



Demonstrate Solidarity with Palestinians

Assemble Hyde Park (Marble Arch)

Saturday 23 January
12.30 p.m.

See pages 6, 7, 10 and 16

NURSES MUST NOT STAND ALONE

DEFEND N.H.S. TORIES OUT

BY THE EDITOR

THE Scottish TUC's decision to call for a Scotland-wide 24-hour strike by health service staff against Tory privatisation of the NHS must be made the opening shot in a campaign to bring the Tory government down.

This is now the only way left to halt Thatcher's plans for the complete destruction of the national health service.

A date for this action must be fixed immediately and the widest support mobilised for it throughout the labour movement.

Every section of the working class must be drawn into this developing battle in support of those nurses, ancillary workers, doctors and patients who have shown the greatest determination in resisting Thatcher's butchery.

From the outset the defence of the NHS has involved a political battle against the Thatcher government. The Tories have been driven back twice by the

determination of nurses and workers in the blood transfusion service.

But nobody must be fooled. The Tories will not retreat from their overall plan: to limit medical care to those who can afford to pay for it, leaving the poor to suffer and die.

What the Tories rightly fear is that the the nurses' action will win such wide support that the whole working class movement will be brought into head-on conflict with the Thatcher government.

The labour and trade union leaders no doubt hope that a few limited protest actions will bring about a change in Tory attitudes.

Health Secretary John Moore answered such dangerous illusions in a three-pronged attack on the NHS in the house of commons debate on the health service last Tuesday.

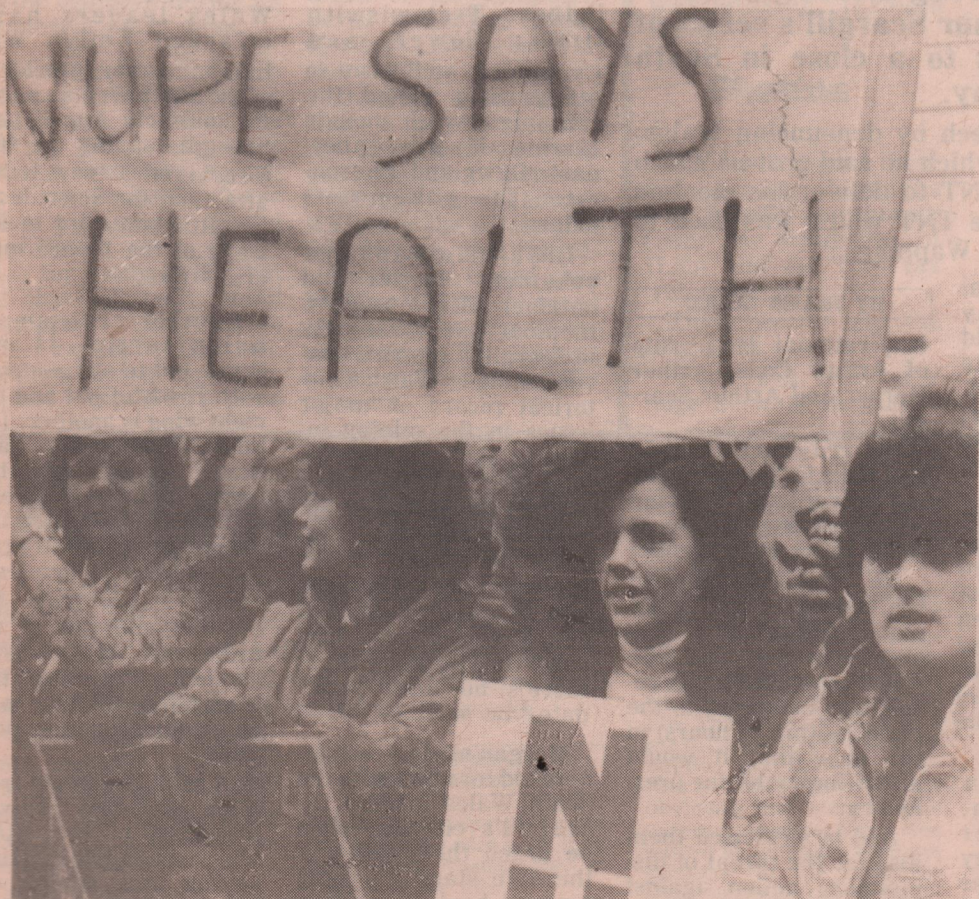
- A boost to private sector work that will eat further into state resources
- The use of 'volunteers of all ages' to work in the public services
- A new round of budget cuts in the coming year with nurses pay not adequately funded.

The real Tory attitude to the NHS was shown in Norman Tebbit's slanderous attack on 'moonlighting nurses' and by Thatcher's refusal last Tuesday to see a delegation of parents from Birmingham desperate about heart operations for their children.

As one of the rejected parents said: 'The only time I have ever seen her cry is when she thought she'd lost her own son in a car accident.'

Thatcher's callous disregard for the lives of ordinary children must be answered in the following way:

- The investigation of NHS's finances must be carried out not by the Tories but by the labour movement. Open the books of the health service! Find out where the money comes from and where it goes!
- The drug companies must be investigated by doctors, patients and scientists. These companies are draining the NHS of blood. They must be nationalised without compensation, under workers' control.
- Every action taken in defence of the health service must be supported by the working class as a whole and those sections of the middle class who are deeply concerned with the collapse of the NHS.
- Where hospitals, wards and departments are threatened with closure, occupation committees must be formed to win the widest possible backing for such actions.
- The TUC must be made to lead the fight against the Tories. They deliberately left the miners to battle alone against the might of the capitalist state. They must not be allowed to leave the nurses on their own!
- As an immediate step the British TUC must be forced to call a national strike to coincide with the Scottish strike action.



Workers Press

Crisis for credit card comrades

WE HAVE NO WISH to underestimate the entertainment value in the antics of the Alliance leaders. We can only watch their strange cavortings with delight and amazement, wondering what they will get up to next.

But if we can bring ourselves to look seriously at the attempts of the de-Owenised SDP and the Liberal Party to consummate their union, a more serious side is revealed.

The 1981 split in the Labour Party came at the start of a period in the history of the British labour movement which ended with the miners' strike.

The aims of those who formed the Social Democratic Party were to find a place in the 'middle ground'. They believed that growing sections of professional and skilled workers would provide a basis for a kind of radicalism, hitherto seen only in Europe, which was not dependent on the trade unions. On this foundation, they thought, they could play the kind of role in the bourgeois state which the other Labour leaders coveted, but were unable to attain.

The remains of the old Liberal Party, hardly recognisable as what was once the main party of British capital, would provide a source of further strength for this new force. The Labour Party would either fall into line, jettisoning its last pretence of socialism, or it would go to the wall.

It looked plausible to many, including some who remained inside the Labour Party. It particularly impressed the 'Marxism Today' crowd, who discarded the last pretence of 'communism' even more deftly than their Labour Party opposite numbers ditched their 'socialism'.

The 1987 General Election brought the whole rotten business to an abrupt end, when the Liberal-SDP Alliance was almost wiped out. As captions to cartoons in 'Punch' used to say: 'Collapse of stout Party'.

What went wrong? The problem was that the conditions of the 1970s had gone. Instead of cashing in on the boom, with policies which would use North Sea oil revenues to spread a little prosperity around, the credit-card comrades were brought face-to-face with the real problems which had now made their presence felt within British capitalism.

These problems first of all hit the poorest sections of unemployed workers and their families. But then they soon began to affect many who would once have been regarded as just the kind of people the Alliance was meant for.

A good example is the teachers. The desperate crisis in all spheres of education has driven many thousands of people, who in the past never dreamt of such things, into the most determined fight with the Thatcher government, including long and bitter industrial disputes.

So the moves to marry the SDP with the Liberal Party were bound to explode as soon as they got to the point of formulating a united policy. The SDP leaders are now driven by the economic crisis to openly Thatcherite economic policies. The mass of Liberals just can't swallow such meat. Nor will it be any good trying to get the merger first, leaving agreement on programme to be worked out later.

It would be unwise for the Labour Party leaders to laugh too loudly at this entertaining spectacle. For they face the very same problems which blew the Alliance to bits. Bryan Gould's recommendation of the virtues of share-ownership to the Party Conference — just before the market crashed — is typical of the response of the Kinnock leadership to their electoral failure.

In short, the difficulties of all those who seek the 'middle ground' spring from the fact that there isn't any. Only revolutionary solutions to the crisis of British capital make sense today.

NUM election

BRITISH miners have always played a central role in the British labour movement. As wind and water power was overtaken by steam, coal for decades became the single source of fuel that was indispensable to capitalism. At its height coal production involved the labour of over a million miners.

The organisation and leadership of this section of the British working class was of vital strategic importance.

For the first 70 years of the last century capitalism attempted to prevent the growth of trade unions in the mines by the naked violence of the state. For the next century it relied almost exclusively on the leadership of the miners to emasculate the potential strength of the working class, firstly through the labour leaders alone and later the labour leaders together with the Stalinists.

In 1984 the British state for the first time in a century returned to the use of naked violence against the trade union movement as the main means of settling a dispute. That is not to say that for the last 100 years the capitalist state had not used violence against the working class. What made 1984 different was that for a whole year the leadership of the British miners refused to com-

COMMENT BY
DAVE TEMPLE

promise with the state. All that was left between labour and capital was the massed ranks of the riot police.

Arthur Scargill's leadership must be judged in this light. British coal mining has been in a state of decline since 1913. This decline was temporarily arrested from 1974 both by the increased militancy of miners and by fluctuations in the world energy crisis.

There is no doubt that the British state under both Labour and Tory governments used this period to prepare for the 1984 conflict. Powerful historical forces fuelled the Tories' resolution to destroy the NUM. Equally powerful was the explosion of energy within the miners. Thousands of young miners expressed the release of potential energy built up over years of compromise and betrayal.

Arthur Scargill did not betray that movement but responded to it and

refused to compromise with the state. This set him apart from most of the other trade union leaders. It created a massive crisis for the Labour and trade union leaders which exposed them in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of workers. Even more importantly it destroyed the leadership of the Stalinist Communist Party whose leaders are now exposed as the tacit supporters of John Walsh.

Of course the year-long strike did not halt the 70 year decline of the British coal industry, nor could it have done. It did not therefore achieve its stated goals. However, and of much greater significance, the state and the Tory government was unable to achieve its major objective — that of smashing the National Union of Mineworkers and pacifying the British trade union movement. On the contrary, not only is the UDM now a virtual dead duck, The year-long struggle also stiffened the resolve of workers in other industries and inspired workers throughout the world, as Cyril Ramapotha and the South African Union of Mine-workers have eloquently demonstrated. It moved the balance of class forces in favour of the working class. Those who wish to describe this process as a defeat express a particular strain of pessimism that ultimately

must conclude that — the miners would have been better off not fighting at all.

Therefore the support for Arthur Scargill in this election is essential.

Of course there will be those who will fall over themselves to declare that Arthur Scargill is not a Trotskyist. Indeed he is not, and we will have every opportunity in the future to debate our differences with him. In this election we are straining every muscle to support Arthur Scargill. He above all others represents the fightback of the working class against Tory reaction and Labour and trade union collaboration. Walsh represents everything that is rotten in the British trade union movement.

The situation is similar in some respects to the battle of Orgreave. Over 10,000 miners faced an equal number of riot police armed to the teeth and supported by horses and dogs. Arthur Scargill was there on the field urging miners into battle. We Trotskyists who were there went into battle alongside him. We did not declare, as the mounted police charged us, 'just a minute, Arthur, we wish to make absolutely clear that you have rejected the theory of permanent revolution'. No, we linked arms in a common struggle. That is simply what we are doing in this election.

Scargill closes campaign in South Wales

A PACKED 800 strong meeting in Aberdare brought Arthur Scargill's series of election meetings to a close in South Wales last Monday.

He opened his speech by denouncing Walsh, producing evidence which he said proved Walsh had used the firm TNT to deliver his election material — the same TNT which was used to cross picket lines at Wapping.

He reaffirmed his total opposition to six-day working, saying he would never agree to negotiate six-day production and, to rousing applause, added he was elected to fight for a four-day week promised in 1990.

While not directly criticising the South Wales leaders, he attacked vigorously the ideas of new realism whose keen advocates are the present South Wales leaders, Duffield and Rees, who are opposing Scargill in the election.

Meeting chairman Tyrone O'Sullivan, secretary of Tower Lodge, suggested they might have done better had their names been 'Arthur' Duffield or 'Arthur' Rees, after the

BY TRAVIS GOULD

inspirational leadership of Arthur Cook, Arthur Horner and Arthur Scargill.

He criticised Duffield and Rees for not nominating Scargill and by doing so supporting Walsh as there is no third choice.

He criticised them on the timing of the ballot over escalation of the overtime ban and the speed with which the result was conveyed to the press (within 24 hours) in the hope that it would affect the ballot for presidency.

And he criticised them also for the threat of disciplinary action against lodges in South Wales who organised support for Scargill, paying tri-

bute to the three initial lodges: Trelewiswith Drift, Tower and Cynheidre and also to others who joined the campaign which include Marine, Maerdy, Abernant, Ogwr and Phurnacite (the cokemens') lodges.

Idwal Morgan, the cokemens' leader and national NUM executive member spoke strongly in Scargill's support, concentrating on Walsh's historical record on major issues in the mining industry, such as his support for the incentive scheme designed to divide the union.

'If the South Wales leaders could not support him five years ago, how can they support him now? He's the same man; there's no third candidate,' he said.

Morgan made a last minute bid for unity with the South Wales leaders for Scargill's election when he urged them 'even at this late stage' to come out and back Scargill in the ballot.

Far from accepting

Morgan's plea, the South Wales leaders have attacked Emlyn Williams, former president of the South Wales miners for publicly supporting Scargill, saying he has discovered a 'new found affection' for Scargill after attacking him in the wake of the 1984-85 miners' strike.

Internal criticism of union tactics is one thing, but to ally yourself with British Coal and the right wing is another. The South Wales leaders have made an irrevocable break with the interests of miners in South Wales and in the wider struggle for socialist principles.

One lesson from the election and out of the movement for Scargill's re-election is that this leadership will have to be challenged for their positions.

● A brief statement from Mick McGahey, ex-vice president of the NUM, was read to the meeting, saying that Walsh was the right wing candidate and urging miners to back Scargill.

TV-am lock-out

THE LOCK OUT at TV-am Camden studio continues into its ninth week and a familiar pattern has emerged.

Union members on the picket line appeal for 'fair play' and the honouring of old agreements; management lays down draconian pre-conditions for the discussion, while evidently glorying in its ability to maintain what is possibly the most amateurish output ever witnessed from an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) franchise holder.

COMMENT BY
BRIAN ELEY

Meanwhile Fleet Street, fresh from its battles with the printing unions, has turned its attention to the so-called 'Spanish practices' of TV technicians and their trade union, ACTT.

In recent weeks both the Observer and Sunday Times have carried extensive reports designed to back up management claims of union 'abuses', in addition to quoting management claims that '...the jobs (of cameramen, editors, engineers, etc.) are not all that difficult to learn and do.'

To put out its breakfast time transmissions the station is heavily reliant on the substitution of secretaries and even the company lawyer for skilled technical staff — perhaps an attempt to prove that the strike-breaking spirit of 1926 still lives in today's would-be army of middle class scabs.

But the major difference between now and then is that the locked-out workforce in this dispute is drawn largely from that section of society — the educated middle class — that in 1926 might have supplied the scabs.

Many on the picket line have expressed dismay at their treatment, and are at pains to point out that they have in the past made major concessions to the company during its uncertain early days.

Significantly, the current dispute is being fought not at one of the larger ITV companies where long-standing union agreements have been a source of gleeful right-wing press distortion for many years, but at this relatively small company. And during its brief existence, the technicians union has conceded much of its ground

in areas of manning-levels and overtime agreements.

Current agreements at the station include provisions for the rostering of technicians at single time rates, at any time during a 24-hour period, seven days a week. Staff blame acute under-staffing, and subsequent rest-day working, for the famous 'golden hour' overtime payment beloved of Fleet Street and Wapping.

