

Workers Press

Saturday 9 April 1988

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Number 117 20p

LABOUR CRISIS DEEPENS

THE DECISION of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to contest the leadership and deputy leadership of the Labour Party has opened a new crisis within the Party.

All the various groups are badly split. Three prominent members of the Campaign Group have resigned at the decision of Benn and Heffer to challenge for the leadership. Three others have left the group and more resignations are expected in the coming days.

Jo Richardson, Labour spokesman on women's rights, Clare Short and Margaret Beckett, two other frontbench spokesmen, have quit the group. Allan Roberts, together with former CND chairman Joan Ruddock and Joan Whalley have withdrawn from the group for the duration of the leadership contest. Short and Beckett voted against the decision to run Benn against Kinnock.

Labour's internal struggle has been accentuated by John Prescott's decision to challenge Roy Hattersley for the deputy leadership.

This turmoil in the Labour Party is undoubtedly a reflection of a mounting crisis within the Tory Party. The conflict between Thatcher and her Chancellor Nigel Lawson is no personality clash, but involves a conflict between finance capital and those making a last-ditch stand for what is left of British industry.

Lawson's efforts to stop sterling from rising on the foreign exchanges marks a desperate effort to prevent what are left of British exports from being priced out of world markets and the emergence of an uncontrollable year end.

The dominant wing in the Tory Party has clearly rejected this

BY THE EDITOR

course. For them, everything must be sold to realise immediate cash, whatever the economic and social consequences.

The virtual give-away of the Rover Group to privatised British Aerospace is the latest expression of this policy. Rover's accumulated debt of £1.9 billion is to be written off in return for a meagre £150 million.

The break-up of British industry, the return to private ownership of many of the state services, including the National Health Service, the elimination of many crucial local authority services on which millions depend, are expressions of a profound social crisis in which capitalism, even in one of the richer countries, cannot guarantee a basic standard of life for ordinary people.

The Labour Party is a reformist party. In 'good' times it provides a few reforms for a privileged minority in the working class and by this means seeks to tie the whole of the working class to capitalism. But the prospect of any such reforms is being swept away by this rapid break-up of British capitalism. Hence the upheaval in the Labour Party.

While we support Benn and Heffer against Kinnock and Hattersley, in the midst of this deepening social crisis, the question of the leadership is a secondary issue. The working class certainly cannot afford to wait for the possibility of another Labour government, whether led by Benn or anybody else.

The crisis hanging over millions of workers will not be solved on the parliamentary arena. It demands a revolutionary socialist policy for its solution.

The nationalisation of all basic industry, the banks and other means of finance under workers' control is the essential basis of such a policy.

The fight for it must be organised around the mobilisation of the working class to defend jobs, services and standards of living. Miners, railwaymen, local authority workers and health workers must come together in action committees. These must hammer out a policy and programme that can defeat Thatcher's privatisation drive. The widest possible discussion must be organised, open to all groups and opinions in the working class movement.

Such discussions must also have at their centre the issue of how to defeat all those in the labour movement who refuse to lead and mobilise the working class for such a fight.

Local action committees must become the basis for a network of regional and national committees under the control of the workers, answerable directly to those

electing them.

This movement would constitute, not only a powerful blow against the Thatcher government, but against all those 'new realists' in the trades union and labour movement whose policy is based on accommodation to and collaboration with the government.

In the epoch known to Marxists as imperialism — the epoch of the death-agony and break-up of capitalism — there is no middle way for the working class. Such a crisis demands revolutionary solution, which leaders of the Labour Party, neither right nor left, can provide.

Only a leadership which is determined to carry the fight through to the end — to the overthrow of capitalism — and armed with Marxist theory will be able to resolve the crisis facing millions of workers. To build this leadership is the task we have set ourselves and we ask all readers and supporters to join us in carrying this struggle forward.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Name date

Address

Trade Union Age (if under 21)

SEND TO:

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

TWENTY-EIGHT villagers were killed and a dozen more wounded when gunmen opened fire into a crowded dance hall in the Colombian village of La Mejor Esquina on the night of Easter Sunday.

According to the Cordoba department governor's office, the killers at La Mejor Esquina were looking for particular individuals, and the others shot at the fiesta just happened to be in the way.

It was the latest atrocity in the ongoing terror war waged by right-wing death squads against the Colombian workers and peasants. Union leader Angelino Garzon says the death squads are linked with big landowners, capitalists and the armed forces. He particularly blames the army.

'It is very strange that there has never been a clash between the heavily armed death squads and

EASTER MASSACRE

Union leader blames army

an army that has a heavy presence throughout Colombia,' pointed out Garzon, general secretary of the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), the country's main union confederation.

Garzon visited Britain last month for talks with MPs, union leaders and Amnesty International. His visit came after a period of escalation in the death squads' activities.

On 24 November, 1987, gunmen entered the offices of the Young Communist League in Medellin, herding people into a room and machine-gunning them, killing five

and wounding three. The YCL premises had been under police guard at the time.

On 12 February, a peasants' meeting in the Meta region was halted by an armed squad who read out a list of 12 names, took them away, and murdered them.

On 4 March, the death squads went to two banana plantations in Turbo, Uraba region where workers belonging to the agricultural workers' union SINTAGRO were on strike. They shot dead 21 union members.

Over 100 members of the CUT and over 1,000 political activists

were murdered in the past 18 months. Some 300 CUT members, including the whole National Executive, have received death threats.

Union leader Garzon is asking for international solidarity against the right-wing terror. He said a boycott of Colombian goods and produce would hit the business interests behind the death squads. It might be launched between May 30 and June 4 this year, when there is to be an 'International Week of Solidarity with the Struggle for Democracy in Colombia'.

SOUTH AFRICA

BOTHA LURCHES

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

BOTHA is finding it impossible to placate at the same time the rapidly developing right-wing turn of white voters and the growing menace of a gigantic well-organised black working class.

This is clear in the zig-zags of Pretoria over the past weeks.

In an effort to maintain the grip of the ruling Nationalist Party, raids were either staged or threatened into neighbouring states — notably Botswana, where four alleged ANC members were murdered. In Paris, Dulcie September, a prominent ANC representative, was assassinated.

