

SOVIET WORKERS REJECT STALINISM

BUREAUCRATS ROUTED IN POLLS

THE Soviet working class has taken its very first opportunity to reject outright the bureaucratic layer which has pretended to represent them for 60 years.

The results of the first round of the elections for the Congress of People's Deputies are of immense significance. They cast a glaring light on the character of Soviet society and the stage reached in the political revolution in which it is embroiled. How can anyone call a state 'socialist', in which the ruling caste is viewed with such hostility and contempt by the population?

The election marks the conclusion of a dispute which began 65 years ago: was the aim of the October Revolution to establish an island of socialism within the borders of the USSR, or was its future entirely bound up with the spread of the revolution in the overthrow of capitalism as a world order?

The followers of Bukharin and Stalin took the former view after Lenin's death. They bureaucratically suppressed the Opposition led by Trotsky. As the monstrosity of Stalin's terror unfolded, the very conception of socialism was transformed into an obscene caricature.

This issue is now settled. The Oppositionists were right. Stalin's lies have been exposed. Throughout the USSR and Eastern Europe, masses of people are demanding an end to bureaucratic rule.

In nearly every region and city, the nominees of the misnamed 'Communist' Party have been overwhelmingly defeated. In some cases, where all critics of the bureaucracy were kept off the ballot paper, this involved millions of people crossing out the names of the single 'official' candidate.

The political programmes of the alternative candidates are hardly relevant at this stage. The more strongly a candidate was opposed by the ruling group, the more they were made the expression of the aspirations of the working class and the oppressed nationalities.

It is also clear that this movement is not under the control of

BY CYRIL SMITH

Gorbachev and his supporters, and not only his conservative critics were defeated. His strategy - to placate the masses, while tying the Soviet economy closer to the world bankers - was also implicitly discarded by last Sunday's vote.

But here is where great dangers lie. The movement to overthrow the bureaucracy is at this stage without clear conscious direction. Inevitably, after generations of false leadership, there is great confusion. Many mistakes will no doubt be made.

HARRY WICKES died on 26 March after a mercifully short illness. Born in 1905, into a traditional labour movement family, in 1920 he started work in a signal box at Clapham Junction, where the militant workers used to meet, and he became part of the Battersea Daily Herald League.

In 1921 Harry became a very young founder member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) when the League members attended the founding conference, and he became a leading light in the Young Communist League.

He edited a rank and file railwaymen's newspaper during the General Strike, and on the return to work when the militants were being victimised, he was sent off to Deal to work cleaning out the army horse loose-boxes. He took part in the election campaign which sent Shapurji Saklatvala into Parliament in Battersea, South London. He heard the Trotskyist point of view in early 1925 when A.E. Reade spoke to the YCL about Lenin's Testament, but in November 1927 he was sent to the Lenin School in Moscow and was lectured in anti-Trotskyism by Kirsonova Yaroslavsky. He attended the Sixth World Congress of the

But the process of historical clarification has begun. Now, the fight to re-connect the overthrow of Stalin's successors with the struggle for international socialism is vital.

The crisis of the Soviet bureaucracy, as always, is directly bound up with the crisis of world capitalism. Gorbachev cuddles up to imperialism just as the contradictions within the expansion of fictitious capital are being revealed.

The mass battles now opening up in Eastern Europe will soon be matched and encouraged by the eruption of the working class in the capitalist world.

This means the reconstruction of the Fourth International, estab-

lished by Leon Trotsky at the time when Stalin's terror was at its height.

Only in this way can the historic significance of the rejection of bureaucracy be translated into the political and economic programme of world socialist planning.

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Workers Press joins Al Richardson in this tribute HARRY WICKES 1905 - 1989

Comintern in 1928.

In 1929 he was at the Moscow May Day Parade when Trotskyists threw leaflets into the air whilst passing the official stand, reputedly their last public gesture in the Soviet Union. When Harry visited the backward Republic of Daghestan he became convinced of the folly of 'socialism in one country' and returned to England in 1930 deeply troubled with the Comintern line, but not yet a Trotskyist. After a period of open criticism he joined the Balham Group in 1932, and from then on was a loyal supporter of Trotskyism, active throughout the 1930s and 1940s in the Communist League, the Marxist League, the Revolutionary Socialist League and entry-work in the Independent Labour Party during the Second World War.

At one point, in order to try to re-establish contact with Indian Trotskyists he was sent to join the army in West Yorkshire - a regi-

ment shortly to go to India, but a week later was discharged without any explanation.

After a period out of politics, but still an active trade unionist, Harry returned to politics in the International Socialists and then in the short-lived group, the Workers League, which split from them.

Harry Wickes was a self-taught worker who did not express himself at great length in print. But he did help CLR James with the massive research that went into the writing of his book 'World Revolution' in 1937. His own writing includes two short pamphlets: 'Notes on the History of Bolshevism' (1936) and 'The General Strike' (1976), and a short article on the early history of British Trotskyism written for the magazine 'The International'. Harry Wickes was a person of great moral strength and personal dignity. There was no hint of personal ambition or of self-seeking advertisement in his entire character. In this sense, he truly represented his class.

We send our condolences to Harry's wife. His stroke has ended their retirement together in Crewkerne, Somerset, where he has devotedly looked after her throughout her own ill-health.

WORKERS PRESS

The truth will out

HELICOPTERS circle overhead dropping tear gas. Down below the death toll rises in Kosovo, Yugoslavia, as the special federal paramilitary forces fire on demonstrators.

Kosovo is barricaded off from the outside world and road blocks prevent movement between towns and villages. Schools and the universities are closed. Meetings of more than three are banned, and a curfew is in force. A state of emergency has existed for a month. 160 miles away in Belgrade Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party, hosts the celebrations on this 'festive, joyous and historic day' as he proclaims the amendments which end the constitution granted to the 90 per cent Albanian population of Kosovo by the late President Tito in 1974.

The people of Kosovo are angry at the surrender of their national rights. Their parliament voted in an open ballot in a building surrounded by armed police. It was acting under the orders of the Federal Communist Party, prepared to use arms against the people to maintain formal unity with the rest of the bureaucratic apparatus.

Last Monday over 200 Kosovo miners were sentenced to two months' jail for 'defying compulsory work orders'. Already 19 demonstrators are dead and 49 seriously injured. Official mourning was announced for the two policemen who were also killed, but no mention was made of the civilians.

Serbian leaders of Yugoslavia's governing bureaucracy have carried out a sustained and intensive campaign charging the Kosovo people as counter-revolutionaries. The same charge was made against the Hungarian Revolution in 1956.

At least 3,000 Albanians (the figure is never published) are political prisoners, mostly young - workers as well as students and teachers. The slightest attempt to publicise their protests is met with merciless repression and death.

In 1981 at least nine people were gunned down by police. On 19 November last year Albanian miners from the Trepca complex marched to the capital city of Pristina, led by Serbian woman Juliana Gasic, the Communist Party leader in the mine. They carried national flags but also had red flags flying.

The people are rising up against the bureaucracy and its bloody repression. In Pristina there is 50 per cent unemployment and the average income is the second lowest in Yugoslavia. They are not counter-revolutionaries - their demand is for respect for their dignity and equality for their nation as a Republic within the Yugoslav Federation instead of the so-called 'autonomous region' that Tito granted. Now even that has been taken away.

The Serbian and Albanian people live together side by side - it is the hated bureaucracy which whips up national feelings by its 'imperialist' divide and rule policies in areas of high poverty, which they try to tell us is 'socialism'.

But times have changed. Millions of people rising up against Stalinism in the Soviet Union are strong allies for the people of Kosovo. A pamphlet produced by the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Kosovo in 1986 says:

'Even if the Yugoslav Government should keep 15,000 Albanians behind bars as political prisoners it can never imprison the truth. All its attempts to do so will be in vain and will end shamefully. Sooner or later justice will win and those who are now the source of the oppression will have to give an account of themselves before the people and before history.'

Can anybody doubt that this stand for truth inter-links historically with the struggle of the Left Opposition and the Trotskyist Fourth International founded in 1938 against Stalinism?

The Yugoslav bureaucracy will not be able to hide the truth. Workers Press salutes the people of Kosovo - we pledge to publish their demands, news of their struggles and of their political prisoners. Our pages are open for discussion.

Workers Press is a paper of the Fourth International. The Trotskyist movement shares with the people of the USSR and Eastern Europe a history of Stalinist oppression. We are intent on bringing out the truth before the international working class.

This is the work of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists for the Rebuilding of the Fourth International. • PO Box 1586, London NW6 6TY

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6 MAY

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AT the time of writing we have £1,434.90 for the March fund and there are three days to the end of the month. Please help us to complete it in good order. We need £565.

But by the time you read this column we will be on our way to raising the £7,500 needed to launch the new tabloid Workers Press.

Workers Press is a paper of the Fourth International. It fights for socialism!

Today the truth of Stalinism is coming out. Millions of people are standing up against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR and eastern Europe - against the murderers, torturers, and bloody traitors. The political revolution has started!

The Fourth International is the continuity of Bolshevism, the party of the 1917 Russian Revolution. It is being built in the struggle to destroy Stalinism. Today we see these millions of people in the Soviet Union on our television screens and it gives us great heart for our struggle. But how did Trotsky see it in the days of the Moscow Trials, when he saw the destruction of the Party of the Russian Revolution (himself later to be murdered by Stalin's secret police agent)?

