

Workers Press

25p

Saturday April 11 1987

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Number 70

Let us
bury our
dead in
peace
— page
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REJECT KINNOCK WITCH-HUNT!

LABOUR leader Neil Kinnock has embarked on a systematic attempt to drive out all opposition elements from the Party.

In the last week the Labour leaders have:

RETREATED on their already thoroughly reformist election programme

LAUNCHED a witch-hunt against supposed 'Trotskyist' infiltration into the Party and

THREATENED to expel all those supporting the organisation of Black Sections.

On the question of its **PROGRAMME** the Party will

● Drop pledges to make increased social security payments

● Scrap proposals to nationalise firms ripped off by Thatcher's privatisation

● Ditch promises to scrap private education.

Terry Ashton, general secretary of the London Labour Party, last week launched a witch-hunt against the alleged activities of the Workers Socialist League, an Oxford-based group.

'We will be investigating the general behaviour of some people to discover whether they are bringing the party into disrepute,' said Ashton.

Alan Thornett, linked with the WSL by the 'The London Evening Standard', spoke to Workers Press before he had seen the reports: 'I have no knowledge at all of this. It appears to be a witch-hunt designed to blame the left in the event of Labour losing the election as a result of right-wing policies'.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

PUBLIC MEETING

**Hands off the camps!
Solidarity with the Palestinians!**

TUESDAY 14 April, 7p.m. sharp
Friends Meeting House, Euston
Road,
(opposite Euston Station)

Speakers

Charles Pottins (WRP Central Committee)

Geoff Pilling (Workers Press Editor)

Michael Holmes (Medical Aid for Palestinians)

£1 entrance (50p concessions)

Defend Black Sections' rights!

The inquiries will centre on the London Borough of Hillingdon, which contains three parliamentary seats.

The witch-hunt against Militant was only the start of the campaign to stifle anybody who speaks out in even the mildest tones against the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership.

The efforts to drive out supporters of Black Sections was stepped up last week with Shadow Transport Minister Peter Snape demanding action against Lambeth leader Linda Bellos.

This followed her attendance at last week's successful recruitment meeting for the Black Section of the Labour Party in Birmingham.

Snape said black section advocates are damaging Labour's electoral chances and are using the Party 'only as a vehicle for their single-interest aims'.

Birmingham council's controlling Labour group last week expelled Jamaican-born councillor Phil Murphy for attending the launch.

Kinnock and Hattersley are desperate about one thing. They want to reassure the ruling class that the capitalist system will be safe in their hands. This was the purpose of Kinnock's trip to the United States.

His efforts to woo the middle class by his so-called 'New Realism' will have as much success as his visit to

Reagan. Sections of the middle class — teachers, NHS workers and civil servants — have shown their determination to oppose the Thatcher government, often in the face of the cowardice of their union leaders.

They can be won as firm allies of the working class only through the fight for socialist policies. As Greenwich and all the recent polls have shown, they will never be won by Kinnock's headlong rush to the right.

The people using the Labour Party for their own purposes are not those at the Birmingham rally but 'leaders' who put their comfortable parliamentary seats above the future of the working class.

Nor is it socialists who are bringing the Labour Party into disrepute, but its right wing leadership. Increasing sections of the working class and the middle class are sickened by his craven refusal to fight Thatcher. Kinnock cannot even demand the calling of an election.

It was this leadership's predatory Malvinas war that secured her victory in 1983. It is their retreat in face of the determined fight of the working class that threatens to impose a third Tory government on the working class.

● Workers Press stands for the unfettered right of all socialists to organise in the Labour Party.

● We defend the right of all

black people to work within the Party and if they think it right to organise themselves into separate sections.

The outbursts against alleged 'Trotskyists' and the witch-hunt on the formation of Black Sections are attacks not just on the 'left' but on the working working class as a whole.

Teachers, civil servants, miners, the workers at Caterpillar and all others in struggle against the Thatcher government will get the same treatment from a Kinnock government that they have had from Thatcher.

The working class is entering an election with a leadership incapable and unwilling to fight the Tories.

A new leadership, based on revolutionary socialist policies, is urgently required. This is the only effective answer to Kinnock's latest witch-hunt.

Wapping comes to Tyneside



SEE PAGE 16

Workers Press

Wasted Talents

A CONFIDENTIAL British Medical Association report leaked last week concludes that the talents of three million unemployed people and their families are being wasted.

It is even more damning of Tory policies than last month's Health Education Council analysis of the widening health gap between rich and poor. So critical is it of Tory policy that it may never see the light of day.

'Young people are held back from achieving their full physical and mental potential by the debilitating effects of unhealthy environment, lack of emotional support or intellectual stimulation, or poor diet' says the report. 'Deprivation and ill-health'.

'The problem as a whole is so great and so entrenched within the structure of society as to be insoluble without significant diversion of public resources. Whether the national will exists to combat deprivation in this way remains a matter for political decision beyond our competence.'

The issue is not that of 'national will': nor is it a question of diverting resources. Human beings themselves are the most vital of the productive forces, the most immediate instrument for the creation of wealth.

That in Britain alone capitalism is unable to employ several million people, especially young people, is an expression of the stagnation of those productive forces, an indication of the extent to which they are imprisoned within the 'structure of society' — the system of capitalist profit-making.

And the situation in Britain is nothing compared with the grinding poverty, and with it the chronic ill-health, that grips the majority of the world's population.

The BMA has traditionally been a bastion of right-wing opinion. That it produces a report which, in its own way, points to socialism as the only solution to the problem of poverty, is further expression of the historical bankruptcy of capitalism.

It is at the same time an indication of the response which a fight for a socialist leadership and programme in the working class can now win.

The best-managed of households

AS OSCAR WILDE would undoubtedly have said, for the Royal family to mislay one of its members might have been put down to carelessness. To lose five does begin to look like something more deliberate.

Two of these Royal scions, first cousins of the Queen, had been listed in Burke's Peerage since 1963 as being dead. In fact, as the 'Sun's' fearless seekers after truth revealed last week, Miss Nerissa Bowes Lyon, who died only last year, and her sister Miss Katherine Bowes Lyon, who is still alive, were life patients in Earlswood, a Surrey mental hospital.

Their aunt, the Queen Mother, is also patron of Mencap, which looks after the interests of those described as mentally handicapped.

Some of the Queen's subjects might well find this a touch hypocritical given that Mencap's policy is against long-stay institutions. It is of course the sheer hypocrisy of the entire Royal family which has been brought to light by the case of the missing relatives.

If reports are to be believed, the Queen Mother only found out that her nieces were still alive some five years ago. Since then, according to the obsequious Sir Brian Rix she had been 'very supportive'. Whether of her nieces or of Mencap is not exactly clear.

Those somewhat more sceptical may want to know how many other Royal secrets are locked away from the public's gaze.

It was Burke's Peerage that reported one sister had died in 1940 and the other in 1961. This misinformation was repeated annually. If nothing else, the pecking away of the Royal relatives has exposed taken to be impossible of what many have previously

How did Burke's come to make this over the Royal disappearance? We are informed that when the Burke's forms had to be filled in, the mother of the two unfortunate ladies took charge, and she is reported to be 'very vague'. Very vague perhaps. 'Very convenient certainly.'

School students carry on the fight

ABOUT 50 school students came out on strike to lobby ILEA headquarters at County Hall on Tuesday in spite of torrential rain.

Pupils from several ILEA schools walked out even though they had been threatened with suspension or expulsion. All of them voiced their opposition to the YTS and the redeployment of their teachers.

During the rally, Frances Morrell, Labour chair of ILEA, refused to meet a delegation from the School Students' Union or address a rally. She even refused to leave the building while the rally was outside!

Dave Sirockin, secretary of the London School Students' Union, told Workers Press: 'We will fight the witch-hunt against me in the Labour Party. If the right wing tries to expel me then we will lobby Walworth Road with thousands of pupils.'

'After the school strike on 26 March the NSSU met to discuss opposition to the two-year YTS conscription. We decided to give an ultimatum to Thatcher to back down by 7 April.'

'ILEA have refused to negotiate with us. The Tories have refused to withdraw the compulsory two-year YTS. We are therefore organising for a national school strike after the Easter break.'

The School Students' Union demanded that ILEA:

1. Reverse its policy of compulsory redeployment and all other education cuts.
2. Appeal to the London teaching and ancillary staff, parents and School Students Union to back a campaign to increase ILEA's budget;

BY JOHN OWEN & JOLYON RALPH

3. Reverse all victimisation so far inflicted on school students and teachers for their involvement in the current dispute; and remove all references to activity in the dispute from school students' records;

4. Recognise the LSSU's right to negotiate, organise and act on its members' and supporters' behalf;

5. Allow school students the right to participate in LSSU activity on school premises and in school hours, free from the threat of victimisation; and

6. Give finance, facilities and resources to the LSSU to allow it to organise democratically and autonomously throughout Inner London secondary schools.

In 1985 — immediately after the miners' strike, and during a struggle in all Labour-controlled authorities against rate-capping — a national school strike pulled out 250,000 school students to fight against the compulsory YTS. After this the Tories shelved their plans.

Now they have put them forward again for their election manifesto, and the SSU must again take action to stop them.



Dave Sirockin (left) and Andrew Dobbie

However, Tuesday's turnout was lower than expected. What lessons can be drawn from this experience?

The TUC has refused to fight the government's attempt to build an army of scab labour through the MSC cheap-labour schemes.

The Tory government's attempts to divide youth from older workers in trade unions was accepted with little opposition by the TUC.

As a result of this, with the further decline of British capitalism and the growing number of unemployed, the Tories have extended the YTS to those aged 18 to 25, in the form of the Job Training Schemes, where unemployed people will be forced to work for their benefit.

After the 1985 demonstrations the SSU was practically disbanded, so it will have to be built almost from scratch.

Instead of building a movement and bringing new forces into politics, the SSU leaders left it to fall apart.

The SSU will have to learn to organise a real campaign to defend youth and education. It will have to organise joint action with the teachers, who are also victims of these Tory attacks and have been organising resistance since 1985.

The example of France shows that secondary-school students must link up with students in further and higher education. The SSU should affiliate to the National Union of Students and fight for full student rights for school students.

Young people are under attack internationally, whether they are on YTS in Britain or starving in Africa. Only an International movement can defeat this attack by organising action by youth fighting together around the world.

Teachers' 'Natural Justice' at the courts

BY ED PHILLIPS

ILTA Council decided at a meeting on 31 March, to support a proposal made by Bernard Regan (executive member of the NUT, and one of those ILTA officers threatened with suspension from the NUT for supporting the call for unofficial strike action on 13 January) to carry out a court injunction against the officers of the national executive of the NUT.

This follows the appeal by Fred Jarvis and the other officers of the NUT executive against the decision of the regional disciplinary committee to reinstate the 50 suspended ILTA councillors

with the clear intention of calling for the supervision and, indeed, expulsion of those leading officers in the left of ILTA council.

It must be said loud and clear, as we in the WRP have said in relation to the Phil Penn case, that political differences and the class struggle cannot and should not be fought out in bourgeois courts.

We would ask 'Socialist Action', of which Bernard Regan is a member, how they can defend such a position in the workers' movement.

This is not a tactical question but a question of principle which all socialists should stand united on.

Our conference should be placed in the firm militancy of teachers and not in the courts which represent only the interests of the bourgeois state. The bureaucracy in the NUT has been proven to be rotten to the core. It was not, as a recent ILTA defence campaign leaflet proclaims, 'a misconceived response' which characterised the national officers' move to suspend the 50 ILTA officers,

but a clear message to all teachers that this leadership grovels before the capitalist state in the hope of defending its own positions, and of demonstrating that they are prepared to police their own members should they dare to mobilise themselves in defence of their hard won trade union rights of conditions of service.

We are told in the same leaflet that the move by the national officers 'overturn every principle of natural justice'.

Rousseau may not have been aware of it in the 18th century but we in the workers' movement should be aware now that there exists no such phenomenon of natural justice and that the last place to work for justice for the working class is the bourgeois court.

Unemployed fight back

BY FRANK FITZMAURICE

KIRKBY Unemployed Centre is carrying out a campaign against cuts in funding which would mean, immediately, the sacking of seven full time welfare rights workers. After a lobby of the annual budget meeting of Knowsley council the centre was packed for a meeting of over 150 people.

Speakers resolved to set up a seven year struggle to build the centre from a small

room in Tower Hill Community Centre to the present centre with its facilities and tradition of fighting on behalf of the unemployed.

Like the other unemployed centres on Merseyside, the Kirkby centre took the principled step of refusing MSC funding because of the restrictions on activity this funding would have meant.

This independence has allowed them to mount campaigns on behalf of the unemployed that have resulted up to 50 per cent higher take the national average. They have also successfully

fought against some of the worst employers which prey on the town, through unionisation of their workforces.

Knowsley Council, although it has an overwhelming Labour majority, has a contemptible record of subservience to the Tory plans to reduce local authority spending, and its halving of funding for the four unemployed centres in the borough is again carrying out the dirty work for the Tories at a time of mounting attacks on social security payments.

That the cuts were a political move was made plain at the meeting. It was pointed out that the recent cut in interest rates has given the council over £1 million in extra revenue, while the cuts amount to £154,000.

It was also pointed out that the mayor's expenses have gone up from £90,000 to £100,000 and £200,000 has been budgeted for councillors' expenses.

The meeting called for a lobby of the council budget committee; and it prudently refrained from including the cuts in its agenda.

NUPE members battle for union democracy

NORTH KENT members of the National Union of Public Employees, angered by union officials' refusal to redress their grievances, have launched a 'Campaign for Democracy in NUPE'.

