

MURDER VICTIM OF BRITISH 'DEMOCRACY'

BRITISH WORKERS MUST DEFEND IRISH WORKERS

BELFAST lawyer Pat Finucane, shot down by a loyalist murder gang last Sunday, is British 'democracy's' latest victim.

The responsibility for his death lies with the British occupation forces, the Tory government, and the Labour leadership who support their policy in Ireland.

A month before Finucane was killed, Tory Home Office minister Douglas Hogg told a Commons committee on the anti-'terrorist' laws that there were north of Ireland solicitors 'unduly sympathetic to the IRA'.

Challenged by Social Democratic Labour Party MP Seamus Mallon to substantiate this, Hogg repeated it ten more times. Mallon replied: 'It will be on the head of this minister and government if the assassin's bullet decides to do, by lead, what this minister has done by word.'

Mallon's prophecy was borne out when members of the Ulster Freedom Fighters (a cover name used by the Ulster Defence Association) entered Finucane's home and murdered him.

Colin Haddick of the Northern Ireland Law Society said: 'What Mr Hogg has done is to create an excuse for terrorist organisations to carry out murders - something which was not available to them before.'

Tory Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King defended Hogg, saying that his statement had nothing to do with Finucane's death.

Charles Haughey and Brian Lenihan, leaders of the 26-county government, added insult to injury: they sent condolences to Finucane's family - while southern judges refused leave to attend the funeral to his brother Dermot Finucane, who is held facing extradition to the north on charges of escaping from Long Kesh prison in 1983.

Labour's spokesman Kevin Macnamara called on Hogg to 'consider his position'.

Every trades unionist and Labour Party member should consider: why didn't Macnamara, even in the hours after Finucane's death, have the guts to call for Hogg's resignation - let alone call for working-

BY SIMON PIRANI

class action against the growing threat to civil rights?

The reason is, of course, that the Labour leadership have always been the greatest supporters of the armed occupation which caused Finucane's death. Labour governments have trampled on civil rights and imposed armed dictatorship in the six counties as enthusiastically as the Tories.

Remember: the UDA - which murdered Finucane - staged rallies of masked, armed men and carried out a murder campaign against nationalist civilians in the mid-70s (Sinn Fein say the UDA have been responsible for 678 killings). UDA members carry many of the north of Ireland's 120,000 legally-held weapons, and many are also members of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

The organisation has never been banned - either by Labour or Tory governments - because its violent campaign against the nationalist

population is an integral part of the sectarian six-county state and British imperialism cannot do without it.

Remember: the Special Branch used the UDA and other loyalist paramilitaries to target their enemies, under both Labour and Tory governments. The no-jury courts, plastic bullets, and shoot-to-kill worked under both governments too. The media hue and cry against Republicanism was whipped up by Labour and Tory politicians.

No wonder, then, that while Finucane's body lay in his Belfast home, former Labour Northern Ireland Secretary Lord Mason was calling for 'bi-partisan' Labour-Tory co-operation against 'terrorism'. What Mason meant was, against democracy and the working class.

In fact, such 'bi-partisan' co-operation already operates: the Tories' war against the Irish working class and nationalists is applauded by the Labour leaders.

And the Labour leaders support the Tories' attacks on the rights of the working class in Britain, by blocking working-class mobilisation and witch-hunting those who resist.

Pat Finucane's death must be a spur to the fight to break the British working-class movement's policy on Ireland from that of the Tories and the state.

- Bring contingents of British workers, on to the International Women's Day demonstration supporting Irish women political prisoners on March 12 in Durham, and the Irish in Britain Representation Group's march for justice on March 18.

- Raise resolutions in the British trades unions, not to politely convince Finucane's murderers that it is 'Time To Go', but to commit the unions to support for Irish national self-determination and opposition to the imperialist occupation of the six counties.

- Bring to account the Labour leaders like Mason: do not allow them to support the occupation of north-east Ireland, and the murder and torture that goes with it, in the name of the British working class.

The question of the British occupation of Ireland, and its connection with the onslaught against democratic rights in Britain, will be discussed at a major 'Workers Press' public meeting this Sunday (see advert page 3).



One hundred City of London Anti-Apartheid Group members and supporters rallied in solidarity with the South African hunger strikers. Four people were arrested for writing the names of hunger strikers in

charcoal on the walls of the South African embassy. See page 3 for stories on the hunger strikers, and on the imprisonment of City Group members, for protesting against apartheid.

Workers Press

Moral Degeneration and anti-humanism

THE 'News Line', paper of the group led by Sheila Torrance, on 11 February carried an editorial 'Ten Years of the Iranian Revolution'.

For readers unfamiliar with this group we should point out that it was formed by those expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party in October 1985. Their then leader Gerry Healy was expelled on grounds of systematic sexual abuse against women comrades in the party, for the regular use of violence against his political opponents inside the party and for slander of those with whom he had political differences.

Torrance and those producing the 'News Line' supported Healy. Some of them said that the charges were false. They knew this to be a downright lie. Healy failed to turn up to answer the charges and to this day has never sought publicly to repudiate a single one of them.

Others who went with Torrance admitted that the charges were true but claimed that Healy's gross abuse of women was a 'personal' matter which had nothing to do with his politics.

Corin Redgrave - who to this day remains Healy's chief lap dog - proclaimed that he was 'neither for nor against corruption but for revolution'.

What has this got to do with Torrance's review of ten years of the 'Iranian Revolution'?

Everything. The editorial says the following about the capitalist media: '...their vitriolic hatred of the Iranian revolution is barely disguised in their description of the situation in Iran today. Typical is the report carried in the "International Herald Tribune" on Thursday which described the fact that women wear the chador (black cloak and veil) and thought it very important to report that some wear coloured scarves.'

In the method pioneered by Stalinism Torrance proceeds to amalgamate those who oppose the brutal subjugation of women in Iran with those sections of imperialism who want to overthrow the Khomeiny dictatorship and replace it with one more directly in accord with their needs.

Let us get one thing straight. Workers Press has always defended Iran against imperialism and we will continue to do so. We defend Iran because it is an oppressed nation. The task of dealing with Khomeiny's brutal regime, which has tortured and murdered hundreds of thousands of working-class political opponents, is one for the working class and not for American and British imperialism.

Here we want to take up another issue: the attitude that this sordid group take to the oppression of women. For them this is a 'secondary' question, just as Healy's inhuman, savage, treatment of women in the old Workers Revolutionary Party was also for them a 'secondary' question.

