

Workers Press

18p

ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
Saturday February 1, 1986 Number 9

£60,000 legal fund appeal

AN URGENT case must be put to all our readers to assist in accelerating the completion of our special £60,000 fund.

Having reached and passed the half-way point in our fund drive, we must state clearly that the second £30,000 is even more necessary than the first — and a glance at the legal onslaught unleashed by Murdoch against the print unions shows that the implications of vicious court

actions launched against our own organisation cannot and must not be ignored.

Having been expelled from the WRP, after having backed the grotesquely anti-working class practices of Gerry Healy, the Redgraves and others are out to use the courts to silence our Party and its newspaper. We urge that all our readers help in whatever way they can to boost the financial resources needed to fight back.

Since last Monday we have received the following amounts: Run-corn £13.00, Nottingham £7.20, Swansea £10.00, Crawley £12.24, W.W. (Australia) £9.23, Basildon £4.00, BBC £8.70, Portsmouth £5.00, Edinburgh £10.00, Paddington £10.00. This £89.37 brings our current total to £31,536.

Post all donations immediately please to: WRP, 21B Old Town, London SW4 0JT.

FULL SUPPORT TO PRINTERS!

Union officials push Fords deal

UNION leaders and some senior shop stewards have dropped all opposition to the draconian conditions attached to the proposed deal in Ford UK plants.

Voting throughout the plants is still in progress on the revised 'final offer' under which Fords have upped the first year's increase (in a two year deal) from 3 per cent to 5 per cent and removed the condition of individual signing of the productivity and efficiency clauses.

Last Thursday, union officials recommended acceptance of this 'improved' offer but with the majority of convenors opposing it — only three convenors are believed to have been for acceptance. When the proposals went back to the plants the majority of shop stewards committees rejected it. But the officials' recommendation is being put to the plants.

In the Dagenham engine plant, for instance, John Davis, T&GWU convenor and newly elected secretary of the convenors' committee, argued for acceptance but could get only three stewards to back him.

All the companies demands are still in the deal: with the increases having to be paid for by the shop floor through intensified productivity and efficiency and by doing other workers out of a job.

Ending of demarcation between trades and assembly workers, abolition of work standards established over years to enable general speed up and manning cuts is also part of the deal.

TUC leaders continued to retreat this week while newspaper magnate Rupert Murdoch, backed by the government, the High Court, police, scabs and barbed wire, stepped up the onslaught against the print unions.

Apart from refusing to call the working class into action, the general council of the TUC is still agonising over whether to go ahead next Wednesday with moves to kick out the EETPU electricians' union — a task already long overdue.

Fresh behind-the-scenes moves to try to appease Eric Hammond's right-wing bandwagon are underway from Congress House even after damning evidence presented to the TUC on Thursday.

The case against the EETPU, which faces seven TUC charges in all, says it assisted outside agencies to recruit staff on behalf of News International for training and operation of equipment at Wapping and Glasgow.

Jimmy Hayes, a former AUEW member, told the TUC hearing how he had been recruited for the company's Glasgow site after two years' unemployment. He had been interviewed in conditions of great secrecy.

An EETPU official was present at this interview and Hayes was told he would have to join that union if he got the job, and was asked would he be willing to walk through a picket line if there was trouble. Hayes left the job after a few days because he found the atmosphere 'repressive'.

Should the TUC now finally decide to suspend the EETPU, as the entire trade union movement must demand they immediately do at next Wednesday's hearing whether Hammond & Co attend or not, the responsibility for permitting News International to take the initiative must be laid with the TUC general council. The 5,000 lost jobs are merely the initial consequences.

The plea for trade unionists not to buy copies of the 'Sun' and other Murdoch papers and similar calls are pathetically inadequate. Full support

must be given to print workers' demands for the TUC to instruct a total labour and trade union black on News International and all suppliers.

But the print workers cannot be left out on strike alone. Demands for total strike action throughout the print industry must be met and full supporting action organised in the rest of the working class. Nationalisation of the whole newspaper and printing industry, under workers' control and without compensation, must be fought for.

That the TUC must not be allowed to sabotage the struggle around News International can be seen from the barrage of legal attacks that Murdoch has let loose against the unions — with Thatcher stating publicly that the Tories' full arsenal of anti-union laws is available.

GREATER London Council leader Ken Livingstone has told a Bloody Sunday rally that he apologised 'on behalf of the ordinary members of the Labour Party' for the policy of torture carried out under Roy Mason.

'Of all the Secretaries of State in Northern Ireland, none is more hated than Roy Mason,' he told a crowd of about 4,000 at the Sinn Fein rally in Derry to remember the 13 civilians murdered by the British army's Parachute Regiment in 1972.



Printworkers picketing Rupert Murdoch's fortress-like factory in Wapping

Livingstone's apology

'A Labour government that is not committed to a withdrawal will inevitably be drawn into supporting all the apparatus of repression in Ireland,' Livingstone added. 'The British people if they were ever allowed a free referendum would vote overwhelmingly tomorrow to get out of Ireland because they recognise that it is your nation and not their nation.'

The GLC leader dismissed the Anglo-Irish agreement reached between Thatcher and Eire's Fine Gael Prime Minister Garret Fitzgerald last November as a 'gimmick'.

It was during Roy Mason's period as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in the late 1970's that Britain was found guilty of torture, (later renamed 'inhuman and degrading treatment') by the European Court of Human Rights; it was he who was responsible for stripping prisoners in Long Kesh of their political rights of association, etc; and which led eventually to the hunger strikes of 1981 in which 10 prisoners gave their lives in a desperate bid for an easing of the conditions. Yet Mason is still NUM-sponsored MP for Barnsley.

After the rally, Livingstone was asked by an 'Irish Press' reporter to comment on the IRA's campaign of violence. The GLC leader replied: 'I do not see any difference when you are in a war situation between the excessive use of violence by one side of the other. You cannot have a war without people going over the top.'

'This happens when a British soldier shoots the face of a child with a plastic bullet and when an IRA bomb goes off on the streets of London. The only way to stop the war is for the British army to get out of Northern Ireland.'

'BLOODY SUNDAY' DEMONSTRATION

Sunday February 2

Assemble 1 p.m.

Speakers Corner

Speakers include:

Francie Molloy (Sinn

Fein councillor)

Jack Collins (Kent

NUM)

Unmesh Desai

(Newham 7)

Called by the Co-ordinating Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland

NEWS FROM THE AREAS

Closed shop under fire

CHIVAS brothers in Paisley, near Glasgow, is one of the few US owned firms in Scotland which operate a closed shop agreement.

John McBarron, a worker at the Chivas plant, spoke to Workers Press about recent developments.

'The first time this situation was discussed was back in March 1985, when management approached the GMBU shop stewards committee and told them of their intentions to sub-contract the work of the canteen employees. Their reason for this decision was to save the company £200,000.

'Now here we have the

key to the whole situation. It is not the £200,000, because this is mere chicken feed to a firm whose annual turnover is in excess of 25 million pounds, and is part of the Seagram Empire. This is the first step in breaking the closed shop agreement and eroding our wages and conditions which we fought for over the years.

'This dispute has shown up our full-time officials for what they really are. It becomes increasingly obvious that the union wanted to put this dispute "on ice", because management came up with a brainwave in May, which caused another dispute. This brainwave was to cut the "spell-time" of

the women who worked in the bottling lines. This, as anyone who has ever worked in a factory tied to lines knows, is the precious time that women get off because they are tied to lines on a tedious, hard job. The management wanted to cut this time by 3 minutes, and it took 3 mass meetings and a pep talk by management to defeat the women.

'Anyway, the delegate told us at one of the mass meetings that it was more important to save the canteen jobs than argue about 3 minutes, and if we would forgo this dispute we could concentrate on the canteen dispute. I spoke out sternly against the shop stewards com-

mittee changing recommendations and we only got defeated by 20 votes.

'Then came the wage negotiations in August, all the time the canteen dispute was looming nearer. I was approached by the convenor and asked not to speak out against the wage offer because, it again, would detract away from the real issue of the canteen jobs, and the delegate had promised to fight this. Needless to say, I did speak out against the offer but got defeated.

'We had three potential dispute situations, so you can see how the work force was demoralised, and the shop stewards were all over the place. We had a mass meeting before the Christmas holidays and there was a unanimous vote to support the canteen workers in their fight to save jobs.

'After the holidays, on 8th January, we had a ballot vote and we won this by 5 votes, but the GMBU call for a 60 per cent majority before they make a strike official. The convenor refused to lead a strike on such a small majority, and he also refused to resign.'

CEU expulsion fight

FOLLOWING the expulsion and subsequent witch-hunt of AUEW (construction section) militant Bill Traynor, the union's convenor at Heysham power station, Workers Press went along to his next union branch meeting.

Committee members were asked as they entered the meeting if they had anything to say regarding the Traynor case.

Branch secretary Joe Hill replied no comment, no comment. 'Well I am not here to discuss'.

James Couch, committee member, also refused to comment on the case. In fact none of the committee members made a state-

ment.

Branch members had something to say, however. Joe Lafferty, steel erector's shop steward, said: 'I think it is unfair what they have done to Bill Traynor. He has done very well for the union, he has got survival courses for our members, he has done a lot for us. I have been in this union for over twenty years, and I don't think there has been a person like Bill who has fought for the union as he has done. He has got my total support.'

John Lafferty, unemployed member, said: 'Bill has done a lot of work for the unemployed people of Liverpool and the trade

unions.'

The branch chairman, Ronald Round, told a Workers Press photographer: 'to use Tebbit's phrase, "on yer bike".'

There was, reportedly, an attempt to deny Bill Traynor the right to have access to branch minutes, but a resolution was carried by a majority vote against this move.

Afterwards Bill Traynor spoke to Workers Press. 'When people say it's wrong of me or any of our members to raise questions over Thatcher's state visit to the Heysham power station at our branch committees I have cause to wonder. It concerns me even more when these people call themselves trade unionists. It appears to me that they are more concerned to fight our membership, than the employers and this government's policy.'

Asked if he thought the committee's action would prevail he replied: 'The case is now in the procedure of our union. They are not fighting me, they are fighting our membership and I do not believe they will even get planning permission for it.'

Pickets attacked

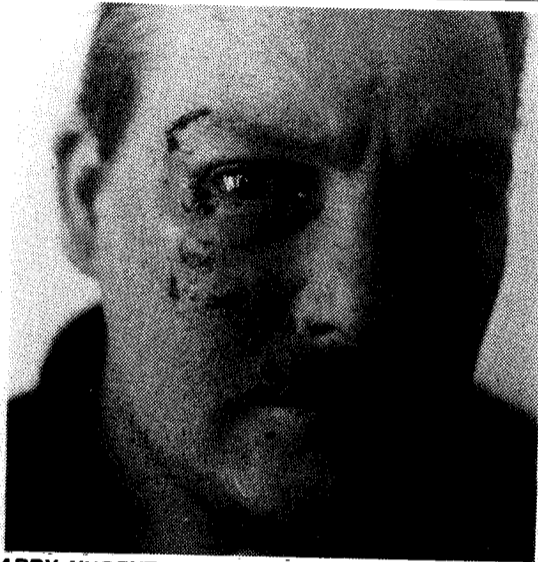
PICKETS at Al Feeds Ltd, Bootle, have been beaten up and knocked down by cars carrying scabs.

Provocations against the strikers, who have been out four weeks fighting recognition of the Transport and General Workers' Union, have intensified since scabs were brought in from Yorkshire.

In the first incident on January 22, two pickets on night duty emerged from their caravan when a car pulled up. Thinking it was support, Eric and Gary went out only to be ambushed by five scabs wearing steel toe-cap boots and carrying weapons.