In South Africa itself 17 black organisations were banned and a demonstration of black church leaders was broken up.

These attacks were staged on the eve of an important urban by-election, widely and accurately forecast to be a walkover for the ultra-right Conservative Party. Significantly, the government's media campaign showing connections between the Conservatives and the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging was abandoned after two previous contests gave decisive victories to the Conservatives.

The right wing party split from Botha's Nationalists in 1982, in response to a surge of activity in the organised black working class. It promises a return to the old rigid Apartheid and the overturn of Botha's limited reforms.

They need 83 seats to control parliament, and now hold 22. In the opinion of many, if a general election were to be called now they would win at least another 40.

In the same period, the execution of the Sharpeville Six has been delayed a month through the due process of the law, the forced removal of the black township of



Oukasie was simply dropped and the Appeal Court decided the government did not have the power to force the Moutse people to be incorporated into the 'homeland' of KwaNdebele. These events were hailed as victories by black workers, and had their own influence on the election results.

Botha's problem is that in trying to reconcile the irreconcilable differences in South Africa he succeeds only in inflaming them. A concession to one side is necessarily a red-rag to the other.

Everything is building up to an open confrontation between the capitalist class and the working class in South Africa. It has been long delayed and class lines long confused through the lack of a Trotskyist party in the leadership, and until that party is built the ruling class in South Africa will stumble from atrocity to concession.

The Sharpeville Six along with hundreds of other prisoners have become hostages in this hideous juggling act — their lives hang on whether the Nationalists decide they will best hold on to power through placating the right through brutalities, or buying off the black middle-class with a share of the capitalist cake.

It is intolerable that the lives of these six, and millions of others should remain prey to such forces. The Black working class can only put an end to this situation by taking power.

'POWER TO SOVIETS' CALL

LEADING Soviet academics have called for the transfer of real power to the soviets — elected councils — as the means to establish genuine socialist democracy.

'Everyone seems to have forgotten that the October Revolution was carried out under the slogan "All power to the Soviets",' says respected economist Yuri Marshakhov, who believes that after Lenin's death in 1924 the soviets ceased to be organs of real power, and were absorbed into the Stalinist party apparatus.

The calls for a restoration of soviet democracy appear in a special issue of the weekly magazine 'Ogonyok', which significantly heads the section: 'More Socialism'.

Philosopher Igor Pantin asks: 'Why does the Supreme Soviet have no commissions on national and internal security, on the armed forces and defence? Why? Why do these organs stand outside public control?'

Dr Grigory Vodolazov, head of the Soviet Academy of Social Sciences, criticises official censorship of Soviet history, including the secrecy shrouding many archives and documents. Among other things, he demands that Khrushchev's famous 'secret' speech to the Soviet Communist Party's 20th Congress, about Stalin's crimes, be made available to the Soviet

public.

Lawyer Boris Kurashvili and political scientist Vladimir Shubkin propose setting up an independent public forum, open to both party members and non-members, and accessible to all Soviet citizens who want to 'participate in perestroika' (that is, the 'restructuring' reforms proposed by Gorbachev). Kurashvili says the Party should concentrate on political and ideological issues, letting governing functions be transferred to the soviets.

Although the intellectuals' views are a mixture, and they attempt to keep within the reforming perspective opened by the Gorbachev wing of the bureaucracy, they are clearly raising bigger historic issues.

The soviets were revolutionary organs, councils of workers and soldiers set up in struggle, which under Bolshevik leadership became the means by which the working class became the ruling class. Under Stalin's rule, they were reduced to rubber stamps for a party that had itself degenerated into a bureaucratic machine run by counter-revolutionary careerists.

Exposing the truth about Soviet history means raising again Trotsky's struggle against this degeneration. To re-establish soviet democracy would require not just attempts to reform the present administration, but the setting up of new revolutionary soviets, organs of workers' power, along with reviving Lenin and Trotsky's party, and the programme of world revolution.

ARMENIANS' STRIKE

WORKERS in Nagorno-Karabakh, the mainly Armenian region of Soviet Azerbaijan, have been waging a general strike to back their campaign for incorporation into Soviet Armenia.

Soviet TV news reported building sites and public transport in Stepanakert, the regional capital, were at a standstill, and workers had failed to turn up at factories.

'Pravda' has blamed Voice of America broadcasts and other western media for stirring up nationalism among the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. But an article from the Soviet Novosti news agency admitted there were genuine grievances.

It said the 'autonomy' supposedly enjoyed by the region had never been properly defined by the Soviet constitution, and even such matters as appointment of teachers and doctors had to be referred to the republic government.

AFTER THE CHAMPAGNE BUDGET

THE TORIES HAMMER POOR

BY BERNARD FRANKS

HAVING provided huge income increases for the rich on 15 March, the Tory onslaught on the poor is unleashed on 11 April.

It is then that the 1986 Social Security Act comes into force, making fundamental changes in the supplementary benefits system which will have a devastating effect on millions of claimants.

The main changes are as follows:

Income Support

Supplementary Benefit is to be abolished and replaced with Income Support.

In the process the higher long term benefit for over 60s and those who have been claiming for a year or more disappears.

All regular additional payments for special needs (heating, diets, laundry) also go, as does the higher householder rate.

Young people will be paid according to age in three stages: under 18, 18 to 24, and over 24.

However, from September the great majority of under 18s will be debarred from any entitlement, expected to take up one of the work substitute schemes — YTS etc.

In addition, water rates will no longer be covered, most claimants will have to pay some part of their rates (later poll tax), and reasons for making "urgent needs" one-off payments will be cut from 14 to three.

According to the Benefits Research Unit 60 per cent of claimants will face real cuts in their incomes, in some cases as high as £12 a week after the changes.

Housing Benefit

According to the London Housing Unit over £640 million is being cut from housing benefit with over two-thirds of recipients (4 million families) losing out. A further one million households will cease to qualify, at least 350,000 of these being pensioner-households.

This is the eighth cut to this benefit since its introduction in 1982.

