

# SOCIALIST VOICE

Journal Of The International Socialist League  
British Section Of The IWL (FI)



Support  
the  
Uprising

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE**

★ General Strike in Spain

★ Reinstate Sacked Workers at Ford

★ Nahuel Moreno: 40 Years for the Fourth International

# Workers on the move in 1989

In 1989 life will continue to deteriorate drastically for large sections of the British working class. The rich are going to get richer. The poorer will get poorer.

The last year witnessed rent arrears soaring to a mountainous level. The arrears were a measure of the governments withdrawal of £699 million from Income Support and the changes in Housing Benefits early last year.

The rent debt is a barometer of poverty. In Coventry rent arrears have gone up 74%, in Leeds 22%. In Knowsley on the outskirts of Liverpool, an unemployment blackspot, arrears have gone up from £1.5 million to £2.6 million.

Homeless figures are increasing and will go higher as youth suffer more and more under last years legislation.

Shelters report on homelessness says that official statistics are omitting several categories of "hidden homeless" among young people affected by recent Social Security changes.

Private landlords are now unwilling to rent to them:

*"without somewhere to live they cannot get onto a youth training scheme, without YTS they get no Income Support, many young people are literally being forced onto the streets".*

With spiraling house prices and hardly any local authority house building, Shelter suggest the true figure of the homeless is in millions. Mortgage repayments are soaring, hitting young working class and middle class families who have been forced to buy their own houses because of the cut in municipal housing.

The number of repossessions has officially increased ten fold since 1979 and was 23,000 last year. This is based on statistics released by the building societies, but the suspicion is, these building societies have underestimated

the problem during the past year in the frenzy to expand credit.

On top of this many workers can expect to pay out at least an extra £12 per week in 1989 because of the rise in mortgage interest rates in 1988.

The Department of Employment last month issued a memorandum defining what is meant by "severe hardship" in the Social Security Act of 1988, which withdrew benefits from most youth under 18. It declares that the young people must be "at risk or in danger" before the state will provide any social security benefit.

The secretary of the TUC South-East regional Training Committee said that: *"we are heading for a new Dickensian era were instead of chimney sweeps and little match stick girls we have drug addicts and child prostitutes"*.

The government is absolutely callous about the 16 to 18 year olds. The trade union leaders however, despite the occasional press releases, are absolutely indifferent to the conditions of the youth in general. More than that, they have assisted in the deterioration of real training of youth, they sell youths' safety conditions and they collaborate in the use of youth as cheap labour. They see the youth not as the future of our class but only in what they represent in terms of union subscriptions.

The government will continue its attacks on education, last month it was announced that 3,000 University jobs will go, on top of 5,200 already agreed.

And the government will now prepare the instruments to deal with the discontent that its measures are going to create.

It was reported towards the end of 1988 that a major enquiry into public order policing methods is to take place. Including a review of the need to replace the baton charge with new methods of crowd control.

CS gas, plastic bullets and water-cannons should now be used according to some "experts on public order".

The scenes which British audiences watched on TV during 1988 of Korean and Latin American police in action will soon be re-enacted in Britain.

However, it is not just a question of recounting what is happening and going to happen to the working class, important though that may be. There are a great number of people, many of whom consider themselves to be on the left in the trade unions and the Labour party, who are specialists in the effects of one or other aspect of the Tory attacks, health, housing, social security, education.

The question is 'what to do?'

Consider the campaign on the Youth Training Scheme and Employment Training in the last year. If paper work explaining the effects of the Tory attacks, the details of the legislation etc, could have stopped the Tory offensive, then it would have clogged up and slowed down long ago.

But it did not, even though it was accompanied by the militant sounding demand of "Smash the Scheme". Who was going to smash it? The organisations of the working class could certainly have smashed it but its leaders, including the lefts among them, organised nothing against it and, in fact, participated in bringing in the schemes.

Is anyone going to say that Ron Todd has had a "knock down", "kick and punch", campaign against Tory Youth Training? He has never had a campaign to recruit and put youth in the forefront of the union.

And the left, which has a majority on the executive of the T&G, shows a miserable record on these questions in the last year.

The unemployed in fact generally showed its indifference to the training schemes, in that the totals registering for it were low.

## International Socialist League

Take out a subscription for Socialist Voice  
35p + 26p P&P or six months, £3.66 includes p&p.  
We want articles, poems, political cartoons and  
letters for our paper from our supporters, readers and  
workers so write now !

Send To : I.S.L. P.O. Box 18, STOCK-  
PORT, SK6 4DH.

## Socialist Voice

### Editorial Board for this issue

Peter Money

Kevin Townsend

Martin Ralph

Peter Windeler

Then what happened, as we forecasted, these trade union leaders assisted the Tories by hurrying their own congress resolutions, Watered down as they were".

And the T&G leadership is also slipping quiteily into this capitulation.

We must add that it took no great foresight on our part to forecast theis, only a little desire to fight against the attacks on our class. The desire which sharpens perceptions of the capitulations of the leadership.

It is time to consider policy, preparation and organisation seriously. As Lenin said, "the only weapon the working class has is its organisation".

**The abysmal weakness of the left in the Labour movement, is that it does not have the burning, consistent desire to move and assist youth, rank and file trade unionists and working class communities to appreciate their own strength and the power of united struggle.**

Here we will ask the question:

"Is this the weakest left in the world?". But we can see that in 1989 we are at a sharper development of a new stage and a new period of struggle in Britain. We can see the future not only in Latin America but also in Spain where 8 million workers came out on strike. Again we hold this example against the record of the lefts in Britain.

It is possible to organise such struggles in this country in actual fact it is easy. Workers are constantly being forced to struggle in Britain without leadership, what a mighty force this will be when it has a leadership worthy of it.

These are the forces which can smash the Tory attacks - the youth, the working class communities and the rank and file trade unionists themselves. And they are going to react.

The failures, treacheries and capitulations of the Labour party and trade union leaders has meant that the Tory government is now squeezing the working class, and in particular the youth, into positions were it must react in struggle.

Explosive movements of youth will burst out on the schemes and in the colleges against the worst aspects of cheap labour, against arbitrary discipline and against the removal of safety standards, educational and cultural rights and housing.

Their will be ferment and movements in communities against deprivation under the Housing Act and Poll Tax.

The movements of new forces coming up will blow a clean wind through all the fakery in the British trade union and Labour movement and the opportunism, careerism, complacency, lethargy and tiredness among the left.

**The test of leaders is going to be in how they can organise and build the widest struggle of these forces, something that is more than making propaganda.**

# Unite the campaigns for jailed and victimised workers

Karl Cook

On Sunday 11th November, 200 demonstrators met at the gates of Wormwood Scrubs prison to protest against the three-year imprisonment of Winston Silcott, Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite and to demand that the Appeal Commission that was meeting on the next Monday release the three.

Tony Benn and Bernie Grant were there for a while, but the outstanding feature of the picket was its determination and enthusiasm to maintain the fight.

At the end, the appeal was rejected.

Why has the mobilisation of the Broadwater Farm community not yet achieved the freedom of those now inside?

It is because these prisoners from Broadwater Farm are just a few more hostages of the Thatcher Government from a number of working class and oppressed communities. It is part of a whole campaign

to frighten, to make an example in front of the working class and the community. It is only another side of the attacks of Thatcher against the democratic rights and the living conditions of workers.

**Only a united struggle of the Irish community, the miners, the blacks, linked with the struggles of the working class and the youth can force the release of the growing number of political detainees in Britain's jails.**

It is this united campaign, that must start in the "Farm", Toxteth, Brixton and the mines, which can guarantee the freedom of those prisoners whose only crime was to be black, to speak Gaelic or to work in a pit.

We call on all those involved in these struggles to work together and find ways of mobilising more support. It is the only way to stop further attacks.



Campaigns such as the Broadwater Defence Committee will not be frightened by this Government

# International Struggle

Britain:

## Reinstate Sacked Workers

Mark Metcalf

The broad grins on management faces at Fords in Dagenham as they returned from the Christmas break had little to do with their skiing at St. Moritz or Christmas parties but with the fact that they have attacked the union and speeded up the production lines without real resistance from the workers ... as yet.

The prime responsibility for this lies with the national union leaders who have been so weak in defending jobs and conditions that workers are leaving the Dagenham Ford plant at the rate of forty a week.

The local leadership is now faced with fighting for the reinstatement of four sacked men including the chair of TGWU 1/1107 branch, Mick Gosling, who was sacked on November 18th after ten years' employment.

Management said that they would take him back but only on condition that he gave an undertaking not to initiate or support any unofficial action. This would have meant him becoming a 'policer' rather than a leader of workers' struggles. Correctly he refused. This offensive by the management on the union signifies the end of the "holding back" by Fords and is the prelude to a drive to introduce increasingly harsh working conditions. Socialist Voice says that all Ford workers should demand the immediate reinstatement of Brother Gosling.

This attack goes hand in hand with the speed-ups. The company is pushing its luck and seeing how workers will react. Already the number of cars per shift has risen to over 300. If workers do not resist this build up then they will take more - first a finger and next an arm - and the number of cars per shift will continue to rise.

### International Support

The leaders of the Brazilian Ford workers (see letter) have shown their internationalism in struggle and the potential that exists for a broad campaign.

This is not the first time! Last year when Ford workers were on strike their Brazilian

counterparts struck in sympathy. This is the developing internationalism which is really the level at which the success of future struggles will be guaranteed.

This is even more obvious working for a company like Fords. With the approach of the single European market Ford will seek to make the factory with the lowest pay and the fastest production line the norm for all plants in Europe.

The coming world recession means British workers are facing a future of struggle and the need not only to build a strong union organisation here but to build strong links with factories abroad. It is also important that these links are made at factory level and not to reinforce an international union bureaucracy.

### Resist Attacks

To resist the immediate attack, all workers inside the plant must be involved. They are from different ethnic backgrounds, West Indian, Indian and white workers. Each make up approximately one third of the work force.

We say that black and white workers must unite. All these sections should be mobilised to defend Mick Gosling and all other workers that have been sacked. To do so would also prepare the way to stop the erosion of conditions.

