

MAGNIFICENT STRIKE! The miners are NOT defeated!

See pages 8&9

TUC

ACTION NOW to support South African unions! WORKERS' sanctions now!

THE GREAT three-week strike of South African mineworkers which ended last Sunday was a struggle of momentous importance, for the working class not only of South Africa but of the whole world.

Out of the barbarous and brutally authoritarian conditions imposed by the apartheid state, the great mining monopolies and banking houses, came a united and confident challenge.

Miners gave notice, incontrovertibly, that they will soon spearhead the working class in the overthrow of South African imperialism and the winning of working-class power.

That is the first vital conclusion to be drawn from the strike: it was the most important step forward up until now in the maturing revolutionary situation which will lead to the overthrow of the apartheid state.

But from this everything follows: Such a revolution is the greatest blow which could be struck at world capitalism. The apartheid state is the supplier of gold to the whole capitalist world and the gauleiter of all southern Africa. Here the imperialist chain will break at its weakest link.

FOR THE working class in Britain and in every other country solidarity with the insurgent working class of South Africa is the outstanding and immediate priority.

The TUC and all other working-class organisations must be made to provide financial and every other material aid, not only for the families of the martyred and the maimed shot down by the mineowners' death squads, but for the building of the South African mineworkers' union and the trade union federation COSATU.

Anglo American's holdings, offices and products in Britain and every country where they operate such as Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and the US must be systematically blacked (see page 8).

The whole question of working-class sanctions to defeat apartheid is now raised to a new level. These sanctions are the only effective way to defeat the apartheid state.

● Every opponent of apartheid must support the South African miners and their actions because these miners and their unions spearhead the working class, the only force which can defeat the apartheid state and the monopolies it represents.

● Every trade unionist and certainly every delegate to the TUC must support the South African miners for the same reason and because the South African miners are striking blows at OUR enemy: Thatcher and the multi-nationals and banks of

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

her paymasters in the British ruling class.

What is at stake is a common struggle against the same enemy, international monopoly capitalism, which must be united in a common struggle.

Every import of coal, gold and uranium from South Africa must be blocked at ports, airports, on the road and in importing agencies. Every export of mining machinery and other resources to the apartheid exploiters of South Africa must be blocked.

This means planned organised actions against the companies who manufacture and transport these goods.

EVERY great struggle — such as the miners' strikes in South Africa and in Britain — raises the great outstanding question of all, that of resolving the crisis of working class leadership.

The arguments about if and when the South African miners' strike should have been called off are of great importance as miners will rightly be critical of secret negotiations and refusal of the NUM leaders to come back and consult the rank and file.

Every such struggle raises the question of the revolutionary overthrow of the regime. That means mobilising the whole class behind a revolutionary leadership, ready and able to go through to the end. Patience and tactical skill are vital components within such a strategy.

The next stage — and it could be in weeks rather than years, so vital and irrepressible is the revolutionary energy shown in the awakening of the South African masses — will above all be the test for those who fight to build the necessary Marxist leadership.

In South Africa the traditional Stalinist leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), will have to be exposed and replaced.

They represent the privileged bureaucracy which rules in the Soviet Union whose strategy is peaceful co-existence with imperialism. A workers' revolution in South Africa setting alight the whole continent would be their death-knell too.



The 500th day of the Non-Stop Picket outside the South African Embassy by City Group Anti-Apartheid. They have also held special pickets in support of the striking miners.

That is why the ANC works against a socialist revolution and peddles the deadly myth of the democratic way out in agreement with the so-called progressive capitalists (among these none other than Anglo-American).

THE LAST two years have seen the growth of the powerful new mass unions, especially the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) of South Africa. These workers now take a great leap forward, feeling their strength as a class to lead the whole people to the overthrow of the oppressor.

Trade unions today, especially in the uncontrolled tempest of South African

politics with masses continuously on the move, cannot be trade unions of the old type. A trade union leadership is not a revolutionary party.

Revolutionary questions are raised as soon as the workers organised in their unions confront the armed might of the state.

The Fourth International was founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, two years before his assassination by a Stalinist GPU agent, as the international of Marxist revolutionary parties which is necessary to defeat Stalinism and reformism. It lives and is being built today in South Africa, in Britain, in

Europe east and west, in the Middle and Far East and in America north and south.

What the South African miners' strike tells us above all is that the urgent task of re-building the Fourth International in every country cannot wait.

Playing its part in the unions, on the streets, in every anti-apartheid organisation, the WRP will organise its members for solidarity with the South African revolution. We call upon all the support groups which have grown up during and since the 1984-1985 miners' strike to fight for working-class sanctions against South Africa and to collect resources to aid the South African miners.

We call upon the trade unions and especially the TUC to organise these actions everywhere. We call upon all workers, employed and unemployed, especially the young, to fight for these working-class actions against the apartheid state to build support for the Workers Press which is devoted to that fight and to join the WRP.

WHAT YOU CAN DO in the solidarity movement in Britain; The miners are NOT defeated; Britain's links with the South African mining industry — see centre pages.

Lobby TUC on Monday

YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM

Lobby the Trades Union Congress

PUBLIC MEETING

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 apprentice system with full rates of pay!
- Trade unions must recruit unemployed and all scheme workers!
- For the unity of unemployed and employed workers!

12:15pm Monday 7th, September
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

Workers Press

TUC Congress:

Expel EETPU! End collaboration!

TRADES Union Congress general secretary Norman Willis has a plan to counter falling union membership and the terrifying spread of anti-union firms. It includes promotional films, exhibitions and US-type credit-card benefits to attract new members who 'might have been put off by what they saw as an unattractive image of trades unionism'.

This rose-tinted TUC — a close relation of Bryan Gould's media-packaged Labour Party — is being presented at this week's Blackpool congress under the heading 'Building for the Future'. But Willis's feeble measures will only aggravate the TUC's problems. For their cause lies in the crisis of the imperialist system of which Willis and Co. are among the most enthusiastic defenders.

Britain's old manufacturing industries, the strongholds of trade unionism, have been battered by closures. Cities like Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle are reduced to ghost towns. Bastions of craft unionism, like London's Fleet Street, have been hammered by multi-national union-busters like Murdoch. New-tech industries requiring tiny workplaces are growing. So is mass unemployment, along with part-time working, home work, and dirt-cheap immigrant and teenage labour.

These changes are brought about by the crisis of British imperialism, which forced Thatcher to confront the most powerful union, the miners, in 1984-1985, pushing through 70,000 sackings but failing to smash the National Union of Mineworkers as she had planned. It now drives the state to a more violent onslaught against the working class, and to demand from the union bureaucracy still greater subservience.

That bureaucracy — which betrayed the miners to avoid a confrontation with the state — reacts to each new set of anti-union laws, and each new attempt to impose a legally-binding settlement like that forced on the teachers' union, with lower cringing and more terrified covering. Occasionally it complains: 'Don't expect us to sell JTS to our activists, we can't!' But with every crucial issue, it draws closer into the state's service.

The most disgusting aspect of the TUC's capitulation is its refusal to lift a finger against Eric Hammond and other leaders of the electricians' union EETPU. Now Hammond has threatened to walk out of the TUC if the Transport and General Workers' Union resolution against no-strike deals is passed. Willis and Co. are desperate to appease him. Greasing the wheels of this operation will be the discredited right-wingers of the Communist Party who also want 'unity' with the scab miners' union UDM.

But as imperialism and the state pull Hammond closer, more sections of the bureaucracy are dragged after him. The Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) leaders will try to amend the transport union's resolution at Blackpool to get the EETPU off the hook — and let the state's talons sink deeper into the unions. This is in line with the AEU's 're-organisation' which will shatter some of its democratic structures and strengthen the right-wing's hold.

The cause of the unions' crisis is not that the miners were 'defeated' as so many 'lefts' presumed. It is the crisis of imperialism in decline, which cannot tolerate any unions unless totally subordinate to its control.

Hammond-ism, collaborationism, SDP-type unionism are for this reason an immovable object. But they will come up more and more against the irresistible force — the struggle of the working class epitomised not only by the miners, the Wapping printers, the teachers and the dozens of small and bitter strikes of the last two years . . . but also by that great mass of impoverished youth, women workers and ill-treated immigrant workers who in many cases are not yet in the unions.

And now the shadow of the South African National Union of Mineworkers hangs over the British unions!

Workers must be mobilised around the demand to expel the EETPU from the TUC, to end collaboration with the anti-union laws, and break from the MSC and all other state bodies. They will be mobilised around the demand to democratise the unions and open them up to the unemployed youth who are deprived of membership.

No bureaucrat, however 'left', can fight effectively for these demands, because it involves challenging capitalism's right to rule. The fight on these issues must be waged by a revolutionary leadership committed to the struggle for working-class power and socialism.

Mother and baby's refuge

BY PAUL HENDERSON

A MOTHER and her baby have taken refuge in a Hindu temple in Leicester to avoid deportation under the racist immigration laws.

Renukaben Lakhani came to Britain in July 1986 as a legal visitor. She met and married Vijay Lakhani, himself a British citizen, and applied for citizenship.

The time taken by the Home Office to decide her case was so long that their child was conceived and born in the interval.

The decision to serve a deportation order on Renukaben has outraged the Asian community in Leicester. Anger has been increased by the cynical announcement that if Renukaben wants to take her baby with her, the Home Office will pay the fare.

Renukaben was praying at the Shree Sanaban Mandir temple when the deadline for deportation came, and she decided to stay in the temple. Already a campaign of protest had begun, with a public meeting of over 300 people, including representatives of 100 organisations.

On 27 August, author Hanif Kureishi ('My Beautiful Laundrette') came to show solidarity, visiting Renukaben and her baby in the temple's small store room which has become their refuge.

Anyone interested in helping the campaign should contact Renukaben and Baby Campaign, 66a Belgrave Road, Leicester. Messages of support particularly welcome.



PHOTO: MARK SALMON

Ambulance strike possible

DEVON ambulance-men are considering industrial action after an ambulance lost a wheel while attending a call.

This came after it was announced that an independent investigation is to be carried out into a series of accidents to Exeter's ambulances. A meeting on possible action will be taken next Wednesday.

This follows last week's incident when a wheel fell off

an ambulance — the fifth accident so far this year in which wheels have either fallen off or come loose during journeys.

The National Union of Public Employees has called for changes in regulations so that vehicles would be replaced before they are either seven years old or have travelled 140,000 miles.

The union is convinced that the ambulances involved in the accidents are either too old or have done too many miles. The replacement of the fleet, as demanded by the union would cost £1 million.

The manufacturer Bedford has told Exeter Health Authority that the company is sure that no blame attaches to its product in terms of assembly, materials or design.

The health authority withdrew half its 120 ambulances immediately from service after the latest incident in which six people — two ambulance crew and four patients were injured.

Axle

It happened when the back axle of an ambulance fractured while patients were being driven home on the Exeter inner bypass last Monday.

The 62 withdrawn vehicles are all V, W, and X registrations. They will be kept off the road until the investigation is completed.

Their removal meant that out-patients had to rely on private transport for most of last week.

Drivers

Ambulance drivers had earlier withdrawn a 35mph maximum speed limit which they introduced after three previous incidents in which wheels had fallen off. On other occasions wheel nuts were discovered to have worked loose, or to have become overtight. The 'drive slow' was called off after the 62 old-style Bedfords now out of service were fitted with new wheels and wheelnuts.

New Tory weapon for immigrants

GENETIC fingerprinting is the latest technique to be introduced by the Thatcher government as part of its plan to further tighten the battery of racist immigration laws. The Home Office admitted last week that such tests were now in operation.

The trial DNA tests are being carried out at the suggestion of the Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs. The tests purport to show whether applicants are related to people already living in Britain and whether they have a right of entry into Britain.

The government claims that this will cut the length of waiting time for cases to be dealt with.

New, more stringent immigration laws are expected to be proposed in the next Queen's Speech. The government has refused to give any details but has indicated that the case of alleged bigamous marriages will be included in new proposals to be published this autumn.

But the government would ensure 'that the legislative framework is robust enough to cope with new pressures and demands' said a spokesman.

The government said that the pressures caused by the surge in applicants which led to the introduction of visas justified even tighter controls against 'illegal' entry.

The government refused a suggestion from the committee that more village visits should be made in Bangladesh. They were two expensive and the High Commission in Dhaka has been told to use smaller teams of officers.

BOOKS

LONDON · GLASGOW

The Paperbacks Centres

28 Charlotte Street, London W1P 1HP
Tel: 01-636 3532

10-12 Atlantic Road, Brixton, London SW9 8HY
Tel: 01-274 8342

Hope Street Book Centre
321 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 3PT
Tel: 041-332 8881

BOOKS

UPTON PARK Paperbacks Centre continues until Saturday 5 September. Lots of bargains. Why not look in for a final browse and buy — you will receive a most warm welcome! 389 Green Street, Upton Park London E13

Mortgage casualties

NEARLY 22,000 people were thrown out of their homes last year because they could not keep up with their mortgage payments.

Building society repossessions were up 12 per cent last year. Over 50,000 borrowers have arrears of between six and 12 months. More than 13,000 are over a year behind in their repayments.

Arrears are rising particularly sharply in the north of England. In Birmingham, the Money Advice Centre (MAC) is dealing with 800 mortgage arrears problems a year and there is now a six-week waiting period for an appointment.

This mounting crisis is hitting previously prosperous members of the middle class.

'We see almost as many relatively affluent people who have got into difficulties by overstretching them-

selves. Where there is a lack of alternative accommodation, people are forced into buying when they really can't afford it. It only needs a slight rise in the mortgage rate and they are in trouble,' said Jeff Brown of MAC.

One factor greatly worsening the problem is the new social security regulations which now mean that claimants get only half their interest on mortgage payments.

One of the key elements in Thatcher's appeal to the middle class was the prospect of share ownership and the spread of a fraudulent 'property-owning democracy' including the right to buy council houses.

Many of these groups are now being badly shaken by tumbling share prices and rising interest rates. The development of a socialist programme to appeal to these sections of the population is now an urgent necessity.

Not wanted in Lambeth

EX-MOSLEYITE fascist Timothy Danvers, who runs the 'Soldier of Fortune' militia and 'survivalist' shop in Charing Cross, London, has dropped plans to expand his trade through ISO books in Westminster Bridge Rd., Lambeth, after indications the council would object.

ISO is a bookshop specialising in military history and related subjects. Danvers' Charing Cross shop has had more specialist stock, such as bomb-making manuals and weapons. He recently expanded to the South Coast, opening an outlet in Brighton's Queens Hotel shopping centre. We also hear he is selling National Front tee shirts in Soho.

Todd deal over buses?

BY ROY THOMAS

LONDON Regional Transport management and top transport union officials have secretly set up a 'Think Tank' on industrial problems in the service.

In private talks, LRT chairman Sir Keith Bright, T&GWU general secretary Ron Todd and the union's national passenger secretary Cliff Twart have set up a 'Think Tank' to discuss problems created by busworkers' resistance to Tory plans for tendering and wage cuts.

Elected members of the union's London Bus Committee and the National Passenger Committee contacted by Workers Press last weekend knew no details of the 'Think Tank', who would be involved, nor when it would meet.

Local bus garage managers however were able to tell bus crews that it would consist of full-time T&GWU officials and management, and would only deal with future plans for tendering and de-regulation.

It would not deal with the three garages, Norbiton, Harrow and Sidecup, where routes have already been 'won' by London Buses — at lower wages and longer hours for the crews.

Faced with determined resistance from the bus crews to pay cuts and longer hours, the T&GWU national leadership has gone over the heads of the elected committees and now seeks to do a deal, isolating the drivers and engineers at the three garages in the forefront of the battle from the rest of the busworkers.

There are only two things up for discussion for London's busworkers. Either:

- make tendering work, which is what Ron Todd is now seeking to commit the union to, or

- blow up the whole tendering and deregulation process by building on the resistance already shown by London's bus crews.

The policy of no wage cuts and no longer working hours has been the policy of the union's bus delegate conference since the beginning of the tendering dispute.

Equal wages and hours (£4.17 per hour for a 38-hour week) for all London busworkers is the central principle in the dispute.

It is the refusal of the busworkers to accept the divide and rule policy of London Buses that is blowing up the government's strategy of using the fraud of tendering to break up the union and its agreements and cut the services.

Late on Tuesday evening angry garage union representatives were on the telephone to London Bus Committee members urging them to stand firm in defence of the Norbiton drivers.

This followed a late television news programme reporting that London Buses will sack all the drivers at Norbiton over the next few months as operators are found to take over the routes.

The London Bus Committee was meeting on Wednesday to discuss the situation. It is understood they will be demanding an urgent meeting with the union's national secretary, Cliff Twart.

Busworkers want to know how Twart and Todd intend to represent their interests. What, they ask, can possibly come out of talks over the heads of their elected representatives?

Why is Ron Todd so determined to have a 'Think Tank' with management when London Buses arrogantly sets out to smash the standards of the workers, and the services of the community?

To put it plainly — is Ron Todd planning a sell-out of the struggle?

CAMDEN FIGHTS THE CUTS

'Resistance needs community support'

'It's clear what the Tories are after and that is the dismantling of a whole layer of government,' Angela Mason from Camden National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) said at a meeting called by Camden Trades Council last week.

'It's taken them nine years to really mount a major attack on Labour local authorities', she said.

'The Tories haven't changed — it's the attitude of elected Labour councillors that has changed.

'They seem to have responded to the difficulties by abdicating any will or ability to respond to the Tory government.'

In July — in a panic move following the Tory victory in the general election and with no consultation with the unions or community groups — the majority of Camden Labour Councillors imposed an immediate freeze on financial growth, a freeze on

filling job vacancies and stopped the renewal of temporary workers' contracts.

