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# SOCIALIST PLAN — NOT TORY BUDGETS

BY THE EDITOR

**THE BUDGET is designed to bribe sections of the middle class to vote Tory in the coming election while leaving the unemployed, the homeless, the sick and infirm in even more desperate poverty.**

The reaction of the Labour and trade union leaders to the Budget again demonstrates they have no policies to win these sections of the middle class behind the working class.

The cynical nature of the Budget is widely recognised, even among those it was aimed at.

Ruth Lister, Director of the Child Poverty Action Group, spoke for many when she said: 'The £2 billion squandered in cutting the basic tax rate could and should have been used to tackle Britain's growing poverty crisis.'

'It could have brought much-needed relief to the long-term unemployed and families in poverty — instead it will mean more money for the haves and more despair for the have-nots.'

Shelter campaign director Leighton Andrews said: 'The Chancellor has ignored evidence that people would prefer money to be spent on building homes rather than tax cuts.'

Confederation of British Industry chief David Nickson summed up the reaction of big business: 'This is what the CBI wanted. We have always said we would judge the Budget on how it affects the cost of borrowing.'

What was the response of the Labour leaders to the Tory attempt to pull the middle class and rich behind them while leaving the poor worse off than ever?

TUC general secretary Norman Willis said: 'The Chancellor has thrown away the chance to create jobs, just as he has thrown away the oil revenues.'

'The TUC wanted the Chancellor to invest in Britain's future. He has chosen instead the short-term, easy way out.'

Mounting unemployment is not a product of evil Tory policy as Willis pretends. It

is a reflection of the growing crisis of capitalism which has brought mass unemployment throughout the world.

Labour leader Neil Kinnock issued platitudes similar to Willis when he said that the Budget 'ignores completely the national need for efficiency in production of wealth and national demand for fairness in the distribution of wealth'.

Kinnock's policy of increased government spending would, on his own exaggerated claims, only bring down unemployment by 1 million. In other words, Labour policy — assuming it was successful — means unemployment for at least 3 million.

The Tories have boasted that they have cut the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement to £4 billion and reduced the rate of inflation.

The reduced borrowing requirement is entirely a product of the wholesale disposal of various state assets to the City of London sharks at knock-down prices.

The day after the Budget the government announced that it will sell the remaining shares in British Petroleum which will bring in £2 billion.

Far from indicating the health of British capitalism such policies further underline the parasitic nature of British imperialism.

Similarly with the reduction in inflation. This has been achieved by the collapse of world commodity prices which has intensified the poverty and distress of millions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

These developments raise the fundamental questions of socialist policies to tackle this crisis.

### Chancellor Lawson's proposals

● A reduction of 2p on the standard rate of income tax which will benefit the rich but give virtually nothing to the poor. If you earn £40,000 a year and have two children you'll gain £8.71 a week. If you earn £4,000 a year and have two children you'll get only 86p a week from this reduction.

● Personal allowances go up 3.7 per cent in line with inflation. The families of the more than 4 million who are unemployed and others struggling to survive on state benefits will gain nothing from this.

● Small businesses are singled out for preferential treatment. Corporation tax is reduced for small companies and VAT payment dates relaxed.

Such policies — involving a socialist plan based on the overthrow of capitalism and the development of the world's resources for the benefit of the working class and the exploited of all countries — are precisely those that will win large sections of the middle class.

The Labour and trade union leaders, whose position

has always rested on the brutal exploitation of millions in the colonial and semi-colonial world, can never adopt such policies.

For that a new revolutionary socialist leadership is required in the working class. To build that leadership we urge you to support Workers Press and join the Workers Revolutionary Party.

## Mandela march (see page 3)



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## Jobless occupation gaining momentum

BY PAUL HENDERSON

UNEMPLOYED workers occupying Leicester's unemployed centre are welcoming messages of support from unemployed groups in other parts of the country.

The occupation began after the city council revealed plans to change the use of parts of the centre to a conference area and make other changes to the detriment of the unemployed users of the building.

An occupation spokesman said:

6 The city council is still refusing to meet and talk with us.

We are getting growing support, especially from unemployed people, although today we were visited by a stranger who ripped off one of the

occupiers and was caught trying to steal money from the occupation fund.

He was evicted. Anyone who wants to steal from us should stay away for their own safety.

On Saturday a woman occupier was molested, showing how important it is to keep the women-only space, although the council are vehemently opposed to this.

Councillor Phil Swift has confirmed that there would no longer be a women's group, and unemployed individuals would not be consulted on the use of the centre, although there is some provision for groups.

The occupation is gaining momentum all the time, although we are having problems with the printing equipment. We urgently need unemployed people with skills to help us with this machinery. 9

### Kinnock drops Cruise demand

LABOUR leader Neil Kinnock is ditching the party's pledge to have Cruise missiles removed from British soil when Labour gets in.

Kinnock's decision is designed to win approval from Washington, which he visits this week. It is being justified with reference to the Soviet Union's offer to remove all intermediate range weapons from Europe.

The Labour leaders now argue that removal of Cruise can await negotiations for removing all intermediate nuclear weapons, Cruise, Pershing, and Soviet SS 20s.

Workers Revolutionary Party

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# Workers Press

## Shadow of the Swastika

CAPITALIST Britain has gone a long way on a dangerous road when the Appeal Court can sanction the sterilisation of a 17-year-old mentally handicapped woman.

Workers Press agrees wholeheartedly with Sir Brian Rix, general secretary of Mencap, that this decision is an 'appalling denial of human rights' which puts thinking back by centuries. The young woman was being treated like an animal, said Rix. She would be 'spayed like a bitch'.

And indeed, most of us associate sterilisation of human beings, not with the advanced and humane society we are told by Thatcher we live in, but with the dark activities of Nazi Germany.

Sterilisation was something done in the concentration camps to the Jews and the Gypsies. Its most notorious advocates in Britain during the present century have been the racist cranks associated with the Eugenics Society, who held 60-odd years ago that working-class people, since they were of 'poor stock', should not be allowed to breed freely.

Thatcher's Britain is not Nazi Germany. Not yet. But even the 'Guardian' admits that the Appeal Court decision takes us a step nearer to 'a society which decides that, in the interests of progress, all black people, Labour voters, claimants and people with low IQs should be sterilised'.

The Appeal Court decision should not be seen in isolation. This fresh judicial assault on human rights and human dignity is part of the steady erosion of civil liberties that we have witnessed in Britain since Thatcher took office: an erosion in which the supposedly independent judges have played a leading part.

Civil liberty is indivisible. It was won for us by the pioneers of the working class movement, who built our organisations in strenuous battle against a corrupt social order.

To label a woman as mentally handicapped is already a political act. To deprive a woman so labelled of her reproductive function is a monstrous piece of state tyranny. Though it concerns only one individual victim, it must be resisted vigorously. If the Appeal Court gets away with this, a shadow is cast on Britain — a shadow in the shape of a swastika.

## ROBERT SHAW

SUNDAY, 22 March 1987 is the seventh anniversary of the death of Bob Shaw, for 40 years a leader in the Trotskyist movement in Britain.

Workers Press takes this opportunity to share our feeling of loss with Bob's widow, Mickie Shaw and their daughters Aileen and Francesca.

Bob died of cancer contracted after exposure to asbestos over 30 years before in the shipbuilding industry. He thus shared the fate of countless workers recklessly exposed to the 'deadly dust' by profit-hungry employers.

He was born to middle-class parents. His father was a pharmaceutical chemist in a working class area of Leeds. Bob was given a middle-class education and brought up a strict Methodist.

With the threat of war and the degradation imposed on the working class by capitalism, Bob sloughed off the influences of his upbringing. He joined the pacifist opposition to war and was active in the Independent Labour Party, but was quickly disgusted by the demagoguery and opportunism of their leaders.

His break from religion was sharp and final, as was his turn to revolutionary Marxism embodied in Trotskyism. From the moment he joined the Workers International League in the autumn of 1939, Bob dedicated his life to building revolutionary, Trotskyist leadership to take the working class to power. And his political life covered a period that was not an easy one for Trotskyists.

During World War II, British Trotskyists were able to build an independent movement. All the other workers' parties collaborated with the capitalist class in carrying out the war. Workers' rights were trampled by government regulations, imposed by cabinet ministers like Ernest Bevin.

By 1944, the various Trotskyist groups in Britain united to form the Revolutionary Communist Party. But the RCP broke up in the five years following the war.

On the one hand, the Soviet Union, and consequently Stalinism, emerged apparently strengthened from the war. On the other hand, capitalism in the west entered a long-drawn out boom, in which the immediate demands of the working class for jobs, wages, social services and education could for a period be satisfied without revolutionary struggle.

Under these conditions successive layers broke away, either seeking lucrative careers or looking for a formula that abandoned the revolutionary role of Trotskyism. Bob's dedication saw him through when world revolution must have seemed a very distant objective.

He devoted years to building the Socialist Labour League and its successor, the Workers Revolutionary Party. From 1960 he was the party's organiser in Scotland. He became synonymous with Trotskyism in that country, training generations of youth and workers in hostility to reformist and Stalinist mis-leaders of the working class.

Bob had just moved to work at the Party's printshop in Runcorn when the disease that was to end his life was discovered.

To his new job, as to all other tasks the party gave him, he brought devotion, moral conviction and a great rectitude. To the end he sought to imbue the younger comrades he worked with his knowledge and understanding of the historical role of Trotskyism and its unshakable foundation in Marxist theory.

# STOP STRIP SEARCHES! No Labour discussion on prison torture of women

**LABOUR women activists fear that strip-searching, like gay rights, is to be made a 'no go' subject by the Kinnock leadership in the election run-up.**

A resolution on strip-searching was remitted to the executive by last weekend's Scottish Labour Party conference, with chairman Bob Middleton preventing a speech being made in favour.

'I knew they would recommend remittance, but I expected at least to be able to speak and publicise strip-searching,' said Margaret Stewart of Stirling Labour Womens' Council.

'The chairman moved straight past our resolution, No.112, to composite No.25.

'I went up and asked, on a point of order, what happened. He said he was not taking single resolutions — but he took others during the conference.'

Women activists say Labour leaders didn't like the resolution because:

- It highlighted barbaric strip-searches which are used to 'humiliate, degrade and intimidate women prisoners' in British and Irish jails — and called on Labour leaders to specify what they would replace strip-searching with, if elected;
- It condemned the 'fundamentally undemocratic structure of the Labour Party, which denies women effective power', and pointed out that: 'Labour Womens' attempts to organise national action against strip-searching were vetoed by the National Executive Committee.'

**Campaign**

Ever since the Labour womens' conference resolved to support the national campaign on strip-searching, the leadership has tried to sweep the issue under the carpet. They must not be allowed to.

Some delegates at Perth were clearly ready to do battle against strip-searching. The fact that conference found time to discuss the future of Scotland's national stadium at Hampden Park, but not strip-searching, was pointed out by a delegate from Ayr in the Arts and Leisure debate.

BY SIMON PIRANI

The issue was also raised at a fringe meeting organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland, where a main speaker from Sinn Fein referred to it as one of the proofs of the reactionary purpose of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

A lobby in support of the Stirling Womens' Council resolution, supported by Troops Out and the Workers Revolutionary Party, displayed placards declaring 'Strip-searching is torture: Labour must act' — and won a favourable response from many delegates who signed a mailing-list.

There was blatant sexism, too — portly male trade union bureaucrats sniggered and the remarks 'I wouldn't mind doing a bit of strip-searching', and 'depends who's doing the searching ha ha' were clearly heard.

Such disgraceful attitudes are harboured in the labour movement by a leadership which is more concerned about the election than adhering to the womens' conference decision to mobilise against strip-searching.

If Kinnock and co. win at the polls, they will continue the torture and murder used, particularly in Ireland, against those who resist British imperialism.

The issue of strip-searching torture, like the whole question of Britain's occupation of the north of Ireland and the use of the state against workers here in Britain, must be taken up by the working class in opposition to that leadership.

## International Women's Day statement from the republican women prisoners in Maghaberry

6Sisters,  
International Women's Day is of great significance to us all as it brings us the opportunity to reaffirm our solidarity and commitment to each other in continuing to further the women's cause.

It is both sad and shameful that in 1987, within a supposedly advanced society, the female remains the subordinate of man. We remain victims of the rapist, the wife-batterer, discrimination and state establishments intent on protecting men's rights but reluctant in extending those rights to women.

In sanctioning the male authoritative role, government, church, state forces and many educational and welfare bodies are encouraging the divisions and inequality which exist between women and men in our society.

Within those structures our future is dictated — it is within those structures we must exert our energies if we are to eliminate the stereotyping process. We are regarded as individuals in theory, yet in practice are denied the right of individuality.

We voice our disapproval at such hypocrisy and demand equal recognition and respect, only to be portrayed as a 'threatening force' to the man's world.

Many of our male counterparts would continue to hold the view that we should be seen, not heard!

For centuries we have been considered the weaker sex — a myth for the male ego. Down through the decades we have eradicated this myth through our persistence to win emancipation.

Like a dispossessed people, we can only gain.

It is on that point that we confront the state standards imposed on the women in this jail. Our own bodies are being used as weapons against us through the implementation of the strip-search policy in November 1982.

It is a grossly demoralising and demeaning practice — a policy which proves nothing short of legalised rape of mind and body.

Young and old are compelled to strip naked entering and leaving the prison for any reason. Refusal to strip is met with the forcible stripping of the women.

During menstruation the woman is forced to remove her sanitary protection and hand it over for inspection — she remains totally naked and 'unprotected' until the visual body inspection and search of her clothing is completed — only then is her sanitary protection returned.

It is impossible to describe adequately how one feels during a strip search.

You are within a hostile atmosphere and at the mercy of hostile prison warders who add to the humiliation you are already experiencing through expressing snide remarks on your body shape or any distinguishing marks you may bear.

Psychologically it can have far-reaching effects.

Women, particularly republican remand prisoners who may be obliged to appear at weekly court hearings for months, have suffered weight loss, the menstrual cycle stopping for indefinite periods of time and immense stress.

'Security', which is used to justify this malpractice, is a groundless excuse — the strip-search policy was deliberately designed to quell our resistance to criminalisation policy.

Sisters, while our situations are different, we have a mutual cause — to defeat the oppression of women in whatever form it may take.

We appreciate the concern and support which is demonstrated by your presence here today and we would hope that the commitment which has brought us do far will prevail.

Our support we give to you unequivocally. May our efforts as sisters in the struggle gain us our just deserts.

In solidarity and sisterhood  
**Women republican prisoners of war**  
Maghaberry Prison  
County Antrim

## Republican women prisoners being strip searched in Maghaberry Prison:

Alice Taylor, Dolores O'Neil, Jennifer McCann, Ellen McGuigan, Cathy Stanton, Patricia McDaid, Marie Wright, Mary McCardle, Pauline Quinn, Jackie Moore, Anna Moore, Patricia Semple, Regina Gallagher, Maura McConville.

Write to them at: Maghaberry Prison, Old Road, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn, County Antrim



International Women's Day picket outside Maghaberry Prison, county Antrim, Ireland, where 15 republican women are systematically tortured by strip searching

## AEU witch-hunt

# Defend Jim Bevan!

## A message to AEU members

14 March 1987

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

JIM BEVAN, left candidate for E.C.6 in the Amalgamated Engineering Union Executive Council election, is fighting on the best policy for the union membership.

As Mid-Glamorgan district secretary of the union, he has won the respect of engineering workers throughout the district for his principled fight for his members — so much so that he was returned unopposed in the election for district secretary. The right wing was unable to find anyone to stand against him.

No wonder the right-wing candidate in the Executive Council elections, Mr J.P. Weakley, is a worried man. He stands for the same policies as those who have practically brought the union to its knees. Bill Jordan and Gavin Laird have brought the union to near-disaster. They have:

- Failed to fight the Tory government's economic policies, which have led to job losses of two million in manufacturing industries;
- Complied with Tory anti-union legislation, thus handing over any vestige of independence to the government;
- Brought the union to the verge of bankruptcy by these policies, leading to the loss of members and finance;
- Betrayed the confidence of members by constantly increasing contributions and cutting benefits.

Mr Weakley, working through a shadowy and suspect organisation calling itself 'The Trade Union Democrats', is now turning to witch-hunting methods in desperation.

In a leaflet, 'Welsh Worker', issue no. 27, they seek to discredit Jim Bevan, implying that he is a 'revolutionary-motivated madman'. They tell engineering workers that Jim Bevan 'thought that the Workers Revolutionary Party under the leadership of sex monster Gerry Healy was a satisfactory way of looking after our political interests'.

Jim Bevan is a leading member of the Workers Revolutionary Party and has always made this position clear. The present membership of the WRP has



won respect throughout the workers' movement for throwing out the corrupt leadership of Gerry Healy and his clique.

Jim Bevan was in the forefront of that fight: to deal with corruption in his own party. It is exactly the same fight that he carries through in the union against bureaucracy.

That is why Mr Weakley is so afraid. At a time when the union faces serious issues, he goes into the gutter with a smear campaign.

We call on all members of the union and other organisations in the labour movement to repudiate the witch-hunt and back Jim Bevan, who has proved he is a man of principle and courage and does not hide behind shadowy and suspect organisations.