The national union leaders will not defend anything unless workers are struggling and forcing them to lead. To say it again, **only workers themselves can make a union fight, they are the union.** Union speakers should be sent to all the Ford plants to explain that unless they support the campaign they will be next - their union and their conditions. What the management were forced to give away last year in the wage package they are now taking back with bonus.

These are the times we live in, only a continuous and mounting struggle by workers can push back and defeat their offensive.



# COMISSÃO

DE FÁBRICA DOS TRABALHADORES DA FORD IPIRANGA - SP

CONQUISTADA EM 30-08-82

Ford Ipiranga Plant Committee  
Av. Henry Ford, 1787  
Ipiranga  
São Paulo, SP  
Brazil

8 December 1988

To *companheiro*  
MICK GOSLING

We heard about your dismissal from Ford in Dagenham through TIE and we were shocked by the way it took place.

As a matter of principle we are against the sacking of any worker; our struggle is for job stability.

The way Ford dismissed you is low and dishonest. We know that management is the same the world over, but we did not think that the persecution was so great.

To sack a trade unionist and a combative one is the same as wanting to destroy the workers' organization, and this we cannot accept.

*Companheiro* MICK, the workers at Ford-Ipiranga in São Paulo are in solidarity with you. We hope that Ford will review its decision and that you will continue your work in the plant and with the trade union.

Trade union greetings.

The Ford-Ipiranga Plant Committee

Letter of solidarity from Brazil against sackings

# Against Ford

This is an account of the struggle against Ford management and the Dictatorship that existed in Argentina between 1976 and 1982. It is written by a worker who worked at the factory at the time and does not wish at this time to use his name. He wants to dedicate this article to Alejandro 'Choclo' Medina who is now dead but who fought inside Ford during those difficult years.

Argentina:

## Resisting the Management and the Dictatorship

In Argentina during the military dictatorship one of the central tasks for socialists was to maintain the unity and the organisation of the working class in order to resist the attacks from the management and the repression of the military.

The management of the Ford company allowed the military government to build a concentration camp on their property next to the factory, one of 200 inside Argentina. Many police informers infiltrated the workforce in order to detect the activists, they were professional and were getting double the normal workers wage; special equipment was installed at the entrance of the factory to search every worker, looking for leaflets, papers, etc. In this way they attempted to smash workers' organisations.

Your readers may ask: "did the workers resist the military take over."

We knew that a coup was being prepared so the PST (Workers Socialist Party), precursor of the MAS (Movement towards Socialism), and other sections of the movement called for a General Strike to stop the coup. On September 1975 the Ford workers had a strike and led a march from the factory twenty two miles along the motorway and into the city calling on the factories to come and join them.

As we entered the city the army and the police met us and stopped the march. The leaders of the strike and some workers did get through to the CGT (the Argentine TUC) headquarters. The leader was Arturo Apaza, who was on the central Committee of the PST. He spoke outside the CGT building with the bureaucratic leaders leveling their guns at him while the workers were calling "Arturo, Arturo."

The CGT did not call the General strike.

After the coup the PST stayed inside the working class when many leaders left. Arturo Apaza became one of the 'disappeared'. In March 1976 the Ford management sacked 2000 of the 7000 workforce. More than 120 workers at Ford were imprisoned or went

missing, never to be seen again.

It was under these conditions that the main task for the militants was to maintain the unity of the workers to resist the attacks, but at the same time to maintain the organisation under strict clandestinity. Without maintaining the organisation of the workers even in an embryonic form they would not be able to take advantage of new opportunities

The tactic used by Trotskyists was aimed at maintaining the organisation of the whole work force around minimum activities and at the same time beginning to build a new group of activists organised to lead the coming struggles.

So it was very important to continue the development of the normal every-day life of the workers, which was shaken by military rule, by organising football matches, parties and social meetings. This had to be done not only in the factory but also in workers' communities

Patiently and carefully after going through these experiences the most conscious workers developed into a group of anti-dictatorship and anti-management fighters.

In 1978, the management attempted to lower the working conditions and to reduce the workforce. It was a process involving all the car factories in Argentina, a product of the recession in the car industry. Anger amongst the workers grew fast and so did the decision to fight. After two years of patient preparation, the young and growing leadership was ready for the fight. The factory had an unofficial organisation because the union was not recognised by the management.

The trade union leadership called for a national strike of all the car-factory workers because they wanted to control the movement as discontent grew. This was the sign for the start of open activity by militants in Ford. The factory was ready for the strike in a few days. Leaflets were taken in the factory by-passing the police control at the gates. The

paper of the PST was taken by the workers into the factory. Pickets were organised to stop the scabs in their homes.

After three days on strike the managements of all the car factories withdrew their plans. The strike to defend working conditions and jobs was successful.

It shows that the struggle against the management and the bureaucracy has to go on under all conditions although with different forms. We faced the same problem then as Ford workers in Britain today. We knew that the real strength of workers lies in their organisations but these organisations have to be democratically controlled by the rank and file. Inside the Ford factory the military rule was used to destroy the union organisation to keep wages as low as possible and to make workers work as hard as possible. In this sense it is no different to the alliance between the Tory Government and Fords' management.

### Brief News from the Met:

There was an unusual result from the High Court in the news recently...

They found against the Metropolitan Police Force.

Two members of the public Stephen Dowsett and Philip Tape were seriously injured after a beating from a group of "good old" British Bobbies - only to find themselves charged with drunkenness (not surprising!)

The court awarded Stephen who suffered a broken jaw in two places £27,554, and Philip £21,145.

# Trade War Fuels Class Struggle

Britain enters 1989 with its economy on a knife edge. Figures published last month show the current account deficit for November at £1.6 billion, the third highest deficit ever recorded.

There is now a very real possibility of Sterling collapsing and Britain entering a period of acute financial instability.

While Nigel Lawson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, struggles with the rudder of the economy by putting up interest rates to protect the pound and keep inflation at bay clouds are appearing on the horizon warning of fresh storms.

The U.S. has just announced trade restrictions, imposing 100 per cent import duties on food items from the European Community, in retaliation for a ban by Europe on meat imported from the U.S. which contains growth hormones. Whilst, in itself, a relatively unimportant event it indicates the pressures throughout the world for a trade war. Recently it has been established that 'anti-dumping' laws in Europe, mainly against Japanese and Far Eastern electrical goods, are just old fashioned trade barriers and nothing to do with selling goods at below cost price. With each section of the world economy desperate to protect home markets a trade war could, at the very least, cause a deepening of a world-wide recession and at worst a world war.

After the shock to the world financial markets of the Crash in October 1987 the U.S. economy fights to keep out of a recession. Now that the Presidential elections are over both Wall Street and the world financial community await a solution to the U.S. budget deficit problem. Wall Street has now made up its mind that the only way to solve the U.S. muddle is by a recession, which taking into account the boom and bust nature of capitalism is now long overdue.

With an international recession precipitated by events in the U.S., a collapse of Sterling and high inflation the Tories will again have no option but to try to make the working class suffer and bear the brunt of their crisis.

# Liverpool Council Refuses to Fight

Liverpool City council has voted to buy the machinery with which to implement the Poll-Tax. Despite protests from workers and students who lobbied the meeting, the issue was not debated until several hours later.

A number of councillors took a stand against the purchase of the machinery, outlining the disastrous effects this would have on the working class in Liverpool - especially the burden it would place on women. Twenty councillors in all defied the legal threats that were outlined by the City Solicitor.

A Legal Clause called section 114 would come into effect if the whole of the council refused to proceed with purchasing the goods. This would put the running of the council under the control of a Government appointed District Commissioner.

**Opposition to the Poll-Tax was shown in a public meeting, organized by the Liverpool Trades Council, where a speaker from the movement in Scotland outlined the massive opposition growing against the Poll-Tax. Also a resolution to oppose the deduction of the tax from council workers was passed.**

The campaign in Scotland has been sabotaged and denounced every inch of the way, by the right-wing of the Labour party, who have cautioned everyone to stay within the law.

The campaign in Liverpool has come under attack from witchfinder General Peter Kilfoyle, the man Kinnock sent into Liverpool to investigate infiltration of the Labour Party by "Militant".

He has been attempting to prevent support growing for the "Broadgreen Anti-Poll Tax Union", claiming it does not represent the views of the Labour Party, and asking unions not to affiliate to it, or support it financially. Alongside this, Sheffield Council leader David Blunkett, also on the NEC of the Labour Party, addressed a public meeting in Bootle, Liverpool, where he argued that the Poll Tax would be repealed by the next Labour Government. This went down like the proverbial lead balloon, with the audience.

The campaign against the Poll-Tax must be taken far and wide into the working class communities and take into account the needs and problems of the working class such as the huge numbers of people in rent and rates arrears. Just as much as no one should be victimized for refusing to pay the Poll-Tax, neither should their water be cut off, or evictions due to rent debts be carried out. And no one should be jailed for debts.

Attempts to isolate individuals must be countered by building stronger community based organisations, which can thwart these attempts. To fight the Poll-Tax means building a mass campaign of defiance to stop the Tory Government.

## Fast Food, Fast Money

The statement, "*Fast food and wages to fast on*" should be in neon lights outside each Macdonald cafe to warn customers into what type of place they are walking. Recently a worker at one of these establishments, who wants to remain nameless for fear of being sacked, told Socialist Voice of the five pence per hour wage rise he received.

His wage is less than a fiftieth of what he checks through the till. But working a twelve hour shift can bring in a lot of money, for Macdonalds that is. Working a full shift at one till (and there are four tills where he works) he took £1100. He earns £1.72 per hour.

Recently he took an assessment test. It asked such questions as how important they rated their attitude to the customer, he failed however to give the right answer to the following question:

"When you have finished your job do you look for other jobs to do?"

By answering no his wage rise was cut in half, from ten pence to five pence! Being between sixteen and eighteen years of age if he did not work at Macdonalds or joined the Youth Training Scheme life without any money would be all that would be waiting for him.

The trade union movement have left these youth to fight against this form of slavery by themselves. The catch phrase the union bureaucrats (including the 'lefts') use to describe many of his age is that they are not "cost-effective" for the union. If older workers paid the same percentage of their pay to the Union they would be paying them £300 a year.

