

Clampdown in South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA'S racist regime has clamped down on 17 anti-Apartheid organisations. The United Democratic Front (UDF), and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), founded by Steve Biko, are among those whose activity is banned.

The Confederation of South Afri-

can Trade Unions (COSATU) has been ordered to conduct no political activity. The government said it was acting because 'revolutionaries who failed through violence are resorting to other means'. An opposition leader said the regime's action showed its state of emergency had failed.

SHOOT-TO-KILL GOES ON

ARMY MURDERER GOES FREE

THE KILLING of an unarmed young nationalist in the north of Ireland last week shows that Thatcher's 'shoot-to-kill' policy is alive and well.

Twenty-four-year old Aiden McAnespie was shot in the back, by a single bullet, fired from an army checkpoint at 300 yards. He died within minutes.

He had passed the checkpoint, at Aughnacloy in County Tyrone, on his way to play in a Gaelic football match.

McAnespie's death was a blatant example of the terror to which the nationalist communities in Ireland are continuously subject by British state forces.

● McAnespie had complained to family and friends about constant harassment by the army. His life was threatened regularly as he passed the checkpoint — which he did at least twice a day, as he worked in a

BY SIMON PIRANI

poultry factory in County Monaghan across the border.

● His claims of harassment and intimidation were well-known locally and featured last year in a Sunday newspaper.

● Although not an active Republican, he had campaigned for his sister, Mrs Ailish McCabe, a Sinn Fein candidate in the local council elections in October 1985.

HE SAID ON BBC TV last week: 'He has been

set up by the army, and they have got what they want. They said they would do it, and they have done it.'

● So bad was the harassment that McAnespie had considered moving across the border to avoid it.

A Sinn Fein councillor, Paul Corrigan, said the shooting was a 'deliberate and wilful act.'

'The British forces in the north have been killing people for two decades. The legal and judicial system has condoned and protected them.'

Record

The army said it 'regretted' the killing, and a Grenadier Guardsman was being questioned by RUC detectives. He has a 95 per cent chance of being acquitted, going by the record of courts convicting soldiers in murder cases since the troops went into the six counties in 1969.

After the Stalker investigation which is now causing such a scandal, the army carried on 'shoot-to-kill' where the RUC had left off.

Policy

The policy is not a matter of bloody-mindedness by the RUC sectarian killers-in-uniform (although that certainly enters into it) — it is a policy of the British occupying forces. That is why state inquiries such as that carried out by Stalker will never get to the bottom of the matter.

There will be no peace in Ireland until the last British soldier is removed from Irish soil.

The British working-class movement cannot stand aside. Resolutions must be put through union branches calling for an inquiry, organised by the trades union movement, into the illegal anti-working class violence of the state both in the six counties and in Britain, and its attacks on democratic rights.

Tragedy for whom?

A SOLDIER sentenced to life imprisonment in 1983 for the murder of Thomas Reilly, a 23 year-old Catholic, has been released and is back in the army.

Private Ian Thain shot Reilly in the back after Reilly, who was unarmed, had run away from the an army foot patrol following scuffles.

In his 64-page judgement, Mr Justice Higgins said the defendant had been untruthful and had 'concocted' a defence claiming Reilly might have been armed.

'He was a young fellow involved in an incident in difficult circumstances. It was a tragic error of judgement. The army would like to give him all the support possible to help him rebuild his life' said a British army spokesman last week.

Life sentences generally involve a minimum of 10-12 years in jail. Of 115 cases recommended for release in 1986, only seven had served three years or less.

Reilly's father, Jim, said that his family had been shocked and distressed by the release.

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Health workers lobby TUC, see centre pages

**Workers
Press**

**Rocking
the
boat**

EACH move in the rapprochement between US imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy is greeted by the world media as a great step towards world peace. But, in top circles of European capitalism, the response is far less enthusiastic.

The division between Reagan and the West German leaders is well known. Kohl's visit to Washington last week has done nothing to overcome it. Conflicts with the French are also no secret.

Reports and deliberate 'leaks' are now emanating from Downing Street which are meant to show the White House that Thatcher is far from pleased with the outcome of the Shultz Moscow talks.

The calling of a fourth Reagan-Gorbachev summit seems highly likely. The arms control talks in Geneva will accelerate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is promised. But the more optimistic the reports of US-Soviet cordiality, the greater the alarm in the European capitals.

What do these creaks and groans in the foundations of the 'Western Alliance' mean? For 50 years, world imperialism has been led by the US. In military, industrial, financial and political terms, New York and Washington took over the role once played by London.

After World War II, the former leaders of world imperialism, Britain and France, were senile shadows of their old selves. In 1944-1947, when the Stalinist bureaucracy managed to derail the revolutionary movements sweeping Europe, the might of US capital put the European capitalists back in the saddle, and the period of rapid capital accumulation began.

Inseparable from this process was the preparations for a third — probably final — world war against the October Revolution, however degenerated was that revolution. US strength now had to take the rearmament of the imperialist world on its shoulders, warding off and fighting off the menace of revolution in every continent.

Twenty years later, especially in the face of the struggle of the Vietnamese people, this burden had sapped the power even of the mighty dollar, on which the entire world financial structure rested. Today, this weakening at the heart of the imperialist alliance has reached a new stage.

German and especially Japanese capital tries to take on some parts of the financial role of the US, which has become the world's largest debtor. But there is no way that any single power can displace the leader of the imperialist gang.

As the Soviet bureaucracy faces a growing crisis, under Gorbachev's leadership it finds its interests converging even more closely with those of American imperialism. Each must find a way to reduce its respective arms burden.

The European capitalists see this deal taking place at their expense. And the White House, with a manifest crisis of leadership at the very top of the ruling class, can no longer impose its will on them without resistance.

Fundamentally, the threat which brings Reagan and Gorbachev to the point of agreement is the working class. In South Africa, in the Middle East and in Europe, both East and West, the new stage which opened in the class struggle at the end of the 1970s is the driving force which propels the superpowers to the summit.

This is the power which increasingly undermines the cohesion of the forces of imperialism.

**COUNCIL WORKERS'
STRIKE: 8 MARCH**

London Bridge takes a lead

A London-wide strike of local government workers on 8 March is gathering momentum. Trade union branches, community groups, fightback organisations, and many anti-cuts councillors are actively working towards a large demonstration.

London Bridge, the London boroughs Joint Trade Union Committee, had called for a fight against cuts at its conference on 10 September last year. That call is now supported by Islington, ILEA, Westminster, Ealing, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham, Hammersmith and Camden NALGO branches, together with Direct Labour Organisation joint committees at Haringey, Hackney, Southwark and Islington.

The Metropolitan district of NALGO passed a resolution in favour of the strike and has produced publicity, and the Greater London Association of Trades Councils as well as local trades

BY ED HALL

councils have answered the call.

The London-wide voluntary sector combine, TGWU ACTSS, will also be there.

The route and platform in Jubilee Gardens is being organised by ILEA Joint Shop Stewards Committee. Manchester nurses led the way against increasingly punitive Tory measures last January. The London Bridge and ILEA strike on 8 March will focus on local government, and the abolition of the ILEA, and will be followed a week later by large scale action in defence of the NHS.

Despite the capitulation of Labour councils, and the uncertainty of trade union

branches in the face of steady job losses and redundancy schemes, there is renewed commitment for a fight to bring down the Tories amid a tide of Tory extremism, illustrated by the poll tax, tax cuts for the wealthy, and rate-capping which is now closing basic amenities and nursery schools.

The recent London Bridge AGM endorsed action on the 8th. A march will leave Kennington Park at 11.30 am and go to a rally in Jubilee Gardens.

Actively

The AGM heard that the Socialist Workers Party were actively campaigning against the 8th, on the basis that it should be abandoned and all efforts switched to action in support of the health service on 14 March. This sabotage has continued despite preparations for the 8th, and increasing support for it.

The London Bridge AGM

passed a resolution in favour of full support for the health service demonstrations and speakers deplored the SWP members present who took the laughable position of opposing the decision of large sections of workers to take strike action in defence of local government, the education service, and their own jobs.

False

At a branch meeting of Hackney NALGO false information concerning 8 March was given, and a vote for strike action was lost.

Those connected with London Bridge are surprised to find the SWP lining up with the more traditional opponents of action — those in the TUC and the Labour Party leadership.

All demonstrations and strikes in the public sector must be supported to build towards the end of a system which can no longer tolerate adequate public services free at the point of use.

**NALGO takes Camden to court
After strike vote narrowly lost**

CAMDEN'S NALGO members have narrowly voted not to take indefinite strike action against the Labour council's threat to sack them if they do not sign letters agreeing to changes in their contracts.

In the results of the ballot, 1,666 (42.2 per cent) voted for a strike, while 2,269 (57.5 per cent) were against. A total of 82.9 per cent of the branch's 4,758 members voted.

Immediately after the results were announced, NALGO's National Law and Parliamentary Committee revealed that the union will initiate proceedings in the High Court against the council if any NALGO members have their contracts terminated.

In a letter to Camden's chief executive, NALGO's solicitors say: 'It is our opinion that no reasonable council could reach a decision to dismiss on the facts of this case and we are advised by leading counsel that such action would constitute a breach of contract and

BY OUR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT

breach of your council's statutory duty. Therefore, our advice to individual NALGO members is not to sign and return the letter, and we look forward to receiving your assurance that you will not be taking steps to institute mass dismissals.'

While the court action may delay the council's offensive, it is vital that trade unionists in Camden do not rely on the courts.

Though strike action was rejected, seven successive branch meetings have overwhelmingly thrown out the compulsory redeployment procedure the council is trying to impose.

NALGO members did not vote for acceptance of the new procedure — they voted against an all-out strike at this stage.

If they hesitated at taking this step, other tactics must be found to keep the membership united against the council's attacks.

Branch secretary David Eggmore rightly said at a meeting attended by thousands of members last summer that the district auditor was now running Camden council on behalf of the Tories.

The Labour council does

not need the redeployment procedure which is the cause of the present struggle — what they do need is to smash trade unionism in Camden in order to carry out the cuts in jobs and services required by Thatcher's government.

Nothing will be settled in the High Court. NALGO members need a firm leadership which will continue the branch policy of refusing to agree to the council's Rupert Murdoch-style contracts. The whole trade union and labour movement must be mobilised in support of the Camden workforce.

**BIG BROTHER
IN CROYDON**

BY JOHN HOLMES

CROYDON council announced last week that it was giving serious consideration to using closed circuit television cameras to monitor housing estates in the borough in a 'big brother' style security clampdown.

This would entail a link-up with the Croydon cable tv network. The tv company would relay pictures directly to council offices.

Financial assistant director, David Beadle was

quoted in the Croydon Advertiser:

'This would enable all high risk areas in the borough owned by the council to be monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week by Taberner House Security Control.'

Pictures of New Addington, Croydon's largest council estate, with a high rate of unemployment and rundown housing were relayed back to the cable tv company's headquarters in an experiment last week.

Workers in the north of Ireland have been subjected to state scrutiny for years. If the introduction of this sophisticated system of local community surveillance proves successful in Croydon it will undoubtedly be used in other parts of the country. It must be firmly resisted.

**ALL OUT
MARCH 8th**

LONDON BRIDGE

**NO CUTS
NO PRIVATISATION
DEFEND ILEA
FIGHT FOR COUNCIL
JOBS AND SERVICES**

**MARCH and RALLY : ASSEMBLE :
KENNINGTON PARK SE II. 1030am.
March to a rally in Jubilee Gardens**

Blood suckers

BY DOT GIBSON

PRIVATE hospitals save at least £200,000 a year and destroy over 7,000 pints of blood a year whilst there are critical blood shortages in NHS hospitals.

According to the British Medical Journal this information was disclosed by Mrs Edwina Currie, the junior health minister, following reports from doctors in London and the South East that operations were being postponed and treatment for Aids patients restricted because blood supplies are perilously scarce.

Private hospitals are supplied with free blood by health service transfusion centres because it is given freely by donors. They are only charged handling costs at £23 to £31 per pint, and are entitled to a rebate for returns.

Currie said that Ministers were under the impression that the returned blood could be used for NHS patients. They had now discovered that because of its limited shelf life and uncertainty about the way in which it was transported and stored in private hospitals the blood was thrown away.

It seems that the government will introduce a clause in their Health and Medicines Bill which end the sale-or-return system. But that will not end 'blood sucking' by the private hospitals of the NHS — anyone who can afford to have private treatment can afford to pay a bit extra for the unused blood to be thrown down the drain.

Birmingham Health Authority 'sting in tail'

BIRMINGHAM children's hospital will get extra funding for 13 nurses to staff two new intensive care beds.

This was announced by the Health Authority which said it would bring forward its proposals to spend £120,000, originally scheduled for 1990.

The funds will be diverted from the £2 million allocation for regional specialities in the West Midlands region.

This is welcome news, but there is a sting in the tail.

It will be done at the expense of other clinical services.

VOTE FOR BUDGET DAY STRIKE

6,000 march in Manchester

Over 6,000 health service workers and their supporters demonstrated through Manchester city centre last Friday, 19 February in defence of the NHS. Most of those taking part were on strike.

Besides NHS workers, trade unionists from Manchester Direct Works and Massey Ferguson's CPO plant came out on strike, as did NALGO members from Manchester and Salford, and NUPE members from Manchester Polytechnic.

Over 100 medical students from Manchester University wearing their white coats walked out of lectures to swell the ranks of the demonstration.

Delegations from Volex engineering factory in Wythenshawe, Agecroft power station and a host of trade union banners as well as a speaker from the Lesbian and Gay Rights Campaign showed that the possibility exists to mobilise the entire working class in a fight to stop the Tories dismantling the NHS.

Most of the speakers demanded more money for the health service on

BY A MEMBER OF MANCHESTER NUPE

budget day instead of tax cuts for the rich.

As Budget Day approaches and the Tories insist that they are sticking to their plans, it is becoming clear that while some concessions may be extracted, to protect and improve the NHS the Tory government will have to be brought down.

The first speaker at the rally in Albert Square was Jeremy Spafford, a psychiatric nurse and COHSE member from North Manchester General Hospital. He was speaking on behalf of the march organisers — the Manchester health stewards' committee.

He called for a vote in favour of a 24-hour general strike on Budget Day or the day before. The vote was overwhelming as a sea of hands went up

all over the square.

He then called on Rodney Bickerstaffe, NUPE general secretary, and the NALGO and COHSE national officers who were speaking next, to carry out the job of gaining TUC support for such a strike. But all three completely ignored what he had said.

defied

Attempts to intimidate strikers were defied, Massey Ferguson's had threatened five shop stewards with injunctions under the anti-union laws and nurses at Manchester Royal Infirmary were told that if they attended the march wearing uniforms they would be disciplined.

We can expect further attacks when we go for strike action on Budget Day. That is why, besides organising for strike action we must take up the fight against union leaders who do not back-up their members. If they are not prepared to do battle they must be removed.

NURSES DO PARACHUTE JUMPS

'National Health Service belongs to us all'

SADIE McGUIRE is NALGO shop steward at the Royal Samaritan hospital in Glasgow's South Side. She has been working at this, the city's only hospital for women, for 20 years and is, in her own words, 'passionate about the health service'.

Sadie is a secretary to two consultants, two house officers and two senior registrars. But she warned them she would not be around on 24 February, when with others at her hospital, she would be joining the Scottish day of action on health.

The consultants obviously respect her commitment and share her concern about the NHS. One, who came in as we were talking, says that he has been waiting four years for a new sterilisation kit which would mean he could carry out this operation without damaging a woman's fallopian tube.

He knows a consultant at the Rutherglen maternity hospital who has access to relatively sophisticated equipment. 'But that is only because he organises charity stunts. 85 per cent of that cost was raised by nurses doing parachute jumps. It's

BY HILARY HORROCKS

disgusting.'