In this they are joined by other groups that emerged out of the break-up of the old WRP in 1985. The mis-named 'International Communist Party', set up by David North and led by David Hyland, also holds that what was important about the Healy regime was its 'politics' and not the 'sexual activities' of 'the leader' as they like to call them.

The same is true of the group led by Richard Price, a man who voted against Healy's expulsion and has to this day said not a word in condemnation of Healy's gross anti-communist behaviour.

For communists, the attitude to women, far from being a secondary question, is the touch-stone of all social questions, a thing we have had to re-learn in coming out of a movement whose leadership had become corrupt to the core.

The brutality of the Iranian regime's policy towards women, the fact that breach of the 'hejab' - the Islamic rules governing

women's dress - is an offence punishable by torture and often death is itself a reflection of the savage oppression of Iran by world imperialism.

For the clearest index of a society's progress, or lack of it, is the manner in which it treats women. The most direct, the most natural, and necessary relationship of person to person is the relationship of man to woman. And because this is the most natural relationship it, at the same time, discloses the stage reached in the relationship of human beings to nature and their own destination, the development of their own nature as human beings.

The extent that the subjugation of women has been overcome indicates in the profoundest way of all the extent to which social progress has been made and class oppression overcome: the degree to which human beings have simultaneously conquered nature and their own nature as human beings.

If Torrance, North and others think this is 'sentimental humanism' we will let Marx speak:

'In this relationship [of man to woman] therefore, is sensuously manifested, reduced to an observable fact, the extent to which the human essence has become nature to man, or to which nature to him has become the human essence of man. From this relationship one can therefore judge man's whole level of development.

'..This relationship also reveals the extent to which man's need has become a human need; the extent to which, therefore, the other person as a person has become for him a need - the extent to which he in his individual existence is at the same time a social being.' (Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts)

The brutal increase in the exploitation of women in the epoch of imperialism, far from being an accident, is a necessary feature of capitalism in its epoch of degeneration. It is an expression of its need to destroy, to 'de-humanise', the productive forces, of which human beings in general and the working class in particular are the most vital element.

The super-exploitation of female and child labour in the so-called 'Third World', as well as Thatcher's plans to 'free' women to work round the clock for a pittance, to 'allow' them to go down the mines, and to 'enable' youths to work nights and shift work with no union protection is part of this same trend.

The fundamental activity that makes human beings what they are is their ability to labour. Under capitalism this basis of life is reduced to a commodity, something to be bought and sold as a means for capital to attain its sole goal: the making of profit.

Capital, while it enabled the productive forces to develop to an unprecedented degree was also implicitly inhuman. It was driven, not by the production of use-values, things to satisfy human needs and expand human capacity and personality but by the production of surplus value for the expansion of capital. Under capitalism the relations between human beings become attached to, dominated by, the relations between 'things': share certificates, money, junk bonds.

In the epoch of imperialism this inhuman relationship ceases to be implicit; it reaches an intense pitch: everything, without exception, must be turned into an object to be bought and sold, whatever the implication for the lives, the feeling of human beings. Everything and everybody must be reduced to a plaything for finance capital.

Healy's callous, inhuman, animal-like, treatment of women comrades in the old Workers Revolutionary Party was not simply a quirk of individual behaviour, just as Stalinism's brutality and philistinism cannot be attributed to one man, Josef Stalin. Healy's systematic wrecking of lives, his justification of any means, however foul, to achieve his political goals was the acutest expression of the degeneration, the moral decay, of an entire social system in its death agony.

The fact that North, Torrance, Hyland, Price and those that went with them share Healy's outlook itself reveals the profundity of the break that was made when this corrupt leadership was thrown out.

It was this break that has laid the basis for our movement as a whole, and every individual within it, to tackle, in theory and in practice, the problems of this degeneration and make this work the indispensable basis for rebuilding the Fourth International.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £1,181.30

THIS is tremendous! At the time of writing we are only two weeks into the month and our fund has topped £1,000. Let's keep this up for the rest of the month, and we will not only complete the £2,000 on time but make up the January shortfall of £122.

Our editorial explains the basis on which the Fourth International is being rebuilt. It is for this that Workers Press exists, and why we appeal for our Fighting Fund. I can see no reason to say more.

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

Dot Gibson

HUNGER STRIKERS

BY WAYNE POULSEN

THE SOUTH African government faces a major crisis as 20 political detainees on hunger strike are hospitalised and at serious risk.

More than 300 have joined the action, initiated to draw world attention to their plight. Some have been in jail without charge or trial since June 1986.

Leaders of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), held at Johannesburg prison, began the strike 'in an attempt to highlight our detention and the restrictions on our organisations and bodies. We have no other course than the one chosen.'

The systematic arrest and detention of anti-apartheid leaders and fighters and the restriction and banning of their organisations is a key tactic of the racist regime in its attempt to crush the five year long revolutionary upsurge.

Detainees not only do not know when, if ever, they will be released, they are denied access to their families, friends, and legal representatives.

While the regime refuses to

provide lists or figures, a United States Department report on human rights claims that over 30,000 have been detained during the state of emergency and that only four per cent have been convicted of any criminal offence.

A further 2,000, many under 18, are serving sentences for 'public violence'. The report acknowledges that detainees are routinely 'interrogated, threatened and often beaten', this could be better described as the systematic use of torture to the point of murder in many cases.

The 37th strike since the state of Emergency began in 1986 is already the most extensive. The National Medical and Dental Association (Namda) which supports the detainees' demand for immediate and unconditional release has warned that if hunger strikes persist for more than 60 days, they invariably lead to death.

The courageous action of the detainees must be answered with action by the British workers' movement. The TUC in particular cannot continue to 'oppose apartheid' without lifting so much as a finger to isolate the racist state.