The youth have and will organise themselves against the shocking conditions and ordinary workers should give them any help they ask for.

# Tories poison population

Kevin Townsend

There has been plenty of hypocrisy lately in the mass media over the epidemic of salmonella in eggs and chickens recently.

Nearly everywhere you can read false re-assuring headlines like salmonella scare, or salmonella outbreak, as though the epidemic of salmonella in eggs and poultry only happened yesterday and was an accident.

Even the Ministry for Agriculture admits that there was 140,000 cases of food poisoning in 1987 and all related to either eggs or poultry. In fact the epidemic of food poisoning has increased twelve-fold over the last eight years.

What is quite clear is that the egg and poultry farming barons are in league with this Tory Government to suppress the truth, and to preserve their profits, even if it means poisoning large sections of the population.

The Tories did their sums correctly as usual and came up with the calculation that it was more expensive to compensate their rich farmer friends for losses they would incur for tackling the epidemic, than pay up for the medical bill for treating poisoned patients. That is why Edwina Currie had to go.

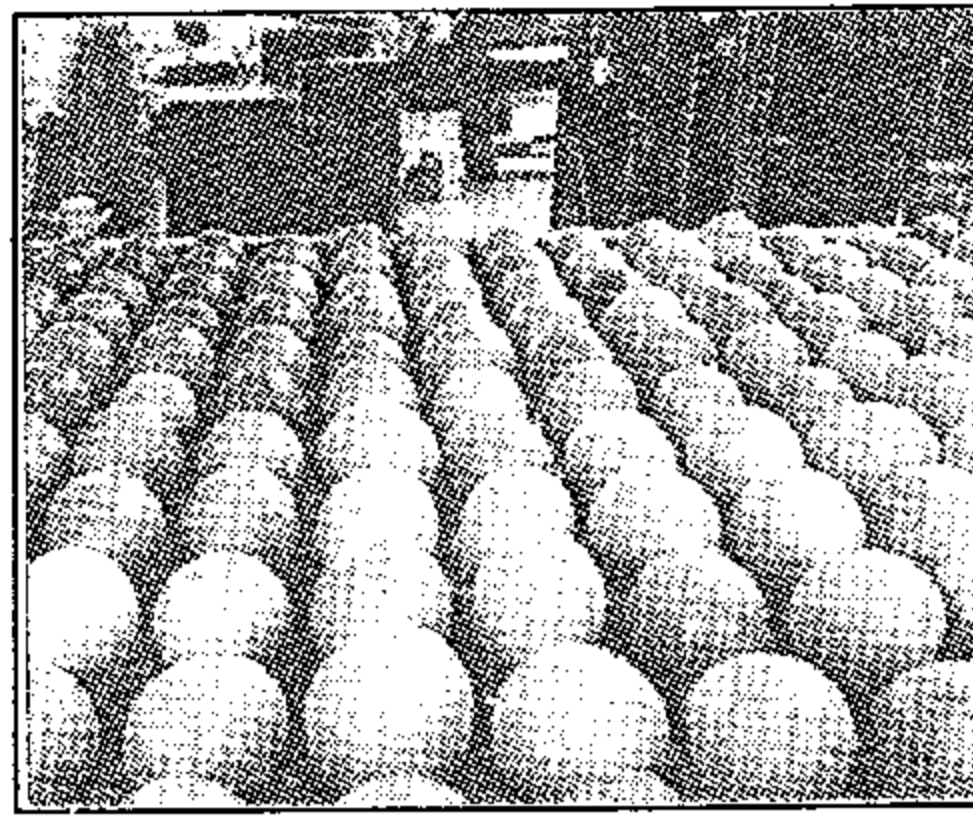
But the Labour opposition stand on the right of Currie on this issue, on the side of the rich farm barons. The 'Party that Cares' seem to be angry at Currie for opening her mouth on the issue and therefore are advocating a cover up of the real scale of the epidemic.

Whenever the capitalists want to maximise profits, or increase efficiency, it is always the working class as consumer or producer, that suffers.

The contamination of poultry and eggs is no doubt only the tip of the iceberg, it is only because it was so blatant that it was admitted. How many more foodstuffs are contaminated or adulterated with unsafe additives? This is Britain in 1989.

Engels in his famous book, "The Conditions Of The Working Class In England" describes how in the last century the most appalling food provisions were dressed up and sold to the poorer working masses, and how this disregard towards the health of the consumer was dictated by the money greed of the middle classes. In it he describes how:

*"salted butter is sold for fresh, the lumps being covered with a coating of fresh butter, or a pound of fresh being laid on top to taste, while the salted article is sold after this test, or the whole mass is washed then sold as fresh. With sugar, pounded rice and other cheap adulterating materials are mixed, and the whole sold at full price. The refuse of soap-boiling establishments also is mixed with other things and sold as sugar. Chicory*



*and other cheap stuff is mixed with ground coffee, and artificial coffee beans with the unground article. Cocoa is often adulterated with fine brown earth, treated with fat to render it more easily mistakable for real cocoa. Tea is mixed with the leaves of the sloe and with other refuse, or dry tea-leaves are roasted on hot copper plates, so returning to the proper colour and being sold as fresh. Pepper is mixed with pounded nutshells"*

The list of deceptions is long but one thing that is common to the conditions in Engels' days and today is the farcically small sentences imposed on these criminals or no sentences at all.

It is not only in consumption that health and safety of the working class suffers, through this Tory governments drive for a higher turnover of profits on capital investments.

In the production field the Tories are guilty of complicity for the murder of workers and consumers of services, through the relaxation of legal constraints on the industrialists, to provide adequate safety standards in the workplace.

The Conservative government has, while fatal accidents have increased, reduced the number of Health and Safety Inspectors from the 1979 level of 951 inspectors to today's 562. Most workplaces can expect a visit if they are unfortunate every four to seven years at this rate.

According to a report in the Independent newspaper nearly five times the number of building site workers are likely to be killed, than all those that perished at Zeebrugge, Kings Cross, Piper Alpha and in the Clapham rail disaster.

At the same time the average fine for those bosses found guilty of criminal negligence, last year, was £915 per conviction.

The dangers to workers health and safety is spreading and growing in other industries especially in industries that have been privatised or have suffered in the run up to privatisation (British Telecom and British Steel respectively). The gradual introduction of private contractors into the coal industry has also brought about an increase of danger at work on the coal face. Faceworkers working under contract have nearly twice the major injury rate of face workers than those miners on permanent contracts with British Coal.

## Thatcher's Democracy

Remember when Thatcher lectured and screamed hysterical abuse at the miners for supposedly being undemocratic when they refused to hold a ballot.

Then what about this one for democracy.

Under the new Housing Action Trust Scheme (HATS) if you want to prevent the sell off of your council home to an interested private landlord or Housing Association, the council has to hold a ballot of all the tenants in the area of the proposed sell off.

In Torbay this happened: Three out of Four voted against selling (more than half of those that voted), however the 2,200 non-voters (forty three per cent) were counted as yes votes.

Does this mean that if the Tories lose the next election that they will count the non-voters as Tory voters?

## The Struggle for Internationalism inside the WRP

Volume One and Two are available of our struggle for internationalism inside the WRP. The two volumes show why we formed the Bolshevik Tendency inside the WRP and why we left that party, in February 1988, to join the International Workers League (Fourth International).

They are selected documents that establish what we were and are struggling for. In the end we had no choice but to form the International Socialist League as part of the IWL.

Special Offer £6.00 + £1.00 p&p

## Selected documents of the International Workers League - Fourth International (LIT-CI)

1. Argentina, Bolivia: Two Lessons - By various authors.....£1.00
2. A Scandalous Document - By Nahuel Moreno.....£5.00
3. Declaration and Platform of the Bolshevik Faction.....£1.00
4. Our Experience with the Lambertists - By Nahuel Moreno and Mercedes Petit.....£1.00
5. Theses on the Necessity of an International and a Revolutionary Leadership.....£1.00
6. On the United Front.....£0.25
7. Manifesto of the 1984 World Congress of the IWL(FI).....£1.50

These documents comprise a selection of the balance-sheet, tasks perspectives and political positions of the IWL(FI) and its forerunner organisations while they were part of USec. Add 26p for p&p for each document or £7.50 the set. inc p&p

# Moreno and the struggle for the International

**Martin Ralph**

On 25th January 1987, Nahuel Moreno (Hugo Bressano) died, he was the most consistent orthodox leader of the Trotskyist movement over a period of forty years and founder of the International Workers' League - Fourth International, the most dynamic international current of the Trotskyist movement.

In 1944, a short time after joining Trotskyist movement, he founded the Grupo Obrero Marxista (GOM) abandoning the politics of small groups and gossip to go into the working class. A few months later the GOM was leading a strike of 15,000 workers in the British owned meat factory Anglo-Ciabasa.

For Moreno, the problem of those first years was that "We were not constantly worried about the struggle and the life of the Fourth International."

In 1948 Moreno was a delegate to the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in Paris. He joined the delegates from around the world who were trying to develop the Fourth International after the death of Trotsky.

These two early experiences marked the whole history of Moreno's theoretical and practical political struggle. He constantly fought for the building of a democratically-centralised international organisation for the world socialist revolution imbued with and confident in the strength of the working class. In one word, he fought for the principles of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

For the International Socialist League, which joined the IWL in February 1988, the IWL was the only organisation that had carried through a fight for what we considered to be the central axis of Trotskyism: only in building an international organisation which started from world politics and world economics and which fought for a programme that developed transitional slogans could the crisis of leadership in any country be resolved and the problem of humanity be resolved.

Secondly and also essentially we were attracted to an International that had turned to the tasks of the mass movement and had built growing sections in a number of countries.

No one section of the IWL has the

scepticism that is so pervasive in Britain and the rest of Europe. It seems that a general anathema concerning the principles of class struggle pervades amongst many who consider themselves leaders.

We do not ascribe to such a view of the working class and its traditions, in fact precisely the opposite. We have great confidence in the working class; in its ability to overcome its problem of leadership and organisation. The strength of the IWL was that it had started to overcome this in practice.

