

- STRIKES outlawed in essential services
- CLOSED SHOP — new curbs threatened

NEW ROUND OF TORY ATTACKS

OUTLAWING of strikes in essential services and further curbs on the closed shop are two of the major targets of a Tory Green Paper due to be unwrapped next month. Other proposals in the document include:

- **COMPULSORY** ballots before a union can donate money to another union in dispute. In future, unions will have to produce full accounts of such donations. This measure is inspired by the miners' strike, during which the NUM received large donations from other unions.
- **COMPULSORY** re-election of all union officials, whether or not they have voting rights on their executives. This is aimed at Arthur Scargill, who will have to stand for re-election under the terms of the Green Paper. The NUM president argues that he does not have a casting vote on the union's executive, is merely the custodian of union policy, and is therefore not liable for re-election.
- **A SCABS' CHARTER**, under which only unions directly involved in industrial action will be able to mount a picket.
- **REMOVAL** of a union's right to discipline members who scab in a strike. Fining of members who defy an instruction not to work — as the National Union of Journalists fined members who worked at News International's Wapping plant — will become illegal.
- **COMPULSORY** postal votes before all strikes and for all union posts.

IT IS understood that Thatcher is determined to introduce these proposals in the next session of parliament or put them into the Tory election manifesto.

Many employers are still not satisfied even with these measures. Last week the Institute of Directors (IoD) demanded that the Tories 'finish the job' of breaking the unions by introducing another round of legislation. The IoD wants

BY JEFF JACKSON

legally binding job contracts and the outlawing of strikes in the public sector.

In a lecture last week to Warwick University's School of Industrial and Business Studies, former IoD policy strategist Graham Mather denounced proposals for the re-jigging of union rules as inadequate and fruitless. Mather, soon to become director of the right-wing Institute of Economic Affairs, wants watertight employment contracts erasing any prospect of 'jobs for life'.

'Woolly job descriptions and out-of-date, imprecise terms and conditions of employment lead to disputes, underachievement and a mis-match of skills to the needs of businesses', said Mather.

'The recent dispute at British Telecom and the threat of another teachers' strike show just how necessary it is to provide a legal framework to support the use of procedure agreements as a substitute for the strike weapon', said Judith Chaplin, head of the IoD policy unit.

What lies behind these measures, the fourth set of anti-union laws proposed by the Tories since 1979?

UNDOUBTEDLY it is the strength of the working class, which all the Tories' efforts — including anti-union legislation, government spending cuts, and attacks on local government — have failed to undermine.

The cowardly betrayal of the Wapping struggle and the failure of trade union leaders — with the notable exception of Arthur Scargill — to fight the Tory government over the last seven years have encouraged the employers and Thatcher to prepare these further steps against the trade union movement. The more the TUC and labour leaders crawl before Thatcher, the more blood she demands.

The unbroken resistance of the working class, now expressed in the rising tide of strikes in the coal industry, comes in the midst of a serious deterioration in the British economy. Despite all the pre-election talk of tax cuts for the middle class in the coming Lawson budget, the reality is that British capitalism faces an acute balance of payments and sterling crisis in 1987.

Workers Press said that the miners' strike, far from being defeated, marked the opening of a new round of struggles, in Britain and internationally. We insisted that the miners had been forced to return to work because of a lack of leadership in the working class as a whole.

The union leaders' capitulation in the Wapping struggle was a lesson for the entire working class. In the face of an onslaught from the capitalist state these leaders proved before all workers that they cannot defend the most elementary interests of the working class.

We have every confidence that in these new struggles a new revolutionary leadership can be built in the working class.

Tamil refugees' lives at stake

HOME OFFICE Minister David Waddington is back in the limelight this week — determined to throw out 64 Tamil refugees seeking political asylum in Britain.

To discredit the Tamils, Waddington spoke of an organised attempt by racketeers to secure admission to Britain by fraudulent means. The Tamils, fleeing genocide in Sri Lanka, arrived with forged passports or with none.

Another Tory Minister, Michael Morris, suggested it was time to look at the cases of the 1,800 Tamils who claimed refugee status in Britain and would be 'perfectly welcome to return to Sri Lanka' — where Jayawardene's troops, trained by the British SAS, have already butchered thousands of Tamils.

BY VICTOR STOCKPOLE

The 64 Tamils only managed to stay in Britain by staging a protest — stripping off their clothes and creating a fuss on the aircraft which they were forced to board.

The High Court 'ordered' the Government not to deport 58 of the Tamils until Monday, when it will hear an application for a judicial review of the Home Office decision to expel them.

The right of workers to enter any country they see fit is not a question for ruling-class courts to pass judgment on. It is the right of all workers to travel anywhere they wish. This should be fought for by all who support the right of freedom of association and movement.

The Tories have only stepped up the deportation campaign, with which the Labour party leaders were and still are in agreement — especially when those deported happen to be black.

● SEE Sri Lanka war — page 7



A 30-strong picket was held outside Downing Street last Wednesday evening demanding Free the Framed Irish Prisoners. The hour-long picket was vociferous in its demands:

- Immediate release of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six

- Clear the names of the Maguire family, Pat O'Neill, Sean Smyth and the late Giuseppe Conlon

- For a public inquiry into all these cases

Messages of support from Maire O'Shea and from Phil Penn (presently serving four months in Wormwood

Scrubs) were read out. Groups supporting the picket were: the Workers Revolutionary Party/Workers Press, Workers Power, Fight Racism Fight Imperialism, Irish Freedom Movement, City of London Anti Apartheid Group, The Irish Prisoners of War Committee, plus a number of individuals.

PHIL PENN BENEFIT

SATURDAY 7 MARCH 1987 7.30-12p.m.

Lambeth Social Club, Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill, London SW9

Cabaret, Dancing, Disco, Food, Drink

Tickets £3 (£1 unwaged)

From Paperbacks Centres:

10-12 Atlantic Road, London SW9. Tel: 01-274 8342

or from

WRP, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS. Tel: 01-274 7271

Workers Press

They're coming back!

THOSE sections of the ruling class who hoped that the miners had been 'seen off' when they went back to work in 1985 after a year-long struggle against the Coal Board and the state must surely be re-considering matters.

This is certainly true of British Coal. The February edition of 'Coal News' complains bitterly that 'strikes in coal mining are running at levels far higher than the rest of British industry'. In the first ten months of last year the coal industry lost more than eight times as many working days through strikes than the rest of British industry, complains 'Coal News'. In the first three quarters of 1986/87, 0.75 million tonnes of coal was lost through industrial disputes.

For the whole of last week the 3,000 miners at Selby in North Yorkshire struck in support of the Whitemoor pit whose weekly bonus was stopped after a one-day walk-out in protest at the visit to the pit by a local British Coal official. These actions come after a series of strikes in the Durham coalfield at the end of last year. Anger is now mounting at the Board's efforts to introduce new bonus schemes, a six-day working week and another round of pit closures.

This same mood amongst miners is expressed in the desertion of thousands from the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) and their return to the National Union of Mineworkers. Up to 200 Notts colliery engine winding men are the latest in the exodus. They are expected to join the NUM's white collar section, COSA. Over 5,000 Notts miners are now back in the NUM. In the past week a further 22 miners in South Derbyshire defected from the UDM and rejoined the national union. The jobs of the Notts engine winders are threatened by the Coal Board's decision to slash another 1,500 jobs in Nottinghamshire by the end of March.

NUM President Arthur Scargill said last week: 'I welcome this substantial number of winding engine men back into the NUM. They will be fully supported by our union. All mine-workers belong together in one national union, the NUM, fighting for wages, conditions and jobs'.

Despite the orchestrated support from the capitalist courts and the press, despite the cowardly failure of the trade union and labour leadership to take action against Link and Prendergast, the UDM never got off the ground. The contrast with the Spencer union after the defeat of the 1926 General Strike could hardly be starker. The scab union lasted for over a decade and retained significant support throughout the coalfield for much of the period.

The fact that the break-away UDM appears to be on the point of crumbling less than two years after its formation indicates once more that the miners were not decisively defeated in their year-long strike.

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill is now the object of an all-out attack from both the state and the Euro-Stalinists in the union. The Communist Party are campaigning against the election of Sammy Thompson as union vice-president because he is a Scargill supporter. They are in favour of reconciliation with the UDM, a policy to which Scargill is bitterly and rightly opposed. This attempt to kiss and make up with UDM leaders is exactly the same policy as that of the TUC which refuses to expel the EETPU for their scab-herding activities at Wapping.

That such decisive political questions have been opened up in the NUM reveals that the possibility of building a strong revolutionary movement amongst miners remains as great as ever.

Dean sheds some crocodile tears

IN the latest edition of the SOGAT union journal, general secretary Brenda Dean writes an editorial on behalf of the CBI, or so it seems.

'In this issue', she says, 'we feature some important facts and figures on the way the general print area, in which the majority of SOGAT's members are employed, has become better managed and organised to compete internationally.'

'But we can do much better from a sound home base and that is why I welcome the BPIF campaign "Print in Britain" to try and claw back lost business.'

Further on she says: 'If any of our members see work going abroad which should be done here, ask management the reason. And urge them to try and bid for the job.'

'This particularly applies, as I mentioned recently, to colour printing like the Automobile Association's maps and the mail order catalogues.'

If Dean is so worried about the loss of jobs for her members, why did she abandon

COMMENT BY A FLEET STREET PRINTWORKER

those on strike at Wapping?

Her touching response will not wash with SOGAT members, who have now got nothing from a whole year of fighting for their jobs.

In the same article Dean welcomes the fact that a leading Finnish papermaking company wants to build a \$215 million paper mill at Irvine in Ayrshire. But why doesn't Dean worry about the Finnish trade unionists who will lose jobs if the company comes to Britain?

Dean's bleatings should greatly please the management at Express Newspapers, who have just sent out a circular to all staff informing them about the new

promotional campaign for the 'Daily Express', 'Star', and 'Sunday Express'.

'Naturally we must all do our bit to ensure the success of this campaign,' says the circular.

'You can play a part by letting us know of any instance where you find any of our titles off sale. Whenever this happens will you please write to me giving the name and address of the retail point, the particular title which was off sale, the date and time on which that paper was unavailable and the approximate availability of rival papers.'

The circular points out

that the company does have its own fully paid-up sales representatives, but the task of looking at every single retail shop around the country is an enormous job. So every employee is expected to become an unpaid salesperson.

By welcoming a campaign for printing to be done in Britain, Brenda Dean is playing right into the hands of people like Murdoch and Maxwell.

The answer is not to plead with the class enemy but to organise ourselves politically to defend our members under attack.

If that means getting rid of class traitors in the unions and labour movement, so be it.

The sacked News International printworkers wanted to fight until Murdoch had been beaten. The union leaders betrayed them. Dean's treachery and Little Englander approach go hand in hand.

This is something the printers will never forget.

What did the police do to Trevor Monerville?

THE FAMILY of 19-year-old Trevor Monerville are fighting for a public inquiry into the terrible events that led up to Trevor being admitted to hospital with brain damage caused by brutal and vicious blows.

Trevor was arrested on New Year's Day and taken to Stoke Newington police station. He was kept there for three days without his family being told — though they visited the station more than once.

Each time they were made to believe that police had no information about Trevor.

In fact he was either in one

of their cells or being transported by them to and from hospital.

Only through the persistence of Trevor's father did the family eventually find their son.

Not only has he suffered brain damage, he is also paralysed on one side of his body. And his speech has been affected.

At one point six policemen were used just to take Trevor's fingerprints.

Members of his family said that when he was taken to Brixton prison the warders destroyed some of his clothing. The family want to know why.

The police have dropped all charges against Trevor

and are holding an internal police inquiry after the family lodged a formal complaint to the Police Complaints Authority (PCA).

The family are now refusing to give information to the PCA, and have withdrawn the complaint, because they have absolutely no confidence in any inquiry conducted by the police.

Stoke Newington police have been involved in many similar incidents in which black people have been hospitalised after contact with the police.

A public meeting at Hackney Town Hall on Wednesday discussed the campaign on the Trevor Monerville case.

SHARPEVILLE REMEMBERED

BY A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

THE Pan Africanist Congress is to commemorate the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre with a rally in London's Conway Hall on 20 March.

The shootings, on 21 March 1960, took place after the PAC organised a powerful movement against the pass laws.

This was a year after Robert Sobukwe and others had broken away from the African National Congress in opposition to its 'multi-racialism' and formed the PAC, with African nationalism and the struggle for the repossession of the land by the indigenous people as its driving force.

The PAC is calling for all those who support the liberation struggle to join with them in this commemoration and to raise the demand for the release from jail of its president, Zephania Mothopeng.

Aged 73, Mothopeng is serving 30 years and his health is deteriorating. The PAC is demanding his release so that he can go abroad for medical treatment. Like Nelson Mandela, Mothopeng last year refused

to win his release by renouncing 'violence'.

In Britain, as in many parts of the world, the PAC has had to fight to make its voice heard in the labour and anti-apartheid movements. At last year's annual general meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Movement the PAC representative had to fight for his right to speak.

The AAM, despite its proclaimed support for all South African liberation movements, fights tooth and nail to maintain the ANC as the only voice of the struggle.

This sectarianism was continued at this year's AGM, where an amendment from the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group calling for support for all South African trade unions opposing apartheid was defeated.

This was despite the formation last October of a new trade union federation with 350,000 members, following a merger of the black Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) and the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU).

Joe Thole, from the media workers, told the founding

conference that the two tendencies — non-racialism and black consciousness — were beginning to speak the same language. It was also made clear that while whites could join at grassroots level there was no room for white liberals in the leadership.

This attack, conscious or unconscious, on the policy of the South African Communist Party ensures the hostility of the Moscow bureaucracy and its followers in the AAM in Britain.

The City of London Group told the AGM that it supported all the liberation movements unconditionally because it supported the struggles of all those fighting apartheid.

STUDENTS MARCH TO DEFEND GRANTS

BY JOHN OWEN

OVER 2,000 students marched through Liverpool as part of a 24-hour shutdown action demanding grants and not loans.

The students are opposing Tory attempts to introduce into higher education a 'loans' system which would deprive working-class students of the right to higher education. More action is to follow.

At a rally at Pierhead, addressed by Militant supporter and Liverpool councillor Tony Mulhearn, a representative of NALGO strikers was refused permission to speak by the supporters of Militant — even though 1,000 social services workers are on strike against cuts in services.

Link

The need to link all these struggles against the Tories must come before political differences between parties on the left.

There is an urgent need to forge all these struggles into a mass movement, to force Thatcher from office and bring down the Tory government.

This raises the serious question of strategy and tactics to defeat the Tories.

The French students' struggle, which flowed into the railway workers' strike, shows how important it is to develop an international strategy for the overthrow of capitalism.

Workers Revolutionary Party SOUTH EAST LONDON BRANCH PUBLIC MEETING

The Role of the Revolutionary Paper
Tuesday 24 February 7.30p.m.
Deptford Town Hall

Speakers: David Bruce (WRP Central Committee)
Alan Clark (Sogat 82)
Danny Chapman (NCU) Chairman
(last two in a personal capacity)

WAPPING

RESIDENTS' FIGHT GOES ON

BY PETER RICKARD AND TONY GODFREY

WAPPING residents, supported by printers, marched down their streets last Saturday to demand an end to Murdoch's juggernauts and a public inquiry into how these vehicles had been allowed to kill a local youth, 19-year-old Michael Delaney, earlier this year.

Dean and Dubbins may have turned their backs on the struggle against News International, but this demonstration of 800 showed that the local residents have no place for Murdoch in their community.

A letter of protest from Tower Hamlets Print Workers' Support Group was to have told Murdoch:

‘A strike is over but the struggle of our working class continues. We do not expect you to even begin to understand that struggle, but we would point out that it is rooted in the economic realities of our society, namely that individuals like you rip off the social wealth produced by us.

We tell you that we will not tolerate the juggernauts of death — the TNT lorries. We will not tolerate a scab labour force in our East End. We will use all the strength in our possession to expose your role and that of the police in the death of Michael Delaney, the violence used against striking print workers, and the attack on working-class rights.

There is no victory for you or your class because we do not accept defeat.

OUR DAY WILL COME!

Since the lines of ‘paper boys’ (as police are known locally) prevented anyone getting near Rupert's Room, a street meeting was organised at which speakers pledged their support and the organisers promised that this was not the end of the campaign as far as they were concerned.

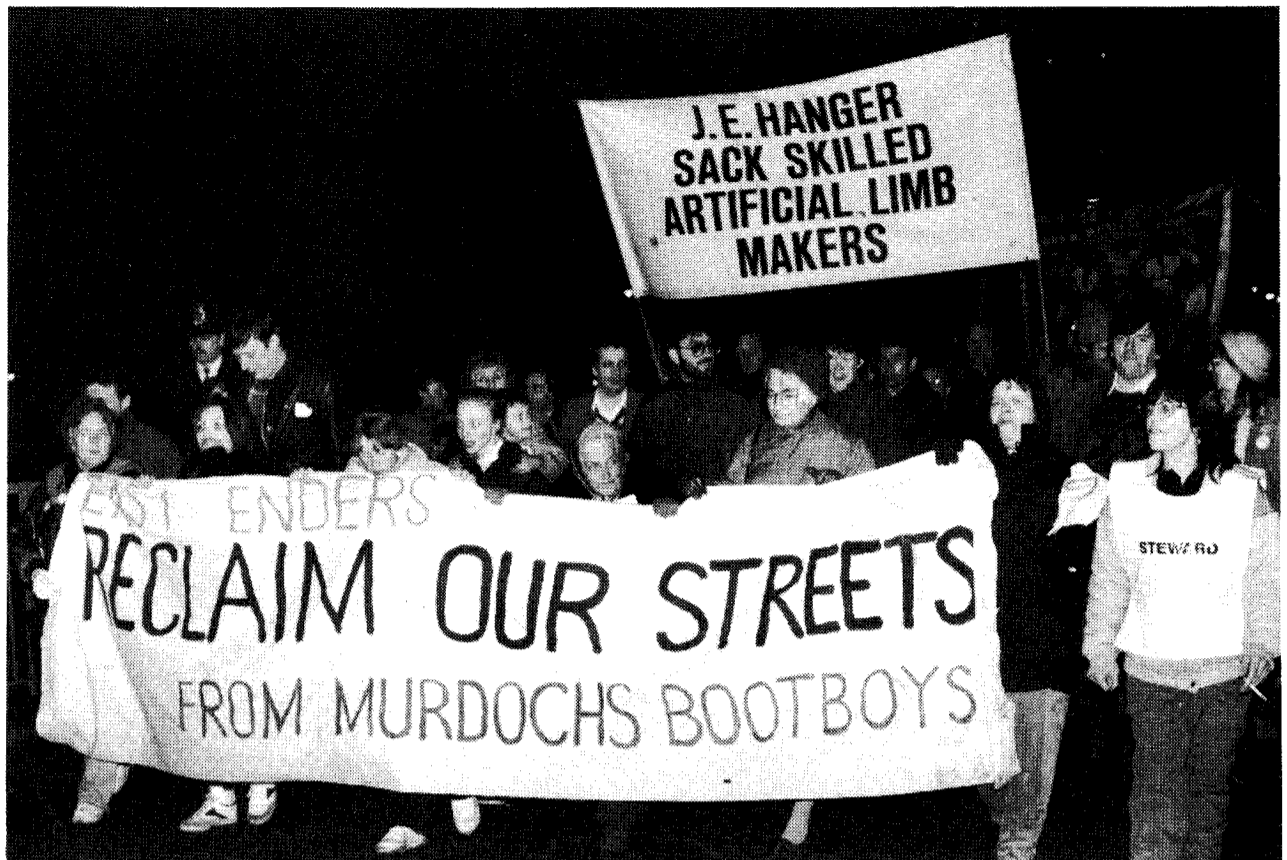
It was decided that, since the letter could not be delivered, it would be burnt instead. The honour of doing so was given to a local resident, 80-year-old Mary Dieters, who had been at the front of the march all the way with the rest of her family.

