

## Mystery of scientists' deaths

THE strange death of a scientist engaged on a secret defence contract, the suicide of two others involved in similar work and the disappearance of a third have led to demands for a full inquiry by Labour MP Dale Campbell-Savours.

David Sands died the week before last after driving his car at high speed into the wall of a disused restaurant at Popham, near Basingstoke, Hampshire. The car, carrying cans of petrol, exploded on impact. Sands was identified from dental records. He had taken an unusual route to work, along a slip road which led to the restaurant.

Special Branch officers tried to see Sands days before his death. On the previous Saturday his wife had called the police after her husband had

disappeared. He returned later at night.

Sands, 36 years old and considered a brilliant scientist, worked for Easams of Camberley, Surrey, a sister company of Marconi, which is carrying out work on the Star Wars programme.

The two men who committed suicide both worked for Marconi. Vimal Dajibhai was found dead below Bristol's Clifton suspension bridge last August. An inquest recorded an open verdict. The other scientist, Ashad Sharif, was found in his car with a rope round his neck attached to a tree. A coroner said his death was suicide.

A third man who knew Dajibhai, Avtar Singh Gida, disappeared in Derbyshire last January. Like the others he was working on a Ministry of Defence project involving underwater acoustics.

# KEEP UP THE CATERPILLAR OCCUPATION

**THE CATERPILLAR shop stewards' decision to continue their occupation — in defiance of the engineering union executive — must receive the backing of the entire working-class movement.**

Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) members must flood the union's national committee meeting starting on Monday at the Winter Gardens, Eastbourne, with demands that support for the sit-in be immediately restored.

'We would appeal to the national committee to restore full support to the sit-in, and pursue the line that we have put to the company,' shop steward John Gillen told Workers Press.

The shop stewards' proposals, worked out at a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with AEU Scottish executive member Jimmy Airlie on Wednesday, are that the 45 shop stewards remain in the plant, along with the 60 management representatives.

Workers must reject this trap! Airlie's proposal would go half-way to breaking up the occupation.

Even this retreat did not satisfy the Caterpillar management. They demanded an end to the sit-in before the talks could begin. 'They are going for the jugular', Gillen pointed out.

The struggle at Caterpillar has reached a decisive turning point. The danger to the sit-in comes from the AEU leaders, not the Caterpillar management. They are trying to foist on to Caterpillar workers the line that the fight must stay within the law.

'Our union can not support an illegal occupation — it is against our policy and against the rules of the union,' said Bill Jordan after the AEU national executive voted against backing the

Caterpillar men last Tuesday.

What is Jordan talking about?

● **AEU POLICY**, decided at the 68th national committee meeting last year, is for 'a greater and more determined fight by the whole membership' against the 'evil of unemployment.' It instructs the executive 'to give full support to all members who are fighting sackings and closures by taking industrial action' — which is what they are not doing at Caterpillar.

● **AEU RULES** state that the executive must be guided by such instructions. But there is no rule about whether or not the law must be obeyed.

Every worker knows: if the trade unions had not defied the law, they would never have been built in the first place.

The role of AEU Scottish executive officer Jimmy Air-

lie must be treated with the greatest suspicion. Airlie, a leading Communist Party member, is reputed to be at odds with Jordan's 'get out of the factory' instruction. But did he vote against it?

Airlie used Saturday's 'Support Caterpillar' Glasgow rally to drop large hints that the sit-in was to end.

'We are quite capable of stopping anything going in and out of the plant,' he said, as though there was to be a picket line. 'I ask the office staff not to go into the plant.'

This is treacherous talk. With a sit-in, there is no danger of things coming or going. Neither do the office staff have much chance of getting to work.

With a sit-in workers are in control. That's exactly what Airlie, together with the AEU right-wing, are terrified of.

Airlie told Saturday's rally that Caterpillar were using

'our courts' to attack the sit-in.

What kind of 'communism' is this? It is the ABC of communism that the courts, and the whole capitalist state, are not 'ours' but 'theirs', instruments of the ruling class for use against the workers.

Thatcher must not be allowed to trample over the unions. The fighting strength of the working class must be mobilised against the laws, and the capitalist state as a whole. But the union bureaucracy, 'left' and right, Communist Party and Labour Party, are bitterly opposed to this policy.

This was clear from all the forked-tongue speeches at Saturday's STUC meeting. Labour's Scottish spokesman Donald Dewar said everybody wanted to avoid a confrontation, and signalled the crowd to hush as they booed Tory speaker Allan Stewart. TUC leader Nor-

man Willis led the crowd in a chorus of 'We shall overcome'. Miners' vice-president Mick McGahy said, predictably, that 'the whole Scottish people' should support Caterpillar.

On Monday trade unionists answered an appeal by Caterpillar convenor John Brannan to demonstrate outside the factory as a mass meeting discussed the next moves.

Two hundred demonstrated outside the plant but arrived after the meeting had started. These numbers are far too small. Unless the full strength of the labour movement is brought into the fight, the sit-in is in grave danger.

The Workers Revolutionary Party and Workers Press repeats what it has said from day one of the occupation: the Caterpillar workers are fighting for the whole working class.

At every step of that fight, they have come into conflict with the trade union and labour leaders who will collaborate with the Tories on all vital issues, just as they did in the miners' strike.

The fight must be organised outside the control of that leadership, against it if necessary.

● Reject the AEU leaders' acceptance of Tory anti-union laws!

● Force the AEU leaders to back the sit-in! Make them reverse their cowardly decision!

● Build Caterpillar support groups throughout the working class movement! Win backing for the physical defence of the sit-in!

● Build up the campaign for strikes and demonstrations throughout the working class!

● For the nationalisation of Caterpillar under workers' control!

## SCHOOL STRIKE SUPPORTS TEACHERS — see page 4





# Workers Press

## Not-so-innocents abroad

THERE IS a certain symmetry between the visits of Thatcher to Moscow and of Kinnock to Washington. Kinnock opened his general election campaign in the White House. Thatcher went to the Kremlin to begin hers. She won the opening round by a handsome margin.

If the Tory press is to be believed, Thatcher initially spoke somewhat sharply to Gorbachev, informing him he ought not to be spreading world communism. When he managed to get a word in edgeways, he protested that reports to this effect are completely false. By the end of her visit Thatcher was more than convinced.

Press hyperbole apart, the fact is that the Stalinist bureaucracy has given the Tories a considerable election boost. Here is the real face of glasnost. On her departure from Russia Thatcher was anticipating not merely a third term in office but a further, fourth, spell as prime minister. Such has been the service of Gorbachev and the bureaucracy.

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MEANWHILE, over at the White House, the host was not quite clear who his visitors actually were and sometimes, perhaps, who he himself was. He thought Denis Healey was the British Ambassador; quite who he thought Kinnock was is not recorded. In any case, he appeared quite unimpressed by Kinnock's declarations of eternal loyalty to the North Atlantic Treaty, one of his cue-cards having told him that this guy was some kind of socialist.

Behind the farce, however, stand the most serious issues in the world. While the visits were in progress, a new stage of world financial and economic tensions erupted.

A vicious trade war is in preparation between the United States and Japan while secretary of state for Trade and Industry Paul Channon last week presented a package of measures designed to strike at the heart of Japanese financial interests in the City of London. The sharpening of this trade war shook the world's stock-exchanges and forced a further rise in US interest rates to shore up a plunging dollar.

Kinnock's objective in Washington was not to so much to parley with Reagan. Reagan is in any case hardly in control of affairs.

If Gorbachev spent his time convincing Thatcher that imperialism has nothing at all to fear from the Stalinist bureaucracy, Kinnock used his Washington visit to give anti-Reagan circles in the American ruling class equally sincere assurances that they have nothing to fear from a government under his leadership.

Kinnock tries desperately to make his nuclear arms policies appear radical to the readers of the 'Guardian', while convincing his masters that if elected he can be safely trusted to take charge of imperialist war preparations.

The foreign visits of the party leaders were on one level cheap electioneering stunts. But they nonetheless raise the question: what problems will be settled by the coming General Election? The answer is: none at all. Neither for the working class nor for the ruling class will anything be fundamentally resolved.

Many sections of the left — often self-styled Trotskyists — are today paralysed by fear that the Tories will get back for another term, or that a coalition including them will take office. Their eyes focussed almost entirely on Parliamentary politics, they have abandoned hope in the strength of the working class and the possibility of building a revolutionary Trotskyist movement within it.

The fact that the bureaucracy — both Stalinist and social democratic — has to fawn before the ruling class is an expression of its profound weakness, above all its inability to deal with the working class in the manner now demanded by imperialism. In this respect, Kinnock's journey west and Thatcher's trip to the east give us renewed confidence in the possibilities of defeating both Stalinism and reformism in the working class and building a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership.

# Welsh opposition to six-day week

**OPPOSITION to the introduction of six-day working at the proposed Margam pit in South Wales is mounting rapidly throughout the coalfield.**

The Durham area's demand for a national delegate conference to discuss the issue has greatly strengthened those opposing the acceptance of British Coal's demands.

The issue is clear: if the South Wales executive defy national policy and agree to the opening of Margam under British Coal's demands, or recommend the same with a ballot of South Wales miners, they will be declaring UDI in South Wales.

Such a policy would play into the hands of those who want to privatise coal. How better to go about it than cause a split in the NUM, setting area against area, pit against pit and miner against miner?

British Coal's chairman, Robert Haslam, has said there will be no national talks on the project, strengthening the hand of the South Wales executive who want to keep it a local issue.

The Board has been aided and abetted by the right wing and Communist Party leaders and their fellow-travellers. They have joined hands with George Wright of the Welsh TUC whose offer to scab on Margam jobs was welcomed by Duffield and Rees.

The South Wales executive's stand has earned them support from the right wing of the South Wales Labour Party and the right wing of the Welsh TUC, a pat on the back from the Liberals and — to top it all — a letter of encouragement from Neil Kinnock. The SDP conference in Wales also urged South Wales miners to go it alone.

Miners' leaders in several South Wales lodges are confident they can win the struggle against six day working, and their opposition is gaining support.

Terry Davies, Lodge Secretary of Trelewis Drift Colliery, told Workers Press:

As far as the men are concerned, they are opposed to any six-day working. After the negotiations the outcome could leave the South Wales Executive with egg on their faces.

The rank-and-file would chuck it out in South Wales and nationally.

Anyway, the issue will be raised in other pits before it comes to Margam, so all the back-biting between South Wales and National is pointless.

It will be decided nationally before South Wales are able to make a final decision on Margam. The six-day week is number one on the Wheeler Plan. People should be made aware of the whole plan. Some parts of the Plan have crept in already, and it is quite unacceptable.

At our conference it was said we're not living how we'd like to, we are living as we have to. If our forefathers years ago hadn't stood their ground we would never have won the conditions we've got. If they are thrown away without any resistance it will be absolutely disgusting.

The Doncaster option is being continuously quoted. It is a very retrograde step to piecework and we should be pressing at national level to get those pits back into line. The miner's agents won't go into the pits to represent the men who operate the option but we should go in and bring them back into the fold.

South Wales leaders are

of the Tower Colliery, said to Workers Press:

A true reflection of what rank-and-file miners in South Wales think is: no way will we go against the national union.

National procedures are to protect us all. Each area has the right to negotiate manning levels etc., but they don't have the right to go against existing national procedures.

Any question of deviating from the five-day working week has to be negotiated at national level. If we don't agree with the six-day working we have the ultimatum: £80million will be invested in other areas. How anyone can succumb to such blackmail beats me.

These new practices not only apply to Margam. Any pit that wants investment, once a principle has been established, will be open to the same blackmail.

As for the 'collaborator' statement, Arthur never meant that to be labelled on the rank-and-file, but on certain members of our executive. If he did say it, then I say to those on the executive: if the cap fits wear it.

Margam is the most critical decision which faces the NUM.

If the present attitude of

BY TRAVIS GOULD

using this as a possibility of us going on our own. Instead of condemning it, they are using it as a yardstick.

It was wrong to bring it in; it's wrong now, it's always wrong. A lot of older men have left the industry. The new younger labour force could be lured by local cash incentives with agreements similar to the Doncaster option. They are not aware of how bad the old days were.

Incentive schemes at the moment divide areas and pits. Under the Wheeler Plan they threaten to split man against man in the same pit.

No matter how many jobs are created with the opening of Margam, it won't make up for the jobs lost in the industry. We should be fighting the Board, not our own national leadership.

Even if they brought in the UDM at Margam, I see that as another battle we have to face.

Hugh Edwards, chairman

## MINERS' ROUNDUP

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

**Midlands miners to strike for sacked men**

MINERS in the Midlands coalfield have voted for a one-day strike in support of those sacked during the 12-month miners' strike.

A ballot held last week in North and South Staffordshire and Warwickshire resulted in a 51-per-cent majority in favour of taking the action on a day yet to be decided.

In the Midlands area 21 remain sacked for fighting to save jobs in 1984-1985.

**Tories support South Wales leaders on six-day pit!**

LATEST support for the South Wales NUM leaders' call for six-day working in the mining industry has come from the Tory leaders.

Last week Energy Secretary Peter Walker, in a written Commons reply to British Coal's proposal for the construction of the £90 million Margam Colliery, said:

British Coal have told me the project will not proceed unless there is agreement on six-day production. The viability of the mine depends on equipment being operated six days a week. I agree with this judgement.

Walker thus joins the Communist Party and the right wing in the union in an effort to isolate and discredit President Arthur Scargill.

The NUM is to hold a special conference next month where South Wales leaders will attempt to scrap national policy for a four-day working week.

Meanwhile, British Coal have taken the pit deputies' union NACODS to an internal appeals tribunal after their rejection of 'new shift patterns' at Margam.

**Sammy in**

YORKSHIRE miners' leader Sammy Thompson has won the election for NUM vice-president with 34,802 votes against Euro-Stalinist supporter Eric Clark's 25,956. Total vote cast was 64,454, a 65-per-cent turnout.

The election result is another indication of the growing opposition to the politics of Communist Party and the right wing in the union.

our executive prevails you can only draw one conclusion — the break-up of the NUM, which is something the rank-and-file will resist.

Ron Mason, Assistant Lodge Secretary at Tower Colliery, added:

It's not like a factory or workshop, or out on site; we work in an artificial environment with artificial light and air. On the weekend you can reflect on your work, recuperate and recover. Longer periods in that environment will encourage an apathy toward safety.

Bill King, retired Lodge Secretary from Merthyr Vale Colliery, is vehemently opposed to six-day working. He said to Workers Press:

They've been talking of opening Margam for 20 years; we've lost 14 pits since the end of the strike. We have sacrificed enough already to open Margam.

We more-or-less accepted the closure of the Garw and Ogmere Valley pits on the basis that the Coal Board would open a new pit at Margam. Now, by social blackmail we can't have the pit unless we accept continental shifts and six-day working.

From time immemorial we called for and fought for nationalisation of the industry and a national union. We have a five-day-week agreement which is a national agreement, and should only be revised, altered, or changed by national agreement.

It will be at their peril if South Wales miners forsake the national union. We would not have had the third day-wage agreement if it were not for the national union.

It gave tremendous increases to our craftsmen and repairers, and took away the right of managers to reduce their wages at pit level. We have the national power loading agreement where facemen for the first time have parity with face workers in England.

They agreed to hold back on their annual increases until the South Wales and Scottish coal fields got a equality with them. It has always been the aim and aspiration since the earliest times of South Wales miners to fight for a national union. The aims of this union carried at conference are for a four-day, six-hours-a-day week, and that should remain.

If George Wright wants to work Saturday and Sunday, let him go down the pit and work it. No miner wants to work under those conditions.

● The 750 miners at Lady Windsor Colliery in Ynysybwll are still out on strike in a row over new shift patterns.

### 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.

**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)

**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)

**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. (Fair events being held in Bradford on 1-5 April. Tele-

phone 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. 5 April: Viraj Mendis Must Stay — the Role of Communists in Anti-Deportation Campaigning.

**VIRAJ MENDIS WILL STAY — STOP ALL DEPORTATIONS NOW!** Conference, 11-12 April, Church of the Ascension, off Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester. Organised by the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign. Telephone: 061-234 3168 for details.



## Mounting toll of asbestos diseases

BY THE year 2000, between 50,000 and 70,000 people are expected to die in Britain from diseases caused by exposure to asbestos.

Asbestosis disables, clogging the lungs, and the fibres of asbestos cause a number of cancers, including mesothelioma ('asbestos cancer') which is incurable.

### Killer

The killer dust affects not only those in the mining and manufacture of asbestos, but also dockers, construction workers, electricians, plumbers, and garage mechanics — and their families, contaminated by asbestos dust brought home on the workers' clothes.

● Victims of asbestos are organising a conference in Sheffield on 4-5 April, to campaign for a better deal for sufferers and campaign against asbestos hazards.

There will be workshops on asbestos in housing, schools, and the workplace; dumping; removing asbestos safely; and using safe substitutes. Details of the conference are available from the People's Asbestos Action Campaign (telephone 01-253 3627).

# Resistance to new Tory job scheme

**DETERMINED** resistance by trade union representatives in many areas of the country has prevented the Tory government meeting the April 1 deadline for implementing their new Job Training Schemes.

Area Manpower boards — comprising a trade union delegate and Manpower Services Commission officials — oversee and sanction schemes for YTS and community programmes. The new JTS will conscript all unemployed 18-25 year olds to work for their supplementary benefits.

Despite national TUC approval there has been significant opposition to this latest Tory brainchild by local trade unionists who see it as an open attack on the unemployed.

The TUC is now seeking a special meeting with the MSC commissioners for a last attempt to make the JTS more palatable. They want a youth training allowance above the DHSS rate.

Regional trade union officials as well as the three commissioners are being drawn into these discussions

BY HUGHIE NICOL

to make sure local opposition by trades councils and unemployed activists is controlled and stopped.