Under the new rates:

- entitlement reduces for those with £3,000 or more in savings, disappearing totally at £6,000 in realisable assets
- all tenants will have to complete an application form once a year
- housing benefit supplement will be abolished
- council special payments to specific groups — large families, the low paid, disabled people — will be banned

Disablement groups complain that disabled people saving their mobility allowance to buy a specially adapted car (up to £12,000) will have their plan wiped out by the £6,000 rule.

The Social Fund

This new system means no one has a right now to emergency help in the form of a one-off lump sum payment. Any such support will be at the discretion of the DHSS, will likely be in the form of a loan taken back from Income Support at so much a week, or may well be refused, the claimant instead being referred to a charity.

In addition:

- appeals can only be made to the DHSS itself
- individual offices will be cash limited: when their annual budget runs out payment ceases for everyone
- the government has nearly halved the sum available for this fund, from £400 million to £203 million, over recent years

Family Credit

This replaces Family Income Supplement (FIS), the payment to low income families where the breadwinner is in work.

In its new form it will cease to count as income for housing benefit purposes.

Also, free school meal entitlement is abolished, affecting over half-a-million children of recipients.

Family Credit will be administered by employers who in any case benefit from what is essentially a subsidy for low pay.

Aside from the changes themselves, an additional crisis for claimants will result from the administrative chaos that will occur when over-worked understaffed DHSS offices come to apply and explain the new procedures.

In fact one reason for rationalising the system is to cut out another 20,000 civil service jobs.

Millions of pensioners, unem-

ployed people, students, low paid families, tenants and house owners will be affected by these changes.

Combined with the introduction of Poll Tax and the new Housing Bill to decontrol rents and evictions, along with plans to compel the unemployed to work for the dole — in effect already operating and about to be universalised for the under 18s — the introduction of the new benefits system will bring vast sections of working class and middle class communities into direct conflict with the government.

Labour movement and community organisations must be ready to do battle, and as part of their preparations all members should make themselves fully conversant with the benefit changes and their effects on individuals.

Labour Party members must be asked to state their position, not only on the destruction of the 1945-1951 reforms, but on the fundamental issue of socialised services, production, distribution and exchange which those measures were said to be a step towards.



Two of Thatcher's victims

LETTERS

Probing below the surface

IN REPLY to the letter from Trudi Jackson in Workers Press for 5 March:

The article criticised dealt specifically with the problems confronting black males in the US today. It did not deal with the problems of native Americans (Indians), migratory farm workers, undocumented immigrants, bankrupt white farmers, unemployed steelworkers and other oppressed sections of the American population.

Nor did it deal with the specific problems of women. Just as feminists often deal with specifically female problems, and justifiably so, this article dealt with the problems of black males exclusively.

There is no disputing the points made by comrade Jackson regarding the disabilities suffered by black working women — actually more numerous and serious than she suggests (e.g. racial assault and rape, teenage pregnancies, one-parent families, etc.).

The point is that fascists and the white ruling class do not perceive the black woman as a threat in the way that they do the black male. Hence, for example, the disproportionate number of black men in prison, while an attempt is made to keep black (and white) working poor women quiet with programmes like food stamps and Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

The article by Professor Staples had the merit of probing below the surface and bringing to light some important information about racism, as it affected black males, which could be useful to readers of the paper. When I come across an article so original regarding the position of black women I will bring that to the attention of readers.

George Lormin

Concrete experience

YOUR REPLY to my letter (Workers Press, 5 March) overlooks the fact that the workers learn who their friends and enemies are on the basis, not of passive demands for others to act for them (demand that the TUC call a general strike), but on the basis of their own action the response of others to their struggles. Lessons are learnt on the basis of concrete experience.

The workers' struggles are forced upon them from the objective development of capitalism, its inability to provide jobs, health services, housing etc. These problems can only be solved under socialism. Through participation in these struggles Marxists provide the masses with a conscious understanding of the nature of their problems and the solution. However, the masses only become receptive to Marxist ideas if Marxists provide slogans, policies and tactics which correspond and

harmonise with the experience of the workers.

Experiencing the conduct of the reformists, thousands of workers have in practice through their strike committees, independent class action, turned against and are hostile to both trade union leaders and Labour Party leaders. The workers have initiated action and taken action beyond the compromising class collaborationist reformist forces, even though they are not politically conscious of the nature and role of reformism. As you correctly state, a break with reformism can only be on the basis of a political understanding, a class consciousness which can only be imparted to the movement by Marxists.

The question is, how can Marxists raise the level of class political consciousness? By contradicting the experience of the masses? By urging them to 'demand' the TUC lead them into action when their experience teaches them not to trust these Labour fakers? To support the Kinnock Labour Party in elections when they declare against the workers' struggles? By telling the workers through inference to forsake their own independent strike committees, rank and file leaders and independent class struggle by seeking and 'demanding' leadership from those who have betrayed the workers struggles? This is a sure path to confusion and demoralisation of militant workers.

The uneven development of class consciousness and militancy means that strata of workers will become receptive to Marxist revolutionary ideas whilst masses of workers will retain their faith in the reformists misleaders. They will become militant and receptive to political ideas when the capitalist crisis bites deeper and the struggle broadens and intensifies.

It is to these backward masses of workers that you formulate and direct your tactics and policies of 'demanding' the union leaders take action. By such you hold back and retard the development of the militant and potentially revolutionary strata of the working class at the level of the most backward section of the class.

Thus arises a basic cause for the 'crisis of leadership' as the militant workers are not developed politically as revolutionary Marxist leaders who can at a later date provide the yeast for the rising of the backward workers against the system and its spineless reformist 'leaders'.

In fact, not only do you retard the development of the militants, but you confirm the backward masses in their illusions of reformism by suggesting that it is possible for the TUC — if the TUC do not act, then and only then will we seek to change them — to take action on their behalf.

Marxists based on scientific theory of social forces, must openly and consistently expose the reformists as not being able to initiate any mass struggle of the workers — except to behead it. Thus will our theory and slogans harmonise and correspond with the workers' objective experience and win them to the cause of socialist revolution.