In 1937 ending a speech at a New York meeting, Leon Trotsky said: 'The Moscow Trials are perpetrated under the banner of socialism. We will not concede to the masters of falsehood! If our generation happens to be too weak to establish socialism over the earth, we will hand the spotless banner to our children.'

'The struggle which is in the offing transcends by far the importance of individuals, factions and parties. It is the struggle for the future of all mankind. It will be severe. It will be lengthy.'

'Whosoever seeks physical comfort and spiritual calm let him step aside. In time of reaction it is more convenient to lean on the bureaucracy than on the truth. But for all those for whom the word *socialism* is not a hollow sound but the content of their moral life - forward!

'Neither threats, nor persecutions, nor violations can stop us! Be it even over our bleaching bones the truth will triumph!

'We will blaze the trail for it. It will conquer! Under all the severe blows of fate, I shall be happy, as in the best days of my youth! Because, my friends, the highest human happiness is not the exploitation of the present, but the preparation of the future.' (I Stake My Life - Dewey Report on the Moscow Trials)

What better cause could we live for?

Dot Gibson

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 2 April:

WORKERS PRESS PUBLIC MEETING

Defend democratic rights!

Fight the Tories!

Blythswood Hotel, Argyle St, Glasgow, 2 p.m.

Speakers include: Dave Temple (WRP), Norman Bissell (Lanarkshire EIS member), Josie O'Kane (Republican Band Alliance), a victimised miner, Scottish Council for Civil Liberties

Saturday 15 April

FIGHTING DEPORTATIONS!

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY

Manchester Town Hall, 10 a.m.

Sunday 23 April

BLAIR PEACH MEMORIAL MARCH

Assemble at: Southall Park, Uxbridge Road, Southall

March to rally at Fenner Brockway Centre, South Road

Monday 1 May

MAY DAY DEMONSTRATIONS

Saturday-Sunday 10-11 June

THIRD SOCIALIST CONFERENCE, CHESTERFIELD

Saturday 17 June

NUM CENTENARY GALA, YORKSHIRE

Saturday 24 June

WORKERS PRESS MINERS' STRIKE 5TH

ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Durham University, Lecture Theatre, Old Elvet, 10 a.m.

Dickensian values for homeless youth



Young people on the streets of London

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

MORE than 150,000 people aged from 16 to 25 years old are homeless each year in Britain, a third of them living on the streets of London.

According to a report by Shelter and the Central London Social Security Advisors Forum, based on diaries written by 100 people, young people are being forced into a life of crime, prostitution, and begging.

The report blames government policies on social security which, amongst other things, have wiped out income for 16 to 17 year-olds who cannot live with their parents, and cannot or will not go on the cheap labour Youth Training Scheme. It also points the finger at Tory policies which have dramatically reduced the availability of cheap housing.

Suicide

Half of the people who kept the diaries said they had been in trouble with the police, most frequently for begging. Two had attempted suicide.

This 'unprecedented scale' of poverty and hardship suffered by young people today in Britain is

'non-persons' by the state - for thousands of them there is no official record of their existence. Those who leave local authority homes but are unable to go on the dole or get on a YTS scheme, and unable to register with a doctor because they have no address simply disappear on to the streets.

They become prey to those like the disturbed Nielsen, who offered homeless youth a bed for the night and strangled them.

Horrific

The most horrific aspect of the story of his crimes is that some of his victims to this day have never been missed or identified.

The state declared them non-human beings, and Nielsen and others like him carry the declaration to its logical conclusion.

The WRP draft programme says of this generation: 'Out of movements and activities that offer an alternative to the despair facing young people under Thatcher will come the forces for a revolutionary socialist youth movement - without which there can be no struggle for socialism in Britain.'

shared by millions in the so-called 'third world' countries.

British youth are being made

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WORKERS PRESS will champion every working-class struggle against the Tory regime, its cuts, and its attacks on unions, immigrant communities, women, young people and the unemployed.

WORKERS PRESS will fight British oppression in Ireland and British collaboration with apartheid.

WORKERS PRESS as the paper of the WRP, will fight for leadership in the working class, against the treachery and corruption of Labour and trade union leaders.

WORKERS PRESS will report on the Trotskyists' fight to build the Fourth International - in the USSR, eastern and western Europe, Africa, and north and south America; it will report on the work of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists.

WORKERS PRESS will continue the Peter Fryer column, 'Letter from Ireland', and theatre and film reviews.

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SCIENTISTS CLAIM SUCCESS WITH NUCLEAR FUSION

BY GEORGE LEONARD

THE nuclear fusion breakthrough announced last week by Professors Fleischmann and Stan Pons has triggered strenuous efforts to test their claim that they have discovered the cheapest way yet of creating unlimited energy.

Their own work, called the Utah experiment, is said to have been concluded with the equipment of a sixth form laboratory paid for by their own savings - less than £60,000 each.

Fusion power opens up a vast energy source - one cubic foot of sea water contains enough deuterium to make the energy of 10 tons of coal.

It is a clean source of power, although some waste estimated at a few hundred tons each year would be produced by a conventional fusion reactor concept.

However, the confidence of Fleischmann and Pons is matched by an equal scepticism from fellow scientists meeting at Harwell Laboratory in Oxfordshire.

Fleischmann, himself, is a consultant to the Atomic Energy Authority and he arrived last week to discuss his findings - 'I know a great deal more than we have disclosed' - to a six-strong team of experts led by Prof David Williams of the AEA.

The gauntlet has been thrown down on decades of work in the arena of nuclear energy. The present process of nuclear fission (splitting the atom) takes place in the dreaded pressurised water reactors, where the reaction of the atoms to create energy has to be at a phenomenally high temperature, and the risk of accidents is high.

A dangerous trade

More than 80,000 tonnes of hazardous waste are imported into Britain every year for treatment or incineration.

Cost is between £500 and £1,500 a tonne. The trade has doubled every two years since 1980.

WRITE TO WORKERS PRESS

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

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

'LEFT' BETRAYALS,

THIS ARTICLE is transcribed from notes of a speech by EDMUND SAMARAKODDY of the Revolutionary Workers Party (Sri Lanka). He agreed to its publication but has not been able to check this text.

Comrade Samarakoddy broke with the treacherous Lama Sama Samaja Party in 1964 when it abandoned any pretext of its former 'Trotskyism' and joined the Bandaranaike coalition government. He remained in the revisionist United Secretariat of the Fourth International but split from it subsequently.

We welcome this important contribution to the discussion not only of the problems facing the Sri Lankan working class, but also of the fight to rebuild the Fourth International, and we invite correspondence on it. The causes of the LSSP betrayal and their relationship to revisionism in the Fourth International must be probed further. It must be added that we in the Workers Revolutionary Party do not agree with Comrade Samarakoddy that Pabloism 'destroyed' the Fourth International. We have constantly insisted that the continuity of the Fourth International was maintained, albeit with many problems, by those who fought Pabloism, initially in the International Committee of the Fourth International - and that the Fourth International will be rebuilt by first of all recognising this.

Simon Pirani

SRI LANKA had the largest section of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, and after 1963 the United Secretariat - that is, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP).

The LSSP was started as a broad socialist party in a situation where the only other workers' party was a Labour Party modelled on the British one.

Living in a colony, Sri Lankans had to go to London for our higher education. Some of the LSSP's founders had come into contact with the revolutionary movement while studying there.

Independence

In 1933, when they returned, India was gripped by the mass independence movement led by Gandhi, and the situation was favourable for us.

Within a short time, the comrades had formed a youth organisation, and we went immediately to the working class movement. There was a vacuum of leadership: the workers were moving left, and the then Labour leaders were being exposed.

By 1935 we had founded the LSSP - of which I was one of the founding members. 'Sama Samaja' means 'equality'.

The leaders of the LSSP included Philip Goonewardene - one of the best agitators I ever knew, who could rouse up an audience at the end of a speech to the point where they would go and burn down buildings if he asked them.

Within a year of its founding, the LSSP sent P. Goonewardene and N. M. Perera to parliament. For a long time they conducted themselves in a revolutionary manner and carried the class struggle into parliament.

During the war, many of us were in jail. After a decade of the LSSP's existence, we had an island-wide labour movement, and a strong party. After the war we had 14 MPs of which I was one.

We were thinking not only of the situation in Ceylon, but internationally. We were concerned about India, and during the war some LSSP members went there and formed the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India.

In 1943 the LSSP became a section of the Fourth International. But the weakness of the International Secretariat, and of the United Secretariat after that, had an impact on us.

Parliamentarist

When Pabloism destroyed the Fourth International, we became more parliamentarist.

By 1961-1962, we had become more and more interested in parliament to the extent that all the leaders of the party were in parliament. In 1964 the party leadership decided that they could become much larger, and have power, by joining with Mrs Bandaranaike's government.

They said 'we are the brains; in a short time Mrs Bandaranaike will be nothing.' They decided to join her in a coalition, and at that point a small minority split from the party.

Some of these remained as the Sri Lankan section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, some joined the International Committee of the Fourth International.

From the commencement of this treacherous coalition in 1964, the left declined. In 1971, when the

LSSP leaders were ministers in the bourgeois cabinet, an uprising was staged by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

As a result of the LSSP's neglect of work among the poorest sections of the population, and their neglect of the countryside, the Sinhala youth particularly had been profoundly disillusioned.

They secretly collected arms and in 1971 rose up against the government. The rising lasted ten days; police stations were destroyed and there was fighting everywhere. Ten thousand young people were killed.