But Mary had other ideas about what to do with the letter and, when John Rees gave it to her after reading it out, she headed straight for the police lines and tried to force her way through in a defiant attempt to deliver it! Mary finally gave up, but only when the blazing letter was burning her fingers.

Asked what he hoped had been achieved, John Rees replied: ‘The tenants are ending this phase of the struggle with a defiant demonstration against Murdoch. Even though the print unions have betrayed the strike, the struggle will go on.’

The support group would function in future as a ‘Workers’ Support Group’, he added.

The final words of the evening came from Betty Primrose, still with buckets on her arm. Loudly and sarcastically, she shouted at the police: ‘That's the end of your overtime for a while — you'll have to go back to beating the wife at night.’



The Wapping residents' banner leads the march



Mary Dieters, 80, insists that the ‘paper boys’ let her take a letter through to Murdoch



Finally, the letter is triumphantly burnt

**RELEASE
JAILED
TRADE
UNIONISTS**

5 WALES MINERS

DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale — Eight year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester

RUSSELL SHANKLAND: Taff Merthyr — Eight year sentence. Gartree maximum

security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester

DURHAM MINERS

GARY BLACKMORE: Murton — Two year Youth Custody from December 1985

MICHAEL STEPHENSON: Wearmouth — Three years from June 1986. RF8756 HM Prison Acklington, Morpeth, Northumbria

JOHN MATTERSON: Murton — Two years, three months Youth Custody from December 1985

PRINTER

MIKE HICKS, SQGAT NEC, Imperial FoC London Wholesalers — Four months plus eight months suspended. Camp Hill jail, Isle of Wight, from December 5 1986.

THE TEACHERS' FIGHT Build a national teachers' movement

TEACHERS must vote in the current ballots for industrial action against the 'Baker Bill'.

This oppressive legislation is just completing its passage through parliament. It will remove the right of teachers to negotiate nationally and gives power to the Secretary of State for Education to impose a 'settlement' — determining both wages and conditions of service.

Having seen the pathetic opposition offered by the right-wing leadership of the National Union of Teachers to Baker, the membership of both the NUT and the schoolmasters'/women's union (NAS/UWT) must wonder what sort of fight is really being proposed.

The NUT line was to lobby the House of Lords. Union members were supposed to write to their House of Lords(!)

Much reliance was placed on the 'democratic' Tory Lords who were supposed to rise up and defeat the Thatcherite proposals in alliance with such other peers as Lord Murray of Epping Forest (one wonders if he enjoys hunting rights) and assorted bishops as well as various enlightened democrats!

These proposals were met with gales of laughter in

staff rooms across the nation and of course did absolutely nothing to defeat, or in any real way amend, this reactionary law.

For over two years teachers have been engaged in a struggle which began over wages, spread to conditions of service and now clearly and rapidly emerges as a struggle against the state.

Opposed

What has also become clear is that the leadership of the teachers' unions — and most notably that of the NUT (the largest and most progressive) — is not only incapable of leading a successful struggle but is positively opposed to it.

They have sold out over the new GCSE exams. The ACAS deal sold out conditions of service and salaries.

They have disciplined those in London who initiated industrial action against Baker.

They are only prepared to lead opposition to Baker now because not to do something would mean an immediate revolt in the union's membership.

They lead the opposition now in order to sell out later. There can be no illusions that simple militant action in the ranks can either keep the executive in line or be a substitute for the executive.

Similarly the role of the left on the national executive must be to lead a fight against the right, to expose it and remove it, not to put pressure on the right to change their minds. The fight against Baker proceeds hand in hand with the fight to throw out the present leadership.

There is a real need to

COMMENT BY MICK KING

develop a nationally-based movement to organise the defeat of this leadership.

During the dispute some local associations (branches) of the NUT set up the Local Association Pay Action Conference (LAPAC). At its last conference on 31 January there were 81 delegates from 35 associations, plus many observers.

It extended its work from pay alone to pay, conditions and union democracy.

LAPAC clearly represents a big opportunity to build a national movement in the NUT, which is why the leadership is trying hard to close it down.

The two largest organised groups within the left of the union are Socialist Action and the Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Party having long ago fused with the right wing.

Bernie Regan of Socialist

Action (a member of the national executive) has been in the forefront of opposing the sell-outs of the leadership but seems to hold a view that pressure will force the executive to fight.

He opposed the direct call in the constitution of LAPAC that it fight to build the alternative leadership in the NUT.

Confidence

He places his confidence in the Socialist Teacher Alliance (STA) which, while it has grown, is mostly based in London with some pockets elsewhere. It is clearly not the sort of national organisation that LAPAC could become.

The Socialist Workers Party also operate in the STA. The politics of this group are dominated by rank-and-fileism. They vigorously

oppose any conception of developing a political strategy in the struggle to defeat the right wing.

They agree with Regan that LAPAC should not strive to become the alternative leadership. Their work-erism took the bizarre form of urging support for the reinstatement of Brent head teacher McGoldrick, suspended by the Inner London Education Authority following an alleged racist comment.

They were the only group on the left who sided with the right wing and Communist Party leadership on this question.

They are currently engaged in a vicious campaign to denounce political opponents as right-wingers because people such as Ian Murch (National Executive, Yorkshire) disagree with their work-erist tail-ending.

Just as the role of the right wing becomes clear, so the political differences on the left emerge.

● Vote for action against Baker.

● Build LAPAC.

● No Slanders — Open discussion to enable a real alternative leadership to be built.

BUS WORKERS MAY STRIKE AGAINST PRIVATISATION



The brand new Plumstead bus garage . . . to be closed down with privatisation?

ROD GOODWIN, T&GWU branch secretary at Plumstead bus garage in south-east London, says workers there might have to take strike action to stop London Regional Transport (LRT) 'reorganising' bus routes.

The real reason LRT want to carve up the routes is to make them into smaller units, which would be more attractive to private operators. Privatisation would also mean a drop in safety standards, Goodwin warns.

'All routes from this gar-

BY ALAN CLARK

age will go out to tender, and the private operators will win because they will not be using the bus garages but sites,' he told Workers Press.

Under Thatcher's instructions, LRT will push ahead with its privatisation plans for bus garages in London.

Cowboy operators will have no proper safety procedures for their buses as many of them will operate from derelict sites and not organised union garages, where safety procedures are usually high.

'Management have not yet talked to the union about these proposed changes,' said Goodwin. 'They have informed the workforce that they want to meet them at

specially convened meetings to put over their points.

'This is obviously to persuade them that privatisation of their routes might mean cutbacks and/or wage cuts if LRT want to compete with the private tenders.'

Goodwin says Plumstead bus garage has had no disputes, but he now feels that 'to publicise the real reasons why LRT want to change bus routes we might have to withdraw our services'.

Plumstead bus garage is a brand new all-purpose modern building with good high-standard working amenities for the staff — and, as Goodwin said, 'the GLC spent millions of ratepayers' money on the building, for what? So that it could be closed down and the efficient bus routes withdrawn?'

UCATT members fight corruption

WIDESPREAD corruption within UCATT was exposed at a 'Defend UCATT Democracy' meeting last Saturday, attended by over 30 members of the union from London and Durham.

Victimised London regional organiser Dominic Hehir said none of the officers from the seven Irish branches found guilty of ballot-rigging had been charged.

Yet he himself had been banned from union office for ten years for circulating a letter to London branches detailing these and other abuses.

The union had engaged David Felton, labour editor of the 'Independent', to produce a report of the biennial conference for the union journal, 'UCATT Viewpoint'.

Yet the report had been consigned to the dustbin because it reported fairly on the defeats suffered by the executive on the questions of merging with the EETPU, ballot-rigging, and accepting government money for secret ballots.

Even the detailed report to the members on the conference was missing.

General secretary Albert Williams was acting dictatorially, and branches should write in to demand these reports.

After instancing other cases of alleged corruption — actions for which there was no provision in union rules — Hehir said executive members were now saying at shop stewards' courses that elections must be done away with and that officials must be appointed from now on to stop the 'loony left' from taking over the union.

Hehir said he was not accepting his own five-year ban, since new evidence had been introduced at the appeal contrary to rule, and members ineligible under rule to sit on the appeal had done so. The appeal had been held up for 11 months to allow this.

Tony O'Brien, convenor Southwark DLO, said

BY GERRY DOWNING

UCATT had always had a bureaucratic leadership. A Labour government had collaborated with that leadership to make the 'Lump' almost unstoppable.

Reg Freeson, a Labour housing minister, had initiated the Planning and Land act now being used to privatise council services.

So the two worst attacks on the union had come from Labour government collaboration with UCATT leaders.

There was open collaboration between so-called 'lefts' and right-wingers in the union. The right-wing only stayed in power by bureaucratic manoeuvring.

Brian Higgins, secretary of the building workers' group, spoke of the corruption in the EETPU and the T&GWU. He outlined a series of disputes, sold out by the leadership, where union policy was fought for.

Jack Henry had sold out the Crouch dispute in Croydon, where two UCATT members had been left badly injured following an attack from a hod-wielding subcontractor.

The Laing dispute was sold out by UCATT officials and by Peter Kavanagh and Pat

O'Neill of the T&GWU. The Tarmac dispute at Wapping was betrayed. And now at the McCarty and Stone dispute union officials were hiding from the picket and coming in disguise!

Dave Ayres, of Crook branch in Durham, said a previous general secretary had connived to get Des Warren jailed.

Peter Hansen, of the same branch, pointed out that the 'well-organised broad left', favoured by John O'Brien, prospective parliamentary candidate for Bermondsey in his earlier speech, was simply an electoral machine.

The meeting decided to set up a steering committee to draft the necessary rule changes to democratise the union in preparation for the 1988 meeting of the rules revision committee.

● Those present were urged to picket Sutton Magistrates' Court, Wallington, at 9.30a.m. on Wednesday 4 March, when a member of the building workers' group will be in court for picketing the McCarty and Stone site in Sutton.

● The meeting voted unanimously to condemn the role of the Healy/Torrance 'rump' in acting as police marks in the jailing of Phil Penn.

Commemoration — after 155 years

FOUR cotton workers killed in Preston in 1842 are to be commemorated at last. An appeal has been launched to raise £40,000 to establish a memorial to them.

The labour movement is being asked for financial support.

The appeal's slogan is 'The Lancashire Cotton Workers' Struggle — Read and be

Damned'. The memorial will honour all those workers who have been or are in struggle with ruthless employers.

● For further information contact Peter Ward, 2 Pool House Lane, Ingol, Preston. PR2 7DQ. Tel. 0772-723318 or 54722 ext 55044.

11th ANNIVERSARY OF FRANK STAGG'S DEATH

Repatriate Republican prisoners — say pickets

TWO HUNDRED people joined a picket of Wakefield Prison (below right) last Sunday to demand the repatriation of Irish Republican prisoners to Irish jails.

'We went to show solidarity with all Irish Republican political prisoners — and particularly Hugh Doherty, who has been given six months solitary confinement for attempting to make a rooftop protest,' said one of the organisers.

Doherty is serving a life sentence at Wakefield; another Republican prisoner, Natalia Vella, is doing 15 years there.

The picket, supported by the Kevin Barry Republican Flute Band (above right) from Glasgow and delegations from Manchester and Birmingham, marked the 11th anniversary of the death by hunger strike of IRA Volunteer Frank Stagg.

Convicted on conspiracy charges in 1973 at the height of a savage anti-Irish press witch-hunt, Stagg and others of the 'Coventry Seven' were to serve ten years. At Albany Prison Stagg was put in solit-

ary confinement, after refusing to do prison work on the grounds that he was a political prisoner.

In April 1974 he began a hunger strike with Michael Gaughan and other Republican prisoners, demanding educational facilities, the right not to do prison work, a pledge that he would not be put back into solitary, and the setting of a reasonable date for transfer to a prison in Ireland.

Gaughan died on that hunger strike after being subjected to horrific force-feeding torture. Stagg was ordered off it, after 70 days, by Republican leaders. He made further protests and began his fourth, and last hunger strike in December 1975 and died in January 1976.

The British state showed its enduring hatred for Ireland by refusing Stagg's wishes to be buried alongside Gaughan in the Republican plot of a cemetery in Ballina, County Mayo.

When his body arrived back in Ireland it was snatched by the 26 Counties' secret police. In conjunction with the British they placed it in a specially dug grave and covered it with a 3-foot concrete slab.

A 10,000-strong Republican demonstration at the grave, staged the following day, heard a forecast that Stagg's

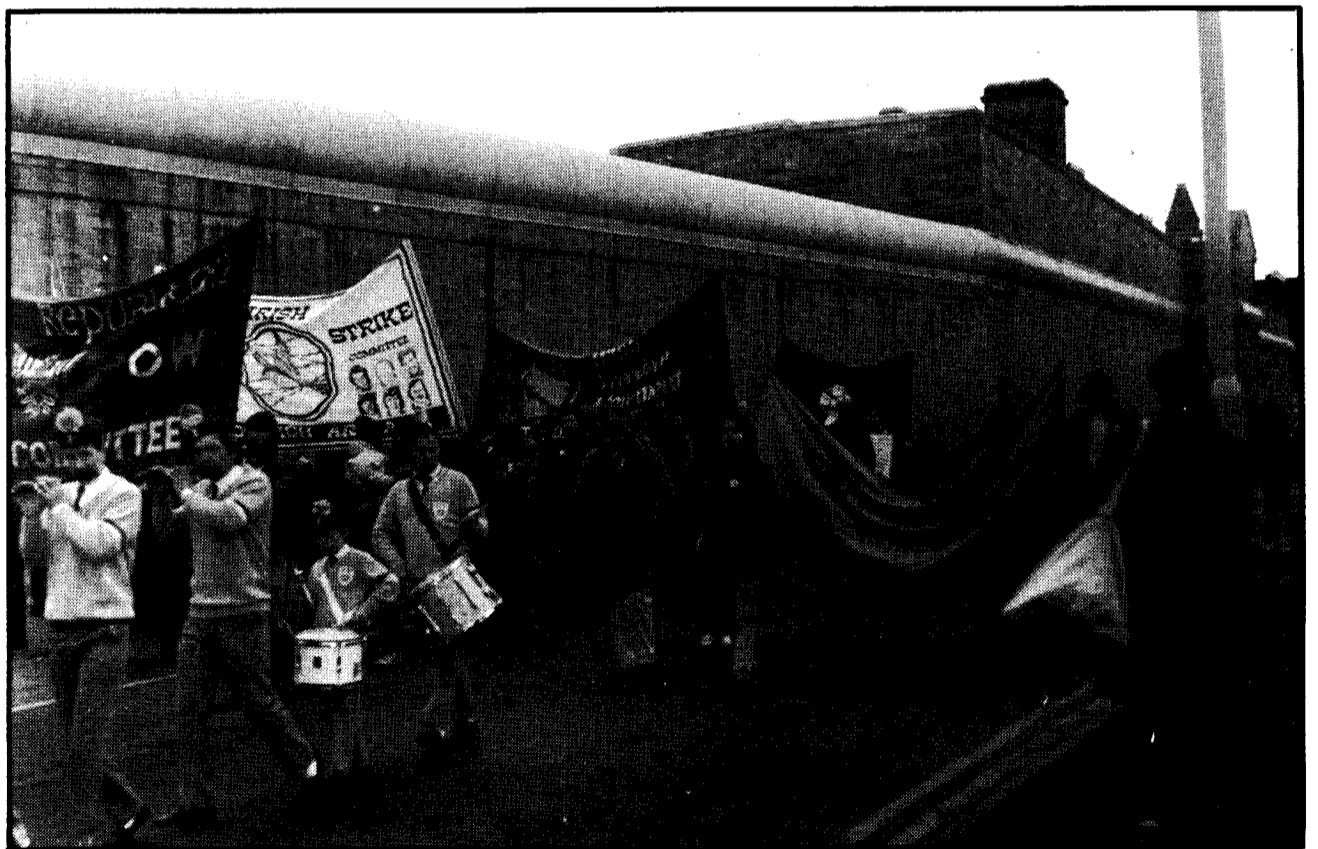
last wishes would be granted. In November 1977 he was reburied at Ballina by the IRA with full military honours.

● Republican prisoner John McComb, serving 17 years at Long Lartin, fears permanent damage to a broken hand for which prison authorities have refused proper treatment. Three weeks after the injury, the only medical help he has been given is a bandage.

McComb broke his hand in a fight in a prison gym, when he stepped in to defend a Palestinian prisoner from an apparently racist attack. He lost 28 days remission and was given seven days in solitary confinement.

Prison doctors confirmed several bones in the hand were broken. Specialist attention was promised and did not arrive.

Leaving such injuries untreated is torture. This scandalous affair, like strip-searching, should be raised throughout the British Labour movement.



REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989.
EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN McCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715.
ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576.
PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575.

PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence, 879225.
PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603.
GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882.
PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532.
TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636.
NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644.

ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES:
SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661.
SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418.

GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicestershire Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP
RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799.
STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence, 758663.
JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635.
ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083.

FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085

BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662.
PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034.
CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662.
EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ
PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888.
BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380.
PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881.

WORMWOOD SCRUBS

HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE
DONAL CRAIG: 4 years.

DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.
VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.

REMAND PRISONERS:

BRIXTON

HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.
MICHAEL J McKENNEY: L46486
G. (DANNY) McNAMEE: L48616

WORMWOOD SCRUBS

LIAM QUINN: L49930

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire
PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree.

PAUL HILL: 462778, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.

JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.

HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree.

JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.

BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland.

RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.

They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.

We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.

Irish councillor detained in Liverpool

BY JOHN OWEN

THOMAS MAGUIRE, a Sinn Fein councillor for Fermanagh, was detained by Special Branch police at Liverpool last week under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

He and seven other Irish-language activists were detained just before they were due to meet local councillors and a solicitor.

When it was found out where Maguire was being detained, the Revolutionary Communist Party organised a lobby of the Brideswell police station to call for his release and protest against the use of the racist PTA laws.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd last weekend gave the police a 48-hour extension of their detention warrant.

