakers on board had invaded the Club Class section and were giving Le Pen a piece of their mind.

Another demonstration, at least 1,000-strong, was waiting at the airport on Guade-

loupe when the plane touched down. On board the plane, angry holidaymakers began chanting 'Le Pen Out!' While stewards and Le Pen's bodyguards held them back, the fascist refused to budge from his seat.

The uproar went on for four hours. A police inspector came on board, and Le Pen and his colleagues were asked to leave so that the holidaymakers could return to Martinique. A local official came and repeated the request. Le Pen stayed put, complaining that he was being persecuted.

Kisser

'If you were real men you would go out and shout at the demonstrators', one passenger jibed at the fascists. 'Shut up or I'll smack you in

the kisser,' replied one of Le Pen's parliamentarians.'

A senior government official refused to provide riot police to escort Le Pen, and ordered the fascist delegation flown back out. Charter planes were used to ferry the remaining passengers to Martinique, and an empty jumbo flew out from Paris to pick up stranded passengers from there for France.

'Save'

Air France had lost an estimated £150,000 through all this. But presidential contender Jean-Marie Le Pen had lost much more in face. The fascist 'strong-man' who claims he can 'save' France had been chased out of two French overseas departments, without his feet even touching the ground!

Hunger in Silicon Valley

IN the wealthiest capitalist country in the world, 20 million people are going hungry, according to a report produced by a group of US doctors.

In California, for the first time in over twenty years, the infant mortality rate is increasing. One out of 10 people in the 'Golden State' now relies on charity food hand-outs. Hundreds of thousands cannot afford to visit a doctor.

In famous Silicon Valley, centre of the high-tech micro-electronics industry, some 35,000 people now depend on emergency food rations.

'Hunger Reaches Blue-collar America' is the title of the report, the work of a 23-member panel of physicians who have travelled all over the United States checking conditions.

Although the Physicians Task Force on Hunger has produced previous reports on malnutrition in the country, this new one points particularly to worsening poverty among working Americans, as well as the unemployed, and the emptiness of Reaganite claims about eco-

nomie growth.

Pointing out the poverty that festers alongside 'astounding wealth', the report says that in world-famous Silicon Valley the team found 'hundreds of thousands of workers in poverty due to low-wage jobs.'

Since 1985, 11,000 jobs have gone in the valley's electronics industry, but those needing food help are both the unemployed and those in low-paid assembly line jobs — often immigrant women — who also work in unhealthy conditions with toxic chemicals.

Referring to the famous 'Reaganomics' — admired also by British Thatcherites — the physicians report says 'Supply-side economics has failed as a remedy for domestic hunger.'

Over half the jobs created since 1980 pay less than the official poverty level, the team found. Of the millions of Americans below the poverty line, 41 per cent have jobs.

nuclear proliferation.

Vanunu insists that his motives were the highest, that he wanted to warn of the dangers to world peace from his government's policies, and to stop the menace of nuclear war in the Middle East.

● **BRITISH journalist Peter Hounam, who handled Mordechai Vanunu's story, and gave evidence for him at his trial last week, was warned afterwards that he faced extradition back to Israel if he tried to publish anything about it. 'I believe the warning came indirectly from the security services here,' he said.**

Hounam said he had managed to shake hands with Vanunu and tell him 'Look after yourself and keep fighting', and Vanunu had thanked him. Scientist Frank Barnaby was also warned by the Israelis not to say or write anything about his testimony.

SIX terribly disfigured survivors of a secret chemical factory fire in Lebanon are undergoing treatment in West Germany. The factory was reportedly making chemical weapons for Iraq.

The six survivors were flown out of Beirut recently for treatment expected to last six months. Lebanon's President Amin Gemayel requested West German help during his trip to Bonn last month.

At the time of the chemical blaze in August 1986, the Lebanese press said there had been a fire in a paint factory, in Beirut's Furn el-Shabbak district, probably caused by an electrical fault.

Firemen who went to the blaze said it had been 'like

burning wind', and worse than any paint fire they had known. Some civil defence rescue workers were killed.

The real story has just begun to come out. According to military sources in Lebanon, chemical weapons were being developed under a deal set up by Lebanese Christian politicians, Iraqi embassy officials, and foreign scientists.

A right-wing politician provided an official licence, 'under the cover of a German pharmaceutical company.'

'At the time of the incident, the laboratory had been producing and exporting chemical weapons to Iraq for about a year and was working on a new experiment when a chemical reaction triggered a fire.'

'Why didn't you let me die?'

A doctor who treated the casualties said people who survived were 'horribly disfigured . . . They lost their hair permanently . . . Their flesh melted away to the bones . . . They smelled terrible.'

The doctor said victims had been kept on a sealed floor of a clinic, entered only by doctors and nurses. They had to be bathed in medicines every day to ease their suffering. One young man, aged 18, had kept pleading 'Why did you leave me alive . . . Why didn't you let me die?'

'I am sure he will commit suicide one day', the doctor said. 'He was a handsome, fit man but now he is just a piece of melted flesh and

bones.'

Some nurses had been unable to cope, and refused to treat or bathe the patients. 'They used to vomit at the sight'. A woman doctor had a nervous breakdown. She was one of several on the medical team who had to be sent on leave to recover.

Although both sides in the Gulf War have denied accusations of using chemical weapons, a 1985 UN report said about 8,500 Iraqis had been affected by cyanide-based poisons or mustard gas.

Kurdish groups recently reported that Iraqi government forces were using chemical weapons in air attacks on Kurdish villages, and they produced photographic evidence of horrific injuries to children.

Chemical plant horror

Teachers asked to spy

TURKISH teachers sent abroad by their government to teach Turkish migrant children have been asked to spy on colleagues, children and parents.

A carefully selected batch of 465 teachers, mainly sent to work in West Germany, were first put through an indoctrination and briefing course run jointly by the Ministry of Education and Turkish Army GHQ.

The army's role in teacher training is less surprising when we remember that in some parts of Turkey the Ozal regime has replaced school headmasters with army officers, particularly when it suspects teachers may be sympathetic to the oppressed Kurdish nationality.

According to a report in 'Turkey Newsletter', teachers attending the one month course were told they must educate Turkish children abroad 'in such a way as not to lose their national identity.' They were also told that 'some Turks brought up abroad have degenerated.'

The teachers were asked to keep an eye on Turkish teachers already resident in some European countries and employed by local education authorities.

The reason given apparently was that some of these were not ideologically reliable. Some were 'even

giving Kurdish language courses or teaching children to believe that there should be a Kurdish state.'

To counter this, 'reliable' teachers should give 'correct' Turkish history courses, and courses on Turkish institutions, emphasising 'the everlasting nature of the Turkish state.'

In whatever city the teachers were sent to, they were told, they would be contacted by an officer of MIT — the Turkish Intelligence Organisation. They would be asked to spy on other Turkish teachers, and to collect information on the children and their parents.

The teachers were told that the MIT officer 'will visit you and ask you questions regularly'... 'some payments will also be made.'

● Turkey Newsletter is published monthly by the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey, (CDDRT), 84 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4AJ. Tel 01-254-0387

CP leaders face trial

TURKISH Communist Party leaders Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin are to be put on trial under laws banning communism as a threat to the state, and also for allegedly 'dishonouring Turkey's name' abroad.

Two lawyers acting for the men were also arrested last week after visiting them in prison.

The decision to prosecute was announced by the Ankara state security court after a four-hour hearing last week. Both men had been seized at the airport when they arrived last month, two weeks before the general election.

They were kept under police interrogation for over a fortnight, without access to lawyers, until the court hearing.

Kutlu, secretary-general of the Turkish Communist Party, and Sargin, of the Turkish Workers Party, had returned from exile saying

they wished to test the Ozal regime's promised 'democracy', and that they intended forming a new united Communist Party committed to parliamentary means.

In the elections, Ozal's state-built right-wing Motherland Party won 36 per cent of the vote, but under his electoral set-up this has been enough for it to take 65 per cent of the seats.

Inonu's Social Democratic People's Party has 99 seats, having fallen short of the 33 per cent of votes that would have brought it a closer second. Former social democrat prime minister Bulent Ecevit, who had refused to throw in his lot with Inonu, came nowhere, and now says he will retire from politics.

Clochemerle à la Turque

OZAL'S anti-union laws have given Turkey its own version of 'Clochemerle' (Gabriel Chevalier's famous story about events surrounding the opening of a public lavatory in a little French village).

For the Turkish Petro-chemical Workers' Union, Petrol-Is, it's no joke. Members of the union executive went on trial recently, charged with having put up a toilet for pickets during a strike!

Under the regime's labour code it is illegal to 'set up a tent' or have more than two pickets at a factory gate. The state prosecutor accused the union of building the toilet with the 'real intention of protecting pickets from the cold', and thereby contravening the law.

As 'proof', the prosecution indictment states that the pickets could have used the toilets in a nearby mosque if that was all they wanted.

Petrol-Is maintains the structure was a genuine WC built for the use of women strikers, and they have called a local imam as a witness that the mosque was closed.

Botha's troops refuse orders

AT LEAST four units of the so-called South West Africa Territory Force, sent by South Africa's racist Botha regime to fight in Angola, have been affected by unrest among soldiers.

In a letter published recently in the Windhoek paper 'The Namibian', a soldier said 400 soldiers had gone on strike in the Force's 101 Battalion. He said 360 were in custody, and another 48 including himself had resigned.

The soldier said he did not want to fight in Angola, where they were being sent to fight alongside Jonas Savimbi's Unita forces. He claimed many men had been captured

or killed in action at Mavinga, and their parents were not informed.

Concern has grown among white South Africans recently as families began to receive news of casualties suf-

fered by their young men in battles in Angola.

The 101 Battalion is recruited from among the Ovambo people of northern Namibia, who have also been the main source of recruits for SWAPO guerrillas fighting South African colonial rule.

Soldiers recruited by the South Africans may be realising they are fighting their own people. Although South African Defence Ministry officials have denied there was any mutiny among the 101 battalion, SWATF command have

admitted 'problems with deployment'.

Commandant Lieb Bester also revealed that 47 members of the 701 battalion, based in the Caprivi strip alongside Angola, had appeared at a court martial on 10 November, charged with refusing to obey a lawful order. They had been found guilty and dismissed.

A member of the SWATF's combat auxiliary service said over 400 of his colleagues had been dismissed recently after complaining of bad treatment and conditions.



MOSES MAYEKISO speaks for the Black working class and socialism

We stand by Moses Mayekiso

IF MOSES Mayekiso and his four comrades who are on trial for treason in South Africa are convicted, it could set a precedent for all anti-government activities to be declared treasonable—even if they are not unlawful.

The trial of Mayekiso has a special significance because of the advanced socialist tendency he and his union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) represent.

He faces charges relating to his activities in Alexandra, a black township on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

In an adjoining courtroom in the Rand Supreme Court, eight members of the Alexandra Youth Congress are nearing the end of their own separate six month trial.

If they are convicted the thousands of township residents who participated in people's courts and street committees throughout the country could face charges of treason for their activities.

Charges

Moses Mayekiso and the four others charged with him (his 22 year-old brother Mzwanele Ndlovu Tshabalala, Mzameni Mdakane, and Obed Bapela) face more serious charges in that they were office bearers in the Alexandra Action Committee, and thus the state alleges that they tried to overthrow the authority of the state by conspiring to seize control of Alexandra and make the area ungovernable.

It is claimed that they did this by forming organs of 'people's power'. This included forming the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC), organising residents

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE



KOLA MAYEKISO

of Alexandra into yard, block and street committees under the AAC and forming 'people's courts'.

They are also charged with forming a 'people's army' of comrades which defended the community and enforced the discipline of the 'people's courts', and with launching campaigns of rent and consumer boycotts.

The indictment adds bitterly that Moses Mayekiso 'believed' that 'the working class, as the vanguard for liberation, should be in control of the struggle.' He is also charged with 'believing' that the working class or its unions should seize control of the means of production and of the residential areas. With these aims in mind he planned the structures of the AAC and became its chairman.

