

Workers Press

18p

ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
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Benn backs justice fight

THE BATTLE for justice for sacked miners was given a major boost this week with the launch of a parliamentary bill.

Labour MP Tony Benn put the Justice for Mineworkers bill — which calls for a review of all NCB dismissals — before the House of Commons on Thursday.

A 25,000-name petition was presented to No.10 Downing Street earlier in the day. It called for a fair deal for all dismissed and jailed men.

Benn said even though the bill would not stand much chance against the Tory majority, it would be circulated to all sections of the labour movement and would become policy for

the next Labour government.

'This bill will be supported from the bottom up. It is not only parliamentary action which affects policy,' said Mr Benn.

Justice for Mineworkers Campaign chairperson Billy Etherington said: 'As long as these men remain sacked it will be a blight on the whole of the labour and trade union movement. We will not rest until justice has been done.' Meanwhile, a massive march and rally is planned tomorrow followed by a celebration concert in the Albert Hall in the evening. The concert is sold out with 4,000 tickets bought in five days.

(See page two and advertisement page nine)



STUDENTS massed in London on Wednesday in the biggest-ever student demonstration against Tory policies.

The 50,000-strong contingent carried banners warning that the future of education is at stake.

New rules being introduced by Social Security Secretary

Norman Fowler will take away the right to housing benefit and the supplementary benefit and unemployment benefit which students depend on in the holidays.

Standing in biting cold, students gave a warm welcome to SOGAT's Ann Fields.

As new wave of strikes builds up

MINERS FIGHT

By Dave Temple, Murton Colliery Mechanics Lodge delegate NUM, WRP Central Committee, in personal capacity

FIVE HUNDRED men remain victimised while 14 are still in jail, nearly a year after the end of the miners' strike.

These men are victims not just of a viciously anti-working-class government but of the cowardly TUC and labour leadership which refused to mobilise the broad industrial movement required to defeat the Tories' attempt to provoke and then smash the NUM.

These men are class war prisoners and, above all, they are victims of state repression.

No-one who witnessed the events at Orgreave could harbour any doubts about the role played by the state in the strike.

Clarity on this question is essential. It was revealed for all to see that the state, the police, the judiciary, the press and television are thoroughly capitalist from top to bottom. They cannot be reformed.

However formidable the task may appear, the state must be overthrown.

Despite the tireless efforts of many Labour Party members in support of the strike, it was on this very question of the state that the leadership of the Labour Party revealed its true class position.

No matter how violent the state became, and

how much it provoked desperate acts of defence from miners, Kinnock would not oppose the state. On every occasion he lined up with the state against the working class.

It would be an act of folly to assume that any future Labour government would have a different position. Just as the 1974 Labour government kept Des Warren languishing in jail and used the army against the firemen, the demand to release the jailed miners will bring the same response.

After all, much of the preparation for undermining the industrial strength of the miners was consciously prosecuted by that same Labour government.

From the building of oil-fired or nuclear power stations to the notorious incentive scheme was all the work of the Labour

government. Even as a slogan 'Labour to power on socialist policies' fosters the dangerous illusion that this Labour bureaucracy is capable of such a policy.

The year-long strike with all its euphoria and trauma has provided us with important lessons. What was only the first of many class battles yet to come, was the testing ground of leadership and perspective.

The more bitter the experience the better we learn the lessons. We ignore them at our peril.

In the first weeks of the strike, as areas rallied to the lead of Polmaise and Cortonwood, the future of the strike tottered on a knife-edge while the NEC debated the vexed question of a ballot.

What decisively killed the argument was not the niceties of debate, but the irresistible force of miners, particularly the youth, who came onto the

streets in their thousands and demanded: 'No-one votes my job away.'

Represented in that spontaneous movement was not just the question of jobs and communities, but all the accumulated hatred of hundreds of years against a class that had so viciously exploited miners and their families when coal was essential to the economy.

Miners will recall that in many cases, paradoxically, the hardest fighters for the strike were those who hated the pit most.

Having disposed of the ballot, the powerful combination of a leadership that would not compromise and the ranks of young miners who would not allow them to do so ensured that a long and bitter struggle was inevitable.

Arthur Scargill will do well to remember that while warring factions on the NUM executive man-

oeuvre against him, his strength lies in the fact that he was able to give expression to that yearning for a principled leadership that is in the heart of this working class.

Our party pledges itself to build such a leadership.

We embrace the Justice for Miners Campaign in the true spirit of a united front. While we firmly believe that the building of a revolutionary party and the overthrow of the capitalist state is the only way the historic interests of the working class can be achieved, we will fight shoulder to shoulder with all working class organisations against this system which, having jailed and victimised miners, now proceeds to try to smash the printworkers' unions.

What is required above all is a unity that does not exclude principled criticism but above all fights for every inch of ground against the class enemy.

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National Justice for Miners Campaign

'It is our duty to

fight for justice'

THE NATIONAL Justice for Miners Campaign which is holding a demonstration in London this Saturday, had to be supported by the whole trade union and labour movement says Tony Davies, Lodge Secretary of Merthyr Vale Colliery.

'My only criticism of the demonstration is that it is being held on a Sunday and not a Saturday. I would like to see the capital disrupted by thousands of trade unionists', he told Workers Press.

'The class struggle is still going on, the issues in our strike, which was a political strike, have to fought out.

The sad thing is that members of our union and supporters outside the NUM are still in prison and suffering hardship. They have got to be supported.

'It is our duty to fight for justice for them'.

The 12-month miners' strike was isolated primarily by TUC betrayals but also through the sectionalism, never really

overcome, of the national leadership. Davies sees this campaign as a wider struggle against the Tory government.

'Even political organisations who hate each other's guts, must work together against this vicious government', he said.

'Even if a Labour government was elected at the next election, I couldn't see that Labour government getting the men out of jail and the sacked men their jobs back, without a lot of pressure from the mass movement.

'A movement like this keeps the issues in the forefront of the news and the media. As a national union we have great responsibility to take more on ourselves, leading the hard work involved in keeping up this campaign. It's obvious it has to be kept in the limelight with demonstrations of this kind.'

Davies admires the stand the printworkers are making to defend trade union rights and also has a great respect for Sogat members and the role they played in the miners' strike.

'We must do one simple thing. Six million must not buy the 'Sun', 'News of the World' and 'The Times'. I hope that every miner is doing this small thing to help repay the support they gave to us in our dispute.

'We have made a commitment to Sogat. We have written to them asking if there is anything they require, whether it is financial, physical support or whatever. I feel it is a debt of honour, their cause is just, as ours was and still is. I feel this dispute can be won and must be won.'

DIRTY DEAL RISK AT CONTRACTS

An hysterical witch-hunt has been launched by the National Union of Taylor and Garment Workers against the alleged involvement of the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Workers Press in the six-month strike at Contracts Ltd in South Shields.

The immediate danger is that this outburst is the possible cover needed to end the strike.

Regional official Ron Bailes has gone to the local press boasting that he has told the WRP to keep off the picket line because of their 'undue influence' and because they want to split the union. This is a blatant lie.

The only division is between the 100 women on strike and the cowardly attempts of the NUTGW to end the dispute in confusion and drop the original demand.

ACAS is now involved in a union initiative to reduce the lay-off period offered at an end of the strike to convince the strike leaders that this is the only deal possible.

The issue is not the involvement of the WRP but the lack of involvement of the NUTGW. General secretary Alec Smith and regional official Geoff Bowen go nowhere near the picket line but Smith has private phone calls with Mr Shen, financial director of Contracts Ltd (who refuses to recognise the union).

Derek Cattel, an organiser from another area, is brought into mass meetings to pressurise the strikers to accept Bailes' word.

Strikers were rushed into voting for a secret ballot on a works committee while leading strikers were absent.

The strikers had to vote with scabs who now sit on this works committee.

This split the strike 45 to 45: the outcome would have been different if the leaders had been there.

Workers Press and the WRP will not keep quiet when workers are treated this way.

These heroic strikers deserves a better leadership than this. See full story next issue.



ANN LILBURN

Jailed miners need support

ANN LILBURN, Chair of the Women Against Pit Closures, a speaker at Sunday's rally, told Workers Press her feelings on the justice campaign.

'This is vitally important to the trade union movement. We have 600 men still sacked and the numbers are growing every day. Men are now sacked for the most trivial of offences.

I feel very strongly about fighting for justice for the miners in jail. These men were driven to extremes.

Everything they did was out of loyalty to their union and to their fellow workmates. I would call them honourable men.

I don't agree with all the methods used in the struggle but they were driven by the pressures of the government, the massive police presence and the starvation.

When you take into consideration the provocations they faced, it is wrong that there are miners in jail. I will never

INTERVIEWS BY HUGHIE NICHOL

stop fighting for justice for these men.

I was on the Wapping picket line and the spirits were very high amongst the print workers. I received a tremendous reception mainly because the miners and support groups are fully behind the print workers.

We are all fighting for jobs.

They said many times during the miners strike 'your fight is our fight'. This is the way we feel now — their fight is our fight.

When I returned to the north east we got off the train at Newcastle station and immediately joined a print workers' picket outside a newspaper distribution depot next to the station.

We must all fight together. This is how I feel.

ANN SUDDICK, co-ordinator of the Durham Miners Support Group and a delegate to the Women Against Pit Closures.

Print

'The attacks on trades unions by the government are continuing.

We feel it in the victimisation of mineworkers and now we see it in the victimisation of print workers.

It is now time for every trade unionist to stand up and fight for the rights of those victimised. This can only be done by campaigning and bringing the issues to the attention of the general public.

It is up to us to stop the rot and to fight for justice for mineworkers and all other trade unionists victimised by Tory legislation.

Join the campaign, affiliate to the campaign and stand up and fight!

JEFF HARTNELL, sacked miner from Durham who took part in



JEFF HARTNELL

the National March to Release the Jailed Miners, organised by the Young Socialists last year.

All jailed and sacked miners are the result of Thatcher's attacks against the trades unions.

The same is true of all sacked print workers. Which section will be next?

The attacks against the trade unions, the attacks on jobs, education, health, local authority spending and everything else is not because we have a Conservative government, though we have.

These attacks are taking place because of the whole crisis of the capitalist system which must destroy thousands of jobs, cut wages and conditions in order to stop the profits from falling.

System

These attacks won't end until the system itself is ended.

To highlight the campaign and raise finance for the sacked miners



JANE KINGSLAND

families the Justice Campaign for Mineworkers will be launched at this demonstration and rally on Sunday.

