

## GIBRALTAR MURDER VICTIMS UNARMED SHOOT-TO-KILL POLICY CONFIRMED

**BRITISH state lies about Gibraltar were reduced to farce last week, by commendations awarded to 22 Spanish police for their surveillance of the three murdered IRA volunteers.**

At the Gibraltar inquest, anonymous SAS murderers and Gibraltar police blamed Spain for losing track of Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage and Daniel McCann. They claimed it was due to Spanish negligence that they thought the three were armed.

Official Spanish sources kept quiet. But last week's Interior Ministry awards speak louder than words. They were backed by a 'leak' to the leading Spanish newspaper, El Pais, indicating that police surveillance of the IRA members was unbroken.

'The question of alleged confusion caused by the claimed failure on the Spanish side was central to the British government's case at the inquest', said Paddy McGrory, solicitor for the families of the three.

'If surveillance continued right up to the gates of Gibraltar, then of course they the state forces) knew exactly what they were dealing with.'

Every pistol-packing former fascist, hiding behind his dark glasses in a grimy Spanish police station, is grunting: 'If Mrs Thatcher wants a shoot-to-kill policy, why should we take the blame?'

The Spanish cop's only complaint is that he doesn't get such a free hand as his counterparts in the north of Ireland.

He knows that the internal 'investigation' into the Royal Ulster Constabulary 'shoot-to-kill' policy ended last week with 18 officers receiving 'reprimands', the least serious measure a police disciplinary board can use. Those who pulled the trigger in a series of fatal shootings have got off scot-free.

The state's propaganda outlets were last week diverting attention from the murder machine in Ireland, with a story about an alleged 'IRA hit list of politicians', syphoned through the Tories' favourite newspaper the 'Sunday Times'.

Even this concern for 'democratically-elected representatives' is so much hypocritical cant. When an elected representative - south Derry Sinn Fein councillor John Davey

BY SIMON PIRANI

- was actually put on a hit-list, and actually shot dead on his way home from a council meeting last month, they said nothing.

They have been quite happy with the systematic intimidation of Sinn Fein's 59 councillors since their election in 1985 - including at least a dozen murder bids, beatings, harassment, and arrests.

Most damning of all is the silence of the Labour leaders about the regime of terror in Ireland's occupied six counties.

Would they stay so quiet if Tory or Social Democratic councillors had their faces smashed by army rifle-butts and their homes petrol-bombed? Or if Tory leaders were on the receiving-end of a 'shoot-to-kill' policy?

The Labour leaders' refusal to resist the Tories' dictatorial methods in Ireland is a danger to the British working class. They will acquiesce in the same terror here.

The Gibraltar killings cut across national boundaries. The Irish national struggle will be brought to a successful conclusion by the working class, not as a purely national affair, but as part of the European socialist revolution.

## South Africa and the soviets

BY BRONWEN HANDSIDE

THE Soviet bureaucracy has worked hard for two years to win the praise lavished on them by South African and British officials last week after secret talks were held between senior Soviet and South African delegations in a hotel near London. The talks were aimed at an 'international peace initiative' on South Africa.



Budget day means more financial difficulties for workers - see editorial page 2

The Stalinists have done everything in their power to bail out the threatened South African regime, and statements made last week are particularly helpful in the face of the constitutional crisis induced by PW Botha's refusal to step down from leadership of the Nationalist Party.

Yuri Yakalov, head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's southern Africa department, has made official the new policy (which Workers Press No. 154 warned was being touted through the press and notably through the authoritative Soviet journal 'International Affairs').

He said from Moscow 'We would prefer a political settlement and want apartheid to be dealt with by political means. Any solution

through military means will be short-lived...South Africa should not be destroyed.'(our emphasis).

When he says 'South Africa', Yakalov refers not to the majority black masses, but to the existing brutish South African regime and capitalist economic structure.

Anatoly Gromyko, head of the Africa institute in Moscow was even more explicit: 'There would have to be a programme of reforms submitted to nationwide discussion at which all sections of society would be represented...' (our emphasis).

The phrase 'All sections of society' is the signal from Stalinism that they will do everything they can to ensure the rule of capital is maintained. *Continued page 2*

## Budget blues

LAST WEEK'S budget was, in its own way, a clear expression of the crisis facing British capitalism and the Thatcher government.

The budget was framed not so much by Nigel Lawson, it was drawn up with the interests of the international bankers in the forefront.

As Lawson's statement in the House of Commons made clear, British capitalism faces a triple problem of deepening recession, mounting inflation and a yawning balance of payments crisis.

This balance of payments deficit will be financed by the world's bankers on one condition: that they stay convinced that the Thatcher government will press ahead remorselessly with its attack on the working class - its organisations, its standard of living and the rights it has won historically from the capitalist class.

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All these attacks will be waged in the name of 'controlling inflation'.

Yet far from inflation being under control, Lawson last week repeated that it would hit eight per cent in the coming months. Lawson tried his best to give the bankers the reassurances they demanded.

'I repeat what I have stated clearly on a number of previous occasions: interest rates will stay as high as is needed for as long as is needed.'

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The fact is that British capitalism is in pawn to the world bankers. Forced to concede that 1988 had brought a £14.5 bn deficit on the balance of payments, Lawson said: 'Given sound policies, however, it can be readily financed'.

What are these 'sound policies'? The international bankers will lend money to British capital only if they are assured of an adequate return.

This means that the burden of inflation will be put on the backs of the unemployed, the poor, the elderly and the sick.

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The British working class has had bitter experiences of this 'sound finance'. It was the 'sound finance' of the 1929-31 Labour government that imposed savage cuts on the standard of living of the working class, both employed and unemployed.

It was in the name of 'sound finance' that the same Labour government, headed by Ramsay MacDonald, put the reduction of the national debt before the needs of millions of workers and their families.

There was nothing in Lawson's budget for the pensioner, for those receiving child benefit or for those on social security benefit. All these people will see their standard of living drop even further in the face of a rising rate of inflation.

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One thing is clear from Lawson's budget. Lawson had billions in the form of a budget surplus available for spending.

The old Keynesian orthodoxy to which the Labour leaders fully subscribe would have proposed that these funds be spent to regenerate the economy and mop up the unemployed. Such 'solutions' are now impossible. As 'The Independent's' correspondent Sarah Hogg noted last week, such a policy '...would, at worst, have resulted in a mid-70's-style unravelling of economic crisis; and even at best left him [Lawson] vulnerable to the slings and arrows of monthly statistics, constant prey of the markets, with only the two-edged sword of interest rates in his hand.'

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She is right. Further government spending aimed at lifting the economy out of deepening recession would only precipitate an inflationary crisis and a run on sterling.

This is another warning to workers that their reformist leaders have no solution to the crisis.

As Lawson's budget speech last week again indicated, inflationary pressures are again mounting. An undefeated working class is now about to enter a series of major battles to defend its standard of living. But in these struggles it will come up against a battery of laws that the Tory government, with the complicity of the spineless Labour and trade union leaders, have placed on the statute book.

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These struggles will therefore be political from the word go. They give an unprecedented opportunity to build an alternative revolutionary leadership for the working class.

## WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £723.38

£1,276.62 needed to complete the March Fighting Fund. Hurry hurry! Thanks to a reader in Hull who sent in £10 saying that it was worth it if the ICP could be kept off his doorstep!

(For new readers the mis-named International Communist Party is a tiny group associated with the so-called International Committee of the Fourth International led by David North of the Workers League, USA. It is organising a slander campaign against the Secretary of our Party, Cliff Slaughter and his son, calling them fascists. Like our Hull reader the few serious socialists and trade unionists who have had the misfortune to meet these people are sick and tired of their frantic, hysterical ravings).

All who read Workers Press regularly know these people are lying. We have published our draft programme for public discussion, and will issue it (amended) for wider discussion following our Conference this week-end. We are for the building of the Fourth International as the continuity of Bolshevism against Stalinism and reformism. Join us to build the Workers Revolutionary Party and Workers Press.

Dot Gibson

Send donations to: Workers Press Fighting Fund  
PO Box 735, London, SW9 7QS

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**SAT 18 MARCH:** March for Civil Rights and Justice in north London. Broadwater Farm march demanding the release of the Tottenham Three (assemble 12 noon, Tottenham Green, Tottenham Town Hall, nearest tube Seven Sisters) will meet up with the Irish in Britain Representation Group march (assemble 12 noon, Whittington Park, Holloway Road, nearest tube Archway), for a joint Rally (3:00 pm, Duckett's Common, Turnpike Lane).

**SAT 18 MARCH:** March against the Poll Tax in Glasgow, organised by Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation. Assemble 11:00 am Glasgow Green, march to Alexandra Park, Dennistoun.

**SAT 18 MARCH:** picket in solidarity with Kurdish people in Turkey, 1 p.m. Hanover Street, near Oxford circus.

### SUN 2 APRIL: Workers Press Public Meeting

'Defend Democratic Rights! Fight the Tories!' Blythwood Hotel, Argyle St., Glasgow, 2 pm. Speakers include Dave Temple (WRP), Norman Bissell (Lanarkshire EIS Member), Josie O'Kane (Republican Band Alliance), a victimised miner, Scottish Council for Civil Liberties.

