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# Overtime ban is a sham!

# STEP UP MINERS' ACTION!

**THATCHER's government is once again provoking a head-on conflict with the National Union of Mineworkers.**

British Coal's intransigence about the disciplinary code is a direct attack on every trade unionist and worker in Britain — and not just on the NUM.

BY THE EDITOR

The struggle to impose draconian disciplinary procedures on the miners proves once again that over two-and-a-half years since the end of the year-long strike, the Tory government failed in its major objective: to smash the NUM and replace it with a company union.

As Henry Richardson confirmed at the recent Nottinghamshire miners' gala: 'The ranks of the scab union (*the Union of Democratic Miners — UDM*) are dwindling. In Nottinghamshire they are down to 14,000 members.'

This is a major reduction from the 1985 figure of 25,000. The claim of UDM leaders that they would soon overtake the NUM and become the industry's major union lies in ruins.

The solid support for industrial action by the miners clearly shocked both British Coal and the Tory government. Nearly four out of five miners voted for action, with no area voting against. The miners' fighting capacity has once more been demonstrated.

But the majority of the NUM national executive committee are not inspired by the mandate they have been given by the ranks. On the contrary, they are frightened of it. Despite the victimisation of a Yorkshire branch official they have initiated an overtime ban which will not affect the vast majority of their members let alone British Coal.

As one Yorkshire official said on television, 'It is like throwing a ball of cotton wool at British Coal'.

The executive committee is split into three groups.

- The old right-wing who want no action of any kind.
- Kent, Yorkshire, Durham and Group No.1 who want to answer the provocation with the strongest action possible.
- A group that can only be described as the 'new right': the 'new realists' of the Scottish and Welsh areas. This group comprises a motley combination of Euro-Stalinists and Labour lefts. These cowardly reformists, masquerading as leaders, have been preoccupied with one central objective since the end of the strike in 1985: to attack and

discredit union President Arthur Scargill. In their own areas they have achieved the incredible record of the largest number of pit closures.

It was South Wales miners' leader George Rees who referred at the NUM conference to Scargill's leadership as dictatorship. In the last NEC meeting this group lined up with the old right wing to emasculate the Yorkshire resolution with an amendment for reducing action to a mid-week overtime ban on coal production. Only a tiny percentage of coal is mined during mid-week overtime.

In this conflict there is a sinister line-up of forces. On the one side the Tory government, in collusion with British Coal, is on the offensive to remove the union activists from the coal industry and break the resistance of the National Union of Mineworkers. On the other side they are being aided by a hostile attack on Scargill from within the leadership of the NUM.

In both these attacks the issues are clear. If a provocation is answered by a retreat then it has achieved its aim and will only lead to a greater provocation. We have to look no further than the years before the 1984-1985 conflict for confirmation of this

inevitable process.

The internal attack on the Scargill leadership by those who in the name of 'new realism' want to retreat and raise the white flag to UDM leaders Link and Prendergast slots in with the Tory attack.

Those who spend all their time attacking Scargill from the left should reflect that he and those who support him are the only ones who have fought British Coal inch for inch.

Scargill has refused to repeat the historic mistake of the Miners Federation of Great Britain in 1937 and make overtures to the leadership of the UDM. He has at all times adhered to conference decision not to sit with the scab union under any circumstances.

This is a vital aspect of the struggle for the independence of all unions from the state. The defence of the NUM is the defence of all unions. It is the defence of the working class itself.

Once again all workers must rally to the aid of the National Union of Mineworkers. The NEC must halt their retreat and step up the industrial action. All those who conspire to remove Scargill must be exposed throughout the working class movement.

## Argentine elections

### US stirs up Gulf war

AS WE went to press it was clear the United States is determined to prevent any moves that might bring the Gulf war to an end.

The US attack by helicopter gunships on an Iranian landing craft came as Iranian President Ali Khamenei had appeared prepared to move some distance towards acceptance of United Nations terms for a ceasefire in the war with Iraq.

The US attack clearly made any such move by the Iranians impossible and when he addressed the UN Khamenei accused the Americans of attacking a merchant vessel. The American representatives walked out and Reagan placed all US embassies, military bases and other installations on high alert.

It is clear that American imperialism at this stage has everything to gain by the war's continuation.



A section of the march organised by the Trotskyist MAS (Movement Towards Socialism) in Buenos Aires in support of their candidate for deputy Luis Zamora — see page 7



# Workers Press

## Glasnost and warheads

**HOW should Marxists assess the moves towards arms agreements between the USSR and US imperialism? Should we join in the euphoric welcome given by the media to the prospect of an era of world peace?**

Within hours of the announcement of the US-Soviet agreement on medium-range missiles, Reagan made it clear that this did not affect his determination to press on with his Strategic Defence Initiative, the infamous 'Star Wars' project.

A little later came the news that a summit meeting in the US between Reagan and Gorbachev is now being prepared. Gorbachev's 'Pravda' article last week spoke of a possible treaty by the end of this year, eliminating all medium- and short-range missiles, and urged an agreement to halve strategic arsenals by the middle of next year.

In fact, the deal already agreed would mean eliminating only 348 US and 1,435 Soviet nuclear warheads, out of existing stocks of over 11,000 each.

Less than a year ago, the Soviet leader was making the abandonment of 'Star Wars' a condition for further arms talks — that was the cause of the breakdown of the Reykavik summit. Now he is falling over himself to reach agreement with Reagan before the Presidential campaign begins.

Behind this shift in the policy of the leading group in the Soviet Union lies the reality of a Soviet economy in severe difficulties, and menaced by the threat of nuclear war. It is seventy years since the first Soviet state was born. Now, as then, a major problem for world imperialism is how to strangle it.

In the late 1920s, the imperialists succeeded in halting the spread of the revolution. Their pressure on the workers' state provided a foundation for its degeneration and the rise of an uncontrolled bureaucracy led by Stalin.

Today, the economic problems of the USSR can no more be resolved under the leadership of Stalin's successors than they could under that of their former boss.

Only the overthrow of the bureaucracy through a political revolution, the re-establishment of workers' democracy and the overthrow of capitalism in the major capitalist countries can allow the productive forces to be planned for the advance of world society.

Gorbachev's 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' policies have two sides to them. On the one hand, they express the need of the Stalinist bureaucracy to head off the growing movement of the working class, demanding improved conditions and increased democratic rights.

The first-ever report of a strike in the Soviet press — referred to as an 'incident' — gives a slight indication of the enormous pressure now building up in Gorbachev's Russia. So does the admitted existence of three million unemployed.

On the other hand, Gorbachev's line must also be seen as a response to the pressure of imperialism. Arms expenditure is a huge burden on the Soviet economy, draining it of desperately-scarce resources.

The bureaucracy has to find a way to balance between these two opposing forces, the working class and world imperialism. Gorbachev's attempted solution is to conciliate the imperialists while granting concessions at home within limits. On both sides, he faces huge dangers.

Reagan's statements make clear that imperialist war preparations will go on. At the same time, the Soviet working class, especially the younger generation of workers and students, will take every advantage of the new 'openness' — and demand much more.

In this 70th anniversary year of the October revolution, the fight to rebuild the Fourth International is vitally bound up with these developments. Only Trotskyism can mobilise the international working class to defend the first workers' state from imperialism.

And only Trotsky's analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy can guide the struggle to remove it through a political revolution, and restore the Soviet democracy established in 1917.

# Le Pen and a 'mere detail'

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

**DESPITE the fact that fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen will not after all speak at Blackpool during the Tory Party conference the events surrounding his visit have underlined again the nature of a section of Thatcher's party.**

Le Pen spent the week trying to back away from remarks describing the Nazi gas chambers as 'just a detail in the Second World War'.

The National Front leader, originally invited by former Thatcher adviser Sir Alfred Sherman, was doubtless told that publicity over his television interview remarks might embarrass his Tory hosts.

But the fact was that Le Pen, who intends running for President, had rebutted a television interviewer's questions, saying 'Do you want me to say that it is a revealed truth which the whole world must believe as if it were a moral obligation?'

'I merely say that these are matters which historians debate . . . I am a partisan of freedom of thought . . .'

The only 'historians' who have treated the Nazi 'Final Solution' as a matter of debate are a bunch of cranks and neo-Nazis themselves, producers of so-called 'revisionist' literature aimed

at whitewashing the Nazi record to smooth the path of present-day fascists such as Le Pen.

In France, where the Front National publishes regular advertising for Nazi material alongside its diatribes against Arab immigrants, and some Front National publications also push the classic antisemitic 'Jewish conspiracy' theme, there was no doubt about Le Pen's intentions.

Yves Jouffa, president of the League for the Rights of Man, said 'These statements form part of a propaganda campaign which is intended to make Nazism commonplace by denying the exceptional nature of the Final Solution.'

He described Le Pen as 'profoundly racist and anti-semitic.' And even the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris said he was 'not only shocked but frightened' by Le Pen's 'degrading thoughts'.

Le Pen's rise in French politics has been described by Jewish Socialists as 'like the early career of Hitler.' And like the best Nazi leaders, the extorturer of Algerian patriots has two faces.

'The party gives dinner-jacketed soirees in the Bois de Boulogne,' says 'Sunday Times' correspondent Brian

Moynihan (20 September), 'it plays classical music at rallies . . . A member of the d'Ormesson family, one of the oldest in France, represents it in the European parliament.'

For the lumpy thugs who attend Front National street rallies in numbers, before going on to beat up and murder immigrant workers, the 'classical music' can be replaced by Nazi marching songs and Hitler speeches on cassette. And the leader's message is that France has been 'invaded' by foreigners, so they can regard their thuggery as 'resistance'.

Le Pen, talking to an assumed supporter about the West Indian-origin leader of SOS-Racism: 'If Harlem Desir gets a good press, if he is raising funds, it's because he's half-Jewish.'

Le Pen, who wants to trade his racist votes for a government position in a deal with Chirac's French Tories, as the next step in his road to power, is being helped by Sir Alfred Sherman, an ex-Stalinist turned Thatcherite, a former adviser to the Israeli government who denounces Jewish leaders for opposing Le Pen.

Not so long ago, the Euro-Stalinists of 'Marxism Today' were justifying an invitation to Sherman saying he had a right to be heard. Now Sherman is still justifying his invitation to Le Pen. It has taken Le Pen's 'little detail' to expose both of them. The fight against them should have begun long ago.

## Sir Alfred and the SS

**TOP Tory 'Thinker' Sir Alfred Sherman, still defending his fascist guest Jean-Marie Le Pen last week, declared that the Nazi SS — the sadistic elite that ran the concentration camps — were basically decent lads misled by Adolf Hitler.**

Had Sherman been in the wrong part of Europe during World War II, he could have sampled their hospitality, but it is unlikely he would have survived to tell us about it. Sherman is Jewish, and a former Communist Party and International Brigade member.

Knowing the prejudices not only of Le Pen but of

many of the Tory Right, it's a fair guess they've had a cynical laugh at getting him to send out the invitation.

We are not qualified to comment on his mental condition. But we can note his political career.

### Spent

According to his 'Who's Who' entry, Sir Alfred Sherman spent the war in 'field security' and later with military administration. Ample opportunity to observe what the Nazis did, but also perhaps to absorb British military intelligence ways of thinking?

Expelled from the Communist Party in 1946, he

turns up in Israel in the 1950s, as adviser to the right-wing General Zionists party and on the economic advisory staff of the Israeli government.

From 1965, Sherman worked for the 'Daily Telegraph', becoming its leader writer in 1977. Meanwhile, in 1974 he had helped start the Centre for Policy Studies, a right-wing Tory 'think-tank' pushing such policies as privatisation.

Until 1984 he was the Centre's director of studies, and he also became a fellow of the London School of Economics. He became a particularly close advisor to Prime Minister Thatcher, and helped write some of her speeches.

Not bad for the boy from Hackney Downs County Secondary.

He gives his occupations as 'public affairs adviser in private practice as Interthought', and is also a consultant to the National Bus Company.

Sir Alfred's publications, listed in 'Who's Who', are 'Waste in Wandsworth' (a Tory council that pioneered privatisation); 'Local Government re-organisation'; 'Crisis calls for a Minister of de-Nationalisation'; 'Communism and Arab Nationalism'; and 'Political Violence in Britain'.

If he keeps inviting people like Le Pen, that last one should have a sequel.

## Concern at asbestos removal

BY PAM HENRY

**TEACHERS at Stockwell Park school are refusing to use part of the building in which contractors, brought in by ILEA, are carrying out asbestos-removal work.**

This action by the teachers now has the official backing of the National Union of Teachers.

The building concerned is the main teaching block, known for years to contain asbestos. The material is present in several forms, the worst of which is in the ceilings of many rooms.

These ceilings have a coating of sprayed material containing brown and white asbestos which, when disturbed, releases small fibres. The temporary seal at present covering the area has proved to be faulty.

The current works in the building are scheduled to take nine months but already there have been delays. The work is planned to proceed floor by floor with normal teaching going ahead on floors where there is no removal work in operation.

NUT members are concerned about this because:

- Accidents can happen caus-

ing a release of fibres to contaminate the teaching areas. There are so many hazards, it is impossible to predict when these may happen. Already on three days this term there have been accidents and examples of inefficient precautions.

- The programme is a disruption to the teaching work at the school. The removal work is noisy and difficult to arrange so that there is no disruption.

NUT members stated their views as long ago as February but have been ignored by ILEA.

### Portable

They would prefer to continue teaching either in portable classrooms or using an alternative site. Both these possibilities have been used successfully for other schools undergoing asbestos clearance.

The teachers called a parents' meeting on 14 October to inform them of the situation.

Strong feelings were expressed about the possible danger to the children. The parents agreed to support the

teachers and to set up an action committee.

Many parents were surprised that the Head was not supporting the stand taken by a majority of the teachers at the school.

At a subsequent union meeting NUT officials said ILEA has never attempted the removal of sprayed brown asbestos before while people were working in the same block because of the potential danger.

When asked for his views on ILEA's intransigence, he said he had no idea but presumed they wanted to take on the NUT.

This desire to take on the NUT by ILEA is also reflected in its refusal to negotiate over redeployment and cover for absent teachers.

Faced with an enormous budget deficit, ILEA, as with other Labour authorities, will increasingly come into conflict with both professional and working class sections.

Labour authorities and trade union leaders who show their unwillingness to resist Tory plans, even to the extent of endangering people's health, are coming in to ever greater conflict with workers. If no acceptable alternative accommodation is found, teachers may well take strike action.

## One man NO vote!

**JUST DAYS before the Labour Party's annual conference an internal inquiry has recommended the suspension of the Knowsley North constituency pending a 'full check on its 500 members, its committee membership and working practices', which could take two years.**

The national executive was to hear the proposals last Wednesday with charges of 'systematic and sustained abuse of party procedures' against the Merseyside constituency.

The proposals are part of the continuing witch-hunt against left-wing and Militant members in the area. Eight charges against the constituency were found to be 'proved' by the investigation led by Joyce Gould, Labour's director of organisation.

The charges relate to failure to obey national executive decisions on Militant and opposition to George Howarth's imposition as candidate in last year's by-election. Disciplinary charges are recommended against named individuals.

Neil Kinnock's advocacy of 'one man one vote' should have the postscript 'pending executive veto'.



## LONDON FIGHTS BACK

## Vote to coordinate fightback

BY ED HALL

'THE London Factor', first invented by the media then used as fact against Labour in the general election campaign, was openly debated at a London conference last Sunday.

Organised by Camden NALGO and London Bridge, the Conway Hall conference, 'London Fights Back', lived up to its London context.

Martha Osamor from Haringey Council, made clear her intention to distance herself from the leadership of Haringey Council.

'We have been playing with words, passing resolutions, winning and losing', 'We decided to settle it once and for all — all Labour councillors are not in the same boat and it is time to fight on the basis of knowing where we stand.'

It is now clear that the Association of London Authorities under the chair of Margaret Hodge, whose article in the 'New Statesman' — 'Sellout or sensible' — was referred to during the conference, made a decision in some atmosphere of confidentiality last December, not to mount a united London campaign in local authorities against rate-capping and thousands of job losses.

There was no consultation with the unions or the electorate on this strategy of survival, and now it is up to the unions, tenants, community groups, and a minority of Labour councillors to mount that fightback.

Martha noted that the Tories had hi-jacked the socialist slogan, 'power to the people', and she was confident that the elements of the 'London Factor', i.e. fighting for those most underprivileged and caught in the poverty of Thatcherism, could be turned around, and used to advantage.

Tony O'Brien co-chair of London Bridge spoke of the collaboration of the worst elements of the private sector in local government activity since the war, which had led to the Poulson scandal, the insistence of the major building companies on system building by which huge profits were made, and the destruction of the labour agreements in the building industry.

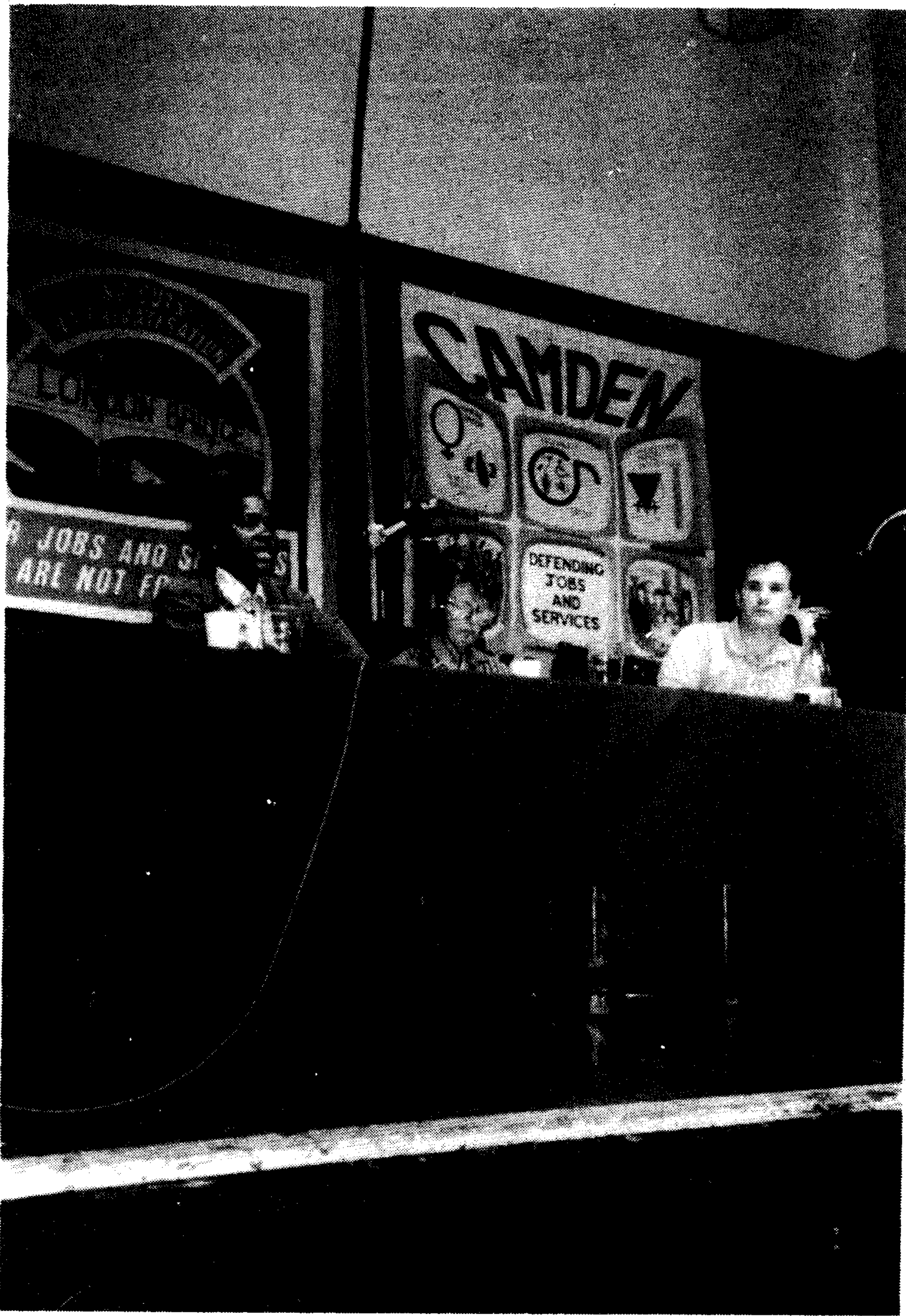
He was appalled that nationally UCATT could consider bringing into membership 'lump' — i.e. self-employed — labour.

