

GORBACHEV, THATCHER IN NAMIBIA MINEFIELD

AMONG the forces now striving desperately to salvage the 'peace' settlement in Namibia are assembled all the enemies of the international working class.

The deal emerged from the Gorbachev-Reagan summit, along with the plan to end the struggle for Palestinian freedom.

Cuban troops, financed by the Soviet bureaucracy, would be pulled out of Angola, allowing the South African invaders to get out of a desperate military situation there. In return, the South Africans promised to allow what was known as 'independence' to Namibia - the former German South-West Africa - which they have exploited as a colony for seventy years.

While the Stalinists damp down the fight against the apartheid state itself, Soviet spokesmen are now explaining the need for 'stability' in Southern Africa, and the possibility of peaceful transition to a democratic South Africa.

The Namibia settlement was to be supervised by the United Nations, which would send troops to see fair play. Elections would be held later this year, to set up an independent government.

The People's Liberation Army of Namibia, the forces of SWAPO, which had been fighting for decades against South African domination, would be held outside the country. South African soldiers who have fought in Namibia were to have votes in the election, even after they had gone home. In effect, the elections would be held under continued apartheid occupation.

When the agreement was supposed to come into operation last Sunday, representatives of the Gorbachev leadership were in the region, in direct discussions with the Botha racists. At the same time, Thatcher was already on the spot.

She spent a large part of the previous week saying that she would not visit the apartheid state, unless Nelson Mandela was released. But she was right there in Windhoek when the deal was in danger, and so was Pik Botha, apartheid foreign minister.

Together, they got United Nations agreement that South African forces would be allowed to resume operations against SWAPO fighters.

She had spent the previous few days enjoying the hospitality of the people of Zimbabwe. Mugabe and his friends had obscenely welcomed 'comrade Thatcher' to the country which had fought so long and so determinedly for

BY CYRIL SMITH

freedom from British imperialist rule.

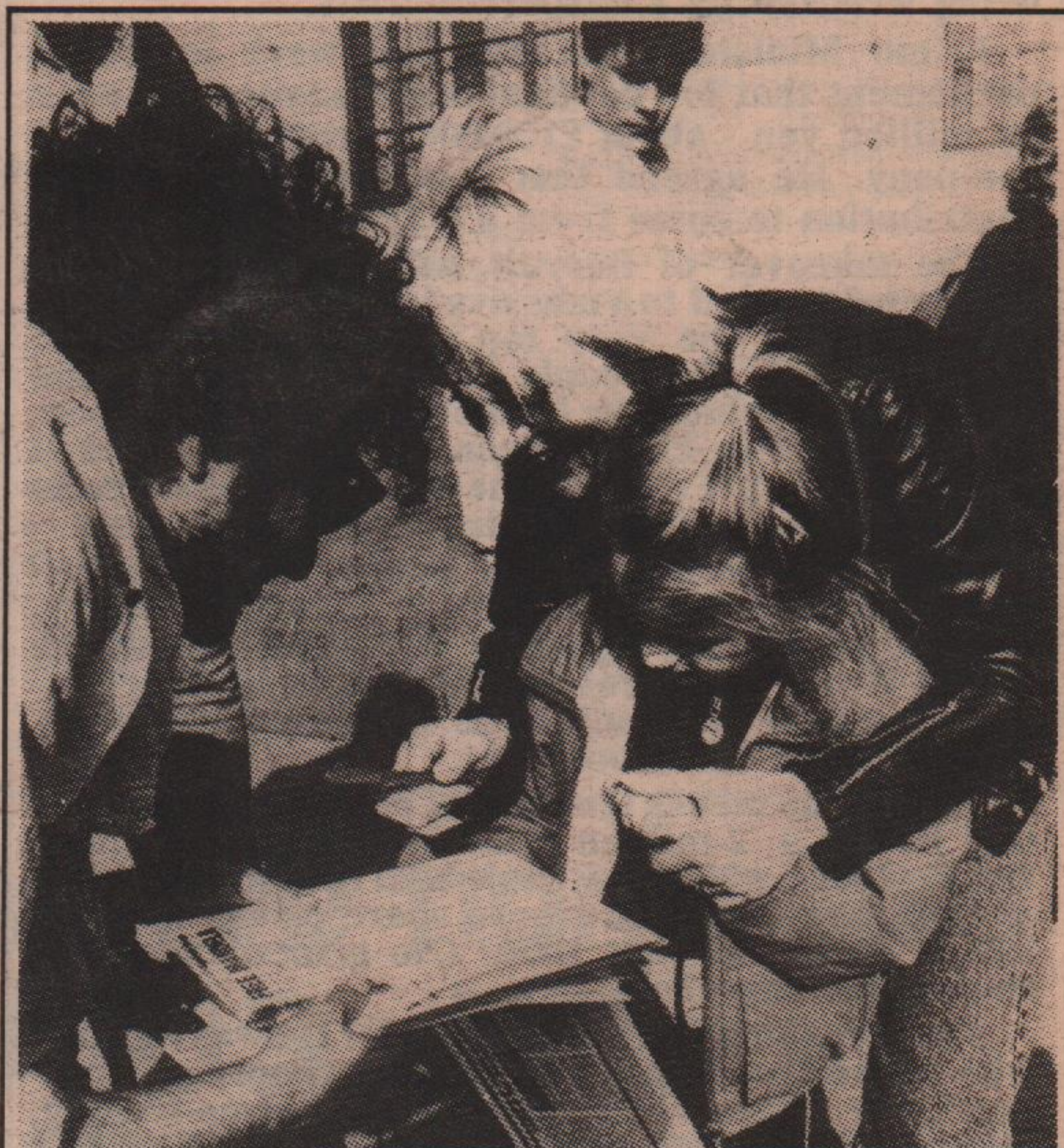
With sponsors like these - US and British imperialism, the Stalinist bureaucracy, African nationalist leaders, the United Nations - how could this plan to smother the fight against apartheid fail? Its backers had everything under control - except the actual power of the struggle itself. Whatever the intentions of the SWAPO leaders, they could not keep this movement in check.

Inside South Africa, the African National Congress has been pushed towards negotiations with the regime, under the influence of the South African Communist Party. Their line was that a democratic South Africa would one day grant freedom to Namibia: they were always careful to avoid the demand for immediate self-determination.

But SWAPO had been achieving military successes against the racist occupying forces. Their leaders, while they had welcomed the promise of negotiated independence, felt confident of victory. Under a provision left vague in the agreement, they sent their men from Angola to camps inside Namibia. Thus the explosion of renewed fighting, just on the eve of the deal, is not surprising.

The lessons for the world-wide struggle against imperialism are vital. Stalinism under Gorbachev, true to its tradition of co-existence with imperialism, is engaged in its deadliest treachery yet, both in Southern Africa and in Palestine.

But this betrayal takes its most open form, just at the time when



A young supporter signs a petition on last Saturday's rally for the release of Moses Mayekiso. The rally was one of those held every month by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group for the Alexandra Five.

both imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy face enormous problems. As the elections in the Soviet Union demonstrated, the Soviet working class is in the process of breaking free of bureaucratic control. A global financial crisis threatens the very fabric of world capitalism.

Southern Africa itself is shaken by this crisis, as the powerful South African working class continues to battle with capitalism and its racist state.

What is being prepared today

in southern Africa is the socialist revolution.

And even the combination of imperialist politicians, Stalinist bureaucrats and nationalist bourgeois leaders will not be strong enough to halt it.

What is lacking is a leadership within the working class, which can arm the struggle with a real understanding of the treacherous nature of Stalinism. That is the task of Trotskyists in southern Africa, as part of the Fourth International.

Mayekiso Trial

IN a startling development, treason charges have been dropped against Moses Mayekiso and the four others charged with him for their part in organising the resistance of the working class in the South African township of Alexandra.

The prosecution counsel in the case were reprimanded by the

judge for refusing to sum up at the end of the presentation of their case - they had said that it should go without saying that their case was proved.

They then summed up in a day, rather than the usual week, and put the case that the Alexandra Five had committed treason because they had formed independent structures within the township.

The judge in dismissing the most serious charge of treason against the South African state

is reported to have said that if the defendants did not have a vote, they could not have been expected to do otherwise.

The five are remanded until 24 April when the verdict will be given on the lesser charges of subversion and sedition. The maximum penalty for the first is 20 years, for the second ten.

There is not much doubt that the pressure of international publicity and support from the world working class has influenced the judge's decision.

Workers Press

Hot money and the state

JAPAN, as everybody knows, is the most prosperous of capitalist countries. but its government is now being wracked by a desperate crisis.