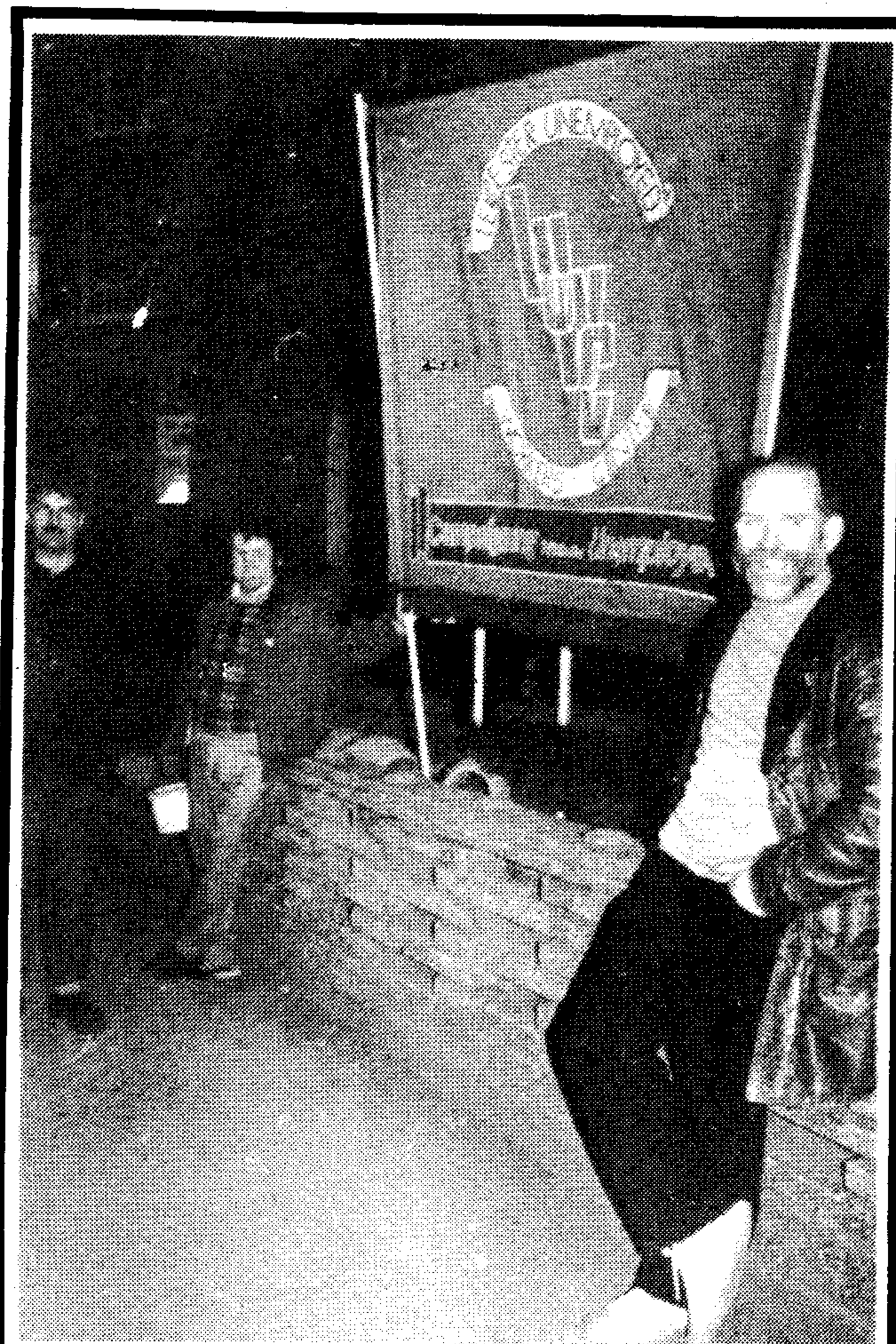
In one region of mass unemployment Area Manpower Board meetings had to be adjourned because of the opposition to the JTS by local trade union members.

MSC officials tried to push the schemes on the grounds that it was up to the Area Boards to ensure relevant trade union approval. This caused uproar from the

trade union delegates and the meeting had to be adjourned for two weeks for the JTS to be reconsidered.

A similar incident in south Tyneside has prevented the new JTS being implemented because the Area Boards have not reached a decision. South Shields TUC at their last meeting pledged full support to the local government union NALGO in opposing implementation of the new scheme.

They called on other trade unions and regional trades councils to support this stand.



The banner of the occupation held aloft outside the centre

## LEICESTER OCCUPATION CONTINUES

BY CHRIS BOYLAN

**THE OCCUPATION** of Leicester Unemployed Workers Centre, in protest at Leicester City Council plans to change the centre's running to the detriment of unemployed users, is now in its third week.

A setback came when Leicester Trades Union Council split on the issue and voted narrowly against support for the occupation. The opposition was based largely on the view that the occupiers were anti-union.

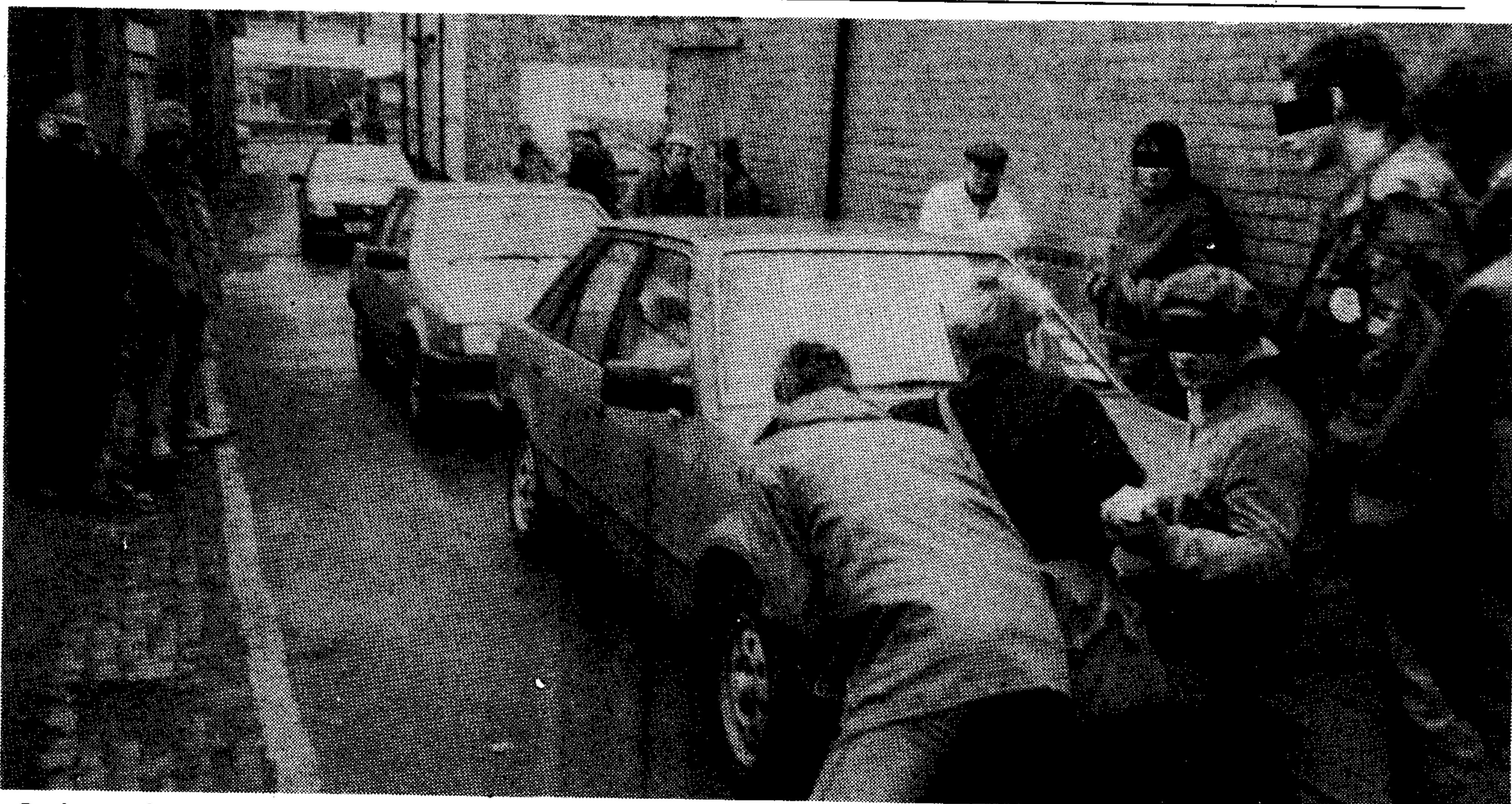
The occupiers strongly deny this. They have pointed out that their initial insistence on an unemployed-only presence in the

occupation was necessary in order that they could organise the running of the centre as an unemployed centre.

Now that they feel they are in a position to welcome the presence of employed workers in the occupation, they anticipate the trades council's attitude will change.

The occupation already has the support of the executives of local students' unions and unemployed groups from around the country.

● **PUBLIC MEETING** at the centre: Friday 10 April, 7p.m. Messages of support should be sent to the Unemployed Workers' Centre, 138 Charles Street, Leicester.



Scabs coming to work at the Leicester offices of the 'Trader' Newspaper Group were given a warm reception last Tuesday by a combined picket from Leicester and Derby. The Derby-based firm gave its workers the sack in a Murdoch-style exercise after provoking them to strike. However, as the picket showed, things are never quite that easy!

## Anti-fascist conference

BY RICHARD GOLDSTEIN

THE National Conference of Anti-Fascist Action in Bradford last Saturday was attended by over 250 delegates.

The discussion was dominated by proposed changes to the constitution which many felt was a sure sign that the movement was growing and taking itself more seriously.

The main resolution, from the Bradford Asian Youth Association, was very comprehensive and emphasised a centralised structure.

An amendment proposed

by Islington AFA called for a federal structure on the grounds that AFA was not a political party but an organisation in which socialist parties, black groups, trade unions, women's groups and gay groups could engage in united-front-type activities through the local branches based in the community.

The conference passed a composited resolution combining local and national features. In future the national committee will consist of 15 delegates, elected at conference together with delegates from the local branches.

A move to add 'Anti-

Racist' to 'Anti-Fascist' — 'ARAF' was narrowly defeated.

The lively discussion included reports of the struggles against racists and fascists.

Particular reference was made to the struggle against ex-Bradford headmaster Honeyford, the Viraj Mendis Campaign and a successful struggle in Islington to evict a family who had been involved in racist attacks.

Unfortunately there was no time for the workshops planned to discuss different aspects of the struggle against fascism.

### Improper?

LABOUR and Alliance MP's have called for the prosecution and resignation of Tory MP Keith Best who has admitted 'improperly' buying six batches of British Telecom shares flotation.

Detectives from Scotland yard are said to be investigating the matter.

Best, who is a barrister and a member of Lloyd's said: 'I accept that I made six separate applications for British Telecom shares in my name, each of which was accompanied with a cheque drawn on an account in my name and signed by me.'

## How smokers kill non-smokers

DAMAGE done to non-smokers who breathe other people's smoke is the target of a campaign by the soon-to-be-abolished Health Education Council.

Of course, says the government's Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health, the causal association between 'passive smoking' and lung cancer cannot be proved.

Yet the Committee admits that the chance of developing lung cancer is likely to be increased by between 10 and 30 per cent by exposure to other people's tobacco smoke.

The Committee also points out that tobacco smoke irritates eyes, nose, and throat and worsens coronary and other diseases of the arteries as well as respiratory troubles.

## More jailings of Broadwater youth

HORRIFIC jail sentences have been dished out to two more victims of the what have become known as the 'Frame-up Trials' of Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham.

Patrick D'Agulias (24) was jailed for two-and-a-half years and James Preston (18) was given three years' youth custody.

They were sentenced for allegedly 'carrying missiles' and 'affray'.

The huge sentences and

the guilty verdicts, similar to those dished out to miners for their struggle to defend jobs and communities from state attacks, are provoking enormous concern among the black community.

Throughout the trials events have exposed the draconian interrogation methods used by the police to obtain 'confessions' and 'evidence'.

## Apartheid-free zone

BY ROS CROUHWELL

RESIDENTS in Leicester have started a campaign for an apartheid-free zone in the Highfields area of the town.

After their second picket outside the main supermarket, the management offered to 'negotiate' the removal of South African-labelled goods from the store.

One of the pickers said: 'We have been picketing outside this busy supermarket against the sale of South

African goods. Concessions have been offered with a view to removing goods which are imported directly from South Africa.

'We feel this is a step forward to reaching the campaign's objective — to make Highfields an apartheid-free zone.'

● The campaign would welcome suggestions from similar actions in the rest of the country. Please to write to AFZ (Highfields), 4 Earl Howe Street, Leicester.



# Some myths about teaching in Inner London

**A FURTHER crisis has emerged in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) in the middle of the education crisis provoked by the Baker Bill.**

Because of government cuts, the ILEA has to find over £100 million to maintain present levels of staffing etc. Through 'creative' accounting they have managed to reduce this to around £52,000,000. They then took a decision not to fight the government, but to make a legal budget involving £52,000,000 'paper cuts'.

However these cuts are not only on paper. The ILEA have said that £9 million of this deficit will be saved by re-deploying so-called surplus secondary school teachers to junior and infant schools.

If the teacher-pupil ratio of one to 17.9 is strictly adhered to, they say, the secondary schools are over-staffed by 1,350, while vacancies in junior schools are running at about 500 and they therefore intend to re-deploy teachers from secondary to junior schools.

This is a myth. **FIRSTLY:** Most teachers will need re-training, which takes one year. Of approximately 200 posts for re-training only some are relevant to junior or infant work. This is a first problem facing ILEA and the teachers.

**SECONDLY:** Although ILEA say there are 500 junior vacancies, in fact only some of these will be available for those re-deployed because many will be for very specialist and experienced teachers.

**THIRDLY:** They are still advertising widely for new teachers to enter ILEA from other areas.

## COMMENT BY PAM HENRY

**FOURTHLY:** The vacancies in the infant and junior schools are not mainly because there are not enough junior-trained teachers, although Keith Joseph's cut-backs in teacher training have contributed to the shortage. The main reason is because the pay and conditions are actually worse in junior schools than in secondary schools. There are fewer above-scale posts and therefore most teachers are on the lowest scale.

The numbers in classes have been rising due to the rise in the birth rate, which officials refuse to acknowledge.

For example: Rathfern Junior and Infants in Lewisham are going to split into two because of rising numbers. This new bulge will shortly be arriving in the secondary schools.

Hackney has been advertising for teachers in high unemployment areas like Scotland. When asked how

these new teachers were to be housed, the authority said the Hackney teachers could put them up!

The truth is that wages and conditions have fallen so low that teachers are not taking the jobs. However many are compulsorily re-deployed the jobs will not remain filled unless wages and conditions are improved.

The proposals for compulsory re-deployment therefore constitute a major attack on educational standards and trade union conditions carried out by a Labour authority.

The implications of moving 1,350 teachers out of their present schools are mind-boggling. In my own school 34 out of approximately 100 staff — i.e. approximately one third — received letters informing them they were identified as being Teachers Above Authorised Numbers (TAANS).

This is not an unusual

case. Sydenham Girls school in Lewisham has had 17 out of 62 staff identified. Warwick Park school in Peckham has had 60-70 staff identified out of 120 — over half.

### What does this mean for these schools?

It means that class sizes will return to the maximum of 30, making individual attention impossible, many subjects will be taken out of the curriculum or be offered to very few children.

Support staff for children with special needs or slow learners will hardly exist, the pastoral side of the curriculum will be destroyed and the new educational initiatives which Hargreave's Report recommended on improving secondary schools will be a joke.

Teaching staff are furious and upset. Morale has never been so low. Absenteeism is rife. Teachers feel they have been treated so disgustingly that they are not coming into school. Much of the fury is because the unions have been spurned by ILEA just as Baker has spurned them in imposing his new pay-and-conditions Bill.

HAVING looked at some of these myths, it is important to underline the principles behind the opposition to compulsory redeployment. In the 1970s there were falling numbers in the secondary schools in Inner London. The

educational arguments were that this drop in numbers should enable smaller classes to function and thus improve the quality of education.

In the previous compulsory exercise in 1981, hundreds of teachers were identified as being surplus. There were no jobs to put them into, so the majority stayed in their schools. If the present 1,350 so-called surplus teachers — mainly in secondary schools — are compulsorily redeployed only about 200 will actually get jobs in different schools.

The ILEA is proposing the rest will not be able to stay in their schools as in 1981, but would have to work outside schools on ILEA initiatives such as new methods of assessment. These teachers would obviously be earmarked for redundancies in the next round of cuts.

The ILEA have refused to negotiate with the teaching unions, the main one being the NUT. This refusal has a history of its own. The present leadership of the NUT's Inner London Teachers' Association (ILTA) won their positions in a fight against the right wing of the Labour Party working with the Stalinists, particularly over the issue of compulsory redeployment.

However, the national executive of the NUT supports redeployment and will only argue over the conditions

which should be offered to teachers facing compulsory redeployment.

The ILTA council called a one-day strike over the Baker Bill on 13 January which was not sanctioned by the NUT National Action Committee. This led to the NUT executive demanding disciplinary action and suspending nearly 100 teachers on the ILTA council. When the union's disciplinary panel met the officers were given a warning and the rest let off. During this crucial period of suspension from January to the end of February the ILEA refused to negotiate with ILTA leaders but did talk to the national executive members over the heads of the local leadership.

Since the reinstatement of the ILTA leadership the NUT national officers have appealed against the disciplinary panel's decision to clear the ILTA council members. Now the ILTA council, particularly the officers, could face expulsion from the union.

A lobby of ILEA by all Inner London teachers was called for Thursday 2 April. But the national union action committee said that only TAANS (Teachers Above Authorised Numbers) plus a small delegation of other teachers could attend.

This position immediately splits the teachers between those who still have a job and the TAANS and weakens the fight against ILEA which can only be won by massive united action.

ILEA has been taking a hard line over the situation. They have threatened to suspend teachers who do not follow the redeployment procedure and also to suspend any teachers who walked out without warning or who accompany pupils.

Teachers should support the London education defence committee and the following demands:

- No redeployment of teaching staff!
- Labour group stop doing Tories' dirty work!
- Support for strikes and occupations by ILEA workers!
- No to privatisation and asset-stripping!

## SCHOOL STRIKE SUPPORTS TEACHERS



SCHOOL students from all over London supported the struggle of their teachers against redeployment.

The crowd of enthusiastic youth, ranging from 13 upwards, blocked the main entrance to County Hall last week before the police moved them down the road — out of sight of the public.

However, a well-organised

rally was held (thanks to the Labour Party Young Socialists) and speaker after speaker surprised the 'older comrades' present with their intricate knowledge of present political events. I noted that only LPYS members mentioned the Labour Party — others talked of 'getting rid of Thatcher and her rotten system.'



# Chile struggle — on the streets and in the prisons



**SANTIAGO, Chile, 24 March 1987: Demonstrators — and a video camera crew — try to get out of the way of water cannon, as the Pinochet regime's police break up yet another demonstration by defiant trade unionists challenging the military dictatorship.**

ALL Chile's 431 political prisoners have been on hunger strike since mid-March, and for the past fortnight 135 of them have been on thirst strike as well.

They are demanding to be put in one unit. They also want unlimited visiting time for relatives and the abolition of special military courts and the death penalty.

Fourteen prisoners are to be executed in connection with last year's unsuccessful attempt on Pinochet's life, and another 34 are

threatened with execution on the same pretext. All the prisoners in the San Miguel prison have been seriously weakened by the atrocious conditions: 38 women and two small children are kept in an area equipped for ten people.

The hunger strike has been timed to coincide with the expected visit of the Pope. Relatives have asked in vain that the Pope visit one of the prisons.

## Hunger strike in Bolivia

TWO THOUSAND Bolivian miners and railway workers have been on hunger strike for the past ten days in protest against government policy. The executive secretary of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) said in the capital, La Paz, that 150 trade union leaders had joined the hunger strike.

# Fascist terror boss captured

ITALY's most wanted fascist terrorist, Stefano Delle Chiaie, was being questioned at a top security prison in northern Italy last week, after being captured in Venezuela.

Della Chiaie, charged with having helped plot the 1980 Bologna station bombing in which 85 people died, had been wanted for 17 years in connection with fascist terrorism and conspiracies.

He fled Italy in 1970 after a failed fascist coup led by Prince Valerio Borghese. There were suggestions at the time that someone in the Italian security services had tipped Chiaie off in time for him to escape arrest.

The December 1969 bombing of the Milan Agricultural Bank, crowded lunchtime with workers cashing paycheques, killing 16 people, is alleged to have been Chiaie's handiwork.

At the time, police tried to frame an anarchist for the bombing. It is thought the fascists planned, in collaboration with secret police chiefs and right-wing military officers to prepare the atmosphere for their right-wing coup.