**SAT 15 APRIL:** Fighting Deportations! Labour Movement Conference of Immigration and Nationality. 10 am Manchester Town Hall. Details/Credentials from: Rena Wood, NALGO, Manchester Branch, 061-834 6564.

**SUN 23 APRIL:** Blair Peach Memorial March. Assemble 1 pm, Southall Park, Uxbridge Road, Southall. March through Southall for a Rally at Fenner Brockway Centre, South Road.

### AND HERE'S SOME ADVANCE NOTICE ...

**MON 1 MAY:** May Day demonstrations. **SAT 6 MAY:** Irish Hunger-Strike Commemoration Rally, Birmingham. **SAT-SUN 10/11 JUNE:** Third Socialist Conference, Chesterfield. **SAT 17 JUNE:** NUM Centenary Gala, Yorkshire. **SAT 24 JUNE:** Workers Press Miners' Strike 5th Anniversary Event. 10 am, Durham University, Lecture Theatre, Old Elvet, Durham.

### LONDON WRP LECTURES

'MARXISM', a series of lectures by Cyril Smith, no.2, 'Marxism and nature'. Friday 17 March, Room 9 Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1 7.30 pm.

'Marxism and Ireland': a series of meetings. The second meeting on 'British workers and Ireland - from Karl Marx's time onwards' will take place on Wednesday 22 March at 7.30 pm, Brent Irish Centre, Salusbury Road, London NW6.

### Continued from page 1

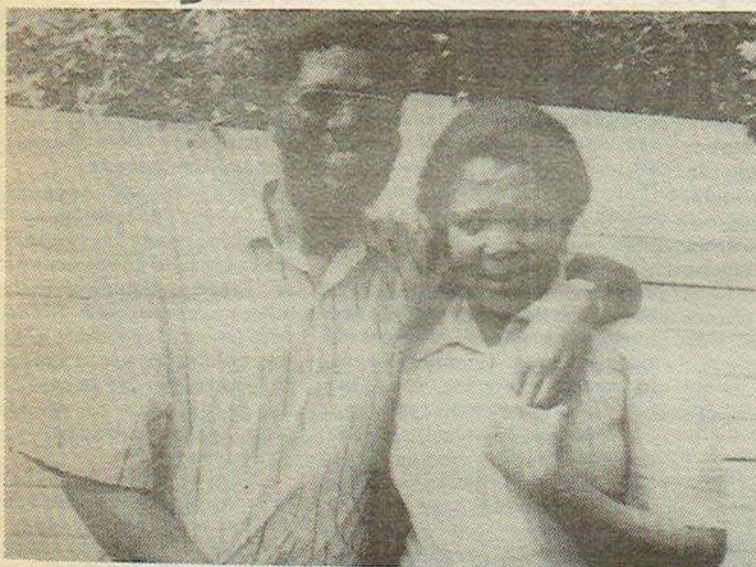
The British, oldest and wildest ruling class in the world are now taking a hand in the filthy negotiations between Pretoria, Moscow and Washington. Once again the Stalinist bureaucracy emerges as the lackey of imperialism - they are receiving accolades from all sides, including the South Africans.

They could not make their deal any clearer. We hand you the southern African working class, and you help us to get our economies functioning, and to retain our fat and privileged positions.

### In Remembrance

Workers Press announces with regret the death of David Oybio-Ishola. Dave was in the party for several years and was the Catford branch secretary. He remained a strong supporter of Workers Press and was always aware of the political changes taking place. We offer our deepest sympathy to his wife May, and to the rest of his family.

# Mayekiso and the lion-tamers



Moses and Khola Mayekiso

BY BOB MYERS

AN astonishing appeal for the audience to refrain from 'political' speeches was made from the chair at a recent packed meeting in Manchester addressed by Khola Mayekiso and Bongani Mukungho. Khola Mayekiso is the wife of Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the South African metal workers' union (NUMSA), now on trial for treason.

Bongani Mkungho, chair of the South African Dunlop shop stewards' committee, was recently sacked by his employers, British Tyre and Rubber.

The tour is sponsored by the Trades Union Congress, 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso', and the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Though posters displayed at the meeting proclaimed: 'Moses Mayekiso can never be silenced. His vision is the workers' vision', his vision never got a look in during the discussion.

Terry Bell, on behalf of 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso', said the South African government was singling out Mayekiso and his co-defendants to establish a legal precedent.

As repression had grown the black communities had turned to the trade unions for leadership. Mayekiso was the only leader who had tried to turn the trade unions to organise in the communities.

The prosecution had dropped the demand for the charge to carry the death sentence, but were determined to use the case to ensure that no trade unionists followed Mayekiso's lead.

Rena Wood from Manchester NALGO (the local government union) spoke on behalf of fellow-trade unionist Francis Okanlami, who is fighting deportation. Britain's black community was under attack, particularly since the deportation of Viraj Mendis and the police frame-ups of leading activists from that campaign.

She appealed for people to support the NALGO anti-deportation conference on 15 April.

Bongani Mkungho described how BTR had sacked him for taking

time off to attend union business and how the state had repressed his fellow-workers' efforts to fight for his reinstatement.

He told of the five-year-old strike at BTR Sarmcol and of the murder of union activists by Inkatha. He appealed for British trade unionists to fight to force BTR to reinstate him.

The township of Alexandra lacked electricity, sewage, and made-up roads, and housing was bad, said Khola Mayekiso. Crime had been rampant in the community.

The Alexandra township committee, with Moses Mayekiso as chair,

Until now I have felt that the best way to deal with the pathetic ramblings of David North and his puppets in England (in the far from impressive shape of the mysteriously named 'International Communist Party' - a grand title for a collection of people who last time I was in a position to count them numbered less than the local pub bowls team) was to ignore them for the insignificant creatures they are. But now I feel it is only right that at least the most absurd allegations of Hyland and his ramshackle gang should be answered.

First I must take up the continual references to my being a friend and associate of a known racist, David 'Para' Brown. ICP members were present throughout my trial, so why are they not truthful about this great friendship and association?

They appear to accept the police evidence against me, so why don't they say that this consisted, firstly, of my getting on a bus to Bradford and meeting Brown, already on the bus, by coincidence? The next and only other time the undercover officers reported seeing me and Brown together was at Kings Cross station, when my friends and I immediately deliberately lost Brown and the group he was with.

Besides, the assertion that Brown was a well-known fascist in Leeds certainly came as a big

had organised yard, block, and street committees which had met with a big response. Crime was cut drastically and the community began to defend itself.

'For these activities he now faces treason charges', Khola Mayekiso declared. Khola Mayekiso appealed for everyone to mobilise in support, not just of Moses, but of the whole South African trade-union movement.

The unions now organised in COSATU (the biggest trade union federation) were in the most part formed by trade unionists who saw their goal as socialism.

They insisted that apartheid could be overthrown only by a movement led by the working class - and that the unions needed their own programme, not just for the overthrow of white rule, but also for the establishment of socialism.

As the trade unions grew rapidly the supporters of the African National Congress' Freedom Charter moved into them to argue against this workers' programme. This move was led by the South African Communist Party.

It was against this background that the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the TUC and the Labour leaders did their best to ensure that the British working class did nothing to support Moses Mayekiso.

AAM and TUC conferences were urged to vote down resolutions backing Mayekiso, usually after speeches from ANC members opposing 'individual campaigns'.

We publish below a letter written by Patrick Slaughter from prison on the campaign of slander against him, Cliff Slaughter, and the WRP, by the International Communist Party

surprise to me and many others who live in Leeds. The truth is that the only thing Brown was well-known for was his propensity to tell fairy stories about his exploits.

Not that I pretend never to have talked to Brown before. He was a well-known character in Leeds, or, to be more accurate, a standing joke.

He was humoured by most people as the harmless big-mouth he really was. The reasons for his behaviour were best explained by the consultant psychiatrist in court, and, to be honest, I don't feel that it is for me to explain his actions. I did explain my own.

If the ICP insist on talking about my friends, why don't they write about those who were arrested and charged who actually were my friends and were cited

A group of people under Socialist Workers Party influence organised 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso' to raise money to publicise the trial and to gain support for Moses. 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso' has never been open to the public. You can support it but you can't have a say.

If 'Moses can never be silenced', it must be asked how a meeting to support the spearhead of the socialist movement in South Africa can take place without a mention of the treachery of the TUC leaders here. And how can such a meeting not mention the role of the South African Stalinists, for whom the enemy is those who call for socialism?

The people who had worked for the meeting in the local area had voted not to have a speaker from the Friends on the platform - ignoring this decision the Friends spoke and under the guise of legal restraints, interests of unity etc, etc helped to set up the 'right' atmosphere to keep the chairperson happy.

