

Workers Press

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£10,000 Special Fund

IN SO FAR: £8,546.86 TARGET: £10,000

The Workers Revolutionary Party urgently needs the last £1,500 of the Special Fund. International visits to Ireland, Europe, Australia and the Americas have cost a great deal. We agreed to spend £5,000 on international work. Already a large part of it has gone. We are sure you support this work politically but we need you to support it financially as well. We have been spending the fund — on the international work and moving the party offices and printing facilities.

Please keep the contributions coming in, large or small. We are aiming for 50 donations of £100 — to raise £5,000 — plus all smaller amounts!

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BLOODY SUNDAY COMMEMORATION

Sunday 25 January
Speaker: John Noonan
Assemble 2.30pm Creggan Shops
Rally at Free Derry Corner

DERRY

1pm Saturday 31 January
Carlisle Street
Rally at City Hall
SHEFFIELD

WAPPING: THE WAY FORWARD

THE year-long dispute at Wapping has now reached a decisive stage.

For the last 12 months thousands of print workers have fought a daily battle against an army of specially equipped and trained police protecting Rupert Murdoch's Fortress Wapping.

The fight at Wapping is a continuation of the miners' strike.

● The same issue is at stake: the right of workers to belong to unions that can fight for their interests.

● The main enemy is unchanged: the Tory government and the capitalist state.

Over £14 million has been spent in this policing operation. This follows the £2,400 million deployed by the Tories in their efforts to smash the National Union of Miners — such is the determination of the ruling class to break the independence and fighting capacity of workers.

The printers' willingness to struggle for their jobs and living standards is a tribute to the combativity of the entire working class.

Thousands of printworkers have rejected Murdoch's efforts to buy them off and force them out of the struggle.

Workers nearing retirement have spurned offers in excess of £20,000. Like the miners before them they have declared that their jobs and skills are not for sale.

Wapping gives the lie to those who have written off the working class in the aftermath of the miners' return to work.

While the printers have risked their homes, their

BY GEOFF PILLING

savings and possessions to defend the rights of the working class, the trade union leaders have been in abject retreat.

From day one, the aim of these leaders was to break the fight at Wapping and force a settlement on Murdoch's terms.

Their cowardice is demonstrated by:

● The TUC's refusal to expel the scab EETPU.

● The acceptance in practice of Thatcher's anti-union laws.

Fleet Street Support Group leader Larry Hyett was dead right when he told a Lambeth rally last week: 'If we want to win this dispute we have to confront these laws.'

This has been the central question since the very first day of the fight at Wapping. The print unions SOGAT and the NGA have been involved in a political struggle against the Tory government. Only a leadership able to start from this fact and its implications could prepare the way for victory against Murdoch.

Union leaders Brenda

Dean and Tony Dubbins have deliberately avoided the struggle to mobilise the whole of Fleet Street, the printers in Manchester and the rest of the country in united action against Murdoch and the Tory government.

They have hidden behind the 'Don't buy the Sun' slogan.

Every serious worker knows that this campaign, on its own, is utterly inadequate and will never bring News International to its knees.

Dean and the SOGAT leadership will now use the rejection of the 58p levy as an excuse to try and wind down the struggle. What it in fact expressed was a lack of confidence by a section of the membership in their leaders.

Many printers were not prepared to see what they believed would be 50p of this money go to the funds of their union when the leaders were in full retreat.

The same TUC that has washed its hands of the Wapping dispute has passively

watched unemployment rising monthly, industries being run into the ground by City sharks, the elderly killed this winter by Tory policies and homelessness and poverty increasing across the country.

They have done nothing to lead even the slightest campaign in the working class against this destruction of jobs and living standards. In practice they have collaborated with the Tory government.

The hour for real action in defence of the Wapping printers has struck.

They need all the financial support that can be raised throughout the movement. But industrial action by the rest of Fleet Street and printers in Manchester and elsewhere is imperative if the struggle is to be taken forward to victory.

Sackings have already started on Fleet Street and in Manchester where last week the 'Daily Mail' announced plans for big cuts in its labour force.

The fate of every printworker now depends on the outcome of the Wapping struggle.

● See 'Printers speak out' — pp8&9

JUST OUT!



Workers Revolutionary Party
MANIFESTO

'A Programme for
the Crisis' 50p

Available from: Workers Revolutionary Party, P.O. Box 735,
London SW9 7QS. Cost 50p + 15p p&p.



TELECOM STRIKE BITES — SEE PAGE 3

Play banned

JIM ALLEN's controversial play about the wartime role of Hungarian Jews has been cancelled.

Despite full-house previews and good advance booking for its proposed five-week run, its director, Max Stafford-Clark felt obliged to take this last-minute decision because 'our determination to proceed with the production was outweighed by the great distress it would cause to sections of the community'.

While expressing his highest regard for the author's integrity, Stafford-Clark has been forced to retreat in the face of a strong Zionist lobby.

Workers Press

Good for a few

THE GUINNESS scandal is only the latest, and certainly not the last, to hit the City of London.

Last January Guinness made a bid for the Scottish whisky firm Distillers. Guinness finally won in struggle with a rival bidder, the Argyll group. Guinness was successful in its £2.8 billion take-over because during the bid's critical period its share price mysteriously rose by a quarter. This greatly increased the value of its bid. It has now been revealed that the shares went up because of illegal share dealing.

One of the country's richest businessmen, Gerald Ronson, head of the Heron Corporation, last week admitted that he took part in illegal share transactions organised by Guinness to help it gain control of Distillers. He has repaid the £5 million 'success fee' paid by Guinness for his services. He also had an undertaking that Guinness would compensate him for any losses sustained due to changes in share prices in the take-over struggle.

This fee is equivalent to the money ten workers continually employed and on average wages could hope to earn throughout their lifetimes. Ronson's fee came out of a secret £25 million fund with which Guinness directors used to persuade a large number of international share dealers and investors to buy its shares. This is a breach of company law which forbids companies to provide financial assistance for the purchase of their own shares.

Ronson's disclosure follows the resignation of Guinness chairman and chief executive Ernest Saunders. The merchant bankers Morgan Grenfell also lost two of its leading figures last week. Chief executive and deputy chairman Christopher Reeves and head of corporate finance Graham Walsh left after an internal probe into the role of the bank during the take-over fight.

Asset stripping

The Guinness scandal comes immediately after the withdrawn bid by BTR for Pilkington Brothers. Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Paul Channon (a member of the Guinness family) had refused to refer the bid to the Monopolies Commission. Here was a crude case of asset stripping. BTR were interested in grabbing Pilkington's because of their considerable research and development budget. Workers in St Helens rightly feared that the take-over would bring savage job losses for the 5,000 employed by Pilkington's.

Labour's call for a strengthening of regulatory bodies in the City is as worthless as the rest of its policy. Who controls the so-called regulatory bodies? It is equivalent to James Anderton checking over the affairs of the Greater Manchester police.

There are currently four separate Department of Trade inquiries into activities in the Square Mile. Speculation is rife that Burton Group will be the next company visited by DTI officials. These investigations might not be completed for years and Channon — a prominent member of the Guinness family — has already hinted that they might not in any case be published.

The take-over mania is not simply the reflection of a few greedy individuals. It is symptomatic of a decadent capitalism in decay. In its heyday capitalism was able to build up industry. In its decline it is forced into the destruction of what it formerly created. No amount of regulation and reform, as Kinnock and company propose, can deal with this incurable system which condemns millions to unemployment, poverty and homelessness while allowing a handful of speculators to accumulate vast fortunes.

Only a socialist policy which aims to put an end to capitalism can reverse this soaring social crisis.

FIGHT DEPORTATIONS!

March backs Walter

BY JOHN OWEN

ABOUT 150 people marched from the Caribbean Centre in Toxteth to the Immigration offices in Liverpool to protest at the attempt to deport Walter Yao last Saturday.

Walter, who has lived in this country for 15 years, went to visit his dying father in Ghana but was delayed there by his father's death and his own illness.

Britain

On his return to Britain he was asked for a visa from Ghana.

Walter spoke at a rally at the end of the march outside the Immigration Offices: 'I ask this government to show some compassion. I've been married for seven years, my



wife has lived here 27 years. I ask the Home Office to reconsider.'

Also speaking was Liz Drysdale from the Defence Committee. 'We must remember that the Labour Party brought these Immigration laws in and the Tories only strengthened them.'

For further information contact Linda Patterson, CRC Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. Tel: 051-709 6858.

Family fears death

BY JOSIE BARRIE

RAHIM Mashadimirza, his wife Djamilah and their two-year-old son Ronad are under threat of deportation to Iran.

The family came to Britain in November 1985. Since then a friend and leading opponent of the Ayatollah Khomeini regime whom they sheltered for eight months in Tehran, has been imprisoned and tortured.

If they return to Iran they fear the penalty for harbouring opponents of Khomeini would be death without trial.

The Home Office has turned down their application for political asylum, but considerable public pressure and new evidence have forced the Home Office to agree to reconsider the case.

The new evidence includes a letter from Amnesty Inter-



national and a letter from leading expert Dr. Roger Owen, Director of St. Anthony's College Middle East Centre, Oxford, substantiating the family's fear of return to Iran.

The Mashadimirza Family Support Campaign (MFSC) meets every Tuesday, 7p.m. at South Manchester Law Centre.

Silentnight Keep Fighting

BY MARTIN RALPH

SUPPORT is already building up in the labour movement for the Silentnight strikers in disgust at their treatment by the Furniture Timber and Allied Trade Union (FTAT) leadership.

Nottingham and Stockport Trades Council have written to FTAT expressing their opposition and have also called on the TUC to support the strikers.

The appeal against FTAT's general executive council decision is continuing.

The union has declared the dispute unofficial. In the January issue of the Record (FTAT's paper) they go even further.

They say 'GEC by unanimous decision have terminated the strike'. The implication is obviously the strike is over.

According to Terry Bennett, one of the Silentnight strike leaders, at last year's TUC conference the FTAT retiring general secretary, Ben Rubner, castigated the Co-Op for not banning the sale of Silent Night beds.

Terry said 'The FTAT



leadership by turning their back on the strikers are going further than the Co-Op. Are they saying the public should now buy Silentnight products?'

The leadership are desperately trying to sell out the strike.

At the same time as trying to force a section of its membership out of a struggle for their jobs, the union is busy with a recruitment drive.

We await to see if the executive council is willing to recruit scabs. It was reported before Christmas in the Financial Times that one reason FTAT withdrew sup-

port was that they wished to take the seat of the national executive panel which represents various interests in the industry.

The chairman of the panel is none other than Tom Clarke, the chairman of Silentnight.

It is increasingly obvious that the drive to keep the working class in order as the basis for Kinnock's election campaign is the real political reason.