We came from the Workers Revolutionary



Party and in the course of the development of the break from national Trotskyism we were attracted to the IWL, its theory and practice.

We discovered that Moreno had fought inside the United Secretariat of the Fourth International from 1964 to 1979. The majority of the Usec turned to Guerrillerism in the late 1960's and new vanguards in the early 1970's. By 1974 Moreno was forced to form the Bolshevik Tendency and two years later the Bolshevik Faction in order to combat the developing turn by Mandel away from Trotskyist principles over the International and many other questions.

Events in Nicaragua meant it was no longer possible to struggle for Trotskyism inside the Usec because Mandel supported the Sandinistas against Trotskyism.

## The Simon Bolivar Brigade

Moreno conceived of building an International Brigade to aid the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979 to overthrow Somoza. It included many workers and peasants but was politically led by Trotskyists.

It is worth noting for British readers that the Simon Bolivar Brigade continued the fighting tradition and capacity for struggle of the working class which was established in the two International Brigades that were sent to

Spain from Britain during the Spanish Civil War. The two periods of history are very different but an internationalist tradition of the working class is contained in both.

After the national revolution the Sandinistas expelled the Simon Bolivar Brigade because they were urging workers and peasants to continue the revolution and make Nicaragua a workers' state. In the process of urging the working class to make their gains permanent they founded more than eighty unions.

The United Secretariat refused to oppose the expulsion and attacked the brigade. The Simon Bolivar Brigade was transported out of Nicaragua by the Panamanian armed forces and held for months in their prison while being beaten up and in great danger of being killed.

Today a section of the IWL is the only Trotskyist party in Nicaragua.

This and many other examples proved to us that the IWL was the only Trotskyist International that we could join.

We believe that 1989 is the year for International Trotskyism. The contradictions in the workers states, the neo-colonial and imperialist countries together with the

upsurge of the working class and oppressed world wide means that there is no other international organisation that can provide an answer to the vacuum of leadership that exists.

In the development of such a leadership we are against any loose federation of parties, we believe that the IWL was correct in building a Trotskyist International based on democratic centralism.

One side of Moreno's struggle for building the International was his insistence on Bolshevik organisation. From the cell teams in every section, to the top leading body of the International the principle was maintained of the widest possible internal democracy in the political discussion and at the same time the strictest discipline for action.

One special aspect we would like to emphasise was the way Moreno used to take part in the rank and file meetings to understand the position on this or that question of the party membership in order to be able to explain and make more precise the policy and tactics of the party.

We broke from the WRP in February 1988 in order for us to face the historic task of building a truly international leadership and in order to begin building a Trotskyist Party in Britain turned to the tasks of the mass movement.



# Life of the LIT

In order to pose a class independent alternative for the General Elections in May the MAS, Argentine section of the International Workers' League, has formed an electoral front with the Communist Party - the Izquierda Unida (IU).

The internal elections for the front took place on 18th December, in which the rank and file chose the candidates. The choice was between the candidates proposed by the MAS and those proposed by the CP.

The outstanding aspect of these polls is that 140,000 voted in the ballot. This surpassed the forecast of between 70,000 and 100,000 people. This number of people confirms that the IU is a real electoral alternative for a sector of the masses which could break from tradition and support a workers' leadership. It has also confirmed that the IU is, without any doubt, the fourth political force in the country and the only force on the left.

The result of the election was 74,000 votes for the CP and 66,000 for the MAS. These results show that while the MAS maintains its strength, the Communist Party revived its electoral support after joining the MAS in the Izquierda Unida.

The MAS won in Great Buenos Aires, Campana, San Nicolas, Olavarria, Bahia Blanca, Jujuy, Tierra del Fuego and La Rioja. These are important industrial areas of the country. This confirms that the MAS is the main left party amongst the working class.

In other big cities the results were close. In Rosario the MAS won. In Capital Federal, in Buenos Aires, the CP won and in Cordoba the CP got just forty votes more than the MAS.

The list of candidates will be formed from the results for the next general elections in May. Candidate for President and for National Deputy in Capital Federal will be Nestor Vicente of the Communist Party. Luis Zamora, of the MAS will be a candidate for National Deputy in Buenos Aires. Silvia Diaz, member of the CC of the MAS, will be candidate for Provincial Deputy in Buenos Aires.

These figures show the success of the Izquierda Unida. It is a success of orthodox Trotskyism it poses a class independent alternative with a principled anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist programme against the bourgeois traditional parties.

# The rapid rise of the Workers' Party

The triumph of the Brazilian Partido de los Trabajadores (Workers' Party) in the nationwide municipal elections on 15th November is a new step in the development of the struggle of the Latin American workers.

## The Brazilian Working Class

Brazil has one of the greatest concentration of industrial workers. In Sao Paulo, the largest city in the world, there are 460,000 metal-workers. In San Bernardo, a city of 600,000 inhabitants, there are 120,000 metal-workers.

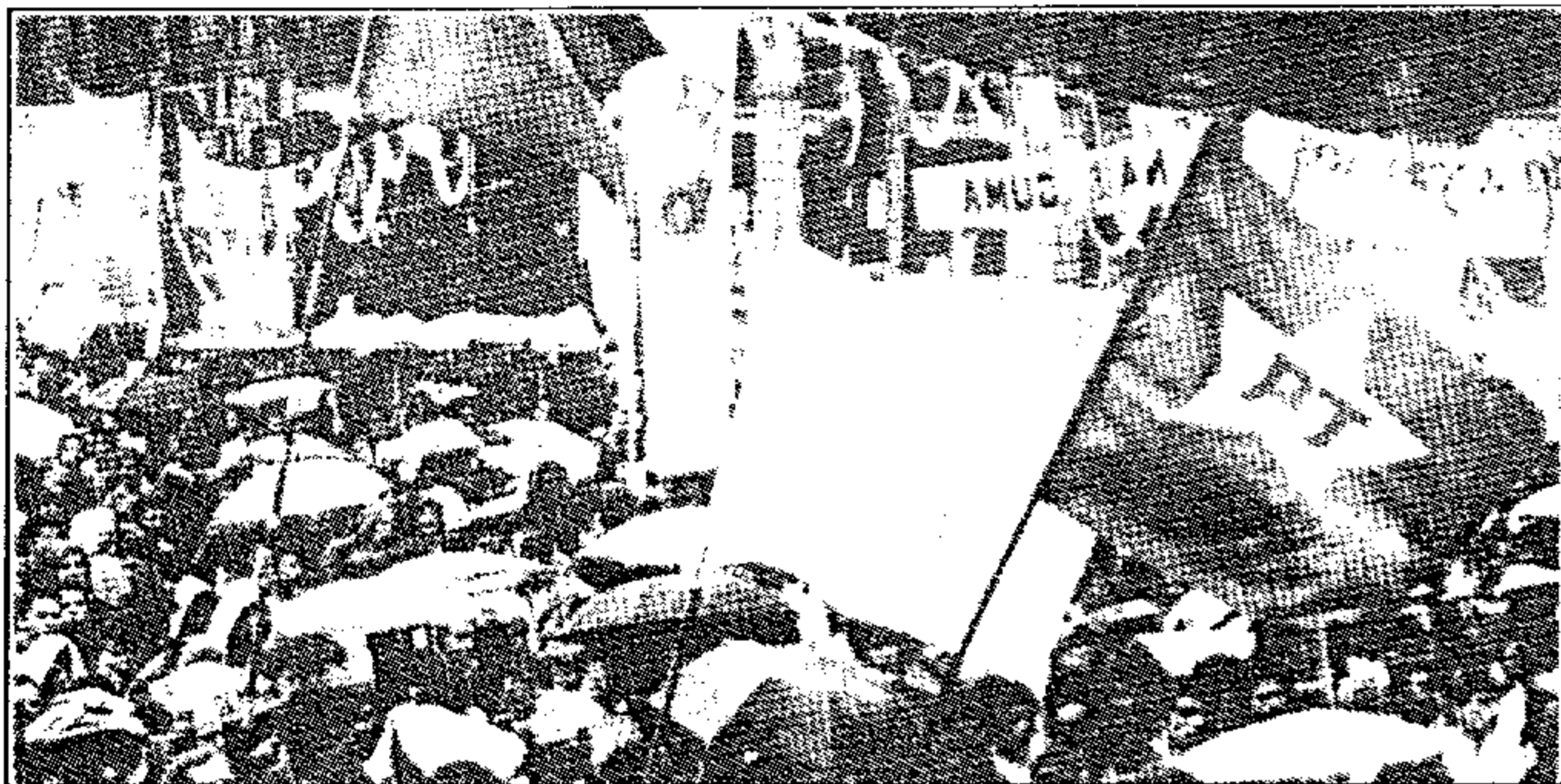
This huge young working class is the result of the "Brazilian Miracle". The name given by the bourgeoisie to the extraordinary industrialisation of the country. In fact, the "miracle" was based on a monthly wage of less than twenty pounds and repression by military dictatorship.

## The Independent Political Alternative

Workers have had successes in many strikes since then. However pay rises won in the struggle were lost after a few months because of inflation. It became necessary therefore not only to get pay rises, but to defeat the whole economic plan of the government.

To do this it was necessary to develop a political organisation of the working class. The advanced workers and the left (except the Communist Party) formed the PT in October 1979. Convergencia Socialista, Brazilian section of the IWL-FI, who had posed the need for a workers' party for a long time, was one of the political organisations that founded the PT.

Since then, the PT has been a symbol for workers in struggle, although previously only the vanguard of the working class saw it as an alternative for the elections.



## The New Trade Unions

A wave of strikes began in 1978 and 1979, which were defeated by the betrayals of the bureaucratic leadership.

After that a new organisation began to develop, whose most important leader was Luis Ignacio Da Silva, known as Lula. It was called the Central Unica de Trabalhadores (CUT), which now controls ninety per cent of the trade unions in the country.

Workers' democracy began to develop, with assemblies of 70,000 or 80,000 that met in the streets or in football stadiums. They decided everything such as when to begin and when to end a strike, as well measures to continue the struggle. The CUT grew from this process of real workers' democracy.