Tom Cowan

WORKERS PRESS APRIL FUND

Total to date: £66.25

We are proud to have received so many messages regretting the closure of the 16-page Workers Press. We hope that our readers will understand that we see the decision as a step forward in the sense that the Workers Revolutionary Party is now beginning to face up to the limits set by our financial and human resources. We received a magnificent £1,750 for March, despite ceasing publication. Many thanks.

We need resources for the new Workers Press and to produce leaflets and bulletins to explain our policies on all the major struggles in the coming months. So we hope that you will give generously.

Please send your donations to: Workers Press Monthly Fund, PO box 735, London SW9 7QS

BOOK REVIEW

Stalker by John Stalker, Harrap, 288PP, \$12.95

THREE unarmed Irish people have been shot dead in cold blood in Gibraltar. 'Shoot-to-kill' is a central plank in the organised state violence against the Irish working class.

John Stalker found specific evidence that the RUC were operating death squads which executed Republicans, fingered and led into ambush by paid informers.

Just as he was about to lay hands on the famous MI5 tape which reveals RUC brutality in the 'hayshed killing' of 17-year old Michael Tighe, Stalker was abruptly taken off the case under the flimsy pretext of an investigation into his dealings with certain business men.

Most of what Stalker discovered was common knowledge in the Republican movement. Irish workers are not astonished that British imperialism uses death-squads — the British have used every conceivable form of cruelty and barbarism in Ireland for centuries.

'Shoot-to-kill' has its ancestry in Bloody Sunday (1972), in the Black and Tans of 1920, the Irish potato famine in the 19th century, the Cromwellian massacres in the 17th century, and beyond that.

Stalker uncovered concrete evidence of the police assassinations, the cover-ups by RUC Special Branch, the use of paid informers to set people up, and the involvement of MI5.

But Stalker had gone further than he was meant to. Once the British government realised this, it was swift to act. Stalker's high-minded sense of "British justice" was so much straw in the wind, and he and his report was silenced.

Liberals, reformists and Stalinists have seized on Stalker as the original 'honest copper'. Like Stalker himself, they have seen the death squads as an unpleasant aberration that can be rectified by 'democratic control'.

Hence Kinnock calls for a judicial inquiry. The labour movement will have to carry out its own.

Furthermore, from a socialist, Marxist point of view, the Stalker revelations offer a clear confirmation of the nature of the state itself under capitalism. 'Shoot-to-kill' is not the product of wild-eyed RUC officers, no more than the hoodings and tortures in the army camps were 'excesses'.

'Shoot-to-kill' shows the organised violence of the British state against the working class in Ireland.

Stalker's own personality in this book is not of great interest. He has a naive and pedantic faith in his ability to determine if murder was done, and who by. And of course he is a policeman through and through, and remains loyal to the state and to the British occupation of Ireland.

The Stalker affair shows that the struggle of the Irish working class threatens the heart of British imperialism. It is inadequate to say that British imperialism is in the six counties to 'protect its investments'.

The British cannot allow a defeat of any kind at the hands of Republican Irish workers, because that would spark off revolutionary struggles in Britain and probably in Europe.

British imperialism in Ireland is not in a strong position. It is only propped up, on the one hand by the rotten Irish bourgeoisie which cuddles up to it out of fear of its own working class, and on the other hand by the British Labour Party which has (in its leadership) unswervingly supported every dirty trick of the military, the RUC and the intelligence agencies.

'Stalker' also contains a rich vein of bizarre and macabre images: James 'Prophet of the Lord' Anderton skulking in his locked office; the police, desperate to find something to blacken Stalker's name, accuse him of eating a free sausage roll at a football ground; the RUC Chief Constable over dinner proffers Stalker a run-down of his Catholic genealogy.

Above all this book should inspire socialists to go out and fight against the British occupation of Ireland, to support the struggle of Irish Republicans, and to build revolutionary parties in Ireland and Britain that will end the system of death-squads and strip-searching and torture for ever.

The indomitable struggle of the Irish Republicans has shown that the working class has fantastic powers of organisation, resilience and political combativeness at its disposal.

The death-squads will not cow or deter Irish workers or British workers. Let the pessimists and fainthearts take note: Our day will come!

BARRY FORDER

BUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Demand for a memorial to Stalin's victims — in the Soviet Union

On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution of October 1917, the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists, for the rebuilding of the Fourth International, issued a call in support of the campaign to re-establish the truth about the Moscow frame-up trials of 1936-1938, the assassination of Leon Trotsky, and all the victims of the Stalinist terror.

The Committee's call made clear that this was a broad campaign with a 'united front' character, responding to what is actually developing in the USSR, Eastern Europe and China, namely, a deep interest in Trotsky and Trotskyism, expressing the intensifying class struggle.

In particular the call noted: 'It has a special place in the USSR, where Trotsky and Trotskyism are immediately bound up with the history of the USSR and of the Stalinist counter-revolution.'

The Preparatory Committee's call said that the workers, youth and intellectuals of the USSR must be allowed to launch and administer independently a fund designed for the purpose of erecting a monument to all the victims of the Stalinist terror.

It has come to light that at the end of last year a considerable movement emerged inside the USSR itself, based on just this demand for a memorial.

The Paris 'Le Monde' of March 18 reported from Moscow that '107 leading Soviet cultural and press personalities recently signed a letter to Gorbachev demanding that the Central Committee give its support to the erection of a monument to the memory of the victims of Stalinist repression'.

By December a petition still circulating in a number of institutes and theatres had received over 5,000 signatures.

The campaign also has the support of the editorial board of 'Literaturnaya Gazeta', organ of the Soviet writers' union, and of many well-known intellectuals. 'Le Monde' reported this as a manifestation

of the debate, every day more lively, on the re-examination of Soviet history stirred up in the past year by 'openness' (glasnost).

The letter to Gorbachev not only asks that the Central Committee support the proposal for a monument; it demands also the official registration of the public Action Committee which has been formed around this aim, the organising of a Conference at the end of 1988 on the history of the Stalin years, and the opening of a research centre with museum and library on this period.

