

VIRAJ MENDIS: A WARNING FOR ALL THE WORKING CLASS

'AT 7.30 a.m. last Wednesday 10 van loads of police in riot gear sealed off the area round the church, smashed their way in with crowbars and hammers, and snatched Viraj Mendis.' (last week's Workers Press)

Tory MPs cheered when Home Secretary Douglas Hurd announced that Viraj Mendis would be deported to Sri Lanka as soon as possible - and by midday Friday he was on the plane, handcuffed to a policeman all the way to Colombo.

Can there any longer be any doubt of the urgent necessity of the working class to be mobilised to defeat the ruling class's assault on civil liberties? Are the organisations of the working class to stand and watch while the riot squad, the dawn raid and the deportation order become matters of everyday life?

The smash and grab operation to deport Viraj Mendis backed by the racist immigration laws was done ruthlessly and brutally.

Does anyone think that the same ruthlessness and brutality would not be used in enforcing the anti-trade union laws against nurses or anyone else?

Ask any miner, or anyone who participated in the solidarity actions at Wapping or at Grunwicks. It will be the same against those who resist the infamous poll tax.

Yet Labour and trade union leaders stand aside. In the same week the Tory government had to admit that there were grounds for appeal for those who were cynically and brutally framed and jailed for 15 years for the Guildford pub bombing.

The divisions within ruling class circles over issues like the Guildford Four indicates the serious weakness of the Thatcher government. But the decision to refer the case to the Court of Appeal does not signal an end to the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, under which people can be held for seven days and fitted up, as the recent case of Eamon Wadley shows and the Winchester Three case proved.

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

Nor will the outcome of the Guildford Four appeal stop the abuse and ill treatment of prisoners of war in Irish and British jails - they will have to serve their time whatever the outcome.

The frame-up of the Guildford Four went on without a murmur from the Labour leaders.

The technique was that of the show trial - nothing to do with justice, but everything to do with

political intimidation and preparation of the 'strong state' to deal with all opponents.

The same show trial technique was used against football supporters to prepare for ID cards and vast new police powers.

The appeal court last week was forced to rule that evidence of undercover operators in these show trials was 'unsafe in law' but where was the official working class leadership in this question? Who except the WRP exposed the ruling class's preparation for the attack on the youth?

It was a Labour government which was in office when the Guildford trial and appeal took place. The same government masterminded the police repression at Grunwicks. It was a Labour govern-

ment which made the first attempt to introduce the anti-trade union laws.

Shall the working class movement, through its official representatives remain in complicity with the partition of Ireland, the brutal repressions in the north, the framing and beating up of Irish prisoners?

This complicity provides the political cover for the ruling class in the name of 'fighting terrorism', to attack centuries - old rights to free speech, trial by jury, the right to silence, habeas corpus and many others.

Shall we continue to accept a leadership which does not challenge immigration controls, so that the ruling class uses brutal racist repression on the one hand to strengthen its police powers against all opponents, and on the other to create an oppressed layer of low-paid unorganised workers without rights?

Internationalism and solidarity with all oppressed peoples is not only for May Day speeches.

It is all of a piece with the urgent necessity to defend democratic rights through the organisation of the working class. Is attack on the right to silence, trial by jury and free speech to be left only to courageous lawyers, individual workers and protest groups? The proud traditions of the workers' movement are being trampled on by the labour and trade union leaders.

Workers Press calls for full support for the national march being organised on Saturday 4 February by the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign. Assemble 12 noon, Crown Square, Manchester.

**Down with immigration laws!
Down with the Tory government which rides roughshod over our basic rights! Organise defence committees and pickets against the riot squads! Organise against the use of police powers on working class estates and against strikes!**

Come to our meeting 'the defence of democratic rights: the fight against Thatcher' 19 February, Edric Hall, South Bank Polytechnic.



Housing needs workers in Brent (above), members of the local government union NALGO, in the fourth month of the longest strike in Brent council's history. After suffering increasing attacks from the public, desperate for the housing the council is incapable of providing, NALGO members demanded facial screens to protect them. One worker had had urine thrown in her face. The council recruited scabs from the local job centre to do their jobs, in true Rupert Murdoch style.

Meanwhile other events are taking place in Brent which will have an even more profound effect on services and jobs. Using sweeping powers contained in the Tory's 1988 Local Government Finance Act, the Director of Finance, an unelected officer of the council, has been able to veto the council's spending.

Brent has a huge £17 million budget deficit, despite having already approved £17 million worth of cuts, and slashed 1,000 jobs this year. The council's deficit comes mainly from payments to ILEA for Brent pupils to attend its schools, the homelessness bill, and loss of grant from central government. Central government now rules openly in Brent, without even pretending to refer to the community through its elected councillors - part of the Tory onslaught on democratic rights.

Workers Press

The Double Oppression of Women

THE 2.3 million increase in the labour force between 1971 and 1987 was attributable almost entirely to women, particularly those aged 25-44.

This is one of the important facts contained in 'Social Trends', the latest issue of which was published last week. It reveals that nearly 70 per cent of women in this age group were working, compared with only a little over a half sixteen years ago.

Yet this increased participation in the labour force is unmatched by any moves towards equality of pay. In 1987, the average earnings for full-time, non-manual female workers was 73 per cent of men's earnings, the same ratio as the previous year.

At the same time women are forced into a position where they are expected to go out to work, do almost all the domestic chores and be responsible for bringing up children. In 88 per cent of households, women do the washing and ironing, in 77 per cent of homes they get the evening meal ready and in 72 per cent of cases they do the household cleaning.

As a result, women of all ages have far less time for leisure than men. 'Social Trends' suggests that unemployed men have 88 hours per week leisure time, compared with 62 hours for unemployed women. Working women have the least leisure, at just under 40 hours per week, where working men had ten hours per week more.

Here is the most concrete expression of the 'double oppression' of women under capitalism: they are producers of surplus value for capitalism and forced to give their labour in the home free - a vital and necessary service for the same system.

The figures are themselves a telling commentary on the host of Fabian type schemes that promised to bring equality for women within the confines of the capitalist system.

While these very trends were taking place, nearly every Labour-run local authority set up a women's committee. They were going to monitor all cases of discrimination against women. Not only did they fail dismally in their objectives: these committees have been amongst the very first cuts made by such Councils.

The fact is that the subjugation of women is a necessary, inescapable, part of capitalism. The fight against it is inseparable from the fight against capitalism, from the fight to mobilise the working class for its overthrow. Here lies the difference between Marxism and all types of bourgeois feminism, which sees the struggle of women as something standing apart from the struggle against capitalism.

The miners' strike proved beyond doubt that women can and will play the most powerful part in the coming struggles of the working class.

It was in the year-long miners' strike that thousands of women, the wives of miners and others, came into political struggle for the first time. And they did so in the most determined and courageous way, proving themselves to be the backbone of the strike in many areas.

It is along this road alone, the road of revolutionary struggle, that the liberation of women from the conditions indicated in the latest 'Social Trends' will be achieved.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £1,109.90

THIS IS WORRYING! Only £145.90 has been received in the last week. We are aiming to reach £2,000 by the end of the month and, at the time of writing, only six days remain to raise the outstanding £890.10.

Masses of people in every part of the world are taking the road of struggle. At a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists last week-end it was again made clear that the consistent publication of Workers Press is a vital factor in the development of the work not only in Britain but internationally.

We need almost £150 a day. Let's all make sure that we do not fail to raise this necessary fund for the maintenance and development of Workers Press.

Dot Gibson

Please send donations to: Workers Press Fighting Fund,
PO Box 735, London, SW9 7QS

TERRY O'HALLORAN

WORKERS PRESS is sad to announce the death of Terry O'Halloran at a tragically early age. Terry was a member of the Revolutionary Communist Group and although we differed on many important political questions we always found him a principled fighter in both the National Union of Journalists and in the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

Our condolences to his family and comrades.

