

YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM

Lobby the Trades Union Congress

7 September 9a.m.
Winter Gardens, Blackpool

**No trade union collaboration with the MSC!
Smash YTS and all other cheap labour schemes!**

- For a massive public works programme with union rights and union rates of pay!
- For a 30-hour week with no loss of pay!
- For workers' control of skill training: a return to the apprenticeship system with full rates of pay!
- Trade unions must recruit unemployed and all scheme workers!
- For the unity of unemployed and employed workers!

PUBLIC MEETING

12.15, Helmshore Hotel
28 Charnley Rd, Blackpool

Speakers: Tim Perkins — MSC scheme worker
Jim Bevan — Mid-Glamorgan District Secretary AUEW (in personal capacity)
Speaker from Youth For Socialism

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL



PHOTO: SEAN HUDSON

John Smith, Professor Peacock and Yevgeny Yevtushenko at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh

Stalinist stab-in-back for Irish struggle — see page 5

Share slide: 'People's capitalism' fraud is exposed

THE tumbling dollar, a yawning American trade deficit, indications of further crises in world banking and fears of a renewed inflationary surge were behind the hammering taken by the stock exchange throughout last week.

The falls on the London, New York and European exchanges came after the £25 million wipe-out of values earlier this month.

Last month's US trade gap jumped to \$15.8 billion at a time when it had been expected to shrink. Anxiety is mounting that the Federal Reserve will be driven to raise interest rates to halt the dollar's slide.

The world capitalist economy has been kept afloat largely by this US deficit; any move to cor-

BY THE EDITOR

rect it would intensify the trend towards world slump.

Standard Chartered Bank last week embarked on a series of asset sales to raise £300 million and rebuild its reserves after making heavy provision against loans to 'Third World' countries.

Standard's total exposure is £2.4 billion, nearly a half which is for 12 countries in Latin America.

The sale of assets was

forced on the bank because its big shareholders refused to support a rights issue. Standard was rescued last year from a Lloyds takeover by Australian tycoon Robert Holmes à Court and Hong Kong shipping magnate Sir Y.K. Pao who each own some 15 per cent of Standard.

Citicorp, the giant US banking group, also announced plans last week to raise more than \$1 billion in an effort to strengthen its balance sheet. This follows its earlier decision to set aside \$3 billion against loans to 'Third World' borrowers.

Between them the South American countries owe £285 million in hard currency. So far 30 per cent of these debts have been written off.

This implies that 70 per cent will be repaid. It will not. Most of the countries

cannot afford the interest, let alone the capital. Bolivian debt can now be picked up for 15 cents a dollar.

Fears of a serious bout of inflation in Britain were also fuelled by the surge in high street spending, up 7 per cent compared with the same time last year. Most of it is financed out of credit.

Lawson's August 6 increase in interest rates is too little too late.

The Bank of England's latest Quarterly Bulletin had earlier issued a severe warning about a renewed bout of inflation.

The Bank warns of a faster underlying growth in domestic costs than in competitive countries, of higher oil and commodity prices, rising house prices and disappointing trade figures for May and June.

Continuing unchecked credit expansion brings the danger of demand outstripping supply in the economy, the Bank says.

The City is worried by the 7 per cent rise in wages. Since 1984 increasing wages have been offset by falling world commodity prices and lower interest rates.

Since 1984 some employers have been able to absorb wage increases because of declining international commodity prices. Stagnation in the world economy has been partly counteracted by lower interest rates.

Last year raw material prices rose by a third on world markets and any move by Reagan to control the yawning trade deficit is certain to drive up world interest rates.

The stock exchange col-

lapse has put a severe dent in Thatcher's fraudulent 'people's capitalism'. Thousands of middle-class people have bought shares, speculated in unit trusts, acquired property beyond their means and now find themselves in serious financial difficulties.

Many middle-class people voted for Thatcher thinking there were easy pickings in the City and that her government would control inflation. Both illusions are about to be shattered.

But the share price slump more than anything demonstrates the bankruptcy of the Labour leaders. Their response to the election defeat — one brought on by their own cowardly refusal to fight the Thatcher government — was to embrace this same 'people's capitalism'.

The crisis now staring many middle class people in the face gives us the greatest opportunity to win them to a socialist programme. We must seize that opportunity as a matter of great urgency.

Workers Press

Labour and democracy

LABOUR PARTY general secretary Larry Whitty is to introduce plans to take away the whatever remaining rights rank-and-file Party members have and place them in the hands of Kinnock and his clique.

The Whitty proposals are first and foremost aimed at the Constituency Labour Parties: national officials are to be given far greater powers in the regions and increased emphasis is to be placed on national rather than constituency membership.

If Whitty's scheme is adopted, some 40 staff will be sacked and a number of publications, including the 'New Socialist' and 'Labour Weekly' will be closed down. Kinnock wants a Labour Party in which not the slightest criticism of the leadership is tolerated.

Whitty is using the severe financial crisis the Party finds itself in following the general election defeat to rush through his proposals in the next four weeks. But his plan to strip the membership of all its rights has far deeper roots than the undoubtedly real financial problems.

In the epoch of imperialism — the epoch which opened up with the start of the present century — the capitalist state is less and less able to tolerate democracy in the organisations of the working class. It increasingly demands that such organisations be directly subordinated to its own immediate requirements.

Whitty's plans come after a protracted campaign to silence any opposition — whether it be from the Militant Tendency or the advocates of black sections.

That is why the developments in the Labour Party are matched by similar trends in the trade union movement. General secretary Norman Willis also proposes that the TUC be given greatly enhanced powers over individual unions. These would include powers to decide which union would represent which workers in a particular plant.

Willis also wants to see the unions scrap their traditional functions and become a means of providing financial and other services to individual members. The members would be linked to central headquarters by a network of computers.

Intensifying this crisis in the trade union movement is the chronic decline of British capitalism, the most parasitic of all the advanced capitalist states. Over the last ten years union membership in the old industries — transport, rail and engineering — has slumped by more than a fifth. Two million jobs have disappeared in manufacturing industry since 1979.

'The Guardian' has spelt out the sort of changes it would like to see in the unions and the Labour Party. In essence they are the same as those advocated by Willis. An editorial last week put the matter clearly and simply:

'If the unions want to flourish under Thatcherism then, like the Labour Party, they must adopt a businesslike approach to survival which may involve ditching a lot of nineteenth century presumptions about what they are here for.'

Precisely! Drop all the nonsense about the class struggle, defence of wages and working conditions and fall in line with Thatcher-style unionism.

The leaders of the electricians and the engineers have already travelled along the road that Willis and the friend of Euro-Stalinism, 'The Guardian', proposes. In the case of the EETPU the results were clearly revealed in the Wapping betrayal.

Because the question of democratic rights in the organised working class is a fundamental matter we will stand shoulder to shoulder with all those who take up a struggle against the Kinnock-Whitty-Willis plans.

Last week Labour MPs Ken Livingstone, Joan Ruddock and George Galloway, together with Peter Hain, an executive committee member of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, issued a statement demanding a halt to further disciplinary action against the left in the Party. They called for the acceptance of black sections and insisted upon the renationalisation of industries privatised by Thatcher as part of Labour's programme.

Whatever our political differences with those making this call we support these demands. But they must be backed by real action.

One thing is clear: there can be no unity with those who advocate scabbing. The fight for democracy in the movement is inseparable from one of the central issues facing the coming Blackpool TUC conference: the expulsion of the EETPU from the movement.

Lessons of the HFW strike

BY FIONA NICOL

SACKED HFW workers who have been engaged in a bitter struggle over the past five months have become the latest victims of the cowardly and treacherous trade union leadership.

The combined efforts of SOGAT national officers and full-time branch officials have succeeded in doing in one hour what the employers, the police and the courts were unable to do in five months.

Over this period, the 47 strikers, most of them women, have seen over 46 arrests, with pickets and their supporters hospitalised. The police and the courts used the Public Order Act to criminalise workers engaged in picketing duties.

Pickets were arrested instantly and locked up in the police cells until they appeared in court. Of the 47 involved, not one single person left the strike during the five months.

Other SOGAT-organised factories in the Tyneside area actually offered to come out.

Full-time branch officials continually

refused to levy the area's 5,000 members to sustain the struggle. No independent elected strike committee of the women was allowed as officials struggled to keep the strike within their control.

The direct involvement of the national officials was maintained from the start, no doubt under the direction of Brenda Dean.

Many arguments arose over the establishment of a support group which SOGAT insisted could only be allowed if it operated under their direction.

A barrage of attack and slander was continually hounded against the support groups by the Communist Party and their supporters who refused to participate.

Leader of the trades council in the area, Alec McFadden, actively tried to discourage the strikers from attending the support group meetings, saying it was organised by Trotskyists and anarchists.

For the past few weeks the SOGAT officials have been arranging interviews with other companies for those on strike at HFW. Nine vacancies were offered and these were used as an attempt to lure people from the picket line and hasten the breaking up of the strike.

One week later a national official informed the strikers that under the 20-week rule in SOGAT strike pay would no longer come from central

funds and picketing was getting them nowhere.

He offered the prospect of cash compensation through ACAS. There was very little doubt about the outcome of the vote. Even then there was still opposition from one third of the strikers.

The role of the present leadership in the trade union movement is to undermine, isolate and betray struggles of workers in face of the employer and Tory government offensive.

Fear of sequestration of funds, of fines and imprisonment and for their own positions of privilege, drives this bureaucracy crawling on all fours before the anti-working class legislation of this Tory government.

Picketing becomes ineffective and insufficient in face of the Public Order Act and anti-union laws. Their failure to fight this government means they have acquiesced in the dictates of the employers and the Tories.

The Imprimer Ltd SOGAT workers who occupied their factory in Gateshead last week were also 'persuaded' to end their struggle by the same leadership after only one week, with the prospect of another employer taking part of the factory over.

Workers who engage in struggles today are forced into a confrontation with not only the employers, the Tory government, the police and courts — but are also confronted with the reactionary trade union bureaucracy which ought to be exposed and driven out and a new leadership forged in the struggle.



Prison picket at Strangeways

A PICKET of Strangeways prison in Manchester will take place tomorrow Sunday 23 August at 1.30pm.

This is a follow-up to a successful picket outside Wakefield prison on 2 August to highlight the ongoing protests of two Irish Republican political prisoners, Hugh Doherty and Natalino Vella, over

the harsh and discriminatory visits at Wakefield.

Both Doherty and Vella have been in solitary confinement since last summer as a result of their protest.

Vella has now been transferred to Strangeways prison where he is being denied essential medical attention.

Over 60 people attended the picket protest outside Wakefield prison. Eddie Coughlan of the POW Campaign in Britain spoke of the

history of Britain's treatment of Irish political prisoners, citing in this phase of the struggle the ten dead hunger strikers in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and the five Irish Political prisoners who have died over the last 13 years in English prisons.

It was from Wakefield prison that Frank Stagg's body was taken following his long hunger strike against his brutal treatment and his demand for repatriation to a prison in Ireland.

He read extracts from a letter from Eila Ni Dhuibhir (Durham Prison) to the protest and concluded by appealing to everyone to support the Republican struggle when final victory would bring about real freedom, justice and peace.

Full support must be given to Sunday's prison picket and to the demands of the Republican POW's — whether on solitary confinement, visiting regulations, medical treatment, strip-searches, or repatriation.

Mass picket at London Tobacco

BY LOUISE CEROVECKI

A LARGE and lively picket at the gates of London Tobacco last Monday persuaded two more workers to support the TASS official picket line.

Exactly two months ago six of the women packers walked out in sympathy with a co-worker who had been suspended for refusing to operate an additional machine attachment introduced without union consultation.

All six workers, including the shop steward, were dismissed.

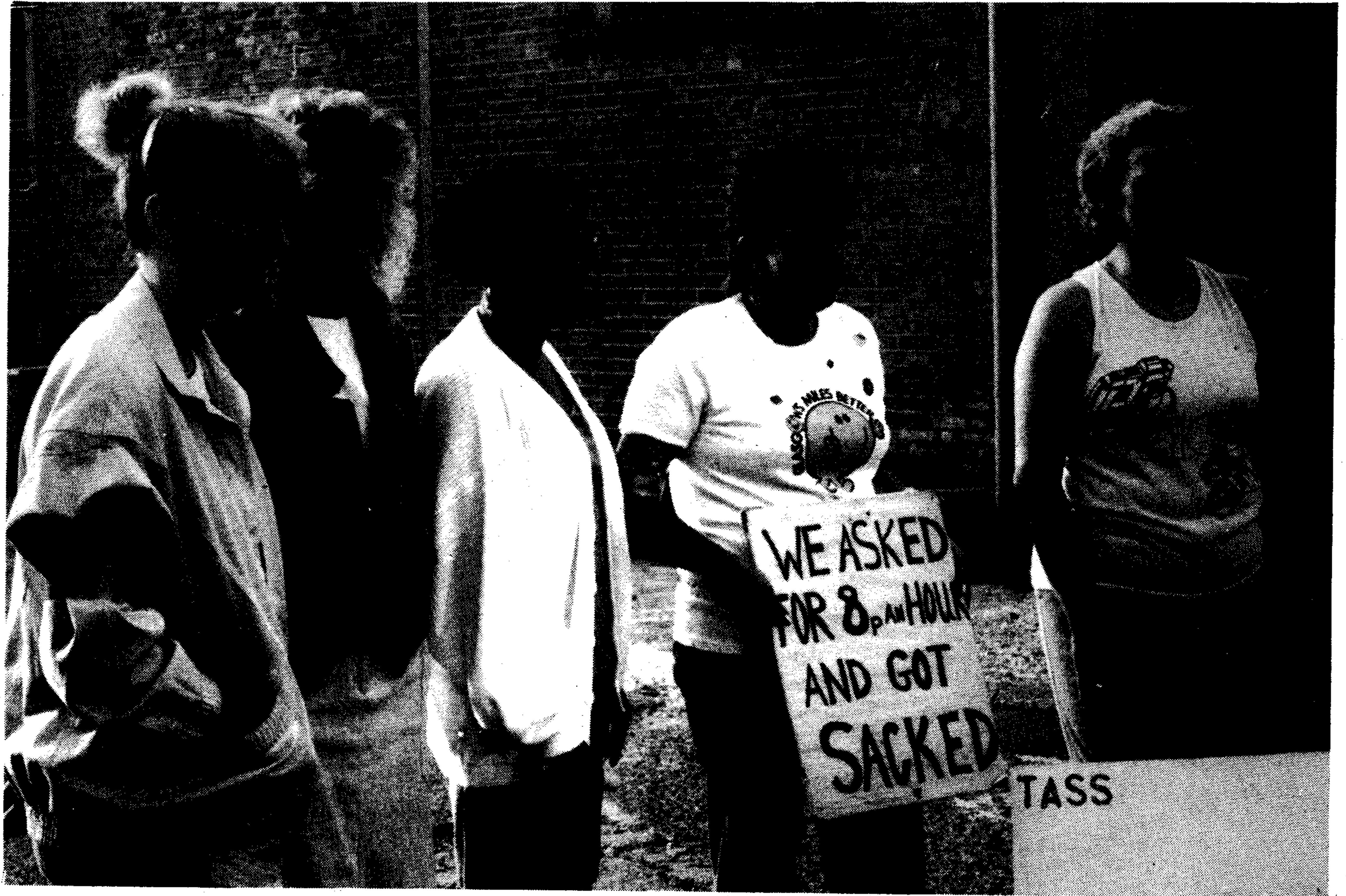
The company, which produces a range of cigarettes mainly for export, has refused to reinstate these workers although a joint disputes committee found in favour of the workers.

'They are trying to break us and break the union,' said Rita, one of the sacked workers.

Many of the small workforce are not in the union. The company pays the lowest wages in the tobacco industry and has a bad record on health and safety.

Steve is one of the workers who joined Monday's mass picket. He described conditions in the 'dust room'.

'If you walked in there, you would want to run back out. You can't breathe in



there. Sometimes the filters just throw the dust back at you.

'The filters are supposed to be changed every year, but they are just being replaced after five years. They should be cleaned regularly

and it's only done once a year.'

Following a health and safety inspection dust badges were promised — they never arrived. Since the packers walked out the management have put inexperienced workers on the packing line. During the first week alone three accidents occurred.

As well as keeping up a daily picket the sacked workers have visited other tobacco factories in Cardiff

and recently in Glasgow where they received a total of £1,000 towards the strike funds. Messages of support have been sent from French tobacco workers.

'Public support has been great,' says shop steward

Carol. 'I was overwhelmed by the welcome we received in Glasgow. Even the local residents have done all they can to help. Hot tea, umbrellas and a fur coat have been donated.'

Our jobs and services are not for sale!

UNDER the slogan 'Our jobs and services are not for sale', London Bridge has called a conference for 10 September.

The aim of the conference is to develop a joint and united strategy for London Local Authorities' trades unions to resist cuts resulting from huge budget deficits and from the effects of the privatisation legislation which puts seven local authority services compulsorily out to tender.

London Bridge is a joint trade union committee open to all shop stewards from the unions of all the London authorities.

