



GIBRALTAR

Lessons for the British working class

THE DECISION of the Gibraltar inquest that the deaths of IRA volunteers Mairead Farrell, Daniel McCann and Sean Savage were justifiable homicide represents a serious threat to the democratic rights of both the Irish and British working class.

It sanctions the shoot-to-kill policy deployed in the north of Ireland, and creates a precedent for its use against 'terrorist suspects' throughout Britain and continental Europe.

The four-week hearing was a mockery, even by the standards of capitalist justice. The seven SAS witnesses, protected by screens and elaborate measures to ensure their anonymity when entering of leaving the court, gave evidence which was as riddled with inconsistencies as were the bodies of their victims with bullets. The soldiers, despite the fact that they showed every sign of having been carefully coached, couldn't agree on the warnings shouted to Farrell, McCann and Savage,

By the Editorial Board

one claiming that it had been a 'strangled cry'. They couldn't agree because no warnings were issued and no quarter given. Another state witness, the MI5 officer identified as 'Miss J', who was only 15 feet from Savage, claimed to have heard and seen nothing of the shootings.

The killings were justified by claims that the three members of the active service unit, which had been tracked by both British and Spanish intelligence services for five months before it entered Gibraltar, had reached for guns which they weren't carrying and a remote control detonator which they didn't possess. An 'expert' witness called by the counsel for the SAS was effectively demolished by Dr. Michael Scott, who showed that a radio device could not have detonated a bomb from the point where the three were killed.

SAS claims that faulty surveillance by Spanish Intelligence was responsible

for them not knowing when the IRA group crossed the frontier, or that it was unarmed, flatly contradicted an interview given on March 21 by Augustin Valladolid, a senior spokesman for Spanish state security. He detailed how the group was tailed right up to the Gibraltar border, in close collaboration with British Intelligence. At the inquest, the testimony of a Spanish intelligence agent was spiked as a result of a top-level deal struck between the British and Spanish governments.

The state's contention that seven SAS soldiers, seven MI5 'watchers' and a senior MI5 officer, plus numbers of Special Branch and uniformed police made every effort to arrest the IRA unit was blown apart. As Paddy McGrory, counsel for the victims' relatives said, the decision to allow Farrell, McCann and Savage to enter Gibraltar was part of 'a conspiracy to murder'.

Despite a state and media campaign to discredit the eyewitnesses interviewed in the television documentary 'Death on the Rock', their evidence undermined every detail of the Crown case.



British soldier on patrol in Belfast

British barrister Stephen Bullock (who can hardly be accused of being an IRA dupe!) described how McCann was shot with his arms in the air and that both McCann and Farrell were shot while lying on the ground. Josie Celecia corroborated the latter state-

ment, while Carmen Proetta confirmed that McCann and Farrell had both had their hands up. Even the Crown pathologist had to concede that Sean Savage was the victim of a 'frenzied attack' and that it was consistent with forensic evidence that bullets were

pumped into his head by a gunman standing over him.

The Gibraltar inquest has demonstrated in the most graphic manner the existence and activities of the official state assassination squad. The operations of the SAS - the iron fist of the imperialist occupation of the north of Ireland - have only been possible as a result of the 'bi-partisan' policy of successive Labour leaderships. It was a Labour government which sent troops into Ireland in 1969 and it was the last Labour government which introduced the SAS in the 1970s.

Kevin McNamara, Labour's shadow Northern Ireland secretary, in calling for a judicial inquiry into the Gibraltar events, made it clear that his only differences with the Tories were that 'unanswered questions' had created martyrs for the republican movement.

A struggle against the imperialist Labour leadership is the pre-condition for uniting the British and Irish working class against their common enemies - British imperialism, its army of occupation and its death squads in the north, and its lackeys in Dublin. Hands off the republicans! Withdraw British troops now! Defeat British imperialism! For a united socialist Ireland!

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Conference confirms swing to right

By Richard Price

THE LABOUR PARTY swung further to the right with the re-election by an overwhelming majority of the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership, and the support given to the reactionary 'Aims and Values' policy review document by the annual conference.

In the leadership election, Neil Kinnock polled 88.6 per cent, against 11.4 per cent for Tony Benn. Roy Hattersley was returned as deputy leader with 66.8 per cent of the vote, defeating John Prescott with 23.7 per cent and Eric Heffer with 9.5 per cent.

Victory for the Kinnock-Hattersley ticket was assured by the block votes cast by the trade union bureaucracy. Kinnock received 39.6 per cent of the 40 per cent of

votes allocated to the trade union section of the electoral college.

But the sharpest expression of the declining influence of Bennism was in the Constituency Labour Party (CLP) section, where Kinnock won by over 4:1 - a collapse compared with Benn's challenge for the deputy leadership in 1981. Only 22 out of 337 CLPs which held individual member ballots voted for Benn.

As if to sum up the half-hearted nature of his challenge for the leadership, Benn maintained a low profile during conference week, called for 'left and right' to work together, and joined the standing ovation for Kinnock's 'key-note' speech.

A resolution which raises the proportion of Labour MPs required to support a future leadership challenge from five per cent to 20 per

cent was passed, supported by T&GWU general secretary Ron Todd, who called for an end to what he termed 'circuses and pantomimes'. Todd also delivered the substantial T&GWU block vote in favour of the 'Aims and Values' document, just as he had swung the union, with the assistance of its 'Broad Left' national executive, behind Kinnock and Hattersley. The subsequent furore surrounding Todd's criticism of the policy review, and his support for unilateralism does not represent any belated stirring of principles. On the contrary, it reflects the difficulties Todd and the 'Broad Left' have in selling 'new realism' to the rank-and-file.

Kinnock faces a dilemma in relation to the trade union block vote. While relying on it to defeat the left, he wants to distance the leader-

ship from the unions in order to attract middle class support. But the reduction of the block vote can only be contemplated if there is a settlement of accounts with the more militant CLPs.

With the final decision on the policy review to be taken next year, Kinnock and Hattersley, supported by yesterday's 'lefts' like David Blunkett, are planning a pincer attack on the CLPs. The leadership clique aims to dominate the party machinery entirely, ignoring annual conference, and by appealing for a mass recruitment campaign, swamp constituency activists with an inactive paper membership. By referring both policy documents and candidate selection to individual member ballots, the right wing aim to establish an unchallengeable leadership ruling by plebiscite.

Euros provide 'think-tank' for Labour right

AS A CONTRIBUTION to the discussion prior to the redrafting of its programme, The British Road to Socialism, the Communist Party of Great Britain has published a document entitled 'Facing Up To The Future'.

By David Lewis

Jointly written by eight leading Euro-Stalinists, including Martin Jacques, Monty Johnstone (who dissented from the finished document) and Beatrix Campbell, it represents the most right-wing version yet of the counter-revolutionary policy of the Popular Front first put forward by the Stalinist parties in the 1930s.

The essential nature of the Popular Front is the subordination of the working class to a so-called 'progressive' wing of the capitalist class through an alliance of workers' and capitalist parties on a 'democratic' programme. In the 1930s, this policy was able to disguise itself behind the rhetoric of 'anti-fascism' and 'the defence of the USSR'. The CPGB in 1935 could still call its programme 'For a Soviet Britain', although it was already a counter-revolutionary party. In 1951, it adopted a document, The British Road to Socialism, which had been personally approved and partially written by Joseph Stalin himself. This explicitly abandoned the Marxist teaching that it is necessary for the working class to smash the state in order to take power. In its place, it proposed an entirely peaceful parliamentary transition to Stalinism.

Even the 1951 programme, however, and its redraft in 1977 were obliged to base their reactionary perspective upon a 'left' majority in parliament which would inaugurate socialist policies.

Sixty years ago, Leon Trotsky predicted that the outcome of the theory of separate 'national roads to socialism' would be the adaptation and subordination of the Communist parties to their 'own' ruling classes. Today's Euro-Stalinists have given up the

pretence of defending the USSR and have converted themselves into a 'think-tank' for Labour's right wing.

Already Bryan Gould, one of the chief architects of the Labour leadership's stampede to the right, has praised the new document for its 'open-mindedness and intelligence which the Labour Party, imprisoned by its past achievements, hostage to its aspirations, has not always found easy to demonstrate'.

'Facing Up To The Future' reads like a passport for those demoralised sections of the middle class who have given up entirely on the working class, and who are trying to rationalise their own pessimism and justify their acceptance of 'the joys of consumerism'.

The core of the document is concerned with a frontal assault on the Marxist concept of class. Basing themselves wholly upon arguments drawn from bourgeois sociology, the authors come to the conclusion that the working class has become so hopelessly compromised by participating in capitalist production that it can no longer 'provide the collective interest for modern socialism'. They proceed to formulate a thoroughly idealist conception of class which starts from an individual's 'perception' of their own class 'identity', independent of any objective relationship to the means of production. By a sleight-of-hand, they equate class with class consciousness, the subjective recognition of class position.

In fact, they attempt nothing new. The claim that workers are now 'both exploited and exploiters' is an old refrain of the liberal bourgeoisie, used to sow the maximum confusion amongst workers as to their class allegiance, the better to exploit their labour power.



JOHNSTONE

The only difference is that the Euro team gives its plea for class-collaboration a contemporary flavour: 'Everyone comes to their sense of their class through their sense of gender, and ethnicity, as well as regional and religious attachments.' If the Euro-Stalinists have a criticism of the Labour Par-



JACQUES

ty, it is that its 'narrow political culture, bound up with trade unionism, is an obstacle to 'strategic alliances between the labour movement and popular forces outside it'. Among these 'popular forces' it lists 'voluntary organisations, community groups, the churches, music and single-issue

campaigning groups', but the main object of the document is to 'provide the common reference point for a social coalition for progressive change'. For those without a doctorate in 'Newspeak', this means a Labour-SDP-Democrat coalition with room, perhaps, for the odd 'wet' Tory.

Council housing is out, the European Community is in, support is offered to the police to deal with 'hooliganism' and the struggles of the working class in recent years are dismissed contemptuously.

'Individual choice' is a key question for the authors and they are staunch supporters of employee share-ownership schemes, except that they call them 'wage earner investment boards', which will require the creation of some-

thing called a 'social capital market'. The aim? To give workers 'a tangible sense of ownership' of course! Until it was picked up recently by Kinnock and Co, this policy was the traditional preserve of the Liberal Party, from which the trade unions broke over 80 years ago to form the Labour Party.

It would be easy to dismiss a document which bristles with 'agendas' ('sexual and moral'), 'terrains' and 'lifestyles', 'marketisation' and 'post-Fordism', as only of interest to the dwindling wine-bar set around 'Marxism Today' but the language of Jacques and Campbell is already the language of Kinnock and Gould. 'Facing Up To The Future' is not a 'road' of any sort to socialism, but a direct route to Labour's right wing.

Tuffin accepts principle of recruitment bonuses

By Daniel Evans

THE END of nationally-negotiated pay and conditions and the undermining of the position of the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) came a step nearer in September with the ending of the first national strike of postal workers since 1971.

The original 24-hour strike on September 1 was called in opposition to the special bonus payments being paid to new recruits in London and the South-east. Although justified by the Post Office as a means of retaining staff in an area with a high cost of living, it is correctly seen by rank-and-file postmen as a ploy to end the national wage agreement and hold down wages in the provinces.

Conceived as a one-day protest by UCW general secretary Alan Tuffin, it was transformed into a two-



Postal workers outside Mount Pleasant sorting office in London during the one-day national strike on September 1

week stoppage by the determination of postal workers to defend standing agreements concerning the use of casual labour. The Post Office management deliberately broke the agreement to clear the backlog of mail,

with the aim of splitting the workforce and encouraging 'public opinion' to support the idea of privatisation.

Tuffin, a rightwinger of the Kinnock school of 'new realism', worked behind the scenes to secure a return to work and claimed that the promise of negotiations without 'pre-conditions' and no victimisation of militant strikers was a victory. But negotiations will only take place on the understanding that the union accepts in principle 'a system of extra payments' which is a 'pre-condition' in itself. As Royal Mail Letters managing director Bill Cockburn put it: 'This is precisely what we were urging the union to accept before their industrial action.' The UCW executive left many individual sorting offices to fight on alone until they could negotiate their own local deals.

The strike's effectiveness

was also undermined by the use of private companies who took over some key deliveries. For instance, TNT - the haulage company which was used by Rupert Murdoch to cross printers' picket lines at Wapping - delivered dole cheques to Unemployment Benefit Offices. Neither the Civil and Public Services Association leaders, nor those of the T&GWU with whom TNT has a single-union agreement, made any attempt to halt this scab operation.

The more sophisticated organs of the Tory media have recognised that Tuffin is the man who can deliver the goods. They have condemned their colleagues in the gutter press for jibes about 'Postman Prat'. Postal workers should take note, and wage a determined struggle to replace the Tuffin leadership with one pledged to fight.

Threat to short-life homes

THE LABOUR-controlled Camden Council has indicated that its policy of providing a limited amount of housing for single homeless people is about to end. Up to 5,000 tenants living in the London borough's most rundown housing stock face being evicted without any offer of alternative accommodation.

Following the attempt to reduce their waiting lists by 'repatriating' homeless Bengali and Irish people, the

council is seeking further cuts in the housing budget. Council officers are currently running a survey of all short-life properties to test their suitability for families.

Their aim is to transfer families on the waiting list out of expensive bed-and-breakfast accommodation into sub-standard housing, and to end any obligation to single people. In doing so, they will be pre-empting Tory legislation planned for later in the year which will force councils to utilise all

their vacant properties, and which will end homelessness as a qualification for being housed.

Councillor Ken Hulme, Camden's vice-chairman of housing, justified the change of policy by saying that people had no right to be in short-life accommodation if the council wanted to get rid of them. 'Short-life housing has had its day. We have to bring back property into normal use. People have got to come to terms with that,' he said.