Meanwhile, management (and press) are proposing the effective abolition of all job demarcation at the station, accompanied by massive pay cuts. This prospect is eyed with amused scepticism by the rest of the industry, but it has been prepared over the past few years, both by local agreements like that at TV-am, and the very nature of television's technical development.

New technology — in particular that developed for use by the burgeoning cable and satellite TV sector — has meant smaller more flexible production teams. This has meant the demolition of old technical grades established during the growth of the union in the hey day of the feature film industry and of 'steam television' and this process is closely paralleled by that of the printing industry. Indeed, much of the computer-based technology straddles both print and television media.

Clearly, more is at stake in the events at TV-am than a mere 'misunderstanding' between staff and management. Whatever the outcome of this dispute, the Thatcherite zest for closed shop bashing will surely mean an attempt to step up the pressure on TV workers in the weeks and months to come.

Parents' action to lobby

'BAKER'S Education Bill is not about improving education,' Belle Harris, Labour member of Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), told the Tower Hamlets Workers Support Group (THWSG).

It means that 'the rich will contribute least to education. The poor will receive least from education'.

'If the Bill is passed,' she said, 'the state will pay only for the core curriculum. 'Extras' like music, books and sport will have to come out of parents' pockets.'

The mainly working class parents in Belle's borough of Tower Hamlets, where she has lived all her life, have no 'extra' in their pockets.

The Tories, in their desperation to abolish ILEA are dangling a bribe of £100 million before the liberals to get them to opt out of and run the Tower Hamlets Education Services themselves.

In two years this money will have gone and the costs of the services in the borough, including education, will have to come out of the Poll Tax already set at a staggering £639 per head. The pitiful amount that will be returned to the borough by central government from the new, lower rates from the Business Rate Equalisation Scheme (BRES) will be nothing short of robbery.

'Baker's Bill, the Poll Tax and BRES (the last two due to become law in 1991) cannot be separated,' said Belle.

'The Tower Hamlets Council is dependent on high rates from businesses and multinationals in the borough, which includes Docklands.'

Tower Hamlets, cheek by jowl with the richest square mile in Britain — the City of London — is given £40 million per year from it, and the City of Westminster, through ILEA.

Ghettos

Big business and these two wealthy boroughs will benefit enormously from the abolition of ILEA and the Tory tax 'reforms'.

These won't help the rest of us.

'They will lead to a huge increase in ghettos

BY GERALDINE THORPE

of the poor,' said Belle, 'and Tower Hamlets will be one of them.'

The Tower Hamlets Liberal council is refusing to make public its plans on opting out. They have refused invitations to attend governors' meetings in schools and colleges.

All they are saying is that they are 'confident' they can run an 'efficient' education service if they decide to opt out. This decision can be made at an ordinary council meeting with a majority of one.

Who gave them this mandate? Not the people of Tower Hamlets who elected Belle and three other members of the Labour Party to look after their educational interests in ILEA.

The Tories have been campaigning to abolish Britain's largest education authority for years. Amendments, from Tory abolitionists, to the present Bill are flying thick and fast, led by MPs Norman Tebbit and Michael Heseltine.

ILEA

Last week the Bill was amended to state that only five (previously eight) of the 13 boroughs had to decide to opt out of ILEA. Once that had been achieved then the remaining eight would not be able to make a democratic decision, they would have to opt out. ILEA would disappear.

Not only are the Tories making up the rules as they go along, they are bleeding ILEA's finances dry, imposing heavy restrictions on rates and grants.

This has been part of a long campaign to discredit the Labour-led authority politically and to set it's employees, parents and students against it.



Belle Harris

This political test of the Labour Party has exposed deep flaws in its political thinking and practice. The certainty of job losses, and worsening of the service has angered ILEA's employees. Teachers and lecturers, canteen workers, cleaners, school keepers, technicians, office workers and sec-

State

tions of managerial staff are up in arms against their employers' tactics.

But the majority of us who work in and use ILEA's services are realising that it is not the saving of the present Labour-led ILEA that is the real issue. It is the saving of a publicly supported and state provided service that is large enough to meet everyone's educational needs that is at stake. A service that can meet our needs in the fullest possible way is what we must fight for.

'We are annoyed about ILEA's new "no re-employment" and "no cover" policies,' said Christine Connolly of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) who represents canteen workers in ILEA.

'But the majority of NUPE workers are far more annoyed with the government for imposing cuts on ILEA.'

'ILEA is one of the better employers,' she said, 'We get sickness benefits, holidays and retainer fees. We wouldn't get these from the council or from private contractors.'

'And as parents we want ILEA. Tower Hamlets council can't run its own housing department,' she said, referring to the Liberal's scandalous slums, and racist record on homelessness, 'and I wouldn't trust it to run education.'

Parents are protesting. 324 parents from St Paul's Way school said: 'Opt out? No way!'

Belle Harris and the three other ILEA members for the borough are pushing for an authority-wide ballot on the issue. They are also urging that ILEA members share the platform at public meetings with the liberals and challenge them to prove they can run an education service.

They also see the urgent need to keep people well-informed so that every parent's place (50 per cent) on governing bodies is taken.

Parents are organising. The Parents' Action Group for Education (PAGE) is calling for a massive lobby of the council on Wednesday 27 January at 6pm in Patriot Square, London E2.

PAGE is a way for parents to get involved in the campaign and work with people from different organisations throughout the borough.

The Trades Council, teachers' groups, joint union committees, the local Labour Party and other community groups, like the Tower Hamlets Workers Support Group, are joining PAGE in this call. In February the teachers are organising a large public meeting.

Classes

Without a large education authority it will not only be schools which suffer. Nurseries, youth clubs, further and higher education and adult education classes will simply disappear. 'Training' schemes to meet 'the needs of the economy' will depend on employers' whims.

Labour councillor Phil Maxwell said: 'The only thing that will make the council listen is concerted action by all of us affected by the cuts in our services.'

The THWSG and all those who recall that the only way the battles in the past have been won is through direct action couldn't agree more.

Alton Bill

A SERIOUS danger is emerging that the anti-abortion bill pushed by Liberal MP David Alton will garner enough votes to go through parliament shortly. The bill will lower the time-limit for abortions from 24 weeks to 18 weeks.

Alton was not confident until recently of getting the bill through, but support is developing from some possibly unexpected directions.

Thirty Labour MPs, some of them in the Shadow Cabinet, and some from the

BY A SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

left wing Campaign Group will be voting with what they term their 'Conscience' in favour of the bill.

Ronnie Campbell, a member of the Campaign Group

says 'I am a practising Catholic, so therefore on those grounds I shall most probably vote for Alton. I don't believe in abortion at all, not even 18 weeks'

Kevin McNamara, Labour front-bench spokesman on Ireland, an even more pious fellow, ejaculated 'I have always felt as a socialist that we have a duty to protect life. The same ideology took me to support the abolition of capital punishment.' This martyr to conscience has obviously had some kind of unfortunate experience (the nature of which we dare not surmise) at the hands of what he calls the 'strident feminism' in the Labour Party. This, he says, is 'not

typical of Labour voters'.

I don't know if Mrs Christine Lavery votes Labour, but she has a message for these MPs. Most foetal abnormalities, including spina bifida, hydrocephalus, Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, congenital heart defects, gastro intestinal and kidney malformations can only be detected by ultra-sound scanning between 18 and 20 weeks. That is far too late for a termination under the bill.

Mrs Lavery was the mother of a child which died at the age of seven from a genetic disorder which kills in early childhood. Last week she said 'David Alton has made a great deal of the fact that he once taught

handicapped children.'

'But as a teacher he could go home at night and leave them. For parents it is a life-long commitment.'

'He does not know what it is like to have to bath a child in the middle of the night because his diarrhoea is taking the skin off his backside.'

He does not know what it is like to wake up in the morning, never knowing whether your child will be alive or dead. My child was dying from the day he was born. It has huge psychological effects living with such a condition.'

Her baby daughter is a carrier of the gene. She has a one in four chance of having

a child which will die in acute pain and misery in early childhood. The Alton bill will deny her the possibility of choosing whether to go through hell or not.

At the same time as this bill goes through parliament and these gentlemen are snuggling up with their consciences, the Tory government is destroying in the NHS and local government any provision for social care for the disabled.

The flood of Irish women who come to Britain seeking help has increased by 50 per cent. These are victims of reactionary Catholic-influenced laws which allow no abortions, and no information to go out about

Labour Boroughs Erupt in Protest Against Cuts

IN PRECISELY 15 minutes last Monday evening Labour councillors in the London borough of Lambeth voted 2,000 jobs and countless services down the plughole. Rank and file Labour Party members were shocked by the cynicism displayed. According to all accounts of the Labour Group meeting held the previous day to decide which way the group was going to vote, many of them treated it as a huge joke.

Trades unionists present reported them as laughing as they said to each other, 'How do I vote on this one — for? against? abstain?'

Joan Twelves, one of the minority group of Labour councillors who voted (from the public gallery) against the cuts spoke at a rally organised earlier by the Lambeth Workers Joint Trade Unions.

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

He met them again after a break at 4pm and was told 'There are some groups that will have to go'. One of the groups they are referring to is the gardeners who are facing a 50 per cent reduction in establishment.

These councillors are going through a very visible process which should be a warning to others tempted to follow. There are those amongst them who feel bad about it, and others who are completely cynical. But once they took the very first decision not to fight cuts, they were on the path to decisions that they would have found unthinkable even a few months ago.

The decision to comply, in practice leads to deportation of Irish families, mass compulsory redundancies, and to other even more reactionary policies. The time between each further capitulation to the Tories becomes shorter every day.

She explained the rapidity with which the council was reneging on every agreement and promise made to the workforce since they were elected. Their 'bottom line' in the midst of the plans to save £60 million had been that there would be no compulsory redundancies, and that they would cut the establishment by 2,000 posts by April 1989 through 'natural wastage'.

That position has gone out the window along with all the others. They are now saying there will be no 'large-scale' redundancies. Mike Waller, secretary of Lambeth NALGO told how he had met with councillors at 3.30 pm one day to be told that they were 'relatively confident' that there would be no compulsory redundancies.



Photos: Dave Stewart

Linda Bellos, leader of Lambeth council is quoted as saying 'We decide where and when workers work'. She has lost touch with a community in Lambeth which turned up at public service points on the day following a one-day action by NALGO extremely agitated not by the strike but by the prospect of losing services they had been accustomed to all their lives.

The major threat to the workforce at the moment is redeployment as in all the other Labour boroughs carrying out Thatcher's policies. Local government workers are protected by their contracts of employment from being redeployed unless they agree to it. David Eggmore, secretary of Camden NALGO explained with what enthusiasm Camden workers received a letter sent to them by the council asking them to agree redeployment.

5,500 letters were sent out and 74 came back. They should have saved the money on the postage and used it to help fill the gap.

The only legal recourse for these Labour authorities now is to sack their workers en masse, a la Murdoch or BTR, and rehire them on different contracts which allow them to be redeployed without consultation, i.e. with the 'flexibility' so dear to the hearts of the multinationals.

So a refusal to fight the Tories leads to an identity of purpose with the most vicious capitalists. The reforms touted by these Labour councillors have vanished like the morning dew before the dictates of the capitalist crisis. In most boroughs without a shot being fired.

Lambeth NALGO came out on a day's strike to demonstrate its united opposition to the council's capitulation. The packed public gallery at Monday's meeting greeted the cuts votes with thunderous shouts of 'Why don't you join the Tory party' and 'No cuts'.

In Haringey on the same night it took councillors 10 minutes to sack 4,000 workers — that's 400 a minute.

A 1,000 strong torch-lit procession protesting the cuts was led by Haringey Fightback. On the march were Haringey NALGO, NUT, Brent NUT, the NUJ, teachers and parents from Haringey North School, Selby Site Project, Middlesex Polytechnic students union, Tottenham Claimant's union and many others.

School is already under occupation by parents,' he added to bursts of applause.

Will Sullivan of Haringey NALGO said that his union was taking the council to court for failing to carry out its statutory duties in Social Services.

Attacks

Speaking on behalf of library workers Tom Roper confirmed the catastrophic nature of the cuts. A third of the library workforce was to be cut, and opening hours to be reduced by a half. Library workers had therefore staged occupations, demonstrations against the Tories and had launched a petition.

As part of the attacks Hornsey Town Hall is to be closed down which means the end of a base for the Wood Green operatic society who all turned up to the demonstration in period costume.

A surge of protest is swelling in the boroughs against Tory policies carried out by Labour councils, and it is coming from all sections of the community. That is the strength which will overturn this Tory government. Those in the councils who are refusing to fight should make way for those who will.

Cuts

Tony Braddock, secretary of Haringey Teacher's Association said 'The cuts involve £6 million cuts to education. This will mean increased class sizes, a reduction by one of teaching staff in primary schools, and by 10 in every secondary school. Haringey teachers are refusing to cover for absent staff, and have launched strike action in 30 schools. Tiverton



Photos: Dave Stewart

LONG LARTIN
HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464989.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22338.
EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.

GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN MCCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.
HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.
VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.
MAIDSTONE
HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent

DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.
PARKHURST
HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
SEAN McSHANE, B75898.
TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR		INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:	
WAKEFIELD HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644. NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.	ALBANY HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087. HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638. BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647. SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.	CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662. MICHAEL J MCKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486. EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.	CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Snyal, Wiltshire, Cheshire PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree. G.(DANNY) McNAMEE, 25-year sentence, HM Prison, Parkhurst PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, HM Prison, Gartree GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin. PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Long Lartin. JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham. HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
GARTREE HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799. STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence, 758663. JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635 PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.	LEICESTER HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888. GERARD McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882. BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380. PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.	DURHAM HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham. MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134. ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.	They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.
FRANKLAND HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085 BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662. PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.	REMAND PRISONERS: BRIXTON HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF. LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693 PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694. LIAM QUINN, 49930		

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

Gorbachev's counter-revolutionary front with Imperialism



Gorbachev

GORBACHEV'S speech on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution was a fraudulent attempt to use revolutionary traditions for the building of a counter revolutionary front with imperialism.

Great events in the struggle of the working class and great words like socialism and internationalism were degraded by being used for such a purpose, before a cynical audience of bureaucrats, in a speech addressed to the imperialist leaders.

Gorbachev declared that the imperialists were being compelled to change.

The Reykjavik meeting 'gave a practical boost to the new political thinking, enabled it to gain ground in diverse social and political quarters, and made international political contacts more fruitful'.

Gorbachev counted on 'awareness that a safe world will have to be built jointly with the capitalist countries.

'The post-war period has witnessed an in-depth modification of the contradictions that used to determine the principal trends in the world's economy and politics'.

A capitalist economy can develop without militarisation, he told his audience of members of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and the Russian Federation.

He told imperialism that it was in its own interests to give up war preparations, saying that 'In the final analysis it has turned out that super militarisation increasingly aggravates the domestic situation and upsets the economies of other countries'.

The capitalists must realise that the contradictions of capitalism, its 'inequitable trade' with the 'Third World', benefits no one.

'The ongoing processes have the force of an objective law' he said, 'either a disaster or a joint quest for a new economic order taking into account the interests of all on an equal basis'.

'The way to establish such an order, as we see it today, has become discernable: it is through implementing the "disarmament for development" concept.

And how is capitalism facing the objective law? It is being moved progressively forward, according to Gorbachev.

'The situation, as we see it, makes this not only necessary, but possible too, the more so as forces in the Third World are acting along the same lines.'

In September, one of Gorbachev's publicists — Yuri Krassin — wrote on the October Revolution. He put first, the same perspective as that of Gorbachev's anniversary speech, but possibly more succinctly.

Reaction

'The task before the working class and democratic forces,' he wrote, 'is to stop the offensive of imperialist reaction and give the technological revolution a democratic and non-militarist form. Translating this immediate alternative into reality does not yet mean

day is to prevent the class struggle ending in mutual destruction.' ('Soviet Weekly', 26 September 1987)

Let us repeat that conclusion. 'The top priority of the working class' is to prevent the mutual destruction of classes.

On the anniversary of the great revolution, while, throughout the world, that revolution was inspiring exploited masses to follow the example of the Russian workers and peasants and overthrow capitalist and feudal exploitation, Gorbachev declared that the future of the world rested on agreements between the bureaucracy and the world's exploiters.