Delegates from all over the country came to London on 4 April to launch this campaign against the bureaucracy within the union. Their conference, initiated by North Kent Branches Joint Committee, elected a steering committee to carry the campaign forward.

Organisers and delegates were united in their bitterness towards full-time officials, and told how, all over the country, members had been refused justice on many occasions.

The Kent branches were stimulated to call for the campaign by the leadership's transfer of a full-time officer in their area, Nick Bradley, respected by all the Kent branches for his union work.

Whereas in the past officers had always been transferred after consultation with and agreement from the area's branches, the branches were now told they had no rights in the matter.

Letters to the divisional officer were ignored. Raising objections at area conference was ruled out of order on the ground that it was the responsibility of the national executive committee and general secretary, Rodney Bickerstaffe.

BY JOHN EVANS

When Bickerstaffe was written to he referred questioners back to — the divisional officer!

Legal and disciplinary action was threatened against anyone who pursued the matter. In the case of area and divisional committee member Martin Craig, this threat has been carried through. At a branch meeting where he wasn't present, a divisional and area official had him expelled.

The divisional officer concerned, Shaun Hilliard, had his name mentioned a few times at the conference. A health worker, involved in the 1979 NHS strikes, remembered him well as undermining the solidarity of the workers in struggle in Sheffield.

In North Kent he now threatens all who demand their union rights.

The basic demand in-

cluded in the 'Draft Charter for Democracy in NUPE' was that all full-time officials be elected and accountable to the members.

The demand was also raised that members should have full power of recall over those elected, and it was agreed to carefully consider the wording of such a demand before including it in the Charter.

Such a demand would strengthen the campaign, and many workers support its inclusion.

It was also agreed to demand that all talks with management be carried out in the presence of stewards; that all decisions on such talks be by the branch concerned; and that there should be a complete review of the union's structure to restore it to members' hands.

The NEC came under further attack over its rule changes and the introduction of undemocratic restrictions in the current NEC elections. Here are just three of these changes:

1. No candidate, branch or member may circulate any material designed to promote any candidate, to any member or branch;

2. No candidate may speak at meetings to promote their candidature;

3. Canvassing of any kind for candidates is not allowed;

Members are told to make up their minds who to vote for on the basis of a short statement from each candidate.

But members who have 'any complaints about the conduct of the elections' can write to the Electoral Reform Society within a month of the announcement of the results. (About as much use as telling Sid!)

Asked about how these rules came into being, a representative at NUPE head office replied: 'We consulted with the Electoral Reform Society and agreed on the guidelines.'

As the ERS don't have any rights under NUPE rules, I pose this one simple ques-

tion: why weren't the members consulted? We have more rights than a non-elected body like the ERS.

A full-time official in London claimed the guidelines were to prevent right-wing organisations, such as Aims for Freedom, giving support to their chosen candidate without union constraints.

I suppose the NEC-ERS Alliance will also be approaching Fleet Street editors and asking them not to support 'moderates' or witch-hunt left-wingers in this and all future elections.

How can we counter the right-wing propaganda machine unless we too are allowed to campaign in elections?

How can we deal with the bureaucracy in our unions unless a ruthless campaign is waged against them?

Resigning from the union is no solution to this problem, as understandable as members' frustrations are. Members have to stay in and take up a principled fight against the bureaucrats.

There will be lessons for all trade unionists in this struggle.

One lesson of the printers' strike was that such leaderships are incapable of winning any dispute. One lesson of the miners' strike was that no union leaders organised any decisive support for them.

One lesson the teachers are learning is how, after two years of struggle, their leaders are winding down the campaign and handing their trade union rights over to the government.

It is crucial that NUPE members realise that the fight for their rights as trade unionists concerns all other union members as well. Before workers can ensure their basic rights they have to rid themselves of the overpaid bureaucracy — this deadweight in their ranks.

NUPE members should contact: Campaign for Democracy, 29 East Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 5NJ. Tel: 0634 813231.

Sale engineers fight sackings

WORKERS fighting sackings at the Sale, Manchester, engineering plant of Senior Colman have now been on strike since 19 January.

Ninety-seven workers were sacked for striking in support of four dismissed colleagues who had failed to comply with a management instruction to fill in new time-sheets.

These dismissals were a breach of both national and domestic agreements.

The Shop Stewards' Committee registered a 'failure to agree' with management in compliance with both national and domestic agreements, and advised their members not to fill in the new time-sheets on 16 January.

Four employees were selected — allegedly 'at random' — and warned verbally for failing to fill in the new time-sheet. Later the same day they were given written warnings and then dismissed.

At the request of a mass meeting that day, the union's district secretary tried to persuade management to reinstate the four dismissed men.

On 19 January a secret ballot voted 110 for and 2 against indefinite strike ac-

BY SUE GWYER

tion until the dismissed men were reinstated.

All the strikers were sent dismissal notices in the post on 20 January and told that if they had not returned to work by 8.00am next day their employment would be terminated.

On 23 January, with just thirteen workers having returned, the threats were confirmed and 97 workers were sacked.

Union

Colman's convener Graham Wyatt told Workers Press: 'Management had prepared to destroy the union. When the Senior group bought out the firm of Barber and Colman in July 1986 they brought in new job de-



On the picket line at Colman

scriptions and would not recognise the union.

'This new contract was still going through the procedures when we were sacked.

'The union was established in 1981 when there was a big fight against individual rates of pay ranging from £3 to £1

per week. We got them all on to £19 per week.'

This dispute is not about the trivial matter of time-sheets. It is about the fundamental right to belong to a trade union.

There is a sinister connection between the Senior Col-

man dispute and the Silentnight strike. Professor Roland Smith, who sits on the board of directors of the Senior Colman group, was also on the board of the Silentnight group of companies. He is believed to be an advisor to Thatcher's government.

Senior Colman strikers need all the support they can get, financial and physical. The Senior Colman Strike Committee can be contacted through the AEU Manchester South District Secretary, J. E. Gwilliam, 43 Crescent, Salford M5 4PE.

JOB centres, DHSS and Unemployment Benefit offices in the north west and Wales were closed throughout last week as civil servants took strike action in support of their claim for a £115 a week minimum wage and a 35 hour week.

The action was part of a campaign by members of the Civil and Public Servants Association, the Society of Civil and Public Servants and the Northern Ireland Public Services Association, covering some 240,000 members.

This is the first national action in the Civil Service since the 16-week pay campaign of 1981 when the government tore up the existing pay comparability machinery which had kept civil service pay in line with 'good employers' in the private sector.

Civil Service pay is 30 per cent less than it would have been under the old arrange-

ments. Over 130,000 jobs have gone and the workload in some areas such as the DHSS has doubled.

Barry Woodburn, the Manchester CPSA organiser pointed out: 'Some members are paying out more in benefits than they receive in pay.'

Around 40,000 civil servants qualify for some kind of income supplement.

Others with particular skills are getting immediate large increases in salary when moving to the private sector.

The fight against low pay, the linking of pay to performance and the defence of national pay bargaining are the issues in the current dispute.

Leaders such as Tony Christopher of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation make no secret of the fact that they are in favour of an Eric Hammond-style pay agreement.

This corporatist plotting can and must be defeated. The members in CPSA have

shown the way forward by voting to strike despite the lack of a recommendation from their cowardly leaders.

■ ■ ■

THATCHER'S promised return to 'Victorian values' could take another great leap backwards if Common Market finance ministers accept moves being proposed next month.

Newspapers, books, and magazines would become subject to Value Added Tax — the first time print has been taxed in Britain since

the 19th-century Stamp Act.

Tory Commissioner Lord Cockfield is expected to support moves to bring EEC taxes into line when the finance ministers meet on 11 May.

Birmingham East Labour MEP Christine Crawley says this will include tax on newspapers, magazines, and books. The Treasury has refused to confirm or deny this.

West Germany already has seven per cent VAT on print. In Denmark the tax on books is 22 per cent. Ireland has 10 per cent VAT on newspapers and 23 per cent on magazines.

After a public outcry, the Tory government was forced in 1984 to back down on VAT plans for print.

George Roucou wins

MANCHESTER building worker and UCATT shop steward, George Roucou, has won the right to stay in Britain.

His appeal against deportation has been allowed after a campaign that brought thousands of trade unionists onto the streets to demand the right of Seychelles-born Roucou to remain in Britain, where he has worked since he came with a British passport in 1975.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Poverty and Maternity

THE LINK between poverty and death of babies dominated the Maternity Emergency national rally in London last Monday.

On the day when the Tories' savage new cuts in maternity benefits came into effect, over 2,000 mothers, fathers, babies and children came to Westminster Central Halls to show their opposition.

After signing a petition the crowds went upstairs to visit stalls run by organisations who support the Maternity Alliance campaign.

A well-run creche took care of the needs of the smaller protesters while refreshments accompanied by music were very welcome for parents.

Inside the main hall a non-stop series of speakers, punctuated with music and entertainment, explained from 11a.m. until 8p.m. how the latest cuts in benefits — which follow continual erosion of maternity benefits since 1979 — will hit those who most need them.

A speaker from the National Childbirth Trust explained that reducing poverty, not just increasing technology, would give better survival chances for more babies.

Community medicine specialist Gillian McIlwaine spoke of the problems in a high unemployment area like Glasgow. An unemployed pregnant teenager would now receive only £80 instead of the previous £187.

'A mother and one child will receive £33.45 a week if living with her parents,' she said, dismissing the Tory myth that teenagers become pregnant in order to be rehoused.

'A mother and one child not living with her parents will receive £75, a bed, cooker and fire (chairs are not considered necessary) and

BY CLARE COWEN

£41.10 a week when the baby is born.'

Angela Phillips of the Maternity Alliance management committee said the campaign for benefits would continue, along the lines that all women should have a right to maternity income and the right to return to work, maternity pay should be an adequate replacement for lost wages and fathers should also have the right to paid time off work.

A Maternity Alliance leaflet made some telling points:

- Thousands of babies die unnecessarily or suffer preventable handicapping conditions in Britain

each year.

- Good health is less common among poor families than amongst the rich. Stillbirth and death in the first week of life are almost twice as likely among babies born in social class V compared with social class I.

- Over 3.5 million children are living on or below the poverty line in Britain today.

- Britain's record on rights for working parents is one of the worst in Europe.

- Rights are shrinking in employment, housing and childcare as well as in health services and state benefits, and choice is increasingly becoming the prerogative of those who can afford to pay.

THIS MONTH'S CUTS

- The £25 maternity grant for all mothers has been abolished as have single payments up to £187 for mothers on Supplementary Benefit. Instead there is one payment of £80 for mothers on the lowest incomes — a cut of £100 — and most mothers will get nothing.

- The weekly maternity benefit for 74,000 mothers has ended — one in five pregnant working women no longer have the right to weekly maternity benefit of £32.85, totalling £530. Employers now pay the benefit instead of the DHSS, so women in small, non-unionised firms will suffer. The payment is taxable so those who do receive it may lose as much as £10 a week.

- The right to maternity leave in small firms (under ten employees) has gone. The qualifying period for protection against unfair dismissal has been raised from six months to two years.

Further plans are in the pipeline: free milk and vitamins for pregnant women and children on low incomes are to be abolished, as is the single payment for maternity clothes to women on supplementary benefit.



Not everyone in the audience paid attention to the speakers at the Maternity Alliance national rally

Prescription charges go up

THE WELFARE of growing numbers of low-income families is threatened by the 1 April increase in prescription charges to £2.40.

Many people living in poverty who just fail to qualify for free prescriptions will be unable to afford medicines, warns the Health Visitors' Association.

The increase is a 12-fold jump since 1979. Already 2,000 people a week are not using prescriptions doctors have written for them.

The HVA stresses that most of these are likely to be deprived families whose health faces the worst risks through unemployment, financial hardship and bad housing.

'This further rise is nothing short of a tax on those vulnerable groups in communities who have the greatest need for adequate health care. The charges exceed the cost of many medicines and broaden the gulf in health between the haves and have-nots,' said Rosalynde Lowe, HVA national chair based in recession-hit Gateshead.

In recent weeks:

- A Health Education Council report disclosed the health gap between rich and poor is widening
- Thatcher refused pleas for free prescriptions for cancer patients. Around 200,000 people become cancer patients every year
- Labour MP Willie Hamilton told the House of Commons a quarter of people who paid for prescriptions were just above the poverty line for exemption from charges. The number of people within 40 per cent of the supplementary benefit level climbed from 5.5 million in 1979 to 7.5 million in 1983.

Shortage of nurses

LONDON hospitals are closing wards and putting patients at risk because of a severe shortage of nurses.

London Health Emergency has surveyed London's 30 health districts and found that low pay and workloads greatly increased by staff cuts are driving out nurses in droves. Health services are likely to grind to a halt, it says.

- Paddington/North Kensington:** at St Mary's Hospital kidney transplant operations have stopped

- Hampstead:** 230 nurses left last year. A place in the health authority's creche is £43 a week, and a staff nurse takes home £87

- Hammersmith Hospital:** 25 per cent of the 600 nursing posts are vacant; beds treating liver and cancer patients have closed

- Riverside:** 657 nursing posts are empty (22 per cent of the total). At Charing Cross Hospital, seven coronary care, five surgical, and six medical beds have been closed

- Tower Hamlets:** agency nurses are being used to fill the shortage of nurses, at a cost of over £1.3 million

- West Lambeth:** A ward closed suddenly at South Western Hospital

- City and Hackney:** 350 unfilled nursing vacancies

- Merton and Sutton:** Red alerts and restricted admissions are the crisis response to nursing shortages

- Wandsworth:** nurses at St James's Hospital, Balham, have complained to management of inadequate staffing in wards and casualty, arguing that 'patients are being put at risk because of the shortage of staff'

Special Schools under threat

BY PAT ROBSON

MANY LONDON parents are unaware of the threat hanging over Special Schools which their children attend.

