

# Workers Press

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## Anti-Tamil media propaganda is

# HYPOCRISY!

**THE FATE of the 152 Tamil refugees, drifting dangerously in the Atlantic ocean and successfully finding refuge in Canada, has hit the headlines in the western media.**

The reports have avoided explaining why Tamil people have to go to such lengths, and undergo such risks, to find safety.

Instead they have been trying to 'find out' where the Tamil people 'started off from', and whether they had lied in their attempt to find safety.

Imperialist hypocrisy knows no bounds.

Twenty thousand Tamils are kept in prison-like conditions in Germany. They seek refuge in Canada as the only way to safeguard their lives.

The Tamils are becoming people without a country. This situation is not of their choosing: it is part of the life and death struggle for self-determination.

They flee because they have to.

### Right

The refugees have the right to use any method to thwart the problem of finding political asylum.

In Germany, Tamils have to take their cases individually through the courts.

and their chances of winning are not good. They also have no rights outside their immediate living areas.

The biggest liars are the western imperialists who in order to protect the pro-western Sri Lankan regime, the murderers of the Tamil people, use all means to paint a picture of democracy in Sri Lanka.

Britain plays the leading role in this.

### Asylum

The chief Immigration Adjudicator of the British Home Office, Patey, when refusing my claim to political asylum, said: 'Sri Lanka is inherently a democracy where the rule of law applies.'

This — of a regime which is conducting a genocidal attack on the Tamil people of Sri Lanka, whilst talking about 'peace'.

Tamil villages are being bombed; between April 1985 and February 1986, 2578 Tamil citizens were killed by the regime's armed forces; in December 1985, over 100 Sinhalese socialists who politically opposed the racist terror against the Tamils were arrested.

The reason for such blatantly false propaganda by the Home Office becomes clear when you see the special relationship between Britain and the Sri Lankan regime.

Forty per cent of Sri Lanka's exports is tea. British companies control 90 per cent of the world packet tea trade.

As the Lloyd's Economic Report 1986 put it, 'the UK is one of the leading investors in Sri Lanka.'

When the Adjudicator

talks about 'democracy', it is for the people who control the banks, the multinationals — but for the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, there is no democracy.

For the refugees, whether it is the Tamils forced to leave the German Federal Republic, or for me — no democracy, only racism, the threat of deportation and possible death.

Immigrants under attack: special report from the Federal Republic of Germany — page 14.

### BY VIRAJ MENDIS

Viraj Mendis is a Sri Lankan, living in Britain, against whose deportation a major campaign has been launched including last month's march from Manchester to London. Viraj is a member of the Revolutionary Communist Group and supports the Tamil struggle.

● News of Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign — see p 2



## Condemn arrests

THREE leading members of the Revolutionary Communist League of Sri Lanka were among those recently detained under the state of emergency. They are at present released on bail.

The RCL is a Trotskyist organisation, affiliated to the International Committee of the Fourth International, which has consistently taken

a principled position in support of the struggle for Tamil self-determination, and against the attacks of the Sri Lankan state.

The Workers Revolutionary Party is for the unconditional defence of the RCL and all Sri Lankans who have been subject to the brutal repression of Jayawardene's regime for supporting the Tamils.

## Busmen back sanctions lobby

LONDON busmen are to lobby the TUC to demand trade union sanctions against apartheid. The busmen's banner and campaign bus go to Brighton on September 1 to join trade unionists from all over the country who will be lobbying the TUC.

Terry Allen, T&GWU London Bus Section District Secretary, said:

'We are proud that our union is in the forefront of the

campaign against the apartheid South African state. The battle in South Africa is a class question, and it is the decision of our delegate conference to attend the lobby as a presence in solidarity with South African trade unionists.

'London bus staff face their own forms of apartheid. The highest concentration of black staff is amongst conductors and

catering grades — both face the extinction of their jobs or swingeing cuts in their wages.

'As I see it we are facing a battle in this country which brings us into solidarity with South African workers. Public service workers on the lowest wages and conditions are being discriminated against, and pushed further down the scale.

'If British trade unionists

don't understand what is happening in South Africa, they would do well to consider what it must be like in that apartheid state for trade unionists to have their leaders incarcerated.

'South African trade unionists are asking us to support sanctions against apartheid and demand the release of their leaders. Workers in Britain act very firmly when their organisations are

under attack, and now we must support South African workers.'

The chairman of the T&GWU London Bus Section, Peter Gibson, will speak officially at the meeting following the lobby.

● South African news and lobby details, p 16

SOGAT members vent their fury at the old 'Sun' building in Fleet Street, during last Thursday's march in support of the 5,000 printers sacked by Rupert Murdoch.

More pictures and report, Page 3.

Comment on next week's TUC and the fight to defend basic rights, Page 2.

# No fudging on anti-union laws

**DESPERATE** efforts are being made by Labour and trade union leaders to remove all the sharpest points of controversy from the agenda of the coming Trades Union Congress

Great anger and concern exists among trade unionists about the attacks on union organisation and rights, by big employers like Murdoch, and by Tory legislation.

Trade unionists want policies of struggle from their organisations on nuclear energy, South Africa, wages restraint under a future Labour government, and on privatisation. But the trade union leaders want no real discussion on these questions.

So the well-practised procedures of working out weasel-worded composite resolutions has come into play. This ensures a great deal of rhetoric, but very little real decision.

The point of all the manoeuvring is to smooth the path for another Labour government.

The TUC officials hastily summoned a composing meeting last Tuesday to smother a discussion on the acceptance by trade union leaders of state-regulated secret ballots.

TUC general secretary Norman Willis worked out a compromise which brought together Alan Tuffin, leader of the Union of Communication Workers and Ron Todd of the Transport and General Workers' Union on an agreed composite resolution on compulsory secret ballots before strike action. Only the National Union of Mineworkers and TASS opposed it.

## Principle

It must be said that the difference between Todd and Tuffin was not one of principle.

Both, like other trade union leaders, are in retreat before increasing state control of the unions.

They are willing to abandon the independence of trade unions from the employers and the capitalist state, for which so much workers' blood has been spilt in the past.

The principle must remain: trade unions are workers' organisations, how they run is a matter for their members, and how they are to be changed is a matter for workers alone.

The 'Guardian' on August 30 declared that trade union leaders wanted a compromise because they wanted to avoid an embarrassment for Kinnock 'who is expected to use next month's Trade Union Congress as a pre-election platform.'

## Unity

Critics of the trade union and labour leaders are being brought into line by talk of not rocking the boat and of having unity for the election. But, more important than that, and the most important basis of this conspiracy, is what is likely to follow the General Election.

Let all trade unionists be warned: these preparations are for a Labour government with right wing policies.

In 1974, trade unionists who had fought Heath's Industrial Relations Act and helped bring down his government were promised by the Labour leaders that legislation against the unions would be rescinded.

The Labour government which came in removed the Industrial Relations Act, but attacked the struggle of trade unionists in other ways. They continued the criminalising of picketing and kept the Shrewsbury

# DON'T BLUNT THE KNIFE!

## COMMENT BY BILL HUNTER

pickets in jail. They used troops against the firemen and, with the help of trade union leaders, instituted the 'social contract' which resulted in a drop in real wages.

Since that time the world economic crisis has deepened. World competition between the big capitalist monopolies is becoming acute.

The Labour government now being prepared is intended by the leaders to carry along the same road as the Tories in state control of

unions — and is already lining up trade union leaders to assist it. The majority of these leaders are not now opposed to the anti union laws: all they want is a Labour government administering them.

Sections of the British ruling class are drawing conclusions from the recent experience of a Socialist government in France and the present Labour government in Australia.

In France the 'Socialists' carried out a programme of cuts, including a savage

mine closures programme. It served the needs of French capitalism to rationalise industry, and paved the way for a right wing government. That government, which was elected in April, has continued on the road begun by Mitterrand's 'socialists'.

In Australia, with the capitalist class suffering under fierce world competition, particularly from America, the Hawke government is embarking on an austerity programme.

Sections of the British ruling class, impatient with the crisis of the Tory leadership, now evidently see the Labour government as able to carry out austerity measures here. This could help

them meet some of their pressing problems and prepare the way for the extreme right wing.

Here is the warning to all trade unionists and particularly delegates to the TUC.

Of course they want a defeat for the Tory government, as do we in the Workers Revolutionary Party. These trade unionists will, rightly, support Labour against the hated Thatcher dynasty in the next election, as we will.

But that means they have to intensify the struggle against the right wing policies of Labour leaders and capitulatory cowardice of trade union leaders — both the Willis right-wing, and such 'lefts' as Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins who are running from a confrontation with Thatcher's anti-union laws at Wapping.

A defeat for those policies is the only way to really defeat the Tories.

## Down

The WRP has advocated a movement to bring down the Tories. Why is it that nowhere, but nowhere, trade union leaders have taken up such a campaign? Because they have no desire to organise workers in struggle against the Tory government, and no desire to see it brought down by a movement of workers carrying forward its demands as in 1974.

Why have these same leaders not responded to calls for trade union action against apartheid? Because they are paralysed and supine in front of the Tory laws which prohibit political and sympathy strikes.

They have long ago abandoned the TUC decision, taken at the 1982 special conference at Wembley, to resist these laws tooth and nail. Instead, Willis and Co are following Eric Hammond of the EETPU to accept Tory diktats for the unions — and Dean and Dubbins are trying not to fall out of the lines drawn by Willis.

Left wingers must stand up and be counted at the TUC.

The struggle of the printers, and before them, of the miners, is worthy of principled, courageous and firm leadership. An important beginning in bringing together such a leadership can be made at this TUC by those, whatever their numbers, who stand firmly against all fudges and weasel words which cover up for capitulation.

# VIRAJ MENDIS ACTION

BY SUE GWYER

PLANS for the day of action by the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign on September 6th are going ahead.

The London Support Group will march on the day from Wood Green to Islington Town Hall: the previous day there will be a picket of the Home Office.

In Manchester the campaign plans a motorcade with street meetings and entertainment in a variety of venues yet to be finalised.

In its attempt to reach as wide an audience as possible, the VMDC will be issuing a public appeal in the Guardian newspaper on October 14.

## Sponsors

This appeal will consist of a list of sponsors who support the campaign and who have paid to have their names in the advert, which will be on the front page of the paper.

The campaigners are trying to get as many MPs, organisations and well-known individuals as possible to sign the public appeal.

Viraj's MP Bob Litherland will meet with David Warrington at the Home Office after the parliamentary recess, to try and persuade him to reverse his decision on the deportation.

This will only be won if Viraj gets enough support from the labour and trade union movement to pressurise Warrington into changing his decision.

● Manchester Immigration Wives and Fiances Campaign. National march against Immigration Laws, protesting against the 'primary purpose' rule: October 11th, march from Longsight Library 12.30pm. Rally 3:00 pm at Platt Fields.

# For a TU inquiry on raid

THE WORKERS Revolutionary Party has called on its members and supporters to campaign to expose the police raid on the International Communist Party.

Police who refused to give their names, ranks or serial numbers and claimed to be investigating a burglary, burst into the ICP's Sheffield offices on May 30.

They had dogs and spent nearly an hour going through files and papers and refusing to let the ICP members on the premises answer their own telephone.

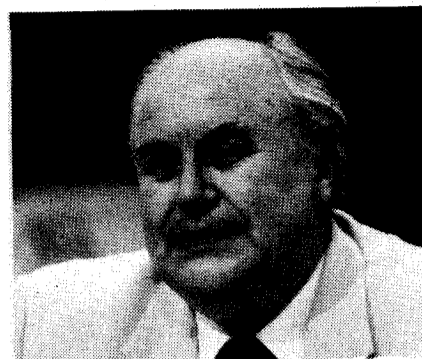
## Retain

The ICP is a Trotskyist organisation which split from the Workers Revolutionary Party to retain membership of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

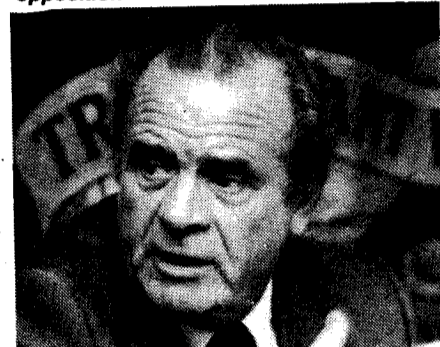
ICP members have circulated a petition demanding a trade union enquiry into the raid.

Miners who signed the petition at the Yorkshire miners' gala last month commented on the similarity between the raid and the way the police attacked pickets during their strike.

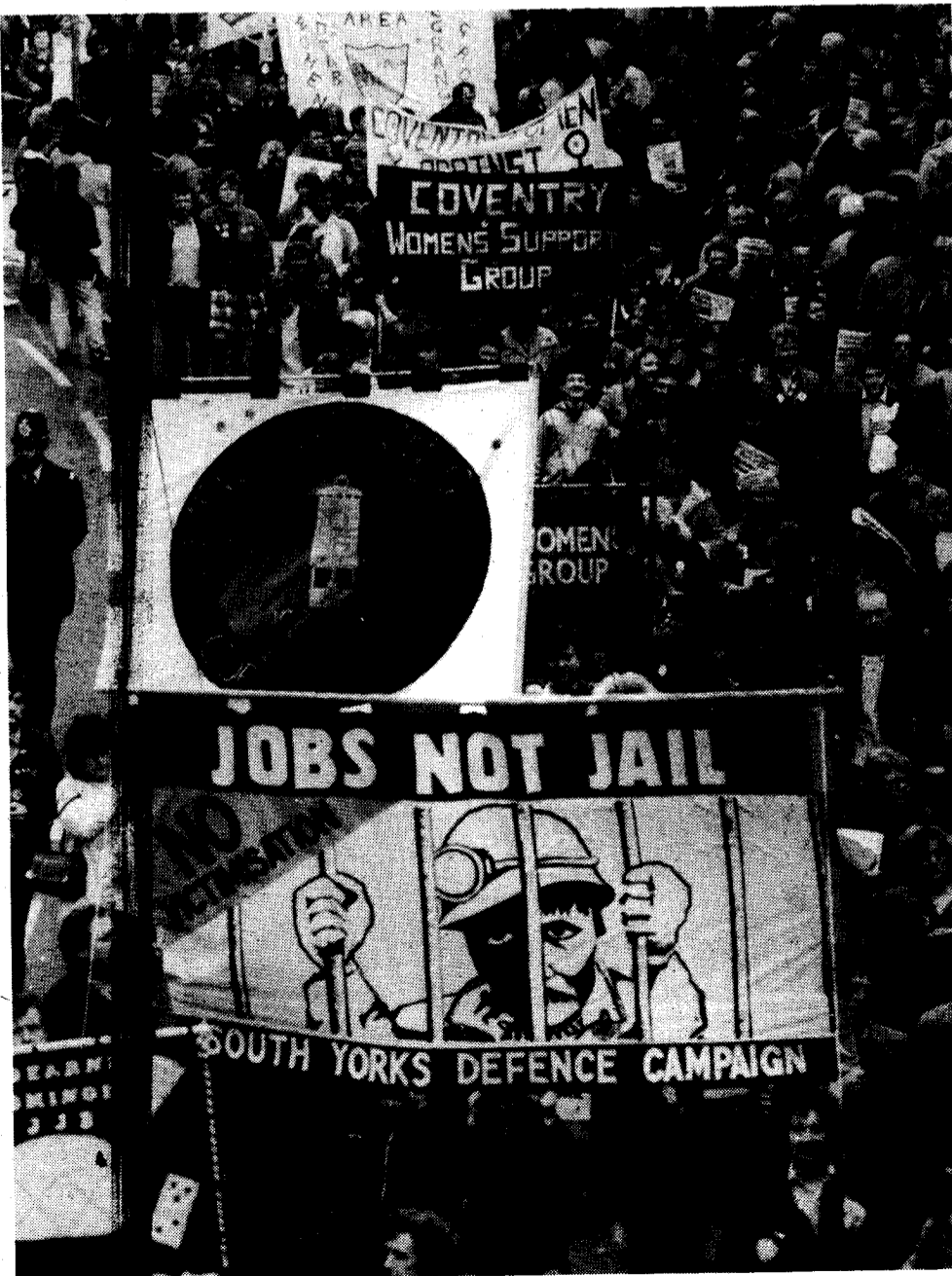
They agreed that the police raid was political, directed against an organisation in the workers' movement.



