

WOMEN GO BACK DOWN THE MINES THE VICTORIAN VALUES BILL

BY OUR POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

THE TORY Employment bill that received its second reading in the Commons last week will open up the prospect of women working down the mines.

Labour shadow minister for women, Jo Richardson, gave this outrageous proposal - described by another Labour MP as inhuman and indecent - which would abolish a prohibition going back to the 1840s, her 'conditional approval'.

She no doubt agrees with TORY Secretary of State for Employment, Norman Fowler, who presented his Bill as a move towards greater 'equal opportunities'.

THIS 'Victorian values' Bill would face 16 year-olds with night work, 11-hour days and 54 hour weeks.

The measures are amongst over 100 which end regulations on young people's hours of work.

Many of them, including that which allows teenagers to work shifts are in breach of the European Social Charter.

Small employers with fewer than 20 staff will now not have to give reasons for dismissal and all workers deemed to be taking 'frivolous, vexatious or unrea-

sonable' cases to an Industrial Tribunal will have to provide a £150 deposit.

All workers will in future have to work two years, not the present six months, before they are entitled to know the reasons for being sacked.

The bill will also severely restrict the time off bosses are now forced to give their workers for trade union activities.

Michael Meacher, Labour Employment spokesman, said of the Bill: 'It is sheer hypocrisy which is to provide a source of cheap and exploited labour.'

Meacher also warned that more teenage workers will face accident and death if the provisions of the bill are enacted.

Accidents

The number of accidents amongst teenagers at work has doubled in the last decade, he said.

These are fine words, but for Meacher cheap ones. For the fact is that this servile 'opposition' has stood aside and allowed the Tories to ride roughshod over rights and concessions won by workers in generations of struggle.

Only last week the leader of the scab electricians' union was appointed by the Tory government to the National Economic Development Council - The tripartite union, state, and employers' body.

TUC general secretary, Norman Willis bleated that this was a 'provocation' but immediately announced that the unions would continue to sit on this corporatist body alongside Hammond.

The Tories have declared a frontal attack on the rights of millions of workers and youth.

The maximum campaign must be built up throughout the working class movement against these attacks, drawing in all groups of

workers, and those layers in the middle class also coming under the Tory hammer.

Such a campaign is inseparable from the struggle to rid the movement of its present leadership, whose main concern is not fighting the Tory government but

collaborating with it.

As all forms of the struggle of the working class have become increasingly shackled by legislation, the only way forward for workers is through the breaking of the law and the challenging of the state.



MPs and picketers hand in a petition with half a million signatures at Whitehall to mark the celebration of 1,000 days and nights of the non-stop picket against apartheid on Thursday 12 January. A mass rally for all friends and supporters of the picket will be held on Saturday 14 January from 10 am to 10 pm outside South Africa house in Trafalgar Square. See inside, page 3, for an interview with Amandla Kitson, founder member of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, and daughter of David Kitson, who was jailed for 20 years by the South African regime for his leading role in Umkhonto We Sizwe, military wing of the African National Congress.

• Inside this week's Workers Press:

- The new legislation on the PTA, by Simon Pirani - pages 4 & 5
- 1,000 days and nights of the non-stop picket outside the South African embassy, Workers Press interviews Amandla Kitson
- Letters - page 5

Workers Press

Open the KGB archives!

WRITING IN THE SOVIET journal "Literaturnaya Gazeta" last week, Soviet historian Dr N.Vasetski declared that Stalin's secret police organised the assassination of Leon Trotsky in 1940. This was the first time such an admission has been published in the Soviet Union.

Vasetski's article also referred to Trotsky as second only to Lenin in the leadership of the October Revolution. The author included the usual attacks on Trotsky, denouncing his 'egotism' and declaring that his policies would have been as bad as those of Stalin.

But that is secondary. What is most important is that Vasetski points to the role of the NKVD - predecessor of the KGB - in the Mexico murder. He refers in particular to the NKVD colonel Leonid Eytngon as central organiser of the assassination, and gives his aliases: Leontyev and Rabinovich.

Dr Gregory Rabinowitz was officially the head of the Russian Red Cross in the US. Also using the aliases "Roberts" and "John", he was at the centre of the group of NKVD agents which enabled Trotsky's murderer, Ramon Mercader, to get into the house in Coyoacan.

Now that Eytngon's part in Stalin's plot to assassinate the leader of the Fourth International has been made public in the Soviet Union, the demand must be stepped up for all the archives of the KGB to be opened for investigation.

Stalin's secret police mounted a major operation, leading to the death, not only of Trotsky himself, but also of many of his followers in Spain, France and other countries. The death of his son Leon Sedov in Paris in 1937 must also be investigated.

The names of many other Stalinist agents who operated this highly-organised murder machine are certainly on files held in Moscow.

Reports indicate that Mercader, released from a not-too-uncomfortable Mexican prison in 1960, was welcomed to Cuba by Castro and Che Guevara. He then went to live in Czechoslovakia, was decorated by Krushchev and was kept until his death as an honoured pensioner of the bureaucracy.

In the 1970s, a campaign of slander against the late Joseph Hansen and others in the US Socialist Workers Party was mounted by G. Healy. Healy was expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1985, but his campaign, accusing them on the flimsiest evidence of collaborating with Trotsky's murderers, is still continued by the group around David North.

These questions can be settled and important lessons learnt by the workers movement when the records of the KGB are opened. This is of especial importance for the Soviet workers and intellectuals who are fighting to clear up the history of the October Revolution and its perversion under Stalin.

