

Smash Stalinism! All Power to the Soviets!

As Mikhail Gorbachev opened the crucial special conference of the Soviet Communist Party, demonstrations were taking place all over the country, independently of the state apparatus.

"No to Stalinism!" "Full power to the Soviets" were the slogans chanted by 1,000 demonstrators outside the offices of Izvestia last Sunday.

This deliberate echo of the slogans of 1917 shows that it is impossible to hide the history of the Stalinist bureaucracy from the eyes of the workers and intellectuals.

"The Soviet people want full-blooded and unconditional democracy," said Gorbachev in his opening speech.

But just as much the Soviet people now want to know how Soviet democracy was smashed by the Stalinist bureaucracy. And more and more of them are demanding not democracy in the abstract but Soviet democracy.

by Cyril Smith

And further: if Stalin led that force that was responsible for imposing a brutal dictatorship on the Soviet working class, weren't those who fought Stalinism to the death right all along?

That is why, whatever the wishes of the bureaucracy, Trotsky's political ideas and practice can no longer be suppressed.

The great danger is that the significance of these events will be under-estimated by Marxists.

The first victorious workers' revolution in 1917 was not a Russian event but the start of the world socialist revolution. Its degeneration in the 1920s, after the death of Lenin, brought to power a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy.

This had an equal significance for world history. The very word "communism"

came to lose its meaning, becoming identified with the monstrosities of Stalin's rule.

While millions had hoped that we stood on the brink of liberation from imperialist exploitation, those hopes faded, as Stalin and his gangsters destroyed the Communist International as the instrument of socialist revolution.

Basing itself on the anti-Marxist conception that socialism could be built in a single country, the bureaucracy sought ways of "co-existing" with imperialism and betrayed one revolutionary struggle after another.

Trotskyism

Trotskyism alone fought to uphold the conception on which the October Revolution was founded - the idea that this was the start of the world socialist revolution.

In this battle Trotskyism had to fight against two currents,

polar opposites with a fundamental unity.

The Stalinists pretended that the degenerated workers' state, and the deformed workers' states which emerged after 1945, were "socialist".

On the other hand, some people declared that the revolution had been lost; not just betrayed but destroyed, and that Russia was capitalism or some new kind of class society.

Thus these tendencies agreed with the Stalinists that the bureaucracy was an essential part of the Soviet state, as against Trotsky's analysis of it as a cancerous growth which would be removed in a political revolution by the Soviet working class.

That is why the events now unfolding in the Soviet Union have such powerful significance for the whole world.

In 1956, Krushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the 20th

continued on page 3



A linocut by Russian artist Vadim Falileev entitled 'The Revolutionary Army' 1919

Dangerous confusion

ARTHUR SCARGILL'S defence of Russell Shankland and Dean Hancock the two Welsh miners now serving eight year jail sentences — will be welcomed by every class conscious worker. Shankland and Hancock were originally jailed for life for murder as a result of their actions during the miners' strike. On appeal the sentence was reduced to eight year's jail for manslaughter.

They are class-war prisoners. The two are in jail because they dared to take up the struggle against the capitalist state that set out in the miners' strike to crush the NUM as a prelude to a frontal attack on the entire working class.

Scargill also showed commendable class instincts when, in response to a question about why he had taken up the defence of the Welsh miners, he retorted 'Why don't you ask about those men who shot and murdered three people in Gibraltar?'

The NUM President's words take on an even greater significance in the light of the jail sentences totalling 29 years handed out last week to four Millwall football fans. These vicious, politically-inspired sentences, harsher than some for manslaughter and even murder, result from the screams of the Tory government and its press, enraged by the collapse of three cases against football fans after the exposure of police 'evidence' produced by undercover Metropolitan Police Officers.

Thatcher's aim is two-fold. To intimidate anybody who takes up a struggle against the Tory government. Second, to use the football question as a pretext for a state crack-down on all working-class youth, which includes, as an immediate measure, compulsory identity cards.

While Scargill's defence of the Welsh miners can only be applauded, his remarks about the politics of the Labour Party and its leadership made on the eve of the NUM's conference were of a different order.

Attacking Kinnock's 'new realism' Scargill said it was time the Labour leadership stopped preaching 'Marks and Spencerism and preached Marxism'.

This betrays dangerous confusion. The Labour Party is a reformist party. Its leadership, based on the most privileged layers in the working class and sections of the middle class, represents the interests of the capitalist class within the working class movement. Its promise of reforms for this or that group of workers is the means by which it sets out to enslave the whole of the working class.

If, like the trade union movement, the Labour Party is in crisis it is because the crisis of capitalism in Britain is driving the ruling class to take away from the working class the most basic gains it has won in the past — the NHS, a free educational system, the right to belong to trade unions etc.

The Labour Party, far from 'preaching' Marxism, has always been based on the struggle against revolutionary Marxism. This is true equally of its 'left' and 'right' wings. While it is correct to support Tony Benn and Eric Heffer against the right-wing leadership of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley in the coming election we must have no illusions about these 'left' candidates. The politics of both are based on the same reformism as the Labour Party as a whole.

Workers Press is not in the business of futile and dangerous appeals to the Labour leaders to embrace Marxism. Our aim is to build a Trotskyist Party based on just this revolutionary theory, Marxism, one that can win the working class from its present reactionary leadership.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

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THE RAPIDLY maturing political revolution in the Soviet Union is an event of profound historical significance. It marks a new stage in the struggle for the world socialist revolution and the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

The Soviet working class, which for a long period seemed to the superficial eye to have fallen asleep has woken with a vengeance. In the face of an insoluble crisis for 'socialism in one country', the working class is placing demands on the Stalinist bureaucracy which is producing considerable splits within its ranks.