When the bourgeoisie wanted to destroy this movement, they called in N. M. Perera to say 'they must be destroyed, annihilated', and that was what he said. Now we are paying the price for this.

In the 1978 elections, not a single member of the LSSP was returned. The reason was that, not only had they participated in the slaughter of the youth, but also they had broken strikes - for example in one strike Perera had ordered the mass sacking of every striker, something that had never happened before in Sri Lanka.

Colony

The 1978 election was a victory for the most reactionary government we have ever had. They linked up with the imperialists. The money came in a flood, and there were developments in the cities, in agriculture.

Politically, the country became a presidential dictatorship. All power went to the president, parliament was reduced to a shell.

All democratic rights we had previously had were destroyed; it was virtually impossible to organise strikes because of the police brutality used to repress them. No demonstrations, except for the May Day demonstrations, could be organised.

Then the Jayawardene regime began the 'divide and rule' policy of discrimination against the Tamils, which Britain had used before them.

The Tamils had been discriminated against by the British. They didn't ask for separation, but asked to be treated like equals in the schools, in terms of religion, work, etc. The Tamils began with public meetings, hunger strikes, and other forms of action. Then the police were sent in.

The government organised anti-Tamil pogroms with their own police in the front lines, which reached their height in 1983. All over the country, Tamils' homes were destroyed and they were driven to the northern provinces where the majority of Tamils live.

Arms

The Tamils responded by saying that, if they couldn't live together with the Sinhalese, they would take up arms. They demanded separation. The main organisations involved were the 'Tamil Tigers' (LTTE), a revolutionary petty-bourgeois organisation, and the PLOT, who talk in terms of 'Marxism' but also have petty-bourgeois politics.

From the outset, my organisation,

the Revolutionary Workers Party, put forward the demand for a separate Tamil state. We were the only group in Sri Lanka to make clear that when we spoke of 'self-determination', this meant the right to form a separate state. And when the struggle began for that separate state, we supported it.

We didn't make a distinction between the LTTE and PLOT. We said that we didn't support their politics, but we gave conditional support to their struggle.

Arms-in-hand

I say 'conditional' for a definite reason. They fought arms-in-hand against the government and the police, and there was no question about our support for them there.

But they also adopted a policy of killing innocent Sinhala people in response to the massacre of Tamils - and while this form of Tamil chauvinism was entirely understandable, we gave no support to the killing of innocent people.

Hundreds of thousands were killed in the course of the Tamil struggle. We saw how it was 'the greatest misfortune of one people to oppress another'.

A number of the guerrilla fighting groups came together in the Tamil Liberation Front, and in 1987 this organisation appealed to India, to Rajiv Gandhi, to help them. They realised they needed support from this imperialist power.

Angry

Gandhi, who was faced with a situation where thousands of Tamils were coming into India, and 50 million Tamil-speaking people living in India were getting increasingly angry, agreed.

Rajiv Gandhi decided on accords between India and Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka wanted the protection of India in dealing with their own people - not only the Tamils but the whole population. Once these accords were in sight, weapons were amassed against the Tamils. The government said to the Tamils 'surrender your weapons', and the Tamil Tigers refused.

Forces

The Indian forces came in. Hundreds of Tamils were killed. In the course of this slaughter one of our own comrades was killed, we think accidentally.

Emergency legislation was imposed on the whole country. The resources of the entire country were directed into the civil war against the Tamils, and this was telling on the entire people: wages were frozen, social services were cut.

Having repressed the Tamils, Jayawardene now pointed to a new scapegoat: the JVP. When Gandhi arrived in Sri Lanka to sign the accords, tens of thousands of people under the JVP's influence took to the streets to march to Colombo and attack Gandhi. He was attacked by a member of the guard of honour. But the JVP was a very different organisation than it had been in 1971.

The morals of North and Hyland

PATRICK SLAUGHTER is serving a four-year sentence for conspiracy after a frame-up trial directed against football supporters - as part of the build-up to the imposition of identity cards. The only 'evidence' against Patrick and the other defendants was provided by the police - but even the police did not suggest that he was a 'fascist' as the political tendency inspired from Detroit by David North have begun to hysterically argue. Their aim is to attack Patrick Slaughter's father, political secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party, and the WRP itself. Here CLIFF SLAUGHTER discusses the morality of the North group, and his Hyland-led followers in Britain. The members of this group walked away from a thorough investigation of the crimes of G Healy after he was expelled from the WRP in 1985 - and now they obediently follow the line of North, which, as comrade Slaughter explains, has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism.

MEMBERS of the group calling itself grandiosely 'International Communist Party' are still trying to sell the January issue of their paper, which contains an article by David North purporting to be an 'answer to the Workers Revolutionary Party' on 'the case of Patrick Slaughter'.

First, to explain who these people are. North is secretary of the US group called 'Workers League'. When the WRP expelled Healy and his clique in 1985, North set about forming a faction in the WRP which would eventually be the 'section' of his spurious 'International Committee', a rump continuation of the body of the same name previously run by Healy.

The ICP, led by David Hyland, is that section. Since I find the name ICP for this group not merely ridiculous but also an abuse of noble words, I hope readers will

forgive me if I refer to it later in this article as the HVLI ('Hyland (Very) Light Infantry').

North says in his article: 'The Workers Revolutionary Party finds itself embracing fascists'.

He starts by describing Patrick Slaughter as my 'fascist son'. He ends by referring to 'fascists like Patrick Slaughter'.

These foul allegations are of course utterly without foundation.

Having accepted police evidence (there is no other whatever) in a frame-up conspiracy trial, North has added his own charge: that Patrick Slaughter is a fascist.

He himself says: 'The convictions were based on evidence gathered by police who had infiltrated a racist gang of fascist sympathisers known as "Para's Army".'

Denied

This is the dirtiest sleight-of-hand. The existence of such a 'racist gang' is presented as fact, whereas that very existence, totally denied by the defendants, is alleged only by the police - and North!

I have already written at length, in two special Workers Press supplements, in defence of Patrick Slaughter and of the WRP, against the lies of North and his HVLI.

In this article I concentrate on just one aspect of their campaign, that is, what I shall call (despite their predictable screams of pain) their morals.

By this I mean their decision to base their attacks against Patrick Slaughter and the WRP on police lies, and to add to these lies their own vicious slanders unsubstantiated by any evidence.

Breach

Why did they decide to proceed in this way? Why did they decide, quite consciously and deliberately, to breach the most elementary unwritten rule of the working class's struggles by siding with the state forces of the class enemy against us?

When David North called Patrick a fascist, in order to whip up the campaign against Patrick Slaughter and the WRP, why did the HVLI reprint his article one month later, in their own paper, when they themselves know that this is a lie?

I have asked every one of them whom I have encountered if Patrick is a fascist (see Workers Press, 18 February), and not one has been able to say yes.

If they believe that he is, why did it take the genius of their guru, North, to discover this truth - in Detroit, Michigan! After all, the biggest battalion (four people) of the

The morals of North and Hyland

HVLI is in Patrick's home town, Leeds. How is it they didn't notice it before North?

When they read North's lying announcement that Patrick was a fascist, why did they consider it expedient not to challenge this, even reprinting it?

I ask them a straight question - to do, yes, with the morality of revolutionaries and of the working class in its struggle to overthrow class society: did you decide that lyingly to slander a young man as a 'fascist' (I know of no worse slander) is after all justified by the need to destroy your political opponents, in this case the WRP?

Notebooks

I think they did. They consider it justified and expedient to make use of police provocateurs' notebooks and bourgeois show-trial convictions in order to destroy Patrick Slaughter, those closest to him - that is, me, his mother, and his sisters - and the WRP.

They acquiesce in North's vicious slander for the same reason. After all, as one HVLI warrior responded in Leeds last week to questions about this: 'Yes, individuals are important, but the class comes first.'

This is a crude travesty which turns Marxism into its opposite, vulgar pragmatism.

They will not succeed. What has already happened to their campaign to get support for these lies in the Leeds labour movement will happen everywhere else.

The disgust aroused by their conduct has resulted in their having advanced from a position of marginalisation to one of total isolation and anathema.

I return to the words of David North. After referring to my 'fascist son', he says: 'Patrick Slaughter was accused of being one of the group's ringleaders and chief instigators of racist violence.'

Even this version of what the police alleged is not strictly true. But what North does not say is what evidence he has for accepting the police accusation.

Identified

Furthermore, North continues: 'Among those convicted with Slaughter was David "Para" Brown, a Falklands War veteran and member of the Territorial Army, who has been publicly identified as a fascist.'

Here the details are very revealing. North says Brown has been 'publicly identified as a fascist'. He does not say Slaughter has been publicly so identified.

If Slaughter has not been 'publicly identified as a fascist' how has North (privately?) identified him as a fascist?

North has not answered this question. We are expected to take his word for it. He cannot answer it. And he will not answer it.

There is a very simple reason. Patrick Slaughter is not a fascist and not a racist. He has said - as in his open anti-racist statement to the Court - and shown by his

past actions what he is, and he will do so again.

Sitting in prison serving a four-year sentence after being framed by police provocateurs, with the case going to the Appeal Court in the very near future, is, North may think, the best position from which to respond to his filthy slanders.

Has it occurred to North and the HVLI that Patrick Slaughter may think that their actions are beneath contempt and that he is incapable of getting down to their level?

