



# FEAR OF U.S. SLUMP BEHIND MARKET CRASH

DESPITE the partial recovery on the world stock markets at the end of last week the billions wiped off share values in New York, London, Tokyo and other centres is graphic demonstration of the chronic and insoluble imbalance in world capitalism now driving it towards a major slump.

The collapse of the European and Japanese share markets was symptomatic of one thing: fear of an impending American slump. The vast bulk of share selling last week came from America, not Europe or Japan.

There is growing concern that one or more major industrial or commercial conglomerate could go under as a result of reckless speculation in the share markets during the Wall Street

#### BY THE EDITOR

boom of the last four years.

These fears are well grounded. American capitalism is now gripped by a series of acute problems:

- A slowdown in economic growth which threatens to bring even faster rising unemployment
- A yawning balance of payments deficit, with no prospect of any correction
- A massive and growing US budget deficit which requires ever-greater borrowing by the state.

Europe and Japan know that America is being driven to measures to tackle this crisis which

will strike devastating blows at their economies. What are these measures?

America can let the dollar's slide continue. This will cheapen US exports, raise the price of American imports and thus hit all those countries whose economic and political stability depends on a buoyant American market.

The Reagan administration can intensify the growing trade war with the rest of the world. Blocks on imports and a heightening of the drive for further exports would also exacerbate the crisis facing western Europe and Japan.

As an alternative measure, America can drive up interest rates in order to attract capital into the US. Yet again this measure would have an

TURN TO PAGE 2

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## AN URGENT APPEAL

WE ARE concerned about the state of our Special Fund. We have two short weeks left to clear our Fund which was established to expand the international activity of the WRP. In the two years since the expulsion of Healy, the WRP has made considerable strides in the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International.

We have already incurred much expense in preparing for the 8 November rally, part of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference of Trotskyists, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

Some Party members who are working have agreed to pay £25 a week to the Fund. Many readers and party members have pledged sums of money to be paid before the Rally. We invite the rest of our readers to follow their example. Unless some real sacrifices are made we will not complete the Fund. Please send your donations immediately to:

WRP Special Fund  
PO Box 735  
London SW9 7QS



## Tamils march in London

Last Sunday 3,000 Tamils in London marched to protest the Indian government's genocide against their people in Sri Lanka. See page 3.  
Planes bomb Tamil temples — see page 5



# Workers Press

## Reconditioned Reformism

THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY will be sending representatives to the Socialist Conference at Chesterfield this weekend. On pages 7 to 10 of this issue you can read three of our contributions to the discussion there.

The conference organisers explain their purpose as:

*'to establish a strong and independent initiative to renew the ideas of socialism in Britain, and bring such ideas up to date in order to meet the needs of today and the 21st century.'*

A noble aim. But on what basis is this to be done? For a century and more, we have seen attempts to reform capitalism away, without all that nasty fuss associated with revolutions. Are we just going to get a new set of recipes for the old social-democratic menu?

The spokespersons for the Socialist Society, the Campaign Group and the Conference of Socialist Economists begin by warning against:

*'explanations . . . for the loss of socialist influence . . . that a succession of individual Labour politicians and trade union officials have betrayed the cause of socialism when they have — personally — enjoyed periods in office.'*

That makes the conversation a little awkward. How can we begin to discuss the abject failure of reformism without understanding that the politics of its leaders have always been perfectly tailored to the requirements of capital?

Some of the papers try to avoid this problem by putting questions for discussion without doing more than hint at answers. For instance, they declare that *'the case for public ownership (sic) and democratic planning remains as strong as ever'*.

But instead of a challenge to the Labour Party's abandonment of nationalisation, they tiptoe delicately round the question, discussing different forms which this 'public ownership' might take. Then we find a section called 'The Restructuring of British Industry', which appears to envisage that capitalism is here for ever.

The papers draw attention to the attack on independent trades unionism, and to the menace to the survival of local government, and ask how the movement can answer these dangers. But they evade the problem this poses for the very conception of peaceful reforms.

In two areas, however, the old social-democratic ideology is quite blatant: internationalism and the state. While there are occasional references to the need to collaborate with socialists in other countries, the authors clearly believe that socialism is a matter for one country at a time.

*'The day may come', they daringly remark, 'when a left government will find its path obstructed by the Rome Treaty and the EEC institutions. It will, at that point, need the support and understanding of the broadest sections of the European labour movement.'* But this comes after a statement that *'there is a growing awareness that the European Community is here to stay for the foreseeable future'*.

Some hints are dropped that NATO is not a Good Thing, but no suggestion that it ought to be broken up. Apart from this, we are given the old guff about 'non-alignment' and 'a foreign policy for peace'.

A section on 'Democracy and the state' makes all kinds of radical noises about the powerlessness of parliament. *'How can we give more power to the legislature over the executive?'* it inquires. *'How can we make the Judiciary, the security services and the Police accountable to the communities they serve?'* it wonders.

Both questions are those posed only by reformists.

One of the conference's purposes is said to be:

*'To offer a realistic vision of the nature of a socialist society, and how it could be achieved by consent in our lifetime.'*

Whose 'consent' do they mean? This word, borrowed from the Euro-communist fad for Gramsci, gives the whole game away. It illustrates how the echoes of half-remembered Marxist phrases — even a slight tinge of 'Trotskyism' here and there — are used to conceal the reformist substance of the document.

It is an excellent thing to have this opportunity to discuss the way to socialism in the light of the current situation in the workers' movement. But this means an honest account of the past errors of the movement, and a consideration of the methods of thinking which underlay them.

For this, the mixture offered here of slightly refurbished reformism and barely-reconstructed Stalinism just won't do.

## Fear of US slump

● FROM PAGE ONE

immediate deflationary impact on the world economy.

Such an increase in interest rates would add further to the crippling debt burden on the colonial and semi-colonial countries and enhance the risk of defaults which the banking system could not carry.

The tension between Germany and America which surfaced last week is indicative of the growing conflict between Europe as a whole and the United States.

The Reagan administration is putting intense pressure on Bonn to lower interest rates. The German government has refused and announced its intention of allowing rates to rise as a means of combatting renewed fears of inflation in the economy.

Many financial pundits have drawn parallels with the situation in 1929, the year of the Wall Street crash.

There are superficial similarities but the situation of American capital is now far worse. It was in the 1920s and 1930s that America replaced Britain as the world's leading industrial, financial and commercial power.

The US took advantage of World War II especially to impose its dominance on the rest of world capitalism.

But the long inflationary boom has taken toll of that position. From being the source of credit and capital to the rest of the world, America is now the world's largest debtor. The growth in labour productivity has been half that of western Germany and a quarter that of Japan.

But because of its sheer size, America remains the most important single market in the world,

and the most important source of capital

The bankruptcy now staring large sections of world capitalism in the face is exceeded only by the bankruptcy of the Labour leaders. They could say nothing of any significance about the events of last week. They issued not a single warning to the millions of workers and sections of the middle class whose future is threatened by the stock market collapse.

Last month's Labour Party conference heard Brian Gould and other 'new realists' extolling the virtues of Thatcher style 'shareholders capitalism'. This month saw the yuppies at 'Marxism Today' announce the launch of an advice service to their share-buying readers!

Not only do the millions who took part in Thatcher's privatisation schemes now face sharp losses but the BP flotation is in grave difficulties. Either the institutions underwriting the BP deal will suffer considerable losses or the flotation will be called off, adding further to the near-panic in the markets.

Whatever the immediate movements on the stock and money markets, we say with confidence that the events of last week mark a severe deepening of capitalism's crisis for which there are no reformist solutions.

The working class needs — not advice about which shares to buy but a policy and leadership that can put an end finally to the whole share-buying and dealing system.

That is why we ask everybody to consider the events of last week seriously, to study the policy of the Workers Revolutionary Party and join the party to help us build the sort of leadership which the working class now requires.

## Council gets security bill for Tory conference

COMPLAINTS to Home Secretary Douglas Hurd about the massive level of policing at this year's Tory Party conference in Blackpool have been made by Lancashire County Council.

A delegation from the council is to meet the Home Secretary to demand that the government contributes to the cost of the security operation.

Ratepayers in Lancashire face a bill of £1.5 million for policing the conference. The cost of protecting Thatcher and the Tories has increased by an extra £810,000 over the original estimate.

Most of the additional spending will go on overtime for policing the conference and the Imperial Hotel where the delegates were staying.

It also includes overtime in planning security and what is described as 'vetting and house-to-house operations'.

During the conference 100 extra police were drafted into the seaside resort amidst a highly charged and hostile atmosphere, largely created by scare stories in the press in its usual glory, whipping up anti-Irish prejudice and racism.

Many complaints were made to the council about Special Branch harassment and attempts to intimidate local Irish people and trade unionists.

Post Office workers were questioned and interrogated by Special Branch officers about their Irish and political connections.

## A march for union rights

ABOUT 200 people marched in solidarity with the Moat House strikers through Liverpool last Saturday.

The strike, now in its seventh month, is over the right to be in a trade union for which 62 staff were sacked.

The rally was addressed by a speaker from another strike. Steve Alcock, convenor of Pendleton's Ice-cream, Kirkby, said: 'We've been out two weeks since our senior shop steward was sacked, 130 of us.'

'We know it's because the sales are getting slack so they want to get rid of some staff. We're picketing 24 hours a day and there will be a main picket on Wednesday 21 October at 8a.m.'

Banners on the march included seamen, car workers, Labour Party branches and dock clerical workers.

Afterwards the rally made its way up to the city centre

to Top Shop department store where 12 cleaners had been dismissed that morning.

All the cleaners in the transport workers' union (T&GWU) had been sacked and told they were to be replaced by 12 others from Burnley where the cleaning firm is based.

Their contracts were not due to expire until next month. Apparently their replacements will be working for £5-a-week less. This shows the need for unionisation of all low-paid workers to fight union-busting sharks like Moat House and Top Shop.

This 'big brother' attack on the civil, political and trade union rights of a section of the Irish community here in Britain, along with it being an attack on a section of the Labour and trade union movement, is a sinister warning to the whole working class of the reactionary role and nature of the capitalist state in Britain.

The interrogations stopped only after a protest was made by the UCW (Union of Communication Workers).

It shows clearly that Thatcher, the Tories and the capitalist state are determined to try and intimidate all those who resist, or might question their repressive role in Ireland, their attacks on public expenditure, their attacks on the poor and the unemployed or those who dissent in any way from their policies.

Councillor Chris Cheetham has written to the chair of the Lancashire Police Committee complaining about the harassment of the local Irish community and of Irish holidaymakers.

Cheetham, who has Irish family connections, said that if he had an Irish name he would have run the risk of being harassed or even arrested by the Lancashire police.

He said that a reasonable level of security was understandable but that the recent goings-on went way over the top.

James Loftus, a former president of the Irish Travel Agents' Association made a complaint to the Irish Department of Justice after Blackpool police sought confidential information about travellers to the resort.

Thousands of people from Dublin holiday in Blackpool every year, while the resort is also popular with people from Belfast and Derry.

## Where's the job?

BY JOHN OWEN

OVER 70 UNEMPLOYED people visited the house of a Tory window-cleaner in Bournemouth last Friday to ask for a job.

The Tory in question was Greg Archdale, Young Conservatives Publicity Officer, who recently accused the unemployed of being 'scabby faced youths'.

He also complained that he had window-cleaning vacancies he could not fill.

The offer of a job and accommodation made during the Tory Party conference by him was taken up by unemployed activists from the North-West, Derbyshire and Scotland who came down on Friday morning in a union-sponsored coach.

The police were waiting when they arrived and only allowed a delegation of four to knock on his door. When they received no response the police contacted Archdale by telephone and he agreed to see the delegation at the local police station.

His offer of jobs turned out to be completely phoney. He suggested going to an Enterprise Allowance Scheme (OK if you have £1,000 to start with). The accommodation he had mentioned would only be let to girls, he said.

Tory windbags like this are always trying to shift the blame for mass unemployment on to the unemployed and away from government policies — which are to create cheap-labour schemes like compulsory two-year YTS and JTS schemes for young adults.

This attack on the unemployed comes at a time when share swindlers like Tory MP Keith Best get slapped on the wrist for fraud while the unemployed are hounded by government snoopers just for drawing dole money.

## What servicing? Debt servicing!

**CAMDEN COUNCIL'S** entire workforce received offers of voluntary redundancy last week following the majority Labour Group's decision to make 20 per cent cuts in next year's budget.

The 8,000 workers received a letters from CAC's chief executive Frank Nickson which stressed the 'grave financial situation' and the council's 'objective to avoid compulsory job loss'.

The decision to cut £43 million from the £195 million budget will mean at least 1,500 jobs must go.

It is highly likely with the present financial crisis that even if sufficient numbers take up the voluntary redundancy offer, the Labour council will be making compulsory redundancies next year.

Nearly 30 per cent of Camden's budget goes to paying off debts and interest charges.

It is estimated by CAC's 'Camden Against Cuts Campaign' that in four years' time nearly half the rates paid by Camden residents will be going straight to the banks and financial institu-

tions of the City.

'Camden's main servicing will be debt servicing' says one of the leaflets issued by the campaign.

A lobby and demonstration outside the council meeting last Wednesday was called by the trade unions and community groups to demand 'no cuts'.

● **London Bridge** — the joint local authority trade union organisation — will be lobbying the TUC general council on 28 October from 9 a.m.-10 a.m. The lobby is calling on the TUC to mount a national campaign to defend local authorities against cuts and privatisation. Everyone is welcome. Bring your banners!

## An important contribution?

IF THE Stock Exchange is able to handle the sale of BP shares for the government, what sort of company will the speculators be buying?

Well, BP declares itself as 'one of the biggest industrial concerns in South Africa'. Labour Research assesses that, together with companies in which it has interests, it employs 25,000 people there. BP South Africa owns the Eikebook Colliery and employs 489 black employees at the mine. Wages paid there are based on special scales for hostel dwellers which are lower than those for employees able to live in their own homes.

BP has two subsidiaries in occupied Namibia, the former German colony that was put under the 'protection' of South Africa by the imperialist governments after World War I. However, it has been said that BP is among the companies who 'are making an important contribution to the welfare and advancement of their black and coloured workers'.

Who says so? Certainly not these same black and coloured workers. That assessment comes from the 'British Industry Committee on South Africa'. The committee represents British company interests in South Africa — and BP is a member!

# Mass picket as trial opens



## 'Appalled' by apartheid

A STRONG delegation of London firefighters joined the picket to demand the release of Moses Mayekiso.

A group of 12 Fire Brigades Union members from Battersea fire station, including a woman firefighter, demonstrated in uniform and with their union banner.

A representative of the delegation explained: 'This is to show that firefighters in Britain do care about the appalling fascist regime in South Africa.'

'As a responsible trade union we condemn the politics and policy of South Africa and we are here to show it.'

'We decided as a trade union that we should be more active on this. It is important to show that there is trade union support.'

London Regional Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, Jim Fitzpatrick was also present on the picket, and explained how FBU support for the campaign had been won:

'There was an emergency resolution at this year's FBU conference in support of Moses and his colleagues who faced charges.'

'When the picket was called, Head Office circulated brigades all around the country.'

'Now that the picket has passed the 500th day, it is good to show support for workers in South Africa.'

**CITY OF LONDON** Anti Apartheid Group staged a highly successful rally in front of South Africa House in London's Trafalgar Square for the release of Moses Mayekiso and his four co-defendants last Monday.

The general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and chair of the Alexandra Action Committee, Moses Mayekiso is on trial for his life, charged with sedition, treason and subversion along with Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, Obed Kopeng Bapela and Mzwanele Mayekiso.

The rally was called by City AA to coincide with the first day of the trial staged by the Botha regime in an attempt to break the revolutionary spirit and determination of the exploited and oppressed black South African workers.

Speakers at the rally included Carol Brickley (City AA Convener), Bronwen Handyside (WRP/Workers Press), David Reed (Revolutionary Communist Group), Anne Wackett (Workers Power), David Kitson, Paul Trehwela and a guest speaker from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

The principled stand of the FBU (see left) contrasts sharply with that of union leaderships in the local government union NALGO and the teachers' union (NUT).

In alliance with the Anti-Apartheid Movement, South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the Socialist Workers Party, these forces specifically opposed the Moses Mayekiso demonstration on 10 October.

The reason for their opposition is not hard to find. Moses Mayekiso represents the most advanced section of

BY NORAH WILDE

South African workers fighting to combine the struggle against apartheid with the overthrow of capitalist exploitation.

Against that the African National Congress, the Stalinist South African Communist Party and the trade union bureaucracy are working might and main to confine the South African revolution to ending apartheid.

The principled support of the FBU for the rally and non-stop picket outside South Africa House must be taken up by other unions.