The so-called 'new realism' therefore makes use of all opportunist trends within the labour movement to se-

cure this aim.

In the Lancashire Evening Telegraph on January 15 John Lee, Junior Employment Minister and MP for Pendle, wrote about unemployment and industrial decline. He said 'Let's start boasting of our successes and what we have going for us in the north-west.' He then mentioned certain industries and added 'in Pendle we have...an excellent recovery from Silentnight'.

In the same issue Jack Straw Labour MP for Blackburn omits to mention the Silentnight strike once. He does make great play of 'top priority to the region'.

Yet the industrial aid for the north-west he is talking about already exists. The Tory financial aid is aimed at keeping wages down and unions out of firms such as can be found in Pendle's two enterprise zones. On this point Straw says nothing.

In February Kinnock will be launching Labour's election campaign. He is scheduled to meet Labour councillors in Leeds.

Essentially the message will be: keep your heads low and make sure that everyone else does. As the Silentnight dispute shows, to try and keep the struggle of the working class within the confines of the interest and outlook of the reformist and Stalinist trade union leadership is to restrict the fight against the Tories.

BBC bans defence exposure

THE existence of a secret £500 million defence project is being kept secret from parliament. Its exposure in a BBC programme has been banned by Director-General Alasdair Milne.

Suspicion grew last week that the ban was made under government pressure. Sir Clive Whitmore, permanent secretary to the Minister of Defence, was aware of the programme, along with a number of senior Tory MPs.

Milne claims the ban was imposed because the film 'could represent a breach of national security.'

The journalist Duncan Campbell rejects this claim. Campbell arranged for a showing in the House of Commons on Thursday last week.

Labour MP Robert Sheldon, chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, says that parliament has been deceived. All projects over £200 million should be disclosed in the Public Accounts. This item was missing.

But Sir Gordon Downey, the Comptroller and Auditor-General denied Sheldon's claim. He said Sheldon had been told of the secret project on condition that he kept the information to himself.

A previous chairman of the same committee, Lord Barnett, a former Labour MP, pulled out of an interview when he became BBC vice-chairman.

The ban came after the BBC's assistant director general, Alan Prothero, had given the go-ahead for the film, one in a six part series, 'The Open Society'.

Leicester Labour crisis

A CRISIS is threatening Leicester City District Labour Party following a vote to defy the party's ruling National Executive Committee.

It follows a row over the re-selection of City Council leader Peter Soulsby to fight Spinney Hill Ward in the May council elections.

Ward opponents of Soulsby and his fellow candidate Rashid Owen Almura, attempted to quash a vote by secret ballot which selected them.

Senior NEC officers decided the opponents had acted illegally and stated the two nominations stood.

But after a close vote last week, a meeting of the district party decided to disregard the NEC and go ahead

with a new selection meeting this Friday — a move which has further split local party members.

Only 25 delegates were present at the district meeting out of a possible 69 and they voted by just 13 to 12 to defy the NEC.

In a new move by supporters of Soulsby, about 65 local party members have sent a petition to the NEC supporting him and complaining of alleged intimidation by his opponents.

Secretary of the district party Paul Gosling said: 'We have received reports that irregularities occurred in the selections at Spinney Hill and we are seeking to resolve matters in the near future in conjunction with the NEC.'

Spanish veteran expelled

FORMER assistant general secretary of the Communist Party Bill Alexander is no longer a member of the Party. He is one of 21 members of the Sydenham branch of the party effectively expelled by the 'Euro-communist' executive.

Alexander, a commander of the British battalion of the International Brigade in

Spain 50 years ago, has been informed by letter that the executive regards him as a 'former member'.

The decision ten days ago was based on the refusal of the Sydenham, Kent, branch to accept suspension. No charges have been laid against Alexander and he will have no right to appeal to the party congress at its November session.

BLOODY SUNDAY MASSACRE

BY SARAH HANNIGAN

IT IS now 15 years since Ireland — and the world — was shocked by the savagery of the British Army of Occupation in the Six Counties, when 13 innocent men and boys were gunned down in cold blood by members of the Paratroop Regiment.

Bloody Sunday, on January 30 1972, will be commemorated in Derry this weekend as it has been every year since that atrocity with a demonstration from Creggan to Bogside along the routes of the parade on which the soldiers opened fire that fateful day.

It has long been recognised that instead of inflicting defeat and pessimism on Republican forces in the north of Ireland, the army's cold-blooded slaughter of innocent civilians did exactly the opposite.

It led to a new generation of young people joining the Provisional IRA and the Irish National Liberation Army, who recognised there would be no peaceful solution in Ireland as long as the British army remained in occupation.

Next week, Workers Press will publish a feature on Bloody Sunday and will report on the fifteenth anniversary commemoration.

Right: HUGH GILMORE receives the last rites



'IT'S outrageous', said Alastair Logan, solicitor for the Guildford Four, of Douglas Hurd's decision not to refer their case to the Court of Appeal although he has agreed to a hearing for the Birmingham Six.

Interviewed by Workers Press, Logan made this trenchant reply to Home Secretary Hurd's claim that there is no new evidence in the Guildford Four case:

'It's an administrative invention by successive Home Secretaries that they cannot refer a case back to the Court of Appeal without there being new evidence. Section 17 of the 1968 Criminal Appeal Act does not require new evidence.'

The Guildford Four — four youngsters rounded up in an atmosphere of anti-Irish hysteria and sent down for life for the 1974 Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings — have consistently claimed that the confessions on which they were sentenced were false and beaten out of them by the police.

This was later confirmed when men captured after the siege of Balcombe Street not only claimed responsibility for the bombings but explained in detail how they were done.

Referring to the Balcombe Street men, Logan said:

No appeal for Guildford Four



CAROLE RICHARDSON



PAUL HILL



GERARD CONLON



PATRICK ARMSTRONG

BY PHIL PENN

facts.

'In relation to the Maguires' — the family framed as suppliers of explosives to the Guildford Four — 'Hurd said he was satisfied about the scientific evidence.

'But he ignores the fact that Home Office forensic scientists have been saying since 1984 that the test used to convict the Maguires would not again be used as the sole evidence to charge a person with a similar offence.

'In other words, if Annie Maguire had been tried in 1984 she would not have been convicted. But she was tried in 1975-76 and she was convicted.

'So although Hurd says he's satisfied with the evidence his own forensic scientists are not'.

Hurd's decision to refer the case of the Birmingham Six to the Appeal Court follows a long battle by relatives for their release; the setting up of a Birmingham Six Campaign; wide cover-

The new evidence on which Hurd says he based his decision is that of a former Birmingham police officer, who has recently testified that the men were beaten by police while in custody, as they have always maintained.

Their faces were badly marked when they were brought to trial, but the judge, in order to maintain the integrity of the confessions, accepted the prosecution's story that the prison screws and not the police had beaten them.

After the Birmingham Six were found guilty and safely locked away, the screws were tried and let off.

Gareth Pearce, solicitor for three of the men, says they are extremely realistic and are cautiously pleased about the decision.

Their caution is understandable, for their case has been referred to the same no-jury court which heard their appeal in 1976 and sent them back to jail.

The Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, and Judith Ward were all framed in 1974. They have now served 12 years of a life sentence. The Maguires served long terms in jail. Giuseppe Conlon, father of Gerard, one of the Guildford Four, died from the treatment he received in jail.

Gareth Pearce said the right place for this case to be heard is before a jury. Alastair Logan has called for a public enquiry as the only means of securing justice for these innocent prisoners.

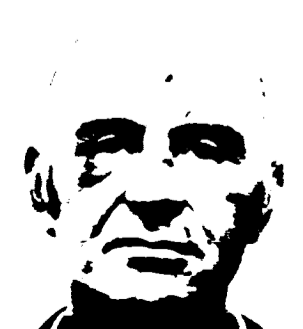
... and no guarantees for Birmingham Six



PADDY HILL



HUGH CALLAGHAN



JOHN WALKER



RICHARD MCKENNY



GERARD HUNTER



BILL POWER

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Coalition Falls

GARETT FITZGERALD's Fine Gael-Labour coalition fell last week when four Labour ministers resigned rather than take responsibility for big spending cuts.

With unemployment already at record levels, Fine Gael proposed to help Irish capitalism out by hitting the poor even harder, cutting health and social welfare.

So determined is it on this Thatcher-style programme that it intends making it its election manifesto.

The opposition Fianna Fail led by ex-prime minister Charles Haughey is clear favourite to win elections expected on February 19.

Labour's participation, not for the first time, in a coalition with the right-wing, pro-British Fine Gael, which has always represented big industrial and farming interests, has left the party with little credibility in the working class.

Its support for the Hillsborough agreement confirms its long separation from the national movement.

The four ministers' action was too little and too late to save their party's reputation.

Fianna Fail, the other main Irish capitalist party, will face two new problems on its flanks in this election however. One is a new party, Progressive Democrats, led by former Fianna Fail minister Desi O'Malley, and appealing to the 'new' middle class.

More serious, and likely to win votes from both former Fianna Fail and Labour voters, is the challenge from Sinn Fein, which has dropped its former abstentionist policy and declared willingness to enter the Leinster House parliament.

Although the Republicans are only standing six candidates this time, how they fare in these elections could be an important indication of things to come.

Gorbachev wants out of Afghan war

RUMOURS of a clash between rival factions in Afghanistan's Soviet-backed government were being discounted last week, although leaders of the governing People's Democratic Party are known to be worried how they'll fare in a diplomatic settlement.

The rumours spread when Soviet tanks and armoured personnel carriers were deployed in strength around the centre of Kabul, the capital, on the second day of a cease-fire proclaimed by the government.

Previous disputes in the leadership have been settled with gunfire, and it was suggested the Soviet forces might be having to keep the peace.

The Soviet government under Gorbachev is anxious to see an end to the Afghan war, so that it can withdraw

troops and improve relations with Asian countries.

In seven years of fighting, committing over 100,000 troops, planes, and helicopter gunships, the Soviet Union has gained nothing from the war. Over 30,000 Soviet youth have been killed or wounded, and demoralisation has spread.

Soviet influence in Asia has suffered too, and there have been hints of unrest within Soviet Asian republics, with their Muslim population. It may have contributed to the serious outbreak of riots in Kazakhstan recently.

While Afghan Muslim guerrilla leaders based in Pakistan's North-West Frontier province were publicly rejecting the cease-fire offer last week, and announcing they would step up operations, Soviet deputy Foreign minister Anatoly Kovalyev arrived in Islamabad for talks with the Pakistan gov-

ernment.

US officials also called there. US Secretary of State Caspar Weinberger has demanded the Soviets withdraw within two weeks US military aid has been stepped up both to the Pakistan dictatorship and the Afghan guerrillas, in the hope of keeping the war going.

