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MAGGIE Smith and Gerry Downing would like to thank all WRP members and others who sent cards during the recent serious illness of their daughter Ella. Ella has now recovered and is home from hospital.

1988: YEAR OF CRISIS

THE old year staggers to an end and the world capitalist economy enters a crisis New Year, under the threat of a massive slump. The leaders of world capitalism are overwhelmed by the enormity of a crisis they cannot even explain, let alone resolve.

With the US dollar in free fall, the Central Bank chiefs in the main imperialist countries could do no more than issue a statement intended to calm the nerves of financiers around the world.

After debating for three days, they assured the business world that the banks would be quite definitely supporting the dollar exchange rate from now on, cross my heart and hope to die.

That nobody believed a word of this, least of all those who signed it, could hardly be kept secret. Before the ink was dry on the statement they had just signed, US officials were 'accidentally' dropping hints that they didn't really mean it.

BY TOM KEMP

Last weekend, before the other stock markets got under way, shares in Tokyo fell like a stone, following the dollar-yen exchange rate. The rest of the world's markets shuddered, recalling that the 19 October 'meltdown' began just like that.

On Monday, Ronald Reagan took a hand. His economic adviser, Marlin Fitzwater roundly declared: 'We feel strongly that any further decline or excessive fluctuation would be counter-productive'. This was like offering a man with pneumonia your best wishes.

While central banks bought dollars in Japan and in Europe, action by the US Federal Reserve Board was no more than a gesture.

It is now clear that nothing has really been done about either the US budget deficit, or the huge trade deficit — either because nobody knows what to do, or because they are

afraid they will make things worse. The Reagan administration is distinguished by its lack of activity.

Not that Reagan's critics have any convincing alternative to suggest. The situation is determined, not by the decisions of those in the White House, but by the laws of capitalism.

As they say in Washington: 'Things weren't like this when Reagan was alive!'

Just at the time when economists are telling each other that globally co-ordinated measures are essential, each capitalist government is putting up the storm barriers, regardless of the effect their actions have on

the rest. The watchword is: 'Maintain profits at the expense of the working class and the people of the former colonial countries.'

Even within the US, any attempt to solve the trade and budget deficits will only be at the expense of the working class and large sections of the middle class.

Engels once described the stock exchange as the place where capitalists fleeced each other. The issue and sale of shares — bits of paper giving the holder the right to a share of the loot extracted from the labour of workers — still involves a strong

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Demonstrations are continuing against the Israeli military repression and mass arrests of Palestinian youth. There have been protests in Israel itself, and this London picket on the Israeli embassy (above). There's to be an all-night vigil on the embassy starting Saturday at 5pm.

(See 'Iron Fist cannot break Palestinian struggle' — page 6.)

WORKERS PRESS DECEMBER FUND

Total so far: £3,637.27

As we explained in our last issue, this month we needed an extra £2,000 on top of our normal monthly £2,000. We explained that we required this money to pay pressing bills and unless we got it by the end of the year the future of our paper could not be guaranteed. We are pleased to say that we got an encouraging response from our readers and supporters and as we go to press, if there is a final effort, we will make our target. A big thank you to all those readers who made considerable sacrifices at Christmas time to meet the needs of Workers Press. Without these efforts we could not survive.

But we must stress that there can be no let up. We must, from now onwards, complete our Fund every month, without fail. It is also essential that sales of Workers Press be systematically increased in all areas of the country. We are particularly anxious to raise the number of regular subscriptions. So please go into action now to ensure that the January target is met and that the drive for increased sales starts right away. Send all donations to:

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Workers Press

Forty Years On

THE COMING year brings the 40th anniversary of the setting up of the National Health Service by the post-war Labour government. Largely the work of the Health Minister, Aneurin Bevan, the creation of the NHS was for many people Labour's most cherished achievement.

Today, the Tories are destroying it.

The extension of the Welfare State at the end of World War II typified the outlook of reformism. Its architects believed that capitalism could be regulated, rendered harmonious and made to serve the interests of the working class. There was no need for social revolution, for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, they said. All this was outdated Marxist dogma.

This so-called 'welfare capitalism' was the product, on the one hand, of the working class's determination to see that there would never again be a return to the Hungry Thirties — the poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and squalor that afflicted large sections of the British working class in the inter-war years.

On the other hand, it rested on the postwar inflationary boom, made possible by the influx into Europe of large quantities of American capital. Now, all that has gone. The American economy is at the centre of a world-wide crisis, which will especially hit British capitalism.

But, just as the post-war boom prepared the way for the present crisis, the way the NHS was set up laid the basis for its disintegration. From the very outset Bevan compromised with the ruling class. Under pressure from the British Medical Association, Bevan allowed private beds into state hospitals, on the grounds that this was the only means of attracting the best specialists into the service.

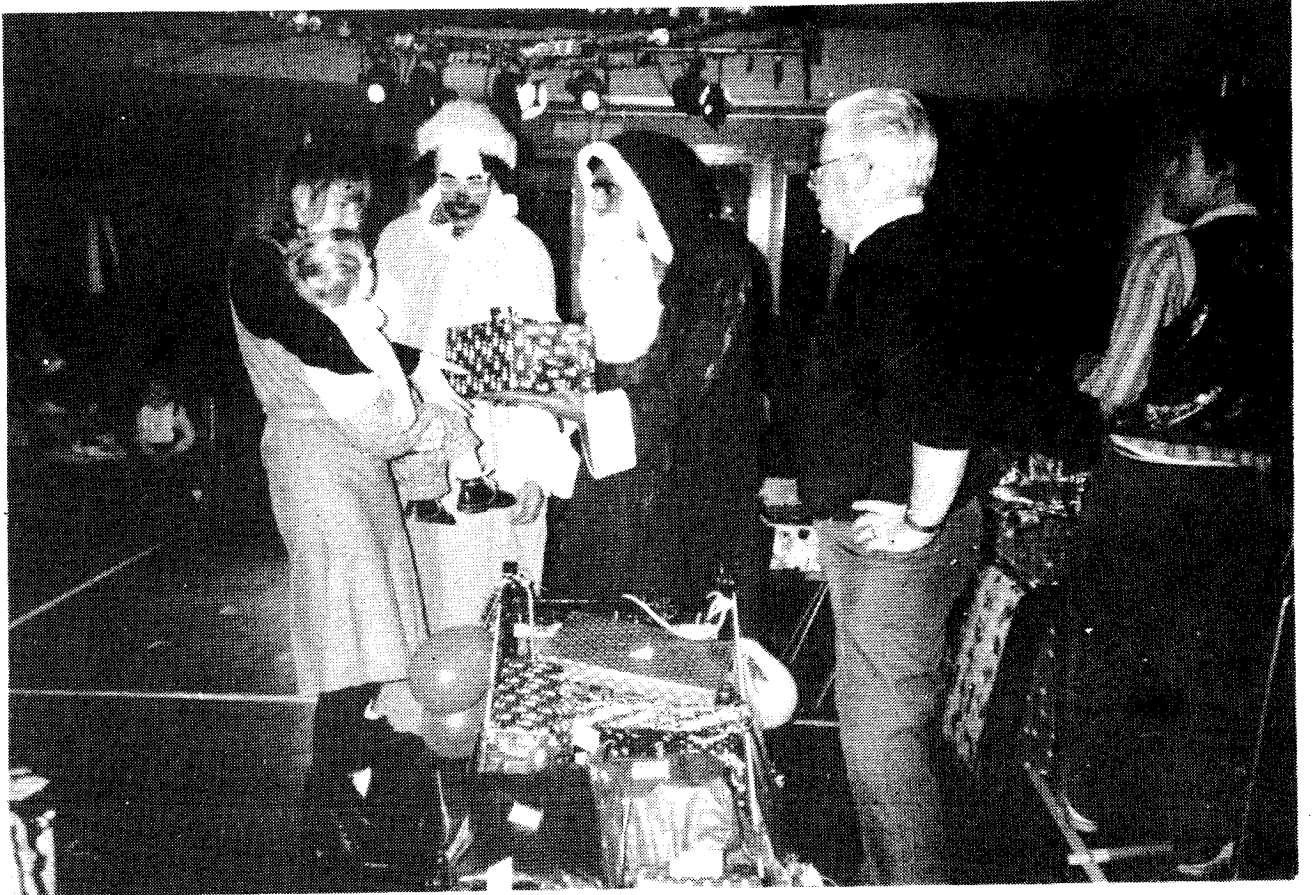
He capitulated to the general practitioners' fears by promising that there would be no full-time salaried medical service; doctors remained self-employed individuals, able to engage in private medicine if they so wished. In the end the doctors and consultants were given an even larger place in the administration of the NHS than the Tories envisaged at the time. For all Bevan's talk about local health centres hardly any were built, and most of those not for many years.

The Attlee government was soon to take a decisive step away from the idea of a comprehensive and free national health service. In 1951 they introduced charges for prescriptions, dentures and spectacles, a move which brought Bevan's resignation.

It is these initial concessions that the Thatcher government has seized upon in its efforts to carve up what remains of the NHS. The Tories and the NHS bureaucracy have channelled vast sums into private contractors, and the hugely profitable equipment and drug industries. They are determined to extend private medicine, to run hospitals on strictly commercial lines whereby the needs of the sick will be pushed into the background.

Capitalism cannot provide for the health or welfare of working people. Its state exists to protect the rights of capitalist property, not to look after the well-being of the population at large.

That is why the defence of the NHS, or of any other gains made by the working class, cannot be undertaken by reformists.



UNDERGROUND WORKERS RAISE MONEY FOR HANDICAPPED KIDS

BY NORMAN HARDING

THE Northern and Victoria Line Childrens' Fund held another successful Christmas party at the Richard Cloudsley school for handicapped children.

Dave Cockle, assistant secretary of the fund, told Workers Press that the Fund has had a very proud association with the school ever since it started 18 years ago. Donations are also made to other schools along the Northern and Victoria line.

He said that like all activities of this nature it was

unfortunate that handicapped children have to rely on charity and they have to constantly find new ways of raising money.

The Fund have held a sponsored parachute jump and several walks — including Brighton to London. This had left a great impression on his feet, said Dave. They have walked the length of the Northern Line. Money is raised every year at a New Year's Eve fancy dress party. The main event for 1988 is to be a seven day walk along the river Severn.

Dave stressed the generosity Underground workers on the Northern and Victoria line had shown over the years. Without them the Fund would have been in great difficulties.

Rural Poverty Grows

THE NUMBER of farmworkers living below the poverty line has more than doubled since 1980.

This was the message of David Clarke, Labour's spokesman on Agriculture, speaking at a Lincolnshire wages rally called by the Agricultural and Allied workers in support of their wage claim.

The claim, lodged with the Agricultural Wages Board, calls for:

- A substantial increase in the minimum rates of pay, with a target of £140 for a 35 hour week
- Double time for all hours worked on Sundays and public holidays with a day off in lieu of public holidays
- Holiday entitlement of 25 days
- Scrapping of the lower part-time rates to bring them in line with the same rate as full-time workers
- Compassionate leave of three days in the event of the death of a close relative
- Paid time off for medical and dental treatment

● Increases in YTS workers' pay to bring it into line with that of full-time workers

Behind the facade of 'our green and pleasant land' lie pockets of unhappiness caused by sheer poverty, Clarke warned the rally. He attacked the Common Agricultural Policy and warned that the government might soon introduce schemes to pay farmers not to farm.

National secretary Barry Leathwood echoed Clarke's concerns about rising rural poverty. He warned of 'villages becoming playgrounds for wealthy city yuppies' and charged the Thatcher government with wrecking the lives of workers who had lived in villages for generations.

Leathwood also spoke of the threat of the poll tax to agricultural workers.

● Throughout the day of the rally an exhibition of trade union history dating from Joseph Arch's setting up of the farmworkers' union in the 1870s was on display in the South Holland centre at Spalding.

1988: Year of crisis

● From Page 1

element of swindling. But the role of the stock exchange has changed considerably since Engels' time.

The issuing of shares is no longer the main way of raising the finance necessary to start or expand a company. That place has long ago been taken by borrowing from banks and other institutions and the re-investment of profits.

But, over the past few decades, gambling on changes in share and bond prices has become a major way of 'employing' money, as an alternative to investing it in manufacturing. You could get very rich on the New York, London or Tokyo markets, while paying workers wages to make things was an increasingly dodgy affair.

An alternative was to invest in commodities: gambling in commodity 'futures' became especially important during the 1980s. Government bonds also became a good way of getting a plush living without working for it.

This was fine for those with cash to spare, as long as the markets continued to rise, and they went on rising while the money flowed in. At the same time, factories were closing and unemployment increasing in all the old industrial centres.

Bonds

If you hold US bonds, as many sectors of world finance do, you are effectively lending money to the American state at a fixed rate of interest. The borrower may not repay this 'debt', but ownership

of the bond was an entitlement to a definite stream of income, and one which carried no risk.

You could sell your bonds, getting a price which depended on the percentage yield available on stock markets. The fall in the dollar means that the debtor is continually reducing his debt, so the percentage yield for anyone buying these bonds is put up to

Rising

take account of this.

Meanwhile, back on Wall Street, rising share prices were cutting the real rate of return on shares. This could not go on indefinitely. In October, 1987, the real world came crashing into this paradise of greed and crookery.

In this country, the Tories are pretending that they are doing fine. The rate of growth of the

UK economy is estimated to be rising at about 5 percent a year.

This merely means that a severe balance of payments crisis must erupt within a few months. This will bring a new element into the world crisis which centres on the crisis of the dollar.

The silence of the Labour leaders on the onset of the crisis is to be expected: they were themselves an essential part of the illusory period of credit expansion of the past decade. In any case, they always believed that a few minor reforms would keep the system going.

Our New Year Resolution for 1988 must be to warn the working class of the need to build a revolutionary leadership, one that bases itself on the destruction of this system and its replacement by a socialist world order.

ANTI APARTHEID PICKETERS ASSAULTED

TWO MEMBERS of the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group were assaulted by three men claiming to be police officers.

Jimmy Brosnan and Adam Bowles were on their way home at 11.30pm when they were followed off the train at Green Park by three men.

They were on their way to the Victoria Line when one of the three told Brosnan they were police officers and he was under arrest for being 'drunk and disorderly'; he was thrown against the wall, punched and handcuffed. These 'police officers' then

poured spirits over his hair and into his mouth and smashed the bottle onto the ground. Brosnan was dragged onto a Southbound Victoria Line train where he was told he was under arrest and being taken to 'Stockwell Police Station'.

On arrival Vauxhall Tube Station, Brosnan was dragged off the train by the handcuffs, into a subway corridor.

He had resisted being taken off the train; the three men had the train stopped and the doors re-opened. Two of them systematically

assaulted him, punching and kicking him in the head. He was beaten unconscious.