Yours fraternally,

J. Kennedy, Liverpool District Committee delegate  
R. Hunter, Liverpool District Committee delegate, Shop Steward, Automotive Products

- C. Bailey, Cambridge Branch Secretary, District Committee delegate and Divisional Committee No. 21 delegate  
T. Gould, Merthyr 23MW Branch Committee  
M. Martin, Cenfig Hill Branch Secretary  
I. Llewellyn, Britton Ferry Branch Secretary  
K. Merrick, pro tem Mid Glamorgan District President and District Delegate  
B. Griffiths, Port Talbot Branch President and District Committee delegate  
K. Holmes, Convenor, British Petroleum and District Committee delegate  
A. Early, Chairman, Shop Stewards Committee, Metal Box  
C. Palmer, Shop Steward, Dunlopillo  
M. Monk, Shop Steward, Byass Fabrications  
H. Nicol, Tyne District Committee delegate  
N. Brown, Hebburn Branch  
D. Land, Shop Steward, Austin & Pickersgill, Sunderland  
R. Goldstein, Tottenham No. 7 Branch Secretary  
J. Simmance, Shop Steward, Charing Cross Hospital and North London District Committee delegate  
T. Stratton, Shop Steward, Newmarks, New Addington, Croydon  
J. Holmes, Shop Steward, Newmarks, New Addington, Croydon  
A. Mattock, Deputy Convenor, Newmarks, New Addington, Croydon  
J. Tocher, Divisional Organiser, No. 24 Division  
P. Walker, Bradford District Secretary  
A. Morgan, Shop Steward, British Steel Corporation, Port Talbot  
J. Francis, Shop Steward, British Steel Corporation, Port Talbot  
T.D. Godfrey, Shop Steward, British Steel Corporation, Port Talbot  
B. Jones, Convenor, Cam Gears, Resolven  
G. Lewis, Cenfig Hill Branch District Committee delegate  
S. Jones, Neath Branch Secretary  
A. Jones, Merthyr 23MW Branch Secretary  
R. Butler, Shop Steward, Swansea City Council  
D. O'Gorman, Taibach Branch Secretary  
A. O'Gorman, Taibach Branch District Committee delegate  
A. Jenkins, Convenor, Engart Fans, Hirwaun  
I. Ralph, Shop Steward, Cranes Engineering, Ipswich  
L. Cumberlin, Shop Steward, Revlon, Maesteg  
K. Scotcher, Shop Steward, Fords, Dagenham

### REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

#### LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ  
LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984.  
JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989.  
EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637.  
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877.  
GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016.  
JOHN MCCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715.  
ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576.  
PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575.  
NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence, 879225.

#### PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX  
PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603.  
GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882.  
PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532.  
TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence, 69204.  
PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880.

#### WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG  
HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636.  
NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644.

#### ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS  
MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087.

HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638.  
BILLY GRIMES:  
SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661.  
SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418.

#### GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP  
RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799.  
STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence, 758663.  
JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635.  
ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083.

#### FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham  
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085

BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662.  
PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034.  
CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662.  
EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.

#### LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ  
PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888.  
BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380.  
PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881.

#### WORMWOOD SCRUBS

HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE  
DONAL CRAIG: 4 years.

#### LIVERPOOL

VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.

#### DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.  
MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134.  
ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.

#### REMAND PRISONERS:

#### BRIXTON

HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.  
MICHAEL J McKENNEY: L46486  
G. (DANNY) McNAMEE: L48616

#### WORMWOOD SCRUBS

LIAM QUINN: L49930

#### INNOCENT MEN AND

#### WOMEN FRAMED BY THE

#### BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire  
PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree.

PAUL HILL: 462778, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.

JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.  
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree.

JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.  
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland.  
RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.

## FREE MANDELA MARCH



Last Saturday's 4,000-strong march to the South African Embassy had a defiant tempo — thanks to the powerful drums of the samba band (above) and other musicians.

OVER 4,000 youth, students, unemployed, and trade unionists left Whittington Park, north London, for the seven-mile demonstration organised by the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

Along the route liberation slogans and chants of 'Racist slogs out of Britain!' were kept up non-stop.

A samba band, whose rhythm and beat combined beautifully with the tempo of the mainly youthful march,

attracted much attention, reminding many of the demonstrations of South African youth seen on television.

Most political groups on the left were represented, a delegation of miners came from Hatfield Main, Yorks, and the Charing Cross Hospital AEU also brought their banner.

When the march reached the racist South African

embassy over 700 were waiting and the whole march stopped spontaneously.

Speakers at the rally, including David and Norma Kitson, demanded that the Thatcher government close down the embassy and break off relations with the racist state and impose sanctions.

It was a most moving experience for everyone who

had worked and campaigned for the demonstration, as well as the many thousands who took part.

The police were out in their hundreds, and lined the barriers with which the embassy had been protected.

The City Group wishes to congratulate everyone on the magnificent response — but stress that the work must be consolidated, and those who want to tone down the fight must be combated.

BY JOHN BALLANTYNE

# FOOTBALL AND THE PROPERTY SPECULATORS

BY JOHN HOLMES

## A DARK shadow hangs over the future of many of London's professional football clubs.

Both Fulham and Wimbledon are faced with closure at the end of the season — a direct result of property speculators moving into football.

David Bulstrode, chairman of Fulham Football Club, recently announced his plan to merge the club with Queens Park Rangers and to demolish Fulham's Craven Cottage ground to make way for the building of luxury blocks of flats, to be known as 'Boat Race Towers'.

The newly merged team would continue under the name of Queens Park Rangers, playing at the Rangers ground, Loftus Road. Fulham would, in effect, disappear.

This plan has enraged Fulham supporters, who have launched a campaign to save the club. Bulstrode, who bought the club from ex-chairman Ernie Clay, heads a firm of property developers, Marler Estates, who also own Rangers' ground and Chelsea's Stamford Bridge ground.

There are fears also for the fate of Chelsea Football Club, who have only two years to run on their current ground lease. They are expected to be forced into a ground-sharing arrangement with QPR, enabling Marler Estates to develop Stamford Bridge.

Fulham may have gained a temporary reprieve — the Football League has vetoed plans for a merger and the local council in Fulham and Hammersmith have refused planning permission for the Craven Cottage ground.

However, Bulstrode has made his position clear: that

Fulham will close at the end of the season unless someone comes forward to buy the club.

Two south London clubs also have the threat of the property speculators hanging over them. Wimbledon chairman Sam Hamam has announced plans to close Wimbledon's Plough Lane ground and merge with Crystal Palace. The Plough Lane ground would then be developed for luxury homes or office buildings.

### Merger

The proposed merger has been condemned by both clubs' fans, who have campaigned and shown their opposition.

Ron Noades, Crystal Palace chairman, announced last week that following a poll of Palace supporters — who voted nine to one against the proposal — the merger would not go ahead.

There is widespread dislike of Noades among Palace supporters. They remember that, as Wimbledon's chairman, he sold the club to Sam Hamam before buying a controlling interest in Crystal Palace and taking over as its chairman in the early 1980s.

Noades's unpopularity increased when he signed the ground-sharing deal with Charlton in 1985. Crystal Palace had previous experience of property developing when its then chairman Ray Bloye sold off a large section of the Selhurst Park ground



Chelsea face even more ruthless opponents than Kenny Dalglish and Liverpool.

for the building of a Sainsbury's supermarket.

London has now become a speculators' gambling den. Despite the lowest industrial output for years, and record balance-of-trade deficits, the 'Financial Times' share index is the highest ever. Land and property values have soared by tens of thousands of pounds in the last six months.

The price of a three-bedroomed house is now £80,000 on average. A converted broom cupboard opposite Harrods was put on the market recently as a bedsit, with the asking price of £35,000. City stockbrokers and speculators can expect salaries of £100,000, while the poor get poorer.

Capitalism in Britain is now devouring itself. It can no longer provide jobs, housing, education, or leisure

facilities for the working class. This is the background to the crisis facing football.

Football in Britain is the most popular working-class sport, both for those who participate at some level and for those who watch. But leisure and sport can only be provided for workers today if they gives the capitalists a high enough profit.

### Supporters

The question is: who shall own the football clubs, the supporters (i.e. the community) or the capitalists?

Nick Raynsford, Labour MP for Fulham, has called on the government to introduce legislation to protect football from property speculators. This is a waste of time, since it is the Tory

government that has created the conditions for the speculators to operate.

Nor is there any answer in the hope that some benevolent pop star millionaire will

buy the threatened clubs as Elton John did at Watford.

The demand must be that football clubs and all sporting and leisure facilities be nationalised under workers' control.

**FOLLOWING** Crystal Palace's home game against Blackburn there was a demonstration. Supporters, unable to get onto the pitch, held a sit-down demonstration against the proposed merger with Wimbledon.

Police, prepared for such an event and clad in riot gear, moved in with horses and dogs. The crowd responded with chants of 'Wapping, Wapping!', but refused to be drawn into confrontation. The police were powerless and could do nothing until the supporters decided to end the demonstration and disperse.

The football supporters clearly saw the connection with the fight to save 'their' football club and the struggle of the sacked printworkers against Rupert Murdoch and the state.

It is the same fight. The only way forward to save football as a working-class spectator sport is to link the struggle against the asset-stripping property developers with the fight to save hospitals, jobs and education.

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### TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A Magazine of Marxist Theory  
Volume 1 Number 1 March 1987

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## Broederbond brothers

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

THE African National Congress is developing strange bedfellows inside South Africa.

In a report from Johannesburg, Professor Piet de Lange, who chairs the secret society the Broederbond, complains about the 'lack of trust' which comes from a lack of 'meaningful contact' between different organisations in South Africa.

The Broederbond was specifically formed to maintain the supremacy of the Boers (South Africans of Dutch descent) and the system of apartheid.

De Lange has already held talks with some leading members of the ANC, whom he met in New York.

### Black

He also arranged a meeting between 30 Afrikaner students and 30 young black radicals from Soweto.

'The first thing they discovered about each other is that they were people,' he said.

The ANC has international recognition as the respectable liberation movement in

South Africa, and increasingly substantial recognition by capitalism inside the country.

To consult with the Broederbond, as they have already consulted with the South African business world, is a new stage in their clearly-signalled intention to sell out the South African revolution to the bourgeoisie.

### Cosy

They are busy making their cosy little deals now as to who gets which slice of the cake, and reassuring the business world at home and abroad that they have no nasty intentions towards the owners of private property.

How much difference does it make to the South African worker if the face of the exploiter is black and not white?

The ANC is perfectly happy with the ineffectuality of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain in relation to sanctions because they do

not want to have an economy handed over to them which is too severely damaged.

In these policies they are fully supported by the Communist Party, both in South Africa and outside.

In a recent interview Joe Slovo, leader of the South African Communist Party, describes his alliance with the ANC as a 'special relationship' in which the Communist Party members accept unconditionally the leadership of the ANC and are bound by its policy decisions even if they conflict with their own party line.

The terrible consequences of such a policy were learned the hard way by the Chinese Communist Party in 1927 when they were slaughtered in their thousands by the Chinese nationalists, the Kuomintang.

### Peaceful

Slovo makes it perfectly clear that the SACP has absolutely no intention of

rocking the boat and that they could not agree more with a peaceful conversion to black bourgeois rule.

'I believe that transition in South Africa is going to come through negotiation. If there was any prospect of settling it peacefully tomorrow, we would be the first to say let's do it.'

### Majority

Slovo speaks of an emerging coalition of forces which have different objectives but are agreed on the immediate one of overthrowing apartheid and replacing it with a non-racial democracy based on black majority rule.

It looks very much as if the Broederbond is rapidly becoming included in his definition of the forces he is prepared to work with.

Slovo hopes and believes that if a non-racial democracy were established, true socialism would 'flow from it' naturally in time.

He does not explain how a black bourgeoisie can be dispossessed any more easily than a white one.

# Miners say: ● No to six-day working! ● Fight for four-day week!

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

'WE'RE for a four-day not a six-day working week', NUM President Arthur Scargill told a packed meeting of miners in South Wales last Sunday.

He was speaking about British Coal's attempts to impose six-day working on the NUM at the planned Margam Colliery.

Scargill was attacking not British Coal, but South Wales's new 'Eric Hammond', George Wright.

Wright, Welsh Regional Officer of the transport union T&GWU, said last week if the South Wales NUM refused to accept the six-day week, he would sign an agreement with British Coal allowing T&GWU members to fill the 800 positions at the pit.

Replying to Wright Scargill said: 'I thought that the trade union movement had made its position clear on issues like this at Wapping.'

'My advice to George Wright is to keep his nose out of it.'

He told the South Wales miners the moves were designed to split the NUM membership.

Many miners in the area, including those who have so far been willing to accept the six-day proposals are sharply opposed to any form of federalism in the union.

Bill Morris, Deputy General Secretary of the T&GWU has denounced the threats to the NUM by George Wright who has made clear his position that 'nothing should stand in the way of the £80 million mine going ahead.'

Wright has implied that T&GWU scabbing is 'legitimate' in South Wales if it keeps the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers out of the area.

South Wales miners' president Des Dutfield is more than happy to join the attacks of the right-wing and the Communist Party on Arthur Scargill.

'I don't regard Mr

Wright's initiative as an unwelcome intervention,' he said. 'Obviously our T&GWU colleagues are as concerned as we are about South Wales and the unemployed. I can fully appreciate their point of view.'

The majority of South Wales leaders are proposing to accept the 'concept' of six-day working despite large numbers of South Wales miners representing many pits being opposed to Dutfield's and the Wales area executive's recommendations.

Dutfield says little or nothing about the attitude of rank-and-file miners towards British Coal's proposal.

Many miners who have been misled into believing that the deal has to be accepted 'in the interests of the South Wales mining industry', are not prepared to do so at the expense of the national union.

Led by Dutfield and Stalinist vice-president candidate Eric Clark the South Wales leaders are trying unsuccessfully to whip up an anti-Scargill atmosphere by describing Scargill's fight to defend NUM national policy of five-day working and to fight for four-day working, as an 'attack' on the South Wales pitmen.

Scargill's stand is the very opposite.

Introduction of six-day working in South Wales will open up all the other areas in the mining industry to six-day working and will create the conditions for further pit closures, 24-hour continental shift working and mass sackings.

A ballot has been planned for the South Wales miners to decide whether to accept the terms which the area leadership have negotiated with British Coal management.

The issue is to be discussed at a national conference. Dutfield has said that he will campaign for a national ballot after that meeting to decide union policy. He says that if that ballot goes against the wishes of himself and British Coal, the South Wales miners will be 'consulted again'.

A national conference must reject six-day working. This will involve a bitter fight against the Communist Party and the right-wing leaders in the NUM.

National Union policy must be defended from the attacks of these class traitors.

- Reject six-day working out of hand!
- Down with all separate area agreements! Defend the NUM as a national union! No return to Spencerism!
- For the implementation of the NUM's policy of a four-day week with no loss of pay!
- The employers will not take the miners pit by pit! For a national rank-and-file conference to represent every pit and decide any action!
- For workers' control in the mining industry! Only then can the proper deployment of labour, the opening up of new pits, defence of working and safety standards be assured.
- Force the Labour leaders to fight for these policies or make way for those who will!



Ann Jones, whose husband John works at Tower Colliery in South Wales, told Workers Press: 'The majority of men I've spoken to are against six-day working.'



Brian Jones, also a Tower Colliery miner, said: 'I know the men at Tower will turn down a six-day working week. We're dead against it. It's not only Margam — every other pit will have six-day working.'

## Packed meeting

BY CLIFF JONES

'I'M FOR uniting miners — I'm not for battles between areas. I'm different to Clarke. He's willing to talk to the UDM leaders Link and Prendergast. I'm not.'

These were the opening words of Yorkshire miners' leader Sammy Thompson to a South Wales meeting with Arthur Scargill last Sunday evening to rally support for Thompson's election as NUM vice-president.

Thompson received warm applause when he backed union policy to reduce the working week in the industry — a policy which the South Wales NUM leadership are trying to break up.

He urged South Wales miners to oppose the introduction of a six-day working week at the national conference called to discuss the issue.

When he told the audience Scargill was the right man to lead the union he received massive applause.

NUM President Arthur Scargill also spoke of the situation in south Wales.

'Area decisions will split the national union. I'm confident that delegates will vote against extension of the working week,' he said.

Of the UDM he said: 'There is a place for every miner in the NUM — but not for scabs like Link and Prendergast.'

During the meeting Tyrone Sullivan, lodge secretary of nearby Tower Colliery announced that the men at his pit had endorsed Sammy Thompson as the man for vice-president.

## Election of NUM vice-president

By Dave Douglas, NUM Delegate, Hatfield Main

MOST of the people at our branch wanted to go for a rank-and-file candidate for vice-president.

It's not a full-time position, it comes up for election every two years, there isn't a car with it, nor a big house and you don't get a pot full of money.

You would think it is the kind of position that a rank-and-file member could run for, not a careerist.

The job has been opened to full-time officials, so all the area leaders have thrown their caps in and squeezed the members out of the election.

We supported Terry French, not just because he was a jailed miner but be-

cause we wanted the rank-and-file to have it. When Terry didn't get the Kent nomination it became a struggle between Eric Clark for Scotland and Sammy Thompson for Yorkshire.

The press and certain sections of the Communist Party have lined up against Arthur Scargill and, necessarily, Sammy Thompson has defended Scargill. On that basis we had no option but to support Sammy Thompson. We have been campaigning for him in the areas that either haven't made their minds up or have gone for Clark.

We want to get away from area parochialism and build a national union.

## Papal pricks

COMMENT BY BRONWEN HANDSIDE

THE VATICAN maintains a deafening silence on the moral position of American Archbishop Paul Marcinkus.

He has been in hiding in the Vatican State since the Italian authorities issued a warrant for his arrest in connection with the financial shenanigans of the Banco Ambrosiano.

Roberto Calvi, bank director and close associate of Marcinkus, was found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge with his pockets full of stones and his briefcase of documents missing.

His family still maintain he did not commit suicide.

The Italian authorities are very keen to find out more about the Banco Ambrosiano, and its connection with the Vatican bank, which is not subject to Italy's banking laws.

The bashful archbishop has retired into the bosom of the church — the Vatican State which has no extradition agreements.

Warrants have also been out for 'some years' for the two laymen who are second in command to Marcinkus in the Vatican bank in relation to financial misdealings.

The Vatican's backwardness in coming forward on this issue has not been repeated in their very confident

pronouncements about medical practices related to infertility.

This large group of 'celibate' old codgers has positively hastened into print on this issue, which affects one couple in seven.

It is a problem which causes mental anguish, suicides, breaks up relationships and in the UK is very badly catered for by the National Health Service, as a direct result of massive cuts to hospital budgets.

Into this arena of heartache strides the Catholic Church, to add just that little bit more to the load of guilt and anxiety that infertile Catholic couples already feel.

The rest of us can at least have a good laugh at the thought of all those bald pates worrying themselves to death to come up with the proposal that artificial insemination is OK so long as the semen is collected during sexual intercourse — in a condom with a pin-prick, so that conception could take place.

The reason the technique is being used is that conception does not take place in this way.

There is one question left to be answered — how many angels can be conceived through a pin-prick?



## Teachers strike

BY MICK KING

LAST Monday afternoon, while 20,000 teachers marched in London (above), tens of thousands more were on strike across the country.