The five are charged with conspiring with each other, with Alexandra's organisations for youth, women and students, and with the Con-

gress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Conspiracy with the African National Congress, and with the South African Communist Party is also alleged, but the state adds that they were not acting under instruction from the last two organisations, but had 'similar goals'.

As they say in America, this is a No Win situation.

Crowds of spectators have attended the Mayekiso trial, and it has attracted international attention and protests.

The March for Mayekiso held on 10 October in London was reported in four South African newspapers and was front page news in the Johannesburg 'Weekly Mail'.

Nearly 200 came to the opening of the trial, among whom were Tony Shaw of the British Trades Union Congress, and International Metalworker's Federation representatives. Local trades unionists present included senior leaders of COSATU, Elijah Barayi, Jay Naidoo, and Sydney Mafumadi: NUMSA president Daniel Dube, and scores of metalworkers.

Witnesses

The people who are reluctant to attend are the witnesses. Many of those called have refused to testify, and most of the state witnesses who came were shop and business owners who said they had been badly affected by boycotts. Under cross examination one of them was forced to admit that the crime rate, murders and stabbings had gone down dramatically in the township when the youth had mounted an anti-crime campaign.

During that time there

were no people found dead on the streets, because they were scared of those people (the youth), he said. 'Now it is quiet people are dying again on the streets.' He also said that more than 15 families sometimes lived on one plot of land in Alexandra. There is a high rate of poverty and unemployment, and no sewerage, storm water facilities or electricity.

Moses Mayekiso himself lived in a one roomed shack with his wife, brother and six children, with no running water and no electricity.

The judge has announced that though the charge of treason carries the death penalty, he does not consider it appropriate in this case. This means that instead of three persons presiding, the judge and two 'assessors', the judge alone will determine the fate of these five.

Life imprisonment in South Africa however means precisely that — imprisonment until death. Workers throughout the world must unite to demand the release of Mayekiso and his four comrades, and the defence of the struggle of the South African working class towards socialism.

The trial now stands adjourned until February, and will probably continue for months, possibly a year.

In London last Saturday a special rally was held on the non-stop picket outside South Africa House by the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group to demand the release of the Alexandra five. These rallies are being held monthly, and the next one will be in Trafalgar Square outside the embassy on Saturday January 16th. Come and bring your banners.

Who pays the Alton Bill?

KINDER, KIRCHE, and kuche (children, church and kitchen) was the slogan the Nazis used to reinforce the subordinate role of women in society. The rights of women to divorce and abortion were the first gains of the Russian revolution that Stalin destroyed.

It seems a necessary step for those seeking to have control of the working class that women's control over their own fertility should be taken away.

David Alton, a Catholic and a Liberal MP is now raring to follow in these unexemplary footsteps.

January 22nd sees the second reading of Alton's bill which seeks to lower the legal limit for abortion from 28 to 18 weeks gestation. This will create enormous problems for those women who are forced by circumstances to abort after the 18th week of pregnancy.

These include: older women who mistake the signs of pregnancy for the menopause, and apply too late, younger socially deprived women who are too frightened or too ignorant to apply for abortion in time, and women carrying fetuses with abnormalities which commonly cannot be detected before 18-20 weeks.

It also includes women with these problems or with none of them who are subjected to the delays of an overburdened health service, or to the self-indulgent moral scruples of some doctors.

The signs are that Alton's Bill may be passed. If it is, how will a disintegrating National Health service cope with more unwanted or disabled babies, when babies are dying today because the hospitals do not have enough equipment, nurses, or cash to treat them?

What is the point of bearing a child when collapsing local government services cannot cope with adequate care for its disability? And how can a young girl be condemned by society to bring up a child on her own on £26.60 a week? The gentlemen and ladies who plan vote for this bill in parliament probably budget more than that to feed their Rotweilers.

CORRECTION

Last week we reprinted the article 'Sinn Fein: revolutionary or reformist?' from Congress '86. The last sentence in the second-to-last

column should have read: 'The old cry "Don't embarrass Fianna Fail" (not Sinn Fein - Editor) must never be allowed to be converted into "Don't embarrass Sinn Fein".'

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464994.
JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464989.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22338.
EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN MCCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.
HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.
VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.

MAIDSTONE

HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent
DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.

PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
SEAN McSHANE, B75898.
TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.
SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP
RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799.
STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence, 758663.
JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635.
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence.
ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.

We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.

FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085.
BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662.
PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.
CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662.
MICHAEL J McKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486.
EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ
PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.
GERARD McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.
BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380.
PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

REMAND PRISONERS: BRITTON

HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.
LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693.
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694.
LIAM QUINN, 49930.

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire
PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree.
G.(DANNY) McNAMEE, 25-year sentence, HM Prison, Parkhurst
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, HM Prison, Gartree
GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.
PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Long Lartin.
JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.

The fight to defend voluntary organisations

ROS GARDINER, departmental representative for the local government union NALGO's voluntary sector, told Workers Press of the fight to defend Camden's voluntary organisations.

She was on last Saturday's Camden demonstration behind the banner of 'Volcano' — voluntary organisations campaigning against the cuts.

They are faced with compulsory redundancies and are calling for support for their weekly one-day strike.

The Camden Committee for Community Relations (CCCR) is a funded organisation, dealing mainly with the problems of black people and minority ethnic groups.

We are asking people to come along and support our strike next Thursday and every Thursday. Five nurseries and all the office-based staff are coming out on strike every Thursday, to stand outside the Town Hall and to appeal to the councillors not to make these cuts.

Their arguments in the beginning were that Labour Party cuts would be better than Tory cuts.

We have never agreed with that, we always thought that the first cut would be the worst cut.

Now they are talking about making 35-per-cent cuts across the voluntary sector. We are appealing to them to refuse to do that, to join with us, the workers, and use the Camden services to come and fight with us and demand back the Rate Support Grant which was stolen by the Tories.

The voluntary organisations are in a much worse position than the other services. What we have heard so far is that we are going to have a 20-per-cent cut.

This is because we are one of the so-called larger agencies. Added to this they are not going to cover our deficit



ROS GARDINER

budget. That represents a 30-per-cent cut which means that something like £150,000 will be lost out of next year's budget. That means the loss of about ten jobs.

However, in the voluntary sector there are no resources for paying redundancy money. So if we were to argue for redundancy payments we would probably have to sack ten people —

CAMDEN'S CUTS

CAMDEN'S CUTS CHRIS MESS

LABOUR-CONTROLLED Camden Council is considering workers in order to down workforce of

Following the overwhelming victory at the National Meeting of the National Government Officers' Union (NGO) legal advice has been sought on the union's opposition.

NALGO has seen the legal advice which gives the Council two options:

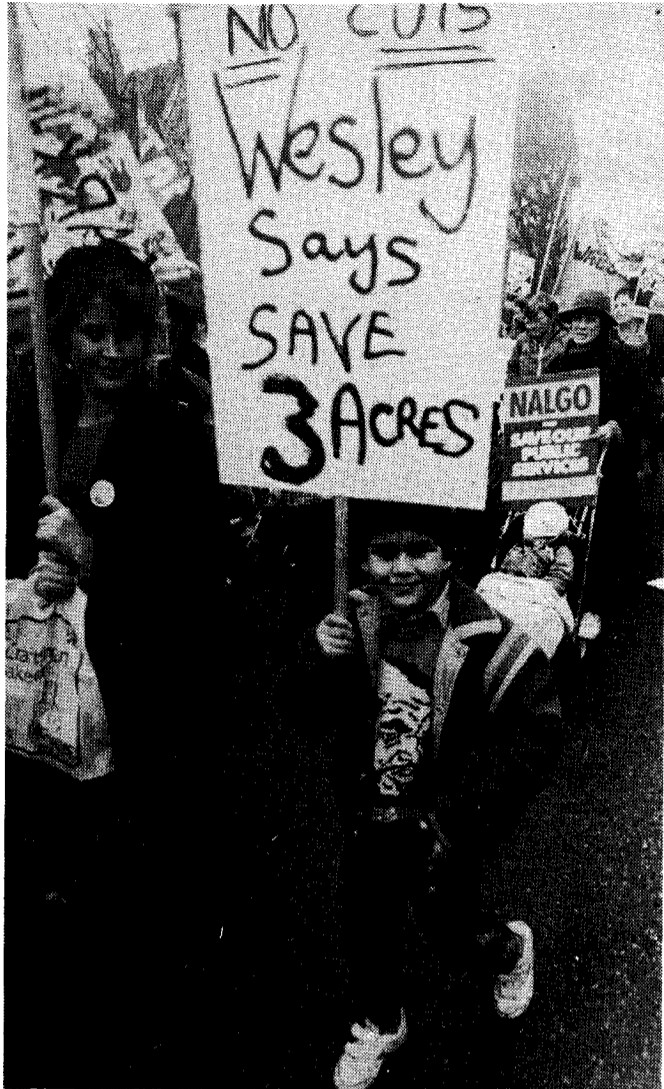
- Impose the new procedure and risk workers taking legal action for breach of the existing contract of employment, or
- Sack everyone and offer to re-employ workers on a new contract with management power to redeploy workers to any job they deem 'essential'.

Camden's legal advisors have urged the Council to take the second option and terminate existing contracts with voluntary redeployment agreements and offer new contracts incorporating compulsory redeployment as a condition.

In a press release NALGO branch secretary David Egmore said: 'We understand the plan, if implemented, is for letters of termination to be sent out on 15 December, though there has been no proposal to get agreement from the Labour Group on this move.'

'While we do not know if management intend to use taxis to deliver redundancy notices, it is clear that Camden Council is continuing its trail-blazing style of industrial relations.'

'We also understand that in at least one department, management are recommending that, once the redeployment agreement is in place it should be applied to all the women currently on maternity leave. So lots of



which is basically the collapse of an organisation.

Perhaps that would not mean its end this year, but the argument we have always had is that if people comply with making cuts this year, next year they are going to come back for more.

The Tories are not going to be satisfied until they have wiped out all these organisations. CCCR is particularly vulnerable because it is a campaigning organisation.

We have heard that there will be lower cuts in some of the so-called large white organisations.

The chair of Grants, Hilary Low, and the chair of the Rates Committee, Barbara Beck, have handed over their funding facilities to Hume for him to choose how he makes the cuts — and the way the cuts are being made

is indiscriminate.

There has been no consultation with any of the voluntary groups — not that we would comply with any consultation — but there have been no efforts to make any.

Nursery and office-based workers at CCCR, supported by their management committee, are calling on all Camden workers, management committee members and users of Camden Councils Services to support them by calling shop meetings to agree solidarity strike action — join them on the picket line every Thursday 9a.m.-2p.m. with a mass picket from 11.30-12.30.

- Organise a lobby of your local councillors' surgery to protest at the cuts!
- Come to the weekly meetings of Volcano!

People repatriated to balance books rally told

TRADE UNION and community groups in Camden took part in a demonstration against Camden Council's effective repatriation of homeless Irish and Bengali families.

Workers from Camden NALGO and Camden's construction department joined the 1,500 demonstrators who marched from Camden town hall to Hamstead town hall where speakers condemned this racist policy and called for maximum unity to defeat Camden's pursuit of Tory policies.

'We were told that Camden (labour) Council would resist Cuts — but they haven't even got the guts to support the call from their own workforce to oppose repatriation' said John Church (secretary of Bentley NUM)

The president of Camden NALGO, Angela Mason, called

led for united action, she said:

'To win this struggle workers must build maximum unity with users of services. This is an essential fight to stop the Tory destruction of local authorities and the national health service. Camden council have abdicated this fight against the Tories.'

A worker from the homeless unit replied to the Labour Group's strategy:

'The homeless unit is stripped to the bare bones. You don't repatriate people to balance your books'

Speakers at the rally also included Graham Surety, one of a group of 11 councillors who are opposing the Camden cuts, a speaker from Camden Black Workers group.

The representative of London Bridge said that Camden's policy should not be understood as due to individual racism but as the outcome of capitulation to Tory policies.