Prime Minister Takeshita last week informed parliament that his political fund had received over 30 million yen - about £100,000 - from the Recruit company. He agreed that this was rather a large contribution to come from a single company.

The takeover of Recruit, with shares selling at insane prices, led to a massive insider-trading scandal, involving the very top layer of the Japanese establishment. The people under arrest - 16 at the last count - include the former chairman of Nippon, the bluest of blue-chip companies, as well as top civil servants. The previous prime minister, Nakasone, is also generously helping to investigate the affair.

James Baker now heads Bush's State Department. He used to be Reagan's Treasury Secretary, and so the leading figure in discussions about the 'Third World' debt problem. In 1985, he was particularly keen on persuading the Brazilians not to default on their enormous debt.

He is by no means ignorant of banking. It emerges that he has a '2-million stake in the giant Chemical Bank. Guess which US bank held the largest chunk of Brazilian debt, and whose share prices went up like a rocket at that time? (No prizes, except, of course, for shareholders.)

You remember the name Towers? He was the man who wrote the Senate Commission report on 'Iran-gate', the affair which neatly linked arms-trading, reactionary politics and drugs money. Reagan didn't come out of that too well, but the report laundered Bush into Mr Clean, just the chap to be US President.

With touching loyalty, Bush tenaciously stuck by Towers as his candidate for running the Pentagon. He was not considered suitable material by the US Senate, however, because of problems about his active social life. Hot money has no political bias, although friendship often has a part to play. In Greece and in France, for example, social-democratic governments, defending the gains of the working class and all that, have their own gains to look after too.

Papandreou has some friends who were standing a little too near to the Bank of Crete when it collapsed. Mitterrand's friends also included some whose names have been entangled with huge insider-trading deals. The closest of these friends unfortunately died last month.

In olden times, the capitalist state used to regulate the affairs of the ruling class. In the interests of the class as a whole, it disciplined individual bourgeois who strayed from the straight and narrow of exploiting the workers.

In the era of hot money, the boundaries between finance, state and the military are so blurred that we must excuse those who get confused about where they stand. As credit and share-prices become fantastically cut off from reality, inside information is the most valuable commodity. Is it surprising that prime ministers and their families sometimes find themselves close to large heaps of money?

Which brings us to the Lonrho-Harrods affair.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

APRIL SPECIAL APPEAL £7,500

In so far: £777.68

WE received the £2,000 fund for March. Many many thanks. In addition we collected £1,504.80 for our International Fund. And by Tuesday 4 April we had received £777.68 in response to our special appeal.

Reports are coming in of Workers Revolutionary Party members' meetings which have discussed plans for selling the new Workers Press coming out on 6 May and pledging donations for our fund.

Student SB is going to put in £100 from his grant; RB has been out of work, but started a job on Monday - and will contribute £100. A print worker, a regular reader of Workers Press, has pledged £100.

This is great. Of course, not all our members and readers can scrape this kind of sum together, and we are happy with all donations big or small - they all come with the same commitment and for the same cause.

The money is being put to good use. £2,500 is extra for our International Fund for the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Rebuilding of the Fourth International. The rest is to launch the new Workers Press. On 15 April we will have a 4-page introductory issue of the new paper and already the printer has copy for 20,000 special leaflets to campaign for new postal subscriptions and deliveries.

There is no time to lose. As one struggle after another breaks out in this crisis-ridden capitalist world and the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR and Eastern Europe comes under the hammer blows of the working class, we must meet up with these developments in the building of the Fourth International.

Dot Gibson

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 13 April

AN EVENING FOR BLAIR PEACH

THE DOMINION Centre, The Green, Southall, Middlesex
7 p.m.

an evening of black arts, and launch of new anthology compiled by Chris Searle: 'One for Blair'

Saturday 15 April

FIGHTING DEPORTATIONS!

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY

Manchester Town Hall, 10 a.m.

Saturday 22 April

NON-STOP PICKET 3RD ANNIVERSARY RALLY

outside South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, London
2 p.m.-6 p.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, Durham

SCOTS MEET ON DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

You only find out that democratic rights for the working class no longer exist when you try to use them, said Dave Temple, a member of the WRP Central Committee and Durham Mechanics branch of the NUM at a meeting in Glasgow last weekend.

The meeting was called by the Workers Press as part of a national campaign in defence of democratic rights.

Temple referred to the rights - even the freedom to travel - which had been withdrawn by the state during the miners' strike.

He stressed that the Labourites had always sided with the state against the working class.

In 1945 the Labour Government had used soldiers to break strikes. They had been part of the attack on democratic rights, and we have to say this. Only the working class can protect its own rights.

Norman Bissell, from the EIS Teachers union, said that youth were particularly affected by recent Tory measures, which were designed to weaken the trade unions by providing an almost free form of conscripted labour, this, they hope, will restore the profitability to capitalism.

The government was also trying to turn teachers into purveyors of Tory privatisation, said Bissell.

'Opted out' schools would be under the direct control of education ministers.

The cowardice of the labour and trade union leaders, he said, had allowed these attacks to go so far.

A key issue was the fight for democratic rights within the trade union movement.

Referring to the 'new realism' advocated by the trade union bureaucracy, Bissell drew attention to the wide-spread hostility this approach had aroused in the previous day's anti-poll-tax rally. 'Unity can't be based on the stinking STUC (Scottish Trade Union Congress) approach, but only on the right to criticise freely, with equal rights for all parties,' he said.

The unity of struggles between Ireland and Britain was stressed by two speakers, Josie O'Kane from the Republican Bands' Alliance, and John Steele from the Socialist Revolutionary Group.

O'Kane told the meeting that a march in Glasgow planned for later this month by the band had been stopped by the Labour Regional Council, whose policy he said, was to set up a 'no-go area' in the city centre for working class demonstrations.

The state had used the press to create a pretext for banning their marches, and police informers to infiltrate all organisation fighting for their rights.

The Republican Bands recognised the need for a united resistance, and had already demonstrated alongside the Viraj Mendis,

BY HILARY HORROCKS

Moses Mayekiso and Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign.

The needs of finance capital meant that the Tories had to bring forward a battery of new laws said John Steele.

Speaking of the Civil Rights Campaign in the Six Counties, Steele said that as soon as this had won concessions from local government, the power of the councils had been replaced by government-appointed bodies.

Brigadier Frank Kitson had admitted quite frankly in the Irish context that the law was not an impartial arbiter.

Since then the British state had systematically dismantled legal rights in Ireland, and had connived

with groups like the UDA to murder those who supported the struggle for independence.

None of this could have happened without the collaboration of the 26-County State which, said Steele, led the way in antidemocratic legislation.

British workers, said Steele, would make no progress in fighting attacks by the state unless they identified with the struggle in Ireland and it was wrong to dismiss the protestant working class, who had an history of industrial militancy. The basis of their privilege, created by employers like Harland and Wolf, would go, said Steele. 'It is only on the basis of unity in the working class that we can advance.'

The meeting welcomed a contribution by Roheela Hussain, who explained how the Home Office was trying to deport her husband Babar on the grounds that their marriage was one of convenience.

This showed how racist the Government was: their marriage would not be questioned if he had been white.

'What future is there for our child and our unborn child?' said Roheela. 'The constant pressure is destroying our lives, and there are many others in this situation. We must speak up for our rights.'

Poll tax activists at the meeting stressed the unity with other campaigns. Asian families faced huge poll tax bills as well as threats of deportation, and poll-tax campaigners had, like the Republican Band, been prevented by the Regional Council from demonstrating through the city centre.

The majority of the meeting agreed that it was essential to establish a broad front against state attacks, within which tactics would be hammered out.

It was decided to set up immediately an open committee which would contact other existing campaigns on aspects of democratic rights and organise a priority against Babar Hussain deportation. Participation in the initiatives proposed by the inaugural London meeting of the campaign was agreed and would be further discussed by the committee.

Tories starve homeless and AIDS victims

BY MIKE BURROWS

On April 10 the Tory Government's legislative bullets will be aimed at homeless families living in bed and breakfast hotels.

About 10,000 families temporarily housed by local councils will lose an allowance paid to cover the cost of eating out because they lack cooking facilities.

The Government no longer recognises that there are extra costs for those unable to cook at home. A menu of starvation is the recommendation.

This has concerned Homelessness campaign groups already alarmed at the increase in the cases of malnutrition documented in a report by the British Medical Association and the Health Visitors Association this month.