SECRECY ON S.A.S. KILLINGS

A CORONER, a British Ministry of Defence Counsel, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary made desperate attempts to cover up for the Special Air Services killer at a north of Ireland inquest last week.

'A veil of secrecy is being drawn over the activities of the SAS in Strabane,' said Sinn Fein spokesman Martin McGuinness of the inquest, into the deaths of IRA Volunteers Charles Breslin, David Devine and Michael Divine.

The three were gunned down on 23 February 1985 by soldiers dressed in civilian clothes, travelling in unmarked cars — and armed to the teeth with Heckler and Koch sub-machine guns and Browning pistols.

Strabane Court House has been turned into an armed camp swarming with uni-

formed armed RUC men. A handful of people were allowed into the public gallery, only to find themselves surrounded by CID officers noting their every movement and conversations.

Blatant intimidation has been directed at the legal representatives of the dead men's families. Solicitor John Fahy was knocked to the ground by four RUC men, who snatched photographic evidence and eye-witness statements from him.

Inside the inquest, coroner Ronald Doherty has ruled that no notes may be taken — after RUC Chief Inspector Cowsley violently seized a notebook from Catriona Breslin, sister of Charles Breslin.

Counsel for the families face a wall of silence about details of the killing. Three

British soldiers, identified only as 'Soldiers D, E and F', and their commanding officer 'Soldier G', gave evidence that they were acting as mobile back-up for a supposedly 'routine' foot patrol.

But two of the soldiers have been recognised, and identified as SAS men who gave evidence to last December's Derry inquest into the deaths of IRA Volunteers Danny Doherty and Willie Fleming.

The soldiers refused to answer questions on this, and refused to name their regiment. Their counsel's objection that this line of questioning was 'irrelevant' was upheld by the judge.

'Soldier D' stated that the patrol had been 'briefed for an operation' in Ebrington Barracks Derry, before the shooting.

CIA airline under attack

FROM A CALIFORNIA CORRESPONDENT

TRADE unionists at the Oakland Airport, California, are organising to shut down the CIA airline Southern Air Transport (SAT).

The airline has been involved in CIA covert operations worldwide including Nicaragua, where Eugene Hasenfus was shot down in a SAT plane while delivering supplies to the Contras.

SAT has also supplied Iran with arms as well as the CIA-backed organisation UNITA in Angola. It has been involved in drug-trafficking, taking arms to the Contras and returning to the US with cocaine.

As a result of contracts with the CIA and the military worth hundreds of millions of dollars, SAT has become a major cargo carrier with buses throughout the US.

One of its biggest bases is at the Oakland Airport. It has a hangar and does maintenance on its planes as well as picking up bombs and machine-guns at Thavis airforce base.

A new committee, the Contragate Action Committee, has called a march on February 28 to 'Shut the CIA airline down'.

The committee, which has been meeting weekly, has

● **THE ST. LUCIA government says it is making enquiries about the US-owned St. Lucia Airways, which has been linked with CIA arms flights to Iran and to South African-backed Unita forces in Angola.**

A St. Lucia Airways Boeing 707 flew former Reagan security aide Robert McFarlane last May on his journey to secret talks with the Iranian regime. Although registered on the Caribbean island, St. Lucia Airways is run from offices in Port Charlotte, Florida.

SOUTH AFRICA'S 'DISAPPEARED'

A COMMITTEE for support to detainees under South Africa's 'emergency' is trying to find out the fate of people who have disappeared.

About 40 people from Chesterville township in Natal disappeared a few weeks ago.

Police have confirmed since then that they are holding three of them. But the Durban Detainees' Support Committee and lawyers for the families of missing persons say they have names of 18 people they believe are being detained.

Some people were picked up in police raids on Chesterville two weeks ago and others were reportedly captured at the border while trying to escape into Swaziland.

Lawyers have asked the Commissioner of Police to confirm details of all persons held, where they are held, and under what regulations.

It is thought some people may have gone into hiding, or succeeded in getting across the border.

Altogether nearly 30,000 people — including children — were detained in the past

won the support of Oakland airport workers and their unions who also want to see the airline shut.

Steve Wilensky, business agent of Service Employees International Union local (branch) 790, and John Martin, secretary-treasurer of Hotel and Restaurant Employees local 28, have both endorsed the march

Their two unions represent hundreds of workers at the airport and they are now seeking to win the support of the Alameda Labour Council AFL-CIO.

The Contragate Action Committee has also included in the march demands an end to the Port of Oakland's union-busting and the use of both the airport and the giant maritime port to ship and receive cargo from South Africa.

The airport unions have faced continuing efforts by the port's board of directors (appointed by black Democratic mayor Lionel Wilson) to break the unions and violate minority living procedures.

The committee also calls for an end to US military intervention in the Middle East.

This important labour link with the struggle against US imperialism must be broadened and expanded throughout the country. It can be a real blow against the US terror and war machine.

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SPANISH YOUTH FIGHT POLICE



Stewards armed with poles defend the 13 February march against attacks by fascists

ARMED with sticks and other home-made defensive weapons, 25,000 students — most of them in their teens — surged through Madrid on February 13, beating off attacks by fascist gangs and charges by 2,000 police in riot gear.

Together with demonstrations in Barcelona, Pamplona, Bilbao, and elsewhere, this was the climax of a week of opposition by Spanish youth to the hated Maravall plan, named after the education minister in the social-democratic government of Felipe Gonzalez.

The demonstrators chanted 'Wood to the flames!' ('Wood' being a nickname for the police) and 'Our Bilbao cousins have you scared!' (a reference to the Basque nationalists of the ETA).

Arrested

Nine people were injured in Madrid and 24 were arrested.

These massive student demonstrations in Spain are strikingly similar to those in France and Mexico. They foreshadow struggles by the working class; they are organised outside the control of the traditional social-democratic and Stalinist leaderships; and they are not merely vanguard struggles.

In short, they express a much deeper social upheaval than just a student protest.

A government minister described the movement among youth as 'a mood — something difficult to negotiate with.' A student belonging to the Youth for Socialism group said the Gonzalez government was not socialist, and that had 'frustrated a whole generation that has neither a job nor a future'.

Almost 50 per cent of the youth in Spain, between 16 and 24 have neither work nor a place to study.

The present movement is a continuation of other important struggles in Spain in the last couple of years, including the shipyard strike of 1984, the general strike of 1985, and the gigantic demonstrations in 1986 against the NATO presence in the country.

The fact that the students shouted slogans against the oppression of the Basques, and the fact that they are targeting Maravall, a

BY A SPANISH CORRESPONDENT

dered the most 'left-wing' minister in the government — speaks volumes about the political content of the present struggles in Spain.

Less than a year after the general election, the situation is becoming critical for the government party, the PSOE.

After his victory in the polls, and given the crisis in the Spanish Communist Party and the disarray in the right-wing Popular Alliance coalition, Gonzalez had high hopes of stabilization.

These hopes are now dashed, and his government is under fire. The crisis in the Spanish colonies of Ceuta and Melilla, and the Basque struggle, are also putting the monarchic regime under attack.

Of course, the government's crisis is developing faster than that of the monarchy, because the government has to face the mass movement directly — and King Juan Carlos is hiding from direct confrontation so that he can be played as a reserve card if the government collapses.

DURING the coverage of the Spanish struggles, we came across members of the Workers Socialist party (PST), Spanish section of the LIT (International Workers League).

They are active in most of the provinces of the Spanish state as well as in the Basque country and in the Spanish colonies of Ceuta and Melilla, north Africa. Most of their members are militants in the CCOO labour federation and have been very active in the recent student demonstrations. They say they are the only left organisation in Spain active in Ceuta against the Spanish imperialist state. In the last elections they obtained 80,000 votes including those for the Moro candidate they stood in Ceuta.

Interviewed by Workers Press, comrade Jesus, a leader of the PST explained their position and political tasks in the immediate future.

● We are striving to get unity between the struggles of the working class, the students and the people of Ceuta, Melilla and the Basque people against the government and the regime.

We are proposing that the student movement direct its struggles towards the working class and at the same time support the workers' struggles now taking place. We stand for the coordination and linking of the different workers' struggles. For example, we are for the coordination of the struggles of miners, car workers, dockers and uniting their fight with that of the agricultural workers in Andalusia and Extremadura.

We believe that these coordinated struggles should demand from the UGT and CCOO an immediate general strike, not in April as the CCOO proposes, but now. That general strike must be led by the working class but count on support from the students and the oppressed people of Spain. The first step in this campaign for a general strike should be a united demonstration to force the UGT and CCOO to endorse the call for such a strike. We have no confidence in the leadership of these bodies and that is why we are agitating in the workshops for massive meetings to discuss and vote for resolutions demanding a general strike.

The struggle for complete and unconditional workers' and union democracy is at the heart of this struggle for the general strike. The content of the general strike should clearly be a political one, against the austerity plans of the government, for the rights and demands of the students as well as for an open and clear support for the oppressed peoples in the imperialist state.

We are for the unity of both the CCOO and the UGT but the latter body must not put as a condition for such unity the acceptance of any plan of action, since the bureaucracy in the UGT are more compromised with the present government.

Turkish workers fight on

THOUSANDS have rallied in Istanbul in support of the largest strike since the 1980 military coup in Turkey.

Workers at the Canadian-owned NETAS telecommunications factory have been on strike since mid-November 1986 and have won enormous support throughout the trade union movement.

At one rally, the mother of Mustapa Denlioglu, a NETAS worker killed in 1980, told the crowd: 'You are all my sons and I support you in your action.'

The editor of a leading satirical magazine 'Girgin' brought a donation and message of support, as have famous singers, actors and supporters all over the world, including the National Graphical Association and other British trade unions.

Independent

The NETAS workers are members of the independent trade union Otomobil-Is. Before the strike a worker who had worked for the company for 15 years earned an average net monthly wage of £90.

The strike demands include a wage increase, three months' severance pay, the right to have a say in transfers, and the improvement of unhealthy working conditions.

The strike challenges the Ozal government's harsh labour laws and gives a lead to workers in other industries fighting for basic democratic rights.

In the metal industry (MESS) 30,000 workers are preparing industrial action while 1,500 workers on strike at the Derby rubber factory in Istanbul have won backing from the NETAS strikers.

General strike in Greece

OVER 1.5 million workers came out on strike and tens of thousands marched through Athens on Monday in the biggest action yet against the Papandreu government's anti-working class policies.

Transport, factories, banks, and shops were closed down across the country. Olympic Airways flights were grounded. Hospitals were reduced to emergency staff only and schools stayed shut for two days.

The 'Socialist' government's pay freeze was imposed in October 1985, five months after Papandreu's PASOK party had been re-elected. Last year, the government also freed landlords to raise rents, resulting in a wave of big rent increases and evictions in Athens and Salonika.

Debts

Workers say their living standards have fallen by more than 20 per cent in the last two years, as the government makes them pay for capitalist debts and inflation.

Papandreu has dropped the 'Left' members of his cabinet along with the 'Left' talk that helped him get elected. He said last month that Greece would stay in NATO and he has urged capitalist multi-nationals to invest in Greece, pleading his government would maintain its economic

COMPUTERGATE

ATTEMPTED suicide by valium overdose of former top US security aide Robert McFarlane came as Reagan's crew faced a new threat — from a computer. The US National Security Council computer system 'PROFS' was revealed to be storing 'an avalanche' of material relating to the Iran-Contra arms scandals, in the form of top official's messages, memos, etc. which someone forgot to erase.

This updated equivalent of Nixon's famous Watergate tapes is reported to make nonsense of such claims as that cashiered Colonel North had not kept superiors informed. It shows top Reagan officials including CIA chief Casey and Secretary of State Schultz knew far more than they claimed. Meanwhile Reagan himself is being excused... on grounds of diminished responsibility?

LEFT TAKES ON AMAL

THE STRUGGLE for Lebanon took a new turn this week as fighters supporting the Communist Party challenged the Syrian-backed Amal forces which have besieged Palestinian camps.

The fighting in West Beirut shows advanced Lebanese workers are revolting not only against what is being done to the Palestinians but against the reactionary imperialist-backed scheme to carve up their country into sectarian-run cantons.

The Communist Party militants, initially defending their premises and right to activity in an area which Amal wanted to treat as its fief, were joined in action by fighters from the Nasserist Mourabitoun and units of the Druze-based Progressive Socialist Party.

Fierce battles spread through the city.

Armed by Syria's Assad regime, and assisted by Syrian special forces as well as the Lebanese Army's Sixth Brigade, the Shi'ite Amal militia have been besieging Palestinian refugee camps for months, bringing thousands of people to the brink of death from starvation or disease. Reports from the worst-affected camp, Bourj el Barajneh, told of people having to eat dogs and cats, women shot while scavenging for weeds, and babies having no milk.

The struggle to defend

their people in the camps united all Palestinian factions.

On Tuesday, leading Shi'ite politician Nabih Berri ordered Amal to lift the sieges so emergency food and medical supplies could be taken in. But there was no certainty this would happen, and the latest fighting brought a further delay.

Syrian troops were reported preparing to move into Beirut to restore 'order'.

Amal wants the Palestinians to give up positions near Sidon in southern Lebanon, although these were taken in response to the sieges.

Palestinians and their allies see the Amal sieges as part of Syrian leader Assad's continuing aim of smashing Palestinian political independence, and carving-up Lebanon in collusion with imperialism and the Zionists.

SRI LANKA WAR

THE Sri Lanka government has opened a new front against Tamil civilians in the island's peninsula, according to a report from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

The entire northern province has been transformed into a theatre of war, the report says, with fierce fighting raging in several areas between the LTTE fighters and Sinhala soldiers.

It has been reported that 4,000 troops went on a wild rampage in Pandiviruchan, Thiruketheswaram, Manthal, Uyelankulam and Parapukadanthan villages, hacking more than 80 civilians to death and leaving a trail of arson, looting and rape. Eighteen refugees from Thiruketheswaram camp were rounded up and shot.

About 10,000 people fled into the jungle to face starvation, while fighter aircraft dropped napalm bombs on civilian targets, setting ablaze more than 30 houses.

Army claims that LTTE bases had been destroyed and many fighters killed are untrue, the report says. They have killed innocent civilians and continue military atrocities.

In a fierce counter-offensive, the LTTE fighters are reported to have driven the troops from Ueruthayapuram.

In the all-out war in the north, the Sri Lankan government have deployed more than 10,000 troops with active support from the airforce and navy, the report says.

Pakistan police fire on marchers

AT LEAST 16 people were injured in Karachi last week as police opened fire with shotguns and teargas at crowds protesting the government's dissolution of the city council. The police said they had been attacked with stones, and some of their vehicles were set on fire.

Mayor Abdus Sattar Afghani and more than 100 councillors had been arrested a few days previously while marching to the Sind Provincial Assembly to demand the handing over of the city's share of vehicle taxes.

The councillors were charged with violating a ban on demonstrations. The regime has removed them, placing a civil servant in control of the council, running Pakistan's largest city, with a 7 million population.

Philippines army murders villagers

PHILIPPINES troops have resumed war with a vengeance on their own people, killing 17 people in a village north of Manila which they alleged had sheltered guerrillas.

Four of the army victims were children between four and 13. There was also a couple in their 80s, the man unable to walk unaided and his wife blind.

The army said guerrillas of the New People's Army had stayed the night in the village and ambushed an army patrol the following day, killing a lieutenant.

Prime Minister Corazon Aquino, having gained her referendum vote and promises of US backing, agreed last week the army could resume war on the guerrillas.

The landowning 'liberal' said she did not want innocent civilians to suffer, and has ordered an inquiry into the incidents.

Army officers denied the killings on February 10 were a massacre. They claimed the peasants had been caught in crossfire between their troops and the guerrillas.

Officers also said that five

of those killed were 'rebels', and the rest were 'rebel sympathisers'. Government officials said the area was known to be under heavy communist influence, if not control.

Mayor George Castenada said many of the victims had been shot in the head. Funeral workers found corpses 'messy' because the skulls had been blown off.

The Namulandyan massacre came two days after the expiry of a 60-day ceasefire between the government forces and the New People's Army and Aquino gave the army the go-ahead to resume operations.

The NPA had been willing to negotiate a more lasting peace, but talks broke down because of right-wing provocations and attempts to lure local NPA commanders into separate negotiations. The NPA rightly rejected this as a ruse to split and disarm their forces before a new government offensive.

The massacre at Namulandyan has strengthened the conviction of NPA fighters that they must continue the armed struggle, as well as their resolve to avenge the many victims of state repression.

PHILIPPINES WOMEN FIGHT

FORMER Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos publicly declared that 'a woman's place' was in the bedroom. Now he's sulking in exile.

Mrs Corazon Aquino is in the president's palace, appears to have beaten off the threat of a Marcos return and has won the people's votes for her constitution.

The workers and peasants of the Philippines can not be content with bourgeois 'democracy', however, nor rely on the landowning Aquino to deliver the changes they desperately need.

Among those fighting for real social change is an important women's movement, the nationalist Movement for New Womanhood, also known as 'Makibaka' — 'Get Involved'.

It began, partly at least, in the feminism of the 1970s. Educated, mainly middle-class women, protesting beauty contests, sexual exploitation, and subservience, sought their identity and political emancipation.

Like some of their Western counterparts — the women of Greenham and those who played such a big part in the miners' struggle come to mind — they widened their aims and horizons.

Amid the poverty, exploitation, 'underdevelopment' and repression of the Philippines, the soft options for some bourgeois feminists in the West — good jobs, grants, TV chat shows, and co-option — were not available.

Within a year of 15 women getting together to form Makibaka, it was driven underground when Marcos declared martial law in 1972. They could either give up their dreams or fight. They fought.

Today, their movement claims 200,000 followers. It is one of 12 groups making up the Communist Party-led National Democratic Front. Several of the women's lead-

ers have had prices placed on their heads.

Recently, the movement held its first press conference, in a 'liberated area' of Quezon province, a hundred miles south-east of Manila. After being driven for almost six hours on rough country roads, then having to trek for three hours along muddy paths, journalists were greeted by a woman who told them: 'Welcome to rebel territory!'

There were a couple of dozen women waiting. Spokesperson Vittoria Justiniani, 'Vic-Vic', described how she had been a 16-year old living a comfortable life in Manila, and looking forward to a college education, when Marcos declared martial law in September 1972.

She joined the underground struggle. 'As days went into weeks, and weeks into months, and months into years, life with the masses made us realise that joining the revolution was not a mere testament to our personal causes but a commitment to pursue the collective will of a nation craving for social change.'

Today, 'Vic-Vic' has an 80,000 peso price on her head. She says the struggle has become a way of life, and there is no going back.

At first, most of the women had acted as messengers for the guerrillas of the Maoist-inspired New People's Army. Later they treated the wounded, and learnt to use a form of acupuncture.

'When fighting escalated, we fought side by side with the men', one said.

Ka (comrade) Rosenda had an M16 slung from her shoulder, and was carrying her five-month old son. 'My son and I have never been separated since he was born. But I am starting to wean him away from me.'