It was set up in order to coordinate the response of the council unions to rate-capping and to give a voice to the widest layers of ordinary shop stewards in a way which was impossible in the existing union structures.

The conference is the first London-wide response to the

announcement of major cuts by just about all of the local authorities.

None of the unions nationally have made any moves towards organising resistance, and nor has the TUC given so much as a press release about it.

Local authority workers and working-class communities are in the biggest crisis of their history.

Compulsory redundancies may be avoided this year, and next year may possibly be scraped through as well, but 1989 and onwards must spell loss of jobs, along with the wholesale destruction of services.

Why does the Labour Party, the TUC, and the national leadership of the unions maintain such a deafening silence?

London Bridge is inviting all shop stewards from London, and also from Liverpool, Manchester, and other areas where cuts are faced.

Speakers from the battle against ratecapping have been invited: Ted Knight of Lambeth and Tony Mulhearn from Liverpool.

Peter Gibson from the London Bus Committee has also been invited because of the resistance to cuts and privatisation being organised by the bus workers, and with the hope of combining forces in some form of industrial action.

A resolution will be put which proposes amongst other things that local government workers in London lobby the TUC on 28 October to demand national action in opposition to these cuts.

● The London Bridge conference takes place on Thursday 10 September from 10a.m.-2p.m. at the Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1.

It is followed ten days later on Sunday 20 September by

another conference organised by Camden NALGO and co-sponsored by London Bridge. This conference is open to councillors, Labour Party members and community organisations as well as local government workers, and is to discuss the fightback against cuts in council jobs and services.

For further details contact Camden NALGO on 01-278 4444 ext 2431.

THE 'Amerigo Vespucci', a square rigged Italian navy training ship will dock at Greenwich on September 4. The ship is on a round-Europe voyage which has been dubbed the Aquarius Project — its aim is to raise public awareness about the fight against pollution.

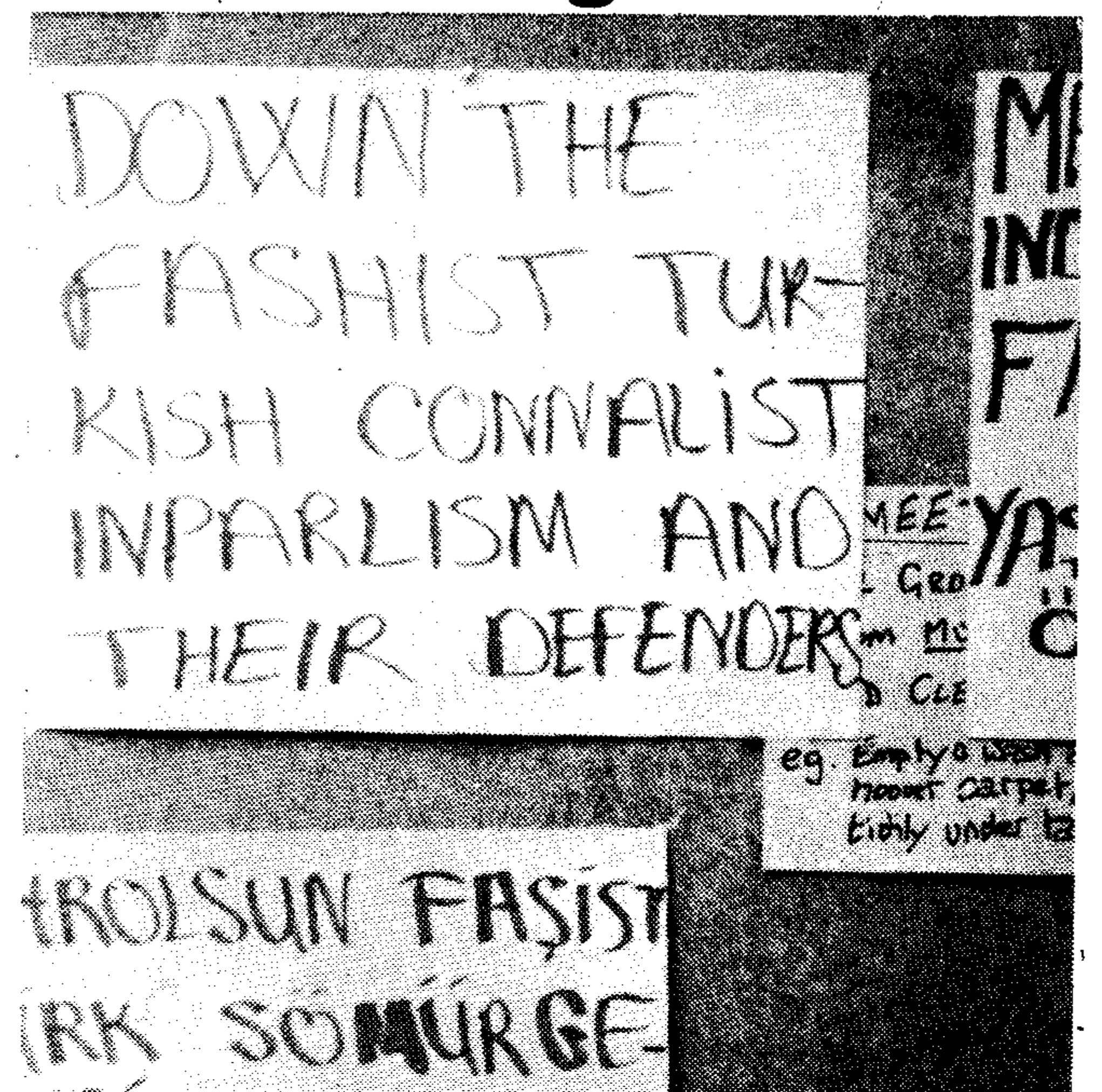
The crew is not alone in their task. They are accompanied by a shoal of 'simple and common fish' — held in a large aquarium on board. At the end of the cruise the captive fish are to be freed.

Can the protection of the environment be safely left in such hands?

For a labour movement inquiry into the MI5

Following the revelations in Peter Wright's book 'Spycatcher' Dorchester trades council has moved a resolution calling for inquiries into phone tapping and the opening of union mail by the security services.

Kurdish hunger strike



KURDISH Liberation Front (ERNK) members in London staged a two-day hunger strike last week at the Turkish Cultural Centre in Stockwell.

The strike was a response to an attack on 27 July by West German police on the houses of ERNK members living in Germany.

The 'Kurdish Print House' was also attacked. The hun-

ger strikers told Workers Press that the German police attacked the ERNK members before taking off with many of their possessions.

The strikers covered their faces for fear of a repeat of the events in Germany.

● See An 'unknown country' and the Permanent Revolution — pages 8&9

Strike over YTS

CIVIL Servants at the West Bromwich Job Centre in the Midlands have decided to remain on strike against management attempts to recruit a cheap labour YTS 'trainee'.

They are demanding that the trainee has his £28.50 allowance topped up to the full union rate, and that he be guaranteed a job after his two years' training. The ten workers, who have been on strike since 6 August, are worried that management plan to use the trainee to replace existing staff.

DISMANTLING THE WELFARE STATE

New Tory sick-pay scheme is wide open to employer fraud

EMPLOYERS are driving a coach and horses through workers' rights to sick benefits under the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) scheme.

Abuses include non-payment, under-payment, delays in paying and actual sacking of workers who seek their entitlement, along with falsification of payment statements by employers to defraud the National Insurance system.

Such violations of the scheme are not incidental but are virtually guaranteed under the terms of the Sick Pay Act itself according to the latest pamphlet from the AEKTA Project.

Inadequate guidelines for the DHSS officers who are to interpret the provisions and lack of effective back-up and monitoring provides the loopholes to enable just such misuse.

Meanwhile cuts in DHSS staff have opened the door even wider to fraud by unscrupulous bosses.

It is true many workers prefer the easier system for claiming and receiving benefit, but a survey found that 94 per cent did not know how their payments were calculated and were therefore heavily dependent on their employer for correct payment.

The AEKTA Project is a Midlands-based clothing trades action group campaigning to improve wages and conditions of workers in the industry.

Supported by Birmingham Council, it seeks to familia-

rise workers with their statutory rights in regard to minimum time rates, holidays, sick pay, maternity entitlement and employment rights generally.

The finding of the Project is that, while SSP has to date made little difference to those workers covered by occupational schemes, particularly where employers pay wages in full for a period (although warnings are sounded in this respect also), there must be serious concern at the loss of rights by all other employees.

Low paid

Particularly at risk are low-paid, non-unionised, female, part-time and manual workers concentrated in small firms, especially in clothing, footwear and textiles.

AEKTA's own experience and examples derive from Midlands clothing industry sweatshops, where bad working conditions and low wages are widespread for the mainly female, mainly Asian workforce.

The Project states: 'The introduction of SSP has left these workers at the mercy

of employers for income during sickness.'

Under the system as it stands today, every worker has a right to SSP from the first day of any employment.

The employer pays it then recovers the amount by deducting it from the firm's normal National Insurance and tax returns to the Exchequer.

When the scheme was introduced in April 1983, three levels of payment applied. But from April 1987 the middle rate was abolished.

The rates are now as follows:

- Where average earnings are £76.50 a week or above, payment is £47.20 a week.
- For average earnings below £76.50 but above £39 payment is £32.85 a week.

Below £39 the employee is excluded from SSP as being below the level at which National Insurance contributions are obligatory. Both NI contributions and tax are deducted from SSP and there are no additions for dependents.

Originally, covering up to eight weeks of sickness, after which Sickness Benefit could be claimed from the



DHSS, it now runs for up to 28 weeks, after which Invalidity Benefit applies.

As with the previous state-paid system, the first three days of sickness are said to be 'waiting days' and payments only begin with the fourth day.

But any second bout of sickness within the following eight weeks is considered as a continuance of the first and the three waiting days do not apply.

A medical certificate is not usually needed for the first week, but it is up to the employer to lay down a notification procedure and to provide self-certification forms.

Apart from examples of delayed payment and actual sacking of applicants, the Project reports that one of the worst aspects of the new scheme is the increased information now given to employers in regard to their employees' private lives.

Prior to the transfer of administration of Sick Pay from the DHSS to the employer, the latter had no right to know the nature of the sickness.

Such rules of confidentiality are now abolished in a process since extended to Maternity Allowance, which employers also administer

(since April this year).

AEKTA warns that the ability to withhold payments and the increased knowledge of employees' personal circumstances gives employers wide power to harass their workers.

It adds: 'This action is in line with the government's other employment policies, which seek on the one hand to deregulate the labour market by removing employment rights, and on the other hand to give unscrupulous employers a green light to exploit their workers and to break the law.'

Examples

The report also gives examples of employers deducting amounts from NI higher than those they have actually paid to employees; an implication of fraud against both the claimant and the National Insurance Scheme.

Other anomalies of the new system are:

- It is left to the employer to decide when to pay; there is no official time limit laid down.
- Employers have to retain records of SSP payments for three years only.
- If a dispute arises over entitlement the employee

can refer the matter to an adjudication officer at the DHSS. However, the rules say that the officer shall 'so far as is practicable' reach a decision within 14 days.

In practice, says AEKTA, this lets DHSS officers extend the delay indefinitely.

True, a right of appeal to a Social Security Appeals Tribunal is allowed, but even if this finds for the complainant, the absurd situation is that the Tribunal has no powers to order the employer to pay up.

Employees can only then cover their legal entitlement by action through the County Court for the recovery of a debt.

The DHSS does have the power to prosecute employers for failure to pay, for failure to supply information, and for falsifying recovery claims for National Insurance.

But AEKTA says that to date 'not a single prosecution has been brought'. In any case, recovery of outstanding sick payments would not be part of the proceedings.

The experience of the AEKTA Project is that workers sacked by employers to avoid sickness payments get nowhere when they seek help from the DHSS.

Sick pay background

STATE sickness benefit was introduced in Britain at a limited level in 1911, based on German, Australian and New Zealand models. It was developed and extended over several decades then universalised by the welfare state legislation of the 1945-1951 Labour government and linked to free medical cover under the National Health Service.

In 1966 the regressive flat-rate contribution was replaced with an earnings-related system. In 1971 invalidity benefit was introduced for those still unable to work after 28 weeks on sickness benefit, payable directly through the DHSS.

Up to the mid-1970s gradual, although slow, improvements were made in cover for the long-term sick and disabled. It was a Labour government which in the 1970s first floated the idea of a cost-cutting rationalisation of the system, but shelved it because of the cost of its administration.

From 1979 the Tories have worked to undermine state-paid sickness benefit by

initially cutting its value by 5 per cent then eliminating child dependence allowances. By 1982 the earnings-related supplement had also been phased out. The 1982 Social Security and Housing Benefit Act, which made employers the government's agents for paying sick benefit, must be regarded as a first major step towards fully privatising sick benefit in terms of eventually turning to private insurance companies and ending state involvement entirely.

Socialists long ago warned that Labour's failure during its terms of office to nationalise the insurance companies and involve working people and all the scheme's staff in the control and administration of the system would leave National Insurance at a half-way point from which reversal was always possible.

Clearly there are major battles ahead for the whole of the labour movement to stop the City of London grabbing the millions in contributions and to prevent the residue public sector returning to a variant of the odious Victorian poor law.

AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Artistic scope after October Revolution

For one thing, it is almost impossible to prove that the reason for dismissal is to avoid paying SSP. Employers are in any case not obliged to give a reason for sacking workers who have under six months' service.

A warning is also given that, while abuses are mainly occurring among the 20 per cent of firms without occupational schemes, those with schemes are far from guaranteeing total cover. Qualifying periods may range from the first day up to 12 months, and sick pay duration can run for 20 years or just two weeks.

With the closure of large industrial undertakings and the increase in small businesses, contract working and part-time jobs, workers' rights are being undermined and the opportunities for employers to erode traditional standards and conditions are growing, not declining.

AEKTA states that from the outset the government set out to use SSP to cut back on DHSS jobs. This has led to problems in both administering and monitoring the scheme, and conveniently, in discovering the true extent of the failings of the system.

Originally 1,600 officers were allocated to visit all employers and check that the scheme was enforced. These were cut to 740 after a year.

Now visits occur only where requested, where it is believed 'mistakes' might occur, or on a random sampling basis.

The rule that employers must keep SSP records for only three years makes monitoring procedures a total farce when an officer may call only once every 160 years (5,000 companies will be visited each year out of a possible 800,000).

AEKTA points out that in 1986 a government Minister quoted an error rate by employers of 28 per cent. However, he went on to state that the government would continue to concentrate on the minority of employers where mistakes occur at an unduly high rate.

In fact one set of DHSS figures indicates a mistakes rate of 32 per cent. In any other context, of course — such as forms incorrectly filled in by claimants — the terms 'theft' and 'fraud' would substitute for 'mistakes'.

According to the Project's report, employers are gaining substantially by the abolition of the NI surcharge and by savings on occupational sick pay schemes where sickness payment was not previously deducted from payments to workers.

The government, naturally, gains by having achieved its object of taxing sick benefit. On the other hand, employees now lose by having to pay NI and tax on sick pay.

In 1986 an independent estimate of the effect of the scheme — using government figures — found that in the first year of operation, 1983/4, the government made a net gain of £90 million, employers made a net gain of £95 million and claimants made a net loss of £155 million.

Since April 1985 the employers have improved their position still further with the extension of the payment period from eight to 28 weeks.

AEKTA estimates that the balance sheet for 1987 will show a government gain of £68.5 million, an employer gain of £135 million and an employee loss of £172.5 million.

● 'Bad bosses cheat the sick'. £2.50 including postage from AEKTA Project, 346 Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B21 9SE.

HEROES in classical tragedy are normally fated to punitive and purgative death by a combination of overwhelming circumstances and the flaws in their own character.

In Anton Chekhov's late-19th century Russian masterpieces, the characters are condemned not to death, but to life.

One must live and fulfil one's duty on this earth, Ivan Petrovich Voinitsky is told by his niece Sonya at the end of 'Uncle Vanya', and then 'we shall see the whole heaven covered in diamonds' and 'we shall rest! We shall rest! We shall rest!'

Ivan Petrovich, settling down again after an emotionally charged day or two, to the tedium of the accounts of the Voinitsky-Serebryakov country estate 'somewhere in the middle of Russia' is elevated by the idealism of this plain girl grappling with her unrequited love for Dr Astrov, but he is not convinced.

A splendidly thought-provoking production of 'Uncle Vanya' by the Gorky Theatre of Leningrad played a central part in the first week of this month's 41st Edinburgh International Festival where, to the great credit of festival director, Frank Dunlop, a major theme is the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution.

The Bolshoi Theatre orchestra has been giving nothing but delight, the Gorky Theatre intellectual and emotional stimulation, and the famous poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, demonstrations that poetry can be public (even if his own humanist message is often somewhat generalised and far from unambiguous).

It is hardly Dunlop's fault if the Soviet bureaucracy's 'glasnost' diplomacy allowed Thatcher's Arts Minister Richard Luce to charge in with all the delicacy of a bagpiper gatecrashing a string quartet, virtually to claim that these triumphs were vindications of the Tory government's

policy of surrendering the fate of the arts in Britain to private enterprise.