**DEFEND
DEMOCRATIC
RIGHTS
FIGHT THE TORIES!**

**WORKERS PRESS
PUBLIC MEETING**

Sunday 19 February

3pm-7pm

Edric Hall, Southbank Poly,
103 Borough Road, London SE1

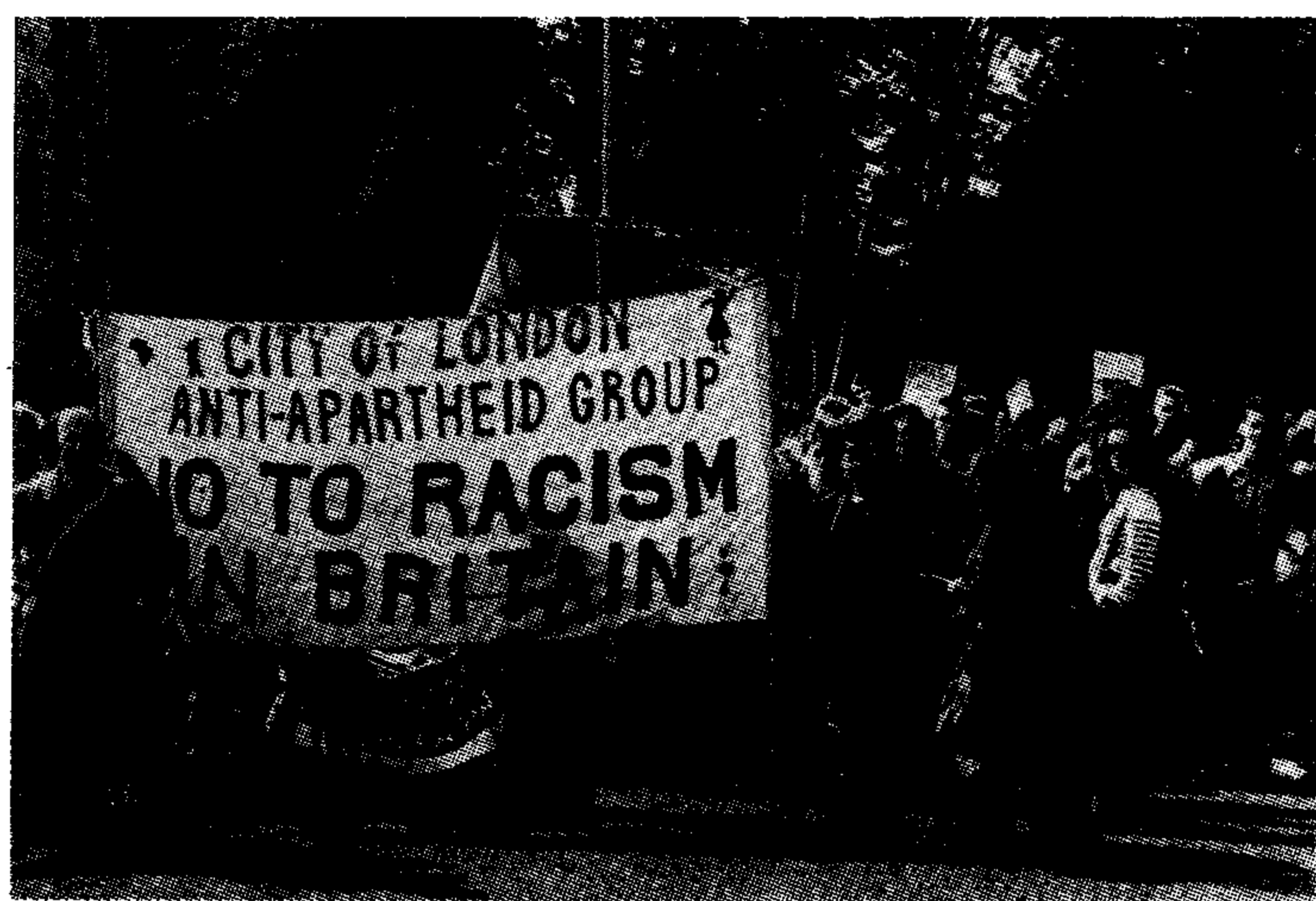
(nearest underground Elephant & Castle)

CRECHE/VIDEOS/REFRESHMENTS

Tickets £1 (50p concessions)

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Cliff Slaughter (Workers Revolutionary Party)
Michael Mansfield (barrister)
Eddie Caughey (Irish Republican Prisoners Campaign)
Martin Walker (author, 'A State of Siege')
Peter Fryer (author, 'Staying Power')
Geoff Hartnell (Durham sacked miner)
George Hall (Wapping strike leader)
Phil Edwards (teacher)
+ speakers on immigration laws, poll tax,
soccer ID cards, strip-searching
Chair: Dot Gibson (WRP)



City of London AA march against apartheid

Anti-apartheid fighters jailed

BY ROBIN ANDERSON

Two City of London Anti-Apartheid Group (City AA) activists, Simon Clark and Dave Kenny have been sentenced to 60 days and 28 days in prison.

They were found guilty of assault on police at Bow Street magistrates court on 3 February.

Three others were fined, one given a conditional discharge, and another a suspended sentence, for obstruction, disorderly conduct, and assaulting police.

The charges arose from an incident on the non-stop picket outside South Africa House, which was provoked by two men hostile to the picket.

Police evidence was exposed as full of contradictions and lies. Eight police officers insisted that all the defendants had struggled violently on being arrested. Photographic evidence showed it was the arrest itself which had been violently carried out.

One police officer claimed that

his arm had been scratched by Lorna Reid, drawing blood, and that Simon Clarke had punched him three times in the face.

The charge against Lorna was dismissed when it was shown that her fingernails were habitually bitten short and could not have caused an injury.

The charge against Simon was found proved, even though the police officer's evidence had already been discredited.

PC Morton claimed that Dave had kicked him in the police van, WPC Florence said that it was Simon who had kicked PC Morton.

Medical evidence was given that all the defendants had suffered injuries while being arrested. None of the police officers was able to explain how they had suffered the injuries.

Simon Clarke and Dave Kenny were later granted bail, on political conditions, that they did not enter Trafalgar Square or participate in any public demonstrations.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Workers Revolutionary Party London District:
Lectures on Marxism, given by Cyril Smith, followed by discussion.**

All on Fridays at 7.30 p.m.

1. What is communism?

24 February.

2. Marxism and nature,

17 March.

3. How communism will be achieved,

21 April.

4. What is revolutionary leadership?

19 May.

All in Room 9, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London, NW1 (near Euston Station).

A series of meetings on **MARXISM IN IRELAND.**

All at 7.30 p.m.

1. Socialism and nationalism in Ireland, Thursday 23 February.

2. British workers and Ireland - from Karl Marx's time onwards, Wednesday 22 March.

3. Communists and the armed struggle, Wednesday 26 April.

All at the Brent Irish Centre, Salisbury Road, London NW6 (nearest tube, Queens Park).