Like in most of the Latin American countries, the majority of the workers were still voting for bourgeois parties.

This time it changed. Workers repudiated the government by voting for their own party, for their own leaders, for the best fighters. This is a big step for the Brazilian working class. The PT had less than 1.5 million votes in 1982, but more than 11 million in 1988. It then had 170 councillors, and has now more than 2,000, including more than 100 Mayors, and the Mayor of Sao Paulo, the largest city in the country. Amongst them, six councillors and one Mayor are members of Convergencia Socialista.

The Brazilian workers have developed their own political alternative which breaks with the Latin American contradictory tradition that the workers, while fighting against the rulers, were still voting for bourgeois parties.

Spain:

# Workers knock back Gonzalez

Mark Smith



*Felipe Gonzalez does not smile any more*

The successful General Strike of eight million workers and the 300,000 strong march in Spain in mid-December was great achievement for Spanish labour movement and a blow against the 'Socialist Government'.

For the first time in fifty eight years, the Socialist led UGT and the Communist led CCOO (the two trade union centrals) made a joint call for the General Strike demanding: the withdrawal of the slave labour schemes which were going to be used as a substitute for real jobs and to undermine wages and working conditions of those who have a job. They also demanded: public servants be paid an extra two per cent this year because the government got its inflation forecast wrong when establishing pay increases; pensions to be raised to the level of minimum wages; there be collective public sector wage bargaining; unemployment benefit be extended from 35 to 48 per cent of the total jobless.

In a situation in which unemployment is, according to official figures, nineteen per cent, and more than thirty per cent of people aged between eighteen and twenty four have no jobs, and where prices increase faster than pay rises it is easy to understand why workers and people joined the strike, even if it was called by the UGT and CCOO, whose membership hardly reaches 5 per cent of the workforce.

The strike and the march reflected the anger of workers and people against the Social Democratic Government of Felipe Gonzalez who applies Thatcherite policies on workers. Even if the trade unions do not control the

majority of the workforce, the correct demands posed by them induced the whole working class to join the struggle. In every city strike committees appeared involving, beside the UGT and CCOO, neighbourhood organisations, political parties, community bodies which organised the strike and organised the pickets.

The Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, Spanish section of the IWL-FI, was involved in these committees to guarantee the success of the strike, at the same time as demanding the leadership make a plan of action to guarantee the continuity of the struggle against the plans of the government.

The effect of the strike was immediate. The government was forced to back away from implementing its youth employment plan and Felipe Gonzalez began to negotiate over the other four demands of the trade unions.

For the first time Gonzalez was placed in a defensive position in front of the working class. The press reported that "*The Prime Minister was clearly shocked by the twenty four-hour strike*" and that "*During a special parliamentary debate ... Mr Gonzalez made an unprecedented show of humility ... Never before have Spaniards seen him so unassuming.*"

The trade unions have made a new demand following the strike for a ten per cent wage rise.

The main lesson for us is that the Spanish workers are showing the way in Europe. British workers can stop this Government if they are prepared to fight their own leadership and demand they mobilise to defeat the Government plans for 1989.

## Extradition

The Tories suffered a nasty shock last month when they failed to secure the extradition of Patrick Ryan from first Belgium and then the Irish Republic.

Over the last few months they have been developing a comprehensive range of weapons to try and suppress the struggle of the Irish people for national self-determination.

These have included, on the one hand, to physically remove republican activists from the scene through shoot-to-kill and by locking them up for longer and longer jail terms under deliberately barbaric prison regimes whilst, on the other, trying to surround them with a wall of silence by broadcasting bans, intimidating Irish groups with financial threats etc. They must have been particularly dismayed then to find that contrary to expectations the Irish people were not to be cowed so easily and had forced the Fianna Fail government in Dublin to renege on the terms of the Anglo-Irish agreement and refuse to extradite Ryan.

Things are just not going the Tories way. Far from having isolated the republican movement there is every sign that it is gaining more support internationally and significantly in Britain.

Opinion polls show in a contradictory way that 80% of people in Britain think that the troops should be withdrawn and hardly anyone believes that the Birmingham Six or the Guildford Four are guilty. There is a growing sympathy now in Britain for the cause of Irish freedom among the British working class.

It is a fundamental duty of all socialists and working class leaders to support the rights of oppressed nations to self-determination and particularly so when it is their own country that is the oppressor.

However, not to do so would be a betrayal not only of the Irish working class it would be a betrayal of the working class in Britain as well. Many more workers are now recognising that they have no interest in Britain's presence in Ireland; that methods of oppression used in Ireland are not long in coming to Britain and that the continuing occupation means a loss of civil liberties like the right to silence.

But this growing unity needs to be developed and strengthened. What is needed is the building of a solidarity movement within the working class which bases itself on the unconditional support for the right of Ireland to self-determination and which would campaign within the class for the immediate withdrawal of the troops and for the release of all framed and political prisoners. Such a campaign would also take up all other issues which arise from the British occupation of Ireland.

# Support the Uprising



The Israeli troops gave their answer to the 'Declaration for Independence' and the Intifada in the style of a Christmas message, they started killing Palestinians at the rate of one a day - officially. Many more were injured, but not satisfied with that forty-nine Palestinians have been expelled since the beginning of the uprising.

To answer this repression we call on all workers and the oppressed to campaign for support for the Intifada. There is clearly danger from many sides in the continuing historic struggle in the occupied territories. The Zionist state has decided to maintain and increase the terror. One example is the attack on a school in December when young girls were beaten at will by soldiers. It is the subject of the drawing on this page.

We hope that those who oppose this oppression in the occupied zone will fight for solidarity in the labour movement.

We publish here the resolution of the IWL-FI written on the 9th December. We think that this should be used in order to fight for the Intifada, in particular point four. In Britain, however, it is also important for the Labour Party and trade unions to break links with the Zionist Labour Party and the Histadrut. You cannot support the oppressor who kills Palestinians every day and the oppressed. You can only support one or the other. The IWL-FI resolves:

1.- Consistent with our unconditional support of the Palestinian National rights against the usurpers - Israel and Imperialism - and without abandoning the deeper criticism that we have against the resolutions of the Palestine National Congress (PNC), we support the call of the PLO:

**For the immediate diplomatic recognition of the Palestine State!**

2.- We denounce the acceptance of the Resolutions 181, 242 and 383 of the UN which means the recognition of the state of Israel and of the Zionist-imperialist usurpation. So, it is an unprecedented grave capitulation that endangers the unity of the struggle in Palestine and that must be reversed: **For the defence of the founding document of the PLO and its historic objectives!**

**For the annulment of the resolutions of the PNC and any other resolution of the PLO against its founding document!**

3.- We denounce the mortal danger represented by leaving the future of the Palestinian masses in the hands of an "International Peace Conference" or by creating the expectation on the "peaceful solution for the conflicts" when the enemies of the Palestinian people can only be defeated by the revolutionary mass struggle of the Palestinians and international solidarity.

We defend the right of the Palestinian masses to defend themselves with the methods they consider necessary!

The terrorism that must be condemned is the one applied by imperialism and the Israeli murderers!

4.- We call for active support for the Intifada because it is the most effective affirmation of the Palestinians rights and because it means a concrete and historic step towards the recovering of the territory usurped by the Zionists.

For an international campaign against the murders, massive imprisonments, deportations and curfews that transform the Palestine cities into concentration camps!

The PLO, the Arab governments and international solidarity must guarantee the supply of food, money and the arms necessary for the triumph of the Intifada!

**For the immediate and unconditional expulsion of the army and the Zionist settlers from the occupied territories (Gaza and the West Bank)!**

5.- The creation of the Palestine State will be not more than a gesture if it is not based on the real recovering of its territories by the uprising and particularly based on the new workers' and popular bodies of power, like the Committees. For that it is necessary to build a Palestine Government reflecting the new stage of the struggle: **For a Provisional Government of the PLO, the United Leadership and the Popular Committees!**

6.- From this position, which places us unconditionally on the side of the revolutionary mobilisation of the Palestinian masses, the IWL-FI will support every action of the vanguard of the Intifada in the way of building a leadership capable to confront the capitulation of the old leadership and capable to lead the fight towards victory.