(Next week, by the way, I hope to write about the Guinness plc 'Maria Stuart', the Standard Life Assurance 'Juno and the Paycock', and maybe the Clydesdale Bank 'Homage to Diaghilev', but the Royal Bank of Scotland 'Juha', sung — incidentally! — by the Finnish National Opera, is beyond the range of my current cultural share-holdings.)

Yet every gesture perfected, every apparently arbitrary movement carefully directed, every casual modulation long worked at, both in 'Uncle Vanya' and in the Gorky's other Edinburgh



PHOTO: SEAN HUDSON

Evgeny Lebedev as the horse Kholstomer in 'The History of a Horse'

presentation, an adaptation of a Tolstoy story 'The History of a Horse', spoke volumes about the artistic needs and possibilities opened up by the October Revolution.

Where there was great acting (and there was certainly none of the other sort on show), it was integrated in ensemble performances. In some advance publicity the veteran actor Evgeny Lebedev (who played the horse Kholstomer, and the retired professor Serebryakov in 'Vanya') was described as 'a Russian Olivier'.

But Lebedev, on this evidence at least, comes from a different acting world: a

world in which the impact of the play first predominates, and thoughts about the 'greatness' of individual performances come only afterwards, on reflection.

Oleg Basilashvili's 'Uncle Vanya', for example, established its authority only gradually as the evening progressed. At first the mutually sustaining portrayals of the professor's wife Elena, by Natalya Danilova, and her step-daughter Sonya by Tatyana Bedova, seemed to carry the show.

But by the time this slightly grey and undemonstrative Vanya had tried and failed to make love to Elena; had apparently tried and ludicrously failed to shoot her husband, and had then stood pathetically yet humourously aghast at finding Elena in the arms of Dr Astrov (beautifully played by Kirill Lavrov), it was clear that Basilashvili's interpretation was just right.

This production gave a sense of authority that was not solemn, of making accessible a great literature to a modern audience; and the same was true of 'The History of a Horse', an anthropomorphic Tolstoyan fable, which avoided almost all the pitfalls of that genre, and in which Lebedev made you smell stables just by flicking a hairy whisk in the region of his backside.

Yet for all the magnificence these were showpiece productions very established and very Russian.

The director of both plays, Georgy Torstonogov, has held the post of artistic director of the Gorky since 1956, and the productions have been in the repertoire since the Brezhnev era.

Edinburgh audiences get no sense of the excitement that must have attended the theatre's early years, when Maxim Gorky and others set it up in the midst of the Russian Civil War with a production of Schiller's 'Don Carlos', or when the plays of the writers of the young Soviet republic were regularly performed.

Gorky Theatre of Leningrad — 'Uncle Vanya' by Anton Chekhov; 'The History of a Horse' by M. Rozovsky. Kings Theatre, Edinburgh.

'PERDITION'

THE PLAY withdrawn following Zionist pressure by London's Royal Court Theatre 48 hours before its scheduled opening last January was premiered at the Edinburgh Festival on Monday.

Jim Allen's 'Perdition' — a courageous effort to focus attention on well-researched evidence of collaboration between Zionist leaders and Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi orchestrator of the 'final solution', in Hungary towards the end of World War II — was given a well-received performance reading at the Royal Lyceum studio theatre.

Jewish students travelled from London to protest. They gave readings from the writings of 'Holocaust' survivors outside the theatre and issued a leaflet to playgoers.

Couched intially in tones of rational argument, the leaflet ended with the claim that Allen's play 'does nothing but add grist to the mills of anti-semitism and those neo-Nazis who seek to deny that the Holocaust ever took place.'

This suggestion was rendered absurd by the sensitive performance of the play by David Calder and members of the original Royal Court cast — amongst whom Ralph Nossack as the fictional alleged 'collaborator', Miklos Yaron, was outstanding.

Playwright Jim Allen said afterwards he was glad the play had now been performed, albeit in an abridged form, and he hoped that a full production would be possible soon.

The play's director is the outstanding socialist filmmaker Ken Loach.

Tom McGrath, the Scottish playwright responsible for staging the performance, said it had been a 'fine reading' of a serious play.

CORRECTION

A DOUBLE error appeared in last week's Workers Press report of the Soviet Cultural delegation's visit to the Edinburgh Festival. Owing to an editorial slip, the well-known cultural affairs magazine, 'Novy Mir', was wrongly described as a poetry magazine. And a reporting mistake led to the statement that the poetry editor of 'Novy Mir' was present at the session in question, when it was in fact Vitaly Korotich, poet and editor of 'Ogonyok'.

Recruitment drive

THE shopworkers union USDAW is setting up a recruitment committee which is to reassess the traditional approach to recruitment as part of a campaign drive to draw more women and young people into the union.

General Secretary Garfield Davies says: 'We recognise that a high proportion of women and young workers in the service trades are working part-time, frequently on a casual basis.'

These particularly disadvantaged workers have been hit very hard by Tory government policies. Their pay levels and employment rights have been eroded.

The USDAW motion for the TUC conference calls on the congress to mount a publicity campaign aimed at highlighting the problems faced by women, part-time and young workers.

USDAW see this projected campaign as move to transform the trade union movement and direct it to the most vulnerable and at present unorganised sections of workers.

Stab in back for Irish struggle

BY HILARY HORROCKS

'I understand your comment and would like to see our journalists approach it in a different way,' replied Zamoshkin, alluding to the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland as 'religious fanaticism'.

The discussion, on the topic 'Economics of Culture', revealed some interesting similarities between the views of the British and Soviet speakers on the need for the Arts to be self-financing. Neither Alan Peacock, author of the recent report on the BBC, nor Shadow Chancellor John Smith, mounted any challenge to the phillistine Thatcherite concept that culture must pay its way.

Victor Karpov, Head of the Writers' Union of the USSR, defended the state funding of the Arts which was one of the achievements of the October Revolution. But he said that the system should be 'more flexible': competition was desirable, and the wages of staff on a profitable artistic venture should be increased above those of workers in an unprofitable enterprise.

Asked how glasnost was going to be carried out by the same people who made their careers in the 1960s and 1970s, Karpov maintained that the original impetus for change had come from within the Communist Party and that many of those traditionally in the Party leadership were able to take part in implementing reforms.

SYMPATHETIC coverage of the Irish Republican struggle in the Russian media was 'regrettable', a representative of the Soviet bureaucracy said last week. Sociology professor Yuri Zamoshkin was speaking at the Edinburgh Festival in the last of a series of public discussions on aspects of British and Soviet cultures.

He was responding to a question from Labour MP Tam Dalyell on how the Soviet Union and the West present each other's policies in news coverage. 'Your depiction of Irish terrorists as freedom fighters gives deep offence to the British public,' said chairman Gus McDonald, Head of Scottish Television, to the Soviet delegation, distorting the intention of Dalyell's question.



Shantytown in Cap-Haïtien. Workers' dwellings are made of discarded sheet metal and wood, crowded along drainage ditches full of sewage and garbage.

HAITI: STRUGGLING TO UPROOT TYRANNY

IT was reported from north-western Haiti last month that hundreds of peasants had been massacred by armed gangsters employed by the rich landlords.

Peasants in the Jean Rabel area had seized land and held it in defiance of the landlords and their violence.

On 24 July, some 700-800 poor farmers gathered to show solidarity with other peasants whose homes had been burned down by the landlords.

As they were returning home, they were ambushed by the landlords' gangsters, using machetes, pikes and guns. The attackers murdered the wounded.

Later, at the town of Jean Rabel, they tried to enter the hospital and finish off 54 survivors being treated there, but were prevented by an army guard at the entrance.

Thousands of peasants in Jean Rabel district, and other parts of Haiti, have organised in associations to demand land reform.

The landlords in the area hired former Tontons Macoutes, the notorious thugs used by the Duvaliers to tyrannise the people, to lead the terror against the peasantry.

Ex-Tontons have also been

BY PIERRE DUMONT

blamed for the murder of opposition politician Louis Eugene Athis and two of his supporters earlier this month.

When the Haitian people brought down 'Baby Doc' Duvalier's tyranny, they vowed to tear it up from the roots. This struggle is still going on.

'The peasant's associations are communists who want to take away our lands and possessions,' one of the gangsters told US reporters. 'I stand for the Americans who have done so much here.'

Imperialism

The link between oppression and exploitation in Haiti and US imperialism's dominance has not gone unnoticed by the workers and peasants, nor the youth who are fighting for their future.

At a rally opposing the rul-

ing KNG junta (council of national government from its Creole initials), a marcher shouted: 'The US government should get it out. The United States put it in and is backing it to keep it in power against the people.'

The KNG, headed by General Namphy, has promised elections next year. The US ambassador has told Haitians they are 'daydreaming' if they want democracy now. But as an oppositionist pointed out:

'The KNG is the child of the Duvalier regime. The military is still running things, and a lot of people fear that when the time comes to hand over, they will not give up their power.'

Since June, when the junta tried to interfere with the electoral commission, and to break up the Confederation Autonome des Travailleurs Haitiens (CATH), the main union federation, working people and youth have been fighting with a series of general strikes and big demonstrations.

The CATH is demanding a minimum wage of \$6 a day for its members (at present they average around \$3), and has also raised pay demands for soldiers. It has successfully resisted junta control so far, and is demanding the KNG quit.

Women are prominent in the struggle for democratic rights in Haiti. On 22 July, an alliance of women's groups organised a 2,000-strong peaceful sit-in at Port au Prince's city hall to demand the resignation of the capital's mayor, Madame Franck Paul.

After some hours, the army broke up the sit-in with teargas, making several arrests, and assaulting journalists who were trying to cover the women's protest.

A march led by the women the following day grew to several thousand as it went through the centre of Port au Prince. The crowd chanted 'macoute'.

Hearing that troops were being deployed at the Ministry of Justice, where they had intended to hold a rally, the marchers headed instead for Radio Soleil, a Catholic radio station.

As they neared the station, an off-duty army officer

fired into the crowd, wounding five people. One of them, Edeline Noel, died later in hospital.

The women opposed Franck Paul because she had been appointed by the military-run KNG, as well as from their discontent over lack of services. 'For us, it is a horror that there are women collaborating with the KNG,' one said. 'We want a new kind of society and a new kind of woman leader.'

On 4 July, troops opened fire on a demonstration in Les Cayes, killing a bystander. They injured several people taking part in a march in Port au Prince organised by the National Federation of Unemployed.

But the worst army attack came on 29 July, when troops opened fire on a demonstration in Port au Prince, killing nine people.

Killed

On 1 August, four more people were killed by the army in Port au Prince. The clash came after a grisly episode that morning.

Passers by in the capital had seen a child's foot protruding from a municipal dust-cart going along the street. They followed, and discovered about 20 corpses concealed amid the rubbish.

People were enraged, as word spread, thinking these must be victims of an army massacre. Madame Paul denied this, saying the bodies were of homeless people who had died in the night and were being collected by the municipal services.

This did not stop an angry crowd from setting fire to the lorry and another municipal vehicle. The army intervened, using teargas, then firing in the air, then firing into the crowd.

It is worth noting that the Haitian Communist Party is not supporting the struggle against the KNG.

Along with the various bourgeois politicians and opportunist hopefuls, it is looking forward to taking part in the elections under military supervision, and has appended its name to denunciations of the CATH unions for taking strike action.

Police protect death merchant

CANADIAN police acted promptly after a Montreal businessman was denounced as a gun-runner supplying the right-wing Contra terrorists in Central America.

They rushed to the Montreal studios of Quatre Saisons television with a warrant to take away video film of a demonstration outside the home of arms dealer Emmanuel Weigensberg.

Some 50 people had gone to Weigensberg's home in plush Hampstead suburb, Montreal. They nailed a banner to his garage door, denouncing his support for the Contras, and planted crosses on the lawn to commemorate the victims of Contra terror.

Within three hours, police were at the television studios asking for any film of the demonstration. They said they would examine the videotape to see if charges should be laid against the demonstrators.

Weigensberg was named during the Iran-Contragate

hearings in Washington, as a member of the far-right network of US military, millionaires, mercenaries and fascists that ran supplies to the Contras while the US Congress had officially withdrawn aid.

Canada's internal security service, the CSIS, is supposed under its terms of reference to probe any activities in Canada 'in support of political violence abroad'.

The Contras' murder of Nicaraguan civilians is certainly violence, and its supporters would presumably class it as 'political'.

But the official 'watchdog' committee set up in Ottawa to review security and intelligence services reported last month that the CSIS did not touch supporters of the Contras, while those opposed to right-wing regimes in Central America were subject to regular spying and harassment.

The committee criticised the CSIS for paying 'too much attention to US foreign policy requirements'.

Clearly, the police in Quebec operate with the same kind of brief: to protect those who arm right-wing terrorists and harass their opponents.

Saudis get British planes

WHILE the Royal Navy was despatching more ships to the Gulf war area last week and the Thatcher government urged an arms embargo, Saudi Air Force pilots have begun training with the Hawk Mk65, supplied by British Aerospace.

Tension in the Gulf escalated sharply recently after hundreds of Iranian pilgrims at Mecca were killed when Saudi police broke up a demonstration.

The first two Hawks were handed over to the Saudis in a ceremony at Dunsfold aerodrome, near Guildford, on 11 August.

Thirty of the British aircraft are to be supplied for advanced fighter training. The plane is armed with rockets and cannon and can be adapted for close support to troops.

Under a deal valued at £5 billion over the first three years, British Aerospace will supply a range of military aircraft, including 72 Tornado multi-role combat planes.

The programme includes full training and a wide range of advanced weapons. British Aerospace says it is 'Britain's largest-ever export contract'.

Argentine major defends torture

MAJOR Ernesto Barreiro, who refused to give evidence before a civil court on human rights crimes, encouraging the Argentine army officers' revolt last Easter, has spoken out in defence of the 'dirty war' waged against the Argentinian people.

Nearly 10,000 people 'disappeared' under military rule in Argentina — trade unionists, students, women, even children.

An unknown number ended up as corpses floating in the Rio del Plata after torture by the officers.

'The only excesses committed in the war against subversion were robberies, extortion or blackmail,' according to Major Barreiro.

In a lengthy newspaper interview, the major admitted that torture might have taken place as well, but said

this had been justified by necessity.

Barreiro praised Colonel Aldo Rico, who took over the Campo de Mayo barracks near Buenos Aires during the Easter mutiny, as 'the biggest hero' of the Malvinas war, and said it was disgraceful the colonel should be punished for the army revolt.

The major said his own problems with the courts had been solved when President Alfonsín rushed through his 'due obedience' law (which allows soldiers to claim obedience to orders as a defence for crimes such as torture).

About 200 officers are thought to have been absolved from charges by this means. However, Major Barreiros complained: 'The 46 officers who remain under trial represent an army that fought in a war.'

The army gazette recently announced that Major Barreiros and Colonel Rico had been stripped of their ranks for their part in the Easter mutiny. But neither has been cashiered from the army, as the government originally claimed.

New Zealand stays Labour

DESPITE record inflation and unemployment, with economic policies that have been described as 'Thatcherite', David Lange's Labour government has received a second term from the electorate.

Lange's anti-nuclear policy, which has antagonised the US, French, and British governments, and got the more subservient Labour government in Australia worried, seems to have proved a vote-winner.

Opposition to French nuclear tests — which brought the 'Rainbow Warrior' terrorist outrage in Auckland — is to continue. Lange is also opposing US militarisation of the Pacific and visits by US nuclear submarines.

This may not yet bring the threat of a CIA-backed military coup, as happened in Fiji. But Tory Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe did threaten further difficulties for New Zealand exports to the EEC.

Le Pen wants a ministry.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

FRENCH fascist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, due to visit next month's Tory conference in Britain, has indicated that he would expect government office in return for helping the 'respectable' Right win elections.

Le Pen, who has announced his candidature for the presidency, was responding to attempts by Premier Chirac to woo voters from the racist Front National. Polls have shown 20 per cent would back Le Pen for the presidency. In a television programme on 2 August, Chirac said it was 'naturally' impossible to have a national pact with the Front National. But he did not deny local pacts. The prime minister also remarked amiably that while he did not share Le Pen's ideology, he knew that Front National voters 'have sentiments very close to those of the present majority' (i.e. the conservatives).

Le Pen has commented that in giving his approval to local and regional agreements with the Front, Chirac had 'made a step in good sense'. The fascist leader also remarked recently: 'Jacques Chirac finds himself a little in the situation of a boss obliged to ask help from a partner with fresh capital, and he's frightened he'll have to part with his company car and director's office, but he'll understand that, if I deliver my capital of voters, I want places on the board of directors'. In other words, Le Pen, an ex-para with a record as a torturer in Algeria, implicated in right-wing plots against past governments, is offering a deal — the racist card, in return for a ministerial post.

To help the French conservative Right feel it can accept the fascist's company, Le Pen has been wined and dined by rich Republican senators in the United States and some prominent Zionists there. Le Pen's invitation to address a 'fringe' meeting at next month's Tory party conference in Blackpool came at the initiative of Thatcherite 'intellectual' and 'Daily Telegraph' contributor Sir Alfred Sherman — also remembered as a guest of the 'Marxism Today' Euro-Stalinists not long ago.