Gorbachev, who claims to operate a policy of openness, should be forced to uncover these dark corners of Soviet history. This demand must be supported by all those in the international labour movement who want to see the truth about Stalin's rule brought to light.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £410.76

We must raise £2,000 by the end of the month. Many thanks for the £410.76 received in the first ten days. We need an average of £76 per day to reach the target.

Please don't let a day pass without doing something about the Fighting Fund. Every 25p, 50p and £1 mounts up.

Workers Press is the paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party and our Fighting Fund is raised from many members and readers who are finding the money for the fund even though they are struggling with the burden of Thatcher's economic crisis.

We look forward to producing Workers Press in its old tabloid format when we can have a proper discussion with our readers through the letter pages of the paper. This is the time for recruitment to the Workers Revolutionary Party and to build up the sales of Workers Press in the fight for socialist leadership against Thatcher and the treacherous reformist and Stalinist leaders in the Labour Party and trade unions.

Dot Gibson

Please send donations to: **Workers Press Fighting Fund**
PO BOX 735, London SW9 7QS.

Not a bottle opener. (see 'Dinosaurs and dotty aunts' Workers Press 17 December 1988.) The horn on Tsintaosaurus spinorhinus is really a displaced nasal bone which should lie flat on the skull. PS The dinosaurs from China exhibition will run for an extra two weeks, closing on 11 February 1989.

Sunday 19 February, 3 pm - 6 pm **WORKERS PRESS** public meeting in London - **The defence of democratic rights; the fight against Thatcher.** Edric Hall, SouthBank Polytechnic, 103 Borough Road, London SE1 (nearest tube Elephant and Castle).

WRP LONDON DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Social Saturday 28 January 8 pm - 11 pm

BAR, MUSIC, FOOD

Abbey Community Centre

222 Belsize Road, Kilburn NW6 (nearest tube, Kilburn Park)

Proceeds to pay for transport for the Pollok Republican flute band from Glasgow to the Bloody Sunday demonstration in London.

Friday 27 January: Workers Revolutionary Party
London District Public Meeting
'70 YEARS SINCE THE MURDER OF ROSA LUXEMBURG AND KARL LIEBKNECHT - GERMAN REVOLUTIONARIES'
Speakers: Bob Archer and Tom Kemp
7.30 pm, room A85 London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, London WC2

Saturday 28 January: Join the WRP contingent on the 17th anniversary of **BLOODY SUNDAY DEMONSTRATION - Britain out of Ireland.**
Assemble Grange Park, Kilburn 10 am - march to Stonebridge Park
Social in the evening £2 (£1 unwaged) tickets can be obtained from the Workers Press office.

THE latest issue of 'Tasks of the Fourth International' is now available. It contains Cliff's Slaughter's report to the extended meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International's meeting last August, together with the transcript of Michel Varga's (Balasz Nagy's) speech to the London meeting called to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Fourth International in 1938. Copies of this issue are available from PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS. Price £2.40, including P&P.

1,000 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF THE NON-STOP PICKET



On the occasion of the 1,000th day of the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group non-stop picket outside the South African embassy, Workers Press interviews Amandla Kitson, founder member of City of London AA, and daughter of David Kitson, who was jailed for 20 years by Pretoria for his leading role in Umkhonto we Sizwe, military wing of the ANC.

THE NON-STOP PICKET outside the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, London started on the 19 April 1986.

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group wanted an action which was a determined, thorough protest.

It was based on the successful non-stop 86-day picket in early 1980 which resulted in prisoners in South Africa being moved from the 'hanging prison'. It meant that they didn't have to spend another winter in a damp jail.

It was particularly vital for my father who might not have lasted

another winter in those harsh conditions.

The huge importance of that picket was that it had made people conscious of what was going on in South Africa, and this picket has had the same effect.

On 12 January, the 1,000th day of the picket, we are handing in a petition of half a million signatures. It represents 500 signatures a day. But it is not just signatures; it is people stopping and asking what's happening - it is discussing the situation with people.

What is most important is the possibility of highlighting British collaboration with apartheid. Britain is the main backer of apartheid and gets huge profits off the backs of the black people. Well over £14 billion is invested.

Politically right-wing forces in Britain would like the same ideological position to win the day here, and the picket is important in taking a stand against that. It is an on-going demonstration saying 'No to racism'.

Most of the media have concentrated on the fact that the picket has been in existence for 1,000 days as a record-breaking event, in the bad weather.

But really the main thing is that it has been an action which has come up against the force of the British state and the police have singled out the black activists in particular, because they don't want the connection made between South African apartheid and racism here.

We stand by a policy of nonsectarianism. We support all organisations and groups which fight apartheid. Anybody can join the picket as long as they are committed to the ending of apartheid.

Basically, because I am the daughter of somebody who was in prison, I know at first hand that the picket is not just a gesture, but is a vital part of actively giving solidarity to the fighting people of South Africa/Azania.

It is interesting to notice who the picket attracts as its mainstay pickets - the young, the unemployed, and the politically conscious people. It also incorporates religious people and people from all walks of life and all levels of commitment.

1,000 days of the Non-Stop Picket is an achievement, but what we must remember is all the political

prisoners and detainees who have spent long hard years in prison and that's the sort of commitment to the struggle we are trying to give in solidarity with Mandela, Mothopeng, Mayekiso, Steve Biko and Sisulu and all the others.

We are remembering everyone who is suffering under apartheid. We are specifically committed to the picket until Mandela is free. But we are not just acting for political prisoners and detainees. The people of South Africa are rising up - we are not just acting for the victims, but in solidarity with all the people in the fightback against apartheid. We are taking our lead from them.

Brent council savages tenants and workers

BY ELIZABETH LEICESTER

AN extraordinary letter is coming through the doors of Brent council tenants. In confusing and mystifying legal jargon tenants are being told that if they have been paying the £7 a week rent increase imposed last October by the Labour council, they should carry on paying it.