Above all, the Soviet workers are demanding to know why it proved necessary for Stalin and his henchmen to wipe out the entire Bolshevik party of Lenin. The lid has been taken off the historical pot and nobody will force it back on.

Last week, Martin Walker in 'The Guardian' reported that a group called Memorial — set up to build a monument to the victims of Stalin — contained within its ranks 'some very radical people who had been expelled from the party for

flirting with Trotskyism'.

Here again is proof that Stalinism, with all its violence, could not wipe out Bolshevism, could not erase the memory of Lenin's party from the minds of the Soviet working class.

We must respond to these great events with great sacrifices in the task before us: to build the Fourth International as the Party of world socialist revolution, to rebuild the Soviet section of the International.

The Workers Revolutionary Party central committee will this weekend hold a special meeting to consider the titanic developments unfolding throughout the Soviet Union.

We have ambitious plans, of publications, meetings, and visits abroad through which we intend to rise to the occasion. But they will be worthless without the finance to realise them.

Please, a really special effort this weekend for our Fund. Go out and discuss this situation amongst the widest possible layers of workers, youth, students and intellectuals, and ask them to assist us in our work.

Workers Revolutionary Party

West of Scotland Branch

DISCUSSION CLASSES

Thursday 7 July, 7.30 pm.

**THE STRUGGLE AGAINST STALINISM
AND THE NECESSITY FOR THE FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL.**

WRP pays Tribute

Comrade Jim Hollaway, a staunch trade unionist for 56 years and Crawley AEU Branch Secretary died on Wednesday 8 June, aged 68.

He joined the Workers Revolutionary Party from the Communist Party following his experience with Stalinism in the 'Community Action Against the Cuts' campaign in 1981.

Despite physical disability, he played an active role in the party branch, recently in particular in support of Moses

Mayekiso and the South African revolution, and against the victimisation of David Kitson by the Stalinists.

At its meeting on Monday 13 June, Crawley branch of the WRP stood in silent tribute to commemorate Jim's intransigent fight against bureaucracy — in the trade union movement and in the WRP against the degeneration of Healy and Banda.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to his widow Peggy and the whole family at this time of sudden loss.

Secret Career

BBC GOVERNOR Daphne Park had no doubts about the 'Real Lives' programme on occupied Ireland or the 'Secret Society' documentary on the Zircon spy satellite. She wanted them banned.

But Dame Daphne, now Principal of Somerville College, Oxford, had a particular interest in keeping secrets. She had a secret of her own. A long career as a top British spy.

Daphne Park's entry in 'Who's Who' coyly mentions a career with the Foreign Office. But according to a new book on MI6 by Nigel West (alias Tory MP Rupert Allason), she was with the wartime Special Operations Executive, later working in Austria under cover of the Allied Control Commission.

She worked as a senior station officer for MI6 in the Congo, Zambia, North Vietnam and Moscow. She is a member of the Special Forces Club. Rupert Allason's apparent license up till recently to handle secret service history seems no longer so good. The author has been in a row with Attorney-General Sir Patrick Mayhew, for refusing to delete names of 13 intelligence officers from his latest book, 'The Friends'

The government's D-notice Secretary Admiral Higgins had 'advised' deletion on alleged 'security' grounds, although some of the 13 were dead and others had been mentioned elsewhere. Dame Daphne Park was not one of those the security services wanted to keep unnamed.

Continued from page 1

Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and the eruption and suppression of the Hungarian revolution, set off a powerful crisis throughout the world Stalinist movement.

At that time, the bureaucracy tried to adjust its method of rule to the new stage of its relations with the working class on whose back it rests. After a few years it found it necessary and possible to close down the process Krushchev had unleashed.

Powerful forces are now in movement throughout the USSR. The bureaucracy, facing a strong, young and technically advanced working class, is itself split into many opposed factions. All the economic, national and social problems which the bureaucracy tried forcibly to keep under cover have now burst into the open.

The development of the productive forces which the nationalised property of the Soviet Union has, within limits, made possible have brought the theory of socialism in one country to an unprecedented crisis.

The further development of these forces - of which the working class is the most decisive - now directly runs up against the national boundaries of the USSR.

This is the basis of the crisis which is shaking the Stalinist bureaucracy - its "reformist" and "conservative" wings alike - to its foundations.

On 25 May, "Pravda" printed an edited translation of

the "Theses" Gorbachev put forward for discussion at last week's Special Conference of the CPSU.

Devoid of all Marxism, Gorbachev's theses assume without discussion that what had existed in Russia under Stalin was socialism.

They also avoid any reference to socialism outside the USSR, and consequently stress the need for "peaceful co-existence" with capitalism.

In relation to foreign policy, the theses express only the subservience to imperialism displayed by Gorbachev at his Summit meeting with Reagan, and his earlier encounter with Thatcher. In these vital respects, Gorbachev is firmly in the tradition of Stalin.

'While backing diversity of views,' bleats the document, '...they must not lead to political confrontation or the disunity of social forces...This applies to many sensitive issues of history, interest in which has recently increased exceptionally...It is our Party and civic duty to rehabilitate those who in the past fell victim to unjustified political accusations accusations.

Bureaucracy

But the bureaucracy cannot dispose of its crimes so easily. Precisely because it is not a class, but a pathological excrescence on the workers' state, lies about its history were and are essential to its very existence. The more the truth emerges, the deeper will its crisis grow.

The conflict within the

Buy drugs or else US tells Philippines

PLANS by the Philippines government to bar the sale of pharmaceuticals that are banned in most developed countries have been met with a threat of US aid withdrawal according to a "New Scientist" report.