The Irish Workers Group speaker claimed that Camden was cynically using racist and even fascist ideology to diffuse opposition to the cuts. 'Imperialist policy created Irish homelessness' he said 'and is now creating modern Irish travellers'.



Trade unionists, community groups and workers protested against the cuts in Camden.

CRISIS: DEFEND THE 11!

DEN'S XMAS MESSAGE

**COLLED Camden
ing sacking all its
e-employ a slimmed
new contracts.**

elming rejection of com-
at the Annual General
l Association of Local
ALGO) Camden branch,
ght on how to break the

The Labour Council's response to these attacks has been to turn their guns on the working class — instead of fighting the Tories, they are fighting the very forces that elected them.

With Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party leadership behind them, they are viciously attacking trade union rights, 'deleting' jobs, and destroying desperately-needed services.

Reformists used to tell us they could use the capitalist state to obtain benefits for the working class. Today, as imperialism faces its deepest crisis, those who continue this tradition must become the instruments for smashing up these gains and policing the labour movement on behalf of the most reactionary forces released by capitalist decay. This is Kinnock's 'new realism' in action, an extreme move to the right.

The witch-hunt of 'Militant' was the beginning of this process. Labour Councillors opposed to 'new realism' will now have to be dealt with by Kinnock.

In Camden, 11 Councillors already face expulsion from the Labour Group. If they continue their opposition, they will face expulsion from the Labour Party itself.

The Camden 11 must be defended by trade unionists and Labour Party members — as must all Labour councillors fighting the cuts in other local authorities.

INTIMIDATION WILL NOT SUCCEED!

● **LEADING activists in the fight against the policies of Camden Council are being harassed and threatened by right-wing Labour councillors.**

This has included abusive phone calls in the middle of the night and red-baiting and witch-hunting at their places of work.

We have been asked through the pages of Workers Press to say to those carrying out these cowardly actions that they will not succeed in intimidating those who oppose them.

The crunch has come for councils

THE TORY GOVERNMENT has greatly increased its control over local authorities according to a briefing document 'The case for local government' issued by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA).

'The existing character, powers and functions of local government are undergoing fundamental change as the result of the cumulative impact of 44 Bills affecting local government in eight years' says the AMA.

From the 19th century local authorities have taken increasing responsibility for the services which affect the daily lives of the whole community. They:

- Educate about 95 per cent of children from the age of five to 16.
- House 28 per cent of the population.
- Repair and maintain 4.5 million homes in England alone.
- Are responsible for housing the homeless, as well as administering housing benefits to 7 million claimants.
- Run residential homes of old people and children in care.
- Provide home and day care support — such as meals-on-wheels and home helps — for the elderly, ill and disabled.
- Are responsible for most aspects of public protection and environmental health.
- Build and maintain roads, pavements and street lighting
- Sweep the streets, empty the dustbins and dispose of waste.
- Support local bus and train services and are involved in the running of municipal airports.
- Provide and look after parks, swimming pools, arts and leisure centres and libraries.
- Employ 1.9 million people.

Now the Tory government has announced its intention to change the role of local authorities. They will become little more than the machinery for local administration of central government decisions on

what services should be provided, how they should be delivered and how they should be paid for.

In the past local authorities raised their day-to-day income from three sources — the government Rate Support Grant, local authority rates, and local authority charges (e.g. council house rents). Government has introduced rate-capping (reduction in government support) and now they are abolishing the rating system with the introduction of the poll tax.

Central government will then control 80 per cent of local government income, and the Tories seek to silence opposition to their plans by what the AMA points out is a little-noticed clause in the current Local Government Bill:

'This would ban any local authority publicity which "promotes or opposes a point of view on a question of political controversy which is identifiable as the view of one political party and not of another".'

In addition to these restrictions imposed on local authorities, the Tories have encouraged the tendering and contracting out of services to private companies. These firms must make their profits by reducing standards and cutting the pay and conditions of their employees.

The AMA reports that school cleaners in one borough suffered a 25-per-cent wage cut, five days fewer holiday, no sick pay and no pension. In another borough days lost a year per employee through industrial injury rose from 2.63 to 9.54 when its refuse collection was privatised.

Local authority workers are skilled, trained, and respond immediately to any crisis. Dismantling these integrated workforces is dangerous.

This is the background to the crisis in local government. It has been building up over the last five years at least and most Labour councils have found ways and means of getting round the worst effects of Tory policies; at first multi-million pound loans from the banks with high interest rates, followed by so-called 'creative accounting' (e.g. sale and lease-back of council assets).

The trade union leaders have 'assisted' by accepting redundancies, Youth Training Schemes and the speed-up of working practices with hardly a whimper.

And now the crunch has come; there are no more holes to hide in. They betray the interests of the young, the old, the sick and the disabled rather than stand up and lead a fight against the Tories.

A mass movement against the Thatcher government and those in the labour movement who refuse to fight it must be built up. A socialist plan for the economy must be drawn up. We pledge that Workers Press will take its full part in this struggle.

BY OUR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT

pregnant women should get notice to quit around mid-December — a real Christmas message.'

The National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) has agreed to the new redeployment procedure which will take away workers' rights to any say in what job they do, allow management to change job descriptions and effectively remove the right of appeal.

In a letter to all Camden NALGO members, Eggmore says: 'Neither the branch nor NALGO headquarters know of any local authority in the country which has granted its management the unfettered powers to enforce redeployment and 'work reallocation' which Camden Council proposes to give its chief officers.'

All Labour-controlled local authorities ratecapped by the Tories are in a huge financial crisis, only deepened by the so-called 'creative accountancy' measures which have left them massively in debt to the banks.

The Tory government intends to break up local government, the National Health Service, public transport and public education. It is not only the gains won by the working class since World War II which are now in jeopardy. Many of the services being destroyed have existed for over a century.



Trade union groups and political parties on the march through Camden. A thousand people are protesting against the cuts inflicted by a Labour council which include the policy of repatriating homeless families.



Politics from the prisons

'CONGRESS' '86 is a journal including contributions from Irish political prisoners, two of which we reprinted in Workers Press last week. It should be greeted with open arms by all those in Britain and Ireland who look forward to the defeat of imperialism and capitalism.

The issues raised are burning ones: what type of leadership does the working class need? What kinds of

fronts and alliances can be formed by socialists and Republicans? What is the role of theory?

The fact that comrades in the prisons, at the sharp end of the imperialist war machine, raise these questions, is a source of great inspiration. We hope the discussion they have started will develop. As Trotskyists we offer the following comments.

A vanguard party

BY SIMON PIRANI

In their critique of Sinn Fein, the comrades write that 'only socialism, only communism, can end the ruthless economic exploitation, political oppression and foreign occupation of our country.'

They oppose, quite correctly, the separation of the tasks of national liberation and socialism, as expressed by Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams.

'We must set about the task of building a revolutionary party, a party built on the Marxist-Leninist theory,' they write. Only then will we be 'capable of leading the working class to victory.'

This is the crucial question for the working class. So it is vital to clarify: what exactly is a Marxist-Leninist party?

In Ireland, the partitionist and reformist Workers' Party, which slanders IRA liberation fighters as 'Ireland's contras', calls itself 'Marxist-Leninist'. In Britain, the 'Marxist-Leninists' of the CP provide the 'new realist' arguments for Neil Kinnock and the right wing. In South Africa, the 'Marxist-Leninist' CP works to impose the disastrous 'stages theory' on the revolutionary movement.

We don't believe that for the 'Congress '86' comrades, Marxism-Leninism has the inside-out meaning given it by these people. But how did such monstrosities come to masquerade under such a proud banner?

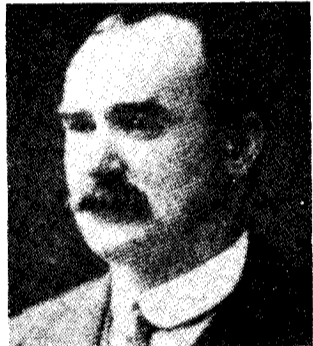
Go back to the first world war, during which James Connolly was condemned as an 'extremist' and 'dreamer' for leading an uprising against imperialism. Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin was similarly reviled by the 'big names' of 'Marxism' at that time — Georgi Plekhanov, Karl Kautsky and others, who, at the outbreak of the war had supported their 'own' bourgeois governments and capitulated to social-chauvinism.

Russians Lenin and Leon Trotsky, Karl Liebknecht of Germany and Rosa Luxemburg of Poland, John Maclean and Connolly were part of a small internationalist minority who condemned the war, and sought to 'turn it into a civil war' against imperialism.

Lenin insisted that Kautsky, Plekhanov and co. had crossed class lines, and could no longer be described as 'Marxist'.

Kautsky, with his 'Marxist' theory of 'ultra-imperialism', and Plekhanov with his 'Marxist' conception of the leading role of the bourgeoisie in the democratic revolution, sided with their 'own' bourgeois. Despite their pretensions to 'Marxism', history decided: they betrayed Marxism and the working class.

Lenin, exiled in Switzerland and uncertain of a Russian revolution in his lifetime, demanded — against waverers among the internationalists who thought the Second International might be recovered — the creation of a new international. In February 1917 the Russian tsarist autocracy was overthrown by revolution. The



JAMES CONNOLLY

Menshevik leaders of the soviets supported this government on the grounds that the revolution was at its 'first, bourgeois stage'. The majority of Bolshevik leaders argued that the Party's old demand 'for a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' had been achieved by this Provisional Government, and gave it 'conditional' support; Lenin fiercely — and successfully — fought this line within his party, arguing that the old slogan was 'obsolete', that the Bolsheviks had to oppose the bourgeois government and fight for 'all power to the soviets'. (This will be dealt with more thoroughly in a future article.)

Having successfully seized control in October 1917, but while on the verge of a dreadful civil war, the Bolsheviks changed their party name to 'Communist' and convened the first Comintern congress in 1919.

Parties claiming adherence to Marxism-Leninism sprung up everywhere; the Comintern's famous 'twenty-one points of admission' were aimed to outline what Marxism-Leninism actually meant in practice, and to keep opportunists from jumping on the bandwagon. (The Irish Labour leader William O'Brien, for example.)

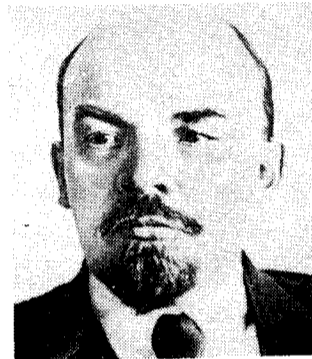
Defeat

With the defeat of the German revolution of 1918-19, the Comintern suffered a major setback at its birth. But in the heat of this and other revolutionary struggles, it won the best workers to its banner.

After Lenin's paralyzing illness (from mid-1922), Stalin and the incipient bureaucracy in the new workers' state established a stranglehold on the Comintern. Conflicting with Lenin while he lived (particularly on Stalin's brutal mis-handling of the USSR's national minorities), Stalin waited until after his death to raise the revisionist formula of 'socialism in one country'.

This line denied the Marxist-Leninist principle that all national revolutions were part of the international struggle for socialism. Whereas for Marxist-Leninists the construction of

socialism is an international task, Stalin proclaimed that the working class of economically-backward Russia could do this alone. With this utopia Stalin subordinated the work of the Comintern, and the tasks of the international working class, to the needs of the Soviet state and the bureaucratic caste at its head.



VLADIMIR LENIN

Stalin imposed on the Comintern the policy of subordinating the Communist Party to bourgeois nationalist and reformist forces. In the 1926 British General Strike, instead of assisting the British CP to build independent revolutionary leadership, Stalin maintained links with the treacherous TUC leaders, refusing to criticize their betrayal of the miners.

In the Chinese revolution of 1926-1927, he formed an alliance with the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), on the grounds that the revolution was at its 'first, bourgeois' stage. This policy was reminiscent not of bolshevism but of the mensheviks' support for the



The Russian revolution was made as a result of Lenin's struggle against the majority of Bolshevik leaders who at first supported the Provisional Government.