- Raise the issue of Moses Mayekiso and his co-defendants in your branch!
- Fight for a delegation to regularly visit and support the Non-Stop Picket!
- Strengthen the struggle for workers' sanctions against the South African regime!
- Fight to establish an international trade union campaign for the release of Moses Mayekiso and his comrades!



## 'Botha in South Africa — Rajiv in Tamil Eelam!'

This was one of the many slogans heard on the 3,000 strong protest march from Marble Arch to Temple Place, Piccadilly last Sunday,

A marked feature of the demonstration which reduced the afternoon traffic

in Mayfair to a single line was the family atmosphere. It was not of course an occasion of celebration but a grave and extremely dignified march, emphasising the outrage and acts of gross inhumanity being perpetrated against their relatives and compatriots along the Jaffna Peninsula.

The other marked feature was the almost total absence of support from the British labour movement.

Clearly much greater attention has to be paid by workers and trades unionists in this country to this struggle. We would be very unwise to ignore the bitter lessons which are at

the moment being learned in Sri Lanka.

The widespread support for the campaign being waged against apartheid in South Africa, in particular the Moses Mayekiso campaign and the non-stop picket in Trafalgar Square, must be focused also in defence of the Tamil nation.

## An appeal for Workers Press

**WORKERS PRESS** is not yet paying its way. We are carrying a weekly deficit which we will not be able to sustain indefinitely.

We have tried to make the paper among the best on the left. Our readers continually tell us how much the paper is appreciated and our Letters Page indicates that we generate considerable interest in the labour movement. But this interest must be matched by greater sales and a higher regular income. We are asking all our readers to make a special effort in these two directions.

● **Help BOOST** sales of the paper. Take it amongst your workmates and friends; try and get extra subscriptions for the paper; help with regular canvasses and sales drives.

● **Can you raise extra income** for the paper? We need more weekly and monthly donations to ensure that the paper continues and improves its coverage of British and international news.

Please, do not treat this as another routine appeal which you read and then forget. The future of **Workers Press** really is in the hands of its readers. Our October total stands at £805.12. Let us see a significant rise during the next few days. The ball is in your court. Please, do not let us down! All donations to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS



# CAPTAIN'S COUP IN BURKINA FASO

BY PIERRE DUMONT

**CAPTAIN Thomas Sankara, who seized power in the poverty-stricken former French West African colony of Upper Volta four years ago, replacing its colonial name with that of Burkina Faso — Land of the Dignified — was killed in a military coup on 15 October.**

The country had just hosted an international conference a week before, on the struggle against Apartheid-ruled South Africa.

Whether the new takeover will mean any change in Burkina's international alignments will have to be seen. Coup leader Captain Blaise Compaore, said to have been a friend of Sankara since childhood, was one of the group that seized power with him in 1983.

Burkina Faso's legacy from colonialism was severe poverty — an annual income per head of less than £200 — and 90 per cent illiteracy. Most of the 9 million people live by subsistence agriculture, although many also went to the neighbouring Ivory Coast for work.

Burkina Faso also had its share of corrupt politicians, and its army. The latest coup was the fifth since political independence in 1960.

Colonel Saye Zerbo's regime, which had taken anti-union measures and outlawed strikes, was overthrown in 1982. Major Jean-Baptiste Ouedrago became head of state, and Captain Sankara was named prime minister.

In March the following year, the military command began to arrest Left-wingers, and purge the ruling People's Salvation Council.

Sankara, who had invited Libya's Colonel Gaddafi to visit Upper Volta, was arrested on 17 May, two days after French Development Minister Christian Nucci and Mitterand's adviser on African affairs Guy Penne had visited the country.

Three months later, Captain Sankara's commandos mutinied, and put the captain in power at the head of a National Revolutionary Council, with Captain Compaore as Minister of State.

The new regime established Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, removed the army general staff, and said the army would become 'a revolutionary army'.

In late October, 1983, Sankara announced that a plot involving former leaders and foreign mercenaries had been discovered. Again in June 1984 several officers were arrested and subsequently court-martialled and executed for having plotted a coup with outside help.

The ambassadors of France

and the United States were warned against political interference. Captain Compaore, on a visit to Paris, accused the French Socialist Party of backing Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo, leader of the banned Front Progressiste Voltaïque. The authorities said Ki-Zerbo had promised the coup plotters French and Israeli help.

Leaders of the teachers' union had been arrested for alleged involvement with Ki-Zerbo in 'foreign subversion' and after a 48-hour strike in March 1984, 1,400 teachers were sacked.

On 2 August, Sankara announced that the country would henceforth be known as Burkina Faso, the Burkina Democratic Republic. Sankara became President, heading a government from which members of a 'Marxist' group, the Patriotic League for Development, were noticeably excluded.

## Retained

While forging links with Libya and Gerry Rawlings' regime in Ghana, Burkina Faso retained membership in the regional economic group of French-speaking states.

Sankara set a style in government by selling off the fleet of Mercedes cars previously run for government officials, and making government members publicly reveal their assets. In August 1984, the land was declared nationalised.

The government made big efforts to improve agriculture, raise literacy, and develop health services. Last year, it was announced that after several years of drought and famine, the country had met its own food needs. This year it is hoped to produce a surplus.

In every workplace and village, committees were formed to mobilise the people and defend Burkina's 'democratic revolution'.

But this 'people's participation' does not appear to have extended to deciding who heads the state. Burkina's change of government, like those in such Stalinist proteges as South Yemen, Afghanistan — and Grenada — was by the traditional palace coup.

# Mystery death shakes West German Tories

**WEST GERMANY's ruling Tory Christian Democrats have been thrown into a crisis by the mysterious death of former Schleswig-Holstein state prime minister Uwe Barschel in a Swiss hotel room.**

Barschel, driven from office by a scandal over 'dirty tricks' against his Social Democrat opponents, was found by reporters from 'Stern' magazine on Sunday, 11 October, in Geneva's swank Beau Rivage hotel. He was lying fully clothed in a filled bath.

Barschel's family rejected a Swiss autopsy report suggesting heart fai-

lure. They said they did not believe he had committed suicide either. Barschel's brother suggested he had been murdered.

A second Swiss coroner's report on 14 October said traces of five different drugs, including sleeping pills and tranquillisers, had been found in the dead man's stomach and blood, concluding 'these medications caused his death'.

But no pill bottles or packages were found in the room. And police were searching for a bottle of Beaujolais which had disappeared.

Barschel had been due to appear before a committee of inquiry to answer allegations that he personally ordered private detectives to spy on Social Democrat opponent Bjoern Engholm, to try and find dirt about the man's private life, and that he insti-

gated tax probes.

On the day before he died, Barschel told his family that he had met 'a contact from Frankfurt' at Geneva airport, and that this man could help him clear his name. His wife said a certain 'Robert Roloff' had contacted them two weeks previously, saying he could help her husband out of trouble, but asking for complete anonymity.

The death has caused a sensation in Germany, and a row among Christian Democrats. Some, accepting the 'suicide' explanation, blame party leaders for having thrown the disgraced politician to the wolves by making him resign. The murder theory would raise the question that something bigger than the known scandal was being concealed.

# No to Extradition deals!

BY CHARLIE WALSH

**There is speculation that the controversial Extradition Act between Britain and Ireland, due to come into operation on 1 December, will be delayed by the Haughey-led Fianna Fail Government in Dublin.**

The reason given is that the Dublin Government is unhappy with the lack of progress being made on the no-jury Diplock Court issue.

Taoiseach Charles Haughey signalled at a recent Fianna Fail Wolfe Tone commemoration at Bodenstown, Co Kildare, that the Irish government wants progress on the North's so-called justice system if the new Extradition Act is to go ahead on schedule.

The single judge no-jury Diplock Courts have been a bone of contention for both the present Irish administration and the previous Coalition government.

Both have called for the replacement of the single-judge court with three judges. The Secretary of State for the occupied six counties Tom King has refused to be moved by the demands of the Irish government.

He has also denied that any commitment was given at the signing of the so called Anglo-Irish agreement in 1985 to reform the Diplock courts. Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor, recently opposed any change in the way the courts operate.

One judge or three, now or in the future, will make no difference to the lives of the Catholic working class in Ireland's occupied six counties.

And the Irish government's fraudulent attempts to pretend that with three judges presiding, these courts will be more acceptable to the Catholic community shows their enthusiasm to support and give credibility to a vital part of Britain's war machine and apparatus of repression in occupied Ireland.

These courts, the conveyor belt of injustice which have framed thousands of innocent Catholics on the basis of confessions kicked or beaten out of them in the hell-holes of Castlereagh, Gough barracks and other torture centres, are part and parcel of the systematic violence used by British imperialism in its attempt to put down the Irish people.

An imperialist lackey like Haughey, however, like Fitzgerald before him, fully supports the British-imposed agreement.

This 'accord' is nothing short of a conspiracy against the Irish people and their aspirations for freedom and independence.

Its main thrust is its attempt to smash Sinn Fein and the IRA.

The recent revelations that Sinn Fein will be prevented from standing candidates in elections unless it signs a pledge condemning violence shows the agreement in its true colours.

Haughey is prepared to go along with the lie, the charade, that through the Anglo-Irish agreement somehow the institutions of a bigoted, sectarian and bastard orange statelet created and nurtured by British imperialism can somehow be reformed.

In the short or long term the Haughey government, true and loyal servant of British imperialism, will honour the Extradition Act and hand over Irish citizens to the sectarian RUC to be tried in no-jury courts and to Britain itself.

One judge or three will be irrelevant.

By signing the Anglo-Irish agreement the Irish government acknowledged that British imperialism had a right to be in Ireland and to partition and occupy part of the country.

Tied in with the extradition question have been the cases of the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and the Maguire family.

These cases have aroused much interest particularly among the Irish community in Britain, who are very hostile and fearful of any extradition agreement entered into by the Irish Government.

The Irish community fear a repetition of what happened to those people who were framed by the police and judicial system:

The Guildford Four were convicted after 'confessions' were extracted by the police using beatings, intimidation, lack of food and sleep and other brutal methods; the Birmingham Six also were convicted on 'confessions' extracted from five of the six innocent men. Paddy Hill refused to sign a confession

after the men had undergone severe beatings and terrible brutality at the hands of the police.

Forensic evidence used in the case against two of the six has now been discredited as indeed has the now-retired forensic scientist Frank Skuse, who did the swab tests on the men's hands.

The Maguire family and their friends were convicted because traces of nitro-cellulose were found on a glove in Ann Maguire's flat.

Ann Maguire suffers from dermatitis and has to wear rubber gloves when putting her hands in water.

With such 'evidence' allied with anti-Irish racism and hysteria generated by the British capitalist media and especially by the gutter press, which had screaming headlines about 'Aunt Annie's Bomb Kitchen', all these people were framed and rail-roaded into prison for many years.

Thirteen years later the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six are still in prison. So is Judith Ward, also an innocent victim of a state frame-up for the bombing of an army coach on the M62 in 1974.

Likewise of course Patrick McLaughlin from Derry who was framed for the bombing of Chelsea barracks in London. He was given a 30-year sentence in November 1986 and is presently in Wormwood Scrubs.

Because of these frame-ups many Irish people believe the Irish government should not extradite its citizens to either the British occupied six counties of Ireland or to Britain itself.

Recently the Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG) passed a motion calling on the Irish Government to repeal the Extradition Act with Britain.

The extradition of its own citizens for alleged political offences within the territory claimed by its constitution should not be contemplated by any self respecting, independent state, the group affirms.

It points out that because the alleged offences are political and a direct result of Britain's presence in Ireland, no Irish person can expect a fair trial in Britain; and that the Prevention of

Terrorism Act (PTA) is still used in a very discriminatory manner against Irish people.

It also points out that Britain was found guilty in the European Court in Strasbourg of degrading and inhuman treatment. Twelve other objections are listed.

If the Irish government agree to this Extradition Act they might as well let British courts sit in Dublin again, says the IBRG.

Because of the near consensus that now exists between all parties in the Irish Dail (parliament) on extradition and in the absence of significant reform of the Diplock courts, Haughey and his Fianna Fail Government would have little difficulty in postponing the implementation of the Extradition Act.

Of late the issue of the Guildford, Birmingham and Maguire cases have been played down and the many vociferous commitments to these people made by Haughey and other prominent leaders of Fianna Fail while still in opposition have been almost forgotten.

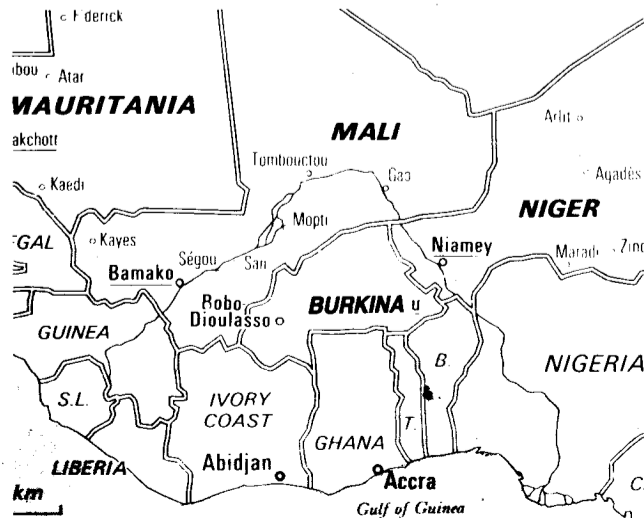
Like all questions relating to the British occupation of the six counties British socialists must be in the forefront of fighting against this repressive Act which will be used to frame and imprison innocent Irish men and women in the same way that the PTA has been used to frame, imprison and intimidate members of the Irish community here in Britain as the Guildford and Birmingham cases show.

Every assistance must be given to all those fighting against this anti-republican, anti-socialist and anti-working class Act and everything must be done to delay its implementation on December 1.

These are not questions just for Ireland or the Irish community here in Britain but questions for the whole working class.

And in achieving a victory over these repressive laws we will be learning valuable lessons for the forthcoming struggles against the Tories who will use similar repressive laws as those used against the Irish people in their attempt to drive back and smash the British working class.

● No to Extradition!  
● Smash the PTA!





# Moscow's links with West Bank settlers

**SOVIET trading interests are setting up deals with the Israeli Zionist settlements in the occupied West Bank.**

This is in striking contrast with the Soviet Union's public stand opposing the Israeli occupation, and the bureaucracy's pretended sympathy for Palestinian rights.

Soviet-Israeli trade links may also be a bridge for trade with South Africa. There are connections with the South African black 'homelands', which Israel is one of the few states to recognise.

Former Soviet Jews who emigrated to Israel, many of them settling in the occupied territories and some active in extreme-right chauvinist movements, have been acting as middlemen for Soviet interests.

Apparently they see nothing wrong in doing business with the Soviets, even though their cause continues to be used for anti-Soviet propaganda in the West, and

BY CHARLES POTTINS

their anti-communism is notorious in Israel.

One person who has acted for Soviet exporters, and according to a report in the Tel Aviv paper 'Hair' obtained a major building contract for a Soviet stadium in return for helping Soviet deals in Africa, is Russian immigrant Shabtai Kalmonovitch.

Kalmonovitch also represented the South African 'homeland' of Bophuthatswana in Israel, giving the racists' stooge regime badly-needed recognition and valu-

able trade connections.

Currently, his business affairs have run into a small difficulty, as he has been held in Britain in connection with the massive American Express forged travellers' cheques fraud.

At the West Bank settlement of Ariel, which is twinned with Bisho, 'capital' of the Ciskei 'homeland' statelet, a company called G.G. Trade and Investment Corporation set up by Soviet Jews is fronting for Soviet economic interests, according to 'Hair'.

The Israeli paper interviewed Grisha Feigin, a decorated Soviet army World War II veteran whose Zionist activity in the 1970s won him international attention, as well as a spell in a Stalinist psychiatric hospital.

Feigin, now heading the Association of Soviet Jews in Israel, and a Labour Party member, boasted:

'When I commanded a Red Army battalion, one of my subordinate officers was a man named Astachov. Now he is one of the directors of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade. A few months ago he telephoned me in Israel, and I got two juicy deals out of this.'

## Food

'Another of my old friends is now a deputy director of the Soviet food industry. I asked him for his opinion about establishing joint factories in the West Bank settlements, where a concentration of sophisticated and highly skilled manpower may be found. His answer was: "Why not? I am not interested in politics!"'

'Hair' said Feigin had already arranged a contract for a soft-drinks factory in Soviet Georgia to open a branch in a West Bank settlement.

# Planes bomb Tamil temples

**SRI LANKAN air force planes have bombed temples where Tamil refugees were sheltering from the Indian army's offensive.**

An eye-witness arriving in Colombo from the besieged city of Jaffna last week said there had been at least 16 bombing raids by Sri Lankan and Indian planes, causing heavy civilian casualties.