Norman Willis . . . trying to smooth out opposition



Ron Todd . . . his transport union moved opposition to secret ballots



The miners stood firm against the anti-union laws, but union leaders have not followed that example



# THE PRINTWORKERS' STRUGGLE Reports by Alan Clark

## No bending to Tory laws!

LAWYERS acting for Rupert Murdoch's News International Group have written to the print unions claiming that pickets outside the Wapping plant are breaking a court order.

The company is concerned that the six pickets allowed at the gate are abusing the scabs as they go in to do 'their' work — and claims this is contempt of court.

What is disturbing is that Brenda Dean has sent Bill Miles, SOGAT's national newspaper officer, down to the picket line to police the situation on behalf of the courts.

### Leadership

His job is to make sure the pickets comply with the court order.

The national leadership of

SOGAT are so frightened of an all-out battle which would mobilise the whole membership against Murdoch that they are willing to accept what he says — for example, agreeing that Murdoch's last offer is his 'final offer.'

### Ranks

The rank and file didn't agree with this then and they won't agree with it now.

Pickets on the main gate should refuse to collaborate with the union national officers when they come down to police them.

- Down with collaboration with the state!
- No sell-out of the Wapping dispute!
- For an elected strike committee!



SOGAT banners on last week's march

# TUC 'blessing' for scabs

THE 'friendly' march to Fortress Wapping, organised by the Daily Mirror joint chapels in support of their colleagues sacked by Murdoch, was impressive and certainly good natured.

It passed through Holborn Circus, Fleet St, Ludgate Circus, Thames Street, and Tower Hill on its way to the hated Wapping plant last Thursday.

### Colourful

The march, full of colourful banners representing many from other Fleet Street union chapels, was determined to show Murdoch, and perhaps Dean and Dubbins, that the means were still there to fight Murdoch and any other Fleet Street employer.

A public meeting of rank and file printworkers, held on the same day in Blackfriars, heard bitter denunciations of the TUC and other union leaders who have buckled to Thatcher's anti-union laws and Murdoch's onslaught at News International.

### Sharp

With the Murdoch dispute now in its seventh month, and no nearer a settlement, the theme of the meeting was to oppose any sell-out of the dispute and stand firm on the question of trade union rights.

Lawrence Jenkins, the support unit chairman, opened the meeting. The first and very sharp speech was made by Paul Whetton, a victimised miner from Nottingham.

'How can you build socialism while the TUC gives its blessing to scabbing,' he asked. 'It seems that we should sort out our own institutions, before we sort out the Tories.'

'One thing that unites the Tories is their determination to finish off the trade union

movement. The Tories are saying to management, "have a go at the unions, if you do the courts will back you up". He went on to say that 'Kinnock must be forced to release, not only the jailed miners, but every jailed worker when a Labour government comes to power.'

To make sure this happens, Whetton suggested 'that Dennis Skinner should hit him (Kinnock) with the mace if he doesn't come across'.

Whetton said that he believed that the boycott campaign against Murdoch's newspapers 'is not succeeding'. He pointed out: 'If those papers are still selling it because advertisers are still advertising, I think Fleet Street should come out.'

'If your leadership won't

do it, you should do it.'

One striking Notts miner had picketed his pit out single-handed, said Whetton. Could Fleet Street not be stopped in the same way, he asked.

### Supporting

Andrea Campbell, speaking on behalf of the Southwark Printworkers Support Group, explained that she had been sacked herself in 1984 for supporting the health workers in their fight against cuts. That was why she was now supporting the print workers who had backed her during that fight.

She pointed out that Tower Hamlets was famous for its struggles against the fascists and against racists.

The residents had been effective in organising solidarity with the printworkers, and in the course of that had seen the true face of the police.

She was also scathing about those leaders who used the dispute for their own opportunistic ends.

Wapping residents and printers had related their experiences to the struggles in South Africa and Ireland in their slogans. And it had often been said on the picket line that the police would 'not have got away with their violence at Brixton or Toxteth the way they had got away with it at Wapping.'

'This strike cannot be seen in isolation, it's not just the Tories trying to smash the unions: it's Kinnock, Willis and Hammond who are also doing the Tories' dirty work', said Campbell.

'There must be no ballots, the rest of Fleet Street must be stopped', she said, adding: 'Tell Brenda Dean to shove her instructions.'

### Break

Larry Hyett, sacked SOGAT printer from the Sunday Times and Times, and a member of the FSSU, told the meeting: 'The way the strike is being conducted means that the union is becoming a company union.'

'As rank and file printworkers we must be determined to turn this strike around, we must break the way the our leadership has been collaborating.'

'There must be no sell-out, we must control our own destiny. Unity has to be built to win this dispute.'

Hyett said: 'The Wapping Post, in its latest issue, boasts of victory, but another SOGAT letter gives no hint of victory. So far the FSSU has been unable to win the hearts and minds of the printers in its efforts to get a proper strike committee formed, but this dispute is too important to lose.'

Hyett said that support had to be demanded from the TUC.

Referring to the Observer management, which plans to cease printing at its present site in London and move to contract printing of the paper in plants outside London.

Hyett said: 'We have to throw picket lines around that building.'

He finished by saying: 'We must go forward to victory and build the rank and file organisation.'

Carol Hall, deputy MOC of the SOGAT Times Clerical Chapel, and secretary of the FSSU said that she was a working-class socialist, and was out on strike to preserve

the right to organise.

'Our forefathers didn't give their lives for the careerists Dean, Dubbins and Willis', she said.

'More and more concessions are being given by the national leadership in this dispute,' said Hall. 'There is still time to bring out Fleet Street. We must defy the laws and the courts.'

### Announcement for WRP members WRP Irish Commission WEEKEND SCHOOL

Saturday-Sunday September 27th-28th  
College of Marxist Education, Derbyshire

DISCUSSIONS ON:  
IRISH SOLIDARITY WORK  
THE IRISH WORKING CLASS AND THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE  
PROSPECTS FOR TROTSKYISM IN IRELAND TODAY  
Cost £12 plus fares from areas. Please make bookings with WRP Irish Commission, 21b Old Town, London SW4 0JT.

## THIS WEEKEND

West of Scotland Free the Guildford Four Campaign

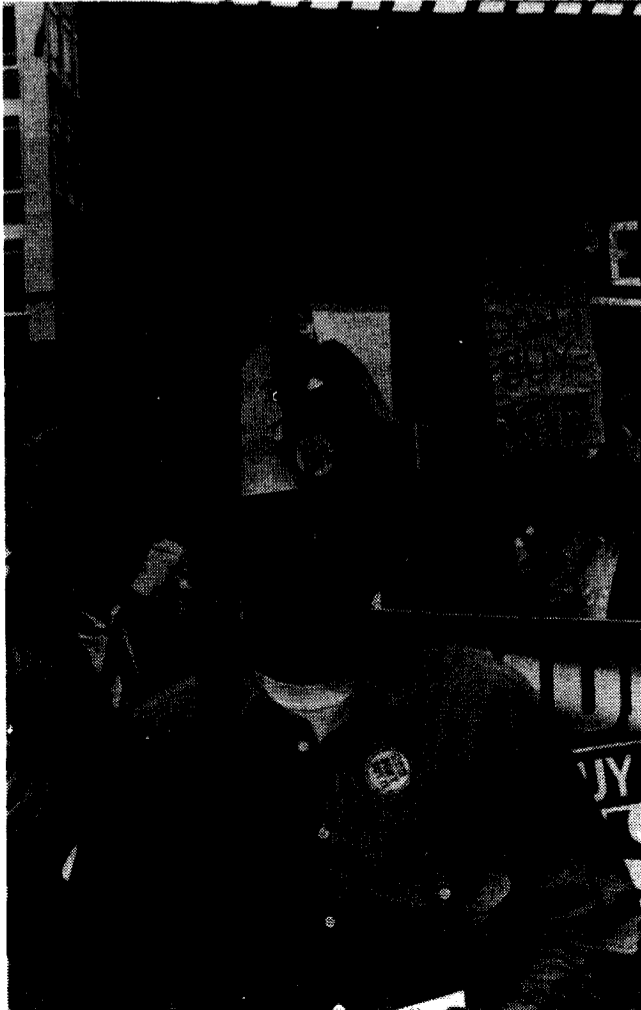
## DEMONSTRATION

Saturday August 23  
Coatbridge

- FREE THE GUILDFORD FOUR AND ALL FRAME-UP VICTIMS!
- REPATRIATE IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS TO IRELAND!
- END BRITISH PRESENCE IN IRELAND; SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!

ASSEMBLE 11.00am Laxford Place, Sikeside  
MARCH 11.30am through Coatbridge Town Centre  
RALLY Addressed by speakers from the Guildford Four Campaign and an Irish Prisoner relative

March organise by the West of Scotland FGFC and the Republican Band Alliance. More information from PH3, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow G4.



Murdoch had better get ready to repel all boarders, if this printer's headgear is a sign of his intentions!

# UDM IS 'IN TROUBLE'

**THE scab UDM is in decline miners' union general secretary Peter Heathfield told a Miners' Justice Campaign meeting in Gateshead, Tyneside last week.**

With fewer than 23,000 members, mainly in Nottinghamshire, the scab union has not taken off in the way it expected.

Heathfield then pointed to another problem: the two thousand non-union members in the industry. This is a result of McGregor's 'divide and rule' strategy.

Heathfield criticised the Labour Party for not fighting back against Tory attacks.

'All gains made by the labour movement must be defended now. It is not good enough to wait for the election of a Labour government,' said Heathfield.

David Guy, president of Durham NUM, gave a moving account of the plight of the victimised miners. He reminded the audience that these men had not worked for 2 years and 4 months.

In Durham 83 men have been sacked (this includes 24 from private drift mines).

Dennis Murphy, president of Northumberland NUM, reported that his area no longer bothers with industrial tribunals because of their bias.

Convenor of the Justice Campaign, Billy Etherington, reported that there were now over 400 affiliates to the Campaign nationally.

Etherington praised the role that women had taken in the Campaign. At least half the delegates to national meetings were women, he said.

Also thanked was the WRP/Workers Press for its 'help and efforts' in develop-

ing the Campaign in the North East.

Forcefully brought into the discussion was the question of the jailed men. It was stressed that these were class war prisoners and their plight ought to be at the forefront of the Campaign.

A call to organise rallies, pickets and lobbies of Tory MPs on this issue was enthusiastically received.

Kevin Flynn, assistant secretary of Tyne-Wear Association of Trades Councils, reported that since January it has been the policy of the Northern Regional TUC to organise meetings of district committees, works committees and branches which would be addressed by NUM speakers on jailed and sacked men and sequestration.

But this has not happened. Flynn later told Workers Press:

'This shows that regional TUC leaders, while not opposing this campaign, are not actively supporting it. Pressure must be brought to bear so that the TUC leadership cannot avoid the problem of the jailed and victimised men.'

Almost 100 people attended the meeting. There were not only NUM members present but also unemployed activists and a range of left-wing parties.

There was a good response to a call to form a regional committee to develop the Campaign locally. The next meeting is to be held on September 18.

## Seaham closure threat

DURHAM miners see a double threat to pit jobs in British Coal's plans to close Seaham colliery: although men there have been told to move to Vane Tempest, they fear that both collieries will close.

They point to coal board chairman Ian McGregor's recent statement that he wants to put more men out of the industry.

The 499 men at Seaham were told a fortnight ago that their colliery is to close, and they are to go to the Vane Tempest colliery on the coast.

The board is refusing to let the move go through the review procedure.

'They say they're "mothballing" seams, we say they're sterilising them', Seaham National Union of Mineworkers lodge committee member Albert Nugent told Workers Press. 'They're

closing Seaham colliery.'

The closure of Seaham cannot be put down to losses. 'It's a viable concern', Nugent points out, 'it's not losing money. The coal board never said we're losing money.'

'They say there'll be no job losses. But there's no way Vane Tempest can entertain 1300 men. So by moving everybody there they will make Vane Tempest uneconomic.'

'They'll end up closing two pits instead of one.'

Nugent believes this is a deliberate ploy. 'If they can't close an economic pit, they make it uneconomic. They say they're "streamlining" the industry. We say it's bad management.'

## RELEASE THE JAILED MINERS

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

**GARY BLACKMORE:** 19 — Affray, attempted not guilty, 2 years Youth Custody. (not a miner, but arrested during the course of the strike)

**SOUTH WALES**  
**DEAN HANCOCK:** Oadkale — Eight year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.

**RUSSELL SHANKLAND:** Taff Merthyr — Eight year sentence Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.

**KENT**  
**TERRY FRENCH:** Betteshanger

— Four year sentence from January 1985. B73383, Weald Wing, Maidstone jail, Kent.

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

**NGEL HODGSON:** Wakefield — Three year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds.

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

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

# North Sea jobs fight

ABERDEEN seamen are calling for a campaign against savage job cuts in the North Sea oil fields, starting with a public meeting organised by their union.

The collapse of oil prices has meant a constant stream of lay-offs and redundancies: every week hundreds of men are sacked.

BY SIMON PIRANI

New investment has been cut drastically: none of the major companies except Shell are starting new projects, and more than half the exploration rigs in the North Sea are now laid up.

In the oilfields where rigs are already 'on stream', development work is slowing down.

The impact is devastating not only on oil workers and technicians, but on companies providing such services as cementing, mud engineering and well-testing.

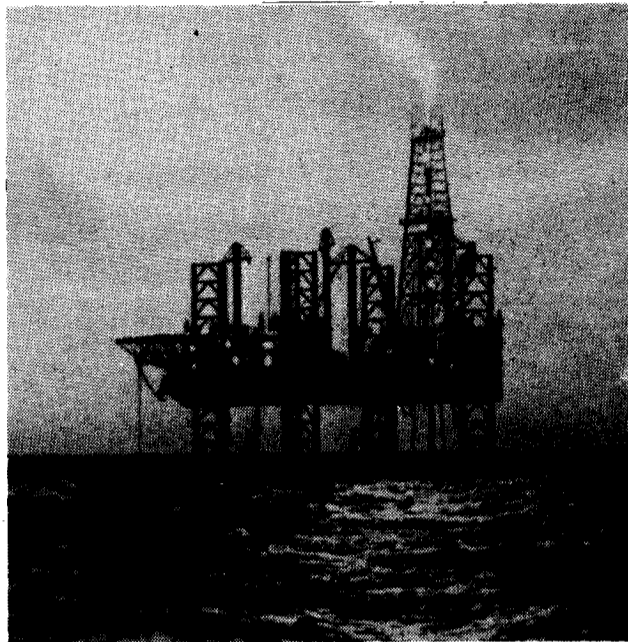
Oil is a cut-throat business. There is no mercy for companies who can't make the running, such as Global Marine whose rigs are now being re-possessed by the banks. But neither is there mercy for workers in an industry dominated by the vicious anti-unionism of the

American multinationals.

Of the north sea's 28-30,000 workers, about 4000 are in the National Union of Seamen and some in other unions. But most are unorganised, and now the price is being paid: it is hard enough to get accurate figures on the devastating lay-offs, let alone organise against them.

Nevertheless, opposition to cutbacks has broken out: it began on the supply boats, where the workforce were told that 'savings' of 25-30 per cent had to be introduced.

Workers rejected the plan and after a two-day strike it was dropped in favour of 4.5 per cent cuts which were made without job losses.



## Resolution passed by Aberdeen NUS 78/86

Aberdeen Branch of the National Union of Seamen salutes the resolute action taken by North Sea supply boat crews to defend their jobs and conditions.

While this demonstrates to one and all the courage of our members and the strength of organised labour, it poses less pleasant but equally important questions. The failure of the trade

union movement to adequately unionise the offshore oilfield sector has resulted, to date, in the inability of any other significant section of oil-related workers to defend themselves against job losses and wage cutting.

This Branch notes recent news articles claiming that 'Forties' and 'Brent' oil is produced for between \$1.5 and \$2.5 per barrel, and has sold for many years at prices

of around \$28 to \$30 per barrel.

