

UNITE TO DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS! UNITE AGAINST THE TORY GOVERNMENT!

BY A WORKERS PRESS
REPORTER

'THE political situation has changed with enormous rapidity over the last few years' stressed Cliff Slaughter in his speech to last week-end's meeting called by the Workers Revolutionary Party in defence of democratic rights.

Thanking everybody for their attendance, Slaughter stressed that the issues raised in the struggle to defend democratic rights ran very wide and very deep.

'They seem very simple but in fact raise a number of complicated issues.'

'Everyone involved in the defence of rights has had to face up to the capitalist state machine' he said.

There were definite reasons for these attacks: the depth of the crisis facing the ruling class. Unlike many on the left the ruling class does not write off the working class, he continued.

Insisting that the main question was the crisis of leadership in the working class, he reminded the audience that the Grunwick dispute had taken place under a Labour government and that the first draft of state laws against the unions was made by Barbara Castle.

He pointed out that it was only a week since a solicitor in the north of Ireland had been butchered on the incitement of a Tory minister. 'They want to discourage all of us, you and me, from taking up the fight' he said.

He reminded everybody that Thatcher had been in office for ten years, coming from nowhere in the Tory Party. 'Thatcher's policy is the policy of the ruling class' he said. 'Is it possible that all the teachers, lawyers and other individuals who had taken up the defence of democratic rights can be intimidated?' he asked.

'Only if there isn't a leadership in the working class to stand up to the onslaught' he insisted.

Stressing the unity of all the struggles facing the working class, he said that even if it proved possible to roll back one Tory attack they would be back to try and smash the resistance of the working class.

Slaughter pointed out that everything: housing, jobs, social benefits, the unions are all under attack. He drew attention to the Tory housing bill, the 'biggest piece of social engineering' since the last war as they themselves had described it. The enormous increase in rents this would bring about was designed to force tens of thousands out of London.

Property speculators would make a killing and cheap labour with no union rights would be provided for the employers in areas out of the capital.

Capital

He stressed that these developments reflected the needs of capital. 'You can't go back to liberal democracy' he insisted and this is where the WRP differed fundamentally with people such as those who supported Charter 88.

He reminded everybody that the WRP and Workers Press had called the meeting.

'The Labour Party was formed 80 years ago but hasn't organised any such meetings.'

'They are complicit in these attacks' he insisted.

When we put demands on a Labour government to repeal the battery of Tory laws we have no illusions that they will do this.

'We make these demands in order to bring into the open their real role' said Slaughter.

Stressing that the big struggles still lay ahead, he urged the audience to take no notice of all those who say that the working class no longer exists.

He invited all those involved in the struggles reflected by the platform speakers to join a discussion with us and join the campaign we are now organising.

Slaughter proposed a Lobby of the TUC in September followed by a Conference to carry forward this fight.

'The working class has conquered certain rights in its history - to strike, to meet, to demonstrate.

'We must defend these rights to the death. Then we will be able to build up the strength of the working class and turn defence into attack.'

A resolution was passed at the end of the meeting which is printed in full in this week's Workers Press. The final part reads



Part of the crowd of angry students demonstrating against the Tory student loans proposals outside the Department of Education and Science in Waterloo, London, on 16 February.

as follows: 'This meeting calls for action by the working class, and others, to defend democratic rights. This will be carried out in spite of and against the labour leaders.

We propose the following practical steps:

(1) The formation of committees or campaigning bodies in areas bringing together all who are resisting attacks on democratic rights, or faced with such attacks, and organising the defence of those who defy anti-working class laws.

(2) A campaign inside the trade unions and the Labour Party, including a lobby of the TUC in September 1989. The following deman-

ds to be made to the leaders: no collaboration with the Tories; break from all state bodies like the National Economic Development Council and the Manpower Services Commission; defy the anti-union laws as Arthur Scargill and the miners did; and defy all other anti-working class legislation. A calling-to-account of those leaders who capitulate to and collaborate with the Tories, culminating in driving such cowards and capitulators from the working class movement.

(3) A conference open to all those fighting to defend democratic rights to be called in September to discuss how such work can be developed.



Fundamentalism and imperialism

Khomenei's denunciation of Salman Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses', and his call for the author's murder, are motivated by the political crisis of his regime, rather than by considerations of Islamic theology. But this does not make them any less profoundly reactionary.

We may regret the offence Rushdie's book may cause to sincere Moslems (although we might guess that only a tiny number of them will actually read it). But the attempt to suppress any serious work of literature must be denounced, let alone by means of threats of murder.

We oppose calls for the laws of blasphemy to be extended to religions other than Christianity. All such laws must be done away with, as remnants of ancient oppression, along with the monarchy and the established church.

On the other hand, the protestations by the leaders of the capitalist powers of their devotion to freedom of expression can be safely dismissed as the crudest hypocrisy.

Both the medieval backwardness of the Mullahs and the modern barbarism of Thatcher, Bush and their friends represent threats to any development in human culture.

Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses' did not suddenly become known in Tehran last week: a review appeared there in December. The reviewer was not very pleased with the book, but was as much concerned with its implied attack on Iranian leaders as with its attitude to Islam's founder.

Khomenei's onslaught on Rushdie represents a move against those sections of the Iranian bourgeoisie trying to re-establish their business connections with Western capitalism. A faction of the Shi-ite clergy see this as threatening their influence in the state.

In our Editorial of 18 February, we referred to the attitude to the Iranian Mullah's regime of the Torrance group.

These people backed G.Healy when the Workers Revolutionary Party kicked him out in October, 1985. Healy had toadied to both the Tehran leaders and the butcher Sadaam Hussein in Baghdad.

Since 1986, Torrance and Healy have slightly diverged. Healy now licks the boots only of the Iraqi leader, while Torrance, on

the other hand, has opted for the Ayatollah. Last week, her 'Newsline' defended Khomenei's attack on Rushdie.

Following Khomenei's lead, these people describe Rushdie's book as part of an imperialist plot, and his apology as a sign of the weakness of imperialism.

For the 'Newsline', the Iranian clergy 'came to represent the interests of the most exploited sections of the population'. Khomenei's faction stands for 'an independent course of development' for Iran, and his priest-ridden state is characterised as 'a regime of the oppressed'.

This last phrase is especially remarkable. As our previous Editorial showed, the oppression of Iranian women, one of the targets of 'Satanic Verses', has the open approval of the 'Newsline', and this is directly connected with their dismissal of Healy's abuse of women comrades. (Healy was expelled from the WRP in 1985 for the systematic sexual abuse of female comrades.)

Islam, in its time, was the setting for a great flowering of culture. At a time when Western Europe was in the grip of its own, Catholic, obscurantism, Arab and Persian scholars were taking forward science, literature and philosophy.

For example, knowledge of the works of Aristotle, and Plato, shunned by the Church as the product of pagans, was only preserved in Arabic translation. One of the greatest of these scholars was the eleventh century writer Avicenna, who worked in what is now Iran.

Later, under the leadership of the rising bourgeoisie, new movements of liberation swept through Europe, as we should not forget in this year of the bi-centenary of the French Revolution.

But, in the twentieth century, imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, must attack every one of its past conquests.

Khomenei has used Islam to rally the support of millions of oppressed people throughout the world. But it offers no ideological basis for liberation from imperialism.

In 1979, it is true, the Shi-ite clergy led their followers against the Shah's pro-imperialist autocracy. But the regime which they set up then brutally suppressed the Iranian working class which came forward in massive revolutionary action.

The so-called 'fundamentalist' wave which then swept through many parts of the world, however much it might conflict with the immediate needs of imperialism, is hostile to any independent movement of the working class. As such, it ultimately acts against all real liberation from imperialism.

So Islam, as much as capitalism, has become the destroyer and betrayer of its past contributions. Only the independent action of the international working class, arming itself with the highest forms of scientific knowledge, can take humanity forward. (see Tom Owen's column, page 6, 'The great Satan.')

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £1,497.30

JUST over £500 is needed to complete the February Fighting Fund. At the time of writing we have seven days left to the end of the month.

The London meeting: Defend Democratic Rights - Fight the Tories, held on 19 February called by Workers Press showed clearly that Workers Press is a vital part of this campaign (see report).

Right now the editor, Bronwen Handyside, says the biggest problem each week is deciding what to leave out! So many letters, articles and reports are coming in.

The Workers Revolutionary Party conference on 18/19 March will discuss the launch of the new, bigger paper and an announcement will be made. In the meantime keep the donations coming in.

It would be a tremendous boost to complete the February fund and also make up the £122 we were short in January.

Send donations to: Workers Press Fighting Fund PO Box 735, London, SW9 7QS

Dot Gibson

BOOKS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS

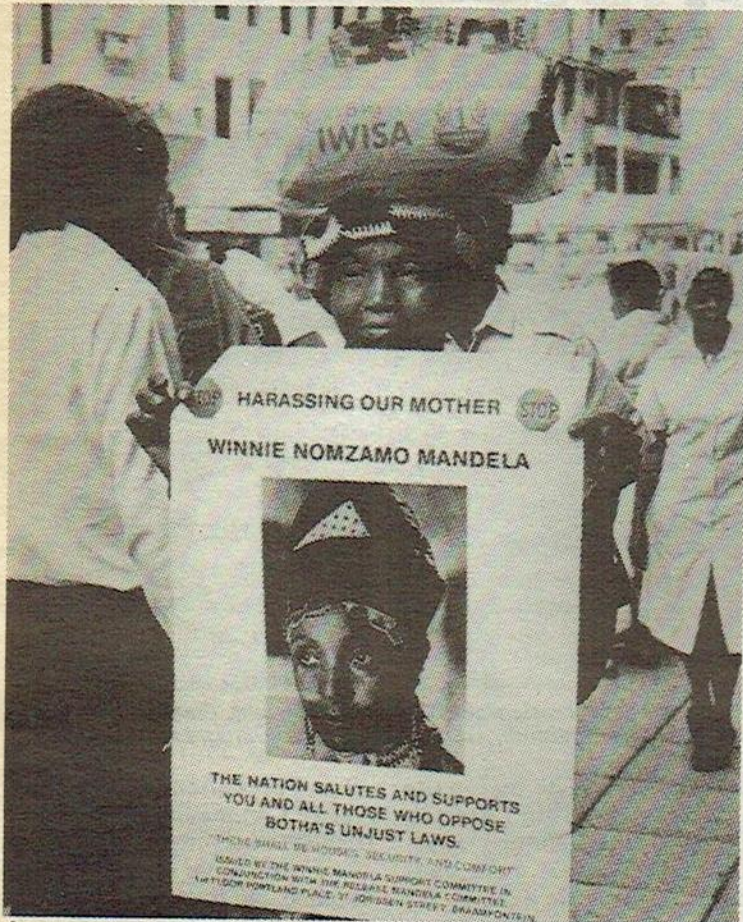
The Workers Revolutionary Party has set up a fund, Books for Political Prisoners. The proposal was made by the Party's Irish Commission, due to the large numbers of requests party members are receiving from political prisoners for Marxist and other political literature.

At three recent lectures in London on 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Socialism in Ireland', we collected (after expenses) £157.03, with which we have started the fund. A further £25.00 was collected at the 'Workers Press' social after the 'Bloody Sunday' march, making £182.03.