While the Manila House of Representatives was discussing a bill to prohibit the 'dumping' of banned drugs in the Philippines and to switch to cheaper generic preparations, President Aquino received a letter warning of the consequences.

Signed by two US senators, it stated 'If decisions are made

which jeopardise or penalise US firms presently doing business in the Philippines, the task of stimulating new US investment may become more difficult'.

The "New Scientist" says that the Manila Department of Health has listed 265 drugs currently sold in the Philippines that have damaging side-effects.

Here is a classic example of how "aid" becomes imperialist blackmail when it is a matter of maintaining the yearly billion-dollar sale of pharmaceutical products to the country, a trade dominated by American firms.

bureaucracy, of which the working class must take every possible advantage, is about how to maintain its rule over the working class. The 'conservatives' say that 'glasnost' will endanger this rule. The 'reconstructionists' argue that a refusal to open up will lead to catastrophe.

They are both correct!

At the heart of the Theses is the argument about economic policy. The document argues against 'command administrative methods of management' and in favour of "economic methods of management...increasing the interest of collectives and individual workers in the results of their work".

Gorbachev

Gorbachev and his supporters must attempt to enlist the backing of the working class for the revitalisation of the economy. But these problems cannot be resolved except by releasing the creativity of the working class and ultimately by overthrowing capitalism in the advanced industrial countries. No section of the bureaucracy can turn to such forces.

It is Gorbachev's attempted transformation of the economy which has led some tendencies which claim to be Trotskyist to condemn him for 'restoring capitalism'.

This is a rejection of Trotsky's conception of Soviet economy. He explained clearly that, precisely because of the relatively low development of industry, it cannot do without the market mechanism, in

combination with state planning and workers' democracy.

Even more important, this attitude implies that support should be given to Gorbachev's more 'conservative' opponents. Instead of grasping that the political revolution of the Soviet workers for the ending of all bureaucratic power is now beginning, these people confer on the Gorbachev wing the powers of a class, or even a super-class, which can change social relations at will.

The development of the productive forces are increasingly violently colliding with the barrier of capitalism as a world system. This now includes the bureaucracy, which has acted as the agency of capitalism within the workers' state for 60 years.

This crisis provides the world Trotskyist movement with unprecedented opportunities. The mounting tide of struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy marks a new stage in the unfolding world revolution.

A mighty force, the Soviet working class is coming to the aid of those struggling to rebuild the Fourth International and its Soviet section.

● Rebuild the Fourth International!

● Long Live the Soviet Working Class!

● Long Live the Soviet Section of the Fourth International!

LETTERS

Although Workers Press usually asks its readers to restrict themselves to no more than 200 words when writing letters, Simon Pirani's reply to the letter from a Republican prisoner has warranted a greater length.

Long Kesh reply

I would like to add to what Charlie Walsh said, in reply to the letter from a Republican prisoner (Workers Press 11 June 88).

Is a Bolshevik-type party necessary? 'The concept is presented as if it were a given truth — as if it possessed a timeless, ahistorical and universal logic', writes the Republican prisoner.

For Marxism, truths are 'given' by historical experience. In my review of 'Questions of History', I wrote about the historical reasons why a Bolshevik party was developed by Lenin, but not by other great internationalists (Connolly, John MacLean, the German Spartacists, the American 'Wobblies' etc.).

Only in Russia, where a Bolshevik party was built, did the post-war revolutionary wave bring victory, and in the early years of the Communist International (Comintern), the Bolshevik leaders fought to educate the world communist movement in the lessons of their own experience. In 'Left Wing Communism' Lenin wrote about 'the truly iron discipline' which was Bolshevism, that realised the proletarian dictatorship and prosecuted 'the most ruthless war waged by the new class against the more powerful enemy, against the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by its overthrow...'

The class struggle today is still that 'most ruthless war', and will be, until the working class vanquishes capitalism in its main international centres; from this — which is very concrete and not at all 'ahistorical' or 'timeless' — the need for Bolshevik parties arises.

Lenin's conception of Bolshevism was of a revolutionary party built on the basis of Marxist theory; he established in the struggle against 'spontaneism' (1901-1902) that such theory developed, not simply out of the struggles of the working class, but as a scientific world outlook, standing on the shoulders of all previous developments of philosophy, political economy and socialist thinking; this theory was 'brought into the working class from without'.

What happened to this conception — of revolutionary self-discipline based on scientific ideas — fought for in the Comintern's early years? It was overthrown in the Comintern by Stalinism during the 1920s; those Bolshevik-Leninists who continued the fight for it, in the Trotskyist International Left Opposition, faced physical repression by Stalinism.

(Stalinist 'discipline' — mindless acceptance of diktats from above — is the opposite of Bolshevik discipline; Stalinist talk of 'vanguard parties', divorced from the Marxist foundations of Bolshevism, is the opposite of our conception).

In my review I wrote 'there are no grounds for believing that the Republican movement can become a revolutionary party of the Bolshevik type'; the Republican prisoner wrote that this approach 'views Republicanism as being in a historical trap out of which it cannot break free'.

Put it this way: the whole of mankind is in a historical trap; we have computers, space flight... and mass starvation; the fate of humanity depends on the working class struggle to overthrow capitalism, and that in turn depends on the conscious struggle to build Bolshevik leadership. The very fact that Republican prisoners have become convinced of the need to study Marxism, and to discuss with us in the Workers Press about it, is proof that they are far from being in an 'historical trap'.