This was an example of unions in collaboration with the employers to break proper wage and conditions structures. 'Local authority services, including that of an employer were basic to Londoners, there were millions who were not self-supportive, and these included wage earners who did not earn enough to be supportive.'

He quoted examples of 'seasonal' working being considered by the unions, under pressure from employers, a system of labour which had successfully been opposed for decades. A speaker from Westminster NALGO spoke of an intention to introduce 'pay by performance' into local government work on three-year contracts.

Bill Bowring, the last speaker of the morning session, surcharged and disqualified from holding office in Lambeth in April 1986, spoke confidently of the strategy of a fight.

Following the disqualifications, the May 1986 elections had produced 28-per-cent



swings to Labour in the wards. The Lambeth '31' would be a 'standing reproach' to those councillors who may now proceed to make cuts.

Joan Twelves, Lambeth Councillor, Pat Waylet, Lewisham Councillor and Karen Newbury of Camden were already involved in campaigns against cuts and would not be voting for 'balanced budgets'. An amendment to distance a campaign from all councillors was rejected in the final voting.

Over 200 delegated members of the conference adopted a resolution which set up a fight-back co-ordinating committee to meet on 6 October 1987 at

7p.m., Lambeth Town Hall. This committee would organise the recall conference early in 1988 and seek to co-ordinate the boroughs in a fight.

The conference also gave its support to a major demonstration prior to the final budget-making of 1988/1989, and will support a lobby of the TUC for nationally co-ordinated trade union action in October/November 1986, the date to be determined by the timetable of the TUC's meetings.

Amendments to the resolution spelt out in some detail the worsening position of black people, lesbians and gays, and women in London.

As poverty increases in

one class so can racism, fanned by a media which pits youth against the elderly and does not explain the mechanics of women being forced to make up for losses in jobs and services.

The 'London Factor' was deemed by the media to be a concentration on single issues which did not add up to a coherent whole.

However on the ground and inside unions and communities, basic fairness in employment, the provision of jobs and adequate services are real issues — the substance of a fightback campaign which will demonstrate that Thatcher cannot take her policies easily into the heart of the capital city.

## 'Oceans no longer divide us'

Leicester workers

make South African connection

BY PAUL HENDERSON

THE 500 members of the Transport and General Workers Union at the Dunlop factory in Leicester, part of the BTR multi-national concern, have begun an all-out strike.

The action was called against a management attempt to produce new machinery and new selection procedures for manning into the factory without union agreement.

The strike coincides with a visit to Leicester by the SARMCOL Workers Cooperative, performing their play, 'The Long March' about the struggle of BTR workers in South Africa, who have been on strike for two-and-a-half years against management's refusal to recognise the union.

Dave Richardson, senior T&GWU steward at the factory, pointed out that it was the Leicester workers' support for their BTR counterparts in South Africa over a year ago that had led to remarks being made about them at the UK BTR board. It was stated that 'all there is at that factory is a load of revolutionaries'.

Since BTR took over the Leicester factory in 1985, none of the old redundancy and pension schemes have been honoured, and all previous agreements were scrapped.

This led to a situation that when the conditions surrounding the introduction of the new machinery were known, there was an instant response from the workforce for industrial action with an 83-per-cent vote supporting the strike.

'The new machinery means considerable demanning on the sections where it is introduced,' said Dave Richardson.

'While there is no question of redundancy, we thought that those with the longer service on the old machines should have first choice on the new.'

'The company is adamant that selection will be made subject to "satisfactory conduct" which means whatever they want to make it, and in the agreement they want us to accept they have included all sorts of clauses: about attitudes to work, fitness, willingness to work overtime, and so on.'

The strike was due to start last Monday, but workers walked off the job the pre-

vious Friday in protest at management use of outside haulage contractors.

Pickets reported a near-total stoppage in their 500-strong membership at the plant, the one exception being a notorious anti-trade union worker.

Although other unions are reported to be working normally in the plant, there would seem little for them to do, as the T&GWU membership makes up the bulk of the total workforce.

Last Tuesday lunch-time the picket was visited at the factory by members of the SARMCOL Workers Cooperative whose play was being performed in Leicester that evening.

Petros Mkhize, one of the SARMCOL workers, explained that the response from workers in Britain had been tremendous. 'We have been in this country for two months,' he said. 'We have been to London, Blackpool, Liverpool and now the East Midlands.'

'Everywhere we have had big and enthusiastic audiences. We have now been on strike for two-and-a-half years and the courts have just made a ruling which has supported the company. They have avoided the whole issue.'

'We will apply for a review of the case but meanwhile our struggle continues. We are very glad of the support of factories such as this one at Leicester for our struggle.'

**THE LONG MARCH**  
Tour of Britain 1987  
Play by the Sarmcol Workers Cooperative  
Birmingham: 26 September,  
The Cave, Brighton: 27  
September, Labour Party  
International Evening: 29  
September, Co-op Hall, Wales:  
30 September, Bristol: 2, 3  
October.

## Vanunu protest

ABOUT 80 people, mainly CND campaigners, mounted a midday picket at the Israeli embassy in London last Monday in solidarity with kidnapped nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, being tried for 'treason' by the Israeli state because he exposed its nuclear weapon build-up.

Mordechai's brother Meir, accompanied by Bruce Kent of CND, and Labour MPs Tony Banks and Jeremy Corbyn, delivered a protest to the embassy.

Besides CND groups, picketers included Kings Cross Women's Centre, Jewish Socialists' Group, and some Israelis. Meir Vanunu thanked all those who had come to show solidarity with his brother.

## 'Third World' is mock battle zone

BY KEITH SCOTCHER

THE BRITISH ARMY is to send troops from its 'intervention forces' (e.g. Parachute Regiment) to take part in training exercises at the Joint Readiness Training Centre at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, aimed at simulating the invasion of 'Third World' countries.

The exercises, in co-operation with the American Rapid Deployment Force units, will feature an imitation capital city in a developing country with resistance from a mock enemy who are to be outfitted as Cubans, North Koreans or East Germans. The base will be used by 5,000 troops at a time with whole battalions airlifted in to reproduce a complex intervention and laser technology used to simulate fire between combatants.

The Army claims that the exercise will allow British troops to be trained with modern weapons and is not aimed at preparing for action against specific countries. In recent years training has been increased for operations beyond the NATO boundaries i.e. Africa or the Middle East. In November Royal Marines will stage an amphibious landing in Scotland as part of a continuous programme to prepare for such operations.

## Racists attack London Bengalis

A MARCH and protest meeting is to be held this weekend after a series of organised racist attacks against Bengali youths in the Kings Cross area of London.

On Saturday 5 September two Bengali youths were stabbed repeatedly by a gang of white racist youths.

This follows the death of Mohammed Parkit who died after police interrogation, and Abdus Sattar who was murdered while waiting at a bus stop.

A spokesman for the campaign formed to answer these attacks told Workers Press that the Bengali community was very frightened and upset. He said that the

first attack came from 15 to 18 masked white youths against one Bengali.

In a later incident one youth had received two stab wounds on the leg and eye and suffered severe bruising. Another youth was badly beaten by an iron bar and a 15-year-old boy had suffered three stab wounds.

The Bengali community is calling on all trade unionists, working-class organisations and everyone who opposes such vicious attacks to join them in their demonstration:

● Saturday 26 September, Assemble 2p.m. Drummond Street, NW1. (For further information ring 01-388 7313 or 387 8731.)



# Anger over jailed waiters

**London's Chinese community has reacted angrily over the jailing of four waiters following a late night fight with drunks at a Soho restaurant.**

Restaurant workers and other members of the community complain the police took no notice of the waiters' side of the story.

They say the waiters had been injured, but were denied medical attention after arrest and point out that none of the four had a criminal record, yet they have all received heavy custodial sentences — two years for a first offence.

Above all, they say Chinese people are fed up with racial harassment and attacks, and the attitude of police, the courts, and the press which favour the attackers.

The incident at the Diamond Restaurant, on Lisle Street, Soho, occurred late on the night of 29 June, last year. Four men and a woman, apparently the worse for drink, upset staff by using racially abusive language, and using chopsticks to drum on the table and dishes.

They ordered wine, but were refused as it was after licensing hours. After consuming cokes and spring

rolls, they attempted to leave without paying. One of the waiters, Mr. Li, went to ask for payment, and was knocked down, kicked and punched.

Li's fellow-workers went to his aid, and during the ensuing fight, both sides suffered injuries. Meanwhile, another waiter, Mr. Chu, phoned the police.

When the police arrived, they arrested the waiters. The police took statements from the white group, and from white customers in the restaurant — not from restaurant staff or any Chinese customers, the 'Diamond 4' defence campaign points out. 'From the beginning, the attitude of the police was to presume the waiters guilty.'

The white people were taken to hospital immediately. But although three of the arrested waiters had sustained injury, and asked to receive attention, they were taken to Bow Street police station, questioned, and charged. Not until a day and a night in the station were they allowed to be examined by a doctor at the hospital.

Contrary to legal guidelines, the defendants were charged while requiring medical attention. They were not informed of their rights, the defence campaign adds. 'Throughout they were not allowed access to an interpreter nor a solicitor.'

During the interview at Bow Street, waiter Chung Fat Li told interviewer S. Taylor that the whites had refused to pay for their food and drinks. Taylor replied: 'But they are all respectable people. Not the sort of people to do this.'

On 25 June this year, the

four waiters were each sentenced to two years imprisonment for affray. The legal counsel remarked that it had been 'rather undistinguished as an affray' and that 'there are worse examples to be seen in practically every Crown Court every week.'

But the Tory press had carried repeated reports that the 'victims' (so far as the Chinese workers are concerned, the white attackers) had been 'clubbed like seals'. In fact, only one of the whites had needed treatment — seven stitches in the forehead.

Supporters of the 'Diamond 4' accuse the police of ignoring who started the fight, and say the court took insufficient account of the racial harassment and abuse suffered by Chinese waiters over many years, which has led them to fight back.

'Whenever the police are called by Chinese to deal with harassment and assault, their complacent attitude leaves much to be desired,' says the defence campaign.

'In most cases, the troublemakers are not arrested. On the contrary, when Chinese victims of assault are forced to defend themselves, they become the accused and the troublemakers the accusers. Experience has forced us to rely on our own resources to protect ourselves...'

Several Chinese community associations have joined forces to back the defence campaign, which is protesting police handling of the case, raising funds for the four men's families, and collating information on incidents and police behaviour. 'This is the beginning of a Chinese campaign for civil rights', their statement says.

# Drug-pushers dealt with by working class

BY SIMON PIRANI

**A CAMPAIGN of mass meetings and pickets against drug-pushers in Dublin's impoverished housing schemes is being blocked by court orders and injunctions.**

Concerned Parents Against Drugs (CPAD) — which aims to drive

pushers of heroin and other hard drugs out of working-class areas — last week picketed drug-pusher Dinah Morrison's house in Blanchardstown, in defiance of a court order.

'If we allow ourselves to be intimidated by the pushers' abuse of the law, every one of them will seek similar injunctions,' Harry Fleming of CPAD told a meeting at Finglas.

Then he travelled with other CPAD members to a

350-strong picket at Morrison's house which was staged in defiance of an injunction granted by Justice Barr.

'We do not seek confrontation with the gardai or the courts — but we will not be intimidated by drug pushers and those who support them,' said Fleming.

In Glenties estate, Finglas South, over 200 people met to discuss the threat of legal action. They vowed to redouble their efforts to stamp out drugs in the area, no matter what the pushers try.

In Crumlin on Dublin's south side, where the CPAD has not previously been active, 300 people attended a recent meeting. The nearby Sundrive Park was described a 'shopping centre' for drugs, with pushers operating openly and preying on teenagers.

A drug-pusher from Rutland Grove, where the problem is especially acute, was given a week to leave the area. Two more were named and it was decided to take similar action against them.

At a meeting in Seagull House, Rita O'Donoghue, who has connections with an infamous heroin-pushing family, was given 48 hours to leave the Marrowbone Lane Flats.

Hundreds of people marched on the home of another pusher in the Oliver Bond flats, and gave him an ultimatum to appear at a future CPAD meeting.

The refreshing phenomenon of independent working-class justice, meted out by mass meetings held in the communities themselves, should be greeted by every socialist.

This is the kind of justice which we are in favour of, as opposed to the 'justice' of capitalist judges, law courts and police forces.

# Inhumane

BY PAUL HENDERSON

**LEICESTER Post Office workers have been angered by the 'inhumane' action of the management in sacking a post woman who suffers from pre-menstrual tension for 'unacceptable sick absences from work'. Her first appeal against the dismissal was turned down, and if the same thing happens at the second appeal, UCV branch secretary Gerry Pointon, says that the workforce will be balloted with a view to industrial action.**

'As far as I can see,' he said, 'the Post Office does not accept the medical theory on pre-menstrual tension. Since the first appeal, we have gathered a lot more of this evidence, and our case is much stronger. We look on this case as a case of harassment and this is the one case which has made us all sick because we are losing people left right and centre. People are on trial for a twelve month period and they only have to do something wrong and they are out of the door with no recourse to appeal or a tribunal.'

Gerry Pointon went on to say that the level of turnover was so high that the level of skill in the Post Office was being affected, as well as the fact that there was little point in thinking about a career under these conditions. 'We have to make a stand, as we have been losing cases on dismissal for eighteen months,' he said.

'This is one case where we are in a strong position and if we don't fight it out, we might as well lock the union door and go home.'

# OPREN: Compensation campaign begins

**A CAMPAIGN has been launched to help sufferers from side effects of the anti-arthrits drug Opren to obtain just compensation from the manufacturers Eli Lilly and Co., and its UK subsidiary, Dista Products Ltd.**

The campaign will be run by the Opren Action Committee and by Citizen Action.

Already it has achieved widespread publicity with a London press conference, a full page advertisement in the 'Times', and an offer by Citizen Action co-director, Godfrey Bradman, to underwrite the costs of claimants who would otherwise be forced to withdraw from the case.

**The drug and its side-effects** OPREN (Chemical name benoxaprofen) is an aspirin-like drug that was marketed in the UK between 1980-82, by Dista Products Ltd. The group (which includes Elizabeth Arden cosmetics) had 1986 sales of \$3.72 billion, with a net income of \$558.5 million.

The pharmaceutical group had what the Chairman described as 'an outstanding year' in 1986 — with sales of \$2.12 billion, a 19 per cent increase on sales in 1985.

Opren was introduced in the UK (and elsewhere) in a blaze of publicity and extravagant claims aimed not only at professionals but at the general public. But...

The drug tended to accumulate in the body causing serious sometimes fatal liver and kidney reactions — especially among elderly, frail female users.

It caused photosensitivity reactions. Among British claimants are some 600 people who allege that these symptoms have been persistent — i.e. have recurred on

exposure to the sun — preventing many of them from enjoying any exposure to the sun since 1982.

The UK authorities suspended the product licence for Opren in August 1982 following reports of over sixty deaths, mainly from liver, kidney and skin reactions.

There was no inquiry into the Opren affair in Britain, but following the withdrawal of the drug in the US, both the company and a senior British executive were prosecuted on criminal charges by the Federal Authorities, notably for withholding evidence of the dangers of the drug from the FDA. Neither contested the charges — both were fined.

**Few offers of compensation in UK**

INEVITABLY, people who have been injured by the drug began seeking compensation from Eli Lilly.

The first case in the United States led to an award of six million dollars (a substantial proportion of what it would have cost the company to have settled all of the British cases.) Many other US actions have been settled out of court.

After nearly five years there was no settlement in a UK case, where claims for compensation for injury are notoriously difficult to pursue, and now, after the launch of the campaign,

offers of a settlement have been made only in a few cases

The British action has been pursued by the Opren Action Committee. This is the main 'clearing house' for some 1,500 people who are taking action against Eli Lilly, the UK subsidiary, Dista Products, and also the licensing authorities, the DHSS and the Committee on Safety of Medicines.

The action will be decided by a system of 'lead cases'. From them the main issues related to liability and causation will be decided.

When Britain's ICI found themselves in a similar position they promptly set up a scheme to compensate those injured by their drug.

But after five years since Opren was withdrawn, the Lilly case has become ever more complicated and costly. For many seeking compensation it will be too late — they have died whilst wait-

ing for their case to be heard.

Unfortunately for many claimants the case has become even more difficult to pursue; for whilst most of the claimants are legally-aided, about 500 are not. Of these, many fall just outside the ambit of the legal aid scheme.

Elderly people who have managed to save a little extra for their retirement years find themselves faced with a liability for costs that could be out of all proportion to the compensation they may be due.

They are therefore under pressure to withdraw from the case completely without the merits of their case even being heard.

**Aims of the campaign** AGAINST this difficult situation the Opren Campaign sets out with the following aims:

To support those people

who fall between the inadequacy of the legal system and the interests of the Company without a safety net to catch them.

To make it clear to Eli Lilly that their response over the five years is unacceptable.

To show other companies that the public will not accept a similar response from them, in the event of future drug disasters.