All those supporting the struggle in South Africa must mobilise in the unions and in the wider working-class community to raise support for Moses Mayekiso. Demand that the Friends of Moses Mayekiso be opened to all working-class supporters. They are friends of a Moses Mayekiso who doesn't exist. He is a fighter for socialism. They are the TUC's lion tamers.

as being in 'my' group - Paul Grayston, Ian Gee, and Robert Reid?

These were the only three of the 26 arrested with whom I ever used to socialise on a regular basis. Perhaps the ICP ignore them because the prosecution decided there was no case for them to answer.

While they are at it, why don't the ICP, if they are so concerned about my racist tendencies and racist friends, call round and ask these friends of mine if there is any truth in these allegations?

The truth is that every member of the ICP knows what my politics are. It is just that they are so desperate for any type of ammunition to use against my father that they are prepared to completely discredit themselves by making use of a Government show trial in order to snipe at him.

The Tory Government attacks sections of the youth by stereotyping them through the media, whether it be Rastas, homosexuals, football fans, or the latest favourites, 'lager louts', and then punishing them in the courts. For the ICP to dirty their hands, using such filthy attacks for their own purposes, speaks volumes for their political credibility.

Patrick Slaughter  
Her Majesty's Prison,  
Lindholme, Nr. Doncaster.

# LETTERS

Write to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

## Reply to Pirani

IT seems my letter to the Workers Press (March 4th) correcting just some of the inaccuracies of your man in Belfast, John Steele, has had the effect of unearthing what seems like the maternalistic instincts of Simon Pirani. So much so in fact that the letter though written in direct response to Steele, was not even allowed to be published and argued through in a rational manner by those who may disagree with its content.

Instead we had the excitable Pirani, typically showing an abuse of his position within the WRP, lashing out blindly with some hideous accusations. Not least was his absurd attempt to claim that my comment that Steele, in his inability to apply logic to political questions, was 'if not careful, in danger of being exhibited as the perfect reason for political birth control', constituted a Stalinist-type 'threat' - and goes on, 'I assume MacCaolite knows Trotskyists will not be deterred by threats'. This is a blatant attempt at slander.

Of course the reason why Pirani feels he must 'defend' Steele against the mildest criticism lies in the fact that they both, when confronted by harsh political realities, rather than accept that they are nothing more than theorists, immediately throw up the old smoke screen of Stalinism in order to cover their escape route.

The Pirani/Steele combo accused the Sinn Fein leadership of stageist theories on the grounds that there was a call at the Ard Fheis (27 January) for the party to work with other groups in a broad all Ireland anti-imperialist movement.

Reporting on a speech by Cliff Slaughter to a WRP meeting on defence of democratic rights (Workers Press, 25 February) the paper declared: 'A resolution was passed at the end of the meeting ... We propose the following steps: (1) The formation of committees or campaigning bodies in areas bringing together all (my emphasis) who are resisting attacks on democratic rights ... (2) A campaign inside the trade unions and the Labour Party, including a lobby of the TUC in September 1989 ... (3) A conference open to all those fighting to defend democratic

rights to be called in September to discuss how such work can be developed.' Interestingly, there was no recorded opposition. An ominous silence from Pirani/Steele on that stageist proposal!!

Lest the main point of my letter be clouded by this hypocrisy - it is one thing for the Piranis of this world to lay claim to the noble title of 'revolutionary' from the comparative safety of London. The people who are actually fighting and not talking the revolution know that there is a price to be paid, exceptionally brave people that they are. However, I rather suspect that certain other self-styled 'revolutionaries' sadly lack the correct political values.

Leabhras MacCaolite

## Reply to MacCaolite by a Republican prisoner

I WOULD like to make a few comments in relation to the ongoing debate in your paper regarding Irish Republicanism. In my view John Steele made a useful and thought-provoking contribution. However, the overall strength of his case was weakened somewhat by the tendency he displayed to infer too much from too little.

John Steele's point that there is a move towards popular front activities is, I feel, generally correct. Yet it was only with Simon Pirani's effective rebuttal of Leabhras MacCaolite, that Steele's case appeared convincing. Steele used 'negative' evidence to support his contention, i.e. that none of the members of the Republican leadership identified by him 'excluded alliances with representatives of the 26 county bourgeois parties'. While it would be unwise to dismiss such evidence we could never afford to it the same weight as we would to 'positive' evidence, such as that put by Simon Pirani.

Furthermore, Steele attributes a significance to the influence of the Communist Party of Ireland which remains undemonstrable. Realistically speaking, the CPI have played no part in the formulation of Sinn Fein policy. That policy has always been stage-ist.

Nevertheless, in spite of John Steele's inaccuracies, his article was an interesting attempt at

clarification. As such it was most unfortunate that a supposedly Republican response to that article was little other than a gratuitously abusive tirade. But I can assure John Steele that not all Republicans resort to 'Sun'-type journalism when responding to critiques of our position.

If we can abstract the political content from an otherwise abusive letter we can see that Leabhras MacCaolite makes the same error he seemingly seeks to punish Steele for, i.e. deducting 'facts' from weak evidence. For example, MacCaolite implies that the Stalinist problem which beset the Republican movement in the 1960s has been removed through 'a costly and bloody war of attrition'. This is only true to a limited extent. What we in the Republican movement have managed to achieve is the deletion of one stage, i.e. the democratisation of the orange state.

We have yet to properly get to grips with the problem of two stages. Thus, our president, Mr. Adams, could approvingly refer to the Stalinist Desmond Greaves in 1986, when claiming that the 'political and economic aspects are the two stages of one democratic reorganisation of society'.

This statement came at least 16 years after the split within the Republican movement. It is worthwhile bearing in mind that the organisation led by Greaves, the Connolly Association, was instrumental in Stalinising the Republican movement in the 1960s. Seemingly, his influence has not yet abated.

Republican  
political prisoner  
Long Kesh

## The French revolution and the Tory government

YOUR supplement on the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the French Revolution (Workers Press 4 March) makes valuable points about the character of the Revolution, particularly in reasserting an analysis based on the role of the ordinary women and men within the context of permanent revolution.

The revolution is clearly still a contentious issue in France itself, but what of this country? Until recently one might have expected the Tories to have ignored the bicentenary.

After all, all revolutions are a bad thing in their eyes. Except of course that they have just finished celebrating the anniversary of the Glorious Revolution

of 1688, so to ignore 1789 will not be so easy. Perhaps we will hear Mrs Thatcher contrasting the peaceful progress of 1688 with the French terror. It would be quite hypocritical, but quite in character.

What of the left? Apparently the Labour Party is joining the common European slogan for the June Euro Elections which is 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'. It may be that Kinnoch will try to claim the ideas of the revolution while ignoring its processes, and particularly the implications for working class activity which your article raises.

There is, no doubt, no harm in pointing out that the bourgeoisie have been unable to fulfil the demand for 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' two hundred years on. But more than this we can profitably recall the inspiration which the French revolutionary tradition provided for the radical movement in this country.

In the 1790s the London Corresponding Society, themselves middle-class radicals, played an important role in defending the revolution against a reactionary government, while the United Irishmen had more practical ideas.

Throughout the first half of the 19th century radicals looked to France. The Chartists, and particularly those left around Harney and Jones, copied many of the tactics used by the French revolutionaries. They also aimed for, initially, the same sort of plebian democracy. The Owenite socialists looked to the Utopian socialist currents thrown up by the revolution.

The general lesson learned was that revolution was possible and that ordinary people could change the course of history. Not bad lessons to remember, and we can be certain that Thatcher and Kinnoch will be doing their best to make sure we forget them.

Keith Hett  
Tottenham

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# CONSTRUCTION CARNAGE

## Safety slumps as building booms



Construction Safety Campaign silent vigil - while UCATT leaders join the employers for a mass for their victims

**A CONSTRUCTION boom has been taking place under the Tories, yet while the building companies make massive profits there are no benefits for the thousands who risk their lives every day in the industry, or the millions who need new houses, schools and hospitals.**

The 1980s building boom is a marked contrast to the building in the years after World War Two when it was a political priority to invest in the fabric of the public sector.

Even when Thatcher came to office, 110,000 council houses were built a year. Last year only 15,000 homes were built; this year the figure will be down to 8,000 and new legislation will stop it altogether.

It is hardly surprising that as a result thousands are homeless. In 1979 local

authorities accepted 56,750 families as priority need; in 1987 they accepted 112,730. Of course this underestimates the real numbers without homes.

Today 55,000 young single homeless sleep on the streets of London.

Local authorities playing a major part in the economies of the communities to which they are responsible presented a real threat to the incoming Tory government in 1979. Thatcher set out to legislate particularly against the inner city Labour councils.

The Planning and Land Act of 1980 attacked the right of councils to run large Direct Labour Organisations, which employ large numbers of building workers in trade union closed shops.

Parallel with these measures against the DLOs, the building boom in the private sector made it doubly difficult for local authorities to compete on price.

Building labour was increasingly casualised and

cash-in-hand payments (the lump) and other forms of self-employment grew.

Local authority costs rose in comparison as they sought to maintain pension and sick schemes, pay national insurance contributions and adhere to safety regulations.