The fascists resumed their 'strategy of tension' a decade later, bombing a train carrying trade unionists on an excursion, and then carrying out the Bologna atrocity. The latter was part of a Europe-wide campaign by neo-Nazis, including the Munich 'Oktoberfest' bombing, and a planned bombing at the Notting Hill carnival.

Meanwhile Delle Chiaie, who started his career as a

lumpen street thug recruited by Rome fascists, was earning promotion working for right-wing dictatorships in Latin America.

Calling himself proudly 'the Fiance of Death', he led a gang of fascists from Europe that was brought in by Bolivia's Banzer regime in 1980, to combine fascist ideology, drug racketeering, and running death squads against the Left.

All this time, Chiaie had powerful patrons in Italy and abroad. He was linked with the now-outlawed P2 masonic lodge whose fugitive head, Licio Gelli, is being tried in absentia for involvement in the Bologna bombing.

In 1982, Italian investigators traced Chiaie to Buenos Aires, but could not touch him because he enjoyed protection from a P2 member in the Argentine military.

On Friday, March 27, following a tip-off, Venezuelan police went to a flat in Caracas where Delle Chiaie was staying. The 'Fiance of Death' was felled by a karate blow from a police-woman.

On the Monday, officers of Venezuela's Department of Intelligence, Security and Prevention took him to Caracas airport, handing him over to eleven Italian police officers who had come to escort him home for trial.

There is little doubt that if the full facts of Delle Chiaie's career and influential backers come out, the reverberations will shake powerful interests, not only in Italy, but internationally.

# SWEDEN: BIG BATTLE AT SMALL MINE

**A MASSIVE campaign is being waged in Sweden to reinstate into the coppermining union the chairman of Norrbotten branch in the north of the country.**

This copperminers' elected leader was expelled by the bureaucracy of his union and sacked from his job as a result of a strike he led last October.

The 450 miners stopped work at the privately owned Boliden mine in a struggle against company plans for speed-up which would mean the sacking of 150 men and shorten the mine's life by 30 years.

On 21 October 1986 the workers at a small coppermine in north Sweden voted unanimously to fight against the sackings and the company's predatory plans.

These plans were a harsh blow against a region that during the last ten years had lost thousands of jobs, mostly in the mining industry. The community's wealth depended solely on the well-being of these mines.

The Boliden strike was in a sense the beginning of the end for a region whose workers had a class-conscious tradition.

This found its strongest expression in 1969-1970, when 5,000 miners at a state-owned mine went on strike for more than two months.

This strike crushed the myth of the 'welfare state' and the 'Swedish model' and was at the same time a battle against the social-democratic government.

To understand the short strike in October 1986 one has to go back some years to the outbreak of the 1975 crisis, which hit the region like a sledgehammer. Norrbotten is an underdeveloped province, based on narrow production of raw materials — iron and copper ore — and suffering high unemployment, low wages, and emigration.

The downturn of the eco-

nomy demanded a government policy that confronted the claim of the workers for work under satisfactory conditions. The process started slowly in the late seventies, when a coalition between liberal and conservative parties had managed to defeat, after more than 40 years, the social democratic government.

Now began a hard battle between the open capitalist government and workers who strongly believed that the social democratic party would solve all their troubles, on the other side.

The government together with the bosses tried forcing the workers to accept increased exploitation and loss of jobs. This was met by powerful demonstrations, which stopped the sackings but only for a couple of years.

## Strong

Norrbotten had by cause of its underdevelopment become a central battlefield between labour and capital in Sweden. But the capitalists didn't actually want that because they met strong militant workers, perhaps the strongest working group in our country.

The workers' firm resistance blocked the government politics for about six years.

When SAP (Social Democratic Workers Party) succeeded in winning the 1982 election, they did so because they made some far-

reaching promises. They promised, among other things, to develop Norrbotten. The SAP won massive support from people in the area.

During that time the Swedish section of IWL (International Workers League) managed to recruit a handful of hardworking men and women in this northern province.

In government the SAP betrayed its promises with a severe austerity plan and shocked workers.

Thousands of workers in the north lost their jobs and were forced to move. The parties to the left of SAP had no answer.

The ironmines were in deep trouble and sacked people in large numbers. There was no action of great importance.

The only mine that prospered in our provinces was a coppermine, Aitik. And one of the members, Lars Karlsson, of the Swedish section of IWL was moving up in the union. This section was now the only party that could 'claim' to be in the vanguard of the workers. The other parties disappeared like leaves in a winter storm.

At that time, spring 1984, some members of IWL and others, launched a new political project, that would hopefully stop this downward tendency. They formed an association based on a minimum platform and called it MAF (Workers League Association). And it was a success. More than two hun-

dred applied for membership.

Together with workers that were tired of the betrayal of the so-called workers parties, the Swedish section — SF (Socialist League) — put forward a programme that would raise the temperature of the struggle.

The programme was not in itself a programme that pointed towards socialism, but it served to form, through a revolutionary united front, demands (state owned mineral- and metal company, for planned mining and refinement, threw confiscation of capital of the speculation economy) that would function as a lever against the 'economic counter-revolution'.

## Offensive

These claims was addressed against the offensive of capitalism.

MAF managed to get a seat in the local town council. The working population now knew what MAF stood for.

Meantime the prices of copper ore had started to fall on the world market. And when the privately owned coppermine, Boliden, went public with its reduction plans, the workers responded with a forceful 'NO!' In head of this movement stood a member of IWL and MAF, Lars Karlsson. But the main point was that the workers accepted the programme of MAF.

The mobilization of the mineworkers occurred behind transitional demands. It was the programme that was at stake, not Lars Karlsson as a person.

The short lived strike was met by a powerful counter response from the mass media but most of all from the trade union bureaucracy and the copper company.

With a mixture of prom-

ises and threats the trade union bureaucracy succeeded in putting an end to this strike that lasted only for three days. It was a unique strike because it was led by a chairman of the local union. And that was against laws of the Swedish labour market. At the same time it was an 'illegal', so-called wild-cat strike.

The bureaucracy was frightened of this movement, it could spread to other sections of society. A national protest movement against austerity plans with mass support was something the capitalists, the ruling party and the trade union bureaucracy feared deep in their hearts. Because of that, the intervention against miners were quick and merciless.

Lars Karlsson was a threat to the 'Swedish model', and therefore the owner of the mine and the trade union bureaucracy acted together.

First Lars Karlsson was expelled from his chairmanship as a trade union leader and denied his membership of the union and some days later he got fired from his employment by the company.

But the miners, who had elected him as their leader, still had great confidence in him, although they chose to return to their work. He represented in spite of their return their genuine interests.

During this strike the other parties to the left were exposed. They either openly or clandestinely attacked the way which MAF and Lars Karlsson acted.

The defeat of this strike was also a defeat of a country. Today there isn't any strong working group that on their own can resist and challenge the ruling of capital and its servant, the government. Probably the fighting spirit must come from south and spread north. But

the main point is that the struggle continues and the heat of the battle is rising in Sweden, like in all other countries owing to the fall in the rate of profit for monopoly capitalism.

As revolutionary socialists we must intensify our efforts, because we stand as Rosa Luxemburg said, between barbarism and socialism.

## Swedish weapons row

SWEDEN's Nobel Industries, whose founder also started the famous Peace Prize, has begun giving details of multi-million arms smuggling operations by its Bofors weapons subsidiary. Nobel's chairman Lars-Erik Thunholm said they were 'highly regrettable incidents in our company's history.'

More than 60 cargoes of arms from Sweden went to the Middle East on Danish ships since the Iran-Iraq war started, Danish seamen's leader Henrik Berlau revealed a fortnight ago.

Robot-70 anti-aircraft missiles were shipped to Singapore, Bofors officials knowing they would be re-shipped to Dubai and Bahrain, probably being intended for the Gulf war.

Swedish law bans arms shipments to conflict zones. Bofors arms firm bosses have claimed murdered prime minister Olaf Palme knew about the deals.

In January, the head of the Swedish Arms Export Control office fell in front of a tube train just before he was due to be questioned by investigators.



# PALESTINIANS STILL UNDER SIEGE

**SHATILA refugee camp in Lebanon was the scene of more deaths last Sunday.**

Starving women and children tried to march out of the camp but were fired upon, resulting in five more deaths.

Shatila, scene of massacre by Israeli-backed Christian Falangists in 1982, is one of the smallest camps in Lebanon. The death toll from the recent siege has reached 100.

The camp has been under constant bombardment by the tanks and heavy guns of the Shi'ite Amal militia and the Sixth Brigade of the Lebanese Army since November 1986.

## Difference

The main difference between Shatila and Bourj Barajneh is that no one is allowed to leave Shatila for any reason.

It is believed in some quarters that the Syrians are deliberately keeping up the siege on Shatila so that they have some kind of bargaining card to try and stop Palestinian groups uniting at the forthcoming Palestine National Council (PNC).

At present the Syrian reg-

BY PETER RICKARD

ime is promoting the Salvation Front which is based in Damascus in an attempt to bring the Palestinians under their control.

However, there are hopes that Palestinian unity could be restored when the PNC meets in Algiers. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine has been engaged in talks with Yassir Arafat's Fatah movement, and there is a possibility George Habbash's Popular Front might join in.

This would leave only the openly Syrian-run groups and Abu Nidal's renegade faction outside the fold.

As the siege of the camps continues, fighters from some of the Salvation Front affiliates have had to join with other Palestinians resisting.

The Salvation Front will only become more discredited if it remains under tutelage of a regime that has continued supporting those besieging Palestinian camps.

Nayef Hawatmeh of the

Democratic Front accused Amal in January of aiming to become 'sole master of the south, militarily and politically,' so that it could serve as 'Israel's border guard'.

The Syrian occupation of Beirut was carried out after secret consultations with the United States ambassador in Lebanon, according to Arab sources. There have also been reports that the US offered economic aid to Syria, provided it stopped PLO leaders returning to Lebanon.

## Acts

One of the first acts of Syrian troops on entering West Beirut was the cold-blooded slaughter of 23 pro-Iranian Hezbollah supporters taken out of premises they had been using. Unlike the rival Amal, Hezbollah Shi'ites had been helping the Palestinians.

According to the well-informed Paris-based 'Israel and Palestine' magazine, top Israeli and Syrian officials met secretly three times in January and February this year. The magazine says they discussed the war of the camps, how to tighten up Lebanon's borders against Palestinians and Iranians, Arafat's comeback, and Egyptian-Israeli-Syrian relations.

# Aegean oil stand-off

**THE Greek and Turkish governments stepped back from a confrontation last week over oil rights in the Aegean sea. But the problem has not been solved, and could blow up again.**

The Turkish seismic research vessel 'Sismik 1' had been due to sail under close naval escort for waters off the Greek islands of Lesbos, Limnos and Samothrace.

The move was called off when the Greek government gave assurances that neither it nor the North Aegean Petroleum Corporation, in which it recently decided to take a major share, would commence drilling in disputed waters eleven miles east of Thasos island.

'Our resolute stand made Greece see reason', asserted a banner headline in the Turkish daily 'Hurriyet' last Sunday; whereas the Greek daily 'Ethnos' bragged 'Turks with tails between their legs.'

Both Greece and Turkey are NATO members. During this three-day crisis, the Greek airforce and navy had been on alert, bombers flying north from Souda bay base on Crete. Turkish warships taking part in NATO's 'Sea Wolf' exercise in the Black Sea were diverted to the Aegean.

Greek prime minister Papandreu demanded closure of operations at the US Nea Makri base, near Athens, charging that US naval communications were assisting the Turks.

In 1976, following an earlier dispute over Aegean oil prospecting rights, Greece

and Turkey signed the Berne agreement, pledging to refrain from any action which might prejudice negotiations over the area.

But in 1981, talks on the continental shelf broke up, and the Greek government has since resumed drilling.

The North Aegean Petroleum Company, at present a Canadian-led consortium, has been producing 27,000 barrels a day from the Primos oilfield, off Thasos, mainly for the Greek domestic market.

On February 24, North Aegean's chairman Charles Parmelee told an Athens press conference called to oppose nationalisation, that his company would begin explorations east of Thasos on March 28.

## Rights

On March 25, Greece's national day, Papandreu declared Greece was ready to fight for its rights in the Aegean. Although Turkish premier Ozal was away getting medical treatment in the United States, his government replied in equally aggressive terms.

There are about 3,000 islands in the Aegean, mostly Greek. The 1923 Lausanne Treaty awarded islands to Greece which in many cases lie within sight of the Turkish mainland, hemming its coast in.

The Greek government wants to claim its continental shelf rights from around the islands, and declare a 12-mile territorial limit around them. The Turkish government has licensed the state-owned Turkey Petroleum Company, TPC, to prospect in what it says are international waters.

It is probably no coinci-

dence that this sabre-rattling confrontation between NATO allies comes as both Greek and Turkish governments have deep problems at home.

In Greece there have been general strikes against the so-called 'Socialist' Papandreu's austerity measures. In Turkey, over 90,000 workers have been on strike this month, and trade unionists are fighting for full democratic rights.

Turkish Economics Minister Ali Bozer is touring Common Market capitals this week to press his governments wish to apply for EEC membership. His government has blamed Greece for opposition to the application.

But Turkish oppositionists, as well as EEC trade unions and Labour parties have been saying Turkey must restore democratic rights before it can qualify for entry.

During the Aegean flare-up, islanders on Mytilene, within firing range of Turkey, called off a ten-day strike against government plans to close their teacher training college. The local 'Dad's Army' turned out on the beaches with World War II weapons to repel any invasion.

In the Dardanelles, Turkish crowds turned out to cheer the Sismik 1 as it put to sea. In Ankara, supporters of right-wing premier Ozal, whose regime has jailed hundreds of trade unionists, prepared to mobilise a massive patriotic crowd to greet Ozal on his return.

With neither capitalist government having abandoned its conflicting claims, and each having tasted the advantages of a war scare for diverting attention at home, the Aegean conflict is unlikely to be resolved for some time.



Farmers, doctors and steel and construction workers brought Spain to a halt in a one-day strike last week. The two leading trade unions, the UGT and the CCCO, are fighting for wage increases of more than fifty percent.

# Murderer of Spanish Trotskyist escapes

**EMILIO HELLIN MORO, the fascist who murdered the Trotskyist activist Yolanda Gonzalez, has escaped from Zamora jail, where he was serving a sentence of 43 years' imprisonment.**

Yolanda Gonzalez was an active member of the PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores), the Spanish section of the International Workers' League (IWL).

Prominent in the student protests that rocked Spain in

1979-1980 — protests which the PST helped to lead — she was murdered by a death squad headed by Hellin Moro, who kidnapped her and shot her repeatedly in the head.

Her body was abandoned on a minor road in the Madrid suburbs in February 1980.

The intention was clearly to intimidate the students and workers in struggle. But the murderers did not succeed.

The PST led a great mass mobilisation that was supported by the student movement and trade unions as well as most of the political parties.

The demand for justice forced the government to arrest Hellin Moro even though Martinez Loza, head of the fascist pro-Franco group in which Hellin Moro was also prominent, was let off the hook.

During 1981 and 1982 the fascists tried to make Hellin Moro an 'anti-communist' hero. The PST headed a mobilisation of workers and students that occupied the court where Hellin Moro was tried and prevented his sympathisers using the trial as a platform.

On 2 June 1982 Hellin Moro was found guilty of kidnapping, murder, and possession of large quantities of ammunition, arms, and explosives.

In the past five years he has made two attempts to escape. Hence his transfer to the Zamora jail, allegedly

'safer', in 1985.

The real reason for his transfer was to give the judge, José Donato Sanz, famous for his leniency towards fascists, an opportunity to provide legal cover for Hellin Moro's escape.

On 2 January 1987 Hellin Moro asked to be allowed to visit his family. The prison authorities refused. But on 12 February the judge reversed this decision and allowed Hellin Moro to leave prison on 20 February.

Clearly this is part of a political message from the Spanish ruling class to both the working class and the fascists.

Spain is currently being rocked by strikes of miners and dockers, as well as by massive students' struggles. Now those in struggle have been warned that death squads are going to be used against them once more.

To the fascists the message is even clearer: they can proceed to murder activists with impunity.

The PST has denounced the hypocrisy of the bourgeois courts and the government, which on the one hand maintain 'strict security' measures against political prisoners of the left — like the separatist Basques — and on the other hand let a fascist murderer walk out of jail.

The PST has called for a campaign to mobilise workers and students to demand justice and prepare for the future repression that Hellin Moro's escape seems to herald.

# Poison trial fury

**ANGRY demonstrators chased mass poisoning trial defendant Adela Jaruta down the street, screaming 'murderer', during the lunch adjournment on the opening day of Spain's cooking oil trial last week.**

Other defendants who emerged from the Madrid courthouse with their lawyers were pelted with stones, and some bottles of the contaminated oil that brought the case.

Most of the demonstrators were relatives of victims, or maimed survivors themselves, of the mass poisoning for profit.

More than 600 people have died in what was thought at first to be a mystery epidemic when it appeared early in 1981. More than 20,000 more have suffered symptoms such as wasting limbs, chest and breathing problems, spasms and skin complaints.

About 4,000 people are having to have psychotherapy for mental and nervous suffering caused by the experience.

Experts found a correlation between the spread of the toxic syndrome and the use of an industrial oil that had been sold to people as cooking oil.

'The correlation between the illness and the oil is so impressive it is the only viable theory,' said health expert Dr Manuel Posado.

Most of the victims were in poor working-class families, many of them on housing estates around Madrid.

The oil was rapeseed oil treated with aniline for industrial use, and bought cheaply in France by importer Juan Miguel Bengochea, of San Sebastian. He is accused of selling it to wholesalers, knowing they would refine it and alter it to resemble olive oil.

The oil was mostly sold in five-litre bottles by door-to-door salesmen who told housewives it was good quality olive oil from Andalusia.

# Unemployment in Soviet Asia

'A MILLION Idle Hands', was how the Soviet paper 'Selskaya Zhizn' headed a recent report on the economic and social problems of the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan.

'In Central Asia, employment of the rural population is the question of questions', according to Uzbek economist R. Ubaidullayeva writing in the agricultural paper.

'In Uzbekistan alone, according to incomplete data, one can count about one million idle hands.'

The Uzbek republic has a population of 18.4 million, of which 7.7 million live in the towns and 10.7 million in the countryside.

About 40 per cent of the population is of working age, about seven million people, but only six million are employed.

Besides having ancient cities like Bokhara and Samarkand, Uzbekistan is an important cotton-growing region. About a million people work on state farms and another million on collec-

tives.

According to the 'Selskaya Zhizn' article, most of the unemployed are in the rural areas. The people have a high birth rate. They are reluctant to move to the cities for both cultural and social reasons, the writer says.

Soviet economic planners have been slow to recognise the needs of the people by developing small industry in rural areas, Ubaidullayeva says, and this has been a problem in Central Asia generally.

The broader issue is that while Central Asian population grows, Soviet industry and planning has remained concentrated in the Russian areas, in line with political power.

● A quarter of a million people are out of work in Soviet Azerbaijan, according to a report in 'Sotzialisticheskaya Industriya'.

The authorities are trying to move jobless workers to Siberia, but the Soviet paper reports Azerbaijanis resent the move, and want to stay in their southern Caucasus homeland.



# CHIPS DOWN FOR TRADE WAR?

The threat of all-out trade war between the United States and Japan, with Britain brought in too, upset stock markets last week.