'A lot of people are being killed and we are now on the verge of starvation,' said the witness, an American-

educated businessman. 'The Indians are shooting civilians like dogs on the roads because they are unable to identify the Tigers from the civilians and the majority of those who die are innocents and not Tigers.'

Although the Indian military have denied using air power in their onslaught, Sri Lankan government officials have said both Sri Lankan and Indian planes were making 'limited' attacks.

According to other reports, Sri Lankan air strikes against the Tamils were being guided by Indian military commanders from the ground.

As Indian troops, backed by artillery and with armoured vehicles, closed in on Jaffna last week, meeting heavy resistance from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who had vowed to fight to the end, civil administrators in the town appealed for the offensive to halt.

In a message to the Sri Lankan government, twelve senior civil servants said nearly 700 civilians had died and another 300 had undergone surgery at Jaffna hospital.

They said the hospital now lacked even basic medicines, as well as oxygen. 'Normal life' in Jaffna had

collapsed, under the bombing and constant shelling, as well as strafing from Indian army helicopters. They feared the lack of food, water and electricity supplies could lead to an epidemic.

The Tamil Tigers had earlier urged civilians to leave the battle area, saying they would fight to the death rather than surrender. An appeal from the Tigers for negotiations had been rejected by the Indian government.

The number of Indian troops on the island has increased to at least 15,000, and may reach double that number, that is, three whole divisions.

# Trade unionists act on Fiji

**AUSTRALIAN trade unionists will refuse to service all aircraft flying to and from Fiji, in a fresh move against the right-wing regime set up by Colonel Rabuka.**

The unions say they are taking the action in solidarity with workers in Fiji whose union rights have been attacked, and leaders detained, by the military regime.

The airport workers' action, which follows bans on Fijian cargoes by Australian and New Zealand dockers, is in contrast with the paralysis shown by Commonwealth governments in the face of the colonel's coup.

New Zealand's Labour government has decided to cut economic aid and halt military co-operation, and says it will not renew an agreement supporting the price of Fijian sugar.

## Threat

India's Rajiv Gandhi may be concerned at the threat to thousands of Indian-origin Fijians from Rabuka's racist policy, which could make them refugees. But with the Indian army's onslaught on Sri Lankan Tamils, and problems in India itself, he is unable to give any lead.

As for Thatcher, she has no more intention of opposing Rabuka than of opposing

Botha. Notwithstanding the Queen's concern for constitutional niceties, Tory assurances of continuing friendship have encouraged former Governor-General Sir Penaia Ganilau to consider accepting Rabuka's offer of the presidency.

## Reactionary

Why should the Tories oppose Rabuka? He is a reactionary after their own heart, who defends the old landowning class and backward privileges, and encourages racism. He and his friends in the Taukei movement were British-trained, some of them having served with the SAS in Ulster.

Besides, the Tories know the extent to which America's CIA, as well as certain big business interests, were behind Rabuka's coup, with the aim of protecting corruption, exploitation, and US strategic plans for the Pacific.

Edrick Sherman, believed to be CIA station chief in Fiji, was seen with Rabuka on several occasions after the colonel's first coup in May, accompanying him on his first visit to the radio station for instance.

Two or three days before Taukei marches and fire-bombings of Indian-owned shops, four CIA officers arrived at Nadi airport and had talks with Rabuka and others.

Right-wing politician Sir Kamisese Mara, with whom Rabuka is linked, was funded by various CIA fronts like the Asia Foundation, and advised by Business International, which has been described as doing contract work for the CIA. Dr. Jeffrey Race, a CIA expert with an appropriate surname (his experience of 'ethnic conflict' in Malaysia was put to use in Fiji) was brought in by them.

After defeat in this year's elections, Mara flew to Honolulu with William Paupe, of the US AID programme, and is alleged to have met former US naval intelligence Admiral Lloyd Vasey, of the 'Pacific Forum', and previously with the shady CIA-front Nugen Hand bank.

## Career

A few days later, General Vernon Walters arrived in Suva. Walter's long career includes: involvement in the CIA-backed coup in Iran in 1953; military attache in Rome (1962-6) when CIA funds were passed to neo-fascist terror groups; organising the 1964 coup in Brazil; deputy director of the CIA (1972-6), when the bloody

coup in Chile was carried out.

Besides US involvement, West Germany's Hans Seidel Foundation, through which Franz-Josef Strauss' Christian Social Union conducts its own foreign policy, has an impressive building in Suva, and has spent millions of dollars on politicians and 'cultural' projects.

## Hush

Emperor Gold Mines, owned by Western Mining of Australia, reportedly paid large sums in hush money to Taukei leaders, to cover land swindles. Shortly before the first coup, an oceanographic ship loaned by Australian interests brought in a consignment of Uzi sub-machine guns.

● The French government is discussing military aid to Rabuka's regime. Rabuka has invited a team from the French gendarmerie's instant-response unit, and military vehicles. Chirac's Secretary of State for the Pacific, Gaston Flosse, has visited Fiji twice since Rabuka took over, accompanied by a senior naval officer. He reportedly sees Fiji's withdrawal from the Commonwealth as an opportunity for French imperialism to move in, and a blow to those opposing French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

# Journalist died after KGB frame-up

**A SOVIET journalist, whose investigation of mining accidents in the Ukraine led him to a big police corruption scandal, died after being in the hands of the KGB.**

Two brothers who had refused to help frame the journalist in a porn video set-up were themselves jailed, beaten and ill-treated in an effort to make them comply.

Viktor Verkhin, editor of 'Soviet Miner', died in July, and yet the story has only now surfaced — in 'Meditskaya Gazeta', Soviet equivalent of the 'British Medical Journal'. *Glasnost* has clearly got some way to go!

Earlier this year, KGB chief Viktor Cheberov announced that a regional KGB officer was being dismissed, for abusing his powers in the Verkhin case. Local party secretary Boris Goncharenko was also removed.

Viktor Verkhin had been investigating poor safety conditions in the Donetsk coalfields, and found management cover-ups. He came upon evidence of corruption in local law-enforcement and in the Communist Party.

'Goncharenko, the former first secretary, wanted to have his revenge on Verkhin, who had provoked the displeasure of the local apparatus with his articles,' 'Meditskaya Gazeta' says.

'The plan was to set Verkhin up, making it appear that he was watching pornographic video cassettes.

'Information existed that a Dr. V. Keinin possessed such cassettes and had shown them to Verkhin. They asked Dr. Keinin to comply with their plan, and he refused.

'They threatened, but he stood his ground. As a last resort, they arrested him and his brother for good measure. They also arrested Verkhin.

'In jail, the Kreinin brothers underwent physical abuse, were often kept handcuffed, and subjected to endless interrogation. The city procurator demanded that they sign statements incriminating Verkhin, but the brothers refused. Verkhin had it much worse.'

Vadim Kreinin was a respected dermatologist — hence the medical journal's covering the case. His brother Igor directed a department in a local combine.

But 'no-one was strong enough to stand up for the brothers', the writer complains. The two brothers were sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison, and served a year before a regional court found them innocent.

'Verkhin was interrogated until he lost consciousness, and was given injections to keep him awake. He was refused an audience with the procurator. When he was released, he never recovered from the shock, and he died in July at the age of 57.'

Journalist friends of Verkhin on 'Pravda' took up his case, and their investigations helped bring about the downfall of those who had framed him and put him behind bars.

But the full dossier of evidence the 'Pravda' team uncovered, which was sent to the Communist Party Central Committee and the KGB, has not been published.

# Soviet car factory strike

**THE Soviet Union's English-language weekly 'Moscow News' has reported a strike by 700 vehicle workers at a factory near Moscow. Under the heading 'exceptional event', the paper says the production manager at the Libano factory was sacked after a three-day strike halted all production. The paper did not say when the strike happened.**

The reason given for the strike was that workers found their bonuses had been cut when the speed of the line was reduced. 'We wouldn't have dared to do something like this before, but times have changed,' workers were quoted as saying.

# Chen Bilan: an editorial note

LAST WEEK we published an obituary of Chen Bilan, the veteran Chinese Trotskyist. It was reprinted from 'October Review', which is the monthly journal of the Revolutionary Marxist League, Hong Kong section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. That organisation opposed Pablosism in 1953 but rejoined the USFI together with the American Socialist Workers Party in 1963 — as did Peng Shuzhi and Chen Bilan.



# Two years since Healy's expulsion

**JUST TWO YEARS** ago Gerry Healy, who had been a leader in the Trotskyist movement for some 45 years, was charged with sexual abuse of women members of the Workers Revolutionary Party, violence against many members and slandering others in the international movement.

He never answered these charges, and was expelled from the Party, along with his supporters, notably Sheila Torrance, Vanessa and Corin Redgrave, and Alex Mitchell.

Whatever they may have said later, these people did not argue that the accusations were untrue. Although they came as a shock to nearly every member, the charges were based on unimpeachable testimony.

Instead, Torrance and the Redgraves declared that Healy's 'private life' was not relevant to his political activity. Their political degeneration had taken them so far from Marxism that they thought communism was compatible with rape and sexual abuse.

The powerful explosion set off within every section of the WRP revealed that, while the Party had appeared highly centralised, it really contained many violently opposed political positions.

The subsequent evolution of these different groups has taught us important lessons, about the world and about the building of a revolutionary party — and still more remain to be learned.

■ Several people dropped out of politics altogether. Some of them had been badly hurt in the course of the degeneration of the Healy leadership, and were not able to continue.

■ Others had been attached to Healy, rather than to Trotskyism. The Torrance group still turn out their paper 'News Line', purely out of habit and without the slightest thought.

They try desperately to go on being Healyites, but now without Healy. Recently, the Richard Price group split away from them, but without being able to explain how it had backed Healy in 1985.

■ Healy himself, after many months in hiding, last year broke with Torrance and emerged with the Redgraves and a few others. He announced that Gorbachev's reforms were the start of the political revolution in the Soviet Union.

Vanessa Redgrave now explains the WRP explosion quite simply: anyone who does not follow every twist and turn of Healy's lunacy is obviously an agent of the

BY GEOFF PILLING

CIA or MI5. (The KGB does not figure in this world-picture any more.)

■ Mike Banda, then general secretary of the Party, tried to help Healy maintain his domination right through the summer of 1985, and was then forced to break with him.

He deserted his post, and led a small group out of the Party. Some of them have now joined the Communist Party, while Banda himself is so devoted to Stalinism that the 'Leninist' faction of the CP was forced to break off its engagement to him.

■ A further group, led by Dave Hyland, and sponsored by Dave North of the US Workers League, also found that life without Healyism was unthinkable, although they had supported Healy's expulsion.

They continue to argue in their old dogmatic style for the sectarian and opportunist line of the old WRP. They make absolutely no attempt to explain either the split or their own history.

## Lessons

**IN THE** teeth of considerable financial difficulties and legal attacks from the Redgraves, the WRP has fought to learn every possible lesson for Trotskyism from the experience of the past two years, not just for ourselves, but for the entire world movement.

In the course of this work, many comrades who had drifted out of activity, or had been driven out by the Healy-Torrance apparatus, have returned to the movement.

We are sure that readers will agree that Workers Press is now among the best publications the Trotskyist movement has ever produced. It has fought for Marxism on the most important issues in the working class.

To take three examples:



In correcting the unprincipled compromise with chauvinism to which News Line had descended, since the split we have taken up the need for solidarity between the British workers' movement and the struggle against imperialism in Ireland. Above: Workers Press banner on a picket to Free the Framed Irish Prisoners in May this year.

We spearheaded the campaign for trade union sanctions in support of the South African working class.

In correcting the unprincipled compromise with chauvinism to which News Line had descended in its later years, we took up the need for solidarity between the British workers' movement and the struggle against imperialism in Ireland.

We intervened in the general election, calling on workers to vote Labour, while denouncing the treachery of the right-wing leadership.

A crucial part in rebuilding the WRP has been played by a number of prominent workers in the trade unions. These worker-Trotskyists stayed with the Party, not just out of loyalty, but on the basis of real conviction about Marxism.

They were able to begin to correct the anti-Bolshevik Healyite method of setting the Party trade unionists against the Party intellectuals. This has been inseparable from their principled and flexible leadership in several important struggles.

**A GREAT** deal of our energies have been devoted to working over the experience of the movement and its degeneration. Two sides of this work are important.

First, we saw that the explosion in the WRP was not just the problem of Healy, but reflected the powerful changes taking place in the class struggle.

This was particularly seen in the miners' strike, which went beyond the type of struggle in the 1960s and 1970s. Every organisation in the working class was shaken up by these changes.

Second, and most important of all, we saw increasingly that the crisis of the WRP could not be understood except as part of the crisis of the Trotskyist



We saw increasingly that the WRP crisis could not be understood except as part of the crisis of the world Trotskyist movement. This led us to open discussions with many other organisations internationally. Above: Election march by the Movement Towards Socialism in Argentina.

movement of the whole world.

Our analysis of the degeneration of the Party thus led us to open discussions with many other organisations internationally. This laid the basis of the call for the holding of a world conference to rebuild the Fourth International.

The fact that the two leading figures in the WRP, Healy and Banda, after decades of struggle for Trotskyism, could become open apologists for the Stalinist bureaucracy, is of central importance for these discussions.

Each of these people had played a part in the earlier fight against the capitulation of Pablo and Mandel to Stalinism.

Their rapid shift demon-

strates how deeply this adaptation had eaten away the basic conceptions of Trotsky, and of Marxism as a whole. To grasp the significance of this experience requires much more than denunciation.

It demands a far deeper analysis of the nature of Stalinism, a return to Trotsky's work of the 1920s and 1930s, a reappropriation of the fundamentals of historical materialism — in short a rearming of the movement to prepare it for its revolutionary tasks.

The WRP explosion has opened up these and many other issues for investigation. Over the past two years we have fought both sceptics — who wanted to ditch the most basic conceptions of Marxism — and dogmatists — who clung to these conceptions and

transformed them into Holy Writ.

Against both, we have gone back to fundamental principles, ruthlessly criticised our own past errors in their light, and uncovered the new features of reality to which we had previously closed our eyes.

We are convinced that this is the epoch of Trotskyism, of the Fourth International. Millions of workers and youth are being driven into revolutionary struggles throughout the world. There is no reformist solution to the crisis which lies at the basis of these struggles.

We are certain that the expulsion of Healy and our experiences over the last two years will enable us to play the fullest part, along with other comrades, in building the world party of socialist revolution.



## THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE — CHESTERFIELD

# Has 'British socialism' a future?

**SOCIALISTS** in Britain today have a considerable advantage over those of previous generations. However, they need the courage to use it.

I mean the many decades of history of the labour movement here: Rich lessons can be drawn, in particular, from the experience of eight Labour governments, followed by eight years of Thatcherite rule.

I should also highlight the 1926 General Strike and the miners' strikes of 1974 and 1984-1985. But to make full use of this hard-won experience demands an utterly critical and objective reappraisal of all of our past conceptions.

In calling for such a re-examination, I certainly make no exception of our own tendency in the movement. We in the WRP (Workers Press) have gone through an explosive crisis, which has forced us to begin the most ruthless re-examination of our history, its successes and its errors. This most painful process is doing us a world of good.

The 1980s have brought some of the sharpest and most startling changes of all time. The gravest danger is that we close our eyes to them, just because they do not fit in with our old ways of thinking.

Without the most drastic theoretical probing, we will certainly fail to grasp their meaning and measure up to the enormous opportunities for socialism they imply.

In 'The Guardian' of September 14, Ralph Milliband gave his views on the future for the left. Speaking of the 'sickness of moderation' which, he said, afflicts the British labour movement today, he recommended its 'obverse':

*'not the phraseology of instant revolution or the politics of ineffective electioneering: it is rather a radicalism whose unwavering and explicit purpose is the creation, in place of the present anti-democratic and anti-social concentrations of power, of a cooperative, egalitarian and democratic social order, on the basis of social ownership at home, and non-alignment abroad.'*

This is a fine example of a way of thinking which I shall refer to as 'British socialism'. It is an outlook which grew up in a bygone era. British capital ruled supreme throughout the globe. Millions of colonial slaves lived under its lash, and from their sweat and blood was coined the gold of the City of London.

The exploitation of the working class at home could be softened, and the struggles of the oldest workers' movement could gain some real improvements, without unduly disturbing the power of the bosses or their state.

It was in this context — in opposition to the long tradition of revolutionary socialism in Britain — that the thinking of the Labour Party and the modern trade union movement was formed. Those were the days when a wily capitalist class learnt how to cultivate that unique domestic animal, the British Union Leader, and a closely related variety, the House-Trained Labour MP.

We should not forget the symbiotic relationship which was nurtured between these gentle creatures and another species. The voice of the Radical Left-Winger is fearsome indeed.

However, in practice this beast can be relied upon never to go beyond the bounds of decency and decorum. Allow it an occasional roar of protest against the betrayals of the official leadership, and it's as meek as a lamb.