FUNDS

Come on out there! Many people tell us what a good paper Workers News is and how well produced it is. But it also needs your financial support. Every worker and youth must draw from the toadying of the Labour and TUC leaders to Thatcher's 'market forces' the necessity of building a revolutionary leadership. Workers News is a vital weapon in that task. So let's get our **£10,000 Building Fund** on the move again. It currently stands at £977.28. Keep up regular donations to the **£300 Monthly Fund**. Post to: Workers News 1/17 Meredith Street London EC1R 0AE

Six-day working prepares pit sale

BRITISH COAL's decision to offer sole negotiating rights at its planned £90 million 'super-pit' at Margam to the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers has cut across the plans of the South Wales NUM executive to do a deal on six-day working in defiance of national policy.

A South Wales delegate conference decided unanimously on September 24 to oppose six-day working, and to support the official position of the NUM. Having previously indicated that they were prepared to break ranks and accept six-day working at Margam, South Wales president Des Duffield and general secretary George Rees were left bemoaning BC's refusal to negotiate. But Rees's empty threat of 'another Wapping' if the NUM is not recognised will not frighten BC or cover up the treachery of the South Wales leadership.

Six-day working is not an end in itself but a ramp for privatisation, and Margam

is clearly intended as a model for the future. In May, Michael Spicer, a junior energy minister, stated that the exploitation of coal reserves should not remain 'a natural monopoly'.

The threats of scab unionism, six-day working and privatisation have converged as the world market for coal becomes increasingly glutted, and they have concentrated the crisis of leadership within the NUM. Despite his opposition to extending the working week, Arthur Scargill remains tied to a bankrupt utopian perspective. In a television interview in September, he maintained that the slack demand under capitalism could be answered by shortening the working week. The laws of capitalism dictate exactly the opposite - fewer workers, longer hours, increased exploitation.

Miners must reject both the collaboration with BC by right-wingers and Stalinists and the 'alternative strategy' offered by Scargill, and build a revolutionary leadership in the NUM.

TUC UNDERMINES BOYCOTT OF E.T.

THIS YEAR's Trades Union Congress, held in Bournemouth at the beginning of September, passed two conflicting resolutions on the government's new Employment Training programme.

The first resolution, as amended by the T&GWU, adopted a policy of boycotting the scheme. The second, moved by NALGO and amended by the general secretary of the GMB, John Edmonds, called for a phased withdrawal over two years, and enables the TUC leaders to continue collaborating with the government. Caught between the hostility of their members towards this latest and most draconian in a line of cheap-labour schemes and their own desire for 'moderation', leaders of some of the largest trade unions marshalled their votes in favour of both motions.

By Philip Marchant

After the vote, Edmonds admitted in a television interview that the 'shabby little trick' had been carefully prepared in advance of the Congress with the intention of undermining a boycott of ET. The success of the manoeuvre reveals how shallow runs the opposition of the so-called 'boycotters' in the leadership of the T&GWU, NUPE and NALGO. Only with their tacit agreement could such a stunt be successfully accomplished. The Willis-led right wing has not only got the mandate it wanted to participate in ET schemes - by brazenly admitting to organisational chicanery, it has also preserved its 'left' cover in the form of the disgruntled 'boycotters'.

Despite this major concession to the Tories by the TUC right wing, the effect was to encourage Employment Secretary Norman

Fowler to bring the 'left' to heel as well. Characterising the vote as one 'against participating in ET', Fowler promptly ejected the TUC's three representatives from the Training Commission, the corporatist body which brings together government, employers and unions to oversee cheap-labour schemes, and announced plans to abolish the Commission and hand over its responsibilities to the Department of Employment. At a stroke, Fowler has made compulsory acceptance of a place on the new scheme easier to enforce through the DoE-operated High Street Job Centres.

Fowler also announced plans to establish a committee to replace the Training Commission on which the trade union representation will be appointed by the government. Suspicions were heightened that the EETPU will be offered a position on this committee when Eric Hammond shared a platform with Fowler on September 23, three weeks after his union's expulsion from the TUC. At the meeting it was announced that the EETPU was joining with the government and several private companies to provide an ET scheme in London's Dockland. Fowler revealed that he had also secured agreement with the T&GWU and the building workers' union, UCATT, for similar schemes elsewhere.

Running parallel to the surrender of the 'lefts' at the TUC was a retreat by the Labour Party-led Liverpool City Council from their decision to cut funding to voluntary organisations who support the ET programme. The organisations in question appealed to Norman Fowler who has been granted a full judicial review, due to be heard in November, which is widely seen as a test case for the minister's powers over local authorities. As a result, the council and the local branch of NALGO, which had supported the action, backed down.

Graham Burgess, the leader of the Liverpool branch of NALGO and a member of the recently-formed Communist Party of Britain, had already demonstrated the limits of his opposition to the Tories' schemes at NALGO's annual conference in June, where he moved the resolution calling for a TUC boycott of ET. He successfully opposed another resolution which called for a complete break with all government and employer cheap-labour schemes. He argued that ET was simply a bad scheme and that trade unions should support the Training Commission even if the TUC's role within it was reduced to an advisory capacity.

The anger of rank-and-file trade unionists at the lack of any serious fight against the schemes was expressed at a conference in Manchester on September 17 called by the T&GWU Community Programme Shop Stewards' Combine. Representatives from trade union branches, a



EDMONDS

number of Constituency Labour Parties and organisations of the unemployed met to adopt a programme to fight against cheap-labour schemes and the government's so-called 'training programmes'. It was agreed to organise a one-day strike and national demonstration in February next year to publicly launch the campaign.

A further conference is to be held early in December to mobilise workers around the following programme: opposition to all temporary training measures and cheap-labour schemes; training to be under trade union control at the employers' expense and leading to permanent jobs; the establishment of regional and national organising committees to unite trade unionists with unemployed workers' groups; the right of unemployed workers to full membership of trade unions at a rate they can afford; and a fight throughout the trade union movement for these policies to be adopted and put into practice.

The Workers International League welcomes all such attempts by rank-and-file workers and youth to oppose the Tory schemes, but warns that they can only articulate the needs of the working class if they are built in resolute opposition to every variety of centrist, Stalinist and reformist treachery.

Desai rejected

Anti-fascist activist Unmesh Desai has accused Newham Labour Party of running a 'racist smear campaign' against him after he failed to be selected as the Labour candidate in a forthcoming council by-election. Desai is the chair of Newham Monitoring Project which campaigns against racist attacks in the area

Record credit

Consumer credit in Britain rose to a record monthly total of £4.17 billion in August. This compares with a monthly average of £3.38 billion from January to July.

AUT march against sacking

MORE THAN 1,500 members of the Association of University Teachers marched through Hull on October 3 against the sacking of philosophy lecturer Edgar Page. They were joined by students from Hull University. Page is the first academic in Britain to be made compulsorily redundant since the ending of the traditional tenure agreement. The AUT bureaucracy, which has encouraged thousands of lecturers to take voluntary redundancy, is clearly uncomfortable at having to take up any kind of fight. Its only proposal so far is a strike fund financed by voluntary contributions.



The demonstration in Hull on October 3 against the sacking of Edgar Page (front right, with beard)

Demand councils refuse to collect Poll Tax!

THE LABOUR and TUC leaders have moved to crush the widespread resistance in the working class to the Tory Poll Tax, due to be introduced in April 1989 in Scotland, a year ahead of England and Wales.

The Labour Party conference rejected a motion from Glasgow Shettleston CLP which called for a campaign of non-payment of the Poll Tax and non-compliance by Labour councils. It voted instead for a motion tabled by the shopworkers' union USDAW, which called for opposition 'within the law'.

Supporting the USDAW motion on behalf of the NEC, David Blunkett, MP for Sheffield Brightside, signalled the complete capitulation of the leadership by saying that the party

could not advocate policies that it knew in the end would 'let the people down'.

A similar motion, again from USDAW, was passed at the TUC Congress in early September. The TUC motion also stressed that full support would only be given for 'every legal effort' to repeal the Poll Tax legislation and went on to call for a national rally and lobby of parliament.

At a special conference of the Scottish Labour Party on September 17, trade union leaders used their block votes to produce a 512,000 to 225,000 majority against a campaign of non-payment. A week later the Scottish TUC, assisted by the Euro-Stalinists, organised a half-

hearted week of action against the Poll Tax which included a call for a 'strike' lasting only 11 minutes.

With the right-wing Labour and trade union leaders openly refusing to defend the working class against the Poll Tax, preferring to impress middle class voters with their respectability, about 15 of the 50 Scottish Labour MPs, along with CLP activists, have been obliged to announce that they will lead a campaign for non-payment. Their main fear is of losing parliamentary seats to the Scottish National Party. At its own conference, the SNP seized the opportunity provided by the cowardice of the Labour and STUC leaders to can-

vass support in the working class for its reactionary policy of an independent capitalist Scotland.

The Labour MPs who have indicated that they will refuse to register for the tax intend, at best, to confine their campaign to one of individual protest. The task, however, is not to make martyrs out of 'left' MPs, but for the working class to demand that Labour councils in Scotland refuse to implement the Poll Tax. Such a stand must be backed by the town hall unions, whose leaders must be forced to issue an instruction to all their members not to process any of the administrative work associated with the tax.

Chilean opposition puts its faith in the armed forces

AS IT BECAME clear that the majority of Chileans had voted against a further eight-year term for General Augusto Pinochet in the October 5 plebiscite, opposition leaders began issuing appeals to their supporters to stay calm and disciplined, and attempted to disperse the huge spontaneous victory demonstrations.

Thousands of workers and youth flooded onto the streets of the capital, Santiago, calling for Pinochet's immediate removal from power, after the military junta announced that 55 per cent had voted 'No' and 43 per cent 'Yes'. Over 15,000 people laid siege to the presidential palace and were dispersed by riot police, and by their own leaders who advised them to stay at home until the official celebration in O'Higgins Park.

Only one of the 16 parties which make up the 'No Command' coalition has called for Pinochet to be

By Richard Price

ousted. The others are putting their confidence in the armed forces, stressing the need for 'generosity in victory', 'reconciliation' and 'national unity'. They insist that Pinochet's defeat at the polls is not a defeat for the military as a whole, but only for a small group at the top.

The opposition has confined itself to calling for a change in the constitution, under which Pinochet can stay in office for a further year before calling elections, and which guarantees the continued domination of the army. Large sections of the military, however, had made it clear in advance that they would not accept changes in the event of a 'No' vote. As Marcelo Mansilla, a professor at the Army Strategic Studies Academy, put it: 'What is fundamental is the preservation of the social, economic and political framework. It cannot be sacrificed because of a mere circumstance of majorities and

minorities in an election.'

Pinochet centred his campaign around claims that Chile's 'economic miracle' will soon put it on a par with advanced Western capitalist countries, and has contrasted the Chilean economy favourably with those of neighbouring Latin American countries. The last person to entertain such grandiose illusions was the Shah of Iran. In fact, Chile's dependence on imperialism has become greater - it can never become another Japan.

Chilean economic 'success' has been based almost entirely upon the brutal exploitation of the working class and the suppression of all democratic rights. The coup which overthrew the reformist Allende government in 1973 outlawed all workers' parties and trade unions, resulted in the murder of many thousands of leading activists and drove tens of thousands more into exile.

Wholesale deregulation and privatisation of state concerns have made Chile a showpiece of the 'free mar-



To mark 15 years since the military coup, Chilean exiles in Britain marched through London on September 16 demanding the overthrow of General Pinochet

ket' policies beloved by Margaret Thatcher. Some 350 firms, which had been rescued from bankruptcy and were administered by the state under Allende, reverted to private hands under the junta. Pensions, the health service, banks, the state airline and electricity have all been sold off at knockdown prices.

Wages have remained among the lowest in Latin America. Pools of permanent unemployment serve to keep wages as low as £25 per month for many workers.

Such conditions have encouraged substantial foreign

investment and created relatively rapid but superficial 'growth' in the economy. The buoyant price of copper on the world market in recent years has also temporarily cushioned Pinochet's faltering regime.

But the Chilean working class has taken the offensive in the last year, and Pinochet's plebiscite is a sign of weakness, not of strength. The central question for the Chilean working class, however, is that of revolutionary leadership. The 16-party bloc of bourgeois

opposition parties represents a 'second eleven' for the Chilean bourgeoisie, on hand to provide an Alfonsín-style government should Pinochet's faltering regime fail. The split Socialist Party and the Communist Party support the same popular front policy - the defence of 'democracy' - which disarmed the Chilean working class in 1973 and led to the military coup. The task remains the construction of a Trotskyist leadership which will fight for the political independence of the Chilean working class, and lead the struggle for workers' power.

Release Moses Mayekiso!

THE TRIAL of Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the South African metalworkers' union, NUMSA, is scheduled to resume on October 17 after a further prosecution adjournment.

Mayekiso was arrested in June 1986 and, along with four of his comrades from the Alexandra Action Committee - Richard Mdakane, Obed Bapela, Paul Tshabalala and Mzwanele Mayekiso, younger brother of Moses - was charged in May 1987 with treason, subversion and sedition.

The apartheid regime attaches great importance to obtaining a conviction - hence the lengthy adjournments which have punctuated the trial, now in its second year, whilst the state deliberates on how best to proceed. The five defendants have been targeted because of the lead they have given in organising the working class, both in the factories and in the townships. Mayekiso heads the second-largest trade union in South Africa and was chairman of the action committee which took over the running of Alexandra township, north of Johannesburg, after the residents drove out the official administration.

The reason given for the latest adjournment was that the prosecution needed more time to prepare its cross-examination of Mayekiso. This was allowed, despite the fact that a previous two-week adjournment when the first of the accused, Richard

Mdakane, had completed his evidence, was granted after the prosecution claimed that it had expected Mayekiso to give evidence first! 'The state is trying very hard to get the result they need,' observed Mayekiso, as Judge Pieter van der Walt announced the recess on September 23.

In the days leading up to the adjournment, Mayekiso had used the opportunity of giving evidence to put forward his own views and denounce the racist regime from the dock.