The Pakistan regime's own vulnerability, highlighted by recent bloody communal fighting in Karachi, but also effected by continuing unrest in North West Frontier, Baluchi and Sind provinces, might make

it more amenable to a peace settlement.

China, which has also backed the Afghan rebels, is due to hold talks with the Soviet Union on frontier problems next month. It has been announced that 12,000 Soviet troops will be withdrawn from Mongolia.

Besides attempting to defend the Soviet Union by establishing friendlier relations with Asian neighbours, Gorbachev may also hope for better economic ties with Japan, whose prime minister Nakasone has just returned from a visit to Eastern Europe.

Shake-up in Ukraine

EIGHT coal mine managers are facing criminal proceedings, and a senior KGB officer has reportedly been sacked in what may turn out to be a major shake-up in the Soviet Ukraine.

Ukrainian Communist Party leader Vladimir Shcherbinsky, regarded as a left-over from Brezhnev's period, is rumoured to be for the chop very soon.

The mine managers, whose dismissal was reported by the official Tass news-agency last week, are being charged with negligence in connection with a pit disaster in December.

Many miners were killed in a methane gas explosion at the Ukrainian mine.

KGB chief Victor M. Chebrikov announced recently that one of his senior officers had been dismissed in the Ukraine, following mistreatment of a Soviet journalist.

Victor B. Berkhin was reporting for a mining magazine in the Voroshilovgrad region. According to a 'Pravda' report, he had uncovered 'shortcomings in the work of law-enforcement agencies' in the region.

He was then arrested, charged with 'hooliganism', 'Pravda' said, and held in jail for 13 days.

'Pravda' journalists named one A. Dichenko as an official who had ordered local prosecutors to have the journalist arrested. Four days later, Chebrikov identified Dichenko as provincial KGB head, announcing he was sacking him.

Whether the law-enforcement 'shortcomings' were related to what is happening in the Ukraine's important mining industry is not known. The Ukraine has been treated as a hotbed of corruption in recent Soviet press reports.

Although the Soviet bureaucracy periodically tries to clean its overall image by removing local officials and managers for alleged corruption or inefficiency, public dismissal of a secret police chief is less common, least of all for civil rights abuses.

Application of Gorbachev's 'glasnost' policy in this case may indicate that the Ukraine, with both working class and national discontents underlying its politics, is to be scene of a serious political struggle.

Bologna trial opens

TWENTY people accused in Europe's worst ever 'peace-time' bombing have gone on trial in Bologna, Italy, after six years of high-level cover-ups and attempts to block investigation.

The 1980 fascist bombing of Bologna railway station, crowded with August bank holiday travellers, killed 85 people and injured another 200.

Some activists in the fascist groups implicated were able to find hiding-places in Britain when the Italian police dragnet got under way.

The prosecution has over 150,000 pages of evidence linking the bombing with a fascist coup plot allegedly masterminded by Italy's sinister P-2 masonic lodge.

Among those indicted — in absentia — at last week's preliminary hearing was lodge-master Licio Gelli, still on the run after bribing his way out of a Swiss prison four years ago.

The P-2 lodge brought together top politicians, bankers, senior Vatican figures and high-ranking officers in the military and secret service establishment.

The trial in Bologna has been adjourned to March 2 while courtroom security is improved. Fears have been expressed that fascists and their backers will use this delay to further cover their tracks and evade justice.

People in Bologna who were injured or lost family members in the outrage have formed their own association, and say they are determined to see justice.

Turkey

FORMER Turkish prime minister Bulent Ecevit has been sentenced to eleven months imprisonment for making a speech during last September's by-election campaign, while banned from politics.

Although the Izmir court passed sentence on December 29, it was kept secret for three weeks, while Labour Euro-MP Richard Balfe was visiting Turkey to report on democratic rights there.



Employees of the bankrupt trade-union-owned 'Neue Heimat' housing corporation demonstrate to protest against its collapse

Social Democrats' slump doesn't mean workers defeated

WEST GERMANY'S Social Democrats are expected to make a poor showing in elections this weekend, despite growing workers' struggles and unrest in the middle class.

Christian Democrat chancellor Helmut Kohl is riding on a temporary upturn in the West German economy, thanks to industry benefiting from falling oil prices, and some preparedness to reflate using the Central Bank's profits.

Nevertheless there are still two million unemployed in West Germany. Important sections like miners and steel workers are fighting employers' sacking plans, while jobs and housing are big issues for youth.

Over 10,000 steel workers marched in Duisburg a fortnight ago, denouncing the Kohl government, and calling for nationalisation of their industry.

In Hamburg there have been regular fights between police and youth squatting in empty properties.

The shock of Chernobyl, and then the poisoning of the Rhine by big chemical companies, have spurred movements against nuclear power and industrial pollution. Not just the young, but even nor-

mally more conservative middle class people and farmers have been drawn into protests.

The Social Democrats, having ditched any pretence of socialism from their programme during the boom years, and with leader Johannes Rau, like Kinnock only more so, cannot arouse the enthusiasm of the youth.

The official labour movement's embroilment in capitalism has led to ignominy, if not disaster, when union housing funds were caught up in a spectacular business failure.

Nor can the Social Democrats turn the environmental

and anti-nuclear issues to advantage, despite the indictment of capitalism these contain. They were taken by surprise when the first emerged, and on the second they have not distinguished themselves much from the Christian Democrats.

The environmentalist Greens Party will probably reap any advantage from this, and has actually acquired the image of being to the 'left' of the Social Democrats.

Hungary writers

Thirty writers have resigned from the Hungarian Writers' Union saying the union is becoming 'arch nationalist', 'adventurist' and 'anti-communist'.

The resignations came after most of the party members were voted off the executive in November.

The last five years has seen a rapid degeneration of the relationship between the wri-

ters, party and government.

This crisis resulted in the dismissal of the editorial board of the literary monthly 'Tisza Tai' and the banning of Istvan Csurka's work.

Respected novelist Miklos Meszoly said last Sunday: 'In a healthy society, when someone writes something, it is discussed, not silenced or punished.'

Lenin's last struggle recalled

LENIN'S attempt to remove Stalin from his position of general secretary of the Communist Party in 1922 is featured prominently in the latest issue of 'Moscow News'.

Recalling the Bolshevik leader's warnings against Stalin's brutality, the Soviet magazine strongly attacks the way Stalin forced previously independent Soviet republics into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics between 1922 and 1924.

After nationalist riots in Kazakhstan last month, and with the Soviet Union trying to extract its forces from the Afghan mess, the re-echoing of Lenin's warnings is clearly significant.

Lenin's 'Last Testament', expressing grave doubts about Stalin's fitness to be party secretary, was long a closed chapter for most

Soviet citizens.

In a letter to the Party congress in 1924, Lenin strongly urged delegates to find a way of removing Stalin as general secretary, saying he was too rude to be trusted with power.

In his fight with Stalin over the handling of Georgia, Lenin attacked the mistreatment of Georgian communists and disregard for the sensitivities of oppressed nationalities.

Accusing Stalin of acting from 'spite' and Dzerzhinsky of adapting to Great Russian chauvinism, Lenin warned against the chauvinism of the bureaucracy.

The 'Moscow News' article recalls that Lenin urged the separate republics be treated as full equals if national resentment and nationalist feeling were not to grow worse.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

CIA LINK TO DRUG TRADE

REAGAN's terrorists — the CIA and the right-wing Contras fighting against the people of Nicaragua — have been linked with the international drug traffic.

Top US officials tried to cover up the racket, in which planes belonging to the CIA front-company Southern Air Transport delivered arms to the Contras, then returned with cocaine for sale in the US.

Now the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency has handed over a dossier to special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, who is probing the Contra connection in the wake of the 'Irangate' scandal.

Investigations have revealed that between 1983 and

1985, US arms planes delivering to Contra bases in El Salvador flew back via places like Barranquilla, in Colombia, where they re-loaded with cocaine and marijuana.

Witnesses who saw planes with Southern Air Transport markings there link the traffic with Jorge Ochoa, head of the powerful Colombian narcotics syndicate.

Eugene Hasenfus, shot down last October while on a supply mission over Nicaragua, was working for Southern Air Transport. From descriptions he gave to his captors, several known CIA agents, some of them Cuban emigres with long terrorist records, were identified as running Contra bases.

Although there have been rumours before of a drug trade connection, hard evidence is starting to come out for the first time.

The US magazine Newsweek has obtained statements from two men held in Miami on drug-smuggling charges that they had been working in Contra arms supply with CIA assistance.

Officers of the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency say they reported in September on arms-for-drugs trade involving Southern Air Transport, only to have their evidence discounted by the Justice Department.

An FBI inquiry into Contra smuggling activities in October was aborted on orders from Attorney-General

Edwin Meese. He had been told by Reagan security aide Admiral John Poindexter that investigations might harm a 'sensitive mission' then under way.

This turns out to have been the Iran arms deals whose exposure have led to Poindexter's resignation and appearance before congressional committees.

With great media exposure last year, Reagan and his 'First Lady' launched their nationwide 'war on drugs', the scourge of America's cities. Now, just like his 'crusade on terrorism', this phoney performance is about to be blown up by exposure of what US government agencies are up to their necks in.

KIDNAP PRESIDENT STILL IN TROUBLE

ECUADOR's President Leon Febres Cordero, kidnapped by rebel officers and forced to order release of former air force General Frank Vargas Pazzo, could be just beginning his fall from power.

Febres was seized, together with his army commander, during an official visit to the air force base near Guayaquil. His captors, some 50 mutineers ranking up to captain, demanded an amnesty for Vargas as the price of the president's release.

Air force General Vargas was accused of trying to lead a rebellion against Febres in March 1986. He had been dismissed for accusing the defence minister and army commander of corruption.

Vargas exposed various deals, such as one where a £550,000 bill for Mirage aircraft spares was mysteriously paid twice, and another involving £165,000 commission on purchase of a Fokker F-28.

Although Febres tried to smooth over the scandal, replaced his defence minister and retired a few officers, his party lost heavily in June elections. Left and liberal parties demanded the investigations be re-opened and Vargas be released.

The ex-air force chief's brother Rene leads Democrazia Popular, a radical Christian democrat opposition group, with strong rural support.

Trying to stave-off left-wing and nationalist opponents, President Febres' pro-US regime has still got support from right-wing army chiefs. But his patrons in Washington have not been much help.

Ecuador has been hit by US protectionism, in the form of taxes on its oil, with hoped-for compensatory US aid failing to materialise. With the economic crisis now goes a crisis of political authority and a split in the armed forces.



The affluence of modern office buildings in Sao Paulo's business district contrasts with the poverty of Brazil's shanty towns



VOLCANO SURVIVORS STRUGGLE ON

ONE of the worst natural disasters within memory. A year later, those who survived it are fighting not to be forgotten.