All workers must support this demonstration to protest and demand the release of all jailed miners and the reinstatement of those sacked.

Sacked miners have been campaigning in London from the middle of January for this demonstration and for the concert in the evening in the Royal Albert Hall.

JANE KINGSLAND, Contract's shop steward.

'We are sending a delegation down to London with our banner. We already support the campaign for the release of the jailed miners and the reinstatement of the sacked men.

What the miners went through has hardened us in our battle. Even though we are only 100 women and we have only been on strike for 6 months our fight is just as big.

We don't intend to give up and we know the min-

ers will continue to support us in our struggles. We know we are continuing their fight.

Our delegation will march proudly with the Durham Miners in the demand for justice for jailed and sacked men.'

TERRY HUNT, aged 17, is part of the delegation from the Contract's clothing strike and has been on picket lines for the past six months in a bitter struggle for trade union recognition.

Class

'Sunday March 2 will be a happy day for the working class.

Since the Tory government came to power they have succeeded in demoralising and humiliating workers.

They help the employers to smash strikes that would otherwise have been won long ago. The miners showed the government that the working class could be twice as strong as any ruling class could be.

The miners took for one whole year all of the devious blows that the government threw at them. The miners took these in their stride.

After one year the decision was made to return to work.

The miners were not beaten but starved and then they were still prepared to fight on. Now the strike is over pits have been closed, miners jailed and jobs lost.

In strikes now we are not just fighting the employers, we are fighting the state.'

JOIN THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

FILL IN THIS FORM AND POST TO:
The General Secretary
21B Old Town, Clapham
London SW4 0JT

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TRADE UNION _____

AGE _____

DATE SENT _____

Sweeping injunction against sacked pickets

THE INJUNCTION issued by the High Court against the picketing of all John Laing's sites is the first time that individuals and not unions have been singled out under the 1980 anti-union laws, UCATT member Ray Mills told Workers Press.

The conditions of the injunction represent the most far-reaching attack yet on workers democratic rights.

The five named pickets who have been sacked by Laings are:

1. not allowed to go to meetings — freedom of association is abolished.
2. not allowed to ask people to support the picket — the freedom of speech is abolished.
3. only two of the five are allowed to picket — the freedom to picket is abolished.

The initial dispute arose because of the use of blacklists, although the seven bricklayers were not directly employed by Laings.

The pickets said that even by being there and talking to a reporter they were committing contempt and could be jailed. But they all see the principles involved as so fundamental that they feel

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

they must defy this injunction.

Ray Mills called on all workers to support the next mass picket on Monday, March 3 at 7.15 a.m. onwards at Midland Road, London N.W.1 (next to St Pancras station).

Len Eaton, London regional secretary, issued notices that the picket was unofficial and should not be supported. Within hours of issue, this notice was being waved at pickets by Laings foremen and by lorry drivers crossing the picket.

In a separate but related incident, London regional organiser Dominic Hehir has dropped a bombshell on UCATT in the form of a letter sent



Ray Mills (left) and Jim Whitegaze picketing the Laings British Library site

on February 10.

The letter alleges ballot-rigging and bureaucratic manoeuvring against left wing candidates. Behind this desperate struggle to defeat the left is the reality of falling dues and the inability of UCATT to

continue as a separate union.

There is a strong desire within the UCATT hierarchy to merge the union with the EETPU. This would enable them to recruit from the lump which would consolidate their position.

A victory for Ray Mills, Jim White, Brian Higgins, etc. at Laings and a defence of Dominic Hehir is the first step towards developing a real fighting alternative in UCATT to expose their politics in the union and develop a revolutionary leadership.

Vote on London bus strike

BY PETER GIBSON

NINETEEN thousand London bus staff will vote at special meetings on March 6 on a proposal for all-out strike action from March 24.

Last week's delegate conference voted overwhelmingly for a 'yes' vote. Last year, London Transport closed four garages and cut 1,500 jobs through route changes and one person operation (OPO).

London Transport has now told the Transport and General union's London Bus Committee that they want special 23-seater small buses and to cut pay from £150 to £95. After two days of talks, they told the T&GWU that the £95 per week basic was 'not negotiable'.

Last Tuesday, London Transport informed the union of four more proposed closures this year: Bexleyheath (June), Southall (August), Hornchurch and Elmers End (October).

Also threatened is the Potters Bar garage because of transport subsidy cuts by county councils outside the GLC area. This would mean the closure of 10 garages in just over a year.

At the same time, they sought further attacks on London's bus services by converting 20 more routes to OPO, with the loss of over 1,000 conductors' jobs — leading to yet more congestion and slower journeys by all road users.

The government-appointed London Regional Passenger Committee's recent call for a stop to further OPO buses in London has been ignored.

Dr Keith Bright, £47,000-a-year chairman of London Regional Transport, who boasts he knows nothing about public transport, has privately stated his aim to run LRT without a subsidy within three years.

To this end, there have been cuts in services and safety standards on the Underground; an end to daily track inspections and frequent breakdown

of lifts and escalators. Now there are reports of cracks and subsidence on the new Heathrow loop.

On the bus side, safety procedures have gone from the Southall garage where asbestos was exposed during a Christmas day fire.

Has well-heeled Dr Bright instructed the bus and underground management to cut services and wages to prepare LRT for sale to city speculators?

T&GWU members on London buses must prepare for a 'yes' vote for strike action on March 6 and a determined struggle by passengers and transport workers to defeat government-directed plans to steal passengers' services and workers' wages before selling the assets that Londoners paid for.

Powers

In the course of a bus strike, the Tory government's anti-trade union planner, Transport Secretary Nicholas Ridley, will certainly de-regulate London's bus services under powers he has had for over a year.

This will enable anyone over 18 who gives 42 days' notice to run any bus service on any road, at any fare, at whatever times he or she may choose: the cowboy's charter!

Transport Campaigns have been set up in London's boroughs to represent both local groups who rely on bus and tube services and transport workers, to organise for better transport services.

These local campaigns must be developed in the same way as miners and printers support groups, to work alongside the passenger transport workers, following the expected vote for strike action. The all-out strike would then commence at midnight on March 24.

The London Transport TUC — representing nineteen London Transport unions — met late on Wednesday and voted to ask all unions 'to take whatever steps were necessary to ensure the success of the strike'.

MP joins hospital closure protest

ALF DUBS, MP for Battersea, and Tom Cox, MP for Tooting, handed in a petition to Roger Evans of the Wandsworth Area Health Authority on Monday opposing the closure of St James' Hospital, Balham, as the local Labour party demonstrated outside the hospital.

They are opposing the closure decision of the District Health Authority (DHA) which is part of the ongoing cuts in the Wandsworth area and are demanding a proper debate on the issue.

The closure decision was taken at a DHA meeting chaired in a manner which precluded proper debate. 1,200 jobs are due to go: some of those being made redundant have worked at St James' for 30 years and will find great difficulty in getting new jobs because of their age.

The hundreds of signatures on the petition were collected in the local area as part of the campaign to fight the closure of this very popular general hospital.

Many objections have been raised to the closure. Not the least of these is the difficulty anyone with a car would have in getting to the nearest hospital in the area — St George's,

Tooting. St George's is not serviced by London Transport.

The disappearance of yet another casualty ward (seven hospitals have closed in this area in the last 10 years) will mean vital minutes lost in travelling the extra distance along a congested high street.

Arthur Hautote, a theatre porter who led the campaign against the closure of St Benedict's and is about to lose his job at St James', told me:

'The final outcome of this closure will mean the shortening of people's lives'.

One of the reasons given for the closure of St James' is because it is an old building, which should be a warning to those employed in the majority of the country's hospitals.

St George's, which is supposed to be taking all the patients from St James', is a sprawling complex which, as building work progresses, is beginning to resemble Murdoch's plant at Wapping.

Some staff already refer to it as a factory hospital. They complain that working in a large high-turnover hospital not only alienates the patients but also has an adverse affect on the staff. But the effect on people's lives is what the DHA calls 'non-financial cost' and is therefore irrelevant.



MPs and supporters with the St James's closure petition

£60,000 legal fund appeal

IT IS four months since the legal onslaught against our party was launched by the Healy-Redgrave-Mitchell-Torrance group of renegades. We still cannot explain the details because of court restraints.

This clique dreams that they can smash the party by destroying its assets.

They cannot begin to understand that it is because we set out to develop Marxism that we can withstand an onslaught.

The determination of our local leaders and members to raise the funds has enabled the party to meet its urgent commitments and to carry out the legal battle.

Note that the collections at our lectures on Marxism are raising regular sums for this fund.

We have received: Upton Park £3.19, Crawley £36.67, Nottingham £30.50, Govan £10.00, Brixton £4.00, London lectures £56.47, Hull £40.00, East London lectures £18.96

This totals £200.79, making a grand total of £32,410.79

Send donations to: Workers Revolutionary Party, 21b Old Town, London, SW4 0JT

Monthly fund

Target £5,000
Received £2,092.53
Need £2,907.47

We still have a long way to go monthly target. Can we get it?

We are proud to go to the labour movement and to discuss our history, policies and practices. We make no apology for being in a state of flux — but let no-one harbour the illu-

sion that we are liquidationists!

Workers Press welcomes your suggestions and criticisms; we ask you to read and sell the paper, write to it and for it and, at the same time, raise the finance to support it.

Please send a donation immediately to:

Monthly Fund, Workers Revolutionary Party, 21b Old Town, London, SW4 0JT

Towering talent of Christy Moore

BY GERRY DOWNING

CHRISTY MOORE stands now as Ireland's foremost singer and must rank among the world's best.

The range of his talent from the purely traditional 'Raggle Taggle Gipsy' to nonsense songs to biting satire on the political issues of the day enthralled an audience jammed into the National, Kilburn, on Monday night.

He absolutely played them as if they were the strings of his guitar. He brought them up with his 'Gipsy' and his 'Lisdoonvarna' and then to a deadly hush as he sang of Frank Ryan and the Spanish civil war.

'Even the olives were bleeding as the battle for Madrid it thundered on.'

They roared with approval as he sang his new composition in support of the women being tortured and strip searched in Armagh and Brixton and then there was hardly a dry eye in the house as he raged against the terrible injustice of the Stardust fire — 'the 48 children that never came home'.

'Our leaders were shocked, grim statements were made
'They shed tears by the graveside as the bodies were laid
'The injured have waited in vain for five years

'It seemed that our leaders shed crocodile tears
'Half a million was paid in solicitors' fees
'A fortune for the owner and his family
'It's hard to believe not one penny came
'To the working-class people who suffered the pain.'