The great lesson for humanity out of the Russian Revolution is the enormous strength of the masses under a Marxist leadership. The exploited are the shapers of history! On the 70th anniversary of this mighty event which shook the world, the bureaucratic leaders of the Soviet Union tell these exploited masses that to seek to determine their own destiny can only bring humanity to ruin!

Gorbachev could not speak on the anniversary of Russian Revolution without mentioning Trotsky. For Trotsky, above all, personified the continuous struggle for the principles and internationalism of the Russian Revolution. He did so by his inspiring resistance to the degeneration of the first workers' state and to the development of a parasitic bureaucracy.

It is most significant that Gorbachev had to spend several paragraphs in distorting the position of Trotsky and denouncing it. Trotsky was for 'exporting revolution'. Trotskyism was a 'poli-

tical current whose ideologists took cover behind leftist pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric, and in effect assumed a defeatist posture'. Again and again it 'saddled the party with discussions'. However, the party's leading nucleus, headed by Joseph Stalin, 'had safeguarded Leninism in an ideological struggle'.

In the economic crisis that the bureaucracy faces; with the rising demands for the truth about the past; with the course of the bureaucracy meaning increasing clashes with the working class we can expect Trotsky and Trotskyism to come under more vicious attack. The concern of Gorbachev and the bureaucracy about Trotsky itself is a tribute to the strength of Trotsky's ideas and the powerful effect that the true history of the struggle of the Left Opposition can have, particularly on Russian youth.

Gorbachev claimed that Perestroika and present policies of the bureaucracy were a direct descent from the Russian Revolution and the policies of the 'New Economic Policy'.

Gorbachev's appeal is to the peasantry. His distortion of history, therefore, showed the New Economic Policy as a step to socialism proposed by Lenin, leading to industrialisation and the economic expansion of the Soviet Union and leading, above all, to concessions to the middle peasants. Bukharin, while in the leadership with Stalin, coined for the peasantry, the famous slogan, 'get rich'.

Gorbachev thus spoke sympathetically of Bukharin and leading bureaucrats are now for his rehabilitation as a way to prop up present policies.

Trotsky, as any objective student of Russian history

knows, proposed the planned development of industry when Stalin, together with Bukharin, was opposed to it and telling the peasants to enrich themselves. As against Stalinist lies about the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union, history records that the Left Opposition were denounced by Stalin as 'super-industrialisers' as late as the party congress of 1927, which declared against 'the danger of a too great involvement of state capital in big construction'. The Opposition had declared: 'Face to the village does not mean turn your back on industry; it means industry to the village. For the face of the state, if it does not include industry, is of no use to the village'.

Gorbachev lists as one of the great symbols of the achievements of industrialisation, the Dneiper hydropower station. In April 1927, at a meeting of the Central Committee, Stalin declared that to attempt to build the Dneiperstroy hydro electric station (proposed by Trotsky) would be the same thing as for a peasant to buy a gramophone instead of a cow. At this time the leaders of the party were against 'poor peasant illusions' about collectivisation! All this is documented in Trotsky's 'Revolution Betrayed'.

Failure to heed Trotsky and the Left Opposition led to the terrible price paid for forced collectivisation when the Stalinist leadership swung violently away from policies of encouraging the richer peasants.

Gorbachev's talk about the need for authentic history occurs because of the swelling demands from intellectuals, students and workers in the Soviet Union for truth. He says about the Communist International that 'the

complete history has yet to be written'. Yet, while he has been putting forward his generalisations about the need for a correct accounting of the party's history, in the past months there have been reports of the secret police destroying historical archives!

Gorbachev spoke about the Communist International fighters in Spain. Empty words! The archives of the International Brigade were taken back to the Soviet Union at the end of the Civil War in Spain and buried away. A few years ago, when the Executive of the Italian Communist Party commissioned a history of the International Brigade they were unable to examine the archives despite several requests.

Essentially Gorbachev uses history and 'theory' as did Stalin — as a justification for his present policies which are an empirical reaction to present situations. The difference with Stalin, of course, is that he cannot force his 'history' and 'theory' on to the Soviet people by the use of the secret police, the club, torture and execution to the extent of the methods that Stalin perfected.

However, suppression of archives and repression have not been abolished. And cannot be, because the power of Gorbachev and the bureaucracy needs a gross distortion of the Russian Revolution and a suppression of the principles which motivated its leaders. To tell the truth about the history of the bureaucracy would show up their false claim that their privileges are in the traditions of Bolshevism.

The bureaucratic version of history must be basically the same under Gorbachev as under Stalin — a justification of the bureaucracy and its privileges. The bureaucrats are a parasitic growth on the Soviet Union; their power and privileges contradict the revolutionary principles of the leaders and masses who brought about the Russian Revolution, they are a conservative philistine opposite to all the turbulent movements driven to change the world in this revolutionary epoch. But to legitimise themselves they must place themselves in a continuity from the Russian Revolution. Their lying is therefore a profound necessity. They cannot escape from the falsification of history. They want to escape from Stalin, but they need him, and Gorbachev's speech repeats the essentials of Stalinist ideology.

The mass of men, women and youth who are increasingly demanding that they be given the means for an objective study of their own history will not be satisfied with this. Their demands will grow. As also will their confidence in themselves opening up the historical material.

The bureaucracy, while weakening state control, and introducing greater inequality, fears most the development of workers' resistance. And that workers' resistance, linked with the defence of conquests of October must be driven to centre round Trotsky, as a leader, with Lenin, of the Revolution; and around Trotsky and the Fourth International with its record and programme of struggle against bureaucratic privileges, inequality and political oppression.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Basic Principles of Marxism

Six Lectures at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC 1.

Friday, February 5, 1988, at 7.30.

The Crash of '88.

WHAT are the implications of the financial and economic crisis for the working class?

Thursday, February 11, 1988, at 7.30.

What is Revolution?

MARX understood the revolutionary transformation of society as expressing the conflict between the advance of the forces of production developed by human beings and the social relations between them.

Thursday, February 18, 1988, at 7.30.

What is Capitalism?

WHY does the social system under which the working class is exploited appear to some people to be in line with 'human nature'? How does this system operate, and how will it be destroyed?

Friday, February 26, 1988, at 7.30.

The State and Revolution

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

Friday, March 4, 1988, at 7.30.

The Russian Revolution, Stalinism and Trotskyism.

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

Thursday, March 10, 1988, at 7.30.

The Fourth International Today.

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

READING:

Cliff Slaughter, *Marx and Marxism*

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*

Lenin, *The State and Revolution*

Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*

'COUNTRY-CLUB COUP' LEADER HELD — For how long?

The uprising within the Argentine armed forces led by the fascist former lieutenant, Aldo Rico, last Thursday, by Sunday had the dynamic which could have led to a coup d'etat.

Rico fled his Bella Vista country residence last Thursday to take command of the Fourth Infantry Brigade in Monte Caseros in the province of Corrientes in the north of the country. Mutinies took place in five other army garrisons in support of Rico. All have now surrendered.

Apparently 60 officers and 222 ncos have been detained in different military units for taking up arms against chief of staff, Jose Caridi and in support of Rico.

Also under arrest are several air force officers who participated in a four-hour takeover of the Horge Newbury airport, just outside Buenos Aires, and a group of civilians of ultra-rightist ideology who participated in the crisis with no direct connection to Rico or his men.

Two officers loyal to Caridi are reportedly in intensive care after their vehicle was dynamited by men loyal to Rico.

Rico is currently detained in Magdelene top security prison in Buenos Aires.

The crisis which erupted within the armed forces had been brewing since April last year when another uprising took place during 'Holy Week'.

BY JUAN VALENTE

There has been a dual power situation within the armed forces since 'Holy Week'. This is a result of the genocide which was carried out against the working class under the former military dictatorship and the subsequent human rights trials against those within the armed forces which carried out this genocide.

During 'Holy Week' the radical government of Alfonsin and all the other political parties, Peronism etc and including the Communist Party, signed the so-called law of due obedience, which in effect conceded everything to the genocides.

The Movement for Socialism (MAS), the only political organisation not to sign the pact, when the present crisis in its early stages broke out, explained that both Carridi and Rico are of the same colours. They come from the same genocidal history.

When Rico took charge of the Infantry Brigade in Corrientes, the MAS called for the defeat of Rico, for the jailing of all the genocides and for the democratisation of the armed forces. They also called on all the parties of the left including the trade unions of Monday of last week to mobilise for a demonstration outside congress.

The political parties were very careful not to call for a mobilisation of the masses for fear of what might happen. The dynamic of last year's mobilisation during 'Holy Week' had the effect of going beyond the control of those parties and the trade union bureaucracy.

The present situation is a direct responsibility of the politics of the present Alfonsin government. He has conceded everything to the armed forces. No, all is not well in the house. Certainly the sections supporting Caridi will now push for an amnesty for all those which carried out the genocide against the working class, in which conservative figures state that under the dictatorship 30,000 disappeared



Palestinian march in Malta

PALESTINIANS in Malta, joined by Maltese supporters, marched through Valetta, the capital, in protest against Israeli repression in the occupied Arab lands.

Watched by crowds of week-end shoppers over 300 people led by children wearing Palestinian scarves and carrying placards marched along the city's narrow streets through Republic Square to the official residence of Maltese Prime Minister, Dr E Fenech Adami.

Dr Mifsud Bonnici leader of the Labour Party opposition in Malta's parliament and Dr Trigona, foreign affairs minister during the Labour Government were

BY DOT GIBSON

amongst the marchers.

A cable was sent to the UN General Secretary. Malta's Arab community also addressed an urgent request to the General Secretary of the Arab League, calling on the League to urge Arab governments and international organisations to 'increase their support on all levels to the cause of the Arab Palestinian people so that the whole truth can be real-

ised by the people and Governments of the world.'

'More than 6,700 Palestinian Arabs aged between 10 and 25 are currently languishing in Israeli jails,' PLO representative in Malta, Monrad Bahloul told a press conference.

'These people have been thrown in jail because the Israelis are saying that they constitute a threat to the security of Israel. How can a 10-year-old boy threaten the security of the country?' he asked. He reported that by 13 January no less than 35 Palestinian martyrs had been killed in the occupied lands.

'None of these martyrs had a weapon in his hand when he was killed. They were only armed with stones picked up from the ground and with determination to fight for the liberation of their homeland.'

Crash will hit U.S. varsities

Following the black Monday stock market crash American universities are facing the threat of immediate and dramatic funding reductions. It is anticipated that the huge corporations which fund much of the United States higher education will substantially reduce their financial support.

In addition the universities themselves have large stock holdings whose market value has been slashed overnight. For instance the Texas university fund lost \$400 million.

Some university officials dismiss this decline as 'paper losses'. Others admit that this will mean cutting back on university budgets — especially their research departments. Referring to the effect of a \$45 million reduction in Rockefeller university's holdings, Barry W. Dress the treasurer said 'There's just a little bit less for new initiatives and equipment'.

An additional concern is that donations from rich individuals which, according to the treasurer of Harvard university 'constitute a major portion of what makes American higher education superior' will be substantially reduced because of the fear of further losses. Apparently this source of funding had already been effected by a reduction in tax relief on such gifts. Charitable foundations who also

make stock investments will also reduce their spending.

On top of this the new legislation which stipulates a reduction of \$23 billion in the federal budget will very likely result in a decrease in funds available for research. Corporate benefactors whose own research and development is threatened by financial crisis and uncertainty are clearly going to cut outside research funding in preference to limiting their own programmes.

At a time when the Tory government is advocating privatisation and industrial funding of some higher education establishments and activities such as research, the 'superiority' being expressed in the funding crisis of education in USA is perhaps worthy of our attention. From a situation where the short term financial interests of industrial backers and even military interests dominated research and monopolised the lion's share of funding and consequently influenced the direction of higher education as a whole the future of many institutions now lies in the balance as the financial crisis deepens.

Reagan's terror

PRESIDENT Reagan has told Congress he'll carry on shipping \$8 million of weapons to right-wing contra terrorists fighting Nicaragua, despite Nicaraguan President Ortega's lifting emergency powers to pave the way for peace talks.

Ortega said last week that talks with contra leaders will open in San Jose on 28 January. Reagan has proposed \$270 million aid for the contras.



EPLF fighters with captured Ethiopian army prisoners.

Eritreans claim victories

ERITREAN guerrillas fighting for independence claim to have smashed two Ethiopian army brigades in battles south of Asmara. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) says its forces killed 710 government troops, wounded 230, and took 147 prisoners.

The Eritreans captured arms and equipment including two Soviet-made T55 tanks and some artillery. Their offensive began just before Christmas. Advancing from the central highlands, they overran two towns, and surrounded an Ethiopian division.

The EPLF has been fighting Ethiopian rule since the days of Emperor Haile Selassie. In the last nine years, Colonel Mengistu's military regime, the Dergue has launched eight big military offensives to crush the Eritreans, but without success.

The EPLF has rejected the Dergue's claims to be introducing internal 'autonomy' recently, and said last year's elections were a mockery fixed by the military. They are bitter that the Soviet bureaucracy, which once voiced support for their

BY PIERRE DUMONT

aspirations, has been assisting Mengistu against them.

In 1985, with drought and famine across the country, the EPLF called for a ceasefire to expedite relief operations, but this was rejected by the Dergue. A recent EPLF statement accuses Mengistu's regime of having used the drought to consolidate its power, and manipulated international aid to sustain its supporters' privileges.

On 23 October, EPLF forces ambushed a UN con-

voy carrying relief supplies. They say this was a mistake, due to the convoy having been escorted by military vehicles carrying arms and ammunition.

In a statement on the relief issue, they have proposed that both they and the regime be informed of relief movement times and routes, and that the vehicles be clearly marked. They say the convoys should not have a military escort, and ask those organising relief to ensure their activity is separate from the Dergue's military operations.

The EPLF says it has instructed its units to try to distinguish between military and relief vehicles, and take all precautions against jeopardizing relief work.

The United States government, which Eritreans still blame for their country being placed under Ethiopian rule in 1950, has been making renewed diplomatic overtures to Mengistu's regime, with a view to pulling it back from Soviet influence.

At the same time, both the US and the EEC have been using aid and trade as levers to pressurise the Dergue on its economic policies. The EEC has withheld £120 million aid, and there is talk among US politicians of banning coffee imports.

While continuing to squander millions on arms and fuel for its war against the Eritreans, the Ethiopian regime has to use what fertile land is left for producing export crops, to obtain foreign currency and pay interest to the international banks.

Top level Ethiopian government delegations toured Europe, North America and the Middle East recently, to canvass economic aid and diplomatic support.

In northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, masses of people are again facing famine. Neither their lives nor the Eritrean struggle can be left to the diplomatic skulduggery of the imperialist powers, or the deals done by the Soviet bureaucracy.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ISRAEL-SA NUCLEAR AXIS

ISRAEL and South Africa have 'an alliance cemented in plutonium' and 'soaked in blood', according to Israeli academic and former naval commander Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi.

In a new book out this month, Beit-Hallahmi says the flash seen by a US spy satellite off the coast of South Africa in 1979 was almost certainly a 155mm nuclear shell being tested.

Both countries realised in the 1960s that what they needed was tactical nuclear weaponry. This led to the development of the nuclear shell, fired from the 155mm howitzer, or from a naval gun tested in 1979.

'Such co-operation between two countries in the development of nuclear

weapons proves an extremely high level of trust and intimacy in the relations between them, an alliance cemented in plutonium is sealed in blood, and should be taken very seriously.'

Besides co-operation with the South Africans, Israel's arms trade serves to do the 'dirty work' for US imperialism in parts of Africa, Central America and Asia where the US administration wishes to conceal its involvement, Haifa University professor Hallahmi says.

(The Israeli Connection, by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, I.B.Tauris, £14.95).

Japan-China war row

CHINA'S official 'Peking Review' has attacked increased Japanese military spending as a 'blow against world hopes for peace and development.'

Meanwhile, distributors of the film 'The Last Emperor' in Japan have cut scenes of the 1937 Nanking massacre and other Japanese war atrocities from the film.

PALESTINIAN youth rising heroically against Israeli military occupation have thrown leaders of the Zionist state into a political crisis.