If however, they have been refusing to pay, and are among those on partial rent strike they are informed that the rent will be increased by £7 from 13 February.

When the increase was imposed originally, thousands of tenants refused to pay on the grounds that this rise was the third within a year and brought the total weekly increase to £12. The council's action was also challenged on the basis that proper notice had not been given to tenants. In the council's letter they mention their original notice was valid - but just in case they are issuing a new notice.

Tenants on rent strike will be meeting this week to consider how to spread their action.

Meanwhile, in another part of the borough, the council's housing needs workers enter their 15th week on strike, the longest in their union branch's history. The small group of workers, who are responsible for housing hundreds of homeless families, are asking for security screens, following an increase in attacks by people made desperate by the housing crisis.

Mass pickets are organised every Monday from 7.30 am outside 36 London Road Wembley, where the Labour council is employing scabs - all are welcome, please bring your banner.

Did Zionists Plant PAN AM Bomb?

BY CYRIL SMITH

SINCE THE PAN AM crash over Lockerbie, in which hundreds of people died, there has been considerable press speculation about who might have planted a bomb on the jumbo jet.

Various Palestinian groups have been proposed. An Iranian group has claimed responsibility.

But the prime candidate is never mentioned in the British press. Who has the skill required to mount this very sophisticated operation, and at the same time the motive of upsetting the Americans?

In other countries the obvious answer has been given from the start: the Israeli secret service Mossad. So widespread was this report, that the Israelis issued a specific denial soon after the crash took place.



Arafat in former days

The scenario widely suggested runs like this. While Gorbachev pressurises the Palestinians, the possibility of US talks with the PLO is discussed between the Zionists and the State Department. To help his friends to accept this inevitable contact, Shultz organises the affair of Arafat's visa refusal.

While secretly negotiating with the PLO Chairman about the content of his speech to the United Nations, the US announces that, since he is a terrorist, they couldn't possibly let him into New York.

The European governments all respond as expected, demanding that the Americans change their minds, and Shultz is able to show the Israelis that nobody agrees with them.

The UN Assembly meets in Geneva, Arafat reads the script

he has been given. Talks between the US and the PLO begin officially. A 'peace settlement' based on the setting up of a West Bank Bantustan, is in prospect.

Meanwhile, the Israelis have already set up the Pan Am operation. The US Embassy in Helsinki receives its tip-off two weeks before the crash. The US agrees to talks (twenty-four hours after the Geneva speech) and only then does Mossad activate its plan.

All this is known to all the governments involved, including the Soviet and the British. Arafat's statement offering 'help in finding the culprits', like the rest of this story, is not quite what it appears.

Some may say 'but this is speculation'; however it is more likely than any other explanation so far put forward.

LABOUR SUPPORT FOR AN a noose around British workers

BY SIMON PIRANI

WHILE you read this, Eamonn Wadley, a 35-year old hospital porter and Labour Party member living in Haringey, north London, waits in his cell at Brixton prison.

Eamonn's future is uncertain. The police came through his door three days before Christmas and detained him under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). After seven days 'questioning' he was charged with conspiracy to cause explosions, and withholding information.

If convicted, Eamonn could face 30 years or more in prison; if not, the personal damage will be permanent anyway. Eamonn was held before under the PTA, in 1981, released without charge, and suffered a nervous breakdown. Now he takes valium. That didn't stop the police interrogating him thoroughly this time round.

In a letter to Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn has asked why Eamonn Wadley was questioned so rigorously 'when he was clearly unfit and after he had exercised his right to silence'.

Corbyn wrote that Wadley's solicitor, Gareth Pierce, 'became concerned about his condition' during questioning, 'and asked for an independent psychiatrist to examine him together with a police doctor.'

Only after this did the police agree that, 'due to his prescription of valium and his condition, he was not fit to continue being questioned.'

Eamonn Wadley is hardly the only person to suffer unbearable nervous tension after arrest under the PTA.

'According to politically-committed Irish people, the PTA's powers of arbitrary arrest and detention terrorises not only themselves, but above all the ordinary Irish people living in Britain.'

Bernard Martin (no previous nervous illness), was arrested in Southampton in a 4 am police raid, held in a police cell, and released four days later with bruising on the eye, shoulder and upper arm. He had experienced 'bizarre and disturbing' hallucinations; a psychiatrist he consulted told the National Council for Civil Liberties that the symptoms were those frequently resulting from sensory deprivation torture.

Another man detained in 1981 under the PTA in a London flat, together with his brother and sister-in-law, was interrogated and then taken to a mental hospital - whose staff were not told how he had arrived in police custody. The man's wife, delayed after being told he was in a general hospital, found him only after he had suffered a complete breakdown. He was sitting, repeating: 'I am Irish and I am scum'.

This is a side-effect of the PTA's powers of arrest and detention for up to seven days, recently found by the European Court to be against European Community law.

There are cases, like that of Middlesex Polytechnic students Margaret Fletcher and

Nick Mullen, who were arrested on polling day while 'knocking up' voters for the Labour Party. There are cases of National Union of Students' officials and conference delegates being detained for days.

Sinn Fein speakers visiting Britain to give public meetings actually consider themselves fortunate if they do not get detained, excluded - and thus silenced. Don't forget, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams was excluded from entering Britain to meet with Greater London Council representatives in 1983 - just after having been elected to serve in parliament!

According to politically-committed Irish people, the PTA's powers of arbitrary arrest and detention terrorises not only themselves, but above all the ordinary Irish people living in Britain. It is a racist law, operated by racists in the police.