Meanwhile the third man told Bowles he was being arrested and handcuffed him. He was dragged up the escalator where he broke away and fell down the 'up' escalator with half the handcuffs still attached to one wrist. The three men then disappeared.

Brosnan and Bowles noted the three men seemed very calm and controlled throughout the incident.

According to the City of London AA Group press

statement, this violent attack came just over a week after two of their black members, Ronald Tomlinson and Tunde Forrest were beaten up by Cannon Row uniformed police.

● City Group is determined to expose those behind the latest assault. Anyone travelling between Green Park and Vauxhall on the southbound Victoria Line Tube between 11.30pm and midnight on Monday 14 December who may have witnessed any part of this incident is asked to contact City AA on (01) 837 6050.

Chaos in schools

BY OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

CHAOS in the schools is forecast by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) when the Tories' implement their 'national curriculum' policy.

The Union estimates that more than 50,000 new teachers will be required by 1993 although the Government's advisory committee estimated that the figure would be 46,000

Teachers in England and Wales (especially in London and the South-east) are continuing to leave the profession despite the 16.6 per cent salary rise and Mr. Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, is accused of doing no research on how many teachers his new policy will require.

The NUT points out that just at the point when the graduate numbers are set to fall the number of school pupils will rise; and 'as the full horrors of the national curriculum sink in' teachers, already angered by the new conditions imposed by the Education Secretary stipulating hours of work, are leaving their jobs.

A survey by the local education authority employers into teacher turnover in 1985-86 showed it at an average 8.6 per cent in primary schools and 9.8 per cent in secondary schools. Many sought alternative work with other authorities, but of those leaving the profession altogether, 14 per cent left blaming inadequate pay, 13 per cent because of a combination of pay and vocation-

al reasons, 44 per cent to take up an alternative career and 10 per cent because of disenchantment, while 20 per cent gave no reason for leaving.

Although maths and science are to be central subjects in the national curriculum, the NUT claims recent figures show that new trainee teachers in these subjects are inadequate and more teachers are leaving the profession from these sectors than from others.

The union also argues that there are both hidden and suppressed shortages — unqualified teachers are teaching shortage subjects and some secondary schools are not offering tuition in key subjects like physics.

Teachers' unions argue that only way the national curriculum can be implemented is by lowering the standards for entry to the profession.

This is confirmed by the Tories' announced plans for the next stage of its programme for education. Redundant executives and retired police officers are among those who will be encouraged to train as teachers.

Mayekiso's friends — and enemies

London's 10 October March for Mayekiso is depicted in the latest bulletin of the International Metalworkers' Federation, calling a world campaign for the Black South African union leader.

Moses Mayekiso is on trial under the Apartheid state's 'Treason' laws, which could mean the death sentence. His union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, has re-elected him general secretary and is campaigning for his freedom.

The International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) has sent British QC Lord Hooson to observe the trial, along with former US Supreme Court justice Arthur Goldberg.

The IMF says it has produced 'Freedom for Moses Mayekiso' leaflets in six languages to circulate among its affiliated unions around the world. US auto-workers' leader Owen Bieber spoke at

a recent rally.

Meanwhile, among those continuing efforts to sabotage the campaign for Mayekiso in Britain are unregenerate Stalinists, bureaucrats, and their crawlers.

In the local government workers' union NALGO, many members have supported demonstrations and petitions calling for Mayekiso's release. But elements in the union officialdom oppose this. They told union branches to give no support to Mayekiso.

At a recent branch Annual General Meeting in London, Metropolitan District Secretary Ivan Beavis made a vicious attack on those campaigning for Mayekiso's release. He reportedly claimed groups like the Friends of Moses Mayekiso were used by the South African secret service to 'disrupt the movement' in Britain and South Africa.

Beavis is a leading 'Morning Star' fan and supporter of the mis-named Communist Campaign Group. The Stalinists of the British Communist Party, both wings, are continuing the Stalinist tradition of slander against anyone who fights for the political independence of the working class.

Striking journalists Christmas jeers

BY LEO FINLAY

A FIVE year-old was subject to the strong arm of the law last week when she was dragged screaming into a police car along with her father, ASTMS assistant general secretary, Roger Lyons, on a North London picket line.

Fourteen sacked journalists from the Advertiser North London Group and supporters of their seven-week long strike bore witness to a gross abuse of police powers as schoolgirl Hannah and her father were taken to Golders Green police station where Mr Lyons faced an obstruction charge.

This was subsequently dropped, although he is now considering action against the police for the illegal abduction of his daughter.

Prisoners

By law a court warrant is required when taking a minor into custody.

Mr Lyons was again present at a mass picket the Monday before Christmas and told 100 demonstrators that the arrest of himself and his daughter was 'an act of gross political bias on behalf of the police'.

Festivities coloured the Yuletide picket as supporters breakfasted on mince pies around the Christmas tree. But police refused to allow the strikers to light their braziers, so central heating was self-generated with a jig-to Irish tunes provided by Grunwick veteran



Striking journalists and their supporters on the march.

and speaker Tom Durkin, and a heated attack on newspaper moguls courtesy of poet and comedian Attila the Stockbroker.

The generous Christmas spirit was enlivened by the dumping of more than 3,000 unwanted copies of the (Scab)vertiser on the com-

pany's forecourt. Red-faced company directors were jeered as they went down on hands and knees to collect their non-

newspapers.

The mass picket followed a march the previous week when more than 150 supporters marched past the Prime

Minister's constituency office in disgust at the sackings of almost the entire editorial staff of the Advertiser.

JUDGE SENT DOWN

BY OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE JUDGE who described the 1967 legislation easing the laws on homosexuality as 'a bugger's charter' has finally died, aged 85.

Sir Melford Stevenson inflicted his bigotry from the bench for five decades on all those unfortunate enough to end up in his court from the wrong side of the tracks, or with the wrong sort of opinions.

His most notorious decision was handed down in 1970 when he sentenced six Cambridge students to three years jail for protesting against the Greek junta. They were in a crowd which burst into the ballroom of the Garden House Hotel, Cambridge.

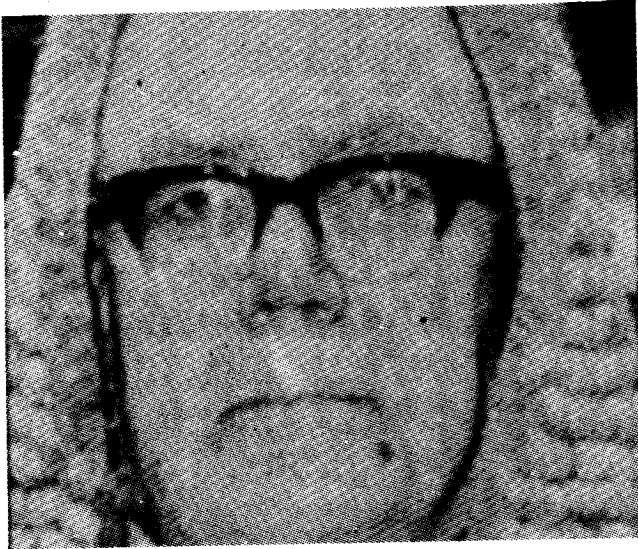
He said that he would

have given them longer sentences, in fact, 'had I not been satisfied that you have been exposed to the evil influence of some senior members of your university.'

His sensitivity was legendary: he once locked up a 15 year-old girl overnight for refusing to give evidence against her father on an incest charge.

The old rhinoceros refused to give up his career until the age of 77 despite numerous public outcries, and 'pressure' from Labour MPs.

Some of his pronouncements must have inspired stupefaction rather than outrage, as when he told a husband in a divorce case 'To live in Manchester is a totally incomprehensible choice for any free human being to make.'



On another occasion he told lawyers representing members of the IRA that they should have their fees cut for 'slinging mud' at the police.

As a barrister he prosecuted Jomo Kenyatta, and unsuccessfully defended Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain. Most accounts of that particular trial agree that the verdict was surprising and that Ruth Ellis was either re-

markably unlucky or remarkably ill-defended.

His reactionary judgments and statements were delivered with unmistakable relish, until the day that decrepitude forced him into retirement. He is reported with some affection in the papers as being 'impervious to criticism', and 'not easily written off as a blimp figure'.

Who are they trying to kid — and why?

Tories plan for electric tags

HAVING filled up the prisons, the Tory government is working on a plan to keep electronic tabs on young offenders.

Home Office Minister John Patten, in a New Year message, explained his thoughts on how to toughen up community service orders, instead of sending youngsters to prison. One possibility involves fitting an electronic tag to the victim's leg.

Two such systems are in use in the US. One keeps in constant touch with the local police station. An alarm sounds whenever the wearer leaves his home. However, once he gets outside a range of a few miles, contact is lost.

Another method is for those confined to their homes. A computer telephones every few hours. If the prisoner does not make contact, an alarm goes off at the police station.

The idea is recommended by Patten, and supported by other Tories, on the grounds that imprisonment only

leads to a return to crime after release. However, not only is it doubtful whether the numbers of prison sentences would really go down. It is also clear that the discussion of such schemes has far wider implications.

The state is continually looking for new forms of control, especially of young people. This is an obvious line of development for the Thatcherites.

Brecht once explained how the State is so concerned about its citizens, that it has them all numbered, in case it loses any of them. Now, Patten wants to use computers for the job.

Social Worker Crisis Mounts

FOLLOWING the inquiry into the death of four year old Kimberley Carlisle at the hands of her step-father, huge staffing vacancy levels across many London borough Social Services Departments have been revealed.

The crisis in the Greenwich Social Services department which led to the child's death has been pinpointed by Greenwich National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) as a lamentably low staffing level.

The social worker who had charge of Kimberley's case was in fact a team leader of a group of social workers, and should have had no case load at all.

Lambeth, where Tyra Henry was murdered, has 70 vacancies. Haringey has 15 and will be losing more because of cuts.

Greenwich itself has a 10 per cent vacancy rate, and the council is proposing to make 15 per cent cuts in the Social Services department, as part of their compliance with the Tories attacks on local government.

ELECTRICIANS ADVERTISE MURDOCH

THE ELECTRICIANS' union has issued a journal featuring a full page colour advertisement for Rupert Murdoch's union-bashing News International.

Murdoch was responsible for sacking 200 of the EETPU members and 5,500 printworkers in the year-long Wapping struggle.

The 312 page Industrial Relations Handbook contains a eulogy for the EETPU from Institute of Director's chief Sir John Hoskyn:

'The pioneering approach of the union to strike-free, single-union agreements is

the most notable and controversial example of the union's progressive attitude,' says Sir John.

He continues in the same vein

'Indeed the EETPU is rightly regarded as a progressive force in industrial relations generally.'

A number of newspapers, companies and non-TUC affiliated unions have taken slots in the 'Handbook'. Japanese firms Toshiba, Hitachi and Sanyo appear alongside the 'Guardian' and the Mirror Group, several TV companies and companies such as Kodak, Plesseys and Pilkington.

Only dying let in

THOSE living in the area of West London bounded by Isleworth, Hounslow, Richmond and Twickenham who cannot afford private medicine had better stay healthy this coming year.

Bed and staff shortages are making it virtually impossible to get into the West Middlesex hospital that serves the area.

Not even urgent cases can be admitted. The hospital's general manager John Branczik said last week: 'The only way you can get in here is if you are nearly dying and you are aboard a blue-flashing ambulance.'

'We are continuously

finding that we are having to keep patients on trolleys overnight because there are no beds.'

'We have had to consider putting patients on mattresses on the floor.'

In the wake of news of yet another child waiting forlornly and hopelessly for the heart operation which will let him lead a normal life, figures have

been released by Harriet Harman, Peckham Labour MP which show massive increases in the numbers of people trapped on NHS waiting lists.

The number waiting more than a year for operations has risen by 30 per cent from 41,000 to 54,000 in the last two years.

The number waiting for urgent operations has leapt by nearly 35 per cent from 14,882 to 20,064. Those waiting more than a month have gone up 24

per cent from 10,212 to 12,733.

● Matthew Collier has a hole in the heart and was too weak to open his Christmas presents this year. He is four-and-a-half years old, weighs 26 lbs and has never walked.

He desperately needs open heart surgery but on Christmas Eve there was no bed available for the fifth time because of the shortage of specialist nurses, a result of a lack of government funding for the NHS.

Desperate bid for six-day working

BRITISH COAL has launched a desperate bid to woo miners to the idea of six-day working. Frightened by the growing success of Scargill's campaign for re-election as National Union of Mineworkers president, the coal bosses have intensified their efforts to split the union in the 'job hungry' areas of Leicestershire and South Wales.

Management is banking on support from Mr Des Dufield, the South Wales president and Mr Jack Jones, Leicester secretary.

The Welsh leaders have already failed in their efforts to have the presidential election declared void on constitutional grounds and they refused to nominate Scargill for the presidency.

British Coal has made clear that it will not go ahead with the new £90 million Margam 'super-pit' unless the miners accept six-day working. Dufield and other leaders opposed to Scargill's defence of existing five-day agreements are anxious to talk to management on their proposals for six-day working.

In the January issue of 'Coal News' British Coal claims that miners would have the chance of one week off in four, seven days less attendance every year, increased earnings and job security.

The firm stand by the great majority of miners against the forcible extension of the working week reflects the understanding that such a move would not only threaten to break up the NUM as a national body but would return miners to pre-war working patterns.

PATIENTS in a Wolverhampton hospital ward last week stopped its closure when they tied themselves to their beds.

Staff and patients in the dermatology ward of New Cross Hospital joined forces to block the closure. Management said a decision on the hospital's future had been postponed.

Electricity privatisation friction

THE Tories' next big privatisation venture, the electricity industry, is leading to some friction between different sections of big business.

Next month, the House of Commons Select Committee begins its discussions on how the sell-off can be profitably arranged. Thatcher's plan is

to drive up the price of electricity, to make it more appetising for those vultures in the City who must be tempted to buy the privatised industry.

But the big industrial consumers of power have certain reservations about Thatcher's approach which is aimed essentially at getting rich-quick speculators.

The nationalisation programme of Labour governments after World War II was designed to assist the big monopolies by providing cheap sources of fuel and power for industry.

Thatcher's plans have ended that. The Electricity Consumers Association will submit evidence to the Select Committee showing how pri-

vatization has already led to higher costs in other industries.

The Committee is due to publish its final report in the autumn, in time for the government's plans.

Months are already beginning to water in the City, although the BP experience may point the way to a later loss of appetite.

Interview with Safiur Rahman of the Bangladesh Project

'WE want British workers to regard the poor people of Bangladesh as comrades in the struggle against British imperialism, not beggars carrying bowls,' says Safiur Rahman of the Bangladesh Project.

'The poverty of Bangladesh is another example of how Britain, and other powers, exploit a third-world country. Capitalism can't do without this sort of neo-colonialism.'

The Bangladesh Project aims to win support in Britain for the movement against the British-supported dictatorship of General Hossain Mohammed Ershad.