This situation has been created because the responsibility for paying benefits is being transferred from the Department of Social Security to local authorities.

Geoff Ferrer of the Central London Social Security Advisers' Forum warned: 'On paper the families will receive more money but it is the local authority that will benefit from the extra money by paying it to themselves through the housing benefit system.'



Campaigners against homelessness

In the mid 1980's it was the private landlords who reaped the rewards from the crisis of the young unemployed in bed and breakfast accommodation as the lure of big profits turned low-grade buildings into hotels with exotic names.

At one time Reading Council was spending more than £300,000 a week.

In one tiny house a group of landlords was collecting £2,600 a month from four families. This 'firm' owned 24 similar properties.

Local authorities now seem to want this for themselves.

• Changes in the Social Security laws last April have meant that recent victims of Aids have had their benefit entitlement cut by 65 per cent.

The London Advice Services Alliance found that some victims were living on as little as £26 a week.

Starvation means a slow death in any language, but it is obvious the Tories want some people to hurry up.

'We fight for socialism' says Khola Mayekiso

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

'WE ARE fighting for socialism. We have a song which we sing in the movement which explains that we fight for socialism.'

'We know that no-one will come from heaven to fight for us. We are not on our knees - we are standing up on our feet and we will fight them on our feet.' These were the final words of Khola Mayekiso at a 200 strong rally for the release of Moses Mayekiso at Lambeth Town Hall last week.

Bongani Mukumgho, chair of the South African Dunlop shop stewards committee, recently sacked by his employers, British Tyre and Rubber, had said earlier 'Our first oppression is apartheid, and our second oppression is capitalism.'

'There is no point in fighting against apartheid without fighting against capitalism. We are for socialism. We know that the super-powers of the US and the USSR will have their discussions, but they must understand that the working class will have their say.'

Khola Mayekiso explained that Moses Mayekiso is the general secretary of the South African Metal worker's union (NUMSA), the second largest in the South African trade union federation COSATU.

He is on trial for treason against the South African state, and could be imprisoned for decades. He was detained in June 1986, and no-one was allowed to visit him until late December 1986.

Khola had come to Britain to win support from the British trade union movement for the unconditional release of Moses and the four others arrested with him.

She explained that the Alexandra Five, as they are known, are on trial for fighting against the appalling conditions in Alexandra Township.

They were leaders in organising the freedom of the township, using a system of street and yard committees.

These committees had built unity amongst the people of Alexandra, where conditions are inhumanly overcrowded.

Ten to 20 families live in one yard, where they have to share one toilet. There is no water and no electricity.

Khola and Moses Mayekiso and their six children live in a one-roomed house. As she said 'No bedroom, no kitchen, no living room - just one room, with no privacy'.



Khola Mayekiso speaks at the rally in Lambeth Town Hall on 30 March

She went on to say 'There were many fights over who used the toilets and other things.'

'When the yard committees were elected they were able to sit down and resolve these problems.'

'The killings were stopped and there was peace.'

Part of the defence case for the Alexandra Five is that the crime ~~was~~ dropped while these organs of workers power were in place.

The trial of the Alexandra Five began again on 3 April. Although the South African regime can look towards a deal with the ANC to maintain the rule of capital in Southern Africa, Moses and his four comrades represent the movement of the working class towards independence from the bourgeoisie.

Fierce struggles have been waged within COSATU between supporters of the 'Workers Charter', which calls for socialism in South Africa, and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and supporters of the ANC's Freedom Charter, which no longer even calls for nationalisation of the land and industries.

The metalworkers union, and the Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers Union (CCAW-USA) have been prominent amongst those fighting for socialism.

They have found that the fight for the independent organisation of the working class necessarily involves the fiercest of struggles with the bourgeoisie's agents in the African National Congress, whose ideology is determined by the South African Communist Party.

Janet Clark spoke from the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign (BFDC) of the persecution by the state of Engin Raghip, Winston Silcott, and Mark Braithwaite, the three people jailed for the death of a policeman in the uprisings on Broadwater Farm Housing Estate.

She spoke also of how the campaign had come to an understanding of the identity of the struggles of the black and Irish

working class, and had jointly organised a march with the Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG) which expressed physically for the first time in Britain the unity of their resistance.

One thing emerged from the Lambeth meeting. Many who spoke in the discussion seemed convinced that they had nothing to learn from the South African comrades, and that it was rather a question of how 'We in Britain' could charitably 'help' them out.

But it was clear that Khola Mayekiso and Bongani Mkungho were very much leaders of a struggle in their own right and it was we who had lessons to learn from them of inestimable value.

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

HUNGARY: A WORKERS PRESS SUPPLEMENT

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN HUNGARY

TOGETHER with Poland, Hungary is in the forefront at the moment. Without going into detail, the similarities and differences between the two countries must be pointed out. In Poland, as in Hungary, the bankruptcy of the bureaucracy's reactionary policy, fraudulently described as 'building socialism', is blatant.

In both countries the only way out for the Stalinist bureaucracy is to seek allies - with imperialism abroad and, at home, with people whom only yesterday they were calling 'the opposition'.

In both countries they are trying to muzzle working class resistance to the attacks of the authorities by forming a 'new coalition' where the bureaucracy would retain the essential part of its power while the 'opposition' would consent to an accommodation with them at the cost of a few posts and some changes in the dictatorship presented under a 'parliamentary' gloss.

The difference lies in the composition of the political landscape. In Poland, Walesa's opportunist leadership has, by and large, succeeded in keeping its grip on the working class, usurping the legitimate hopes the workers vest in Solidarnosc.

Even there, however, it would be wrong to underestimate the active resistance to the liquidationist 'round table' manoeuvres with the authorities which has come from part of the elected leadership of Solidarnosc resting on the young workers.

In Hungary, unlike Poland, the working class does not possess an independent organisation of the Solidarnosc type.

The process of its organisation is still at a very early stage and the petty-bourgeois opposition has developed outside the working class.

These parties and groups therefore have no roots in the working class and cannot exercise the same influence that they do in Poland.

The Hungarian bureaucracy is in a crisis every bit as deep as Jaruzelski's.

Just remember that Hungary's per capita foreign debt is higher than Poland's and heads the European league table. But they

**In this week's
Workers Press,
JANOS BOROVI
introduces a report of
a conference in
Budapest to launch
'Workers Solidarity
'89', an independent
trade union movement
in opposition to the
bureaucracy.**

do not have anyone even like Walesa to act as their relay into the working class. And at the same time the Stalinist party is disintegrating at top speed.

Where there should be a political leadership of the working class, there is a vacuum. At the same time big class movements are inevitable in the face of the attacks on the gains workers have made.

The only hope for the Hungarian bureaucracy is the mirage of 'parliamentary democracy'.

Facade

There are possible partners in such a 'democratic' facade - the social democrats, the small-holders and agrarian party, the 'Democratic Forum', etc - but they too will immediately go into crisis when faced with the workers' explosion.

Hungary is, therefore, on the eve of big battles, just like in Poland, but the Hungarian bureaucracy will face them from a much worse position than Jaruzelski because the working class is not under the domination of a centrist

leadership. Quite apart from the fact that the church has infinitely less weight than in Poland.

For these reasons I believe that the situation in Hungary can be described as pre-revolutionary.

That the forces that are fighting to rebuild the Fourth International, the members and observers of the Preparatory Committee, have grasped the importance of the situation in Hungary is extremely positive.

It is sufficient to list the coverage in the Trotskyist press in Hungary, Austria and Britain; the intervention at the FIDESZ (Hungarian independent youth organisation) Congress by the British WRP and the Austrian IKL; at the congress of the independent scientific workers' union TDDSZ; and finally at the 'Solidarity '89' Conference.

Achieved

This last is described in the accompanying report which has been translated from Hungarian and was written for the newspaper of the Revolutionary Socialist League of Hungary. All this has been achieved in the last few months.

A political polarisation has already started and it will intensify.

This will open up big opportunities for Trotskyists to rally the vanguard of the working class in order to build the revolutionary workers' party in Hungary.

We must prepare for the decisive battles that are to come and in which we will meet the sympathy and support of advanced workers and youth. But we will also encounter hatred and attacks.

These will come not only from the Stalinist bureaucracy but also from its bourgeois and petty-bourgeois allies. The bureaucracy sets the tone.

They are the ones who advocate the return of capitalism. The Stalinist bureaucrats are already looking for good jobs in 'joint ventures' with capitalists.

It is on the basis of this openly pro-capitalist turn that all parties, including the social democrats, are glorifying the beauties of capitalism. Only the Fourth International plots its course in this crisis on the basis of the interests of the working class.