I was inclined to think the same way myself until a HVLI member in Hull publicly slandered Patrick as a fascist, and I realised what a dirty little campaign was being prepared.

And I consider perfectly natural and justifiable the reaction of one leader of the 1974 building workers' strike, to whom I showed North's first article against Patrick.

He said simply: 'Who is this ass-hole North?' Indeed, I considered using it as the headline for this article, but I find Trotsky's essay 'The Struggle for Cultured Speech' very persuasive, and, incidentally, very relevant to the 'cultured' language used by North.

A group which accepts and uses police evidence and court conspiracy judgments as the basis for slandering and trying to destroy political opponents is a danger to the workers' movement.

In North's article we find a very revealing two paragraphs indicating the outlook which underlies his attack.

Writes

He writes of WRP members and Workers Press readers as 'declassed and demoralised petty bourgeois', a 'politically diseased milieu, full of hatred of the working class and Marxism'.

I myself am especially vile, it seems: 'Slaughter, a consummate cynic and hypocrite, epitomises in his political and personal life all that is corrupt and perverse in the British petty-bourgeois intelligentsia.'

'He is, therefore [?], a specialist in gathering into his net the most degenerate human specimens produced by this decadent social milieu.'

'Slaughter, the master procurer... What is the meaning of this way of conducting a political attack on an opponent?'

At the very least, everyone knows that the only people who descend to this kind of abuse ('corrupt and perverse' personal life, 'procurer', etc.) are themselves bankrupt of any theoretical or political ideas.

And where are the Hyland-North supporters who for years were in the same party as me, some seeing me every day, and who might be expected to substantiate this attack?

Why are they silent? Why did they not speak up before?

As in the case of Patrick being a 'fascist', did they have to wait for the guru in Detroit to make this discovery for them,

even though they lived in the same town as me?

But the biggest question here is: on what grounds do they justify this systematic lying, this attempt at the destruction of personalities?

In the same paragraph, North goes further in his hysterical attack on the members of the WRP:

'...hallucinating journalists, alcoholic university professors, and aging film directors of unfulfilled promise... middle-class ladies who blame Trotskyism for their unsuccessful love affairs and failed marriages...'

And he calls me a cynic! North's remark about 'middle-class ladies' is actually very instructive. He dismisses as of no importance the grounds on which Healy was expelled from the Trotskyist movement in 1985.

He dismisses as degenerates the comrades who carried out that expulsion.

Healy was found to have used his leadership position in the WRP and the International Committee to brutally impose his sexual wishes on women comrades.

Damage

This he did systematically, repeatedly, promiscuously, brutally, destructively, without any regard for the emotional and physical damage which he inflicted on his victims.

North knows all this. Several of his British followers know it at first hand.

They reject our insistence that this behaviour of Healy's was absolutely intolerable in the revolutionary movement as it is in the working class as a whole.

It is a direct manifestation of the most reactionary forms of capitalist ideology, always expressed most unmistakably in the oppression of women.

In its conscious and contemptuous treatment of human beings - in this case, the flower of the working-class youth, those who had joined the Fourth International - as mere objects to be used and discarded, it comes close to the most extreme ideology of capitalism in its epoch of decay, fascism.

North slanders Patrick Slaughter as a 'fascist', but attacks me bitterly for having said that the outlook of Healy and of those who defended him (especially Vanessa Redgrave and her brother Corin), on these questions, was 'near-fascist'.

In a more recent article North has now stated publicly that he was against our 'premature' split with Healy-Redgrave.

This is no surprise. His cynical attack on 'middle-class ladies' and their 'love-lives' tells all.

He knows that comrades' very lives were at stake.

But let us take North's very next paragraph. He says:

'Slaughter... can play on their heart-strings by appearing before them as the wounded father, whose loving son has been subjected to such cruel abuse by the "inhuman" followers of North, who care

The morals of North and Hyland

The Case of Patrick Slaughter SON OF WRP SECRETARY CONVICTED ON CHARGES OF RACIST VIOLENCE

BY DAVID NORTH

On June 1, 1988, five men in the city of Leeds in Britain were found guilty of conspiring to commit acts of violence during football matches. In at least one case, the targets of the violence were black workers and youth. Among those convicted and subsequently sentenced to years imprisonment was Patrick Slaughter, the 23-year-old son of Cliff Slaughter, the present political secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

In assessing such cases, Marxists always warn workers that the conspiracy laws used by the capitalist state against racists and fascists today may be used against revolutionary workers tomorrow. Indeed, the state prosecution of right-wing groups is often little more than a trial run for the use of conspiracy laws on a far wider scale against the real enemies of the ruling class in the socialist and trade union movement.

It is necessary for us to warn readers against being provoked by them. They hope that their slanders - a substitute for politics - will bring about a physical confrontation. They will be disappointed."

Like the criminal who shouts, "Stop the Slaughter attempts to camouflage his own intentions by attributing them to his opponent. The wild claims which he now makes of ICP plans for physical confrontations are exposed by noting that the very individuals whose activities are cited as an example of menacing behavior, John Upton, is a discredited construction worker who has been confined to a wheelchair for years.

What, then, is really behind this sinister talk of physical confrontations? Unable to politically answer the exposure of his opportunistic politics by the ICP and the ICFI, Slaughter tries to use his son's case to create his own provocations against the Trotskyist movement. It is peculiar, to say the least, that the articles which have appeared in the Workers Press on the case of Patrick Slaughter have been devoted almost entirely to denouncing the ICP and the ICFI. No attempt has been made to provide a factual exposure of the alleged sickening comparison between Patrick Slaughter and Des Warren, has there even been a genuine appeal for working class support. Instead, it appears that the WRP and Slaughter are using this case for the exclusive purpose of attacking the ICP and the ICFI.

On the surface, it would appear that this kind of attack will not be very fruitful for the ICP and Slaughter. No politically conscious worker will hold against the ICP its hatred of a man like Patrick Slaughter. But the hysterical attack on the ICP is not addressed to the working class at all. Rather, Cliff Slaughter is addressing his appeal to the middle-class elements in the lumpen-proletariat who hate the workers' movement and are likely to feel sympathy for the elements of Patrick Slaughter. Slaughter himself is very far from being a proletarian. He is a middle-class individual who has served frequently in the armed forces and has been decorated for his services.



Patrick Slaughter

convicted on the basis of evidence gathered by police who, during a covert operation, infiltrated a racist gang called the Yorkshire Republican Army which allegedly planned to commit acts of violence during football matches. Slaughter, a law student whose only links to the workers' movement is through his father, was convicted on the basis of evidence gathered by police who, during a covert operation, infiltrated a racist gang called the Yorkshire Republican Army which allegedly planned to commit acts of violence during football matches. Slaughter, a law student whose only links to the workers' movement is through his father, was convicted on the basis of evidence gathered by police who, during a covert operation, infiltrated a racist gang called the Yorkshire Republican Army which allegedly planned to commit acts of violence during football matches.

However, in making such a warning, Marxists do not extend the slightest political sympathy to the fascists and the racists, nor do we call upon the working class to defend them. We point out to workers that such exemplary prosecutions of a handful of racist thugs like those in Leeds will do nothing in the long run to prevent the growth of a fascist movement. Therefore, we advise workers to fight the racists and fascists by relying on their own strength as a class, not by depending upon the institutions of the capitalist state.

The Workers Press distorts this basic revolutionary approach by writing that "It is a basic question of working class morality that questions of racism, alleged and real, are not dealt with by the state but within the working class itself."

What is the meaning of this little word "within"? Since when do Marxists consider racists part of the workers' movement who are to be fought from within? Racists and fascists should be fought by the workers' movement, not within it. In other words, workers should deal with trash like Brown and Slaughter by building defense guards that will acquaint their faces with the pavement and send them on their way.

Cliff Slaughter can shout his head off and denounce the ICFI and the ICP to his heart's content, but he won't persuade anyone except that Patrick Slaughter is the innocent victim of a frame-up.

It has been falsely reported, it would have been Patrick Slaughter's responsibility - and to take the stand, disassociate himself from elements like "Para" Brown, and refute the charges against him.

Clear

One or two things must be said loud and clear:

Without just such a false and artificial hardness, and such a false and mechanical version of the subordination of the individual to the needs of the working class and the revolutionary party, Healy's victims could not have been subjected to the violations and humiliations which befell them.

And secondly; Marxism and the communist movement, against all the corruptions of Stalinism and other reflections of bourgeois ideology, build upon and carry forward all the conquests of human culture which were made in the course of civilisation's progress.

Core

And this includes, at the very core, the struggle for the liberation of the individual from absolutism, from dogmatic authoritarianism, from religion, and for the freedom to create in the fields of art and science.

Without this, and an understanding of this by Marxist revolutionaries, no socialism.

Capitalism in its rise and early ascendancy was the mode of production, the mode of exploitation, which provided the basis for the greatest advances in all these fields.

But then, as in the whole history of class societies, these conquests could be the property of only a small section of the ruling classes and their representatives, enjoyed on the backs of millions of exploited workers and peasants.

But capitalism had the historical role of creating the great advances in the productivity of labour which make possible, now, the acquisition of all these gains, and their greatest development, by the whole people.

The heritage of progress - in art, science and forms of cultural intercourse (which

certainly include the relations between women and men, between parents and children, between all individuals) - must be rescued from the imperialist bourgeoisie by the working class in revolution, imposing its rule and building socialism.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the 'free development of each is the condition for the free development of all' (Communist Manifesto).