A new feature is the central role of the working class in the struggle, principally through the Sramik Karmachari Oikkya Parishad (SKOP) trade union federation, formed two years ago, which commands the support of 8-10 million urban workers, land workers and peasants.

The workers' first serious challenge to Ershad — who seized power in 1982 and tried to legitimise his blood-thirsty junta with rigged 'elections' in 1986 — came in July last year.

Ershad unveiled a plan for military participation in Bangladesh's district councils: this provoked a series of demonstrations and strikes culminating in a 54-hour general strike starting on July 30. The plan was withdrawn.

'Three or four million workers took part in that action,' Safiur Rahman explained to Workers Press. 'Then a campaign was launched for a "siege of Dhaka" to demand Ershad's resignation.'

This was planned for October, but was postponed to November 10 because of the floods. Hundreds of thousands of people descended on Dhaka and surrounded the presidential palace.

Mobilise

'The regime had used the breathing-space given them by the floods, to mobilise the army on the pretext of the flood emergency.'

'On November 26, Ershad dissolved parliament, imposed a state of emergency, and arrested 12,000 political activists, including the principal leaders of the Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the main opposition parties.'

Since the state of emergency was declared, there have been 10 days of general strikes, supplemented by half-day strikes, organised jointly by SKOP and the political opposition.

Until the state of emergency, SKOP activity was technically legal, but its organisers face the constant threat of assassination, torture and wounding at the hands of the ruling Jatio Party's thugs.

Some of its most bitter struggles have been in the countryside, and particularly have centred around the new land created by alluvial deposits as the country's rivers change direction (KHAS lands). According to Bangladesh's constitution, this land is distributable to the rural poor. But landworkers and peasants who attempt to settle on it come up against big landowners who mobilise thousands of armed thugs to take it over, and armed landworkers' movements have grown up in response.

The growth of SKOP and of working-class struggles will inevitably affect the political opposition movement in Bangladesh which is dominated by bourgeois nationalism. This movement consists of:

The eight-party alliance including the Awami League, National Awami Party, and the (pro-Gorbachev) Bangladesh Communist Party, which has trebled its membership in the last five years and recently drew 150,000 people to a series of rallies around

BY SIMON PIRANI

the country. This alliance proclaims its adherence to the 'four pillars' of Bangladesh's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan, that is 'socialism, secularism, democracy and nationalism'.

The more right-wing seven-party alliance headed by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party of the late military ruler Zia Rahman;

The five-party alliance led by the Maoist Workers Party, which has never recovered from 1971, when Mao supported Pakistan against



Bengali national liberation.

Asked about the workers' movement's attitude to the recent flood emergency, Safiur Rahman explained: 'First of all, the flood aid that was sent to Bangladesh was used by the ruling class and military, to secure their own position and line their own pockets.'

Hotels

'There is a layer of people who control the aid, who loan it out, or even use it to build hotels or military installations. These misappropriations are well-documented, and acknowledged even by the World Bank and the United Nations.'

'Stealing and corruption is endemic. For example the food aid is rationed, stockpiled, and the best quality materials kept by officials. Much of it ended up in the urban market-places. Only 20 per cent of it reached the disaster areas.'

'We are concerned that aid is purely used for political patronage. Britain and the US are the main donors, along with the World Bank, and the aid comes along with all kinds of pressure on Bangladesh to join the CEN-TO or SEATO military alliances.'

'Britain is quite willing to give aid because most of it is spent on British products and technology; it enables Britain to strengthen its ties with the military.'

'Aid is also counter-productive because the industrialists know that if they make a loss, they will be bailed out with the aid.'

Eighty per cent of Bangladeshis live below the poverty line, and the country has the highest infant mortality rate in the world. The Bangladesh Project cam-

BANGLADESH:

WORKING CLASS ON THE MOVE

paigns energetically against the Ershad government's myth that this is caused by 'over-population'.

'Bangladesh's economy is principally agricultural, producing rice and fish. But the fish is so highly-priced that the people can't afford it and it is exported,' said Rahman.

'The state of the main urban industry, textiles, reveals the hypocrisy of the imperialist nations. It exports 70 per cent of its products to the United States, which represents only one per cent of US textile imports — and yet the US decided to levy charges, to protect their own textile industry, thereby causing grave difficulties to Bangladesh. Britain has taken similar measures.'

'It is this relationship which lies at the root of poverty. But the government says it is over-population and spent half of its budget on birth control.'

'Sterilisations are encour-

aged, and hundreds of thousands of them carried out. Birth-control drugs are off-loaded on to the Bangladeshi market with no quality control. The drug depopulation, the effects of which caused a big scandal in Namibia recently, is freely used in Bangladesh.'

Resources

'Our country has rich soil and resources sufficient to feed its population. The floods and famine are a direct result of military rule, and of the economic and political course pursued by the regime in alliance with imperialism.'

The floods, Rahman explained, are themselves caused by the unplanned anarchy of capitalism. The northern forests of the Ganges delta have been stripped for timber and no proper re-planting organised; the destruction of the

forests — which both retained rainwater and held the topsoil in place — allowed the rainwater to flow down towards the Indian Ocean, dislodging millions of tons of ground on its way.

'The government saw the floods as an opportunity to strengthen themselves against the democratic movement,' said Rahman. 'Ershad set up a "presidential fund" but spent more on publicised personal trips to flooded areas than on the actual flood relief.'

'On September 26 this year an opposition demonstration was called to highlight this, and he responded brutally.'

'Jatio Party thugs attacked the march with cricket bats, swords and guns; people ended up in hospital with severed limbs and other serious injuries.'

Rahman concluded: 'The same system which generates poverty in Bangladesh also creates poverty and

oppression here in Britain. Workers must realise we are fighting the same enemy. When the democratic movement in Bangladesh makes requests for support, we hope the British working-class will respond, as we know what you are capable of.'

The Workers Revolutionary Party calls on British working-class organisations not to support charities whose aid is misused by the corrupt Ershad regime, but to forge direct links with SKOP and the emergent working-class movement.

We look forward to developing such links with the Bangladeshi working class, which we confidently expect will come forward in its own right, not as an adjunct to one or other section of the bourgeoisie but in the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government.

The Bangladesh Project can be contacted to Scottish Asian Action Committee, 537 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.



'Iron Fist' cannot break Palestinian struggle

ISRAELI occupation troops have effectively turned Jabaliya refugee camp, in the Gaza Strip, into a mass detention camp for its 60,000 inhabitants, sealing it off so food and essentials could not be brought in.

A director of the United Nations' Refugee Work Agency (UNRWA) warned them this was creating a 'desperate' situation for hundreds of small children whom relief workers help to feed.

UNRWA officers said that since 22 December, when Israeli troops began their blockade, food supplies and sanitation work had been prevented, contrary to assurances the military authorities had given them.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Meanwhile, the mass arrests of Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank territories were reported to have passed into

four figures, most of those held being young men and teenagers.

In the Palestinian villages and refugee camps on the West Bank, people spoke of troops and security men coming in the dead of night, dragging young people from their homes, in their pyjamas, out into the rain, and off to detention.

In Jerusalem, Israeli police used tear gas to break up a march by Israelis, demanding an end to the occupation, on Saturday, 26 December. About 1,500 people had attended a 'Peace Now' rally. Police moved in when some tried to march on the home of prime minister Shamir.

Israeli Arabs — Palestinians living in Galilee and other areas within the Israeli state — have demonstrated solidarity with those under military occupation, by a massively-supported general strike.

Mass deportations of Palestinians would be harder to keep quiet. Jordan has already forewarned that it intends doing all it can to prevent people being shoved across its border.

The world could yet see scenes on the Allenby bridge reminiscent of what happened on the German-Polish frontier fifty years ago, when Jews were being deported, if the Zionist authorities have their way. There are prominent Israeli political leaders who openly advocate mass expulsion of the whole Palestinian population.

This would be a continuation of what the Zionist armies did in 1948, when the State of Israel was set up. But since the 1967 war, when the Israeli state grabbed the remainder of Palestine, it has found itself ruling over a subject population which is a source both of cheap labour and unrest.

The Israelis annexed East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights taken from Syria. But since they could not cope with the mass of Palestinians as Israeli citizens, they have kept the West Bank and Gaza under military rule, a colonial territory.

Massive funds have been spent on planting Jewish settlers in the areas. Palestinian land has been expropriated, water resources diverted for the exclusive benefit of the new settlements, new roads built for them.

Conditions

Palestinian development is deliberately stifled, so that the people are forced into serving as cheap labour for Israel. From Gaza, thousands normally commute each day. It has been called 'Israel's Soweto'. In fact, conditions in the camps are worse than in South Africa.

In the past five years, out of 70,000 immigrants to Israel, some 12,000, or about 17 per cent, were persuaded by either religious-chauvinist fanaticism or material incentives to settle beyond the pre-1967 borders. About half the immigrants from the United States have gone to such settlements.

The World Zionist Organization's immigration department said in December that the proportion of new immigrants among the Jewish population in 'Judea and Samaria' (the West Bank) had grown 20 per cent, whereas that in pre-1967 Israel had only grown 5 per cent.

In some so-called 'development towns' within Israel, where Jews from Arab countries were settled, and jobs and services have been neglected, the councils last year adopted a call previously raised by the 'Black Panther' militants, that the government allocates to them the funds it is spending on the West Bank settlers.

Israeli workers went to a West Bank settlement project being opened by Minister David Levy, and shouted him down.

Subsidies

Despite the Zionists' propaganda, the official maps which show the occupied territories as though they were part of Israel, and the massive subsidies for housing and services, the West Bank settlers remain just an armed presence, creating racist provocations, and often retaining their US passports just in case.

The Zionists would like to receive mass immigration from the Soviet Union to reinforce this settler garrison. But while the Soviet Union relaxes restrictions, most of the Soviet Jews don't

want to leave, and those who do would mostly prefer not to go to Israel.

Besides the cost of maintaining an occupation army to keep the Palestinians down, the Israeli government has had to contend this year with youth in its schools declaring that they would refuse to serve in the territories when called up to the army. They are a politically-aware minority, but enough to worry the authorities that they could start an infection.

On 9 December, the demonstrations began in Gaza and spread to the West Bank. The Zionist state responded with its 'Iron Fist', rubber bullets, tear gas, and live rounds fired into crowds of Palestinian youth. Still the youth came back and fought.

Having claimed against all historic reason that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) could not represent the Palestinians, having claimed five years ago to have 'finished the PLO' with their murderous military onslaught on Lebanon, the Israeli rulers are reduced to wailing before the world that this massive youth revolt is 'PLO directed'.

The Israeli Labour leaders have vied with Shamir's right-wing Likud as to who could support more settlements and carry out more efficient repression. It was Labour's Yitzhak Rabin who coined the 'Iron Fist' policy and as Defence Minister is implementing it.

Zionist rule rests on brute force and repression, supported and paid for by US imperialism, and generally endorsed by the Thatcher government, which looks after Israel's privileges in the EEC.

The fight must be waged now in the international labour movement for solidarity with the Palestinian people, a boycott of Israeli goods so long as the occupation lasts, and full recognition of the PLO and the Palestinian right to their own state.

GAZA: Aspects of occupation

Military against trade unions

'FOR the first time since labour activity was effectively banned in Gaza 20 years ago, Gazan commercial and public service workers held union elections yesterday. The elections occurred despite the efforts of the military authorities, who dispatched soldiers to prevent people from entering the union office.

The soldiers removed printed ballots and ballot boxes from the office, unionists say. Tal'at Laffi, one of the union activists elected yesterday, was arrested two days ago and charged with "incitement".

The commercial and public service workers' union is the second of Gaza's six trade unions to defy military authorities and to vote for new union officials. The carpenters and building workers' union voted for new leaders on February 21, but military authorities have refused to acknowledge them.

The organisers of yesterday's elections say they are simply trying to breathe new life into dormant institutions in order to teach Gaza's workers about their economic rights.

The military government, however, opposes the new elections mainly because they "encourage hostile elements".

"They want to use the unions as they use the universities, as they use the newspapers, to strengthen the infrastructure of the PLO-affiliated organisations in the area."

But Hussein Ibrahim Abu-Nar, one of those elected yesterday, charged that the military government doesn't want workers to organise because it wants to ensure a cheap labour supply for Israeli employers.

— from 'Jerusalem Post', 5 April, 1987.

During the following two months, the military government banned at least nine union leaders in Gaza from continued union membership or entering their union offices, under threat of arrest.

No room for young mother

'An expulsion order has been issued to a Palestinian mother, even though there are no "security arguments" involved. The order, requiring immediate compliance, has been handed to Inam Mussa al Saadah, who was born and lives in the Jabaliyah camp in Gaza.

Inam is 24 years old and a mother of two girls aged four and three, as well as of a one month old baby. In 1967 she left the Gaza Strip with her father, who went to work abroad. In 1980 she married an inhabitant of the camp, and has since lived in Jabaliyah on the strength of several temporary permits.

Over the years, she submitted numerous applications for family unification, which were all rejected by the legal adviser. She has now been told by the military governor of Gaza that she must leave within 20 days.

Her family has sent a telegram to the Defence Minister, asking him to allow the young woman to stay in her place of birth with her husband and children, but has not received any reply yet. The expulsion order apparently reflects the established practice of not letting Palestinians who have lived abroad for a long time to return to the territories.

— from the Israeli daily 'Al Hamishmar', 25 November 1987.

Makeshift

As makeshift military courts began trying batches of young Palestinians for alleged resistance activity last week, there was talk from the Israeli military and the Shin Bet secret police of mass expulsions.

On several occasions in recent years, Palestinian journalists, trade unionists, and political activists have been deported, although under international law it is illegal to expel someone from their own country.

Palestinians who have travelled abroad for work or education are also frequently refused the right to return to their families in the occupied territories. So far, in contrast with the loud Zionist propaganda about the 'right' of Soviet Jews to 'return' to Israel, little has been heard in the media about this inhuman policy.

A schoolboy in Ansar II

'THEY undressed us down to our underpants, opened the windows, and for 15 minutes soldiers beat up my friend, while I waited for my turn. They beat him with their fists, kicked him and hit him with clubs and rifle butts in a dry beating on all parts of the body.

When they had finished, they forced him to insert a cucumber into his anus, exerting him to push harder, as he did so. Then they made him put the cucumber in his mouth. I saw it because I was close-by.

Then a soldier smashed his fist into my face, kicked my testicles and passed me to the five soldiers who had been doing the beating. When I refused to insert the cucumber into my anus, they got so annoyed they beat me up again.'

This is from a sworn testimony given by A.P., a

one Wednesday morning in December, 1986, and lasted eight days; half a day in military headquarters, six in Ansar 2, two more in Gaza jail.

That morning he did not travel to his school in Gaza, because his father had forbidden it, being worried about demonstrations. Instead he went for a walk near the town square, not far from where a pupil demonstration was gathering.