The politics of this casualisation despite years of struggle to unionise building, has dominated the annual conferences of the building union, UCATT, as well as the grassroots of the union.

The 1972 national building workers' strike which led to the imprisonment of Des Warren and the Shrewsbury pickets had as its slogan 'Kill the lump!'

The UCATT conference, however, last year voted to accept the euphemistically-named 'self-employed' building workers into membership.

Although this had happened in practice for years, this decision called off the fight and institutionalised a social evil. The consequences will show not

only in living standards, but in deaths and injuries.

The price being paid for running the construction industry with only money as its motor is three deaths a week.

Ninety per cent of these could have been prevented by the application of safety standards accepted as normal ten years ago.

The rate of deaths and major accidents is up 65 per cent since 1981, from 164 per 100,000 employed to 271 per 100,000.

A major rank-and-file movement, the Construction Safety Campaign, was formed over a year ago. It organises for direct employment and trade union membership, as well as the full implementation on every building site of a safety programme, not just safety measures but inspections, education and high penalties for employers who break safety regulations.

In this special three-page report, ED HALL examines the background to this campaign.

# The Tories attack Direct Labour Organisations

**DIRECT LABOUR ORGANISATIONS** have been important in maintaining standards of safety and conditions of employment. The government has become increasingly frustrated with them and the extent to which they have been run in ways counter to their plans for the industry. It has moved against them at a faster rate than the terms of the Planning and Land Act.

The DLO of the London Borough of Hackney was served with a closure notice in 1988, although it had a track record of profitability and its most recent accounts were still with the auditor.

Hackney sought a judicial review because it claimed the government had not acted reasonably. The Judge admitted that the government has 'draconian' powers, and can close a DLO provided it discloses its criteria!

Hackney DLO is a major local employer. It has a 200-place training scheme and operates the largest training scheme for women builders in the EEC.

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All building maintenance of every council will be subject to tender after October.

This means DLOs will not be able to 'reserve' work for themselves or extend or renew contracts. It will release a further £400-million worth of work to the private sector.

The principal requirement of the Planning and Land Act was that DLOs should make 'profits' of 5 per cent in a 'trading account'.

The government knows that as tenders compete with the de-regulated private sector, tenders are not 'like for like', and 'profits' in these circumstances are impossible.

On 13 February, another London borough, Haringey, terrified by the consequences of the 1980 Act, accepted the results of an independent consultant which showed their

DLO making a £7.5 million 'loss' in 1988-1989.

The council voted to cut its 1,400-strong DLO by half. The leader of the council has admitted this cannot be done without compulsory redundancies.

The actual money available to Haringey is attacked through other mechanisms. Housing investment, £21 million this year, is to be £17 million next year, and this can only be spent on preparing the housing stock for sale.

New build in London has been virtually stopped by a financial device named the 'admissible cost limit'.

The arbitrary powers of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 have also been used in Haringey and elsewhere to prevent any new contracts.

In Haringey, the non-elected officers appealed, using this Act, to the Secretary of State for the Environment. This takes the budget out of democratically-elected hands altogether.



## No training

**THE PRIVATE sector cannot afford training schemes and the financial structure of the construction industry prevents apprenticeships, as there is so much labour-only sub-contracting.**

In 1966 there were 135,000 apprenticeships in the private sector; now there are less than 50,000 in any form of training scheme.

Injuries to young people on Youth Training Schemes are scandalous. One in five YTS 'trainees' injured was involved in construction, yet just over one in ten YTS placements are in construction.

In the first three months of 1988, 41 YTS trainees suffered major injuries on building sites, and over 200 received minor injuries.

Local authorities have provided the skilled employees to be poached by the private sector - but DLOs have been attacked and closed. Already skill shortages are acute. There is a shortage of 200,000 skilled workers.

Meanwhile the conditions of the unskilled who cram into London in particular are appalling.

Building workers from the north of Ireland are often the

## THE BUILDING BOOM AND THE TORIES

CONSTRUCTION output is going up every year; it rose 8 per cent in 1988. In 1987, building work completed totalled £34,500 million, imports to fuel the boom stood at £4,000 million, and shares of building companies trade on an international basis.

The stock market crash saw a surge of interest in industrial building; Thatcher's friends the property developers continue to ride high while industry itself has been devastated.

It is a paradox only partly explained by the Tories' policies, which have undoubtedly been geared to help private sector construction.

It has more to do with speculation the way land and property are valued, and re-valued, especially at a time of rising inflation.

Private commercial work accounts for 76 per cent of the industry. Investment in public works fell by 9 per cent in 1988 and will fall by 11 per cent this year.

While actual building costs, including the wages bill, rose only 5.3 per cent last

year, the contractors charged clients through their tenders an extra 17.3 per cent - which shows the easy pickings of a de-regulated industry. In 1987 the average profits of building companies were up 60 per cent - and their average donation to the Tory party coffers was £30,000.

Building activity is all the more frenzied because the boom cannot last in its present form. The expected glut of offices and high-cost housing will kill it.

Because so many of the workers can be sacked at a moment's notice, and because of the use of sub-letting and sub-contracting, the major companies expect to weather a collapse.

Speed is vital for them. Delays for disputes or accidents cost them billions - and threaten this very speculative investment.

With the sense of impending collapse, anti-union measures, black-listing of activists and the lowering of safety standards force up the accident rate.

Although at present deaths and injuries are individual and isolated, the industry is in a state where a single accident could involve large numbers of workers, or the public.

While actual building costs, including the wages bill, rose only 5.3 per cent last

# THE CAMPAIGN FOR SAFETY



## for danger

victims of accidents only days after starting work as a result of a complete lack of training.

General health also suffers. A third of the single hostel residents in London are Irish, able to survive on the 'lump' but unable to join the housing ladder.

The use of the lump, unskilled labour and the operation of blacklists has brought union membership down from 350,000 in UCATT in 1980 to 260,000 in 1988.

Stories of the abuses of what union organisation is allowed on sites, particularly those in docklands, abound.

It is not unknown for convenors to be contractors' nominees, and shop steward systems are prevented by sacking any workers who forms a health and safety committee or begins to use complaints procedures.

The Economic League runs the most developed blacklist. Building companies which subscribed to the League in 1987 included Amey Roadstone, Costain, Gleeson, McAlpine, Marples, Taylor Woodrow, Wimpey and Mowlems.

The national leadership of UCATT has not addressed this abuse and has a poor record of ensuring proper organisation on the ground, where trade union shops do not exist and corruption and malpractice are rife.

ANGER at the increasing and unnecessary carnage on building sites has led to a year of campaigning by the Construction Safety Campaign.

Activities have included picketing sites where deaths have occurred, and demonstrations at courts where coroners have been reminded that deaths are not 'accidents' but killings.

Last month the Construction Safety Campaign held a silent vigil outside Southwark Cathedral, while inside UCATT officials sat down for a requiem mass with the building employers - to mourn the deaths their pursuit of profit had caused.

### Insult

The Campaign members considered this an insult to the building workers who had died. They issued a leaflet which explained:

'While the Trade Union Officialdom and the Employers organise a Requiem Mass, the deaths and injuries go on and are rising remorselessly.

'The Construction Safety Campaign states unequivocally that the only way to bring about an end to death and serious injury in construction is for all building workers to get unionised, well-organised, and eventually mobilised around a Construction Safety Programme which is directed towards and committed to building for mass demonstrations, mass strike action and mass picketing.

'We call on all construction workers, religious and non-religious alike to support the construction safety campaign, its aims and its policies.

'Let us organise to celebrate living in the building industry and to eliminate dying in it.'

The press, including the Stalinist 'Morning Star', preferred to report the mass rather than the picket.

In 1988 there were 157 fatalities and 3,624 major injuries on British building sites.

The government's own Health and Safety Executive has stated that 90 per cent of these deaths could have been prevented, and that in 70 per cent of them positive action by management could have saved lives.

Half the victims who died between 1985 and 1987 had been working for less than a week on the site where they were killed.

Workers are expected to operate machinery with no training. In October 1988 a carpenter was crushed to death in an excavation by a forklift driver whose vehicle was out of control. He had had no training.

### Overtaken

In the same month a dumper driver was killed when the dumper overturned in soft mud. There was no temporary roadway and the driver had been given no instruction.

Another of the deaths last October was of a labourer in Wembley, suffocated in an unsupported trench.

Workers are gassed and electrocuted because they have had no training in handling dangerous services.

Building workers are still dying of asbestos-related diseases and the accident statistics do not include the occupational deaths, estimated to be 40,000 since 1979, from bronchitis, cancer due to dust and diseases aggravated by poor site conditions.

The Health and Safety

Executive 'blitz' over an 18-month period resulted in 2,000 prohibition notices. They found half the larger sites warranted action, and nearly a third of smaller sites.

One in four of the sites visited had to be closed down until safety was brought up to standard. Yet most sites are never visited - and two thirds of them are never even notified to the authorities.

Employers whose negligence kills can expect an average fine of less than £500.