There are some 100 Special Schools in the Inner London Education Authority which provide for children with varying difficulties for which ordinary or mainstream school has been stated as insufficient.

These Special Schools provide for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (maladjusted), moderate and severe learning difficulties (mentally handicapped), physically handicapped, autism, sensory and language impairment, (blind, deaf or dumb), and delicate (those not fitting in elsewhere).

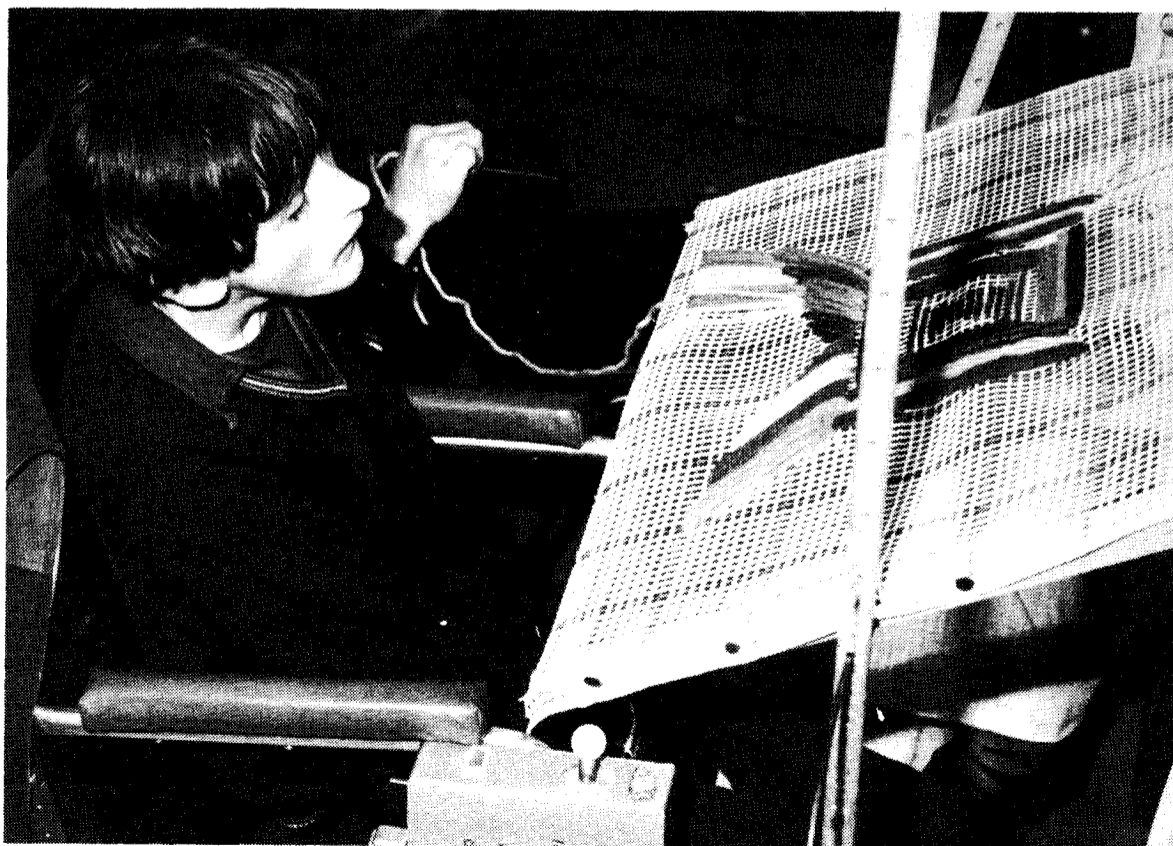
At a time when mainstream schools have overstretched teachers, overcrowded classrooms, curriculum changes and reduced budgets, ILEA is thrusting ahead with an 'integration' policy.

This follows the Fish Report published in July 1985 which would mean the eventual end of small, all-age Special Schools.

Many parents and teachers were shocked by a recent television news item which announced that Special Schools were closing and that all of them would be integrated into mainstream schools.

A group of deeply concerned parents and teachers from Samuel Rhodes School, Islington, who find themselves in the front line, have formed the 'Campaign for Choice in Special Education'.

At a meeting on 19 March at



In special schools, children who have difficulty learning in mainstream schools are taught by teachers trained to develop their abilities

County Hall, one of the points stressed was:

'We are sceptical about assurances that individual schools will continue. We support those parents who wish to see their children educated in mainstream schools but our clear wish is for a proper network of special schools to be

maintained as a positive alternative choice.

'We feel, as parents and teachers, that we are a kind of silent majority who are witnessing the destruction of our schools and it is time we found our voice.'

A petition is being circulated, letters are being written to MPs, and the next important meeting

takes place at County Hall on Thursday, 30 April, at 7.30p.m.

This new conflict between parents and teachers and the Inner London Education Authority might well be used by the Tories to further their secret plan to do to ILEA what they did to the GLC — abolish it!

Solidarity with PLO!

FIGHTING broke out again in Lebanon last week between Palestinian fighters and the Shi'ite Amal militia units that have been besieging Palestinian camps.

The battles, around villages overlooking the refugee camps, came after Syrian troops broke the siege of Chatila camp, where 3,000 Palestinians had been under bombardment and starvation.

Families that had been kept apart by the siege rushed to embrace in tears, relieved to find loved ones still alive. Hungry children reached for food parcels brought by sympathisers.

Over 100 Chatila residents had been killed during the six-month siege, and 600 wounded. Many were women cut down by sniper fire as they foraged on the outskirts of the camp for food for their children.

Twelve-year old Mohamad Gandour told reporters last Monday. 'I lived in fear because of the shelling. There is nothing inside, no food, no water, nothing. We ate grains, grass and when it became unbearable people resorted to eating cats.'

The Syrian decision to call off the Amal forces came after pressure from the governments of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Algeria. It is also on the eve of the PLO Parliament, the Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers.

Vicious to the end, Amal troops halted lorries carrying milk powder to the camp on Monday, and fuel for the water pumps. Like the Israeli-backed fascists who massacred Chatila residents in 1982, they regard Palestinian babies as a military target.

WRP Conference Resolution

THIS conference stands fully with the besieged Palestinians in the refugee camps of the Lebanon. This conference calls for an international campaign demanding:

1. A cease fire and withdrawal of all the militias that are surrounding the camps.
2. A withdrawal of all Syrian troops from Lebanon.
3. That complete freedom of movement is allowed for all Palestinians in and out of the camps.

These demands are only the most basic for the continued survival of the Palestinians.

We call on all International organisations to join with us in this campaign and to raise the defence of the camps worldwide.

THIS conference condemns the continued Israeli repression in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and the recent closure by Israeli police of the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem.

Conference demands the dropping of all charges against Michael Warshawsky and his comrades of the Alternative Information Centre.

Conference resolves to send a message of solidarity to Comrade Warshawsky of the Revolutionary Communist League (Israeli section of USec), and to approach those campaigning on his behalf here, with a view to assisting the campaign.



SARWHU mobilised more than 3000 for a meeting at COSATU house which had originally been intended for stewards only

Rail Strike in South Africa

BLACK RAIL WORKERS in South Africa, fighting for union rights and against victimisation have hit the employer, SA Transport Services(SATS), hard.

The company went crying to the courts last month that it was losing 500,000 Rand a day so long as the workers at City Deep container depot stayed out.

SATS regional manager

Spies Le Roux said 751 containers were stuck at City Deep waiting for delivery, a further 458 were on trains to be unloaded, and more were piling up.

The strike began when SATS management, who refused to recognise the South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union (SARWHU), dismissed a worker at City Deeps.

As the City Deeps workers

were joined by thousands of others, the spreading strike may have pushed losses up to tens of millions of rands, besides what it has done to firms relying on the railways.

The South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union (SARWHU) reported on March 26 that a further 23 goods and container depots had been hit, including Johannesburg's Kaserne de-

pot with 6,000 workers. More than 16,000 workers were out.

Ticket collectors at 55 stations in the Transvaal walked off when they heard the company was dragging its heels in negotiations. The strike spread to Bloemfontein, and was also joined by about 700 workers at Jan Smuts Airport.

The Posts and Telecommunications Workers Association pledged full solidarity with the railway workers.

The enthusiasm with which South Africa's Black working class is mobilising through the unions has been well-shown in this strike. SARWHU assistant secretary-general Themba Kuzwayo says workers have been signing up to join the union at a rate of 200 a day.

When SARWHU called a meeting at Cosatu House, in Johannesburg, originally intended for shop stewards, more than 3,000 railway workers turned up with their banners and slogans.

Surrounded by busloads of police who came armed with rifles and tear-gas launchers, the workers refused to be either provoked or intimidated. They proceeded with their meeting and voted to extend the strike.

Referring to workers' anger at both the company's anti-union policy and the state's heavy presence, the union said in a statement 'It was only the disciplined manner in which the SARWHU members conducted themselves that averted an ugly situation.'

According to Themba Kuzwayo, 'The strike also reflects a realisation by workers of their important contribution to the economy.'

The company was refusing to recognise the union, and working with the government to try and smash it, possibly by sacking and evicting migrant workers and trying to recruit raw labour from tribal 'homelands'.

But the strike could meanwhile spread further, bringing out track maintenance workers for instance, and paralysing South Africa's rail transport.

Trade Wars: DEBT HEADACHES FOR IMF

RONALD REAGAN sent the world's stock exchanges into a tail-spin when he announced tariff measures against imported Japanese electronic goods on 27 March.

Not to be outdone, Thatcher followed this with a threat of reprisals against Tokyo for their refusal to let Cable and Wireless into the Japanese telecommunications market.

But even these sounds of the approaching trade war are not really the worst of the news for world capitalism.

The problem of the US-Japanese trade imbalance is not a new one, of course. Huge quantities of Japanese consumer goods have been pouring into European and American homes for some time.

The steady fall in the value of the dollar over the past two years has made little impact on this flood; nor has it done much to shore up flagging US exports to Japan.

The Japanese trade surplus now runs at over 50 billion dollars a year.

Yet, as the financial big-wigs assemble in Washington for the meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, their headaches are less about trade than about debt.

In the capitalist world to-

day, to an extent beyond anything Lenin could have envisaged, financial transactions predominate over actually making things.

And Japanese invasion of European bond markets and banking is now accelerating rapidly.

This was the meaning of the reminder that licences for foreign financial institutions in London could be revoked under legislation now going through Westminster.

In the first quarter of this year, Japanese intervention in the sale of Eurobonds rose above 25 per cent of the 50 billion dollar total.

The Euro-yen is fast replacing the Eurodollar as a major source of borrowing.

Until the 1980s, US imperialism was by far the world's largest lender.

European and Japanese capitalism were restarted after the war on the foundation of the almighty dollar.

Now all this has changed. The US is the world's heaviest borrower; Japan, the largest lender.

The outstanding US debt now totals twice the annual National Product.

International co-operation to let the dollar fall was agreed with acclamation at the talks at the Plaza Hotel in New York last year.

Since February 1985 the yen has doubled its dollar value.

Not only has this failed to restore the US-Japan trade balance; but it has also been accompanied by an increased flow of credit into the US.

This is what links the starvation of masses in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to the consumer boom in Reagan's America.

Since 1982, Americans got into debt to buy 42 million cars, 24 million fridges, 84 million television sets, and 38 million microwave ovens.

Source

Effectively, Tokyo is the source of a great part of this debt.

With a massive trade surplus behind them, Japanese banks and other financial institutions can become more and more powerful competitors on the US and European exchanges.

Meanwhile US manufacturing industry declines as fast as that of Britain.

Who wants to get into the risky business of setting up factories, when billions can be made from issuing bonds?

This is the background also to another topic in Washington this week, for a major source of US borrowing is really what used to be called the 'developing countries'.

The story used to be that

the World Bank would borrow money from the banks in the advanced countries — that meant mainly the US — and lent it to the independent governments of former colonial countries.

They were then going to import the technology needed to raise the standard of living of the masses impoverished by colonialism.

What actually happened was that they ran up fantastic debts.

When the prices of their exports dropped, they were forced increasingly to cut into food production, just to service these debts.

The result is increasingly widespread starvation, and the conversion of these 'independent' governments into tax-collectors for the international banks.

The men from the IMF

turn up from time to time to force even more desperate austerity measures on them. If that doesn't work, a military coup might not be avoided.

So, for three years, the flow of funds has been from the poorest countries in the world to the richest.

Now the IMF is announcing a pact to 'reschedule' these debts.

This means that they are going to let the Africans keep their treadmill going even longer, giving them more time to pay and, perhaps, lower interest rates.

Maybe the French representatives can provide the other delegates to the talks with some of those Ethiopian flowers whose export to Paris continued right through the period of the famine.

Tanks Block 'Peaceful Road'

ARMOURED vehicles firing tear gas, water cannon, and mounted police, were turned out against youth in Chile's capital, Santiago, on April 3, as Pope John Paul II addressed crowds in O'Higgins Park.

Armed police moved in when a group of youth hoisted a banner denouncing torture in the right-wing military regime's jails. Youth and workers fought

back with stones.

That evening, leaders of Chile's banned Communist Party were among a political delegation received by the Pope. They reportedly pledged themselves against the use of 'violence' for political ends.