WORKERS PRESS PUBLIC MEETING 'DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS: FIGHT THE TORY GOVERNMENT

Sunday 19 February, 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

EDRIC HALL, SOUTHBANK POLYTECHNIC

103 Borough Road, London SE1

(nearest tube: Elephant and Castle)

Speakers include: Cliff Slaughter (WRP Central Committee)

Michael Mansfield (leading barrister)

Martin Walker (author, 'A State of Siege')

Eddie Caughey (Irish Republican prisoners campaign)

Geoff Hartnell (sacked Durham miner)

George Hall (former FOC, Wapping strike leader)

Phil Edwards (East London Teacher's Assoc/Parents Action Group for Education)*

Chair: Dot Gibson (WRP Central Committee)

* in personal capacity

Friday 27 January: WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
LONDON DISTRICT PUBLIC MEETING

'70 years since the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht - German revolutionaries'

Speaker: Bob Archer

7.30 p.m., room A35 London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2

Saturday 28 January: join the WRP contingent on the 17th anniversary of the BLOODY SUNDAY DEMONSTRATION - Britain out of Ireland!

Assemble Grange Park, Kilburn 12 p.m. - march to Stonebridge Park.

WRP DISTRICT COMMITTEE SOCIAL

Saturday 28 January 8 p.m. - 11 p.m.

BAR MUSIC FOOD

Abbey Community Centre

222 Belsize Road, Kilburn NW6 (nearest tube Kilburn Park)

Proceeds to pay for transport for the Pollok Republican flute band from Glasgow to the Bloody Sunday demonstration in London tickets £2 waged (£1 unwaged) can be obtained from the Workers Press office.

STOP THE KILLINGS! Stop executions of political prisoners in Iran! Stop massacring the Kurds! Stop harassing refugees! PICKET: Saturday 28 January 1 p.m. Iranian Embassy. (nearest tube: High Street Kensington.)

SCOTLAND AGAINST THE POLL TAX

BY HILARY HORROCKS

THE BATTLE against the poll tax is beginning in earnest in Scotland, where the changeover from the old rating system begins in April.

This was the message from a packed meeting in Govan, Glasgow, where an audience of 250 responded defiantly to the faint hearts of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, who have all but wound up their anti-poll tax campaign.

Indignation was expressed when a representative from the Scottish TUC who is also a Communist Party member announced a planned lobby of parliament on 1 February and a free rock concert in April - then promptly left the meeting.

Speakers Jim Sillers, Scottish National Party (SNP) MP for Govan, and Labour MP Dick Douglas, were involved in plenty of chest-pounding rhetoric and self-righteous moral indignation, but many in the audience noted that neither spoke of mobilising a mass non-payment campaign.

The SNP are basing their anti-poll tax strategy on a select band of protestors who can, but won't, pay the tax. Others are advised by them to delay payment in the hope of clogging up the administration of the tax, without breaking the law - a dead end tactic reminiscent of the Labourites 'Stop It' campaign. And the SNP do not appear

to expect their own regional councillors to break the law by refusing to implement the tax.

Events in Grampian Regional Council have shown a divided SNP, after the removal of one of their members from office last week, for his opposition to the use of warrant sales (seizure and sale of poll tax refusers' goods) to collect unpaid tax. Fellow nationalists resigned in protest - except for two, who defied their party whip to remain on the council.

Strathclyde region, the largest in Scotland, has announced an annual poll tax of £219 - to which in Glasgow, is added the district council charge, making a total of £306.

This figure - already substantially higher per individual than many annual rates now paid by

whole families - has been kept artificially low by a government subsidy. This will be reviewed after a year, leading to an expected jump in the tax - but it indicates the Tories' awareness of the extent of opposition in the area.

Strathclyde Regional Council is to be challenged on its implementation of the tax by a lobby of community groups this week. Hundreds are expected to converge on the council's Glasgow headquarters as part of a campaign co-ordinated by the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN.

Wednesday 1 February - lobby of parliament organised by the Scottish Trades Union Council. Special train from Glasgow: contact Glasgow Trades Council for details.



Angry strikers return to Wapping to demonstrate on the anniversary of the printworker's strike

Saturday 4 March 11 am - Scottish Unity Conference at the City Hall, Glasgow, organised by anti-poll tax federations. Every group in Scotland entitled to 5 delegates and visitors welcome.

Saturday 18 March - National demonstration - assemble Glasgow Green at 11 am. English and Welsh anti-poll tax groups welcome!

• Many who voted for the SNP's Jim Sillers in Govan have been disgusted to hear of their new MP's decision to write regularly for Murdoch's scab newspaper the 'Sun'. 'Big Jim', as he is billed, has begun a regular Saturday column in the Scottish editions - following in the discredited footsteps of ex-upper Clyde Ship Builders and Communist Party leader Jimmy Reid. His first piece praised Thatcher for her 'guts' in her ghoulish visit to the victims of Lockerbie.

Troops Out member refused US entry

BY PETER COGRAM

ON 14 December of last year Nina Hutchison travelled under a recent visa waiver programme from London to San Francisco, to visit her sister and to give her Christmas presents for her family.

On arrival at the airport Ms Hutchison was detained and then advised that she would be sent back without access to a lawyer and any legal rights. The airport official was throughout aggressive and used racist and sexist abuse; 'indeed he appeared to me to be bordering on the psychotic...'

When she refused to go she was arrested, handcuffed, strip searched and spent a night in gaol. She was returned to London on the evening of 15 December.

She was subjected to this ordeal because she is a member of the Troops Out Movement, which, with the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) and the Ireland Fund (based in Dublin and New York and giving funds to non-political community groups), was considered by the airport official to be a 'subversive' organisation.

The airport officials had immediate access to detailed information on Ms Hutchison from their computer terminals. The installation of a national identity card system in Britain would greatly facilitate this kind of control of people's movements.

A law recently passed in America states that affiliation to political groups should not be a bar to the USA.

A FIGHT AT THE OPERA

BY KEITH SCOTCHER

UPROAR and scandal has erupted around Paris' new £230 million Bastille Opera due to be opened as part of the official 'celebrations' of the French Revolution.

The Opera's new chief administrator Pierre Berge has dismissed the musical and artistic director Daniel Barenboim.

Berge is a personal friend of president Mitterand and also the boss of the fashion house Yves St Laurent, with no previous experience of opera management but now demanding artistic control of productions.



Opera Bastille under construction

Berge was appointed as a reward for giving financial support to Mitterand's Socialist Party, while Barenboim was appointed by Chirac.

The dismissal has outraged stars of the operatic world who are threatening to boycott the venue.

Mitterand's hope of a grand opening, thereby heaping glory on himself, is now evaporating.

Police collude in Brazil deaths

OVER 1,000 people have been murdered since 1980 in the war waged by Brazil's powerful landlords against those who challenge their interests. Francisco 'Chico' Mendes, leader of the Amazonian rubber tappers, gunned down last December, was one of many rural trade unionists targeted.

Other victims have included squatters, local community leaders, priests and lawyers. Police, the judiciary and the military have been implicated in helping the landowners' hired gunmen rather than apprehending them. Amnesty International last week asked the Brazilian government to investigate the killings.

Amnesty says evidence shows the authorities 'not only tolerate these crimes but frequently assist in them.' Out of more than 1,000 cases, the gunmen were convicted in only three, and those who hired them, never. One case they cite is that of former state MP Joao Carlos Batista, who complained on December 6 last year that he feared for his life after being threatened by two military police officers. He was murdered the same day.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND THE ATTACK ON THE TRADE UNIONS

BY GEOFF PILLING

THE ATTACK launched by the Thatcher government on basic democratic rights is centred on the attack on the trade union movement.

The unions remain the basic organisations for the defence of the working class. Only if the ruling class is able to strip trade unionists of the rights they have won in struggle over the last two hundred years will they be able to bring about a fundamental shift in the relationship of class forces in this country.

In Britain, perhaps more than any other country in the world, the capitalist class has traditionally established and preserved its rule over the working class through the trade union and labour bureaucracy. The absence of a large peasantry produced a situation where class relations in Britain are extremely polarised and where the collaboration of the trade union and labour bureaucracy with the representatives of the capitalist class has assumed exceptional importance in the maintenance of capitalist rule.