President Reagan, the champion of capitalist free trade, had responded to protectionist pressure by announcing a 100 per cent tariff on \$300 million worth of Japanese electronic products.

The goods, including television sets and computers, allegedly contained microchips 'dumped' at uneconomic prices. Japanese semiconductor manufacturers denied this, claiming they had stuck to an agreement.

In London, there was talk

of retaliation against Japanese banks and Japan Air Lines, unless Cable and Wireless is allowed to bid for Japanese telecommunications business.

With no less than 58 Japanese banks operating in the City of London, and Japanese investment in manufacturing, repercussions from such a stand could be considerable.

US manufacturers have been complaining that data chips bought cheaply in Tokyo are supplied to electronics manufacturers in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, and that US firms cannot compete. The US tariff measure, due to take effect on April 17, is supposedly aimed at persuading Japanese companies to halt this trade.

But the Japanese companies say they have been doing their best, and the six

months since they reached agreement with the US is too short a time to judge from.

Japanese trade minister Hajime Tamura last week called the US action 'regrettable', and urged emergency talks. If the tariffs were imposed, Japan would take 'appropriate measures' he warned.

Japanese prime minister Nakasone is due in Washington on April 30 for scheduled talks with Reagan. US officials were last week suggesting agreement might be reached before the tariff

comes into effect, to prepare for the summit. Japanese newspapers reported a plan to buy multimillion dollar US supercomputers to head off sanctions.

The US trade deficit with Japan last year reached nearly \$60 billion. Elections are coming, with the Democrats taking a protectionist stand. Reagan is under pressure. At the same time, as Japanese industrial jobs decline, there is the beginning of resentment there against being pushed around too much to help rival country's capitalists.

## Tapes don't bring music to US business ears!

NEW digital audio tapes said to be so good you can't tell taped copies from original recordings, are being withheld from the US market while manufacturers find a way of 'spoiling' them.

Japanese manufacturers fear the US record companies will succeed in persuading Congress to legislate against digital tape recorders otherwise.

In Europe, Philips NV, which says it has the technology to produce the digital tapes, wants to hold them back while it continues to make good profits from compact disc sales.

Arguing that digital audio tapes would 'confuse the consumer' just now, Philips is negotiating with Japanese competitors to delay the tapes' appearance on the US and European markets.

### Dutch

The Dutch firm has lobbied the EEC Commission to put up barriers against tapes entering Europe. Its US subsidiary Polygram has lined up with the US music industry to lobby Congress for legislation.

Digital recorders work by electronically 'sampling' a sound more than 40,000 times a second. A number is assigned each fragment of sound and put on a tape or disc. The numbers are read and reproduced as sound.

There is no record surface to wear, and the inevitable noise from imperfections in ordinary tapes or discs does not occur. Reproduction is said to be almost perfect. The record companies say it is too perfect.

US entertainment companies claim they lose \$1.5 billion each year from unauthorised copying, and would face even bigger losses once digital audio tape recorders are available.

### Digital

Although the new digital recorders are high-priced — over £1,000 — companies predict prices will drop later, as has happened with compact disc players.

'To refrain from production due to objections about software — that would be technological regression', observes Akira Nagano of Matsushita Electric, makers of Panasonic goods.

But to avoid protectionist measures from US and European governments responding to pressure, the Japanese manufacturers are likely to introduce 'spoiler' devices to block illegal copying.

So digital audio tapes could join the apocryphal 100-mile carburettor and long-lasting light bulbs as a real-life example of capitalism blocking its own technological progress.



WEST GERMAN school pupils fight for their future. In the Ruhr steel town of Oberhausen, where the Thyssen company plans mass sackings, these are some of the youth who joined thousands of steelworkers in a mass demonstration on March 18.

## 'Conspiracy' hunt

A BIZARRE new Western import has caught the imagination of many middle-class Japanese.

Antisemitism along the lines of Europe's notorious 'Protocols' has emerged to provide worried petty-bourgeois with an explanation of why, all of a sudden, capitalism has problems.

'If You Understand the Jews You Can Understand the World', claims the title of a paperback reported to have sold nearly a million copies. The book's subtitle is '1990 Scenario for the Final Economic War'.

Author Masami Uno, who describes himself as a Christian fundamentalist, claims that all the big US banks, and corporations like General Motors, Standard Oil, Du Pont and IBM, are 'Jewish'-controlled.

Uno blames Jews for the high value of the yen hitting Japanese exports, and for South Korea undercutting Japanese industry.

Another publication, 'History Textbook' magazine, blames the 'Jew' Nelson Rockefeller for causing the Watergate affair, and 'Jewish' oil companies for the Lockheed scandal, which brought down former Prime Minister Tanaka on bribery charges.

Like Nazi propaganda minister Goebbels, the authors clearly believe that they 'decide who is a Jew', since they name many people as such who are not Jewish at all, in order to construct their 'conspiracy' theories.

According to the weekly magazine 'Bunshun', a survey of Tokyo bookshops found most of the buyers for such literature are white collar staff attracted by covers claiming to explain Japan's current economic problems.

The emergence of this strange phenomenon in Japan seems to bear out Sartre's bon mot that 'if the Jew did not exist, the antisemite would have to invent him', as well as the materialist analysis of antisemitism as a product of capitalist crisis.

During World War II, official attempts to organise an antisemitic movement to impress Japan's Nazi allies had limited success, since there was no tradition to build on, and most Japanese were mystified what it was all about.

The Japanese occupiers in China left the Jews there alone, and even helped some refugees. Nowadays, there are about 1,000 Jews living in Japan, with little prominence in the society.

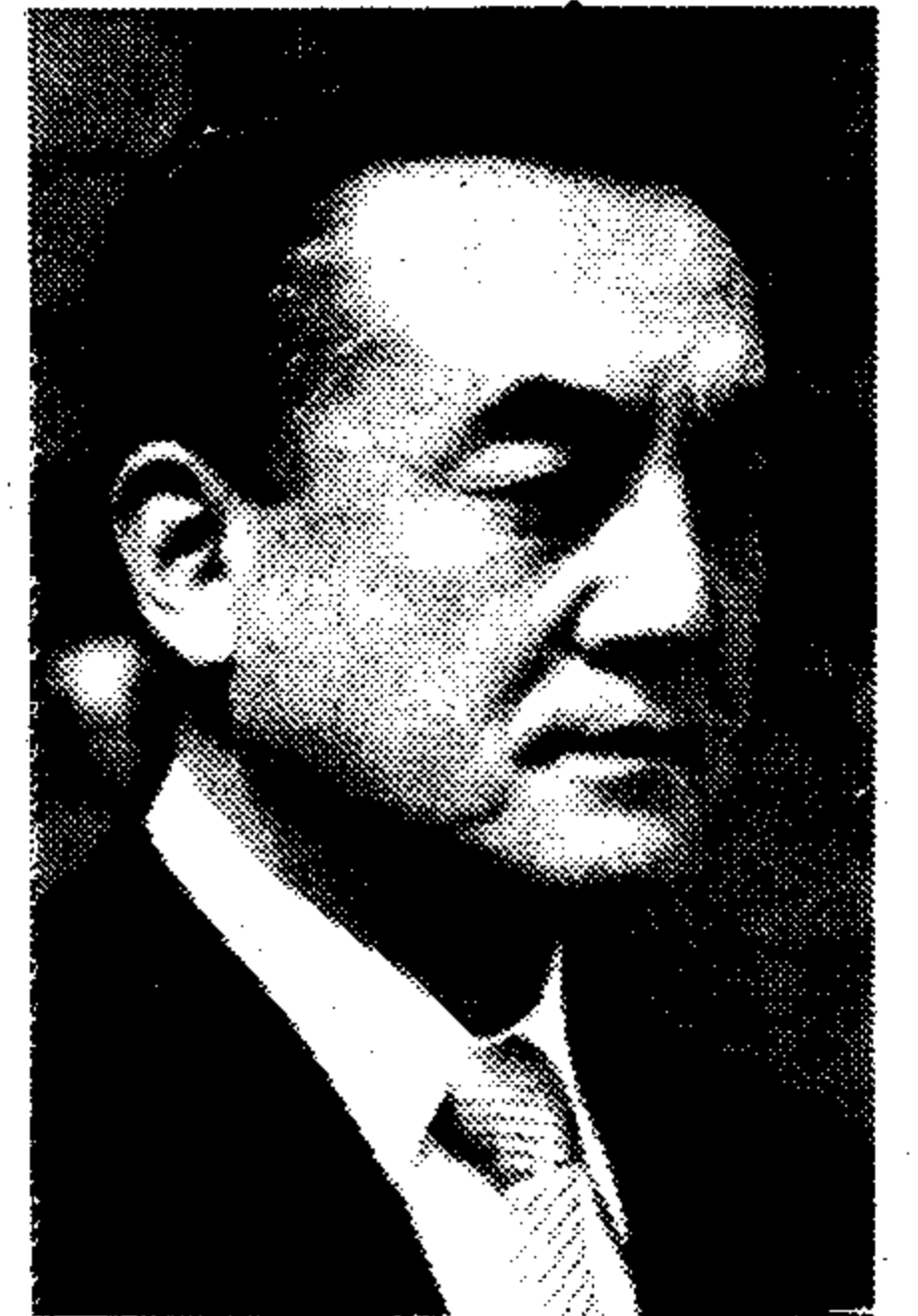
Japanese people abroad have been targets for racism, particularly in the US West Coast, and this was exacerbated by the imperialist Second World War.

However, racism is no stranger to Japan. It has

been applied against the Korean minority, the aboriginal Ainu in the north, and the eto, or buraku, — not a 'race' or ethnic minority at all, but descendants of an 'untouchable' caste in feudal Japan, living in slum ghettos and doing the 'dirty' jobs in capitalist Japan, and subject to discrimination.

Recently, there have been reports of anti-immigrant racism directed at Filipinos, Thais, and others who have come to Japan for work. There are the usual cries that the immigrants 'smell', that they are to blame for crime, and that there are 'too many' of them.

Another sign of the times perhaps, was Tory prime minister Nakasone's remark last year to appreciative businessmen supporters,



NAKASONE

that America had a lower literacy and intelligence quota than Japan because of 'race mixing'.

(Nakasone later insisted, not altogether convincingly, that he'd been misquoted. This was after Black American leaders had said they'd call a boycott campaign against Japanese goods.)

Japan's competitors are bound to see the opportunity to exaggerate any discrediting features of Japanese society in the media.

Nevertheless, Japanese capitalism faces real problems of US protectionism and world depression, with growing unemployment. Imperialist-bred xenophobia is directed first at the 'inferior' Asian immigrants.

But as elsewhere, a middle class feeling the crisis for the first time looks for some kind of explanation of what's going wrong, other than capitalism itself. Here, 'conspiracy theory' comes in, and it seems Japan has imported a classical European form.

## South African varsity war effort

ONE at least of South Africa's universities is 'doing its bit' for the racist regime's war effort, despite being the scene of many a student protest.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, final-year engineering students are asked at the beginning of their year to choose a design project to which they will devote eight weeks' work.

One student chose a project described as involving 'Control Theory'. No further details were given.

To his surprise, after he had sat his final exams he was asked to sign a document binding him to secrecy.

Only then did he learn the full specification of his project. It was to design a constant-recoil damping system for an unspecified device firing 600 rounds per minute from an airborne vehicle.

For helicopter gunships perhaps?

### Too late

The student discussed the matter with his supervisor and expressed objections. He was told it was too late. Project allocations had been finalised and no further choices were available.

The student was in effect told that if he refused the

military project — under the auspices of South Africa's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) — he would not graduate.

He later found out that students in previous classes had been involved in similar projects and that the mechanical engineering department at Witwatersrand regularly gave CSIR projects to students.

Professor Roy Marcus, head of the department at the time, now heads the university's engineering faculty. He is also an officer in the South African armed forces.

Marcus has tried unsuccessfully to start a cadet force at the university. He faces growing unpopularity

from students, many of whom have experienced brutal attacks from the police during anti-Apartheid demonstrations.

### Story

The student's story is told in the current issue of 'Resister', published by the Committee on South African War Resistance (COSAWR) (available from COSAWR, BM Box 2190, London WC1N 3XX.)

It shows there is a good case for challenging academic links with the apartheid state as well as more obvious economic ones.

## Brazil police kill homeless

A BRAZILIAN worker whose crime was that he could not afford rent, and tried to provide a home for his family, was shot dead by Sao Paulo police last week.

Adao da Silva, 28, had built a shack for his pregnant wife and four children on empty municipal land in a working class district of this rich city.

The police, members of a special municipal guard set up by Sao Paulo mayor Janio Quadros supposedly to deal with crime and violence, went into the Guaianazes district burning down squatters' shacks.

When people protested, the police opened fire, killing Adao and wounding several others.

Up to 100,000 homeless

people have moved on to empty land in Sao Paulo during the past month. They are demanding that the government allow them to stay and build houses.

In northern Brazil's Para state last week, the people of the small town of Castanhal staged a minor revolt after hearing that a local youth had died in police custody.

The 17-year old lad, held accused of stealing a paintbrush, was apparently beaten to death at the hands of the police.

Outraged people stormed through the town, burning down the prison, police station, courthouse and policemen's houses, before being driven back by police using tear gas.



# 'What is to be Done?' — 85 years on

COMMENT BY  
SHAUN PATRICK-MAY

**THE Fourth International cannot be reconstructed without a firm theoretical grasp of the principles that are significant, today in Lenin's 'What is to be Done?'. These principles must become an intrinsic part of the party's revolutionary theory and practice.**

Healy used this book doctrinally, raising every word to a dogma to justify bureaucratic rule and stifle democratic discussion. Others mistakenly think the whole book can be viewed as a 'product of its times' and no longer relevant.

The latter fail to see the logical and organisational pearl in the historical dungheap. Clearly, historical development has thrown into relief the historically dead whilst emphasising, through the experience of the class struggle, what is still of fundamental importance today.

I hope this article will stimulate discussion of Lenin's book. The relevant principles of Marxism are summarised below and then discussed in more detail:

- The Marxists' struggle against the essentially bourgeois outlook prevailing in the British proletariat and internationally:

- The need for professional revolutionism:

- Flexibility and elaboration of tactics according to the needs of the party and class within the given concrete situation, while always stressing the need for a centralised revolutionary party.

- The crucial importance of the Marxist newspaper as agitator, propagandist, theorist and, especially, political organiser.

## Tactician

Lenin was a great tactician. The history of Bolshevism shows that the revolutionary Marxist party must be flexible in tactics and strategy to meet the changing requirements of the party and working class under the specific conditions of the class struggle in each particular country.

This fluidity of movement ensures the growth of the party as it struggles to win the leadership of the proletariat and thereby raise its consciousness.

The present consciousness of the proletariat is essentially bourgeois in its content, and this limits the class in its fight against the ruling class.

Trotskyists must therefore struggle to change this consciousness and establish a Marxist outlook among workers.

Marxist consciousness does not develop spontaneously within the proletariat because, like any science, it must be studied and elaborated as a supreme act of conscious thought. Marxism must therefore be established and developed in the class by revolutionaries.

This task imposes definite constraints on the Trotskyist movement. The most important of these is the need to train and prepare professional revolutionaries who will fight for Trotskyism within the class as professionals.

## Competent

This professionalism implies that Marxists must become thoroughly competent to agitate and organise in all areas of society.

It is only when Marxists become competent revolutionary practitioners that experience of the use and application of tactics can be politically fruitful and important organisational skills can be obtained.

Such a practice reveals the strengths and weaknesses of specific tactics and thereby provides the basis on which tactics can be elaborated to meet the needs of the evolving struggle for socialism.

Tactics, for Lenin, develop side by side with the practice of the party in the class being conducted

on a centralised basis. This activity must be planned, disciplined, and well organised, and must serve to educate members. Members' experiences must be interchanged through democratic discussion.

Majority decisions are to be carried out loyally by the minority, which has the democratic right to transform its minority into a majority. The Healyites refused to follow this procedure and were rightly exposed for their bureaucratic centralist methods.

Democratic centralism is the necessary organisational basis of the party. Not only is it required for a national response to national developments in the class struggle, but a party scattered can never oppose and overturn a centrally organised, militarised capitalist state.

## Means

Centralism is the most effective means for training, agitation, and organisation under conditions of illegality as well as 'normal' conditions.

However, democratic centralism does not give leaders a carte blanche. Leaders and all members must be accountable to the whole party for their actions and show themselves to be capable and worthy of their positions in the party.

All members of the party possess rights, duties, and responsibilities to the party and the class. Comrades should only be elected to leadership positions in the light of the individual's history as a revolutionary.

**No rights without duties! No duties without rights!**

The role and nature of the revolutionary newspaper (its politics, outlook, functions, etc.) are intimately connected to the centralism that must exist in the party because the paper is of crucial importance in national organisational matters, e.g. training and recruitment.

So it is absolutely necessary that the paper is edited by committed revolutionists in the party.

Regular columns in politics, current events, etc. should be written by Marxists who have the trust and support of the members, who must be regularly consulted on matters of fundamental importance to the whole party and class.

## Barometer

A lively letters page should be seen as a barometer of Marxist opinion in the party, expressing the democratic life of the centralist party and being a source of theoretical development through the resolution of conflicts within the party.

The paper is a crucial weapon in the struggle to win the leadership of the proletariat and must reflect that struggle.

Bolshevism is both a revolutionary method of organisation and an organisation of tactical and strategical flexibility which evolves with the development of the conditions of the class struggle.

Lenin touches on this latter point in 'Left-Wing Communism' when he stresses 'the need for a strictly objective appraisal of the class forces and their alignment before taking any political action.'

These 'class forces and their alignment', as part of the concrete objective conditions of the struggle in each country, always determine the tactical behaviour of the revolutionary party.

However, the fact that this party must be based necessarily on the principles of democratic centralism is irrefutable.

Let us leave the last word with Lenin, again from 'Left-Wing Communism'. From the wealth of experience of the Russian Revolution he insisted that 'absolute centralisation and rigorous discipline in the proletariat are an essential condition for victory over the bourgeoisie'.

# Clean-up — not cover-up

**WORKING in the kitchen at Wormwood Scrubs for the first four weeks of his imprisonment, Phil found deplorable conditions.**

He decided to write to MP Ron Brown who had sent him a letter of support in the early days of his imprisonment with a promise to raise the question of his jailing in the House of Commons.

BY JEFF JACKSON

The letter Phil wrote to Ron Brown detailed the conditions under which the food there is prepared, pointing out that the state of the kitchens poses a serious health hazard.

It never got past the censor.

Included in the letter a number of points:

- Severe cockroach infestation.
- Food is frequently left out overnight, allowing the cockroaches first bite!
- The aluminium pots and pans are so old and badly pitted it is impossible to clean them properly.
- Scrubbing brushes are worn out and the washing-up liquid diluted to such an extent as to be ineffectual.
- Use of rubber gloves is denied (a request for them from one prisoner resulted in his being 'sacked' from his kitchen job). The very hot water available which would help to remove grease is therefore not used by the prisoners.
- An open drain in the kitchen is used to pour away waste porridge and custard. It invariably becomes blocked. When that happens the sewage flows back into the kitchen.

A convict with a job in the kitchen counts himself fortunate — the alternative is to spend 23 hours a day locked away in your cell. The wages earned pay for extra tobacco.