He described the squalid conditions of life in Alexandra township, and the brutal harassment of the population by vigilantes and police, explaining how the lessons of fighting for workers' democracy in the trade unions had been used in the establishment of the yard, street and block committees which made up the Alexandra Action Committee. He outlined his development from illiterate migrant mineworker from the Transkei to NUMSA general secretary and executive member of the COSATU trade union federation. Mayekiso addressed the court in the Xhosa language and corrected the official interpreter who referred to 'employers' and 'employees': 'No, no, no. I meant what I said: bosses and workers.'

The attack on Mayekiso and his four comrades is designed to intimidate the entire black working class, and particularly the trade union movement which has rapidly increased in size and

influence in recent years. In contrast to the policies of the majority of the anti-apartheid organisations in South Africa, which remain shackled to the ANC/Communist Party-inspired class-collaborationist perspective of a 'multi-racial democracy' (i.e. capitalist democracy), Mayekiso has stressed throughout his evidence that he is a worker and a socialist. His emphasis on the crucial role of the working class in the smashing of

apartheid, and of the necessity of establishing a socialist state in South Africa, has earned him the special hatred of the regime.

Trade unionists in Britain have an urgent obligation to escalate the campaign for the release of the Alexandra Five who, if convicted, face life imprisonment. They must demand that their leaders co-ordinate international working class action against the Botha government.



MOSES MAYEKISO

Botha outlaws election protests

By Ian Harrison

IN A DESPERATE attempt to get black voters to turn out in the October 26 elections for the stooge municipal councils, the Botha regime has launched a nationwide crackdown on the trade union movement and other opponents calling for a boycott.

- A conference planned for September 24-25 in Cape Town, jointly organised by anti-apartheid groups and the 700,000-member trade union federation COSATU, was banned because it was expected to advocate a boycott of the elections.

- A group of unidentified attackers fire-bombed a coach carrying striking BTR Sarmcol workers to Cape Town to prepare for the conference.

- Leading members of the metalworkers' union NUMSA, COSATU regional officials and 11 senior representatives of the United Democratic Front have been arrested, and restriction notices served on other prominent activists.

- The Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, has been granted new powers enabling him to place individuals under house arrest without the necessity of a court order. A report in the liberal 'Weekly Mail' states that: 'The minister will only have to publish the person's name in a gazette. This means a person can be restricted without knowing it.'

- A £1,200 bounty on the heads of all ANC guerrillas was announced by Vlok on October 5, to run until election day.

- The security forces have introduced the new tactic of sealing off whole streets and searching everyone inside the area.

- In a campaign bearing the stamp of a government 'dirty tricks' department, a series of leaflets bearing fake trade union letterheads has been widely distributed in black workers' hostels and townships, aimed at creating splits inside the unions.

- The collaborationist Soweto council has attempted to break rent boycotts in the township by sending armed policemen house-to-house in the middle of the night to collect arrears.

Despite the intensification of state repression, groups of workers in several parts of the country have moved onto the offensive. Eight thousand members of the railworkers' union SARWU employed on the docks and railways in the Durban area have launched a strike in defence of jobs and wages. They have been supported by 1,000 workers in East London.

Meanwhile, the strike of 3,500 municipal workers employed by Soweto council continues. It began in August after the council victimised SAMWU shop stewards for leading a fight against privatisation of services. And in Alexandra township, attempts to establish a stooge committee which would encourage participation in the municipal elections have been thrown out by workers.

In contrast to this militancy have been the conciliatory moves of the COSATU leaders. They have signed an agreement with the strike-breaking thugs of Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha movement which calls for peace in the Pietermaritzburg region of Natal. The agreement comes in spite of the murder by Inkatha of dozens of COSATU activists and a succession of attacks which have resulted in over 9,000 workers and their families being forced to leave the area.

Burmese military cling on to power

SHAKEN to its foundations by seven months of revolt, the Burmese military cling to power. Three changes in government in seven weeks between July and September have not altered the essential nature of the regime nor blunted the hatred of the masses.

Sein Lwin replaced Ne Win on July 26. After 17 days, he gave way to the civilian front-man Maung

Maung. He in turn lasted barely more than a month, before General Saw Maung took control and launched a new crack-down on September 18. None of the rounds of this militarised version of pass-the-parcel has broadened the support for the regime among any significant strata of the population.

The army leaders have used every weapon at their disposal – political and military – to retain control. In contrast, the liberal bourgeois opposition is paralysed, fearing both the army

By Martin Sullivan

and the threat of social revolution. Its leaders are either accidental figures – like Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of wartime nationalist leader Aung San – or disaffected former members of the Ne Win regime, like Brigadier General Aung Gyi (Ne Win's ex-deputy) and former defence minister General Tin Oo.

Thrust into the leadership of a movement they played no part in creating, the liberals lack a programme,

except 'democracy' and 'free elections'. They lean on the workers, peasants and students, whilst attempting to find a 'democratic' wing of the military to do business with.

During Maung Maung's brief government, the liberals took at face value its 'pledge' of elections within three months. Rather than call for insurrection, under conditions in which a general strike had immobilised the civil service and most major industries, mutinies were taking place among junior ranks of the army and airforce and barricades had been set up throughout Rangoon, they spent the days prior to Saw Maung's takeover parleying with 'moderate' members of the ruling party. These talks were aimed at setting up a joint interim government.

For the military, however, the interlude of civilian-led government was marked by feverish activity. In late August, a conspiratorial

meeting was held between Sein Lwin, Maung Maung, Saw Maung and Ne Win's daughter. Behind the promise of elections to lull the liberals and even the official dismantling of one-party rule, the Burmese secret police set to work creating provocations against workers and students on the streets.

In three days of fighting which followed Saw Maung's coup, a thousand demonstrators were murdered. House-to-house searches in Rangoon caught some student leaders who were taken out and shot. Others left for the north to join the armed struggle of the Karen people. The official opposition leaders were left alone.

The repression was, however, unable to break the general strike. The working class remains the decisive force which the students and the awakening peasantry must unite behind and break with both wings of the bourgeoisie.



GADDAFI

Get rich urges Gaddafi

THE LIBYAN government of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi has embarked upon a programme of loosening state control over the economy. In the past year, small businesses have mushroomed and the monopoly previously exercised by state marketing firms has been lifted.

Reuters reported Gaddafi telling crowds on the 19th anniversary of the overthrow of King Idris on September 1: 'Be rich. Everyone is invited to become bourgeois on condition that he does not do so by stealing the effort of another or plunder.'

Gaddafi claims that the programme outlined in his 'Green Book' has proved too ambitious to achieve.

Gandhi withdraws press gag

RAJIV GANDHI's government has been forced to withdraw a Defamation Bill which aimed at widening press restrictions. The bill would have placed the burden of proof in defamation cases upon accused journalists.

The humiliating climb-down followed widespread protests and strikes by jour-

nalists. Gandhi has been under sharp attack in the Indian press over the Bofors defence contracts scandal, and allegations of torture in the Punjab.

On September 8, the north-eastern state of Mizoram became the fourth to come under direct rule from New Delhi, after Gandhi sacked the state government.



GANDHI

Walesa's road to 'respectability'

NEGOTIATIONS begin this month between the Polish Stalinist regime of General Jaruselski, representatives of the Catholic Church and the trade union Solidarity. The talks, aimed at securing 'national reconciliation', involve a possible trade-off – partial legalisation of Solidarity in return for its leaders' acceptance of Jaruselski's economic 'reform' programme. A pivotal role in bringing about the talks has been played by Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.

In late August, Poland was convulsed for the second time this year by a massive round of strikes, whose central demand was the legalisation of Solidarity. The August strikes surpassed those of May in their nationwide scope, and the number of workers involved. At least 14 coal mines in Silesia struck, along with steelworkers, four shipyards and a repair yard in Gdansk, transport workers and dockers in the Baltic port of Szczecin – in all 100,000 workers.

Walesa's own base, the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, was among the last major plants to join the stoppages. Even as the decision to strike was taken, Walesa

COMMENT

told the Gdansk workers: 'We cannot pull Poland out of her troubles by means of strikes. We are ready for dialogue and talks.' Following approaches by the Polish government, Walesa lent his authority – as in May – to calling off the strikes. Directly after meeting Interior Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak on August 31, Walesa sent telexes to striking workers calling upon them to return to work – this despite a series of violent attacks upon workers by riot police and the enforcing of curfews in three provinces. Two days later, Walesa drove 400 miles to Silesia to cajole striking miners into calling off their action. On September 4, Walesa defended his betrayal by arguing that a return to work was 'demanded by a higher necessity', although it isn't clear whether he was referring to God or to Poland's \$30 billion foreign debt!

Solidarity 'advisor' Adam Michnik backed Walesa's line, claiming that 'social peace' could be achieved through an agreement with the government. The Solidarity leadership declared itself ready to enter talks without preconditions, despite the statement of government spokesman Jerzy Ur-

ban that there could be no return to the legal rights gained by Solidarity in 1980-81.

Walesa's steady evolution to the right is instructive. The pioneer of independent trade unionism, who shinned over the walls of the Lenin shipyard, has become a 'statesman', courted by Western capitalist leaders, and is seen by Poland's Stalinist rulers as an indispensable component of 'national reconciliation'. Walesa's youthful courage remained within the boundaries of syndicalism, and at no stage did he have a coherent programme for the overthrow of the bureaucracy. This proved to be his and the Solidarity leadership's Achilles' heel in 1980-81. Syndicalism has given way to a flabby reformism, entirely subservient to the Stalinist regime. This shows conclusively that there is no substitute for the Trotskyist programme of political revolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

An enthusiastic supporter of Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Walesa ironically finds himself at the head of a mass movement directed against Jaruselski's attempts to introduce a similar 'reform' programme to Poland.

Jaruselski is anxious to draw Walesa and the Sol-



Polish workers on strike in 1981

idarity leadership into a 'dialogue' to secure its support for a harsh programme of austerity measures. The seven-year ban on Solidarity since the declaration of martial law in 1981 has failed to resolve the deep crisis of the Polish economy. Low productivity in an economy reliant on vast antiquated industrial complexes, inflation at 50 per cent and an insoluble debt crisis – such are the disastrous overheads of the bureaucratic caricature of socialist planning.

Solidarity's strongholds have traditionally been in the centres of heavy industry, and it is precisely these areas of the economy which are targeted for 'rationalisation'. It is not Poland's thriving small businessmen, private bankers, *zloty* millionaires or party bosses who will bear the brunt of the austerity measures. It will be the industrial working class, and hence the need to win the support of the

Solidarity leadership. On September 19, the government headed by Zbigniew Messner stepped down to make way for this new relationship.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had planned to meet Walesa during a state visit scheduled for October 16-18. It was cancelled owing to the change of government. Like other Western capitalist leaders, she has frequently offered her hypocritical 'support' to Solidarity. At the same time, the capitalist media urge Solidarity to collaborate with the economic reform programme. This apparent paradox can only be understood in the light of imperialist policy towards Poland. On the one hand it is necessary to draw a 'democratic' veil across the growing capitalist penetration of Eastern Europe and the USSR by speaking out against 'human rights violations'. On the other hand

Reagan, Thatcher and company recognise the Polish Stalinists as the only reliable guarantors of their outstanding loans. Like Jaruselski, they recognise that the measures required to drive the working class harder, and enable repayment, cannot be applied without the collaboration of the leadership of a legal or semi-legal Solidarity.

But Walesa's prestige in the Polish working class is waning. Large numbers of strikers greeted his calls to return to work in stony silence, or with outright anger. The opportunist leadership of Solidarity is a millstone round the neck of the resurgent Polish working class, and an obstacle in the struggle for the political revolution in Poland. Only its removal and replacement by a Trotskyist leadership can clear the path for the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the victory of workers' democracy.

EDITORIAL

Gorbachev and the victims of Stalin

A DEAFENING crescendo of applause for the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is being generated by an unholy alliance which stretches from Margaret Thatcher, through the capitalist press and the top echelons of the Labour Party and both of the British 'Communist' parties, to the majority of those who lyingly pose as 'Trotskyists'.

Thrilling to every development of the Gorbachev 'reform' programme, today's fake 'Trotskyists' perform a service to both Stalinism and imperialism. What unites a dozen or so groups both inside and outside the Labour Party is the lie that, in one way or another, Gorbachev is leading a struggle to reform the Soviet bureaucracy out of existence, and regenerate workers' democracy in the USSR.

Like his spiritual forefather Khrushchev, Mikhail Gorbachev has discovered that, in order to maintain and defend the existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it is necessary to distance the present occupants of the Kremlin from Joseph Stalin. By heaping the collective crimes of the bureaucracy on to Stalin as an individual, and by pouring scorn on the so-called 'Brezhnev years of stagnation', Gorbachev hopes to deflect the Soviet working class away from examining the social roots of bureaucracy and inequality.

Unable to uphold the lie that the victims of Stalin's crimes, including the vast majority of the leaders of Lenin's party, were fascist mad dogs and agents of Hitler and the Mikardo, the bureaucracy has been forced to embark on a series of 'rehabilitations'.

Kamenev, Zinoviev, Piatakov, Radek, Rakovsky, Bukharin and others — all of whom were convicted at the infamous Moscow Trials and shot, or died subsequently in prison — have been posthumously acquitted this year.

The Soviet Supreme Court, which annulled the trial verdicts of 1936-8, remained silent on the charges against Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the Russian Revolution, and his son Leon Sedov, the chief defendants of the Moscow Trials who were tried in absentia and subsequently murdered. However, a senior Soviet diplomat in New York has indicated that a partial 'rehabilitation' of Trotsky is being considered. In September, it was announced that 9,500 previously banned books, including the works of Trotsky and other old Bolsheviks, had been restored to Soviet libraries.

Such decisions lay bare the Stalinist falsification of history and implicitly uphold Trotsky's exposure of the Moscow Trials. This is undeniably a product of the crisis gripping the bureaucracy. That being said, Workers News does not recognise the 'right' of any of Stalin's heirs to 'rehabilitate' any of Stalin's victims. For us, the annulment of the political trials staged by the bureaucracy is the task of the Soviet working class. Moreover, this is not a thing in itself but an inseparable part of the programme of political revolution as a whole.

A trench separates us from those fake 'Trotskyists' who wilfully see in the decisions of the Soviet courts part of a victorious process of 'self-reform' by the bureaucracy.