Gary managed to get away for help, but Eric was trapped and viciously bated and kicked till he blacked out on the floor. He woke to find he was still being beaten and hit with iron rings. As the ambulance arrived the scabs fled.

The second incident took place the following



HARRY NUGENT: run down by a scabs' car

Friday. Police are normally on duty from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, and later on through the night. But this time, the police left at 6.55 pm. Shortly after a car carrying four scabs driven by the foreman swung out of the factory gate and smashed into the awaiting pickets.

Two pickets, Billy Braddock and Harry Nugent, were very badly injured. Billy was badly cut and bruised and got a twisted cartilage in his leg. Harry received a

smashed cheek bone cuts and bruises and glass in his right eye. Subsequently he had to go to hospital for treatment.

Despite police threats to charge pickets when there is more than four on the line, the turn out of supporters is still growing.

Messages of support and financial donations should be sent to Paul Shaw, Al Feeds shop steward, c/o Transport House, Islington, Liverpool.

Build alliances against the cuts

ON DECEMBER 5th more than 80 per cent of teachers in Scotland took part in the biggest national strike ever to take place north of the border.

In Glasgow over 10,000 marched through the city centre to a mass rally in George Square and similar demonstrations were held in towns and cities from Dumfries in the south-west to Aberdeen in the north-east.

For over 18 months Scottish teachers have been campaigning on the basis of national strikes, local strikes and a strict work-to-contract in support of their demand for an independent pay review.

This demand — originally brought forward by the leadership of the biggest teacher's union, the Educational Institute of Scotland — has mobilised tens of thousands of teachers in the most militant campaign in the history of Scottish education.

The reason for such militancy is self-evident: over the last ten years Scottish teachers have seen their standard of living fall by almost 40 per cent.

The teachers' campaign has won widespread support and has the backing of the TUC, the Scottish TUC, the Labour Party, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and many parents' and community groups. Even the Scottish press has been largely supportive of the teacher's action — sometimes outspokenly so.

Throughout the dispute, however, Thatcher and her henchmen at the Scottish Education Department have remained ada-

mant that they have no intention of financing an acceptable pay settlement.

The teachers' campaign has now reached an important crossroads and more and more questions are being asked as to how the campaign can be strengthened and its objectives achieved.

The simple truth is this: by keeping the campaign purely at the level of a wage dispute, the leadership of the EIS (ably assisted by the Stalinists of the Communist party) has placed a straight-jacket on the teachers' action.

Question

At the heart of the dispute lies the question of opposition to the cuts and the defence of the public education service. The erosion of pay is only one aspect of this general question.

Education spending programmes have been cut back every year since 1975. They were first instituted by a Labour government. In the grant, Labour-controlled Strathclyde Region more than 4,000 teaching jobs have been lost since 1979. Their staffing standards are now poorer even than Tory local authorities in Scotland.

Thousands of school textbooks are filthy, falling apart and outdated — they should have been dumped years ago. Basic equipment cannot be requisitioned, replaced or even repaired.

Local authority schools and colleges present a

sorry picture of crumbling walls and windows frames, leaking roofs — dingy and poorly lit. Essential repairs and maintenance have been cut to the point where thousands of educational establishments are no more than slowly crumbling hulks, with the local authorities flouting their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

The Tories, meanwhile, have sold off Hamilton College of Education to the private sector at barely a quarter of its market value.

Privatisation is a great and growing threat and it is a matter of the record that by their insistence on co-operating with cheap-labour MSC schemes the door was opened to privatisation by the Stalinists of the Communist Party inside the EIS and particularly its further education section.

The militancy shown by Scottish teachers over pay during the last 18 months is the clearest possible indication of their willingness to defend the whole public education system. By broadening their campaign to include the entire question of the cuts, the teachers can develop a stronger base from which to attack the horrendous social policies of the Tories.

The campaign to defend the education service would provide the bridge between the teachers' and parents and community groups. By building teachers' support groups in communities all over the country,

the attempt by the Tories to stir up antagonism between pupils and parents on the one hand and teachers on the other can be completely confounded.

A principled campaign against the cuts would also provide the basis for a real alliance of public sector unions and transform the present formal support for the teachers' case into real unity in a campaign of joint action.

This development is already underway in Strathclyde Region where a joint council of trade unions has been formed and a mass meeting of shop stewards has been organised for later this month to consider their reaction to the latest cuts proposed by the local authority.

Future

Such a campaign, too, would rapidly expose the present reformist leadership of the teachers' unions and their Stalinist backers, who are struggling might and main to hold the teachers' action at a 'safe' level and to keep the teachers' isolated from the joint action with other public unions. It would also expose the reformist leaders of the local authorities who mouth support for the teachers' while happily imposing the cash limits of the Tories.

The teachers and their unions are confronted by the most vicious anti-working class government in 50 years — a government prepared to go to great lengths to destroy the social gains of the working class (public education, the health service, social security etc.) and to smash or seriously damage the trade unions in the process.

JOIN THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

FILL IN THIS FORM AND POST TO:
The General Secretary
21B Old Town, Clapham
London SW4 0JT

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TRADE UNION _____

AGE _____

DATE SENT _____

A BACKBENCH BONAPARTE!

THE posturing and demagogic declamations of the Healy rump have reached new and even more hysterical heights. This is presumably a last attempt to whip up enthusiasm for the 're-launch' of the daily newspaper with its resultant massive 'backdebt' and fund targets.

In last Wednesday's issue of the rump's News Line, dated January 22, it was proclaimed that Heseltine was now a 'Bonaparte' as well as Thatcher.

'Both are Bonapartes' the News Line Editorial Board screeched, no doubt to the surprise of the demoted Heseltine who has received this unlooked-for promotion only from Healy's clique. According to Alex Mitchell, who no doubt penned this garbage, Heseltine is parading himself around as 'self-styled leader of the Europeans'.

Sinking

It is interesting to note that the previous Wednesday's Newsline had Heseltine leaving the 'sinking ship' of the Tory government, after a premonition about the future of the Thatcher regime — 'in order to further his own Bonapartist political ambitions'. Within a week he had supposedly assumed the mantle of Napoleon, only to be seen this week cringing before Thatcher in the Westland debate. Obviously they don't make Bonapartes like they used to.

No doubt for someone fully schooled in Healyite 'dialectics' the key to unlocking the real movement behind the crisis of capitalism is to find out what leaders 'style' themselves. Or in this case, as Heseltine has not yet adopted the title of 'Bonaparte' or 'leader of the Europeans' it is to confer upon them such a title and then lo and behold they are what you say they are. In a group in which the invisible leader was wont to style himself 'the objective situation' such thinking is indeed possible.

It is instructive to look back to the days when Bonapartes were only supposed to be aspiring to the title. In the perspectives for the Re-called Fifth Congress of the Workers Revolutionary Party, held on January 2-3 1981 when Healy was still in charge, the emergence of the S.D.P. was to mark 'a powerful swing among the middle class towards Bonapartism'. The perspectives, written by Healy himself, identified Roy Jenkins and Ed-

BY MIKE HOWGATE

ward Heath as potential contenders! In the same perspectives document it was also proposed that the appointment of Jim Mortimer as Labour Party secretary heralded a 'behind-the-scenes search for a mini-Bonaparte to maintain the "old rump" of Labour safe for the right wing of the trade unions'.

While, of course, tendencies in a Bonapartist direction by certain elements of all the major political parties can be identified at one time or another, it is quite another thing to come out with a characterisation of the Thatcher regime as expressing fully blown Bonapartism. The use of the term to describe the individual Heseltine is particularly ridiculous, as the term Bonapartism is used to describe a particular type of bourgeois government in which the Bonaparte himself acts as arbiter between class forces by raising himself above them and relying increasingly on the state. The fact that Heseltine is sulking on the backbenches immediately disqualifies him even if he might like to be considered for the post.

Can the Thatcher government then be described in a scientific, Marxist way as being Bonapartist? Does the fact that her government uses the police in industrial disputes and relegates parliament to a rubber stamp for her cabinet, and increasingly, individual decisions mark out her administration as a qualitatively different type of bourgeois rule — the 'Thatcherism' of the Euro-stalinists or the 'Bonapartism' of the Healy clique.

Decrees

In his analysis of the regimes which preceeded Hitler in Germany, Trotsky discusses the question of Bonapartism in relation to the administrations of Bruening and von Papen. This is how Trotsky designated the Bruening government which at that time 'thanks to the Social Democracy... had at its disposal the support of parliament for ruling with the aid of emergency decrees' ('Germany The Only Road', in 'Germany 1931-1932', New Park).

'In its time, we designated the Bruening government as Bonapartism ("caricature of Bonapartism"), that is, as a regime of military-police dictatorship. As soon as the struggle of two social strata - the haves and the have-nots, the exploiter and the exploited - reaches its highest tension, the conditions are given for the domination of bureaucracy, police and soldiery. The govern-

ment becomes "independent" of society. Let us once more recall: if two forks are stuck symmetrically into a cork, the latter can stand even on the head of a pin. That is precisely the schema of Bonapartism. To be sure, such a government does not cease being the clerk of the property owners. Yet the clerk sits on the back of the boss, rubs his neck raw and does not hesitate at times to dig his boots into his face.'

With the advent of the von Papen government, however, Trotsky saw that a correction was necessary to his designation of the Bruening regime as Bonapartist. 'Were to be exact', he wrote, 'we should have to make a rectification of our old designation: the Bruening government was a **pre-Bonapartist government** (my emphasis, MH). Bruening was only a precursor. In a perfected form, Bonapartism came upon the scene in the Papen-Schleicher government.'

'Wherein lies the difference?' Trotsky continues, 'Bruening asserted that he knew no greater happiness than to "serve" Hin-

denburg and Paragraph 48. Hitler 'supported' Bruening's right hip with his fist. But with his left elbow Bruening rested on Wels' shoulder' (Wels was a leader of the German Social Democrats - MH).

Expose

Trotsky explains the evolution of this pure form of Bonapartism as follows: 'The more Bruening's independence from the parliament grew, the more independent did the summits of the bureaucracy feel themselves from Bruening and the political groupings standing behind him. There only remained finally to break the bonds with the Reichstag. The von Papen government emerged from an immaculate bureaucratic conception. With its right elbow it rests upon Hitler's shoulder. With its police fist it wards off the proletariat on the Left. Therein lies the secret of its 'stability', that is, of the fact that it did not collapse at the moment of its birth'.

Only in the wildest imagination could the present Tory government be



HESELTINE . . . giving the orders?

interpreted as conforming to 'Bonapartism'. This method of rule, although somewhat variable depending on national and historical circumstances, always relies on a balancing act, an act which Thatcher with her massive majority sees no need to indulge in. The oft-repeated line of Healy, that she will never allow another election and will instead dispense with parliament and move directly to police-military rule is nothing but speculation. In any event the classic 'electoral' strategy of Bonapartism is the plebiscite. In his pamphlet 'The Work-

ers' State and the Question of Thermidor and Bonapartism' Trotsky describes the Stalin regime as 'plebiscitary or Bonapartist'. He then goes on to describe a regime which members of the WRP will remember with a shudder:

'Stalin is the judge-arbiter, the fountain of all boons, and the defender from all possible opposition. In return for this, the bureaucracy, from time to time, presents Stalin with the sanction of a national plebiscite. Party congresses, like Soviet congresses, are organised upon a sole criterion: for or against Sta-

lin? Only "counter-revolutionists" can be against, and they are dealt with as they deserve. Such is the present-day mechanism of rule. This is a Bonapartist mechanism. No other definition for it can be found as yet in a political dictionary.'