When he saw an army jeep approaching, he turned to leave, but was too late. He was pulled into the jeep and beaten all the way to the military government headquarters. Inside, the beating of the detainees continued.

After that, 15 of them were put into a cell measuring about two metres by one-and-a-half metres. They were woken in the middle of the night and taken out one by one, to be beaten again.

In order to remind them that this was an interrogation, each was asked: 'You throw stones, don't you?', but the beating continued without any break for an answer. Then they were returned to the cell.

The next day, they were loaded into a command car, after their heads had been covered in sacks. They were taken to the detention camp in Gaza known as "Ansar 2".

which had been left behind by the British army near the town's beach.

They were put into rooms holding 50 men and given two blankets each. That night, they were taken out again, three at a time, to another room, where they were beaten by soldiers.

For four days, they were forced to sit with their legs crossed, their heads between their legs and their hands above their heads. Anyone who moved his legs or raised his head was beaten. Only during the last two days were the detainees allowed to sit normally, says A.P.

A.P. talks about the long days of beatings and humiliations, recalling how once two women soldiers came to their cell accompanied by male soldiers, and spat at the detainees. Between their arrest and the next day they were given no food. They were allowed a slice of bread and margarine once a day for the two following days.

When one of the detainees asked why they were being treated so humiliatingly by Israel, which was a democracy, one of the officers, according to A.P., replied "Democracy is what they have in the Knesset, here we have a dictatorship."



This generation of youth has grown up under occupation. They will never accept it. The Israeli government has no answer except brute force. It will never succeed.

SRI LANKA POLICE MARKET MASSACRE

SRI LANKAN police killed 25 people in the east coast Tamil town of Batticaloa, on 27 December. The police went on the rampage through the town's bazaar, crowded with weekend shoppers, after three of their men had been ambushed by Tamil Tigers.

It was the second incident in a month in which civilians were killed by rampaging forces of 'order' in the area. Indian 'peace-keeping' troops attacked Ottamawadi village, killing up to 24 civilians and burning a mosque, after two Indian platoons had come under fire from Tamil Tigers.

They also reportedly held up a bus later, ordering out 15 passengers, and shooting them. This was confirmed by Sri Lankan military officials, although Indian officers denied it.

The incident in Batticaloa market began when three policemen, in plain clothes but armed, were ambushed by three men, who seized an automatic rifle from one policeman and escaped in a waiting car.

When news of the attack reached the police station, armed police poured out, shooting at people in the bazaar, and setting fire to shops and stalls.

Sri Lankan officials claimed later that police and Indian troops had opened fire, and that civilians had been caught in 'crossfire'. The Indian forces denied being involved, saying they had arrived later and asked

the police to return to barracks.

Witnesses who saw eighteen bodies brought to the mortuary said some had been shot at close range, indicating deliberate murder. Local people also said six more bodies had been left in burning shops, and had not been recovered, because of the intense heat.

The Tamil Eelam people are suffering the combined onslaught of two hostile forces, those of the Sri Lankan and Indian government, whose only concern seems to be to blame each other for the massacres and atrocities.

The only way to stop this carnage is for both forces to be withdrawn from the Tamil areas, and the people to be granted the right to self-determination which the Tamil Tigers are fighting for.

Bukharin to be rehabilitated soon?

BOLSHEVIK Nikolai BUKHARIN is likely to be rehabilitated 50 years after his execution in 1938 following the last of Stalin's infamous Moscow Trials.

In the latest issue of 'Nyedelya' (weekly magazine supplement to Izvestia) historian, Anatoly Latyshev, writes portraying Bukharin as far more alert than Stalin to the dangers posed by Hitler.

Latyshev also says about Bukharin's execution: 'The end of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin cannot but alarm any honest man.'

This is the latest report of the growing demands for the victims of Stalin's repressions to be rehabilitated; and it is 32 years since Khrushchev made his speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union making public some of Stalin's crimes.

In that speech Khrushchev stated:

'Stalin originated the concept 'enemy of the people.' This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proven; this term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of

revolutionary legality, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations.

This concept "enemy of the people" actually eliminated the possibility of any kind of ideological fight or making one's views known on this or that issue, even those of a practical character.

Proof

'In the main, and in actuality, the only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the "confession" of the accused himself; and, as subsequent probing proved, "confessions" were acquired through physical pressures against the accused. This led to glaring violations of revolutionary legality and to the fact that many entirely innocent persons, who in the past had defended the party line, became victims.

'We must assert that, in regard to those persons who in their time had opposed the party line, there were often no sufficiently serious reasons for their physical annihilation.

'The formula "enemy of the people" was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating such individuals.'

Today, the ferment of opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy and the subsequent 'answer' to this in the form of Gorbachev's 'perestroika' has meant that 30,000 unofficial clubs, political associations and sundry other organisations have sprung into existence.

An unsigned editorial in 'Pravda' (27 December) reported that Soviet authorities have sent these organisations a warning: they must serve the cause of 'perestroika' or face the consequences.

It seems that the bureaucracy is determined to bring the unofficial organisations to heel and calls for 'registration' are growing.

'Pravda' urges the party, the unions and the communist youth league to 'strengthen productive contacts' between official and unofficial bodies, 'in the interests of "perestroika" and socialism.'

However statements like that of Latyshev, urging the rehabilitation of Bukharin, are bound to strengthen opposition to the bureaucracy and encourage a study of Stalinism and the Moscow Trials.

Save the Sharpeville Six

THE 'Sharpeville Six' continue to face the threat of imminent execution in South Africa.

The Six are Theresa Ramashamula, Reid Mokoena, Oupa Diniso, Mojafel Sefatsa, Francis Mokhesi and Duma Khumalo.

Charged with the murder of a councillor and sentenced to death in December 1985 their lawyers subsequently appealed. That appeal was lost in December, compelling the lawyers to appeal for clemency to the State President, P W Botha.

However the families of the accused, and their international supporters, fear that Botha may secretly hang the six victims of apartheid, granting neither a reprieve nor advance warning.

To grasp the significance of the Sharpeville Six we must recall the momentous and revolutionary developments in South Africa which led up to their framing and imprisonment.

The incident which led to the six being arrested came after a crowd marched on the councillor's home, urging him to join a rents protest. He drew a gun on the people, after which they attacked him. The six were just part of the crowd.

When the Nationalist Party led by Botha won the elections in 1979, their immediate plan on behalf of international finance capital was to impose the burden of the deepening world economic crisis on the backs of the black working class.

Botha set about attempting to divide black opposition. A Tri-cameral Parliament was launched in 1983. Indian and so-called 'Coloureds' were given electoral rights and a Parliamentary House each, whilst a third and controlling House was reserved for whites.

Black people were totally excluded from this racist and fraudulent 'reform' and the newly formed United Democratic Front successfully mobilised against it.

At the same time, in re-

BY NORAH WILDE

sponse to deteriorating educational facilities and the racist educational policies of the South African state, school students launched the beginnings of a nationwide boycott of the schools.

In response to the biting economic crisis, the Nationalist government had set out to re-structure local government infrastructure. Black advisory boards which had formed part of the local (black and white) municipal bodies were now split off, with the aim of transforming them into self-financing black Community Councils.

As a means of financing these destitute Community Councils, black Councillors drawn from the petit-bourgeoisie, not uncommonly local shopkeepers, immediately and catastrophically raised rents and rates, which in turn provoked the beginnings of a nationwide rent boycott.

In this way additional and unbearable burdens were imposed upon workers already suffering from growing unemployment, homelessness and plummeting living standards.

The response of workers up and down the country was immediate and uncompromising.

Under the impact of these developments, the oppressed and exploited rose as one, triggering in 1984 the start of South Africa's continuing revolutionary upheaval.

Far from being prepared for this immense revolutionary outburst, the panicked Nationalist government stumbled and fumbled towards a militaristic solution. Eventually the armed forces were deployed in the townships to battle against the heroic resistance of unarmed workers and young people.

At the same time, collaborating black councillors systematically mobilised on

behalf of the apartheid-capitalist State, armed lumpen elements known as 'vigilantes' who served a double purpose.

Used to target and murder known leading oppositionists, they also enabled Botha to lyingly claim that bloody confrontation between the anti-apartheid forces and the vigilantes was nothing more than 'black on black' conflict.

But such was the force of the revolutionary conflagration, that black workers and young people swept on against formidable opposition, to destroy the local government organs of the apartheid-capitalist state in many parts of the country, compelling collaborationist black councillors, administrators and policemen to flee for their lives, whilst others were summarily executed.

Emergence

In this way the destruction of local government paved the way for the emergence of block, yard and street Committees such as those organised by the Alexandra Action Committee led by Moses Mayekiso, the General Secretary of the National Union of the Metalworkers.

Flourishing in different parts of the country, these nationally un-coordinated Committees were community organs of black self-rule in the townships, later subjected for just this reason to the most ferocious repression.

It was in this context of revolutionary upheaval and counter-revolutionary repression that the Sharpeville Six were arrested and framed in December 1985 for the murder of a councillor.

The threat of their imminent execution has provoked an international outcry, including a rally in front of South Africa House, Trafalgar Square by City Group Anti-Apartheid, South Africa the Imprisoned Society (SATIS), Nalco members and supporters of the ANC and Anti-Apartheid Movement.

City AA has additionally staged a six-way demonstration between South Africa House and Downing Street.

Labour camp survivor dies

RUTH BONNER died last weekend in Moscow at the age of 87.

Born in 1900 into a Jewish revolutionary family living in eastern Siberia, she grew up a committed socialist influenced by the suffering of her family in the programs against Jews during the 1880s and 1900s.

After 1917 as a member of the Communist Party she met and married an activist member of the Armenian Communist Party.

In 1937 her husband was accused by Stalin of 'bourgeois nationalism' and shot like so many other communists murdered in the Moscow Trials and the purges.

Ruth Bonner was removed from her job in the Moscow City Party Committee's department and imprisoned in Kazakhstan as the wife of 'an enemy of the people'.

Her brother, Matvei, died in prison the same year — one of the millions killed on Stalin's orders.

In 1946 Bonner was released, but forced to live in internal exile near Leningrad and then in the Gorky region east of Moscow.

When Khrushchev made public in the Soviet Union the crimes of Stalin one year after his death in 1954 she was released from internal exile and her husband posthumously rehabilitated.

In 1971 her daughter, Yelena, a former Soviet Army

doctor married Dr Sakharov the Nobel-prize winning physicist and pioneer of the Soviet hydrogen bomb.

Dr Sakharov had written a private letter to Khrushchev in 1961 warning of the danger of nuclear weapons. Later when he criticised the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the Sakharovs were exiled to Gorky.

In 1980 Bonner went on a short visit to the USA, but after campaigning for the release of the Sakharovs from exile she was refused an entry visa by the Soviet authorities and could not return home until 1986.

When she returned she would not renew her membership of the Communist Party.



Capitalism is international. So is the struggle against it. 1987, the anniversary of the great October Revolution, saw the working class on the march again throughout the world.

Pictures, clockwise from bottom left:

SCOTTISH workers occupied the Caterpillar tractor plant against closure, as the New Year opened. They built this heavy tractor for the people of Nicaragua. The company halted it with a court action. The workers had made their point. The occupation continued until May.

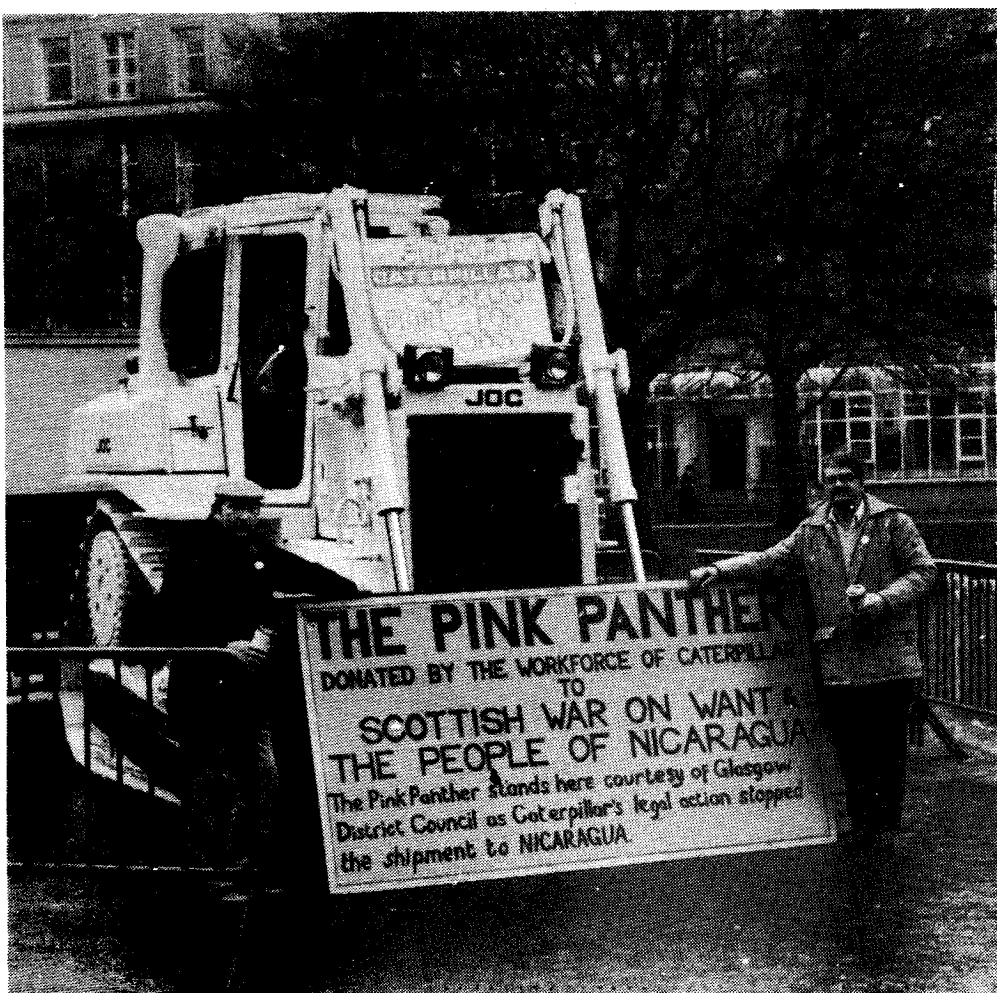
In SOUTH KOREA, big student demonstrations at Easter, more in May and June, were the overture before a massive explosion of working class militancy after years of sweated labour and intimidation. Workers organised, put in new union leaders, struck for recognition and pay rises, occupied plants, and took on the state.