She had been with the guerrillas ten years. Aged 29, she leads a unit of about 100 women in 16 towns of Quezon province.

'This has been my life,' Ka Rosenda said, 'and I feel secure with the movement. I know no other life.'

The women's meeting with the press took place during the ceasefire with government forces which expired on February 8.

Ka Sarah, 24, remarked that the bullets the women carry on their belts, and which they normally cleaned every fortnight, were start-

'The ceasefire has afforded us the chance to train and organise the masses quite openly. Yes, it gave us a respite from fighting but not from our other tasks.'

ing to show signs of rust. 'Not only because we have not fired a shot but also because we have been busy with other things, like lectures before organised groups in the villages.'

'The ceasefire has afforded us the chance to train and organise the masses quite openly. Yes, it gave us a respite from fighting but not from our other tasks.'



After the killing of land-reform marchers in Manila came the 'softly-softly' treatment of pro-Marcos putschists. Above: Left-wing demonstrators sum up their experience of capitalist 'democracy'.

'You know, although we have a ceasefire at the moment, it is not unlikely for us to go back to the battlefield,' Ka Rosenda predicted. 'When that happens, I think fighting will become more intense.'

'There is no way we can give up the armed struggle',

denied the National Democratic Front's right to operate as a legal party.

The Philippines' military has gunned down peasants demonstrating for land, but treated right-wing pro-Marcos mutineers with kid gloves.

The right-wing coup threat, staged conveniently near to the constitutional referendum, helped Aquino get the votes she wanted.

Now the army officers want all-out war on the Left, both the guerrillas in the countryside and the workers in the towns.

Together with wealthy businessmen and some religious groups, assisted by foreign mercenaries and no doubt CIA advisers, officers have begun organising counter-revolutionary gangs to 'fight communism'.

The women of Makibaka, and all the fighters of the New People's Army, have been right to hold on to their weapons. Their courageous struggle deserves our admiration and solidarity. But it also deserves something more.

Neither Stalinism, with its 'peaceful co-existence' theory, nor Maoism with its adherence to 'stages' theory, can provide the perspectives Filipino workers and peasants need for their struggle. The Soviet bureaucracy was Marcos's last friend. The Chinese leaders are still wooing Western capital, and don't want to upset US imperialism in the Pacific.

To draw a rough comparison with Russia in 1917, the Philippines have had their 'February'. They have more than one 'Kornilov' — right-wing general — still armed to the teeth. To arrive at their 'October', the workers, peasants, and women like those fighting in Quezon, need a Bolshevik party.

That means a Trotskyist party, a section of the Fourth International, with the perspective of Permanent Revolution, to end Philippine dependency and poverty. The fighting spirit and experience of the Philippines' revolutionaries would give them a proud and important place in this movement internationally.

WEST BANK CLASHES

HEAVILY-armed Israeli troops patrolled occupied West Bank towns in force last week, breaking up demonstrations, beating up students, and forcing striking shopkeepers to re-open.

Eight people were reported injured in Gaza when troops opened fire on Palestinians demonstrating solidarity with their people under siege in Lebanon. In Nablus, troops used teargas to break up a demonstration by high-school girls.

In west Jerusalem, Israeli police raided the offices of a Left-wing Israeli organisation, the Alternative Information Centre, taking away six of its workers and stacks of documents.

They said they were closing the centre for six months. The Alternative Information Centre acts as a clearing house for accurate news and information on struggles in Israel and the territories.

A police spokesman accused it of working for the PLO.

Reporters were barred from entering the West Bank town of Ramallah, while the army moved in to attack demonstrators on Monday.

The following day, however, reporters witnessed plain-clothes Israeli security men draw pistols and set about a Palestinian youth.

'One of the security men

held him by the back of the neck, another aimed kicks at him and the third hit him two or three times on the head,' a Reuters correspondent said.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip had been staging strikes and demonstrations for ten days, to show solidarity with their people under siege in the Lebanon, support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and opposition to Israeli military rule.

The police attack on the Alternative Information Centre comes after expulsions of Palestinian journalists, closure of newspapers, and intensified censorship of the news.

Now the Israeli government turns its hand against those Israelis who try to tell the truth about Israeli society and what is being done to the Palestinians.

Workers Press understands that among those arrested in the raid on the AIC was comrade Michael Warshawsky, who has played a leading role in the centre's work, and is a member of the 'Matzpen' Marxist group which supports the Unified Secretariat.

We declare full solidarity with comrade Warshawsky and his co-workers, as with all those fighting national oppression and reactionary rule in the Middle East. Workers Press will watch developments closely to play our part in mobilising international action.

PERU STUDENTS DEFY ARRESTS

SCORES of students were arrested and many injured as riot police used water cannon, teargas and bird shot to break up demonstrations in Lima last week. The students had taken to the streets to protest mass arrests of their comrades. They fought back with stones, lit burning tyre barricades, and set light to a water cannon.

Nearly 800 students were arrested on the night of February 13 when more than 3,000 armed police raided university campuses around Lima. The police smashed down doors and arrested everyone in sight. Twenty-five students were injured.

Peru's President Alan Garcia defended the raids as 'dramatic but necessary'. He claimed university residences were being used as hiding places for 'terrorists'. The police claim students resisted with firearms and that the raids netted guns and explosives as well as literature from two left-wing guerrilla groups, Sendero Luminoso and Tupac Amaru.

JAPAN STEEL REDUNDANCIES

BY NORAH WILDE

NEARLY one in three Japanese steel workers face redundancy over the next three years, according to a report in 'China Daily' on 16 February 1987.

The steel industry is controlled by the Japan Iron and Steel Federation, which once dominated the world steel market. In the federation there are five major monopolists which employ 117,000 and plan to 'shed' 36,000 workers.

The biggest monopoly steel industry is Nippon Steel which wants to reduce its workforce of 65,000 by 19,000. The second largest, Nippon Kokan, has not yet revealed its plans, but Kawasaki Steel Corporation aims to fire 5,000 of its 26,000 workforce.

Next in line are Sumitomo Metal Industries and Kobe Steel Works, which both plan to reduce their workforces by 6,000. Sumitomo employs 26,000 workers whilst Kobe has 28,000 employees.

The colossal scale of redundancies is planned, because the Japanese economy has been affected by the steep appreciation of the yen against the dollar. In September 1985, 260 yen equalled one dollar; today one dollar is worth 152 yen.

As a result, foreign goods imported into Japan are cheaper than Japanese goods, whilst Japanese exports have become more expensive.

Affected by the steep rise of the yen against the dollar, steel magnates are preparing for battle on the world market by reducing labour costs and cutting back production at home, in order to sell steel at a cheaper and more competitive price abroad.

In an industry now affected by over-production, over-capacity and falling profits (Nippon Steel lost \$73.5 million between September 1985 and September 1986), monopoly capitalists intend to maintain profits at the expense of the workers who create their employers' wealth.

THE JAILING

An open letter to rank-and-file members of which publishes 'News Line': from the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party

Dear Comrades,

Police Witnesses and Principles

ONE of our comrades, Phil Penn, is in jail and your organisation provided the only police witnesses in the case. It is a long-established principle in the working-class movement that political differences are never regulated in bourgeois courts or by reliance on the police.

This is not the first time leaders of your organisation have acted in this way. Six of them appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield Crown Court in January of this year after an incident between members of your organisation and the International Communist Party. On this occasion the court did not believe them and the defendant was found not guilty.

After a demonstration at Wapping on 3 May 1986, Phil, who was on his own at the time, was attacked by four members of your organisation — Richard Price, Eric Rogers, Paul Williams and another man. They knocked him to the ground and Richard Price attacked him with banner poles. Unfortunately Eric Rogers' eye was damaged in the fracas. Phil Penn was the only one arrested.

The background to these events is as follows: In 1985 Gerry Healy, leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, was expelled. He was charged on the following counts: systematic sexual abuse of female party comrades, physical violence against party members and slanders against a leading member of a Trotskyist organisation in the United States. He refused to appear before the Party members to answer these charges, and has since disappeared from public life. Phil Penn is part of the majority that expelled Healy.

Those of us who expelled Healy from the Workers Revolutionary Party in October 1986 were, for a long time, party to much of his anti-communism and we have never sought to hide this from the working class movement. It is not a crime to make mistakes, even serious ones. **But it is a crime, and a grievous one, to lie about such mistakes and refuse to struggle in practice to overcome them.**

We are working with others in the international Trotskyist movement to analyse our history, overcome the unprincipled past of the movement and take our place in the ranks of those striving to build the Fourth International as the party of world socialist revolution.

Healy was supported by Vanessa Redgrave, Corin Redgrave, Sheila Torrance, Alex Mitchell, Ben Rudder, Simon Vevers, Ray Athow, John Eden, Frank Sweeney, Dave Oatley, Ray Efford, Linda Efford, Paddy O'Regan, Claire Dixon, Richard Price, Paul Feldman, Ian Harrison, Stuart Eames, Chris Eames, Dave Gilbert, Corinna Gilbert, Sue Laird, Judith White, John Graham, Jim Kane, Graham Fenwick, Bill Rogers, Eric Rogers, Roberta Colling, Steve Colling, Slav Colling, Paul Williams, Mark Harrison, Frances de la Tour, Kika Markham, Tom Kempinski, Mick Blakey, Mary McEntegart, Kay Riddick, Billy Cummins, Jean Kerrigan, Kathy Hilton, Kathryn Davies, Mair Davies, Will Downing and Martin Booth.

The leaders of this group shielded Healy from the membership although they knew the charges against him to be true — and he never denied them. Instead they called their own conference, and set themselves up as a bogus 'Workers Revolutionary Party', publishing a daily paper, 'News Line'.

Sheila Torrance and the Redgraves

have never dared face the working class on the question of Healy. Sheila Torrance told some that the charges were false; to others she admitted they were true, but said that Healy's so-called 'personal life' did not matter.

But the practices of leaders of the movement most certainly do matter, and Healy's actions involved a fundamental break with Marxism and communism. He used the membership for his own sexual and personal gratification and in so doing destroyed many members, especially amongst the youth.

Acts of this kind cannot be hidden from the light of day for ever. Nor can they be kept from the working class. The same abandonment of revolutionary principles which led Sheila Torrance, the Redgraves and others to lie about and cover up for Healy in 1985 caused them to attack their opponent, Phil Penn, in 1986 and, as police witnesses, put him behind bars in 1987.

Contrast this with the fact that when Phil Penn was again attacked by members of your organisation in Leicester on 8 June 1986, this time with a club and a knife, the police wished to prosecute, but Phil — who was again on his own at the time of the attack — refused to act as a police witness. The case could not go forward.

Although Eric Rogers, Kay Riddick and Mary McEntegart were the police witnesses, they alone are not responsible. This action was undoubtedly planned and sanctioned by Healy, Torrance and the political committee of your organisation. In fact 'News Line' carried an anti-political and provocative attack on Phil Penn three days before the Wapping attack.

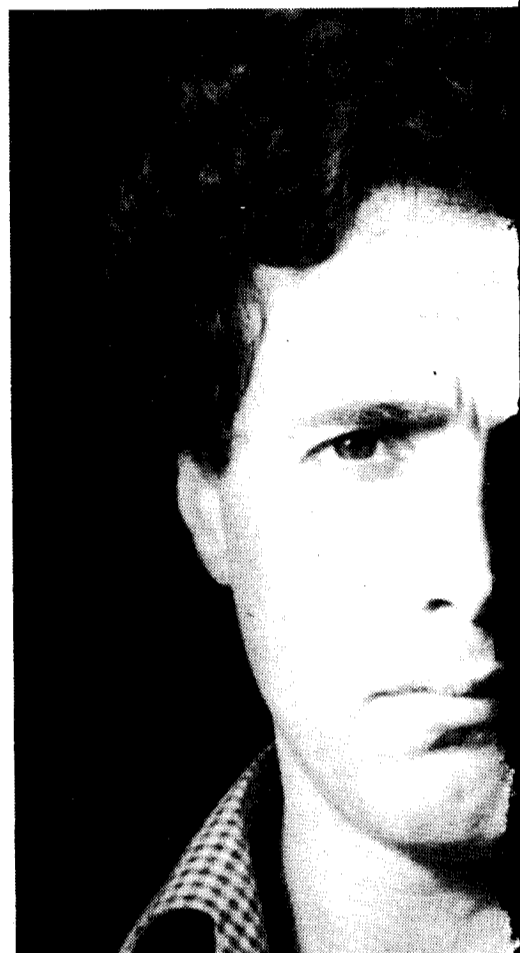
We are asking you to insist on accountability from your leaders, just as trade unionists are insisting on their leaders accounting for their actions. We realise that any new members of your organisation may be confused about what they are told about Healy's expulsion. But you should not have to suffer the political anger in the working class that will now break over your heads for the reactionary practices of your leaders.

Those who disagree with members of your organisation being put up as police witnesses should make your opposition known in the working class just as you should ask Sheila Torrance to explain her remark about Phil Penn at Wapping on Saturday 7 February. She said: 'He should have got longer.' Can you stomach such rank anti-communist behaviour? A communist leader does not act on hatred and revenge, but on Marxist principles.

If you have the slightest doubts about these events, if you are in the least degree dissatisfied with the explanations you are being given, follow them up. Look into history. Read about these things. Principles are the bedrock of the movement; they cannot be traded for opportunist alliances and protection of those who are wrong. Wapping has again shown that if principles are traded (in this case the right to free trade unions) the working class alone will suffer.

We make this appeal to you: take notice of those in the labour movement who can explain the basic principle that you must never use the police against other members, even if you have fundamental disagreements. No doubt you have regard for the basic principles of the working class movement. Leaders must be accountable. We invite you to discuss these matters with us.

Yours fraternally,
Political Committee, Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press)



What you can do.

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn in your own support group, etc. Phone 01-274 7271 for explaining the case.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. L27055, HM Prison 757, Ducane Road, London W12 0AE.
- Send messages of support for Phil and the Workers Press. We will have a special column behind bars.

Messages of

THE SCOTTISH Area of the WRP sends its warmest greetings to Phil, Sandra, Amy and Terry Penn.

We expelled Healy on principles, for which no price is too high. His followers may think Phil is paying the price, but they are the losers.

THE CLYDESIDE Troops Out Movement send sympathy to Phil Penn and his family. Those who imprisoned you are common informers and do not deserve the name socialist.

THE WEST of Scotland Republican Bands Alliance and its constituent bands send greetings to Phil Penn.

It ill becomes those who call themselves socialist to act as informers for the police. We have every sympathy with you.

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Wapping residents' stewards tell 'News Line' supporter Ray Athow to leave their march. Athow sat in the court press box the day Phil was sentenced — but did not dare to report the actions of his friends the narks in the 'News Line'.

THE Healy-Torrance group do not appear to have much to show after a year of campaigning around the Wapping dispute.

For the past 12 months they have spread photographs of the strikers across the pages of 'News Line' and called for a 'General Strike Now!' Over this period they also staged more than one play purporting to deal with the history of the printers.

They were completely shamed at last Saturday's Wapping march organised by the local residents: because of their action in the Phil Penn case the organisers asked them to leave.

With police present in large numbers, the stewards did not press the issue. The Torrance group marched at the rear of the demonstration, huddled together like sheep, hardly daring to speak to any of the printers or sell the 'News Line'.

Their campaign of lectures and meetings has also got off to a flying start. At two meetings, one in south London, the other in Hackney, not only did nobody come to listen to the speakers, but the latter — Paddy O'Regan and Claire Dixon — did not show up.

At a third meeting in Cable Street — practically

next door to Wapping — only six old faithfuls turned up, including the speakers.

● 'News Line' sellers were driven away from the steps of Lambeth Town Hall on Monday by supporters of various labour movement organisations. Several different papers were on offer to the audience arriving for a meeting addressed by Linda Bellos, Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn in defence of black sections in the Labour Party, but the Torrance group's sellers were told that they were not welcome to stand with the others.

Dear comrade Phil Penn,

I AM sending you this letter to let you know of our complete solidarity with you. The Healy-Torrance group members who acted as witnesses for the prosecution and the police in your trial have to be denounced and exposed ruthlessly in the labour movement.

The methods of slander, lies, frame-ups and physical annihilation is a method alien to the working class. It was a method of dealing with political differences first introduced by Stalinism. So was the method of calling in the state and the police to meddle with the affairs of labour and socialist organisations. All these methods must be vigorously opposed and confronted if we are to succeed in our struggle for workers' democracy and working-class struggles.

The Healy-Torrance group has a long history of utilisation of these methods inherited from Stalinist practices. They framed the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (America), Joseph Hansen and George Novack, in the 1960s. They organised the same slanderous campaign against Tim Wolforth and Nancy Field in the 1970s.

In the 1980s, another of their followers in the United States, David North, called in the bourgeois court to effectively disrupt and destroy the SWP, a working-class organisation, in the Gelfand vs SWP case.

But the Healy-Torrance-Hyland groups are not alone in this job. Pierre Lambert, today leader of the French PCI, slandered and framed people like Michel Varga and Ricardo Napuri in the past.

You are now serving your sentence and represent the latest victim of this campaign. Who will be next?

The labour, socialist and Trotskyist movement should wage a resolute campaign to stop these methods. A good start in this particular case would be to call for a

labour-sponsored boycott of the newspaper 'News Line' published by these people and to call upon the miners' leaders, those involved in the Wapping struggle and others to form a commission to develop this campaign.

I am pretty sure that those who already experienced the repressive character of the police and the state would have no problem in stating their opinion of those 'socialists' who testify for the police in court.

I hope that every single working-class and socialist organisation will join in denouncing this crime against the entire working class.

Yours, with warmest greetings,

Leon Perez

Representative in Britain of the
LIT (International Workers
League — Fourth International)

Dear Comrade,

ON Sunday, 15 February, the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign meeting voted to send you solidarity and greetings. We also strongly condemn the disgusting police collaboration of the 'News Line' supporters who caused your imprisonment. From all comrades and supporters of VMDC we extend to you our wholehearted solidarity.

Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign

ON BEHALF of the Newcastle support group of the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC) I would like to send solidarity greetings to comrade Phil Penn.

Comrades representing Workers Press have supported the Newcastle group from the outset. They informed the group of the atrocious behaviour of the 'News Line' supporters which resulted in him receiving a jail sentence.

Viraj, who has now been in sanctuary for nearly two months, likens

his situation to that of being in prison. However, his conditions are far preferable to that provided by HM prison department.

The VMDC in Newcastle has proved that socialists with different views can work together without real conflict and still maintain their position. The Revolutionary Communist Group, Workers Press, Workers Power, the Labour Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party have all sent delegates to committee meetings. We are having a public meeting next week and hope to develop the campaign further in the surrounding area.

I hope that comrade Penn will soon be out of jail and be able to take part in the struggle for workers' rights.

We in the VMDC are determined to carry on our struggle until Viraj has won the right to stay.

Yours in solidarity,

Graham Foster
On behalf VMDC (Newcastle)

Dear Comrades,

In response to your letter about the jailing of Phil Penn we would like to add the growing condemnation of the 'News Line' group — its sinister violence and collaboration with the state, its courts and police. The principle is clear: the working class does not use bourgeois courts to resolve differences within the movement.