(This was banned in Ireland because it told us 'the fire exits were chained').

Christy sings of the ordinary man who 'never missed a day or went on strike for better pay' who is now part of a 'generation cast aside'. He never does a gig without singing Bobby Sands' two songs 'Back home in Derry' and 'McIlhatten'.

He says he will never join a political movement but the enormous talent and energy he delivers in his hatred for the oppressor has contributed to the political development of many a young Irishman.



CHRISTY MOORE in concert

Threat to juries warning

BY CHARLIE WALSH

All trials could soon exclude juries, barrister Mike Mansfield told a meeting of the Irish Solidarity Movement in Camden, London, on Monday 24th February.

He was commenting on the state's reaction to the jury's recent acquittal of Dr Maire O'Shea, president of the Irish in Britain Representation Group, whom he had defended on a charge of conspiring to cause explosions.

He said that among the higher judiciary there was an insidious campaign for an extension of the no-jury Diplock courts, because of the high number of acquittals.

Mansfield said as an excuse to introduce no jury

trials here in Britain they are using alleged nobbling of juries in Hong Kong fraud cases and the pretext that juries were not capable of dealing with complex cases.

Control

Already the state has a considerable control over the composition of juries. They are vetted by MI5 and the Special Branch.

In addition, the defendant's right to challenge

seven jurors has now been reduced to three.

Commenting on a message of support to the meeting from Tony Benn which called for a Justice for Ireland Bill in parliament, Mansfield said this Bill should include Britain itself.

Dr Maire O'Shea herself told the meeting she was glad of the opportunity to say things she was prevented from saying in the course of her trial.

She told the meeting that if she attacked the judiciary, the armed forces or the police it would have been used against her by the prosecution. But the prosecution could say anything they liked.

They presented her to the jury as a highly dangerous terrorist. The trial cost around a million pounds.

There were police marksmen on the rooftops, a helicopter circling over the courthouse costing £20,000 a day and a Special Branch policeman in a bullet-proof vest who sat beside the jury throughout the trial.

Roads leading to the courthouse were cordoned off while people were searched coming to and from the court. Maire O'Shea was subjected to intimate body checks. Even her sandwiches were searched.

Despite all this she and Peadar Brazil were acquitted.

Some of her supporters had felt she shouldn't talk about politics during the trial because she would be sent down. However she had insisted on talking about the Irish situation and was still acquitted.

Warned

She warned Irish people arrested under the PTA to give their name and address and no more, as the most innocuous of questions can be used by the Special Branch to link an innocent person with a conspiracy to commit an offence.

She was arrested, she felt, because of her role in the IBRG. The organisation supports British withdrawal from Ireland and highlights the oppression of British imperialism in Ireland.

Irish politics were put up front in the trial, and her victory was a blow against the PTA.



PICKET... friends of Belfast hunger striker Henry Doherty protest outside Premier Fitzgerald's home in Dublin

Hunger strike ends

FROM OUR OWN REPORTER

IRISH prisoner Henry Doherty has ended a hunger strike in Portlaoise jail after fasting for 43 days. He was protesting at the Eire government's refusal to grant his demand for nine open visits a year from his family and friends.

Doherty, from New Barnsley in Belfast, is serving a six-year sentence in connection with a bank raid in Tipperary. He has been in

the Curragh Military Hospital and his sister told reporters that he had lost nearly four stone in weight.

The announcement from the government that Doherty had given up the fast came shortly after his

family and friends picketed the home of Irish Prime Minister Garret Fitzgerald.

As part of the Fine Gael/Labour Party coalition government's moves to get closer to the British Tory regime, prison conditions in the Irish Republic have become increasingly brutal.

Other prisoners as well as Doherty are demanding compensation from the government for craft work damaged during cell searches. Their refusal to grant his claim was another reason for Doherty's hunger strike.

It has now been announced that legal proceedings are due to begin shortly in relation to a case similar to Doherty's and he has agreed to wait for the outcome.

RELEASE THE JAILED MINERS

NORTHUMBERLAND

WILLIAM SMITH: Whittle — 2½-year sentence from February 1985. E44975, Durham Jail, Old Elvet, Durham DH13HU.

DURHAM

JOHN MATTERSON: Murton — Two years and three months youth custody from December 1985.

JOHN HEMINGWAY: Murton — One year and three months from December 1985.

JOHN ROBSON: Murton — One year and three months from December 1985.

ROBERT HOWE, 22, miner, affray, attempted not guilty (Judge refused to allow change of plea), 21 months

ANTHONY RUTHERFORD, 24, miner, affray attempted not guilty, 18 months

JOHN ROBINSON, 21, affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months jail

GARY BLACKMORE, 19, charge affray, attempted not guilty, 2 years youth custody

ANTHONY HOWE, 19, affray, attempted not guilty, two years youth custody

WILLIAM BELL, 20, affray, attempted not guilty, 18 months youth custody

YORKSHIRE

MARTIN HODGSON: Wakefield — Three-year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

NIGEL HODGSON: Wakefield — Three-year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

PAUL WRIGHT: Saville — 18-month sentence. G76424 Kirkham Jail, Freckleton road, Preston Lancs.

CLIVE THOMPSON: Frickley — Three-year sentence from April 1985. G79348, Acklington Jail, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9XF.

N. DERBYSHIRE

PAUL BROTHWELL: 12-month sentence.

DAVID GAUNT: Shirebrook — 2½-year sentence from December 1984. E71037, A Wing, Millers Park Youth Custody Centre, Doddington Road, Wellingborough.

KENT

TERRY FRENCH: Betteshanger — Four-year sentence from January 1985. B73383, Weald Wing, Maidstone jail, Kent

CHRIS TAZEY: Betteshanger — Three-year sentence from January 1985. A29398 Youth Detention Centre, Springfield Road, Chelmsford

SOUTH WALES

DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale — Eight-year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.

RUSSELL SHANKLAND: Taff Merthyr — Eight-year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, Leicester.

Anglo-Irish sell-out condemned

A LOCAL press witch-hunt, manoeuvring by the council, an attempt by fascists at disruption and a bomb scare preceded a meeting called by the Labour Committee on Ireland in east London.

Despite all this the meeting went ahead in tower Hamlets town hall, last Monday.

Joe Donald, a Sinn Fein, condemned the Anglo-Irish accord and spoke about the daily harassment of republicans, arrests, house searches,

the use of plastic bullets, the show trials, and the degrading strip searches.

'There is no Anglo-Irish agreement — be it inspired by Labour or Conservative governments — which will resolve the problems of Ireland. Only the withdrawal of Britain

from Ireland and the self-determination of the Irish people will do that.'

Also speaking on the platform were Narendra Makenji, national secretary of the Black Section of the Labour Party, and Jane Prust of Labour Women for Ireland.

MIDDLESEX POLYTECHNIC MARXIST SOCIETY
Launch meeting
Tuesday March 4th
7pm-9pm
Room B128
All Saints Site
White Hart Lane,
Tottenham N17
Speaker: Geoff Pilling
on 'Why a Marxist Society'

D C THOMSON: THE LESSONS FOR TODAY

BY ALAN CLARK

London machine branch, SOGAT 82

AS THE printworkers' strike at Murdoch's News International plants gets into full stride, let's take a look the long drawn-out dispute between the print unions and the Dundee-based firm of D.C. Thomson, whose best-known titles include the 'Beano', 'Dandy', and the 'Sunday Post'.

After the 1926 General Strike Thomson's wanted to restart their business on a non-union basis. They wanted all staff to sign a written apology for going on strike, to leave their trade union and to promise not to re-join.

New employees were required to sign a document agreeing not to be members of a union while in Thomson's employ. This was restricted to technical staff at first but was later extended to editorial and commercial staff.

A court of inquiry set up to look into the dispute at the time said: 'To demand of a workman in fear of possible unemployment an undertaking that he will not join a union is regarded by the trade union movement as a form of duress which drives the trade unionist underground and can justify, it is claimed, his signing the undertaking even though he has no intention of honouring it.'

Although the trade unions regarded Thomson's policy as a major challenge, very little was done until World War II. Other newspaper firms in Scotland which had also adopted similar policies never made it a condition of employment that employees must not belong to a union and therefore as memories of the strike faded and union membership increased, only Thomson's was left as the outstanding anti-union firm.

Rebuff

During the war years the unions did not take advantage of their strong position and tried a conciliatory approach. But when the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation (P&KTF) tried to suggest discussions with Thomson's in 1942, 1946, 1948 and 1951 they got an unfriendly rebuff.

Nevertheless the print unions continued to extend their membership at Thomson's during those years and a good number of recruits were obtained. But after a lively campaigning session in the early 1950's, trouble brewed.

Some members of the Paper Workers Union (PWU) were sacked from Thomson's Manchester plant in January 1952 and a few months later a member of NATSOPA who worked in Glasgow

was dismissed, it appears, for being an active union member and the acting Father of the Chapel (FoC).

The dismissal was treated as victimisation by the union with the member receiving dispute benefit and the case reported to the P&KTF. The TUC took the case up with the Ministry of Labour.

Strike

Richard Briginshaw (who was by then the General Secretary) travelled up to Glasgow to see the Scottish secretary L. Moncrieff and find out whether or not the other members of NATSOPA working at Thomson's would support a strike.

A majority of members were in favour of taking strike action over the victimisation, and when Thomson's refused to negotiate with Briginshaw and Moncrieff a strike was called.

The strike was to have very widespread repercussions. Attempts were made at conciliation through the Ministry of Labour, which led to a court of inquiry, and the P&KTF gave the union their full support.

The Federation's support, however, was aimed at limiting the dispute and when union members wanted to cut off the supply of news from the Press Association to Thomson's papers in Dundee they were prevented from doing so as it would have broken the service to Kemsley newspapers in the town.

Support

NATSOPA declared the firm of D.C. Thomson 'black' and appealed for trade union help and support, which poured in from trade unions, trades councils and print chapels. The NUM sent a large donation of £1,000 and other groups of workers in the printing industry had regular levies.

The PWU in London informed the wholesalers that they would not handle Thomson's publications



The London SOGAT banner on a recent demonstration in support of the News International printworkers strike

and the same action was taken in Manchester, Liverpool and Birkenhead. Lorry drivers at Bowaters paper mill on Merseyside refused to drive lorries loaded with paper for Thomson's.