Of this, a balance of £74.06 remains. The remainder was spent on a copy of 'Socialism and Republicanism in Ireland' by Priscilla Metscher, a new academic work, which was sent to Republican prisoners in Long Kesh but has been delayed in reaching them, and books on revolutionary art sent to prisoners in Portlaoise, Long Kesh and English jails. We appeal to our readers to donate to the fund, about which regular reports will be made in the paper. We expect the requests for literature will continue - so the money will be put to good use!

We invite any political prisoner in Ireland or Britain (or their friends or relatives) to contact us if there are books you need. The address is Books for Political Prisoners, c/o WRP, Box 735, London SW9 7QS.

THE CASE OF WINNIE MANDELA



A supporter

J.T. BARNEY

WINNIE MANDELA'S 'fall from grace' and the hunger strike by over 300 South African detainees are being reported in the bourgeois media.

The 'Mandela affair' is big news whilst the hunger strike is treated as a secondary matter. But these two issues are intimately linked.

For decades the Stalinist-ANC has used the name of Mandela to win support amongst bourgeois public opinion for their 'just' struggle against the 'immoral' apartheid regime and South African masses are constantly reminded that the solution to the problem of apartheid rests upon Mandela's shoulders.

We demand the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and salute his heroism and courage, but reject the cultism and heroworship that has been erected around him. It is the struggle of the black masses under a revolutionary leadership that will defeat apartheid.

Winnie Mandela has suffered greatly under the apartheid regime. Before her 'fall from grace' the ANC built her up as the standard-bearer of all the suffering black women in South Africa - the 'Mother of the Nation'. When she offered to sell international rights to the Mandela name to an American businessman, she was only taking this cult to its logical conclusion.

In the lull following the insurrectionary period of 1984-86, Winnie Mandela's excesses began to be a source of acute embarrassment to the Stalinist leadership. This was because their ultra-left policy of 'making the country ungovernable' gave way to the right-wing policy of wooing the liberal bourgeoisie.

We condemn unreservedly the intimidation, abductions and beatings carried out at the behest of Winnie Mandella, ostensibly in the name of the struggle. The masses quite early on gave the signal that they would not tolerate the reign of terror. High school students, for example, burned down her house when members of the 'Mandela football team' raped a teenage girl.

A revolutionary leadership would have taken up this matter with the organisations of the working masses, COSATU, AZACTU, UDF, AZAPO etc. with a firm demand for this 'team' to disband to establish the principle that all leaders must be accountable to the masses.

But this 'leadership' appointed a 'Mandela Crisis Committee' to 'solve' the problem with as little publicity and damage as possible. But things got worse and fourteen year old Stompie Moeketsi lost his life.

Now the Stalinist leadership acts - not to protect the interests of the working masses, but because Winnie Mandela's present tarnished image conflicts with their courting of bourgeois public opinion. In the most opportunistic and cynical way

they have dissociated themselves from her.

Contrast this with their treatment of Gatsha Buthelezi. With this lackey of apartheid, whose Inkatha vigilante thugs have murdered and maimed hundreds of militants, the 'mass democratic movement' is prepared to sit around a table to 'discuss peace', but Winnie Mandela can be sacrificed to the racist apartheid state.

Response

How else are we to explain the speed of the apartheid state's response? They interpreted the announcement of the 'mass democratic movement' as an invitation to apply to her apartheid 'justice'.

Nothing can be more hypocritical than the apparent concern of the apartheid state about the murder of Stompie Moeketsi. At eleven years Stompie was detained without trial by this 'caring' state and subjected to inhuman torture.

Winnie Mandela will not be given a fair trial. It is our revolutionary duty to defend her against apartheid justice, which the toiling black masses know from their own experience is no justice at all.

We must demand this matter is taken up in the organisations of the exploited and oppressed, and a free, open discussion organised on the question of the accountability of all leaders.

While Winnie Mandela has become a liability for the Stalinist leadership, the hunger strikers are 'positive' publicity and can be used to persuade the international bourgeoisie to increase the pressure on

the apartheid state to come to the negotiating table.

It is only the revolutionary mobilisation of the international proletariat which can assist the South African working class in their struggle to bring down the detested apartheid state. This means that in Britain the TUC must be forced to take up the fight for working class sanctions against South Africa.

The heroic sacrifices of the hunger strikers has forced the apartheid state to make a commitment to release all those detained without trial. But this racist state can never be taken on its word.

We must extend and deepen the struggle of the hunger strikers to ensure that all detainees and also all political prisoners are unconditionally released. The state of emergency must be immediately lifted.

Bans on political parties and organisations of the oppressed and exploited must be ended. A Constituent Assembly with sovereign powers, elected on the basis of secret and universal franchise must be convoked.

The Stalinist ANC-SACP are not only incapable of providing the revolutionary leadership and programme required for such a struggle, but are actively working to ensure that such a leadership and programme does not emerge. Only the building of the Fourth International in South Africa, the revolutionary continuity of Bolshevism, can prevent the betrayal of the South African revolution from taking place and lead the black working class to capture state power.



Winnie Mandela faces the media, as she has done so often

MEETING TO DEFEND

IN OPENING the meeting on the defence of democratic rights organised by the Workers Revolutionary Party, Dot Gibson gave a brief account of the attacks on rights which were the experience of many people today.

In calling the meeting, she said, the WRP were inviting people to join a campaign, and it was proud to have printed its own draft programme for discussion throughout the labour and trade union movement in its paper, the Workers Press.

This document would be discussed at the WRP conference in March. 'It is important that it should be discussed because it is important to build a party for the whole working class, so that it can take power and establish socialism. This will be done by smashing the capitalist state.'

She spoke of Des Warren who should have been on the platform. The building workers strike of 1972 was part of the great upsurge throughout the country against the Tory anti-union laws.

Des and two others had been jailed on charges of conspiracy.

Labour leaders had given no help, and the Communist Party of Great Britain had sabotaged the campaign to free him. After his imprisonment he had joined the WRP.

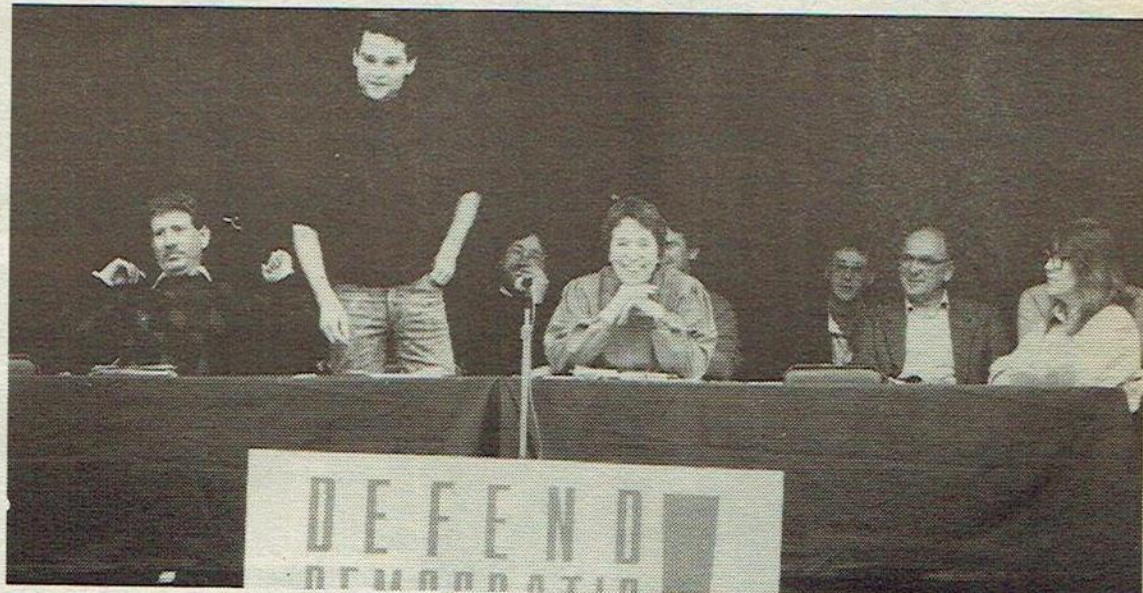
'What happened to Des Warren was a forerunner of present experiences.'

Dot Gibson said that the working class had not been defeated, but had on its agenda, the struggle with its reformist and Stalinist leadership. 'We offer the Workers Press for this discussion' she said.

'Freedom is indivisible,' said Peter Fryer, the first speaker, (author of 'Staying Power: the History of Black People in Britain' and of 'Black People in the British Empire'), referring to the attack on Salman Rushdie over his book 'The Satanic Verses'.

'Freedom of expression is indivisible. And an attack on the freedom of any writer, of any artist, is an attack on the freedom of us all;

'In this sense,' Fryer continued, 'we are all Salman Rushdie, and those who seek to drag



Part of the platform at the meeting to defend democratic rights. From left to right, George Hall, Craig Brewin, Phil Edwards, Dot Gibson, Martin Walker (behind), Gary O'Shea, Cliff Slaughter, Lee Minto.

us back to the middle ages will have to physically exterminate, not just one individual writer, but every writer who has within him a single spark of intellectual and moral integrity.'

In the past week Pat Finucane, the Belfast solicitor, had met his death at the hands of political opponents, 'after being blatantly fingered by a minister of the crown, Douglas Hogg,' Fryer reminded us.

'This crime carries forward to a new stage the attack the Thatcher government is waging against our democratic rights...the right of an accused person to a free and vigorous defence.'

Peter Fryer concluded by appealing for the meeting to be 'the beginning of a crusade into which will be drawn all those in our society who have been hit by the Tory onslaught...who are waiting for one thing and one thing only: resolute leadership'.

Workers Revolutionary Party member, and sacked Durham miner, Geoff Hartnell, was next to speak. He related his own and the experiences of his workmates during the miners' strike.

He, like hundreds of others, was sacked by the Coal Board for going on strike. Although an industrial tribunal found that he had been unfairly dismissed and ordered his re-instatement, the Coal Board refused.. 'You don't realise what your democratic rights are, until you want to exercise

them,' he said. The reason the miners' strike didn't get the support of the Labour leadership was because it was a question of a struggle against the state, 'one thing they don't want' Hartnell pointed out.

Roz Hardy, secretary of the United Campaign against Strip Searching, said, 'In the 1980s, beginning in Armagh Gaol, Ireland has been used as a testing ground for repression. In 1985 sixty five people were arrested at a peaceful demonstration. Of the six who were strip-searched, one was a 17 year-old young woman who was strip-searched in the presence of six or seven policemen. She was brave and protested, but few women do.'

'This form of torture suppresses the personality and is used extensively in South Africa and Chile. Anyone who opposes the state is a likely target,' she said.

Lee Minto from the Irish Republican Prisoners of War Campaign, said, 'Through centuries of struggle the Irish people have never abandoned their right to national liberation.'

'Resulting from their continuing struggle there are many Irish political prisoners rotting in English jails.'

At present there are 34 men and women, plus 'The Birmingham Six,' 'The Guildford four,' Judith Ward, and some ten other innocent people serving very long sentences after frame-up trials.

'The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) means that 'to be Irish is to be guilty.'