Baltic rallies demand truth on Nazi pact

DEMONSTRATIONS have been called in three Soviet Baltic capitals this weekend, on the same day, and the same issue.

Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians are being urged to rally on Sunday to mourn victims of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, signed by the foreign ministers of the USSR and Nazi Germany on 23 August, 1939.

The Latvian 'human rights' group Helsinki '86, which called the Riga rally, reported last week that a group formed in neighbouring Estonia, with the name 'Group for the Full Publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact', was urging people to gather at noon in Tallin's main square.

The Latvian group intends to lay flowers at the Freedom Monument in the centre of Riga. The Estonians will also march to a wreath-laying ceremony. In Lithuania, former political prisoners have called a rally in Vilna.

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, which had been part of the Tsarist Russian Empire, were briefly independent capitalist states after the Revolution and the imperialist wars of intervention.

The three Baltic states were annexed to the Soviet Union after the Red Army invaded in 1940. The move has often been presented as necessary to forestall Nazi invasion.

It is believed that secret clauses in the Nazi-Soviet pact actually gave the Soviet Union a free hand to invade the Baltic states. Later, when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the Nazis were able to recruit some Baltic nationals to Waffen SS and police units.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact enabled Nazi Germany to receive Soviet oil for the Wehrmacht, right up to the day the Soviet Union was invaded. Although Soviet agents like Leopold Trepper and Richard Sorge sent detailed reports of Hitler's plans, Stalin refused to believe them.

The Soviet invasion of Po-

land, simultaneously with the Nazis in 1939, presented as a defensive move against Nazi advance, was regarded by many Poles as a 'stab in the back' and act of collusion under the pact.

Among victims of the pact were German communists handed over to the Gestapo. Polish railway workers discovered this secret traffic, when they found prisoners were being shipped west in sealed railway-trucks.

Two leaders of the Jewish Workers' Bund in Poland, Ehrlich and Alter, crossed the Soviet lines, it is believed with a plan for underground anti-Nazi resistance. They were killed by the Stalinist GPU.

In August 1940, the GPU agent Ramon Mercader murdered Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, in Mexico.

Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union, Stalin had ordered the dismantling of defence works along the western borders, supposedly unnecessary now the Soviet army had moved west, or because he believed Hitler would stick to the pact. This made the panzers' advance so much easier in 1941.

Twenty million Soviet citizens were killed in World War II.

In their call for the 23 August rally, the Latvian campaigners say:

'Looking at the condemnation of Stalinism in the USSR, a strange paradox is apparent. On the one hand, there is unsparing criticism of Stalin's domestic policies, but on the other hand, Stalin's expansionist foreign policy is acclaimed as good and correct.'



Korean strikes still spreading

SOUTH Korean workers spread their industrial action last week, closing the country's car industry and shipyards, and bringing transport to a halt in several cities.

Thousands of trade unionists were joined by students in a rally in Seoul, the capital, on 16 August. They demanded free trade unions, workers' rights, and better pay.

Coming not long after South Korea had a record trade surplus, the big strike movement has now cost £189 million in exports and lost production, according to government trade officials.

In a reversal of traditional relationships, big car makers Hyundai and Kia announced they intended importing components from Japan, if necessary, so as to resume production.

After years of being held

down and exploited as cheap labour, attacked by police or company gangsters when they tried to organise, South Korean workers are asserting their rights, and demanding some of the wealth they produce.

Since 1 July, more than 700 companies have been hit by industrial disputes. The workers' entry on the scene clearly also spells a big change in the country's politics.

Hess

HITLER'S former deputy Rudolf Hess, who flew to Britain in 1941 hoping to persuade sympathetic Tories to join war against the Soviet Union, died in Spandau prison last week.

'The Last Nazi', one newspaper headed its report. But neo-Nazis gathered outside the prison to honour their hero. In Spain, too, neo-Nazi groups flyposted Madrid and Barcelona to honour Hess.

Along with secrets Hess took to the grave was a new mystery. Did he really commit suicide by strangling himself, or was he helped?

The big business interests which financed Nazism remain. Only when the working class buries capitalism itself will Nazism be finished for good.

Material on Hess will be published in next week's Workers Press.

Army behind attempt on Jayawardene?

SPECULATION grew last week that army officers opposed to Sri Lanka's deal with India on the Tamil question might have been involved in the attempt to kill President Jayawardene.

Armed men, said to have been wearing uniform, fired shots into the cabinet meeting room, then threw grenades. An MP was killed and others injured. Jayawardene described it as 'another attack on parliamentary democracy'.

Early press reports suggested the Sinhalese-based JVP movement might have been responsible. But it was known that elements in the military would have had

more opportunity to carry out the attack, and are opposed to the treaty.

Last month a member of the official guard of honour attacked India's Rajiv Gandhi during his visit.

Another element in the island's political violence now are the many foreign mercenaries and imperialist agents brought in to fight the Tamils.

The attack on a train in southern India, unsuccessfully blamed on Tamil fighters, was one provocation which looked suspiciously like their work.

US imperialism has its own aims for the Indian sub-continent, in which Jayawardene might be regarded as expendable.

Vanunu versus nuclear threat

BY DAVID DORFMAN

ISRAELI ministers will decide soon whether to cancel the Lavi fighter-bomber, a multi-billion dollar project that would give their air force superior strike capacity in the Middle East and beyond.

The Jericho missile, test-fired 500 miles in May, is being continued. The missile would have a 1,000 mile range, and could carry a nuclear warhead. The Soviet Union has expressed concern.

Where the secret test launch was carried out was not reported. South Africa has been in partnership with Israeli weapons projects before.

Meanwhile, in a top-security prison near Ashkelon, kidnapped nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu is held in solitary confinement, awaiting trial for 'treason', for revealing Israeli nuclear weapon capability to a British newspaper. The trial is due to begin on 30 August.

Israel's paymasters in the United States provided 90 per cent of the \$1.5 billion

invested in the Lavi project, but are advising it should be cancelled.

Israeli Finance Minister Moshe Nissim says the country can't afford to continue with it. His officials estimate each family would have contribute an extra \$200 in taxes for the Lavi.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres favours dropping the Lavi, and purchasing US-made S-16Cs instead. Prime Minister Shamir wants to continue the prestige project, and is hoping for South African orders. After a split cabinet last week, ministers were given another fortnight to decide.

Peres as Labour Defence Minister was chief architect of the Israeli arms industry and its nuclear programme, begun with French help in 1957.

In 1977, when Mordechai Vanunu went to work at the

Dimona nuclear complex, where he was employed in the plutonium plant, nuclear weapons had been produced there for ten years. By 1985, when he took redundancy, it was starting to produce neutron bombs.

Vanunu, whose family were from Morocco, had developed sympathies with the Palestinian people, and concern as to where Israeli Zionist policy was leading.

To stop the drive towards a nuclear holocaust, Vanunu decided to travel abroad and tell what he knew.

At the end of September last year, Mordechai Vanunu disappeared from his London hotel. He had given his story to the 'Sunday Times'. It appeared on 5 October. Agents of the Mossad had already kidnapped him.

Although details have been given of how he was abducted, one issue remains unclear. Who tipped off the Mossad on Vanunu's whereabouts and intentions?

It is known that the Au-

Price of capitalist competition

JAPAN's suicide rate has risen by more than fifty per cent in the past eight years, and an increasing number of the deaths are due to economic worries.

A report from the National Police Agency (NPA), whose records show 487 management executives killed themselves last year, blames 'economic reasons and the stresses of Japan's competitive society' for the high toll.

Value

The soaring value of the yen, and new difficulties for Japanese exports, which companies have tried to boost by taking huge losses at home, has been blamed for worsening health due to stress, and increased suicides.

The Japan Productivity Centre is running regular stress and mental health tests for affiliated companies' employees. Big firms like Matsushita Electric employ their own psychiatrists. A suicide prevention manual has been introduced for civil servants.

The NPA report blames 'heavy pressure in the workplace' for the fact that 55 per cent of last year's suicides were in the 40-64 age group. And although the biggest increase has been among managers, they aren't the only ones.

Uncertainty

Last year, 49 employees of Japan National Railways killed themselves due to widespread uncertainty about the security of their jobs, the NPA report says. The railways have been broken up into smaller companies ready for privatisation.

At Takashima mine, closed by Mitsubishi, a union official hanged himself because he felt he had failed his workers.

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) notified MI6 when Vanunu flew to London, and according to the 'Sunday Times' (9 August), 'when the plane landed at Heathrow on September 12, two special branch officers were watching.

'It is believed that a Mossad team then put Vanunu under surveillance in London. The Israeli secret service had been ordered by the then prime minister Shimon Peres to "get" Vanunu back to Israel alive.'

The paper said Scotland Yard has promised to examine any new evidence its reporters could provide relating to 'offences which may have been committed on British soil.' Really? Haven't they got evidence of their own? If Special Branch was watching Vanunu fly in, wouldn't they have watched him fly out?

Meir Vanunu, brother of the kidnapped technician, back in Britain to alert public opinion on the Vanunu case, is due to speak at a meeting in London on Sunday evening. (see listings p. 7)

GUILDFORD FOUR

Police will investigate ... the police

NEW evidence claiming to show the innocence of the Guildford Four will not be put straight in front of a jury.

Instead, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has ordered a police investigation into the evidence.

The Guildford Four, sentenced to life imprisonment after the 1974 Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings, have consistently protested their innocence.

The IRA bombing campaign continued after they were imprisoned. In 1976, following the siege of Balcombe Street, two captured IRA volunteers gave detailed accounts showing that they, and not the Guildford Four, had carried out the bombings.

In spite of this, no re-trial was ordered. Appeal Court judges later dismissed the new evidence. The Guildford Four have remained in prison for 13 years.

People campaigning for their release demanded a public inquiry in 1986 following a number of TV documentaries which drove a horse and cart through the evidence upon which they were convicted.

To take the heat out of the situation, Douglas Hurd ordered a Home Office internal review of the case. Allowing a decent period to elapse, Hurd announced the matter warranted no further action on the spurious grounds that there was no 'new evidence'.

Mrs Yvonne Fox claims she was with Paul Hill on the night of the bombing, as were Paul's uncle and aunt. This has now been accepted as 'new evidence' but was in fact available at the time of the trial.

The trial took place during a massive press witch-hunt. Merlyn Rees, who was then the Labour Home Secretary, has confessed to being carried away by the atmosphere at the time. The 'confessions' of the Guildford Four presented a very convenient solution to the situation — no matter that these 'confessions' were extracted by police intimidation and beatings.

The fact that these 'confessions' contradicted each other was total-

BY PHIL PENN

ly ignored, as was other evidence showing the innocence of the four. Anyone who did come forward was similarly intimidated.

Frank Johnston, for instance, a student at the time, remembered being at a dance with Carol Richardson on the night of the bombing. When he reported this to the police they arrested him. They threatened to kill him and his invalid mother. After the police had finished with him he too agreed to sign anything and changed his original statement.

Later, during the trial, Johnston repeated that he was with Carol at the dance and said he had changed his statement under duress. But the police then did a bit of 'investigating of the evidence' and found out that Frank had been on an anti-Internment march. This was used to discredit him.

Shortly

IN THE case of the Birmingham Six which will shortly be going before the Court of Appeal, the police have also been 'investigating the evidence' of a former West Midlands police officer, Tom Clarke who says he saw the men 'mistreated in custody'.

Chris Mullin, Labour MP for Sunderland South and author of the book 'Error of Judgement' and John Farr, Conservative MP for Harborough, wrote a joint letter to 'The Times' last month complaining that 'as is common with inquiries of this sort' senior police officers 'are displaying an unhealthy preoccupation with discrediting Mr Clarke rather than establishing how the convicted men came by the injuries which no one disputes they received during their first three days in custody'.

'Attempts to have this inquiry placed under impartial supervision have so far failed and we understand that this report is not to be published.'

The 1974 bombings resulted in membership of the IRA being made illegal. The Prevention of

Terrorism Act was rushed through parliament, since when it has been used to arrest thousands of Irish people every year, who are subsequently released without charge.

An interesting aspect of the case of the Birmingham Six is that a police provocateur named Thomas Watt had been told by the police to engage the men in conversation about the IRA. They had been under police surveillance for six months before the night of the bombing. Watt was to become a key witness for the prosecution.

Staying at Watt's house on the night of the bombing was another agent provocateur, Kenneth Littlejohn. Littlejohn had carried out robberies, bombings and surveillance work in southern Ireland on behalf of MI6. He had miraculously escaped from Mountjoy jail to be there and was not even worried when the police turned up.

Also in 1974, attempts were made by MI5 to destabilise the Labour government. We now know that assassinations, bombings, robberies and psychological warfare were used to do it.

Frame-ups are also part of their trade according to ex-Secret Service man, Collin Wallace: 'Judging by my own experience,' he said 'it would be dead easy. There would be no overt sign. Someone is just called in and told that it is in the national interest. People just do not argue in cases like that.'

Another and important aspect in the whole affair is the role of the Irish government. This lily-livered bunch have not even summoned the courage to demand that the innocent prisoners be released. They are at the moment engaged in a bit of horse-trading with the prisoners' lives over the Hillsborough Agreement.

They are hoping that Hurd will release them now that they have agreed to an extradition treaty. In December the Irish government is to start handing over Republicans to be incarcerated in Europe's only concentration camp. The question is: will Hurd be impressed by these spineless Free Staters?

All framed prisoners, including Patric Maclaughlin whose case proves that frame-ups are still being used against the Irish community, should be released pending a public inquiry.

SAS assassin jailed

EARLIER this month Captain Simon Hayward of the Life Guards, who spent time in Ireland as a member of the SAS, was given a five-year jail sentence by a Swedish Court for smuggling £500,000 worth of drugs into Sweden.

The capitalist media went into a frenzy about how poor simple Simon was so obviously innocent, how it must all be a terrible mistake and so on. And, above all else, how the Swedish legal system was inadequate and backward and should be more like 'our great system of justice'.

This so-called great system sends innocent people like the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven to jail for years, including life imprisonment for people like Paul Hill. This is the hypocrisy of the British media, which attacks the Swedish legal system and ignores its own system which frames and imprisons Irish people as the above cases show.

The Swedish legal system may well have its critics but for the British media and others to set themselves up as its

COMMENT BY CHARLIE WALSH

judge and jury, while ignoring what is happening under their own noses here in Britain and in the occupied six counties of Ireland, is typical of the rank hypocrisy, deceit and arrogance expressed by British imperialism.

Hayward's crucial role in the murder of three young unarmed Catholics in Strabane, Co Tyrone, in February 1985 was the thing that appealed most to the gutter press such as the 'Mirror' and the 'Sun'.

To the British capitalist media, SAS murderers of Irish people will always be heroes. It went into raptures about how Hayward had set up the murders in Strabane. Hayward and his fellow-SAS assassins pumped 90 bullets into the bodies of Charlie Breslin, Michael Devine and David Devine. David Devine was only 16 years of age.

The 'Mirror' quoted a 'fellow officer' of Hayward's as saying: 'If anyone

deserved a gong (Hayward) did'. Hayward's mother and girlfriend received ample prime-time television to proclaim Hayward's innocence. This is in stark contrast to the media's treatment of the families of Republican prisoners.

From what I saw on television of Hayward's prison cell in a Swedish police station it looks more like a modern flat than the hell-holes Irish republican POWs have to endure for years on end in English prisons. The 'Sun' newspaper thought it cruel to keep Hayward in solitary in his cosy-looking cell because he suffers from claustrophobia.

When it comes to hypocrisy its hard to beat the British capitalist media. British imperialism could indeed teach Sweden a thing or two about how to get the 'right result' in or out of court by framing innocent people, by the use of the single judge, no-jury courts, and shoot-to-kill policies as advocated by the late Lord Justice Gibson and carried out by the murder gangs of the SAS.



The policies must fight

1. The right of nations to self-determination

THE struggle being waged by the Kurdish people for the right to determine their own destiny has led them into confrontation with imperialism and the regional bourgeoisie.

Similarly, to the degree that the Iranian, Turkish and Arab proletariats support the struggle of the Kurdish nation against their own bourgeoisies, they become independent of the ideology and politics of the latter.

For this reason the Kurdish national liberation struggle has a progressive character.

Our current struggle stands alongside the Kurdish workers and peasants and supports the struggle of the Kurdish people for the right to determine their own destiny without heeding the words of social chauvinists and petty-bourgeois pacifist writers.

2. A United Socialist Republic of Kurdistan

ALL EFFORTS for the unification of the divided Kurdish nation and all steps made in that direction must be linked with socialist goals and objectives.

To adopt the goals of the Kurdish bourgeoisie as revolutionary demands and to postpone socialist goals to an uncertain time in the future is to deny the progressive character of the nationalism of an oppressed nation.

The struggle against the genocidal politics of the regional bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers cannot be separated from the struggle against the Kurdish exploiter class.

The Kurdish nation's claim to existence and the historical interests of the Kurdish working class and peasants can only be united in the perspective of establishing a socialist republic of Kurdistan.

3. A federation of United Workers' Republics of the Middle East

BECAUSE of the economically underdeveloped structure of Kurdistan and the restrictions imposed by national borders, the Kurdish national revolution cannot bring an end to the current relations of dependency established by the imperialist market.