The firm obtained scab drivers but PWU members refused to load paper onto the lorries. The PWU also called strike action at Donside Paper Company in Scotland and at Clyde Paper Company, Rutherglen, to stop paper getting through.

Injunction

Legal action by Thomson's against the T&GWU and NATSOPA was dismissed in the High Court, although the Edinburgh court of sessions granted an interim injunction against officials of ASLEF and the NUR who were alleged to have incited their members to refuse to run trains carrying goods belonging to the firm.

The battlefield was widening: questions were raised in the House of Commons, NATSOPA members refused to print what they considered a provocative article against the unions in the 'City Press' and the paper failed to appear.

The union failed to support the men even though

they also felt the article provocative and instructed the men to print it, mainly because they were not acting under instruction from the union and were therefore acting unofficially.

Although NATSOPA was willing to have the matter settled by arbitration, provided their members on strike in Glasgow were reinstated, Thomson's refused to consider it.

To get round the deadlock the TUC arranged to see the then Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and as a result the Minister of Labour was asked to make renewed efforts to secure a settlement.

During discussions with Churchill the TUC were informed that Thomson's had ceased to insist on employees signing an undertaking not to join a trade union. NATSOPA felt this was a great victory but it did not resolve the problem of the Glasgow strikers.

The unions decided to make a gesture in acknowledgement of the withdrawal of the 'document' by lifting the ban on raw materials for the firm, while not ending the dispute.

Thomson's did not reinstate the men which infuriated both the unions and the public. It was felt the unions had made a

statesmanlike gesture and that Thomson's should reciprocate by reinstating the men, who had gone on strike for a principle which had now been accepted.

The matter dragged on into 1953 when, by then, most of the Glasgow men had found other jobs. NATSOPA decided to continue the struggle against Thomson's since their members had not been reinstated.

Years

It is not clear just how long the union kept up the dispute, but it is clear that today's dispute with Murdoch cannot go on for years and years. Thatcher's anti-union laws make it almost impossible to move a muscle without being taken to court and having an injunction slapped on, a fine, or the union's entire funds sequestered.

So what do they do? For a start they must stop treating this dispute with kid gloves — Murdoch has planned for this situation for years. The other proprietors have waited in the wings until this precise moment when they are now saying that their workforce must be cut drastically or they will either go bust or shut the place down if they don't get their way.

Without doubt new technology will have profound effects on the printworkers; management want to shed as many jobs as possible whereas new technology should be used for the benefit of the workers.

But how can you achieve this under capitalism? The simple

answer is you cannot. Workers will need to make the socialist revolution to change the whole rotten system.

Only a socialist planned economy can solve the problems facing workers who now face the harshest of attacks against basic living conditions, jobs, health treatment, education and unions.

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COMMENT

by Martin Beveridge

The role of the trade union leadership

WHY can't the leadership of the NGA and SOGAT 82 organise more effective picketing at Wapping? And can the struggle be won at all? Printworkers have been discussing these questions repeatedly on the picket lines.

If the union leaders confine themselves to appeals not to buy the Times, Sun and News of the World, with a token picket action alongside main roads where well-organised police control the access roads to the plant, printworkers are on a hiding to nothing.

The mass picketing — which of course must be supported by every trade unionist — has proved to be no answer to the deliberate and planned police violence, familiar from the miners' strike.

As Bernard Franks pointed out in 'Workers Press' two weeks ago, the rest of the printing world faces rationalisation and job cuts and should be out on its own account.

But Maxwell and the other Fleet Street employers are getting away with murder in relation to manning levels because union officials argue that Murdoch will lose readers to his capitalist rivals.

What will happen when Shah's full-colour 'Today' paper comes out on March 4th? Will the union chiefs encourage his brand of union-busting against Murdoch's?

Brenda Dean, SOGAT's general secretary, has said in interviews that she is willing to accept job losses in the introduction of new technology. She must know that job cuts are the last thing that workers need today. Why don't the SOGAT leaders fight to retain members with increased holidays, a shorter working week etc?

Printers who find themselves sacked by Murdoch should seriously consider approaching other Fleet Street chapels and discussing the possibility of pulling out the rest of Fleet Street. It does mean the threat of wholesale Wappings and defying the law. But not to do so is to face losing jobs and all trade union rights anyway.

The fact is, this is not an all-or-nothing dispute at News International on which the fate of the working class as a whole depends. It opens up an era of prolonged struggles in the aftermath of the miners' defeat.

What is crucial is that the real problems facing workers today must be discussed and confronted seriously with the intention of really overcoming them, not answered with mindless slogans such as 'General Strike'.

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WORKERS PRESS PHOTOFILE ON WED

Students were still massing at London's Jubilee Gardens while the head of the March was rallying at Kennington Park nearly two miles away

**ODE TO
ROBERT
MAXWELL**By a 'Daily Record'
print worker

Top for news and top for sales,
Entertainment never fails,
Scotland's pride and
Maxwell's joy
Has just turned in to
Maxwell's toy.

'Kill the paper, sack the staff!
God! It must give Bob a laugh.
'Steal their assets, kill morale!
Isn't Captain Bob a pal?

He said that Rupert likes to war,
He said that he just likes to jaw.
Who's he kidding? Those he sacked?
Negotiations have been whacked.

Let the law tell him he's wrong,
Let him sing a different song.
The stupid bugger's off his trolley,
Tell him where to stick his lolly!

MIRROR Group boss Robert Maxwell found his Scottish 'Daily Record' building full of angry trades unionists last week, as his attempted mass sacking backfired.

Maxwell issued 1,050 sack notices on Monday after printers and journalists refused to obey his edict to work on an Irish edition of the 'Daily Mirror'.

An angry meeting, held in the early hours of Monday, resolved that the plant would not be vacated and that printers would present themselves for work in defiance of the sack notices.

Harry Templeton, Imperial Father of the Federated Chapels and Sogat machine-room Father of Chapel told 'Workers Press' of Maxwell's string of provocations.

'We had been negotiating terms to print a new paper for the north of England. Maxwell held a meeting with us and was talking about "stealing a march" on Eddie Shah's new paper. The plan was to launch a new paper on February 24.

'Then last Thursday we were told that plans for

SACKINGS

BY SIMON PIRANI

the new paper were scrapped, that we would be printing an Irish edition of the "Mirror".

'This edition is currently printed in Manchester and we would not agree to do work that is normally done elsewhere, without having the opportunity to contact our national union officials.

Message

'On Sunday afternoon we were in the process of holding chapel meetings because of the threatening message from Maxwell printed in the "Sunday Mail". The FoCs were asked: "will you print the Irish edition?"

'They all said that their members would report to do their normal work. We were told that the company would deem that we had broken our contracts of employment by this, and that dire consequences would follow, the first of which would be

the closure of Anderston Quay' (the 'Record' office).

Harry explained the dramatic sabotage of Monday's 'Record' by management: 'The journalists produced everything for the first edition of Monday's "Record". It went through the case room and most of the plates were through the process department.

'Then a notice was posted up in the process department, saying that SOGAT and the NUJ were deemed to have dismissed themselves and the first casualty was tonight's edition.

'While the case room workers, who are in the NGA, were reading the notice, the foreman stole the negatives for the last page, page two.

'The process room informed the case room of the situation. New page-proofs for page two were sent down. When the pro-

cess workers tried to "shoot" negatives from the proofs, the foreman spread-eagled himself across the camera. (Non-printers note, this is a very large camera — the size of a transit van).

'He said he was ordering them not to shoot the negatives, that he was upholding the management's right to manage. Then he dismantled the camera frame and took the page-proofs out of it.

Drained

'The foreman in the plate-making department switched off all the machinery, drained the developer, and locked developer supplies in a cupboard.

'The power for the presses was switched off. They have taken action to prevent us from putting a paper out.'

Journalists and printers again presented themselves for work for Tuesday's edition. Just to make their point, managers cut off editorial tele-

WEDNESDAY'S NUS MARCH



Wapping an exposure of Healy rump

BY JOHN SIMMANCE
AUEW shop steward, Charing Cross Hospital

If one issue has exposed the rump who masquerade as the bogus WRP it is the strike of printworkers against Murdoch's News International.

When the bogus News Line returned to daily production on February 1st, we did not have to wait long to see 'But a lie told six times a week is no better than the same lie told twice a week. In fact it is three times worse.' (Workers Press 1.2.86)

On the front page Mitchell writes the lead article 'Blockade Murdoch's Fortress' and goes on to say: 'Print unions are calling on other workers to join the fight to defeat Rupert Murdoch's union-busting operation at Fortress Wapping in London's East End'.

Fine stuff! But what print union is he referring to? The NGA, SOGAT, the AUEW? But to produce a newspaper, even at Murdoch's Wapping Fortress, you need others.

We know of course the deplorable role Hammond's EETPU has played — but before you can print a newspaper, someone has to write it. Why no mention of the role played by members of the NUJ?

Reporting

In fact when you examine the bogus News Line's reporting of this strike, you can see why. Their 'This Morning' column of February 6th headlined 'The Issues at Wapping' states 'SOGAT '82 and the NGA are fighting to defend the basic democratic rights of the whole working class: the right to strike, the right to organise, the right to picket and the right to work'.

Yes: the right to picket — and should I add that any trade unionist worth his salt would never cross a picket line.

Further on in the article we have: 'By one vote, the General Council refrained in a 15-14 division from issuing an instruction that the EETPU should tell its members not to cross a picket line!'

But what about NUJ members? No mention from the TUC about them. Did the rump criticise this? Not a word. The only mention of the NUJ was two paragraphs down: 'As the NUJ journalists union investigation in 1984, and the miners strike itself proved, trade unionism is already technically illegal under Thatcher's Bonapartist dictatorship (sic)'.

No mention of NUJ members who are openly



HARRY CONROY



ERIC HAMMOND

producing Murdoch's scab papers. The only mention of this union in the News Line's entire coverage of the strike was on January 25th before the strike started.

They say: 'Leaders of the NUJ have instructed their members in News International not to participate in any publications from the Wapping plant and to continue at their normal workplace in Grays Inn Road and Bouverie Street. If the company makes this impossible the union's Emergency Committee has given NUJ General Secretary Harry Conroy the authority to tell members to stop work'.

Three weeks later still no action by the NUJ leadership. Why does the bogus News Line remain silent? Are they too busy calling for a General Strike?

In fact the bogus News Line has become the mouthpiece of the right wing of the printworkers unions. Pictures and interviews abound with the right-wing leader of SOGAT 82 Brenda Dean

— who only a month ago was prepared to sign a deal with Murdoch which agreed to legally binding arbitration and which would destroy printworkers rights.