Lee then gave an extensive, detailed and harrowing account of the barbaric, cruel and insanitary conditions under which Irish Republicans prisoners serve their term in English jails.

'British justice equals no justice,' she stated.

'A particular feature of the Irish Prisoners of War sentences in English gaols is the great difficulties created for visitors, including the family.'

'Because of the hardship for families we demand repatriation of Irish Prisoners of War,' she said.

'Contrast the treatment of private Ian Thain, sentenced to 'life' for the murder of an unarmed Catholic in West Belfast - after two years he was released and returned to his regiment.'

'No republican prisoner has ever been paroled from gaol in England.'

'The ultimate solution to the hardships and sufferings of Irish P.O.W.s and their relatives is the obtaining of Irish freedom by the defeat of British Imperialism in Ireland.'

Phil Edwards, a teacher in Tower Hamlets, and a member of the WRP said 'there had been attacks on education since 1979 which were very broad in scope, but education was a democratic right.'

'In the past, the capitalist class had seen the need for education, but what is hap-

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

pening now reflects the break-up of the whole system. Skilled labour is no longer needed,' he emphasised.

The Tory attack on local government spending has led to school buildings falling to pieces. In addition to this there are demoralised teachers and caretakers, poor meals and dirty classrooms.'

Another point said Phil was 'that a good general education is being replaced by 'vocational training' (mis-named 'preparing for life'), and this is being linked to the destruction of the professionalism of the teachers.'

Gary O'Shea, speaking for 'Red Action' told the meeting that the left rarely invited his organisation to speak.

He decried the Tories as right-wing crusaders who were not going to stop. 'They know there will be a fight with the working class, that is why they are attacking democratic rights.' He said 'The Labour party is the future 'left wing' of the Tory party, whilst the far left have no credibility in the working class.'

Speaking of the relationship between British workers and the Irish struggle he said, 'The war in Ireland is the key which will determine what happens here in Britain.'

He concluded 'There are fascist groups waiting in the wings to fill the vacuum of leadership. The danger is that when the middle class feels the economic pinch they will go to the far right. Since 1981 there have been 70,000 racist attacks every year and 43 racist murders. It is the responsibility of people who consider themselves revolutionaries to accept this challenge.'

Martin Walker is a researcher, writer and activist, who gave legal advice to the Yorkshire NUM during the miners' strike, and wrote 'State of Siege' and 'With Extreme Prejudice' (about the case of Steven Shaw, the Manchester student attacked by the police).

He said the rights of the individual in society are intimately related to its economic structure.

The onset of the international crisis of capitalism in the early 1970s had been accompanied by attacks on the trade union

movement and other organisations which defend the interests of those without property and power.

The erosion of the protective aspects of the law has meant the redefinition of the criminal class. The criminals are now those who demonstrate against government policy, those who form unions, those who make affairs of state public and those who gather together for any common purpose which opposes property relations.

While the British state has long been notorious for its secrecy, this did not naturally include the criminal and legal side of policing.

The lack of access to a public forum about policing which we are now seeing reflects the centralised dictatorship of 'juntaism' of the present government.

The cases of Steven Shaw, Trevor Monerville and the Burkes all reflect the ability of the police to act with impunity.

The secretary of the Football Supporters' Association (FSA), Gary Brewin, said that ID cards are the 'thin end of the wedge' of the government's attacks on civil liberties.

Although most football fans are not political, they are overwhelmingly against the cards, and it is expected that 250,000 will sign the FSA's petition.

The FSA believes that the scheme will be ineffective as a deterrent to violence, as most violence is created on the spur of the moment and fascists will get around the scheme by 'mugging' or by transferring cards.

He said that facilities and conditions for ordinary supporters at all clubs are appalling. As supporters' clubs are simply away-travellers' groups, only an organisation like the FSA which had been rapidly and independently built, could fight for fans' interests.

Anil Bhatt, the City of London AntiApartheid Group's legal officer, spoke of the history of harassment and frame-ups his organisation has been subjected to by the police, in maintaining the non-stop picket of the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square.

The City Group has suffered the banning of rallies and the

arrest of more than 550 people for 'obstruction' and 'assault', and the notorious catch-all Public Order Act has been widely used against it.

Nevertheless, it has won 94 per cent of the court cases the police have brought, and has succeeded in maintaining the picket for nearly three years.

Anil said that the Group welcomed the Workers Revolutionary Party's campaign on democratic rights and would be happy to share future platforms.

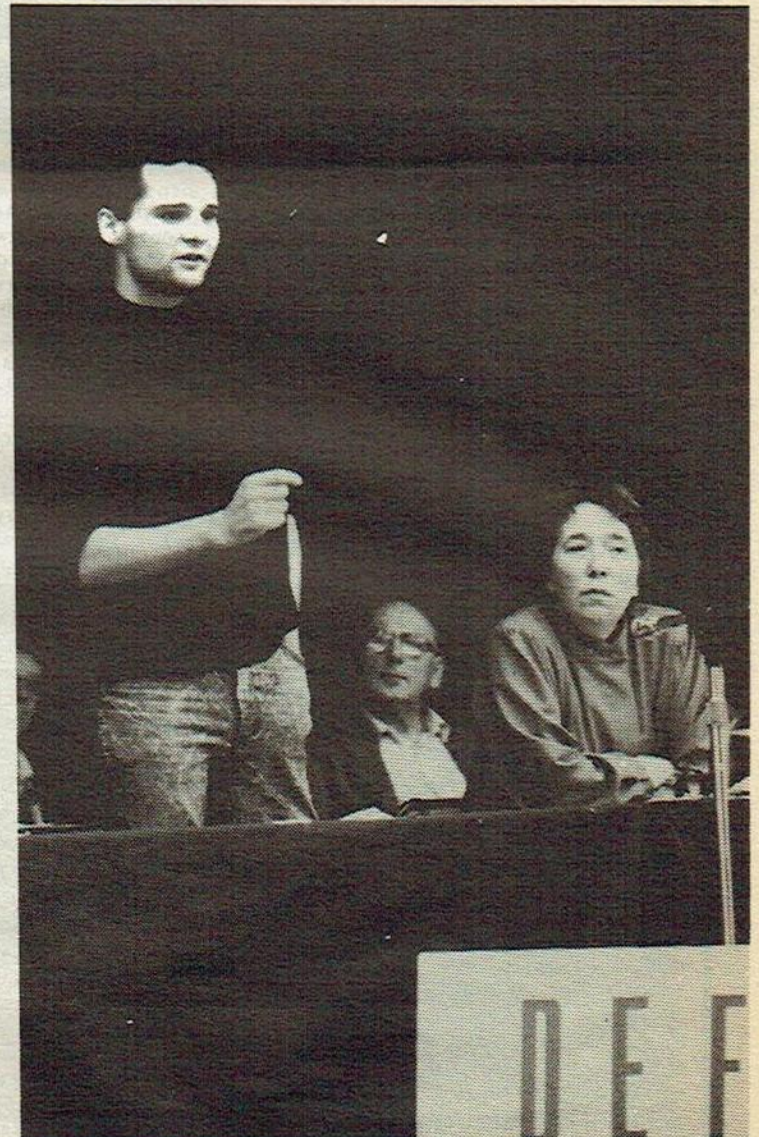
The last but one speaker was George Hall. A Wapping strike leader, Hall said in opening that although it was true he was a leading chapel shop steward, and therefore found himself on all the strike committees, the leadership had fallen into other hands.

'My voice and a few others were voices of the minority,' he

said. 'We argued continually that this was a major political strike, and one we could win following on from the miners' strike. To win you had to be prepared to take on the state.'

'It is important not to forget the events of Wapping, it was a fundamental attack on democratic rights, taking away a right our forefathers and mothers fought so hard to achieve...the right to organise.'

'Those rights were taken away with the timid and powerless trade union bureaucracy looking on.' It was the struggle of the working class to win its rights which provided the inspiration for the present struggles, Hall said; 'not the soft-bellied so-called leaders of today. The Labour party leadership is moving to the right, becoming the SDP.' The attack on rights came out of the crisis of capitalism, he said.'



Craig Brewin, secretary of the Football Supporters Association

A REFORMIST ATTACKS TROTSKYISM

Tariq Ali
**REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE:
 WHERE IS THE SOVIET UNION GOING?**
 Hutchinson, 1988. £3.95.

BY CYRIL SMITH



'Socialist Initiative' and 'Popular Front' in Moscow demonstration July 1988

IT WOULD BE A mistake to dismiss this book as a journalistic account of some visits to the Soviet Union. As its author openly, if rather coyly, explains: 'It is, frankly, designed as a political intervention from the Left in a debate taking place inside the USSR.' (Page (xii)). The question is, intervention for what political purpose?

The title tells all. Ali believes that Gorbachev's policies are the work of those he calls 'the reformers' against 'the bureaucracy'. 'If Gorbachev succeeds the socialist project will have received a tremendous boost.'

And what about the workers? Ali's script gives them a walk-on part. 'The revolution from above only begins to be effective when there is a massive show of support from below' (Page 54).

And, if these extras get a bit impatient with the slow pace of the director, tell them that 'he is engaged in an extremely delicate operation which did not confront Lenin.'

'He has to effectively dismantle a gigantic bureaucratic apparatus, and he wants to do this with the agreement of those whose privileges will be swept overboard.' (Page 124) Tricky!

But, if Gorbachev is getting rid of the bureaucracy - with their permission, of course -

just where did he come from? 'Gorbachev was one of a number of reform-minded, modern and sophisticated lower-echelon leaders from a younger generation which had grown up in the Brezhnevite stable.' (Page 7).

Now we begin to see the Ali theory of history. Changes are brought about, not by the movement of classes, not by the entry of the masses on to the stage of history, not by the working class becoming a class for itself.

That stuff belongs to the days of those old fuddyduddies Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, and is only clung to by those 'Trotskyite sects' Ali keeps sneering at.

Nowadays, the action must be left to reform-minded young leaders who come to see the need for something called 'democracy'.

The role of the masses is to cheer them on, but these reformers know that in the absence of the said 'democracy', 'it is impossible to ask the workers to make sacrifices'. (Page 125).

You might be surprised after this to learn that Ali's aim is to show how close Gorbachev's ideas are to those of Leon Trotsky! Occasionally, he runs into a spot of bother. So, when he refers to the relations between the Soviet Union and world capitalism, he fumbles:

'If Gorbachev really means that he wants to create a common capitalist socialist civilisation (that is what the man said, by the way), then he is indulging in a Utopian fantasy...If on the other hand Gorbachev is recognising a fact rather than a dream, and is basically (sic) stating that whether people like it or not the USSR is part of a world dominated by capitalism, then he is making a profoundly 'Trotskyist' point as opposed to a Stalinist one.' (Page 101). So that's alright, then.

Gorbachev has done a deal with Reagan, working to de-rail revolutionary struggles in the Middle East and in Southern Africa, but Tariq Ali will not mention such details.

Instead, he prefers to talk about 'a programme for Pan-European recovery.'

'A major obstacle to Pan-European unity supposedly is the obvious split between the differing social systems'. (Page 191). But our hero is not deterred by such difficulties. For one thing, 'sections of West European capitalism would gain a great deal economically from a Pan-European recovery programme' (Page 197).

