

TOWER HAMLETS SUPPORT GROUP
& WOMEN AGAINST MURDOCH

RALLY

Sunday 3 May, 4p.m.
Wellclose Square

PUBLIC LECTURES

A series of four lectures
by Cyril Smith

1. Marxism and bourgeois philosophy
2. Subject and object
3. Individual and society
4. Theory and revolutionary practice

FRIDAY evenings
7.30p.m. sharp
Duke of York, York Way
near Kings Cross Station, London WC1
start 24 April

WAPPING

JURY VERDICT VINDICATES STRUGGLE

THE DECISION that Michael Delaney was unlawfully killed by a scab TNT lorry near Wapping on 10 January is a vindication of the fight by the Delaney family and sections of the working class in London's East End.

The jury defied coroner Dr Douglas Chambers who had earlier told them that the appropriate verdict would be misadventure or accidental death. Chambers advised that a verdict of unlawful killing would not be germane.

Chambers added that a verdict of unlawful killing would be the same as causing death by reckless driving, meaning that TNT lorry driver Robert Higgins had had 'total dis-

regard for the consequences of the act'.

It is cases such as this which have driven the Thatcher government to prepare for the scrapping of the jury system, along lines already present in the north of Ireland.

The papers in the case will now go forward to the Director of Public Prosecutions who will consider whether further proceedings will be initiated.

After the verdict, Roy Mincoff, solicitor for the family, said: 'I trust the police will now prosecute the TNT driver vigorously.' He added that the family would consider taking civil action against the driver and TNT.

TNT was the scab lorry firm that distributed Murdoch's papers during the year-long dispute. Murdoch is a large shareholder in the company.

John Rees, chairman of the Tower Hamlets Print Support Group, told Workers Press that the verdict justified the tenacious fight of the family to repudiate suggestions that Michael had died through misadventure or as a result of an accident. Rees told us of the campaign waged to establish the truth about the Wapping incident.

Accompanied by local MP Peter Shore, he and others had spent an hour

arguing the case with Home Secretary Douglas Hurd after collecting 2,000 signatures on a petition.

Rees said that workers in the area had demanded answers to the following questions:

● Why did the Police allow the lorry to go 25 miles before stopping it when normal procedure would have been to halt it immediately after such an incident?

● Why are such lorries allowed to use the highway free from all restrictions?

Rees insisted that whatever the DPP decides, the case would not be allowed to die. The issue did not concern the TNT driver alone but the firm itself.

■ Sunday 3 May, 4p.m. Wellclose Square, E.1. Tower Hamlets Print Support Group, in association with Women against Murdoch, will be holding a Rally. It will commemorate the 3 May Wapping demonstration, will fight on the question of unemployment and take forward the Wapping struggle in the light of the Michael Delaney verdict.

We call upon all Workers Revolutionary Party members and Workers Press readers to attend this march and rally and give full support to those who have struggled to expose the activities of Murdoch and the scab TNT lorries.

—HFW strike— see page 16—



**Workers
Press**

'Glasnost' and Counter-revolution

THE SECRET of Gorbachev's 'openness' and 'reconstruction' is now out: his Stalinism with a human face hides a new stage in the preparation of the Soviet bureaucracy to behead the mounting struggles of the working class. After his public relations job for Thatcher, Gorbachev now offers US imperialism concessions on nuclear arms control beyond its wildest dreams. The State Department is unable to believe its good fortune.

Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who generally pushes Reagan towards a tougher line with the Russians, has been reduced to a low growl. Secretary of State Shultz has returned from his Moscow visit with the offer of a deal on all ranges of nuclear weapons, including, to everyone's surprise, short-range missiles.

Amidst all the euphoria, we must warn that these moves open the Soviet Union to renewed and grave danger. Gorbachev has declared openly that he does not regard world capitalism as an enemy. Stalinism — in its Gorbachevian as much as its more familiar mode — disarms the workers' state and the workers' movement, politically and militarily.

The prospect of a summit meeting between the super-powers opens up the danger of far more extensive treachery. The chief centres of this betrayal are not Europe but South Africa and the Middle East.

In each of these regions, the movement against imperialism is menaced by the bureaucracy's desperate need for accommodation with imperialism:

- Acting through the Syrian bonapartist leadership, Moscow will offer a deal with Zionism at the expense of the beleaguered Palestinians. Most likely is a proposal to legitimise the incorporation of the West Bank of the Jordan into Israel.
- The South African working class continues to march forward, despite all the attacks of the apartheid-capitalist state machine. Only one force can stop it: Stalinism. Talk of a deal between the African National Congress and a section of South African big business gets louder every day. Such a deal, aimed at beheading this powerful mass movement, would require the dual sponsorship of Washington and Moscow.

All these moves express the fundamentally counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism. Gorbachev is as firmly based as any other Stalinist on the reactionary conception that Soviet society must develop as an island of state-owned property in a sea of capitalism.

The implications of this conception were revealed in Stalin's time in the bureaucratic terror of the degenerated workers' state. Economically, it cut off Soviet economy from world economy, and condemned the Soviet working class to harder work and lower living standards than the workers of the west. Militarily, it placed the Soviet Union in mortal danger from imperialism, a danger only averted in 1941-1945 by the heroism of the Soviet people.

Soviet industrial advance since World War II did not bring these dangers to an end. On the contrary, they were taken to a higher level. Every step forwards in technology intensified the interdependence of world economy. At the same time, it made the military danger still more horrific.

The bureaucracy, in Eastern Europe as well as in the USSR, was forced to undertake crippling military expenditure. Now, it must seek help from the international banking system. The disastrous history of this strategy in Poland — where the bureaucracy has to oppress the workers ever harder in order to service foreign debts — is only too well known.

The latest moves of Gorbachev must be placed in the context of the new stage in the international class struggle and the deepening crisis for world imperialism. In effect, the bureaucracy tells Reagan and Thatcher: 'If we don't hang together, we'll hang separately.'

So, from Beirut to Soweto, from Warsaw to Glasgow, Stalinism, dressed in fashionable liberal clothes, must strive to undermine the independent movement of the working class against capitalism. Social democracy, the original agency of capital inside the working class movement, long ago proved itself unable to do this job. Without Stalinism the dying world order of capitalism could not survive.

This was the essential meaning of Trotsky's fight to found the Fourth International — against the scepticism of all those who sought some way to reform Stalinism or liberalise the bureaucracy. The work to re-organise the Fourth International is the only answer to a new stage in the history of Stalinist counter-revolution.

Hospital workers fight privatisation

OVER 500 workers at North Manchester General Hospital lobbied a meeting of the health authority last week to protest against plans for extensive privatisation.

They were attending a mass meeting called by the joint shop stewards' committee and voted for an immediate lobby once they heard of the plans.

The health authority face an estimated deficit of £1.2 million in 1987/1988 and commissioned a document containing proposals to privatise gardeners, porters and works departments and to close Ancoats hospital completely.

NUPE member Paul Phillips, a cook at the hospital, told Workers Press what happened.

‘Once we marched in they closed the meeting and wouldn't tell us if the document had been discussed, they said it was nothing to do with us.’

Our stewards and branch secretary Vinny Fish explained that tendering to the lowest bidder doesn't necessarily mean a better service. Domestic services have

BY STUART CARTER

already been privatised.

Medicare have won the contract to clean clinics and Hall's of Liverpool have the contract for the general hospital.

They gave examples from health authorities where these firms already operate of inadequate standards of cleaning.

Discussed

The authority hadn't had this information, only the evaluation team, and they said it would have to be discussed and if we all went away they would discuss. We've not heard anything since.

Commenting on the effects

Todd must resign from MSC!

TRANSPORT and General Workers Union leader Ron Todd has threatened to resign from the Manpower Services Commission.

One of the three TUC-MSC Commissioners, Todd is contemplating this action because of the government's refusal to increase the benefit paid to those on the new Job Training Scheme.

Employment Secretary Lord Young is understood to have rejected union pleas for 'extra benefit' for JTS victims.

Todd now says his union will boycott the scheme unless 'trainees' get extra benefit.

Meanwhile the Scottish TUC is preparing to 'withhold co-operation' from the JTS which union officials say will make the scheme inoperable in Scotland.

Ron Todd has been a critical instrument in the Thatcher's government's drive to enslave millions of young workers on YTS and other schemes.

This kind of cheap labour was used for scabbing in the Contract workers strike in the North East. It is designed to introduce wage cuts, sackings, longer working hours and worse working conditions for millions of workers in every industry.

Todd and many other Labour and trade union leaders have actively participated in introducing various forms of cheap labour. He is now shedding tears for unemployed workers who are to be forced to work for food and a roof because he thinks they should get 'extra benefit'.

Trade union rights is the issue facing those on JTS, not 'extra benefit'.

● Ron Todd and all other TUC commissioners on the MSC must resign from the MSC now!

● Trade union rates of pay and trade union membership for all workers and trainees with no exceptions!

● Proper jobs at the end of any training period!

MOATHOUSE: Two pickets arrested

BY JOHN OWEN

TWO pickets were arrested last Saturday night outside the Moathouse hotel in Liverpool, where over 49 staff were sacked two weeks ago for joining the Transport and General Workers' Union.

One of the pickets, Denise Redmond, was accused of letting down the staff van's tyres, and fellow-picket Garry Fath was arrested while trying to stop the police arresting her.

'I was taken to the cells, fingerprinted, and later charged with obstruction,' said Garry. 'I'm due up in court in May. Why I'm charged with obstruction I don't know.'

Denise was later charged with being drunk and disorderly. Her case is also due to be heard in May.

One of the pickets explained what happened: 'We'd had a lot of support from guests at the hotel that night, and as we were going off from picket duty one provocative copper was shouting to us: "Beat it!"'

'We replied that we were on an official picket line, so he went off and arrested Denise and Garry. When we asked where they were being taken the police refused to tell us. They were let out in the early hours of the morning.'

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

privatisation has had already in the hospital, Paul said:

‘When domestic services were privatised we were told 38 jobs would go, but over 100 have gone.’

The authority were conned by the managers who were only in it for the savings. In the catering department the in-house tender won the contract. Contracts are supposed to last for three years but we have been told that expenditure will be reviewed monthly and if target figures have not been met the authority can retender.

So in effect we're on a one-month contract.

Now they are talking of closing one of the two canteens so what's the point of tendering when services are being closed anyway?

In my opinion we shouldn't have put tenders in in the first place, but there was no firm lead from the unions.'

One reason private firms did not win catering contracts is the ending of Crown Immunity. The Environmen-

tal Health Authority has put the fear of god into the management. If kitchen standards are poor they can't say 'leave it' or 'what can you do about it?' any longer.

Claims

Paul was not impressed by Labour's claims to fight cuts. He used to work at the Manchester Jewish hospital, which closed. 'When we wrote to Stan Orme MP, he wrote back more or less agreeing that the closure was a good idea and the councillors on the health authority didn't do much.'

● Also in Manchester, domestics at Prestwich hospital have been told they must accept downgrading and loss of pay if the in-house tender is to be accepted.

The health service unions have so far failed to lead a national campaign of opposition to privatisation and have advised hospital departments to compete in cutting costs by putting in their own in-house tenders.

London bus strike

SIX London bus garages struck last Wednesday in advance of Friday's ballot on management plans to slash wages and increase hours. At a number of other garages buses came off the road while mass meetings took place during working hours to consider Friday's vote.

'Socialist Youth' ignores 'Keep Left' History

BY JOLYON RALPH

THE LATEST issue of 'Socialist Youth', the paper of the Labour Party Young Socialists, has an article by Graham Cooper of Watford LPYS on the history of the Labour Party youth movement, starting with the founding of the Clapham Young Labour League in 1920 and finishing with the present Sawyer proposals for 'reforming' the LPYS.

This article ignores completely the history of the 'Keep Left' movement of 1960-1964 which built the YS from scratch to 20,000 members on a Marxist programme, finally breaking with the Labour Party in 1964 after a series of expulsions.

Cooper covers this vital part of the Labour movement's history by saying 'As a result of this [circumstances in the late 1950s] the "Young Socialists" was formed, later to be re-named "Labour Party Young Socialists"'

History

This is a distortion of our history. The LPYS was a small rump of a few hundred members who stayed in the Labour Party when the majority of the YS left it.

We would expect this sort of distortion of history from the right wing, but this comes from the Militant-

controlled 'Socialist Youth'. Why do 'Militant' ignore 'Keep Left', the biggest Marxist youth movement in British history, especially when there are so many similarities with what is happening today in the YS?

Perhaps it's because there was a real Marxist youth movement in the Labour Party, at least five times as big as the present LPYS (even using the LPYS's distorted membership figures), which after a long fight with the right wing had to split from them. This would not be in line with the 'Militant' idea of transforming the Labour Party into some kind of revolutionary party.

Tiny

Perhaps it's because at that time 'Militant' was then a tiny sect with very few supporters which refused to support 'Keep Left' against the witch-hunt to safeguard its own position in the Labour Party.

Perhaps it does not want to let its present generation of supporters, mainly recruited as a result of the right-wing witch-hunts, know about S. Mani, an editorial board member of 'Militant' in 1964, who voted FOR the expulsion of 'Keep Left' supporters.

Militant is picking the bits out of history that support their account and ignoring the rest, especially the parts where their shady political activity is exposed.

When 'Militant' supporters learn the truth about the past, especially the history of 'Keep Left', they will be more likely to ditch their group for a real Marxist organisation, and it is our job to speed up this process.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Police fail to halt Non-Stop picket

DOZENS of rampaging police failed to break up the South African Embassy picket last Sunday as City of London Anti-Apartheid Group celebrated its first anniversary of Non-Stop Picketing.

About 200 people turned out to celebrate the event — including the father of Winston Silcott, sentenced to life imprisonment during the Broadwater Farm trials.

The demonstration was lively but peaceful. When a bench was put in the enclosed area for speakers to stand on to address the pickets the police made their well-timed move and waded into the pickets.

Among those injured was Steve Kitson, who was knocked to the ground by police and dragged off unconscious.

Steve is the son of David Kitson who spent 20 years in apartheid jails for his activities in the armed wing of the ANC.

The police deliberately arrested many of the youth who spend much of their time on the Non-Stop Picket and charged them with offences ranging from 'police

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

assault' to 'highway obstruction'.

White South African thugs with diplomatic immunity have started following people off the picket and violently threatening them.

Plans to launch a campaign with the slogan 'Defend the Non-Stop Picket' have been suggested.

The Thatcher government, the police, the Communist Party and other Stalinists, the Anti-Apartheid Movement leaders and large sections of the ANC leadership have combined to try and break up the activities of the City Group.

City Group must make a turn to the forces fighting the Tory government and those in the working class who defend it.

Defence of the Picket can be developed only on the basis of a struggle against those who seek to strangle the South African workers and the prospect of working-class unity among British and South African workers in the struggle to destroy capitalism and bring about socialism.

City Group activists taking up these issues will play a vital role in the struggle for a socialist revolution in South Africa which is being held back by the ANC and those who refuse to expose the treachery of their leaders.



Organised police intimidation has failed to stop the Non-Stop Pickets but only the working class will provide strong political defence of the picket

10,000 in 'illegal' West Belfast march

BY JOHN BALLANTYNE

SOME 10,000 people defied the new Public Order Act by marching through West Belfast last Sunday to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

Tension mounted at the assembly point when British soldiers and RUC personnel swamped the area around, evoking memories of the massive intimidation at Volunteer Larry Marley's funeral a week earlier.

As people gathered the RUC announced that the march was illegal and those taking part would be liable to prosecution.

When the new Public Order Act (N.I.) was read out, Sinn Fein stewards replied by saying: 'Yes, this march is now illegal. All those wishing to take part fall in behind the second band.' The announcement was cheered.

At Milltown Cemetery a speaker read out the Proclamation of 1916, and

wreaths were laid from the IRA's Belfast Brigade and its three battalions, Sinn Fein, the Prisoners of War and the National Graves Association.

A young man who read out a statement from the IRA declared that it had never been so confident and so determined on victory. Since last year's Army Council Convention, which elected a new command, the organisation was now more representative of the grassroots.

He said the British Government would only be talked out of Ireland by the rattle of machine-guns and the roar of explosions.

'The IRA, and especially this generation of the IRA, cannot and will not be defeated,' declared Gerry Adams, who called on those present to rededicate themselves, make the necessary sacrifices, and 'do the work that will bring the day of freedom forward'.

Referring to Sinn Fein's showing in the Republic's recent general election, Adams said Sinn Fein accepted the challenge to build political support in the south.

Everyone at the rally was guilty of an offence under the new Public Order Act, but 'ours is a small illegality compared with those committed by the terrorists of

the British Army and the RUC', Adams stated to loud applause.

● Earlier in the day, about 200 had attended the Irish Republican Socialist Party's ceremony, where Terry Har-kin paid tribute to dead colleagues.