This was the long-awaited 'official' joint response to Baker's Act from the National Union of Teachers and the second biggest union the NAS UWT: a wave of half-day strikes across England and Wales.

Teachers came out in their hundreds and thousands against the Tory law which takes away their national negotiating rights.

However, the national leaderships have no perspective for leading a principled fight against Baker as part of the defence of state education.

At the rally in London speaker after speaker stressed opposition to Baker but only one of the NUT speakers had voted against the ACAS deal which erodes Teachers' conditions of service. The line from Jarvis and Willis is that the next Labour government will look after the teachers.

There is much talk of a merger of the two biggest teachers' unions, the NUT and NAS/UWT, in order to oppose Baker and the small right-wing teachers unions.

However, in reality the national leaderships of both unions are moving towards this in order to preserve chances as teachers' numbers fall and as a means of heading off the challenge to the leadership of the NUT.

## Merseyside teachers out

BY JOHN OWEN

MOST Merseyside schools closed for a half day on Tuesday when NUT and NAS/UWT members turned out against the latest imposed pay settlement from Education Minister Kenneth Baker. Head teachers refused to cover.

Angered at a deal which gives them a smaller pay increase than the one negotiated by ACAS and which also deprives them of their bargaining rights, over 3,500 teachers staged a mass rally at Goodison Park.

The leadership's advice to members at the rally was to write to their MPs.

### ILEA Joint Shop Stewards Inaugural Meeting.

Friday 20 March, 10a.m., Pear Place  
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#### A CALL TO ACTION

No to cuts!  
No to privatisation!

Called by NUPE ILEA  
Schoolkeepers' Branch. All  
Welcome.

# Whither Gorbachev?

THE defence of October 1917 and the struggle for proletarian dictatorship are the paramount tasks of revolutionaries today.

Communists have to provide the revolutionary alternatives to war and barbarism in a period when Stalinism covers for imperialism with the anti-communist concept of peaceful co-existence and adaptation to bourgeois democracy.

Stalinism may face differing conditions in South Africa, Chile, and Britain but the essential programme remains the same: capitulation to the 'stage' of bourgeois democracy.

This capitulation has in some instances led to the most horrific bloodbaths, in which Stalinists have died. However, the latter have not been shy in destroying Trotskyists who stood in the way of Stalinism's conceptions of 'revolution'.

In this context Gorbachev's proposals for Soviet reform are important.

Do they constitute an embryonic political revolution in the USSR, with important international repercussions for Stalinist and communist practice?

Or are they an attempt to lift the lid on Soviet society, so that a head of steam may evaporate before the bureaucracy is toppled in the USSR?

Let me begin with a global analysis of Gorbachev's proposals and reforms — the 'perestroika' — in the light of his international practice. The essence of Gorbachev's foreign policy is peaceful co-existence and the opening of the Soviet market-place to capitalism.

At Reykjavik Gorbachev's main concern was the status quo. We should be under no illusions that the Soviet leadership would welcome the de-stabilisation of NATO by British withdrawal.

The revolutionary task of campaigning against NATO membership is rejected by the Stalinist New Communist Party and the National Peace Advisory Committee of the CPGB as 'ultra-left' and 'Trotskyite'.

Gorbachev stands for a non-class approach to world politics, and this flows from his approach to domestic policy:

BY JOHN REES

'Foreign policy is everywhere and always a continuation of domestic policy.' (*The Revolution Betrayed*, New Park Publications, p.186).

Gorbachev's domestic 'perestroika' is underpinned by his commitment to the 'theory' of socialism in one country. Trotsky's characterisation of Stalin holds true for this modern bureaucrat:

'He profoundly believed that the task of creating socialism was national and administrative in its nature.' (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p.97).

The main thrust of Gorbachev's report to the CPSU central committee was summed up by him on 25 February at the Soviet TUC:

1. The introduction of quality control in industry;
2. Self-financing of some enterprises;
3. Choosing officials through elections;
4. Some freedom of expression and criticism ('glasnost') (*Financial Times*, 26 February 1987).

These proposals are distilled from the report to the Central Committee of 27 January, which covers four main areas:

1. A critical and historical analysis of past practice in the political, economic, moral, and ideological fields;
2. Major proposals for the reorganisation of society;
3. A new personnel policy linked to proposal 2;
4. The political and moral regeneration of the CPSU.

At the level of description Gorbachev's report strikes a chord with Trotsky's analysis in *'The Revolution Betrayed'*. Speaking of the 1930s and 1940s, Gorbachev says:

'There emerged an



Mikhail: no mystery

ossified concept of socialist relations of production, and their dialectical inter-relation with the productive forces was underestimated' (27 January).

Indeed the whole tenor of Gorbachev's report is to emphasise the relationship between the material well-being, the democratic involvement and cultural and scientific level of the people, and production and labour discipline.

Because it is a descriptive response to Stalinist practice, an example of the latter is worth quoting:

'Milk is a product of cows and not of socialism, and you would have actually to confuse socialism with the image of a country where rivers flow milk, in order not to understand that a country can rise for a time to a higher level of development without any considerable rise in the material situation of the popular masses' (*K.Radek, quoted in 'The Revolution Betrayed'*, p.61).

Descriptively Gorbachev's analysis can be summed up in Trotsky's response to Radek and Stalinism:

'Socialism is a structure of planned production to

adaptation of principles and policies to the empiricist 'what works'.

Consequently Gorbachev addresses his proposals to the very bureaucracy he seeks to regenerate, very much in the manner of the police enquiry into 'police misbehaviour' in this country.

For Gorbachev the job is to provide for the Soviet people a political and economic model within which they can develop in an all-round way. The irony is that, as the most conservative and reactionary layers of the bureaucracy respond to his heresy, he will be placed in the classic reformer's dilemma: retreat or appeal to the masses.

Such appeals merely lift the lid. Gorbachev's 'social physiognomy' will not allow him to be a political revolutionist — that is the job of the political party of the proletariat.

Varga's perceptive remarks on the Hungarian bureaucracy and the Petofi circle at the meeting marking the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution spring to mind at this point (see *Workers Press*, 1 November 1986).

But Gorbachev is no people's reformer. His address to the bureaucracy — which extends from the Kremlin right into the village and local enterprise — is about opening 'Soviet' society to the methods of the market place.

His primary concern is the construction of an economy which opens out to foreign competition and co-operation, within which 'pre-conceptions about the role of monetary-commodity relations and the operation of the law of value' (Gorbachev report, 27 January), which led to voluntarism in the past, are set aside.

Democratisation of society, the new morality, and an expansion of scientific and training opportunities, cast in Marxist rhetoric, are in fact the pre-conditions for a deepening of the adaptation of the first socialist state to imperialism.

In the Stalinist methodology of the Czechoslovak and

German Democratic Republic leaders, Gorbachev is a revisionist whose ideas are not suitable for Czech or German consumption.

For revolutionaries Gorbachev's leadership is critical and exciting because it 'lifts the lid'.

But its pragmatic and opportunist base creates grave dangers for the Soviet proletariat. There are no vacuums in politics, and the absence of a Bolshevik leadership in the USSR, in the face of a major split in the bureaucracy, could lead to counter-revolution.

Gorbachev may well desire the status quo of peace at an international level, but the driving force of imperialism is war.

Faced with major antagonistic contradictions in 'soviet' society, imperialism could launch a war drive, in which Trotskyists would be in the frontline of defending the USSR, while no such Trotskyist leadership exists in the first deformed workers' state.

Gorbachev therefore presents a challenge for Trotskyism to move beyond phrases and into the serious business of building a section of the Fourth International in the USSR.

The Workers Revolutionary Party seeks to be a major revolutionary force in Britain as part of a workers' International. At a national level, that job involves confronting social democracy and Stalinism politically.

At the higher plane of international tasks the job remains the same.

I hope that the proposed 1987 conference for the reorganisation of the International will take this task seriously and address itself to Gorbachev, the USSR, and the deformed workers' state in such a way that it goes beyond both sectarian phrasemongering and the flip side of the coin — the tail-ending of Mikhail Gorbachev.

This article is a modest contribution towards formulating practice for a noble and necessary project.

## Hunger striker

FIODOR FINKEL, a leader of the Free Inter-Professional Trade Union SMOT in the USSR, is now extremely weak at the end of his first month on hunger strike.

A 29-year-old engineering worker, Finkel started the hunger strike on 16 February of this year.

He is seeking permission to travel abroad with his wife, Svetlana (24), who is suffering from cancer.

They hope to find proper medical treatment in the West.

SMOT is struggling to build free trade unions in the USSR independent of the ruling bureaucracy.

Although Gorbachev's policy of 'glasnost' (openness) has led to the lifting of many repressive measures against intellectual oppositionists, there has been no

relief for the militants of SMOT.

Two of them, Alexander Skobov and Vladimir Sitynski are currently incarcerated in a KGB-run psychiatric prison.

Another, Vladimir Gershuni, is held in a psychiatric hospital.

Their only 'mental problem' was that they fought to build independent trade unions through which the working class could speak.

Finkel was the public spokesman for SMOT and a member of its council of representatives until 1983, when the group was decimated by repression.

He himself was arrested at that time, along with his mother.

Trade union organisations in the west have flooded over 150 telegrams supporting Finkel's visa request to both

Finkel himself and the Soviet leader, Gorbachev.

Finkel, who is taking only water, is now spitting blood and suffering frequent fainting fits.

He has lost 15 kilograms since starting the hunger strike. It is feared that his health may have suffered irreparable damage.

It appears that the Soviet authorities are playing the well-known 'cat and mouse' game with him.

Following a demonstration Finkel participated in on 3 March, a deputy public prosecutor assured him his case would be dealt with in two weeks, in view of his health.

But he was informed subsequently by the civil registry (OVIR) that it would take six months to consider his request and that he possibly faced 15 days in jail for participating in the 3 March demonstration.

## Tramps

BY TRUDI JACKSON

THOUSANDS of homeless tramps and vagabonds are living in the Soviet Union on the edge of society and legality.

This unusual bit of news was published by the Soviet Weekly Magazine 'Ogonjok' recently. Its report came from the journalist Alexy Lebedev who lived for six months amongst them.

The author describes how the tramps move right across the country from Siberia to Moscow and find shelter in cellars, lofts, cemeteries and refuse deposits.

### Retained

In the cities and railway stations they are arrested immediately 'to prevent crime'. They can be detained for up to a month. The authorities are officially obliged to offer them a job.

Once they are issued with a new personal document and work permit they get in the mill of the bureaucracy.

They are sent from one authority to another who all want to get rid of them.

Under these conditions they prefer to return to their previous life again.

So much for real 'socialism' in one country.

## Statement by the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party

WE DEMAND that the Soviet government grants to Fiodor Finkel and his wife Svetlana the right to travel abroad to seek medical treatment for Svetlana, who is suffering from cancer.

Finkel is a leader of the Free Inter-Professional Trade Union SMOT. He has been on hunger strike since 15 February 1987 to demand the right to travel abroad with his wife. He is now

very weak and suffering from fainting fits.

We also demand the immediate release of SMOT representatives Alexander Skobov, Vladimir Gershuni and Vladimir Sitynski, all imprisoned in psychiatric hospitals by the Soviet Government.

9 March 1987

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# POLLARD CASE HITS US-ISRAEL TIES

RELATIONS between the State of Israel and its chief paymaster — the United States — have been shaken by the case of Jonathan Jay Pollard, convicted Israeli spy.

Pollard, a former US Navy intelligence analyst, has begun a life sentence after being convicted of sending thousands of classified US documents to Israel. His wife, Anne Henderson-Pollard, got five years.

US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger said he thought the spy should have been sentenced to death.

Pollard, who has boasted that his information helped the Israeli airforce bomb PLO headquarters in Tunis, was caught trying to gain asylum in the Israeli ambas-

sy in Washington in November 1985.

His naval intelligence bosses and the FBI had plainly been watching him for some time. Now they are expected to move against several other Israeli spies.

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir claimed as recently as a week ago that Pollard was not employed by the Israeli government.

The US court has indicted Israeli Air Force Colonel Aviam Sella as Pollard's handler. Pollard's intelligence material went to the Tel Aviv offices of a shadowy 'Bureau for Scientific Liaison', or to give it its Hebrew acronym, Lekem.

Set up by the Israeli Ministry of Defence in the 1960s to acquire sophisticated arms technology by whatever

means, Lekem's role was expanded during the Begin government.

Long-time intelligence officer Rafael Eitan, — known from his Army days as 'Dirty Raffi' — and former adviser on terrorism to the Prime Minister's office, was put in charge.

While Pollard was awaiting trial, Israeli authorities promised the US 'Dirty Raffi' would be relieved of his intelligence responsibilities.

'Dirty Raffi' was removed from his Lekem post. Trade and Industry Minister Ariel Sharon promptly placed him in the directorship of the Israeli Chemical Corporation, which conducts a lot of its business in Asia, and is reputedly not entirely separate from Israeli intelligence work.

Colonel Sella has been promoted to command an Air Force base in the Negev. US officials feel the pair have been rewarded, rather than punished.

US Jewish leaders were last week warning the Israelis of the dangers of the Pollard affair for Israel, and for American Jews — Pollard claimed Zionist patriotism as his motive — faced with 'dual loyalty' jibes.

'What began in stupidity sank into irresponsibility', complained Nathan Perlmuter of the Bnai Brith Anti-Defamation League. 'If this was a "rogue operation" it's a fair question for people to ask why Israel has proceeded to promote the rogues.'

In Israel, an association

formed to help the Pollards has begun raising thousands of dollars for the American couple, whom the public feel were let down by the Israeli government.

The affair has come at a particularly bad time for both Israeli-US relations and the Israeli intelligence services. Top US officials and politicians have been shifting the blame for 'Irangate' on to Israeli influence.

Although nobody anticipates Congress will suddenly cancel Israel's annual \$3 billion aid cheque, the Pollard case will certainly strengthen those who argue that the Zionist state can be more of a liability than an asset.

According to the Israeli newspaper 'Haaretz', Pollard may have compromised

entire networks of US agents in the Arab world.

For the Israeli intelligence services, accusations of irresponsibility in the Pollard affair come after revelations of torture, cover-ups and scapegoating of an Army officer, arising from the murder of two Palestinian youths, as well the feeling that the Iran-Contra affair got out of hand.

The Israeli public may accept aggression, brutality, and reactionary policies as necessary to 'security', but they won't accept inefficiency and blundering!

What they are also noting increasingly is the continuing refusal by political leaders like Peres and Shamir to accept responsibility when things go wrong.

## Yugoslav workers fight pay freeze

YUGOSLAV workers have challenged their government's pay freeze law with a wave of strikes spreading across the country.

The unrest has divided the ruling Yugoslav League of Communists. Party leaders in Croatia, where the strikes broke out first, have urged the government to reconsider.

The new pay law introduced on 27 February ties wages to the productivity level of individual enterprises. It is expected to lead to cuts in wages for hundreds of thousands of workers.

Croatian union leader Ivo Bilandzija has accused the government of pursuing anti-working class policies. Prices of bread, meat, sugar and cooking oil all rose by between 25 and 60 per cent in one week this month.

Starting in the Croatian capital Zagreb and the ports of Split and Rijeka, strikes have spread throughout Yugoslavia.

The Croatian party central committee issued a statement last week saying the new law had 'caused anxiety among the employed and led to work stoppages'. It warned the law would be hard to implement.

The official news agency Tanjug reported that 16 workers at the Istra iron and steel works had been sacked for 'interrupting work contrary to regulations.' Labour minister Janko Obocki declared 'There will not be, and cannot be, any retreat.'

## STRIKE WAVE HITS GONZALEZ

RAILWAYS throughout Spain were halted last Wednesday as thousands of workers struck against the 'socialist' Gonzalez government's pay policy.

Building workers, doctors and others were also striking. Miners and steelworkers are fighting redundancies. Students plan more demonstrations. The Socialist Party's national executive held crisis talks last week on how to regain authority.

At Reinos, in the north of Spain, ten policemen were captured by steelworkers during a clash on 12 March. Police had run out of rubber bullets while trying to storm the steelworks, where workers occupying against redundancies held their bosses captive.

In Madrid, the CP-led Workers Commissions re-

oned 400,000 people had taken part in a demonstration for jobs and wages.

Prime Minister Gonzalez is also upset because the Socialist Party-led UGT unions have not fallen into line with his five per cent pay limit. UGT general secretary Nicolas Redondo, who is also a Socialist Party deputy, challenged Finance Minister Solchaga in a television debate.

University students have begun a series of demonstrations, following those last month by school pupils.

● US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger was in Spain last week to persuade the government not to reduce US military bases. At Torrejon airbase about 10,000 demonstrators demanding the US quit clashed with police.

## ZIONISTS LUNCH WITH LE PEN



ALL SMILES? France's National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen with Senator Hawkins of Florida. Will Zionists help him woo more 'respectable' right-wing backing?

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

FRANCE'S Jewish community has been angered to hear that leading American Zionists recently met with French National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Le Pen, who has built his political career attacking immigrant workers and minorities, was guest at a luncheon in New York in February hosted by Jacques Torczyner, president of the World Union of General Zionists.

A report on the gathering appeared in the right-wing Paris daily 'le Figaro' last week, and has brought a strong reaction from French Jews.

Denouncing 'Torczyner's scandalous initiative', Theo Klein of the leading Jewish body Crif demanded: 'How could American Jewish leaders do such a thing when they are perfectly aware of the activities of the National Front?'

'It is obvious the NF will thoroughly exploit such initiatives', Klein pointed out.

Since his rise in French politics — the racist National Front gained two-and-a-half million votes in last year's elections — Euro-MP Le Pen has become a leader for fascists throughout Europe.

Calling for a 'Europe of the Fatherlands', his fraternal alliance includes Italy's MSI, the pro-junta Greek EPN, and Franco veteran Blas Pinar's newly-reformed party, which has also taken the name National Front.

Le Pen's 17-strong far-right group in the European parliament has been joined by Ulster Unionist John Taylor.

Le Pen's February trip was not the fascist leader's first visit to the United States. Last year he ran into bother at New York airport baggage check, carrying a .75 Magnum he had purchased in New Mexico.

His few hours in the slammer hasn't dampened his campaigning enthusiasm for 'law n' order'. But then his supporters understand this is a code phrase for beating up blacks and Arabs in police cells. Le Pen's previous military career was as a torturer in Algeria.