With over 8,000 workers employed by Camden Council there are always a large number of vacant posts. Freezing these posts, including those made vacant by women taking maternity leave, has caused chaos and severe disruption to Council services.

The Camden nurseries for instance are only working at half their capacity. Telephone switchboards are now shut in some Council offices for several hours a day because of job vacancies.

Camden NALGO members — over 4,000-strong and the largest union in Camden — overwhelmingly adopted a policy of opposition to the cuts, no cover for vacant jobs and support for members on industrial action as a result of this policy.

'To keep up this policy of resistance we will need the support of the local community,' Mason said.

'We must get people in particular sectors together, for instance people in housing with tenants — we must bring together the users of services and trade unionists.'

She also stressed that this is a London-wide problem and it is vital to make links with workers in other boroughs.

Speaking from the floor Graham Shurety, one of nine Labour Councillors in Camden openly opposing the cuts said: 'All manoeuvres are over for local authorities.'

'The ratecapping campaign never got to the point where the trade unions felt the attacks because most Labour councils never defied

the law or challenged the government.

'This time the working class will have to respond,' he said.

Other speakers from the Health Service and Camden National Union of Teachers stressed the importance of learning lessons from their experience with Labour health and education authorities.

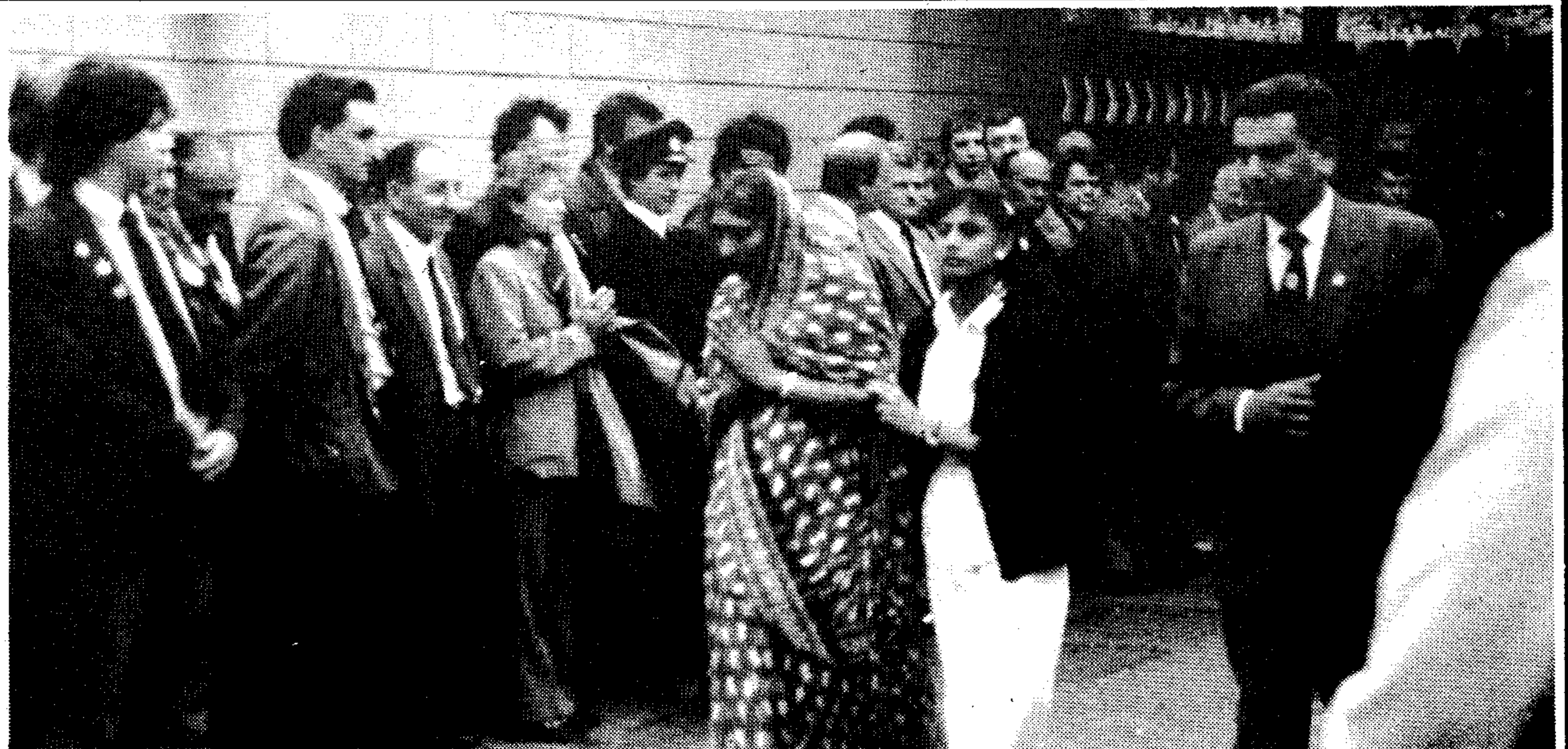
Labour authorities carrying out Tory cuts wield the axe just as viciously.

Three campaigns against the cuts have been set up in Camden:

- Camden Workers Against Cuts which meets weekly and is open to all Camden workers;

- Volcano, which includes workers and management committee members from community groups funded by Camden Council;

- Camden Against Cuts, organised by the nine Labour Councillors fighting cuts and aiming to get support from all trade unions and labour organisations in Camden.



THESE PICTURES were taken at the funeral of London bus conductor Babu Shah on Thursday 27 August. We wish to thank Catford garage driver Kelvin Rivers-Simpson for donating them to Workers Press.

Babu Shah died of knife wounds whilst at work on a bus from Leyton garage in July. Despite five emergency operations he could not be saved. His death is the subject of a court case.

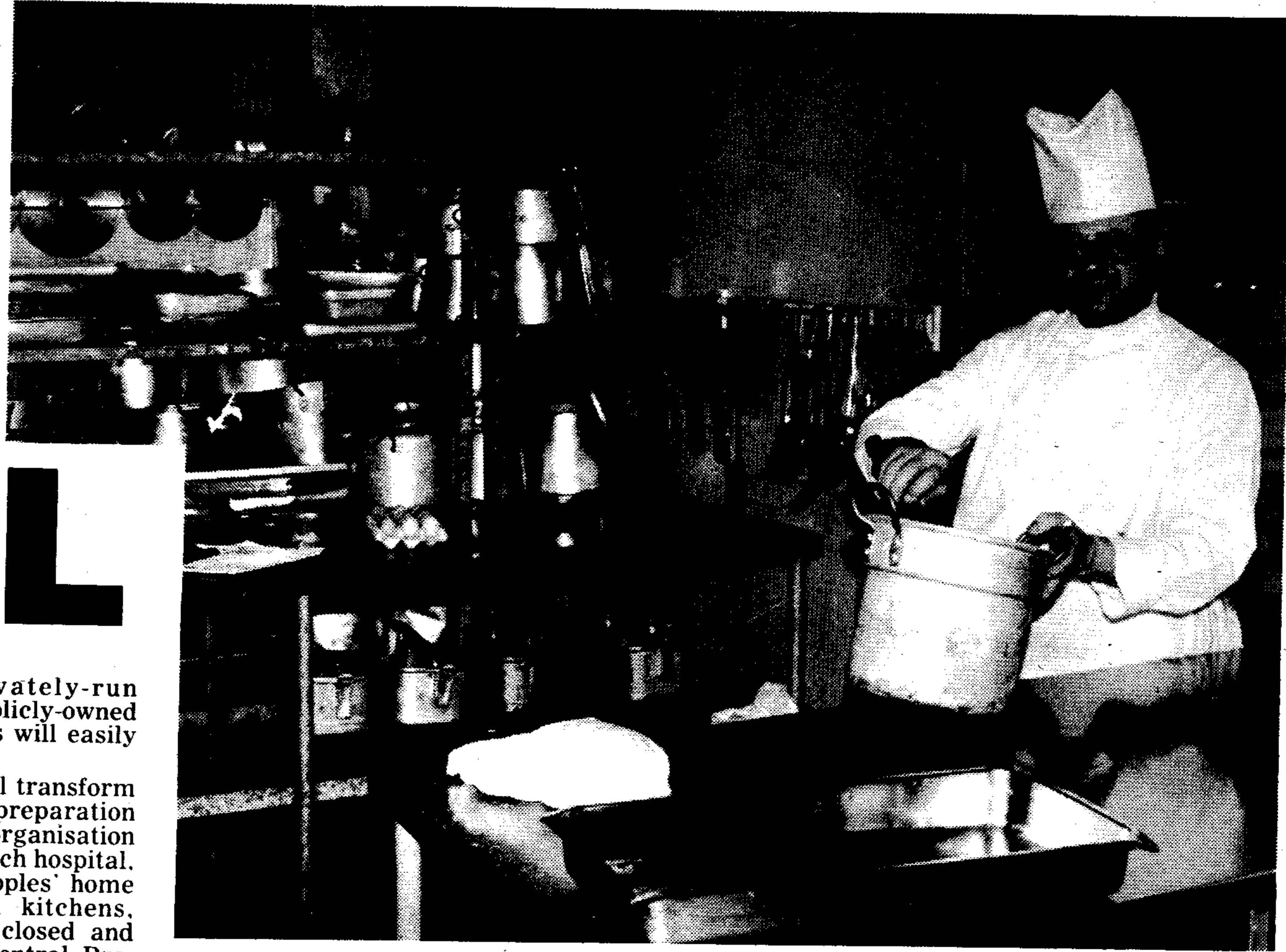
The editorial board of Workers Press expresses its deepest sympathy to Babu Shah's widow and 17-year old daughter.

A strike of all Transport and General Workers Union members in London's bus garages was called off last Thursday at the request of Babu Shah's family. Nevertheless more than 1,000 busworkers attended the funeral and brought floral tributes from all 51 garages.



Bernard Franks on hi-tech privatised cooking in hospitals and schools

THE BIG CHILL



The NHS chef: a dying species?

REHEATED meals rolling out of factory-type kitchen complexes for hospital patients and old people. The Orwellian future? No — the Thatcherite present.

Mass-production kitchen technology, run by private contractors, is being forced on unwilling health, education and local council departments by the Tory government.

And the introduction, on a vast scale, of the 'cook-chill' system — which has ominous and far-reaching consequences, not only for public health but for the pay levels and jobs of public service workers — is imminent.

The Tories intend to use competitive tendering to in-

introduce privately-run 'cook-chill': publicly-owned catering systems will easily be undercut.

'Cook-chill' will transform not only food preparation techniques but organisation too. Instead of each hospital, school or old peoples' home having its own kitchens, these would be closed and replaced by a Central Production Unit (CPU) — or an existing kitchen would be converted to supply several other institutions beside its own.

Food would be bulk-bought, and large-scale storage used, to continuously supply this factory-style system.

Bacteria

That's the hors d'oeuvre. The main course is new technology: blast-chilling of cooked food down to between 0 and 3 degrees centigrade, to prevent bacteria growth and — allegedly — to preserve quality. Cooked food packs can then be stored ('banked') for up to five days.

Meals are transferred from this 'bank' — taking care not to let the temperature rise above 10 degrees centigrade — to satellite

introduce privately-run 'cook-chill': publicly-owned catering systems will easily be undercut.

Another system, 'cook-freeze', is organised along the same lines, but involves blast-freezing down to a temperature range of -28 degrees centigrade to -10 degrees centigrade which enables storage for weeks instead of days. Then controlled thawing or use of special re-heat ovens must follow.

The advocates of cook-chill claim that it is a highly cost-effective system. Advantages for employers are said to include:

- Far more meals produced through high productivity and better utilisation of equipment in eight hours of non-stop cooking;

- Savings in energy consumption;

- Elimination of existing prolonged 'warm-holding' technique of big institutions which is unsafe and leads to loss of both nutritional content and palatability;

- End-kitchens can run with a few unskilled staff;

- The five-day time buffer is a hedge against fluctuations in customer demand.

The great danger is that this process — which needs extremely accurate temperature, hygiene and quality control to operate safely — is introduced precisely on the basis that cost-cutting, job elimination and de-skilling will be the primary considerations.

Not only will there be severe pay and job cuts, but loss of job security and employment rights is likely, as the 'cowboy' contractors rush to take advantage of the Tories' abolition of the Fair Wages Clause. These and other dangers are comprehensively detailed in *'The Big Chill'*, by Julie Shepherd, a London Food Commission (LFC) report, which is invaluable for trades unionists trying to fight the privatisation or rationalisation of catering services. The LFC is concerned that part-time employment for married women may be drastically reduced by use of 'cook-chill' in the school meals service.

There is evidence that cook-chill can impair palatability of food and lead to loss of nutrients, especially Vitamin C.

As for 'cook-freeze', many delicate foods can not be subjected to freezing — including eggs, custards, soft fruits and salads.

It would be a shocking irony if those sections of the population needing a highly nutritious diet — hospital patients, the elderly and school children — should be on the receiving end of a system which undermines food quality.

The LFC says: 'Much more information and research is required before "cook-chill" can be regarded as an acceptable method of feeding vulnerable and captive clients'.

There are narrow safety limits — the 0-3 deg. holding temperature, the below 10 deg. transporting temperature, and the five day maximum for chilling — which could easily be broken by accident, mismanagement or deliberate abuse by unscrupulous profiteers.

With 'cook-chill' approaching, and the incidence of food poisoning rising generally, environmental health officers which are supposed to check all food premises are under-staffed.

Already, there are about 240 operational cook-chill units throughout the country, mostly in industrial catering but also in hotels and airline companies. Eighty of these are in the public sector including 46 in the NHS, mainly in long-stay psychiatric and geriatric hospitals.

So far the surface of the public meals provision, which feeds 347,000 patients, and 850,000 staff a year, serves 1.4 million meals a day and employs 38,000 kitchen and associate staff, has scarcely been scratched. But catering firms and

equipment suppliers are now preparing to move in: the sort of job cuts experienced in Manchester Health District — where work previously done by 80 cooks is done by 14 — will become the norm.

'Cook-chill' is liable to be introduced with maximum management disinformation and minimum negotiation.

Part of the disinformation campaign is the myth that 'cook-chill' is coming in to cut back on rising labour costs. In fact catering workers — who make up one-tenth of the working population, with a higher proportion of immigrants — are generally paid less than all designations of poverty pay: over 44 per cent of men in the industry earn under £100 per week and the average wage for women is £77.70

The fight to unionise this massive body of workers, and improve pay and working conditions as their industry becomes more factory-like, is tied up with the fight against privatisation, and the fight to defend public health standards against the dangers implicit in 'cook-chill'.

● *'The Big Chill'* is available from the London Food Commission, PO Box 291, London N5 1DU, price £5.50 including postage and packing.

New-tech kitchen systems

THE factory-style food production systems currently in the pipeline include:

- The Capkold system, introduced to Britain by the American Groen company, is highly automated. Liquidised foods — soups, sauces, stews — are processed and cooked in a giant 'kettle' and automatically pumped into plastic cases at 82 deg. C where they are vacuumised, sealed and then chilled in a tumbling cold water bath. It is claimed that one person can produce hundreds of gallons of the products in this way.

- Sous-vide (under vacuum) is a French method of cooking food in vacuumised plastic bags to eliminate bacteria and prolong shelf life by weeks.

- Full Food vending is a labour-saving delivery system whereby customers purchase chilled menu items from a refrigerated machine and reheat them in microwaves provided. Again, this system's preoccupation with cost-cutting tends to conflict with hygiene and safety standards.

- Food irradiation, i.e. sterilisation of foods using nuclear radiation or x-rays, is at present illegal in Britain for all general purposes. But there is a powerful food industry lobby to get this ruling overturned, with a view to profiting substantially from the extension of shelf life and reduced decay period for many foods.

Clearly, trade unions must take on board the fight against these systems where they endanger the wellbeing of customers and threaten to undermine vital public services.

Experts condemn 'chill' food

A SPECIALLY-built 'cook-chill' kitchen at Stanley Royd Hospital, Wakefield, where nineteen elderly people died of food poisoning in 1984, has been condemned as 'cheap and nasty' by a food consultant.

She found the system to be so badly designed that patients ran real risks from contaminated food.

Her report has been backed by the view of Professor Richard Lance, Head of Microbiology at Leeds University and the Health Authority's infection control officer.

Unsafe

He told a meeting of experts called to discuss the system that it was 'microbiologically unsound and nutritionally unsafe'.

'Cook-chill' itself was 'totally unacceptable as a catering system for Wakefield District Health Authority'. (*Guardian* 22 July, 1987).

This stemmed from the position three months ago when the unit was set to open: it was only postponed after health unions refused to operate it, fearing danger to patients



School dinners: soon they will be mass-produced, pre-packed and reheated by private caterers

Table 3.4: Factors contributing to 1479 outbreaks of food poisoning, England and Wales, 1970-1982

Contributing Factors:	Number of outbreaks in which factors recorded (%)
* Preparation too far in advance	844 (57)
* Storage at ambient temperature	566 (38)
* Inadequate cooling	468 (30)
* Inadequate reheating	391 (26)
Contaminated processed food	246 (17)
Undercooking	223 (15)
Contaminated canned food	104 (7)
* Inadequate thawing	95 (6)
Cross contamination	94 (6)
Raw food consumed	93 (6)
* Improper warm holding	77 (5)
Infected food handlers	65 (4)
Use of left overs	62 (4)
Extra large quantities prepared	48 (3)
Total	1479

Adapted from Roberts D.M. "Food Preparation - The Faults that lead to food borne disease". Proc. of XIII International Congress of Nutrition. Brighton, 18-23 August, 1985. Pub. John Libbey & Co., London, 1986.