The 1984-85 miners' strike undoubtedly marked a watershed in disrupting this relationship between the trade unions and the capitalist state. Despite the fact that the Tories, on the basis of what previous Labour governments had started, had already built up a battery of legislation aimed at taking away the right to strike, to black and to picket, the miners' strike lasted for over a year.

'Only if the ruling class is able to strip trade unionists of the rights they have won in struggle over the last two hundred years will they be able to bring about a fundamental shift in the relationship of class forces in this country.'

Not even the seizure of the NUM's funds by the state prevented tens of thousands of miners from battling day in and out with the police and other forces of the state. The miners only returned to work because their cowardly leaders - both Labour and Communist Party - had managed to temporarily isolate them from the rest of the working class.

The fact that the Tories had pressed ahead with further legislation against the unions proves not that they are all-powerful, but that they need more laws to prepare for the next round of the battle with the working class.

Since the miners' strike, communication workers, teachers, local authority workers, postmen, students and many other sections have been involved in bitter battles against the Thatcher government.

The Tory government still rules through Parliament. It still rests upon the trade union bureaucracy as its main prop of rule. Without the complicity of the trade union leaders and their counterpart in Parliament - Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition led by Kinnock - Thatcher would not have been able to press ahead with these attacks.

But increasingly the ruling class has to make preparations for a new form of rule, to get ready for the next round in the upsurge of a working

class determined to protect both its standard of living and its basic rights.

With inflation again threatening to erode the living standards of millions of workers and their families, the ruling class knows that big battles lie ahead. They know that the defence of wages and living standards will, from the very outset, bring political struggles against the capitalist state. It is for these battles they continue to prepare.

The biggest crime of the Labour leaders is their refusal to warn the working class of the dangers ahead. Instead these leaders strive to lull the working class into a complacent hope that a future Labour government will be able to put matters right.

Despite the walk out of the electricians union from the last TUC Congress it is still 'business as usual' as far as the leaders are concerned. Eric Hammond is invited by the Tory government to join the National Economic Development Council, Neddy - composed of representatives of the employers, the unions and the government - and the union leaders continue to sit on this corporatist body. Meanwhile, leaders of the engineering union press ahead with merger talks with Hammond's scab union.

'The biggest crime of the Labour leaders is their refusal to warn the working class of the dangers ahead. Instead these leaders strive to lull the working class into a complacent hope that a future Labour government will be able to put matters right.'

In union after union, leaders sign or attempt to sign 'sweetheart deals' which amongst other things take away the right to strike.

This, the right to strike, is the most fundamental of all rights. The working class lives through the sale of its ability to work, its

labour power. It is a class without property. Take away the right to withdraw this commodity from the market and you have taken away that right on which every other right possessed by the working class and millions in the middle class in the last resort rests.

This cowardice of the Labour leaders encourages the Tories to prepare even further draconian measures against the unions.

'The 1988 Employment Bill that recently received its second reading, proposes to sweep away all those measures designed to protect women workers and young workers from super-exploitation.'

The 1988 Employment Bill that recently received its second reading, proposes to sweep away all those measures designed to protect women workers and young workers from super-exploitation. Under its terms women will once again have the 'privilege' of being able to work down the mines, a throw-back to the 1840s!

The same Bill, if carried, will at a stroke abolish the restrictions on the employment of young people - that is 16-18 year olds. They will be forced to work nights, bosses will no longer be obliged to keep registers of young people in their employ and local authorities will be stopped from enacting bye-laws to get round the provisions of the bill.

Workers of all ages will have fewer redundancy rights once the Bill becomes law, and rights will be especially restricted in firms employing fewer than 20 people - the typical sweat shops that the Thatcher government has particularly encouraged.

While this Bill is going through Parliament, the Tories have introduced a code of practice laying down guidelines for the right to strike. While not having the force of law these guide-



Police charge pickets during the miners' strike

Workers Revolutionary Party

DRAFT PROGRAMME 1989

1. THE WRP AND ITS AIMS

'The crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.'

This central proposition of the founding programme of the Fourth International, the international revolutionary organisation founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, is just as true today as it was 51 years ago.

Despite half a century of controlled atomic fission and decades of manned space flight, millions die of starvation every year.

Our planet is threatened by war and uncontrollable ecological crisis.

In Britain, the oldest industrialised country, there are millions without work. Health, welfare and education services are under attack. Month by month the social crisis deepens.

The chief aim of the Workers Revolutionary Party - together with our comrades in other countries who are united with us in the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists - is to build a new revolutionary leadership of the working class.

The working class of the world needs a new revolutionary leadership if it is to put an end to the capitalist system that has dragged humanity into the present crisis, and if it is to build socialism.

By socialism we mean, in the words of the 'Communist Manifesto', 'a free association of producers' in which 'the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.

This entails the abolition of classes and the disappearance of the state machine.

The first step to such a society is the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of a government of workers' councils (i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat) which will carry through the expropriation of capitalist property and the dissolution of the capitalists as a class.

This historic task can be carried out only by the working class - that class which capitalism brought into being and which alone has an interest in the destruction of capitalism.

Such a workers' revolution must be carried through on an international scale.

The first victory of the international socialist revolution was the Russian revolution of November 1917 which brought into being the first workers' state.

The degeneration of that state under Stalin has resulted in the mockery

This week Workers Press publishes the first of three parts of the Workers Revolutionary Party's Draft Programme. The Draft was adopted by the party's Central Committee on 15 January 1989 after three months' preliminary work and discussion in the Central Committee, Programme Commission and party branches.

For the next two months the Draft will be discussed more fully in the party's branches, from which amendments and addenda will be accepted. It will be submitted to the Workers Revolutionary Party Congress at the end of March for adoption.

We have struggled over the last three years, since the defeat and expulsion of the old Healy leadership of the WRP, to re-establish these principles: that our task is re-building the Fourth International, against Stalinism and revisionism; that this work is guided by Marxist theory which is embodied and developed in our programme.

We could not have produced this Draft Programme without having gone through that struggle for principles, a bitter one involving a number of splits. We could not have written it three years ago or even one year ago.

It will be on the basis of the Programme, when adopted, that work to build the WRP as the British section of the Fourth International will go forward.

This work will be done not only by present party members, but also by many who have not yet joined. That is why we are publishing the Draft, bringing supporters and readers of Workers Press into the discussion as well as party members. Readers are invited to send us their comments for publication.

The first part of the Draft, published this week, covers the WRP's socialist aims, the foundations of socialism, the bases of the programme, the basis for, and the re-building of, the Fourth International.

The second part, to be published next week, covers the question of women and the family, the capitalist crisis and its impact on Britain, democracy, parliament, the workers' movement and Labour Party, the socialist revolution and the questions of imperialism and war. The third and final part, to be published in Workers Press on 11 February, is our Programme of Action to fight the Tory government.

which is presented as 'socialism' by its bureaucratic rulers, but which in fact has nothing in common with socialism.

So too in the deformed workers' states of eastern Europe, China, etc. The deep crisis in all these countries shows the bankruptcy of their false Stalinist perspective of 'socialism on a national scale'.

Today the Stalinists of the various Communist Parties, headed by Gorbachev with his policy of 'one world, two systems', are the main force in heading off and betraying revolutionary struggles, thus enabling capitalism to prolong its existence.

Since World War II the betrayals of Stalinism have also enabled the reformists of the Labour Party, and their counterparts in other countries, to continue their betrayals, administering capitalism and protecting it from the struggles of the working class.

By their treachery the Stalinists and reformists have enabled crisis-stricken capitalism to continue long after it has become rotten-ripe for overthrow.

So the struggle for socialism means, above all, defeating the Stalinists and

reformists and driving them out of the working-class movement.

This is the sense in which 'the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership'.

2. WHAT OUR PROGRAMME IS BASED ON

Scientific socialism and its programme were first developed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, and fought for in the First International (formed in 1867) and by the revolutionaries within the Second International (formed in 1889).