This in a country where thousands of working people paid with their lives for reformist and Stalinist 'peaceful road' policies when the army overthrew the Allende regime and installed dictator Pinochet.

Arriving last week in Buenos Aires, the Pope said he had not time to meet an Argentine human rights delegation.

Workers Revolutionary Party Special National Congress — 4&5 April 1987

For the reorganisation of the Fourth International

Main resolution passed by the Congress

AS THE working class developed, the need for an international association was brought before it by its own experience.

Marxist theory revealed that the necessity for such an association arose from the nature of capitalism itself.

Today the contradiction between the development of the productive forces and national boundaries dominates the class struggle. That was the central characteristic of the miners' strike of 1984-1985.

Not only does the energy crisis, born from the crisis of capitalist society, demand an international solution but this period of enormous conglomerates of finance capital, with their global exploitation and domination of world economy, gives a fresh acuteness of Marx's dictum that the class struggle is national in form and international in content.

The meaning of any national struggle today can only be grasped from this standpoint.

The task of reorganising the Fourth International is placed before us more urgently out of the objective necessities of today. To defend the conquests it has already gained and lead the world revolution, the working class needs a World Party.

That leadership itself can only be developed in international association. Following the struggle in the Comintern, Trotsky understood this more than any other Marxist.

He declared that we had to firmly grasp that really independent parties — independent of Stalinist and petty-bourgeois leaderships — 'cannot be built unless there is a close international bond between them on the basis of self-same principles, and provided there is a living exchange of experiences, and a vigilant mutual control.' ('The ILP and the Fourth International' — Trotsky's Writings On Britain Vol 3)

Today, imperialism can do no other than impose its crisis on the workers of the advanced countries, on the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America and on the workers and peasants of the deformed and degenerated workers states.

They must organise to take back the gains won by the working class everywhere, and it is the resistance to this attack which is bursting forward against unemployment, the continuing destruction of jobs and skills, and the wiping out of the communities. The workers in health, welfare and education services are drawn into the same struggle as the bourgeoisie tries to dismantle the elementary gains won in those spheres.

In all these cases, while wages fights remain important, it is a question of the **whole future** of the class which predominates. From this comes the crisis of the trade unions and 'trade union consciousness.' Spontaneous struggles of great intensity go far beyond the scope of trade unions, and meanwhile the trade union bureaucracy (Stalinist and social democratic) move closer to the bourgeois state and monopolies, adapting their

agency in the workers' movement.'

The Trotskyist movement developed in struggle, politically and physically, against Stalinism. The liquidationist tendencies inside the Fourth International, beginning with Pablo who not only advocated 'entryism of a special type' into Stalinist parties, but kept deliberately silent about Stalinist murders of Trotskyists, transmitted the pressure of Stalinism, which needed to try to destroy Bolshevism, into the Fourth International itself. Thus the content of Pabloism was essentially the same as Stalinism.

■ ■ ■
TROTSKYISM is the continuation of Bolshevik methods of struggle and Bolshevik ideas: thus its development is the essential means for the working class to achieve political independence.

The struggle against Pabloite liquidationism from 1951, including the foundation of the International Committee in 1953 — with all its limitations and inadequacies — has been the struggle for Bolshevism.

structure and policies to the needs of imperialism.

The immediate cause of these possibilities of the reorganisation of the Fourth International was the coming together of a number of struggles within the subjective factor — the Fourth International itself. Those coming forward at present with the aim of taking the decisive step of building the Fourth International on a principled basis have all been through long experience in which they had to break from Trotskyist leaderships which degenerated and went to the right.

These leaderships capitulated to the Stalinist bureaucracy, or to the reformist and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces which had been given a lease of life by the counter-revolutionary forces of Stalinism.

When the Stalinist bureaucracy 'definitely passed over to the side of the bourgeois order' it sought to physically destroy Bolshevism not

The Healy leadership abandoned the theory of permanent revolution, making opportunist agreements with Arab bourgeois governments, centrists and reformists, capitulating to Stalinism (Vietnam and China), and in Ireland dropping the most basic principle of unconditional support for the struggle against British imperialism.

The majority of the WRP expelled its degenerate leadership in 1985. Healy's personal and political degeneration was exposed by the fight taken up by the party membership against the sexual abuse of women members. It was this abuse which brought an immediate reaction from party members who had fought for Trotskyism within the WRP. This systematic abuse caused the destruction of many communist cadres throughout the International Committee.

The expulsion of Healy brought into the open the contradictions, and opened the way for the WRP to negate its own history and take forward what was positive in it, and to make a crucial contribution to the development of the International. Healy has now pronounced for Gorbachev's 'reforms' of the bureaucracy: Banda has de-

the bourgeois revolution in France, and thus in effect poses 'democracy' as against revolutionary socialism.

■ ■ ■
THE United Secretariat of Mandel capitulated not only to Stalinism but to petty-bourgeois nationalism. At the beginning of the 1970s the leadership of the United Secretariat — Mandel, Maitan and Frank — orientated their international on the strategy of guerrilla warfare in Latin America over the next prolonged period.

Those who opposed this constitute one of the currents that carried forward the continuity of the Fourth International.

In 1979 the United Secretariat leadership abandoned the principle of building a Trotskyist party in Nicaragua, and subordinated itself to the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN). It endorsed the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by the FSLN and its delivery into the hands of the reactionary Panamanian bourgeois state.

This experience of the Simon



Miners confront the state: Orgreave, September 1984. The miners' strike in Britain was a turning point internationally

only in the USSR but internationally. The Fourth International, which represented the continuity of Bolshevism, was thus subjected to an unprecedented international campaign of extermination, from its birth.

It was this international drive to wipe out revolutionary leadership which most of all defined Stalinism as 'the most counter-revolutionary

We stand on the struggle against liquidationism, on which the International Committee was formed. At the same time we recognise how contradictory its history was; the maintenance of vital principles on the one hand, the increasing theoretical, political, organisational and moral degeneration of successive leaderships (Healy, Lambert, North) on the other.

nounced Trotskyism and declares for Stalinism — these positions have emerged because the political issues were fought through systematically since October 1985.

In the PCI, Lambert has made adaptations to social democracy. He is president of a Movement for a Workers' Party, which his party developed, and which stands on the Constitution of 1793 arising from

Bolivar Brigade is a burning lesson for revolutionaries and a warning to all those who minimise the call for the building of parties the Fourth International in every country.

It is not our call which separates us from the United Secretariat and the Socialist Workers Party (US), but reality. Their act was in continuity with those who supported

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For the reorganisation of the Fourth International

the Popular Front in Spain before the war. It is not only a question of being against the building of Trotskyist parties in theory, but of being for the destruction of Trotskyist parties in a real situation.

Those Trotskyists of the International Workers League (LIT) who fought against Mandel for the continuity of the Fourth International carried on the traditions of Trotskyism in Spain.

In the name of overcoming isolation and 'developing the programme,' liquidationist revisionism (Pabloism) has tended always to dissolve the Trotskyist vanguard into a general milieu of radical middle-class lefts, adapting revolutionary Marxism to the requirements of this milieu.

But the real overcoming of the Fourth International's isolation requires a conscious struggle to implant it into the working class, which is the only truly and consistently revolutionary force against capitalism. This requires fighting to develop programme and policies of the Fourth International, against petty-bourgeois centrists and revisionists; only in this way can the political independence of the working class be established.

After the expulsion of Healy we were forced to this conclusion that the explosion in the WRP took place as a result of profound international developments. International processes since have underlined that conclusion. The miners' strike stands out now as the beginning and not the end of an international heightening of struggle.

■ ■ ■
WE concluded secondly that the international developments had brought about a polarisation in World Trotskyism of which the splits in the WRP were the sharpest expression.

The anti-Trotskyist policies of the United Secretariat in the 1970s prepared the way directly to the open rejection of permanent revolution and Trotskyism by leaders of the SWP in the US and by the SWP in Australia.

Mandel and his collaborators maintain these renegades in their international. As in Germany they liquidate their sections for the sake of so-called unification with anti-Trotskyist forces.

Developments in the WRP took their place in this world polarisation of the Trotskyist movement. On one side are the degenerations, the revisions and the capitulations, the betrayals, and on the other side are the forces reflecting movements in the working class, seeking to resolve the crisis of leadership in struggle against bureaucracy, and truly showing the continuity of the Fourth International.

Reorganising the Fourth International means uniting in a World Party all those who are on, or who can be won to, the revolutionary side in that polarisation. To take our own conclusions seriously means to enter into struggle against the other side of that polarisation.

To rally and consolidate all who seek to intervene and participate in the gathering class forces can only be done by firmly laying down principles as against the revisions and capitulations. That we seek to do in our call.

We have to divide and unify the Trotskyist forces internationally on these principles. Our Call must divide as well as unite tendencies in the world Trotskyist movement. There is no other way to proceed. How can we make a call for the reorganisation of the Fourth International without stating the principles on which that reorganisation can take place?

The Call seeks to rally all those

forces in the world today attempting to resolve the question of our age — the crisis of humanity which is the crisis of working class leadership.

With this Call we have taken an important step, not just in issuing it, but in laying down the principles on which the reorganisation can take place. These principles, which guide the development of our theory are objectively and historically given to us.

We began by listing the foundations of the Fourth International — The First Four Congresses of the Third International, the Transitional Programme, the Permanent Revolution. With the assistance of other Trotskyists — the GOCQI (Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International — the group led by Michel Varga), and the LIT (International Workers League) — who have gone through their own struggles for the Fourth International, we have

questions are subordinated — means to return to Bolshevism and the struggle of the Left Opposition against Stalinism and all brands of socialism in one country. Declaring for a programme of the international revolution against a programme of socialism in one country, Trotsky wrote in 1928:

'In our epoch, which is the epoch of imperialism, i.e. of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single communist party can establish its programme by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country.' (Third International after Lenin — Chapter 1 Part 1)

When the Fourth International was founded in 1938, it was on the central principle of the necessity for a world party dedicated to the establishment of independent pro-

joint work with these tendencies who agree with us on the principles of our call. This does not exclude joint work with others.

We are criticised for including in our Call the setting up of Trotskyist parties in all countries because, it is said, this will preclude sections of the United Secretariat. Some of these critics have expressed agreement with this in principle, but see their role as fighting for this within the United Secretariat. That is their right.

The WRP is not for excluding them from the Conference. But the issue is something else: the principle of building Trotskyist parties in every country contains the difference between the conception of the World Party and capitulation to Stalinist and petty-bourgeois forces.

If we did not think so we would not be seeking the means to

our critics. It declares:

'The WRP calls upon all organisations who agree with this call to participate jointly with us in a committee to prepare the Conference itself, its agenda, and its arrangements, to organise the pre-conference discussion and distribution of documents.'

This means that we are seeking to organise together with those who support the principles set out in the call, and who represent the continuity of the Fourth International. What are our critics saying? 'It is in order for you to state your principles, but for god's sake don't organise around them!'

We do not think that the urgent need is for a gathering of Trotskyists which is just organised for representatives to state their positions, and then return home, although we know that some may attend on that basis. We are discuss-



Volunteers of the People's Militia in Managua, Nicaragua

been able to concretise these fundamentals in the conditions of the polarisation of the Trotskyist movement over the past years. Our Call brings out the nature of the struggle for continuity of the Fourth International, and declares for the building of Trotskyist parties in every country.

■ ■ ■
TO enter the struggle for internationalism was the greatest step taken by those who broke with supporters of North and Banda — who could not make a complete rupture with opportunist-sectarian politics and ultimatism.

This signified the beginning of a turn away from conceptions of national Trotskyism and a repudiation of British exceptionalism.

To struggle for the building of an international as the key question for the WRP — to which all other

letarian revolutionary leadership of the world's exploited masses.

The continuity of the struggle for communism in the Fourth International since its formation has been carried through precisely by forces which have maintained this principle despite enormous pressures on the revolutionary vanguard. Continuity now rests with all those who have opposed attempts to return to Stalinist or social democratic ideology or to liquidate Trotskyist leadership.

The proof of such continuity lies primarily in the fact that Fourth International movements exist today which express their confidence in Trotskyist principles — not just in abstract declarations, but by seeking in practical ways to build Trotskyist leaderships in every corner of the globe.

■ ■ ■
IF we are to tackle our international tasks then clearly we must begin by strengthening

reorganise the Fourth International, but would be joining the United Secretariat ourselves. We repudiate with contempt the suggestion that the inclusion of this basic principle was a manoeuvre by the late Comrade Moreno (LIT) or our own Political Committee members.

From groups like Socialist Viewpoint and others internationally comes disappointment that our Call for the International Conference is not made as a call for an 'open' forum to all who call themselves Trotskyists. Our Call sets forth the basic principles upon which the reorganisation of the Fourth International can take place.

In its conclusion it asks all Trotskyist organisations to participate in a Conference on the basis of what has been set out previously. This does not exclude groups who might disagree with aspects of the Call. However it is the next proposition that shakes and disturbs

sing and will continue to discuss with all those who consider themselves Trotskyists, but that is not the question.

The burning need is for the reorganisation of the Fourth International. We believe it can be done on the basis of the principles in our Call.

■ ■ ■
THIS follows from our conclusion on international developments, which were the context of the WRP explosion. Whole new layers of people internationally are being drawn into collision with Stalinism and social democracy.

It is impossible to consider the miners' strike without discussing the role of women in the coalfields. It was not accidental that the WRP split took place over the sexual abuse of women cadres: the struggle by this oppressed layer in the party reflected the powerful

Congress — 4&5 April 1987

On of ional

changes expressed by the women in the coalfields, a harbinger of the forces internationally who will come on the scene in the future.