● The Workers Party ('Stickies') ceremony was the only legal gathering, since this organisation had complied with the Act by giving the required seven days' notice to the RUC. A spokesman claimed the true traditions of Republicanism were carried forward by themselves and condemned the IRA's struggle.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984. JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989. EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637. ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877. GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016. JOHN MCCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715. ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576. PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575. NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence, 879225.	WANDSWORTH SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661. GARTREE HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799. STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence, 758663. JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635. ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083. FRANKLAND HM Prison Finchale Ave, Braside, Durham WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085 BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662. PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034. CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662. EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.	ence, D25134. ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135. REMAND PRISONERS: BRIXTON HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF. MICHAEL J MCKENNEY: L46486 (has now got 16 year sentence) LIAM QUINN: L49930 G. (DANNY) McNAMEE: L48616 LIAM MCCOTTER PATRICK McLAUGHLIN WORMWOOD SCRUBS VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064. INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE: CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree. PAUL HILL: 462778. HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs. GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin. JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham. HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Long Lartin. JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison Long Lartin. BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Long Lartin. GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Long Lartin. RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Long Lartin. PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Long Lartin. They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.
PARKHURST HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603. GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882. PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532. TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence 69204. PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880. WAKEFIELD HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636. NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644. ALBANY HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087. HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638.	LEICESTER HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888. BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380. PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881. WORMWOOD SCRUBS HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE DONAL CRAIG: 4 years. VINCE DONNELLY: Life Sentence, 274064. DURHAM HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham. MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sent-	

Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign Committee

BENEFIT

Maria Tolly and Guests

7.30p.m., Friday 24 April
Brent Irish Cultural Centre
Salisbury Road
Queens Park NW6
Admission Free

Haringey blacks, gays, lesbians hit back

BLACK people, gays, lesbians, women, trade unionists and socialists are urged to demonstrate in the London borough of Haringey on Saturday 2 May, against an offensive being waged by Tories, racists, and religious reactionaries.

Two organisations, Haringey Black Action and Positive Images, have jointly issued the call.

They see links between Tory media hysteria against black youth following the Broadwater Farm rebellion, and similar hysteria against gays and lesbians over Haringey council's positive images policy in schools.

leaflet warns that the

Labour Party is responding to media pressure by trying to ditch its association with lesbian and gay rights.

The organisers say parents' demonstrations against Haringey council policy received backing from the National Front, the 'Moonies' religious cult, and the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers.

The UDM promised legal and financial support to the so-called Parents' Rights Group.

The 'New Patriotic Movement', a Moonie-backed outfit which held a rally in support of Manchester Chief Constable James Anderton, has put out the slogan in Haringey: 'GAYS = AIDS = DEATH'.

The reactionaries are not

concerned about what is really happening in schools', says the leaflet.

'They are not concerned about racism in schools, the Tory cuts in education, or the low pay of teachers. Instead, they are diverting attention away from these issues by whipping up prejudice.'

Religious fanatics have jumped on the anti-gay, anti-lesbian bandwagon, the leaflet notes.

And it warns: 'What is happening in Haringey is not just about council policy.' Pointing to a recent increase in attacks on and murders of gays and lesbians, they say Tories 'are whipping up hatred and bigotry in a climate which is further legitimising violence against lesbians and gays.'

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

Viraj Mendis conference from Sanctuary in Manchester

BY SUE GYWER

Five hundred people gathered together at Viraj Mendis' sanctuary in Manchester last weekend to fight the immigration laws and plan how to win Viraj his right to stay in Britain.

Activists in the Sanctuary movement attended from as far away as the US, Switzerland and France alongside Trade Unionists from Sweden and nationally. Schoolchildren from Burnage High School, recently the scene of a racist playground murder entertained the conference with theatre and music.

Mother of Abdul Ullah, 13-year-old victim of the murder sent a message of support to Viraj and the conference.

Walter Silcott, father of Winston Silcott attended the conference and received warm applause for his short message of solidarity.

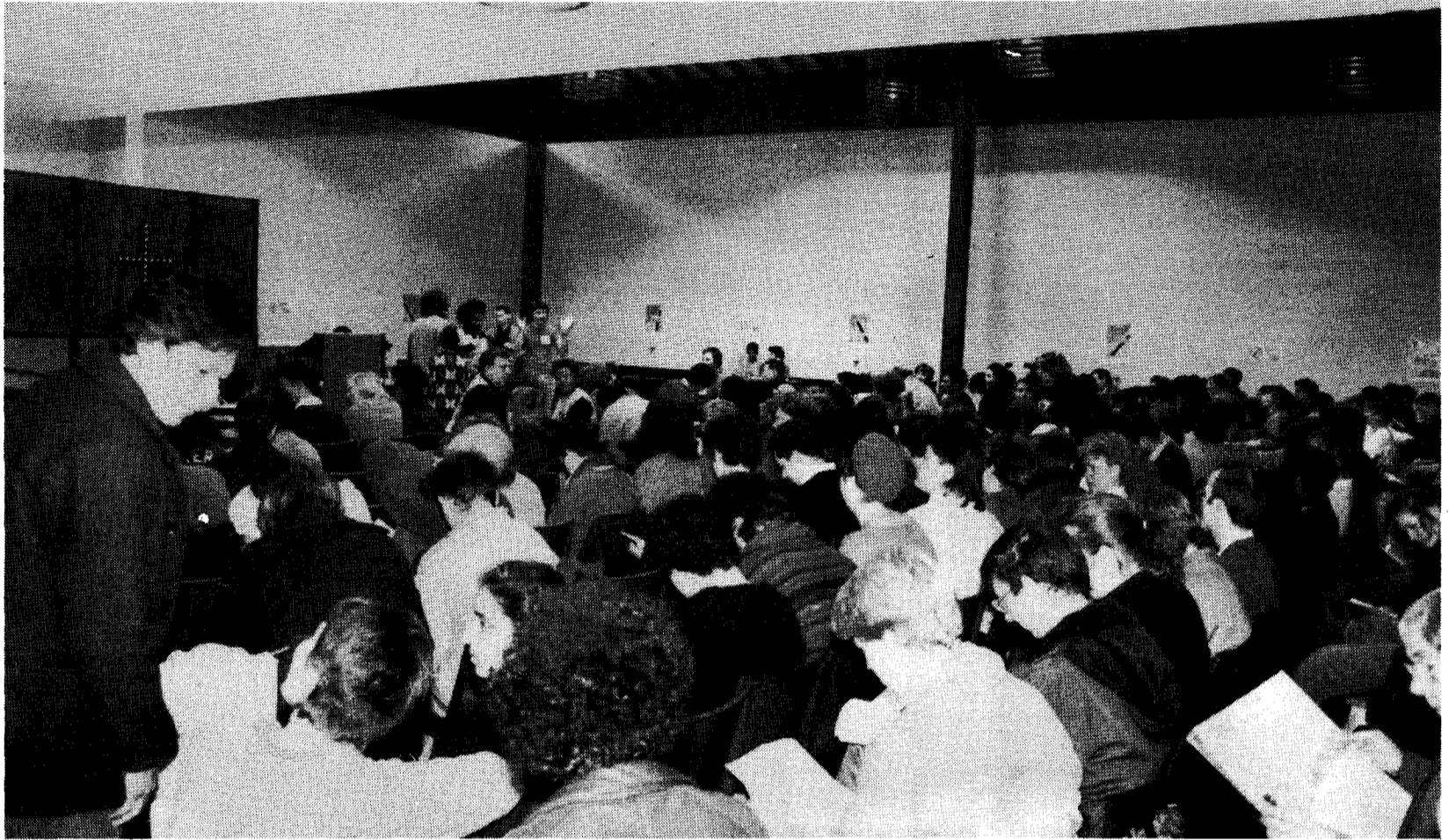
Occupied

Maire O'Shea voiced her support for Viraj and talked of the occupied Six Counties as being the practice ground for the types of attacks being mounted on trade unionists and blacks in Britain today.

The conference united those fighting the immigration laws with successful campaigns such as Mohammed Idrish, the Mashadimirza family and the recently victorious George Roucou.

Rose Alaso and son Brian from Leeds fighting against deportation to Uganda congratulated Manchester City Council on the stand against racism and the immigration laws.

The council is having extreme pressure exerted upon it to retreat on the offer of a job to Viraj. The onslaught of racism incited by Waddington, the Tory government and the national and local press has resulted in a polarisation of anti-fascist and



The conference at Viraj's Sanctuary

anti-racist forces around Viraj.

Terry French, recently released jailed miner, visited Viraj in sanctuary two weeks ago and identified with the fight against a common enemy.

Terry guaranteed that if Viraj came under attack in the sanctuary 100 Kent miners would be mobilised in 24 hours to his defence.

The mother of Rajwinder Singh, the mentally handicapped young man in sanctuary in Bradford, thanked the VMDC for giving her the inspiration to fight back.

Som Raj Ray from Wol-

verhampton also facing deportation asked the conference to support a march being organised jointly by his union, the NUJ and his defence campaign for the end of May or beginning of June.

The conference passed a formal resolution in support of the Caterpillar workers.

Harpal Brar of the Indian Workers' Association emphasised that it is in the interests of the trade union and Labour movement to fight racism.

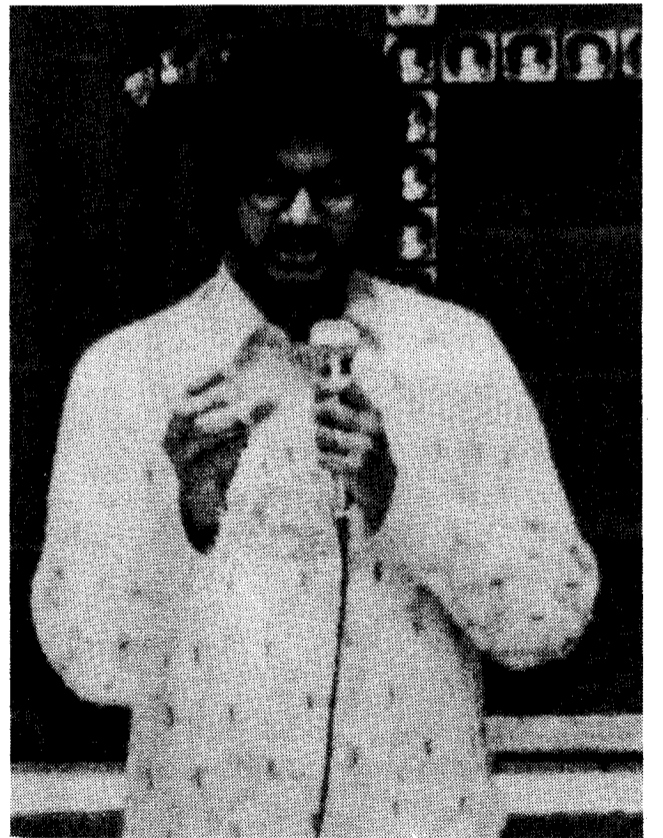
Quoting Marx he pointed out to thunderous applause: 'Labour in white skin cannot

be free if in black it is branded.'

The conference resolved to work towards building for a demonstration in London on 30 April when Viraj's case has a judicial review at the Royal Court of Justice in the Strand when the judge will decide whether the case merits a further hearing.

The campaign is also mobilising for a national demonstration in Manchester on 11 July. All delegates resolved to mobilise support for this demonstration.

VMDC support groups have now been set up in Leicester, Coventry and one in Italy.



Viraj Mendis



Some of the banners of participating groups



Stalls outside the conference



Festival Hall, Kirkby in Ashfield: Huge turn-out to support victimised miners

'We must fit these struggles together'

SUPPORTERS of the East Midlands Justice for Mineworkers campaign packed into the Festival Hall at Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts, last Sunday as part of the continuing campaign for the jailed and sacked miners.

Speakers from the platform — which included Tony Benn, MP for Cheshire; Sharon Atkins, prospective parliamentary candidate for Nottingham East; and NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield — stressed the need to defend working-class gains, unite oppressed sections of the labour movement, and elect a Labour government.

Tony Benn pointed out that since the miners' strike the struggle had widened to include Silents, Hangers, GCHQ, and Wapping.

'As we get near the election, we must fit these struggles together, including the

local authorities,' he declared.

'We must restore sequestered funds, reimburse the councils, and reinstate the sacked miners.'

Benn felt that the right of black people to autonomy in the Labour Party had to be supported: 'If women had not had autonomy before World War I, they would not have won the right to organise.'

'We must rebuild and re-found the labour movement, built on socialism around miners, lesbians and gays, blacks and trade unionists.'

Sharon Atkins condemned expulsions in the Labour Party and the lack of defence for those expelled.

'There is no reason, no ex-

cuse, to boot people out because they have the wrong colour, gender, sexuality, or political views', she said. 'Blacks are disillusioned and under attack. They are of the working class and they need a voice in the Labour Party.'

She stressed that miners had always stood by workers in struggle, in contrast to other organisations in the Labour movement.

It was the NUM and not the TUC that supported the South African miners — 'and it was the TUC who sold out the General Strike'.

Peter Heathfield said the sacking and jailing of miners was not about violence or insubordination, but about what happened to workers when they stepped out of line.

'How do we collect new evidence to appeal when miners have been condemned on hearsay evidence?' he demanded. 'In most cases

not even the charges are known.'

British Coal was pushing Margam to accept the six-day week: 'This is not about six-day working at Margam, this is about destroying a national agreement.'

Amid applause, Heathfield added that just electing a Labour government wouldn't solve the problems of the working class: 'Putting Kinnock at No.10 isn't enough. We need ordinary working people to keep pressurising them.'

Closing the meeting, chairman Bill Etherington pointed out that not one man would be reinstated through sitting down with the UDM.

'It is the job of the NUM to destroy the UDM,' he said. 'A six-day week won't get any back, neither will sitting in with the Coal Board.'

'At the end of the day, we shall have to have industrial action, although I'm not sure what form it will take.'

Hangers workers fight on

SUPPORTERS of 139 Hangers workers locked out for seven months are planning to march from Roehampton to Bishops Park on Saturday, 2 May.

The locked-out workers and their supporters are still smarting from a piece of police malice on Boat Race day, when a huge banner put up in an attempt to get some publicity from TV coverage was hacked down.

Though Hammersmith and Fulham councils had given consent, the Met decided that 'political advertising' was not allowed, so they cut the ropes.

Hangers workers and Putney Labour Party's Trade Union Action Committee had worked for days to make and put up their message.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to Hangers TASS office, Westsex House, 520 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4YQ.

Further information about the march can be obtained from Kath Crosby on 01-871-601.

'Scabs are not engineers' — say Senior Coleman strikers

THE FIGHT for jobs and union recognition continues at Senior Coleman, Sale, Manchester, where 101 engineers were sacked three months ago.

Management have sunk to the level of trying to intimidate four deaf engineers by saying they would not be able to work anywhere else.

Workers Press spoke to three members of the strike committee, who outlined some of the developments since the dispute started on 19 January. We have called them Sid, Doug and George, but those are not their real names.

WP: What was the cause of the strike?

Sid: The management asked for new time-sheets to be implemented. They wanted a detailed daily time-sheet — in the past we filled in a weekly one.

They had some consultants in before the introduction of these time-sheets. They insisted the sheets be filled in

Doug: One of us asked McGuinness, the personnel director, to delay implementing the time-sheets until after the informal conference we had arranged on 22 January. He said: 'No, it is not negotiable.'

They implemented the time-sheets and chose four people to sack who refused to use them.

Sid: We suspect those four people were selected because management deemed them to be soft touches.

WP: What was the significance of the introduction of these daily time-sheets?

George: It was as if you were doing your own time and motion. They wanted every minute, every second, of the day detailed. If you went to the toilet they wanted to know how long it took!

Sid: But this isn't essentially a dispute about time-sheets. It is about the right to negoti-

ate over the time-sheets.

Doug: At the end of the day we might have filled them in. But we wanted this issue to be dealt with by a full-time official. He would have been able to assess if there was an ulterior motive to introducing them.

So what it boils down to is not a strike over the time-sheets, because they have tried one or two things already and a strike could have happened over something else in the future. It seems that they really wanted a confrontation.

WP: You said that there may be something else behind the introduction of the time-sheets.

George: It was to get the union out. The factory has only been organised for three years. Before the union arrived, it was a case of shut up or get out.

The union has meant better pay, better conditions and a complaints procedure. It has established a framework for negotiations.

Doug: There is a link be-

Stop Zionists abusing the 'no platform' tactic

THE Palestine Solidarity Campaign are asking for signatories for the following resolution from students, student unions, Labour clubs, etc.

WE THE undersigned fully support the use of the 'no platform' tactic against fascists and active racists. We recognise that this policy is necessary in the defence of the rights and freedoms of black, Jewish and gay people in particular. It is not, however, a tactic that should be used in order to silence those we may disagree with politically.

We therefore deplore and condemn the misuse of the 'no platform' tactic by the Union of Jewish Students in the current debate on the Middle East in the National Union of Students.

We understand that anti-Zionist Jews, Tony Greenstein and Roland Rance, have been banned from speaking at Leeds and Manchester Universities respectively, that attempts were made by UJS at both the aforementioned universities to prevent George Johannes of the African National Congress from speaking and that similar attempts have been made by UJS, albeit unsuccessfully, at Thames and Brighton Polytechnics, the London School of Economics and the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Allegations have been made that all the above named, despite their record of anti-racist and anti-

imperialist work, are 'anti-semitic'. We reject any attempt to label as anti-semitic those who are anti-Zionist.

In the light of the government's recent Education Act, such a misuse of the 'no platform' tactic can only undermine those who wish to prevent the National Front and others from organising on campuses. The 'no platform' tactic should be used only to defend the freedom of those under attack from fascists and active racists, not to deny freedom of speech to those one may disagree with as a means of avoiding debate.

By issuing this statement, we are not expressing any particular view on the Israel/Palestine questions. We would equally deplore attempts to ban Jewish societies on the basis of their views on Zionism. We demand the immediate withdrawal by Leeds and Manchester Universities of the ban on Tony Greenstein and Roland Rance and an immediate end to this abuse of the 'no platform' tactic.

● Please return signed statements to: Palestine Solidarity Campaign, c/o Student Union, Brighton Polytechnic, Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex.

The station with no heart

BY SIMON BURGESS

JOURNALISTS at Crawley-based Radio Mercury ('the heart of the South') are struggling to defend their basic union rights.