It further notes that drilling contractors have commanded prices of up to — and in some cases more than — \$90,000 a day for semi-submersible rigs.

These figures represent colossal profits for the oil-rich companies and drilling contractors, and bumper di-

vidends for their idle-rich shareholders.

This Branch rejects completely the idea that oil workers should pay the price for the current crisis in the industry, which they have had no control over anyway.

### Problems

While stating this we recognise that there is not a simple answer to the very complex set of problems that face workers in the industry.

We recognise that a campaign to recruit oilfield workers 'en masse' to the National Union of Seamen by traditional methods is no longer adequate, and that new methods must be found.

The Branch proposes to sponsor a public meeting to which all trade unions locally and nationally involved in the industry will be invited.

The meeting will be specifically aimed at — and advertised to — all workers currently employed offshore or already sacked, whether they be present members of a trade union or not.

The purpose of the meeting to be:

1. To clarify just what is going on under cover of a virtual news blackout.
2. To gauge the response of workers in the industry to the current attacks on them, and their longer-term effects.
3. To begin to develop a strategy to resist the attacks and organise the workforce.

Towards such an end, representatives will be invited to attend from trade unions organising oilfield workers abroad — specifically the ROF of Norway, and the Cork branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, but not excluding any other interested or relevant people.

Also invited should be John Prescott, the NUS-sponsored Labour MP and Shadow Employment Spokesman, and Tony Benn, Labour's ex-Energy Minister.

An organising committee will be elected to carry out this task.

This committee will have the power to co-opt suitable people to aid the work of the committee.

We call on the Executive Council to endorse and lead this fight, and to make available funds from the union's defence fund.

## 'Racism' cause of army violence

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Over a hundred dismissed Gurkhas have written to the Queen blaming 'unacceptable' remarks by their commander for an attack on him by the men.

The army has brought Sandhurst-trained Major Corin Pearce back to England. Pearce had not been due to return to the Royal Anglian Regiment until October.

'It was thought that in view of the fact that he was involved in the incident with his own men it would be inappropriate for him to remain in Hong Kong,' the Ministry of Defence said.

Major Pearce was knocked unconscious, and suffered head wounds and broken ribs in the incident, on May 25. A Gurkha captain who went to his aid was also beaten up.

Senior officers in Hong Kong have been asked to prepare a report for Whitehall on the Gurkha incident. Labour MP Jack Ashley has written to Defence Secretary George Younger about reports that officers behaved in a racist manner, that Gurkhas got only half the pay of other soldiers, and that their food was bad.

The Gurkhas had been in Hawaii on a joint exercise with American troops, Operation Union Pacific. They were celebrating afterwards in a bar at the US army's Schofield base when Major Pearce arrived and ordered them out.

According to reports from Nepal, what angered the Gurkha soldiers were humiliating remarks their British commander made about them in front of American servicemen. Pearce alleged-

ly said the Gurkhas came from the hills, were uneducated, could not afford to wear shoes, and joined the army out of poverty.

They accused him of insulting the Nepalese nation, and making 'patronising, rude, and racist remarks.'

Eighteen men were arrested after the two officers were beaten up. The Ministry of Defence says the others were dismissed 'for failing to co-operate in the subsequent military enquiry.'

King Birendra of Nepal is reportedly 'extremely unhappy' about the unprecedented mass dismissal. Remittances from Gurkha soldiers are Nepal's second largest source of foreign currency. Besides this, any break in the 170-year old relationship with the British would have serious implications internally too.

The Gurkhas have been serving in the British Army ever since it failed to subdue their people in 1815. In two world wars they lost 43,000 dead for British imperialism, and gained 26 VC's. Their last campaign was in the Malvinas war.

At present there are six Gurkha battalions, four in Hong Kong, one in Brunei, one in Britain. With British withdrawal from Hong Kong due in 1997, the Ministry of Defence is considering where to redeploy them.

Racism is nothing new in the British Army, as many an ex-squaddie would be first to admit, never mind those who have experienced British rule in India, the

Arab world or Ireland.

However, the Gurkhas' reputation as reckless and efficient professional killers, ready to give their all for their officers, made them a valued asset for British imperialism. They could be praised and patronised as quite different from other 'wogs' — so long as they knew their place.

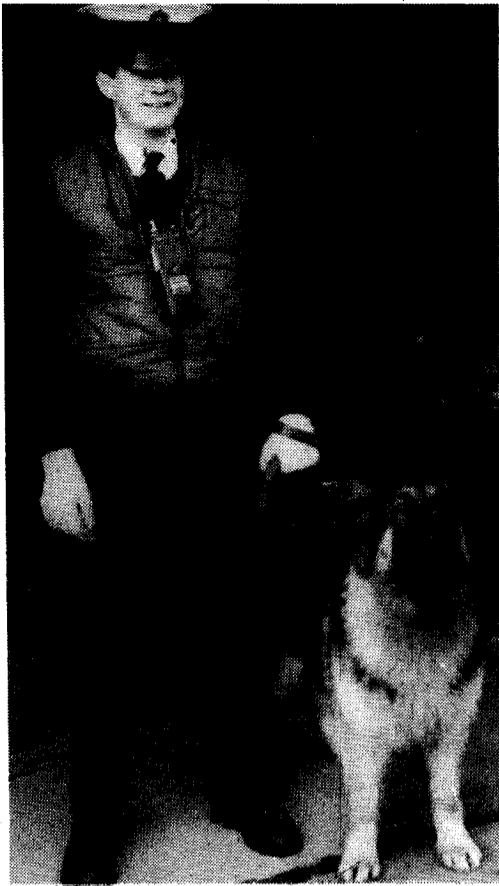
The need to replace the traditional kukri with more sophisticated weaponry may have contributed to a more sophisticated soldier too, demanding more respect. At the same time, the increased likelihood of the British Army being used to 'support the civil power' means officers moving further to the right, if that's possible. That's likely to mean more racism.

Whatever the reasons, from the standpoint of workers and those fighting imperialism, any sign of unrest disrupting the British armed forces must be welcomed.

● The liberal 'Guardian', continuing the imperialist paternalism it was commenting on, suggested in an editorial (Tuesday, August 12) that the Gurkhas' trouble was 'a sudden over-exposure to the late 20th century'. It said 'they would surely feel more at home with their fellow-countrymen in today's Indian Army... and 'Britain should be preparing a handsome golden handshake for the Gurkhas...'

We say the Gurkhas should reject the power that uses and then insults them, and place their fighting tradition on the side of their people, in the struggle to liberate Nepal and the Indian sub-continent from imperialism and under-development.





A security guard faces Silentnight pickets at Barnoldswick, as enthusiastic as ever after fifteen months on strike

## Message from Silentnight

'We want physical support' was the message for Silentnight strikers, now out fourteen months for union recognition, at Manchester support meeting.

Terry Bennett, chairman of the furniture union FTAT's Cravendale No92 branch, and one of the strikers said: 'Don't buy any Silentnight products at all.'

'Boycott all stores selling these products.'

'Silentnight is not just a little company. Tom Clarke is a multi-millionaire with a personal fortune of about £60 million and 36 companies.'

'Perfecta, Sealy Sleep, Lay-E-Zee, Restmaster — these are all Silentnight bed companies. If you buy Debenhams, Queensway Harris label these are made at Barnoldswick.'

'There are also Silentnight bedroom Cabinets and Silentnight kitchens. We need to black all of these.'

'We need more practical help. Go back to your respective parties and see that all stores in your towns that sell these products are boycotted.'

The meeting brought together supporters from Bolton, Manchester, Stockport, Crew and Macclesfield. People at the meeting heard Terry outline some of the experiences of the pickets.

In Yorkshire the police park inside the Sutton fac-

BY MARTIN RALPH

tory. Tom Clarke has been sponsoring them since 1984. These are the police arresting pickets on the Sutton line — giving them trumped up charges and getting them bound over.

'It is mild compared to the things at Wapping but it's still happening except with our mass pickets.'

'There are always five or six police with no number on. Are they SPG or have they been transferred from the army.'

'The Yorkshire police don't care how much destruction or havoc they wreck.'

Terry also said that Neil Kinnock should not be trying to 'create a second class Tory party'. He should be trying to create a first class Labour party. Kinnock should be chasing Maggie Thatcher not Militant.

# 'WE NEED PHYSICAL SUPPORT'

## DON'T BUY!

FIVE HUNDRED workers have been sacked at Silentnight. The crime they committed was to stabnd up and fight for their rights.

Listed below is a group of companies in which Silentnight boss Tom Clarke and his family are major shareholders.

SILENTNIGHT HOLDINGS PLC, Wellhouse Road, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire; Associated Bedding Federation Ltd; Buoyant Upholstery Ltd; Coutessa Upholstery Ltd; Buoyant Caravan Services Ltd; Buoyant Sheffield Ltd; Daço Productions Ltd; Foster Binder Ltd; R Foster & Son Ltd; J A Enser & Co Ltd; M Hackney & Co Ltd; The Heckmondwike Flock Co Ltd; Lay-E-Zee Ltd; Fred Booth & Son Ltd; Edmund Leon Ltd; Liftsum Ltd; Harry Parkinson Ltd; Perfecta Bedding Ltd; Restmaster Ltd; Sealy Sleep Products (UK) Ltd; Sherbury Ltd; Silentnight (Belgium) S A; Silentnight Cabinets Ltd; Silentnight (Contracts) Ltd; Silentnight (Crumlin) Ltd; Silentnight (Export) Ltd; Silentnight Finance (Jersey) Ltd; Silentnight Investments (Jersey) Ltd; Silentnight (Jersey) Ltd; Silentnight (Kenya) Ltd; Silentnight Kitchens Ltd; Silentnight Ltd; Silentnight (Properties) Ltd; Silentnight U A E Ltd; Sleepy Lagoon Ltd; Uganda Mattress Co Ltd; Welbeck House (Sandiacre Upholstery) Ltd; Deutsche Silentnight Postermobel und Bitten.



The furniture union's banner on the picket line

## Banned — from his own house!

A SILENTNIGHT PICKET has been ordered by a magistrate to stay five miles from the factory. . . but his house is inside the 'forbidden' zone!

Where should the picket, from Silentnight's Sutton factory, go each night? That was not made clear in court.

In another case brought against the Sutton picket line, Tommy McLane was charged with dropping litter on the picket line — a cigarette paper.

Others such as Clifford Ashton, shop steward from Barnoldswick, has been bound over for two years and been fined a large sum of money.

Silentnight boss Tom Clarke found out at his furniture exhibition at Salterforth, which started on August 3, that this police harassment only makes the strikers even more determined. They staged a de-

monstration there.

'Most of the cars there are the company reps' cars' said Stephen Burns secretary of the Cravendale branch of FTAT, which represents the Silentnight strikers.

As Workers Press talked to strikers a trickle of cars passed us and half stopped to take a leaflet.

Two huge American-style limousines passed, one empty and the other with one of the directors cowering in the corner of the car.

Barry Pugh, another director present at the show, was head of the government arbitration service (ACAS) in the North West Region before he joined Silentnight.

He had been officially hired to deal with industrial relations some months before the strike.

'They seem best at keeping a strike going' was the pickets' comment.

## MINERS' PAY FIGHT

BY TRAVIS GOULD

# NCB 'squealing'

THE Coal Board are 'squealing', as the South Wales miners' ban on coal production during overtime goes into its second week. It is the first serious industrial action they have had to face since the strike ended last year.

The ban affects five pits, where up to five hours extra production a day can be achieved by cutting coal during meal breaks or between shifts. This type of work is now banned.

Two pits particularly badly hit are Taff Merthyr and Deep Navigation in the Merthyr district.

At Taff, 7500 tonnes were lost last week — 2,700 tonnes of that being immediately saleable coal; with 5,000 tonnes lost at Deep Navigation, 3,000 tonnes of which was

saleable. The loss from these two pits alone is way over the amount the coal board claim to have lost for the whole South Wales area, 5,000 tonnes last week.

The ban on coal production during overtime was introduced at the South Wales NUM conference just before the holiday and implemented immediately after miners returned.

This was after pit-head meetings unanimously accepted a recommendation to take action. In fact a lot of

pits wanted the action to go further and wanted a complete overtime ban.

The main strategy is to take a step forward, however small at first, in combatting the plans of the coal board who want to drive the wedge in further after the setback at the end of the year's strike.

Included in the strategy also is the policy of putting pressure on South Wales coal board who will in turn put pressure on the National Coalboard over the wages claim.

The miners feel very

strongly about the wages question and are very bitter that scabs are getting an increase and the board are holding their wages up.

One lodge official told Workers Press: 'The board are deliberately trying to break the NUM: they can see the UDM is cracking and are using it as a weapon against us. What they are really saying is join the UDM and get a rise.'

The UDM however have nothing in Wales, and this puts the Welsh NUM in a strong position to rally the rest of the national union.

# Lessons of Liverpool

**PART TWO OF A SERIES  
BY BILL HUNTER**

**THE CAMPAIGN** to defend Liverpool council was marked by the Militant's hostility to mobilising the vast array of community organisations and committees which sprang up to fight the cuts, racism and other Tory attacks.

Everything, for the Militant, had to have the Labour Party stamp and go through institutional channels.

The campaign around the council's budget was run as a Labour Party propaganda campaign.

There was no conception whatsoever of encouraging new forces into struggle or developing new leadership. Not one defence committee or campaign committee was set up in the area. The centre of political gravity, for them, remained the council.

The sharpest sign of the Militant's sectarianism was their abhorrence of the miners' aid committees which sprang up in all parts of Liverpool during the miners' strike and collected an enormous amount of food and money — although it must be said that other non-Militant Labour councillors participated in this work.

In November 1983, there was a very big demonstration in Liverpool of 20,000 against Tory policies. It showed widespread anger against the attacks on the Merseyside working class.

There had been 46,200 jobs lost since 1980, with 10,500 redundancies that year.

Councillor Derek Hatton, speaking from the platform at the end of the demonstration, described it as a 'fight back' by the people of Liverpool.

He told the press afterwards: 'If the government refuses to give us money for services and brings in commissioners to take over the council, the Labour Party would be within its rights to call for a local general strike.'

There had been a big cheer from the audience at the meeting when he had spoken about a general strike.

The Labour Party was certainly 'within its rights' in calling for one — but in the event, the mountain delivered a mouse.

## Needed

Such a call from the Liverpool Labour Party needed some degree of preparation, surely.

'We have talked with the unions,' said Councillor Hatton, 'and will be looking towards having further discussions to look at the details, if such an eventuality actually happened.'

In this propaganda, there was always a hint that the government would be frightened off by the threat of action.

A general strike must, by definition, involve wide sections of the population. To be serious about reaching them needed more than a few discussions with union officials or shop stewards.

In reality, however, the character of the exercise was one which depended on a few 'generals' and was executed from above. The conceptions were paternalistic.

The power of the council was used to set up a campaign unit staffed by full-timers appointed by the council.

## Lobby

The resolution put to the meeting at the end called for a lobby of Parliament — 'to bring further pressure on the government to meet our just demands'!

Meanwhile, very shortly after taking office in 1983, the council revealed how seriously it thought of the 'confrontation' with the Tory government.

The council came forward

with a programme for reorganising schools. In reality, and in practice, it accepted the Tory demands for cuts in education.

The capitulatory premise of the council was: 'Reorganisation of our schools must take place. If the Labour government doesn't do it, the Tory government will.' (Liverpool Labour News).

## Pamphlet

The Education Committee sent all parents a pamphlet announcing its proposals: the text began with nothing other than a quotation from Tory education minister Sir Keith Joseph!

The pamphlet sought to frighten parents with talk of 'the statistics of falling rolls', declaring that 'in January 1983, there were over 7,000 surplus places in the county secondary sector.'

Like other surpluses in reactionary Tory proposals for education it was based on an acceptance of targets founded on class prejudice and cuts.

Those norms decree that the average class size in state schooling should be 30. At this time, 15,000 Liverpool children were already in classes of over 30 after teaching staff cuts.

The educational proposals were enthusiastically supported by the Militant Tendency, repudiating a policy decided on by the City Labour Party only a year before.