The Royal Samaritan has been under threat of closure for the past four years; after 18 months of demonstrations and petitions staff have still not heard of a definite decision.

'I feel very passionately that when you're unwell you shouldn't even have to think

'Women can just walk in here for a cervical smear, the pill, sheaths — whatever they need, at no cost,' says Sadie. 'There are so many things women need to have done — their physiology simply demands more attention.'

'All this will be changed if the attacks on the NHS are allowed to continue.'

Sadie is worried that plans for more preventative care — a breast screening unit

and a coposcopy clinic to deal with cervical cancer on an out-patient basis — will

about whether you can afford treatment' says Sadie, who believes that the Tory government has rolling legislation all prepared for the systematic dismantling of the health service.

'I would like to see brought out on strike, sections that really hurt, such as the finance section, and for us all to pay them a weekly levy. This would also not affect the patients.'

Strike

'With our last strike all we did was help the government. One day strikes are no use, they only hurt the very low paid workers.'

Sadie is encouraged by the strikes taking place in other industries to back the health workers' day of action. 'The NHS belongs to us all — every one is a patient or a potential patient. That is why other workers must and will support us.'

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

TORY steps towards the elimination of state provision for health care were made public last week.

Thatcher has once again made clear that the Tory government will provide not a penny extra for the crumbling health service.

She will yield to neither protest nor pressure.

● Top of the list is a proposal to privatise GPs and their patients. GPs would leave the health service and take their patients with them into private health companies. The government would pay a monthly or annual fee per head to provide health care over the year.

Better food, private rooms and 'swifter attention' would be available only to those able to pay for them.

New bodies, Health Maintenance Organisations, would be both insurers and providers of health care centred on a hospital which they would either buy or hire services from.

● Second favourite is a plan mooted by bully-boy Leon Brittan. His idea is to separate off a new National Health Insurance Scheme to pay for health care — over and above the tax levied for social security spending. This plan aims to encourage individuals to opt out of the national scheme out and join private health schemes.

GPs TO BE PRIVATISED

● The third proposal involves retaining the health service as it is and tinkering around with structural changes in management, new charges, and better marketing of optional extras such as private rooms.

The technological developments which have exploded in medical science over the last couple of decades have created new expectations and demands in the middle class and working class.

Ten years ago it was, for instance, accepted that:

- Babies born at 26 weeks of gestation could not survive.
- You could not find out whether your child suffered from a genetic disorder until after it was born.
- Women without fallopian tubes could never become pregnant.

These rising expectations lie at the root of the massive

opposition to Tory plans to destroy the NHS.

So widespread is the opposition that it has created serious divisions within the Tory Party itself, as shown by the Tory dominated all-party House of Commons Select Committee that proposed that the nurses' pay rise should be fully funded.

The campaign to defend the NHS has provoked a major political crisis for the Thatcher government.

Only the refusal of the Labour leaders to unite the working class in a struggle against the government has allowed Thatcher to survive this crisis.

The full weight of the working class must be mobilised against the government.

For an all-out general strike on Budget day, 14 March.

Eviction repulsed

200 DEMONSTRATORS repulsed Health Authority bosses' attempt to evict occupiers from Ancoats Casualty on Friday afternoon 19 February.

They left the Manchester NHS march after Billy from the Ancoats Action Committee made an appeal from the rally platform in Albert Square.

The health authority had threatened to bring in the bailiffs if the occupiers did

not evacuate the Casualty by noon.

They probably thought they would not meet much resistance while everyone was on the demonstration. However, their plan backfired and the resistance is now stronger than ever.

The Action Committee are demanding that the health authority stick to their promise to open first-aid and clinic facilities to replace the closed department.

Camden call police to library occupation

LEFT-WING Labour Camden council last week called in the police to remove 50 people occupying St Pancras reference library.

The occupiers were protesting at the proposed closure of three of the borough's libraries: the reference library and branch libraries at High Holborn and Belsize Park.

The occupiers, on the first floor of the Shaw Library building, had earlier winched up food, drink and bed-

BY ANDREW BURGIN

ding brought to them by outside supporters, using a bucket and rope.

St Pancras is widely recognised as one of the best reference libraries in London, with collections of national significance; it is scheduled to close at only 7 day's official notice as part of Camden council's cuts

programme.

The occupiers had earlier told Workers Press:

'We're determined to carry this action through. We want to force the council to reopen the reference library permanently. We are adamant that the council will not be allowed to close so crucial a resource.'

At a demonstration in support of the occupation Caroline Holding, one of the Man-

ifesto councillors who are opposing the cuts, told Workers Press:

'I think this action is great, I'm really pleased. What I want to stress is that this is just one of many cuts that the majority labour group are now carrying through.'

'The old people's luncheon club meals have just gone up 50 per cent. I am here to support the fightback against all the cuts.'

LESSONS OF THE FORD STRIKE

Ford strike surrendered by leaders

THE Ford strike ended after just two weeks when the officials and most plant leaders surrendered and recommended acceptance of Ford's amended terms: a two-year deal with strings.

Union leaders, Ron Todd, Bill Jordan, Mick Murphy and Jimmie Airlie gave undertakings to the company that the Ford's efficiency programme would be implemented in the plants.

At every stage the union leaderships sought to prevent a strike taking place and then moved rapidly to end it once it had begun.

What stood out in this struggle was how the 32,000 Ford workers rebelled against their leaders and the international character of the strike.

It took three ballots to wear down the resistance of the workforce who eventually accepted — through lack of confidence in their leadership to carry the strike through to victory.

A 90 per cent vote to reject the company's terms was whittled down by the cowardly leaders' continuous retreat.

Even then around

BY A FORD WORKER

16,000 (50 per cent) voted to accept, 6,000 to reject, with some 10,000 not voting at all.

This strike, the most solid strike ever at Fords, shook the Ford Motor Company internationally and threw the world financial scene into a panic.

Since 1978 Fords in Europe has been rationalised and reorganised into a gigantic integrated production unit where a strike in one part of it immediately hits the rest.

The Wall Street Journal bemoaned the fact that the Ford strike showed

that new technology and methods of production had 'enhanced' the strength of the working class.

Within days of Fords UK coming out on strike, Genk and other plants were being closed down. What was revealed was the enormous power of the working class and the international nature of the struggle.

The Ford workers had never before been in such a strong position to win their demands. This is what terrified the union leaders most.

After four days of the strike, Todd, Jordan, Murphy and Airlie secretly met the company to work out how to end the strike.

The Fords National Joint Negotiating Committee (FNJNC), dominated by full-time officials and right wing convenors, accepted a deal only marginally different from what had been 'on the table' since last November 24, including most of the company's efficiency 'strings'.

At mass meetings, convenors such as at Dagenham's Engine plant and Bridgend argued that if they stayed out for another 12 weeks they would only get one per cent more, thus hiding the real situation —



that Fords of Europe was being brought to its knees.

The full claim — ten per cent and a one-year deal without strings was winnable. The decisive question was leadership. (In Dagenham's PTA

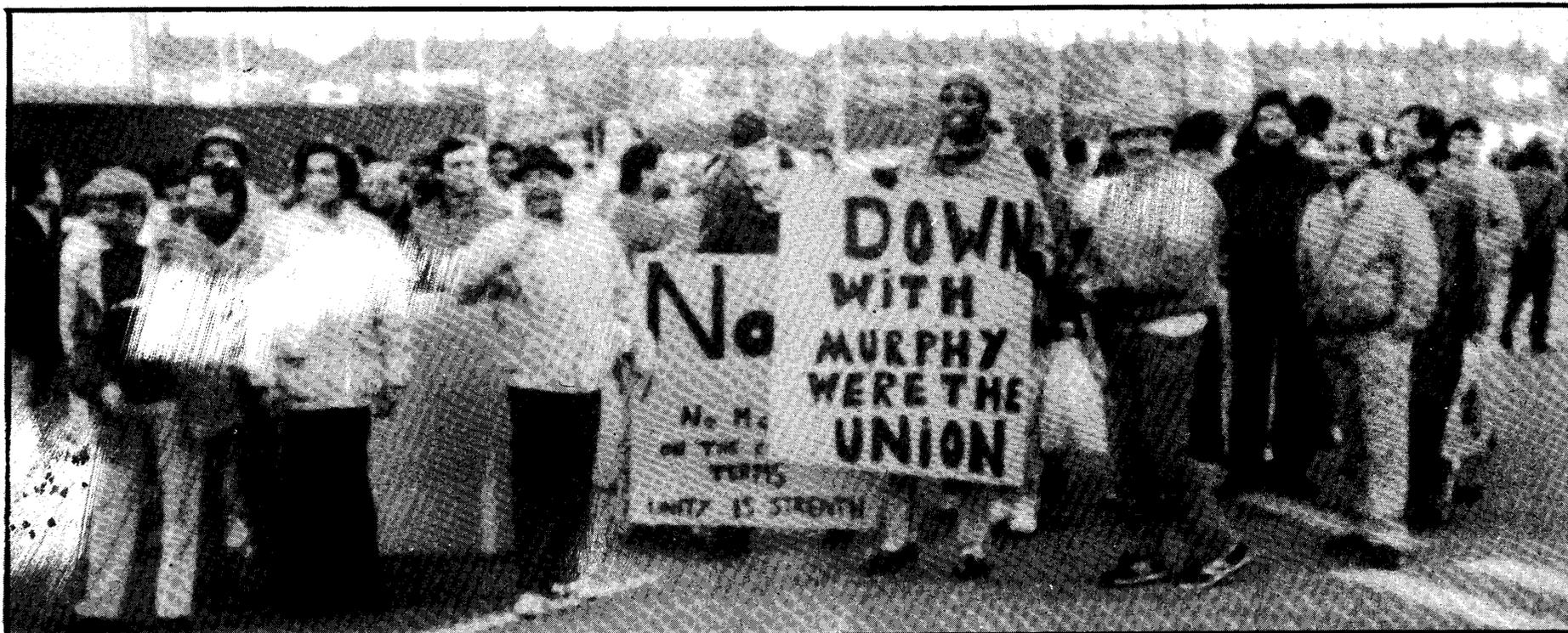
plant, the 4,000 workforce still voted 60 per cent to reject).

The most important issue now facing Ford workers is to clear out those leaders who would not fight!

The FNJNC should be scrapped and replaced

with a democratically elected negotiating body answerable to the workforce.

Links must be forged immediately with Ford workers in West Germany, Belgium and Spain to found an International Ford workers combine.



The beginning of the Fords strike at the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant

'Peaceful co-existence' a new phase

BY MICHEL VARGA

AN INTRODUCTION

THIS article is a continuation from last week's Workers Press article — 'An unholy alliance.'

In it 'Ramos and Co' refers to the political organisation led by Anibal Ramos, the Assouline brothers, G. Laffont and others which calls itself the Fourth International.

It was formed in 1976 out of a struggle against the abandonment of Trotskyism by Lambert's International Communist Party (PCI) in France.

This group at that time included Michel Varga (Balazs Nagy), the author of this article, together with a number of comrades from Eastern European countries. In 1984/1985 these comrades and their supporters were bureaucratically excluded from the organisation. Principled differences had developed, particularly on the issue of the political revolution against Stalinism.

Besides the example given in the text, Ramos developed a position which accepted all political parties (including bourgeois ones) in the workers' councils and recognised

the rights of the bureaucracy to enter these councils — against the position of the founding programme of Trotskyism (the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International written in 1938): Legalisation of Soviet parties! Drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets!

The excluded comrades are now organised in the Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International (GOCQI) which works along with the Workers Revolutionary Party in the Preparatory Committee for the organisation of an international conference of Trotskyists.

The article refers to the Simon Bolivar Brigade. This was formed by Latin American Trotskyists who are now the International Workers League (IWL), Fourth International. It was a fighting brigade in the Nicaraguan revolution. Because it stood for the leadership of the working class in the revolution, on the programme of Permanent Revolution, it was expelled by the Sandinista government.

REAGAN and Gorbachev want only to disarm the oppressed peoples who are fighting for their freedom. They agonise over the 'hot spots' of the world, which they propose to pacify.

The workers of the oppressed peoples of the whole world see in the West Bank and in Ghaza just what pacification means: disarmament of the people by thugs in uniform, armed to the teeth.

Workers, be careful! The Kremlin pressurises the Nicaraguan government towards 'peace negotiations' with the contras, the peace that Lambert and company and their reformist friends praise to the skies, belittling the gains of the revolution.

There are alarming signs that the bureaucracy is already mobilising itself to smash the militancy and the unity of the South African working class, in order to lead it towards a 'democratic' solution.

The Kremlin feverishly prepares to abandon Afghanistan, and simultaneously encourages the isolation of Iran to allow imperialism to stabilise and strengthen its position in the Middle East.

There is an agreement on the 'disarming and pacification' of these 'hotspots' which is perfectly understood even if the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy make sure that the terms are never openly revealed. It is not for nothing that Reagan has described this meeting as 'historic'.

For the imperialists it also involves their hopes for the 'peaceful' reconquest of the USSR and the other countries which have escaped their domination and control.

Military inspections in each other's countries constitute a significant step towards arms control, and by way of consequence, the control of the USSR's economy. I indicated the possibility of this breach in the defences of the USSR 25 years ago.

Today it is a dangerous reality. With an even greater possibility for capitalism to penetrate directly into the planned economies (credits, mixed enterprises, manufacturing under license, 'know how' etc) as well as indirectly (through the path of 'adjustment' of prices, the application of profitability, the softening of the monopoly of

foreign trade etc., in a word the destruction of planning) the threat increases against the conquests of October.

The Reagan Gorbachev meeting, even if it did not place this particular question at the centre of the discussion, has given a thrust to the economic reforms (penetration of capital and attacks against the gains of October) of the bureaucracy. The recent crisis whips up imperialism to accelerate a 'reconquest' — if possible peaceful — of the huge markets that the USSR, China and other countries represent.

In the particular area of economic relations, the Kremlin bureaucracy is directly affected by the financial and monetary crisis in which imperialism flounders.

It is so ready to stabilise this system that all its economic aims are immediately conditioned not only by the normal functioning of the world market — which is a reference point, and more and more the base of the economy of the USSR, and upon which its dependence is more and more marked — but by the good functioning of the imperialist economy. The fall of the dollar, for example, has caused immense (incalculable) losses to the planned economies which for decades have done everything to increase their dollar reserves.

Imperialism's strong tendency towards protectionism, particularly in the USA and the countries of the EEC, has literally ruined the economies of the small countries of the East in a few years, and has shaken even that of the USSR where the bureaucracy is the fiercest advocate of streamlining the economy and effective international 'constraints'.

The Reagan-Gorbachev

meeting pushes forward all the outstanding processes affecting the economy of the USSR and the other Eastern countries. The acceleration of economic reforms is the order of the day. Translated into economic terms, the stabilisation of imperialism means austerity reinforced and generalised on a world scale: unemployment and famine for millions, renewed attacks against the conquests of the working class and workers organisations, particularly the unions and revolutionary organisations. It means the exporting of the imperialist crisis into the USSR and the other eastern countries.

It is under these political and economic conditions

that the defence of the USSR, and of all the countries in which the bourgeoisie have been expropriated and its power overturned, is an urgent necessity.

At present it does not mean an armed struggle, nor simply political or diplomatic support against the class enemies, their threats and slanders. It consists of preparing the political revolution which is ripening in all the European countries and the East (also in China), while being concentrated in the USSR itself.

It is never reduced to platonic declarations against reforms and still less to a purely negative opposition. That is the attitude of the Stalinists of the old school, who, fearing that the change of tactics called 'reform' will provoke a mobilisation of the masses, oppose it and attack it.