It should be remembered that the Preparatory Committee included in its demands: **Opening of the Archives**, the contents of which are the concern of all those who are loyal to socialism; setting up of a commission of inquiry by the international working-class movement to study these archives and to report to the workers of all countries; publication of the writings of the murdered Bolsheviks, especially Trotsky.

The 107 say in their letter that their demand for a memorial and the other measures they propose would receive

wide popular support, and they point to the appearance already of a number of local action committees.

They also argue that these measures would facilitate the formation of the consciousness of new generations in such a way as to assure that the years of terror would never be repeated.

This may be compared with the Preparatory Committee's appeal, which declared: **Even the Kremlin leadership recognises that the USSR has entered a grave and unprecedented crisis. The Old Bolsheviks in their time proposed answers to these problems, but they were reduced to silence by the GPU on the orders of Stalin and his clique. With Trotsky at their head, they denounced Stalinism — they analysed it, they fought it.**

It is surely time for a renewed initiative in the campaign to restore the truth about the victims of Stalinism, in particular Trotsky's assassination and the Moscow frame-up trials. This campaign, like the circulation by every means available of Trotsky's works in the USSR, is an essential part of the urgent task of building the section of the Fourth International in the Soviet Union.

CADRE CLASSES BEGIN

THE London District of the Workers Revolutionary Party is organising two important cadre schools, one to be held weekly during the day and the second at week-ends.

It is hoped to launch similar schools in districts outside London in the coming months.

The schools will be directed at the theoretical re-arming of our party in the light of the experiences we have made over the last two and a half years.

It has become increasingly clear that the old Workers Revolutionary Party leadership was responsible for the abandonment of the theoretical and political foundations of the movement. The two central leaders of the old party, Gerry Healy and Mike Banda, have abandoned Trotskyism and become open apologists for Stalinism.

Healy's 'cadre training' consisted of a perversion of Marxist philosophy that became increasingly gross. For Healy, thinking was produced by individual 'brain work' (that of Healy); in this vulgar materialism the historical and social content of thought was ignored.

Under this mis-education of Healy, Marxism became dogma, cut off from real life and the struggle of the working class. It is this situation that the Workers Revolutionary Party now intends to start to correct.

Under these conditions, the great majority of members of the Party, through no fault of their own, remained ignorant of the history of the Fourth International, of the basic development of the British working class movement, of the basic points of historical materialism.

A Marxist party demands educated cadres, not those who have been taught a few slogans by rote. Only those who have embarked on a struggle to critically assimilate the intellectual conquests of the past truly de-

serve the name communist.

We intend to build a cadre party based firmly on the foundations of Marxist theory, that is Trotskyism. These cadre courses mark a new stage in this endeavour.

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £2,735.29

The necessity to rebuild the Fourth International is at the centre of all the activities of the Workers Revolutionary Party and Workers Press. Our fund is being collected to ensure that we can participate fully in the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference of Trotskyists to be held later this year.

Send a donation to this important fund.

PO Box 735, London, SW9 7QS

In praise of good wine

IT'S a pleasure to see that Cyril Ray, the veteran social historian of wine, has attained his 80th birthday in full possession of his wit, his nimble pen, and his sturdy political commitment.

His comments on Margaret Thatcher in the 'Guardian' recently were characteristically terse and caustic.

Whether the interviewer prompted him or not wasn't clear, but Ray went on to answer those critics who make out that there's something incongruous about a socialist enjoying, appreciating, and even writing about wine.

Being a socialist means making certain sacrifices for what you believe in, but it doesn't mean wearing a hair-shirt or surrendering all the good things of life to the rich.

I've never thought it right to let the devil

have all the good tunes, nor to leave all the good food and fine wines to the yuppies who can afford to guzzle and swill every day of their lives.

Marx and Engels took much the same view. Engels not only helped his friend with cash, but also sent him Christmas hampers of hock and other fine wines.

First-class mature claret and Burgundy is expensive, but the serious drinker knows about buying these wines young, when they're much less expensive, and leaving the bottles unopened for several years, during which time they get steadily better and better.

I drink about three or four such bottles a year, on special occasions. Thus I celebrated my birthday this year with a bottle of 1971 claret bought in 1976 for peanuts, comparatively speaking, and now unobtainable for less than a king's ransom.

The pleasure I got from drinking it was matched by the pleasure it gave me to have deprived the bourgeoisie of something they think of as theirs by right.

To a Marxist, it's both amusing and instructive to see how the official classification

of claret, which has scarcely been altered since the 18th century, faithfully reflects the class structure of feudal society.