'The Birmingham Six and Guildford Four cases remind you that being innocent doesn't stop you spending a lifetime in prison.'

The statistic - 7.8 per cent of the 5,905 detained in the first ten years of the Act charged, a small minority of these found guilty - tells you that the uninvolved are a target. The Birmingham Six and Guildford Four cases remind you that being innocent doesn't stop you spending a lifetime in prison.

The PTA clauses under which the Home Secretary can 'exclude' you from one part of the 'United Kingdom' and send you to another - without you having any right to appeal against his decision, or even right to know why he has taken it - also ruin people's lives.

James Martin, for example, was excluded from Britain and returned to 'Northern Ireland' in 1979, after living here for 19 years - and to

re-settle in Belfast with his wife and three children who were born and brought up in Southampton.

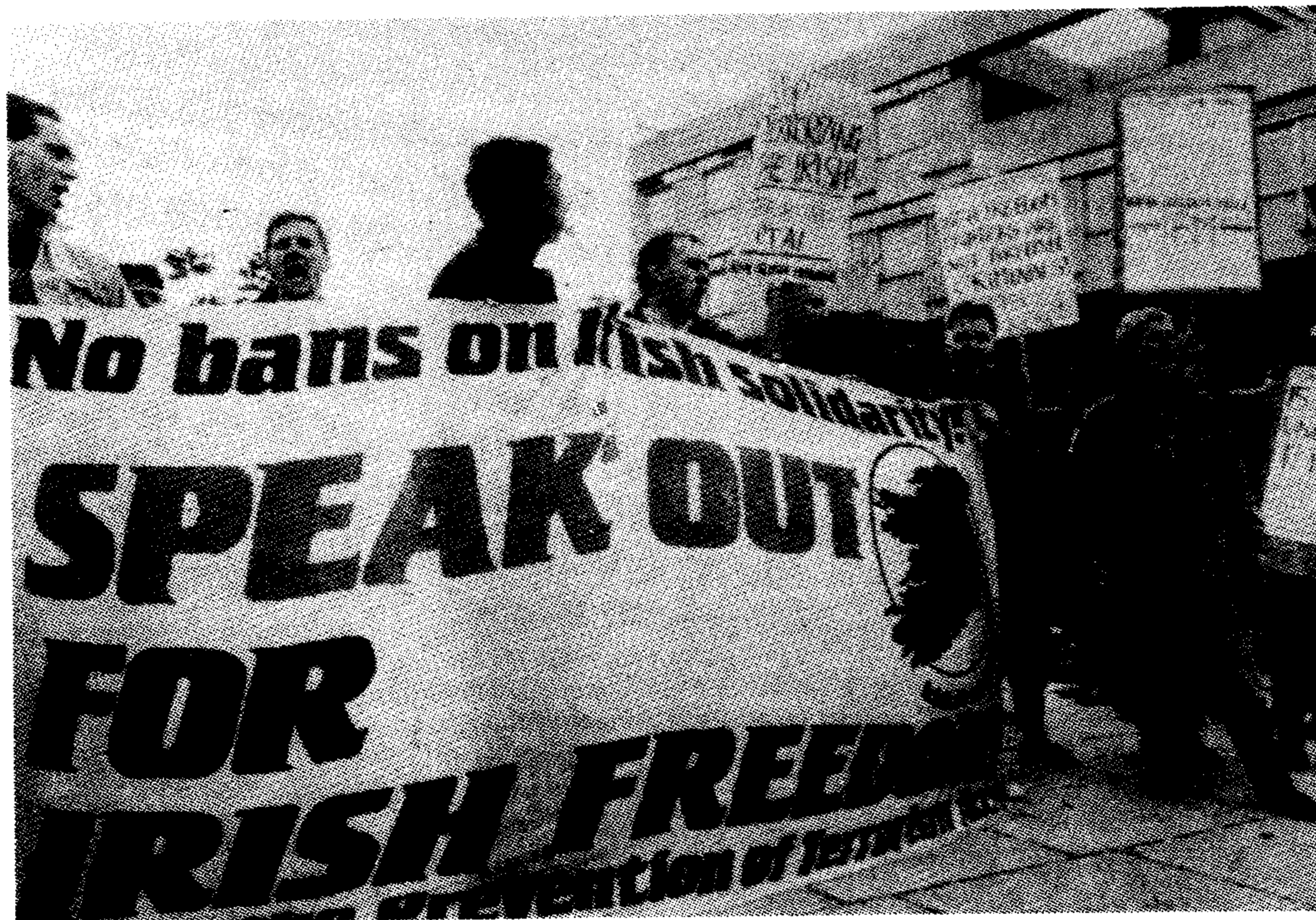
John McGuinness, who has no interest in politics, used to travel from Glasgow to visit his girlfriend in Belfast. He was excluded from the north of Ireland under the PTA; she had years before been convicted of a 'scheduled' offence under the act and was already excluded from Britain. The couple had to move out of the UK (they could not live together within it). Now their son, born and raised in southern Ireland, can never go on a trip to visit either set of grandparents with his mum and dad.

'The Labour leaders' support for the new laws, as for the imperialist occupation of the north of Ireland and the brutality it entails, helps put a noose round the neck of the British working class.'

(Referring to South Africa, leading Labour politicians call this 'internal exile'; when it comes to Ireland they say it is 'fighting terrorism').

When the IRA recommenced its campaign in Britain in 1973, the then Tory government had draconian 'anti-terrorist' measures drawn up by Home Office civil servants; but Prime Minister Heath's government was rocking under the strain of his conflict with the unions which - after the miners' strikes in January 1974 - brought him down. Introducing the laws in that atmosphere would have added fuel to the anti-Tory movement.