Saturday 25 February: National student demonstration against the loans system, also the Greenwich Action Campaign Against Racist Attacks is demonstrating through Woolwich, south-east London.

Monday 6 March: Vigil to commemorate the anniversary of the Gibraltar shootings, Kilburn Square, London, 6:00 p.m.

Meeting on Republican life prisoners in Brent Irish Centre, Salisbury Road, London NW6, 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday 7 March: Meeting on Republican life prisoners in Deptford Town Hall, London SE14, 7.30 p.m.

Saturday 18 March: Irish in Britain Representation Group march for justice and freedom. Assemble Whittington Park, Archway N19, 12:00 midday.

The march will join up with a march from Wood Green for the 'Tottenham Three'

• **Please send details of your activities for this column.**

A LETTER FROM IRELAND

THE SINN Fein Ard Fheis (Conference), held on the weekend of 27 January, demonstrated another stage in the party's abandonment of socialist policies and its move towards a pan-nationalist alliance.

Popular-front tactics were the order of the day, as the main political debate centred on a resolution which called upon the party to work with other groups in a 'broad all-Ireland anti-imperialist movement'.

This strategy, which submerges the interests of the working class to pacts with all sorts of 'progressives' was supported strongly by the whole Sinn Fein leadership and was passed with only a handful of delegates voting against.

Moving the resolution, Sinn Fein general secretary Tom Hartley, stressed the importance of creating mass support for 'progressive' policies and the need for imperialism to be confronted by the 'broadest possible range of political forces'.

Neither Hartley, Gerry Adams nor Martin McGuinness excluded alliances with representatives of the 26-county bourgeois parties who have viciously supported the contrivance of partition and the repression of Republicans.

And many speakers specifically included 'community groups' and 'church groups' in their concept of the Popular Front.

The only delegate to argue directly for a rejection of the motion, Johnny White of Letterkenney, Co. Donegal, said that he was concerned that the organisation was attempting to attract people who were not Republicans and not socialist.

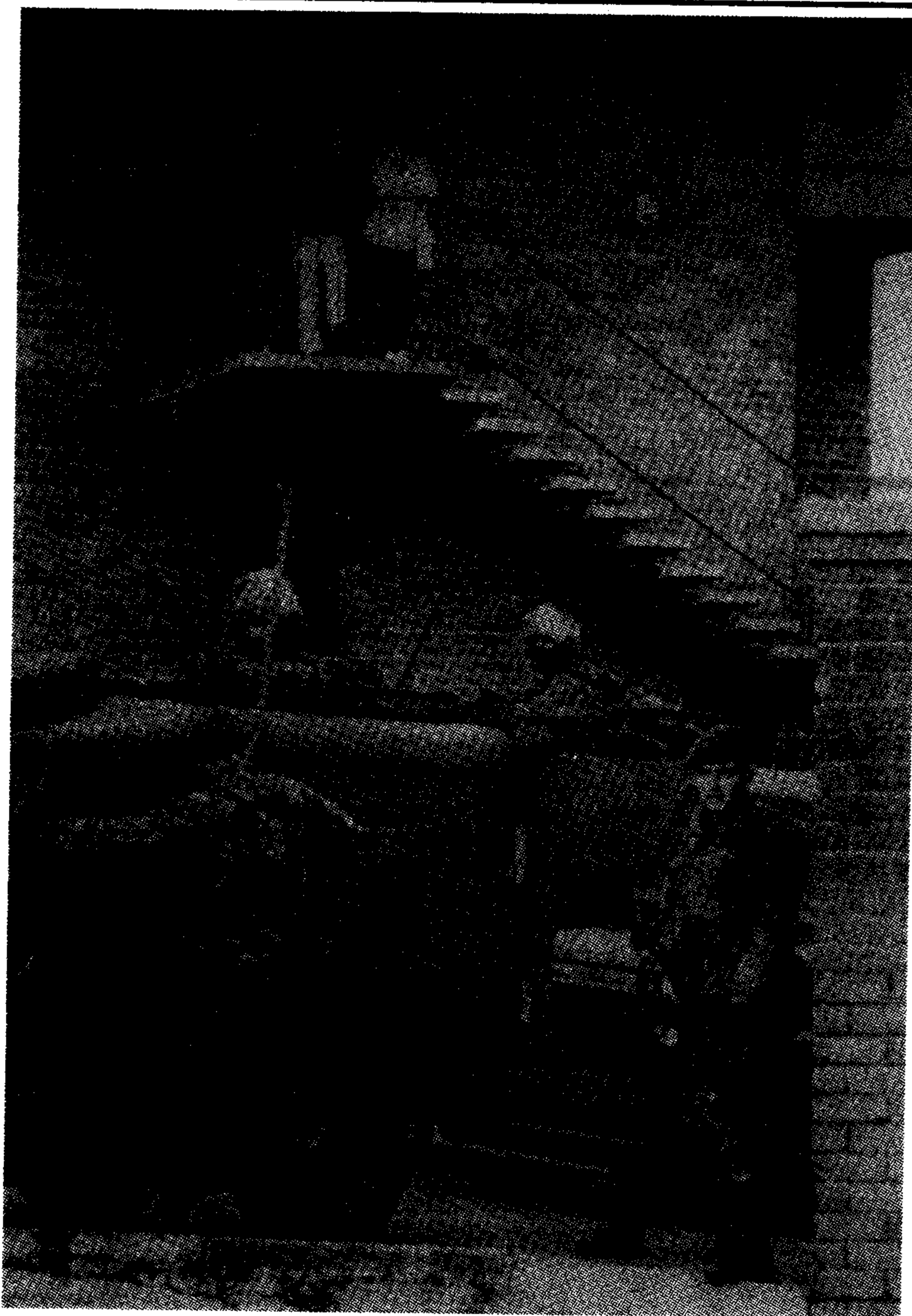
'Who are we trying to attract - members of the SDLP (Social Democratic Labour Party) and Fianna Fail?'

He correctly pointed out that the economic and social interests of these groups were diametrically opposed to the aims of Sinn Fein.

Central to the Popular Front strategy in Ireland is a belief that

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 as part of a regular series, a report from a leading member of that organisation.

BY JOHN STEELE



the 26-county bourgeois has a progressive role in the fight for national independence.

This is an important point in the Stalinist 'strategy' which artificially separates the struggle for self-determination from the struggle for socialism.

And the Stalinist Communist Party of Ireland played no small part in the formulation of Sinn Fein's strategy.