* Aspects of faulty temperature control.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Name date

Address

Trade Union Age (if under 21)

SEND TO:
Secretary to the Central Committee
PO Box 735, London SW9
7QS

The issue we cannot dodge — by Hughie Nicol

Why
TUC
must

BREAK

WITH

THE

MSC!



While workers like these, at HFW Plastics in Gateshead, are fighting low pay, MSC schemes are undermining them

PAUPERISING and regimentation of the unemployed is now recognised as the sole purpose of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC).

Millions of unemployed youth and trades unionists now face having to work for their benefits. Workers' wages are being undermined by government-sponsored cheap labour, and the MSC is even being called in to break strikes.

But the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party leaders STILL sit on MSC boards and collaborate with their decisions.

That is why the demand that trade union leaders break from this state cheap-labour institution — which 'Workers Press' has advanced continuously, and which is being taken up at the TUC congress this week by a lobby organised by Youth For Socialism — is a central one.

The trade union leaders refused to fight the government over the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). This has now resulted in the appalling situation where all the unemployed, up to the age of 50, are now faced with the same system of being forced to work for non-union rates.

● The YTS itself used to mean six months' service for school leavers aged 16-18, for £25 per week. Now they are compelled to serve for two years on the scheme or benefit is stopped.

● Under the 'Restart' scheme, all unemployed aged 16-50 are given compulsory interviews — and in some cases persuaded into leaving the unemployed register for low-paid jobs.

● The Job Training Scheme for 18-25 year olds represents an open declaration of 'work for benefits, or starve'.

● Under the Community Programme scheme, 25-50 year olds must now work full-time for benefits, plus allowance. Along with the key Restart and availability-for-work test, CPS is compulsory.

The balance sheet, after thirteen years of involvement of the trade unions with the MSC, is clear: no improvements for the youth or unemployed have been conceded by the Tories.

The union leaders' refusal to fight and defend the

weakest and the unorganised sections in society — the youth and the unemployed — must now lead to further and more savage attacks against the unions themselves. Wages and working conditions are under direct threat from non-union free labour conscripted into industry.

Those initially in the front-line will be the non-industrial service sector. Shops, offices and similar services will be flooded with the conscripts from the dole queues.

This is the pay-off for the cowardly betrayal by trade union leaders who refuse to take on this Tory government.

Where a stand has been taken the response has been significant. In some districts where NALGO members have boycotted JTS, including large parts of north-east England, local authorities are joining their campaign.

NALGO members have organised a conference of all trade unionists, to discuss how to break the trade unions from involvement with the MSC, to be held in Birmingham on 7 November.

This issue must be taken up throughout the working class movement. The policy of the TUC, who have taken a too-little too-late stand against JTS but continue to participate in the MSC, must be fought. In a recent report the TUC General Council state it would be 'invidious' to have a TUC representative on the sub-committee that manages

JTS, and they do not plan to replace Ken Graham who retired recently.

But they say they regret that this means that they will be unable to influence further developments or receive information. What 'influence', what 'information'?

'The General Council recognises that several unions have members who are directly involved in the operation of the new JTS, and a boycott of this could endanger their jobs and would exceed the General Council's decision to withdraw support', says the report.

The real intent of the trade union leaders is then further exposed by their decision to replace the same Ken Graham on the MSC by Roy Jackson, the TUC assistant general secretary.

These decisions were taken in the full knowledge that — as early as June this year — the Tory minister, Norman Fowler, wrote to MSC chairman Sir Bryan Nicholson, informing him of state plans to fundamentally change the MSC structure by October 1987.

So sweeping were these changes — which for one thing will increase employer representation on MSC boards — that government legislation would be necessary to facilitate them, warned Fowler.

'The legislation will amend the Employment and Training Act 1973 to enable me to appoint up to an additional six members, so that

there is representation of major sector employers which are not currently represented on the commission including the new technology industries, tourism and leisure services, retailing and distribution, banking, insurance and financial services and the small firm sector,' wrote Fowler.

'It will also provide for an enhanced employer representation on all the industrial training boards.'

What then can justify any further involvement of the trade unions in the MSC? Here is an open declaration by the Tories that their plan for a conscripted army of the unemployed is to be directed at the service centre industries.

The plan for an inbuilt majority of employers and the state make a mockery of the TUC position on 'influence' within the MSC.

The MSC itself is to be restructured and separated from the Job Centres, creating a new organisation. Fowler continues in his letter: 'This new organisation which will be directly operated by my Department will provide a full range of services for unemployed people, including the payment of benefits, help and advice to job seekers and job placement.'

'It would be the gateway to the whole range of programmes we are developing for unemployed people including the community programme, the job training scheme,

particularly through the restart interviews'.

Those who argue within the labour movement for working within these schemes ignore at their peril their class character. They have nothing to do with training but have effectively eliminated apprenticeships, and fundamentally changed the education system towards privatisation in colleges and further education. They abolish at a stroke the hard-won rights of workers and their families as people are forced into work for their benefits.

The proposals stem from the urgent needs of monopoly capitalism to extract more profit from the working class. To do this they

must remove the barrier that defends the working class and helped them win concessions in wages and conditions in the workplaces: the trades unions. This is the corollary of the attacks on the unemployed.

That is why the trades unions can only defend themselves by a total break from the state-run schemes. The TUC's present policy will lead from the appalling balance-sheet we already have to closer collaboration with Tory regimentation and wage-cutting.

Break from the MSC! Defend the Youth and the Unemployed from these attacks. Mobilise the forces with the trade union movement to expose and destroy this Tory government.

WORKERS PRESS SEPTEMBER FUND

In so far: £88.00

Although it is very early in the month we should pay attention not to let the days slip by without raising the urgent question of support for our monthly fund with all Party members and readers of Workers Press.

Use the paper to recruit new members to the Party. We can reach the widest cross-section of workers through the pages of our press.

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

WORKERS PRESS

WORKERS PRESS leads the fight for Trotskyism and Marxist principles in the labour and trade union movement nationally and internationally.

The most reliable way to get your copy of WORKERS PRESS is by post.

You can have WORKERS PRESS delivered for 25p per week.

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION

Prompt, regular, reliable — anywhere in the world!

INLAND: 10 issues £4, 50 issues £19

Overseas SURFACE: 10 issues £5, 50 issues £24

EUROPE inc Eire: 10 issues £5.30, 50 issues £25.50

AIR: Near East: 10 issues £5.50, 50 issues £26.50

Americas, Asia, Africa: 10 issues £6.10, 50 issues £30

Far East, Australia: 10 issues £6.60, 50 issues £32

Name Enclosed £

Address

Send to: WORKERS PRESS, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

Knowsley Labour witch hunt

BY FRANK FITZMAURICE

THE Knowsley North constituency Labour Party will almost certainly be disbanded by the national executive this month, and eleven activists referred to the National Constitutional Committee for discipline.

The eleven are charged with misconduct during the recent Knowsley unemployed centres' campaign, led by the Kirkby centre, against 50 per cent cuts in their funding and the sacking of seven welfare rights workers.

At a time when the those on social security — from unemployed school leavers who face an increase in the compulsory element of the

MSC schemes, to the sick and disabled who find badly needed single payments being slashed — face state attacks, the centres are more needed than ever, say local activists.

The crime of the eleven consisted quite literally in raising their voices in protest against these attacks and the council's collusion in them.

Threat

The threat to disband the constituency is the result of the struggle of the ward Labour Party's right to select and re-select MPs which has been withheld from them for the past two years.

This came to a head last October with the imposition

of George Howard as the parliamentary candidate, following the resignation of sitting MP Robert Kilroy-Silk.

The management committee of the constituency unanimously voted to boycott the imposition, on the grounds that the principle of party democracy was more important than electoral success.

The defenders of 'democratic socialism' on the NEC, far from being delighted by this egalitarian spirit, replied by setting up an enquiry which to nobody's surprise found the constituency party guilty on eight out of 10 points at issue.

The accusations, which will be discussed at the executive meeting on September 15, include such trumped-up generalities as

the minority in Knowsley not being listened to with sufficient care.

Disbandment

The disbandment of the constituency party comes at a very handy time for Knowsley council. After some years of 'creative accounting' which gives new meaning to the word creativity they are faced with either privatising services or making some kind of a stand against the Tory cuts in local government expenditure.

In a related incident the Labour Party in Liverpool have moved offices out of the Hardman Street unemployed centre. They didn't complain about the rent of the offices but last Tuesday just moved out into another office.

PHILIPPINES

It's civil war

THE crisis-ridden regime of President Cory Aquino narrowly survived a fifth attempt by right-wing sections of the military to overthrow her.

Around 1,500 troops led by Colonel 'Gringo' Honasan attacked the Presidential palace, Army headquarters, two TV stations, the National Assembly building and the Villamor air base.

In the fighting 40 died and 270 were wounded. Honasan escaped although Aquino had ordered him to be shot on sight; 500 rebel troops were captured but the majority made a getaway.

Unlike the 'Peoples Power' uprising 18 months ago that overthrew Marcos and brought Aquino to power, the masses stayed off the streets and Aquino relied entirely on the armed forces to defend her.

The right-wing in the army has become increasingly disgruntled with Aquino's failure to crush either the militant trade unions or the 22,000-strong New Peoples Army and have demanded a total war against the left.

Earlier the same week Aquino had been forced to partially retreat on 20 per cent fuel price increases that had led to a national transport strike and the threat of a general strike by the KMU trade union federation following mass arrests.

Aquino pleaded with the strikers to 'understand the predicament of the government' but the KMU rejected the partial cut and said they would bring out 2 million on to the streets.

With inflation running at 6 per cent, rising world oil prices and repayments due on external debts to the banks, Aquino is attempting to turn the screws on the working class. Next month large increases in electricity charges and bus fares are planned.

Strikes have generally been met with military and police action. In Cebu City police opened fire on 500 strikers. In Manila protesting nuns were clubbed and dispersed with water cannon. A strike at a factory owned by one of Aquino's ministers was broken by the military.

During the transport strike the government commandeered dustcarts to try

BY KEITH SCOTCHER

to transport thousands of stranded commuters while 6,000 demonstrators — who 18 months ago probably marched for Aquino — converged on the Mendiola bridge chanting 'Cory Aquino, puppet of the Americans'.

After coming to power Aquino ruled through a military junta until the new constitution was adopted and elections took place, but did not stand for election herself, it being written into the constitution that she be the president for five years.

She has pursued a military war against the NPA and increasingly come into conflict with the masses.

Civil war has constantly been just below the surface. KMU leader Rolando Olalia was murdered in November 1986 by an agent of the Defence Ministry.

In January 1987 a demonstration of peasants was fired on, massacring 20 on the Mendiola bridge, 500 yards from Aquino's palace.

No action was taken against the marine unit involved while the peasants' union leader was charged with incitement to rebellion. After proclaiming 'Peoples Power' Aquino now talks of 'Peoples War' to crush opposition from the NPA and Muslim forces of Mindanao.

HONASAN's involvement in the latest coup attempt is ominous for Aquino. Founder of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement he was prominent in the revolt against Marcos and an ally of Enrile.

Following recent NPA successes Honasan said: 'We can't go on fighting like this. We might lose by default... the chain of command is not taking the initiative.'

When Aquino summoned the senate to an emergency meeting at the height of the crisis, Enrile was absent. He denied responsibility later,

but captured officers said that someone high up was responsible but refused to name him.

The latest coup attempt failed because provincial units involved had been unable to enter Manila with heavy equipment including tanks. The storming of the palace was intended as the beginning of the revolt.

The still illegal Philippine Communist Party, predominant political force in both the labour movement and the NPA, at first held out the hope of 'pulling Aquino over' to the left. It was forced to continue both the industrial and military struggle in the cities and the countryside.

The task facing the Philippines working class is struggle for power. This can only be resolved by revolutionary leadership that combats Stalinist popular frontism and opportunism.

Workers

take on VW

MORE than 10,000 car workers at the Volkswagen plant in Puebla, Mexico, have been on strike since 1 July in support of a 100-per cent wage rise and the defence of hard-won trade union rights.

Despite being among the poorest paid car workers anywhere, Volkswagen employees are being squeezed for every last ounce of surplus value with the full backing of president Miguel de la

BY TRUDI JACKSON and TOM SCOTT ROBSON

Madrid who, since the collapse of world oil prices, presides over a terminally bankrupt economy.

On 8 July a mass demonstration by workers blocked six key roads in Puebla bringing traffic to a standstill.

Teachers joined the strike and students assisted with traffic control and the distribution of essential supplies to strikers and their families. Workers defence guards were set up. The scene was set for a protracted struggle.

Puebla has a history of militancy. It was the focal point of the student demonstrations in 1968 and since that date a socialist has al-

ways been elected chancellor of the university.

But the struggle being waged in and around the Volkswagen plant is not a Puebla or even a Mexican affair, it is one facet of the struggle of the international working class against a moribund imperialism's drive for super-profits.

Volkswagen has always been held up as a symbol of the German post-war 'economic miracle', a state-operated manufacturer of the most technologically advanced kind in which any ordinary citizen can have a share (even if those shares are then used for the most corrupt speculation, as recent scandals have revealed).

The economic recession of the early 1970's hit Volkswagen like every other major car manufacturer. It led to massive lay-offs in West Germany and the build-up of production capacity in countries like Brazil and later in Mexico where comparatively cheap labour could give the war-time 'beetle', for example, a new lease of life. In this way they hoped to balance the losses being made by the holding company in West Germany.

But as the working class in these countries began to organise more effective trade union resistance, profits declined and the bosses in Wolfsburg counter-attacked.

In Mexico the West German masters are attempting to impose a 15 per cent wage cut, to remove all bonuses and profit-sharing, and introduce Sunday working. To achieve their aim, they have to smash the union.

The work-force in Puebla has already been cut by just under 5,000 in six years. A further 723 jobs are threatened.

Working conditions are appalling. 'If we want a new drill, because the old ones are causing injuries, they say we have to do without,' Irene Cruz declared. 'They refuse to give us gloves when we are soldering, claiming that we soil replacement parts with them. When we are pregnant we still have to push and carry heavy loads even if this is strictly against the law. We have never seen the law kept at Volkswagen.'

Despite modern equipment, 210 workers per year sustain serious injuries at work.

Workers like Irene Cruz earn approximately one-tenth of her North American counterpart in the Westmoreland plant in Pittsburgh which recently stopped work for two weeks because of overproduction. In fact she earns less, because she is a woman.

The average daily wage at Volkswagen in Puebla is £4. It is impossible to keep a family for under 200,000 pesos a month, yet a car workers average income does not exceed 150,000 pesos. Hence the determined struggle for an immediate increase.

It is clearer and clearer to workers in Puebla that the internationally co-ordinated strategy of multinationals such as Volkswagen cannot be defeated in purely national struggles. Hence their appeal for messages of solidarity (preferably in Spanish) to be addressed to:

Sindicato Independiente de 'Volkswagen de Mexico', 16 Poniente 5315, Puebla, Mexico.

'Please give the workers in Wolfsburg many kisses', a woman worker in Puebla said.



Shop stewards at Puebla Volkswagen plant, Mexico

Queensland Tories

sterilise black women

QUEENSLAND'S right-wing state government is backing the sterilisation of Aboriginal women and encouraging doctors to use a banned drug on them.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's Tory government — also known for its union-bashing policies and pretended concern for 'morality' — has backed mis-treatment of women for its racist aim of curbing the Aborigine population, a scientific conference in Townsville, Queensland was told.

Gwen Deemal-Hall, an Aborigine nurse and research student, shocked delegates at the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science when she said women as young as 13 had been given the drug Depo-Provera, without their knowledge.

Doctors

In other cases, doctors were sterilising women soon after they gave birth to their first child.

Depo-Provera can prevent pregnancy for up to three months with one injection, but it can also cause serious side-effects, including diabetes, hypertension and sterility. The drug is banned in Britain but has been used in some poorer countries.

Australian health minister Neil Blewett recently warned doctors against using it, and ordered a review of its use in institutions for the mentally handicapped. Gwen Deemal-Hall said

from research with medical workers on Aboriginal health she knew of 130 women who had been given the drug, often under the guise of immunisation against measles, and she believed its use in Queensland was increasing.

'They're not telling the families anything. They're just lining them up and saying it was immunisation. It has been widespread in Queensland and has happened in the rest of Australia, mainly in remote areas.'

Queensland Health Minister Mike Ahearn denied Depo-Provera was being illicitly administered, then withdrew his denial. The revelation comes as a Royal Commission is looking into the high death rate of Aborigines in police custody, mainly in Queensland.

Israeli plane

workers riot

ISRAELI aircraft workers blocked the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem motorway and besieged Ben Gurion (Lydda) airport last week, in reaction to job cuts caused by the Lavi fighter-bomber project being cancelled.

Workers threatened to block runways at the airport, then settled for blocking access with burning tyre barricades. Elsewhere, they blocked junctions, listening into police radio so they could forestall intervention. There were fights with police outside the Ministry of Defence.

Development of the Lavi has already cost £918 million, and production costs have outstripped original estimates by four times, to

nearly \$3 billion. Now the project is to be scrapped, on the advice of US imperialism — and Israel Aircraft Industries say 3,000 jobs will go immediately and 3,000 later.

Voting in the cabinet was tight, split 13-12, with hard-line right-wingers like Industry Minister Ariel Sharon protesting that the government was bowing to US pressure. His Likud colleague Ehud Olmert said the Lavi had been 'a speck of glory reminding us of the feeling we had after the war in 1967.'