We do not regard the 'News Line' group as a socialist tendency or as part of our movement; their use of violence and the courts to jail Phil Penn place the 'News Line' leaders in the camp of the ruling class.

We send our warmest greetings to Phil Penn and hope this letter can be forwarded to him.

Yours in comradeship,
John Rees (Chair)
Tower Hamlets Print Workers
Support Group

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for your letter on 'The Jailing of Phil Penn'.

The Revolutionary Communist group send its solidarity to comrade Phil Penn. Without any hesitation we condemn the actions of 'News Line' supporters who, while claiming to be Marxists, have collaborated with the police to secure the imprisonment of a revolutionary.

We unreservedly condemn 'News Line' for adopting the tactic of police collaboration in their struggle against the Workers Revolutionary Party/Workers Press. We note that this method has been used against the International Communist Party too. Needless to say, collaboration with the police in pursuing a struggle against other trends in the socialist movement has all the hallmarks of basic opportunism.

We note that Cde Penn, as a principled revolutionary, refused to act as a police witness against 'News Line' supporters. His imprisonment, as a result of 'News Line's' actions, has also damaged Irish solidarity work — we know that Cde Phil was convener of the campaign to free Irish prisoners.

On behalf of the RCG Executive Committee and all RCG members and supporters please pass on our revolutionary greetings to Cde Phil Penn, his comrades and family.

With communist greetings,
Eddie Abrahams
Revolutionary Communist Group

I WAS much moved to to read of the jailing of Phil Penn. I did not know him myself but I know others who do. I belong to the Labour Party so I understand what you mean about workers' loyalty. Without it the world might as well blow up tomorrow.

Vive la Solidarite !

C.L.

TORRANCE GROUP TO ANSWER!

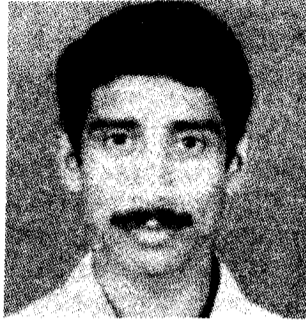
JOIN US IN A CAMPAIGN ON BRUTAN PERERA

THE Workers Revolutionary Party has been appealing in the last few months for support for Brutan Perera, a member of the Revolutionary Communist League, Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, who was jailed under the Jayawardene regime's emergency laws.

Although Perera has now been released on bail, he has charges hanging over his head which could still result in heavy penalties. Like all opponents of the Sri Lankan regime he is in great danger.

Having built up support from a number of organisations and started a campaign in the labour movement, we approached the International Committee of the Fourth International and its British section, the International Communist Party.

They rejected our approach and issued a frenzied attack on us entitled 'Open Letter' in their paper 'International Worker'. This is a reply to it.



An Open Letter to the International Communist Party

Comrades:

We call on you once again to abandon the sectarian stand of your 'Open Letter' of 28 November 1986, and join us in a campaign for the dropping of all charges against Brutan Perera.

(We understand that Comrade Perera has been released on bail, but is awaiting trial on charges which carry possibly a heavy sentence).

This is not the place for a discussion on the absurd and contradictory attacks you make on us.

When you quote the International Committee of the Fourth International resolution, stating that 'Healy and Banda despised the RCL (Sri Lankan Revolutionary Communist League) and, with the assistance of Slaughter, worked consciously for its physical destruction' we are entitled to ask — while maintaining our own critique of past ICFI leadership — what evidence have you of this so called 'conscious work' and how do you explain that it was carried out without opposition from the ICFI or any of its sections?

The very asking of such questions shows how absurd your contentions are. Your other frenzied and fictional attacks we will deal with in due course.

The purpose of this letter is to call on you once again to mobilise jointly in defence of Brutan Perera.

It has always been a basic principle of the communist movement that joint work be carried on with non-communists, and even with the most bitter enemies of communism in the workers' movement, in defence of political prisoners and those threatened by the state.

In the early years of this century, for example, three decades after Marxism had concluded its organisational break with anarchism, communists everywhere played a leading role in the defence campaign for the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, a campaign carried on jointly by different political tendencies in the workers' movement.

Trotsky himself collaborated with groups and individuals — whom he attacked politically as centrists and even bourgeois liberals —

mounting his own defence against the Moscow trials.

The founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938, standing in this tradition, passed a resolution on the defence of persecuted revolutionaries who — because of their principled politics — were excluded and discriminated against by Stalinist, social-democratic and bourgeois liberal defence agencies.

The resolution states: 'It is permissible to co-operate in this work with sincere elements of other political tendencies, but in no case should the formation of national defence and relief bodies be deferred or put aside because of the inability to secure the co-operation of this or that organisation or individual.'

'The need is absolutely urgent and un-postponable... (Documents of the Fourth International: the formative years, Pathfinder Press edn., p. 275)

The tradition of the com-

munist movement since its foundation is clear; the spirit of the resolution of the Fourth International is clear.

Your refusal to carry out joint work in defence of Brutan Perera stands in sharp contrast to both.

Indeed you have chalked up a dubious 'first' in the movement's history: when our comrades demonstrated in defence of Brutan Perera in London on 21 December, members of your organisation issued leaflets denouncing us!

Since initiating a campaign in defence of Brutan Perera in our paper, we have received messages of support from the Communist League (Australia), The Group of Opposition and Continuity for the Fourth International, the Fourth International (Executive Committee) and the Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (France); the International Workers League (Fourth International) and its organisations in a number of north and south American countries; the Revolutionary Workers Party (Sri Lanka); Lutte Ouvrière (France);

'Workers Power', the Revolutionary Democratic Group and Revolutionary Communist Group (Britain).

These comrades have publicised the case of Brutan Perera in their publications and offered assistance in campaigning jointly in his defence.

Are you prepared to work with these organisations, in spite of your undoubted political differences with them? Or will you reject their support also?

We propose, once again, that you co-operate with us, and with others who are prepared to support Brutan Perera, to secure the dropping of all charges against him by the Jayawardene regime.

We repeat, publicly, the proposal we made to you in September: that we arrange a meeting to build up a campaign throughout the labour movement in Europe, initially in defence of Brutan Perera.

Yours fraternally,

Simon Pirani,

On behalf of the Workers Revolutionary Party Central Committee

INSIDE THE HEALYITE SWAMP

BY RON STONE

THE INTERNATIONAL Healyite tendency, which tried to reconstitute itself after the Workers Revolutionary Party split in the autumn of 1985, is now in complete political and organisational dissolution.

A few months after the split, at a conference of the pseudo-WRP in January 1986, Gerry Healy was not voted on to its central committee.

Soon after this, Alex Mitchell, who was probably Healy's best assistant in his filthy economic and other transactions with nationalist bourgeois Arab states and corrupted sheiks, left the Healy group.

Alex Mitchell had sold photographs of members of the Communist Party of Iraq to the Iraqi Embassy and for sure many of these were murdered by Saddam Hussein's police force.

Since the split in 1985, Healy has vanished from the political scene, with the exception of one public appearance last August. This was at a meeting organised by the pseudo-WRP to commemorate the 46 years since Leon Trotsky's murder.

In September 1986, the Healyites organised an abortive International Youth Congress in Athens at which, with difficulty, they managed to collect 150 members from Greece, Spain and Britain.

Soon after this, at the end of October 1986, the pseudo-WRP organised a Special Conference at which Healy and Vanessa Redgrave were not present.

After the conference, Healy, Vanessa and Corin Redgrave, John Eden, Mick Blakey and a few others, officially departed from the organisation.

One of the political reasons for their disagreement is Healy's assertion that Gorbachev is a revolutionary element and a supporter of dialectical materialism.

Against Healy, Sheila Torrance says that Gorbachev represents a right-wing restorationist tendency. Also, Torrance accuses Healy of revising the 10th Congress of the International

al Committee of the Fourth International!

Having lost some of his last supporters in Britain, Healy is trying to retain a small audience for his pseudo-dialectics in Spain and Greece.

About a month ago, Healy attended a school in Barcelona, organised by his supporters, where he presented his latest 'discoveries' in dialectics.

Basically an international front has been formed against Torrance between Healy, Dolores Romero in Spain and Savas Michael in Greece. But even though Torrance accuses Healy of being a lunatic, she continues to publish philosophical articles by him in her theoretical journal.

In Greece, soon after the split of the WRP, Savas Michael called himself the Secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International, and changed the name of his group (Workers Internationalist League) to Workers Revolutionary Party. In this unique way, he managed to acquire a Party even though the membership is steadily declining!

To hide the facts of the split, Michael created a climate of intrigue within his organisation and accused Cliff Slaughter of being a Moscow agent and Dave North of being a CIA agent. Now he maintains that in three months he will be publishing a daily newspaper even though he only has a few dozen members.

In view of his sectarian politics and organisational crisis the publication of a daily is impossible. The only way he can do this is by turning to financial sources outside the working class — something for which he has been well trained by his mental guru Healy and his buddy Mitchell.

NAHUEL MORENO

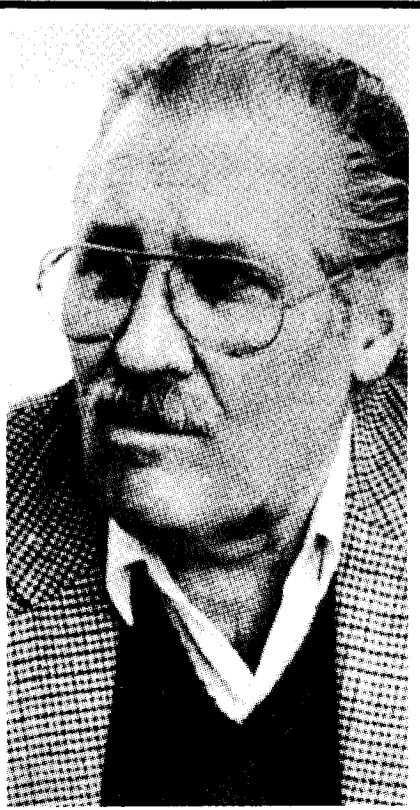
Message from the Varga group, read out at the Moreno Memorial Meeting on 2 February at Friends' Meeting House, London.

The Opposition Group for the Continuity of the Fourth International salutes the memory of Comrade N. Moreno. We salute the memory of this militant who devoted his whole life to the struggle for Trotskyism, despite differences which separated us.

We send our salutations to the comrades who are attending the meeting to honour his memory. We wish to express our deepest condolences to his family.

Paris, 1 February 1987

From the Opposition Group for the Continuity of the Fourth International, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and France.



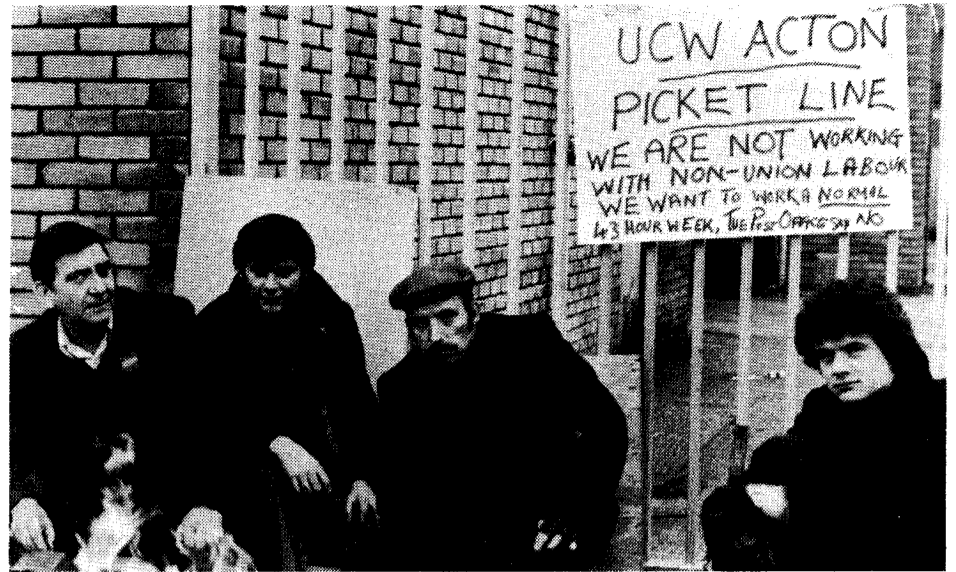
WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PUBLIC LECTURES

All on FRIDAY evenings
7.30pm sharp
Duke of York, York Way
Near Kings Cross

MARXIST DISCUSSION GROUP

Bryant Street Methodist Centre
Off West Ham Lane,
Stratford, E. London
Sunday 22 February, 7.30pm
'The Call for an International
Conference of Trotskyists'
Speaker: Bob Archer (WRP)

POST OFFICE: THREAT OF PRIVATISATION



THE Tory government 'Think Tank', the centre for policy studies, advocates the break-up and sell-off of the Post Office.

A study of the current *Post Office Report and Accounts for 1985/6*, shows that its Managing Board is working with precisely this end in view.

No doubt indignation would be expressed at any such accusation. Board Chairman Sir Ron Dearing is said to have expressed concern at the 'Think Tank' proposals — not at privatisation itself, which he thinks is for the government to decide — but at the splitting up and selling off in pieces.

'The corporation should remain as one entity,' states Dearing, 'because each part reinforces the other.' ('Observer', January 4, 1987.)

This is strange talk indeed coming from the man whose annual statement confirms that his Board has decided the Post Office 'should reorganise its activities into a number of businesses. Each would be led by its own management team with the chance of relating its services closely to the needs of the market place.'

In the 'Observer' article Dearing put his opposition to the break-up of the Post Office saying: 'I am surprised that Professor Albon (author of the Centre for Policy Studies report), as an expert, did not even consider whether the corporation as a whole should be privatised.'

He also made clear that should a future Labour government impose a 'renationalisation' programme, 'I should find something else to do.'

Schemes for mechanisation and computerising various aspects of the services are outlined in the *Report and Accounts*, along with plans for changing working practices with a view to expanding business while cutting costs.

Needless to say there is no mention of the anger and industrial action these measures led to last year, once their objectives of cutting the fulltime workforce and relying on cheap non-union labour were clearly understood.

Whatever the Board may say, the primary aim is clearly to maximise the profits of the separate sectors and discipline its workforce so that each business can be presented as a lucrative investment in its own right.

The reorganisation

A SPECIAL section of its Annual Report and Accounts confirms that the Post Office is in the process of reorganising into three distinct businesses: letters, parcels and counters (National Girobank was constituted a wholly-owned subsidiary company of the Post Office in 1985. The telecommunications sector was separated completely and sold off in 1984.)

The present 142 head post offices in the ten post office regions are to be replaced by separate district offices for each of the businesses.

Specialist managers for each of the sectors will replace the present unified system under one head postmaster.

The 64 district letters offices will report in turn to outstationed headquarters units termed 'territories' based in Edinburgh, Manchester, London, Cardiff and Leeds.

The 32 counter districts will likewise report to territories at Leeds, Colchester, Manchester and London.

The present 31 parcels concentration offices will be managed through 12 parcels district offices.

BY BERNARD FRANKS

each with its own district manager.

The report states: 'The collection and delivery of parcels will mainly be performed by letters staff as at present but on contractual terms based on cost and quality of service.'

The implication is surely that the way is being opened to the use of private contractors and that separation of services will eventually be total.

As part of the reorganisation, Scottish and Welsh Postal Boards are to be established similar to the Northern Ireland Board. All will report to the main board.

Mechanisation and new technology

Letters

The year to April 1986 saw: ■ The number of inland letters handled increased by 5.9 per cent.

■ The completion of the mechanised letter office network with the commission of the last 12 offices.

■ An increase in post code usage from 60 to 65 per cent.

■ The number of items sorted by machine increased from 5.2 billion to 6.1 billion.

■ Successful completion of the trial at London's Mount Pleasant Sorting Office of optical character recognition equipment — machinery able to read typed and printed addresses and able to code them from automatic sorting.

■ An order placed for a further 18 reading machines for delivery beginning in 1987.

■ Continued development jointly with industry of a new generation of letter-coding desks and letter-sorting machines.

■ A continuous presence maintained in the electronic facsimile transmission market.

■ The beginning of trials at Bristol of the E40, one of the world's fastest letter-sorting machines which can sort up to 32,000 letters an hour, twice the speed of existing machines.

■ Introduction of new transport arrangements, combining road, rail and air between London and 12 cities.

Parcels

In 1985-1986 the Post Office:

■ Introduced Trakback, a signed delivery service for contract customers, using the latest developments in bar code technology.

■ Laid plans to improve the capability of handling heavier and larger parcels.

■ Opened a large modern handling depot in Reading for the Thames Valley area.

■ Prepared new quality of service monitoring schemes and a computerised tracking system for air parcels.

Counters

■ The Tory government has approved a substantial investment in automation beginning with 250 offices. The key aspect will be computer terminals at counters linked into an integrated network. Installation of terminals at counter positions in 6,000 offices will be completed by 1993. Currently the counter sector serves more than 20 million customers each week through 21,000 post offices.

A social Service

THE STATE postal service was established in Britain in 1635 when the facilities of the Royal Posts were opened up to the public by Charles I. Oliver Cromwell's republican government removed the King's head but confirmed the state monopoly of posts and set official postage rates in an Act of 1657.

The rise of industrial capitalism with its need for an efficient and cheap nationwide service led to the penny post of 1840, its significance being that cost was low and no longer related to distance travelled, but weight. Postal workers were active by the mid-19th Century, forming unions and defending their interests against fierce state opposition.

A telegraphists' strike occurred in 1871 and a postmen's strike in 1890.

On the other hand, following the 1926 General Strike in which postal workers played a prominent part, the 1927 Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act banned civil servants unions (which at that time included Post Office Unions) from affiliating to the TUC or the Labour Party. This was repealed in 1946 by the post-war Labour government under a virtual mandate to do so from trade union voters.

However, it was also a Labour government, under Prime Minister Harold Wilson, which launched the first attack on the Post Office's nationalised status when in March 1967 a multi-million pound strategy was prepared for rationalising and developing its operations, most of the money going to the telecommunications side.

The service was divided into two separate sectors, posts and telecommunications, then split away from the Civil Service to become a

public corporation in 1969. The telecommunications section was finally privatised by the Tories in July 1984.

The latest British Telecom battle should provide additional lessons for Post Office workers who last year had their own fight over the introduction of the changed working practices outlined in the Report and Accounts.

Following the use of P.A. management consultants to measure workloads with work study techniques at 12 sorting offices, new schedules were introduced to fit staff to the 'peaks and troughs' of the workload. An overtime ban at Leeds by 2,000 staff when management began imposing the changes without agreement was answered by the Post Office with the use of hundreds of non-union, casual workers and transfer of work elsewhere.

The union leadership emphasised the question of meal breaks but the real issue was the loss of 122 full-time jobs at Leeds and the equivalent application of the scheme across the service leading to the loss of thousands of jobs.