Anyone wanting to know more about the campaign should contact: Citizen Action (Opren Campaign) 3 Endsleigh St., London WC1H 0DD

## The right to a home!

ACCORDING to the Housing and Construction Statistics, March quarter 1987, the number of new houses started in the public sector in the first quarter fell to 6,700 — a drop of 9 per cent compared with the same quarter of 1986. This is only 15 per cent of the number started in 1975.

By contrast the private sector is booming with 49,400 new houses started — 20 per cent more than a year ago. Building societies made a total post-tax profits of £1.03 billion last year, against £803 billion profit in 1985. They are expecting the figures to show a bonanza in 1987.

Meanwhile it is not only would-be council house tenants who are in trouble. The number of private houses repossessed in the first six months of this year was 11,220. There was an even bigger rise of 13 per cent in the number of home loans in arrears to 64,120.

## Panic measures

**PROPOSALS exist to set up labour camps to deal with the workload in construction in the south, particularly London.**

This warning is contained in a letter recently issued by the Transport and General Workers Union, which talks of the 'Auf Wiedersehen Pet' syndrome.

The use of 'floating hotels' on the Thames and other forms of temporary accommodation for construction workers from overseas and from other parts of the country, is now the subject of meetings involving government ministers, the Manpower Services Commission and employers' organisations.

Cut-backs in public expenditure caused a recession in the construction industry. Skilled workers were forced out of their jobs, and were not replaced by younger unskilled workers.

Now panic measures are being taken to find more labour to deal with present requirements. Low wages have intensified the shortage of qualified labour.

The Transport and General Workers Union has warned in the past that the lack of a skilled workforce would lead to serious problems in the industry.

They blame the lack of planning for a situation where now construction workers have to leave their families to go and work in other areas. The union is pressing for the reopening of wage negotiations.

## Laboratory closure

THE West London medical branch of ASTMS (Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs) has expressed its dismay at the proposals by Riverside Health Authority to close down pathology laboratories.

Commenting on the 'panic measures' to cope with the financial plight of the central London authority, ASTMS branch chairman Alan Talbot has described the proposals as 'insane'.

'They are seriously considering bussing blood for emergency operations and infected blood samples through some of the most congested of London's streets (from Westminster and St Stephens, the two hospitals affected) right over to the new Charing Cross Hospital in Fulham.'

Apart from the length of time it would take to get a blood type cross-matched for an operation, 'there is also the danger to the public if cars being used to carry infectious materials are involved in an accident', Talbot said.

St Stephens is among the largest of the AIDS treatment centres, handling more and more cases as the disease spreads. 'I am no longer surprised by any of the hair-brained schemes they come up with,' Talbot concluded.



# HOW TO FIGHT POLL TAX

## A MONSTROUS IMPOSITION ON WORKING PEOPLE

UNDER the Tory poll tax more than 7 million households in Britain (one in three) will face tax increases of more than 20 per cent and more than 3 million households (one in seven) will suffer increases of more than 80 per cent.

These figures are the result of a detailed study conducted on behalf of Durham County Council.

The report was compiled from an analysis of the effects of the proposed 'community charge' (poll tax) on 160,000 households in the region.

The rate bill and poll tax for each household were compared using data on the rating register and the electoral register, both held on the county's mainframe computer.

The study found that even allowing for proposed 'safety net' payments to compensate local authorities for changes in grant and loss of non-domestic rate income, the poll-tax bill would exceed the rate bill by more than 20 per cent in 34.69 per cent of households in the county.

### Reasons

The report reminds readers that one of the main reasons originally given by the Tories for introducing a poll tax was the great hardship that would follow on a rates revaluation based on today's house prices.

In a speech on May 20 to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, Secretary of State for the Environment Kenneth Baker explained that such a rates revaluation would mean 'over a million households in England would

BY BERNARD FRANKS

see increases of 80 per cent in their rate bills'.

He went on to say: 'Half of these would be owners of modest terrace houses, many of them first-time buyers.'

The author of the Durham study, John Gibson of the Institute of Local Government Studies, points out that there are 17.65 million houses in England. Baker's 'million households' therefore represents just 5.66 per cent of the total.

However, according to the figures for County Durham, nearly three times as many — 15.47 per cent — would have household increases of over 80 per cent with the introduction of poll tax.

This was an average figure derived from local districts, ranging from 10 per cent at Easington to 19 per cent at Teesdale and Wear valley.

The report comments: 'Once again, it is true that a government presentation of the figures designed to show that revaluation is extremely unpleasant or unacceptable was being confronted with the important further fact that the poll tax is much worse.'

Similarly, according to

Kenneth Baker, half of those households facing a revaluation of over 80 per cent would be 'modest terrace houses'. But that is half of 5.66 per cent, i.e. 2.83 per cent.

In fact the study is able to prove that precisely this type of housing would be far more severely hit by the community charge.

Taking the town of Darlington as an example, the study compared rate revaluation with poll tax using Baker's criteria as given in the 1986 Green Paper.

It found that 17.67 per cent of households would suffer bill increases of more than 80 per cent under poll tax, of which 85 per cent were of £100 rateable value or below.

### Increases

Thus, approximately five times as many low-rate households would face huge increases as under Baker's dreaded revaluation.

Turning next to those likely to gain from the community charge, the study found that in Darlington the vast majority of households likely to experience a reduction of more than 40 per cent in payments were substantial properties.

Out of 332 dwellings with a rateable value of over £400 there were 280 which would gain by over 40 per cent from the change to poll tax.

The report comments on

this: 'The skewing of benefits towards occupiers of higher-value properties under poll tax is clear.'

**BUT can the results for County Durham — admittedly across a very wide sample — be simply transposed into a national setting? Gibson believes they can.**

He cites the 'safety net' system as one in which the underlying objective is to equalise out poll tax levels in all areas for equal standards of service: 'This, given that we have found that (say) 34 per cent of households in County Durham have bill increases greater than 20 per cent, we can be confident that similar percentages of households will be affected in all other cases.'

The present system of rating is far from ideal. In fact it represents a monstrous imposition on working people, taking little regard for income or the fact that most services directly or indirectly comprise a subsidy for employers (educating their workforce, transporting it to work, supporting the sick and retired with social services).

The Tories, however, only wish to end this system to replace it with something worse, by transferring an even greater part of the business communities' share to the domestic ratepayer.

Clearly there is an urgent

need for working-class organisations and communities to take up the struggle with a view to burying the scheme long before vesting day.

In this context, the methods and plan of campaign have to be carefully thought about.

Workers Power, for example, calls for mass action now, but looks to its culmination in tax strikes — 'mass defiance and non-payment' (Workers Power editorial, August 1987).

### Primary

Yet surely the primary consideration at this time is to ensure that such a tax never reaches the statute books and the implementation stage?

Much stranger is the view of the Communist Party, or at least that sector of Stalinists grouped around 'Marxism Today'.

They call for an alternative system to both the poll tax and the existing rating methods in the form of 'a local income tax based on ability to pay'.

But this is nothing more than a graduated poll tax, throwing the great burden of payment on to the domestic ratepayer — which is the Tory aim.

In any case, it could be asked, what is an organisation claiming to be commun-



BAKER

ist doing telling capitalism how to apply an income tax?

In fact it is not a question of 'ability to pay' but why should the working class pay at all for services which essentially benefit the capitalist state and the capitalist class?

Presumably one reason is to leave national taxes free for spending on military systems for intervention against such nations as Iran and the Soviet Union.

## Lewisham worse off with community charges

'In recent weeks, a considerable amount of press coverage has been given to the possible financial implications of the Government's proposal to replace domestic rates by a community charge.'

'In most cases the analysis has been confined to comparisons of average borough/district rate bills and estimated community charge liabilities.'

'While these comparisons are useful in providing a broad overview of the financial consequences, they tell us little about the effects on particular types of household and little about the redistributive effects of a community charge.'

'Against this background, Lewisham LBC's Borough Treasurer's Department has undertaken an investigation to determine how individual households and residents of the borough are likely to be affected by the proposal.'

THESE are the introductory paragraphs to an analysis by Russell Harvey, Professional Assistant, Lewisham LBC, which appeared in 'Public Finance and Accountability', 31 July 1987.

Harvey, formerly economic adviser at the DoE working on the rate support grant mechanism, goes on:

'The analysis compared the annual rate liability in 1986/87 of a randomly selected sample of 1,801 households, comprising 3,594 adults, with estimates of community charge liability for the same year.'

'The results of the sample were then grossed up to yield totals for the borough as a whole.'

### Estimates

'The community charge estimates used in the investigation were taken from a recently published Department of the Environment exemplification, which illustrated the effects on each local authority area of the reforms proposed in the Green Paper, Paying for local government.'

'The exemplification is based on 1986/87 budgets (budgets notified to the DoE on the return of expenditure and rates form), grant totals and grant related expenditure allocation and on certain working assumptions about the proposed system, which are in the main, those in the Green Paper.'

'The DoE has calculated two community charge estimates for each local authority area. One is calculated without any safety nets to limit the losses suffered by individuals arising from the introduction of the new system, while the other is calculated on the basis of very tight safety nets.'

'The estimates for Lewisham are £625 and £410 respectively. These compare to an average household rate bill of £678 and an adult rate liability per person of £362 in 1986/87.'

'Finally, both rate and community charge liability are expressed in gross terms (ie before rebates).'

The first of three Tables which Harvey provides 'shows the number of adults and households in the borough which would gain and the number which would lose from a community charge of £410 (the lower of the two DoE estimates), and the extent of the gains and the losses.'

'It is clear from the results that a majority of adults and households in the borough would lose from the proposal.'

'In fact, nearly 75 per cent of the borough's adult population would lose, with almost 55 per cent losing over £100.'

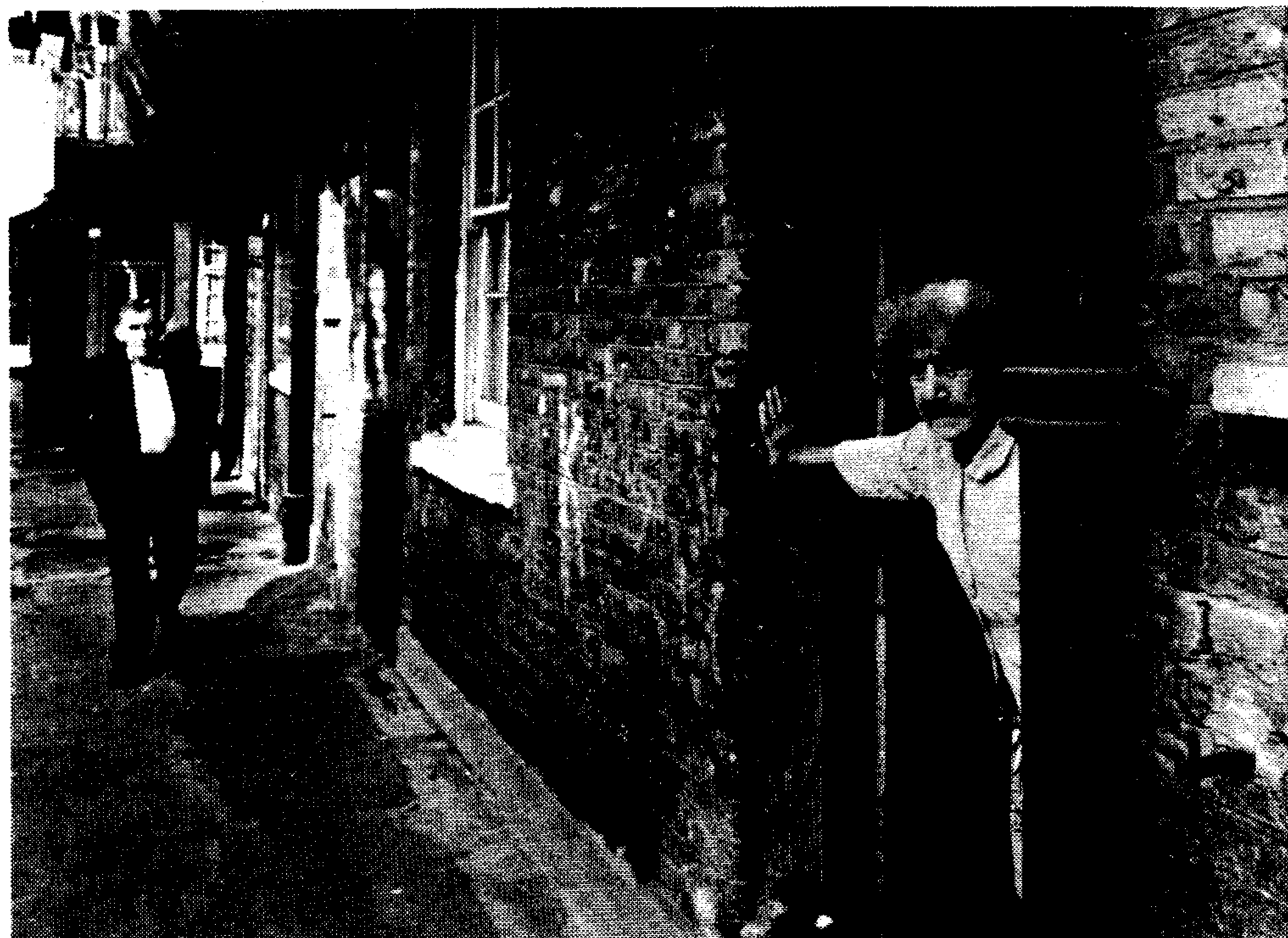
'Of the borough's households, 59 per cent would lose, with 27 per cent losing in excess of £300.'

'If the analysis is repeated with a community charge of £625 the losses are even more striking.'

'92 per cent of the adult population would lose, with 55 per cent losing in excess of £300. Of the borough's households, 85 per cent will lose with 50 per cent losing over £500.'

'These results demonstrate that the majority of adult residents in Lewisham will be worse off and in many cases significantly worse off, if a community charge is introduced.'

'Even the lower of the two DoE estimates will disadvantage 75 per cent of the adult population, while the higher estimates will impose a markedly increased burden on the overwhelming majority of the borough's residents.'



No matter what the condition of housing, the community charge will apply to all adults

### Numbers of households and adults gaining and losing and the extent of losses with a community charge of £410.

| Gains/losses, per household, per year. | Households   |              | Adults        |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|  | Number       | %            | Number        | %            |
| <b>Losses</b>                          |              |              |               |              |
| Upto £100                              | 11210        | 11.5         | 35400         | 19.5         |
| £100-£200                              | 8080         | 8.3          | 57220         | 31.4         |
| £200-£300                              | 11160        | 11.5         | 38540         | 21.2         |
| £300-£400                              | 7870         | 8.1          | 2990          | 1.6          |
| £400-£500                              | 4900         | 5.0          | —             | —            |
| £500-£1000                             | 10350        | 10.7         | —             | —            |
| £1000+                                 | 3450         | 3.6          | —             | —            |
| <b>Gains</b>                           |              |              |               |              |
| Upto £100                              | 10720        | 11.0         | 20460         | 11.2         |
| £100-£200                              | 11640        | 12.0         | 11900         | 6.5          |
| £200-£300                              | 7760         | 8.0          | 7190          | 4.0          |
| £300-£400                              | 5550         | 5.7          | 4760          | 2.6          |
| £400-£500                              | 2750         | 2.8          | 2080          | 1.1          |
| £500-£1000                             | 1620         | 1.7          | 1470          | 1.0          |
| £1000+                                 | —            | —            | —             | —            |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>97100</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>182000</b> | <b>100.0</b> |



## US used 'human guinea pigs'

**HOSPITAL patients and prisoners were used as human guinea pigs in harmful experiments with radioactive materials carried out by US scientists.**

They were not told what was being done to them, let alone asked for consent. In some cases, patients were told lies that the experiments were to find a cure for their illnesses.

In one case, the victim was a five-year old boy.

A San Francisco court has begun hearing the case brought by some US servicemen who want to pursue compensation for being exposed to radiation during 1946 atom bomb tests at Bikini atoll in the South Pacific.

Although men exposed to atom tests have suffered effects from hair and teeth loss to leukemia and fatal cancers, it was not until 1979 that the US government admitted any connection between the tests and the ailments.

A few months ago, a San Francisco judge fined the government's Veterans Administration \$145,000 for having destroyed case records, given evasive answers to inquiries, and victimising staff who made investigations.

Altogether 220,000 US servicemen were exposed to atom tests either in the Pacific or in Nevada and Utah. The current court action is challenging a Civil War-period law restricting soldiers' and widow's legal costs to \$10, which the government has maintained to protect itself from claims.

However, servicemen were not the only victims of US government interest in the effects of radio-activity.

Some details of the abuse of civilians are contained in the report of a US House of Representatives subcommittee, 'American nuclear guinea pigs: three decades of radiation experiments on US citizens'.

Some examples:

● Between 1961 and 1965, 20 elderly people from the New England Age Center were used in experiments at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

They had agreed to take part in experiments studying the ageing process. In fact, they were injected with radium and thorium to study the metabolism of these substances.

● From 1945 to 1947, 18 hospital patients thought to have short life expectancy were injected with plutonium to measure the quantity retained in the body. They received between 1.6 and 98 times the permissible occupational dose at the time.

There was no informed consent to this. The diagnosis of short life-expectancy proved wrong in many cases — seven of the patients lived more than ten years, four for more than 25 years, one was alive 36 years later.

The experiments had been represented as experimental treatments for the patients' illnesses. This was a bare-faced lie.

One of the subjects used was a five-year old boy, who could hardly have given 'informed consent' anyway.

● During 1946 and 1947, six patients with good functioning kidneys were injected with increasing doses of uranium-234 and uranium-235 to determine the doses needed to cause kidney injury.

The patients were mainly chronic alcoholics, homeless, and emotionally disturbed. One was having hallucinations. The incentive for them to come in and be used was a warm bed in hospital.

● Between 1963 and 1971, over 100 inmates of state prisons in Washington and Oregon were subjected to radiation on their testicles, to determine the dose that would sterilise them.

The projects were funded by the Atomic Energy Commission, to the tune of \$1.5 million. There was no long-term follow up to check against testicular tumours.

Commenting on this report in the 'British Medical Journal' (11 July, 1987), Professor T.J. Hamblin says 'people were exposed to potentially toxic doses of radioactivity simply to satisfy scientific curiosity'.

He points out that 'some of the later experiments took place when the dangers were only too well known'.

Nazi scientists and doctors who carried out sadistic experiments just to 'satisfy scientific curiosity' were rightly considered war criminals. The US scientists carrying out the work described might have also had the motivation of fat grants.

What were the government bodies awarding them after, in trying dangerous radiation on people?

A further thought. Professor Hamblin says: 'Undoubtedly in these experiments ethical standards were flouted in a manner that is almost beyond belief'.