Labour Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin reminded them that the United States provides 70 per cent of Israel's military budget, an annual \$1.8 billion in aid. The airforce is expected to buy US-made F16s.

Turkish hunger strike

EIGHT HUNDRED Turkish political prisoners are on hunger strike: seven of them, lying in chains in Istanbul's Sagmacilar prison hospital, have fasted for more than 50 days.

Fourteen relatives who staged a sit-in outside the prison were beaten up by police and thrown into prison themselves.

The wave of hunger strikes began in May, and spread to

nine prisons. The prisoners are demanding shorter sentences, an end to ill-treatment and torture, more visits by relatives, better food and medical treatment, the right to receive reading matter freely, and the right to have radios.

An all-party parliamentary inquiry two years ago found prison conditions drastically unhygienic, relatives denied visits and prevented from bringing food, and torture common. The authorities allow 20p a day for a prisoner's food.

Since the hunger strikes began conditions in some

prisons are said to have improved, but the authorities have also put some hunger-strikers in solitary confinement, and taken reprisals against alleged ring-leaders.

Many have been transferred to different prisons in an attempt to break up groups.

Internationally-known Turkish writer Yasher Kemal (author of 'Memed my Hawk'), actor Tarik Akan, and the widow and son of murdered trade union leader Kemal Turkler, were among those who joined a demonstration outside Istanbul's Bayrampsa prison on 13 Au-

gust in solidarity with the hunger-strikers.

Minister of Justice Oltan Sungurlu declared brutally: 'Hunger strikes are completely out of fashion. If one gave too much to eat to the prisoners they would only get fat. They can't use up all the energy.'

This is at a time when Turkish government representatives are at pains to deny political repression and ill-treatment of prisoners, as the Ozal government pursues entry to the EEC, and wants to spare its Tory allies embarrassment.

'Defend Kurdish rights'

ATTACKS on the democratic and national rights of the Kurdish people were denounced at a meeting in London last week, by speakers from the Kurdish Workers Association and the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The meeting, called by the WRP at Conway Hall, was an important step in working jointly with, and forging links with, organisations of immigrant workers from the middle east in Britain.

This, and other practical campaigns on international questions, is being carried out by the party in connection with its call for an international conference for the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

Central Committee member Simon Pirani told an audience of more than fifty that no nation on earth had been subjected to the kind of oppression suffered by the Kurds.

He said the regimes of Iraq, Turkey and Iran and Syria all stood condemned for the brutal repression and torture they had inflicted upon Kurdish nationals.

The Iraqi Ba'ath regime, which since 1963 had carried out the most ruthless suppression, has throughout the year unleashed on liberated Kurdish territory merciless bombing raids killing hundreds of civilians, Pirani stated.

The enforcement of Arabisation was accomplished by removing large sections of the population, closing schools and banning the use of the Kurdish language.

Eight thousand people from one transit camp had disappeared to an unknown fate.

'In northern Kurdistan, under the dictatorship of the Turkish regime which throughout the history of Kemalist bourgeois nationalism has violently suppressed the Kurdish movement, a group of activists were at present nearing the point of death in their hunger strike demanding to be recognised as political prisoners.'

In giving support to the struggle for national self-determination, Pirani said, we do so as internationalists. The road to national and cultural freedom lies in the international struggle to overthrow capitalism which

is responsible for all the imperialist plunder, military terror and national oppression in the middle east.

'As revolutionary internationalists, we look to the working class of the world — workers, whether they are Iranian, Iraqi, Kurdish, Turkish, European or north American workers — as the force which will be able to bring about a united socialist Kurdistan as part of a united socialist states of the middle east.'

Pirani raised the question of the responsibilities of British revolutionaries in relation to the struggles in the Middle East. First of all, he stressed, it was important to separate ourselves from the type of support given by Labour MPs, establishment figures and bourgeois journalists.

'The publicity they give to the struggles is, of course, welcome. But our support is of a different kind.'

'It is not our job to compare British democracy

favourably with any of the middle eastern regimes. When we condemn the murder and torture they are carrying out, we recognise first of all that they are defending not only their own riches but those of Britain and other imperialist powers. They are only doing what British imperialism taught them to do.

'We side with the working class and oppressed peoples by fighting against our own ruling class and those labour leaders who act as agents for it inside the workers movement.'

Pirani made clear that he hoped the meeting was the start of organised joint work between the WRP and Kurdish, as well as other Middle East comrades.

Ihsan Ozgur, from the Kurdish Workers Association, said all means possible had been used by the imperialist countries to suppress the struggle for a Kurdish nation.

He gave an example where a Kurdish worker had been arrested for merely stating his nationality.

Of particular importance was an understanding of the historical role played by Kemalism and also that of Saddam Hussein. (Expressions of anti-imperialism which the News Line and WRP, under its former leader, Gerry Healy, adapted to in the most opportunist and unprincipled way.)

Ozgur said that Marxists have to understand that anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist positions were a way in which national bourgeoisies were able to survive.

For a Socialist Kurdish Republic

The London meeting passed the following resolutions:

'This meeting stands in solidarity with the Kurdish workers and peasants in their struggle for self-determination against the genocidal attacks and political oppression by the regional bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers.

The historical interests of the Kurdish working class and peasants can be united only in the establishment of a socialist republic of Kurdistan.

On this basis we call for the maximum solidarity and

practical support to the Kurdish workers and cultural organisations in Britain.

'This meeting salutes the decision of the Kurdish and Turkish organisations who will act in solidarity with the hunger strikers in Turkish prisons. We call for the maximum support for the picket on: Wednesday 2 September, 11a.m. — 8p.m. for two weeks; and the march on Saturday 12 September, 2p.m. Hyde Park to the Turkish Embassy.'

● See picket story for change in arrangements



London picket

The Organising Committee for solidarity with the hunger strikers in Turkish prisons, representing many different Turkish organisations in London will be meeting after we have gone to press to make its final arrangements for this action. Therefore we are not able to inform our readers of these details until the next issue of the Workers Press

The details of the picket and demonstration in the resolution passed at the meeting reported on this page under the heading

'For a Kurdish Socialist Republic' will not now apply

The WRP and the Workers Press calls for maximum support for the picket and demonstration as soon as the new date is announced

Our latest information is that police have attacked a protest staged by prisoners relatives in Ankara and one demonstrator was seriously injured. It has also been reported that police in Turkey staged a number of raids on the homes of the hunger strikers.

Vanunu beaten by police

ISRAELI nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, on secret trial for exposing the Zionist state's nuclear weapon programme, was beaten by guards taking him into court, lawyer Avigdor Feldman said last week.

Vanunu, who told the British press last year that Israel has 100 nuclear weapons stockpiled and can make neutron or hydrogen bombs, has been nominated for a Nobel peace prize.

The 32-year old technician was kidnapped by the Mossad secret service before his newspaper article appeared last October, and taken back to Israel. He is facing charges of treason and espionage which could mean a death sentence, or life imprisonment.

His brother Meir Vanunu told a London meeting recently that Mordechai had acted solely from concern at the nuclear war danger. He expressed fear the trial would not be fair, in view of press propaganda preceding it, and because it is being

held in camera.

Police escorting the handcuffed prisoner to court last week made him wear a motorcyclists helmet to obscure his face so newsmen could not take photographs. According to Avigdor Feldman, it was when his client struggled to take this off that the guards started beating him.

● VIGIL FOR VANUNU — outside Israeli embassy, Palace Green, Kensington High St. London. Monday 21 September, 12 noon-2pm.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNE, 20-year sentence, 464989.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22338.
EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN MCCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.
ANDY MULRYAN, 20-year sentence, 461576.
PATRICK MULRYAN, 20-year sentence, 461575.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.
GERRY McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
SEAN McSHANE, B75898.
TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Wakefield, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.
CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662.

STRANGEWAYS

HM Prison Southall Street, Manchester 3, Lancs.

NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.

ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.
SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP
RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799.
STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence, 758663.
JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635.
ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.

FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085.
BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662.
PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.
MICHAEL J MCKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486.
EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ
PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.
BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380.
PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

WORMWOOD SCRUBS

HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 6AE
DONAL CRAIG, 4 years.
VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.

DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

REMAND PRISONERS: BRITTON

HM Prison, Jobb Avenue, Britton, London SW2 5XF.
G. (DANNY) McNAMEE, L48616
LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694
LIAM QUINN, 49930

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire
PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree.
PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.
JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree.
JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland.
RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.
PATRICK McLOUGHLIN, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

THE STRIKE OF 300,000 S

British links with the South African mining industry

BRITAIN has a long history of involvement with the South African mining industry. The diamond and gold mines were originally developed using capital raised largely in London and 50 individual South African mines are still quoted on the London Stock Exchange, as are all the large South African mining houses and their various offshoots.

Below is a summary of the main links between British commerce and industry and the South African mining industry. This mainly consists of holdings in South African mines by British companies, but in recent years, investment flows have started to reverse, with South African corporations acquiring interests in this country.

of South African coal into the UK.

Johnson Matthey: Part of the Anglo American group via Charter Consolidated's 30-per-cent holding. Operates the largest platinum mine and refinery in South Africa at Rustenburg and also acts as a trader and refiner of other precious metals.

Rio Tinto Zinc: Notorious for its holding in the Rossing uranium mine in Namibia. Also owns the Palabora copper and uranium mine in South Africa employing 4,000.

Other: Over 400 British companies supply equipment to the South African mining industry. The main ones belong to the Association of British Mining Equipment

Companies (ABMEC). In 1985 South Africa was ABMEC's second largest export market worth £22.1 million.

South African mining houses regularly recruit engineers and underground personnel from Britain and have developed close links with the mining and geology departments of British universities.

Most of South Africa's gold is marketed through Switzerland, but the London Gold Market, consisting of a cartel of five financial institutions led by the merchant bank J. Rothschild, establishes the gold price at its daily 'fix'. British banks have made huge loans to South African mining companies and have substantial investments in mining and gold-related securities.

STEVE BIKO

To mark the tenth anniversary of his death in South African police custody, 'The Eleventh Hour' presents 'Biko: Breaking the Silence', an examination of his impact on the anti-apartheid movement. Monday 7 September, 11p.m. Channel 4.



Hopes fade for missing miners

THE chairman of the Afrikaans-owned General Mining Corporation (Gencor) which owns the St Helena mine in the Orange Free State has stated: 'There is no hope that any of the 40 persons still unaccounted for could be found alive. By now we must accept that there are 10 confirmed deaths and up to 40 more unconfirmed.'

Rescue teams working in the disaster have established that the cage had plunged 1,300 metres to the bottom of the shaft following an explosion. Ten bodies were found at a pumping station and down the shaft itself.

Gencor director Gary Maude said that methane gas appeared to be the cause of the explosion. 'There was no sign that any explosives had gone off and methane appears the most likely cause,' he said.

Several Free State gold mines, including St. Helena, suffer from problems with methane which finds its way from coal seams before reaching the deeper gold reef. Every year hundreds of South African miners die in mining accidents.



City Group Anti-Apartheid's pick African miners' strike

Anglo American

Consolidated Gold Fields:

Parent company (38-per-cent ownership, 48-per-cent voting rights) of Gold Fields of South Africa (GFSA) the third largest mining house. GFSA manages seven gold mines, five colliers and other platinum and base metal mines. Over 80 per cent of its profits come from gold. It employs almost 100,000 miners and is one of the most intransigent employers, refusing to implement previous wage settlements agreed by other mining houses.

Consolidated Gold Fields also controls the Tsumeb Corporation in Namibia, the country's largest private employer, which produces base metals and minerals and has an appalling employment and wages record.

Anglo American Corporation:

The largest corporation and mining house in South Africa. Controls either directly or indirectly about 55 per cent of the listed shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. It owns and manages five main gold mines, is the largest coal producer and has huge industrial and financial interests including ownership of First National Bank (ex Barclays). It is closely associated with De Beers, the diamond producer which enjoys a monopoly of the world diamond trade, via cross shareholdings and common directors (Anglo holds 35 per cent of De Beers who hold 38 per cent of Anglo). De Beers markets its diamonds through its London-based subsidiary, the Central Selling Organisation.

Despite its name, Anglo is a South African company, although it has extensive multinational interests held mainly through its Bermuda-registered investment company Minorco. In Britain, Minorco has a controlling interest in Charter Consolidated, the construction and heavy engineering company, which in turn controls Anderson Strathclyde, a major manufacturer of mining equipment both for the British mining industry and for export. (See main article on Anglo)

Burnett & Hallamshire:

British parent of Rand London Corporation in South Africa which manages three opencast export coal mines. One of the major importers

IT MINES gold in Brazil, brews beer in Zimbabwe and fells forests in Canada. ● It controls 600 companies employing 800,000 workers. ● Its tentacles reach into nearly every corner of the South African economy. ● Through its Central Selling Organisation — probably the most powerful cartel in the world — it controls the world diamond trade in business partnership with, among others, the Soviet Union. ● It is the largest foreign investor in the United States. ● It is a white-owned South African company which has extensive

THIS IS the empire built by the Oppenheimer dynasty, started by the second generation Randlord, Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, and taken over by his son Harry, now 78, who, over the past decade, has gradually surrendered the corporation to rule by committee: the five or six members of the inner circle who today stand at the

helm of all this wealth and power.

It is an empire whose watchword is secrecy — the conspiracy of the diamond cartel requires it and so does the sensitive nature of relations with the rest of Africa; the South Africa connection is a stigma always requiring disguise.

AAC annual reports get slimmer each year as even the shareholders learn less and less of what the corporation is doing.

AAC's substantial holdings in Zimbabwe, for instance, get no mention in the most recent report.

Soviet Union has links with Africa's largest corporate empire

BUSINESS co-operation between Anglo American and the Soviet Union — highlighted by the sighting of Gordon Waddell at the Bolshoi ballet six-and-a-half years ago — extends through gold, platinum and diamonds.

The Soviet Union has been trading and dealing with South Africa for years through price-fixing 'understandings' on gold and platinum and the sale of Soviet diamonds by De Beers.

Representatives of Johannesburg Consolidated Investments meet their counterparts from the Soviet Diamond and Platinum Trading Organisation every May at the annual 'platinum dinner' at the Savoy Hotel in London.

But there are other fascinating facts about Anglo's extensive, diverse and complex overseas empire which spans five continents:

● The Mineral and Resources Corpora-

tion (Minorco) — Anglo's massive North American investment holding company — was started up on money 'bled' from the copper mines of impoverished Zambia after independence.

● Contrary to the myth of the Oppenheimer Midas Touch, the corporation has suffered some major international investment disasters, blowing millions of dollars on doomed projects, particularly in North America.

● In 1982 employees of Anglo's Manica Freight Services in Mozambique's Beira were told to fill up their cars a day before South African commandos blew up oil tanks with limpet mines. The director and his deputy were later jailed for using the office as an intelligence post for Renamo,

investments in, and trading links with, black Africa from Angola to Nigeria. ● The economies of two countries — Botswana and Lesotho — are little more than dependencies of the corporation. ● Ignoring the pretence that the diamond-mining De Beers and the Anglo American Corporation (AAC) are independent entities — as presented on the stock exchange — then the AAC group ranks 25th in the world league of multinationals, ahead of Unilever, Siemens and Nissan.

But there may be other reasons for wanting things kept quiet, as two Dutch anti-apartheid activists discovered when they burgled a small Anglo office in Amsterdam and found documents showing it to be the centre of a multi-million-dollar international tax-avoidance scheme involving Holland, Britain, the Dutch Antilles and Bermuda.

This snippet is part of a new book, the most comprehensive picture of AAC yet to appear: 'South Africa Inc. — the Oppenheimer Empire', whose authors are 'Guardian' journalist David Pallister; corporate analyst Ian Lepper; and researcher Sarah Stewart.

They lift the lid on a huge and compulsively secretive business empire, but also expose the political mythology of the corporation, in particular the Oppenheimers, as liberal opponents of apar-

theid.

As the authors point out: 'The mines on which their wealth rests provided the economic impetus for some of South Africa's most vicious legislation — the pass laws, the Group Areas Act and the migrant labour system.'

This fact is familiar to many South Africans — particularly AAC's black miners — yet the liberal image remains.

'Cautiously and assiduously, the Oppenheimers have honed a mystique about them that has so far defied critical examination,' say the authors.

The British press reports every public utterance of Oppenheimer or AAC chairman Gavin Rely with the importance usually reserved for heads of state or senior Cabinet ministers.

● TURN TO PAGE 11

What you

WORKERS IN Britain more: How can we help them to win their struggle?

There are many solidarity groups involved in.

● As part of the campaign to free trade unionist Moses Mayekiso, on trial for treason, a meeting has been called by Crawley Workers Revolutionary Party and the Socialist Labour Group on **Thursday 3 September in Crawley.**

● On **5 September** the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) has called a street rally outside Sainsbury's (keen sellers of South African goods) in Peckham Rye Lane, London SE15 from 11a.m. to 3p.m. Take buses 12, 36, 36A, 36B or 171 to get there.

● There is a lobby of the TUC Conference in Blackpool on **7 September** to demand the TUC mounts a major campaign to free Moses Mayekiso and all South African political detainees.

● Five days later on **12 September** there is a demonstration in Workshop against BP investment in South Africa. On the same day in London there is another street rally organised by the RCG outside the Royal Agricultural Hall in Upper Street, London N1, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.. Nearest tube: Highbury (Victoria Line).

● On **14 September** there is a special picket of South Africa House from 6p.m. to mark the start of Moses Mayekiso's trial — especially important for trade unionists. Bring your banners.

● On **15 September** there is a public meeting on Moses Mayekiso in Southwark Town Hall on Peckham Rd, London SE5 at 7.30p.m. also called by the RCG.