Even if the Israeli military could keep foreign newsmen and television out of the occupied areas and refugee camps where they have been brutally suppressing the people, their own people would still know what has been going on.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

The Israeli conscript soldiers, confronting young people who despite beatings and bullets, come back for more, are frustrated and could become demoralized.

Two of the ideological myths of Zionist propaganda are in tatters — that of the brave, highly-motivated, Israeli soldier standing up to terror, and that of Zionist labour.

Farmers and contractors depending on Arab labour were surprised by the strength of the Palestinian strikes, both in the occupied territories and within the state itself. The orange harvest should be at its height. Tnuva Export was unable to pack any oranges recently because no workers had turned up to pick them.

About 100 army reservists have refused to serve in the occupied territories. Haim Baram said he had told his commander he would not go, and so far the military authorities had done nothing, he assumed because they wanted no publicity.

Baram, a former Zionist youth organiser and an army bomb disposal expert, is active in Yesh Gvul, the reservists' movement formed initially to oppose the 1982 Lebanon war.

Last week, after police hurling tear gas went on the rampage against Moslem worshippers at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque, and savagely beat fleeing crowds on the streets, a leading member of Prime Minister Shamir's ruling right-wing Likud party said Israel would have to withdraw from the territories and negotiate peace.

Tel Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat, a retired major-

general, said 'holding on to the territories is a burden for Israel, from the human aspect and the national aspect.'

He was concerned that the occupation, and the ugly scenes of repression seen by the world, were hitting the chance of attracting more Jewish immigrants. 'They will not come to a state that will not give them at least 70 per cent of the living standards they are used to, that will not give them peace with their neighbours.'

Lahat proposed a deal with Jordan's King Hussein to hand over the West Bank, and for either Hussein or Egypt's Mubarak to take Gaza. He admitted the latter might be more difficult, and thought Israel might have to appeal for international loans to develop Gaza, as part of a peace deal.

In fact, neither carve-up is acceptable to the Palestinian people, who want their own state, on their own land. Lahat's groping for such answers, not dissimilar to those Labour Foreign Minister Peres has been clinging to, is significant only insofar as he has abandoned his party's insistence that the territories must be held at all costs, as part of a 'God-given' 'Greater Israel'.

(Shamir and other Zionists insist on calling the occupied West Bank 'Judea and Samaria'. Lahat and Peres still want to hold East Jerusalem, which Israel has annexed, and where some of the worst brutality has taken place.)

A former Israeli West Bank commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Benyamin Ben Eliezer, has accused the gov-

Zionists in Crisis

ernment of having no policy, and says politicians don't want to face what is going on. 'What we are looking at is a historic process,' he told the weekly 'Koteret Rashit' recently.

Ben Eliezer, noting that the generation born since 1967 are standing up to the Israelis, calls them 'Palestinian Sabras'. (the Sabra, a tough prickly-pear cactus, was what Israelis used to call their own youth born in the country). 'They wear jeans, tee shirts and Addidas shoes and have university degrees. They are light-years removed from the previous generation.'

This generation is inflamed with 'the hatred of a frustrated society that has lost hope and experienced the cumulative effect of twenty years of occupation,' Ben Eliezer says. 'This generation is a powder keg, easily lit by every truck that crashes, every child that is killed.'

'Their identification with the PLO is complex. It influences and controls them

from afar. It is the only body fighting for their cause, and flesh of their flesh, but they are sharply critical of its methods and character.'

All these young people lacked as yet were sophisticated tactics and weaponry, the former Israeli commander said. 'This is not the generation of the kalashnikov,' of the Palestinian commandos which elite Israeli units had been sent to fight, such as his own Shaked patrol.

'Today the fire is inside. It is mass-based and spontaneous. Spontaneous terrorism, based on simple, elementary means, on what is at hand.'

'Unfortunately, nobody is grasping or willing to grasp that there can only be one solution to this problem — a political one. There is no other way, but the political sector does not seriously address itself to the problem and continues to mouth empty slogans. Meanwhile, the defence sector remains on its own, just as it has been for the last 20 years.'

PLO-Jewish meeting

LONDON PLO representative Feisal Aweidha is among speakers for a public meeting Tuesday night organised by the Jewish Socialists' Group.

Others speaking at the Friends' House Euston meeting against Israeli occupation and deportations are Richard Hauser, an expert on world refugee relief (and refugee from Nazi Austria himself), and Israeli journalist Elfi Pallis.

TURKISH SHOPS VICTORY

WORKERS in Turkey's only big supermarket chain have won a determined four-month strike. The workers employed by Migros stores, in Istanbul, part of the big Koc Holdings monopoly, had been earning only £90 a month for a 45-hour week. This is less than half the minimum needed to keep a family in the city. Most workers had to moonlight as waitresses, shoe-shine boys or whatever.

The 840 members of the TEZ-Koop-Is union came out demanding higher pay, a 39-hour week, proper job-descriptions and an end to the practice of transferring staff to any branch. This had frequently been used against union activists.

Regime

Despite pressure from the employers and the anti-union right-wing regime, the shop assistants stayed out 134 days. With little or no strike pay for most of them, they went hungry. But they stood firm.

On 31 December, they returned to work after the Migros employers had been forced to negotiate. Their final settlement is one of the highest won by workers since the military took over in 1980. With new tax-free 'social benefits' added to higher wages, the union says the workers have achieved an over 300 per cent increase.

Iranian refugees' ordeal

BY ERROL RESNIK

'We were walking in the middle of the night, it was snowing and we were freezing. The Iranian racketeer-guide wasn't speaking to us. I was younger than the other two who were with me, I didn't want them to know that I was afraid of the trip.'

When I left Tehran I knew all the dangers of crossing the borders. We may still be extradited if we are caught. But that is our fate. Maybe my fate has changed. After a short time we reach the Turkish border, and the Iranian racketeer will pass us to a Kurdish racketeer.

Suddenly there is gunfire and the sound of

horses and the cries of people. It strikes me that there was a woman's cry amongst them. The Iranian racketeer said we must go back to Iran, because the Turkish soldiers have opened fire.

Fear

We didn't listen to him but carried on walking in spite of our fear. We saw dead bodies and also a dead horse. Someone came towards us and told us a woman and child had been killed and a man captured by the Turkish soldiers. We couldn't cross the border, so we came back one day later. We tried again and crossed the border.'

The speaker is one of the 1,000,000 Iranian refugees in Turkey. His story is true, he had entered Turkey in November 1987 on the same date that an Iranian nurse and her child were killed by Turkish soldiers, and her husband captured and deported back to Iran. The



Kurdish smuggler had managed to save another child from the Turkish soldiers.

He finished his speech, 'Being afraid does not make sense to us, because when you are afraid of everything you become afraid of nothing'

Everyday, ten Iranians escape to Turkey from Iran without passports or any permission. Most of them are extradited back to Iran within a week by the Turkish authorities.

According to the Turkish weekly magazine 'Nokta', the following Iranian refugees were recently deported: Babek Trud, Sayed Tebrizi, Afsin Mur Mectehidi, Muhammed Riza, and Ali Reza Perteve. This action was taken by the Turkish authorities even though a Turkish court had ruled against their extradition.

Nightmare

The tragedy of Iranian refugees is a continuing nightmare. When Turkey deports Iranian refugees back they are either shot on return or sent to the war front. According to an Iranian who smuggles

people, Iranian refugees are killed at the border, or sent to the war front after long interrogation under torture.

The families of those who have fled Iran suffer great hardships. Their rights to education and work are removed, they lose their meat ration, sometimes they are imprisoned.

When a deported refugee is sent to the war front his parents must give the state a minimum of £1500 as a guarantee for their son. If he doesn't die within three years at the front, he is then imprisoned for three years.

The Iranian racketeer said 'Iranian people want to escape from Iran and are supported by their families, despite the hopelessness and tragedy of being refugees.'

In Turkey, Iranian refugees live under very harsh conditions. The Turkish police steal their money and anything they have of value. They are set to forced hard labour. People who refuse to do this work are deported.

Even once living in Turkey their lives are still under threat from

SAVAMAK, the Iranian Secret Service. In the Autumn of 1986, twelve Iranian refugees were kidnapped from their hotels in Van. The Turkish authorities did nothing.

Under these circumstances, many refugees don't send their refugee applications to the United Nations. They know that the United Nations is unconcerned about their plight and that there is no guarantee that their applications for refugee status will be successful.

The persecution of the Iranian refugees stretches also to Pakistan, which like Turkey, enjoys good relations with the Islamic regime. The so-called European democracies, champions of human rights, have abandoned the refugees to their fate.

Every day the Khomeini regime uses every sort of pressure and violence in order to try and crush all opposition. As Trotskists we declare our fullest support for the refugees driven from Iran, we stand with the Iranian working class against all the attacks launched by the bourgeois government of Khomeini.

MANCHESTER:

BY STUART CARTER

Time to defy govt.

ON 13 January a march of 200 hospital workers descended on a meeting of Salford Health Authority where cuts of £1 million were being proposed.

Authority general manager, Peter Foster, told the lobbyists that if the authority did not balance its budget and make cuts government commissioners would be appointed to take over the authority.

The argument had been accepted in previous years but this time the workers said they would fight all cuts whether they were made by the health authority or commissioners.

They demanded that the health authority take a stand to protect services and refuse to make any cuts.

Nurses and ancillary workers speaking from the floor said that now was the time to defy the government while it is under increasing attack for under-funding the health service.

Many of the marchers were nurses from the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. Under the cuts proposals the admissions unit and two wards at the children's hospital would close.

They would also mean that children from outside the Salford district would be refused treatment at the hospital, even though many of its specialist facilities are not

available in other health authorities. Also proposed are the closure of a geriatric ward at Ladywell hospital, shutting 26 beds at Hope Hospital, ending scoliosis (curvature of the spine) treatment and reducing the number of patients being treated in the nephrology (kidney disease) and rheumatology departments.

Scoliosis, nephrology and rheumatology are regional specialities where pioneering research is being carried out and treatments are available which do not exist in other health authorities.

A telegram from the three local Labour MPs to the authority chairman Dr Beswick asked the health authority to postpone any decision and send a delegation to the prime minister to ask for extra funds. However local councillors on the health authority took a firmer line and councillors Burrows and Murphy moved a resolution that

the health authority refuse to make any cuts. They were supported by Professor Anderson the chairman of the local G.P.s committee and the chairman of the Community Health Council. The medical advisory committee representing doctors in the health authority is also opposed to any further cuts. However the health authority was deadlocked with eight voting for and eight against the resolution.

The chairman, Dr Beswick, who had voted against the resolution said he would not use his casting vote because of the strength of feeling against cuts. The health authority was clearly influenced by the presence of the lobbyists who warned that if they made cuts they would be responsible for lives being lost.

The chairman of the local G.P.s said that because of cuts, waiting lists were increasing — causing extra work for doctors and district nurses. They could no longer cope with any increase in their caseloads. Professor Anderson said that the health authority is not over-spending, it is being continually underfunded. In these circumstances it could not balance its budget. The authority decided to send delegations to the Region-

al Health Authority and Mrs Thatcher to point out the effect on patients and services of further cuts.

The march and lobby was organised by NUPE and supported by members of all other health service unions. NUPE stewards are now planning stronger action for the next health authority meeting.

The health authority will end this financial year heavily in debt. Authorities up and down the country are in the same situation as a result of government policy of deliberately under-funding the health service in order to make private health schemes more attractive.

They usually argue that if they defy DHSS instructions they will be replaced by government commissioners. They say cuts they make will be more humane than those made by government commissioners.

Hospital workers must reject these blackmail tactics and organise opposition to all cuts whoever makes them.

The TUC Health Service Committee is asking all NHS workers to participate in lunchtime demonstrations in support of the NHS on 10 February from 12.30p.m.- 1.30 p.m. outside every hospital gate in the North West.

No blackmail

MANCHESTER Royal Infirmary was last week declared bankrupt by its general manager. Stewart Clapperton said: 'To all intents and purposes we are bankrupt. If we were a commercial organisation finding the prospect of not being able to pay our staff we would have gone into voluntary liquidation.'

The Central Manchester Health Authority is £1.7 million in the red this year. To stay solvent it has been holding back payments to its major suppliers and has run up a bill of £5.6 million, which must soon be paid.

After sending letters out to all employees warning that money to pay their wages may soon

run out Mr. Clapperton said that 150 jobs would have to go. But unions at the hospital have stood

firm and have advised staff to reject 'invitations' to volunteer for early retirement, cuts in hours and redundancy.

Central Manchester Health Authority has also been one of the first authorities to privatise services.

Unions urged all staff and members of the public to lobby the health authority meeting on Tuesday to demand that cuts are rejected. Stan Rupa, NUPE official, said 'Everyone is now coming to the conclusion that at

the end of the day the issue is one of central funding.'

Two unions, NALGO and ASTMS are holding ballots on industrial action.

In north Manchester the health authority was promised £487,000 to placate mounting concern. But now they have been told that they will not get the money unless they extend privatisation plans and close 55 beds.

Health Authority finance panel member, Mrs. Pamela Barnes, said: 'We are being blackmailed.'

Stand firm

MORE than 400 hospital workers lobbied a meeting of Central Manchester Health Authority last Tuesday demanding that plans for 145 redundancies at Manchester Royal Infirmary be withdrawn.

They stormed the meeting and demanded that discussions take place.

Members of NALGO and ASTMS technicians, laboratory staff and secretaries went on strike for two hours. NUPE porters from MRI and the neighbouring eye hospital went on strike for the afternoon.

Steve Riddles, NUPE chair for Central Manchester hospitals, told Workers Press: 'The lobby was well attended especially by professional staff who don't normally join such actions. The staff were very angry and want to show their feelings. But this is just the

start of the battle — if the redundancies go through there will be more action.'

He said the redundancies would be catastrophic for patient care. No redundancies are planned for nurses since the hospital is short of nurses already; nor amongst ancillary staff where savage cuts have already taken place.

Riddles said: 'They come out of a very small number of professional, technical and administrative staff and it will end up with nurses having to do even more.'

The Authority has warned that they may not be able to pay wages if redundancies are not made.

'I would rather see that happen' Steve said, 'it would bring things to a head rather than the Health Authority carrying on the pretence that they are doing the job of running the hospitals.'

Lobbyists told Health Authority members that the government had money available which could be directed to the Health Service and so they should stand firm.

SCO



3,000 Lo Glasgow H Author

REPORT FROM HILARY HORN

Representatives from the health unions and local communities were barred from a meeting of the Greater Glasgow Health Board on Monday before they could state their case against the privatisation of hospital services.

The deputation was echoing the anger of a 3,000 strong demonstration outside the Health Board headquarters of ancillary workers, nurses and doctors. All 40 hospitals in the area were represented, from the small Samaritan hospital in Shawlands, Glasgow's only women's hospital, to the massive Southern General in Govan.

After a two-hour meeting the Board agreed to accept the Tory Scottish Office proposals to put out hospital catering and cleaning ser-

vices to private tender. Health unions said they would be meeting at the Scottish TUC to step up their campaign against the Board.

Health Boards in Argyll and Clyde, Lanarkshire, Tayside and Lothian also face the threat of industrial action by agreeing to privatisation.

Nurses at Gogarburn mental hospital, near Edinburgh walked out for 24 hours on Monday in support of ancillary workers, who have been on strike since last week over plans to introduce private contractors.

TS FIGHT BACK

5,000 in Schools Lobby



THE Charing Cross area of Glasgow was brought to a standstill on Monday by two simultaneous mass lobbies against the cuts.

At the headquarters of Strathclyde Regional Council, 5,000 parents, teachers and pupils turned out to lobby the Labour group in protest over plans to close or merge 22 secondary, 44 primary, two nursery schools and one special school.

Meanwhile round the corner in Bath Street, thousands of health service workers, including striking nurses, were lobbying the Greater Glasgow Health Board over Tory plans to put health service catering and cleaning out to private tender.

Scale

Labour-controlled Strathclyde Region are bent on butchering schools on a scale even beyond the imagination of the Tories, who have proposed the closure of 20 secondary schools.

Parents and teachers are absolutely clear that the Labour councillors are doing the Tories' dirty work, that their plans have nothing to do with education and everything to do with financial savings. The Scottish Federation of Socialist Teachers are calling for the resignation of Labour councillors who support the cuts and demanding that they stand for re-election on a Tory programme.