It fights to defend and to renew the gains of the working class, to prepare for the political revolution based on workers' councils, to build its party.

Respectable

This policy is unbearable for the former opposition which has become the authorities' respectable partner while remaining virulently anti-Marxist and anti-Bolshevik.

The Hungarian working class needs the experience of workers in capitalist countries in order to combat illusions that are fostered in bourgeois democracy and the 'German model'.

It needs their experience of the struggle against capital, but also against its Stalinist and social-democratic agencies.

Comrades

The impact the British and Austrian comrades' contributions have made has proved how true this is.

At the same time I am convinced that every step forward by the forces that are rebuilding the Fourth International in the USSR and Eastern Europe is of irreplaceable assistance in rebuilding revolutionary workers' parties in the capitalist countries.

Above all in intervening in the crisis of the Stalinist parties.

Stalinism is in the process of definitively besmirching the banner of socialism. We, however, are engaged in hoisting the banner of real socialism in the east in the face of Stalinism's failure.

Is there any more potent argument than the renewal of the hopes of 1917 in the country where they were first betrayed?

HUNGARY: A WORKERS PRESS SUPPLEMENT

LONG LIVE THE WORKERS ALLIANCE

GABOR PATKO reports on the conference of the workers' trade union alliance 'Solidarity '89' which took place in Budapest in January 1989

'WE CANNOT expect anyone else to represent us to the authorities. We have to represent ourselves. Who else can represent us? We must organise free and independent workers' unions. . . Who do the factories belong to? Demand the setting up of real workers' self-government - workers' councils!'

So runs the call for the 'Workers' Solidarity '89' Conference held at the Jurta Theatre, Budapest, on 25 January 1989.

It is a long time since such true words have been uttered in the factories and workplaces.

The people who are saying this to the country's workers are the 'Workers Group' of the independent youth movement FIDESZ and other young people who are worried about the future of the working class.

Six hundred people came to the conference. Several mines and factories said they would have like to have come but they did not have the fares. Others sent delegates each representing twenty or thirty workers.

They came to discuss tasks such as how to react to the attacks on workers, the shattering price increases, the threat of unemployment and the future of the country, which is being ruined.

Participants therefore assumed a great responsibility because this was the first opportunity in a long time for workers to deal with matters of concern to them, in a country where the lying official propaganda claims that power belongs to the workers.

They felt the need to act and get organised, that time is short. This urgency was expressed in the proclamation of 'Solidarity' by acclaim.

The whole meeting was marked by its internationalism. That is why the union adopted the name 'Solidarity', following the Polish example.

The loudest applause was

given to the British miners' delegation, in which the WRP participated, and the speech of the Austrian car worker, Peter.

Dave Temple, a leader in the British miners' strike, was several times interrupted by applause, especially when he pointed out that we face the same enemies.

The Thatcher government has banned political strikes (strikes that go beyond the confines of the factory and are aimed against the government) in just the same way that the Hungarian government has. Coal provided by Jaruzelski with the connivance of the trade union and Stalinist bureaucracy was used to break that memorable strike, Temple continued.

At that, a Hungarian miner in the hall stood up and shouted: 'We were with you, we sent you food so that you could hold out'.

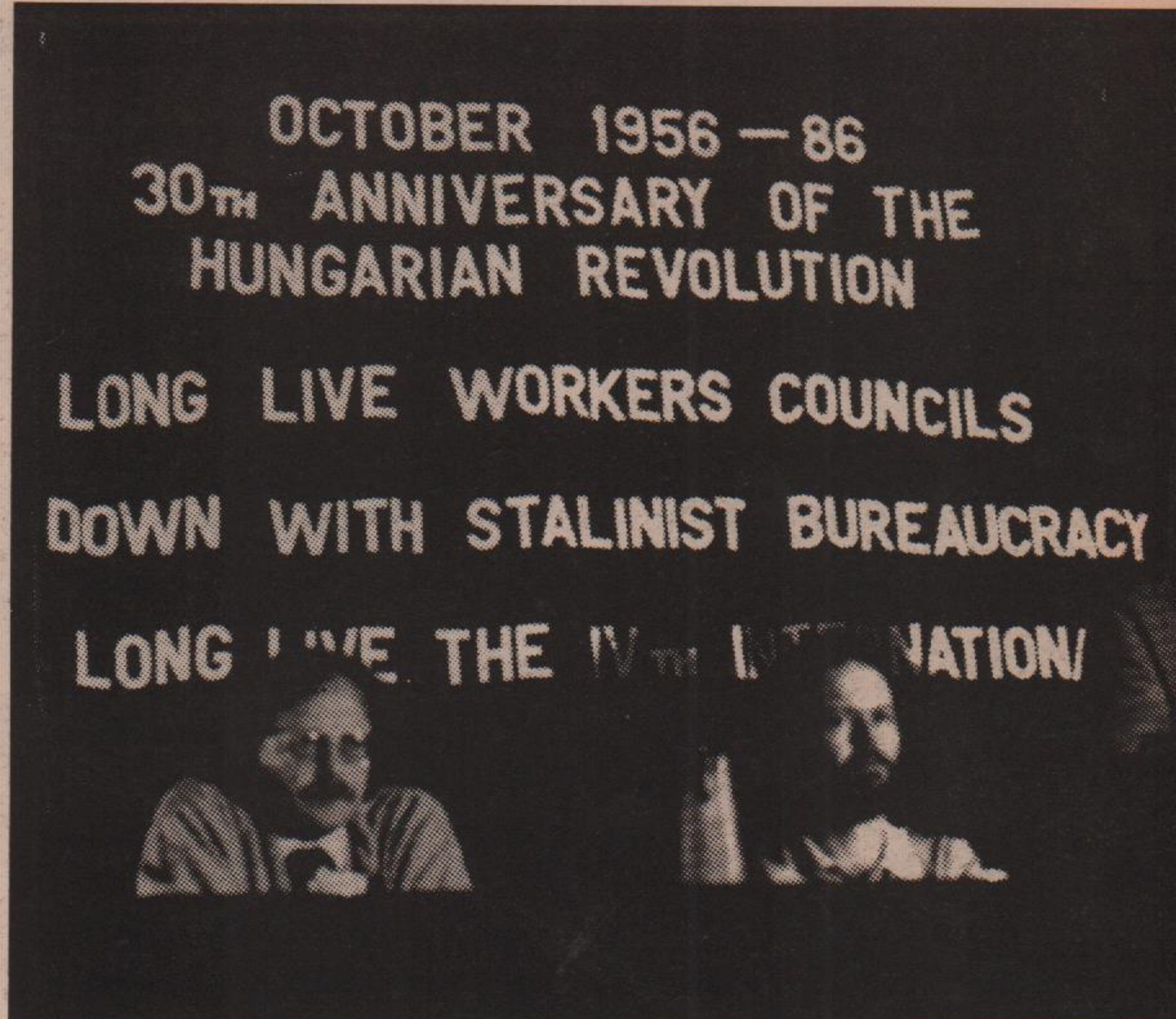
Peter, a member of the Austrian engineering workers' union, also showed that the enemy is the same, and how Austrian capital works with the Hungarian Stalinists to attack the workers in both Hungary and Austria.

In particular he mentioned the Austrian capitalist who threatened his striking workers that if they were not satisfied with their wages he would close the factory down and open one in Hungary where wages were several times less.

Janos Borovi brought greetings to the Conference from the League of Revolutionary Socialists of Hungary. He promised the unconditional support of Trotskyist for the struggle for an independent democratic trade union.

He saluted the rebirth of internationalism and pointed out that the pre-condition for independence is that workers take the initiative themselves, and that the future of the working class is the only thermometer for judging reforms.

Workers' struggles in the capitalist countries, he went on, show that not only Stalinism but also social



The platform at the meeting to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the H from left to right, Peter Fryer (expelled from the Communist Party in 1956), Steve McSweeney (Workers Power), Balosz Nagy, member of the (Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party).

democracy do not represent the interests of the workers.

At the same time as building a new workers' trade union, the building of a new revolutionary workers' party is also on the agenda.

In the view of Trotskyists, this party can be no other than the Hungarian section of the Fourth International.

All participants had in their hands the proposed Programme of Action calling for a workers' united front to defend and mobilise the workers. This was published in the February 1989 issue of 'Negyedik Internacionale', the newspaper of the LRSH.

The conference was the start of a turn in the situation in Hungary. At the same time it could not resolve every problem.