Women internationally have been and are being drawn into vast struggles echoing and superseding the experiences of the women in the British coalfields. Out of the crisis of the old leaderships significant sections, particularly youth, will seek the programme of Trotskyism.

We have to reorganise the Fourth International in line with these developments, which means that we come before these new forces clearly and decisively elaborating our principles and independence, and raising for them the banner of Trotskyism as the only party of the world revolution.

If it is true that the initiative for an International Conference responds to the objective needs of the working class it is true also that this initiative already lags behind the tempo at which the working class is driven forward by the crisis.

The working class does not come into action in a steady acceleration without interruptions and at the same rate in every part of the world. The heritage of Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership means that the struggles are separated and diverted, and that there are partial setbacks, sometimes severe.

The preparations for the International Conference must mean the building of the Party here and this means intervening and participating in the mass movement, recruiting the leaders who come forward in struggles, and paying particular attention to organising women and youth.

In the training of revolutionaries of the Fourth International it will naturally not be enough to rely upon conviction and enthusiasm drawn from the general truth of a renewed upsurge of the working class internationally. The leadership in every country will need to be trained through all the ups and downs of changing class relations within the development of the class struggle.

To build sections of Trotskyism thoroughly implanted in the mass movements and recognised among the working class as a force challenging for political leadership is an essential complement of the organisation of the International Conference.

We reaffirm that the task of Trotskyism is to fight to make our programme and the parties built upon it the leadership of the working class.

We reject theories of 'stages' in the development of revolutionary leadership with their strategy of working for some intermediate or 'transitional' working-class leadership which is not Stalinist, not reformist, not yet Trotskyist — e.g. the Lambertist Movement for a Workers' Party — just as we reject the Pablotte conception of the development of petty-bourgeois national-revolutionary movements into the leadership of the proletarian revolution.

Again the basic principles of Bolshevism are at stake: the political independence of the working class and the necessity of ensuring that independence through a party based on the theoretical, political and organisational principles of Bolshevism; these three being 'cast in one piece'.

THE transformation of our forces of today and their conflict with the leadership of the working class does not proceed either through an intermediate type of leadership of the working class or through the transformation of reformist or Sta-



PHOTO: JOOST GUNTENAR

SWAPO singers at Namibia Health and Education Centre, Kwanza Sul, Angola

linist parties into revolutionary leadership.

The road is through the Transitional Programme creatively developed, applied, and fought for by Trotskyists who build their independent revolutionary parties.

The Stalinist crisis means we must attach great significance to the prospect of agreement, joint work and unity with Trotskyists working in Eastern Europe, the USSR and China. The contradictions in the workers' states not only cannot be resolved within the framework of socialism in one country, but they intensify and raise ever anew the danger of capitalist restoration.

It is a betrayal of the permanent revolution and of Bolshevism to substitute reliance on this or that 'liberal' or 'progressive tendency' in the bureaucracy for the political revolution to destroy the bureaucracy. Revolutionary sections of the Fourth International must be built to carry out this task.

It is necessary to develop in independent work and publications the Marxist understanding of the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism and of social democracy, as they are called upon always to stifle and strangle the workers' movement which surges forward.

As has been seen by the evolution of elements like Banda it is absolutely necessary to insist upon and deepen total opposition to all 'theory' that the Stalinist bureaucracy has some 'progressive side' or 'dual nature'.

Trotskyism and Stalinism are mortal enemies. Stalinism is the gravedigger of Bolshevism, Trotskyism its continuation.

Reorganisation of the Fourth International is by no means solely an organisational job. It means a conscious and thorough theoretical and political arming of our movement and especially the youth, and on this basis, an organisational leap forward internationally.

THE worst service to the cadres of the Fourth International and especially the youth would be to persist in underestimating or taking for granted the basic principles of Bolshevism — Trotskyism.

Any tendency to brush aside these basic principles as 'old fashioned' or 'inevitably requiring re-examination' or 'just generalisations' must be fought.

Development of the Fourth International programme and theory is absolutely necessary, as it always is for Marxists, but such development means reconquering the most basic theoretical and political conquests of Bolshevism. That is the key to the struggle to root Trotskyism deep in the working class.

The WRP stands before a big leap together with the international tendencies which have agreed with our Call. To struggle against British exceptionalism means to enter into the undoubted problems of the future, allying with those with whom there is a principled agreement, and fighting through the differences which will inevitably come up in the struggle in real situations.

We must avoid being sidetracked by secondary considerations — we are all subordinate to

the necessity to build a World Party of the Fourth International in the international working class. Building the Fourth International today means breaking out of inward turning circles.

The opportunities opening up for international leadership place every group and tendency on test. It is this international situation which gives us the opportunity in linking the Fourth International with movements of the working class and oppressed peoples to override individual grievance and past personal differences.

We must proceed as quickly as possible to build close international bonds with those with whom we have agreement on principles. We have to develop a living exchange of experiences, and interventions internationally in the mass movement.

That is the importance of the committee to organise the Conference — a committee of those who agree with our Call. The committee will organise the fight internationally for the principles in the world discussion before the Conference and at the Conference itself.

The really central question in the history of the Fourth International

has been how to break into the mass movement. The possibilities for resolving that are posed by this present stage of the imperialist epoch. That is the conclusion from our analysis of the stage reached in this international crisis, expressed in the miners' strike. Either we take it seriously, or we are no better than commentators and phrasemongers.

We must orientate our education work around the building of the World Party by organising an international summer school and organising a series of lectures in every district.

Besides the production of a monthly theoretical journal and internal international bulletins for the Conference, the preparatory committee should publish a series of basic pamphlets and study guides on the basic elements of our theory and programme.

The preparatory committee must make recommendations as to attendance at the International Conference, organise finance, handle documents, and organise the production of a World Political Report and a document on how to reorganise the Fourth International.

TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A Magazine of Marxist Theory
Volume 1 Number 1 March 1987

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No. of copies	Britain & Ireland	Europe	Middle East & N.Africa (air)	Africa & India (air)
1	£2.34	£2.49	£2.59	£2.72
5	£10.95	£11.42	£11.97	£12.56
10		£23.00	£23.71	£16.88

*For bulk orders in UK, contact WRP at above address or phone 01-274 7271.

For subscriptions, multiply cost of single issue.

Cheques/postal orders payable to WRP/Communist League as appropriate.

Congress resolutions:

6 In accordance with the statement of the Central Committee making the call for the International Conference, we resolve:

(a) To convene a first meeting of the Preparatory Committee of all those who declare agreement with the ten points of the Call;

(b) To reaffirm that agreement in principle with the ten points of the Call is the basis for participation in the committee.

6 The organisations participating in the Preparatory Committee must be those who recognise themselves and each other as parts of the continuity of the Fourth International and the struggle to build Trotskyist organisations.

6 Agreement on the ten points in the Call is a minimum basis for a discussion among Trotskyists. Our aim must be to set up an international democratic centralist organisation on the foundation of principled and programmatic agreement.

6 This conference instructs the WRP delegates on the International Conference Organising Committee to fight for at least one session of the International Conference to be set aside to discuss the women's question and for the delegates to the Conference to be decided with this in mind.

6 That all delegates sent abroad on International work, summarise and publish their discussions in the Internal Bulletin, with due regard to security.

BUILD TROTSKYIST PARTIES IN ALL COUNTRIES

ON 31 January 1987, Workers Press published the Workers Revolutionary Party's call for an International Conference of Trotskyists to reorganise the Fourth International.

Over 30 organisations around the world now support that call and will be represented at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference.

Another dozen organisations have expressed interest in the conference in varying degrees.

The most important controversy so far is around the point of the WRP's call which is for the building of Trotskyist parties in every country.

The argument of those who complain about the inclusion of this

sion, because the discussion is precisely about these points.

At the centre of the theory and programme of the Fourth International is the question of Trotskyist parties in every country.

With the dissidents of the USec, the main tactic is to be firm on the principles and show in practice that it is possible and necessary to fight for them.

The USec is more and more going in the direction of liquidationism into the Stalinist, reformist and petty bourgeois milieus.

The American Socialist Workers Party has formally renounced Trotskyism and is proposing a fusion with Castro-Sandinists.

The Australian SWP took the advice so seriously it dumped the

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

It is precisely against this increasingly liquidationist tendency that the unity of orthodox Trotskyists to reorganise the Fourth International has to proceed.

With this need as our starting point, we have to base our call to those dissidents to join us on the principles, and not merely on a 'tactical' withering away of our principles.

In 1979, around the defence of the Trotskyists of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade (SBIB) and the need to build Trotskyist parties in Nicaragua and El Salvador, the then Bolshevik Faction (BF), today the LIT (International Workers League), was able to consolidate its previous gains and emerge out of the struggle inside the USec with

international magazine, 'International Courier'. The first issue in Turkish appeared recently.

It is likely that they will be represented at the International Conference called by the WRP.

In their letter, the comrades of the CWL criticise national-Trotskyism and explain the need for an international organisation and leadership. They are also very clear on the question of Trotskyist parties in every country.

They pose this question as the most important in their decision to start developing relations with the LIT, and we reproduce (below) part of the letter for the benefit of our readers and also for our critics.



The list of countries where the Unified Secretariat (USec) says Trotskyist parties are no longer needed because some other leadership will do the job is growing daily; it began with Castro in Cuba

point is not, of course, one of principle, but is of a tactical nature.

They say that members of the Unified Secretariat (USec) who may agree with it and are in opposition to the leadership of the USec will be prevented or 'excluded' from participating in the Conference.

They would like the point 'tactically withdrawn' from the call to allow those 'dissidents' to come to the Preparatory Committee and to the Conference itself.

The critics of its inclusion refer mainly to the TUFU (Tendency for the Reunification of the Fourth International) formed by the British International Group, the American Socialist Action group and the Matti Tendency in the French LCR.

That tendency was mainly ignored in the last World Congress of the USec (dedicated totally to the differences between Mandel and the Socialist Workers Party on Central America) and their proposals obtained very few votes.

But what the critics don't say is that this is a political struggle where principles come first. You cannot bargain with essential principles in order to have a discus-

USec and is now in the process of fusing with a wing of the Australian Stalinist movement.

Recently, Alain Krivine, a major leader of the French LCR, announced publicly a proposal to dissolve his organisation in the 'renovateurs' of the Stalinist PCF.

The German section of the USec just dissolved into a small Stalinist party, the KPD.

Pedro Penaloza, a member of Congress of the Mexican section of the USec, the PRT, is leading a public factional fight to liquidate his organisation in a fusion with both the Stalinist PSUM and the left nationalist PMT (Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores).

Hugo Blanco led a small number of his followers in Peru into a dissolution inside the Stalinist PUM (Partido de Unificacion Mariateguista).

The list of the USec 'country-exceptions' (allegedly where Trotskyist parties are no longer necessary because some other non-revolutionary leadership will do the job) is growing daily.

To the original Cuba have been added Nicaragua, El Salvador, Germany and the Philippines.

an overwhelming majority of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America on its side.

Both Mandel and the SWP opposed building sections in Central America in order to support unconditionally the reformists of the FSLN and the FMLN.

The BF became organisationally strengthened in that fight because it stood by its principles and fought and won the majority of the Trotskyists in Latin America to its side.

This lesson should be remembered by all those who today are willing to compromise on principles in order to have somebody else in the discussion.

But if we need a more recent example, let us take the experience of the comrades of the Communist Workers League (CWL) of Turkey, the group publishing the newspaper 'Workers Front'.

The CWL were, until the coup d'etat of 1980, sympathisers of the USec.

They have now sent a letter to the LIT (International Workers League) dated 1 February 1987.

In that letter they announce their wish to be invited to the next world congress of the LIT and their initial steps to publish in Turkish its

Turkey and the International

A letter from the Communist Workers League of Turkey to the LIT (International Workers League):

BASED on our own experience, the emergence of Trotskyism as a political current within the history of the left movement in Turkey can be dated to 1974-75. These were the years when Trotskyist sectors began their first efforts towards political organisation.

Such a development necessarily posed the question of establishing relations with one of the existing international currents.

Contacts were initially made with the USec. As a result of the influence of the USec's revisionist policies and Menshevik organisational concepts on Trotskyist sections in Turkey, however, the existence of the international leadership impeded the development of the national movement.

In the course of our practical work, we learned that the United Secretariat not only possessed no militants trained in underground conditions, but had never even made any efforts in this direction.

The technical and material poverty of their organisations was so great that they were even incapable of securing the possibility for one person who needed to leave the country to do so.

As a result of police attacks upon our movement and the arrest of a number of our comrades, we protested in writing this structure of the USec and the lack of seriousness which it demonstrated.

Two facts which we confronted upon making these protests were of hair-raising dimensions.

The USec answered our letter in a completely frivolous manner. In their response figured some curious lines as to whether they remembered our name correctly or not.

However, as early as 1979 we had forwarded the basic documents of our movement to them and made attempts to participate in their Eleventh world congress.

The second fact which we learned as a result of our persistent efforts was that the person through whom we had been carrying on our relations as a representative of the USec was in fact not a representative of the USec, but rather a sympathiser who had come to Turkey on business.

Therefore, nothing this person said or did was binding upon the USec.

To recall one such non-binding statement made by this individual who claimed to have conveyed our criticisms faithfully to the USec, he declared to us that the USec did not believe it was possible to have an organisation in Turkey due to the backward nature of the Eastern countries and that this view had been expressed openly to him.

Following the 1980 military coup, we decided to remain inside the country and continue our work. Our movement suffered heavily from the arrests made in 1981-82. The identity of numerous members of the organisation became known to the police and several were followed and arrested.