The 'Local Government Policy' they promised to carry out declared that the

Labour Party's policy in office would be to use 'falling rolls to improve education'.

In secondary education they declared they would 'ensure no class is more than 25 pupils.'

But the most important point is that the council was in opposition to the real forces that have to be de-



*The council juggled with Tory environment secretary Patrick Jenkin... but left the trade union battalions out of the picture*

veloped to fight the government.

The spontaneous resistance to the closure of schools has been a vital part of the fight against cuts and has brought whole communities into struggle. High point of this fight was the occupation of Croxteth Comprehensive School in north Liverpool, which had begun in opposition to a closure threat from the old Liberal council, which was carrying out a policy based on 'falling rolls'.

The Liverpool council

came into sharper conflict with the government than any other in relation to its budget in 1984 and again in 1985. But its struggle was limited by the same considerations which forced other councils to come to a compromise earlier, even though the Militant had sharply condemned them.

In 1984, the council refused to make a budget within the limits imposed by the government.

## Demanded

It demanded from the government £30 million, which, it declared, the government had taken from Liverpool.

It declared it would not cut jobs or service and it would not increase rents.

The slogan of no increase of rates became 'no massive increase of rates'.

In July, after a series of hurried meetings with government representatives, during which the press created a cliff-hanging atmosphere, Liverpool council leaders agreed a budget.

It was on the basis of concessions made by Patrick Jenkin, the Minister of the Environment, and 'creative accountancy' — juggling of accounts — which had been agreed by government and council officials.

It was a legal budget with a rate increase of 17 per cent.

Said the editorial in the 'Militant' of July 13: 'Liverpool council has won an overwhelming victory over the Tory government.'

'Without any cuts in ser-

vices, while securing 2,000 extra jobs, they have forced the Tories to concede £55 million to work out a 'legal' budget.'

The Tories, of course, had conceded no such amount.

The 'Militant' however, took off. 'Ninety five per cent of the council's demands are conceded' it declared.

At the City Labour Party meeting on July 9, there were only seven votes against the deal.

The speeches were euphoric. One MP was reported as saying that the miners needed a leadership like that of Liverpool council!

Outside of the meeting there was criticism among some trade unionists.

Generally, however, with some uneasiness at the Militant supporters' rhetoric, the settlement was welcomed as a defeat for the government.

## Limited

The limited extent of the concessions by the Government were shown in the 'News Line' at the time.

The main basis of it was on a 'borrow and manoeuvre now: pay later' basis.

Overshadowing all the financial duck-shoving was the stage of the industrial and political class confrontation in Britain at that time.

The councillors, and particularly the Militant, began from the narrow and sectional opportunism which operated on the need for an immediate Liverpool solution.

But the government was

pushed to do a deal by national conditions — the miners' strike and the movement to a mass action around it.

The Tory government — as in the case of the railwaymen and the power workers — was deploying its tactics to ensure the miners' strike was isolated.

## Withdraw

The council withdrew from the front line it had found itself in with the miners. That is the fundamental criticism of Liverpool's Labour leaders.

The Liverpool dockers came out on strike the same day that the City Labour Party met to discuss the deal with union leaders working to destroy what was the essential content of their action — solidarity with the miners.

Out of the government's fear born of the miners' strike, the council gained a small amount. But it sacrificed principle for a mess of pottage.

A declaration of the council that it was not to be bought out of the struggle, that the people of Liverpool were gaining very little (and that only temporarily): this could have had incalculable effects in pushing forward the movement to a united struggle with the miners.

In any case, the other road was that of sectionalism and opportunism.

Continued next week.



*'Support Liverpool Labour council', said the posters. But what about mobilising the working class organisations, asks Bill Hunter*

# Community left out of struggle



# CHEAP LABOUR SCHEMES Part 3 of a series by Hughie Nicol

## Avast ye swabs! Dole kids sent to sea

YOUTH who are unemployed and on probation for 'criminal activities' are to be put aboard tall masted sailing ships and sent to roam the North Sea.

The Manpower Services Commission are to fund a new pilot scheme to remove 'young offenders' from the unemployment register.

This is the most cynical and slanderous attack by the Tory government yet against the unemployed and particularly the youth.

Every MSC-funded scheme will be incorporated into the Restart programme now in operation throughout the country.

The pilot scheme to be introduced on South Tyneside is being jointly backed by the Home Office, the MSC and the Northumbria Probation Service.

Spokesman for the scheme, Mr Warren, said from his Jarrow office:

'Really I'm here in South Tyneside to try and offset the debilitating effects of unemployment. The ultimate aim is to stop people re-offending.

He alleged that the whole aim of the plan was to try and 'break down the relationship between unemployment and the crime rate.'

'About 83 per cent of all offenders are unemployed and it is very clear to us that one of the effects of high unemployment, particularly in the under-21 age group, is that they are committing a lot of the crime.'

With Home Office backing for three years, schemes involving education, recreation and unemployment are already being set in motion.

There are also schemes aimed at giving 'young offenders' the chance to become self-employed.

A group of 300 young people on probation will be involved in the South Tyneside pilot scheme, and if it is successful it will be extended to other parts of Britain.

### 'Restart' swindle slammed

THOSE ON THE RESTART schemes are mainly youth. Well over 50 per cent are under 25, and the main recommendations by the 'tutors' are to persuade the youth to accept part-time Community Programme earning £59 a week.

One of the long-term unemployed who did accept such a part-time scheme found out just how caring the DHSS are towards the unemployed.

He worked on a Youth Community Programme for £59 a week. The DHSS used to pay him £60 a week and also pay his rent.

When he realised that the South Tyneside Council job was not paying enough, he applied for Family Income Supplement and Supplementary Benefit but was not eligible because he only worked for 28 hours a week instead of 30.

'I asked my boss if I could work the extra two hours for nothing but they would not allow it.'

'I was in the situation where I could not afford to keep the job.'

Although the DHSS offered the family an extra £1 a week to take their income to its previous amount, they no longer paid the rent and the family could not make ends meet.

Now the DHSS has withdrawn 40 per cent of the money it previously paid this man, who has a wife and small child, because he left his employment.



School youth demonstrate against YTS: new schemes are now being devised

## Printers for £60 a week

TEAM LEADERS FOR THE MSC's new RESTART programme have been touring small businesses to prepare industry for the bonanza of cheap labour that was to be driven their way with the RESTART scheme.

In January this year a printing firm in Sunderland was offered time-served printers for free with the MSC paying their wage of just £60 a week.

The manager told Workers Press:

'She asked if I would employ a printer if the wages were paid by the MSC.'

'When I asked what the wage would be she replied £60 a week.'

'My first reaction was "If you can get me printers who will work for £60 a week, I'll have three please!"'

'She said they would get them for us. I am naturally suspicious and by the way she was talking I rightly concluded that "finding somebody" would be under duress and threat.'

'When I asked if we could top up his wages to the proper rate for the job, as our union the NGA would probably insist, she said we would not be allowed to do that.'

'If we had fallen for that, we would have had a printer working under duress for a scab wage and that would have been no good for anybody.'

# CBI 'KEEPS AN EYE' ON UNION REPS

THE BOSSES' ORGANISATION, the Confederation of British Industry, is increasingly anxious about growing trade union opposition to the MSC's cheap labour schemes.

The CBI has a vested interest in the MSC and its schemes and they have set up a special Task Force to keep abreast of developments in legislation and increased opportunities to exploit new schemes.

The Secretary of State for Employment, Lord Young, briefed David Pennock, chairman of the CBI's Community Programme Task Force, on the pilot projects for the Re-start programme.

The CBI sends an internal news-sheet to industry bosses to advise them on how to get the most out of the schemes.

Recent issues of the CBI circulars have a new emphasis. They warn their members about the developing opposition to the MSC and the schemes it funds.

Trade unions opposition to the MSC is being reflected not only at conferences but also in the way in which the MSC operates in the workplace.

The CBI's news-sheet expressed their fears that trade unionists are no longer prepared to co-operate with the MSC's machinery.

'The CBI is concerned that for the past few months there have been increased difficulties on a number of Area Manpower Boards because of requests by Trades Union representatives in the context of scheme approval that are outside agreed criteria.'

'The CBI wish to stress that... "The AMB is an advisory

body which can recommend approval, modification or non-approval of schemes.'

'The final responsibility rests with the MSC Regional Director. We wish to stress, therefore, that the role of the Board members must be seen in this context, and that no particular interest group has a unique role on the Board.'

So now we have it in plain language.

### Collaborate

The CBI now say to the trade unions: 'collaborate if you will, but even without you we will do as we wish.'

The trade union leaders put the noose around their own neck when they first accepted the YTS and then the Community Programmes.

Their involvement and collaboration with the MSC was a scandalous betrayal not

just to the millions of unemployed, but also their own members.

These schemes are now compulsory and with a clear purpose to attack wages and conditions.

There can only be any serious fight to defend wages and working conditions and to defend jobs if the trade unions break off all involvement with the Manpower Services Commission now.

The trade unions must stand up to defend the unemployed against conscription onto schemes under the Restart programme.

Boycotts, strikes and pickets must be organised outside the Job Centres and DHSS offices and benefit offices who act against the unemployed when they refuse Restart courses or referrals to schemes.

Every local authority must be lobbied to insist that they refuse to operate Community Programmes that do not pay the trade union rate and they must scrap the Restart courses in colleges.

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# HUNGARY

## Crisis in the Communist Parties provided great opportunities and problems for the Trotskyist movement

At dawn on November 4, 1956, after a massive bombardment, 2500 Russian tanks rolled into Budapest. Against bitter opposition from poorly armed workers, youth and students, they blasted their way into the city.

It took nearly a week before the last opposition groups surrendered, both in the capital and in the rest of Hungary. Over 2000 people were killed in the fighting and many thousands executed and imprisoned afterwards.

Despite this, strikes paralysed the major industries until the new year.

Throughout the world, there was a wave of revulsion against the brutality of the Moscow leaders.

For millions of ordinary people, these feelings were deeply felt.

But the statements made by the spokesmen of the imperialist powers were, of course, utterly hypocritical: the Russian action was only possible because it coincided with the Anglo-French-Israeli onslaught on Egypt.

There is evidence that the US State Department knew about the Russian intervention well in advance.

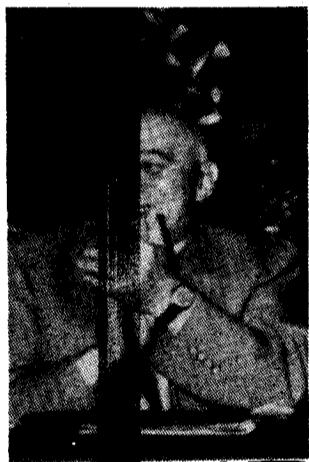
Despite all kinds of rhetoric about 'freedom' and 'democracy', the imperialists did not want to upset the arrangement of Europe the Russian tanks were upholding.

Moreover, Dulles and Co. were certainly not going to stick their necks out for an uprising that was clearly under left-wing leadership.

The eruption in Hungary on October 23, 1956 had been bubbling under the surface for many years.

Under the bureaucratic rule of Rakosi, the standard of living had been falling, at least since 1949.

The Moscow Stalinists had been bleeding the Hungarian economy, as with the rest of Eastern Europe.



Rakosi, Moscow's appointee in Budapest until he was forced to resign in July 1956



Imre Nagy's government had wide support for its liberalisation

National oppression, always an essential element of Stalinist rule, played an important part in the discontent of the masses.

With the loosening up which began with the death of Stalin in 1953, demands for change were widespread.

In Moscow, the Krushchev leadership, fearful of losing control, was trying to find a new relationship between the bureaucracy and the working class.

They met a brick wall in the Rakosi leadership.

These men, in particular, were responsible for the execution, torture and imprisonment of thousands of workers and intellectuals,

including many communists.

After the denunciation of Stalin by Krushchev in February 1956, the movement for the exposure of these actions became irresistible.

In June 1956 the innocence of Laszlo Rajk, the victim of the 1949 show trial, was grudgingly admitted by Rakosi.

When Rajk's widow Julia spoke out at a meeting and demanded that her husband's name be cleared, and his murderers punished, the ferment reached fever pitch.

The outbreak of riots in Poland at the end of June turned the screw still further.

## CYRIL SMITH INTRODUCES A SERIES ON THE EVENTS OF 1956



The huge statue of Stalin was toppled and spat upon by workers in Budapest

On July 18, Mikoyan was sent to Budapest and Rakosi was forced to resign, but his place was taken by Ernő Gerő, another old Stalinist thug.

On October 23, a demonstration called by students was supported by a huge proportion of the population.

Soviet troops intervened the next day, but were withdrawn a week later.

The hated AVH security police were hunted down and in some cases killed by the crowds.

Workers councils sprang up all over the country, while the government led by Imre Nagy appeared to have general support for its liberalisation policies.

The Moscow leaders seemed to have been forced to accept the new set-up.

The old Communist Party was dissolved, and a new one formed, while many other political groups also appeared.

The Hungarian October Revolution seemed to have been victorious.

The second intervention of November 4 came without warning.

For the Stalinist parties of the world, the events of 1956 were catastrophic.

In the British CP, the turmoil which had begun with

the revelations about the crimes of Stalin earlier in the year now exploded in an unprecedented crisis.

About 10,000 people, one third of the membership, including hundreds with many years' membership, left the Party or were expelled for fighting for a real explanation of the role of the CP leaders.

The Stalinist leaders, in Britain as in Moscow, answered only with lies about the Hungarian movement being the work of 'fascists' and 'imperialist agents'.

Those who had been fighting to develop the work of Leon Trotsky had long understood many of the key features now revealed by the heroic struggle of the Hungarian workers.

In the 1920s, a bureaucracy under the leadership of Josef Stalin had usurped power from the Soviet working class.

### Caste

This parasitic social caste, alien to socialism, but living off the workers' state, had extended its rule into Eastern Europe in 1945, with the agreement of the imperialist powers.

The struggle to overthrow this bureaucracy and establish the democratic rule of the working class over the nationalised industries had begun with the Berlin strikes of June 1953, and continued in the revolts of the Polish workers in the summer of 1956.

The movement of the Hungarian workers had taken this movement to a higher level.

This was made particularly clear in the establishment of the Workers' Councils, which played an increasingly important part in the struggle.

Despite the lack of any coherent leadership, and amid widespread confusion, all the open political groups were unanimous in their wish to maintain and defend the nationalised property, and their complete opposition to the return of capitalism.

While there were certainly agents of imperialism at work, they were never able

to show their heads.

The Workers' Councils increasingly revealed their character as organs of dual power, more and more in advance of and independent of the Nagy leadership.

In some of their statements were to be found the main points of Trotsky's programme for the political revolution, in which he had anticipated the Soviet workers would overthrow the bureaucracy.

But it is doubtful whether anyone in Hungary knew anything about these writings, which had appeared 20 years before.

Trotskyism was also well prepared for the murderous and slanderous reaction of the bureaucracy: these were precisely the weapons Stalin had used to try to silence the voice of the Left Opposition.

For as long as the Trotskyist movement had existed, it had been battling against the mountain of lies built up by Stalinism to wall it off from the working class.

Now, for the first time, it was possible to begin to penetrate this barrier, and bring the true history of the international communist movement to the best elements of the class.

