

Workers Press

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ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
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NO TO SCAB UNIONS!

EETPU must be expelled

'SCAB UNIONISM' is growing like a cancer, unopposed by trade union leaders 'left' or right. This is the unavoidable conclusion to be drawn from the crisis in the newspaper industry.

Three years ago, Eddie Shah set out to produce the 'Stockport Messenger' using a small scab labour force and new technology.

The National Graphical Association (NGA) took a stand against scabbing, and was bankrupted by the courts under Thatcher's anti-union laws.

The TUC General Council, then led by Len Murray, betrayed the 1982 Wembley conference decision to defy the laws, and voted not to support the NGA's stand.

Shah took the TUC betrayal at Warrington as a signal. He immediately began to organise his attack on the unions in Fleet Street.

From 1983, he planned the launch of 'Today' with advice from former 'Sunday Times' editor Andrew Neil, SDP peer Lord Harris, and extreme right-wing Tory Norris McWhirter of the Freedom Association.

His finance came from such pro-Tory firms as Bricom, Trust House Forte and McAlpine builders (not to mention £3 million from the investment bank of Stalinist Hungary).

All the newspaper monopolies are planning to introduce new technology, move out of Fleet Street and destroy jobs in the process.

As well as Murdoch's 5,500 sackings from News International, Maxwell forced through 300 redundancies and 1,800 other job losses at the 'Mirror' (in fact the opening shot of the Fleet Street war).

It has now announced 300 redundancies at Scotland's 'Daily Record'.

Associated Newspapers is planning 1,000 job losses, 'Binding' arbitration and direct-input are demanded at the Guardian.

State intervention has simply forced the pace.

The central issue at Wapping, however, is not just job losses, serious as

By WRP print union members

they are. It is the destruction of trade unions by Murdoch under the protection of the anti-union laws.

That is why the whole trade union movement must support the sacked printers.

One of the greatest strengths of the heroic miners' strike of 1984-85 was the refusal of Arthur Scargill to back down to the Tory laws, just as he refused to condemn miners who confronted police violence.

In the midst of the strike, other major unions were posed, at Austin Rover, with joining Scargill's stand against the laws; while the T&GWU did so, the AUEW, GMBATU, and the 'left' leadership of AUEW-TASS, appeared in court and broke the TUC guidelines. That was the thin end of the wedge.

Failure

Every trade unionist knows about the TUC's failure to build support for the NUM. But it was followed in September last year by equally dangerous treachery at the Blackpool TUC.

While a resolution was passed by the congress supporting the victimised miners, TUC leader Norman Willis and T&GWU leader Ron Todd did a behind-the-scenes deal with the AUEW and EETPU to keep them in the TUC, backing down in front of their brazen collaboration with the anti-union laws.

This back-peddalling has encouraged other unions like UCATT to take



MOOD of defiance on the women's march last weekend in support of the print unions' fight

Tory money for ballots under the laws.

The AUEW and EETPU were determined not just to take Tory money for ballots: vital for them was the signing of single-union deals, particularly in new technology industries — starting with the AUEW deal with Nissan at Washington, county Durham.

The TUC's paralysis in the face of EETPU scabbing at Wapping simply follows their climb-down to Laird and Hammond last September.

The TUC General Council has now voted 15-14 not to tell the EETPU to instruct its members not to cross the Wapping picket lines.

So the most basic trade union principle of all has been broken with support from the TUC leadership.

The EETPU's scabbing is 'acceptable' not only to the TUC leadership but also to a section of the Labour party.

The EETPU organiser

who sits in on interviews for Murdoch's Kinning Park plant, Pat O'Hanlon, was on the Scottish Labour party executive until last week's conference.

Labour party officials work in Kinning Park with EETPU cards: including Jimmy Hayes, (election agent for Motherwell South MP Jeremy Bray), Mossend Labour party branch secretary Anne Rafferty, and EETPU delegates to Motherwell North CLP, John McGrogan and Lionel Khan.

A Labour party member who was formerly a shop steward at the Gartcosh steelworks has been recruiting workers from the doomed strip-mill to work for Murdoch.

A campaign must be waged through-out the trade union movement for the expulsion of the EETPU from the TUC.

A union which does not only sacrifice its negotiating rights but systematically organises

strike-breaking is a scab union working against the interests of the working class as a whole.

The campaign to expel the EETPU must be combined with full support for the growing number of electricians and plumbers who are organising against the Hammond leadership.

The National Union of Journalists must also expel its members crossing picket lines at Murdoch's plants.

Break up

Members of the AUEW — whose News International membership has also been sacked — must fight to break up the strike-breaking alliance of their leaders and the EETPU.

EETPU leaders, and Murdoch, are encouraged not only by the TUC's cowardice but by the paralysis of union leaders, including the 'lefts', in the face of the anti-union laws.

The NGA, in contrast to its 1983 stand, failed to instruct members printing Murdoch's publications, the Times Educational and Higher Education supplements, at Northampton.

No 'blacking' order has been issued to SOGAT members who handle Murdoch's publications daily, or even to UCW members delivering 'Sun' bingo cards.

The T&GWU not only tolerates crossing picket lines at Murdoch's plants. Their shop stewards at TNT, a T&GWU closed shop, negotiated the recruitment of 57 extra drivers on the very day that the 5,500 print workers were sacked.

T&GWU members must demand to know how this happened.

SOGAT has not only given full collaboration to the sequestrator inside their head office, but has instructed their branches not to obstruct sequestration of funds.

Brenda Dean, boosted by the Stalinists of the Communist party as some kind of 'left', made it quite clear in the 'Euro Communist' journal 'Marxism Today' that she wishes to arrange a 'honourable settlement' with Murdoch, which will leave many of the sacked men out on the street and the EETPU as the main union inside Wapping.

There are no easy answers to the onslaught against trade unionism initiated by Murdoch and Shah. But that is no excuse for giving up without a fight.

The boycott campaign, designed to play Maxwell and others off against Murdoch, is a time-wasting fraud.

What do we do when Maxwell takes his instant dismissal threats from Glasgow to Fleet Street? It's only a matter of time.

Strike

The newspaper employers can only be answered by an all-out national newspaper strike.

The boycott campaign assumes that we can not fight the anti-union laws, since the attack of the miners' strike, the working class can not challenge Thatcher.

The cowardice of the TUC was a principal cause of the miners' setback, not a result. The retreat began long before the miners even came out. The call must go up:

● Return to the Wembley decisions.

● No collaboration with the Tory laws.

We call for mass picketing of Murdoch's plant. Of course the miners' strike proved its limitations, but until the working class finds other methods of struggle, it will have to use those it has. Local support groups, which proved so powerful in the miners' strike, can also be mobilised.

These must involve the whole working class including trade unionists, political parties, womens' groups.

TURN TO BACK PAGE

BATTLE IN UCATT HOTS UP

BY GERRY DOWNING

SUPPORT for sacked London regional official Dominic Hehir is building up among the rank and file of UCATT.

The Executive is continuing its vicious campaign to crush the opposition and turn the union into a lump-recruiting tool of management.

This assault is led by General Secretary Albert Williams and ex-Communist Party member Jack Henry. London Regional Organiser, Terry Heath has also resigned from the CP to join the right-wing bandwagon.

Following his re-election to the Executive, Henry used the employers' newspaper 'Construction News' to

threaten reprisals against five London organisers who, he said, supported his rival.

Dominic Hehir hit back with the now famous letter of resignation detailing alleged corruption and ballot rigging and naming names.

The Executive sacked him and have threatened him with expulsion from the union. The case comes before the Executive on April 1.

Dominic Hehir's own branch has counter-charged four senior offi-

cial. The union referee Edgar Jepson, has found in Foley's favour and has condemned the Executive's treatment of him: 'In this case I am not satisfied that Brother Foley received fair treatment my reasons are as follows: 'The General Secretary has a duty to place all matters of importance before the Executive Council. I do not accept that if a member fails to attend the selection committee he is automatically debarred... each case

should be treated on its merits. 'Every step should be taken to ensure fairness and justice and prevent conflict and complaint. The 62 branches in the NW region are entitled to have the candidate they nominated interviewed and if accepted placed on the ballot paper'. The Executive have 'noted' the report. Frank Foley could not attend the interview because he had just returned from holiday. This was known to at least some of the EC. Yet they refused to listen to his case and barred him from running. UCATT branches should send in resolutions and letters of complaint and should charge the guilty officials.

Also blowing up is the crisis over the treatment of Frank Foley, a North West region full-time offi-

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Vote for strike on London buses

LONDON bus crews have voted by 3,907 to 2,728 for all-out strike action from March 24. The issue is large-scale job cuts, allied to reductions in pay and a dramatic worsening in conditions.

'The strike will go ahead unless there is a change of attitude by management,' said Terry Allen, T&GWU bus district secretary, at a press conference in Transport House on Wednesday.

Asked how solid the strike would be, Allen replied: 'Management will be amazed at the response of the London bus workers.'

Allen said relations between the union and London Buses had completely broken down. 'Quite frankly, our feeling is that firstly we cannot trust them, and secondly we cannot talk to them at all.'

'They have cancelled the main agreement with us, and they are indiscriminately cutting bus services.'

'This is in the year in which they promised us there would be nothing like the number of job losses we sustained last year due to conversions to one-person-operation. Now they are saying job losses are going to be higher than in 1985.'

About 18,000 drivers and conductors work for London Buses. Voting by

ballot took place at meetings in the various garages. Attendance at the meetings totalled 6,681.

Management are threatening to seek a court injunction to get the ballot declared illegal, on the grounds it does not comply, they claim, with Tory anti-union legislation.

The T&GWU says the ballot was conducted at garages in line with tradition, the union rule book, and the law.

The renewed attack on jobs, wages and conditions stems from legislation to deregulate the bus industry throughout the country.

London Buses is telling the union if wages are not reduced then routes will be lost to private operators when services are put out to tender.

'Tendering is all about reducing wages. It is not about anything else,' said Allen. 'All these developments taking place have to be faced up to by both sides of the industry, hammered out, and resolved.'

Since November 1985, four garages have been closed in London. Four more were then announced in February.

Subsequently, it was discovered that Loughton garage was to close in May this year because London Buses had lost all of its routes currently out to tender.

'Obviously if garages continue to close at this rate it will mean two things: no-one's job will be safe and London's network of bus garages will become so decimated that even a new government would find it very difficult to restore the capital's public transport system,' says a T&GWU circular to bus workers.

The public will be hit hard by the cuts — including on the question of safety.

'You also have the closure of the Chiswick driving training school where the tough standards maintained have long been a source of pride.'

Laing's call

DELEGATES from Camden NALGO and Suffolk and Haringay DLO were among trade unionists who joined the picket of John Laing's British Library site last week.

The picket is continuing in spite of a high court injunction which forbids the five sacked bricklayers from attending meetings, calling for support or, in the case of three of them, even joining the picket lines.

The difficult decision to break the injunction was taken by the John Laing's Lock-Out Committee.

One of the men reminded Camden Trades Council about Des Warren and his treatment by the state.

At the picket line on Monday, Brian Higgins from the lock-out committee said they now have two demands:

- The lifting of the high

court injunction. The men will not negotiate under this threat.

- The reinstatement of the whole gang together at the Surbiton site where the dispute started.

He hit out at the UCATT bureaucracy which has withdrawn official support for the picket.

'We must build a united front of Lambeth and Liverpool councils, the sacked Haringay DLO and all trade unionists.'

The employers are using the Tory anti-union laws.

We must step up our fight and hit the Hayes Wharf site which is a government contract' he said.

The lock-out committee is asking all trade unionists and supporters to join them next Monday, March 17, at Laing's Hayes Wharf site, London Bridge starting at 7 a.m.

Merthyr bus workers defend TU conditions

MERTHYR TYDFIL busmen have told their new board of directors that they will not accept their new terms and conditions of employment when privatisation takes place in October.

The busmen work for the local Labour-run council. The board of directors is made up of Labour councillors, who presented the new, long awaited, conditions of employment and told the busmen, 'Take it or leave it'.

Branch chairman Mike Cummings said they would not surrender what trade unionists fought hard for in the 1920s and 30s.

Weekends

Highlights of the document are — no pension scheme; abolition of the superannuation scheme and the occupational sick scheme (no sick scheme at all is proposed); a twelve per cent wage cut; cuts in holidays and holiday pay; an end to proper overtime working for week-ends.

Other measures include cuts in holidays for prolonged sickness; flexible duties; an end to canteen facilities and dismissal for working for any other employer or setting up a business which is in direct conflict with the company.

And just in case that does not suffice, the management reserves the right to make further changes without negotiations by simply giving 28 days notice: split shifts for example.

The busmen, members of GMWBTU, have unanimously rejected these terms in two branch

meetings. Area organiser Vic Greenwood, who has met the new board of directors, has recommended rejection.

The board will be surrendering the document for acceptance to the appropriate body — without trade union agreement.

A neighbouring municipal bus undertaking, Rhymney Valley District

Council, have had their existing terms and conditions transferred to their new company as it presently stands and with the understanding that this year's pay award will also be honoured.

Merthyr busmen have been told that their pay award will not be honoured, which means a further wages cut when the transfer takes place.

Tory indifference kills

BY SARAH HANNIGAN

THE TORY government's onslaught against the poor, the old and the sick is making itself felt in the lives — and deaths — of thousands of people.

In the first three weeks of February this year, at least 6,000 people more died than in the same period in 1985; of those deaths nearly 4,000 alone were from bronchitis and pneumonia, i.e., cold-related deaths.

(These figures come from the Office of Population and Census Surveys, OPCS.)

It has been estimated that there could be as many as 60,000 cold-related deaths among the elderly this winter — and those figures only include England and Wales.

They do not record the deaths among the old in Scotland or the north of Ireland.

In face of such widespread annihilation, the Tories' indifference is tantamount to murder.

When old people are dying of cold or hunger, there is no urgent help to ensure that payments for special heating allowance are issued speedily.

Instead two-thirds of the

country's Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) offices were still refusing to accept that the weather was exceptionally severe.

It must be said that the record of the Labour reformists is no better.

They will state the extent of deaths from hypothermia and issue pious statements, but when in office, they have not given the question any priority.

Not content with the deaths of thousands of old people, the government has still another attack afoot.

It was announced this week that from April 1, prescription charges will rise by a further 20p to £2.20 an item.

It means that since the Tories came to office, the cost of prescribed medicine has gone up from 20p to £2.20p, an increase of 1,000 per cent!

If the fees had risen in line with inflation in the last seven years, prescriptions would now cost about 40p.

Of course these huge rises go hand in hand with the Tories' continuous attacks on the National Health Service — cutting spending, undermining services and driving out staff — all in the name of efficiency.

The NHS, we are told, must pay its way. But private patients who are treated by NHS-paid consultants are allowed to make use of the over-burdened services for a derisory fee.

Porters, cleaners, nurses, drivers, ancillary workers who demand decent wage or who fight to defend services, are witch-hunted and pilloried for their actions.

But consultants who spend all day at their private clinics in Harley Street or in fee-paying hospitals — while virtually ignoring NHS patients — are held up as pillars of society.

Such are the standards of Toryism; for our health's sake we must be rid of them.

RELEASE THE JAILED MINERS

NORTHUMBERLAND

WILLIAM SMITH: Whittle — 2½-year sentence from February 1985. E44975, Durham Jail, Old Elvet, Durham DH13HU.

DURHAM

JOHN MATTERSON: Murton — Two years and three months youth custody from December 1985.

JOHN HEMINGWAY: Murton — One year and three months from December 1985.

JOHN ROBSON: Murton — One year and three months from December 1985.

ROBERT HOWE, 22, miner, affray, attempted not guilty (judge refused to allow change of plea), 21 months

ANTHONY RUTHERFORD, 24, miner, affray attempted not guilty, 18 months

JOHN ROBINSON, 21, affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months jail

GARY BLACKMORE, 19, charge affray, attempted not guilty, 2 years youth custody

ANTHONY HOWE, 19, affray, attempted not guilty, two years youth custody

WILLIAM BELL, 20, affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months youth custody

YORKSHIRE

MARTIN HODGSON: Wakefield — Three-year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

NIGEL HODGSON: Wakefield — Three-year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

PAUL WRIGHT: Saville — 18-month sentence. G76424 Kirkham Jail, Freckleton road, Preston Lancs.

CLIVE THOMPSON: Frickley — Three-year sentence from April 1985. G79348, Acklington Jail, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9XF.

N. DERBYSHIRE

PAUL BROTHWELL: 12-month sentence.

