

STOP THE DEPORTATIONS! END THE OCCUPATION!

National Demonstration:
Assemble 12 O'Clock Hyde Park Corner Saturday 23 January.
Called by the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Palestinian solidarity organisations.

WE STAND WITH PALESTINIANS

Act against Israeli terror

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

THE PALESTINIAN people are waging a heroic struggle for their existence and national freedom against a ruthless Israeli colonial regime backed by the power of United States imperialism.

This struggle now demands even greater support from the British and international working class.

Last week, Israeli planes attacked the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp in south Lebanon, killing over 20 people and wounding 30.

In occupied Palestine itself, Israeli troops have shot dead over 30 people in the past month, suppressing demonstrations in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and the killings continue.

Among the latest victims was a woman hanging out washing in her garden in the village of ar-Ram, north of Jerusalem, when Israeli troops appeared pursuing a Palestinian youth. Apparently she said something to them, and they shot her in the chest.

In defiance of world opinion and international law, the Israeli government has proceeded with deportation orders against nine Palestinian detainees — deportation from their own country by an occupying power which has no right being there.

Prison

On Tuesday, it was reported that the nine had begun a hunger-strike in Jneed prison, near Nablus, where they were being held.

On the same day, Israeli troops were sent on to the campus of Bir Zeit University to attempt to forcibly break

up a demonstration by students who had erected burning tyre barricades.

Shocked

In Khan Yunis, at the southern end of the Gaza Strip, there was a general strike and clashes occurred between local youth and the occupying forces. In Nablus, Ramallah, and el Bireh there were more demonstrations and troops fired tear gas and live rounds at the crowds.

Curfews were imposed in Tulkarm refugee camp and the town of Qalqilia, where women had marched through the town and staged a sit-in demonstration in the chamber of commerce.

In the Gaza Strip refugee camp of Jabalia, where five people had been killed by the troops, the inhabitants had endured a prolonged siege by the Israeli occupiers who denied them food and essential supplies; women marched on the Israeli military headquarters. The Israeli commander reportedly had to abandon his car, which was destroyed by demonstrators, and take to an armoured vehicle, from which he later



Defiant faces in court, awaiting trial (above)

threatened the people through a loud -hailer.

It was in Jabaliya, as women shouted about Israeli military brutality and beatings, that British Foreign Office minister David Mellor said he was 'shocked' by the conditions he had seen.

'I defy anyone to come here and not be shocked,' Mellor said. 'Conditions here are an affront to civilised values. It is appalling that a few miles up the coast there is prosperity, and here there is misery on a scale that rivals anything in the world.'

Gesture

Later, in a gesture that upset his Israeli hosts, Mellor intervened with an Israeli colonel to ask why a 14-year old boy had been arrested nearby, although he was doing nothing. The troops claimed the youth was suspected of throwing stones.

Conditions in the Gaza Strip refugee camps — where thousands exist in breeze-block huts under corrugated tin roofs, boiling in summer and shivering in winter — are amongst the worst in the world and have been described many times. The poverty and oppression

have been graphically reported and quantified statistically by the UN relief agencies and the Israeli Benvenisti report, which in an understatement last year called Gaza 'Israel's Soweto', and predicted an explosion.

It was the setting up of the Israeli state in 1948 that drove Palestinians from homes in Jaffa to huts in Gaza's camps. Since the Israeli army seized the Strip in 1967, land has been expropriated for Zionist settlers, the citrus and fishing industries discriminated against and the area made a reservoir of cheap labour.

Frontier

Palestinian labourers who cross the frontier for work are not allowed to take up residence. They are not only underpaid but must pay Israeli taxes and social security contributions from which they receive nothing. The Israeli state makes a net profit on the Strip!

Presumably Mellor was briefed on some of this before he made his trip. Nevertheless, having visited the Gaza camps myself, I can testify that confronting this

reality is a moving experience, and may be so even for a Tory minister.

What I also found in the camps was the indomitable spirit of the Palestinian people; the women who somehow maintain houseproud standards and raise healthy children, the doctors, teachers, nurses, the youngsters who surround you to ask questions about the outside world and what it is doing.

It is in this same spirit that young Palestinian schoolchildren are daily confronting Israeli tear gas, beatings, and bullets.

Mellor used the time-honoured phrase 'something has got to be done'. He said 'The Israelis cannot duck their responsibilities', . . . the people here have to have some hope for their future.'

The Palestinian people, in Gaza, the West Bank, the camps in Lebanon,

and Galilee, have hope for their future, and they are fighting for it. The only responsibility they want the Israeli Zionists to take is to get out of the occupied territories, and let the Palestinians determine their own future.

Israel is the biggest single recipient of US aid. It enjoys privileges for its exports in the EEC. Whatever fine words US and British Tories utter, with their world-renowned hypocrisy, what is needed now are deeds.

The responsibility for the Palestinian people lies above all with the international working class. The working class throughout the world must show solidarity with the Palestinian people.

● Demonstrate! Pass resolutions in union branches! Boycott Israeli goods, airlines and shipping! Solidarity with the Palestinians now!

State threat to NUM — back page

The Soviet opposition — page 8
Health service crisis — pages 2 and 4
Connolly, Sinn Fein and Bolshevism — page 10

**Workers
Press**

Financial Killing

LAST week's 'Sunday Times' revealed that large consignments of meat from famine-torn Ethiopia are arriving daily in Britain.

Next week the Ethiopian cargo ship 'Metzanet' will unload tinned corned beef at Teesport in Middlesborough. Similar consignments have been arriving at Antwerp every two weeks for the past two years. The exports are handled by Star, an Italian multinational company working in partnership with the Ethiopian government.

Reactions to the news have been various. 'People buying Ethiopian meat are doing the country and its people a favour' said Christopher Thornton, spokesman for Save the Children Fund.

Bob Geldof, recently returned from Ethiopia, said: 'I understand the dilemma, but such exports bring in much needed foreign currency. The knee-jerk reaction is that we shouldn't buy it, but the trade does not bear any direct relevance to the famine. During times of drought farmers often have to sell their cattle. People should have no qualms about buying Ethiopian meat.'

Tory MP Geoffrey Dickens demanded the meat be banned. 'It is obscene that their government should be exporting food when their people are dying' he said.

All these statements miss the real point. The plight of the Ethiopian economy certainly cannot be blamed on the buyers of meat in this country or Europe generally, or even on the Ethiopian government.

Like all the former colonial countries, Ethiopia is being bled white by the international bankers. It is the blood-sucking bankers who are responsible for the death and starvation haunting these countries.

While millions die of starvation in Ethiopia mountains of food are stockpiled by the Common Market with the sole purpose of maintaining food prices and thus the profits of the multi-national financial giants that control most of European and American agriculture.

Here lies the obscenity, that of a dying social system unable to provide even the minimum of food, clothing and shelter for millions of ordinary people throughout the world.

While millions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries face starvation, in the big capitalist countries of Europe and North America the means of making wealth — factories, mines, shipyards, together with the millions of workers currently unemployed — lie idle or under-used.

Large numbers of workers and youth as well as sections of the middle class have been moved by the plight of the people of Ethiopia and other countries ravaged by imperialism. But the outbreak of the new crisis in Ethiopia so soon after such large sums of money were raised demonstrates that charity, however well-meaning those who donate to it may be, can never answer what is at root a deep social crisis.

It is urgent that the working class of the big capitalist countries, together with the workers and all those exploited in the colonial countries, join hands in hammering out an international plan which would work out how the human and material resources of all countries could be mobilised to put an end to world poverty and disease.

The elaboration of such a plan would be a vital step in the struggle for the socialist re-organisation of the world — the only final answer to the starvation and poverty that imperialism forces onto the peoples of the world.

NHS will 'fall apart'

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

A SICK contradiction exists between today's miraculous possibilities of technologically developed methods of health care, and the grim decay of the British National Health Service.

It was reported last week that US computer scientists have developed a technique for 3 dimensional X-rays, which mean that surgeons can plan their work by manipulating the picture before an operation in the same way as engineers test new designs on computer before a single part is built.

In the same week, a national survey reported that large sections of the NHS are on the brink of collapse and will fall apart this year unless immediate action is taken.

The Association of Community Health Councils of England and Wales, produced a frightening array of statistics, revealing that hospitals across the country had overspent their budgets by up to £150 million by Christmas. One in two Health Authorities are cutting services to patients by closing beds, wards or specialist units.

Next year's budget will be £100 million short of what is needed to cover pay and price increases, according to the survey of 113 health districts. There will be no money left to cope with increasing demands for treatment, especially for the elderly, or to finance advances in medical technology.

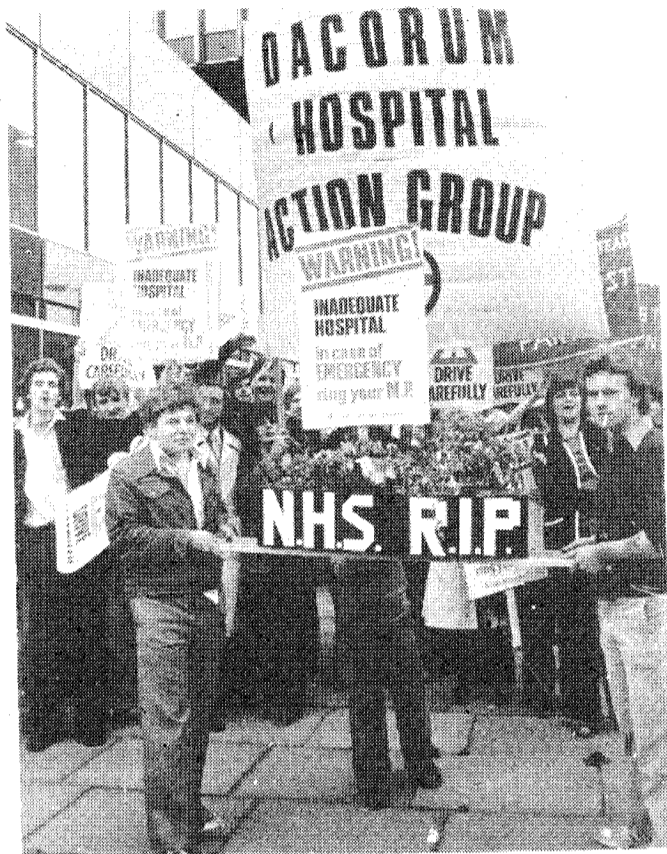
Many Authorities were facing deficits between £120-£150 million. The survey states that these deficits are a result of the government's failure to provide sufficient resources to fund the increases in pay and prices coming up next year for Health Authorities.

Tory ministers are stonewalling, demanding that the cash shortfalls be made up with efficiency savings and cost improvements totalling £140-150 million, together with an extra £10-20 million from commercial activities such as selling advertising space and running hospital shops.

How do you view the prospect of waking up after your operation to find the surgeon bending over you with Drink Tuborg Lager written on his surgical cap and trying to sell you one of those nice shell-crusted ashtrays?

BMA chairman, Dr. John Marks, joined a gathering chorus of top medical figures breaking decades of dignified reticence to tell Health minister Tony Newton that the Torys' insistence on more and more 'value for money' was a load of

apart'



The coffin, carried by these health workers on a 1981 demonstration, is today an even more macabre symbol of the state of their industry

old hogwash. 'We're through the fat, we're into the meat, and now we are dangerously close to the bone.'

Birmingham Children's Hospital again featured in the news as another set of desperate parents resort to the courts in a last-ditch attempt to get treatment for their four year-old son.

His heart operation has been postponed three times because of the lack of skilled nurses available to nurse children in the Intensive Care Unit.

The constant stream of nurses leaving the NHS threatens to develop into a flood because of their worsening conditions and pay.

Most work long hours of unpaid overtime, out of commitment to patient care. They receive the worst compensation in British industry for working a continuous three shift system.

Staff nurses earn between £7,300 and £8,600 a year, and ward sisters from £9,000 to £12,000.

The Thatcher government plans a new pay structure which because of changes in special duty payments will further cut their pay.

'The British Medical Journal' last week explained in great detail the effects of cuts and plummeting morale in a particular hospital where they were unable to find the Christmas decorations because not one of its nurses had been working there the previous year.

The same issue carried an interview with a heart surgeon. He complains of the nurse shortage and the burden doctors are expected to carry. He

vided' he said.

The hospital itself is 'generally filthy' because of Thatcher's privatisation campaign.

The fate of NHS workers today is the same as local government workers and services tomorrow.

It is significant that top NHS doctors attack Tory policies in a conventional journal like the BMJ. British spending on health per head of population is barely half that of France, and less than half that of Germany or Switzerland.

Tony Newton in the BBC debate with the chair of the British Medical Association reiterated Tory determination to see the private sector take over the more profitable sections of the NHS.

'We are concerned to make sure there is a high standard of health care available to everyone regardless of income.'

'But it would certainly be foolish not to recognise that people's willingness to spend over and above what is taken from them as taxpayers can and does make an important contribution.'

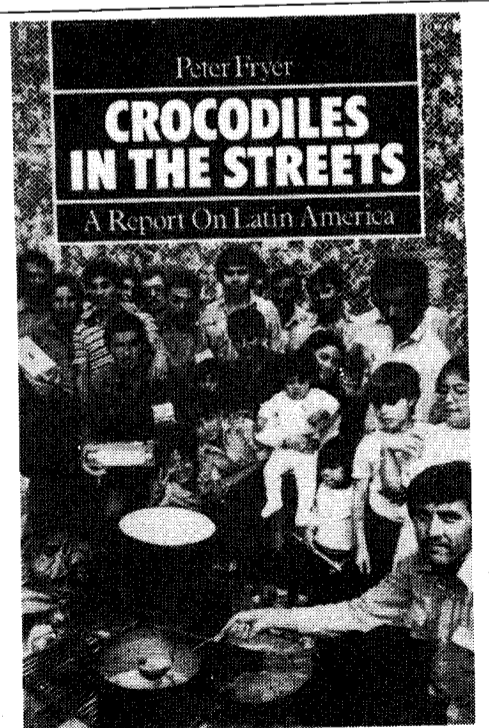
The establishment of a national health service was a significant step forward for the working class. It marked the fact that medical care cannot be organised on an individual basis but requires collective, social action.

The plan to destroy such a system expresses the stagnation and decline of the productive forces. More and more sections of society are coming into struggle to defend the health service against the Thatcherite vultures. The battle to defend the NHS will be one of the coming year's major political struggles.

also reveals that a large part of the cash shortfall in his department is now being financed by what he calls 'soft money'.

Some of this is supposed research, funded by drug companies, but the rest of it comes out of the doctors' own salaries.

This particular surgeon supplements his secretary's income, that of his nurses, and to a lesser extent the hospital technician's pay. 'I even bought the typewriters because I got so fed up with the rubbish the NHS pro-



**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 (IWL). Fryer lets the people he met speak for themselves.

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Working class will make her eat her words!

THATCHER'S BOASTS

THATCHER'S claim that she has cured 'Britain's sickness' is false to the core.

Her hollow boast came as she passed Asquith's record as longest serving prime minister this century. She said that in 1979 the nation was suffering from the British disease, but now the world was coming to Britain to seek out the British cure.

By the 'British disease' she means one thing: the organised strength of the working class. This she most certainly has not broken, as the ruling class know only too well.

Over the last eight years the working class, as well as sections of the middle class, has demonstrated time after time their willingness to take on the Thatcher government in open conflict.

One thing only has stood in the way of victory in these battles: the perfidious leadership at the head of the working

COMMENT
BY GEOFF
PILLING

class. From the struggle with union-busting Eddie Shah at Warrington through to the Wapping struggle against Rupert Murdoch the Labour and trade union leaders have collaborated, secretly or openly, with the Tory government against the working class.

Latest in the line of battle are all those — nurses, hospital workers, doctors and others — who have taken up the defence of the National Health Service against Thatcher's attempt to destroy it.

Thatcher could not have survived a year without the collaboration



The working class showed in the battle at Eddie Shah's Warrington printing plant — and many times since — its readiness and capacity to take on Thatcher and the state machine

of those leaders, 'left' and right who have opposed the mobilisation of the strength of the working class against the Tory government.

In the face of Thatcher's hollow talk about the revival of British capitalism the stark truth tells a different story. The Thatcher years have seen

the continued decline in British capitalism as a whole and British manufacturing industry in particular.

Millions of jobs have been lost in coal, steel, transport, engineering, shipbuilding and those other industries on which British prosperity once depended. Several millions are now reliant on state hand-outs for their survival. The only 'growth industries' have been those associated with the most parasitic and speculative activities of the City of London.

This decline is self-evident even before the full gale of the impending US recession hits Europe. Thatcher was the most avid fan of 'Reaganomics' — the idea that tax reductions would unleash a boom in capital investment and lead to the revival of an ailing Amer-

ican industry.

This strategy — if it can be graced with the name — is now in ruins. Instead of investing in industry, those receiving tax cuts took part in what they thought would be a never-ending stock-exchange boom. Thatcher's strategy for the regeneration of British capitalism will surely meet with the same fate.