Now we have the picture. Gorbachev will reform away the bureaucracy, while he and West European capitalists make beautiful economic music together, making the Americans jealous.

In his Preface, Ali declares: 'My own political formation had been influenced by the writings of Isaac Deutscher, Leon Trotsky and Ernest Mandel (in that order)' (Page (ix)). We can certainly see the influence of the first and third of these.

But anyone who has read Trotsky's 'The Revolution Betrayed' will know that Ali is perpetrating a cynical con-trick on those he is addressing in Eastern Europe. This is particularly vicious, since they are still not allowed to study Trotsky for themselves.

Giving his book the same subtitle as Trotsky's and misusing a few phrases from Trotsky's writings, he seeks to place Trotsky and his followers firmly into the past:

'The question of Trotsky's importance, however, is not simply a subject for historians, but Soviet politicians and publicists too. Now some in the West and particularly Trotskyists may imagine that this reflects the power of Trotsky's ideas. After all, there is something gratifying in the notion that the spectre of the old man killed on Stalin's orders in Mexico still haunts the hard-bitten infighters of the obkoms and ispolkoms of the Soviet apparatus. This is, alas, not the case.' (Page 95).

Despite Ali's sneers, Trotsky's ideas do remain a power in the USSR. Ali is schooling his friends in the bureaucracy in the art of using Trotsky's authority as a left cover for their plans. On pages 100 to 106, especially, he presents a series of caricatured headings from 'The Revolution Betrayed', perverting them for this purpose.

Trotsky led a decade-long struggle of the Left Oppositionists within the Third International. He fought to reveal all the implications of the bureaucratic conception that socialism was being built within the borders of the USSR and struggled to turn the Communist Party back to Lenin's road of world revolution..

In 1933, after the German workers had been betrayed by Stalin into the hands of Nazism Trotsky argued that it was necessary to build a new, Fourth, International.

The Third International had gone over to the

Once again:

STALINISM AND TROTSKYISM

FOREIGN MINISTER Shevardnadze said as far back as July 1988: 'Coexistence should not be identified with the class struggle... (and) the rivalry between the two systems (socialist and capitalist) can no longer be considered as the main tendency of our epoch.'

But, as is well known, this dogma was for decades declared to be the basic 'Marxist-Leninist' doctrine underlying the foreign policy of the Stalinist 'socialism in one country'.

Gorbachev himself told the United Nations on 7 December last that he was for the 'de-ideologising' of international relations and 'the supremacy of the universal idea'(?).

He pointed unwittingly to the direct connection between this 'de-ideologising' and the impasse of 'socialism in one country', when he said, next: 'it is no longer possible to maintain closed societies.'

However, Shevardnadze had made very clear that the bureaucracy's desperate manoeuvres to escape the dead end of socialism in one country mean the very opposite of a return to Bolshevism and the world socialist revolution! In the July report already cited, he had said:

'You must not behave as if the rules of civilised conduct recognised by the international

In a series of articles in the last months of 1988, Workers Press analysed the political line of Gorbachev and his supporters in the Stalinist bureaucracy, as it had been expressed in Gorbachev's report to the 19th Special Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Statements on the foreign policy of the Soviet leadership since then have made even clearer the Stalinists' new phase of 'peaceful coexistence',

CLIFF SLAUGHTER explains,
using examples taken from an article in the French newspaper *Le Monde* (5 January).

community do not apply to you. If you want to be accepted by that community you must observe these norms.'

And he concluded that 'our country now appears to the world in a different light.'

But the new leading light of Soviet Stalinist ideology, Vadim Medvedev, has made most explicit the new line, and particularly the deliberate separation of it from any claim to continuity with the October Revolution and Bolshevism.

What Trotsky accused the Stalinists of, Medvedev now proudly acknowledges!

Writing in the Communist Party monthly organ 'Kommunist', Medvedev explains that the mistaken policies of Stalinism in the past began in the earliest years of the revolutionary workers' state, because Lenin saw the world as 'in the antechamber of world proletarian revolution' and thought that this world socialist revolution was 'the extension of the soviet system

to the whole of the world.'

According to Medvedev, Lenin corrected this mistaken outlook in 1920, but Stalin later returned to it and from this flowed the mistaken idea of the division of the world into two camps, socialist and capitalist.

Medvedev concludes that coexistence today is 'a prolonged and extended process, the historical limits of which are difficult to define.'

Furthermore, capitalism must be viewed with different eyes: it has 'learned a lot since October 1917.'

Having surmounted the losses resulting from the experience of colonialism and made great advances in productive technique, capitalism now 'serves as a stimulant to the development of socialism.'

Medvedev therefore considers that the idea of a parallel development of the 'two systems' is obsolete. Rather, the two have 'an inevitable interaction in the

framework of a single human civilisation.'

And this passage concludes with a gross misuse of 'dialectical' terminology of which G. Healy would have been proud: we do not have 'convergence' of the two systems, he says, but a new application of the dialectical principle, 'which foresees not only the conflict of opposites but their unity.'

Even while the Stalinist bureaucracy has been elaborating its line of trying to escape from the impasse of socialism in one country by trying to adapt the deformed workers' state ever more directly to imperialism, it has also been forced to open some of the files of the great Stalin repressions, and in particular to admit that the assassination of Trotsky in 1940 was the work of the Stalinist secret police, the NKVD.

These 'revelations' must of course have enormous impact in the USSR, despite the bureaucracy's accompanying campaign of falsification about Trotsky's political positions.

What have these changes in the Stalinist bureaucracy to do with the Trotskyist movement?

It was a very important step forward for us in the Workers Revolutionary Party (however simple it might seem now), after the expulsion of Healy and the split of 1985, to

see that we could understand and overcome (go beyond) this experience only as part of the crisis of the Fourth International.

Along with this, it was necessary to grasp that this understanding and this overcoming could be achieved not just by thinking about it, but only if we engaged in the struggle to overcome this crisis in the Fourth International, to reconstruct it.

This means: we have to work to organise the building of a conscious international force. This force must be part, must become the leading section of, the working class as it breaks from its bankrupt Stalinist and reformist leaderships, as it must do if it is to resist and defeat the assault upon it by the capitalist class in crisis and find the way out of decaying capitalism.

The practical outcome of this is the Preparatory Committee to organise a world conference of Trotskyists for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

What next?

This step forward in our thinking and in our political work is necessary, decisive. But it must not be mistaken for the great step forward in revolutionary practice required by the working class and, specifically, by the revolutionary party able to win leadership of that class.

What about the material conditions necessary if this aim is to be achieved?

There is a lot of talk about the great changes in capitalism which we have not yet analysed and understood (and there is certainly important work to be done on this). After World War II, there was a lot of talk (and then complete disorientation of the Fourth International on the basis of it) on the need to study the potential of Stalinism to bring about the existence of workers' states under the pressure of the class struggle.

Trotsky's characterisation of capitalism in decay and his characterisation of Stalinism as 'counter-revolutionary through and through' were rejected, 'revised'.

The Preparatory Committee is organising an international symposium on both these questions (was Trotsky right to say that the productive forces stagnate? did Stalinism 'project a revolutionary orientation' in 1945? was Trotsky's prognosis in founding the

Fourth International invalidated by events? etc.) essential to our understanding of this epoch, to our intervention in Eastern Europe and the USSR, to the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

This theoretical clarification is essential. Its content, however, is first of all in the present. If we see it only as a clarification of past history we shall miss this content and we shall fall behind our real tasks.

What I mean is this. We are in danger of being restricted to the scope and tempo of our own immediate experience.

At the very historical moment when we 'discovered' the crisis of the Fourth International as the real content of our existence and experience, the crisis of Stalinism showed itself to be far more advanced than we had hitherto understood.

We were to a great extent blinded to the depth of this crisis of Stalinism by revisionism, with its questioning of the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism and its acceptance of a revived 'neo-capitalism', yet Stalinism was rapidly arriving at the point of its disintegration.

And we have failed so far to grasp the enormity of what has happened!

'Socialism in one country' is finished!

The impasse of the Soviet economy and of the parasitic bureaucracy's control of it, is open for all to see.

The ability of the Stalinist bureaucracy, by virtue of its control of all distribution, of political force, and of ideology through the Communist Party and the institutions of Soviet society, to discipline and suppress the Soviet working class and the intelligentsia has begun irreparably to break down.

The floodgates are open.

The most important component of this breakdown is that the truth has burst through. Stalinism could not be victorious and cannot maintain itself without the big lie. Now, whatever twists and turns are made to distort Trotsky's politics, the genie is out of the bottle and cannot be put back in.

The Communist Parties of the world can no longer control the outcome of the international class struggle in such a way as to be the

instrument which assures the continued rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR (that is how Trotsky characterised the role of these parties in 1935). They have already gone far beyond the 'communo-chauvinist' character which Trotsky saw them developing towards before World War II.

The theories, the politics, and the struggle waged by Trotsky and the Left Opposition and the International Left Opposition are vindicated.

So we see, yes, that our crisis, that of the Fourth International, presents itself to us for solution; but the same historical developments which demanded we face up to this crisis contain the conditions for its solution, and above all the insoluble crisis of our opposite, Stalinism.

Yet as soon as we recognise this, we have new problems!

We are confronted by the extreme example of the truth expressed by Trotsky when he said: when you see that your perspectives are confirmed, beware! Watch out! Remember that your consciousness always lags behind the real movement of society, the class struggle, the revolution and the counter-revolution!

Your perspective is already insufficient and must be developed. The reality in which your perspective was vindicated is inevitably richer, more many-sided, contradictory and complex than you could have foreseen.

You must not be blinded by the proof of your correctness, no better than the way we were previously blinded by the pressure of revisionism and the Stalinism standing behind it.

It is of incalculable importance that the Stalinist bureaucracy is forced to begin to tear the veil from the truth about the assassination of Trotsky, the Moscow Trials, Trotsky's role in the October Revolution, and the Stalin school of falsification.

No longer able to maintain the 'monolithic' lie that they are the necessary leaders of the land of socialism, the guardians of the conquests of October and the bearers of Lenin's heritage, the Stalinist bureaucrats make a desperate attempt to 'release' a version of the historical truth which empties Trotsky's struggle of its revolutionary content.

But they are not the only actors on the scene. Countless thousands of workers, youth

and intellectuals in the Soviet Union find living continuity with Bolshevism and insist on the truth, fighting for it against the bureaucracy and against the plethora of bourgeois-democratic and politically reactionary ideas which inevitably appear because of the bureaucracy's bloody 60-year rule and its debasement of Marxism.

Never was there a more urgent historical responsibility than to ensure, now, that these living forces find their future in the reconstruction of the Fourth International. (1)

This means a creative effort to find new ways of finding the resources, material and human, to take Trotskyism, the Fourth International, into the Soviet Union! We have to bend all our will and all our thinking to this task.

To take this direction, firmly and without hesitation or turning back, is the only way to fulfil the historical task of Trotskyism, Bolshevism, which is, after all, to be the continuators of the October Revolution!

And this coincides exactly with the needs and the aspirations of the advanced workers, intellectuals and youth of the Soviet Union as they confront the crisis of 'socialism in a single country'!