'The one redeeming feature is that the United States is an open society and therefore this information has become available. In many other countries it would remain an official secret.' (our emphasis).

Writing in Britain, and with the Peter Wright and Colin Wallace cases fresh in mind, we need not go far to think of a government that goes to great lengths to protect Official Secrets.

**FRENCH premier Jacques Chirac, flying to New Caledonia last week to celebrate the referendum keeping the South Pacific territory under French rule, had his airliner touch down at the atoll of Hao en route.**

He stepped down to be greeted by Major Alain Mafart, now second-in-command of the military airbase on Hao, and one of the two French secret agents found guilty for the 1985 bombing of the ship 'Rainbow Warrior' in Auckland, New Zealand.

Later, Chirac and his diplomatic adviser Jacques Foccart had a short private

meeting with Major Mafart, the second agent, Captain Dominique Prieur, and her husband.

The 'Rainbow Warrior' attack, to stop the Greenpeace ship leading protests at French nuclear tests in the Pacific, killed photographer and crewman Fernando Pereira. New Zealand's Labour prime minister David Lange rightly called it an act of 'state terrorism'.

Mafart and Prieur were sentenced to ten years each for manslaughter. Last year, after economic and political pressure from the Chirac government, they were handed over to French custody, supposedly to be confined at Hao.

Mafart's senior post, and Chirac's treatment of the two state terrorists as heroes, shows the real state of play.

In New Caledonia, with a strong French military pre-

sence and brutal repression of Kanak independence campaigners, just over half the population — mostly the French settlers — voted against independence.

In his speech of triumph Chirac declared cynically: 'Now there must be no winners and no losers, only Frenchmen who respect each other.' The Kanaks must respect French superiority, in other words.

The attitude towards New Zealanders is not much different. Chirac's meeting with Mafart and Prieur was a gesture of arrogance towards all the Pacific peoples.

It was also a gesture towards people in France. A few days before Chirac conferred with the former agents on Hao atoll, another former agent of the DGSE secret service had been arrested in Paris.

Gerald Andries had given

a television interview, concealing his identity with back to the camera and disguised voice, claiming to have been one of the frogmen who bombed the 'Rainbow Warrior'.

He had accused the previous Socialist Party government of betrayal for not fully backing its agents, and for moving the frogmen's base in Corsica, which the French navy regarded as too much of a law unto itself.

To show that his government would not encourage airing of secret service affairs in public debate, Chirac told Defence Minister Giraud to track down the agent who had broken the rules.

Then to show that he stands fully with the secret services and state terrorists, the capitalist prime minister made his stopover at Hao atoll to meet the 'Rainbow Warrior' heroes'.

# Chirac meets 'Rainbow Warrior' terrorists

## Philippines at crossroads

BY KEITH SCOTCHER

**A FASCIST death squad has assassinated the young general secretary of the main legal left-wing organisation in the Philippines.**

The Bayan Party's Leandro Alejandro, 27, was attacked as he returned to his office after calling for a national strike to protest at the increasing militarisation of the Aquino government.

He was shot five times when his car was ambushed in broad daylight in a Manila street. Alejandro played a key role in organising last month's nationwide strike against rising oil prices and had received numerous death threats.

Last November, the leader of the KMU trade union movement Robundo Olalia was assassinated. More recently Bernabe Buscayno, (former New Patriotic Alliance leader, 'Commander Dante') was wounded and the leader of the peasants' union KMP is in jail facing charges of sedition and incitement to rebellion following the massacre of peasants at the Mendiola bridge. All these testify to the growing right-wing drive to launch all-out civil war against the working class and peasantry.

Aquino's government is in complete crisis after all 26 ministers have resigned. Vice-President Salvador Laurel has emerged as the main rival for power and had been openly campaigning against Aquino amongst the military and the officer cadets even before his resignation. He made it clear he sympathised with the recent coup attempt launched by Colonel Honasan. Many thought that former Defence Minister Enrile was behind the coup, but Enrile suggested that Laurel was the culprit. These right-wing forces wanted a tougher line against the left following Aquino's failure to make any headway against the New Peoples Army.

Aquino's main ally now is the Ramos wing of the army who saved her from being overthrown. The masses no longer come out on the street for her. The left wing has been forced into a semi-legal existence with the leaders moving from house to house, communicating by radio and regularly keeping a check on each other's whereabouts.

The NPA, formerly based in the countryside has established units in the urban areas, recruiting amongst young factory workers. Since 1984 soldiers,

policemen, informers and fascists have been dealt with following investigation of charges against them, according to operational commander Ka Serio.

The question for Aquino is whether she can deliver on repayment of the national debt (£17bn) and maintain power with a large fascist element in the army and a strong armed opposition from the NPA, and local people's militias. All hope of a 'democratic' regime with a loyal workers' and peasants' movement is disappearing fast.

The underground Philippines Communist Party, who are prominent in both the NPA and the workers' and peasants' unions, broke with Moscow in the early 1970s following Marcos's military coup and a turn to armed struggle. The party was subsequently organised along Maoist lines until China made its excuses to withdraw its support and arms supplies. When Aquino came to power the PCP held out the hope that she could be 'pulled over' away from the military, showing that Stalinist ideology is still prevalent.

Only a Marxist revolutionary leadership that can make the complete break with 'Popular Front' politics as well as the military-bureaucratic methods of Maoism, to organise the working class and poor peasantry to take the power, can resolve the crisis facing the Philippine masses.

# Canadian trade unionists demand inquiry

**'CANADA doesn't have a secret police'. So said right-wing union officials at a conference recently.**

But union members across the country are taking a less complacent view, as they discuss recent events. As in Britain, calls are being made for a labour movement inquiry into the security services.

On Friday, 12 September, Edward D'Arcy Finn resigned as director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) after the agency's lawyers admitted to a Federal Court in Ottawa that the CSIS gave false information to a judge to get a phonetap warrant on a Sikh activist.

The same day, in Quebec City, a CSIS informer was being praised for helping the prosecution of four National Confederation of Trade Unions officials. Marc-Andre Boivin took part in bombing the property of a union-

busting hotel boss, then helped the state set up four NCTU officers on conspiracy charges.

It has been revealed that Boivin had been on the CSIS payroll for some time, well before the 'bomb plot', but Crown prosecutor Georges Letendre refused to say how much this agent-provocateur had been paid, and praised him as an upright citizen.

At the Hay River, North-West Territories, conference of the Public Service Alliance, a resolution from Local X0003 in Inuvik, began 'Whereas it has been revealed that Canada's secret police have had an informant in the leadership of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the country's second largest labour federation, for the past 15 years,

referred to the Boivin case, and denounced

the way the CSIS, police, and press had organised an attack on trade unionists.

Top officials of the Public Service union tried three times to stop or water down the resolution, one of them objecting to the words 'secret police', because he said, 'Canada does not have a secret police'.

Delegates were given an altered copy of the resolution, removing a paragraph about CSIS deputy director Laurent Hugo's intervening to stop union lawyers questioning Boivin about his police work, claiming they would endanger 'national security'.

The Inuvik delegation fought to have their resolu-

tion moved in full, and won, whereupon the leadership claimed it had no 'independent verification of the facts', then moved to have all outstanding business referred to the executive, and the conference adjourned.

Thus the Public Service union conference wound up without a decision. But the issue is not going to be buried so easily. The Inuvik resolution, which went on to call for the Canadian Labour Congress, New Democratic Party, and other working class organisations to organise their own investigations into the CSIS, is likely to keep cropping up, in one form or another.

## No room at the inn

US Secret Service agents arrested Ted Hayes, who had begun a fast on the steps of St. Vibiana's Cathedral, Los Angeles, protesting the removal of 700 homeless people from the next door Union Rescue Mission during the Pope's visit.

Later, Hayes criticised Los Angeles Archbishop Roger

Mahoney, saying he 'hasn't raised \$3 million for the homeless, but he can raise \$3 million for one man's visit.'

In Phoenix, Arizona, sacked TWA flight attendants picketed the Pope's procession because he'd flown TWA. 'He's flying an airline run by scabs', one said.



# Argentine elections — a gain for the Fourth International

THE NEAR quarter million vote for the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), Argentinian section of the International Workers League (FI), in the recent elections is an event of considerable significance for the international Trotskyist movement and the building of the Fourth International.

Not only did the vote for the Trotskyists increase sharply since the last elections but the MAS outvoted the Communist Party (organised in the FRAL: a front with other parties). The MAS victory over the Stalinists was especially marked in the working-class districts around Buenos Aires.

The election took place against a tide of rising working-class

COMMENT by PETER JEFFRIES in Buenos Aires

struggles. Railwaymen, underground workers, postal workers, busmen, university teachers and students were all involved in strike actions during or immediately following the election campaign.

The MAS fought the election on a programme which included the demands for the bringing to justice of all those in the armed forces who had taken part in the brutal repression of the working class, for the refusal to pay the interest on the foreign debt and for democracy in the trade union movement.

The election is an indication that in the situation now unfolding Stalinism can be taken on and defeated in the working class movement. The MAS undoubtedly gained prestige amongst workers because of its principled refusal to sign the agreement with Alfonsín under which an amnesty for military torturers would have been accepted. It was on this basis that last Easter the MAS ended its electoral agreement with the Communist Party who did sign this agreement.

The success of the Trotskyist movement in the elections should inspire all those who are now fighting for the reorganisation and rebuilding of the Fourth International.

## 'Iraqi planes dropped gas' — Kurds

IRAQI air force planes have bombed Kurdish villages in the north of the country with poison gas, according to reports from the Kurdish national movement, which claims to have liberated a large area in recent fighting with Iraqi troops.

Guerrillas supporting the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), operating from Iran-Kurdistan, reported they had overrun an Iraqi army base at Kani Masi and were poised to attack the main highway between Iraq and Turkey.

An Iraqi force had been diverted from the Iraq-Iran war front to cope with the Kurdish offensive, and flown to an airfield on the Turkish side of the border so it could take position against them.

The KDP claims its fighters liberated 260 square miles of territory along the Turkish border, and engaged in three days of fighting, causing 200 Iraqi casualties and taking 600 prisoners.

In a petition handed to UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar when he was in Tehran, five Kurdish groups jointly asked him to do something about Iraqi government actions. They said Iraqi planes had bombed villages and used poison gas.

In view of the proven use of poison gas by Iraqi bombers in the war against Iran, the accusation is all too likely to be true. It is also significant that previously rival Kurdish nationalist groups considered the issue serious enough for them to suspend differences in making their appeal.

The Kurds, who are continuing a long struggle for self-determination in their homeland — partitioned between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria — also accuse Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime of terrorising and deporting Kurdish people from their homes.

The reported use of a Turkish airfield by the Iraqi forces, together with the reprisal raids into Iraq-Kurdistan earlier this year by Turkish planes and commandos after guerrilla incidents in Turkey-Kurdistan, confirms the close collaboration of the Turkish and Iraqi governments.



Section of the 20,000 strong Buenos Aires march organised by the MAS

## Eritreans not impressed by Mengistu's 'democracy'

**ETHIOPIAN military ruler Haile Mengistu Mariam was proclaimed President of a 'People's Democratic Republic' on 11 September.**

About 100,000 people attended a mass rally the following Sunday to celebrate the new republic. There was a military parade, and a march by supporters.

But the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), one of the organisations fighting for self-determination in the mainly Moslem north-eastern region, remains unimpressed by Mengistu's 'democratic republic'.

A recent EPLF communique warns that the regime may be planning worse repression and war in Eritrea, and therefore 'we have no choice other than pursue the armed struggle.' The EPLF says it is intensifying the fight against Ethiopian forces.

Handed over to Emperor Haile Selassie's Ethiopia against their wishes by the US imperialist-dominated United Nations in 1951, the Eritreans began their struggle under imperial rule, and hoped the emperor's overthrow would help them gain independence.

This was not to be; and after 1977, when the military regime passed from US to Soviet backing, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, calling itself Marxist, found itself fighting a 'Marxist'

regime strengthened with Soviet and Cuban arms and advisors.

'In the past 13 years, the regime has waged a colonial war in Eritrea, reigned over a period of unsurpassed terror and brutality against the Ethiopian people, and feverishly attempted to consolidate its power,' the EPLF says.

'It has, in the process, built a narrow power base consisting of the upper strata of the military and civilian bureaucracy, functionaries of the extensive security apparatus, and the Kebeles (para-military public institutions). It is these three institutions which have been organised into the so-called Ethiopian Workers Party.'

Besides being head of state, and as such, commander in chief of the armed forces, Mengistu is secretary-general of the Ethiopian Workers Party.

One of the original Dergue — military junta — which replaced Emperor Haile Selassie in September 1974, Lieutenant-Colonel Mengistu became head of state in 1977, and announced plans to create a 'Workers Revolutionary Party' in August 1979.

Although the country now has a party, a constitution and an elected national assembly, the shengo, the EPLF says these are just a 'democratic veneer' which the military regime has given itself, and that elections were rigged.

'The colonial regime claims, for instance that 400,000 people voted in the election in Eritrea.

'A cursory investigation reveals however that out of these, more than 70,000 were Ethiopian soldiers of occupation while another 250,000 were Ethiopian civilians including members of the bureaucracy, families of the occupation army and Ethiopian settlers deliberately brought by the regime to replace Eritreans forced to flee and abandon their homes by colonial repression and terror.'

The EPLF says that out of 64 supposed representatives elected from Eritrea, 18 were high-ranking military officers, six with the rank of Brigadier-General or higher, and seven colonels.

'The commander of the Ethiopian occupation forces in Eritrea, Major-General Regassa Jimma was, elected to the regime according to the residents of Keru; a village that was totally destroyed by the Ethiopian army of occupation a long time ago and which now lies well inside the liberated zone.'

As for the Eritreans reported to have won seats in the shengo, the EPLF claims these are 'mostly senile men who had served Haile Selas-

sie in the 1950s and 1960s and are considered as loyal servants of the colonial regime.'

By way of contrast, the Eritrean movement says that its people were able to express their will in a congress 'convened in the liberated zone' earlier this year, attended by over 1,300 delegates representing more than 80 per cent of the population, which reaffirmed backing 'for the EPLF's longstanding policy of seeking a just and peaceful solution'.

The EPLF is concerned now that the Ethiopian regime will claim Eritrea is 'no longer an issue', meanwhile using supposed Eritrean representation and the legitimacy it expects from declaring a 'democratic republic', to crush internal opposition to its policies, and to military conscription, and step up the war in Eritrea.

'The Ethiopian regime has neither the will nor the intention of solving the Eritrean cause peacefully', the EPLF statement accuses.

Consequently, it says, the EPLF has decided to intensify the armed struggle, and has been waging 'extensive operations against Ethiopian forces' which have 'put out of action about 3,000 enemy soldiers in the past two months alone.'

At the same time, it stresses the need for international backing, and pressure 'to compel the Ethiopian regime to terminate its war of aggression and seek a peaceful solution to the Eritrean cause'.

## Soviet ferment

OVER 600 Soviet oppositionists, representing a variety of hitherto underground groups opposing Stalinism and bureaucracy from socialist standpoints, have held a congress recently in Moscow.

The news came at the same time as the official Soviet press for the first time reported a strike by workers, or as 'Moscow News' (16 September) discreetly called it, 'an incident'.

In Chekhov, south of Moscow, bus crews had refused to take their buses out after their pay was cut. Interviewed by the paper, they complained also of old, decrepit vehicles, and lack of facilities for workers, and said the pay cut had been 'the match which ignited the tinder.'

One Soviet opposition group, styling itself the Russian Social Democratic Party, is urging strikes and boycotts as a method of struggle, and demanding free trade unions and 'all power to the soviets, not the party.'

A 'Federation of Socialist Clubs', formed at the Moscow congress, offers critical support to those in the Communist Party prepared to fight bureaucracy. It wants the victims of Stalin honoured, and aims for 'a self-managed society' and genuine classless society.

● In next week's Workers Press, we will feature a fuller report on these important developments from our special correspondent, Patrick Kane. Make sure of your copy.



## SOUTH AFRICAN MINE DISASTERS

*A blast, fire, a rush of wind . . . then**darkness*

‘I WAS at the pump station when I heard the explosion. It was followed by fire, strong winds and darkness. I lost consciousness. When I recovered I saw bodies sprawled around me. I saw a torchlight 12 hours later and shouted for help. I was rescued after I thought I was going to die.’

THIS is the brief account by 38-year-old Mlamli Mavi of the mine disaster which occurred just as the black South African miners' strike ended. Mavi was one of only five survivors in the disaster — probably caused by a methane gas explosion — at No.10 shaft at St Helena gold mine in the Orange Free State.

The horrible death suffered by at least 62 miners occurred when their lift cage plunged to the bottom of the shaft, 1,300 metres below the surface. The story of their burial under tons of rubble will never be told. In

all likelihood, the names of the black victims will not even be published.

Although the names of the five white miners killed have been released, the mine owners say they must wait till the next of kin are informed before they release the names of the black migrant workers. It could take weeks to contact their families in the rural ‘homelands’ and neighbouring states of Lesotho and Mozambique.

In fact it took more than two days for the St Helena authorities to realise there were an extra 12 black workers in the doomed lift cage, bringing the total to 62.

Serious mine accidents, like this one, attract considerable media attention, but there is barely a record of the daily occurrence of deaths on South Africa's mines. The National Union of Mineworkers has published a booklet called ‘A Thousand Ways to Die’, taken from an old miners' saying that ‘there are a thousand ways to die in a gold mine’.

Among other things, the union is demanding the right to:

- elect safety stewards;
- refuse dangerous work;
- receive proper health and safety training and
- protection from punishment for demanding these rights.

‘We will not rest as long as our people are dying underground,’ said union general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa. ‘For us, every death is one too many.’

**Gencor's record**

THE accident at the St Helena mine was the third serious disaster in a year at a mine administered by the General Mining Union Corporation (Gencor).

● In September last year at Kinross mine in the eastern Transvaal, 177 miners died in an underground fire. The blast was caused by a welding accident igniting a highly-inflammable polyurethane sealing foam which has been taken off the market in other western countries because it gives off deadly toxic fumes.

● In April this year, a methane gas explosion killed 34 miners at Gencor's Ermelo coal mine — where 11 workers were killed in a similar explosion in 1982.

The NUM has described Gencor mines as ‘deathtraps’ and said the St Helena accident confirmed the union's view that South Africa's mines were the most unsafe in the world.

Gencor has said it was ‘deeply concerned’ about the St Helena accident and was determined ‘to eradicate the cause of this type of accident as soon as it can be established’.

A leading official has claimed that several further precautions had already been taken ‘to add to the large number of safety steps and procedures already in force’.

The union is unhappy with the government's decision to prosecute Kinross mine management for last year's disaster only on charges of culpable homicide and contravening the Mines and Works Act safety regulations.