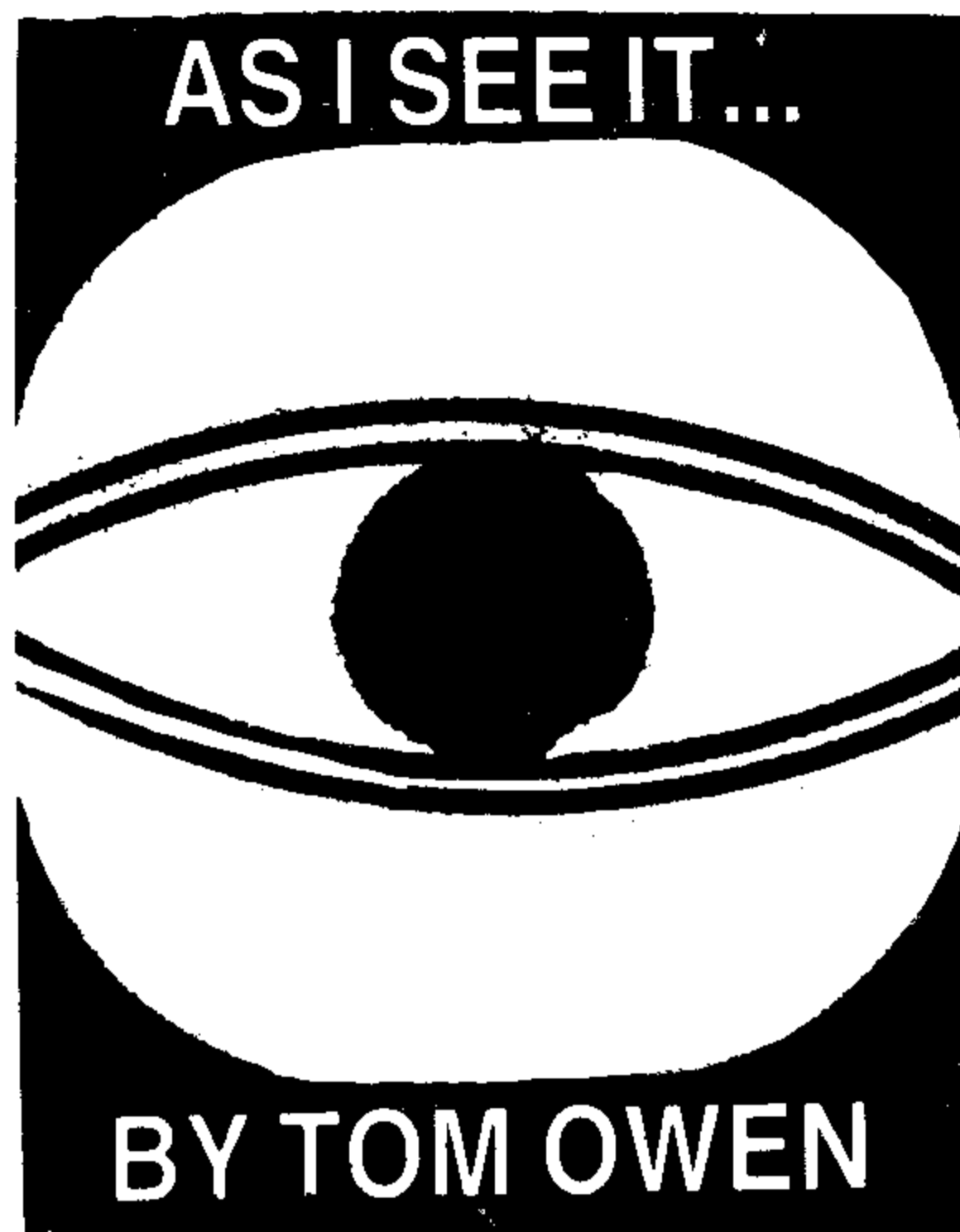
Down at the bottom there are 'peasant growths' and 'artisan growths'; somewhat better wines are called 'bourgeois growths' and 'superior bourgeois growths'; then there are the 'great growths' or aristocrats, elaborately subdivided into five ascending grades of excellence, as it might be viscounts, counts, marquesses, dukes, and royals.

The future classless society, which may perhaps decide to retain these labels for historical reasons, will have no problem about fairly distributing the wines they describe.

One thing is certain: these wines won't vanish down the thirsty throats of a privileged caste of bureaucrats. I like to think that the best bottles will be reserved as special rewards for talented, creative, and innovative people in the arts and sciences, in medicine and sport.

And, perhaps, as birthday presents every so often for everybody else.

PETER FRYER



The revenge of Janet and John

DO you remember Janet and John, the brother and sister in the 'Ladybird' books who lived in a nice semi with a mother who wore an apron, washed up, cooked and wore a permanent wave perm?

They had a daddy who worked in an office, but at weekends cut wood in his garage and dug in his garden. John helped his daddy and Janet helped her mummy.

Everyone said things three times so that you could learn to read and write and pretend you lived like that.

You won't see much of Janet and John now because some nasty intellectuals have said that most English speaking children don't live like that. A lot live in tenements, tower blocks and terraced houses. Many are not white, live with one parent, and only wear

shorts in summer.

So Ladybird's Janet and John have been forced out of the classroom! And quite right too.

But that resilient little insect has had its revenge on the effete intelligentsia.

Which brings me to the point.

Every week my local pub, a lively left wing Sheffield watering hole, is host to a visiting darts team, an event that can transform a palace of fun into a funeral parlour. So we tend to visit a place where the main attraction is not the beer or the conversation but its quiz night.

The pop quiz attracts both sexes — and they seem to attract each other.

Quizzes have become a feature of pub life in the North. There are leagues, prizes and charities served by them. In some establishments they have replaced darts and fishing as the focus for organising social clubs.

They are potentially anarchic, with questions frequently challenged in the unpredictable mele of drink, flirtation and socialising.

This happened only the other week when a dispute broke about who Don Mclean's song 'American Pie' had been written for. The participant gave as his answer Buddy Holly, the American singer killed in a plane crash. The answer was rejected by the quizmaster who said the right answer was John Lennon.

In heated exchanges it was pointed out that Lennon was still alive when the song had been written. But the redoubtable quizmaster stuck to his guns and as final authority drew out 'The Book' wherein all the answers are printed

And the publisher? Yes you've guessed it.

Ladybird Books!

Quite a comeback for the little insect many thought crushed by a section of the trendy left.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT:

THIS is the first issue of our new-format Workers Press. It appears at a time of a mounting economic and political crisis in Britain which is a reflection of the deepening crisis of imperialism internationally.

The main purpose of the paper will be to provide leadership to the working class in the struggles in which it is engaged. The Thatcher government has made clear that it intends to take away from the working class every gain it has made throughout the postwar period. The National Health Service is to be scrapped and replaced by a system that will provide only for the rich, leaving the poor to suffer illness and pain.

The state educational system is to be undermined, with the rich able to send their children to privileged schools while the sons and daughters of ordinary people will be herded into institutions where no proper education will be provided.

The selling of the state owned industries to City sharks continues apace, with plans well underway for the privatisation of the coal industry and the wholesale loss of jobs and erosion of conditions this will bring.

Local authority services, on which millions in this country depend, are being systematically destroyed. In many parts of the country it is Labour councils who are carrying out Thatcher's policy of butchery, and anybody in the Party who opposes such actions is threatened with discipline and even expulsion.

While all these attacks proceed, the official leaders of the working class refuse to take up a fight against the Tory government.

Their 'new realism' means collaborating with Thatcher in each of her reactionary plans. Willis and Jordan crawl to Fords in Detroit pleading with them to reconsider setting up a plant in Dundee that would in effect be a non-union shop.