One comrade of ours was sentenced initially to 17-and-a-half and subsequently to an additional nine-and-a-half years in prison. Another ten or so of our comrades were sentenced to terms ranging from six to eight years each.

Not a single offer of assistance was made to us during all of these arrests and operations, and instead propaganda was circulated to the effect that our group, which was labelled as 'Morenoist' despite our denials, had dissolved.

In 1980 and 1981 we attempted to establish relations with currents outside the USec, but our efforts were unsuccessful. The fact that those of our comrades who spoke foreign languages had been arrested and that we didn't know where to find many of the rest was a significant obstacle.

In 1981, we were able to establish contact with the Spartacist group. We invited representatives of this group, about whose views we had no detailed information, to come to Turkey and meet with us.

This group, which leaves no room for doubt as to who is truly 'revolutionary', had, however, one small concern. 'If we come to Turkey, who will vouch for our safety?' they asked. We did what was natural in the face of such an unserious response and took no further initiative to establish ties with them.

It seems they preferred doing 'healthy political' in the atmosphere of artificial security afforded by the metropolitan countries to taking revolutionary risks.

Message from Australia

The Communist League of Australia has condemned the jailing of Comrade Phil Penn.

We reproduce extracts from the statement published in their paper, 'Socialist Press':

The Communist League condemns the jailing of Comrade Phil Penn of the Workers Revolutionary Party, who has been sentenced in Britain to 12 months in prison (eight months suspended).

His jailing by a London court results from the services of members of the group supporting S. Torrance and G. Healy, the expelled former leader of the International Committee of the Fourth International, who gave evidence against Penn following his arrest after a demonstration in support of the Wapping print workers on 3 May 1986.

Phil was attacked by four members of the Healy-Torrance group while on his own after the demonstration. Phil defended himself and was alone arrested by police. One of his assailants had an eye damaged in the attack.

Phil was again attacked, this time with a club and a knife, by supporters of Healy, in Leicester on 8 June. Despite pressure from the police, Phil refused to act as a police witness, and the case had to be dropped.

Comrade Phil has been the subject of particularly vicious and violent attack by the Healy-Torrance group because of the exemplary role he played in the campaign to expose Healy before the members of the Workers Revolutionary Party of which Healy was leader until his expulsion in October 1985.

When, as a result of Healy's increasingly reactionary and irrational behaviour and the influence of other comrades who discussed with him, Phil came to the conclusion that Healy was reactionary and degenerate, he firmly and

THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN

decisively set about correcting his past error.

Phil enthusiastically and resolutely supported the campaign to expose Healy before the whole membership of the WRP and have him expelled.

After Healy's expulsion Phil repeatedly insisted that members of the WRP had to squarely face the full significance of their past errors and correct them.

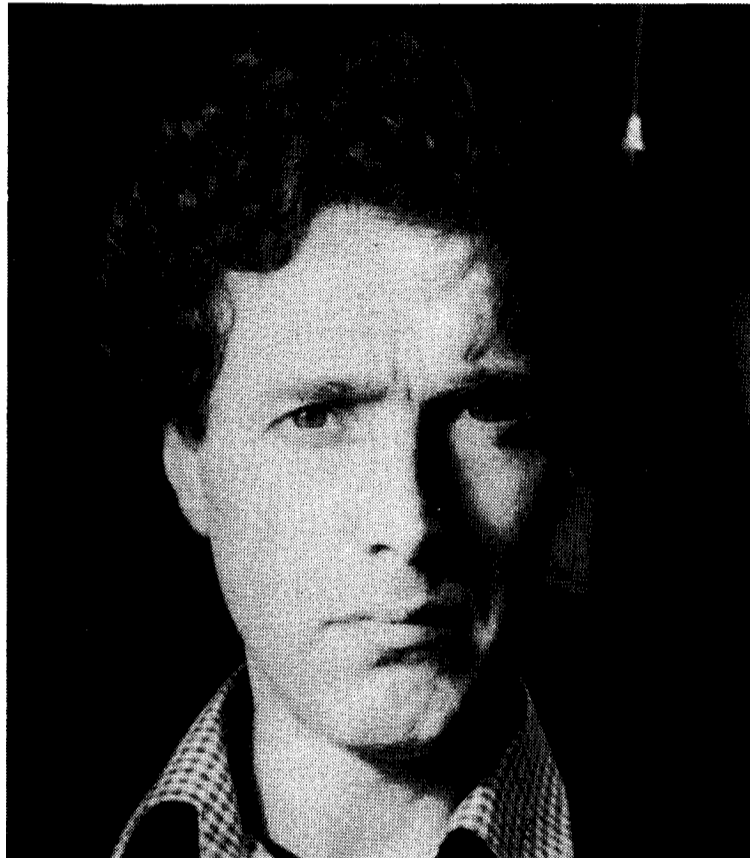
Members of the International Communist Party in Britain have also been subject to reactionary physical attacks by members of the Healy-Torrance group and have been the target of Healy's long-standing practice of using the capitalist state against his political opponents.

Six members of the Healy-Torrance group appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield in January in an attempt to have members of the ICP jailed. The jury in the case however did not believe them and threw the case out.

Healy — always in awe of the power of the capitalist state — has a long record of use of the capitalist state against his political opponents in the workers' movement.

The use of the capitalist state against Comrade Penn is a totally reactionary act, intolerable in any movement claiming to be a part of the working class.

The Communist League condemns the actions of the Healy-Torrance group and demands Comrade Penn's release.



Resolution passed last week by City Anti-Apartheid Group

CITY Anti-Apartheid Group condemns the imprisonment of Phil Penn and the role of the WRP/News Line members who appeared in court against him as police witnesses.

We regard the action of WRP/News Line as crossing the principled working class lines of not calling on the police and courts to political disputes within the workers movement.

We send our solidarity to Phil Penn in Wormwood Scrubs prison.

Conference greets Phil

Dear Comrade Phil,

The Special National Congress of the Workers Revolutionary Party sends you our warmest revolutionary greetings. We received the report of your fight on the conditions in prison with pride, but not surprise.

Your stand is a tribute to you as a leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

You can count on us to back up this fight and make public the conditions in prison.

Yours fraternally,

Peter Gibson
Chair of the Congress

Letter from America

WE reproduce here extracts from a letter received from the Central Committee of the League for the Revolutionary Party — USA:

The LRP condemns the jailing of Comrade Phil Penn. We demand his immediate release.

Penn was first assaulted by members of the Healy/Torrance WRP — News Line group who later gave testimony in court which led to his conviction. This despicable use of the bourgeois

state by the followers of Gerry Healy against a member of a working class organisation is further proof of the thoroughly rotten nature of Healyism.

The record of Healy's thuggery within the workers' movement is one aspect of the treacherous capitulation perpetrated by this adventurer and his followers in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Comrades who are rightly indignant at the use of the capitalist courts should not pass over the physical assaults on Penn which led to it.

Goon tactics were not and are not confined to Healy alone. The fight to free Phil Penn must be a fight to free Trotskyism from the ugliness and brutality committed in its name.

With communist greetings

Sy Landy
For the Central Committee of the LRP

What you can do...

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn in your union branch, trades council, support group, etc. Phone 01-274 7271 for copies of the circular explaining the case.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. L27055, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Ducane Road, London W12 0AE (registered post is best).
- Send messages of support for Phil and reports which we can print in Workers Press. We will have a special column each week while he is behind bars.

Lambeth's cuts budget

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

ANYONE watching the antics of the majority of the Labour Group in Lambeth would be forgiven for thinking that they simply do not want to win the local elections in May.

Perhaps Neil Kinnock, who is hotly pursuing an identical course on a national level, would be able to explain why.

The Lambeth Labour group under the leadership of Linda Bellos has recently passed a cuts budget with drastic implications

for the borough and its community.

Under threat of surcharge and disqualification a rate was set well within the limits laid down by Tory legislation.

The cuts include delayed openings of a wide range of social services, (crucial to an inner-city borough), cuts to the housing repairs budget, and biggest of all a so-called 'recruitment drag' through which they plan to save £6.1 million by leaving jobs empty.

Recruitment to the already unacceptable level of vacant posts will be slowed even further, with a consequent effect on deteriorating services.

Members of the National Association of Local Government Officers

(NALGO) have been refusing to cover for vacant posts in an attempt to persuade the council to accelerate recruitment.

They are choosing whether to continue the 'no cover' policy, which hits services, or accept vacancy levels and work harder.

The run-down services are ripe for the private contractors and the Tories plan to slam through their temporarily shelved privatisation legislation if they win the next election.

The response of Linda Bellos to NALGO's opposition to these policies was to say that there would have been no dissension from a cuts budget if she had been a white man.

She has also written a letter to the Labour Group, as a result of

the rebellion of eight councillors who voted against the budget, to say 'I do not see so much a Left Right split but instead a white left split.'

'I believe my record indicates that I am not of the white left, but instead on the black left, which represents an entirely different tradition in the Labour Party.'

To justify the cuts budget on the basis that this is acceptable for the black left is an insult to black people. To use the tactics of the smear campaign against political opponents is the action of the worst kind of coward.

Although Kinnock and Bellos appear to be on opposite sides of the fence over the question of black sections in the Labour Party, and Bellos uses this to validate her claim to be a left-winger, they are both for tying the Labour Party to a refusal to fight.

Bellos was shouted down at a rally called by Birmingham black section on the grounds that she stands with Kinnock, on the right.

Classes on Marxism

Fortnightly meetings, Tuesdays 7.30pm
Highfields Community Centre,
Melbourne Road, Leicester.

RELEASE JAILED TRADE UNIONISTS

S 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

PERSONAL COLUMN

Capitalism and the artist

JOHN RUSKIN once observed that no artist's work was worth half its proper value during his or her lifetime. But the moment he dies, his pictures, if they are good, reach double their former value.

How astonished Ruskin would have been that a single painting by Vincent van Gogh should be bought, by a multi-millionaire, for almost £25 million.

In 1970 Gerald Reitlinger, in 'The Economics of Taste', said that 'Mlle de Ravoux' at £175,000 was so far the dearest painting by van Gogh. But, he added, there must be van Gogh pictures that are worth a million.

We have come a long way in 17 years. £25 million is equivalent to nearly a third of Bhutan's gross domestic product. Such a sum would feed a lot of hungry children in the countries that imperialism has ill-used.

Are those sunflowers really 'worth' £25 million?

'What we are witnessing', says the 'Guardian', 'is nothing to do with real value. It is a game for mega-millionaires, satiated with material possessions.'

Another aspect of that 'game' can be seen in the grossly inflated prices paid for the tasteless jewels amassed by the Duchess of Windsor.

As long ago as 1912 Roger Fry — no Marxist, but no fool either — called art 'the symbolic currency of the world'. Possession of rare and coveted works of art is seen as a sign of greatness, national or personal.

An intelligent visitor to our planet might be forgiven for supposing the human species to be mad.

Millions of people haven't enough to eat. Millions haven't a decent roof over their heads. Many don't even have access to proper drinking-water. A few months ago, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, I saw a shanty-town whose inhabitants, since the nearby streams are all polluted, have to dig in the ground for water.

Yet a handful of multi-millionaires, whose wealth comes from other people's toil, bolster their self-esteem and status by amassing works of art and precious stones.

Madness? Certainly. But it's the madness of a decaying social system.

Unlike some socialists I know, I believe a great many people, especially young people, can now be won for socialism if such anomalies are explained to them with care, patience, and passion.

There are many young workers who view these anomalies with disgust and anger, and are thirsting for two things: an explanation; and an indication of what they them-

selves can do to bring about change. Marxism alone provides both. And it alone throws light on the anomalous position of the artist in capitalist society — existing, as Roger Fry put it, like a sparrow 'picking up the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table', and looking forward to pie in the sky in the shape of posthumous renown.

By artists I don't mean just painters, of course, but sculptors and musicians and poets too: all, indeed, whose talent impels them to create beauty in this society where the rich are greedy for beauty, provided its creator is both dead and highly esteemed by the pundits.

The fate of van Gogh's sunflowers should surely inspire the revolutionary movement to reach out to young artists.

They are badly needed. For they are well equipped to fire the rest of their generation with a vision of the future society, in which there will be no poverty and works of art will no longer be commodities or status symbols.

Thatcher's mis-quotation

FROM each according to his abilities, to each according to his means.' That was how Margaret Thatcher 'quoted' Marx during her Moscow visit.

At least, that's what I thought I heard her say, on television; and Alan Watkins of the 'Observer' thought he heard the same.

But, as he pointed out last Sunday, what Marx actually wrote, in 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' (1875), was: 'From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.'

Perhaps Thatcher's version was 'a more acceptable formulation for a Conservative', suggested Watkins.

It wasn't Marx, by the way, who originated this slogan. He seems to have borrowed it from the anarchist Michael Bakunin, who in 1870 put it like this: 'From each according to his faculties, to each according to his needs.'

Leaping nun

I WAS interested to see that Monica Baldwin's 'I Leap Over the Wall', first published in 1949, has just been reissued by Hamish Hamilton.

The author entered a convent in 1914 and stayed strictly secluded there until 1941, when she was released from her vows and went back to the outer world.

In those 27 years she had 'missed' World War I and the start of World War II; her uncle Stanley Baldwin had been prime minister for a time; broadcasting had arrived; the motor-car had replaced the horse and carriage; and women had taken to showing their legs and painting their faces.

If you're wondering what Marxists might find interesting in an account of such an experience, I can only reply: 'Everything.'

It confirms from an unexpected perspective the view of our epoch as the terminal crisis of a social system. It puts flesh on the bare bones of social history.