The participants' speeches and private discussions faithfully reflected the situation in the rank and file of the working class. The policies of the government, the bureaucracy and the party were unanimously condemned.

The Stalinist policy of

'building socialism in a single country' has blatantly failed, but nobody can see a way out within the narrow framework of Hungary.

Meanwhile Hungarian workers have to defend themselves against the authorities' attacks without having a perspective or an independent programme.

The various parties - the social democratic party, the small-holders' party and the Democratic Forum (MDF) - are busy doing deals with the bureaucracy. They are fighting over the crumbs from the authorities' table.

It is significant that the only ones to support the conference were FIDESZ, the magazine 'Hiany' and the independent scientific workers' union TDDSZ.

The MDF even launched a slanderous attack against the conference. Already Hungarian workers can see who they can rely on, and the struggle has only started.

The conference gave a co-ordinating committee the responsibility, together with

HUNGARY: A WORKERS PRESS SUPPLEMENT

WORKERS' TRADE-UNION

'SOLIDARITY'



...garian Revolution in October 1986, ...or his support for the Hunfgarian ...ofy Circle in 1956, and Bob Archer

militants who came forward at the conference, of organising a conference to found the union. The hard work is just beginning.

Unlike its Polish counterpart, Hungarian Solidarity was not born during a strike or a broad mobilisation.

A trade union is by its very nature a mass organisation.

Workers will accept it as their own if they can build it from the rank-and-file, based on the factories and the workplaces, and if its programme and rules are based on a broad discussion and organisation and common struggles.

There are objective bases for such a mass movement in Hungary.

The conference proved that a section of the working class is already ready for an independent organisation, but also that there are many who are still hesitating.

This is not because they are scared of a fight but because they have not yet had the opportunity to prove whether the new union will really belong to them, that

they are 'building their own house'.

This waiting posture is understandable.

More than any other social layer or class, workers judge things on the basis of their own experience and they have not yet had the chance to 'test' the new workers' union.

The future of Hungarian 'Solidarity' depends on winning

this majority of workers. We are convinced that this is fundamentally a political question.

The strength and confidence will come from having discussion, taking decisions, and carrying out aims and methods of struggle within the framework of workers' democracy.

In this the experiences of the world working class and an

organic link with it play an important role.

As for us, we shall help in building 'Solidarity' not only within a Hungarian framework but by linking it - with the help of those forces fighting to rebuild the Fourth International - with the struggles of workers in capitalist countries.

Call for the conference

WORKERS! YOUNG WORKERS! The party that has held power in our country for the last 32 years is called the 'Hungarian Socialist WORKERS Party'. They have destroyed our country with the word 'worker' on their banner.

- Those who claim to run our country as our representatives have recklessly and wantonly squandered the results of our labour. The worker is not honoured and his work has no value. The standard of living keeps falling, the wages we earn from honest labour are worth less and less. We have the right to ask: Who does the country belong to? To us workers, or to the leaders and functionaries of the party?

- **WE CANNOT EXPECT ANYONE ELSE TO REPRESENT US TO THE AUTHORITIES. WE HAVE TO REPRESENT OURSELVES. WHO ELSE CAN REPRESENT US? WE MUST ORGANISE FREE AND INDEPENDENT WORKERS UNIONS**

- Who are they selling the factories to? We demand a proper valuation of the means of production, factory buildings, machines and materials. Free workers' share certificates must be issued that correspond to that valuation so that we can be the real owners of these factories and businesses.

- **WHO DO THE FACTORIES BELONG TO? DEMAND THE SETTING UP OF REAL WORKERS' SELF GOVERNMENT - WORKERS' COUNCILS!**

- They are taking the money out of our pockets! Demand a far-reaching reform of wages and a re-examination of the state budget!

- Will we be able to work tomorrow? Demand the defence of the unemployed and a solution to the problem of unemployment.

- Can we take part in politics without intimidation? Demand a law allowing parties and elections which must be passed quickly so that we can express our will by associating in independent parties.

We are convening a national workers' conference on 25 February 1989, at 9.00 am at the Jurta Theatre.

Come and speak! Get organised! Set up independent workers' groups! Speak out in an organised way in all forums to defend your interests!

12 January 1989

Organisers of 'Workers Solidarity '89' Conference

(Tens of thousands of copies of this call were put out as posters and leaflets)

News briefs . . .

Humans to have animal donors?

THERE is a serious shortage of human heart donor organs, says John Dark, director of the heart transplant programme at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne.

The answer he suggests is that animal hearts be used. Genetic engineering techniques would have to 'humanise' the organ to avoid its rejection.

He added that 'it is a long way off but it is something we should be thinking of now.'

Hungary for a deal with racists

NOT to be outdone by the Soviet Union, Hungarian and Polish government officials recently slipped into South Africa.

The trip was a trade mission but done in secret. The South African 'Sunday Star' said the visit was the latest in a string of diplomatic contacts between South African and Eastern bloc countries.

The forgotten dead

AMERICA'S first planned city, Columbia, Maryland, was built in 1664. It was supposed to be perfection.

The developers designed play grounds and lakes, cycle and jogging paths, a shopping mall, cultural centres, a golf course and bowling alley.

What they did not do was provide for burying the dead in this city of 70,500 souls. Twenty five years after the birth, a 28 acre graveyard is now being created. 'I guess you know you have made it as a city when you have a cemetery,' said Rev. Thomas Golucke.

The Mafia, the FBI, and the Teamsters

THE late Jackie Presser was the leader of the American Teamsters Union. His other connections were the Mafia and the FBI. The U.S. Justice Department court case against the union for racketeering revealed some of the 2,000 pages of Presser reports to the FBI.

The documents describe murders, car bombings, political wheeler-dealing, Mafia efforts to control union activities and laundering of profits from Las Vegas casinos.

Presser started work for the FBI in 1977 shortly after the mysterious death of former Teamster boss, Jimmy Hoffa. By 1984 he was chairman of Ronald Reagan's inaugural committee.

'Nien' to NATO

FROM Hamburg to Nuremberg, more than 100,000 people have marched against recent NATO behaviour.

They were against low-level NATO training flights over West Germany and the plan to modernise short range nuclear weapons. 'Modernise defence policies and not atomic rockets' said one Frankfurt banner.

In Hamburg, Karin Benz-Overhange, an official of the IG Metall trade union, voiced opposition to the government's plans to increase compulsory military service from 15 to 18 months.

SCOTS PROTEST THE POLL TAX

BY HILARY HORROCKS

THIRTY thousand protestors from all over Scotland and other parts of Britain flooded into Edinburgh last Saturday to demonstrate against the poll tax.

The march - the largest ever seen in the city - was organised by the Scottish TUC on the day the tax came into operation in Scotland.

Hundreds of community based and student anti-poll tax groups joined trade union contingents on the march despite the organisers denying speaking rights to representatives from the Federations in which many of these groups are linked.

This followed the now notorious letter the STUC sent to all affiliates three weeks ago, telling them not to take part in an anti-poll tax demonstration in Glasgow organised by the Anti-Poll Tax Federations.

The letter from STUC deputy secretary Bill Speirs, objected to the targeting of Scottish Labour councils - without whose co-operation the Tories poll tax would not be operable. It said:

'The organisers of this event ... have stated that 'our intention to pressurise regional and district authorities to refuse to collect is non-negotiable.'

In the view of the STUC General Council such a stance will simply lead to massive surcharges and disqualification of individual councillors: it is no basis for mass action against the poll tax.'

At the rally following last week's demonstration a hostile reception was given to platform speakers identified with the refusal of the labour and trade union leadership to organise effective resistance to the tax.

STUC general secretary Campbell Christie was barracked despite his gesture of publicly tearing up his own poll tax payment book. The fiercest heckling however, was reserved for Scottish Labour Party chairperson, Mark Lazarowicz.

Communist Party of Great Britain industrial organiser John Kay appealed for 'unity' - but only on the terms of the STUC. Any one who criticised their policies, he said, was helping the Tories.

But the size and energy of the demonstration itself showed that the bureaucracy have not been able to control the campaign against the tax. An event which was almost certainly conceived as a final fling actually expressed a renewed vigour - and a unity between trade unionists and communities which the STUC reformists and Stalinists, contrary to their public speeches, have done everything to attempt to prevent.



Anti-poll tax campaigners turn out in Edinburgh

'Spy' frame-up against Arab trade unionist

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

A PALESTINIAN trade unionist held since last July has been charged by the Israeli authorities with 'spying' and theft of classified documents.