In June this year, Peter Taafe, the editor of 'Militant', told a meeting that Gorbachev's declaration that there must be no blank spaces left in the history of the USSR marked the beginning of the political revolution in the USSR.

A random selection of the journals of other entry groups within the Labour Party reveals similar leanings. Oliver Macdonald set the tone for 'Socialist Outlook' last November when he mused whether 'we' should become 'the left wing of the Gorbachevites... preparing to transcend Gorbachevism tomorrow'. 'International Viewpoint', journal of the United Secretariat, anxiously scans the USSR for evidence of bureaucratic 'self-reform'. It even finds something to the bureaucracy's credit in the Armenian events: '... the relaxation of bureaucratic repression required by the *perestroika* policy has allowed the question of a democratic settlement of the national question to be raised again in the Soviet Union.'

Gerry Healy and Vanessa Redgrave's so-called Marxist Party does away with any equivocal formulae, and throws its support squarely behind Gorbachev. According to Healy, the political revolution in the USSR began in 1953. It is an irreversible, 'contradictory', 'objective' process 'existing independently of thought', although not independent of Gorbachev under whose leadership it has been developing over the past three years.

Healy designates the political revolution as standing at the summit of the world revolution. What he means is that the struggles of the world working class are entirely subordinate to the diplomatic manoeuvrings of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and he consequently remains silent on the counter-revolutionary 'regional settlements' with imperialism sought by Gorbachev in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, the Middle East, Kampuchea and southern Africa. He also has nothing to say about Gorbachev's economic policies or the eruption of the national question in the USSR.

The 'political revolution' envisaged by Healy will be completed when all the works of the old Bolsheviks are returned to the libraries. It will be conducted by the intelligentsia, not the working class who have no need to overthrow the bureaucracy. Thus, for the first time in history, the chief protagonists of a revolution will be librarians!

There would be no need for Trotskyists to answer such reactionary drivel if it did not appeal to a section of the middle class in Britain, who have given up entirely on the working class and look for something strong in the shape of the Soviet bureaucracy to shelter under.

The struggle for workers' democracy and to defend the property relations established by the October Revolution lies not through the bureaucracy, but against it: 'Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection — the party of the Fourth International.' ('The Transitional Programme').

Down with Stalinism and its revisionist apologists! Long live the unity of British and Soviet workers! Forward to the political revolution!

May 15, 1988

Dear Comrade North,
You concluded your letter of December 6, 1987, by offering the Workers International League 'every possible assistance' in breaking from the opportunism of the WRP. Recent months have given us ample opportunity to appraise the nature of this 'assistance'. Whilst engaged in correspondence with the WIL, your organisation was simultaneously attempting to smash us by directing the activities of the minority faction of C. Harrison and G. Hollingsbee. Your political collaboration with this minority was clearly evident to the majority of the WIL several months before their theatrical departure.

Notwithstanding their disloyalty, their attempts to sabotage the WIL's activities in the working class, their call for the closing down of Workers News and their systematic lying to the WIL's membership, they were granted full rights to campaign for, and circulate, their views among our members. Let us say in passing that the rights afforded this minority to propagate its views were considerably greater than those granted to any opposition grouping within the SLL/WRP or the ICFI in the last two decades.

The WIL would have been fully within its rights to expel the three-member minority for complete political inactivity. We took a conscious decision not to in order to deepen our understanding of the nature of the minority and of the ICFI. In this, we were guided by Trotsky's insistence that the best way to deal with a petty-bourgeois tendency is to allow it to express itself fully.

In spite of the full democratic rights extended to this minority, they chose, under your instructions, to walk out of our organisation, and are now justifying themselves in the pages of your press with the barefaced lie that they were bureaucratically excluded from our Congress. Their claim rests on the fact that the discussion on the Constitution of the WIL was taken as the first item on the Congress agenda. In fact, after failing to put up a convincing argument against such an elementary procedure, they revealed that their opposition was to Clause 3 of the Constitution — 'Programme' — a clause which they themselves drafted! That they should be reticent about expanding on the theme of their 'exclusion' in the pages of 'International Worker' is, therefore, hardly surprising. The attempt by Harrison and Hollingsbee to acquire credentials as a persecuted minority can only be accomplished by deceiving your own members and readers. Their somersault on Clause 3 was evidently the result of instructions from your organisation, orchestrated in a manner not dissimilar to Thorne's dead-of-night meetings with Blick on M4 exit roads.

In Comrade Schwarz's letter of August 20, 1987, he attempted to take the WIL to task over the issue of 'mercenary relations' with the Arab bourgeoisie. In our reply to you we stated quite truthfully that our knowledge of these questions was restricted to the material which you and the 'Workers Press' have previously published. Now, you attack from the opposite direction, denouncing us for publishing the previously suppressed findings of the December 1985 International Control Commission. Your representative, C. Harrison, accuses us of being 'provocateurs', aiding the 'Sunday Times', the anarchists and the state. A similar position was expressed by ICP CC member V. Short at a recent public meeting in London. This hysteria in relation to uncovering the corruption of the WRP will, we are sure, come as an unexpected boost for Healy, Torrance and

Correspo the WIL a

Slaughter, all of whom have a similar desire to hide the truth.

The document reveals that Healy's inner clique constituted themselves over a period of years as an organised conspiracy within the WRP, betraying the most fundamental principles of Trotskyism, and systematically lying to the membership. The idea that somehow this is not the property of the WIL, the majority of whose members devoted years to the struggle to build the WRP, is particularly arrogant. As for the argument that we are aiding the state, this reminds us very strongly of the charge levelled at Trotsky that, in mercilessly exposing Stalinism (including its financial chicanery — see 'Stalin's Gangsters', chapter two), he was assisting the imperialists.

If the anarchists and the 'Sunday Times' choose to make what they will of the report, primary responsibility rests with Healy, Banda, Slaughter and Co. We are completely indifferent to bourgeois public opinion on these questions. The only 'public opinion' we seek to influence is that of the working class. In the month following the split of October 1985, representatives of the capitalist press (and presumably the state) were given ready access to the Clapham headquarters of the WRP, and plied with internal WRP material. One of the Fleet Street papers was even able to report from the floor of the Special Congress meetings which were held there. In 'How the WRP Betrayed Trot-



NORTH — offered 'every possible assistance'

skyism', you make several detailed references to the WRP's financial and political relations with the Arab bourgeoisie. Are you seriously suggesting that the state does not read your publications, that it has been snoozing for the past two-and-a-half years, and that it has only woken up to the real state of affairs in the WRP in recent months? Since you are so well read in the works of Trotsky, you will no doubt be familiar with his response to those who accused him of 'collaborating' with the press of William Randolph Hearst during the period of the Moscow Trials:

'If I should have to post placards, warning the people of a cholera epidemic, I should equally utilise the walls of schools, churches, saloons, gambling houses, and even worse establishments.'

We have lived through something of a cholera epidemic in the Trotskyist movement in recent times, which has killed off virtually the entire leadership of the WRP. Instead of circulating slanders about our 'col-

laborating' with the state, you should place on record why you have suppressed the International Control Commission report for the past two-and-a-half years.

You write in your letter: 'In all your years in the Workers Revolutionary Party, you received no basic education in the history, principles and methods of the ICFI.' Precisely which history, principles and methods are referred to here? If you are referring to the correct struggle waged by the ICFI against Pabloism, then it is certainly true that, from the mid-1970s onwards, members of the WRP were not educated in this spirit. It was replaced by the method and outlook which was also expressed in the 5th to the 10th World Congresses of the ICFI. If the ICFI claims to represent the unbroken continuity of the World Party, then its present leaders must shoulder their burden of responsibility for the decisions of the six revisionist World Congresses held during this period (the Comintern, after all, only held three revisionist Congresses).

You accuse the WIL of 'disdainful skepticism' in relation to the history of the ICFI. You do this because you have transformed the history of the ICFI during the decade or so before 1985 into an abstraction. Rather than a real ICFI, armed with revisionist perspectives, programme and World Congress decisions, you give us an 'abstract' ICFI, 'defending Trotskyism' against the degeneration of the WRP. But, with the exception of the RCL, no such struggle took place, as your documents confirm, until 1982, and then only the Workers League was involved. The processes by which the WRP suppressed the Workers League's criticisms in 1982 and 1984 are now well known. Why is it then necessary for you to go to great lengths to cover up your role at the 10th World Congress? In your account, you relate that 'we withdrew our criticisms in order to avoid a split in which an international discussion would have been precluded'. Is it not the case that the British and American delegations at the 10th World Congress threatened to split with the rest of the ICFI? This was recounted to the WRP CC in February 1985 by Slaughter in his report from the 10th World Congress, in which he favourably contrasted the Workers League with the other sections of the ICFI. Is it not the case that you were among the most sterling fighters for 'the ten stupidities of C. Slaughter'? Is it not also true that the RCL of Sri Lanka was singled out for expulsion? And if so, please tell us how **avoiding a split** in the ICFI took the form of **threatening to split** from a majority of its sections, and supporting Healy, Banda and Slaughter.

The account given of the 10th World Congress in 'How the WRP Betrayed Trotskyism' is intentionally misleading, because any record of the complicity of the current ICFI leaders in its decisions has been expunged. And yet you read us lectures on the necessity of an 'honest appraisal' of past events! We were

THE CURRENT edition includes three items of **and the Workers Intern**

Six months after the W from Peter Schwarz, th authority of the ICFI. T stated its willingness to David North, to which In typically deceitful m To this date, there has



The WRP's Marx centenary me

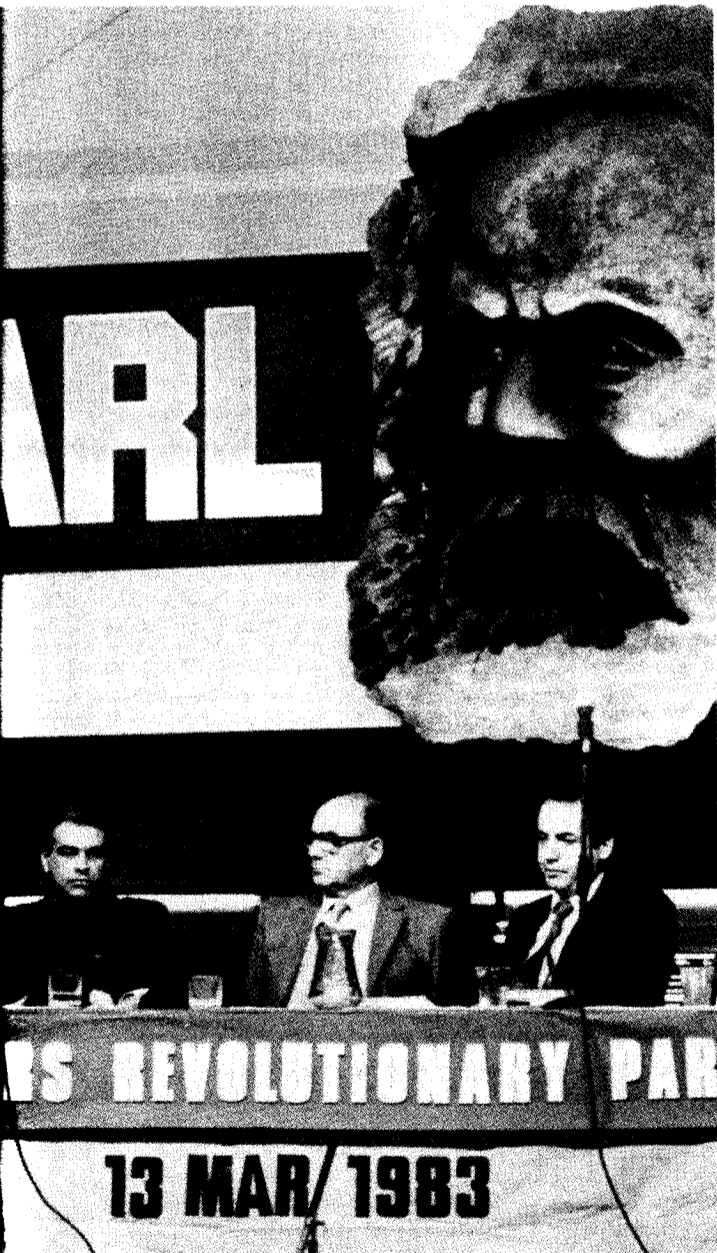
interested to note that our reply to Comrade Schwarz was handed to you to deal with. The reason is plain enough, since he cannot claim any history of struggle against the WRP leadership prior to 1985, 'subterranean' or otherwise.

The 10th World Congress resolution was, like its six predecessors, so far as we are aware approved unanimously by the ICFI. In reply to Comrade Schwarz's question as to when the ICFI broke with its 'historically-developed principles', we state that it broke with these principles every time it voted for the revisionist formulations which increasingly found their place in World Congress manifestos from 1974 onwards.

Independence between WIL and North's ICFI

of the David North-led ICFI's 'Fourth International' magazine, published in June, correspondence between the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Workers League.

WIL was formed out of a split with the WRP/'News Line' group, a letter was received from the secretary of the ICFI, urging the membership of the WIL to acknowledge the differences. The WIL responded by outlining some of its political differences with the ICFI, but refused to open the discussion. A lengthy and hostile letter was subsequently received from the ICFI. The WIL replied in more detail. This reply, dated May 15, 1988, is printed below. In the original manner, North omitted it from 'Fourth International'. There has been no reply from the ICFI to this letter.



Meeting in 1983. Left to right: Healy, Banda, Slaughter, and North

Turning to the alleged 'tactical withdrawal' in relation to the critique of Healy's 'Studies' between 1982 and 1985, we must say that it looks more like a thorough-going apology. In both the resolution of the 11th National Congress of the Workers League published in June 1984, and in the presidential election manifesto published in September 1984 there are prominent advertisements for the 'Studies', describing them as 'ESSENTIAL READING IN MARXISM'. As late as the summer of 1985, you wrote a political letter to the members of the Workers League drawing their attention to the importance of Healy's book.