DAVID GAUNT: Shirebrook — 2½-year sentence from December 1984. E71037, A Wing, Millers Park Youth Custody Centre, Doddington Road, Wellingborough.

KENT

TERRY FRENCH: Betteshanger — Four-year sentence from January 1985. B73383, Weald Wing, Maidstone jail, Kent

CHRIS TAZEY: Betteshanger — Three-year sentence from January 1985. A29398 Youth Detention Centre, Springfield Road, Chelmsford

SOUTH WALES

DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale — Eight-year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.

RUSSELL SHANKLAND: Taff Merthyr — Eight-year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, Leicester.

Monthly Fund
£304.68 received this week,
Total now £535.48
Our special fund received
£158.82 and now totals
£32,816.63

Details will be published next issue.
Thanks for all your donations. Send to WRP, 21b Old Town, London, SW4 0JT

Scottish Labour Party in scabbing scandal

GLASGOW printers are calling for action against scabbing being organised from inside the Labour Party.

Constituency Labour Party delegates and officials from Lanarkshire are working in, and recruiting others for, Rupert Murdoch's scab plant at Kinning Park, Glasgow.

The scab recruitment was organised by Patrick O'Hanlon, Bellshill-based official of the EETPU. Until last weekend he sat on the Labour Party's Scottish executive.

He sat on the platform at the party's Scottish conference at Perth. Although voted off the executive, he received over 100,000 votes.

The AUEW delegation decided nine to seven to cast its 67,000 votes for O'Hanlon — despite the sacking of AUEW members at Wapping.

Even more brazen than O'Hanlon was Jimmy Hayes, election agent for Motherwell North MP Jeremy Bray, who carried the boycotted 'Times' under his arm all week-end.

Hayes is a long-standing Labour Party member and

former convenor at Smiths Clocks.

The scale of the involvement of Labour Party officials in scabbing is outlined in a circular from the Print Workers' Co-ordinating Committee which organises picketing at Kinning Park. The circular states:

'Apart from Mr O'Hanlon acting as a recruiting agent and sitting in at interviews at Kinning Park, it is also alleged that Mr D. Kenney, who holds a position in Motherwell North Constituency Labour Party, was responsible for knowingly or

unknowingly recruiting the following EETPU members now reported to be working at Kinning Park:

'Mr Alex King, Mr William Doyle, Mr John Long, Mr Jim Kane and Mr Laird Brownlie.

'EETPU members Mr John McGrogan and Mr Lionel Khan, who are also members of the Motherwell North Constituency Labour Party are also reported to be working at Kinning Park.

'Many of these people hold positions with or are delegates to local Labour Parties.

'We are further informed that Ms Anne Rafferty of the Mossend branch of the Labour Party and Mr J. Hayes of the Motherwell South Constituency Labour Party are both working at Kinning Park.

'Information has been received that Mr J. Conn, a former shop steward at Gartcosh, had been distributing recruitment forms and that indeed someone from Gartcosh has now commenced employment at Kinning Park.

'Mr Hugh Clark, one of your own officials had his

brother-in-law involved in recruitment and is indeed working there.

'We are further informed that the son and husband of convenor Mrs Ellen McKenna of Honeywell Ltd are reported to be working at Kinning Park.

'We would like our colleagues in the rank and file of the EETPU and of the local Labour Parties to ask questions as we know they will find behaviour of this nature to be unworthy of a great and proud trade union such as the EETPU and of the great and proud Labour Party.'

MORE YARDS SUPPORT CONTRACTS STRIKERS

SOUTH SHIELDS trade union council decided unanimously at an emergency meeting to step up support for the Garment workers on strike at Contracts (French Connections) in South Shields.

The resolution moved by South Tyneside NALGO branch says: 'This trades council wishes to express its grave disquiet at the fact that the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers have withdrawn official support to the strikers of Contracts Ltd.

'This trades council is also concerned at the manner in which the media appear to have been used to try and discredit the strikers.

'This dispute is fundamentally important as it

is a basic recognition dispute therefore this Trades Council agrees:

1. To continue to support the strikers.

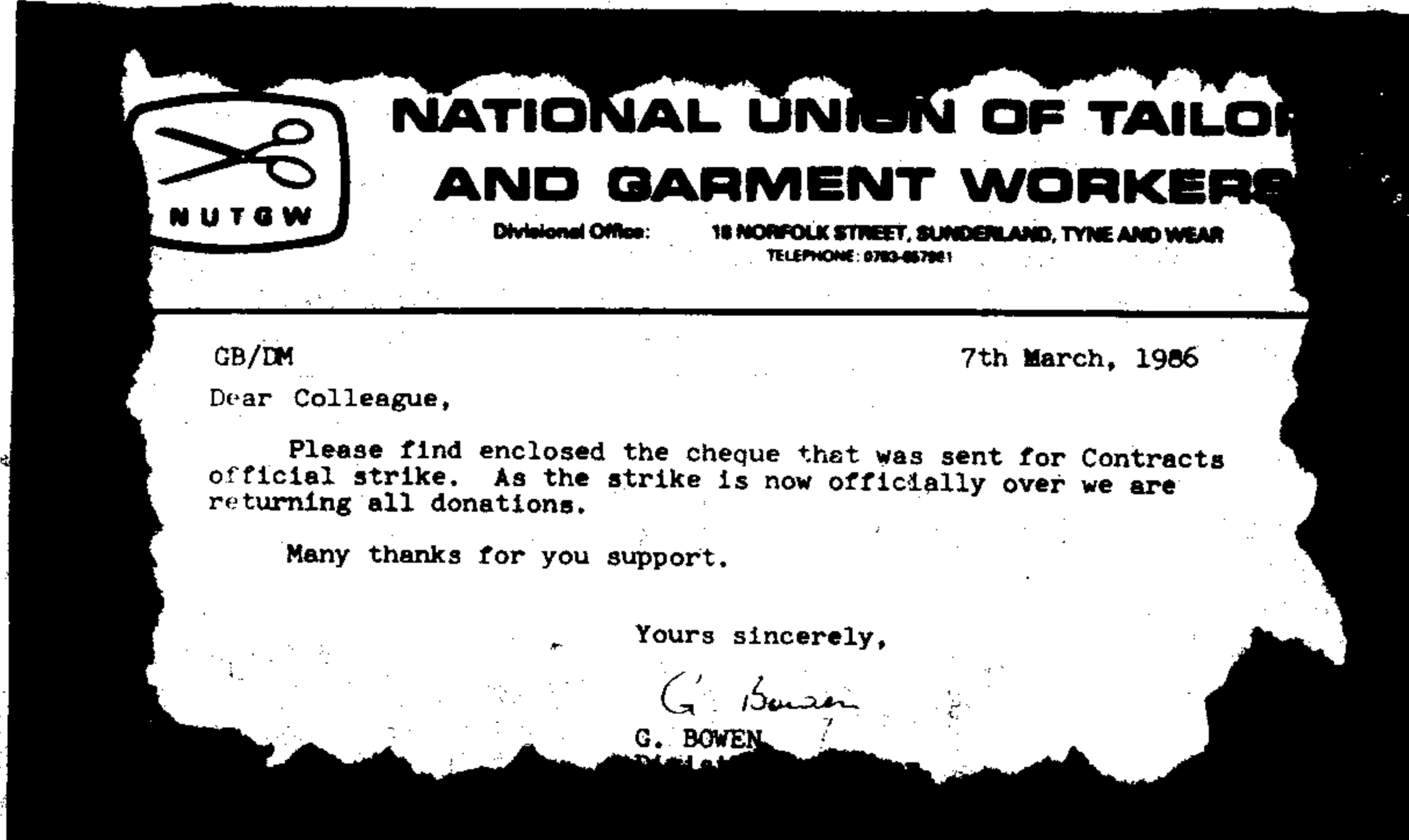
2. To make appeals for financial donations by constituent unions and individuals to the strike fund.

'Further this Trades Council agrees to instruct the secretary to submit a suitable motion to the County Association of Trades Councils for onward submission to the regional TUC and also write to the general secretary of the NUTGW deploring their decision.'

Challenged

Earlier a statement was read out by the secretary of the TUC from a letter from the NUTGW explaining the gains that had been made in the settlement reached through negotiations at ACAS.

Every line of the statement was challenged by the delegate from the strike committee who emphatically stated that



Letter sent by NUTGW headquarters returning a donation from a union branch RON BAILES



tracts workers has spread from Tyneside to the Wear where four more shipyards have pledged their support and are arranging collections.

The more attacks launched on these women from their bosses and the NUTGW the more resolute and determined they become.

But cut off from vital finance by their union their hardship fund was drained last week. The district officials are returning cheques donated by other trade unionists, saying that the dispute is over.

To help the strikers at Contracts write to Alex Smith 16 Charles Square, London N1 telling him that you are disgusted by the actions of the full time officers of the NUTGW and that you still support us.

Make cheques payable to: Contracts Dispute Hardship Fund, c/o NUS building, 4 Coronation Street, South Shields, Tyne and Wear.

it was full of inaccuracies and inventions and was totally misleading.

Delegates were informed that there was no trade union recognition in any form and that the proposed phased return over a three-and-a-half month period was both humiliating and degrading, this had to be seen in light of the statement from the NUTGW stating:

'No union member

should take work at Contracts Ltd and if you believe that your company has accepted orders from Contract or its parent company French Connection please inform this office.

Shop steward Billy Edwards was delighted with support from the TUC and added:

'This strike will continue for as long as it takes to get recognition from the management.'

The very next day this was confirmed as the strikers voted at their mass meeting to unambiguously reject for a second time the offer of a phased return to work recommended by their union.

NUTGW officer Ron Bailes did turn up outside this last meeting and left abruptly after telling Edwards that the final payment of strike pay promised last week would not be paid until after the strikers returned to work.

Cancelled

The strike committee retaliated with another batch of 10,000 leaflets exposing the role of the NUTGW leadership in their six-month battle for trade union rights.

A delegation of 12 strikers left for London on Monday night to lobby the executive of the NUTGW at Charles Square. At 10.30 p.m. Alex Smith the general secretary cancelled the executive meeting scheduled for the Tuesday morning.

Smith told the delegation they must return to work on the deal offered. The union had been in contact with the manage-

NACODS to discuss ban on overtime

A SPECIAL conference held in the North East by the National Association of Colliery Overmen and Deputies (NACODS) has decided to ballot their 16,000 members this week on whether to impose a national over-time ban over the NCB's decision to close Bates Colliery in Northumberland.

Industrial action now appears to be the only weapon left to the organisers of the joint campaign

to prevent the closure of the colliery — with a loss of 880 jobs.

Leaders of the NUM discovered last week that their legal action against the coal board in the high court had failed.

The only hope for the under-sea pit now lies with the deputies, but they face a race against time.

Saivage work in the pit is already under way. Expen-

sive mining machinery will soon be moved out. A worry for the Northumberland men is that the overtime ban may come to late.

Cliff Dixon, NACODS Northumberland area secretary yesterday said he was happy with the support shown for the action by delegates from every British coalfield. The 70 delegates decided to back the overtime ban after hearing a report from their

national executive.

Dixon said 'It is not only a lifeline for Bates but for every pit in the British coalfield'.

Peter McNestry, NACODS General Secretary, said the ballot about Bates would be held within days. If imposed, the overtime ban will only be lifted after a second ballot.

That will only be held when the coalboard agrees to reverse its decision over the Blyth pit and gives assurances about the independent review procedure.

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	

LETTER to the Editor

The Editorial board of Workers Press welcomes letters on any topic from all our readers. Please address them to The Editor, Workers Press, 21b Old Town, London, SW4 0JT. Please try to keep your letters short — they have much

more chance of getting printed. While we try to print letters as they arrive, we reserve the right to edit letters to give everybody a chance. Where letters have been edited, this will be indicated.

Matgamna wrong about exposure of Scargill

THE continuing discussion in the letters to Workers Press on the expulsion of Healy and his rump from the Workers Revolutionary Party is an important part of the necessity for us to confront our own history.

That does not mean, of course, that we should not reply fully to letters which attempt to make political capital out of the split.

In this respect, the Editor's answer to Sean Matgamna was, in my view, inadequate.

As he stated, the majority of the membership knew little or nothing of the libel action taken out against Matgamna and Socialist Organiser by Vanessa Redgrave.

If the facts are as stated, then we can only apologise and point out that it is entirely in line with the numerous court actions pending against us now from the same source.

However, Matgamna raises two other questions which I think need further discussion.

Why does the Editor in his comment not take up Matgamna's point about Arthur Scargill and the miners' strike, although he devotes several col-

umn inches to suggesting that the WRP 'set Scargill up' for the capitalist press on the eve of the miners' strike — surely an appalling accusation if it is true?

As he stated, at the 1983 TUC conference, News Line (predecessor to Workers Press) exposed Scargill's support for the repression of Solidarity in Poland.

The fact that the capitalist press took this up was not the responsibility of our paper. Scargill supported the same kind of attack on a trade union organisation in a Stalinist-led deformed workers' state that was soon to be unleashed on his own union here.

While everything which happened under Healy has to be subjected to the most searching enquires, the 1983 exposure of Scargill's support for Stalinism does not seem to have been such a crime.

The real question is not whether the capitalist press tried to make something of it, but whether it was correct to warn miners, who were about to start the longest and bitterest industrial struggle in post-war history, that the Stalinists are as dangerous to the working class today as they have ever been.

Nobody questions the



Scargill pleads for reduced Polish coal imports during the miners strike

courageous and principled stand that Scargill took during the strike, but unfortunately, as the outcome of the strike showed, that is not enough for the working class in the struggles they face today.

Unable to break from Stalinism, Scargill could

not forestall the bitter blows against the miners strike which came from the Communist Party leaderships of the Scottish and South Wales NUM executives.

Do we really have to remind Matgamna of the deal which allowed more coke into the Ravenscraig

steel plant in Scotland that was going in before the strike?

Or of the decision of the South Wales executive to send their men back to work in one of the firmest areas in the country, in the interest of — solidarity?

Do we have to recall the

increased coal exports to Britain to undermine the strike, from Poland — which the Polish government was only able to do precisely because of its suppression of Solidarity? Or the oil imports from the Soviet Union?

In his final point, Matgamna claims that the WRP under Healy had ceased to be part of the labour movement, and the Editor replies by asking him if he thinks we have rejoined it now — is Matgamna supposed to be the judge of that?

The Editor also claims that in his opinion 'the Healyite rump is a part of the labour movement, no matter how degenerate and corrupt its leadership'. That is, of course, his own idea, to which he is fully entitled, but it has not yet been fully discussed in the party.

That opportunism and sectarianism — those two main poles of Healy's politics — are very much a part of the British labour movement is beyond questions.

However, that is not the end of the story. This is not just a politically confused group. While many trade union and Labour bureaucrats are known to be corrupt, the Healyite leadership is in a class of its own.

Since when has the rape

of young comrades been part of the tradition of the labour movement?

A leadership which can not only carry out such practices, but justify them by statements such as 'We are neither for nor against corruption', or that a man's sexual behaviour has nothing to do with his politics, or who can willingly send young girls to his flat knowing what is in store for them, cannot be lightly described as part of the labour movement.

This group's leadership regards its members and the working class as just so many objects to be used, abused and manoeuvred as they see fit. It reached such a violent and obscene level that their ideology has been described as 'near fascist'.

Far from expressing, in a distorted way, the traditions of the working class, Healy and his supporters express the most sick and degenerate ideology of a sick and degenerate capitalism.

Whatever the motives of many of its members when they first joined the WRP, it is certainly open to question whether they can be said to have any links with the labour movement now.

Carmel Dersch.

Trotskyism and the Philippines

CHRIS DIXON'S article (Philippines Civil War?, March 1) was interesting, informative and well put together, but was missing in one vital ingredient, one which lies at the heart of all the struggles of the masses worldwide.

To show what I mean I would like to recall an article I read in the 'Workers Press' years ago, which I remember vividly.

It was about a demonstration in Chile where workers had demanded arms to defend themselves against attacks from the right-wing and had been assured that this was not necessary. The fact that the Allende government had a parliamentary majority was their protection.

The article then went on to warn of the folly of this mistaken confidence of the workers' leaders in parliamentary institutions.

Their toppling of Allende's government, and his murder soon after

this in a military coup which cost the lives of thousands of workers and peasants, were the highlights of this article and the vital lessons it contained.

I have since learned that the analysis contained in that article was based on the lessons of Lenin's 'State and Revolution' and Trotsky's 'Permanent Revolution'.

This is the missing ingredient in Chris Dixon's article: a Marxist analysis of imperialism and the tasks it poses for Trotskyists to solve the vital question of leadership in the workers' movement worldwide.