And if North wants to say that this quotation is torn out of context, because it refers only to the distant communist future, let him answer Trotsky, who wrote in his essay 'Tasks of Communist Education' (in Problems of Life):

Ideals

'The conception 'revolutionist' is permeated by the highest ideals and morals which we have taken over from the whole preceding epoch of cultural evolution.'

And he goes on to paint a portrait of the revolutionist of our day, the proletarian revolutionist, with the will to destroy the enemy and create the new society, to master the theory necessary to understand the concrete conditions of the revolution,

to free himself from superstition and religion, and so to 'concentrate all his passion' on the transformation of society.

This, and not the stupid and cynical brushing aside of the individual, the personality, is the approach of Marxism to the relation between the individual and the working class.

Abstract

Without this it is not possible to grasp the reality of North's repeated contemptuous references to our supposed concern with some abstract morality purportedly standing above classes and the class struggle.

North, in the name of supposedly proletarian, revolutionary hardness, dismisses all concern with individuals as in contradiction with the interests of the working class and the party.

For him, the interests of the class and the party, as interpreted by himself of course, justify the abuse and sacrifice of individuals (other individuals, that is), justify the attempted destruction of Patrick Slaughter and other individuals through the technique of the big lie.

Marxists do not embrace a supposed supra-class morality.

Every class society has its own morality,

The morals of North and Hyland

justifying the needs of its ruling class.

But we maintain without fear or favour that the objectives, the 'ends', of the working class, are objectives which correspond to the deepest needs of all struggling humanity.

All methods or 'means' are justified which truly bring nearer these objectives.

It is obvious, then, that not any methods are justifiable, defensible, but only those that actually correspond to our socialist ends.

That is the test of North's foul methods of slander. And that test they fail.

Why then do he and his followers assume so readily that such repulsive methods are beyond criticism?

Why do they take on the appearance of sectarian religious zealots, and stand outside our meetings as if wearing the mantle of infallibility, chanting the words of the master?

Enlighten

How can it be that a dozen followers of North in the German Federal Republic think it useful, nay historically imperative, to enlighten workers in a Ruhr factory with the translation of a Detroit article on a Leeds football supporter?

I believe that the best clue so far to this mystery has now been given to us by North himself.

In a new article against the WRP, ('The Bulletin', 10 February), North has at last said something about Marxism.

Another comrade, Cyril Smith, will analyse North's discoveries at greater length in another article, but I must say here and now that North has revealed for us the theoretical source of his political behaviour and that of his cult followers in the HVLI.

Apologies, but I must quote the whole opening paragraph of North's new article. Here is madness explained:

Astonishing

'The scientific character of historical materialism finds its most profound verification in its capacity to anticipate not only the future course of the class struggle in general, but also to plot with astonishing precision (!) the trajectory of the political parties and tendencies through which the interests of classes and even fractions of classes assert themselves.

'Nor is it beyond the power of Marxism to predict the political evolution of those key individuals who, often without realising it themselves, articulate with the necessary consistency - or inconsistency - the outlook of definite social forces.'

This is not Marxism, not historical materialism, but some sort of soothsaying. I am the law and the prophets, saith the Lord David North.

I plot (!) with astonishing precision the future! I have the power, because of my magic talisman, Marxism, to predict (!) the inconsistencies of the evolution of individuals!

This is called fortune-telling, not Marxism.

But North's followers believe this stuff is good for politics!

As a Mr. Steve Long, writing in the paper of the HVLI, says: 'the working class must accept (!) the policies of his party.'

Well, of course. I return to the question of what means are justified in the fight for socialist ends.

It stands to reason (if that is the right expression) that if North has decided with astonishing scientific precision the political future, and has predicted scientifically the evolution of individuals, then what must be done follows unquestionably from the mouth of North.

Everything in the world is a confirmation, sorry, verification, of the Marxist gospel according to Saint David.

In reality, questions of strategy and tactics of the working class and its party depend upon the analysis of the economic, social and political forces at work in the class struggle as a whole, including the practice and force of the working class and of the revolutionary movement themselves, and more directly upon perspectives based on this analysis.

Marxists organised in the revolutionary party move towards a more accurate understanding through approximations made in their practice and in the theoretical working over of that practice.

Marxist

This work as Marxist revolutionaries has nothing to do with 'predictions' and 'plotting' with 'astonishing precision'.

Marxists do not at all think that the means to be employed flow naturally and automatically from the predictions of an infallible leader and his spurious 'Marxism'.

That was characteristic of Stalinism and its distortion of Marxism, and it is this distortion that North inherits, as Healy did.

This infallibility, this gross caricature of Marxism, when personified by Stalin, supported a mentality in the members of Stalinist parties which supported, or at best tolerated, the moral and political murder, then the physical destruction, of thousands upon thousands of communists.

In the person of Healy, it was used to legitimate the abominations which were revealed in 1985.

It is not the only source of these crimes, but it is an important theoretical source, just as it is the theoretical source of the religious enthusiasm with which North's followers set about their work of destruction.

That is the real place of North and his clique in the historical struggle between Stalinism and Trotskyism.

The WRP and the Preparatory Committee are fighting for the continuity of Marxism, of Trotskyism.

The enemies of that continuity are Stalinism and all its revisionist agencies in the Trotskyist movement, beginning with

Pablo-Mandel and continuing through Healy and North.

I cannot do better at this point than quote from Trotsky's work, 'Their Morals and Ours', on the question of ends and means:

'Permissible and obligatory are those and only those means which unite the revolutionary proletariat, fill their hearts with irreconcilable hostility to oppression, teach them contempt for official morality and its democratic echoers, imbue them with consciousness of their own historic mission, raise their courage and spirit of self-sacrifice in the struggle.

'Precisely from this it flows that not all means are permissible.

'When we say that the end justifies the means, then for us the conclusion follows that the great revolutionary end spurns those base means and ways which set one part of the working class against other parts, or attempt to make the masses happy without their participation; or lower the faith of the masses in themselves and their organisation, replacing it by worship for the "leaders".'

Rejects

'Primarily and irreconcilably, revolutionary morality rejects servility in relation to the bourgeoisie and haughtiness in relation to the toilers, that is, those characteristics in which petty-bourgeois pedants and moralists are steeped.

'These criteria do not, of course, give a ready answer to the question as to what is permissible and what is not permissible in each separate case. There can be no such automatic answers.

'Problems of revolutionary morality are fused with the problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics.

'The living experience of the movement under the clarification of theory provides the correct answer to these problems.'

Trotsky, as we see, was a little more modest than North, with his 'astonishing precision' and his 'predictions'.

Poisonous

I fear that what I have written will offer no comfort to all those who might have hoped for the chance to hear, read and talk political sense without having to put up with the mountains of poisonous rubbish issuing from North and company. They are in orbit.

No doubt, then, the Hyland (Very) Light Infantry will continue to drill and learn orders by heart in its suburban barracks, emerging from time to time to fire with astonishing precision its astonishing verbal volleys.

It's no good complaining about it. The only thing is to learn from these strange happenings, which do after all have an explanation, and to act accordingly.

Make no mistake, these liars with a divine mission and the inspiration of a prophet are dangerous to the working class, and should be treated as such.

RIGHT-WING TERROR

The original leaders of the 1971 rising were from the Stalinist organisation; after the Sino-Soviet split a Maoist party had been formed, and some of the original leaders of the JVP had been educated first in Moscow, and then in the ranks of the Maoist party.

It was difficult to ascertain their politics in 1971: they were functioning secretly.

Plantations

They talked about 'Indian expansionism'. They also made it clear they were against the foreign-owned plantations - but they didn't have much to say about the plantation workers.

They advocated uprooting the tea, rubber, etc. - and this had the unspoken implication of sending the plantation workers, most of whom were Tamils, away. So the roots of their extreme Sinhala chauvinism were there even at that time.

But in 1971 there was no sign of this sort of chauvinism on the surface.

Jail

There were 10,000 of them in jail, and as a lawyer I defended many of their cases. They asked for books on Marxism, and they got them - but it's obvious that they never learned.

When Jayawardene came to power in 1978, he held secret negotiations with leaders of the JVP as a result of which many of them were released from jail. They began to hold huge meetings, the likes of which I hadn't seen since seeing Gandhi's meetings in India.

They had uniforms and sticks, although no guns. At that time we

still referred to them as 'left' - they appeared as very devoted petty-bourgeois youth, with deep emotions.

It was at this time, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, that they started attacking the 'traditional' left as traitors - (and they were indeed traitors). In 1980, for example, there was a major strike, and the JVP attacked the strike leaders while the strike was in progress. The strike ended with Jayawardene sacking 50,000 workers.

In 1983 the JVP was made illegal. Then a qualitative change took place in their organisation. The war against the Tamils began, and they issued leaflets saying, 'make us legal, and we will go and fight the Tamils.'

Deal

The deal struck between Jayawardene and Gandhi opened a period of deep antagonism between the government and the JVP. At first Mrs Bandaranaike lined up with JVP against the government; but soon they went far further than she did, and began an armed campaign against the government.

A number of leading MPs were killed, and in an attack on parliament that was generally regarded as an 'inside job', a minister and a number of others were killed. The armed struggle of the JVP against the government raged throughout 1988. But then they turned against the left, whom they accused of betrayal. In a few months they had killed about 80 members of the unions, the LSSP, the 'Militant' group, and the Communist Party.