The leaders of the Second International - the forerunners of today's Kinnocks and Mitterands - deserted to the side of capitalism and supported the first imperialist world war (1914-1918).

The Bolsheviks - who led the first successful workers' revolution in Russia in 1917 - and the revolutionaries who joined them in 1919 to form the Third (Communist) International, fought against those reformist leaders for the

socialist programme. This programme was further elaborated in the first four congresses of the Comintern (1919-1922).

Against the degeneration of the Comintern under Stalin from 1924 onwards, and its eventual crossing-over to the side of the ruling class, the struggle for world socialist revolution was continued by Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition, and then by the Fourth International.

The WRP's programme is based on all the conquests of Marxist theory made throughout the entire history of international working-class struggle.

Armed with these theoretical weapons, we fight constantly to develop strategy and tactics, slogans and forms of organisation, which will enable the party to develop as the revolutionary leadership of the working class.

Internationally, the WRP is fighting alongside other parties in the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists, for the rebuilding of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

3. THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIALISM

Socialism is not only possible but it is necessary. So long as capitalism survives, the productive forces of humanity are continually turned into forces of destruction.

The Fourth International's founding programme said in 1938 that the objective conditions for socialism were 'not only ripe, but somewhat rotten': this contradiction is greatly intensified today.

Decades ago scientific and technical knowledge had reached a level sufficient to raise the standard of living of all humanity to a point where want can begin to disappear and the social antagonisms that characterise class society can start to be overcome.

But the capitalist social system bars the way to the development of mankind's productive forces.

Techniques exist which could revolutionise food production and create an abundance of food. Yet millions are still starving, simply because profiteering capitalism will not apply and develop those techniques.

Famine and poverty, created by imperialism, are exacerbated by the crushing burden of debt which grinds down entire nations.

Mass unemployment persists in the big capitalist countries of western Europe, north America and Japan, especially among young people, because capitalism cannot and will not employ this 'reserve army of labour'. It is not profitable to do so.

Millions - especially the old and infirm - are forced to live in poverty. Basic services are destroyed. Urban decay sets in. Education and the arts are thrown into crisis.

All this despite unprecedented levels of scientific and technological know-how waiting to be tapped.

The developments in the world capitalist economy - in the newly industrialised countries of the Far East, for instance - occur only at the expense of the productive forces elsewhere. So the growth of Japan and Korea is inseparable from the stagnation of western Europe.

The world banking system is so closely interconnected, so precariously balanced on a mountain of credit, so unable to find a replacement for the USA as world banker, that 'healthy' economies face being dragged into the abyss along with the declining ones. This was the meaning of the stock exchange crash in October 1987.

The 'ecological crisis' is, essentially, another sign of the blind alley into which capitalism has led humanity.

Our environment is menaced by the pollution of soil, water, and atmosphere, which threatens the protective ozone layer and generates poisonous 'acid rain'. It is menaced by the destruction of rain forests. It is menaced by the threat of nuclear and other disasters which humanity will be unable to control.

These threats are not, as the liberals claim, an expression of a crisis between man and nature. Nor are they the inevitable result of the productive process.

On the contrary, they stem from the unplanned plunder of nature under profit-hungry capitalism.

The last word in capitalist 'development' is nuclear war - the transformation of productive forces into instruments of the destruction of humanity.

So the whole of human culture is threatened by this system's decay.

Unlike the pacifists, the communists of the WRP assert that only the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by socialism can halt the drive towards nuclear destruction.

The leaders of imperialism tell us their system is stronger than ever, and they cite as proof the 'technological revolution'.

The Labour leaders forecast a new era of 'humane capitalism', and the Eurocommunists write theories to justify it.

The so-called 'Trotskyist' leaders of the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' cling to the discredited theory of 'neo-capitalism'.

Against all these, we assert that the present imperialist epoch is, in Trotsky's words, an 'epoch of wars and revolutions'.

Imperialism survived World War II only because of the treachery of Stalinism and reformism: that is why we make it our task to resolve the crisis of working-class leadership. For this is the only way in which the crisis of humanity can be resolved.

The social crisis gripping capitalism extends also to the USSR, eastern Europe, and China. These countries' economies, cut off from the world division of labour and burdened with a huge military machine, stagnate or even decline.

With productive forces and techniques that lag hopelessly behind those of the advanced capitalist countries, they are unable to provide their inhabitants with even the basic necessities of life.

It is this crisis which forces the working class of these countries into struggle against the bureaucracy.

From the 1930s in the USSR, and in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in the deformed workers' states, their Stalinist rulers claimed that 'socialism' had been built there.

Against this the Trotskyists insisted that these states' economies were trapped

and limited by their national character, that they could never become socialist until the working class came to power in the major metropolitan countries.

Now the Stalinists admit that their 'socialism' has failed. We reply: this was never socialism; socialism is the 'free association of producers', the withering away of the state, the end of class society.

Today the prerequisite for this advance is not only the overthrow of capitalism in its main centres, but also the overthrow of the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes by working-class political revolution.

This world socialist revolution will open the door for the human and material resources of the planet to be used in a planned way, in the interests of all humanity.

The national divisions in capitalism which threaten nuclear war will give way to international co-operation.

The horrors of famine will become a thing of the past. State and class divisions will begin to disappear; so will the divisions between mental and manual labour which characterise class society.

The way will be opened for ending the oppression of women; the family will no longer exist in its present patriarchal form.

But the choice between this advance to socialism, or a continued descent into barbarism wholly depends on resolving the crisis of working-class leadership.

4. THE BASIS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The world socialist revolution began with the Russian workers' revolution of November 1917, led by Lenin's Bolshevik Party, which brought into being the first workers' state, destroyed the capitalist state, and expropriated capitalist property.

This revolution is the principal gain of the international workers' movement so far, and it lives on in the nationalised property relations in the USSR, which we defend.

In the 1920s this revolution was isolated by the betrayals of reformism, principally in Germany.

Confined within the state boundaries of the USSR, the workers' state degenerated. Political power was usurped by Stalin and a privileged bureaucratic caste, which replaced Lenin's internationalism with the reformist policy of 'socialism in one country'.

From 1917 to 1924, the Comintern was built, above all, on the basis of the lessons of the Russian revolution, to lead the struggle for international socialist revolution.

Reflecting the needs of imperialism within the working-class movement, Stalinism tried to destroy Bolshevism and the continuity of Bolshevism. The struggle of Trotsky against Stalin, first in the Russian Opposition (from 1924) and then in the International Left Opposition (from 1927), represented that continuity.

Stalinism was responsible for the great defeats inflicted on the working class between the two world wars: in the Soviet Union itself, with the virtual destruction of Lenin's Bolshevik Party; and in China, Spain and, above all, Germany.

Following the line laid down by

Moscow, the German Communist Party spurned a united front with the social-democratic workers and allowed Hitler to come to power without a shot being fired; after Hitler's victory not a word of criticism of this disastrous policy was uttered within the Comintern.

Trotsky and his supporters in the International Left Opposition concluded that the Comintern, which had been founded to lead the world revolution, had turned into its opposite, had 'passed over to the side of the bourgeois order', and that a new international, a Fourth International, had therefore to be built.

'The cause of these defeats is to be found in the degeneration and perfidy of the old leadership', declared the Fourth International's founding programme in 1938. 'The class struggle does not tolerate an interruption. The Third International, following the Second, is dead for purposes of revolution. Long live the Fourth International!'

The same founding programme forecast a revolution at the end of World War II. This revolution began - in France, Italy, eastern Europe, and eastern Asia.

But it was strangled, distorted and, in some countries, broken by Stalinism. Stalin's deal with imperialism divided Europe, and with it the powerful German working class.

This alone gave capitalism a new lease of life: that is why today, 50 years after the foundation of the Fourth International, the crisis of mankind remains powerfully concentrated in the crisis of working-class leadership.

5. THE WRP AND THE REBUILDING OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Ever since the end of World War II, the international working class has come forward to do battle with imperialism, time and again confronting barriers put in its path by the Stalinist, reformist, and bourgeois national leaderships.