The dispute started on 1 April when managing director John Aumonier imposed a new contract which

● removes all recognition of the National Union of Journalists;

● slashes maternity and redundancy benefits;

● abolishes special responsibility payments and yearly pay rises;

● fails to guarantee adequate numbers of staff;

● cuts back on many other conditions of employment.

Members blacked news

programmes and were suspended without pay. National news stories are still being taken from IRN's land-line but local news is being 'lifted straight out of the local press'.

Post Office workers have refused to cross the journalists' picket line, stopping press releases going into the station. Labour-controlled Crawley Council have blacked Mercury.

A meeting between Aumonier and NUJ officers was due to take place last week at NUJ headquarters in London.

● Send messages of support and donations to: S. Midgley, 1 Alice Close, Alice Street, Hove, Sussex.

tween Professor Roland Smith, who is on the board of Silentnight, and Senior Coleman. We believe he is also an advisor to Thatcher. These links are being investigated.

WP: What effect are you having on Senior Coleman?

Doug: They have made a trading loss of £800,000. Their shares have been dropping on the Stock Exchange. A lot of work is coming back because the standard of products has deteriorated.

The scabs are not engineers. The majority are rogues, drug addicts. The police know most of the scabs going in. They even said it made their job easier.

The company has sacked 30 scabs so far. Some have been caught in the toilet injecting themselves, some have been charged with sexual abuse. The drug squad lifted one scab coming out of the factory.

McGuinness says production is normal, but how can it

be?

WP: What support have you received from the trade union movement?

Sid: Well, the AEU and the NUM have been two of the better financial contributors, and workers at Maneyns and Thorn EMI have been good supporters. But we do need more support.

It has made me realise the need to support other workers.

George: The Caterpillar set-up was brilliant, fantastic. I have never seen a set-up like that before in my life. They have got the numbers, and the backing of the trade union movement.

Sid: We are asking for more support.

Senior Coleman strikers need both financial and physical support. Their strike committee can be contacted through the AEU's Manchester South District Secretary, E. Gwilliam, 43 Crescent, Salford M5 4PE

General strike threatens Botha

While white South Africa prepares for a general election, which President Botha hopes will be a vote of confidence, the surrounding Black masses are flexing their industrial muscle in what could become a stormy general strike.

More than 20 trains were firebombed in one week in the Johannesburg area, as the number of Black rail workers on strike for union recognition neared 20,000.

The six-week old rail strike, originally sparked by victimisation of a union member at City Deep container depot, has been joined by 6,000 postal workers in solidarity.

The Postal and Telecommunications Workers' Asso-

ciation is raising its own demands for better conditions and pay, and said last week it would spread the action if management did not settle quickly.

Workers anger was increased last week with news that railway employers, South Africa Transport Services, were threatening to sack strikers, and that 300 railworkers had been arrested under Emergency regulations at Ogie, near Springs, for 'gathering illegally'.

Municipal employees could be out next. The Municipal Workers of South Africa (MWUSA) issued a statement last week backing the rail and post strikes, and warning that it might call its members out in solidarity. Municipal workers brought Johannesburg to a halt in a strike in 1980.

Transkei arrests NUM members

Miners at the Anglo-American corporation's New Denmark colliery in the south-eastern Transvaal walked off shift last week, angry at hearing that 75 union members had been arrested in the Transkei 'independent homeland.'

The men were arrested while going to attend the funeral of a colleague, McDonald Mvundla, and charged with 'furthering the aims of banned organisa-

tions' — the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Confederation of South African Trade Unionists (Cosatu).

Transkei's stooge-ruler Chief Matanzima had just expelled General Ron Reid-Daly and other former Rhodesian Selous Scouts, but denied there had been a military coup attempt. The miners were stopped at a road block set up after the military expulsions.

South Korea: police attack memorial crowd

South Korean police hurling tear gas and wielding electric stun-batons attacked students leaving a Seoul cemetery, last Sunday, making over 100 arrests.

The students had gathered over 4,000-strong at Suyuri hill, in the capital's north-eastern suburbs, to honour those who died in 1960 demonstrations that brought down US-backed dictator Syngman Rhee.

The Chun Doo-Hwan regime is bracing itself for big demonstrations in May marking the anniversary of the unsuccessful 1980 rising when 193 people were killed. On Good Friday, there were demonstrations in several Korean cities against Chun's regime, and students at the university burnt an effigy of the 'fascist military dictatorship.'

South Korea's Home Secretary had to resign this year after it was revealed that a student leader had been tortured to death in police custody. There were angry demonstrations by students and parents. Human rights groups disputed government claims that the torture was an isolated case.

The new Home Affairs minister is former Army chief Chung Ho Yong, whose special forces suppressed the 1980 Kwang Ju rising.

Moonies' press power

Despite claims of 'balderdash' by right-wing editor Arnaud de Borchgrave, staff who've resigned from the 'Washington Times' blame Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church for editorial interference.

Former leader writer William Cheshire and four others quit after being told by de Borchgrave to alter a column criticising the South Korean government as autocratic.

Cheshire said: 'It is no longer possible, in my judgement, for the Times to maintain independence from the Unification Church under the editorship of de Borchgrave, if it is indeed at all.'

With 104,000 readers, the 'Washington Times' is the US capital's second-largest newspaper. Its right-wing politics have made it a favourite with the Reagan White House and it is favoured with National Security Council leaks for its scoops.

Owners World Communications Incorporated, closely linked to the 'Moonies', subsidised the paper to the tune of \$35 million last year to cover its losses.

While followers hawk little papers like 'One World' around shopping centres, soliciting money for missionary work, Rev. Moon, millionaire businessman and former South Korean CIA agent, has built an international press empire serving right-wing interests.

Ex-South African prison comrades back David Kitson

David Kitson has been a member of the trade union TASS for 39 years. Twenty of those years were spent in jail as a political prisoner in South Africa, following Kitson's return there after working in Britain.

He was jailed for his part in the leadership of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the banned African National Congress in South Africa, after the arrest of its first tier of leadership including Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

During Kitson's imprisonment in South Africa, TASS undertook to provide for his future for life after his release, in recognition of his part in the fight against apartheid. This was to be in the form of a research fellowship for life at Ruskin College, Oxford, funded by TASS. Ruskin College confirms that no political conditions were specified by TASS at the time of the agreement being made.

Kitson was released from prison in South Africa in May 1984 and took up his appointment at Ruskin in December that year.

Last year, arising out of disagreement between anti-apartheid organisations in Britain, the TASS executive unilaterally decided to end the funding of Kitson's post, apparently on the grounds that it disapproved of the anti-apartheid organisation with which it believed Kitson to be associated.

To us, former political prisoners in South Africa and colleagues of David Kitson in prison, the retrospective and arbitrary introduction by TASS of such a criterion into a British trade union appointment appears both undemocratic in the union context and an interference with academic freedom. Nor do we consider it consistent with the principles of the struggle for liberation in South Africa itself.

And surely, Kitson has suffered enough for his beliefs, without now having his new livelihood threatened?

We protest at TASS's action and call on the union to rescind this rash decision. TASS should restore David Kitson to his post at Ruskin College.

Baruch Hirson
Paul Trehwela
John Laredo
David Evans



UP AGAINST THE WALL! Guardia Civil with CS gas launchers driven back by angry workers in Reinos.

'End Legal Murder'

Fourteen people were executed for murder in the Byelorussian town of Vitebsk. Then the real killer was caught.

Soviet lawyer Sofia Kelina cites 'horrible, tragic legal errors' as one reason the Soviet Union should give up the death penalty.

Writing in 'Moscow News' (April 17), Selina says abolition would demonstrate 'not only the magnanimity of our society but also its inner strength.' She suggests it could be done gradually, by reducing the number of offences carrying the death penalty.

Abolished by the October Revolution, used by Stalin to despatch political opponents, the death penalty can be used for 18 offences, ranging from espionage to embezzlement, under present Soviet law.

In another article in 'Moscow News', writer Vladimir Kardin says human life is only sacrosanct 'when deliberate violent death has been ruled out... when legitimised murder, capital punishment, has been ruled out as well.'

'Izvestia' reported on April 17 how an accountant framed by a senior police officer had spent 21 months in the death cell before his sentence was annulled by the Supreme Court.

Armour sent against Spanish steel town

Spain's so-called 'Socialist' government has sent armoured cars into the northern steel town of Reinos in its effort to crush workers' opposition to sackings.

Over 700 Civil Guards, using rubber bullets, CS gas, and baton charges, were in action two nights running enforcing a government ban on demonstrations announced on April 17.

Over 40 people were injured, several seriously, one man suffering a fractured

skull from a beating by the guards. Over sixty people were being held by police on Good Friday.

Workers at the local steel plant and a nearby lorry components factory have been occupying to fight closure and sackings. Earlier this month, they held one of their bosses in his office. When police tried to storm the plant, workers gathered outside beat them back, taking a group of police prisoners.

On April 16, squads of Civil

Guards backed by armoured cars were poured into Reinos. Armoured cars cruised the streets warning people over loudspeakers to stay indoors. Around the city centre park, 16 armoured cars formed a ring to stop a planned demonstration.

Battles took place on the main highway outside the town, where demonstrators had thrown up burning barricades, and at Reinos railway station, where they tried to stop the Santander-Madrid express.

Gonzales' Socialist Party government has blamed the Communist Party-led Workers' Commissions for the trouble in Reinos. But the Socialist Party-linked UGT unions have also expressed support for the Reinos workers, and told Gonzales his austerity measures, causing unemployment, are alienating workers.

● LAST MONTH over a million passengers were stranded by rail and air strikes in Spain.

Unions affiliated to the UGT (led by the Socialist Party) and Workers' Commissions (led by the Communist Party) joined in calling a 24-hour stoppage to oppose the socialist government's 5-per-cent pay limit.

The unions are demanding up to 8 per cent.

West Germany's housing crisis

GERMAN tenants' associations are concerned for workers' welfare as more and more families are threatened with homelessness.

Because of rising rents people with low incomes find there are fewer houses they can afford.

Already 21 per cent of an

average household's income goes on rent — 25 per cent in the case of families with especially low incomes.

One third

Threatened with homelessness are one third of all young householders and half of all single parents.

ARGENTINA MAS leads the fight

THE abortive military coup in Argentina contains important lessons for the British working class.

It demonstrates the fragile nature of bourgeois democracy in that country. The attempted take over by sections of the army was defeated neither by Parliamentary institutions nor the supposed negotiating skill of President Raul Alfonsin but by the class action of the Argentinian workers who came out in their hundreds of the thousands to oppose the re-imposition of military dictatorship.

Argentina contains the latest warning of the treacherous role of Stalinism which throughout the world is committed to the peaceful road to socialism, a programme which met with such tragic consequences in Chile.

The Argentinian events also demonstrate the crucial role of leadership in the working class. As our correspondent reports, the Trotskyist movement in Argentina played a crucial role in mobilising the working class and opposing the attempts of reformists and others to compromise with the military regime.

The Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) was in the forefront of mobilising against last week's attempted military coup in the Argentina.

Together with the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo they were the only organisations that refused to sign the agreement between the government and the military after the attempted coup.

The MAS and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have denounced the government for signing an agreement with the military which grants the Military Department immunity from prosecution for the crimes which they committed during the dictatorship.

The main newspapers in Argentina and other Latin American countries have denounced the MAS as the only organisation which refused to support the government. On the other hand all the newspapers also recognise that they were in the forefront of opposition to the coup.

United

The MAS called for the organisation of a united General Strike to fight against the military.

They called for a serious turn in every factory and to concentrate on both the main

cities and around the army barracks.

This call was widely accepted in the workplaces and even the CGT Labour Federation was forced to support what was already under way.

During the demonstration the MAS was one of the biggest and most militant contingents.

When at the Plaza de Mayo on Saturday President Alfonsin announced in front of 400,000 people that he was going to negotiate with the military, both the MAS and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo led a walk-out from the plaza. Their contingents were chanting: 'No negotiations! Smash the rebellion!'

Palestinians united

PALESTINIAN leaders meeting in Algiers have re-united their national movement to confront all the conspiracies of imperialism, Zionism, and the corrupt Arab regimes.

Palestinian fighters celebrated with a fierce rocket attack on northern Israeli settlements, on the same day that delegates were giving Yasser Arafat a standing ovation at the opening of the Palestine National Council (PNC), the Palestinians' parliament in exile.

Earlier, a Palestinian commando unit had crossed the border and fought Israeli

troops. The raid was claimed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

PLO chairman Yasser Arafat entered the hall together with George Habbash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It was the first time Habbash had attended a PNC meeting for five years, and the end of a rift that had deeply divided Palestinians.

To ease the way for the PFLP and Nayef Hawatmeh's Democratic Front to rejoin Fatah and other Palestinians in a re-united PLO, Arafat gave three poli-

cy pledges:

One, to annul the PLO's 1985 Amman accord with King Hussein of Jordan, which was to have provided for joint representation in any peace talks. It was only a matter of time, or form, before the PLO renounced this.

The imperialist-backed Hussein had effectively reneged on the Amman deal by closing PLO offices, arresting militants, and trying to promote his own stooges against the PLO leadership. Arafat had little to lose.

Second, to downgrade relations with Egypt, distanc-

Grenada prisoners allege brutality

Grenada's appealing against sentence for the murder of former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop have smuggled out a message detailing irregularities in their trial, and reported brutal treatment in prison.

The seventeen prisoners, all captured by US troops during the October 25, 1983 invasion of their island, continue to insist on their innocence of the murder charge. They say the jury was selected, and evidence presented in their absence, they were denied proper representation, and the judge connived at contempt by prosecution and media.

Since the trial ended with a guilty verdict in December, the prisoners have been held in Richmond Hill prison, St. George's, Grenada, pending an appeal.

According to information released in London by the New Jewel 19 Committee, severe beatings have been meted out to all the prisoners.

Accusing Prison Commissioner Lionel Mallory of ordering a group of warders to beat up prisoner Lt. Iman Abdullah on February 16 and 18, their report says Abdullah was denied medical treatment despite being ren-

dered unconscious by the beatings.

Prisoners are being denied exercise, kept 24 hours a day in their cells, under strong lights the whole time. Trade unionist and New Jewel central committee member John 'Chalkie' Ventour's eyesight has deteriorated considerably under this treatment.

Prisoners' food rations have been cut by more than half, and they had their plates and bowls removed, forcing them to eat off the floor with their hands. Lt. Christopher Stroude has suffered black outs as a result of inadequate diet.

Although the prisoners are due to present lengthy and detailed appeals, they have been denied access to their legal notes, the committee reports.

'The purpose of this treatment is to demoralize and physically destroy the health of prisoners so that they will be in no physical or mental condition to adequately prepare or effectively defend themselves at their forthcoming appeal,' the New Jewel 19 Committee concludes.

The committee is urging representations to the Government of Grenada over the treatment of the prisoners.

military commander Abu Jihad said last year, that the armed struggle will continue, and that so long as the Zionists do not define their borders, Palestinian fighters will not distinguish between occupied territory and the state's territory.

'We will maintain our armed struggle against Israel,' Arafat told the PNC opening session, 'not because we seek war, but because we want peace; a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of the Palestinian right to self-determination and to an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.'

tween 1982 and 1985 — equivalent to the assets of 11 major corporations including IBM, General Electric, Kodak, and McDonalds.

The Farm Credit System (FCS) lost \$2.7 billion in 1985 — that's larger than the Continental Illinois bank failure. Non-performing loans made up 11 per cent of the FCS portfolio. By this year nearly 50 FCS institutions will have been liquidated.

From 1982 to 1984, the percentage of agricultural banks identified by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation as 'problem banks' — likely to fail — more than doubled, from 13 to 27 per cent.

Out of 43 commercial banks that failed in 1983, seven were farm banks. In 1984, it was 25 out of 78. In 1985, more than half — 62 out of 118 banks that went under — were farm banks.

World debt, US farmers, and workers: Since the world debt crisis burst in 1982, US policy has been that debtor nations must increase exports, cut imports, to keep up foreign banks profits.

More land in poor countries is turned over to cash crops for export, driving peasants onto poor soils, creating famine in Africa and elsewhere.

Argentina and Brazil stepped up exports in a race against falling world prices, trying to keep up their interest payments. US farmers could not compete while the dollar was high and market countries were getting poorer.

The crazy logic of capitalism has come to mean, the more you produce, the poorer you get.

Worsening debt problems in the poorer countries, farm crisis in the USA, and EEC governments' plans to cut production, have combined to hit the jobs of workers in the agricultural machinery industry.

'We Can Feed the World', the slogan adopted by Caterpillar workers in Scotland, will be echoed by farmers and farmworkers in the USA and throughout the world. It can't be done under capitalism. We need to develop and fight for a world socialist plan.

Where else but America?

As homelessness grows in US cities, latest gimmick from America's toy industry is a 'Bag Lady' doll, realistically modelled on old women vagrants who walk city streets looking for a place to sleep, carrying their miserable belongings in old plastic carrier bags.

Associations for the homeless calculate that at \$75 each, the dolls are equal to the cost of putting up a real 'bag lady' in a hostel for three nights. But who's going to find money for that?

CARIBBEAN CALL

BY SATISH SEKAR

I HAVE just returned from Dominica where I was a guest of the national Workers Union, the only active trade union in Dominica, during their tenth anniversary celebrations.

At the seminars, useful discussions were held on topics such as the threat of nuclear war, the foreign debt, the involvement of the union's membership in the policies of the union etc.

But initially they were very poorly attended due to anti Labour laws threatening workers with dismissal by refusing to give written authorisation to the NWU for workers to get time off to attend, despite verbal promises.