Uniting

Throughout the region joint anti-closure committees have sprung up uniting parents, teachers, pupils and communities

in defence of schools. The depth of support can be gauged by the fact that the East Kilbride anti-closure committee alone sent ten coaches to the lobby.

The lobby at Strathclyde headquarters was one of the liveliest seen in Glasgow for many years. In the van were the youth whose schools are under threat. Hundreds turned up carrying banners and chanting slogans against the council's plans and against Thatcher's cuts.

Strength

The Labour Party as a whole has been shaken to its core by the strength of the protest. District councillors (many of whom are up for re-election in May) are publicly criticising the proposed closures. So are many Labour MPs and many of the regional councillors who support the closures are afraid to show their faces at the host of public meetings that parents and teachers have organised.

REPORT FROM JOE EYRE

Parents in particular are adamant that the closures will be stopped. At a rally following Monday's lobby, Eddie Hughes, a parent representing St Andrew's High in East Kilbride said that council leader Charles Gray would never have been elected if he had stated in his manifesto his present position on school closures. 'The area review groups, in which many parents participated in good faith, were set up to close schools,' he said. 'We were told for months that no decision had been made to prevent parents setting up a campaign.'

Another parent from All Saints school pointed out that for years parents had been told schools had too few teachers and facilities. 'Now all of a sudden we're being told we have too few weans.'

'Our children are not going to be made political footballs either of the Tories nor of the Labour councils — education is not a privilege for a few, but a right for all.'

EIS teachers' union speakers condemned the spending of ratepayers' money by the region on huge advertisements in the Scottish press which, said president Peter Andrews, were 'downright misleading' on the question of school closures. Both he and the general secretary-elect, Jim Martin, warned of industrial action by teachers if the Labour group did not change its mind.

Parents and teachers are being urged by the Socialist Teachers' Federation to organise the orderly occupation of threatened schools and hold open days to show the public the resources that are to be axed.

The EIS is calling for a series of rolling strikes during January and February and the parents and communities are gunning for the councillors who they accuse of keeping parents in the dark about closures and actually lying in public. The movement is such that Labour could well find themselves deserted by the working class in Strathclyde come the May elections.

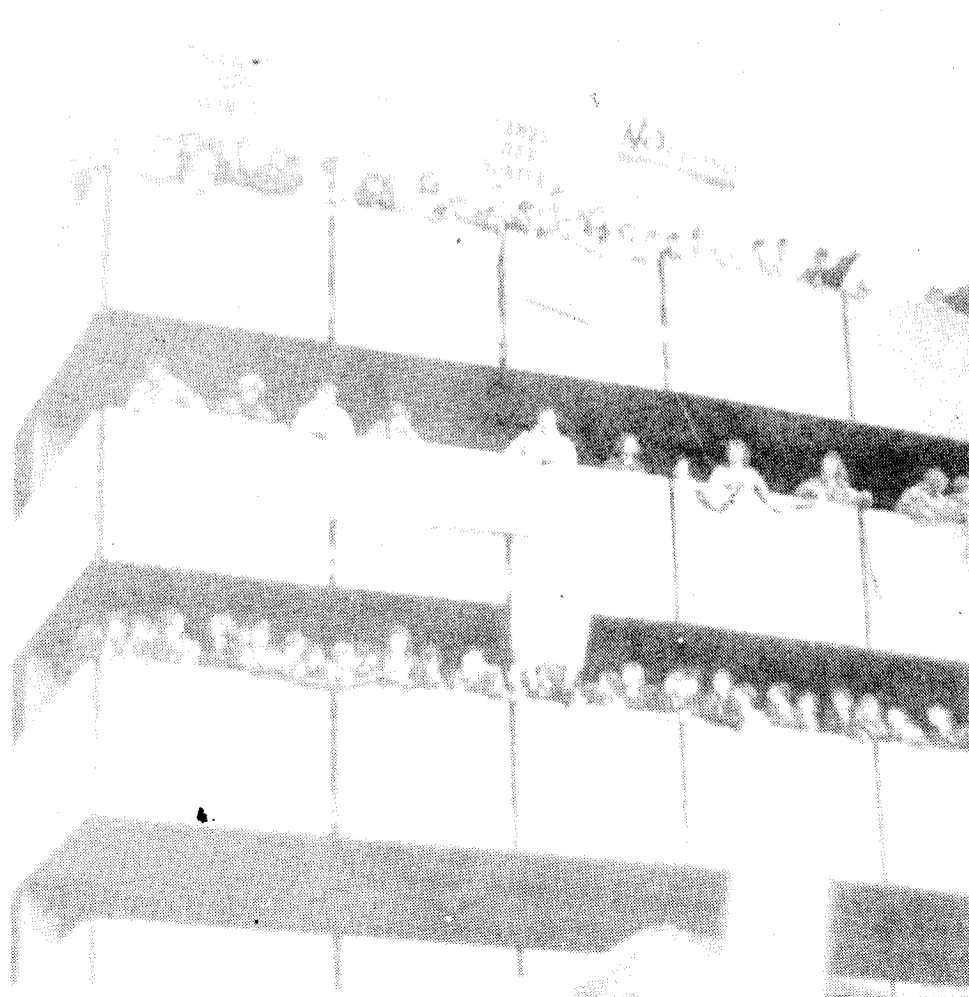
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CKS

And nurses at Hartwood hospital near Shotts in Lanarkshire also joined other staff in a 24-hour strike, the first by nurses at the hospital since it opened in 1896.

At a press conference held by health service unions at the weekend, Marion Haggerty, a sister at Gartnavel General in Glasgow said: 'We acknowledge that we nurses are not directly under threat from privatisation, but we still feel very deeply about the threat to ancillary workers.'

'Hospital work calls for a high degree of flexibility and responsibility to deal with emergency situations. At the moment we have that from ancillary workers. Outside contractors have a reputation for a high turnover of casual staff. They can't anticipate crises in the hospital.'



ACCUSER of CAPITALISM

John Maclean's
Speech from the dock, May 9th 1918



Available from: New Park Publications Ltd, 21-25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR, 01-274 6885; or from Paperback Centres (see separate ad), 75p + 25p p&p.

Hands off the Palestinian people!

**STATEMENT BY GROUP OF
OPPOSITION AND
CONTINUITY OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

The news reports speak of another 'bloody week' in Gaza and the West Bank. The relentless harassment and provocations of the Zionist military against the Palestinian people, particularly the youth, exceed all bounds of cynicism and despotism.

Palestinians are killed like dogs in their own homelands, in front of their own homes. Incited by Kahane's fascists the Zionist occupation makes no attempt to hide its programme of 'death to the Arabs'.

A new period is opening of a struggle to the death between the Palestinian people, condemned to disappear by the plans of Zionists, and the apartheid state of Tel Aviv. A new generation of fighters has matured who reject the counsels of despair and of capitulation of its political leaderships grouped for the most part in the PLO. The Israeli bourgeoisie are mortally afraid of them and are trying to strangle the rising revolution by large scale pre-emptive repressions.

For the Palestinian people's struggle for survival and for their own state, for liberation from imperialist occupation, carries within itself a revolutionary ferment for the whole Middle East. Israel, the imperialist gendarme, is afraid of it as are the 'sister' Arab bourgeoisies of Syria and Libya. Palestinians are as persecuted as much in Lebanon as they are in Israel, as much in emigration as they are on the West Bank. Betrayed by the corrupt Arab bourgeoisie — that of Egypt on the head — and dragged from one defeat

to another by its political leaderships — the PLO and its various components — the Palestinian people have been driven with their backs to the wall. Daily they are starved in the camps in Lebanon and terrorised in the 'occupied territories'. They can only exist as a mass of disenfranchised slaves, good only to be transported daily from the occupied zone to keep the Zionist military machine turning.

Faced with this unequal struggle 'democrats' the world over, from the open advocates of imperialism to the petty bourgeois pacifists, hypocritically cry for 'an end to the violence'. As if the violent indignation of a starving and enslaved people could be equated with the violence of aggressors armed to the teeth. Those who preach a 'peaceful settlement' even go so far as to forget their own governments' UN resolution demanding the withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces. Far from having any intention of withdrawing from the occupied territories, the imperialist gendarme in the Middle East is pursuing a policy of accelerated colonisation, flagrantly depriving the Palestinian population of their rights, dynamiting homes on the slightest suspicion of membership of or sympathy towards the PLO, provocatively terrorising the youth. None of this has been able to break Palestinian resistance. The fury of the Zionist military is the true measure of its fear of the Palestinian nationalist cause, just and invincible, bold and stubborn like few this century.

Trotskyists salute the courageous resistance of the Palestinian workers and peasants, and above



all of the youth. Despite our severe criticisms of the PLO and its components, we unconditionally support them against the imperialist enemy.

Your struggle is not yours alone, an isolated national cause. It is the cause of all the workers of the Middle East, the cause of all oppressed peoples, the cause of the world proletariat from Nicaragua to Poland, from the Philippines to South Africa, wherever the social and national struggles of the oppressed rise up against imperialist barbarism.

Imperialism and its Zionist agent has undertaken the gigantic task of destroying your people, an undertaking whose accomplices are to be found not only among the ranks of the corrupt bourgeoisies of the Arab countries and the capitalist 'democracy' in Europe, but among the ranks of the failed workers' parties — both socialist and communist — whether in power or not. Faced with this world

wide complicity, we Trotskyists re-affirm the path traced by Lenin and Trotsky. Outside of the struggle for the organisation of the young Palestinian proletariat as an independent and leading class within the bosom of the Palestinian people, outside the struggle to endow this proletariat with its revolutionary leadership, there is no salvation. The various leaderships and factions of the PLO have demonstrated their inability to lead you to freedom. Against the various deals and diplomatic combinations with the enemy, who has sworn by Mount Zion that you will vanish from Palestinian soil, against the mediaeval reaction of Islamic integralists of all shades (Khomeini, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brothers) we affirm that there will be no Palestinian liberation without the social revolution throughout the Middle East.

A free and independent Palestine will only see the light of day when the

framework of the Socialist United States of the Middle East. The task is to overthrow not only the Zionist imperialist fortress but also the reactionary Arab dictatorships in the region. The workers of Lebanon, Syria and the present Jordan, as well as Jewish workers who break from Zionism, are your indispensable allies. Palestine freed from Zionism will be socialist or it will not be. At a time when the world capitalist system is on the edge of the precipice, making the great majority of toiling humanity pay for its crisis, to believe that there can be room for a prosperous Palestine on capitalist foundations is an illusion.

But how to get there? Those who tell you that political problems are secondary in the Palestinian question and that power grows out of the barrel of a gun, that you can achieve the goal through isolated guerrilla actions, or within the framework of negotia-

tions between Moscow and Washington, are deceiving you. Without clear class politics the rifle is blind. The proof is furnished by the innumerable victims your people have suffered over generations. Your ally is not the hypocritical Moscow bureaucracy, ready to sell out your struggle within the framework of a deal with imperialism, and still less Reagan's allies, the European bourgeoisie. Your ally is the world proletariat and the party which expresses its interests and historic mission: the Fourth International. It has no privileges to defend except the privilege of its own banner.

● Long live a free and socialist Palestine!

● Down with Zionist apartheid!

● Long live the Socialist United States of the Middle East!

Poll Tax fight: Labour leaders' sabotage

IN TWO month's time, canvassers employed by Scotland's Regional councils will be on the streets, seeking out 'responsible persons' in each household to give information for a poll tax register.

The tax means the poor pay more and the rich pay less.

The Queen will pay £346 poll tax for her 17,000 acre estate at Balmoral. Local postman Alastair Leslie who delivers her letters will pay £519 for himself, his wife and son, at their two-up and two-down house in Ballater.

Many labour movement activists are trying to harness the tremendous anti-Thatcher potential of disgust at the tax.

The main obstacle faced by campaigners — many of whom advocate a refusal to register for the tax when the canvassing starts in April — is the cowardly acquiescence of the Labour Party right-wing and the euro-Communist dominated union bureaucracy, with the Tory plans.

The bureaucracy's 'Stop It' campaign set up its first local branch in Glasgow last week. The meeting's organisers, apparently oblivious to the tax's imminence, non payment or non registration for the tax would

of local ward meetings in Govan, together with community organisation to encourage non registration, is underway.

A member of the USDAW shop workers' union, who tried to move a resolution from the floor, was told by chairman Alastair Graham of the Glasgow Trades Council to 'wait until the end of the meeting': at the end she was simply denied the right to speak. At least six other left wing activists were not called despite submitting speakers' slips.

Payment

The line of the 'Stop It' campaign — spelled out in a recent television interview by its secretary John Rafferty — is that to contemplate non-payment of the tax is 'defeatist', and that the law should be repealed, not defied. This line is made even more nonsensical by the recent defeat of Tory 'rebels' in parliament who complained about the tax; it can only mean trying to strangle efforts at working class action.

In Edinburgh the trades council — in contrast to that in Glasgow — has organised a cam-

paigned for non payment, non registration, and trade union action to resist the tax. The council called a registration against it in December and, after the march, 100 activists set up a 'Labour Movement Against Poll Tax' committee.

The Scottish TUC reacted by writing to the trades council, advising against 'talk of non payment' and calling for priority to be given to the do-nothing 'Stop It'; this correspondence was noted without comment.

This Saturday, a 'Stop It' conference is to be held in Edinburgh. 'Labour Movement Against the Poll Tax' activists will be fighting for the proposal: 'don't pay, don't collect, and Labour councillors don't collaborate with the tax.'

The councils are an important battleground.

Strathclyde region, Scotland's biggest, with a large Labour majority, voted last year to accept the relevant Policy Resources Committee reports enabling the poll tax to be administered. Eleven left councillors in Strathclyde voted against: a similar minor-

ity resisted Lothian Labour council's decision to operate the tax.

On Saturday 30 January, Labour councillors from all over Britain will meet in Edinburgh (10.30a.m., at City Chambers, Edinburgh High Street) to be addressed by Neil Kinnock about the tax. The 'Labour Movement Against the Poll Tax' has called a lobby.

The treachery of the Labour-controlled regional councils has been endorsed by the 'Stop It' campaign, of whom Strathclyde region leader Charles Grey is a sponsor. It has also left NALGO members who oppose the tax in a difficult position: the poll tax canvassers, whom Labour councillors have agreed to recruit, will become members of the union.

Strathclyde region of NALGO at their December annual general meeting voted to support Labour movement resistance to the tax, and sanctioned industrial action by their members in the context of such a campaign. Computer workers, who would be the first in line were such action organised, came to

the meeting advocating only 'political and lawful pressure' against the tax.

Voted

The prospect of NALGO members being involved in collecting the tax cannot be blamed on those employees themselves, however loathsome the whole business may seem. It is above all the responsibility of the cowardly Labour bureaucracy — the councillors who voted to create the tax-administering jobs, and the euro-Communist machine which is covering up for them.

Nevertheless the fight for industrial action to block the tax is not over. In Lothian, where NALGO's annual general meeting took a similar position, left wingers have formed a 'NALGO Against the Poll Tax' movement to fight for the reversal of its decisions.

Every Workers Press reader, down south as well as in Scotland, is called upon to work within the campaign in their local communities, where potential for mass resistance to the tax is enormous.

World brief

Maxim's Occupé!

FAMOUS Paris restaurant Maxim's was taken over by 250 Left-wing youth on Monday night, in a protest against government policies. They said they were turning the prestigious bourgeois eating house into a soup kitchen 'for the poor'.

Ranks break

POLAND'S state-approved unions have stepped out of line by denouncing General Jaruzelski's price and incomes policy, saying it has done nothing to ease the economic crisis, still less to improve the conditions of working people. The OPZZ unions, formed to replace Solidarnosc, are usually seen as a tool of the bureaucracy.

Arts Patron

'FIRST I decide what I want to buy. Then I worry about how I am going to pay for it,' Wall Street whizz-kid David Bloom was quoted in a 'New York Times' feature on wealthy art collectors. Now the US Securities and Exchange Commission has accused Bloom of paying for his paintings by swindling \$10 million from investment clients.

Tories flog their grandmothers

CONTRARY TO what you might expect, death is no protection against privatisation. Last year Westminster City Council sold off all its cemeteries to private companies for the price of £1.