On an earlier US trip, Le Pen met respectable right-wingers like Florida Republican Senator Hawkins and Paul Laxalt, chairman of the Committee for the Re-election of Reagan.

British Tory MEP Sir Henry Plumb, current President of the European parliament, was guest of honour at the first night dinner when Le Pen and his Group of the European Right gathered in London for three days last month.

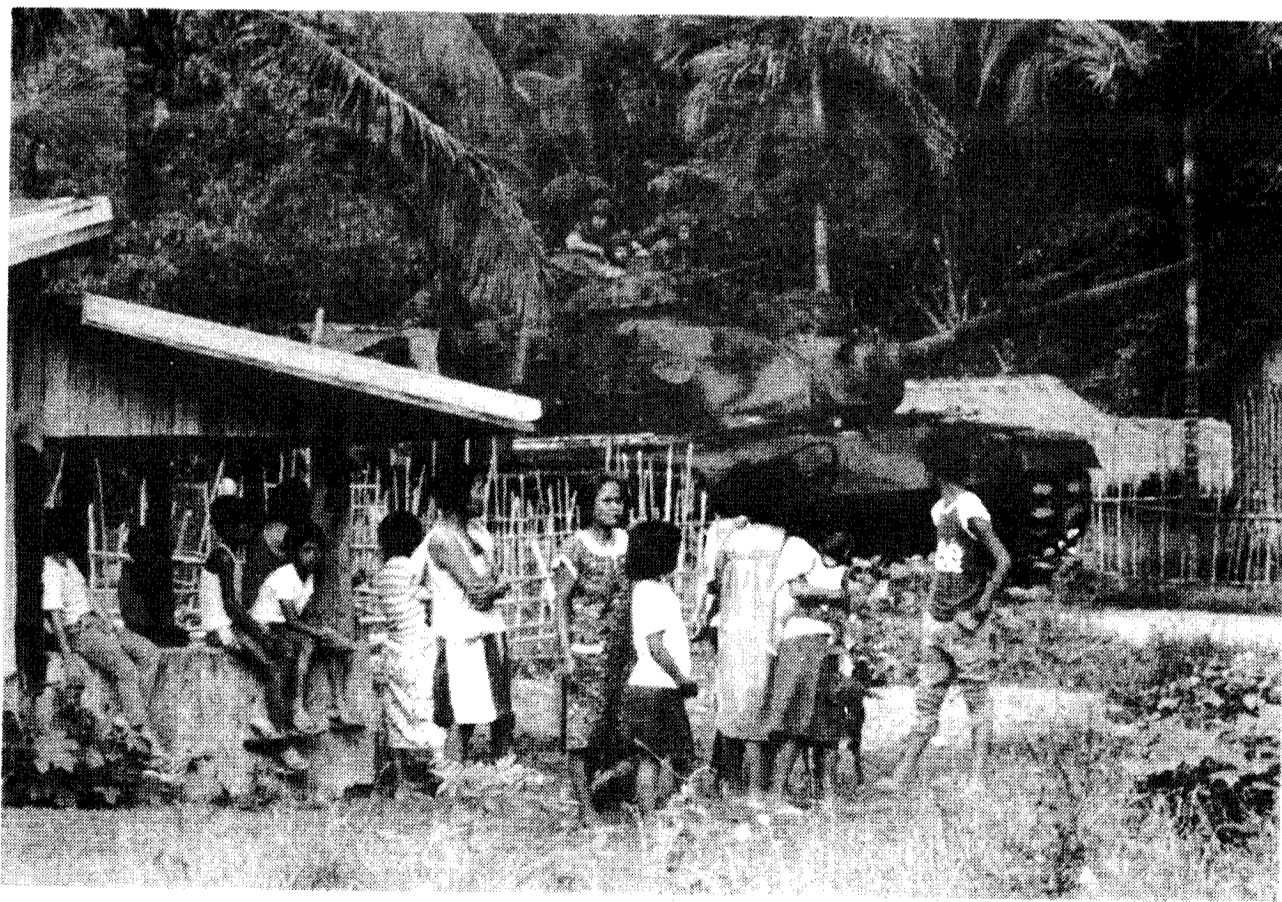
Knowing Le Pen's long fascist track-record, the way the racists and neo-Nazis have rallied behind him, and the menace the National Front represents for democratic rights and all minorities, French Jews are angrily demanding what Zionists like Torczyner are up to.

Whatever the Zionist leaders' motives, Le Pen's game is clear. Although he inherited a fortune years ago, the fascist leader now requires the kind of big money that more 'respectable' right-wing politicians can pull.

While letting the thugs and psychopaths around the edge of his movement interpret the racist message by beating up immigrant workers or bombing synagogues, one-time fascist brawler Le Pen is cultivating his image as polite dinner company.

'Look, I wear a white shirt, not a black one!' he told a television interviewer.

Right-wing Tories and US Republicans will now feel more able to be seen with the fascist, thinking they can disarm critics by pointing to the Zionist precedent. Zionist leaders deserve fascist gratitude — and Jewish anger.



American troops on manoeuvres in a Philippine village

## NPA Steps up war — and Reagan sends more CIA

AN ARMY colonel was among four people killed in a bomb explosion at the Philippine Military Academy last week. Nearly 40 others, including 13 officers were wounded.

President Corazon Aquino was due to visit the academy. The bomb had been planted in the ceiling just above the stage where she was to speak.

Elsewhere, guerillas of the

left-wing New People's Army (NPA) ambushed an army patrol, killing 19 soldiers. An armoured personnel carrier and a truck were blown up by landmines.

The attack was in Quezon province, about 100 miles south-east of Manila, the capital.

A train carrying troops was derailed in an NPA ambush recently. A number of army and police officers have been shot dead in Manila itself.

From Washington, it is reported that President Reagan has authorised the CIA to step up its activity

against communists in the Philippines.

According to 'Newsweek' (23 March), Reagan has recently signed a secret 'finding' — like that which authorised the Iran arms deals — authorising millions of dollars for covert US activity.

The 115-strong CIA station in Manila will be reinforced with a dozen more agents, and CIA overflights may assist operations against the NPA fighters.

**Community News**

**LIVERPOOL:**

**RACIST attacks** have become an everyday occurrence all over Liverpool, declares a local community relations worker.

Just over a week ago, racist thugs attacked and vandalised the home of a young black mother in Edge Hill. Racist graffiti were sprayed over the walls and on the mother's pictures of her children.

Liverpool's deputy senior Community Relations Officer, Maria O'Reilly, said it was the second racist attack at that home.

Community Relations Council officer Syed Hussein said: 'There is an attack every day, and not just on property, but at school, at work, or in the street — and it's happening all over Liverpool.'

'It can happen any time, any day, to anyone.'

'Just before Christmas there were two cases of Asian property burnt down. Asian families are being harassed so much that if something breaks out, don't blame them.'

Local black organisations are appealing for donations to help the young mother who was the victim of this recent attack.

**NEWHAM:**

ONE East London borough has recorded almost as many racist attacks in the last 12 months as the rest of London put together.

And fewer than one in four local black people are satisfied with the response of the police.

A survey carried by the Harris Poll on behalf of Newham council recorded 1,550 incidents of racial harassment in the borough. One in four black residents had suffered harassment in the past year.

The report published last week says 'dissatisfaction largely stems from a feeling that the police are apathetic to the problems of black residents.'

Among poll findings were that two-thirds of people suffering harassment were victims on more than one occasion.

Three out of four Asian women were afraid of being a victim of crime. One in four said they felt unsafe even at home.

Newham police committee chairman Conor McAuley said the figures 'were much more serious than we realised. Nish Kanwar, of the Newham Monitoring Project said 'We're finally able to back up what we've been saying with figures.'

**LEWISHAM:**

LEWISHAM council in South-east London has accused other London authorities of 'dumping' homeless families in the borough.

A report by Lewisham's Housing Committee says the Greater London Mobility Allowance, designed to help families to move around the capital, is being misused by some councils to get homeless people off their books.

It accuses Croydon, Brent, Westminster, Kensington and Hammersmith of 'acting like 18th century judges sending convicts to Australia.'

**WANDSWORTH:**

**PENSIONERS** are not getting enough to eat in the ten old peoples' homes owned by Wandsworth council.

The private contractor, ARA, who provide meals in the borough, which was the trend-setter for the Tories' privatisation plans, were fined 31 times in the last year for failing to meet adequate standards.

The faults included: not enough food, an evening meal of just bread and jam, poorly or undercooked food, no morning tea, one occasion when no breakfast was provided by the caterer at all.

On at least three occasions, the kitchens were found to be a health hazard by the council's own inspectors.

In one home, bags of flour were left next to cockroach bait, bacon was defrosted and then refrozen, cooked meat stored next to fresh meat, and bread was left open.

Dear Comrade Phil, We have just read in Workers Press that you have been attacked by Healy's thugs, then dragged by the latter before the bourgeois courts and condemned to a year in prison.

We must express to you our total militant solidarity and demand your immediate freeing, in joining our voice to the campaign on your behalf launched by your party, the Workers Revolutionary Party.

That a 'historic' leader like Healy, who calls himself a revolutionary, and what's more, a Trotskyist, had recourse to physical violence and bourgeois justice to settle political differences within the workers' movement and its revolutionary vanguard — tells us much about his own failure, his degeneration, and his fear of confronting the political struggle in front of the working class and vanguard militants for the ideas and programme of the Fourth International.

Healy has employed against you the typical methods of the Stalinist bureaucracy — of provocation, violence and calumnies — which the workers of Poland and other East European countries know only too well from their daily experience.

Birds of a feather, flock together. For, how can we not draw parallels between these Stalinist methods and the present politics of Healy towards the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Kremlin, that is to say his glorification of Gorbachev and the pro-capitalist 'reforms' which the latter is introducing in the USSR.

In hoping to see you speedily free again, please accept warmest greetings from

**Stefan Bekier,**  
On behalf of the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Workers' League of Poland (section of the Fourth International).

**Cambridge and District Trades Council** agreed on 18 March to write to Phil Penn in prison, to write a letter of protest to the News Line and to send a copy to Workers Press. The vote was 15 to 7 in support of the campaign against the jailing of Phil Penn, a clear rejection of the lies in the News Line article which had been circulated to trades council members.

# THE JAILING

## More pictures from

Saturday 7 March at Lambeth

The Benefit night for Phil Penn and his family was a big success and the Healy-Torrance clique

At its meeting on 10 March 1987, the Wigan Trades Council discussed the jailing of your comrade Phil Penn. The meeting condemned the anti-working class actions of the Healy-Torrance group who were responsible for the jailing of Phil.

We agree with you that no organisation that calls itself socialist would or should collaborate with the police and courts to help jail members of the labour movement.

We would like you to pass on our best wishes and support to Phil and his family.

**Mike Farley**  
Secretary, Wigan Trades Union Council.

Dear Phil,

This branch, Merthyr Bus GMBATU, condemns the action taken by the Healy-Torrance group, acting as police marks, resulting in your jail sentence.

Being the only police witnesses against you they have crossed the class lines. As a scab crosses a picket line.

The working class resolves its problems and differences through its own organisations, not the State's courtrooms.

We wish you and your family well.

**Yours Comradely,**  
**Cliff Jones, branch chairman,**  
GMBATU Merthyr Bus Branch.



Geraldine Murray and Sid Frisby sang songs inspired by struggle

PAGE 10 The News Line Saturday March 14, 1987

# THE PENN CASE

## — the facts

**FOR the last four weeks, the tiny readership of 'Workers Press' has been told a pack of lies about the jailing of one of its leading supporters, Phil Penn.**

The unfortunate readers of this rag have been told that Penn was jailed as a result of a 'provocation' staged by members of the Workers Revolutionary Party and that his jailing resulted from a 'political dispute'.

Significantly, they have been unable to substantiate this with a single reference to the trial which took place at Southwark Crown Court on February 5-6.

That is because their account is a tissue of lies from beginning to end.

Penn was jailed because he was found guilty of inflicting grievous bodily harm to Eric Rogers, a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Rogers was partially blinded in one eye after Penn kicked and punched him repeatedly as he was leaving the Wapping demonstration on May 3 last year. After deliberately pulling Rogers' coat over his face, Penn proceeded to smash his spectacles into his face, driving glass into Rogers' eye.

Rogers spent three days in hospital, several weeks

off work and was forced to change his job because of the severe damage to his eye. His sight remains badly blurred ten months later.

This is what the 'Workers Press' described as 'unfortunate damage (!)' sustained during the settlement of a 'political dispute'.

Now, after Penn has been sentenced to prison, this group of political charlatans cry foul. They say that these 'political differences' should not have been 'regulated in bourgeois courts' and argue that the 'dispute' should have been settled within the labour movement.

How is it then that not once — WE REPEAT NOT ONCE — during the nine months before the trial, did Penn or the organisation which supported his action even apologise to Eric Rogers for the serious injury to his eye?

**Arrested**

In fact Penn did not contest the evidence from one of the policeman who witnessed the attack and arrested him that he had said he would have been glad to see Rogers blinded.

We can assure News Line readers and the whole trade union and labour movement that if a member of the WRP physically assaulted a member of another labour movement



Phil Penn (ringed) was among supporters of 'Workers Press' who were happy to use the police to regulate a political dispute in their ranks last year. The police were called to prevent members of the Hyland grouplet from entering the rump's congress in February 1986

organisation in this way, he or she would be severely disciplined and their action condemned.

That is not the way Penn's thuggish behaviour has been treated by the 'Workers Press'. It has tried — with a miserable lack of success — to turn Penn into a hero and victim.

In his own evidence Penn claimed that he faced a crowd of 50 WRP members (Rogers told the court that the group with him numbered between 15-20, but leave that aside). How is it that, faced with these overwhelming odds, Penn managed to emerge unscathed and Rogers was the one who was injured?

By his own evidence Penn confirms that our

members were seeking to avoid a physical confrontation and not cause one.

Having defended Penn's actions Messrs Slaughter, Pilling, Bruce and Temple have an obligation to justify the near blinding of a political opponent before the working class.

**Differences**

Trade unionists will be interested to know just how smashing glass into a political opponent's eyes is consistent with settling political differences. There is no mention of support for this kind of action in their manifesto.

As the court heard, our members did not 'run to the police'. The police were

actually on the scene, saw the assault take place and took the court action against Penn! (In fact they had to drag Penn off Rogers while he was still kicking him in the face). This group's accusation, therefore, that our members acted as 'police marks' is beneath contempt. It is nothing more than a crude attempt to justify an unprovoked assault on a political opponent.

This group must believe that our movement and the working class is suffering from collective political amnesia!

In October 1985 it was not so squeamish about running to the state during the split within the WRP. This gang opened the doors

of the party's former headquarters at Clapham to the capitalist press and handed over the names and addresses of our members to the hounds from Fleet Street.

**Assaults**

When this outrageous collaboration with the state failed to intimidate our members these desperadoes adopted violent tactics. They trailed around our meetings launching frequent physical assaults on our members.

The attack launched by Penn is consistent with this record of provocation. We urge trade unionists to study this case and reject this gang of political provocateurs.



# ING OF PHIL PENN

## m Benefit

**Social Club**  
a landmark in the history of our break with



Sandra Penn and daughter Amy enjoyed the Benefit



Benefit DJ Pete kept everyone entertained



Colin's Irish songs enthralled the audience

# News Line's lies: We reply

BY GEOFF PILLING

**AFTER five long weeks of silence, the 'News Line' has at last been forced to reply to our exposure of their reactionary activities in connection with the Phil Penn case ('News Line', 14 March 1987).**

The widespread hostility to their collaboration with the capitalist state in the jailing of Comrade Penn and the break-up in their own ranks which this action has accelerated has forced them to a belated and pathetic defence of their sordid activities.

Phil Penn, a long-standing member of the Workers Revolutionary Party, was jailed on 6 February for alleged assault on News Line supporter Eric Rogers.

He was given 12 months imprisonment, eight of them suspended. The evidence was supplied solely by members of the Healy-Torrance group, publishers of 'News Line'.

This group thus broke one of the most basic principles in the working-class movement: No matter how serious political differences between groups and tendencies inside the working class, they cannot be regulated by recourse to the capitalist courts or the police of the class enemy.

Consider the 'News Line' response point by point:

● They accuse us of making no reference to the court case which led to Penn's jailing. 'Significantly, they have been unable to substantiate this [that the jailing resulted from a 'political dispute'] with a single reference to the trial which took place at Southwark Crown Court on February 5-6.'

The 'significant' feature of the case — which Torrance and company deliberately ignore — is that the only witnesses in the case, apart from the police, were provided by the Torrance-Healy group. Without their appearance in court the case could not have proceeded and Comrade Penn would not now be in jail.

● They tell their readers that they would take the firmest action against any of their members involved in violence in the working-class movement.

'We can assure "News Line" readers and the whole trade union and labour movement that if a member of the WRP physically assaulted a member of another labour movement organisation in this way, he or she would be severely disciplined and their action condemned.'

This is an outrageous lie. The Healy-Torrance group is notorious throughout the labour movement for the violence it employs to try and silence its political opponents.

In October 1985 Gerry Healy, long-standing leader of the WRP, was expelled from the Party. One of the three charges against him was that he had used systematic physical violence against Party members and others in the working-class movement.

Torrance, Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, Richard Price and the rest of the small minority who were expelled along with Healy covered up for this record of vio-

lence. After their expulsion this group set themselves up as a bogus Workers Revolutionary Party.

Over the last 18 months they have said not a single public word to defend Healy against this charge. Nor will they because they know the charge is true.

● On Sunday 8 June Phil Penn was savagely attacked by three men, members of the Healy-Torrance group, while taking photographs outside a meeting in Leicester.

One, called Colling, carried a stick and another a Stanley knife. Penn was hospitalised because of this attack. Despite the police's wish to take the assailants to court, Penn refused, as a matter of principle.

It was Healy who ordered the attack. No action has been taken against Penn's assailants by these self-proclaimed opponents of violence in the workers' movement. Nor is any mention made of it in their reply.

● The tale told by 'News Line' is so inconsistent as to be ludicrous. They quote Rogers' evidence in court that he was with 15-20 fellow 'News Line' supporters when he was allegedly set upon by Penn.