Perhaps a new entry in the political dictionary could read: 'Healyism — tin-pot, parish-pump Bonapartism, a diminutive caricature of Stalinism as formerly practiced in Fortress Clapham by one G. Healy, degenerate and renegade from Trotskyism.'



BRUENING (right) with von Hindenburg

Community will fight closure

A RALLY of 2,000 miners' with many NUM, Women Support group banners left Hemsworth last Saturday for Kinsley.

The march was quiet except for two bands near the front. But a feeling of determination and strength was generated that morning.

Many local people and councillors came out to support the march. As Mrs G. Wileman councillor for Fitzwilliam said: 'We supported the lads all through the strike, we will support them now and whenever necessary. The whole community does.'

Kinsley Pit had already voted in a ballot 4-1 in favour of fighting the closure. The meeting that followed the rally contained at least 400 miners' and supporters'. The chairs ran out, the tables and the floor space were filled up — there was only

ceiling space left.

A platform of Peter Heathfield, McNestry (NACODS), Linda Turgoose (Community Action Group for Kinsley), David McIntyre (COHSA), Sammy Thompson (NUM Yorkshire Executive) and others showed a united face to fight the closure of Kinsley.

Heathfield made a rousing speech. He related the principle 'no one has the right to vote someone out of a job'. He supported the ballot at Kinsley because everybody voting had a stake in the future of Kinsley. Mentioning the teachers' he said they would be stronger now had they supported the miners' struggle. He called on miners to support the NGA in their present struggle.

The UDM was the butt of his sarcasm as he slammed them saying 'its

biggest function was in suspending members who are becoming loyal to the NUM'. Figures for December 1985 show 13.9 per cent of the NUM had joined the UDM, but this figure included all the Nottingham men who are loyal to the NUM. Less than 2 per cent are from outside Nottingham. In recent votes north Wales and Leicester had stayed with the NUM.

Heathfield continued 'Miners were sacked in 1926 who never got their jobs back. This will not happen again. Events in 1926 led also to the united union and the public ownership of the mines.'

He finished by saying how important the fantastic support of the women was. Together we can win.

Heathfield did not diminish the problems facing miners. Recent news shows that 25 mines

here have been closed since the end of the strike. But Polkemmet (Scotland), Bates and Horden (Durham), Kinsley Drift (Yorks) and Tilmanstone (Kent) are resisting closure.

McNestry of NACODS spoke. He had a very rough reception, however the miners allowed him to speak because he was man enough to come and face them and he wanted to fight the threatened closure of Kinsley.

He said that mistakes had been made but he was not here to ask for forgiveness, he was here to work with the NUM and others. Miners welcomed him to the meeting but will obviously keep a wary eye on him.

One local opponent of NACODS past record of not fighting with the NUM was Bill Pearson a delegate from Dearne Valley Colliery who said:

'I have no confidence in the NACODS leadership to call a strike. They will throw their weight with the NCB and sell out the NUM like they did before'. NACODS will have to prove themselves if they want to win the confidence of the membership.

Sammy Thompson (Yorkshire Executive) speaking to the meeting reminded everybody of the miners who have died in the struggle, like Joe Green and David Jones: 'David died on March 21, and is buried close by at South Kirby — remember that. 139 are still sacked, some still in jail — never forget that,' he said.

He criticised those in the labour movement that condemned miners for violence. He asked were was their apology when it was proved even in a bourgeois court that many miners were innocent.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign:

2nd March

for anniversary of 1984/1985 Miners' Strike

Demonstration

1.30pm Jubilee Gardens, County Hall, London SE1

Rally & Concert

4.30pm Hyde Park and 6.30pm Royal Albert Hall, Kensington

A contribution to the discussion in the WRP

THE 'PRACTIC COGNITION'?



LENIN fought to develop philosophy on the basis of the latest scientific developments

THE central practice called for in every one of the perspectives documents of the International Committee of the Fourth International and its sections for at least the last ten years has been the training of the cadres, particularly the youth, in the 'practice of cognition'.

Sometimes it is called instead 'the process of cognition' and sometimes even 'dialectical materialism'. Both of these last two terms, though in fact meaning something else entirely, were used to mean this same 'practice of cognition'.

Healy personally placed himself in charge of this training of cadres. Perspectives and policies constantly changed, but the struggle for 'the practice of cognition' went on as the main fight in the International.

What is 'the practice of cognition'? There is in fact no such thing. It didn't take Marx to understand this. The question was first clearly dealt with by Spinoza. Spinoza's contribution is described by Ilyenkov in 'Dialectical Logic', page 33:

'By a simple turn of thought Spinoza cut the Gordian knot of the "psychophysical problem", the mystic

insolubility of which still torments the mass of theoreticians and schools of philosophy, physiology of the higher nervous system, and other related sciences that are forced one way or another to deal with the delicate theme of the relation of "thought" to "body", of "spiritual" to "material", "ideal" to "real", and such like topics.

'Spinoza showed that it is only impossible to solve the problem because it is absolutely wrongly posed; and that such posing of it is nothing but the fruit of imagination.

'It is in man that Nature really performs, in a self-evident way, that very activity that we are accustomed to call "thinking". In man, in the form of man, in his person, Nature itself thinks, and not at all some special substance, source or principle instilled into it from outside.

'In man, therefore, Nature thinks of itself, becomes

This article by Chris Bailey, a member of the Cambridge branch of the Workers Revolutionary Party, takes up the so-called 'practice of cognition' preached by G. Healy, former leader of the WRP. Healy was expelled from the party last October on charges of sexual abuse of female comrades, physical abuse, and slandering a US Trotskyist leader. Comrade Bailey's contribution forms part of the discussion taking place following the expulsion of Healy and the split with his followers

aware of itself, senses itself, acts on itself. And the "reasoning", "consciousness", "idea", "sensation", "will", and the other special actions that Descartes described as *modi of thought*, are simply different modes of revealing a property inalienable from Nature as a whole, one of its own attributes.'

The process of cognition, and it is a process not a practice, can only be studied as a property of nature as a whole. On page 90 of Vol. 38 of Lenin's Collected Works, Lenin quotes with approval Hegel's description of what happens if you separate thought from nature:

'[N.B. also p. 11 . . . "But if Nature in general is opposed as physical, to what is mental, then it must be said that logic is rather something supernatural . . ."]'

Hegel was here undoubtedly-

ly referring to Kant. Hegel recognised that Kant had assumed a dualist position with the categories of thought on the one side and the 'thing in itself' on the other. Hegel knew that this dualist position had to be overcome.

In the summer school at the College of Marxist Education two years ago, Healy declared the main struggle in the WRP to be the struggle against Kantianism. He declared that he personally was leading this fight. His solution to the dualism of Kant was quite simple: he just totally ignored the problem which led to Kant's position in the first place!

He declared that the unity between thought and nature was sensation. He said that, in order to overcome idealism, it was necessary to start always from 'immediate being' as perceived in 'sense-perception'. His writings on an earlier school describe what he saw as the problem:

'We emphasised the essence of Leninist materialism by stressing that if ever the student was in doubt, the origins of materialism were affected from without, reflected in the form of sensation.

Imposed

'Whereas the origins of idealism were from within and resulted in thoughts being imposed upon the external world and not derived from it.' ('Studies in Dialectical Materialism', page 76.)

Hegel was quite clear on where this starting purely from 'sense-perception' led: 'Besides, this school makes sense-perception the form in which fact is to be apprehended; and in this consists the defect of Empiricism. Sense-perception as such is always individual, always transient: not indeed that the process of knowledge stops short at sensation; on the contrary it proceeds to find out the universal and permanent element in the individual apprehended by sense. This is the process leading from simple perception to experience.' ('Small Logic', page 62.)

In fact it did not take much thought for Hegel to write the above. The weakness in starting from sense perception was first realised by Hume and it was the central

Dublin street traders' protest

DUBLIN — Street traders organised a march to Mountjoy jail in protest at the imprisonment of Tony Gregory, an independent socialist member of the Irish parliament.

Gregory had been jailed for refusing to give an undertaking he would not take part in demonstrations. He had been ordered by the District Court to sign a bond stating he would not participate in further protest marches.

The order had been issued on October 29 last when Gregory was convicted of threatening and insulting behaviour during a street traders' demonstration last March.

Last weekend's march to Mountjoy was joined by hundreds of mainly women traders, who sell everything from fruit to trinkets. The City Centre Business Association says street trading damages members' businesses and devalues their property.

In a statement published last weekend, Gregory said he had refused to sign the bond because it was the only way to emphasise the importance of peaceful public protest to disadvantaged communities. Street traders, he said, had exhausted every channel to get licences but had been frustrated at every turn by wealthy businesses who had used all their influence to stop them.



Marching to Mountjoy prison . . . street traders in Dublin

Workers Press COMMENT

Gerry's Daily Liar

TODAY the Healy clique launch their daily 'News Line'. It appears less than four months after the expulsion of Gerry Healy and his supporters from the Workers Revolutionary Party.

This is the most remarkable political resurrection since Lazarus. This paper will be produced by a group whose leader is still in hiding from the working-class movement, having refused to account for his activities to the party he led for more than 40 years.

Healy deserted the WRP rather than face charges of sexual abuse of women comrades, violence against party cadres, slandering the leader of the US Workers League, Comrade David North, as an agent of the CIA, and breaching an agreement with the party's political committee.

Some of his followers, like Alex Mitchell, brazenly claim in public that the charges against him were all lies. Others, like Sheila Torrance, admit that some of the charges are true, but claim that Healy's 'private life' is his own affair.

Torrance can hardly deny the truth of the charge of sexual abuse because she was actually present when Healy signed a declaration that he would cease 'my personal conduct with the youth'. The mistyping was the work of another renegade, Claire Dixon.

What characterises the rump group is that they endorse every single one of Healy's practices over the last half-century. Healy, their guru, can do no wrong. They are more a cult than a political organisation and all the sacrifice they can muster from their 200-odd members will be as unproductive as Healy's loveless couplings.

The political basis of the new daily is already evident. It will perpetuate Healy's paranoid ravings about the imminence of capitalist collapse and the struggle for power (a line he has clung to for at least the last decade), the Bonapartist nature of Thatcher's government and the revolutionary syllogism, a device which Healy patented.

The new daily will doubtless sing the praises of Sir Michael Redgrave and his dynasty; there will be uncritical (and unreadable) accounts of life in various parts of the Middle East and there will be articles purporting to prove that other revisionist groups are run by intelligence agents.

The rump group will undoubtedly trumpet the attainment of daily production as a major achievement. It may even impress some members of our own organisation. But a lie told six times a week is no better than the same lie told twice a week. In fact it is three times worse.

The Healy group is founded on a historical lie. It is that Healy is the sole incarnation of the continuity of Trotskyism and the struggle for dialectical materialism. As Chris Bailey has demonstrated in his article on pages 4 and 5, this claim is without foundation.

We will no doubt be told that we are being wise after the event. For years prior to the split the entire WRP defended the same untenable assertions as are now advanced by the rump. We reply that it is certainly better to be wise after the event than to be for ever ignorant.

The entire record of Healy and the organisations he led must now be the subject of the most thoroughgoing scrutiny. This is the sole basis for any regeneration of the WRP.

Like the proverbial mule, the Healy group has the most dubious ancestry and absolutely no hope of progeny. They don't attempt to explain either where they came from or where they are going. As Torrance told London members before the split: 'We must never re-examine our own history.'

This rump exists to protect Healy from the consequences of his own anti-party actions. All their blethering about the WRP's political evolution cannot hide their own status as the friends of rape.

Mitchell's in-tray is overflowing with correspondence on this very topic. But it will never see the light of day. The bogus 'News Line' will only publish letters that sing its own praises. Healy has spawned another monstrosity. He is more than welcome to it.