They accuse Mahmoud Masarwa of stealing police and military documents from a firm where he worked that did shredding for the government, and sending them to a 'contact' on 'Militant' in Britain.

Although Masarwa was arrested on July 19, 1988, and the alleged offence is supposed to have taken place a year previously, the case has only just come to court, on March 29. The Israeli press was not allowed to report that he was being held.

At the time of his arrest, Mahmoud Masarwa had been to visit Britain as a guest of the labour movement. In a letter smuggled out of Ramla prison in October, he described how security police dragged him to a police station, where he was hooded and beaten unconscious.

In repeated beatings and prolonged interrogations there and in Ashkelon prison, they tried to force him to confess to a number of serious offences.

The son of a citrus plantation worker, Mahmoud Masarwa was born in Baqa al-Gharbiya just after the Zionist state itself, in 1948. In 1970, he joined a group called the Workers' Alliance, which saw itself as Marxist, and sought to link worker's day to day struggles

with a programme for uniting Arab and Jewish workers.

In 1972, Mahmoud was jailed on 'spying' charges along with members of another group, the 'Red Front', led by Israeli ex-paratrooper Udi Adiv.

Adiv's group had tried to contact the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in Damascus, but were set-up in a meeting with a Syrian intelligence officer.

Released in 1978, Mahmoud did odd jobs as a carpenter, and worked as a nightwatchman on an industrial estate near Tel Aviv. He renewed his political activity in the Workers' Alliance, and when this was disbanded in 1982, he set up a group in his home village called 'Al Nahda', (the Renaissance).

With Israel's strict 'security' screening of workers it is unlikely that Mahmoud Masarwa would ever be allowed near secret documents. More possible is that he collected information exposing political repression, as any socialist would.

Having already detained numbers of Palestinian trade unionists without trial under colonial emergency laws, the Israeli government has resorted to frame-up methods to deal with Masarwa, an Israeli citizen with international support.

His trial follows the jailing of the editors of the left-wing Israeli paper 'Derech HaNit-zotz', which specialised in coverage of the Palestinian Intifada, and comes as yet more West Bank union leaders are facing illegal deportation.

LETTERS

Write to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

Harry Wicks - an apology

I was very upset on seeing in the current issue of Workers Press that you had added to the text of my obituary of Harry Wicks after I had communicated it to you without consulting me.

This has introduced mistakes that are not my responsibility, even though my name appears over them.

The name of Harry Wicks is mis-spelled all the way through. I made it clear that Harry attended the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern as an observer; without this qualification the impression is conveyed that he was a delegate. I also made it clear that when Harry was sent up to West Yorkshire it was to join a regiment going to India in order to re-establish the Comintern's contact with the Indian Communist Party (they were always channelled via the British Party).

The way you have stated it is that he was intended to make contact with the Indian Trotskyists - at a time when there were no Trotskyists in India and he was not as yet one himself.

I can only marvel at the freedom accorded to your editorial staff and request that you publish this letter in the next issue of Workers Press.

Al Richardson

Thanks

WORKERS PRESS thanks Al Richardson for this letter and apologises to him and our readers for the errors in our piece on Harry Wicks (1 April issue).

It is a pity he felt obliged to make such a cynical comment in the last paragraph. Comrades like Al Richardson know that Workers Press does not have 'editorial staff' - it has an editor

In respect for Harry Wicks' family I will not set out here the problems encountered in actually getting this piece in time and in a form suitable for its inclusion in Workers Press.

The Editor

Poll tax spells ruin to farmworkers

BY PETE DENNS

IN a stunning display of greed and meanness the Scottish National Farmers Union has refused to compensate their farmworkers who will be hard-hit by the introduction of the poll tax.

The Scottish Agricultural Wages Board rejected a plea that farmers should pay the community charge of farmworkers and their wives who live in tied cottages.

An across-the-board increase of £5.33p per week was also turned down. The farmers would not even offer the money they will be saving in rates bills.

Fifty per cent of Scottish farmworkers live in tied cottages. For one family with a daughter over 18 years old it

means finding an extra £1,950 from their budget from wages of £7,000 a year.

Their union, the Scottish Trade Group, failed to obtain any concessions and payments are to be left to the discretion of the farmer, turning what should be a right into a grace and favour charity.

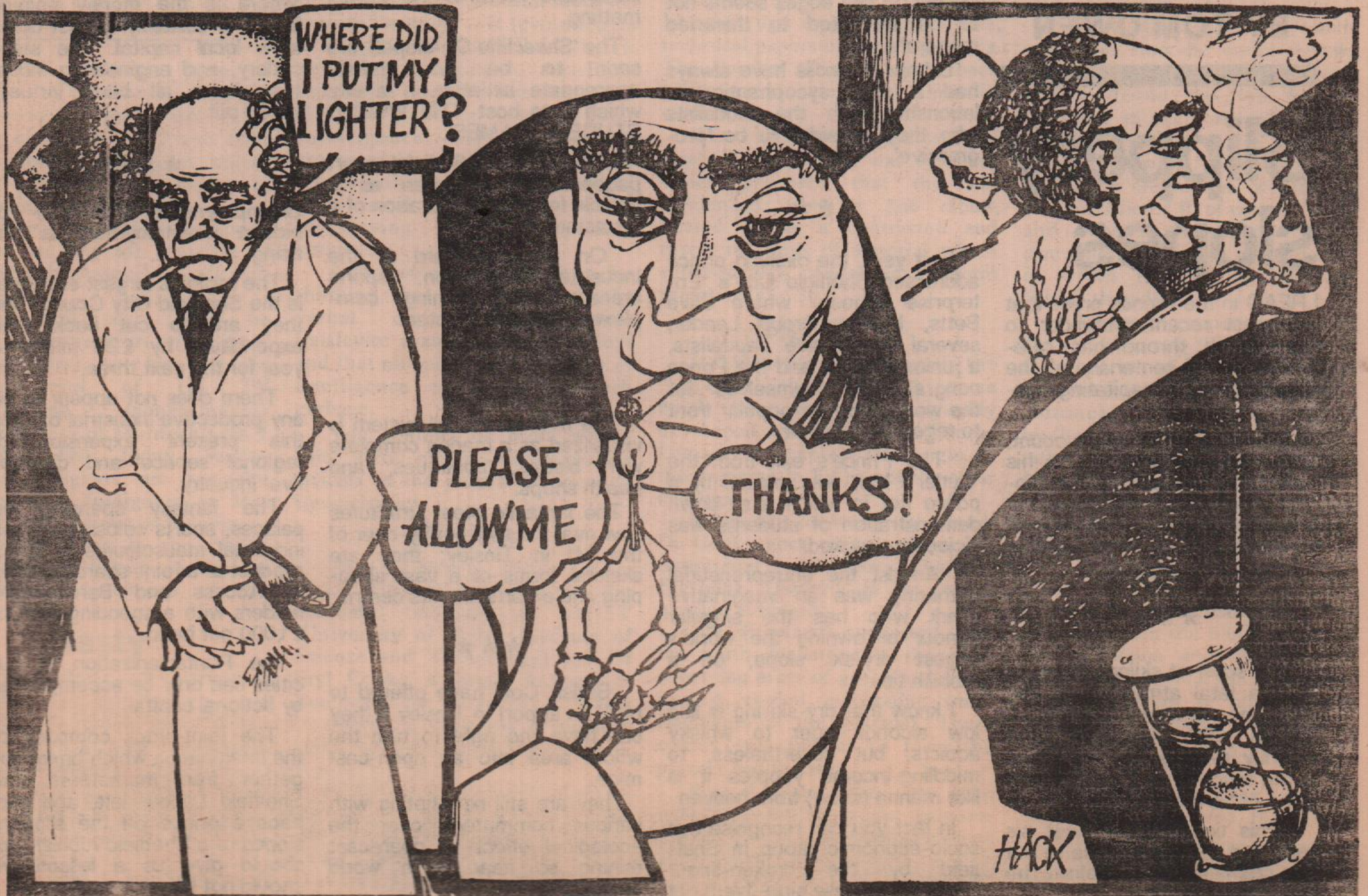
Hugh Wilson, Scottish Trade Group Secretary said, 'It gives the farmers another lever for intimidating their workers.'

Most obscene of all is the advice given by the SNFU that their members should find out what rebates workers are being allowed so that they can vary their compensation accordingly.

'It is a sickening recognition of the rotten wages landowners and farmers pay their workers,' he added.

'We don't want charity or advice to apply for rebates - we want a decent living wage for our members which reflects their skills and recognises the increased burden of the poll tax.'