Like the working class in general, they are impelled towards finding answers to the questions posed by their struggle. But Republicanism as an ideology is in an historical trap: its aim, a united Ireland, cannot be achieved with the 'stage-ist' ideology which guides the Republican movement's leadership.

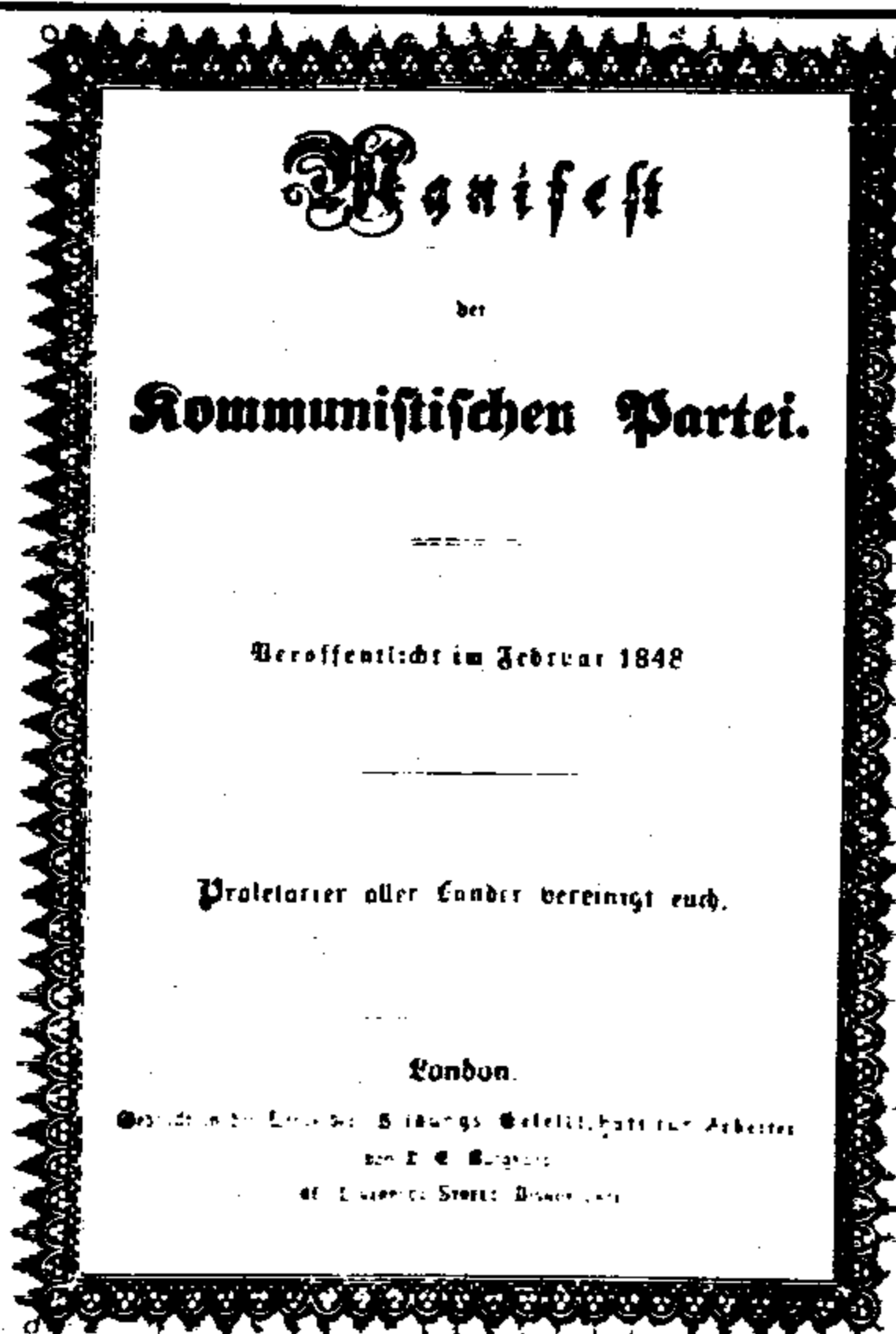
There have been revolutionary guerilla-ists, who systematically broke with their former ideology and became Marxists: the greatest example was Plekhanov, founder of Russian Marxism. On the other hand, hideous Stalinist perversions of 'Marxism' have sometimes been injected into petty-bourgeois nationalist movements (for example, Official Sinn Fein in the early 1970s).

But no petty-bourgeois nationalist movement, not even one with a working-class following, ever turned itself into a Bolshevik party based on Marxist science.

In fact, predictions by 'Marxist' revisionists, that one might substitute for a Bolshevik party, has more than once (Stalin's illusions in the 'left' Kuomintang in 1926, Pablo's faith in the 'progressive' wing of the Bolivian National Revolutionary Movement in 1952) led to disaster for the working class, including many courageous fighters who remain under the banner of nationalism. My point about Sinn Fein was not a 'mechanistic prediction', but based on what I know about these historical experiences.

Nowhere will we find more courageous fighters against imperialism than in Ireland. To you, comrades, we in the WRP promise frank discussion; to the social-chauvinist Labour leaders, we promise relentless battle to drive them out of the British worker's movement, which they have shamed with a century of bootlicking pro-imperialism.

Simon Pirani



Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press).

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PTA as 'mental torture'

HOME SECRETARY Douglas Hurd has refused to lift an exclusion order issued last March against a Dublin woman, Mrs Deirdre Whelan, after she was arrested in London under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, having attended the committal proceedings at Lambeth magistrates court where her sister, Ms Martina Shanahan, along with John McCann and Finbar Cullen, were committed to stand trial on charges of conspiring to murder Mr Tom King, Secretary of State for the British occupied six counties.