### Deaths

Construction is now the most dangerous industry of all. There are more deaths in construction than in all the manufacturing industries put together.

The Campaign has succeeded in gaining the support of 205 MPs for an 'early day motion' which calls for more factory inspectors and legislation so that 'stronger action can be taken against those employers who ignore the legislation and thereby put the lives of the workforce at risk.' UCATT has been forced to start a 'safe site' campaign, and have picked up the call for greater penalties. This campaign was linked to the TUC 'safety inspection week'. But it is clear that the issue is not penalties for a few rogue employers, but the whole structure of the industry - and that includes the organisation of the building union itself.

• The Construction Safety Campaign holds its first AGM on Saturday 8 April at Kingsway College, near Kings Cross, London WC1.

• Details from: CSC, 72 Copeland Rd, London SE15. Telephone 01-732 3711.

## THE DEMANDS OF THE CONSTRUCTION SAFETY CAMPAIGN INCLUDE:

- a mandatory prison sentence for employers where gross negligence is proven, or in the event of a death or serious injury
- an end to sackings, victimisation and the blacklist
- effective construction safety legislation, written by building workers, for building workers

- the right to stop unsafe jobs and to refuse dangerous work
- the labour and trades union movement to make deaths and serious injuries in the construction industry a major political issue
- local authorities to refuse to employ contractors and sub-contractors with a proven record of wilful and serious negligence in the matter of safety in construction
- the support of the medical profession to get proper statistics on the true extent of accidents and disease among building workers

## Personal Column

Peter Fryer

## Hatred and contempt

IF there's one thing worse than a prime minister who thinks she's the Queen ('We have become a grandmother'), it's a judge who thinks he's God.

Judge James Pickles sent 24-year-old Michelle Renshaw to prison for seven days. Her crime was to refuse to give evidence against a man who had allegedly beaten her up.

She had received threatening telephone calls and was terrified of being on the receiving end of further physical violence.

Few who saw Michelle interviewed on her release, after serving four days of her sentence, and who heard her account of how she was strip-searched and otherwise humiliated, could have failed to echo her feelings of 'hatred and contempt' for the self-satisfied tyrant who saw fit to punish her in this way.

Those feelings were deepened by the sight of Judge Pickles smugly observing that 'nobody can sack me or make me resign'.

Some men enjoy punishing women, and some enjoy putting on fancy dress to do so. And there is nothing more despicable than a man in a silly wig using his power to cause further pain and humiliation and fear to an already battered and frightened woman.

Judge Pickles is not alone. A great many of his fellow-judges share his invincible incomprehension of women's vulnerability, and display an incorrigible tenderness towards rapists and child molesters.

The whole judicial system in Britain is rotten to the core.

It's not only Judge Pickles who needs to

be 'struck off', but the entire system by which ignorant and arrogant upper-class barristers are appointed to positions of immense power and enjoy immunity from any kind of democratic control.

It's not only Judge Pickles who deserves our hatred and contempt, but the entire system which puts men like him on the bench as guardians of capitalist property, capitalist law, and capitalist morality.

## Mothers and children

I HESITATE to cross swords with Bob Potter, for whose temperate criticism (Letters, 4 March) I am grateful. But his letter does surprise me.

I'm surprised, first of all, to find Bob recommending, as if it clinched his argument, Michael Rutter's 'Maternal Deprivation Reassessed'. This book is in fact markedly less 'anti-Bowlby' than Bob implies. For Rutter states:

'The last eight years have seen the continuing accumulation of evidence showing the importance of deprivation and disadvantage as influences on children's psychological development. Bowlby's (1951) original arguments on that score have been amply confirmed' (my emphasis).

Secondly, M. P. M. Richards, in a 1979 paper, notes how 'Bowlby's ideas about attachment in human babies have been transposed to mothers, but moved back in time and the process renamed 'bonding'. In the course of this transposition many of Bowlby's views on mother-child separations have been overlooked.'

This suggests that there are revisionist Bowlbyites: epigones, so to say, who have misused and distorted Bowlby's work.

So it's surprising to find Bob blaming

Bowlby for the use made of his name by those who, as Bob puts it, sought 'to close down the nurseries and return the women to the kitchen sink'.

Thirdly, I'm surprised to find that Bob doesn't refer to the considerable difference between Bowlby's early view and the revised view expressed in his 1969 book, 'Attachment and Loss, vol. I: Attachment'. Bowlby's early view was that strong attachment was essential for a child's healthy development, and that long separation from the mother, or deprivation of maternal affection, was liable to result in maladjustment.

His later view was that separation didn't inevitably lead to maladjustment, but that protracted absence of a mother-figure before the age of about five did substantially interfere with healthy psychological development.

Fourthly, I'm surprised that Bob fails to acknowledge two results of Bowlby's 1951 book which I'm sure he would agree were extremely beneficial: the abandonment of the barbarous practice of separating mothers and babies immediately after birth; and the adoption of the civilised practice of allowing mothers of hospitalised children to stay with them in hospital.

Finally, let me assure Bob that by 'mother' I didn't necessarily mean biological mother. No doubt it would have been less slipshod on my part to have written something like 'stable parental figure of either sex'.

But, even in 1951, Bowlby himself acknowledged the value of what he called a 'permanent mother-substitute'.

Rereading 'Child Care and the Growth of Love' after many years, I have searched in vain for the claim that Bob attributes to its author of 'an almost mystical relationship' between biological mother and child.

## AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

## Comic Relief

One of the fastest growing industries in Thatcher's Britain is charity.

It represents one of the more successful and spectacular features of the enterprise culture.

The established charitable organisations like Oxfam and Christian Aid, along with other long-standing voluntary agencies like the NSPCA, have become more and more professionalised or integrated into the distributive industries.

But they are being upstaged by more popular, energetic and often eccentric initiatives.

These sometime originate from the brainwaves and whims of a public entertainer or personality like Bob Geldof which can have an incredible snowballing effect. We had Bandaid, Sportsaid, money mountains of all kinds - and now Comic Relief.

The distinguishing feature of these new activities is that they

turn charity into spectacle. They rely heavily on much-publicised media events with musicians, comedians and sports personalities performing gratis to raise apparently astronomical funds. Amidst the conscience salving there are reputations to be made or mended.

Zany yuppies like Cleese, Atkinson, et al and reactionary clowns like Tarbuck, Dodd and Co. can demonstrate that they have hearts of gold as well as bank balances full of the stuff.

The new charities have been successful not only because they have been made into entertainments. They have an edge over the traditional outfits because they are transient; they do not require an institutional framework of established volunteers.

They can pragmatically draw in new people with each new event. They are able to do this relying on the drawing power of the mass media, often addressing millions of people or involving some of them on the basis of popular cultural events.

They make a special appeal to children and young people who can be motivated by schools and youth organisations to collect money or pressurise their parents into forms of sponsorship.

The charities have developed in this way on the basis of a populist appeal. The political content of this populism is an

admixture of frustrated idealism and reactionary sentimentality.

The mechanisms of the public spectacle involve leaders or personalities (sometimes operating on an international level with satellite link-up) giving an impression of collective popular action.

In fact, the collective action of the spectacle is an illusion. Apart from the scattered sponsored events, the decision to 'give a bit' is a highly privatised one, made at home. The emotional tempo is heightened by target meeting, exhortations and congratulations which rise to the pitch of religious fervour.

The moral is invariably that if only we maintained the same spirit, the ills of the world would disappear. All this cannot but obscure the fact that loan interest rates from imperialist financial centres can wipe out national economies.

The economic and 'natural' causes of famines can be diagnosed, predicted and prevented, but are not, because of the crisis of international finance capital.

The effects of this crisis are presented in terms of perennial human suffering and natural disaster. Anyone who objects to the populist charities is labelled as selfish, hypocritical, and last week as humourless.

Last week's effort, Comic Relief, makes charity a laughing

matter. There are red noses (this time rose scented) for fun-loving people, large ones for cars, little red books for alternative comedians and big red balloons for pubs.

For the drinkers of Rotherham there is red beer at £1.50 a bottle. Perhaps this heady brew will get to those parts of the Labour council where other varieties of red have failed to reach.

The BBC devoted their prime-time viewing to re-running comedy 'classics' and will no doubt be now able to re-define their statutory 'public service' remit.

This year's laughter campaign has a nationalist edge.

It appeals to that 'charity begins at home' moralism which can serve as a cover for racism. That the health service, social services and care agencies should depend on charity as an integral part of their funding is a clear indication that 'third world' conditions now exist at the heart of the advanced capitalist states.

Show biz charity re-enforces the idea that this is a natural state of affairs.

The final insult is that all this is packaged to make us laugh. On the contrary, in the immortal words of 'Albert and the Lion' this time, there is 'nothing to laugh at at all'.



# The Syphilis of the labour movement

IN HIS letter (Workers Press, 4 March) Geoff Barr says:

'My one disagreement (with Dot Gibson's article) is her argument that North's use of slander and abuse puts him outside the labour movement. If only it were true.