Thatcher's claim — that the working class has been rolled back and socialism removed from the agenda — has been the same cry of all those defeatists and faint-hearts in the working class who have grovelled before what they take to be Thatcher's triumphal march.

The coming year will provide ample opportunity to expose such elements in the labour movement.

Sitting room killers

BY ANDREW BURGIN

THREE MORE CHILDREN were killed this week when a fire swept through their home. They were killed by the greed of furniture manufacturers who continue to fill their products with lethal polyurethane foam. This foam bursts into flame at the touch of a match — giving off poisonous fumes that kill within minutes.

Seventeen people died over Christmas as a direct result of toxic fumes from this foam. Alternative types of foam are easily available and are only slightly more expensive. One fire officer calculated that it would cost only an extra ten pounds per settee to ensure completely safe furniture.

Situation

Furniture manufacturers, like their counterparts in the airline industry, are unwilling to make the necessary changes. They complain that such changes would affect their profits and as one manufacturer said last week: 'safety is the last thing that the customer is looking for when he buys our furniture.'

The Thatcher government is of course completely unmoved by this situation, so much so that Tory ministers are allowing the polyurethane foam which is to be phased out over three years to be replaced with HR, or highly resilient polyurethane foam. This foam actually produces more toxic fumes and burns more fiercely than the standard foam.

A campaign has been launched to ban the use of these killer materials. While we fully support all such campaigns we point out that it will be through a struggle to end the economic system of capitalism itself which will ensure proper safety conditions both at home and at work.

Stalinists behind S.A. union split

A DEEP split has rocked the Commercial Catering and Allied Worker's Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA).

In line with the policy of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) declared at its launching conference — to establish one union for each industrial section — a merger was planned between CCAWUSA (membership 70,000) and two other unions: HARWU (Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, membership 9,000) and RAWU (Retail and Allied Worker's Union, membership 3,000).

The initial merger talks failed, but a breakaway minority section of CCAWUSA carried through the unification with HARWU and RAWU. The majority charged the minority with conducting the merger in an unprincipled, unconstitutional way.

COSATU set up a commission to mediate between the two groups, but while discussions were taking place the breakaway section not only merged with a non-COSATU union but also forcibly took over CCAWUSA's Capetown offices. Members and officials present were

threatened with violence, and financial records and cash stolen.

Despite these actions, the Central Executive Committee of COSATU took the side of the renegades, and joined with them in accusing CCAWUSA of being anti-COSATU, critical of COSATU policies, and planning to affiliate to NACTU, a rival federation of trade unions.

CCAWUSA has issued a statement about these accusations. 'From time to time we have levelled criticisms against certain undemocratic activities carried out by certain COSATU structures or individuals. We see this as our democratic right and it does not mean we are criticising COSATU as a whole. Part of being a democratic organisation is to critically evaluate and this in no way means being against the whole organisation.'

'We firmly believe that our members must be involved in developing the political position of CCAWUSA. The fact that our members have not adopted the Freedom Charter does not mean we are anti-COSATU.'

The gathering influence of the African National Congress and South African Communist Party over COSATU is expressed in the right wing position it has taken over the split.

The influence of these two organisations is shown in the adoption of the Freedom Charter, which contains their conciliatory, anti-socialist policies.

The attack on CCAWUSA is an attack on the independent struggle of the working class for socialism. This factor is anathema to the Stalinists and their unholy allies in the ANC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Basic Principles of Marxism

Six Lectures at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC 1.

Friday, February 5, 1988, at 7.30.

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WHAT are the implications of the financial and economic crisis for the working class?

Thursday, February 11, 1988, at 7.30.

What is Revolution?

MARX understood the revolutionary transformation of society as expressing the conflict between the advance of the forces of production developed by human beings and the social relations between them.

Thursday, February 18, 1988, at 7.30.

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WHY does the social system under which the working class is exploited appear to some people to be in line with 'human nature'? How does this system operate, and how will it be destroyed?

Friday, February 26, 1988, at 7.30.

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HOW does the state exercise power over the working class? Can that power be broken? What will take its place?

Friday, March 4, 1988, at 7.30.

The Russian Revolution, Stalinism and Trotskyism.

SEVENTY years ago, the Russian workers, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrew Tsarism and capitalism, and the world socialist revolution began. The rise of a bureaucracy within the Soviet state led to the betrayal of the revolution, but not its destruction.

Thursday, March 10, 1988, at 7.30.

The Fourth International Today.

FIFTY years ago, Trotsky led those who fought to continue the work to prepare the world revolution in the foundation of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution. After decades of crisis, the time has come for the re-founding of the FI.

READING:

Cliff Slaughter, *Marx and Marxism*

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*

Lenin, *The State and Revolution*

Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*

Bernard Franks writes on the background to the NHS crisis

Policy decision to smash the NHS

BY BERNARD FRANKS

THE LIE from the Tory government is that the maximum amount of money has been set aside to run the health service and it cannot be helped if this is not enough.

The only matter open for discussion, they say, is in what proportions this fixed sum is divided between health authorities and between the various sectors of the service.

More for psychiatric care will mean less for the acute wards. Higher nurses pay will mean less equipment. More cash for the north will mean less for London, and so on.

Health workers and service users all over the country have quite rightly rejected this story and are demanding that no cuts be made anywhere and that all sectors be fully funded.

Health Authority members and managers who rob Peter to pay Paul in an attempt to lessen the effects of the government's measures are either knowing wielders of the Tory hatchet or — to give some the benefit

of the doubt — have not understood that there is no shortage of money.

The truth is that the Tories have taken a policy decision to smash up the National Health Service in its present form and are doing this by systematic budgetary manipulation.

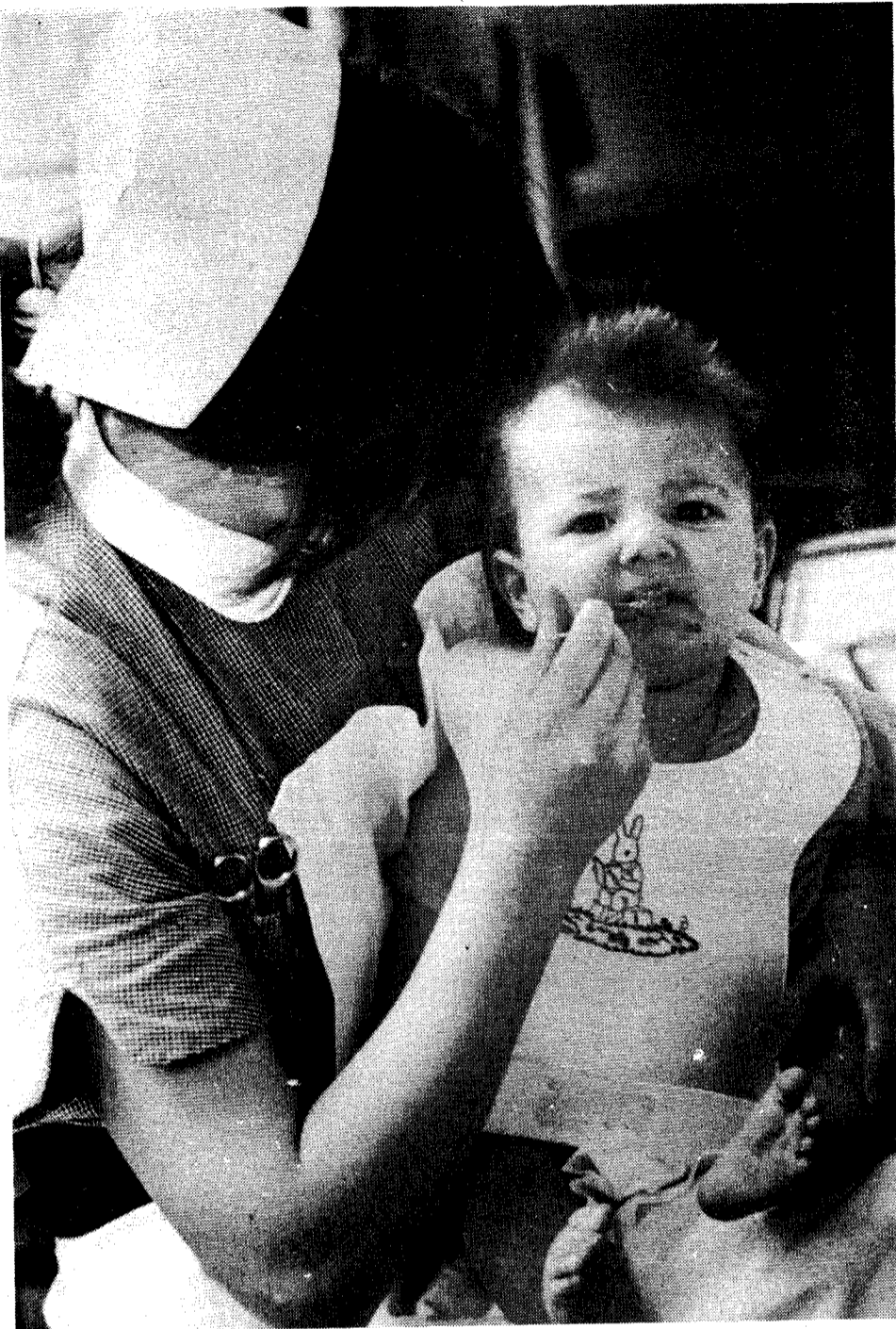
For the NHS as a whole, and for each health district and hospital, funds are deliberately set below the level at which existing provision can be maintained so that services will reach the point of collapse.

Cut

On this basis they ensure that bed numbers will be cut, wards will be emptied, patient queues lengthened, accident units shut, hospitals bulldozed away and pay, conditions and staff numbers will be forced below the level at which patients can be properly treated and cared for.

Should any health authority successfully make economies, so that it is able to work adequately within the new budget without major clinical cutbacks, it will simply be hit again with a new round of cash deductions until it is financially starved into the required erosion of its provision.

Tory strategy is to destroy the present state-provided health service in order to replace it with a two-tier pro-



vision which makes no call on the exchequer whatsoever.

At the upper level there will be a vastly expanded private sector in which all forms of treatment and care — consultations, operations, time in hospital etc — are priced and charged for on a cash down or private insurance basis.

Only the rich and those paying extremely high premiums will be able to afford full cover, especially if they want it to carry over into retirement, when the majority of health problems occur.

Poor

The second tier will be a second-rate treatment for less well off people and the outright poor. But whether depending on some form of national insurance scheme — costed to match spending strictly to contributions — or whether resting on some cheaper private scheme, it is clear that the Tories expect to see charity and collecting box input as a major factor at this level.

For those with chronic conditions needing long-term care, there will be no third tier but only so-called 'community care'. This has already proved to be a matter of dumping ex-patients and long-stay patients onto local authority services which are themselves going through the same process of cutback and privatisation.

In practice relatives and charities will simply be left to cope alone with the worst cases needing the most comprehensive care — for example those slowly dying or people with severe mental conditions or handicaps.

This two-level structure is not new. It was developed in Victorian times and collapsed in the 1930s when the voluntary hospitals and clinics which provided free provision for the poor lost their

they can make use of public service facilities.

Obviously this initial activity is just the first step towards substitution of private for public control.

Meanwhile the Tories are not interested that their undermining of services could bring a massive disaster if a major accident, an epidemic or a particularly savage winter suddenly overloaded the service.

Reduced

Managers who seek to work within the now reduced budget, health authorities which seek favourable deals with the private sector, and charities and collectors raising cash to cover for lack of essential equipment, are all playing into the Tory hands and laying the basis for the next stage of the NHS's destruction.

Certainly, individuals with a concern for the sick would best serve their interests by fighting to defend and extend the state service rather than increasing the reliance on voluntary contributions.

The NHS was a product of a huge popular revulsion against reliance on charity, flag days and ladies and gentlemen bountiful on the one hand, and impossible prices of private treatment on the other.

By the end of World War II, the near-universal demand was for a free state health service. Whatever the inadequacies of the system subsequently provided, no government has been given a mandate to destroy it.

So where is the action by the trade unions and the Labour opposition to fight the Tory onslaught and unify the action taken locally by health workers and supporters?

Massive

Although all polls show a massive hostility to the destruction of the health service, the present TUC leadership has not mounted a single day of action against the Tory plans, never mind a concerted campaign.

Likewise, the Labour leadership hides behind its parliamentary minority and its opposition to extra-parliamentary activity to challenge the Tory political strategy with nothing more than platitudes.

Members of trade unions and community organisations have a positive duty to promote new leaders of the labour movement who will take up the vital unifying and political struggle, inside and outside parliament, to bring down the Tories and destroy their plans for wrecking all social and public services.

ose to use the extra cash to expand their own facilities to cut the waiting lists are refused the extra funding.

So a public service in crisis is being forced to subsidise the private sector; to the tune of £2,000 a time for hip operations.

Private

On the other hand the private clinics are currently cutting their prices just to get this work and make massive inroads into the public sector.

In the same way, private health companies are offering to put up cash towards vitally needed equipment — scanners, kidney stone smashers etc — if in return

funding during the slump.

Of course health is a highly emotive subject and the Tory tactic is essentially one of privatisation by stealth.

Contract tendering for a number of ancillary services — cleaning, laundry, catering and portering — is the thin end of an extremely thick wedge comprising the total of all hospital provision.

Meanwhile the government is forcing increased dependence on private hospitals by supplying extra cash to the public sector to clear the huge backlog of non-urgent operations — hip replacements, varicose veins etc — only on condition that this work is sub-contracted out to the private sector.

NHS hospitals which prop-

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PICKET ON 7 FEB

Irish POW in solitary

REPUBLICAN prisoner Noel Gibson is in solitary confinement in Wakefield prison — being punished for an offence he could not have committed.

Noel began a life-plus-111-years sentence in 1975, after being convicted by Judge Cantley at Manchester with four other Republicans.

He was moved to Wakefield in September last year — and after a week was put in solitary for a mythical breach of 'good order and discipline'.

Although the charge is unproved and unprovable, Noel spent his birthday (December 11) Christmas and New Year in solitary.

He was alleged to have borrowed a book from the prison library, placed an incendiary device in it, and then returned it.

But he wrote to 'Republican News' explaining: 'I was only in the prison a week, have never been to the prison library, and the only books in my possession are educational ones.'

Gibson told the governor he could not have committed the offence, only to be told, 'well then, you had the book taken from the library, assembled the incendiary device, and then had it placed in the library.'

Tests

The book was sent for forensic tests twelve weeks ago — but Gibson is still in solitary. He has been told the results will take a long time to come through.

Although periods of solitary confinement are only supposed to last 28 days, prison authorities frequently extend them — sometimes for periods of months.

Gibson is calling for pressure to be put on MPs, the British government and the



Noel Gibson

Irish Embassy in London to draw attention to his case.

Wakefield prison authorities are notorious for such blatant acts of discrimination and harassment against Republican prisoners. Special orders have been given for humiliating procedures to be adopted during visits — strip searches for prisoners, body-searches of visitors and total absence of privacy.

Protests

Last summer Republican prisoners Nat Vella and Hugh Doherty protested against these conditions by refusing to wear prison uniforms, accept visits or do penal work. Noel Gibson is also refusing to accept visits because of the repressive rules applied to them.

A PICKET of Wakefield prison, to commemorate the death of Republican prisoner of war Frank Stagg, who died on hunger strike there, will be held on Sunday February 7 at 1:00 pm.

The picket also aims to draw attention to the victimisation of Noel Gibson and other Republican prisoners, and demand their repatriation to Ireland.

'Revolutionary armed struggle in '88'

'REVOLUTIONARY armed struggle is the only means of countering the evils of British imperialism and the sectarian six-county state,' says a Christmas and New Year message from the leadership of the Republican movement.

Extending Christmas greetings to Irish prisoners of war and to their families, the statement then pays tribute to the many IRA Volunteers killed in 1987.

'They will always be remembered by their comrades in arms, by the republican people, and eventually they will be acknowledged by the Irish nation as the founders of an independent, democratic, socialist republic.'

Determination

The statement goes on to re-affirm the Republican movement's determination to defeat Britain in the six counties. It also highlights the IRA's responsibility for the protection of nationalist

communities — which 'neither Dublin nor the SDLP has the courage, the ability or the intention to do'.

'But for the IRA presence in many urban nationalist areas, loyalists would be using their old tactic of the pogroms', the statement says.

Policy

In keeping with the IRA's policy of not militarily confronting the twenty-six county state forces, the statement says: 'Our strategy is no secret. It is not to march a thousand armed Volunteers down O'Connell Street or through government offices in Dublin. It is to militarise the armed struggle in the north and thus convince the British public that their government is lying with it says it can win the war in Ireland. It is to persuade the British to pull their troops out.'



Postal workers on the march

**BY SAM CAMERON
Dundee UCW
(In Personal Capacity)**

I URGE all postal workers to reject the deal negotiated by UCW general secretary Alan Tuffin when voting in the forthcoming ballot.