Russian bourgeoisie — and it had more disastrous results. The Chinese Communists were instructed not only to remain under the KMT's military discipline in fighting Japan, but to uncritically support its politics. As the revolution subsided, the KMT turned on the Chinese Communists and massacred them; Stalin responded by strengthening his links with the KMT and putting its leader on the Comintern executive.

From 1928, in line with a 'left turn' of internal Soviet economic policy (the forced collectivisation of agriculture etc), Stalin imposed a 'left turn' on the Comintern. 'Stage-ism' in China gave way to crazy adventurism: Communists were ordered to carry out coup d'etats leading to bloody defeats in a number of eastern countries. In the big capitalist countries, the 'left' turn meant an abandonment of Lenin's 'united front' policy and the communists cutting themselves off from reformist workers. In Germany, Trotsky's calls for a united front against the rise of fascism were ignored; the CP condemned the reformist workers as 'social fascists', equating them with the Nazis. This policy, imposed from Moscow, paralysed the CP and when Hitler began physically liquidating workers' organisations, no serious or united resistance was mobilised.

From 1923 Trotsky had fought to correct these errors, first in the Left Opposition, and from 1927 in the Joint Opposition. He called for a return to Lenin's

internationalism, and developed a revolutionary programme, opposing Stalin's reformism and 'stage-ism', and then his ultra leftism. His struggle was answered first by slanders and then by brutal repression.

With the German CP's abject failure to unite the working class against Hitler, history pronounced its verdict on Stalinism, as it had on Kautskyism in 1914. The Stalinist bureaucracy had transformed the revolutionary Comintern into an agency of counter-revolution. Trotsky called for a new, Fourth, International to be set up.

Today, Gorbachev — enthusiastically supported by the Workers' Party, the British CP and every other Stalinist — says that while Stalin had his 'excesses', his 'struggle against Trotskyism' was correct.

This 'struggle against Trotskyism' was the imposition of 'socialism in one country', of 'stage-ism' followed by ultra leftism. From 1934-1935 it was the 'popular front' policy, the Moscow Trials, and the destruction of communist cadres not only in the USSR but dozens of countries.

There is an unbridgeable gulf between Stalinist so-called 'Marxist-Leninism', as represented by Gorbachev and other variants of Stalinism, and the revolutionary internationalist Marxist-Leninism of Trotskyists.

In this conflict lie the answers to the question: what is a Marxist-Leninist party.



The 1916 rising was condemned by right-wing 'socialists'. These women fighters of Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen Army took part in it.

Politics from the prisons

Lessons of the 1934 Congress

SERIOUS socialists will greet the call for a new Republican Congress. We agree with 'Congress '86' that Republicans and revolutionary socialists can participate in joint actions, without concealing their differences.

Since expelling the Healy leadership, whose chauvinism and sectarianism precluded such joint work, the Workers Revolutionary Party has campaigned jointly with Republican and Irish solidarity organisations in Britain — and we look forward to developing such work, in opposition to the six-county occupation and for the advancement of working-class struggles.

Another Republican Congress could initiate joint campaigns and provide a means for discussion.

What programme should revolutionaries advance at such a Congress, and for the Irish working class in general?

This programme should be both socialist and anti-imperialist. Only in this way can workers in the twenty-six counties be mobilised; only like this could the possibility of breaking sections of protestant workers from loyalism be realised.

To drop fundamental anti-imperialist principles — 'Britain out of Ireland! End partition! For national self-determination!' — would be, as both 'Congress '86' and the Republican leadership says, nothing more than social-chauvinism. For British socialists these are our central demands in relation to Ireland, raised against the Labour leaders who provide indispensable support for imperialism.

But to drop socialist principles — the taking of the banks, financial institutions and major industries into workers' control and ownership; the expropriation of large landowners, the total separation of church and state — will make it impossible to mobilise the working class, which must be in the forefront if imperialism and capitalism are to be defeated.

In his book 'The Politics of Irish Freedom', Gerry Adams says that unless 'the republican character of the independence movement' is maintained, and unless 'the most radical social forces are in the leadership,' then inevitably 'it must fail or compromise'.

He counterposes this to the 'ultra-left view', that supposedly 'breaks up the unity of the national independence movement, by putting forward "socialist" demands that have no possibility of being advanced until real independence is won.' (p. 135).

But how can 'the most radical social forces' be in the front lines, if the question of socialism is not raised loud and clear? Are the working class going to fight for a united Ireland that will not be a workers', a socialist Ireland?

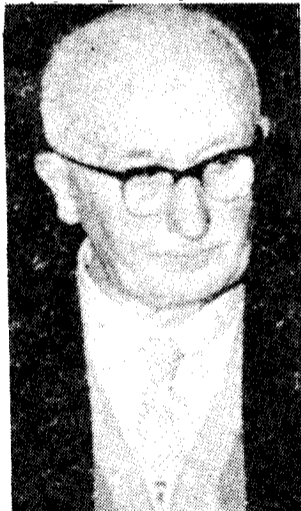
And with whom will 'unity'

be built in which socialist demands are put aside? Presumably allies from the bourgeoisie.

Sinn Fein's 1987 election programmes, both for the six and twenty-six counties, confirm this: although they refer to 'socialism', the policies put forward to tackle unemployment, emigration, spending cuts, and the economic crisis, are simply 'increasing economic growth' by state intervention. Basic foundations of socialism — nationalisation of industries and banks, and expropriation of both British and Irish bourgeois interests — are excluded.

This kind of 'unity', in which working-class or socialist demands are silenced, is the road to disaster.

Temporary alliances — even 'with the devil himself' as Trotsky put it — are vital in pursuing democratic aims, including national liberation. But silencing work-



CPI leader SEAN MURRAY

ing-class demands will deny victory of any kind. Failure to put socialist demands now will prevent the working class ever being mobilised to achieve socialism.

Adams writes that the anti-imperialist movement 'can not be built around the slogan of socialism, until socialism comes on the historical agenda, until a distinctly Irish form of socialism is developed to meet our needs and conditions, and until the majority class in Ireland, the working class, understands that this is in their interests and is what they want.'

But socialism is on the historical agenda in every sense, has been since capitalism became the predominant economic system in the last century, and in the present imperialist crisis is the only alternative to world war and a return to barbarism.

Adams suggests that socialism should not be made central until the working class understands the need for it. But it is precisely by raising the issue — in the form of demands such as 'nationalisation of industries under workers' control' — that workers' struggles will be developed to the political level, against reformist and treacherous leaderships.

What are the lessons, for the present, of the 1934 Congress?

We agree with 'Congress '86' that the collapse of the 1934 Congress is no reason to deny the need for joint action and discussion today; nor is it a question of apportioning blame. We must learn from history.

The conflict within the IRA came to a head at the 1934 General Army Convention when Michael Price put his resolution that the army 'shall not be disbanded' until a government has been established 'based upon production and distribution for use and not for profit, in which the exploitation of the labour of human beings . . . shall not be tolerated.'

When this resolution was defeated by the right-wing IRA leadership, Price resigned. But Peadar O'Donnell and George Gilmore, who had not supported the motion, stayed on. Like Gerry Adams today, they held that socialist aims should not be openly declared yet; but that the working class should be seen as the most effective force for achieving the republic, as against Fianna Fail's openly capitalist 'republicanism'.

O'Donnell and Gilmore had already in 1933 put a resolution urging the IRA itself to convene a Republican Congress; this was repeated



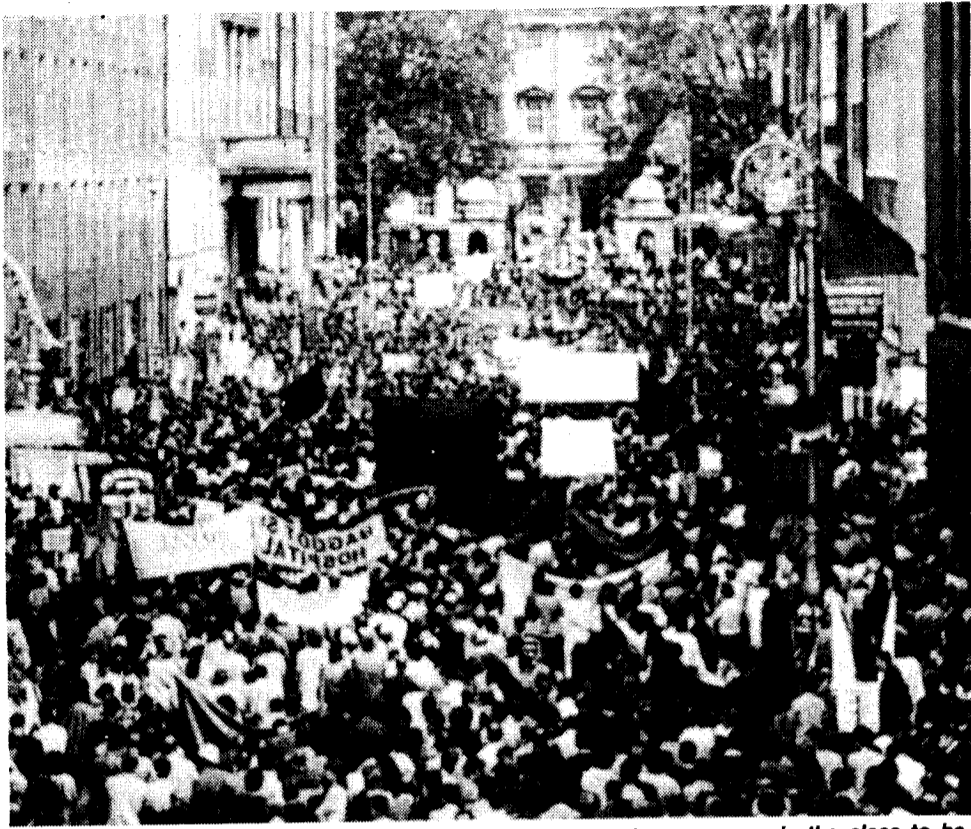
PEADAR O'DONNELL — put 'Irish Republic' resolution.

in 1934, and defeated. They then resigned and joined Price in issuing the Athlone manifesto which stated that a Republic 'will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on the way'.

But by the time of the Congress itself — held, after six months of highly successful campaigns, in September 1934 at Rathmines — the difference between Price and O'Donnell emerged again.

Price put a resolution that the Congress give 'a clear direction as to how the ideals of Republicanism and Labour can be welded in a militant movement which will succeed in overthrowing British imperialism . . .'; this could only be done by aiming for 'complete working-class supremacy in a workers' republic . . .'. This position was supported by Roddy Connolly, former founder of the CPI in 1920 and son of James Connolly.

O'Donnell's resolution specifically avoided reference to a workers' republic. Its stated aim was a united republic, pointing to the working class as the force to achieve it. Moving the resolution, O'Donnell said: 'We dare not jump through a stage in the fight, raising now the slogan "workers' republic" and leaving Fianna Fail to escape, saying that



Mass march in Dublin against health service cuts. On which programme is the class to be mobilised?

they are standing for one kind of Republic but that we stand for a different one.'

Of course O'Donnell was right that war had to be declared on Fianna Fail's 'republicanism'. But by posing the achievement of a Republic as a 'first stage' which preceded raising the issue of socialism, he came up



JIM LARKIN

argued the same question raised above in relation to Gerry Adams: if you do not today raise clearly the question of socialism, how will the working class be mobilised at all, in the struggle for national liberation or any other task?

Nora Connolly O'Brien argued that the Congress movement had been able to bring sections of organised workers from protestant areas of Belfast, together with southern workers, only on the basis of fighting for a workers' republic: 'A workers' republic was more than a slogan — it was something they were prepared to work for and fight for. It was the phrase "Irish republic" that separated us from the views of anti-imperialists and from the mass of workers in the north.'

Lost

The Congress ended with O'Donnell's resolution being passed by 99 votes to 84. But the Congress movement lost the momentum of its first six months and never regained it, concentrating latterly on sending Irish republican units to fight in Spain.