The workers and peasants of China, Cuba and Vietnam struck powerful blows

against imperialism. But their struggle for socialism was blocked by the Stalinists who bureaucratised the states that emerged - and ensured terrible and bloody defeat in Indonesia, Chile, Greece, and elsewhere.

The 1968 general strike in France; the struggles of the Hungarian, Czechoslovak, and Polish workers against Stalinism; the Iranian revolution which overthrew the Shah but was drowned in blood by the Khomeini regime it bore to victory; the British miners' strike of 1984-1985; the struggles in Palestine and South Africa today: all these defined still more sharply the crisis of leadership which the Fourth International set out to resolve.

For this reason, the problems within the Fourth International itself since World War II are the concern of the whole working class.

The Fourth International was subjected to tremendous pressure from Stalinism.

The assassination of Trotsky himself in 1940 cut the movement off from its living connection with the Russian revolution's leadership; the Stalinists physically wiped out many of its strongest cadres in the USSR, Europe, and the Far East.

This pressure also took a political form, with the growth of revisionist trends at the heart of the Fourth International.

The first and most important of these revisionist trends, led by Pablo and Mandel in the early 1950s, revised the Marxist conception of the nature of the epoch, putting forward the prospect of 'centuries' of deformed workers' states before socialism could be achieved.

Pablo and Mandel also revised Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism, claiming that it had a 'dual nature', or 'progressive' sides, and that it could in some cases 'project a revolutionary orientation'.

The practical consequence of this was the liquidation of the Trotskyist movement into Stalinism, at first under the so-called tactic of 'entryism of a

special type'.

Mandel and the leaders of the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' maintain this revisionist outlook today, searching constantly for 'progressive' leaderships within Stalinist, reformist or petty-bourgeois national movements, as a substitute for the struggle to build the revolutionary leadership of the working class.

The struggle for the Fourth International has been a long fight against revisionism.

This started in 1953, when the International Committee of the Fourth International began to oppose the liquidationism of Pablo and Mandel. The leaders of the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA had initiated the 1953 split which led to the formation of the International Committee, but they failed to wage a thorough struggle against Pabloism either in theory or in practice. And in 1963 they rejoined Mandel in the revisionist 'United Secretariat'.

But the fact that the International Committee was founded on the need to fight revisionism did not make it immune from revisionism itself.

Its organisations, too, degenerated both theoretically and politically; and this degeneration found its sharpest expression in the opportunism and corruption of leaders such as Pierre Lambert of the French OCI and Gerry Healy of the WRP.

In Lambert's case, the programme of socialist revolution was abandoned in place of slavish support for French right-wing social democracy.

Healy turned his back on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and on the struggle to build the Fourth International.

But it did not stop there. The regime of the International Committee under Healy, especially in the 1970s and early 1980s, became the very opposite of democratic centralism, the Leninist form of revolutionary organisation in which discipline is based on a common understanding of party tasks.

So, to an increasing extent, decisions



'The Russian workers' revolution of November 1917...is the principal gain of the international workers' movement so far...'

were taken by an individual, arbitrary instructions were issued, and differences of opinion were suppressed.

In this way the movement under Healy adopted some of the worst features of Stalinism.

Many who joined it wishing to become revolutionaries found that this path was blocked. Only after Healy's expulsion in 1985 was this problem confronted.

Those forces which continued to struggle for Trotskyism against revisionism took strength from the combativeness of the world working class.

Thus it was the British miners' strike of 1984-1985 - part of an international wave of working-class struggles, a turning point where the crisis of leadership was sharply posed - which exposed most clearly the Healy-led WRP's combination of opportunism and sectarianism, exposed its inability effectively to challenge the reformists and Stalinists, and brought the crisis within the party to a head.

Healy was expelled from the WRP in October 1985 on charges of sexually abusing female party members, physically abusing party members, and slandering political opponents within the movement. The very nature of these charges - to which Healy never replied - show eloquently how deeply his leadership had degenerated.

Equally, the defeat and expulsion of Healy, and the subsequent and vitally necessary theoretical re-arming of the party's cadres, laid the basis for a major development of the party.

When this struggle began its full significance was not apparent to the party. Only through struggles against numerous factions which emerged in the wake of Healy's expulsion did its significance become clearer.

Healy ended up unconditionally supporting the Soviet bureaucracy and Gorbachev; his deputy Mike Banda ended up renouncing Trotskyism and explicitly defending the Stalin regime of the 1930s.

Other factions rejected the centrality of the fight against Stalinism (the 'Internationalist tendency'), or sought organisational means, rather than political ones, to resolve the crisis of the Fourth International (the 'Bolshevik tendency').

Others again (Torrance, Hyland) vigorously denied the existence of the Fourth International's crisis, continuing with elements of Healy's sectarian and opportunist programme and his anti-communist methods, and proclaiming that they were the Fourth International.

It was in conflict with these factions that the WRP took up the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International, against Stalinism and revisionism, as the central question facing the working class, and as the only means to resolve the crisis of working-class leadership internationally.

This is indeed the central issue dividing us from others in the British working-class movement who proclaim their adherence to Trotskyism.

In the 1950s the 'Militant' leaders renounced the need for a revolutionary international. They adapted Pablo's theories to British conditions, deducing that if objective conditions could make Stalinism revolutionary, they could also resuscitate the stinking corpse of British

social-democracy.

Today they are merely an adjunct of the Labour bureaucracy, and are faithful to it at all times.

Other groups claiming adherence to Trotskyism, including 'Socialist Action' and 'Socialist Outlook' (both affiliated to the 'United Secretariat') have similarly adapted to the Labour 'left', urging workers repelled by reformism to rally behind its 'leftmost' bastion, the camp of Benn and Heffer, instead of fighting to build the Fourth International in opposition to it.

The Socialist Workers Party is also the continuation of a movement which broke with the Fourth International. They opposed its defence of China and Korea in the Korean war of 1950; they renounced any defence of the USSR and deformed workers' states against imperialism.

They maintain that the USSR and deformed workers' states are 'state capitalist'. They put an equals sign between the parasitic bureaucracy and the capitalist class of the west, attributing to the bureaucracy the strength of a ruling class.

In this way they write off the gains of the Russian revolution. Since they deny that the bureaucracy is a parasitic growth on the workers' movement or that Stalinism is the main counter-revolutionary force within that movement, they have no perspective for a struggle to break Stalinism's influence within the working class. Today the SWP has swung from its 'leftist' 'rank-and-file-ism' of the 1970s to adapt, like others, to Benn and Heffer, urging workers to follow them instead of following a revolutionary leadership.

The Revolutionary Communist Party and others who split from it carry out 'leftist' propaganda, but they too reject the perspective of the building of the Fourth International against Stalinism and reformism.

Many workers believe that the divisions among these organisations gravely weaken the working class. We answer that, in every struggle of the working class against the capitalist enemy, we will work side by side with those in every political tendency or none.

But we will never hide our programme or seek unity at the expense of principles.

We will test our programme against others in the course of the struggle. And we are sure that this will greatly strengthen the working class.

6. THE FIGHT FOR INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS UNITY

All those who claim adherence to Trotskyism, as well as other 'lefts' and some Stalinists, speak of 'internationalism' and 'international solidarity' in general. But only in building the Fourth International can Marx's slogan 'Workers of the world unite' take on concrete meaning.

The workers of the world can unite only through carrying through the socialist revolution to its completion.

Only in this way can the democratic demands of the South African masses, and the national aspirations of the Irish, the Palestinians and the Nicaraguans, be

achieved.

Only in this way can the workers of the USSR and the deformed workers' states go forward to the socialism for which they have fought and to which the bureaucracy is the main obstacle.

In Europe, the capitalist powers driven by fear of their American and Japanese competitors, and above all by fear of the working class - seek closer economic and political co-operation (hence the ending in 1992 of some tariff, Customs, and legal barriers). They also seek new agreements with the leaders of the deformed workers' states.