**\* For a new revolutionary leadership for the Palestinian masses!**

**\* For the destruction of Israel and for a democratic, non-racist and secular Palestinian State!**

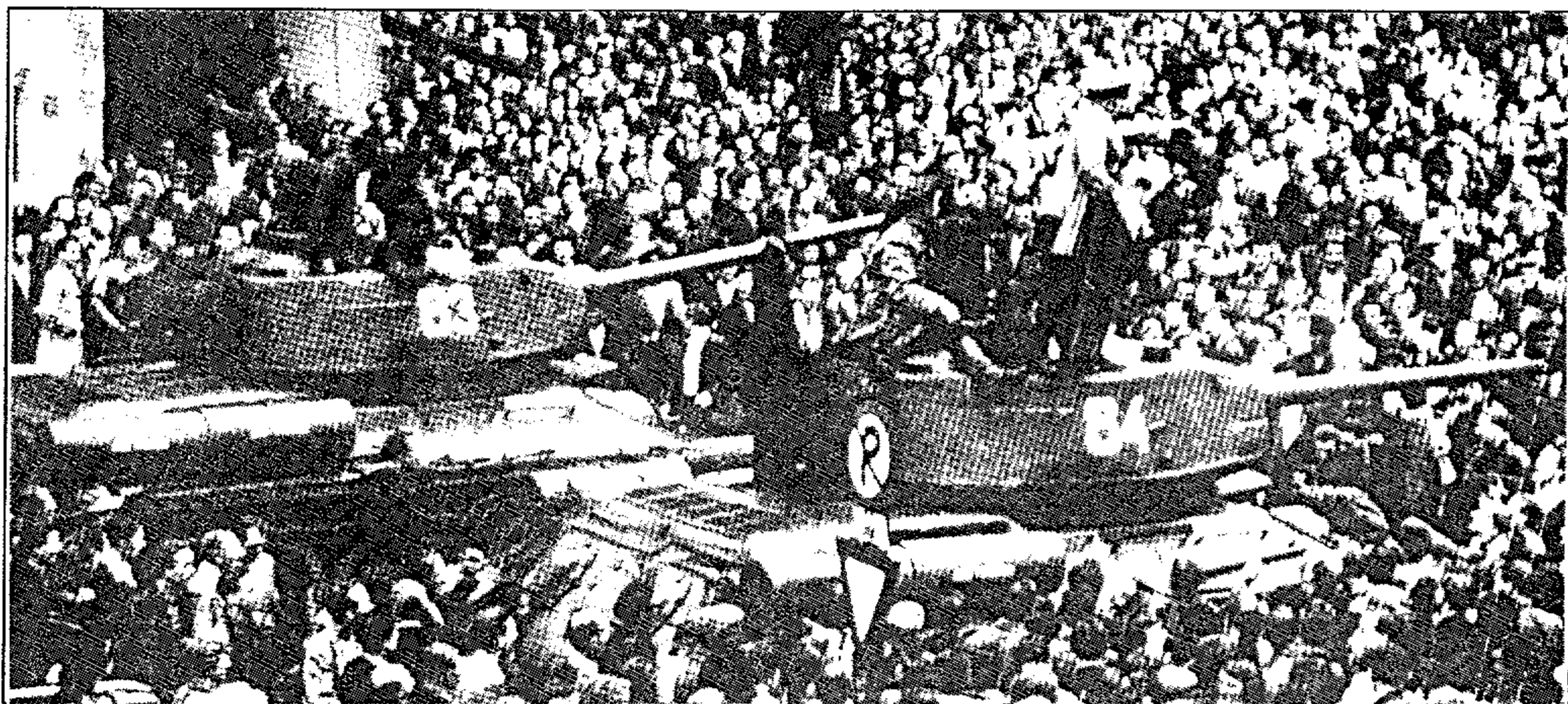
**\* For the socialist federation of the Arab people in the Middle East!**

**\* For building a Palestinian section of the Fourth International as part of this new workers' revolutionary and internationalist leadership!**



# Stalinism still reigns in East Germany

John Owen



*A massive demonstration in East Berlin halts Soviet tanks during the uprising*

The most decisive period of Germany's political history is being reviewed by the GDR (East Germany) with a storm brewing over Stalin's tactics in the 30's.

A recent article in the "Independent" on the 22nd December, reported that a Soviet publication "Sputnik" was banned in East Germany, because its October edition had an article saying, "The German Communists did not dare unite with the Social Democrats in the struggle against the Nazis. Had they chose this, Hitler would not of succeeded in winning the Reichstag elections, and European history would probably have taken a completely different course".

This article however omits the fact that at that time the only organisation on the planet that opposed the Comintern's line of Social-Fascism in relation to Social Democracy was the International Left opposition led by Leon Trotsky.

In a struggle to break the German Communist Party from the disastrous policies advocated by Stalin, which treated the Social-Democratic Party as a bigger threat than the Fascists, Trotsky put forward the policy of the United Front. To unite the whole of the working class in Germany against it's common enemy, the Fascists.

The reaction to this strategy by the British Communist Party typifies the policy of the rest of the Communist Parties. In 1932 a pamphlet entitled "Is Trotsky a Counter-Revolutionary?", by William Gallacher (a CP leader later to become a Communist Party MP) we read: "So the bourgeois liberal Trotsky puts forward the apparently simple but

*totally unmarxian solution of a United Front with Social Democracy - on a basis agreeable to Social democracy, with the main aim of keeping out the Fascists".*

Further he adds: "*Between the Social Democrats and the fascists there is only the 'irreconcilability' as between the sly, slow, cunning prisoner and the open, brutal garroter and cut-throat".*

## Call to German Workers

At that particular time the eyes of the world working class movement were concentrated on the events in Germany which had the largest Communist Party outside of the Soviet Union. In an appeal entitled "To all members of Communist party of Germany, to all Social Democratic Workers, to the entire Proletariat of Germany" (An appeal printed by the International Left Opposition in Germany). We read:

*"The victory over Fascism is still possible. Whoever tells you that all is lost, that the struggle is now in vain, is betraying you. You can still conquer. But in order to achieve victory, and avoid defeat, the whole working class must unite in the struggle against the reaction.*

*"This is possible on one condition: that all the organizations of the German Proletariat - the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the trade-union organizations the factory councils, etc - undertake the joint struggle against fascism."*

However the leadership of the KPD (German Communists Party) kept to Stalin's ultra-left policies and after the conquest of

power by Hitler, announced "our turn next".

But that was not to be, they along with the leaders of Social Democracy were thrown into concentration camps.

The 30th December marked the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party in Germany, where these issues emerged.

However a glimpse at how the Stalinists are dealing with the storm is given in the "Independent":

*"A foretaste of what East-Germans can expect was given last June, when 'Neues Deutschland' published its version of communist history, the word Stalin and Stalinism did not appear, the massacre and torture of German Communists under Stalin were skated over lightly, and the Hitler/Stalin pact is presented as an attempt to protect the 'only Socialist state on Earth' from onslaught by a 'United imperialistic front'".*

Publishing the works of Trotsky can be the only way for German workers to understand the full history of the German working class and the role played by Stalin in stopping united action against Hitler. But it is not only the history of Germany that will give an exact account of how the Communist Party degenerated to the point where it became a counter-revolutionary party. Only by understanding the International development of Stalinism and its degeneration in the Soviet Union can German workers learn about its past. For this to begin the first thing is to place all of Trotsky's works in the libraries and begin an open discussion on this fateful history.

Armenia:

# Natural and Bureaucratic Disaster

Bill Hunter

There was deep sympathy for the grief stricken survivors of the Armenian earthquake, whose death toll is now said to be 55,000. The desire to help was shown immediately in the offers of aid from fire fighters, medical staff and in the donations that were the immediate response to appeals for assistance.

In the midst of Armenian grief there was clearly a great deal of anger. And while feeling great sympathy, the Trotskyists of the International Socialist League share that anger. Humankind has not developed as yet the technique to control movements of the earth's crust but it was not unavoidable that they should strike with such savage results. **And the bureaucratic rulers met the disaster with hypocrisy, confusion, even demoralisation, and used it to increase national oppression.**

They have imposed a new curfew on Armenia after unleashing a campaign against the Erevan "Karabakh Committee" of eleven members who were leading the recent nationalist demonstrations.

The Soviet Interior Minister, General Dubiniak, accused them of "*putting themselves above the law*". The Committee had refused to clear a building where they had set up an unofficial centre to gather aid for the earthquake victims. Troops went into the building and arrested five members of the committee. It was reported that they were given thirty days jail on 11th December.

Armenians took to the streets to demonstrate against the arrests. Security forces attacked the demonstrators with truncheons and then fired warning shots and grenades to disperse the crowds. The people who were attacked were those who, eight days before, had suffered the terrible earthquake disaster!

**In these incidents is the answer to those observers who commented on the presence of large numbers of troops in Armenian cities and queried why they were not participating in rescue work.** Helen Womack, wrote from Erevan to the "Independent" of 19th December, that she saw very few soldiers working to recover bodies or clear debris. "*Asked why they were not digging, they said they were on guard duty*". The

troops were not there to deal with the disaster but with the discontent of the Armenian people.

Since the arrests the authorities have been hunting for supporters of the Karabakh Committee and over 150 have been arrested. A committee member, still at large on December 15th declared that their only offence had been to try to organise their own relief operation. The above-quoted General Dubianak attacked the committee for its attempts to "*claim credit for the efforts of the whole Soviet people*".

Yet, on the very next day, the Soviet Prime Minister, publicly attacked the Foreign Minister for a total failure to provide adequate support for foreign teams aiding the international rescue effort.

Foreign medical helpers criticised lack of organisation by Soviet authorities and lack of qualified medical staff at the scene.

The Young Communist League paper, Komsomol'skaya Pravda asked in the middle of last month why activists were to be found in Erevan, the Armenian capital, with "*one and the same words on their lips - Karabakh?*". The answer to this question is clear. But it will not be given by bureaucratic careerists and certainly not by Gorbachev who declared in November 1987, at the seventieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, that the Soviet Union had resolved the national question.

Gorbachev, blind to the national problems in the first instance, vented his fury on Armenians. After declaring the required sympathy for the victims he turned to a denunciation of "*provocateurs*" who were trying to exploit the earthquake for their own "*unseemly purposes*".

A great disaster very often brings out extreme weaknesses in a society. The Armenian earthquake certainly brought out the nature of the bureaucratic rule of the Soviet Union. It emphasised the poor conditions that existed in transport and disaster relief in an area which was the last in the queue for development at the hands of bureaucratic centralisation.