At 11p.m. on the terrible night of November 13, 1985, the Colombian city of Armero was engulfed by 31 million cubic metres of water, mud and stones rushing down from the Nevado del Ruiz volcano.

Some managed to escape. Those who didn't, 25,000 in all, lie buried under a sea of grey sand.

A few miles away, around the town of Lerida, thousands crouched in small tents under the wind and rain, or spent the night on schoolroom floors where they took shelter after the quake.

According to official figures only about 1,000 of the 8,000 disaster victims in Lerida have been able to get new homes, jobs, schooling for their children.

The rest wait, watch anxiously as their children become sick through lack of facilities such as decent water supplies and sewage systems, and wonder what happened to all the aid that was supposed to be coming to them.

A reporter from Prensa Latina who recently toured the area found the survivors bitter and angry, 'demanding an accounting of the money raised to aid disaster victims, for which there are various estimates and whose whereabouts is a national mystery'.

Where did relief money go?

Colombia's disaster relief agency received some \$20 million in 1985-1986. People at home and abroad subscribed to relief funds. Clothing, blankets, medicine, generators were sent.

UN experts say what was distributed was inadequate for people's needs. In addition, organisation was poor. People were moved around from place to place, did not know what was happening, were not informed of the fate of missed loved ones.

Prensa Latina's Jorge Enrique Botero reports meeting anguished parents who insisted their children had been sold after the tragedy.

'That's right: sold. For many say they witnessed the rescue of their children but have not heard of them since. They have been vainly seeking them for months in aid agencies, official and pri-

vate institutions and have published advertisements in the papers — all to no avail.'

A congressional commission has said the government relief agency's accounts are dubious and much of the aid never reached the people for whom it was intended.

Besides huge salaries for the bureaucrats appointed to run the agency, there was embezzlement of both cash and supplies.

Big profits were made on land bought for housing. Bureaucrats worked hand in glove with businessmen to split the money intended for victims between them.

Even without such problems, efforts to rehouse the Armero survivors and organise jobs and facilities have fallen down through inter-departmental feuds and lack of any overall plan, Enrique Botero reports. Nearly \$4 million dollars held by the International Red Cross may be lost because there is no specific investment plan.

Will volcano erupt again?

Worse could be to come. Experts have warned that the Armero disaster could happen again.

The 1985 disaster was caused by volcanic heat melting the crater of Nevado del Ruiz and the ice above it, bringing the avalanche that engulfed Armero.

Experts say there are 350 million cubic metres of ice covering the volcano and if they ever come sweeping down many cities could be destroyed as Armero was.

A round the clock watch over the volcano is maintained by a committee in Manizales, but despite their efforts the warning systems in high risk areas may not be adequate.

The Colombian government has organised with some efficiency for a different kind of eruption, apparently. The Prensa Latina reporter says he saw hundreds of heavily armed soldiers and police in the vicinity of the refugee camps around Lerida, evidently on guard in case the survivors' anguish and anger explodes.

In Lerida, Libia Rosas recalls that at the start of the tragedy, when terrified Armero residents ran shouting 'Lagunilla has overflowed' (a nearby river), police panicked and opened fire. They thought they heard 'the guerrillas are coming'.

BRAZIL FEARS WORKING CLASS RESISTANCE

CALL TO CURB DEBT PAYMENTS

AS Brazilian representatives met with major capitalist creditor governments this week, the country's leading political party urged partial suspension of foreign debt payments.

The Brazilian Democratic Movement's national directorate and 22 state governors elected in November issued a joint statement saying they would 'support a decision to suspend payments on part of the debt and limit remittances abroad temporarily'.

Behind this call is fear that attacks on jobs and living standards to meet the bankers' demands will bring fierce resistance from Brazilian workers.

Big private banks in Europe, the United States and Japan hold more than \$70 billion of Brazil's debt. The bankers have warned that any move by Brazil to curb payments could have serious international repercussions.

President Jose Sarney's government, in which the

Brazil Democratic Movement (BDM) is the main coalition partner, has tried to meet the bankers' demands but faces resistance from the Brazilian working class to attacks on jobs and living standards.

Politicians remember the clashes on the streets last year over price rises, the unemployed riots in Sao Paulo a few years ago, and the workers' demonstrations against the bankers' policies.

Earnings

Last week's BDM statement says: 'Debt payments should be linked to a percentage of our export earnings or of our gross national product, and interest rates should be reduced so we can dispose of our savings for the investments that are indispensable to increase national production.'

Party leader Ulises Guimaraes said what the BDM was saying was 'no to recession, no to inflation, no to reducing the pay of workers, and no exorbitant interest rates'.

The once-hailed 'Brazilian miracle' came to a rude end in the late 1970s. In 1982 Brazil emerged as the world's

biggest debtor, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stepped in. Interest payments alone since 1982 have cost Brazil \$55 billion.

Last year, Brazil had a 7.7-per-cent increase in Gross National Product, according to official figures, the highest growth rate in Latin America. Trade surpluses averaging \$1 billion a month have enabled the country to keep interest payments up to date.

But this interest now stands at \$105 billion, and Finance Minister Danilo Fuarero has warned that Brazil cannot continue sending \$12 billion abroad this year without hitting its economic growth.

In elections last November, the BDM won control of both houses of Congress and 22 out of 24 state governorships. But when the government lifted price controls on many goods and services soon afterwards, huge price increases brought an angry reaction from workers who felt cheated.

Trade unions called a march in Brasilia, and police

used armoured cars and teargas to 'restore order'. Bank workers also took strike action against mergers.

Besides cutting public spending and jobs, a major target for the bankers' demands is to end the policy whereby wages are updated to compensate for increases in the cost of living.

Strength

Continuation of this policy in Brazil was a reflection of working class strength, shown in the big Sao Paulo strikes a decade ago, and the defeat of the military regime, allowing the BDM to power.

While the Sarney government negotiates with the 'Paris Club' of foreign finance to have debts rescheduled, Labour Minister Almir Pazzianoto has been holding urgent talks with businessmen and trade union leaders to try and achieve a corporate plan of price and wage controls.

WAPPING PRINT



Enjoying a nice cup of tea after a long march

Working class not defeated

— print meeting told

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

THE working class is not defeated and is ready for a fight!

That was the defiant message from a public meeting organised by the Lambeth Print Support Group last Monday to rally support for the twelve month Wapping Anniversary March.

Sacked pintworker, SOGAT and Fleet Street Print Support Unit activist Larry Hyett

speaking of the anti-union laws said:

'If we want to win this dispute and others like it we have to confront those laws. This strike is not over until the members decide.

About police violence he said:

'Unless we fight back as workers we will be beaten and abused by riot police. As printers we demand the release of all jailed trade unionists.

'This meeting is to mobilise trade unionists down to Wapping to confront the state over whether or not workers have the right to picket.

'This dispute and the miners' strike are the beginning of a transitional period.'

'Gene Scott, sacked Silent-night worker, condemned the role of the furniture trade union executive.

'Our Executive Committee of wisdom have withdrawn support for our dispute.

She explained how the union leadership sent an official to 'sequester' the strikers' funds and equipment needed to continue the dispute — and how they failed.

'If the leadership had acted in support of us as much as they acted to wind up the dispute, I would have been in work a year ago and not touring round meeting trade unionists and getting a political education thrown into the bargain. We're not going to give in — we've got nowhere else to go.'

Kent miner Alan Sutcliffe paid special tribute to Kent NUM leader Jack Collins. Sutcliffe was clearly very upset by Jack's loss.

He told the meeting that conditions in Wapping would be much worse than being out on strike if the fight against Murdoch was lost.

'Our industries are run by the wrong people for the wrong reasons.

'We've taken enough: let's go forward and win a victory for us all.'

Surcharged former Labour councillor Ted Knight said he was very confident about the strength of the working class:

'Twelve months after the miners strike those workers are fighting on despite trade union leaders.

'We have to look at the situation because it means that workers are ready for a fight. What's at stake is not just jobs, it's trade unionism itself.'

He said that the employing class is taking the only path it can take which is to smash all the organisations of the working class.

'They are prepared to use the whole array of the state against the working class.'

He denounced 'those in our movement who use their pages to tell us that we're finished'. Mother of the Chappel of SOGAT Clerical Carrol Hall said criticised the 'Boycott Campaign'. She said 'Any conscious trade unionist never bought the Sun anyway. If we have any chance of winning this dispute then Fleet Street must come out.'

She said that if the anti-union laws were not confronted then no major dispute can be won.

'But this we must grasp, in order to know what is to be done. She said 'We have to build an attacking movement based on principles. We have to connect all the different sections who are coming into conflict with the state together.'

Over one hundred and fifty pounds for sacked printworkers was collected and an appeal was made for people to attend print support group meetings.



A speaker at the meeting was Steve Smith (above), Father of the Manager's Chapel at Mirror Group and Secretary of the Federated House Chapels of Mirror Group, who has been suspended along with Angela Malloy, Mother of the Clerical Chapel at Mirror Group, on the grounds of 'gross mis-conduct'.

One year

AS THE printers' strike enters its second year this weekend I thought it would be fitting to report on some of the people involved in the dispute who would not normally get a mention.

Several of them have been the backbone of the dispute and have done things that, as they admit, they could never have done but for Wapping.

Wellclose Square, opposite the Wapping plant, is where it all happens, where all the pickets gather and the stalls and tea vans are set up.

Ernie and Bert Bates along with Tony Tomlinson run a stall on behalf of the Blackhole Support Group. Everyone who passes it must buy a ticket for the nightly raffle — and God help those who try to sneak past without one! All three are members of SOGAT and worked in the machine room of the 'Sun' and the 'News of the World' at Bouverie Street. They are staunch supporters of the dispute and as Bert says: 'We will fight on until we beat Murdoch'.

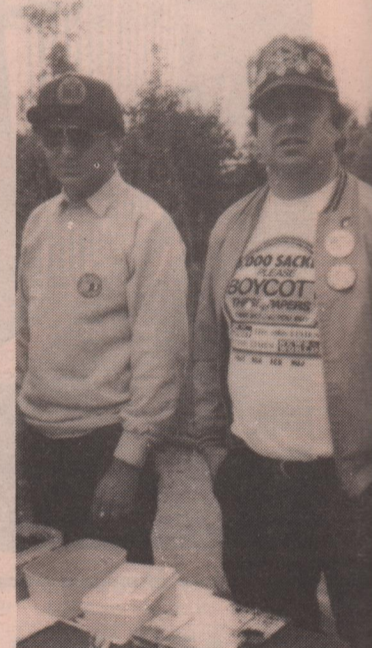
Strike Graphics are the people who do all the designs on T-shirts, mugs etc. Tony Hall is the name behind many of these quite spectacular, and often controversial items.