It was the fifteenth anniversary of the British Army's 'Bloody Sunday' massacre, and in August, the 16th anniversary of internment in occupied northern IRELAND. There were big demonstrations in Belfast and London. At the Belfast rally, Sinn Fein councillor Tommy Carroll quoted Irish socialist James Connolly — 'It is not those who inflict the most, but those who can endure the most who will win.'

In ARGENTINA, a resurgent working class had turned out in force to block right-wing military coup threats in Easter. It was increasingly restive with the government's appeasement of the military torturers, and pay restrictions to please the bankers. The Trotskyist MAS, seen here celebrating May Day, did well in elections in September.

KURDISH workers, here brightening this year's May Day march in London, are fighting as a people for their homeland and as workers for their rights. In September, Kurdish and Turkish workers joined in demonstrating support for political prisoners in Turkey. In October, there were horrific reports of the Iraqi regime's use of chemical weapons against the Kurds.

SOUTH AFRICA'S Black miners, metalworkers and railworkers were all in action in 1987. In October, we demonstrated for metalworkers' union leader MOSES MAYEKISO, who has gone on trial under the racist state's 'Treason Law' for his leadership of the mass struggle.





MARCHING ON FROM '87



Talk of a 'downturn' in the class struggle continued to be confounded by new fighters emerging — like these determined young women fighting for union rights at HFV Plastics, Gateshead. They withstood sackings, police brutality, and organised scabbing in a six-month mini-Wapping, but were betrayed by the union bosses. Their battle ended in August. The war goes on.

Another section that showed they were ready to fight this year were the Post Office workers. In June, these London postal workers walked out over casualisation and breach of agreements, and claimed victory. In November, a ballot showed postal workers ready to strike for shorter hours, and many came out at once. The Post Office and the Tories had made threats — but settled for talks.

In November, the WRP and others in the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference of Trotskyists celebrated the 70th anniversary of the first proletarian revolution. In commemorating the Revolution we were also fighting for the Bolsheviks who led it and were murdered by Stalinism. And as we made clear, we were not just recalling a historic event, but preparing a movement that will lead the working class to power throughout the world. Forward to the World October!



Politics from the prisons

BY SIMON PIRANI

Trotskyism and nationalism

AFTER the 1916 rising, 'it wasn't only Connolly's class enemies who condemned him, some British and European socialists did too, with notable exceptions being the historian T. A. Jackson, the Scottish labour organiser John Maclean and Lenin,' says 'Questions of History' (p. 70).

'Among those who criticised the rising was the Russian Marxist, Trotsky. He claimed it was the work of "national dreamers". He felt that a nationalist rising, particularly one in a European country, where the working class proletariat had achieved a measure of strength and social consciousness, was of little significance and that only pure working-class socialist revolution was of any importance. Subsequently Trotskyists today play down the importance of the question of national liberation for the working class. Lenin however saw things differently. He felt that in the era of world imperialism it was correct for the working class to engage in a national liberation struggle against imperialism. According to Lenin, imperialism is the highest form of capitalism.'

Several vital points are raised here, and we will try to tackle them thoroughly.

Firstly, we need to look at the content of the discussion among Marxists during the first world war on the 'right of nations to self-determination'.

The imperialists had made the war in the name of 'defending small nations' (Belgium etc), and this split the Second International down the middle. Plekhanov in Russia, Kautsky in Germany, and other great 'orthodox Marxists' supported the war.

tendency

Those internationalists who opposed the slaughter, and called for it to be turned into a civil war of the working class against capitalism, included Connolly, Maclean, Trotsky, Lenin and other Russian revolutionaries such as Radek and Bukharin, and Leibknecht and Luxemburg in Germany.

All these Marxists were united by their opposition to nationalism as a political tendency; they all regarded the international struggle of the working class for socialism as their starting-point.

defend

'Questions of History' is unclear about Lenin's standpoint. He did not, either before, during or after the war, call on the working class to 'engage in' the national liberation struggle as such; rather he insisted that the working class had to defend the right of nations to self-determination. Workers in imperialist countries thus had to aid such struggles — even when they had a petty-bourgeois or bourgeois character — against their 'own' imperialist rulers; in oppressed countries, the accent was on the need to 'defend and implement the full and unconditional unity . . . of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation', without which it was 'impossible to defend the independent policy of the proletariat' against the 'intrigues and treachery' of the national bourgeoisie. 'The

Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination'.

achievement

On defence of nations' right to self-determination, Trotsky completely agreed with Lenin. They also agreed that the achievement of such rights was indissolubly tied up with socialist revolution.

'Victorious socialism must necessarily establish a full democracy and, consequently . . . realise the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination', wrote Lenin.

In his article 'Nation and Economy', Trotsky made more explicit the limitations imposed on national movements by economic developments in imperialism. He then stated, 'we do not intend to throw overboard the right of nations to self-determination. On the contrary, we think that the epoch is approaching (i.e. that of socialist revolution) when this right can at last be realised.' He added that this demand should be linked with the slogan for a united socialist states of Europe.

Other socialists rejected the slogan for 'national self-determination', not on social-chauvinist grounds — these were internationalists who had opposed the war — but because they believed it unachievable under capitalism, and unnecessary under socialism.

This mechanical view was taken by Russians Radek, Bukharin and Pyatakov, together with the Dutch internationalists. (When they founded the paper 'Vorbote' in 1915, Trotsky wrote to them, mentioning their opposition to national self-determination as one of his reasons for not joining the editorial board).

The great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, obsessed with opposing reactionary bourgeois nationalism in her Polish homeland, also conflicted with Lenin from a similar standpoint.

The Dublin uprising led by Connolly was a powerful test of all views.

Radek dismissed it as a 'putsch', and — ignoring the role of the working class — wrongly characterised it as 'a purely urban petty-bourgeois movement'.

Lenin fiercely attacked Radek, pointing out that the street fighting was 'conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers' (Lenin's emphasis). To dismiss the rising as a 'putsch', Lenin pointed out, was to ignore the fact that 'the socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and backward workers will participate in it.' ('The Irish Rebellion of 1916').

Trotsky concurred with Lenin that the working class had played a crucial role; he attacked both the British social-chauvinists with their 'hooligan blood-lust', and the Russian social-chauvinist Plekhanov who described the rising as 'harmful'; he praised Casement's courage.

Trotsky stressed that the rising showed that national movements could only be carried through by the working class: 'The experiment of an Irish national rebellion, in which Casement represented, with undoubted personal courage, the outworn hopes and methods of the past, is over and done with. But the historical role of the Irish proletariat is only beginning.'

It is in this context that we should read the remark: 'A nationwide movement, such as the nationalist dreamers had conceived of, completely failed to occur. The Irish countryside did not rise. The Irish bourgeoisie, together with the upper, more influential stratum of the Irish intelligentsia, held aloof.' ('Lessons of the Dublin Events').

Analysis

Since Trotsky was undoubtedly relying on second-hand capitalist press reports, the accuracy of this analysis is striking.

It seems clear that neither he nor Lenin realised, at the time, what Connolly's role had been. Nevertheless they both identified the part played by the working class.



Trotsky



Radek



Luxemburg

'Questions of History' is wrong to suggest that Trotsky considered 'only pure working-class socialist revolution was of any importance.' The point is that he saw working-class socialist revolution as the ultimate means by which national and democratic struggles would be resolved — as did Lenin.

Distorted

We have gone into this at length, not to be pedantic, but because Trotsky's remarks on the 1916 uprising have often been distorted and quoted selectively, by Stalinists, to prove that he ignored the national question. (See David Reed's book, and the CPI's 1970 introduction to the pamphlet 'Lenin on Ireland').

This distortion is answered by several of the early Comintern's principal congress resolutions, written by Trotsky, where the communist attitude to national self-determination is clearly spelled out. While on his death-bed, Lenin conflicted sharply with Stalin on the rights of small nations within the USSR: Trotsky supported Lenin. Trotsky's later writings repeated his views

many times, right up to the 'Manifesto on Imperialist War and Revolution' written in May 1940, five months before his death.

Like Lenin, Trotsky consistently stood for the right of nations to self-determination. Like Lenin, he saw imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. Like Lenin, he believed in temporary alliances with the national bourgeoisie in oppressed countries, only with the working class marching under its own banner towards a socialist goal.

What about Trotskyists today? 'Questions of History' states that they 'play down' the importance of national liberation.

Degeneration

But in 1969, the Trotskyists of the Socialist Labour League (SLL), were one of the few British organisations to oppose the Labour government sending British troops to Ireland.

Certainly, in the mid-70s, in line with the anti-Trotskyist degeneration of the Healy leadership, the SLL and then Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP)

succumbed to social-chauvinism in certain respects. The Trotskyist movement in Ireland was badly damaged and nearly destroyed. Then social-chauvinist condemnations of 'terrorism' were published in our paper, in which the principle of support for the rights of nations oppressed by our own bourgeoisie were dropped. But since expelling Healy two years ago, we have fought to re-establish Trotskyist principles, and in the course of that to develop a correct attitude to national liberation.

At the same time Stalinist parties — be it the British CP or Communist Campaign Group, or the CP of Ireland — are condemning 'terrorism' ever more loudly. On the present anti-IRA witch-hunt — where the issue of defending national struggles comes up concretely — they are with imperialism. As for the Stalinist Workers' Party, they have long ago accepted partition lock, stock and barrel. It is these people, not Trotskyists, who turn their backs on Ireland's right to self-determination.

(A full documented account of the struggle among internationalists over the question of national self-determination is contained in 'Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International, 1907-1916', Monad Press 1984).

A final article in this series, next week, will deal with points raised in 'Questions of History' about revolutionary leadership. Readers' letters and comments are welcome.



A British Communist Party pamphlet of 1921 included this cartoon of the giant Connolly haunting Winston Churchill, Sinn Fein leader Arthur Griffith, Prime Minister Lloyd George and Labour leader Arthur Henderson

A Soviet oppositionist speaks

PART ONE OF AN
INTERVIEW BY
PATRICK KANE

SINCE the demise of the human-rights movement in the Soviet Union in the 1970s there has been a marked increase in groups opposing the Stalinist bureaucracy. Between 1977 and 1982 underground bulletins such as 'Variations' and 'Left Turn' were published in Leningrad and Moscow. An attempt was even made to form a federation of 'Democratic forces of a socialist orientation', but this was broken up by the state before it could be properly established.

The following interview with Soviet oppositionist Alexander Severukhin (a pseudonym) reflects the deepening political crisis in the USSR.

Workers Press is printing this interview despite the fact that we do not consider the views expressed to be those of a Trotskyist; we consider the use of the term 'left oppositionist' to be misleading. The Left Opposition, (the precursor of the Fourth International established in 1938) was led by Leon Trotsky. It rejected the theory of Socialism in One Country, advanced by Stalin and Bukharin. At the same time it stood for the unconditional defence of the nationalised property relations of the USSR against imperialism and rejected all notions that the Soviet Union was in any way capitalist.

While we think that much of what Severukhin says is confused, such confusion is only to be expected as the working class and sections of the intelligentsia enter a new stage in the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. We invite readers' comments on the issues raised in the interview.

How do you explain the question of proletarian revolution on a world scale?

We are trying to rethink the theory of permanent revolution from the standpoint of a new experience which is basic for us. Our idea is that first of all there is a revolutionary process.

First, we see the West as having the most stable political and economic system. Though the crisis exists in the West as well, the West still accumulates the positive effects of the entire world system. That is why we think that western societies are not likely to be the place where the next revolutionary process could take off.

The third world accumulates the negative aspects of the world system, and that is why we don't think the third world is the source of a real revolutionary impulse, because these countries are underdeveloped. The main aim of the revolutionary process there is not really to destroy capitalism, but to correct the underdevelopment situation — to remedy the evils of today.

When you try to go forward to a genuine socialist position in a third-world country, you will be forced down an extremist path. From that standpoint I see the Nicaraguan experience as both positive and negative. It has many positive aspects, but the Cubanisation of Nicaragua is already taking place.

That's why we think that, paradoxically, the Soviet bloc countries, with their own crisis, more independent of the world capitalist system, but nevertheless influencing the world system in general, have an important revolutionary potential which could be very significant, if realised, for the whole world.

From that standpoint we can go back to the Trotskyist original orthodox version of permanent revolution taking off in Russia — now the Soviet Union — but of course not in the traditional forms of 1905.

We have seen Poland and Czechoslovakia where the mixtures of reform and revolution were realised — although finally without success. But in the Soviet Union we have greater hopes for success — because there is no 'big brother' moving against us — we are ourselves the 'big brother'.

What can you tell us about the left opposition in the Soviet Union today?

I would say that it is just emerging as a political factor. In the late 1970's and early 1980's the problem was simply to prove that we actually did exist — to prove this to our own society and, in some sense, also to the western left.

The position of the dissident emigres has been that in the Soviet Union there is absolutely no socialist opposition; that it disappeared after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It is true that the old-style reformist communist opposition disappeared. Our task was to begin from the very beginning, from almost nothing. No, from less than nothing, because a socialist ideology was considered something old fashioned, even 'reactionary'.

Stalinism had managed to make most intellectuals anti-socialist. But, at the same time, right-wing dissidents and emigres showed that their own so-called solutions were even more totalitarian and Stalinist than

official Stalinism. It was a kind of inverted, anti-communist Stalinism. Solzhenitsyn is a very typical example. But many others still inside the Soviet Union are also inverted Stalinists.

Socialist

The younger generation realised that anti-communist dogmatism is no better than communist dogmatism, and among some of us there was a revolt against both types.

There existed a need to find basic principles for a new left-wing thought in the Soviet Union; to study the western left-wing tradition; to study the tradition of Russian socialist thought; to study our own concrete experience, and work out ways of solving our own problems and to find a kind of synthesis.

I would not say that this has been achieved, only that there is a process underway — a process of synthesizing different left-wing traditions.

People considered to be left-wing in the Soviet Union don't think of themselves as 'social democrats' or 'revolutionary Marxists' or whatever, they think of themselves as 'people of the left'. It isn't necessary to specify a tendency or tradition because the idea is to overcome divisive elements in the tradition — to find a non-sectarian left-wing ideology. We are trying to integrate ideas of so-called market socialism, ideas of self-management, of revolutionary Marxism and so on.

There are also tendencies which are objectively left-wing or socialist, but lack socialist consciousness — such as the Trust Group — which objectively has a left-wing element in its political positions and is associated with the western left through the peace movement. But they do not think of themselves as a left-wing group.

In the ecologist movement, which is semi-official, there are some people thinking in more or less left-wing terms. I see a lot which coincides . . . but do not think of them as genuine left-wing people.

In official reformist currents there are also some groups which are moving toward the radical left, but doing so under the pressure of real objective forces.

In the the west, the left often finds itself in an 'objective collaboration with the right' — supporting East European political prisoners, for example. This often presents problems of differentiation.

I know the problem, and have discussed it with my English friends. I think this is sometimes unavoidable. But it is still better to avoid it. Sometimes it is unavoidable simply because if someone is in prison you must help them by every means possible. But this is only the case for prisoners.