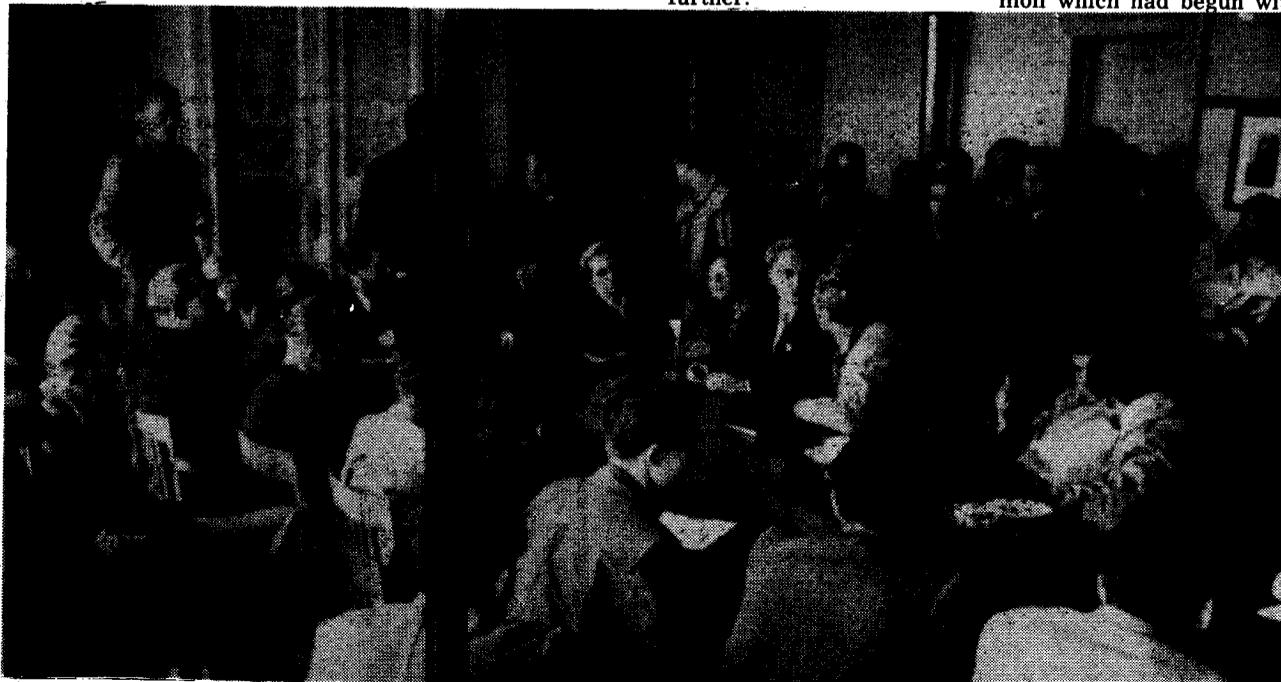
The possibility for small groups of Trotskyists to make this intervention in the Stalinist crisis was prepared by the sharp disputes in which the world movement had been engaged since the end of the war.

By the time the Fourth International which Trotsky had founded in 1938 began to reorganise itself, now bereft of Trotsky's leadership, Stalinism had been able to prevent revolution in Western Europe.

In Eastern Europe, including Hungary, the Russian army had moved in to crush independent working class action as the Nazi state apparatus crumbled.

As Stalin had promised Churchill and Roosevelt, regimes were installed in which the Stalinists shared power with representatives of the bourgeois parties, and capitalist property relations were kept largely intact.

The Stalinist parties themselves were purged, and new leaderships utterly subservient to the bureaucracy were established.



Workers Councils and Student Revolutionary Committees like this one sprang up in all towns



# Y 1956



Workers resisted Russian tanks with rifles, and stayed on strike for a week after the invasion

Then, after the bureaucracy had looted the economies of these countries, they found it impossible to maintain this set-up.

The coalition broke up, and by 1948 bureaucratic regimes had nationalised a big part of industry and collectivised agriculture.

These changes were welcomed by large sections of

think the Russian Revolution had opened the world socialist revolution.

The first workers' state had been destroyed, and replaced by a new form of capitalism, dubbed 'state capitalism'.

The bureaucracy was a new ruling class, they said, and Russia a new imperialist power.

To some of the people who took seriously Pablo's theory about the 'self-reform of the bureaucracy', the workers of Budapest ought really to be condemned for joggling the elbow of the Moscow leaders, derailing the train of reforms by driving it too fast.

Their actions, in any case, were doomed to defeat from the start.

This position was clearly stated by Deutscher, but was privately held by many others.

Those who had held firm to the idea that the bureaucracy was essentially anti-working class saw the Hungarian revolution as a complete vindication of our stand.

Only Trotsky's programme of political revolution made any sense of these events.

It was on this foundation that in Britain we turned to the Communist Party crisis, and Trotskyism began to break out of its previous existence as a small propaganda group.

## Events

Looking back on these events after thirty years, can we say the movement was correct in its approach?

I believe that we were right to identify the Hungarian workers' action as our cause.

We were right to concentrate on the history of the communist movement and to fight for the truth about the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

But I think we were limited by our resources, both theoretical and material, to defending the positions of Trotsky of two decades earlier.

We struggled to force the new world of the 1950s into the theoretical framework of the 1930s.

The Revolution Betrayed and the Transitional Programme remain to this day

the indispensable foundation for our work, and above all for understanding Stalinism.

They distilled the entire experience of October 1917, the struggle to build the Communist International, and the fight against the degeneration of the workers' state.

bourgeois state power, but once again Stalinism managed to hold them back.

Today, we still see the world in the process of socialist revolution.

The unprecedented advances of technology continually collide with private exploitation by capital and

More clearly than ever, 'the crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of proletarian leadership.'

But the regeneration of Trotsky's Fourth International demands that we continually deepen this conception.

We are obliged to grasp in our theory and practice the contradictory unity between the anti-imperialist struggles, the fight for socialism in the advanced industrial countries and the political revolution against the bureaucracy in the workers states, abstracting from the entire experience of this international movement.

I believe that we are only beginning to accomplish this task, after neglecting it for many years.

We were always too easily satisfied with having the theory that was 'correct' in Trotsky's day, instead of doing what he himself had done, fighting at every stage to take this theory forward.

It is from this standpoint that we must look back at the heroic battles for freedom of the Hungarian workers and students.

*The Workers Councils increasingly revealed their character as organs of dual power, more and more in advance of the Nagy leadership.*

But, just as Marx and Engels could not have proceeded in the 1860s and the 1870s simply with the ideas of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, we were and are obliged to develop Marxism continually in relation to history as it occurs.

Trotsky, who saw further and more clearly than anyone else in his time, had concluded by the time of his murder that the second world war would end in revolutionary struggles, led by the Fourth International.

Either these would succeed in overthrowing capitalism in western Europe, and in removing the Stalinist bureaucracy from power, or the USSR would be defeated by the united forces of imperialism.

Neither of these variants worked out.

Instead, Stalinism emerged as a powerful force, taking over eastern Europe and making western Europe safe for capitalism.

In China, Vietnam and later in Cuba, the independent action of the working class was kept in check by the bureaucracy, and capitalism expropriated bureaucratically.

At the height of the long period of capitalist expansion, in 1968, the French workers joined the students in a massive challenge to the

with the outmoded national boundaries.

In South Africa, masses of workers fight to organise the overthrow of capitalism in its racist form.

Once more, they find Stalinism a major obstacle in their path, trying with its 'theories' about the 'two-stage revolution' to steer them into a treacherous compromise with imperialism.

## PUBLIC MEETING

October 26 1986

30th Anniversary

of the

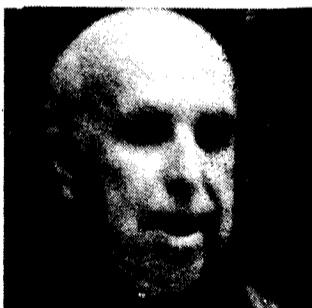
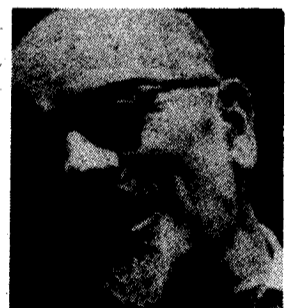
HUNGARIAN UPRISING

Speaker: Peter Fryer

Eyewitness to the events in Hungary as correspondent for the Daily Worker and author of 'Hungarian Tragedy'

Manning Hall, University of London Union,

Malet Street, London WC1



Isaac Deutscher claimed the Stalinist bureaucracy was going to liberalise itself. Michel Pablo (Raptis), right, bringing Deutscher's ideas into the Fourth International, split it in 1953

the working class, but they were not the result of independent revolutionary actions by the class.

How was this development to be understood? This was the question before the Trotskyists.

Then, before it could be satisfactorily answered, the contradictions of the new state of affairs into which the bureaucracy had empirically stumbled began to show themselves, when the break occurred between Stalin and the leading figure in East European Stalinism, Tito.

Some Trotskyists began to hail Tito as a revolutionary leader.

There seemed to be two ways to proceed. Either you maintained the old concepts of Trotsky intact, merely bending them or making a few terminological changes.

Or you accepted 'the facts', and abandoned the ideas on which the movement had been based.

One group, which in Britain was the precursor of the Socialist Workers Party of today, decided that Trotsky and Lenin had been wrong to

They announced they were neutral in the struggle between US and Russian imperialism, and left the movement for ever in 1950.

In 1953, a more important split occurred in the International.

Michel Pablo (Raptis), who had become the Secretary, tried to adapt the policies of the movement to the apparent might of Stalinism.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the bureaucracy was going to liberalise itself, he said, following the ideas of Isaac Deutscher.

And if the Chinese CP could lead a revolution, why not the French?

Against him, several groups fought to defend the heritage of Trotskyism, especially the characterisation of Stalinism as counter-revolutionary.

The 'de-Stalinising' moves of Krushchev in 1953-56 appeared to many people to confirm the predictions of Deutscher.

But the eruption of the Polish and Hungarian struggles certainly did not.



Mrs Armstrong, Josephine Armstrong and Lily Hill at Mrs Armstrong's home in the Divis Flats

# Guildford Four: step up the fight!

BY PHIL PENN

LILY HILL is worried about her youngest son: if he stays with her in west Belfast, he is subject to constant RUC and army harassment; if he goes to England to work the same thing could happen as happened to his brother Paul twelve years ago.

Paul and three others were framed and wrongly imprisoned for the Guildford and Woolwich Bombings in 1974: now they are known as the Guildford Four.

Although responsibility for the bombings was later claimed by the Balcombe Street active service unit of the IRA, the British government have stubbornly refused to release the Four.

After the Hull prison riot in 1976, Paul was badly beaten by warders, and then paid compensation; but then a promise he would not be sent back to Hull was broken, and he is there today. Lily Hill's only income is the little money she gets from the Social Security and the distance involved in visiting her son means that she has to save up in order to make the journey.

These visits have been disrupted by the prison authorities who delight in moving Irish prisoners so that relatives sometimes arrive to find they have come to see a prisoner who is no longer there.

Last week she went to see Paul but could not afford the additional cost of making a detour to London to attend a meeting of the Free The Guildford Four Campaign.

Mrs Armstrong, Patrick's mother, is in the same position. She lives in the Divis flats with her daughter Josephine.

Josephine has not seen her brother in twelve years. In order to visit him she has been told she would have to register with the RUC, which, not surprisingly, she has been reluctant to do.

Mrs Conlon lives in the same area. Her husband Giuseppe Conlon was taken from her at the same time as her son Gerry. Giuseppe was also framed and died in jail.

The families have been fighting a lone battle since 1974. The ray of hope which came with the declaration from the Balcombe Street men was cruelly dashed when the Appeal Court refused to accept it as new evidence.

## Release

Finally in May of this year a campaign was launched to fight for their release.

A TV documentary was shown in July, highlighting the case. Tory Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, who knew the programme's contents in advance and made sure that certain things were not said, called for an internal Home Office review of the case.

In answer to this Alastair Logan, solicitor for three of the prisoners has called for a public enquiry into the case. When it was formed the Committee decided that while campaigning for their release, the hardship suffered by the prisoners and their families had to be alleviated as much as possible.

In a recent letter from Carole Richardson who is now at Styal open-prison she said that they think she is mad because she walks out in the rain. After being

cooped up in Durham jail for so long she does not care if it is raining — she has to be outside.

When asked if there was anything she needed she said 'Only my freedom'. But we know that she needs money to finance her craftwork.

Workers Press asks our readers to raise the case of the Guildford Four in every organisation.

But also the campaign desperately needs money in order to meet its commitments to the prisoners and their families.

## Model Resolution

We note that three men and an English woman, known as the Guildford Four, have been in prison since 1974, serving life sentences for the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings;

That four other men have gone on record and given evidence in court that they were responsible for these bombings and that the Guildford Four had no connection whatsoever with these events;

That despite this crucial new evidence and other overwhelming evidence of a miscarriage of justice the Guildford Four's request for a retrial was rejected by the no-jury Court of Appeal in 1977; That no further legal route for appeal exists; they can only be released by decision of the Home Secretary.

We therefore resolve to:

1. Write to the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, demanding the release of the Guildford Four;
2. Write to the Irish Embassy asking them to protest to the Home Office;
3. Inform local representatives about the case and call on them to support the demand for the release of the Guildford Four (trade union sponsored MPs for relevant constituencies, other local MPs, etc.);
4. Raise the matter further within this organisation/trade union;
5. Affiliate to the Free the Guildford Four Campaign;
6. Donate £ . . . to the Free the Guildford Four Campaign.

If it is impossible for you to donate as an organisation, please take an informal collection. Cheques etc. to 'Free the Guildford Four Campaign', BM Box 6944, London WC1N 3XX.

# Organising in the f

# SCOTS BAN IRISH STR

BY SIMON PIRANI

HOW DO you organise Scottish youth to demonstrate their fervent support for the Irish Republican struggle? How do you politicise them? How do you take them on to the streets?

These are problems that face the organisers of the west of Scotland's Republican Band Alliance week in and week out.

Add to that the effects of police hostility, of media distortions, of religious sectarianism — and you have an idea of what this unique organisation is up against.

This weekend, for example, the bands will take to the streets, along with the West of Scotland Guildford Four Campaign, on a march which will probably be the largest yet supporting the four innocent people framed up for the Guildford bombings. But they don't expect much coverage from the traditional left-wing press, let alone the capitalist papers — unless there's trouble.

## Mould

To many older people in Scotland, marching bands represent nothing more than the poison of religious sectarianism which divides the working class: Catholic youth were marshalled into the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Protestants into the Orange bands, with sectarianism and even bigotry encouraged on both sides.

The Republican Band Alliance was formed precisely in a fight to break out of that mould.

The first Republican band formed in Scotland in living memory was the James Con-

nolly band, formed in 1976 by people who had become sickened by the hypocrisy and sectarianism of the Hibernians, a band alliance spokesman explained to Workers Press.

'The conflict in Ireland had been going on for seven years, the longest period of war for a generation. People began to see the struggle as class-based, rather than as a Protestant-Catholic conflict as the media and government wished us to believe.'

'The James Connolly band acted as a focal point for people who for obvious historical and social reasons found themselves in the Hibernians, but who began to recognise the dangers of Hibernianism to the working class.'

The Hibernians originated in Ireland to protect priests saying mass, which was illegal under the British penal laws until the end of the 18th century. Among the Catholic Irish who emigrated to Scotland to escape famine, they evolved as a

charitable and religious organisation, but by the present generation, they had become 'little more than a mirror reflection of the orange lodges', as the band alliance spokesman put it.

The break-up of the Hibernians and formation of the band alliance was triggered by events in Ireland, far closer to Scotland than England both physically and by family and historical ties.

By 1980 there were four more Republican bands, although an attempt to form an alliance at that time failed.