What the working class urgently requires is a leadership with the necessary strategy and tactics to take on and defeat the Tory government and all those in the workers' movement who collaborate with it.

This is the aim of the Workers Revolutionary Party and its paper. Workers Press will concentrate on analysing the problems faced by workers in struggle. In particular it will put under the spotlight all those other groups and tendencies in the working class who claim to offer an alternative to those leaderships of the Labour and Communist Parties.

But the paper will by no means be confined to analysing the political and economic scene in Britain. The working class throughout the world, in both the capitalist countries and the Soviets, the states of eastern Europe and China is engaged in a mounting wave of struggles.

The same problem faced by the British working class is faced by workers throughout the world; the question of leadership. The Workers Revolutionary Party is a Trotskyist party, fighting to rebuild the Fourth International, the international established by Trotsky in 1938 following the betrayals of the Communist International.

We will bring you, our readers, regular news of progress in this work for the rebuilding of the Fourth International. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the International and we will be celebrating this event with a series of meetings throughout the country.

These meetings will be part of the preparations for an International Conference of Trotskyists to be held this year to discuss the crisis within the Fourth International and the manner in which this crisis must be resolved.

We know that many of our readers were concerned that we had to cease publication of Workers Press as a 16-page paper. We understand your concern, but we took the decision so that our publications could be brought into line with our real political and material resources.

Many of our old features will be retained in this new paper. Tom Owen and Peter Fryer will contribute regular columns. Bernard Franks will continue to report regularly on various aspects of the deepening social crisis in Britain and Charlie Pottins will be responsible for news from overseas.

But we want news from our readers too. Please send in reports of struggles taking place in your areas and the lessons of these struggles for the working class as a whole.

Above all send us your letters. We want to hear from as many of you as possible. But, because of the restricted space, letters will have to be limited to 200 words. Letters longer than that will be cut accordingly.

Finally, despite our reduced size, we still urgently need all the financial support you can muster. So do please give as generously as before to our Fighting Fund.

GEORGE LORMIN IN THE USA

The Spectre of the Deficit

WHOEVER wins next November's presidential election will have to deal with a crushing budget deficit and a soaring national debt, legacies of the Reagan administration.

Despite attempts to talk down the amount of the budget deficit, it is expected to rise in fiscal year 1989 to over \$180 billion.

Even this figure assumes economic growth targets which may not be realised. A slide into recession would result in a much larger deficit.

In the meantime, government debt has soared enormously, making a mockery of Reagan's promise eight years ago to balance the budget.

The national debt now stands at \$2.8 (US) trillion, against "only" \$1 trillion at the beginning of Reagan's term.

Much of the increase represents investment by foreigners who find government securities a convenient way of holding dollar earnings.

Abroad the huge debt is rightly seen as a symbol of the vulnerability of the US economy. Foreigners are free with their advice. Significantly, presidential hopefuls in both of the capitalist parties evade the subject of the deficit as far as they can in their electioneering.

The trade deficit can conveniently be blamed onto foreigners; the budget deficit arises out of decisions taken in Washington, and nowhere else.

It is not necessary to be an economist to

know that there are only two ways of controlling a deficit: cutting expenditure or increasing taxation. To recommend one or the other (or both), when it comes down to specifics, means indicating who will have to make the sacrifices or who will have to pay.

No wonder, therefore, that the candidates leave the issue in the dark, as far as possible.

Any pronouncement they care to make is likely to lose votes or dampen the enthusiasm of their supporters.

Reagan himself learned that it was easier to make cuts on paper than in practice, especially the so-called entitlement programmes, such as pensions, Medicare and Medicaid.

His Democratic opponents are in no better position. If they say that they are against cuts in social programmes they then have to say what taxes they will increase: a sure vote loser.

If they say cut the arms bill they will lose the support of right-wingers in their own party.

Something like a way out was found after the 19 October Wall Street crash when a bipartisan National Economic Commission was set up by Congress to work out ways of cutting the deficit.

This 12-member body has just begun work. With partisan feeling running high during the presidential election campaign its chances of coming up with an agreed programme seem to be small.

There will be strong pressure to make those

swingeing cuts in Social Security which Reagan was unable to carry out.

Cuts which affect the elderly and the comparatively affluent middle class may be in store. Something like one quarter of the US population depends in one way or another upon cash or non-cash payments made through the Federal government. Although whittled down by the Republican administration they still basically stand.

Recognising this, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board — who is not running for office — has called for cuts in entitlement programmes and an increase in the petrol tax.

Threats of reductions in the arms programme seems to be causing discontent in the military and the right-wing of the Republican Party which feels that Reagan has betrayed them by making an agreement with the Soviet Union on intermediate missiles.

The latest estimates made by the Secretary of Defence, Frank Carlucci, for the 1990s shows arms expenditure rising by 2.5 per cent per annum in real terms.

The Republicans have given notice that if they are returned there will be no slow down in the arms budget; in other words, other, socially oriented programmes will have to be slashed.

Few Democratic politicians can afford to take a strong line against arms expenditure; electors just do not have a choice on the matter.

IRELAND: LABOUR CRAWLS

THE working-class movement should take warning from the Labour leaders' servile acquiescence to Tory terror in Ireland.

Labour's northern Ireland spokesman Kevin McNamara described the killing of British soldiers Derek Wood and David Howes, who drove their car at IRA volunteer Kevin Brady's funeral cortege, as 'bestial'.

He couldn't find such venomous expressions to describe the Gibraltar executions, which his colleague George Robertson enthusiastically supported.

What about the gaping holes in the British state's explanations of the soldiers' provocation? Why did the Labour leaders keep quiet about these?

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) issued a statement — carried on the radio and in Sunday newspapers after the incident — that the soldiers were on duty, carrying out surveillance. The army said the men were off duty, on their way to their Lisburn headquarters.

No Labour voices in the 'mother of parliaments' challenged the army's lie, or demanded that Tory northern Ireland minister Tom King explain the glaring contradiction between the two statements.

No Labour leaders resisted the hypocritical press chorus about 'savagery', which masked the question of why the two soldiers' car careered at mourners. Neither did they protest at press falsifications — in which even the maps were re-drawn, to bolster the fairy tale that the soldiers 'blundered'.