'The movement would have been rid of the Stalinists long ago; likewise Kinnock would have found himself with no place within the movement either. The labour movement includes many reactionary organisations and individuals. A major task for us is to fight and defeat them to the point at which either they break from the working class or the movement drives them out. That task is still in hand.'

If he means simply that the historic task of driving bourgeois, anti-working class elements out of the workers' movement remains to be done, then we agree.

But I think it may be confusing to leave it at the level of 'organisations and individuals'.

What we have are agencies and influences of the class enemy and its ideology in the workers' movement. These will not 'break from the working class'.

And if Geoff Barr's letter was interpreted to mean what some people say, that opportunism and Stalinism are part of the workers' movement (which he certainly did not intend to imply), that would be wrong. They are an alien infection in the body of the working class and the labour movement.

The trade unions and the Labour Party, and the Stalinist parties, are part of the working class movement.

The trade union bureaucracy which leads the unions and the Labour Party reformist leaderships are agencies of the capitalist class of their own country (and, through them, of international capital) inside the workers' movement.

The Stalinist parties in all countries are part of the workers' movement. Stalinism is not. It is the politics of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, a caste parasitic on the deformed workers' state.

This caste is a bourgeois agency in the workers' state and in the workers' movement internationally. When this caste proved to have turned the Communist International into the tool of

capitalist counter-revolution, it was time for Trotsky and his comrades to found the Fourth International. Stalinism had to be driven out of the workers' movement.

In order to make this point more strongly, Geoff Barr could have quoted Trotsky on the necessity of ridding the workers' movement of Stalinism:

'It is necessary to rally the efforts of all revolutionists, all honest workers, all true friends of the proletariat, to purge the horrible contagion of Stalinism from the ranks of the emancipatory movement ...

'Never before has the labour movement had in its own ranks so vicious, dangerous, powerful, and unscrupulous an enemy as Stalin's clique and its international agents. (Nov 2, 1937).

'On the soil of Spain, Stalinism has shown with particular clarity that it has assumed the role of international policeman against the proletarian revolution, the same role that czarism played against the bourgeois revolution. (June 1, 1938).

'The main enemy within the ranks of the proletariat remains, of course, opportunism, especially its most vicious and malignant form - Stalinism, that syphilis of the workers' movement. (July 18, 1938).'

Cliff Slaughter.

## Comments on the draft Programme of the WRP

IN SECTION 1. The WRP and its Aims

Is it not the case that the central proposition of the Transitional Programme, the crisis of revolutionary leadership, is more true, more urgent today than simply, 'just as true'?

It is true that only the working class can carry out the historic task of overthrowing capitalism and smashing the capitalist state.

For this reason it must become the leader of all of the oppressed. The groups that make up the oppressed must be emphasised - blacks, immigrants, etc.

This could possibly be done in section 8, **The Crisis of British Capitalism and the British workers' movement.**

I think that it is important that we specifically include Cuba among the deformed workers' states, and not simply use, 'etc'.

**3. The Foundations of Socialism**  
I think that this section should show more clearly the interlinked nature of the crises of imperialism and Stalinism and why these crises are interlinked.

This forms the material basis

of the unity of the socialist revolution and the political revolution, in a word, the struggle for the reconstruction, the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

**4. The Basis of the Fourth International**

This section needs to emphasise that Stalinism represented (still does) definite class forces and class interests, even if the bureaucracy has not been able to transform itself into a ruling class. It could therefore only usurp power on the condition that the proletariat, and particularly its party, (The Bolshevik Party as well as the Third International), was defeated.

This is why its struggle against the continuity of Bolshevism was, and continues to be, a life-and-death struggle. In this it reflects the needs of imperialism. The turn away from the working class meant a turn towards the bourgeoisie. The Comintern became the instrument through which the bureaucratic caste defended its privileged position and interests in the Soviet Union.

The activities, programme, etc., of the Comintern and its constituent parts had increasingly to correspond to the Kremlin bureaucracy's needs and interests. This is seen clearly in the 'third period policy' which was directly responsible for the victory of fascism over the German working class.

**5. The WRP and the rebuilding of the Fourth International**

Is it historically correct to say that the struggle against Pabloism began in 1953? Did this struggle begin earlier and 1953 represent a higher stage of development?

Also, was the perspective in 1953 not to force a process of discussion and clarification and not the initiation of a split? That this split took place because the leadership bureaucratically blocked off all attempts at discussion and clarification while at the same time further developing its liquidationist line?

**6. The fight for international working class unity**

In addition to speaking about the democratic demands of the South African masses, the programme should speak also about their struggle to smash apartheid.

On the deal hoped for by the SA Stalinists it needs to be pointed out that they sow the illusion that apartheid can be destroyed without destroying capitalism.

Maybe this sentence can be rewritten in the following way:  
The Stalinists there hope to stitch up a 'democratic' comp-

romise which they pretend will result in capitalism discarding its detested apartheid face but which in reality will enforce the rule of capital more firmly against the working-class movement, the new trade unions and the growing cry of socialism.

Why is socialism in inverted commas?

**The Role of the National state**

The programme needs to show more clearly what the role of the national state is in the present crisis of capitalism, particularly in relation to the threat of war (section 12: Against the war). As far as I can see this is only touched upon, and all too briefly, in section 3: The Foundations of Socialism.

The national divisions in capitalism which threaten nuclear war will give way to the international co-operation.

In this connection the following remarks by Trotsky are very important:

'The fundamental contradiction is between the productive forces of capitalism and the level of consumption of the masses.

'But this contradiction does not present itself in an arena of capitalism that is one and indivisible. The national state delimits the framework within which this contradiction comes to light.

'This is how the contradiction between the productive forces of capitalism and the national state becomes the immediate cause of wars. Without characterising the economically reactionary role of the national state, one cannot refute the idea of national defense (LT, 1934-5 Pathfinder, p109).'

**The Action Programme**

I think that we need to defend very clearly the right to form black sections in the Labour Party. This is implied but I think that it should be spelt out.

I think that the following slogans need to be added and possibly developed (this is taken up in section 11: British imperialism, but I think that it should also be emphasised in the Action Programme):

Fight racism, discrimination!  
Oppose the immigration laws!  
Resist deportations!  
Defend political refugees!

I think that the Action Programme should make clear the WRP's attitude towards sectarianism, opportunism and centrism. Maybe this could be best developed in the section which begins:

Central to our programme of action to mobilise against the Tory government, is the call: Unite to defend democratic rights!

J.T. Barney

# THE SASSENACHS GET THEIR COME-UPPANCE

IN THE month before Thatcher attempts to impoverish the Scottish people even more by using them as guinea pigs for the poll tax, and thunders ahead with the break up of the Scottish Education system, I was keen to find out why John McGrath was staging a play about the mythical border and the north-south divide.

As the SNP make political capital out of our present political climate, so it seems do the left wing nationalists and John McGrath, the purveyor of the 'people's theatre' was letting us know from the start that nationalism was the only hope.

The audience is taken on a journey through Scottish history from Pictish times until the present day. A narrator, though he sounded more like a school teacher, witticises(?) his way through successions of kings and dates of battles, but rarely puts these isolated facts into the context of the time.

All we are told is that it is the English who were the enemies from the word go - no mention is given to the brutality and greed of the Scottish lords and rulers.

He does however, treat the Scottish people with respect, and highlights 'our bravery and strength', claiming the Scots were the first to use guerilla warfare as they fought off the English in the hills and glens.

But when we reach the 1790s, he treats the strong movement of the Scottish working class 'the Edinburgh mob' as simpletons, duped by the French Revolution, and when they are defeated he dismisses them as 'modern day floating voters'.

The omissions in the play say more than the play itself. No mention was given to the effects of the 1917 Russian Revolution on the people of Scotland and of John McLean's internationalist views.

However, despite these criticisms, it was an excellent piece of theatre when you forget about the political messages. You've got to be prepared to stand for three hours. There's no stage or seating. The actors and actresses are wheeled about on big platforms and you're very much a part of the action. You're in the middle of a battle on a Scottish hillside, and



*The Edinburgh Mob*

**BORDER WARFARE**  
by John McGrath, Old Museum  
of Transport, Albert Drive,  
Glasgow  
March 13-25  
at 7 p.m.  
Tickets: £6 (£3 concession)

almost on the receiving end of some enthusiastic king's spit as he orders another slaughter of the Scottish riff-raff. You're spectators at every Wembley match from the 1950s right up to the turf being stolen in 1978.

As the interval approaches, you're asked to sit in on parliament, listen to the arguments for and against the Act of Union and cast your vote. Those for leave the theatre by one door -

those against by another - and again the glaring omission, there are to be no abstentions.

The smart ones in the audience leave by the yes door and manage to get a drink and rest their wearied feet before the next act, while the rest of us 'patriots' struggle out of the 'no' door.

All this involvement with the play make it an enjoyable night out and the music is powerful and stirring.