Why? A crucial factor was the CPI, which had a large number of votes at the Congress, used to support O'Donnell's resolution, against the 'workers' republic'.

CPI leader Sean Murray attacked Michael Price, saying: 'He said you cannot get rid of British imperialism until you smash capitalism. I say you cannot smash capitalism until you get rid of British imperialism.'

Why did Murray, a 'communist', insist so rigidly that the question of the workers'

lar front' government in May 1936. The CPI's line at the Republican Congress was an early taste of it.

This was the political rock on which the Congress foundered: the CPI's bitter hostility to raising the slogan 'workers' republic', and their opposition to the new working-class party that Price and Connolly wanted to form.

It did not just fail because a good idea was not put into practice, as 'Congress '86' suggests.

Had the CPI been part of a revolutionary international, it would never have acted in such an anti-Leninist fashion at Rathmines. It would certainly have championed the slogan of 'workers' republic' and the need for unity of working-class action, against 'stage-ism'.

But the Comintern was no longer such an international. Instead, as we stated in the article on the vanguard party, it was imposing the counter-revolutionary policies required by the Stalinist bureaucracy, which had led to disaster in Germany a year before. The bureaucratisation of the Comintern, and its abandonment of revolutionary strategy, had already had ruinous consequences in Ireland.

Dissolved

In 1926, James Larkin's centrist Irish Worker League (IWL) — into which the CPI had, wrongly, dissolved itself — collapsed into a shell. Roddy Connolly set up the Workers Party of Ireland on a revolutionary programme — but its application for membership of the Comintern was twice rejected, while Stalin strengthened ties with Larkin and some Republican leaders. With the 'left turn', the Stalinists in Ireland went to the opposite extreme, denouncing the entire IRA in the identical terms to those used about Fianna Fail. The Revolutionary Workers' Groups were formed on this basis in 1930.

These actions can only be understood by looking at the degeneration of the Comintern as a whole: an understanding of that is indispensable for building revolutionary leadership today.

Quotations and information from 'The Republican Congress 1934' by George Gilmore, Cork Workers' Club; 'Communism in Modern Ireland', by Mike Milotte, Gill & Macmillan.

FILM REVIEW

The Revolutionary and the Dilettante

'CRY FREEDOM' is very much a big budget 'saga' along the lines of Richard Attenborough's previous film, 'Gandhi'. It is impressive as regards acting, photography and design.

The film's main aim seems to be to record the relationship which grew up between Steve Biko (founder member of the Black Consciousness Movement, then a student at the all-black university of Fort Hare, in a small town called Alice) and Donald Woods (then editor of the 'Daily Dispatch', a newspaper of the Eastern Cape in a town called East London, not far from Alice).

Woods was forced to flee South Africa in 1977 in order to tell Biko's story. The film attempts to chart Wood's development from White South African 'not so liberal', to dabbler in politics, coming to an understanding of black people as human beings.

As Attenborough said recently in a television interview, he was fishing about for something to do regarding South Africa — something which was not just what everybody else has been saying, something with a story, something with a bit of hope.

What actually emerges is a dashing tale of two dashing young heroes, one black, one white, against a backdrop of war-torn South Africa. But the war itself is rarely mentioned.

As is expected in a blockbuster movie, 'Cry Freedom' is very much a tale of individual heroes and heroines. It is emphatically not about the Black Consciousness movement or its role in the 1970s, especially the 1976 student uprisings.

In the film these events are just so much interesting background against which to see the Woods/Biko relationship; so much adventure for Woods to be the hero in.

The year 1976 is central to recent South African history, but not to 'Cry Freedom' or to Woods' consciousness. Thus mention is only made of 1976 in the odd flashback as Woods prepares to flee the country; his reporters seem more anxious to follow Biko; he hires black reporters to write stories about black township life.

One wants to ask where Woods and his newspaper were in 1976! Were the events themselves not more newsworthy than the story of one detained leader, however charismatic, however articulate and brave he may have been?

Thus it is Biko's charisma and individual heroism which wins Woods' admiration (good grief — an articulate, educated black man! Where does he come from?) rather than the very real struggle of the oppressed and the exploited of South Africa.

Woods becomes curious to see for himself how blacks

Cry Freedom. Directed by Richard Attenborough. Screenplay by John Briley. Based on books by Donald Woods. Leading players: Kevin Kline, Penelope Wilton, Denzel Washington, John Hargreaves, John Thaw, Timothy West.

live, rather than how they struggle and die. Even at the end, his aim is to ensure that Biko's death does not go unnoticed, rather than to draw attention to the dozens of deaths in detention, hundreds on the streets and thousands in the mines, the factories and the fields.

Because the film's (and Woods') attention is focused on Biko, it is Biko's humanity which is at stake, his death which is a loss to South Africa.

And so it is — but so too is the death of Woods' black reporter and dozens of schoolchildren! Do their deaths not warrant special attention? Is any one death more important than all the others?

Moreover, is South African history to be recorded by the death of individual heroes, or by the heroism of its people, particularly that of the black workers and youth?

On a slightly more positive note, the film does reinforce the anger which fires every revolution. No matter how coolly one debates the need to



STEVE BIKO

objectively grasp what is required to overthrow capitalism, about how and why capitalism arises, etc., no human being can remain untouched by Biko's horrifying death and the roll call of martyrs of the South African revolution.

Even though Attenborough's film incites hatred and revulsion at the terrible death of one dedicated and brave man, it does little to awake at least as much passion over the deaths of hundreds of young children in 1976, deaths which, after all, were caused by the same evil — apartheid-capitalism.

The film's second half, as it were, centres around our young white hero, now taking to politics with some gusto. His initial concern was to form a relationship with Biko, not to become a part of Black Consciousness or any other political movement.

The restrictions on Biko upset him, but only token attention is paid to the pass law restrictions on Woods' maid.

The furthest that Woods develops in this direction is to defend her (somewhat melodramatically and unbelievably — one does not draw a firearm on a white South African policeman) against a pass raid.

He magnanimously allows her to see her children at will — but servant in servants' quarters, cleaning while the family lies on the beach, she remains.

What, one wonders, would his response be to her being unionised? His furthest venture into her education (freeing her mind from

chains?) is to clap his hands over her mouth in fear and embarrassment to stop her from calling him 'Master' at a mass gathering of black people.

In conversation with 'the maid', Evalina, his wife continues to refer to Woods as 'the master'.

Woods' knowledge of South African history, like that of the ANC, is lamentable. The cap-in-hand plea to the minister still features high on the list of political activity.

What, one wonders cynically, does he expect to get from a butcher like Kruger, except savagery. Reference has since been made to Woods' heroism and his self-sacrifice — against the bloody background of South Africa since 1976, giving up a life of luxury can hardly be called sacrifice!

As for the Black Consciousness Movement, on the positive side, the film does restore the imbalance in recent accounts of South Africa, 1976 by giving the movement (even primarily in the form of Biko) a major role in the uprisings. However, the movement does not remain unscathed by schmaltz.

Attenborough reflects accurately the current fashionable atmosphere of seeking peaceful settlements and compromises for 'South Africa's problems'.

Thus he presents to the world a 'man of peace', an articulate, charismatic, handsome young leader — not a revolutionary; a movement idealistically striving for the recognition of black humanity, not for the overthrow of apartheid-capitalism; blacks freeing their minds from chains, not their bodies from wage slavery; blacks wanting a little recognition, not wanting to divest capitalists of the ownership of the means of production.

'Liberals'

All this, of course, will sell well. 'Liberals' will see the film, shake their heads at a missed opportunity to negotiate with 'decent blacks' and rest assured that their property will remain intact.

If this is all that the Black Consciousness Movement aims for — an idealistic struggle to get the chains off people's minds rather than the shackles off their hands and feet — then certainly black working people in South Africa can continue to hope for no more than crumbs from the capitalists' table, and the latter can continue to feast in the added safety of a few articulate, educated, black doctors and lawyers.

Attenborough wanted to make a 'nice story' about South Africa, the current hit as world dramas go. He wanted to make a film with hope for the future.

For people of his ilk, he has succeeded — the film is a pretty piece of entertainment with plenty of hope for the rich. It succeeds in not once casting aspersions on the lives of splendid luxury in South Africa, in leaving their consciences intact and not blaming them for anything.

What more could one hope for?

SARA FREEMAN

BOOK REVIEWS

Opening up the Scottish question

THE 'SCOTTISH QUESTION' is once again thrusting its way on to the stage of the British labour movement, creating as much of a headache for the Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party as Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' is said to do for actors.

The fall of the Callaghan government in 1979 was brought about by its attempts to impose the demands of the International Monetary Fund on the working class; but the form of that regime's demise centred on the confusion it created over Scottish devolution.

This is the Banquo's ghost haunting Kinnock as he attempts to find a path to 10 Downing Street by espousing openly capitalist policies at the same time as holding together his cohort of MPs, many of whom feel the pressure of working class constituents who voted them into parliament to fight for socialist policies.

In Scotland the dilemma is especially sharp, since Kinnock's parliamentary credibility depends quite substantially on the fact that an unprecedented 50 out of 72 Scottish seats were won by Labour in June. Of the remaining 22 seats only a minority (ten) went to the Tories, raising the possibility of different patterns of electoral politics developing north and south of the border.

As Premier Thatcher and Chancellor Lawson carry out their declared aim of turning the screws of the 'enterprise culture' on the recalcitrant Scots, Kinnock's right wing Scottish colonel-in-chief, Donald Dewar, fears that the resistance of the working class will either by-pass parliamentary politics of take an aggressively Scottish form.

Either way he sees the Scottish Nationalists — aided by confusion created by the Stalinists (Communist Party) — benefitting, and Kinnock's dream of a 'new realist' Labour government by the early 1990s disappearing in Scotch mist.

These three books on aspects of Scottish history and politics will not answer 'the Scottish question' for the Labourites or anyone else. But they might help to open up a serious discussion on its historical background.

James D. Young, now a history lecturer at Stirling University, has been 'making trouble' for the Establishment since his childhood in Grangemouth in the 1930s. The son of a former miner, turned railway plate-layer, turned docker, he made his way, via Newbattle Abbey

Robin F. Callander: 'A Pattern of Landownership in Scotland' (Haugend Publications, Finzean, Aberdeenshire, £5.15); T.C. Smout: 'A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950' (Collins, Fontana Paperback, £6.95); James D. Young: 'Making Trouble' (Clydeside Press, 37 High Street, Glasgow, £3.50).

College near Edinburgh, to Ruskin College, Oxford, and later into university teaching.

But he is no orthodox historian. Convinced of the political force of the 'Scottish national question', he seeks to combine 'socialist internationalism' with 'a sense of working class Scottishness'.

His collection of five 'autobiographical explorations' covers his childhood; his decision to get a college education, his discovery of Marxism and Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union and his experience of academic life on both sides of the Atlantic; his visit to Poland in 1982 where he brushed with the Stalinist authorities and met Solidarity members reading Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky; his experience of Scottish 'radical culture' in the 1970s and early 1980s; and his reflections on historical method.

Account

It also contains a pregnant account (pp.49-51) of his contact with Tony Cliff's 'Socialist Review' group in the late 1950s. Despite his attraction to Trotskyism, and his continuing intellectually courageous opposition to Stalinism, Young appears to have been diverted from Trotsky's struggle to re-found the Leninist world party by this experience.

Robin Callander's study of Scottish landownership is less easily read because its argument is not always entirely clear. Perhaps the second phase of his study, to be called 'The Power Behind the Pattern (?)', will make it so.

But in improving on previous surveys of the very complex issue of landownership in Scotland, and adding his own detailed study of Aberdeenshire, he highlights the fact that 'Scotland still has a more concentrated pattern of private landownership than any other country in Europe' (p.135).

He points out that this affects not only the lives of people in rural communities

but also 'the aspiration... of society at large for its rural environment' (p.137).

But his concentration on the uniquely feudal (a word used in a technical rather than a Marxist sense) basis of Scottish land law leads him to see the solution in legal reform rather than in the ending of capitalist ownership.