In that sense their arguments and Ramos' are identical. All sectarians, and those who want to disguise their opportunism take the very easy role of denouncing the reforms of Gorbachev. But this denunciation of the Kremlin reforms directed by Gorbachev, on its own, important and absolutely necessary though it is, is not only insufficient, but left at that stage, ties its perpetrators to the old Stalinism.

The important question is not a literary denunciation (and the writings of sectarians are extremely trivial and bad) but the preparation of the political revolution. That is what the sectarians — the consistent and the occasional — won't do. They will reiterate the necessity (in general) of the political revolution, to distinguish themselves, verbally from the old Stalinists. But ask them how? They don't dare say anything about the Tran-

sitional Programme — because it is precisely this programme they criticise: no, they are not for the revision of the planned economy. According to them that demand derives from 'Gorbachevism'.

The central task for the preparation of the political revolution consists in relying on the deep aspiration of the masses for a profound and global transformation (what is more, it is that aspiration the bureaucracy tries to channel in order to break it up) in order to turn it against the plans of the bureaucracy.

All the better if these plans resemble externally and formally the formulas of the Fourth International. That proves, on one side, the depth of the crisis of the bureaucracy which is forced to use such language, and on the other, the extraordinary validity of our Transitional Programme written by Leon Trotsky — exactly 50 years ago.

It is the content of the formulas that matter and their social weight in the presence of a mobilisation of the masses. Sectarian/opportunists forget — if they ever knew — that in 1956 it was the Hungarian bureaucracy itself, at the moment of its collapse, that launched the appeal for the creation of workers' councils. They wanted to use them as Tito had done. Workers did not shout stupidly, like Ramos (and others): no, no, no, what an evil suggestion! They responded massively to the appeal and created workers' councils — in their own way, and everybody, (even Ramos and his friends) congratulated themselves — after the event.

As for the hypocritical indignation of the world at large about blocs, alliances

and support to this or that wing of the bureaucracy against the others, under precise conditions, suffice it to bring up the political nature of the main objector.

Not so long ago Ramos tailed after the Sandinista government, sparing them from all criticism, asking for permission to send a brigade to Nicaragua, while maintaining a steadfast silence on the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar brigade.

It was more than a critical and temporary alliance: it was opportunist adaptation. Today he declares himself ready to support the PLO against the Zionist state or the Filipino maoist guerillas against the government — very good — but refuses conditional support to one wing of the bureaucracy against the other. Why? He never says so, but the reason is simple: he has a terrible fear of unveiling his own opportunism by confusing support with adaptation in practice.

Ramos has amply proved the nature of his political conduct. The entire history of the Spanish POR bears witness to it: the principal reason for collapse of this party (from hundreds of members to a handful of militants) is precisely this oscillation between sectarianism and opportunism. At the moment he has just caught the fever of sectarianism (in relation to the political revolution).

It would be perfectly in character if these people, at the moment when a genuine left current defined itself in the ranks of the bureaucracy of the USSR — which is highly possible — (because Gorbachev represents state power, he constitutes the central axis, as I have emphasised many a time), going well beyond support, adapt themselves noisily while attacking our support — because it is critical, conditional and temporary — as sectarian. The past and the present of the workers' movement swarms with such cases.

The central task of the Fourth International is to contribute to the development of the mobilisation of workers towards the political revolution, in facilitating this process as the means and the method of rebuilding the 'bolshevik' party, that is to say the soviet section of the Fourth International. Negative criticisms, sterile commentators make the greatest mistakes, because they isolate Trotskyism from this process.

In the present period, the preparation of the political revolution ripening in the USSR goes hand in hand with the mobilisation of workers and oppressed peoples in the capitalist countries for the defence of their conditions of life and their gains, for them to win their freedom.

In the face of this surge, the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting organises the apparatus of imperialism and the bureaucracy to impose their 'austerity' and their 'control'. Instead of peace, they bring war and civil war against the people. Only the Fourth International warns the working class about this. It is resolutely against 'pacifism without peace', the illusion that the lackeys of capitalism parade to cover over the real content of the agreement between imperialism and the Kremlin, the disarming of the peoples in struggle and the attempt to break the resistance of workers.

It is exactly the opposite of a peace that is announced: it is for the biggest of battles that we must prepare, and mobilise for from this moment on — above all in forging the decisive weapon, the Fourth International, to the rebuilding of which we call all the militants, the advanced workers and the young revolutionaries of the whole world.



The bodies of the brutal and hated Hungarian Secret Police shot down in the uprising of 1956

Discussion article

IRAN: Has imperialist intervention changed meaning of Gulf war?

FOLLOWING an article 'Nationalism' in the *Socialist Worker* dated 28 November 1987, in which the SWP (Socialist Workers Party) explain the position adopted at conference '... to support Iran in its war against imperialism', we feel that a number of points concerning the arguments used, analogies employed and conclusions reached need to be looked at with critical care and rejected.

Two points in the article are of considerable importance: firstly, the suggestion that there is '... one war — on the battlefield and in the Gulf because "Reagan has mobilised the whole of Western imperialism behind Iraq, secondly, that the war against Iraq is now a war of 'national liberation'.

This is a dangerous conflation and is mitigated against by the facts of the matter.

The danger of this conflation was not entirely missed and one contributor at the conference pointed out that 'There are reports of strikes against the war effort in Iran. We now seem to be saying that we are against these strikes'. The comrade goes on to comment that Iranian comrades are 'rightly scared' of Islamic fundamentalists.

We believe that the untenable and contradictory position of the SWP is highlighted in these comments. We hope in this letter to clarify some points and ask all socialists give this matter their fullest attention.

Anyone who has followed the history of the war between the governments of Iran and Iraq are well aware that it is the inevitable consequence of years of skirmish and conflict between two reactionary regimes.

On the part of Iraq, it is an attempt to replace the Shah's regime as the principle military force in the area; on the part of Iran, an attempt to spread its retrograde Islamic fundamentalism to other countries irrespective of the wishes of the people of those countries.

The idea that the war is one of 'national liberation' is based on the proposal that 'the whole of Western imperialism' supports the Iraqis.

With this is coupled the build-up of British and US warships in the Gulf. If the whole of Western imperialism is ranged against Iran, why then does Iran continue to export oil investments in Iran and expand them since 1979?; why is British investment in Iran on the increase?; why had France made new diplomatic moves which include the expulsion of Iranian opposition activists?; why are Japan and

Last month, the International Socialist Society at Glasgow University submitted an Open Letter to 'Socialist Worker', concerning the position adopted by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) with regard to Iran and imperialism.

The Glasgow university comrades said they had been in discussion with Iranian socialists, and felt that the position taken by the SWP was 'faulty and dangerous'. The Association of Iranian Students apparently backed the Open Letter.

The comrades said they intended contacting other papers and parties on the Left, in the hope of broadening the discussion.

Workers Press was pleased to receive a copy of their Open Letter. We are publishing it, not necessarily because we agree with their conclusions, but because we think they raise important issues for discussion.

We hope others will feel free to join in the discussion.

other Western countries continuing to purchase and transport Iranian oil?

Is the answer that 'the whole of Western imperialism' is mobilised against Iran? We think not, comrades.

It may of course be that the Americans and other agents of Western imperialism are ineffectual, but a look at the trade embargo and blockade of Nicaragua would suggest they were not.

It may of course be that the Iranians continue to export oil and it finds its way to anti-imperialist countries such as Nicaragua to help them in their efforts against imperialism.

But, in reality it is the rest of Western imperialism which benefits: France, West Germany, Japan etc.

The presence of US and British warships in the Gulf, for all their posturing, has led to no direct confrontation with Iran. In fact, in the last six months or so Iranian oil exports through the Gulf have increased to the point where Iran is receiving more now from oil exports than at any time in the past.

After 1979 there was disinvestment by US and British capital but this was a 'cold-feet' reaction rather than a concerted effort on the part of Khomeini and this is borne out by the fact that West German and Japanese capit-

al remained and expanded.

Khomeini was not stretching his 'anti-imperialist' wings. The SWP try to draw a parallel with the Spanish civil war situation but we would suggest that if any parallel is to be insisted upon it should be looked for in another area.

Whilst we would not suggest that the Khomeini regime is fascist, we would suggest that there is more in common between Khomeini and Franco than between Khomeini and the Republicans.

The 'imperialist' presence of the British and US warships in the Gulf has been advantageous to the Iranian regime, allowing them to whip up 'anti-Western' reaction in the country to fuel the war effort against Iraq.

It also supplies an excuse for the continued purge of undesirable elements: such subversives as 'prostitutes' (women who wear their veils too high in public) who are stoned; Kurdish and other national minorities who are subjected and/or eliminated; workers who strike for basic rights; students who demand freedom from the oppressive 'law of Islam'.

The last year or so has seen no fundamental change in the regime with the exception that the 'moderates' (with whom Oliver North so

successfully set up dialogue) have gone into the ascendancy. Those with an eye to history will recall that a little over a year ago the Iranian regime was more than willing to collude with the most right-wing, militaristic sections of US imperialism.

The collusion was a complicated plot to buy arms from the US, with the assistance of Israel.

The money from these deals was carefully laundered through CIA accounts and went to finance Nicaraguan Contras.

It was after the expose by a Lebanese newspaper and the refusal by Danish dockworkers to handle the ships carrying the arms that the affair came to light.

We wonder whether the American administration would not still be supporting the Iranian regime's war efforts had it not been for the embarrassment of the expose.

Is it from these incidents and developments that the SWP obtain the idea that the Iranian regime's war is against imperialism?

Shift

In consideration of the shift in the political complexion of the Iranian regime towards an increasing consolidation of Rafsanjani's position (a man trusted by the US administration), the next 12 months might well see the ships which are 'threatening' Iran in such an 'imperialist' manner again supplying arms if the regime decides that, opportunistically, there is more political capital to be made from posturing against the USSR; or the Chinese; or the Kalahari Bushmen; or their own working class — with even greater rigour than presently.

Khomeini's expansionist pretensions are well known. As he stated in 1976, 'Holy war means the conquest of all non-Moslem territories. Such a war may well be declared after the formation of an Islamic government worthy of that name, at the direction of the Imam or under his orders'.

Also on record are his fulminations against the secular anti-imperialist movements, especially the Palestinians.

The reactionary militarism of Khomeini and the Shi'ite fundamentalists was highlighted in the Lebanon where, in 1982, they welcomed Israeli troops and took part in the slaughter at the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps.

Khomeini has his Islamic government and is attempting to prosecute his fundamentalist desires: socialists in Iran rightly see their task as one of stopping the regime in its expansionism and repression of peoples.

Assaulted

Since 1979 the Iranian comrades have been assaulted by pro-Moscow parties which decry their struggle and, doubtless they see through such mouthings.

But when socialists and communists who are independent of the Soviet dictat misguidedly add their voice of disapproval, our Iranian comrades will suffer — and not only in their morale.

At a time which has seen the rise of the right wing in Iran, our comrades are presently fortunate to be languishing in low morale rather than jail or a grave.

The struggle against expansionism and militarism is an international one and the Iranian socialists and spearheading that fight against their own expansionist regime.

Socialists internationally should be supporting the comrades in Iran — both in published articles and in action.

One area of action which lends support is the continued pressure to bring about the end of military intervention in the Gulf: intervention which only strengthens the hand of the reactionary governments.

Rather than the abandonment of the class struggle, which the SWP appear to propose by their condemnation of strike action in Iran, we demand support for the Iranian working class and call for the working class internationally to follow the lead of our Danish comrades and stop the export of arms to both Iran and Iraq.

We stand against military victory of either Iran or Iraq, and against imperialist intervention.

Further, we see the way forward in the defeat of both reactionary regimes and imperialism by the efforts of the working class: railworkers refusing to transport arms to docks; dockers blacking ships carrying arms to the Gulf; seamen blacking ships which carry arms to either Iran or Iraq.

It is action such as this which will bring victory to the Iranian working class and the working class worldwide, not misguided mouthings against 'Western imperialism'.

Below the Bible belt

AMERICA'S billion-dollar Bible-bashing industry — and right-winger Reverend Pat Robertson's chances for the Presidency — were counting the costs last week, after yet another television preacher-man was caught with his pants down.

Reverend Jimmy Swaggart, whose \$150 million-a-year TV gospel empire contributes \$14 million a year to the Pentacostal church, has had to resign his ministry after being caught in a motel room with a prostitute.

It was Swaggart, fire-raising cousin of rock singer Jerry Lee Lewis, who helped bring down Jim Bakker, of the 'Praise The Lord' (pass the loot, some say) gospel ministry last year. Bakker had been paying out large

sums to church secretary Jessica Hahn (now living with Hugh Hefner of 'Playboy') to keep quiet over a past seduction.

Now Swaggart has been tumbled by another preacher man, Reverend Marvin Gorman, whom he once got sacked for 'immorality and conduct unbecoming a minister'. Gorman hired a private detective who followed Swaggart to the New Orleans motel room, and got photographs that were presented to elders of the Assemblies of God, in which Swaggart is a minister.

FOR David Clark it seemed that the American dream had come true.

From a wealthy family, member of a Greek letter fraternity at university, he joined a prestigious law firm catering for wealthy clients; he was one of the elite.

Besides an expensive town house he bought a Long Island country retreat and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on its renovation.

A mythic figure to his acquaintances, he went water buffalo hunting in Africa, belonged to a number of exclusive New York clubs, enjoyed a reputation as an experienced polo player and could bet as much as £10,000 on a game of backgammon.

A married man with two children, he dated a string of expensive girl friends.

The problem was that, in a

great American tradition, Clark stole himself rich. In 1980 he started defrauding the wealthy clients of his law firm. Their money was funnelled into his stock market account with stockbroker Kidder, Peabody and Co., the aim being to repay his clients' accounts from the proceeds of successful speculation.

He joined up with Peter Bryant, then a stockbroker with Kidder, Peabody who, in turn knew a 'Wall Street Journal' columnist called Winans.

As befitted a scribe for 'the daily dairy of the American

dream', Winans was prepared to provide advance information about what investment advice he would be giving in the paper.

In other words, Clark hoped to use insider information to make money on the stock exchange.

This particular insider-trading scheme was revealed in 1984. By this time Clark was drinking heavily.

An attempt to flee to Brazil failed and Clark entered an alcohol rehabilitation centre.

Bryant was soon arrested on insider trading charges and agreed to testify against other people involved, including Clark. After three years of investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Clark was arrested in March 1987 on a criminal indictment. Divorced by his wife, deserted by his former friends, in-

cluding Bryant and Winans, Clark returned to the bottle.

A few days before he was due to be sentenced last month for his part in the insider trader racket Clark collapsed and died. Cause of death: chronic alcoholism.

Victim

What the death certificate did not say was that he was a victim of the American dream.

Capitalism not only exploits the working class, it also devours many of its supporters. Clark was one of those. As an acquaintance put it: 'He wanted it all too soon, too fast. It wasn't alcohol that killed David Clark. It was money.'

He might have said that it was capitalism.

Life and death in the fast lane

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Kurds' prison hunger strike

KURDISH prisoners in Turkey's Eskishekir prison have gone on hunger strike in the isolation cells into which they were thrown after a protest over conditions and ill-treatment.

On 6 February, the Turkish regime sentenced 20 Kurdish political prisoners to death for their participation in guerrilla activity in Turkish-occupied Kurdistan.

About 97 prisoners were put in solitary at Eskishekir after police and troops went into the prison to smash a three-day protest. Relatives and lawyers of the prisoners have been banned from visiting.

About 2,000 prisoners at Diyarbakir military prison were reported to have ended a hunger strike on 18 February, after ten days, when the authorities announced they would gain some of their demands.

According to a Defence Ministry statement in Ankara, issued after Prime Minister Ozal had discussed the prison dispute with President Evren, it was agreed that food, sanitation and medical care be improved, that visiting hours be extended, and prison uniforms would no longer be mandatory.