The Stalinist bureaucracy, through its 'expert' on Trotskyism, one Vassetsky, recognises in its own blundering way, with the almost instinctive cunning of a trapped animal, this very threat from Trotskyism.

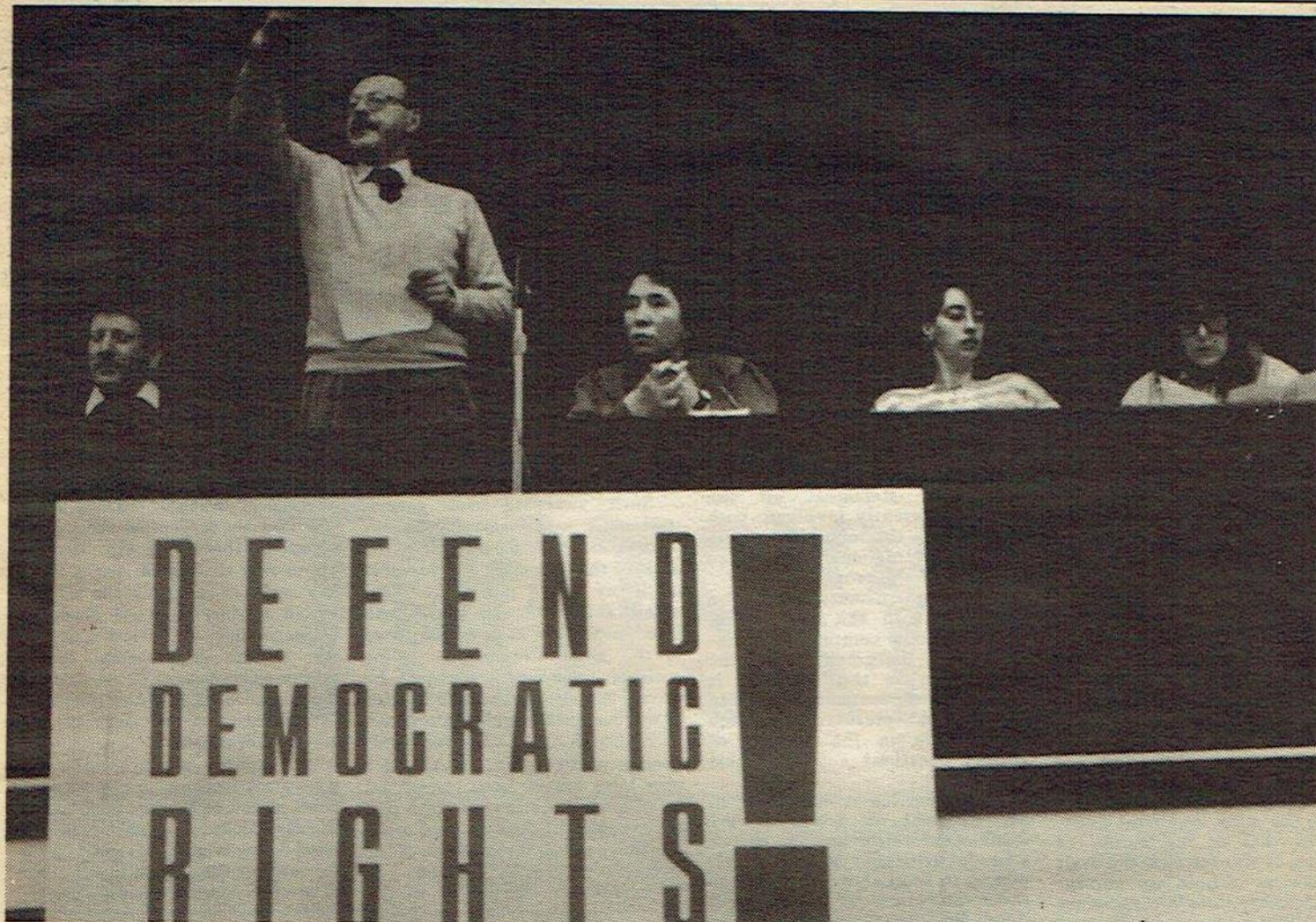
Vassetsky, after putting in writing his sudden conversion to truths such as that Trotsky was indeed co-leader, with Lenin, of the October Revolution, goes on immediately to discuss 'contemporary Trotskyism'.

Vassetsky has for years been explaining to Soviet readers that Trotskyists continue the work of Trotsky as agents of the capitalist class in the workers' movement. Now he must change.

Socialist and Communist Parties, he writes, can and should form alliances with Trotskyist organisations; and he refers to examples.

In other words, far from Trotskyists organising to build independent revolutionary leadership to take advantage of Stalinism's crisis, smash Stalinism and provide the leadership for the working class to carry through the

(1) Marx: 'Mankind inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.'



united social revolution in the capitalist countries and the political revolution in the USSR and the deformed workers' states, they are to allow themselves to be used as a left cover for the Stalinists to carry through their new phase of 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism.

It is precisely for such a role that revisionism in the Fourth International has worked to prepare Trotskyist parties in one country after another. Never was it clearer that the fight for the continuity of Bolshevism, against that revisionism, was the most essential task of all!

So that there should be no confusion, it must be said that Trotskyists are far from denying the necessity of the united front of the working class against capital. What we mean by that is that it is necessary for a Marxist party to propose what is necessary for a united working class to confront the class enemy.

By doing this, in the form of demands on which the existing parties of the working class can unite, the revolutionary party fights for the working class to take a path of struggle which will enable it to throw aside its existing reformist and Stalinist leaderships and go forward to the conquest of power.

Needless to say, that is not

what Vassetsky and the bureaucracy are talking about

On the contrary, they look for fake 'Trotskyists' to support their electoral alliances in the interests of their collaboration with imperialism, which will as always mean the betrayal of revolution. Naturally our attitude to members of the Communist Parties who are coming into conflict with their Stalinist leaders is a different one.

We in the Preparatory Committee understand very well what kind of 'Trotskyists' Vassetsky has in mind, and we understand also what will be the attitude of him and his fellow-bureaucrats to the work of building the Fourth International in the Soviet Union.

The battle must and will be joined on a new level, far higher than anything yet seen! The death-knell of socialism in one country, and therefore of the Stalinist bureaucracy, has sounded unmistakably! The fight for revolutionary continuity is historically vindicated, and has suddenly entered the lives of millions, in the first place in the Soviet Union!

Now to the fight for leadership! That was the message of the Founding Programme of the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky in 1938 - resolve the crisis of working-class revolutionary leadership! Forward to the reconstruction of the Fourth International!

This is not just a footnote but a conclusion. The Trotskyist movement is not immune from the English diseases of insularity and 'dislike of theory'. It has taken us many years to begin to understand that the revolutionary work of building the party in Britain is an essentially international task, starting from the highest achievements of Marxist theory and the conquests of Marxism internationally.

To discuss the building of the party now, in 1989, means in the first place to fight in the WRP for a real agreement on the nature of the world revolution and the reconstruction of the Fourth International, a common understanding of our tasks, the tasks of world Trotskyism today. The WRP would not be built if we did not first and foremost fight to educate and train ourselves as militants of the Fourth International, who understand that the material conditions have now matured for striking the final blow to Stalinism, resolving the crisis of revolutionary working-class leadership.

A party of Fourth Internationalists working in Britain as part of their work of building an international leadership - that is what we need, and it is a thousand miles away from a national party with international 'affiliations'. The work of the Preparatory Committee has consisted of a fight for methods of building the International which are based on Marxist principles, against organisational manoeuvres and manipulations. This led to a split with the LIT, whose leadership was unable to break from such conceptions. Did this weaken the Preparatory Committee (or even put it to death, as some of our enemies would like to believe)? On the contrary, we were able to move forward to the formation of a centre for the reconstruction of the Fourth International; and this was accompanied by very significant changes in our work in Eastern Europe.

What is now becoming clear is that the patient and firm struggle against the LIT leadership's conceptions has created the conditions for comrades in Argentina and other Latin American countries to make real advances in building the alternative leadership, with the prospect of a major development of the Preparatory Committee and the reconstruction of the Fourth International. This development is itself an indication of what is posed to us by the crisis of Stalinism and the 'new line' on Trotskyism enunciated by Vassetsky (above). Only the conscious fight to reconstruct the Fourth International on the foundations of Marxist theory can stand in the way of parties calling themselves Trotskyist becoming a left cover for Stalinist betrayal. What is the political future of the WRP? It is, to understand clearly that these are the alternatives, and to reconstruct the Fourth International.

Workers Revolutionary Party DRAFT PROGRAMME 1989 : Discussion

This week we begin to print contributions to the discussion on the Draft Programme of the Workers Revolutionary Party. The Draft, published in three parts in Workers Press (28 January, 4 February, 11 February), is currently under discussion in the WRP branches, who will submit amendments to the party Congress at the end of March. We invite all our readers to consider the party's Draft Programme and to consider joining the Workers Revolutionary Party.

If you would like to know more about the party, or to receive a copy of the Draft Programme, please write to us; if you would like to take part in this printed discussion in the Workers Press, please let us have your comments. Write to: the National Organiser, WRP, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS (Please enclose a stamp if you would like us to send you a copy of the Draft Programme)

Scotland - Stalinism and reformism

THE WRP'S draft programme was discussed in Glasgow last week at a meeting of party members and supporters from the west of Scotland and Edinburgh.

In a wide-ranging discussion perhaps the most important question was that of the nature of Stalinism. It was felt that the draft lacks comment both on current developments in the bureaucracies of the USSR and eastern Europe, and on the role Stalinism plays in Britain today.

The concept of the 'dual nature' of Stalinism, said one comrade, was not refuted by the draft. The meeting also agreed that the programme should deal with the way the Stalinists provide ideological backing for the Labourites. An additional section - between the existing sections 3 and 4 - headed 'What is

Stalinism?' was proposed.

A brief statement on the sections presently involved, with the WRP, in the rebuilding of the Fourth International was also necessary in the programme.

Much of the discussion was also taken up with the question of Scotland, some comrades expressing strong disagreement on the formulation in the draft. It is hoped to propose amendments to this section - presenting Scotland much more in the context of British questions - at the next meeting.

This topic led to beginning of an important discussion on the crisis of reformism and the party's attitude to this. Is this crisis clearer to Scottish workers than to those elsewhere in Britain? and does the draft's section about Scotland not skirt round the question of putting demands on the Labour leaders?

Other important points raised were the relationship between democratic rights and democracy and the nature of revolutionary leadership in the trade unions.

Everyone agreed much more discussion was necessary and a further meeting was arranged for 5 March.

Any proposals?

Comments on section 7 of the WRP's Draft Programme 1989.

If, as is now recognised in the Draft Programme, the sexual abuse of women, and the fact that women in the 'old' WRP were habitually assigned menial tasks were both justified on the basis that the struggle for women's rights was 'subordinate' to the class struggle, what is actually proposed to prevent such practices from re-occurring within the WRP?

Throughout section 7, such practices are blamed on the Stalinist corruption of Marxism and on the 'stinking prejudices of male supremacy' created by 'millennia of class oppression'.