Is this analysis relevant today? In his book 'Permanent Revolution', Trotsky states in a polemic with Radek:

'Tsars, feudal lords, and priests were always and everywhere beaten with the fists of the proletarians and their precursors, the plebians and peasants... a dictatorship (i.e. of workers and peasants) never arises in the old revolutions... Why not?'

'Because astride the

backs of the workers and peasants, who did the rough work of the revolution, sat the bourgeoisie. Radek has forgotten the most fundamental thing in a revolution, namely, who leads it and who seizes power.'

This is directly relevant to events in the Philippines today. Chris Dixon's article shows that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has no perspective for building an independent party of the working class to lead the masses to power, as the communist parties have never broken from Stalinism.

Trotsky's theory of 'Permanent Revolution' is based on the laws of combined and uneven development of capitalism, which are exacerbated, not smoothed out, in the epoch of imperialism.

This places the onus on the proletariat, in a country which has an organised working class, as the only progressive class in society, to carry out the tasks in the underdeveloped countries which capitalism, in the epoch of imperialist decay, can

no longer carry out.

It is the necessity for the working class to smash the bourgeois state and take power so they can carry out these tasks; the need to continue on to the building of socialism, based at the same time on an international perspective with international co-operation which gives the proletarian revolution its permanent character.

This led Trotsky to struggle against Stalin's revision of Marxism contained in his theory of 'socialism in one country' and eventually to found the Fourth International, based on the 'Transitional Programme' and the Theory of Permanent Revolution.

This is the heritage of Trotskyism which, thanks to the struggle of the Left Opposition in Russia, has an unbroken connection with the foundations built by Marx and Engels, the role of Lenin and the First Four Congresses of the Third International.

This struggle is carried on today in the fight to build the Fourth International as the world party

of Socialist Revolution.

This fight has not yet succeeded but there is no reason to suppose that it has definitively failed. It should be present in the Workers Press in the form of articles giving a Trotskyist analysis of the struggle of workers worldwide.

The question Trotskyists should be asking is not, 'Philippines, Civil War?' but — how quickly can a section of the Fourth International be built in the Philippines to lead the working class and peasants to victory in a civil war?

The ICFI had become a caricature of a Trotskyist International; Permanent Revolution was abandoned in practice and distorted in theory in the perspectives.

The expulsion of Healy and his clique removed a huge obstacle to the re-orientation of the WRP and the ICFI. This must be the starting point for the correction of Healyism in these organisations. Any analysis of their degeneration must



MARCOS

be from this standpoint and from the necessity of a re-orientation of Trotskyist forces interna-

tionally in order to build a world party.

Yours fraternally,
Frank Fitzmaurice

The meaning of the teachers' agreement

TORY plans to merge state education with cheap labour schemes loom large over the present debacle in the teachers pay dispute and the intervention by ACAS.

The government has announced that Department of Education and Training will be formed in the autumn (chief overseer Lord Graffam, formerly David Young of the Manpower Services Commission, plus one other cabinet minister).

This is behind all Tory education planning, a subterranean monster, now emerging into the open, that is devouring any education gains won from capitalism in Britain since 1944.

Cheap labour 'training' in one guise or another, is the outlook of all the parties to the deal, the TUC, the unions, the local education authorities (LEA). The NUT leaders the Labour party and the SDP all support MSC and 'training'.

Equally they all demand teachers assessment and training, though this is cosmetically worded as 'career development' and 'appraisal' by the trade union bureaucrats.

Closely following from Tory plans is the 'fall-out' of teachers' jobs, school closures, etc., the destruction of all sixth form facilities, forms of privatisation and Thatcher's 'voucher' system for a few.

Closure

An outline was leaked in January with the demand of the Audit Commission (chief, John Banham, former director of US management consultants McKinsey and Co.) for the loss of at least 27,000 secondary school jobs by 1991, and a more aggressive closure and rationalisation of schools.

In other words, teachers and schools face the same methods as McGregor is using against the miners.

The prime aim of the Tories and the state throughout the year-long dispute has been their determination to bring pay and conditions together.

Christopher Patten, newly appointed under-Secretary for Education, made this clear when speaking to the Society of Education Officers (i.e. The top education administrators) at the end of January.

'For the government and the education service as a whole this is a pivotal issue — it is absolutely central to us... we will not budge from it.'

The recently published Education Bill under scores this with national regulations for state enforceable assessment.

The Tories however have been able to rely on the TUC, the teachers leaders and their counterparts in the Labour party and local education authorities to take the chestnuts out of the fire for them!

It was the Labour 'Opposition' in Parlia-

COMMENT by a London teacher

ment, TUC chairman Norman Willis and no doubt the labour local authority leaders (Mrs Nicky Harrison became the chairwoman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities in July 1985) who combined to hatch the conditions for the ACAS deal. Labour MP Giles Radice, very much the 'shadow' Minister of Education, was an exponent of an inquiry.

The ACAS agreement of March 3 (described by 'Education', the weekly magazine of the local education authorities as 'the historic agreement'), is a treacherous blow for teachers.

The acceptance, as part of the deal, of 6.9 per cent, uploaded (!) to 7.5 per cent from March 31, is a derisory increase on the employers' initial offer of 4 per cent early in 1985.

It comes after 12 months of unprecedented discontent throughout the teachers' profession. It will do nothing to measure up to the rise in the cost of living, restore the past Houghton gains or maintain comparability with other professions — two of the main union demands.

For 186,000 teachers (out of 440,000) on the lowest pay, it is less than offered by the employers in December!

Judges

Teachers' discontent, fuelled during the struggle by the 32-46 per cent pay awards to judges, army officials and top civil servants, will continue.

The absolute decline of living standards for a large section, often close to penury, is made harsher by the growing crisis in education, and for many, unbearable working conditions as a result.

At the same time, a completely new stage has been created by the formation, via ACAS, of 'ad hoc' state panel of three 'wise men' briefed to sweep aside all existing pay and service conditions machinery and for the first time to tie teachers pay direct to conditions.

Throughout a six months period, during which the teachers unions



NUT general secretary Fred Jarvis (left) and EC member Harry Dowson meet Tory minister Lord Young to discuss YTS cheap labour schemes

are to drop all industrial action, with disputes taken to conciliation and arbitration the intention is to work out a legally binding contract for teachers.

This would make the teaching force directly subject to the state's demands, outlaw trade union rights (the 'sanctions' of non-cover for absent teachers, withdrawal of goodwill, etc.) and implement, as its cornerstone, the compulsory annual

ACAS offer.' (our emphasis)

Keith Joseph's ploy of tampering with the Burnham pay committee (in line with Tory tactic of deploying the UDM and EEPTU for their attack on the unions) in favour of the non-strike Professional Association of Teachers (membership said to be 42,000) and thus counter-balancing the NUT vote, paid off.

But this was only possible because of the politic-

public spending as part of the strings attached to the IMF loan to bail out the Labour government!

On top of this, seven years of Tory cuts, rate capping and rising interest rates, whilst within the system, the attacks on curricula and cheap labour pilot schemes...

All this made it impossible to read a negotiated settlement in the teacher's favour — and, whatever the words and deeds, has made the reformist teacher's leaders 'empty barrels'.

leaders was crucial, as the facts show:

1. Throughout the dispute, members of the NUT have been repeatedly balloted — each ballot confirming support for the struggle — and then involved in a campaign of piecemeal, fragmented with one and at most three day strikes.

These strikes were largely isolated in the schools, apart from an occasional local rally. Local education authorities that gave 'support' to the claim were exempted from strike actions.

2. From April to July 1985, the total number of members of the NUT on strike at one particular time was 4,000 at minimum — to 16,000 at maximum out of 250,000 NUT members!

3. From September, the supposed escalation of the strike action revolved around marginal election seats, so-called 'target areas' of key (sic) Tory ministers, and in fact apart from a lobby of Parliament, the involvement of teachers was being wound down.

4. From the largest national union, not one day of national strike action for the whole membership during the entire 12 months dispute!

5. The Special Salaries Conference held at Wembley on the 18th January was truly the 'tying up' of the campaign by the NUT leaders, whose motion to delegates rolled out the onward spreading carpet for the 1986-87 claim — whilst the ACAS deal was being staked out!

The role of the NUT

Implications of the ACAS deal

1. Direct involvement of teachers' unions in working out new methods to implement the attack on education and teachers.
2. Attraction of so-called 'right quality' of teachers for managerial and 'leadership' posts.
3. Arrange appraisal and training, i.e., redeployment of a ragged army of temporary and mobile teachers around the 'main professional grade' teacher.

assessment of teachers' performance, combined with retraining, directly controlled by the DES.

At the critical stage in the struggle — when parents began to become more involved — Willis steered the unions into ACAS. As the 'Financial Times' reported (December 20, 1985)

'At a meeting at Congress House, Mr Willis made it clear to leaders of the NUT and NAS/UWT that they had the responsibility to pursue the standing

4. Legal definition of contract, including duties and responsibilities (i.e., extending the working day) to include previously voluntary known 'goodwill' time after normal duties.
5. Rule of ACAS and panel over this issue.
6. Ceasing of industrial action.
7. Disputed matters in inquiry to go to conciliation and arbitration.

al treachery of the NUT, and its leader Fred Jarvis, himself a member of the TUC General Council.

What began as a pay dispute quickly exposed the massive crisis in education after nearly two decades of cuts. The Houghton Award of 1974, under the Wilson government, was itself a crisis measure to ladle out a few well-paid teacher scales and contain the 1973 strike movement.

This was closely followed by cuts imposed on

6. When an amendment from the floor called for a one day national strike and demonstration, vice-president Robert Richardson was wheeled out to oppose it. Though passed, it was jettisoned by the Executive the following month!

This catalogue of betrayal, pressure politics and pious phrases to cover up political bankruptcy has not prevented Jarvis and the NUT leaders being cushioned throughout the dispute by the erstwhile 'lefts' of the Socialist Teachers Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party.

Their demands have been limited to 'extend the action' and calls for NUT/NAS unity at school level. In other words they have been interested solely in strengthening the illusions that it was just a matter of hardening Jarvis' phrases.

Criticisms

The SWP, in the 'Socialist Worker' made so much of the NUT leaders campaign that by November, they were claiming ('Socialist Worker', November 16) 'The government has been forced to make concessions.' What united the SWP and the STA is that 'socialism' for them is, apart from some 'left' criticisms, the 'socialism' of social democracy.

All their so-called demands are based on adaptation to the trade union bureaucracy and their devotion to the state role of the Labourites.

An article by Carol Regan in 'Socialist Teacher', this February says 'Forcing our (sic) executive to make formal approaches to the NAS/UWT on building a united strategy for Burnham is the only way to ensure no sellout takes place'

This when Burnham was being shattered by the combined forces of the Tory strategy and the TUC connivance in ACAS!

Education in Britain cannot be 'reformed' or a return made to past gains. The pledges and pleas of the Labour leaders are hollow — they are tied hand and foot to the capitalist state, to slump and mass unemployment.

Only the emergence of the political independence of the working class as a revolutionary force with a socialist programme, in alliance with its allies in the professions and middle class, can secure a future for education and resolve the crisis, as in all other spheres of society.

For this the theoretical arming of the protagonists, in the implications and lessons of the split in the WRP, will play its inestimable role.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Israel: Racist terror against Arabs

RACIST gangs in Israel are using the same terror tactics as fascists in Britain, in their efforts to drive out Palestinians.

Families have been burnt out of their homes, and children attacked on the street. The thugs responsible are being encouraged by the racism of more 'respectable' right-wing leaders.

On the night of January 15, in her flat in the Jerusalem suburb of Neveh Yacov, Rosalia Jaabar was woken by the heavy coughing of her four-month-old baby. She found smoke was blowing into the flat from the front-door.

Looking out, Rosalia saw a huge ball of flame. She managed to wake the children and escape with them, and called the fire brigade. They were able to put out the blaze before the flat was destroyed.

BY CHARLES POTTINS

There was no doubt about it being arson, or about the identity of the arsonists. An hour before the attack on the Jaabar's home, a similar fire was started on the front door of a Jewish family living in the next block, who were friendly to the Arab tenants.

In both cases, the fire-raisers left their 'calling cards' — letters signed 'Kach' — the name of the

fascist movement led by Brooklyn-born Rabbi Meir Kahane.

'Kahane wants the Arabs out of Neveh Yacov', was the simple message left on the stairs to the Jaabar's flat. The letter left for their Jewish neighbours warned the family that if it continued inviting Arabs round, 'your children will be killed and your home burned'.

Nor were the racists leaving it at that. The following week, while four-

year old Swaafi Jaabar was being treated in the eye wards at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital, as a result of the fire at his home, his seven-year old brother came running home crying.

He told his parents: 'A young man with a skull-cap beat me up and said I was a dirty Arab.'

In London's East End, in the 1930's, it was young men in Blackshirts, and the victims were Jews. In east London today, fascists are active again,

even if they haven't got back in uniform yet, and Asian homes have been attacked.

In Israel, the fascists have donned the skull-caps of religion, and Palestinians are the target. Otherwise, not much has changed.

In the past year, against the background of political and economic crisis in the Zionist State, with growing unemployment, racists like Kahane have been campaigning hard.

Arab workers have been harassed on their way to work, Arabs have been attacked on holiday beaches, and there was even an organised attack on Arab nurses' and patients in a Beersheba hospital.

Neveh Yacov was built on Arab land seized after the 1967 war. Today it houses 30,000 Israeli Jews and just 30 Arab families. The Jaabars, though Palestinian, are Israeli citizens.

Until recent months there was no trouble between Jewish and Arab tenants in Neveh Yacov. But, Rosalia Jaabar says, just a week before the arson attack, Meir Kahane came to speak at the Neveh Yacov neighbourhood centre, and threatened to harm any Arab who moved into the district.

'We have been Israelis all our life, we helped the government, and look how we are treated', she told reporters.

Just like other fascist leaders before him, Kahane whips up the hate, stands back briefly to deny organising the thugs when arrests are being made — then gets on with whipping-up the mob some more.

But Kahane is not the only racist campaigning against Arabs in Neveh Yacov and elsewhere.

Jerusalem's mayor Teddy Kollek is a Labour Party member, and 'liberal' by Zionist standards.

After the a The same week Kahane decided to visit Neveh Yacov, Kollek's deputy-mayor Nissim Zeev, a member of the orthodox religious Shass party had told reporters he wanted a plan to remove Arab families from the Old City of Jerusalem and replace them with Jews.

He cited a founder of the Zionist state and former Labour prime minister as authority. 'Ben Gurion, too, said that we should do this and he was right.'

Zeev claimed Arab construction on the Temple Mount area was a 'security' problem. He went on to speak about Neveh



KAHANE

Yacov, complaining that too many Arabs were moving in.

'They pay cash in hand and Jews prefer them as tenants. This creates panic in the neighbourhood. How are you supposed to, know who is a terrorist and who isn't? Parents fear to let their daughters out after 7pm, because they might start mixing with Arabs. Arabs live with Jewish women.

'There is even a brothel with Jewish whores and Arab pimps. We must prevent such developments. Separate neighbourhoods are not racist'. Oh no? Kahane — or any other fascist, couldn't have done better.

Zeev proposed: 'We must establish action committees in every house, which will take steps against anyone letting flats to Arabs, and would belong to a body called "Jews for Jews".'

'We need a clear policy laid down in law to the effect that apartment built by the Ministry must not be sold to Gentiles. Naturally, the deputy mayor did not call for arson attacks on people's flats. The racists never do.

The Shass party secured backing for their anti-Arab campaign from Chief Sefardi Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, who ruled: 'It is forbidden to sell apartments in the land of Israel to gentiles not a single apartment may be sold.'

Ironically, some of Kahane's political associates have been getting finance from way-out Christian fundamentalists in the United States, and selling them chunks of Jerusalem real estate.

But racists don't let consistency stand in the way of expediency,

Many Israelis have been rallying around an Anti-Fascist Committee to stop Kahane, and in the Labour town of Givatayim, near Tel Aviv, the racist leader had to be rescued by police from angry crowds twice last year. He later vowed that if he ever took power he'd 'wipe Givatayim from the map'!

However, if the opposition to Kahane is not to risk the charge of liberal hypocrisy, or be rendered ineffective, anti-racist Israelis will have to face the facts, that it's not just Kahane's little gang of psychopaths they have to fight against.



May Day Rally, East Jerusalem, Palestinian trade unionists take stand for rights.

Trade unionists protest at travel ban

PALESTINIAN trade unionists are calling on the British labour movement to demand an explanation from the Israeli government as to why they stopped a woman teacher coming to speak to teachers in Britain.