I am not here thinking only, or even primarily, of the straight corruption of individual leaders, bought off with the promise of wealth and position, (though there has been plenty of this, and still is, as we all know).

BY CYRIL SMITH  
Workers Revolutionary Party  
(Workers Press)

Underlying the susceptibility of leaders to such attractions are habits of thought which draw on even older British ideological traditions, and even the most devoted class fighter is not immune to them.

From the very beginnings of capitalism in this country, there sprang empiricism, the distrust of all generalised thought. From this standpoint, 'realistic' politics begins and ends within the framework laid down by bourgeois society and the bourgeois state, including its national boundaries. All that was needed was for representatives of the labour movement to take the place of those of the bosses within this state.

With Labour men as local councillors and Her Majesty's ministers, life would get better and better. Of course, social changes in other countries, welcome or unwelcome, were quite independent of what was happening in these islands.

We all know that the conditions which produced such an outlook have gone, and gone for good, along with the Empire (on which the sun never set, you may recall). What some people just can't bring themselves to accept is that there is no return to the old days, when



'In countries like Korea, the Philippines and above all in South Africa, the struggles of the 1980s centre on the development of huge new working-class movements, mobilised in the most modern industrial conditions.' Above: the launch of South Africa's second-largest union, the National Union of Metalworkers, earlier this year.

Laski — with the phraseology of 'instant revolution', it is now necessary to restate the scientific basis for socialism.

For this purpose, we have to base ourselves, not on the situation as it appears in this country, but on the understanding that capitalism as a world order has reached the end of the line. In its brutal rise to power, capital brought into being a world market and a world economy. On this basis, it took technology forward, far beyond anything which could have been dreamt of in the past. In so doing, it brought into being the working class, concentrated into increasingly organised masses in every country.

In the 20th century, this process reached its limit. Humanity now has at its disposal productive power sufficient to satisfy the needs of everyone. Imprisoned within the

enfeebled working class, and a thriving though repulsive capitalist order, surviving through some new-found strength, and led by quite irresistible reactionaries like Thatcher and Reagan. Socialism is presented as an impossible dream.

This is all nonsense. In reality, we see a world order which is on its last legs. It survives into the last decades of this century only because of the confusion, weakness and downright treachery of the established leaderships in the organisations of the working class.

Really, the pessimists are bemoaning the disappearance of the

Over the whole world, after two global wars, hangs the still more terrible prospect of nuclear and biological warfare, utilising every resource of modern science and technology: military research now accounts for the vast bulk of scientific development.

The massive international expansion of debt is an expression of the fundamental inability of capital to take mankind forward. The burden of debt weighs unbearably on the backs of the poorest people in the world, as they are forced to pay more and more to the very richest. The transformation of the United States, from the world's largest creditor to the largest debtor in history, is one of the central features of the 1980s.

Not one of the interlinked elements of this crisis can be answered in one country, or even in one continent. Only the organised power of the international working class can break through the barriers which stand in the way of the well-being of all: national boundaries, private property and its state power.

What becomes clearer every day is that there is no answer to the world crisis except the international planning of the world's resources. This is the context in which every one of the vitally necessary struggles of the working class in this country must be understood.

That is the framework in which we must look at the experience of the miners' battle with Thatcher. This was not a last-ditch stand, doomed to defeat from the start. It was the beginning of a new type of movement, in which the illusions and inhibitions of the past are discarded. It stands as a part of a world-wide change.

In countries like Korea, the Philippines and above all in South Africa, the struggles of the 1980s centre on the development of huge new working-class movements, mobilised in the most modern industrial conditions.

Whether those engaged in these struggles know it or not, their implications transcend the direct issues involved. For the immediate demands of these workers to be satisfied means to break the bounds of capitalist property relations on a world scale. That is what gives the battles of the 1980s their special character.

Only now is it possible once again to see the road forward to world socialism. But this demands that we renew and develop a conception of the transformation of world society, and the establishment of a leadership which will fight for it.

As a first step, let us take firm hold of the traditions of 'British socialism', and place them gently in the dust-bin. ■



'We can honestly draw the balance-sheet of a century and more of "British socialism" at work and recognise its final outcome: Thatcher's Britain.' Above: the desolate remains of a closed pit in the North East

an unending series of Labour governments were supposed to bring, ever so gradually, the 'democratisation' of the British state, and the levelling out of 'social inequality'.

Now, we can honestly draw the balance-sheet of a century and more of 'British socialism' at work, and recognise its final outcome: Thatcher's Britain.

In the new conditions, the old ideas remain. In the 1980s, as Thatcher's axe destroys one after another of the past achievements of a century of reform, the old conceptions can only lead to the blackest pessimism. With the splitting up of 'British socialism' into Owenite and Kinnockite wings, the projects for Labour governments of the old kind seem bleak. It is hard for 'British socialists' to see any future for 'British socialism'.

Well, at the risk of offending the sensibilities of Comrade Milliband — that worthy student of Harold

private profit system, this very power has produced a many-sided global crisis of unprecedented gravity.

Just 70 years ago, the Russian workers and peasants began the fight to set up a state power which could serve the needs of working people everywhere. This was not just a national transformation, but the beginning of the victory of international socialism.

But history does not move in nice straight lines. The isolation of the Soviet state led to its degeneration. In place of the internationalism of Lenin, Stalin's bureaucratic national perversion of socialism took control — a sort of Russian version of 'British socialism'. The Soviet Union survived, but the socialist aspirations of millions of workers throughout the globe were pushed back.

The picture is commonly projected these days of an

old prosperous capitalism, within which they used to operate happily as protesters and reformers. Instead, we should answer the deep crisis of this rotten system with the determination to get rid of it as soon as possible.

In Asia, Africa and Latin America, millions oppressed by imperialism face starvation. In the old industrialised countries, millions are unemployed.

Capital moves industry to areas of cheap labour, and huge transnational companies shift their money into purely parasitic fields, like share manipulation and property speculation. For a generation of young people, capitalism holds nothing but misery and despair.

The unplanned exploitation of the world's natural resources threatens environmental disaster. The progress of medical knowledge enriches the pharmaceutical companies, while new diseases infect every continent.



# Communism and 'British socialism'

THE title originally proposed for this paper was 'Reform or Revolution'. Traditionally, in the workers' movement, this choice has summed up the division between two trends:

- those who envisaged socialism coming about through a gradual accumulation of reforms passed by parliament, each constituting a step in the dispossessing of the capitalist class; and
- those who claimed it was necessary for the working class to unify and mobilise all its strength to destroy the capitalist state and replace it with a workers' state, which would take the property from the capitalists, suppress the resistance organised by the capitalist class, and install a planned socialist economy.

In 1914, the parties of the Socialist International (except in Russia and Serbia) each supported their 'own' capitalist rulers in war. Revolutionary socialists henceforth organised in the parties of the Third, Communist, International.

The British working class, since the end of Chartism, has suffered under the leadership of reformists of a particularly reactionary type.

The Labour Party did not adopt socialism as its aim until 1918 (and then only formally) under the impact of the enthusiasm engendered by the Russian Revolution and the great strike movement of those years in Britain.

In practice, the aims of the Labour Party were never any more than to take maximum advantage of the fact that Britain was a great imperialist power. The 'crumbs from the table of imperialism' created a situation where certain concessions to a 'labour aristocracy' could be afforded from time to time, taking off the pressure created by the conflict of classes.

Today there is not even the pretence of a socialism to be achieved through an accumulation of reforms. Instead, Labour leaders and the vast majority of trade union leaders have openly accepted that capitalism is eternal, everlasting; and they see themselves as efficient collaborators with it, only paying more attention from time to time to ameliorating or rather disguising its worst features.

But the game is up. The old British imperialism is dead.

Not only has the ability to provide concessions when necessary disappeared; it has become imperative to take back all the gains previously won by the working class.

That is the meaning of the attacks on the independence of trade unions from the state, the tendency to state-imposed settlements, the regimentation of the youth in employment schemes, the attacks on education, health services and local government, and so on.

The crisis in the labour movement comes from this: generations of class-collaboration have produced a situation where continued collaboration means aiding the enemy in his attacks, not winning reforms.

The EETPU is only the most open and arrogant expression of the politics of the TUC, just as the SDP splitters are only the most consistent of the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER  
Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press)

Can anyone at the Conference honestly say they would have been surprised to see any one of the present Labour leaders among the SDP renegades? Hattersley? Healey? Gould? Kaufman? Kincock.

The 'parliamentary road to socialism' was always a fraud, a cover for opportunism. Parliament is part of the state, a machine more and more openly revealing itself as what it has always really been: the organised repression of the working class and the centralised manager of the bourgeoisie's affairs when that is necessary.

No one can escape the lessons of the miners' strike (though many are desperate to do so). Miners and their wives fought with every resource at their disposal on the elementary demand of the preservation of their livelihood. They came up against the state machine itself.

## Mobilising

This experience demonstrated the Marxist definition of the state: 'bodies of armed men'. The state, commanded in day-to-day operations by the Thatcher government, could have been defeated, but only by mobilising the whole working class.

And that could only have been done by a leadership having been built which had earned the confidence of the working class, and which was prepared to face up to the necessity of going through to the end: the smashing of the state power and the establishment of a workers' government with a socialist programme.

This would have required the workers' councils, unions, support groups, action committees, etc., many of which developed during the strike, to actually take hold of power.

But we are back at the very opening paragraph of this paper. To do what was necessary, from the standpoint of the working class, meant taking the revolutionary and not the reformist road.

Reformism, in its parliamentary and in its trade-union bureaucratic form, was proved completely impotent. But we do not delude ourselves that this proof is apparent to every worker. Far from it.

The responsibility of socialists is to fight to find ways of burning this lesson into the consciousness of the working class. It is not only a matter of finding the right words, the right propaganda medium.

Strategy and tactics, leadership, have to be developed in such a way as to provide the best conditions in

which these conclusions become inescapable.

Paradoxically, the Communist Party, by the time of the miners' strike, had long ceased to be revolutionary, and in no way could provide such leadership. On the contrary, its trade union representatives were instrumental in compelling the miners to remain in isolation and eventually return to work.

Since World War II the Communist Party had openly advocated the 'peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism'. There is of course no such thing. The advocacy of this programme was only the latest form of a Stalinist degeneration which had begun even before the General Strike of 1926.

We have to face up to the paradox. The British working class was for years, in reality and not just in imagination, able to avoid the necessity for communist politics, because there was almost always the possibility of 'crumbs from the imperialists' table'.

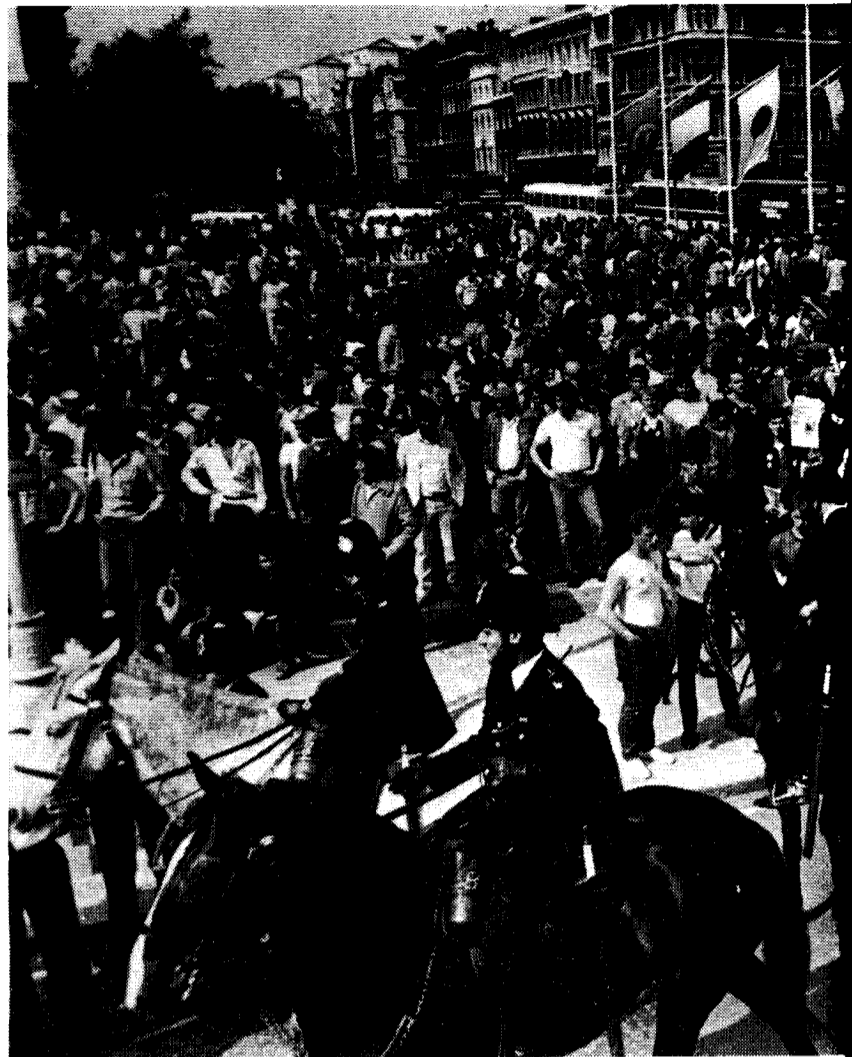
Now that all that is finished, and experience insists on the necessity of communist politics, the Stalinist corruption of communism, in the USSR, in China, in Eastern Europe and in the Communist Parties of the world, stands in the way of a solution. In other countries, where the Communist Parties had the leadership of the majority or a large section of the working class, this had become clear in gross betrayals, with bloody consequences.

There is no solution to the economic and social problems of a decaying society, capitalism, except socialism, and there is no parliamentary road to that socialism. Many on the left have had for years a relationship with the Stalinists or sections of them, some with the high-sounding motive of 'unity of the left'. Unity of the left is a fine thing, as is unity of the working class. But unity on what basis?

Right at the point where the necessity of a truly communist direction is shown in experience more clearly than ever before, if the working class is to be united, the Communist Party, having capitulated to reformism, is breaking up. It does not cease to be Stalinism.

The imports of Polish coal during the miners' strike sum up everything, just as the Argentine dictatorship was prettified by the Argentine Communist Party in the 1970s because of the dependence of the Soviet Union on that country's wheat exports.

So-called 'socialism' in the USSR is in fact a society dominated by a reactionary parasitic caste, the Stalinist bureaucracy.



'Miners and their wives . . . came up against the state machine itself. This state: "bodies of armed men"! Above: June 1984. Striking miners face

The Russian capitalist class was expropriated by the October revolution, but the isolation and economic backwardness of Russia have meant that the society established by the revolution — one transitional between capitalism and socialism — is corrupted and deformed by bureaucratic dictatorship, the suppression of workers' democracy, the cutting off of the Soviet working class from the international working class.

A degenerated workers' state exists, which we must defend against capitalist attack, but which the Soviet working class must regenerate by overthrowing the Stalinist bureaucracy. That political revolution is the necessary and natural ally of the socialist revolution in Britain and the whole capitalist world.

It follows as night follows day that the ally of the British working class is the Russian working class and not the Stalinist bureaucracy! And the same applies to Eastern Europe and China.

## Politics

That is the basis of a real communist politics, the politics on which the Workers Revolutionary Party, a Trotskyist party, is founded. Trotsky was assassinated by a Stalinist agent in 1940 for fighting along this line.

All that history is now brought back to the front of the struggle; in Britain by the miners' strike, the vicious attacks of the Tories, and the bankruptcy of the traditional leadership, and in the USSR, Eastern Europe and China by the upsurge of the working class and the insoluble contradictions of the bureaucratically controlled national economies, which have forced Gorbachev and Co. to seek a safety valve through 'glasnost' (openness).

The bureaucracy hopes by this to quieten the working class and to ease its own problems. The working-class movement internationally, Britain included, should say: Yes, glasnost! But that means opening up the truth! Openness — yes! openness about the Moscow purge trials of the 1930s, the judicial murder of the whole October generation of Bolsheviks, and the murder of Trotsky.

Open up all the archives and show how the Stalinist bureaucracy rewrote the history books to justify its brutal rule. Publish the works of Trotsky, which are suppressed in the Soviet Union.

Are these just literary questions, matters of 'historical interest' only? Far from it. The 1917 Revolution in Russia was the first link in

the chain of world socialist revolutions. Since then, there have been many historic delays, interruptions and setbacks.

British Labour's opportunism and bogus 'reformism' has been a major obstacle. The principal one on a world scale has been and remains the corruption and parasitism of Stalinism.

'British socialism' always prided itself on a 'common-sense', 'down-to-earth', 'pragmatic' approach, seeking 'real' reforms, as against 'doctrinaire' Marxism. Socialism itself was carefully kept aside for occasions such as May Day meetings.