Tony, like the rest of the

ALAN CLARK, member of Times' night machine chapel International dispute since James Murdoch sacked his entire printing in a new purpose-built day Alan has reported the dispute he writes about some of the people the dispute without whom the same.

Strike Graphics team, worked as designers and artists on the 'Sun' and 'News of the World'. He says that even after one year he won't be giving up. 'It's quite refreshing to be doing material that is so completely opposite to what we did under Murdoch: this stuff is wanted.'

The Women Against Murdoch (WAM), formed in October



Ernie and Bert

A beginning - no

Carol Hall, Mother of the Chapel of the 'Times' clerical chapel, spoke to Workers Press about the dispute. She attacked the electricians' union leader Eric Hammond for his collaboration with Murdoch on the planned move to Wapping.

'NO DOUBT Murdoch had watched the antics of Hammond and his henchmen at the TUC in 1984, when he laid the movement open to ridicule with his readiness to undermine the miners with his cheap jibe about "Lions led by Donkeys."

This was the signal that Murdoch wanted — within months of the miners' strike ending he was laying the plans to launch an evening paper.

'Claiming Wapping was a green field site was the first shot to shake the complacency of the print unions, he knew Hammond would back him,' she said

'Dean on the other hand was confident that a deal could be made with Murdoch, she gave

him the biggest Christmas present he could have wanted.'

'Dean capitulated to Maxwell at the Mirror' and ended the strike within 72 hours and agreed to have the workforce cut by 2000, which clearly showed that she was not prepared to fight for jobs.

'In this corresponding week last year Dean was armed with a magnificent strike mandate from the News International chapels, but she was ready to concede 50 per cent job losses to get into Wapping. Whereas Murdoch was demanding 80 per cent job cuts, a legally binding agreement, no closed shop, no strike deal and so-called management's right to manage clauses.

'The strikers objectives were somewhat different — they wanted to fight for jobs and union recognition which would give the ordinary rank and file printer a voice.

'Instead we got a low profile campaign through the media, which are the very people that are out to destroy us. We got the 'Boycott Campaign' a consumer ban, hoping to persuade people not to buy the 'Sun'.

She suggested that most conscious trade unionists never bought the 'Sun' in the first place. 'Anyhow, how can you

FREE MIKE HICKS!

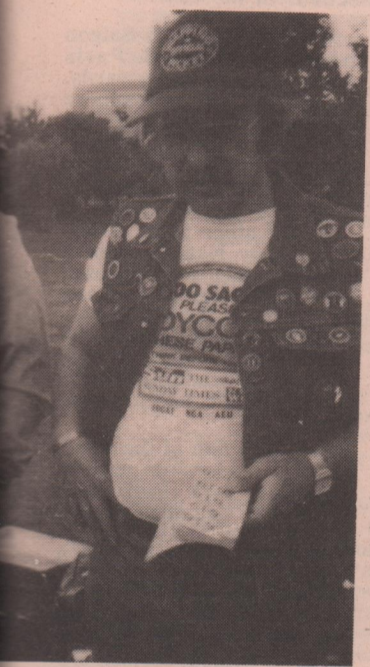
FLEET STREET

ERS SPEAK OUT

ear on

OGAT 82 and of the 'Sunday has been involved in the News workforce of 5,500 and started at Wapping factory. From that date for Workers Press. Today sung heroes and characters of strike would not have been the

ber, have also earned themselves a place in the Square. Many of them are the wives, girlfriends or mothers of sacked printers and they have stood firm alongside their men from day one. Their banner is always on the marches and their lively and cheerful singing helps to keep the pickets' spirits up when heads sometimes start to drop. The women of WAM



an end

compete in publicity with a multinational publishing company with all their easy access to media coverage.

'As far as I am concerned there is only one way to beat Murdoch. This fight is just not against him; every other proprietor in Fleet Street has jumped on the band wagon; we have seen a jobs slaughter, we have seen the beginning of something evil, some people call it company unionism, I call it corrupt trade unionism.

'If we want the attacks to stop, if we seriously want a chance of winning, Fleet Street must be called out,' she said.

Victory

'I am confident, much more confident than I was 12 months ago, victory and justice can be achieved for our class.'

As more and more sections of the community are thrown into conflict with the state we are charged with linking these struggles together, this is our task, we can do it and we will.'

'The anniversary of our dispute must not be allowed to be the end, it must be the beginning'

and all other women supporters have decided that their place in this dispute is in the front line.

Tim Hennessey will tell you he did not support the miners during their dispute, but one year on strike has changed his mind. Tim has become best known for his selling of the 'Wapping Post' and he does this in his own inimitable style. This dispute has certainly awakened his dormant political mind. He gladly tells everyone now that he was wrong for not supporting the miners.

Like many of the pickets, Tim Hennessey has become aware of what life is really about.

The tenants and residents of Tower Hamlets have supported the sacked printers from the beginning, and their Reclaim the Streets demonstrations have often shown the printers just how they should be picketing. John Rees, organiser of the movement, says, 'We don't intend to run away. The death of the local lad Michael Delaney strengthens our resolve to carry on.'

Police road blocks are certainly no deterrent to them. They are determined to demonstrate and march in support of the printworkers around Wapping and because of this great friendships have developed between the residents and the printers.

Support groups around the country have sprung up and have done some good work on behalf of the printworkers. Camden, Oxford, Lambeth, Hackney and Tower Hamlets are just a few that need mentioning for their timeless efforts in supporting the strikers.

The tea wagons parked in Wellclose Square have been the lifeblood of the pickets. Thousands of gallons of tea have been drunk by the marchers and supporters. The biscuits, rolls, soup, and wonderful bread pudding have also been memorable. Every bite and sip has usually been more than welcome.

Last but not least is Betty Primrose, who goes anywhere for the printers just as she did for the miners. You can't miss her — she's the one with badges and stickers over her coat, always carrying two buckets.



Do you need a helping hand mate



Reclaim our streets march



CAROL HALL

Jailed printer's brother speaks

PAT HICKS, brother of jailed print leader Mike Hicks, speaking at a public meeting last week, said Michael regards himself as a class war prisoner.

'My brother was arrested to take the head off the printworkers' marches. What the police said in court against him was a completely untrue,' he said.

Michael led the fight in the wholesale to get Murdoch's titles boycotted, unfortunately he was not to be so successful outside London, Pat Hicks said.

Hicks went on to say that the new Public Order Act was there to restrict marches and demonstrations and to protect the Murdoch's.

The City of London was

committing more crimes than anyone, yet nothing ever happens to them

Hicks said that he thought Murdoch wasn't having it all his own way as last Monday's Panorama programme seemed to suggest.

Though Pat Hicks didn't say how, he said that Murdoch could be defeated and if he is it would assist all those others in dispute.

● SOGAT National Executive member and jailed Wapping strike leader Mike Hicks had his appeal against conviction and prison sentence turned down at the Court of Criminal Appeal last week.

The three judges unanimously opposed the reduction of Hicks's 12 month prison sentence, of which eight are suspended.

The appeal was based on

three identification queries.

The queries included the fact that a police witness had admitted that there were 'hazards inherent in this kind of identification'.

With the support of his fellow judges, Lord Justice Caulfield dismissed the three points on the grounds that the incident arose from what is 'notoriously known as the Wapping dispute'.

Hicks left the dock with a smile on his face and waved to his supporters and friends.

The Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers stated 'In view of the highly doubtful evidence against him his conviction can only be regarded as grossly unfair and unsafe.'

Hundreds of sacked printworkers demonstrated their support for Hicks outside the court in The Strand.

ET OUT!

FREE MIKE HICKS!

VIETNAM AND TROTSKYISM

The Fourth International and the Stalinist Ho

THIS article by Simon Pirani concludes our series on the history of Vietnamese Trotskyism. Previous articles described the 1945 revolution in Vietnam which was defeated by the joint efforts of Stalinism and Imperialism. This article follows the movement's history from 1946.

'INSOFAR as capitalism has created a world market, a world division of labour and world productive forces, it has also prepared world economy as a whole for socialist transformation,' wrote Trotsky, attacking Stalin's reactionary fraud of 'socialism in one country', in 1929.

'Different countries will go through this process at different tempos. Backward countries may, under certain conditions, arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat sooner than advanced countries, but they will come later than the latter to socialism.' (*The Permanent Revolution*, New Park edn. p.155).

Fifty-seven years later, the contradiction between the struggle and sacrifice of backward countries on the one hand, and the unresolved crisis of international working-class leadership and the delay of socialist revolution world-wide on the other, remains a central feature of the class struggle.

In Vietnam, a peasant army, organised under a Communist Party imbued with reactionary Stalinist ideology, achieved a crushing victory over the mightiest imperialist power of all.

Today the state founded on that victory faces hostility from imperialism on one side, from the reactionary Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy on another, from the crushing backwardness of its own war-weary rural economy on a third — and finally from the narrow nationalist and bureaucratic outlook of its own Stalinist rulers.

The problems faced by the Vietnamese workers — like those of workers in other countries — can only be considered as part of the problems of the world working class.

Their struggle is part of the permanent, international revolutionary process.

The only tendency which approached Vietnamese problems in this way was Trotskyism — and these articles, while not claiming to answer all those problems, aim to outline that tendency's history.

The aftermath of 1945 and the war with France

It was the refusal of the Saigon workers and their Trotskyist leaders to compromise with the French-British-Vietminh carve-up of Vietnam, in September 1945, that led those forces to turn on them.

The Vietminh executed Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau and hundreds of Trotskyist cadres.

Trotskyist and nationalist forces, who had resisted the French when they had re-entered Saigon, were driven into the countryside where they fought a guerilla war against the French, British-officered Gurkhas and the Vietminh.

Ho Chi Minh, the Stalinist leader, went to Paris and negotiated with the French, signing an initial agreement which recognised the French presence in the south on March 6, 1946.

Despite being decimated by the massacre, the Saigon Trotskyists re-organised in the International Communist Group (Union des Communistes Internationalistes), and in October 1946 issued a leaflet condemning the

agreement signed by Ho, which 'offered nothing but advantages for French imperialism: the restoration of French control economic, financial and customs, and reparations for the French.'

The leaflet called on workers to maintain their political independence from the bourgeoisie, organise trades unions and fight for 'workers' liberties'. (*For a revolutionary trade union organisation*, leaflet in the files of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, Library of International Contemporary Documentation, Nanterre University, Paris).

In the north, where the Stalinists had set up the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), initial progress by Trotskyists of the Struggle group was cut short by ruthless persecution.

A report in the Fourth International's journal states that at first, the DRV had tolerated the thriving Trotskyist movement, which won wide support, and met particular success in organising women.

At one point DRV speakers had even attended Trotskyist meetings.