During six years of Freedom Party rule the foreign debt has escalated rapidly, the average wage and standard of living has plummeted and the Eugenia Charles administrations only answer is to sell the people to the interests of American imperialism via the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI).

This was devised by the U.S.A., as a reaction to the Grenadian and Nicaraguan revolutions and the fall of Patrick John in Dominica in 1979, to safeguard American interests in their sphere of influence.

Originally the U.S.A. wanted Canada, Venezuela and Mexico to participate in the initiative but they all felt that too many strings were being attached and concluded separate agreements.

Any country showing vaguely socialist sympathies, or which had nationalised an American company without prompt compensation was automatically disqualified from receiving CBI aid.

The CBI allows American employers to repatriate all of the profits leaving the Caribbean financially dependent on the U.S.A. indefinitely. The Minister of Labour (also the Attorney General) said that 'Dominicans must be prepared to accept a little exploitation as the price of development'.

The CBI also provides military aid which has led to the militarisation of the Caribbean and strengthening of the security forces to brutally repress any signs of popular resistance to the economic morass that the CBI has not and cannot solve.

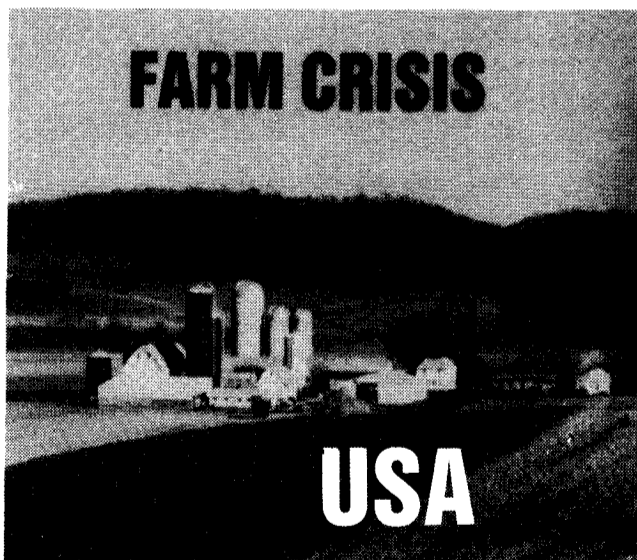
Eugenia Charles' governments answer to the glaring social injustice that is the lot of most Dominicans is to waste taxpayers money building permanent gallows to hang three people, despite the vast majority of Dominicans being unequivocally opposed to the death penalty.

This was proved by the public outrage to the recent hanging of Major Frederick Newton who was convicted of murder, despite being at home with his family when the incident occurred, due to the law of Common Design.

There have been several incidents of unarmed and defenceless Rastas being shot dead by the police, for no reason other than Eugenia Charles' wish to eradicate opposition to her tyrannical rule. Prisoners are deprived of even the most fundamental human rights such as sunlight and exercise.

The N.W.U. have sent tape recorded appeals to people all over the world to defend their rights as human beings and help the people of Dominica in their hour of need.

For further information please contact: Satish Sekar. Tel.01-855-0618 or 854-2030 ex 423.



FARMERS in the United States are among the most productive in the world. But thousands are finding it difficult to make ends meet, and going bankrupt. There have been many demonstrations demanding the government do something.

Bankruptcies in rural America, factory closures and sackings at Caterpillar and Massey-Ferguson, cuts in food production in the EEC, starving kids in Africa, Asia, Latin America.

Capitalism is a world-wide system, it has produced 24-hour computer-linked speculation in commodities and currencies around the globe; but it cannot organise to take grain out of silos into hungry mouths, and it rewards farmers and workers' productivity with bankruptcy and the sack.

The facts and figures on US farming.

● A study last year found that 35 per cent of all commercial farms in the United States were either no longer economically viable under present conditions, or had debt burdens that would sink them unless restructured.

● Between 1979 and 1983, net farm income, adjusted for inflation, fell by nearly two thirds, to the lowest levels since the Great Depression. It rose in 1984, but has been falling sharply since.

● A larger percentage of farm income is coming from the US taxpayer. In 1983, the Reagan Administration budgeted for a \$1.8 billion farm programme. It actually grew to near: \$19 billion.

For some time now, American governments have effectively paid farmers not to produce. Paid to take acreage out of production, farmers invested in fertiliser and machinery etc, increasing yields from remaining acres.

Farm prices last year for food grains — wheat, rice, etc. — were 42 per cent less than in 1974. The Reagan administration also cut price support loans.

● Farm debts. During the 1970s, enterprising farmers, often encouraged by their bank managers and government advisers, borrowed heavily to invest, and produce for export.

But while interest rates and the prices of farm equipment soared, US agricultural exports and farm prices fell. The farmers are caught.

Total farm debt in 1971 was about \$54 billion. By 1976 it was \$91 billion. In 1986 it reached over \$215 billion. That is, the United States farm debt is bigger than the combined foreign debts of Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, leading debtor countries.

From 1982-5, the rate of farm bankruptcies quadrupled. Another 200,000 commercial farms have crippling debt problems.

It is not much use farmers relying on farm land and buildings as collateral. The value of farm land has dropped by an average of 20 per cent in the past six years, and in states like Iowa by more than 50 per cent. There was a \$200 billion drop in the value of farm assets since 1981.

A Senate study released in May last year showed a \$146 billion fall in land value be-

REVIEWS

Review of Dennis O'Rourke's Documentary 'Half Life' shown on channel four at 10.45pm on Thursday 16 April

IN HALF LIFE, Australian writer-director Dennis O'Rourke shows brilliantly to what barbaric lengths American imperialism will go to achieve global military superiority.

This leisurely paced and thoughtful documentary concentrates on the causes and the tragic consequences of America's first Hydrogen bomb test on Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954.

It draws on recently declassified official documents, evidence from US weathermen and a radio operator who were stationed downwind of the blast, and interviews with many Marshall islanders.

O'Rourke's style is superficially simple, but tremendously effective. He uses captions, rather than commentary, an abundance of revealing contemporary newsreels and classified films, in addition to the elements already mentioned.

I will draw freely on O'Rourke's material to order to tell his story.

Caption: 'About two thousand miles south west of Hawaii there is a cluster of tiny coral atolls called the Marshall Islands. The US took these islands from Japan during the Pacific War.'

'In 1947 the United Nations placed the islands under the protection of America. The Trusteeship Agreement stated that the US was required to: "Recognise the principle that the interests of the inhabitants are paramount..." and to "protect their rights and fundamental freedoms..."

What the United States government actually did was to use the Marshall Islands as a testing ground for new atomic weapons.

Caption: 'The first tests were held on Bikini Atoll. The people there, and on the atolls downwind, were removed from their traditional homeland.'

'During the next decade the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) exploded at least sixty-six nuclear bombs on these islands, contaminating them for centuries to come.'

'Today (1985), the US is in the

democracy and the dignity of self determination. . . Thank you and congratulations!' — To which I might add a clutch of exclamation marks of my own, were it not for the fact that an elderly Marshallese mother makes the point more forcefully than I ever could.

'Don't American's know that every life is precious? They are educated people. Do they really believe that one person's life is unimportant? What goes on in the minds of these people? They think they are smart but really they are crazy. They are smart at doing stupid things!'

To grasp the depth of the American ruling class' cynicism, articulated to perfection by Reagan, we must go back to that fateful day in March, 1954 when the administration had already carried out its premeditated act of genocide.

Caption: . . . The winds carried the fallout towards the inhabited islands. At midday a snow-like powder began to fall on Rongelap. The islanders had not been warned, and their children, who had seen pictures of snow, played in the fallout. That night everyone became violently ill. Navy ships were measuring the radioactivity. These ships were protected from the anticipated fallout. They could have rescued the islanders but they were ordered to sail away.'

A decision must have been taken at the very highest level in Eisenhower's administration to use the detonation of the first H-bomb (Operation 'Bravo') to monitor the effects of radioactive fallout on human populations — a programme of medical and scientific investigation that continues to this day!

The official version has always held that due to a sudden, last-minute shift in the wind pattern at the time the nuclear device was activated, atolls previously assumed 'safe' were unfortunately affected by fallout.

At a press conference one month after the explosion a government spokesman had this to say: 'For the day of shot-1, meteorologists had predicted a wind condition which should have carried fallout to the north of a group of small atolls lying to the east of Bikini.'

'The survey aircraft carefully searched the area and reported no

. . . Since that time it has been determined that one weather personnel can return to duty but they are still being kept on Kwajalein for the benefit of extended observation (my emphasis). None of these 28 weather personnel have any burns. The 236 natives also appear to me to be well and happy.

'Today, a full month after the event, the medical staff of Kwajalein have advised us that they anticipate no illness barring, of course, diseases which may be hereafter contracted.'

This statement made in the presence of Eisenhower and other government officials is, as O'Rourke proves, a lie from start to finish.

Don Baker (Radio Operator, Rongerik Atoll): 'Mr Strauss indicated that shortly after the blast there was a sudden shift in the winds. Well, I don't really believe that. It's my firm belief that the winds were already blowing in a easterly direction, and that they intended to use Marshallese natives as guinea pigs, because you're going to have a controlled environment, you're going to have people that are going to live there for the rest of their lives. That way they would be able to evaluate the short term and the long-term effects of radiation.' **Lamon Noley** (weatherman): 'It would be difficult for me to even consider the idea that they would do it — you know — on purpose. But from the information that is beginning to surface now you're not left with a whole lot of choice.'

A mother: 'We didn't understand our illness, or what they were doing to us.'

Caption: 'After three months the people from Utirik were sent back to their contaminated atoll. They ate radioactive food and drank the poisoned water. The amount of radiation in their bodies rapidly increased.'

'The people of Rongelap were returned after three years. The AEC declared that "The habitation of these people on the island will afford most valuable ecological radiation data on human beings..."

A mother: 'When we returned I got pregnant. My stomach started to swell. But before the proper time, I gave birth to something

Four months in prison

AS WE GO to press, our comrade Phil Penn spent the last four months in the Sc... preparing himself to face the outside world

We do not think that we tempt providence when we say that the time many of our readers read this! — Phil Penn will be a free man!

Phil was jailed on 6 February, convicted of assault on evidence given solely by members of the Healy-Torrance group, publishers of News Line.

BY JEFF JACKSON

He was given a 12-month sentence, eight of them suspended, following his arrest after a demonstration at Wapping on 3 May last year when he was physically attacked by four members of this rump organisation.

In defending himself Phil damaged the eye of one of his attackers.

When the police brought the case to court, they had only three witnesses: Eric Rogers, Kay Riddick and Mary ('Tag') McEntegart all members of the Healy-Torrance group.

The Workers Revolutionary Party immediately launched a campaign inside the labour movement to expose the thoroughly unprincipled position taken by the Healy-Torrance group who had shown themselves to be nothing but police narks!

The WRP's former leader, G. Healy was expelled from our Party in October 1985 after he had been charged with systematic sexual abuse of female Party members as well as physical violence against members.

Healy never answered these charges and disappeared from public view. He was supported by Sheila Torrance and Vanessa and Corin Redgrave and they too were expelled from the Party.

In the course of this split Phil Penn played a prominent and decisive role. His stand against Healy during that period was undoubtedly what lay behind the attacks subsequently unleashed upon him by Healy/Torrance both verbally and physically.

Not only was he the object of two such physical attacks by them (one in Wapping on 3 May, the second in Leicester on 8 June 1986), he was also verbally reviled in the columns of their newspaper, News Line, a couple of days before the first incident. It was this 'news item' in their column, Workers Notebook, which portrayed him as a moron.

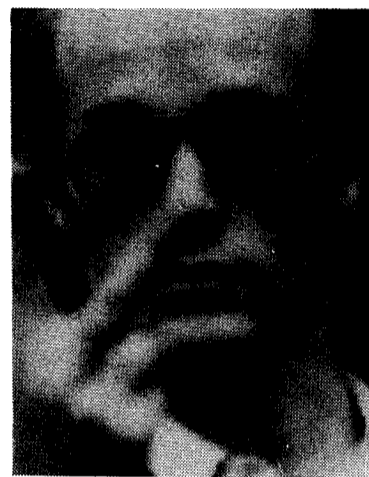
MESSAGES of support for Phil and condemnation of the anti-working class action by the Healy-Torrance group swiftly began to arrive.

At the Central Committee meeting of our Party at the weekend following Phil's imprisonment it was agreed that a weekly column should be devoted to this question with the intention of printing comments and messages received from other labour organisations.

In fact the 'column' expanded immediately to a double-page spread — a feature which has continued in the paper throughout his jailing, such has been the concern and interest on this point, not only locally and nationally but internationally.

The thoughts and sympathy of Party comrades were very much with Phil and, equally with Sandra, his wife and two small children, Amy (3) and Terry who was just a few months old.

In her first statement about the case, in Workers Press on 14 February, Sandra made clear that the class treachery carried out by the Healy-Torrance group was not, in their case, an isolated action.



Witnesses in Phil Penn's conviction, from the top: Eric Rogers, Kay Riddick and Mary ('Tag') McEntegart. Below: Richard Price, who attacked Phil Penn with banner poles.



process of terminating its Trusteeship Agreement.'

Ronald Reagan's scriptwriters, sitting as always on the sunny side of the street, drafted the text for the maladjusted robot's broadcast to the nation:

Reagan fixed a smile on the teleprompter and read as follows: 'Under the Trusteeship we have come to know and respect you as members of our American family. And now, as happens to all families, members grow up and leave home.'

As you chart your own course for economic development, and as you take up your new status in the world as a sovereign nation, we look forward to continuing our close relationship with you in your new status. You will always be family to us.

Over the years perhaps one of the most lasting and valuable things we have built together are not the roads, the airports, the schools and hospitals, but rather an understanding of the meaning of

shipping. The shot was fired.

'The wind failed to follow the predictions (my emphasis), but drifted south of that line, and then little islands of Rongelap, Rongerik and Utirik were on the edge of the path of the fallout.'

'A Japanese fishing trawler appears to have been missed by the search, but based on a report attributed to the skipper, to the effect that he saw the flash of the explosion and felt the concussion six minutes later, it must have been well within the danger area.'

'The 23 crew members of the ship, 28 American personnel manning weather stations on these islands, and the 236 natives on the islands were therefore within the area of the fallout.'

'The taskforce commander promptly evacuated all people from the islands. They were taken to the island of Kwajalein where we maintain a naval establishment and there placed them under continuous and competent medical supervision. (my emphasis)

which I cannot describe. It did not look human, I don't know how to say it. . . like the innards of a beast. It could not survive. . . it was dead at birth.'

A father: 'My daughter was born July 2, 1975. She grew up with her head too big and with no control over her body. I believe that this is caused by radiation. I also believe that my cancer is a cause of radiation.'

Recent studies show that the radioactive danger to the Marshall islanders is many times greater than the official estimates.

The weathermen who were on Rongerik Atoll are suffering from the same illness as the Marshallese. The people of Longelap Atoll, fearing the effects of radiation, have abandoned their islands.

For these incalculable losses, the American ruling class must be made to pay.

Tom Scott Robson

Months on

Penn who has
subs, will be
world again.

They say that — by
once more will

They willingly and eagerly dropped recognised basic principles,' he said, 'to settle personal scores.'

A letter from the Workers Revolutionary Party, giving the background to the case, was drawn up and distributed throughout the labour movement. In it, Dave Temple, chairman of the Party, pointed out that the Healy-Torrance action was not the first of its kind, and that six of their group had appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield Crown Court at the beginning of the year in connection with an incident between themselves and members of the International Communist Party.

An open letter to rank-and-file members of the Healy-Torrance camp was published in Workers Press the following week, drafted by our Political Committee. It included the following:

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

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

THE FIRST messages of solidarity to be printed in the Workers Press came from: WRP Scottish Area; Clydeside Troops Out Movement; West of Scotland Republican Bands Alliance; Workers Power Political Committee; Leon Perez, International Workers League representative in Britain; Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, including its Newcastle Support Group; Tower Hamlets Print Workers Support Group; Revolutionary Communist Group, and a Labour Party member (C.L.).

On 28 February we printed messages from Des Warren; Michel Varga (Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International); John Lang, sacked printer; Marie-Jeanne Guermant, a reader from Brussels; the 'Schoolkeepers' Branch of NUPE LEA; Booksellers and Stationers Branch of USDAW; a joint message from comrades in the Irish Workers Group and Peoples Democracy; Socialist Workers Party of Britain; Dipak Basu for the Azania Solidarity Campaign; the Crawley branch of the AEU; Richard Knott, and the Political Committee of the Workers League (USA).

Saturday, 7 March was the occasion of Phil's Benefit at Lambeth Social Club. It was a big success and a real tribute to Phil. Entertainment for the evening was provided by folk singers Colin; Geraldine Murray and Sid Frisby and

THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN



Phil and three-year-old daughter Amy



Sandra and Terry Penn

the dee-jay, Pete. Their contributions were greatly appreciated by the packed audience many of whom had travelled long distances to pay their respects and show support for Phil and his family.

Meanwhile the Phil Penn double-page spread (although we continued to refer to it as 'a special column' in the paper itself!) flourished.

Messages were now pouring in: Stefan Bekier on behalf of the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Workers' League of Poland; Wigan Trades Union Council; Merthy Bus Branch of GMBATU; Cambridge and District Trades Council; Maria Tolly; WRP North East Area; Carole Richardson, one of the Guildford Four prisoners; Ron Brown MP; Manchester Irish

Solidarity Committee; Mick Woods, Brent Councillor; International Secretariat of the Fourth International (reconstructed); 'La Verite'; Jolyon Ralph; Political Bureau of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario de Espana (section of the Fourth International); G. Lucas (KDE), executive member of the National Building Workers Union, Greece; Durham Mechanics (NUM); Charlie van Geldren; Norman Harding; Geoff Barr; Liverpool WRP; Annie Wakefield on behalf of the Breakout! Collective; Political Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League of Sri Lanka; Revolutionary Democratic Group; John Tully in Melbourne; Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire in Belgium; Editorial Board of Socialist Platform, and Left Out/

Lesbians and Gays Support the Printworkers; Cambridge WRP and comrade Cecile, on behalf of the LST in Paris — all of which were published in Workers Press.