In your reply to the WIL, you

carefully side-step our contention that Slaughter was operating a hidden agenda before rather than after October 1985, and that your failure to take a decisive stand against this compounded the confusion. It is a matter of record that throughout the WRP CC meeting of October 12-13, 1985, (which you politely refer to as 'embittered'), members of the majority announced that they had been in prior contact with revisionists and ex-members who had reneged on the movement in the previous three decades. You explain that your failure to intervene at this crucial and shambolic meeting was due to the fact that the IC had not yet met. Your relations with Banda and

Slaughter were determined, you claim, by the fact that 'both Banda and Slaughter occupied definite and official positions quite independent of the rapidly shifting sands of the factional alignments of October 1985'. Moreover, you lay at our door the WRP leadership's refusal to call a truce in its civil war until the ICFI delegations had arrived in Britain. You forget that we were not aware prior to October 12 that any IC representatives were in Britain. Secondly, while you think it was appropriate for you to have discussions with individual members of the WRP CC, you deem it inappropriate to have addressed the Committee as a whole. And yet your pamphlet, including your 1982 and 1984 contributions, had been circulating among selected rank-and-file members of the party for several days prior to October 12. Its foreword is dated September 30, 1985, and members working at the Runcorn printshop will certainly have been aware of its contents. We were unable to obtain copies of it until October 15. So, with discussions proceeding and documents circulating, the rules of etiquette somehow forbade you to address the WRP CC. Yet you still maintain that this could not possibly have been interpreted as unilateral support for Banda-Slaughter! The fact of the matter is that, irrespective of your intentions, several hundred members of the WRP, including ourselves, did interpret it this way at the time.

Although the IC made no serious attempt to contact the minority before the morning of October 26, the one member of the minority you did attempt to get a discussion with was none other than Alex Mitchell. As the Control Commission report reveals, Mitchell, along with the Redgraves, was one of the WRP leaders most heavily implicated in Healy's dirty dealings.

You accuse us of 'self-justification' and 'self advertisement', but it is, on the contrary, the leaders of your movement who are busily writing themselves false political biographies and modestly describing themselves as 'the historically selected cadre'. For instance, you have retrospectively extended your 'differences' backwards to 1976. In a throwaway sentence, you write: 'From 1976 the paths of the WRP and the Workers League steadily diverged and led to the latter's open declaration of differences in the autumn of 1982.' ('The Heritage We Defend', p.453). This is clearly intended to give the impression that, in one form or another, you

had held your 1982 positions for the preceding six years. Leaving aside the utterly self-congratulatory tone of this statement, mere mortals might wonder why your accumulating 'differences' over these six years led to a 'political summary' in November 1982 which covers less than three-and-a-half pages of fairly large type. These years saw the Lebanese civil war, the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions, the fall of the Callaghan government, the Zimbabwean independence struggle, the siege of Beirut, the Malvinas war and the Iran/Iraq war, to mention but a few developments with which the work of the ICFI was closely bound up. But in 1982 you still refer to the 'alliance' with the Libyan Jamahiriya of August 1977 as 'an unclarified question'. Indeed, in spite of your alleged 'differences' after 1976, the leadership of the Workers League considered the WRP-Libyan communique to be of sufficient importance to the American working class to publish it in pamphlet form in September 1977. If you regard our attitude to the 'struggle' within the ICFI between 1976 and 1982 as 'disdainful' we can only shrug our shoulders.

Eight years into your 'dif-

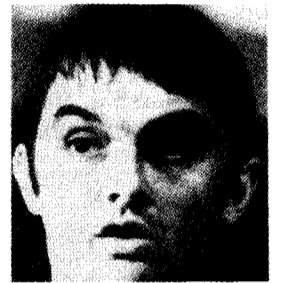
The WIL rejects your claim that this record of partial criticisms and tactical withdrawals represents the unbroken continuity of the struggle for Trotskyism.

Elsewhere you write ('Bulletin', November 6, 1987) that 'the WRP recognised that it could not, as long as it remained in association with the International Committee, openly repudiate the theory of permanent revolution'. Literally dozens of WRP and ICFI statements prior to 1985 refute your contention, by ascribing to the bourgeoisie of the Middle East and Africa a progressive role.

Whilst you accuse the WIL of operating 'without an integrated historical and programmatic conception', your organisation has given several indications that it is heading back to a perspective close to that of the 10th World Congress. C. Talbot writes in 'International Worker' (November 7, 1987): 'The crash on the world stock markets over the last three weeks is a milestone in the complete collapse of the capitalist system and ushers in a tidal wave of revolutionary struggles on an international scale... Crashes which dwarf 1929 in magnitude and intensity will mean the rapid growth

without hindrance'. Not surprisingly, you have been forced to retreat over the past six months from the theory of imminent catastrophe. It would be tedious here to cite all the occasions on which Trotsky warned against the simplistic hypothesis of 'crash-revolution'.

In relation to the serious point we made on the question of Cannon's American Theses, and the development of the SWP after the Second World War, you respond with a cheap smear that Banda 'eventually found it far easier to come to terms with Stalin's Moscow Trials than with Cannon's imaginary error in the American Theses', implying that the WIL is on the road to capitulating to Stalinism. If this were so, then this jibe might have some foundation, but you know that it is not the case. We are certainly not suggesting that Cannon's prognosis of 1945-6 was an irreversible error;



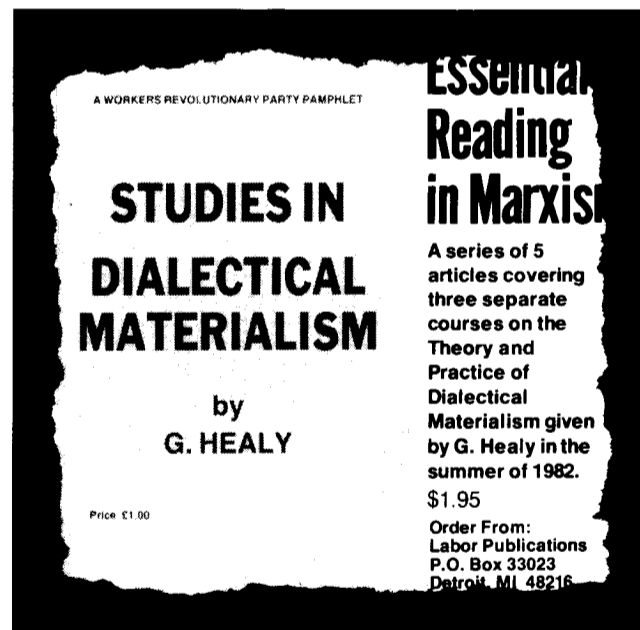
SCHWARZ - no record of opposition

but Cannon himself remarked at the outset of the struggle against the Cochran-Clarke tendency in March 1953 that the American Theses were in keeping with the perspectives of the Pabloite Third World Congress: 'This is the time not to put the American Theses on the shelf, but to take them down and read them, to recognise their unity with the documents of the Third Congress and to make the general line as a whole the axis of all our party work and education.' ('Speeches to the Party').

In fact, your attempt to tie the criticisms of Cannon solely to the period of the degeneration of the SLL/WRP is false. As early as 1961, Slaughter, in a report to the ICFI, states: 'Comrade Peng complains of the references by Comrade Healy to the failure of the SWP to check the theoretical degeneration of the Fourth International up to 1950, before which it sent support to Pablo in Paris... The SWP was right to give support to the International, although it could not be a member for legal reasons, but its failure to develop theory, as the leading party in the international, is vitally important.' ('Trotskyism versus Revisionism', Vol.3, p.175). Wohlforth's book 'The Struggle for Marxism in the United States', which contains an analysis of this period, was the outcome of 'discussions in England in February 1964', and must constitute one of the most extensive theoretical works of the early years of the American Committee for the Fourth International and the Workers League. Far from picking up some 'old canard' of Banda's, we base ourselves on the analysis made by the ICFI in the early sixties.

You ask what is the basis of our criticism of the ICP's attitude towards Social Democracy and the role of the 'lefts'. In our opinion the ICP has failed to assimilate any of the central lessons Trotsky derived from his study of British, French and German Social Democracy, and in particular the United Front tactic. Notwithstanding the problem small organisations face in utilising this tactic, the ICP's attempts to throw it overboard and carry out an ultimatum policy will, without doubt, be doomed to disaster. The ICP's attempts to take over and shout down the opposition at Labour Party meetings have the effect of driving Labour-following workers in

TURN TO PAGE 8



Advert for Healy's 'Studies' in a Workers League pamphlet issued in June 1984

ferences' you are still writing to Banda that 'every comrade in the Workers League is proud to be known as a "Healyite"... We are not suggesting that any section of the IC - and least of all the WRP - is to be accused of any conscious retreat from Trotskyist principles. As far as the Workers League is concerned, the example of the WRP remains the political model upon which we seek to base our work each day.' (Letter to Mike Banda, January 23, 1984). In May 1984, in the introduction to Volume 7 of 'Trotskyism versus Revisionism', you conduct a sterling defence of Healy's philosophical method (pp.xv-xvi). As late as September 30, 1985, your introduction to the critique of Healy's 'Studies' adopts an apologetic tone and states that 'The reader will doubtless find certain terminology which is, from a theoretical standpoint, not entirely acceptable, or even incorrect.'

of economic depression, with collapse of banks, financial institutions and industrial corporations, enormous stepping up of trade war and instability of the currency markets. In short it signifies the complete break-up of the relative stability which the capitalist system has enjoyed since the Second World War - a collapse not simply of fictitious capital but of capital itself! The previous day, you underscored this 'perspective', writing of 'a stupendous upsurge in revolutionary struggles by the proletariat in all the economic centres of imperialism. These struggles will achieve a level of international synchronization that directly corresponds to the highly integrated character of world commodity production'. ('Bulletin', November 6, 1987). Here, we are only one stage removed from the impressionism of Slaughter's 'common level of struggle' and 'objective laws operating

By Richard Price

IN THE AUTUMN of 1985, following the split in the Workers Revolutionary Party, a sharp struggle developed between the Slaughter faction of the WRP and the remaining sections of the David North-led International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

For Slaughter, his ties to the ICFI were a barrier to 'regroupment' with right-wing revisionists on an international scale. For North, the break with the British leadership was a necessary exercise in damage-limitation in order to maintain the fiction of the 'unbroken continuity' of the struggle for Trotskyism by the 'historically selected cadre' of the ICFI.

On October 25, the ICFI established an International Control Commission whose remit was 'to investigate, but not limited to [sic], the corruption of G. Healy, the cover-up by the Political Committee and the financial crisis of the WRP.'



SLAUGHTER

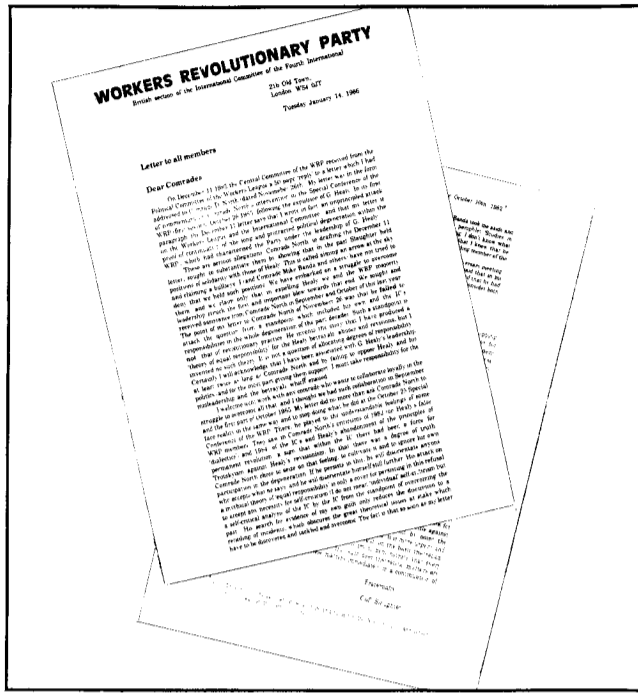
The document that North 'forgot'

The report of the Commission, dated December 16, 1985, shows all the signs of being a rushed job. Although presented to a meeting of the ICFI held on December 16-17, it was not used to build a Trotskyist cadre, trained in the real history of the WRP and the ICFI. Instead, it was a convenient weapon to beat Slaughter and Co with, and was then buried.

The report's full contents were not published until the WIL obtained a copy and printed it in the April 1988 edition of Workers News.

The Control Commission traced records of £1,075,163 raised by the WRP from Arab bourgeois regimes between 1977 and 1983, although it recognised that this sum represented only a portion of the funds acquired.

At the December 16-17 meeting, North successfully carried a motion to suspend the Slaughterite WRP from the ICFI. Anxious to cover the British leaders' backs, Slaughter counter-attacked by delving into the Pandora's box of ICFI history. On January 14, 1986, Slaughter wrote a letter to the membership of the WRP concerning the role of David North and Nick Beams, secretary



The 'letter to all members' from Slaughter, dated January 14, 1986

of the Socialist Labour League, Australian section of the ICFI, in suppressing material from the Control Commission.

Slaughter's thoroughly opportunist motives were self-evident. Implicitly defending the WRP's raising of funds from the Arab bourgeoisie, Slaughter hastens to add that: 'We do not say, of course, that to seek such assistance is always wrong,

it is wrong when political principles are sold for the maintenance of such relations.' Such a position is fraudulent as Slaughter well knows. The vast sums donated by Arab nationalist leaders could not have been raised had the WRP and the ICFI pursued a principled Trotskyist line in relation to such movements. North's position was no less opportunist. He sprang to the

defence of the SLL, arguing that its own activities on this front did not constitute 'a class betrayal'.

In fact, the revisions of Trotskyism carried out by the Australian SLL in relation to the 'Arab revolution' were identical in essence to those of the WRP, as a cursory reading of the SLL's pamphlet 'Libya - The True Story' reveals. (Remaining copies of this gem have presumably been shredded).

Below we reprint the relevant passage of Slaughter's January 14, 1986, letter:

'Let the IC delegates (and especially Comrade North) who voted for suspension of the WRP ask themselves the following questions.