But after a particularly successful Trotskyist rally at Bach-Mai, 'having realised the popularity of working-class policies, and dreading their growing influence, Ho Chi Minh gave a secret order to arrest T. (the leader of the group) and other members of the Fourth International.

'But despite this they could not prevent the clandestine publication of "The Struggle", and the participation of Fourth Internationalists in the resistance.' (*Quatrieme Internationale*, Jan-Feb 1948).

While ensuring the destruction of his Trotskyist opponents at home, Ho returned to Paris for more talks with the French, which dragged on from May to September 1946 . . . while

French troops swarmed across Vietnam, ready to renew open hostilities against the DRV.

Ho's policy of trying to negotiate crashed to the ground on November 23, 1946, when French ships bombarded Haiphong harbour in the north, killing thousands and signalling the start of Vietnam's bloody seven-year war with France.

There is no record of what privations and repressions the Saigon Trotskyists faced as war engulfed the country.

But a manifesto issued by their provisional central committee stated:

'To those who believe that the national liberation of Vietnam can be achieved by negotiations with French imperialism, with or without mediation by other imperialists, we say: we will not achieve liberation without a concerted struggle of the working people and peasants of Vietnam, together with the revolutionary proletariat of the metropolitan countries, hand in hand with the other oppressed peoples.'

The statement, dated July 8, 1947, recognised that the crisis of the colonial peoples could only be resolved with the progress of the world revolution as a whole.

It called on Vietnamese workers not to place their fate in the hands of the national bourgeoisie but to prolong their resistance struggle 'to accentuate the overall crisis of France.' (*Our Position*, manifesto in ISFI files).

Contact with the Chinese section

The relentless advance of Mao Tse-Tung's Red Army, and the disintegration of the Kuomintang forces in 1948-49 must have filled every work-



When the Chinese Red Army routed Chiang Kai Shek's Kuomintang, Trotskyists' hopes were raised. But Mao's victory led to new repressions — and became one of the forces of revisionism inside the Fourth International itself

er and revolutionary in Asia with hope.

The international significance of the Chinese revolution was clear to the Vietnamese Trotskyists, who sent one of their leading members to contact the Chinese Trotskyists in February 1949, eight months before Mao's victory.

This delegate attended a conference of the Revolutionary Communist Party of China, which not only discussed at length the Chinese political situation, but also resolved to establish, jointly with the Vietnamese comrades, a Far Eastern Secretariat of the Fourth International, and to set up a joint cadre school.

But Mao Tse-Tung's victory in October 1949 heralded another chapter of Stalinist repression.

Many Chinese Trotskyists suffered, at his hands, the same deadly fate that Ho had meted out in Vietnam four years earlier.

The Chinese RCP moved its head office to Hong Kong, but the British colonial authorities were no more 'democratic' than the Maoists.

RCP leaders P'eng Shu-tse and Liu Chia-liang then moved to Vietnam, at the end of January 1950.

'Hardly a few months passed, however, before misfortune struck again', wrote P'eng's wife Ch'en Pi-lan. (*Looking Back Over My Years with P'eng Shu-tse*, introduction to *The Chinese Communist Party in Power*, by P'eng).

'Two leading Vietnamese Trotskyists were invited to participate in a conference in the zone controlled by the Vietminh.

'We had been assured that the conference was being organised by Trotskyist elements inside the Vietminh, among them being the chief of staff of the army in control of this zone.

'The conference was scheduled to discuss the military situation and organisation problems of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement. Unfortunately, the Stalinists had prepared a trap.

'When the conference came to an end, all the Vietnamese Trotskyists, and our comrade Liu Chia-liang . . . were arrested.'

Liu, a veteran of the 1926-7 Chinese revolution, who joined the Trotskyists in 1931 and served several sentences under the Kuomintang, died shortly afterwards in the Vietminh jail.

When Ch'en and P'eng left Vietnam fearing for their own lives, their Vietnamese comrades were still imprisoned but alive. Nothing further is known of them.

Vietnam and the split in the FI

How did the Trotskyist movement internationally — itself subject to massive repression by Stalinism and fascism alike — react to the Stalinist crimes against its

sections in the east?

News of the 1945 Saigon massacre reached Paris nearly a year afterwards, whereupon Trotskyists there publicised it, and publicly demanded of Ho Chi Minh — who was in Paris talking to the French government — an answer for this crime.

On the other hand, Trotsky's widow Natalia Sedova (who in later years opposed the Fourth International and its defence of the USSR, condemning it as an exploitative class society), was in 1947 accusing FI leaders of relaxing the fight against Stalinism.

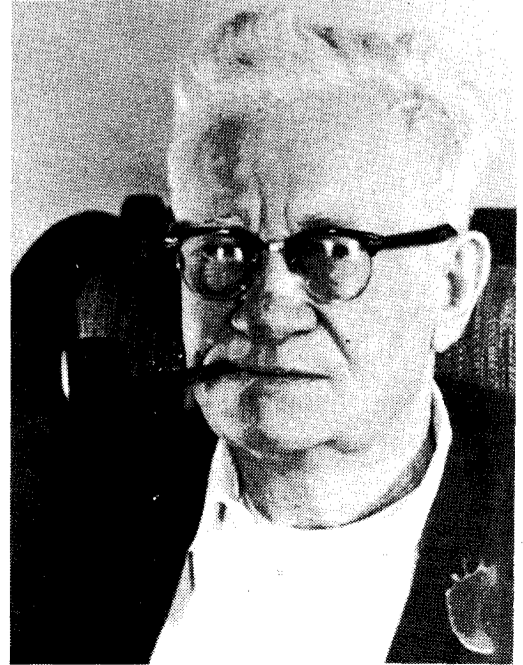
In a criticism of the international leadership, written together with Benjamin Peret and Grandizo Munis, she stated that the Indo-Chinese section had been 'forgotten for so long', that 'even to demand who assassinated Ta Thu Thau has been forgotten, in order to support, without serious criticism, the Stalinist government of Ho Chi Minh, greetings from whom were so warmly hailed by The Militant and La Verite.' (*FI Internal Bulletin*, 1947).

A full discussion on the FI's politics in 1947-48 is beyond the scope of this article. But in the period immediately following, there is a clearer picture.

Without doubt, the FI leadership under Pablo, which revised Trotsky's fundamental theses on the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism following the Communist Party coming to power in Yugoslavia and China in 1949, capitulated to Stalin-



Leading figures in the post-war Fourth International (left to right): NATALIA TROTSKY, who criticised the failure to campaign over Ta Thu Tau's death; MICHEL PABLO, who advocated 'entryism of a special type'; JAMES P CANNON whose 1953 'Open Letter' declared a split in the FI



The Final part of our series

ism to the extent that it deliberately covered up and minimised the repression of Trotskyists.

When the FI split in 1953, with the International Committee (ICFI) forming around J. P. Cannon's 'Open Letter' in opposition to Pablo's liquidationism, a letter from the Chinese Trotskyist P'eng to Cannon accused Pablo of trying to stifle discussion on Stalinism in the Far-East Commission of the FI's Third Congress in 1951; refusing to distribute information on the wholesale arrest and murder of Chinese Trotskyists by Mao; and concealing for four months (May-September 1953) an appeal from the Chinese Trotskyists on behalf of imprisoned comrades.

P'eng states that, with regard to Vietnam, Pablo's 'entryism of a special type' actually meant sending Vietnamese Trotskyists from France back to their own country, with instructions to join the Vietminh, and without a clear understanding of the extent of Stalinist repression.

'When the Vietnamese comrades were ready to return to their country to apply the "entryist policy", and called a meeting in which I was invited to make a speech, the chairman of this meeting made a request of me not to mention before the comrades the recent persecutions experienced by the Chinese comrades.

'I knew quite well that it was an instruction or suggestion from Pablo,' wrote P'eng.

'Although I observed the request of the chairman, I still warned him personally that the "ostrich policy" was the most dangerous.' (*Towards a History of the FI, part 3, vol 3, p.170-71, published by the Socialist Workers Party (US) 'Education for Socialists' series.*)

The Trotskyist group referred to was built among Vietnamese workers in France during and after the war.

When it returned to Vietnam in the early 1950s, this group was split — a majority faction supporting the Pablo leadership, and a minority supporting the French Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) who had opposed Pablo.

This minority voted against the resolutions of the FI Third Congress along with the PCI.

We have pointed out (Workers Press, December 6) that while the ICFI was formed on the basis of opposing Pablo's adaptation to Stalinism and his attempts to liquidate independent Trotskyist organisation, that in later years the Healy-Banda leadership in the IC had itself manifested liquidationism with regard to Vietnam.

But the French PCI (which founded the IC together with the SLL-WRP and American SWP) did continue to pay attention to Vietnamese Trotskyism, running classes on its history throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.

A well-known incident in the late 1960s, while proving nothing in itself, is illustrative: members of the United Secretariat of the FI on a Vietnam solidarity march in Paris chanted 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh' — and were robustly answered 'Ta, Ta, Ta Thu Thau' by a PCI contingent.

Vietnamese Trotskyism today

We know that, haunted by at least some knowledge of earlier repressions, and no doubt affected by the split in the FI, some Trotskyists carried on activity throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s in Saigon.



P'ENG SHU-TSE who narrowly escaped from Stalinist repression in China and then Vietnam

(*The Geneva Accords are a Treacherous Betrayal*, July 1954, leaflet in ISFI files).

It is known that when the Vietminh reached Saigon 21 years later, in 1975, they freed from jail some Trotskyists who had led Saigon's railway workers against the pro-American regime.

But soon afterwards, some of these comrades were re-arrested by the Stalinists.

In the 1970s, with the Vietnamese struggle occupying a central place in international events, Vietnamese Trotskyists in France organised a group attached to the USFI.

Having appealed in vain in 1954, when Ho signed the Geneva accords which left the south in the hands of the imperialist puppet Ngo Dinh Diem, a Trotskyist manifesto condemned his secret diplomacy.

It called for workers in north Vietnam to demand expropriation of property and imperialist enterprises, agrarian reform, workers' and peasants' control over production and consumption, and democracy for workers and peasants.

In the south the Trotskyists advocated the expulsion of imperialism, the advance of trades unionism, and unity around slogans of national liberation, agrarian reform and democracy.

for guidance to the USFI Eighth Congress in 1975 (see Workers Press, December 6), they proceeded to issue a manifesto in 1976, calling on Vietnamese workers to carry through a political revolution.

This group of older comrades began, at the end of last year, producing a new magazine, 'Chroniques Vietnamiennes', aimed at the younger Vietnamese generation in France.

The first issue contained three letters signed by Ho Chi Minh in 1939, which prove that he personally initiated the slander that the Trotskyists were 'Japanese agents'.

This quarterly French-language magazine is available from Chroniques Vietnamiennes, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil Cedex, near Paris, France. An annual overseas subscription is 85 francs.