The Wisland Investment Group Ltd (no connection to Burke and Hare Ltd, late of Victorian Edinburgh) based in Switzerland and registered in Panama is looking at a likely profit of about £7 million.

One of the gatehouses has already been sold for £170,000. Another has been valued at £300,000, and 11 acres of building land which came with Mill Hill cemetery are being offered 'in the region of £5 million'. Who says you can't make a living from the dead?

Meanwhile the graveyards have through neglect fallen into a state of decay. Relatives of the dead have expressed great distress over this state of affairs, amongst them Nigella Lawson, whose mother is buried in one of the cemeteries, along with Ann Hathaway and Billy Fury the pop star.

Nigella's mother has a certain muted notoriety as the first wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson.

The Chancellor's daughter was recently 'distressed' at being told

that it was no use planting flowers around her mother's unmarked grave, as it was about to be turfed over.

Surely even a Tory android like Nigel Lawson, must feel some embarrassment at having it publicly revealed that he has no human feelings towards his dead wife and his daughter.

Other families with relatives in the cemeteries have complained to Westminster council about the state of the graves but have received no reply. One entreaty attached to a grave reads 'Please dear God hear our plea for help. It breaks my heart to see what has happened here.'

If the Tories can privatise the wife of the chancellor of the Exchequer there's not a much hope for the rest of us.



SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

**DEMONSTRATE
FOR BRITISH
WITHDRAWAL**

**LONDON
SATURDAY
30 JANUARY**

Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out
Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group



ON 30 January 1972, Bloody Sunday, British Paratroopers opened fire without warning on unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry. Fourteen people were killed.

On 30 January 1988 a demonstration marking the 16th anniversary of Bloody Sunday will be held in London.

In order to get the biggest possible turnout, WRP members, supporters and readers of the Workers Press should contact and work with their local Bloody Sunday organising committee. If no committee exists in your area, contact other groups and set one up.

● See listings for further information.

LETTERS

Scargill

WORKERS PRESS editorial rightly supporting Scargill's fight for re-election in the midst of furious opposition, failed to clarify at this most appropriate time, WRP differences with Scargill (WP — 21 December 1987).

In fact the editorial went further, actually blurring those differences through one-sidedly claiming that 'Scargill has been one of the few leaders who by his action has opposed the drive... to create unions directly subordinate to the needs of the capitalist state' etc.

Yet during the Coal Board/NUM discussion on the Disciplinary Code, Scargill offered to submit the NUM to the binding arbitration of ACAS provided the Coal Board was willing to do the same. This offer further subordinated the Union's independence to the bourgeois state and was tantamount to a no-strike agreement.

Scargill additionally supports Tory protectionist measures in demanding bans on all imported coal, measures which divide the working class internationally and stimulate racism.

Neither matter has anything to do with fighting for the independence of the working class but everything to do with class-collaborationism, against which Scargill presents himself as the principal opponent.

Editorial adaptation to Scargill was taken further by 'our industrial correspondent's' report in the midst of rightly opposing Tory/Coal Board anti NUM/Scargill machinations (WP 9 January 1988).

He is seen (!) to represent, wrote our correspondent, 'workers who want to fight for a socialist alternative (!) That is why (!) all serious socialists are supporting Scargill'. Seen by whom we must ask. By workers perhaps? But are serious socialists not obliged to dispel those illusions in practise in Workers Press?

And what is this ambiguous and evasive 'socialist alternative'? Isn't one illusion that Scargill is busy fostering amongst workers, the 'socialist alternative' of parliamentary socialism?

Is it not clear that Scargill uses miners militancy to oppose at certain times, certain forms of his opponents' class collaborationism in order to push forward a fundamentally counter-revolutionary, class-collaborationist strategic fight for Parliamentary socialism. A fight which, if left to him, would lead intact the bourgeois state, and which enables him to agree to binding ACAS decisions.

Trotskyists however are guided in this election campaign and everywhere else, by the perspective of fighting to build in the labour movement, a world socialist party to lead an independent working class in the overthrow of the bourgeois state, in order to establish proletarian dictatorship based on Soviets as part of an international struggle.

That is why in fighting alongside workers with this aim, we urge miners to place demands on Scargill whilst fighting for his re-election, since he is (inconsistently) leading the miners struggle against the Stalinists etc.

Only in this principled and dialectical way can Workers Press and cadre in practice, simultaneously push the fight forward against the Stalinists etc., facilitate Scargill's re-election and begin to dispel illusions in him thus clearing the road to building the Party amongst workers.

Such demands must include — a break with union policy on binding ACAS decisions; opposition to protectionism; full support to all

miners' struggles including those without official union backing. And that Scargill lead the fight to unite all workers to bring down the Tories through using their own class methods etc., etc.

I look forward to the replies of the editor and our industrial correspondent.

Norah Wilde

Analysis needed

I HAVE had a feeling for some time now that we need a book which gives a real political analysis of the 1984 — 1985 miners strike.

Like every other miner on strike, I found myself going through many experiences and struggles. Our ideas of what this fight was about were very different at the end of the strike than they were at the beginning.

There have been many books about the strike, some of them by miners themselves, many of them very interesting. But we need a book which really helps us to understand our own class experience in the strike. Only a political analysis of this, learning from the experience of everyone involved, can teach us the lessons of the strike which are vital for the struggles of all workers, like the nurses today against the Thatcher government and the forces of the capitalist state.

My belief in the necessity of this work, and my determination to see the project moving, has just been greatly strengthened by having watched Panorama's character assassination of Scargill. Seeing people like the sell-out expert Jimmy Reid blaming Scargill for all the ills facing the working class was sickening. In reality it was thinking like his and of his Stalinist creators, which led to the betrayal of the miners. The class enemy and all its agencies like Panorama, the trade union bureaucracy and the likes of Jimmy Reid, want to cripple the rank and file with this kind of consciousness.

This has to be stopped — with the help of Workers Press, and of every NUM Branch, support group and so on, the kind of book I propose can be written. The writing of it could involve the members of all class organisations and all other participants who supported the strike, as well as all those now coming into struggle who urgently need to learn the real lessons of the miners strike.

I am very anxious to get this work moving, and would urgently like to hear from anyone willing to help. I can be contacted at the above address, and I ask all those interested to write to Workers Press too.

Dave Smith
ex-president
Dinnington NUM branch
member of WRP central
committee

Gutter press lies

AS THE mother of five children, whose husband is unemployed, I feel angry enough to write to you concerning an article in The Sun (rubbish) newspaper saying there is no unemployment in Crawley.

I do not know where they got their facts from, but if they had bothered to find out the truth they would have known that unemployment is still with us in Crawley.

No matter how hard this present government tries to hide the fact, whether by slanted figures, or with the help of their friends in the gutter press, unemployment is here to stay.

Full employment will not

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

begin to become a reality until the people of this country wake up and kick this present government out.

To replace it with what, I do not know. The Labour Party seems to be in disarray at this moment.

As a mother, I worry about the future that my children will grow up in. Perhaps things will change for the better. I hope so.

S Ives
Crawley, Sussex

Open Letter from Viraj Mendis

I WANT to thank you very much for the support you have given me and the campaign. Without this support I could not have managed to carry on the last year of sanctuary.

Our enemies are now using my family to attack me. Although I have come to expect the behaviour of the British gutter press — this I did not expect.

I have been careful not to have contact with my parents, brother and sister in Sri Lanka, because of the danger this would put them in. Any connection between us will be used by the Sri Lankan regime and other right wing forces to harass my family. The Sunday Express reporter has destroyed all this by the press exposure of my family. From now on my family will be marked people.

Imagine what would happen if any member of my family made any statement to the effect that I would face persecution because of my known support for the Tamil people's struggle. Imagine what extreme right wing groupings, who have just assassinated the Chair of the ruling party in Sri Lanka, for allegedly being too soft with the Tamils, would do to my family?

I don't think the Express, Star, Times and Manchester Evening News attacks on me are coincidental. Is it a coincidence that after three months or so, of press silence, just as soon as the Tamil 'House of Lords' appeal is completed (and therefore my appeal court hearing is on the agenda) that a concerted attack on me, ranging from mobilising backward racist forces to complain about my flat, to wide ranging press attacks on every conceivable issue related to my case, has been waged?

The Home Office and its racist friends, have launched a campaign against me. Tony Favell, an unknown Tory MP from Stockport, is inciting fascists to drag me from the church.

The Home Office are terrified of the consequences of a victory for our campaign. This they fear will be the beginnings of a sanctuary movement. They are preparing the political conditions, so that if the appeal goes against me, they can smash into the church without much resistance. The appeal itself and the period immediately afterwards will be the watershed for the campaign.

I need your support now, more than ever. The wide ranging forces that the government has mobilised against me can only be defeated if all sections of the progressive movement in Britain takes an open stand. I need you to write to Douglas Hurd demanding that he lifts the deportation order against me (please send a copy of the letter to the campaign). We need your ideas, experience, contacts, etc. in the campaign. Please phone us at 061-234 3168 and leave a message — we will contact you. The British state has virtually unlimited

LISTINGS

Listings are published free by Workers Press for organisations within the Labour movement. Please send details of any function or event you want to advertise to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thursday.

FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS Time to take the offensive. Day-school organised by RCP. Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19 (nearest tube: Archway). Sunday, 24th January. For further information contact Fenna King, 01-729 0414.

END THE OCCUPATION! Self-determination for the Palestinian people! Public meeting with Feisal Aweidha (PLO), Richard Hauser, and JSG speakers. Org. by Jewish Socialists' Group. Tuesday, 26 January, Friends House, Euston Road. 7.30pm.

'Glasnost' and Soviet nationality problems. JSG meeting with Stephen Shenfield. Sunday, 31 January, 8pm Friends International Centre, Byng Place (off Torrington Place), WC1 (nearest tube Goodge St.)

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

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

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

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

SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY Demonstrate for British Withdrawal. Saturday 30 January, Islington Town Hall. Further details from: Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, Box 353 London NW5 4NH. (Labour Committee on Ireland, Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group).

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

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN EVOLUTION. A series of 10 lectures. Starting Thursday 14 January 7pm. £1 (includes light refreshments). Lecturer Mike Howgate. Venue Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. London. WC1.

PUERTO RICO SUPPORT COMMITTEE. Public meeting. Saturday, January 30th, 5pm. Latin America House, Priory house, Kingsgate place, London. NW6.

BENEFIT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN MINERS. Organised by Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council. Saturday 23rd January, 8pm. Emerald Centre, Hammersmith Broadway, (263 Hammersmith Road). Waged £4, Unwaged £2.

FRANK STAGG COMMEMORATION. Wakefield Prison Sunday, 7th February at 1.30pm.

VALENTINE'S EVE SOCIAL. Organised by Tower Hamlets Hackney and East London Workers' Revolutionary Party. Saturday February 13. From 8 o'clock. Venue, 169 Leytonstone Road, Stratford, E15. Adm. £2. Unwaged OAP £1. Proceeds for the special fund for international work.

JUMBLE SALE. Saturday 6 February 2pm. Bryant Street Church Hall, Bryant St, Stratford, E15. Refreshments, tombola. Tower Hamlets and East London WRP.

PUBLIC MEETING! Labour campaign for Lesbian and Gay rights. Monday 8th February 7.30pm. Highfields Community Centre, Melbourne Road, Leicester. Meeting theme 'Lesbians and Gays fighting the backlash'. Further information contact Marie Critchley 0533 550946.

money at their disposal to fight us. Make a donation to the campaign. The appeal court hearing will be a political showdown. We need you to attend it. The date will only be disclosed to us at the last moment — to stop us from mobilising. Send us your address and we will inform you as soon as we know. Together we can win!

Viraj Mendis

WORKERS PRESS JANUARY FUND

In so far: £1,005.08

The Workers Press monthly fund went up by £315.81 last week. We now need nearly £1,000 to complete the target by 31 January. But it is not just a target — it is the minimum sum necessary each month to maintain Workers Press. Each week we are receiving reports from readers in every part of the country of the fight taking place in local government the health service and in workplaces — each week we have first hand reports of international struggles. This week our paper says 'force the Tories out' and we are anxious to hear the views of our readers so that the discussion can be conducted in the columns of Workers Press. We are now asking all our supporters to make sure sales are increasing, collect donations for the fund to ensure the continued publication of Workers Press. Don't leave a stone unturned in this struggle. Send all donations to:

WRP Monthly Fund
PO Box 735
London SW9 7QS

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £979.66

WE need a little over £19,000 to complete this fund by May 1. Workers Press will shortly be announcing special meetings to campaign for the International Conference of Trotskyists being organised by the Preparatory Committee. There is no part of the world which is not affected by the capitalist crisis and the betrayals of Stalinism and social democracy. There is no part of the world where the working class and dispossessed are not faced with a struggle against imperialism. In Britain the Workers Revolutionary Party will campaign for a May Day expressing the internationalism of these struggles and we will be campaigning for our Special Fund to ensure that we can carry through the work for the International Conference. Please make sure that you make regular donations to this fund — speak to your friends and explain its importance — ask all our readers to donate. Send donations to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

Workers Press Benefit

Proceeds to Workers Press and Bloody Sunday commemoration committee.

Venue: Abbey community centre, 222 Belsize Rd, London. NW2.

Saturday 30th January, 7.30pm. Irish music, dancing, bar, food. Admission £2 — £1 unwaged.



Vietnam and Trotskyism:

An important new publication from the Communist League of Australia comprising a series of articles by Simon Pirani on the struggle of the Trotskyists in Vietnam. Together with additional material from the Communist League, it makes this booklet indispensable for all socialists concerned to learn the real history of the Trotskyist movement and its life and death fight against Stalinism.

Now available from
New Park Publications Ltd.
21-25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR.
£2.95p. Please add 50p p&p.

Glimpse into the sewer

LAST week, having been lent it by a friend, I finally got round to reading 'Spycatcher'. Yes, I know I'm the last kid on the block, as it were, since everyone else is now into 'Inside Intelligence', the so-called 'Christmas card' sent out by the former MI6 officer Anthony Cavendish to several hundred of his cronies.

By the time I get round to 'Inside Intelligence', I dare say there'll be a reading list as long as your arm of injunctions, disjunctions, and semi-injunctions: some lightly blue-pencilled by the courts for serialisation in this or that newspaper; some legally purchasable in Australia but in Thatcherland available only under the counter; some with refutations of refutations of Chipmunk Puncher or whatever his name is; some even perhaps (shades of Borges) with refutations of those refutations.

SHOTS

I don't envy the bibliographers who have the task of keeping tabs on these 'books which are not books' but rather shots fired in a seemingly endless series of interlocking private wars waged by disaffected pensionless ex-MI5 men, self-appointed 'Intelligence' experts, and others keen on getting their spoons into the gravy.

Suppressed books are the bane of the

conscientious bibliographer's existence. I spent several years trying to get hold of a check-list, which I knew existed, of the suppressed books in the British Library: ancient libels; books saying disloyal things about Queen Victoria's love-life after the death of the Prince Consort; blasphemous books; books withdrawn from circulation during the First World War, on the 'advice' of the Special Branch, because they said nasty things about Britain's allies or nice things about Britain's enemies; books telling aspirant burglars how to crack safes; books telling aspirant anarchists how to make bombs . . .

Needless to say, I never got sight or scent of that check-list, now no doubt swollen by 'Spycatcher' and 'Inside Intelligence' and soon to be further swollen by their progeny.

'Spycatcher', despite a few (for me) longeurs when technical matters are discussed at inordinate length, is well worth the time spent reading it. For one thing, it reveals very clearly indeed just why Thatcher has gone to such extraordinary lengths to have it suppressed if she could.

The reader is invited to look through a peep-hole, as it were, into a self-contained underground sewer inhabited by a bunch of ignorant, arrogant, and extremely unpleasant creatures — rats, if you like, but lacking both the intelligence and the mammalian solidarity of *Mus decumanus* — who deem it their business to spy on the rest of us and who think they have a God-given right to make and unmake governments.

When not spying on and plotting against the working-class movement, these denizens of the capitalist state's underworld seem to devote much time and energy to stabbing each other in the back.