However, nothing is resolved, the Scottish people are still losing and Fletcher of Satoun stands up and gives a speech about the need for a separate Socialist Scotland. The audience leaves wet-eyed and whipped up into a frenzy of nationalism. If it had been done in the traditional setting with a stage and a seated audience, I'm sure we'd have been totally bored but the setting and the audience participation certainly saved the play.

Carol Gilchrist

## 'THE ASSASSINS'

NO book was ever more timely than this one.

Its first edition (1938) coincided with Herschel Grynszpan's assassination of a Nazi official in Paris; this second edition came out only a couple of weeks before the death threat levelled against Salman Rushdie by the Ayatollah Khomeini, whose 'noxious' regime is denounced in the preface.

The second coincidence is even more pertinent than the first. Founder of the famous Assassins was an Iranian, Hasan-i-Sabah. His first fortress, his sect's chief stronghold, was in northern Iran. He also was a Shi'a heretic, though of the line of the Seven rather than Khomeini's Twelve.

But whereas the heroic young Jew Grynszpan vainly tried to protest against the savagery of the approaching holocaust against the innocent, Khomeini's activities are of an altogether different order. This alone should warn us against making generalisations taken out of context in space and time. History does, of course, repeat itself, as Hegel and Marx taught us, but never identically. Times change profoundly, and likes into their opposites.

As Ridley plainly shows, Hasan-i-Sabah's technique of assassination was meant to cast a

F. A. Ridley  
2nd edition  
Socialist Platform  
£5.50.

veil of protection around the freest thought of Islamic civilisation at the height of its sophistication; the Ayatollah's fulminations are directed against freedom of expression in our own times. Hasan sought to defend his sect against ferocious religious and political persecution; Khomeini's chief claim to fame lies in unleashing it.

Hasan struggled vainly to preserve the achievements of Islamic medieval culture; Khomeini represents the revolt of the bazaar against the Shah's attempt at 'modernisation' through capitalist imperialism.

This revolt is merely the latest and most degenerate of a long line of such revolts within the Islamic world. Engels wrote in 'On the History of Early Christianity':

'They unite under a prophet, a Mahdi, to

chastise the apostates and restore the observation of the ritual and the true faith and to appropriate in recompense the treasures of the renegades. 'All these movements are clothed in religion but they have their source in economic causes; and yet, even when they are victorious, they allow the old economic conditions to persist untouched.'

No better guide to these complex questions can be found than this book, written by the veteran socialist F. A. Ridley, Maxton's right-hand man in the ILP and one of the first to disseminate the ideas of the International Left Opposition in this country.

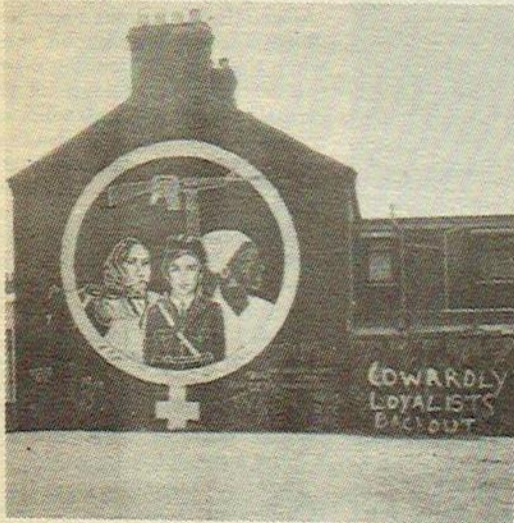
His book does not limit itself to the growth of the political murder in the medieval Middle East, but traces its further development and elaboration into early modern times at the hands of the Jesuits and others.

It's interesting to recall in this connection that a Vatican newspaper last week echoed Rushdie's condemnation. Historical analysis is no luxury for Marxists, but an essential prerequisite for the elaboration of a revolutionary programme. The fact that the Middle East occupies centre stage in world affairs at present reminds us that we have so far hardly investigated its past at all.

Our world is no stranger to political assassination and terrorism. No serious revolutionary can ignore this book.

Al Richardson.

# Mother Ireland



**THE government ban on broadcasts showing the Irish Republican struggle could be extended to historical footage, warned a film-maker from Derry recently. Anne Crilly of the Derry Film and Video Collective was speaking in Glasgow at a showing of 'Mother Ireland', the film she directed for Channel 4 which they decided not to show.**

The film explores, in a series of interviews with Irish women historians, political activists and those involved in the media, the political and psychological effects of the image of 'Mother Ireland'.

One of the contributors is Mairead Farrell, who was murdered in Gibraltar three days after the completed film was delivered to Channel 4. The television station asked for five changes which the film makers agreed to, and the film was passed to the IBA for approval.

After five months - during which the collective was unable to show the film, four years in the making, at any festivals - Channel 4 called Crilly in to tell her that Farrell's interview must be cut. That afternoon, Douglas Hurd announced the new media legislation, which would have excluded five of the interviewees. This, and further cuts demanded by nervous Channel 4 bosses, eventually made the film unviable.

Anne Crilly explained how Channel 4, afraid that their franchise would not be renewed by the government, exercised even more censorship over their material than the BBC. Even before the government announced its new legislation, the channel demanded the following cuts in the film:

- A Christy Moore song, 'Unfinished Revolution', on the soundtrack.
- US news footage of Emma Groves, shot by a rubber bullet in the 1970s.
- A Republican poster (only a corner of which is visible behind Farrell).
- Republican women assembling weapons - footage owned and already shown by Channel 4
- Women on a demonstration against British troops in the 1970s.

The Tories' October legislation was interpreted by Channel 4 as applying not only to members of listed organisations, but also to those who expressed similar views. This would have excluded many of the participants in the Derry film.

**'Mother Ireland' available from:  
Derry Film and Video  
1 Westend Park,  
Derry BT48 9JF.**

In a move with even more far-reaching implications, the TV company also refused to transmit sections of interviews with women in their 70s and 80s because they spoke of the early days of Cumann nBann - a proscribed organisation under the new government ban.

Footage of Republican women in the 1930s was also considered too risky - a decision, said Crilly, with enormous repercussions for the makers of historical documentaries. The British state, through a subservient media, was now in effect determining which version of history would be available. Crilly pointed out the irony that the symbol of Mother Ireland - so prevalent in nationalist imagery of the 18th and 19th centuries and still a familiar image, was born as a result of censorship. The same

conditions were now arising again.

Many of the women interviewed in the film comment on the negative aspect of the image, which implies surrender and oppression - negative both for the struggle for Irish freedom and for women. Very much bound up with the Virgin Mary image, it became a role model for all the Irish women who lost their sons in famine and war.

Tensions between Republican men and women and between nationalist women and suffragettes or feminists, are recalled both by veterans who took part in the 1916 Easter uprising (though they were mostly cooking and administering First Aid, one complains), and by activists of the post-1969 resistance such as Bernadette Devlin.

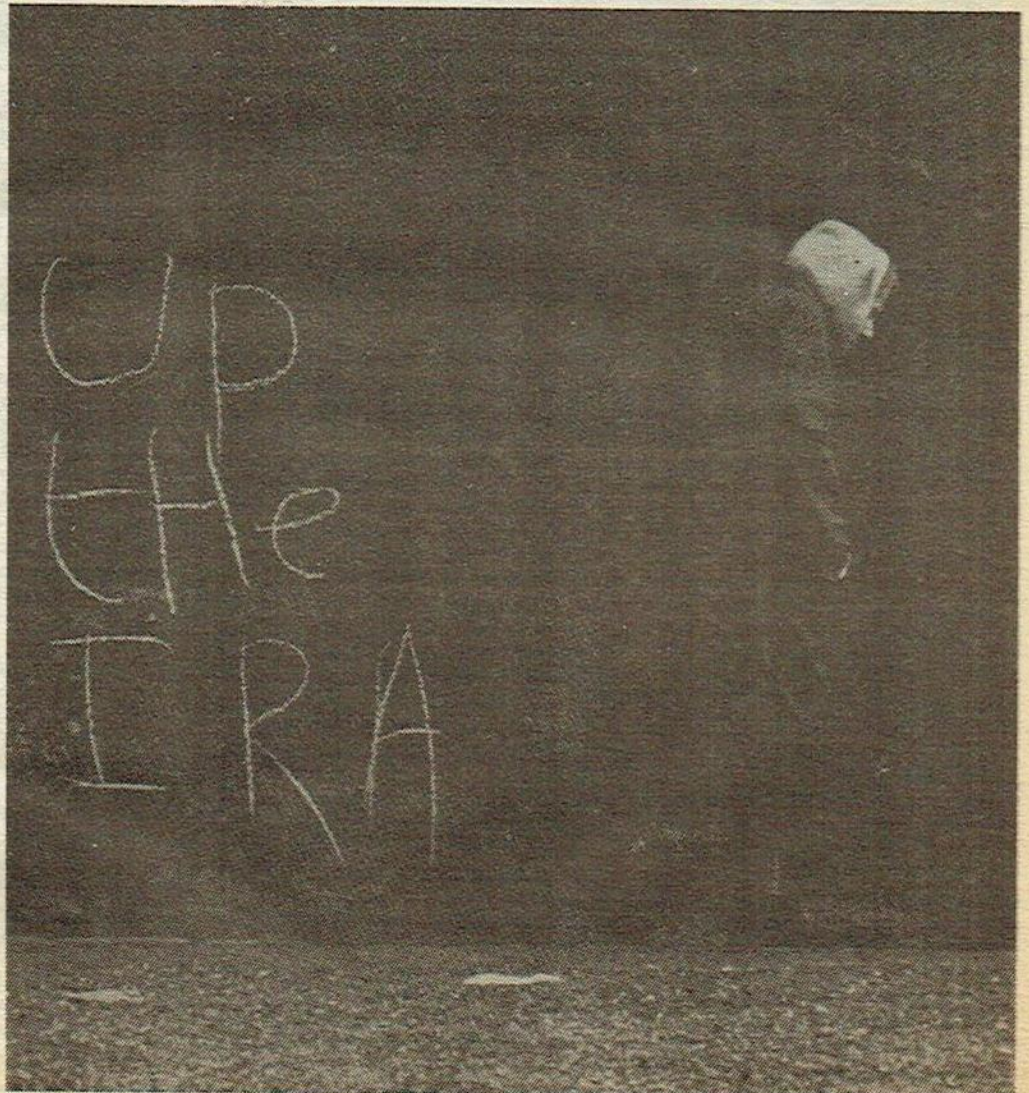
'The Republican movement and society really thought that women shouldn't be politically active,' comments Mairead Farrell. 'We also thought of ourselves as an extension of the men's struggle - but we educated ourselves.'