This means the authorities will not conduct a full-scale investigation — which could put Gencor itself in the dock for its poor safety performance.

In 1983, after 68 mineworkers died in an underground methane gas explosion at the Hlobane coal mine in northern Natal, the owners — a subsidiary of the Iron and Steel Corporation — were prosecuted and fined R400 (about £200) for contravening the Mines and Works Act.

The inquiry revealed that:

- 14 machines underground were not flameproof and could have sparked an explosion;
- no proper testing had been done for methane gas on the morning of the explosion;
- the ventilation system, which should have dispersed any build-up of methane gas, had never worked properly and a repair operation a few days before had short-circuited it.

Yet the mine continued to boast a four-star safety rating.

**‘Every death is one too many’**

Grim-faced rescue workers haul up cables in St Helena's No.10 shaft. Only five of their colleagues were brought to the surface alive. Most victims — at least 62 — lie buried under a pile of rubble at the bottom of the shaft.

**Why 3,000 stayed at the bottom of a mineshaft**

DURING the South African miners' strike 3,000 mineworkers staged a sit-in at the bottom of a mineshaft. There were reports that they were forced down at gunpoint by security staff.

Officials at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels mine have dismissed the claim, saying the men went down voluntarily. They said it was physically impossible to force 3,000 workers to go to work at gunpoint — it would have needed a gun behind every workers' back ‘and that would have meant 3,000 guns’.

The strikers themselves tell a different story. According to Zebulon Lenka, construction team leader and shaft committee member of the NUM, when security armoured vehicles started assembling at the No.3 shaft compound, he became worried.

Although there had been a heavy security presence on the mine since the strike began three weeks previously, the vehicles had never before entered the compound where the workers were housed. He feared for the safety of the chanting mineworkers who were assembled on the soccer field.

He approached the chief hostel manager. ‘He told me the hippos (armoured vehicles) were there to protect the kitchen and changerooms,’ Lenka said. But when he heard a

loudhailer announcement that mine security personnel were there ‘to take control of the hostels’, he sensed trouble.

At about 6p.m. he saw a group of workers walking from the direction of the union offices towards the compound, carrying a union flag and singing freedom songs. When he saw one of the vehicles move towards the workers, he dashed past to try and stop the singing. The workers turned back but found their path blocked by more vehicles that had been approaching from the back.

‘The men on the vehicle I had just passed opened fire and I saw one of the workers fall down after being hit in the face by a rubber bullet,’ he said. Teargas and further shots were fired as workers fled towards the rooms.

He dragged the injured worker into Room 14 and waited until the shooting had died down. When he tried to leave, he was met by gun-wielding security personnel who took the injured worker away. Soon afterwards he saw mine security officers moving into the rooms, instructing workers to go to work or stand aside.

‘We didn't know what would happen to us if we indicated that we were unwilling to go to work, because the atmosphere was charged and we were being prodded with gun butts all the time,’ Lenka said. At about 9p.m. thousands of workers had assembled in front of the clocking office, guarded by the armed men.

‘They commanded all of us to go to work regardless of

whether we were day or we were surface worker cage taking the workers Mr Meyer who instructed he met another union of winch driver and vice

They were kept at the day (Thursday) before On Saturday the two we their clothes and pay. their clothes missing, station and held until T

Felantoni too was am shaft, but when he arr security personnel he h was escorted to fetch it came back, he was stop (white) shift boss who found Lenka. On his wa who had sjambok weak

A senior personnel as given time not more than a single shift. That he was most irregular, he that the numbers were s or afternoon shift who



## SHEFFIELD CONFERENCE

# Call for workers' sanctions evaded

BY BOB MYERS

**LAST SATURDAY'S** conference to discuss sanctions against South African coal imports evaded the main question of workers' sanctions against apartheid.

The Sheffield conference was jointly called by the National Union of Mineworkers and the Anti Apartheid Movement (AAM).

Arthur Scargill explained that Cyril Ramphosa, leader of the South African NUM, who was due to speak had been refused a South African passport and had refused the offer of a 'homelands' passport.

Scargill described the struggles of the South African NUM, a union that has grown to 375,000 in just five years. He talked of the low pay and conditions that have killed 48,000 black miners this century. 'The system has been challenged and shaken to its very foundations by the recent SANUM strike. It showed the strength of the unions.'

He compared the problems of the unions here with the difficulties of strike organisers there, where union representatives were not allowed within a mile of the mines. The British NUM had helped them overcome this problem by supplying secret communications equipment which had enabled the union to keep in touch with its members and with overseas unions.

Scargill explained that the forces against apartheid were in ascendancy. Later this year there is to be an international conference in Australia where unions from 56 countries will be attending to discuss the Shell boycott, and in the US the United Mine Workers have called for a picket on every Shell station.

In Britain, Liverpool dockers are refusing to handle uranium from occupied Namibia (see page 10).

Scargill ended by saying: 'We as trade unionists should impose our own sanctions, we can refuse to handle goods that are tainted with blood. Take a leaf out of the book of the women at



The conference platform. Arthur Scargill speaks, with Norman Willis sitting beside him.

Dunne's stores. Help speed the day when we can be addressed by an honorary member of the NUM, Nelson Mandela.'

But Scargill's call was at odds with the rest of the day which never again addressed the question of workers' sanctions. Willis, sitting next to Scargill had a run-in with him even during his speech, as Scargill contrasted a speech made by a South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) member at a TUC fringe meeting with the discussion inside the TUC itself. 'You've no right to say that', muttered Willis.

And Willis, the genial buffoon, described the impressions of his trip with Ron Todd to South Africa. Then he set the tone for the rest of the day's proceedings. 'Swinging public opinion behind a call for mandatory sanctions is the chief weapon — it would give this government some authority to getting other countries to impose sanctions.'

Willis ended his speech by turning pointedly on Scargill's call for workers' sanctions by saying the movement in South Africa didn't deserve to be given promises that couldn't be delivered.

The chairman, Richard Caborn, Labour MP, then praised the staff of the AAM and said: 'It is difficult to service

the explosion of anti-apartheid activity taking place.'

**This is indeed the growing problem for the AAM leaders: how to keep under control this growing movement and keep it within the realms of protest.**

Mike Terry, AAM secretary, described the fear felt by the South African mine owners for the AAM. They had opened an office in London to counter the sanctions campaign and had even asked for credentials to the conference. After lunch a Euro-MP spent 20 minutes explaining why he could do nothing in the European parliament, and a South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) speaker talked about the miners' strike, using the term 'we' all the time.

One could be forgiven for thinking he meant SACTU if you had not had the privilege of overhearing the lunch-time conversation between him and a delegate in which the SACTU man admitted while they had members 'in the underground' they had no actual union.

Quite how you have a congress of unions that don't exist needs to be explained, especially as the final resolution of the conference called for branches to invite SACTU and not COSATU speakers.

Betty Heathfield called on the struggle to be linked with the fight against six-day working and the disciplinary code.

Then for half an hour we had speakers from the floor who, we were assured, were not vetted from the speakers slips.

It was just an accident that they were nearly all middle-class AAM activists, despite the fact that there were 103 NUM delegates and only 84 AAM delegates — there were 428 delegates in all.

Only two miners were called. One made the point that he went to lots of these conferences that passed lots of resolutions and nothing happened. The other miner, from Silverwood, the only person to mention the jailed union leader Moses Mayekiso, asked the ANC representatives why they were sitting down with the white bosses.

Frances Kelly of the ANC replied by explaining that while the ANC was OK with its long-term allies, the Communist Party, SACTU, COSATU, it had to ask about temporary allies. 'Why can't we unite with them' (whites who are against apartheid) 'for a temporary goal? There is a crack, because of the pressure of some of the imperialist governments.'

The name of Oppenheimer, the biggest of the so-called progressives, nor of his company Anglo-American who took a leading role in fighting the miners' strike, were not mentioned.

The AAM speaker explained that a white bishop at their recent talks had said that the ANC ran the risk of being denounced by its own people for sitting talking to the whites. But Kelly said:

'We tried to get an agreement on a sort of "pre-freedom charter", as when we come to power we will have to fight to implement the Freedom Charter.'

A SWAPO speaker called on the conference not to forget the question of Namibia which was the other side of apartheid, the regime's own colonial expansion.

Finally a programme of action was passed with no vote being taken. Suffice it to say that the action contained in the 12 points called on trade unionists only to go to meetings, hand out leaflets etc. etc. The actual action part was contained in the bit 'Make the British government act now'.

The AAM put on their coats, left Sheffield satisfied that the growing movement to halt South African coal imports was still in their hands. Their loyal opposition in groups like Socialist Action were delighted with the useful day's discussion. Many delegates had started leaving, probably from boredom long before the conference closed.

But the matter must not be left there. The stifling bureaucrats of the AAM may have coasted through without opposition but it is a symptom of their problems that they have to hold a conference with the NUM.

**There could not be any two other bodies objectively travelling in such opposite directions, as the NUM once again takes on Thatcher while the AAM leaders grovel at her door.**

● TURN OVER to page 10: Liverpool docks blockade

## Hundreds die every year in mines

**EVERY YEAR 600 to 800 South African mineworkers die in underground accidents and hundreds more are permanently disabled, according to the NUM.**

The fatality rate on South African coal mines is eight times higher than in British mines, four times higher than mines in EEC countries and twice high as US coal mines.

While South Africa's coal mines are shallow, the gold mines are the deepest and hottest in the world. 'The deeper the mine, the greater the risk of rock falls and rock bursts,' says Jean Leger, mine safety expert and researcher at Johannesburg's Witwatersrand university.

The average depth for a gold mine in South Africa is 1,600 metres although some mines reach 3,500 metres underground. 'Very few mines in the rest of the world are as deep as 1,600 metres, so comparisons are pretty meaningless,' Leger explained.

He said 170 workers had died in gas explosions since 1981 — excluding the St Helena victims. Although methane gas, a by-product of coal, is found mainly in collieries, South Africa's Free State gold mines also have a number of coal seams near the surface.

If found in a concentration of about 4 to 12 per cent in air, the gas becomes explosive if exposed to a spark or another source of ignition. Methane explosions can be prevented by adequate ventilation — to bring the methane gas concentration below danger level.

In addition there should be no source of ignition and the air should be tested regularly for a build-up of the gas.

Despite the numerous accidents, no concrete improvements in safety are taking place. After most accidents the government's Mining Engineer launches an official investigation to determine the cause of the individual accident.

The NUM is calling for a government commission of inquiry into safety in the mining industry as a whole — so far ignored. Mining accidents have been a powerful factor in the development of the NUM in recent years.



Striking gold miners start their long journey home to Lesotho after being sacked

Afternoon shift workers or whether he said. As he tried to board the down the shaft, he was stopped by a him to go to the time office, where official, Ben Felantoni, a single drum shaft committee chairman.

Time office until 7a.m. the following ing taken to the local police station. e taken to the compound to collect at found the pay office closed and they were returned to the police esday morning the following week.

g miners herded at gunpoint to the ved at the shaft entrance he told id forgotten his clocking badge. He at the No.5 changeroom. When he ed from boarding the cage by the him to go to the office — where he he met a man called 'Discharge' and bruises on his back.

stant at the mine said that at any 1,500 workers go down the mine on e were 3,000 workers underground aid. An Anglo spokesman claimed elled by workers from the morning refused to come to the surface.



## LIVERPOOL DOCKS BLOCKADE

# Are workers' sanctions possible?

**THE answer from Liverpool docks is a resounding 'yes', with TG&WU port workers moving to impose a blockade of uranium of Namibian or South African origin.**

The action in Liverpool changed national union policy, broke the media silence on Namibia and forced British Nuclear Fuels Ltd to admit that two-thirds of its export processing work uses Namibian or South African ore.

It also vindicated a persistent struggle by the Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts, working with the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia on an issue virtually ignored by the British left.

The priority now must be to spread the blockade from Liverpool to other ports, other transport workers and even the nuclear industry itself.

Last February, Ben Ulenka, general secretary of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, a SWAPO prisoner, toured Britain and addressed a trade union conference against apartheid. He called on workers to 'do all in your power to stop the flow of Namibian goods, including uranium'.

BY GREG DROPKIN  
Namibia Support Committee

By June, research by the Namibia Support Committee and documents passed to SWAPO had proved the Liverpool connection.

Uranium oxide from Rio Tinto Zinc's Rossing mine and South Africa's NUFCOR (extracting uranium from gold and copper mining) is shipped to Britain, imported through Southampton and delivered to BNFL Springfields plant near Preston.

Springfields converts the oxide to uranium hexafluoride on behalf of Japanese, West German and other EEC utilities.

Some of the 'hex' is exported through Liverpool, shipped on Atlantic Container Lines and imported to the US for enrichment by the Department of Energy before fuel fabrication and delivery to the utilities.

SWAPO wrote to the TG&WU Merseyside Divisional Organiser Eddie Roberts, who contacted Docks and Waterways District Secretary Jimmy Symes. Dockers and clerical staff immediately resolved to impose a ban.

Their decision enabled an amendment from the 6/522 branch to become policy at the July Biennial Delegate Conference of the T&GWU,

welcoming the formation of unions affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers and endorsing Ben Ulenka's call.

On 11 August, port workers stopped a consignment of enriched uranium hexafluoride and held it for four days. The dock company fell over themselves to divulge documents and promised full details of past and future nuclear shipments.

This particular cargo appeared to be Canadian material heading from the US to Springfields on behalf of the Spanish electricity board. But by their frenzied remarks about Canadian uranium, the docks company and BNFL effectively conceded the main point: Namibian and South African uranium will not be handled in Liverpool.

Mineworkers in Namibia, on strike against TCL coppermines, were delighted to hear of the action and regarded it as a direct show of solidarity with their strike.

Previous attempts to change T&GWU policy were broken by the veto of BNFL. Springfields workers, who echoed management that their jobs depended on Namibian uranium, despite a glut in the world market. Now, with a real rank-and-file base in Liverpool, the ground has shifted.

● **Demonstrate: Saturday 3 October 12 noon at Transport House, Liverpool. March to Pier Head via Shipping Company offices.**

## 'We must identify with workers' struggle in South Africa' — says Liverpool shop steward

WHEN Liverpool dockers suspected a cargo of uranium from South African-occupied Namibia was being moved through their port, they took action to stop it. FRANK FITZMAURICE interviewed JIMMY NOLAN, Liverpool Port Shop Stewards Committee, about their policy.

**What is the position on handling Namibian uranium in the port?**

**JN:** A consignment of uranium was left on the quayside for four days until it was proved not to be from South Africa but from Canada. Now management have agreed no Namibian uranium will be shipped through the port of Liverpool.

**What about South African coal imports?**

**JN:** During the last three years, several attempts have been made to unload South African coal at Birkenhead coal terminal. But we made it clear to management that we would not unload it, and they now seem to have accepted this position.

The coal terminal at Seaforth handles only North American coal. There was a lot of confusion recently when leaflets were given out on the docks saying that South African coal was being unloaded in the port in containers. Anyone who is familiar with bulk handling of materials knows that is ridiculous. I wish that all coal imports would come in containers as this would create about 20,000 extra jobs shovelling the stuff out!

**What are the main problems you have faced in refusing to handle South African goods?**

**JN:** When we refuse to handle South African goods they get diverted to other ports. We have approached the T&GWU about this but have not been able to get the goods blacked elsewhere, although the union has said it will support any group of workers who

refuse to handle South African goods.

We can appreciate the difficulties that workers in factories and other ports face these days, with the employment situation and the attacks of this government. Our workforce has gone down from 14,000 in 1967 to 1,250 at the present day. But as trade unionists we must identify with the struggles of workers in South Africa and places like Latin American countries.

We are facing loss of jobs, while they face torture and death. So we say it would be worthwhile to take the same stand as us in refusing to handle these goods. Meanwhile the TUC passes resolution after resolution against South Africa that they have no intention of putting into practice.

**What do you see as the best way of taking the trade union sanctions campaign forward?**

**JN:** The T&GWU sent three delegates to Sheffield to the NUM conference. It was a good conference but the weakness seemed to be a lack of industrial workers. When coal is imported from South Africa it must go somewhere to be used. Most probably to the power stations. This means electricians and engineers ought to be mobilised to stop South African coal being burnt at these stations.

Following the Sheffield conference we want the T&GWU to organise a conference in Liverpool and to get the maximum attendance of industrial workers, dockers and seamen. The National Union of Seamen's participation in sanctions against South African coal is very important, as the main European coal port is Brussels, and a lot of South African coal finds its way there.

At the Brussels coal mountain, imports from all countries are tipped on to the one pile, creating a difficult situation for a ban, unless one starts before it is unloaded. This needs the co-operation of unions like the NUS. Also, when delegates go to these conferences it is very important they give full report-backs to their workplaces, and fight to rally support for any decisions.



Miner Bill Whitley in the changing room on his day of retirement

BY DEREK MOORE  
Pictures: ROBERT VOYSEY

**ON 10 SEPTEMBER, 30,000 miners in the coalfields of New South Wales and Queensland came out in a one-week stoppage in the biggest fight against the destruction of jobs and conditions since the depression of the 1930s following the latest round of mass sackings.**

Almost 1,000 men were thrown out of work at the end of August and another 7,000 jobs are expected to go within the next 18 months.

Since last December, 1,000 men had already been sacked following earlier mass job destruction a number of years ago. On top of this employers are pushing for draconian changes in work practice, including 24-hours-a-day manning, 365 days a year.

This is in line with the policy of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) — the equivalent of the TUC — of imposing the widespread surrender of work practices throughout the industry in return for a paltry 4-per-cent second-tier pay increase.

The architect of this policy is leading Stalinist Laurie Carmichael, the recently elected Assistant Secretary of ACTU and former head of the powerful metal trades union.

He is also responsible for the development of Australia Reconstructs, a national programme of industrial collaboration initiated by ACTU on the so-called Swedish model.

At the beginning of August, Miners Federation officials prevailed on their members to accept a proposal by Labor Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, for a so-called moratorium on sack-

ings by the giant coal owners.

Far from 'persuading' coal owners to 'change their minds' on job destruction it allowed them to further increase stockpiles of coal and wage a propaganda war in favour of pit closures and changes in work practices.

The 1,000 men were sacked on the day the moratorium ended — 28 August — without a word of protest from the Labor government in Canberra or the Labor government of New South Wales, where most of the men had been employed in the Hunter Valley (about 130 miles north of Sydney.)

On the eve of the latest sackings Hawke said that tough decisions had to be taken. He meant that miners have to carry the cost of falling markets in Japan, Australia's biggest customer.

The Minister for Primary Industry and Energy, John Kerin told the unions that there would be no point in taking industrial action that would hamper satisfactory new arrangements.

The massive job destruction and attack on conditions is happening in one of the most efficient coal industries in the world and the biggest single Australian export industry.