A Kurdish bourgeois or workers' republic has to remain tied to the historical and social conditions it is born into.

This is not to say that the founding of a bourgeois state would be the same as founding a workers' state. Marxists, at all times and under all conditions, without surrendering to the conditions binding them, struggle to change those conditions.

The Kurdish revolution must not be restricted to national objectives; it must act as a propelling force for the Iranian, Turkish and Arab revolutions. The workers and peasants of the Middle East must not fight against each other under



Kurdish women also fight as pesh

An 'unknown country' and the Permanent Revolution

Part II of the article by E. REFIK and SELINI SOL on the Kurds, the fourth most numerous people in the Middle East — and one of the world's largest peoples without their own independent state. The land which the Kurdish people have inhabited for over 2,000 years was divided between the states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria after World War I. Kurdish history is marked by repression and struggle, rebellion and betrayal. Part I, dealing with the historical background and the Kurdish national liberation struggle today, appeared in WORKERS PRESS on 8 August 1987.



Kurdish peshmergas in Turkey

These mass organisations must become centres of political decision-making. Without developing these conditions it is not possible to prevent the betrayals of bourgeois and petty bourgeois leaderships and Stalinist currents.

The gains of the Kurdish revolution can only be protected and advanced by the masses forming their own organisations. Organisations such as workers' councils can hold bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships under control and prevent their capitulationist initiatives.

Revolutionary Marxists consider the masses organised by the revolution itself, where the revolutionary masses take the decisions on their own destiny, to be more important than the programme of any organisation or the speeches and views of any leader.

Trotsky taught us this truth as a basic principle. Our current has found this principle to be correct time and time again in the historical development of various countries.

5. United Workers Front

AS THE Kurdish nation is

under constant attack from all sides, the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords feel an increasing need to form alliances with other social classes and strata.

Revolutionary Marxists demand the alliance of the proletariat and peasants with other working-class sectors against the bourgeoisie rather than the collaboration and alliance of the bourgeoisie with other classes.

Revolutionary Marxists are not afraid to fight alongside the Kurdish bourgeoisie against the brutal attacks made by the aggressor bourgeois states against the Kurdish people. However, this never means the postponement of our struggle against the bourgeoisie, nor does it mean we see them as allies.

We must not forget that as soon as the Kurdish ruling class attains its own bourgeois objectives it will turn towards eliminating the Kurdish revolution.

This is why the creation of a front independent of the bourgeoisie as a centre of attraction for the working class is one of the most vital issues.

Such a front, built upon the organisations of the masses, can hold together the Kurdish workers and poor peasants, the makers of the Kurdish revolution.

6. 'Workers-Peasants' government

BEHIND our political propositions there is always the aim of expropriation of the

bourgeoisie and landlords in favour of the working classes and peasantry and the right of the working class and other toiling sectors to strike and to free speech and opinion — rights which have been withheld for ages and must be granted in full

There is only one force capable of carrying out this historical demand of removing the ruling class from the backs of the oppressed. This is the Kurdish proletariat supported by the peasantry.

We can summarise one of our most definite political proposals for moving in this direction in the following way: the foundation of a workers' and peasants' government in the liberated zones of Kurdistan; workers' councils and peasants'/soldiers' councils or something similar in a form peculiar to Kurdistan as the basis for establishing a new power; the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and landlords; creating the conditions for the masses' self-rule; the support of revolutionary forces on the other side of the border and uniting with them, without any capitulation to imperialism and its collaborators.

Governments or leaderships adopting policies aimed at adapting to the imperialists or local bourgeoisie, instead of revolutionary policies of the kind outlined above, will become fetters on the Kurdish revolution.

7. For Building the Fourth International in every country

REVOLUTIONARY Marxists are struggling to organise the Fourth International worldwide, for a united organisation of the working class and other working sectors, and the creation of an international revolutionary leadership.

Without this struggle it is inconceivable for the Kurdish proletariat, along with the proletariat of other countries, to organise parallel joint actions and remove the borders separating them from one another.

This is one of the most basic conditions for the success of permanent revolution in Kurdistan. The Kurdish proletariat and its political representatives must become a part of the international communist movement.

To the degree that the Kurdish nation becomes the vanguard of the proletariat of other nations and is not restricted to national objectives, the victory of the Kurdish revolution becomes inevitable.

8. For building a Trotskyist Party

THE ONLY force capable of leading the permanent revolution in Kurdistan to victory is the proletariat. The proletariat, however, with its own vanguard — its own party — cannot achieve these objectives.

Within the Kurdish revolution the issue of creating a leadership independent of the bourgeoisie as well as of petty-bourgeois centrist and Stalinist currents is intimately bound to the issue of the organisation of a proletarian party.

Only a proletarian party can unite the struggle for today's needs with the struggle for historical needs and act as an element joining the national revolution with the world revolution.

The most vital issue for the Kurdish proletariat, and a part of the duty of a revolutionary Marxist international, is the creation of its own independent parties.

The struggle we are waging, under fire in a number of countries worldwide, must be joined with the revolutionary struggle of Kurdish workers and peasants.

The future belongs to a United Socialist Republic of Kurdistan and a United Socialist Middle East.

CONCLUDED

we
or!

separate banners but together under the same banner against the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes.

To the degree that the struggle for a socialist Kurdistan is linked with the struggle for a socialist Middle East, the Kurdish national revolution will be united with the world revolution.

'More and more Kurdish revolutions' must be the slogan of our day.

4. The masses must build their own organisations and develop them into centres for political decision-making

THE workers and peasants of Kurdistan must be united in trade unions, village cooperatives and councils where workers, peasants and soldiers make joint decisions.



gas, seen here in Turkey

Workers Revolutionary Party

PUBLIC MEETING plus VIDEO

The genocidal attacks and political oppression against the Kurdish nation

THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 7.30 pm

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square, Holborn
London WC1

The meeting is to denounce the attacks on the democratic rights of the Kurdish people and to establish international solidarity with them.

Speakers:

Simon Pirani — Workers Revolutionary Party Central Committee

Ihson Özgür — Kurdish Workers Association and (in a personal capacity) Kurdish Cultural Centre Central Committee

NICARAGUA

The struggle for Trotskyism

WHAT are the trade unions' relations with the Sandinist government?

BEFORE the 1979 revolution there were about 60,000 industrial workers, of which only 9 per cent were unionised, divided between the 'official' Somocist trade union apparatus, and independently-organised unions.

When the Somocist state apparatus was destroyed, the 'official' trade union structures went with it; new trade unions appeared, and this was an enormous victory for the working class.

The trade unions created a sort of dual power at the beginning of the revolution. They expelled anti-worker managers; nothing could be done unless it was agreed by a workers' meeting in the factories.

Petrol rations, cars, wage levels and all the traditional privileges were controlled by the workers and their fate decided by these meetings.

There was an enormous contradiction between the bourgeois coalition government established by the Sandinists and the upsurge of the working-class organisations. For the sake of the 'national unity' they had created with the bourgeoisie, the Sandinists tried to dissolve the 'dual power' organs that had been created.

They repressed, quite selectively, organisations of the working class vanguard.

The Simon Bolivar International Brigade, which advocated factory takeovers and the formation of strong trades unions, was expelled from the country; they repressed 'El Pueblo', a paper published by the Movimiento de Accion Popular (a Maoist group), and jailed 15 Trotskyist trade union leaders for several months.

At this time we were demanding the expulsion of bourgeois ministers from the government, opposing the disarmament of the workers' militia and trade union control of the factories.

This sort of repression was possible because the masses trusted the Sandinists totally. And they were receiving the enormous material gains of the revolution.

Prices were frozen, basic elements of the diet were subsidised, a free health service set up, canteens put into the factories — the people had never had these things before.

At the same time, the Sandinists came under attack from the bourgeoisie and the masses closed ranks around them.

For the first two years of the revolution, the movement of strikes and factory takeovers proceeded apace, causing terrible problems for the government.

When the Reagan administration stepped up the war

against Nicaragua in 1981-1982, the Sandinist government decreed a state of emergency, outlawing strikes, demonstrations and factory takeovers. Again, the masses closed ranks against imperialism. And the government used this as an opportunity to discipline and bureaucratise the unions.

At this time the government also made repressive moves against the Nicaraguan Communist Party (CP), a national variant of Stalinism, that had grouped around it a strong section of the working class which was being driven out of the factories by closures.

These workers were very militant. There were cases where the Sandinist militia took over factories controlled by the CP, expelled the

The factory meetings lost control in most places and surrendered to an industrial committee which was a triumvirate of the factory manager, the political secretary of the Sandinist party in the factory, and the trade union secretary.

Everything is decided by these three people: the economic plans, objectives, the rhythm of work — and which opposition activists should be sacked.

WHAT about the ability of trade unions to campaign and negotiate at national level?

AFTER the 1984 elections, the Sandinists gave up their 'reformist' policy, cut down subsidies, repealed the price-freeze

managers and trade unions — and so the 'raison d'etre' of trades unions disappear.

The decisions are made by the Sandinist labour federation, the Sandinist government and the ministry of labour. Often the SNOTS act as an instrument to raise productivity and demand more sacrifice.

WHAT is the attitude of the Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Workers' Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores — PRT) to the problems facing the working class in Nicaragua now?

WE ARE living through an aggressive imperialist war, being fought in the countryside, in a country which has traditionally

PART III of a three-part interview by SIMON PIRANI with BONIFACIO MIRANDA, leader of the Revolutionary Workers' Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores: PRT), section of the International Workers' League-Fourth International in Nicaragua.

The powerful blows struck at US imperialism and its puppets in Nicaragua — and the crisis of the Reagan administration in which its genocidal policy in central America is a major factor — have inspired workers and revolutionaries all over the world.

The campaign to defend Nicaragua from imperialist attack is of central concern to Trotskyists, particularly in the US and its imperialist allies like Britain. But the political problems posed for the world Trotskyist movement by the coming to power of the Sandinists went beyond simply the need to side with them against imperialism.

Those Trotskyists who in 1979 formed the Simon Bolivar International Brigade (SBIB) to fight alongside the Sandinists (previously reported in Workers Press), found themselves in sharp political conflict with the new government: the Trotskyists' calls for the total expropriation of the bourgeoisie and firm punishment of counter-revolutionaries, in particular, were opposed by Sandinism. This political conflict grew so sharp that the SBIB was expelled from Nicaragua.

Today the PRT is continuing the struggle to build Trotskyist leadership in Nicaragua, advancing its independent policies to deepen the revolution.

price: by the fact that Nicaragua is still paying its external debt to imperialism, and by the economic concessions made by the Sandinists to the bourgeoisie. The debt should not be paid; no incentives should be given to capitalism.

These measures will not of course solve the economic crisis anyway, and likewise it will be very difficult to sustain a prolonged war against imperialism.

So together with the measures we propose, the PRT makes it a priority to appeal for the solidarity of the international working class with Nicaragua.

If president Ortega asked all the workers of the world for \$1, we would quite easily have \$200 billion, which in our present condition would be a massive economic relief.

This is a campaign which our fraternal organisations in the International Workers' League (Fourth International) are taking up in the working-class movement everywhere.

WHAT is the military policy of the PRT?

TO DEFEAT the Contras a strategy is required that takes into consideration not only the economic measures I talked about before, but also the fact of their bases in Honduras and Costa Rica, and their support from US imperialism.

We say that all the revolutionary forces and the masses of Central America must be united in this struggle. This is the way to defeat the Contras. And the struggle here must be supported by the working class of the whole world.

Within Nicaragua, we call for the re-arming of the workers' militia; we are against the bureaucratic military apparatus of the army and the discipline of a regular army. We accept that there must be a regular army to fight imperialism — but we also stand for the soldiers' right to criticise their officers, for their right to oppose any privileges.

We are for the democratisation of the army and for the right of left-wingers who have shown themselves capable militarily to be officers.

At the same time we stand for the development of the militia in any factory or neighbourhood, to oppose the sort of terrorist attacks we have seen recently against workers.

WHAT is your attitude to the unions?

WE FIGHT within the unions for a single trade union federation independent of the government; real, not formal, independence.

We stand for the democratisation of the Sandinist trade union federation, since this controls the vast amount of unions, and that is where our own comrades concentrate their activity.

We are against the existence of different trade union federations controlled bureaucratically by various parties: we want a democratically-organised federation in which all parties have to compete for leadership.

But having said this we of course accept the workers' right to organise however they like, which at present is not the situation.

WHAT are the PRT's prospects?

THE possibilities of building a strong Trotskyist movement in Nicaragua depend on the attitude of those sections of the masses who are becoming disenchanted with the Sandinists.

In 1979, the policy of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) to oppose the building of a Trotskyist movement in Nicaragua left us the privilege of being the only group here claiming to be Trotskyist.

We are still, now, a small propaganda group. But I believe that our survival through the first period of the revolution, when the masses were very solidly behind Sandinism, when they trusted it most blindly, was itself a gain.

We managed to uphold our Trotskyist principles at that time. Our criticisms were not popular — but many of them have proved to be justified by reality. Now our programme and slogans allow us to address sections of the workers' movement quite effectively.

As yet there are no massive possibilities. But we are continuing to build the party, in the factories, in important work-places, in the universities.

We have a legal party and a fortnightly paper. We have participated — and sacrificed — in all the struggles of the revolution. We are confident.

CONCLUDED



Miners in Puerto Cabezas on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast

CP-ers and elected a new Sandinist leadership.

In the case of some of the biggest factories, the Sandinist government closed the factory for two months, changed the personnel and opened it again two months later.

The left wing practically disappeared from the unions, along with their militancy. The Sandinist-controlled trade union federation controls 75 per cent of the unions, and so the unions are no longer controlled by workers, but act as a transmission belt of economic policy of Sandinism into the working class.

The democratic character of the factory meetings has virtually disappeared.

For the sake of concentrating all efforts on the war, the Sandinists imposed their own leaders on the unions.

policies through which the working class suffered.

They set up the National System for the Organisation of Work and Salaries (Sistema Nacional de Organizacion de Trabajo y Salarios — SNOTS) which is a copy of what is being applied in Cuba, with the big difference that there is a planned, albeit bureaucratic, economy in Cuba, whereas in Nicaragua the economy is anarchic.

The SNOTS divide workers into 25 different categories. Workers receive pay according to their capacity. As a result of this workers were divided between qualified and unqualified. Neither does this system allow for collective bargaining.

There are no national, or local, negotiations between

been kept poor and backward. Of course this means we have to make sacrifices.

What we don't see is why workers should give sacrifices, while the bosses get economic concessions.

The way to ensure that the war is fought most effectively, and that those at the front get everything they need, is to institute workers' control of all enterprises, to nationalise all imperialist enterprises, and to nationalise the big farms producing agricultural exports.

The war should cause us to hit the capitalist economy harder. We cannot allow the exploitation of the working class to fatten up capitalists.

On top of direct exploitation by private capitalists, there are two other ways in which workers pay the

NEW PARTY DOOMED TO FAIL

HEALY'S MOVEMENT

DISINTEGRATES

GERRY HEALY, expelled former leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, is to make one of his rare public appearances this coming weekend.

He is advertised as speaker for 'The Marxist Party' at the Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, on Sunday, 23 August, 3pm.

Called to mark the 47th Anniversary of the Assassination of Trotsky by Stalin, Healy shares the platform with Vanessa Redgrave who is to report on 'Important Changes in the USSR' following her visit in July to the International Moscow Film Festival.

This is a timely moment to review Healy's recent activities and his current evolution.

Healy was expelled from the WRP in October 1985. Since that time he has appeared only once on a public platform, an unadvertised appearance at that. Healy now conducts what is left of his operations from a room in Vanessa Redgrave's Chiswick house.

He was expelled from the WRP on the following counts:

- Systematic sexual abuse of female comrades.
- The regular use of violence against Party members, including women and disabled comrades.
- The repeated slander of political opponents and associates including David North, secretary of the American Workers League, whom Healy branded as a CIA agent with no evidence.

A small minority in the Party defended Healy: they included Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, former WRP assistant general secretary Sheila Torrance, Healy's 'Mister Fix-it' Alex Mitchell, London District Secretary Richard Price and Eastern Region Organiser Ray Athow.