The arrogance of bureaucratic planning was surely evident in the construction of high buildings in place of the two storey buildings

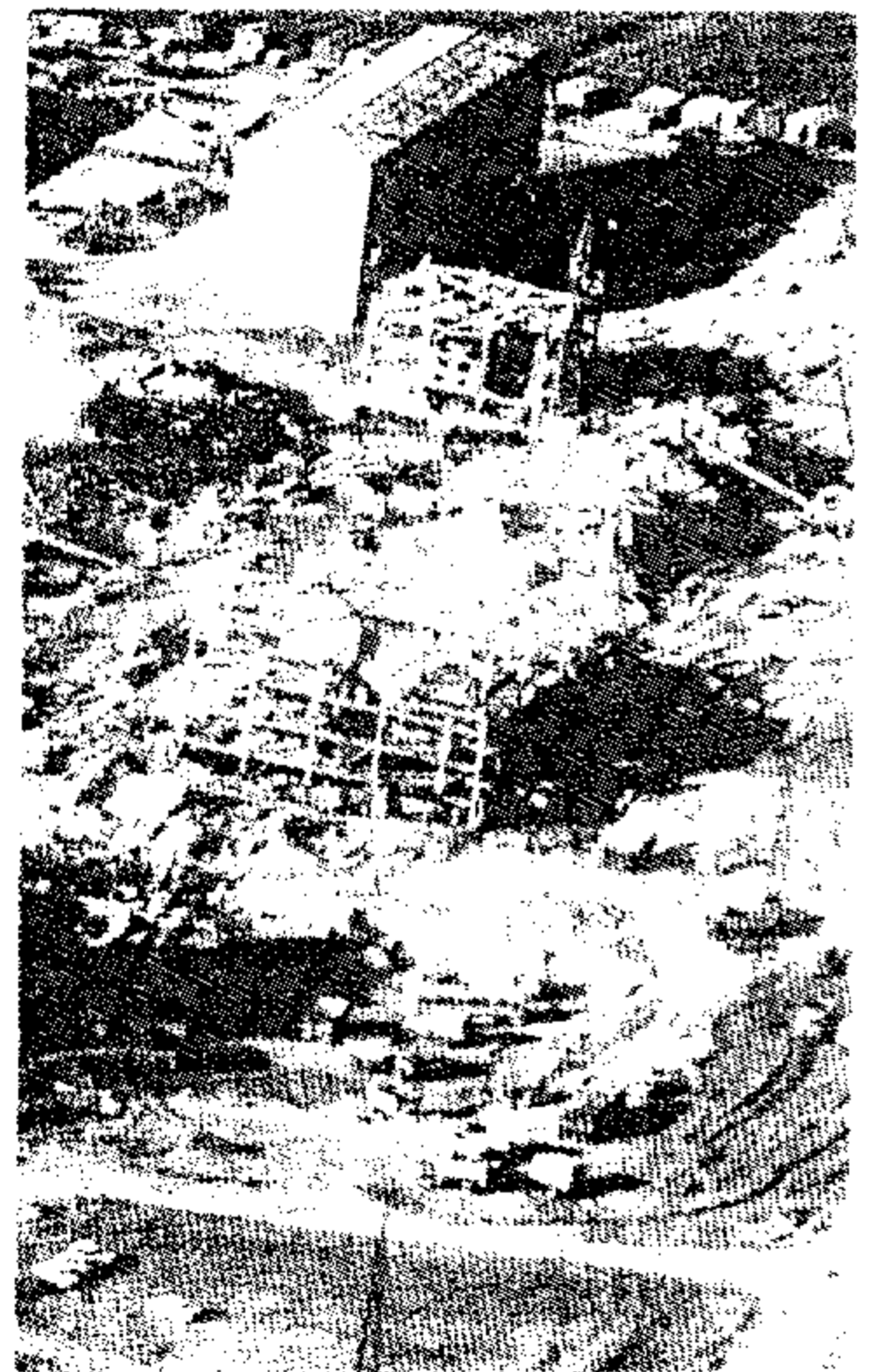
which had been traditional. The high rise buildings were supposed to have been strengthened to withstand earth tremors. But their disintegration points to the corruption that has been rife among the apparatus and dishonest building executives.

The Deputy Chairman of the State Construction Committee, Leonid Bibin, admitted that: "*If work had been better all round, then the number of collapsed buildings would have been fewer*".

The degeneration in the Bolshevik Party which was headed by Stalin began on the national question. It is now the irremovable rock for a bureaucracy which, while repudiating Stalin, has not broken with its training and conditioning in bureaucratic parasitism and its stalinist ideology.

The leaders of the Bolshevik Party at the time of the Russian Revolution of 1917 were convinced that without workers' democracy and respect for small nations, there could be no advance to Socialism.

Is it not a lesson on how far removed are Gorbachev and the present ruling elite from these principles that they meet the self organisation of the stricken people of Erevan with terror?



# Swindling a Capitalist Way of Life

A glance over the pages of the financial press will reveal scandals breaking out in all the corners of the globe. Is it a new phenomena? We think not although it is on a greater scale than ever before.

Marx noted back in 1879 that the growth of capitalism embraces 'the whole world in a network of financial swindling...'

## Land of the Rising Knock-back

Since June a national scandal has been raging in Japan over the flotation, two years ago, of shares in Recruit Cosmos, Japan's largest employment agency. At the time the shares were an assured way of making money.

In the Recruit Cosmos case shares were sold to seventy six prominent persons prior to the issue to the general public, giving immediate profits of up to £100,000 to those involved. One of those involved was the chairman of the world's largest company in terms of stock market value, Hisashi Shinto of the Nippon Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.

Shinto resigned on 15th December admitting that profits of £40,000 from shares sold in the insider trading scandal had been paid into his private account. Previously the Japanese Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa had resigned due to the scandal and a distant relative of the Prime Minister, Naboru Takeshita, was amongst those involved. To date in total 16 politicians, officials and business people have had to step down.

A Japanese commentator described the whole affair as a 'bottomless swamp' and a western diplomat said, 'what we are seeing is the development of a power elite whose members pay each other off with huge sums'.

It is well known in Japan that money greases the political poll and benefactors would be receiving payment for past favours or for future services. This case is being compared to the Lockheed affair of the mid-1970's when the U.S. aircraft group was found to have bribed Kakuei Tanaka, then Prime Minister, paying him ¥500 million (£2.25 million).

The Japanese political constituencies cover a large area and, compared to other bourgeois democracies, a large number of constituents. This means that it costs a Japanese MP an estimated £0.5 million per annum to fulfil his political role whereas an MP's salary amounts to only £50,000. Therefore MPs have to find wealthy backers and enter into 'shady' deals. Calls to amend the constitution and reduce the size of constituencies have always fallen on deaf ears as the ruling Liberal Democratic Party would lose its permanent electoral advantage.

As we go to press the latest news from Japan is that the Justice Minister appointed to

## Peter Windeler

investigate the Recruit Cosmos affair has resigned admitting that he also had received money. On the day before the Justice Minister resigned, the Chief Cabinet Secretary Keizo Obuchi went, admitting that his own personal political organisation had received money from the Recruit Cosmos business.

## Earth-quake Aid Turned into Luxury Yachts

The Italian Prime Minister, Ciriaco De Mita, is facing allegations that he and his family, together with fellow Christian Democrat bosses in his native province of Avellino, had prospered from huge amounts of money earmarked for the 1980 earth-quake in Southern Italy.



Pilar Miro in Court

Many independent observers are convinced that a sizable proportion of the more than L40,000 billion (£16.8 billion) allocated for earth-quake reconstruction in the south has directly benefited the Christian Democrats and their supporters. New luxury villas dot the region, there is a high incidence of ownership of private yachts and a sharp increase in average per capita income. The beneficiaries being masons, architects, engineers and building contractors.

## Greek Tragedy

In Greece a scandal over the Bank of Crete has led to the resignations of several Socialist Government Ministers, the latest being the Deputy Defence Minister, Stathis Yiotas, on 14th December and on the following day, the Assistant Economics Minister, Theodore Karatzas. Yiotas, in his resignation, letter

disclosed that illegal arms sales and defence procurement contracts had been made involving aides and close friends of the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou.

The Bank of Crete is the largest private bank in Greece and became the personal "fiefdom" of a George Koskotas who joined the bank as a clerk ten years ago. Koskotas subsequently became the owner of a magazine called "Ena" which supported the Socialist Government at a time when the majority of the press was hostile. Consequently, the bank attracted deposits from many public sector organisations. At the same time, Koskotas lived the life of a tycoon even buying a football club with money directed from the Bank of Crete into his own private account.

When the Bank of Greece, which polices Greek banks, became alarmed it was hindered by the government and prevented from investigating the irregularities concerning the Bank of Crete. The Bank of Crete now owes 20 billion Drachmas (£46 million) and its playboy owner is in jail in the U.S. awaiting extradition. Before he fled Greece Koskotas said that he had paid payment of millions of dollars in bribes into accounts abroad in the names of senior Socialist officials including George Papandreou, the Prime Minister's son and Education Minister.

## Have a Piano on the Firm

Not to be out-done by Japan, Greece or Italy, Spain has its own political jar of worms. The Socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez is being racked by the discovery that government ministers have been abusing their positions.

The Prime Minister's, deputy Alfonso Guerra, whilst returning from holiday in Portugal to see a bull fight in Seville, became caught up in a traffic jam. He became irritated at the thought of missing his bull fight and so he turned his car round, found the nearest telephone and ordered a government jet to pick him up.

One of Gonzalez's closest friends, Pilar Miro, head of the country's radio and television services, it has been revealed, used her corporate credit card to buy some PTA2 million (£9,600) worth of fine clothes and jewellery. Meanwhile Minister of Defence, Nacis Serra, had his department buy a PTA 1 million piano for his home in Madrid.

Miro has offered to resign but is still in her job. Guerra and Serra, two of Gonzalez's "most able ministers", hardly bothered to account for themselves. The Socialist Party in Spain has appointed hundreds of their own, even whole families, to positions of influence throughout the country.

# Tories Destroy Shipbuilding

Socialist Voice deplores this governments decision to close the last yard on the river Wear so ending shipbuilding forever in Sunderland.

Thatcher and the Tories are more than generous to their rich egg and poultry farmer friends, £40 million compensation for loss of profits is seen as chicken feed. But when it comes to saving 2,000 shipyard jobs and a demand for a fraction of that type of money in subsidies everything is determined by what is immediately profitable.

The decision to close the yard must be seen then as a political decision to break a strongly organised workforce, and to teach workers a lesson.

Socialist Voice spoke to Billy Richings, Sunderland shipyard welder about the fight to keep the yard open.

S.V.: "Can you tell us about the Save our Shipyard campaign and what it has been doing?"

Billy: "It was a broad based campaign-right across the spectrum. We tried to contact everyone - shopworkers, pubs - trying to make people realise the effect on Sunderland economy and community as a whole if they closed the shipyard. But it ground to a halt. You can only do that for so long. You need something else to do."

S.V.: "Had there been a feeling for an occupation at any time?"

Billy: "Yes, at first, there might have been a feeling for an occupation. We were discussing it about a month ago but in the end they were not prepared to take action like that in case they lost their redundancy money."

"The good thing about an occupation was that it would have shown that we were prepared to fight for jobs, that we weren't going to sit back and be dictated to by these Westminster parasites. The uncertainty is just killing people. They just see it as an opportunity to get out and make a break."