The chance to introduce the laws came after Labour was elected and industrial unrest receded. In November 1974, after the Birmingham pub bombs, the draft legislation was pulled out, given the title Prevention of Terrorism



LETTERS**The Fourth International and Palestine**

In recent months, Workers Press has carried several attacks on the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and on the decisions of the Palestine National Council (PNC) concerning proclamation of a Palestinian state, and willingness to negotiate with, and recognise, the State of Israel.

The Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has been accused of 'treachery'. It has been claimed that the PNC decisions mean abandonment of the Palestinian people's right to their homeland, and betrayal of the principle of self-determination. One article went so far as to accuse the Palestinian people's representatives, by implication, of conniving at the 'liquidation' of their own people.

I think such attacks go well beyond any reasonable criticism that might be made, and amount to vile slanders.

It has also been asserted that the 'destruction of the State of Israel' (we are not told by whom) is a necessary precondition for the unity of Arab and Jewish workers. (a topsy-turvy approach if you ask me!) Thus, notwithstanding the supposed criticism of the PLO as 'bourgeois nationalists', we are left with a more extreme bourgeois nationalism as the alternative.

These views have appeared not only in signed articles but also in editorials, and in a leaflet in the name of Workers Press.

I want to make it clear that I do not share the opinions that have been expressed, and to dissociate myself from the attacks made on the PLO. I think it only fair to add that the WRP is just beginning a full discussion on its position on the Middle East, and hopefully this will be reflected in the columns of an enlarged Workers Press in the not too distant future.

I consider that the kind of attacks made on the PLO, and Palestinian statehood, however genuine the authors' motives, could only serve the aims of the bourgeois Arab regimes which want to undermine the PLO and prevent Palestinian self-determination; and of the Zionist leaders and US imperialists, so far out-manoeuvred by the PLO leadership.

If Marxists in Israel and Palestine were to follow the kind of 'lead' being offered by some 'Trotskyists' here, they would be paralysed from any agitation among Israeli workers and soldiers, and isolated from the Palestinian masses.

Fortunately, those fighting there are not turning to us for advice. But what does that say for 'the leadership of the Fourth International'?

The negative attitudes expressed in recent months have diverted our paper and the party from the duty of campaigning in solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada; against Israeli occupation, for Palestinian trade union freedom and the release of Palestinian and Left-wing Israeli political prisoners, and for Palestinian self-determination - which must mean the right to a state.

Without engaging in such elementary international solidarity, it is idle talk to say we are 'building the Fourth International.'

Charlie Pottins

WRITE TO WORKERS PRESS

WORKERS PRESS welcomes letters on all subjects, but please be as brief as possible. Only in exceptional cases are we able to print letters longer than 200 words.

We also welcome new contributors of articles or reviews.
Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

**PTA-IRISH LAW:
'necks**

home secretary Roy Jenkins, and rushed through parliament in 17 hours.

It has stayed on the statute books for 14 years and is now being replaced by more 'temporary' (i.e. permanent) laws. The Labour leaders' grovelling commitment is still important to the Tories - which is why Labour MPs Clare Short and Andrew Bennett had to resign from Labour's front bench when they voted against the new Act, rather than obey Kinnock's three-line whip instruction to abstain.

The new Act goes much, much further:

- * The Home Secretary will have the power to proscribe organisations here in Britain.
- * Police will be able to detain and question people at ports or airports for up to 12 hours without arresting them.
- * Police will be able to investigate anyone's bank account, on the grounds that they may be 'laundering funds for terrorists'. But unlike the laws dealing with drug trafficking, they will not have to show 'reasonable cause to suspect' such involvement; they will not have to destroy records so acquired subsequently; they will not have to tell someone they are being investigated.
- * Police and soldiers searching people's homes will now be able to detain them in a particular part of the premises. 'The provision creates the farcical possibility of someone being sent to jail for two years for walking from their living room to their kitchen', comments the Belfast-based Committee for the Administration of Justice.

'The British working class movement must take a stand against the PTA and the whole imperialist anti-Irish war machine.'

* Remission on prison sentences in the six counties, which used to be half of the sentence, is cut to one-third. Thus Republican political

prisoners - against whom the clause is specifically directed - if given full remission, will serve 20 years of a 30-year sentence instead of 15.

This, together with the use of release dates to politically blackmail those serving life and Secretary of State's Pleasure sentences (see Workers Press December 23 issue), is another part of the state's attempt to force political prisoners to accept criminal status.

The Labour leaders' support for the new laws, as for the imperialist occupation of the north of Ireland and the brutality it entails, helps put a noose round the neck of the British working class. Our fight against Thatcher, or fight for socialism, is weakened by every bit of support given to the Tories in their attempt to subdue the Irish working class and nationalist movement.

The British working class movement must take a stand against the PTA and the whole imperialist anti-Irish war machine.

'Unity must be forged between those fighting the PTA, and other campaigns to defend democratic rights.'

Every case like that of Eamonn Wadley must be fought (Eamonn's friends and supporters are still considering how to campaign on his case, and we will keep our readers informed).

Unity must be forged between those fighting the PTA, and other campaigns to defend democratic rights. The means of doing so, and the place which the defence of democratic rights has in the struggle for socialism, will be raised at the Workers Press public meeting on Sunday 19 February in London and meetings elsewhere (see ads), and also in further articles in the pages of Workers Press.

Personal Column

Peter Fryer

Where the CUT comes from

SINCE my daughter and her Brazilian husband are now living in Rio de Janeiro, I watched Clive James's television account of that city last week with more than normal interest, and was more than normally disappointed.