● The Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and the miners' union NUM are co-organising a day seminar on **19 September** in Sheffield to 'mobilise for a mandatory ban on South African coal

SOUTH AFRICAN MINERS

The miners are NOT defeated!

THE heroic strike of over 300,000 miners, the biggest and most significant in South Africa's labour history has not been defeated, despite its undemocratic calling-off by the National Union of Mineworkers' leadership.

Not for many years has a strike inspired such confidence and enthusiasm both in the South African working class and the world proletariat.

Here was a truly mass workers' strike which challenged the world system of capitalist-imperialist might at its centre — the gold mining industry — crucial to the international monetary market of world capitalism.

The South African NUM leaders claim that calling off the strike is not a defeat because the miners showed their 'resilience' and 'determination' by staying out on strike in the major industry of South Africa for close on three weeks.

But the significance of the strike was far deeper. The miners have not been defeated because it was not they who called off the strike against the mining bosses.

Three days before the union leadership unilaterally ended the strike, the miners had in fact, by an overwhelming majority, voted to continue the strike until all their demands were met.

International working class support for the South African miners was growing in leaps and bounds.

The struggle will continue!

THE miners will go back to the inhuman and slave con-

Despite huge vote leaders give order to end strike

movement of the working class will inexorably sweep away.

Union leadership adopted tactics of least resistance!

THROUGHOUT the strike the union leadership strained to keep it within the boundaries of 'legal' trade unionism.

They also evinced a tendency to treat it as a strike of the union leadership and not a strike of hundreds of thousands of mine workers.

The union leadership cannot be condemned for caution. This was after all a strike which challenged apartheid-capitalism right at the heart of the system.

It was imperative that the union leadership proceed carefully, evaluating at every stage the balance of forces and the next step to take.

But there is a great difference between caution and the line of least resistance.

It is impossible to attempt to take on the system of apartheid-capitalism right at its centre and then expect to win by not employing fighting tactics.

Bosses disregard 'legalism'!

THE mining bosses most certainly did not 'play' by the rules.

They used every means at their disposal to break the strike, including killing striking miners.

When they were at their most vulnerable because of the unexpected duration of the strike, they resorted to the most crass blackmail, threatening to sack most of the miners and hiring scab

labour to replace them.

How could the union leadership hope that the miners would be able to defend their jobs against scabs when they took the decision that the miners had to leave their places of work and return to their various 'homelands'?

Pointing to the awesome resources that the mining bosses have at their disposal — or even to the advantages to the bosses of the compound system of housing miners — cannot justify this action.

If it is to be the 'strength' of the bosses that alone determines the actions of the workers, then the workers should never go on strike, because 'theoretically' the bosses are invariably in the stronger position before the commencement of most strikes.

The bosses showed little hesitation in calling on the resources of the racist state to defend them against the workers.

Of course, as the executive organ of the bourgeoisie, the racist state could hardly be expected to act in any other way.

Not once however did the union leadership call on the solidarity of the whole class against the capitalist exploiters and their racist state.

COSATU left the miners isolated!

TO BE sure, there was talk of the trade union federation COSATU coming to the assistance of the striking miners, of the imminence of a general strike, of the rest of the oppressed being mobilised behind the miners.

But that is where it remained — at the level of rhetoric!

Such 'support', rather than assisting the miners, streng-

thened the confidence of the bosses because they realised that it did not go beyond posturing.

NUM leadership acted bureaucratically!

THE greatest blow against the striking miners was when the union leadership, completely undemocratically, called off the strike, violating the majority mandate given to them by the workers to continue until their demands had been met.

The union leadership was telling the workers: 'This is not your strike, we will make the decisions for you.'

Certainly the union leadership has a responsibility to lead.

And yes, there are times when the union leadership must warn against workers taking rash decisions.

But once the workers have democratically decided to embark on a particular course of action, however 'rash' or 'incorrect' this may seem to the union leadership, they must follow the directives of the workers, and they have no right unilaterally to reverse those democratic decisions.

No amount of 'rationalisation' or 'justification' on the part of the union leadership can alter the fact that their decision to call off the strike was a completely bureaucratic one and a flagrant violation of worker democracy.

The manner in which this decision was reached — secret talks with the bosses where the principal workers' demands were not even discussed and where no guarantees were given for unconditional reinstatement of all workers — is totally indefensible.

● TURN TO PAGE 11

can do

are asking more and South African work-

ny campaigns to get in-

Imports to the UK and the EEC, and to promote action to stop imports'. It is sponsored, among others, by the TUC, the National Union of Seamen, and Women Against Pit Closures.

This is a particularly important conference for trade unionists in the light of the very rapidly developing organisation and militancy of the South African miners. To ensure a victory for that section of workers would strike directly at the heart of capitalism in both South Africa and Britain.

The conference is open to all 'bona fide' organisations interested in and involved in the campaign against South African coal imports. Each organisation is entitled to three delegates, and must register by Friday 4 September by contacting the trade union secretary of the AAM, 33 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW.

In 1985 South Africa exported Rands 3.2 billion worth of coal. It is the second largest source of foreign exchange after gold, and 52 per cent of it goes to EEC countries.

All trades unionists should attend this conference to make sure of a boycott of this huge section of apartheid's trade.

On Tuesday 22 September the RCG has organised another meeting on Moses Mayekiso at Moseley Central Library, Fieldway Crescent, London N1, 7.30p.m. Nearest tube: Highbury.

Lambeth Trades Council holding a meeting for the release of Moses Mayekiso on 8 October and 10 October is the national march in London for Moses Mayekiso, assembling 12 noon at Clerkenwell Green to march to South Africa House. Two weeks later is the AAM's march on 24 October.



Enthusiastic miners at a COSATU rally

SOUTH AFRICAN MINERS' STRIKE

Anglo American

● FROM PAGE 8

Anglo's reputation as a liberal opponent of the National Party apartheid government stems from the long-standing philosophy of the Oppenheimers.

As a sophisticated international capitalist, Harry Oppenheimer was able to point to the inherent shortcomings of apartheid decades ago.

The image was enhanced by his financial support for the opposition Progressive Party and various other opponents of apartheid.

However, Oppenheimer's political philosophy is that of a self-confessed conservative who, as recently as 1984, was opposed to universal franchise because it would lead to 'chaos and disorder'.

Despite public attacks on Oppenheimer, South Africa's Nationalist government has worked closely with him from the beginning, for instance, on the establishment of a strategic uranium industry.

Oppenheimer was among a number of private-sector figures who formed the South African Foundation in a bid to improve the country's image after the Sharpeville shootings. This foundation proved to be 'an invaluable asset' for the apartheid government.

Again after the 1976 Soweto uprising, Oppenheimer was pivotal in the formation of the Urban Foundation whose aim was to search for ways and means of preserv-

ing an economy endangered by African revolt against conditions in the townships.

Most tellingly, the book observes that the 40 years of Nationalist rule have been good for business and profits. In that time AAC has expanded massively and diversified both in the South African economy and internationally.

Using internal Chamber of Mines and Anglo American documents, the authors show that between 1984 and 1986 black workers on Anglo mines still complained about poor hostel accommodation and food, inadequate pay, corrupt personnel staff, racist and aggressive white supervisors, homosexual abuse and unnecessarily dangerous underground work.

'And in times of crisis, Anglo has had no hesitation in falling back on the full panoply of coercion and force,' the authors state.

While it has improved wages and working conditions and accepted the emergence of black trade unions on the mines, AAC's enormous profits have depended on 'the apartheid labour system with its pass laws, influx control and homelands policy'.

White rule in South Africa has been good for Anglo, but looking to the future it must be seeking an accommodation with a future black-governed South Africa.

It has survived and flourished in Zimbabwe, it mines diamonds in Angola

and has come to terms with Zambia over copper. It hopes to do the same in post-apartheid — but still capitalist — South Africa.

This is why Oppenheimer's successor Gavin Relly took part in the Lusaka talks with the African National Congress.

However Relly is perceived by the authors as being on a 'rickety fence, playing to the international audience by both condemning the failures of the regime and pleading forbearance for it'.

But the authors feel the Nationalist government needs the Anglo business giant for its survival — particularly with its experience of sanctions-busting in what was then Rhodesia — rather than the other way round.

In South Africa's struggles AAC has become a major political player with very little accountability. It is run by a select group 'as powerful and tightly-knit as anything to be found in the oil-fields and haciendas of Texas'.

Winnie Mandela's suggestions to the recent COSATU conference that Anglo could be negotiated with have been exposed in the course of the strike by thousands of Anglo miners in the last two weeks.

Multinational corporation that it is, if things go wrong for Anglo in South Africa, there is always Europe, Brazil or North America — not to mention their interests in Australia and the Far East.

The miners are NOT defeated!

● FROM PAGE 9

The workers will learn revolutionary lessons!

REVOLUTIONARY struggle, Lenin once remarked, is the greatest teacher of the working masses.

There is not the slightest doubt that the miners' strike is going to teach the exploited and oppressed many salutary lessons.

The most important thing that will be drummed home to the masses is the need for revolutionary leadership; for a bold and audacious revolutionary organisation that does not balk at the tasks to be performed; which does not crumble at the first show of strength by the class enemy, which does not set itself up in opposition to the militancy and revolutionary zeal of the struggling masses and which is able to unite the whole class, employed and unemployed as well as the rest of the oppressed, to struggle for the overthrow of apartheid-capitalism.

It would be incorrect at this stage to propose the miners defy the union leaders and continue their strike 'over' the heads of that leadership.

This would only create divisions among the striking miners and enable the management to isolate and victimise those they consider the 'militants'.

In the same orderly and united way in which the 300,000 miners came out on strike, so should they now conduct the retreat which the union leadership has imposed on them.

NUM and COSATU leadership must give account!

BUT the miners must call their leadership to book! They must demand that this leadership give account for violating worker-democracy.

They must condemn in the strongest possible terms the 'secret talks' that the leadership conducted with the bosses.

They must demand from the COSATU leadership that it explain why it did not call the rest of the workers out in solidarity strike action, but left the miners isolated to struggle on their own.

They must demand an explanation from the 'popular' African National Congress/South African Communist Party leadership why it did not provide the revolutionary leadership that their struggle so urgently called for.

Build the revolutionary party!

No trust in the counter-revolutionary ANC/SACP!

WE must also learn the lessons from the miners' strike.

It cannot be left to the trade union movement to conduct the struggle against apartheid-capitalism.

We must learn that the ANC/SACP is hopelessly inadequate to perform the tasks that the revolutionary situation in our country demands.

This is the self-same leadership that barely a year ago was engaged in



A miner gets the most out of his accordion

talks (the so-called Lusaka Indaba) with the very class enemy that the striking miners confronted.

Then they tried to present Anglo American chairman Gavin Relly and others as 'patriots' who could be 'persuaded' to break with the apartheid state.

Now when these 'business patriots' reveal their true zeal for 'democracy', the ANC/SACP offer nothing but a deafening silence as to how the working class must organise to defeat these capitalist exploiters.

Less than two months ago the ANC/SACP were again blazing the trail of class-collaboration, this time in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss with leading representatives of the bourgeoisie how apartheid-capitalism could be reformed and a 'peaceful solution' found to South Africa's problems. (see Workers Press, 18 July 1987)

The policies of the ANC/SACP serve only to disorient the struggling masses.

Their counter-revolutionary role blunts the mass offensive that the working class has to mount if it is to topple the apartheid-capitalist regime.

Is it therefore a surprise when Cyril Ramaphosa, 'leader' of the mineworkers who never ceases to praise the 'national-liberation movement', declares incredulously that he did not realise how 'tough' the mining bosses could be — as if through 'moral persuasion' and 'pressure politics' the capitalist class can be made to give up their predatory and exploitative economic system?

Prepare for the new round of battle!

THE working class and the oppressed masses need a revolutionary organisation if the struggle against apartheid-capitalism is to be consummated.

They need a Bolshevik-Leninist party guided by the revolutionary theory of Marxism. They need a world party of socialism that will be able to mobilise the international working class in support of the South African working class.

We dare not delay a mo-

ment in building this revolutionary leadership.

The class enemy scents victory in this retreat that has been forced on the miners. It will now prepare for even heavier assaults on the working class and the oppressed masses.

But the working class will in no way consider this retreat to be a defeat. They know that their fighting potential has not yet been tested to the full.

The revolutionary situation in our country remains and great class battles are imminent.

The question of whether the working class and the oppressed masses or the capitalist exploiters and their racist state are to be victorious depends very directly on whether or not we will be able to provide this revolutionary leadership.

Miners, workers and oppressed must demand:

- unconditional reinstatement of all miners!
- immediate sacking of all scabs
- the NUM convoke an emergency congress where the decision of the union leadership to undemocratically call off the strike be rejected!
- the strike be resumed until all the demands of the miners have been met!
- that this time COSATU support the miners struggle through solidarity strike action!
- rejection of the 'secret deal' made by the union leadership with the mining bosses!
- all secret talks be made unconstitutional and that the union leadership publicly apologise to the miners for violating worker-democracy!
- **Build the Revolutionary Bolshevik Party!**
- **Re-organise the Fourth International as the Party of World Socialist Revolution!**



Anglo publicity picture of the housing for their employees — a tiny minority! Most live in single-sex compounds.

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.

GRENADA Public Meeting. Hear former High Commissioner, Fennis Augustine speak on current situation. Sunday 6 September, 4p.m. 218 Lambeth Road, London SE1. Organised by New Jewel Movement (UK).

AGAINST BP INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA Demonstration outside Shell Garage, Burnet and Hallamshire Factory, Worktop. Saturday 12 September, 9.30a.m. Organised by Nottinghamshire Area NUM, Worktop Trades Council and Yorkshire NUM. Followed by Rally, 11a.m. at Worktop Town Hall. Speakers: Peter Heathfield (NUM), SACTU, SWAPO, ANC, Anti-Apartheid.

ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA Meeting with June Jordan, Moshe Machover and others. Tuesday 15 September, 8p.m. Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, SW11.

SABRA AND SHATILLA Fifth Anniversary of Massacre. Palestine Post Rally. Dr Swee Ang (Medical Aid for Palestinians) and Faisal Awaida (PLO representative in Britain). Thursday, 17 September, 7p.m. Holborn Library, Theobalds Road, London WC1.

SUPPORT MORDECHAI VANUNU CNV Vigil at Israeli

Embassy. Monday 21 September, 12.30.- 2p.m. Palace Green, Kensington High Street.

TRADE UNIONS AGAINST MSC Conference to co-ordinate opposition to MSC schemes and government policies on unemployment through the trade unions. Saturday 7 November, 9.30a.m.- 5p.m. Dr Jonson House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham B4. Registration £5. Contact: M.Arkwright 01-521 4130.

OUR JOBS AND SERVICES ARE NOT FOR SALE Conference. Thursday 10 September, 10a.m.- 2p.m. Camden Centre, Bedford Square WC1. Organised by London Authorities Joint Trade Unions. (01-274 7722 extn. 2001).

FREE MOSES MAYEKISO Free All South African Prisoners; Hands Off COSATU; End British Collaboration With Apartheid. March to South Africa House, Trafalgar Square. Saturday 10 October. Assemble mid-day, Clerkenwell Green, London EC2 (nearest tube: Farringdon)

UNEMPLOYED? FIGHT BACK WITH THE UWC Demand TUC Breaks From MSC and Supports Organisations of the Unemployed. Lobby in Blackpool, 8 September. Details: UWC, BCM Box 928 London WC1 3XX (01-431 3135).

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. In dispute with British Tyre and Rubber Company since May 1985 — See Their Play, Hear Their Story. Hackney Empire, Mare Street, E8. 15-19 September 8p.m.

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. Daventry Centre, 179-181 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

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

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.

SOUTH AFRICA

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The fight for a Bolshevik party

Part Three

TO OUR READERS: This is the third part of the series, 'Permanent Revolution: the fight for a Bolshevik Party', the first two parts of which appeared in Workers Press on July 4 and August 1.

Together with the fourth part, which will appear in next week's Workers Press, it covers the question of the relationship of DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM.

Here an apology is needed, because on August 22 we mistakenly presented an article on the role of Stalinism in the COSATU union as the third part of the series. In fact that was a special article on that subject.

This error was due to the difficulties of communication from the South African comrade writing the articles.

'To reduce all the contradictions and all the tasks to one common denominator — THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT — is a necessary, but altogether insufficient, operation.' (Trotsky).

Fight for the permanent revolution!!
Fight for 100 per cent democracy!!

WE SAY quite unambiguously that the struggle in South Africa is for socialism. We are thereby insisting that all the economic prerequisites for socialism exist. In saying so, however, we do not proceed to renounce the struggle for democracy. It is not this that distinguishes Trotskyism from Stalinism in South Africa, or anywhere else. On the contrary, as revolutionary Marxists we are for 100 per cent democracy.

The working class, the majority class, will come to power not least of all through a struggle for consistent democracy. Democratic slogans, especially under the monstrous apartheid regime, MUST form an integral part of our transitional programme for socialist revolution. By struggling under a banner that combines 'minimum' and 'maximum' demands in a dialectical manner the working class will advance to socialism. This is the permanent revolution!!

The oppressed masses in South Africa have too long hungered for democracy and ached for a direct say in the running of their lives. They no longer can remain passive receivers of the paltry crumbs of pseudo-reform from the ruling class — the fraudulent democracy of the Tricameral Parliament, the half-baked removal of pass laws, the hollow pretences of an end to forced removals, the new toy Statutory Council — and whatever else Botha finds time to fiddle with while Rorpe burns.