WHAT future then for 'British socialism'? The answer must be squarely faced.

Either the British working class turns to scientific socialism, Marxism, or there is no future. The so called democratic socialism is dead, because its begetter, British imperialism, cannot afford it any longer.

Is the alternative then communism? Yes. Not Stalinism, but Communism.

Isn't all this very complicated, contradictory? Yes. . . and no.

It points to the need for a serious study of political and historical questions, and of the whole of Marxist theory, without which these questions cannot be understood.

The history of the international working class has confirmed the discovery of Marxist theory: that capitalism is a doomed system, which will drag humanity down with it unless it is overthrown and replaced with socialism. The long-drawn-out decay of capitalism's death-agony means social decay and mass destruction.

But it also means that the inherent power of resistance of the capitalist system is weakened, once the working class is armed with a theory and with a party which have learned the lessons of the past and can master the necessities of the present.

Is there a future for British socialism, asks the Conference.

Insofar as it remains British, the answer is an emphatic no.

The bringing into being of socialism is the task of the working class, which is international in character. The material prerequisites for socialism are the outcome of capitalist development, internationally.

Only the Communism of Marx, carried forward in theory and practice by Lenin and Trotsky, arms the working-class movement on this basis. There is no other way. ■



WORLD SATURDAY/SUNDAY 24-25 OCTOBER

# Trade unionism in the 1980s

## THE EXPERIENCE OF LONDON BUSES

**THE fight to defend both the conditions of bus-workers and the transport facilities in London against the attacks of the Tories has some general lessons for the whole movement.**

The removal of London Transport — once the show-piece of 'public' enterprise — from the control of the Greater London Council was a necessary first step towards the break-up of public transport services in London.

A start was made by putting routes out to tender, awarding some of them to private bus operators at lower wages and worse conditions, and then us-

**By the WRP Bus Workers Group**

rates of pay, or received severance pay. New staff were then recruited at lower rates.

The same line was taken when London Buses set up new 'greenfield' low-wage minibus bases at Orpington and Stanwell. Finding that they were not able to force down wages under the 'main' agreement, London Regional Transport put out to tender all the routes in the Kingston area, worked from Norbiton Garage, and then awarded them to London Buses. They proposed to increase the working week by seven hours and cut pay by £36 a week.

The entire workforce was given 90 days notice and offered their own jobs, driving their own buses on their own routes, at the lower wages. No redundancy or severance pay was to be paid — because there was a job for everyone.

The bus crews thought this was so unjust that they could not believe it was legal. They demanded that the unions test this in the courts.

In July 1987, London Buses' action was found in the High Court to be quite legal. Industrial action was taken by the Norbiton crews and a series of 24-hour strikes by the rest of the London crews took place. ACAS intervened.

After countless hours of talks, there was no substantial change in the conditions offered. Each slightly improved offer on hours was rejected by the workforce in the face of threats that, unless the conditions were accepted and industrial action stopped, the garage would be shut down.

Finally, it was announced that, in spite of the Court judgement, redundancy payments would be made to 80 drivers, and the rest would be transferred to other garages at full rates. Only then was industrial action called off.

So, over the last three years, the London Bus Section has been through overtime bans, 24-hour strikes, guerrilla strikes, legal actions and ACAS — the entire gamut. But we have to face the fact that low-wage operations, under London Buses management have been established.

**What does this mean for the movement as a whole? The trades union movement just has to accept that the 1970s are long gone. The 1970s way of thinking must be put into the past as well.**

There is no longer any possibility for this economic system to provide for the needs of the mass of the people, either in jobs or services. How are we to face this change?

We have seen several examples of energetic and tenacious struggles, going on for months, and sometimes years, involving important sections of the working class. But they have been unable to prevent the advance of Tory policies.

The miners battled for a year, in the face of an offensive by the state and stabs in the back from the TUC and Labour Party leaders. They mobilised considerable mass support, but were unable to win their demands.

Similar experiences were reflected in the printers' struggle at Wapping. The teachers, without anything like the same history of prolonged struggle, nonetheless fought for three years to defend their standards.

In each of these cases, as in many others, the fight has been transformed from the old kind of strike to a new type of social mobilisation. The fight of the miners

was as much about the survival of communities as about the defence of jobs. That was the importance of the women's and other support groups.

The actions of teachers, bus-crews, hospital and health service workers are increasingly seen as battles to defend the needs of the whole class and the whole community, and not just the jobs and conditions of the strikers.

The depth of the social and economic crisis in Britain and throughout the world means that the ruling class cannot come to any kind of settlement with the unions in the old way.

In 1985-1986, it became customary for union leaders to tell their members: 'Don't rock the boat; just get a Labour government elected, and everything will be all right.' Now what are they going to say?

For workers have to defend the gains made in the past. They have no option. Increasingly, people are saying they would rather see their firm, factory, garage or pit shut down than accept the new conditions being offered.

When told that worsened conditions are the only way to 'save' the concern or industry, large groups of workers are refusing to take this 'option'. Some union leaders agree with them in words, but in practice support the employers' argument.

The tacit belief that the same job at lower wages is better than a struggle to maintain conditions — because of the danger of closure — is used as a local anaesthetic, blunting the fighting ability of men and women in struggle, and preparing the ground for the employers to get their way.

Jordan of the engineering union (AEU) and Hammond of the electricians' union (EETPU) are more straightforward. They openly support the 'new realism' of the capitalist crisis. They openly urge cooperation with the employers to defend the employers' system.

Of course, neither these open servants of the ruling class, nor their 'critics', who seek to act as a kind of loyal opposition to them, can resolve the problems of this dying system. However savage the wage cuts they accept, it will never be enough. The alternatives will remain: more cuts, or the company goes bust.

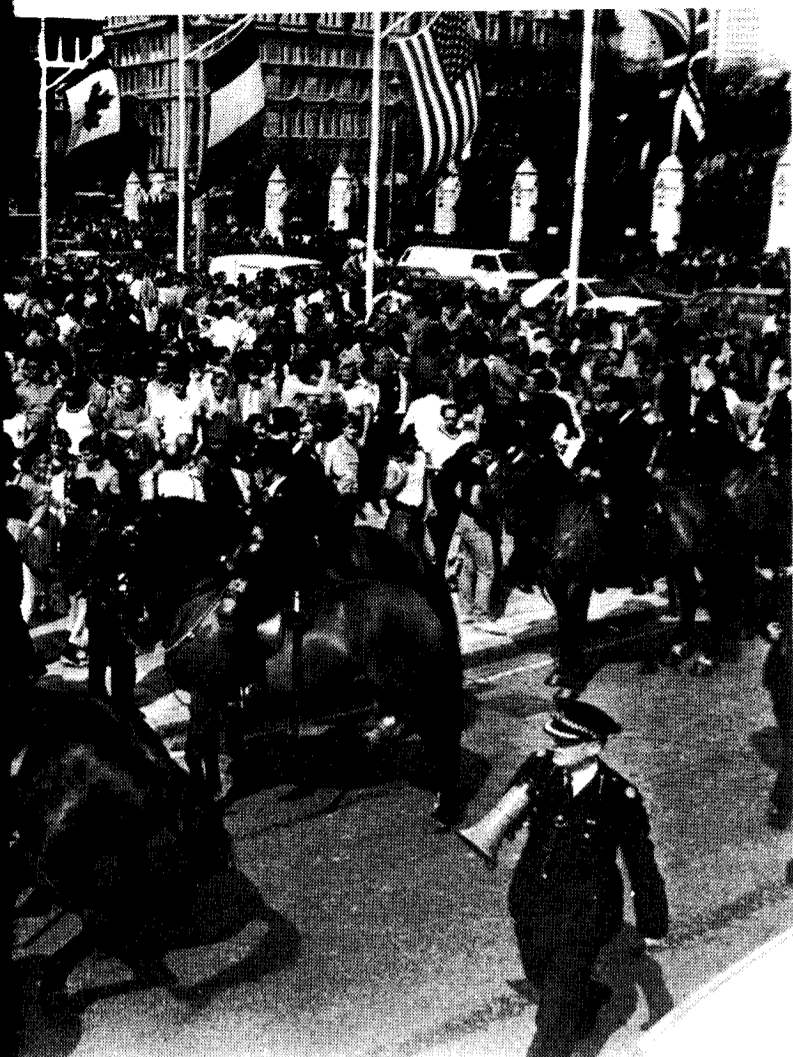
The pretence that a Labour government could make capitalism work better than the Tories could is treacherous nonsense. There is no way for this system to provide people with housing, public transport, health care, education or jobs.

David Owen and Reg Prentice have demonstrated the logic of the policy of making capitalism work, just as Jordan and Hammond show the real logic of the old kind of trade unionism in the new conditions.

Other trends in the movement draw the conclusion that sectional and partial battles are a waste of time. This is only another way of dodging the fight. Each battle must be fought out, and fought through to the end. Only in this process will the kind of union organisations be built up which can really meet the needs of the 1980s and 1990s.

We must therefore stop telling workers: 'You can't win this battle. The answer is a political one.' We have to explain that, after decades of trying to negotiate our way round problems, there is no way left, just as local councillors are having to realise that there are no creative accounting tricks left in the bag.

From here on, each battle fought is part of a struggle, not to make this rotten system work better, but to make it unworkable, to bring it down. ■



Above: Hungary 1956. The Stalinist corruption of communism, in the USSR, in China, in Eastern Europe and in the Communist Parties of the world stands in the way of a solution... this had become clear in gross betrayals, with bloody consequences.



Above: Hungary 1956. The Stalinist corruption of communism, in the USSR, in China, in Eastern Europe and in the Communist Parties of the world stands in the way of a solution... this had become clear in gross betrayals, with bloody consequences.

To be published on 23 November 1987

## Crocodiles in the Street

By Peter Fryer

The British public knows little about Latin America, least of all about recent working class struggles in that continent. This illuminating book is a report on a visit lasting six-and-a-half weeks, during which Peter Fryer met Brazilian gold miners, Argentinian meat workers, Bolivian tin miners on strike, Peruvian metal workers and Colombian trade unionists under threat of death from paramilitary fascist squads.

In all five countries he also met activists and leaders of the Trotskyist parties organised in the International Workers' League (IWL). Fryer lets the people he met speak for themselves. This is a unique account of a continent seething with resistance to capitalism.

Paperback, 84pp. £3.95.

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ing these job losses as a lever to push down wages and conditions for London bus crews.

To answer this offensive, the Transport and General Workers' Union London Bus Section adopted a 12-point policy which insisted they would not negotiate wage cuts.

When London Buses announced that they had won the tender for their own routes in the Potters Bar area, the Section refused to agree to any wage reduction. All the drivers and engineers were either transferred to other garages at full



Bus pickets at London's Peckham Garage

TURN OVER



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**70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

# Commemoration of Russian Revolution

TROTSKYISTS will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution at an international public meeting on Sunday 8 November in London.

The struggle for international socialist revolution, of which the 1917 victory of the Russian working class was the first stage, is today centred on the task of building the Trotskyist Fourth International against Stalinism.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, which after Lenin's death usurped power in the Soviet workers' state, is today shaken by a profound crisis. What it fears above all is the developing political revolution in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe.

Gorbachev and the bureaucracy as a whole is terrified by the striving of the working class to re-establish Soviet democracy and get rid of the parasitic caste which now more than ever threatens the gains of 1917. Gorbachev's response is glasnost — 'openness' towards Ronald Reagan and other imperialist leaders, and economic reforms which threaten to undermine the nationalised economy.

He sees the so-called 'openness' in the press, culture and education as a safety valve for the hostility of Soviet workers, youth and oppressed nationalities to the bureaucracy. But reports from the USSR indicate that an uncontrollable flood threatens to bust the valve. Soviet workers are protesting at the wage cuts and unemployment caused by economic reforms; the struggles of oppressed nationalities are being expressed in street demonstrations and riots.

Especially significant are the demands by Soviet students and youth for the freedom to study the history of the USSR and the Stalinist SPEAKERS:

- Cliff Slaughter — WRP Central Committee
- Jean-Phillipe Dupont — International Workers League (Fourth International)
- Michel Varga (Balasz Nagy) — Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International
- Speakers from the organisations on the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference of Trotskyists
- Paul Trehwela — Former South African political prisoner
- Ihson Ozgur — Kurdish Workers' Association

terror of the 1930s. For in such a study lies the key to continuing the struggle for international socialism begun by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, and cut off by Stalin with his counter-revolutionary 'theory' of 'socialism in one country' and the subordination of the Communist International to the counter-revolutionary requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The aim of the Stalinist terror and the Moscow Trials — about which Soviet workers and students are today demanding the truth — was above all to destroy those Bolsheviks who fought against Stalin's bureaucracy for the continuation of the revolution internationally.

*Stalinist terror failed! The Left Opposition survived the show trials, death squads and labour camps; it won to its ranks the best communists and went forward to form the Fourth International in 1938.*

The Bolshevik struggle was continued in the struggles of Trotskyists, against Stalinist repression and against revisionism inside the FI itself. Today it goes forward in the rebuilding of the Fourth International as the leadership of the revolutionary struggles of the working class.

Speakers at our meeting will include Trotskyists from western Europe, from Eastern Europe, from Latin America and from the Middle East; other comrades struggling against imperialism and against the bureaucracy will also be invited on to our platform. (Full details in future issues of Workers Press). The Workers Revolutionary Party, being privileged to host this meeting, invites all Workers Press readers and supporters to attend and extends a warm invitation to all our international comrades to travel to London for the meeting.

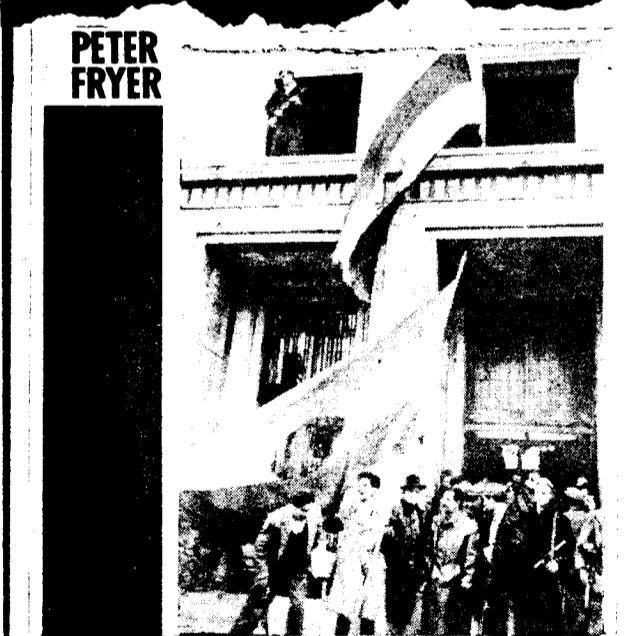
● For further details write to WRP, PO Box 735 London SW9 7QS.

Please send me . . . . . ticket(s) for the 8 November Russian Revolution anniversary meeting.  
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Send to: 70th Anniversary meeting, WRP, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS.

# HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY



The Hungarian revolution of 1956 and its brutal suppression by Russian tanks was a watershed in the history of socialism. In October 1956 Peter Fryer was sent to cover these events for the Daily Worker. He reported what he saw — only to have his despatches suppressed and to be suspended and then expelled from the Communist Party. He saw people in arms demolish a regime of fear and poverty and take power in their own hands. He saw security police atrocities — and the people's terrible revenge. Then he watched appalled as a nation's new-born freedom was relentlessly crushed.

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- Peter Fryer, author of several books including 'Hungarian Tragedy' and a forthcoming book on Latin America, 'Crocodiles in the Street'. Fryer presents his iconoclastic view of the world in his weekly Personal Column.
  - Tom Scott Robson, whose

Robson's Choice keeps a sharp eye on TV and the media generally.

- Terry Brotherstone who covers the Scottish arts scene. His recent reviews from the Edinburgh Festival were much appreciated.
- Charlie Pottins — responsible for making sure that all major international developments are analysed in the paper.
- Bernard Franks who writes regularly on the social services.

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# They cannot tell the truth about Trotsky

## PART III

**LEADING BUREAUCRATS in the Soviet Union may make general statements on the years of purges, terror and trials — as Gorbachev does when he says they can never be accepted.**

But lies against Trotskyism continue.

The text of a Soviet television comment in a 'World Today' programme of 3 July, shows the same method of slander and amalgams that was used in the Moscow Trials.

Under the title of 'Trotskyite' Anti-Communists in Reagan Administration' Dmitriy Biryukov, the television commentator made an amalgam of American Social Democrats with 'Trotskyites'.

Listen to this piece of crude, slanderous Stalinism: 'On the one hand, the American social democrats participate in the Socialist International, which, in recent years, has adopted sensible positions on world political problems...'