However Callander's account highlights that, in Scotland above all, to present as socialist any policy which does not include the wholesale nationalisation of the landed estates is simply absurd. Maybe this is one key to the Labour reformists' Scottish dilemma!

T.C. Smout has done more to make Scottish social history since the Reformation accessible to the general reader than any other British liberal historian in recent years. Although his book on the period 1830-1950 is nothing like as good as his 'A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830' (1969), its appearance in paperback is welcome.

It presents a limited and bleak view of the 'Scottish people' as Smout in part at least acknowledges (p.5). The author ably describes aspects of the contradiction between the existence of a vibrant popular culture in the years of misery from the 1830s to the 1920s, and what he sees as a loss of 'political will' under the Welfare State (p.275).

But the vibrancy of the Scottish working class lay — and lies, not in the rhetoric of the radicals and 'socialist idealists' he celebrates, but in the class struggle itself. This is an insight Smout denies himself by his rejection of Marxism, his rather bizarre conception of which he describes in his 'Introduction'.

For the liberal historian as for the Labourite politician, this 'aspect' of the Scottish question — which is in reality, the essence of both the question and of the approach to an answer — poses problems.

TERRY BROTHERSTONE

BRITISH PAPERBACKS

LONDON · GLASGOW

The Paperback Centres

28 Charlotte Street, London W1P 1HP
Tel: 01-636 3532

10-12 Atlantic Road, Brixton, London SW9 8HY
Tel: 01-274 8342

Hope Street Book Centre
321 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 3PT
Tel: 041-332 8881

BOOK CHOICES FROM 1987

Two regular Workers Press contributors describe books they enjoyed during the year

PETER FRYER

THE book that has given me most pleasure in 1987, and a lot of instruction as well, is 'The City as a Work of Art' by Donald J. Olsen (Yale University Press).

Richly illustrated with lithographs, aquatints, water-colours, and photographs, with street plans and plans of houses and blocks of flats, this magnificent book compares and contrasts London, Paris, and Vienna in the century after Waterloo. It shows brilliantly how these three imperial capitals reflected the political cultures and dominant values of their respective ruling classes.

For any reader, but especially for one who knows even two of these three cities at all well, Olsen's book is a treasure-house of architectural and social history, chock-full of fascinating insights and written with rare intelligence and verve.

The book that has given me most instruction in 1987, and a lot of pleasure as well, is Isaac Deutscher's massive three-volume biography of Trotsky: 'The Prophet Armed', 'The Prophet Unarmed', and 'The Prophet Outcast' (Ox-

ford University Press).

I had read the first two volumes many years ago, but never the third. This summer I devoured all 1,516 pages with great excitement and still greater profit.

It's possible and, no doubt, necessary to differ from Deutscher about many of his political judgments: on the controversies of the 1920s for instance and, above all, on the foundation of the Fourth International in 1938.

These however are the inessential flaws of a masterpiece that will surely rank as this century's outstanding biography. Here, not idealized into a demigod who never made a mistake in his life but honestly portrayed in all his human complexity, is Trotsky the man.

And what a man! He dominated his times by sheer ability, and continued to do so even in the 'hell-black night' that would have driven most lesser men to despair.

In Deutscher's book is to be found the answer to all that malicious chatter about Trotsky's alleged egotism. Here was a leader totally confident of his place in history but never seeking anything for himself. His highest ambition was to serve the working class in struggle.

Can his traducers say the same of themselves?

PETER FRYER

enjoyed during the year

AMONG books I'd recommend for the history that explains the headlines is Neil Ascherson's 'Struggle for Poland' (Michael Joseph, £14.95), well-illustrated, clear, comprehensive, intelligent, and conveying the drama of Polish history as it carries you along.

Another history that's an excellent read is Ilan Halevi's 'History of the Jews', (Zed), particularly for its penetrating insights from a Sefardi-Middle Eastern point of view, its objectivity, freshness of thought, and because it is intricately and beautifully written.

I'd been looking forward to Gilles Perrault's 'A Man Apart', (Zed £7.95) about Egyptian communist Henri Curjel, murdered in Paris in 1978. The book is even better than I expected, not just a true 'thriller' with a real-life hero, but a fascinating look into a little-known side of contemporary history. Again, well-written, and with feeling for its subject.

Still in Egypt, I was very pleased to see Wagui Ghali's novel 'Beer in the Snooker Club' (Serpents Tail £4.95) reprinted again, and read it a second time, . . . and a third. If you don't mind your humour blended with a little sadness, — like in real life — you'll enjoy it too.

CHARLIE POTTINS

I've just started Peter Fryer's 'Crocodiles in the Streets' (New Park); a highly topical inside-Latin America tour. Bringing working people to working people, Peter takes us into Brazilian union meetings and Bolivian mining villages. Distances and language-barriers disappear as we are pitched into discussion with comrades in our common struggle.

His true reporter's gift for listening, and observing those little details of daily life, make all the difference between boring dry texts and this lively account.

I belatedly got into Primo Levi this year, enjoying 'If not now, when?', his rattling tale of Jewish partisans, and admiring 'The Periodic Table' (Abacus), his highly original work in which each fine sketch from memory is related to a chemical element.

Recently I've been reading 'The Wrench', tales told by a travelling rigger who talks to the author in a factory canteen. Levi says the character is based on men he'd met. I reckon we must have been on some of the same sites. Lightly told, but observant, and philosophical.

When we did Jack London's 'White Fang' at school, my Mum told me about 'The Iron Heel' which she'd read as a girl. Discovering that the struggle for survival wasn't just waged by wolves in the frozen North, I was away.

London's apocalyptic vision of class war and American fascism was regarded as over the top by some of his contemporaries, but as all too prophetic by the 1920s. It's now available from Journeyman Press, together with his classic account of a sojourn in London's East End, 'People of the Abyss', and 'Revolution: stories and essays', all three nicely presented in a box for £7.95.

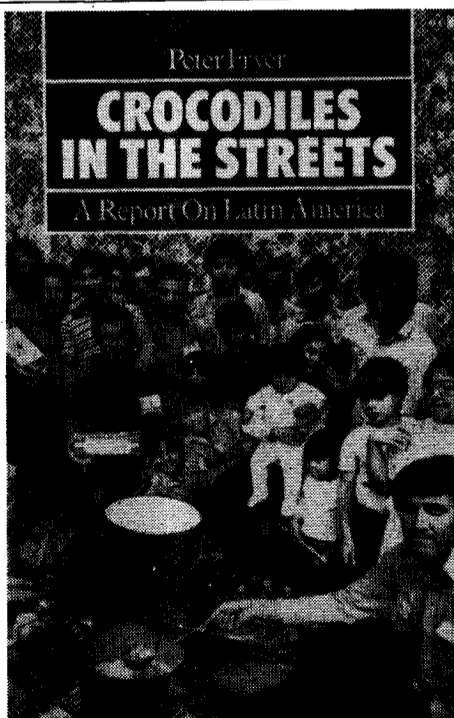
From generation unto generation, I'd recommend this as a present for young relatives who aren't into heavy theoretical tomes just yet, but want something strong nevertheless.

This is traditionally a season for Dickens, somewhere amid the robins and jolly coaching scenes. (Having occasionally travelled on unheated British Rail slow Sunday trains in freezing weather, I can imagine just how 'jolly' they really were.)

Personally I prefer rich, solid sagas like 'Great Expectations', 'Little Dorrit' and 'Bleak House' to the merely sentimental tales. I like the Penguin editions with lots of footnotes for added flavour.

So for a change from telly rehashes this Xmas, get stuck into one; or dip into 'Dickens' London' by Peter Ackroyd, (Headline), packed with sepia photographs for atmosphere, as it takes us through the mean streets, misty riverside, and crowded courts that Dickens knew and wrote about.

Literature, social history, photography, are all there, well put together and presented. I'll be poring over it not just to deepen my enjoyment of the novels but to add pleasure to strolling streets still haunted by Bill Sykes, Jo, and the Barnacles.



Peter Fryer

Crocodiles in the Streets

The British public knows little about Latin America, least of all about recent working class struggles in that continent. This illuminating book is a report on a visit lasting six-and-a-half weeks, during which Peter Fryer met Brazilian gold miners, Argentinian meat workers, Bolivian tin miners on strike, Peruvian metal workers and Colombian trade unionists under threat from paramilitary fascist squads. In all five countries he also met activists and leaders of the Trotskyist parties organised in the International Workers' League (LI). Fryer tells the people he met speak for themselves.

Paperback, 84pp. £3.95.
New Park Publications Ltd
21-25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR
Please add 75p for orders by post.



'Dickens often took his friends on voyages through such slums, visiting some of the lodging houses as he did so: he would go in quite blithely but there are reports of his companions, overpowered by the stench within, who came out into the streets to be sick.' From 'Dickens' London' by Peter Ackroyd (Headline).

LETTERS

Camden: the tip of the iceberg

THE BANKRUPTCY of reformist Labour Party policies in local government is being revealed throughout the country.

Following on from the Liverpool Labour council's proposals to sack its workforce and now Camden Labour council's policies of encouraging the repatriation of the homeless and the sacking and rehiring of its 8,000 staff on new contracts, all councils are faced with similar measures dictated by the Tory government's spending cuts.

In Barking and Dagenham, the Labour council has reacted to a forecasted £2 million shortfall in the projected £20 million budget of the North East London Polytechnic by voting on the board of governors for redeployment and compulsory redundancy of teaching staff. The staff and students have launched a campaign to fight these cuts.

What is revealed is the widening gap between the local Labour Party and the working class in the area.

The Labour Party, at national and local level, has no answer to these government attacks and plans to implement them. For them maintaining seats on councils and in parliament is more important than the education and living conditions of the workers who elected them.

Keith Scotcher

Anti-deportation whose victories?

THE ANTI-DEPORTATION campaign being waged in Camden marks a new development in such movements nationally.

For the first time the fight is being directed against a Labour-controlled council in defence of more than an individual or family.

Previous campaigns have claimed some success in winning the right for individuals to stay in Britain. For example the recent Varida Bibi and Renukaben Lakahni 'cases' have succeeded in mobilising large sections of the immigrant community.

At the same time Viraj Mendis is approaching the end of his first year in sanctuary and many other individual cases are being 'dealt with' by the Home Office.

The successful campaigns have been won by appealing to the Home Office on the grounds of 'special circumstances'.

Farida Bibi had a new genetic finger-print test, proving she is Nizar Hussein's daughter. Renukaben Lakahni managed to convince the Home Office that she does love her husband.

But the Tories are tightening immigration controls. The racist policies of this government have not even been dented. Future campaigns cannot afford to appeal on the 'special case' basis. The ruling class is determined to shed some of its surplus labour; deporting immigrants is a convenient way of doing this.

Future campaigns must be directed towards the labour movement; community defence squads must be built or the deportations will only increase.

Chris Boylan

The dangers of cannabis

THE CONTENT of Workers Press has improved since it was first published last year.

Part of its success can be attributed to Peter Fryer's 'Personal Column' which is informative, interesting and well-written.

I have a very high opinion of Peter Fryer. Forced out of the Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the Workers Revolutionary Party) by Healyite methods, he nonetheless maintained his principles and, following Healy's expulsion, came back to lend a hand.

However, I was both dismayed and appalled to read in last week's issue (5 December) that he had seen fit to express the view that the drug cannabis was less harmful than alcohol or tobacco.

In my opinion cannabis is an extremely dangerous drug, the perils of which are not generally appreciated. I write as a psychologist with some knowledge of problems associated with drug abuse.

A feature of the use of cannabis is that it affects different people in various ways. Some users can smoke it without any immediately apparent adverse effects. It is this that undoubtedly gives rise to the mistaken view that it is harmless.

On the other hand the smoking of just one 'joint' can lead to serious psychiatric disorders, whilst prolonged exposure can lead to chronic psychosis.