Dr Fathiya Nasru, of Bir Zeit University in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, was due to address the women's conference of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), and to attend the conferences this month of the Women's TUC and Labour students.

On February 27, Fathiya was stopped from crossing the Allenby bridge into Jordan, from where she was to fly to Britain. She returned to her home town of Nablus. The next day, the Israeli authorities confirmed the ban on her travelling.

The ban on this educationalist is the latest step taken by the Israeli

occupation forces to stop Palestinian trade unionists speaking with workers in Europe, a Palestinian Trade Union Federation (PTUF) representative in London pointed out:

'A delegation of Palestinian workers was prevented from visiting NALGO last year and another member of staff at Bir Zeit was banned from coming to Britain.'

'This policy is a reflection of the very real progress which PTUF and Trade Union Friends of Palestine have made in exposing Israeli oppression of our workers in particular, and the Palestinian people in general', the PTUF representative said.

'The only response which Israel can make is to try to gag the mouths of Palestinian trade unionists. It will not succeed.'

Delegates at the NUT Women's conference agreed, when they heard of the ban on Dr Nasru, to protest and to send her a letter of sympathy. The TUC was also contacted and approached the Israeli labour federation, Histadrut.

The Histadrut bureaucrats' reply, true to Zionist form, could just as well have been written by Israeli Foreign Ministry officials. It said Palestinians were only banned from travelling when 'the purpose of their travel is to conduct political incitement or any kind of subversive activity against the State of Israel.'

In another paragraph, the Zionist union bosses repeat a familiar Israeli military governors' lie, linking Bir Zeit University with 'terrorist organisations'.

The Histadrut leadership, who recently complained because a British TGWU delegation had met with Arab trade unionists on the West Bank, is plainly the

accomplice of Israeli military repression.

Since Israeli Labour leader and 'man of peace' Shimon Peres introduced an 'Iron Fist' policy last August, at least 24 Palestinian trade union leaders have been interned without charge.

Others have been deported, including Ali Abu Hilal of the Abu Dis Institution Workers' Union, expelled to Jordan on January 31 this year. Many more are banned from travelling outside their town or village.

The Palestine Trade Unions Federation is calling on British trade unionists and socialists to demand from the Israeli government an explanation for the ban on Fathiya Nasru speaking to British workers and students: to demand an end to all internment, deportations and town arrests without charges or trial: to demand an end to all restrictions on the right of Palestinian workers to organise.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Public Meetings LONDON

The Tasks of the Fourth International

Tuesday March 25
7.30pm

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1

Speakers: Cliff Slaughter (WRP Central Committee)
Geoff Pilling (Acton WRP)
Chris Bailey (Cambridge WRP)

Chair: Richard Goldstein
(WRP London Area Committee)

Tickets 50p

CARDIFF

Why we expelled Healy

The Split in the WRP and the ICFI

The task of building revolutionary leadership

Wednesday March 26th

Brownhills Hotel
Saunders Road

Near Cardiff Central Station

Speaker: Bill Hunter (Liverpool WRP)

IRSP — TARGET FOR THE STATE

TERRY HARKIN, a leading member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, is one of a large number of people still awaiting trial under the notorious 'supgrass', no-jury system in the north of Ireland. Harkin told Workers Press in an interview at his Belfast home how the IRSP and its membership is a particular target for the supergrass system, and how this is only the latest stage in a systematic — and frequently murderous — campaign to destroy their party:

‘**SUPERGRASS** cases are a concerted attempt to smash the will of the Irish people to resist Britain. It is the use of uncorroborated evidence of a sole informer who has been offered bribes, immunity or shorter sentences, to provide this evidence. They are paid perjurers.

Evidence in such trials cannot be credible because informers are prepared to tell lies about people, whose names are put forward by the British army or the RUC, in an attempt to get a few years off their sentences.

A big campaign was built up in the north of Ireland on this issue, although here we are often preaching to the converted. Hopefully, it is now having an impact in Britain. It is unfortunate, however, that it took another hunger strike to highlight it.

The use of supergrasses has been and is being used to a very great extent against the IRSP. I would say it is a concerted attempt to smash our movement and take away a principled socialist voice from the Irish working class, and to silence our movement.

The British like to think that what is happening in the six counties is the opposition of 'tribal differences' between Catholics and Protestants. But the IRSP insists it is a class struggle.

We feel this is why we have been hardest hit by the supergrass system, because our movement is engaged in a class struggle for the rights of workers, for the establishing of a 32-county socialist republic based on the works of Marx Engels and Lenin.

Struggle

You only have to look at the history of assassination against our movement to see what kind of struggle we are engaged in.

The early leadership of our movement, Danny Loughlan, Hugh Ferguson and Seamus Costello, were murdered by the Official IRA. This was between 1975 and 1978. The Official IRA now laughingly call themselves the 'Workers Party.'

Later, new leaders of our movement, such as Miriam Daly, Ronnie Bunting, Noel Little, Neil Monagal and Paul McCann, were either assassinated by the RUC and British army, or by these

'security services' masquerading as loyalists. This was between 1979 and 1984.

Assassinations have kept hitting us, supergrasses keep hitting us, and we are harassed and arrested. Our members are frequently put in custody for long periods via what we call internment by remand.

More than 150 of our members have suffered at the hands of the supergrasses in the north of Ireland. Six informers have been used against our members so far — in cases that have all, with the exception of Kirkpatrick, been either laughed out of court, or withdrawn after the supergrasses admitted in court telling lies at the behest of the RUC.

Our movement is engaged in a liberation struggle, a class struggle for a republic.

I would emphasise we are not in this struggle for one form of imperialism, British imperialism, to be exchanged for another run by Britain's hirelings in Dublin.

This country must rid itself of not only British imperialism but all such influence, so that we stand as a socialist nation and that, in the eyes of the world, Ireland will be pointed to as a socialist state and where socialism works. ♪



The ear-shattering noise of helicopters announces unwelcome rooftop visits for tenants of this pensioners' tower block in Divis Flats, a republican stronghold in Belfast. The visits are increasingly frequent as the helicopters ferry troops and supplies to an army observation and listening post, on top of the tower.

Strip-search protests

Protests against strip searching of women in Armagh prison will be held throughout the north of Ireland this week-end.

Women will picket the jail itself on Saturday. They point out that since 1982 there have been 3,000 strip searches on a prison population which has never exceeded 35!

A spokeswoman for the prisoners said last week that strip searching is continuing unabated, despite claims to the contrary by Stormont Minister for Security, Nicholas Scott.

She said: 'The decline in statistics is due to only one factor — the steady decrease in the prison population during the last two years.'

'All entering or leaving the prison, for any reason whatsoever, continue to be strip-searched completely naked — no one is exempt from this practice.'

She continued: 'During the month of January there were 45 strip searches conducted

in the prison. Among those subjected to this harrowing experience were two young pregnant women — one of who was serving a mere seven days for non-payment of a fine, and the other a remand prisoner who will continue to endure strip searching weekly until her case is heard.'

The spokeswoman added that strip searching could not be justified on 'security grounds' and challenged Scott to produce evidence that security had ever been threatened or contraband had ever been found 'that deemed it necessary to employ such a devastating measure as strip searching.'

● A SENIOR psychiatrist has visited Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson, the two women held in top security on remand in Brixton prison since last July.

At their lawyer's request, Dr Derek Davis, consultant psychiatrist and emeritus professor of mental health at Bristol university, has seen the women and heard the conditions under which they are being held.

He has reported that while both women are in good mental health with no signs of disorder, the regime presently imposed on them could prove damaging in the long run.

Michael Fisher and both women's families are concerned that the harsh conditions and continued strip-searching may prevent them from making adequate preparations for their trial which begins on May 5.

Their solicitor is about to apply to the High Court for an order that the prison conditions be improved and the strip and body searches ended.

Belfast cash crunch

FUNDING for Belfast city council will expire at the end of March when the present grant runs out. The city's workforce are worried they may be the target of mass sackings.

The crisis follows the refusal of the unionist-dominated council to strike a rate, in defiance of a High Court injunction.

For the last five months the council has refused to hold meetings in protest at the Anglo-Irish accord between the Dublin and London governments.

The Belfast loyalists are hoping their actions will inspire the other 17 unionist councils to follow suit — some have already been refusing to strike district rates and to carry on their business. Lisburn borough council has also adjourned all meetings in protest at the agreement.

In fact, since the local government elections last year, many unionist councillors have been engaged in disruptive tactics in areas where

Sinn Fein councillors were returned to office. The latest stage in the campaign is aimed at bringing the north of Ireland's local government machinery to a halt.

Ironically, it is members of the reformist pro-accord Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) who have been threatening the unionists that the outcome of their actions could be jail sentences and fines.

Whether the unionists will be found in contempt of court depends on the Alliance Party returning to the High Court to point out that the order has been defied.

Council employees fear mass sackings and community groups may go unpaid if a rate is not struck. Already the community services department at Belfast city hall has circulated 14 groups who receive grant aid from the council and employ workers funded by the department.

The circular warns the groups that include citizens'

advice bureaux, a community centre and two local resource centres that funding will expire on March 31.

Belfast community services chief John Doherty has warned that because the council is not meeting, his department has no means of securing decisions on grant-aid.

Employees of the technical services department have told the West Belfast 'Anderstown News' they fear losing their wages. 'We are worried that after March 31 there will be no-one with the power to issue our wage cheques. If that happens we will be into a Liverpool-type situation with redundancy notices being issued until the government steps in by appointing a commissioner.'

So far all city hall departments have been operating as normal. But leisure centres and other public amenities may not even have basic items like fuel for heating in a few weeks time.

COMMENT

By Mike Howgate

**Comrade Pottins,
money and morals**

THE Comment article by Comrade Charlie Pottins in last week's Workers Press (No.14) was in many ways a continuation of the sort of thinking that should have departed with the Healy rump.

At best (and most of it was for the worst) it was an evasive reply to a straight question from Mr. Sean Matgamna of Socialist Organiser. The question was — to what extent was Healy's WRP financed by bourgeois nationalist regimes in the Middle East and North Africa.

It is beside the point that Matgamna, for his own factional (or other) reasons, chose to pose the question in a style reminiscent of Private Eye. Nor is it enough to castigate Matgamna for appealing to bourgeois public opinion. He also appealed to a justifiable distrust in the workers movement of the WRP's relations with bourgeois nationalist regimes.

To fudge this question is to place ourselves in the camp of those who cover up for Healy and his crimes. So no matter how painful or possibly, in the short term destructive, the truth will and must out.

For Comrade Pottins to echo Comrade Dave Bruce (Workers Press) in saying that we (i.e. the party as a whole) know nothing of 'alleged funding of the WRP by Libyan authorities' is to pre-empt the current investigation into the corrupt and 'mercenary' relations established by Healy.

It is common knowledge for example that the Libyan government gave printing jobs to Astmoor Litho and purchased copies of films produced under the auspices of the party. It is also well known that the party press gave an unusual amount of coverage to Colonel Gaddafi and Libya and entered into a public anti-imperialist undertaking with the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The characterisation of the Libyan regime as 'an intergal part of the socialist revolution' (News Line September 9, 1979) and as 'developing in the direction of socialist revolution' meant that the party was tailoring its principles to accommodate a special relationship with Gaddafi.

To what extent this accommodation rested on financial considerations, whether via direct payments or through 'legitimate' financial contracts needs to be fully explained and not pre-emptorily dismissed with the excuse that 'Certainly none of it came my way!'

But worst of all is the blunt assertion by Comrade Pottins that, as far as cash payments are concerned, all cats are black in the night. 'What is so terrible' he says 'about Libyan, or other Arab money, as distinct from other kinds anyway?'

The terrible thing is that Comrade Pottins appears to think that finance and contracts from the Middle East came without strings. It should be obvious, even without a full report from the investigation into Healy's crimes, that the WRP was not on the receiving end of a 'free lunch'.

As Comrade Cliff Slaughter pointed out at the October 18 aggregate, (see WRP News Line November 20, 1985) behind the political corruption of Healy's WRP in relation to the Iraqi regime was 'an unprincipled financial and political dependence on the Iraqi bourgeoisie.'

Does Comrade Pottins need reminding that Healy's henchmen, in the name of the Party, carried out a spying operation on behalf of Iraqi intelligence against members of the Iraqi Communist Party? Workers Press (issue 13, AKA 11) has already reported that material is being investigated which links such intelligence gathering activities with cash payments.

Finally, the arrogant jibe to Matgamna to 'spare us your moral lectures' sounds just like the replies of some of the hardened cynics of the rump to the question of revolutionary morality in the WRP. Revolutionary morality is not solely to do with sexual relations, it also means that principles and honesty in front of the working class are not for sale.

**London
HEALTH
EMERGENCY****FIGHTING
FOR A HEALTH
SERVICE BASED
ON NE**JOHN LISTER talks
to PHIL PENN

WE ARE primarily a London-based campaign due largely to our GLC funding. What we know is mainly about London, because even with the efforts that we have made through Labour Party and TUC fringe meetings and so on we have not built sufficient links for a national campaign.

London however is at the sharp end of most of the developments taking place in the NHS. There are a couple of other Health Emergencies and some similar campaigns in the rest of the country but not many.

In London there is a network of 25 or so, and rather than rush around trying to build a national network we decided to focus on particular disputes that have broken out in London that we can build a campaign upon and function as a source of information for anyone who actually wants to fight.

Our newsletter 'Health Emergency' attempts to draw the strengths out of the struggles taking place, draw some experience from past struggles and also present the most up-to-date picture of what's going on in London's health service.

We cover everything from the quality of health care, racism in the health service, special problems facing women in relation to the health service, lack of democracy in the health service, privatisation and what it means for jobs and patient standards, right through to cuts.

We took on staff here in the spring of 1984 when the first phase of really big fights was taking place against privatisation.

What has emerged as par for the course of the private cleaning contractors is a cut of between 30 per cent and 60 per cent in hours worked, in other words physical hours worked doing cleaning, etc. This obviously means job losses and a decline in cleaning standards.

There were a number of struggles taking place on privatisation: the Barking strike, the Hammersmith strike, which lasted three months and was defeated, Scarsdale in Derbyshire and Addenbrookes in Cambridge, which NUPE and COHSE have just decided to wind up after 18 months.

One or two of these were quite successful. In Oxford at the Littlemore Hospital they actually won — but that was because they built very strong support, involving the local labour movement and developing a solid base.

Local

We have supported many local struggles on privatisation. It was a phase in which, although there were cuts in spending and so on, they were not taking a dramatic form that you could build a campaign on, so privatisation came pretty much to the fore.

But opportunities were missed really to build around these struggles. The Barking strike, which should have been the focus of a national campaign by NUPE, and the GMBTU which was also involved, instead became a token rather than the basis for an organised challenge to competitive tendering.

Opportunities were missed then and the amount of work we were able to do to counteract that simply made us somewhat unpopular with some union officials.

The NUPE leadership ignored a unanimous conference decision in May 1984, and refused to fight for national supporting action to spread the Bark-

THIRTY-ONE of London's hospitals have been closed in the last six years. Three have been partially closed, a further 22 have been approved for closure and five approved for part closure since 1979.

Nearly all Londoners have suffered real cuts in health service

resources over the last three years.

This year they will also lose the Greater London Council which undertakes a wide range of vital health matters. This week, John Lister publicity officer of the London Health Emergency campaign, talks to Workers Press on the damage being done to London's health service.

ing strike. This allowed it to become isolated as a kind of one-off dispute.

The one exception to this approach was last year in Sunderland, where NUPE mobilised along with COHSE in one of their big bases in the north east.

They escalated the dispute bringing out two thousand auxiliaries in supporting action. This eventually forced the health authority to give

jobs to those who had been displaced and stopped them privatising any more services.

So it is possible to win, but victories have been very thin on the ground. What we have now got coming is a new round of cuts, very sharp cuts right across London and many other areas as well.

But we have got a labour and trade union movement that is in no way prepared for that —

links have not been built, stewards' committees have been run down and so on. It is in a very poor condition to mount the kind of fight that is needed.

The structures that ought to be taking a lead and putting down a militant marker are not there. The tendency is either to look for a local compromise with management or to give up on the prospect of calling their members out.