Bloody Sunday, D

Anatomy of the massacre: by a victim's father

FOURTEEN years ago, on January 30, 1972, the British army killed 13 unarmed demonstrators in Derry. One was James Wray, aged 22, who died a few yards from his grandmother's back door on the edge of the Bogside.

The two bullets that killed him entered the right side of his back, just below the shoulder blade. On the anniversary of what the world came to know as 'Bloody Sunday', James Wray, 67, the father of the murdered young man, spoke to Workers Press reporter Chris Corrigan

MY wife, myself and six members of our family took part in the march. It was against internment, British law under which people could be taken out of their homes and imprisoned without charge.

It was, of course, aimed at the Catholic population and was the latest in a series of attacks on them. The civil rights movement had grown since the loyalist shooting down of Catholics in Belfast in 1969 and had shown itself capable of bringing 30,000 on to the streets of the north of Ireland.

The RUC, which was supposed to be a police force, but in fact has always been a bigoted, anti-Catholic force, had treated the civil rights marchers with the utmost brutality.

We had Harold Wilson, the Labour Prime Minister at the time, saying on TV that he had seen the brutality of the police, had seen what was happening here, and was going to remedy it. That, anyway, was his public face.

But privately, and secretly, Wilson and the rest of the British govern-

ment had sent over army observers to the north of Ireland to see how much gas would be needed for the Bogside and elsewhere. The nationalist people here didn't ask for the British army to be sent here. It was the RUC who asked for the army. This was to enable the RUC to get back into the Catholic areas — because the RUC had been forced out of these areas and had no way of dealing with the situation.

The British government could not allow the thousands of civil rights protesters who were com-

ing on the streets to stay on the streets — after all, these people could not all be 'terrorists'.

Bloody Sunday was not some over-reaction by individual British soldiers, as some people would have it. It was a well-laid plan, and the cabinet of the Tory government in 1972 must have known about it in advance. I'm convinced of that.

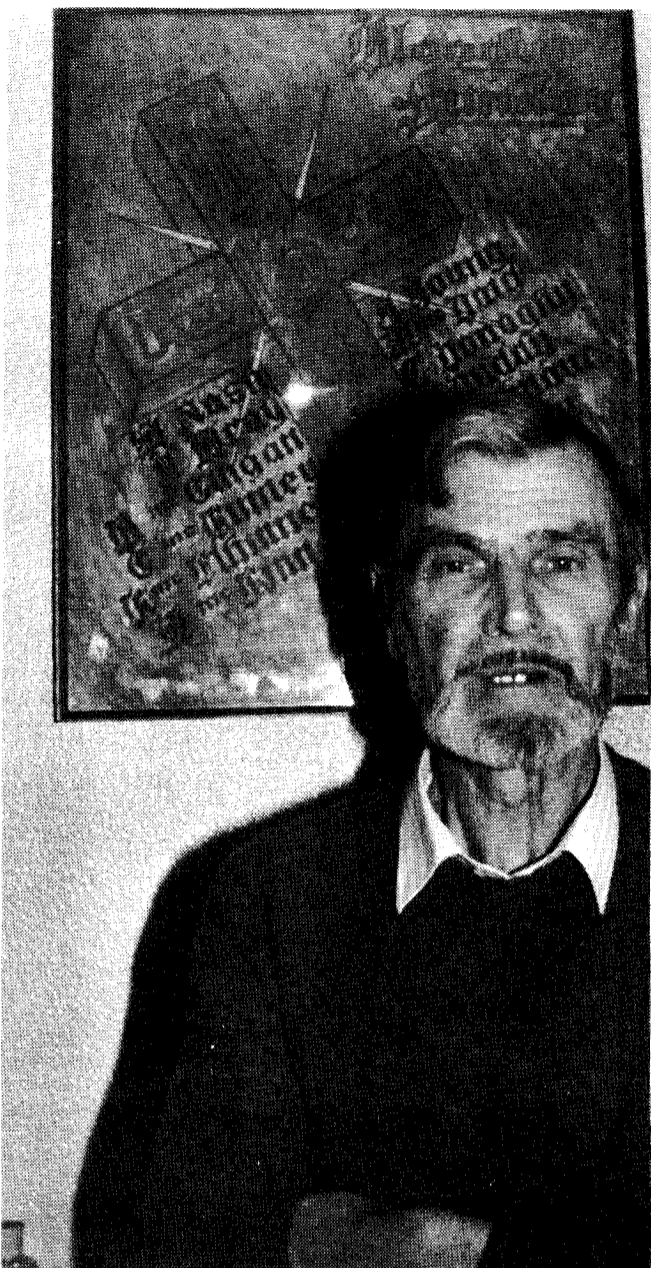
Before the march on Bloody Sunday, the Provisional IRA put out a statement they would not be taking part in the march; that they would stay back to defend Creggan, or otherwise the army would use the opportunity to get into Creggan.

Wounded

On the march itself, the British army first of all opened fire and wounded three people in William Street. They wanted to see if the IRA were in the vicinity. When there was no return of fire, the army knew the Provos had kept to their statement.

Of the 13 victims of Bloody Sunday, seven were shot in the back. My son James was shot three times. He was shot in the back in Glenfada Park, and lay half on the footpath and half in the gutter.

Lots of people were off the street, and hiding in houses. A quartermaster sergeant from the Irish national army, home in Derry on leave, saw my son and tried to get to him to rescue him. As he approached my son the army opened up. The



James Wray, senior, beside a Bloody Sunday memorial in his

quartermaster sergeant told me later that he knew then the British army were leaving my son's body so that anyone who tried to rescue him would get shot too.

Three paratroopers moved right forward, and one stayed 10 feet from James, behind him, while the other two went into an alleyway. These two shot the McIlhinneys. One of the McIlhinneys had his two hands above his head and said, 'Don't shoot me, I'm unarmed.' He was shot dead.

The first para had been watching my son for 10 minutes. My son lifted his head. My son's body lifted twice as as the para pumped two more bullets into him.

That is what they are; sub-human. They say the British army is here for peace-keeping. But you don't see soldiers walking round with olive branches do you? No, they're carrying high velocity weapons to terrorise the people.

The army opened up with live rounds on a group I was with, as we were trying to get back into the Bogside. I managed to get back to my house. It was crowded. A woman was trying to wash her coat in the bath. She was being pushed and pulled. The army opened up. The

I went back down. I saw a civil rights banner with blood on it and went to pick it up. Someone said, 'Don't touch it, there's a body.' Underneath was Barney McGuigan, who had waved a white handkerchief as he tried to get to Paddy Doherty, who dying in the street. They blew the head off Barney McGuigan.

Heart

Later, when relatives got over to the hospital to identify bodies, the RUC and soldiers were inside the hospital and jeering and laughing at the relatives arriving. Another person shot was Gerard Donaghy. He'd been shot in the head. The private car used to rush him to hospital was held up for an hour by the RUC and army on the underdeck of the bridge on the route to the hospital.

The British army is still here after 15 or 16 years. They came here initially to get the RUC into the Catholic areas. They also had the idea of destroying the IRA. That, of course, was a pipe-dream.

Thatcher has no chance. I would say the Provisional IRA are stronger now than ever before. When the Provisional IRA were in 1969 there was no Provisional IRA in Derry. In a way,

erry — 14th anniversary

RELATIVES FIGHT SUPERGRASSES

From Chris Corrigan

FRANK STEENSON is the treasurer of Relatives for Justice, an organisation which grew out of the hundreds of savage jail sentences handed out by the courts in the north of Ireland on the evidence of supergrasses.

His own son, Gerard Steenson, was incarcerated for four years before even taken into court for trial. Then he had six life sentences imposed upon him, with the judge recommending a minimum of 25 years. But he is just one of the many, many victims of the supergrasses — or 'paid-perjurers' as they are known in the nationalist areas.

At a recent demonstration by Relatives for Justice outside the High Court in Belfast, Frank Steenson carried a placard saying, 'No country has a monopoly on corruption or injustice: but Britain has applied for a patent.' Later he spoke to Workers Press

WE RELATIVES are fighting for justice for all those jailed under the supergrasses.

But we are having a hard fight because the judiciary accept the evidence of these paid-perjurers. Many of these supergrasses — the number of them is now getting near to 30 — have been given large sums of money, given false identities, and shipped out in the middle of the night.

You can, of course, be held for four years or more before even being sentenced by the courts.

The English public are quite ignorant of what happens in the north of Ireland. All they see is the headlines in the media. The sort of things really happening to members of the nationalist population here is not publicised at all.

Scape-goats are picked out. Often the first Irish people who happen to be handy have been lifted. Catholic people in the north of Ireland are being jailed as a sop to the loyalists. Literally hundreds have been victims of this.

(The first 25 supergrasses 'named' a total of 426 people that the RUC and British Army wanted charged. 15 of these supergrasses, however, subsequently retracted their statements).

The British government has known on many occasions they have done wrong things — putting innocent people into prison. But that same government will never, never admit that they have committed a wrong and that the British have corrupted justice to keep the heat off themselves.

You only have to look back to what was going on only a few years ago. The gerrymandering. I live just off the Falls Road,

I'm from a family of 11 children. That was 13 of us in the house altogether. But even when most of us were grown up, not one of us could vote in the elections, simply because my grandfather's name was on the rent book and nobody else's. Only a householder could vote.

So for years and years West Belfast, with a large majority of nationalist people in it, could never vote an MP into Stormont. Little has really changed

Groups

We don't represent any one particular group. We represent all groups, and in the past have met loyalist prisoners relatives' groups before they were warned off by other loyalists.

We've been going now for about four years, since this started with supergrasses. Some have admitted in court they are perjurers.

One famous one, John Grimley from Craigavon, actually said in court he had been told to name various people. The trial, with 22 defendants, collapsed after five days. Accused people named by Grimley had been in prison for 22 months on his discredited evidence. It is on record that it was the



Frank Steenson

RUC who told the supergrass to name Thomas Power, Gerard Steenson and John O'Reilly.

(Thomas Power and Gerard Steenson became the longest-ever serving remand prisoners after that; being held for four years on remand. On other informant evidence, Power was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment; Steenson 25 years; while O'Reilly is in Portlaine prison in the south facing extradition proceedings to the north, on the word of Harry Kirkpatrick).

Grimley admitted in court he didn't even know these people, and had

been told by the RUC that if he didn't name them he wouldn't be given immunity.

As soon as these three were released, they only got to the door and were immediately re-arrested under supergrass, Harry Kirkpatrick (Belfast ex-INLA member who has 'named' 38 people in all after himself being 'named' by Grimley and two other supergrasses).

Justice

There is no justice here. for nationalist people in the courts. That has been

proved time and time again.

No judge has yet accepted supergrass evidence against a loyalist. There is the question of two loyalists, in separate cases, of sectarian murders of Catholics. They were given suspended sentences.

One of the defendants accused by Kirkpatrick was given 12 years on a burglary charge; that's Dermot Drain, from Twinbrook.

There was a man sentenced last weekend who broke into a woman's house, beat her up, raped her and then robbed her. He got five years for

aggravated assault, rape and burglary. It was, of course, a loyalist judge who sentenced him.

Fined

In another case against two men, one a UDR man, a young girl had been raped. The girl's parents were told by the RUC they were not needed in court. The judge fined them £90 each.

This is to highlight the difference. One man gets 12 years for a burglary, while others convicted in more serious cases get less than half the sentence, or even a fine. 9

the British army was responsible for the growth of the Provisional IRA here.

I know nothing about the structure of the Provisional IRA, but I believe they have survived and grown because they've the support of the people. The freedom fighters of the IRA have the right to defend and the right to put the British invaders out of here.