In the course of his address to the Ard Fheis, Hartley revealed that during the 1970s he had a series of discussions with northern protestants, not socialists or workers ('protestants').

This is an obvious example of the reactionary reformist approach in the northern area of the country. It was published in an 'Open Letter' in 1987 which promised cooperation with Sinn Fein on condition that the IRA would end its armed struggle.

The collaboration was demonstrated when the Preparatory Committee member E. J. Conboy shared the plan with Gerry Adams at the Sinn Fein conference commemorating the 70th anniversary of the first Dail.

Not since before the January 1970, which led to the formation of the Provisional IRA, has a leading Communist Party member been so prominently displayed in Sinn Fein.

And it was, of course, the result of the involvement of the Republican movement with the Stalinists in the 1960s, which was mainly responsible for its inability to win nationalist areas against the imperialist pogroms.

Then, as now, the imperialists can analyse correctly the nature of the conflict and the reasons arising from the isolation of the armed struggle, driven by the Sinn Fein leadership along a reformist, constitutional path. Stalinists have always

BOOKS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS

The Workers Revolutionary Party has set up a fund, Books for Political Prisoners. The proposal was made to the Party's Irish Commission, due to the large numbers of requests party members are receiving from political prisoners for Marxist and other political literature.

At three recent lectures in London on 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Socialism in Ireland', we collected (including expenses) £157.03, with which we have started the fund. A further £25.00 was collected at the Workers Press social after the 'Bloody Sunday' march, making £182.03.

Of this, a balance of £74.06 remains. The remainder was spent on a copy of 'Socialism and Republicanism in Ireland' by Priscilla Metscher, a new academic work, which was sent to Republican prisoners in Long Kesh but has been delayed in reaching them, and books on revolutionary art sent to prisoners in Portlaoise, Long Kesh and English jails.

We appeal to our readers to donate to the fund, about which regular reports will be made in the paper. We hope that the requests for literature will continue - so the money will be put to good use!

We invite any political prisoner in Ireland or Britain (or their friends or relatives) to contact us if there are any books you need. The address is Books For Political Prisoners, c/o WRP, Box 735, London SW9 7QS.

LETTERS

Write to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

Just who is Vanessa Redgrave?

VANESSA REDGRAVE is the one person who gives credibility to Gerry Healy in his never-ending attempts to gain recognition as leader of the imminently expected British revolution.

Usually known as a good actress, part of a celebrated acting family, she is also known as a champion of the Palestinian cause and, by extrapolation, as a champion of the oppressed everywhere. Some even believe (mistakenly) that she stands for women's rights.

Here arises a dilemma: how to reconcile a despicable role during 15 or so years posing as a Trotskyist with considerable recognition as an actress.

Workers Press is obliged to dispel the mystique surrounding Redgrave. She is no ordinary actress for the countless women caught up in the mess surrounding Healy's sexual abuse of party members in the past (and, no doubt, in the present).

Vanessa Redgrave is fronting for a man who did his best to destroy a lot of lives when he had power in the Workers Revolutionary Party.

She and her brother were the official excusers of Healy's crimes at the time of his expulsion in October 1985.

Corin Redgrave rationalised every sordid act across 40 years and she has publicly declared the WRP as presently constituted to be MI5 agents.

This is why I have a problem with the publication of the review of Redgrave's performance in Tennessee Williams' play 'Orpheus Descending' (Workers Press, 14 January 1989).

The article was by a guest reviewer with no direct experience of Redgrave's position in backing Healy - the editor would have had difficulty finding anyone who had been in the party at the time of the split willing to watch her performance.

Why can Workers Press not divorce Redgrave's acting qualities from her political role?

First, let us look at her role in the WRP before the split. Catapulted on to the Central Committee when still a new member, she rapidly became a slavish supporter of Healy's every quirk, even in his maddest moments.

Her standing as an international actress was used by Healy both within the party and publicly to boost his authority and give him greater power and credibility.

Healy consciously and cynically used her acting fame in publicising the Palestinian cause because the stir this caused and the prominence it brought to the party reflected back on to him.

I cannot say what Redgrave knew before the split about Healy's sexual abuse of women in the party. She certainly had direct experience of his scandalous maltreatment of women (and men) comrades, notably of the young women in the leadership of the Young Socialists: the violence, invective and harassment.

On 1 July 1985 when the letter from Healy's secretary exposing his sexual abuse of women comrades was read to the WRP's Political Committee, Vanessa Redgrave was the first person to speak: 'This is a provocation!' she said, signalling her intention to defend him.

In the subsequent battles that made up the split, Corin Redgrave defended Healy's actions on the sexual front with his infamous statement that revolutionaries are neither for nor against corruption. Meanwhile, Healy disappeared with Vanessa Redgrave.

Perhaps Alex Mitchell was the most slavish supporter of Healy in the party leadership. But he was just a whore of the journalistic variety. Redgrave, on the other hand, played a much more important role in the Healy machine precisely because of her acting fame.

For Workers Press to publish appreciations of her acting - exactly the quality skilfully exploited by Healy - is dangerous and open to misinterpretation if the paper does not make clear its opposition to her politics.

The situation is not assisted by a provocative and insensitive headline ('A fine performance from Vanessa Redgrave') which was out of tune with the main line of the review.

Her activities since the split are further reason why her acting cannot be separated from her politics. Today the discredited little man Healy, who should have disappeared from the political face of the earth when his power was destroyed in 1985, has one prominent champion: Vanessa Redgrave.

Aided by her brother Corin, who does the legwork and conveys Healy's line to her, she gives credibility to this insane

monster. As a member of the Redgrave dynasty she is able to pull certain forces round his little group.

All Redgrave's actions on the international theatrical front are directed by Healy. Last November's performance in the Adelphi Theatre, London, as a 'Memorial to the Victims of Stalin' was an example of the Redgrave name being used to pull in participants and an audience mainly of drama students in the hope of constructing some kind of organisation around Healy.

Can one say that the poor woman is being duped by Healy? Certainly, greater historical figures than she have been taken in by charlatans, notably one Tsarina. But this could not excuse her role.

The damage Healy has done to party members over the decades can never be quantified: the broken marriages and relationships, the after-effects of sexual abuse, the hounding and persecution of individuals, the physical beatings. For some of the women comrades, Healy's expulsion and the split in the party signalled the beginning of a struggle to repair the damage, to climb out of a nightmarish pit and try to restart life afresh.