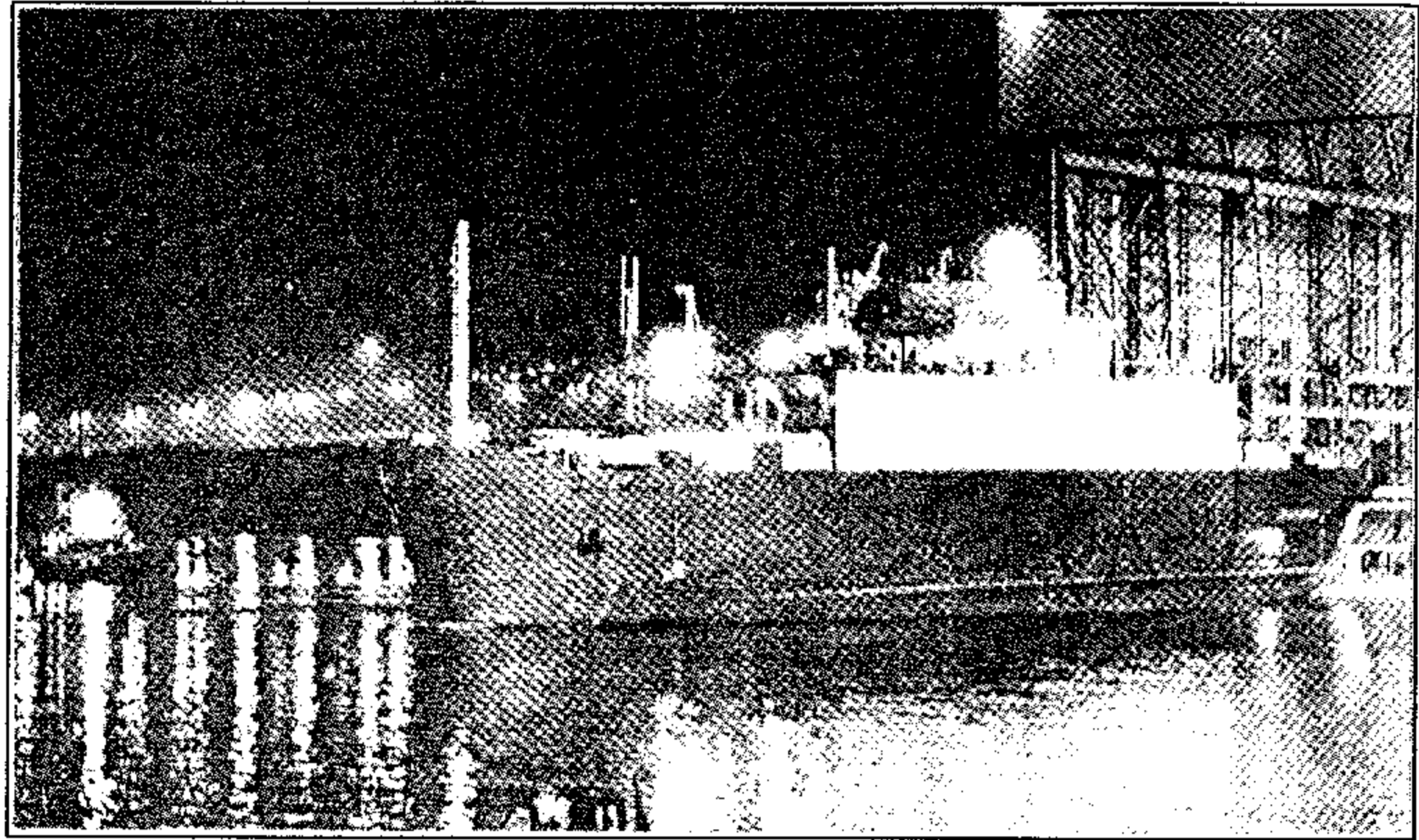
S.V.: "What were the main reasons for the closure?"

Billy: "I think the main reason was the Tories commitment to nationalised industry; they were just not prepared to put any more in. It has gone the same way as the steelworks and the pits."

"There was a £110 million order from Cuba. If they had wanted to keep the shipyard open they would have taken it."

S.V.: "On the question of the Cuban order. What was the feeling? Was there any attempt to make connections with Cuba?"

Billy: "No... but it comes to something when a country like Cuba, with the debt they



have got, realises they still need shipping while a country like ours cannot realize that we still need shipbuilding. They are a hard up country but realize the importance of shipping. They wanted us to have the order but the government put every obstacle they could think of in front of us."

S.V.: "What kind of obstacle did they put?"

Billy: "It was a question of funds and subsidies - they were not prepared to put in enough subsidies. Cuba was saying let us talk about it. But they would not talk, they just kept fobbing them off."

S.V.: "What reaction did this have in the unions and the community?"

Billy: "People could see that it was a country like Cuba that was prepared to wait. It was the Tories who were not willing to negotiate, who did not want to keep the yards open. It highlighted what this government is about."

S.V.: "What is the situation in the community?"

Billy: "Male unemployment is already 24%. With 2,000 jobs to go in the yard plus the knock on effect makes 8,000 in the community as a whole. It will devastate the whole economy."

"We were trying to say the cost of these things will be more than the cost of keeping the yard open, apart from the effect in the community. We could be looking at male unemployment in Sunderland of 30%. They have ripped the heart out of the town. People feel betrayed, stabbed in the back."

S.V.: "What has been the response from the Labour Party?"

Billy: "The only help we have had from them has been from Bob Clay the Sunderland

North MP. He has been outstanding. It is a pity we didn't get the same commitment from the rest of the Labour MPs."

"The thing is it is 600 years of history that they have taken from this town. It was once the biggest shipbuilding town in the world. At one time as many as 25,000 people were working on the river."

"The lads feel that they have been exploited - that's what they are saying. When there's profits to be made off our backs. During the war Hitler tried for six years to flatten the shipyards - Thatcher has done in nine years what Hitler couldn't do. When we're asking for a little bit of assistance to keep the yards open it's not there. They are quite happy to take from us when there is profit to be made keeping us working in squalor and living in poverty."

"The lads are now saying - woe betide her if she gets into a war, like she did in the Falklands, when she comes crawling back on her knees asking for aircraft carriers."

"There is a crisis in world wide shipbuilding and what we are facing is the total dismantling of shipbuilding capacity throughout the country. We have got to have a manufacturing base. At the same time we are an island nation; 95% of imports and exports depend on ships. We are not just taking away the heart but also the pride of workers. It has been a wanton act of vandalism, that's all it's been."

"She's got a bloody nerve talking about the enemy within, it's time we had a look at who the real enemy within was."

# Build a Student Movement Against The Tories

Ed Barber

Over 300 students on Tyneside last month defied the police to march through the city centre of Newcastle, protesting against the Tories attempt to phase out student loans and the introduction of campus moves.

But the police who blocked the roads on the route of the march were unable to stop us from taking our protest through the city centre crowded with shoppers.

After the national demonstration in London and all the marches and demonstrations in the cities and towns the campaign has to equip itself with a perspective to take the struggle forward.

The first thing to say is that we are absolutely confident that we can win. But we can only do so by building a youth movement that reaches and surpasses the size of the students movement of the 1960's.

Students have already begun to break through some of the reformist dead-end policies of the National Union of Students (NUS) leaderships. Policies that tell students: the only way to fight is by mass letter writing to MP's, candle lit vigil's and by peaceful protest.

Students should learn from the experiences of France in 1968 and 1987 that only through militant action can reforms be gained, and at the same time knock back this Tory government.

In 1987 between November and December hundreds of thousands of students and workers protested on-mass outside the National Assembly, against the Devaquet bill and a series of other bills such as the racist French Nationality bill and the prison privatisation bill. These victories were won by using radical action independent of the union bureaucracy and by uniting with workers. One of the most popular ways of organising was through setting up university strike committees and holding general assemblies (these would meet on a regular basis to keep students up to date on all the developments as they unfolded).

If such mobilisations are connected with a programme against the Tory Government then it has every chance of success.

Over the past year the fight against education cuts has taken two forms in Newcastle. The campaign against student loans emerged in earnest in September.

Before this the fight in Newcastle polytechnic took a different form. We were fighting against cost cutting which meant, for Newcastle students, the removal of social

studies and psychology courses from the city centre to a second site four miles away, where there is no library and few of the student union facilities of the city centre campus.

The fight against these proposals was waged on the basis that students on courses that were moved would lose access to facilities and would experience a rise in travelling time and costs. Since the out of town campus is to be closed down in two years it means that courses moved there are threatened with closure.

This attack was fought by blockading the meetings at which the decision was to be formalised. They even had the nerve to offer us the right to have representatives on the committee where the decision would be made, although they would not have the right to vote. We rejected this so called right as we did not want to give the decision any credibility.

When they held a secret meeting and formalised the decision we occupied the administrative corridor in the poly. This continued for two nights before the police were brought in (after they had used blackmail by suggesting that last years graduates degrees, could not be awarded).

All this we hoped would delay or even prevent the moves. This was the background to our campaign against cuts and moves, and when the national campaign against student loans was started we naturally merged the two campaigns against cuts and against loans as it is the same struggle against the overall attacks on the right to education.

Two weeks before the national lobby of parliament the polytechnic directorate served court writs on the members of the Newcastle Polytechnic Students Union (NPSU) executive and in the ensuing court case the judge forbade them from campaigning against loans and cuts whilst he openly accepted the illegality of his decision.

Members of the executive were later deemed to have defied this court ban by attending the march through the city centre against the loans and the cuts.

Directorate members (the directorate is the highest body in the Polytechnic) identified executive members on the march, as days later each one was personally served with a legal writ by a private detective.

By accepting this legal document which details the exact extent of the courts judgement, NPSU executive is expected to be according to this class ruling fully aware of

what is legal and what is illegal according to an illegal decision.

This is a class ruling and as such must be answered by the whole working class. It is an attack not just on Newcastle students but on the whole National Union of Students and on the right of youth and workers to fight and campaign for the defence of education for all.

- \* Mobilise for 1st February
- \* No to Closures or Moves
- \* No to Loans
- \* Hands off NPSU executive
- \* Free Access to Education for All



Published and printed by:  
ISL, P. O. Box 18, Stockport Sk6 4DH.