As recently as the last financial year, New South Wales, the largest supplier, increased production by 14.6 per cent to 88.42 million tonnes while employment in mining fell by 1.5 per cent from 19,820 to 19,528.

Australian coal miners are caught in the international trade war, world overproduction and the laws of the so-called 'free market'.

Orders are being lost to suppliers of more expensive US coal to Japan as the latter tries to resolve its chronic balance of payments crisis with the US.

The coal owners and the Labor government are strengthened in their attacks by the knowledge that the miners' leaders are incapable of waging an all-out fight in defence of their members because, being reformists, they accept the private ownership of coal resources.

There is implicit agreement from them that thousands of jobs must go no matter what.

In July this year 800 miners from the two pits near Lithgow in the western coalfields of NSW were compelled to take pay cuts of \$215 a week, from \$630 to \$414, for fear of ending up on the dole.

A local lodge president, Arthur Feltham, said: 'It was either that or nothing — we took the package rather than lose our jobs, although after the cuts there still could be standdowns.'

'We have given everything we can give — now the government has to do something. Morale among the men is very low around here.'

'The men are very bitter and disappointed. It is not so much the money the workers are worried about, it is the conditions, conditions the union fought hard for and won more than 40 years ago.'

At South Bulli mine on the southern fields a 55-per-cent cut in bonuses along with a pledge to increase productivity by 69 per cent was extracted, in mid August, once again in a desperate effort by miners to save jobs.

The government of course will do nothing to defend jobs but is firmly committed to defence of profits.

The Miners Federation has long had a policy of nationalisation of the coal industry. But implementation is not seriously considered.

Although there is widespread recognition of the limitation of nationalisation of the British model, particularly following the 1984/1985 miners strike, this has not led to the conclusions that the solution is nationalisation under workers control and with no compensation.

Instead of seeing this as the only way to defend jobs and take a step towards a socialist planned economy the leadership has instead called for a national marketing authority.

General president of the Miners Federation John Maitland has said there must be no further concessions until such an 'honest broker' as a National Coal Board with marketing powers is established.

But as envisaged a National Board would simply involve coal industry unions in assisting both coal owners and government to legitimise sackings.

The answer to the anarchy of capitalist production is not for mining unions to become the third leg of capitalist enterprise but to struggle for their independence from both, particularly the government.

This has to start from a refusal to accept the destruction of jobs and conditions.

Mass meetings at the beginning of September overwhelmingly instructed mining union leaders to lead a national struggle against sackings and job destruction.

The fight now for miners is to hold them to this.

Already the leadership has called off a planned march on parliament house in Canberra, fearing a re-



# New strategy is necessary for Australian miners



The exterior of Coalcliff pit showing the coking ovens and washery

peat of a similar situation a number of years ago when angry miners smashed their way into the chamber.

Then it was a conservative government. This time it is a Labour government!

## TWO MINERS SPEAK OUT

**BILL WHILEY** will remember 28 August, 1987 for the rest of his life. It was the day he retired from his job as a miner and a Miners Federation lodge secretary at Coalcliff Colliery, on the coast some 30

miles south of Sydney.

It was also the day that the government-inspired 'moratorium' on sackings in the industry ended: 1,000 men were sacked throughout the country.

Sixty-year-old Bill has no regrets about not having to go underground any more but he is upset that he is going to miss out on what he and fellow Coalcliff miner, COLIN MARKHAM (ETU delegate and endorsed Labor Party candidate for the next state elections) predict will be the biggest battle coalminers have faced since 1949 when Labour Prime Minister Ben Chifley sent in troops to break their strike.

There are lessons as well as irony in the fact that miners are faced with a hostile Labor government today just as they were nearly 40 years ago.

**BILL WHILEY:** I started working in the mines in Broken Hill in December

1950. I was cavilled out (sacked) and blacklisted for a while and have been at Coalcliff for 13 years. For the last couple of years I've been driving a loco at pit bottom.

**How do you feel retiring at a time like this?**

I wouldn't want to miss the struggle that's coming up — I think it's going to be one of the most vicious and drawn-out that we've ever had. It'll be like the big strike that we had in May 1949 when Chifley sent the troops in.

But then the miners were isolated and that's not the case now because the leadership has been very patient in the way it has handled the ACTU, the prime minister and the other unions.

**How many men are working at Coalcliff?**

At its peak in about 1980 the mine as a whole had about 1,050 and the Federation had about 640. There were voluntary retirements in October and November 1984 and the Miners Federation now has 294. With this lot of retirements the number will be down to 220 or 230.

Management says the pit will close in three years but it could even be before then. If the American government steps up its pressure on the Japanese government to take more Amer-

ican coal we could go even quicker because the coal is of a similar quality to the American, a hard coking coal.

The companies are not only fighting it out on the world market but also amongst themselves and this is where deregulation comes in. The owners want to produce coal 365 days a year with complete deregulation of labour.

If there's a big blue (fight) and the owners lock us out they will be looking for a resumption of work on these terms. Those miners left in the industry after all those cavilled out are going to be in for a very torrid time to defend what they've got.

**How many jobs have been lost on the South Coast over the last few years?**

**COLIN MARKHAM:** Since about 1981 there's been about 6,000 jobs gone, including all classifications. Some people are selling their jobs and I don't count those.

But there have been people sacked. They are job losses, the other ones are sold jobs, the same as they are doing here now. They are offering a Voluntary Retirement Scheme, which I believe is a 'sell your jobs scheme'.

This company keeps telling us that they have never sacked anyone. The last time round there were about 400 people took VRS or transfer. Only last week the boss was telling us how benevolent they were because they never sacked anyone in 1984 or 1986.

In the true sense of the word they haven't sacked anyone but they have done away with about 500 jobs.

If this mine closes in 1990 all the small villages around here will suffer. Coalcliff is the oldest mine in Australia and has been built on the traditional mining community where you lived down the bottom of the pit hill and you worked in the mine — sons-fathers and grandfathers.

It will be the northern suburbs of this district that will really suffer from the job losses here at Coalcliff and other mines in the district.

The southern district is split into two areas and about 5,000 people work there altogether. What they are talking about now is cutting Coalcliff back to 408 and then closing it completely.

I'm very suspicious because the company is not telling us what their forward plan is.

This company is not being fair dinkum with us because they are telling us they are going to shut the pit in three years time and yet they're telling us they will shut it at Xmas time if we don't get the projected amount of coal out of the place anyhow.

**BW:** Here and at South Bulli management has said 'Take a cut in your bonus of 50 odd per cent or we'll sack so many. We want to cut the bonus and reduce the workforce through voluntary retirements.'

But they are also saying 'Up the production' and this will be hard in an old pit like this.

Today is the deadline for miners here who want to take voluntary retirement. There have been about 80 but the company want 163 so we don't know what will happen next week.

**CM:** I'm opposed to voluntary retirement because, for a start, anyone who takes it will never get a job in the coal industry again because we won't accept them. If they get the sack they go straight onto a list for re-employment in the industry.

Companies come up smelling like roses by saying to the general public that they haven't sacked anybody.

But they are sacking people in every sense of the word and worse because they put pressure on the younger workers to accept voluntary retirement and then that's a job that's down the drain.

This joker has been putting pressure on me for a fortnight to take it. They buy people off.

**BW:** A lot of people will pay off their debts but then they run out of money and will do anything to get back into the industry.

**CM:** All you can do is to tell people not to take it because you get no more than if you are sacked. If you are sacked you still have to get three weeks pay for every year of service and that is what you get for voluntary retirement.

It is the district position of all unions that we don't accept voluntary retirement and we won't encourage voluntary retirement.

You can't stop someone going to see the boss and asking how much they are worth, all we can do is tell them not to do it. It's a voluntary sacking.

**BW:** The companies are all prepared to take us on and to roll back the award conditions that we have gained over the years.

**How will this affect safety?**

**BW:** The men will have to work harder and faster and the safety factor does come into it, particularly penalties.

**You said now is a good time for them to take you on, why?**

**BW:** Because there is about 18 to 20 million tonnes of hard coking coal over supply in the world market.

**CM:** If they can reduce the workforce by half they can take the work practises from us, and that's what they are really after. Some of the things they are putting up to us just here are in line with what coal owners are going to put to all the pits.

When things do come good they are going to have a workforce reduced so much that production costs will be halved or more so.

This company here ships in to Great Britain one million tonnes a year and we know what happened in Britain 18 months ago when

they had the coal miners strike because we supported them from this pit. And now this company has a million tonne contract a year.

**BW:** The company in Broken Hill wants the right of the foremen to sack men under-ground for insubordination or inefficiency on the spot.

**What do you think are the lessons of the British miners' strike?**

**BW:** The nationalised industry is just the same as if it was privately owned. You can have the nationalisation but when the screws are on you get kicked from pillar to post too. So workers have to re-think another strategy.

**CM:** If we were working under a nationalised industry we would be suffering what we are now. Maybe not as acutely but we'd be suffering, don't worry. I think that's the lesson we have learned from the British miners' strike.

You can go out on the grass for 12 months and really have your back against the wall but unless you have the rest of the working class supporting you, you may as well give it a bloody miss because it is no good having one section taking on a whole force.

We have seen that not many months ago in the workers compensation strike when they were off for four days and the rest of New South Wales just went along merrily. So unless you can get that welding of the working class it's a struggle.

**Are you happy with the preparations being made by the Federation and the combined unions?**

**CM:** I think they have done a good job.

**BW:** Yes, because the men want national action but they have been very patient. They have dealt with the ACTU, they have dealt with the government.

Now Hawke can't really come out and give us a kick as he'd like to. I think the national leadership has played it pretty coolly.

**CM:** If we have everyone on an indefinite national stoppage the only way we'd get back to work would be under their terms.

It would be like the SE-QEB dispute in Queensland and the things that came out of that. You learn from those sort of things and you have to have some sort of programme to try and get around it.

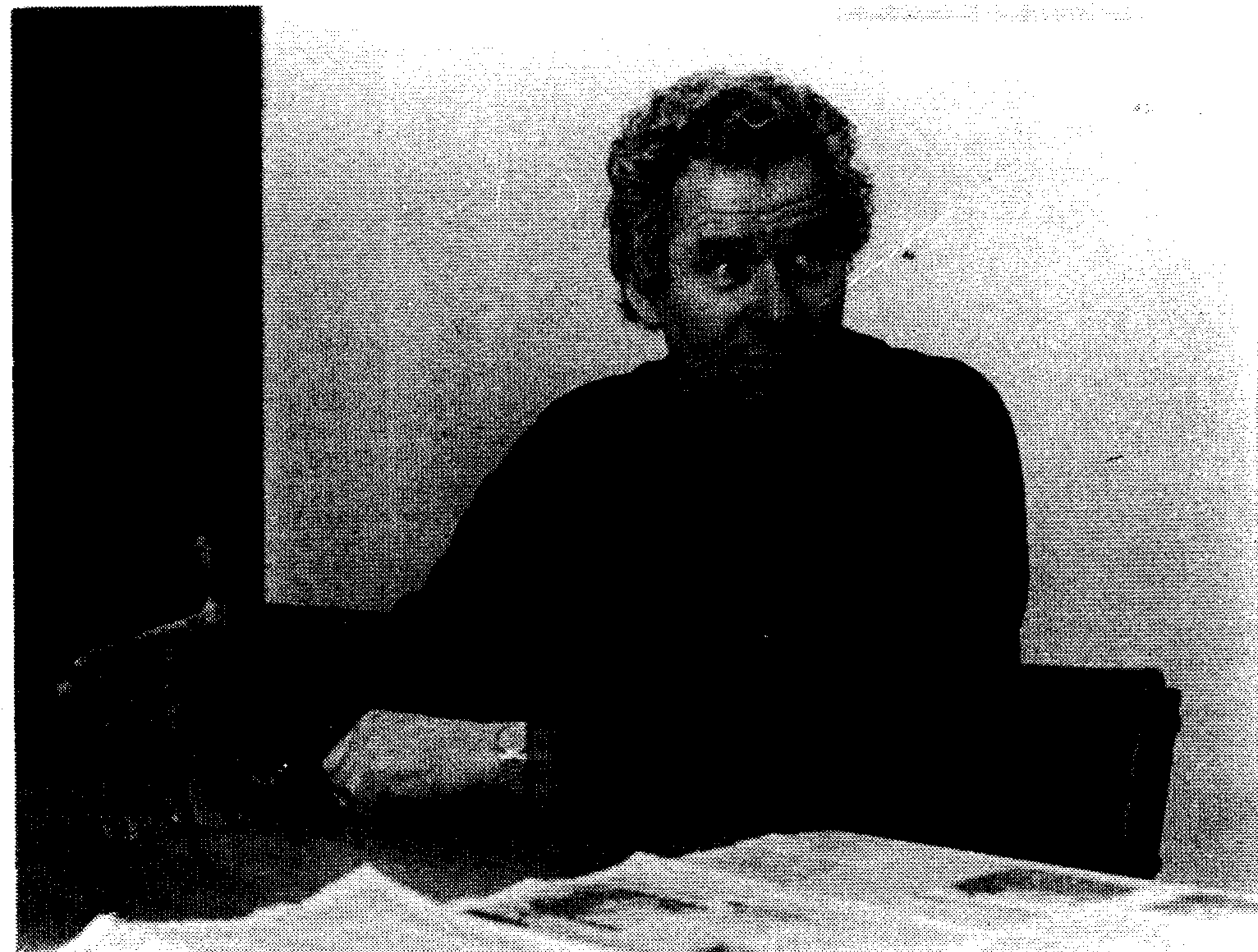
We don't want to be forced into a position where they are going to say: 'This is the only way you are coming back to work.'

And don't worry, the coal industry in this country is at that point where they would be prepared to shut it down for a few months if they thought that they could get that sort of a return to work.

**BW:** The loss to the federal government in revenue from the coal industry brings about a crisis in the balance of payments and it's not in their interest to have it prolonged.

Now, would they side with the coal owners to try and resolve it or side with us? They'd go with the coal owners. Hawke and Keating (Paul Keating, federal Treasurer), Dawkins (John Dawkins, Minister for Employment) would but then there could be a big split in Cabinet and the federal Labour Party.

It could also bring them undone too. So if the men decide to go I don't know what the leadership recommendation is going to be.



Fellow Coalcliff miner Colin Markham



# LETTERS

Letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editorial Board. Letters over 500 words will normally be cut. Letters should arrive by first post Monday at: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS, and should include sender's address.

## Socialist Organiser's libel of 'Perdition'

IT IS necessary to draw the attention of the British left to Jane Ashworth and John O'Mahoney's 'Why "banning" is folly' in 3 September 'Socialist Organiser'.

It is allegedly a review of the print version of Jim Allen's 'Perdition'. In fact it is a libel against Allen, myself and the entire anti-Zionist British left.

They call 'Perdition' 'obnoxious propaganda', but do not cite one single word of error in it. In fact they are forced to admit that 'Perdition' is a far better play in its published (fourth) version than it was at the beginning.

Of course they attribute this to the outcry against it by the Zionists.

All due respect, but this is bullshit.

We may be sure the Zionists don't think this version better than the previous ones. They were not objecting to a phrase here, or a slight error there. They objected to the core concept, that the Hungarian Zionist leader Rezzo Kaszner collaborated with Eichmann in the extermination of 450,000 Jews, in exchange for the lives of 1,674 Zionists and rich Jews.

In fact everyone knows that playwrights are always pruning their plays up to the last minute. Shakespeare did it. How does a playwright cutting his play 'totally' destroy 'the moral and factual basis of' his case?

Turns out that 'Allen bases himself on the work of Lenni Brenner.' And then they go on to denounce me as a hellish monster. I'd like to agree with them. But I look and look again, yet I do not see them pointing to even one word of my 'work' that they say is in factual error. Yet they have the chutzpah, the gall, to say that: 'In Brenner's historical writings, the trick is to blame the Zionist movement — presented as some sort of diabolical power outside the ordinary Jewish people — for the Holocaust as if "the Zionists" in Europe did not go to the death camps too.'

None of this is true. Of course innumerable Zionists went to the camps. Where do I deny that? And why would I deny that?

To be sure, Zionism was middle class, not working class. All scholars agree on that. But that is a far cry from my saying that the movement was 'outside the ordinary Jewish people.' And to say that I 'blame the Zionist movement... for the Holocaust' is an odious libel.

I defy these libellers to find one sentence in any of my three books that can imply that.

The Holocaust would have happened even if there were no Zionists. But I showed that the World Zionist Organisation leadership repeatedly collaborated with Hitler in the pre-war period, thinking that they could do a deal with him. And then, in Hungary, in 1944, Kaszner did personally collaborate with Eichmann. And then, in the 50s, the Israeli government defended him, denied he collaborated, and even said that if he was guilty, then so were they.

SO's libels do not stop at Allen and Brenner. Listen to this garbage from the two irresponsible:

'On the left, Zionist complicity in the Holocaust is now increasingly an article of faith in a movement which has adopted an attitude of comprehensive hostility to Jews, in Israel and outside it, who will not "convert" to anti-Zionism and adopt the demand that Israel cease exist... Allen's play, like Brenner's books and the often hysterical anti-Zionist

agitation of organisations like the SWP, is part of a cultural ferment which is generating a new "left wing" anti-Semitism.'

So, according to these two crackpots, the only thing that was wrong with the Zionists' efforts to drive the play off the boards of the Royal Court Theatre was their heavy handedness.

'It was perfectly right and necessary to respond to "Perdition". Leaflets, pickets, and so on, would have been perfectly in order. The fatal error lay in allowing the matter to appear as a question of free speech.'

Thus we see where SO has ended up: side by side with those Zionists who tried to suppress free speech.

Sad isn't it? Except that they can do anything they like. The public doesn't give a damn for the little Zionist dictators who tried to stop it from seeing the play, and it isn't going to listen to SO either.

One last point. SO's madness re Zionism did not fall from heaven all of a sudden. O'Mahoney is notorious for his previous abject capitulation to Orange fanaticism in Northern Ireland.

Once he abandoned Marxism there, inevitably he began to abandon it elsewhere. Just as he had come to see the left as wrong for trying 'force' the Protestants into a democratic secular Ireland, he began to see it as wrong for trying to 'force' the Jews into a democratic secular Palestine.

Once he became a present day supporter of the 'loyal Jewish Ulster', as Sir Ronald Storrs, a governor of British Palestine, once called the Zionist settlement, O'Mahoney began to defend the undefendable Zionist role during the Holocaust.

That accomplished, he now descends to the level of libel, accusing the British left of anti-Semitism.

Make no mistake: he will not stop there. Sooner or later, but inexorably, he will discover new differences with the left. Eventually he will become an opponent of the left, not only on Ireland and Palestine, but everywhere.