Such sweeping and general statements are remarkably meaningless, and cannot constitute the basis of the necessary development of theory which must take place within the WRP and the Fourth International if - as now recognised in the Draft Programme - 'the socialist revolution cannot be carried out without the mobilisation of women against their oppression'.

Although the necessary development of theory has already, to a very large extent, been carried out by Marxist feminists over the past two decades, their work has so far remained within the confines of the women's movement and has not therefore been considered of any interest or value within traditional Marxist and male dominated parties or organisations such as the WRP.

To begin with, and as Marxist feminists have now clearly demonstrated, confusion about the nature of the double oppression of women stems from Karl Marx's own patriarchal bias in his analysis of capitalism and serious omissions or 'oversights' on his part as to what actually and materially happens within the household or family.

Unpaid domestic work carried out by women in the private world of the household does not produce surplus value as defined by Marx, and is therefore taken out of his analysis of the capitalist mode of production. In his analysis of class relations therefore, the specific exploitation of women's labour by men within the family whereby use value, as opposed to surplus value is produced, is simply abstracted away.

Furthermore, because Marx allows no autonomy of content to the social relations of human reproduction, women are seen to inhabit only capitalist relations, rather than both capitalist and patriarchal relations; it follows that there is no sense of contradictions in Marx's analysis of women's position as he provides no conceptual tools for a complete theory of the 'double' oppression of women, nor is there any evidence so far that the WRP, a whole century later, is about to begin to apply dialectical materialism to the development of its theory and practices in relations to the historical task of the liberation of women and therefore of the whole of mankind.

A serious attempt made towards recognising the invaluable contribution of Marxist feminists in the development of Marxist theory would constitute a giant step forward for the Fourth International towards a more scientific understanding of the complexities and nature of our society and of international capitalism.

Such an undertaking would also provide the only possible basis from which any revolutionary leadership would not be allowed to degenerate to the lowest form of patriarchal exploitation of women's sexuality or any kind of sexual division of labour within its own ranks.

Clare Bowden. Blackpool

LETTER

Concise and significant

BEFORE discussion begins on the main content of the moving and important letter 'Just who is Vanessa Redgrave?' (Workers Press, 18 February), may I make a couple of points about its context - points with which Clare Cowen, if I understand her, will not necessarily disagree, but which do not emerge clearly from what she herself wrote.

Workers Press has a policy, of which I think it is rightly proud, of covering the arts, including theatre. Inevitably, given the resources currently available, this coverage is spasmodic and uneven.

One contradiction is that, despite its being based in London, the paper's provision of reviews of that city's vast

dramatic output is one of its weak spots.

Sir Peter Hall's production of 'Orpheus Descending', one of Tennessee Williams' most deeply felt but theatrically difficult plays, was almost universally hailed in the bourgeois Press as a West End highlight at the end of last year.

A serious and emotionally gripping play, definitively directed, and brilliantly performed - especially by Ms Redgrave - was the general consensus.

Quite aside from its special interest in Redgrave and her history, it was, in my view, objectively desirable that Workers Press should cover the event, if it were at all possible.

The special obstacle to doing so, in the case of this particular 'story', was - as Clare Cowen's letter makes clear - that it would be difficult to find many regular Workers Press correspondents who would feel confident that they could write about a production centring on

Redgrave in an unbiased manner.

Fortunately the answer was to hand. David Pilling is a young journalist who has recently won a prestigious national award for the craft in which he is an apprentice; and he has made a special study of aspects of the US theatre.

I thought the piece he wrote was a model of reviewing, containing a sense of what it felt like to be in the theatre on that particular night, taking into account the sort of readership that the paper may be presumed to have, and - incidentally - entirely lacking the indulgent verbosity which sometimes mars the work of some other Workers Press reviewers!

It would, in my view, be a pity if the impression were given that the main point of the article was that it was flawed and limited - even though through no fault of the writer - by its failure to enter into the question of Redgrave's degenerate politics.

On the contrary, I think its publication marked a real step forward in the far from easy struggle to make Workers Press into a fully-fledged, objective, Marxist, workers newspaper.

In the short term it has enabled Clare Cowen to raise the very important issues she has raised. In the longer term it may contribute towards the evolution of a new standard of theatre criticism - an art which is in a pretty low state in the Establishment journals today.

There is much more to be said on this last point - notably in relationship to the London critics' generally ecstatic assessments of the current 'English acting scene', of which Vanessa Redgrave is so much a part.

But that must await the evolution of this correspondence, and, this reader certainly hopes, the appearance of many more London theatre reviews in Workers Press.

Terry Brotherstone, Edinburgh

bourgeois order. The workers' state had degenerated to the point where a bureaucratic caste, an entire social layer hostile to socialism, had destroyed the Soviets as instruments of workers' power, and now dominated Soviet society.

Transmitting the pressure of world imperialism into the workers state, the bureaucracy defended its own privileges, analogously to the trade union bureaucrats of the capitalist world.

And just as revolutionaries had the duty of defending the unions against the employers, even unions under the most reactionary leadership, they had also to defend the workers' state, despite its Stalinist leadership.

The overthrow of capitalism was inseparable from the struggle of the Soviet workers to sweep away the bureaucracy and re-establish the Soviets as organs of power. In these Soviets, there would be no place for the bureaucracy. The task of linking this political revolution with the socialist revolution in the capitalist countries fell to the Fourth International.

Many of those who had backed the Opposition up to 1933 opposed these conceptions.

Led by people like Isaac Deutscher, they argued instead for the continuation of the attempt to reform the Comintern. This tendency found allies within the Fourth International after the Second World War, in the shape of Pablo and Ali's mentor Mandel.

(But even Deutscher would have been disgusted by Ali's reference to Rakovsky. He was Trotsky's oldest comrade, and his capitulation to Stalin was a terrible blow to Trotsky. But Ali makes it seem that Trotsky condoned it. 'After Hitler's rise to power he made his peace with Stalin, understanding, as did Trotsky in exile, that it was only a matter of time before Hitler invaded the USSR.' (Page 94).)

Listen to Ali today: 'Trotsky insisted that the USSR...was only at the beginning of the road towards a fully-fledged socialist society. This view is not far removed from the essence of contemporary Soviet reformism.' (Page 100).

'Trotsky was for open engagement (the Gorbachev line) but without any political illusions. He was always of the view that capitalism would never be reconciled to the USSR and would always constitute a threat to its survival (the Stalinist authoritarian line)...The development of the USSR and its engagement with the capitalist world could be achieved because, and insofar as, the USSR had indestructible bases of political solidarity within the capitalist countries.' (Page 103)

Describing the political revolution, Ali says: 'Trotsky thought that bloodshed could be avoided, but what was necessary was a thorough-going shift of the centre of gravity of power from the elite to the majority of working people. He certainly did not believe that forces from within the bureaucracy could ever become the bearers of qualitative changes in the political system. What he was calling for was a popular sovereignty anchored in the soviets and he believed that this was only possible through Soviet pluralism.' (Page 106) We haven't enough space for the many other examples of Ali's attempt to emasculate Trotskyism, rendering it safe for bureaucratic use.

What this book must tell us, however, is the vital necessity for the works of Trotsky and a true account of the history and programme of the Fourth International to find its way to those many workers, young people and intellectuals now coming into struggles against the bureaucracy.

Ali's 'political intervention' must not succeed in diverting these forces from grasping the real nature of the bureaucracy, including its Gorbachev wing.

The political revolution is indeed beginning, and the truth and power of Trotsky's ideas will win the backing of the masses, brushing aside all of Ali's miserable reformist compromises.

Campaign for Vietnamese

Trotskyists



American soldiers hunt the enemy

by Simon Pirani

AN APPEAL, for the truth to be told about the Vietnamese Trotskyists assassinated by the Stalinists during the 1945 revolution, has been launched in Paris.

The question of the murdered Trotskyists is a crucial one for the international workingclass movement. They commanded wide support in the trades unions, peoples' action committees, and other working-class organisations in the 1930s in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh city in south Vietnam).

Several of them were elected to the municipal council there in 1939, winning huge majorities over the Stalinist candidates who at that time urged support for 'democratic' French imperialism in the war.

At the end of the war, the workers and peasants rose in revolt: Ho Chi Minh and the Stalinists took power in northern Vietnam, but in the south advocated collaboration with the French colonialists, in line with the deal made between the USSR and the 'Allied' powers at Potsdam.

The Trotskyists opposed the deal, and worked to form workers' councils. They took up arms against the British and French troops who invaded Saigon in October 1945.

Their refusal to make deals with the 'democratic' imperialist powers led to a flurry of denunciations from the Stalinists. Then British troops moved into Saigon, and as the

Trotskyists retreated to the countryside Stalinist bands imprisoned and then shot their leaders.

Ta Thu Thau, the internationally-known Trotskyist leader, was arrested by the Stalinists while travelling to north Vietnam. He was already half-paralysed, due to a hunger strike carried out in prison in the 30s and further ill-treatment in the French Poulo Condor concentration camp during the war.

Such was the respect Ta Thu Thau commanded among the rank-and-file Communist Party members, that a 'people's tribunal' which tried him found him not guilty three times. He was shot anyway.

The launch of the appeal is supported by the Vietnamese Trotskyist Group (comrades who are members of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International), and the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference of Trotskyists of which the Workers Revolutionary Party is part.

It has been signed by well-known supporters of the Vietnamese war against US imperialism, as well as historians and academics with a special knowledge of south-east Asia.

The appeal comes at a time when the Stalinist leaders of the USSR, and many eastern European states, are forced to admit past crimes. But we can not be satisfied with such admissions.

The demands for the historical truth to be told, for the hidden archives about the history of the working-class movement to be opened, must be raised. These are part of the fight for political revolution in the Stalinist-ruled deformed workers' states, and part of the fight to build sections of the Fourth International in these countries.

This is the purpose of the appeal about the Vietnamese Trotskyists, which will be printed in full in next week's Workers Press. We urge friends and organisations in the working-class movement to write and indicate their support.



'Nguyen Van Dinh, poor peasant' as the sign identifies him attends a land reform meeting in the land reform programme after the Vietnamese revolution

An open letter to British communists

I DON'T know exactly how many organisations there are now in this country that call themselves a Communist Party or regard themselves as one.

I'm not poking fun at this desperate fragmentation, which is not confined to Britain but reflects all over the world the extreme, and no doubt terminal, crisis of Stalinism.

This letter is addressed to the members of all the British CPs, and to younger members in particular.

Here again, I don't know what proportion of you were already in the party in that pivotal year of 1956. Probably the veterans - the comrades aged 50 or more - are heavily outnumbered by younger members for whom 1956 is not just history but prehistory.

I lived through the greater part of 1956 as a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (which I had joined in 1942), until I was suspended from membership on 26 November and expelled on 16 December.

That year, as I well recall, was a great historical turning-point for the CPGB, as it was for the entire world communist movement.

Between the Khrushchev speech denouncing Stalin in February 1956 and the Hammersmith Congress in the spring of 1957 the party lost about a third of its members.

Most of them left because the party leaders supported the Soviet invasion of Hungary, whose purpose was to suppress what those

leaders characterised as a counter-revolution inspired and led by fascists.

The year 1956 has been a huge time-bomb ticking away under Stalinism for a third of a century. In the past few weeks that time-bomb has exploded at last.