Racial segregation is enforced in the kitchens. All black prisoners are put on washing-up. White prisoners get the cleaner jobs such as food preparation and cooking.

## Right

Whereas it is every prisoner's right to write to his respective MP regarding conditions in jail, Phil, for his pains, was brought before the Governor and interrogated. No reason was given by the Prison Department for withholding the letter.

Phil was informed also that he was dismissed from his kitchen job and was to be transferred to Camphill Prison, on the Isle of Wight.

Not surprisingly, all complaints are actively discouraged, sometimes with threats of transfer. Complaints can also lead to loss of remission and jeopardise parole for longer-term prisoners.

When he came before the Governor, Phil argued his case successfully and, in front of witnesses, the Governor admitted to knowledge about the cockroaches. He wrongly claimed that the pest controller had visited the kitchens the previous week, but when Phil challenged this the Governor withdrew it.

In the grounds of Wormwood Scrubs a new kitchen complex has been built, costing several million pounds. It has never been used. There are, apparently, major defects which would cost a similar amount to put right.

The threat of transferring Phil to the Isle of Wight has, for the present at least, been removed. He has filed complaints against the Governors and the Board of Visitors about conditions in the prison and about his letter to Ron Brown being withheld on 14 March.

When last visited, Phil reported he was meeting with a lot of obstruction. He has repeatedly asked for a copy of Standing Order No.5 (the prison rules). Despite having paid for this item in advance his

## What you

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn in support group, etc. Phone 01-274 explaining the case.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. L27055, H 757, Duane Road, London W12
- Send messages of support for Phil Workers Press. We have a special bars.

## A letter from a fo

Dear Phil,

I'm very sorry to hear about what has happened.

Also I think that Sheila Torrance was a lady in the party who led the youth into doing things that they did not want to do. I think that people who use the police and the courts to jail leaders of the workers' movement should be driven out of the workers' movement.

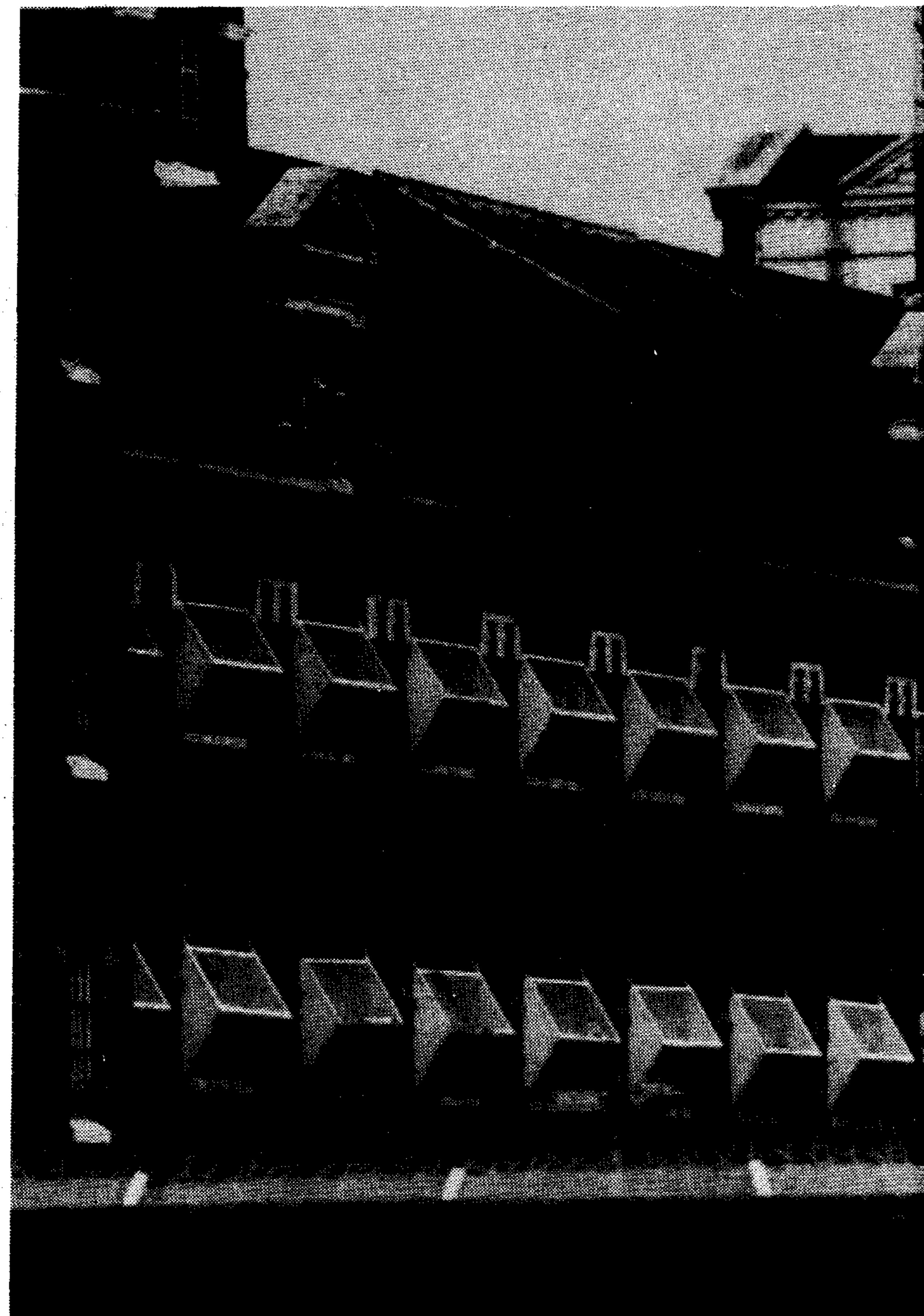
Also I hope that they are treating you well in prison.

It was those in the 'leading' role in the party who you thought were behind you who have used slander against you. As you know I am an ex-member of the party from before the split and I was very shocked to hear of Healy and Torrance's corruption against those who were doing good work for the party.

I have known you to be a genuine person in the party. As for those who have put you in jail, you should keep up the good faith and fight against them, if not you alone — all of the members should fight against them.

All for now Phil — good luck mate!

Ex-Young Socialist member  
Frank Barclay.



ABOVE: The daunting exterior of Wormwood Scrubs prison.

In November 1981 the then Governor of the Scrubs, John McCarthy, caused something of a stir when writing a letter to 'The Times' in which he described 'the major prison in the United Kingdom' as 'a penal dustbin.'

The letter was to protest about the Home Secretary's proposal to reduce the prison population by allowing courts to suspend between a quarter and three quarters of prison sentences of six months to two years. McCarthy's subsequent resignation was described by that newspaper's Home Affairs correspondent Peter Evans:

'The career of a church-going idealist, with a love of horses and music has ended in disillusion and reflects the loss of morale over the crisis in the system. He is to become assistant director of the residential service for the mentally ill. Mr McCarthy obviously feels he can tolerate no longer a scandal which he has so little power to alleviate. He believes the roots of the prison crisis lie



can do. . .

Your union branch, trades council,  
7271 for copies of the circular letter

Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box  
7271 (registered post is best).

and reports which we can print in  
column each week while he is behind

former member



Phil Penn

# THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN

## Price's split — nothing to do with principles

RICHARD PRICE and Ian Harrison are amongst some 12 people who are the latest to desert the dwindling Torrance group.

The reasons for this most recent split are not yet completely clear. But one thing is most certainly clear: if Price thinks this will allow him to escape the consequences of his sordid role in the jailing of Phil Penn or in the cover-up job for Healy he can think again.

This is Price's vile role in these two events over the last 18 months:

- He was the ringleader in the taunting of Phil Penn at Wapping on the night he was arrested. It was Price who attacked Penn with banner poles, leaving other Healy-Torrance members to attack Phil. Price's bleat that he did not appear in court as a witness at Penn's trial is a lousy evasion. Price was party to the decision to put up others to do their dirty work in court and testify against Phil Penn.

- Price now criticises Torrance for not having taken up Healy's headlong rush to Stalinism over the last 18 months. Again a cheap evasion of his despicable part in the expulsion of Healy.

On 1 July 1985 when Healy's secretary's letter was read to the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Price abstained on the resolution that the letter was a provocation. He said he wanted

to hear what Healy's secretary had to say. He was quickly pulled into line by Torrance and was soon defending Healy, claiming that the contents of the letter consisted of lies — when he knew they were true in every detail.

Price and Harrison cannot evade their past actions. Just as much as Healy and Torrance, they are finished in the working class movement.

## From Harry Cohen MP

Dear Charlie,

Thank you for your recent letter about Phil Penn. I am disgusted that so-called 'socialists' should behave as agents provocateurs and that trade unionists and demonstrators at Wapping should be dealt with in such a harsh manner and unfair way by the Courts.

However I feel that I cannot get directly involved in factional disputes within a party which is not my own.

Clearly, the Left should be more aware of their real enemies — the capitalists.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Cohen

## From Workers Power, Cardiff

Dear Comrades,

We wish to express our condemnation of the jailing of Phil Penn and to extend our support to him and his family.

Unfortunately the Healyites still exist (though much diminished) in our area; rest assured we will

strive to bring these marks to account before the local working class whilst doing all we can to raise Comrade Penn's imprisonment and to aid his release.

Fraternally,

Workers Power  
Cardiff branch

# WRP

## Workers Revolutionary Party

PO Box 735  
London SW9 7QS  
Tel: 01-274 7271

Dear Comrades,

### THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN

9 February 1987

One of our comrades, Phil Penn, has been jailed for 12 months, eight months of it suspended, for assault. He is a highly respected member of our Central Committee, a party member for 18 years, active in the trade union movement and recently in campaigns such as that on the Guildford Four.

Our concern in this case is that members of another organisation claiming to be part of the labour movement were, apart from the arresting officers, the only police witnesses. This would be like miners giving evidence against miners in the recent strike.

As you may know, in October 1985, the Workers Revolutionary Party expelled its former leader Gerry Healy for sexual abuse, violence and slanders against members of the organisation; charges he never contested. A small group of party functionaries — including Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, Sheila Torrance and Richard Price — supported Healy and were expelled by the majority. This group then formed a bogus party calling itself the 'Workers Revolutionary Party' and publishing a newspaper, 'News Line'.

Phil Penn was arrested and charged after a demonstration called by the print unions at Wapping, on 3 May 1986. The events, as reported in court, were as follows:

- In the 'News Line' of 1 May 1986, the Worker's Notebook column carried a crude and provocative attack on Phil, insulting his intellect and presenting him as ignorant and illiterate, speaking in grunts.

- On the 3 May Wapping march, as the conflict between demonstrators and police became increasingly fierce, Phil went to fetch his camera. Once away from the main body of demonstrators, he came across members of the Healy-Torrance group. They verbally abused him, taunting him with quotes from the above-mentioned article. He refused to be provoked.

- Four of them, Richard Price, Eric Rogers, Paul Williams and another man, then attacked him physically — in Price's case with banner-poles — and knocked him to the ground. In defending himself, Phil damaged the eye of one of his assailants. Only Phil was arrested.

No organisation calling itself socialist would collaborate with the police against members of the labour movement. This is a point of principle. But members of the Healy-Torrance group eagerly acted as police witnesses. Three of the four men who attacked Phil did not appear in court but two women members of the Healy-Torrance group gave evidence which Phil vigorously contested. Had he been found guilty on the charge of wounding with intent, he would undoubtedly have been given a much longer custodial sentence.

This is not the first time the Healy-Torrance group have acted in this way. Six of them appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield Crown Court in January this year after an incident between themselves and members of the International Communist Party. On this occasion the court did not believe them and the defendant was found not guilty.

We should point out that members of the Healy-Torrance group again attacked and beat up Phil Penn on 8 June 1986 in Leicester. They used sticks and knives. The police wished to prosecute his attackers, but, as a matter of principle, Phil refused to act as a witness and the case could not go forward.

We are asking all labour-movement organisations to condemn the anti-working class actions of the Healy-Torrance group, which were responsible for the jailing of Phil Penn. Messages of support and inquiries should be sent to: Workers Revolutionary Party/Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS.

Yours fraternally,

Dave Temple,

Chairman, Workers Revolutionary Party/Workers Press.

embedded in the nature of British politics. He is dismayed to think that morality is being used for political ends rather than politics for moral ends. Otherwise, how could such appalling prison conditions be tolerated?

In fact, McCarthy had reportedly been on the brink of resigning from the prison service when he took over as Governor of the Scrubs in May 1980.

As recently as June 1986, there was further controversy involving the Scrubs, when a new million-pound kitchen was turned into a workshop following a decision to build another kitchen in a 'better' position.

Work on a new hospital block had allegedly been abandoned, the old hospital was used as a store and other new development work interrupted. When these charges were raised against the Thatcher government in the House of Lords, the Home Office strongly refuted any wastage of public money in regard to the £30,000,000 prison modernisation plans.



## The expulsion of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade

ON 13 August 1979, the national leadership of the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) called the leadership of the Simon Bolivar Brigade to a meeting. On the 14th the Brigade marched to the meeting with 5,000 workers from over 100 factories in Managua.

At that meeting the FSLN leadership demanded that the Brigade immediately cease all political activity and submit politically to the discipline of the FSLN leadership. The SBIB leaders asked for time to discuss the proposal with other members of the Brigade.

Outside the meeting, 5,000 workers were demonstrating, demanding Nicaraguan citizenship for all the internationalists. No agreement was reached at that meeting.

The next day, 15 August 1979, every radio and television station in Nicaragua broadcast a government call to all members of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade to attend a meeting in Managua on 16 August. The members of the Brigade came to this meeting without arms, as a sign of good faith and to avoid any chance of a provocation in the tense atmosphere.

Before any meeting could take place, the Brigade members were surrounded by a large armed contingent from the Panamanian National Guard. They were immediately arrested and transferred to a waiting military transport plane of the Panamanian Air Force with identification numbers K-400. They were flown to Panama and imprisoned.

**The FSLN feared using its own troops to expel the Brigade because of its high prestige in the eyes of rank-and-file FSLN fighters. They had to appeal to the bourgeois army of General Torrijos to do their dirty work for them.**

Once imprisoned in Panama, the internationalists were threatened with deportation to their country of origin. For many this was simply a death sentence since their countries, like Argentina, Brazil and Chile, were at the time ruled by brutal right-wing military dictatorships.

The Brigade members refused to be separated in prison and fought with the Panamanian National Guard over this.

At the same time more than 30 Trotskyist organisations around the world launched an international campaign of meetings, demonstrations, petitions and political pressure to obtain the release of the internationalists imprisoned in Panama.

After a week, the Panamanian government relented and agreed to release the Brigade members in Colombia, the country where the Brigade had been organised.

## The attacks against the Simon Bolivar International Brigade

AS reported in the Latin American press, the deportation of the internationalist fighters by the FSLN was motivated by political reasons and clear political differences. For example, *El Espectador*, one of the most important newspapers in Colombia, quoted various FSLN and Nicaraguan officials, who gave the following reasons for the expulsion:

- They organised more than 70 unions;
- They encouraged the occupation of lands;
- They organised militias in the neighbourhoods of Bluefields and Managua;
- They described some members of the government as bourgeois.

The *Washington Post* published a revealing front-page article on 21 August 1979 which stated:

Despite the revolutionary euphoria of the past month, the first signs of organised opposition to Nicaraguan new government are coming from the extreme left, and not, as widely anticipated, from conservative businessmen.

At the same time, the govern-

# SIMON BOLIVAR INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

ment's first act of impatience has been to expel some 60 Latin American Trotskyists whom it charged with being 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'creating problems for the Sandinista revolution'.

Although the government is anxious not to disappoint popular expectations of change, it seems determined to resist extremist pressure for sudden, radical measures that could frighten both domestic and foreign private sectors and retard economic reconstruction.

The radical left, mainly Maoists and Trotskyists, on the other hand, has been trying to force the government's hand through such provocative actions as takeovers of private firms, instigating workers to seize control of factories and urging the 'popular militia' to not surrender its weapons to the new Sandinista army. In most cases the government has quickly intervened to prevent these actions.

The article ended with a long explanation of how satisfied the Carter administration in the US was with the expulsion and the 'moderate' course of the FSLN and described the 'cordial' relations between the Sandinista government and the US ambassador.

Similar articles appeared in *Le Monde*, *The New York Times*, and other key papers of the imperialist capitals.

*La Estrella de Panama* carried an extremely revealing article

## PART IV

**THIS article is taken from the February 1986 issue of 'Working Class Opposition', journal of the US section of the International Workers' League (LIT), the Trotskyist organisation responsible for founding the SBIB.**

was a clash between two different political perspectives, a fundamentally revolutionary perspective advocated and put into practice by the Simon Bolivar Brigade, and a fundamentally reformist one, advocated and practised by the Sandinistas.

With the benefit of hindsight, we believe that the political position and strategy of the Simon Bolivar Brigade on all vital questions was completely vindicated.

● The SBIB was right when it demanded the punishment of Somoza's National Guard war criminals. The FSLN was wrong in its generosity to them and now the Nicaraguan people are paying a terrible price for that mistake.

● The SBIB was right to demand the ousting of Pastora, Robelo and Chamorro from the government. The FSLN was wrong to protect them and compromise with them. Today they lead the Contras.

● The SBIB was right to fight for radical land reform. By opposing occupations of land and returning them to the 'prog-

ery other vital issue that confronted the Nicaraguan revolution, from the need for workers' democracy to spreading the revolution throughout Central America, history has proved the foresight and revolutionary truth of the programme and strategy of the Trotskyists who fought in the Nicaraguan revolution.

The political banner of the socialist revolution carried by the Simon Bolivar Brigade is today carried in Nicaragua by the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) of Nicaragua. It continues the traditions of the SBIB, fighting against the Contras and imperialism to advance the Nicaraguan revolution towards socialism.

The FSLN attacked the Trotskyist internationalists in Nicaragua for clearly political reasons; likewise the imperialists attacked the Brigade — both through their press and with the Panamanian National Guard — for clearly political reasons.

**But they were joined in their attacks by . . . 'left organisations' in the US. These orga-**

Sitting comfortably in the heart of imperialism while others fought against Somoza's National Guard, they falsified history and facts in order to discredit the SBIB.

An article published in the SWP's *Intercontinental Press* on 3 September 1979, stated: 'The individuals belonging to the Simon Bolivar Brigade arrived only in the final days of the war'.

The material we have printed in the first three parts of this article is sufficient proof that this allegation is false, but far more extensive documentation in Spanish exists and was then available to the SWP.

Furthermore, no one knew during the 'final days of the war' how long the fighting would last or who would win. Even those internationalist fighters who in fact arrived near the end of the war came to fight, ready to stay as long as it took to defeat Somoza, prepared to lay down their lives if necessary.

The SWP, on the other hand, refused to take such risks, or to make such a commitment, and in fact predicted the military defeat of the Sandinistas.

## According to the SWP, workers are stupid

THE SAME article quoted above also contains the slanderous allegation that 'the workers who supported the activities of the Brigade were under the false impression that they were following the FSLN'.



**Somoza's National Guard soldiers fire at Sandinista guerrillas. The Simon Bolivar Brigade demanded punishment of these war criminals and insisted the FSLN was wrong in its generosity to them**

entitled 'Nicaraguan regime is not communist', which stated:

Three Nicaraguan bankers reported in the Guatemalan capital that the government of Nicaragua is not communist and the proof of it is in the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade which was trying to organise a communist party in Nicaragua.