If there's one thing they hate more than 'subversion', it's each other. 'Spycatcher' makes it clear that there's no love lost, either, between MI5 and their grimy dogsbodies in the Special Branch: 'Special Branch would like to be us, and we don't want to be them.'

'Spycatcher' tells, with unconcealed distaste, of one MI5 operation where a Special Branch superintendent, brought in at the last minute to make the actual arrests, claimed all the credit and hogged all the press and television publicity.

Of the greatest interest to trade unionists and political activists is MI5's 'F Branch', which 'Spycatcher' calls a 'domestic surveillance empire'.

This evil empire gathers information, by bugging, burglary, and infiltration, about the 'activities and structure' of left-wing organisations, including the Workers Revolutionary Party. One of the past officers of 'F Branch' is described as 'ambitious', which I should imagine is putting it fairly mildly.

Unscrupulous ambition often succeeds, especially under Thatcher. It has done so in the case of Patrick Walker, who, we were told a few days ago, has now made it to the top of MI5.

According to the 'Guardian', this 'career MI5 officer', who spent a lot of his time in 'F Branch', has now been promoted to the plum job of Director General over the heads of the organisations's 'old guard', which can't have pleased them very much.

TERRORIST

The article revealing this claimed also that 'there is a view in Whitehall that MI5 should concentrate on active terrorist groups and less on political and other organisations which may come under the Government's broad definition of "subversive"'.

Frankly, I don't believe a word of it. To my mind, this smacks of disinformation, an art in which this lying, furtive government are past-masters.

The leopard doesn't change its spots, and I should have thought that the appointment of an 'F Branch' expert to head the whole caboodle foretakens a stepping up rather than a scaling down of state spying on working-class organisations.

After all, they've been at it for quite a long time. One of the most enlightening experiences of my life was to sit in the Public Record Office at Kew a few years ago and read the reports of the spies and agents provocateurs sent into the British working-class movement of the Regency period: especially around the years 1817-1820, when state repression was at its height.

To handle those long, thin strips of parchment and read those grubby, illiterate informers' reports gave me an authentic frisson of horror, a shudder along the spine.

PIONEERS

For these were the very documents that sent some of the most devoted pioneers of the early British labour movement to their deaths: men whose crime was that they resisted tyranny as best they could and sought to persuade others to do the same.

There was some light relief here and there, of course. I enjoyed the description of the 1819 socialist meeting in the Mulberry Tree tavern, Moorfields, 'crowded to Suffocation' with 150 people, all very poor.

The landlord looked hard at everyone entering the club-room and signalled to the speaker whenever a stranger came in; then 'the subject of Spies is started and violent declarations made as to the Manner they would treat a Spy if discovered'!

After 170 years or more, the British ruling class has had a great deal of experience in this class of operation, and there's no reason whatever to believe that it's no longer a top priority for them.

But this knife cuts both ways. For the working-class movement also has had a lot of experience of the techniques used by its enemies.

To combat these techniques, even in their sophisticated modern forms, we need neither complacency nor paranoia but common-sense level-headed vigilance.

The statement printed below is from the Puerto Rico Support Committee, established in Britain a year ago.

The Committee is holding a public meeting on Saturday, January 30 at Latin American House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 starting at 5pm which will give an update of the 'Macheteros' case described below and discuss British labour movement solidarity action.

On August 30, 1985 250 armed FBI agents invaded the homes of Puerto Rican political, trade union and independence activists, and arrested 13.

Three more were arrested later — one an American attorney. Those arrested stand accused of belonging to an armed, clandestine independence organisation called 'Los Macheteros', using the funds from a federal robbery in Hartford, Connecticut to further their aims.

The 13 were taken, chained, from Puerto Rico to Hartford in US military airplanes.

For many months, those arrested were held under the 'Bail Reform Act, 1984' which allows for 'preventive detention'. After 16 months, the majority were allowed out on bail after massive popular pressure, and most returned immediately to Puerto Rico.

Two men, however, Filiberto Ojeda and Enrique Segarra, remain in pre-trial detention after more than 28 months.

These are the longest incarcerations of this type ever in the history of the United States.

At the appeal against this, one of their attorneys asked the vital question 'How long

How long is too long?

'Los Macheteros': Symbol for Puerto Rican Independence

Statement by Puerto Rico Support Committee

is too long'. The US Appeal Court, in June 1987 effectively answered, 'We don't know — and we're not going to rule on it either.'

By the time the trials begin the two will have been in detention for three years.

Why has the entire judicial might of the United States been brought to bear on 13 Puerto Rican activists? The answer lies in the history of

the struggle of the island against US domination and rule.

Puerto Rico is a small island situated near the Dominican Republic and close to Cuba in the Caribbean. The population is Spanish speaking and of Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic American background.

After the war between the US and Spain in 1898, Puerto

Rico was 'ceded' to the US — effectively taking away the independence of an independent state.

US citizenship and domination has been a mixed blessing to Puerto Rico.

Migration to the US in search of work and other opportunities is open to Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans on the island are de-

nied the Presidential elections. More than two million Puerto Ricans live in the US. The population of the island is 3.5 million.

Experiments in different types of economic development have mainly proven to be failures.

Unemployment is about 30 per cent and much of the population depends on welfare funds from the US.

Because US industry has an open entry into Puerto Rico, problems of environmental health and the break up of the cultural and social structure have begun to emerge.

As a result of economic problems on the island, there has been increasing tension and anti-US feeling.

American bases on the island in particular have become a focus for much activity.

The US has its largest naval base in Latin America in Puerto Rico. The island has played a strategic role in US policy in the Caribbean, and what the US does not want is unity among movements in the area.

The defendants in the 'Macheteros' case are accused of using funds from a federal robbery to further the aims of the independence movement.

The repression against them, the raids on their houses, the confiscation of all books and papers in their homes, the open violations of their rights before arrest — wire tapping, selective surveillance without the knowledge of the Puerto Rican government, the use of pre-trial detention on such a massive scale, the insistence on trials in the US instead of on the island, all of these point to a US desire to crush the movement and frighten into submission those who advocate independence.

Los Macheteros have become a symbol.

Popular agitation, demonstrations of solidarity at the trials and a constant reporting have meant a high profile for the defendants.

Even those who do not consider themselves independentistas are sympathetic and appalled by their treatment.

It is possible that the US government's sledgehammer tactics will be counter-productive.

ROBSON'S CHOICE

On **Saturday**, at 2.10p.m. (BBC2), award-winning documentary featuring ballet dancer Jacques D'Amboise, **He Makes Me Feel Like Dancin'**. At 4.30p.m. (Radio 4), **Science Now**. At 8p.m. (BBC2), **The Human Voice**, features operatic soprano Hildegard Behrens. At 9.05p.m. (BBC2), a welcome repeat of John Byrne's successful black comedy series **Tutti Frutti**. At 11.55p.m. (BBC2), Fernando Colomo's gentle comedy **Skyline**.

On **Sunday**, at 7.35a.m. (Radio 3), Piano Concerto No. 2 this week in **Schnabel's Beethoven Concertos**. At 1.10p.m. (BBC2), another chance to see last Monday's fascinating **Horizon**, 'Playing with Madness'. At 1.30p.m. (C4), Opera on Four presents a Bolshoi Ballet production of **Boris Godunov**. At 5p.m. (BBC2), the arts and media programme, **Review**. At 7.15p.m. (BBC2), part-three in the documentary series **Eyes on the Prize**, an account of America's civil rights

movement. At 8.45p.m. (C4), **Ten Great Writers** looks at Fyodor Dostoyevsky's 'Crime and Punishment'. At 10p.m. (BBC2), a film by Angela Pope, **Sweet as You Are**. At 10.30p.m. (ITV), **The South Bank Show** looks at Australian aboriginal art and literature. Also at 10p.m. (BBC1), **Everyman**, a token religious programme I normally avoid like the plague, looks at the social and religious impact white missionaries had on black tribes in South Africa, and how that legacy of confusion affects their politics today.

On **Monday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 3), Raymond Chandler's **The Lady in the Lake** adapted for radio in three parts. At 6p.m. (C4), **Information Technology** looks at 'opto electronics'. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), **Horizon** goes to the Panama Canal. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), Thatcher defends Thatcherism in **Panorama**. (Faint hearted Tories can rest assured that she will not be given the same

treatment meted out to Arthur Scargill two weeks ago by the same programme!). At 11p.m. (C4), **Ferid Arab Cinema**, a documentary introducing a short season of Arab cinema on this channel.

On **Tuesday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), part-three of **The Spy Who Came In from the Cold**. At 9p.m. (C4), a new adaptation of Dumas' **Camille**, with a distinguished casts. At 10.30p.m. (ITV), John Pilger's final blast from down under, **Other People's Wars**, in Viewpoint Special.

On **Wednesday**, at 11a.m. (Radio 4), part two of a six-part review of 1968, **The Year of Dreams**. At 10.30p.m. (C4), a welcome re-run of Tom Sharpe's hilarious **Porterhouse Blue**.

On **Thursday**, at 7.10p.m. (BBC2), **Cover to Cover** interviews Alicia Partnoy, author of **The Little School**, an Argentine concentration camp into which she 'disappeared', but survived. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 4), **Concerto**. At 8p.m. (C4),



Left: *Camille* 9p.m. on Tuesday. Right: *Boris Godunov* 1.30p.m. Sunday.



part four of **The New Enlightenment**. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), final part of Max Hastings' **The War in Korea**. At 9.30p.m. (C4), John Davies' film set in West Belfast, **Acceptable Levels**.

On **Friday**, at 6.30p.m. (Radio 3), **The World on a String** celebrates the 80th birthday of fiddler Stephane Grappelli. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), August Strindberg's powerful play **Master Olof**. At

9.25p.m. (BBC2), **Arena** features the distinguished Polish writer, Ryszard Kapuscinski, in the first of two programmes. At 11.15p.m. (BBC2), Jean Renoir's film **The Vanishing Corporal**.

By Tom Scott Robson

MOSCOW TRIALS CAMPAIGN

THE CAMPAIGN TO demand the clearing of the names of the victims of Stalin's frame-ups of fifty years ago is going to organise a public meeting in March. Trade union and labour organisations are to be circulated, asking for their financial and political backing.

Several Labour MPs and other prominent figures in the movement are being approached to take part.

March 1988 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the third and last of the Moscow Trials, that which condemned to death Nicolai Bukharin, Christian Rakovsky and other Old Bolsheviks.

Evidence has emerged during the past few weeks that the issue is still very much a live one in the Soviet Union, at the centre of a deep crisis for the bureaucracy. Reports in the Soviet press have referred to a recent meeting in Moscow, at which Gorbachev was tackled on the necessity to stop the attempt to hide the true history of the 1930s.

Gorbachev was addressing editors of the main newspapers and journals - a vital section of the bureaucracy. Editor of the influential journal 'Ogonyok' was particularly outspoken on the specific issue of the victims of the Moscow Trials, demanding an end to the policy of silence or downright lying about these leaders of the October Revolution.

The international campaign on the trials must be stepped up, not just among academics and politicians, but in the working class movement as a whole.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Name date

Address

Trade Union Age (if under 21)

SEND TO:

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

Gorbachev 'needs Bukharin heritage'

SOVIET leader Gorbachev 'needs to make use of the theoretical heritage of Bukharin', according to historian Roy Medvedev.

The Soviet historian, well-known for his work uncovering the truth about Stalinism, clearly links rehabilitation of Nicolai Bukharin, a victim of Stalin's frame-up show trials fifty years ago, with 'liberalisation' of the Soviet economy today.

Bukharin, a leading Bolshevik in the Revolution, head of the Communist International from 1926-9, and co-author of 'The ABC of Communism', was accused of conspiring with Trotsky and being a 'Japanese spy', and executed in 1938.

During the 1920s, Bukharin had advocated slow progress, compromise with the peasantry and private trade, and the 'socialism in one country' perspective adopted by Stalin.

Falling foul of the ultra-left 'Third Period' turn in 1929, he rejected the programme of forced collectivisation. He also upset Stalin, in that despite his political differences with Trotsky he opposed Trotsky's banishment.

In an interview with the West German news magazine 'Der Spiegel', Medvedev recalls Lenin's descriptions of Bukharin as 'a golden child of the Revolution' and 'a very valuable and important theoretician who hasn't quite understood dialectics.'

'He was honest and modest, and the chief editor of "Pravda".' Medvedev observes. 'He wrote the Second Party Programme, as well as "The ABC of Communism", which had to be studied by every Party member. He loaned his theoretical abilities to whoever came to power.

'He compromised and

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

didn't use the majority on the politbureau which was behind him, to isolate Stalin. Later, Stalin had brought the politbureau behind himself with intrigue and manipulation, and declared Bukharin's programme a deviation.'

'The first Five Year Plan was worked out under the decisive influence of Bukharin. But Stalin was for a super-industrialisation. It was exactly Stalin's ideas which proved to be a big mistake and did immeasurable damage to our economy.'

Medvedev plainly wants to rehabilitate not only Bukharin, the Bolshevik who was legally murdered, but Bukharin's Right Opposition, as a heritage for 'perestroika'.

'Bukharin's programme would have meant a big development for both industry and agriculture, technological development as higher standards of living within ten years.'

'If Lenin's New Economic Programme had been carried on, which means a well-balanced development of all sectors of our economy, state-owned, community-owned as well as private-sector, our state would have developed quicker and better.'

'We would not have had the terrible tragedies - collectivisation of 1930, murder-

ous famine of 1933, and the terror of 1936-7 were there through the guilt of Stalin. Twenty million lost their lives already before the war, including the most capable cadres of economy, science and military. Stalin needed the blood of Bukharin.'

According to Medvedev, leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy are divided on what to do about Bukharin. A commission set up under Khrushchev has proved all the accusations against Bukharin false. 'Gorbachev wants to appoint himself head of that commission, but the majority of the political committee under Suslov is against this.'

The Soviet historian also charges that many Stalinist parties in the West were against rehabilitation, 'like the French under Maurice Thorez who especially flew to Moscow to advise against it.'

'The late economic school of Bukharin is distinguished by a certain liberalism, by a coexistence of state ownership and private ownership, and collaboration with the capitalist world,' Medvedev told 'Der Spiegel'.

'In 1988 Bukharin would have been 100, and his theories need to be published and discussed. But also a whole number of Bolshevik leaders like Rykov, Tomski, Pyatakov, Radek, Zinoviev and Kamenev should be rehabilitated at the same time.'

Asked about Trotsky, Medvedev says: 'He wasn't an anti-socialist. Firstly, he was a Menshevik until 1917, but his useful work during the Revolution and civil war should be recognised. Secondly, the second man after Lenin was always Sverdlov, not Trotsky, as the Western press has grown used to writing.'

(Spiegel: But Sverdlov died in 1919...)

Thirdly, Trotsky formed the Left Opposition in the 1920s and demanded already

in 1926 what Stalin did in the 1930s. Trotsky didn't have an alternative programme but it was a rivalry between two authoritative figures.'

Leaving aside the shallowness and crudeness of Medvedev's analysis, — and his amalgam between Trotsky's demands and Stalin's turn which is completely false — his readiness to demand honest discussion as well as rehabilitation of Stalin's frame-up and murder victims is to be welcomed. It must also be born in mind



Bukharin

that seeking the truth about Trotsky cannot have been easy in the Soviet Union.

Medvedev's desire to resurrect Bukharin as a heritage for Gorbachev places him as a latter-day 'Right Oppositionist'. His failure to see the process from the right-wing policies of 'socialism in one country' to Stalin's 'left' turn, and back again, is lacking in dialectics.

Of more immediate import, the fact is that Bukharin was tried as a supposed 'accomplice of Trotsky'. To rehabilitate Bukharin and the other murdered Bolsheviks opens a Pandora's box which must frighten the bureaucracy. Hence their dilemma, and divisions on the issue.

BOOK REVIEWS

'The Devil's Pack': People's armies of the French Revolution

The term 'Revolutionary Armies' (armees revolutionnaires) used to describe those forces operating in 'Year Two' of the first French republic refers not to military organisations but to the more than 40 district and regional armed people's militias active across the country.

Set up by popular demand, particularly by the town poor, these bodies worked to enforce the recently decreed controlled economy. At the same time they were vigilant in suppressing all counter-revolutionary activity.