WE PUBLISH BELOW PETER VERITY'S VIEW OF SMOKING



Personal Column

Peter Fryer

Sharks rampant

NO, I didn't go out looking for it.

By 11 o'clock on Friday morning, 24 hours after the government had obtained a gagging injunction against it, a fellow reader at the British Library had thrust into my hand a copy of the 'Observer's' special mid-week issue.

Newspaper sellers in central London were having a field-day, telling busybodies who murmured 'injunction' at them to 'piss off'.

You could see just why the government had tried to suppress this special issue.

Here are two big sharks engaged in a bloody battle over a juicy piece of meat. One has the government in his pocket - and not only the government, judging by the 'Observer's' front-page picture showing 'The Queen and Mohamed Fayed at the races'.

The other shark has a once great British newspaper in his pocket.

Shark no. 1, it appears, got possession of Harrods by claiming he had millions more than in fact he had, silencing those who contested this claim by threatening them with expensive libel actions, and persuading his government friends to suppress a damning report by the Department of Trade inspectors.

Shark no. 2 has only to snap his fingers, and his tame poodle rushes out a mid-week edition printing a large part of that report.

Fraud and deceit are the norms of this shark-infested, shark-ruled society.

Ferment in Hungary

IT'S barely two months since this column called for the remains of Imre Nagy and his fellow-victims of Stalinism to be exhumed

from their unmarked graves and reburied with honour.

Now the news comes from Budapest that the exhumation has taken place and that the ceremonial reburial is planned for mid-June.

This momentous news came just in time for it to be briefly incorporated in a television programme last week on recent political developments in Hungary.

My name being neither Gerry Healy nor Germaine Greer, I am not so egotistical as to suppose that any words of mine have been heeded by the caste of bureaucrats who run Hungary; it is of course mounting pressure from below that is causing them to backtrack so speedily, and so irreversibly, on everything to do with the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath.

But readers may be sure that I will move heaven and earth to be present at that Budapest ceremony where, amongst other things, the last nail will be driven into the coffin of a third of a century's Stalinist lies about the Hungarian Revolution.

Meanwhile the TV programme, for all its omissions and political illiteracy, did give British viewers some idea of the growing ferment in Hungary that is leading to the emergence of political parties and something like press freedom.

Unfortunately, though the camera took us inside a steelworks, not a single industrial worker was interviewed.

Marxism in Hungary, we were told, has 'gone up in smoke'. Well, fine, if you choose to put an equals sign between Marxism and Stalinism.

But that is something the Hungarian Marxists around the journal 'Negyedik Internationale' ('Fourth International') are not going to let happen.

They are poised to win the younger generation of Hungarian workers for a Marxist understanding of Stalinism, of the 1956 revolution, and of the role of workers' councils in that revolution.

They have a formidable task of re-education ahead of them, since for over 40 years Rakosi and Kadar in turn dragged the word Marxism, and the word communism, through the mud.

One of the strengths of the TV programme was that it showed the bankruptcy of, and lack of support for, the reactionary parties that are emerging or re-emerging in the present ferment.

The great majority of Hungarians don't want to go back to the capitalist past. How to go forward to real socialism is something they will not discover without struggle, without the clash of ideas.

And our Hungarian comrades have a key part to play.

Nostalgia note

ONE more book for the London nostalgia booklist. Angela Rodaway's 'A London Childhood', first published by Batsford in 1960 and reissued with a new introduction by Virago in 1985, is beautifully written and full of charm.

Tiger nuts, lotus pods, Spanish wood, and coconut 'tobacco' may have vanished from the sweetshops, but some things never change. Rodaway, brought up in Lower Holloway in the 1930s, tells us:

'Many of the children round our way had been taught to run from the police and never to answer questions. At school they taught that a policeman was a friend and nobody believed it, any more than they spoke at home in the accents recommended by the teachers.'

AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

Slippery slopes

I READ in the French press that the most recent pretender to the French throne has celebrated the bi-centenary of the Revolution by decapitating himself.

The dashing Bourbon count, in an act of solidarity with his ancestors, strayed off the slippery slopes of a ski-run in the American Rockies and cut off his head on a wire demarcating a dangerous no-go area.

The sport of skiing seems to have a fatal attraction for the yet-to-be crowned heads of Europe - the Prince of Wales recently returned to the scene of the much publicised death of some of his courtiers.

This time he has kept his head, but will not be able to put his brain in gear before he engages his mouth.

The lemming-like passion for ski-ing off cliff edges seems not to be restricted to thwarted monarchs.

Labour Councils have always had a cosy sycophantic relationship with the feudalists who they consider to be 'progressive'.

Last year, the dashing prince addressed Sheffield City's 'Enterprise Scheme' where Clive Betts, Labour Group Leader, several 'progressive' capitalists, a junior minister and the Prince congratulated themselves for the work of a new popular front to regenerate the city.

The Prince's exit from the 'Cutler's Hall' was marred by a police riot in which a sit-down demonstration of students was viciously attacked.

Amidst the entrepreneurial gathering was an imaginative shark who has the singular honour of owning the world's largest dry-ski slope, on a rubbish tip.

I know that dry-ski-ing is like low alcohol lager to whisky addicts, but nevertheless, to middling-income yuppies it is like manna (snow) from heaven.

In fact you can recognise this socio-economic group in Sheffield by the broken-finger syndrome. These high-flyers get

their fingers trapped in the intractable fibres of the plastic matting.

The 'Shirecliffe Ski-slopes' are seen to be an entirely appropriate initiative in a city which is to host 'THE WORLD STUDENT GAMES'.

The obscure Stalinist sport pageant is now seen as a vehicle for the regeneration of a devastated city.

On the graveyard of the Industrial Revolution, sports arena, and swimming complexes are being erected.

The river and canal system is visualized as a marina complete with bistros, boutiques, and health shops.

The fantastic steel structures now rival the two-tier fly-over of the M1 in Tinsley; they are skeletal forms of a vast shopping and entertainments centre.

British Coal have offered to build an airport in Tinsley if they can have the right to turn the whole area into an open-cast mine.

They are still negotiating with various committees over the ecological effect of open-cast mining so near to a world sporting event.

What people are asking is: 'where is the money coming from?' It certainly cannot come from local capital. The steel, cutlery, and engineering industries have all been virtually wiped out

Unemployment fell; semi- or hidden unemployment is still rising.

The region's largest employer is the Sheffield City Council and they are to cut back their expenditure by £20 million a year for the next three.

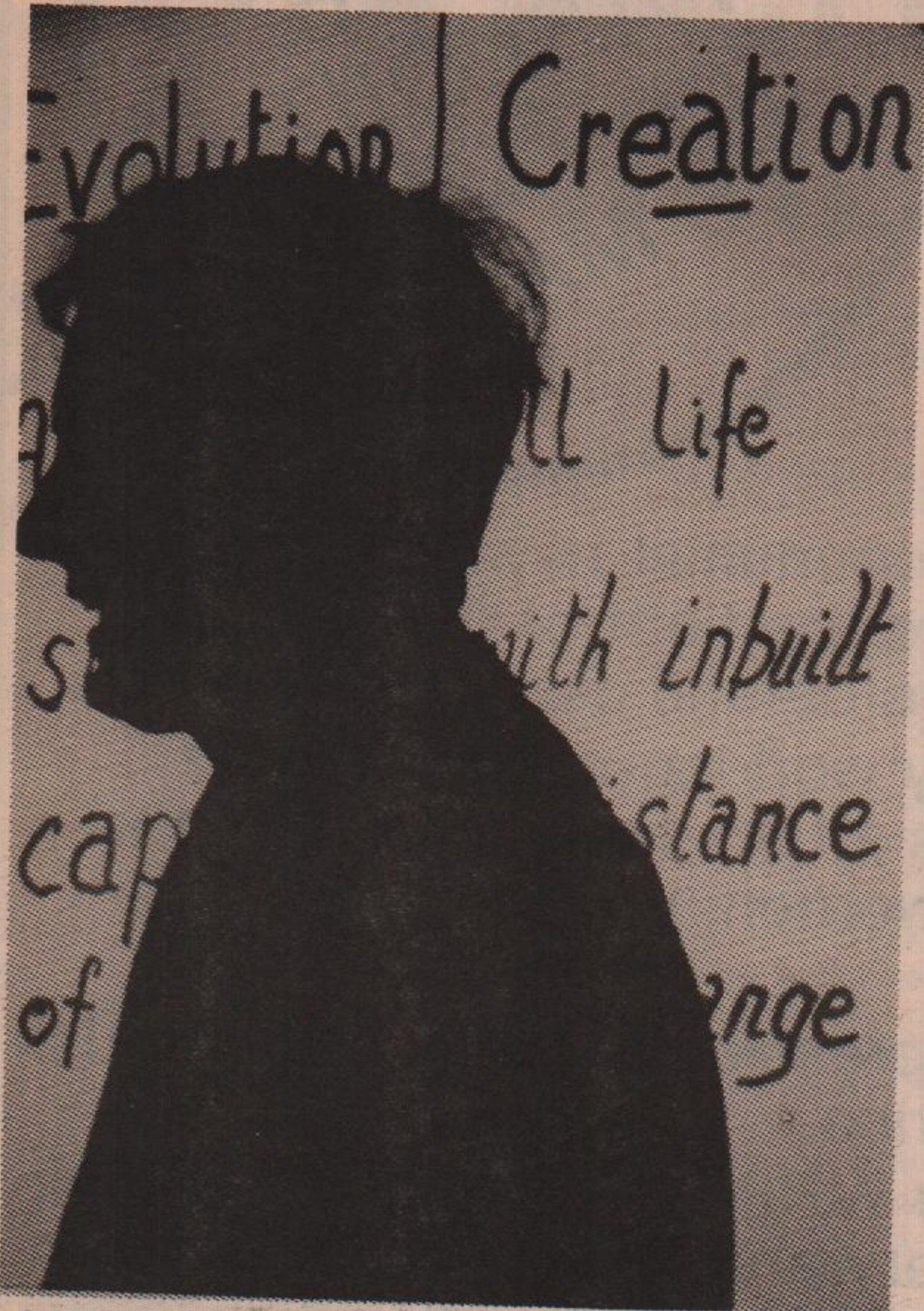
There does not appear to be any productive industrial base to this present expansion of regional 'service' and 'distributive' industry.