## Answer to the 'left-wing' cheerleaders

WE HAVE proved above with documentation that the clash between the FSLN and the SBIB

ressive' and 'patriotic' landlords, the FSLN gave the bourgeoisie time to build a new 'internal front' of economic sabotage and brought disillusionment among sectors of the peasantry, some of whom today support the Contras.

● The bureaucratic manoeuvres of the FSLN on the Atlantic Coast against the workers and the SBIB also weakened the revolution. It was a forewarning of the FSLN's terrible mistakes in suppressing language and cultural rights. In the same bureaucratic fashion they suppressed the workers of Bluefields, the Miskito and Rama Indians. The FSLN literally pushed the Indian population into the hands of the Contras.

On these and on virtually ev-

nisations included, among others, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), at one time the US Trotskyist party, aided by a group called the Spartacist League, as well as an 'independent' left journalist, George Black.

None of these groups or individuals in the US fought in the Nicaraguan Revolution. None of them responded to the appeals of the FSLN to take up arms against Somoza, nor to the appeals of the organisers of the Simon Bolivar Brigade in the US.

In fact, the SWP and the Spartacist League denounced the FSLN as a 'petty-bourgeois organisation', and condemned their strategy of armed struggle as adventurist and suicidal.

The truth is that all the activities of the brigade were carried out openly, with the knowledge of the FSLN and the working class and often in conflict with the FSLN.

Those who joined the internationalists to fight and who followed its lead in organising unions and in punishing the National Guard knew perfectly well what they were doing and what the difference between the SBIB and the FSLN was.

The SWP not only slandered the fighters of the Brigade, but also the thousands of Nicaraguan workers who supported it (out of stupidity if the SWP is to be believed).

## The SWP supports repression and slander against revolutionaries

THE SWP went as far as to send delegates to Nicaragua to deliver a note to the FSLN which said: 'The leadership of the FSLN has the right to demand that non-Nicaraguan members of this group (the SBIB) which was self-defined as a military organisation, should leave the country.' (*Combate Socialista*, Bogota, 10 October 1979).

After slandering the FSLN for years and denouncing it as adventurist and petty-bourgeois, embarked on a suicidal strategy, the SWP quickly transformed itself into the most craven apologists for the FSLN's repression of revolutionary internationalists.

Furthermore, at the time, the SWP and organisations which built the SBIB all supported the same international organisation. On the document submitted by the SWP to the Nicaraguan government can be found the signatures of Barry Shephard, currently one of the leading figures of the SWP, and of the renegade Peter Camejo.

Camejo, who split from the SWP soon after his dirty trip to Nicaragua is infamous among Latin American revolutionaries for two things: being a member of a wealthy family of the Venezuelan oligarchy, and fingering revolutionaries to the bourgeois police when he has political differences with them.

The SWP has repeated these and other slanders on any number of occasions. They went so far as to claim that no one from the US participated in the SBIB. When challenged by Brigade veterans in the US to debate these charges in public, they ducked and hid.

The lies, deceit, unprincipled political manoeuvres and direct aid in the arrest of revolutionaries by the SWP was one of their biggest steps toward becoming a Stalinist organisation.

## The school of falsification

THE SWP was aided in its campaign against the internationalist fighters by the Spartacist League (SL), a group well known on the American left for its sectarian and disruptive behaviour. In the tradition of that organisation's newspaper, *Workers Vanguard*, the Spartacist League published a pamphlet called the 'Moreno Truth Kit'.

The one thing this pamphlet did not contain was the truth. Instead it was filled with a plague of quotes taken out of context, distortions, defamations and straight lies.

The 'Truth Kit' was an attack on our party and specially on our international movement, the International Workers' League. As evidence for its attacks, the SL used the petty-bourgeois and imperialist press.

Among other things it stated:

It does appear that for the most part Moreno's Brigade, despite its bombastic propaganda, sat out the fighting in Costa Rica. In fact its US-based supporters did not even leave for Managua until the day after Somoza fell.

So the heroic, gun-in-hand guerrilla image the Brigade leaders would like to assume . . . is certainly undeserved.

Sending off the Brigade was essentially a gimmick rather than a real act of proletarian internationalism.

**The truth is that when confronted with a truly internationalist act which they refused to support, the recourse of both these petty-bourgeois organisations was to indulge in mud-slinging and slander.**

It is worth noting, however, that the FSLN itself never made any kind of statements or charges made by the SWP and the SL.

In a lot of ways the FSLN told the truth. They openly and honestly recognised the courageous and valuable role the SBIB played in the overthrow of Somoza. They denounced the Brigade because it wanted to go beyond the programme of the FSLN.

The FSLN openly defended



# What News Line said

its petty-bourgeois reformist programme and did not claim that its aim was socialist revolution. The political grounds stated in Nicaragua for repressing the Brigade were the same as those stated to the international press.

They did not lie and slander the Brigade as the armchair revolutionaries of the coffee shop brigades of the SWP and the Spartacist League did.

## The George Black slander campaign

IN his book *Triumph of the People*, George Black accepted, without verification, the Socialist Workers Party version of the history of the Simon Bolivar Brigade. He went further, adapting their story to fit the moods and prejudices of his readers in middle-class America. He wrote:

Organised in Colombia by the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), it embraced combatants from Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Mexico, the USA and other Latin American countries, subscribing to varied ideologies. The combatants entered Nicaragua in the last days of the war in the Frente Sur. Other sympathisers actually attached themselves to the Brigade after July 19.

More than anything, the freedom with which they operated indicated the FSLN's early problems of imposing centralised military authority on irregular fighting units and the Simon Bolivar Brigade took advantage of the post-war chaos to dress the FSLN uniforms and carry red and black flags in order to convince people that they spoke with FSLN authority.

The PST leadership encouraged a simplistic move to socialism, exhorting workers to strike and peasants to seize private land. As the Frente became aware of the threat of a newly arrived foreign group posing as an alternative revolutionary leadership, it called leaders of the Brigade in for meetings where it stressed the need for internationalist units to be integrated swiftly into a single Sandinista military command. The response was aggressive.

When the FSLN arranged a meeting with all the Brigade members on 14 August, it found itself confronted with a demonstration of 1,000 workers brought there — supposedly by an FSLN contingent — in the belief they were to lobby the Sandinista leadership on wages and trade union questions.

This was the last straw and the Frente expelled 60 non-Nicaraguan members of the Brigade to Panama.

(*Triumph of the People*, George Black, Zed, London, 1981, pages 334-335).

Black presents this story as an authoritative factual account, but then in a tiny footnote he writes:

Most of the accounts of the Simon Bolivar Brigade episode are notoriously unreliable. The majority of Western press reports have been confused about the exact political origins of the Brigade. Most left-wing commentaries on the other hand have sought to defend one or other sectarian positions of their respective authors.

The article "Imperialism launches propaganda drive against Sandinistas" in the 3 September 1979 edition of *Intercontinental Press*, while admittedly tendentious, probably offers an account of events which is as factually correct as any. (*Triumph of the People*, page 357)

In other words, Black admits he has no idea what the truth about the Simon Bolivar Brigade is, nor is he interested in discovering it. In fact his entire book is based on 'tendentious articles' and the reports of the bourgeois press which are notoriously unreliable on every facet of the revolutionary struggle, not just the history of the SBIB.

At no point did Black ever contact the Brigade or its supporters for its version of events, nor attempt any serious documentation. His version is in fact a political lie, written to cover up the real history of the entire

## AS WE follow the inspiring and highly instructive history of the Simon Bolivar Brigade — an episode of armed revolutionary internationalism, of armed Trotskyism — it's worth looking back at what the News Line said in 1979.

This was the paper of the Workers' Revolutionary Party under Healy and Banda, run under Healy's close supervision by Alex Mitchell. All three have been expelled from our movement, we are pleased to say.

'Fake Trotskyists are expelled from Nicaragua', ran the bold headline over a full-page unsigned article in News Line 23 August 1979.

Asserting that the Simon Bolivar Brigade militants had 'been officially denounced as "counter revolutionaries" by the Sandinista leadership', News Line accused them of 'reactionary attempts to create splits and divisions' in order to undermine the revolution.

The Healyite article slanderously accused these Trotskyist fighters of having played no part in the struggle against Somoza, claiming they 'entered the country after the revolution was victorious.'

After quoting a Sandinista leader describing the economic difficulties facing Nicaragua, News Line remarked sympathetically that 'The Bolsheviks faced similar problems in the years after the October revolution.'

It went on: 'They, too, were faced with reactionary opponents who accused them of "abandoning socialism".'

While Latin American capitalist newspapers were referring to 'the expulsion of communists' from Nicaragua as a good sign, News Line compared the Sandinista leadership to the Bolsheviks, and claimed the Trotskyists had merely used Left slogans like arms for the workers as a cover for counter-revolution.

To back this attack, News Line referred to the Socialist Workers' Party in the US,

led by the 'double agent' Joseph Hansen, and declared: 'These people have been actively serving imperialism in Iran and have lined up with the Shah's sister, Ashraf, in denouncing the alleged "lack of rights" for women.'

But as though to clinch the argument, News Line's anonymous writer created a false amalgam between the fighters of the Simon Bolivar Brigade and one Fausto Amador, denounced as a traitor to the Nicaraguan revolution.

'Before any of these self-styled "Trotskyists" start with another protest campaign on "human rights" in Nicaragua, they should announce publically where they stand on Fausto Amador...', News Line declared.

Had the News Line writer really wanted to know about the relations between the Simon Bolivar Brigade and Fausto Amador, he need not have looked very far for information. He could have started by referring back to the pages of the 5 May 1979 issue of a publication called News Line!

That issue of the paper carried an 8-page weekend supplement dedicated to 'Security and the Fourth International', and headed 'Hansen's World Network Exposed.'

The first article in this, 'The Latin American care-taker', dealing with Amador, ran over five pages, and quoted extensively from internal documents of the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International revealing a fight within that organisation.

It showed that in March 1977, the Unified Secretariat resolved that Amador's actions had been 'incompatible with membership of the Fourth International', and demanded he make a public statement rejecting his previous actions before the USec could discuss the possibility of readmitting him.

Later, when USec, apparently influenced by Hansen, abandoned its opposition, a motion came from one of its sections to make public the original stand taken on 24 March 1977.

As the Newsline article

Nicaraguan revolution, to glorify his own political co-thinkers and patrons.

Like the SWP and the Spartacist League, Black did not respond to FSLN appeals for international fighters. Like the SWP and SL, Black makes no assessment of the SBIB's political programme. He and his book were just one more note in a chorus of calumny and lies.

### Editor's note

WE HAVE written this answer to the lies and slanders as only a partial payment of our debt to the historical truth. As our resources to produce more material in English increase, we will publish more.

Entire books have been written about the Brigade in Spanish. The principles, traditions and lessons learned by the SBIB are today embodied in the living politics of the Internationalist Workers Party (Fourth International) and in our sister parties in the International Workers League (Fourth International).

We look forward to carrying on the real political debate with all those who have slandered us in the past, because, in no small part due to our participation in the Nicaraguan revolution, we now have the forces to guarantee a suitable answer to the cowardly middle-class journalists of the armchair left.

CONCLUDED

## Why they chose the name Simon Bolivar

SIMON BOLIVAR was the revolutionary leader for the liberation of most of South America from the Spanish Empire. Born in Venezuela, he joined the independence movement in 1807 as an adherent of the French Revolution and opponent of Napoleonic reaction. From 1810 until the final defeat of the Spanish armies in 1824, Bolivar was the central political and military leader in the war for independence as well as the most advanced revolutionary thinker and politician of his day in Latin America.

He stood for uniting all of Latin America into one great confederation — the only way, he believed, to guarantee maintaining its independence against the growing power of British and American imperialism. He opposed the monarchists and rejected the narrow, nationalistic outlook of the right wing of the independence movement. When an uprising occurred in Ecuador, despite continued civil war in Bolivar's base in Colombia, he sent troops to ensure victory for the Ecuadorian revolution.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

stated, this demand came from 'the Colombian PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores) led by N. Moreno.'

Later, USec called on its Costa Rican section, the PRT, 'and any other Fourth International organisation that wrote public polemics against Amador... to cease and desist all such attacks and to co-operate in the defence of Amador, the OST and the Fourth International against the Stalinists' slander campaign.'

'But Hansen ran into opposition from the Central Committee of the PST of Colombia... the News Line article observed. It went on to quote a PST resolution condemning Amador as a collaborator with the Somoza dictatorship, rejecting the USec's resolution, and repudiating 'Intercontinental Press' for its promotion of Amador as a 'trotskyist leader'.

By December 1977, Moreno was in full conflict with Hansen and others in the USec leadership. News Line's 'Security and the Fourth International' article



The article on the Simon Bolivar Brigade in News Line, Thursday 23 August 1979

of May 5 1979 relied heavily on quotes from Moreno's documents attacking Amador and Hansen, yet by September, News Line was demanding to know what Moreno's followers — the Simon Bolivar Brigade — thought of Amador!

The important thing for the Healy-Mitchell team was not the success of the Nicaraguan revolution, the struggle for socialism in Latin America, or the truth about the Simon Bolivar Brigade.

It was Healy's vendetta against Hansen, the phoney 'Security and the Fourth International' campaign, to which News Line's international coverage and the work of the International Committee and sympathisers abroad, particularly in the United States, were subordinated.

In May 1979, News Line had been hawking its purloined documents to say 'look, even people in the Unified Secretariat are attacking Hansen'. By September, it had forgotten this, and was portraying the the entire Unified Secretariat and supporters as all 'agents'.

Here was great irony. First of all, the main issue on which the Socialist Labour League, its successor the Workers' Revolutionary Party, and the International Committee, had fought what we called 'Pabloite revisionism', was our insistence on independent revolutionary leadership based on the working class.

Trotsky had founded the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution, on the premise that 'the crisis of humanity is a crisis of proletarian leadership.'

In 1953, the International had split over Michael Pablo's contention that under circumstances, the existing leaderships, particularly

Stalinists, might be transformed into revolutionaries.

Pablo went on to interpret Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution as meaning an objective process, such that the petty-bourgeois leadership of national liberation movements would be transformed into a revolutionary vanguard capable of establishing socialist states.

The role of 'Trotskyists' would be reduced to that of helpers and advisers to such leaderships. Pablo took a post with Ben Bella's FLN in Algeria, which he said was becoming a workers' state.

In 1963, the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, particularly Joseph Hansen, declared that Castro was creating an undeformed workers' state in Cuba, and that it was time to re-unify the Fourth International around recognition of this 'fact'.

The Socialist Labour League refused to go along with this, and said it raised issues not only concerning Cuba, but of Marxist method. We insisted there had to be more discussion.

When the largest 'Trotskyist' party in the world, the

tion with 'revolutionary' talk, 'News Line' was increasingly giving uncritical support to trade union bureaucrats and Labour councils in Britain, and bourgeois nationalist leaders abroad. It was a turn to Menshevism.

Mitchell's article lambasts a writer from the IMG who had remarked on the bourgeois ministers in the Sandinista government, and had urged that Nicaragua break with the IMF and annul its external debts.

'This is ultra-Left adventurism of the most criminal type', Mitchell thunders. As for the bourgeois ministers, he compares their presence with the use Lenin made of specialists after the October revolution. The same comparison between the Sandinistas and Bolsheviks that crops up in News Line's attack on the Simon Bolivar Brigade later that year.

Before long, Mitchell dispenses with any attempt to explain in theoretical terms why the IMG critic is wrong. He ropes in Fausto Amador, Joseph Hansen, Somoza the CIA and the FBI as explanation for why the IMG are 'Enemies of the Nicaraguan Revolution', as the article was entitled.

News Line, in the hands of Healy and Mitchell, was now pursuing a line not at all unlike that which it had fought as 'Pabloism' before, and broken with Hansen over in 1963-4. Healy had become a 'Pabloite'!

The camouflage behind which the theoretical struggle for Trotskyism against revisionism was abandoned was 'Security and the Fourth International'. If our opponents were simply agents, who needed to battle their ideas theoretically?

The second irony in all this was, having attacked the Simon Bolivar Brigade in the name of 'Security and the Fourth International', the great crusade against Hansen. News Line ended up keeping company with... the SWP! The leadership of the SWP in the United States also refused solidarity to the Latin American Trotskyists, deciding that the Sandinista government should not be criticised.

There is one more irony to speak of. Consider this. If a movement like the Sandinistas could fulfil the role of Bolshevik party, who needed a Trotskyist party? Any attempt to form a workers' party independent of the leadership was plainly redundant, 'splitting', perhaps even the work of counter-revolutionaries!

Hence News Line could attack the Simon Bolivar Brigade in terms reminiscent of Stalinist attacks on the Trotskyist movement, and using similar methods (the fake amalgam with Amador, and the frequent talk of 'agents').

'Security and the Fourth International' had been launched with an investigation into the assassination of Leon Trotsky by an agent of Stalin's GPU. The way it was turned to use by Healy and his henchmen, it led to Stalinist-type attacks on other Trotskyists. By concealing abandonment of principles by the leadership, it also brought us perilously close to the destruction of Trotskyism in our party.

The October 1985 revolution in the WRP ousted a cancerous growth from our party, and re-affirmed our Trotskyism as a living revolutionary force. With the call for a world conference, we are taking up the threads of continuity again, to play our full part in the building of the Fourth International as the party of world revolution.

While firing WRP members' enthusiasm and devo-



# 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.

## Disturbances in Scottish jails

PRISON authorities always lay the blame for disturbances on a small group of troublemakers. Let's look back over the past four months and tally up the total number of Scottish jails involved in disturbances.

1. Saughton: five prisoners wrecked a hall and took a screw hostage.
2. Perth: 170 prisoners were evacuated after fire raged through D hall.
3. Peterhead: at least 56 prisoners rioted; one screw was taken hostage; A and D halls were gutted by fire after the prisoners surrendered.
4. Barlinnie: a riot on New Year's Day, when at least 300 prisoners, most awaiting trial, threw uneatable food and steel trays at the screws.
5. Inverness: three prisoners in the notorious cages went on a 'dirty' protest during the festive period.
6. Barlinnie: full-scale riot in January when 28 prisoners held 45 screws hostage for several hours; 38 screws were injured when the hostages, helped by two 'multisquad' squads of 70 screws each, made a break for freedom; prisoners captured riot gear (batons, shields, and helmets). Two of the five screws still held were released on humanitarian grounds; the other three were held for a total of six days.

7. Perth; full-scale riot in A hall; 170 prisoners smashed it up after 80 prisoners were treated for food poisoning. There was no media report on this until four days afterwards.

8. Saughton: two prisoners staged a protest inside the roof space of one of the halls.

Most of these disturbances have been given media coverage of some kind.

I also know from very good sources that there have been incidents at the following penal establishments: Aberdeen, Dumfries, Glenochil YPS, Lawmass, Largsrigend YPS, and Gateside.

So over a fifth of the entire Scottish prison population of 5,000 have been involved in protests of one kind or another.

If this is just a small hard core of troublemakers, then somebody at prison headquarters needs to go back to school.

As chairman of Dumbar-tonshire branch of the Scottish Prisoners' Support Committee (SPSC), let me tell your readers the real reasons for these predictable and all-too-frequent mutinies: terrible conditions compounded by physical and mental torture; degradation and humiliation; disgusting food; disgusting visiting conditions; and screws who for the most part are more illiterate and prejudiced than their so-called charges.