Baldwin was shocked by the deterioration in the quality of life since she had gone 'inside'. The world had become alarming and even, she felt, hostile.

I was disappointed that the only review I've seen of this reissue made no mention of Baldwin's astonishment at the way the English language had changed during her incarceration.

During a railway journey the expression 'luggage in advance' meant nothing to her, so she told the porter to do as he thought best. There were many expressions in the daily papers that she couldn't make head or tail of: 'jazz, gin and it, the Unknown Soldier, lease-end, Ho Ywood, cocktail, striptease, and solatorism', for instance.

She was bewildered when friends said 'tis your funera or Believe it or not. Advertisements for Brasso, Rinso, and Vim meant nothing to her, and in restaurants it was hard to make sense of the menu.

This is a useful reminder that language never stands still. English has been changing faster than ever since the advent of television, and the past 27 years have brought changes on a far bigger scale than that recorded by Baldwin — not least in the language of politics.

Further particulars

BRIAN PEARCE tells me that the journal 'Sbornik' is to be renamed 'Revolutionary Russia' from the next issue onwards.

Those interested in reading Pearce's paper, 'Lenin versus Trotsky on "Revolutionary Defeatism"', which I mentioned on 21 March, should write to the editor: Dr John Slatter, Department of Russian, University of Durham, Durham City DH1 3JT.

I hear from Nigel Todd that his 'Black on Tyne: 1860s', which I mentioned on 14 March, is to be reproduced in the 'North East Labour History Bulletin' this autumn.

Peter Fryer

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THE Workers Revolutionary Party Special Fund is urgently needed to carry out the preparation for an International Conference of Trotskyists, planned for later this year, to reorganise the Fourth International.

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● Please send contributions, large or small, to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

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FREE THE FRAMED IRISH PRISONERS BENEFIT Brent Irish Cultural Centre, Salisbury Road, Queens Park, NW6. Friday, 24 April, 7.30p.m. Entertainers include Maria Tolly. Admission Free.

FREE THE FRAMED IRISH PRISONERS PICKET Downing Street, Wednesday 29 April, 6.00p.m.-7.00p.m. For a Public Inquiry into the Beating and Framing of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four. (Next campaign committee meeting will be on Wednesday, 15 April at 7.30p.m. in Camden Town Hall)

HANGERS WORKERS SUPPORT GROUP MARCH Support the locked out Limbitters. Assem-

ble 10.30a.m. Saturday 2 May, Roehampton Lane, SW15; march to Bishops Park for Rally at 1.00p.m.

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, 7.30p.m., Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All are welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938)

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

BRING BACK VICTORIA WILLIAMS! Campaign meetings take place on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month at UCA, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, Acton (7.30 p.m.)

TALK POLITICS WITH THE RCG Weekly discussion meetings every Sunday, 7.00p.m. at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. 26 April:

The Soviet Union and the fight against imperialism.

VIRAJ MENDIS WILL STAY — STOP ALL DEPORTATIONS NOW! Conference, 11-12 April, Church of the Ascension, off Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester. Organised by the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign. Telephone: 061-234 3168 for details.

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REVIEWS

Stalinism feeds lie-machine

This Week. Thames Television, 2 April

LAST WEEK'S *This Week* was a classic example of putrid collaboration between the media, government-controlled British Coal, academia and the British Communist Party.

The word went out: 'Do a job on the NUM' and one-time lefty Jonathan Dimbleby together with side-kick Trevor Phillips join hands with Roy Link (NCB house-boy and leader of the scab UDM), historian Hywel Francis (son of Dai Francis, leading South Wales Stalinist) and retiring NUM vice-president and long-standing member of the CPGB, Mick McGahey, to carry out a crude and contradictory character-assassination job on NUM president Arthur Scargill.

Dimbleby defined the parameters in his introduction: '... The NUM is now so small indeed that its president, Arthur Scargill, only just retains a place and a voice on the top table of the TUC General Council. Despite that decline and despite the trauma of the strike, Mr Scargill has been insistent that his men should be as militant as ever' (my emphasis).

But the mood of the miners has changed and, as Trevor Phillips reports, their leader is now under open attack not only from his critics outside, but from once-loyal colleagues inside the union.

Phillips then takes over and cuts directly to the cemetery in South Kirby where we see Mark Jones placing flowers on his son's grave. The voice-over of Mark Jones explains 'David was very strong on Arthur Scargill' who has 'got his views, strong views, and he feels passionately about them'.

The implication was obvious: support for Scargill can only lead to the grave.

To even infer such a thing is scandalous. Since David Jones' tragic and untimely death on the picket line at Ollerton, his mother and father, Doreen and Mark Jones, have been untiring, active supporters of the miners and their cause.

'It's what (David) believed in, and what the miners believed in,' Mark states in the programme, 'and from my point of view they were right: they had to take up the struggle and fight for their jobs, their industry and their union.'

When I telephoned Mark Jones and asked him what he thought of the way *This Week* had used his footage he commented succinctly: 'I felt as if I had been raped.'

The Coal Board and the government have a sticky problem. They want to build a capital intensive 'super-pit' in Margam, South Wales. To be financially viable it has to 'super-exploit' its workforce.

So they are looking for ways to divide the NUM if they can and get the Stalinist-controlled South Wales NUM to sign a local agree-

ment which would include provision for a six-day working week. The NUM executive knows this is the thin end of the wedge.

Retiring NUM vice-president, Michael McGahey, knows better: 'Sir Robert Hanlan, the chairman of the NCB, has made clear that they are not looking for six-day working throughout the British mining industry.'

That's rich, I thought as I watched the programme, the NCB chairman's 'word' versus the NUM Executive's considered view, and

like Phillips knows this well. Time to spin a web of subtler lies and innuendoes. Time for the academic to do a double act with the 'old trade union battler'.

Francis: 'To criticise Arthur would be in some way to criticise the sacrifices made by miners and their families, and it has somehow or other got mixed up together...'

McGahey: 'He did not learn the lesson of the strike... I think we are still using 1972 tools for 1984.'

Francis: 'I think it's rather im-

Not a lot, but it is nonetheless worthy of our attention.

During the miners' strike the media's chosen weapon for hammering the NUM was to vilify its president, Arthur Scargill, on a daily and sometimes hourly basis. He was depicted as a dictatorial, power-hungry demon who cared nothing for the miners but was hell bent on subverting 'democracy' for his own political ends.

On those heady days his chief lieutenant, Mick McGahey, was never mentioned without attribut-

Age-old political differences which could not be resolved inside the NUM or even within the workers' movement now explode in a wider arena. Old wounds cauterised with a few drops of state ointment; attempts to settle old scores subjectively by appealing to the class enemy for arbitration.

No different in content from Healy and the Redgraves taking WRP companies to court; no different from the Torrance-machine supplying police witnesses to facilitate the jailing of Comrade Phil Penn.

For the politically bankrupt there remains fewer and fewer disguises.

McGahey, Terry Thomas, Hywel Frances, even the miserable Roy Link (whose pension can hardly be said to be guaranteed) know perfectly well that no National Official of the NUM can speak for himself or herself. They are bound by policy voted on by the NUM Executive. Those who suggest otherwise are lying.

The same principle applies whether one is referring to 'talks with the UDM' or to a six-day working week.

As Scargill stated in the programme: 'The policy of the union is for a shorter working week, and until and unless anyone changes that policy, that will be my position. I will not be party to extending the working week for miners.'

To conclude I would like to say this. Dimbleby in his opening remarks laid stress on the fact that since the end of the strike... the mood of the miners has changed and, as Trevor Phillips reports, their leader is now under open attack from... inside his union.'

Show us the proof, Dimbleby and Phillips!

If the mood of the miners has changed, and Scargill opponents, like McGahey, are taking the high ground, how in hell do you explain the fact that last week 64,454 miners voted a Scargill supporter, Sammy Thompson (a Yorkshireman to boot), to the vice presidency by a healthy margin of 8,846 votes, defeating McGahey's co-thinker, Eric Clarke, in the process???

Tom Scott Robson

... This review replaces Robson's Choice



Nurses marching with Arthur Scargill in support of the miners — one section of the many workers who supported the miners during the strike

McGahey sides with the chairman! He should have been 'retired' long ago, as many miners in Scotland have been saying for years.

In the final analysis it comes down to a question of leadership, as Phillips makes clear in his commentary: 'Mr Kinnock has put his cards on the table by publicly supporting the South Wales area.'

'South Wales wants negotiation. Nottingham is appealing for conciliation. But back in Yorkshire Scargill (sic) is offering yet more confrontation.'

So let's try (once more) to get Scargill: 'Most labour leaders dislike Scargill's (sic) policies and his (sic) methods,' claims Phillips over a shot of Kinnock sipping, Perrier water?

He then cuts to the bosses' 'flavour of the decade', Eric Hammond, who is sounding off at the 1975 Labour Party Conference: 'The miners did not choose to strike (sic). The Triumvirate did, and they were defeated!'

Such crudities help, but only in moderation, and an aspiring hack portant because that is why I sup-

pose there has been a great reluctance to analyse the strike itself, because that would be seen in some way or another as a criticism of the very great and courageous sacrifices that were made by miners and their communities.'

McGahey: 'I disagree with Arthur's approach. I think it is too abrasive, in relation to the UDM for example... I refuse to accept that 20 thousand miners and their families and communities are untouchables...'

Francis: '... we have to disentangle the image of National President and Arthur Scargill's own persona... between Arthur and the union.'

McGahey: 'If he as an individual reflects the feelings of the Executive, then he will be the right man at the right time for the job... None of us live on an island unto ourselves... we must reflect the Executive', and Terry Thomas, South Wales NUM, agrees with this one hundred per cent.

What does all this guff add up to? ing to him longstanding membership of the Communist Party.

How times have changed!

Now that McGahey is a willing tool of the NCB, of Thatcher and of Kinnock, and enthusiastically adopts the same methods of slander and lie against Scargill and the NUM that were used against Scargill and McGahey in 1985, there is not a single mention of his political affiliation by Phillips, Dimbleby or anybody else.

Surprise, surprise! It takes one to know one, as the saying goes.

Now in Paperback

Where Sixpence Lives. By Norma Kitson. Hogarth Press, £4.50.

WHEN Norma Kitson's book was published in hardback, our reviewer said it had 'flashes of lightning and it is certainly written to make people's feet march and to set them in the right direction.'

Many comrades fighting for the South African revolution have come across the activities of the official Anti-Apartheid, representatives of what Norma Kitson calls the Chevra, the 'Burial Society'.

The struggles and sacrifices of Norma and David Kitson to put the South African revolution first both inspire and arm with knowledge. The paperback publication of her autobiography brings it within everyone's grasp.

Selling Hitler. By Robert Harris. Faber and Faber, £4.95.

ANOTHER book making its appearance in a paperback edition is Robert Harris's account of the Hitler-diary conspiracy, in which shrewd operators made the work of fairly amateurish forgers a front-page story, and exposed the purchasability of a number of prominent historians...

With \$4 million missing, this was the most expensive fraud in publishing history, and cost at least four editors their jobs.

The story has a lot to say about values of the bourgeois press. For Murdoch the authenticity or otherwise of the diaries was of minor importance; sales of the 'Sunday Times' increased by 60,000 copies.

And David Irving, right-wing historian, did rather well out of the episode, sending bills to newspap-

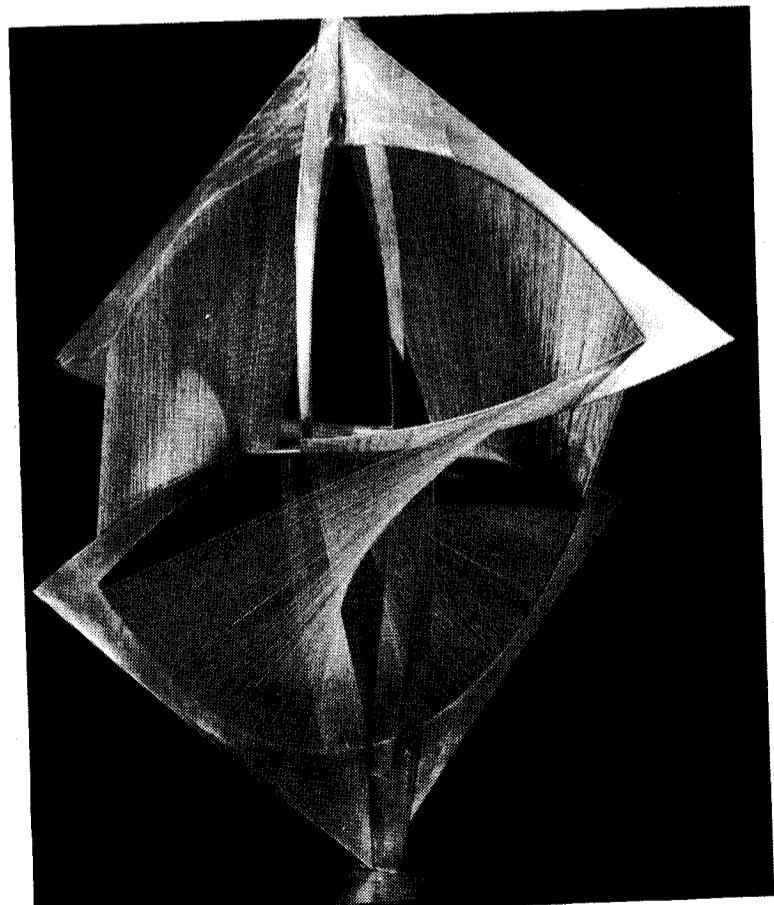
ers in several countries for his work in uncovering the deception — and his publishers trebled the print run of his book on Hitler's medical history.