A 24-hour strike at Leeds led to a subsequent demand from management that workers sign an undertaking not to strike, or face suspension. Massive support action followed.

Seeking to force the new practices through, Chairman Dearing said at the time: 'We have to get tough over this issue. It has gone on long enough. There is absolutely no question of us backing down.' ('Guardian', 1 June 1986).

Contingency plans were laid by the Tory Cabinet to beat any resulting strike by using private

postal carriers as strike-breakers. The strike was averted by a total capitulation by the right-wing leadership of the Union of Communications Workers who signed a deal accepting the new practices.

These are clearly the basis for speed-up, job cuts and privatisation and a service heavily dependent on casual labour, i.e. on non-union cheap-labour schemes. True, there are the productivity bonus schemes, but these are notorious for tightening up and disappearing as exceptional working is made into the norm — and the Post Office's professed concern in this respect is to 'save' £60 million a year.

Today's Post Office union leaders appear to be still standing on the infamous premise laid down by former Union of Postal Workers general secretary Tom Jackson who told 'The Times' on 29 January 1969:

'We have always welcomed development which would reduce the size of the labour force. It is the policy of our union so far as posts are concerned to seek a gradual reduction in the number of staff employed on the basis that those left in the service will be better-paid as a result.'

Today the Post-Office provides not just a public service, but a social service: It makes payments and supplies information to pensioners, the unemployed and other claimants. It supplies a savings and banking service. It deals with motorists needing licences and travellers needing passports. Aside from its massive business mail it carries post between family and friends separated by job and housing problems.

Clearly there must be an unremitting fight against rationalisation and privatisation of the service.

Changes in working practices

MECHANISATION and automation introduced by an employer preoccupied with profitability is not meant to benefit the workforce in terms of shorter hours and easier working but on the contrary is aimed at cutting the numbers employed while extending the workload of the remaining.

On this basis working practices are constantly revised and rationalised, often by work study and method study techniques, to fit in with the new systems and thereby increase the level of exploitation of those involved.

The Post Office Report states that a 'far-reaching agreement' with the Union of Communication Workers, signed in Spring 1985, rests heavily on the continual extension of staff flexibility at local offices.

Described as a 'breakthrough' in the Chairman's statement, it will involve a continuous office-by-office study to find ways of cutting costs and raising efficiency with the outcome linked to pay through productivity bonus schemes.

The agreement specifically provided for the increased employment of part-time staff. More than 1,500 such posts have already been filled but many more are to be created.

Changes in working practices in the year in question were affected by the following operations:

Letters

■ A team of industrial engineers reviewed workplace practices at Leeds head post office and are said to have greatly increased productivity by introducing work standards. The report states: 'This approach will be introduced at all major mail centres over the next two years.'

■ A mails network inspectorate has been established.

■ The appointment of professional transport managers and the introduction of efficiency measures is said to have greatly improved the effectiveness of road transport operations.

■ A drive has begun for significant productivity improvement in engineering maintenance arrangements. In general, a priority aim has been set with a concern to 'improve productivity by aligning staff requirements more closely with traffic, using modern measurement techniques and rewarding staff for improved performance.'

Parcels

■ A fundamental review of the parcels service was launched with a view to improving efficiency, productivity, cost effectiveness and quality of service.

■ A programme of sorting office examination was initiated using modern method study and materials handling techniques.

Counters

■ Over the year, counter staff hours were cut by 0.6 per cent. The Post Office expects to continue this trend by negotiating major efficiency packages with the two main staff unions. These deals will rest on increased use of part-time staff in a form which will guarantee an extension of the service at a reduced cost.

■ The closure programme of the past two years, involving main and sub-offices is said to be at an end, at least for the year ahead. However replacement of a full-time service with part-time subpostmasters is likely to continue in rural areas where it is not 'cost-effective' to maintain the present provision.



Postal workers have been involved in many struggles in defence of pay and working conditions — now under threat if privatisation goes ahead. Above: Acton postmen on picket duty in December 1984. Above: A mass picket during the long postal strike in 1971.

LETTERS

Letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editorial Board. Letters over 500 words will normally be cut. Letters should arrive by first post Monday at: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS, and should include sender's address.

When a Fryer needs a panning

PETER Fryer ('Personal Column', 14 February) confesses a reluctance to get caught up in other people's controversies — a pity therefore that he could not temper his diffidence with restraint.

It is odd that a Personal Column should be a forum for personal attacks and that it should choose to be partisan on so important an issue as... muddled writing.

Cde Peter (I dropped the lone surname when I left public school) broke, as is well known, from the Communist Party on the issue of the Hungarian Revolution.

He came to Trotskyism, but the problems of the movement at that time precluded his making the contribution that his undoubted talents would have allowed.

His later departure was, for him, a period of considerable anguish — but our problems remained unresolved for years.

On the contrary, the party became an organisation chronically unable to tolerate the kind of free discussion of which his column is an example.

That this was but one symptom of profound political problems is, of course, widely acknowledged. Other aspects of this degeneration are less well understood.

One of these is that an entire generation, no longer young, in the party is completely unused to articulating its political ideas — our development has been stunted as surely as malnutrition prevents healthy growth.

It would be a tragedy if the older generations to whom we look for assistance in overcoming this spurned our request.

For example, Cde Downing was attacked in a recent letter from J. Upward (he might adopt the nom-de-plume of Step Sideways) because Cde Downing called the policies of the Socialist Labour League on Ireland 'middle class'. What a crime!

I chanced to read that letter at the same time as I read Cde Sarah Hannigan's account of how Micky Devine left the SLL because of its chauvinist line on Ireland (chauvinism is bourgeois ideology, but let that pass) only to die later in the 1981 Hunger Strikes.

It makes one pause for thought.

Again, Brian Pearce is a contemporary of Peter Fryer who shares a similar political history.

Cde Pearce is a lifelong communist to whom the movement will always owe a debt for his magnificent translations of Trotsky, especially the monumental 'Military Writings'.

He is a confident and articulate writer.

Peter Fryer is the author of another monumental study, 'Staying Power', the history of black people in Britain.

It is widely regarded as a classic 'which manages the rare feat of combining scholarship with readability'. Peter himself writes of 'the effect English racism has had on the lives of black people living in this country'.

Is it too forward to remind Peter that using the word 'Londonderry' to refer to Derry (as Brian Pearce does in the same issue of the paper as Cde Goldstein's letter) is as sure a symbol of English racism to Irish nationalists as 'nigger' is to black people?

The meaning is clear; it is less important than attacking Richard Goldstein's letter on the opposite page? Do Norah Wilde's syntactical problems pale into insignificance?

Or is it perhaps that Peter Fryer fears arguing with his friends even more than he hates getting caught up in other peoples' controversies?

But let us agree that racist terminology is a secondary issue unworthy of the attentions of an independent columnist and that muddled writing is a burning issue.

I don't find it hard to get the gist of what Norah Wilde is saying but if I were to adopt Peter's role of pedagogue I could find my way to awarding marks for content even if I scored it low on presentation.

However, I don't have a weekly column — which brings me to another point.

This party fought for the right of its members to speak and write freely. This right is an indispensable weapon in building the kind of party to which we aspire.

We won that fight — in political battles, legal struggles, a war of financial attrition and, most recently, in the criminal courts where the man who drove Peter Fryer out of the movement used his stooges as police witnesses to jail one of our members. Our victory is substantial but fragile.

The training of new writers is an urgent problem. Norah Wilde (and Richard Goldstein, come to that) is one of the many new names in our paper whose development we should treasure, not belittle.

Of course, such a 'gung-ho' method of 'correcting the press' as Peter Fryer adopts may be fine for the tough world of the literary review — professional writers must be judged by the standards of their trade. But is it appropriate for this party at this stage of its development?

Again, may we recall that it was precisely the political determination of our members (Richard Goldstein played a leading role) which, despite their appalling ignorance of orthography, syntax and (Ye Gods!) punctuation, enabled Peter Fryer to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution

'Questions' answered

I LIST below my replies to Comrade Peter Fryer's question in his Personal Column last week (Workers Press, 14 February).

1. Slake means quench. In this case a way of describing imperialism satisfying itself at the expense of semi-colonial countries.
2. The antecedent of 'that' is bourgeois democratically elected governments.
3. This refers to phenomena in general and the state in particular.
4. 'Materialist basis of changing international class correlations' means showing how changes in the world economic situation and political situation affect each other.
5. 'Modified essence of development' is correct. It is a more accurate way of describing change. Some examples of this are boom to slump, deflation to monetarism, Labour to Tory, parliamentary democracy to naked dic-

tatorship.

6. 'Permitting preparedness for the essential line of class developments' — the 'whom' is the Fourth International; the 'what' is giving revolutionary leadership.

7. I see no useful purpose in commenting on this question.

I am the first to admit that Comrade Norah Wilde does not have a free flowing journalistic style.

That does not invalidate what I called a 'bold effort' to follow the issues involved.

Comrade Fryer now has not only all the letters and editorials involved but my answers to his questions.

I would like to ask Comrade Fryer a question: Will he make a political comment on the issues involved, in particular Comrade John Robinson's comment that he is reminded of the Communist Party's British Road to Socialism and what I say to this?

Richard Goldstein

in the impressive way he did.

It is a shame that Peter could not have contented himself with a shorter column for one week and devoted the extra time to helping comrades like Norah to learn the techniques of his trade. Why take the privilege of a column for himself and use it to silence the less articulate with sarcasm?

I sat in court for two days recently and saw the effects of an anonymous 'column' in

another newspaper I could name which sought physically to silence an opponent. It has temporarily succeeded.

Of course, this was abuse of a political enemy, not sarcasm towards an inexperienced comrade. But I hope that my anxiety will not provoke more sarcasm.

I write this honestly, but not humbly. I'm far too angry and far too disappointed for that.

Dave Bruce
SE London WRP

Vietnamese Trotskyists

WE HAVE been interested to read the excellent treatment by Comrade S. Pirani of the struggles of the Vietnamese Trotskyists in the Workers Press for the last few weeks, and they fill a real gap in the literature of the subject, at least in Britain.

However, in the issue dated 24 January, there is the statement that the Fourth International publicised the massacre of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, followed by the remark that Natalia Trotsky 'was in 1947 accusing the FI leaders of relaxing the fight against Stalinism', without any further explanation.

The truth of the matter was that when the news of 1945 came through to Europe the initial reaction of the leaders of the International Secretariat was to support the Stalinists.

In spite of the fact that Ho Chi Minh had said in July 1939 that the Stalinists would do their utmost to annihilate the Trotskyists on the political level and to 'unmask them as agents of the fascists', the French Trotskyist paper 'La Verite' announced that 'the majority of the Communist Party of Indo-China has broken with Stalinism and joined the Fourth International' (reproduced in Socialist Appeal, mid-July 1945). 'Front Ouvrier' published the following from the pen of Daniel Guerin:

"That is why the intellectual elite of the Annamites, after having been nationalists for a time, today adhere in the majority to revolutionary Marxism. Is not the President of the Viet Minh really the militant Communist Nguyen Ai Quoc? His book 'The Process of French Colonisation' is known to all the members of the Indo-Chinese people"

('The Militant', 24 November 1945)

Without this information Natalia Trotsky's complaints remain inexplicable. Her evolution to a Third Camp position, like that of the Cliff group in Britain, was a result of the capitulation of the International Secretariat to Stalinism in the first place, and cannot be explained in any other way. The Yugoslav affair was only the final proof (if any more were needed) as far as she was concerned.

Incidentally, your January 3 number also reproduces a letter from Charlie van Gelderen attacking our book, and referring to his similar attack in the last issue of International.

Apart from being mystified as to what 'enmeshed in a time warp' may mean in terms of dialectical materialism (presumably our refusal to desert Marxism for middle class-lifestyle politics), we notice that the letter to which we refer talks about 'many errors of substance' in chapter one of our book — without any further elucidation.

Are we supposed to take it at that? If Charlie knows of them, isn't it his revolutionary duty to set them right?

One of our alleged errors pointed out in his International review is our remark that nine tenths of the RCP members were workers, and he pours scorn upon it. For his benefit, the source of this particular error is the organisational report to the 1947 RCP Conference, where there is a detailed breakdown of the membership.

It was a fabrication. There were no workers in the RCP. The report was a fabrication. It was a fabrication. It was a fabrication.

Against chauvinism

THE CALL for a re-organisation of the Fourth International published recently in the Workers Press requires a fight for proletarian internationalism against the reactionary chauvinism contained in Brian Pearce's letter (Workers Press, 7 February).

It also requires clarity on such basic issues as unconditional support for national liberation movements and in the definition of World War II as a 'war between slaveholders with the aims of consolidating slavery', not a 'struggle against reactionary absolutism'.

This latter is a social-chauvinist position as it 'var-

nishes' the bourgeoisie of the allied powers. Chauvinism has infected the Trotskyist movement in this country and came out in the reactions of various groups to the Malvinas war.

At least the WRP, after an internal struggle, took up a principled position of calling for a defeat of British imperialism in this war, but some other groups calling themselves Trotskyist, notably Militant, took a chauvinist attitude to the war.

It is an extremely serious situation when, more than 60 years after Lenin wrote his pamphlet on Socialism and

War, disorientation on these basic issues can disable large sections of the left at a time when clear revolutionary leadership was urgently required.

It is also serious when a member of the 'special bodies of armed men' of the state that has enslaved more peoples than any other in history can lecture a captured member of a national liberation movement, who undoubtedly had as few illusions in Nazism as he had in British imperialism, on the dangers of enslavement, and today boasts about it in the columns of Workers Press.

('Communist' interventions of this type in the national liberation struggles

must have some responsibility for the popularity of the rosary in Ireland today.)

The expulsion of Healy has enabled us to strike decisive blows against this chauvinist tendency in the party, both in the expulsions and the ensuing struggles in the WRP.

The fight to re-organise the Fourth International must strike decisive blows against this tendency in the workers' movement in the imperialist countries. Any movement which is not implacably hostile to this reflection of imperialism — transmitted through their aristocracies of labour into the workers' movements of these countries — would be incapable of giving any leadership to the struggles of the masses against imperialism.

Frank Fitzmaurice
Liverpool

Revolutionary strategy in Ireland

J. UPWARD recently referred to G. Downing's discussion article 'Revolutionary strategy in Ireland'.

Gerry's article briefly mentioned 'the role of the British middle class left including the Socialist Labour League/Workers Revolutionary Party under Healy' in relation to Ireland.

J. Upward asked: 'Has he (G. Downing) discussed and found agreement in that (Central) Committee that the SLL/WRP was part of "the British middle-class left" or is he making this attack as an individual — in the columns of the WRP's paper?' (Workers Press, 24 January 1987)

Has J. Upward discussed and found agreement that the SLL/WRP was not part of the British middle class left etc.?

Whilst we have reached agreement as to what constitutes the theoretical foundations of Trotskyism, we are far from having completed our analysis of the way in which the British middle class left has developed. I must thank J. Upward for his question.

Press, 17 January 1987.

That is why we are engaging in open discussion in the Party, in Workers Press and with other organisations.

But J. Upward thinks the process begins the other way round.

Against the Party's all-sided and concrete approach, he proposes the abstract and impoverished method in which the CC must first of all discuss our history and reach agreement, despite the obvious fact that the CC alone does not possess all the necessary knowledge.

To be consistent, that method would also have to be applied to thousands of other issues involved in the global history of Trotskyism over the last 45 years.

An approach so cumbersome and bureaucratic would effectively liquidate discussion, not only in the Party, Workers Press and with other organisations, but within the already overworked CC itself. A dialectic J. Upward appears to have envisaged.

sion article as an 'attack' upon the SLL, this approach aligns J. Upward with D. North, leader of the Workers League (US).

He also opposed the WRP's public re-examination of the past, and claimed that it was an attack upon Trotskyism, an attitude J. Upward seems to share.

He writes: 'I defy (sic) him (G. Downing) to show how the politics of the SLL, on Ireland or on any other question, were "middle class", meaning presumably that SLL policies were consistently Trotskyist.'

Free and open discussion however has brought to light the following painful reminders that this is far from the truth.

Consider the following:

- SLL policies based on 'partitionist rubbish' concerning Ireland in December 1968 and July 1969. (S. Pirani Workers Press, 8 November 1986)

- Suppression of the question of women's double oppression and exploitation
- Failure to recognise Cuba as a defeated workers state

- Support for the Mao wing of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

- Inability of the SLL to probe the roots of 'Pabloism', a matter which influenced, if not informed many other questions, etc. etc.

Alas, the list is extensive, which is not to say that other policies were not correct.

But to treat the SLL one-sidedly is to agree with North, as J. Upward does, that our movement's decay spanned only the years 1975-1985.

But why confine the challenge to free and open discussion to the SLL years only? Why not extend it to 1940-1959 and indeed to 1975-1985? In fact, why not end open debate altogether, and pass straight from North back to Healy?

Since October 1985, freed from bureaucratic repression, Workers Press and the WRP through its internal and public discussions, have deepened and clarified our understanding of the past, another dialectic with which J. Upward appears to be unfamiliar.

Norah Wilde

Letter from America US farmers going bust

WHEN fourth-generation Iowa farmer Dean Hagedorn walked into his bank last year with a cheque for \$94,000, the proceeds of his corn crop, he thought his problems were over. Instead the bank kept the cheque, foreclosed his mortgage and forced him into bankruptcy. Hagedorn is now a door-to-door salesman.

His case was one of five recently bankrupted farmers from the same area featured in a front-page article in 'The New York Times' on 4 February.

Charlie Behrens, a life-long farmer of 65 on land in the family for 124 years, found that the bank called in its loans after two bad soybean crops.

He told a 'Times' reporter: 'They'd call up at 7.30 in the morning: "You got any money yet, Charlie?" they'd ask. And then they'd call back at 8.30 at night. I didn't know people could get that way. But, you see, they were scared, too, with all the problems around.'

Behrens has given up looking for a full-time job and lives in a cheap rented house without running water.

In the last few years thousands of farmers in the rich farmlands of the Mid-West have suffered the fate of Hagedorn and Behrens. According to the US Department of Agriculture, the number of farms had dropped by 65,000 in the 12-month period ending in June 1986. That means a farm was lost about every eight minutes.

Assuming three people per farm, about 200,000 people are leaving the land each year, an outflow unparalleled since the Depression of the 1930s.

Most of those affected had been comparatively prosperous 'family farmers', the backbone of American agriculture, to whose well-being capitalist politicians all pay lip-service. In fact, the independent family farmer has long been one of the great myths of the American Dream.

For many years now more and more such farmers have been driven out of business and many others only survive because they, or members of their family, have non-farm jobs — mostly low-paying ones in small towns in the predominantly rural areas.

Although in one sense small rural capitalists, the family farmers are squeezed between the corporations from which they have to

purchase their inputs and the food-processors to whom they sell their produce. American farming cannot be carried on without a huge investment in tractors and machinery. Even in 1976 the average capital invested per farm worker was \$88,000, 4.5 times as much as the national average of \$20,000 in industry.