The whole deal represents servility and capitulation by the union leadership. It proposes new measures designed to maximise profits by intensifying productivity.

Management recently announced that profits had doubled from 21 million to 46 million for the six month period up to September 1987. This was a result of previous productivity deals.

Tuffin and the executive were given a mandate, in May, to reduce the working week by three hours without 'strings'. This mandate included the possibility of industrial action to achieve this demand. They have not only failed miserably to obtain the just demands of postal workers but have agreed a most pernicious and poisonous productivity deal. The Post Office will introduce two separate measures for letters and parcels both with the same aims, to make the work harder. To increase exploitation and to maximise profits.

Urges

Allan Johnson, assistant secretary of the union urges postal workers to vote yes to both the performance based incentive scheme (PBIS) related to parcels and real unit labour costs (RULC) for letters. This is despite the fact that details of both schemes have yet to be negotiated. We haven't seen the rotten fruit on sale under the counter but we're expected to buy it.

One of the most repugnant parts of the deal is the abolition of the IWM. This will mean large cuts in bonus payments, affecting offices where the union is strong, London and Glasgow. This is a complete sellout. The Union leadership argues that 43,000 members get less than £7.50 from IWM and that 22,000 receive nothing at all. The new schemes do not solve these problems at all. The Union leadership have abandoned small offices to divisive incentive schemes, their 'solution' is to replace a bad scheme by a worse scheme which cuts the pay of thousands of workers. This is not acceptable!

On the five day week

POSTAL DEAL: THE REAL ISSUES

agreement Johnson maintains that the management tried to introduce many unacceptable conditions which were rejected. But in the same breath he claims that the measures which were agreed were fairly innocuous and are of benefit to the membership. This is a lie and must be rejected.

The real reason for these measures is the search to increase profits, to prepare the ground for the privatisation of the Post Office. This is the avowed intention of the Tory government. Thatcher wants to sell off the Post Office to her City friends at bargain basement prices.

Every postal worker knows that Johnson's optimism is just pie in the sky. They know that behind Sir Bryan Nicholson is a Tory government hell bent on the impoverishment of the working class.

The situation in the Post Office is no different from other industries. That is, profit first — pay and conditions last. The Post Office makes much of customer service but in reality the only customers they care about are big business. They could not care whether the unemployed or the pensioners receive their entitlement. Nicholson brags about having kept prices down, postal workers know only too well at whose expense this is.

Postal workers should be clear where the well paid union bureaucrats who are meant to be representing

their interests really stand. They are no less than a bunch of craven capitulators. They are prepared to lick the boots which are trying to kick us to death.

Tuffin and company are more of afraid of their own membership than of the management. That is the reason they called off the industrial action, joining hands with management to worsen the conditions of postal workers.

Casual

Since the introduction of casual and part-time labour there has been a continuous attempt to divide and intimidate all workers. This has been answered by industrial action. The response of the union leadership has been to give no support or even to face their membership on this question. The executive have hidden at UCW house, postal workers are saying that the time for hiding is over — they must fight! While the workers are prepared to fight, Tuffin has been hiding behind Thatcher's petticoat.

In rejecting the deal every postal worker must be clear that they are not only voting against the deal but are also voting no confidence in their leadership. The next step is inevitably confrontation. This is the last thing that the union leadership are prepared for or are prepared to lead. They are praying for a yes vote. They don't want to go along a road where Thatcher and Nicholson are preparing to smash the union. Tuffin must either fight or resign!

What is really on the agenda now is the question of leadership. The urgent question is the building of a new leadership in the UCW. A leadership which will really fight for the interests of all postal workers and a leadership which will not capitulate to Nicholson and Thatcher. The lessons of the miners strike have to be drawn to win this dispute — no union can go it alone. Only the united strength of the trade union movement can defeat Thatcher.

The postal workers have demonstrated their willingness to fight, and they will fight.

THE FORD pay deal package has been rejected by the Amalgamated Engineering Union leadership. Bill Jordan, AEU president, said the Union objected to the drastic changes in working practices and the three year deal. A series of one day strikes has demonstrated the anger of Ford workers at the proposed deal. It is this opposition that has prevented Jordan and the AEU leaders from settling with Ford management at this stage.

Science Report

How old medicine works

THE travelling medicine man, purveying herbs and roots promised to cure anything from back-ache to heart trouble, has long been a crowd-puller in Chinese street markets.

The funny thing is, just like the practice of acupuncture, many of the cures seem to work.

A recent report on tests carried out in hospitals says 654 patients who had had heart attacks were divided at random into two groups. The first lot were treated with a mixture of Western medicines and a traditional Chinese recipe. The others got only Western drugs.

Of those treated with the mixture, 34 died. Of the second group, 46 died. That is, 6.7 per cent, as against 14 per cent.

There are more than 2,000 traditional medicines used by Chinese people. They are part of a tradition that goes back thousands of years. The Chinese characters for medicine and doctor appear in bone inscriptions dating from around 1,800 BC.

Today, in Beijing's Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine and at Hong Kong's Chinese Medicinal Material Research Centre (CMMRC), modern researchers are finding out just how and why some of the traditional medicines work.

In the People's Republic, both traditional and Western methods have been assisted in the public health system. In recent years, the authorities have allowed free trade in traditional cures, and found them a profitable export.

In 1983, Hong Kong imported \$200 million worth of Chinese medicines. Hong Kong's government officially endorses only Western medicine, although researcher Rance Lee of the CMMRC found 50 per cent of the people opt for traditional remedies.

Hong Kong is due to return to China in 1997, and a basic law to be drafted may have to include health provision and regulations.

There are thought to be between 8,000 and 10,000 traditional medicine sellers operating in Hong Kong. Without any inspection, licensing or proper training

facilities, the market is wide open to quacks and abuses.

Western-trained doctors working in oriental countries have come to recognise nevertheless that traditional knowledge has something to offer. Scientists are now trying to bring its useful products within their ken, so that its benefits can be brought into an integrated health system.

Soviet scientists studying the ginseng root — whose users include some of their athletes and astronauts — isolated three active components: panaxin, panaquian, and schingenin.

They believe these enhance circulation, stimulate the nervous system, and increase hormone secretions.

'Chinese medicine, based on the clinical experience of millions over generations of patients, has been well documented through the dynasties,' says Hong Kong research director Hsou Mou Chang.

'The task now is to separate placebo effect and spontaneous recovery from real bioactivity.'

In the 16th century, herbalist Li Shih Chen travelled through China, methodically gathering material for 'A Descriptive Catalogue of Herbs'. Modern researchers find this work still useful today in beginning their exploration.

At the CMMRC, they are compiling an IBM database of botanical classifications of all the common Chinese herbs, with chemical analysis if known, pharmacological data, and clinical applications. Using Western medicinal terms, botanical or chemical names, it is possible to search through the database.

Thus they are bringing about a cross-fertilisation of Western and traditional Oriental medical knowledge.

While at the practical



Roadside vendor dispenses traditional medicines.

level, people simply learnt over many generations that a certain herb was effective. The traditional theory classified drugs according to flavours and aromas, the 'four energies' and the five traditional elements. A patient with fever might be given a 'cool' flavoured herb, such as mint or chrysanthemum.

Modern scientists are using such methods as laser spectroscopy to analyse the complex molecules of organic compounds, identify the drug chemically, standardise batches, and study the active ingredient. This is combined with clinical tests in hospitals and laboratory monitoring of effects on animals.

In the case of heart treatments, some of which go back as far as the Han dynasty, 2,000 years ago, they have extracted alkaloids and flavonoids — the pigments in fruit and flowers — which they believe dilate the

blood vessels, countering blockages.

'Since the active components seem to be highly potent and exist only in small amounts in the natural product, we envisaged extracting them for mass production,' says Hsou Mou Chang.

The huge costs of modern Western medicine have led the World Health Organisation to recommend improving and using traditional medicines in poor countries. Together with widespread disillusion in Western countries with medical orthodoxies, this could offer a big market for the traditional products. No doubt the big pharmaceutical monopolies will have their eyes on this situation.

Economics aside, the research being conducted in Beijing and Hong Kong offers an interesting illustration of a dialectic, from practice through theory to a higher practice.

Sea of Disaster

BAD planning has led to fish being wiped out in the Soviet Union's Aral Sea and human health being affected by contaminated water supplies. The whole region is threatened with an 'ecological catastrophe', according to the Soviet weekly 'Ogonyok'.

Over 20 years, rivers flowing into the landlocked Aral Sea, in Soviet Central Asia, were used for irrigation water in nearby desert regions.

The project brought huge areas under cultivation of rice and cotton. New towns and industry were developed.

But as the water from the

Amudarya and Syrdarya was diverted, the level of the Aral dropped forty feet, and it retreated 60 miles from its original shores.

'The ecological balance of the entire region has been destroyed, resulting in powerful dust storms along the southern and eastern shores,' writes 'Ogonyok's' Abdizhamil Nurpeisov.

'Pictures taken from space show millions of tons of dust and salt scattered over hundreds of miles'.

The sea has become too saline for fish and too shallow for ships. Irrigation water from cotton fields with a high toxic content has found its way into drinking water, causing jaundice and other epidemics.



Environment

Forest fire warnings

ONE of the world's remaining great rain forests, that in East Kalimantan (Borneo), could be threatened with destruction by fire before long. Warnings from conservationists have brought controversy over responsibility.

Five years ago, fire swept through the forest destroying some 3.9 million hectares (nearly ten million acres), out of 17.5 million hectares. A further 2.9 million hectares have been felled by logging companies.

Late last Summer, fires broke out again, and by September air flights over the region had to be suspended for several weeks because of the amount of smoke and haze. The extent of the damage is yet to be measured.

In December 1985, a paper prepared for the Indonesian conservation organisation SKEPHI warned that unless the authorities took urgent action a new disastrous fire was inevitable.

Official comments have tended to blame the traditional practice of slash-and-burn by shifting agriculturalists like the Dayak people. The experts don't accept this.

'Slash-and-burn is nothing new', says Ibrahimyah Rahman. 'The poor fertility encouraged this system hundreds of years ago. But while it was practiced according to tradition and on a small-scale, forest fires were never a problem.'

The Dayaks always stuck to the 'nyaang' principle, of clearing a gully, about fifteen foot wide, around an area to be burnt down.

There was a problem with people brought into the area from Java by the Indonesian government. Rice growers by tradition, they had no option when irrigation was not arranged, but to try slash-and-burn, without being familiar with the necessary precautions.

The government had provided no help or advice for them, about forest safety. 'The bitter experiences of the fire five years ago have failed to inspire any movement for the protection of the forests,' Rahman complained bitterly.

The 1985 paper, 'East Kalimantan's forests, a resource that must be saved', also made the point that the Dayaks took precautions, checking wind direction and loca-

tion, digging gullies, clearing rubbish, branches, and shrubs to make sure their fires did not spread.

Authors Erwin Adriawan and Sandra Moniaga, having spent some months among Dayak tribes forced to resettle after the fire, complained that most attention had been focused on the losses suffered by timber companies, whereas 'far greater losses were suffered by the local population.'

The Dayaks were having to travel for months to find rattan, which they had previously been able to find a few miles away. Their perennials were destroyed, and their rice crops were being eaten up by a plague of wild pigs and rats.

As for causes of the disaster, Adriawan and Moniaga said: 'One need only look at the timber dumped and left lying around over vast areas of the forest. The companies seem unaware of the dangers caused by these piles of rubbish. They consist of timber considered too unprofitable to be carried away. Many have piled up in small streams which are nature's barriers to the spread of fire

Bridges built to get heavy equipment across rivers had caused piles of rejected logs to build up along banks and in river beds. The companies left the rubbish to be carried away by the water. But in a drought, the river and the rubbish dried out, so that the riverbed became a fire hazard, not a barrier.

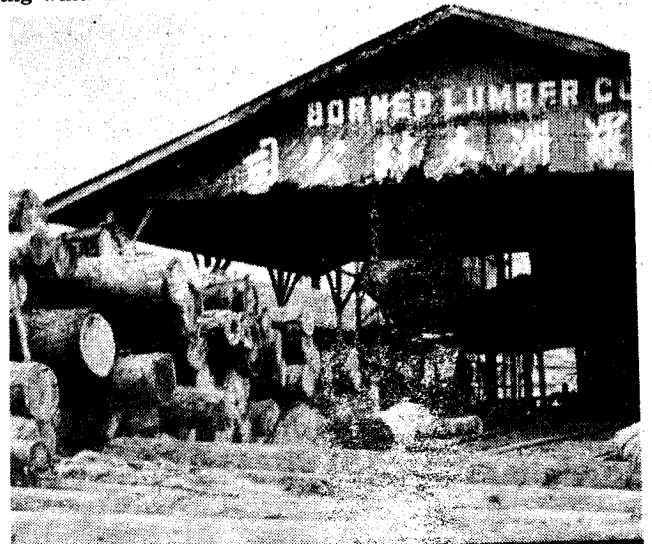
The paper warned that unless action was taken, the danger would get worse. Peat outcrops now occurred in many places, which were highly inflammable. In 1987, in fact, many peat outcrops took fire.

The 1985 report made a number of recommendations, such as fencing off peat outcrops, planting fire-resistant trees, stopping the pile-up of logs, training a special fire-fighting force.

In September 1987, an emergency meeting was called of everyone involved in forestry affairs. Of over 100 timber companies with concessions in East Kalimantan, only 30 bothered to send anyone.



Gathering medicinal herbs. Research may open way to mass producing active ingredients.



Hussein arrests militants

AS Israeli troops continued their repression of Palestinians last week, King Hussein's regime in Jordan showed its own version of 'Arab solidarity' — with Israel.

The Jordanian police have arrested over 50 Palestinians and their sympathisers in order to prevent demonstrations in solidarity with their people under Israeli occupation.

The round-up began on 30 December, and was timed deliberately to forestall demonstrations planned for New Years Day in Amman and in the Palestinian refugee camps.

It was on 1 January, 1965, that Fatah, the Palestinian national liberation movement, carried out its first military operation in occupied Palestine, and the day has been special to Palestinians since, besides the current upsurge in the mass struggle.

Outpost

Jordan has been under martial law since 1967, and in this little outpost of the imperialists' 'free world' demonstrations and political parties are banned.

With an estimated 60 per cent of the population being of Palestinian origin, however, sympathy for the people confronting Israeli repression in their homeland is strong, and Hussein feared it could get out of hand.

Last month, several deputies in the Jordanian parliament hailed the 'Palestinian uprising' and urged more democratic freedoms

in Jordan itself at the same time.

Hussein has made repeated attacks on the Palestinian people and their leadership, and attempted in recent years to promote his own stooges to replace the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Monarchy

The Jordanian monarchy is heavily subsidised by imperialism and Arab reaction, and last year the British government joined the Reagan administration in backing a scheme whereby about \$1 billion was to pass through Jordan for West Bank and Gaza development.

The British government's £2.5 million contribution was in line with its recognition in 1950 of Jordan's annexation of the West Bank, following the 1948 establishment of Israel, thus carving-up Palestine. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir has been less co-operative than his Foreign Minister, Peres, in welcoming Jordan's attempts to re-assert influence.

When an attempt was made last year to launch a pro-Hussein party in the West Bank, all the leading figures who emerged were former notorious collaborators in the Zionist-backed 'Village Leagues', and were seen as merely hirelings.

Vietnam seeks capitalists

VIETNAM'S National Assembly has passed a law aimed at attracting foreign capitalist investment to the country.

Planning chief Vo Van Kiet told the assembly recently that shortage of capital was a major obstacle to economic stability. Talks have taken place with companies in Europe, Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

If the new law conforms to a draft released earlier, it will remove the ceiling on foreign equity participation in joint ventures, allow wholly foreign-owned enterprises to set up, and allow foreign bosses to be appointed.

The bill provides for repatriation of profits and capital, and guarantees companies against sequestration.

However, United States

imperialism is still maintaining an embargo on trade with Vietnam. Japan's Honda company recently pulled out of a deal to manufacture motorcycles in Ho Chi Minh City, because of criticism in the US Congress.

Vietnamese leaders have said 1988 will be a crucial year in plans to rescue the Vietnamese economy from three-figure inflation, a run-down transport system, and shortages.

The country badly needs hard currency to pay for imports, investment in agriculture, and modernisation of industries. A recent party central committee plenum discussing some of the problems also hit out at what it called: '... bureaucratic, undemocratic, fragmented, departmentalistic and undisciplined centralism,' saying this was hampering implementation of decisions.

Children Tortured

'IF you do not speak, we will torture your daughter,' Turkish police threatened teacher Kemal Bilget. His two-year old daughter was brought into the torture cell. He could hear the screams of his wife in another cell.

It is one of the cases in a new report from Amnesty International, which also tells of thousands of children, some as young as seven, arrested by South African police, beaten and tortured.

In Iraq, the report says, 250 children were arrested two years ago to punish their parents' political activity, and their fate is unknown. In the United States, more than 30 sentenced as juveniles are now on death row.