Lenni Brenner

## WRP uncritical of Sinn Fein

SIMON Pirani's review of 'Ten Men Dead' (Workers Press, 22 August) was excellent, and did justice to a powerful and moving book, which gives a stunning portrayal of the utter ferocity of British imperialism.

But the review again illustrated a recent trend in 'Workers Press' — it was totally uncritical.

Why does 'Workers Press' never make any criticism of the political underpinning of Sinn Fein?

I can understand that there is a necessary reaction to the chauvinism of the Healy era, but surely there is now a danger of tail-ending Sinn Fein?

The contrast with the African National Congress in South Africa is sharp: Workers Press has correctly published quite a lot of criticism of the ANC's pro-Stalinist 'two-stages' theory.

But why is Sinn Fein different from the ANC? Are we arguing that Sinn Fein are 'natural Marxists'?

In 'Ten Men Dead' there are several aspects of Sinn Fein's politics that worry me. First, there is a kind of romantic even mystical concern with death.

This is well summed up in the famous statement by Terence MacSwiney, who died on hunger strike in 1920: 'It is not those who can inflict the most, but those that can suffer the most who will conquer.'

I can't believe that the WRP goes along with this statement: it produces great heroism and martyrdom but does it affect socialist revolution?

Second, there is a tremendous political eclecticism shown. One Cage even burns books such as 'Capital' and 'The Communist Manifesto', while Bobby Sands was reading all the revolutionary literature he could get hold of.

In other words, in this book, Sinn Fein is shown as very unclear as to what it wants and how to get it. The role of the working class is uncertain.

Some people may say that it is callous to make criticisms of men who were prepared to die for their movement. But it's not callous and does not dishonour them.

In fact the best way to serve their memory is surely to fight out the political battles with every degree of truth and honesty.

Barry Forder

## Wider discussion needed on education

I SHOULD like to hear comrades' views on the Workers Press coverage of educational issues.

Of course, all socialists must wholeheartedly support the struggles of teachers against the vicious attacks of the Tories. But is this enough? Can we answer the desperate crisis which now faces the schools merely in terms of teacher-syndicalism?

I don't think so. As long as we keep the discussion on this level, we shall be restricted to purely defensive struggles, and won't be able to get to grips with the real problems of the educational system.

It is not just that the schools crisis affects children and parents as well as teachers. Even more important, the crisis of education is a vital part of the crisis of capitalism as a whole.

Why can't we have some discussion in the paper about the enormous changes which have occurred in every aspect of education since the period of economic expansion of the 1950s and 1960s came to an end?

Why shouldn't the teachers who contribute articles to Workers Press not talk about the problems of teaching a generation which has no idea of its future?

## Lessons for Trotskyists

Why not discuss the possibilities for education which modern technology makes possible, but which will only be applied in a socialist world?

If we don't open up such questions, are we not guilty of restricting the working class within the framework of bourgeois society?

Perhaps some of our teacher-contributors will be able to answer these questions.

Cyril Smith

## Monty Johnstone and the crisis of Stalinism

MONTY Johnstone says there were four inaccuracies in my article headed "Morning Star" building and press sold" (Workers Press, August 14).

Suppose we take his word for them, (in view of his record as a loyal follower of Stalin until 1956, this does involve a certain risk), and accept that the Communist Party paper 'Seven Days' does sell 'around 6,000' copies, that the Party did eventually manage to hold a London District Congress and set up a north-west District Committee, and that only 33 people have been expelled by the CP Executive Committee since 1984.

But the main points of my article still stand. The 'Morning Star' is in desperate straits. The CP's membership has dropped like a stone, and is still falling. The Young Communist League has almost vanished.

This is not a question of gloating over the difficulties of our enemies. As I said in the article in question, the sacrifice of many thousands of workers went into the establishment of the CP and its daily paper. This effort was destroyed by the Stalinist perversion of communism.

The point is that, in this period, Trotskyism, as the only continuator of the fight for communist principles, can defeat Stalinism within the working class.

Johnstone thinks he can score a few points by sneering at the difficulties of the WRP and its paper. This really demonstrates his weakness.

For, as everyone who reads Workers Press will know, we have tried to discuss all these problems openly and objectively in our columns.

Johnstone's 'Communist' Party has now abandoned every vestige of Marxism, and, despite a show of 'glasnost' is still trying to evade the material basis of its own decline.

Geoff Pilling

tical struggle for materialism.

Perhaps because of the Stalinist crudities (of truly hair-wrenching stupidity and poisonous consequences) materialism has not been thought of as a particularly smart philosophy.

Yet surely it is the ground for our struggle with bourgeois ideology.

Does not the school system teach individual salvation through private inspiration and effort?

Do we not counter that it is the productive life of man that explains the private life of men and women?

These ideas and criticisms are by no means original or mine. They belong to Sebastiano Timpanaro and are to be found in his book 'On Materialism'.

There he also discusses the philosophical approach to man's relation to nature. The fact that this is often considered a settled question is a measure of the simplistic attitude to materialism, one which has led to the sterility of dialectics.

Are these problems post-ponable? Let me say, yes. We are not governed by the hand of historical necessity which issues summons, for one of Healy's little tricks was to paralyse thought by thrusting the burden of history on to the individual.

Been there, done that. Those that are particularly interested in these issues please send in contributions to Workers Press or write to me via the editor.

Ben Robinson  
Sydney, Australia

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PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.  
PATRICK McLOUGHLIN, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

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

We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.



## PERSONAL COLUMN

Peter Fryer

# The 'Zinoviev letter' revisited

**W**E live in the age of the instant expert. Any ignorant mediocrity whose views correspond to the prejudices that the media seek to foster is assured of having those views trumpeted forth, and himself acclaimed as a fount of wisdom.

This may be partly due to the nature of television, which recoils with horror from any kind of precision or complexity or profundity, since its purpose is not to instruct but to entertain. In any case, the puffery of intellectual charlatan reveals an aspect of the crisis of capitalism: that its defenders increasingly retreat from fact into fudge.

Last week, for instance, we had a chief constable with a hot line to God advocating castration as a preventive of rape. His barbaric proposal was publicised as if he had announced the second coming of Jesus Christ (as he seems likely to do any day now) — regardless of the fact that half the fully-grown men who are castrated continue to have both sexual desire and ability to copulate.

(Not that the police interest in these matters is purely theoretical. Last Sunday's 'Observer' told how in Hounslow about three weeks ago an Iranian, whose crime had been to park his car in the wrong place, was beaten by police so savagely that one of his testicles had to be removed.)

But I digress. The person whose lack of

intellectual integrity I want to draw attention to this week is not a policeman but a historian — though, since he specialises in the history of 'intelligence' operations, it may be that in his own way he is somewhat more useful to the capitalist state than is James Anderton.

I didn't see the BBC2 'Timewatch' film on the 1924 Zinoviev letter; but I read the 'Listener' article last week by its presenter, Dr Christopher Andrew, who is senior tutor at Corpus Christ College, Cambridge, former editor of 'The Historical Journal', editor of 'Intelligence and National Security', and author of 'Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community' (1985).

In the 'Listener' Dr Andrew sketches the background to the Zinoviev letter, which purported to be a message from Zinoviev as president of the Communist International to the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Dr Andrew observes correctly enough that 'the chief conspirators were Conservative Central Office and a handful of retired intelligence officers . . . who hoped that publication of the Zinoviev letter would wreck Labour's election campaign' — as indeed it did, though Dr Andrew doubts it.

The Foreign Office published the forgery four days before the 1924 general election. There was a massive outcry in the capitalist press, and Labour's parliamentary representation was slashed from 191 to 151, that of the Tories rose from 258 to 413, while the Liberals slumped from 159 to 42.

On the question of whether the Zinoviev letter was a forgery, Dr Andrew sits uncomfortably on the fence. And he writes: 'Even if the Zinoviev letter was forged, it was no more seditious than a number of authentic Comintern instructions. The interwar British Communist Party was bound, by its membership of Comintern, to support the Soviet Union by illegal as well as legal means.'

This is simply not good enough. Dr Andrew has clearly read 'The Zinoviev Letter' by Lewis Chester, Stephen Fay, and Hugo Young (Heinemann, 1967),

though he nowhere mentions it. Indeed I suspect that most of his information on the subject comes from that book, whose authors describe the affair as the 'most unscrupulous, and potent, election "gimmick" in British political history'. (Dr Andrew calls it 'the greatest Red Scare in British political history'.)

But what Dr Andrew does not take from the Chester book is its testimony by a woman who actually witnessed the forgery as it was performed, and who, after 42 years, revealed her secret to the authors. Mme Irina Bellegarde, widow of Alexis Bellegarde, told them how the letter was drafted by two White Russian émigrés, Gumansky and Zhemshusnikov, on a sheet of headed notepaper stolen from the Soviet embassy in Berlin.

She added that the signature was forged by a Latvian called Edward Friede, who had served with the anti-communist Baltic 'Patriot Volunteers'.

No reputable historian — no one, indeed, who has the slightest acquaintance with Comintern documents of the early 1920s — now believes in the authenticity of the Zinoviev letter, with its glaring solecisms like 'SSSR' for 'USSR'. It is clearly 'an impudent forgery', as Sidney Webb said it was at the time.

As for Dr Andrew's comparison with 'authentic Comintern instructions' to the CPGB, this just doesn't hold water. No such document refers to the forgery's wholly chimerical 'Military Section of the British Communist Party, . . . the future directors of the British Red Army'.

But a genuine letter from the Comintern Executive to the CPGB, on the latter's conduct in the October 1924 election, advises that 'a bitter fight should be carried on against MacDonald's policy in China, India and Egypt' and 'against the economic exploitation and national oppression of the Irish working class by the English bourgeoisie'.

It also recommends 'the fraternisation of soldiers and workers' and that 'soldiers should not shoot upon workers on strike'.

Subversive? That depends, I suppose, on one's political standpoint. But it's certain-

ly not subversive in Dr Andrew's sense of supporting the Soviet Union 'by illegal . . . means'. But what can one expect of a historian who goes on to assert that Marx was 'misquoting Hegel' when he wrote that great historical events tend to occur twice, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce?

Unlike some Cambridge historians, Marx was painstakingly scrupulous in his verification of quotations. And the opening words of 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (1852) in fact read as follows:

'Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.' Some misquotation!

This is how communist history is written these days by the instant expert on 'intelligence'. Tidying up such a rubbish-heap is a tedious job, but a necessary one.

## Blues for Bessie

**F**IFTY years ago today, on 26 September 1937, one of the greatest singers of all time died in a car accident about 70 miles south of Memphis.

Bessie Smith's intolerance of racism and sexism; her searing contempt for whites who dared to patronise her as a black artist; her swift response with her fists to all men, black or white, who dared to harass her: these are legendary.

A 17-minute fragment of film from 1929 shows a big, handsome woman in the prime of life. Her singing in that film, and in her 160 surviving recorded songs, will be listened to with gratitude, reverence and awe as long as music has power to move the human heart.

As the epitaph on her gravestone says, Bessie Smith 'will never stop singing'.

## LISTINGS

**BROADWATER FARM** Moses Mayekiso Must Not Hang. Public Meeting. Stapleford Social Club. Thursday, 1 October, 7.30p.m. Speakers from City Group AA and Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign.

**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.

**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)

**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.

**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. Camden Town Hall (note change of venue).

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

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

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

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

**MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND JUSTICE** We Demand: Public enquiry into uprising on 6 October 1985; immediate release of innocent youths framed and convicted after the uprising; fight state racism and oppression. March from Broadwater Farm to 10 Downing Street. Saturday, 3 October. 10.00a.m. Meeting points: Seven Sisters tube 10.30a.m., Manor House 11.00a.m., Finsbury Park, 11.10a.m., Camden Town tube 11.30a.m., Trafalgar Square 12.45p.m. (all times approximate). Rally in Hyde Park 3.00p.m. National and International Speakers.

**BENGALI COMMUNITY UNDER ATTACK** March and Protest Meeting. Join us and fight the racists in our streets. Saturday, 26 September. Assemble 2p.m. Drummond Street, NW1 (tubes: Euston Square, Warren Street).

**UNDER 5s MUST SURVIVE!** March and Rally. Fight against the cuts in Camden. They affect us all! Saturday, 26 September. Assemble 11a.m. Caversham Childrens Centre, 33-43 Caversham Road, Kentish Town (tube: Kentish Town).

**FIGHTING CREATIONISM A.P.E.** Debate: Does the fossil record support evolution or creation. Saturday, 26 September. 1.30p.m. Westminster Chapel Hall, Buckingham Gate (tube: St James's Park). Speakers include Dr Chris Springer of British Museum and Mike Howgate, Department of Zoology, University College London.

**TRADE UNION SANCTIONS AGAINST APARTHEID** Second Conference. Saturday, 26 September. 11a.m.-5.15p.m. Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham.

**EL SALVADOR: EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF FMLN** Picket US Embassy. Saturday, 10 October, Mid-day-2p.m. Social in the evening 7p.m.-Midnight. Students Union, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, WC1 (tube: Russell Square).

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**THE LONG MARCH** — Tour of Britain 1987

Play by the Sarmcol Workers Co-operative. Coventry, West Indian Hall. 26 September. Birmingham The Cave. 27 September. Brighton, Labour Party Conference International Evening. 29 September. Brighton, Co-op Hall. 30 September. WALES. — 1 October, Wales\*. 2, 3 October, Bristol. 5 October, Leeds, Trades Club. 6 October, Sheffield, Memorial Hall. 7 October, Huddersfield. 8 October, Hull, Trade Union Centre. 9 October,

York. 10 October, Barnsley. 12 October, Glasgow, Jordan Hill College. 13, 14, 15 October, Edinburgh. Traverse Theatre. 16 October, p.m. Trade Union Hall; late p.m. Glasgow, Tran Theatre. 17 October, Glasgow, Maryhill Community Central Hall. 19, 20 October, Tyneside\*. 22, 23 October, Lancashire\*. 26-31 October, East Anglia including Cambridge, Norwich, Colchester\*. 1 November, London, Brixton\*.

\* exact details to be confirmed, contact 0533 712 041

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## REVIEWS

# NOT a fair cop

KENT police became very anxious indeed, their nerves frayed at the edges, when it was learned that Vince Foxhall was to write a play based on some strange goings-on in the Kent constabulary.

The play, 'Pork Pies', which opened in Stratford East on 14 September was criticised by a flustered Terry Piddock, vice-chair of the Kent branch of the Police Federation.

Speaking to the Evening Standard on 24 August, he stated: 'I was extremely annoyed when I first heard about it and thought it very irresponsible. . . I will certainly be going to see the play and if it is defamatory or prejudices the inquiry I will immediately take legal advice.'

The Kent Police tried to stop the production of the play. 'Allo, 'Allo, 'Allo what's going on 'ere then'.

To understand this we have to go back to 10a.m. on 11 August 1986, the day Scotland Yard raided a series of police stations in the Kent area. This followed allegations from police officer Ron Walker.

Walker had alleged that the high clear-up rate in the Kent area was the result of creative booking rather than the expertise of the sleuths in that neck of the woods.

Clearly even the presence in Kent of Simon Templar, Colombo, Dixon of Dock Green, Chisholm and the Singing Detective could not ex-

plain the dramatic rise of clear-ups. In one subdivision of the Kent force this had risen astronomically from 24 per cent to 70 per cent.

Eighteen months on and the policeman who had made these allegations is still on sick leave while the investigation into the Kent force is still going on.

The substance of these allegations is that there is a trend towards crime clear-up figures being arrived at less by detection and more by false confessions and that known criminals have charges against them dropped in return for their agreement that they commit any further crimes on a different patch.

## Play

The play has as its central character Ron Walker and tries to explain what motivated him to make these allegations. The part, cleverly played by Timothy Block, depicts Ron Walker as a sort of speaking conscience agonising over what to do about

Pork Pies. A play by Vince Foxhall. Theatre Royal, Stratford, London E15 until 3 October.

the corruption going on around him.

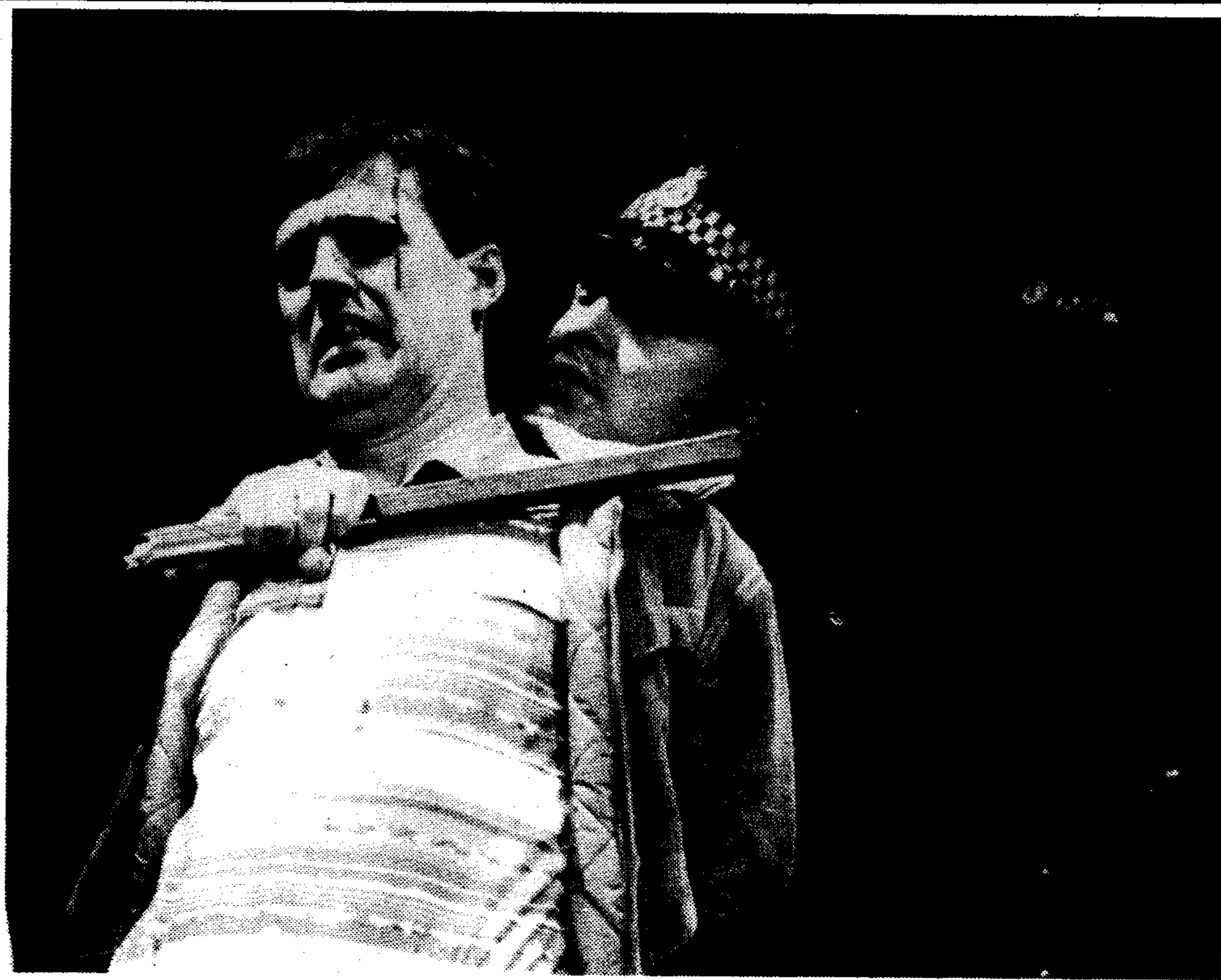
It shows in a series of fractured scenes the choice confronting him: either to shut up and stay safe in a cushy though smutty job or spill the beans.