Even a family farm, employing no hired labour, thus requires a huge investment of capital to stay in business. Expenditure on machinery drives farmers to borrow from the banks or other lenders.

If receipts from crops fall, and especially if there is a bad harvest, payments cannot be met and the farmer is at the mercy of his creditors. His mortgage may be foreclosed and his machinery distrained.

The local banker is too often no longer a family friend ready to extend a helping hand to a neighbour, but a

at the mercy of market forces as shaped by the needs of monopoly capital.

The idea of the legend, that farming is 'a way of life', is ground to pieces in the face of capitalist reality. The farmer has to drive himself, and members of his family, in order to stay in business. Even if he remains relatively prosperous the farm family suffers from hidden exploitation.

Like the peasants about whom Marx wrote, the American family farmer is in the position of receiving rent (if he owns his land), of exploiting labour (his own family or hired labour) and of producing surplus value — a fair proportion of which is creamed off by the corporations who sell him his inputs and buy his crops or animals.

While ceasing to be the independent rural entrepreneurs they once were, the

Meanwhile, the agribusinesses have moved into large-scale production using advanced technology which immensely increases productivity and reduces the demand for labour. Little more than 3 per cent of the workforce is now left in agriculture.

More and more labour is hired instead of being provided by the family farm unit. Such labour consists largely of migratory farm workers including many recent immigrants, whether legal or undocumented, in areas of intensive cultivation such as California in particular. Incidentally, the unions have just won an important concession: the provision of sanitary facilities by the giant farms which employ them.

Meanwhile, American agriculture is continuing to go through profound changes. The land of the failed family farmers is being taken over by bigger, more highly capitalised units. These big farms are the main beneficiaries of government handouts originally designed for the salvation of the family farmer in the days of the New Deal.

The agri-businesses are deep into certain kinds of production as well as squeezing the surviving farmers. Who said the capitalist laws of concentration and centralisation do not apply to agriculture! They have only taken longer to work themselves out.

The process going on in the American farmlands represents a desperate attempt by the giant corporations to keep up the rate of profit in the face of the relentless overproduction crisis.

This restructuring and re-deployment of capital, though spread over a lengthy period with enormous geographical unevenness, is of as great historical moment for American agriculture as were the enclosures in England or the Soviet collectivisation of the 1930s.

How it will end is by no means clear, but agricultural exports are now of vital importance at a time when the US is running a monster trade deficit and the dollar is tumbling.

One thing is clear. The problems of the Mid-West 'family farmers' are inextricably bound up with the world crisis of capitalism and they are buffeted by forces which they neither understand nor can influence.

'They'd call up at 7.30 in the morning: "You got any money yet, Charlie?" they'd ask. And then they'd call back at 8.30 at night. I didn't know people could get that way. But, you see, they were scared, too, with all the problems around.'

hard-nosed executive with head office breathing down his neck. With interest rates at 18 per cent or more the banks scoop up a big proportion of the earnings of even the more solvent farmers.

Concerned about their loans, banks are actually advising farmers to get out before they are forced out by bankruptcy.

In any case, the family farmer of legend is very often simply a farm operator working to the requirements of the giant agri-businesses. He is forced to enter into contracts under which seed, fertiliser and the rest are supplied in order to produce a given crop, the price of which is fixed in advance.

Even when not bound so rigidly to the agri-businesses, the farmer has to depend on a few big suppliers for machinery, fertilisers and other imports. When he comes to sell his crop he likewise confronts a handful of monopolistic concerns. Family farmers are

family farmers who remain in business still preserve their illusions in capitalism. Or they look to the Federal government to assist them with subsidies or price supports or with threats against other countries, like those of the Common Market, who do not keep their doors open for American agricultural exports.

Those who are forced out of business do not, for the most part, turn to the workers' movement — for reasons which are partly bound up with the historic crisis of leadership so acute in the US. Consciousness lags behind objective conditions and processes.

Mostly they seek an individual solution. Of the five cases investigated by 'The New York Times', two had become salesmen, one had joined the police force, one was still looking for work and the other was too old to have any chance of finding a full-time job.

GEORGE LORMIN New York

LISTINGS

Listings are published free by WORKERS PRESS for organisations within the Labour movement. Please send details of any function or event you want to advertise to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Friday.

WRP PUBLIC MEETING: Role of the Revolutionary Paper Tuesday 24 February 7.30pm at Deppford Town Hall, David Bruce (WRP CC), Alan Clark (Sogot 82), Danny Chapman (NCU) — last two in a personal capacity.

MARXIST FORUM: Marxism and the Labour Party Monday 2 March, 7.30pm at Rising Sun Pub, Harlesden Road, Willesden, NW10. Speaker: Peter Firmin (Socialist Viewpoint).

WRP West of Scotland Branch Discussion Class: What is Marxism Tuesday 3 March 7.15pm at Woodside Halls, Glenfarg Street off Maryhill Road (near St George's Cross). Further classes to be announced.

A SOCIALIST PLATFORM MEETING/SOCIAL ON 'War and the International' A discussion on the history and problems of the Trotskyist movement in Britain. 7.30pm Saturday 28 February, Duke of York Pub, York Way, near Kings Cross Station.

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE. For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political

prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House in Trafalgar Square, London. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Weekly planning meetings are held every Tuesday, 7.30pm, Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All are welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938)

RAGGED TROUSERED CABARET Sunday 22 February, 8.00pm at The Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sister Road, London N7 (£2.50/1.50). Acts include: Ian McPherson; Crisis Twins; Jazz duo and poet/juggler

RAGGED TROUSERED CABARET NUJ Surrey/South London Newspapers Benefit, Friday 27 February, 8.00pm at The Secombe Centre, 42 Cheam Road, Sutton Surrey. (£3.50) Featuring: Thundering Typhoons; John Hegley; Jenny Eclair and Pr Murry

SOCIALIST DISABILITY ACTION GROUP Public Meeting, Wednesday 4 March at 6.15pm-8.00pm. House of Commons, Room 6

WOMEN AND SANCTUARY MOVEMENT We're all refugees from Reagan's war. Monday 23 February 7.30pm at St Werburgh's Community Centre, Horley Road, St Werburghs, Bristol. Also, The Los Angeles Ripper — Justice v

Police Illegality and Racism. Co-sponsored by the English Collective of Prostitutes. The Inkworks, 20-22 Hepburn Road, St Pauls, Bristol

FROM RESISTANCE TO REBELLION An exhibition of Asian and Afro-Caribbean struggles in Britain. February 3-28. Dame Colet House, Ben Johnson Road, Stepney, London E1 (01-790 9077). Exhibition goes on to Multicultural Education Centre, Leeds, 7 from March 2-13 (0532 623 448).

POLICING THE IRISH COMMUNITY A Conference organised by Greenwich and Lewisham Councils. Saturday, February 28, 10.00am-4.30pm. The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford, SE8 4AG. Speakers, videos, workshops on PTA, Plastic Bullets and Strip searching. Stalls, books etc. Free creche; wheelchair accessible and Signer available. Ring 01-854-8888 extn. 2056 for further details

MOLESWORTH WOMEN BREAK THE SILENCE Molesworth rape survivors invite you to a day of discussion and workshops. Saturday, 21 February, 11.00am-5.00pm, Wesley House, London.

MEETING AGAINST RE-START Merseyside Trade Union Community and Unemployed Resource Centre, 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool. Friday, 27 February. Starts at 2.00pm followed by a Concert in the evening.

LABOUR BRIEFING Youth Day School 'Youth and Sexuality' Saturday 21 March 10.00am-4.30pm. For details of venue etc. phone Fran (01-431 0357) or Mike (01-769 6803)

DEFEND THE WOBOURNE 12 Defend Lesbian and Gay Rights. Planning meeting every Thursday at 7.30pm, The Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 (Finsbury Park tube)

CAMPAIGN FOR TRADE UNION SANCTIONS AGAINST APARTHEID Picket South African Embassy, Saturday, 21 February, 2.00-4.00pm. Release All Political Detainees in South Africa

SPECIAL SCREENING: 'Secret Society' Zircon programme — Half Moon Theatre, Mile End Road (near Stepney Green). 23 February at 7.30pm. £1.00 Entrance

GEORGE ROUCOU DEFENCE CAMPAIGN Lobby Appeal Hearing, Friday 13 March at 9.30am, Aldine House, New Bailey Street, (across the Inwell), Manchester. Bring your banners!

SUPPORT THE WHEELERS WORKERS March and Demonstration, Saturday 28 February, assemble 12 noon, Queen's Square, Brighton. Organised by T&GWU Regional Committee

CITY OF LONDON Anti-Apartheid Group National Demonstration and Rally, Saturday 14 March. Assemble Whittington Park, Highgate (near Archway tube) at 1.00pm; march to South African Embassy

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£15,000 Special Fund

IN SO FAR: £10,367.34

THE Workers Revolutionary Party has called for an International Conference of Trotskyists to re-organise the Fourth International. It is planned to take place later this year.

The Special Fund is being spent as it comes in to pay for international work in preparation for that meeting. The response from around the world has brought donations to our fund — including the unsolicited £160 from 'a comrade of the ISL in New York City' that we reported last week.

The Workers Revolutionary Party would like to thank members and supporters for the response so far. The first £10,000 we asked for came in by the target date; now we have extended the total to £15,000. Please discuss how this can be reached.

● Send your contributions, large or small, to help pay for this international work, to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

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ROBSON'S CHOICE

The subtle side of censorship

IN THIS column last week I made the point that the media in general does not need to adopt heavy-handed methods of censorship to exert its class influence.

It can do so, for example, by endlessly repeating the same characterisation until it becomes the socially accepted norm.

The example I gave was the use of the word 'terrorist' to represent freedom-fighter. (When Reagan applies the word 'freedom-fighter' to the reactionary Nicaraguan Contras he is being absolutely consistent. For him and his class, a fighter for freedom from imperialist domination and oppression is a 'terrorist'.)

In Monday's *Panorama*, all bark-and-no-bite Sir Robin Day produced another example of the same method. In introducing the leader of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock, and speculating on the outcome of the next general election, Day framed the question thus: 'Should the country choose socialism'.

The interview that followed revealed what millions of people — including Robin Day — have known for a long time: that Neil Kinnock has nothing whatever in common with 'socialism' even of the reformist variety.

When a British Labour leader and a prospective prime minister can claim Ronald Reagan as a close friend and confidant, as Kinnock did with pride in Monday's broadcast, he needs a herd of Robin Days (or a week of them, if you prefer) to accuse him of being a 'socialist'!

In other words, Kinnock is a 'socialist' only when the Days of this world give him that label. And the conspiracy goes deeper. The interview was especially revealing for the topics it failed to address.

If Day really believed Kinnock to be a threat, a 'socialist', he would surely have asked him the question of questions: Will a future Labour government renationalise the industries and services privatised by Thatcher?

But on this point, no doubt by tacit agreement, Day was absolutely silent.

When the young Keir Hardie stated 'We don't preach revolutionary socialism. We are practical men capable of practical gains' (*Pioneers of Socialism*, Saturday, C4), he was being a thousand times more honest than Neil Kinnock is today.

* * *

On **Saturday**, (6.20p.m. BBC2), *Micro Live* explores new developments in robotics. At 8.15p.m. (C4), part two of *Pioneers of Socialism*. At 9.40p.m. (BBC2) George Stevens' langorous epic, *Giant*.

Playwright Alun Owen's *Lena O My Lena*, made for Armchair Theatre, is on **Sunday** at 9.15p.m. (C4). At 10.30p.m. (BBC2) you can see Dennis Potter's latest work since 'The Singing Detective', *Visitors* — bound to be of interest.

On **Monday** there is little to catch the eye except *We Build*

Ships at 10.55p.m. (C4), which focuses on the decline of the ship-building industry in the north east.

Bandage your eyes on **Tuesday** and tune in to Radio 4 at 8.30p.m. for *The Tuesday Feature: Trial by System*, a reconstruction of the 1938 Stalin Show Trial.

On **Wednesday**, Fay Weldon's *Heart of the Country* (9.25p.m. BBC2) might be of interest. If not, there is *Paradise Alley* (10.05p.m. BBC1), starring Sylvester Stallone, who also directs, before concentrating most of his energy on developing a red neck. It is the story of three working class youths and their attempts to break out of their 1946 New York slum existence.

On **Thursday**, Film on Four is screening *Cal* at 9p.m. — high on promise but low on delivery.

Friday has largely been given over to combating Aids, but before I come to that let me draw attention to a delightfully inventive feature film called *Fantastic Voyage* (1.30p.m. ITV).

At 9.30p.m. on both BBC1 and BBC2 you can see *Aids — the Facts*. ITV, as is so often the case, has put it to music: *First Aids* starts at 7.30p.m. and ends at 9p.m.

Intentionally, or unintentionally, BBC2 closes the evening with *Ida Lupino's The Bigamist* at 11.35p.m. *Henry Hathaway's Diplomatic Courier* (11.15p.m. C4), an excellent espionage thriller, is the other option.

TOM SCOTT ROBSON



Derek Waring as Arthur and Susan Penhaligon as Natalie in Fay Weldon's first original serial for television 'Heart of the Country' (starts Wednesday, BBC2, 9.25p.m.)

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PERSONAL COLUMN

Christopher Caudwell remembered

an embarrassment to some of the participants today'.

Margolies himself found Caudwell guilty of 'dreadful writing', 'an often muddy prose', and 'a lack of organisation . . . that often makes his ideas unnecessarily difficult to follow'. Caudwell's work 'bears all the marks of hasty composition'.

But Margolies paid tribute to the 'brilliant insight' and 'immense breadth of knowledge' of this 'renaissance man', whom he called 'the most important English Marxist critic' and 'perhaps the first critic to take a fully social and fully Marxist view of art'.

I am inclined to agree with both poles of Margolies' appreciation. It is important, I think, to bear in mind that when he dashed off those posthumously published writings, some of which he left more or less in note form, Caudwell had only just become familiar with Marxism.

He had taken on the stupendously ambitious task, for someone in his twenties, of applying what he had just learnt from Marx to the whole of the culture in which he had been brought up.

His weaknesses and failures are obvious. His strength and success lie in his sturdily independent thinking, his refusal to substitute slogans, clichés, and quotations for real argument and real knowledge.

The bibliography of 'Illusion and Reality' contains 350 titles. It shows Caudwell's acquaintance with all the leading writers, up to his day, in psychology, anthropology, philosophy, history, aesthetics, linguistics, and many other disciplines.

Nor was this a mere nodding acquaintance. The text shows that he had read these authors, and read them critically.

Somebody once said — if I may be permitted a quotation that does help my argument — that communism is an empty phrase, a mere façade, and the communist a mere bluffer, 'if he has not worked over in his consciousness the whole inheritance of human knowledge'.

Caudwell made a valiant, if abortive, attempt to do exactly that, and to share his discoveries and insights.

And it is this attempt which makes his writings, in J. B. S. Haldane's phrase, a 'quarry of ideas'.

Half a century after Caudwell's death, perhaps his most appropriate epitaph is those words of his on death that I paraphrased from memory a couple of weeks ago. They come from 'Love: A Study in Changing Values', one of the 'Studies in a Dying Culture':

'The more full and abundant our life, the more we are repelled by death, and this repulsion, so painful, is yet productive of pleasure, for it forces us to cram our now valued lives full of richness and complexity, to seize great armfuls of time and action, to achieve and conquer and love and suffer before we die. Death, the negation of life, thus generates it. All spring, all youth, all health yields its peculiar and rich savour just because of this, that they go.'

The 'bisexual' face of policing

AS a footnote to Martin Walker's sombre and informative piece last week on 'The Future Face of Policing', spare a thought for the part played in 'Operation Perch' by stout Pc Stewart Taylor of the Paddington vice squad.

Using a false name, he had a letter posted from Egypt to the celebrated Streatham party-giver Mrs Cynthia Payne. That was to establish his bona fides.

Then, with make-up borrowed from a female colleague, he was transformed from Plod into 'bisexual'.

A professional make-up artist was employed to apply green eye-shadow, mascara, and heavy lipstick. The officer, described in court as possessing a 'huge beer-belly', donned a silk blouse and cravat.

All this and much more, be it noted, was done simply to save the face and protect the wilting morale of the Streatham police.

PETER FRYER

'DOES anyone still read Caudwell?' The question I asked a couple of weeks ago turns out to have been rather a daft one.

An edition of Caudwell's 'Collected Poems 1924-1936', with an introduction by Alan Young, was published only last year in Manchester by Carcanet Press.

It contains a great deal more than the original 'Poems' (1939), which was issued under Caudwell's real name: Christopher St John Sprigg.

As it happens, this month marks the 50th anniversary of Caudwell's death. He was killed on the afternoon of 12 February 1937, on a hill near the Jarama river, outside Madrid.

It was his first day of active service. He was 29.

An eyewitness said he was last seen covering his section's retreat, with the advancing Moors less than 30 yards away: 'He never left that hill alive, and if any man ever sacrificed his life that his comrades might live, that man was Sprigg.'

He was born in Putney on 20 October 1907, left school before he was 15, and worked for two years as a junior reporter on the 'Yorkshire Observer'.

He wrote for an aeronautical journal, learnt to fly, edited a trade journal, and invented an infinitely variable gear, though nothing seems to have come of it. He wrote seven detective novels and five aeronautics textbooks, one of which, on the dirigible, became a standard text.

He thought nothing of writing 5,000 words a day — roughly four times the length of this column — and would dash off a detective novel in a fortnight.

During the last three months of 1934, while working four half-days a week in an office, he wrote a serious novel ('This My Hand', 1936), a detective novel, an aviation textbook, 30 articles on flying, at least six short stories, several poems, and 'heaven knows how many news paragraphs'.

Towards the end of 1934 he began a thorough reading of the Marxist classics, and he spent the summer of 1935 in Cornwall completing this task.

Soon afterwards he moved to the east London borough of Poplar, where he joined the Communist Party, became branch secretary, and took his share of selling the 'Daily Worker', fly-posting, and street-corner oratory.

When the Poplar branch of the CP bought an ambulance for Spain, in December 1936, he volunteered to drive it across France and Spain to the front line.

Joining the British battalion of the International Brigade, he became a machine-gun instructor and edited the battalion's wall newspaper.

Caudwell had purposely avoided the party's intellectuals, who knew nothing of his talents and his work.

His brother took a proof copy of 'Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry' to the CP's King Street headquarters. Whereupon, so the story goes, a 'high party official' sent a cable to Spain recalling him; but it was too late.

'Illusion and Reality' was published posthumously in 1937, and was followed by 'Studies in a Dying Culture' (1938), 'The Crisis in Physics' (1939), 'Further Studies in a Dying Culture' (1949), and 'Romance and Realism: A Study in English Bourgeois Literature' (1970).

In 1951 'Modern Quarterly' opened its columns to a heated discussion on Caudwell's work that ran through a whole year's issues.

The debate was started by the philosopher Maurice Cornforth, for whom 'Caudwell tries to be Marxist, but does not succeed'.