As for Thatcher, she said 'Use the ballot box.' But what happened when ballot boxes were used by Sinn Fein? The British government is now framing laws to prevent Sinn Fein candidates from standing in elections!

As for the likes of Garret FitzGerald in Dublin, FitzGerald would not have the faintest idea what an Irish nationalist is. He would do anything for England — and John Hume of the SDLP is the same. In fact, I can soon see Hume joining 'Fitt the Brit' in the House of Lords.

One last point: it was the leader of the British TUC — Vic Feather at that time — who went out to the United States immediately after Bloody Sunday to tell the American public that on Bloody Sunday it had been nail-bombers and gunmen who had been shot. I'll always remember that too.

BLIDWORTH BOOK LAUNCH THIS WEEKEND

Through womens' eyes

'SHIFTING Horizons' (Canary Press, £5.65) is the oral account of two striking miners' wives of their experiences throughout the 12-month strike, recorded, edited and written by Lynn Beaton, a visiting Australian journalist, who lived with them for six months during the strike.

Doreen Humber and Pauline Radford live in Blidworth, the North Notts village to which the police laid siege in 1984. They are both married to striking miners employed at Blidworth colliery, each with a family of young children to maintain.

Neither of them had any enthusiasm for the strike at the beginning and hoped their husbands wouldn't get involved. Both mistrusted Arthur Scargill.

When the closure of Cortonwood was announced and Yorkshire miners came out on strike, Pauline's youngest child was seriously ill and she was staying with him at the Nottingham General Hospital when her husband,

Alan arrived unexpectedly one afternoon and announced he was on strike.

Miners from Yorkshire had put a picket on Blidworth pit which Alan would not cross.

Pauline was torn between the miner husband's principle of not crossing the picket line and the needs of her sick child.

Doreen and her husband faced intractable financial difficulties.

Doubts

The lack of a decisive strike call from Notts area NUM increased their doubts and confusion.

The two men were in an intolerable position. Not wishing to hurt their wives they went to work, and were sickened by their action of crossing the picket line. When a special picket was put on by the pit branch committee, they refused to cross it.

That decision changed dramatically the lives of Doreen Humber and Pauline Radford. Their story is also the story of thousands of women — wives, mothers, sisters — who became involved in the struggle of the miners against pit closures and the break-up of the mining communities. A story of women who displayed enormous courage, determination, ingenuity, organising ability, sentiment, firmness, humour, despair and above all an unshakeable class consciousness. A story of the comradeship of a community in struggle to uphold their basic rights.

Doreen and Pauline joined two or three women on the picket line. Five weeks into the strike

they attended a meeting to discuss how to feed the striking miners and their families. With half-a-dozen or so other women from the village they took full responsibility for this task and were catapulted into a struggle they could not possibly have envisaged prior to March 1984.

Occupation

To secure suitable premises to set up a kitchen and dining facilities, the Blidworth women's committee organised an occupation of the local youth club. Like similar committees throughout the country they organised collections of food and money.

They became involved in every aspect of the

strike — speaking at meetings, appearing on television and radio broadcasts, meeting other trade unionists, picketing, persuading the pit canteen staff not to cross the picket line. Every day striving to improve on the previous day's performance in all the work they did.

They no longer recognised themselves as the women they had been before becoming involved in the strike. Pauline reports on their radio interview:

'Doreen said: "Well nobody likes a strike, let's face it, nobody wants to be on the dole either. What choice do we have, we either fight and try to keep our men in work for the next ten years or we give up, that's our

choice."

"We want to be able to go out to work, to work and have what we're used to, we want a good wage, and a good living so we can bring our children up properly." I added, "And jobs for your children at the end of it as well . . . We want some future for them."

Doreen talked a bit about her teenage lads all facing unemployment, then the interviewer cut her off. We got the feeling that he really only wanted to know about the hardship (of the striking miners' families) he didn't want to hear about the importance of what we were fighting for.'

Doreen explains how she became conscious of her developing political awareness:

'It was like a lot of scrambled bits of information suddenly became sorted out and when that happened I started to realise that I was a political person. I remembered watching the Brixton riots on television. At the time I believed what the television said, that the police had to stop these race riots. Then when I saw what the police did to us on the picket line, and when I could see what the government was going to us I started to wonder what they'd done to those black people to make them riot like that. I was beginning to have some confidence in my knowledge, not just about the strike but about other things as well.'

Surprised

By September Pauline was 'surprised at how complete my involvement was. The issues of the strike really ate at me inside, really made me want to stand up and say "All right, enough is enough. I won't take this. I will do something to change it." Once you've felt that once, you can feel it again over other things and we all knew that we'd never be the same again, that we'd always fight when we saw something that we thought was wrong.'

The occupation and siege of Blidworth by riot police has become one of the legends of the miners' strike. It is detailed by Doreen and Pauline, not just as observers, but as victims of the police attack.

The vicious harassment by the police of miners' families, the provocations, arrests, jail sentences, sackings — all the experiences of the strike nationally, are mirrored in the testimony of Doreen and Pauline.

They received the news of the end of the strike over the TV, and they didn't believe it.

Angry

'But it was true and we all had to believe it. We cried and cried, all of us, we felt sick and ill . . . We were also angry, angry with the rest of our Labour movement and trade union movement for leaving us on our own, and not coming out with industrial support.'

In an afterword Doreen and Pauline state:

'We learnt so much in this, our struggle and we know that it is the same struggle as many others, against racism, against minority groups, against nuclear weapons and against the racist regime in South Africa, but the list is endless . . . Although the miners' strike was a hard and bitter struggle we know that there are thousands of women whose lives, like ours, have changed for the better . . . and how much we realise that the struggle still goes on.'

'Shifting Horizons' will be launched in Nottingham on Saturday February 1 at 12.00 noon at Queens Walk Community Centre, The Meadows.

Doreen Humber and Pauline Radford will be there along with author Lynn Beaton and many of the men and women from Blidworth who are featured in the book. Also present will be Betty Heathfield and Ann Scargill.

Those who cannot make the Nottingham launching, look out for the signing dates at Paperback Centres in Liverpool, Glasgow and London which will appear shortly in Workers Press.

Copies of 'Shifting Horizons' can be obtained now from all Paperback Centre bookshops — Workers Press readers should not hesitate but order copies immediately.



Blidworth during the strike: the children and (above) the women

CLASSES

Workers Press readers and supporters in West and North West London hold weekly classes on Marxism every Thursday night at 7.30pm Carlton Centre, Granville Road, Carlton Vale NW6.

Thursday Jan 9th: Wage Labour and Capital (Marx)

Workers Revolutionary Party

MARX'S CAPITAL AND THE WORKING CLASS

1986 series of lectures

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| Saturday February 15, | Saturday February 22, |
| 1.) The relevance of 'Capital' today | 3.) 'Capital' and the Working Class |
| Sunday February 16, | Sunday February 23, |
| 2.) Commodities, Value and Money | 4.) 'Capital' in the age of information technology |

All lectures start at 2.p.m

Glasgow YS Training Centre,
Tobago St.
(off London Rd),
Glasgow

Lecturers: Tom Kemp & Geoff Pilling

Tickets: 50p
Complete series: £1.50

Workers Revolutionary Party

MARX'S CAPITAL TODAY

1986 series of lectures

1. Friday 31st January

The capitalist crisis and the bankruptcy of the social sciences
Lecturer: Tom Kemp

2. Friday 7th February

Commodity, Value and Money
Lecturer: Geoff Pilling

3. Friday 14th February

Surplus Value and the Class Struggle
Lecturer: Tom Kemp

4. Friday 21st February

Capital and the rate of profit
Lecturer: Geoff Pilling

5. Friday 28th February

The contradictions of capitalism
Lecturer: Cyril Smith

6. Friday 7th March

Capital in the age of information technology
Lecturer: Cyril Smith

Reading: Marx, *Capital* vol 1

Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*
Tom Kemp: *Marx's Capital Today*

Conway Hall

Red Lion Square, London WC1

Starts 8pm

Tickets 50p each lecture; complete series £2

LETTERS

Strip-search humiliation

The following letter is from two female Irish republican prisoners in Brixton prison, Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson. It was written to members of the Glasgow Women and Ireland Group, who with the authors' permission passed it on to Workers Press.

TO strip and stand naked before three screws, while they fumble through the seams of our underclothes, is an experience we'll try to unfold. We must watch while a screw feels along the inside of our knickers and dangles them about as if they were rare exhibits. Each item of clothing is searched thoroughly and one can be ordered to turn around

LETTER FROM PRISON

slowly to have our entire bodies researched.

A screw rubs our hair and ears and may, at her pleasure, even lift one's breasts. They are at liberty to stand anywhere or poke any part of our bodies to further their purpose.

wide open during this procedure while two screws hold a blanket shoulder high and gape over the top. Another may stand in front of one. When they have seen everything they may hand us a cloak. The latter is no improvement since it inevitably slips off our shoulders while we sweat and rush

to dress.

The overall humiliation is crowned when we're ordered to lift our feet so that they too, can be searched. Throughout the event, we try to ignore the screws' eyes on us and the fact that they are fully aware of the effect it has on us.

It's not possible to describe, in words, the shock, horror and anger accompanying this experience. It's horrific when a screw has the arrogance to touch any part of our bodies. We feel disgust when we hear them snigger or see them maul clothes soiled from



Pickets protesting against brutality in prisons

a day's wear. We force ourselves to endure these invasions of our bodies while resisting the designed assault on our morale.

Having a slight notion now of what one strip-search entails, try to imagine having two such 'strips' in six minutes, which was the experience of one of us two weeks ago. During the period from 4th to the 16th of November, Martina and I together, had a total of forty-two of these obscenities imposed on us.

This gross insult has been, and continues to be, carried out in Armagh women's prison and at Brixton, in the name of security. Here at Brixton we are constantly watched by an average of seven wardens, numerous cameras and even dogs. The treatment meted out to the women in Armagh and to us here highlights the depth of corruption inherent in the British prison system, as affecting both islands.

Ella O'Dwyer
Martina Anderson

Problems of leadership

I WOULD like to make a brief reply to the letter in the Workers Press on Wednesday, January 8, 'Unity is needed to defeat Anglo-Irish deal', signed PM, London.

There are many things in the letter that not only myself but also colleagues in the Irish Socialist League do not totally agree with.

I don't think it is hair-picking, given the whole approach of the letter, to point out that the title, which is true to the content, is both superficial and wrong.

Unity with Sinn Fein, the IRA, the INLA and all other groups in struggle inside any section of the working class and national movement is certainly needed.

But if we understand by this coming-together in

the Anglo-Irish agreement, of the Catholic bourgeoisie of the south with Thatcher, a considered move on their part to smash all resistance to their rule — then something more than unity is needed.

This is essentially a Trotskyist party in Ireland which will be the centre of the struggle for the united front.

Now this is all dealt with in the article which I wrote prior to the signing of the agreement.

I will not repeat what I wrote. I do think that PM has introduced a totally new line.

The difference may lie in that my article was concerned centrally with building the Irish Socialist League as the Trotskyist leadership. This is not the case with PM's letter.

Furthermore, when he talks about 'its leadership (i.e., Sinn Fein) must be won over towards revolutionary socialism' and this in the context of what I have said above then I have the deepest differences with the writer of this letter.

The writer also criticises me for saying that 'Paisley is a spent force'. I do not remember ever saying any such thing.

The contradictions of Paisley's position are there in a very big way and it requires a Trotskyist cadre to see it and to act upon it.

Anyway, what is the point of analysing anything if you just wait for the next ally, or whatever. I knew well in advance, as did everybody, that Paisley would hold a big rally and it was because of that that I was drawn to look closely at his position. I feel that the points I raised remain more valid today than ever, and will become more so.