OVER 70 people are believed to have been killed by Brazilian police who savagely attacked a sit-down demonstration by gold miners, their wives and children.

The police, 400-strong and armed with tear gas, revolvers, and machine guns, stormed a bridge which the miners and their families had occupied, in the southern Amazon district of Maraba.

'The state police acted with inconceivable brutality,' said Isaias Munhoso, himself with the Federal Police, who saw miners lying dead with bullet wounds.

A newspaper photographer said he had seen bodies lying on the rocks in the river below the bridge, which the police had stormed from both ends. Downstream, it was reported that three women's bodies had been washed ashore.

The gold miners had been campaigning for improvements, including earthworks to make gold-prospecting safer. Twenty miners died last year in landslides.

According to Nelson Marabuto, who had been sent by the Ministry of the Interior to negotiate with the miners, they had already accepted promised terms and agreed to end their 48-hour occupation when the police charged.

'The police took the bridge from both ends, and in the panic many people flung themselves off the bridge,' he said.

'There was no warning, no negotiation on the part of the police,' said Marabuto, who called the police action 'unspeakable cowardice'.

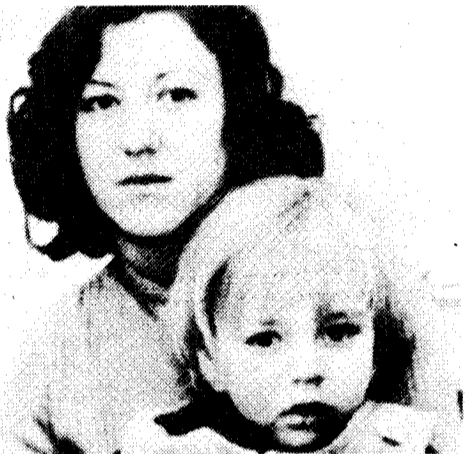
State Governor Helio Gueiros, who authorised the police action, said he had done his duty. He said he would not accept 'disrespect' for his state. It is thought the Brazilian government may be compelled to hold an investigation and take action against the governor.

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Argentine torture victim Estela Falikoff. Children were among 'disappeared' under junta. Amnesty report 'Children Behind Bars' covers 18 countries.

Lee Kuan Yew cracks down

SINGAPORE'S Lee Kuan Yew government has taken further steps against opposition, ordering a Christian body to dissolve itself, and restricting circulation of a leading news magazine, the Hong Kong-based 'Far Eastern Economic Review'.

In a statement banning the Christian Conference of Asia, the Home Ministry claimed it had breached an undertaking to stay 'non-political', by supporting 'liberation movements' in other countries and allegedly funding 'pro-Communist movements'.

The 'Far Eastern Economic Review' is accused of trying to 'pit the Catholic Church against the Prime Minister and the Government' in an article about the so-called 'Marxist conspiracy' last year.

Over twenty people, including journalists, church activists and community workers, some of them connected with the Christian Conference, were detained under emergency laws when the government claimed to have discovered a 'Marxist conspiracy' organised by an Oxford student.

The 'Far Eastern Economic Review' published allegations by the detainees of ill-treatment, including the shining of bright lights in

detainees eyes during prolonged interrogations, denial of sleep, and assaults on women.

The magazine also printed extracts from a political statement by Chew Kheng Chuan, who had been held without trial for three months, apparently solely on account of alleged associations and views disliked by the government.

Singapore's longest-standing political detainee is Chia Thye Poh, a former MP for the opposition Barisan Sosialis (Socialist Front). He was arrested in 1966, under the Internal Security Act, and has never been tried for any offence.

Asked to make approaches to the Singapore government about Chia's case, the Thatcher government — which never tires of talking fine words about 'freedom' and 'fair play', usually for dissidents in the Soviet Union or Poland, — refused, saying it did 'not think it would be appropriate to do so.'

With elections possible this year, in which Lee Kuan Yew's crisis-hit pro-capitalist policies might face the test, the government has tabled legislation to alter the electoral system. It wants to merge half the constituencies, and is introducing a communalist element into politics.

Opposition groups have accused Lee Kuan Yew of trying to guarantee '100 per cent representation' for his People's Action Party. Uncovering 'conspiracies', and intimidating opponents, could well fit the same aim of holding on to power.

Vatican Rathole

VIENNA'S former Archbishop, cardinal Franz Konig, has confirmed that leading churchmen helped Nazi war criminals bolt to South America after the Second World War.

Cardinal Konig added 'I personally know two... an Austrian and a German... both hold to this day high posts in the Vatican.'

Timor war still on

INDONESIAN armed forces commander Benny Murdani has admitted that the war of repression in East Timor is not over.

Murdani spent Christmas Day with Indonesian troops on the island, whose numbers are estimated at 10,000. Last week, in Jakarta, he claimed there were only 500 Fretilin guerrillas hiding out in the hills.

'It may take several more years to clean them all out', he admitted, however.

Indonesian troops invaded East Timor in 1975, after the people had thrown out Portuguese colonial rulers and were setting up a state of their own.

There was resistance from Fretilin, the Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Timor, and in 1978-9 the Indonesians waged an all-out offensive to crush it, since when they have ruled by force. The struggle is going on.

Last September, a UN human rights sub-commission heard evidence from Timorese who had suffered torture in Indonesian detention camps. Joao Carrascalao, a leader of the Timorese Democratic Union, acknowledged that the Indonesian authorities had built roads

and hospitals, but said his people were still being jailed daily, and were 'facing a war of extinction'.

Amnesty International instanced cases of Timorese being tortured or killed in detention, and said attempts to obtain copies of trial documents from the Indonesian authorities had been unsuccessful. The Indonesian government treated such requests as 'interference in its internal affairs'.

Indonesian commander Murdani said last week that the Indonesians needed to make the Timorese 'aware we are not colonisers', and said 'this is a conflict, or say it is a misunderstanding, which cannot just be settled with weapons.' He spoke of developing the area.

Fretilin's external mission head Abilio Araujo sees it differently. He has compared the Timorese struggle with that of the Sahroui people against Moroccan occupation.

'This is a new phenomenon where countries that were previously colonised by the European powers are now the colonisers; these countries which until recently were among the staunchest defenders of anti-colonialism... have now become true colonialists

A Soviet Oppositionist spe

SINCE the demise of the human-rights movement in the Soviet Union in the 1970s there has been a marked increase in groups opposing the Stalinist bureaucracy. Between 1977 and 1982 underground bulletins such as 'Variations' and 'Left Turn' were published in Leningrad and Moscow. An attempt was even made to form a federation of 'Democratic forces of a socialist orientation', but this was broken up by the state before it could be properly established.

The following interview with Soviet oppositionist Alexander Severukhin (a pseudonym) reflects the deepening political crisis in the USSR. The first part of the interview was published last week; this is the second part; the final part will be published next week.

Workers Press is printing this interview despite the fact that we do not consider the views

You have spoken of the need to build a 'new Soviet left', as you put it, which would unite the left tendencies in the Soviet Union today. What concrete possibilities exist for practical work towards this end, for propaganda, etc?

For reasons you will appreciate, I don't wish to be specific about concrete actions. I can only answer your question in a general way.

The 27th Party Congress made a great deal of promises to the people. At the same time, it is clear that the system is not capable of fulfilling those promises. The idea now is to exploit the official promises to the fullest extent. That is why, at least for the time being, we have some possibility of legal work.

The main trend in our activity now is to work legally, but to organise ourselves in a somewhat 'conspiratorial' way, because even legal work must be organised in a way that is not 'publicised'. Otherwise it would be quickly destroyed.

You have mentioned tendencies towards crisis of a social and political kind. What economic problems are most significant in this period?

Economic tendencies are already well known in the west. The drop in oil prices accompanied by a decrease in production creates a very unfavourable situation for the Soviet economy. In some ways this is crucial because Brezhnev oriented the economy towards oil exports. These exports were necessary to pay for western technology, and for grain — two elements which were used to support domestic stability.

Brezhnev's idea was to solve difficulties with oil production partially by means of atomic energy. Since the Chernobyl events it is clear that the atomic energy programme will not compensate for these shortcomings in the system.

It has become clear that the systemic weaknesses are stronger than any objective circumstances. By this I mean, for example, that we had resources, but we have now managed to get rid of these and produce shortages instead. Then, there was an atomic energy programme — now that is also in difficulties.

A second problem is machinery. Equipment in Soviet plants is not only theoretically out of date, it is also physically too old — at this point machines are literally falling apart.

Economists believe that by the end of the 1980s, because of this, it will be very difficult just to keep the economy going — simply to reproduce the economy will be very hard. In other words, there is a level on which the system itself is making all adopted decisions counter-productive — is destroying

the process of decision-making. It is a particular moment of the system's natural development.

There is a Marxist law — the contradiction which may arise between forces of production and the relations of production. Relations of production are not only in contradiction to the productive forces, but are actually destroying any real development of the productive forces beyond a limited minimal level. In the long term this contradiction is fatal to the system.

The only way out is a kind of reform — but a reform which can only be realised through a social struggle. Social struggle is not something that takes place between factions, as you know, but between classes. Sooner or later this struggle will be radicalised, and will involve broad masses of the population. That's why 'reformism' is the only way to be 'revolutionary' here. We must sup-

ported to be those of a Trotskyist; we consider the use of the term 'left oppositionist' to be misleading. The Left Opposition, (the precursor of the Fourth International established in 1938) was led by Leon Trotsky. It rejected the theory of Socialism in One Country, advanced by Stalin and Bukharin. At the same time it stood for the unconditional defence of the nationalised property relations of the USSR against imperialism and rejected all notions that the Soviet Union was in any way capitalist.

While we think that much of what Severukhin says is confused, such confusion is only to be expected as the working class and sections of the intelligentsia enter a new stage in the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

port the reformists' initiatives, seeking to make them popular initiatives, trying to get support for them from the grass roots. Those initiatives once receiving support from the grass roots are no longer 'reformist' — they become revolutionary . . .

The main task is to explain to the people that they themselves must do something to cure the evils of the system. Even if they support some aspect of the system and are not seeking to destroy it. They must be engaged in the life of the society. Then that social life will produce something new; it will 'reproduce' or change those people who are engaged in it.

Is the national question a source of potential instability in the Soviet Union, as some in the west suppose?

I don't think it's the main problem — though it certainly exists. A different degree of Russification exists in

each republic . . . perhaps the most backward republics can be said to have gained from being 'colonised', from having been included in the system. The most advanced, on the other hand, feel themselves held back more or less. For example, when you discuss Azerbaijan in terms of Russification, it is not hard to guess that this is in some respects a positive development, a form of modernisation.

Interestingly, the official policy — in creating local national elites, at the same time, creates the problem of nationalism. The main problem in this sense is not a struggle of oppressed nationalities against Russians, in many republics it is really a factional struggle between bureaucracies: the local bureaucracy, elevated in the Soviet period (produced by the system), which want to have more rights and possibilities inside the system. For many bureauc-

'REFORM CAN ONLY COME BY SOCIAL STRUGGLE'

rats, for instance in Azerbaijan or Uzbekistan, the most important thing about other national feelings is to get control of posts now occupied by Russians.

There is also a kind of intellectual nationalism — although I wouldn't call it real 'nationalism' because a large number of very Russified intellectuals consider themselves nationalists. At the same time they are primarily concerned with the problem of censorship and other general problems. They are concerned with this because they are writers and artists, just as Russian writers and artists are.

There are different kinds of 'nationalism'. Our task is to find progressive tendencies even in nationalist currents and to co operate with them, seeing their positive side, but we must not support 'Nationalism' as such. This is very important. Western speculation about the Soviet Union being torn asunder by warring nationalisms is simply not correct. There are many problems and dangers for the system, but nationalism is not the greatest danger, though it might combine with others, complimenting them . . .

Do you see the Ukraine as occupying a unique position in this respect?

Perhaps I should say something about this from a specifically Russian point of view. Russian views of the Ukraine are very dualistic. For example, Ukrainians are generally the worst people inside the system once they have been integrated.

There are a lot of Ukrainians (most of whom have forgotten their native language and national origin) who are nevertheless the worst great Russian chauvinists. Many in the secret police, the party hierarchy and the army are from such a Russified Ukrainian background. It's an important point. There are more Russified Ukrainians that Russians at certain very important levels of the bureaucracy. The most oppressive elements within the system are using those people — they are used both against Russians and against their own people.

At the topmost level of the bureaucracy, the whole group around Brezhnev was from the Ukraine. For example, Fedorchuk, a well known figure in the secret police, and later in the regu-

lar army, was a great enemy of Ukrainian nationalisms, and all other nationalisms, except of course, Russian.

There is a phenomenon among Russians which I call *khokhlophobia* — from *khokhol* — the slang word for Ukrainian. There is a lot of competition between Russians and Ukrainian bureaucrats (I mean Russified Ukrainian bureaucrats). I refer to those inside the Russian republic. Many Ukrainians have moved here, and have been easily assimilated, since there is not such a great difference between us in the ethnic sense. Since they compete with Russians inside Russia, there is a great hatred against them within the bureaucracy. That is what I mean by *khokhlophobia*.

But there is also anti-Ukrainian feelings among workers and among intellectuals — this is because Russified Ukrainians do a lot of damage to the perception of the Ukrainian nationality from the outside. That is why even dissident intellectuals in Moscow have displayed very dualistic feelings when the question of the Ukrainians is raised. The Ukrainian movement within the Ukraine is regarded, of course, as something very important and positive. But Ukrainians outside their own republic are known to be some of the most active supporters of the system's most oppressive elements.

Ukraine is, of course, one of the biggest republics, and the most powerful economically, having many resources of its own. But what does 'the Ukrainian question' mean?

First, it refers to a cultural question — a question of national identity, because Ukrainians have their own history. There was a Ukrainian cultural renaissance in the twenties, but almost all those who were engaged in this movement were later eliminated. Now there is a lot of pseudo-Ukrainian culture, with many folkloristic elements, but the real Ukrainian cultural tradition cannot be developed.

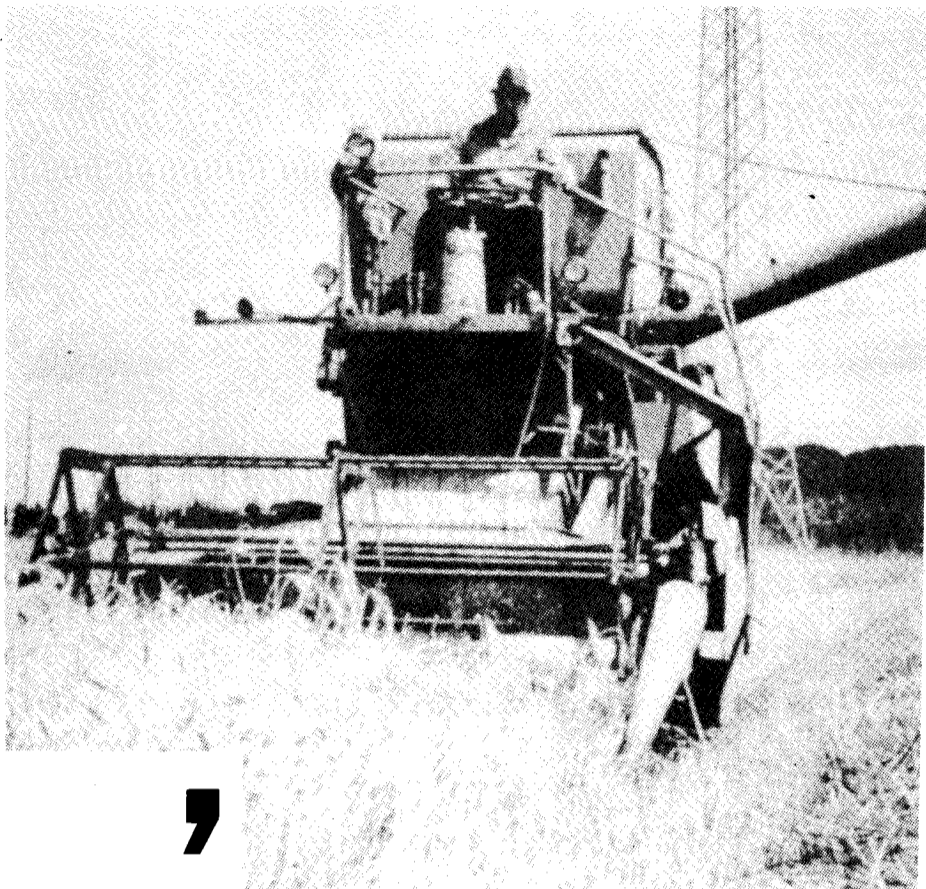
In a sense, you can say almost the same thing about the other republics, even about Russia. But it is important to stress that the Ukraine is a highly developed part of the Soviet Union. Ukrainians produce more than any other nation



Central Asian women receive 'soviet' education: the national question is still significant

aks

PART 2 OF AN INTERVIEW BY PATRICK KANE



One of the big economic problems is the age of machinery which needs renewing or replacing

in the Union. There is a feeling that distribution among the republics is unequal, meaning that Ukraine gives more than it receives in relation to other republics. This is also something it shares with other developed republics — the Baltic republics especially. The only instance of a highly developed republic avoiding this fate is Byelorussia.