IN THE midst of this welter of support for the campaign, News Line, after five long weeks of silence, was forced to make a reply, which appeared in their edition of 14 March. It was, of course, a pathetic and unprincipled defence of their sordid activities.

Worker Press lost no time in replying to it and reproduced in full the half-page statement they had produced. What was of particular interest to our members was News Line's use of a photograph taken outside our conference in February by a member of the Hyland group who claimed we had called the police to prevent their supporters entering the conference.

We heard from Phil that he was receiving letters direct from other supporters too. We were informed by Sandra that he was generally in good spirits when she was allowed to visit him and his critical faculties — especially about aspects of Workers Press! — were as sharp as ever.

PHIL ALSO made some valuable observations about prison-life, especially the deplorable conditions that he met while working in the kitchens at Wormwood Scrubs. This won him the support of other prisoners, and Phil wrote to Ron Brown MP about the conditions.

At first this letter was withheld and Phil was dismissed from his kitchen job and labelled a 'subversive'. However, after a principled argument with the prison governor Phil won his fight and got his job back!

IT WAS around this time that we learned about a further split in the Healy-Torrance organisation. One of their members, who had been involved in the attack against Phil, Richard Price,

together with about a dozen other members had split with the Torrance wing.

Price's role, despite his protestation that he never appeared in the witness box against Phil, is a particularly loathsome one. His final break with Torrance was completely consistent with his unprincipled and cowardly position in regard to the October 1985 split.

He had abstained on the resolution that the 1 July 1985 letter which prompted the revolution inside the Party, written by Healy's secretary to expose his sexual abuse of female comrades, was a provocation. Price had declared that he wanted to hear what Healy's secretary had to say.

He was very quickly pulled into line by Torrance and was soon defending Healy, claiming that the contents of the letter consisted of lies — when he knew they were true in every detail.

FURTHER messages came from Frank Barclay, a former Young Socialist; Harry Cohen MP; Cardiff Branch of Workers Power; The Communist League of Australia; City AA Group, and the League for the Revolutionary Party (USA).

On the weekend of 4/5 April, the Workers Revolutionary Party held a Special National Conference to discuss the resolution put forward by the Central Committee for the reorganisation of the Fourth International and the forthcoming International Conference.

At the conference, Chair of the Congress, Peter Gibson read out a message to be sent to Phil who was now into his last couple of weeks in the Scrubs.

In support of Phil's taking up the questions of the abominable conditions in the prisons and the crisis of overcrowding which was now near bursting point, Workers Press produced a couple of articles on the subject and the Tories' plans to privatise the prisons in this country.

Liz Short, chair of Fleet Street Support Unit sent a message of solidarity to Phil and his family as his term in jail began to draw to a close. Barnet Councillor, Ellis Hillman, also wrote in.

Benefit Night for the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners

A BENEFIT organised for the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign is taking place at the Brent Irish Cultural Centre, Queens Park on Friday 24 April.

Organised by the Campaign Committee, entertainment will be provided by Maria Tolly and guests. All are welcome and admission is free.

The Campaign which was set in motion earlier this year has taken up the fight for justice and the freeing of the 17 innocent Irish people — ten of whom are still in jail — who were sentenced following a series of show trials conducted by the British police and courts in the 1970s.

The cases of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire family are the focus of growing attention. The Tory Home Secretary has recently announced

that new evidence in respect of the Birmingham Six case has prompted its reference to the Court of Appeal. At the same time he says he will not re-open the other cases. But evidence of a frame-up in all three cases has existed for years.

Not only do the cases thoroughly expose the police and the courts, they also damage the reputations of senior establishment figures. Sir Michael Havers, for example, was chief prosecutor against the Guildford Four. He is now Attorney General.

Help to fight for justice and the freedom of the prisoners. Take part in the regular monthly pickets of Downing Street. The last two pickets have been well supported; over 20 people attended the last one on 1 April. The next picket will be on Wednesday from 6p.m. — 7p.m.

● Come to the benefit night on Friday (see separate advert on page 3 for full details) and support the campaign to free the framed Irish prisoners in every way you can.

BLACK SASH CONFERENCE

'Reform has a purpose: The maintenance of power in white hands and the entrenching of apartheid by more subtle and sophisticated processes. For every person who has benefitted from "reform" measures, there are many hundreds whose condition is immeasurably worse.'

APARTHEID's continuing viciousness and brutality exposed the hypocrisy of the so-called reforms which had been introduced in South Africa in the recent period, concluded the Black Sash's three-day conference held recently in Cape Town.

The Black Sash is a liberal women's organisation which campaigns against the inhumanities of apartheid and runs advice centres to assist victims of apartheid to obtain their rights — such as they are — under the apartheid legislation.

The conference discussed some of the major 'reforms' legislated by the regime: the repeal of the notorious Pass Laws and the Restoration of South African Citizenship Act passed last July, along with the Trespass and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Acts.

THE Pass Laws were still in operation, despite the 'more polite' wording of the new Identification Act, the conference heard. Ordinary people were still being stopped on the streets by the police in a completely arbitrary manner.

The repeal of the Pass Laws, which were designed to restrict the movement of black people, has not decreased the need for advice offices, reported the Johannesburg office.

'There is an entirely new system of law, but there is no real freedom of movement. There are new names to government offices, but the same officials continue to deal with the public.'

The report said it doubted whether the regime's infamous pass raids were really over. 'In one ten-day period in February 1987, five different people in five different suburbs phoned to report that police were stopping people in the streets and demanding their passes,' it said.

THE Restoration of Citizenship Act also turned out to be a major problem area.

The president had promised in 1985 that citizenship would be restored to those South Africans from whom it had been taken through the 'independence' of tribal homelands like the Transkei, Ciskei and Bophutswana.

'The actual administration of the Act is so far removed from the president's promise, it bears almost no relation to it,' it was reported.

By February this year only 2,909 homeland citizens had regained



Victims of apartheid wait in a packed Black Sash advice office to relate their problems

their South African citizenship — out of at least 9 million denationalised black people.

Some 'citizens' of homelands 'are now in a much worse position than they were before', because there is a fine of R5,000 (about £2,000) — or a two-year jail sentence — if employers give work to an 'alien'.

'THE shape of influx control has merely been remoulded and control is now being exerted in other ways,' the Transvaal region commented in its report.

The Trespass Act and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act are prime examples of this new control.

'Control over land and housing, which has always been one of the most important influx control mechanisms, continues to be so. It will increase in importance now that other mechanisms have been repealed.'

'The deliberately created and insurmountable housing shortage will result in tens of thousands of black people being unable to find land or accommodation where

they were born and have always lived.

'Many of them live a shadow existence in shacks and are likely to be excluded from the metropolitan area by anti-squatting and trespass legislation.'

'Jails are once again being filled by people whose only offence is their homelessness — the same people who were previously offenders under [now repealed] influx control laws.'

● The conference noted that workers have started building strong and well-organised trade unions and drew attention to the alliance being forged between workers and

civic, student and women's organisations too.

The Black Sash clearly understands the fraudulent nature of apartheid's reforms. What are its hopes for the future?

'The most just dispensation for South Africa can only be reached through ending apartheid and building a non-racial democracy,' president Mary Burton said in her conference address.

Part II of 'A programme of action for the South African revolution' will appear in next week's Workers Press.

Citizenship and Trespass

AFTER three years of battle, Mrs Mosala was informed in August last year she was now entitled to a South African Identity Document. This meant she was also entitled to apply for a house — for the first time in her life.

But the waiting list for houses has thousands of families, stretching back 20 years — and 20 years ago Mrs Mosala could not legally apply for a house because she had no ID.

However, as a resident of a squatter settlement in Soweto, she could be arrested for trespassing or squatting and fined R2,000 (about £700) or jailed for two years.

Now she has her papers in order she is free to move, but not to stay where she is . . . nor can she get anywhere else to live. . .

AS IF apartheid's legislative grip is not enough, evasion of legal obligations by employers is still widespread:

● 'Some people arrive at work to find the firm closed overnight, the doors locked and no one there to deal with. These fly-by-night companies leave their workers without UIF (Unemployment Insurance Fund) cards, without pay, without tax certificates, without redress,' the Johannesburg Advice Office report said.

Pregnant women especially experience serious problems in obtaining UIF benefits when on maternity leave. Sometimes they are told there is no work for them when they return.

● Physical abuse also seems to be widespread, with domestic workers and security guards being exploited particularly harshly. 'Many security firms bring people from homeland areas, particularly from the Transkei, to work here. These men are completely untrained. They are made to work long hours, often dumped in a place they are meant to guard and not collected again for 60 hours over a weekend. They are also often paid below the legal minimum wage.'

● Pension funds are also a major problem for workers. 'People are faced with inordinately long waiting periods, files are lost and destroyed.' Some pension fund cheques are even sent to the wrong address or made out in the wrong name. The Sash slammed the failure of companies to inform workers they were entitled to pension funds.

THE Eastern Cape region reported on foreign companies and the state of emergency:

● Not a single foreign-owned company paid workers detained under the emergency regulations in full, a survey discovered.

One foreign-owned company merely paid an ex-gratia payment, while three others paid between 50 and 60 per cent of their workers' wages and two decided not to pay detainees at all. This exposed foreign companies' professed concern 'to apply progressive and democratic principles in the running of their operations'.

(Only four out of 18 local companies surveyed paid workers in full.)

'Horrendous and inhuman exploitation'

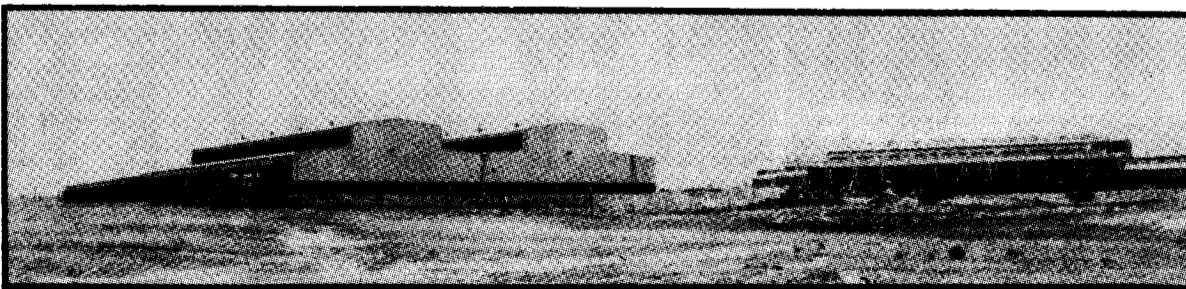
BY JOLYON RALPH

WORKERS at factories in Botshabelo, a decentralised industrial centre in the Qwa Qwa homeland in South Africa, are being paid starvation wages — not even enough to buy a hamburger a day.

Billy Cobbett, a University of Warwick researcher, interviewed the employers in Botshabelo last month. In a paper based on his research he describes conditions there as 'the most horrendous and inhuman exploitation'.

There are about 50 foreign and locally-owned factories in the area. The majority of the foreign factories are Taiwanese, but there are also some Israeli-owned firms.

The wages in the area range from R43 to R120 a month, the average wage being R60 a month,



Factories in Botshabelo . . . employers only pay 5 per cent of each wage, the state pays the rest

which is R2 a day. This is less than the cost of a hamburger from a cafe 100 metres from the industrial area.

The state pays 95 percent of the workers' wages as an incentive for the employers to decentralise.

Cobbett says employers often claim extra cash for non-existent workers, and sometimes the workers don't get all the money the state pays out for them. If the employers paid the workers the

full state allowance, there would be no margin left for illegal claims.

Conditions in the factories are terrible. There are few canteens or rest-benches, and no shade for workers during lunchtime inside the factory premises. Cobbett adds 'The only shade generally provided for was for businessmen's cars'.

The factories have high-security fencing and are patrolled by armed guards.

Workers often work a basic 50-hour week with no overtime. Work-

ers who spend 'too long' in the toilet have their pay reduced, and there are often no pensions, sick pay, maternity benefit or paid holidays.

Cobbett says 'The final reality of Botshabelo is captured very simply but sickeningly: as one manager explained to me, about once every week to 10 days, one of the women on the production line faints or collapses from hunger while working. The workers try to hide the fact and claim they are ill so that

they will not lose their jobs.'

About 93 percent of the workers included in the survey were women. When the employers were asked about this, they gave answers ranging from 'women are more reliable than men, they are more serious, they don't drink' to 'women are more efficient, more clever, than males'.

One Israeli manager of a Taiwanese company told Cobbett: 'This society (African) is a women's society — the women work, the men only make children. The men are very lazy.'

The same manager claimed that an attempted shift system at the factory had failed because 'by 8p.m. they are all asleep. It is their culture — they are not dynamic people.'

Describing the 'problem' of maternity, one manager said: 'It's the normal crap. They have babies. So we organise a birth control clinic to come here once or twice a month, and the women are given injections or pills, while condoms are given to men. All this is free.'

The forgotten case of Judith Ward

An unsolved mystery

JUDITH WARD is 38. She has spent approximately one-third of her life in Durham top security prison.

In all probability she will die there.

In November 1974, she was convicted of the M62 coach bomb incident which killed nine army personnel, a woman, and two children. At the time it was the highest death toll of its kind in Britain.

Two days after she was arrested, Judith Ward signed a statement detailing how she had not only planted the bomb on the coach but carried it from London to Manchester, having picked it up from two well-known Sinn Fein members.

She was given 12 life sentences plus an additional ten years.

There is a strong likelihood that she is in fact innocent.

She was born in Cheshire. When she was 16 her love of horses took her to Ravensdale, Dundalk, County Louth in the Irish Republic, where she worked as a stable girl.

She was considered an extremely shy, withdrawn young woman. On a holiday visit to her home in 1971 she quite unexpectedly joined the British army.

According to what she told her former employer, for whom she had worked the previous six years, she had wandered into a recruiting office and signed on, scarcely knowing what she was doing.

Six months later, having gone absent without leave, she had returned to Dundalk and was hanging around Republican bars and associating first with the Officials and later with Provisional members of the IRA.

Internment

This was during the period of internment without trial, when men from the north of Ireland were on the run.

The dangers involved clearly appealed to the young Judith, who craved excitement and attention. She had apparently boasted to her army colleagues that she had connections with the IRA.

She was regarded as a kind of groupie. She wrote to Sinn Fein in Dublin but they would not accept her. Nobody in the movement took her seriously; she was thought to be a bit unbalanced. All they let her do was sell papers.

In 1973 she moved to London and joined a Sinn Fein branch in Kilburn. Still seeking to draw attention to herself, she was arrested when she turned up at Euston station shortly after a bomb had gone off, and shouted at police that, had it been the IRA, it would have been much bigger.

Though forensic tests were carried out on her at the time, the police released her without charge.

However, early in 1974 she was again arrested, in the Liverpool docks area, only days after the M62 coach bombing.

Forensic tests again proved positive. The scientist who carried out these tests was the same 'expert' who did the tests in the case of the Birmingham Six, Dr Frank Skuse.

Dr Skuse took early retirement last year after a television programme showed that innocent substances can give positive results in such tests.

Judith Ward's detailed statement about her involvement with the IRA — including being the girlfriend of Michael McVerry, a leading Provisional IRA man who had been shot dead by the British army — made it seem an open and shut case. But serious discrepancies soon began to emerge.

One of the men from whom she

BY JEFF JACKSON

claimed to have collected the bomb established that he was in Ireland at the time. Both men were released.

Inquiries also showed that Judith herself was in Oxfordshire, over 100 miles away, at the time and had spent the evening drinking with members of a circus with which she was employed.

When interviewed again she stated she had only delivered the bomb. She agreed with a police suggestion that the bomb had been planted by a man high on their 'wanted' list.

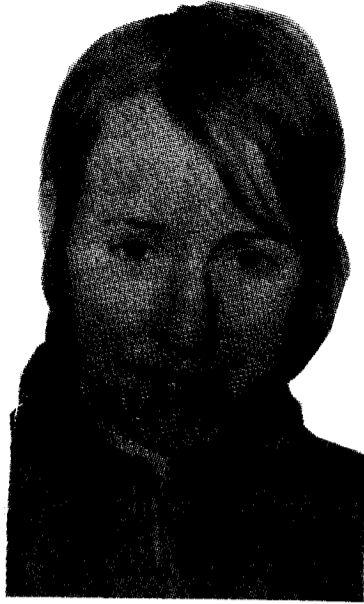
Although this man subsequently served a jail sentence in Portlouis, there was never any attempt to extradite him for the M62 bombing.

During these inquiries, Judith confessed to planting another bomb at Latimer army college in Buckinghamshire. A witness came forward to contradict this statement as well, claiming he and Judith had spent that night together in an hotel.

Though the prosecution was concerned about these grave discrepancies, details of Judith's alleged involvement in another bomb case, this time in Aldershot in 1972, were also produced.

The series of alarming claims continued when she said in court that she had in fact become McVerry's wife in 1973, although a former girlfriend and his family denied he had had any association with Judith.

The IRA issued a statement during the trial, denying that she had ever been a member or 'involved in any action carried out by the organisation'. They suggested that she was in need of medical treatment.