They were arrested in July 1987 at a holiday camp site in Wiltshire, a few miles from King's home.

The decision has been made despite a warning from the Irish Foreign Affairs minister, Brian Lenihan, who said that her exclusion would be particularly inappropriate on humanitarian grounds.

Mrs Whelan's only sister, Martina, is presently being held at Risley Remand Centre and is not due to stand trial until November. Mrs Whelan said that she was flabbergasted with the decision and didn't know where she could go from here.

"I may never see my sister again if she is sentenced," she said.

She went on to say that she really thought they would revoke the exclusion order: "I made the strongest possible pleas to them," she added.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin said that the Irish government has made it clear to the British that it is opposed to exclusion orders being used against Irish people.

Pascal Mooney, a Fianna Fail senator, condemned the move by the Home Office as a form of mental torture. He said that it would confirm the widespread belief that there is no such thing as British justice for Irish people.

Haughey dances to Thatcher's tune

GARDAI and detectives from the so-called anti-terrorist branch were earlier this week involved in a comb-out in counties Louth and Meath, south of the border in a search for alleged IRA guns and explosives smuggled in, it is claimed, from Libya before the alleged gun-running ship to Eksund was captured.

According to their intelligence reports, the Garda chiefs are convinced that a massive arsenal, including SAM missile parts and heavy machine-guns, is buried in underground bunkers near the border.

Gardai recently found two bunkers, but they were almost empty. They are also convinced that most of the arms shipped allegedly from Libya before the Eksund was captured are buried in an area stretching from Navan and Trim in Co. Meath to Dundalk in Co. Louth.

Earlier this month gardai found six home-made mortars, 22 detonators, a hand-gun, bayonets and fuse-wire in a concrete bunker at Ballivor near Navan.

It is also alleged by Irish gardai that the heavy machine-gun used by the IRA to shoot down a British helicopter over Crossmaglen last week had been hidden in one of the arms stockpiles.

The comb-out of the area has been intermittent since January last year, when the southern security task-force found booby-trap equipment and armour-piercing grenades near Trim in Co. Meath.

Irish security chiefs claim the finds foiled an IRA plan to booby-trap cars owned by members of the British security forces in the occupied six-counties. Six "sea searcher" magnets used for clamping small bombs to cars were among the items found.

As usual with such comb-outs and searches, those who are either involved in or sympathetic to the struggle being waged by the Republican movement will have their homes, farms, businesses etc invaded by the so-called forces of law and order in the Free State.

Their rights as Irish citizens will be trampled on and Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act (the catch-all act) will no doubt continue to be used to arrest and intimidate these people.

It is being done to assist and collaborate with British imperialism and its occupation and partition of Ireland.

Two lessons must be drawn. Firstly, it shows Haughey and his government in their true colours.

They are more than willing to dance to the political tunes played by Thatcher. Whether it is extradition, cross-border co-operation or trampling on the rights of British citizens who hold views contrary to British imperialism, Haughey is willing to oblige imperialism.

Despite all the collaboration and the boasts about the many arms finds on both sides of the border, the IRA is still more than capable of launching deadly and punitive attacks; causing huge damage to the military morale and inflicting high casualties, as it did recently in Lisburn and Crossmaglen on British Crown forces.

The searches going on in counties Louth and Meath may indeed yield some gains for British imperialism and its Free State collaborators. But it will make little difference to the IRA or its ability to continue the war against British imperialism in Ireland.

Shoot-to-kill policy in the South

THE Irish government should make public whether the security forces had a shoot-to-kill policy, delegates to the Irish Council for Civil Liberties were told by their President, Kadar Asmal, at their AGM last week-end.

Asmal referred to the shooting of Martin Bryan last November at Minister's Cross in Co. Kilkenny, which preceded the capture of Dessie O'Hare, and he questioned the criteria on which the security forces are allowed to use firearms.

He said that the Irish government seemed reticent in disclosing such criteria, adding that in a democracy it was not tolerable that people didn't know when the army and gardai were permitted to use force.

They couldn't criticise a shoot-to-kill policy in the north of Ireland unless 'we know the conditions under which such a policy may be operated here'.

It was regrettable that the coroner at Mr Bryan's inquest did not refer to the use of force by the state, said Asmal. He also criticised what he called the persistent abuse of section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act being carried out by the gardai.

The abuse within the Irish republic was as extensive as the abuse of the Prevention of Terrorism act in Britain, he said.

Asmal further criticised and condemned the judgement in the Irish High Court in the Paul Kane case, which allows the gardai powers to follow a person who has committed no offence.

He was also critical of the 'excessive use of police powers' during the nationwide searches for arms last November, which involved 50,000 homes.

These searches were unprecedented in a democracy.

'They may have been designed to impress the British.'

He spoke of the public disquiet and anxiety over the number of people who die in detention and in prison every year.

Sinn Fein conference

SINN FEIN President Gerry Adams, has secured the support of many of the party's leading activists in the north of Ireland for his talks with the SDLP and for his policy of seeking a broad consensus of nationalist parties, including Fianna Fail, on Irish re-unification. The backing was given at a private week-end conference in Belfast last Saturday.

A statement issued before the meeting said 'the consensus was clearly in favour of broadening our base and of constructively addressing our attitude to the SDLP. It was agreed that the demand for national self-determination was of central importance for nationalists, and it was accepted that there was a need for Sinn Fein to develop further our present social and economic policies'.

Party officials were insistent that the conference was educational and that the delegates and activists who took part had no policy-making function.

No detailed or formal discussions took place on the IRA, the statement said.