Masherov, a very popular party leader, managed somehow to separate the Byelorussian economy from the Union — establishing a kind of local republican autarchy. For the Ukraine this is impossible, since the republic is so large and so closely connected with the functioning of the Union economy.

Is the national question related to other tendencies towards crisis in the system?

I am not an expert on national problems except, perhaps, in relation to the Baltic republics which I have attempted to study in some detail. But my feeling is that the high point for specifically national movements has already passed in most of the republics. Now people are more concerned with general problems affecting the system as a whole. I see this as a positive development.

This is not to say that national questions are no longer important. On the contrary, they are very important. But they are more and more integrated into the general problem of the system's crisis.

It is interesting that in the official reformist tendencies, those operating legally, one can see the ecologist tendency, and another tendency which is moving to the left — toward self management — but still the

national problem is not taken up by any reformist tendency. It is mostly used by dissidents. As I've mentioned, one of the ideas of our group is to integrate different tendencies and demands into something more generalised: into a generalised radical reform movement which can later become something more than a reform movement.

But great attention must still be paid to the national problem in an effort to understand what different nationalities really want, and how those national demands can be integrated into more general reforms.

I think that more freedom is better for everybody, and greater freedom in the sense of self-government is necessary also to solve the national problem. Decentralisation, liberalisation — these two reformist ideas — are already moving in a positive direction.



Gorbachev: his speech at the 27th Congress made many promises



Brezhnev: he brought a group of Ukrainian bureaucrats to the Kremlin with him

LATIN AMERICAN TROTSKYISTS COMMEMORATE OCTOBER

BY ARMANDO DIAZ

THE Movement to Socialism (MAS) campaign for the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution climaxed on 5 December with the main meeting in Plaza Once, Buenos Aires.

Approximately 7,000 people attended (the bourgeois press claimed 20,000) to listen to the speakers from the MAS in what was the culmination of nearly one month of meetings, discussions and conferences across the country.

'In the midst of the general crisis that grips the country, when political and trade union leaders dare not show their faces but negotiate behind the backs of the people, here stands the MAS, with the largest public meeting held anywhere in the country to celebrate the Russian Revolution, speaking face-to-face with the workers of Argentina', is how the main speaker, Luis Zamora, characterised the meeting.

Greetings

Greetings were received from workers and trade union committees in banking, the railways, health, metalurgy, education, textiles, graphics, etc. Attending the meeting,

symbolising them all and their struggles, were telephone workers and a delegation from Yaciretea (construction workers), representing the two most important strikes currently in progress.

Without doubt, the most moving part of the meeting was when Luis Zamora reminded those present that next month would be the first anniversary of Nahuel Moreno's death, 'our most important leader, our architect and our comrade in the struggle'.

In closing his speech Zamora said: 'To all of you, but especially to Moreno, we say that seven decades later and thousands of kilometers away, the possibilities are wide open for Argentine workers to travel the same road signposted by the heroic Russian working class in 1917, and we give it everything we have. They will be carrying the flags for which you gave your life, the flags of October, of socialism with democracy, workers' flags, the flags of the world socialist revolution.'

● Organisations of the Inter-

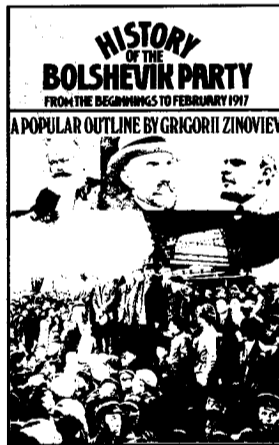
national Workers League (IWL) were responsible for a variety of events in other parts of the world. In Latin America, public meetings were held in Montevideo (Uruguay), in the mining centre of Oruro in Bolivia, in Colombia, in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua, heart of the Central American revolution. Also in Costa Rica and in the US, heart of imperialism, where meetings were held in Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Brazil

In Brazil, more than 2,000 people gathered together in fifteen separate meetings, most prominently the workers of ABC, in Rio de Janeiro, San Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre. In Mexico a demonstration outside the Soviet embassy delivered a petition demanding the immediate rehabilitation of the victims of Stalin's Moscow Trials.

Four meetings were held in Spain, and in Italy the Revolutionary Socialist League (sympathisers of the IWL) organised 24 meetings in different cities.

TWO BOOKS BY F.F. RASKOLNIKOV



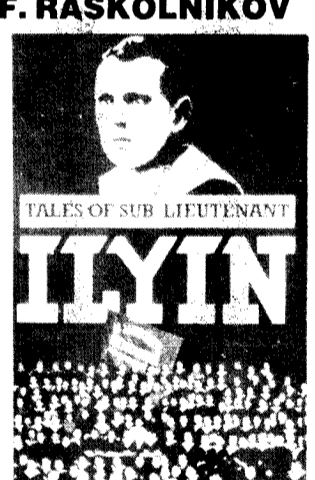
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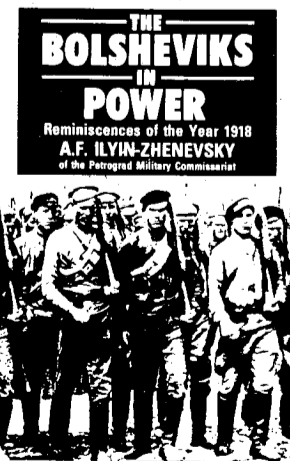
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Politics from the prisons

Connolly, Sinn

This is the final article in a series by Simon Pirani, taking up issues raised in the book 'Questions of History', by Irish Republican Prisoners of War, published by Sinn Fein (Dublin).

Why did the Easter uprising fail? What lessons can be learned from the work of James Connolly, who led it, and was punished with execution by British imperialism?

'Questions of History' points out that both Connolly and Jim Larkin — with whom he led Ireland's first mass strike struggles, the 1907 Belfast dockers' strike and the 1913 Dublin general strike — had been strongly influenced by American Marxism in that it emphasised the role of the trade union in a revolutionary movement, whereas Russian Marxism emphasised the role of the vanguard party' (p. 68).

To understand the significance of this, it is worth looking at the whole international socialist movement of that time, the Second International.

This was formed in 1889 when Frederick Engels, one of the founders of Marxism, was still alive, and brought together all major socialist parties. Its history, broadly speaking, was of the struggle between two tendencies: reformists who advocated the gradual winning of reforms under capitalism, and were often prepared to enter coalition governments with capitalist parties (they had support from the most conservative sections of workers, the 'labour aristocracy'); and revolutionaries who were unequivocally for the overthrow of capitalism.

At the turn of the century, this struggle of tendencies took different forms in different countries. In the Second International's largest party, the German Social Democrats, the reformists led by Eduard Bernstein had the upper hand against revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg; 'orthodox' Marxist theoreticians like Karl Kautsky wavered between these two opposites. German Social Democracy embraced all 'socialists' from extreme right to extreme left, as did the French Socialist Party.

In Britain, there were various left socialist groups, who like the German left had no conception of organising a revolutionary party, and worked as part of the Labour Party after its formation in 1903.

In the US, there was no working-class electoral party at all. But the unions were clearly divided: between the pro-imperialist American Federation of Labour (AFL) led by Samuel Gompers, and the revolutionary syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW: 'wobblies'), formed in 1905, who fought bitter battles to organise the mass of unskilled workers. It was this tendency with which Connolly worked in the US 1903-1910, before returning to Dublin to form the Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI).

There was no country where the struggle between

socialists were conducted with such thoroughness, and at such a high theoretical level, as in Russia. The split of the first Russian Marxists from the revolutionary terrorist 'People's Will' group in 1883; the strike struggles of the 1890s; the building of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), formed in 1898 and split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1903; the 1905 revolution which saw the world's first workers' councils (soviets) — these experiences, and the ability of revolutionaries to learn from them, produced the party which was able to lead the Russian revolution.

In the pamphlet 'Left-Wing Communism', Lenin wrote of the 'decades of unprecedented suffering' through which the Bolsheviks had struggled to build Marxist leadership; in 1918 Trotsky wrote that the 'large staff of revolutionary leaders, tempered in struggle and bound together by the unity of the revolutionary socialist programme' was 'the priceless legacy' which had come to the Russian working class alone from the epoch of the Second International. ('Lessons of the German Events').

The Bolsheviks and American syndicalists, then, both stood on the left wing of the movement. What were the roots of the crucial difference between Bolshevism, which saw the party as central, and syndicalism which placed all the emphasis on building unions?

The IWW's conception was that, through industrial unions (i.e. unions covering whole industries, as opposed to unions divided by trades), the working class would gain control of the factories, and thus deprive capitalism of its economic power. The struggle for political power, the syndicalists believed, was subordinate to this economic struggle.

The syndicalists either ignored or opposed Engels' ideas about the state, as an instrument of power wielded by the ruling class in each society, which has to be forcibly overthrown by a new class assuming power. (Of course this didn't stop them leading courageous struggles against state forces, nor, in Connolly's case, seeing the need to strike a blow at the British imperialist state during the first world war).

The unique conditions in Russia gave Marxists there the opportunity for a theoretical and practical training far advanced from that of socialists in the US.

During their internal struggles of the 1890s, and the struggle particularly by Lenin in 1898-9 to unite the scattered Marxist study circles into a nationally-centralised revolutionary party, they had already established the need for the working class to have first of all its own party which expressed its historical interests (i.e. the achievement of socialism) through its programme, and thereby guaranteed it political independence from other classes.

Consequently when a huge wave of strikes swept Russia in 1898-1900, and 'Economist' ideas were put forward

amongst revolutionaries (i.e. that workers should concentrate mainly on economic struggles, as opposed to political ones against the state — thus echoing syndicalism in Russian conditions) these were firmly rejected by the Social-Democratic majority. Lenin and others insisted on the primacy of the political struggle, on the working class's role as a political force, and on its political independence from the bourgeoisie guaranteed by the revolutionary party.

This same question — of the revolutionary party and its programme ensuring the political independence of the working class — was also central to the conflict with the Mensheviks. Although the immediate cause of the 1903 split with them was questions of party structure (Lenin advocated a centralised party whereas the Mensheviks wanted a loose federated organisation), there were fundamental political differences bound up with this. Lenin's organisational principles derived from his view of the working class as the leading force in the revolution; the Mensheviks saw the bourgeoisie as the leading force and consequently had no idea of a 'combat party' of workers. This issue was to put the Mensheviks on the other side of the barricades in October 1917.

(A full and readable account of this is 'The History of the Bolshevik Party' by G. Zinoviev).

The RSDLP split was one of the earliest clear expressions of the deep international division — between reformists who subordinated the workers' interests to those of the bourgeoisie, and revolutionaries who fought for the political independence of the working class in practice — which was consummated by a great historical event, the outbreak of the first world war in 1914. It was this which led Rosa Luxemburg to declare the Second International 'a rotten corpse' and Lenin to advocate a new International.

In their opposition to the war, the Bolsheviks found themselves side-by-side with the German Spartacus



Delegates to the second Comintern congress at a Red Army parade: the Russian Bolsheviks fought during these congresses to bring the lessons of their history to the international movement

League, the American revolutionary syndicalists, other left socialist parties, and heroic individual revolutionaries like Connolly and John Maclean who had undertaken a study of Marxism virtually single-handed.

'Did Connolly and Larkin fail to contribute as much to the development of a revolutionary situation by directing the bulk of their energy to union organisation as they might have done, had they addressed themselves to the task of building a vanguard party comprising scientifically trained revolutionaries', asks 'Questions of History'.

What we have tried to show here is that — considering Connolly did not have the sort of Marxist training with which the Russian revolutionaries were advantaged — it is not a question of charging him with 'failing' to build a Bolshevik-type party, but rather of seeing why he was unable to do so. Given the limited theoretical tools provided by the syndicalist tradition (and also the limited number of Marx's works available in English at the time), and his lack of knowledge of the internal life of Russian and German socialism, Connolly's insistence on the leading role of the working class (in substance the same as all revolutionary socialists) was a great contribution.

Conditions for the rapid

and successful construction of the Third Communist International (Comintern) — and thereby for the systematic and widespread study of the lessons of the Russian Bolsheviks' experience — only came after Connolly's death, that is, after the victory of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

Most of the revolutionary socialists joined the Comintern when it was founded in March 1919, and were able to participate in its first four Congresses, in which the Bolsheviks brought their experience into the international movement; this included, for example, many former IWW leaders, and in Ireland Connolly's son Roddy. Perhaps Connolly would have joined it too, had he lived.

The Comintern gave revolutionaries internationally the opportunity to learn from the Russian experience, only those who rejected revolutionary politics deliberately rejected these lessons.

Such was the case with those who assumed leadership of the SPI after Connolly's death — principally Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) secretary William O'Brien, Irish TUC leader Thomas Johnson, and Cathal O'Shannon.

They acclaimed the Bolshevik revolution, as did many who wanted to maintain 'left' credentials — but

were bitterly hostile to the essence of Bolshevism, the building of revolutionary leadership through which the political independence of the working class was guaranteed.

'Questions of History' states correctly that, in Ireland, 'not only did organised labour allow the bourgeoisie to monopolise effective control of the struggle for national liberation, but they also allowed the bourgeoisie to gag it. While O'Brien and labour did support the anti-conscription general strike of 1918, they did so on a purely nationalist platform allowing Sinn Fein to gain the rewards. In the same year O'Brien orchestrated the refusal of labour to participate in the 1918 elections

... Larkin, however, who was in America, felt that by their action in 1918 they had surrendered to the "anti-labour Sinn Fein" and by doing so had turned their backs on the chance Connolly had given them to lead the national struggle' (p. 77).



Frederick Engels... the syndicalists ignored his writings on the state

And when the authors ask — 'did the absence of a revolutionary vanguard party contribute to a significant degree to the development of opportunism in the labour movement, and the subsequent deviation by that movement from the ideology of Connolly?' — we would answer 'yes'.

The SPI leaders' relationship with the First Dail (1919-20) was proof of how dangerous that opportunism was.

The British general election of December 1918, mentioned above, resulted in a landslide victory for Sinn Fein in Ireland: it won 73 seats, the Nationalists won 6 and the Unionists 27. On this basis, Sinn Fein assembled the First Dail and declared it



Eamonn De Valera reviewing IRA troops in July 1921: his bourgeois government had the uncritical support of Irish Labour leaders

Fein and Bolshevism



The revolutionary syndicalists of the International Workers of the World, who unionised these American miners, believed that the economic struggle could bring socialism about

a continuation of the 1916 Republic, in reply to which British imperialism intervened militarily in the Tan War (1919-20).

What was the relationship of the SPI to the Sinn Fein government whose class character was unmistakably bourgeois?

The 'Democratic Programme' adopted by the Dail — a masterpiece of radical phrases designed to push the working class into supporting a capitalist government — was drawn up by Dail president Sean O'Ceallaigh advised by Johnson and O'Brien.

This programme stated, following Pdraig Pearse's formulation in 1916, that 'the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and

tain good relations with the Catholic Church, conservative farmers and businessmen.'

The SPI leaders' support for Sinn Fein leader Eamonn De Valera was uncritical, indeed they helped give his bourgeois government a 'left' face, with which it hoped to win political support from Ireland's restless working class. This was opposite from a Bolshevik, communist policy — which would have been to fight alongside that government, to the death, against British imperialism, but refuse to give it political confidence or (worse still) 'socialist' credentials. (Such an attitude was adopted by the Bolsheviks themselves, when they fought alongside Kerensky's government to

George declared the First Dail illegal and the war with Britain intensified. By mid-1920, a three-day general strike had won the release of political prisoners, the Knocklong creamery soviet was established and had triggered a movement of similar co-operatives, and the ITGWU had declared a 'black' on the movement of British military supplies and men. The working class and rural poor came to the fore in the struggle against Britain — and De Valera turned against that working-class movement, firstly with the Land Arbitration Courts which prevented land takeovers by peasants and supported the landlords. These courts were supported by O'Brien and Johnson.

When the Irish bourgeois leaders signed the Treaty with Britain in December 1921, O'Brien and co. accepted its terms, and called for reconciliation between pro- and anti-Treaty Republicans.

But one positive development took place: O'Brien, O'Shannon and Johnson were expelled from the SPI, the leadership was taken by James Connolly's son Roddy who attended the Second and Third Congresses of the Comintern in Moscow, a revolutionary socialist programme was adopted, and the party's name changed to 'Communist'.

There are vital lessons to be learned from the 1916-23 period — above all from the struggles of the group around Roddy Connolly, who tried, in opposition to O'Brien and co., to give independent working-class leadership.

What about the prospects for building revolutionary leadership today?