For some of the victims it has meant disturbed sleep, hallucinations, dizzy spells and ongoing anxiety attacks. Some may never recover, others will need years to overcome the effects of the Healy trauma, made worse by the feeling that the whole experience is forgotten by those who were not direct victims.

Vanessa Redgrave, the most prominent woman member of the party before the split (this is not the time to discuss Sheila Torrance), occupies a particularly bitter position for Healy's women victims. My anxiety is not directed to the guest reviewer of the play. My concern is that Workers Press must make its position on Redgrave's politics clear and not leave her in the realm of 'art'.

Her casting in the television film 'Playing for Time', about musicians in Auschwitz concentration camp giving orchestral performances to the Nazi staff, was highly controversial and bitterly opposed by the Zionists.

But the film was memorable for another reason. As I recall, Mahler's granddaughter, the conductor, defends pure art for its own sake and sees the orchestra as something other than a means of gaining time before extermination.

If I could stomach watching Redgrave's performance in the film again, I would like to go over that point. This is a big question that I feel unable to tackle. I hope other Workers Press readers will take it up - as well as the question of the artist and her politics.

Clare Cowen
SW London WRP

Thanks to the WRP

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the 'Workers Revolutionary Party' on behalf of the committee members, and supporters of the 'Pollok Republican Flute Band' (Glasgow), who travelled down to London on 28 January 1989 to attend and take part in the Bloody Sunday demonstration.

Also we would like to thank you for the invitation, accommodation, hospitality and comradeship extended to us on the weekend trip, as it was thoroughly enjoyed by all,

I. Watson
Secretary
Pollok Republican
Flute Band

Selling kidneys

Mr Ally Anton, a man from Turkey, is trying to sell one of his kidneys for £9,000, to pay the hospital bill for treatment to his daughter. The kidney is supposed to be removed in London.

Surely such black market trading in human parts is entirely immoral. A regime like Turkey creating such a situation means it is not much different from slavery, or Czarist Russia before the revolution.

Even our system in Britain is better than that, allowing for its rapid decline.

When will the masses awaken to their potential to change these despotic social conditions through a people's government!

William Wright
Edinburgh

POLITICS FROM THE PRISONS

AND OTHER ARTICLES ABOUT IRELAND

FROM

WORKERS PRESS

Weekly paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party

Price 80p - £1 by post

By post from:

Workers Press, PO Box 7
London SW9 7QS

Personal Column

Peter Fryer

Programme notes

TAKEN as a whole, the draft programme of the Workers Revolutionary Party, published in the past three issues of Workers Press, is a timely and impressive document.

Its great strength is that it addresses the real problems confronting the British working class and the mass of the down-trodden whom this Tory government is driving deeper and deeper into degradation.

No such programme, or anything remotely resembling it, has been or could ever be produced by any other group on the left - least of all by those infantile ultra-left groups (Vanessa Redgrave Productions, the Friends of David North, and so on) which prefer the facile parroting of slogans and slander to the hard work of thought and analysis.

Not the least welcome aspect of the programme is the invitation to non-members of the WRP, like me, to join in the discussion. Hence the following notes on ways in which I think the programme could be strengthened still further.

1) The programme begins with the famous words: 'The crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.'

This aphorism sums up, at a high level of abstraction, a fundamental truth about the world we live in. Unfortunately it isn't readily accessible to people unaccustomed to thinking politically.

Let us ask ourselves who the programme is written for. Is it just for people already engaged in political thought and activity? Or has it also a message for people who are not so engaged but are desperately seeking a lifeline?

On the principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown (a principle that underlies all successful teaching), I would suggest a new introductory section on the world crisis, rather more detailed than the references to this crisis in the section titled 'The WRP and its Aims' (which I would largely retain).

There's no shortage of material for such an introductory section. Every week brings fresh material in abundance on how deep and far-reaching the world crisis has become.

'New York City is sinking into social chaos', says last weekend's 'Sunday Times Magazine'. 'Corruption, violence, drugs and crime are turning a fabled metropolis into a nightmare. . . Homeless children prowl the streets at night. Beggars have become violent. Aids victims . . . haunt doorways, looking for a last refuge. Racism runs through municipal operations, including the police.'

The new introductory section I am proposing should sum up sharply and passionately the depth and ubiquity of this world crisis; the specific features of it that are apparent here in Britain; and the impossibility of solving it without the overthrow of capitalism.

And it should lead the reader by logical steps to the conclusion that the crisis of revolutionary leadership is the key problem that confronts humanity: the problem on whose solution everything else depends.

2) The ecological aspect of the world crisis, though by no means neglected in the programme, needs rather more emphasis.

Many people whose 'green' consciousness is leading them to deeds of courage, self-sacrifice, and total futility can now be won to an understanding that there is only one way out of the crisis: the revolutionary way out.

But this can't be done unless Marxists show them that we take the threat to our environment at least as seriously as they do.

3) The serious attention the programme gives to women and the family serves to underline the programme's relative neglect of young people and of ethnic minorities in Britain.

Yet there can be no possibility of building a vigorous revolutionary movement without the participation, on a mass scale, of precisely these sections of the dispossessed.

Indeed, the programme says as much, where it recognises that without a revolutionary socialist youth movement 'there can be no struggle for socialism in Britain'.

Youth and its problems and struggles deserve a section of the programme to themselves.

So do the ethnic minorities and their problems and struggles. For without them, too, 'there can be no struggle for socialism in Britain'.

4) The section on 'Democracy, Parliament and the Labour Party' suffers from compression. Some extremely complex historical processes are summarised here, and the overall effect is of a certain oversimplification. This should be corrected.

5) While the programme as a whole is refreshingly free from jargon, a number of technical terms are introduced without explanation.

In particular, it isn't enough to refer to 'Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution' without explaining this theory, especially since the word 'permanent' here doesn't bear the meaning it bears in everyday speech ('lasting indefinitely without change').

Similarly, some explanation should be offered of what is meant by 'transitional demands'.

AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

Down to earth

IF you had not noticed it, a miracle happened last week - the 'media revolution' of the century.

Sky Television's Satellite Services was launched on Sunday (when else?) 5 February after Murdoch had made a successful takeover bid for the brand name formerly owned by God Universal Incorporated Industries.

The heralds of the new celestial company beamed down their fanfares and video miracles, and turned on four of its six vision channels.