## Outrage

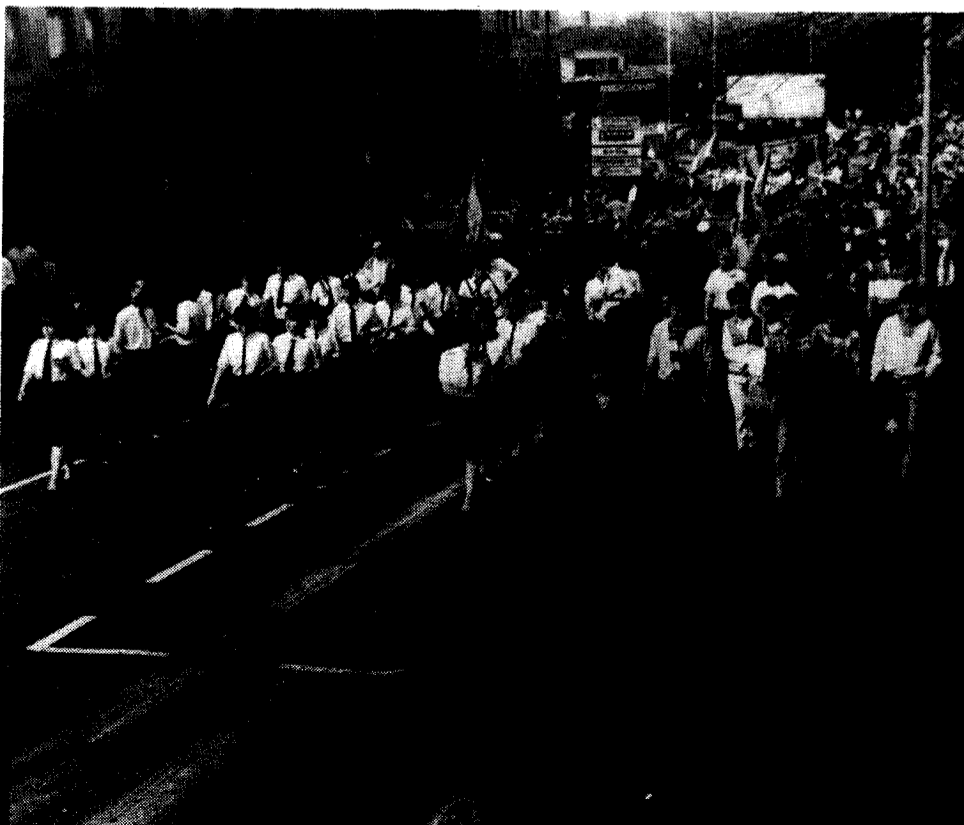
The following year, Bobby Sands and other Republican prisoners went on hunger strike, and outrage swept across Britain as the Thatcher government sent them to their deaths. The Republican bands joined with some left-wing organisations to stage one major demonstration in Glasgow.

## 'Recognise national question'

imposed on Ireland by imperialism.

'Smashing that border, and achieving a united Ireland, is for us very much tied up with taking the working class to socialism; and it certainly is a socialist Ireland we want.'

The Republican Band Alliance also support Scottish Republicans who echo the calls made by John Maclean at the end of his life for a Scottish workers' republic; they gave support to a recent march in Merthyr Tydfil commemorating Welsh nationalist leader Dik Pen-deryn.



The bands are made up overwhelmingly of teenagers

## MANCHESTER IRISH SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

### PUBLIC MEETING

Free the Guildford Four!

August 27, 7.30pm

Conference Hall

Town Hall, Albert Square

MANCHESTER

Speakers: Liz Hill, sister of Paul Hill plus a speaker from MISC



# ace of bigotry and discrimination...

## DS BACK UGGLE

To their shame, the trade union and Labour leadership and even some left-wing organisations turned their backs on the hunger strike campaign, opposing Thatcher in words only. Because of this, and the difficulties activists had working together, demonstrations supporting the hunger strikers could not be sustained, in a city where pro-Republican marches usually face violence from loyalist thugs.

'Our difficulties during the hunger strike, when working-class men were dying for their just demands, acted as a catalyst to organisation,' said the spokesman. 'Five bands formed the band alliance to co-ordinate activities and to politically educate band members about the class character of society.'

'What really turned many bands against the Ancient Order of Hibernians was one of their speakers, who at a march in Coatbridge called Bobby Sands a suicide case.'

'Since then we have mushroomed. At first we found ourselves getting used by left-wing organisations who would pick us up for one march and then drop us again. We realised eventually that we could organise effectively outside any particular party or grouping, as a political entity in our own right.'

The Band Alliance have joined pro-Republican demonstrations not only in Scotland and the north of Ireland, but in England and even, in the case of the Parkhead band named after IRA volunteer Billy Reid, New York.

Throughout its existence, the band alliance has fought against the sectarian strait-jacket into which the establishment tries to put it. 'There is nothing the authorities hate worse than the fact that we are acting as a focal

point for socialist politics, and that we won't play the sectarian role that they have earmarked for us,' says the spokesman.

The names of the bands do not exactly project a religious image: they commemorate socialists and Republicans including Bobby Sands and the other H-Block Martyrs, James Connolly and John Maclean.

All 17 bands now in the alliance have both Protestants and Catholics in them, which is unprecedented; all bands except one have women members. 'We don't mind people practising religion but it is not allowed to interfere with our politics', says the spokesman.

He was also quite blunt about the fact that religious sectarianism has not died out and presents constant problems. 'We don't expect republicans or socialists off a production line. We know there are bigots; there are in any real working-class organisation, and we have to fight to change them.'

### History

The band alliance has an education programme — 'to stress working-class history as opposed to imperialist history; we try to discuss the class basis of society, not the "history" of such figures as Lord Nelson or Mountbatten' — and also tries to encourage political activity.

'We were active during the miners' strike, collecting money and supporting the marches; during the Sabra and Shatila massacres in the Lebanon large numbers of our members supported demonstrations for the Palestinians. And we have worked constantly to challenge the deep-rooted prejudices of racism and sexism amongst our members.'

The band alliance certainly



The bands bring hundreds of supporters on to the streets

ly find the working-class youth of Clydeside more open to persuasion than the Labour-controlled authorities of Strathclyde Region and Glasgow district.

'We have always had a tremendous battle to establish our right to use public halls,' explained the spokesman.

As for permission to march, this can be even tougher to obtain: Labour-controlled Strathclyde recently stubbornly refused to have the bands march through Toryglen in south-west Glasgow despite its large Catholic-Irish population.

It hardly needs adding that the bands expect no favours from the police. Arrests at marches are common for offences ranging from carrying the Irish flag or the Starry Plough of Connolly's

Citizens Army, to selling 'Troops Out', or just being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

What about the bands' relationship with the organised working-class movement and the unions? At the moment, it's virtually non-existent: hardly surprising in a part of the world where anti-strip search banners have been forcibly removed from labour movement May Day marches, and resolutions on the same subject dropped from the Scottish TUC Womens' Conference agenda for lack of a seconder.

Just as all British socialists must take a clear practical stand in support of Irish self-determination, so those in the west of Scotland must treat the Republican bands with the seriousness they have earned.

## REPUBLICAN POWs

### LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ

LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984.  
JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989.  
EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637.  
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877.  
GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016.  
JOHN McCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715.  
ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576.  
PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575.

### PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX  
HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636.  
NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence 879225.  
PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603.  
STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence 758663.  
TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence 69204.  
PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75882.

### WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG  
SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661.  
CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662.  
PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532.  
NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644.

### ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS  
VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.  
HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638.  
SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418.

### GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP  
ROBERT CAMPBELL: 10-year sentence, B32954.  
JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635

RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799.

### FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham  
PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034.  
EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.  
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085

### LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ  
BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662.  
BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380.  
PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888.  
GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75880.  
PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881.

### HULL

HM Prison Hedon Rd, Hull, Humberside  
MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087.  
ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083.

### DURHAM

HM Prison, Durham.  
MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134.  
ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.

### INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON: HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire

PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree, Market Harborough, Leics., LE16 2RP  
PAUL HILL: 462778. HM Prison Hull, Hedon Road, North Humberside

GERARD CONLON: HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs.

JUDITH WARD, HUGH CALLAGHAN, JOHN WALKER,

BILLY POWER, GERARD HUNTER, RICHARD McILKENNY,

PADDY HILL. They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.



The unity of South African and Irish liberation struggles is expressed in this Belfast mural.

# FRENCH FASCISTS BLOWN UP

FOUR members of a racist terror gang were killed in an car explosion while on their way to carry out a bombing in the French Mediterranean port of Toulon last week.

The incident came after a campaign of bomb attacks on Algerian cafes and other places used by immigrant workers.

The dead men, evidently blown up by their own bombs, included Claude Noblia, who stood unsuccessfully as a National Front candidate in the 1984 European elections and later in local elections.

there might be some link between Noblia's organisation and attacks in Toulon, Nice, Marseilles and other southern towns, claimed by a shadowy 'Commandos de France' which said it was fighting 'the Arab invasion'.

While the National Front in Paris was anxious to dissociate themselves from Noblia last week and condemn the bombing campaign, Toulon NF deputy Yanne Piat preferred to claim that the explosives might have been planted in the car to discredit the Front.

'It cannot be ruled out that this was a remote-controlled operation aimed against the National Front,' asserted Piat, one of 33 fascist deputies in the French parliament.

This was the second time in recent years French fascists have been blown up by their own contraption. A racist campaign against Jews and Arabs in the Marseilles area was halted when two men were killed in a car explosion while near the city's Grand Synagogue.

## Violently

Dropped by the Front so it could pursue a more 'respectable' image for the French elections, the violently anti-immigrant Noblia recruited former French paras and other heavies to form 'SOS-France'.

This was obviously aimed against the anti-racist movement SOS-Racisme, which had been building big support among French youth.

It is thought the gang blown up on August 17th had been aiming to bomb premises formerly used by SOS-Racisme in Toulon.

It has been suspected

# RIG OCCUPIED

AUSTRALIAN police were standing by last week as workers occupied an offshore gas rig on which the city of Perth depends for supplies.

'I am not Superman', Regional Police Inspector Ken Hemming confirmed, when asked whether he had tried to arrest the strikers.

Hemming had been out to the rig in a helicopter, but had to land on a barge alongside after the workers blocked the helipad with their bodies.

The 350 or so workers decided to occupy after the em-

ployers, Woodside Petroleum, sacked a drilling crew in a dispute. Management claimed the crew were endangering the platform by refusing to return to work on a gas well.

Woodside cut off gas production on Sunday, after the occupation began, claiming this was for safety reasons. Perth, a city of a million people, was warned it would soon be out of gas for industry and homes.

Shop stewards on the rig were said to be urging the workers to continue their occupation. They could not be reached from the shore as the phone link had been cut.

## LISTINGS

**ALTERNATIVE BOOKFAIR.** New and secondhand books and pamphlets. Saturday September 20, 11 am - 5.30 pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

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

**EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN - PROTEST.** Saturday September 13, 12 noon, United States Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London.

**EAST MIDLANDS JUSTICE FOR MINERWORKERS GALA.**

Saturday September 6. Assemble 10.30am, Mansfield Leisure Centre, Chesterfield Road, Mansfield, to march to West Notts College of F.E. Speakers Mick McGahey, Dennis Skinner, WAPC, SOGAT, and Justice.

**SOCIALIST ACTION: BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM.** Weekend November 22/23, in London, a major political event with speakers, debates and discussions. Details from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM.** Workshops and forums on the theme of an alternative socialist strategy in Europe. October 17-19, Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth Street, London WC1. Details from Symposium, PO Box 503, London N1 1YH.

## PAKISTAN ANGER ERUPTS

Police opened fire on crowds, and the army was deployed to guard government buildings, as popular anger erupted in Pakistan last week after the arrest of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto and others.

Protestors were killed by police gunfire in Lahore and Karachi. In Halla, banks were set on fire. In two towns near Karachi, crowds set fire to government offices. In Thatta, they also stormed the prison and released 48 people who had been awaiting trial.

## EVICCTIONS FIGHT IN GREECE

Greek trade unionists staged protest strikes last week over rent increases and a massive wave of evictions that have been hitting working class tenants.

Landlords have been taking advantage of a new law by the so-called 'Socialist' government abolishing rent controls. In Athens and Salonika there have been at least 20,000 evictions, and the courts are having difficulty handling the growing caseload.

## NZ BAN ON S.AFRICA

New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange announced a limited set of sanctions against the South African racist regime last week. Lange said the moves were in line with Commonwealth call.

The New Zealand measures would be implemented by December 1, Lange said.

# DATELINE PALESTINE

# When the s destroys a h

UM EL FAHM — The dog, resting in the shade afforded by the one bit of masonry left standing, got up as we approached, gave an indignant bark, then strode off across the rubble.

Circling around us warily, it took up position nearby, tilted back its head and began a strange series of short high-pitched barks, almost a howl, of protest.

It was eery. A phrase from somewhere crossed my mind: 'even the dumb beasts cry out'.

Until a few days before there had been a house. A family had lived there, with young children. The dog had doubtless been ready to protect them fiercely, against thieves and all comers. But how could it do its duty against a force of armed police, with a bulldozer, who came not just to rob, but to destroy the home?

Maybe the master would have known what to do? But he had been taken away some time previously, the dog knew not where.

Now the family had been forced out of the house, and the house reduced to rubble. Some of their belongings were left under it. All the dog could do was keep his vigil, and protest to the world.

## Gathered

People started to appear. Small children gathered round, curious as ever. A woman across the street, watering flowers on her balcony, called to her neighbour. A small boy drove the dog away. A young woman came across, picking up an errant fair-haired toddler, and asked who we were.

Within a minute, we were in a nearby upstairs room, listening to Mrs. Ighbareyya, whose husband was in jail, explaining how her home had been destroyed.

The police had come early in the morning, in force, and with armed Border Police. They had told the family to get out, not even giving them enough time to rescue all their furniture before the demolition began.

When the children came home from school at 10 am for their breakfast, their home was no more. 'The little one wouldn't stop crying, she could not understand



Mrs Ighbareyya tells her story

why she could not go inside.'

Ra'afat Ighbareyya is serving a nine-month sentence for refusing a court order to demolish his own house. It was only built in 1979. Ighbareyya, who suffers from partial paralysis in his hands, has been tried three times, and fined for refusing to pull his family home down.

Now the family have also been told they must pay for the cost of the police demolition operation.

The authorities had said the house was 'too near the main road'. Mrs. Ighbareyya recounted. But it was set well back from the road, and behind other houses. Well, that's what they said...

The police had picked their time for the operation, she thought. 'At that time most of the men would be at work.' On a previous occasion, local people had been forewarned, and turned out en masse to stop the house-destroyers.

The police also came despite assurances given to the local council, that the demolition order would be postponed until September 20, to allow Ra'afat Ighbareyya time to fight it in the courts.

Hence they had the advantage of surprise. But to make

sure, the Border Police — really a military force — sealed off the entire area, while the demolition squad hurried with their work.

Neighbours have taken in the family, and a local committee has been formed to raise donations, and help them build a new house. Within four days of the demolition, 2,500 shekels were raised. (about £1,250).

But there are thousands of so-called 'illegally built' Arab houses, which the Israeli authorities claim the legal right to demolish. It is not racism, you see, just 'planning'. That families need somewhere to live is evidently not the planners' responsibility, and that the victims of this policy are mostly Arabs is just unfortunate.

## Satellite

The little hamlet where the Ighbirreya family live is really a satellite — what Palestinians would call 'daughter village' — of Um el Fahm, in the Irrun Hills between the coastal plain and the Jezreel valley.

This is an area known as the Arab 'Triangle', under Israeli rule since 1948, but adjoining the northern part of the occupied West Bank seized from Jordan in 1967.

In the town hall, a modest building at the centre of the old town, Um el Fahm's mayor Hashim Mahamid, wearing the traditional keffiyeh and igal head-dress of the older generation, spoke about his town and its problems.

'Until February this year, this was the largest village in Israel. Now we're a town. Besides more than 24,000 inhabitants in Um el Fahm, we provide services to about half a dozen small villages in the surrounding area.

'The fifteen-member council was first elected in 1962. The town has problems com-



Um-el-Fahm from the nearby hillside

**BOOKS**

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**BOOKS**



# Charlie Pottins reports from Um-el-fahm

## tate ome

mon to many Palestinian vil-  
lages in Israel.

'For most of the residents there is no proper sewer system. The council began installing one, but less than 10 per cent of the homes have mains drainage. The council ran out funds.

In the hospitals around Um el Fahm they speak of "Um el Fahm disease". It's a stomach disorder particularly effecting children. People have little doubt it's related to local conditions.

'Um el Fahm waited 20 years for town status,' Mayor Mahamid says. 'We're still the poor relation. If you take a Jewish town, Pardes Hannah with 14,000 people has an annual budget of \$6 million. Um el Fahm with 24,000 gets \$2 million.



Mrs Ighbareyya points out the devastation caused by the police wrecking party

### Amenities

'How can we pay everyone, keep things going, improve the amenities? We get \$100,000 for development each year. With that we can buy maybe two tractors to take sewage from the cess tanks.'

An important concern is education. 'Each year 700 pupils enter the schools. Each year we need a new school building. Some of our schools were established before the State of Israel.