'Questions of History' asks: 'If Sinn Fein today were to refrain from becoming a revolutionary vanguard party with a strong socialist content, which placed great emphasis on ideologically training its members, and required that they have a high level of awareness, could they be depriving the nationalist working class of Ireland of some, or much, of its capacity to complete the struggle?' (p. 97).

The Bolshevik conception of a revolutionary vanguard party, as we tried to show above, is one which, by pursuing a consistent struggle for a socialist programme, guarantees the political independence of the working class against all other classes. The history of the Second, Third and Fourth Internationals is the history of struggles to build such parties, in conflict with tendencies which denied or played down the leading role of the working class in the socialist revolution internationally, or sought to water down the socialist programme.

Those seeking to build a revolutionary party in Ireland or any country, would have to look first of all to that history, and fight to assimilate its lessons.

Sinn Fein comes from a

different tradition — that of those courageous Fenians who took up the gun against British imperialist domination, waging rural guerrilla warfare a century before Che Guevara.

The Republican movement today has the honour of being the only significant force to resist British imperialist occupation of northern Ireland — and does so militarily, with the consequent loss of many heroic fighters. More than any other national liberation movement, it draws its support and membership from sections of the working class. We don't forget any of this.

In judging their political programme, however, we will not blur our differences: theirs is the programme of Irish nationalism, and reformism — not of revolutionary socialism.

Certainly Sinn Fein leaders speak about socialism. But what do they mean by it? Gerry Adams writes that Ireland 'must win not only political freedom but economic independence as well' ('Politics of Irish Freedom', p. 167). This economic independence 'must be in the sense of securing our own control over our own economic surplus, so that we can apply it to productive capital investment for the planned economic development of the whole island and of all our people. This means the reconquest of Ireland by the Irish people.'

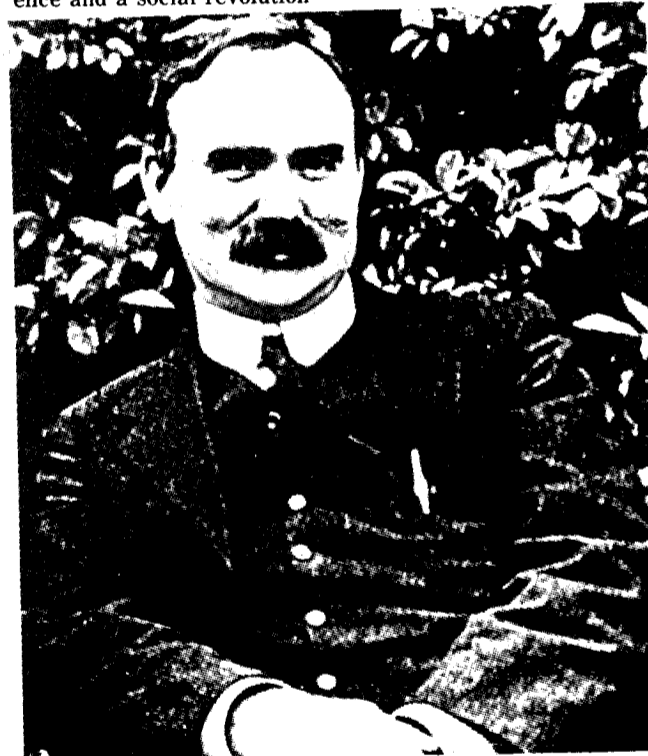
'This can not be done under the present system. It means national independence and a social revolution

in all Ireland.'

Although Adams refers to 'social revolution', he leaves its meaning vague. When he says 'productive capital investment for the planned economic development of the whole island' — this is much clearer; it means, the growth of the Irish capitalist economy 'independent' of British and other imperialist domination. This is also clear from Sinn Fein's 1987 election programmes, for both twenty-six county and six-county elections, which again speak of 'productive investment', public spending increases and other radical reforms ... but not of such policies as nationalisation of banks or major industries which are basic to a revolutionary socialist programme.

There are no grounds for believing the Republican movement can become a revolutionary party of the Bolshevik type, any more today than in the past. This is not to minimise its tremendous capacity to fight — and lay down lives — in the struggle against British occupation.

What is more, the very appearance of 'Questions of History', its attention to socialist history and the issues it raises, shows the huge positive value of the discussion taking place in the Republican movement, and particularly in the prisons. It is obligatory reading for serious socialists in Ireland and Britain. We hope these articles have added something to the discussion, and welcome contributions to 'Workers Press' on these issues.



'The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. They cannot be discovered.'

James Connolly (1868-1916)



Eduard Bernstein ... reformist leader of German Social-Democracy

women of the nation, but to all its material possessions, the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and the wealth-producing processes within the nation, and that 'all rights in private property must be subordinate to the public right and welfare'.

As 'Questions of History' explains (pp 78-9), 'although the "Democratic Programme" was radical in content it did not exhort the elimination of class society or advocate workers' control, it only called for "improvements in the conditions under which the working class live and labour".' And in any case 'the "Democratic Programme" was buried because the conservatives who ruled Sinn Fein wanted to main-



Karl Kautsky ... vacillated between left and right defeat Kornilov in September 1917.

On February 3, 1919, a week after the Dail assembled, O'Shannon and Johnson went not to the leaders of the Comintern, but to the 'International Labour and Socialist Conference' at Berne, to appeal for support for the Irish Republic. No one could criticise, of course, an appeal for backing against Britain's imperialist threat — but note that this conference was called by the pro-imperialist, British Labour Party, to assemble those right-wing 'socialists' who supported the first world war slaughter and opposed the Russian revolution.

In September 1919, British prime minister Lloyd

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HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464969.
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.

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 Elvet Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

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.

REMAND PRISONERS: BRITTON
HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Britton, 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 Sneyd, Wilmshurst, 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.

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

LETTERS

The economic crash

I WAS somewhat disappointed by Workers Press coverage of the crisis. During a series of lectures in London I had learnt a certain view of capitalism; mostly I had learnt it from Geoff Pilling and Cyril Smith.

The view was that in writing 'Capital', Marx was not writing an economics book, rather he was writing a book about people in a particular society. And in this society certain types of views are put forward as explanations of how that society works.

These views are sometimes crazy, sometimes just a defence of the interest of one group in that society. (Marxists often refer to such thinking as 'alienated'.)

These types of thinking — the alienated — is what is called economics. I would like to give examples of this mode of thinking and the reality it conceals.

There was a report in the 'Times' to the effect that Prince Charles was very concerned about unemployment in the Duchy of Cornwall and had decided to aid the unemployed by taking two Cornish unemployed on as servants.

In the alienated mode of thinking Prince Charles is presented as a benefactor. In reality, one idle, selfish and useless person has gained two servants.

Another example. In the 'Evening Standard' just after the slump there was an article defending the yuppies. This article described the yuppies spending large sums of money in night clubs. The article went on to claim that this helped create employment.

This last example is breathtaking. The social reality is that this small group of people are of no use to anyone. And that this small group of people enjoy almost unimaginable facilities for living well — food, travel, leisure, housing etc. And in the alienated economic mode of thinking they are presented as doing the rest of us a favour!

When the slump occurred I tried to think about it as a Marxist — in the terms taught to me by the WRP. We all know that a slump of 30 per cent in share prices means starvation and death for millions, impoverishment for many more, fascist coups, and the possibility of revolution.

Everyone knows this at an empirical level — it happened before and it will happen again. But my problem was how to grasp it in the real world. My thinking had been shaken up by the slump and I wanted to understand why these purely quantitative abstractions would produce deaths in remote villages which had never seen a yuppie or a computer terminal.

I had been taught that capitalism was a form of social organisation in which relationships between people were expressed in relationships between things (Marx). And that form of social organisation is crazy (Cyril Smith). And that the primary contradiction was between the private ownership of the means of production and the public socialised nature of production.

I attempted to apply this view to the slump. I managed to come up with: Firstly, the capitalist class could no longer control the process of production. Secondly — and this will need translating into the language of social reality — they could not get enough profit from things at present and did not want to own the system.

A hundred years ago one capitalist could support himself in luxury on the basis of one hundred wage slaves: fifty were producing the socially necessary goods, the other fifty were servants for the capitalist.

This is not the appearance of it but it is its reality. In appearance, the capitalist had one hundred workers producing, let us say shoes. But the capitalist only pays for the amount that would be produced by fifty workers and so he has the working week of fifty workers at his disposal.

He is free to exchange this for the labour of other workers — servants, tailors, cooks, wine sellers etc. All this takes place through the money form but underneath it the social reality is of a few living in luxury and an army of servants and hard-pressed workers — all of which is what is described in the history books.

Today machines 'cost' more. In effect the capitalist who could maintain himself in the luxury he desired on the basis of one hundred workers requires a thousand.

This means less capitalists — they aren't going to like that and will fight to save themselves. And it means closures of factories that do not enable capitalists to live.

I am very much an amateur in economics and political analysis. I am sure there is much wrong with the above. I am certain that Geoff Pilling, Cyril Smith and others could do much better. I only offer it because I have seen no attempt to explain why these abstractions will have the effects on people's lives that we know it will have.

Descriptions in terms of 'fictitious capital', 'budget deficit' etc. leave me unsatisfied, since I do know that people will murder for the sake of them. I do not understand why.

Neil McCuish

The dangers of pot

I WRITE in order to support the views of John Robinson on the use of marijuana.

Unlike comrade Robinson, I am not a professional psychologist; unlike Peter Fryer I cannot quote 'objective' evidence. However I have used this drug periodically for over a quarter of a century. I no longer do so.

Robinson's description of the behaviour of marijuana smokers is most certainly consistent with my own experiences and those of others I have known. Users of the drug invariably lose the ability and the desire to be self-critical or indeed critical at all.

Fryer quotes a psychiatric source which claims that cannabis (or marijuana) psychosis does not exist: it does. I have experienced psychotic states on many occasions during periods of using cannabis and the symptoms of this psychosis have disappeared when for one reason or another I have abstained.

To say that cannabis is less harmful than alcohol or tobacco is to say that it is better to be run over by a car than a bus. The harmful effects of cannabis are subtle, insidious, delayed. Retrospectively I can establish clear causal relationships between the use of marijuana and undesirable, sometimes catastrophic events and situations in my life, including a deterioration in academic perform-

Please send your letters to Workers' Press, PO Box 745, London SW9 7QS. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

ance as a student leading to my expulsion from college and the loss of several jobs.

More importantly, the use of this drug has at times induced a reluctance or even refusal to engage in concrete political activity. No serious revolutionary should use marijuana. In addition to its narcotic effects it is illegal. Readers of 'Workers Press' will have little or no respect for the laws of the bourgeois state and breaking the law can be politically justified, but only when it serves the purpose of the world socialist revolution. Smoking dope does not serve this purpose. On the contrary, it is a profoundly counter-revolutionary activity. Members of the revolutionary party who buy the drug — usually from de-classed criminals — endanger both themselves and the party as cadre. This, comrade Fryer, is the significance of illegality in this matter.

Youth of all social classes but particularly unemployed working class youth will steal or engage in other unlawful activities in order to obtain the money to 'score'. Over the years hundreds of thousands of people have thus acquired police records, been criminalised. I have merely been lucky in this respect.

It is in this context that the attitude of some members of the medical profession is to be understood. The medical establishment is sensitive to, responds to, the needs of the capitalist class. This drug is in my opinion serving the interests of the ruling class and the evidence quoted by cde Fryer is therefore suspect. Many psychiatrists undoubtedly use marijuana themselves and their research is far from objective. Moreover these layers of the medical profession under capitalism reveal their ineptitude time after time. The prescription of tranquillisers and anti-depressants as a substitute for counselling and therapy takes place on a massive scale. The Thalidomide tragedy occurred. Some contraceptive pills are now found to be extremely harmful to women's health.

No doubt Robinson could produce equally convincing medical evidence to show that the use of marijuana is harmful and this debate could continue for weeks. Such a debate should not be necessary. Marijuana is a harmful, dangerous, illegal narcotic substance. I urge all readers of 'Workers Press' to have nothing whatsoever to do with it. Your time (and money!), your energy, is required elsewhere.

A London Reader

More on pot

JOHN ROBINSON cites various medical 'authorities' to say pot-smoking is harmful. Peter Fryer disputes these authorities and cites others. I've got a disturbing sense of déjà vu. Didn't we hear all this argument to and forth 20 years ago?

Since then, particularly during the 'Swinging Sixties', many young people experimented with cannabis and more harmful drugs. Dope was the 'in' thing in some circles, and its illegality added that little thrill, like smoking (tobacco) behind the bicycle sheds when we were schoolkids.

Some points I'd make based on observation. Some

of the most boring parties I ever attended were those where people were zonked out on cannabis. At least alcohol, in reasonable amounts, acts as a social lubricant, so people can enjoy singing, conversation, or a good knees-up.

Of course, we shouldn't need it, but we're English, and living under capitalism. As for those who get pissed and kick someone's head in, they'd be violent anyway — the drink is just an excuse.

I know several people who smoked dope when they were younger, and put it away when they grew up. So it can't have been habit-forming. Some admit that the 'laid-back' life-style associated with regular cannabis use proved incompatible with getting organised to be politically active.

The 'drug culture' which grew up in the late Sixties around cannabis use was also influenced by the myth put around by some petty-bourgeois ideologues that pretended rebelling against your parents — in clothes style or use of illicit substances — was a way of changing society.

There was also the turn away from changing the world, around you towards mucking about with your head. This was a psychochemical variant of the religious cults that grew up to prey on young people's search for alternatives. Some have wondered since why the powers-that-be did not subsidise dope to keep people stupid.

The thought that the 'blue meanies' were around the corner and might pounce was also part of the drug culture however. This may be why once people had started with pot they sometimes found it easier to get into harder, more dangerous drugs. So Peter has a point when he warns against crying wolf.

The trouble with looking to the medical profession as authorities is that they have been among the biggest drug-pushers. Many young people's first experiments with drugs will have been with the prescribed tranquillisers etc. in their parents' medicine cabinet.

In 1972, having gone to complain about back-trouble I was dispensed a large bottle of pills. Told they would 'ease the pain', I told the hospital dispensary to keep them. I cured my back trouble by a hot bath, and moving my machine around at work.

Talking to a friend in the pub that night, she told me I should have taken the bottle of pills as she could have flogged them, 'you can get a buzz from them'. The pills were distalgesic, which I've since read have been found habit-forming.

A South London reader

WORKERS PRESS is looking for even more material from its readers. We want the maximum coverage of all activities in the labour movement from all areas of the country. The growing fight in defence of the NHS, the mounting opposition to Thatcher's plans to break up the state system of education, the continuing struggle of miners to protect their jobs and communities are issues we like to see get more coverage in the paper. The more the paper reflects the many struggles of the working class the more its influence will grow. Please write to us with your moans about the paper and tell us when you particularly agree with us. News from our readers overseas is especially valuable.



Maggie Beeks selling the Workers Press in 1971

MAGGIE BEEKS died in Leeds on January 1, 1988 after a year-long battle against cancer. She was 38.

Maggie's parents were active in the Communist Party but she and her sister Miriam joined the Trotskyist movement.

As a member of the Socialist Labour League and the Workers Revolutionary Party in the early 1970s, Maggie will be remembered especially in the Yorkshire area for her long hours of dedicated work.

Her generosity and hospitality, sharing what she had even when she had very little,

OBITUARY

Maggie Beeks

sustained many comrades even after Maggie had left political activity.

We send our warmest sympathy to her family and friends, particularly her children Debra and Peter.



SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

DEMONSTRATE FOR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL

LONDON SATURDAY 30 JANUARY

Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group



ON 30 January 1972, Bloody Sunday, British Paratroopers opened fire without warning on unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry. Fourteen people were killed.

On 30 January 1988 a demonstration marking the 16th anniversary of Bloody Sunday will be held in London.

In order to get the biggest possible turnout, WRP members, supporters and readers of the Workers Press should contact and work with their local Bloody Sunday organising committee. If no committee exists in your area, contact other groups and set one up.

See listings for further information.

Peter Fryer

Personal Column

The Windscale scandal

IN October 1957 the Windscale fire released a cloud of radioactive contamination with over 600 times the iodine content of the USA's Three Mile Island disaster 20 years later.

It was Britain's worst nuclear reactor accident, and the worst in the world before Chernobyl.

Papers released last week at the Public Record Office under the 30-year rule showed how Harold Macmillan as prime minister ordered that the full damning facts should not be revealed to the public.

So the report was redrafted to exclude detailed information, including information about management incompetence and panic.

Macmillan's chief purpose in ordering a

cover-up was the effect the facts might have on Britain's relationship with the USA, and especially on the desired collaboration between the United States and the United Kingdom in the military applications of atomic energy.

A secondary reason for the secrecy was to deny ammunition to the anti-nuclear lobby. It has taken us 30 years to find out that Windscale had no basic operating manual; that temperature gauges were in the wrong position; that the laboratory where milk samples were tested was out of action at a critical time.

Even now we have not been given the full story: the evidence of individual witnesses to the committee of inquiry into the fire has been withheld until January 2008.