This was in answer to the claim that some delegates at the conference had criticised the military struggle being waged by the IRA.

Charlie Walsh

Forty winters on

I'd been a reporter on the 'Daily Worker' for not quite six months when, on the morning of 22 June 1948, I was sent to Tilbury to cover the disembarkation from the SS 'Empire Windrush' of 492 West Indians, most of them Jamaicans.

These were the first of the post-war Afro-Caribbean settlers in Britain, in what was to be until 1953 the merest trickle, though ministers were already privately describing it as an 'influx'.

My piece about these first arrivals, which began with the words '500 pairs of willing hands', earned me my first ever byline.

I remember as if it were yesterday those hopeful men, most of them a few years older than me, in their 'best' suits and hats, all so eager to find jobs.

And within three weeks 76 of the 492 had begun work in foundries, 15 on the railways, 15 as labourers, 15 as farm workers and 10 as electricians. The others had gone into a wide variety of jobs, including clerical work in the Post Office, coachbuilding, and plumbing.

Of the Afro-Caribbean men who came here before the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act began the process of giving state sanction to racism, only one in seven of the men, a mere one in 20 of the women, had no skills. Yet few of them could find jobs to match their skills.

It's important to remember why they came to Britain. There was both a push and a pull.

The push: the atrocious conditions in the British West Indies, so vividly described in the Moyne Commission report (which I mentioned here on 27 February).

Ten years after that report was drawn up, conditions had, if anything, worsened. There was large scale unemployment, and the jobless were desperate. There was no relief whatever: no dole; no children's allowances; no social security at all.

'No one knows exactly how the jobless live', wrote Joyce Egginton in 1957, in her unheeded book 'They Seek A Living'. 'It is not surprising', she added, 'that thousands have left the West Indies. The surprising thing is that so many have stayed.'

Emigration to metropolitan Britain offered the settlers the prospect of a new life unblighted by the miserable poverty that was the lot of most people in those British colonies after hundreds of years of imperial rule.

The pull: the demand for labour in Britain and, above all, active recruitment by British employers of black workers in their home countries.

London Transport recruited staff in Barbados, Trinidad, and Jamaica. The British Hotels and Restaurants Association recruited in Barbados. And a Tory Health Minister called Enoch Powell welcomed Afro-Caribbean nurses to this country.

Last week I met again some of the 'Empire Windrush' pioneers, at a reception in their honour given by the mayor of Lambeth.

One of them, Sam King, a former mayor of Southwark, recalled how a labour colonial secretary, Creech

Jones, had remarked of the 'Windrush' settlers: 'These people have British passports and they must be allowed to land. There's nothing to worry about, because they won't last one winter in England.'

This jovial prophecy is wryly alluded to in the title of the commemorative booklet jointly produced for the occasion by Lambeth Council, 'The Voice', and the 'South London Press'. It is called 'Forty Winters On'.

This is a booklet not to be missed. In the simple, moving, non-political phrases of ordinary working people describing their lives and experiences, it tells what is a highly political story.

It's a story of exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, and inhumanity — and at the same time a story of high courage and resource, and also of progressive disillusionment.

'When I finally got a job', says Windrush passenger Mrs Lynette Findlater, 'I had to work 12 to 14 hours a day in horrendous conditions for less than white workers.'

Nurse May Cambridge recalls how 'people had to share rooms and even the cellars were used. One of my landladies charged a penny for toilet tissue. Shopkeepers would ignore you and serve the white customers first although you had been in the shop before them.'

The sons and daughters of the pioneers know what these 40 winters have been like for their mothers and fathers.

That's why, born black in Britain and treated by the police as second-class citizens in the land of their birth, they are determined to resist racism by every means in their power.

AS I SEE IT...



BY TOM OWEN

The great fear

'La grande peur' of the last weeks should recede now that the European Cup is over and the English fans have made their disconsolate way home. Dusseldorf and Frankfurt on the News at Ten look like any English city - Liverpool, London, Bristol - in a riot.

We are all invited to be ashamed, scandalised, by the mindlessly 'un-British' behaviour of union-jack swathed supporters. 'Would you like drunken German thugs to do this to your town?' screamed the Mirror in a fit of indignant reverse patriotism. The Guardian committed columns to examples of horrified response of Guardian-social-category German families whose early evening aperitifs were so rudely disturbed

by the English yobs. The same paper also hunted for any neo-Nazis they could find getting in on the act.

The press found exemplary behaviour amongst the Irish fans; this must have taken some act of will by our hacks to roll back centuries of stereotyping and prejudice!

Douglas Hurd — that sinister Old Etonian housemaster who treats a nation state like a public school — came up with a startling diagnosis: too much money and too much strong foreign lager (not English beer that has been judiciously watered since World War 1).

Before the images of Dusseldorf had faded from our screens, English cricket had a chance to redeem our national morale by bravely facing that inhuman cricket machine, the West Indies.

With that charity-walking dope fiend (albeit cricketing genius) Botham safely out of the way, the morals police had purged Gattling for inviting a member of the opposite sex to his hotel room for a drink. Behaviour unbecoming of an Englishman, never mind a cricketer! Even worse he had actually written a book!

Well now we know the result of this particular moral crusade. The magnificent Marshall ruthlessly demonstrated a simple scientific fact: that moral rectitude doesn't make your bat three feet wide, nor will the shining shield of temperance deflect a well-pitched ball travelling at 90 mph.

But with the arrival of the strawberry season, there's a much more civilised game to serve up before us. There's not much obvious patriotic mileage in Wimbledon. The British, unlike the Americans with their college system, the Swedes with their social democracy, and the Stalinists with their military-sporting complexes, have never invested in popular training facilities.