The author of 'Aeschylus and Athens' (1941), George Thomson, whose death was reported recently, entitled his reply 'In Defence of Poetry'.

The savagest attack on Caudwell came from J. D. ('Sage') Bernal, who called his work 'schematic, bare and forced', 'noticeably lacking in historical sense', and 'a distortion of Marxism'.

Commenting on this controversy in his book 'The Function of Literature' (1969), David N. Margolies said it did little to advance understanding of Caudwell, 'served primarily to stir up feeling', and 'perhaps would even be

REVIEWS

E. Mandel on World War II

THE BIG question that arises from this recent publication is: What is the meaning of Mandel's book? What is its purpose?

Mandel has a world reputation as a Marxist writer; he is a well-known leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, of which he has been a member all his adult life.

The subject is a not unimportant one. War speeds up all social processes; it is a decisive test for all socialist and working class movements.

The last war, in particular, was a watershed in the imperialist epoch we live in. Out of it have arisen big questions for the Trotskyist movement, and for the international working class.

We cannot have too many Marxist studies of the World War II, from the point of view of aiding Trotskyists today, by throwing light on the class developments and problems of leadership then.

Mandel is not addressing this audience. He is not addressing the working class nor those interested in the problems of its emancipation.

His book is interesting in parts, it has the required quota of sources for academic circles, displays the author as someone who has read on military science, and altogether shows him to be a knowledgeable fellow.

It is, however, a descriptive journey through aspects of World War II. Here are some of the chapter heads: 'The immediate causes'; 'The social forces'; 'Resources'; 'Strategy'; 'Weapons'; 'Logistics'; 'The opening gambit in Europe'; 'Towards the climax'; 'The final onslaught'; 'The after-

The Meaning of the Second World War. By Ernest Mandel. Verso, £6.95.

math'; 'The legacy'.

The working class appears, but it is only as one aspect of the war among others. And, significantly, in some cases it does not appear at all. Here is Mandel telling us about contradictory relationships in the Soviet state:

'Within the USSR itself an explosive contradiction appeared between the strengthening of the USSR's industrial and military infrastructure under the Five Year Plan on the one hand, and the grave political crisis into which Stalin's purges and his reckless diplomatic game plunged the country, on the other.

'The second process decapitated the Red Army, disorganised the defences of the country, delivered Poland and Europe to Hitler, and facilitated the Nazi attack on the USSR. The first enabled the Soviet Union to survive in the end.'

We had always thought that the consciousness of the Soviet working class had a great deal to do with the survival of the Soviet Union. And further, that the contradiction in the Soviet Union appeared within the industrial and military 'infrastructure' itself, where the bureaucracy brought crisis and disruption.

Further, what is Mandel doing but personalising history in talking about one side of the contradiction as Stalin's 'purges and reckless diplomatic game'?

Mandel will mention the fundamental developments and relationships but his emphasis is on the secondary. The war is the result of the drive of imperialism to world domination, he says, and he then spends his time on immediate causes, on the

accidents and personal actions.

Certain bourgeois leaders — who is he telling? — were stupid. He says that: 'Bourgeois political and military leaders who end up losing half their state through pride, or because they hope - against all evidence - to regain through last minute political upheavals what they have lost on the battle field are simply a bunch of incompetents who do not defend their class interests properly.'

The German High Command, for instance, who had a 'certain psychological resistance to suing for peace . . . prolonged the war at the expense of the German bourgeoisie, which should have known better.'

And then there was the Polish bourgeoisie. From their 'point of view . . . it would obviously have been preferable to have made a deal with the Soviet Union as early as 1942 (not to mention prior to the war).'

'The Rumanian ruling class was another case in point'. Their 'helplessness is, to a significant degree, self inflicted . . .'

Mandel's pudding is a mixture of Marxism, sociology and downright rationalism. Added to that is the commentator's sigh.

'From the standpoint of the long term interests of the working class', he writes, 'not to mention the interests of world socialism, it would of course have been preferable if the masses of Rumania and the other East European countries had been able to liberate themselves, through their own forms of struggle. The Soviet bureaucracy's "revolutions from above" bequeathed an ugly political legacy, which has profoundly marked the post-war situation, not only in this part of Europe, but throughout the world.'

Bill Hunter



Stevie: a biography of Stevie Smith. By Jack Barbera and William McBrien. Papermac, £7.95.

UNAUTHORISED biography of Stevie Smith, writer and poet, illustrated with the quirky line drawings that she battled with her publishers to include alongside her poems. The book probes the relationship between her melancholy and her art, as when she

wrote that poetry is ignored like a 'branch line scheduled for closing'.

The authors remark: 'Typical of her humour, such remarks arise out of sadness but transform it by wit.'



E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical. By Patricia Romero. Yale University Press, £17.50.

SYMPATHETIC but sometimes politically woolly biography of Sylvia Pankhurst, which denies her usual 'socialist feminist' label in explaining her evolution from suffragette, organiser of working class women in East London and pacifist to religious groupie for Haile Selassie, Ethiopian dictator.

Romero makes much of Sylvia's 'dependence' on men. Even when she describes how Sylvia Pankhurst proclaimed in the 'News of the World' that she had a baby whose father she would neither marry nor name, Romero points out that she had named her son after her father and her former lover Keir Hardie.

Romero regards as of particular importance Pankhurst's early recognition of, and campaign against, fascism. Although Romero is somewhat scathing about Pankhurst's socialism, her book makes clear that what distinguished Pankhurst from many of the other suffragettes — including her mother and sister — was her real feeling for the problems of working class women.

Romero illustrates this by their very different reactions to prison, where 'the queenly Mrs Pankhurst' was oblivious to the tragedy of the other women prisoners, whose suffering made a lasting impression on Sylvia.

● Picture shows Sylvia Pankhurst's design used as a poster and on the membership card of the Women's Social and Political Union, of which she was the secretary in the first years of this century.

Encyclopaedia of Feminism. By Lisa Tuttle. Arrow, £6.95.

THOUSANDS of events, women, ideas and actions are collected in this volume; it is undoubtedly a useful work of reference. There will be strong disagreement from Marxists about some of the terse paragraphs — those on Engels and Bebel spring to mind — and with some definitions. Among the worst is the entry on rape, which is said to be 'an act of political terrorism, used systematically by all men to intimidate and oppress all women'.

Death of an Ex-Minister. By Nawal El Sadaawi. Translated by Shirley Eber. Methuen, £2.95.

RELATIONSHIPS between men and women dominate these short narratives. The tellers of the tales appear to face the camera, caught briefly (and sometimes on the point of death).

This is Egypt's foremost woman writer — and certainly Egypt's best-selling contemporary writer in Britain — and this is a good introduction to her style and themes.

The Women's Decameron. By Julia Voznesenskaya. Translated by W B Linton. Methuen, £3.95.

TEN WOMEN, ten themes (ranging from 'first love' to 'sex in farcical situations',

'rape' and 'revenge') — 100 short stories.

But these are Soviet women, cooped up in a maternity ward, and the stories will certainly surprise you.

Truth Tales: Stories by Indian Women. edited by Kali for Women. Women's Press, £3.95.

DO NOT read these stories expecting to be entertained. They have been collected by the Indian feminist journal 'Kali' to show the literary tradition of women writers in the different languages of the sub-continent. Some of them are very grim — hence the title.

The first in the collection is the story of Jashoda, a Brahmin wet-nurse in a household in Bengal, who, after breast-feeding 50 babies, finds her life empty once her breast is empty, and who dies horribly of breast cancer, ignored by her employers.

The CIA: a forgotten history. By William Blum. Zed Books, £8.95.

A THOROUGH compilation of CIA covert activities in over 40 countries and over 40 years.

'Fuck your parliament and your constitution. America is an elephant. Greece is a flea.' President Johnson is reported to have told the Greek ambassador to justify United States action in the area.

Workers Press

Saturday February 21 1987. Newsdesk 01-733 3058

JOURNALISTS MARCH AGAINST SPECIAL BRANCH RAID

STRIKING journalists marched through London, Liverpool and Glasgow last week and demonstrated outside parliament and at BBC Scotland in protest at the Special Branch raid on the BBC.

In Glasgow, a large contingent from BBC Scotland headed the march. They were supported by journalists from all the city's main newspapers, Labour councillors, a Trades Council delegation, and workers from the occupied Caterpillar tractor factory.

TV presenter Margo McDonald told a rally in Partick Burgh Halls: 'It seems to me that people — including senior BBC executives — are saying "We'll take more care about what we investigate".'

'I am very concerned that programme-makers are keeping their heads down, that people will be cautious.'

'Don't be cautious — be responsible, as you always have been.'

Usurped

Scottish teachers' union leader John Pollock said the BBC board of directors had increasingly taken power away from the director general, and that Thatcher's placemen and placewomen

BY SIMON PIRANI

were dominating the board.

'The Zircon programme was not about revealing spy secrets,' he said, 'it was about by-passing democratic processes.'

This last point was made crystal clear by the Zircon programme itself, which was shown at the end of the rally.

It showed how details of vast expenditure on the spy satellite had been deliberately concealed from parliament and the public.

Duncan Campbell's work in exposing the innards of the state machine has touched a raw nerve. He and the journalists who worked with him must be defended by the working-class movement.

HEROIC SILENTNIGHT STRUGGLE ENDS AFTER NEARLY 20 MONTHS

THE Silentnight strikers have decided to call off their heroic 20-month action after being increasingly undermined by the leadership of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trade Union (FTAT).

This was a struggle by a tiny section of the working class against the combined weight of Silentnight management, the police, the FTAT leadership, the management of the Co-operative stores which sold Silentnight beds, the TUC, and the Labour Party leadership.

Workers Press salutes the campaign waged by the Silentnight workers. All strikers that we talked to stressed that they ended up having to fight the FTAT executive and not their main enemy, Tom Clarke of Silentnight.

Steve Price, a strike leader at the Sutton factory, declared: 'We hope we have learnt from this dispute and can help other workers in their struggles. It has increased our political awareness.'

'The rank and file have been prepared to fight. It is the bureaucrats of FTAT who have lost this strike. They pursued policies that have destroyed the strike.'

'It is about time that when trade unions make decisions, such as those at the Wembley Conference, they keep to

BY MARTIN RALPH

their decisions. Though we have been sold out by the leadership, the support from workers has been tremendous.

'We feel like the sacked miners and we hope to have continued support. And we hope that nobody ever buys a Silentnight bed — that campaign continues.'

'We intend to stay in FTAT and fight to change our union. It is about time workers came together to fight the main enemy.'

Disgraceful

Terry Bennett, strike leader from the Barnoldswick site, outlined one of the most disgraceful acts of the labour movement leaders:

'Bob Clay, secretary of the Campaign Group, was told by Colin Christopher, general secretary of FTAT, that the executive council decided in November to withdraw support — but this was not minuted.'

'The general secretary of the TUC, Norman Willis, and the general secretary of the Labour Party had been consulted shortly after this.'

'Not one word of warning came from the FTAT leadership, the TUC, or the Labour Party. We were informed on the Thursday before Christmas by a telephone call from a reporter with the Financial Times.'

This group of workers were thrown into a fight for their jobs shortly after they had joined FTAT. Many had

no previous experience of organising, but they could not walk away from this fight.

It is a testimony to their courage and determination that this dispute reached epic proportions.

What is proved by this dispute is the urgent need for the working class to find ways of replacing its present leaders with leaders who will fight.

The employers' drive for productivity and reduced wages will give rise to many more struggles. Workers defending their jobs will increasingly face the question of democracy within the labour movement.

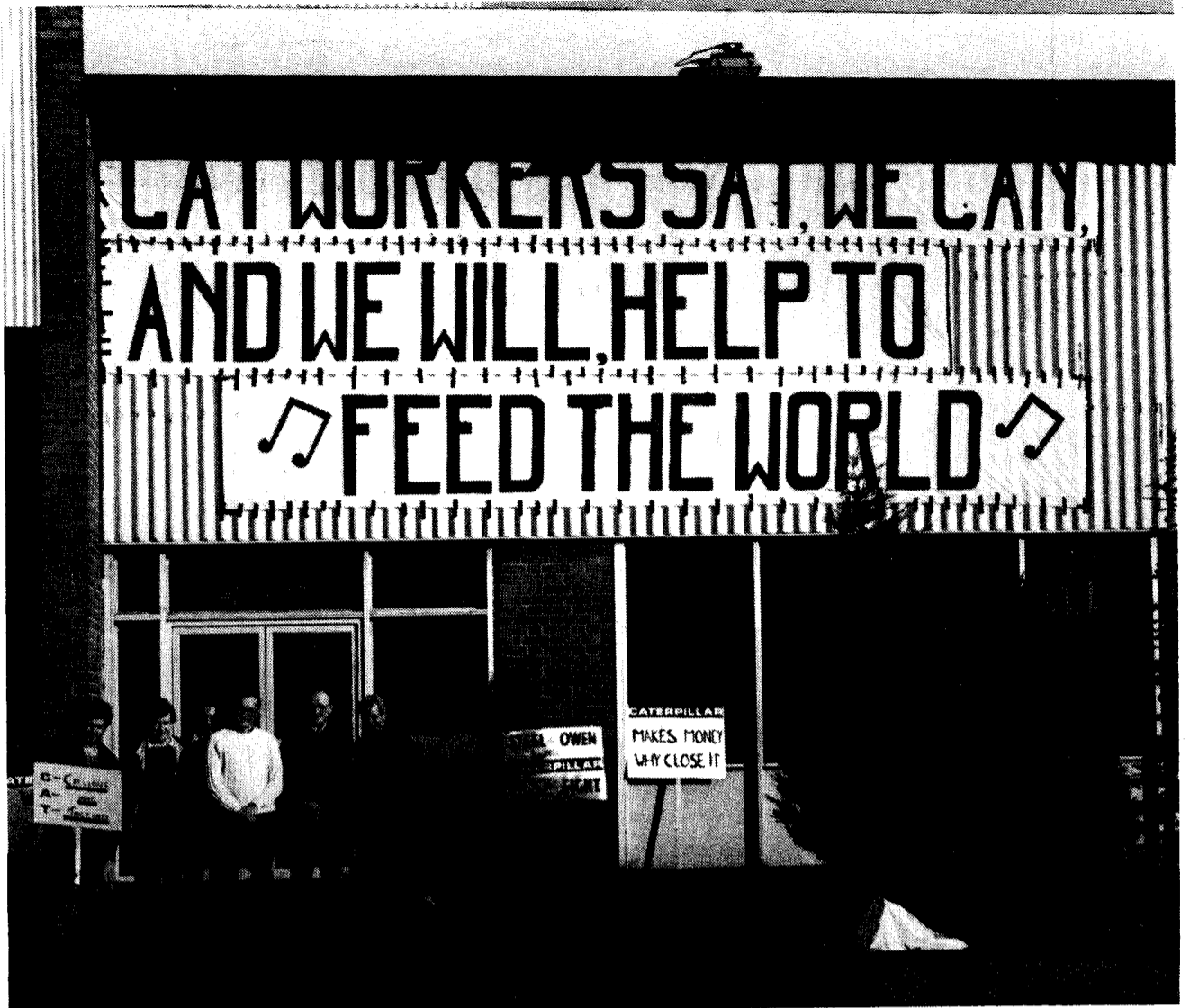
Those who do secret deals, make secret decisions, and discipline their members rather than fight the class enemy must be exposed.

The FTAT leadership would only go so far in allowing the Silentnight strikers to fight. When the question becomes money or members, in the words of Terry Bennett, 'They put money before members'.

These leaders cannot even be consistent trade unionists. Putting the apparatus and finance above the membership will itself lead to bankruptcy.

The role of reformism and Stalinism has to be considered in assessing why these leaders are incapable of working for their members' interests — and why, in many unions, democracy is becoming the main question in the fight against the Tories.

CATERPILLAR OCCUPATION



Occupy all threatened factories

BY WEST OF SCOTLAND WRP

Workers at two more Scottish factories — UK Optical and Golden Wonder — have decided to resist closure threats. They have contacted their unions local MPs and the Scottish Office.

Every factory threatened with closure should be occupied! Follow the example of the Caterpillar workers who are fighting from a position of strength inside the factory. Once Golden Wonder, UK Optical or any other employer has workers outside the gate they will shut it for good.

The demand for tractors has not fallen — they are more needed than ever in starvation-ridden Africa; nor have people stopped eating crisps or wearing spectacles.

Here are three factories threatened by multinational companies who buy, sell, open and close workplaces to suit their financial needs. Workers are being told to pay the price for the turmoil and disruption of the world money markets.

The fight for jobs must not be put in the hands of Tory politicians like Malcolm Rifkind. He is looking for 'an alternative employer' for the Uddingston plant; any that he finds is bound to want wage cuts, drastic alterations of conditions and job losses.

The working class movement must demand nationalisation of factories threatened with closure.

Of course this is a demand addressed to the government; particularly, it must be put to a future Labour

government. But the fate of communities like Uddingston, Broxburn or Mauchline cannot be entrusted to Neil Kinnock any more than to Thatcher. The working class movement must act to safeguard its own future.

Links must be forged between all workers fighting for their jobs. The Caterpillar workers, who are in the front line of the fight, took another step forward last week, sending pickets to docks and other factories and sending teams to gather support from factories in England.

Now a campaign of occupations, strikes and demonstrations should be built up by the trade unions. Such a movement could be the means to bring down this hated Tory government.

Struggles like Caterpillar prove that the working class has not been beaten by Thatcher. This struggle has picked up where the miners left off.

Trade union activists have a responsibility not to waste a moment: support groups like the miners' support groups, should be formed to organise both financial and physical assistance.

Support is growing internationally for the Caterpillar workers. The International Metalworkers' Federation has contacted all its affiliates asking them to ensure that they do not handle work normally done at the Uddingston plant.

CATERPILLAR, Uddingston: highly modernised tractor plant in Lanarkshire, (male unemployment 21 per cent); profitable, with few strikes by 'loyal' workforce; £62,500,000 plant with a future expansion programme announced in September 1986; US-based multinational plans to 'trim capacity'. **Threatened with closure and loss of 1,200 jobs.**

GOLDEN WONDER, Broxburn: crisp factory with the most modern packaging equipment; in West Lothian (male unemployment 25 per cent), an area already decimated by 10,000 job losses in recent years, mainly from British Leyland Plesseys (Bathgate) and Polkemmet pit; factory recently received £250,000 regional development grant; bought by Hanson Trust last year and then sold to Dalgety, the British-based multinational.

Threatened with closure in July with loss of 340 jobs.

UK OPTICAL, Mauchline: spectacle frame and lens makers in north Ayrshire, (male unemployment 36 per cent); two take-overs in the past 10 months; now owned by American Optical; badly affected by NHS prescription charges, which are forcing people to buy inferior imported plastic lenses; workers accepted modest pay increases last week in the hope of saving factory. **Threatened with closure in May with loss of 200 jobs.**

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
WEST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH

DISCUSSION CLASS

Tuesday 3 March 7.15p.m.

Woodside Halls, Glenfarg Street
off Maryhill Road (near St George's Cross)
Glasgow