To be insular means literally to live on an island, and all that the insular inhabitants of the island of Britain have traditionally thought it needful to know about Brazil is summed up in a famous line from a comedy of the 1890s: 'I am Charley's aunt from Brazil, where the nuts come from.'

Clive James's account of Rio didn't really improve on that. It showed above all that this educated native of the island of Australia, in his approach to cultures unfamiliar to him, is every bit as insular as the British.

To be sure, he did interview, in a perfunctory fashion, a handful of the city's upper crust. There were no surprises: those fine ladies and gentlemen displayed the arrogance, ignorance, self-satisfaction, and conceit that are characteristic of their class all over the world.

When James turned his attention from the rich to the poor, he was no less superficial.

Brazil's macumba and candomblé cults, syncretic blends of African religions and Portuguese Catholicism, are of the highest scientific and historical interest. But James's attitude to them was one long sneer.

He sneered at their 'monotonous' music.

He evidently doesn't know, or doesn't care, that they sing in an archaic liturgical Yoruba which to present-day Nigerians sounds rather as someone reciting in the language of Chaucer would sound to us.

He sneered in disgust, real or affected, at the ritual sacrifice of a goat. When animals are still being tortured and killed to serve the greed of cosmetics manufacturers, it seems pretty odd to condemn a group of poor and hungry people in Brazil for slitting the throat of an animal that they would afterwards cook and eat.

But James's programme must be indicted more for what it didn't show than for what it did. And what it didn't show was the remarkable social and political ferment that is seizing Rio and the rest of Brazil: a ferment that has mounted appreciably since I witnessed it at first hand in the autumn of 1986.

So we were told nothing about the massive steelworkers', oilworkers', and electricity workers' struggles last November, in the course of which troops opened fire on strikers at the state-owned steel plant in Volta Redonda, 70 miles north-west of Rio - South America's biggest steelworks - killing three workers and wounding many more.

We were told nothing about the ever-increasing support by Brazilian workers for the militant trade union confederation known as the CUT, which was founded in 1983 with this simple central demand: 'The rank and file must decide.'

We were told nothing about the massive gains made in last November's municipal elections by the Workers' Party, within which a key part is played by the Marxist Convergência Socialista group - massive

gains both in Rio and in the city of Sao Paulo, where Workers' Party left-winger Luiza Erundina was elected mayor, to the dismay of stock market and Stalinists alike.

Electoral support for the Workers' Party has soared from 1,400,000 votes in 1982 to 11 million in 1988, and the party has increased its share of local council seats from 170 to 2,000 in the same period.

We were, of course, told nothing about the recent murder by landowners' agents of Francisco 'Chico' Mendes, leader of Brazil's rubber-tappers, internationally acclaimed campaigner against the destruction of the Amazon rain forests, fearless denouncer of the international profiteers who plunder those forests, founder of an historic alliance between the rubber-tappers and the beleaguered Amazon Indians - and a member of the Workers' Party.

Recipient of many death threats, which failed to divert him from his chosen path, Mendes was gunned down like a dog in his own backyard just before Christmas.

Having been so critical of Clive James's insularity and selectivity, I must in all fairness add that Workers Press has not set a shining example in its coverage of news from Brazil in recent months.

This is due, not to insularity, but to limited resources. The enlarged Workers Press that we're looking forward to later in the year must have an improved international coverage, with regular reports from Brazil and other key areas of working-class struggle.

Meanwhile this brief account will make amends, to some extent, to our Brazilian comrades whose recent struggles have brought them such sorrows and such victories.

AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

1789 and all that

IT IS fascists, fools and other reactionaries who do not make the distinction between species and cultures.

A friend of mine, whilst visiting that bleak region of France the 'Ardeche', was invited into a cage of wolves. These creatures are timorous as far as humans are concerned (contrary to folkloric legends). However at the passing of a French poodle, these beasts went stiff and alert.

My friend was consoled as it was explained that wolves regard all but exceptional dogs as food.

Thankfully the distinctions between canus and lupus are not and cannot be sustained between Anglais and Français.

Having said this, I have sometimes to pinch myself when coping with cultural differences.

For example, on being herded like cattle or beatniks etc. from quay to quay in the morning for

the Dover-Calais crossing, I advised an American student not to board the bus named 'Calais' as a coach was neither a Ferry nor a hovercraft. He said to his girlfriend that English humour was nearly impenetrable. I replied as explanation that since the seafarers' strike, Sealink thought that they could walk on water. She still agreed with him.

I try to persuade myself that France is not much different to the British Isles, after all the jeans, the 'disques' and the chops in fast food places look and taste alike. But on passing through the 'Bastille' metro station I noticed that there were endless posters inviting us to celebrate the 'Revolution'.

The 'Bastille' was to be stormed again in 'Son et Lumiere'. I did not linger for this multi-media event but caught the 10 o'clock T.G.V. for Lyon. I was lucky because there was a bomb alert on the 10.45.

In Lyon a huge advertising hoarding proclaimed two hundred years of 'Revolution'. The small print revealed that this particular celebration was in honour of a brand of washing machine soap. I could only think of one kind of machine that needed the occasional wash in 1789.

I wondered what Satchi and Satchi could make of the New Model Army and 1642 and all that. I think perhaps the liberals

have jumped the gun by celebrating the 'glorious' settlement of 1688.

But back to France. 'Revolution' is the buzz word, 'Sans Culottes' are appearing everywhere like ragged garden gnomes, in the soap adverts, on garden benches, railway station posters, in the revisionist weekly 'Lutte Ouvriere' and the austere 'Le Monde'. In fact the latter had a full page article on 'The Next French Revolution'. This was to do with Europe, 'technologie' and (of course) Gorbachev.