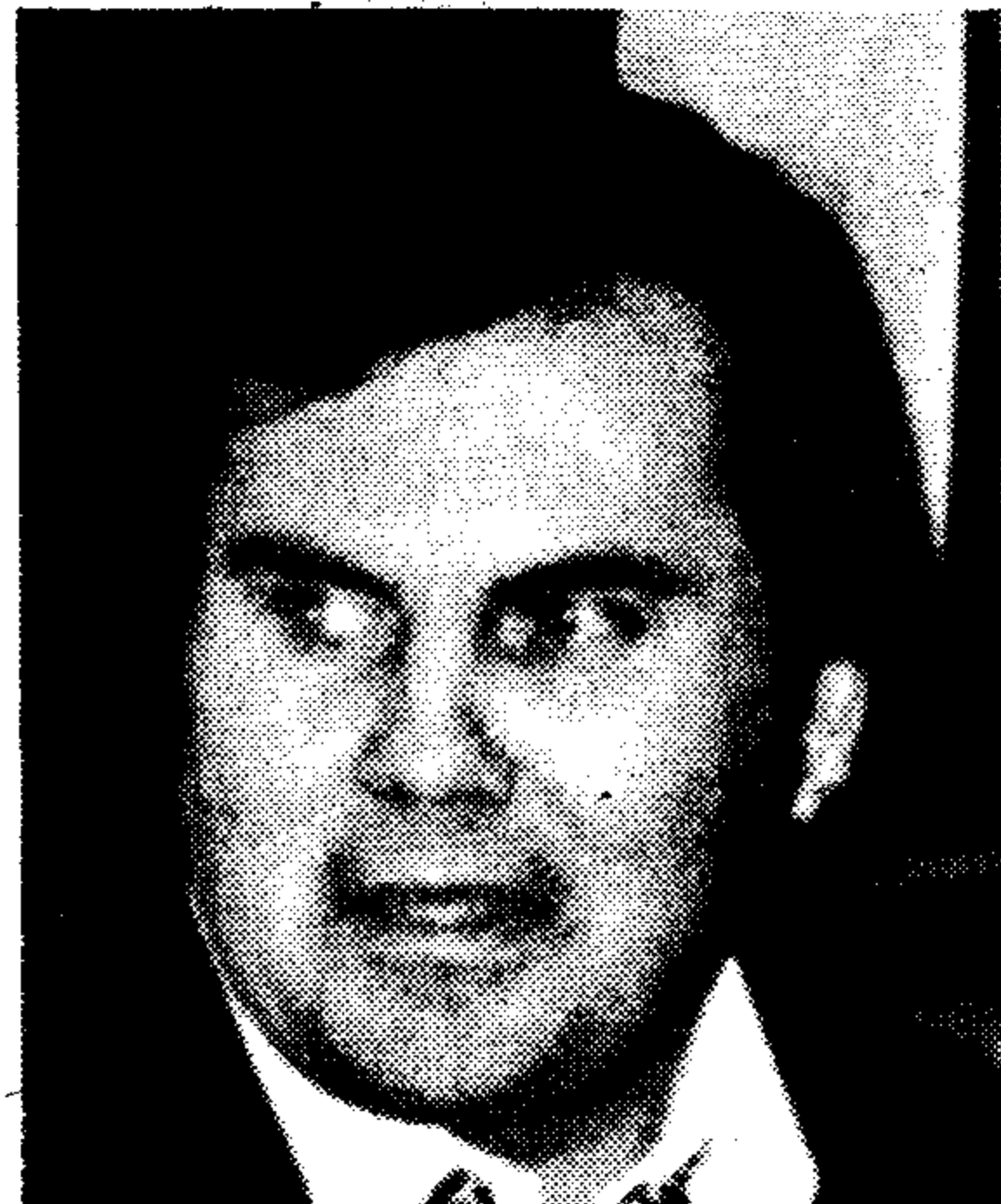
Healy ran away from the Party he had led for almost 40 years. Neither he nor his supporters answered the charges: they knew they were accurate both in substance and in fact. They set themselves up as a bogus WRP and resumed publication of a paper, the 'News Line'.

OVER the last two years it has become ever clearer that the expulsion of Healy involved issues which far transcended the individuals concerned. The expulsion of Healy brought to a head a chronic crisis inside the WRP.

His closest associate for most of that 40-year period was Michael Banda, secretary of the WRP for ten years. Within a few months of the split Banda had become the crudest apologist for Stalinism — so crude in fact that the 'The Leninist' (a pro-Stalinist group working inside the Communist Party) has broken relations with Banda, unable to stomach his fawning before the Stalinist bureaucracy.



SHEILA TORRANCE



ALEX MITCHELL



RAY ATHOW



CORIN REDGRAVE

Banda believes that the Stalinist regime in Russia constitutes socialism and that the 1917 Russian Revolution set in motion historical processes which are 'irreversible'.

Healy himself has emerged as a

BY GEOFF PILLING

rank apologist for the Gorbachev wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

On 13 August 1986, he announced to the political committee of the Torrance group that the Stalinist bureaucracy was no longer Thermidorian, that a left turn was taking place in the USSR and that a left turn would take place internationally.

Just as incredible: according to Healy, dialectical materialism has entered into the thinking of this left-turning section of the Stalinist bureaucracy which is busily de-Stalinising itself.

SINCE October 1985 the Healy-Torrance group has been in the process of decomposing into five groups:

1. Healy, together with the Redgraves and a handful of others, mainly actors, deserted Torrance last November, cancelling their cheques and refusing to sell the 'News Line'. This is the group which has now assumed the name 'The Marxist Party.'
2. Torrance has maintained the 'News Line' group almost entirely on the basis of blind activism.
3. A group, led by Richard Price, has broken away, publishing a paper 'Workers News'. Price is now attempting to re-write the history of his own role in the party crisis. He 'forgets' that he, like Torrance, Redgrave and company defended Healy against the majority's charges, even though he, like the rest, knew them to be absolutely true.
4. A set of what Torrance scathingly calls 'new-lifers' including Alex Mitchell, Judith White and former 'News Line' journalist Paul Feldman has dropped out of politics.

Feldman is freelancing for 'The Guardian'; in May of last year Mitchell decamped to Australia with White. He is working on the 'Sun Herald' in Sydney. Mair Davies is another seeker after the 'new life'. In October 1985 she vehemently defended Torrance and Healy, denouncing those who expelled him as advocates of 'Mary Whitehouse morality'. She is now out of politics.

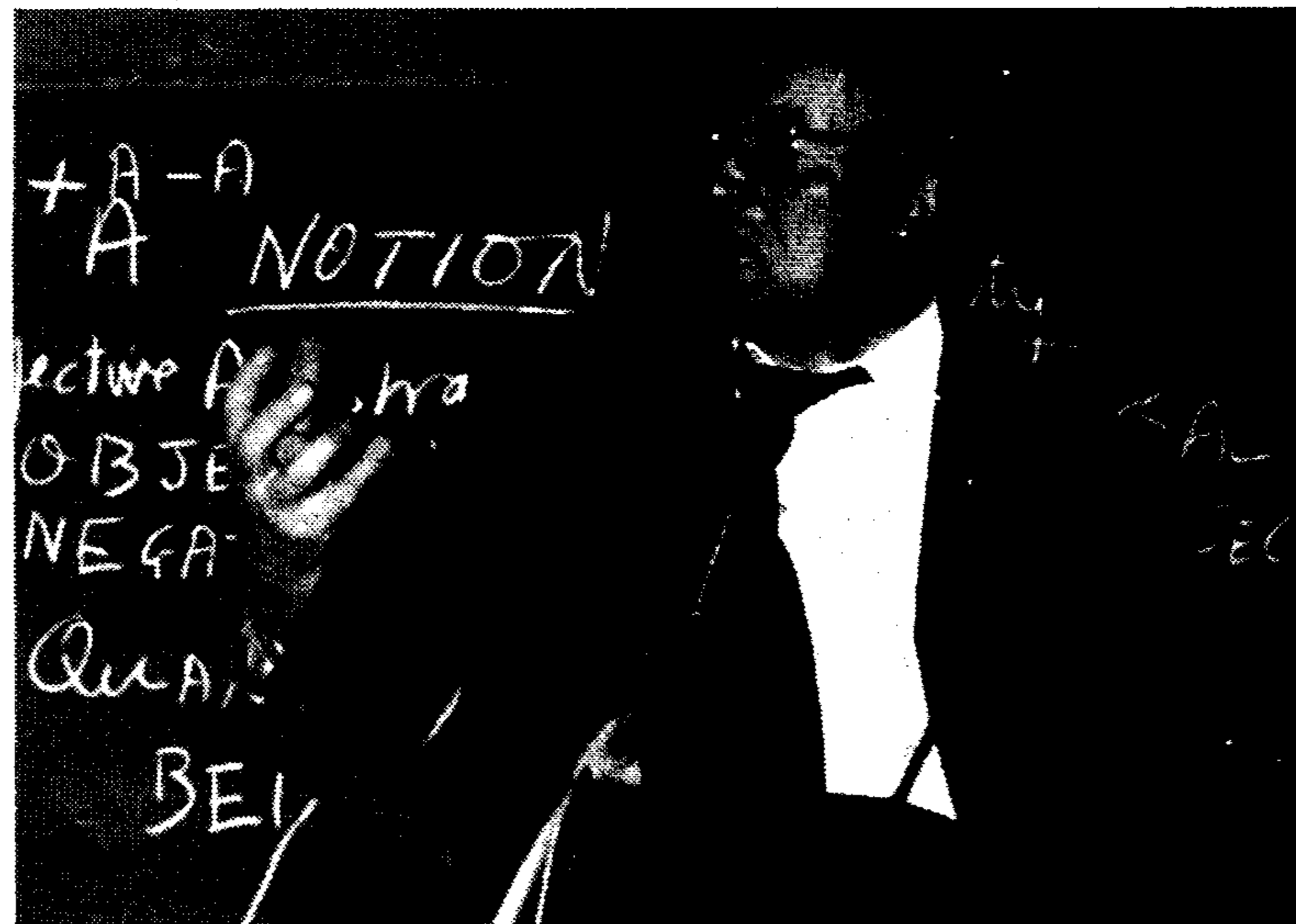
Mitchell's desertion was an especially cruel blow to Healy who made Mitchell *de facto* editor of the 'News Line'; it was Mitchell who organised Healy's 'dirty tricks' department in the old WRP.

Along with the Workers League secretary David North, Mitchell was the author of 'Security and the Fourth International' which purported to show that over decades the FBI and GPU had penetrated the top echelons of the Fourth International and in particular the American Socialist Workers Party.

Never a man to allow consistency to stand in his way, Healy has now branded agent-hunter Mitchell as himself... an agent!

5. Yet another split is imminent in what is left of the 'News Line' group. Ray Athow is leading a section against Torrance on the ground of her intolerable attitude to the membership (Athow is clearly a little slow on the uptake) and that she personally controls the whole of the party assets.

Athow is trying to find out



Healy explains relations between the five warring factions of his former movement

where the money to sustain the 'News Line' comes from. An understandable question, when even members of the Torrance group tell us that it has a daily sale of 150-200. (This must be something of a record for a 'daily' — as indeed must be the fact that entire issues of the 'News Line' appear without a single byline.)

ONE thing has characterised this disintegration: there has been not an iota of principle involved in any of the divisions. The original 1985 minority completely supported Healy's sordid practices: they either denied that they had taken place or, to others, said they did not matter — what was at issue was Healy's politics, not his 'personal life'.

This was of course the most reactionary form of bourgeois ideology. For Marxism there can be no rigid division between 'personal' and 'public' morality. Healy's abuse of female comrades for his own gratification, his treatment of women as mere objects, expressed all that is rotten and corrupt in a decaying bourgeois society.

At the time of the original split (October 1985) Healy announced that Torrance was leading the minority in 'the greatest struggle in the Trotskyist movement since 1933'. A year later this self-same Torrance was, according to this self-same Healy, at the centre of a clique of police agents in the leadership of her 'News Line' group!

Similarly with Torrance. Her relations with Healy and the Redgraves have been as rotten and devoid of principle as have theirs with her. Torrance and her lieutenant Paddy O'Regan now denounce Healy for 'Pabloite capitulation to Stalinism'.

Yet this pair was amongst the most enthusiastic supporters of Healy's pro-Gorbachev line when he first raised the matter on the 'News Line' group's political committee. For months Torrance pleaded with Healy to stay with her, even when he was peddling the crassest Stalinism.

It was Torrance who proposed to invite Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko to the 24 August, 1986 Trotsky Anniversary Rally. She remained silent while Corin Redgrave ('Marxist Review', July 1986) heaped praise on Victor Karpov, first secretary of the Writers' Union of the USSR.

Last week's opening of the Edinburgh International Festival put



MICHAEL BANDA

both these positions into perspective (see 'Moscow Trials not a priority', Workers Press, 15 August).

Addressing a meeting of a top-level cultural delegation which is visiting the Festival and acting as Gorbachev's mouthpiece, Karpov made clear that a re-examination of the cases of the Bolshevik leaders framed in the infamous Moscow Trials was not a priority for the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Speaking on the same Edinburgh platform was another of Healy's 'de-Stalinising' elements in the bureaucracy, Professor of Sociology Yuri Zamoshkin, who expressed his 'personal' view that 'as a personality' Trotsky 'was like Stalin, only worse'.

At the same Festival session, Yevtushenko expressed his warmest admiration for Khrushchev, said nothing about his bloody 1956 invasion of Hungary and defended the former Russian leader's philistine attack on artists as an expression of 'peasant cunning'.

Healy has ended up as the leader of a tiny pro-Stalinist group, apologists for the most right-wing elements in the Stalinist bureaucracy.

This alone indicates the depth of the forces which lay behind the 1985 explosion in the movement that Healy led for 40 years. Stalinism finds itself in its deepest-ever crisis, desperate to prepare for and carry out those bloody betrayals of the working class that alone will enable capitalism to survive.

Pabloism was the expression of Stalinism inside the Fourth International. In this period of crisis for Stalinism Healy openly defends the classical positions of Pablo. The driving out of Healy from the movement, the exposure of all those who covered up for him, and continue to do so, was an indispensable blow in the struggle to build the Fourth International.

NATIONALISATION

The dream or the nightmare?

THIS year is the 40th anniversary of nationalisation of the coal industry. To mark the event, Durham Miners' Association produced a commemorative souvenir brochure for their Gala, giving an incisive account of what nationalisation has meant to the Durham coalfield. As a union they feel it is important to raise questions as to why a whole coalfield has been virtually destroyed under public ownership while millions of tonnes of coal have been sterilised. To battle against privatisation, they say, they must understand how they have fared under state control.

In 1947 nationalisation seemed like a dream, but in the 1980s that vision seems tarnished. The Durham Miners Association hope their analysis is of benefit to those who may, once again, have the chance to bring their industries under public ownership. WORKERS PRESS is pleased that the Association has given us permission to reprint their account. Copies of the souvenir brochure are available from them — see advert right.

On the last day of 1946. . .

THERE was never a New Year's Eve like 1946. Beleaguered pit communities looked forward, with genuine optimism, to a new era: fifty years of agitation was at an end.

At midnight they would celebrate the end of a cruel century of misery and exploitation. Tomorrow there would be no master. The private own-

ership of the coal industry was finally over.

Miners crowded into the pit yards. Sons and daughters were hoisted on to shoulders. They watched with pride as the new flag was run up over the headgear.

The large notice in the pit yard read: 'This pit is now managed by the National Coal Board — for and on behalf of the people.'

'The pit's ours now,' miners told each other.

They had been released from the military discipline of the war effort. Rations were still short, but now there was a Labour government in power. The country had given it a massive majority in Parliament in 1945 and a mandate to nationalise the coal mines. To most miners the insecurity of the past was over.

No longer would they face long periods without work as they did in the 1920s and 1930s. No longer would their children go hungry.

It was, as many Durham ban-

ners proclaimed, 'The Dawn of a New Era'. The future was being built for the young and the present secured for working men.

But now we are 40 years of from those halcyon days when delivery from oppression seemed guaranteed.

There are now only six pits left in Durham, where at nationalisation there were 134.

Miners in the coalfield once carried the proud boast 'my son won't follow me down the pit'. Today it would be a luxury if their offspring could find a paid place in the bowels of the earth.

Questions are being asked about nationalisation and what it really meant for miners and their families.

Who would have imagined that those sons, once carried high on their shoulders on Vesting Day, would be battling with riot police outside the very pit yard in 1984?

Who would have thought those same sons would be chased over the moors at Tow Law, bludgeoned and struck down in the streets of Easington and locked up in Durham jail?

Who on New Year's Eve 1946 would have foreseen a bitter, year-long strike in the defence of collieries supposedly 'managed by the NCB — for and on behalf of the people'?

The optimism of two generations past deserves an answer to those questions.

In part, this pamphlet is an attempt to gain an understanding of why nationalisation — even with its undisputed benefits — has by the 1980s failed the mining communities of Durham.

We hope it will be of some benefit to miners and their families throughout Britain and the world as well as Durham.

In search of a better land

Nationalisation of industries was an accepted part of labour-movement thinking since the turn of the century.

There was no better candidate than coal mining.

Coal was the single source of energy — the 'wealth of the nation' was built on it and depended on it.

Production of Britain's life blood under the private coal owners was wasteful and anarchic. For the miners it was miserable, dangerous and poorly-paid toil, which often put them out of work for years on end.

The landed gentry who owned the mines proved so unreliable that the Liberal government of Lloyd George brought coal production under state control at the beginning of the 1914-1918 war.

The state controlled profits and directed subsidies to loss-making collieries because they needed every nut of coal for the war effort.

The coal-owners loved it. In the last year of the war profits trebled. All the miners received was a national minimum wage.

The success of state control of production led to the 1919 commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of Justice Sankey.

The mining unions, through the Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGGB) — which Durham had joined fully in 1908 — put forward a draft bill for nationalisation.

They wanted a federated sys-

tem with governing bodies at national and regional level. There was to be representation on the boards of half miners and half taken from consumers and the community. The coal owners would be given only minimum compensation for the loss of their mines and would receive royalties.