The oppressed masses, especially in the last three years of heroic battle, have demonstrated their complete intolerance with the autocratic racist rule of the bourgeoisie. They themselves want to rule, they themselves want to set right everything that has wronged them. They themselves want to stamp out every vestige of racist oppression.

They want the right to enough good food; they want the right to be well-clothed; they want the right to decent housing; they want the right to be healthy; they want the

right to leisure time, culture and education; they want the right to work; they want freedom of assembly; they want freedom of movement; they want the right to say and write what they like; they want to be rid of all bureaucratic harassment, police brutality, arrests and detentions; they want an end to all racist practices; they want the right to full equality in society.

Fight for the constituent assembly!!
Build the workers' united front!!

These are the rights and freedoms that the oppressed masses — workers, unemployed, women, youth, students, the black petty bourgeoisie — have fought and died for. We say, let the demands of the oppressed masses, the multi-millioned victims of the apartheid-capitalist system, be heard. Let the great mass of exploited and oppressed choose their representatives in the freest and fairest elections.

Our primary democratic slogan therefore is for a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY of universally, directly, equally, and secretly elected representatives, from the length and breadth of the whole of South Africa. For support for the Constituent Assembly to become overwhelming, all sections of the oppressed and exploited masses must be drawn in.

A solid foundation for a mighty universal WORKERS' UNITED FRONT, which can champion the battle for democracy, already exists. The workers' giant COSATU, must unite in action with NACTU; the advanced workers must be joined in battle by the proletarian militants in the UDF and the NF; to this must be added the struggling efforts of the young courageous revolutionaries in SAYCO, the NECC, and all the other youth and student organisations.

Form committees of action against apartheid-capitalism!!

Draw all layers of the exploited and oppressed into the struggle for 100 per cent democracy!!

Let the ranks of the workers united front swell. The revolutionary crisis demands that the workers' united

front comprise not only established mass organisations (the trade unions and political organisations) but also more flexible, fighting organs. Consequently, now is the time to form thousands of Committees of action against Apartheid Capitalism across the length and breadth of South Africa, to draw all the hitherto inactive layers into political life.

The vanguard of organised workers, unemployed, youth and students in the urban areas, must take the struggle into the countryside — into the white farm areas and the bantustans — so that it has the broadest, most democratic sweep. Gathering strength from the example of the urban workers, the rural working masses must actively begin to challenge the longstanding unavenged oppression on the farms and the reigns of terror in the bantustans.

The privileged layer of the proletariat and the non-proletarian strata who suffer

whose dominance is supreme in the epoch of imperialism, utterly ruins the petty-bourgeoisie. This is no less the case in apartheid-capitalist South Africa. The oppressed petty-bourgeoisie must be drawn in firmly behind the Workers' United Front. They must be convinced of the complete bankruptcy of the apartheid-capitalist system, and of their inevitable economic ruin under it. They must be made to break cleanly from the racist bourgeoisie with their smokescreen promises and ramshackle schemes about 'black business advancement' and 'free enterprise democracy'. They must be made to ultimately realise that there will be no place for exploiters, big or small, in a free South Africa.

Furthermore, they must reject the fraudulent political reforms that the bourgeoisie have increasingly begun to dream up. They must be convinced that their salvation lies in siding with

doubtful if such an assembly will be convened, and even if it were, it would be powerless so long as the material power remains in the hands of the Kuomintang generals.'

Already the advanced workers and revolutionary youth in the urban areas of South Africa have few such illusions left. Through their own practical experience, thorough-going lessons have been learnt about the necessity for ending the armed dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and replacing it with the armed dictatorship of the proletariat. Through vigorously championing the call for the Constituent Assembly the revolutionary workers' vanguard will in fact enrich the experience of the oppressed masses and bring closer the moment of the proletarian dictatorship. Such is the logic of the permanent revolution.

Build workers' defence squads!!

without the disarming of the organs of repression of the bourgeois state. There can, furthermore, be no free and fair elections unless the masses secure the unbanning of all organisations of the exploited and oppressed and also the release of all political prisoners and detainees.

Demonstrate the necessity for workers' soviet power!!

'...the slogan of soviets can and must be put forward from the first stages of the revolutionary progress of the masses. But it must be real progress. The working masses must flock to the revolution, rally under its standard. The soviets furnish an expression, from the organisational point of view, to the centripetal force of the revolutionary progress. (Trotsky).

The committees of action against apartheid-capitalism must increasingly assume the character of soviets, i.e. organs of workers' democracy. In active struggle the masses will be convinced that these organisational forms embody the highest form of democracy; that they constitute real democracy and not the limited, formal democracy of the Constituent Assembly.

The protracted intransigence of the bourgeois state, as it struggles for its very existence, and the nationwide intensification of the struggle by the working class, as it struggles to break its chains of oppression, will fan the flames of civil war. Then, Workers' Committees of Action against Apartheid Capitalism will inevitably grow into organs of power that challenge the state power of the bourgeoisie. This tendency expressed itself in embryonic form during the high point of the 1985-86 mass offensive. Only a lack of revolutionary leadership prevented real Workers' Soviets from emerging. The working class must be prepared all the more urgently now for the task of seizing power in the coming period.

Fight for the constituent assembly!!

Fight for a workers' government!!

Together with the revolutionary democratic demands, must therefore simultaneously be raised the demands of the revolutionary class, i.e. the transitional and socialist demands of the proletariat. In so doing, we firmly grasp the permanent character of the revolution. For us the lack of democracy and racist oppression are inseparably bound up with capitalism. The struggle for 100 per cent democracy must inevitably make deep inroads into private property relations.

There can be no jobs for all under capitalism; their can be no housing for all under capitalism; their can be no end to hunger and poverty under capitalism; there can be no end to racist inequality. In short, there can be no consistent democracy under capitalism. Consequently, the essential aim of the struggle is to smash apartheid-capitalism. The workers' united front must be built to mount an inexorable

● TURN TO PAGE 12



'The oppressed masses in South Africa have too long hungered for democracy and ached for a direct say in the running of their lives': women at a union meeting

from the trials, the uncertainties and insecurities of the crisis-ridden apartheid-capitalist system, must also turn to the workers' united front for relief.

White workers must be made to realise that the capitalist evils of chronic joblessness, wage freezes or even cuts, and soaring inflation, to which they have increasingly fallen prey, are not the product of a passing phase but of an insoluble crisis of apartheid-capitalism.

They must realise that continued participation in a racist 'democracy' can no longer afford them a decent existence. The apartheid state simply no longer has the means to act as their racist patron and protector. White workers must shed their prejudices and take up their places alongside their black class comrades in the Workers' United Front. They must take up the fight for a Constituent Assembly.

The position of the black petty-bourgeoisie is analogous to that of the white workers. Finance capital,

the mighty working class, and fighting for a Constituent Assembly.

Only a consistent struggle for 100 per cent democracy can dispel the illusions of formal majority rule!!

As the workers' united front gathers momentum, the call for the Constituent Assembly will be attractive to the masses precisely because it directly raises the possibility of them asserting their majority will over their oppressors. The illusions that the masses have about this formal democracy, i.e. the bourgeois democracy, will be dispelled and transcended in the course of the struggle. As Trotsky said of the struggle for democracy in China:

'In the process of agitation for this slogan (for the Constituent Assembly), it will obviously be necessary to explain to the masses that it is

Arm the worker-masses!!

It is absolutely necessary, now that the organisations of the masses are under daily siege from all quarters, that they are militantly defended. Workers must Build Workers' Defence Squads: to forcibly prevent the crossing of picket lines; to resist attacks by vigilantes and other right-wing terrorists; to counter the intimidation and violence of the state and the bosses. The democratic organisations of the workers' united front must forcibly claim their right to exist and be active.

Therefore, inseparable from our slogan for the Constituent Assembly is the call to arm the worker-masses. It is inconceivable, after so many bloody years in which Botha's police and army have proved themselves to be the chief enemies of democracy, that the democratic election of representatives to the Constituent Assembly can take place

South Africa

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The fight for a Bolshevik party

● FROM PAGE 11

challenge to the whole apartheid capitalist system.

Together with our slogan for a Constituent Assembly, we therefore simultaneously raise the call for a Workers' Government. We are guided by the Second Congress of the Third International:

...as a central political slogan, the workers' government is most important in countries where the position of bourgeois society is particularly unstable, and where the balance of forces between the workers' parties and the bourgeoisie places the question of government on the order of the day as a practical problem requiring immediate solution. In these countries the workers' government slogan follows inevitably from the entire united front tactic.

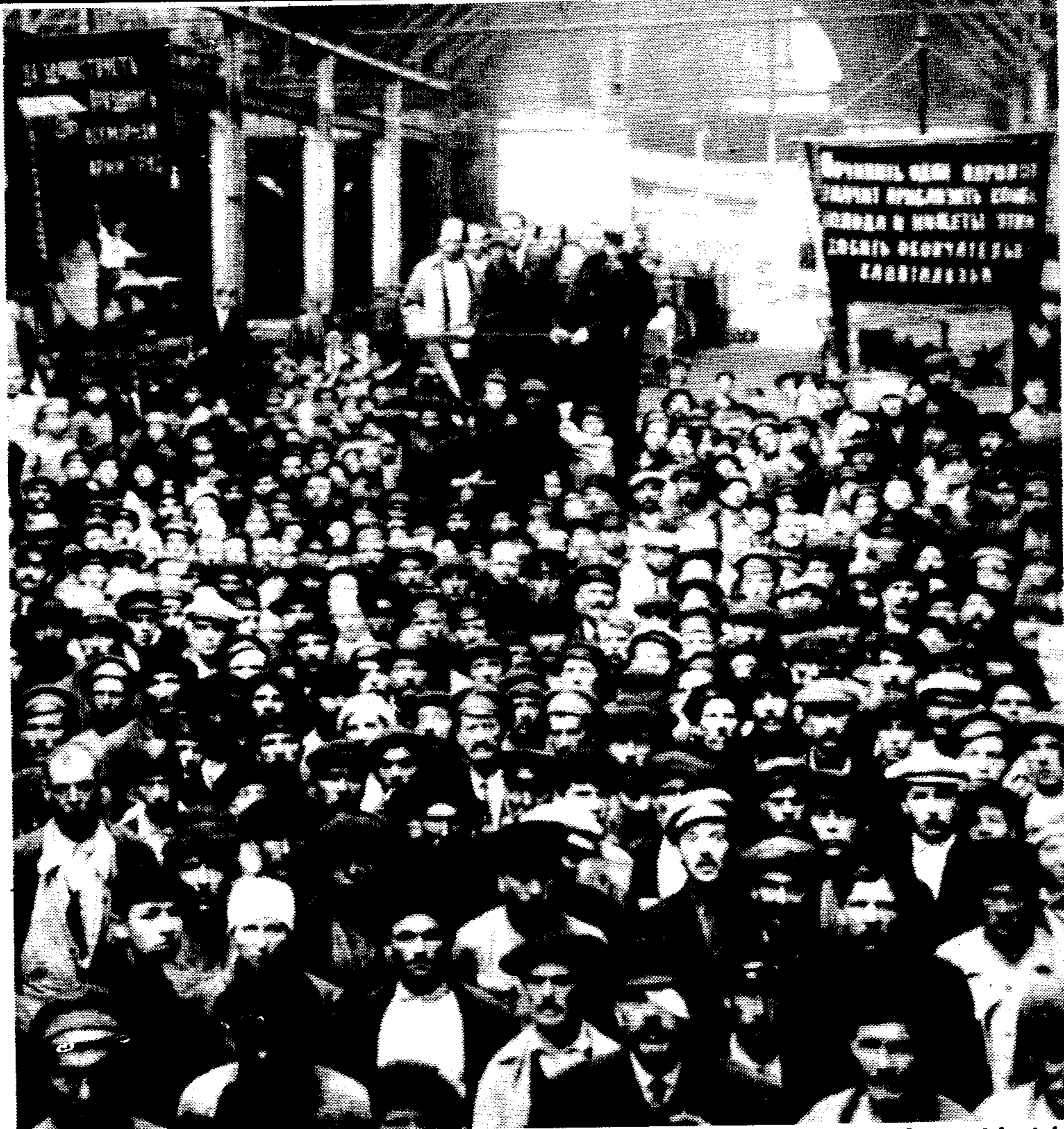
Apartheid-capitalist society is indeed 'particularly unstable', and, over the last three years, the struggles from the factory floor and in the black townships have, repeatedly posed the question: who is to govern? The unequivocal answer must be: the workers shall govern!!

The Stalinists fear 100 per cent democracy!!

The Stalinists fear the soviet power of the worker-masses!!

The whole perspective that has been outlined is the perspective of the Permanent Revolution. It is in direct and irreconcilable contradiction with the two-stage perspective of the Stalinists and the petty-bourgeois nationalists.

We believe that the ANC-SACP position is not even a consistently democratic one. The call for a Constituent Assembly is not part of its



'The soviets furnish an expression, from the organisational point of view, to the centripetal force of the revolutionary progress': workers at the Putilov factory in Petrograd, 1920, electing delegates for the city's soviet.

programme. This 'Marxist-Leninist' party, that so ardently champions the cause of bourgeois-democracy, that is so particular about confining the struggle to that of national democracy, lacks even the fighting democratic slogan of Bolshevism. The same applies to the ANC.

The reason for the SACP's lack of clarity even on the question of democracy is clear. The call for the Constituent Assembly is in direct opposition to the idea of a negotiated settlement or a national convention of 'recognised' leaders. It fears nothing more than the great

worker-masses, the vast majority, taking direct control over their own destiny by acting in their own material interests!

Rather than fighting for the permanent revolution, i.e. fighting for democracy on the basis of a consistent class struggle, the aim of the SACP and the ANC, over the last few decades, has been to make a play for bourgeois public opinion. They have called on all and sundry to support the cause of justice and freedom (vague terms emptied of all class content) against apartheid.

Pressure politics has been the hall-mark of this approach. So South Africa has been branded a 'pariah nation', out of step with the rest of 'civilised' humanity. Capitalist governments, American senators, monopoly corporations — a whole coterie of liberal elements and agencies — have been consistently called on to put pressure on the Botha regime through disinvestment and other forms of passive resistance.

The Bonapartist regime itself is pressurised by individual acts of sabotage and violence, as part of a 'strategy' of making South Africa ungovernable, in the hope that Botha will 'come to his senses'. The Marxist tenet of the irreducibility of class interests is abandoned in favour of reliance on bourgeois morality. Does the SACP not realise that: "Pressure" can never induce the bourgeoisie to change its policy on a question that involves its whole fate." (Trotsky).

But the Stalinists do not want to tamper with the 'whole fate' of the bourgeoisie. It merely wants to participate in the bourgeois state, and it does not have to be participation in the highest form of the bourgeois-democratic parliament — the Constituent Assembly. A Lancaster House style negotiated settlement will perfectly suit its purposes. This is why the SACP regularly emphasises in its publications that it does not exclude the possibility of negotiation.

The task is to remorselessly expose the vacillations and inconsistency of the Stalinists and the ANC leadership on the question of democracy. The Trotskyists must prove themselves to be the most ardent champions of democracy. The Trotskyist party will break the

influence of the ANC-SACP leadership and will win the battle for the hearts and minds of the worker-masses by fighting for a permanent revolution.

Fight for:

- The Permanent Revolution!!
- 100 percent democracy!!
- A Constituent Assembly!!
- A Workers' Government!!
- Workers' soviet power!!
- The Dictatorship of the Proletariat!!
- A Bolshevik Party!!

To be concluded in the next issue.

Stop Le Pen!

THE invitation to French fascist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen to speak during this year's Tory party conference in Blackpool has aroused concern and anger among many people.

Drawing attention to the racist violence that has accompanied Le Pen's rise, the Jewish Socialists' Group is urging that if the Tories don't cancel the invitation, 'anti-racists and anti-fascists should demonstrate in Blackpool against Le Pen's visit'.

The French National Front leader has been invited to speak at a fringe meeting, on the initiative of right-wing Thatcher adviser Alfred Sherman.

Rail strike

CANADA'S 48,000 railway workers came out on strike last week after union talks with Canadian National Railways and Canadian Pacific broke down on the issue of job protection.

Commuter services in the big metropolitan areas of Toronto and Montreal were hit, as well as freight trains. About 30 per cent of Canada's freight normally goes by rail, and western Canada's bulk products are particularly affected.

The railway companies are opposing job guarantees, because with transport deregulation coming next year they say there is going to be fierce competition for business.

REPORT FROM

Wash-house blues

A SMASH-HIT at this year's Edinburgh Festival 'fringe' took place not in a theatre with the aid of make-up and complex lighting but in a specially reopened old wash-house in broad daylight.

How it will transfer to London's Almeida Theatre, where the company hope to perform it next year, is hard to say. But the acting is so good and the script so well-conceived and written that it will be worth going to see.

The play is Dominique Durvin's 'Le Lavoir' ('The Wash-house') done by Amien's Theatre de la Basoche.

'La Lavoir' is about 'an ordinary morning' at the wash-house and about lives, the fears and the hopes of nine women who come there to do their own or other people's laundry.

Except that the audience knows it is not an ordinary day at all, since scrawled on the blackboard, where the list of washerwomen for the day is put up, is the date — in August 1914 — on which France and Germany went to war.

Nor is the play written as merely a 'slice of life' eavesdrop on a single day's experience. It is tightly constructed, moving skilfully from moments of back-breaking routine, to flare-ups revealing underlying personal, social and even racial tensions between the women, to passages of almost lyrical harmony.

Likely

Much more happens than would have been likely to in a real single morning in 1914. But this is precisely what makes it possible for all the characters to be developed by reminiscence, argument, talk of their aspirations, fisticuffs even, and some beautiful singing. This is what makes 'Le Lavoir' a good play, not merely a dramatised documentary.