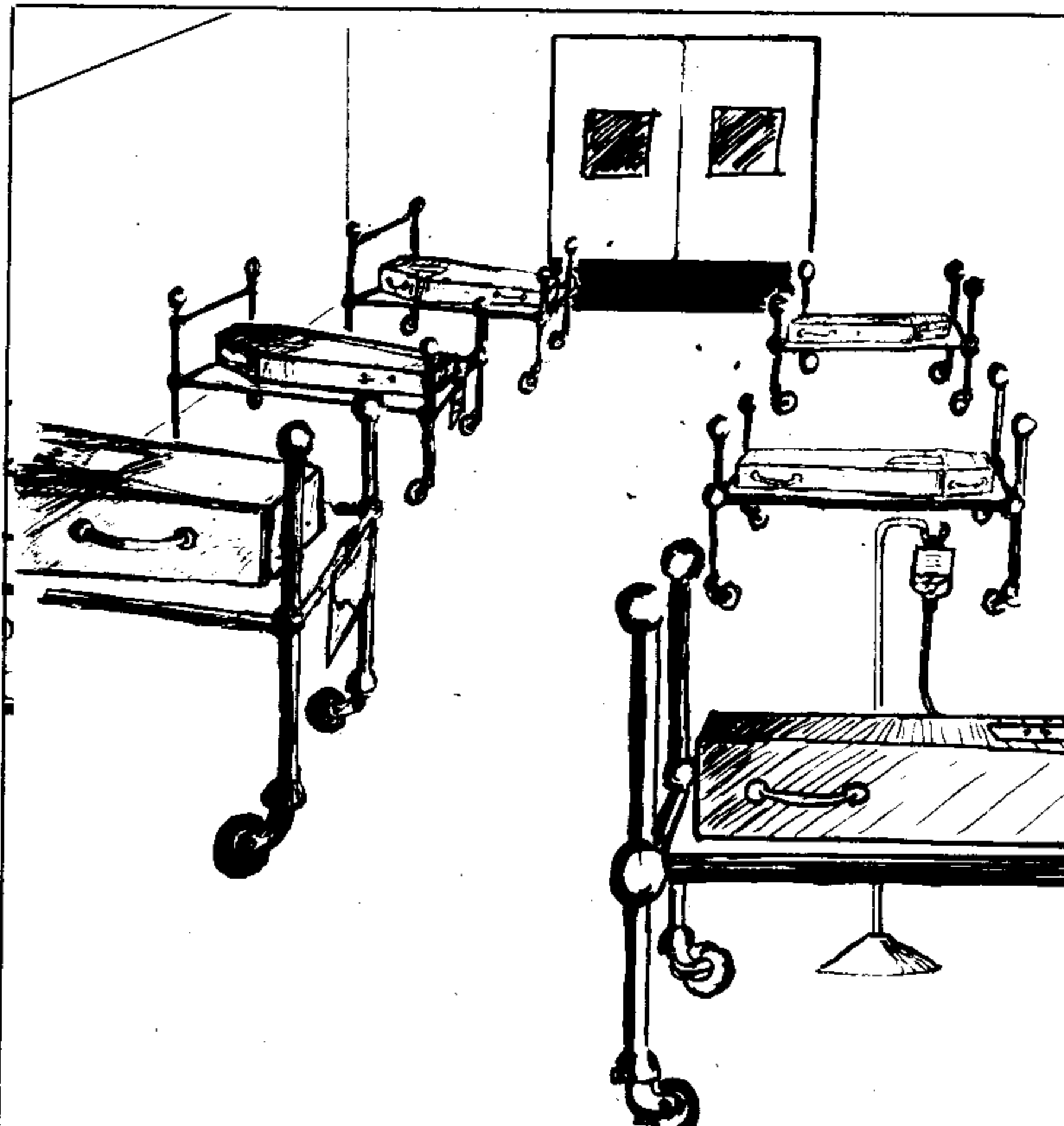
Where there is a lead given, there is a response, Neasden Hospital, for instance, in Brent was occupied quite recently with substantial popular support amongst health workers.

But a weakness of the trade union leaderships was played upon by the taking out of an injunction which threatened the assets of the unions involved — which then moved in and called the action off.

I think health workers have been seen and have seen themselves as the weaker end of the trade union spectrum in terms of strength of organisation.

I think that they have suffered in morale terms as a result of the defeat of other sections of the trade union movement.

Just as the miners came out in support of health workers in 1982, some health workers responded very strongly to



In order to cut costs the Area Health Authority have introduced one of the new unmanned wards. The two most costly items, patients and hospital workers, have been eliminated. Costs have been further reduced by the elimination of the necessity for heating, lighting and high tech. equipment. The authority are hoping to specialise more in this field

NG TH ED ED



'You have whole accident services shut down and the resultant chaos caused in terms of the waiting list'.

the miners strike of 1984-85. They saw that strike defeated and at the same time saw their own leadership retreating from calling any kind of solidary action with the miners.

There is no doubt that we face a morale problem which has been generated by the failure of the leadership over a long period of time. We recognise that and have consistently challenged it. We took it up during the Barking strike.

It's fair to say that in that period there was a very strong rank and file feeling for a fight on privatisation.

Action

In June of 1984 in support of the Barking strike, NUPE called a London-wide day of action. More hospitals took action on that day than any day during the pay dispute of 1982, but entirely at a rank and file level without any kind of serious official mobilisation. So given a real official lead, it would have been possible to mobilise a big fight but that did not happen.

What has happened is the whittling away and in some cases the wholesale destruction of the ancillary work force. We should bear in mind that the ancillaries have been the backbone of the health service struggles; they have always been the most keen to defend the health service; have been the most militant and the most unionised.

Remember that they have been the ones who have suffered the brunt of privatisation even when private contractors have not been brought in. Management have enforced their own cuts which have

sometimes been even worse.

So it is quite a problem persuading workers that there is a possibility of winning in order to get them out of the gate. That is the general scenario, which does not alter what you need to fight for but does colour your impressions as to how easily you are going to win.

The big areas that have been cut include Lewisham, with Guy's hospital and three local hospitals shut except for emergencies. Lambeth, with proposals to shut down St Thomas's for a month in the summer — and obviously there are a lot of cuts there — Greenwich, with St Nick's and the Dreadnought facing closure — and other cut-backs in Greenwich.

North of the river the Bloomsbury area is facing a £7 million overspend at the end of the year which will carry over into next year. Whole wards and dozens of beds, are shut until April. Vacancies are frozen: one thousand jobs have been cut since 1982.

In Hampstead, further north, the Royal Free, which has also suffered a kitchen scandal, is to have eight wards closed for three months during the summer.

The worst-hit areas are the ones with the big teaching hospitals which have had large sums of money in the past but which are not now adequately funded. The spin-off from this is that the cuts are passed onto the weaker hospitals, which do not have an influential consultant to fight their corner.

In Riverside, the West London and either the Westminster or St Stephen's will shut. Half London's hospitals are restricting non-urgent admissions: eight districts in the North West Thames (NWT) region are on 'red alert' — admitting emergency cases only. Yet this region plans to cut another two thousand beds by 1994!

Many districts have been hit very hard by under-funding last year of pay awards right across the board.

The government refused to pay more than 50 per cent of the actual pay award which means that the whole of London was cut by £12 million, — making a total cut of over £70 million since 1982. The result is even more closures.

Facilities

They think they can cut back beds; at first it just seems as though they are only holding back the waiting list. But, as soon as you get a cold snap like the one we are now experiencing and people start dropping, all of a sudden hospital facilities are full up.

The waiting list grinds completely to a halt, they cannot admit anyone other than those who will die if they do not get admitted, so the whole time the alert prevails is added to the waiting list.

Consultants complain that University College Hospital (UCH) has ceased since before Christmas to admit anyone from the waiting list.

Of course people who

can afford it are being driven into the private sector. You are getting the development of a two-tier health service.

In Croydon, the cuts have meant the postponement of a new orthopaedic ward in the Mayday hospital, just opposite the hospital gates, a private firm are building a brand new hospital which is going to specialise in orthopaedic surgery.

Now it has just been announced that the health authority are going to send patients there for treatment from the NHS waiting list, paid for by the NHS!

Near Guy's there is a brand new massive private hospital being built. It suits the consultants; they only have to pop across the road.

In one hospital they now have a vetting system where a nurse sits by the door and asks patients questions as they come in.

They call it a nurse triage system, a term adopted by French doctors at the battle of Waterloo.

The idea was that the walking wounded could look after themselves, the mortally wounded were not worth bothering about any way and the others were the ones that could be patched up enough to do some damage to the enemy.

What is significant of course, is the fact that this term is being trotted out now.

You have whole accident services shut down and the resultant chaos caused in terms of the

waiting list. For instance, the Middlesex hospital casualty has been shut down and everybody shunted over to University College Hospital (UCH).

So UCH fills up with emergency cases and no one on the waiting list can be admitted.

You get delays admitting even accident cases; and young children turned away at the last minute from booked cardiac operations.

There are many cases like that and they are well documented in 'Health Emergency'.

People come from all over the south of England to use the specialities offered in the big London teaching hospitals.

You might argue that they should have somewhere nearer where they live: people in Cornwall, for instance should have a teaching hospital in Cornwall to look after them.

The thing is that no one is proposing to build such hospitals. What they are proposing is to cut back what exists in London to stave off cuts in other parts of the country.

This is part of what they call the 'reallocation of resources' which basically means that London is cut and every where else gets a small slice of that. The Resource Allocation Working Party (RAWP) aims to level down London to match the deplorable levels that exist elsewhere.

Whatever happens with the GLC the campaign will not close down. We may not be able to afford full-time staff but as a focus for the fight that's coming, the campaign will be kept going.

For that purpose, we have increased our affiliation fees to set the campaign on a firm financial footing. We have 185 affiliated unions Labour

Party and local campaigns.

We have at least insured that the 'Health Emergency' will go on and some basic organising work can continue. We are asking all Trade Unions, Labour Party branches and any other concerned organisations to affiliate.

The fact is that the Health Service as a whole has been cut back and London has been cut the hardest.

The only answer is a government that will adequately fund the health service and provide the necessary restoration of standards. This means fighting for a health service that is based on need rather than on finance available.

If you have a cash-limit health service then you are going to have people dying and suffering unnecessarily and that is the situation we now have.

Porters foil speed-up bid

AN ATTEMPT to introduce a one man portering system at St James' hospital in Balham south London was foiled last week when theatre porters refused to co-operate with the scheme.

Management tried to introduce the scheme as part of a cost cutting exercise which will mean the destruction of three theatre porters jobs by 'natural wastage'.

St James' is earmarked for closure in 1988 with the loss of 100 beds and 200 'full-time equivalent' jobs

which comes to substantially more when measured in real people.

However a number of St James' workers including theatre porters will be transferred to St George's Hospital Tooting and it is thought management hope to transfer one-man portering with them.

Although the cleaning service has been privatised at St George's, management were faced with a

strike when they tried to introduce one-man portering. The porters were not only concerned about job losses but also about the risks involved to the patient.

The management backed down at St George's but then tried to introduce it via the St James' porters.

Arthur Hautot, a theatre porter and steward at St James, said 'The St James' work force have no intention of becoming a Trojan Horse for the plans of the district health authority.'

South Africa



STATE OF EMERGENCY ENDS

By Wayne Poulsen

PRESIDENT P W Botha ended seven months of rule by emergency powers on March 7.

Since July 21 last year, 30 districts around Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth have been subjected to the brutal and unfettered repression of the apartheid state.

Imposed after ten months of escalating resistance and protest by workers and youth in the black townships, the emergency has raised the death toll by nearly 800 to over 1,200 in the last two years. Almost 8,000 were detained under powers extended to the state forces. Thousands more were maimed and injured.

P W Botha has claimed that an 'easing' of the unrest has enabled the change. But twenty-two more died in the next two days and seven were shot by police in the Lebowa tribal homeland while trying to attend a funeral.

Existing security legislation will in fact be raised and strengthened to maintain a virtually permanent state of emergency.

Many of those detained expect to be re-arrested under the long-standing apartheid laws, such as the Internal Security Act which allows indefinite detention for interroga-

tion or preventive purposes.

Last month the South African government made a 'short term agreement' with 30 foreign banks to turn 1/214 billion of short term loans into medium term loans. This followed a unilateral freeze on repayments by South Africa in August last year immediately prior to the declaration of the state of emergency.

The banks demanded an immediate 700 million down-payment; the situation is to be reviewed in a year's time. It is clear that the banks are demanding an end to the social upheaval which increasingly threatens the very foundations of capitalism in South Africa.

Botha's ending of emergency rule is no more than a cynical concession to the bankers' demands.

Imperialism is deeply divided on how to deal with the South African crisis. This is sharply reflected within the local ruling class. Last year's meeting between African National Congress (ANC) leaders and the delegation of South African businessmen led by Gavin Reilly of Anglo-American (South Africa's

largest company) pioneered the 'Trek' to Lusaka.

Since that visit numerous business, political church community and trade union leaders have followed.

Botha's extreme right-wing constituency demands nothing short of total repression of the resistance by the working class and youth. His strategy is supported by Regan and Thatcher.

They have neither faith nor interest in what liberal opinion sees as the 'moderate' and 'reasoned' stance of the ANC, underpinned by its adherence to the 'two stage' theory of revolution according to which the democratic demands can and indeed must be obtained without socialist revolution.

For them, catastrophe is the only alternative to the burgeoning rebellion in the republic.

The 'liberal' bourgeoisie and their international supporters (including the 30 banks) see 'catastrophe' in the form of the working class taking the road of socialist revolution.

They believe this can only be avoided if Botha

immediately treats with the 'authentic leaders' of the South African people, particularly the ANC and Nelson Mandela, and begins to dismantle the laws and institutions of apartheid.

Neither strategy can succeed for imperialism. Apartheid is a particularly brutal and humiliating form of capitalism. It exists to provide a cheap and docile labour force for super-exploitation. Smash apartheid in South Africa and you destroy the foundation of capitalism itself.

The democratic demands of the 'non-white' working class, peasants and middle class can only be realised by socialist revolution itself.

The formation of the new 'super federation' council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in November last year highlighted the movement by the working class towards independent industrial and political organisation. COSATU is the biggest trade union organisation in South Africa's history and has committed itself to a programme of political demands aimed at the destruction of apartheid backed up by threat of nationwide industrial action.

The working class is the decisive political force in South Africa and daily becomes conscious of that fact.

WHAT is urgently needed in the workers' movement today is a perspective of struggle which corresponds to the real balance of class forces.

The problem is, it seems to me, that the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two main classes are still being tested out in the class struggle itself. However, it is possible to begin a discussion on a number of basic considerations.

When the ruling class were in disarray over the Westlands affair they remained in power with no serious challenge to their rule because the working class are themselves in disarray.

Legal curbs on traditional forms of trade union action have been accepted by the trade union leadership, which has in turn encouraged the employers to mount a union-busting campaign on the miners and now the printers — two of the most important bastions of trade union strength.

This has brought to the fore the weak side of the working class: the grip of the reformist labour bureaucracy. The TUC in particular played the most despicable role over the NGA's Shah dispute at Warrington and in the miners' strike.

The definite and serious problem of this trade union bureaucracy, which has a social base in the most privileged layers of the working class, can only be overcome by the class itself — not by any amount of words and

propaganda, as the experience of the miners' strike proved beyond all doubt.

Revolutionaries must seek in every possible way to undermine and weaken this bureaucracy which, as Trotsky pointed out, represents a colossal brake on the development of the British revolution.

A careful reading of the Healyite rump's bogus 'News Line' in relation to this question is important because, in criticising its pronouncements, we have to clarify ourselves on issues where a year ago we were in 'unanimous', unthinking agreement.

Although we have broken with the rump WRP organisationally, we are still engaged in parting company with them in the kind of political practice we carry out.

Evidence

Last Saturday (March 1st) they published a three-page manifesto which expounds an apocalyptic perspective where the working class and ruling class 'are lined up for a fight to the finish'; 'no compromise is possible'; Thatcher has single-handedly 'imposed rule by decree' and in defiance of the laws of history 'straddles between rotting parliamentarianism and open police-military rule' (which is how they define her 'Bonapartism').

Instead of presenting any evidence that the Marxist category of 'Bonapartism' is applicable to the present situation, the manifesto declares that parliament has been thrust aside and in its place we have rule by 'state force', meaning

'the physical coercion of the judiciary, the courts, the police, the armed forces and the capitalist mass media.'

But this is no different to what workers in many countries have experienced for years and is merely another form of 'bourgeois democracy'. Parliament has by no means been 'thrust aside' as the Westlands affair showed.

What the Healyites are saying is just a more extreme version of what every trade union bureaucrat is saying: they present a picture of an all-powerful ogre called Thatcher's government in order to justify their capitulation to the anti-union laws, and maintain an illusion of a 'fight to the finish' when in reality they are preparing to sell out.