Further, 'News Line' claims that its members did not 'run to the police', for the police were on hand to witness Penn's alleged attack. 'The police were actually on the scene, saw the assault take place and took the court action against Penn!'

So we end up with the following fanciful picture: Rogers, surrounded by 15-20 of his members, is attacked by Penn, knocked to the ground and badly injured — while the police look on.

● Clearly getting desperate, 'News Line' accuses us of similar behaviour to theirs in that

we went to the capitalist press to expose Healy's crimes.

First, it was the Healy group who were the first to go to the capitalist press in October 1985.

Second, the capitalist press is in any case not a part of the state machine and to suggest otherwise is to betray a profound ignorance of Marxism. We completely defend our reporting of Healy's activities as widely as possible because workers have a right to know exactly what their leaders are doing. It was because of this action that Healy has disappeared from public life and is finished as a political figure.

Third, it was Redgrave and her supporters who initiated not one but 21 court actions against our Party and its companies with the aim of breaking it financially and imprisoning those members who led the fight to expose Healy's corruption and violence in the movement.

● The 'News Line' prints a picture of police outside our conference in February 1986. They use this as proof that we called the police to prevent the Hyland group entering that conference.

This is a sheer fabrication. The Hyland group (now called the International Communist Party) never attempted to enter the conference.

The police were called not by us but by those living in the vicinity of the meeting who were rightly outraged by the noise and commotion caused by the Hyland group.

It is ironic that they should invoke the case of the Hyland group. Six of the Torrance-Healy group appeared in January of this year as police witnesses after an incident between themselves and the International Communist Party. On this occasion the court did not believe the Torrance-Healy group and the defendant was found not guilty.

## Framed prisoners' meeting

Widespread support for the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign was reflected in the public meeting in Kilburn last Wednesday night where over 50 people attended.

Among the speakers from the platform were former deputy leader of the GLC, John McDonnell; Charlie Walsh of the Workers Revolutionary Party and Maire O'Shea, veteran campaigner of the Irish in Britain Representation Group, who was herself the victim of a frame-up attempt by the British state machine.

A short message of support from Phil Penn was read out at the end of the meeting.

● A much fuller report on the contributions will be published in next week's Workers Press.

## What you can do...

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn in your union branch, trades council, support group, etc. Phone 01-274 7271 for copies of the circular letter explaining the case.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. L27055, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Ducane Road, London W12 0AE (registered post is best).
- Send messages of support for Phil and reports which we can print in Workers Press. We have a special column each week while he is behind bars.



# For an International Conference in 1987 for the Re-organisation of the Fourth International

**THE CALL** for an International Conference of Trotskyist Organisations, issued by the Workers Revolutionary Party last month, has brought responses from a number of organisations around the world.

We publish some more of these here; in addition, the following comrades have written to say they wish to attend the conference: the Finnish Group of Fourth Internationalists, the Socialist Organiser group (Britain), the Bolshevik-Leninists (a group of German Trotskyists), and the KDE of Greece (the organisation led by L. Sklavos).

The political committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party passed the following resolution at its meeting of 20 February:

**In accordance with the statement of the Central Committee making the call for the international conference, we resolve:**

(a) to convene a first meeting of the preparatory committee of all those who declare agreement in principle with the ten points of the call;

(b) to re-affirm that agreement in principle with these ten points is the basis of participation in the committee. 9

The WRP call already makes clear that, when the organising committee is set up, it will handle all matters relating to pre-conference discussion, organisation, attendance and financing of the conference.

#### Comrades,

The International Executive Committee of our movement, and all of the sections (PORE, LOR of France, TO of the USA, Bolivian and Antilles Committees of the Fourth International), have taken note of and discussed the Call for an International Conference that you have published in Workers Press.

The International Secretariat has been mandated to contact you right away and to let you know that we agree to participate in such a conference through a delegation of the IS and our sections, according to the procedures established by the Preparation Committee of the conference, in which of course, we would also like to take part.

Our Executive Committee considers as very positive for opening

the preparatory discussions the fact that the WRP has synthesised in its Call all of the positions which it intends to defend in the course of such a Conference.

We would also like to prepare for you in the shortest possible time a first contribution on our part, similarly under the form of a short theses, summarising the principled bases, advanced by our recent Tenth Congress, on which we believe a regroupment of the revolutionary vanguard is possible, with a view to realising an important step forward in the building of the Fourth International.

(To this end, we would like to make available to you a certain number of copies of all our resolutions of our Tenth Congress, which you know about already, for the information of other organisations desiring to integrate themselves into the Preparation Committee of the Conference.)

We think that the success of this conference among the international workers vanguard will depend on its openness, on the greatest possible participation of

currents and organisations that claim Trotskyism without exclusion of anyone, such as the United Secretariat of Mandel, the 'Fourth International-International Center of Rebuilding' of Lambert, etc. as well as national tendencies or groups desiring to participate in the discussion on the problems of the crisis and on the building of the Fourth International.

We believe that such a conference can as well become a great internationalist workers' forum, attracting the attention of many advanced workers in all the countries, opening an important debate in their ranks and facilitating, at the present moment, the practical collaboration of their organisations in the struggle of the classes against imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In this sense, in the framework of the preparation of the Conference and in order to root it to the largest extent among the workers, we would like to propose to the Preparation Committee a certain number of international campaigns of mobilisation and of actions that could be led jointly by the organisations adhering to it, and which could attract others, concerning the defence of the peoples oppressed by imperialism, the struggle for the rights of the Polish workers and workers of other countries subjected to the bureaucracy, etc.

At the same time, we think that one of the most important conclusions of the conference can be the constitution of an international Tribunal, having the authority of the organisations who vote for this

Tribunal, in front of which all the cases of the utilisation of slanders against different groups and leaderships could be denounced, having been an obstacle to free discussion and the respect of workers democracy.

Without a doubt, we will have the occasion to take up all the details of these questions, and others as well, in the course of the preparatory work of the conference.

Finally comrades, we send you our fraternal Trotskyist greetings.

For the International Secretariat of the Fourth International  
Gerard Laffont  
Paris, 9 February 1987.

#### Dear Comrades,

We received a copy of your call 'For An International Conference in 1987 For The Re-organisation of The Fourth International'.

1. We welcome this call and we herewith express our willingness to participate in a conference on this issue later in 1987.  
2. We agree to 'participate jointly' with the WRP and other groups 'in a Committee to prepare the Conference itself, its agenda and its arrangements, and to organise the pre-Conference discussion and distribution of documents.'

Fraternally yours  
Edmund Samarakkody  
Political Committee  
Revolutionary Workers Party  
(Fourth Internationalist) of Sri Lanka  
8 February 1987

## CORRECTION

OUR obituary to Nahuel Moreno (Workers Press January 31) stated: 'In 1963, the Fourth International was re-unified. SLATO delayed entering because it considered the leadership around Ernest Mandel to be impressionistic and petty bourgeois.'

This section of the obituary — which was translated from material supplied to us by comrades in Argentina — gave the wrong impression that the Workers Revolutionary Party now believes that the FI was 're-unified' in 1963 and has thus changed its position on the issues raised at that time. In fact no such change has been made.

**THE** expulsion of Healy from the WRP opened up a period of re-examination of the history and principles of Trotskyism. To the horror of dogmatists, for whom principles had become holy texts, we began to test out our theory against the criteria of real life and practice.

Then, to the terror and rage of sceptics, we started to rediscover these principles, not as dogma, but as the expression of the battle for revolutionary leadership against revisionism. We realised this task could not be carried out in Britain alone, but demanded the pooling of the experience of the international fight for Bolshevism.

This is the basis of our call for the conference to re-organise the Fourth International. The necessity and possibility for this reconstruction does not arise from our wishes or intentions, but from the objective change in the class struggle internationally signalled by the strike of British miners in 1984-1985.

I should like to take up just one aspect of this work. The 1938 Transitional Programme begins:

'The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat. The economic prerequisite for socialist revolution has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism.'

'Mankind's productive forces stagnate. Already new inventions and improvements fail to raise the level of material wealth. Conjunctural crises under the conditions of the social crisis of the whole capitalist system inflict ever heavier deprivations and sufferings upon the masses.'

# Have the productive forces stagnated?

BY CYRIL SMITH

After nearly 50 years of unprecedented advance of science and technology, with huge rises in the productivity of labour and in the standard of living of many sections of the international working class, how should we assess these lines? Trotsky wrote them to explain why it was necessary to establish the International. This was the ground for the fundamental statement: 'The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.'

When we bring these ideas face-to-face with actual developments, we are obliged neither to discard them, nor merely to reaffirm their eternal truth. Rather, we must deepen our understanding of them by returning to the basic conceptions of Marxism.

I think that Marx's term 'productive forces' has often been taken too lightly. We ought not use it as a synonym for technology, even if we add 'and the working class'. It implies the totality of powers, skills and instruments which humanity has developed collectively in the course of its unity and struggle with nature.

Under the bourgeois social order, these powers are torn to pieces. Competing capitalist enterprises seize great chunks — the means of production — as their private property. This cuts off individual workers' capacity for work from the means to produce. They have to sell off their humanity a bit

at a time in order to buy the necessities of life.

The worker is prevented from developing the possibilities open to human beings today, and is forced instead to devote his or her life to crippling limited and one-sided activities, while yielding up surplus value to the employer in tribute. The global system of production, which is more and more closely interconnected, is carved up between warring national groups of capitalists and nation-states.

This fragmentation is the driving force for class struggle and its outcome, the socialist revolution, the establishment of social relations in which this fragmentation is overcome. So the post-war period is a continuation of 'an epoch of wars and revolutions'. Even more agonisingly than in 1938, every advance of scientific knowledge and its application must bring about violent upheaval and destruction.

The rise in mass chronic unemployment is not the only result of technological advance. All the important developments are increasingly the byproduct of war preparations. We should all be aware of the appalling military and environmental dangers which accompany each advance.

In the 1950s and 1960s, voices were heard telling the working class capitalism could find ways of

delivering a rising standard of living for all. There was much chatter about 'consumer capitalism', the 'affluent society', 'neo-capitalism' and the 'third industrial revolution'. Some of this stuff even infected sections of the Fourth International, along with other revisions of Marxism. (We have Mandel in mind here, of course.)

The idea appeared that there was a 'Third World'. The countries formerly directly colonised by imperialism would find ways to develop themselves, that is to apply technology imported from the imperialist countries. So the backwardness and poverty which imperialism had imposed on them could be overcome, without the need to overthrow capitalism in the imperialist 'First World'.

The history of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East in the past few years has brutally exploded these myths. All these countries have seen rapid industrial development, no doubt, but not in forms that 'Third Worldists' expected. Powerful working classes have appeared. Many live in huge cities, filled with masses of impoverished ex-peasants.

At the same time, the 'Green Revolution', which was supposed to bring a leap forward in agricultural production, has resulted in environmental disaster — and massive profits for 'agribusiness'.

In fact, food production declined, while resources were shifted into

cash crops for export, in the vain attempt to pay the interest on the crippling burden of debt to international finance. So mass starvation on an unprecedented scale has been the result in countries which were once self-sufficient in food.

The idea that those countries where the capitalist state had been overthrown could also develop peacefully in coexistence with imperialist power was part of this same mythology. In practice, the constant imperialist war threat increasingly distorted the economies of the USSR and China and their allies.

Under bureaucratic rule, industrialisation has gone forward at a fantastic speed. But every technological advance in these countries pulls them closer into the net of imperialist finance. However loudly the bureaucracy intones the Stalinist catechism of 'socialism in one country', the objective necessities of world economy are inescapable.

There is another side to our quotation from the Programme. If we say that 'the economic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution' exists, this simultaneously implies the existence of the prerequisite for socialism.

To a great extent, the FI emphasised the demands of the programme as a means of moving the working class towards the question of state power, and this is, of course essential. But at the same time they serve to move them towards consciousness of the necessity for communism.

I think that the development of technology in the past few decades makes this aspect more important than before. We must place in the forefront of all our work the possibility and necessity of the all-sided planning of economic life under the control of the working class.

We must combat every tendency to bend actual developments to fit our preconceptions. We do indeed live in the epoch of world socialist revolution, for which only Trotskyism shows the way forward.

## The internationalists' new response

ON 29 June 1979, Radio Sandino announced that a new contingent of 200 volunteers from Honduras was joining the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) forces to attack Managua to 'combat the Somocistas'. (*El Socialista*, Bogota, Colombia, 6 July 1979).

In Chinandega some internationalists participated in a new attempt to capture the city, one of the strongholds of the National Guard.

Along with the conventional weapons of war, like mortars and automatic rifles, the rebels relied on the ingenuity of the local population. Propane gas tanks were buried under the streets, attached to detonators, and used as incendiary landmines to blow up the National Guard tanks as they drove over them.

Three times the revolutionary forces and the local population assaulted the National Guard strongholds. Three times they were repelled.

Everywhere the members of the Simon Bolivar Brigade fought, they encouraged the local population to organise Civil Defence Committees.

The committees, taking local government power into their own hands with the entire population of the towns participating, passed judgement on members of the National Guard captured by the revolutionary forces.

When they were acquitted they were handed over to the International Red Cross. When found guilty of atrocities or massacres of the civilian population, they were executed.

This popular revolutionary justice carried out by the Civil Defence Committees organised and set up under the influence and leadership of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade was in marked contrast to the official line of the FSLN.

The FSLN said that it would be generous with its mortal enemies, and freed the vast majority of National Guard soldiers it captured, without submitting them to the judgement of popular tribunals.

Today these war criminals released by the FSLN make up a large part of the leadership and the fighting forces of the Contra armies.

Within the forces of the FSLN there was tremendous sympathy for the revolutionary popular justice advocated by the Simon Bolivar Brigade.

FSLN columns and Civil Defence Committees often adopted the Simon Bolivar International Brigade's policies as their own, despite the official FSLN line.

In the city of Cardenas, which fell to the Ramon Raudales column of the FSLN and the popular insurrection after another sharp battle with the National Guard, the Civil Defence Committees that were established implemented popular revolutionary justice against the captured Guardias.

In the words of Raul Guerrero M., the commander of the column:

'The people directly elect, publicly, who they want to represent them in the popular tribunals, the members of the jury which holds session in front of the people.'

'We have our legitimate right to accuse and present evidence of all the acts that were committed; the accused also have the guaranteed right of self-defence. The tribunal judges and punishes them according to the gravity of the charges.'

In the same interview, commander Raudales said of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade fighters:

'We are moved that the Sandinista cause had caught the attention of revolutionaries of America and the world, and that you are ready to put your lives on the line with ours for the cause of the Nicaraguans.'

I believe that is absolutely correct. (*El Socialista*, Bogota, Colombia, 13 July 1979).

# SIMON BOLIVAR INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

## Colina 50 and 'Pedro the Uruguayan'

COLINA 50 was a strategic hill controlled by an elite of 'chiguines' led by 'Major Bravo', the best field commander of Somoza's National Guard.

The chiguines' position was fortified and defended with heavy artillery and three tanks, and continuously protected by aircraft.

A commando group of FSLN experts and SBIB members was organised to take Colina 50 by surprise. The group consisted of 15 members under the command of Pedro, a Uruguayan internationalist.

The first attack was a failure. Four of the 15, including Pedro, were killed. Seven others were wounded.



A Nicaraguan fighter

The FSLN General Staff of the Southern Front decided to organise a larger squad to take the hill, which dominated the line of march of the FSLN forces on the city of Rivas.

The reorganised unit, composed mainly of internationalist members of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, called themselves the 'Pedro the Uruguayan Column' in honour of their fallen comrade.

The column won a definitive victory and complete control of the strategic hill in some of the fiercest fighting of the war.

Many Sandinistas and internationalists died and many more were wounded.

After the column took the hill they were subjected to virtually uninterrupted artillery and aerial

## PART II

This article is taken from the February 1986 issue of 'Working Class Opposition', journal of the US section of the International Workers' League (IWL), the Trotskyist organisation responsible for founding the SBIB. Part III will appear next week.

bombardment from the National Guard as well as attempts to retake the hill, until the very end of the civil war.

### The SBIB'S political strategy

THESE examples of the heroic involvement of the SBIB in the civil war were repeated everywhere the internationalist fighters participated around the country.

tions with the FSLN leadership, as FSLN units tried to follow the example of the internationalists and elect their own officers.

Needless to say, this led to numerous heated debates between the Sandinista fighters and appointed officials within the FSLN.

During the brief respites between each combat engagement, the SBIB carried on propaganda campaigns about the need to advance towards a re-

fighters of the FSLN on every front.

In fact, many Nicaraguans were attracted to the Brigade and voluntarily chose to fight with them and join in the daily political discussions organised by the SBIB.

### The entrance into Managua

SOMOZA'S regime and that of his successor Urcuyo collapsed in the midst of a nationwide general strike (supported by 90 per cent of the people), military defeat, insurrection, and international isolation. Nicaragua was shaken and the old regime was destroyed.

On 17, 18, and 19 July, the National Guard collapsed. Some of its battalions crossed the border into Honduras with their arms and vehicles. Others disintegrated, with individual members fleeing for their lives.

Scenes reminiscent of the last days of the American occupation of South Vietnam occurred throughout the country. Soldiers abandoned their guns, hanging from airplanes and helicopters overloaded with terrified soldiers of the fallen dictatorship.

On 19 July 1979 the first detachments of the insurrectionary army of the FSLN entered Managua. Among them was one of the units of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade.

For a full day after they entered the capital there was literally no government in Nicaragua.

Somoza had fled the country, the National Guard had collapsed, but the FSLN leadership as well as the bourgeois opponents of Somoza hesitated.

Only on 20 July did the FSLN formally move into Managua to join with the bourgeois anti-Somoza forces in establishing the Provisional Government in the capital.

Even though the SBIB was already calling for a workers' and peasants' government, and for a government of the FSLN without bourgeois forces, the FSLN General Staff, recognising the SBIB combatants as some of the best of the revolutionary fighters, put some of them in the new Provisional Government's personal security squad.

The newly appointed Minister of the Interior, Thomas Borge, through his assistant Silvio Casco, assigned the house of former Somoza supporter David Zamora for the use of the SBIB as office and headquarters. (See letter from the office of the Minister of Interior of Nicaragua, in *Nicaragua: Reform or Revolution?*, *Coleccion Polemica Internacional*, page 395).