Dr Elizabeth Tylden, a leading medical authority on cannabis abuse (who happens to be a close colleague and friend of mine) writes:

'There are numerous accounts of the acute panic reaction which sometimes occurs on the first exposure to cannabis.

'One patient became acutely paranoid, deluded and hallucinated. He broke off the end of a bottle to fight off an imaginary police raid.

The psychosis took 24 hours to subside. Recent articles describe similar states:

'The chronic psychosis comes on after heavy exposure lasting 3 to 4 months. The patient looks ill as well as being deluded, depressed and rambling. There may be ideas of reference (ideas of persecution) and acute panic reactions. Hallucinations are not particularly common, but when they occur, animal shapes are frequently seen. There is less insight in a cannabis psychosis than in LSD psychosis. . . Latent schizophrenia has been triggered off by cannabis in at least three of my patients. In others, a schizoid episode or depressive episode of varying intensity has occurred. . . Abstinence from cannabis usually brings about a complete remission, but on further exposure to the drug the patient relapses again. A cured patient becomes literally a different person.' ('Cannabis and LSD — Two dangerous hallucinogens' Australian Family Physician, February 1972).

In addition to psychiatric disorders such as those just mentioned, cannabis use can also lead to physical disorders such as bronchitis and other respiratory ailments. The functioning of the liver can also be affected. This leads to various toxic substances, which normally would be rendered harmless, being allowed to circulate freely in the bloodstream. More importantly, prolonged use of cannabis can lead to permanent brain damage.

My experience of cannabis users has led me to reach a number of definite conclusions. All cannabis smokers

I have known well enough to study carefully have exhibited, in one way or another, some impairment of psychological functioning. The most common of these is the loss of the ability to be self-critical or to accept reasonable criticism from others. When things go wrong they will tend to blame others rather than themselves. This, of course, implies an inability to recognise other impairments brought about by cannabis.

Frequently cannabis users cease to care about their personal appearance and will become untidy and unkempt. States of lethargy are common and many users find it difficult to hold down jobs (if indeed they can get one in the first place).

A further common characteristic to be found in cannabis smokers is what is often referred to as 'delusions of insight'. This implies that the individual believes that his or her ideas are of tremendous importance whereas in fact they are trivial and not worthy of consideration.

Whilst a tutor to undergraduate students (also whilst a student myself) I was able to observe a number of instances in which students began to smoke cannabis on a regular basis. Almost without exception their academic performance rapidly declined. They became insensitive to criticism and continued to maintain that they would pass their examinations with no difficulty.

Most of these students, in fact, either did badly at their exams or else dropped out of their respective courses.

In conclusion, cannabis is an extremely dangerous drug. It is just not true, as Peter Fryer asserts, that it is less harmful than tobacco or alcohol. As we all know, both tobacco and excessive alcohol intake have their dangers, but cannabis is really in a far more dangerous class altogether.

I have always been impressed by Peter Fryer's integrity as a journalist. I would, however, urge him to refrain from commenting on matters about which he lacks adequate knowledge. We could well do without the sort of irresponsible and dangerous nonsense he wrote last week.

Finally, if Peter requires further documented medical evidence of the harmful nature of cannabis, I can get him plenty.

John Robinson

Rates reform or gerry-mandering

RATES REFORM has played a part in the Tory onslaught against the working class. Why should people in large houses pay more than a low-paid worker in a council flat?

From this comes the concept of 'accountability' whereby payment of poll tax would ensure that working people would be responsible for the rates. The question 'how?' may well be asked here.

The imposition of the 20-per-cent rate payment by all is a preparation towards collection of the tax.

If this should be adopted, will workers not be encouraged to come off the voters' roll in order to avoid payment of this monstrous tax? As a follow up to the changes made to voting areas in 1983 is this not an attempt to manipulate the number of eligible voters?

A group called 'Smash the Poll Tax' has been formed in Scotland. I wish them all the best.

Karl Forman
Coventry

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

London public lectures
BASIC ELEMENTS OF MARXISM

Crown Tavern
43 Clerkenwell Green
London EC1
Tube: Farringdon

Fridays, 7.30 p.m.
Lecturer: Geoff Pilling

HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY



The Hungarian revolution of 1956 and its brutal suppression by Russian tanks was a watershed in the history of socialism.

In October 1956 Peter Fryer was sent to cover these events for the Daily Worker. He reported what he saw — only to have his despatches suppressed and to be suspended and then expelled from the Communist Party.

He saw people in arms demolish a regime of fear and poverty and take power in their own hands. He saw security police atrocities — and the people's terrible revenge. Then he watched appalled as a nation's new-born freedom was relentlessly crushed.

ISBN: 0 86151 072 6 Price £2.95

New Park Publications Ltd.
10-12 Atlantic Road, London SW9 8HY
01-274-8342

ROBSON'S CHOICE

ON Saturday, at 4.30p.m. (Radio 4), Science Now, at 7.30p.m. (BBC2), the Montreal Symphony Orchestra plays Strauss, Brahms and Bartok (stereo link with Radio 3). At 10p.m. (BBC2), Luis Bunuel's masterly surrealist comedy, *The discreet charm of the Bourgeoisie*. At 10.15p.m. (Radio 3), *Trombone Acts*. At 11.40p.m. (BBC2), Bertrand Blier's *Notre Histoire*.

ON Sunday, at 6.30p.m. (Radio 3), Rossini's two-act opera, *Semiramide*. At 7.15p.m. (C4), the documentary *Cubatao — Valley of Death*. At 7.50p.m. (BBC2), *The Great Philosophers* introduces The American Pragmatists. At 8.45p.m. (C4), a documentary by Lutz Becker, *Vita Futuristica*, a study of the Italian Futurists at the beginning of this century, and their links with fascism and communism.

ON Monday, at 8.20p.m. (BBC2), *Venturers*, every Thatcherite's favourite programme, looks at empire builders in Japan. At 9p.m. (BBC2), Woody Allen in *Love and Death*. At 9.30p.m. (Radio 4), *Letters from Eritrea*. Also at 9.30p.m. (BBC1), *Panorama* looks at the political scene in the Philippines. At 10.10p.m. (BBC1), part-six of *The Perfect Spy*. At 10.25p.m. (BBC2), the first of five programmes devoted to Russian dissident, Anatoly Sharansky. At 11p.m. (C4), more experimental video from Europe on *The Eleventh Hour*.

ON Tuesday, at 7p.m. (Radio 3), Ben Jonson's play, *The Devil is an Ass*. At 8.30p.m. (BBC1), *Into the Black and Blue Holes*, underwater exploration in a remote part of the Bahamas. At 9p.m. (C4), award-winning documentary *Talking to the Enemy*, bears all the hallmarks of an impotent liberalism — we shall see. At 9.30p.m. (BBC2), *Footsteps* follows the explorations of Richard Wetherill (1858-1910) in the American south-west. At 10.30p.m. (BBC2), part-two of *Sharansky*.

ON Wednesday, at 6.30p.m. (C4), final part of Peter West's beautifully assembled, light-weight *All in a Days Life*. At 9p.m. (ITV), a dramatised documentary to mark the 50th anniversary of Antonio Gramsci's death, *Gramsci — Everything that Concerns People*. At 9.25p.m. (BBC2), final part of *A Perfect Spy*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC2), *The Visit: Give me Tomorrow*.

ON Thursday, at 2.15p.m. (Radio 3), Verdi's opera *Aida*. At 7p.m. (Radio 3), *The Left Handed Legacy*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), *Rough Justice*. At 10.10p.m. (BBC2), part four of *Sharansky*.

ON Friday, at 9.40p.m. (BBC2), *Arena* introduces Art Spiegelman, one of America's leading comic-strip artists. At 10.25p.m. (BBC2), final part of *Sharansky*. At 11.45p.m. (BBC2), Luis Bunuel's little known, *La Mort en ce Jardin*.

TOM SCOTT ROBSON



GRAMSCI

LISTINGS

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

VMDC London Support Group Weekly Campaign Meetings. Thursday evenings 7.30p.m. Camden Town Hall. All welcome. (Further details: 01-837 1688.) **24-HOURS FOR VIRAJ MENDIS** Sponsored Vigil outside Downing Street. 5.30p.m. Thursday, — 5.30p.m. Friday 10-11 December. Come and join us or pledge a donation.

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S CAMP To all women — we are still here; we still need your support! Near Newbury, Exit 13 on M4, or BR Newbury, Berkshire.

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY Demonstrate for British Withdrawal. Saturday 30 January. Islington Town Hall. Further details from: Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Weekly planning meetings every Tuesday 7.30p.m. Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, N4 (01-991 2938).

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, Trafalgar Square. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

BULLETIN OF THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE (BIRMINGHAM) Now available on subscription: £2 per year (3 issues incl. pp). From: Tiofaidh Ar La c/o IHSCC, PO Box 540, Sparckhill, Birmingham, B11 4AU



Striking Hormel workers in the Austin National Guard Armoury on 31, August 1986 to protest at proposed contract in favour of strike-breakers.

TUC's American dream a workers' nightmare

BY PAUL COSGROVE
Labour Party member, Workers Press reader
IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY

IT comes as no surprise to see the Reagan and Thatcher administrations working closely together, further cementing their aims under the guise of 'our special relationship'.

In practise we note that the achievement of profit is the only real goal of these prime capitalist nations. Both countries revel in their old imperialist image that they rule the world economy.

Despite giving up much in terms of territorial possession, America and Britain contribute greatly to the up-keep of global capitalism, albeit via the huge multi-national conglomerates.

What does come as a surprise perhaps, is that the battered British trade union movement, in the shape of the TUC, looks towards its American counterpart the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour & Congress of Industrial Organisations) for some respite in the wake of 9 years of mauling from the Tories.

A hat-trick of Tory victories has forced the TUC leaders to review the situation and ask: 'Can we do better next time? Indeed can we survive further Tory assaults which will ensure (they hope) a further reduction in trade union membership?'

For workers throughout Britain the answers to these questions are of urgent importance, it is they who will have to live under the resulting situation. By offering trade union members and potential members more in the way of services, the TUC is hoping to consolidate its ground.

It has been suggested that the American way could help in an effort to make unions more attractive, offering such services as interest-free loans, free legal help for the members families, discount holidays and financial advice for members. The TUC hopes that the introduction of these services will capture the hearts and minds as well as the contributions of British workers.

In America and Britain trade unionists have fallen victim to anti-trade union

legislation. Ian McGregor was awarded a knighthood for his 'valiant service' to Margaret Thatcher during the miners' strike, and a succession of attacks have been launched against workers — from miners to hotel staff.

McGregor learnt union-busting in the US coal and steel industries. For the capitalist class, union busting has to be carried on internationally if international profits are to be secured in 'free markets'.

Attack

In the US one of Reagan's first acts as President, was to launch an attack on striking air-traffic controllers in 1981 — 11,000 members of PATCO were dismissed; many of its leaders were shackled in chains.

● A pattern of membership decline emerges on both sides of the Atlantic:

● A rapid reduction in manufacturing.

● An increase in part-time labour.

● A shift of economic investment away from traditional labour strongholds.

In Britain there is the north-south divide; in the US Florida, Texas and California have benefitted at the expense of areas like Illinois, and the industrial eastern states, including New York.

TUC general secretary Norman Willis and Co use the US trade union movement as a model in order to survive Tory policies. They see the chance to bend public opinion away from the struggle — a move clearly associated with the right-wing trend of the Labour Party. Both set out to eradicate trade union struggle. Business trade unionism is the way. British trade union leaders aim at 'self-survival' for

the bureaucracy

Rather than simply reject these moves out of suspicion, British trade unionists must study some aspects of the US labour movement from an angle of contemporary issues and events. US workers have a proud record of struggle.

May Day originated in Chicago; trade union militancy in the auto and associated industries in the 1930s was an inspiration; and US workers have had to combat the trade union bureaucracy as well as the bosses.

Life in US trade unions is not as cosy as we are led to believe. For example the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) has a turbulent tradition of corruption; the 'scams' of James Hoffa are well documented. During Select Committee hearings in Washington in 1957, Beck — a leader of the IBT, and Hoffa's contemporary — was called upon to answer allegations of 'improper activities'.