The bogus 'News Line' goes on to assert that this onslaught 'drives the working class to defend itself as a class' and it then 'immediately becomes a question of which class rules'. This is even more hot air, only taken from the realms of fantasy to near-lunacy.

The fact that sections of the working class are experiencing a more intensive form of state oppression certainly radicalises those sections, but they come up against it only when they are fighting for their own particular interests.

What prevents the working class fighting 'as a class' is the trade union bureaucracy whose role is ignored and thus covered up for by the Healyites.

The fact that different sections of the class are being attacked or are struggling on their own account does not mean

Martin Beveridge

A cover for the union chiefs

ge looks at the Healyites manifesto



The SPG forcing a way through the NGA picket lines at Warrington in 1983 for one of Shah's scab trucks... the TUC played the most despicable role



V I LENIN... scornful of 'slogans learned by rote'

that they are inclined to combine in practice.

They have many experiences to go through before they do — including the break-up of the traditional forms of organisation which held them apart on craft and sectional lines.

For a tiny sectarian group to imagine they can jump over all this by demanding: 'Combine your struggles' and expect anybody to listen to them — believe me, they really do say this in their manifesto — is a case for reaching for the strait-jacket.

Abstract

The question of which class rules is not in dispute, either — it is the capitalist class. We are not in a situation of dual power. The working class 'as a class' are not in a state of armed insurrection. They have no organs of rule, no military strength at present... etc. And to acquire those things will not be 'immediate'.

The Healyites are talking about imaginary things: an abstract concept of a Bonapartist ruling class and a pure working class free of bureaucratic shackles. That is why they actually reveal their true position when they say: 'No matter if the TUC and Labour leaders cringe and crawl. The crisis-ridden Tory regime will only want more'.

Could there be a more open cover-up for the treacherous role of this bureaucracy which does weaken the struggle of

the working class? No need to highlight and counter their pernicious role and undermine them — they can be safely ignored because either they're going to be crushed by fascism or, of course, the revolution's here!

Now when the manifesto finally does come to the question of revolution, the process of 'abstraction' is taken a stage further. 'The appearance was', it says, 'that the working class was immersed in trade union and parliamentary forms.' This is in fact the major problem which serious Marxists have to grapple with. But not the Healyites!

'This development is historically deceptive', they hasten to add. 'It simply meant that when the working class reached the hour of its revolution, all the historical processes for its leap would be complete'.

What the Healyites really mean is that the 'revolution' (which for them is a complete abstraction) doesn't depend on the working class at all, prepared or unprepared, but on 'historical processes' which are independent of the actual development of the class.

What are these processes? This is made clear by their subsequent argument.

They call for the elaboration of a 'United Front' of 'all those drawn into the anti-Tory struggle'. A United Front is a tactic of a revolutionary party with influence in the class aimed at winning workers away from their reformist leaders.

This is not what the Healyites have in mind, however.

Since they ignore the bureaucratic leadership of the working class, they are 'convinced that the conditions for an all-out strike against the Tory government are maturing rapidly'.

This is because there are a number of different struggles going on: eg printers, teachers, local government workers. The specific nature and development of each of these is ignored, along with the treacherous role of their leaders, and they are all combined (but only in the head) by the Healyites call for community councils.

Community councils are equated with soviets and hey presto! 'As a class for itself, in General Strike action, the working class would rapidly build Community Councils (soviets) to organise the struggle for power and go forward to a Workers Revolutionary Government'.

Schema

What this really means is: as an abstraction formed by a general strike — which would overcome all problems of leadership — the working class would then materialise the Healyite schema for revolution, which is in fact the same thing as the 'historical processes' mentioned earlier.

The form of struggle of the working class is therefore drawn from thought — not reality — and this imaginary schema is then imposed on the

actual struggles workers are engaged in now.

Or as the editorial in the previous Saturday's 'News Line' (February 22) spells out, in relation to the fight against the anti-union laws: 'This mass mobilisation must take the form of the General Strike...' (my emphasis).

We can now decipher the real meaning of a key final paragraph in the Healyites' manifesto. Overthrowing capitalism and smashing the capitalist state, it says, 'requires the conscious leadership of a Marxist party guiding the practice of the revolutionary working class' (my emphasis).

At first sight, this seems to be the same as Lenin's position in 'What is to be Done'. But what the Healyites mean is that the party (consciousness) 'guides' in the sense of directs or commands, literally deciding in advance the form of struggle of the working class (practice).

The relation between the Marxist party and the working class, in the Healyite conception of things, is an objectification of the relation between consciousness and practice in Healyite ideology: consciousness drives practice along and it is the state of your individual consciousness that decides what you can or cannot do.

This extreme form of subjective idealism expresses the bureaucratic centralist relations in the Healyite party but could not be further from Lenin's true position on this question.

He did not only write about the tasks of the Marxist party and the working class in 'What is to be Done' but did so continuously, since the relation between them was constantly changing with the changes in the social and political situation in Russia.

This situation, he said, 'in a most direct and immediate manner determines the conditions for action, and hence, its aims' (Collected Works vol 17, p39).

Tactics

Of course, Lenin was here referring to the aims of immediate and direct action, to tactics, and not fundamental aims. He was scornful of the sectarian repetition of 'slogans learned by rote' that led to empty phrase-mongering and cut the party off from the specific features of the new and living reality.

'Marxism requires of us a strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation' he wrote in 1917 (vol 24, p42).

'What then are the clearly established objective facts which the party of the revolutionary proletariat must now be guided by in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?' he asked (ibid).

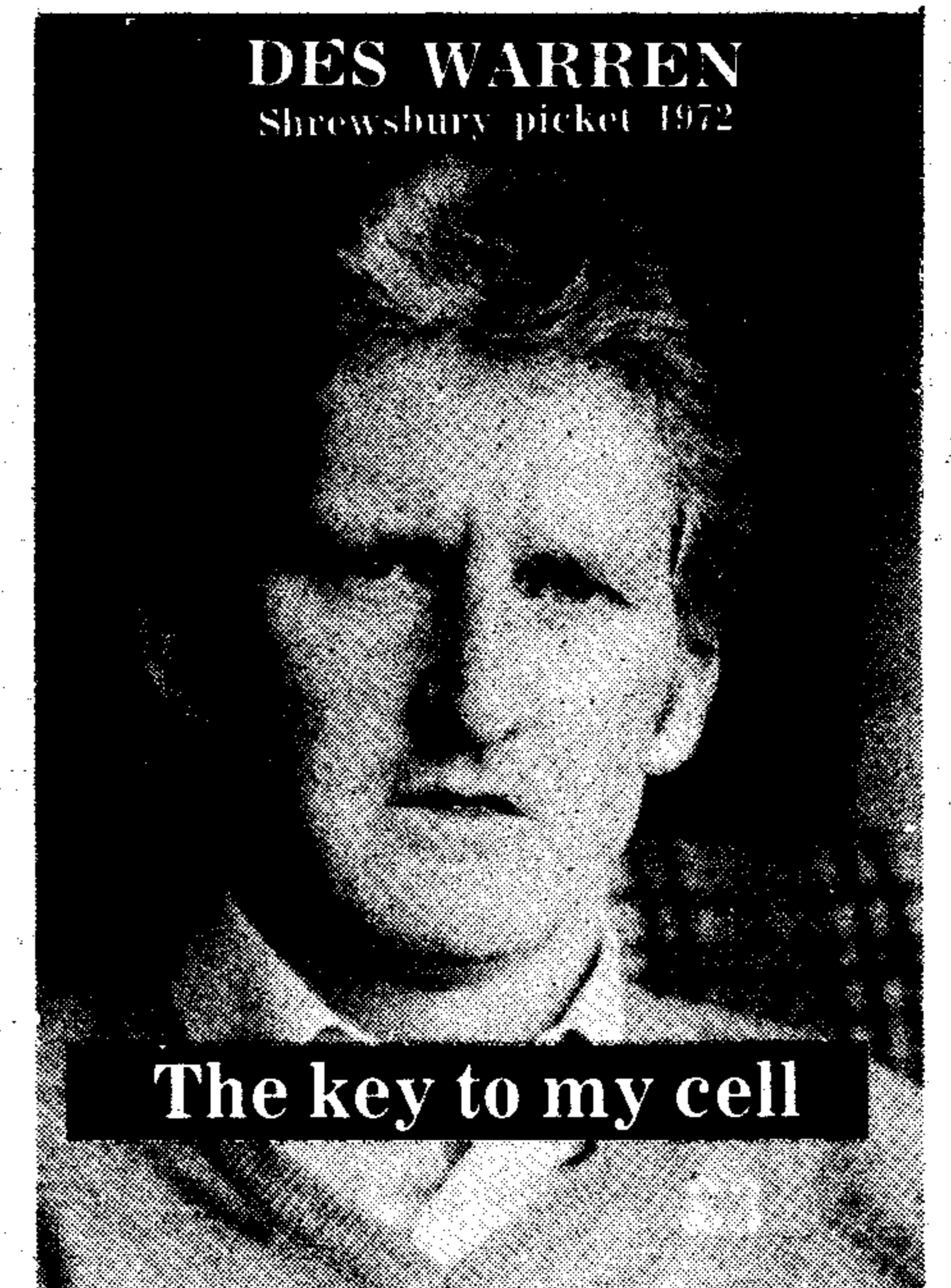
In my opinion, the most important task facing Marxists in the WRP today is to work collectively in such a way as to be able to assess accurately the nature and extent of

the spontaneous movement of the working class in relation to the employers' and state attacks in each specific industry.

This means devising practices to test, correct, verify and deepen our conceptions of this movement and enable us to orientate towards the revolutionary developments in the class.

And I repeat, we must

seek every opportunity to undermine and weaken the labour bureaucracy in order to assist the spontaneous movement of the class to express itself in opposition to the bureaucratic grip of its reformist leadership. Without this practice I believe we will have no scientific foundation for defining the tasks and forms of activity of a revolutionary party.



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LECTURES HIGHLIGHT A NEW TURN TO 'CAPITAL'

A WELL-ATTENDED series of six lectures on Marx's 'Capital', organised by the London district of the Workers Revolutionary Party, ended last week.

An average attendance of nearly 100 testified to the interest in questions of Marxist theory. Literature sales over the series totalled some £450.

Apart from WRP members, individuals from other political groups, including Workers Power, the International Leninist Workers Party and Socialist Viewpoint participated in the lively discussion which was a feature of the lecture series.

Supporters

The lectures took place against the background of a severe historical crisis in the WRP involving the expulsion last October of its former leader G. Healy and his supporters.

That 'Capital' was being discussed at all was, for many WRP members, a welcome change. For years this work has been neglected in the programme of 'cadre training' as Healy liked to call it. Everything was confined to Healy's absurd version of 'dialectics'.

There is no doubt that the WRP's analysis of the post-war capitalist crisis has been severely flawed and this was certainly a reflection of the party's overall degeneration.

In the recent past, especially, it tended to concentrate almost exclusively on the monetary aspect of capitalism's crisis and, having done so, it

BY GEOFF PILLING

proceeded to explain this crisis in terms which involved a fundamental departure from Marx's 'Capital'. This was fully discussed in the earlier lectures.

One issue involved was the attempt to find in Marx's work an immediate confirmation of the political line which the Party was following at any particular time.

From 1977 onwards, according to the Healy leadership, we were in a permanently revolutionary situation where the struggle for power was 'posed' or was 'on the agenda'.

To justify this wrong political line, bits were torn from Marx which appeared to 'fit the bill'.

What was lost was any concrete analysis of the real development of the world capitalist crisis.

Here is a lesson for all those interested in a serious study of Marx's major work, 'Capital'.

There is no direct link between this work and the day-to-day developments in the capitalist crisis. Any attempt to find such a link is bound to lead to serious errors.

System

At the same time, however, a study of Marx's critique of political economy is a vital prerequisite for grasping the contradictory appearances of the capitalist system.

As Marx said in the third volume of 'Capital': 'If the outward appearances of things coincided directly with their essence, there would be no need for science.'

It is for this reason that

the critique of political economy was for Marx a science which did not and could not arise spontaneously from the working class.

It involved him among other things in the study of a vast literature, including the work of all the major economists, both 'vulgar' and scientific.

Marx had to demonstrate that this political economy was a distorted, idealist reflection of the real, developing relations of bourgeois economy. His work had to connect up with all that had gone before in this area of science.

Collapse

In criticising many of the undoubted mistakes of the WRP, some participants at the lectures were at pains to point out that the great mistake was made at the end of World War II, when the movement had failed to predict the stabilisation of capital but had instead based its work on a false perspective of the imminent collapse of the system.

This is an important matter which needs to be given careful consideration.

In the first place, it is quite wrong to speak of the 'stabilisation' of capitalism after the last war, certainly in any absolute sense.

The post-war period as a whole has been characterised by an almost unbroken series of colonial wars, by the growth of a powerful series of national liberation struggles in many of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, by the decisive defeat of imperialism in

Vietnam, following an equally powerful blow to imperialism, the Chinese revolution.

As one comrade pointed out, these conditions can hardly be called 'stable'.

Second, many of those who based themselves on this so-called 'stability' did so with a theory that was essentially Keynesian in character.

This was certainly the case with the advocates of the 'permanent arms economy' theory which claimed that state spending on arms had rendered the capitalist economy more or less permanently stable.

These theories were entirely superficial and failed to analyse the contradictory nature of such an economy and thus the equally contradictory impact which arms spending had upon it.

In a similar vein were the theoreticians of 'neocapitalism' (Ernest Mandel was prominent here) who argued that increasing intervention by the state had been able to stabilise the system.

Finally, and most decisive, is the question of the character of the epoch in which this post-war boom developed.

Crisis

Trotsky, in the founding document of the movement, the Transitional Programme, characterised the epoch of imperialism as one centred on the crisis of leadership in the working class.

The Fourth International was founded in order to resolve that crisis. The survival of capitalism after 1945 was, in this respect, a rich confirmation of Trotsky's proposition.

For it was thanks to Stalinism and social-democracy alone that the

ruling class was able to survive the deep-going economic, political and social crisis which engulfed it at the end of the last war.

If this conception is abandoned, the essence of Trotskyism is lost.

In no sense did capitalism find some new reserves of strength in the post-war period which allowed it to survive for a further period. It survived only because of the unresolved crisis of leadership.

The idea that a 'third industrial revolution' based on electronics and other associated developments had given capitalism a new lease of life was also popular with Mandel and his supporters.

Future

In the final lecture, Cyril Smith dealt in detail with the implications of the 'information technology revolution' for the nature and future of capitalism.

He demonstrated in detail that such developments in science and engineering were not only incompatible with capitalism but actually created the basis for a new, communist society which would be prepared for by the proletarian revolution.

One final point about the discussion at the lectures. Some comrades complained that a concern with the method of 'Capital' was far too abstract an issue when compared with 'concrete' developments in the class struggle, such as Wapping.

This was strongly opposed by the majority of those present.

The fact is that any so-called 'concrete' question



KARL MARX

in the working class movement can only be approached by means of a series of theoretical abstractions.

Without such abstractions, an uncritical acceptance of the immediate surface appearance of these developments is inevitable.

This can only lead to the abandonment of Marxist theory, the foundation of the revolutionary party.