What about Solidarnosc, which received massive rhetorical support from the right in the US and elsewhere?

But material support came from the unions — not from the right. I think it is necessary to attend demonstrations simply to show the people in the east, who are not always socialist, that they are supported by socialists. It is important to show democratic activists, who are neither left-wingers or right wingers, that the left supports them.

Reagan's money — US money — didn't influence developments in Poland. Political problems did influence them. Political support is very important. It is important for us to be able to say 'This, this and this has been done by the western left, for the eastern democratic movement. This shows that the western left is democratic, and that we are correct in trying to establish links with it'.

Is this an argument you are able to put here?

Yes, in criticising anti-communists and right-wing dissidents — those who seek support from Reagan and such people.

How does your movement relate to that kind of activity in the Soviet Union?

You mean right-wing activity? It is almost dead. Almost everyone who was active on the right is either silent, in prison or in the west. It is important to stress that it is dead not because of repression — although this has been severe.

Some years before, following repression, there were young activists who joined and reproduced the movement in the next generation. But now, since 1979, very few young people have been joining that trend; this creates a crisis for them because they have no fresh blood. But perhaps their movement will re-emerge later if there are specific reasons or conditions.

You have said that there are liberal and democratic elements which are not socialist?

Yes — but we must try to integrate those elements into the 'broad left'. The right-wing emigres claim that 'dissent is dead'. That is not true. Dissent is re-organised — in the process of being restructured. But right-wing dissent is dead, which is the real issue. That is why right-wing emigres prefer to say that all dissent is dead.

What about links between Soviet and East European left oppositionists?

Very few. We have more, in fact, with the western Left. This is very unfortunate. We had some connections with the Solidarity movement in Poland, but these were very limited. Our impression, regrettably, is that the East European left is very 'high brow' and believes that in the Soviet Union no left should exist.

They prefer to view the Soviet Union as many third-world nations view American imperialism: as an outright enemy. This makes it very difficult to establish links. It is unfortunate that such an important question solicits such a short answer, but that is how it is at present.

What can you say about the position of the Soviet working class?

It is important to remember that the Soviet working class is very different from the traditional western understanding of the working class or proletariat in general, because the Soviet working class was produced by rapid industrialisation under the conditions of a totalitarian state.

The latter moved gradually towards a kind of new, post-totalitarian authoritarian form — (but one which is different from the kind of authoritarianism we know from Latin America or third world experience).

In that sense the Soviet working class is still rather marginal; it is large if you count by numbers, but the real working class in the Marxist sense is only a section of the so-called working class, or rather 'working masses'. We speak of a working mass of which the working class is only a sector but, we hope, a decisive one.

Could you expand on that?

Well, during the process of rapid industrialisation, the number of so-called workers grew very rapidly. Then, during the Khrushchev period of rapid urbanisation, there was a second wave of growth among the working class. In reality, though, this was not a real 'organic' working class, but rather a mass of marginal, classless people, who were rounded up and thrown into factories with neither a class consciousness nor a class structure.

Such a 'mass' could simply not exist separate from the bureaucratic system. The system was very important because the official policy was always to integrate people into the system directly, in a way which would prevent them from consolidating their social relationships, and from becoming a class in the real sense.

Protest

Friends of mine who have tried to explore the real nature of social relationships in the factory have discovered that there are a lot of ties connecting workers with administration. We call these 'corruptive ties': ties connecting them with the bureaucracy and with lower levels of management.

For example, if workers are not very disciplined or productive, the administration will turn a blind eye. At the same time, workers don't protest when they are underpaid, or when their rights are ignored by the administration, because management also ignores their own misbehaviour.

In that situation there are a lot of ties which are not

class ties but rather anti-class ties. They are very real, not something invented to spoil the working class, but something organically developed by the system.

Developed

Nevertheless, class ties also exist, and these are more and more developed within the process of social development. We maintain that there is a real working class in the Marxist sense, structurally organised along the lines of skilled, qualified labour. That is the nucleus of the real working class. Its interests are basic to the broad labour masses as a whole. We hope that the broad labour masses can be integrated into that nucleus, can be organised by it and follow it.

Nevertheless, we know that different elements of the labour masses have interests of their own; have their own specific social experiences . . . For the qualified working class the main interest is in the idea of reform. Democratisation, and the type of reform characterised by the Czechoslovak experience, or perhaps, to begin with, the Hungarian model, later developing towards something more radical.

For unqualified labour, the main idea is justice. This sector seeks justice, but doesn't think very much about reform. The problem for the left is somehow to integrate these tendencies ideologically. To integrate the idea of justice and the concept of reform — that is the theoretical task of the left.

The official reformers work out a programme of specific measures which are oriented toward a kind of market socialism, even towards a kind of democratic self-management. But their ideas are always abstract. What do they do in reality? They write letters to the authorities.

Question

The programme must integrate real social interests with the movement for reform to mobilise the masses in line with their own interests. This question cannot be solved by official reformism. Therefore, the unofficial left-wing opposition must be built for that task. This is the raison d'être for a radical left in the Soviet Union — a group that is more than simply reformist. It should be revolutionary.

Revolutionary not only politically and methodologically, it must also have a kind of revolutionary psychology. Even if people are not revolutionary in their theoretical ideas (because there are a lot of people who are theoretically rather reformist; who would be social democrats in the west). They nevertheless, practicing as Soviet opposition leftists, are forced to develop a revolutionary psychology. That is why we have the possibility of integrating different tendencies of the left into a kind of 'new Soviet left' — an 'organic left' as we call it, which combines all the various tendencies, and all the versions of our historic experience as a combined left.

● To be continued
next week

LETTERS

Please send your letters to Workers' Press, PO Box 745, London SW9 7QS. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

Writing for the revolutionary paper

I HOPE that there are more seminars like the one Peter Fryer gave to members of the Workers Revolutionary Party, on 6 December, where he brought simply and clearly to us what he knew about writing for a revolutionary paper.

It is heartening that he felt he could give up a Sunday to the political education of a Party he hasn't joined.

Equally encouraging is the WRP's recognition that it has to draw on life outside its own ranks for its education.

Peter's column in Workers Press makes clear his views and sympathies.

I must recommend the two books he reviewed last week (12 December).

It is not often that writers can take you to familiar places and familiar names and give such delight.

We learn not only about places and people in these books, we learn something about ourselves.

Donald Olsen's 'The City as a Work of Art' (Yale University Press, 1986) shows that although the cities of London, Paris and Vienna are shaped by the dominant values of the ruling classes of the time, they are not 'private' nor 'individual' creations but are social creations.

We are not let off the hook entirely from our responsibility in shaping our environment.

The book raises the spirit of William Morris: 'Where profit mongers are allowed to stalk, art dies'.

As one who came to Trotsky by way of Stalin, Isaac Deutscher's three volume biography of Leon Trotsky: 'The Prophet Armed', 'The Prophet Unarmed' and 'The Prophet Outcast' (OUP, 1954) is answering a lot of questions.

It is also raising new questions.

Above all, it offers marvellous glimpses of Trotsky and his contemporaries struggling with and against one another for the love of life; some, like Trotsky and Lenin, selflessly, others more selfishly.

However, we aren't meeting superhumans in this biography. We are seeing men and women who cared, who could act brilliantly and also make terrible mistakes.

Books (and political education seminars) like these help to arm us in our own struggles. But they are not a substitute for life.

We must look to our own words and deeds for this.

How else can we rid our streets and our lives of those parasites who feed upon profits from our labours and place the hand of death on everything?

Geraldine Thorpe

Healy's political history

It IS obvious from Vanessa Redgrave's hagiographic sketch of Healy's political history (Workers Press, 5 December) that she has been fed with an idealised version.

Healy joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935. At the time of the first Moscow Trial (1936), he was a leading member of WIL — so he could not have founded the

Marxist (?) Party after his expulsion from the CP.

This is not the first time I have heard fictional tales of Healy's revolutionary past.

Some years ago a Belgian comrade (Nathan Weinstein) asked me if it was true that he had been sent clandestinely into Nazi Germany by the CPGB.

I wonder who started that canard?

Best wishes for 1988.
Charlie van Gelderen

Understanding nationalism

I WOULD like to correct the impression given of the contribution I made at the John Maclean Annual Memorial Lecture of the Lanarkshire E.I.S., in Simon Pirani's report in Workers Press, 12 December.

The first point, which was not understood by Simon, was that I never mentioned 'nationalist movements'.

What I said was 'national', or later, 'national democratic movements'.

This distinction is important.

National movements are a response to a denial of certain democratic rights.

Nationalism, however, is an ideology, advocated either by the ruling or middle classes.

Therefore, in certain circumstances Marxists will champion national movements, but will always oppose nationalist ideology.

The existence of a national movement tells us nothing about the class nature of its leadership. But if working class parties abstain on the issue of democratic rights, as they often have, then national movements will inevitably be led by nationalists.

Once the difference between national democratic movements and nationalism is understood, then it becomes easier to explain the most controversial aspect of John Maclean's life — his views on Scotland, towards the end of his life.

When he adopted the slogan 'A Scottish Workers Republic' many say he became a nationalist — particularly the nationalists and the ultra left.

I agree with Simon, and the speaker, Terry Brotherton, that John Maclean remained an internationalist till the end of his life.

I also agree that much of his motivation was to give effective succour to the new Soviet Republic.

However, I said that Terry missed out another important aspect — the impact of the 1916 Dublin Rising and the Irish Revolution.

I also pointed out that this event had contributed mightily to Lenin's changing conception of the role of national movements.

Up to 1916, Lenin had been at best lukewarm towards nationalists taking the lead in national struggles.

Instead he had advocated cross-national working class unity, by looking to the working class in oppressed nations to block the nationalist designs of their native bourgeoisies, whilst the working class in the oppressor nations, blocked the imperialist excesses of their ruling classes.

This leaves the working class in an abstentionist position, when a national democratic movement develops.

The First World War sharpened Lenin's thinking on the issue. He had to fight against certain Dutch and Polish comrades, whom he characterised as 'imperialist economists', because they dropped the demand for

national self-determination.

The 'shock' that Lenin experienced, at the 1916 Rising, was the shock of recognition — the vindication of his position.

'The dialectics of history are such that small nations, powerless as independent factors in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the real anti-imperialist force, the socialist proletariat, to make an appearance on the scene.'

By 1917 Lenin was quoting Engels favourably in 'State and Revolution':

'Even in regard to Britain where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries, would seem to have "put an end" to the national question in the various small divisions of that country — even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not just a thing of the past, and recognised in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a step forward'.

Here is the sharpest convergence of Lenin's and Maclean's thinking.

Up until the Irish Revolution, Maclean was in agreement with almost all those socialists before him, and most since, that there was a British road to socialism.

What he now advocated was a break up of the British Empire, including the United Kingdom, road to socialism.

This represented such a sharp break with previous strategy, that it was completely misunderstood then and today.

To some, Maclean became mentally unbalanced, to others he capitulated to nationalism.

British readers still have difficulty explaining this, claiming he remained an internationalist (true) but fail to explain why he specifically adopted the slogan 'A Scottish Workers Republic'.

The significance of John Maclean was that his new deeper understanding of the nature of the UK constitution and state, led him to advocate the break-up of the UK as a programmatic position.

The developing situation in Scotland shows the relevance of John Maclean's later strategy.

Unless socialists grasp the significance of this, then the likely alternative to Labour's 'Feeble 50' is the SNP's 'Timid Trio'.

If, however, we see the democratic movement in Scotland as adding a second front to that in Ireland, in the struggle to break up the United Kingdom, then the national question becomes much more important.

One last point — although I am indeed a member of the E.I.S., I announced myself as a member of the Revolutionary Democratic Group.

Allan Armstrong

Football, workers and shares

THE 10 December shareholders' meeting of Manchester United Football Club showed to all football fans who controls the 'sport' loved by millions of workers.

United chairman and chief executive Martin Edwards won the 'right' to a dividend of £50,000 to top up his £83,611 salary.

This was despite a massive vote against by the 300 shareholders (possibly some the average person in the street).

The Edwards family, own-

ing 52 per cent of the shares, could say 'up yours' to the majority present.

They are the owners of United.

It is a position giving Martin Edwards £690,000 since 1979.

One shareholder is quoted in 'The Daily Mail' (11 December) as saying: 'United were no longer a football club but a business conglomerate and every decision was taken on a commercial rather than a football basis.'

'Director Bobby Charlton said: "Commercial is not a dirty word there is nothing wrong with making money".'

The point is, Mr. Charlton and Mr. Edwards, who makes United one of the richest clubs in the world and where does the money go?

United have just introduced a new membership scheme which is compulsory for 28,000 fans (half United's capacity) before being allowed into Old Trafford.

Each person has to pay £5, presumably the cost of the card and administration.

Edwards' dividend could have gone to pay for the scheme, therefore costing the fans nothing (this is leaving aside the dubious position of having identity cards which the police would like for all people so they can control dissenters).

How do the low paid and unemployed in Manchester and elsewhere find the £5?

United's income comes basically from the fans (60,000 paid a considerable sum to Bobby Charlton in his testimonial match in 1973).

More important the dividend scandal makes a mockery of the Labour Party policy of Bryan Gould for share ownership.

Edwards, owner of a meat empire and Maxwell (still a Labour Party member?), owner of a printing and communications empire, are part of a capitalist class that will defend their ownership and monopoly to their last breath.

You, mere workers, can have a few shares: we, the minority, will remain the owners of production and entertainment.

Workers' control of sport, where fans decide the use of facilities, etc., is a revolutionary task.

Labour Party members, are you going to allow Kinnock, Gould and Co. to divert workers from struggling to achieve real democracy, i.e. socialism.

Robin Burnham
Crawley

The way forward in Scotland

THE potential for economic radical change in Scotland exists not only from the role played by an Devolved Scottish Assembly but from the inherent nature of the labour movement in Scotland.

Only by fundamental change in the economic framework of our country will improved living standards of Scottish people begin and the effects of eight years of Tory bureaucratic centralism be reversed.

Before we examine the role of the Scottish labour movement let us address ourselves to the main forms of Tory legislation which set to turn the clock back to the old days of feudalism.

The government White Paper on Housing serves the needs of the private tenant as an individual rather than the vast requirements of the homeless and unsuitably housed.

Educational reform which means removing local au-

thority control and allowing private individuals to allocate money and resources where or when they please.

And the implementation of the Community Charge which requires any individual over the age of 18 to pay a minimum of 20 per cent irrespective of their financial circumstances.

With this in mind only the most radical social forces will prevent a level of poverty and unemployment acceptable to the major political parties in Scotland. With mounting opposition to the Poll Tax many Scots are deciding not to register on the electoral roll this year.

Already Dundee Trades Council is involved in discussions about educating local people on how to avoid paying the hated tax and have now decided on a public rally in the city on 6 February.