Today we have no direct knowledge of Trotskyist activity in Vietnam itself.

But the world situation — in which movements are growing not only in Europe, Africa and the Americas, but in China and indeed an upsurge against state bureaucracy in Vietnam itself — contains great possibility for the building of our movement.

CONCLUDED

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Aboriginal deaths in Custody

BY NORMAN HARDING

THE YEAR 1988 is the 200th anniversary of the British colonisation of Australia. The aboriginal Koori people do not see the event as something to celebrate. The brutal treatment handed out to the Kooris as their traditional lifestyle was destroyed continues up to this day, as the following accounts show.

JOHN PAT

FOUND dead in his cell at Roebourne on 28 September 1983. He was 16 years old. An all-white jury acquitted the five police officers charged with manslaughter.

The jury heard 57 witnesses tell how a group of drunken cops provoked a fight with a group of Aborigines, then arrested them and beat them. John Pat died, his friends Ray Smith and Peter Coppin ended up in hospital.

Bar attendant Catherine Parks of the Victoria Hotel in Roebourne testified in the Supreme Court that the five off-duty police officers had threatened the Aborigines and made racist remarks. She was guarded by four builder's labourers. Within minutes of

giving her evidence she was sacked and told: 'We don't want doobers (grasses) here.'

After her evidence Catherine Parks was given one week to leave town. It is clear that powerful mining and pastoral interests want the John Pat case buried.

A Labour MP married to an Aboriginal from the Roebourne area was threatened with libel because he had spoken out on the matter. Freelance journalist Jan Mayman went to Roebourne to cover the story and after talking to a number of Aborigines she was threatened and told to leave town. Reports of other journalists were blatantly censored.

DIXON GREEN

FROM Kununurra, North West Australia. Died in Broome Regional Prison on November 19 1985. Official verdict: heart attack.

His family aren't convinced. His brother Ken Green said: 'We found (Dixon's) front teeth knocked out, top and bottom and sand in his mouth. We also found a red mark around his neck.'

TONY KING

DIED on October 31 1985 in Geraldton, Western Australia. He was a Maori man married to an Aboriginal.

For six years the police had been trying to solve a series of rapes in the Geraldton area, with a big media campaign. Tony King was in the area being patrolled by the police.

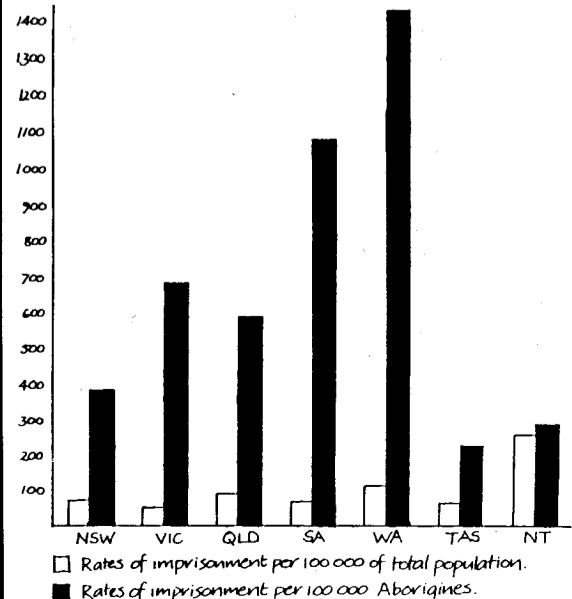
He was chased and caught, and held in a bear hug from which he was rendered unconscious. There was no attempt to resuscitate him. Official cause of death: asphyxiation and coronary arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).

A trial-by-media branded King as the rapist although there was not a shred of evidence and at the time of some of the attacks he was in Perth. His family commented: 'They killed a black man and thought he would be a good scapegoat for the unsolved rape attacks.'

ROBERT WALKER

DIED August 1984 in Fremantle jail. He was dragged from his cell in the middle of the night by the warders and brutally beaten on a lawn in full view of dozens of prisoners watching from their cell windows. They came forward to testify even though this would put their own lives in danger.

The prison officers were acquitted.



ON VISITING PRISONERS

Mr Warden-in-Charge/
Why do you lock me
Into a room,
A locked room in a locked
block/
A locked block in a locked
prison complex,
Heavily guarded/
To visit with people/
through mesh net grills/
Who are also locked
away from me?

I won't run away...
I live on the outside,
And that's a prison/too/
Regulated by twelve million
citizens
Who play warden to each
other/
And twelve million clocks
That measure out our 'time'.

Mr Warden-in-Charge/
I feel so sorry for you/
With your giant keys
for your giant locks/
Locking people/in/out

Don't you see that the choice
Of the prison within
Or the prison without/
Is no choice??

I live in a prison/
and I don't run away
from there —
Do I???

Bobbi Sykes

From her collection 'Love and Other Revolutionary Actions'

Surveys throughout the 1980s have consistently shown Aboriginal people are jailed at least ten times more than white Australians. Overall imprisonment rate is about 60 per 100,000. For Aborigines it is 726 per 100,000, worse in some states than others (see graph). In South Australia Aborigines who appear in court were found to be four times as likely to receive a prison sentence as their white counterparts. In 1982 they accounted for 1.9 per cent of court appearances, but 37.8 per cent of people sent to jail. Dispossession, brutalisation, destruction of families and culture, a racist legal system and racist police all make Aboriginal people the most imprisoned group in the world.

REVIEWS

BOOKS

Vivid memories you can't kill...



A noose is lowered as TUC General Secretary Norman Willis speaks at a rally in Aberavon, South Wales.

You Can't Kill the Spirit. By Jill Miller. Women's Press, £4.95.

I WAS asked to express my views on the book 'You can't kill the spirit' by Jill Miller.

As a miner's wife actively involved with the Betws Women's Support Group as treasurer during the miners' year-long strike, I can identify with most of the events that the women in the Abertillery Women's Support Group encountered.

The early childhood memories, collection of food and its preparation in the kitchen at the Institute (or in the Miners' Welfare Hall in my case), fund raising, food parcel preparation and distribution, picket-line duty, public speaking, rallies and marches, the Christmas party and present distribution, the shortages of money and fuel and the sorting out of priorities, clothing collection and distribution, the happy and not so happy times spent at the strike centre.

The pressures and tensions and the emotional traumas and anger felt towards the government, police and media due to the slanderous statements issued about the miners' leaders and their supporters especially at being called 'the enemy within', the noose incident at Port Talbot, the fantastic local, national and foreign support, the long-lasting friendships, the unity among those fighting for the survival of the pits and communities, the disappointment at the scabs and the recollection of the first day back at work, marching in unity, banner flying.

In the book, one incident stands out: the adamant way each woman vows that their group would not disband, even after the strike ended and the group would have served its purpose. It would still continue.

Reading the book brought back some vivid memories to me of the strike although to me the book lacks atmosphere and I would have liked it to be less vague about instances during the strike.

As I see it, the book is an opportunity for the women to air their personal views.

As all the women bar possibly one were involved in the same activities and had similar upbringings, the book gets very repetitive to the point of getting tedious (I've heard all this before!!)

As for Jill's contributions in between each life history, well, what can I say, they were mostly quite irrelevant.

Not a book for my bookshelf, I'm afraid.

Judith Evans

Top managers benefit from asset strip

Privatisation: Paying the Price. By Labour Research. £1.15.

THE GOVERNMENT'S contracting-out programme has already cost 71,000 jobs in the public sector and another 330,000 are threatened.

These figures are presented in the latest pamphlet from Labour Research.

It reviews the government's asset-stripping spree which began with the sale of ICL in 1979 and shows what has happened in the parts of the public sector where work has been put out to tender.

The City's cut in fees and commissions for privatisations since the election of the Tories in 1979 has been £407m — which includes £123m for British Gas alone.

While workers have been badly affected by the sell-offs, the top managers have benefited enormously.

The chairman of Cable and Wireless, Sir Eric Sharp, has seen his salary rise tenfold in the five years since privatisation.

The Tory story about the way the privatisation programme has increased the number of shareholders has to be seen in the context of the slice of the cake the big shareholders have.

At British Telecom, three quarters of the shareholders — 1.2 million people — own just 7.3 per cent of the shares.

At the other end of the scale, 1,313 individuals and institutions — less than 1 per cent of the shareholders — own 36 per cent of the BT shares.

Strong unionisation in the

formerly nationalised industries has resisted the destruction of pay and conditions. The exception has been British Rail hotels.

However, jobs have been lost both before and after privatisation.

British Airways staff has been cut from 53,600 to 38,900 since 1980 in preparation for its sale.

Associated British Ports have cut their workforce by a fifth since they were sold.

Pension rights have suffered, even in companies like British Airways where the sale has not yet taken place.

In the case of the contractors moving into the public sector, the impact on jobs has been massive, but for those left, conditions have worsened.

Holiday entitlement has been slashed, sick pay wiped out, and working hours altered so that employees, often women, lose any protection from employment laws and become casual labour.

The report shows the falling standards of service once the contractors move in; where performance has been monitored, it is between a third and a quarter below the specified level.

The report also shows contractors overcharging, and the way a handful of firms — almost all of which make donations to the Tory party — have come to dominate the contracts, with BET and Hawley holding 62 per cent of council cleaning contracts, 46 per cent of civil service cleaning and 53 per cent of NHS domestic service contracts.

Bridget Dixon

ROBSON'S CHOICE

THE first feature article in Radio Times this week — while rumblings about BBC management's blatant censorship of programmes gets louder by the hour — is designed as a sop for supposedly backward viewers.

It's entitled 'Taking Sides' and purports to be a background piece introducing the series *Split Screen* (Wednesday, 10 p.m., BBC2) which this week deals with sex education in schools. But it is nothing of the kind.

By underlining the 'exceptional' nature of this series, which presents programmes which are 'unashamedly partisan', the article sets out to strengthen the ideological hold on the producers and viewers alike.

The producers on this series are 'just hired hands' we are told. 'They've not had to waste any of their time ensuring balance and impartiality' (my emphasis).

The implication being, note well, that the remainder of the time BBC producers are devoting their skills to 'ensuring balance and impartiality' and that this is what responsible viewers have come to expect.

This myth, peddled by the ruling class, the corollary of which is that the BBC is independent of government, is a load of cobblers, as media analysts might admit if they were tempted to speak the truth.

Every British miner and his family, every printer, every black youth in St Paul's Bristol, knows that there is no more 'balance and impartiality' on the BBC than there is in the class struggle.

Having said that, I have to admit that on *Saturday* I will allow myself to be hijacked by the BBC at

7.25 p.m. (BBC2), a Tchaikovsky piano concerto followed by his glorious 'Pathétique' symphony.