The working class will resist the consequences of the economic blocs and anti-working-class political deals of capitalists and bureaucrats. In such struggles the socialist slogan of the United Socialist States of Europe will become a rallying-cry; the achievement of this aim, too, lies along the road to socialist revolution.

The international links forged by British workers are of great importance. Such links exist with workers throughout Europe against the capitalist Common Market, as in the recent Ford strike; with workers in southern Africa against apartheid, e.g. the Liverpool dockers who blocked Namibian uranium.

Links will be forged too with the workers of Ireland against our 'own' imperialism, which has kept them in colonial chains.

The WRP fights for such solidarity, but it does not stop there. Just as the revolutions now developing on a national scale will be completed by the world socialist revolution, so the unity of the working class will develop from isolated acts of solidarity to a general struggle against imperialism.

Today this issue arises concretely with regard to South Africa. The Stalinists there hope to stitch up a 'democratic' compromise which will discard capitalism's discredited apartheid face and enforce the rule of capital more firmly against the working-class movement, the new trades unions, and the growing cry of 'socialism'.

In line with this the British Stalinists want to turn the anti-apartheid movement into 'solidarity' with popular-front-type betrayal.

Trotskyism in South Africa is challenging the ANC leaders' treachery. Here in Britain we stand with the South African Trotskyists, with those fighting for socialism, with the working class - and against Stalinism.

This is real internationalism: the internationalism of the Fourth International.

<p>WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY</p> <p>Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party</p> <p>Name</p> <p>Address</p> <p>Age (if under 21) Trade union</p> <p>Send to: WRP National Organiser, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS</p>

LETTERS

Support the sacked P&O workers

A YEAR on and the P&O dispute is still with us. A year on, and we have endured at least four major passenger accidents in that period, which without doubt can be attributed to the philosophy of 'Profit before people or need'.

A year on and P&O are allowed to sail ferries with 15 crew members less than the ill-fated Herald of Free Enterprise. NUS P&O workers refused to sign new contracts which would have implemented these new working practices and were promptly sacked.

Scab labour was introduced, and the union responded with all-out strike action, followed by calling out Sealink and other port workers.

Without doubt this was a definite opportunity for a clear victory over the multinationals. Everything looked set, Sam McCluskie said words to the effect that if it meant going to jail so be it. A few days later McCluskie told his members that the law must not be continued to be broken.

What a scab! Another week of secondary pickets and that evil company would have had to back down. It's obvious that the TUC and the Labour Party are only policing the ruling classes policies. Surely the time has come for a change in leadership. We need a workers controlled international movement that would serve for need, not profit.

These brave sacked P&O workers are still fighting on. There are pickets every day in Dover. Saturday 4 February roughly marks a year on, and there will be mass pickets on that day in Dover, with some kind of function during proceedings.

Comrades we should all be on that picket line and show our solidarity to our fellow workers.

David Ward
NUPE Leicester

Turning in his grave

Mr Brotherstone spoke of the City of Edinburgh and its culture and what was available at the festival. For me personally the presentation of the so-called opera 'Nixon in China' is utter musical cacophony with only a remotely sounding Chinese theme and barely any narration.

This opera would rate from my experience of opera appreciation 3 out of 10. By way of comparison one of the greatest and most musically haunting and emotionally expressive of opera composers was Giacomo Puccini who composed several immortal works such as La Boheme with such arias as 'Che gelida Manina'. Other operas such as Pietro Masagni's one act or 'Cavallaria Rusticana' was at one time played in 96 different opera houses all over the world, and yet as destiny sometimes has it he died penniless in 1945 as the US troops entered Rome. Surely if 'Nixon in China' makes money, Masagni will turn in his grave.

William Wright
Edinburgh

The Fourth International and Charlie Pottins

IN HIS LETTER on 'The Fourth International and Palestine', Charlie Pottins gets himself into a political mess which goes beyond the issue of Palestine.

Arafat makes a speech in Geneva whose text was agreed in advance with the State Department, renounces the original aims of the PLO and wants to talk peace with the Zionists. Every imperialist rogue is delighted, with the exception of the Israeli right-wing leaders.

It's OK, says Charlie, it's just Arafat outmanoeuvring US imperialism.

We are for solidarity with the intifada and with the struggle for Palestinian self-determination. But what is the aim of such solidarity?

For Marxists it must be part of the fight for the unity of the international working class against imperialism, for its independence from all the agencies of world capital.

Charlie tries to make it look as if we are postponing the unity of Arab and Jewish workers until after the State of Israel has been destroyed. This is not quite honest. Opportunism has always denounced socialism, urging the working class to accept the existing state of affairs and concentrate on making the best of it.

Marxists fight in every movement which objectively expresses the contradictions of imperialism, under whatever leadership. But we do so in order to make its revolutionary implications conscious and to demonstrate the impossibility of its success except as part of the overthrow of the power of capital.

Zionism is the main agent of imperialism in the Middle East. Whatever disagreements its leaders may have with the imperialists at present, the State of Israel remains the main outpost against the workers and peasants of the region.

In Israel, we should certainly support the slightest challenge to the Zionist leaders by Jewish workers trapped by Zionism. But the basis of working class unity must be the destruction of the state of Israel.

Charlie's position on Palestine leads him to a line of argument that would justify every opportunist trick of any union bureaucrat.

If he accepts a miserable settlement on behalf of a group of workers, Pottins would explain: in the interests of unity, don't talk about a sell-out! He's only outmanoeuvring the employers! In any case, what else could he do?

Stubbornly refusing to move away from the line of the old WRP, and trying to put the PLO leaders beyond criticism, Charlie Pottins is building a wall between himself and Trotskyism.

Cyril Smith, on behalf of the
WRP Political Committee

WRITE TO WORKERS PRESS

WORKERS PRESS welcomes letters on all subjects, but please be brief. Only exceptionally are we able to print letters longer than 200 words.

Workers Press PO Box 735 London SW9 7QS



Riot police in front of pit in 1984

lines will certainly be used by the judges when called upon to pronounce whether industrial action is legal.

The code constitutes a scab's charter. Any minority voting against strike action will not be allowed to engage in strike action.

Such minorities will have legal protection and will be backed by a special state fund to protect them against any 'intimidation'.

All strike actions will only be allowed after all procedures have been exhausted and even then the union concerned will have to consult ACAS, the government's so-called 'arbitration' body.

'The union leaders either stand by and allow the Tories to press ahead with their plans to shackle the unions directly to the needs of the capitalist state or they collaborate with the enemy in its plans.'

Balloting restrictions will be greatly tightened with the sole aim of producing low turnouts so that the state can deem them 'unrepresentative'. A minimum turnout of 70 per cent will be needed in any ballot. Actions taken on lower ballots will find judges declaring such action as outside legal immunity.

Postal ballots will be the normal type of ballot, with workshop ballots only allowed in exceptional cases.

The union leaders either stand by and allow the Tories to press ahead with their plans to shackle the unions directly to the needs of the capitalist state or they collaborate with the enemy in its plans.

Trade unionism is now at the crossroads. The old type of 'democratic' trade unionism is less and less compatible with the needs of the capitalist state. The transformation of the unions into fighting organisations able to defend their members and the working class as a whole above all demands a new revolutionary leadership. The building of this leadership is inseparable from the struggle against the existing reformist and Stalinist leaders.

* For trade unions independent of the capitalist state!

* Force the union leaders to break with the capitalist state!

* End all collaboration with the Tories!

* For the united struggle of all workers, employed and unemployed!

* Down with no-strike deals!

Rough justice

THERE'S a lot of public sympathy for the mother who poured boiling water over her lodger's genitals after he had raped her five-year-old daughter. This is a case that raises some perplexing questions.

The crude principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is associated, generally speaking, with less enlightened cultures - in particular, with those where rigid and intolerant religious beliefs hold sway. By and large, it doesn't seem to act as an effective deterrent.

A friend who saw a convicted thief's hand chopped off in Saudi Arabia some years ago told me that, so far as he was aware, theft is no less prevalent in Saudi Arabia than elsewhere.