'At the very same time, the very same social democrats, the Trotskyites, support US interventionist policies abroad. An interesting fact: at their last Congress, Alfonso Robelo, a Nicaraguan Contra leader, was one of the main speakers.'

The Trotskyists are amalgamated with the social democrats and then the social democratic conference becomes a 'Trotskyite' conference. And how do we get to 'Trotskyites in the Reagan administration'?

The GPU Stalinist style of lying continues: 'American social democrats publicly proclaim their loyalty to the Democratic Party but at the same time occupy important positions in the Republican Reagan administration. One of the main theoreticians who worked out justification for Reagan's foreign policy is a member of the national committee of the social democratic party.'

This is straight out of the old Stalin stable. Social democrats are anti-communist and helping Reagan; therefore it follows, comrade, that they are Trotskyites. And, if the Trotskyists can prove that these social democrats have no connection with Trotskyism at all, then that only shows how sinister is the Trotskyite conspiracy and how skilful they are in covering up their real aims.

The commentator concluded:

'Comrades, this is the logic of action of the American Trotskyites who, to this day, are continuing to implement the policies of the Trotskyites of the 1920s and 1930s under different conditions and on different soil.'

'Perhaps it is not in vain then that many bourgeois ideologists are now attempting to rehabilitate Trotskyism which in the final analysis is helping to divert the attention of people who have been imbued with left-wing ideology from the progressive path.'

There speaks the fear of the bureaucracy for Trotskyism. They bring in their lies about the past in their attempts to discredit Trots-

## Why they must continue to slander

BY BILL HUNTER

ky and Trotskyism today. What causes this great fear?

The bureaucracy faces a severe crisis. The economy is failing in productivity and quality of goods. At the time of the first economic plan nearly 60 years ago, the Stalinist leaders were boasting that its aim was to catch up and outstrip the capitalist economies.

The 'complete triumph of socialism' which was always considered by Marxists must have the prerequisite of a productive and production level far higher than the highest of capitalism was announced again and again in the Soviet Union. In 1935, there was announced, not only the final, but the irrevocable triumph.

Now, the publicists of the bureaucracy tell us, that in the 1930s the main economic target of socialism — that of outstripping the capitalist states in labour productivity and production volume was not reached. We failed to build society which could in every aspect set an example, giving an impetus for the reorganisation of the world.

Alexander Bovin in 'Soviet Weekly' 19 September 1987.) Bovin talks of growth rates slowing down and of 'inertia and conservatism behind which stood strong social groups'; of capital investment producing diminishing returns. He says that 'going on like that meant economic stagnation and crises and

undermined the Soviet Union's world prestige...'

In 1936 Trotsky completed his book 'Revolution Betrayed'. In that book is the most complete explanation of why the bureaucracy is in crisis today. Here is Trotsky on the basic question which has been before the Soviet Union since its inception.

'Socialism,' wrote Trotsky, 'is a structure of planned production to the end of the best satisfaction of human needs; otherwise it does not deserve the name of socialism.'

'If cows are socialised, but there are too few of them, or they have too meagre udders, then conflicts arise out of the inadequate supply of milk — conflicts between city and country, between collective and individual peasants, between different strata of the proletariat, between the whole toiling mass and the bureaucracy.'

'It was in fact the socialisation of the cows which led to their mass extermination by the peasants (under forced collectivisation — BH). Social conflicts created by want can in their turn lead to a resurrection of "all the old crap".'

Trotsky's conclusion was that 'Soviet forms of property on a basis of the most modern achievements of American technique transplanted into all branches of economic life — that would indeed be the first stage of socialism. Soviet forms with a low productivity of labour mean only a transitional regime whose destiny history has not yet finally weighed.'

('Revolution Betrayed', page 61, New Park edition.)

Are the scales to move towards socialism or capitalism? The final answer to that question has yet to be given but it looms up over the whole destiny of the Soviet Union today.

Stalin invented a theory that the Soviet Union would evolve from socialism to communism because of its exceptional national conditions together with peaceful co-existence with imperialism. That theory lies now in complete ruins.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition defended the Marxist-Leninist principles of internationalism, declaring that the future of the Soviet Union could not be decided within its own boundaries but only on the international arena. That meant its future could only be based on the working class nationally and internationally.

The conclusion of Trotsky, put forward as far back as 1925 in his book 'Towards Socialism or Capitalism', that the development of the economy of the Soviet Union would mean increasing, not less, necessity of participating in the world division of labour, is patently justified today.

His and the Left Opposition's fundamental position as against Stalinism on the decisive place of the Soviet and international working class in the development of the Soviet Union is vital today.

When the publicists of the bureaucrats talk of the



Soviet writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn — one of the old 'dissidents', hostile to the working class and much beloved by the capitalist West.

'apathy and social passivity', the 'inertia and conservatism' they talk about are the results of stifling and repressive bureaucratism which they cannot overcome in a socialist direction.

'An a priori economic plan,' declared Trotsky, who with the Left Opposition first raised the necessity of a national plan, 'above all in a backward country with 170 million population and a profound contradiction between city and country — is not a fixed gospel, but a rough working hypothesis which must be verified and reconstructed in the process of its fulfilment. We might lay down a rule: the more "accurately" an administration task is fulfilled, the worse is the economic leadership.'

One of two essential levers for the essential regulation and application of plans he gives as 'the political lever in the form of a real participation in leadership of the interested masses themselves, a thing which is unthinkable without Soviet democracy'.

Stalinism and the bureaucracy developed extreme contempt for the international and Soviet working class and 'glasnost' today continues within that context.

The power and privileges of the bureaucracy rest on the political expropriation of the masses and destruction of workers' soviet democracy.

This bureaucracy cannot evolve as a principled working-class leadership, confident in the initiative that can be brought out of the working class and inspiring a struggle for socialism and world emancipation.

Such a leadership can only come from those who build on the Trotskyist struggle for working-class internationalism and against bureaucratic degeneration in the Soviet Union.

Faced with the contradictions and crises of its economy the bureaucracy can only seek to overcome them by substituting the capitalist market for a large degree of socialist planning. It now opens up in the Soviet Union the penetration of capitalist relations with the weakening of state control itself.

In so doing, it must attack conditions of the working class as Gorbachev has already announced, with the abolition of state subsidies holding down prices, increase in differentials and factory closures.

A great movement of the Soviet working class is on the agenda. The bureaucracy now do not face an opposition of the character of the old dissidents, like Solzhenitsyn who were so much beloved by the capitalist West, and were hostile to the working class. We now can expect movements far greater than those of workers of Novosibirsk and elsewhere in 1962, which had no mention in Russia or among emigres.

Workers in struggle against bureaucracy, together with students and intellectuals will turn to Trotsky. But their main gain will not be the acceptance of a heroic future.

Today, 40 years after his assassination, Trotsky's struggle and that of the Left Opposition, his programme for the international and for the political revolution in the Soviet Union, can be an inspiration, an enormous attraction for Soviet workers and an invaluable guide. Stalin was mortally afraid of this.

So is the present bureaucracy. That is why they continue their slanders of Trotsky.

TO BE CONTINUED



Trotsky speaking after his exile from the Soviet Union.



# 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.

## Ultra-Leftism, opportunism and Pabloism

IT WOULD take a short article to reply adequately to the editorial comments on my letter (Workers Press, 10 October). I will, however, do my best and confine myself to the more salient points.

First of all a word of congratulations: There is one aspect of the post-Healy WRP on which you have not reneged — the columns of your paper remain open to many points of view. This is a very valuable contribution towards creating that atmosphere of free discussion which was the hallmark of the pre-Stalin Bolshevik Party.

Yes, you gave adequate space to the Labour Party conference in your issue of 3 October. One can, of course, agree with much of your views on the Labour Party without necessarily sharing in the organisational conclu-

sions which you draw from them.

But this does not confound my criticism that, as a party which claims to be the revolutionary vanguard of the working class you had some responsibility to analyse the conference agenda and to give guidance to the delegates.

I like your editorial of 10 October. You write that 'Kinnock is not a traitor to his cause. He remains what he always was, a reformist'. This is almost a verbatim lift from a letter of mine which you published in late May or early June in which I criticised your misuse of the words 'Labour Traitors' in your pre-General Election frontpage headline.

I wrote: 'Kinnock and Co. are not really "traitors" in the accepted meaning of that term. They genuinely believe in reformism and the mixed economy — i.e. capitalism.' For this I was severely berated by Cyril Smith. I rejoice in this minor polemical victory.

You question my explanation of Healy as a sub-

conscious left-over from his Stalinist Third Period past on the grounds that the Healy-led SLL/WRP was both sectarian and opportunist. So was the Third Period — a combination of sectarian ultra-leftism and opportunism.

I can give you many examples of this opportunism but will limit myself to one — the 'Red Referendum' of August 1931, when the German Communist Party formed a 'united front' with the Nazis to overthrow the Centre Government in Prussia — this at the same time when they were pursuing a policy of the united front only from below toward the Social Democrats and physically breaking up SD meetings.

As Lenin pointed out: ultra-leftism and opportunism are nearly always simply different sides of the same coin.

You refer to the fact that I opposed the positions of Pablo before Healy took up this fight. Yes, and so did Betty Hamilton and Harry Ratner if my memory serves me right.

We took issue with the re-

solutions of the Third World Congress which was later to be repeated and amplified in Pablo's Thesis on Stalinism which became the cornerstone of the campaign against 'Pabloism'.

At first both sides claimed that they were the defendants of the decisions of the Third Congress. This was palpably nonsense as there were no differences in principle between the resolutions and the thesis.

Although I opposed, at the time, the tactics and strategy which flowed from these positions, I never resorted to the use of the term 'pabloism'.

This was the creation of Cannon and Healy to justify the split in 1953 in the same way as Zinoviev and Kamenev created the myth of 'Trotskyism' after Lenin's death in 1922.

Healy became the most ardent peddler of this myth and continued to use it unscrupulously to try and block re-unification in 1963.

I did not think, in 1953, that a split was justified and said so at the fateful meeting in

Caxton Hall where this was consummated.

I went along with the British majority reluctantly because, having worked with Lawrence on 'Socialist Outlook' I was only too aware of the direction he was travelling and had no desire to accompany him on that journey.

The facts are that the International Secretariat never liquidated the Fourth International as predicted by the anti-pabloites.

Furthermore, a number of sections who were in political agreement with the International Committee chose to remain with the IS which was a more coherent international organisation than the IC (see letter from Peng She-tse to Lee, Feb 1956).

The case for re-unification was overwhelming. As James P Cannon pointed out, it was only 'the factional ultimatum of the British' (i.e. Healy, with Bill Hunter only half-a-step behind) which kept them out of the re-unified international. (Letter to Tom Kerry, 3 July, 1957). A great opportunity was lost.

Just look at some of the most ardent fighters against 'Pabloism' and see where they are today — Lambert, Tim Wohlforth, Robertson — Healy himself. It is a joke to think of these people as the defenders of Trotskyism.

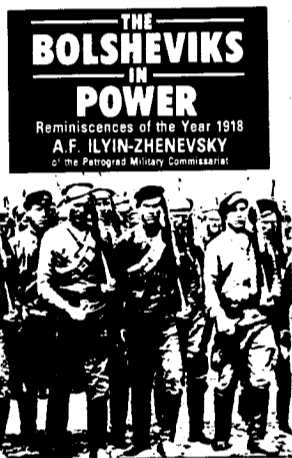
Finally you remark that my 'later political evolution has brought me into the same circles as... notably Ernest Mandel and others who have openly broken from Trotskyism.'

When and where? This is not political argument but slander from the same cesspool which led to the false charges against Hansen and Novack and that notorious article 'The Platform of Shame'. Slander is the final resort of those who can no longer argue politically.

Far from my political position 'evolving', I stand today where I stood in 1953 — squarely on the platform of the Fourth International. I am proud to be associated with people like Ernest Mandel in building and strengthening the Fourth International.

Charlie van Gelderen

## 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:



History of the Bolshevik Party  
GRIGORII ZINOVIEV

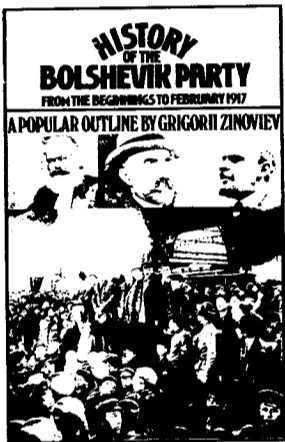
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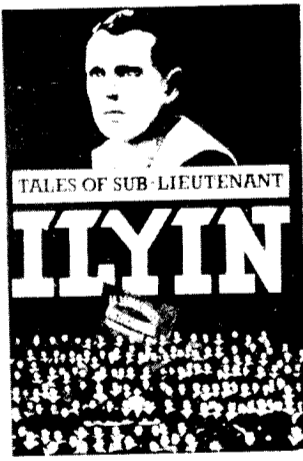
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JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464989.

PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22338.

EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.

ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.

GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.

JOHN MCCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.

HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.

PATRICK MULRYAN, 20-year sentence, 461575.

NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

**PARKHURST**

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PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.

GERRY McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.

PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.

SEAN McSHANE, B75898.

TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence 69204.

PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

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HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.

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SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

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Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP

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STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence 758663.

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ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.

**FRANKLAND**

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside,

Durham

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BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662.

PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.

CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662.

MICHAEL J MCKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486.

EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

**LEICESTER**

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2

7AJ

PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.

BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380.

PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

**WORMWOOD SCRUBS**

HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane

Road, London W12 0AE

DONAL CRAIG, 4 years.

VINCE DONNELLY, Life Sentence, 274064.

**DURHAM**

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street,

Durham.

MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.

ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

**REMAND PRISONERS:**

**BRIXTON**

HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton,

London SW2 5XF.

G. (DANNY) McNAMEE, L48616

LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693

PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694

LIAM QUINN, 49930

**INNOCENT MEN AND**

**WOMEN FRAMED BY THE**

**BRITISH POLICE:**

CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM

Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire

PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison

Gartree.

GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison

Long Lartin.

PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Long

Lartin.

JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.

HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Pris-

on, Wormwood Scrubs.

JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison,

Wormwood Scrubs.

BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison,

Wormwood Scrubs.

GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison,

Wormwood Scrubs.

RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM

Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.

PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison,

Wormwood Scrubs.

PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, HM Prison,

Wormwood Scrubs.

They are all serving life and in the case of

Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.

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



PERSONAL COLUMN

Peter Fryer

Opening eyes

WITH our attention naturally fixed on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution other notable anniversaries tend to get short shrift.

But it would be a pity to forget the great upsurge of working class militancy in Trinidad and Barbados that made 1937 such a difficult year for British imperialism.

Fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 had greatly stimulated the national liberation movement throughout the Caribbean. Trinidad dockers had refused to unload Italian ships, and there was a marked surge of black consciousness and political awareness in all the British-held islands.

But the root cause of the great strike movement that gripped the British colony of Trinidad in June 1937 was the worsening living conditions of the masses: unemployment, underemployment, grinding poverty, malnutrition, deficiency diseases, and atrocious housing.

For all the vast profits taken by their British employers, Trinidadian oil workers were earning less than they had earned in the 1920s.

Between 1935 and 1937 they were unionised: in the south, by the Grenada-born labour leader Uriah Butler, who said he was conducting 'a heroic struggle for British justice for British Blacks in a British country'; in the north, by the socialist and anti-imperialist Negro Welfare, Cultural and Social Association (NWA).

Led by Jim Barrat, Elma François, Rupert Gittens, Christina King, Clement Payne, and Bertie Perceval, the NWA had strong support among the unemployed.

When the Forest Reserve oil workers struck on 18 June there was an attempt to arrest Butler, who went into hiding, then gave himself up and was tried and sentenced to two months' hard labour.

The workers responded with widespread strikes and rioting, and within 48 hours the

strike was general. Two policemen were killed at Fyzabad; the police killed 12 workers and wounded 50.

At first the governor made certain concessions. But the oil companies put pressure on the Colonial Office, and the governor capitulated, switching suddenly from conciliation to repression and calling in British troops.

One of the main results of the 1937 struggle in Trinidad was the rise of an organised trade union movement — though under Colonial Office and British TUC tutelage, and with leaders who mostly knuckled under to British paternalism.

In July 1937 police fired 800 rounds of ammunition into unarmed crowds in the Barbados capital of Bridgetown, killing 14 and wounding 47. Over 500 were arrested, and some of these were sent to prison for five years, others for ten — sentences later reduced by the Colonial Secretary.

The demonstrators were protesting against the arrest of a young Trinidad-born activist called Clement Osbourne Payne, a member of the Trinidad Youth League. Not long before, he had distributed the first May Day leaflets ever seen in Barbados, and he soon had the police after him when he started speaking at meetings urging the workers to organise to improve their conditions.

People said: 'Because he opening we eyes they're trying to lock him up.'