Some sections of the Hungarian bureaucracy are now saying that the 1956 events in Hungary were not, after all, a counter-revolution but a popular uprising (which is what many of us said at the time).

There is, of course, still some disagreement and confusion. Some of the Hungarian party leaders are saying that the first stage of the Hungarian events was a popular uprising, but that there were then counter-revolutionary developments.

This position is an uneasy compromise, the best answer to which was given at the time by the Polish communist journalist Wictor Woroszyński, editor-in-chief of 'Nowa Kultura', who was in Budapest and who wrote on 3 November, the day before the Soviet invasion:

'Stabilisation is beginning in the country, the government is becoming a real government, sustained by all the revolutionary forces.'

That the expression 'popular uprising' can at last be used officially or semi-officially in Hungary as a characterisation of the 1956 events raises a number of questions which, however embarrassing they may be to leading Stalinists all over the world, are crying out for answers.

If the 1956 events were a popular uprising, that uprising must have had causes. What were those causes?

After 11 years of what they had been told was socialism, hundreds of thousands of people surged onto the streets of their towns

and cities.

Why did they feel it necessary to do so? What had gone wrong? What kind of a regime were they demonstrating against?

What part did the Hungarian working class play in the uprising? Why did they occupy the factories and elect their workers' councils?

Why did the Soviet leaders invade a country where the workers had occupied their factories arms in hand?

Why did the Soviet leaders disband the workers' councils and arrest and imprison their elected delegates?

What kind of a method is it which can overnight so blithely change your characterisation of a great historical event - which can turn a counter-revolution into a popular uprising by the stroke of a pen?

Above all, what has this method got to do with Marxism, the science which is supposed to guide your parties?

Discussing these questions and trying to find answers to them is far from being an academic exercise. It is a political necessity.

It is an essential step in re-educating those of you who want to be communists and who have been fed the most shameless lies by your leaders over the past third of a century.

For each one of you it is an essential step in your personal discovery of the true nature of Stalinism - and of the continuity since 1924 of the Marxist critique of Stalinism.

For you who want to be communists, there is a lot of reading and discussion now to be done.

And we who in 1956 trod the road you are now treading, and asked the questions that you must now ask, are ready to give you every possible fraternal help in discussing those questions now.

AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

The great Satan

The extraordinary events which have surrounded the publication of Salman Rushdie's 'The Satanic Verses' have a nightmarish quality, and seem to belong more to the world of fantasy fiction than to contemporary social and political life.

That a variant of one of the major world religions should resurrect the medieval atrocities of the Inquisition, condemn to death a prestigious author living on the other side of the globe, publicly burn his books as the work of a heretic and blasphemer, cannot simply be explained in terms of lunacy or of a social and cultural underdevelopment.

Indeed, once before in the century we saw the recrudescence of aspects of medieval Christian theology, anti-semitism at the heart of the culturally advanced capitalist state, Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

'The nation of thinkers and poets' of Hödelin and Goethe, Hegel and Marx witnessed the marshalling of the most advanced

technology and bureaucratic forms of organisation for the destruction of millions of human beings.

The culture of the Islamic world is rich in the arts and sciences, but in response to the crisis of imperialism and the development of the world revolution, like Christianity it can become the source of the most barbarous and reactionary counter-revolutionary ideologies. Both these religions have 'fundamentalist' currents and schisms.

The essence of modern fundamentalism is the 'literal' application of the founding 'truths' or moral laws of that religion as enshrined in their scriptures to contemporary contexts. In periods of social peace, fundamentalism is confined to the often brutal and eccentric disciplines and preoccupations of sectarian existence.

The sect or order is sealed off from the rest of society which it sees as a 'fallen world' in a state of degenerate or degraded existence. In times of social upheaval and crisis, especially when the working class and oppressed people are not armed with a leadership founded on scientific Marxist theory, the fundamentalist 'crusade' can be mobilised to 'purify' the degraded world, to discipline and bring together the backward and atomised social forces behind the counter-revolution.

As we see under the vicious clerical regime of Khomeini, revolutionary socialists, trade unionists, liberals, gays, 'adult-erers' and prostitutes are all tortured and murdered. What is the position now of those who like Vanessa Redgrave carried the portraits of Khomeini as a symbol of the intransigence of the Iranian revolution? Is this 'social cleansing' now part of the necessary 'terror' of the Revolution?

Our answer should be that there is never and cannot ever be any conciliation between Marxism and religion or religious thinking in its highest form, philosophical idealism.

We constantly fight for a secular state with a secular education system whether in Ireland or Iran.

The responses of the revisionists and Labour 'lefts' to the Rushdie affair are instructive. The Bradford MPs Maddon and Wall have become masters of diplomacy overnight.

The former 'Militant' Patrick Wall, fearful on one hand of losing electoral support amongst the immigrant vote and, perhaps, equally afraid that the old man of Quom will declare him persona non grata, stated that of course he could not condone burning books, but sympathised with people whose religious sensibilities were bruised by blasphemy.

Then there are the respectable

'community' leaders who the Labourites have cultivated over the years with their 'multi-cultural' projects. All of them wanted to burn books. One of them demonstrated eloquently that religious hypocrisy and cant are not confined to Christianity. Dressed in expensive western clothes, he complained that Rushdie has insulted HIS women by naming a brothel in a dream sequence after the traditional head-to-toe dress for women which they were honoured to wear.

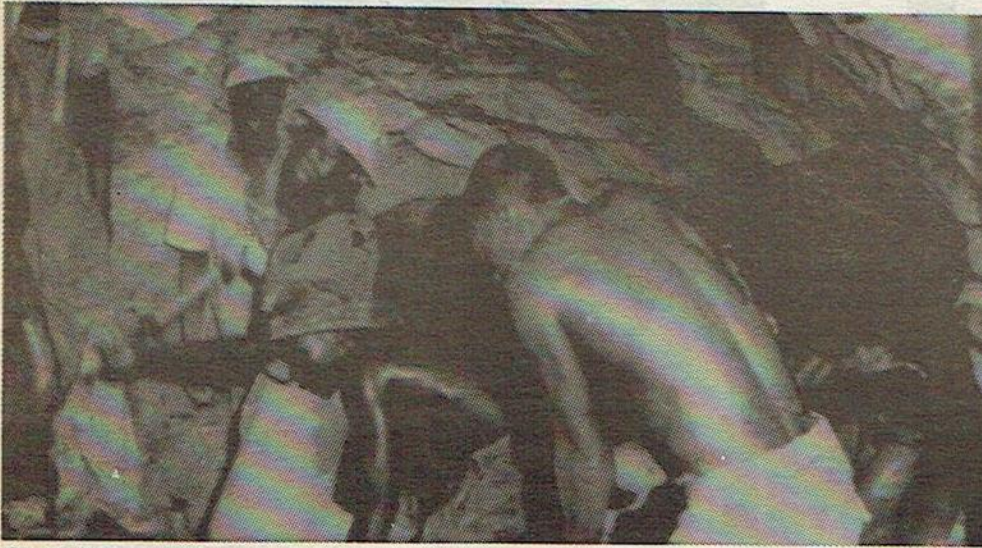
The most sophisticated 'revisionist' defence came from Tariq Ali, friend and collaborator of Rushdie. Ali stressed that the fanaticism of Khomeini was an aberration and drew attention to a 'humane' tradition in Islam epitomised by the early Muslim poets and ecstatic dancers of Northern India.

It is a profound historic irony that the western novel as a form has become intolerable to the puritanism generated by the crisis.

The novel, that essentially bourgeois art form, battled for existence against the poetry of the court which the new middle classes considered decadent, fictitious or 'lying'.

Rushdie's form of realism in tearing away the veils of religious bigotry renders once more the novel a dangerous destroyer of fictions. It is a remarkable achievement.

SOVIET BUREAUCRACY COURTS SOUTH AFRICAN RACISTS



South African miners

BY GEORGE LORMIN

THE SOVIET foreign ministry has begun moves aiming at improving diplomatic relations with the South African apartheid regime.

Apart from speculation in the Press, which must reflect Soviet diplomatic activity, the political basis for an understanding has been expounded at some length, by Boris Asoyan, deputy chief of the 2nd African Department of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a recent issue of the authoritative journal 'International Affairs' which appears in English and Russian.

Significantly, the article was picked up by the Soviet affairs experts of the Afrikaner University of Stellenbosch and translated into English from the August Russian edition, even before it appeared in the English edition of the journal in September.

This meant that the Soviet message contained in the article was quickly transmitted to the foreign office in Pretoria. Asoyan, who knows South Africa well, entitled his article 'Time to gather stones together' and the Sovietologists of Stellenbosch recognised at once, from its conciliatory and, as they said, 'sympathetic' note that something new was afoot.

There are several reasons why the Soviet bureaucracy should seek an understanding with Pretoria. Essentially it is part of 'perestroika' as applied to foreign relations, but it means that, if Pretoria responds, Moscow will demand of the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress that they go to the conference table and seek a peaceful and compromise settlement of the South African crisis.

The Gorbachev regime is signalling as hard as it can that it does not want violence, civil war or revolution in South Africa.

All those who have had illusions in Soviet support, military as well as moral, should take note now, before it is too late. Moscow does not intend to allow an uprising of the oppressed in South Africa, or anywhere else, to interfere with 'peaceful co-existence'.

Policy has to be geared to the need to make a deal with the United States stabilising the present division of the world. The bureaucracy wants to cut its losses in Southern Africa and play a conciliatory role as mediator. Behind-

the-scenes discussions are already preparing the way for a sell-out of historical proportions, which will betray the struggle of the African workers and peasants.

In Africa, as everywhere else, the bureaucracy supports its own interests as a parasitic ruling caste menaced by the political revolution of the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In this strategy the South African Communist Party conveys the policy and the African National Congress and its supporters do the spade work.

Asoyan's contribution to the debate about whether South Africa is ripe for revolution signals clearly to the bourgeoisie that the Soviet bureaucracy is opposed to revolution. It wants some kind of compromise solution: the so-called 'united, non-racial and democratic South Africa' of the Freedom Charter.

The bureaucracy would like to see a post-apartheid South Africa with a government 'in which there will be more blacks than whites'. Asoyan knows perfectly well that without a revolution such a government would remain the instrument of big capital for the preservation of bourgeois property relations.

A substantial part of the bourgeoisie, the English-speaking part in particular, would be happy with such an arrangement and even anticipates advantages from the ending of rigid apartheid.

The black masses would get a few concessions, including voting rights, but precious little else.

Rather than having to deal with revolutionary turmoil in Africa, the Soviet bureaucracy wants to cut its losses in that region and resume business-like relations (South Africa and the Soviet Union together produce about two-thirds of the world's gold supply).

Asoyan obviously sees the main barrier to the achievement of such a settlement in the attitude of the Afrikaners. Hence he appeals especially to them. Many feel especially insecure at the present time as they face the prospect of black majority rule.

Thus, in a post-apartheid South Africa there should be 'security for whites, for Afrikaners, for their culture, language and religion'.

He is calling on them to show more flexibility at a time when the need to protect their own (white) skins is becoming something of an obsession.

Fundamentally, Asoyan wants to avoid a reckoning with apartheid and its supporters.