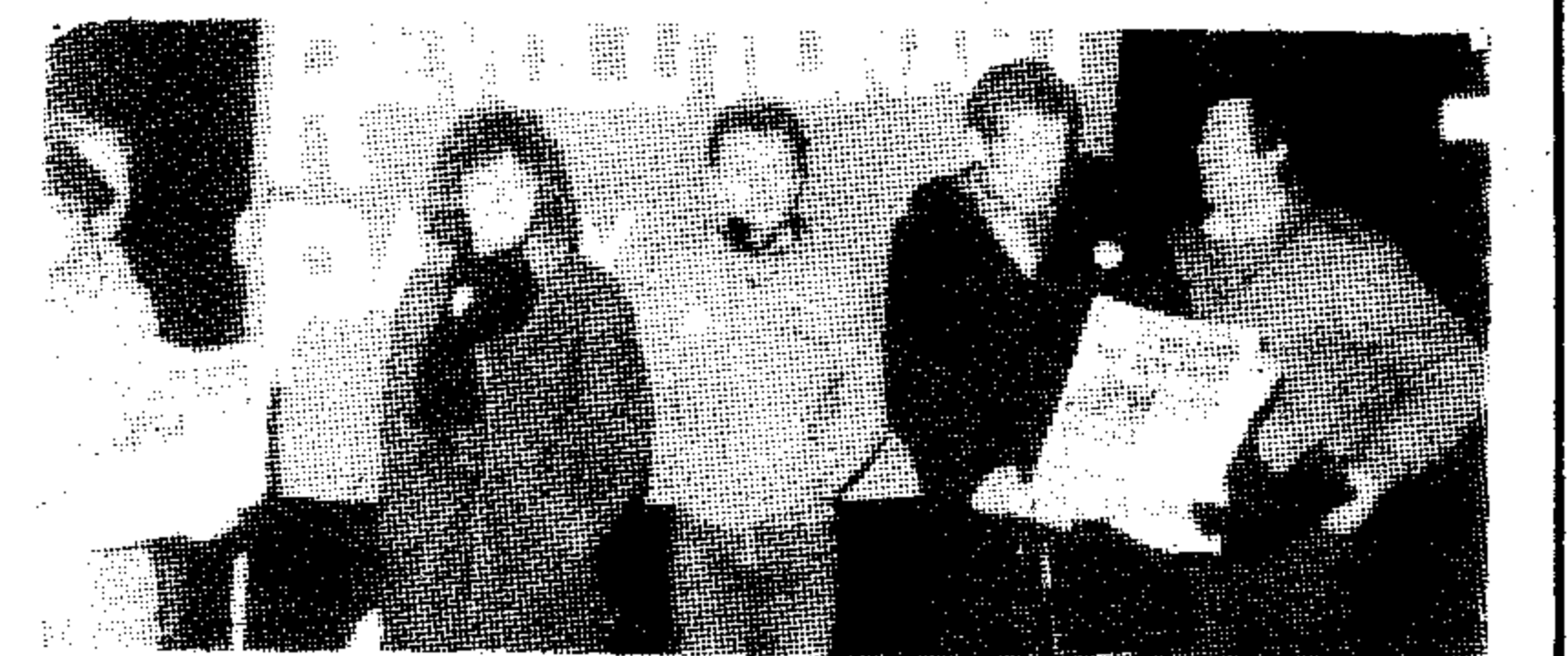
Although many future problems remain for fu-

ture work, there is no doubt that the series of lectures was highly successful as part of the process of the re-founding of the Trotskyist movement.

A similar course has been given in Scotland, one is now in progress in Liverpool and one planned for Manchester.

● A group has been formed to make a systematic reading of 'Capital'. This is being organised by Mick Gentleman and Mike Howgate. Details will be announced shortly in Workers Press.

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NORTH WALES SUPPORT GROUP SET UP

OVER 100 North Wales Miners' their wives and supporters were at the Gwersyllt working mens club, Wrexham, last Tuesday evening for a first meeting in support for the National Justice for Miners Campaign in North Wales.

Since the end of the strike the groups has campaigned not only for the miners who were victimised but for other workers fighting for jobs and union rights.

Among the speakers were: Jim Kelly, from the Silent Night strikers, who were sacked last July for refusing to call off their strike for better pay and

conditions, and Meurig Thomas, speaking for the quarrymen from Blaenau Ffestiniog who have been on strike since August for refusing to accept a pay cut.

Other speakers included Dick Withecombe of the National Justice for Miners Campaign, Kath Jones, South Wales Women Against Pit Closures, Bett Turner, a striking South Wales miner's wife, Dennis Pennington, a Lancashire miner jailed during the strike, Les Sweeting who



was sacked at Betshanger colliery in Kent, and Kent NUM Secretary Jack Collins.

Chairman Pete Leverton, an ex-miner but now a full-time official of ASTMS, pointed out that nearly 600 miners are still sacked or

in jail for fighting for their jobs and communities and for the future of their children.

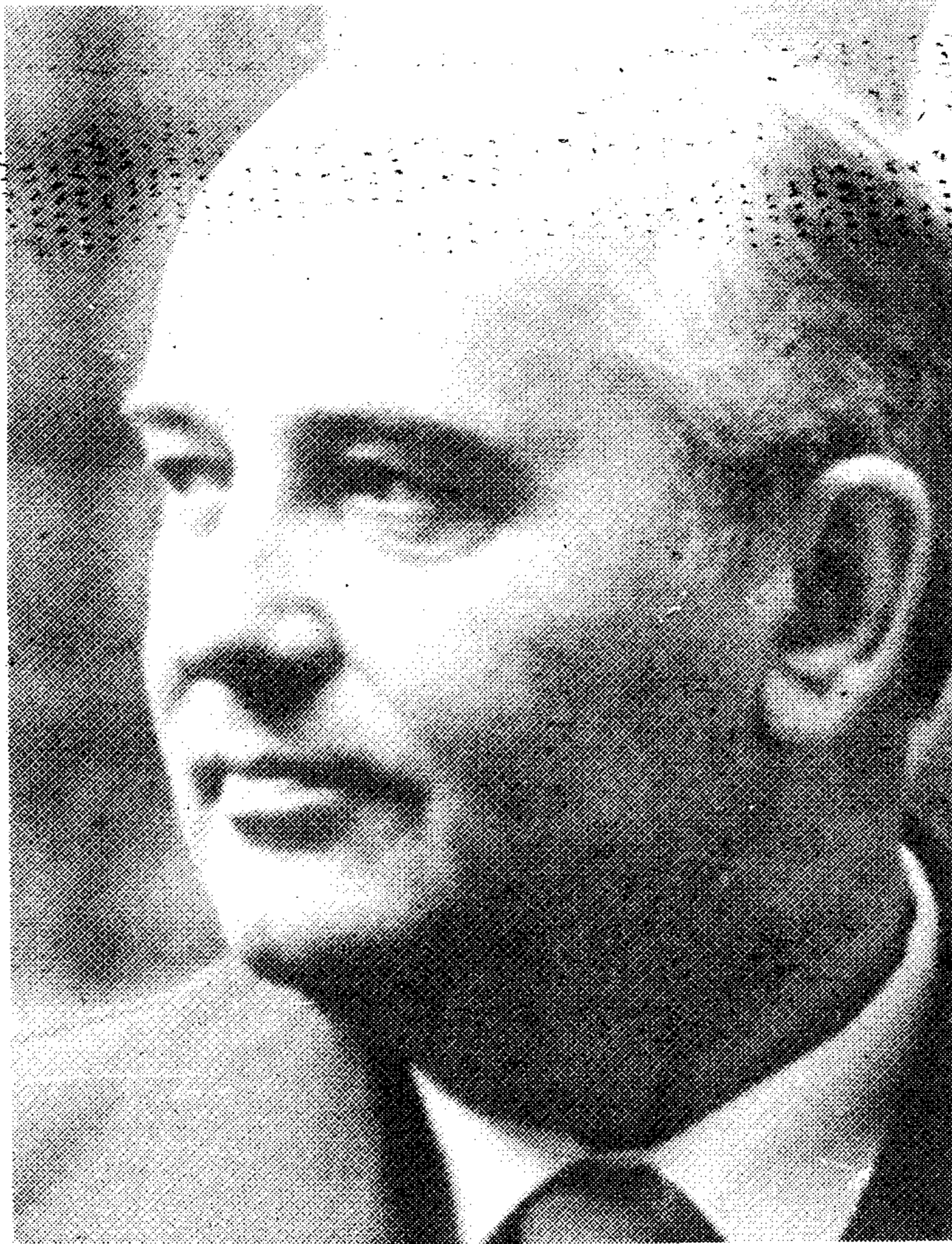
He said that the miners had no need to thank their supporters. The whole working class had to thank them for their courage and

determination in the face of massive attacks from the government and the state.

They had been an inspiration for all those — such as the printers — who are now following in their footsteps.



Brezhnev



Gorbachev



Thatcher

GORBACHEV'S PROBLEM

No.1: THE WORKERS!

BY TOM KEMP

IF THE 5,000 bureaucrats assembled in Moscow for the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union learned anything it is that they have a new boss.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the peasant's son from Stavropol's province, rose to the top the hard way: as a diligent student, a firm supporter of the party line at any given moment and an efficient Komsomol leader.

Making himself agreeable to the right people, he rose through the hierarchy to become party secretary at 54 — a mere youth compared with the gerontocracy which has held the top positions for many years.

He obviously intends to consolidate his grip, throwing out elderly deadwood and bringing forward his own supporters and allies.

He has staked his reputation on his ability to make a deal with the capitalist states on the lines of 'peaceful coexistence' and to re-invigorate the flagging economy.

Gorbachev himself has words in his five-hour long opening speech, many points of which were emphasised by other party dignitaries.

This was, of course, a set-piece Congress along the lines determined in the days of Stalin: long, formal speeches with no

touch of spontaneity, no voice from the factory floor or the collective farm.

But even in the dreary prose of bureaucrats something did break through the realities of Soviet life.

In fact, Gorbachev went out of his way to insist on the shortcoming and deficiencies of the Soviet economy from the start of his speech.

Practical

He told the Congress that 'the leadership of the CPSU considers it to be their duty to tell the party and the people honestly and frankly about the deficiencies in our political and practical activities, the unfavourable tendencies in the economy and in the social and moral sphere.

'For a number of years the deeds and actions of party and government bodies trailed behind the needs of the times and life — not only because of objective factors, but also for reasons above all of a subjective order.

'The problems in the country's development built up more rapidly than they were being solved.

'The inertness and stiffness of the forms and methods of administration, the decline of dynamism in our work and an escalation of bureaucracy — all this was doing no small damage. Signs of stagnation had begun to surface in the life of society.'

This was a strong condemnation of his predecessors, not mentioned by name. More significantly,

Gorbachev was unable to explain why these so-called 'negative factors' had appeared.

An examination of past statements by members of the Soviet bureaucracy would unearth many similar complaints and exhortations to do better.

In fact it has been clear for a long time that the bureaucracy was failing to deal with the accumulating problems of the Soviet economy.

Unlike the crisis of the capitalist countries these problems are specific to a nationalised and planned economy, developed within the constricting framework of 'socialism in one country' and under the control of an irresponsible and privileged bureaucracy.

Gorbachev himself is a typical creation of this stratum with whose fortunes his own is inextricably bound up.

Promises not backed up by results will have no effect on the increasingly critical working class which has heard it all before.

Faced by this working class demanding more and better consumer goods and beset by the armaments burden imposed by the Cold War the bureaucracy is desperately seeking a way out.

While armaments are a lifeline for the big US corporations which form part of the military-industrial complex, they are a massive burden for the Soviet economy.

They divert resources away from urgently needed investment and consumption, including scarce scientific and

technological skills.

The central problem of the Soviet economy is now one of re-structuring industry and, indeed, the whole economy in line with demands of modern 'high technology'.

As in the capitalist world, whole industries, upon which the bureaucracy bestowed such lavish care in the past, have now to be scaled down.

On the other side, industries now have to be built up and an increasing and more highly developed range of services have to be provided for consumers.

In principle, the planned and nationalised economy should make such a transition easier; in fact the concentration of all decision-making in the hands of a conservative layer, more interested in defending its own position, makes it more difficult.

Forces

These people, with their material privileges (such as special shops and other perks) which have to be paid for out of production, and their monopoly of power, are a brake upon the productive forces.

This is what Gorbachev means when he refers to the subjective factors holding back development.

When he talks about 'bureaucracy' he means the vices of office-holders — to whom he appeals to do better — not a definite layer, part of Soviet society and thus, also, an objective factor.

That is to say, an obstacle which must be removed if the full possibilities of the nationalised and planned economy are to be realised.

Gorbachev himself is part of that; a particularly self-conscious part, it is true, but still a representative of, and fighter for, the bureaucracy which grew up as part of the degeneration of the Soviet state and party under Stalin.

Gorbachev knows that unless there are drastic changes soon in the Soviet Union the bureaucracy is doomed.

Hence, first of all, there must be some deal with the capitalist world to halt the arms race and make additional resources available for economic tasks.

It is interesting to note, for example, that there were representatives at the Congress of bourgeois parties, notably the Indian National Congress.

Not only does this signify that the Soviet bureaucracy is firmly against a revolution of the masses in countries like India but also it signals to the world bourgeoisie that it has no revolutionary aims anywhere in the world.

As for the state of the economy, many revealing things were said at the Congress.

Take an example given by Gorbachev himself. He claimed that new lubricants had been developed by Soviet research scientists which, when used in machinery, guaranteed a 'no-wear-and-tear effect'.

By reducing friction

such lubricants greatly increased productivity. In fact, however, the new lubricant had not been applied but had been held up by mismanagement in the Ministry of Petrochemicals and other ministries.

Had a system of workers' control been in operation such a situation could never have arisen.

The same goes for many of the 'shortcomings' to which Gorbachev drew attention.

Thus the head of the Soviet government, Nicolai Ryzhkov, had to admit that 'though much was done in 1981-1985, the assignments of the Five-Year Plan were not fully attained.

Resources

Many industries were unable to reach planned targets. The country did not receive the expected results from the large resources invested in agriculture.

He added that there would have to be 'basic changes, a profound re-structuring'.

Unable to trace the problems to their roots, the spokesmen of the bureaucracy are only able to propose more of the same, plus some more 'leadership, greater attention to innovations and scientific and technological developments and so on.

The spokesmen of capitalism are unwilling to recognise that the Soviet economy, thanks to the nationalised property relations and planning sys-

tem, has been growing steadily despite the many shortcomings which the bureaucracy has to admit.

This growth has continued and is provided for in the Twelfth Five Year Plan which begins this year.

Meanwhile the capitalist world still suffers from prolonged stagnation and overproduction.

The problems of the Soviet economy are profound: it is how to produce more to satisfy the needs of the population.

This has to be done within the context of a thorough re-structuring of industry which is impossible within the limitations of a single country.

It requires the opening up of the economy to the world market from which, for example, much of the high technology required can be obtained.

It is too much to expect that the bureaucracy can make such a change. Indeed it is depending primarily upon raising labour productivity to find a way out.

Thus it is with the huge Soviet working class that the last word will reside, for productivity is not simply a question of better machines or more efficient organisation.

The enormous potential of the nationalised and planned economy — which show up in the great past achievements of industrialisation — cannot be realised unless the working class heaves the parasitic bureaucracy off its back. Only then will it be able to enjoy the full heritage of the October revolution.

Cyril Smith replies to Mike Banda . . .

Historic significance of Healy's expulsion

Dear Mike

WHEN I first read your 'Twenty-seven Reasons Why the IC should be buried forthwith and the Fourth International built', I thought it was an important contribution to the discussion.

When I read it a second time, I still thought so, but it now seemed incomplete: there were lots of reasons for 'burying' the IC, but not half a reason why the Fourth International should be built.

But at the third reading, I began to see it as embodying a false, metaphysical method of looking at history. I then considered writing to you personally. After hearing the conclusions some comrades were drawing from your ideas, I decided to submit this letter for publication.

I don't subscribe to all of Bill Hunter's comments in 'Mike Banda and the bad men theory of history' (for example I think you might be correct in relation to the Minneapolis Trial).

But I do agree with him when he described your approach as subjective. I understand this to mean that your characterisation of the history of our movement as a 'sorry and lugubrious tale', and so on, reflects the way you feel about it, not its objective significance.

It is not a matter of saying that this or that episode was not as bad as you say it was. In fact, as I shall point out, you actually miss out the very worst bit.

It is rather that you talk about the past as if you could observe it from the outside. But, however we might feel, it is our history, and we can't get ourselves a different one.

That is why, even though I am sure you would condemn their attitude as strongly as anyone, there are those who — whether they know it or not — effectively draw from your account the conclusion that Trotskyism is finished, that the heroic efforts of generations to carry forward the heritage of Bolshevism were in vain.

Old Hegel said that what appears as fear of error is often actually fear of the truth. (One of our jobs must be to cleanse Hegel of Healy's paw-marks by the way.)

However painful it may be, we must not be afraid of our errors, and even our crimes. For they all had objective foundations. In many cases, they could have been avoided

only by giving up altogether the attempt to build the movement.

This is not to excuse or cover up anything: if we are to grasp the real meaning of the last half a century, it can only be through our past actions, that is, by tracing them in detail to their material base.

Roots

This implies not less concentration on our misdeeds, but more. If we are to re-establish the International, its theory and its programme, we must unflinchingly dig down to the roots of every one of its defects.

We have to look at every side and every thread of our history, and the theory which is its crystallisation. Into them are woven self-sacrifice, stupidity, determination, corruption, cowardice, devotion to principle, isolation, defeat — and a few victories.

And I do mean woven, so that it is impossible to cut out some piece without destroying the whole. Many times during the last few months I have recalled a line of a poem by, of all people, Eliot: 'Unnatural vices are fathered by our heroism.'