The government also said it would drop its ban on Kurdish — the main language in the Diyarbakir region. Under the Turkish constitu-

tion, it is forbidden to speak Kurdish in the street.

However, nothing was said in the ministry statement about the prisoners' demands for an end to torture, beatings, and being held in chains.

The Diyarbakir hunger strike spread to about four prisons. About 23 prisoners' relatives staged a solidarity fast, joined by two MPs belonging to the opposition Social Democratic People's Party, at the party's Diyarbakir offices.

The Ozal regime last month signed United Nations and Council of Europe agreements against torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners, in a bid for international respectability while seeking entry to the EEC.

The regime has yet to announce any plans for stopping such practices in its prisons. Kurdish and Left-wing opponents say the regime is as repressive as ever, and merely attempting to clean its image for international consumption.

'No peace without justice'

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

PALESTINIANS will reject any attempt to impose a so-called 'peace' settlement which does not meet their just demands, a leading PLO figure told a meeting in the Houses of Parliament last week, and they will continue to defy Israeli bullets.

'We differentiate between a mere "peace", and a peace with justice,' said Khalid el Hassan, Foreign Affairs spokesman of the Palestine National Council. 'Any attempt at a peace without justice will never realise a durable peace.'

'The ABC of justice is that the victims agree to the solution,' he stressed.

Organised by the Labour Friends of Palestine, the meeting was chaired by Labour MP Harry Cohen.

Rejecting British media hypocrisy on the West Bank and Gaza struggles, the PLO speaker said he had read in 'The Independent' the suggestion that the Israelis ought to use rubber bullets, instead of live bullets.

'That might satisfy the United States,' he said. But so far as Palestinians were concerned, 'the problem is not rubber bullets or live bullets. The problem is to end the occupation. And so long as we have to fight that, we don't care about bullets, and you shouldn't either.'

Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary Gerald Kaufman, who joined the platform at the packed Westminster meeting, should have conveyed this to Neil Kinnock. Notwithstanding his protests over Israeli use of dum-dum bullets, the Labour leader came from a meeting with Israeli prime minister Shamir last week urging the Palestinians to desist from violence!

Kaufman, who said Shamir had refused to see him during his visit, acknowledged: 'violence is inevitable, if it is the only way people can assert their right to self-determination. The Palestinian people have decided their patience is exhausted and they want their freedom.'

Referring to the forces the Palestinians were up against, Khalid el Hassan reminded his audience that Israel received from the United States over \$15 billion in aid a year, for less than three million people.

The Zionists were just used by imperialism. And referring to the PLO's attitude to Israelis, Khalid el Hassan recalled that some years ago at a meeting in London he had declared the PLO would 'liberate the Jews from Zionism'.

He now agreed with what an Israeli friend had told him at the time, 'the only people who can liberate Israel from Zionism are the Israelis themselves.'

'Since we took over the PLO from Mr. Shukhairi in 1969,' (Ahmed Shukhairi, appointed to run the PLO by Arab governments, an old-style Palestinian leader and demagogue — C.P.) 'it has become much more than an organisation. We have many organisations. It is not just an organisation, and not a party.'

'A political party has to have a social programme, an ideology,' said El Hassan, a Fatah member. 'But that means we must have a home. So long as we don't have a home, what's the use of talking of future social justice?'

Khalid el Hassan said under the British mandate, the head of education had boasted of training the Palestinian as 'an obedient servant'. The founders of the modern Palestinian movement had different aims. 'We said when we founded Fatah in 1958 that we would be the bridge over which another generation would march to Palestine.'

Today, they had 23,000 Palestinian engineers, 20,000 doctors, more universities than Arab states, and Palestinians were studying around the world. 'We are five million people scattered in the four corners of the world.'

—PLO speaker at Westminster



KHALID EL HASSAN. 'Our job to support the people . . .'

Describing the way Palestinians educated abroad brought their different ideas into the movement, — 'we have nationalists, communists, democrats, international socialists' — el Hassan said the PLO had organised unions, and associations, wherever its people were. From them were elected delegates to the Palestinian National Council.

'We cannot hold elections in the Arab world, though, because the regimes don't want us to teach their people democracy.' He said as far back as 1952, Aramco, the big American-owned oil company had sent a memo around its managers, 'don't employ Palestinians because they raise the consciousness of the surrounding people.'

The PLO's democracy was 'the best we can do in a "terrorist organisation"', el Hassan quipped, to appreciate laughter and applause.

'When you attack the PLO you are attacking the identity of the Palestinian people,' he said, recalling bitterly how the British government back in the 1920s had refused to see a Palestinian spokesman as a representative of his people but would only

speak to him as 'a Palestinian gentleman'.

Those who would not recognise the PLO as representatives of the Palestinian people did not want to recognise the Palestinians as a people, he stressed. 'That's why the Likud, the Israeli government don't want to recognise us.'

The British Foreign Office had said it 'only recognised governments'. But the Zionist movement had long been recognised by Britain before it was recognised by the Jewish people.

On the current uprising in the occupied territories, Khalid el Hassan particularly praised the heroism of the Palestinian youth. 'America has the Statue of Liberty, holding a torch. When we are free we'll have the statue of a child with a stone.'

'In each camp now, there is a committee. We get daily reports. You all know that the people support the PLO. Our duty now is to support these people, not theirs to support us.'

The youth were doing what the PLO had advocated, without waiting to be told. 'If I see my kid in the street, and he talks my language, that means I was successful as a father.'

London picket protests visit

TURKISH prime minister Turgut Ozal flies to Iran on Sunday to sign a \$3 billion trade deal. Refugees from Iran link the trip with increased co-operation between the two reactionary regimes, which has included joint military operations against Kurdish villages, and the handing over of political fugitives to the Ayatollah's secret police.

CARI, the Campaign Against Repression in Iran, has called a PICKET, on Saturday 27 February, from 11am to 1pm, outside Turkish Airlines, 11 Hanover street, W1. (nearest tube Oxford Circus).

RIO FLOOD CALAMITY

RIO DE JANEIRO'S mayor declared a 'state of calamity' after torrential rain and floods caused over 2000 deaths and made 20,000 people homeless.

Mud slides destroyed favelas (shanty towns) housing tens of thousands of poor people. Food, clothing and bedding donated from home and abroad reached relief centres. Ambulances struggled through floodwaters and blocked roads, but medical authorities were desperately appealing for blood donors and medicines, and there is fear of epidemics.

Baby slump

EEC foreign ministers meeting in Brussels last week left off discussing minor matters like Middle East wars, Common Market food mountains or African famines, to confront the falling birthrate in Europe.

'We need an impetus to the demographic dynamic,' said West Germany's Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who feared Europe would otherwise lose its economic and political position. Geoffrey Howe for Britain said later the baby shortage was 'a legitimate concern'.

Reports in the press said it was not clear which member of the British government would be responsible for following up any EEC directive. Surely a job for Cecil Parkinson?

WORLD BRIEF

SA jet downed

SOUTH African military admitted last week that one of its planes had been shot down by Angolan groundfire, and the pilot was missing. Angolan officers said later two South African Mirage jet fighters had been downed.

South African planes had raided what they claimed were bases used by SWAPO guerrillas, fighting for independence in Namibia. SWAPO said their members had not been in the area, and the South Africans had bombed Angolan civilians.

Cyprus win

NEW Cyprus president George Vassiliou, elected with backing from the Stalinist AKEL, has called on all Cypriots to unite for the good of Cyprus, and says he hopes for better relations with the Turkish Cypriots.

Millionaire businessman Vassiliou, whose parents

were AKEL founders, stood as an independent. He beat Socialist candidate Lyssarides and veteran politician Kyprianou in the first round, then took votes from both's supporters to narrowly beat right-winger Glafkos Clerides.

Spanish CP leader

SPANISH Communist Party delegates at their 12th Congress last week elected Cordoba mayor Julio Anguita as new general secretary. He replaced former Asturian miners' leader Gerardo Iglesias who stood down after criticism of the party's poor showing.

Observers from the 'Marxist-Leninist' Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain (PCPE) attended. Anguita urged party members to work in the United Left with them. The CP-led Workers' Commissions have meanwhile signed an agreement with the UGT unions to oppose the Gonzalez government's austerity measures.

Wooing Saudis

SOVIET Foreign Ministry director Viktor Polyakov has paid a visit

to Saudi Arabia for talks seen as heralding possible renewal of full relations. It was the first visit by a senior Soviet official in half a century.

Last month, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal visited Moscow on behalf of Gulf Arab states, urging a UN Security Council meeting on Iran. Meanwhile, an Israeli consular mission is expected in Moscow soon.

Kennedy's Mafia friends

ASSASSINATED US president John F. Kennedy was backed by Mafia money and influence when he ran for election, according to ex-Kennedy mistress Judith Campbell Exner, who acted as his go-between to Chicago mob head Sam Giancana.

Exner, introduced to Kennedy by Frank Sinatra, previously denied on oath that the president knew of her Mafia connections. Kennedy made a deal with the organised crime syndicate to try and have Cuban leader Fidel Castro murdered.

Sri Lanka front

SRI LANKA'S Lanka Sama Samaja Party, which reneged from Trotskyism in 1964 to join a bourgeois government, has formed a new 'left' front with the Communist Party, centrist Neva Sama Samaja, and Mahajan (People's) parties.

Their 'United Socialist Alliance' was proclaimed at the funeral of assassinated film star and Mahajana founder Vijaya Kumarantunga.



KENNEDY

DON'T LET THATCHER KILL OUR KIDS!

TUC Must call a general strike

14 March

BY THE EDITOR

THE TUC General Council — the highest elected body of the trade union movement — must co-ordinate the actions of all trade unionists in defence of the National Health Service and call a general strike on 14th March (pre-budget day).

This call was initiated by Sheffield nurses who suggested action to coincide with budget day — their demand was taken up by the London hospitals' strike co-ordinating committee and it is supported by COHSE.

The Charing Cross hospital joint shop stewards' committee has circulated the call throughout the movement, and thousands of NHS workers, supported by other trade unionists and communities, have taken part in actions all over the country.

As the lobby was taking place, there was a strike of Scottish NHS workers supported by many other trade unionists (see page 3); the Welsh NHS workers are taking action on 1st March.

The determined struggle of health workers to defend the NHS from Thatcher's plans to destroy it has inspired millions. These workers are in the front line of this struggle and must not be left to fight alone.

Today's lobby of the TUC is part of this rising wave of anger against the policies of this Tory government. 50 million people are affected by the break up of the NHS and they are looking for leadership to mobilise a mass movement in the fight to defend this basic right.

● Organise, inside and outside the health service, for an all-out pre-budget day strike on Monday 14 March! Miners, teachers, carworkers, seafarers and council workers — all must come to the defence of the health workers.

● The TUC's planned 5 March national demonstration must be made the springboard for extending the 14th March call.

This is literally a life and death question. The tragic death of Matthew Collier makes this clear. There are over 100 children now waiting for urgent heart surgery in the Birmingham area alone. Mere protest will change nothing!

Since 1981 protest demonstrations, pickets, and conferences have been held, thousands of people have signed petitions; but wards and whole hospitals have closed down all over the country; even occupations have not stopped this onslaught.

● Privatisation means that the tremendous advances in medical science over the last decade are taken away from ordinary people and only the rich reap the benefits.

● Working conditions and wages of nurses, doctors, lab technicians, radiologists, clerical and ancillary workers have deteriorated; stress illnesses are commonplace.

● Patient care is maintained only at the expense of the health of NHS staff; many wait years for treatment, new techniques are either unavailable or remain unused due to lack of funds and in some cases NHS workers themselves voluntarily organise charity events to raise the necessary funds in their 'spare time'.

● There are growing debts to the multi-million drug companies and a shortage of blood for transfusions (whilst the private hospitals save £200,000 per annum on a sale and return scheme which also means that more than 7,000 pints of blood a year have been thrown away).

The Tories have no mandate to kill our children and destroy the welfare state, no more than they had to close mines, shipyards and steelworks. And they could not stay in office if the Labour and trade union leaders did not compromise and block every working class assault on their regime.

● Don't let the TUC isolate health workers as they did the miners!

In demanding that the TUC organise a general strike on 14th March, we also say that this must be the start of a campaign for an all out general strike to bring down the Tory government and if the TUC will not take action to lead the struggle then they must make way for those who will!

The strike committees being formed in hospitals should turn to the whole community with the aim of involving and organising workers both inside and outside the health service in committees like the miners' strike support groups in 1984/85.

The campaign must demand:

● Full funding for the NHS, reversal of privatisation, nationalisation of the big drug companies and control of the NHS by committees of NHS workers and NHS users.

● Only a general strike can defeat Thatcher. These policies and this demand must be fought for throughout the trade union and labour movement.



A forceful picket makes its opinions known



Workers at the lobby of the TUC to call a general strike on the NHS

ALL OUT WITH THE NHS WORKERS

Strike on

h!

ONE DAY
GENERAL
STRIKE
DEFEND THE
NHS



A nurse from University College Hospital explained why she was lobbying 'We're here to fight for better conditions and better pay, and to defend the National Health Service. We need support from all workers. If we get it we can beat this government at its own game.'

Most of us have never taken action before, and we're all here because we think it is necessary. We are not taking it lightly.

'I am a newly qualified staff nurse. In my hospital the staff shortage is horrific. We are supposed to have a certain number of staff on the ward but often we are below the level of emergency cover, and it is unsafe for the patients. Equipment meant to cover five or six patients is being shared among 28. Morale is very low — students can't learn because there is no time to teach them. There are so many coming in through casualty that admissions have been pushed right back. The conditions are inhumane and immoral.'

Nurses are managing to cope with the situation but if we had a few cardiac arrests at the same time... A lot of nurses are apolitical, and they're frightened to take the first step — but once you've taken one step you've got to go all the way.'

Terry Fields, Labour MP, talked about the attitude of the Labour Party towards the NHS. Kinnock is ambivalent. The world and his wife is responding to the NHS issue. Kinnock restricts himself to asking three

questions a day in parliament, but the important thing is the outside associations with the struggle of workers.

When asked about the vote led by Kinnock on the Labour party National Executive Committee (NEC) he said 'They are distancing themselves from the trade union movement. You also get the attitude of the elected trades unionists on the NEC who say to the MPs, you get back to parliament and we'll deal with the trade union issues. We've lost three general elections, and now on the industrial front we see the willingness of workers to struggle. The problem is lack of leadership.'

The money is there — we are a rich nation, but money is wasted on nuclear weapons. I have asked a question in parliament about diverting money away from nuclear weapons into the NHS. Four years ago Kinnock laughed when I said we needed a general strike. I am not talking about anarchy in society, it needs to be coordinated. In 1926 the trade union leaders shied away from power. They had the perspective of keeping the working class within the confines of capitalism. The TUC cannot defend its current membership.

For an International Conference in 1988 for the Re-organisation of the Fourth International

Moscow trials — a crucial stage

THE CAMPAIGN for the restoration to their rightful places in history of the old Bolsheviks, slandered and murdered in Stalin's infamous frame-up trials has now reached a crucial stage.

Earlier this month the Soviet Supreme Court announced that it had cleared the victims of the third and last of these trials, that of Bukharin, Rakovsky and others in 1938.

Reports from Moscow indicate that the court will proceed to the second trial, the 1937 Radek-Pyatakov frame up.

Yagoda, who organised the earlier show trials and was shot after the 1938 trial was excluded from the Supreme Court decision.

The issue cannot therefore be simply rehabilitation of

Bukharin, whose views might be taken to be in line with Gorbachev's present orientation.

Now that Rakovsky, amongst the closest of Trotsky's collaborators, has been declared an innocent victim of the Stalin lie and murder machine, the question of the historical role of the Left Opposition cannot be avoided.