Compensation, as we shall see, was to prove one of the major issues in nationalisation.

With great foresight the historian R.H. Tawney, a member of the Sankey Commission, warned:

'Unless the compensation paid is inflated to a point out of all proportion to the values of the properties acquired, the state, thanks to its superior credit, will retain a safe margin on profit in the transaction.'

He was pointing out, clearly, that compensation, if paid too high, would leave the state with a huge burden. In 1947 he was proved right.

In the end, after hearing evidence from all parties, including the coal owners, Sankey came out in favour of nationalisation.

One of the key points must have come from Chief Inspector of Mines, Sir Richard Redmayne, who said:

'The present system of individual ownership of collieries is extravagant and wasteful, whether viewed from the point of view of the coal mining industry as a whole or from the national point of view. The advantage that would result from collective production (would be) enhanced production, diminished cost of production and prevented waste.'

But the commission did not agree with the unions' proposals on control of the industry. Sankey recommended only one-third representation from the miners, leaving control firmly in the hands of the government.

He also disagreed over compensation for loss of royalties. Clearly, the Sankey Commission showed that capitalists — as well as the unions — were interested in the concept of nationalisation.

Due to the coal owners' influence and power they kept control, despite years of unrest in the industry. The industry was passed back to their control in March 1921 — a year that ushered in two decades of depression and misery for miners.

Nationalisation was put back into the box of ideas throughout the strife-torn years of the 1920s and 1930s. These were dark years of unemployment, lockouts, short working and defeats. Release from poverty and oppression were the main debates of the day.

And not all miners were agreed that nationalisation was the best road to that release. Some argued that state control would mean state control of labour — disputes would be made illegal and wages held down by law.

Others maintained that only workers' control would bring lasting benefits to the working class.

The Labour government of 1931, with Ramsay MacDonald at its head, must have made nationalisation seem like a pipe dream, even to the most optimistic.

It was not until 1939 that the government felt it necessary to control the 'wasteful' coal owners.

1947: From this. . .



During the 1950s, Durham saw some of its biggest Galas



Vesting day at Boldon Colliery



The Years of Victory: Durham Miners' Gala, in post-nationalisation fervour hears Nye Bevan speak

Durham Miners' Gala Souvenir Brochure

'40 years of nationalisation'

Available from:

Durham Miners' Association
'Redhills', Durham

Price: 50p + 20p p&p

Proceeds to Justice for Mineworkers

Once again the 'national need' and the 'war effort' was to override the interests of individual capitalists.

The call for nationalisation was reintroduced in 1939 by Ebbey Edwards, the secretary of the MFGB, calling for 'completely socialised industry'.

In 1941, the coalition government, through the right-wing Labour Minister Ernest Bevan, brought in the Essential Work (Coal Mining Industry) Order. This act forced men to stay tied to their own pits, to maintain production. It brought back memories of the Annual Bond which was fought against so bitterly by Durham miners a century before.

The owners clamoured for more profits and in 1942 the Ministry of Fuel and Power was established to control the greedy colliery proprietors.

The miners were forced to work under military discipline and the harshness sparked waves of strikes throughout the Durham coalfield, despite pleas from union officials to support the war effort.

By 1943 Durham miners had had their fill. In November 3,000 struck at Horden in support of 'datal' boys who were demanding better conditions of employment.

Blackhall Colliery also joined the strike. In the same month 11,500 men at Whitburn came out in support of boys who insisted on being paid a man's wage for men's work. Ryhope Colliery also struck in support of one Alex Dag-

lish, who was imprisoned for not paying a fine of £5.

The month of discontent was topped when Boldon men came out in support of a man jailed for refusing to pay a £2 fine for an alleged offence at work.

But the Durham Miners' Association did not back the strikers.

In the 'Northern Echo' of November 18 it published the following statement:

'The reckless stoppages are not a manifestation of the high standard of valour and the testing qualities of grit for which the Durham Miners have been renowned. They are a violation of pledges and can only be designated consciously or otherwise as sabotaging the war effort and assisting the enemy.'

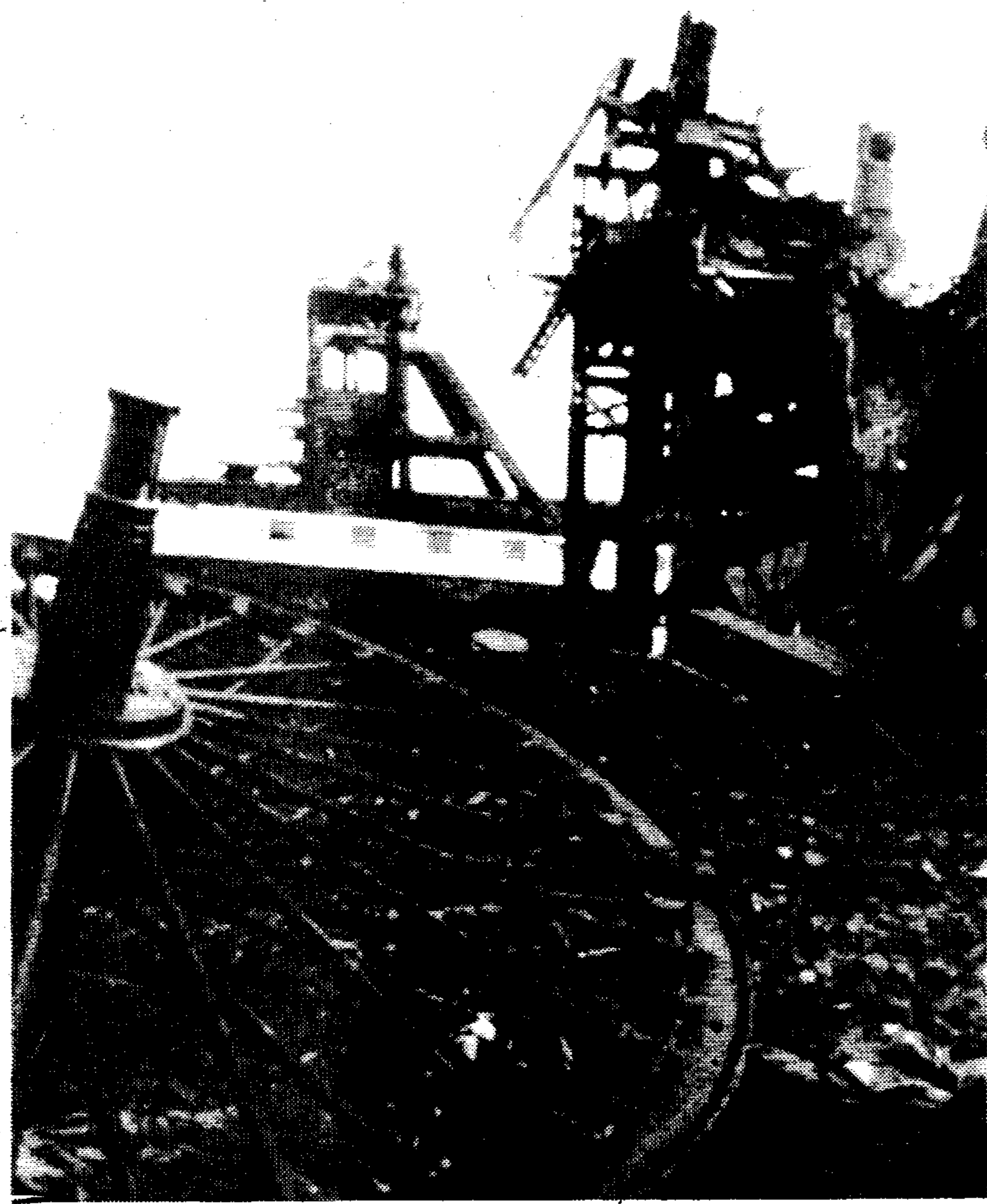
Interestingly, an ex-soldier replied to the statement in the same newspaper on November 10:

'If I had not known who has issued the DMA circular, I would have blamed the coal owners. I fail to find one word in the circular about the coal owners being to blame for some of these reckless stoppages.'

'With reference to the miners letting our lads down who are fighting in Italy, if the lads who are doing the fighting knew the wages and conditions we miners are still undergoing they would surely ask themselves what they are fighting for.'

TO BE CONTINUED

... to this: 1987



Horden colliery only months after closure

ROBSON'S CHOICE

TOM SCOTT ROBSON is away on holiday this week but one programme he has pointed out that should not be missed is 'The Eleventh Hour' presentation on Channel 4, 10p.m. Monday evening. 'Incest: a crime of violence' is a revised version of the 1986 documentary revealing child sexual abuse and the extent of abuse, its effect on its victims, and the role of the police, legal system and medical profession in dealing with this frightening and debilitating experience.

* * *

● Our picture shows: The 'First Love' season continuing with 'Arthur's Hallowed Ground', starring Jimmy Jewel and his lawnmower protecting a cricket pitch, Thursday 27 August at 9p.m., Channel 4.



Peter Fryer

is on holiday

LISTINGS

LISTINGS are published free by WORKERS PRESS each week for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thursday.

PICKET STRANGWAYS PRISON. To highlight protests by Irish Republican prisoners, Hugh Doherty and Natalino Vella. **Sunday, 23 August, 1.30 pm.** Southall Street, Manchester 3. These Political PoWs have been in solitary confinement in Strangeways and Wakefield prisons since last summer for protesting against their harsh and discriminatory treatment.

LONDON TOBACCO DISPUTE Public Meeting and Social in support of sacked workers. **Friday, 21 August 8.15p.m.** Liberty House, 324 High Street, Ponders End, Enfield. Organised by Enfield Strike Support Group.

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

THE LONG MARCH Sarmcol Workers Co-Operative Presentation, Hackney Empire, Mare Street, E8. **15-19 September 8p.m.** In dispute with British Tyre and Rubber Company since May 1985 — See Their Play, Hear Their Story.

RALLY IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH AFRICAN NUM Outside South African Embassy. **Saturday, 22 August 3-6p.m.** Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

TRADE UNIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE Discussion Meeting, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. **Sunday, 23 August 3-6p.m.** Speakers from South African trade unions, Hatfield Main NUM, RCG and WRP. Plus video on launch of COSATU.

RELEASE MORDECHAI VANUNU! Meeting with Meir Vanunu, kidnapped nuclear expert's brother. **Sunday, 23 August, 8p.m.** Venue details: phone Dave, 01-482-2940, or Charlie, 01-673 4622.

MARCH FOR MAYEKISO COMMITTEE Open meetings every Wednesday 8p.m., preceding 10 October, to organise national demonstration in support of South African trade unionist Moses Mayekiso. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn.

THE ALIENS ACT REVISITED Exhibition on immigration history, racism, and laws. Davenant Centre, 179-181 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

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

BRING BACK VICTORIA WILLIAMS! Campaign meetings, second and fourth Wednesdays of every month, 7.30p.m., UCA, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, W3.

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

VIRAJ MENDIS LONDON SUPPORT GROUP Downing Street Protest every Monday, 6p.m.-7p.m. (Westminster/Charing Cross tubes.) Weekly organisational meetings take place after the picket.

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The Workers Revolutionary Party Special Fund continues to come in at a trickle.

The important work in progress preparing for the forthcoming Conference to reorganise the Fourth International needs every penny that can be raised for it to go ahead successfully without interruption.

If every reader was to give something to this appeal, however modest — and ask others to do the same, it would make a big difference.

● PLEASE send donations without delay to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

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Donations urgently, please, to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY

GLASGOW

Saturday 22 August

9.45a.m. Assemble at Craigmuir Street, Blackhill
10a.m. March to Royston
10.45a.m. Rally.

Speakers from: Sinn Fein; Pan Africanist Congress; Kashmiri Independence Movement; Campaign Against Repression in Iran; Republican Prisoners Committee

- Britain out of Ireland!
- Down with British Imperialism!
- Support all struggles for national liberation and socialism!

Organised by Republican Bands Alliance and Clydeside Troops Out Movement

All banners welcome!

South Africa: the Miners' Strike, the Armed Struggle

Friday 21 August, 7.30p.m.

City Halls, Candleriggs, Glasgow
Speaker from Pan African Congress

REVIEWS

Story of the hunger strike

THERE are more than 1,500 Republicans in British and Irish jails today, six years after the Long Kesh hunger strike.

They are political prisoners — and the hunger strikers died making that principle clear. 'Ten Men Dead', by David Beresford, is a powerful and accurate account of that struggle.

It explains the cause of the hunger strike: not an 'inhuman' or ghoulish command by 'IRA god-fathers', but the prisoners' desperation at Britain's 'criminalisation' policy.

'Criminalisation' was 'a new security strategy devised by a high-powered government think-tank — which included representatives of the army, police and the counter-intelligence agency, MI5 — in an attempt to break the IRA and end the fighting in Ireland,' writes Beresford.

It was 'an attempt to separate the Republican guerrillas from their host population, the Catholics; depriving the fish of their water, to echo Mao Tse-tung's famous dictum.'

'Criminalisation' meant the ending of special category status for Republican prisoners; this was synchronised with propaganda about IRA 'gangs', 'racketeering' and 'thugs'.

Republican prisoners refused to wear prison uniform rather than accept 'criminalisation', and started the 'blanket protest'; this was punished by 24-hours-a-day confinement to cells and loss of all remission.

Petty intimidation of men going to washrooms led to the 'dirty protest'. Searchings and beatings became more violent, despite an IRA assassination campaign against prison officers.

Republican leaders faced a situation where a large proportion of their fighting forces were incarcerated; the 'criminalisation' propaganda was taking effect and the prisoners were demanding a stepped-up campaign for political status.

'The H-blocks could become the knackers' yard of the Republican movement,' wrote Bobby Sands. 'I know what the consequences of this hunger strike are going to be and I know what the consequences to our movement will be if it fails,' wrote the IRA commander at Armagh women's prison, volunteering to fast.

It was this type of intransigence by prisoners which got the go-ahead for the hunger strike from Republican leaders, who had opposed it on tactical grounds.

'Ten Men Dead' gives a vivid account of this relationship, quoting hundreds of 'comms' — secret communications etched on to cigarette papers, wrapped in household cling-film and smuggled out of Long Kesh

Ten Men Dead: the story of the 1981 hunger strike. By David Beresford. Grafton Books 1987. £3.95.

in the mouths, bras or panties of women visitors.

Most of those quoted are from Brendan 'Bik' Macfarlane, the IRA commanding officer in the H-blocks at that time:

'What with Ray (McCreesh) dying this morning and then getting whacked up the kite with Patsy (O'Hara) about to go any minute, the thought of Brendan (McLaughlin) not lasting past the weekend was somewhat staggering even for someone who is trying his best to "stay solid", he wrote to a Sinn Fein official.

'Such a bastard of a day. What I want to do right now is kneel down and cry myself to death ...

A document from the Justice and Peace commission of the Catholic church sets him agonising: 'If this development is the major undermining effort we've been expecting and we are not able to combat it then we should seek a way out of this situation, saving lives and as much face as possible.

'If it doesn't appear that the Brits will be forthcoming with a feasible settlement, then we should get in before public opinion swings against us, forcing us to halt after say six or seven deaths, which would be a disaster ...

Macfarlane interrupts one narrative with: 'I've just heard the Hump's (Tory minister Humphrey Atkins) statement — "no changes!!" Are they serious? What sort of people are we dealing with? I just can't fathom their logic at all.

'Surely they must pull the greatest condemnation yet upon themselves. It appears they are not interested in

simply undermining us, but completely annihilating us.'

The hunger strike demonstrated this utterly inhuman refusal to compromise to millions, and — in part through chances like the timing of the Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election and the 26 county general election — gave rise to massive anti-imperialist protests which completely surpassed the prisoners' expectations.

'Ten Men Dead' chronicles these events, focusing on the devastating paths inside Long Kesh itself. The hunger strikers are pictured life-size: Francis Hughes a fearless and battle-hardened guerrilla; Bobby Sands a poet and community leader; Mickey Devine an ordinary Derry youngster, driven by British state repression first to left-wing politics, then to the armed struggle.

The way in which Devine joined the Irish Young Socialists, and left again due to the political mistakes and remote arrogance of the British Socialist Labour League (SLL) leadership under Healy, is mentioned by Beresford.

'As the barricades went up in the Bogside the drift towards Republicanism was denounced as "sectarian" by the Young Socialists, who thereby cut themselves off from the community. Mickey opted to man the barricades and joined the Official IRA.'

On Bloody Sunday 'Mickey was not hurt, but it confirmed him even more deeply in the comradeship of arms.'

To WRP members, this brings home the importance of our recent change in attitude to the Irish revolution. In general, this book is essential to understand the struggle of Irish political prisoners which reached a desperate high point in 1981 and which continues to this day.

Simon Pirani

False Hope False Freedom



Guatemala: False Hope, False Freedom. By James Painter. Latin America Bureau, £4.95.

TWELVE months of 'civilian' rule under Christian Democrat President Cerezo have altered neither the poverty of the peasants nor the power of the economic elite and the army, argues James Painter. The book has an introduction by Rigoberta Menchu, the coffee-picker who has become known throughout the world as leader of the women plantation workers.