The fantasy spending on palaces, sports colosseums and industrial mausoleums is not a product of a joint-share meeting of Access and Barclay-card holders with a spending limit of £1,000 per head.

The Ruritanianization of our cities can only be accomplished by fictional capital.

The joint-stock company of the imagination which brings together free marketeers, the Sheffield Labour left, and perhaps a prince on the slippery slopes of a Sheffield rubbish-tip, should give us a lesson we should not forget.

Academic fundamentalism in our own back yard



The shadow of creationism

BY MIKE HOWGATE

RELIGIOUS intolerance is in the news again. This time it is not the US born-again creationists trying to have evolution withdrawn from state schools' curriculum unless counter-balanced by a dollop of Genesis-inspired ignorance.

No, it is a less well thought out plan to stop all criticism of religion by the Ayatollah - off with their heads!

We will also soon be privileged (those of us with dishes and decoders) to be on the receiving end of US TV hot-gossiping money-making scams, courtesy of Murdoch's SKY television. But loony fundamentalist religions are not the prerogative of foreigners as Mrs Thatcher would have us believe.

Hidden away in the cracks and crannies of British society are some classic specimens of the genre.

Nasty

A particularly nasty variety of home-grown creationism is spreading out from the Welsh valleys care of the Apostolic Church of Penygroes, Dyfed. The style of their house organ, 'Riches of Grace', bears all the old world charm of some medieval witch-hunting trial.

Try this for size.

'Evolution is the deceptive

mask behind which Satan hides his real philosophy... It (evolution) is a Satanic idea (and) Evolution is anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible (all right so far) anti-man and (believe it or not) anti-intelligence. The theory is sustained by the energy of satanic spirits influencing and dominating the minds of unregenerate, unbelieving and unrepentant people.'

Now, you could be forgiven for thinking that this was just the verbal outpouring of some Paisleyite ayatollah of the valleys and that no one with a modicum of intelligence could support such garbage.

You couldn't be more wrong! The two major anti-evolution articles in the journal are penned by academics.

Wales

Dr A.J.Monty White B.Sc. Ph.D. C.Chem. MRSC., is the academic secretary of UWIST (University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology) and Dr Eryl Cooke, a former lecturer in Zoology at the University of Wales in Cardiff is currently a research officer with the Open University in Wales.

The former is an old hand at the lies and half-truths of creationism. He has published his own 'Creation Newsheet' for several years now.

His outpourings are of the

tried-and-tested type: no intermediate fossils between major groups of animals and plants in the geological record; the statistical improbability of Boeing 747s being produced as hurricanes plough through junk yards as proof that life couldn't evolve by chance, and various other abuses of statistics.

To produce this sort of guff time after time it is imperative that Dr White never does any work on fossils or statistics. It is also advisable that he never listens to any rebuttals. After all it would be Satan speaking and Christians are specifically instructed to 'stop up your ears' against his wiles.

Dr Cooke, however, must be a new hand at the creationist game. Despite his zoological training, he leaves the question of organic evolution well alone. Instead he takes us on a rambling Cook's tour of biblical exegesis, the gap theory (where evolution is allowed between Genesis I and II), radiometric dating, the big-bang statistics (again) and the authority of Christ. All in two pages!

Dr Cooke's ignorance is outshone only by his pomposity. He accuses scientists of what he describes as 'elective ignorance'.

His prime example is what he refers to as the 'Big-bang theory of Laplace'. Now I wouldn't want Dr Cooke to go to the trouble of looking up original references, technical papers or even big books. The Hamlyn all-colour paperback 'Astronomy' (mine cost 30p) will suffice.

The Nebular hypothesis of Laplace (1749-1827) was a theory which proposed that the sun condensed from a gas cloud, heated up as it contracted and threw off rings of material which subsequently condensed to form the planets (p 36).

Big bang

It has nothing to do with the 'big-bang' theory which came much later and was originally developed by the Belgian George Lemaitre to explain the origin of the universe (p 106) - not the solar system.

If this howler were not enough Dr Cooke goes on to give us his impression of the 'Laplace Big-bang theory'. It is worth quoting at length:

'He (Laplace) suggested that the earth began as a shapeless revolving mass of gas, which, as it rotated, cooled, jettisoning small fragments of the gas-ball. These cooled still further to form the planets and the stars.'

Poor Laplace. Not only is a geocentric theory of the universe attributed to him, but ludicrous inversions of scale (small fragments of the earth's 'gas-ball' giving rise to the stars) and

inversions of the second law of thermodynamics (not only is the 'gas-ball' cooled, it is 'cooled still further to form the planets and the stars').

Laplace, even though he wrote at the end of the 18th century, could never have penned such rubbish. (See Laplace, P.S. 'Exposition du systeme du monde' Volume 2, published in the year four of the Republic, 1796, in Paris.)

Momentum

Dr Cooke then goes on to explain how the 'law of the conservation of angular momentum' is contradicted by the 'Big-bang theory of Laplace'.

Discounting the fact that Dr Cooke is totally confused about Laplace's theory, let us see how this argument develops:

'One of the laws of physics, called the "law of the conservation of angular momentum", states that, "when anything revolves, fragments coming off that object will revolve in the same direction as the original object."

'For evidence we find that Venus spins in the opposite direction to the earth and Uranus, on its side, at 98 degrees to the direction of the Earth. Of the 32 moons of Saturn, one third of them spin backwards.'

Here Dr Cooke is totally confused. How he could mistake the direction of revolution of a planet around the sun for the direction of spin around its axis beggars belief.

The law of 'the conservation of angular momentum' would only be contradicted if, of course, Venus and Uranus revolved in a direction opposite to the direction in which the Sun is spinning. Which they don't.

As for the moons of Saturn, the fact that two thirds revolve in the direction of spin of the planet and one third in the other direction indicates that they were captured by the gravitational field of Saturn rather than originating during the formation of Saturn.

Perhaps the most bizarre innovation is Dr Cooke's conclusion.

Bizarre

In the past creationists have generally seen the hand of God in the perfection and regularity of nature and ascribed to the 'fall' all departures from an ideal natural order. For Dr Cooke, however, his is a God of the quirky, the unpredictable, the inconsistent.

I will let Dr Cooke have the last word and let you, the reader, be the judge.

'The only explanation for this extraordinary unconformity, is that God made them that way.'

Workers Press

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE
WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY



WORKERS PRESS is a revolutionary communist newspaper of the Trotskyist Fourth International. It will lead the fight of the working class against the Tory government and to defend democratic rights.

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

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

WORKERS PRESS has a leading part in the work of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists. It will report on the building of the Fourth International to destroy Stalinism, in the struggles of the working class and oppressed peoples in the Soviet Union, eastern and western Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and throughout the world.

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