Powerful

And that brings me to what I regard as the two most important aspects of the post-war history of the International: one, the powerful effects of Healy's degeneration; two, his expulsion. Neither of these can be grasped without the other. If we do not begin to see our history in their light, then we are indeed without hope.

Mike: you did not say a word about either of these in your document. And yet you would not be talking about any of the issues you raise if Healy had not been expelled.

Two characteristics of Healy are important here: his pathological



It is our history and whatever happens we cannot get ourselves a better one. . .

subjectivism, and his total conception of political activity. Together, they explain why his degeneration had to be absolute and complete.

Part of our work must be to understand this experience in the context of the advanced stage of decay of modern capitalism, especially in the way that the new technology carried dehumanisation to its extreme limits.

Healy's period of domination must be grasped as an expression of the contradictions of the boom period, and of the struggle of the movement to cling to basic principles during the long years of isolation from the class.

(While, of course, there could only be one Healy, it is interesting to note the prevalence of roughly equivalent forms of autocracy in other countries and other organisations.)

But the other side of

Healy's obsession with total domination of the movement is the positive significance this gives to his overthrow. I declare: only the continuity of the struggle for Bolshevism, in however distorted and attenuated a form, could account for the events in the party in 1985.

Further than this: the outcome of the Healy expulsion will be a gigantic theoretical leap, as we draw new knowledge about the end of the boom from this experience, an experience unique to the WRP.

Of course, those who saw the downfall of Healy and Torrance as the automatic reflection of 'class forces' were mystics, not Marxists. Nonetheless, they had a grain of truth.

For the Torrance machine was already finding it quite impossible to contain and control the fresh winds blowing in from the miners' strike.

Even her methods could not fully insulate the party from these influences.

Surely, the way forward now must begin from the decision to grasp the contradictions of the Healy era, however painful this may be — and I can only imagine how deeply you have been affected by the realisation of what we were all doing.

Evade

But North's refusal to criticise our past, and your attempt to reject it totally, are each ways of trying to evade contradiction. Both methods must fail: even if you don't recognise contradiction, it will inexorably recognise you!

Now, this is really the whole point of this letter. To carry out this work, to absorb the full bitterness and lunacy of what happened to us, to penetrate

to its real meaning — for this job, we are all needed.

However much we might disagree at this stage, even if we hate each other's guts, we are all part of a collective and objective process of development.

If we have the courage to face our history, Trotskyism will, I am profoundly convinced, win those powerful new forces which are emerging in every section of the international working class.

On the last occasion I spoke to Tony Short, I said that I regarded every question of Marxism as open. The subsequent apoplexy of this deeply religious man prevented him from hearing the explanation of what I meant: that the truth of each aspect of this theory had to be investigated anew, and not assumed on the sole basis that we said it was true long ago.

That was about a month ago, but it seems an age. Now, we are reaching the stage where some of these questions can be answered, not with domestic citation of holy writ, but on the basis of the experience of the struggle in the party.

Above all, it seems to me, we can confidently reaffirm the correctness of Trotsky's call for the FI. I don't mean from the standpoint of what he knew in 1936, but with the knowledge of the entire history of the intervening half-century.

The expulsion of Healy will give us a far deeper understanding of the meaning of the crisis of working-class leadership, and of the struggle to resolve that crisis.

With all good wishes,

Cyril

February 17, 1986

And John Spencer replies to Cyril Smith

Nobody has title deeds to history

CYRIL SMITH'S letter is essentially a defence of Healy's megalomaniac conception of his own place in history. Of course, Cyril has progressed from supporting Healy to opposing him, but the transformation remains confined within the same distorted frame of reference.

Thus, according to Cyril, the most important aspects of the post-war history of the FI are the effects of Healy's degeneration and his expulsion. I don't believe that these two things are comparable, still less that they provide a basis for understanding the last half-century.

Indeed there is by no means unanimity about either of these phenomena. The rump did not accept that Healy had degenerated at all. The Hyland minority believed that others in the party leadership were even more degenerate than Healy himself.

And among those who remain in the WRP there are deep divisions over how far the party can genuinely be described as revolutionary and whether its pretensions to Bolshevism carry credibility.

As for the expulsion, it was strictly speaking only carried out after the event. Healy reneged on the WRP before he was expelled, splitting the party rather than face his accusers.

Formality

The expulsion was certainly necessary, but it was a formality rather than the epic event some people have made it in retrospect.

The word degeneration implies a backsliding from some previous higher point. It has yet to be established that Healy ever occupied that higher point.

Certainly there is evidence that his abuses go back over a very long period. I have yet to be convinced that there ever was a 'golden age' of post-war Trotskyism.

I believe Cyril Smith is still dominated by the Healy-ocentric world outlook which was developed to a high point in the WRP prior to the split with the rump. He still takes Healy at his own estimation.

For example, it is absurd to believe that Hegel's reputation is in any serious way affected by anything Healy said or did. Healy didn't come up to Hegel's ankles, so he could scarcely cover him with fingerprints.

If we don't begin with Healy, says Cyril, 'we are

indeed without hope'. But the best that can be said about Healy's rise was that it was eminently resistible, and of his downfall that it was long overdue.

In my opinion, Healy is an essentially petty political figure whose organisation was never more than marginal to the life of the international working class.

I appreciate that history may judge these matters differently. But I can't help feeling that to base our appreciation of the last 50 years around the individual fate of this small-scale tyrant is subjective in the scientific rather than the Healyite sense of the word.

I make this distinction because in his letter Cyril Smith abuses the term in the way that Healy so often did. He says patronisingly that Banda is subjective because his words 'reflect the way you feel'.

It would have been more honest and more accurate had he accused Banda of subjectivism for writing what he thinks.

In old-style WRP-speak subjectivism meant disagreeing with Healy. Since he was the most important figure in world Trotskyism it followed that his thoughts had 'objective significance' while those who disagreed were subjective idealists.

Banda commits an even worse crime, writing a whole document about world Trotskyism without saying a word about Healy's degeneration or his expulsion!

It is to Mike Banda's credit that he raised the discussion of the history of the FI above the level of an argument about Healy's merits or demerits.

It is a step forward even if it does cause Cyril to raise his hands in mock-horror at the conclusions people might



MIKE BANDA



HEGEL



HEALY

draw from such an analysis.

Again Cyril's attitude is patronising. It is all very well for Banda to raise these issues, but some people might conclude that Trotskyism is finished. Above all, not in front of the children!

I'm not sure which generations Cyril is referring to when he speaks of heroic efforts to carry forward the heritage of Bolshevism.

The WRP has owned up to systematic violations of the principles of Bolshevism over an extended period. I would think it was for Cyril to demonstrate to what extent Trotskyism has a past in the WRP, never mind a future.

I certainly don't share the view that the WRP has some proprietorial interest in its own history. Nobody has any title deeds to history. It belongs indifferently to everyone. To believe otherwise is mysticism, not Marxism.

Cyril produces the excuse, worn thin by the Stalinists long before he laid hands on it, that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

Or as he puts it: 'our errors and even our crimes... in many cases could have been avoided only by giving up altogether the attempt to build the movement.'

Apart from being an unwarranted slur on Trotskyism, this is extremely comforting news for all of us who were prominent in the WRP.

Even Healy might be able to draw solace from this point, assuming that

Cyril's words reach him wherever he is hiding from the wrath of his comrades.

But even Healy might wish that Cyril's absolutism was a little more specific. Which errors and crimes is he talking about? Where Banda produces 27 specific instances Cyril refers to only one (the Minneapolis trial) and then it is to concede that Banda might be right.

It is touching, too, to see Cyril regurgitate almost word for word the official formula developed to justify Healy's domination of the WRP.

This was, to quote Cyril, that Healy's domination was 'an expression of the contradic-

tions of the boom period, and of the struggle of the movement to cling to basic principles during the long years of isolation from the class.

Not to put too fine a point on it, this is cant. As Banda's document demonstrates, the FI began to jettison basic principles during the war and went on doing so afterwards. In any case, Healy's ascendancy was well underway long before the boom really developed.

In my view the explanation of Healy's domination has to be sought in the English contempt for theory, noted and commented on by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Cyril's idea that Healy has a total conception of

political activity is equally wide of the mark. He and his supporters deny any connection between his political activity and his systematic sexual abuse of women comrades. Healy's political outlook is that of a vulgar opportunist.

Cyril concludes that because of Healy was obsessed with total domination of the movement his overthrow signifies the continuity of the struggle for Bolshevism.

My reply is simple: Prove it. I don't believe Healy's activities would have been tolerated by many trade unions, never mind by a revolutionary party. The fact that he was expelled proves nothing.

The assertion about a gigantic theoretical leap also sounds to me like whistling in the dark.

No doubt some comrades are becoming clearer about the nature of the WRP and the IC, but many of these same conclusions were reached years ago by those like Alan Thornett who we considered to be revisionists.

If a flat-earther realises that the planet is round after all, does this constitute a theoretical leap for anyone but himself?

In Cyril's eyes Banda's attempt to begin a discussion on the history of the IC places him alongside North who wants no discussion at all. In my view the first requirement is to face the truth as squarely as we can.

Cyril says this is impossible. The components of the history of Trotskyism are so interwoven as to defy analysis. If this is really so we have left the realm of science entirely and entered that of faith.

Perhaps this accounts for the blandly (and blindly) optimistic conclusions of Cyril's letter. Each aspect of Marxism has to be investigated anew, but the correctness of Trotsky's call for the FI can be 'confidently reaffirmed'.

At the end of a letter like Cyril Smith's this hollow assertion reeks of complacency and self-satisfaction. This is no basis for winning new forces from any section of the international working class.

February 22, 1986

Workers Revolutionary Party

LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE MARXIST MOVEMENT

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Lecturers will include: Tom Kemp, Geoff Pilling, Cyril Smith, Bob Archer and Bill Hunter.

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THE CLASS STRUGGLE

LAST WEEK, Workers Press published a history of International Women's Day. This week we continue our celebration of IWD with a tribute to some of the women who fought in some of the most solid

attacks on capitalism around the world.

Next week, we will conclude this series of articles with an account of the work of women in Britain in the 1984/85 coal dispute.

WOMEN'S direct contact with the effects of hunger and the suffering it causes has often created the spark that has set off revolutions. Last week we mentioned the bread riots which broke out in Russia on International Women's Day in 1917 and started the February Revolution.

The bread march of the women to Versailles and the subsequent storming of the palace of Louis XVI is well known and was the beginning of the insurrection in May 1789 which became the French Revolution.

Less than a hundred years later, the great-granddaughters of these women again demanded their right to bread and became the catalyst which started the Paris Commune.

The courage, aspiration and strength of the Communards has provided great inspiration to the world's struggling working classes. The brutality of its suppression is one of the most tragic events of our history.

Much of that courage and inspiration came from the women of the Commune who fought for its survival, organised for

its continuation and struggled to plan a new society that would bring equality for all.

So brave, resourceful and dedicated were the women that the reactionary forces around the world found it necessary to single them out for condemnation. On May 19 1871, the Times said:

'If the French nation were composed only of French women, what a terrible nation it would be.'

The women were instrumental at the very beginning in neutralising the soldiers sent by the French government to squash the Commune.

Justice

They mingled with the soldiers, convincing many of them of the justice of their cause.

The resultant fraternisation with the Commune's National Guard allowed it to survive and become the example it has.

The women also built organisations to defend the Commune and to develop new ideas and solutions to social problems. There were many women's clubs and societies all with their own manifestoes and demands.

The Women's Union for the Defence of Paris and for Aid to the Wounded was one such organisation which boldly stated its aims in its first call to

battle issued on April 11 as:

'Total social revolution, for the abolition of all privileges and forms of exploitation, for the replacement of the rule of Capital by the rule of Labour — in short, for the emancipation of the Working Class by the Working Class.'

As factory owners fled Paris, many workers introduced co-operative production. Women played an important part in formulating and partially implementing a series of progressive educational reforms intended to bring literacy to all Paris.

They took steps to institute a state-funded system of compulsory education, free of the influence of the church which offered a balanced education of humanities, sciences and useful technical training.

Girls' education was given special attention as it had been the most neglected.

Women were encouraged to learn the skills that would find them employment and efforts were made to establish day nurseries near the factories.

A new sexual morality and ideas of women's emancipation were being discussed everywhere at public meetings. Marriage came under strong condemnation and was seen as the enslavement of women.

A pension was decreed on April 10 to all widows and children of all citizens killed defending



LOUISE MICHEL, a schoolteacher, was active in the Commune. At her trial she demanded to be shot, but was deported to New Caledonia

the rights of the people. It was stressed that this would be granted whether the children were legitimate or not.

When the Communards were eventually defeated, the women fought side by side with the men in the streets of Paris. The butchery of the troops was not spared the women, many of whom were seen to come into the streets, enraged by the brutality, and strike the officers who were shooting their menfolk.

The women were shot alongside the men. Their heroism so terrified the world's ruling classes that a sort of hysteria about women incendiaries broke out, producing numerous articles and even some novels condemning the 'inhuman' acts of the women of the Paris Commune.

But to the working class all over the world, the women of the Paris Commune provided an example in the courage of their actions and the clarity of their ideas.

Their spirit is carried into every working class struggle and their aims continued.

IN ARGENTINA a unique campaign has been waged by the 'Mothers of the Disappeared' to recover their children from the Junta's prisons. They started by simply searching for their children

but they ended up challenging not only the Junta and the armed forces but the present government as well.

The coup of 1976 unleashed one of the most brutal and repressive regimes that Latin America has experienced. It left 8,000 dead, 5,000 political prisoners and forced thousands into exile.

About 30,000 young Argentines, mostly students and trade unionists are estimated to have disappeared.

Kidnapped

Many of the disappeared were kidnapped from their homes and held in secret detention centres, refused all contact with the outside world and denied any legal trial.

The regime tried to deny these prisoners any legal existence at all.

The Mothers started as a secret organisation, distributing and printing newsheets and books of poems through the underground.

Their meetings were clandestine and they were laid open to enormous personal danger.

In December 1977, their first president, Azucena Villaflor, was kidnapped from her home by members of the armed forces and herself became one of the disappeared.

A few days later two French nuns were seized

sisted to the last any changes in women's second-class status. FSLN guerilla commander Monica Baltodano had the responsibility of receiving the National Guard's surrender in the city of Grenada, but the officer refused because he didn't want to surrender to a woman.

Since the Revolution, women have been a strong presence in the building of the new society.

Important

They play a highly important role in the army, the police, the unions and the FSLN.

The Luisa Amanda Esponosa Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE) organises women in all parts of the country.

Its view is that women must be integrated into all aspects of the revolution and it has focussed much of its energy on organising participation in the great literary crusade.

Before the Revolution, in some rural areas scarcely any of the women could read or write. Now sixty per cent of the volunteers working on the crusade are women.

AMNLAE also works in the militias and other national campaigns and has called on the new government to deal with the special problems which women face.

Many advances have been made. The new government has made a start in setting up several dozen day-care centres; it has built community kitchens and production co-operatives which will provide jobs for women.

Protect

The government has also made efforts to organise and protect women workers. The Ministry of Labour has a special project on the health of working women and pregnant women are entitled to 45 days off before giving birth and 45 days after.

The poverty of the country and the constant need to defend the Revolution against the US-funded Contras has meant that the gains have not been introduced as quickly as they might have.

Even so, the Nicaraguan revolution has provided a great contrast in its concern for the problems of Nicaraguan people with the capitalist governments around the world.

NO TO SCAB UNIONS!

FROM PAGE ONE

groups, tenants, OAP's youth and all sections.

The deep going issues posed at News International will not go away. The development of new technology has brought whole industries into existence: they are being 'colonised' by the EETPU while the TUC stands idle and impotent.

Developments in the media have not escaped the notice of the newspaper owners who are buying their way into television and other branches of publishing. This is powerful proof that the old craft divisions must be broken down and steps taken to unite the media unions.

The Labour leaders have no intention of taking control of the media out of the hands of Murdoch, Maxwell, Shah and the rest. We will call for a Labour vote at the next election — but with no illusions that Kinnock will deal with this gang. He has already made it quite clear that he would, if elected, maintain parts of the anti-union laws. Trade unionists must demand their complete repeal.

Calls for a Labour government to make 'arms length state intervention' or form a 'National Print Corporation', favoured by the Communist party,

evade the fact that a challenge to the newspaper bosses means challenging the whole capitalist class of which they are such an important part.

The nationalisation of the entire print industry, under workers' control, is the only way in which printworkers' jobs can be defended, new technology introduced in such a way as the whole working class benefits, and the industry run for use, not profit.

Only by such socialist nationalisation can 'press freedom' be ensured, because only then will it be out of the hands of the newspaper bosses.