Hence on February 10th an article by Penny Bloor said: 'The SOGAT General Secretary told a rally that things were not going as well in Fortress Wapping as Murdoch claimed. That day the UCW Post Office workers had blocked his Bingo cards from being delivered to people's homes.'

And from Dean, referring to the Saturday night picket, 'The turnout tonight has been fantastic and hits Murdoch right between the eyes'.

Every action by other workers must be supported but if printworkers 'are locked in a fight to the finish' (Jan 25 News Line) then surely more than stopping Bingo cards is called for?

The alarm bells must be rung at every twist and turn by the union leadership. They cannot get away from the fact that the state, its laws and

courts are now being used to smash trade unions.

But how is SOGAT's leader Brenda Dean going to reply to the sequestration of £17 million by the courts? Is she going to rally her members? Let us quote from the 'Guardian' of February 12th:

'The meeting between Ms Dean and the sequestrators lasted two hours at a neutral rendezvous. Those who participated afterwards claimed that the atmosphere was generally good, and bore no resemblance to that during the miners strike when the NUM tried to avoid its sequestrators.'

Quoted

No mention of this in the bogus News Line. In fact on the same day Brenda Dean is quoted no less than three times, but there is no mention or criticism of her role. Ben Rudder says on page 2 'SOGAT is calling on other union branches and Labour Parties to assist in the distribution of leaflets, pass resolutions of support and give all practical assistance.'

This is hot air. Will Dean now instruct her members at the wholesalers to black all scab papers? Will she demand that all trade unionists — including NUJ members — don't cross the picket line? Not a word.

Why is the bogus News Line silent? All its shouts for a 'General Strike' are in reality a cover-up for the right wing. Hence we have on February 10th: 'As wives firmly demonstrated alongside the printworkers at Wapping last Saturday we see all the lessons of the miners strike being put into practice by the printers.'

This is gross betrayal to the right-wing union leaders. No wonder headlines cry out: 'Murdoch takes a Wapping!' (February 5th). Are these the lessons of the miners strike?

Betray

The facts are that the leadership of the TUC is preparing to betray the printworkers, not lead them. And that goes for the bogus News Line's pin-up Brenda Dean.

Every honest trade unionist must demand:

- Respect all picket lines
- Black all production and distribution of scab papers
- Organise printworkers' support groups to raise support and money
- Expel all trade unions who collaborate with Murdoch's scab operation
- No truck with the courts or sequestrators

BACKFIRE

phone lines, cancelled insurance on company vehicles and switched the heating off.

The police also played a role. Harry Templeton explained. 'In the not too distant past, the police were reluctant to get involved in an industrial dispute. Now Maxwell has been provided with a go-man "picket line" of policemen on this plant.'

The management have been over the gatehouse from Sogat members working there and shut metal grills across the plant entrance. Private cars, vans, lorries carrying supplies of ink and paper — they have all been turned away, not by company security guards but by policemen.'

Harry Templeton regards the 'Record' workers' struggle as completely bound up with the fight against News International. Maxwell would like to re-employ his workers in smaller numbers, with lower wages and different conditions. I think he would like us to become a contract printing plant, to



ROBERT MAXWELL

print whatever Scottish newspapers need printing.

'He certainly doesn't believe in not kicking a man while he is down. Now that the print unions are down he is jumping up and down on top of us.'

He added: 'Ron Todd

said at the rally in Glasgow last week that there comes a point where trades unionists have to draw a line and say, beyond that line I will not go, I have been shoved round long enough. Every print worker is now coming to that point.'

Film & Book reviews

Hollywood sensation that never takes off

EIGHTEENTH century New York. The mob topples a symbol of monarchy to the ground.

Young girls with rebel emblems tattooed on their foreheads cheer on their men; 'Brits out' is splashed in paint on the sides of a cottage in old Wall Street.

'Revolution', an 'epic adventure', sets out with great ambition, and a budget of some sixteen million pounds, to bring to life the American war of independence of 1776.

In the audience, and among the revolutionary masses of New York, hopes are high! A struggle for national liberation curiously untouched by the myth-makers of Hollywood, but central to the story of the greatest imperialist nation on earth, is going to receive a bold popular treatment at the hands of British filmmaker Hugh Hudson (Chariots of Fire; Greystoke; The Legend of Tarzan) and a squad of American stars — Al Pacino, Nastassia Kinsky, Donald Sutherland.

Tom Dobb, a fur-trapper, apolitical and deeply distrustful, is forced to surrender his boat and property to the war effort in exchange for a paper promise — \$70 and 250 acres of land at the war's end — from the newly formed Congress.

When his son Ned accidentally enlists with the rebels, Tom chooses

BY BRIAN ELEY

to join him so that they may remain together.

In another part of town and another social class, Daisy (Nastassia Kinsky) drives her loyalist mother to despair ('get that poxy rebel-patriot stuff out of your room...!') and yearns to cut loose from her stuffy bourgeois background.

As the Continental Army heads north to meet the British, she and Tom meet and fall in love Hollywood-style (a second's glance at 300 paces, across a crowded harbour, in the dark) and things are never the same again.

Euphoria

The euphoria and cruelty of small lives caught up in great events is well evoked. Every button on every costume has been well researched. A perpetual rain, and photography the colour of mud, blood and candle-light sets the mood.

So why doesn't it work? How can the whole intricate tapestry unravel over the course of the next two hours, leaving us bored, cheated and none the wiser?

At the centre of Hugh Hudson's film lies a fatal indifference to the curiosity of its audience.

The characters we are invited to identify with are prepared to endure great sacrifices for a cause. Even the reluctant Tom Dobb comes to identify the survival of his own son with that of the

emerging nation, his consciousness forming in a convincingly roundabout and contradictory way.

But we are shown next to nothing of the cause itself. Where are the movement's leaders, its programme, its debates? What differences separate those struggling to take sides?

It is possible to tell such a story in a way which is accessible to a mass audience, using the techniques which Hollywood has spent 80 years perfecting.

Despite their faults, both 'Reds' and 'Heaven's Gate' came tantalisingly close. But 'Revolution' misses by a mile.

As events wither to a halt, Tom Dobb steps forward to claim his 250 acres. But the dollar has been devalued and Congress has sold the land to the speculators to pay off the war debt.

Tom's son will go west to pioneer a life in the wilderness, but Pacino elects to stay in New York.



A scene from 'Revolution': British troops march into New York following their victory over the Continental Army of the new United States at Upper Manhattan in 1776

Zora — all-around black woman

Dust Tracks on a Road by Zora Neale Hurston, Virago, £4.95; Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston, Virago, £3.95.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON has been described by Alice Walker as 'folklorist, novelist, anthropologist, serious student of voodoo, also all-around black woman.'

Born and brought up in Eatonville, Florida, the first incorporated black township in the United States, she died in poverty and was buried in an unmarked grave in 1959.

She was part of the 'Harlem Renaissance' in the depression years, but it is particularly since the popularity of black women writers like Alice Walker and Toni Morrison that a new generation has discovered and been inspired by her writing.

Not everyone likes what they discover; Delli-ta Martin's new introduction to the autobiographical 'Dust Tracks on a Road' is distinctly unhappy with Zora's lack of straightforward black pride, and finds a large measure of ambivalence and disorientation.

But what does find general agreement is that there is remarkable veracity, gutsy poetry and humour in her writing.

Zora Neale Hurston says that she wrote the novel 'Their Eyes Were Watching God' in seven weeks in Haiti. It had been, she says, 'dammed up in her'.

Its style is simple, its emotional power complex. Zora's heroine, Janie, eventually breaks with convention and runs off with a younger man.

When Zora sums up Janie's life at the time

BY BRIDGET DIXON

she began to see her older husband ageing, his formerly pugnacious belly sagging, she is saying a great deal about the lives of the black women so familiar to the author:

'She was a rut in the road. Plenty of life beneath the surface but it was kept beaten down by the wheels. Sometimes she stuck out into the future, imagining her life different from what it was.'

'But mostly she lived between her hat and her heels, with her emotional disturbances like shade patterns in the woods come and gone with the sun.'

These are the insights of a writer who had observed life, and then studied it as a graduate anthropologist under the direction of Frank Boas.

Going into the southern black community as a woman social scientist led to at least one narrow escape from the murderous intentions of an enraged and jealous woman who had seen Zora talking to her man.

Zora's writing is a blend of the independent, thoroughly modern, and the times she lived in. It is sometimes hard to re-

member that she was born in 1891 and was able to interview the last living black slave shipped to America, Cudjo Lewis.

He was brought on the last load in 1859, and Zora found him a 'cheerful, poetical old gentlemen in his late nineties who could tell a good story.'

The meeting made a strong impression on her. His memories of Africa aroused in her anger not

only at the white people who bought and exploited her ancestors, but also at the 'greed and glory' in the Africans who sold them.

It would be surprising if everything Zora Neale Hurston said could be endorsed by those writing today, but wholehearted endorsement is not the measure of the influence and importance of any pioneer.

Young victims

The Invisible Children by Gitta Sereny, Pan Books, £3.50

POIGNANTLY, bitterly, Gitta Sereny investigates the lives of child prostitutes in Britain, America and Germany.

Her research took her

three years of patiently talking to children, social workers, pimps and parents. She agonised about the effect her interviews were having.

Although she interviewed over 150 children, she spent most time with ten of them. Their tragic

stories are told in the book in their own words.

Each had been eagerly taken up by a sex-industry in which the men who exploit boys and girls sometimes as young as ten are likely to receive lenient sentences if they are prosecuted.

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BOOKS

EXPULSIONS LINK TO ANTI-UNION LAWS

BY BILL HUNTER

EXPULSION of between 10 and 16 Militant supporters has been set in motion by the Labour Party's national executive committee.

The district party is also to be reorganised with the aim of reducing trade union representation. Two full-time organisers will be put in to oversee the district party and a 'caretaker' executive committee set up.

There is widespread opposition in Liverpool to the purge and the attacks on Labour Party democracy. The Kinnock-Hattersley bureaucracy is also intervening in other parties on Merseyside.

The two St Helens parties have been suspended since Christmas, pending an inquiry. One reason for the 'inquiry' is that a miner who scabbed on the strike was refused membership.

A big role in the inquiry was played by the 'Liverpool Labour Left', set up by supporters of 'Tribune'. Under the banner of 'a Labour government at all costs', they are rallying around Kinnock.