Mick McCallum

## From a woman prisoner in H wing top security unit, HM Prison, Durham

I HAVE been reading your paper regularly for a while now, and decided to drop you a line about conditions in H wing top security unit for female prisoners.

The wing was opened in 1961 as a special punishment block for male escapees — 22 category A male inmates occupied the wing. It was shut down in 1972 following a report by Lord Mountbatten, who stated that prisoners were suffering from sensory deprivation. He condemned the wing as uncivilised and intolerant.

Yet in 1974, without changes to the actual structure of the building, the wing was reopened. Security was doubled and 38 women were housed in it.

However, out of the 38 life-sentence and long-term inmates, only four are category A. This means the remaining 34 women are subjected to category A conditions when they need not be.

We are subjected to regular body searches, although in the last few days we are getting them at random.

We are currently strip-searched at random after all visits, social or legal, and we are subjected to regular strip searches when we get

our cell searches, which seem to be on the increase of late.

On average, women are having cell searches and strip searches once a week. The reason we have been given for this sudden increase is that the officers got behind with the cell searches and are now making their numbers up!

There is absolutely no need for these continual searches when we are under observation, by staff and cameras, 24 hours a day. Strip-searching is degrading and unnecessary.

We have a very small visiting-room, which can only hold three prisoners at a time. We are observed and listened to by one or two officers, who practically sit at the visiting table with us.

This makes both inmates and visitors nervous and uncomfortable. If these officers are observing us, then surely there is no need to search us afterwards?

We never leave the wing at all for anything (except going to hospital) and wherever we go we are watched.

Therefore it is unnecessary to strip-search or cell-search us once we enter this prison.

Category A prisoners are

not allowed to share the visiting-room with any other inmates. This causes unrest between the women on the wing and consequently we have to work out between ourselves when we can have visits.

We have no full-time education and no facilities for studying. Recently our education study periods were cut down by an hour and a half for morning study periods, because the workshop was not producing the amount of work it was taking orders for.

Women have been denied study periods on the grounds that they are not doing long enough or are appealing. The emphasis is totally work-orientated.

How can working at a sewing machine be better for our so-called rehabilitation than the chance to educate ourselves?

Our exercise time was cut down from an hour to half an hour during weekdays. This is the only time when we get natural light and fresh air.

We are confined to the wing for 23-and-a-half hours a day and, if anything, we need more than an hour of fresh air and real light per day. At Leicester top security unit they get two hours'

exercise because the unit is so confined.

We were told that the two-and-a-half hours we lost from our exercise time would go to our gym time, instead of going to the workshop.

However, the workshop is using these extra two-and-a-half hours and refusing to pay us when we do go to PE, which we get once a week and for an hour on alternate Saturdays.

Our gym sessions are two hours, so we lose money when we go to gym. We were told that we only get two hours of PE because there is no demand for PE in H wing. This is untrue.

We are still subjected to slopping out and washing with cold water in plastic basins in our cells at night.

Finally, we would like to draw your readers' attention to a march taking place outside the prison on 13 June. Any support will be appreciated.

I must just stress that the issues I've brought up in this letter are not the only problems we have in this prison.

I hope you print this. Yours in solidarity and sisterhood,

Ms A. Huxley

## A reply from the Royal College of Nursing

WITH reference to the article by Rachel Hunter (Workers Press, 14 February) on some of the implications for the National Health Service if Project 2000 is adopted, I wish to redress the balance.

1. I agree that the current state of the NHS is of serious concern to all those, including the RCN, who are committed to a free national health service.

Cuts and closures as a result of government policy, and the appalling wages paid to most NHS staff, are prime concerns for all the health unions.

Nevertheless Project 2000 has never been supported in principle by COHSE, NUPE, and the RCN as the only hope for the future of nursing.

More trained nurses will have to be recruited in the short term to replace student nurses, who will no longer be abused as 'pairs of hands'. So Project 2000 will mean that all patients will have their care planned by Registered Nurses — as it is supposed to be.

2. There is no reason why Enrolled Nurses and Auxiliaries need to feel threatened. Enrolled Nurses, who for years have been left with responsibilities they are neither trained nor paid for, will have their

position protected until the last of them retires.

Furthermore they will have better opportunities for career development as conversion courses are offered and criteria other than five O levels are accepted for entry into nursing.

There will always be a need for nurse helpers, whatever they are called, and a structure for their employment might clarify their role in the team. Too often they are treated badly.

3. The RCN does not 'mainly represent the views of qualified SRNs and administrative staff, the nursing elite' and does not want to turn nurses into mini-doctors. It is a democratic trade union with 257,000 members: students and qualified nurses.

I appreciate Rachel Hunter's anxieties but regret her misrepresentations of the situation.

May I suggest that those interested read the 'Project 2000' document and consult with the unions for their view?

The last thing we need is for the government to be able to reject it (because better care costs more) and be supported.

Sally Gooch  
Branch Secretary,  
Hampstead RCN

## An unsigned complaint

OF LATE there has been a succession of letters from one Brian Pearce published in Workers Press.

I wish to disassociate myself completely from the publishing of these letters. I found them racist, pro-imperialist, but above all anti-communist.

It could be said that those responsible for the publishing of this eclectic garbage are also guilty by association of the same philosophical and political trend as the letter-writer, and are just as guilty, or even more guilty, by the fact that they actually published them, showing complicity.

Pearce states: 'If Northern Ireland were to be annexed to the Republic', thus implying that the reunification of the island of Ireland would be an artificial grafting.

Surely this is the very opposite of what is true. Before colonisation Ireland was a nation state, and even when Britain attempted to rule in Ireland she attempted to govern the island as one political entity.

Pearce's statement reeks of chauvinism of the crudest kind, and is in essence pro-imperialist, denying the right of oppressed nations to wage war against their oppressors.

What did a real Marxist say about this subject? Lenin wrote: 'In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e. their freedom to secede' (Collected Works, Vol. 22).

This said, and still Pearce's letters are published. Any new reader of Workers Press would feel that these letters were a reflection of those who allowed them to be printed and this is an aspect that worries me.

It is ironic that at this time, with talk of internationalism, the Party in Britain should impede the possi-

ble progress of our Irish comrades, for such letters as those written by B. Pearce will certainly have such an effect.

A while ago a representative of Sinn Fein called for constructive criticism within the pages of Workers Press. All he receives in return is Pearce's racist, backward remarks.

No! the publishing of such letters will not do. They represent subjectivism at its very worst.

I did toy with the idea of calling them selectively perceptive. However, this description would be to grant the ideas a position above their station and to say that they are dominated by bourgeois empiricism would also be wrong, for B. Pearce's letters have nothing in common with the best traditions of British bourgeois empiricism — at least historically speaking.

The British bourgeois empiricists had some excuse, for they lacked the scientific instrumentation and methodology with which to reveal the dialectical pro-

cess and actuality — this is not the case today.

The ideas inherent in these letters, and by association the act of publishing them, come directly from a class position: they come from a petty bourgeois fear and hatred of oppressed peoples in struggle, which brings with it a philosophical bankruptcy.

One question rears its head: when will this hatred, fear, and philosophical bankruptcy manifest themselves internally in attacks upon the British working class?

Only a charlatan would still hold to the backward ideas expounded in B. Pearce's writings.

I feel that those who allow such garbage to be printed today will — philosophically speaking — have to sweep it up tomorrow or be buried by it.

● Whatever our disagreements with Brian Pearce, the standpoint of the above (unsigned) letter must be rejected. Pearce has raised some issues of great importance for Marxism, issues which are not to be settled by abuse.

Take, for example, one aspect of the problem which is particularly vital, and not just in connection with Ireland. A number of countries which were once colonies of imperialism have gone through tremendous economic and social changes.

They are no longer characterised by large peasant populations, with landowning classes propped up by imperialist power. Instead, we have powerfully organised proletariats, with nominally independent governments acting on behalf of international banks and transnational corporations.

Yes, there is undoubtedly national oppression taking place, but our job is to analyse carefully the new forms this now takes, not mindlessly to repeat old formulas.

If Pearce's letters stir comrades into sending contributions which tackle these pressing problems, that would be splendid — Editor.

[In printing this letter we have waived our usual rule not to publish anonymous letters because we believe the issues must be answered.]

## A newly-translated document from the Vietnamese Trotskyists

AN English translation is now being made of 'National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam' by Anh-Van and Jacqueline Roussel, originally published in Paris, in French, by the Fourth International in 1947. (English translation copyright New Park Publications).

This work consists of a Marxist historical analysis of Vietnam before and during the French conquest, the class structure of Vietnam, an outline of the development of nationalist movements from their origins in the 1890s, and of the Stalinist and Trotskyist movements in Vietnam.

It concludes with an estimation by the author, a Vietnamese Trotskyist who work-

ed in Paris after World War II, of the nature of the Indo-Chinese revolution.

We are not able at present to print this material. However, this work is invaluable for the study of the Vietnamese revolution, and of importance for the study of revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries in general.

We are therefore offering Xeroxed copies of this document (approximately 100 A4 pages) for £5 plus postage (Special offer for WRP members £2.50).

Please return the form below within a month if you want a copy of this document. We need finance in order to complete the work on this project.

To: WRP Education Department, PO Box 735, London SW9 1QS. Please send me a copy/... copies of 'National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam'.

Name & Address .....

.....  
.....

Please enclose £5 per copy (£2.50 for WRP members) plus postage: 50p — Britain and Ireland; 60p Europe; £1.56 — Middle East and north Africa; £2.12 — America, southern Africa, India; £2.40 — Australia, Far East.

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## PERSONAL COLUMN

### Under the imperial carpet

A WRITER in 'City Limits' a couple of weeks ago was good enough to mention my contribution to the rapidly expanding field of British black history.

Caryl Phillips referred, quite correctly, to the debts I owe to two of my many predecessors in this field: the British historians Paul Edwards and James Walvin. These are debts I have always been happy to acknowledge publicly.

I found it a little odd, though, that she made no reference to the incomparably greater debt I owe, and have likewise gladly acknowledged, to the Nigerian historian Folarin Shyllon, whose 'Black Slaves in Britain' (1974) is still the best guide to the complex and gradual process by which slavery ceased to be lawful in this country.

Those who read Shyllon should not of course neglect the recent work of the Canadian historian Douglas Lorimer, who has shown that black slaves in Britain were not in practice freed by the courts and the rule of law — as the official myth has it — but emancipated themselves as individuals by running away from their masters and mistresses.

In this long-drawn-out process of self-emancipation they were no doubt helped by changes in the law. But they were helped still more by the London 'Mob': the pre-industrial craftsmen and other working people of London, who periodically rioted to defend their rights and liberties against arrogant rulers and saw runaway black slaves as fellow-fighters against a common enemy.

\* \* \*

The point of all this is that British black history is not, and cannot be, the preserve of individuals. It is very much the work of an international team who, indebted to each other as well as to such pioneers of the subject as Kenneth Little — whose 'Negroes in Britain' appeared as long ago as 1947 — are patiently digging for, and piecing together, the evidence that for so long was buried deeper than deep.

It's all the more a matter of team-work since so many separate disciplines are involved — and since, above all, it's now clear that the centuries-long history of black people in Britain can't be studied or understood apart from the entire history of the British Empire.

The black presence in Britain was the direct result of British imperial expansion. One of the team's members, Rozina Visram, showed this recently in her outstanding 'Ayahs, Lascars and Princes', which

charted Asian settlement in Britain up to 1947.

It's shown again in an excellent book just published by the Rabbit Press: 'Under the Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History 1780-1950', edited by Rainer Lotz and Ian Pegg (and distributed by Bladestock of Brixton Hill, London SW2, at £18.50).

This collection of 18 essays was the brain-child of Jeffrey Green, who has done more than anyone else to throw light on the black presence in Britain in the early years of the present century, is a frequent contributor to 'New Community', and is himself responsible for four of the essays in this book.

One of Green's contributions is on the Liverpool merchant adventurer George William Christian, Toxteth-born son of a settler from Antigua who married a Liverpool woman.

Another concerns Dr James Jackson Brown, a Jamaican who practised medicine in Hackney from 1914 until he was struck off the register in 1943 for the 'ill-considered sympathetic gesture' of giving a false certificate to a man with extensive family commitments, thus enabling him to avoid military service so that he could support his family.

Green writes interestingly, too, on the Virginia-born evangelist Thomas Lewis Johnson, whose entertaining autobiography, 'Twenty Eight Years a Slave', was published in Bournemouth in 1909.

The fourth of Green's essays, written in collaboration with the Caribbean lawyer Randall Lockhart, is about black students in the Christian Student Movement in the years 1917-1920. A biographical note on Lockhart, who was born in 1900, says he introduced Marx's writings to his fellow-students in London just after World War I.

\* \* \*

Politically, the most important piece in the book is Jacqueline Jenkinson's well-researched paper on the so-called 'race riots' — in fact, anti-black riots — that took place in Barry, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, east London, Newport and South Shields in 1919, and Hull in 1920.

This is a thorough and judicious survey of those events. It has certain implications for our own day and deserves close study, not least for its indications of how the embattled black communities, under armed attack from lynch-mobs led by demobilised soldiers, organised their own defence.

Some of the victims of these anti-black riots were British ex-servicemen, and this fact helps to make David Killingray's superb and all too short essay 'All the King's Men? Blacks in the British Army in the First World War, 1914-1918', such a poignant testimony.

Killingray is of course able only to scratch the surface. As he remarks, 'it would be useful to have a systematic study of the experience of Blacks in the British armed

forces throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and especially during the two World Wars'.

There is indeed a crying need for such a study, which would have much to tell of brave deeds, bright medals, and broken promises.

\* \* \*

Since Green has a lively interest in music, it isn't surprising to find that seven of these 18 essays are on musical topics.

Ninety-year-old Marjorie Evans's sprightly recollections of the shamefully neglected Anglo-African composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor correct the errors in some earlier accounts of his life.

Doug Seroff's piece on the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the American ex-slaves who first brought 'Negro spirituals' across the Atlantic, in 1873, whets the appetite for his forthcoming book-length account.

Rainer Lotz has an essay on the Afro-American theatrical impresario and singer Will Garland, who frequently toured Britain and the Continent between the two World Wars; Ray Funk writes on various black American singing groups that performed in Britain; Howard Rye puts the spotlight on the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, 'the first Afro-American jazz orchestra to make a substantial public impact in the United Kingdom' (they brought the clarinet and soprano saxophone genius Sidney Bechet over with them in 1919).

There is an impressive contribution by that indefatigable discographer John Cowley, whose 'West Indian Gramophone Recordings in Britain, 1927-1950' shows that some of the work of the masters of Trinidad calypso was available in British record shops before World War II.

Cowley reveals that Lords Beginner and Kitchener, two of the greatest calypsonians ever, were on board the 'Empire Windrush' when it docked at Tilbury in the summer of 1948 with the first 500 of the post-war Caribbean settlers, and that they lost no time in doing a recording session, for Parlophone.

I was at Tilbury that morning and interviewed a lot of people — yet hadn't the slightest idea until I read Cowley's essay just what a historic interview I had missed.

\* \* \*

This important book, well edited and delightfully illustrated, deserves a wide audience. Black history is one of our sharpest weapons against racism, and 'Under the Imperial Carpet' is a welcome addition to the growing armoury.

Don't miss it.

*Peter Fryer*

### 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: Life sentence, 758661.

SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 338635.

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 DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.

MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134.

ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.

#### REMAND PRISONERS: BRITTON

HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.

MICHAEL J MCKENNEY: L46486

G. (DANNY) MCNAMEE: L48616

LIAM MCCOTTER

PATRICK McLAUGHLIN

#### WORMWOOD SCRUBS

LIAM QUINN: L49930

VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.

#### 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 Long Lartin.

JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.

BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Long Lartin.

GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Long Lartin.

RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Long Lartin.

PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Long Lartin.

They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.

We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.

### TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A Magazine of Marxist Theory  
Volume 1 Number 1 March 1987

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## REVIEWS

## Rape of our planet

LAST month on three consecutive Tuesdays, Thames Television drew up an ecological balance sheet of our planet entitled *Earth*.

The programme makers and their expert witnesses concluded that our natural habitat had reached an advanced stage of degeneration and was close to collapse due to mankind's indifference to the consequences of its own action.

'The environment crisis' said Dr Barry Commoner, 'raised an issue that no society had been willing to face yet. Are we able to devise ways of overcoming production decisions that reflect the necessity of harmony with the environment? We've got to get to the question of social control, with ecology playing a role in these decisions about production. Until we do that, we are going to be patching a crumbling structure.'

I think that what Dr Commoner is trying to say is that only a centrally planned world economy can put an effective break on capitalism's rampant abuse of nature, though why he cannot bring himself to say that in plain English I do not know. Instead he resorts to allusions such as, elsewhere in the final programme, 'Ecological issues raise questions of how society is organised'. Quite so!

Why the mystery? Why not call a spade by its proper name? The powerful array of facts skilfully presented in three programmes leaves no room for ambiguity. Without a socialist world plan there can be no hope of mankind living in harmony with nature.

The same drive for private profit which led the capitalist class to enslave millions of men, women and children since the bourgeois revolution also drives it to attempt to enslave all nature.

'Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature', cautions Engels (1) 'For each such victory, nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first.'

## The AIDS panic

The Truth about the AIDS Panic. By M. Fitzpatrick and D. Milligan. Junius Publications £1.95

THIS pamphlet ruthlessly cuts through the lies put forward by the government and the fatal errors of most socialists and gay activists when dealing with the emotive question of AIDS.

The authors — one a doctor, the other a long-time gay activist — put forward two main arguments.

Firstly, they argue very few people are at risk: 96.5 per cent of people with AIDS (PWA) in Britain are either gay men, I.V. drug users, or recipients of blood or blood products (before blood screening was introduced). Only 22 people outside these groups have developed AIDS in over four years.

So why has the government gone to the trouble of sending leaflets on AIDS to every household and putting advertisements in all forms of media about the supposed risk to the general public? Perhaps because of the high death toll?

In Britain there have been 350 deaths in four years due to AIDS. In the same period cancer has killed 700,000 and car accidents 20,000. There

Richard Broad and Mike Dormer's programmes gave real substance to Engel's prophetic words. Take the world-wide problem of loss of topsoil; the destruction of the rain forests; the transformation of finite, natural resources into energy and atmospheric pollution, with non-bio-degradable commodities and acid precipitation resulting. And that is just the start.

'Soil is not crushed rock' as one contributor pointed out, 'but a highly complex micro-environment.' It can take the activity of micro-organisms hundreds of years to create one square inch of soil. And what is happening to this precious, free commodity?

'In parts of Britain and America nearly half the topsoil has gone, either blown or washed away. The world is losing 26 billion tons of topsoil every year — 7 per cent of topsoil in a decade — soil that took millions of years to create.'

## Businesses

Dr Paul Ehrlich: 'Modern agricultural systems are run as businesses and businesses are run on the basis of economics. Economists cannot see more than six or seven years into the future, so that the bottom line is to get the maximum yield today, and not concern yourself with what is going to happen tomorrow. As a result, for instance, soils which are absolutely essential to agriculture are being eroded away all over the world, especially in areas where modern agriculture is featured, because these people think they can maintain the quality of the soils by adding inorganic fertilisers, and that just does not work out in the long-term.'