The working classes are happy enough kicking a ball around their streets, or knocking a cork ball around in a backyard. But the British can host the best in the world, cultivate the arcane manners and conventions of the game, and make off with a lot of money. Foreigners can always be put in their place by pronouncing their names in the best standard English.

Television presentation of the ritual is akin to that of a royal wedding, with a rouse like Dan Maskell drooling over every shot, like a medieval potentate being served with sherbert and sweetmeats from his harem. Tennis, unlike soccer, rugby and cricket, has always been an aristocratic sport, literally played in the Court.

The others have their origins deep in mediaeval popular life, in 'laikings', 'festes' and 'holy day' secular activities. These sports have always been accompanied by popular disturbances, gangs, and unruly crowds — especially in the last century. The games as we know them are the product of codification and refinement in the nineteenth century and their intergration in the public schools.

They were taken up with passion and enthusiasm by the working class, but whatever cultural autonomy working class sports organisations achieved, they have now been stripped clean by advanced capitalism. Popular sport has become a residue of the crudest capitalist values — xenophobia, competition, aggression, subservience to authority etc.

I asked a young naval rating from Sheffield who had said he was going to the matches in Germany how he had fared. 'Didn't go. My dad wouldn't let me, because if I got in trouble with the German police, the Navy would get me and I don't want to get in trouble with the Navy.' He's off to the Gulf next week.

One hundred years ago: the women who set the Thames on fire

In June 1888 reformist socialist Annie Besant went to the giant Bryant & May factory at Bow, East London, seeking a story for the Fabian newspaper "The Link".

Outside the gates she was besieged by home-going factory women eager to tell her of the terrible conditions and degrading treatment they faced every day at work.

Use of phosphorus in the match-making process led to many young women contracting bone decay, particularly of the upper and lower jaw. (Yellow phosphorus is now known also to induce anaemia, intestinal weakness and liver damage if continually absorbed in even small amounts.)

Regularly carrying trays of matches on their heads led to hair loss but the management didn't care.

They complained also of fines - for dropping matches, answering back and having dirty feet - as well as deductions, originally made to pay junior helpers yet still being taken out of their wages long after such assistance had been discontinued.

There was also the story of 'that statue', a likeness of Liberal ex-prime minister William Gladstone, erected in the factory forecourt and paid for out of more compulsory pay deductions.

As a final indignity they had all been given a day off for the unveiling ceremony - unpaid.

Afterwards, furious women had mobbed and battered the statue.

Mrs Besant wrote the story, emphasising the 23 per cent dividend that Bryant & May paid its shareholders - including 40 clergymen - deriving in part from pennies stolen directly out of its workers' pay.

Just two national newspapers took up the story, and in terms sufficiently critical to embarrass the company.

At the Bow works pressure was put on the workers to sign a document denying the reports. When they refused three women, who were known to have spoken to Mrs Besant, were sacked for disobedience.

Immediately a deputation went from the factory floor to demand that management reinstate the dismissed women. When that was refused 1,400 workers instantly walked out on strike.

by Bernard Franks



Some of the match workers at Bryant & May who struck in 1888

Later the same day, 4 July, several hundred marched to "The Link's" offices in Fleet Street to ask Mrs Besant to be their organiser and spokeswoman.

She was deeply shocked at the turn of events, having thought only in terms of a propaganda campaign to win sympathy from important people, never thinking that the young women would take such resolute action on their behalf.

She was in any case rapidly moving away from even the milk-and-water, gradualist

socialism of the Fabians, and was shortly to join the Theosophists and proclaim guru Krishnamerti the new messiah.

However, she agreed to organise a strike committee which in turn held mass meetings on Mile End Waste - the mustering point for peasants in the general revolt of 1381.

London Trades Council now involved itself, a body of artisans and craftsmen not greatly concerned at the problems of the semi-skilled and unskilled but extremely worried at the story of fines and deductions.

One of its useful functions was to organise strike funds which, in this case, won so much support that the women received near normal pay. Families and neighbours saw to the rest in the East End tradition.

On 11 July, a lobby of parliament was held at which several women who had become expert at putting their case regaled MPs with the full story of their situation.

Shocked at the favourable publicity and massive support for the strikers, Bryant & May directors hurriedly backed down on 17 July. They agreed to reinstate the sacked women, supply a separate dining room to avoid contamination from the work benches, provide barrows to replace the system whereby women carried trays on their heads, end the illegal fines, restore the payments deducted from wages and, last but not least, recognise the union that the women proposed forming.

At 6pm the same day a packed meeting voted acceptance of the terms and agreed a return-to-work. As the news spread a vast victory celebration engulfed the area.

Within a year fathers, brothers and husbands working in the Thames-side industries would themselves be taking industrial action - at Beckton Gas Works, on the docks and in the transport and tobacco industries - in the great upsurge of New Unionism of the year, 1889.

All of them acknowledged that the young women of Bryant and May had led the way: "If the girls can do it, why can't we?" was the unassailable argument put to the hesitant that year.

It was true. The match girls' strike exposed the limitations of existing craft-based, elitist unionism, protecting itself as much against other workers as against the employers, with whom it often maintained excellent relations.

In 1906, use of yellow phosphorus was banned by an international ruling. Match-making was in any case rapidly being mechanised by this time.

A hundred years on, the twin towers of the empty Bryant & May factory still dominate the Bow skyline, the building currently the object of a £30 million development project.

Sparks fly over Hammond

Over 150 supporters attended a meeting of the Flashlight organisation (broad left of the electricians union, the EETPU) in Manchester last Saturday and voted by a two-thirds majority to support the following resolution: 'If the leadership of the EETPU persists in pursuing a policy of splitting the TUC and setting up a rival organisation then we will seek to find ways and means of remaining within the TUC as an organised bloc.'