In the ninth-century laws of King Alfred, rape was punishable by the castration of the rapist. There is no evidence that this expedient deters other potential offenders; nor, indeed, does it necessarily remove sexual desire or potency or render a rapist incapable of raping again.

Besides this pragmatic objection to the eye-for-an-eye principle there is a further objection: that justice should be seen to be done; that it should be administered equitably; and that an accused person should have the right to state his case before an impartial tribunal.

The bourgeois legal system pays lip-service to these criteria, but in practice, as is well known, they are constantly violated by police and judiciary alike.

In times of social upheaval, when the masses pour onto the historical stage, there are always acts of rough justice - acts of

revenge for years of tyranny, oppression, and brutality.

A case in point, which I saw myself in 1956, was the lynching of a Hungarian security policeman who had taken part in the mass murder of some 80 men, women, and children in the little town of Magyarovar.

Those who kicked him to death and then hanged his body upside down were the relatives of the people he had murdered.

Rough justice? Certainly. But Lieutenant Jozsef Stefko reaped only that which he had sown: a possibility which all policemen who are tempted to abuse their power ought constantly to bear in mind.

Now, I am not saying that the mother who administered rough justice, who took the law and a kettle of boiling water into her own hands, should have got off scot-free. But a suspended sentence, or a binding over, would surely have been a sane and humane decision.

The decision that was in fact taken was neither sane nor humane.

The judge who has sent the mother to prison and put the little girl into care has got his priorities completely wrong. Like many of his colleagues, he is an ignorant and misguided man.

Convincing work has been carried out in the past 40 years by John Bowlby, James Robertson, and others on the long-term psychological damage done to young children by being separated from their mothers at times of stress. The evidence for this is absolutely overwhelming.

It is painful to think about the extreme distress the child in this case must now be suffering. If there is one person in the

world she needs to be with, to give her comfort and reassurance and help her begin to heal the mental scars left by a horrible experience, it is her mother.

Yet that one person has been locked up away from her, and she herself is now locked up and tended by strangers. However kind they may be, and however hard they may try to help her, they are not her mother.

Having been treated as a mere object by the brute who violated her, this totally defenceless child has now been treated as a mere object by the judge.

Her needs and interests have not been given the slightest consideration. She has been doubly violated.

How to sell a lot of books

TWENTY-ODD years ago I gave evidence for the defence in a case involving a book called 'Last Exit to Brooklyn': no masterpiece, but certainly not pornographic either.

Most of the MPs who demanded its banning made it clear that they hadn't read it, and at least one of them didn't even know its name. Boosted by this outcry, sales shot up almost overnight from a few hundred to 13,000.

The brouhaha over 'The Satanic Verses' its public burning in Bradford, the campaign against it by the ridiculously named Society for the Protection of Religious Tolerance - is the best possible advertisement for this book.

With the help of Bernie Grant, MP, and others, Salman Rushdie has hit the jack-pot.

AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

Dirty business

MEDIA WATCHERS have recently commented on the emergence of a 'new style' of advertising which they see as either a product of, or a response to the aggressive atmosphere of 'Thatcherism'.

The style is abrasive and studiously insensitive. The t.v. cameos depict a world of ostentatious luxury, of the yuppie affluent life style surrounded by urban squalor and decay.

For example when the 'test drive' scenario was used for luxury cars, the setting used to be high mountain passes or deserts; today's 'test drive' is in the heart of the inner city or the ghetto where the 'going really gets tough'.

The 'dinner party' routine, once a display of elegant middle-class conviviality, to show off 'quality' commodities, has become the location of sexual duplicity and the commodity part of the seduction game.

The new iconography of the

'enterprise culture' is full of arrogant cynicism. This 'new style' has been with us for quite a while actually, certainly since the 'Labour isn't working' gimmicks of the first Thatcher election campaign.

Thatcher's no-nonsense maternalism and Hurd's public-school paternalism are undoubtedly an act but they still retain selected aspects of the patrician Toryism. Behind their tail coats and with their approval a generation of deeply cynical sharks are disporting themselves.

This new generation, often drawn from a re-composed social layer of middle class, see no need for the historical finesse of the MacMillans et al. with their carefully constructed illusions of 'national unity' based on class compromise and equilibrium. They also conducted themselves as they pleased in whole areas of their lives, but they needed hypocrisy and a sense of political irony to survive.

As the German Marxist, Walter Benjamin remarks of their lifestyles, 'The man...who knows himself to be in accord with the most ancient heritage of his class or nation will sometimes bring his private life into ostentatious contrast to the maxims he unrelentingly asserts in public...as the most conclusive proof of the unshakable authority of the prin-

ciples he puts on display.'

But as the crisis deepens, the refined art of political irony and hypocrisy have to be replaced historically by the brutal cynicism of real politik.

In other words, the distance between what is said and what is done all but disappears, and what we see is the emergence in the ruling class of an open and active class hatred.

The cultural products of this class are without irony and full of a slick opportunism. The most vicious manifestation of this is the publicity campaign for a 'charity' project of that meddlesome cretin, the eldest son of Mrs E.Windsor.

The advertisements for the 'Prince of Wales Business Trust' consist of three portraits of young people. The first, of a defiant white skin-head, has the caption 'Help him create wealth not agro'.

The second, of a black youth, reads 'Get him in the right company, his own'. And the third, probably the most disgusting, shows an attractive young woman with a hint of independence or 'waywardness' suggested by careful dishevelled hair; her caption reads 'Help us put her into business before someone else does'.

If they need spelling out, the blunt assumptions are, white unemployed youth are violent, black unemployed youth are in

bad company i.e. other black people, and unemployed women will go into prostitution if their 'business' instincts are not guided into respectable enterprise.

The solution offered is a princely charity which will introduce them to the business ethic. Capitalism puts an end to violence and prostitution and bad company, no more wars, no more 'Union Carbides' no more (degeneration?) and sexual exploitation of women! The cynicism leaves us breathless, as it is meant to do.

If the present culture is deprived of irony, then life certainly is not. One of the tabloids discovered last week that one of the young people to benefit from the prince's business charity to set up a men's underwear shop, was a working prostitute who ran an escort service.

His dabbling in the 'social problem' is significantly different to that of his father in the 1950s and 1960s.

He believed that if you hung kids off cliffs, froze them in Snowdonia or half-drowned them at sea, you could put them back as good boys and girls in the City.

However times are changing, he now admits that he can't tell the difference between marriage and prostitution...well he wouldn't would he!

A LETTER FROM IRELAND

AS THE 17th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the massacre of 14 unarmed civilians in Derry by British paratroopers arrives, the rightward move of the Sinn Fein leadership becomes increasingly exposed.

This move to the right was emphatically marked last year by the meeting of Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams and John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP).

Now, in the face of draconian legislation by Thatcher's government and widespread harassment by the British Army and RUC, there is a conscious refusal of any attempts at mass action and, instead, an increasing rehash of the middle class sentiment and ideology of nationalism.

In a leading article in 5 January issue of the Sinn Fein weekly 'An Phoblacht (Republican News)' spokesman Mitchel McLoughlin presents the situation as a war between the 'Irish people' and 'Britain'.

Blaming the 'British' for the domination and exploitation of the Irish, he is totally unable to make a class analysis and distinguish between the British imperialist bourgeoisie and the British working class, also under attack from Thatcher.

This method of thinking leads McLoughlin into calling for 'all shades of opinion' to come together in the fight for self-determination.

In this campaign he specifically includes Fianna Fail - the jailers and extraditers of republicans!

The article, which reaffirms the Sinn Fein strategy tabled in the discussion paper 'A Scenario for Peace' first issued at the time of the last Westminster elections, demonstrates the increasing importance being placed on constitutional politics.

In the course of the article, McLoughlin reiterates Sinn Fein's equating of its fight for Irish self-determination with the national liberation struggles in other parts of the world, particularly with the PLO.