Similar methods of resistance are being organised by Smash the Poll Tax Campaign (SPTC) PH8 West Princes Street, Glasgow.

The Labour Party and the Scottish TUC have launched a faint hearted campaign of gimmicks and slogans similar to their plans for devolution failing to place Scottish socialism back on the agenda.

I would finally hope all to involve themselves in the labour movement campaign and not to be divided by socialist or nationalistic ideologies.

Lawrence Morton
Dundee Labour Party

Snoop?

A disgusting aspect of Thatcher's economic paradise came to my notice recently. Some unemployed youths in a neighbouring house are being pursued for money by the gas board. The latter wrote here asking for information as to their whereabouts, e.g. the landlord's, or a forwarding address.

Why should we act as an unpaid detective agency for what is now a bunch of private sector profiteers?

On the one hand, we're expected to tell the law if anyone suspicious comes near our neighbour's house, on the other we're asked to inform on these same neighbours if need be. Are they getting us acclimatised for this, for when the Poll Tax snoop squads start work?

D Barker

Capitalism to blame for plight of US economy

WHILE I agree with the main thrust of Paul Cosgrove's article (Workers Press 12 December), exposing the inadequacies of the American trade union, I think he has failed to mention the most damning facts about it.

Even in the boom years, the AFL-CIO was in retreat, signing concessionary contracts and surrendering hard-won gains.

There were straightforward wage cuts, the introduction of two-tier wages, where newcomers start on a lower level, and the imposition of onerous new conditions.

As a result, average real wages in the US non-farm sector have fallen a remarkable 14 per cent until they are 'lower today than they were in 1962'.

Commenting on these figures the 'Financial Times' (13 May 1987) stated: 'This 25 year period of stagnation is probably unmatched in any other country outside Africa and Latin America.'

In my opinion, three things follow from these facts:

First, while it is normal for politicians and the media to blame the ills of the world upon greedy workers, the present plight of the US economy cannot be placed on their shoulders.

American capitalism is in trouble because of American capitalists.

Second, it seems hardly surprising that union membership has dropped from 41 per cent of the labour force in 1946 to only 18 per cent in 1985.

Understandably, workers ask themselves, 'What would I gain from joining?'

Then they look and discover affluent union leaders doing nothing for the rank and file, except worsen their conditions, and therefore can see no point in it.

Third, it is, in these circumstances, about as sensible for Norman Willis to hold up the American trade union as the model to be followed as it would be to look to London Transport for advice on fire prevention.

Raymond Challinor

Singapore detainee

Five more people detained without trial in connection with the trumped-up 'Marxist conspiracy' have now been released. Thus only one of the 22 people who were detained in connection with the 'conspiracy' is still detained:

Vincent Cheng, former executive secretary of the Catholic Church's Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission, who was described by Father Edga D'Souza, former press liaison officer for the Catholic Church in Singapore as someone whose 'only crime is his deep concern for people, especially those exploited in society and those who have no rights.'

Vincent was depicted by the propaganda of the Internal Security Department in Singapore as the ringleader of a 'Marxist network' which aimed to overthrow the Singapore Government at some point years in the future. He has never been charged, still less tried.

He is detained without trial on a renewable two-year detention order as a threat to national security.

The Singapore government has utterly failed to convince either domestic or international opinion that its ludicrous vision of a 'Marxist conspiracy' corresponds to reality.

Its only honourable course of action is to release Mr. Vincent Cheng unconditionally and to restore full civil rights to the twenty former detainees who — although never charged or tried — are now the victims of repressive and intimidatory restrictions on their activities.

If you believe, as I do, that detention without trial is rarely if ever justified, hope you will speak up for Mr. Vincent Cheng ask the Singapore government to release him unconditionally.

With thanks, best wishes for the festive season and the New Year.
Steve Savat
Singaporean and Malaysia British Association.

Peter Fryer

Personal Column

The dangers of crying wolf

JOHN ROBINSON (Letters, 12 December) says I have come back 'to lend a hand'. As an account of my relationship with Workers Press, this is only half the story.

The other half is that the group which expelled me in 1959 for premature anti-healysm has come forward to lend me a platform.

When he doesn't like what he hears from that platform — the statement that 'the use of cannabis is on the whole medically and socially less harmful than the use . . . of alcohol or tobacco' — John Robinson calls my views 'irresponsible and dangerous nonsense' and says, in so many words, that I don't know what I'm talking about and ought to shut up.

This kind of bluster might have passed for debate under Gerry Healy, but it won't wash any more. I have been speaking and writing in favour of cannabis law reform since 1967 and shall continue to do so, with or without John Robinson's leave.

Before signing the 'Times' advertisement I did my best to get to know what had been written on cannabis.

I read, for instance, the seven-volume report of the 1893-1894 Indian Hemp Drugs Commission, which took oral or written evidence from 1,193 witnesses and concluded that moderate use of cannabis had no appreciable effects on the body, no adverse effects on the brain (except possibly for individuals predisposed to act abnormally), and no adverse effects on morality.

I read the 1944 report of New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's committee, which found that cannabis use did not seriously disturb mental or physical func-

tioning and did not lead to violence or to harder drugs: 'Prolonged use of the drug does not lead to physical, mental or moral degeneration, nor have we observed any permanent or deleterious effects from its continued use.'

And I read Dr Anthony Storr's letter in the 'Sunday Times' of 5 February 1967, which included these words: 'It is not a drug of addiction and is, medically speaking, far less harmful than alcohol and tobacco.'

Subsequent research has, in the main, confirmed these findings. Studies by A. Crancer and colleagues ('Science', vol. 164, 1969) and by Dr Andrew T. Weil of the Harvard Medical School ('The Natural Mind', Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1972) showed that cannabis was a relatively mild intoxicant which did not impair, and in certain instances even improved, the performance of chronic users in selected tests.

V. Rubin and L. Comitas ('Ganja in Jamaica', The Hague, Mouton Press, 1975), selected a group of 30 cannabis smokers and a control group of 30 non-smokers to undergo extensive physical and psychological testing.

The tests included lung X-rays, brain-wave recordings, chromosome studies, and a range of psychiatric and psychological examinations designed to uncover evidence of emotional disturbance or brain damage. No significant differences were found between the cannabis users and the controls.

The 1968 report of the Standing Advisory Committee (the Wootton Committee) in Britain; the 1973 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs (the Le Dain Commission) in Canada; the 1973 First Report of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse (the Shafer Commission) in the USA: all supported varying degrees of relaxation of penalties.

The present medical consensus is summed up in a standard teaching text, 'Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine', edited by J. Macleod, 14th edition (Edinburgh etc., Churchill Living-

stone, 1984), page 696, as follows: 'There is no evidence that occasional use is harmful.'

John Robinson refers me to the work of his 'close colleague and friend' Dr Elizabeth Tylden. I have in fact been familiar with her work since her letter in the 'British Medical Journal' of 26 August 1967, according to which cannabis causes confusion, delirium, voracious appetite, emaciation, slight bronchitis, bad temper, apathy, and loss of desire to work.

At that stage the leading UK proponent of what was then called 'cannabis insanity' or 'reefer madness' was Lord Sandford, who told the House of Lords on 20 June 1967 that 'marijuana . . . leads to incurable insanity'.

It turned out that his Lordship's case was largely based on a tract entitled 'Science Speaks to Young Men on Liquor, Tobacco, Narcotics, and Marijuana', written by two Second Adventists and anti-Darwin fundamentalists, and published in California about the year 1938.

Dr Tylden's 'BMJ' letter was remarkable chiefly for two things. First, she wrote of her childhood in the Orange Free State, where she had seen for herself how her parents' African employees got 'stoned out of their heads' on hemp instead of doing their jobs properly, which was no doubt dashed inconsiderate of them.

Twenty years later, it might legitimately be asked whether Dr Tylden's early observation of the use of cannabis in that peculiar cultural matrix had not predisposed her to take a one-sided view of the subject.

The second remarkable thing about Dr Tylden's 1967 letter was her solemn prediction of 'a crop of cannabis psychotics' which would soon 'increase the young population of our mental hospitals'.

Despite the large number of young people who have smoked cannabis in the meantime, this prediction has not been fulfilled.

Twenty years later, it might legitimately be asked whether there was not some

flaw in the methodology of this 'leading medical authority' that led her so badly astray.

Dr Tylden's 'cannabis psychosis' has few supporters. The paper by H. Kolansky and W. Moore ('Journal of the American Medical Association' vol. 216, 1971), allegedly documenting 'cannabis psychosis' in a number of their patients, has been discredited; P. J. Geerings and others ('Acta psychiatrica scandinavica', vol. 48, 1972) have concluded that no specific cannabis psychosis exists.

I am most grateful to John Robinson for offering me 'documented medical evidence of the harmful nature of cannabis'. If he has any references that supplement the standard 'Marijuana: An Annotated Bibliography', compiled by Coy W. Waller and others (Collier Macmillan, 1976-1982), I shall be glad to add them to my files.

As for John Robinson's personal observations in this field, it doesn't seem to have occurred to him that all the cases he describes can be more satisfactorily explained in a wider context: a context in which cannabis is considered not as cause but as catalyst.

It is neither irresponsible nor dangerous to tell the truth. It is both irresponsible and dangerous to exaggerate the dangers of cannabis use.

Young people, finding out for themselves that these dangers have been exaggerated, may well conclude that the dangers of heroin use have likewise been exaggerated.

A perplexing feature of John Robinson's letter is its failure to address the political and civil liberties aspect of the question.

I argued on 5 December that cannabis law would by now have been relaxed — to the extent of making simple possession of a small amount a mere titular offence — if the police hadn't found the existing prohibition such a useful instrument of 'social control'.

On this, in the whole of his letter, John Robinson hasn't a word to say. Since the most dangerous thing about cannabis is its illegality, his is a silence that shrieks.

Tory gay-bashing charter

JAMES ANDERTON, Greater Manchester's chief constable is not alone in his 'Gay plague' mission against the gay and lesbian community.

Tory MP Elaine Kellet-Bowman, defending the amendment to the Tory local government bill banning the so-called promotion of homosexuality by local authorities, asserted that she was 'quite prepared to say and affirm that there should be intolerance to evil' (she has not yet cited the same inspirational source).

The amendment seeks to ban the 'promotion' of the 'acceptability of homosexuality' in maintained schools; any publication or activity supposedly promoting homosexuality; any support, financial or otherwise, of any person who 'promotes' homosexuality.

Do we want our schools to teach young people that six million men and women are unacceptable members of our society?

Tottenham MP Bernie Grant believes 'If the new clause is accepted it will be a signal to every fascist and everyone opposed to homosexuality that the government is on their side.'

As well as leading to the closure of Lesbian and Gay units, funded projects and even bars, it is anticipated that the bill could lead to the withdrawal of books by gay authors such as Orten, Wilde and Vidal and widespread victimisation of Gay and Lesbian employees.

BY LOUISE CEROVICKI

Graham Stringer, leader of Manchester city council, claims: 'It is actually the most massive attack on civil rights and civil liberties ever launched by an elected government on any group in this country'

A well-attended, three hour Commons debate on the amendment provoked angry shouts from the public gallery. The Labour front bench has given support to the amendment.

During the debate when one of the speakers referred to a recent arson attack on the London-based gay paper 'Capital Gay' as an example of increasing intolerance, one Tory MP was heard to shout that the attack was quite right.

When Tories were challenged to give examples of schools teaching homosexuality there was no response.

A report from the London Gay Teenage group was quoted showing figures of suicides among teenage lesbians and gays as one in five. According to Gallop attacks on gays have increased ten-fold in the last two years.

The measure is provoking an unprecedented response from the lesbian and gay community. Lobbies, meetings, petitions and demonstrations are planned to oppose the bill. Within a week of the proposed amendment the largest lobby of parliament since the anti-cruise lobby was organised.

Debate

Following a large picket and angry interventions by gay and lesbian delegates the Greater London Labour Party was forced to debate the issues raised by the Tory move and pledge to defend local government equal opportunities policies and projects supporting gay and lesbian initiatives.

A statement condemning the 'Capital Gay' arson attack was nonetheless only narrowly passed by 11 votes to 9.

Those who voted against said they were concerned about press coverage. When asked at a public meeting about the position of the Labour front bench on the bill and amendment, Labour councillor Bob Crossman quipped 'Supine'.

'Clause 27 of the local government bill . . . is just one example of the sham concern which is being used as a cover for vicious and violent thugs who hate gay people'. Councillor Margaret Hodge who made this statement, cited as a further example the anti-gay AIDS hysteria.

Writing on the sinister threat behind the increasing violence towards the gay community, the editor of

'Capital Gay' pointed towards the inadequate response of the Labour leadership: 'But the one powerful doubt I have is that there is no effective opposition in the country. On Saturday afternoon I rang several Labour MPs who have supported us in the past. They were resigned to defeat, apologised for their Party's spinelessness and moaned about the general unstoppable drift to the right. . . We are on our own and I am near despair.'

This attack on the rights and services for the gay community must be seen as part of the Tory attack on local authorities and their attempt to reduce them to little more than the administration of central government decisions.

As is amply shown by the

callous reaction of the Tory government to the protests at the misery and suffering being inflicted by the funding crisis of the NHS, the health and welfare of the mass of the working population, even at the most basic level is to be sacrificed in the pursuit of its policies. The position of Labour authorities and that of the Labour leadership is that some services and some sectors can be sacrificed so that they can supposedly safeguard essential services.

Services to the gay and lesbian community are high on the list of the 'dispensable'. This divisive and cynical policy is the figleaf with which these 'socialists' hope to disguise their brazen betrayal and abject capitulation to the Tory attacks. Support in defence of the gay and lesbian community must be

an integral part of the struggle to build a mass movement against the Thatcher government and those in the Labour movement who refuse to fight.

The organisation for Lesbian and Gay Action (OLGA) is organising a national demonstration on Saturday, 9 January, 12 noon starting at the Temple.

● Britain's lecturers' union said last week that the Local Government Bill could lead to gay teachers being sacked. The National Association of Teachers in Higher Education issued a statement warning that teachers in local authority funded colleges now face regressive legislation. The Bill would mean 'severe consequences for both equal opportunities and academic freedom' the association said.

LISTINGS

LISTINGS are published free by WORKERS PRESS each week for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thursday.

FIGHT THE ALTON BILL A National Day of regional and local activities: 16 January. For further details contact campaign offices at The Polytechnic of Central London, Student Union Building, 104-108 Bolsover Street, London W1. (01-436 0249).

WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS CAMPAIGN Against Unwanted Pregnancies; No Return to Back-street Abortion. Rally at Central

Hall, Westminster, 21 January. 1.30p.m.; Lobby of Parliament: 2p.m. (Further information: 01-490 0042.)