'We have 120 private rooms rented by the council for use as extra school rooms. By Israeli law these are illegal. The Schools Inspectorate said "It's a shame for the State of Israel", but this changed nothing.

'Fifty per cent of our pupils are failing in primary school. This is repeated in high school. In all the Israeli universities, only 3 per cent of students are Arabs, although the Arabs in Israel are 17 per cent of the population.'

Then there's housing. 'There is no zone plan for Um el Fahm', Hashem Mahamid explains. 'Since the establishment of Israel, we have had no new areas to build in.

'All the new houses in Um el Fahm are "illegal".'

'Under Israeli law it is forbidden to connect an "illegal" house to electricity, water supplies, or the tele-

phone. The council helps with water, legal or not. Electricity is often connected from house to house — illegal or not.

Then there are the Israeli authorities' demolition orders. 'The authorities have the legal power to destroy 700 houses around Um el Fahm.'

'The Zionists said "For a people without a Land, a Land without a People", Hashim observes. But the Palestinians were there, so....

Laws allowing confiscation of land for 'public use' were used in Israel to confiscate land from Arabs, he said. Since 1948 the Israeli government had ordered demolition of hundreds of Arab villages. In the same period, not one Arab new town or village had been allowed.

A Jewish municipality might get 94 per cent of its budget from state funds, as well as additional help from Zionist institutions like the Jewish Agency, money raised abroad.

Last year Um el Fahm obtained \$92,000 from an Arab welfare association in Geneva. The Israeli authorities tried to block the money because, they said, it 'came from the PLO'.

The money was for a street cleaning machine for the municipality. Hardly the kind of hardware that might endanger the State of Israel, you might think. But evidently the Zionists have a

wide concept of threats to their 'security'.

Another figure quoted by the Um el Fahm councillors comes from statistics gathered by former Jerusalem deputy-mayor Meron Benvenisti. He's worked out that it costs the Israeli state budget £100,000 for each Israeli settler it plants in the occupied West Bank. The same sum the whole town of Um el Fahm gets for its needs.

Land confiscation and financial discrimination have meant Um el Fahm is not only the 'poor relation', but the reserve labour for the Israeli economy. 'Less than 10 per cent of the people in Um el Fahm work in Um el Fahm', I was told.

### Factories

Was there any local industry?, I asked. 'Some little clothing factories', I was told. 'Contractors get material from bigger firms, they employ local women on low wages, the finished clothes may end up selling abroad at high prices, in stores like Marks and Spencer.'

It's surprising at first to hear that ten out of the fifteen councillors in Um el Fahm are 'independants', representing the hamulas — something between an extended family and a clan — which are an important feature of traditional Palestinian life.

Many younger Palesti-

nians see the hamula as outmoded, and an obstacle to modern political mobilisation. It was strengthened in some ways by the confrontation with Zionist colonialism, because people like to hold on to traditions when resisting alien rule, and because it gave the individual moral and practical support.

However the hamula's solidarity is restricted to kinship ties, it can be divisive, critics say, and the Israeli authorities have been able sometimes to bribe a head of family to control the rest.

In Um el Fahm, traditional or not, most of the hamulas have given their support to the progressive and nationalist coalition in the town. The mayor is a member of the CP-led Democratic Front. The Communist Party has its own headquarters, including a youth club.

The best-known movement here however is the Abna al-Balad, Sons of the Village, founded in Um el-Fahm in 1969.

Hassan, a school teacher and Um el Fahm councillor was a founder-member of Abna al-Balad. He tells how the old Palestinian leadership had been destroyed in 1948, how people had to fight under conditions of military rule against land confiscations, and for the right to work and to study.

They had tried to follow developments in the Arab world, the rise of Nasserism, the Algerian war. Young

people had slipped across the border to try and join guerrilla groups, and been captured by Jordanian police who handed them back to the Israelis.

The Israeli military victory in the 1967 'Six-Day War' had a paradoxical effect. It brought Palestinians within the Israeli state back in contact with those who had been under Jordanian rule, and renewed their national consciousness as Palestinians.

Refugees came back to visit their former homes, and young people were able to make contact with resistance groups in the West Bank and Gaza. Many landed in jail. Some former political prisoners were among the founders of Abna al-Balad.

Abna al Balad was 'the most developed social expression of Palestinian national consciousness', Hassan says. It mobilised people in the villages to fight for their rights. It linked the national struggle with being anti-patriarchal, with seeing 'the workers as the future of society', with the liberation of women.

Among the movement's tangible achievements in the villages have been cultural and day-care centres, clinics, and kindergartens — a boon to the working mother and a good base for future Palestinian culture.

### Division

Since 1982, Abna al-Balad has been split both by the divisions in the Palestinian movement outside and developments in its own struggle within Israel.

Hassan is one of those who believes in working with Left-wing Israelis, including the Communist Party, and taking part in Israeli elections.

Rajah, still with the original Abna al-Balad, rejects this. 'We are part of the Palestinian national movement, not the Zionist Knesset', he says. He points out that the Israeli Labour Party had rejected overtures from the Left, Peres didn't want them, he went for a 'National Unity' government. 'We don't believe we'll get a solution from the Knesset.'

'The Israeli Communist Party is still the Israeli Communist Party'. Rajah re-

minds us. It had tried to confine the struggle to demands for equality in the State, whereas 'we are an integral part of the Palestinian people'.

'We consider Israel an imperialist state which has occupied Palestine.'

He charges the C.P. with wanting to be 'in charge' of all the struggles, whereas Abna al-Balad had provided an umbrella for all the national forces.

Hassan quotes Engels on the need for a workers party participating in elections. He also challenges Rajah's attempt to separate local government from parliamentary elections, by pointing to the wall of the council chamber, whence between the municipal emblem and an Israeli flag, President Herzog looks down on the proceedings. 'How can you pretend you'll take part in one and ignore the other?'

### Elections

I ask what proportion of Palestinians vote in the Israeli elections. Hassan says that the percentage who turn out is actually higher than among Israeli Jews. So if you don't campaign, their votes could be wasted on conservatives and opportunists linked to the Zionist parties? 'We tell them not to vote', is Rajah's simple reply.

He says the Palestinians' problems cannot be solved through Israeli, Zionist-dominated politics. 'It must happen from outside.' They must look to progressive Arab regimes to unite behind the Palestinians. But isn't that leaving the people themselves passive and disarmed, which is not what he wants?

The discussion is interrupted by the amplified voice of the muezzin from across the way. Besides, it is time I was getting back to the bus. I shake hands with Hassan and Rajah, ma'salamah. They go off to the cafe together, still arguing.

Both have their points. The struggle they are waging has many problems. Back in London, I know there are people who think they know all the answers. But as with the working-class struggle in Britain, you have to be a participant before you even know the questions.



Street life, down an Um el Fahm lane.



Um El Fahm's town hall

# THE SCOURGE OF RACISM

MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS living in the German Federal Republic with their families are increasingly coming under attack from the growing rightwing.

The background to their presence in Germany is the postwar reconstruction of the capitalist economy in the Federal Republic after 1945 with the help of United States imperialism.

The boom which followed required additional labour power. This extra demand could at first be met by 10 million refugees and people deported from the German Democratic Republic and eastern Europe.

With the building of the Berlin wall in 1961 the current of labour was forcefully cut off and the employers feared that the boom would be interrupted.

The Federal Republic consequently made agreements with other countries, notably Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey, to cover the need for additional workers. In addition European Community contracts catered for extra labour power.

## Flow

The economic and social conditions of mass unemployment and misery in these countries of southern Europe provided an enormous flow of migrant workers to the GFR.

At the first sharpening of the crisis of the capitalist system in 1966/67, almost half a million of these immigrant 'guestworkers' were 'sent home'.

In November 1973 a block was put on recruiting immigrant workers by the Social Democratic/Liberal coalition government.

Rising unemployment led to a further 700,000 migrants leaving the GFR.

Right from the beginning the foreign workers have been discriminated against in all areas of society — legally and socially.

The immigrants found themselves isolated in ghettos, denied medical and social care, schools and higher education.

What started as a sharpening of the policies for immigrant workers under the Social Democratic/Liberal coalition government turned into an open confrontation once the Conservative Kohl government came to power.

As a consequence of economic and political developments in West Germany, the poison of chauvinism, racism and hostility towards foreigners is spreading.

The ones who spread this poison try to make the men and women who are in fact fellow workers and trade union colleagues the scapegoats for rising unemployment and social ills.

Through drastic restrictions on immigration and residence permits, the Kohl government aims at halving the number of foreigners living in the GFR.

In 1984, the government attempted to drive immigrants out of the country with the offer of a bonus payment to workers from non-EEC countries.

The immigrants were giving up pension and other rights that they had acquired through their work and the deductions they had paid.

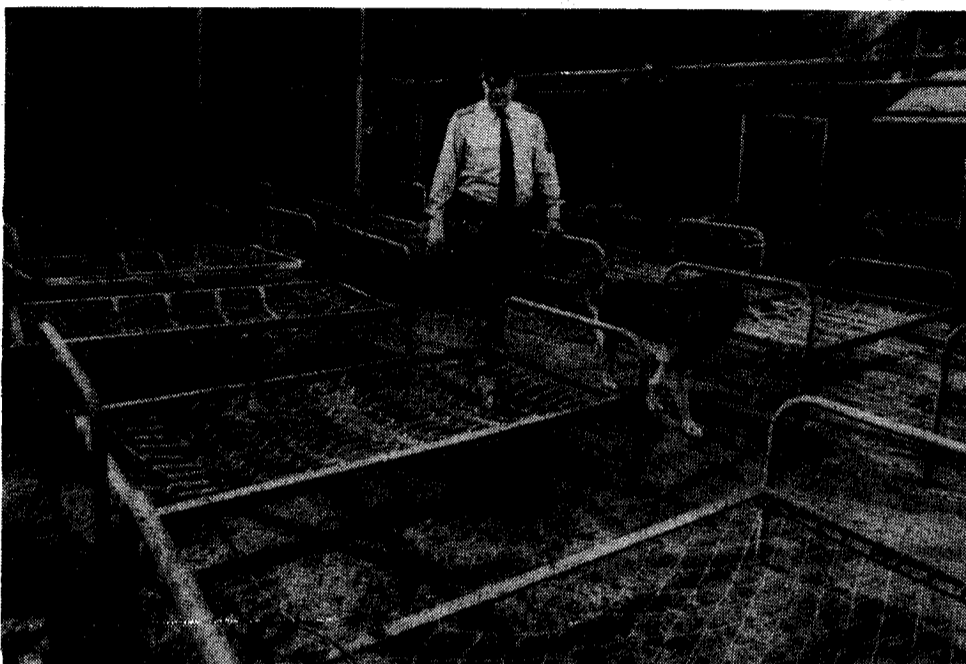
These measures were accompanied by a considerable tightening up of political asylum rights, with the inhuman practice of deportation.

Applicants for political asylum were to be put into 'concentration camps'.

## WORKERS PRESS REPORTS FROM WEST GERMANY



Demonstration in support of immigrants



The fascists at work: an immigrant workers' hostel, burned out by anti-immigrant hoodlums

The Turk Kemal Altun and six other detainees became the victims of this reactionary immigration policy.

Home Office Minister Herr Zimmermann gave proof of the support of the German government for bloody regimes when he justified Altun's deportation.

In the interests of a good co-operation in the past and the future with Turkey in police matters, the deportation order has to be executed.

In recent years, interconnected with this development, acts of terror have

been carried out against immigrants in the GFR by various neo-fascist groups.

Neonazis around Mantred Roder attacked various homes of immigrants.

In Nurnberg, the neo-Nazi Oxner shot and killed three immigrants and seriously wounded three others.

In several cities of the Ruhrgebiets neo-fascist groups called for an armed fight against Turks.

At the beginning of this year a Turkish worker from Hamburg was murdered by skinheads in a bestial attack.

Attacks causing grievous bodily harm, destruction of the rooms of immigrant workers' associations and the appearance of racist graffiti have become daily occurrences for the immigrants living in the GFR.

The fact that since the beginning of 1986 over 40,000 refugees from various countries arrived in Germany was used by reactionary politicians to pretend that there is a 'flood' of people seeking political asylum.

They make their attack on laws which came into existence as part of the constitution which followed Hitler's dictatorship when 800,000 oppositionists found refuge in other countries.

They welcome the opportunity to blame large-scale

immigration for the crisis, and have mobilised demonstrations in support of their right-wing policies.

A demonstration in the Neukoelln district of Berlin was not against the inhuman conditions of accommodation for those seeking asylum — in a huge tent — but protesting that they could not use the football ground on which the tent was standing.

As part of this march neo-Nazis carried a banner saying 'we are and remain German.'

## Refugees

The refugees are housed in Portakabins, gymnasiums or marquees. They get a daily 'support' of 70 pence.

Most of those seeking asylum came into the GFR via East Berlin, the German Democratic Republic.

The Kohl government complains that the GDR freely hands out transit visas in Beirut and Istanbul, but then they protest about 'violation of human rights' in the GDR.

The conservative politicians, including CSU leader Franz Josef Strauss and the CDU Berlin Senator Heinrich Lummer, demand restrictions on political asylum.

They mean to repeal section 16 of the constitution which guarantees political refugees the right to asylum.

Refugees from the Lebanon, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and the Tamils from Sri Lanka would be worst hit.

Anticipating these changes, Immigration Control has for some months evaded existing guarantees and deported hundreds of refugees.

## PUBLIC MEETING & DISCUSSION 1974

● The events surrounding the expulsion of Alan Thornett from the WRP  
SUNDAY AUGUST 31  
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The Scottish working class and its history  
Tuesday October 14th, 7:30 pm:  
The family and the struggle for socialism

All lectures at the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow

## Lorca remembered

AN ENTHUSIASTICALLY acclaimed production of Federico Garcia Lorca's tragedy Yerma at the Edinburgh Festival last Tuesday ended with a moving tribute to the memory of the author, who was murdered by Franco's fascists in the early weeks of the Spanish civil war.

The noted Spanish actress Nuria Espert, who played

the title role in her company's now celebrated production of the play, strikingly directed by the late Victor Garcia, called a cheering audience to silence, and reminded them of the playwright's death, aged only 38, on Granada on August 19th 1936.

She read in English Lorca's poem which begins 'when I die, bury me with my guitar'.

## 1971: a correction

A LETTER in last week's Workers Press, 'Let's Talk Frankly About 1971' from S. Pirani, was subject to a printing error and lines of type were put in the wrong place.

Readers who are following the discussion may wish to note this correction: the last two lines of the first column should have been placed in the second column, just under the picture of Guillermo Lora. The last four lines of the second column should have been in the third column, also just under the picture.

Thus the bottom of the second column should read: 'Personally I believe that Healy's politics were only the most grotesque symptoms of deep-going problems

of the Fourth International, problems sharpened by the savage blows struck at its leadership by Pabloite revisionism and never adequately answered.

'These are the questions we have to discuss now, questions answered by neither the SLL nor the OCI in 1971.'

In the third column, the paragraph about the POR's history should read: '... The POR played a decisive role in the 1952 national uprising, in the formation of the COB in 1953, and in the bitter and violent miners' strikes and general strikes against Bolivia's various dictators in the 60s, when its leaders was subjected to constant repression ...'

Many apologies.

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# WORKERS PRESS AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

# Brilliant Wajda, intense Bergman

**CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, Stary Theatre of Krakow. By Fyodor Dostoyevsky, adapted and directed by Andrzej Wajda.**

**JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN, Bavarian State Theatre. By Henrik Ibsen, directed by Ingmar Bergman.**

**THE GREAT HUNGER, Abbey Theatre of Dublin. By Tom MacIntyre, based on a poem by P.J. Kavanagh, directed by Patrick Mason.**

**BOPHA, The Earth Players of Johannesburg. By Percy Mtwa, directed by Percy Mtwa.**

THE 40TH EDINBURGH International Festival (August 10-30) is the first to include a fully-fledged World Theatre Season, and this has already justified the enterprise of Festival director Frank Dunlop.

Bringing Andrzej Wajda's production of 'Crime and Punishment' to Scotland would have made the season worthwhile, even if there had been nothing else.