And we know in advance the impending drama which the women at most only occasionally sense. An extensive programme note (for once really helpful if one cannot follow the detail of the rapidly spoken French) tells us that Gustave, common law husband of the domestic servant, Gervaise, will burst in with news of the mobilisation.

Gervaise must come home; their son must prepare to join his regiment. The old woman supervisor and her daughter are left alone, commenting that 'with all the blood that's going to the shed, there's plenty of work for the old-wash house yet!'

Want

'Le Lavoir' is not a political play, and one would neither want, nor have the right, to ask it to be. But the programme is full of notes on the history of the relationship between trade unionism and the struggle for women's rights in early twentieth century France; and if I had one regret it was the character

of Henriette, the only active trade unionist amongst the washerwomen, was not more fully developed.

But this is no criticism of the portrayal of her by Marie Henriau. The playing of the whole cast indeed was mutually sustaining and uniformly excellent.

Theatre de la Basoche: Le Lavoir by Dominique Durvin and Helene Prevost. Abbeymount Wash-house, Edinburgh festival fringe.

The 41st annual Edinburgh Festival is over and the thousands of performers who participated in its Fringe have departed, some maybe to success as a result of what they did there, many to massage their bruised aspirations and bank overdrafts.

Left regular readers have been left with the impression that nothing worthwhile happened during Edinburgh's three weeks of anarchic glory in foreign languages, here is a word or two about some done in English.

The only contemporary Soviet play to go alongside official Festival offerings of classics from the Gorky Theatre of Leningrad was the UK premiere of Michael Glenny's translation of Samuil Alyoshin's 'Theme and Variations'.

It is an interesting study of a young woman tourist-guide (Jacqueline Fox) who develops an affectionate relationship through correspondence with an ageing lawyer with nineteenth-century values, and then mistakes him for his younger colleague who is more of a twentieth-century cynic. Its impact was unfortunately blurred by poor direction.

There were strong individual performances by the Studio Two company but Charles Nowosielski's direction was heavy-handed and gimmicky, obscuring the impact of the play — though it was clearly intended to be inventive, unusual and helpful. This was a pity as Nowosielski is fresh from a successful and important first season at Musselburgh's Brunton Theatre (near Edinburgh).

Concentrating there on Scottish themes, he produced real revelations, notably in a new play 'The World Traveller' set against a background of female labour in the eighteenth-century Fife coalfield. (Look out for this, as there was talk of it going on tour.)

A short walk across Edinburgh took one from Moscow to Chicago. Theatre ACT triumphed over an unsuitably cramped stage and a perilously unstable bed to give an illuminating account of David Mamet's ironically-titled 'Sexually Perversity in Chicago'.

Mamet believes that 'the language we use, its rhythms, actually determines the way we behave, rather than the other way round,' a rather partial insight to say the least, leaving open the question of where language comes from; but one which he uses to give a quite specific and devastatingly convincing account of male/female relationships amongst the young, upwardly mobile in the U.S. of A. in the mid 1970s.

'We've got baby seals dying in Alaska, and we're passing amendments for broads', remarks the apparently super-confident but truly screwed-up Bernie (Ted Dawson) about equal

Two important pamphlets on Iran

Cari

information bulletin

the Iranian Workers' movement

Price: £1, obtainable from B.M. CARI, LONDON WC1N 3XX or through Paperback Centres.

Price: 50p, obtainable from Committee for Defence of Women's Rights in Iran, c/o London Women's Centre, 70 Great Queen St. London WC2b 5AX, or through Paperback Centres



THE 41st EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Jarman's bleak vision

BY HILARY HORROCKS

A CAPACITY audience at the Edinburgh Film Festival gave a muted response to the premiere of British director Derek Jarman's film 'The Last of England'. It was as if they wished the best to an experimental film maker who obviously has a healthy contempt for box office takings but were exhausted with trying to make sense of 90 minutes of thousands of disparate images intercut at dizzying speed.

The film is made up of a series of happenings — there is not enough narrative content to call them incidents — shot mostly in London's derelict docklands.

The destruction of the landscape seem to be both recent and man-made, since fires continually burn on the horizon and pathetic groups of fugitives are herded across the wasteland and sometimes arbitrarily shot by men with machine guns and bal-lavas — for whose identity you may search in vain.

Jarman says one aspect of his film is to point out 'how the situation in northern Ireland is being brought into this country'. If so, are the gunmen agents of the state? The film's credits label them 'terrorists', which hardly helps the confusion.

Throughout the film, constantly recurring images — imperialist pomp in India, Royal Weddings, the Malvinas war — are juxtaposed

with the scene of carnage and desolation, implying, I take it, that this is the true cost to mankind in the age of imperialism's death agony.

Fragments of Hitler's speeches and a mysterious figure in a Ku-Klux-Klan hood, among other images, imply that racism and fascism have already taken over. These dark forces have emerged, as a voice-over tells us during one of the more lucid moments in the film, out of the sunny gardens of English suburbia, as represented by inter-cut home movies of Jarman's own family in the 1940s.

Although what little Jarman has judged it necessary to say about the film indicates he sees it as a warning about the capitalist state, its message comes across as far more ambiguous. The small snatches of commentary blame the indifference of the population for their country's plight, and the images

are of communities already annihilated, of a populace cowed without resistance.

The film ends with actress Tilda Swinton trying to tear off her stinging wedding dress in despair — and with the bleakest of all its images, a boatload of refugees sailing into a dark cavern while a crow calls omnivorously on the soundtrack.

Of course, with such a disjointed work all kinds of interpretations can be advanced. But incoherence on such a topic is surely both politically and artistically indefensible.

In line with the events in the arts festival as a whole, a prominent theme in the film festival was of the Gorbachev bureaucracy's glasnost on the cinema.

Under its First Secretary, Elem Klimov, the Cinematographers Union re-establishing film as the Soviet Union's 'most important art', using a term from Lenin in the revolutionary years when the Soviet republic was combatting widespread illiteracy and limited understanding of great political events.

Even though the contents of the current flow of Soviet films to the West and the relaxation of censorship is far from revolutionary, the new films shown in Edinburgh are worth looking out for.

They included recent student shorts such as Markarov's 'Land and Water', Nugmanov's 'Ah-Ha-a', Chvornova's 'One Long Step', and Aldashin's 'Transformation' (described as an allegory of 'restricted bureaucracy') — all made this year.

Features included Konstantin Lopushansky's 'Letters from a Dead Man' — about a nuclear catastrophe, it was made before but released after Chernobyl; Vadim Abdrashitov's 'Parade of the Planets' (1984); his 'The Train Has Stopped' (1983) and 'Plumbium, Or A Dangerous Game' (1986); Nana Djordjadze's 'Robinsonade, Or My English Grandfather' (1986) which won the 'Camera d'Or' at the Cannes Film Festival; and Eldar Shengelaya's already renowned satire from Georgia 'Blue Mountains' (1984).

Amongst British films apart from the Jarman premiere (and selecting very much at random) were two shown on the Festival's first full day, Timothy Neat's 'Tree of Liberty' and Neil

Mackintosh's '1686'.

The first, already seen on Channel 4 but not to be missed when it comes up again, is a tribute to the work of the extraordinary American composer, Serge Hovey. He is confined to bed and, by all medical precedents, should have died years ago of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.

Limited to infinitesimal movements in one elbow and living on a massive life support system, he has succeeded in proceeding with his work of restoring all the songs of the eighteenth century Scottish poet Robert Burns to their original tunes, and directing the self-taught Fife folk singer, Jean Redpath, in recording them.

'1686' is an interesting example of a new interest amongst artists in different media in Scottish history. In a series of short scenes it tells of the fate of a Covenanting family in one of the last of the religious risings in lowland Scotland prior to the 1688 so-called 'Glorious Revolution'.

Also on show from the Channel 4 stable was Mike Alexander and Douglas Eadie's fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the death of the Italian socialist, Antonio Gramsci.

These two interesting film makers have captured some marvellous footage of the Sardinian and Italian mainland countryside as well as some unique archive film.

But the very limited attention the film gives to Gramsci's political and theoretical work is too tied to interview with members of the Italian Communist Party.

These are often interesting, but dubious as historical evidence when presented uncritically. They are also rendered infuriating by the use of voice-over translations delivered in a mock-Italian accent.

The provocative, and clearly unintended, conclusion which seemed to emerge was that, whatever his enormous personal courage in surviving Mussolini's prisons for over ten years (he died fifty years ago this year soon after his release), Gramsci was theoretically of only minor interest.

But readers will make up their own minds when the film goes out later this year on Channel 4, followed by a discussion programme.



Germaine Delbat (*la mère*) oversee the wash-house from a wheelchair propelled by Helene Rimbaud, as her daughter Toinette

The fringe benefits

rights legislation. 'I don't mind physical violence, I just can't stand emotional violence,' shouts the slightly less insensitive Danny at his girl Debs (Karen McGregor).

But then she is apt to provoke him with truly brutal inquiries like 'Tell me what you're feeling!' Mark Gash as Danny was especially good.

For an authentic (I think) whiff of the atmosphere from off-Broadway (New York's 'fringe' theatreland), however, you had to visit American Festival Theatre, a company of professional American actors (all ages) who pay their own way annually to the Edinburgh Festival.

This serves to underline how important the Festival is in the perception of the international artistic community — something clearly understood also by Mikhail Gorbachev, whose 'perestroika'-men scored a real coup this year by taking the whole thing much more seriously than the English.

AFT — known as Studio Theatre Productions in the States — now run what is almost their own Festival of American drama, filling a gap in the official Festival itself. Their production of Lanford Wilson's 'Hot Baltimore' explored the world of the downwardly rather than the upwardly mobile, portraying a group of fascinating characters living out the last days of a once noble, now condemned, Baltimore hotel.

Clientele

'If my clientele represent a cross-section of American manhood, this country's in trouble,' cracks the hooker, April Green (can Spring be far behind?), played with delicious aplomb by Michele Fulves. Done to near-perfection as in this production, Wilson's work, little known in this country, looks as though it is more than just a reworking of that old standard, the crisis of the American dream.

The American dream, nevertheless, is in one helluva crisis — it has been since at least the 1890s — and the talented (British) National Student Theatre Group — found an original way of exploring this. 'American Eagle' is an inventive exercise in putting the strip cartoon on stage, and exposing the myth of superperson saving the 'free world' for 'truth and decency'. Done with tremendous poise and energy, it deserved bigger audiences.

That Ms M.H. Thatcher's British capitalist dream isn't in too good shape either was brought home by Haydon

Galliard's production of Christopher Haydon's 'Celestial Blue', a sensitive examination of the life and death of a more admirable Hilda — Hilda Murrell.

Serious

A very serious school of thought (led by the indefatigable Tam Dalyell, MP) holds that the murder of this elderly rose-grower in March, 1984, was not unconnected with a desire in some quarters of the state to halt her anti-nuclear campaigning, and/or her possible interest in the sinking of the Belgrano, in which a relative of hers was involved. 'Celestial Blue', besides its environmental connotations, is Westminster Press lobby code for the aforementioned M.H.T.



The 'American Dream' stripped to the last of its seven veils: Damien Kavanagh as Mr Katz and Harriet Gold as Suzy in American Festival Theatre's 'Hotel Baltimore'

A newly-translated document from the Vietnamese Trotskyists

To: WRP Education Department, PO Box 735, London SW9 1QS. Please send me a copy . . . copies of 'National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam'.

Name & Address

Please enclose £5 per copy (£2.50 for WRP members) plus postage: 50p — Britain and Ireland; 60p Europe; £1.56 — Middle East and north Africa; £2.12 — America, southern Africa, India; £2.40 — Australia, Far East.

Subscribe to WORKING CLASS OPPOSITION
American Monthly Newspaper of the Internationalist Workers Party, official American section of the LIT (International Workers League)

NAME

ADDRESS

Phone 01-636 3532

Enclosed is a cheque/money order for £10 for 6 issues of Working Class Opposition (sent by airmail)

Enclosed is a cheque/money order for £15.00 for 12 issues of Working Class Opposition (sent by airmail)

Please make cheques/money orders to October Publications Fill in this coupon and send to Leon Perez, Box 735, London SW9 7QS

NATIONALISATION

The dream or the nightmare?

PART III

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.

Towards the abyss. . .

The 1950's still held an air of goodwill and general agreement that life for the miner under public ownership of the mines was better than the brutality of private bosses.

Employment was secure

and vast improvements were made in safety — although in Durham that record was marred by the terrible explosion at Easington in 1951 in which 83 lives were lost.

One of the reasons why more lives were not lost at Easington was due to the board's reorganisation of Rescue Stations.

Before nationalisation there were 37 rescue stations nationally under the control of 31 separate bodies — co-operation between the various teams was never good under this system.

The NCB brought them under the control and co-ordination of one body.

All this was part of the NCB's brief to 'ensure the safety, health and welfare of the persons in their employment'.

The Nationalisation Act — for the first time — made an employer responsible for the welfare of its workforce. And those conditions were enforced by laws of statute.

In general, working conditions were vastly improved, and those improvements were appreciated by miners who had battled under private ownership.

Miners were also given an occupational pension — the first group

of workers to be offered such a scheme in Britain.

Compensation was also won for industrial injuries.

More pit head baths were built and the danger, misery and injury which dogged miners' lives spurred everyone in the industry to make it a safer place in which to work.

Outside the pit the Welfare State was being born, with decent health care promised for all and improvements in education.

In County Durham new homes in new towns were being planned. There was a vision that miners would soon be released from the dark, back-to-back houses so favoured by the coal owners as a cheap form of accommodation for the labour force.

By the end of the decade the dream was beginning to fade away.

Coal was no longer the sole source of energy, oil had arrived on the world scene as a major competitor.

As we shall see, the board wants to go back for that coal — but through open casting, not traditional deep mining.

The West of Durham was deliberately made unprofitable, through lack of investment and restrictive prices on coal.

The new technology needed to modernise the pits was withheld — pumps to deal with water problems were refused, and modern machinery was kept out of the mines. They were allowed to struggle on in the same backward way they had inherited from the coal owners.

The cost in human terms was immense.

During the 1960's the West of Durham was virtually cleared of pits and population.

The pit villages were subjected to the brutal 'Category D' planning restriction which banned any development or new building and forced people into the new towns.

The period of wholesale pit closures in the county was to be ushered in — presided over by a Labour Government.

If the NCB had a planned life for the West of Durham collieries of fifty years or more, why did they close so many in the 1960's?

Contrary to the popular myth it was not on grounds of exhaustion.

According to the NCB's own figures only 127.2 million tons of the available 592 million tons had been extracted by 1962. The NCB sterilised over 400 million tons of coal in the West of Durham.

Communities were uprooted and dispersed to Newton Aycliffe, Washington and Peterlee.

Villages like Green Park, Eldon, Witton Park (to name only

a few) were turned literally into ghost towns, where the elderly saw out their later years with sons and daughters living miles away.

The clearances also drove many miners into the central coalfields of Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire where new developments required more labour.

Some, like Harold Wilson, the Labour Prime Minister, might have called it 'socialist planning', but to the old and infirm of the West Durham villages it was a nightmare.

In the sixties there were other jobs to go to — some in light industry in the new towns, some in other traditional industries in the region.

And that worried the National Coal Board, which, we were told, was still managing the collieries on behalf of the people.

Managers were afraid of a labour shortage to hew the precious coal.

So, they actively conspired to keep new industries out of the area and keep the men in the mines they wanted to develop on the coast.

The Ford Motor Company wanted to site its works on Tyne-side during the early part of the decade. But the NCB and engineering employers banded together to keep them out. The plant eventually went to Halewood.

Durham County Council also accepted that new industries were a threat. One planning report stated:

'competitive industries must not be encouraged into mining areas to such an extent as to create a shortage of male labour in the mines.'

A government commission backed up the county planners by saying:

'With coal the most precious and urgently needed of industrial raw materials, to introduce into mining areas male employing industries based in up-to-date factories and able to offer pleasant work at good wages, would inevitably attract men away from the mines with disastrous consequences for coal production.'

Between 1965 and 1969 two-hundred pits were closed nationally — at the rate of one a week during those years. Local economies were — and still are — devastated.

Opening up to the market. . .

BOTH nationally and regionally the NUM accepted that the NCB should operate under 'market forces'. The prevailing attitude in Durham was summed up by General Secretary Hesler:

'We, as a union must . . . concentrate our efforts securing the introduction of new industries in the area to absorb our members, and while it is sad to see the decline in membership in our great union, as an ex-miner myself, I say in all sincerity, that there are many more congenial ways of earning a living than toiling in the mines.'

One of the reasons for this attitude must lie in the whole nationalisation contract.

Even the left-wing of the NUM of the time believed nationalisation brought miners closer to a socialist society.

Arthur Horner, the Communist general secretary of the NUM from 1946 to 1959, told the last



The Randolph Banner at a Gala in 1950. It was one of the West Durham pits to pay the price during closures in the 1960s.

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

PERSONAL COLUMN

Violence and the state

NEWS of the Hungerford massacre came to me on the radio while I was staying in a quiet corner of Shropshire, that gentlest and least ravaged of English counties.

What most of all shocked the local people, and me too, was that any of us might have been — might, indeed, live to be — victims of a madman with access to powerful weapons. What had happened at Hungerford could happen anywhere in the land.

One result of being on holiday is that you have an unusually detached view of media, government, and police response to an appalling event of this kind.

For 48 hours or so I seemed to be seeing from afar a country trying to come to terms with the facts of late 20th-century life. I didn't greatly care for what I saw.