I will conclude at this point. I believe most firmly that the issues raised by PM certainly can not and will not be dealt with in a day and a night. They can not be dealt with by letter form either — but only by a determined party of Trotskyist cadres engaged in a practice inside Ireland, establishing from that stand fraternal relations with our comrades in Britain, and indeed globally.

Felix Quigley

Put the class issues first

I WANT to criticise the article on the Scottish NUM which appeared in Workers Press on January 4, under the headline 'Pit Jobs Blow to Stalinists'. Beginning with 'The Euro-Stalinist Communist Party plunged deeper into crisis over the Christmas period...', it went on to tell now a Scottish industrial tribunal, to which the union had turned, failed to reinstate four victimised miners.

I'm not questioning the facts of the report, nor the political analysis of how the Communist Party's misleadership and 'pressure politics' had let down Scottish miners in their struggle.

My criticism is of the way the issues were presented, because in my view it gave a false impression — not of the Euro-Stalinist Communist Party, I hasten to say, but of our own, Workers Revolutionary Party.

It's a question of first things first.

The most important thing for me, and I'm sure for most other trade unionists — not least the Scottish miners — is that four workers who fought for their class remain victimised.

From the evidence of how the NCB set out to get them — even the tribunal found it 'authoritarian, harsh and unreasonable' — it's clear this was not only vindictive, but intended to intimidate the rest of the workforce.

The tribunal's failure to reinstate these men shows up the uselessness of relying on industrial tribunals, and that the kind of trade unionism which relies on gentle 'pressure' and appeals to 'fair play' is worse than useless in this period of class-war government.

I hear the miners at Bilston Glen have now decided to take strike action for their sacked com-

rades, and they deserve full backing.

Since the Euro-Stalinists of the Communist Party have done their best to steer Scottish miners and other workers back from necessary, effective confrontation, and have so much to answer for, it's only right we should expose them.

The Workers Press and the WRP would have something to answer for if it didn't.

We have every right to be angry that union leaders who call themselves 'communists' are consistently holding back workers' struggles, and betraying them.

But the way the article was presented was unfair to the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Anyone who didn't know us better would think we were more interested in 'exposing the Stalinists' than in the actual victimisation case itself.

I'm sure that's not true of anyone in the WRP, including especially the comrade who wrote the article. (Who I gather is someone who's worked hard for this movement, and is close to the Scottish miners).

But there it was, the headline 'Pit Jobs Blow To Stalinists' whereas, let's face it, it was not George Bolton or other union leaders who'd just spent Christmas on the dole, but the four victimised miners.

What had happened was not primarily a blow to the Stalinists, but a blow to the working class, for which the Stalinists must share responsibility.

Since our paper is the Workers Press, it must be able to see every struggle from a worker's standpoint, and the way that article was presented was a sad lapse from this.



Fight for sacked miners is the central question

Another point I'd like to make is this:

The article did rightly call for the 'broadest democratic discussion' in the workers movement, which is needed if we're to sort out the present crisis of leadership.

Only if Marxists are really going to promote wide discussion in the working class, we've got to learn to stop talking and writing as though we're only talking among (and to) ourselves.

Many of the workers I discuss with at work have little idea what a Stalinist is, let alone a 'Euro-Stalinist' (After all, Joe Stalin died before a lot of them were born.) That doesn't mean we should put off talking about the issues, being clear, and calling things by their proper names. But it does mean we have to be prepared to explain things properly, to be able to relate them to people's experiences, and to avoid unnecessary jargon.

If we can't explain things clearly, it probably means we don't understand them ourselves. Above all, we should beware sounding like inward-looking 'know-alls', who know nothing about what the struggle really means for people's lives.

The struggle for Marxist theory is not some kind of intellectual game.

I also think that talk of

the 'Euro-Stalinist Communist Party plunging deeper into crisis' over this episode risks underestimating the issues facing us.

The article says, reasonably enough, 'it is clear that what is required (i.e. among Scottish miners and other workers) is a radical rethinking of policy and tactics.' Right.

Then why talk as though this has already taken place, and masses of Scottish miners were already coming up with a revolutionary alternative?

If we're going to build the kind of leadership the working class needs, it's not enough to 'expose' other parties and tendencies in a propagandist way, or show how their policies have led to betrayals and defeats.

In the 1930s, Stalinism betrayed not just individual workers and strikes, but an entire generation.

The policy of the so-called 'Third Period' helped divide and defeat the German working class, so that Nazism triumphed.

The Popular Front policy in Spain betrayed the Spanish revolution, and all those workers and intellectuals who rallied to fight fascism.

The Trotskyist movement was right. But being

right was not enough; exposing Stalinist betrayal was not enough.

It did not prevent the working class suffering defeats, and it did not even prevent the Stalinists from later regaining and even strengthening their positions in parts of the working class movement after the war, ready to betray again.

As a matter of fact, Stalinism as distinct from communism, thrives on defeats and setbacks for the working class movement.

Wasn't that how it started? And what brought a real crisis for Stalinism in the 1940s was that the working class, and the oppressed peoples and peasantry in the colonial countries, refused to accept defeats and betrayals, so that in China and Yugoslavia the Communist Parties found themselves having to take power, against Stalin's orders, and even in Britain the mass of workers were unimpressed with the CP's proposal to maintain the wartime coalition with Churchill and Eden.

I'm not suggesting this spontaneous movement of the working class is enough — or we'd have got workers' power in 1945, whereas all we got was Attlee, and a Labour government that prepared the way for the Tories again.

Nor am I denying that Stalinism, and for that matter Labour reformism, are in many ways today in a much deeper crisis. So of course is capitalism itself.

But the outcome of none of these crises is guaranteed. And let's face it, the crisis of working class leadership, which is what still has to be resolved, has also expressed itself in our Party.

The time to start crow-

ing over 'blows' to Stalinism is when it's us who are delivering them.

What will really bring the crisis of Stalinism to a head, and make its outcome worthwhile, is when the working class starts to challenge Stalinist and reformist leadership, and moves decisively towards the revolutionary alternative, as it gains the confidence and strength to take on and defeat the Tories — this time for good. In the miners' strike, we saw the beginnings of this.

The Workers Press article reported how miners still want to fight, and are discussing their experiences, e.g. 'Some men are openly criticising the pit's leadership', etc.

From what I know of Scottish miners even before this last strike (I spent some time in the Midlothian coalfield in the late 1960's and still remember the many deep discussions on socialist politics and history), I'm sure they'll be quick to learn political lessons from present struggles, and will be an important part of the Workers Revolutionary Party that the working class needs, and we must build.

Charlie Pottins (S. London)

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LETTERS to the Editor

Engels and historical materialism

ON December 13, 1985 the News Line published a letter from a Mr John Robinson criticising an article which had appeared in the paper. In that letter Mr Robinson made a number of attacks on Engels' work 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State', which have so far gone unanswered in the pages of the Workers Press. That such an attack should be made in the newspaper of a Marxist party is surprising enough; that it should have gone unanswered by any serious editorial reply is astonishing.

Mr Robinson seems to level two main criticisms against Engels: he objects to Engels' analysis of the economic role of the family and he objects to his analysis of the role of women. I say seems because I, for one, found Mr Robinson's arguments difficult to follow. I sometimes had the feeling that we had entered into the business of phrasemongering so common in 'left-wing' circles, not least in the WRP under Healy, that have done so much to obscure Marxism. Engels, by contrast, is very clear. His clarity emanates from his firm grasp of the concrete realities of the subject about which he was writing. When we read Engels we are made aware of vital human societies, when we read Mr Robinson we are tied up in a tortuous maze of empty phrases and opaque arguments.

Read

Rather than attempt to follow Mr Robinson's letter point by point therefore, let us begin with Engels, with the preface to the 1884 edition of the 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State'. Firstly Engels states that he is continuing the work of Marx, carrying out a task which Marx himself had intended to do. This is an important point. Engels acknowledges his debt to Marx and his use of Marx's notes. Their letters show that both men had read and discussed the material which Engels uses in the 'Origin'. NO fundamental disagreements exist between Engels' analysis in the 'Origin' and any of Marx's writings. If therefore we are to criticise Engels we are also criticising Marx. Mr Robinson seems to accept that this is the implication of his letter, but it is worth stating clearly, so that it is plain to everyone.

The task which Marx had set himself and which Engels was to fulfil was to combine Henry Morgan's work on the American Indians, in which he had independently developed a materialist approach to history, with that of Marx and Engels. This was to provide a much fuller account of pre-capitalist society than was possible from the European evidence alone.

Engels gives a brief

statement about the nature of the materialist conception of history. He states that the production and reproduction of immediate life is ultimately the determining factor of history. By this he means not just the production of food, shelter, clothing, tools etc., i.e. production in the usual narrow sense of the term, but including human reproduction itself. This is an essential part of the materialist conception of history; without it we are reduced to a crude mechanical model of social development.

Mr Robinson draws back from the idea in horror and he is not alone in doing so; the majority of bourgeois and revisionist commentators on the 'Origin' agree with him. In the edition of the 'Origin' published by the Pablotite Pathfinder Press, Evelyn Reed comments that this statement of Engels' is wrong. If this is the case Marx is wrong too. In his Economic Manuscripts 1857-1859 (Grundrisse) he writes, 'the community itself appears as the first great force of production' and 'production itself, the advancing population (which also falls under

duction of human beings, i.e. family/sexual ties, in determining social institutions.

Within such a society, based on family ties, the productive forces develop to the point where the accumulation of private wealth and the exploitation of the labour power of others creates class antagonisms which break up the old society. From it emerges a new society in which ties of sex and family are no longer predominant.

From this point begins the written history of society. Unless we can accept the role of the family in production, the whole of prehistory which precedes this development must be regarded as incomprehensible and outside the province of Marxism. This is no small matter since the majority of human history is prehistoric in this sense and until the advance of colonialism large areas of the world were inhabited by people who lived in this way, with classless

here for Stalinism, nor any justification for the continuation of the monogamous patriarchal family in the Soviet Union.

The oppression of women develops as classes begin to emerge. There may be differentiation in the roles of men and women in a classless society but both have equal authority in the community. Recent anthropological work, particularly that of Eleanor Leacock, has done much to illuminate this process showing how the position of women in such classless societies deteriorated as a direct result of contact with missionaries and traders. The ideological influence of a transition to Christianity was important but the critical factor was the usurpation of women's control of production. Where men were hired as wage labourers or their products were bought by the European traders, the key role of women in production and hence their power was lost. Men began to dominate the family and the community. The patriarchal family appeared.

Analysis

A letter cannot possibly do justice to the depth and richness of Marx and Engels' analysis of pre-capitalist society, nor to the importance of these questions to Marxists today. The global character of capitalism demands that Marxists understand the dynamics of societies which have been catapulted from tribalism to the brink of world revolution.

The movement of women into the forefront of struggles throughout the world, encountering the oppression of the patriarchal family in addition to that of their class, demands that Marxists offer them a leadership which draws strength from this dual oppression, rather than denying the historical fact of their oppression as women. Our revolution is to extirpate the very roots of class oppression; it must not shrink from these most basic questions of the family and women.

If the publication of Mr Robinson's letter provokes serious discussion of these issues perhaps it is to be welcomed. What is to be deplored is the response which it has received from the editorial board. Why, when a decision was taken to publish a letter which attacked Marxism, was the only comment a facetious and light minded letter from Comrade John Spencer? Members of the WRP and readers of the Workers Press have the right to expect better than this.

Ann Goodier
Huddersfield

● Editorial note: John Spencer wrote his letter while he was on sick leave — it does not represent a response by the editorial board. The editorial board in fact welcomes comrade Ann Goodier's letter



PAUL LAFARGUE

The role of the

Dear Comrade,

I was pleased to see your criticism of J. Robinson's article on the Family in the first copy of 'Workers Press'.