'Is it only the WRP which received financial assistance from one or other Middle Eastern bourgeois national governments? Which other sections did so?'

'Is it not a fact that the Australian section did receive a sum of (tens of thousands of dollars) in 1983? (We do not say of course, that to seek such assistance is always wrong, it is wrong when political principles are sold for the maintenance of such relations).

'Is it not a fact that the receipt of this money by the Australian section was reported to the Central Committee of the SLL (Australia) only in the month before the IC meeting of Dec 16? And is it not a fact that the IC delegate, Cde Beams, was told by his CC in Australia to report this matter to the IC?'

'Is it not true that Cde Beams failed to report the matter to the IC or to the WRP delegates, but that he did report it to at least some of the delegates who supported the WRP suspension and certainly to Comrade North? That is what happened.

'Finally: is it not true that Comrade North and Beams agreed the matter should not be raised at the IC because they considered it did not constitute a "class betrayal"? How did they differentiate between the class betrayal of the WRP in this matter - on which was based the argument for suspending the WRP from the IC without charges and without a hearing - and the actions taken on behalf of the SLL (Australia)?'

'Finally, on this point, how can we avoid the Conclusion (1) - Cdes North and Beams, in a totally unprincipled way, rejected the wish of the Australian section CC that Cde Beams must report to the IC the receipt of this money.

'Conclusion (2) - They did this because it would obstruct their decision and plan to suspend the WRP. Such was the haste to suspend the WRP (with the threat of permanent expulsion in March 1986) that principle was thrown out of the window, in a manner without precedent in the history of the IC'

Needless to add, this document has, like the Control Commission report, not been reproduced by North, despite his pompous claims to have exhaustively analysed the WRP split in 'thousands of pages'. Nor has North responded when challenged twice by the WIL as to why he has never printed the Control Commission report. Instead, his supporters have indulged in a series of malicious attacks on the WIL, accusing it of 'aiding the state'.

The Slaughter letter, despite the opportunism which prompted it, exposes the hollowness of the ICFI claim to have consistently defended Trotskyism against the WRP.

Slaughter's WRP began publishing 'Workers Press' in late 1985 with a ringing declaration that it would 'campaign against corruption in the workers' movement'. Of course, no such 'campaign' has ever been mounted, because to do so would cut across the organisation's centrist orientation and oblige its leaders to uncover the roots of the SLL WRP's degeneration. How much more comfortable for the WRP/Workers Press' leaders to live with the smug conceit that they represent the 'golden thread' of Trotskyist continuity.



HEALY

A measure of the seriousness of these great 'campaigners against corruption' was the Political Committee statement issued by the Slaughter group on February 8 this year. Breaking the long silence over the Control Commission report in order to reply to an attack by the 'Sunday Times', the statement attempted to brush the question back under the carpet, reiterating the line that the WRP/Workers Press' group had no objection to raising funds from bourgeois governments, providing that principles were not traded in return.

Neither North nor Slaughter have a principled attitude to the history of the WRP and the ICFI. Having lifted the lid on some of its seamier aspects, they slammed it shut once the immediate task of unseating Healy was completed and they had proceeded to next business down separate paths.

Correspondence between the WIL and North's ICFI

FROM PAGE 7

the opposite direction. Trotsky described this method as attempting to rape the working class without convincing it. We believe that the policy of ultimatum is not unconnected with the failure of the ICP to hold on to many of the forces it took from the WRP/Workers Press' in 1986. To argue, as ICP members do, that it is impermissible to place demands upon the majority leadership of the Labour Party and TUC simply flies in the face of everything Trotsky wrote on the subject. C. Harrison and G. Hollingsbee, drawing inspiration from the ICP, arrived at the conclusion that the 'lefts' are 'the most dangerous enemies of the working class', blissfully unaware that they were echoing word-for-word the resolution of the 11th Congress of the CPGB held in 1929 during the Third Period of happy memory. If the 'lefts' are the main enemy, then it follows that the right wing are a lesser danger, particularly since the ICP maintains that the advanced workers have already broken from the right wing. We are not told what form this 'break' has taken. C. Harrison earnestly told us that, in his trade union experience, the right wing were indeed a lesser danger, since they frequently voted for his resolutions. So, the Labourite workers must expel the right wing - who are the lesser danger - in order to install the 'lefts' who are... their most dangerous enemies! Unimpeachable logic, and guaranteed to go down like a lead balloon. If the decisive break with the right wing has

already taken place, then the right-wing leaders are 'sufficiently exposed'. This is dangerous rubbish, and especially in the light of the recent strike-wave in Britain. On the question of South Africa, ICP CC member V. Short told a recent trades council meeting that demands should not be placed upon T&GWU leader Ron Todd, but only upon Jeremy Corbyn MP, Scargill and Benn. This is what we mean by a mechanical approach. We also noted that in an election contested by a WIL member and a leading Stalinist, she abstained.

Finally, you attempt to 'call us to order' for raising the question of violent attacks by the ICP upon members of the WRP/News Line' group. We have no intention of giving way on this question and it is, on the contrary, us who call you to order. Either you are covering up for your British section, or they are lying to you - and whichever is the case, it has nothing to do with internationalism. None of our members were present at the Sheffield public meeting which you refer to, but you should explain how a group holding a public meeting inside a building can 'provoke an incident' with a group lobbying outside. However, one of our members was present at the Yorkshire miners' gala in 1986 as part of a sales team predominantly composed of youth. No sooner had they set foot in Doncaster than they were set upon by a group from the ICP, including at least four members of its Central Committee. Either you condone such behaviour, or you don't, but stop denying that it took place, because this

monstrous kind of activity has its roots in the degeneration of the WRP. You have never, to this day, made any public statement in relation to the wave of physical violence carried out by members of the WRP majority in the wake of October 1985, nor have you challenged the account of these attacks given in the first edition of Workers News. Trotsky was unequivocal in his condemnation of such methods:

'Naturally, the dictatorship of the proletariat is inconceivable without the use of force, even against certain sectors of the proletariat itself. The workers' state, however, also requires that workers' democracy exercise the most vigilant control in order to know why, how, and in whose name violence is employed. This question presents itself in an entirely different manner in the bourgeois countries, where the revolutionary party constitutes only a small minority of the working class and where it has to struggle in order to win the majority. Under such conditions, the use of violence against ideological opponents - not strikebreakers, or provocateurs, or fascists attacking treacherously, but ideological opponents, honest social democratic workers included - is an enormous crime and madness that must inevitably turn upon the revolutionary party itself. In the bitter struggle against the Narodniks and the Mensheviks during the fifteen years that preceded the October Revolution, there was never a question of employing methods of physical violence. As for individual terror, we Marxists rejected it even with regard to the czarist satraps. Nevertheless, in

recent times the Communist parties, or rather their apparatus people, have resorted more and more frequently to the disruption of meetings and to other methods for the mechanical suppression of adversaries, notably the Left Opposition. Many bureaucrats are sincerely convinced that this is what real Bolshevism consists of. They avenge themselves on other proletarian groups for their impotence against the capitalist state, and thereby transform the bourgeois police into an arbiter between us.

'It is difficult to imagine the depravity engendered by this combination of impotence and violence. The youth become more and more accustomed to thinking that the fist is a surer weapon than argument. In other words, political cynicism is cultivated, which more than anything else prepares individuals for passing over into the fascist camp. An implacable struggle must be waged against the brutal and disloyal methods of Stalinism, by denouncing them in the press and in meetings, by cultivating among the workers a hatred and contempt for all these pseudo-revolutionists who, instead of appealing to the brain, take a crack at the skull.' (A Reply to the Chinese Oppositionists', Writings, 1929).

There is no need to 'regret' the 'sharp form' of your letter. We do not expect differences to be fought out in anything but a rigorous manner.

Yours fraternally,

Richard Price, on behalf of the Workers International League CC.

By Bob Pitt

THE LABOUR PARTY conference of October 1928 marked the culmination – and collapse – of the ‘socialist revival’ campaign headed by Miners’ Federation secretary A.J. Cook and Independent Labour Party chairman James Maxton.

Although it has usually been relegated to a footnote of labour history, as an example of the left movements which have repeatedly arisen in opposition to the pro-capitalist policies of the labour bureaucracy (most recently the Bennite current in the Labour Party, and the Chesterfield conference movement), the Cook-Maxton campaign deserves a more detailed examination.

The campaign was launched in response to developments within the trade union and Labour Party leaderships comparable to today’s ‘new realism’. On the industrial front, a turn to open class collaboration following the General Strike was typified by the Mond-Turner talks, initiated by industrialist Sir Alfred Mond and backed by the TUC general council under the chairmanship of Ben Turner, which brought together employers and union bureaucrats with the aim of promoting ‘economic efficiency’. Politically, the Labour Party’s draft programme ‘Labour and the Nation’ represented a shift to the right even in comparison with the party’s 1918 programme, portraying socialism as a more consistent version of Liberal social reform and deferring the common ownership of the means of production into the indefinite future. All this was accompanied by increased repression against the left, particularly those associated with the Communist Party.

Maxton and Cook personified the resistance inside the official leadership to these developments. Maxton, as one of the group of Clydeside ILPer elected to parliament in 1922, advocated a ‘third way’ between Communism and Fabian gradualism, calling for a Labour government which would move urgently to the abolition of capitalism. Cook was the product of a tradition which saw militant industrial action as the necessary force for the realisation of socialism, and as such he was a bitter critic of Mondism. Maxton was a left-reformist, Cook essentially a syndicalist; neither was a revolutionary but their stand against the right wing had won them influence over a significant layer of workers.

In the summer of 1928, the Clydesiders invited Cook to a meeting at the House of Commons. There it was decided to issue a manifesto in his and Maxton’s names, although the actual authors reportedly included Maxton, fellow ILPer John Wheatley and William Gallacher of the Communist Party. The participation of the latter was in line with the CPGB’s policy of co-operating with non-Communists to build

The Cook-Maxton campaign

opposition movements in the trade unions and Labour Party, a potentially fruitful tactic which, with the Communist International on a rightward phase of its degeneration, had been undermined by opportunism – Gallacher’s co-authorship of a politically confused document like the Cook-Maxton Manifesto being a case in point.

Issued in June 1928 and addressed ‘To the Workers of Britain’, the Manifesto condemned a tendency for the Labour Party to abandon the principles which had allegedly animated pioneers like Keir Hardie. It was now said that the Labour Party was ‘no longer a working class party but a party representing all sections of the community’. And in place of ‘an unceasing war against capitalism’, there was a move to make ‘peace with capitalism and compromises with the philosophy of our capitalist opponents’. As a result, ‘much of the energy which should be expended in fighting capitalism is now expended in crushing everybody who remains true to the ideals of the movement’. Announcing a forthcoming series of meetings, the Manifesto concluded with an appeal to the working class to join Cook and Maxton in the battle against the capitalist system.

This initiative immediately came under fire from the right wing. On the ILP National Administrative Council, Maxton only narrowly defeated a proposal to boycott the campaign, despite his assurance that it would be merely ‘a Moody and Sankey campaign, conducted rather in the manner of a religious revival’. In Scotland, the ILP regional council voted unanimously to refuse co-operation. And the Glasgow ILP paper, ‘Forward’, attacked the Manifesto’s claim to defend the heritage of Keir Hardie, quoting Hardie’s explicit opposition to waging a “class war” dependent for its success on the “class consciousness” of one section of the community’.

The opening meeting of the Cook-Maxton campaign on July 8 attracted 4,000 to Glasgow’s St Andrew’s Hall. The speakers made an agreement to meet the following day. They were asked to sign a card pledging themselves ‘to support the efforts of Messrs Maxton and Cook towards establishing the New Order with all possible speed’. Arthur Cook delivered a typically fiery

denunciation of Mondism, which was received with a roar of applause. But it was followed by a disastrous speech from Maxton who, although emphasising the need to win the rank-and-file to a militant policy, was too concerned to avoid the charge of disrupting the Labour Party to present a convincing political challenge to the established leadership.

In an attempt to restore the campaign’s momentum after Maxton’s timid performance, two days later Wheatley made a public attack on Ramsay MacDonald and railwaymen’s leader J.H. Thomas. This led to both Wheatley and Maxton being summoned before the Parliamentary Labour Party, and although no disciplinary action was taken, the Communist-controlled ‘Sunday Worker’ detected hints



JAMES MAXTON

that the campaign would in future concentrate on ‘principles’ rather than ‘personalities’.

The ‘Sunday Worker’ was capable of making some correct points in relation to the Cook-Maxton campaign. ‘Capitalism’, the paper stated, pressing for the campaign to put forward a definite programme, ‘cannot be fought by the proclamation of hopes for a socialist utopia, nor by the cry of “Back to the socialism of Keir Hardie”’. It must be fought by attention to the stark realities of the class war. But the CPGB was itself in poor shape to address these realities, as the Comintern of Stalin and Bukharin moved out of its right-opportunist period to adopt an ultra-leftist ‘new line’. At the Glasgow meeting, the Communists demanded a commitment from Maxton and Cook to fight the MacDonald expansion from the Labour Party – which allowed him to evade the more immediate question of removing MacDonald from the party leadership. If supporters of the new line had a strategy for interven-

tion in the campaign, it was to provoke the Labour Party right wing into expelling the left, thereby providing the Communist Party with an anticipated influx of recruits.

Cook and Maxton did eventually publish a programme, under the title ‘Our Case for a Socialist Revival’. In it they proposed that the trade unions reorganise on industrial rather than craft lines and build links with the unemployed and co-operative movements. In the cause of working class unity they advocated the lifting of proscriptions against Communists in the unions and Labour Party. Their immediate programme for a Labour government included the nationalisation without compensation of the banks, land, mines and railways, the confiscation of incomes over £5,000 and the



A.J. COOK

abolition of the monarchy. The call for a change of leadership was noticeably absent. Indeed, Maxton apparently took the view that rank-and-file pressure could force even MacDonald to implement this programme.