But we have been told that, before the accident, there was no plan to protect the public from radioactive milk despite serious unpublicised leaks from the plant which had in fact contaminated milk.

And we have been told that, although milk distribution was stopped for six weeks after the fire over an area of 200 square miles, and although 3,500,000 pints of contaminated milk were destroyed in a highly publicised operation, milk containing up to three times above the official danger level was in fact released for human consumption.

This fact was hushed up by the govern-

ment to avoid 'needless fear'.

We now know that, far from blowing out to sea as the Atomic Energy Authority said it did at the time, the main radioactive cloud from the Windscale fire travelled south-east across most of England.

We now know, too, that the accident led to the release not only of oxidised uranium but also of polonium, a highly radioactive substance used in nuclear bombs.

It is estimated that the accident may have caused up to 260 cases of thyroid cancer, 13 of them fatal.

But when a Windscale scientist, Dr Frank Leslie, wrote to the 'Manchester Guardian' criticising the way the Atomic Energy Authority had handled the accident, Macmillan commented: 'Dr Leslie must be an opinionated ass.'

In a typical piece of public relations damage limitation, or change of image, Windscale was renamed Sellafield. And Sellafield has become Britain's second most popular sightseeing spot: a place where coachloads of visitors are welcomed with smiles and lie in an operation most charitably described as the bland leading the blind.

Meanwhile another 'opinionated ass', Greenpeace campaigner Hans Guyt, who has been doing his best to block the Windscale — sorry, the Sellafield — radioactive discharge pipeline, spent Christmas in Pentonville jail for disobeying a High Court order not to do so, and faces a £125,000 damage claim from British Nuclear Fuels. He sees this as a government attempt to break him financially.

Whereas the Russians kept quiet about Chernobyl for a couple of weeks, our own supposedly open society, as the 'Guardian' points out, 'sat on its own guilty secret for three decades', so that John Citizen was 'kept in the dark as usual "for his own good" as defined by his furtive and lying masters'.

Fresh light on the national question

THE discussion now opening out in the columns of Workers Press on the national question in the British Isles is at once long overdue, fascinating, and of the highest theoretical and practical importance.

I found Allan Armstrong's letter last week, and Simon Pirani's article on 'Trotskyism and nationalism', especially interesting in the light of the newly published vol. 42 of the 'Collected Works' of Marx and Engels, which I've been browsing through during the Christmas break.

This volume contains their correspondence from October 1864 to March 1868. This period saw increased activity by the Fenians (Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood) and increased repression of the Irish liberation struggle by the British state.

In September 1865 a number of Fenian leaders were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, publisher of the banned newspaper 'The Irish People', was given life (he was to be amnestied five years later).

On 13 December 1867 a Fenian group tried to free their imprisoned leaders from

Clerkenwell jail; they failed, but the explosion they caused destroyed some houses, killed some people, and wounded over 100.

I'm not one of those who use the Marxist classics as cookery books in which valuable recipes for solving present-day problems can be found at a glance, sparing us the trouble of doing our own thinking. The scriptural approach is totally alien to Marxism.

What is interesting and valuable about the Marx-Engels correspondence, and not least in those letters which discuss various aspects of the national question, is what it reveals about their method.

Marx saw the Fenians as expressing the interests of the Irish peasantry at a time when 'the sole meaning of English rule in



The arrest of Fenian leaders in Dublin, 1865: Marx supported them

Ireland' was the clearing of estates by the forcible evictions of thousands of tenant-farmers from their homes.

'Fenianism', Marx wrote, 'is characterised by socialist (in the negative sense, as directed against the appropriation of the soil) leanings and as a lower orders movement.'

He welcomed a 'tempestuous demonstration' by English workers in favour of the Fenians, adding that 'the business is boiling up in the intelligent section of the working class'.

He discussed with Engels in great detail what advice they should give the English workers about programmatic and other support for the Irish struggle. And he wrote indignantly about the treatment of Irish political prisoners and suspects, describing the English authorities responsible as 'curs'.

But he wrote privately to Engels, the day after the Clerkenwell attempt, that it had been 'a great folly', adding: 'The London masses, who have shown much sympathy for Ireland, will be enraged by it and driven into the arms of the government party. One cannot expect the London proletarians to let themselves be blown up for the benefit of Fenian emissaries.'

'It is the misfortune of all conspiracies that they lead to such acts of folly', Engels replied, pouring scorn on 'the notion that you can free Ireland by setting fire to some London tailor's shop!'

There is plenty of food for thought in this volume. I hope the current discussion continues, and I hope it will be broadened out to include Wales, on which the work of Gwyn A. Williams, especially his recent 'When was Wales?' (Black Raven Press, 1985), is absolutely indispensable.

Fight Manchester cuts

BY MARTIN RALPH

redundancies position is just the start of a fight back. It is not sufficient — but without that starting point no real fight can be waged.

Tony Byrne, the only Labour councillor opposing the cuts, told 'Workers Press': 'The support for the lobby showed the depth of feeling there is against the cuts. The full impact of the cuts have not yet hit home.'

'When the public can see the services that are going to go, there will be a hell of a lot of movement at grassroots level.'

'The Labour Party policies have been hi-jacked. Last January the City party resolved that there would be no rent increases, rate increases in line with inflation, and a campaign to restore the cuts of £500 million taken by the Tories.'

'The leadership of Labour has ditched these policies.'

'Last March for instance rents were increased by £1.50. In the run up to the general election a plan was drawn up by the Economic Development Department which identified 15,000 jobs that should have been created, including 4,000 in education and housing to bring the services to a reasonable level. After the general election, there was no campaign to defend jobs and services. No lobbies of parliament, no real meetings.'

'Instead we now have a package of £110 million cuts.'

'They say they want to protect front-line services. Yet people in education, housing and social services are going to be affected.'

'They are saying that one

solution is to retire those over 50. Why should they be asked to leave and what happens to the members that are left?

'It will also mean frustration building up on the YTS as the prospect of a real job is further diminished.'

'The fight is against the Tory government. The council should become a battering ram against the Tory government, the real enemies.'

No one in the labour movement who considers they are socialists can agree in principle and in practice to any of the cuts now proposed.

The Workers Press will and does fight to organise jointly the defence of workers against any attack by the council.

One college in Manchester was given the figure of £750,000 to cut in wages and told to come up with a plan of how to do it. A similar story is told in the housing department and elsewhere. Union campaigns against such impositions must be organised.

The best way to weaken a union is not to fight. That is one of the lessons from the miners strike. In the Lancashire coalfield, militants are using the experience that started in the miners strike to oust the right wing.

Union members in Manchester should consider this lesson. To understand how to destroy the Tories you have to begin to fight. In order to understand how to defend the councils you have to begin to defend them.

We demand that the councillors reverse their position on the cuts, and defend the gains of the working class in this respect.

No cuts and no redundancies. Full support for all workers in Manchester who are fighting back. For a joint platform of all those who are prepared to fight back.

WORKERS PRESS DECEMBER FUND

Over the top!

Congratulations on a great effort that took our Fund to £4,752. Some promised donations are still on their way and will be included in the January Fund. We would like to thank in particular several readers who sent in substantial donations to make sure that the target was achieved. We are very gratified by such support which gives us confidence for the future.

We said last week that there can be no let-up in the fight to sustain Workers Press. We repeat that warning. The present circulation of the paper is inadequate and must be boosted in all areas to make sure the paper continues. So we ask all readers to consider ways of expanding sales through canvasses, sales at work and in colleges. We must also strengthen the financial base of the paper by ensuring more regular donations. Even a modest additional sum from every reader would considerably improve our financial position.

Do please make sure that the January campaign gets under way immediately. Money is tight after Christmas and we will have to go all out to get in the minimum £2,000 needed to ensure our future. Send all donations to:

WRP Monthly Fund
PO Box 735
London SW9 7QS



London's Kurdish community and friends saw 1987 off in style at the Kurdish Workers' Association social and cultural evening the other week.

The dismal rainswept streets of North London were left outside. Inside a packed Red Rose Club, the atmosphere was great, as Kurdish people relaxed from work and studies, celebrating the culture they have defended against foreign oppression in their homeland.

There were lively folk-dancers in national costume, poetry, ballad singers, and traditional musicians. Tasty Kurdish snacks could be enjoyed, with refreshing yoghurt drinks, or beer from the bar according to choice.

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.

FIGHT THE ALTON BILL A National Day of regional and local activities: 16 January. For further details contact campaign offices at The Polytechnic of Central London, Student Union Building, 104-108 Bolsover Street, London W1. (01-436 0249).

WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS CAMPAIGN Against Unwanted Pregnancies; No Return to Back-street Abortion. Rally at Central Hall, Westminster, 21 January. 1.30p.m.; Lobby of Parliament: 2p.m. (Further information: 01-490 0042.)

FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS Time to take the offensive. Day-school organised by RCP. Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19 (nearest tube: Archway). For further information contact Fenna King, 01-729 0414.

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.

IMMIGRATION LAW Teresa Thornhill on latest legislation. Jewish Socialists' Group meeting, Sunday 9 January, 8pm Friends International Centre, Byng Place, off Torrington Place, WC1 (nearest tube Goodge St).

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY Demonstrate for British Withdrawal. Saturday 30 January. Islington Town Hall. Further details from: Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, Box 353 London NW5 4NH. (Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group).

LESBIAN AND GAY ACTION (OLGA) National Demonstration—Saturday 9th January, 12 noon from the Temple.

DEMONSTRATION organised by the Tunay Hassan and Trevor Monerville campaigns, 8 January starting from Hackney police station, Lower Clapton Road, E8. Assemble 7pm.

FREE MOSES MAYEKEISO! FREE THE ALEXANDRA 5! Picket the South African embassy. Saturday 16th January.

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN EVOLUTION A series of 10 lectures—Starting Thursday 14 January 7pm. £1 (includes light refreshments). Lecturer Mike Howgate. Venue Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London. WC1.

Seafield closure threat

ARMAGEDDON has arrived in the Scottish coalfield, said Richard Saville, a St Andrews University economist and co-author of a recent report 'The Case For Retaining Seafield'.

BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE

British Coal are expected to announce on Monday the closure of the Seafield colliery in Fyfe, with the loss of 650 jobs.

This represents a major turn of the screw in the destruction of Scotland's industrial economy. It comes against the background of a Warwick University report on the relative prosperity of Britain's 10 economic regions, which shows that Scotland has fared worst of all since 1981.

At midnight on Wednesday Dr Lewis Moonie, Labour MP for Kirkcaldy, and min-

ing union officials, began a 24 hour vigil outside the Scottish headquarter of British Coal in Edinburgh. The gesture is the outcome of the Stalinist politics of the Communist Party-led Scottish area of the National Union of Mineworkers, whose leaders have publicly refused to endorse Arthur Scargill's candidature for the NUM presidency.

A spokesperson for the Seafield Campaign Group called the vigil 'a chance to demonstrate to British Coal the strength of feeling of

Scotland on this issue.'

But the report for the case on Seafield by Saville and Edinburgh lecturer George Kerevan makes it clear that the likelihood of closure is no accident, but the result of British Coal's 'hidden agenda'. Seafield miners have been subjected to torrents of abuse from, and the setting of impossible by, the board's Scottish director, George McAlpine, since the autumn as a way of preparing the rundown.

Kerevan and Saville show that if a rich but difficult seam such as that at Seafield is closed as unworkable, the Scottish coalfield is likely to be shut entirely by the 1990s.

ROBSON'S CHOICE

The stock and share game!

The reason I seldom, if ever, highlight run-of-the-mill sit-coms or mystery stories in this column is not because I wish they did not exist, or hold them in contempt as some might think, but because, rather like water, everybody knows where to find them.

Together with news and current affairs programmes they represent the lion's share of radio and especially television output. They perform a useful social function: sociable company for those who live alone; uplifting humour for the down at heart; a touch of glamour for the down at heel; pure escapism for those who need to escape, etc. As a means of relaxation television is hard to beat.

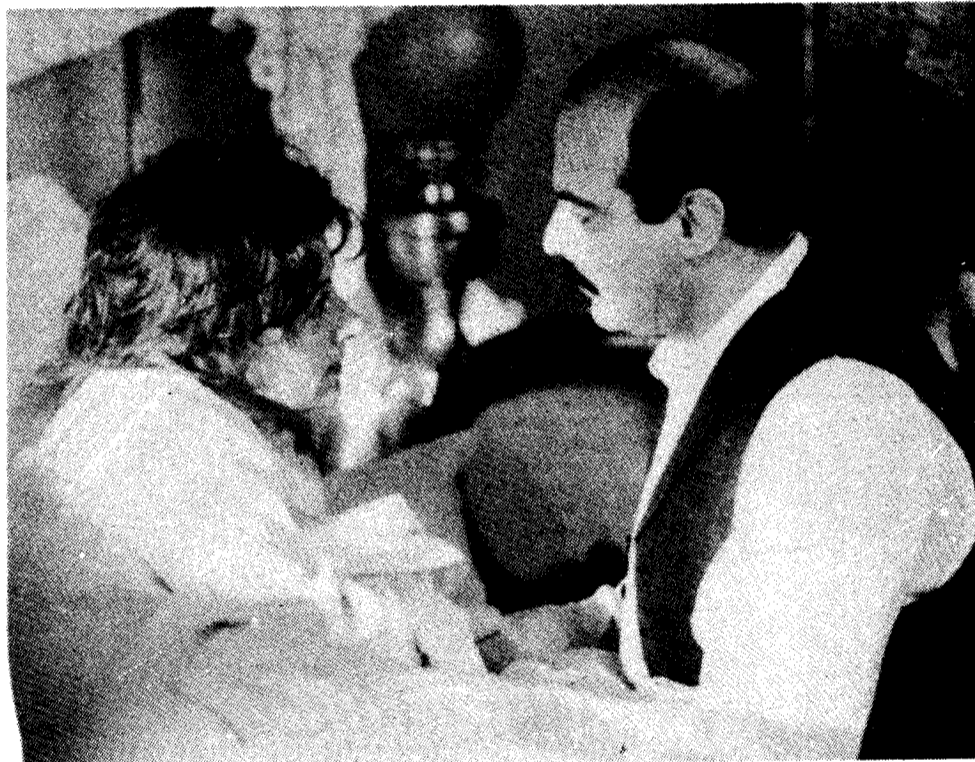
Where I draw a line, however, between light-hearted and usually light-minded escapism and irredeemable pap which should either be banished from our screens or carry a health warning, is Quiz Shows.

Television PR's will not doubt protest that the rising tide of quiz shows (fourteen separate programmes this week, not counting repeats) is merely a sensitive and timely response to public demand. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. The truth, being very concrete, has to do with money, not a genetically determined passion for guessing games.

There is no cheaper type of television production than the quiz show — with or without prizes. That is why it is on the increase; and also why you can see twice as many on commercial channels as you can on BBC.

There has also been a marked increase in recent months in finance related programmes. These may not necessarily be cheap to make, but they serve an important ideological function. They shore up Thatcher and her falling star. Now that she has proved that her particular brand of popular capitalism can lead to more ordinary citizens losing their shirts faster than at any time in history, TV comes to her rescue with a vengeance.

A few years ago the only programme touching on finance was *The Money Programme*. Now there is *Antique Roadshow*, *Talking Business*, *Money Spinners*, *The Business Programme*, *Business Daily*, *I Could do That*, *Tourism*, *The Marketing Mix* and *The City Programme*.



David Suchet and Sorcha Cusack, as Leopold and Molly Bloom, appear in the examination of James Joyce's 'Ulysses', first of the series 'The Modern World: Ten Great Writers' on Channel 4

And next week, Channel Four makes a historic leap. It brings together these two great liberating trends in British television, popular capitalism (or low finance) and guessing games. I wait with bated breath to see the first broadcast of *The Stocks and Shares Show*.

On **Saturday**, at 10.55a.m. (C4), Charlie Chaplin and Edna Purviance in *The Idle Class*. At 2p.m. (BBC2), Fritz Lang's *Rancho Notorious* followed, at 3.25p.m. by Josef von Sternberg's *The Devil is a Woman*, both starring Marlene Dietrich. At 5.30p.m. (BBC2), crystals, lasers and the human body are the subjects of the *Royal Institution Christmas Lecture*. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), Puccini's opera *La Boheme*. At 7.40p.m. (BBC2), Solti and Perahia play Bartok. More Bartok at 10.05p.m. (Radio 3), in *Hungarian Piano Music*.

On **Sunday**, at 12.20p.m. (Radio 3), Mozart and Schubert in *From The Festivals 1987*. At 1.10p.m. (BBC2), a repeat of *Horizon's* fascinating and informative 'The Transplanted Brain'. At 1.30p.m. (C4), Monteverdi's epic opera *The Return of Ulysses*. At 5.30p.m. (Radio 3), *Bergman and His Demons*. At 7.15p.m. (BBC2), the story of America's civil rights years 1954-1965 in six parts: *Eyes on the Prize*. At 8.15p.m. (C4), the one-and-only, history-making, *The Stocks and Shares Show*. At 8.45p.m. (C4), *The Modern World: Ten Great Writers*, tackles James Joyce's 'Ulysses'. At 10p.m. (BBC2), the much publicised *The Vision*.