Today the death toll of left-wingers stands at about 150. Although the

Revolutionary Workers Party, is a small group, they came to us and said that so far they had nothing against us, but that if we carried out political work the penalty was death.

The government was compelled to call elections. The main contestants were Jayawardene's UNP, Mrs Bandaranaike's party, and a popular-front type alliance - called the 'United Socialist Alliance' - composed of the LSSP, Communist Party, 'Militant' group, and a small bourgeois party led by Mrs Bandaranaike's nephew. We had to consider the situation carefully. It would have been very important for the working class to intervene in this election, and for Jayawardene to be thrown out. But we decided we could not call on workers to vote for this alliance.

Alliance

None of these people had protested when the Tamils were being killed. None of them had protested when the Indian army came. Now they had made an alliance with a bourgeois party. We were not prepared to call on people to vote for them.

In the election the JVP called on people not to go to the polls. They attacked the candidates not only from the government party but from the United Socialist Alliance too.

Then in the last week of the election campaign, the JVP lifted their 'ban' on the elections - but most people were frightened to vote.

The government candidates got in, even in areas where they had little support.

The election was, however, won by

Mrs Bandaranaike. Since her election it has already become clear that the 'left' is continuing to betray. They have entered into talks with her.

When N. M. Perera of the LSSP died, the body was given over to the government for burial in Independence Square where only members of the government are allowed.

When we talk about Marxism we are talking a different language from all these people. The Sri Lankan newspapers call the JVP 'Marxist' - but they are neo-fascist. They will remain the enemies of the working class and the left for a long time.

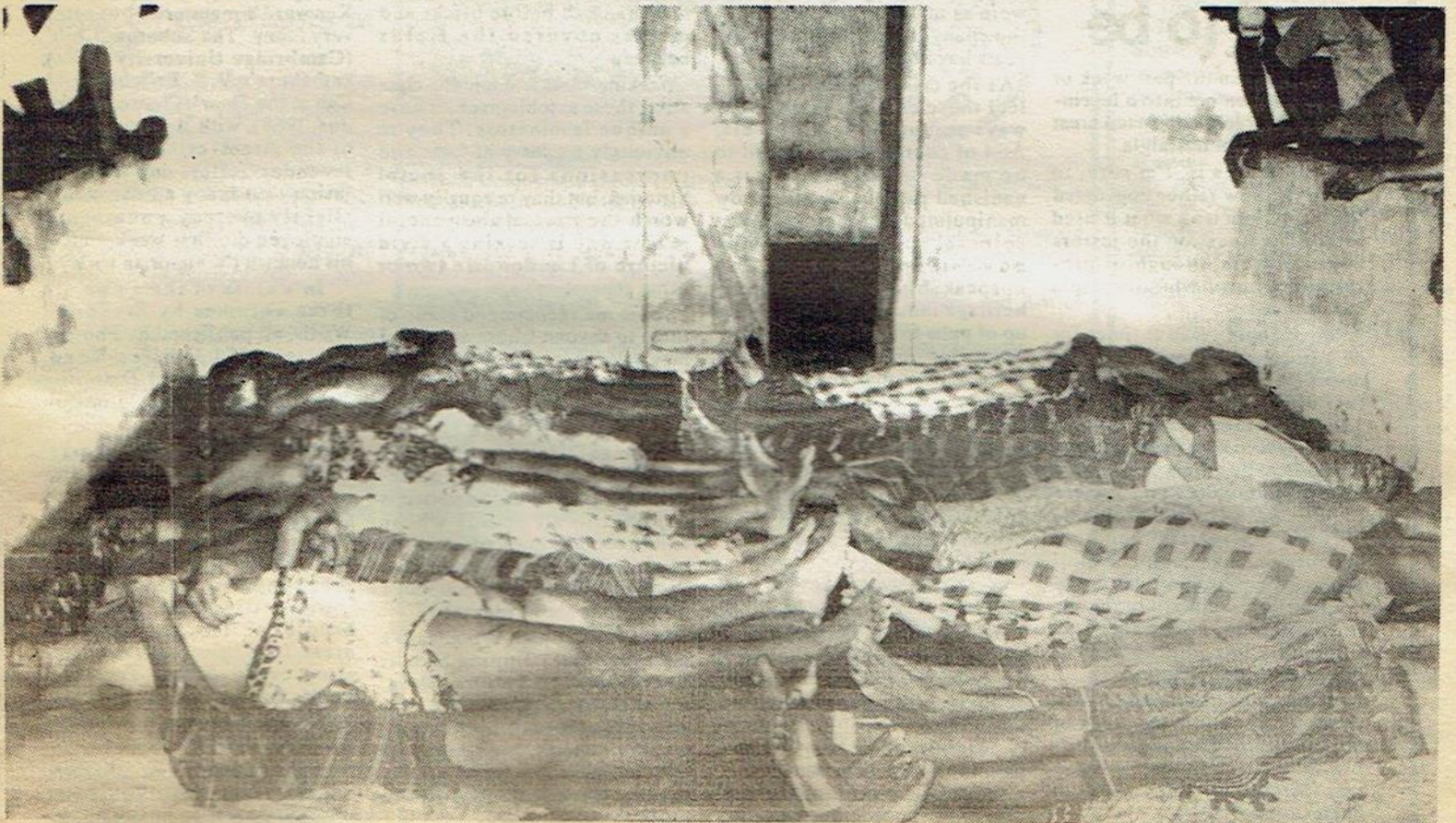
The need is for a united front. It is not a question of writing newspaper articles denouncing the JVP or appealing to it. It is a matter of the entire labour movement mobilising, arms in hand, to defend itself from the JVP.

But in the elections, the 'left' parties got armed bodyguards from the police - not of their own.

Denouncing

The Revolutionary Communist League, affiliated to the 'International Committee' of Dave North, published a series of articles in their paper denouncing the JVP, the character of which I believe left their comrades exposed. Two of their comrades were killed by the JVP during its anti-left pogroms.

The Revolutionary Communist League has also raised in their paper the call for a united front, and I was extremely glad to see this. But when we approached them to discuss the matter, they would not talk to us. A united front is still needed.



The government organised pogroms against the Tamils which reached their height in 1983

LETTERS

Write to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London E9W 7QS

Sinn Fein and socialism

IN his letter (4 March) Leabras MacCaolite is very much in favour of the policies of Sinn Fein and its armed section, the Provisional IRA.

Sinn Fein wants: (1) The removal of British forces from the north of Ireland; (2) The British government to renounce its claim to the north of Ireland; (3) The unification of Ireland in a 32-county republic. Sinn Fein believes that if these things were achieved, then everything in the garden would be rosy. I beg to differ! James Connolly wrote in January 1897:

'If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you.

'She would rule you through her finances, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country.'

This still applies today. Although the 26-county republic is well established, because its system is still capitalist then what Connolly said regarding English domination without an army is even more

relevant today than when he wrote.

Connolly, one of Ireland's greatest patriots, was adamant that Ireland's problems could only be solved by socialism.

We who are carrying on the struggle for a socialist Ireland say that, while we must defend the right of Sinn Fein or any other group to conduct an armed struggle against British imperialism, we would question certain aspects of the struggle.

Unfortunately for the working class, Sinn Fein never calls for a Socialist Republic. It hasn't got socialism on its agenda.

For the people of Ireland there is no future in any vision of a united Ireland that does not include the overthrow of the capitalist system.

For centuries every generation in Ireland has witnessed an attempt to throw off English domination. The main forces in the struggle have been the rural poor and the city workers.

But, with notable exceptions, their leaders have consistently excluded their class interest from the aims to be achieved. They sought instead to woo the Irish bourgeoisie to the nationalist cause.

The leaders have always emphasised a united national movement, which ignored the class interests of the Irish working class. MacCaolite's statement

about 'political birth control' is contemptible. But I agree 100 per cent with his statement that 'there is no such thing as a bloodless revolution, every revolution has its price'.

Of course all revolutions are bloody and have their price - but revolutions are essentially class struggles, and can be successful only when a class moves together to achieve victory. Isolated segments of society cannot possibly carry through a successful revolution. They must have the active support of the working class, without which all revolutions are doomed to failure.

The job in hand is to build a revolutionary socialist party that commands the support of the working class and therefore can lead the people to victory over their capitalist oppressors. All efforts must be concentrated towards this end!

J. Clark
Coleraine Co.

Ends and means

ROGER COTTRELL'S letter (25 March) on Irish republicanism did not take the discussion forward.

A. McIntyre (11 March) put his finger on an important problem: 'The decision by your party to defend the right of the IRA to fight "in whatever way it sees fit" may leave you open to the accusation of "tailism". If the IRA were to resort to their campaign of sectarian warfare which it waged under the

truce leadership of 1974-1976 would you still defend that right?'

Roger Cottrell says McIntyre 'ignores... that we are organising in the oppressor nation', which necessitates winning workers to support 'republican violence against Britain'.

What sort of answer is that? McIntyre isn't disputing WRP defence (not 'support') of 'republican violence against Britain'. He asked: what about violence not 'against Britain' but against protestants in 'sectarian warfare'?

Such issues, he said, were 'of such complexity, both morally and politically, that it appears to be an abdication of your revolutionary responsibility to make the point as you do'. This extremely important point - also raised by Irish Trotskyist comrades - cannot be brushed aside.