He is offering them a way out. South African revolutionaries must be alerted to the role which the Soviet Union is now playing as an advocate of peaceful change through a bourgeois-democratic regime to be brought about without armed struggle.

It is continuing its counter-revolutionary role, sacrificing the interests of the working class to its needs to do a deal with the bourgeoisie to preserve its own threatened rule.

The Stalinists have conserved more influence and prestige among the South African workers than they have in most other parts of the world. Now is the time to expose the manoeuvres and the feelers being put out to the bourgeoisie.



Anti-apartheid protest at Nelson's Column

DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS FIGHT THE TORIES!

Dear Comrades and Friends,

Over the past months WORKERS PRESS has received many letters and reports about Tory abuse of democratic rights and examples of the terrible effects on people's lives of Tory attacks on the social services, housing, the NHS and education. We called a meeting on 19 February and the response proved the need for a united campaign in defence of democratic rights against the Tories. Those present were from many different campaigns, trade unions and socialist organisations.

If you are interested, have something to tell us, want to participate, please send us your name and address and information about your particular campaign or problem, and WORKERS PRESS will be doing everything it can to build a united fight against the Tories (see report of the meeting and the resolution on the back page of this issue).

Yours in comradeship,
Bronwen Handyside
EDITOR

CAMPAIGN IN DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS - FIGHT THE TORIES

Name:
Address:
Organisation (if any):

Telephone number:

WE REPRINT BELOW THE RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY- WORKERS PRESS' PUBLIC MEETING ON THE DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS



Typical scene in the miners' strike of 1984-1985

THIS meeting draws attention to the systematic attacks on democratic rights by this government, and the prospect of further attacks.

These rights, established by the trade unions and the working class (to organise trade unions, to strike, picket, demonstrate etc.), have been destroyed in law by the Tory anti-union legislation.

The Tory attacks extend also to democratic rights established under British capitalism from the 17th century and even before: the right to habeas corpus, trial by jury, to freedom of assembly and the press, etc. are threatened by far-reaching legal changes (abolition of 'right to silence', threat to jury system, Prevention of Terrorism Act, immigration laws, plans for ID cards, legal attacks on journalists etc.) and by the increase and centralisation of police powers.

There is also the assault on local government, introduction of the poll tax, and the National Curriculum and other changes in education.

The north of Ireland, occupied by Britain, has been used as a testing ground for dictatorial measures, and a base for making anti-democratic changes. Many of these changes are also tested out first on the Irish and other immigrants in Britain.

The Tory attacks proceed unimpeded because the Labour and trade union leaders at the head of the working class movement surrender to them at every turn.

Decisions taken at the 1982 Wembley TUC conference, to fight the anti-union laws, have been overturned; the miners and their wives, whose struggle to defend their communities brought them into conflict with the state, were betrayed and left to fight on their own; in Wapping, P&O and subsequent struggles the labour leaders showed the white flag before the battle commenced.

This meeting calls for action by the working class, and others, to defend democratic rights. This will be carried out in spite of and against the labour leaders.

We propose the following practical steps:

(1) The formation of committees or campaigning bodies in areas bringing together all who are resisting attacks on democratic rights, or faced with such attacks, and organising the defence of those who defy anti-working class laws.

(2) A campaign inside the trade unions and the Labour Party, including a lobby of the TUC in September 1989. The following demands to be made to the leaders: no collaboration with the

Tories; break from all state bodies like the National Economic Development Council and the Manpower Services Commission; defy the anti-union laws as Arthur Scargill and the miners did; and defy all other anti-working class legislation.

A calling-to-account of those leaders who capitulate to and collaborate with the Tories, culminating in driving such cowards and capitulators from the working class movement.

(3) A conference open to all those fighting to defend democratic rights to be called in September to discuss how such work can be developed.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party

Name.....date.....

Address.....

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

Send to:
Secretary to the Central Committee,
PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

News briefs . . .

Religious rights

HARE KRISHNA followers in the USSR, said to number more than 10,000, are beginning to enjoy a new-found freedom. The gradual easing of Soviet policy towards independent religious organisations allowed a group of 60 devotees to attend a two-month course in India recently. In Riga, the capital of Latvia, the movement has been able to officially register with a local authority. Other cities are said to be making similar concessions.

Dam protest

MORE than a dozen indigenous tribal groups were represented at the opening session last week of the First Meeting of Indian Nations, in Altamira, central Brazil. The meeting, organised by the Calapo tribe, was in protest against plans to construct a huge new dam complex in the heart of the Amazon region. The Brazilian government has been under increasing attack internationally over its ecological record. This particular project, the protesters claim, would result in the flooding of 1,225 square kilometres of virgin forest in the Calapo territory. And, if other related hydro-electric projects, at present suspended, were to be built, the area flooded would rise to 18,000 sq km.

In the extreme

THE LATEST study by West Germany's federal Constitutional Committee has revealed that there are 234 known right-wing extremists in the civil and military services, post office or state railways, 24 of whom hold senior posts in the Army or civil service. The total number of far-right group members has grown to 28,000 - an increase of nearly 3,000 in the past year. Of the 20 groups classified as 'neo-Nazi' (like the National Sammlung which was banned two weeks ago) membership is said to total only 1,520.

Geddit?

A RETIRED British army major travelling on the London Underground came upon a busker displaying a sign which read 'Falklands Veteran'. 'It seemed jolly hard luck,' the major said, 'to fight for your country and end up playing a guitar in Bank station, so I told him how sorry I was and dropped a tenner in his hat.' As the major walked away, the grateful busker called out 'Muchas gracias, señor'.

No cheers for democracy

THE members of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers have had a two year pay deal imposed on them by their leadership. They had already rejected the same offer twice in the fairest of fair postal ballots. National Union of Miners members will be having a quiet chuckle over a not unexpected turn of events.

MARCH AGAINST RACIST POLICE

BY ALAN CLARK

IN THE last 18 months there have been 265 cases of racial brutality and harassment by police in Woolwich, South-East London, according to Dev Barrah of the Greenwich Committee Against Racial Attacks (GACARA).

'In the last month alone there have been four racist police attacks.'

Last year a young Asian boy, 10-year old Ranvir Samra, playing outside his home in Abbey Wood, was kidnapped by a white man and taken to Woolwich police station where the man claimed that Ranvir had been throwing stones at his car.

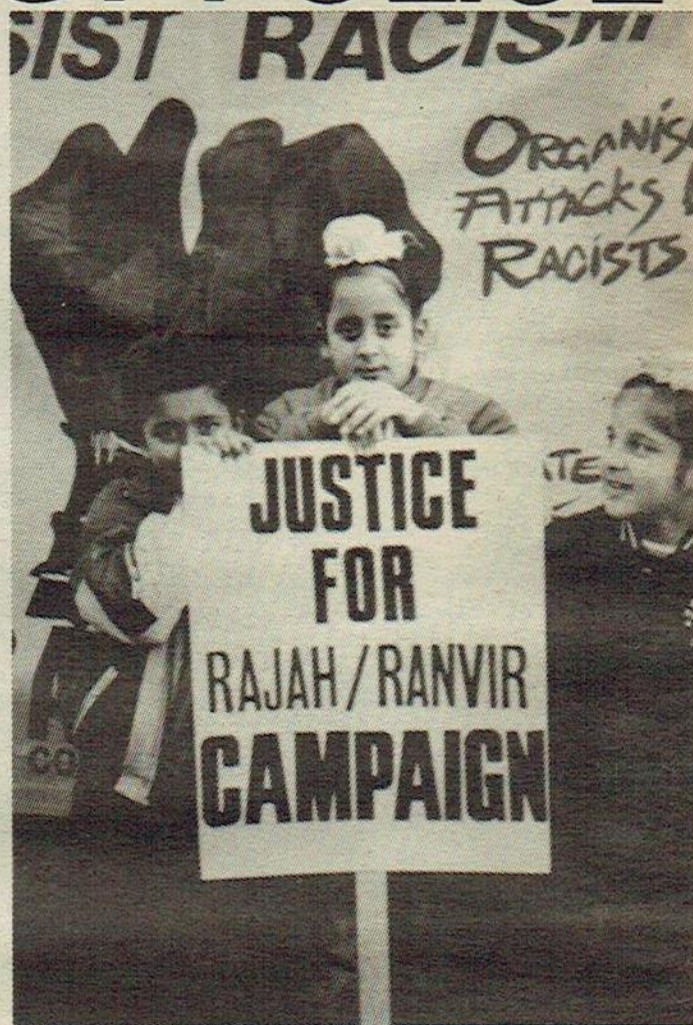
Ranvir was detained and questioned by police officers.

What annoyed the Samra family, and the Asian community, was that the man was not charged with the boy's kidnapping.

After questioning, the police handed young Ranvir back to the man and asked him to take the boy home. It took Ranvir an hour to make his way back from where he was dropped.

Not once during all this time did Woolwich police contact Ranvir's parents to let them know where the boy was and why he was being held.

Ranvir Samra's case is just one of many such racist attacks on the black and Asian community by police in Woolwich, say GACARA. They have organised a demonstration against the attacks



on Saturday 25 February. The assembly point is St Nicholas' Gardens, Plumstead, at 12 noon.

Since Thatcher came to power in 1979, police violence against

workers has increased dramatically, and the failure of the Labour and trade union leaders to mobilise against these attacks has encouraged racism.

Cleveland doctors vindicated

BY HILARY HORROCKS

THE CLEVELAND child abuse controversy took a dramatic new turn last weekend when child-care specialists from the area published a defence of the doctor most prominently involved.

Eleven consultant paediatricians from the north-east of England, wrote to 'The Guardian' saying that 'public perception' of the case 'is so wrong as to be virtually a mirror image of the truth'. They claim that as many as 90 per cent of the children identified as suffering sexual abuse 18 months ago in the Cleveland area were accurately diagnosed.

A campaign led by right-wing Labour MP Stuart Bell and fuelled by hysterical accounts in much of the press, resulted in most of the 121 children being returned to their families by the courts.

The professionals involved were subjected to sustained vilification in the media and Dr Marietta Higgs was transferred from her post in Cleveland as a result.

The paediatricians' letter calls for her reinstatement in her former job.

They point out that the workers involved in the case were restrained for ethical reasons from releasing their evidence on individual cases of abuse - their only means of defence.

'As a group,' they continue, 'we jointly have access to much information about events in Cleveland which we have studied carefully ... the children were abused and the paediatricians' diagnoses were accurate to a far higher degree than the public realise... We believe that some genuinely abused children have been wrongly returned home by the courts, quite possibly to suffer further abuse. This very

serious possibility has not to our knowledge been considered by any commentators to date.'

'We were sad,' commented the Butler-Sloss report, as quoted in the paediatricians' letter, 'he (Stuart Bell) was unable in the light of further knowledge that he clearly had, to withdraw or modify allegations which could not be substantiated.'

In perhaps their most significant observation, the paediatricians draw attention to the way the media outcry serves the needs of the state - anxious at all costs to preserve the credibility of the family institution at the expense of the child victims. They conclude:

'There is a real danger that the new childcare legislation will be debated in an atmosphere which will lean more towards the rights of abusers than of abused children. This can only make the task of child protection even harder than it already is.'