● This is the background to the call made by the Moscow Trials Campaign.

A meeting will be held in the Kingsway-Princeton College, off Grays Inn Road, on Sunday 20 March.

The meeting will be chaired by Eric Heffer MP, and a platform representing a wide range of Labour movement opinion will shortly be announced.

THE WAY FORWARD

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RE-BUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

MANCHESTER

Sunday
March 27th, 2:00 pm,
Committee Room 10,
Manchester Town Hall,
St Peters Square

Cardiff

Thursday
April 7th, 7:30 pm,
Brownhills Hotel

GLASGOW

Sunday
March 13th, 11:00 am,
Blythswood Hotel,
320 Argyle Street

LONDON

Sunday
April 17th, 2:00 pm,
Kingsway Princeton
College,
Grays Inn Road
(corner of
Sidmouth Street),
London WC1

LEICESTER

Wednesday
March 23rd, 7:30 pm,
Unemployed
Workers' Centre,
Charles Street

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM

Lectures at Room 301, Kingsway Princeton College, Grays Inn Road, London WC 1
All lectures start at 7.30pm

Thursday 25 February

The State and Revolution

HOW does the state exercise power over the working class? Can that power be broken? What will take its place?

Friday 3 March

The Russian Revolution, Stalinism and Trotskyism

SEVENTY years ago, the Russian workers, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrew Tsarism and capitalism, and the world socialist revolution began. The rise of a bureaucracy within the Soviet state led to the betrayal of the revolution, but not its destruction.

Thursday 10 March

The Fourth International Today

FIFTY years ago, Trotsky led those who fought to continue the work to prepare the world revolution in the foundation of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution. After decades of crisis, the time has come for the re-founding of the Fourth International.

Thursday 17 March

The Significance of the Preparatory Committee

THE Workers Revolutionary Party has issued a Ten Point Call to revolutionary Trotskyists throughout the world to prepare a conference in 1988 for the re-organisation of the Fourth International. The campaign for the Preparatory Committee and its work in progress sheds new light on many fundamental problems of revolutionary leadership.

READING:

Cliff Slaughter, *Marx and Marxism*
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*
Lenin, *The State and Revolution*
Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £1,851.90

MANY thanks to our members, readers and supporters for a total of £579.80 received this week for our Special Fund.

We are campaigning for the International Conference to be organised by the Preparatory Committee later this year; international travel and communication is very expensive.

We intend the Conference to be one that reaches out to new forces coming into struggle that can be won for the Trotskyist movement. Please help us in this work.

Every donation, large and small will be greatly appreciated.

Meetings are being held to discuss this conference and the principles on which it has been called.

We need funds to carry out this work and that is the purpose of our fund. Please make collections and send in donations to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

EXHIBITION

Gold of the Pharaohs,
City of Edinburgh Art Centre until 30 April
Reviewed by Terry Brotherstone

Ancient Egypt comes to commercial Edinburgh

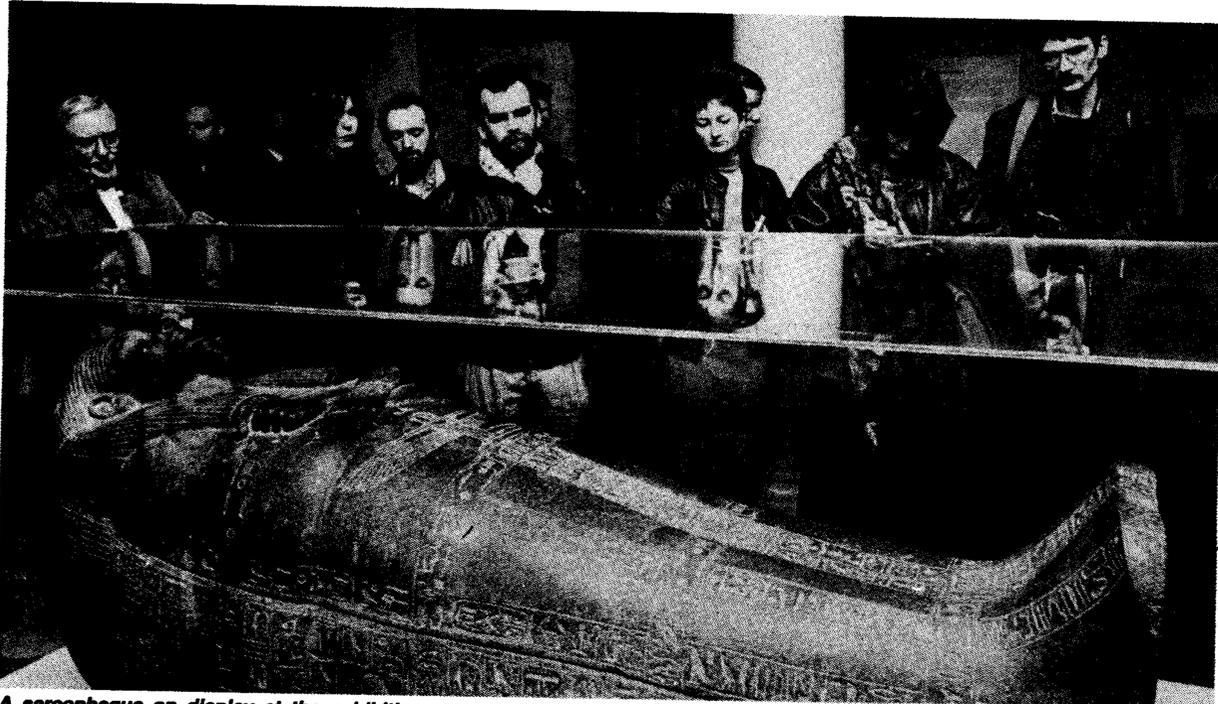
THIS IS a magnificent exhibition, and, if you can, you should come to Edinburgh before the end of April to see it. But try to come un-influenced by the silly publicity which the era of commercial sponsorship seems to demand of such an event 'to justify investment'.

No doubt all the expensive promotion, replete with references to marginally related Hollywood movies and the incalculable monetary value of some of the exhibits, will ensure good takings and civic prestige. Maybe it will bring in a few interested people who might not otherwise have known about the exhibition.

But it was symbolic that, at the opening ceremony, the Press was told that Edinburgh District Council's cash would not run to complimentary copies of the catalogue — which explains the exhibits — only then to discover themselves seduced with wine, smoked salmon and caviare, supplied in generous quantity by the main commercial sponsor.

Such occasions are no doubt standard practice, and fair enough within limits if the object is to launch a serious public discussion of the show. But the promotion of 'the most important archaeological exhibition to have been mounted in the UK since the treasures of Tutankhamun were shown in London 16 years ago' (as we have been told ad nauseam) overstepped the limits.

First the managing director of the main sponsoring company (which for reasons soon apparent shall remain nameless) put a metaphorical pistol at the heads of the assembled scribes and dignitaries, demanding public gratitude for the cash his



A sarcophagus on display at the exhibition

company put in to bring the exhibition to Scotland (which of course it will charge against tax).

'For the past decade,' announced this would-be, latter-day Lorenzo de' Medici, 'we have recognised that business sponsorship has a crucial role to play in the well-being of the arts. I believe that more business sponsors will come forward and provide more support for the arts if the media routinely recognise the identities of the companies doing this good work.'

Not only must we suffer unemployment, poverty, cuts in health care, welfare and education so that finance capital can flourish, we must also, it seems, lie down and lick its spokespeople where they most like it, if we are to have even an occasional insight into the high culture created by human labour and human genius, which is rightly the property of us all.

How directly this outlook is connected to the main drawback of the exhibition

itself (which, I re-emphasise, is magnificent) is hard to say. But there is a real danger that, as presented, it may engender feelings of anti-climax and even boredom where it should excite wonder and encourage historical imagination.

So many splendid photographs of the extraordinary funerary mask of Pharaoh Psusenes I have appeared that, if I had come all the way from Iceland, West Germany or Devon (they are booked in from all the airts and parts we are assured) I think that I might feel a bit let down.

More important, the opportunity to launch young, and not-so-young, minds on a journey of historical imagination, to excite inquiry into the real basis of the high culture of the remote past, has been signally missed.

Maybe the 'Schools Pack' which Lothian Regional Council has admirably produced and issues to local schools will partly disarm the criticism, but I have not seen it yet, and the majority

of visitors never will.

Of course, they can overcome the limitations of the exhibitions for themselves. The catalogue supplies an initial reading list, and there is a shop where some books can be bought — though it is mainly concerned with selling T-shirts and other irrelevant souvenirs.

What one gets from this generously laid-out display is, first of all, a sense of timeless beauty. The religious inspiration which led the priests and successors of the dead Pharaohs to carry out their orders to entomb them, mummified and surrounded by their bodily organs and all the wealth they required for eternal life is one aspect that is well brought out; as is the advanced state of the anatomical knowledge the process must have required.

Those who crafted — from gold and silver and precious stones — pots, bowls and cups; sandals, finger-stalls, rings, bracelets, amulets, and pectorals; and the great mask of 991 BC itself, suc-

ceeded in conveying to a posterity they can never have remotely thought would ever see their work, a truly human achievement of near perfection. To grasp this you need to take time to relax and imaginatively reflect.

Secondly, the exhibition gives a good sense of the necessary fascination of historical inquiry. The well-mounted (though sometimes too low) captions, and the accompanying video-show — which for once is staged on a comfortably viewable scale but which is marred by a commentary delivered in an aggressively mid-Atlantic accent and written patronisingly in the historic present tense — tells us quite a bit about French archaeologist Pierre Montet and the semi-accidental process through which he made the great find of the tomb of Psusennes at Tanis in the Nile Delta in 1939-1940.

What is missing, however, is a sense of the need to marry the aesthetic impulse

generated by the exhibits to the intellectual interest sparked by the information about Montet in such a way as to at least begin to satisfy the urge for an imaginative grasp of the society which produced all these things, and its connections with the present.

Indeed much of what is said and written in the exhibition gives the impression that it was the Pharaohs themselves who created all this magnificence, a view entirely in line with that of the managing director, who evidently thinks there is nothing amiss when access to it today depends on the whims of private patronage.

Perhaps the reason we are told so little about Egyptian society and the labour-process that lay at its base is that it seems too obvious. Slavery is scarcely, if ever mentioned. But perhaps every school student is supposed to know about that. . . .

Nevertheless, much more on this essential aspect of the story is what is needed to transform a splendidly titillating exhibition into an assuredly stimulating one.

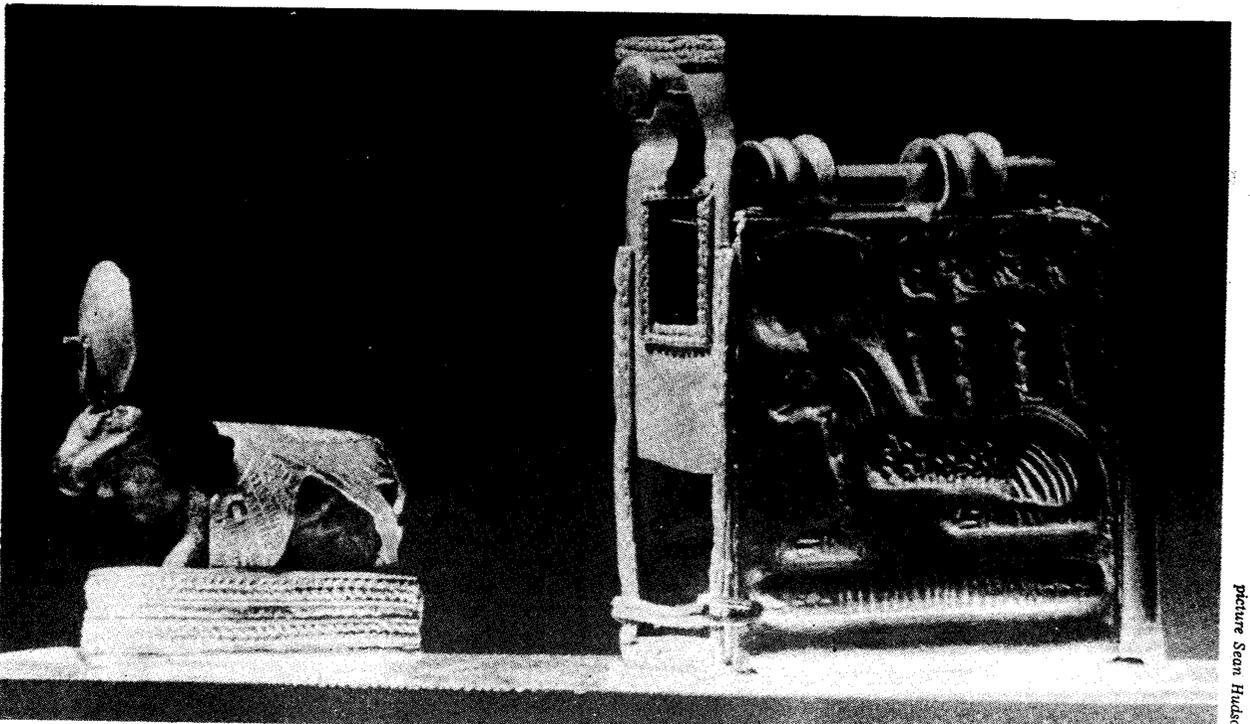
Edinburgh's Labour District Council is to be congratulated on bringing these exhibits to the UK. Neither its spokesman, nor the Egyptian ambassador — unlike the commercial sponsor — used the opening to make an overtly political speech. And the Tory Scottish Secretary Malcom Rifkin, whose presence protocol apparently decreed, happily did not speak at all.

He laughed loudly however at the managing director's rather philistine little joke, and looked at his shoes while councillor Henderson explained that the show had been mounted despite conditions of 'great financial stringency'.

For a moment the splendours of ancient Egypt, rather than boosting 'the enterprise culture' seemed to be sitting in judgement over the man known unaffectionately in Scotland as 'Thatcher's governor general'.



The funerary mask of Psusenes I



Amun's ram and its shrine

Picture Sean Hudson

Picture Sean Hudson

Picture Sean Hudson

BOOK REVIEWS

A Tax On All The People. By Carey Oppenheim. £1.95. Child Poverty Action Group, 15 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY

THE poll tax is a system of local taxation which halves the tax burden on the rich, shifts resources from the recession-struck north to the south-east, boosts already soaring house prices, costs almost twice as much to collect as the system it replaces, needs an army of investigators to hunt down those liable to pay, disenfranchises the poorest, batters the deprived people of the inner cities, hits out at those caring for others, catches the very poorest in an insidious poverty trap and vastly extends central government's grip on all local affairs.

So says a new pamphlet from the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), a useful outline of the proposed 'community charge' which details its devastating effects.

The poll tax is one element of three in the government's plans for local authority finance. These involve:

- Replacing the property-based domestic rate with a flat-rate community charge levied locally on each adult over 18
- A Uniform Business Rate set separately for Scotland, England and Wales to replace the present locally set non-business rate. It will be fixed by central government and income will be distributed to local authorities according to their population

- Replacing block grant and the domestic rate relief grant with a new Revenue Support Grant based on population levels, but with a weighting factor for exceptional needs.

- Scotland's scheme is due to start in 1989, those for England and Wales in 1990, with no transition period. However, in 13 London boroughs the payments will be so enormous that they must be phased in over four years.

They will start by paying £100 in 1990, according to government figures; at the end of the transition, while Bournemouth residents will pay £165 a head and those in Worthing £155, Londoners in deprived Tower Hamlets must find £639 each, in Hackney £691 and in Camden £782.

Ironically, the London boroughs will have to take on at between 100 and 150 extra staff while they are running the old and new systems simultaneously.

Even when the system is operating 'normally' an area

which used to send out 75,000 rate bills could find itself despatching 150,000 poll tax accounts. Summonses could increase from 10,000 a year to 50,000.