The defence pointed to the mountain of inconsistencies and downright lies in her statements, and asked: 'Is she trying to achieve notoriety by making false admissions? Is she trying to seek a place in Irish folklore?'

The only evidence was her statements and the forensic tests. No explosives were found; there was no identification, and no fingerprints.

Progress

While the trial was in progress, however, two bombs exploded in Guildford, killing five people. Other bomb scares made the whole atmosphere very hostile, and Judith Ward was convicted on all counts.

Republican organisations have never adopted her as one of their prisoners, and she can hardly be regarded as a security risk. Yet she has remained a top security prisoner in Durham with no prospect of a transfer to a more open prison.

One former fellow-prisoner described her as being subject to fits of severe depression. The conditions under which she has served for the past 13 years have damaged her both physically and mentally.

There is a very urgent need to decategorise Judith Ward, move her to a more humane prison environment, and reopen the case.

TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A Magazine of Marxist Theory
Volume 1 Number 1 March 1987

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Hiding behind Gramsci's corpse

AS THE general election looms, the British left abandons the last vestiges of socialist principles.

To cover their embarrassment, they have found a useful screen in the corpse of Antonio Gramsci, once the leader of Italian Communism.

BY CYRIL SMITH

At the beginning of this month, the organisation which still goes under the name of 'Communist Party of Great Britain' held a veritable orgy of Gramsciana in London.

Gramsci, his frail health broken by ten years in a fascist prison, died just 50 years ago. He had quarrelled with the Stalinist leadership when they adopted the lunatic ultra-leftism of Stalin's 'Third Period', and his memory was almost forgotten until 1946.

As the Italian Communist Party turned more and more to the right after 1956, his Prison Notebooks became a bible for the tendencies in world Stalinism which later emerged as 'Eurocommunism'. As more and more of his work was translated into English, the rightward surging CPGB found that he was exactly what it wanted. Gramsci's name gave an air of radical intellectual respectability to the breaking of all ties with Marxism.

Gramsci had been installed by Zinoviev in the leadership of the Italian CP in 1924. He was arrested in 1926. Against the most terrible odds, he struggled to continue his theoretical work under the noses of the fascist prison guards.

His Notebooks were necessarily couched in vague and general terms, in order to deceive his jailers. So they are tailor-made for what is sometimes called the 'soft left'. ('Soggy' might be a better description.) In addition, it must be said, Gramsci was brilliant and heroic — but never a Marxist.

Failure

His problem was to explain, not just the defeat of the Italian workers, but the failure of the Russian Revolution to spread to Western Europe. His opposition to the crazy ultra-leftism of 1929-1934 became an attempt to marry revolutionary politics with parliamentarist conceptions — ironic for someone in a fascist gaol. This tendency combined with his academic training under the Hegelian Crce into a turn away from historical materialism.

His theories of 'hegemony' and 'government by consent' effectively make political ideas primary and economic contradictions secondary in understanding social change — exactly Hegel's priorities. So, as the Euro-Stalinists head the lurch away from socialism, Gramsci finds himself on Neil Kinnock's list of heroes. Poor Gramsci!

The fad for using him to replace Marxism started 20 or 30 years ago. But its renewal today occurs when the left, which used to see the political future in Britain in terms of an indefinite series of Labour governments, is wandering aimlessly around the political landscape.

For these reformists without hope of reforms, opportunists without opportunities, the jargon of the Gramsci cult is an invaluable means of concealing the meaning of their thoughts, even from themselves. They have a desperate fear of Thatcherism, which is tinged with more than a measure of respect. They regard the miners' strike as the defeated last stand of what they think of as the 'old' working class movement.

In the latest 'Marxism Today',

Ernesto Laclau explains that 'the working class is... a social agent limited in its objectives and possibilities, and not the "universal class" of the Marxist tradition, the necessary agent of global human emancipation.'

Begins

Laclau and his friends write off the working class just as the new period of class struggle begins. For these people, the expressions of the deep crisis of world capitalism — the miners' strike, the movement of French railwaymen, the international movement of students, the emergence of the powerfully organised working class in South Africa — are a source, not of inspiration, but of fear. It is this fear which moves them today.

Whatever Gramsci's limitations, we must defend him against the charge that he held views like these. But he does have one thing in common with his present-day devotees. Like them, he refused to



ANTONIO GRAMSCI

make a clear materialist statement about the driving force for social revolution. Is it driven by the way people and classes decide to struggle, or is it an expression of conflict between productive forces and outmoded social relations?

The second conception, that of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, leads to the conclusion that world capitalism survives, not because of some inherent strength, but because of the treachery of working-class leadership. Gramsci's silence on this issue is what puts him at the disposal of the legions of the 'lost left' today.

Only Trotskyism takes seriously the basic conceptions of historical materialism. Only Trotskyism, which fought the degeneration of the Third International and the Soviet state under Stalin, can maintain the conception that 1917 was the start of the world revolution.

Only Trotskyism refuses to blame the continued existence of capitalism on to the working class, and ascribes it instead to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Only thus can we grasp the very real and profound changes taking place in the structure of capitalism, not to show the strength of the system, but to find the right way to smash it.

LETTERS

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

'Looking at history with blinkers on'

HOW DO we approach the history of our movement? To confirm hardened prejudices — or to enrich our theoretical arsenal for today's struggles?

Comrade P. Conlon (Workers Press January 31) tells us that all the ills of Trotskyism stem from 'the "critical support" given to "left" bourgeois governments'. He re-writes Vietnamese history (Workers Press March 21) to prove it. Finally he showers me with abuse (I am 'attempting to cover up' in 'good Healy style') for questioning him.

Yes, we must learn from history. But he is approaching history with blinkers on: he has already made up his mind what the Vietnamese Trotskyists (whose history is only now being discussed in Britain) did wrong.

He says that in 1945 they 'compromised their role as the vanguard party by offering — in fact pleading for — accommodation with the Stalinist "bourgeois democratic government"'. Let's look at the facts.

1. Comrade Conlon mentions that Trotskyist Ho Huu Thuong moved a resolution on 21 August at a Hanoi students' meeting, calling on the Vietminh to form a government.

Did Thuong encourage the illusion that the Vietminh would lead the working class to socialism? — if so, that mistake was deadly. Or did he fling this challenge in the Vietminh's face, along with calls to the working class to organise, and warnings that Ho Chi Minh would work with imperialism? The records are so sparse that we don't know.

But it does seem that by his call to the Vietminh, unaccompanied by a call to the working class, Thuong made an impermissible compromise.

He did so not with the support of other Vietnamese Trotskyists, but condemned by them — a point comrade Conlon ignores.

2. A Vietnamese worker,

says comrade Conlon, condemned the 'Struggle' group for its 'critical support' of the Stalinist administration in Saigon. True. But what was this 'critical support' in practice?

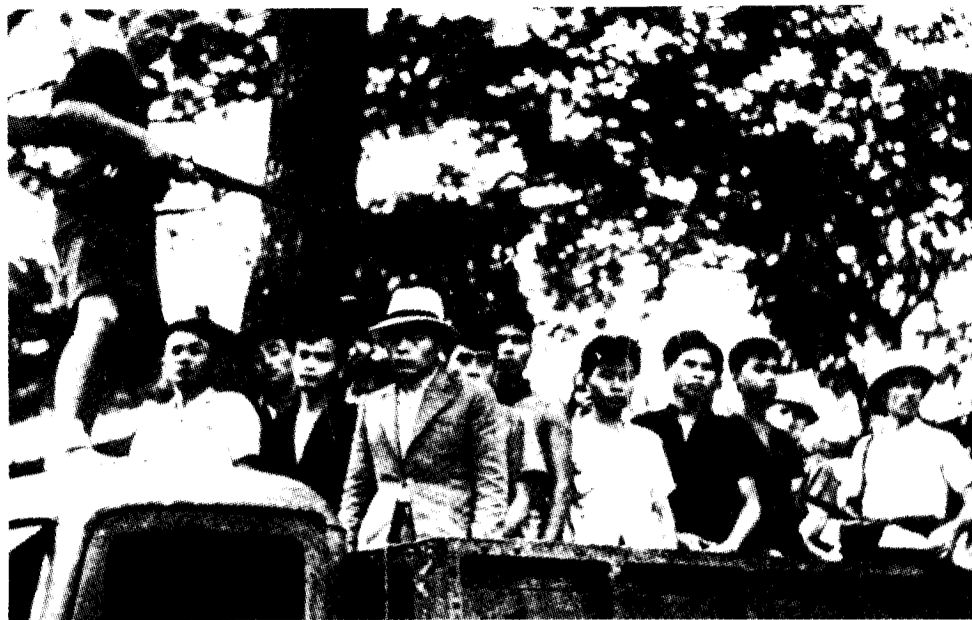
In the first period of the revolution, when Japan collapsed and there was no government in Saigon (16-22 August), the 'Struggle' group proposed a united front to the Vietminh, around slogans of national independence and agrarian reform. (There is no evidence that they dropped their independent programme; certainly they published 20,000 papers daily to explain their line).

The Stalinists rejected this proposal, and set up an administration on 22 August: so began the second period of the revolution, during which the 'Struggle' group called for 'action committees, an Indochinese congress, the arming of the people, a workers' and peasants' government, and a popular army'. That was hardly 'abdicating the leading role', as comrade Conlon claims.

In the third period of the revolution, from 10 September onwards, the Stalinists worked with the allied imperialist troops which were arriving, to crush opposition. Certainly the 'Struggle' group delayed, inexplicably, before breaking links with the Stalinists: a joint meeting of 'Struggle' leaders, bourgeois nationalists and the Vietminh was held as late as 19 September, where the Stalinists paved the way for repression by condemning 'Struggle' as provocateurs.

It appears that the 'Struggle' group paid a terrible price for this delay. (I believe this stemmed from a wrong policy towards Stalinism, rather than over 'left' bourgeois governments in general). Anyway, it didn't prevent them, once the Stalinist and imperialist repression began, playing the leading role in the military struggle.

Comrade Conlon's generalisations, far from drawing out the real lessons of such



Resistance fighters rounded up by French troops in Saigon, October 1945

struggles, ignore them.

3. Comrade Conlon quotes a statement by the other major Trotskyist group, the Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (LCI), which declared on 4 September that it was ready to 'assist' and 'support' the Stalinist administration 'with all physical means'... 'if the government declares itself prepared to defend national independence and safeguard the people's liberties.'

Did this 'abdicate the vanguard role', or 'create illusions that under pressure... these "lefts" can carry out progressive and at times even revolutionary acts'? No, not at all.

If the LCI had offered 'support' or 'assistance' to the Vietminh unconditionally, without calling the working class to action, and without politically condemning the Stalinists, that would have been criminal. But the sentence before the one comrade Conlon quotes reads: 'We, internationalist communists, have no illusions at all that the Vietminh government, with its policy of class collaboration, will be capable of fighting imperialism

in the days to come.' Is this 'creating illusions'?

The sentence after the one comrade Conlon picks out reiterates that 'we shall strictly maintain the complete independence of our party in relation to the government and to all other parties'. Is this 'abdicating the vanguard role'?

The whole statement breathes contempt for the Vietminh and the imperialist 'allies'. And that theme ran through every practical action of the LCI. On September 2, they participated in the biggest demonstration in Vietnamese history shouting 'all power to the popular committees', against the Stalinist slogan of 'power to the Vietminh'.

Two weeks earlier they had convened a conference of 150 soviet-type popular committees, which resolved 'that the national bourgeoisie will be completely incapable of playing the role of the revolutionary vanguard', proclaimed that

'only the popular alliance of industrial workers and rural toilers' could solve the national and agrarian questions, pledged the committees' aim to organise that vanguard and indicated their 'complete political independence' from the Vietminh and the bourgeoisie.

All the evidence points to the fact that these communist fighters advocated working-class revolution and were wiped out for it. But that's not good enough for the r-r-revolutionary comrade Conlon.

To offer support to a bourgeois government at any time is 'contradictory' and 'can only create confusion', he says. For him, this tactic is always impermissible. What childish ultra-leftism!

'How can one', he asks, 'particularly in a revolutionary situation, tell the masses to prepare their forces for the overthrow of the capitalist government, and at the same time call for support

for the same government?'

The answer is: the way the Bolsheviks did! They prepared the November 1917 revolution by supporting the bourgeois government of Alexander Kerensky against the counter-revolutionary General Kornilov in August 1917.

They had been jailed or driven underground by Kerensky in July-August — but they mobilised workers in his support, carrying out not only the military defeat of Kornilov, but a political offensive against the reformist and petty-bourgeois parties (Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries) who still had a majority in the Soviets.

With Kornilov beaten, the Bolsheviks proposed a bloc to the Mensheviks and 'SR's': that they break with the bourgeoisie and take power. They refused. Two months later the Bolsheviks took power themselves and formed the world's first workers' government.

The ABC lesson of the 1917 revolution is that tactical alliances with bourgeois governments, under certain definite conditions, are permissible and necessary.

'The sole "condition" for every agreement with the bourgeoisie,' Trotsky wrote, 'for each separate, practical, and expedient agreement adapted to each given case, consists in not allowing either the organisations or the banners to become mixed directly or indirectly for a single day or a single hour: it consists in distinguishing between the red and the blue, and in not believing for an instant in the capacity or readiness of the bourgeoisie either to lead a genuine struggle against imperialism or not to obstruct the workers and peasants.' (*Trotsky on China*, p. 292).

Such alliances were necessary in Vietnam in 1945, and (to quote a more modern example) in Nicaragua in 1979.

Simon Pirani

How do we destroy reformism and its Stalinist allies?

I HAVE been reading the 'Workers Press' since the split from Healy's gangsters in 1985, and have been very impressed with the development of open discussion in its pages.

A communist can never be frightened by open discussion, something completely alien to the regime which I remember.

It is in the spirit of Trotskyist solidarity that I am writing this and would appreciate it if this letter could be published.

I would particularly like to ask the WRP what its position is in relation to the Labour party, the mass political organisation of the working class? I ask this question because I think it is one of the most fundamental questions facing any revolutionary organisation in countries like Britain.

I disagreed with the WRP over supporting an RCP candidate against a Labour candidate.

This is not because I have any illusions in Labour but because the working class has not as yet broken politically from reformism.

The question that continues to confront us then is — How do we destroy these illusions? I would not oppose such a candidate if that organisation had a significant force within the working class, sufficiently large enough numerically to start

breaking these illusions in parliamentarism.

This is not the case.

It is also not the case with the WRP.

Is the possibility of Trotskyists entering the party of the working class an anachronism or in fact a revolutionary necessity? I say this not through any belief that the Labour Party could ever take the working class to power but because one of our central tasks as revolutionaries is to fight to develop the consciousness of the working class as the revolutionary class.

Both the writings of Lenin and Trotsky deal with this question in Britain, recognising that however reactionary this party is, it represents the working masses at a certain point in time.

It seems logical that the pathway to the development of the working class as a revolutionary force, is initially prepared through its own organisations, i.e. where the masses are.

Taking from its best elements for an independent mass revolutionary party.

Is this still the case or have we gone beyond this historically? I believe that we have not and the question of destroying reformism and its Stalinist allies is a central task.

I ask that my opinion is not dismissed as 'another for the

reformist camp'.

I feel it is a very serious question.

Having seen an editorial (20 December 1986) on the situation of the Stalinists at Wapping, I was at a loss to understand what the WRP meant.

Surely a call from these political degenerates to recall congress should have been supported along with our demand to remove TUC leaders who would not support Hicks and carry through Congress policy.

How else could they be told loud and clear? How else could the working class witness this experience? Is it simply enough for us to tell the class how bankrupt the Stalinists are through our press? Propaganda is a useful instrument, along with journalistic technique, but it can also be rhetorical.

I feel that however genuine the comment was it assumed a stage not as yet reached by the majority of the working class.

Finally, I would like to say how pleased I am to see a discussion taking place with other organisations both internally and internationally.

I look forward to future discussions in particular on Cuba, Vietnam, and China.

Fraternal greetings to all WRP comrades and in particular comrade Phil Penn.

Maria
New Zealand

Strip searching: a long history

'Stop strip searches!' — Strip searching is torture! (Workers Press, 21 March 1987).

This happened long ago but it is not a fairy-tale.

From 21 June 1945 to 15 September 1945, most Belgian girls and women who were unemployed found jobs in the 1st Canadian Army Base Post Office (Pioneer and No.1 Civil Labour Unit) which was based 30km from Brussels. This was at the end of the Second World War.

I had been accepted as a clerk and given the military number 59,335.

Some girls were engaged in re-directing parcels sent to the Canadian soldiers by their families, who were campaigning in different parts of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

My job consisted in sorting letters and making sure the addresses were right. If they were not, to affix to them a ticket with the correct address of the said soldiers.

Too often, alas, I had to put the distressful word 'deceased': a man, a worker, was dead, missing for ever.

This introduction is necessary to understand how I arrived to hate to be strip searched by the women military personnel who had instructions to carry out on us. Because there were thieves, they said.

The first time, and every time thereafter, I vigorously protested against the procedure; at any moment of the day five or six of us were called into a room where we were obliged to take off every piece of our clothing;

shoes and even hairpins and combs.

I remember a certain Mary who probed into our most intimate parts with her rubber-gloved fingers. Another searched into our mouths and ears. The third one looked through our hair, and the fourth inspected our clothes, stockings, shoes and hand-bags.

To tell the truth, some women found it quite normal and would even laugh about it, making little jokes while being strip-searched!!

I, as a communist, found it disgusting.

I felt it to be rape; a real torture which I have never forgotten after more than forty years.