The SBIB did not rest for a moment. Immediately after the fall of Somoza it embarked on a military and political campaign to secure the gains of the revolution and to advance it towards socialist goals.

It was very active in the clean-up campaign against elements of the National Guard that had launched a campaign of terror and sniper attacks in Managua. Several of these attacks by National Guard elements were launched against the Brigade's new headquarters, but each time they were repelled.

The Brigade warned continuously of the dangerous possibility of a counter-revolutionary war launched by the exiled National Guards in Honduras

supported by imperialism.

The newly installed government and the FSLN denounced these warnings as 'ultra-leftist'. They launched a campaign under the slogan of 'generous in victory', freeing several thousand Somocistas and National Guardsmen.

It is now clear that, in this essential matter, the FSLN was cultivating the 'public opinion' of world imperialism rather than acting on behalf of the revolutionary masses of Nicaragua.

If not entirely, at least in part, the existence of the Contra armies today is attributable to the Sandinista policy of 'generous in victory', while the international fighters' warnings have been proven to be in complete accord with the needs of the revolution, and anything but 'ultra-left'.

If those warnings had been heeded, if the Brigade's call for revolutionary popular justice had been implemented, and if the entire population had been armed, the present Contra threat to Nicaragua would have been eliminated before it was born.

At the very least, the Contras would have been deprived of their military leadership and cadres, and imperialism would have been deprived of its pretence that the Contras are 'freedom fighters' instead of CIA pawns.

The internationalists' revolutionary strategy recognised the need to link the Nicaraguan revolution as closely as possible with the rest of the Central American revolution, especially the struggle in El Salvador. The Simon Bolivar International Brigade called for the active support of the Nicaraguan people for the revolutionary masses of El Salvador.

These calls were met by the FSLN argument that 'the best solidarity with other peoples is consolidating our own revolutionary process'.

Accompanying its clear-cut programme for the political consolidation of the revolution against the Contra danger, and its extension throughout Central America, was the Brigade's proposal of a programme for the expropriation of all large landholdings and their immediate distribution among the peasantry, to consolidate the revolution's alliance with the peasants.

This was a crucial question for both the needs of the peasants themselves and the abolition of their exploitation — and at the same time it was the only political guarantee that the peasants would not, at some future point, become disillusioned with the revolution and turn towards the right.

The FSLN Minister of Agriculture, Jaime Wheelock, was strongly against the social revolution in the countryside and fought hard to force the evictions of peasants who had spontaneously occupied lands.

Instead Wheelock and the FSLN distributed only a small portion of the land that had been owned by the Somoza family itself, and defended the private property rights of the rest of the landlords.

Again, the FSLN's position was aimed at appeasing imperialism. In retrospect, it can clearly be seen that holding back the social revolution in the countryside has reinforced the bourgeoisie inside Nicaragua, and the Contras' military-political struggle against the revolution.

When the present State of Emergency was declared, one of the principal reasons given was fear of a businessmen's strike and a refusal to harvest the coffee crop.

Such a possibility would not exist today if the FSLN had encouraged rather than held back the expropriation of the land and its distribution to the peasants.

At the same time, the Contras have today established bases of support within Nicaragua, especially in the more remote regions, where they have gained the sympathy of sectors of the peasantry.

This is also partly due to the earlier opposition of the FSLN to revolutionary land reform, and the subsequent disaffection of sections of the peasantry from the revolution.

TO BE CONTINUED

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER COX

# LETTERS

Letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editorial Board. Letters over 500 words will normally be cut. Letters should arrive by first post Monday at: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS, and should include sender's address.

## Healy's abuses: an integral part of our problems

I WANT to write in support of the comrade who wrote last week about the need to re-examine Healy's sexual abuses.

First, I think she is absolutely right in insisting that Healy's crimes cannot be determined as rape, because to do so would imply that our women comrades had put up with rape for years without defending themselves, and therefore there must be something wrong with them as revolutionaries.

I joined the Socialist Labour League in 1973. In 1975 I was the victim of a rape at knife-point. I certainly did not think I had to put up with this!

With my husband's loving support (he is also a long-standing party member), I recovered quickly and this experience left me with no marks.

We both understood clearly that what had happened to me was an expression of the degeneration of the capitalist system and its particular oppression and violence against women, which must be fought by all socialists.

Needless to say, I went to the police and the attacker got nine years.

(It is interesting, by the way, to recall the reaction of Sheila Torrance to my ordeal at the time. She hardly took any notice. When, over a year later, I received £850 criminal compensation and donated £500 to the Party, her interest suddenly perked up a bit and, somewhat belatedly, she asked me how I was coping!)

The question of Healy's crimes however is fundamentally different.

As the comrade correctly says, it was a question of breaking up comrades' self-confidence, crushing any independent thought and using their revolutionary determination, their trust and his political authority for his depravity, with devastating effects on his victims.

She is absolutely right to state that the question still remains how this unbelievable degeneration was able to arise and exist at the centre of the Trotskyist movement.

We have not yet answered this question. And we will not be able to understand the fundamental problems of the Fourth International without examining this question.

The Healy abuses are an integral part of the problems of our movement.

We now know from our international discussions, that we were not the only tendency afflicted with this particular problem. Other tendencies calling themselves Trotskyist also are affected by similar problems.

Healyism and his abuses are one of the forms in which the problems of the movement revealed themselves. Form and content are an interconnected whole, a unity of opposites.

It is through an examination of all aspects of the form that we can come to an understanding of the content of the movement's problems. We have not studied the form of the Healy degeneration enough.

I, too, believe that the roots of the WRP's degeneration under Healy lie in an abandonment of Marxist theory, resulting in a succumbing to bourgeois pressure with all its reactionary ideology towards women.

We must study how this abandonment took place. I

believe we must look for the answers right back in the origins of the International Committee itself and its inability to successfully fight revisionism in its own ranks.

I believe the IC itself started out with wrong conceptions about both the nature of the International and also the nature of democratic centralism, wrong conceptions of how you educate a cadre of self-confident Marxists capable of withstanding the pressures of bourgeois ideology, wrong conceptions about building the party through rigid centralism, 'from the top down', etc.

It is urgent that the whole Party is re-educated in these basic questions.

I am confident that the forthcoming international discussion will address itself to these problems of the movement, of which Healy's abuses were the outcome and the form.

A WRP member

## Rape victims

COMRADE TAPP raises some important points in his letter to which the Workers Revolutionary Party must address itself.

However, in defending his position on rape — a position I would agree with — he tries to over-simplify the position.

'Its (rape's) victims are invariably female', he writes. This is just not true.

In developing theory you have to look at all the facts, even uncomfortable ones which seem to contradict your ideas.

It is a fact, comrade, that many men are raped each year. An awkward fact yes, but true nonetheless.

Brian Dempsey  
Glasgow

## The 'Raving Right'

WE HAVE many cries of 'loony left' from Tories, attempting to influence the choice of Labour Party candidates.

This is shouted at anyone who dares to defend the gains made by the working class, especially in the defence of the welfare state.

Kinnock responds and carries the attack into the Labour movement. At the same time he claims President Reagan as a friend.

The 'Gang of Four', when in the Labour Party, were always praised by the Tories and defended by the Labour bureaucracy, as was Mellish when he openly campaigned for the SDP Alliance.

Kinnock is attempting to convince the capitalist state that his policy on defence is the correct one for defending capitalism (not much different from a soap powder manufacturer trying to convince the public that their particular product washes cleaner than any other).

Now we have Callaghan giving his full support to the Thatcher government and its policy of support for the Trident programme.

Maybe he thinks the Thatcher government isn't killing people off quickly enough and that the Trident programme will speed up the process.

Lord (to be?) Raving Right Callaghan is only showing the true face of the Labour bureaucracy and its haste to defend the system of private enterprise that all socialists have to oppose.

Callaghan is truly a Labour lieutenant of capitalism, serving under Major General Kinnock.

Norman Harding

## The English Crown

BRIAN PEARCE says that if the six counties of the north of Ireland were to be annexed to the republic, this would mean the majority community in the north would have imposed upon them not only the ideology of the Roman Catholic church but also something else which is alien to their culture, namely the Irish language.

He obviously has no confidence in a nationalist revolution being turned into a socialist one. His pessimism may reflect a misconception of permanent revolution and/or an unwillingness to fight for the subjective factor which could change nationalist to socialist, that is, the party.

This indicates to me that Brian is opposed to a united Ireland. Is he also opposed to the call for troops out, or does he like to place conditions on withdrawal, as incidentally do Socialist Organiser.

He goes on to say that this is no part of the tradition of people whose ancestors were mostly lowland Scots.

He neglects to mention that these lowland Scots were loyal colonists, used to settle the north after the English Crown had waged a bloody war of conquest in Ireland throughout the 16th century.

Whole districts were parcelled off to various lords, and to the merchant companies of London. This is why Derry became known as Londonderry. Knowing that you are a historian, Brian, you should look a little further back than World War II in defending your use of the name Londonderry.

The heritage that you defend is one of imperialist colonisation.

Sue Gwyer

## Defeatism in Ireland

DESPITE the IRA, says Brian Pearce, 'we' were able to use the army base at Derry during World War II (last week's Workers Press).

Who is 'we'? The 'allied' imperialists? Certainly it was their leader Winston Churchill who complained, as did Brian (Workers Press, 7 February), about the Irish bourgeoisie's abstention from World War II.

What are the lessons of that war? Was the Fourth International's 'Manifesto on Imperialist War and Proletarian World Revolution' (1940) right to say that by the 'very creation of enormous difficulties and dangers for the imperialist metropolitan centres, the war opens up wide possibilities for the oppressed peoples', that the working class in struggling for world revolution should give 'unconditional support' to the struggle for Chinese and Indian independence?

Were the Irish Trotskyists right, in line with that, to pursue a defeatist policy towards Britain? Were they right to attack the Irish Stalinists for 'giving undivided attention to "democracy's" battle against Hitler' (Fourth International, *Theses on Ireland 1944*)?

What about the FI's scathing attack on Gandhi for proclaiming his refusal to exploit Britain's war-time difficulties, 'as if the oppressed anywhere or at any time have ever been able to free themselves except by exploiting the difficulties of their oppressors'?

Presumably Brian Pearce thinks that the Indian Trotskyists, instead of participating in the anti-imperialist struggle during the war, should have joined the British army.

What about the Vietnamese Trotskyists, who regarded imperialism's crisis as their opportunity, and advocated defeat of 'allied' imperialism?

What about the British Trotskyist building worker, James Murphy? Was he right to set up the 'Friends of the Irish Republic' in 1939? Was this organisation right to pass, at a James Connolly commemoration rally at Hyde Park on 12 May 1940, a resolution that the Irish struggle should not be left to 'a handful of militants in the IRA', and that 'only in the armed might of the workers and small farmers of Ireland lies the possibility of securing our freedom and the emancipation of our class'? (See *War and the International* by Bornstein and Richardson).

Or should the resolution have called on the IRA to desist from attacking Britain until the war was over?

Brian Pearce enthuses over the war 'against fascism'; he derides the IRA for obstructing it.

Were the Trotskyists in Ireland, India and Vietnam (not to mention China, Sri Lanka and Latin America) wrong to pursue a revolutionary defeatist line, then? Were the Stalinists in those countries right to support 'democratic' imperialism?

Lastly: I resent Brian Pearce's accusation that Workers Press wants to 'ignore' the lessons of 1688 or other episodes in Irish history; recent letters pages suggest otherwise. Trotskyists studying this history could do with help from brains like Brian's — but my suggestion that he provide some got such a facile answer (Workers Press, 7 February), that I suspect he's really not bothered.

Simon Pirani  
Glasgow

## Churchillian Marxism

ONE OF the advantages of clear writing is that it exposes plainly the author's thoughts. Poor Brian Pearce, his writing is clear but his thoughts are a confused mess.

They consist of reminiscences of World War II (with some odd Churchillian 'Marxism' thrown in), some random factual snippets, and a confusion of issues, places and historical periods. Behind this chaos there is a guiding theme — blind reaction.

I use the word 'blind' because Comrade Pearce is clueless about where he is going. He cannot see that masses rising against imperialism in Ireland have placed the national question first.

Liberation is the work of the masses, it is not possible against them. They have fought imperialism in their way. The freeing of even a part of Ireland from British political domination was a blow at British imperialism.

That is why the British armed forces fought so hard and with such cruelty in Ireland.

Comrade Pearce's arguments about "reactionary nationalists" in Central Asia and Transcaucasia illustrate the state he is in. It is not just that his blindness leaves him unable to focus but he cannot tell dark from light.

In Ireland the reactionaries are those who want to maintain British rule, not those who fight to defeat imperialism.

Pearce's blindness is reactionary as he stands with imperialism and against its enemies. He has spent a long time implying that Britain fought for freedom in World War II.

British imperialism fought to defend the empire and its position of dominance

against German imperialism. It did not care one bit about freedom or democracy.

Pearce is plainly moving rightwards at a speed approximating to the speed of light (am I right in thinking that his political mass is reducing rapidly?)

If the Workers Revolutionary Party supported Pearce in standing for the union of British imperialism and the north of Ireland I am sure that it would have no members and would deserve none (except B. Pearce).

Exeter WRP must continue to fight alongside all that is best in the working class movement. It must oppose any attempt to impose Orange marches, the National Front and other fascist groups on our community.

The WRP will continue to take a broad view of socialism. Socialism incorporates and develops all sides of the fight for freedom from capitalism and imperialism.

Finally, Brian Pearce has made much of 'Ulster Protestants' and their anti-fascism. Perhaps Workers Press readers could stomach one further letter from him.

He could explain why Ulster Unionist Euro-MP John Taylor has joined the Group of the European Right with Le Pen's National Front and the fascist MSI of Giorgio Almirante (one of Mussolini's Admirals).

The letter could go on to explain the close ties between the National Front and the loyalist paramilitaries. For some details of these links see 'Searchlight' November 1986.

Geoff Barr  
Exeter

## Ignorant

I'VE OFTEN found Brian Pearce's contributions learned and thought-provoking. His latest letter seemed remarkably ignorant, and provocative.

His erudite references to Irish history treat it as a religious conflict, ignoring that Ireland was colonised. It is a view through Orange spectacles.

Even in the existing 26-county bourgeois state, with all its backward religious features, where is the kind of bigotry, discrimination, or pogroms which Catholics have suffered under the Orange ascendancy?

Likewise, Pearce ignores the Republican movements' historic tradition of opposing sectarianism, and defying Church rule, even from a nationalist viewpoint.

Neither Republicans nor the Workers Revolutionary Party expect the unlikely spectre he conjures, of the Free State 'annexing' the North. We want British troops out, and a 32-county Workers' Republic.

Charlie Pottins

## Repatriate PoWs

I WOULD like to appeal for readers to write to the Irish prisoners of war, the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, and Judith Ward, all incarcerated in English jails.

Writing, sending them books and magazines, and letting them know they are not forgotten, is the least we can do.

I also wish to raise the issue of the repatriation of Irish PoWs to prisons near their homes in Ireland.

The prisoners' main concern is for their families who have to make the long journeys from Ireland.

Many of the families are unemployed in the occupied six counties and find it hard

to raise money for the journey. Apart from harassment from the British state, relatives often arrive at a prison only to be informed that the prisoner has been moved.

New regulations announced by the Home Office will change the rules on prison visits so that relatives will only be able to visit when the prison regimes decide.

The Home Office wishes to punish not just the PoWs but their relatives as well, many of whom see their loved ones only once or twice a year.

Loyalists convicted in Britain are allowed to serve their sentence in a British prison in the occupied six counties; British soldiers convicted of offences in the occupied six counties are allowed to serve their sentence in a prison in Britain.

Only republican PoWs are refused the right to serve their time in a prison near to their family and home in Ireland, in contravention of the European Convention on Human Rights which states that prisoners should be allowed to serve their sentence as near to their family and home as possible.

Socialists and revolutionaries must campaign against the discrimination of the Home Office and the Prisons Department.

Similarly we must campaign on the issue of the strip-searching of Irish women political prisoners — not from any humanitarian standpoint but from the standpoint of the political and civil rights of Irish political prisoners.

We will not be able to defend the rights of the political prisoners and class fighters in Britain in the future if we do not defend the rights of the Irish PoWs now.

Charlie Walsh  
West London

## Yet more on the Vietnamese Trotskyists

I'M SURPRISED by Simon Pirani's postscript to his letter of 28 February ('More on the Vietnamese Trotskyists').

Surely it is obvious that the 'left bourgeois government' which I refer to as being supported by the Trotskyists of Vietnam is the Stalinist government established in Saigon in 1945.

Simon Pirani states that the only critical support he knows of was for the Stalinist government 'in its military struggle against French imperialism from 1947'.

Is it not strange that he states this when in his very own article (part 3) he writes of a 'motion put by the Trotskyist Ho Huu Thuong calling on the Vietminh to form a government'.

Can one imagine the Trotskyists calling for a government by the Stalinists and, on its formation due in no small measure to Trotskyist pressure for such a government, not then to give it at least practical support with verbal criticism?

This is fully confirmed by an eyewitness account (Workers Press, 3 January), by a Vietnamese worker who was in Saigon in 1945: 'The militants of the Trotskyist group "La Lutte" (The Struggle) are the first victims of the Stalinist terror, despite their proclamations of "critical support" to the Vietminh Government'.

This means that both Trotskyist tendencies gave support to the Stalinist 'left bourgeois government'.

How is it that Simon Pirani's memory is so short? Pirani, in good Healy style,

PERSONAL COLUMN

East Timor's unknown ordeal

is attempting a cover-up, through 'forgetting' historical events, to protect and defend a policy that has been catastrophic for the revolutionary forces.

This is why he remembers 'critical support' after the 'repressions' but not before — in other words the policy of Trotskyism did not contribute towards the ability of the Stalinists to murder your own people. Instead of arguing a case Pirani prefers to forget.

Innocently, Simon Pirani continues his PS: 'What course of action would P. Conlon have advised?' — as if I had not suggested an alternative in my letter, which Pirani has no doubt forgotten!

The Vietnamese Trotskyists 'won the leadership of the working class in the South from the Stalinists... in the late 1930s' (Workers Press, 6 December); they initiated the Soviets or Popular Committees which 'posed an increasing threat to the Stalinist government' (Workers Press, 17 January); though numerically weak, they were able to rally 30,000 militants under their banner, so paralysing the bourgeoisie, who left the field clear for the activities of the Trotskyists; they also 'led the revolutionary masses through the popular committees' (Workers Press, 17 January).