The meeting was a decisive response to Hammond's brinkmanship tactics and took place in conditions of increased urgency following last week's TUC decision to suspend the EETPU in 14 days.

Some delegates, especially from the Liverpool area, thought the resolution didn't go far enough.

Their demands for more urgency were forcibly expressed but answered in part by John Aitken, the Flashlight leader, who gave some indication of negotiations already taking place to keep as many EETPU members as possible together in a bloc under the umbrella of the TUC.

Several stewards, each representing hundreds of members, declared their intention to recommend to their members leaving the EETPU and remaining in the TUC.

by Mike Burroughs

Moving the resolution, Stuart Stevenson explained it was firm and flexible enough and did not 'telegraph our punches to Hammond and company.' The test of the resolution will come over the next period. Some speakers opposed leaving the EETPU in the event of expulsion, feeling as one put it 'punch-drunk by the years of battering by Chappell and Hammond'. Unable now to recognise what John Aitken called 'the biggest attack on the TUC in 120 years', they wanted to keep the same line as ever. 'Stay in and fight. Make sure that Hammond doesn't get all his own way.'

Vocal

The most vocal and determined opposition to the resolution came from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) - rare visitors to Flashlight meetings! - under the subterfuge of tactical arguments and other red herrings like "A bureaucrat in the EETPU is the same as one in the TGWU". They opposed the resolution, demanding instead, "Stay in and Fight" - regardless.

The vast majority of the meeting recognised the futility

of this policy from increasingly bitter experience. It would need a separate article to detail even some of the gangster-like tactics used by the EETPU leaders against their opponents in the union.

Justify

When one steward from a large Scottish ship-building yard with 500 electricians compared the strategy of staying in the EETPU outside the TUC to joining the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) in Nottinghamshire, one SWP supporter tried to justify the tactic of joining the UDM in some circumstances and urged EETPU members to follow suit.

Agenda

Ironically an EETPU-UDM federation could be on the agenda in the near future. One young SWP speaker in arguing the line 'One bureaucrat is the same as another' raised criticism of the seafarers' leaders in the P&O dispute at Dover. In the light of the SWP's despicable role in covering up for that very leadership's record in that union, this was either pure hypocrisy or ignorance of their party's record.

Socialists in the EETPU must welcome and fight for expulsion which will arm them for the first time in years with the means for attacking and defeating not only a rotten bureaucracy but also Thatcher's fifth columnists in the working class.

Issue

The issue is: 'stay in the TUC' not 'stay in the EETPU'.

The resolution carried at the meeting was correct and sets the scene for EETPU members to go on the offensive. What all principled trade unionists should be fighting for is to make sure the EETPU is expelled in September and no compromise allowed.

Hammond and company's attempt to smash up the TUC and impose corporate trade unionism must be met by a determined and uncompromising fight.

Merely extending the suspension will hand the initiative back to Hammond and Jordan in the form of a possible EETPU-AEU merger next year.

'Let the 1001 hand-to-hand battles commence!'

In the next three months all members and supporters of the Workers Revolutionary Party must give this fight urgent priority.

Workers' deaths save money

ON THE last day of the inquiry into the causes of the fire which killed 31 at Kings Cross last year, it was revealed that London Regional Transport is to axe another 700 jobs on the Tube.

The inquiry revealed LRT's terrifying policy of carrying out government cuts at all costs, including passengers safety and lives.

Tony Ridley, chair of London Underground has openly admitted to the press that another 'unforeseen' accident like the Kings Cross fire, 'could happen again.'

He said that management of the Tubes had given higher priority at all times to problems of congestion than to passenger safety. Perhaps transport bosses are hoping to clear some of the congestion by disposing of some of the passengers.

by Bronwen Handyside

The 'Capital Transport Campaign', a passengers' watchdog body, in a recent report emphasised the the refusal of the heads of London Underground and London Regional Transport (LRT) to accept full responsibility for the disaster at the inquiry.

The same managers who got up in front of the Inquiry to plead innocent are at the same time forcing through cuts which are worse than those which combined to cause the Kings Cross fire.

The ill-named 'Action Station' plan touted at present by LRT means 1,000 fewer staff at stations, with many being totally unstaffed.

The recent surge of publicity about the jailing of a cold-blooded murderer and rapist, who stalked his victims at de-

serted railway stations, together with the news that his fellow predator who assisted at several of the rapes is still at large, should make any civilised human being think twice about taking staff out of stations. Not these budget balancing gentlemen, who wash their hands of the horrible deaths of working-class women whose only means of travel is public transport.

The fire at Kings Cross was caused by an accumulation of grease and dirt under an obsolete wooden escalator. The dirt accumulated because the escalators were not cleaned often enough.

London Underground have reduced the number of cleaners since 1980 from 32 to 21, while the number of users has increased by 60 per cent. A cleaner who retired two months ago - while the witnesses at the inquiry were pro-

nouncing that insufficient cleaning led to the fire - has not been replaced. Current cleaning contracts do not specify that escalators should be cleaned.

We seem to be dealing with a group of split personalities in the managers of London's transport. They are wide-eyed and concerned at the public inquiry, and simultaneously devotedly following government policy on savage cuts - regardless of safety needs. French rail unions are blaming government cuts for the train crash at the Gare de Lyon in Paris last Monday. When transport for workers is turned into a death trap all over the world it is time to take action against the system which saves cash by sacrificing workers lives.

Transport workers must hold an international conference to work out how to do this.