There is a real contradiction. We must defend the right of the IRA, and all those fighting imperialism, to fight imperialism in whatever way they see fit. But we must also be able to judge if and when a fight against imperialism ceases to be against imperialism.

Comrade Samarakoddy gives an example in this issue (pages 4-5): Sri Lankan Trotskyists' refusal to defend the right of Tamil fighters to kill innocent Sinhalese.

Our ends determine our means, but these ends do not license anyone claiming to be a revolutionary to use any means at all.

S. Pirani
WRP

Personal Column

Peter Fryer

Not what it used to be

MY reading, in the past week or two, has taken me into a fascinating and largely uncharted area: the literature of nostalgia.

To start thus is, I'm sure, to invite the now rather dog-cared jest: nostalgia isn't what it used to be. The question the jesters never address, though, is precisely how and why nostalgia has changed.

Many people yearn at times for an unrecoverable past. Political nostalgia seems to have been in full blast as long ago as 1848, judging by the remarks of Marx and Engels in a nowadays little-read section of their 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', where they describe what they call 'feudal Socialism' as 'half lamentation, half lampoon; half echo of the past, half menace of the future;... always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history'.

During the present century there has been an upsurge of social nostalgia, as people's everyday lives have been transformed by that 'march of modern history'.

The massive changes in social

life brought about by early capitalism, so vividly summed up by Marx and Engels in 1848, were as nothing compared with the changes the subsequent 141 years have brought.

As the crisis deepens, people feel these changes in different ways and at different levels. And of course there's profit to be made out of regret for a vanished past, an emotion now manipulated commercially on a colossal scale: in television advertisements; in the unspeakably tatty and phoney heritage industry; in the tarting up of pubs to look 'olde-worlde' (usually with a jarringly anachronistic jumble of styles).

Come to that, the brewers have even found a way to cash in on people's nostalgia for old-fashioned beer, by marketing 'real ale' that's every bit as bland and characterless as the gnat's piss it's supposed to be an improvement on.

That's the negative side. But there's a positive side, too. The social changes in Britain, particularly those since World War I, have spawned a large literature of nostalgia, in which writers in the evening of their lives lovingly describe what the world was like when they were young.

The particular branch of this literature I've been investigating comprises autobiographies by

Londoners, many of them born in suburbs that still retained much of the village character they had had before bricks and mortar covered the fields between.

Working-class and middle-class alike, these autobiographies have a unique fascination. They're obviously a quarry of facts and impressions for the social historian; but they're equally well worth the time of the general reader who is seeking a vivid picture of London life two or three generations ago.

So let me recommend some of them to anyone whose appetite I may have succeeded in whetting.

There's Richard Church's 'Over the Bridge' (Heinemann, 1955) and its sequel 'The Golden Sovereign' (Heinemann, 1957), with its casually dropped observation that 'fear of the police is dormant in all people whose childhood has been spent in the streets of large cities' ('fear' isn't how I myself would put it, but I know just what he means).

There's Kathleen Woodward's unforgettable 'Jipping Street: Childhood in a London Slum' (first published in 1928 and recently reissued by Virago), which has some good pages on how workers in a Bermondsey factory were recruited to the union.

There's the snobbish but

informative 'Back Numbers' (Hutchinson, 1954), by W. MacQueen-Pope; there's James Kenward's mannered but often very funny 'The Suburban Child' (Cambridge University Press); and there's V. S. Pritchett's 'A Cab at the Door' (Chatto & Windus, 1968), with its recollection of the street-cries of London lavender-sellers and its revelation that many a boss would slightly overpay a new young employee the first week, to test his honesty ('a Victorian trick').

In a class of their own are three volumes by Frederick Willis, all published by Phoenix House: '101 Jubilee Road' (1948), 'Peace and Dripping Toast' (1950), and 'London General' (1953).

Willis is good on 'mudlarks' (children diving for halfpennies in the Thames mud); on 'extra casuals' (dockers jostling each other like animals for a day's work); on how history and geography were taught at school ('the Indian can live on a handful of rice a day'); and on dress, food prices, sweat shops, slang, catch-phrases, and boys' books and periodicals. Plus a revealing story about the Labour traitor Ramsay MacDonald.

If you can find one of these books at your local library you are guaranteed an entertaining, and nostalgic, couple of hours.

Sinn Fein and Stalinism

THE letters from Leabras MacCaoilite (4 and 18 March) and from a Republican political prisoner (11 and 18 March) represent different and important tendencies within Republican thinking.

In many ways Leabras MacCaoilite's views are a throw-back to the 'physical force' men who have predominated in the IRA at various times and whose influence waned after the 1956-1962 guerrilla campaign on the border.

Their hallmark was always a lack of a social policy and a belief that physical force was the sole means of settling the fight for independence.

MacCaoilite's abusive tone and sensitivity to criticism of the Sinn Fein leadership are combined with an exaltation of those 'who are actually fighting and not talking the revolution' (18 March). These are the ones, he says, who have the 'correct political values'.

In the tradition of Pearce's 'blood sacrifice', he believes that a spontaneous movement to drive out British imperialism can be built on the personal bravery and sacrifice of the IRA youth.

The courage of the nationalist youth, driven into the fight against the forces of the state, is not in question, and it is the duty of socialists to fight for their unconditional defence inside the international working-class movement.

What is in question, however, is whether the present policies and leadership of the Provisionals can attain their declared aims of independence and socialism and whether the IRA's military tactics represent an historically outmoded form of struggle.

Simon Pirani (4 March) has already answered the amateurish but dangerous conception of socialism as 'the theory that the

in the arena of combining class struggle with the pursuit of national freedom.

'That being the case then Republicans have to recognise that just as the struggle has undergone a considerable change so too must their analysis of it.'

'They must also see that we can no longer rely on superficial or ill-worked out solutions to issues.'

The writer goes on to state that people will continue to make sacrifices in support of the battle for national independence 'if that same movement is in the forefront of the battle for socialism'.

And it is in this context that the role of the Adams leadership must be examined. It is not just that it is committed to the stage-ist theory and its inherent policy of alliances with bourgeois nationalism; it is the manner in which it subordinates the battle for socialism in these alliances.

In the pamphlet 'Signposts to Independence and Socialism', published by Sinn Fein in October 1988, Adams baldly states that the adoption of a policy of Irish reunification as a national demand will 'transcend all party political differences'. Even more important are his cynical attacks on any open advancing of socialist ideas by Sinn Fein.

He criticises the notion that the Republican movement should style itself 'Socialist Republican'

'In the coming struggles it is possible to win sections of the protestant working class to revolutionary socialism.'

community as a whole should have political and therefore economic control of its own destiny'.

But, to be fair to Leabras MacCaoilite, he is echoing the views of the Sinn Fein leadership in so far as they have attempted to clarify their understanding of socialism. Belfast Sinn Fein councillor Martin O'Muilleoir explained ('An Phoblacht/-Republican News', 30 June 1988):

'Sinn Fein's democratic socialism is more a case of "fair play for all" than Marxism, more a call for social justice than a battle cry for workers' control.'

This view is being challenged. More and more Republicans are trying to assess the present stage of the struggle inside a scientific analysis of the social and economic forces at work in Ireland.

The theoretical conflict was highlighted in an article from a political prisoner in the December 1987 issue of the Sinn Fein internal magazine 'Iris Bheag'.

He explains that 'the struggle has broken out of the republican/nationalist framework and is now

because he is afraid that this would 'imply that there was no place in it for non-socialist Republicans'.

This, he explains, would 'narrow the potential support-base of the Republican movement' and allow the leaders of Fianna Fail and the SDLP to claim that what the Republicans are offering is some foreign importation called 'socialism'.

Adams, the opportunist, continues: 'If socialism is what is offered as an alternative it cannot have the same popular appeal and will leave the leadership of these sham Republican parties [Fianna Fail and the SDLP] politically unscathed'.

It is on this basis that Adams sees the campaign for a broad anti-imperialist movement. The fight for the independence of the working class in struggle will not be promoted, because it 'cannot have the same popular appeal'.

It certainly will not have any appeal to Kevin Boland, one of the signatories to the letter announcing the first meeting to discuss the campaign. Boland, a former minister in Fianna Fail regimes, is a

LETTER FROM IRELAND

BY JOHN STEELE

reactionary capitalist with unconcealed anti-socialist views.

The reformist conception of socialism leads the Sinn Fein leadership into open class collaboration with the 26-county government.

Thus Philip Flynn, Sinn Fein member and general secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union, was main architect of the Programme for National Recovery, the deal with the trade union movement which allowed Haughey savagely to attack the working class with his spending cuts.

Sinn Fein policies are designed to prevent the development of revolutionary working-class leadership and, as such, are carbon copies of the tactics of Stalinism, whose influence is very real.

The Open Letter of the Communist Party of Ireland to the Provisionals (June 1987) promised joint support in an unarmed mass anti-imperialist movement, and this is of course the very slogan that Adams has now adopted (AP/RN 9 March).

In an amazing insult to their own history, the latest edition of 'Iris' (November 1988), the Republican magazine, printed a feature by the Stalinist founder member of the Connolly Association, Anthony Coughlan.

This man joined the Republican movement in the 1960s and, along with Roy Johnston, was responsible for putting Republicanism in a strait-jacket of reformism.

The adoption of policies advocating that the Stormont regime could be democratised in peaceful alliances with 'progressives' disarmed the nationalist community and left them virtually defenceless before the attacks by RUC B Specials and armed loyalists in August 1969.