Just like his rival, God, Murdoch likes 'good' things, and therefore he creates them. Flanked on his right by his archangel Andrew Neil, he said

in a pre-launch revelation, 'I think it's good for viewers, it's good for British industry, it's good for everyone.'

'This is a revolution in choice. At a stroke we have doubled the programmes available to viewers.'

In this abundance of 'goodness' it has been leaked that a sub-committee of disciples is to rewrite Genesis and serialise it for the 'Sun' to run over six days.

Plans are well ahead for a new soap called 'Parables' but a suitable filming location is yet to be found.

There are now four channels for visions, family entertainment, news and sports. Two similar ones are to follow shortly, one for the arts and one for Mickey Mouse.

We were told that the stage management of the launching miracle went smoothly. But miracles are more complex things to organise today.

A really classy one like this needs £500 million up front with loads of collateral, an army of extras and plenty of prior publicity, for the advisers to the miracle-makers are not so sure whether people are as gullible as in the days of the old master.

The production may have gone without a hitch but success was much more patchy at the receiving end of the market.

The vision-receiver dishes priced at £199 were either so unreliable or so difficult to get in the shops that one 'Guardian' scribe who had witnessed the apparition commented, 'currently it is easier to buy a cruise missile and certainly easier to make it work'.

What was for viewing? Well for once I feel a bit like those prelates or the 'blue rinse brigade' who always find detailed reasons for burning books they have not read or banning films and plays they have not seen.

As I am not endowed with extra-sensory powers, I have to rely on secondary sources.

I am not sure whether to believe Michael White's claim that the two films on Sunday night were called 'The Colour of Money' and 'Ruthless People'.

But I can imagine the comeback of Frank Bough (remember him) must have been an emotional moment.

He had appeared last summer to publish his 'confessions' in News International journals and they were so forthright that he had to leave that prissy outfit 'Auntie'.

I said in this column last summer that Bough would be a ruined man without the intervention of some powerful patron. God (Mark II) moves in a mysterious way...

The other comeback was that

of Mozart but he seems to have been of little interest to the press.

Every aspiring God must have, in spirit with the dialectic of the new theology, an opposite. Murdoch has lots of opposites, and we can recognise these devils by their colour...pinko.

It is surprising how many of these little pinko devils the magnanimous Mr Murdoch has taken on board or even converted as in the case of Mr Austin Mitchel.

But it looks like the good Mr Murdoch has caused discord in what he regards as the Devil's Party.

For somewhere in the infernal regions of the Labour front bench, Mr Bryan Gould, the shadow Industry Secretary, has cried 'foul' by invoking the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to investigate Mammon's vision and media interests.

It will be of no avail as those who remember their Macbeth will not demonstrate the same zeal with Mammon's private property as it did with public utilities like life-giving water.

After all it is written somewhere: 'In the beginning there was the world and Murdoch saw it was good so he made the sun.'

'He breathed on it (or something like that) and there was News International which made the sky and Wapping'.

'The disposal of unwanted members of the public'

Justice Under Fire: The abuse of civil liberties in Northern Ireland.
Edited by Anthony Jennings. Pluto Press, £22.50.

'You are under arrest; you are warned anything you don't say can be taken down and used in evidence against you.'

This is how one cartoonist interpreted the Thatcher government's latest attack on democratic rights, the abolition of the right to silence.

The exercise of this right can now be interpreted in a court of law as evidence that the accused is hiding something.

The destruction of this right, as well as the recent banning of Sinn Fein spokespersons from television and radio is part of a huge attack on civil liberties in Britain and the occupied six counties.

The abuses of civil liberties in the north of Ireland include and have included forced confessions, police frame-ups, the super-grass system, shoot-to-kill, Prevention of Terrorism Acts, torture, plastic bullets, abolition of trial by jury, stop-and-search and the widespread misuse of police powers of arrest.

'Justice under Fire' is a collection of eight essays looking at these abuses in the occupied six counties. The book, compiled by barrister Anthony Jennings, brings together a clutch of lawyers and academics who give a detailed account of these attacks.

The picture they paint is of a system in which all pretence of justice has disappeared: in which the law is being used as a mere expedient in the war being waged against the Irish people.

This is illustrated at the beginning of the book when Jennings quotes Brigadier Frank Kitson:

'...the law should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public. For this to happen efficiently, the activities of the legal services have to be tied into the war effort in as discreet a way as possible.'

Notwithstanding Kitson's use of the word, 'discretion' is totally lacking in the government's shoot-to-kill policy. The figures tell the tale.

The total number of IRA volunteers murdered by the SAS in the last 15 months is fourteen. Between November 1982 and February 1985, 35 people were summarily executed, 23 of them in covert operations.

The acquittal rate of those members of the armed forces prosecuted for murder is equally indiscreet. Overall, 33.98 per cent

of people were acquitted.

The acquittal rate for members of the security forces charged with murders with firearms whilst on duty is a staggering 90.5 per cent.

No wonder ex-cop John Stalker was forced to conclude 'the circumstances of the shootings pointed to police inclination, if not a policy, to shoot suspects dead rather than arrest them. Coming as the incidents did so close together the suspicion of deliberate assassination was not unreasonable.'

What this policy means is that there are South American-style death squads operating in the north of Ireland.

The introduction of shoot-to-kill was a consequence of the failure of other repressive measures. The super-grass system blew up in the government's face and they had to find some other strategy for 'the disposal of unwanted members of the public.'

Of great help to the British state in this enterprise has been the Prevention of Terrorism Act passed by the Labour government in 1974, in an atmosphere of hysteria following the Birmingham pub bombings, for which the Birmingham Six were wrongly convicted.

To date over 6,500 Irish people have been arrested under this Act.

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Less than 2 per cent are ever charged.

The National Council for Civil Liberties has stated: 'By giving the Home Secretary and the police powers that cannot be challenged in court the PTA has destroyed at a stroke the edifice of safeguards built up in the country's legal system to protect the citizen against wrongful arrest, detention and conviction.'

It is this Act that the traitors in the Labour Shadow Cabinet have advised Labour MPs to vote for.

The recent case of Eamon Wadley, an active Labour Party member and GMB union shop steward, who was interrogated for four days while on valium shows that the Act is used against Labour Party members who speak out on Ireland.

As well as excellent chapters on shoot-to-kill and the PTA, the book examines every aspect of the government's 'legal' attack on the Irish people. One question should be asked with the intensification of the government's attack on the working class in Britain.