Despite all this influence over the revolutionary sections of the workers and peasants, who were apparently straining at the leash to seize the factories and the land and go forward to a state of dual power and Soviet rule, the Trotskyists confined the struggle to an anti-imperialist perspective (as did the Stalinists), pledging support for the Vietminh in these words:

'We shall not hesitate to assist it' (the Stalinist government) 'and to support it with all physical means in the revolutionary struggles.'

In the 'revolutionary struggles' for socialism or workers' power? Oh no, this was conditional on the government declaring itself 'to defend National Independence and to safeguard the people's liberties'.

And furthermore this 'support... with all physical means' was to be given to a self-proclaimed 'bourgeois democratic government' (Workers Press, 17 January).

The Stalinists at this juncture were acting the role of a left bourgeois government, holding back the revolutionary forces, defending the rights of the national bourgeoisie, and preparing to welcome back the allies, i.e. the British and French.

In Vietnam the Trotskyists should have provided independent class leadership to the revolutionary forces, and not compromised their role as the vanguard party by offering — in fact pleading for — accommodation with the Stalinist 'bourgeois democratic government'.

One does not grow strong and win the support of one's opponent's followers by seeking to support one's opponent, whatever tactical considerations one may plead. History has taught us that this policy is fatal to the revolution.

I challenge Pirani to show one instance where such a policy has brought about a successful revolution, whereas I can point to numerous defeats arising out of such policies.

We all make mistakes, and we must learn from our mistakes, and I suggest to Simon Pirani that as a revolutionist he should face up to and admit that certain policies and tactics can and should be subjected to further study and analysis in the light of historical facts. To ignore the facts is to condone the mistakes.

Paolo Conlon

ON 27 February the 'Times Literary Supplement' broke the virtually unanimous media silence about East Timor when it published a long and informed review by Peter Carey of José Ramos-Horta's recent book 'Funu: The unfinished saga of East Timor'.

Last week's 'TLS' had a letter from Alexander George, usefully supplementing Carey's review by detailing the consistent support, including arms sales, that Britain has given to Indonesia in the latter's ethnocidal efforts to wipe out the guerrilla resistance of the FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor).

The facts are simple, and horrifying. In December 1975 the Portuguese administration had withdrawn from East Timor, which lies about 350 miles north-west of Darwin, north Australia. FRETILIN was the effective government of the territory.

Then the Indonesians invaded. Of a total pre-invasion population of 688,000, at least a third have been killed or forced to flee abroad.

Many others have lost their homes. Many live miserably in 'resettlement' camps ravaged by hunger and disease.

Political suspects are tortured, and there are frequent reprisals against innocent civilians.

The American journalist Rod Nordland, who visited East Timor recently, calls it 'a land of hunger, oppression and misery... a land where no one laughs'.

Nearly all the world's governments have turned a blind eye to the repression. American arms sales to Indonesia went up dramatically after the invasion. Bell helicopters and OV-10 'Bronco' anti-insurgency aircraft were used to spray napalm, chemicals, and crop-defoliants on FRETILIN positions in the Mount Matebian range, and hundreds of civilians were killed.

Survivors described the battle as like a scene from Dante's 'Inferno', with mothers, terribly wounded, pleading for help in easing their children's agony.

Since then there has been eager competition among western governments to sell arms to Indonesia for use in East Timor, where, according to Carey, 2,000 guerrillas are holding down 30,000 Indonesian regulars.

France, Canada, and Israel are well to the fore in these arms shipments. But Britain, though a latecomer to the Indonesian market, is catching up fast.

In April 1978, under a Labour government, British Aerospace signed a £25 million contract to supply Indonesia with Hawk ground-attack/trainer aircraft.

Britain has since refitted naval frigates for Indonesia and supplied 12 more Hawk aircraft and £180 million worth of Rapier missiles.

Negotiations for further equipment, including 600 tanks from Alvis, are being 'vigorously pursued', says Alexander George.

From the very start Britain has taken the line that 'it is in Britain's interest that Indonesia should absorb this territory as soon and as unobtrusively as possible and that if it should come to the crunch and there is a row in the United Nations, we should keep our heads down and avoid taking sides against the Indonesian Government'.

Those revealing words come from a dispatch sent to the Foreign Office in July 1975 by Sir John Ford, London's ambassador to Jakarta (and quoted in 'Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1968-75', published in 1980).

British policy since then has been exactly as foreshadowed in that dispatch.

George quotes Margaret Thatcher's toast to Suharto of Indonesia: 'Our cultures are diverse, but when it comes to defending independence and freedom we are at one with you.'

'We must confront the possibility', George comments, 'that we live in an age of hypocrisy and moral degeneration that rivals the worst history has to offer.'

Not the least disturbing aspect of this story is that British newspaper readers and viewers are never told anything about what is happening in East Timor, or about their own government's sordid role.

But then, as Norman Buchan observes in the current 'London Review of Books':

'Already in the popular press three men — Maxwell, Murdoch, Stephens — control 80 per cent of the dissemination of information. Two of them have already bought their way into satellites: these are being beamed up from France and from Luxembourg.'

'Perhaps five people will shortly control the basic dissemination of news and information for the whole of Western Europe. It is a frightening monopoly position, worse than in any sector of our manufacturing industry.'

All the more reason to build the sales, improve the content, and ensure the professionalism of the workers' press — including, of course, the Workers Press.

A look at 'defeatism'

FASCINATING and fruitful discussion? Or heated controversy? I foresee one or the other — even, perhaps, both — when Brian Pearce's paper, 'Lenin versus Trotsky on "Revolutionary Defeatism"', is published in 'Sbornik' later this year.

'Sbornik' is the journal of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution, at whose 1987 annual conference Pearce read his informative and provocative paper.

Eyebrows will no doubt be raised by his assertion that there was no advocacy of 'defeatism', as a policy for revolutionaries in inter-imperialist conflicts, by the first four congresses of the Communist International.

According to Pearce, advocacy of 'defeatism' didn't in fact appear in documents of the international communist movement until 1924.

In his text, and in some supplementary material presented at the conference, Pearce traces the history of this concept, and its use by various people in various contexts: notably World War I and the eve and first year of World War II.

Listening to jazz

SEVERAL readers have been asking me to write something about jazz in this column from time to time.

I'd love to oblige, but the request does present certain problems. I know a little about the blues, which isn't the same thing as jazz by any means; my knowledge of jazz is altogether too sketchy and patchy for me to set up as any kind of expert.

After all, jazz is now a vast field, with a literature that grows by geometrical progression and a treasure-house of available recordings that would have made the eyes of us young collectors pop out of our heads 30 years ago.

My chief concern with jazz these days is with its early history and prehistory. Here the treasure-house is dazzlingly well stocked.

Take ragtime, for instance. On the RCA double album of that name are two pieces recorded in 1900: Saydisc's 'I'll Dance till de Sun Breaks Through' LP goes one better, with a banjo duet, 'Eli Green's Cake Walk', recorded as early as 1898.

Listeners used to high-quality sound often find these very early recordings unacceptably surfacey. One solution for those who, like me, can't resist ragtime's charm is to plump for modern recordings of the pianola rolls made from 1895 on: Saydisc's 'Pianola Jazz' and 'Pianola Ragtime', for instance.

Another branch of jazz history now well served by LPs covers the diffusion of jazz in countries outside the United States. Harlequin's remarkable 'History of Jazz' series, for example, covers Trinidad from 1912, Argentina from 1915, Martinique from 1929, and so on.

The South African LP in this series, with riveting performances by Dorothy Masuka, Jake Ntuli, Benny G. Mwrebi, Walter Theletsane, and Spokes Mashiyane, shows how closely these talented musicians had listened to imported American 78s before developing, in the she-bens of the late 1940s and 1950s, their own original jazz styles.

Lastly, for those interested in acquiring just one disc that shows 1920s jazz at its classical best, let me recommend BBC's 'New Orleans'. This LP has cured me of my long-standing prejudice against the reissue of old 78s in digital stereo. Cleaning up, I always thought, destroyed much of the music.

Not here. 'New Orleans' gives an idea of how Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Johnny Dodds, and other legendary performers must have sounded in live performance. Each line in the ensemble rings out crystal-clear.

This disc has given me enormous pleasure, and I hope you enjoy it, too.

Peter Fryer

Supernatural persona

THE FOLLOWING paragraph of Cyril Smith's letter headed 'How does science develop?' (Workers Press, 14 March) reads most strangely:

'Because it is bound up with the movement of the whole of society in its struggle with nature, natural science penetrates to the heart of nature and obtains objective knowledge of the movement of matter and the material relationships between its infinitely many aspects. Amidst all the

erroneous ideas it entertains along its path, science embodies this absolute.'

Leaving aside the obvious non-sequitur, is it not nonsense to attribute to something called natural science the capacity to act consciously, think and know, surely the sole prerogative of animate beings?

I raise this question not to be pedantic but because as scientific socialists (and I admit to being a very humble practitioner) we must take care to express

ourselves as precisely as possible.

We must also avoid succumbing to idol-worship, of which science is here made the object by being endowed with a supernatural persona.

This is a kindred error to G.Healy's reification of the process of cognition ('the process of Cognition interprets', etc.) or Workers Power's fetishisation of programme ('Programmes develop a strategy of action', etc.)

Ken Moxham

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# YOUTH STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NAZIS

## The Edelweiss-Pirates

'THERE'S a funny smell in the air,' said Wolfgang, 'a really brown sort of smell. Either there's a big heap of shit round here, or else it's Nazis.'

'It must be Nazis,' retorted Gunter, 'shit doesn't stink so disgustingly.'

One of the Hitler Youth turned round. 'Sod off,' he shouted angrily, 'we haven't got the time to work you over.'

'Come on, let's split,' said Wolfgang to his pal, 'these shitbags are too chicken. They've got their pants full already.' He did not move, though.

Gunter shook his head: 'Can't understand it. These assholes normally like to show off, specially when they're with their tarts.'

'Only when there's ten of them against one. Otherwise they piss themselves with fear.' Wolfgang spat on the pavement with contempt. 'These shitholes aren't worth pissing on.'

The two Hitler Youth could not ignore this much provocation without losing face in front of their girlfriends.

'We'll show you clowns who the real cowards are,' one of them said, turning towards the boys.

'Don't take all night over it,' taunted Gunter, raising his fist.

Wolfgang was still standing with his back towards the Hitler Youth. When they were directly behind him, he suddenly turned and threw himself on one of them, reaching for his throat. The other one walked straight into one of Gunter's best punches . . .

BY LISE BAUER

THE above is a small extract from the memoirs of Kurt Piehl, a former member of the Dortmund Edelweiss-Pirates. His two books give a vivid account of this, one of the least-known resistance movements in Nazi Germany.

The Edelweiss-Pirates were an organisation of working-class youth between 14 and 17 years of age (at 18 they were all drafted), which sprang up spontaneously from around 1941 in the big industrial cities in northern Germany.

To begin with, they were quite unorganised. The movement developed out of groups of youth from the poorest working-class areas, meeting at night in bombed-out parks for a bit of fun, music and dancing — youth who just wanted to enjoy themselves away from the regimentation and harassment of the regime which they instinctively resented.

However, the Nazi authorities could not even tolerate this much independence and regularly deployed the Hitler Youth organisation to arrest, beat and harass the youth in an attempt to force them to submit and accept Nazi conformity.

The youth began to organise to defend themselves,

and into a movement of several hundreds developed in the big cities. They had their own secret meeting-places where they held 'council meetings' to deal with emergencies; they developed their own jargon and songs; and they adopted the edelweiss-shaped lapel pin, worn secretly on the reverse side of their jacket lapels, as their own membership badge.

They organised many activities to disrupt the day-to-day work of the authorities and especially the Hitler Youth organisation.

They were rough youth — reflecting the brutality of life in Germany under the terror of the Nazis and the devastating bombings of their cities.

Politically, they came mostly from former socialist families — though they had little political education, only what they could remember from the times when they were young children.

But one thing united them all: they hated the Nazis, they hated the war, and they hated the regimentation of

areas. Many youth lost everything: their homes, their belongings, and often their families and friends.

For many, being an Edelweiss-Pirate became a way of life, a way to survive and to keep their spirits high. They lived in bombed-out houses and supported themselves, each other, and sometimes their families by looting and swindling the authorities (and rationing), and they became experts.

The Pirates developed a high degree of solidarity and comradeship amongst each other, often risking their lives for one another. There were also instances when they organised to hide and look after Jews.

The youth became experts at devising schemes for evading the draft into the

authorities, especially SS and Hitler Youth units, look ridiculous and stupid.

A favourite stunt was to smuggle into parade formations home-made carbide bombs which would explode after a short while, causing panic and disorganisation.

The main activity of the Edelweiss-Pirates was, however, street fights with the Hitler Youth. Many Pirates became heroes known throughout a whole city, having notched up a particularly high number of such fights.

Even Gestapo men were sometimes beaten up, usually as an act of revenge for particular brutalities against the youth.

However, the Pirates' relationship with the Hitler Youth was a complex one. There was a certain amount of mutual respect for the best fighters on either side.

In addition, as the 'final victory' became more and more of a farce and disillusionment set in, many Hitler Youth boys deserted their units and either joined the Pirates or collaborated with them.

The most famous battle between the Edelweiss-Pirates and the Hitler Youth was the 'Corso Battle' in Dortmund in July 1944. The Pirates had been given detailed inside information about a major planned raid by the Gestapo on all the youth's favourite haunts, in an endeavour to round up any youth who had no valid papers, had evaded the draft, or were otherwise wanted by the police.

The entire city-wide Hitler Youth organisation was to be deployed in this raid. But the plan was leaked to the youth by a senior leader of the Hitler Youth who was about to defect to the Pirates.

It was a battle of epic proportions. The youth mobilised hundreds of boys from all over the city and set a trap at one of their favourite inns, the 'Corso'.

They surrounded the whole area and posted detachments in all the side streets. When the Hitler Youth arrived, the trap was sprung and all the side streets were sealed off.

The youth attacked their

opponents with home-made truncheons, chains, brass knuckles (a favourite), and pieces of cable, against the Nazis' thongs and knives. The battle raged for several hours, destroying most of the 'Corso' and ending with the total defeat of the Hitler Youth, almost none of whom escaped a savage beating.

This battle became a legend and is remembered by Dortmund workers to this day.

Inevitably, many of the youth were arrested by the Gestapo and brutally tortured. Kurt Piehl himself was arrested many times and, after seriously wounding a Gestapo-man with his knife while resisting arrest, was taken to the notorious Dortmund 'Steinwache' prison, where he was imprisoned for many weeks and tortured and starved almost to death.

After the end of the war, the Edelweiss-Pirates gradually dissolved. They were never officially acknowledged as a resistance movement, although mountains of files about them were found in Gestapo offices. So they were not entitled to compensation, nor were their torturers put on trial for their crimes against the youth.

Kurt Piehl himself became a building worker with a Dortmund construction firm, where he was chairman of the shop stewards and later district president of the building workers' union for many years, until he was made redundant in 1982.

A study of the history of the German Edelweiss-Pirates certainly exposes once again the lie of the 'guilt of the German people' for the Nazi regime.

But, more important, it reveals in a vivid way the revolutionary courage and heroism of working-class youth, who kept their spirits high in the darkest days of reactionary repression. Their story is an inspiration to all revolutionary youth and workers today.

Kurt Piehl, 'Latscher, Pimpfe und Gestapo', Extrabuch, 1983.

'Rebellion mit dem edelweiss', Extrabuch, 1985.



KURT PIEHL

their lives. They called themselves 'Latscher', which means 'shufflers', i.e. those who refuse to march in step.

As the war dragged on, the big German industrial cities were bombed to the ground, especially the working-class

Hitler Youth. When this proved impossible, they adopted the tactic of joining as a whole group and disrupting a particular Hitler Youth unit from the inside.

They loved daring stunts designed to dodge the Gestapo and to make the Nazi

# Moscow Trials Campaign

A STATEMENT demanding that the names of those falsely accused in the Moscow Trials of 1936-1938 be cleared is to be circulated widely this month.

The statement is supported by several prominent figures in the labour movement. Labour MPs Sydney Bidwell, Jeremy Corbyn, Terry Davis, Eric Heffer, Ian Mikardo, and David Winnick are among those who have signed so far.

So have MEP Stan Newens and parliamentary candidates Paul Boateng and Mildred Gordon.

Veteran socialists Fenner Brockway and Frank Ridley have signed. Reg Groves and Harry Wicks, who were leaders in the campaign against the trials in the 1930s, are also supporting the statement.

Tamara Deutscher, well-known writer on Soviet history and widow of Trotsky's biographer, has signed.

So have left-wing author Tariq Ali; labour historians Ray Challinor and Walter Kendall; professor of economics Meghnad Desai; writer Peter Fryer; George Krasso, leading Hungarian socialist; Oliver MacDonald, editor of 'Labour Focus on Eastern Europe'; and historian and translator Brian Pearce.

Copies of the statement, printed below, are to be circulated widely in the labour and trade union movement, and in the universities, to gain as many signatures as possible.

IT IS now over 50 years since the infamous Moscow show trials. It is astounding that, at a time when the Soviet government is at pains to emphasise its concern with 'human rights' and proclaims the need for 'glasnost' (openness), the accused in these trials, with a few exceptions, are still considered guilty of being paid agents of Nazism, and other crimes.

Among these men were numbered several who played outstanding roles in the Revolution of 1917. The reputations of founders of the Soviet state like Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky, and Bukharin were besmirched or expunged from the history books.

Today no one doubts that the 'confessions' at the trials — the sole basis for the prosecutions — were utterly false.

Seven defendants in the third trial — Krestinsky and others — have been both



Zinoviev

judicially rehabilitated and politically exonerated. So have the military leaders, Tukhachevsky and others, whose military trial in 1937 was held in secret.

But the admittedly false



Trotsky

evidence against these men was inseparable from the charges against all the other accused.

None of the accused, of course, is alive today. Many were executed immediately

after their trials. Others died in prison or camps. Leon Trotsky, the chief accused in all three of the trials, was murdered in exile in 1940.

However, families of some of the defendants are still living in the Soviet Union. Some had also suffered imprisonment and exile. It is worth recalling that a review of all these cases was promised by Khrushchev, but this promise was broken.