On **Monday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), part-two of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. At 6p.m. (C4), *Information Technology* looks at sensors and robotics. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), *Horizon*

presents 'Death of a Star'. At 8.15p.m. (Radio 4), a play by Mike Walker set in Nicaragua, *Companeros*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), *Panorama* cynically poses the question in its programme title 'Arthur Scargill Evermore?'. At 11p.m. (C4), genetic engineering in *The Soft Cell*.

On **Tuesday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), the first of six parts, *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*. At 6p.m. (BBC2), the film *Tom Thumb* in *Children's Classics*. At 8.30p.m. (BBC1), *Wildlife on One*. At 9p.m. (BBC2), Joseph Losey's film, *The Servant*. Also at 9p.m. (ITV), John Pilger presents the first in a series of three reports from his homeland in *Viewpoint Special*.

On **Wednesday**, at 2.30p.m. (C4), Laurel and Hardy in the film *Bonnie Scotland*. At 4.20p.m. (ITV), *The Wind in the Willows* continues. At 10p.m. (C4), Robert Altman's film, *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, etc.* At 12.15a.m. (ITV), Don Siegel's tough thriller, *The Killers*.

On **Thursday**, at 8.10p.m. (BBC2), Max Hastings continues his *War in Korea*. At 11.25p.m. (C4), the documentary *Gates of Heaven*.

On **Friday**, at 11.10p.m. (BBC1), Ivan Passer's film *Silver Bears*. At 11.30p.m. (C4), Jacques Deray's wicked film, *He Died with His Eyes Open*.

Tom Scott Robson



'Stocks and Shares Show' presenter John Swinfield (centre) with regular contestants



PART-TIME WORK: TORY TRAP

A GROWING army of part-time workers are fast becoming central to British bosses' plans.

Firms see part-timers as the key to cost-cutting and expanding profits: their labour can be used more flexibly, it is cheaper, and they have far fewer legal employment rights. They can be more easily undervalued, discriminated against and sacked.

Today part-timers not only cover work of limited duration, but are increasingly doing jobs that were previously full-time.

Today there are five million part-time workers in Britain, more than one-fifth of the total workforce.

Over 80 per cent are women, and a high percentage are from overseas or immigrant backgrounds.

The change since the 1950s has been staggering: between 1951 and 1986 the number of full-time workers fell by 3 million while the number of part-timers rose by 4 million.

Rights

Heavily concentrated in the very worst-paid public and service industries — health and catering — part-timers frequently miss out on holiday pay, sick pay, pensions, bonuses, shift payments and organising rights.

Now the Tories plan to make things still worse. The range of workers who fail to qualify for elementary employment rights will be extended.

Two important pamphlets — 'Part-Time Workers' from

the Labour Research Department (LRD) and 'A Fair Deal for Part-Time Workers' published by the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) — provide a mass of information on employment rights, and the lack of them, in this sector.

For example, it is explained that anyone paid below the National Insurance threshold of £39 does not have to pay NI and pension contributions — but then loses entitlements ranging from unemployment and

sickness benefits to widows' pension, state retirement pension and invalidity pension.

Obligation

Meanwhile their employers gain not by having to pay contributions and by having virtually no obligations to this grade of employee.

Those who regularly work less than 16 hours a week, but more than eight, have to be in the same job for five years before qualifying for redundancy pay, maternity leave and pay, the right to return to work after childbirth, a minimum period of notice, a written statement of terms and conditions of employment, an itemised pay statement, time off for union and other public activities, and protection against unfair dismissal.

Definitions of part-time work also vary at the convenience of the viewing authority. The government's New Earnings Survey takes 30 hours a week as its upper level. For Family Income Supplement it is also 30 hours a week — but 24 hours a week for single parents.

Collective agreements however, frequently regard a part-timer as anyone work-

Part-timers are brought into the health service and other already low-paid sectors

ing for less than the hours normally worked, i.e. less than 39 hours for a local authority manual worker.

Even part-timers are supposed to have certain contracted and statutory rights, whatever their hours of work or length of service, including equal pay for work of equal value, time-off for ante-natal care, and rights under the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts.

But none of these 'rights', for part-timers, are backed by laws protecting them from unfair dismissal.

So while an act of discrimination against a part-time worker would be unlawful, any subsequent dismissal for having fought the action might not be 'unfair' in legal terms.

Privatisation has been a major factor in reducing full-time work to part-time, and in cutting back existing part-time work in both hours and pay.

The contract tendering system hands out work to the firm making the lowest bid. The most notorious case was that of Barking hospital in 1982 when contractors Crothalls cut hours by 40 per cent to win the contract, thereby sparking a strike which lasted nearly two years.

Now the Tories are working to strengthen the position of the privatisers and the corner-cutting employers even further.

In April 1987 they introduced a 'job share' scheme — supposedly a system for creating more employment by dividing one job into two.

In practice this simply involved paying employers a grant of £1,000 a time to turn full-time workers into part-time — with the loss of all employment protection and negotiated rights this implies.

NUPE warns that job-splitting should be avoided, and strictly distinguished from voluntary job-sharing, which should also be approached with great caution.

As for European Community minimal legislation for protecting part-timers, the Tories (although solidly pro-EEC!) have rejected all attempts to introduce it.

Implementation of the EEC draft directive of December 1981, which guarantees part-timers the same rights as full-timers in regard to holidays, sick-pay and pensions (on a pro rata basis), has been consistently blocked by the Tories, as has the January 1985 amend-

ment which extends cover further.

Instead, the Tories are planning to increase the number of workers who do not qualify for rights.

They aim to raise from eight hours per week to 12 hours the level at which almost no rights apply, and lift from 16 hours to 20 hours the upper-limit at which 5 years' work for one employer is needed to qualify for basic entitlements.

All labour movement organisations should be urged by their members to involve themselves in the battle to stop part-time work being

used by employers and government as a means of destroying basic rights and heightening exploitation.

At the same time the problem should be attacked from the other end. In the age of new technology and the highest development of machine production, the demand should be raised for these to be used as the basis for the systematic general reduction in hours of work — without loss of pay or employment rights — so that everyone can benefit in terms of more time for their own interests and pursuits.



Women in part-time work

Five occupational groups account for 41 per cent of female part-timers: nurses and midwives; general clerks; saleswomen, shop assistants and shelf fillers; home domestic helpers, hotel chambermaids and nursing assistants; cleaners other than road sweepers.

Of all these women working under 30 hours a week, 11 per cent worked for less than eight hours and 29 per cent between eight and 16 hours.

Average hourly earnings for part-time women workers were £2.43 in April 1985 compared with £3.32 for full-time women and £4.49 for full time men.

(Information from New Earnings Survey, April 1985)

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

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Secretary to the Central Committee

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Saturday January 9 1988, Newsdesk 01-733 3058

BANKS PONDER BOND DEAL

BY CYRIL SMITH

CHANCELLOR LAWSON'S new year message to the business community was full of cheerful noises. A similar story was told by bankers and politicians everywhere.

These gentlemen know the reality is very different. Last week they poured massive funds into an effort to shore up the tumbling dollar.

They must in addition have agreed to buy dollars for a couple of weeks. The result was a sudden lurch upwards on stock markets at the beginning of last week.

The aim of the bankers is to slow down or reverse the dollar's fall until the next set of US trade figures, which it is hoped will show a less horrific deficit than of late.

Nobody, however, has any answer to the underlying problem: the world's banker, the USA, is in debt to the rest of the world, and the size of this debt is continually growing.

Over the past two decades, US banks have been lending money hand over fist, especially to Latin American countries. This 'Third World' debt now tops \$900 billion. For some time now, the poorest countries on this planet have been financing the richest, as interest payments drain away a huge part of the dwindling export earnings of Africa and South America.

During 1987, it became clear that, not only would the principal not be repaid, but the creditors would be lucky to get much interest either. A 'secondary market' has

grown up, where you can buy a share in the Mexican or Peruvian debt at discounts of up to 50 or 60 cents in the dollar.

It is well-known that a lot of the money loaned to Mexico and Brazil never left New York. It just got transferred from the account of the Latin American government into that of one of its ministers or of his friends and relations.

The latest chapter in this tale of greed and exploitation is the Mexican 'loan-for-bonds' proposal whereby Mexico will wipe off a large chunk of its debt.

In return, it will present the US banks with special 20-year bonds, using US government securities as collateral. The banks will soon be faced with a choice: carry on pretending that the Mexicans owe them 20 billion dollars or more — knowing full well that it will never be repaid; or accept 10 billion dollars-worth of these bonds instead.

What do these manoeuvres mean? A major part of the capital of the world has gone into such dealings since the oil crisis of 1973 and the recession which followed. Some of this capital is now going to disappear.

All this ducking and diving is a search for ways of minimising the disruption this will cause to the global circulation of capital. At the same time, a massive game of 'pass-the-parcel' is in progress. Each capitalist seeks to ensure that it is the other fellow's capital which vanishes, and not his own.

Meanwhile, the working people of the world, whose labour goes to produce all the surplus value which nourishes this capital, face mass unemployment, cuts in social benefits and starvation. Their only alternative is the socialist revolution.

Seven-day week warning

THE SIX-DAY week in the mining industry is a step towards the seven day week, warned Arthur Scargill, speaking at a rally in Coalville, Leicestershire on Sunday night.

BY PAUL HENDERSON

This meeting did have official area support, but attracted an audience of 50, which included a posse of media people and the speakers.

Scargill concentrated his speech on the issues in the election and repeated his pledges to have no conciliation with the UDM, and to flatly oppose six day working.

'As far as I am concerned,' he said, 'I want a four day week, so that those kids who are presently having to sign on the dole can get work in the pits.'

Closures

'I also want to see the reinstatement of every sacked miner, and to stop all pit closures, except on the grounds of exhaustion.'

Pointing out that British Coal is currently saying that they have an over-production of coal, he asked to loud applause, 'What is wrong with giving it away, when people are freezing?'

'I also don't need any lectures on the morality of free

'They want an incentive scheme to divide pit from pit, miner from miner,' he continued.

'The background to all this is the recession, the inner cities in crisis, the health service collapsing around our ears, and four and a half million unemployed. This has led to the opening up of a big discussion in the working class movement.'

The meeting was organised by the Leicestershire Miners Forum in the face of a refusal by local leaders to invite Scargill to speak.

In spite of the lack of official support, the hall was packed with nearly 200 people, mostly miners, in contrast to a meeting held earlier in the day addressed by Arthur Walsh, Scargill's opponent in the election for the national president of the union and the candidate favoured by British Coal and the media.

Coal board interfere with union affairs

NUM BALLOT: BEWARE STATE ATTACK

BY OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH COAL has made an unprecedented attack on the conduct of the NUM presidential election before a single vote has been cast. The Board is acting for the Thatcher government to stop the election taking place.

Thatcher has sworn by all that she holds dear that the election for the president of the NUM will not take place, according to Westminster journalists.

British Coal make their allegations now to create an atmosphere in which an injunction can be taken to halt the election.

British Coal arrogantly claim that the NUM have printed too many ballot papers. NUM election rules are strict and clear. The number of ballot papers printed is based on the membership of the last financial year. This is common practice and well known to British Coal. They also know that the only men allowed to vote are those whose names appear on the check-off list provided by British Coal that confirms those members who have paid their subscription on the last quarter.

The check list and unused ballot papers have then to be accounted for, registered with the signa-

enterprise from Thatcher, who supports the importing of coal from racist South Africa, and from countries like Colombia, where coal is mined by nine-year-old children.'

The meeting was in a key area for the elections. Although the area is small, it highlights many of the contradictions facing the NUM. Its miners — with the exception of a highly principled minority — worked throughout the 1984-1985 strike, following a ballot organised by their area leaders which went against the strike call.

After this ballot the local leaders actively encouraged the crossing of picket lines and even incited violence against the pickets.

In spite of their behaviour in the strike, the Leicestershire miners voted solidly after the strike to stay in the NUM and even went on strike in protest at the tactics of the UDM, who came into the area to leaflet in an attempt to reverse their disastrous situation.

The meeting was chaired by Keith Vaz, newly-elected Labour MP for Leicester East, who pointed out in his opening speech that the predictions made by Arthur Scargill on the closure of pits had come true as far as Coalville was concerned.



ARTHUR SCARGILL

tures of the scrutineers and sent to the Electoral Reform Society for counting — a time-tested system regarded as one of the most secure and democratic in the trade union movement. It regularly produces an 80 per cent poll.

Thatcher and British Coal want to stop the election and force a postal ballot when the legislation is enacted.

Past postal ballots have proved that 60 - 70 per cent more ballot papers are printed and distributed than are actually used. Unlike the pit head ballot there is no check on the unused papers. At least 15 per cent of ballot papers reach the wrong addresses and therefore go to non-members who, if they wish, can vote for the candidate of their choice since there are no scrutineers on a post box.

Postal ballots are by their very nature insecure. Their organisation is concentrated in the hands of a few bureaucrats who, if corrupt, could subvert the election by themselves.

British Coal's attack has nothing to do with democracy. 'Stop Scargill' is their only aim. His re-election would be a tremendous blow to their plans for the privatisation of British Coal.

British Coal requires:

- the closure of all remaining 'uneconomic' pits
- the introduction of flexible working — seven day production
- the deregulation of the mines

● Scargill's removal as NUM president.

The implications go much deeper than the National Union of Mineworkers. Scargill has come to represent opposition to the rightward drift of the leadership of the trade union and labour movement. He has based his campaign against these 'new realists' — those who want total capitulation to the Thatcher government.

He is seen to represent those workers who want to fight for a socialist alternative. That is why all serious socialists are supporting Scargill. The enthusiastic support shown at Scargill's rallies contrasts with the growing contempt for the South Wales and Scottish leaders who have deserted Scargill.

By nominating no candidate they have put themselves firmly in the Welsh camp but haven't the guts to nominate Walsh, the man they really want to win the election.

Every indication is that the Scottish and Welsh miners will defy their leadership and vote solidly for Scargill.

S. Wales support grows

BY TRAVIS GOULD

SOUTH WALES miners' leaders are placing every obstacle they can in the path of a Scargill victory in the NUM presidential election.

But despite the last delegate conference decision not to support either candidate, and to leave it up to the individual miner to decide who to vote for, seven lodges in Wales representing over a third of the work-force are openly backing Scargill and support for him is growing.

A series of disputes in South Wales originating from the rank and file has shown the feeling against six-day working, flexibility and the disciplinary code, the most re-

cent being a two-week stoppage at Taff Merthyr colliery just before Christmas.

An invitation to Arthur Scargill to visit new underground working at Cynheidre colliery near Llanelli was the cause of a row last week. Initially South Wales leaders opposed Scargill's visit on the grounds that correct procedures had not been followed. The intransigence of the Cynheidre lodge leadership forced an executive climb down on Tuesday.

Phil Cullen, the Cynheidre lodge chairman, told the press: 'He (George Rees — South Wales NUM secretary) said we had not followed correct procedures and informed him first that we were inviting him (Scargill). We wrote back to say he was coming.'

Cullen also commented on the efforts of the local leadership to challenge the validity of the election at law. 'If they are willing to take legal

advice to try and stop him resigning and standing again for president, then they will stop at nothing to hinder him.'

The large core of pro-Scargill miners actively campaigning in the election are winning widespread support. They have been met with a hysterical witch-hunting attack from president Des Duffield, Rees and company who charged that 'Trotskyists' and others who were not miners were running the campaign.

General threats to use union rules regarding outsiders have been made by the South Wales leaders. These panic accusations will be ringing in their ears when the welcome mat is put down for Scargill at Chynheidre.

● Scargill will be addressing three meetings in South Wales on 11, 12 and 13 January in the Gwent, Middle and West Wales coalfields.

■ TYRONE O'SULLIVAN, Tower colliery Lodge secretary, and a prominent supporter in South Wales of Arthur Scargill's campaign for re-election as NUM president has organised a coalfield campaign for a public meeting at Pontllanfraith in the Gwent coalfield on 12 January against the instructions of the executive.

Tower is located.

O'Sullivan told Workers Press: 'Because of the deliberate delay in making a nomination the meeting had to be booked in advance of

Delay

that. Since that date, the Marine colliery Lodge has taken responsibility for the meeting — they are sponsoring it and will chair it on the night.'

British Coal is forcing the closure of Tredomen engineering works by offering redundancies to the entire

workforce, with the proviso that if required skills are retained they will run a reduced operation. The same ploy was used to close down Tredegar workshops leaving Tredomen the last workshop in Wales.

They are offering AEU members the same carrot as NUM members — an extra £5,000 if redundancies are accepted before 29 March.

The redundancies are being opposed by the AEU-dominated shop steward's committee who have formed an action committee at the plant.