The somewhat inadequate grasp of dialectical logic expressed in the article must not be allowed to pass for a Marxist analysis. In fact it is fair to say that Robinson stumbles from one blunder to the next. Perhaps we could go through these one by one.

He begins by saying that 'the class struggle originates in class society' and in the next breath contradicts himself by saying it originates on the basis of the development of the productive forces in tribal communist society. The juxtapositioning is startling and unfortunate for Mr Robinson since the world 'originates' here takes on a very important meaning. To say that the class struggle originates in class society is logically inadmissible.

The class struggle is the mode of actual human existence in class society. To say one is to imply the other.

Gaff

Robinson would have been more consistent if he would have stuck by the second proposition instead of introducing tawdler in the first. Gaff number two:

'The basis of any society is the relations of production'. What about the mode of production taken as a whole? The productive forces and the unity of the conflicting relations and forces of production? All this seems to be conveniently forgotten in Robinson's article 'Class struggle and the family' (13.12.85).

In effect he fails to grasp the whole as a transitional unity of opposed material, economic and social forces which dominates the relations within the family. In the final analysis, and JR does not appear to understand this, it is the stage of development of labour (productivity of labour) which determines the size (quantity) and qualitative relations within the family.

Historically the family

has therefore undergone a development which reveals that its size decreases in inverse proportion to the increase in the productivity of labour. It would be thoroughly anti-Marxist to try to quantify this relationship. However, taken as a general movement, history reveals its truth. The unity of the development of labour with the social relations within which it occurs is undeniable but JR neglects the determining role which this unified whole plays on the form of the family.

The article clearly does not grasp the significance of the social relations between the sexes in prehistory — the importance of the division of labour of Male and Female. Set within the greater relations of kinship (blood relations), was scientifically revealed by Morgan in 'Ancient Society' and later by Engels. The dominance of the Matriarchal family in prehistory was an outgrowth of the natural division of labour which existed between Male and Female.

This relation was taken to a higher level with the establishment of societies based on the common tribal ownership of land. Therefore the role of the Matriarch was not merely a natural outgrowth (the fact that the Gens to which the children belonged could only be ascertained matrilineally but also necessarily social since the labour of the women in the prehistoric era was held to be of the highest importance, especially in the household and food production.

Lafargue, in his book 'The Evolution of Property' (New Park Publications Ltd) said, 'as the use of a thing constitutes the sole condition of its ownership, landed property, on its first establishments among primitive nations, was allotted to the women. In all societies in which the matriarchal form of the family has maintained itself we find landed property held by the woman.'

The control of food production and distribution was women's work in the fields whilst the males hunted, defended the trib-

al property and later acquired the economic means of overthrowing the matriarch: Livestock and Slaves.

Obviously whilst economy was so closely bound to the fluctuations of nature the matriarchal family tended to dominate.

If we inquire close enough into prehistory the seeds of the class struggle can be detected in gentile society which incorporates the division of labour between the sexes and the conflict in this relation of tribal gentile communism.

The potential of class society is therefore to be found in the growth of the productive forces within tribal society and the manner in which this growth affected kinship relations which demarcated ties of sex.

Claim

This is where JR falls down. He opposes 'relations of production' to 'relations based on sex and kinship' in primitive society and thereby forgets that within such a society (where duties and rights are indistinguishable) it would have been impossible to separate one from the other.

Thus the relations within the gens were a reflection of and ultimately tied up to the material production of life and basic needs, the maintenance of tribal property against intruders and the distribution of the basic necessities of human existence. Robinson's separation is accordingly vulgar and metaphysical.

Furthermore Engels' 'inaccuracies, inconsistencies and plain untruths' amount to his proposition that the production and reproduction of immediate life is the determining factor in history. This, says Engels, is of a two-fold character: the production of the means of human existence and the production of human beings themselves — propagation of the species.

Surely all that Engels means here is that in order for production to continue human beings must continue to exist



FREDERICK ENGELS

the head of production), is bound to eliminate these conditions of tribal society' (Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1859, Pre-Capitalist Socio-Economic Formations, Lawrence and Wishart 1979, pp 99 and 110). The community is made up of actual human beings. Whether Mr Robinson and Evelyn Reed like it or not, human beings only come into the world by one route.

Engels then goes on to say that the institutions of a society are determined by production in this wider sense, embracing the production of food, shelter, clothing, tools etc and the reproduction of human beings through the family. Mr Robinson disputes this and substitutes for it a statement whose meaning is not clear to me.

In a society where the introduction of food shelter, clothing, tools etc. is not highly developed and where the volume of production is small, the more important is the repro-

duction of human beings, i.e. family/sexual ties, in determining social institutions.

Within such a society, based on family ties, the productive forces develop to the point where the accumulation of private wealth and the exploitation of the labour power of others creates class antagonisms which break up the old society. From it emerges a new society in which ties of sex and family are no longer predominant.

From this point begins the written history of society. Unless we can accept the role of the family in production, the whole of prehistory which precedes this development must be regarded as incomprehensible and outside the province of Marxism. This is no small matter since the majority of human history is prehistoric in this sense and until the advance of colonialism large areas of the world were inhabited by people who lived in this way, with classless

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LETTERS

Youth and the fight against

Healy

AS a member of the WRP and YS I would like to welcome the Workers Press back onto our streets.

I have been a member of the party for four years. I joined the YS at a disco where only a handful of youth came. A couple of days later I attended the YS annual conference where I spoke for the first time on the Toxteth riots which took place in the summer of 1981. It saw hundreds of youth take to streets and

take on the police. It led to looting and one young lad was killed. Later on that year I joined the Granby branch of the WRP and become very active both in branch work and the area.

My first real fight against not just this government but internationally was when I took part in the Karl Marx march in February 1983. One hundred and thirty youth from seven countries took part covering 250 miles during a four

week campaign. It finished in London with over 4,000 workers and youth celebrating Karl Marx's revolutionary achievements and the centenary of his death with a march and rally at the Alexandra Pavilion. Expelled member Gerry Healy in opening his speech told the rally: 'Marxism lives and it is

the vital force all over the world. We will carry the banner on high in the victory of the world socialist revolution.'

He says this on one hand and destroys it in the other by sexually abusing female comrades not just in Britain but internationally and by the beating up of male comrades. Healy and the rest of his supporters (rump WRP) do not belong in the working class movement. I fully agree with Healy and Co. being expelled. I

remember Sweeney (expelled CC member now with the rump) when he tried to close down a North-West regional committee because he didn't agree with what the youth were saying. This was Sweeney's attitude to the youth in the North-West.

On another occasion I went over to North Wales (Rhyl) to set up a YS branch. I finally got a branch going and some good youth around I used to travel about 60 miles a day about three times a week to be able to do some active work with the youth and with the miners we had recruited into the party during the miners' strike.

After about two to three months I asked Sweeney about a meeting that was arranged for the following day at which myself, Comrade A. Jones and Sweeney were to go over some of the work that needed doing. I suggested my going to live in Rhyl to be able to assist the youth there and this new comrade A. Jones. Sweeney said he had no objections and didn't see why not.

A couple of days later I found out Torrance was attending an area committee and Sweeney said he would raise it as I was not a member of the area committee. I heard nothing for a few days when he came into Liverpool and told me Torrance didn't like the idea and that was the end. In spite of this decision I carried on working over there and brought about fifteen youth to the 1985 YS conference. Some time after that I got told I had to stay in my branch more



The Young Socialists played a leading role in the fight against Healy

often and when they sent comrade J. Owen over to take YS meetings there, they were left all week on their own. After about two weeks of this comrade going over fewer went till there wasn't a Rhyl YS any more. This is Torrance and Sweeney's attitude to the youth. How are they going to build a YS?

The Young Socialists are the youth movement of the WRP. We work with and under the control of the WRP CC.

Older comrades should assist the YS with their work, especially comrades who were around when we expelled from the Labour Party and those who were around

during the 1970s when we made huge gains for the party and the YS.

I would like to thank every one involved in the production of this paper. Comrades go out and sell this paper to the working class. Take it far and wide.

Last of all I like to thank the Runcorn print workers (excluding Sweeney, Cummins and Oatley, now expelled) and the North-West area committee who took action to stop the paper in October and let other areas know what was going on inside our own Party. Happy New Year Workers Press!

Maria Sloane
Skelmersdale Branch

family in prehistory

and in order for humans to exist they must produce the means of human existence: shelter, food, clothes, etc. Engels thus states that this dialectic must be at the basis of all social development which encompasses the evolution of the family itself.

Engels continues: 'The social organisation under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labour on the one hand and of the family on the other.'

We are now informed by JR at this point, that Engels goes seriously wrong. Why? Because the 'social organisation under which people live' is not determined by the 'stage of development of labour' (productive forces) but by the relations of production and by the conflict between these relations on the one hand and the productive forces (i.e. stage of development of labour) on the other.

Confusion

I think there is some confusion here by JR about what is meant by 'relations of production'. Surely the 'relations of production' is the 'social organisation under which men live' as was meant by Engels. Surely therefore these relations of production do not merely exist at the workplace but describe the intergrated totality of social relationships (including family relations and connections) within which the productive forces are worked.

As well as the elementary mistakes where JR differentiates 'social organisation' from 'relations of production' which are different expressions for the same thing, he also fails to understand that the form of the family is dominated by the whole of the mode of production and not merely by 'relations of production'.

What must be stressed is the need to view the mode of production as a whole, a contradictory unity of opposed interacting parts and forces which are necessarily interconnected and not, as JR does, view it like a schema: A determines B determines C etc. etc.

Engels was trying to depict the whole by illustrating the organic interconnection of productive forces, production relations and the reproduction of the species within the form of the family. Engels the Marxist of course, contrary to what JR says, never said that the production of the means of existence and the reproduction of the species were separate.

Robinson's allegation is based on an entirely inadequate philosophical grasp of what Engels did say. Can you suggest to him that he reads 'The Origin of the Family' again — but this time dialectically and not with the metaphysical methodology always to be found in the best bourgeois psychology textbooks.

Robinson's method is also observable in his analysis of the relations between the sexes in prehistory, relations which he plays down and fails to grasp. It is an unquestionable truth that in the prehistoric 'family' there ensued a struggle between male and female over leadership of the 'family'. This centred on whether the gens was to be organised matrilineally or patrilineally. The struggle grew in intensity the more the productive forces matured within gentle society since the division between the sexes was based on real differences in property ownership.

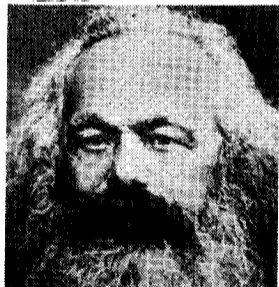
Although the land was held in common by the whole tribe, male and female were assigned different roles. Women in the household and field; then as warriors, hunters and keepers of the flocks and herds. Such relations necessarily gave rise to struggle between the sexes in the undeveloped primitive social organisation of the tribe composed of phratries and genses.

The struggle to overthrow the matriarch reached its highest point of development as soon as the production of a surplus over and above the needs of the tribe was established and commodity production and exchange started to emerge.

Slavery now became necessary in order to complete the ever increasing tasks now thrown up by develop-

ments in production. Such developments gave the men the opportunity to smash the matriarch. Historically the hunting, fighting and expeditions had been performed by the men and thus, naturally, control and ownership of the enslaved captives fell to the men.

The introduction of slave-labour into the fields not only emancipated the women from agricultural labour but also simultaneously dispossessed them of the leadership of the gens and family. Agricultural production — before merely meeting the needs of the family through the labour of the women — had now become a means of supremacy in the family and society with the emergence of commodity production and exchange.