French television viewing needs another pinch, Starsky et Hutch, Les 'Untouchables', Les Aventures de Sherlock Holmes, Hawaii etc...on all six chains (channels) it gives us a preview of what Murdoch/Maxwell deregulation will be like.

However, there was some space for President Mitterand to make his Queen's speech. We were told that it was time for French society to recognise the contribution of immigrant workers and to investigate possibilities of offering them some form of recognised citizenship.

The Minister of Defence also congratulated the gendarmerie for their efficiency in only losing two men this year and that was during the massacre of the Kanak nationalists.

Immediately after we had a professional lecture on the role of the 'committees of public

safety' and the 'terror' delivered from an august looking study. To follow, a choir of very sedate looking French 'bourgeois' sang that raucous revolutionary hymn the 'Marseillaise'. It was as incongruous as a choir of Stalin look-alikes singing the 'Internationale'.

After much revolutionary procrastination, one of the French TV channels showed the American film 'Something of Value' or 'Le carnaval des Dieux' in which Rock Hudson and Sidney Poitier play out the drama of the national liberation struggle in Kenya.

The French TV view is that the film was widely banned because it showed a white man carrying a black man. The other reason, I believe is that it portrayed some of the Mau-Mau members sympathetically.

I read in 'Le Monde' that the poet and radical humanist Iouli Daniel has died. His colleague and friend Andre Syniauski in a moving obituary recalls their struggle against the bureaucracy. Daniel was to be buried in the Vangankovskoe Cemetery Moscow. He is remembered for his solidarity and his verses.

His solidarity is celebrated by those who witnessed his contempt of judges. His verses will be remembered by all those who believe that 'Every member of that society is responsible for what happens in the heart of that society'.

A FINE PERFORMANCE FROM

VANESSA REDGRAVE



Julie Covington as Carol Cutrere in 'Orpheus Rising'

BY DAVID PILLING

THE BOSTON censor, arbiter of public morality, was not amused when 'Battle of Angels', Tennessee Williams' original version of 'Orpheus Descending', appeared in 1940.

The play, which pitted a Bohemian free-spirit ethic against the petty mores of small-town southern America, proved too controversial and was closed after only two weeks. Recommendations, as Vanessa Redgrave pointed out in a Channel Four interview, do not come much better than that.

'Orpheus Descending' is driven by the conflict of values established when Val Xaviour (Jean-Marc Barr) stumbles into the hell of the American deep south. Val, the sensitive wandering artist - who clearly contains much of the self-portrait - remains too long in the underworld. Like Orpheus, he is torn apart by harpies, the bigoted lynching gangs whose values he threatens.

Hell is a world of racism, of alienation where 'nobody ever gets to know no body', of violence where chain gang dogs tear at escaping prisoners, and of loneliness where 'we're all of us sentenced to solitary confinement inside our own skins, for life'. Hell in short is the modern world.

The morality of this world is encapsulated in the story of Lady Torrance's (Vanessa Redgrave's) father, recounted in the first scene by two cackling gossips. Mr. Torrance, a 'bootlegging wop' ran a wine garden, a romantic and joyful retreat from petty prohibition laws. But the Italian immigrant incurred the wrath of the local Ku Klux Klan by selling wine to 'niggers' and was burnt

to death in his orchard. The ironic twist, which sends the gossips howling with delight, is that Lady later unwittingly married the leader of the Klan, her father's murderer, Jabe.

Into this world steps Val Xaviour (Saviour), an itinerant musician who has lived off his wits, his powers to attract women and his refusal to be 'branded'. He is the bird of what the somewhat clumsy, yet compelling, image which permeates the play - a legless bird which survives by remaining constantly on the wing. A Christ-like figure, Val attracts three women who share his freedom of spirit but, in doing so, stirs up the town's wrath with tragic consequences. As dogs howl and thunder cracks, Lady is shot by her jealous husband, and Val is dragged to his death.

Peter Hall's production superbly moulds a taut and unified drama from what, in other hands, could be a rather disjointed work. Central to the production's success is Vanessa Redgrave's brilliant portrayal of Lady, a woman deadened by the leadweight morality of her environment. Val's appearance awakens in her long-lost yearnings and dreams - Redgrave rushes about the stage, a beautiful combination of youthful enthusiasm struggling to emerge from a life of bitter experience. She personifies human potential drowning in the cash-nexus world.

Almost as important to the play's success is Julie Covington's portrayal of Carol Cutrere, a rich girl appalled at society's treatment of its black population. Unable to fight politically she seeks escape in a Bohemian life-style (parallel to Val's) of booze, sex and mysticism. She warns Val not to settle in the town, not to trade his snakeskin jacket for the blue suit of a convict (the uniform he wears as an assistant in Lady's shop). To survive, she argues, Val must remain on the wing.

Victory in 'Orpheus Descending' lies not in finding life's solutions to life's questions, but in continuing to ask questions. Its price is a fragile existence, on the wing, on the run and beyond society's clutches. It is the struggle of Kerouac's 'On The Road', an endless journey from coast to coast, a retreat into the self. To stop, to engage society in battle is to court tragedy and death.

For political activists the message may seem pessimistic. But Williams did not merely retreat from reality. The programme notes contain an extract from his writings:

'My mother had said to me so often, 'So, when there is so much unpleasantness in the world, why is it necessary to put it on the stage?'...I'm not sure that I even tried to answer it, but one time, to my surprise, I heard her answer it herself. A visitor was saying, 'Mrs. Williams, why does your son waste his talents on such morbid subjects?' Mother spoke as quickly as if she's always known the answer. 'My son,' she said, 'writes about life' - and she said it with the conviction of a rebel yell.'