The Cook-Maxton campaign continued throughout July-September, with the backing of a number of left MPs and union leaders. According to one participant, ‘the campaign gathered force as it swept the country. Scores of meetings were held and everywhere the great body of Labour voters gave the speakers a tremendous welcome. It brought new life to the movement in many towns and districts... The fighting spirit which the campaign revealed among the rank-and-file might have been forged into a powerful weapon against the bureaucracy. But this was beyond the capacity of the campaign’s leadership or of a Communist Party caught between two phases in the Stalinist degeneration of the International – the opportunist right turn and the onset of the ultra-left ‘new line’.

The Socialist Revival!
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Any illusions that a propagandist movement like the Cook-Maxton campaign could substitute for systematic revolutionary work in the unions and Labour Party were shattered in the autumn of 1928. At the TUC in September the left found itself in a small minority, and despite an emotional appeal by Arthur Cook the delegates overwhelmingly endorsed the Mond-Turner talks. The next month’s Labour Party conference saw another victory for the right, with the trade union block vote marshalled solidly behind ‘Labour and the Nation’ and further restrictions imposed on Communists and their sympathisers in the name of party loyalty. ‘MacDonald and the evolutionists have swept communism and leftwingism out of the way,’ Beatrice Webb noted with satisfaction. ‘The Maxton and Cook agitation has fizzled out.’

Indeed it had. According to a contemporary report, Maxton stated that ‘he would be no use to the working classes if he hoisted the white flag the moment he got a black eye. The fight would go on still’. But for Maxton it was a fight for the inclusion in Labour’s election manifesto of the socialist policies he now claimed to find in the official programme. Cook’s collapse was even more dramatic. Soon he was attacking the Communist Party for ‘interference’ in the Miners’ Federation, and in the interests of a united campaign to elect a Labour government he abandoned any attempt to rally the

rank-and-file against official policy.

To supporters of the Comintern’s new line within the CPGB, this debacle proved the impossibility of exposing the left-reformists in practice by intervening in struggles against the right-wing bureaucracy. Such centrist movements, it was argued, only served as an obstacle to the recruitment of workers who were supposedly ready to desert Labour en masse. Early in 1929, the CPGB wound up its organisation inside the Labour Party, and it was declared ‘a crime equivalent to blacklegging’ for workers to join a party now held to represent a variety of fascism. In the unions, too, the CPGB withdrew from the fight against the bureaucracy, attempting to set up new ‘red’ unions in rivalry with existing organisations. Within a year of the Cook-Maxton campaign’s disintegration the now thoroughly Stalinised CPGB had lost almost all influence in the Labour movement.

Despite the reformist limitations of Maxton and Cook’s programme, thousands of workers were attracted by the possibility of a fight against the right wing. Only a correct policy on the part of the Communist Party could have taken this movement forward. The degeneration of the CPGB and the retreat of the lefts prepared the conditions for further betrayals by the Labour Party leadership, culminating in the formation of Ramsay MacDonald’s National Government in 1931.

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ANTI-SEMITISM REVIVES IN GORBACHEV'S RUSSIA

By Terry McGinity

THE EMERGENCE of a vocal anti-Semitic trend in Soviet society is the latest fruit of Gorbachev's 'reform' programme. Prominent among several officially-sanctioned racist groups is the extreme chauvinist Pamyat or 'Memory' organisation. Posing as the protector of Russian 'cultural heritage', it is in fact the prototype for an openly fascist movement.

Pamyat, along with several other right-wing political groupings which are now able to organise, recruit and promote their ultra-reactionary views, draws its inspiration from the Black Hundreds, the instigator of pogroms against Jews which flourished under the Tsars.

Seizing the opportunity of the officially-backed celebrations of the millennium of the Russian Orthodox Church in June, Pamyat activists desecrated tombstones at the Jewish cemetery in Moscow, made abusive

phone calls to synagogues and distributed leaflets threatening a pogrom. One such diatribe declared: 'Remember - Russians it is your land. It is your Church. Keep the Jews out. June 4 - Remember.'

Pamyat's association with the Orthodox Church is no accident since the church has provided the traditional rallying-point for anti-Jewish terror campaigns. While Raisa Gorbachev was lending her well-publicised support to the 1,000-year anniversary festivities, the Russian National Patriotic Front, an arm of Pamyat, held a series of five public meetings in Leningrad during June and July. The militia stood by as calls were made to ban marriages between Russians and non-Russians and for the immediate deportation of Jews and other national minorities to their 'places of historic origin'. Jews were also blamed for the Chernobyl disaster, the purges, forced collectivisation and for the

destruction of unspecified historical monuments. At one meeting a man was forcibly ejected and his banner proclaiming 'Workers of the World Unite' was ripped apart by Pamyat thugs.

Sixty academics from the Leningrad Academy of Sciences accused the bureaucracy of giving tacit approval to Pamyat in allowing the meetings to go ahead. They condemned the violation of Article 36 of the Soviet Constitution which notionally guarantees the equality of all peoples and Article 74 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code which outlaws incitement to racial hatred. But the only arrest was of Alexander Bogdanov who was jailed for demonstrating *against* Pamyat's anti-Semitism.

None of the Leningrad papers mentioned the events, whilst reports of similar outrages in the Soviet Republic of Moldavia were flatly denied by the 'Sovetskaya Moldavia'. The Moldavian KGB chief



GORBACHEV

resorted to the familiar anti-Semitic line that 'foreign Zionist organisations' were deliberately stirring up national tensions.

The condemnations of Pamyat which have appeared in the pages of 'Izvestia' and 'Moscow News' are primarily designed for Western consumption, to ensure that the growing economic 'co-operation' with imperialism - an important component of *perestroika* - can continue. Internally, however, the revival of virulent anti-Semitism is being assisted by Gorbachev's

glasnost, and the activities of Pamyat and other extreme right-wing nationalist groups take place under the protection of the police. At a time when Soviet workers are coming under renewed attack by the bureaucratic leadership and are faced with accepting unemployment, wage cuts and the withdrawal of subsidies on staple commodities, anti-Semitism is being given free rein to confuse and divide the working class.

Such attempts are not new. On assuming power in 1917, the Bolshevik government had immediately put an end to the outlawed status of Jews, to their confinement within the 'Pale of Settlement', the poorest parts of Russia, and introduced heavy penalties to deter pogroms. With the degeneration of the Soviet workers' state from the mid-1920s onwards, however, the bureaucracy became the seat of the most conservative and backward outlooks, including anti-Semitism. Trot-

sky charted the development by the bureaucracy of such methods in his article 'Thermidor and Anti-Semitism', written in 1937.

Anti-Semitism was part of the legacy of the Tsarist period and would only be completely eradicated by the raising of the cultural level of the masses through the development of a socialist economy coupled with an education programme conducted by a genuinely Communist leadership. In his article, Trotsky answers the formal thinkers of the time who refused to believe that anti-Semitism could exist in the 'socialist' USSR.

But the more the bureaucracy under Stalin turned away from Bolshevik internationalism and consolidated itself as a privileged ruling stratum espousing 'socialism in one country', the more it attracted the hatred of the workers and peasants. One of the ways in which the leadership attempted to counter this 'isolation' was by utilising the residual anti-Semitic feelings amongst sections of the population: 'In the struggle for its self-preservation,' says Trotsky, 'it exploits the most ingrained prejudices and the most benighted instincts.'

For Stalin, the most critical and conscious use of anti-Semitism was made in the fight against his political opponents led by Trotsky. In order to help condemn, in the eyes of the Soviet masses, the defendants at the three Moscow show trials of 1936-38, every attempt was made to identify them, where possible, as Jews. Defendants who were only known by pen names or by names assumed during the period of Tsarist illegality were referred to by their original Jewish names. Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, was called Bronstein, his grandfather's name which he had never used.

Anti-Semitism has remained the stock-in-trade of the Stalinist bureaucracy, with or without Stalin, ever since. The appearance of groups like Pamyat on the scene today, whatever the views of individual Soviet leaders may be, directly aids the bureaucracy in its attack on the working class. In raking up the muck of ages to divide the working class at precisely the moment when *perestroika* poses the greatest threat to its living standards, Pamyat acts as the most open expression of the self-interest of the bureaucracy. Far from being the midwife of political revolution, Gorbachev's *glasnost* has unleashed some of the most reactionary forces inside the Soviet Union.

The series 'In Defence of the Theory of Permanent Revolution' will continue in the next edition of Worker News.

Iraqis attempt to crush Kurdish national struggle

FOLLOWING the cease-fire in the Iraq-Iran war, the Iraqi government has stepped up its brutal repression of the Kurdish people in the northern provinces. Thousands of Kurds have been forced to seek refuge in neighbouring Turkey.

In April 1987, Saddam Hussein's regime initiated a terror campaign aimed at dispersing and uprooting Kurdish settlements. Led by Ali Hassan Majid, this policy has destroyed thousands of Kurdish villages and murdered large numbers of Kurds. They have been forcibly transported out of traditional Kurdish homelands in the mountains to the desert region near the Jordanian border.

The creation of so-called 'exclusion zones' in the Kurdish provinces was ordered by Majid in June 1987. He issued instructions forbid-

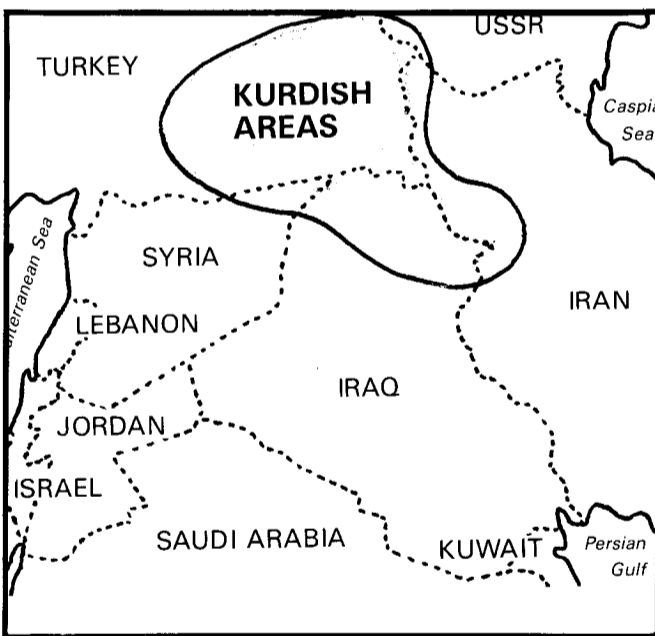
By Ian Harrison

ding 'all agricultural and industrial activity' by the Kurds and stated that: 'No humans or animals are allowed in these areas. Shooting is unrestricted in these areas, unless on orders issued by us.'

With the ability now to deploy army units no longer fighting Iran, the policy is being systematically applied. Chemical weapons, including phosgene, cyanide and mustard gas have been used against the Kurdish people.

The historic responsibility for the obstruction of Kurdish national rights rests with British imperialism. The Sykes-Picot treaty between Britain and France in 1916, carved up the Ottoman Empire into 'spheres of influence' following the Allied victory in the First World War. The boundaries of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey were artificially established by British and French imperialism to suit their exploitation of this oil-rich region, cutting across the historic homelands of the Kurds. The treaty was sanctioned by the League of Nations.

Up to this point, the Kurds had been a largely nomadic people, and had been relatively free to move throughout their homelands. The division of the Kurdish na-



tion between Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey ended their freedom of movement and began a series of attempts to eradicate its national culture.

Today, the Kurds constitute an oppressed nation of some 20 million people, subordinated to the bourgeois regimes of neighbouring countries. The Saddam Hussein, Khomeini and Evren regimes are not averse to using rival Kurdish groups as bargaining counters to seek an advantage over each other. Thus Turkey, which has waged its own brutal war against the Kurds, temporarily opened its borders in September to refugees from Iraq. The Iranian leadership, which is a fervent opponent of the creation of an independent Kurdish state, allied itself to the pro-imperialist Kurdish Democratic Party during the

Iraq-Iran war, while Iraq sought the support of Iranian Kurds.

Saddam Hussein's recent offer of an 'amnesty' to Kurds who have fled to Turkey and Iran, provided they return to newly-created 'strategic settlements', underlines the dangers of subordinating the Kurdish national struggle to the interests of any of the bourgeois states in control of Kurdish lands.

The solution of the Kurdish national question lies only in an independent struggle by the Kurdish working class, which would win the support of the poor peasantry. This in turn indissolubly connects the Kurdish struggle to the fight to overthrow the bourgeois regimes throughout the region and establish a United Socialist States of the Middle East.

Protests banned

WITH mass demonstrations and strikes continuing in Armenia and in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Stalinist authorities have adopted new measures aimed at cracking down on the working class. A decree passed on July 29, but only made public in mid-September, makes demonstrating punishable by heavy fines and the organisers of demonstrations liable to terms of imprisonment in labour camps. Meanwhile, a special riot squad has been established in Moscow armed with paramilitary helmets, clubs and plastic shields.

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IN DECEMBER 1987, the combined debt of Latin America and the Caribbean stood at \$409.8 billion. This book attempts to examine the background and subsequent development of the Latin American debt crisis of the early 1980s, and considers in detail the catastrophic effect it has had on the working class and peasantry of South and Central America.

Amongst the wealth of material summarised are statistics on the growth of debt country by country, the dramatic rise in profits of US banks, the growth of Japan as a lender nation to the region, and the impact of debt repayment on the living standards of the masses. Roddick demonstrates how the revised terms of the IMF and World Bank loans, in

Latin American working class pick up IMF bill

the event of a country defaulting on the original conditions, stipulate wage controls, currency devaluation, the end of tariff restrictions on imports, the removal of subsidies on food and other staple items, and a range of policies designed to favour foreign companies.

Behind these demands lies the attempt by the IMF to reduce the debtor countries' balance of payments deficits so that sufficient foreign currency is available to continue repayments to West-

ern banks. The IMF interprets this as requiring a 'cut in the spending power of local consumers' - in other words, a swingeing attack on workers and peasants.