Poll tax will be calculated by taking local authority spending and deducting the Uniform Business Rate allowance and the Revenue Support Grant, then dividing the remainder by the number of people liable to pay.

There will be few who will not have to pay the tax. Those on benefits or student grants will pay at least 20 per cent. There is a catch: the compensation to cover the 20 per cent will be based on the national average, and in areas with a high poll tax it will not cover the cost.

A 'poverty trap' will mean as income goes up, rebate will be taken away to compensate.

Convicted prisoners, long-term hospital patients, 19-year-olds still at school and severely mentally disabled people will not have to pay. There is concern about what test would be applied to decide on 'severe mental disablement'.

Register

Every local authority will have to keep a comprehensive register of all adults living in their area. This will be checked against the electoral register and lists of users of local services — libraries, schools and social services — as well as house sales.

Plans for the destruction of local democracy are now complete. The government's tanks are now moving into place around every town hall. Battle will commence in the autumn. From then on local government is likely to suffer a series of blows from which it will be extremely fortunate to recover. Britain will be more than ever a centrally managed state, with power concentrated in Whitehall.

Financial Times, 17 August 1987

CPAG warns that vast numbers of people, unable to pay, will disenfranchise themselves to avoid being traced. They would also probably avoid using local authority services and amenities, often those needed by the poorest people.

If they are tracked down by the army of snoopers the scheme will need, non-payers, after a warning, can have their goods seized and ultimately face prison. The pamphlet warns that 'attachment of earnings' to take the tax direct from



Peasants in revolt

wages is being considered.

The calculations used to work out how much each person will pay are based on 100 per cent retrieval. If only 80 per cent pay up, the average £6.62 a week charge in Scotland would rise to £8.19.

Collection

The task of collection will be enormous as 15 per cent of the population move house in any one year and in some inner city areas a quarter of the population change address each year.

A major preoccupation of the Tory government is 'accountability', the requirement that all local voters are tax payers, and vice versa. They believe that then, particularly where the tax is high, councillors who will ruthlessly cut and privatise services (Tories, SDPers, Liberals and right-wing Labourites) will be voted in.

This purely political aspect has been expressed clearly by Tory minister Nicholas Ridley:

'Above all (*sic*) the new system will remove from Liverpool that poisonous power base on which extremism thrives — the power base of spending without local accountability.'

Package

Specifically, CPAG shows that the poll tax package will mean central government control of local government finance will rise from 44 per cent to 75 per cent in England, 65 to 85 per cent in Wales and 55 to 80 per cent in Scotland. It comments:

'This centralisation will remove decision-making from local authorities to central government ministers and bureaucrats. Contrary to the rhetoric of "local accountability", it will further remove power from electors.'

The pamphlet points out

- The tax is regressive: a family with an income of 75 to 100 a week would contribute about four times as much of their net income as a family on 500-plus.

- House prices will rocket when the existing rates system, essentially a property tax, goes.

- The tax is a blow to 'community care': carers for elderly or disabled relatives are more likely to be living in households with two or more adults, and all will be liable to pay.

- Young people will be brought into the local tax net for the first time. They are likely to face the most harassment from the investigating authorities

- The poll tax will not apply in the six counties of the north of Ireland

- Overseas visitors living here will have to pay

- Landlords of houses in multiple occupancy will pay a collective poll tax which they will have to recoup from their tenants

- Council tenants are likely to receive a separate poll tax bill rather than paying their rates with their rent

Poll

In 1381 a poll tax sparked a violent peasant uprising. Today the battle must unite the entire labour movement in all its aspects, its political parties, the trade unions in general, the trade unions specifically involved in supplying services or applying the tax, community organisations and ethnic groups — with demands on Labour councillors and MPs to take up the fight.

Struggle

It is vital to see this struggle in the context of the defence of local services — housing, education, health amenities — and in terms of communities coming to control these resources themselves through their own organisations.

Carey Oppenheim has made an extremely valuable contribution by setting the poll tax in the context of a more sinister plan to increase the government's stranglehold on individuals and local affairs.

Bernard Franks

The Thatcher Years; Britain and Latin America. Edited by James Ferguson and Jenny Pearce. Latin America Bureau, £3.50.

THATCHER'S policies in Britain are intertwined with her policies towards Latin America, argues a new book with the usual high standards of the Latin America Bureau: thorough, up-to-date and hardhitting.

Thatcher boasted of her ability to hold down inflation — but this depended on plummeting commodity prices

Although Latin American countries increased exports by 19 per cent since 1982, their income fell as commodity prices fell by 21 per cent.

Thatcher denied aid to Nicaragua; 'political, industrial and commercial considerations alongside our basic development objective' (as one Tory put it in parliament) led to quite a different allocation of money — 31p a head for Bolivia and 1.72 a head for Jamaica (countries where child malnutrition is rising at a fright-

ening rate) compared with 5,000 a head for the 'Falkland Islanders' in the Malvinas

Meanwhile British banks are vulnerable to the problems of the region, with Lloyds and the Midland getting a quarter of their income from interest payments from Latin American countries, and Barclays and the NatWest 10 per cent.

Thatcher's policies are also influenced by anxiety at the inability of the region to go on paying. In 1987, a third of the debts had to be written down; the IMF has moved in to insist on policies to squeeze as much as possible from the poor in a region where already 50 million, 13 per cent of the people, are hungry.

In 1986 alone \$22 billion left Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the Falklands Malvinas war, Thatcher's task force victory was secured only with help from Pinochet's Chile, and, according to Bob Woodward's recent book on the CIA, 'Veil', help from US intelligence too.

The Tories' hypocrisy is well described in the book.

While the arms embargo against Chile was being lifted in 1980, the Tory government found it convenient not to know about the capture and torture of a British citizen in Chile. The following year Britain abstained on a UN resolution condemning Chile's record on human rights.

Before the Malvinas war enabled Thatcher to see clearly the atrocities of Galtieri's military rule in Argentina, Whitelaw had closed the door to political refugees from there.

While trading happily with military regimes throughout the continent, which government did Britain condemn for failing to hold elections?

Why, Grenada. So Britain acquiesced — in spite of disquiet on the Tory backbenches at a violation of the queen's sovereignty — in the illegal US invasion of Grenada in October 1983.

This book argues that the election of Thatcher's government in 1979 led to changes in the relations between Britain and Latin America, with an immediate resumption of arms sales and the training of key milit-

ary personnel.

The economy of Belize is dependent on Britain's military base there — 1,800

troops, Harrier jets and Rapier missiles.

Britain is there, argues the book, not simply because it



Front cover of 'The Thatcher Years'

is a jungle training ground, but because Reagan's United States wants its ally there. Belize is also the site of a US propaganda station aimed at undermining the Sandinistas.

There are rumours that arms for the Contras have been routed via Belize, implying British complicity.

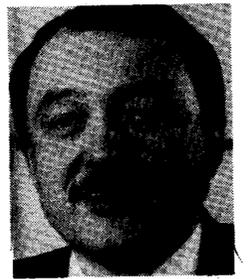
The thrust of the book's argument is the subservience to Reagan of Thatcher's policies in Latin America. Other examples include British acquiescence in the invasion of Grenada, supporting the American 'splashing dominoes' theory of 'communist' influence, and British observers giving credibility to elections in El Salvador, which was important to the US and of little significance to Britain.

And finally the evidence for British help to the Contras is assessed; North's evidence points, at the very least, to an official blind-eye to the activities of British-based mercenaries.

Bridget Dixon

LETTERS

Please send your letters to Workers' Press, PO Box 745, London SW9 7QS. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.



KEN LIVINGSTONE

Farida Bibi stays

AFTER months of struggle to keep Farida Bibi in Britain, a victory can be declared.

On 22 December 1987 Timothy Renton, Minister for Immigration, announced the decision to allow Farida Bibi to stay in Britain. The precise wording was:

'Because of the exceptional circumstances of this case which proved beyond doubt that Farida Bibi is the natural daughter of Nazir Hussain, we grant permission that she be allowed to stay in Britain on indefinite leave.'

The 'Let Farida Bibi Stay Campaign', which began after Farida was threatened with immediate deportation and went into hiding in April 1987, has consistently fought for her right to stay in Derby.

DNA genetic testing, developed at Leicester University, proved conclusively the identity of Farida's mother and father, and exposed the injustice of the Law Courts which had maintained that she was not the daughter of Nazir Hussain.

The campaign was only in existence for a short period of time but the family's struggle lasted over 15 years. Nazir Hussain was naturalised a British citizen over 20 years ago, and then

had to fight to bring his family to join him.

Campaign funds were raised from local organisations such as the Pakistan Association, the Indian Association and the Derby Trades Union Council. Derby Campaign for Racial Equality and the Pakistan Centre lent premises without cost.

The campaign brought together individuals and groups within Derby and united with other campaigns fighting the racist immigration laws - the 'Som Raj Defence Campaign' and the 'Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign' in particular.

The DNA test was seen as a tactical weapon to be used to prove the relationship of Nazir and Farida beyond any doubt.

The overall strategy was the struggle against the class nature of the racist immigration laws and on many occasions the campaign committee stressed this.

All those battling against those laws will recognise the terrible trauma and heart-break faced by families which, like Nazir's, have exhausted the procedures of law. They must fight with any methods at hand.

The immigration officials denied Farida a further stay to take the DNA test, which placed her father in an intolerable position, so she went into hiding until the result of the test.

While she waited from April until the test became available in June, the campaign worked at publicising the wider issues involved.

The test cost over £500, and the Hussain family and their friends thank all those who gave money.

The Committee also thanks all those in Britain who have helped in our fight and thanks the Workers Revolutionary Party and Workers Press for their support to win this fight.

This was a small victory in the continuing struggle against racism and immigration laws; the 'Farida Bibi Campaign' will aid anyone fighting against these laws.

Zbigniew Wojcik
Co-ordinator
Let Farida Bibi Stay Campaign

Sobering equivalents

IN an interview on BBC, 18 February 1988, the prime minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, referring to the RUC said:

'Just remember that background, 2,600 murders — the equivalent in Great Britain if you translate that proportion to the population would be 91,000.'

The prime minister should also just remember that 126 innocent civilians have been murdered by the British army and RUC in Northern Ireland, some of them children like the plastic bullet victims. By simple arithmetic that would be the equivalent of 4,200 in Great Britain. By similar arithmetic the equivalent of IRA members killed, many of them victims of a shoot-to-kill policy, would be 4,000 in Great Britain, and the equivalent of loyalists murdered by the British army would be 500 in Great Britain.

Fr Raymond Murray

Health authority summonsed

A SUMMONS has been served on the City and Hackney Health Authority by John and Annette Monerville.

They wish to gain access to medical records covering their son Trevor's visits to Homerton hospital while in the custody of Stoke Newington police.

Trevor Monerville, aged 19, was missing from his family from 10.50 p.m. on 1 January to 8.30 a.m. on 3 January 1987, and in that

time was taken to Homerton hospital on two occasions. His father made repeated inquiries to the police and was informed on each occasion that they had no knowledge of his son's whereabouts.

Through his own efforts Monerville traced his son to Brixton prison medical wing lying on a mattress on the floor — his naked body covered with serious bruises from head to toe. Within two days Trevor had to undergo brain surgery.

The Monervilles believe that the medical records will reveal how Trevor sustained his injuries, particularly as his second visit to the hospital took place shortly after he was forcibly finger-printed by six police officers and his physical condition had clearly deteriorated. They also believe that they will find out whether their son suffered further injuries when held on remand in Brixton prison medical wing and whether there are further grounds for a claim of negligence arising out of the treatment he received at Homerton hospital.

Family and Friends of Trevor Monerville Campaign
Family Centre
50 Rectory Road
London, N16 7QY
Telephone: 01-249-0193

THANKS for all your letters. Keep them rolling in! But no more than 500 words, or you may be cut.

No lead at PTA meeting

A CHANCE to mobilise the Irish community was missed on Monday night when a packed meeting in Kilburn, west London, held in response to the case of the Birmingham Six, the Stalker Affair and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, waited in vain to hear what they should do now.

In an anti-climax after an interesting speech, Ken Livingstone said we had to keep raising the case of the framed prisoners, especially in America. The audience, most of whom are unlikely ever to see America, were then told to join the local Labour Party.

The highlight of the evening came when Lilly Hill, the mother of Paul Hill of the Guildford Four, spoke passionately about the treatment of her son and the other framed prisoners.

They shoot children:

the use of rubber and plastic bullets in the North of Ireland

A NEW edition of 'They shoot children' was published on 28 January.

First published in 1982, the report received wide publicity and helped to highlight a hitherto hidden scandal. But since then the situation has got worse, not better.

Three more people have been killed by plastic bullets in the North of Ireland and many more have been injured. Further, the British police are now equipped and trained to use the weapons, and police armed with plastic bullets were deployed on British streets for the first time on 6 October 1985, at the Broadwater Farm estate in north London.

New material in the second edition includes accounts of the deaths of Stephen McConomy, John Downs and Keith White (p 37), a full list of all those giving basic information on each case (centre pages) and an account of the authorities' preparations to deploy the weapons in Britain (p 39).

The United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets, which gives information about the number of people injured by the weapons and of relatives of those killed by them, has said: 'The booklet provides a powerful and compelling argument against the use of plastic bullets and their predecessors, rubber bullets. We have distributed numerous copies to individuals and organisations throughout the world. It is vital that this booklet be read by the British public so that they will come to know what is being done in their name by their government in Northern Ireland.' (Mrs. Clara Reilly, tel: 0232-622854).

'They shoot children' is available from good bookshops for 75p or for £1, including postage from: Information on Ireland, PO Box 958, London, W14 0JF.

The right to refuse?

BRITISH army chiefs refused an offer by a German commander to evacuate French civilians from Le Havre as the Royal Armoured Corps were about to launch an attack on the German-held town in 1944.

This is why William Douglas-Home, captain tank commander, refused to take part in the operation which led to the death of 2,000 civilians. As a result he was court-martialled, cashiered and sentenced to a year's imprisonment with hard labour.

Douglas-Home claims that he had a right to refuse this unreasonable order and is now considering asking the Ministry of Defence to

reopen his case.

Now aged 75, Douglas-Home has been moved to consider an appeal after hearing that 'The investigators in the Waldheim inquiry talked about the Nuremberg trials precedent, and the long-established tradition of soldiers not being punished for disobeying certain orders.'

It seems in order to ask whether this 'long-established tradition' applies to soldiers in the north of Ireland



Carol Ann Kelly aged 12 murdered by the British army

International women's day

PICKET DURHAM PRISON



Sunday
13 March
1 pm

STOP STRIP SEARCHES! END BRITISH TORTURE!

Saturday 12 March
women only events

Details from:
c/o Irish POW Campaign
PO box 540 Sparkhill,
Birmingham B11
Creche details supplied by writing
to above PO box with details.

Doing 'a Silcott'

BY MIKE HOWGATE

BARRISTER Courtney Griffiths told a press conference on 23 February that a report by Amnesty International: 'Alleged forced admissions during incommunicado detention' and details instances where 'police broke the law or subverted its spirit'. Several members of the legal profession and community leaders held the press conference on the report on the Broadwater Farm trials.

Courtney also stated that a new term had entered the vocabulary of the robbing room (where lawyers get decked out in their fancy dress). 'Doing a Silcott' means: getting a conviction on no evidence.

Sharon Raghip's husband is one of the three with a life sentence. She said: 'Winston Silcott came the worst out of it'. Silcott received his savage sentence, despite there being no reliable witness, on his own confession, which was able to locate him at the incident.

Local law worker, Debbie Wilde stressed that the police organised 271 almost indiscriminate raids which netted them 297 suspects who were arrested or interrogated. Out of these only 94 (i.e. 25 per cent) were interviewed with solicitors present.