Robert F Kennedy, chief counsel for the Select Committee said: 'During the year 1946, Mr D Beck took \$31,000 from the Joint Council Building Association to pay off a bank loan. Mr Beck, did you do that?'

Beck answered: 'In regards to the allegation, I must decline to answer the question because this Committee lacks jurisdiction or authority under Articles I, II and III of the Constitution; further, because my rights and privileges granted by the Constitution as expressed by the Fourth and Fifth Amendments are violated'.

Asked about the use of other large sums of union money for personal use, Beck again used the Constitution in his defence. (Shades of Oliver North?)

The current IBT president, Jackie Presser is just as elusive and is in the same mould. At the union's convention in 1986 Presser organised a party at Caesar's Palace costing the membership a cool \$350,000. He made the grand entrance in a sedan carried by four bearers dressed as Romans. Delegates were invited to buy watches with Presser's face beaming on the dial!

A rank-and-file organisation — 'Teamsters for a Democratic Union' (TDU) — exists to combat corruption; they produce rank-and-file papers, leaflets, and stand a

slate of opposition candidates in elections. At the 1986 convention the TDU forced major debates in opposition to the right-wing on the right to elect trade union officials, limits on officers' salaries and an increase in strike benefits.

The TDU has also publicised corruption within the union. For example it made public the case of the IBT Local 688 strike fund. It was established within the Local's bye-laws that 10 per cent of union dues should be set aside for a strike fund.

However a 1985 financial statement showed income from dues to be \$223,817, the strike fund was allocated \$10,269, less than 5 per cent. This kind of corruption has been going on for years according to TDU investigations.

The AFL-CIO leadership predictably shies away from a fight in times of struggle. The recent Hormel workers' struggle is an example of this. Geo Hormel (meat packers) of Austin, Minnesota, provoked a strike by the introduction of mandatory wage cuts despite record profits. 1,500 members of the United Food & Commercial Workers' Local P9 were solid in their resolve to win.

Bitter

The dispute quickly became one of the most bitter of recent battles of US workers. Scabs were escorted through picket lines by armed National Guardsmen. Worried about the threat to its finances of legal actions, UFCW national leadership set out to discredit Local P9. The bosses must have been pleased by these actions:

- The branch mail was censored; telephone facilities discontinued; City officials were pressurised into refusing the strikers the use of public facilities; letters were sent out indicating key strikers would be expelled; they even informed the company that the strike had ended without consulting the membership.

This blatant abandonment of the strikers drew some criticism from an unexpected source; the Catholic Bulletin of 1986 quoted: 'The UFCW made a mistake... it (the union leadership) should have co-operated with the tough men and women of Austin, and thus might have struck a spark in its whole

organisation'. Such a sentiment could be directed at any number of British trade unions in recent years who have behaved in the same manner when it comes to policing the membership.

AFL-CIO activities are the same on an international level. In 1962 the 'American Institute for Free Labour Development' (AIFLD) was set up, ostensibly to organise and encourage the development of trade unions abroad, particularly the developing countries of the Third World. In reality it has provided an ideal cover for CIA operations.

A total of 25 per cent of the AFL-CIO budget goes into its international affairs department. CIA operations include destabilizing the elected governments of Brazil 1964, Dominican Republic 1965, Chile 1974 and more recently providing right-wing trade unions in El Salvador. It now seems almost certain that some of these funds have been involved in the Irangate scandal.

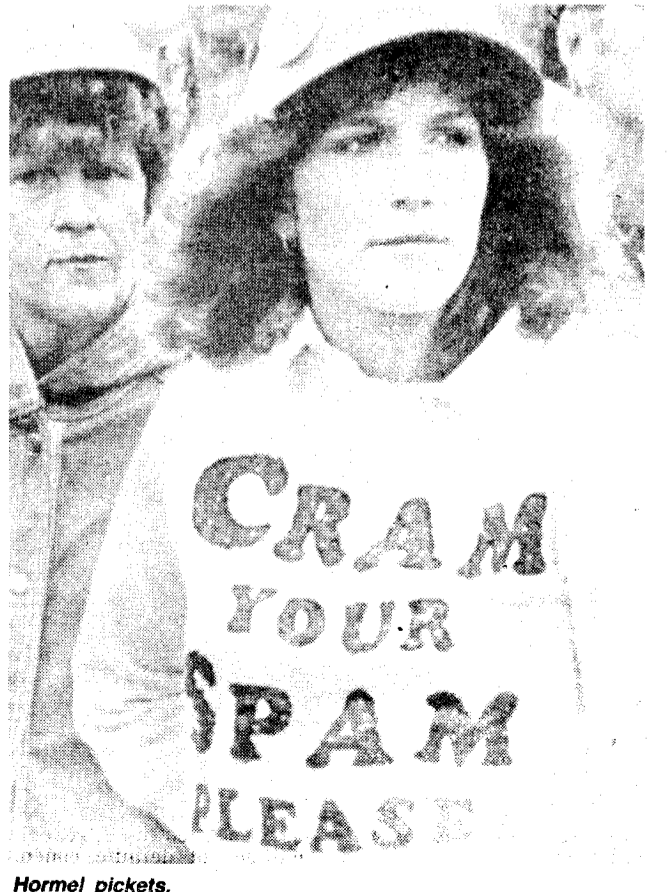
Our answer to British trade union leaders should be: 'Yes, let us look to other

countries for inspiration, but an inspiration to fight and not to dig in hoping that somehow the shells will miss us.' In today's world of multi-nationals, trade unionists of all lands have a genuine need to unite; our enemy does not operate from one country.

International

In common with comrades in South Africa, international solidarity is very much an essential feature in our fight against the Tories. US workers realise this when they play a vital role in support of Nicaragua and refuse to handle goods for South Africa on the San Francisco docks.

A positive step to be taken by British trade unionists is that of building up rank-and-file contacts in other countries to counter our leaders when they tell us 'the grass is greener on the other side'. The fact is that capitalist system makes no exceptions to the misery which it imposes on people throughout the world. WORKERS OF ALL LANDS UNITE.



Hormel pickets.

Workers Press

Saturday December 12 1987, Newsdesk 01-733 3058

WRP
London Lecture
Fundamentals of
Marxism
Crown Tavern,
Clerkenwell Green
7.30pm Friday 11 December



Ford's final offer



BY A FORD WORKER

FORD'S presented its final offer to the unions representing 32,500 manual workers on 7 December.

The only change since negotiations began 6 weeks ago is an increase in the wage offer from 4.25 per cent to 6.5 per cent.

The three-year deal and wide-ranging productivity clauses remain in the proposed deal.

Despite the Company's assertion that this was its final offer, the union negotiators did not reject

it outright but said they would take it away for consideration.

The trade union side of the national joint negotiating committee will meet in January 1988 to discuss its response, postponing the question of a ballot for all-out strike.

While the talks were taking place a 24-hour strike hit Dunton, Essex, and workers in Halewood were laid-off.

One hundred Ford workers from Dagenham, Basildon and Bridgend lobbied the talks, calling for 'no sell-out on the union claim for a one-year deal with no strings'.

Tactics

The delaying tactics of the union negotiators — their unwillingness to fight Ford's on the claim — has caused deep concern in the Ford plants.

As expected, the policy of continuing talks has only resulted in the Company introducing more strings. In addition to their demand for short-term-contract labour, Ford's has now called for the Ford Sick Benefit Society to be brought under their total control.

This would mean that, whereas at present sick pay stands at approximately £100 per week, under the new arrangement it would be 50 per cent of the wage rate (including Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)).

In effect a cut in sick pay and the possibility for the Company to withhold it as a form of discipline.

WORKERS PRESS

WORKERS PRESS leads the fight for Trotskyism and Marxist principles in the labour and trade union movement nationally and internationally.

The most reliable way to get your copy of WORKERS PRESS is by post.

You can have WORKERS PRESS delivered for 25p per week.

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION

Prompt, regular, reliable — anywhere in the world!

INLAND: 10 issues £4, 50 issues £19

Overseas SURFACE: 10 issues £5, 50 issues £24

EUROPE inc Eire: 10 issues £5.30, 50 issues £25.50

AIR: Near East: 10 issues £5.50, 50 issues £26.50

Americas, Asia, Africa: 10 issues £6.10, 50 issues £30

Far East, Australia: 10 issues £6.60, 50 issues £32

Name Enclosed £

Address

Send to: WORKERS PRESS, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

KING'S CROSS

Inquiry will cover up guilt

DESMOND FENNEL QC opened the inquiry into the King's Cross fire by saying: 'This is an investigation — it is not litigation. It is not a law suit in which one party wins and another party loses. It is quite different from the ordinary criminal process which is accusatorial in character.'

'This investigation is inquisitorial — an exercise designed to establish the cause and to make recommendations which will make a recurrence less likely. Those who died deserved nothing less.'

Fennell's message is clear. His inquiry has no power to allocate blame. London Underground senior management, the private contractors working at King's Cross and above all the Tory government which is guilty of slashing the money available for the Underground system are to escape punishment.

According to this inquiry, blame lies not with any earthly agency but with some free floating, indifferent, extra-terrestrial force.

No blame will be attributed in the King's Cross case. But the courts have no difficulty in punishing miners, or printworkers, or anti-Apartheid pickets outside South Africa House or anyone else who takes up the fight against Thatcher.

Fennell went on to say that he hoped, by hearing evidence from experts, to be able to recommend 'how to make the London Underground a safer place'.

Reports from independent bodies, from within London Regional Transport itself, from the fire brigade, and from workers on the tube have repeatedly warned in detail of risks on the Underground and the lack of measures taken to prevent fires, or to deal adequately with them if they do break out.

A fortnight after the horrifying deaths at King's Cross a tube train packed with passengers was sent into a tunnel with firemen on board to look for a fire on the Northern line.

Firemen were called after thick white smoke was seen coming out of one of the tunnels. No attempt was made to stop the public going down into the station. The station had not been evacuated — the platform from which the smoke had been seen was full of passengers but no one from London Regional Transport was in sight.

The inquiry has been adjourned until 1 February. In the meantime the 'Evening Standard' is being sued by LRT for calling for the resignations of Sir Keith Bright, chair of LRT, and Dr Tony Ridley chair and managing director of London Underground, whose enthusiastic support for Thatcher's destruction of public services has never faltered.

The 'Evening Standard' agrees with Desmond Fennell QC that the investigation of the causes of the disaster 'should be free of slanging and recrimination.' They also want to restrict the responsibility to those in charge of LRT.

The responsibility lies with Tory policies: it is Thatcher and company who must be removed from office.

The failure of the Labour leaders to call for an independent trade union inquiry into the disaster exposes them as hand in glove with the Thatcher government in covering up the real culprits responsible for the disaster. The campaign for such an inquiry must be launched immediately throughout the working class movement.

CBI wants rate burden shifted to workers

A WINDFALL of £2 billion in rate relief would be awarded to industry if the CBI's (Confederation of British Industry) recommendations for rate reform are accepted.

Under this plan business ratepayers would contribute only to the costs of certain specific services such as roads, fire and police. The costs of other services would then fall entirely on 'domestic' rate-payers.

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £664.82

OUR Special Fund has been established to make possible the development of our international work which centres on the struggle to build the Fourth International. We need to step up the pace if we are to achieve our goal of £20,000 by 1 May of next year. We again ask all Party branches to plan fund-raising activities over the Christmas period to give the Fund a boost. Send all donations to:

WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

WORKERS PRESS DECEMBER FUND

Total so far: £249.98

The amount which we had received as we went to print on Wednesday night was seriously below what we really need to have in by this time of the month.

We have repeatedly warned our readers that each time we fall short on the £2,000 monthly fund Workers Press is in grave danger of ceasing production as a weekly newspaper. That position is now imminent.

We simply cannot continue for more than another week or two unless there is a dramatic improvement in our fund situation.

Send all donations to:

WRP Monthly Fund
PO Box 735
London SW9 7QS