The Provisionals were formed in violent protest at the politics of Coughlan. But, no doubt as justification for the current policy of the broad anti-imperialist alliance, Coughlan is given free rein to rehash his Popular Front views and blame the demise of the Civil Rights Campaign on those who 'put forward socialist demands which might be desirable in themselves but were unachievable in the six counties context, thus causing divisions among those who could otherwise unite on what was achievable'.

Those members of Sinn Fein who believe that the fight for socialism is central to the fight for national independence have a duty - not only to their fellow-members, but

to the whole Irish working class - to raise the issue of revolutionary socialism in order to expose the Adams leadership.

The references to sectarianism and the protestant working class by the Republican prisoner A. McIntyre (11 March) pinpoint an area of debate that cannot be ignored by those involved in fighting imperialism in Ireland.

Because large numbers of protestants have never allied themselves to the Republican cause A. McIntyre dismisses them, but he fails to recognise the potential for change in the course of the class struggle.

The reformist and Stalinist leaders have always confined industrial struggles within the levels of economic demands, and there has never existed in Ireland a revolutionary Marxist party which has consistently fought to relate the social and industrial problems of the protestant working class to the fight against imperialism.

Class-conscious protestants will never be won to the vision of a united capitalist Ireland, and indeed their fears of this situation are well grounded.

Those occasions where the fight against capitalism and imperialism have been combined have seen a response from sections of the advanced protestant working class, particularly the events leading up to the Republican Congress of 1934 when the Congress manifesto explained:

'We believe that Republic of a united Ireland will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on its way.'

That Congress was wrecked by the Stalinists, and they similarly confuse the class issues of today when they present the resistance to the privatisation of shipyard and aircraft factories as 'community' issues and attack proposals for independent working-class action such as workers' occupation.

As the economic crisis deepens, the material base for protestant privilege is being diminished. The Anglo-Irish Agreement shows that Britain cannot continue to rule in the old way.

In the coming struggles it is possible to win sections of the protestant working class to revolutionary socialism.

But those in the Republican movement professing Marxism must recognise their responsibilities and apply themselves to the fight to combine all working-class struggles in the march towards the Irish Workers' State.

News briefs . . .

Labour's thought police

LIVERPOOL Broadgreen's AGM has been suspended while seven members' alleged association with 'Militant' is investigated.

Glasgow Pollok's Young Socialist branch in Glasgow, along with the north Pollok branch, has been suspended, including branch secretary Tommy Sheridan.

Thirteen other members are under investigation, including Bob Wylie, who says the only evidence against him was that he had booked a hall for a public meeting:

'Even in Gorbachev's Russia the opposition is allowed to have public meetings without facing the ideological firing squad. The Labour Party is now controlled by the thought police.'

£10 million swindler

FOR his services to the Tories, including speech-writing for Thatcher, the late Hugh Simmonds, a solicitor, was awarded the CBE.

Law Society investigators have found out, soon after Simmonds's committed suicide, that he had embezzled the funds of nearly 500 clients.

The amount claimed in compensation could be as much as £10 million, involving mortgages, investments, property, and gambling.

Right of silence

LEGAL and civil liberties organisations have launched a campaign to fight Tory attempts to abolish the accused's right of silence in England and Wales.

The groups include the Law Centre Federation, National Association of Probation Officers, Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, and National Council for Civil Liberties.

Professor Michael Zander, of the London School of Economics, said abolition would lead to undue pressure on suspects and an increase in false confessions.

The campaign coincides with the publication by the Civil Liberties Trust of a book called 'Right of Silence', recommending that this right be given statutory protection.

Dangerous Gatwick

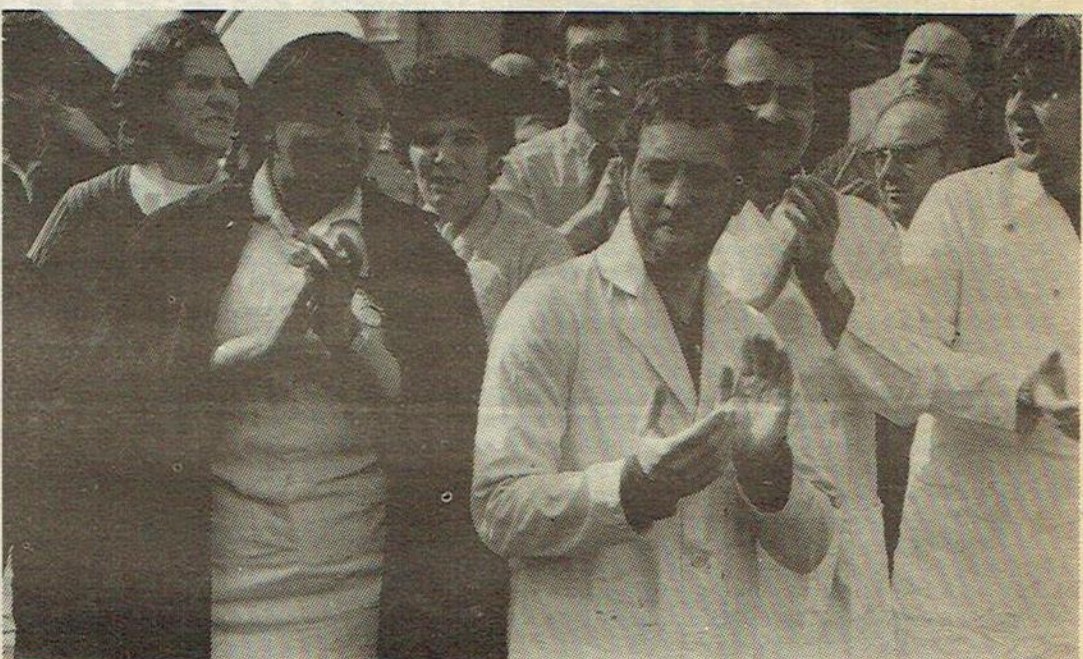
BRITISH Airways senior staff claim Gatwick Airport is now a thousand times more dangerous than almost any other airport.

Too many aircraft have to land on a single runway, which at 10,300ft is too short for fully laden jumbo jets.

In February 1988 a Boeing 747 developed engine trouble and scraped treetops before landing safely.

Two options for a second runway can save the village of Charlwood, to the north. Either build south over the A23 (the road could be sunk underneath in a tunnel as at Chicago and Amsterdam airports) or at an angle from the existing runway's western end.

MORE WRITS BY TIRED DOCTORS?



BY SIMON COOK

THE junior doctor at London's University College Hospital who is suing his employers over excessive hours is hoping to spark off a wave of similar legal action across the country.

Dr Chris Johnstone, a 26-year-old house officer, made legal history by serving a writ on Bloomsbury District Health Authority for endangering his health by expecting him to work a 120-hour week.

He cares for 60 women on the obstetrics ward at UCH, and declared himself 'knackered' when he came off a 50-hour shift at the weekend.

He is asking for an injunction to stop the authority requiring him to work more than 72 hours a week. The average week

worked by junior doctors in Britain's hospitals is 86 hours.

Long hours are relied on by health authorities under intense government pressure to cut costs. Junior doctors are paid overtime at a third of their normal rate of pay, which works out a lot cheaper than hiring extra staff.

Dr Sam Everington, who is leading the campaign, says he wants to see other doctors taking out writs. It's very easy to do, he says, and costs only £60.

'It would show the depth of feeling through the profession and would really put the cat among the pigeons', he adds.

Meanwhile Wexham Park Hospital in Slough plans to convert eight NHS beds to private patients' use, and hopes this will bring in £50,000 a year.

Management says it would like to use the beds for NHS work, but hasn't enough money to do so.

OIL BOSSES IN A MESS

BY CHRIS STEVENS

HAMPERED by lack of proper equipment, by bad organisation, and by 70mph winds, Exxon tried without success this week to clean up North America's worst-ever oil spill.

As Exxon's president fumblingly admitted 'We've got a mess on our hands', it was revealed that the captain of the tanker which ran aground in Prince William Sound, Alaska, had a long history of drinking problems.

'The clean-up is not proceeding well - believe me, that is an understatement', confessed Mr Frank Iarossi. 'That slick is moving like it's on a superhighway.'

More than 10 million gallons of crude oil have contaminated over 100 square miles of the bay, on Alaska's south coast.

Exxon have now admitted that the tanker's captain, Joseph Hazlewood, has twice been convicted of drinking offences in the past five years, and has had his driving licence suspended.

When the tanker struck two charted reefs while moving out of harbour in darkness, it was being piloted illegally by the third mate. The captain was in his cabin.

Another poll tax manoeuvre

BY PETE COGRAM

THE government intends to create and use all possible sources of information in compiling poll tax registers.

Latest example is a demand by Medina District Council's poll tax officers for 'restricted' lists of school students' parents, compiled by Isle of Wight local education authority under the 1988 Education Act.

These new parents' lists have been prepared for the school opt-out scheme, and now contain fuller details of all parents and guardians, including divorcees and one-parent families.

The education department had previously given assurances that

these lists would only be used for education purposes. Now the Department of the Environment has overriding powers to obtain the information.

This government manoeuvre has been presented as a dispute between two government departments. But the Democrat-controlled local education authority have expressed 'concern' over the encroachment on parents' privacy and are testing the legality of this move.

Poll tax registrars' use of parent lists is fully consistent with existing powers to demand personal data from such sources as the electoral roll, library records, gas and electricity suppliers, and social work files.