Members of this group gave evidence alleging intimidation and the 'fixing' of meetings.

The feeling generally in the Labour Party is shown by the fact that they attracted around 300 to their initial meeting four months ago, most looking for a left alternative to 'Militant'.

Now, attendance at their meetings is around 20 or 30.

Any trade unionist or

Labour Party member who fails to recognise that the prime and principal task must be to defeat this witchhunt, is committing a political crime.

The opportunist policies, dogmatism and downright blunders of the Militant certainly should be criticised. But, although important issues in relation to the question of leadership, they are not the major issue.

Immediately, the aim of the right wing is to abolish Liverpool district Labour Party's control over the policy of the Labour group on the council and reduce the organised strength of the council workers.

However, the questions involved are wider and much more serious. The movement into closer collaboration with British monopolies and the state is causing both trade un-



Neil Kinnock

ion and Labour bureaucracies to attack the power of the rank and file.

The Merseyside witchhunt is only the beginning.

Kinnock and the Labour Party leaders are removing all traces of reformist socialist demands from their policies following the miners' strike where they showed their hatred of action by workers.



Roy Hattersley

All the indications are that the present stage of capitalist economic crisis is creating a new sharpening of class relations. Takeover bids herald a new and more ruthless monopolisation.

The government faces a number of critical economic problems, especially the danger of a collapse in North Sea oil prices.

The Labour bureaucracy is pushed towards deeper collaboration with the state and the monopolies. The trade union bureaucracy capitulates before the anti-union laws as the Labour bureaucracy prepares for a new government which will continue to administer them.

The attack in Liverpool aims to remove barriers to right-wing policies. It cannot be stressed too much that these are preparations for a Labour or coalition government which will use the state against the unions.

The fight against the witchhunt is therefore very much bound up with the defence of trade unions. Not only are we faced with the task of preserving the independence of rank and file organisations like the Liverpool council workers' joint

shop stewards' committee, which the trade union bureaucracy is dismantling.

There is the wider question of the anti-union laws. The Labour bureaucracy is adapting to the programme of the state and the monopolies to control workers' organisations and crush their independence.

Throughout the country it must be realised that what is happening in Liverpool is not peculiar to Merseyside. It happens here because the struggle went the furthest over defence of council services.

The basic question then is the struggle against the preparations for a right-wing Labour government of betrayal, or for a coalition. A principled opposition to the witchhunt of 'Militant' supporters in Liverpool is the necessary beginning to that struggle.

Council hassles street traders

BY CARMEL DERSCH

LIVERPOOL street traders are fighting a running battle with the Militant-dominated city council over renewal of their licences.

Many of the traders have lost their jobs in this city of chronic unemployment and have turned to trading as the only way to make a living.

They are all members of the T&GWU and, as a group, have played a major role in the city's trade union struggles.

Jimmy Burdett, an ex-building worker who recruited them into the union, told Workers Press of their anger at the council's arbitrary decision to issue some of the stallholders with four-month licences instead of the usual annual ones.

'It saddens me that a socialist council can act in such a way,' he said. 'Particularly since those getting the four-month licences are the most active trade unionists.'

'From day one of the council's battle with the Thatcher government, the traders have been right behind the council 100 per cent, withdrawing their labour on every day of action and sending delegates on the protest marches.'



Dublin street traders demonstrating in O'Connell Street last month demanding the release of Dail member Tony Gregory, who had been jailed for disobeying a court order against street demonstrations on their behalf. Liverpool street traders have sent messages of support to Gregory and the Dublin traders

'At the beginning of the financial appeal to pay the councillors' legal costs, I was asked to make a donation.'

I immediately arranged for someone to go around all the stalls with a bucket to collect as much money as possible.

'When the "get Derek Hatton out" movement was at its peak, they set up a stall in Church Street giving out literature and it was the traders who dissuaded a lot of people from accepting this reactionary drivel.'

'During the heroic 1984-85 miners' strike it was the traders that the NUM members turned to for protection when they were collecting on the streets of Liverpool and were threatened by the National Front, which

happened quite often.

'Every week we had large collections for these brothers and at Christmas we gave them and their wives a night out, as well as donating a lorry-load of fruit and vegetables and toys for their children.'

'I mention these things not to brag, because any class-conscious worker would have done the same. But is it not possible for the council to treat the street traders as equals, instead of in the arrogant way in which they are issuing the new licences? It all boils down to the old capitalist way of divide and rule.'

'When I was up before the committee for my licence renewal it was like being the victim of an inquisition.'

'We know the big stores don't like us being there. How does the Labour council feel about doing the Tory Stores Committee's job for them?'

'Most of the traders are not here because they want to do this. Don't tell us to give up our licence and do something else. What else is there to do in Liverpool?'

Burdett said that talks with the council were continuing and, whatever the outcome, the traders were still hoping the council wins a just victory against the Tory courts.

'We would like to use the columns of your paper,' he added, 'to send our best wishes to the traders in Dublin in their struggle for their rights.'

Technicians fight 28 per cent cut

WELL over 250 university technicians from medical schools, colleges and veterinary schools across the country packed one side of Tavistock Square, London, on Monday to lobby pay negotiators.

Aside from London University's 12 colleges and medical schools there were representatives and banners from as far away as Birmingham, Warwick, Liverpool, Wales and Glasgow.

Mainly members of ASTMS and AUEW, the technicians are furious that they are victims of the Tory 'pay restraint' policy to the extent that their pay has fallen 28 per cent behind that of workers doing comparable work in private industry.

The 17,000 university technicians nationally are vital support workers in the areas of science, technical and medical teaching and research.

They contribute enormously to the creation of the scientists and technologists of the future and to the research work on which many private companies build vast profits.

The particular significance of Monday's demonstration was that it occurred on the first day of discussions, not at a later critical stage of negotiations.

There is an awareness among the technicians that past initial strong rhetoric from negotiators has ended with a cave-in and recommendations to accept increases below the rise in the cost of living.

'Horizons' launched

TRADE unionists and members of miners' support and women's groups were at the Merseyside Trade Union, Community and Unemployed Resources Centre in Liverpool last Friday evening for the launching of 'Shifting Horizons,' by Lynn Beaton.

The evening was organised by Merseybooks to announce the publication of this new book which is the story of two Nottinghamshire striking miners' wives and how the year-long struggle changed their lives.

Speakers included

Lynne O'Sullivan of the Wavertree Miners Support Group; Larry Cavanagh, Liverpool docks shop steward; Lynne Cheetham, Point of Ayr striking miners wives' support group; Ray Williams, secretary Liverpool NGA; a Nottinghamshire striking miner; and Lynn Beaton herself.

The chairman was Billy Partington, president of Liverpool trades council.

Buyers queued up to buy copies of 'Shifting Horizons,' personally signed by Lynn Beaton. Copies are available at all Paperback Centre shops (£5.65, Canary Press).

NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINeworkERS CAMPAIGN

MARCH, RALLY & DEMONSTRATION 2nd March, 1986

Assemble: 1.30pm, Jubilee Gardens, County Hall, London SE1, (with speakers)

March to Hyde Park

Rally: 4.30pm in Hyde Park

Speakers

Chair: W. Etherington (NUM, Nat. Exec. Comm.)

(Confirmed) Peter Heathfield (Gen. Sec. NUM), Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Ann Liburn (Chair. Women Against Pit Closures), Tony Banks (Chair. GLC), John McDonnell (GLC), Eric Clarke (NUM Scottish Area), Martha Ossamor (Broadwater Farm Defence Committee), Roy Butlin (Coalville NUR), Sarah Roelofs (Lesbians & Gays MSG), David Nellist MP, Liz French (Kent gaoled miner's wife), Sean Geraghty (EETPU Fleet St. (invited speakers) Brenda Dean (SOGAT), Ron Todd (Gen. Sec. T&GWU), Ken Cameron (FBU), Ken Gill (TASS), Diane Abbott (Nat. Comm. Black Sections)

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Contemporary songs of struggle for the Working Class

(Based on the Heroes LP, produced after the Miners' Strike in N.E. England)

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LETTERS to the Editor

For an investigation of 'Security and FI'

THE JULY split in the WRP opens up the pages of a living encyclopaedia for the first time in our history. One of the most important exposures which came before party members was the method of 'analysis' which was used by Healy and his errand-boys to justify everything that Healy thought as being correct.

This method, subjective idealism, or, in Healy's case, paranoia, was used to justify the description of the Tory government as a 'Bonapartist regime' and the present political situation as a 'revolutionary situation' — clearly rubbish!

Because this method was used right throughout the history of our party, in Healy's case it clearly means that everything that was classed as a 'gain' for the 'international Trotskyist movement' has to be questioned and reinvestigated.

One thing that sticks out like a Scammell starter button is the 'investigation' carried out from 1975 onwards known as Security and the Fourth International. This 'investigation' into the conditions surrounding the death of Leon Trotsky continues today in the form of the Gelfand case — a battle being waged through the US courts supported by the Workers League, supporters of the 'International Committee of the Fourth International'.

North, a former journalist for the 'Bulletin', is one of the leading figures who carried out the investigation along with Alex Mitchell. Mitchell was expelled from the WRP along with the group led by Sheila Torrance and Vanessa Redgrave who still support Healy to this day.

Even though at this stage we cannot give a full analysis of the 'investigation', which was carried out on Healy's orders, a lengthy stream of questions now arises out of the exposure of the method and theory which Healy, his accomplices

and ex-accomplices used to put together a never-ending line of books, pamphlets, folders, leaflets (to which none of the investigators would put their names as authors).

Security and the Fourth International named Robert Sheldon Harte, Joseph Hansen, George Novack, Sylvia Franklin and many others as being accomplices of the GPU.

Now that Mitchell, Healy and others have proven to be liars, cheats and anti-Trotskyist frame-up merchants, it is absolutely vital that we examine all the arguments put against Security and the Fourth International which now arise during discussions in our party. Here is some basic food for thought.

Security and the Fourth International points at Robert Sheldon Harte as being a GPU agent on the basis that a picture of Stalin was found on the wall of his apartment.

Harte was an ex-CP member. A Spanish-English dictionary contained the signature of Si-queiros, a GPU agent.

He was seen by a person living in a house, not far from the house where Harte was being kept by the gang of GPU killers.

During the time of the first raid on Trotsky's home, a large number of Trotskyists were recruited out of the CP. This leaves the first point of 'circumstantial evidence' unconvincing.