Wajda is the celebrated director of films such as 'Ashes and Diamonds,' 'Danton,' 'Man of Iron,' and 'Man of Marble,' the last two compelling reflections of the emerging political revolution in Poland.

A better staging of his magnificent adaptation of Dostoyevsky's classic novel of the inner and outer worlds of human struggle in 19th century Russia would be difficult to imagine.

## Benches

A de-consecrated church in an unfashionable area of the city was transformed into a court-room style theatre in which the audience sat on crude, uncomfortable wooden benches behind a judicial rail — as it were the jury set to pass judgement on the poverty-stricken, philosopher-murderer, Raskolnikov.

From the complexities of the novel Wajda has abstracted the relationship between Raskolnikov and his interrogator, the lawyer Petrovich.

The performances of Jerzy Radziwilowicz (star of 'Man of Iron,' and 'Man of Marble') and Jerzy Stuhr in these roles must surely rank amongst the greatest seen on a British stage for a long time.

## Raw

These are deeply professional but at the same time raw and passionate performances in a setting which offered the audience neither physical nor intellectual comfort.

We see in Raskolnikov and Petrovich ruthless antagonists who come to depend upon each other, concrete individuals in whose inevitable conflict we grasp something of the universal contra-

ditions of human existence. But there is no danger of this engagement with universality degenerating into another tedious sermon on 'the human condition'.

## Original

The production is historically specific through and through, not least because of a brilliantly original set by Krystyna Zachwatowicz, which breaks every rule in the theatrical handbook to drag the audience, whether it likes it or not, into the seedy decadence of Dostoyevsky's St Petersburg.

A few people left, frustrated no doubt at grappling with such an intense experience in a language they did not understand.

But maybe those who stayed, as they stood, cheered and stamped their feet — bringing a reluctant but irrepressible smile to the exhausted features of Radziwilowicz — would reflect on how Tsarist Russia could produce such literature and Jaruselski's Poland such a profound realisation of it on stage.

## Towering

The Bavarian State Theatre's presentation of Ibsen's towering late play, 'John Gabriel Borkman,' directed by another well-known film director, Ingmar Bergman, was in its own very different way also a splendid vindication of the World Theatre Season.

It too contains acting triumphs, especially for Hans Michael Rehberg as the disgraced bank manager, Christine Buchegger as his embittered wife and Christa Berndl as her twin sister, Ella.

But these performances, in contrast to those in 'Crime and Punishment,' seem almost constrained by, and in tension with, the direction — rather than being unleashed by it.

Bergman's interpretation of the play is always to the fore — an attempt to transcend what he presumably sees as the historical, geographical and stylistic limitations of the late-19th century Norwegian playwright's



Hans Michael Rehberg as John Gabriel Borkman in Henrik Ibsen's play

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN HUDSON

grandiloquent original.

Ibsen's detailed stage directions are all ignored in favour of starkly symbolic sets, stressing the male social and sexual domination which, even in his disgrace, and his estrangement from 'his' women, gives Borkman destructive power over their lives.

Thus Borkman becomes more than the bank manager who embezzled funds in an attempt to build a great industrial empire.

Without doing anything crudely explicit, Bergman and Rehberg give him something of the predatory menace of a Nazi war criminal, whose belated bid for spiritual freedom by enlisting the aid of his son Erhard (over whose future Borkman and her sister have been wrestling from the very beginning of the play) takes on the significance of a doomed attempt to corrupt a whole generation.

Erhard finds his liberation — if that is what it is — with Fanny Wilton, several years his senior and, in this production, a woman who flaunts her sexuality as her answer to the society which allows men like Borkman to dominate.

If this production grows in stature the more one reflects on it, the same is true in a different way of the Abbey Theatre's 'The Great Hunger.'

## Poem

Performed on the Fringe, but dovetailed excellently with the World Theatre Season, this unique presentation is based on a poem by the Irish poet P.J. Kavanagh, who died in Dublin in 1967. It is a ballet without dance, an opera without song or music, a play without plot.

Its 'great hunger' is not a social event in the 1840s but, explains a programme note,

a celebration of 'the terrible isolation of a male tied to the husbandry of poor soil.'

Here it is male sexual repression rather than aggression that speaks metaphorically of the oppression of a whole nation.

## View

The overall impact of the play is not, in my view, unambiguous, but MacIntyre's plays have apparently sparked off almost a new theatrical genre since this one was first performed at Dublin's Peacock Theatre in 1983, and his work certainly be worth very serious attention.

'The Great Hunger' begins by bewildering you with grunts and clatter and the picking up of potatoes, but ends by winning you over through the heroic conviction and sheer brilliance of the actors, led by Tom Hickey.

There was no ambiguity about another international Fringe presentation this time at Edinburgh's resident 'fringe' theatre, the Traverse.

'Bopha' by Percy Mtwa (author of 'Woza Albert') is, unreservedly, a brilliant piece of political theatre, more powerful and enduring in its dramatic integrity than any crude piece of propaganda could possibly be.

The three performers, Aubrey Radebe, Sidney Khumala, and Aubrey Moolosi Molefe, take the audience at an almost agonisingly maintained pace through the cruel dilemmas of a black African family in which the father is a policeman, who has joined the enemy he thinks cannot be beaten.

A play like this — if it can always be splendidly done, is not only a contribution to the South African revolution, but will also survive to be performed long after that re-

volution is achieved.

Edinburgh in August is nowadays a place full of absurdities and cultural contradictions: but it is assuredly also becoming a real challenge to what — through no fault of actors and writers — sometimes seems to be almost an Anglo-centric philistinism in the London theatre.

It is to be hoped that this challenge can be sustained and developed.

## LETTER

# A facile view

READERS of last Saturday's Guardian were treated to a nauseating explanation and expose of Stalin's Moscow trials.

It appears the the victims were the forerunners of Gorbachev.

The lengthy article by Geoffrey Robertson ignores the essential purpose of the trials: to behead the Soviet state of its last living links with Marxism, allowing it free rein to pursue opportunist policies for the benefit of the bureaucracy.

The article ends with a plea to rehabilitate Bukharin

# The miners' life. . .

BY HILARY HORROCKS

This year's Edinburgh Festival fringe saw the revival of the Hull Truck Theatre Company's 'Cramp' by John Godber.

The play — a witty but ultimately tragic study of life in a Yorkshire mining community — now has songs by Tom Robinson and Hereward K., which add greatly to its impact.

It has also been up-dated to take account of the miners' strike — but this is confined to passing references uncomfortably inserted without truly reflecting the deep-going effects of the strike on family relationships and on the general outlook of such a community.

## Grueling

Neither does the play take enough account of the growing fear of unemployment, its emphasis being almost exclusively on the oppression of the monotonous but gruelling work of the pits and the factory.

This, however, it does extremely well, with the mood of the piece powerfully established by the opening number 'Dig up Coal.'

Chris Walker, as the central character — determined to escape from the town by applying for university and pursuing his 'private war' against his environment and himself with a punishing body-building routine — gives an especially moving performance.

## Sons

Anthony Bronwen as his pal Max, who both participates in and comments on the action, is equally good — and the fact that both actors are miners' sons obviously adds greatly to the conviction of their performances.

Your letters are welcome at Workers Press, 21b Old Town, London SW4 0JT.

PHONE OUR NEWSDESK

01-720 2000

# Workers Press

Saturday August 23 1986. Newsdesk 01-720 2000

## Pickets won't be gagged

COMPLAINTS have been received from the embassy: no more singing, shouting or use of loudhailers is permitted. These were the diktats that were delivered by police to the non-stop anti-apartheid picket at South Africa House in London's Trafalgar Square.

What could the pickets do? Last Monday they turned up gagged with handkerchiefs and staying absolutely silent.

But at midday, the pickets came off and the gag resumed its normal lively barrage of songs, slogans, and speeches denouncing apartheid and in support of the liberation movements in South Africa.

The police then denied ever having made the threat! Perhaps that was something to do with its ineffectiveness.

Organised by the City of London Anti Apartheid group, the non-stop picket has been going since April 19th, and follows previous campaigns there demanding the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

Senior police officers meet with the picket organisers to agree arrangements for the picket — only for PC on duty to ignore these.

No doubt matters will get worse when the new Public Order Act becomes law.

There have been continuous arrests for obstruction, for street collecting etc.

Many of the arrests are completely without any legal basis and are only designed to disrupt the picket. Many of those arrested have been punched and beaten by the police.

Pickets have been faced



Pickets at South Africa house make their point against police intimidation tactics

with continuous verbal abuse from the police being called coons, slags, chinks, whores, etc.

The use of the megaphone has been banned between 9pm and 8am on the basis of noise pollution, this despite the constant roar of traffic in Trafalgar Square.

The police collaborate completely with the South African embassy staff. One black man was even arrested for daring to enter its white domain.

The police are very aware of the split in the AA movement and are taking advantage of the AA national lead-

ership's refusal to back the picket. Worse: by disaffiliating the City of London group, AA leaders give tacit support to the police attacks on them.

All trade unionists and opponents of the SA regime should support and join the picket.

### GO BY TRAIN!

Train to the TUC lobby, Monday September 1st. Departs London Victoria Station, 6:30 am; returns Brighton station 4:00 pm. Return fare £4:00.

Bookings to Bronwen Handyside, Lambeth Nalge, 17 Porden Road, London SW2. Tel: 01 274 7722 x 2001/2010.

# UNCLE TOM SYSTEM CRACKS

BY BOB MYERS

'GIVE ME somewhere that I can control my community and my son's education, not because I am superior to any one else. But because I am what I am by the grace of god.'

This was South African president Botha talking to the federal congress of his National Party.

When the congress was planned they hoped to announce some new form of black collaboration with the government.

But despite the State of Emergency having broken up most of the organised opposition, the hatred of the masses for any collaboration with the apartheid regime left the white nationalists without their desired fig-leaf.

Even chief Buthelezi, leader of the reactionary Inkatha movement, was forced to say he would not talk to the government without the release of Nelson Mandela.

The Congress was left making appeals which went unheeded — for black elections, for people to talk to Botha, and for the bizarre notion of making black townships like Soweto into City States.

'If a state such as Luxembourg can be independent why can't black communities close to our metropolitan areas receive full autonomy as City States?' asked Botha.

It is doubtful if Luxembourg could be independent if its only income was nine million rand a month for rents — of which only three million rand can actually be collected because of a rent strike.

The rent strike has been a persistent feature of the two year revolt. In areas like Tumaohaole in the Orange Free State the agitation has been at the centre of resistance.

Residents there first refused to pay a rent increase in 1984. A residents' march was fired upon by police and a man killed.

When another three were killed as police dispersed a meeting in 1985 the rent strike became total. Now police and vigilante groups are attempting to terrorise the rent strikers with beatings, detentions and evictions.

One tenant said: 'People are bitter but far from dividing people and making them afraid these attacks have convinced us that we have to stand together.'

Indeed, despite evictions in several areas, the movement is actually growing and has spread even to the 'Homeland'. It is costing the government 30 million rand a month.

The apartheid dream of City States is made even more ridiculous with the collapse of 'independence' plans for the proposed black homeland of KwaNdebele.

Under pressure from the masses, and under the eyes of a packed public gallery, the members of the legislative council have unanimously reversed their decision of three months earlier to proceed with 'independence'.

While the gallery cheered and clapped, Pretoria's representative looked on sullenly. Not only independence was dropped but also the pro-government vigilante squad Mbokhoto was wound up.

One assembly man who, like others opposing independence, had been in hiding, said his constituents had told him:

'We will be sending you to a meeting of the legislative council. You must not say a lot of things beating around the bush. Talk straight. We

don't want the Mbokhoto and we do not want independence'.

After the vote the streets of the shanty towns were lined with people celebrating the collapse of the collaborators' plans.

While in some areas the school boycott continued in defiance of new education department rules, in others school children who had stayed away from classes for three months began to return.

In Soweto children burnt their passes without which troops will not allow them into school. There were fights with the defence forces and some children were detained.

Scores of detainees were released following last week's Supreme Court ruling that they were held illegally: but this decision has now been over-ruled by another judge in the same court.

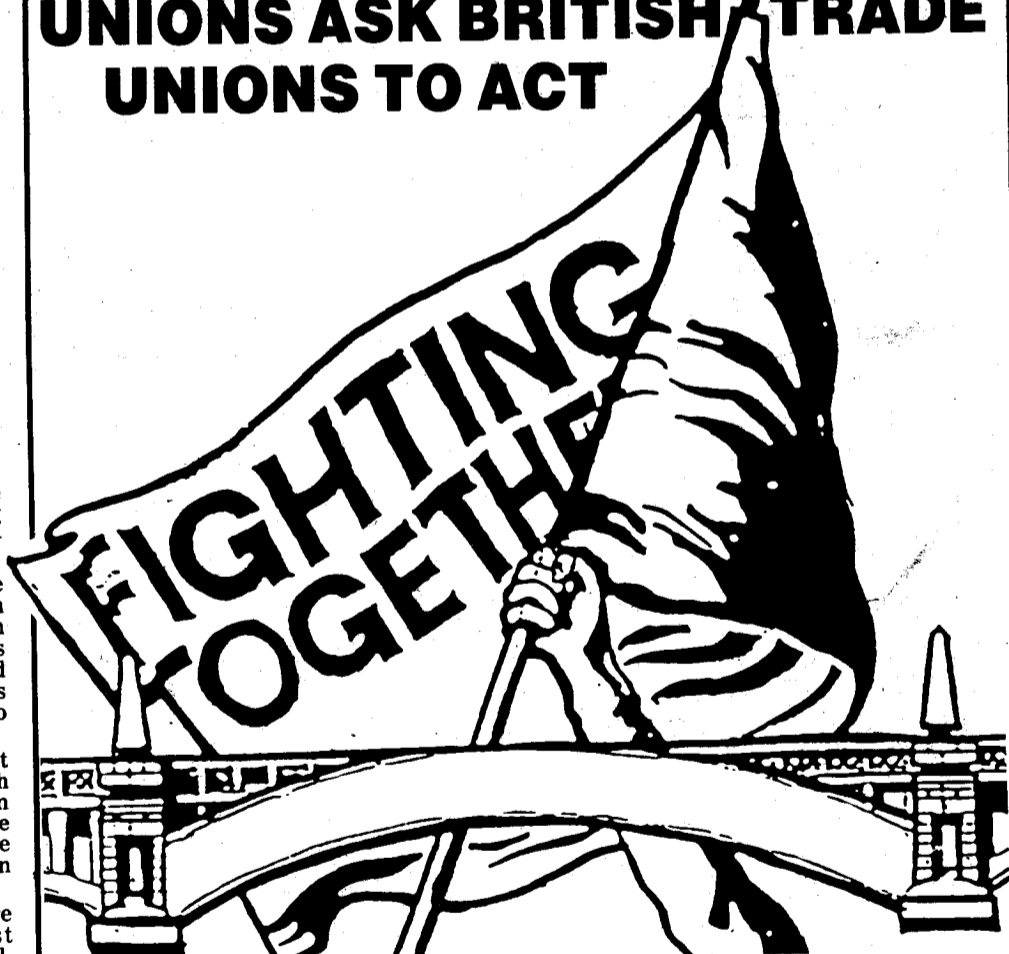
This conflict between different judges will now be taken to appeal.

The government has released a list of names of over 8,000 detainees. Opposition groups are sceptical that this is a full list.

The opposition groups are re-organising below and above ground. New leaders are taking the place of detained comrades. The mood against collaborators is fierce.

Campaigners for sanctions in Britain must also fight against our own collaborators: those in the TUC who are fearful that action will fall foul of the anti-union laws. The lobby of the TUC on September 1 in Brighton is vital.

## SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS ASK BRITISH TRADE UNIONS TO ACT



### LOBBY THE TUC FOR TRADE UNION SANCTIONS

**Brighton**

(Conference Centre)

**Monday 1 September 8.30am**

Sponsored by: Lambeth Trades Council, Chelsea AUEW Charing Cross Hospital Shop Stewards Ctee

### LAMBETH TRADES COUNCIL FRINGE MEETING

'Trade union sanctions against South Africa'  
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 4th, 7.30 pm  
Royal Albion Hotel, Old Steyne, Brighton