It seems probable that many waived their rights under duress.

Of the 49 subsequently brought to trial (41 on the basis of confessions), 27 were acquitted.

She also said that juveniles were particularly targeted in the early days of the investigation. She outlined instances of the type of duress they were subjected to on arrest and during police questioning.

One 15 year-old was taken from his home at gun point in his underwear. Many were kept similarly clothed for the maximum 36 hours incommunicado. They were threatened with lengthy detentions or being brought within the ambit of the murder charge in order to induce them to plead guilty to a lesser charge or make statements.

Many also complained of being racially insulted and otherwise pressured by the

police. The Amnesty International report states: 'Suspects say that they were told by the police that they would be kept in detention until they made a statement to the police or that friends or family would be arrested if they did not confess; and that the police were behaving in a threatening manner, e.g. banging their fists on the table, shouting at the suspect, smashing cups against the wall while threatening that the suspect's head would be smashed next.'

In the case of juveniles brought before the court, evidence of this method of police intimidation was enough to get them acquitted.

Not so for the adults. The state was out to make an example and individual guilt or innocence was not the question.

The old colonial method of communal punishment and reprisal was the order of the day. This meant that justice had to be seen not to be done in order to cow the black community.

Courtney Griffiths stressed that the way forward was to internationalise the struggle (referring here to the international call of human rights). He said the law by itself in highly political situations could not be relied on, especially the judiciary.

Benjamin Abelobe emphasised that the reply of the Police Federation to the report was to make personal attacks and accuse Amnesty International of supporting the Broadwater Farm Defence Committee in order not to take up the substance of the issues raised.

Demonstration: 18 March; picket outside Tottenham Police Station, 6-8p.m.

Personal Column

Peter Fryer

When starvelings arose

In many a stereotype, however misleading or bizaare it may be, there's a nugget of truth worth disentangling from the cobwebs of prejudice and ignorance that conceal it.

A Metropolitan Police commissioner — not the present incumbent but his diminutive predecessor — told an American journalist a few years back that 'in the Jamaicans, you have people who are constitutionally disorderly . . . It's simply in their make-up. They are constitutionally disposed to be anti-authority'.

Here's a neat example of police racism: a smug justification for 'hard' policing of ethnic minorities and inner cities. And it's notorious that similar views, albeit more coarsely expressed, abound in the lower ranks of the police.

Leaving aside Sir Kenneth Newman's vulgar subsumption of Jamaica-born black people under the label 'Jamaicans', it is of course absurd to suppose that skin pigmentation has anything to do with disorderliness or opposition to authority, any more than it has to do with intelligence or musical talent.

But when you examine the history of the real Jamaica and the real Jamaicans you find this nugget of truth: that under British rule theirs was above all a history of unceasing resistance to that rule.

As Orlando Patterson pointed out in his 'Sociology of Slavery' (1967), during the island's 180 years of slavery under British rule 'hardly a decade went by without a serious, large-scale revolt threatening the entire system'.

A decisive part in the 1833 emancipation of the slaves was played by the last of those slave uprisings: the so-called 'Bap-

tist War' of 1831-1832, which mobilised 60,000 slaves over an area of 750 square miles.

A 'Black Regiment' of 150 slaves with 50 guns was formed under the command of a carpenter and a wagon-driver; other slaves organised themselves into companies, each responsible for guarding its estate boundaries and sending intelligence reports to regimental headquarters.

Within a week the insurgents controlled the entire western interior of Jamaica and had cut off all communications across the island. But the rebels, however successful against the militia, could not hold their own against regular troops.

Resistance to British rule continued after slavery came to an end. The Morant Bay peasants' rebellion of 1865 — when rebels burnt down a court-house and killed magistrates, militiamen, and planters — was savagely suppressed by the notorious Governor Edward Eyre, who had 439 people shot or executed and 600, including women, flogged with the utmost barbarity.

The major blow against British imperialism struck by the workers and peasants of Britain's biggest Caribbean colony came in the great rebellion of April-June 1938, whose 50th anniversary will soon be upon us.

For three months the Jamaican masses downed tools, marched in demonstrations, looted shops, cut telephone wires, put up road-blocks, tore down bridges, burnt crops, besieged the rich in their houses, and — armed only with sticks and stones — fought back against armed police patrols and troops with the same courage and tenacity that the Palestinian masses are daily displaying against their tormentors.

After years of sporadic unrest, the rising began with a strike at the Frome estate in Westmoreland parish. More than 100 armed police were rushed in, and they killed four people of whom two were women, one elderly, the other pregnant.

In retaliation, the strikers set fire to the sugar-cane fields. In Kingston, dockers, public service workers, and transport workers came out on strike and thousands marched through the city centre, only to have their demonstration broken up by

police wielding truncheons.

The strikers fought back with stones and threw up barricades, smashed street lamps to hamper night patrols, overturned rubbish bins to set on fire those hated buildings that symbolise imperialist rule. Troops were brought in, and they shot dead a woman and her young son.

But when the capital had been subdued the uprising spread to the rest of the island. In Spanish Town the sanitary workers came out, and there was soon a general strike. Montego Bay dockers, when they heard the news from Kingston, came out on strike and staged a hunger march. Soon the railwaymen joined in.

There was a series of rolling strikes as sugar and banana workers marched from estate to estate to spread the movement. Everywhere there were fierce clashes with police and troops.

Four people were killed in the small town of Islington, in St Mary parish. Here, when police arrived and started confiscating the sticks some people were carrying, a man called Edgar Daley refused, declaring: 'No, not a raas. You have you gun. I have my stick.' He was bayoneted and his back was broken with rifle butts.

In Trelawney parish, on the north coast, a seaplane from the Royal Navy cruiser 'Ajax' dispersed crowds outside a sugar factory by diving at them.

Thus the uprising was in the end subdued by the British rulers' superior weapons. Of the 480 people convicted afterwards, two, S. Kerr Coombs and H. C. Buchanan, were sent down for six months after they had exposed police brutality in St James parish.

But, though defeated, this struggle was by no means in vain. In the first place, like the 1937 struggles in Trinidad and Barbados (which I wrote about here on October 24), its immediate result was the emergence of a substantial trade union movement.

Secondly, the 1938 uprising induced the British Colonial office to concede to Jamaica, six years later, a long-overdue constitutional reform, with (for the first time) universal adult suffrage and an elected lower house.

Thirdly, the Jamaicans' struggle and

those of their brothers and sisters elsewhere in the Caribbean contributed significantly in indirect, to the winning of independence from Britain.

The workers and peasants of Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados — and those of British Guiana, British Honduras, St Lucia, and St Kitts, too — had shown British imperialism in the 1930s just what to expect if it tried to keep its boot across their necks.

This national liberation struggle that climaxed in the Jamaican uprising of 1938 caused the British government to set up, later that year, the Moyne Commission which investigated social and economic conditions in the British West Indies.

This Commission's report was so devastating, and so embarrassing for the British authorities, that it was suppressed for the duration of the Second World War and didn't see the light until 1945.

It told of 'pitiable' conditions: starvation wages; totally inadequate education; 'decrepit' and 'deplorable' housing with leaking roofs, rotten flooring, and a lack of light; and a high incidence of yaws, tuberculosis, malaria, worm infection, bowel diseases, and respiratory diseases.

This was the state of Britain's Caribbean colonies after several centuries of absolute rule. And these were the conditions, unimproved ten or fifteen years later, that led Caribbean settlers to seek a better life in the 'Mother Country' from 1948 on.

Further reading

THE indispensable book on slave revolts in the British Caribbean is Michael Craton's 'Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies' (Cornell University Press, 1982).

On the 1938 uprising in Jamaica, Ken Post's 'Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath' (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), though spattered with sociological jargon, does give a good idea of what took place.

'BLACK male genocide' is what Professor Robert Staples of the University of California, San Francisco, calls it (in a recent issue of 'Black Scholar'). Despite the legal ending of segregation and the high profile of blacks on TV and in some walks of life, American capitalism has by no means solved the race problem inherited from slavery.

Institutional racism remains deeply embedded; it falls most heavily upon black males.

BY GEORGE LORMIN

According to Staples, black males face the following problems in the 1980s:

- While black men account for only six per cent of the population in the United States, they make up half of its male prisoners.
- The majority of the 20,000 Americans killed in crime-related incidents are black men.
- Over 35 per cent of all black men in US cities are drug and alcohol abusers.
- 18 per cent of black males drop out of high school.
- A quarter of the victims of AIDS are black men.
- Over 50 per cent of black men under 21 are unemployed.
- 46 per cent of adult black males have incomes below the official poverty line.

For reasons which have to be explained, black men are the most vulnerable to the ravages of capitalism.

Appearances seem to deny this. There is a very visible black middle class, some catering for the black community as doctors, lawyers, clergy and so on, others in fields like sport and entertainment.

In fact the kind of jobs in which black males work

have been shrinking. At the same time, the Reagan administration has manipulated white public opinion to convince white workers that they were being discriminated against in favour of blacks.

Attacks on blacks have multiplied in white neighbourhoods, on college campuses and other public places.

Reagan's policies, which have made the rich richer and the poor poorer, have inevitably discriminated against blacks, most of whom are concentrated in the poorest one-fifth of all families.

Studies of property distribution show that 99 per cent of all US wealth is owned by whites.

Black males find it increasingly difficult to move into better jobs. Black workers have lost from the transfer of manufacturing facilities to low-wage countries by the multi-national corporations and from new immigrants from Asia and Latin America who have taken low-paying jobs formerly held by blacks.

So-called 'black capitalism' has proved to be a delusion. Of the top executives of America's 1,000 largest corporations only four are black.

Blacks have lost ground in

business in recent years and black-owned businesses are mostly confined to services and retail trade, often catering mainly for the black community.

Many blacks who have made it as entertainers or sportsmen give credence to the myth of black success. For example, the highly rated Cosby Show depicts a black family which is far from being typical of the lives of the majority of black Americans.

Many avenues are closed to blacks by invisible racial barriers.

Meanwhile the impression is encouraged that black poverty, unemployment, low level of education, crime and family instability are attributable to race rather than environmental conditions.

Black males are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty from which, for many, crime seems the only way out.

Poor education excludes them from many jobs, while jobs not requiring educational qualifications have decreased in number.

Ironically, as Staples points out, 'the job most typically offered to uneducated and young black males is that of the minimum wage security guard, an occupation that entails protecting the property and person of affluent whites from other

New aspects of racism in the USA

black males of the under class'.

Even college-educated blacks are four times more likely to be unemployed than white graduates.

Black males are disproportionately affected by the ravages of inner-city life. Hence their implication in crime and drug-taking and trafficking. These provide short cuts to money and wealth, the only way open to ghetto-dwellers. Hence, to

the horror of white reformers, 'drug dealers often become heroes to ghetto youth'.

Many embark on a life of crime as an illusory way out, only to swell the ranks of the prison population. When not in gaol they come to depend upon alcohol and drugs to blot out their awareness of their superfluous existence.

In the meantime, black males do much of the dirty and heavy work and receive the lowest wages.

Staples ends on an optimistic note.

'The contradictions of capitalism,' he writes 'are reaching a crisis point, and its ability to use racism to divide workers is at the point of diminishing returns.'

'Disenfranchised white farmers and steel workers may discover their commonality with unemployed black teenagers in Harlem.' Black men have a leading role to play.



Demonstration in Alabama 1963

ROBSON'S CHOICE

On **Saturday**, at 6.35p.m. (Radio 3), Philip Martin plays piano pieces by Chabrier, Faure, Debussy and Poulenc. At 9p.m. (BBC2), final episode of *Tutti Frutti*. At 10p.m. (Radio 3), *Camden Jazz Festival* features the music of Willem Breuker. At 10.10p.m. (BBC 2), a comedy by Yan Xueshu, set in the Chinese province of Shaanxi, *In the Wild Mountains*. At 11p.m. (Radio 4), *Fallen Arches*, by Stephen Sheridan. At 11.50p.m. (C4), Sidney Lumet's screen version of *Equus*.

On **Sunday**, at 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* direct from the Barbican Hall. At 8.45p.m. (C4), *Ten Great Writers* presents the life and work of Italian dramatist Luigi Pirandello. At 10.15p.m. (Radio 4), final programme in the six-part review of the year 1988, *The Year of Dreams*. At 10.25p.m. (C4), John Ford's classic western, *My Darling Clementine*. At 10.30p.m. (ITV), *The South Bank Show* examines the life and work of American artist Jackson Pollock. At 12.15p.m. (C4), Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene's delightful political satire, *Xala*.

On **Monday**, at 3p.m. (BBC2), *Chronicle* shows how unique Egyptian temples were rescued from the rising waters of the Aswan High Dam in the early '70's. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), *Horizon* investigates a new drug to treat incurable cancer, currently on trials in the US. At 10p.m. (Radio 3), Edith Vogel plays *Beethoven's Diabelli Variations*. At 11p.m. (BBC1), *Business Matters* introduces Dr Rosabeth Kater, a management 'consultant' in such demand that companies will pay her up to \$70,000 for an hour's talk!

On **Tuesday**, at 7.30p.m. (Radio 4), *File on 4*, the first of two special reports on the NHS. At 8.30p.m. (BBC1), *Wildlife on One*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), Malcolm McKay's play, *Airbase*. At 9.40p.m. (Radio 3), a play by Peter Cox, *Tickertape and V-Signs*. At 10.35p.m. (ITV), *First Tuesday*.

On **Wednesday**, at 3.10p.m. (Radio 3), the first of three programmes on the career and art of the German-born soprano Lotte Lehmann. At 7.45p.m. (Radio 4), part three of *Lenin of the Rovers*. At 7.55p.m. (Radio 3), recent unpublished poems

in *Poetry Now*. At 9.15p.m. (Radio 4), *The Tsar's Friends*, an account of a group of Yorkshire Quakers who were invited to St Petersburg in 1818 to drain 100,000 acres of marshland around the city. At 9.25p.m. (BBC2), *A Very Peculiar Practice*. At 10.20p.m. (BBC2), the documentary series *Up North* this week looks at the black economy in rural Lincolnshire.

On **Thursday**, at 4.15p.m. (Radio 3), Scriabin and Stravinsky in *Russian Piano Music for Four Hands*. At 9.30p.m. (C4), Mike Newell's film, *Dance with a Stranger*.

On **Friday**, at 11a.m. (Radio 4), *Analysis* investigates the Japanese economy. At 7.10p.m. (BBC2), a documentary on the Ottoman Empire, *Suleiman the Magnificent*. At 8p.m. (Radio 3), third play by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy in the series *Whose is the Kingdom?* At 9.30p.m. (BBC2), *Arena* presents *An Andalusian Journey*, a documentary about the *flamenco* of southern Spain. At 11.10p.m. (BBC2), Fernandel stars in *Autant-Lara's* farce, *The Red Inn*.

Tom Scott Robson



A scene from *Equus* (Saturday)



and *Dance with a stranger* (Thursday)

Students anger at Baker Bill

BY MARIAN BURROWS

THOUSANDS of students throughout South Wales responded to a one-day strike call by NUS Wales on 11 February and demonstrated in opposition to Kenneth Baker's Education Reform Bill.

Some college unions organised only half-day or 'work-in' protests, but others planned and won an all-out response, showing the widespread anger that is growing as knowledge increases about this Victorian bill.

South and West Glamorgan colleges and the universities in Cardiff and Swansea were the most active.

Students from South Glamorgan Art College occupied the County Education Office and won a sympathetic response.

At West Glamorgan institute, NUS president Jon Townley proudly reported a 95 per cent strike. Students picketed the gate all day, winning support from many staff and turning back postal and Telecom vans.

Hundreds of signatures were collected for the petition.

Jon explained: 'This college will be one of those to be virtually handed over to industry, threatening courses not appealing directly to industry's needs'.