Educate, Agitate, Organize: 100 Years of Fabian Socialism. By Patricia Pugh. Methuen Paperbacks, £8.95

THE OFFICIAL history of the Fabian Society is guaranteed to send a shiver down the spine of every socialist.

From its original mixture of mysticism and rhetoric, it became a training ground for Labourite prime ministers from Ramsay MacDonald to James Callaghan.

Kinnock is an enthusiastic Fabian, the kind of 'thoughtful democratic socialist' that the society has nurtured since 1884.



If you can, get along to the current exhibition at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, London before it closes on 20 April.

The picture above is of a Naum Gabo construction of stainless steel sheet and spring-wire, made in 1974, entitled 'Torsion, Variation'.

This is one of many examples of his feel of space and time, which appear in the exhibition covering 60 years of his work.

Russian-born Naum Gabo, an enthusiastic supporter of the Russian Revolution and the freedom for artistic expression it brought, was co-author, in 1920, of 'The Realistic Manifesto' in which he stated 'Space and time are the only forms on which life is built and hence art must be constructed'.

Geoff Thurley

'LET US BURY OUR DEAD IN PEACE'

BY SIMON PIRANI

TENS of thousands of people lined the streets of west Belfast last Wednesday to defy police and army intimidation and pay tribute to IRA Volunteer Lawrence Marley.

Mourners were attacked by baton-wielding RUC police as Marley's coffin left his home in Ardoyne, north Belfast, draped in the Irish tricolour.

Rifle-toting British soldiers, low-flying helicopters, and more than 100 army and police land-rovers were used to surround the funeral procession through Ardoyne.

Then the cortege drove to the Falls Road, where thousands of nationalists had waited for four hours, jamming the pavements.

Marley's funeral was postponed from Monday, and then Tuesday, after the RUC waded into mourners with batons.

The RUC claimed that the purpose of the intimidation was to stop 'an IRA funeral'. But the IRA's Belfast brigade pointed out in a statement on Monday night that they had already staged a ceremony in Marley's honour on Sunday, when they fired a volley of shots at Ardoyne's Republican memorial.

The ghoulish state attacks on the funeral brought anger to boiling point, and on Tuesday night riots broke out on the Falls Road: cars, articulated lorries and buses were burned out, and barricades erected.

IRA units bombed the Woodburn army-RUC barracks (no casualties), and attacked British army patrols, with two soldiers wounded.

Shot

Volunteer Marley, 41, was shot six times in the chest on Monday at his home. The loyalist para-militaries of the Ulster Volunteer Force claimed responsibility.

'Ardoyne was swamped by the army when Marley was shot,' a Republican Press Centre spokesman told Workers Press. 'There was a roadblock on every single road in the area, except the one used by the killers.'

'The police wanted to dictate who would carry the coffin and how the funeral would be conducted.'

'At the recent funeral of Emmanuel Garghan (who died in the INLA feud), people carrying the coffin wearing black ties and white shirts were deemed to be in "para-military uniform". This intimidation is just not acceptable.'

Throughout Republican

history, British occupation forces have attacked funerals and even desecrated graves and monuments.

These attacks intensified since the hunger strikes, and reached a climax in recent months with frenzied attempts to stop coffins being draped with the tricolour, and the berets and gloves of IRA men.

The funeral of an RUC officer was disrupted last month by an IRA bomb; a message issued afterwards stated: 'If you want to bury your dead, keep a dignified distance from Republican and nationalist funerals.'

Opposition

Three thousand mourners honouring IRA volunteer Gerard Logue in Derry last month were attacked by hundreds of soldiers and police, and 75 armoured cars; the IRA fired a volley of shots in the churchyard under the nose of the state forces.

The campaign against the funerals was joined by the Catholic hierarchy, with Bishop Edward Daly condemning 'violent' IRA displays, but saying nothing about the British forces.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) attacked the state for playing into the IRA's hands. When Sinn Fein councillors at Omagh moved suspension of business for a week in protest, the SDLP voted against.

Danny Morrison of Sinn Fein said: 'The brutal scenes of riot police attacking mourners shows the reality of life for nationalists under the Hillsborough agreement. The SDLP should hold their heads in shame . . . let them condemn Thatcher and the ghoul under whose direction the RUC are carrying out this operation.'

Protest

The brutal attacks on Marley's funeral, reminiscent of South Africa or Iran, brought a storm of protest from southern Ireland and the United States.

But there was not a whimper from the British



STRABANE: The massive RUC presence at Volunteer Charles Breslin's funeral on February 26th 1985

Labour leadership. Kinnock and Co.'s commitment to the army occupa-

tion, with which Britain maintains control of northern Ireland, prevents them speaking out against the most vile state intimidation.

Labour's spokesman on the six counties, Stuart Bell, said at the weekend that Labour was putting a four-point plan to extreme right-wing Unionists, clearly hoping to win their 14 parliamentary votes in the event of a close election result.

Bell — to the anger of other Labour leaders who fear that the cat is out of the bag — said the Unionists' views would be 'listened to seriously' by the Labour leadership.

The sight of working-

class men, women and children being batoned and pushed by gun-toting soldiers and police must redouble our fight against this sort of chauvinism in the British labour movement.

Working-class organisations must side with the nationalist communities in Ireland against police and army violence, show trials, plastic bullets, strip-searching . . . and now the deliberate disruption of Republican funerals.

For a British withdrawal from the north of Ireland! Support the nationalist communities and the Republicans against British imperialism! For a united socialist Ireland!

Part two of the Leon Goodman interview will appear next week



DERRY: Mourners attending the funeral of Volunteer Kieran Fleming on December 23rd 1984 baton-charged by RUC outside the Fleming home

Seamen back occupation

ABERDEEN branch of the National Union of Seamen has passed the following resolution in support of the Caterpillar workers.

•Aberdeen branch of the NUS sends its warmest greetings to the Caterpillar workers after their decision to continue the occupation of their factory, despite a court ruling against them. We condemn the AEU executive's cowardly abandonment of the struggle by refusing to support the occupation on the grounds that it is illegal.

We note the Caterpillar shop stewards' spokesman John Gillen's defiant answer to the courts: 'If we go on with the

occupation and the court finds us in contempt and decide they want us physically removed, we will call on the trades unions and unemployed to come and physically defend the plant.'

The branch resolves:

1. To offer its fullest physical support to the Caterpillar occupation;
2. To petition the NUS executive council for funds to be made available to support the workers;
3. To campaign for this course of action throughout the labour and trade union movement;
4. To bring the union banner on all Caterpillar and related demonstrations.

Caterpillar support group is launched

WEEKLY demonstrations to back the Caterpillar sit-in will be held on Saturdays by the newly-formed Glasgow Caterpillar Support Group.

The support group is calling on trades unionists, youth, the unemployed, women, community organisations and all those who want to fight unemployment to take part.

'To hell with the hierarchy of the unions; to hell with the Tory law,' said Jim MacDuff, electricians' shop steward from the Yarrow shipyard, at the support group's founding meeting last Monday.

'The union hierarchy say they have their arms twisted

behind their backs with the law, that they can't do anything.

'Well we don't need to wait for them: it's us, the workers in the factories, the people on the streets, who will decide.'

Jim, speaking on behalf of the Yarrow shop stewards' committee, pledged to do everything possible to win sup-

port among the 3000 workers, at the warship-building yard for the Caterpillar struggle.

Members of the engineering, print, mining, and teaching unions, as well as students and unemployed, took part in the meeting.

'According to Caterpillar, we were "victims of remedy" — their remedy for falling profits, which was to

cut capacity worldwide,' Caterpillar worker John Jamieson told them.

'When we started our sit-in, management responded by declaring it illegal.'

John said that political and religious groups had supported the sit-in, but now the workers' own union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), had withdrawn support. 'They are frightened of their money being taken off them.'

Of the proposal to end the sit-in and picket the plant, John said: 'If we picket in the street we will have nothing. With the occupation we are preventing machines leaving the factory: without

these it is worthless, nothing more than a big aircraft hanger.'

Some trades unionists from the Midlands travelled to the meeting, and stated their intention of starting support groups there.

One of them, an AEU member, said that Bill Jordan, the AEU leader who was now telling Caterpillar workers to end the sit-in, had presided over massive job losses at a factory of which he was convenor.

'My branch of the AEU has passed a resolution demanding that this class treachery be reversed, and that the executive give full support to Caterpillar.'

'As workers, as socialists, we cannot afford to lose this particular struggle.'

There was a discussion about the possibility of Caterpillar workers finding loopholes in the law to prevent eviction. But National Union of Seamen member Neil Rothnie pointed out: 'When the basic class issues are at stake, the courts never find in favour of workers.'

He added that the support group, and the Caterpillar workers, had to have their eyes wide open to the fact that eventually the sit-in would be up against the law, just as the miners and Wapping strikers had been.

An Iranian student said that the Organisation of the Iranian People's Fedayeen Guerrillas had publicised the

Caterpillar sit-in in their paper, and would do so on their radio station. 'Factory occupations in Iran often last only a day: they are crushed by the military; workers are shot and imprisoned,' he said.

The support group agreed that its tasks were to raise political, physical and financial backing for the sit-in.

• A weekly demonstration will be held on Saturdays at 11a.m. at the 'Pink Panther' tractor at George Square, Glasgow. (The 'panther', built during the sit-in to donate to War on Want to help fight famine, is trapped in Glasgow by an interdict from the multinational company).

• The support group meets each Monday (except for Easter week, when it will be Tuesday), at 7.30p.m. at the Transport and General Workers' Union offices, Bath Street, Glasgow. All are welcome.

• More information on Glasgow support group from Kate Lonergan, secretary GCSG, c/o Shop Stewards Committee, Yarrow Shipbuilders, 1581 South Street, Glasgow G14. Phone 041-954 9321.

• Financial donations to: T. Stevenson, Treasurer, Joint Occupation Committee, 17 Campsie View, Bailleston, Glasgow.

Please note: stationery supplies are urgently needed at the occupation!



Left to right: Michelle Wildslith, Sandra Black and Carole Bolam on the HFW picket line

Wapping comes to Tyneside

BY KEVIN TOWNSEND

SOGAT '82 are once again in bitter struggle against Murdoch-style union-busting. A Gateshead firm, HFW, has sacked its entire workforce for refusing to sign a loyalty pledge and is busying in scabs and patrolling its premises with private security guards with Alsatian dogs.

The workforce, who have not had a pay rise in four years, introduced an overtime ban after the company refused to pay an agreed annual increase.

HFW responded by forcing its workers to sign the loyalty pledge. Eight workers including the FoC (shop steward) refused and were instantly sacked.

All 50 SOGAT members — many young and low paid —

walked out in support. Five days later the entire workforce was sacked when they refused to return to work. The management have withdrawn union recognition and have been engaged in recruiting scabs.

When managing director Paul Jackson took over he was horrified to learn that women employees were earning £100 a week. His reaction was: 'No woman is worth that', and he set about cutting their wages.

Michelle, 17, summed up the feelings of the women workers when she told Workers Press: 'I started a three-month trial period on £47. Following the trial period all

the lads got an increase of £10 whilst myself and other girls didn't get anything.'

Sandra, who was sacked for refusing to sign the pledge, said: 'We have never had a wage rise in four years. I refused to sign the form because I knew there was an overtime ban and they wouldn't give us time to consult our union. When I refused to sign I was sacked immediately.'

Carole said: 'We even took a wage cut of £10 last year. The highest take-home pay is £71 in this factory.'

The strike is receiving trade union support on Tyneside. HFW management were forced to abandon a Gates-

head hotel last week where they were interviewing scabs because local trades council leaders reminded the hotel that the National Conference of Trades Councils is due to be held this year in the same hotel and they might reconsider.

When this issue was posed the hotel management turfed out the scab company.

Some unemployed workers who were going to the interviews turned away when confronted with pickets from the factory. British Telecom engineers fresh from their own dispute refused to cross the picket line to repair the company phones.

• Donations to: HFW Strike, SOGAT, 119 Jesmond Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 1NL

From CHRIS McBRIDE at CATERPILLAR

'GAVIN LAIRD has been a disaster for the AEU. We just paid our dues and went along with it but now they've shown their true colours and it's about time that something was done about them!'

Derek Dixon, an occupant at the Caterpillar tractor works near Glasgow, is one of the many workers heading into a confrontation with the leaders of their unions.

As the occupation runs into its 13th week the question of the leadership needed to safeguard this essential industry is being raised sharply for the Caterpillar workers. Their defiant stand against the Caterpillar multinational and the courts is scaring the wits out of AEU leaders and the Scottish TUC.

Dixon described the difference between the occupation leaders, and the 'big wigs' Gavin (or Give-in) Laird and Communist Party member Jimmy Airlie, who is 'negotiating' between the Scottish

TUC and the occupation committee.

'John Brannan and John Gillan are not prepared to give in to people like Jimmy Airlie and Gavin Laird, they are standing up for the whole community.'

'Thatcher doesn't need to bring in any more new legislation because they've got people like Laird and Jordan at the top of the tree.' Airlie had told the occupants that 'our union cannot support an illegal occupation.'

Asked about the 1978 Caterpillar strike and the present dispute, Dixon explained: '1978 was a strike for pay. This time it's a life or death situation. We've got to give it all we have got or there will be nothing there at the end of the line.'

Asked about the attitude of the strikers he told us: 'The guys who have stuck it through till now will see it through to the end.'

His workmate Tom Farrell said: 'I don't think there's any point in giving up the struggle. It's a viable plant; surely there must be something there.'