Interesting to note that like Beethoven, with his last piano sonata, Tchaikovsky breaks with classical tradition and makes his last movement a slow one. A few days after the concerto's first performance the composer died.

Later on Saturday at 9.55 p.m. (BBC2), Robert Altman's film *Thieves Like Us* followed at 11.55 p.m. (BBC2) by Nicholas Ray's film debut *They Live by Night*.

Lie in on *Sunday*. Get up in time for *Everyman's My Father's World* at 10.10 p.m. (BBC1) which looks at the Mennonite community in central Canada.

I know of a similar community in Paraguay who tried to pick up where the expelled Jesuits left off. They didn't have much influence in spreading the good word, but they did invent a remarkable lacquer that was virtually impervious to damage.

They made artefacts of wood, machine-turned, and one of the most popular lines produced by these confirmed teetotalers was whisky 'glasses' made of quebracho, a local hardwood, which they protected with their secret lacquer or polish. I can't wait to find out what their Canadian cousins get up to.

Christopher Morahan's *After Pilkington* will be worth a look, (10.10 p.m., BBC2), which will leave you in the right frame of mind to sleep through yet another round of snooker.

On *Monday* there is *Wildlife on One* (8 p.m., BBC1), introduced by the genuinely enthusiastic and seemingly



Hope: Turkish director Yilmaz Guney's examination of social injustice

ageless David Attenborough, and *Donna* at 10.55 p.m. (C4) which looks at the women's movement in Italy.

If you want lighter fare try *Comes A Horseman* (10.30 pm, ITV) a well-made film by the director of *Kluge*.

Tuesday offers Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* (9 p.m., BBC2) adapted for television by the author and directed by David Jones, followed by a choice: the documentary *Attack on Liberty* (10.30 p.m. ITV) or *The Twentieth Century Remembered* (10.50 p.m., BBC1).

The former is an account of the Israeli attack on a US

spy ship during the Six Day War, the latter is an interview with the thoroughly discredited, ex-general secretary of the TUC who used to be plain Len Murray but in return for services rendered is now known as Lord Murray of Wapping (sorry, Epping Forest).

I will go for Len. If I cannot stand it, I will choke the telly and turn on Radio 3 to hear *Music from India* at 11 p.m., a recital by the imperishable sitar player, Nikhil Banerjee, on the first anniversary of his death.

Wednesday is no strain on eye or ear. There is little of interest aside from Yilmaz

Guney's film *Hope*, (10 pm, C4). Don't miss it.

Thursday: Computer addicts might get some useful hints from *Equinox: What They Don't Tell You When They Sell You a Computer*, 8.30 p.m. (C4), though from the title you are likely to get more than hints.

As I have already shot my bolt, I'll tune in to *Pinchas Zukerman and the ECO* in a performance of the great D Major Violin Concerto by Beethoven, 8.25 p.m. (Radio 3).

Friday offers more choice. *Arena* at 9.30 p.m. (BBC2) has a feature on Dennis Potter,

author of the *Singing Detective*, and *Conversation Piece* 11.20 p.m. (BBC2), a feature film by veteran Italian director Luchino Visconti.

At 10.30 p.m. Channel 4 presents Fritz Lang's brilliant 1944 production *The Woman in the Window* with T. G. (sic) Robinson in the leading role.

If you want to rest your eyes, try tuning in to *Barrie Keeffe's* radio play *Frozen Assets*, about a *Borstal Boy* on the run (7.30 p.m. Radio 3). ● If you want to go out, try and see *Malcolm*, a moving and thoroughly entertaining first feature from Australia — if you can find it.

DISGUST!

DISGUST was the main emotion of Caterpillar workers on sit-in duty last week.

'They promised us we were secure until 1992. In fact they said 1100 people were safe more or less indefinitely,' said AEU member John Brown.

'This is not a pit that has run out of coal or a steel mill which is running over-capacity. A former manager phoned, saying that out of 27 years on this site, Caterpillar has been profitable in 24 of them. And we are closing.'

'Of course we weren't supposed to know about this. It only leaked out in the "Financial Times".'

Jim McGuinness, an EET-PU member, said: 'Here are 1100 guys with their backs to the wall.'

Jim, believing his job secure, took out a large bank loan to pay for double glazing the day before the closure announcement.

Bathgate BMC. Now after seventeen years I am losing my job here, and my wife is being made redundant from the Black and White whisky bond at Stepps, at the same time.'

Tam Wilson said: 'Every company that comes to Scotland stays 25 years and then gets out. When we were told about this package deal "for the future", young men made mortgage and HP commitments. One young lassie took out a mortgage last week. Now they have been dumped.'



Workers guarding the occupied Caterpillar factory at Uddingston, Lanarkshire, and (below) posters at the main entrance

BACK THE SIT-IN!

BY TAM WHITE WEST OF SCOTLAND WRP

THE occupation of the Caterpillar factory at Uddingston, Lanarkshire, is the first time since the miners' strike that the bosses and the state have been challenged in such a direct manner.

An occupation means the workers are in control of the means of production. Nothing can be done without their say-so. They have thrown down the gauntlet to the bankers and the capitalist state.

The confident action of the Uddingston workers also gives the lie to the idea that the miners' strike was a decisive defeat for the working class. If that was so, how would such action be possible?

An occupation, in fact, takes the fight for jobs on to a higher plane. If the pits had been occupied and all the phoney meetings with

the NCB stopped, the NUM fight would have taken a different course.

An occupation presents an opportunity for the involvement of the community and the working-class movement. Caterpillar must become a focus for the energies of all those ready to fight this government.

The reins of the Uddingston struggle must be put in the hands of an occupation committee elected by the workers themselves. They must guard against the professional conciliators who would like to make a deal with the Tory secretary of state Malcolm Rifkind — and would be happy to see another capitalist company come in, keeping half the present work-force and giving way on trade union rights and conditions.

Reputations

This is what happened at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, where trade union officials like Jimmy Airlie built up undeserved reputations.

The Caterpillar issue must be taken up now by the whole labour movement. Its future depends on this.

My own experience at Talbot was that a decision was taken by a mass meeting in January, giving the shop stewards authority to take any action they deemed necessary to safeguard jobs against the threat of redundancies. When the notice of closure came in April, many leading stewards ran about like headless chickens, printing a weekly newspaper, and holding a series of meetings with Allan Stewart (minister at the Scottish Office).

They decided to remain undecided, while the axe hanging over their head was



being sharpened to a fine point. Not a job was saved.

This time the fight has started the right way, with an occupation. Now it must be stepped up and the whole labour movement must be brought in to it, actively. Other factories threatened with closure should be occupied and the fight linked to Uddingston. This is an ideal way to start a campaign to bring down this Tory government.

● The destruction of jobs at Caterpillar and countless other companies in the west of Scotland highlights the necessity for trades unions, the Labour Party and all working-class organisations to adopt the policy of nationalisation under workers' control — not only of the factories, but of the banks, share-dealing and swindling centres like the city of London, and insurance companies.

This is the only way in which unemployment can be stopped. A Labour government working with the so-called 'alternative economic strategy' will do nothing to challenge the power of the multi-nationals and monopolies who are devastating industry.

● The Falkirk branch of the EETPU last Monday voted full support for the Uddingston workers. Every union branch, Labour Party and shop stewards' committee should follow this example.

A worker's view

ROBERT BOYES, AEU member and a skilled turner at Caterpillar, told Workers Press:

'When our union was told about the closure, they said to the company, "let's have talks about it" — they refused even that.'

Then we held a meeting and decided to occupy. Nobody voted against, and at the next mass meeting only one hand went up against.

No choice

We had no choice. The closure was announced in a short statement, in the middle of a cold spell when many workers were not even in the factory, right at the end of one shift. There was a danger we would actually be locked out.

They said the rundown of the factory would take a year, that we would all be employed until the fair (summer holiday), and some until next New Year. We didn't trust them.

At the best of times managements don't tell the truth. And in this case they wouldn't even sit down and

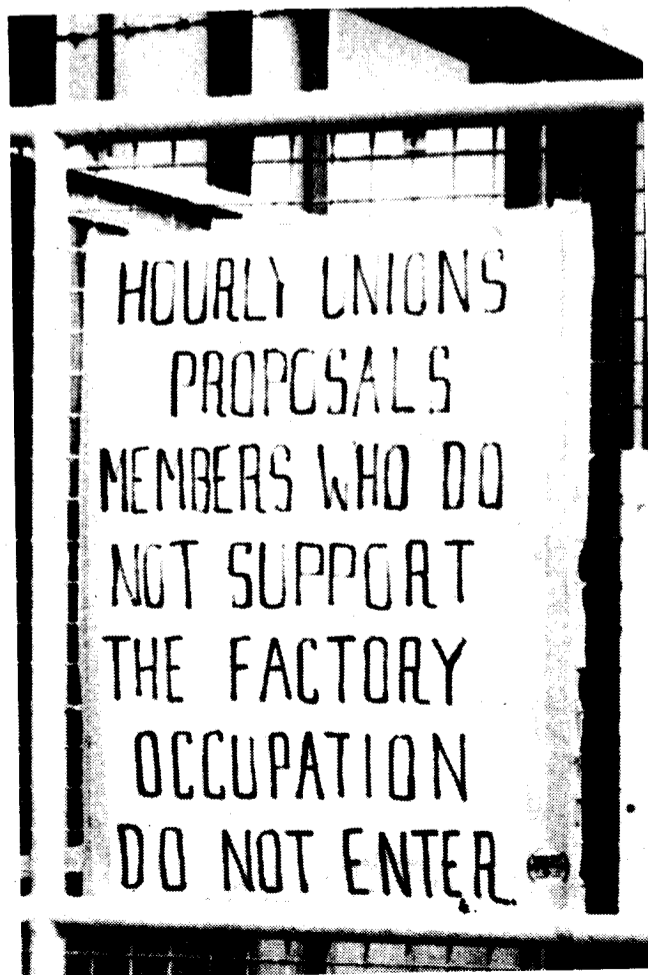
talk about it for ten minutes.

Personally I have feared this sort of thing for some time. Workers here were conned. All the normal pressures people are under, to be good timekeepers, to keep their noses clean, were doubled, because we were working for the future.

We were going to be 'the most automated of all Caterpillar's factories'; we had plaques on the wall — like they do in the Soviet countries — saying we were the 'plant of the future'; we had glossy magazines about investment. Compare all that to the reality.

I was expressing doubts about our security, and unfortunately I've been proved right. Now we have taken action. But I believe personally you can't change the system only by fighting for something when you are left with no option; you have to fight on a long-term basis — how you live, what you buy, what you vote — not just stick your foot in the dyke on occasions like this.

Closure will be devastating for me, a single man, never mind someone with a wife and family. I have been 21 years in Caterpillar. The system's not changed in that time. 9



A poster warning workers who don't support the occupation to stay away