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, Trafalgar Square. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

IMMIGRATION LAW. Teresa Thornhill on latest legislation. Jewish Socialists' Group meeting Sunday 10 January, 8pm Friends International Centre, Byng Place, off Torrington Place, WC1 (nearest tube Goodge St).

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Weekly planning meetings every Tuesday 7.30p.m. Steaks Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, N4 (01-991 2938.)

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S CAMP To all women — we are still here; we still need your support! Near Newbury, Exit 13 on M4, or BR Newbury, Berkshire.

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY Demonstrate for British Withdrawal. Saturday 30 January. Islington Town Hall. Further details from: Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, Box 353 London NW5 4NH. (Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group).

VMDC London Support Group Weekly Campaign Meetings. Thursday evenings 7.30p.m. Camden Town Hall. All welcome. (Further details: 01-837 1688.)

BULLETIN OF THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE (BIRMINGHAM) Now available on subscription: £2 per year (3 issues incl pp). From: Tioclaidh Ar La c/o INHSC, PO Box 540, Spar-khill, Birmingham, B11 4AU

ROBSON'S CHOICE

Tom Scott Robson looks at this week's viewing

Saturday, at 10.15a.m. (Radio 3), **Stereo Release** features Mozart's Requiem in D Minor (completed by his student Sussmayr). At 1p.m. (C4), the outrageous Mae West in **She Done Him Wrong**. At 4.30p.m. (Radio 3), **Science Now**. At 7.15p.m. (BBC2), **Schubert**, the first in a series of six daily programmes featuring the music of this popular Viennese composer who, among other things, was in the habit of scribbling his latest song on cafe tablecloths rather than risk forgetting it. At 8.05p.m. (Radio 3), Michael Tippett's oratorio **A Child of our Time**. At 9.35p.m. (C4), Iqmar Bergman's imaginative screen version of Mozart's opera **The Magic Flute**. At 11.10p.m. (BBC2), Marlene Dietrich in the Joseph von Sternberg classic **The Blue Angel**. At 11.15p.m. (C4), Sidney Lumet's **Network**.

On **Sunday**, at 2.25p.m. (Radio 3), Verdi's opera **Don Carlos**. At 4p.m. (C4), an early repeat of the fascinating documentary about the **Baka Pygmies**, **Baka — People of the Rainforest**. At 6.25p.m. (BBC2), Peter Schreier

sings Schubert. At 8p.m. (BBC2), Mel Brooks' pastiche **Young Frankenstein**. At 10.25p.m. (BBC2), Woody Allen's first film, **Take the Money and Run**. At 2.05a.m. (ITV), John Huston's **Night of the Iguana**.

On **Monday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), Raymond Chandler's **The Big Sleep**, dramatised in three parts. At 7.20p.m. (BBC2), the Nash Ensemble play 'The Trout' in **Schubert**. At 7.35p.m. (BBC1), **Watchdog** investigates dangerous 'cures' for short sightedness that can lead to blindness. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), **Horizon** investigates new techniques in brain transplants. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), **Panorama** looks at Thatcher's 3,000 Days. At 10.10p.m. (BBC2), part-one of the three-hour epic film **The Right Stuff**. At 10.55p.m.

(Radio 3), first in a new series on composer romantic composer **Max Bruch** (born 1838) features an historic performance of his well-known violin concerto by Jascha Heifetz. At 11p.m. (C4), more experimental video in **Eleventh Hour: Time Code**.

On **Tuesday**, at 10a.m. (Radio 4), **Medicine Now**. At 2p.m. (Radio 3), **Guitar Encores**. At 7.25p.m. (BBC2), the acclaimed 10th Symphony in **Schubert**. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), **Croniamental**, an exploration of the life of Apollinaire. At 9p.m. (BBC2), Hoffman and Streep in Robert Benton's **Kramer vs Kramer**. At 11.30p.m. (C4), **Off The Page** looks at the work of white South African writer, Nadine Gordimer. At 11.35p.m. (Radio 3), the great oboeist Heinz Hollinger plays **Martinu**.

On **Wednesday**, at 7.25p.m. (BBC2), Alfred Brendel plays piano sonata in B flat major in **Schubert**. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), **Timewatch** investigates the many instances in which the capitalist system is incapable of preserving even its own heritage for posterity, whether they be films, books or paintings. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), **Q.E.D.** looks at ways of improving memory. At 10.20p.m. (BBC2), second part of the film **The Right Stuff**.

On **Thursday**, at 7p.m. (Radio 3), Verdi's opera **Falstaff**. At 7.20p.m.

(BBC2), **Mass in A flat** in the final programme of **Schubert**. At 8p.m. (C4), 'The Death of Socialism', part-one of a repeated series, **The New Enlightenment**. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), a Max Hastings documentary, **The War in Korea**. At 9p.m. (ITV), **This Week Special: Hungerford — the Lessons**. At 9.30p.m. (C4), James Ivory's film **Heat and Dust**.

On **Friday**, at 7p.m. (Radio 3), **Music for Guitar**. At 8p.m. (BBC2), **The Friday Report** focuses on Dr Pauline Cutting, the surgeon who worked for five months under siege in the Palestinian camp of Bourj al Barajneh in Lebanon. At 9.15p.m. (Radio 3), Eugene O'Neill's play **Desire Under the Elms**. At 9.25p.m. (BBC2), **Arena** looks at the life and times of Woody Guthrie. At 11.20 (BBC2), Jean Renoir's delightful film, **The Vanishing Corporal**. At 11.30p.m. (C4), Luc Besson's surreal film **Subway**, which has all the qualities the befitted a late night movie: it is beguiling to watch and quite devoid of content.

TOM SCOTT ROBSON



The ageless Cary Grant and the outrageous Mae West in the 1933 classic, 'She Done Him Wrong' (Channel 4, Saturday 2 January at 1p.m.).

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SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

DEMONSTRATE FOR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL

LONDON SATURDAY 30 JANUARY

Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group



On 30 January 1972, Bloody Sunday, British Paratroopers opened fire without warning on unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry. Fourteen people were killed.

On 30 January 1988 a demonstration marking the 16th anniversary of Bloody Sunday will be held in London.

In order to get the biggest possible turnout, WRP members, supporters and readers of the Workers Press should contact and work with their local Bloody Sunday organising committee. If no committee exists in your area, contact other groups and set one up.

See listings for further information.

FREE THE Framed Irish Prisoners!



'If the (Birmingham Six) win it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous... This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: it cannot be right, these actions should go no further. (Lord Denning, denying the Birmingham Six the right to proceed with an action against the police for injuries received while in custody) 1980

A new pamphlet outlining the cases of framed Irish prisoners, including the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four. Copies available from Free the Framed Irish Prisoners, c/o BM 132v, London WC1 3XX.

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.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, 122338.
EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN McCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.
HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.
VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.

MAIDSTONE
HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent
DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.

PARKHURST
HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
SEAN McSHANE, B75898.

TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD
HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks, WF2 9AG
NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

ALBANY
HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.
SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

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.
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, 863532.
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.
MICHAEL J McKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486.
EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER
HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ
PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.
GERARD McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.
BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26390.
PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

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

REMAND PRISONERS: BRITXON
HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.
LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693.
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694.
LIAM QUINN, 49930.

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719. HM Prison Snyal, Wilmslow, Cheshire
PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree.
G.(DANNY) McNAMEE, 25-year sentence, HM Prison, Parkhurst
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, HM Prison, Gartree
GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.
PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Long Lartin.
JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
RICHARD McIKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.

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.

EXHIBITION

Fernand Léger: 'The Later Years'



The Grey Acrobats (oil on canvas, 1942-1944)

Fernand Léger: *The Later Years*. . . exhibition, until 21 February 1988. Whitechapel Art Gallery, Whitechapel High Street, London E1.

WITHOUT the fanfare accorded the arrival of the Diego Rivera retrospective at the South Bank shortly before it, an equally important exhibition by another major artist opened at the Whitechapel Gallery on 27 November: Fernand Léger.

Léger, who was born in 1881, was associated with the Cubist movement around 1911. It was on this which his reputation was imperishably built.

He was the first of the group, which included Picasso, Braque and Gris, to experiment with non-figurative abstraction.

This exhibition, however, deals with his output from the 1930s until his death in 1955.

During that time his artistic energies were directed towards an idealised form of socialist art.

He is said to have first become aware of the elitist nature of abstract art during his experiences as an infantryman in the First World War in which he was gassed.

Of this period, he wrote in 1924: 'Three years without touching a brush, but in contact with crude reality at its most violent.'

'When I was discharged I could benefit from these hard years. I reached a decision, without compromising in any way I would model in pure and local colour, using large volumes.'



Fernand Léger in 1953

'I could do without tasteful arrangements, delicate shading, and dead backgrounds. I was no longer fumbling for the key. I had it.'

'The war matured me, and I am not afraid to say so.'

In 1917 he and Le Corbusier became friends and Léger undertook several mural commissions. Machine age technology fascinated him. 'Ballet Mecanique', a film he directed in 1924, which was entirely without scenario, is a particular example.

The kind of utopian evocation the figures, 'the people of France' take on from around the time the exhibition deals with, have a very uniform appearance, heavily outlined limbs and torsos, stylised facial features, primitive shading techniques and the exclusion of all but primary colour.

Harmony

Clouds, foliage, buildings are handled in a similar way.

Divers, construction workers, cyclists, picknickers, acrobats; whatever subject Léger selected there is always the concern to rhapsodise, to create a sense of harmony.

This pictorial naivete — although far removed from 'socialist realism' is very clearly Léger's attempt to adapt his creative talents to Stalinist ideology: a sort of peaceful co-existence.

(Léger joined the French CP in 1945.)

The objects in his paintings float in space, divorced from any conventional sense of perspective. Colour and line, too, are independent of each other.

Léger claimed he acquired the idea of the way he used colour in these later works from his stay in America and his observation of the reflective effects of neon advertising signs: turning a person and the surroundings green one moment, blue the next.

Recognition of the importance of his later work was slow to come. This has been attributed to the reaction, especially in America, against Léger's well-known Communist sympathies.

One McCarthyite politician is on record as claiming that both Léger and Marcel Duchamp, both domiciled in the US throughout the Second World War, were guilty of undermining the American way of life.

According to Congressman George A. Dondero, 'Léger and Duchamp are now in the United States to aid in the destruction of our standards and tradition. The former has been a contributor to the Communist cause in America; the latter is now fancied by neurotics as a surrealist.'

But, Léger's art — whether early or, as can be seen at the Whitechapel, late — finally surmounts all such obstacles. His importance and influence in 20th century art are secure.

This is the first major Léger exhibition in Britain for 30 years. It is an opportunity which should not be missed.

As with the Rivera exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, there are many items missing from the show. The superb murals he created, inevitably.

Unfortunately, too, the masterly, final version of his 'The Great Parade', completed in the year before he died, is not included; it remains in New York at the Guggenheim Museum.

But there are plenty of other fine examples of his work to be seen: 'Adam and Eve' (1939); 'Adieu New York' (1946); 'The Grey Acrobats' (1942-1944) among them.



Adam and Eve (oil on canvas, 1939)

JEFF JACKSON

CAMDEN XMAS PRESENT REFUSED

BY OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

ONLY 74 replies were received in response to Camden Council's attempt to strongarm its workforce into accepting a compulsory redeployment agreement.

Some 5,500 letters were sent out to members of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) in Camden urging them to accept the new agreement by signing a tear-off slip and returning it to the Chief Executive.

Of the 74 who replied, only 44 were in favour of the new agreement.

A second letter was sent out just before Christmas once again urging NALGO members to agree to the new procedure.

In what is viewed with some amusement by Camden workers, the second letter says, 'The consultation process on the new procedure has now been completed and the attached procedure is the one that must therefore be adopted by the Council.'

A letter from David Egmore, NALGO branch secretary says: 'The procedure which the

Council wishes to introduce still constitutes an unprecedented reduction of employees' rights, and would give management powers over individual staff which are not exercised in any other local authority.'

It is still possible that Camden's right-wing Labour leadership will sack the entire workforce and then re-hire on the basis of acceptance of the compulsory redeployment agreement.

It is very unlikely that many NALGO members will be frightened into signing the Council's second letter in spite of its threatening tone.

Gap between rich and poor widens under Thatcher

THE top ten per cent in the pay league are now earning three times as much as those in the bottom ten per cent, according to research published last week by the TUC.

More than a third of the population has been passed by in the recent relative rise in incomes.

Part-time workers have been badly hit. Women working part-time have received wage increases of only 2 per cent, compared with an average of 8 per cent for women in full-time work.

Homeworkers, who now number over 250,000, received no increases at all in pay or commission.

The report points out that 'on this basis, the real earnings of individual homeworkers may well have fallen significantly over the years of the analysis.'

Male manual workers are only 1 per cent better off than they were in 1983 and the lowest paid in this group have received an average increase below 1 per cent.

Women manual workers averaged real increases of less than 2 per

cent and those relying on benefit such as pensioners and the unemployed, saw almost no increase in their incomes.

At the top of the pile things are quite different. The top ten per cent of business executives have seen their salaries rocket by 45 per cent over the last financial year. Between 1983 and 1987 executive salaries have risen by an average of 5 per cent a year.

The trend towards greater increases for

higher earners has meant that some top executives are getting paid over a million pounds a year — and that's without the fringe benefits such as cars, holidays, expense accounts.

The report highlights the consistent trend toward inequality over the last ten years.

The Thatcher government has moved against every section of the working class with privatisation, attacks on the Wages Councils, and a battery of legislation intended to destroy trade unions.

The developments outlined in the TUC report will become even sharper with the massive cut-backs now being carried

out in local authorities and the National Health Service.

Future Tory plans such as benefit cuts and the poll tax will also deepen the divide between rich and poor.

The facts presented by the TUC are useful. But it is hypocritical of this body to present such a report.

By their conscious refusal to fight the Thatcher government, by their attempted betrayal of every major struggle against it, the union leaders have only encouraged these attacks.

Thatcher and her City backers have set out to create a pool of poor people dependent on the state for their existence.

They intend to use this pool of unemployed and part-time workers and those engaged in the 'black economy' against the organised working class.

One of the key tasks for the coming year will be to hammer out a strategy and tactics to deal with this newly developing situation.

BY LIZ LEICESTER

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HOW does the state exercise power over the working class? Can that power be broken? What will take its place?

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The Russian Revolution, Stalinism and Trotskyism.

SEVENTY years ago, the Russian workers, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrew Tsarism and capitalism, and the world socialist revolution began. The rise of a bureaucracy within the Soviet state led to the betrayal of the revolution, but not its destruction.

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The Fourth International Today.

FIFTY years ago, Trotsky led those who fought to continue the work to prepare the world revolution in the foundation of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution. After decades of crisis, the time has come for the re-founding of the FI.

READING:

Cliff Slaughter, *Marx and Marxism*

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*

Lenin, *The State and Revolution*

Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*