How was it, I asked myself, that the initial media honesty about police over-reaction was ended after a few hours, as if by the stroke of a magic wand, and replaced by the usual bland, sycophantic underwriting of every police action?

Yet who could deny that the police over-reacted? They swamped Hungerford with hundreds of men who ran around like peas in a hot pan, frightening old people out of their wits and cordoning off streets that need never have been cordoned off, long after the killer had shot himself.

Local people knew that 99 per cent of this phrenetic activity was quite unnecessary. Their indignation was summed up by the woman worker who, finding access to her house blocked after a hard day's work, told the police she had been at work since six o'clock that morning and saw no reason why they should prevent her going home.

Whether this over-reaction was due to the fact that a policeman was among the slain or whether, as I am inclined to think, the police simply put into effect a pre-arranged emergency plan (no doubt the one filed under 'civil disturbances'), all mention of it soon disappeared from the media as if some invisible hand had wiped it off a slate.

What we had in its place was not reassuring: half-baked theorising by half-educated pundits about the killer's supposed state of mind; uninformed theorising about the supposed effects of television violence on unstable minds (and panic cancellations of several programmes); and the obligatory visit to the scene by Margaret Thatcher, that ghoul who haunts every large-scale disaster to suck what political advantage she can out of it.

Now Thatcher, of all people, has a lot of explaining to do. She came to office in insolent possession of the high moral ground: Britain was going to be cleaned up, once and for all. Something Would Be Done About Crime.

She gave the police a blank cheque. But instead of diminishing during her reign, crime of all kinds — above all, police crime — has increased, is increasing, and is going to go on increasing. The same applies to violence, and above all state violence.

Under Thatcher we have seen the emergence of what can only be called a police state, whose cutting edge is turned above all against the organised working class.

The decisive turning-point came during the miners' strike, when would-be pickets were stopped and turned back a good 400 miles from their destinations, mounted police were hurled against pickets with unprecedented ferocity, and riot police invaded pit villages, beating

hell out of the defenceless inhabitants.

All those unheeded warnings by a few voices in the 1970s — about the build-up of police power and armaments, about the dress rehearsal aspect of Britain's war in Ireland, about police surveillance of working-class organisations — have been borne out by subsequent events.

So now we have a nationally co-ordinated police force, armed with quite deadly weapons and not always too careful about how they use them; armed also with secret contingency plans for crushing resistance to Thatcher's continuing offensive against the poor.

The media prate about 'violence'. The fact of the matter is that, as every militant worker knows, the British state rules precisely through violence.

It keeps the lid on in the inner cities, and in industrial disputes, through daily incessant violence, now furtive, now overt, against the poor and dispossessed and underprivileged, against workers in struggle.

Thatcher has created a Britain where the brutal violence of the state is hailed as gallantry, while the desperate self-defence of the victims is branded as violence.

And the risk of being shot in the street, or in one's home, by an armed policeman is — in the larger cities, at any rate — at least as great as the risk of being shot by a Michael Ryan.

This is something the media conveniently forget, as if all those accidental shootings by police in recent years had never happened. Yet the relatives and friends of those victims mourn their loved ones no less than the relatives and friends of Ryan's victims.

There are indeed far too many guns about. And many of them — too many of them — are in the hands of the police.

The media err too in limiting the concept of violence to physical violence. But the British state has declared war on ethnic minorities and young people, as well as on organised workers.

To allay fears about alleged 'millions of pounds flooding into Britain from Muslim countries', with supposed 'political overtones', the government is said to be planning 'a high priority inquiry into the impact and influence' of Britain's Islamic community. This was announced a few days after Thatcher decided to send minesweepers to the Gulf.

A week or so later came the leak in the 'Observer' of a secret 'discussion document' circulating in the Department of Education, containing the sinister suggestion that police files on secondary school pupils should be used as an 'indicator' of each school's performance.

Some who had seen this proposal thought it smelt of fascism, said the 'Observer'; others saw in it just another example of 'a rapid and highly authoritarian increase of State power'.

However one labels them, both these developments — special surveillance of ethnic minorities, special surveillance of schoolchildren — threaten fresh and unacceptable violence to the traditional liberties won by the British working class.

Step by step, those liberties are being whittled away by the most reactionary and most violent government this country has seen for almost 200 years.

There's still time to halt and reverse this process. But time is running out.

Peter Fryer

pre-nationalisation conference of the NUM:

'I hope there is an appreciation throughout the industry that things have changed and that when you put the flags up on vesting day... it does mean something different. It is a tremendous change that gives us the possibility of realising things we have only dared dream about for years and years.'

Yet it did not take most miners long to realise that although there were some improvements in conditions and welfare, the bosses were still very much alive.

The demands for miners to work harder and not be greedy were still there, only now it was in the name of the 'national interest' and not private profit.

We have seen how the union was given little control over the running of the new state-owned industry.

But throughout the 1950's and the 1960's the NUM co-operated with the pit closure programme.

Any lodge who tried to fight against closure, or took unofficial action, was swiftly disciplined.

And some believed that the most militant collieries were among the first to be closed.

Ryhope was a prime example of this. No one could suggest that the colliery was closed because of exhaustion.

Murton, Seaham/Vane, Tempest and Wearmouth have all since worked 'Ryhope coal'.

In 1965 there was an epoch-making deal between the NCB and the government which was to craft the future of the Durham coalfields.

In return for writing off the £415 million debt — much of which was still a hangover from the compensation paid to the pit owners — the NCB had to agree to a colliery closure programme which took out most of the 'unprofitable' pits.

The closure programme speeded up dramatically.

Meanwhile, the Labour government of 1965 re-drew the map of energy production in the UK.

They were to push for nuclear power — a programme that had less to do with economics and more to do with providing Britain with the capacity to produce nuclear bombs. The nuclear power programme incurred losses without limit.

The greatest insult to the Durham miners was the decision in 1967 to build Hartlepool nuclear power station — at the edge of the coalfield.

That power station is not operational — 20 years on. Yet under its shadow, thousands of mining jobs have been lost and millions of tons of coal sterilised.

The government's 1967 White Paper on energy placed its faith in North Sea Gas, nuclear power and imported oil. Coal was to be a last resort, a plug to fill in where others failed.

The pound in your pocket.

WHILE the closure programmes went unabated, miners wages were being squeezed downwards.

Management concentrated investment on the coastal collieries — expecting to build super-pits with high productivity and low labour costs.

New technology piled in — mechanised roof supports, advanced coal clearance systems, new shearers and all the machinery modern miners are used to.

Production per manshift was rising and in 1966 the National Coal Board and the NUM signed the national wages agreement, the National Power Loading Agreement.

It was a God-given excuse for management to push down wages.

In Durham, however, a number of mechanised pits retained their piece work agreements — against national policy.

Nevertheless, the number of strikes fell dramatically. In 1956, 78.4 per cent of all strikes in Britain were in coal mining. By 1970, the proportion had fallen to 4.1 per cent.

Wage negotiation was effectively taken away from the men on the face and now lay firmly in the hands of the national union.

But troubles were brewing as miners felt they should be given a better national wage agreement.

The Yorkshire coalfield led the way, building up an unofficial leadership through the 'Doncaster Panel'. This was a left wing grouping which set about the task of overhauling the right wing leadership.

Unofficial strikes spread throughout the national coalfield.

In 1969, a strike over surface workers hours started in Yorkshire and spread through the country, involving 130,000 miners in 140 pits.

Durham was involved with the second wave of unofficial striking when Easington, Dawdon, Westoe and Vane Tempest joined the dispute.

By 1972, miners were primed to strike over poor wages. The national collaboration with the government had failed them.

The strike ballot of 1971 produced a national majority in favour of 58.8 per cent. Durham voted 54.7 per cent in favour of action.

With public support firmly behind them they scored a resounding victory.

The pay strike was repeated in 1974, when the true force of the miners was shown through the three-day-week and the eventual fall of the Heath government.

Although the miners did not directly bring down the government, their action played a major part in the Tory downfall of that year.

The miners had their tails up for the 1974 strike, and even moderate Durham voted 85.7 per cent in favour of action.

The new Labour government sought to appease the still powerful NUM by the 1974 'Plan for Coal'.

The Labour government which took power in 1974 did so at a time when the oil price rises seemed to herald a great new future for coal. Reflecting the spirit of optimism, Eric Varley, the new Labour Minister for Energy, told the NUM Executive:

'King Coal is back on his throne again... No one can knock him off. The only way he can lose is by abdication.'

Plan for Coal — agreed between the government, the NUM and the NCB in 1974 — anticipated that by 1985 the demand for coal would be 150 million tonnes. It recognised that, because of the failure to invest in the 1960's, four million tonnes of new and replacement capacity would be required a year to reach this target.

It represented part of a final attempt by the Labour government to rework the theme of 'collaboration' which they initiated in 1945. At first, the optimism among miners and the rest of the working class was almost as great as then. But as in 1945, expectations were to be cruelly dashed.

The Social Contract was created, but despite important legislation extending rights (e.g. the Sex Discrimination Act), the recession rapidly caused the government to abandon progressive aspects of the Contract.

Despite vociferous criticism from within the union, the leadership supported the Social Contract. The miners heard familiar appeals for wages moderation for the sake of the nation. In 1975, Harold Wilson told the national conference:

'What the government is asking for the year ahead, what the government has the right to ask, is not a year for self, but a year for Britain.'

Each year, by wafer-thin majorities, the union accepted pay rises in line with the Social Contract. The security which the Plan for Coal promised successfully removed miners from the period of intensified class struggle which the recession provoked.

TO BE CONTINUED



Maintaining high production levels was still a prime object of the union during the 1960s. General Secretary Alf Hesler is pictured receiving a new 'production banner', awarded to the lodge with the highest output.

Write for Workers Press!

WE ARE receiving more material than ever for Workers Press, but we want to hear from even more of our readers. Please send letters, news

from your area, reports of the struggles of the working class, of women and youth, of developments in the Labour Party and Communist Party.

Anti-YTS strike spreads

WEST Bromwich Job Centre has now voted to join Bolton Vocational, Education and Training Group Area Office on strike against Department of Employment management's provocative attempt to force through poor quality YTS schemes.

The Job Centre closed completely on 6 August as all 13 members walked out. The action brings to a halt Re-start

interviews, job counselling and other employment services. Management's intentions are to introduce 120 YTS trainees for 12 months. More trainees are going into other DE offices in the West Midlands and Merseyside. The programme will be completed with a final batch of trainees going into the north-west on 24 September. CPSSA officials are holding meetings in all the

offices affected to build up support for action.

The morale of the strikers is very high. The Bolton office which has been out for over 13 weeks is producing a regular news sheet supplying speakers for meetings.

Frank Hamill, DE assistant section secretary, has written to branches asking them to hold awareness meetings in offices. 'Management are attempting to involve local trade unions in YTS programme review teams. Branches should not become involved in these teams while the dispute is still on,' writes Frank.

No trade union collaboration with MSC!

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

TRADE union participation on Manpower Services Commission (MSC) boards today represents the biggest betrayal of trade union principles, the unemployed, young workers and students.

Our lobby of the TUC under the banner of Youth for Socialism calls on the unions to break off immediately all collaboration with the MSC.

The 'schemes' — compulsory two-year YTS for school leavers and Job Training Schemes (work for your dole) for 18- to 20-year-olds — organised through the state MSC boards give the employers free labour.

The Community Programme, commonly referred to as the coercion programme by the youth, is used by local and regional councils to replace unionised staff.

Even so, in some cases the youth have joined trade unions. But these schemes are being phased out in favour of the YTS and JTS schemes.

Employers like J. Sains-

bury Limited use hundreds of youth on the schemes to open new multi-million-pound superstores. This means double exploitation of the working class — free labour, but no cheap food. And the youth are used against strikers, as with Contracts Limited in the north east.

Collaborates

The TUC collaborates all along the line with the Tories on the MSC, and even where trade unions have a policy of non-cooperation with the schemes, their officials sit on the boards.

Trade unions in Britain grew up in a period when, despite the slave-like conditions of the workers, they were able to take advantage of competition between capi-

talist enterprises to win legality and democratic rights to fight for wage increases and better conditions.

The problem now is that the trade union leaders are trying to carry on the same activity in a different period of history, when they are confronted with monopoly capitalism, united through the state. They are collaborating on state bodies with representatives of the very force which is setting out to destroy them!

Hoped

The TUC leaders had hoped to be sitting at the Congress this year with a Labour government in office. But their own actions, like collaboration with the MSC and their cringing before the state in the miners' strike and the Wapping News International dispute, paved the way to another Thatcher government.

In the old days the unions expected — and got — the crumbs from the superprofits of big business. Now their funds are sequestered if they dare to raise their heads above the barricades.

Every time they refuse to mobilise workers and youth against monopoly capitalism and the state, every time they run away before the Tory anti-union laws, the position gets worse.

The lobby calls for the

TUC to cease collaboration with the Tory government and its plans to create a massive pool of free labour for employers. Withdraw all trade union officials from the boards; at the same time mount a concerted campaign to organise workers on the schemes.

Laws

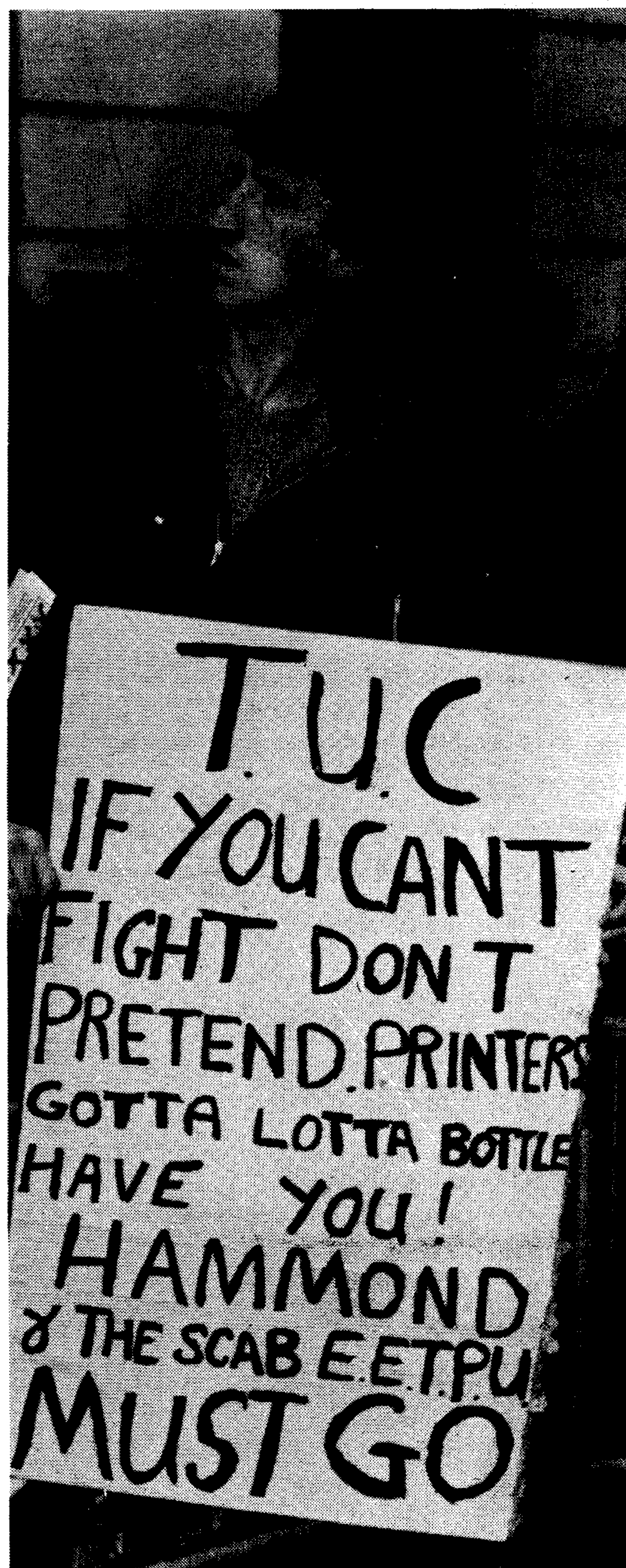
The South African trade unions are growing in the teeth of laws much tougher than anything the Tories have yet been able to introduce in Britain. Despite more than a year of a state of emergency there is a big wave of strikes, including the massive miners' strike.

Youth in Britain are looking for this kind of lead from the trade unions here.

We want to know of the trade union leaders: Are you going to let the Tory laws stop you?

Youth for Socialism is determined to build a movement to defeat all class collaborators in the labour movement.

● SEE TUC must break with MSC — page 5; Editorial — page 2



Another carnival

HUNDREDS of families, children and youth flocked to Southmere Park in South East London for this year's Thamesmead Town Show on Bank Holiday Monday (right). The fun day started with the usual procession of colourful floats, with a West Indian Steel Band playing their happy dancing music, and a girl majorette group leading everyone along the route to the park.

The theme of this year's show was a sporting one, reflected in many of the stalls and events, from five-a-side football, tug-o-war, a water skiing show to a two-mile family fun-run — and many more.

The Town Show programme pointed out that stalls, side-shows, other events and many community groups taking part this year, came mainly from the local area of Greenwich and Bexley. The winner of the best float went again to the Hawkmoor Youth Club.

£5,000 Special Fund

IN SO FAR: £2,424.85

The Special Fund hardly moved in the last week.

Could all Party branches make a point of bringing the question of the importance of the special fund into their next branch meeting's agenda; to discuss how extra money for this urgent appeal can be raised. The preparation for the forthcoming Conference to reorganise the Fourth International should be among our main priorities so that work for it can proceed without interruption.

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