That is why, in my name and in the name of all the

women and men who are subjected to such immoral, degrading and humiliating torture, I want to add my protest to that of the growing lobby working to stop immediately, not only in British and Irish jails but everywhere, such a thing!

With regard to the disgraceful attitude of some trade union bureaucrats on the question; they have no understanding of what it is like to be strip-searched, to be tortured!

Every kind of torture must be abolished!

We must keep in mind the 'shadow of the Swastika' which is raising its ugly head again in Europe: Le Pen, the National Front etc.

Marie-Jeanne Guermant,
Brussels

BRIAN PEARCE AND WORKERS PRESS

WORKERS PRESS has published a number of letters on the subject of the struggle for national independence in Ireland, including some from Brian Pearce. We feel that the letter from Pearce which appeared in last week's issue requires some comment.

In its apparent defence of the partition of India, and in its suggestion that Trotskyism's opposition to imperialism in the last war helped Nazism, we think the letter went beyond the bounds of socialist controversy. We do not regret our publication of Pearce's previous letters. However much we may disagree with his position on Ireland, Pearce raised a series of important issues. We feel that in some cases these were answered with mere abuse.

On further consideration, however, we think that last week's contribution should not have been published.

Workers Press Editorial Board

PERSONAL COLUMN

From right and 'left'

SUDDENLY I find myself under fire from far right and pseudo-left at more or less the same time.

On a personal level my reaction is to think, 'Well, I must be doing something right!', and get on with my work. But there may be some political lessons in this amusing synchronism. Let's see.

Roy Kerridge, in the right-wing 'Spectator', calls me 'a mischievous ex-communist who now addresses Trotskyite meetings in Tottenham' and says of my book 'Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain' that it 'ends on a note of exaltation, as buildings blaze'.

An anonymous writer in a curious journal called 'International Worker' classes me among 'middle class dregs'; accuses me of challenging Lenin's definition of the capitalist state, making 'scurrilous attacks' on members of the Workers Revolutionary Party, and holding up to ridicule those who defend Marxism; attributes to me 'innumerable connections to all sorts of petty bourgeois radicals, black nationalists, university snobs, etc.'; and defines me as one of the 'moral flagbearers' of a 'popular front alliance'.

I met Roy Kerridge once — mercifully not for long. He's one of those racist clowns who delight in imitating Afro-Caribbean speech patterns and body language.

As it happens, I have never in my life addressed any meeting in Tottenham, 'Trotskyite' or otherwise. Since Broadwater Farm is in Tottenham, Kerridge's purpose is quite clear, and quite unsavoury.

My nameless critic I haven't met, so far as I know. Internal evidence suggests he is an American whose only contact with the working class is with an abstraction in his own head.

Regular readers of Workers Press are capable of assessing his summary of this column's contents over the past three months, and I'm happy to abide by their judgement.

His account of my 'innumerable connections' is pure fantasy: none of them — not even that delicious 'etc.' — exists outside his feculent imagination.

His reference to a 'popular front alliance' is much more interesting, for it shows either political illiteracy or uncommon deviousness. Here's someone who either doesn't know, or doesn't give a damn about, the difference between a popular front with bourgeois parties and a united front of working-class organizations.

'International Worker' has much to say

about Argentina, where, to his horror, the Trotskyist Movement to Socialism (MAS) has entered into an electoral alliance with the Communist Party. That this alliance is called the Frente del Pueblo (People's Front) gives him gooseflesh.

It's a name, he says, that 'reads like a traitor's calling card.'

What kind of a 'Marxist' judges the wine by the label on the bottle? In Argentina last autumn I saw for myself that the Frente del Pueblo is not a 'popular front alliance' and that, far from compromising the MAS, this tactic has enabled it to win over from Stalinism an increasing number of rank-and-file members of the CP.

Roy Kerridge and 'International Worker' have a lot in common.

For a start, they're both liars — though, it has to be said, clumsy and unconvincing ones.

Secondly, they're both extremely arrogant. They think they have nothing to learn. Their minds are sealed.

Thirdly, and most important, they're both deeply hostile to — and deeply afraid of — the living movement of the working class. The last thing either of them wants is that real leap forward of the mass movement that is worth a dozen perfectly formulated programmes.

There's food for thought in this symmetry between the ultra-reactionary and the ultra-left.

The latter would find a speaking likeness of himself in 'Death of an Old Revolutionary Hero', a piece which George Bernard Shaw, that good man fallen among Fabians, contributed to 'The Clarion' in 1905.

Not that 'International Worker' is either a revolutionary or a hero — except, of course, in his own eyes.

Hobsbawm's choice

FOR a genuine 'moral flagbearer' of a popular front alliance we have to turn to Eric Hobsbawm, who in the latest issue of 'Marxism Today' is calling for tactical voting in the forthcoming general election.

The 'only logical conclusion', according to Hobsbawm, is to vote for the candidate with the best chance of beating the Tory, even if this means voting for the Alliance rather than Labour.

This, wrote Neal Ascherson in the 'Observer' last Sunday, 'must be the first time in British history that Marxists have offered abasolution — even encouragement

— to proletarians who vote Liberal'.

Not a bit of it. In the Aylesbury by-election of 1938 the Communist Party called on the workers to vote Liberal against Labour.

No doubt this was partly because the Labour candidate happened to be Reg Groves, one of the founding fathers of the British Trotskyist movement, who had been expelled from the CP in August 1932 as a member of the famous Balham Group.

But Groves's candidature was not the only motive for this turn to the Liberals. In August 1938 William Rust was writing in the CP's 'Labour Monthly' of the need to draw the Liberals into the People's Front — and this in an article which admitted with regret that the workers had shown little interest in the People's Front idea and had expressed concern lest propaganda for it 'distract attention from the drive for the workers' united front'.

Trotsky's later comment on the inclusion of the Liberal Party within the People's Front throws an interesting light on Hobsbawm's revival of this policy 49 years later. Trotsky wrote in the 'Byulleten Oppozitsii' for March-April 1939:

'In Great Britain the Comintern is nowadays conducting agitation in favour of creating a "People's Front" with the participation of the Liberals. At first glance such a policy appears to be absolutely incomprehensible.

The Liberals represent an utterly compromised and politically second-rate force.

'An alliance between the Communists and the Labourites might assume some shade of anti-imperialism and would thereby render more difficult a rapprochement between Moscow and London.

'The presence of Liberals in the "People's Front" signifies a direct and an immediate censorship exercised by imperialism over the actions of the Labour Party.'

Hobsbawm's declared objective in calling for tactical voting for Alliance candidates is to get rid of Thatcher. For one of Kinnock's trusted advisers to make such a proposal reveals a staggering failure of nerve.

Labour, the party formed to represent the working class in parliament, is entering an election knowing that it is not going to win. For the British working class this is a serious political crisis.

Hobsbawm's response is to fly into the arms of the Liberals and their allies whose defection from the Labour Party helped to secure Thatcher's re-election last time.

And this is what he calls 'logic'!

Peter Fryer

A newly-translated document from the Vietnamese Trotskyists

AN English translation is now being made of 'National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam' by Anh-Van and Jacqueline Roussel, originally published in Paris, in French, by the Fourth International in 1947. (English translation copyright New Park Publications).

This work consists of a Marxist historical analysis of Vietnam before and during the French conquest, the class structure of Vietnam, an outline of the development of nationalist movements from their origins in the 1890s, and of the Stalinist and Trotskyist movements in Vietnam.

It concludes with an estimation by the author, a Vietnamese Trotskyist who work-

ed in Paris after World War II, of the nature of the Indo-Chinese revolution.

We are not able at present to print this material. However, this work is invaluable for the study of the Vietnamese revolution, and of importance for the study of revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries in general.

We are therefore offering Xeroxed copies of this document (approximately 100 A4 pages) for £5 plus postage (Special offer for WRP members £2.50).

Please return the form below within a month if you want a copy of this document. We need finance in order to complete the work on this project.

To: WRP Education Department, PO Box 735, London SW9 1QS. Please send me a copy/. . . copies of 'National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam'.

Name & Address

Please enclose £5 per copy (£2.50 for WRP members) plus postage: 50p — Britain and Ireland; 60p Europe; £1.56 — Middle East and north Africa; £2.12 — America, southern Africa, India; £2.40 — Australia, Far East.

LISTINGS

Listings are published free by WORKERS PRESS for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Friday.

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S CAMP To all women — we are still here; we still need your support! Near Newbury, Exit 13 on M4, or BR Newbury, Berkshire.

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.

LONDON EDUCATION DEFENCE COMMITTEE Public Meeting, Coburg Primary School, Cobourg Road, off Old Kent Road by Burgess Park. Wednesday 29 April at 6.00p.m. Organised by ILEA/NUPE Schoolkeepers.

THE HANGERS MARCH Saturday 2 May, Assemble 10.00 a.m. Telegraph Road, Putney Heath, SW15. March to Rally in Bishop's Park, Fulham 12.30p.m. — 2.30p.m. Speakers include Arthur Scargill, Alf Dubs and Ken Livingstone.

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).

UNEMPLOYMENT, TRADES UNIONS AND THE MSC Conference Saturday 2 May 10.00a.m. — 5.00p.m. The Hampden Community Centre, 150 Ossulston Street, NW1 Speaker: Dann Finn, Unemployment Unit. Organised by Joint Unions Steering Group Opposing MSC (Further information: M.Arkwright)

BLACK FLAG VIGIL To commemorate Sixth Anniversary of 1981 Republican Hunger Strike. Tuesday, 5 May in Kilburn Square

at 7.30p.m. Organised by Bobby Sands Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee.

LONDON MAY DAY MARCH AND RALLY Friday 1 May. Assemble Temple Green, Embankment at 6.00p.m. March via Fleet Street and Farringdon Road to Clerkenwell Green.

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)

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. Sunday 26 April: The Soviet Union and the fight against imperialism.

20 YEARS OF OCCUPATION West Bank and Gaza Women's delegation 3.00p.m. Saturday 25 April, Africa Centre, Covent Garden WC2.

20 YEARS OF OCCUPATION Speaker from West Bank women's delegation. Jewish Socialist's Group meeting. Friends' International Centre, Byng Place, Torrington Place, WC1. (near Goodge St. tube). Saturday 2 May, 7.45pm.

FIGHT BIGOTRY! FIGHT RACISM! Smash the Backlash! DEMONSTRATION Haringey Black Action and Positive Images. Against reactionary attacks on gays, lesbians and black people. Saturday, 2 May, Assemble 1.00 pm, Ducketts Common. Turnpike Lane tube. Mobile creche and disabled facilities.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Name date

Address

Trade Union Age (if under 21)

SEND TO:
Secretary to the Central Committee
PO Box 735, London SW9
7QS

Workers Revolutionary Party
East Midlands Branch

Classes on Marxism

Fortnightly Tuesday meetings at 7.30p.m.
Highfields Community Centre, Melbourne Road, Leicester
5 May: Stalinism and the Soviet Union: Capitalism and the Labour Bureaucracy

Marxist Discussion Forum

Women's Liberation and Socialism
Introduced by Leonora Lloyd
Monday 27 April at 7.30p.m.
The Rising Sun, Harlesden Road, NW10

Workers Revolutionary Party
Scottish Area

Day School

The Struggle to Re-Organise the Fourth International
Sunday, 17 May — Venue to be announced

Workers Revolutionary Party
Series of Classes on:

Principles of Communism

AUEW House, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 7.30p.m.
15 April: Imperialism and Internationalism
22 April: Permanent Revolution
29 April: Stalinism and Bolshevism
6 May: Trotskyism and Revisionism

£5,000 Special Fund

IN SO FAR: £1,497.99

A Preparatory Committee has been formed and has held its first meeting to organise the International Conference of Trotskyists, planned for later this year, to reorganise the Fourth International.

The Workers Revolutionary Party Special Fund is the only source of money for our party's contribution to that committee, and it is therefore urgently needed.

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

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USA ... CLASS STRUGGLE ... USA ...



Voting among Pennsylvania miners as part of the National Labor Union

The first national labour federation

WILLIAM H. SYLVIS was born in Pennsylvania in 1828, one of ten children in a poverty-stricken family.

He joined the Philadelphia branch of the iron molders in 1857 at the age of 29.

This one act changed his entire life: he went on to blaze a trail in the history of class struggle in the US.

Sylvis went straight into a campaign for the iron molders to become a national organisation. And in 1860, the year after which it was formed, he was elected treasurer.

But unlike those who were to use the trade union movement for their own financial gain, Sylvis and his family were dogged by debt-collectors and poverty until the day of his death.

But the new national union was virtually destroyed as its membership went off to the Civil War. Freed slaves were used as cheap labour in the North. Between 1860 and 1865 wages had risen 43 per cent and prices had soared by 116 per cent.

Late 1862 saw the breaking point: the wages being paid could not support the families. Union members demanded an increase. The employers, more prosperous than ever before, refused to budge. And then, early in 1863, workers started to act; strikes were happening everywhere. These strikes produced wage increases and more unions.

Sylvis then turned his attention from local agitation to a call to reconstitute the National Molders Union. At its convention in Pittsburgh in January 1863 he was elected president and took on the job of turning what at the time was a national union on paper into something tangible.

With \$100 in his pocket he embarked on what was to be the first national organiser's tour in American history. His hundred dollars soon spent, he travelled from city to city begging lifts in trains, often hungry and in threadbare clothes, but doing what he had always wanted to do: be a labour organiser.

At the end of this tour that had stretched from Pennsylvania and Ohio to Missouri, Canada, Michigan and New York, the union had 6,000 members and 54 locals. And now others were taking to the road and organising other industries.

In 1864 the employers, fighting to impose a 25-per-cent wage cut, pul-

PART II OF A
FEATURE SERIES
BY NORMAN HARDING

led troops away from the battlefield to use them in actions against the strikers.

The Civil War ended on 9 April 1865. In Charleston, where the slave-owners signalled the start of the war with Edmond Ruffin's shot across the bay, the Negro 54th regiment from Massachusetts marched past the proud stately mansions followed by thousands of freed slaves. Auction blocks, whips and branding irons were destroyed.

This was too much for Edmond Ruffin. What he thought was normal and 'God's will' was being destroyed. He went into the garden and fired his second historic shot, this time blowing his brains out.

In the period that followed new fortunes were made and old ones consolidated. While the standard of living of the workers was being attacked castles were being shipped to America from Europe brick by brick.

In 1866, with Sylvis's leadership and drive, the National Labor Union was formed, the first attempt to build a nationwide federation of trade unions.

It was at its first congress in Baltimore that Sylvis called for the admission of women and for the organisation of black workers in solidarity with their struggle for

total political freedom. He not only failed to convince the delegates to unite labour but also to organise an independent political party composed of labour, the Negro people, and the farmers.

The events of May 1866 saw the lynching of 46 Negroes in Memphis, followed by 45 more slain in New Orleans.

While these murders were taking place 5,000 molders were locked out in Pittsburgh. A seven-month struggle took place in which their leaders were charged with conspiracy and jailed.

It was around events like these that Sylvis, as president of the NLU, fought for the unity of black and white workers. But it was not until the convention of 1869 that the delegates of the NLU finally agreed to adopt Sylvis's position.

'The National Labor Union knows no North, no South, no East, no West, neither colour nor sex on the question of the rights of labour, and urges our coloured fellow members to form organisations in all legitimate ways, and send their delegates from every state in the union to the next congress.'

Sylvis was not there to see his victory, he had died suddenly on the eve of the convention, at the age of 41, only 12 years after joining the molders' union.

Many of his colleagues claimed he had worked himself to death building the National Molders Union and the National Labor Union.

His family did not have enough money to pay for his burial: they had to borrow \$100, the same amount given to Sylvis six years previously to finance his first nationwide recruitment campaign.

● Next week: Pinkerton and the Molly Maguires

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ROBSON'S CHOICE

IN THE 1960s the American Maysles brothers, Albert and David, pioneered what came to be known as cinema-verite (cinema-truth). In plain language, what was involved was to remove the camera from its tripod, rest it on the shoulder, and move freely with it.

Portable sound-recorders and directional microphones had recently become available, and Kodak had developed a fast film-stock, Double-X, which greatly increased the possibility of filming successfully in poor lighting conditions.

The standard kit of fixed lenses (prime lenses as they are referred to because of their optimum transmission qualities) were set aside for the time being and replaced with the ubiquitous zoom lens. Gone were the days when you had to unscrew a long-focus lens and replace it with a wide-angle one before the lorry ran you down! A finger on the zoom would do the trick in a split second.

If you believed, as the Maysles and others did, that filming in real time (as opposed to editing time in the camera by selectively stopping and starting) brought you nearer to the truth, then you would do what they did: fit their Auricon cameras with 1,200ft Mitchell magazines which would enable them to roll without a break for a full half-hour.

In 1970, at the height of their powers, but by now with many successful films behind them, the Maysles made *Gimme Shelter*, a chilling account of the Rolling Stones tour that ended in tragedy. You can see it on **Saturday** at 12.50p.m. on Channel-Four.

On **Sunday**, at 2.30p.m. something for the children: *The Amazing Mrs Blunden*, (ITV). If the children are better engaged, the adults can see Preston Sturges' *Last Train from Gun Hill*, 3p.m. (BBC-1). If you enjoy Evelyn Waugh more than I do, watch *Scoop* at 9a.m. (ITV). If you enjoy Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) less than I do, give his opera *Nabucco* a try. This La Scala production starts at 7.45p.m. (BBC-2) in a simultaneous, stereo broadcast with Radio 3.