The Sahara desert advances south at least six miles every year, invading the savannas of Ethiopia, Chad, Niger, Sudan and Mali, and bringing drought and famine with it. This phenomenon is directly attributable to loss of vegetation through overgrazing and the wholesale destruction of forests.

But nowhere is capitalism's destructive power more evident than in the Amazon Basin where one-tenth of the rain forest has

already disappeared.

As Engels warned, 'In nature nothing takes place in isolation. Everything affects and is affected by every other thing, and it is mostly because this manifold motion and interaction is forgotten that out natural scientists are prevented from gaining a clear insight into the simplest things.' (2)

Science has moved on since Engels wrote that: scientists today have a clear insight into many complex natural processes. Their difficulty (and not theirs alone) is how to act on the knowledge they have for the benefit of humanity; how to take effective political action. The facts and their interconnectedness are not in dispute. Take the rain forests of the Amazon.

Rain forests in general are fragile systems, as the programmes pointed out, because the soils on which they are based are very thin; poor compared to soils in temperate zones. Trees felled in Europe will leave plenty of nutrients in the soil for trees to regenerate. But in the poorer soils of the rain forests where nutrients are leached away very rapidly this cannot happen.

'Ninety per cent of organic matter is in the trees themselves. If you cut them or burn them and they get washed away you have lost ninety per cent of organic matter. That will support life for three or four years and then you are left with sand.'

But the problem does not stop there. 'In the heavily forested Amazon Basin one-quarter of the rainfall runs into streams and back into the ocean. Three-quarters of it comes up as evaporation, either directly from the soil or through transpiration of the plants, and gets recycled as the air mass moves westward towards the Andes: it just keeps recycling the water.'

'As it moves west water passes through the vegeta-

tion about nine times: A rain forest helps to generate the weather it needs to survive.'

'If you cut the trees three-quarters of the water runs off immediately into the stream and back into the Atlantic, leaving only one-quarter to come back up for recycling.'

Much, much more could be said on the subject of the Amazon alone, but with limited space I will make only two additional observations: 'Firstly, rain forests play a crucial role by absorbing carbon dioxide (which we generate in vast quantities) and by releasing life-giving oxygen.'

## Climatic

Secondly, as another example of the interconnectedness of the eco-system, climatic changes in the Amazon Basin resulting from the felling of the rain forest for a fast buck is already affecting the temperature of the Gulf Stream which in turn alters the pattern of the weather in western Europe.

To sum up, although the series *Earth* made a valuable contribution to our understanding of some of the consequences arising from man's blind (and not so blind) interference with the highly complex processes of nature, it could not go beyond that point.

And this is not surprising because the solution to all the problems posed by the programmes rests, not with the biologists however enlightened, but with the rising generation of revolutionary socialists.

The elaboration and development of an International Plan must, in my opinion, take these vital and urgent issues into account.

(1) *Dialectics of Nature*, page 180.  
(2) *Ibid*, page 178.

Tom Scott Robson

## The chilling technicality

Prolonging the Agony: The Human cost of Low Intensity Warfare in El Salvador. By John MacLean. El Salvador Committee for Human Rights, £1.95.

LAST YEAR, 1,725 civilians were killed by government forces in 'counterinsurgency' operations in El Salvador, and at least another 42 were killed by 'death squads'.

But, says MacLean's short pamphlet account, 'it is not this brutality which most characterises the new-found sophistication of the Salvadorean armed forces.'

'Rather it is the chilling technicality of the project of controlling people's lives for which the bombing, army brutality and displacement are simply the precursors.'

One incident is typical. A churchworker standing by a roadside in Chalatenango was passed by a truckload of army musicians on their way to 'civic action' in a combat zone.

'Half an hour later it was followed by a convoy of trucks bristling with guns, on its way to a military sweep only miles further on.'

'Civic actions are the soft-sell follow-on to the murderous "Phoenix"-type operations, intended to win the hearts and minds of those who still have bodies.'

The book provides testi-

mony of the 'displaced', driven from their homes by bombing, the maimed, bereaved and tortured.

It gives also a chronology of the war which has spread throughout the country in defiance of the repression of Duarte's right-wing regime.

In 1980-1981, guerrilla attempts to topple the government were defeated with massive repressions in the cities.

The next two years saw the country partitioned, with some areas controlled by the government and some by the guerillas.

In 1983, the guerillas formed a popular army and took on the government troops in major battles; the government turned to the United States who sent what they euphemistically call 'advisers'.

Ferocious aerial bombardment from 1984 onwards drove civilians from popularly-controlled zones and returned the struggle to a mobile guerrilla war, but in the last few years the guerillas have been active throughout the country.

Neither brute repression nor social manipulation can keep the lid on a country so deeply polarised between the 'land-rich oligarchy' and the 'land-hungry mass of peasants', concludes MacLean.

Bridget Dixon

## The private side of Lowry

A Private View of L.S. Lowry. By Shelley Rohde. Methuen £6.95.

THE biography of Manchester artist L.S. Lowry has been republished as a paperback to coincide with the centenary year of his birth.

Well-known for his industrial landscapes with their insular, hurrying figures, Lowry's very much private paintings and drawings of the unidentified (and unverifiable) Ann were fully revealed only after his death.

Shelley Rohde attempts to unravel the private side of Lowry's life through conversations with the young women Lowry took under his wing and encouraged in their artistic abilities.

He is shown to be a man who was 'always very careful to keep his shell around him', who kept the different parts of his life separate from each other — thus remaining enigmatic even to his close friends — and who guided and advised his protégés, without imposing his decisions on them.

Lowry's development as an artist is also covered in an interesting manner. The book includes many quotes from his contemporaries and friends, as well as extracts from reviews, and Lowry's own private papers.

It is striking how he furiously disagreed with his art teacher over the painting of the background for his figures — he preferred a murky ground into which his dark figures merged — but then experimented with a flaky white ground, finding that, over the years, it mellowed into a pleasing creamy white.

The style of the biography is that of the investigative journalist that Shelley Rohde is. The reader joins in the search for the 'real' Lowry, taking the evidence and weighing it in the same way as the author, developing his or her own theories on Lowry's style of painting and on his personal relationships. The book is easy to read and difficult to put down.

Geoff Thurley

## ROBSON'S CHOICE

## Palestine lives — in Manchester

THE Workers' Film Association and the Manchester Palestine Solidarity Campaign have joined forces to present a wide-ranging season of cultural events designed to deepen our appreciation of Palestinian history and the Palestinian struggle to regain their homeland\*.

In addition to a wide variety of films and videos, the programme includes poetry readings, music, a major new photographic exhibition called *Who are the Palestinians?* and numerous talks by Palestinians and committed anti-Zionist Jews.

The season opened last Saturday with the Newsreel *USA's Revolution until Victory*, followed on Monday by *Samed's Day of the Land* to commemorate the 11th anniversary of that most important event in the Palestinian calendar.

**Saturday 4 April, 7.30p.m.:** The Massacre of the Arab Cinema of the last decade. After the film there will be a performance of Arab music and song.

**Saturday 11 April, 7p.m.:** A talk by Elsie Pallas on the Kibbutzim and the Palestinians followed by extracts from David Elstein's television programme *Whose Hand on the Tap?*, which focuses on Israel's manipulation of water resources as a weapon to facilitate the expropriation of Palestinian lands.

**Wednesday 15 April, 7.30p.m.:** Antonia Caccia's *On our Land*, followed by an illustrated talk by Linda Balf who spent a year as a volunteer teacher in the Galilee.

**Wednesday 22 April, 7.30p.m.:** Tony Greenstein and Roland Rance, both members of the PSC national executive, will talk about Zionism and anti-semitism, the Zionist movement and its relation to Palestine, and Zionism as it is currently practised in Israel.

**Saturday 25 April, 7.30p.m.:** David Koff's highly acclaimed documentary *Occupied Palestine*. 'What distinguishes this film,' wrote Dr H. Shirabi, Editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 'is not only its immediacy and uncompromising honesty, but also the way it captures the totality of the Palestinian experience... Never has what happened in Palestine been revealed so dramatically with such accuracy and power. Suddenly the mystification is over and we can see for ourselves what happened.' Followed by a talk on *Israel's Iron Fist Policy* by Salim of Manchester PSC and a music performance.

**Wednesday 29 April, 7.30p.m.:** Women's Struggle in Palestine, an illustrated talk by Linda Clair who recently visited the Occupied Territories at the invitation of the Palestinian Working Women Committees.

**Saturday 2 May, 7.30p.m.:** Heiny Srour's prize-winning *Leila and the Wolves* looks at the role of Palestinian women in their people's fight for self-determination, from the British Mandate to the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Afterwards the director will be joined by Rima Milhem, born in Shatila camp in Beirut, for a discussion.

**Saturday 9 May, 7.30p.m.:** The powerful compilation *Battle for Beirut* and a summing-up session. The discussion will be led by Dr P. McKenna who worked as a doctor in Beirut in 1982.

\*All the above events take place at the Workers' Film Association headquarters at 9 Lucy Street, Manchester M15 4BX. Tel: 061-848 9782.







## ANCOATS VISIT GLASGOW

A DELEGATION from the Ancoats Hospital occupation travelled to Glasgow last Saturday to support Caterpillar workers and spread news of their occupation.

The Ancoats banner won warm applause as it entered George Square for the STUC rally.

They were refused the right to speak, however, as the last thing the STUC want is unemployed men, women and children showing that occupations are a weapon.

After the rally the delegation visited the Caterpillar factory where they received a £50 donation. 'You have nothing to lose. Continue your occupation,' urged the Caterpillar workers.

The Ancoats occupation last week entered its third month. The campaign by local residents for its reopening is gaining wider backing in local factories and schools.

Last year 36,791 patients attended the hospital's casualty unit, accounting for over a third of all north Manchester emergency treatments: 50 per cent as a result of accidents in the home and 25 per cent child admissions.

North Manchester General Hospital is four miles away — one-and-a-half hours by public

transport. The Manchester Royal is severely under-resourced. Ancoats is half a mile from Manchester city centre. The casualty unit is new and well-equipped.

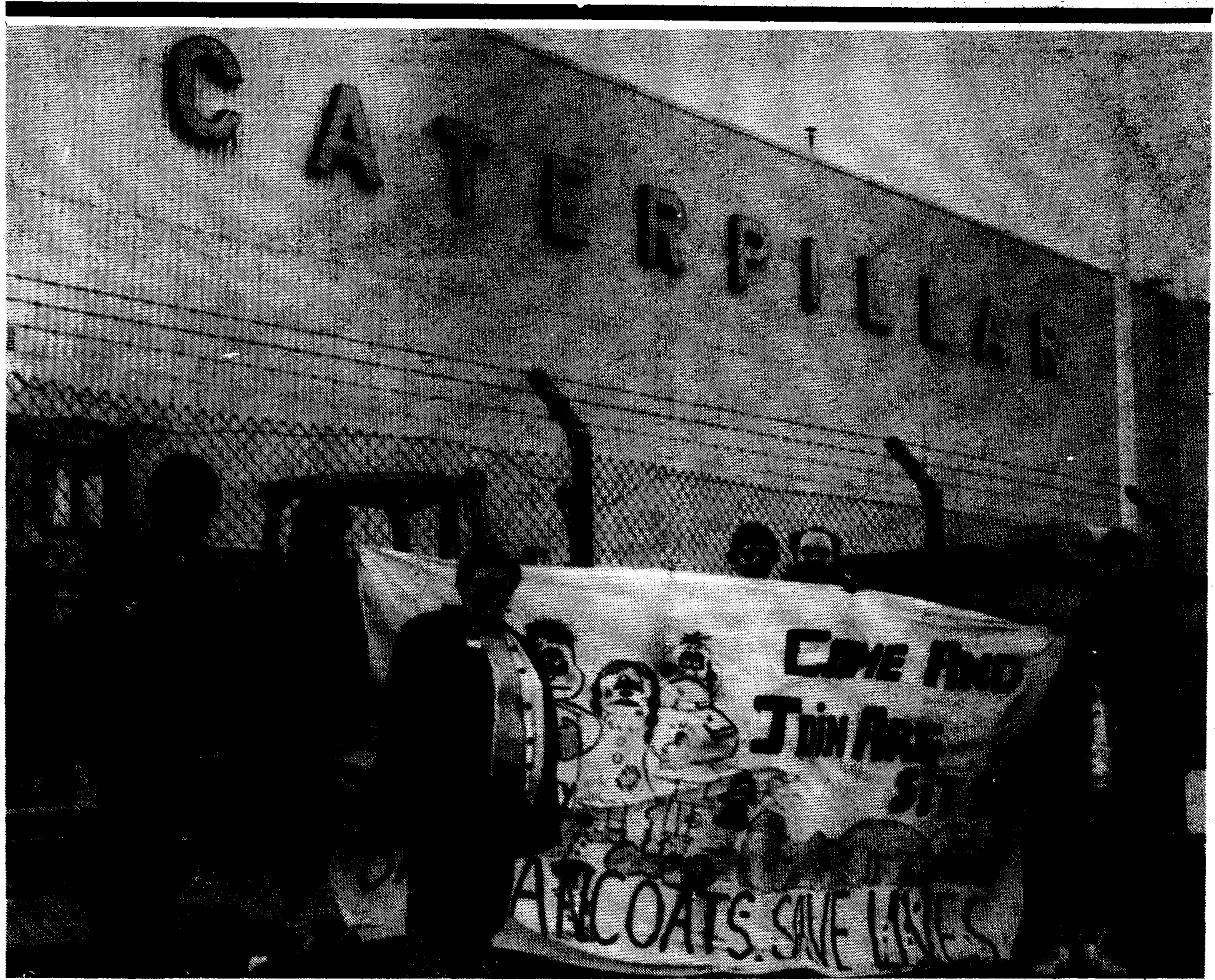
The occupation is even more significant because of the acute staff shortage in two wards at North Manchester General. Hospital chiefs have stressed it is a short-term problem and have promised the wards will reopen next week. Union leaders fear it will be closed for much longer.

A ward closed earlier this year for a week remained shut for two months. It has since reopened.

COHSE branch secretary Mary Foster said: 'The nursing shortage is crippling. Many of our nurses are being worked to death with overtime. At least another 50 are needed to assist staff stretched to the limit. We need more money from the region to train more nurses.'

These attacks on the NHS are not only happening in Manchester. Ancoats residents have taken a lead in the fight against them. They occupied the hospital on their own initiative without support from union officials.

● Rush financial donations, messages of support and invitations to speak to ACOC, Ancoats Hospital, Old Mill Street, Manchester 4.



The Ancoats occupation banner from Manchester outside the Caterpillar factory following the support march in Glasgow last Saturday

## Successful meeting

**DON'T** leave the factory at any cost, Caterpillar workers were advised by a young shop steward who has been on strike for two years.

'I hope you decide to continue the sit-in,' Brian McKee of the Morris' furniture factory told a meeting held after Satur-

day's demonstration, at which it was decided to form a Caterpillar Support Group in Glasgow.

'Picketing alone is not going to work: I've had two years of it. It didn't work in the miners' strike; it didn't work at Wapping.'

Brian, who has seen solidarity action for the Morris union recognition fight stopped by legal action, said: 'The anti-union laws as they stand are a disgrace. The

labour movement can't get anywhere with them.

'And I don't see any government, even a Labour government, withdrawing them.'

Brian pointed out that on the rally platform in George Square, AEU official Jimmy Airlie had called on office staff at Caterpillar not to cross picket lines — as though the occupation had already ended.

Victimised Durham miner

Geoff Hartnell, who had been on the march with the Durham NUM Mechanics' banner, said: 'If the workforce at Caterpillar are given a leadership they'll fight. We got leadership from Arthur Scargill, but we were betrayed in the end by the TUC and Labour Party leaders.'

'We learned the lesson that one section of the working class cannot defeat the state on its own. No trade union has ever defeated the state. That is a question for the whole working class.'

The Caterpillar occupation, Geoff pointed out, raised the question: 'who owns the factory?' That had to be answered by demanding nationalisation under the workers' own control.

A member of the Ancoats Hospital Occupation Committee, which is fighting for the maintenance of a casualty unit at the Manchester city centre hospital, expressed support for the Caterpillar struggle.

### Teachers

Joe Eyre, a member of the EIS teachers' union, said that the Caterpillar — which had been consistently profitable for more than 20 years — was 'threatened with closure by an international system of exploitation: that's what we're all up against.'

There were more than twenty speakers from the floor of the meeting, called discuss 'Caterpillar' The Way Forward.'

EETPU member David McIlwaine pointed out that workers in dispute invariably found themselves in conflict with their own union officials.

RCP members argued that the occupation was being held back by working-class demoralisation: this was hotly contested.

Victimised miner Bill Ross said workers should not wait for trade union officialdom. He spoke of the vital importance of the women's groups and support groups in the miners' strike. A Caterpillar support group should be formed as soon as possible, he said — a proposal which was unanimously agreed.

### 'Union recognition was a battle'

CATERPILLAR has never given anything away without a fight — not even the right to organise unions in the first place.

'In November 1959, they put up big signs outside the factory saying: "Join the AEU — get organised",' recalls Hughie Fullerton, a stalwart of the present occupation.

'They had meetings in the club over the road, just coinciding with the start of the day shift. On one occasion, Alex Cummins, one of the first union men in Caterpillar, was going to work after holding such a meeting, and he was taken to task and dismissed.'

'Willie Selkirk, another of those who had started the union here, made inquiries about Cummins — and then got similar treatment himself. So when part of the workforce withdrew their labour, it was first of all to get these two men their jobs back.'

'Then we took up the cudgels for union recognition.'

'That strike lasted ten weeks, including Christmas and the New Year. The company maybe thought it would fall apart over Christmas. But as the weeks went by, we had pickets on the gate and our numbers began to multiply.'

'Initially there were about 3,400 on strike, but by the end of it, just a small minority of



It's happened before and it could happen again: Caterpillar workers up against the police in their 1978 wages strike (with thanks to Caterpillar workers for loan of the photo)

a workforce about the same size as the resent one) were working.

'After talks with John Boyd of the AEU, the company re-instated Selkirk and Cummins and agreed to have negotiations with the union.'

Hughie, 55, started work as a welder at Caterpillar in January 1959, just six months after the first D8 tractor built there went to Earl's Court exhibition in London.

He emphasised that, like other firms, it had come to Lanarkshire about the same time as Ravenscraig steel-

works — and the closure not only threatens devastation for the Caterpillar workers, but means the shadow over 'the Craig' is just that bit longer.

'Caterpillar is a way of life here in Uddingston,' Hughie explained. 'At their peak, they employed about 2,700 people. It's got to be said that a lot of good came out of them being here. As time went on, wages and conditions proved to be fair and comparable.'

'In the early days, we had a lot of problems with wage negotiations. But over the last decade, the relations be-

tween workers and management have been very good.'

The last major confrontation between Caterpillar workers and management was over pay, in 1978. Then both mounted and foot police used violence to protect scabs from pickets, using the sort of tactics seen on a larger scale in the miners' strike.

'Since then, we've had labour relations which were the envy of many. That's why the closure announcement was such a devastating blow, particularly following the hard and fast promises of £62.5 million investment.'

**URGENT — To all supporters of the Caterpillar sit-in the Glasgow area.**

**MEETING to set up a Glasgow Caterpillar Support Group**  
Monday 6 April 7.30p.m.  
West Room, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

All trades union and working class organisations and all supporters of the sit-in are welcome. Support groups now also function in East Kilbride and Dunfermline, with proposals to start one in Falkirk.