Roddick cites Costa Rica as an example of how the debt burden strangles the development of Latin American countries. By the late

70s, this relatively prosperous country (by the standards of the region) was showing a marked economic decline. When the 'liberal' wing of the national bourgeoisie took power in 1982, it was faced with a major crisis in debt repayments. The National Liberation Party (PLN) government headed by President Luis Monge embarked on a vicious economic restructuring programme, including the privatisation of the bulk of industry, which resulted in a sharp drop in living standards for the working class and poor peasantry, and an investment bonanza for US multi-nationals. Despite these measures, the foreign debt rose by 15 per cent between 1982 and 1984, accompanied by growing resistance from workers, peasants and small farmers. In 1983, 85 per cent of debt arrears was rescheduled over seven years and the Reagan administration guaranteed just sufficient new credit to keep the economy going. The price of this was that the PLN government should acknowledge and support the presence in the north of Costa Rica of US-backed Contra forces fighting the Nicaraguan Sandinistas.

Monge accepted the US terms with hardly a murmur. Costa Rica set about transforming its policy of 'neutrality' into open hostility towards the Sandinistas. On April 8, 1985, the ambassador to Nicaragua was withdrawn and three days later Monge applauded Reagan, saying he welcomed the 'contribution your illustrious government has made towards strengthening peace and Costa Rican democracy'. Diplomatic rela-



Demonstrators against the IMF in Lima

tions with Nicaragua were finally severed in May after a border provocation.

The response of the workers and poor peasants was to reject overwhelmingly a policy which favoured US imperialism, and to side with Nicaragua. After a poll recorded 70 per cent opposed to the government's hostile stance towards Nicaragua, the PLN reintroduced a position of neutrality prior to the February 1986 election.

The re-elected PLN administration under President Oscar Arias was obliged to take account of the anti-imperialist feelings of the masses. Arias 'discovered' and then closed down an airbase built in 1985 by a Panamanian-registered company set up by Oliver North, and used to supply the Contras and service the mercenary forces flying missions over Nicaragua. North personally threatened Arias with the withholding of \$80 million of US aid, and the pressure from the IMF and World Bank over debt repayments which had been stepped up after the 'declaration of neutrality' was further intensified. Like his predecessor, Arias sought to make the working class, peasants and small farmers pay through austerity measures, whilst attempting to placate them through his much-trumpeted but ill-fated 'peace plan' in 1987.

Whilst the strength of this book lies in its recognition that the role of the IMF and the World Bank has 'compounded the crisis of the poor', it fails to grasp the nature of the post-war capitalist boom and the development of 'controlled inflation'. It sees the relationship between the imperialist powers and the semi-colonial coun-

tries as being the outcome of purely subjective policies rather than the result of the objective momentum of the expansion of capital. The growth of investment in Latin America in the 1960s was not, as Roddick proposes, the outcome of an international game of 'Monopoly', but the continuation of the expansion of finance capital, driven by the falling rate of profit to seek new reservoirs of cheap labour to exploit.

By implication, the argument that the inequalities between oppressor and oppressed nations are primarily the result of policies leads to the view that they could be reversed by alternative, more humane, policies. And predictably this is where the book ends up - with a utopian plea for the return of Keynesian policies in the imperialist countries and the world's banks. In fact, the material Jackie Roddick has assembled leads to diametrically opposite conclusions: namely that no section of the Latin American bourgeoisie, whether nakedly military regimes such as those of Pinochet in Chile and Stroessner in Paraguay, or 'democracies' like Garcia of Peru or Alfonsín of Argentina, is capable of leading a consistent struggle to repudiate the vast debts saddling the continent.

With great brutality, capitalist development in Latin America has brought into being an industrial working class tens of millions strong. Roddick sees it only as an oppressed class, but it is this force alone which can liquidate the poverty and exploitation inherent in the vicious circle of debt, through socialist revolution in each country.



Arthur Miller's version of Ibsen's 'An Enemy of the People' at the Young Vic theatre

Flouting the opinion polls

WRITTEN during the vindictive campaign against him in the press which followed the publication of 'Ghosts', it is perhaps not surprising that Henrik Ibsen gave the hero of **An Enemy of the People** an exaggerated sense of his own importance.

However, Dr. Tomas Stockmann's contempt for the 'solid majority', and his belief that truth can only be realised by an intellectual elite, were ideas which Ibsen maintained throughout his life. They were merely reinforced by the outrage over 'Ghosts', which Ibsen saw as complete incomprehension on behalf of the 'public'. In fact, only a portion of the 'public' was able to pass judgement - precisely those petty-bourgeois philistines which Ibsen so brilliantly denounces in his work.

When Stockmann discovers that the water supply for the new municipal baths is dangerously polluted, he thinks he has fulfilled his role as medical officer, whilst saving his town from both national scandal and financial disaster. But for the politicians and businessmen it is the prospect of expensive alterations, along with the

loss of income from visitors 'taking the waters', which spells disaster. Led by the mayor, they manipulate public opinion through the press, dub Stockmann an enemy of the people, and eventually isolate him completely.

American playwright Arthur Miller adapted Ibsen's play during the anti-Communist witch-hunts led by Senator Joseph McCarthy. It was first produced in December 1950 and was conceived as a defence of the right to hold individual views opposed to those approved by the state. It is this version which is currently being performed at the Young Vic.

Miller plays down the worst aspects of Stockmann's elitism, particularly the assertion at a meeting of the townspeople that truth can only flourish in clean and healthy living conditions. Whilst this makes the play more palatable, its inclusion in the original is important to keep in mind for an understanding of Ibsen's view of truth.

The Norway of Ibsen's early years was dominated by the petty-bourgeoisie; large-scale capitalist production had not yet taken root, and

consequently there was no substantial working class. Not surprisingly, Ibsen's hatred for the narrow-mindedness which characterised this society was unable to find a political solution. He wrote: 'I am concerned with asking questions; answers have I none.' His inability to understand class relations led him to believe that 'truth' could only be grasped by enlightened individuals, prepared, if necessary, to stand against the majority. But although living in poor conditions, workers, more than anyone else, know the 'truth' of exploitation.

What makes 'An Enemy of the People' a great play is its withering portrait of the petty-bourgeoisie and their lackeys. Here Ibsen is on firm ground, minutely observing the shifting allegiances of the opportunist, and exposing the hypocrisy of those with vested interests.

Tom Wilkinson leads a strong cast in David Thacker's production which is highly recommended.

• The Young Vic is presenting a single benefit performance of David Edgar's 'The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs' on November 6. Proceeds to the Albie Sachs trust fund.

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Students under attack

PRIVATELY-funded higher education is now on the agenda after a meeting of university and polytechnic heads threw out the principle of a wholly state-funded system, and decided to draw up plans for attracting sponsorship from parents and industry to

boost the student intake.

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, at its annual conference in Oxford at the end of September, claimed that the fall in the number of 18-year-olds in the 1990s would lead to a 'catastrophic' decline in the number of graduates. They will be presenting a set

of guidelines for new private funding arrangements to the government.

The Oxford meeting of the CVCP was reacting to the persistent lobbying by Tories within the education system, notably a group of right-wing academics at the

By Christine McDermott

London School of Economics and the vice-chancellor of Strathclyde University, Sir Graham Hills.

Hills has been calling for a system based on the government issuing vouchers, or 'education entitlements', to students who would then 'buy' the education of their choice. Students would be charged the full cost of their education, regardless of the value of their vouchers, and since the government is considering freezing grants at present rates and offering top-up loans of up to £1,000, working class students would be heavily penalised. Colleges would be competing for students according to 'market forces', which would result in massive price differences around the country for the same course. Students with limited means would be obliged to travel long distances for poorer quality tuition.

In an attempt to railroad the CVCP into acceptance of this scheme, Hills gathered around him a group of university and polytechnic chiefs prepared to 'go it alone'. With the backing of eight other institutions - the Institutes of Science and Technology in Manchester and Cardiff; Imperial College London; Aston and Salford universities; and Hatfield, Kingston and Newcastle polytechnics - Hills brought strong pressure to bear on the CVCP.

Both loans and vouchers have been described by Tories as providing more educational choice. In fact, they would lead to exactly the opposite. Many students would not be able to consider higher education as an option because of fears of not being able to repay the loans. This can already be seen in Sweden, which has a loan system, where the numbers going on to higher education from secondary

schools dropped from 68 per cent in 1968 to 29 per cent in 1983.

A survey by the National Union of Students (NUS) has shown that grants are already well below the cost of living, as most students pay, on average, double the amount allocated to them in their grants on rent. For example, grants allow £17.70 per week for rent in London but the average actually paid is £35 per week. This means that unless parents can afford to help them, students fall into a trap of poverty and debt.

However, the introduction of loans, which Tory Education Secretary Kenneth Baker wants to implement by 1990, and vouchers, which he claims the government is undecided on, are overshadowed by the private funding debate. The student grant system will not be ended overnight, but it will become increasingly inadequate, 'proving' the need for private money. Vouchers, on the other hand, are primarily aimed at forcing educational institutions to accept the values of the 'free

market'.

Both schemes are tactics designed to hasten the end of the commitment to state-funded higher education. This is confirmed by the remarks made by Hills after the Oxford meeting. The CVCP's decision goes well beyond tinkering with the existing system and instead proposes a fundamental shift in favour of private funding. Hills welcomed the 'change of mood', no doubt aware that his pressure group had been largely responsible for creating it. 'Vouchers are now a secondary consideration compared to a general philosophy of looking for new ways of funding,' he said. 'This is a new beginning.'

Though formally opposed to loans, the NUS has not even taken an official position for or against vouchers. Its leaders must be forced to implement a campaign of action to defend every attempt to undermine the right to free education. They must fight for mandatory grants and automatic entitlement to housing benefit for all students.



McDonalds - 'flexible hours' but unbending hostility to trade unionism

There's a difference at McDonalds . . .

A SMALL research group called Transnationals Information Centre (TIC) is facing legal action taken by the fast food chain McDonalds. The writ for damages objects to 11 passages of a 20-page report published by TIC called 'Working for Big Mac'.

Using examples from the company's world-wide operations, including Britain, the report shows how McDonalds' profits are built upon the exploitation of cheap youth labour and anti-trade unionism.

Hiring young people, especially black teenagers and school youth, enables McDonalds to keep labour costs at a minimum. Thirty-two per cent of the workforce are under 18 and 75 per cent are under 21. By employing under-18s, the company saves 52 pence per hour. Even adults, however, only receive a pittance.

The report cites the example of a 25-year-old woman, working a six-day week from 7-11pm, who earns £58.32 before tax. A 17-year-old girl working a 30-hour week got just £47.40.

The system of 'flexible hours' enables McDonalds to avoid much of the government's employment legisla-

By Lizzy Ali

tion, which only covers those working 18 or more hours per week. Those working less than 18 hours have no rights to maternity or redundancy pay or to claim for unfair dismissal, unless they have worked continuously with the company for five years.

The only exception to the five-year rule on unfair dismissal is where a company sacks a worker for belonging to a trade union. But McDonalds is a strictly non-union employer. The report quotes one manager: 'The company is totally anti-union. If you want to start a union, they'll hear about it and sack you.'

In West Germany in 1979, a McDonalds' personnel officer sent out a circular: 'If you notice during the conversation that the candidate is a trade union member, bring the interview to a close after a few additional questions and tell him that he will receive a reply in a few days . . . do not hire him on any account.' In San Francisco, McDonalds was caught using a lie detector during interviews.

It is on such low-wage service industries that Thatcher's unstable 'boom' is based.

● TIC has launched a fund to fight the legal action. Their costs already stand at £2,500 and could rise to £40,000. Donations should be sent to: Transnationals Information Centre, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

Algerian revolt

YOUNG workers, school youth and students have spearheaded a massive wave of discontent which has swept Algeria since October 3. The demonstrations, directed against mass unemployment, rising food prices, food shortages and the austerity measures of President Chadli Bendjedid, spread from Algiers to the second largest city of Oran and other provincial towns two days after the government declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew. Government buildings have been attacked as troops

and youths have clashed repeatedly.

After a week of disturbances during which, according to an official statement, the army killed over 200 people, Chadli ended the state of siege and announced the 'speeding up of political reforms'. Changes to the constitution will be put to a national referendum on November 3, in an attempt to divert attention away from the government's inability to resolve the severe economic crisis which has been intensified by the recent slump in world oil prices.

YTS accidents on the increase

By Daniel Evans

ACCORDING to a recent report by an independent charity, the Unemployment Unit, working on the government's cheap-labour Youth Training Scheme is more hazardous than a job in some of the most dangerous industries, including shipbuilding.

Basing its findings on statistics acquired from the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and on answers to parliamentary questions, the report finds that there has been a 68 per cent increase in deaths and injuries on the scheme since 1984 when the recording of accidents was introduced.

In that year, there were 69 deaths and injuries per 100,000 youths on the scheme; in 1985, 70 per 100,000; and in 1986 and 1987, the figures leapt dramatically to 92.5 and 117 per 100,000 respectively.

Despite the worsening accident rate, the Unit discovered that far less YTS workplaces are being closed down on the grounds of inadequate health and safety provisions than ever before. In fact, the Training Commission (formerly the MSC) inspects only 0.15 per cent of workplaces despite claims by a spokesman that YTS programmes are visited regularly. The cynical advice offered to trainees is that they should read a copy of

'Mind How You Go', issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

The report describes a number of horrific accidents, including that which led to a 15-year-old boy, accepted onto the YTS several weeks before his 16th birthday, losing a hand in a wood-cutting machine on his first day. Seven youths were killed in 1987, three of them whilst driving vehicles which they had not been properly trained to operate, or were even legally qualified to drive.

The YTS programme is one method by which the Thatcher government has 'revived' the British economy. The firms which operate the scheme are boosting their profits, and young workers are being taught to accept low wages as normal. For the employers and the Tories, money spent on health and safety is profit down the drain.

From last month, unemployed 16- and 17-year-olds have been compelled to accept a place on a scheme or lose their dole money. As the Unemployment Unit points out, this will mean more young people on the schemes and another increase in deaths and injuries. Workers and youth must step up the campaign for a total boycott of all cheap-labour schemes and to replace them with proper training leading to guaranteed jobs, and trade union rates of pay.