KARL MARX

The introduction of slavery into agriculture by the men therefore served as a lever (means) for the overthrow of the matriarchal form of the family and its replacement with the patriarchal family. This struggle has been recorded in the history, myths and legends of many peoples, especially the Greeks where the result of the Amazonian women is recorded. Aeschylus also makes the battle between mother-right and father-right a central issue of the Oresteia.

Engels summarised the whole process in 'Origin of Family', 'as wealth increased it on the one hand, gave the man a more important status in the family than the women, and on the other hand, created a stimulus to utilise this strengthened position in order to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance in favour of his children. But this was impossible so long as descent according to mother right prevailed. This had, therefore, to be overthrown, and it was overthrown.

The reckoning of descent through the female line and the right of inheritance through the mother were hereby overthrown and male lineage and the right of inheritance from the father instituted.

The overthrow of the matriarch took place over definite economic conditions. Similarly we can see that the break-up of the capitalist mode of production as a whole generates profound contradictions in the family leading to a whole range of perverse phenomena and occurrences within its midst. It is not merely the movement of the relations of production which determines the change within family relations but it is the development of the integral whole of the mode of production.

Grasp

We must, I think, learn to grasp this whole transitional movement. Finally, and I believe this to be very important, I would like to raise the fact that when a political party regenerates itself, it must necessarily expel all the philosophical impurities which have accumulated over the years. The further exposure and defeat of Healyism is the present objective linked to this process. However, we must be extremely careful not to throw the 'baby out with the bathwater'.

The basic task which Engels set himself in 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' was to give a Marxist analysis of the development of the family in its interconnection with the emergence of private property and state out of primitive gentle communist society.

Much of Engels' work in the book, as well as being based in his own researches, was based on Marx's own notes on Morgan's 'Ancient Society', which Marx himself held in high regard. He even accredited Morgan with the independent discovery of the materialist conception of history. For Marxists, Engels' book on the family must still remain a brilliant product of the application of materialist dialectics to the field of human prehistory and researches in this area.

Yours Fraternally,
Shaun Patrick May

Healy and Hoffman (part two)

THE letter from C. Slaughter about the relationship between Healy and John Hoffman, a Communist Party theoretician (I think inverted commas are out of order), reminded me of occasions in 1976 or 1977 when Hoffman was whisked off to the College of Marxist Education. This was done without the knowledge and behind the backs of the local branch of the WRP who only found out later and by accident what had been going on.

I was particularly aggrieved as I work in the same university as John Hoffman and I was constantly 'crossing swords' with him in our shared union branch. It appears that Healy was quite prepared to undermine the work of the local party branch without discussion and in order to further his own opportunist relationships.

Yours fraternally,
Paul Henderson

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Our Theoretical Guide To The National Question

THE principal determinant factor that propelled the dynamics of national friction leading to this inevitable choice of political independence was none other than national oppression. Therefore, in the study of the Tamil Eelam national question, oppression, that is, the oppression of a big nation against a small nation perpetrated within the power structure of a unitary state becomes the crucial element for a theoretical analysis as well as for a political strategy.

Positing the problem within the theoretical discourse of Marxism, we hold that Lenin's theoretical elucidations and political strategies offer an adequate basis for a precise formulation of this question. Lenin's exposition of the concept of self-determination, that deals primarily with a nation's right to secession and statehood is adopted here as a theoretical guide to provide a concrete presentation of the Tamil national question.

Self-Determination and Secession

The Tamil nation is a historically constituted social formation possessing all the basic elements that are usually assembled to define a concrete characterisation of a nation. Yet a definition as to what constitutes a nation is theoretically unnecessary since we can precisely formulate our issue within the Leninist conceptual framework of the self-determination of nations.

The concept of self-determination needs a precise and clear definition. Such a clarification is vital to our national question, since some of the so-called Leninists in Sri Lanka are confused on this basic concept. The most ridiculous misrepresentation and misconceptualisation of this concept arise from a position in which the right of the Tamil nation to self-determination is given recogni-



A young Tamil guerilla fighter in the struggle for a separate socialist state of Tamil Eelam

tion while opposing secession.

Attempting to show a radical face as revolutionaries these political opportunists are proclaiming that the Tamil speaking people as an oppressed nation has the right to self-determination; but they do not have the right to secession. It is precisely on this position one finds a calculated distortion of a clearly defined concept. Lenin's texts on the national question constantly reiterate the definition that the self-determination of nations is nothing but secession and the formation of an independent state. To quote a couple of examples:

Conclusion

'Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or 'inventing' abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies and the formation of an independent national state' (Lenin: 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination')

Again in the same theoretical essay Lenin writes:

'Self-determination of nations in the Marxist programme cannot, from

TAMIL EELAM: WHY A SEPARATE STATE?

THE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are a revolutionary group fighting for self-determination for the Tamil nation in Sri Lanka against the oppression of the ruling Sinhala regime.

The Tamil and Sinhala peoples are two distinct social formations with distinct cultures, languages and history. They had existed as separate national entities in pre-colonial times until they were arbitrarily unified under one state structure by British imperialism in the early nineteenth century.

It was the national oppression of the racist Sinhala ruling elite beginning soon after 'independence' in 1949

which drove the Tamil people on the road to self-determination.

Based on the revolutionary Tamil youth, the Tamil Tigers were formed by Velupillai Prabhakaran in 1972 and later emerged as the armed resistance movement of the Tamil masses.

Their commitment to armed struggle was not undertaken lightly, but only after a careful appraisal of the objective conditions of the national struggle. Part of their theoretical analysis, written by Professor A. S. Balasingham in 1983, is reproduced below.

Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism, were questions raised against his thesis on the national question. These questions and Lenin's consistent defence of this position are important to us because it is precisely these questions that are hurled against the Tamil demand for secession.

The freedom of secession should not be confused with the reactionary bourgeois category of 'separatism' which is sometimes utilised to undermine the genuine democratic struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. The freedom of secession articulated within the concept of self-determination exclusively implies an inalienable right of a nation of people to agitate for political independence from the oppressor nation. This complete freedom to agitate for secession is a right, which can be exercised under conditions of intolerable oppression.

Equality

Therefore, the recognition of this right to secession, Lenin repeatedly argued, is vital to prevent national friction arising out of a big nation's chauvinism, a right that holds the complete equality of nations, a right if violated will lead to national hostility and the fragmentation of nations. It is here Lenin advances the dialectical principle that in order to ensure unity there must be freedom to separate. He even argued that freedom to divorce will not cause the disintegration of the family. Therefore, Lenin rigorously held that he was not advocating a doctrine of separatism but advancing a highest principle of a socialist democracy in which absolute freedom should be accorded to a nation of people to secede under

conditions of oppression. To quote him in this context:

'Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession... This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression'. (Lenin: 'The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination')

Proletarian Internationalism

Marxist political praxis certainly advances proletarian internationalism, but at the same time gives fullest recognition to the revolutionary character and the historical legitimacy of the national movements. The principle of nationality, or rather, the phenomenon of nationalism itself, in Marxist discourse is characterised as a historically inevitable political phenomenon in bourgeois society.

For Marx, nationalism is historically prior to proletarian internationalism. Proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist social formations, Marx foresaw, will generate the progressive forces of internationalism towards the gradual structuration and consolidation of a world socialist society. Lenin, who saw the historical unfolding of the great socialist revolution, became an ardent champion of proletarian internationalism, since he rightly believed that only the revolutionary power of a united international proletariat can challenge the structure of dominance of world capitalism. Therefore, we find in Lenin's texts a constant emphasis on the necessity of the solidarity of the working classes of all nations to

mobilise to fight against the hegemony of international capital.

Yet, on the other hand, we find Lenin as a fierce champion of the oppressed; he fought vigorously against all forms of enemy of the class struggle and without the emancipation of the oppressed, proletarian solidarity of the oppressed and the oppressor nations is unattainable. That is why, Lenin firmly held that proletarian internationalism demands that the proletariat of the oppressor nation should grant the right to self-determination (ie the right to secession) to the oppressed nation.

'The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means that they must fight for the right to self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nation. Otherwise, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words, neither confidence nor class solidarity would be possible between the workers of the oppressed and oppressor nations...

Fundamental

The right of nations to self-determination does not contravene the socialist principle of proletarian internationalism. On the contrary, as Lenin has shown, the recognition of this right is a fundamental necessity to advance internationalism. It will amount to chauvinism and political opportunism to preach the noble ideals of internationalism to a nation of people caught up in a liberation struggle against the oppression of the bigger dominant nation.

Intolerable Oppression And Inevitable Secession

We are now approaching the most crucial stage of our discussion on the Tamil Eelam national question. That is, under what political and economic conditions of oppression a nation will opt for secession, and whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for national independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and oppressor nations. An elucidation of these issues is vital for a

theoretical comprehension and for a political strategy for proletarian revolutionaries in Sri Lanka who are confronted with a national struggle of an oppressed nation which has chosen the path of secession.

The determinant factors behind the Tamils' decision to secede and form a state of their own, as we have pointed out earlier, are the historical conditions of intolerable national oppression. The cumulative effects of this multi-dimensional approach made joint existence unbearable. The contradictions that emanated from national friction made a political rupture inevitable.

Dilemma

Thrown into the painful dilemma of political isolation and economic deprivation and threatened with annihilation of their ethnic identity, the Tamil speaking people of Eelam nation had no other alternative but to opt for secession. Under intensified conditions of national oppression, a decision to secede and fight for political independence is not only a correct action but also a revolutionary move which will serve the interests of the class struggle.

Lenin says: 'From their daily experience the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big state. They will therefore, resort to secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder any and all economic intercourse. In that case, the interests of capitalist development and of the freedom of the class struggle will be best served by secession.' (The Right of Nations to Self-Determination.)

Within the Leninist perspective we can safely hold that the decision of the oppressed Tamil nation to secede from the oppressor nation was necessary and historically inevitable because of the extreme conditions of oppression. The question that can be posed now is whether the Tamil struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of the oppressed and oppressor nations.

Continued in the next issue of Workers Press

PLO in South Yemen peace role

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.) has been involved in efforts to halt the fighting in South Yemen, and a P.L.O. medical team is caring for the wounded. P.L.O. chairman Yasser Arafat has been personally involved in diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.

Palestinian help was urgently requested by the Soviet Union at the outset of the conflict. The Russians proposed that a joint Yemeni-Palestinian-Libyan-Algerian peacekeeping force intervene, to assure a cease-fire and enable peace talks. Palestinian forces in neighbouring North Yemen were moved to the border. But in the absence of agreement from both sides to accept their role, the P.L.O. was reluctant to take sides.

The small P.L.O. unit in Aden itself was ordered to stay in its barracks while the fighting raged on. Soviet representatives themselves decided it would be futile to proceed with the 'peace-force' mission.

Meanwhile, ever concerned at any conflict that weakens the Arab cause, P.L.O. chairman Yasser Arafat flew to Sana'a, the North Yemeni capital, in a

bid to help end the Aden bloodshed. In two days of talks he met N. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Salih, and the Soviet, Iraqi and Egyptian ambassadors. In a statement broadcast over Voice of Palestine Radio from Sana'a, Arafat said he was happy that an agreement had been reached by opposing South Yemeni factions, and hoped this would prove effective.

In Aden itself, P.L.O. representative Abbas Zaki,

dean of the diplomatic corps there, has been working with a joint committee formed by the two sides to establish a cease-fire and seek a peaceful solution. This was disclosed by Hani al-Hasan, one of Arafat's top political advisers, in an interview on Radio Monte Carlo on January 21. Hasan said he understood some forces were still besieging other forces, but it would be better not to go into detail as yet.