News briefs . . .

Glasnost divides

DESPITE desperate pleas for unity from its General Secretary, Herbert Mies, at the opening session of its three-day congress, the West German Communist Party looks set for a split from which it is not expected to recover.

Mies is an old-style Stalinist who, whilst paying lip service to perestroika and Gorbachev, is fiercely sticking to his hard-line policies. Mies was re-elected but with a drop in his vote of nearly 25 per cent. His second-in-command, Ellen Weber fared even worse, losing 30 per cent of her previous vote.

Work and pay

PHENOMENALLY high price rises are beginning to be introduced in Hungary as a result of the government's new economic reforms. Basic food prices are going up by an average of 17 per cent; medicines by 80 per cent. By February public transport fares will have risen somewhere between 60 and 80 per cent, and postal charges by 50 per cent. To maintain their present standard of living, the average Hungarian is forced to work a 70 hour week, according to a recent survey. For the ninth year in succession old age pensioners are experiencing yet another drop in their real incomes.

Their choice

THE TORY government's encouragement of undergraduates to switch to science and engineering studies has not had the desired effect, according to figures published in 'University Statistics 1987-8: volume 1, Students and Staff'. Instead there has been a marked increase in the numbers favouring social science and humanities, on average around 5 per cent. Creative art students have gone up by 9 per cent.

Foreign investment

THE REASON house prices in Canada are now said to be beyond the reach of many Canadians is because of a spate of property buying by wealthy residents from Hong Kong. In the past four years £3 billion has been spent on land, housing, hotels, offices and shops, and the Canadian government expects a further £1 million will be invested this year. In Vancouver 20 hotels have been built or bought up in the past two years. Over 400 flats in the city were sold last year, within hours of coming on the market and without even being offered to Canadians. A flood of immigration applications from Hong Kong is expected around 1995.

FOOTBALL FANS RESIST ID CARDS

The resistance of football supporters, and many football clubs, to the proposed ID card 'scheme' has highlighted the deepening of divisions among the ruling class and its state machine.

Tory Sports Minister, Mr. Colin Moynihan, has already been forced to make minor concessions on the Act but is desperately trying to unite the relevant official bodies on the necessity of the identification cards.

Many backbench Tory M.P.s say the scheme will be 'unworkable' and 'uneconomical' and fear 'trouble away from the grounds'.

The latest issue of the Police Federation magazine described the ID card scheme as 'a lamentable miscarriage of judgement'. The Police Federation chairman, Mr. Alan Eastwood, said last week that the scheme was 'likely to create more trouble and problems than it's trying to solve', and that the scheme is 'a threat to safety and public tranquillity'.

At the same time Mr. Brian Hillyard, editor of Police Review magazine (Association of Chief Police Officers) has said that a working party has been set up on the selected issue of identity cards for all citizens which will report in April.

Tory right wingers are reported in the 'Guardian' to believe the scheme is a deviation obstructing plans to introduce a national identity scheme for all, while others are worried about Britain's five and a half million football supporters in a campaign involving the question of civil liberties being too hot to handle.

As well as the obvious political problems and crisis already visible because of the proposals, there is enormous practical and financial problems which are driving many clubs - especially the smaller ones - into a confrontation with the Tories. Under the 1975 Safety of Sports Grounds Act a football turnstile can admit one person every four seconds.

A report by independent consultants Arthur Young for the Football League and Football Association predicts long queues 'with a high risk of unrest developing among those waiting'. The cost of cards and relevant computer technology is put at around £25-£38 million.

Clubs would lose an estimated £34 million in lost gate receipts. The huge manpower and length of time needed to produce and

BY CHRIS MCBRIDE

process the cards is also outlined in the report. It pointed out that to turn fans with invalid cards back would probably lead to protests by those with cards.

Any class conscious worker will see the Tory ID scheme as a further attack on the working class, and especially the youth. Thatcher's long term plans are to introduce ID cards for every worker and trade unionist, the youth and unemployed especially.

Black and Irish communities will also be specially targetted.

The Tories need a centralised register in order to check up on the doings and whereabouts of those refusing to pay Poll Tax, refusing to be forced onto cheap labour schemes, the long term unemployed and others.

The Thatcher government



TV programme on Ireland censored

ON INSTRUCTIONS from the Thatcher government, the Independent Broadcasting Authority has told Channel 4 that a proposed programme about the history of the north of Ireland can only be repeated if certain specified cuts are made.

This is the latest Thatcher crack-down on the freedom of journalists and others working in the media.

'The Troubles' is a five part series first shown on ITV eight

years ago and Channel Four intended to repeat the programmes to mark the arrival of British troops in the north of Ireland. They were sent in by the Labour government headed by James Callaghan in 1969.

But following the Home Secretary's new curbs on publicity for 'terrorists', introduced in the autumn of last year, IBA has said it will allow the re-screening only when certain interviews have been cut out.

thought that if enough hysteria was whipped up about so called 'soccer hooligans' and 'lager louts' the football grounds could be used as an entry point for compulsory ID cards for the working class.

The 'football hooligan' frame-up trials of Millwall, Chelsea and Leeds supporters, most of which collapsed in the courts were a prelude to this campaign.

The response so far by millions of football fans and their clubs in opposition to ID cards has helped reveal enormous problems and political divisions for the Tory 'security' plans (ID cards, censorship, more police).

Football supporters' clubs must now take a lead in mobilising their members against police agent provocateurs and Thatcherites on and off the terraces, and in defence of the game which is so dearly loved and played so much by the working class.

Trade unionists and unemployed should give as much practical and political support necessary to stop the use of football crowds by the Tories as a vehicle for the introduction of ID cards for ALL.