—What about Thatcher's new interpretation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which implies that its sweeping powers could be used against any crowd

which dares to repulse her state forces?

The PTA was quoted by RUC detectives who demanded untransmitted BBC film of the incident. Where are you, Labour defenders of 'civil liberties'?

Harry Conroy of the National Union of Journalists warned, correctly, that the confiscation of film further threatened press freedom. But no Labour leaders challenged this new definition of 'terrorism' — which, if it included the actions of the Belfast mourners, must surely include also a crowd of West Indian teenagers who bark back at a London policeman, or pickets who resist police interference.

—The Labour leaders are truly shocked — that Belfast nationalists dared to fight back, that unarmed men rushed towards a gun-toting terrorist for the second time in a week. The defiance of the oppressed is something they will never understand. These pro-imperialists recoiled instinctively.

Kinnock and Co. condemned the mourners who resisted state provocation, and the IRA executions of Howes and Wood — which were nothing more than the deaths of two more soldiers in Britain's colonial war — because they support the war. Such moments only reveal the hypocritical two-facedness with which some Labour MPs support fighters against racism in South Africa, or imperialism in Nicaragua who are not fundamentally different from the IRA.

Support must be built up in the British labour movement for the principle of Irish self-determination. Demands must be raised for the end of British occupation of the six counties; other issues which reveal the imperialist barbarity used against Ireland — such as strip-searching torture, the PTA, and the refusal of Britain to repatriate Irish Republican prisoners to prisons near their homes — must be highlighted.

● On Saturday 30 April a major demonstration — the first since the recent developments in the Irish war — is planned in Wakefield, demanding the end of British occupation, and the repatriation of Irish Republican prisoners. The

march will assemble at 2p.m. at The Monkton Road Industrial Estate, Wakefield, and pass Wakefield prison — notorious as a punishment centre for Irish prisoners — on its way to a rally, where speakers include a prisoners' relative and a British miner.

The demonstration is organised by an Ad Hoc Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, based in Glasgow, to which Republican, Irish solidarity and political groups are affiliated. The committee decided to mobilise in Wakefield as no Republican prisoners are held in Scottish jails, and is cooperating with 'Troops Out' and other groups in England to make the march a success.

Trotskyists

'Trotskyist' chauvinists: the Labour 'left' no more challenged the Tory witch-hunt against Belfast nationalists than did the right-wing leaders. The so-called 'Trotskyists' of the 'Militant' tendency deserve special mention.

'Militant' 25 March, declared that 'British workers and workers in Ireland recoiled at the brutality meted out to the soldiers. It gave a glimpse of the barbarity that would erupt if Northern Ireland were to drift into all-out civil war.'

Such condemnations of 'brutality' are nothing but capitulation to British bourgeois 'public opinion'. Nothing is said, in a page containing three articles about Ireland, about hundreds of years of British colonial brutality.

The same pro-imperialist prejudice — in a 'Marxist' guise — is expressed in 'Militant's' fears of 'all-out civil war', repeated several times on the same page. There is already a form of war in Ireland — not civil, but colonial: about this they say not a word.

Loyalist violence is a result of British colonialism. The 'Militant' draw an equals sign between this violence (the UVF, the Red Hand Commandoes, 10,000 members of the legal UDA, who everybody knows have the active collusion of 8,000 Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers and the rest of the British occupation forces) and the violence of the IRA, whether in defence of

BY SIMON
PIRANI

nationalists or against Britain. This is to draw an equals sign between oppressor and oppressed.

The 'Militant's' solution is: 'The trade unions must now campaign for a socialist programme. It must begin with the fundamental need for the unity of Protestant and Catholic workers. It must link the demand for decent jobs, wages and conditions for all workers to the need for a political solution.' Later on, it adds: 'The campaign should put forward the slogan of a socialist united Ireland linked to a socialist federation of the British Isles.'

First problem: the trade unions are dominated by a pro-imperialist bureaucracy, as 'Militant' well knows. The fight for a socialist programme will not be carried out by that bureaucracy but against it; it will be carried out not by the trade unions, but carried into them by revolutionaries. They say nothing about this.

Secondly: what is this 'political solution'? Does it include the socialist policy of self-determination of oppressed nations? Not for 'Militant'.

A socialist Ireland 'linked to a socialist federation of the British Isles' is nothing more than a demand on the Irish working class to put aside the issue of self-determination in the name of so-called 'unity'. Frederick Engels convinced the English trades unionists in the First International that this approach was unacceptable, in 1872: it is adopted more than a century later by the 'Militant'.

It is the task of 'Workers Press' to show how such 'Trotskyism' is the very opposite of what the Fourth International fights for, and what Trotsky himself fought for. We draw to the attention of 'Militant' members what Trotsky wrote in the Manifesto of the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920: 'The British socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland, Egypt and India against the London plutocracy — such a socialist deserves to be branded with infamy, if not with a bullet ...'

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ.

LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464964.

JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence 464960.

PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence H22336.

EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.

GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.

JOHN McCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.

HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.

VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence 274064.

MAIDSTONE

HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent.

SHAUN McSHANE, B75898.

DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.

PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 6NX.

PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence 342803.

PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.

TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence 69204.

PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.

WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG.

NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085.

ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 6RS.

MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.

HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence 338638.

BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.

SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP.

RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799.

STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence, 758663.

JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635.

PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence.

ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.

FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham

BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662.

PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.

CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662.

MICHAEL J McKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46488.

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

LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ.

PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.

GERARD McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.

BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380.

PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.

MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.

ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

REMAND PRISONERS:

BRIXTON

HM Prison, Jubb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.

LIAM McCOTTER, LB83683.

PATRICK McCAUGHLIN, LB83684.

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE

CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow Cheshire.

PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree.

G.(DANNY) McNAMEE, 25-year sentence, L48616, HM Prison, Parkhurst.

PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, 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 Prison, Long Lartin.

JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.

BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs Ducane Rd, London W12 0AE.

GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Gartree.

RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.

PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Gartree.

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

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