Arrested after leading a march on Government House, Payne was deported. This brought large crowds on the streets, damaging cars, pushing them into the sea, and breaking shop windows.

With showers of bottles and stones the crowds chased the police into the central police station, from which they emerged armed with .303 rifles.

Lightermen and stevedores came out on strike, and the rising spread to rural districts, where starving people broke into shops and raided sweet-potato fields.

Even the highly biased report of the commission of inquiry (the Deane Commission) admitted that sheer hunger had helped to cause these outbreaks in the countryside. 'There was a large accumulation of explosive matter in the island to which the Payne incident only served as a detonator', said the commissioners, adding that it was 'a question of undoubted stark

poverty'.

Four of Payne's supporters, Fitz Archibald ('Menzies') Chase, Mortimer ('Mortie') Skeete, Darnley ('Brain') Alleyne, and Ulric Grant, were unmercifully beaten up while in police custody, and their ordeal was the subject of songs handed down in the oral tradition.

Chase was jailed for nine months for having 'incited' the crowd to riot by merely declaring: 'Tonight will be a funny day.'

One result of the rising was the formation of the Barbados Progressive League under the leadership of C. A. ('Chrissie') Brathwaite and Grantley Adams.

A few months later these events in Trinidad and Barbados were to be eclipsed by the great 1938 uprising in Jamaica, which shook the British colonial system to its foundations.

I hope to return to this important period of British imperial history about which nothing whatever is taught in our schools, so that the British-born grandchildren of the Caribbean workers and peasants of 50 years ago know little or nothing of their grandparents' struggles.

What the schools fail to teach can and must be taught by other means. Opening eyes? Why not, indeed?

Bloody Sunday

WHEN I wrote here a few weeks ago about Bloody Sunday I said the biography of Cunningham Graham by Cedric Watts and Laurence Davies contained the best recent account known to me of that day's events.

Since then I've found a still better one, in Rodney Mace's 'Trafalgar Square — Emblem of Empire' (Lawrence and Wishart, 1976).

The author of that book is main speaker at a meeting to commemorate Bloody Sunday and the free-speech martyr Alfred Linnell (a radical law-writer, not, as I wrote, a socialist worker), murdered by a blow from a mounted police-

man's truncheon.

This meeting takes place at 11a.m. on Sunday, 22 November, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Mace's talk will be illustrated with slides, and there will be a reading from William Morris.

Wind and pith

THOSE watching television on the morrow of the Great Hurricane had to endure the predictable spectacle of Margaret Thatcher at her oiliest, and a hardly less nauseating performance by a member of the Labour 'Shadow Cabinet'.

This self-important bag of wind droned on and on without saying anything remotely germane or memorable or helpful.

Rightly are they called shadows, these puffed-up bladders of pomp and circumlocution. When it comes to leadership, they're all shadow and no substance.

Real leadership in an emergency says what needs to be said in as few words as possible. Like the pithy statement made just after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 by the marquis of Alorna:

'Bury the dead; feed the living; and shut the doors.'

These words are often attributed to the marquis of Pombal, and may well have been authored by him.

Pombal was Portugal's Peter the Great, a moderniser who clipped the wings of the Inquisition, sent the Jesuits packing, dismissed the Papal Nuncio, disbanded monasteries and convents, humbled the older nobility by executing the plotters among them, fought against foreign economic penetration, stopped the persecution of the Jews, and freed the African slaves in the Alentejo and Algarve.

Not the sort of person to use 9,000 words where nine would do.

LISTINGS

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

**GRENADA: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES** Public Meeting, Saturday 24 October, 6-9p.m., Shepherds Bush Baptist Church Hall, Shepherds Bush Road, London W6. Organised by the New Jewel Movement 19 Committee. 01-928 2136

**TWENTY YEARS OF THE ABORTION ACT** National Abortion Campaign: Twelfth Annual Conference, Saturday Sunday 31 October/1 November Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London, WC2B 5AU. Speakers include Jo Richardson MP, representatives from Committee in Defence of Women's Rights in Iran, Tamil Women's League and Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, Crèche and Disabled Access

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE — TOWARDS A SOCIALIST AGENDA** Day Conference, Saturday 14 November, Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N4. Organised by Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice. For further details phone Ruth Allan, Northwood (65) 24666; Bron Roberts, 01-903 4921; Chris Naylor, 01-226 3396.

**TRADE UNIONS AGAINST MSC** Conference to co-ordinate opposition to MSC schemes and government policies on unemployment through the trade unions. Saturday 7 November, 9.30a.m.-5p.m. Dr Jonson House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham B4. Registration £5. Contact: M.Arkwright 01-521 4130.

**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, Trafalgar Square. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

**CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR)** Weekly planning meetings every Tuesday 7.30p.m. Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, N4 (01-991 2938.)

**BRING BACK VICTORIA WILLIAMS!** Campaign meetings second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. 7.30p.m., UCA, Uxton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, W3.

**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.

**VIRAJ MENDIS LONDON SUPPORT GROUP** Downing Street Protest every Monday, 6p.m.-7p.m. (Westminster/Charing Cross tubes.) Weekly organisational meetings take place after the picket.

**BULLETIN OF THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE (BIRMINGHAM)** Now available on subscription: £2 per year (3 issues incl. pp). From: Tiochaidh Ar La c/o IHSCC, PO Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11 4AU

THE LONG MARCH

26-31 October, East Anglia including Cambridge, Norwich, Colchester. For details: tel 0533-712041.

**Sunday 1 November 7p.m.**  
Assembly Rooms  
Lambeth Town Hall  
Brixton  
London  
Tickets £1.50  
Unwaged 50p  
Details: 01-274 4000 ext 372

Workers Revolutionary Party  
Tower Hamlets Marxist Discussion  
St George's Methodist Hall,  
Cable St., E1 (nearest tube: Shadwell)  
7.30pm

Friday 6 November: Stalinism in Britain  
Friday 4 December: The Stalinist theory of socialism in a single country

In the 70th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution  
East London WRP  
Discussions on Marxism  
Sunday 25 October 7.30p.m.

CORRECTION

In some of our adverts for the WRP Conway Hall meeting on 22 October we referred to Paul Trehwela as a member of City of London Anti-Apartheid. We wish to make clear that Comrade Trehwela addressed the meeting in a personal capacity and apologise for this mistake.

manchester martyrs commemoration



ON 23 November 1867 William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien were hanged for their part in the shooting of a policeman. They were part of a five-man team who attempted to rescue two Fenian leaders being transported in a prison van in Manchester.

A hand-picked jury convicted all five men. Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were publicly hanged and buried in Strangeways Prison.

Thousands marched in protest against the executions and money was raised for a monument in Moston Cemetery. Since then an annual commemoration has been held to honour the Manchester Martyrs, and to highlight the continuing struggle of present Irish freedom fighters.

Last year's march had over 1,500 people commemorating the Martyrs and supporting the contemporary freedom fighters. Donations are urgently needed towards the cost of the march, travel expenses for invited speakers from Ireland and Republican Flute Bands from Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Organisations are asked to affiliate, individuals to make donations.

Sunday November 22nd 1987

MANCHESTER

Name.....  
Address.....  
Donation/affiliation (£10 for organisations) £.....  
Do you want to receive regular bulletins in the run-up to the march?.....  
Send to Manchester Martyrs Committee, c/o Grass Roots, 1 Newton Street, Manchester 1.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PUBLIC MEETING

- Victory to the South African Revolution!
  - Free Moses Mayekiso and all political detainees!
  - Trade union sanctions against the apartheid state!
- Monday 26 October 7.30p.m.  
West Indian Sports & Social Club  
Westwood Street  
Moss Side, Manchester  
Speakers: Dave Temple (WRP Central Committee)

FREE VLADIMIR KLEBANOV

Free Trade Unionist DEMONSTRATE At the Soviet Embassy Wed 25 November 18 Kensington Palace Gardens 1.30 to 3.00





# Poll Tax on the Eve of the English Revolution

**THE YEAR 1381 was not the last occasion in which a government in Britain attempted to apply a poll tax according to an article by Conrad Russell in the October issue of 'History Today'.**

In 1641, on the eve of the outbreak of the English Revolution, a desperate parliament faced with the hostility of the propertied sector of the population to all traditional forms of taxation, turned to a poll tax to spread the burden down to the poorer classes.

Dr Russell is not suggesting that a Poll Tax was responsible for the subsequent civil (i.e. class) war.

On the contrary, he believes the authorities were extremely conscious of the contribution made by the 1380 levy to the great rising of the following year and were very anxious to learn from the errors of their predecessors.

Through the early part of the 17th century the English bourgeoisie had proved increasingly reluctant to meet the debts of feudal absolutism without achieving a political role in keeping with its own economic power.

In 1640, as historian Christopher Hill put it, the bourgeoisie 'went on strike'.

The Scots took the opportunity to throw off control by the English Church, Crown and aristocracy, and when King Charles I tried to re-establish his authority they marched south and occupied the English northern counties.

## Withdraw

They would only withdraw if given guarantees of their rights, along with a sizeable indemnity to pay off their troops. At the same time cash was needed to pay the English army.

## BY BERNARD FRANKS

Charles had no money at all and had to call a parliament with a strong involvement of merchants and upper gentry, the men with the money.

Horrified at their demands for political rights and redress of grievances before they could consider a hand-out, he dissolved the body after just three weeks. This was the so-called Short Parliament.

## Link Up

With the Scots threatening to march south to link up with sympathetic English forces. The king called a second parliament and in May 1641 made major concessions including the execution of the Earl of Stratford, the imprisoning of Archbishop Laval and the abolition of the Star Chamber.

In June 1641 the House of Commons agreed to raise £242,000 to pay off the Scots.

An initial plan to call in and melt down gentlemen's plate was rejected because it was said the Mint was not up to the task. Instead a poll tax was considered.

So nervous of the political risks was its proposer, Secretary Vane, that he urged government to exempt



**In 1641, on the eve of the outbreak of the English Revolution, a desperate parliament turned to a poll tax to spread the burden down to the poorer classes. However these classes moved into action to bring feudalism to an end. Above: General Fairfax and the Military Council meet in Putney Church, from the 'Putney Debates' of 1647.**

all cottagers and day labourers totally.

The concession finally decided on, however, was that it would be a steeply graduated tax.

The rates approved by the House of Commons on 18 June 1641 ranged from £100

for a Duke (purely cosmetic as there was only one), £60 for Bishops, £10 for Esquires, £5 for Gentlemen and sixpence (two-and-a-half pence in decimal currency) for everyone below that level who was not in receipt of alms.

There were hopes that snobbery would take a hand at the middle levels as gentry sought to prove their right to be termed 'Esquire' and upwardly striving yeoman farmers affected the title 'gentleman'.

Russell comments that

these interests rapidly evaporated when they had to be paid for. Instead such people looked to become downwardly mobile in order to cut their tax bills.

Lower down the scale there occurred ominous local disturbances as distraint on goods and livestock was resorted to.

Collection proved so slow that the debts to the armies in terms of back pay were increasing faster than money was coming in, demobilisation not being tenable without pay-out.

## Revolt

At the end of July only £18,000 had been collected. Commissioners sent to reassess non-payers were particularly reluctant in Essex, where the 1381 revolt had begun.

By early December 1641 £256,000 had been raised 'long after it was needed'.

This was just over half the original sum, but in the meantime this had grown enormously from the addition of interest charges on money borrowed in anticipation of tax not yet collected.

However, no more pressure was applied. Eventually the situation was superseded by an outbreak of open hostilities as the poorest classes moved into action to make parliament, in spite of its poll tax, the sole power and to bring feudalism to an end.

The bourgeoisie would then have to pay heavily, though still reluctantly, to make and maintain its own revolution.

As for the 1641 levy, Conrad Russell concludes: 'The House of Commons had succeeded in raising a poll tax without raising a rebellion, but only at the price of turning the tax into a fiscal damp squib.'

# THE SOCIAL FUND: What it means

FROM PENSIONERS LINK NL

**IT SEEMS AGES ago that Pensioners Link submitted evidence to the Government during the consultation period leading up to the Social Security Act. The publication this June of draft guidelines for DHSS officers confirm our worst fears.**

The Social Fund replaces the present system of grants (Single Payments) to people on supplementary benefits who have less than £500 savings, in order to help them cope with unexpected expenditure which they cannot pay for out of their weekly benefit. The system was changed in August 1986 and 'change' means tighter rules when claims can be made, less items for which claims can be made, and less categories of claimants who qualify.

From April next, when the new law comes into effect, the Social Fund will mainly be in the form of loans, which will have to be repaid out of the persons weekly benefit. This will amount to a cut in pension. It is truly amazing that the government suggests people have to live below the subsistence level (which supplementary

benefit effectively is), which they themselves have set.

What worries us, welfare rights workers, is that larger essentials, like a replacement cooker (£150) or roof repair (£300 or so) will mean larger deductions from weekly benefit, thus pushing people more and more into poverty. Will pensioners apply to the Social Fund if

this means they will have £5 or £6 deducted all through the winter months, when fuel bills already form a pensioners biggest worry?

Each local DHSS office will have a cash-limited Fund. While at present a person qualifies for a grant on the basis of the need for the particular item, in future a loan can be refused because the local office has run out of money. This situation is made worse, because the draft guidelines forbid people to make 'repeat claims' after having been refused. It also instructs DHSS staff not to make an award which could result in overspending the local budget.

## Loans

The guidelines tell DHSS Officers not to make loans, no matter how great the need, if they consider that the person will be unable to repay — repayments will normally be at the rate of

15per cent of the claimants income (but can be up to 25per cent). If someones claim is refused, it will be likely that they fall in the hands of 'loan sharks'. An article in the Guardian in June reported a 75 year old woman who was waiting to be operated on but she was too weak to have surgery as she had starved herself in order to repay £28 per week out of her £41 pension to pay a moneylender.

The whole issue of the Social Fund will be discussed again in Parliament as additional legislation will have to be introduced: Norman Fowler has failed to notice that the Social Security Act did not include powers to deduct money to repay loans. It is therefore hoped that Pensioners Link as well as other pensioners organisations can lobby the powers that be to take out the most damaging parts of this uncaring piece of legislation, which will do pensioners and others untold harm.

# Union accepts Sunday racing

**SUNDAY racing, initially opposed right across the industry by transport union members, has now been accepted.**

The T&GWU organises stable staff, transporters, starter stalls, racecourse personnel and catering, while the ACTSS group represents the employees of the TOTE and licensed betting offices.

Each section is affected by the Sunday racing proposals in different ways:

- Stable staff accompanying horses to a Sunday race meeting will have a continuous 13-day work period and others who cover their duty at the stables will have extra work.
- Transporters can only work six days per week by law and would therefore have to receive an alternative day of rest in the event of working on a Sunday.
- Betting office staff deal with a

far wider trade than just horse racing and can expect to be affected for 52 Sundays, not just the seven to 12 projected by the Jockey Club.

When a working party was established, it became clear that little was to be considered besides what overtime rate would apply.

Because much more fundamental issues were involved, the T&GWU initially declared total opposition.

However the union recently announced that the membership directly related to horse racing is now prepared to accept the concept of Sunday racing.

Licensed betting office membership remains adamantly opposed to the opening of the shops on Sundays and there is little prospect of a change of policy on their part.

Apart from Coral Racing, all other bookmakers have resisted union efforts to establish representation, particularly Lad-brokers where there is substantial membership.



# ROBSON'S CHOICE

## Diego Rivera: art and politics

**Diego Rivera: A Retrospective**, opens in London's Hayward Gallery on 29 October and will run until 10 January 1988. Not to be missed!

When the Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910 Rivera was living and working in Paris. Many of the Modernist-inspired canvases he painted in this period will be on show for the first time.

Before his return to Mexico in 1921 he went to Italy where he studied the famous Renaissance frescos of Giotto, Uccello and others. They made a deep impression on Rivera and had much to do with shaping his future as an artist.

In his own words, he was 'born again' when he returned to his native Mexico in 1921: 'All the colours I could see seemed heightened: they were clearer, richer, better and more luminous. Blacks had a depth which they had never had in Europe. I was at the centre of a plastic world in which colours and shapes existed in absolute purity.'

'In everything I saw a potential masterpiece — the crowds, the markets, the festivals, the marching battalions, the working men in the shops and in the fields — in every glowing face, in every luminous child. Everything was revealed to me. I had the conviction that if I lived a thousand lives I could not possibly exhaust this storehouse of beauty.'

'The first canvas I did amazed me,' he explained. 'It was really good! From then on I worked confidently and contentedly. The inner doubts which had tormented me in Europe had disappeared. I painted with the same naturalness with which I breathed, talked and sweated. My style was born as children are born, in a moment, except that this birth had come after a torturous pregnancy of 35 years.'

Once in Mexico, Rivera did not have long to wait before he received the first of many large-scale commissions; to paint frescos along the open-air galleries of the National Preparatory School in Mexico City.