Similarly, feminism had deliberately excluded the nationalist question, says journalist Nell McCafferty, who argues that 'liberation must continue on all fronts.'

'The 32-county state might be just as awful for women,' warns film-maker Pat Murphy. 'There are more and more going into the Republican movement who want to expand it and get rid of the Mother Ireland concept.'

The Derry Film and Video Collective are now planning a film on the life of James Connolly.

Hilary Horrocks



## News briefs . . .

### Last of a line

Empress Zita of Austria, who has died aged 96, had a unique claim to being "living history". As the consort of Karl, the last Hapsburg Emperor, she shared the throne of an empire which ceased to exist 70 years ago. Karl's way to the throne was cleared by the assassination of Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914, which not only sparked off World War I, but caused Emperor Franz Joseph's famous remark 'I am spared nothing.' When the Hapsburg Empire disintegrated in 1918 Karl, known as "Peace Emperor" and "Emperor of the People", refused to abdicate. Empress Zita's most famous observation "I've never liked flying", probably referred to Karl's second unsuccessful attempt to regain the Hungarian throne by rickety monoplane from Switzerland in 1921. In refusing to swear loyalty to the Austrian republic, Empress Zita remained a monarchist to the end.

### More living history

In America, as matrimonial separation for Congressman Joseph Kennedy puts his political career on hold, JFK's boy enters the spotlight. From the three-year-old John-John of 1964, JFK's son emerges as 'witty, fun-loving, publicity-loathing, intensely, highly sexed; with the Kennedy smile, Rambo chest, bulging biceps and carefully tousled brown hair.' People magazine last year put him on its front cover and acclaimed him sexiest man alive. Or as Michael Gross put it 'perhaps the most famous presidential child of the century transformed into the living embodiment of a nation's not-quite-impossible dream.....another JFK in the White House.'

### Solar wind

The curtains of colour seen in the night sky this week, the 'aurora borealis', have provided one of the most spectacular sights of this century. Usually visible only in the north, it has spread south because of a violent magnetic storm caused by a solar flare. The aurora is caused by the solar wind charged particles boiling off the surface of the sun and raining along the lines of the earth's magnetic field.

### Genetic fingerprinting

IN only the third trial ever to go ahead without the victim's body, Ian Simms, aged 33, was found guilty of the murder in February last year of Miss Helen McCourt, who had vanished while walking 500 yards from a bus stop to her home. Simms was linked to her disappearance by scientific and circumstantial evidence. His conviction breaks ground as the first achieved with genetic fingerprinting "by proxy". Scientists compared the DNA make up of her parents with the blood found on Simm's clothing and found it 126,000 times more likely to come from their child than from anyone else's.

# SCARGILL, BENN, SKINNER AND THE LABOUR PARTY



Miners and police during the miners' strike

#### BY DAVE TEMPLE

THE enthusiasm of the 1,000-strong audience at the Manchester rally marking the fifth anniversary of the miners' strike was proof, if proof were needed, of the enormous impact the strike had on the lives and consciousness of millions of workers in Britain and internationally.

What was expressed was an enthusiasm for struggle; a bitter hatred of the cowardly and compliant leadership of the labour and trade union movement; and a passionate yearning for principled leaders and a socialist programme.

It was no ordinary rally of workers such as might have taken place in the years of the post-war boom. It was a rally of experienced veterans, confident that they had been tested in struggle and proud that they had not capitulated.

For a whole year they had defied the state police, the state propaganda machine, the sheer physical hardships.

They responded with genuine euphoria to the platform speakers. Scargill, Benn and, in the evening, Skinner delivered the same message. They threw down the gauntlet to Kinnock.

What was needed was not less socialist policies but more, the renationalisation of everything the Tories had privatised and then more nationalisation - as Scargill put it, a definite 'irreversible transfer of power from capitalism to the working class' and a withdrawal from the capitalist Common Market.

However, given that Kinnock and the right wing are firmly in control of the labour bureaucracy, and are moving rightwards by the hour, a thinking miner might have been forgiven for supposing that a split was in the making.

After all, the 1984-1985 miners' strike had an explosive effect.

It blew the British Communist Party apart. One faction is now lined up with the right wing of the National Union of Mineworkers; the other, around the 'Morning Star', is desperately trying to assert its credibility.

In the Workers Revolutionary Party the strike created the motive force for the rejection of

Healy and his corrupt leadership. And inside the Labour Party, was the strike left a time-bomb whose fuse is running out?

Could a split be possible? Are there really Labour Party lefts who are realising the impossibility of transforming the Labour Party into a socialist party?

Or are these speeches just holiday speeches - empty rhetoric such as it has been the lot of the British working class to endure for the last 80 years?

The miners have the right to ask how an 'irreversible transfer of

power from capitalism to the working class' is to be achieved.

After all, the Labour Party leadership would not support them when they were defending themselves from the violence of the capitalist state. Those leaders are certainly not going to lead an overthrow of that capitalist state.

If however Scargill, Benn, and the rest are concluding - and we have no firm evidence that they are - that the right wing cannot be removed from the leadership of the Labour Party, then what kind of a party are they contemplating?

Does an 'irreversible transfer of power from capitalism to the working class' constitute a revolution? And does a revolution not require a revolutionary party?

There is however in Marxist terminology a name for a party that only talks about a transfer of power but can't say how it is to be achieved. Such a party is known as a centrist party.

It is no exaggeration to say that Spain was littered with the corpses of those who followed such a party. The WRP has no intention of allowing this to happen in Britain.

## Justice demand for prisoners

#### BY CHARLIE WALSH

GOVERNMENT hypocrisy, in calling for the release of Nelson Mandela but continuing injustices against Republican prisoners in Long Kesh, was condemned on a 'Justice for Lifers' speaking tour last week. Many Republican prisoners have served over 15 years and still have no release date, Una Gillespie of the 'Justice for Lifers' campaign told a meeting in Kilburn.

Long Kesh prisoners formed a steering committee in March 1988 to expose the hypocrisy of the Northern Ireland Office, which refuses release dates to hundreds serving life and Secretary of State's Pleasure (SOSP) sentences.

There are six committees outside the prison campaigning on six demands advanced by the prisoners.

The treatment of Republican lifers, said Una, was in contrast to:

- Private Ian Thain, who murdered Thomas 'Kids' O'Reilly, and served two-and-half years, visiting his family at weekends and going on holiday with them, during the sentence. Now Thain is again serving in the British army, gun in hand;

- Supergrass Kevin McGrady, who sent many innocent nationalists to prison and, despite admitting to two murders, served only six years;

- Two of the 'Shankill butchers' who tortured and murdered nationalists, dismembered their victims' bodies, and served eight and nine years.

The review board in front of which prisoners appear is sent private reports from prison officers, holds interviews with the prisoners during which questions are asked about their political beliefs, and gives no reasons for its decisions.

Mairin Higgins of the Irish Republican prisoners' support group in Britain called for the repatriation of prisoners in British jails to serve their sentences in Ireland.

She described how the Prevention of Terrorism Act, strip-searching, and other barbarous intimidation are used against prisoners' families.

John Simmance spoke on behalf of Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council's Ireland sub-committee, which has opposed discrimination against Catholic workers in Belfast industries, picketed the BBC against censorship on Ireland, and organised an 800-strong public meeting.

The British working class, said Simmance, couldn't advance unless it campaigned against the British occupation of northern Ireland, said Simmance.

Earlier a vigil was held to commemorate the three IRA volunteers killed by the British state in Gibraltar.