The day before a General Body Meeting of students had been warned by Penny Barefoot, deputy president of NUS Wales, that the Bill will give 175 new powers to the Secretary of State, and bring privatisation of education onto the agenda.

A campaign is now underway to win support for the national demonstration in London on 27 February and a joint NUS/TUC lobby of parliament on 1 March.

But many students are rightly sceptical of one-day events involving only students. This Bill has drastic implications for all of education, bringing back class divisions in schools which had begun to be eradicated by the comprehensive system.



Welsh students march against the Baker Bill

Children will be tested at 7, 11 and 13 to weed out the 'failures'. Teachers will be pressurised to teach 'to the tests'.

The national curriculum will straightjacket subject teaching; provisions for charging for 'extra' curricular subjects will be introduced, and opting out of local education authority control will be led by a minority of parents who favour a private education.

Clearly students will not defeat this Bill alone. Labour Party guidelines explaining its implications have been issued to all affiliated unions, but no wide campaign to warn parents has been initiated.

What are they frightened of? This issue is as fundamental as is defence of the health service. A movement that linked the two could not just stop the Bill, but bring down the government.

Family credit hits low paid

A single mother of two aged four and six, earning £70 a week before tax, will lose £13.59 a week from April. Couples with children will suffer where there is only one bread-winner.

Government figures show that, for many families, gains from the new system will be wiped out by cuts in housing benefits.

So drastic are the measures that Tory MP, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams said the system would produce: 'An enormous sub-culture for whom working and saving is not worthwhile. Even the most destitute and low-

paid have a right to stand on their own feet.'

Government figures admit that at least one in three disqualifications are wrong; from 1 April they are giving themselves powers to disqualify claimants for six months. This is double the current three-month maximum (increased two years ago from the original six weeks, unchanged, until then, since 1911).

Low Pay Unit report — 'Disqualified from Benefit' — gives examples of the indiscriminate imposition of the benefit qualifications.

A 17 year old was deprived

of benefit for the maximum three months after he was sacked for asking for one day off a week. Why did he need to make this request? He worked a 56-hour seven-day week as a labourer in a North East bus depot.

A worker was deprived of benefits for three months. His crime? He had an accident on the way to work, was unconscious in hospital for two days, and was sacked because he failed to telephone the boss to say he was sick!

Benefit officers are working under extreme pressure. They are allowed 16 minutes for a decision which could lead to disqualification.

Nuclear waste scandal

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

EVIDENCE detailing corrupt practices in the European nuclear industry involving the bypassing of standard safety procedures and indiscriminate dumping of nuclear waste was exposed last week.

An official in the EEC Commission which has set up an inquiry said '... there is nothing to stop highly radioactive waste being dumped unmarked in unidentified sites. There are questions our scientists cannot answer and facts they cannot find.'

The commission is concerned about inconsistencies in the records on movements of nuclear waste between the Belgian reprocessing plant at Mol and other centres in Holland, Italy, Switzerland, and particularly West Germany.

Serious violations of safety procedures have been uncovered by the commission. An inquiry was set up after accusations in West German newspapers of corruption and illegal dumping by the West German firm Transnuklear. 200 milligrams of plutonium were discovered in 321 barrels marked as containing low grade waste.

Further inquiries are being undertaken by the Belgian and West German governments, and by the European parliament.

The commission has sent a letter to the Belgian government outlining the inconsistencies it has found in the records of transport of radioactive waste.

Part of it reads 'The simplest explanation is that the experts have seen only incomplete records. But it is impossible to rule out other explanations like the illicit processing, storing or disposal of radioactive waste which might constitute infringement of the Community's basic standards of radiation protection.'

So far no evidence has been found to support charges made in the press that plutonium recovered from nuclear waste passing through Mol had been diverted illegally to Libya and Pakistan for use in the development of their nuclear weapons programmes.

Speculation has always reigned in Britain that the reason for the grimly determined commitment of Tory and Labour governments to nuclear power has been because these stations are effectively banned in the USA — mainly through unprofitability — and the 'second-rate' world powers need somewhere to acquire reclaimed plutonium.

One thing is for sure, if West Germany is there, can Britain be far behind?

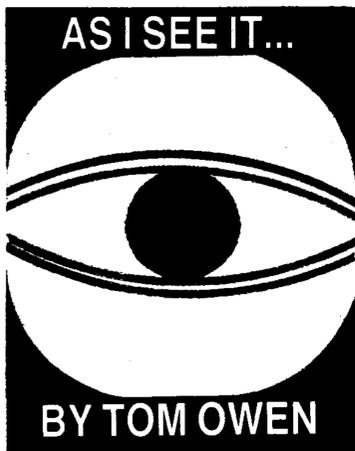
Leo Tindemans, the Belgian foreign minister has already expressed his disquiet over the increasing number of investigations in several other EEC countries into the functioning of nuclear power stations and processing centres.

The European parliament will try to broaden the inquiry to cover the secret protocol between the British government and Euratom (the EEC nuclear safeguards authority) which includes nuclear safeguards at Sellafield.

Permission to release the terms of that secret agreement has already been refused by the authorities on the grounds that the arrangements covering reprocessing for military purposes at Sellafield is a 'matter of national security'.

Although it appears highly probable that some kind of irregularities are occurring in the British nuclear industry, the British public is not to know about it — presumably on the grounds that it is better for you to be poisoned and blown up by your own kind.

OVER 420,000 low paid workers with children will be up to 20 per cent worse off when the new family credit system is introduced in April, according to official figures.



I WAS watching the television news in Barcelona last summer. The Catalans now have a number of Catalan language channels. One of the largest European minority languages (2,000,000 speakers), Catalan was brutally suppressed by Falangist reaction, depriving all of us of its rich mediaeval and contemporary literatures.

I had just seen the outrageous events of the Hungerford shootings when a familiar theme tune came from the box. Yes, it was 'East Enders' dubbed into Catalan — you could hear the melody echoing around the crumbling tall tenements and dark courtyards. And sure enough Dirty Den, wheeling

and dealing and having his wicked ways, was just as much an object of fascination in the Iberian Peninsula as in the British Isles.

'Why the enduring popularity of such entertainment?' is a fair question. All European languages which have access to television have their own Soaps. The Welsh have 'Pobl y Cwm' (People of the Valley), though neither BBC nor SC4 have got round to dubbing 'East Enders' into Welsh.

(Incidentally, 'East Enders' has just made it to the great soap opera over the water, the USA.)

The Brazilian and Mexican television industries are dominated by Soap productions. Soap is something that sells big in the 'Third World'.

In Britain, I'm told, the theme tune in 'Neighbours' is at the top of the hit parade for under fives.

What gives this type of entertainment its universal appeal?

Soaps certainly have a lot in common. Their social location and geography is as carefully chosen as the style and shape of womens' magazines. In Britain, for instance,

choices are made as to North or South, working class or middle class, and which variety of English is spoken.

This type of programme had a particular evolution. Originally devised as US radio programmes designed to sell soap, the plots led to their culmination at regular short intervals where the principal protagonists actually advertise the product.

The format still survives, with periodic unresolved crises heightening the tension every 10 or twenty minutes to draw attention to advertised products now outside the frame of the narrative.

Soap prides itself on a kind of false realism. No matter in which social class they are located, whether the Dallas oil barons or suburban Australia, they are presented as intimate chronicles of 'real peoples' lives.

In fact they are little more than elaborate social pantomimes. In the case of the rich and powerful they may provide a costumed fantasy world of villainy and sexual intrigue. But no matter what the

social geography the plots are still inhabited with wicked witches, scheming wizards, innocents and hapless cinderellas meeting their princes only to end in rags and ashes on midnight's stroke.

Each episode is magnified by 'strong characters' whose only possibility of change is situational — changes permuted in a way that would baffle the most ardent and ingenious football pool punter. To add spice to the continuum, more daring issues are introduced — homosexuality, incest, alcoholism, and sometimes a touch or two from the 'real world'.

A show such as 'Brookside', which prides itself on its radical realism, used the ex-Shrewsbury building worker Ricky Tomlinson, and has dealt with strikes and trade union struggles.

This programme now seems to have been brought back into line with the 'general political climate'. Tomlinson's recent crisis was to lose his licence for a drink-driving offence.

Perhaps the addition of honest Manchester sleuth Stalker as a

'Brookside' consultant will provide new inspiration. Maybe we will see an Irish connection, although I doubt it. All we're likely to get is the constant recycling of situations and plot devices.

Eloquent testimony to this is the statement of Angela Dobson, one of 'East Enders' central characters, who is leaving the well-paid role because she feels she is only programmed to repeat the round of dipsomania, abstention and temporary liasons, unable to bring anything new to deepen the part.

As a child I learned to read in my mother tongue from a marvellous children's book 'Llyfr Mawry Plant' (Big Book of the Children).

It featured a charming little duck called 'Will Cwac Cwac'. I was suprised to see that this has been made into a prize-winning cartoon at the Cannes film festival. (I hope it has been dubbed from Welsh.)

This attractive aid to literacy has the same relationship to Donald Duck and the militaristic propaganda of Popeye as Soap has to realist social drama.

I shall return to cartoons later.

A dubbing for Dirty Den

LISTINGS

Listings published free for labour movement organisations. Send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thurs. **PICKET DURHAM PRISON!** Stop strip searches! End British torture! On International women's day **Sunday March 13, 1 pm.** Organised by the IrishRepublican POW campaign committee.

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. S Africa House, Trafalgar Sq — City AA.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Wkly planning mtgs every Tues 7.30pm. Stoke Newington Community Centre, Lesswin Rd, N16. All welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, N4 (01-991 2938.)

VMDC London Support Group Wkly Campaign Meetings. **Thursday evenings 7.30pm.** Camden Town Hall. All welcome. (Further details: 01-837 1688.)

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.

BULLETIN OF THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE (BIRMINGHAM) Now available on subscription: £2 per year (3 issues incl. pp). From: Tiofaidh Ar La c/o IHSCC, PO Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham, BI1

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN EVOLUTION. A series of 10 lectures. Starting Thurs 14 Jan 7pm. £1 (includes light refresh-

ments). Lecturer Mike Howgate. Venue Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London. WC1.

BENEFIT for Irish Prisoners Appeal and Troops Out Movement, Old White Horse, Brixton Rd, Thurs 10 Mar, 8pm. Entertainment by the 'Jacket Potatoes' and other groups. Raffle of toys made by Gerry McDonnell and other prisoners.

DEMONSTRATION AND RALLY. Organised by the Regional Education Alliance. **Saturday 12 March 12.30pm.** Assemble Victoria Park Gates, Leicester.

PICKET. CARI the Campaign Against Repression in Iran, has called a picket, on **Saturday 27 FEB,** from 11am to 1pm, outside **Turkish Airlines, 11 Hanover St, W1** (nearest tube Oxford Circus).

WRP LECTURES

Room 301 Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth St. off Grays Inn Rd. WC1

Thurs 3 Mar 7.30 pm The Russian Revolution, Stalinism & Trotskyism. **Thurs 10 Mar 7.30 pm The Fourth International Today**

RELEASE JAILED MINERS

SOUTH WALES **DEAN HANCOCK:** **Oakdale** - Eight year sentence. Gartree Prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester. **RUSSELL SHANKLAND:** **Taff Merthyr** - Eight year sentence. Gartree Prison, Market Harborough, Leicester.

DURHAM **MICHAEL STEPHENSON:** **Wearmouth** - Three year sentence from June 1986. RF8756 HM Prison Acklington, Morpeth, Northumbria.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN
HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Wores, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464989.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22538.
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.
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 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD
HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085

ALBANY
HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
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, L46486.
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, Jobb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.
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.
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.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Gartree.
RICHARD McIKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Gartree.
Wormwood Scrubs, Ducane Rd, London, W12 0AE.

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

We thank An Cathair Coimisiún for supplying and locating this information



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If the (Birmingham Six) win it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous. This is such an appalling case that every sensible person in the land would say it cannot be right these actions should go no further. The Birmingham Six are innocent and should be released. Copies available from Free the Framed Irish Prisoners, c/o BM 1320, London WC1 3XX.

This pamphlet outlines the case of framed Irish prisoners, including the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four. Copies available from Free the Framed Irish Prisoners, c/o BM 1320, London WC1 3XX.

NURSES MUST NOT FIGHT ALONE
DEFEND N.H.S.

WORKERS PRESS PUBLIC MEETING

SPEAKER: John Simmance, Chairman of the Charing Cross Hosp JSC (in a personal capacity)

DATE: 4 March 1988

TIME: 7 30 pm

PLACE: AEU Hall (lounge) Robinson Road **Crawley**

ADMISSION: 50p (30p Strikers/Unwaged)

The TUC's 5 March demonstrations in defence of the NHS should be supported throughout the labour movement. It must be made a stage in the campaign for united industrial action on 14 March against the Tory government. Book your coaches now — bring your trade union banners.

SCOTTISH MARCH FOR NHS

GENERAL STRIKE 14 MARCH

SHIPYARD workers, engineers, steelmen and council employees struck alongside hospital workers in Scotland last Wednesday in defence of the health service.

There were marches in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Lochgilthead, Dumfries and Inverness — against privatisation of Scottish hospital services particularly, and health cuts in general

The first of Glasgow's 45,000 demonstrators reached George Square an hour before the last contingents left the Royal Infirmary. It was the city's biggest march since 1981 — and not since the Upper Clyde Shipyard's campaign of the early 1970s has such a crowd turned out on a weekday.

No wonder police snoopers were on the top floor of buildings in George Square with their long range lenses!

The big hospital delegations each numbered in hundreds. Strathclyde NALGO, Britain's biggest union branch, staged a solidarity walk-out: so did Glasgow District's building, cleansing and

BY OUR SCOTTISH CORRESPONDENT

housing departments, Govan shipyards, the Clydebridge and Impeir steelworks, and Coatbridge College teachers.

Civil servants at the Cowglen National Savings Bank who voted to strike received management letters threatening disciplinary action — but their banner was there. So were those of the Sols-girth miners, the firemen, students, and all major unions.

'The TUC, confed and others should say to the government: if we don't have the health service we need, we won't work — then see how long Maggie lasts', Govan shipyard convenor Sammy Gilmour told the rally. But it was a reflection of popular sentiment, not a definite proposal.

In fact no perspective at all — except a call for the Saturday 5 March demon-

stration in Stirling — was offered by the main speakers.

'Even the Tory place men on the health boards could not be trusted to carry through privatisation — that is why Michael Forsyth (Scottish Health Minister) gave them an instruction,' said STUC secretary, Campbell Christie.

'We are committed to continuing the campaign until he withdraws his instruction, and provides proper funding for the health service.'

No mention of throwing Thatcher out, which was the demand on every marchers' lips.

STUC chairman, Charles Gallacher said: 'The need for a real inquiry into the NHS', and the fact that 'Forsyth has gone too far', should be impressed on the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It is the STUC leaders themselves who need something impressing on them: that they should co-ordinate with the TUC in London, mount a pre-budget day one-day general strike on Monday 14 March, and build up a campaign of industrial action which will force the Tory government out of office.

There are fertile grounds for such demands in Scotland following Wednesday's powerful and moving demonstration of working class unity.



Scottish workers march against privatisation and health cuts



Huge marches in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee protested Tory policies on the NHS

WORKERS PRESS FEBRUARY FUND

In so far: £638.02

As we go to press, we need £1,362 to complete our fund. We appeal to all our readers to send in donations and make collections amongst your friends, family and workmates. Workers Press is in the forefront of the campaign for the general strike on 14 March in support of the NHS workers. We invite you to send in reports, photographs and letters. Sell the paper discuss its contents and let us have your views and comments.

We appeal to you to make sure we receive enough financial support to enable Workers Press to continue its work.

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