Workers Press was very pleased to announce on the front page of issue no. 142 that a new Trotskyist organisation, the Socialist Revolutionary Group, had been established in Ireland, which pledged itself to fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and committed itself to participate in the Preparatory Committee. We publish here a report from a leading member of that organisation



BY JOHN STEELE

REPUBLICANISM AND REVOLUTION

But there has been a noticeable silence from both Sinn Fein and the IRA to the denouncing, by the PLO, of the IRA as 'terrorists'.

The director of the Palestine Information Office in Dublin in a letter to the 'Belfast Telegraph' describes as 'distres-

sing' any attempts to equate the PLO with the 'IRA or any other terrorist organisation'.

He discloses that Yasser Arafat when in Strasbourg, assured the SDLP's John Hume that the PLO had no connection with the IRA. Hume's role is interesting.



Catholic barricade in West Belfast

Last year's dialogue between Gerry Adams and him was an attempt by Hume to steer Sinn Fein down the purely constitutional road.

Adams admits this in an interview in January's edition of 'Living Marxism'.

He states that the talks were an attempt by Sinn Fein to examine the possibility of 'an unarmed strategy'.

Here Adams shows that his method of thinking is close to that of the reformists in the Communist Party of Ireland and 'Militant' who call for an end to the military campaign, as if it can be turned on and off like a tap.

The precarious hold of British imperialism can only be maintained by a corrupt and violent state. It is the nature of the state and its physical presence on the streets as 'bodies of armed men' that forces working class youth into taking up arms.

More and more the role of Sinn Fein is to head off this revolt of the youth. They have turned away from any attempt to defend the nationalist communities whose areas were recently subjected to massive intimidation and harassment, with many homes extensively damaged.

Figures released by the RUC, which they admit themselves are a 'conservative estimate', reveal that in a 5-week period the RUC and British Army stopped and searched 700,000 vehicles and searched more than 1,100 buildings and homes.

Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA gained their early support by their defence of these nationalist areas.

Now, the only response to the increased repression is the targetting, by the IRA, of the homes and families of British servicemen.

Marxists must stand firm on the fundamental issue of the defence of all those youth drawn into the armed struggle and this method of fighting imperialism.

However, the armed struggle cannot be a substitute for the mobilising of the working class and the conscious building of a leadership that analyses and understands the class nature of imperialism.

News briefs...

Lost appeal

THE ACTRESS Vanessa Redgrave has been unsuccessful in seeking to hold the Boston Symphony Orchestra liable under a State civil rights law for cancelling a series of performances she had been contracted to give in 1982. The United States Supreme Court declined to review a ruling that Ms Redgrave could not collect damages for the cancellation because of the alleged threat of disruption by opponents to her support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation. A performance fee of £15,200, as well as a lost part in a play valued at £6,500 were the sums involved.

Protesters bailed

TWO of Viraj Mendis's supporters, Jeremy Clifton and Dominic Thackeray, both from Camden, London, were granted bail at Marylebone Magistrates' Court on Monday. They have been charged with conspiring to cause criminal damage at the Sri Lankan High Commission building, on which they were alleged to have daubed slogans, and also to throwing paint over a Rolls-Royce in protest at the deportation of Mendis last week.

Shortlisted

A SALARY of more than £30,000 a year could well be in store for Linda Bellos, the former leader of Lambeth Council. Many of her present colleagues believe that Ms Bellos, who for the last six months has been in charge of Hackney Council's women's unit, is the favourite for the job of assistant chief executive with her new employers. Hackney Tory councillor, Joe Lobenstein, has been quoted as saying that he would be 'aghast' if the appointment was made on the basis of her political affiliation. Hackney is, of course, Labour controlled at the moment.

Soviet women

ARTICLES appearing in the Moscow press claim that as many as 90 per cent of first pregnancies in the Soviet Union are aborted. An annual death rate of 700 women has been estimated as a result of the 6.5 million abortions that are carried out. On average, Soviet women are said to endure four abortions in a lifetime, in some instances as many as nine. Inadequate medical care and facilities leading to humiliation and physical distress are recounted by those interviewed. A scandalous lack of proper contraception and the stifling by the bureaucracy of educational programmes has meant that abortion is the chief form of birth control.

THE FIGHT FOR JOBS AT FORD

BY KEITH SCOTCHER

THE SHOCK announcement of the ending of Sierra production at Ford's Dagenham plant has exposed the bankruptcy of the union leaderships at both national and local levels.

For years Ford union leaders have opposed and resisted moves to organise Ford workers internationally to match Ford's international planning and strategy.

Instead, Ford management has played off one workforce against another, threatening to move work from country to country if the union leaders did not agree to implement and enforce rationalisations and efficiencies.

These 'leaders' grovelled before Ford offering more subservience than their competitors, i.e. Ford workers in other countries.

In reality, Ford decides its investment programme independently according to the most favourable conditions for profit making, but doesn't miss the opportunity to exploit the willingness of the union leaders to collaborate, if only to kick them in the teeth later.

The 'Financial Times' has revealed that last November the British unions rejected an approach from their continental counterparts for joint action in defence of jobs on the grounds that they enjoyed a good working relationship with Ford!

The union officials with most responsibility for this situation are the 'left' allies of the right wing; the AEU's Jimmie Airlie, Jack Adams of the TGWU and local official Steve Hart, all members of the 'Euro'CPGB.

Jack Adams, while talking about fighting the jobs loss, is also suggesting to Ford that Dagenham's workforce is prepared to accept worse conditions including 'more flexible shift patterns' if Ford change their plans.

Also proposed is a boycott of components for continental plants made at Dagenham, a divisive policy that avoids the issue of uniting Ford workers internationally.

Ford plan to impose three shift working on the Genk workforce to achieve complete transfer of Sierra production. The opportunity exists to forge a joint resistance with the Genk workforce. The main obstacle is the union leadership who don't want to mobilise their members.

For several years all Ford's requirements for overtime and weekend working have been agreed. Ten hour shifts have



become standard in Ford plants across Europe, making a mockery of the fight for the shorter working week.

Shop stewards meeting in Dagenham on Sunday 29 January must reject their leaders nationalistic grovelling and call for a joint struggle with Belgian Ford workers against attacks on Dagenham jobs and Genk working conditions.

An immediate overtime ban and the ending of collaboration

on efficiencies, EI, EDAP, etc, would be a first step in combatting Ford's plan.

The urgent task before the Ford unions is to build an International Ford Union Combine that can begin to confront the common struggle faced by workers internationally; how to end capitalist exploitation and the constant threat to jobs and livelihoods posed by imperialism.

Mass defence of Viraj Mendis



BY BOB MYERS

ON THE DAY of Viraj Mendis's deportation a crowd gathered outside Manchester Town Hall, many of them NALGO workers. Loudspeakers broadcast Radio Manchester's minute by minute commentary from Gatwick airport.

As the news came that the plane had taken off, a roar of anger went up - many people were in tears.

Councillors, Euro MPs and North East TUC leaders all denounced the government but appealed to the people not to vent their anger on the police.

However the crowd marched down to Bootle Street police station. The gates had been locked. The lone policeman on guard duty was sent flying and a banner was tied across the gates 'Thatcher you got blood

on your hands'.

In many other towns rallies and walk-outs took place. In Manchester the same evening demonstrators took to the streets for the fourth time in three days. Several thousand people sat down and blocked Central Manchester and then marched to the church in Hume, followed this time by an enormous convoy of tactical aid group police vans, horses and even an ambulance. There was to be no repeat of the siege of Moss Side police station of two nights earlier.

The rally was addressed by Tony Benn and Bill Morris, Deputy leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who was speaking on behalf of the TUC General Council.

But the most powerful speech came from Anwar Ditta who had been helped by Viraj to organise the battle to bring her own children to England.

She described the conditions of fear that the Asian community was being forced into.

The government's determination to be seen to be ruthless and to step up the attack on the black community was confirmed by an anonymous source in the Immigration Service who told the 'Observer' newspaper that they knew where hundreds of illegal immigrants were hiding but that they had not been able to clobber them till Mendis was out of the way.

The weekly Viraj Mendis Defence campaign meeting was packed as plans for the national demonstration on 4 February and continuing the campaign against immigration laws were discussed.