Migrant workers on Guatemala's estates are virtual slaves. They camp in open 'galeras', with earth floors, roofs and no walls. One plantation worker interviewed in the book points out that to have 'only a cough' is a luxury — because hunger increases susceptibility to disease and medicine is prohibitively expensive. Half the people of Guatemala have no access to health care of any kind; half the houses have no water, and a quarter of the people draw water from rivers, lakes and springs.

Hunger and poverty kill, but repression kills as well. Painter's book shows that civilian rule has left unchanged the great extremes of wealth and poverty in a country in which a handful own everything and the people are kept divided along racial lines, with the Mayan Indians at the bottom of the pile.

Hockney Posters. Introduction and text by Eric Shanes. Pavilion Books, £14.95.

DAVID HOCKNEY'S 50th birthday is celebrated by this comprehensive presentation of his 'excitingly forceful, vibrant and varied' posters, spanning paintings, drawings, one-man exhibi-

tions, opera productions and other events. The posters themselves are now collector's items, but this book is excellent value and superbly produced.

World Debt: Who Is To Pay? By Jacobo Schatan. Zed, £5.95.

A CHILEAN economist who worked for Allende's government, Schatan remains a utopian. But while his solutions to the debt burden of Latin America are in terms such as not paying the 'excessive interest' and calculating what is owed to the Western banks using the interest rates of the mid-1970s, he nevertheless gives a useful summary of the burden itself.

He also takes a 'green' view of the way the particular demands of capitalism in Latin America have blighted the environment through destructive mineral extraction, deforestation on a vast scale and life-threatening pollution.

Guinea Bissau: From Liberation Struggle to Independent Statehood. By Carlos Lopes. Zed, £7.95.

A DETAILED and academic history of the development of Guinea Bissau from the armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism to its present precarious economic and political position.

Lopes assesses the role of Amilcar Cabral, outstanding leader of the fight for liberation, but deals mainly with the problems after 'independence' was achieved — and the problems of nationalism and 'neo-colonialism'.

His verdict is that the revolutionary potential has not been fulfilled, but he does not regard the future as fixed. He quotes Gramsci 'the pessimism of reason should not obstruct the optimism of will.'



The Chocolate Conscience. By Gillian Wagner. Chatto and Windus, £18.95

INDUSTRIAL paternalism, Quaker-style, and the chocolate-millions of Fry, Cadbury and Rowntree.

A remarkable business history which pursues the story from the 19th century when the Frys locked the factory girls into the room where scripture was being read to the sale in the 1960s of the 'News Chronicle', the Cadburys' attempt to mould opinion through the press.

The Dali Scandal. By Mark Rogerson. Gollancz, £12.95.

HOW does a £10 piece of art paper become worth thousands of pounds? If you want to know how capitalism creates the extraordinary values of art, read this account of the Salvador Dali print scam.

His signature on blank sheets of paper meant that they could be used to make 'limited edition' prints. So what is a fake or a forgery? Actually, as this book admits, the art world has not been able to produce a satisfactory definition.

But did Dali really sign any paper at all after 1980 — or even 1979 — and what does that mean for the unfortunate collectors who have invested in a work of art not because they like it, but because capitalism says it is worth a lot of money?

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SOUTH AFRICA

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The fight for a Bolshevik party

Part Three

Part One of this series drew attention to the notorious historical legacy of Stalinism (Workers Press, 4 July 1987).

Part Two (Workers Press, 1 August) showed that the two-stage conception has its origins in Stalinist counter-revolution and defeats of the working class, while the Permanent Revolution conception represents the only path for a victorious proletarian revolution.

The final article shows how Stalinism prepares to defeat the struggle of the South African working class.

Stalinist opposition to the struggle for socialism

THE completely counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism and its preference for peaceful coexistence with the international bourgeoisie above that of world revolution is directly and unequivocally revealed in the position which it adopts towards the South African revolution.

Those who are still so desirous of looking for 'two-sides to Stalinism (its so-called 'dual' or 'contradictory' nature), should consider very seriously the advice given to the oppressed and exploited masses in South Africa by the Soviet bureaucracy to dispel forever such dangerous illusions.

In an interview on Soviet policy in Southern Africa, Dr Goncharov, reported to be one of the Soviet Union's 'top' Africa specialists, and also deputy director of the Institute of African Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, made it abundantly clear that the Soviet Union did not wish to see socialism established in South Africa.

Goncharov said that he was disturbed at what he detected as an attempt by some African National Congress (ANC) members to 'put before the national liberation movement now the tasks of the socialist revolution'.

According to him, 'the Soviets would welcome more "flexibility" and realism on the part of the ANC, which should downplay the desire for socialism present among

some of its members.' ('South Scan', No.36, 17 June 1987)

Worst the South African working class believe that the bureaucrats in the land of 'socialism-in-one country' would wish them something similar, Goncharov was quick to reassure them (raising the theory of 'two-stage' revolution to new and absurd heights).

'South Africa would eventually be a socialist society, [but] he estimated that it would take between 25 and 100 years — and he considered himself an optimist!!' (ibid)

Goncharov did not however stop here. To ensure that the revolution in South Africa did not overstep the boundaries of bourgeois democracy he insisted that it was necessary that the US and the USSR jointly intervene in solving the crisis in South Africa.

The task of the Soviet Union would be to bring the ANC to the negotiating table with the ANC willing to give group right guarantees to whites, and the task of the US would be to prevail upon Pretoria that there could be no solution to South Africa's problems which did not include a deal with the ANC.

Imperialism and Stalinism both fear proletarian revolution in the weakest link!

SOUTH AFRICA has come to occupy a similar place in the balance of world class



A hero's welcome for general secretary Jay Naido at the COSATU's launch in 1985. The federation has mobilised the working class around militant demands

forces that Russia occupied on the eve of World War I.

Like the Russia of 1914-1917, South Africa concentrates in itself in a unique and explosive way all the contradictions that characterise world capitalism in its final and most decrepit stage.

In South Africa the worldwide historical crisis of capitalism finds its most acute expression in the crisis-ridden nature of apartheid-capitalism.

The racist bourgeoisie in South Africa is finding it more and more difficult to defeat the mass upsurge of the past two to three years. It has to contend not only with an economic system which is in chronic crisis, but with a political system which has been rejected by the overwhelming majority of the South African population.

The links between apartheid and capitalism are however so organic and deep-seated, and the working class is so preponderant in relation to the petty-bourgeoisie, that neither the South African bourgeoisie (nor their class allies, the international bourgeoisie) are over-eager to tamper with the apartheid system lest the whole edifice of apartheid-capitalism comes tumbling down upon their heads.

The international bourgeoisie are under no illusions that a successful proletarian revolution in South Africa will unleash a revolutionary wave which will leave no part of the world untouched. They know that the maintenance of private property relations in South Africa is integrally tied to the maintenance of the capitalist system worldwide.

The principal agency of imperialism amongst the working class — Stalinism — is no less disturbed about the direction that the South African revolution is taking.

The greatest fear of Stalinism is not world imperialism, nor the threat of a third world war, but the independent mobilisation of the working class on a programme for social and permanent revolution.

For the bureaucratic caste that has usurped the mantle

of the October Revolution, the prospect of a revolution in South Africa conjures up the nightmare of their own working masses being inspired to return to the true October heritage — by carrying out a ruthless and thorough-going political revolution against them.

COSATU has become a major threat to Stalinism!

GONCHAROV's 'warnings' are not a chance and isolated occurrence. The recent second national congress of the trade union federation COSATU revealed just how petrified those who want to betray the South African revolution have become of the organised strength of the working class.

Delegates representing close to 1 million workers heard messages of 'support' from members of the Congress Alliance: the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU).

There were gasps of incredulity when they were seriously admonished 'not to elevate the struggle for socialism above that of the national democratic struggle', nor to adopt the struggle for socialism (which the workers have already done) as the policy of COSATU.

COSATU may be only a trade union, but it has mobilised the working class around a programme of militant demands and in its concrete struggles to defend the interests of the workers it has been forced to make the connections between the system that exploits the workers (capitalism) and the system that oppresses them and denies them all democratic rights (apartheid).

This is sufficient for the ANC-SACP-SACTU alliance to realise that COSATU represents a direct challenge to their plans to betray the South African revolution.

Unlike SACTU in the 1950s which was quite willing to subordinate the interests of the working class to the 'national democratic struggle' (read, struggle for bourgeois democracy), COSATU has consistently

advanced the position that the struggle in South Africa, if it is to be victorious, must be led by the working class.

A revolution in South Africa which is led by the working class and which guarantees its class interests will not however be able to stop at some 'bourgeois democratic stage', but will increasingly, as the class struggle intensifies, be forced to place socialist tasks on the order of the day.

By emphasising the interconnectedness of the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism and by insisting on the leadership role of the working class, COSATU has come into direct collision with the 'two-stage' theory of revolution. Hence the 'controls' which the ANC-SACP-SACTU now want to place over it.

Build the Bolshevik party and re-organise the Fourth International to defeat Stalinism!

THE coincidence of positions between the Soviet bureaucracy and the ANC-SACP-SACTU alliance demonstrates that it has become the main agency of Stalinism amongst the South African working class.

Yesteryear's petty-bourgeois nationalists in the ANC have increasingly come to adopt the perspectives and methods of the Stalinist SACP for the struggle in South Africa.

The division which could be made in the past between petty-bourgeois nationalism and counter-revolutionary Stalinism is becoming increasingly blurred through the inexorable march of the class struggle.

The petty-bourgeois nationalists need the socialist pretensions of the SACP to keep in check the militancy of the working class, and the Stalinist SACP needs the standing and popularity of the petty-bourgeois nationalists amongst the oppressed and exploited to carry out their betrayal of the South African revolution.

COSATU must be de-

fended against this attack by Stalinism. It will be at the peril of the struggle of the working class that we allow the Stalinists to deflect the struggle of COSATU away from an all-sided attack against apartheid-capitalism to 'pressuring' the Botha regime to come to the negotiating table.

There can be no illusions that the ANC can be transformed into a 'mass socialist party'; nor that there is some 'progressive' side to Stalinism.

Trotsky's characterisation of Stalinism in 1933 as the most counter-revolutionary force amongst the working class retains its correctness and forcefulness a hundred times more in 1987.

Today Stalinism 'admonishes' the working class against raising the call for socialism; tomorrow, arms-in-hand, it will physically eliminate all those who refuse to countenance its defeatist and class-collaborationist policies for South Africa.

The only and best defence against Stalinist counter-revolution is to build a Bolshevik party, firmly rooted in the mass movement, that leads the struggle of the working class on a programme for permanent and uninterrupted revolution; and to re-organise the Fourth International as the world party for socialist revolution which alone will be able to mobilise the international proletariat to come to the support and assistance of the South African revolution.

To delay in building the Bolshevik party in South Africa and to ignore the struggle to re-organise the Fourth International is to prepare the groundwork for Stalinism to carry out the most vicious betrayal of the revolution in South Africa!

- Defend COSATU against the attacks of the Stalinists!
- Build a Bolshevik party on a programme for Permanent Revolution!
- Re-organise the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution!

CONCLUDED



Celebrating the birth of a new union: Several unions have merged to form the 130,000-strong National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, representing all-metal industry workers within the COSATU federation

MINERS' STRIKE: THE ROAD TO VICTORY

THE historic strike of over 300,000 gold and coal miners, now entering its third week, richly confirms the deep-seated nature of the revolutionary situation in South Africa.

The strike is a truly mass workers' strike, occurring against the background of almost five years of strike activity by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and three years of mass upsurge by the oppressed and exploited.

The mining magnates — organised in the powerful Chamber of Mines — and their chief executive organ, the racist South African state, are certainly fully aware of the revolutionary import of the strike.

They have seen the class struggle in South Africa develop rapidly into a full-scale attack against the whole system of apartheid-capitalism.

That the working class is

BY A SOUTH AFRICAN
REVOLUTIONARY

now prepared to do battle against them in the centre of this system — the gold mining industry — must surely raise the spectre of social revolution.

The strike is going to be a supreme test for the whole of the working class and for all the oppressed masses in South Africa. On the surface it may seem that it is only about wages and decent working conditions for the miners — perfectly 'legitimate' trade union demands.

But in it is bound up all the questions of the cheap

labour system, migrant labour, the role of the 'homelands' etc — in a word, the strike poses a direct challenge to whole of apartheid-capitalism.

If it was merely a question of wages, why have the mining bosses adopted such an uncompromising and belligerent position? There is certainly a great deal of provocation in the bosses' stand (fully supported by the Botha state).

The NUM is the youngest of the large industrial unions of the trade union federation COSATU — but it is the largest; it is based in the strategically most important industries of South Africa; it has been the mineworkers who in the main have given the lead in COSATU and thereby inspired all workers and oppressed alike.

The fate of the development of the revolutionary situation in South Africa is inextricably bound up with the fate of the miners' strike.

Defeat of the miners would be a serious blow to the masses and could enable the racist state to carry out the kind of measures which two states of emergency have not made possible.

On the other hand, victory to the miners would greatly steel the confidence of the masses and be a vital preparatory step towards an all-sided attack on apartheid-capitalism.

The huge significance of the strike brings into sharp focus the need for revolutionary leadership — the need for systematically preparing the masses for taking power.

Only a Bolshevik Party can provide such a leadership. Without the guidance of a revolutionary vanguard the union leadership has inevitably made serious errors.

The African National Congress (ANC) and South African Communist Party (SACP) will not — or rather cannot — provide the necessary revolutionary leadership.

Their two-stage conception is at root reformist. Their politics is essentially petty-bourgeois with its emphasis on 'pressurising' the Botha state into abandoning an exclusive racist 'democracy' in favour of a non-racial 'national democracy'.

This is why the propagation of guerrillism has always coincided with the idea that negotiation is not ruled out.

For years the ANC-SACP have talked of the revolutionary seizure of power but even in the heart of the 1985 revolutionary crisis there was only a deafening silence on how this was to take place.

All they had to offer then (as now) was the anarchistic



Jubilant miners' with their union banner

slogan: 'Make the country ungovernable' and the rote insistence that 'the armed struggle continues'.

But on the question of how the masses, that is, the workers, are to be prepared for taking power there has been nothing but vagueness and confused rhetoric.

It is in this context — the dire absence of revolutionary leadership — that the errors of the NUM leadership must be placed.

Sending the workers home is a wrong tactic. To instruct the miners to leave the arena of struggle is to emasculate the strike, is to deprive it of all its revolutionary import. The mass of the workers are dispersed, they are separated from their leadership, they are deprived of the experience of directly engaging the class enemy.

We are aware of the awesome power which the mine bosses have at their disposal. We know how they brutally crushed the heroic miners' strike of 1946. We know how vulnerable the miners are in the compounds and how this makes possible the isolation of the miners.

But in struggle the proletariat will never be victorious if its leaders chose for it the 'line of least resistance', instead of presenting it with a bold and carefully thought-out revolutionary plan of action.

COSATU has already raised the call for the workers to build defence squads. The strike of the miners presents a concrete opportunity for this call to be translated into reality!

COSATU, the United Democratic Front, National Education Crisis Committee, the youth movement SAYCO — indeed, all the

organisations of the exploited and oppressed — have already raised the call for a Workers' United Front against apartheid-capitalism.

Can there be a better time to build this Workers' United Front than now when that section of the working class that has fought the fiercest battles against the bosses is involved in a life-and-death struggle?

The call has already been raised for international solidarity with the masses of South Africa. What better moment to mobilise the international proletariat than now, when the fate of the South African revolution is at stake!

The miners' union leadership is cautious because they do not fully appreciate the determination of the miners to come out of this battle victorious.

Against their advice, thousands of workers have not returned to the 'homelands' and many thousands of workers who are not even members of the union have joined the strike.

This militancy and readiness to take the battle to its logical conclusion must make the union leadership realise that their own hesitancy and lack of boldness can only serve to disorientate the masses.

Only revolutionary Marxism can show the way forward. A Bolshevik party must be forged in this crucial class battle. It alone will be able to direct the strike on to a revolutionary course.

In its struggle to strengthen its vanguard this party must:

● agitate for the building of workers' defence squads;

● patiently explain to the workers why it is a mistake to leave their workplaces;

● raise the call for the building of committees of action to come to the support of the miners;

● actively agitate for the creation of a Workers' United Front which must ensure the miners are not left to fight on their own; and

● begin to prepare for the extension of the miners' strike. This must include raising the question of a general strike.

We are not advocating any adventurist turn. We are not saying a general strike can simply be called without the most careful and thorough preparation, and without at least the most organised sections of the working class ready to do battle; we are not saying that the immediate and direct struggle for power has begun.

We are saying that the miners' strike poses revolutionary questions which can only be solved by revolutionary measures. We are saying that the strike poses all the questions of how we prepare for an all-out assault against apartheid-capitalism.

Through a close study of the unfolding situation concrete answers must be found.

We are saying that the links in the chain must be built.

Only revolutionary Marxism will be able to provide definite guidance to action. Only the building of a revolutionary party can guarantee the miners' strike will not be defeated and that the struggle against apartheid-capitalism can be taken to a higher level.

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