The fact that a picture of Stalin was found on his wall is also left unconvincing when the 'polemical' methods of the GPU are considered.

The picture of Stalin could have been planted there by Mercader in order to confuse and divert an investigation that would have been carried out after the planned attack on May 24, 1940.

The dictionary containing the signature of Si-queiros could have been given to Harte by Mercader, once again in order to divert or confuse the investigation. The fact that Harte was



JOSEPH HANSEN



SHELDON HARTE

allowed a walk round the garden doesn't mean that Harte was free to leave whenever he wanted.

There could have been armed GPU keeping an eye on him from inside the house. It would be hard for one man to escape from a gang of GPU killers.

Security and the Fourth International contains only quotations from Trotsky which rule out the impossibility of an agent finding his way into the Trotsky household.

Natalia Trotsky described the method used by Trotsky in his final analysis of the raid on May 24: 'He attached the proper significance to every single thing, and wove them into a single whole.'

Security and the Fourth International also completely omitted a letter sent to Jess S. Harte, father of Robert Sheldon Harte after Harte's body was found with a bullet in the back of his head. It reads:

'My wife, my collaborators and I bow in deep mourning before the grief of the mother and father of our dear Bob. Only consolation in these bitter hours is that the wild slander against Bob through which the assassins tried to conceal the assassination, is now un-

masked. As a hero, Bob perished for ideas he believed in.

Natalia and Leon Trotsky, Joe Hansen, Harold Robins, Charles Cornell, Jake Cooper, Otto Schuester, Walter O'Rourke.'

Security and the Fourth International makes no reference to the articles on pages 90-91 of Trotsky's Writings 1939-40 (Merit Publishers).

In these articles which Trotsky wrote after Harte's body was found, Trotsky explains that the allegations that Harte was an agent of the GPU came from the mouths of the GPU agents themselves and the people who were misled and confused by the methods used by the GPU to confuse investigations and also confuse history.

Security and the Fourth International contains letter after letter which prove that Joseph Hansen was collaborating with the FBI 'behind the backs of the SWP leadership'.

I must bring to people's attention that the letters contain information which only proves that Hansen demanded more help from the police to expose the agents and accomplices which led to Trotsky's assassination.

The letters are merely

own role in the process.

As to how far back these malpractices go it is still too early to say or to have analysed. But it will be completed. So let us not rush in with out-of-hand 'emphatic' assertions.

I am sure Comrades Slaughter and Banda would agree with this assertion.

Yours fraternally
Alex McLarty
CC, WRP

This incorporates their

of the organisation which they are spying on?

One of the main pieces of evidence against Joseph Hansen is that he ran to the defence of Sylvia Franklin after she was accused of being an agent. Security and the Fourth International completely failed to name James P. Cannon as an agent.

When ex-Stalinist and GPU agent Louis Budenz named Sylvia Franklin (Caldwell) as an agent, Cannon carried out an investigation (so he claims) into Franklin and told her to carry on with her duties running the head offices of the SWP. Why was Cannon completely left out of the investigation?

Healy claimed that everybody who politically opposed him was an agent of the capitalist state or the GPU. Surely, now that Healy's practices are completely exposed, no WRP or IC member can deny that the multi-million dollar farce should be completely reinvestigated for a matter of a 'few dollars more'.

Chris McBride

An ineffective reply to Mitchell

Dear Comrades, AS a Trotskyist I have taken a keen interest in the WRP split and have attended several of your recent public meetings. I view the majority in a positive way and have placed a regular order for Workers Press.

In line with the comradely discussions I have had with rank and file members of the majority I would like to take up the issue of an article that appeared in Workers Press on January 11th: 'Hypocrisy over Stalinism'.

The article defends the majority against Mitchell's claim of capitulation to Euro-Stalinism because Cliff Slaughter shook hands with Monty Johnston. Clearly Mitchell's attack was a classical Healyite slander typical of methods from the past, superficial, no analysis, no depth.

However, I do not think the article replies to the Healyites effectively. Instead of a detailed expose of the Healyites political relations with Stalinism in the past the article replies with a few examples of Healy's and Mitchell's friendly chats with Stalin-

ists. Unfortunately these particular revelations reply to Mitchell in a similar vein to his own.

It would be much better to provide a copious list of Healy's and the old WRP's political capitulations to Stalinism.

A pertinent example would be the miner's strike. Why didn't the then WRP and the Newsline constantly expose the pervasive betrayals of the strike by Stalinism (Tankies as well as Euros)?

I fear that the search for diplomatic political relations with Stalinist NUM and trade union leaders was the source of this at the time. Paragraph 19 states:

'As for us what determines our behaviour to both the Stalinists and the rump is not first the reactionary nature of these organisations, but also that they are part of the labour movement'.

The article does not then go on to suggest what concrete measures should be taken to defeat the actions of the Stalinists. Undoubtedly, a full scale political analysis will be necessary, not simply of the past but

most importantly of the present. What practical action within the whole spectrum of the mass movement should be taken up?

For example, Stalinism is presently beavering away at pushing popular frontism in the unions and the Labour party. For instance, 'Marxism Today' is calling for an 'anti-Thatcherite broad democratic alliance'.

What action needs to be taken to prevent the formation of a popular front government? What should Trotskyists counterpose to it in the present period?

Finally, several column inches were spent describing Healy's eating habits and the consistency of his vomit. Of what political value is this? In future editions of Workers Press, myself and many other workers I am sure, would like to read in depth analyses of the political roots of Healyism and the degeneration of the WRP over the past twenty years which led to the split.

Yours Fraternally for the reconstruction of the FI, Phillip Atherton, Unemployed worker, St Helens

Unfounded assertion

Dear Comrades,

In publishing Alan Thornett's letter (February 22), the comment is made in Workers Press:

'The WRP emphatically rejects the assertion in the letter that Mike Banda and Cliff Slaughter "clearly knew what was going on and condoned it for decades".'

This is entirely without foundation!

Allow me categorically

to state that the author of this comment does not speak for the WRP nor could he or she. The Central Committee of the WRP itself, to date, is no more in a position to make any such emphatic declaration.

If Thornett's allegation is 'entirely without foundation', then the comrade who penned the comment should inform the Central Committee as to how far back this complicity goes

in executing Healy's policies and their knowledge of them.

As far as I am concerned, in breaking from Healy's politics, both Comrades Slaughter and Banda have undertaken, as part of a leadership collective responsibility, to participate in reworking over the past to uncover how, when and why the Party and the IC became derailed.

THE EDITORIAL board welcomes letters from readers. They can be sent to Letters Page, 21B Old Town, Clapham, London SW4 0JT. Those letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of Workers Press

LETTERS

Where does WRP stand?

Editor's comment

NOW THAT the dust from your split seems to be settling, I wonder if you would be good enough to clarify certain questions for me.

1. For about two years, from early 1981, Socialist Organiser was forced to spend sizeable sums of money preparing to defend John Bloxham and myself against the libel actions brought on behalf of the WRP by Vanessa Redgrave.

I was sued for the following comments in an article published in Socialist Organiser No. 33, January 24, 1981.

'The WRP... is a pseudo-Marxist gobbledegook-spouting cross between the Moonies, the Scientologists, and the Jones Cult which committed mass suicide in the Guyana jungle three years ago. It recruits and exploits mainly raw, inexperienced, politically, socially and psychologically defenceless young people. It employs psychological terror and physical violence against its own members (and occasionally against others).'

John Bloxham was sued for repeating some of this in a private circular to SO supporters, a copy of which was given to the WRP.

In fact Healy and Redgrave seem to have got cold feet. The libel action never got to court (though it still remains on the lists).

Your section of the old WRP has said as much as I said — and more — about the Gerry Healy-led WRP. You have renounced and repudiated many of the things the WRP did under Healy. But you have not commented on the libel case against Socialist Organiser.

What is your position on the SO libel case?

2. In 1983 the BBC's Money Programme carried an investigation into the distribution of Colonel Gaddafi's political 'slush fund' in Britain. It alleged that the WRP received subsidies from Gaddafi.

Socialist Organiser had already said repeatedly that the circumstantial evidence suggested that the WRP was getting money from Gaddafi and perhaps from other Arab governments too, and that in the late 1970s it had been getting money from Iraq. We thought it conclusive evidence that we were right when they did not sue us for saying that, though they had sued me for comparing the WRP to the Moonies.

I wrote a short critical



ARTHUR SCARGILL on the picket line in the first months of the miners' strike



SEAN MATGAMNA

review of the BBC programme, repeating what I'd long been saying about the WRP's finances.

Proving yet again that the allegations were true, the WRP did not sue either the BBC or me, but instead conducted a vigorous political campaign in the labour movement.

It was a matter of the law courts against a labour movement paper for calling them Moonies and a political campaign in the labour movement against the BBC for saying they were the hirelings of an Islamic fundamentalist police state!

It was a large campaign, conducted on the

Stalinist principle of 'the amalgam' to link and politically merge the BBC and... Socialist Organiser!

For about two months a page of 'News Line' every day was given over to printing denunciations of the BBC, Socialist Organiser and... myself. It was obviously being made the occasion for a rollover of WRP strength and loyalty as day after day the 'contributions' were printed.

Tom Kempinski wrote in hollow and pathetic rhetoric: 'We are not mocked! No? An actor who specialises in playing a fastidious upper-class policeman in television wrote an essay of denunciation in the purest Healyite gobbledegook.

Loyal rank and file members of the WRP wrote to tell about the real sacrifices they made every day to finance the organisation — as if that could tell you anything about the activities of the highly secret autocrats who went on tours of the Middle East, etc. etc.

A few labour movement bodies were persuaded because of their justified hostility to the media to condemn the BBC — and SO — and to brand what was said as a self-evident libel on the WRP.

What I'd like clarified is where you now stand on this campaign, which in truth was a campaign of libel against Socialist Organiser and against me, designed to create a lynch-mob hostility towards us among certain people.

3. You have said in explanation of Gerry Healy's involvement in the killing of would-be communists by the Iraqi government in 1979 that Healy was motivated by 'bags of money'. If you have said anything about the 'Libyan gold' I missed it. Could you clarify the financial side of the Healyites' relations with Libya and other Arab states and factions?

4. At the beginning of the 1983 TUC 'News Line' did a stunt to 'expose' Arthur Scargill for his views on Solidarnosc. This sparked a loud and venomous press campaign against Scargill.