How long before they bring these attacks to Britain? When will the Irish war come home? The working class ignores this question at its peril.

Anton Mactonian

Lunchtime concert and Shostakovich

TODAY, for almost an hour, at the very heart of British capitalism, two great revolutions made a tenuous but vibrant connection. Through musical space and time, they made a connection.

In quiet St John's Church, Smith Square, London, only a few minutes' walk from noisy Millbank and the Thames, the legendary Borodin Quartet from Russia played Beethoven's (Rasumovsky) Quartet, Opus 57 No.1, in their lunch-time concert.

Great music, played to a hushed and spell-bound audience.

The revolutionary connection? Beethoven, himself a revolutionary creative artist, celebrated 1789, the early years of Napoleon and the spirit of human freedom in his great Eroica Symphony No.3.

The Borodin Quartet's connection with 1917 lies concretely in their close friendship with and

musical dedication to the compose Dmitri Shostakovich.

Their recordings of his 15 string quartets are unequalled in virtuosity, feeling and depth of understanding.

The eighth quartet, which epitomises Shostakovich's hatred for the ignorance, brutality and tyranny of Stalinism, was first played for him privately by the Borodin Quartet. When they finished, he wept.

Shostakovich was a child of the October revolution. At the age of 11 he witnessed Lenin's return to St Petersburg at the railway station.

His astounding talent and creative originality gave early expression to

his revolutionary beliefs in the second and third symphonies.

Much later, after a lifetime under Stalinism, during which his music uniquely charted the hopes, terror, courage, suffering and endurance of the Russian people, Shostakovich massively re-stated his revolutionary faith in his eleventh and twelfth symphonies, which celebrated the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

Anyone who mistakes the bitter humour and irony in his music for cynicism, should listen to the second Piano Concerto.

This was written for his son Maxim's 21st birthday, shortly after Stalin's death. It is a work of

gaiety and beauty to rival even Mozart.

The Beethoven was played with superb sensitivity, understanding and assured technical mastery. The audience was enraptured.

Lastly, we heard Webern's Five Movements, Opus 5. Music delicate as gossamer, spacious as air and yet clear and precise as cut glass. It contrasted with the Rasumovsky Quartet as lace does with velvet.

The end. So, out onto the sunlit steps of the church, and a few minutes later to gaze at the confident gulls, bobbing serenely on the wrinkled, sparking Thames.

Did 1789 and 1917 touch fingers? It seemed to me that, for a little while, they clasped hands and pledged the emancipation of all humanity.

Tony Madgwick

News briefs . . .

Back minus bang

CHINA'S first avant-garde art exhibition, which was closed down by armed police the week-end before last, has reopened and is proving to be a huge success with the Peking public. Exhibits include a giant breast suspended from a ceiling, scores of inflated condoms, and a plastic mattress filled with water and dead fish. Performance art is, however, now absent from the show. On the first day of the original opening, an artist pulled out a pistol and began firing at her own exhibit, two telephone booths separated by a mirror, which was the reason given for the police raid.

Mixed celebrations

FOLLOWING the amnesty granted by Ayatollah Khomeini, nearly 1,100 political prisoners have been released to mark the 10th anniversary of the Iranian revolution. The government also made known its intention to execute a further 70 drugs traffickers in line with its severe anti-narcotics campaign. Already this year 100 drugs smugglers have been hanged; fifty-six in one day. There is reported to be a million drug addicts in Iran out of a 50 million population.

AFGHANISTAN

BY KEVIN IRELAND

THE WITHDRAWAL of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, by removing the uniting factor of the foreign invader, has produced sharp divisions amongst the groups forming the mujaheddin forces, demonstrating the possibility of a genuine workers and peasants revolution in Afghanistan.

The Shura religious consultative assembly meeting in Pakistan on 10 February broke up with no agreement on forming an alternative government to the pro-Stalinist Najibullah regime in Kabul.

The meeting was engineered by Pakistan's military intelligence and has proved a failure.

Four hundred Sunni delegates were detained after the Shura by Pakistan military intelligence because the meeting broke up without a decision.

The seven different groups forming the mujaheddin represent Sunni Muslims, Islamic fundamentalists, and tribal and minority nationalities who have conflicting interests.

The Pushtans, for instance, have claims on land that bridges both Afghanistan and Pakistan and have no intention of being puppets of Pakistan.

Forty per cent of the Afghan population are Pushtans, the majority of whom are now in refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran. A hated secret police has terrorised villagers who opposed the occupation. The resolving of the national issues is crucial for the Afghan revolution. The Soviet invasion in 1979 took place in order to impose a military-bureaucratic 'solution'. This has failed.

Pro-Soviet officers had seized power and introduced reforms but had tried to rule the same Afghan 'nation' as had King Zair Shah who was overthrown in 1973 - without arming the workers, without Soviets of workers and peasants, and without resolving the grievances of national and tribal minorities.

When opposition guerilla groups emerged, Brezhnev sent in the Red Army which in itself provoked massive resistance. The previously pro-Soviet leader Amin was murdered.

After nine years, 15,000 Soviet soldiers and 1.24 million Afghans have been killed. In desperation the Red Army commanders ordered the bombing and shelling of villages, the laying of 30 million mines, the machine gunning of livestock and the destruction of agriculture. The Stalinists have driven the peasantry behind the reactionary mullahs and feudalists. The atrocities continued after Gorbachev took over in the Kremlin.

During the withdrawal of the Soviet forces 40 villages were shelled to destruction along the Salang highway killing thousands of villagers to facilitate the unhindered withdrawal from Kabul.

Not satisfied with their criminal 'mistakes' already perpetrated, the Stalinist Soviet leaders are now seeking to impose a 'political' solution via the United Nations of a 'government of national unity' including King Zair Shah, overthrown in 1973 as a figurehead!

Pakistan, under Zia, had hoped to install a fundamentalist Islamic regime. Benazir Bhutto has continued Pakistan's support for the mujaheddin, trying to engineer an anti-communist takeover in Afghanistan, but fearful of a Pushtan national movement. Only on the Soviet withdrawal has Najibullah distributed 30,000 arms (not enough).

He hopes that divisions amongst the mujaheddin will enable him to keep power with the help of King Zair Shah.

The only solution would be the realisation of a revolutionary regime led by the working class winning the support of the peasantry with a programme of resolving the problems of the national minorities in alliance with the workers and peasants in Pakistan as part of the revolution throughout the Middle East and Asia.