We the undersigned therefore call on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice, as took place with Krestinsky.

We are confident that all those accused in the trials of 1936-1938 will be shown to have been innocent.

They should be immediately rehabilitated, their honour restored, their families compensated, and their graves marked.

## REVIEWS

## SOLDIERS ON STRIKE

BY BERNARD FRANKS

WHEN British servicemen formed trade unions at the end of World War I, the government was terrified. Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, a Bolshevik-type seizure of power was thought to be imminent in Britain.

The establishment of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Union (SSAU) in particular provoked intervention by the security services.

So writes lecturer David Englander in his article 'Troops and Trade Unions 1919' in the March issue of 'History Today'.

He has made liberal use of the huge volume of secret reports and intelligence summaries compiled at the time and now available for examination.

'To those in authority', he writes, 'it became apparent that the general wartime radicalisation was not confined to the industrial workforce.'

'The fusion of shop-floor unrest with an aggrieved soldiery, whose respect for the rights of property had been blunted by their years in the trenches, represented a nightmare.'

Warfare on such a vast scale had dramatically altered the composition of the armed forces. While regular soldiers were 'about as political as footmen and posed few challenges to authority', they were now greatly outnumbered by an army of uniformed civilians recruited from the urban working and lower-middle classes.

Reflecting the severe treatment and conditions met by discharged soldiers once back in civilian life, there had arisen in the early years of the war an ex-servicemen's movement from which officers who had



Striking troops, January 1919. The catalyst for such actions was objection to being sent to Russia to aid anti-Bolshevik forces in the Civil War

not served in the ranks were barred.

The National Federation of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers was the largest such association, 'over which Asquithian Liberalism held uncertain sway'.

After the signing of the Armistice in 1918, mutinies and disturbances broke out among servicemen impatient to be demobbed.

The authorities had a policy of slow demobilisation so as not to throw vast numbers of men, now proficient in arms, back into the harsh realities of civilian life.

The SSAU was formed to represent serving members of the armed forces. A strongly socialist body, it emphasised the need for unity of soldiers and workers if

fundamental social change was to be achieved in the post-war world.

Apart from seeking an accelerated rate of demobilisation and the abolition of conscription, the Union's main objectives were to improve the status of serving men; increase pay; bring about shorter hours of duty, adequate pensions, and maintenance for all dependants; prevent victimisation; secure recognition of the Union by the government; and prevent servicemen being employed as strike-breakers.

King's Regulations barred servicemen from joining unions; this was solved by calling serving soldiers 'honorary members'.

The SSAU grew with start-

ling rapidity, so that by April 1919 it had 49 branches, mainly near training camps and military depots, including Calais and Boulogne. Military Intelligence put its membership at 10,000.

Two official organisations were formed to head off the development of this and the ex-servicemen's organisations.

One, The Comrades of the Great War, was set up under the direction of Colonel Wilfred Ashley, chairman of the Anti-Socialist Union, with the backing of businessmen and army officers.

The other, a product of the search by the authorities for a 'depoliticising strategy' (in fact for a continued adherence to imperialist ideals), was the British Legion.

However, more direct action was being prepared against the SSAU.

Soon Special Branch and Military Intelligence were professing to have discovered a plot to launch a coup d'etat in Britain.

The SSAU founder, Captain Denisthorpe, had resigned earlier and written to the 'Sunday Times' to denounce the union as now 'purely Bolshevik'.

Certainly the Union was a catalyst for strikes and demonstrations by troops. And it was the Union's concern that they were being held back to be sent to Russia by the Lloyd George government, to aid the anti-Bolshevik forces in the civil war.

Others declared the organisation to have a pronounced Sinn Fein influence.

When the Union appeared to be about to call a strike of the so-called Derby Men — volunteers of 1915 due for discharge six months after the end of the war but retained beyond this period — the authorities struck.

On 5 May 1919 the SSAU headquarters was raided. No arrests or prosecutions followed but this action apparently proved sufficient to bring about its demise.

Probably more significant than the raid was the fact that the government had scrapped its slow demobilisation policy and raised service pay, while a short-term boom was bringing an upsurge in job opportunities and pay rates generally.

By the time this boom ended in 1921 the authorities had eased the national insurance contribution rules substantially so that ex-service personnel could continue receiving benefits.

However, ex-servicemen continued to organise in some form, as is shown by the fact that they formed important contingents on every demonstration, by unemployed and others, in the 1920s and 1930s.

Following World War II, the Labour government under Attlee and Bevin sought to apply some of the lessons from these events with a more careful demobilisation policy and a large-scale provision of promised welfare reforms.

Even so, a wave of disturbances and mutinies occurred in camps across the world, from Egypt to Java, this time of airmen waiting for demob. The full story of this has yet to be told.

David Englander's article 'Troops and trade unions, 1919' is in 'History Today', March 1987. £1.40.

## FILMMAKERS

Luchino Visconti. By Claretta Tonetti.  
The Golden Age of French Cinema: 1929-1939. by John W. Martin.  
Columbus Filmmakers, each £5.95.

TWO WELCOME additions to the Columbus Filmmakers series are Luchino Visconti, by fellow Italian Claretta Tonetti and The Golden Age of French Cinema: 1929-1939 by John W. Martin.

'I chose to write about Luchino Visconti,' Tonetti admits in the preface to her book, 'because I find his films complex and rich and his personality intriguing'. Fair enough.

An aristocrat by birth-right, Visconti divided his professional life almost equally between stage and screen, much as Ingmar Bergman has done to this day.

While all memories of his theatrical productions are doomed to fade, there can be little doubt that his films will endure. Films like *Ossessione*, *La Terra Trema* and *Rocco and his Brothers* are landmarks in the history of world cinema.

But his deeply held sympathy for the oppressed, the subject of many of his early films, was always tinged with an uncontrollable nostalgia for the elegant lifestyle he had enjoyed as a child.

The *Leopard*, as Tonetti rightly points out, suffers from this ambivalence.

When the self-styled Marx-

ist died in 1976, he did so peacefully while listening to Brahms.

He received the traditional Catholic burial rite in the church of Sant'Ignazio in Rome, while his communist friends held a memorial meeting outside. A contradiction in death as in life.

Tonetti explores this contradiction, this internal tug-of-war, with sympathy but also with thoroughness, showing how it was manifest in Visconti's work to the very end — *Death in Venice* and *Ludwig*, for example.

The ten years that John Martin takes on in *The Golden Age of French Cinema* were, of course, seminal years during which torches were lit that burned for decades around the world.

Rene Clair, Jean Renoir, Luis Bunuel, Abel Gance, Marcel Carne, Marcel Pagnol, Jean Vigo, Julien Duvivier, Sacha Guitry, Anatole Litvak and many, many other directors of the early cinema produced some of their finest work in this decade, and in doing so raised film to the level of art-form.

But why such a profusion of talent, and why in France?

The book's editor, Robin French, has a stab at answering this question in his foreword:

'Although strict forms of film censorship existed throughout the world during the 30s, French controls were more political — jealously aimed at preserving a national image — than moral, as in the United

The Jaguar Smile. By Salman Rushdie. Picador, £2.95

WHEN Salman Rushdie went to Nicaragua he found people surprisingly insular.

'Very few people asked me any questions,' he said, 'though they were all happy to answer mine.'

'History was roaring in their ears, deafening them to more distant noises.'

That history consisted of the fight against America — Nicaraguans pointed out Rushdie must say North America — a fight in which he supported them unequivocally.

Rushdie went to places where Contra activity meant death at any time; where the Contras had deliberately killed the professionals, especially the doctors, in order to destroy the communities.

Rushdie points out that there is 'a grand total of \$800 million being spent on dirty tricks and destabilization, to bring to heel a country of under three million people.'

He found Nicaragua a country beset by small tragedies as well as large.

The indigenous Rama peo-

States and England, or ideological as in Germany, Italy and Russia.

'Since moral and ideological straightjackets keep the arts simple-minded, childish and escapist, it was only in France that the talking picture developed as a medium of sophisticated fare.'

Tom Scott Robson

## History roaring in their ears

ple have been virtually wiped out, and the 23 who survive are old.

A researcher with a tape recorder wanted to preserve as much as possible — and found the main obstacle the high price of false teeth in Nicaragua. The old people could no longer pronounce clearly enough.

Rushdie tried to talk to the Nicaraguans about the Soviet Union. They could grasp none of the concepts he wanted to use to discuss critically a country they perceived as their ally.

Rushdie is concerned about personal liberty. The strongest criticism he has of the Nicaraguan government is that it closed down the rightwing opposition newspapers, yet one of the most revealing interviews in his book is with the disgracefully reactionary woman running that paper.

Rushdie discussed with Nicaraguans the new constitution which was being drafted. Should the right to abortion and the non-existence of god be enshrined in the constitution?

And what about the age of majority? Fourteen-year-olds were dead and wounded in the defence of the country — what rights did they have?

Rushdie's work is poetic, speaking to the emotions of an audience whom he expects will share his hatred for imperialism and optimism about the future of Nicaragua.

But in each chapter there is the pain of a struggle in which communities are



Women fighters in Jalapa

being built as well as being destroyed, even if the building starts with families resettled in 'roof-only' schemes in which they have to construct their own walls when they arrive.

And there are problems — of single parents, of the divisions in the revolutionary movement, and above all the problem of defending a tiny country.

He does not pretend or presume to present a complete

picture, but he has telling portraits, anecdotes about people, and descriptions (for example President Ortega — 'a bookworm who had done a bodybuilding course').

And the writer's eye was caught by a poem chalked on a blackboard, which he translates:

The revolution is carried in the heart that it may be died for, and not on the lips, that it may be lived by.

# Workers Press

Saturday March 21 1987. Newsdesk 01-733 3058

## Write for Workers Press!

WE ARE receiving more material than ever for Workers Press, but we want to hear from even more of our readers. Please send letters, news from your area, reports of the struggles of the work-

ing class, of women and youth, of developments in the Labour Party and Communist Party. . . We also need photographs — phone us on 01-733 3058 and discuss the best way to get them to us.

Support the Scottish TUC demonstration in support of the Caterpillar workers sit-in!

Saturday 28 March, 10.30a.m.

Assemble Blythwood Square, Glasgow. March to rally at George Square

## Support the Caterpillar fight

THE whole trade union and labour movement must answer the Caterpillar management's threats by organising industrial action in support of the sit-in.

The occupation force will be sacked this Monday and the company will take measures to regain control of the factory, says manager Ken Robinson, 'in exile' from the plant at a local hotel.

There is little doubt that the workers, who have a mass meeting this Monday and are in their third month of struggle, will treat the threats with contempt.

They have a guarantee from Caterpillar workers at Grenoble, France, and Gausolize, Belgium, that attacks on the occupation will result in a European-wide strike.

Contacts made during the sit-in mean that an all-European shop stewards' organisation will be set up later this month — a project Caterpillar unions in the United States are also keen on.

In the Scottish labour movement, meanwhile, there is plenty of discussion about the need for a Scottish Assembly, to defy Tory dictates if Labour loses the next election.

Why wait for the election? The Caterpillar workers are defying their company's dictates now — and unless physical support is organised for that struggle, then

talk of defying dictates is just hot air.

Certainly the Uddingston community is getting organised. A womens' support group has been set up. Caterpillar worker Tommy Farrell's 14-year old daughter, Joanne, organised a petition around local schools and sent it to the Queen.

Local support groups are being set up in East Kilbride, Dunfermline, Dundee, Dumfries, Stirling, and Glenrothes.

The labour and trade union movement must take positive action, not just raise money. As a Caterpillar shop stewards' spokesman said last week: 'If this place goes, and then Ravenscraig . . . what will be left of industry in the West of Scotland?'

The Scottish TUC lobby of parliament, predictably, achieved absolutely nothing for Caterpillar. Neil Kinnock's proposal that a co-operative should sell parts to the US multinational is, similarly, miles from reality.

A campaign of strikes and demonstrations should be organised in support of the sit-in. Demonstrations should be organised on a week-day, to let the Tory class know that this fight is serious.

Other threatened factories should be occupied and Caterpillar made the centre of a national movement against unemployment.

The demand for the nationalisation of the factory, under workers' control as it is at present, should be adopted by labour and trade union organisations.



The 'Pink Panther' tractor — waiting to go Nicaragua

# Pink Panther trapped in Glasgow

THE 'PINK Panther' tractor, built by workers in the Caterpillar sit-in and donated to fight poverty in the poor countries, is trapped in Glasgow.

An injunction, granted to the US-based multinational company whose factory is occupied, forbids War on Want from transporting the tractor to Nicaragua.

'The generosity of the Caterpillar workers is much appreciated,' Lawrie Gardiner of Scottish War on Want told Workers Press.

'It is their skills and labour which have made this tractor from its disparate parts. They are very anxious to highlight the need for a transfer of technology to the third world.'

'At a time when the government is assisting the purchase of Blowpipe missiles for the Contra terrorists who are fighting Nicaragua, people need to be reminded that Nicaragua needs trac-

tors, not missiles.'

Scottish War on Want are seeking legal advice on getting the tractor released. The labour to build it was donated by the sit-in workers, to highlight the need for such tractors in poor countries, and the profit-mongering lunacy involved in shutting down their factory: but the company say they will not donate the £70,000 worth of parts in the 'Pink Panther'.

David Bulloch, 13 years a Caterpillar worker, was campaigning last week for public support in George Square, Glasgow, where the 'panther' is on display.

'This shows how callous the company are: it would be simple for them to donate this to War on Want, just as we donated our labour,' he said.

'They have treated us in the same callous way. We have received letters saying we will get sacked next week — it's quite possible that their next move will be to use the police to get us out of the factory. They will stop at nothing.'

The 'panther', if it reaches Nicaragua, will be sent to the Atlantic coast for use in a building programme of health centres, hospitals, schools and roads.

'The Atlantic coast is the most undeveloped part of an undeveloped country,' said Lawrie Gardiner.

'The "Pink Panther" is a low ground pressure tractor, particularly suitable for the soft and swampy ground conditions prevalent there.

'Nicaragua has not been

able to get the new equipment they require due to the American economic blockade. They have become adept — as the Cubans and Chinese had to at one time — at forging parts to keep old machines going.

'They have not had access to this sort of technology. Now things are getting worse and the danger is that the gains of the 1979 revolution will be reversed. They have committed themselves to a social and health policy, but defence now takes up ever more of their budget.'

The Caterpillar workers have highlighted the fact that as workers are thrown on to the scrap-heap in the industrialised nations, millions starve in the poor countries for want of the very machines that those workers' labour can produce — only because capitalist firms, serving the needs of profit instead of people, control the means of production.

Labour leader Neil Kinnock says the Caterpillar workers should set up a co-operative to sell products to the company which wants to shut the factory down.

Why not approach Nicaragua, and other poor countries, and offer to sell tractors to them?

Why not approach trade union organisations in the poor countries and ask them for suggestions?

Why not organise through the engineering unions to supply parts to the Caterpillar sit-in, so that such a possibility can be realised?

That is the way to start fighting for socialism, and workers' control, here and now. That is the alternative to Neil Kinnock's plan, which is to do business with multinational capitalism today, and talk about socialism in the long and distant future.

## Thatcher casualty?

ANCOATS Casualty, Manchester, is still occupied after six weeks by local residents, who say they will stay until it is reopened.

Casualty cases are still turning up at the unit with injuries ranging from stab wounds and strokes to bruised limbs and superficial cuts.

The women and children who are keeping up the occupation for most of the time insist that it is their hospital, and that the closure has endangered the lives of local residents and factory workers.

Support from the labour movement is growing, but those involved feel this

occupation is the responsibility of all who live and work in the area.

'Can anyone be complacent about the closure of hospital services?' they ask.

Ancoats Action Group have appealed for donations of money or food, to be sent to them c/o Ancoats Hospital, Old Mill Street, Ancoats, Manchester.

They also suggest that letters supporting them be sent to North Manchester Health Authority, local MPs, the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Community Health Council: 'We would be grateful if you could forward a copy of any letters sent.'

### LISTINGS

Listings are published free by WORKERS PRESS for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Friday.

**NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE.** For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House in Trafalgar Square, London. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

**CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR)** Weekly planning meetings are held every Tuesday, 7.30p.m., Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All are welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938)

**SOCIALIST HEALTH ASSOCIATION** National One Day Conference: A New Agenda for Public Health, Saturday 21 March, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1. 10.30a.m.-4.30p.m.

**LABOUR BRIEFING** Youth Day School: 'Youth and Sexuality', Saturday 21 March 10.00am-4.30p.m. For details of venue etc. phone Fran (01-431 0357) or Mike (01-769 6803)

**DEFEND THE WOMBOURNE 12** Defend Lesbian and Gay Rights. Planning meetings every Thursday

at 7.30p.m., The Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 (Finsbury Park tube)

**BRING BACK VICTORIA WILLIAMS!** Campaign meetings take place on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month at, UCA, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, Acton (7.30 p.m.)

**6th INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR** Radical Black and Third World books. Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, Kings Cross, 26-29 March. Concerts, readings, exhibitions, films, forums and panels will also be taking place. (Fair events also being held 18-21 March in Manchester, and on 1-5 April in Bradford. Telephone 01-272 4889 and 01-579 4902 for details)

**DON'T LET THE POA CRUSH YOU; CRUSH THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT** March, Saturday 4 April, 1.00p.m. Malet Street, London W1 (further details from CAPOA, 01-274 6655)

**TALK POLITICS WITH THE RCG** Weekly discussion meetings every Sunday, 7.00p.m. at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. 29 March: Imperialism, Zionism and the Palestinian people

**ASBESTOS VICTIMS ORGANISING CONFERENCE** of the Peoples Asbestos Action Campaign. 3-5 April, Sheffield. Details from Frances Carter, PAAC, c/o SCAT, 31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT. (01-253 3627)

### MARXIST DISCUSSION GROUP

#### EAST LONDON

Bryant Street Methodist Centre  
off West Ham Lane (Tube: Stratford).

Sunday 22 March 7.30pm.

Woman and Capitalist Society — the WRP experience  
Speaker: Lynn Beaton

#### MARXIST FORUM

#### WEST LONDON

The Rising Sun, Harlesden Rd. NW10

Monday 30 March, 7.30

The International Conference