Of course Scargill's views and comments on the Polish labour movement are scandalous — but that is the business of the labour movement, and in 1983 Scargill was getting ready to make a heroic stand against the attack the NCB was about to launch against the miners. The press campaign against Scargill was

probably part of a deliberate softening-up operation by the employers and their government to undermine Scargill in preparation for a showdown with the miners.

It was inexplicable at the time why the WRP should do what it did. Your picture of Gerry Healy putting the WRP up for hire to the Iraqi state in return for 'bags of money' naturally raises the question: did Healy get 'bags of money' for setting up Arthur Scargill, and if he did, where did the money come from?

5. Socialist Organiser's attitude to the WRP has been governed for the last seven or eight years by the belief that such a cult, and doubly so given that it was tied financially to certain bourgeois governments, was not a part of the labour movement.

Writers in your paper, notably Cliff Slaughter, have noted points of comparison between fascism and the Healyites' leader cult and ingrained irrationalism. Leaving aside the question of how precisely the Healy group should be characterised, do you think the Healy group is or is not now a part of the labour movement?

Sean Matgamna (Socialist Organiser)

THE Workers Revolutionary Party has endorsed the call for an open discussion in the labour movement on the split in the party. This letter from Sean Matgamna of Socialist Organiser was received early in February.

It is fitting to repeat that publication of a letter in Workers Press in no way implies endorsement of the contents. We cannot answer most of the points that Matgamna raises.

We do not know, for example, about alleged funding of the WRP by the Libyan authorities. The evidence is, as he says, circumstantial evidence about 'highly secret autocrats'.

We can assure him, however, that we shall find out the answers and will publish them for the class to judge.

We can also assure him that the attitude of the WRP to the use of the bourgeois courts is clear. Political differences can only be fought out in struggle in the class. There is no role for the judiciary in this process.

The libel action pursued against Socialist Organiser by V Redgrave is in line with actions taken by her against the WRP's printing company. This one, unlike the case discussed in the letter, did not peter out.

Party members were at best ill-informed, mostly uninformed, about the Matgamna libel action. The implications of condoning, even by default, such actions must be considered by the WRP membership.

As a point of information, the WRP does not accuse Healy of 'involvement' in the murder of the Iraqi communists in 1979. They were executed by the Ba'athist government in Baghdad.

The News Line endorsed these executions. This was a betrayal, not just of Trotskyism but of elementary class responsibility.

Subsequent to this, demonstrations by Iraqi CP members in London were photographed by News Line staff and, we believe, the photographs were handed to the Iraqi embassy. There is no evidence for or against the notion that monies were paid for this 'favour'. We are investigating the incident and, again, will have no hesitation in reporting in full.

We note that Sean Matgamna did not consider the WRP a part of the labour movement. We have a question for him. Does he now consider that the WRP is a part of the labour movement?

It is the editor's opinion that the Healyite rump is a part of the labour movement, no matter how degenerate and corrupt its leadership. Our court actions should remain defensive.

Workers Press invites comment on this important matter from our readers and thanks the Socialist Organiser for raising it.

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A TIMELY PRODUCTION

The Black Jacobins
By C.L.R. James
At the Riverside Studio, London
February 21 - March 15

PRODUCED only once before, in 1938, with Paul Robeson in the role of the charismatic black revolutionary, Toussaint L'Ouverture, 'The Black Jacobins' is a visually and intellectually powerful experience.

The play outlines a forgotten period in black history, the only successful slave revolt, sparked off by and modelled on the great French revolution of 1789.

It led to the establishment of Haiti as an independent republic.

Its theme is the ability of black people to leap from slavery and seize control of their own lives and destinies — by defeating the French, Spanish and British colonial powers.

Fifty years later, it has retained its appeal.

C L R James wrote the play out of a disgust with the conventional history of blacks as downtrodden, exploited and submissive.

Exploding that image, the play also raises some larger issues.

As we watch Toussaint L'Ouverture deceived and defeated by his own belief in the inviolability of the slogans of the French revolution, 'Liberty, Equality and

Fraternity,' and see his trusted lieutenant plot his death to proclaim himself Emperor, shades of future events hover.

As the masses rise to overthrow the regimes in Haiti and the Philippines, the play is an uncanny and timely reminder of unfinished business for people of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The production is beautifully staged; Norman Beaton puts in a tremendous performance as Toussaint, capturing charm and humour along with power and decision.

Mona Hammond gives an outstanding portrayal of what must be one of the earliest black feminists.

Editor's note: recommended reading on L'Ouverture: 'This Gilded African' by Wanda Parkinson. (Napoleon's abusive epithet before the French invaded the new republic.) Published by Quartet, out of print but still available with a hunt.

PHILIPPINES CIVIL WAR?

Ferdinand Marcos this week fled from the Philippines after twenty years as President, thirteen of them with dictatorial martial law powers. Millions of workers and peasants have taken to the streets with the corrupt regime crumbling; key groups of army officers now back a new president, Mrs Corazon Aquino. Regan has announced US support for the new government. Our special correspondent CHRIS DIXON argues that the civil war will continue and looks at the background to the mass opposition to America's policies and its Phillipino government stooges.

CIVIL WAR in the Philippines did not begin with the recent rigged elections or even the murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983.

The ousted dictator President Marcos had his luxury liner anchored ready for a getaway in Hong Kong for nearly a year as the armed struggle against him intensified.

Over seventy battalions (200,000 soldiers), plus the armed police, have been waging a continuous battle against the mass of the country's 50 million people. When martial law was proclaimed in 1972, 30,000 were immediately arrested.

The size of the opposition was shown when two million people demonstrated at Aquino's funeral.

In the rural areas, clashes between troops and peasants — referred to by the government as guerillas — have been commonplace.

One of the worst incidents took place last September, when 27 striking sugar workers were shot dead in Escalante. Troops happily take on unarmed crowds, but in some of the country's 7,000 islands the villagers are armed and give as good as they get.

Rebellion

Imperialism has always held the Philippines by force. Wartime occupation by the Japanese stimulated the nationalist movement, and there was a mass uprising in the late 1940s, led by the Communist Party. The Huk rebellion was defeated, and the entire leadership arrested.

The Communist Party abandoned military struggle, and was not active again until the late 1960s when it split, with the present CPP orientated to China rather than Moscow.

The Communist Party has a military wing of over 12,000 full-time fighters and at least 18,000 armed villagers, the New Peoples Army. It is believed by the Pentagon to be the fastest growing army in the world.

One in five of the villages are now controlled by the NPA.

But the Stalinist party also participates in the National Democratic Front alongside groups of workers and 'Christians for National Liberation'.

The lack of clear direc-

tion in the CPP was shown by their position in the recent presidential election. They called for boycott of the election although this was by no means the policy of the whole party. The boycott assumed a Marcos victory, but other sections wanted to align themselves with Aquino.

The party's attempt to appease all political tendencies, rather than elaborate a policy, is shown by the concluding section of its election statement:

'We call upon you, our people — those who are boycotting and those who are participating — to forge a strong unity after February 7 to broaden and intensify the antifascist and antidictatorship struggles, in urban and rural areas alike, in the armed sphere and in the open mass movement.'

Fleet Street peddles the illusion, shared by a section of the CPP, that an Aquino administration will be different from that of Marcos.

It must be remembered that Benigno Aquino planned, with the help of a his business friends in Manila and America, to return to the Philippines to set up a legitimate and viable opposition which would cool the rising temperature of revolt. Marcos's henchmen had him shot as he landed.

The new president, his widow Corazon Aquino, comes from one of the wealthiest Phillipino dynasties, the Cojuangco family. They monopolise the country's coconut industry and the San Miguel Corporation, the major multinational based in Manila. Her campaign team was very much a family affair, and it is likely that her gov-



'BABY DOC, RING MAGGIE AND TELL HER THERE'S ROOM FOR ONE MORE ON MY GETAWAY LINER'

ernment will be too.

There will be no solution to the problems raised by workers in either towns or villages under an Aquino government.

Unemployment is over 40 per cent and inflation is 50 per cent. Fertiliser prices went up by over 120 per cent between 1984 and 1985, and the peasants are obliged to borrow money at interest rates of between 45 and 400 per cent.

Illusion

The basic structure of the Philippines economy has been determined by its colonial relationship with American imperialism.

From 1898 when the United States took the islands from Spain, American capital has developed the Philippines economy as a source of raw materials and cheap labour. In 1946 independence with a US-style constitution was designed to ensure the continuation of the USA's domination of the economy.

The islands supplied a limited range of exports, including copra, of which the Philippines is the world's largest supplier. The United States was the principal market.

From the 1950s, the

and now make all their tennis balls in the Philippines.

The exceptionally low wages, even by Asian standards, and the prognoses of political instability by the multinationals' 'risk assessment departments' meant that only the most labour intensive assembly plants, with little technological investment, came to the Philippines.

The chemical industry is notorious for its lack of elementary safety precautions. Electronics assembly is often done by young women who peer down microscopes. After a few years, their sight deteriorates, and they are sacked.

The appalling working conditions, attempts to reduce wages and the use of the army to control workers in the free trade zone focused the opposition to the Marcos regime and, increasingly, its US backers.

There is growing support for the KMU, the 'May 1st Movement', formed in 1980 as an independent trade union federation. It was established in opposition to the corporatist unions, and has won recognition from many trade unionists internationally.

Regime

The new 'democracy' in the Philippines has a strategic rather than moral appeal to imperialism. The US backing for the new regime is to protect not only its investments, but its vital military bases, built up over the last forty years.

The US Subic Bay naval base is presumed to have a nuclear capability, and its closure would deprive the American fleet of control of the Pacific. America also has 10,000 troops at the Clark Airforce Base.

The Americans have had to make the choice between cutting their losses by cutting economic and military spending, and encouraging the government to bring in some kind of reforms as a way of holding onto the economy of a country whose overseas debt has reached 26 billion US dollars.

Mrs Aquino has already announced that America can keep the bases, although in the run-up to the election she deliberately courted the votes of those opposed to the US military presence. She has also shown the true face of the new regime by asking Reagan in return for more help to continue the fight against the 'communists' and the Moslem separatists in the south.

Dunlop closed factories in developed countries

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

PUBLIC MEETING

Lessons of the Miners Strike and today's struggle in the Unions

Tuesday 4th March
7.30pm

Leeds Trades Council Club
Savile Place
Chapelton Road

Speakers
Dave Temple
WRP Central Committee, Murton Colliery Mechanics Lodge delegate, NUM (personal capacity)
Dave Smith WRP (Yorkshire Miner)
Cliff Slaughter WRP Central Committee