The beginning of 'Year Two' — September 1793 to September 1794 — was a harsh time for revolutionary France. Civil war was raging in a score of provinces and battles were in progress on all fronts against the English-led coalition forces of intervention. These aimed to smash the bourgeois revolution and restore the French feudal monarchy to sole power.

Terrible living conditions were a product of disrupted production and the English naval blockade. The situation was made worse by the action of farmers and merchants who withheld goods, forcing up prices and enabling them to make large profits. Although the newly established parliament, the National Convention, continued in being, it was by this time no more than a rubber stamp for the decisions of the ruling revolutionary committee and war cabinet, the 'Committee of Public Safety', on which sat the leading radical Jacobins, Maximilian Robespierre and Anthony Saint-Just.

The 'Sans-culottes' (without breeches), the lowest level of petit bourgeois, wage-earner and pauper masses had carried the revolution forward through every stage in spite of the bourgeoisie itself, which sought to compromise with the feudalists. The 'Sans-culottes' were willing to suffer untold hardships for the cause, but not where these were a product of the selfishness and greed ('egoism') of French capitalists.

Through their revolutionary assemblies, societies and committees the 'Sans-culottes' demanded the establishment of a 100,000-strong armed people's militia, organised into flying columns each complete with an associated revolutionary

BY BERNARD FRANKS

court and a guillotine on wheels. This would be the ideal form of 'encouragement' for the conservative peasants and rich merchants to release their grain stocks, charge fair prices and support the revolution generously.

Soldiers leaving for the front were especially concerned that their families should be protected and provided for in this way. It was over this issue that fierce struggles broke out in the popular assemblies between the 'Sans-culottes' and a horrified bourgeoisie which until this time had co-existed with them in most of the bodies evincing direct democracy.

In Paris the town hall was besieged by thousands of angry wage-earners from the workshop districts. The leaders of the revolutionary municipal committee, the Commune, were forced to carry their demands to the convention. The vast throng of revolutionary activists also went along and returned a few days later, with cannon, when it was seen that the deputies were reluctant to agree their proposals.

The Jacobins, the club of the middle class and the radical bourgeoisie (the sector closest to the people) took up this aspect of the 'Sans-culottes' programme only when they saw that they could no longer oppose it and still retain leadership of the popular movement. In any case, they saw mitigating circumstances in that the controlled economy was less dangerous for the bourgeoisie than the demands for the equalisation of wealth. Also, the revolutionary armies would ensure that the military forces of the Republic were adequately supplied and the townspeople fed, thus reducing the need for the new extension of the revolution for which 'Sans-culotte' leaders were calling.

The great fear of the government was that these civilian militias would become the military wing of the existing organs of direct democracy, which might act as an alternative form of government to a parliamentary system. This problem was solved by decreeing the controlled economy and the revolutionary armies in grossly emasculated form.

In regard to the controlled economy, some basic essentials notably bread, were fixed in price and in the amount per person at this price. The remainder, however could be sold at market price i.e. to those who could pay the most. Meanwhile wages were also frozen.

In regard to the revolutionary army, a Paris force of just 7,200 men was decreed. The provinces were advised to use their existing agencies: a handful of gendarmes and the (bourgeois) national guard. A general staff was chosen to ensure a majority of Jacobins and loyal government men.

Its commander, Ronsin, was a protege of the painter David who was a Robespierist and a member of the highest body in charge of suppressing the counter-revolution, the 'Committee of General Security'.

This new force was denied its own revolutionary courts and its mobile guillotines. But for the fierce enthusiasm of its members it would have been little more than a token body to appease the anger of the 'Sans-culottes'. However, many other towns and provinces had not waited on the government's edict but had set up their own armed force on their own authority.

First published in 1961 in French, Richard Cobb's book is now in English for the first time. Drawing on government, military, police, municipal and revolutionary archives he brings to life the characters who comprised the 'Revolutionaries'. In amazing detail, he uncovers the social backgrounds, political affiliations, ideals, motivations and even the personality traits of those of the 18th century historian Thomas Carlyle called, 'the Devils Pack'. Cobb's work must rank with those of Rude, Soboul and a few others who have researched the popular base of the French revolutionary movement revealing the total dedication and heroic self-sacrifice of those contemptuously termed 'the mob'.

What Cobb discovers is that in the main the militias were made up of middle-aged townsmen with one son or more away at the war, a mix of traders, artisans, wage earners and small business owners. The militias also comprised the very poorest, the unemployed and also a criminal element. They included in their ranks some of the most fervent 'Sans-culotte' activists.

The provincial forces ranged in numbers from 10 members to some thousands, in total possibly 45,000 men. Their remit was to ensure food supplies to the town markets, by forcible requisitioning if necessary.



Halimeh Hassan Abd al-Nabi, amidst the rubble of her home.

Halimeh's home

Halimeh Hassan Abd al-Nabi, a Palestinian, sits amid the rubble that was her home, telling of her struggle. Behind are the buildings of Gilo, a new Zionist settlement on Arab land near Jerusalem.

On 14 July 1986, elderly Halimeh returned from hospital, and found 150 Israeli soldiers outside her home. She rushed to get her lawyer, but by the time she returned the house was reduced to rubble.

An Israeli construction company had wanted Halimeh out for some time. Since 1976, land around her home village, Sharafat, near Jerusalem, had been taken for

the Zionist settlement of Gilo. Vineyards and orchards were uprooted, homes demolished.

Halimeh's kitchen and well were destroyed, a boundary wall built to separate her from the settlement actually cut off her staircase. By 1986, hers was one of only two Palestinian homes left at Sharafat. Still Halimeh refused to move. For her steadfastness, the authorities detained her several times.

After her home was demolished, and her furniture dumped in a field, volunteers came to help Halimeh retrieve the furniture and put up some shelter. The Red Cross promised a tent. But the Israeli military had confiscated the land upon which her home stood in 1975, and would not allow her to remain there.

Halimeh is one of thousands of Palestinians made homeless in this way. Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have destroyed 20,000 homes in the occupied territories. For 'security' reasons. As collective punishment of Palestinian families. Or simply to drive people out.

To impose revolutionary taxes, arrest counter-revolutionaries, and to intimidate 'moderates' into supporting the revolution and guarantee supplies of food, cash and materials to the armies of France at the frontiers and in the civil war regions.

To this end they adopted a ferocious appearance and an even fiercer language, designed to terrorize the hostile into supplying stocks at reasonable prices and parting with valuables.

In civil war areas, the militias, replied to royalist atrocities with mass shootings and burning of villages. Later, during the dechristianising campaign to undermine the Catholic church's stranglehold on the countryside, religious artifacts and emblems were smashed or confiscated for the national war chest. This movement was opposed by the central government.

Cobb goes on to trace the political development that led to the suppression of this people's terror and its replacement with a state terror turned increasingly against 'Sans-culotte' activists and the most dedicated revolutionaries themselves.

This was merely the replacement of 'anarchy' with 'order' according to the government in Paris. All except the Paris force was disbanded. 'The Revolution is Frozen' declared Saint-Just. Later, the Paris army was sent on mission out of the capital, then broken up and dispersed. Finally, its leaders were arrested, tried as 'ultra revolutionaries' and executed for allegedly preparing an insurrection to carry the revolution to a new stage.

With them went the last remnants of popular support for the Robespierists. Disillusioned by the destruction of their leaders, by the restrictions imposed on their

'PUNISHING THE INNOCENT, House Demolition and sealing in the West Bank', published last month by the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, details this policy, describes cases, and urges an international campaign of publicity.

The youth of Palestine are fighting back against Zionist colonialism and brutality. The Israeli government shoots down the youth as readily as it destroys the homes of the old. Will it be influenced by human rights protests?

Maybe not. But as the fight is waged in the international labour movement for solidarity with the Palestinians, we can be sure that right-wingers and Zionists will continue to prey on ignorance and confusion as to what is really happening in Palestine, and what the fight is about.

Knowing what Israel and Zionism really mean to people like Halimeh Hassan Abd al-Nabi, is as important as having the 'correct' slogans or working out programmes.

('Punishing the Innocent' is available from CAABU, 21, Collingham Rd. London SW5 ONU.)

popular assemblies and the enforcement of the maximum on wages, the 'Sans-culottes' stood by unmoved when Robespierre and his comrades were overthrown by the representatives of the middle bourgeoisie on 9th thermidor (27 July 1794).

Terrible times followed as the controlled economy was wound up, leaving trade and prices to run free. The farmers and rich merchants no longer had anything to fear' says Cobb.

Hounded and persecuted by the thermidorians, former members of the militias would nevertheless be found involved in every revolutionary movement and action over the next twenty years. They were to play an important part in Babeuf's 'Conspiracy of Equals, the first attempt at Communist insurrection.

The Peoples Armies, by Richard Cobb, Yale University Press, 776 pages, £30.

WITH PALESTINIANS

THE Palestinian people are waging a heroic and inspiring struggle against Israeli occupation forces. Workers, women, youngsters armed with nothing but a handful of stones and the determination to free their homeland, are taking on an army that Ronald Reagan once described as 'second to none'.

This people's war must have the support of every socialist, trade unionist, and opponent of imperialism and racism. This support must be expressed in action.

In the past couple of months since the demonstrations began in Gaza, over 40 people have been killed by the Israeli army of occupation. They have ranged from a ten-year old boy to a 70-year old woman.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

As the women hastened back with bread, oranges, and vegetables for their families, jeeps of soldiers sped up. The troops seized plastic shopping bags from screaming women, scattered the food in the road, then ran their vehicles back and forth over it.

An Israeli colonel watching over his men's handiwork 'explained' to reporters that the people in the camps had to be 'taught to obey the curfew'. The camps had been under curfew for over a week.

On Tuesday, 19 January,

Shamir-Peres government. Solidarity with the Palestinians now, is the fight for their future too.

Mordechai Vanunu, the son of poor Jewish immigrants from Morocco, had reached that conclusion when he decided to tell the world about Israel's nuclear weapons plans, having worked as a technician. That is why the Mossad kidnapped him, and why he is being tried in a secret court, to keep him silent. There must be more Vanunus, ready to organise, and act.

The Palestine issue is international. As an old Palestinian refugee told his sons last week, 'The English brought all this upon us, with their Balfour Declaration.' It was British imperialism which brought Zionism to the Middle East.

The State of Israel was established on the destruction of Arab Palestine. It was those very powers like the United States, which had closed their doors on Jews fleeing Nazi Germany, who decided after the War, in their benevolence to prom-

toxicated with the pride of military conquest, the arrogance of colonialism, and a dangerous new fanaticism poisonously blending corrupted religion and outright racism.

The 'only democracy in the Middle East' is ruling half a million people whom it denies all rights — except, of course, the 'right' to pay taxes. For people like Ariel Sharon, the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank are meant to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'.

Palestinian land is seized for Zionist settlements. Water resources needed by Palestinian villages are diverted for these settlements. The Palestinians are being turned into a rightless sub-proletariat to work for Israeli employers, in the dirtiest and lowest-paid jobs.

On the official maps of this 'normal' State of Israel, there's a most abnormal feature — no borders are shown! But any Palestinian from Gaza who goes to work in Ashkelon (where his family might have lived before 1948), and tries to stay the night, is soon reminded by Israeli police, or racist vigilantes, that there is a border, and he must go back over it — or else.

Just like South Africa. In fact, the Israeli Benvenisti commission in 1986 decried Gaza as 'Israel's Soweto'.

The Palestinian people have risen up to throw off colonial rule. They are fighting for the right to live in their own land, and to run their own life as a people.

The Palestinians have made it clear, through their representative organisation — the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) that in this just, national liberation struggle, they are not fighting for their exclusive rights.

They are prepared to share Palestine with the Israeli Jews, either in one secular democratic state together, or two states alongside each other. What they are not prepared to do is remain the enforced subjects of a racist colonial rule, subject to land-grabbing, repression, and deportations.

In the forefront of the struggle today is the generation that grew up under occupation. Behind them stand all the Palestinian masses, in the camps, in the territories, in the Arab world, and within the State of Israel itself.

The Palestinian youth know there is no other way but struggle. Time and again, their people have told anyone who will listen that they want their freedom, and that the PLO is their representative. A poll carried out last year by a US agency found over 90 per cent of the people in the West Bank and Gaza supported the PLO.

Rabin admitted as much to Thatcher during her visit. He said the Israelis could not allow municipal elections in the West Bank because the people 'would only elect PLO supporters.'

Still the British government backs the scheme of Israeli Foreign Minister Peres to maintain domination of the West Bank with the help of Jordan's King Hussein. A scheme the Palestinian people firmly reject.

The Reagan administra-

tion, like the British Foreign Office pretends it does not like what the Israeli troops are doing in Gaza — just long enough to help its reactionary Arab client regimes praise it. Then it agrees on more billions in aid for Israel.

As for the Soviet bureaucracy, having hosted King Hussein just before he began arresting Palestinian militants, they are now entertaining an Israeli diplomatic mission in Moscow. What timing!

But the Palestinian people must not be allowed to stand in the way of Gorbachev's deals with US imperialism, must they?

A Palestinian leader remarked a few years ago 'There is hardly a regime in the Arab world that has not betrayed us, monarchies or republics, whether they call themselves capitalist, or 'democratic', or 'socialist', they have all attacked our people.' The same goes for the great powers.

This is why the young

Palestinians are relying only on their own determination and heroism. Is there anyone else they can trust?

We repeat: the international working class movement must rally to the side of the Palestinian people. Not just with words, but with deeds.

Those on the left who are forever offering unsolicited advice on where the Palestinians have 'gone wrong' should realise that no one is obliged to listen. If we want to propose 'programmes', we must first prove we are in the struggle.

The answer to the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian camps must be the international trade union blockade of Israeli exports, shipping, and airlines!

- End the Occupation!
- For Palestinian self-determination, sovereign statehood, and equality!
- For Arab-Jewish workers' unity!
- Forward to a socialist federation of the Middle East!



Israeli soldiers have gone into a hospital to drag out injured people as prisoners. Youths were tied to the front of an army jeep as a shield to plough through demonstrators.

In Jerusalem, Israeli police hurled tear gas canisters into the al Aqsa mosque, crowded with Friday sabbath worshippers. Fleeing crowds were pursued with batons.

The soldiers and so-called 'border police' attacking the Palestinians are not just unleashing their own brutality. They are carrying out orders. Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin said last week that his forces had been told to crush the revolt in the occupied territories 'by force, power and blows'.

Among the sickening sights of this repression were those on Monday, 18 January, outside the Nuseirat and Elbureij refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli Army's elite Givati Brigade went into action. These heroes' target? Women from the camps who had sneaked out under curfew, to try and get food.

Defence Minister Rabin banned food and clothing from international charities and support groups coming for people in the occupied territories. 'If they want to strike and not supply food, they should not cry afterwards that there is a food shortage,' said Rabin — architect of the 'Iron Fist' policy, and a leader of the Israeli Labour Party!

Among the supplies turned away were four lorries sent from Haifa, carrying food collected by Israeli Jews and Arabs for people in the refugee camps. Supplies from Nazareth were also stopped.

Israelis who had travelled down with the relief convoy staged a sit-down protest in the road, chanting 'Down with the occupation!'

WE salute those Israelis who are speaking out against their government's brutal policies, and who are finding ways to show solidarity with the Palestinians. We back those reservists and call-up youth who refuse to serve in the occupied territories.

We call on Israeli workers to do everything they can to interfere with the repressive war machine and bring down the

ote a Jewish state — at the expense of the Palestinians.

Zionism has betrayed the Jewish people and their finest traditions. Having promised to solve 'the Jewish question' by 'normalising' Jewish life, the Zionists have succeeded only in creating a state whose existence is tied to its mercenary role for imperialism.

Today, Israel is the biggest single recipient of US aid. Its biggest export industry is armaments and military expertise, sent to places like South Africa or Latin American military dictatorships. 'Whenever there's a job the United States Congress feels is too dirty for them to handle, we step in to do the work,' an Israeli ex-officer remarked.

Having turned masses of Palestinians into homeless refugees in 1948, and systematically taken over the land of the 'absentees' (even when they weren't absent), the Israeli state seized the rest of Palestine west of the Jordan in 1967.

The Zionist leaders and apologists who'd said 'plucky little Israel' only wanted 'Peace' were now in-



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