Although these and the many other massive murals he was responsible for cannot be transported, a representative selection of individual panels will be on display at the Hayward Gallery in actual-size colour reproduction.

As some readers will already know, Diego Rivera is not celebrated only for his art, but also for his politics. Of the three great Mexican mural painters committed to the notion of public art — art for the people — Rivera was the only one who, for some years, though in an increasingly confused way, gave his political allegiance to the Fourth International.

(Siquieros, who led an armed raid on Trotsky's house, lived and died a Stalinist. Orozco, the third member of this distinguished trio, was a life-long anarchist.)

The Trotskyist movement will always owe Rivera a debt of gratitude for having used his personal influence with President Cardenas to secure political asylum for Leon Trotsky and his wife Natalia when no other country, including Britain, would give them shelter.

Trotsky, for his part, held Rivera — artist and friend — in the highest regard. 'Shortly after the tanker halted', he wrote on arrival in Tampico in January 1937, 'a gov-

ernment cutter approached carrying representatives of the local federal authorities, Mexican and foreign journalists, and, most important of all, true and reliable friends. Here was Frida Rivera, wife of the famous artist whom illness had detained in hospital.

Their future relationship — both political and personal — was to be anything but easy, as Trotsky lucidly explained in a series of letters written early in 1939.

'It is very difficult for me to find out the real source of Diego's discontent,' Trotsky admitted to Frida Rivera. 'Twice I tried to provoke a frank discussion on the matter, but he was very general in his answers.

'The only thing I could extract from him was his indignation at my reluctance to recognise those characteristics in him which would make for a good revolutionary functionary.'

He went on to explain precisely what he meant: 'I insisted that he should never accept a bureaucratic position in the organisation, because a "secretary" who never writes, never answers letters, never comes to meetings on time and always makes the opposite of the common decision is not a good secretary.'

'And I ask you, why should Diego be a "secretary"? That he is an authentic revolutionary needs no proof; but he is a revolutionary multiplied by a great artist and it is even this "multiplication" which makes him absolutely unfit for routine work in the party.'

'I am certain that in the time of a revolutionary tide he would be invaluable, thanks to his passion, courage and imagination. In peacetime he is precious on a revolutionary staff which he can inspire by his initiative and ardour. But for routine organisational work, our friend Diego is absolutely unfit.'

'It seemed as though', Trotsky continued, 'he had the ambition of proving to me that he was the best bureaucrat in the world and that he had become a great painter only by chance.'

Rivera's response was to launch an even more vitriolic and subjective attack on Trotsky, making relations quite intolerable, the more so because Trotsky and Natalia were still living in Rivera's house for which the latter would not accept even a token rent.

Rivera's way out of revolutionary politics took the form of inventing conspiracies in which he was obliged to play the role of unwitting 'victim', slandering individual comrades without proof or justification and hurling gratuitous invective at the leadership when it correctly defended them against these attacks. The whole affair has a very familiar ring about it.

Despite Trotsky's efforts to encourage Rivera to withdraw his wild accusations, his individualism manifested itself with a logic of its own, leading eventually to his resignation from the Fourth International.

Trotsky's support for Rivera, however, never wavered. At the height of his



Writer André Breton, Diego Rivera and Trotsky in Mexico

dispute with Rivera, when the latter was being publicly vilified by tin-pot journalist Vegas Leons, Trotsky sprang to his defence:

'Vegas Leon, with comical scorn in each line, calls Comrade Rivera "painter", as if this word carries itself a frightful condemnation. Senor Vegas Leon, in order to add to the weight of his irony, the irony of an impotent philistine, should have spoken of a "great painter"; if it is an evil to be a painter, it is incomparably worse to be a gifted master.'

'Imitating Lombardo Toladano and other bourgeois "socialists", Trotsky continued, 'Leon accuses Rivera of selling his paintings to the bourgeoisie. But who can buy paintings in capitalist society if not the bourgeoisie?'

'The overwhelming number of artists, dependent on the bourgeoisie because of social conditions, are united ideologically with the bourgeoisie. Rivera represents an exceptional case because he maintains complete moral independence from the bourgeoisie.' (My emphasis).

Within a couple of months of resigning, Rivera had founded the Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party and installed himself as its first secretary. It had, in Trotsky's words, a petty-bourgeois, reformist programme and no international connections. It was, again in Trotsky's opinion, doomed to failure.

'After his resignation', a statement of the Pan-American Committee noted, 'Comrade Rivera declared that he would remain an active sympathiser. If there is any sense in human words, then an active sympathiser would mean a person who helps the party from outside. But can we call anyone a sympathiser who creates a new party, opposing it to the Fourth International and its Mexican section?'

'We must state openly that not only has Rivera resigned from the Fourth International, but that by his political activity he puts himself fundamentally outside the Fourth International. Where principles are involved we cannot permit any concessions, even toward such an important figure as Diego Rivera.' (My emphasis).

In 1955, after a few years in the political wilderness, Rivera was welcomed back by the Mexican Communist Party which had expelled him from its ranks in 1929.

In Frida (Rivera) Kahlo's blue house in Coyoacan, now a museum, where the Trots-

kys lived for many months, you will find a painter's easel sitting in the middle of the modest-sized studio. Resting on the easel is one of Kahlo's last oil paintings: a portrait of Josef Stalin.

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● ● On Saturday, at 7.55p.m.(BBC2), **Dance from America**. At 9.45p.m.(BBC2), the first of two feature films from the Soviet Union, Irakli Kvirikadze's **The Swimmer**, followed at 11.05p.m. by Vadim Abdrashitov's **Plumbum, or a Dangerous Game**.

On Sunday, at 10a.m.(C4), Link explains what new aids are now available to assist people with impaired vision, and how the NHS fails to make them available. At 2.20p.m.(Radio 3), Mozart's opera **Don Giovanni**. At 3p.m.(BBC1), Vittorio de Sica's amusing **After the Fox**, starring Peter Sellers.

At 5p.m.(BBC2), **Music in Camera**. At 5.30p.m.(BBC2),

Review presents Soviet **Popular Culture**. At 7.50p.m.(BBC2), **The Great Philosophers focusses on Hume**. At 9p.m.(Radio 4), **Alexandra Kollontai: Portrait of a Revolutionary**. At 10.30p.m.(ITV), **The South Bank Show** presents a portrait of artist **Andy Warhole**, who died earlier this year.

On Monday, at 12.30p.m.(Radio 3), pianist Barry Douglas plays **Bach and Mussorgsky**. At 9p.m.(BBC2), Joyce Chopra's delicate **Smooth Talk**. At 9.30p.m.(BBC1), **Panorama** looks at the governments proposed Poll Tax. At 11p.m.(C4), The first in a new series of documentaries tracing the history of the British working class and the socialist movement: **The People's Flag — Part One: The First Betrayal**. At 11.30p.m.(ITV), **Beginners Please**.

On Tuesday, at 9p.m.(C4), part-two of **Apartheid**, entitled **A New Order**. At 9.30p.m.(BBC2), **Footsteps** presents **Pyramids** in the

**Jungle**, Alfred Maudslay's 1850 exploration of Central America. At 10.30p.m.(ITV), **Pravda**. At 11.30p.m.(ITV), one of Claude Goretta's early films, **This Wonderful Crook**.

On Wednesday, at 3p.m.(Radio 4), **Play: The Price of Gold**, by John Fletcher. At 9.30p.m.(BBC1), **Mafia Wars**, a documentary.

On Thursday, at 10.15p.m.(C4), a unique documentary from the Soviet Union focussing on Soviet youth: **Is It Easy To Be Young?** At 10.30p.m.(ITV), **The City Programme**, looks at recent events in the 'financial service industries'. (Rumour has it that the programme title will shortly be changed to **Going for a Laugh**.) At 12.10p.m.(C4), Julien Duvivier's 1936 gangster classic, **Pepe le Moko**.

On Friday, American playwright Arthur Miller is interviewed in **Omnibus**.

**TOM SCOTT ROBSON**



Channel Four's 'The Eleventh Hour' presents the first of five documentaries in a new series called 'The People's Flag'. They trace the history of the British working class and of the Socialist movement from 1914 to the present time. The first programme, **The First Betrayal**, covers the period to 1931 and examines the impact on British labour of World War I, the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, the 1926 General Strike and the first two Labour governments. The series is written by Stuart Hood and directed by Chris Reeves.

# the South African Revolution

Saturday, 24 October.

AAM National Demonstration for Sanctions. London. Assemble 12 noon EMBANKMENT. March to Hyde Park for 3p.m. rally. Chief speaker: Sam Nujoma, president of SWAPO. Details: 01-387 7966.

**THE HEROIC** struggle of the South African working class against the hated apartheid/capitalist system has understandably aroused the support and sympathy of workers and youth throughout the world.

The recent South African miners' strike raised this struggle to a new level. It marked the open entry of the most powerful section of the South African working class into direct struggle against the Botha regime. The miners' strike was not defeated. In fact nothing was resolved and the big issues still lie ahead.

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

The eyes of the whole world are now fixed on this struggle.

The African National Congress (ANC) in partnership with the South African Communist Party is at present in the leadership of the South African working class.

If they remain in this position the working class will be defeated, in the same way that the British working class will be defeated if the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy maintain its stranglehold over the British working class.

The policies of the African National Congress more and more involve an accommodation with South African capitalism.

The ANC has cynically used the struggle and sacrifice of the masses to bring the capitalists to the negotiating table. This policy is inspired by the 'peaceful coexistence' policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

ANC officials have met on several occasions with representatives of big business, including Harry Oppenheimer, whose Anglo-American Corporation distinguished itself recently by the brutal tactics it used in the miners' strike.

South African capital increasingly recognises the need to create a black middle class if the struggle of the

working class is to be controlled. This is why the ANC falsely claims that the enemy in South Africa is apartheid, and that this apartheid is separate from capitalism.

The policies pursued by the South African Communist Party reflect slavishly the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy.

These policies are laid out with the utmost clarity in recent public statements from two of the five deputy directors of the Moscow-based Institute of African Studies.

In a recent interview with the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung', Gleb Starushenko, one of the deputy directors, suggested an ethnically-based parliament with a veto for each group in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Starushenko also believes that Buthelezi's Inkatha movement could not be written out of the negotiations for such a parliament, which should be broadened beyond the ANC and the present government.

(The Inkatha group is a reactionary and racist Zulu-based organisation which specialises in the murder of workers, particularly those on strike.)

These Institute members share a belief that Southern Africa offers the potential of regional co-operation with

the United States. They both oppose an escalation of the military struggle and they claim that South Africa is not ripe for socialism.

A fierce debate is now raging in the South African unions around the adoption of the Freedom Charter, a document which manifests only the limited compromise politics of the ANC.

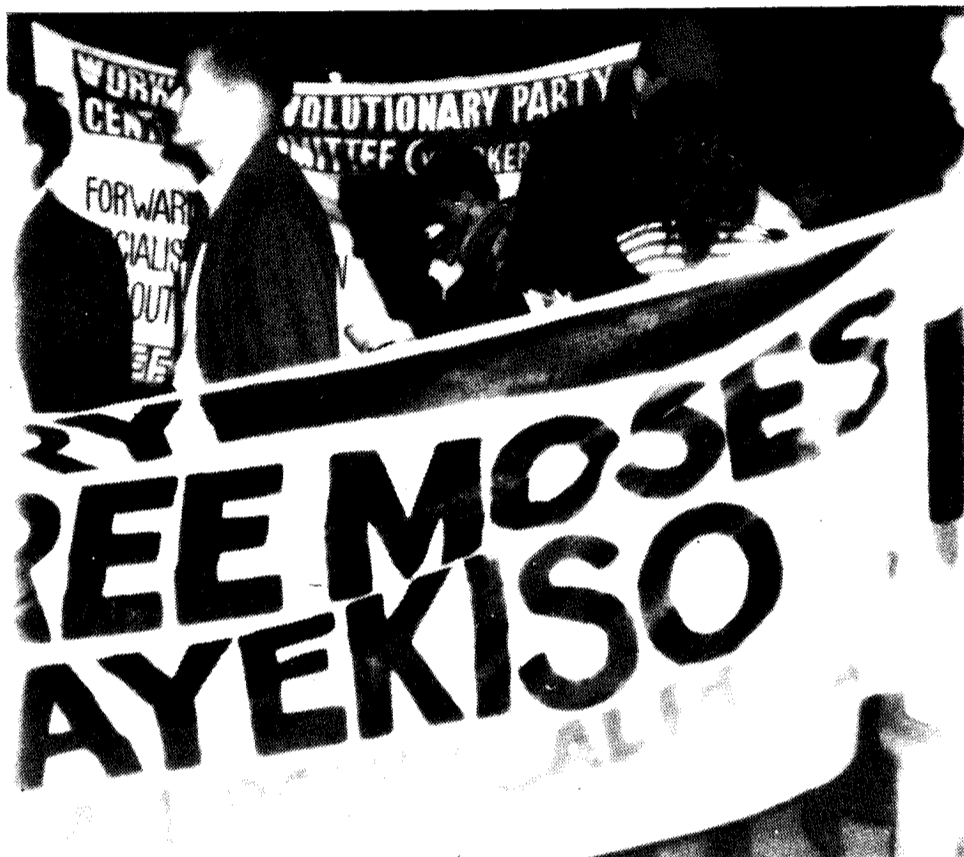
A delegate to the inaugural conference of the 140,000-strong National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) reports a bitter clash between the merging unions over the adoption of the Freedom Charter.

'Some delegates felt that the Freedom Charter should not be adopted without it being fully discussed on the factory floor, and a mandate obtained from workers there.'

## Alliances

'Another viewpoint put forward was that delegates had to look at the tasks ahead of them as socialists. While one saw the necessity to form alliances with community-based organisations, this had to be seen in the context of the international and historical experience of the working class.'

'As socialists, it is important to build politically independent working-class organisation. Only when the working class takes the lead and organises independently can true democracy for all



A picket was held at the South African embassy last Monday to mark the reopening of the treason trial of Moses Mayekiso and four other defendants — see report page 3

the people in South Africa be guaranteed.

'In accordance with (the trade union federation) COSATU'S principle of the independence and leadership role of the working class, it is important that when the organised working class enters into an alliance, it does so on its own political programme. The working class is not forced to adapt themselves to the programmes of their allies.'

'It is clear that there was not a simplistic acceptance of the Freedom Charter as has been portrayed in the commercial press. Some socialists in NUMSA see the adoption... of the resolutions as having laid the basis for the development of a socialist political programme which will go beyond the limited demands of the Freedom Charter.'

## Symbol

'There are others who see the Freedom Charter as a symbol, but it must be remembered that the Freedom Charter is regarded by its supporters as a political programme. It commits its followers to a National Democratic struggle (i.e. freedom now, socialism later).'

'This in itself is not in the long-term interests of the working class. In order to establish the leadership of the working class, make correct alliances and build true socialism and democracy, the working class has to have its own clear political programme.'

'The Freedom Charter as it stands, can be accommodated by capitalism. Attempts to make the Freedom Charter acceptable... by distinguishing between the National Democratic struggle against apartheid and the socialist struggle against capitalism, is both misleading and incorrect. A dangerous trend is also the attempt to stifle debate around the clauses of the Freedom Charter.'

## Merger

The politics expressed in this statement also finds its echo in the failed merger conference for the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA). The issue at that conference was also an unscrupulous drive from a minority section to impose the Freedom Charter on the union.

**IN Britain hostility to the unfolding South African socialist revolution is concretely expressed in a determined opposition to the campaign to 'Free Moses Mayekiso'.**

Mayekiso is the national secretary of the most politically advanced union in South Africa, NUMSA.

**The position of all political trends in Britain on the unfolding South African revolution are settled most clearly by their attitude to Moses Mayekiso.**

Stalinism has spearheaded the fight to undermine the campaign for Mayekiso and they have been aided in

practice by such groups as the Socialist Workers Party who refused to support the 10 October Free Moses Mayekiso march in London.

They oppose Mayekiso because he represents the beginning of a growing opposition to the politics of Stalinism in the South African working class.

**Moses Mayekiso is not just one amongst thousands of political detainees.**

He embodies the socialist aspirations of tens of thousands of workers, which are in direct daily conflict with the Stalinist conception of the two-stage revolution — bourgeois democracy today and socialism at some unspecified distant date.

## Future

This fits in exactly with ANC policies which are for a black middle class today and socialism in the future, if at all.

The defence of every socialist in Britain is the fight for the release of Mayekiso. Every possible act of solidarity — through sanctions, publicity campaigns, collections for the BTR Sarmcol workers — must be carried out. (See advert page 12 for the Sarmcol play 'The Long March'.)

This is now the most concrete way to expose the politics of Stalinism, politics which can lead only to the betrayal of the South African revolution.



Moses Mayekiso