On **Monday** BBC-1 presents the

first of three documentaries (to be shown on successive evenings) entitled *Only One Earth*. These programmes will definitely be worth watching even though their terms of reference ('A series to mark the publication of the Brundtland Report on the future of the world's environment') gives one a foretaste of its probable limitations. The first programme goes out at 7p.m. (BBC-2). At 8.30p.m. (also BBC-2) Horizon presents a play, *Life Story*, about the Cambridge scientific fraternity's scramble to discover the 'secret of life', the double helix of DNA. At 10p.m. (C-4), Ken McMullen's thoughtful *Zina*, a poetic study of the tragedy of Trotsky's daughter, Zina Bronstein, in the Germany of the early 1930s.

On **Tuesday** at 7.10p.m. (BBC-2) part-two of *Only One Earth*. On BBC-1 at 11.40p.m. Professor Richard Layard (*Two Nations?*) promise to show us three ways in which unemployment can be reduced without increasing inflation. Could wage-cutting be on o them? I cannot wait to find out. At 12p.m. (ITV) you can see Gorbachev-sanctioned 'history' in the making when 'a studio audience in London talks direct via satellite to a studio audience in Moscow'. I am reliably informed that the rumour doing the rounds to the effect that G. Healy had a hand in setting up this historic *Moscow Link-Up* are absolutely false. Sarah Kennedy, at any rate, knows nothing about his secret, behind-the-scenes activities.

On **Wednesday**, at 7p.m., the final part of *Only One Earth* on BBC-1. At 10p.m. on Channel Four, Francois Truffaut's gentle *Les Deux Anglaises et le Continent*. At 10.20p.m. (BBC-2) Duncan Campbell's second programme in the controversial new series *Secret Society*. On **Thursday** at 11.25p.m. (C-4), distinguished Soviet director Elem Klimov's *Agonia* based on the events of 1916 in Petrograd. **Friday**, aside from the usual fodder, is a cultural desert (and I use the word in its broadest sense). Why not step out to the ICA Cinema in the Mall, if you live in London, and see Ken Loach's thought-provoking *Fatherland?* Showings are at 4.30p.m., 6.35p.m. and 9p.m.

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BUUNS

For an honest discussion!

Reply to Stuart King of Workers Power (Secretary of the MRCI).

THE Workers Power group in the March issue of their paper produced a reply to the Call initiated by the WRP for a 'world conference of Trotskyist organisations'.

The letter was an attempt by Stuart King, secretary of the MRCI (Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International), to mislead his own members as to the nature of the Call by deliberate distortion of the WRP's position and by confusing double talk on the positions of Workers Power itself.

The first indication of how King views the call is in the box prefacing his letter. It states that 'The WRP (Workers Press) call for an "open conference" of groups claiming to be Trotskyist looks like turning into an exclusive event'.

The impression given is that the WRP has reneged on an 'Open Conference' and now seeks to confine the conference to a few co-thinkers. As King is well aware the call is for a 'world conference of Trotskyist organisations', that is partisans of the Trotskyist world organisation, the Fourth International.

Equal

King's protestations are that those who consider themselves Trotskyist should have an equal say in the way the conference is organised even if they are hostile to the Fourth international.

What is an 'Open Conference' as envisaged by King, if it is not a talking shop rather than a conference with the definite aim of reorganising the Fourth International?

Why should an organisa-

BY MIKE HOWGATE

reported that they have pinpointed the exact date and time when the irreversible descent into centrism occurred. While the French group Lutte Ouvriere maintain that the Fourth International was declared but never built.

Other groups are hostile to the inclusion of point eight which reaffirms the necessity to build 'revolutionary parties of the working class, sections of the FI, in every country' yet others on the characterisation of the Stalinist bureaucracy as 'counter-revolutionary through and through'.

The question arises: why would groups which are a) quite sure that the FI is dead for purposes of revolution or b) are not quite sure that a Trotskyist party is needed in certain countries, want to be responsible for organising a conference to reorganise the FI as the World Party of socialist revolution?

It is worthwhile noting that the United Secretariat have not responded to the call or demanded clarification on whether they would be excluded or not. Maybe their advocates in Workers Power and Socialist Viewpoint could explain why the U.Sec. have been so remiss.

members of the WRP were revolutionary or not.

Leading Workers Power member Steve MacSweeney at the following meeting then tried to give this new and nonsensical characterisation some theoretical gloss by inventing a 'neither centrist nor revolutionary' category for the WRP.

This he insisted was highly dialectical. It was in fact highly confusing. However this new characterisation of the WRP does not appear to have been passed on to other Workers Power members, who are still convinced that the WRP is centrist.

Old WRP

More to the point, if as the leaders of Workers Power/MRCI appear to be suggesting, the old WRP was able to develop a revolutionary orientation out of its own ranks, i.e. one of the fragments of the dead for purposes of revolution Fourth International.

Then doesn't it follow that their pronouncement of the death of the FI as having occurred in 1953 was somewhat premature. The Workers Power comrades may have to reassess their diagnosis in the light of this new sign of life.

Trotsky, let it be said, was not overhasty in pronouncing the Third International dead. And when he did it was not because the Comintern had made a series of bad or even horrendous mistakes, such as the betrayals of the British General Strike and the Chinese Revolution.

What led Trotsky to call for the formation of a New

Trotskyism against centrism'.

As an instance of this Cde. King takes up the WRP's characterisation of the Stalinist bureaucracy. And by a neat piece of quotation clipping sets up a straw man which he no doubt seeks to impress the members and supporters of Workers Power by knocking to pieces. It is worth considering this piece of dishonesty in some detail.

This is what King says. 'Your characterisation of Stalinism for instance, as "counter-revolutionary through and through" is as one sided and undialectical an analysis as the "dual nature" one you correctly reject.' In having this analysis we are told we 'ignore the contradiction involved between the working class base... and their Stalinist... leaders'.

Unless we recognise this contradiction we will never be able to operate a united front, says King. 'Such tactics would not be possible if these parties (the Labour party is thrown in as added confusion) were counter-revolutionary through and through. Of course we would and do characterise both parties as counter-revolutionary in their practice, their programme and their leadership.'

Unable

Excellent stuff: here is the WRP unable to distinguish between the Stalinist leaders and the workers in their parties, certainly a good hit for Workers Power, who for good measure characterise the Stalinist leadership as counter-revolutionary.

The only problem is that the WRP does not say that Stalinist parties are counter-revolutionary through and

was wrong, and undialectical, in its characterisation of Stalinism as 'counter-revolutionary through and through'. What then according to Workers Power is the nature of the beast?

Spice

Next King tries sarcasm to spice up his reply under the subhead 'anonymous thrust'. He appears to be scandalised that the WRP proclaims that the FI must be built 'in opposition to all those who pronounce it dead or proclaim the need for a new international'. He asks indignantly whether we are including Workers Power in this category. Well to be precise, YES! and he proves we have hit the nail on the head in his subsequent denial.

'Comrades we do not hold any of these positions' he blusters. 'Our slogans are "Forward to the refounding of a Leninist Trotskyist International! For a New world party of socialist revolution!" Well if a New world party is not a new international, what is it? As for pronouncing the FI dead you do that in the next paragraph 'We certainly do not think that the Fourth International still exists either organisationally or in terms of programmatic continuity'. For you 'the world party of socialist revolution was shattered in 1953'. Well at least this is plain speaking, so why do you protest so much?

Look at the problem you face logically. Either the FI is dead and the necessity is for Workers Power and its

cothinkers to build a Fifth International or you were rather premature with the death certificate. If you really do think that the WRP as it now is, is a force for revolution and no longer centrist, then you must re-evaluate the criteria on which you based your conclusion that the IC current of the FI in particular was not struggling against revisionism in the 1960's but on the contrary, capitulating to it.

How can you glibly pronounce that the I.C. 'offered a number of partially correct "left" criticism of Pablo and Mandel' and maintain the above position anyway? Was the IC correct to fight against the openly espoused liquidationism of Pablo, the pro-Castroism of the SWP, the theory of Red bases in the Universities of Mandel. All without the benefit of hindsight and with, inevitably, many mistakes?

If you want to criticise the IC's heritage honestly, then you have to recognise the contradiction that it was, and how that contradiction resulted in the explosion in the WRP, the self-criticism of the LIT (which you arrogantly disparage in an article in the same issue) and the deepening of our analysis of Stalinism represented by the struggle of Cde. Varga's group.

In place of an analysis of these important developments in the Trotskyist movement you seek to score cheap points and sink to misrepresentation in order to do so. We have broken with that type of argument Cde. King. Can you?

HOW OPEN A CONFERENCE?

The Editor, Workers Press

Dear Comrades,

As you know the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) responded positively and promptly to your declaration for an open conference (see MRCI statement of 28th January published in Workers Power 90). We offered to contribute resources to building the conference and to participate in its organising committee on the basis of working for a democratically run conference.

Along with members of a number of international tendencies, the International Workers League (IWL) and Lutte Ouvriere, members of the MRCI sections attended a recent meeting called by the WRP on the International Conference. At this meeting comrade Bob Archer, speaking we understand for the Central Committee of the WRP, declared that the conference was now being organised on the basis of 'Ten Points'.

The WRP (Workers Press) call for an international "open conference" of groups claiming to be Trotskyist looks like it is turning into an exclusive event. We print below a letter we have sent to Workers Press registering our opposition to any attempts to exclude any tendencies that regard themselves as Trotskyists from an open conference.

exclusive as pre-conditions for an international conference aimed at the task your organisation set it, they are certainly inadequate as a basis to define genuine Trotskyism against centrism, to, as you put it, 're-organise the Fourth International' upon. Your characterisation of Stalinism for instance, as 'counter-revolutionary through and through' is as one sided and undialectical an analysis as the 'dual nature' one you correctly reject. Historically within the IC tradition it has led to a differential hostility to Stalinism as against socialist revolution, an adaptation

the refounding of a Leninist Trotskyist International! For a new world party of socialist revolution!

We certainly do not think that the Fourth International still exists either organisationally or in terms of programmatic continuity. Its revolutionary continuity was broken in 1951, when a world congress adopted general and systematic revisions of Trotskyism on all the major elements of the programme. Its organisational existence as the 'world party of socialist revolution' was shattered in 1953. The IC played an equally culpable role in shattering the organisational unity and, whilst it offered a number of partially correct 'left' criticisms of Pablo and Mandel, never took these to the level of a revolutionary restoration and then further development of the transitional programme.

We wish to restore and develop Trotsky's programme and Trotsky's world party of socialist revolution. Whether this re-founded international will be the Fourth or

this is no different to the SW position, the IWL just too different 'left' forces for its national. Yet you are willing to accept their full participation on their supposed acceptance of the 'Ten Points'? If you think you are going to persuade them full participation in the conference why not us and other tendencies as well?

IN COMMON

The reason can only be that WRP leadership thinks it is in common politically with them (and others who can agree a 'Ten Points') than with those excluded from full participation. The 'Ten Points' in this will have become the first towards a political fusion. This was precisely the adopted by the IWL (then the shevick Faction under the leadership of the PST of Argentina) in

tion like Workers' Power/MRCI demand to be on the organising committee of a conference dedicated to the reorganisation of the FI when they believe that body to have been dead for purposes of revolution since 1953?

The conference will of course be as open as possible. But as we have set ourselves the task of reorganising the Fourth International we intend to proceed to organise the conference to do just that.

There are, of course, several groups who although not openly hostile to Trotskyism are skeptical with regards to the rebuilding of the FI or do not agree with certain parts of the call.

Workers Power for instance regard the FI as dead for purposes of revolution since 1953, it has even been

How then does the Workers' Power/MRCI view the call for an international conference? Stuart King gave us some idea of how he sees the conference at the East London meeting he refers to in his letter. Here he told those present that Workers Power would seek, not to reorganise the FI, but to win members from the centrist groups who were drawn to the conference.

Argument

We were then treated, in the pub afterwards, to an apologetic argument in which King tried to convince the WRP members present that we had nothing to fear as they were no longer characterised by Workers Power as 'centrist'. However he was not quite sure whether

International was a betrayal of epochal proportions plus the Comintern's inability, in Trotsky's judgment, to return to the revolutionary road of the first four congresses.

If there had been an overthrow of the Stalinists in a major section of the Comintern before the defeat in Germany in 1933, then wouldn't Trotsky have revised his diagnosis and fought for the regeneration of the Third International?

To go back to the letter. After chiding the WRP for laying down stringent conditions (the ten points) which he wrongly suggests will keep out of the conference those breaking from the USFI, Cde. King then goes on to say that the ten points are 'certainly inadequate as a basis to define genuine

through in the caricature way King represents the matter, and we certainly do not ignore the contradiction between workers in Stalinist parties and their leadership.

This is what the Call actually says: 'These states (USSR, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam) are not identified in their class nature with the Stalinist bureaucracy. This Bureaucracy has no "dual nature" but is parasitic on the workers states and is counter-revolutionary through and through'.

Would King explain how he slipped in such a misrepresentation? Does he for instance believe that the WRP regards every member of a Stalinist party as a member of the bureaucracy?

It would also be interesting to know how, if the WRP was correct in its rejection of the 'dual nature' of Stalinism, it

HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY

PETER FRYER



The Hungarian revolution of 1956 and its brutal suppression by Russian tanks was a watershed in the history of socialism.

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Workers Press

Saturday April 25 1987. Newsdesk 01-733 3058

Write for Workers Press!

WE ARE receiving more material than ever for Workers Press, but we want to hear from even more of our readers. Please send letters, news from your area, reports of the struggles of the work-

ing class, of women and youth, of developments in the Labour Party and Communist Party. . . We also need photographs — phone us on 01-733 3058 and discuss the best way to get them to us.

Caterpillar occupation to continue

TALKS between management and the workers fighting to prevent the closure of the factory at Uddingston near Glasgow, broke down on Tuesday after the employers refused to make plant and machinery available to a potential competitor.

The union, at negotiations arranged by ACAS, had proposed that the factory should be kept open for a year and the machinery left in place while the search for an alternative buyer went on.

Shop stewards convenor, John Brannan, said of the management: 'Their attitude of rejection has been cynical. Here we have a multi-national dictating what can or cannot be done in an area of high unemployment.' He rejected the employer's call for a mass meeting at the Plant saying this would only allow more pressure to be brought to bear on the occupying workers and their families to abandon the sit-in.

Nothing new had emerged from the talks, said Brannan,

therefore a mass meeting was unnecessary. The sit-in would continue, and shop stewards were meeting on Wednesday to discuss how to extend support for their action in the trade union movement.

Jimmy Airlie, AEU Scottish Executive Officer, who failed to persuade the Caterpillar stewards to call off the occupation 3 weeks ago, repeated after the breakdown of talks that the union could not support illegal action.

Caterpillar workers were waiting on Wednesday to hear the results of AEU executive meeting which was to determine whether strike pay would continue to be paid to the men,

As one shop steward told a meeting of the Glasgow Caterpillar Support Group, this ACAS talks aimed at the forlorn hope of finding an alternative management are now over and the occupying workers must fight to extend financial and physical support where it can be won in the rest of the working class movement.

The Scottish TUC, at their conference in Perth this week, voted unanimously to back the workers action. They must be called upon now to put this into practice by calling for strikes and demonstrations in solidarity with the Caterpillar men.

HFW workers score victories

LAST Wednesday's decision to call off the mass picket for the day at HFW Plastics to allow talks with management to take place was greeted with considerable suspicion by many of the strikers.

BY KEVIN TOWNSEND

While they saw this as a partial recognition of the union but the suspension of the picket allowed scabs to be bussed in at 9a.m. whereas in the past they have been kept out till 1p.m.

The sacked workers want full reinstatement and have little hope that management will meet this demand.

Several women told Workers Press: 'We were prepared to get arrested'.

The HFW workers are fast learning that they are fighting not only their employer but the state.

With the lessons of the miners' strike, Silentnight and Wapping to draw on, pickets at the Gateshead factory are in no doubt as to the battle ahead of them.

Lorraine Sawyers — one of 39 workers sacked when she walked out in support of eight workmates already sacked for refusing to sign a loyalty pledge — told Workers Press:

'We may not get our jobs back but we will close him down.'

Sandy Black one of the original eight sacked woman said: 'We have to make a

stand. Employers everywhere seem to think they can get away with this sort of thing.'

Carole Holme who also refused to sign a pledge said: 'When I tell people what has happened, they don't believe me. But it has happened, they just don't care.'

Workers on Tyneside believe the dispute could become a testing ground for the Tory anti-union laws.

It is receiving widespread support. Last week miners in the area promised support after Carole Holmes had addressed a meeting of the North East Justice For Miners campaign. Sacked miners and their union have promised to support a mass picket.

Workers, mainly women and youth, have not received a pay rise in four years and last year agreed to accept a £10 wage cut. The company now openly admit it has a full order book but has sacked the workers for daring to campaign for a wage rise. Management has also withdrawn recognition from the union SOGAT.

A crucial feature of the

dispute is management determination to reduce wages — the scabs who are bussed in daily are being paid £34 less than the sacked workers. Supported by the local Labour movement the strikers have scored some successes by closing down the plant by up to half a day at a time.

● Thursday 9 April: mass

picket sealed off entrance to factory for four hours before police are brought in.

● Friday 10 April: no scabs go in all day. No work done.

● Monday 13 April: mass picket again seals off entrance, chain and padlock the gate and stages a sit-down protest to stop scabs enter-

ing. Four hours later after gates are burned open with torches, scabs get in.

● Wednesday 15 April: mass pickets joined by 21 German trade unionists from I-G Metal. Gates sealed off, two new security guards let scabs loose. Security guard attacks picket in the presence of police. No

arrests made. Scabs not in until five hours later, despite heavy police presence.

● Two AEU members instructed by the DC to respect the SOGAT picket.

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



Young workers display the banner of Newcastle upon Tyne Trades Council who have supported the picket.



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