## Mouth

This painfully slow process has a standard issue, cliché-ridden policeman's wife and his colleagues both bringing pressure on him not to depart from the straight and narrow and to keep his mouth firmly shut.

Walker is painted by the author as a very rare commodity indeed, a police constable motivated by a sense of justice. Because of this the character appears totally inauthentic and counterfeit. Not only from a different type of police force but also from a different planet.

The play depicts a Kafkaesque world, a police force that is completely desk-dominated using computers to pretend to solve crime. Foxhall's play seems to be pining for the return of a mythical golden age of British policing, epitomised throughout the performance by constant references to the despicable Dixon of Dock Green.



Alan Cowan (left) and Glyn Grimstead in 'Pork Pies'

The days when all that was needed to make an arrest was the firm feel of a shoulder at which the offending party would then say: 'Its a fair cop gov' nor, I'll take my punishment like a man,' and accompany the policeman to the station to make a full confession.

## Dixon

Nowadays, of course, people think that the legendary Dixon is either the Chelsea centre-forward or the man who owns the camera shop in the High Road.

These changes in the perception of the state are a result of real material forces, the movement from capitalist boom to slump.

The appearance of paramilitary-type policemen at Grunwick, Orgreave and Wapping have helped expose the police for what they really are: agents of class rule and domination.

If Dixon of Dock Green was to return now he would have us laughing in the aisles at the unreality of it. Because of this naivety the play lacks any analysis as to the origin of this corruption.

## Boring

Walker is seen as the most boring of theatrical characters: a good, one-dimensional man in a bad world. The play fails even to ask the question whether the

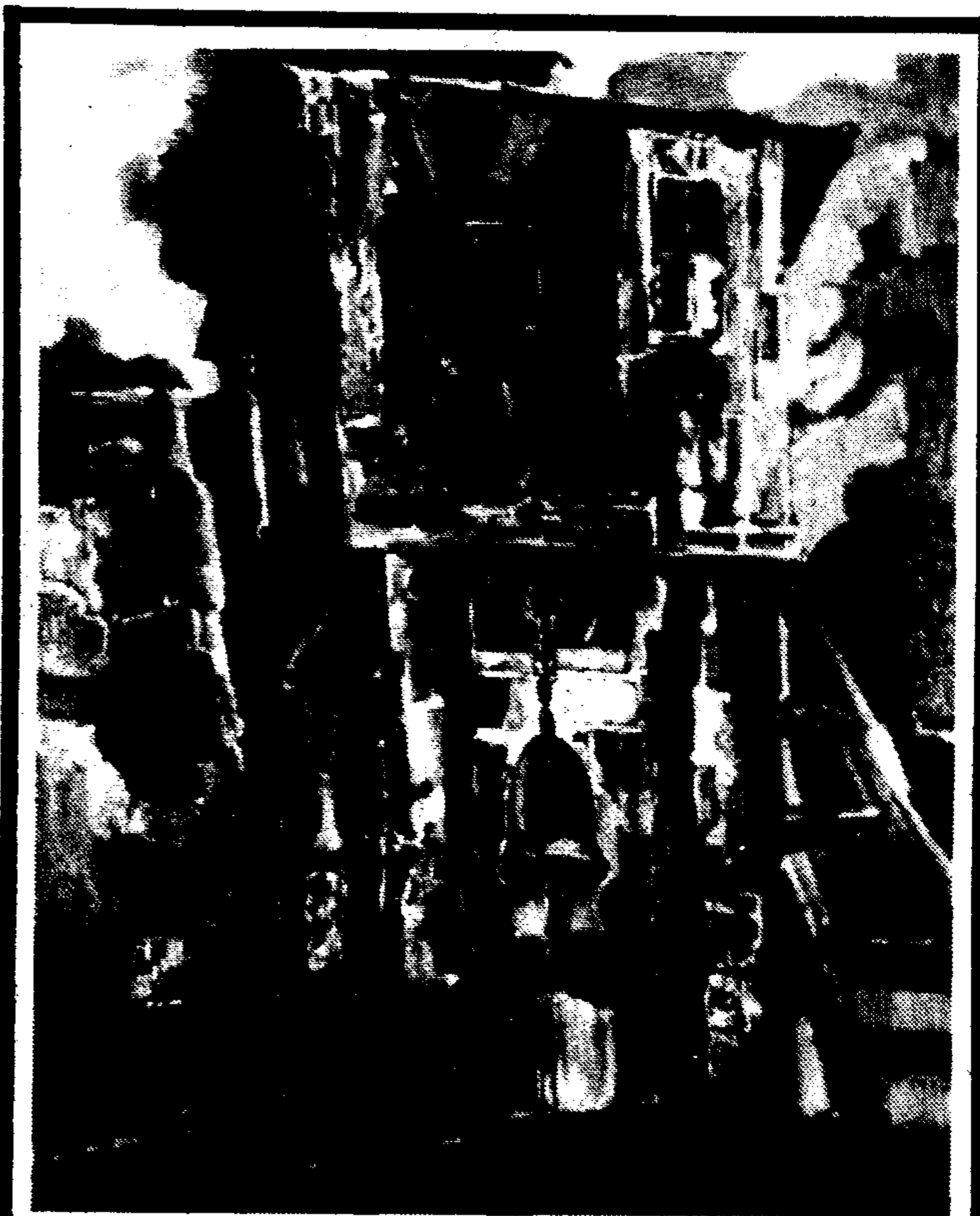
practices of the Kent police are the exception or the rule.

The fact that corruption and greed, vices that are endemic in the capitalist mode of production, are also present in the police force is not for me or, I suspect, the audience a surprising revelation.

Notwithstanding, Jeff Teare's production is of a very high standard indeed, with excellent performances from Jerome Willis as George, an officer of the old school; and Kevin Quarmby as the new model suavely smooth technocrat.

This, and an excellent set could not detract from the hackish nature of a script that promised much but in the end disappointed.

Roger McGuinn



## Small taste of recent Soviet art

Moscow: a Private View

ORIGINALLY seen at the 369 Gallery, Edinburgh, at the International Festival, this small but interesting show is currently on view at the Warwick Arts Trust, 33 Warwick Square, Pimlico in London until 4 October.

The exhibition, said to be the first-ever showing of contemporary Soviet painting in Britain, demonstrates a contrasting range of styles amongst eight Soviet painters, aged between 27 and 46.

Illustrated: Viktor Grigoryevich Kalinin's 'Bell', painted in 1986.

T.B.

# Perestroika and British Stalinists

BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE

DEEP ANXIETIES about secretary Gorbachev's *perestroika* ('restructuring') in the Soviet Union emerged at a meeting of 'Morning Star' supporters in Edinburgh last weekend.

The meeting was the last in a nationwide series addressed by the 'Star's' Moscow correspondent, Kate Clark.

About 50 attended, crammed in a small room that reflected the modest aspirations of the organisers.

A number were young people but the discussion appeared to be conducted by veteran Communist Party members and peace movement activists.

Clark presented her impressions of the USSR engagingly enough, stressing that she speaks Russian and lives among Muscovites.

But the warm personal reception she received contrasted with the fact that nearly all the questions and contributions from the floor were critical of the new policies.

The principal worries concerned the new competitive pricing policies being introduced in the Soviet Union, proposals to base some, or even all of the health services on 'consumer' payments, and the 'non-political' analysis being made by leading Soviet ministers of problems such as drug and alcohol abuse.

Clark claimed that the changes she was reporting showed the 'strength of socialism' and involved the introduction of 'workplace democracy'.

She quoted the building worker jailed in the Wapping dispute, Mike Hicks, as saying on a visit to the USSR: 'While the hand of socialist democracy is opening up, the fist of capitalist democracy is closing tighter and tighter.'

Yet she admitted to reservations herself, and remarked that some of the measures being taken sounded on the surface very like things that would be bitterly resisted by workers if proposed by the Thatcher cabinet.

The increasing trend to the self-financing enterprises means that an elected council determines the wages of individual workers on a 'labour coefficient basis', she said.

This led to incidents such as that when a group of wallpaperers refused to take a minute off the job to speak to her and other journalists because it would affect their wages.

Soviet economists interviewed by Clark had insisted that such changes were long overdue because of the catastrophically low productivity of labour. She cited instances of workers only staying on the job for two or three hours in the morning and then knocking off to spend the rest of the day drinking.

One type of solution to this problem being introduced was to make workers operate in teams in which the productivity of each affected the wages of all.

Clark quoted from a recent Gorbachev speech in which the Soviet leader distorted the Marxist definition of socialism — 'from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs' — by changing the word 'need' to 'work'.

Chairman Dr Donald Cameron, Veteran Edinburgh Communist Party member and now secretary of the local 'Morning Star' supporters' group, summarised the several criticisms of *perestroika* which came from

the floor by saying that whether the question was pricing policies or drug abuse, the fear was essentially the same: that problems were being treated as individual issues of finance or medicine — or even criminality — rather than being analysed and dealt with as part of a socialist political strategy.

Clark referred to the influence of *glasnost* ('openness') on the publication of hitherto banned books, the rocketing circulation of newspapers and the release of critical films. Both in films and in academic work, reassessments of the Stalin period is going on 'to some extent'.

she stated.

Asked why, if the Gorbachev regime wished to make a statement of socialist honesty to the world working class, it did not immediately rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow trials and relieve their descendants of the slander that they were Nazi collaborators, Clark stated that some scientists had recently been rehabilitated, that Gorbachev had only been in control for two-and-a-half years, and that, as far as the main political victims of the trials are concerned, 'we will have to wait and see what the Soviet people want to do.'

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**BOOKS**



# ROBSON'S CHOICE

**THE de-stabilising role of the US backed Contras in Central America is by now well known. Colonel North saw to that.**

But much less is generally known about South Africa's disruptive role in the so-called front line states of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia and Angola.

Channel Four's **Destructive Engagement**, the first of two documentaries on the subject, screened on 21 September, was therefore very timely.

## Concrete

Made by two South African émigrés, Toni and Ivan Strasburg, the programme gave concrete evidence of South African efforts to destroy industry, strangle trade and spread famine and death to the civilian populations of neighbouring countries — in fact, to wage full scale war on its neighbours either directly (as in the case of Angola) or through agencies such as the MNR (in the case of Mozambique).

They have wrought destruction on a massive scale. In Mozambique alone, it is estimated that South Africa has been responsible for more than 400,000 deaths, at least half of them children under the age of five.

The pretext is essentially the same as the one invoked by the US in Nicaragua or the Zionist state of Israel in Lebanon or Tunisia: to 'attack ANC and its shelters when and wherever the situation demands'.

The net result is also the same: an endless succession of atrocities inflicted on defenceless civilians.

Half the rural population has been displaced, forced to flee, ending up in make-shift refugee camps where they face probable starvation thanks to enemy attacks on vitally needed food convoys.

'People don't run away from liberation movements', a Mozambican fighter pointed out. 'People don't run away from the ANC in South Africa. People don't run away from Frelimo in Mozambique. They don't run away from the MPLA in Angola.

'They run away from the MNR because they are not a liberation movement. They don't want to be linked to a band of murderers who are, above all, murdering for the military in South Africa.'

Many told of their forced exodus. Countless others, the lucky ones, who had stepped on a land mine and lost only a leg, limped past the camera displaying their newly-acquired artificial limbs. A hideously injured, elderly, school teacher showed what had been done to him with cutlasses.

'When they come to a school, they burn it, they kill the teacher and the pupils. So you see, the bandits have no political ideas.'

Not only the black population has paid in blood for South Africa's policy of destabilisation. Since independence in 1980, more than 40 white farmers have been killed in the western region of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. Who carried out these killings?

## Operate

'They are certainly established locally,' said E.W. Kirby, chairman of the Commercial Farmers Union. 'They are able to operate locally, but who controls them we do not know and we have no way of finding out.'

I think Mr Kirby was being cautious. The Zimbabwe authorities investigated and came up with hard evidence. Bullets found at the scene of some of these crimes were identified by their markings (22-20) and traced back to South Africa. Similar shells had been found after raids on the Beira corridor.

Unlike in Zimbabwe, there is nothing covert about South African operations in war-torn Angola as this film made clear. 'UNITA does not take direct action', a commander from southern Angola explained. 'The South Africans come first, and after they have defeated our units, they leave UNITA in their place. When UNITA encounters our forces it withdraws.'

It is abundantly clear that

# Destabilisation in southern Africa



South African aggression in Angola: rescue workers carry away a victim of a rail attack

given the absence of any mass support, neither UNITA nor the MNR (which is merely an arm of the South African Defence Force) could have survived until today without massive financial and logistical backing from imperialism — any more than the Contras could have survived without direct and indirect US aid. This stark reality makes nonsense of the summing up remarks proffered by Mozambique's Carlos Cardoso: 'The governments of the world must get involved.' They already are!

Nowhere is imperialism's scant regard for the sovereignty of nation states more glaring than in the case of land-locked Zambia and Zimbabwe. Their shortest route to a deep water

port is by rail through Angola or Mozambique.

As these rail lines are constantly under attack by UNITA and the MNR respectively, they have been obliged to export their produce and raw materials via the South African ports of Durban and Port Elizabeth, at a staggering additional cost of US\$300 million per annum.

## Spine

Welcome though all this information was, I must add that **Destructive Engagement** was far from being the documentary it might have been. It had a structure without a spine and the commentary was, to be charitable, liberal in its lack of defini-

tion.

Worst of all, however, it suffered from what in theatre parlance is known as 'no third act'. Having made the analysis it could not achieve a synthesis.

Hence the filmmakers' torturous amalgam of verbal abstractions in the final three minutes of the programme, strung together with music which sounded to me more like a Coca Cola commercial than a call for revolutionary action.

Oliver Tambo demanding pressure from the 'international community' and Kenneth Kaunda assuring us that 'political morality is with us' hardly seems an appropriate answer to South Africa's genocidal activities in southern Africa.

To dedicate a film to the

future of the 'people of the region' may look good on the screen, but to seriously contribute to that future it needs to be a better film.

## Astute

Chris Hani, an ANC spokesman, made an astute comment towards the end when he said: 'South Africa faces a crisis it has never faced before, it faces a serious economic crisis. The army is overstretched. The army is involved in Namibia, in Angola. It's involved with the MNR. But now, for the first time, the army is actually involved within South Africa. That, precisely, is what is new.'



ON Saturday, at 2p.m. (ITV), Fritz Lang's classic **You Only Live Once**. At 7.30p.m. (C4), a documentary about Marcus Garvey called **Colonial Madness**. At 9.05p.m. (BBC1), **Silkwood**. At 9.40p.m. (BBC2), Robert Bresson's **Lancelot of the Lake**, the first of two films by the French director. The second one, **A Man Escaped**, is at 11.20p.m. (BBC2). At 1a.m. (C4), if you are still awake, Fritz Lang's **Dr Mabuse the Gambler - Part**

**BUSTER KEATON** in the 1923 silent movie 'our Hospitality'. Part of the **Thames Silents** series, it is being shown (with a new score by Carl Davis) on Channel 4 on Wednesday 30 September at 10p.m. It follows a documentary about Keaton on ITV at 9p.m.

1. On Sunday, at 2.30p.m. (Radio 4), Globe Theatre presents Tennessee Williams' **Glass Menagerie**. At 8.35p.m. (BBC2), **The Natural World** explores the scenery and natural history of New Zealand. For a quick, cheap laugh try **The New Statesman** at 10.20p.m. (ITV).

On Monday, at 9.30p.m. (BBC1), **Panorama** looks at the future of the Labour Party. At 11p.m. (C4), the second documentary on **Frontline Southern Africa**. This one, **Corridors of Freedom**, looks at the creation of SADC as a means of countering South African economic aggression.

On Tuesday, at 8.30p.m. (BBC2), **Brass Tacks** looks at **The Price of Power** traces the connection between the Electricity Board and 40,000 deaths through cold-related illnesses. At 9p.m. (ITV), **The Politics of Food**.

On Wednesday, at 9p.m. (ITV), **Kevin Brown-**

**low and David Gill's documentary (first of two) Buster Keaton — a Hard Act to Follow**. At 10p.m. (C4), **Buster himself in Our Hospitality**.

On Thursday, at 9.50p.m. (BBC2), **40 Years at the ICA**. At 12.45p.m. (C4), **Il Prato**, a film by the Italian brothers, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani.

On Friday, at 8.15p.m. (C4), **A Tribute to Norman McLaren**, the unique animator who died recently. At 10.45p.m. (BBC1), the arts programme **Omnibus** plunders its own archives after 20 years on the air. At 11.20p.m. (BBC2), **Mervyn Le Roy's hard hitting I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang**.

TWO films worth seeing at the National Film Theatre in London's South Bank: **Kafr Quassem**, (27 September 6.15p.m. and **Salvador**, (2 October 8.40p.m.).

TOM SCOTT ROBSON



Saturday, 10 October.

National March for the release of Moses Mayekiso. Assembling 12 noon Clerkenwell Green, LONDON. March to South Africa House. Bring banners! Organised by March for Mayekiso Committee.

Saturday, 24 October.

AAM National Demonstration for Sanctions. London. Assemble 12 noon EMBANKMENT. March to Hyde Park for 3p.m. rally. Chief speaker: Sam Nujoma, president of SWAPO. Details: 01-387 7966.

# MOSES MAYEKISO

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

**THE campaign for the release of Moses Mayekiso is being sabotaged by the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and other left groups, with the connivance of the TUC General Council.**

Moses Mayekiso is the general secretary of the 130,000-strong National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), now the second biggest in the federation of COSATU and second only to the South African National Union of Mineworkers.

At the time of his detention he was general secretary of MAWU (Metal and Allied Workers Union) one of the most openly socialist of South Africa's unions (which has now amalgamated with others to form NUMSA).

Mayekiso was a key figure in the setting up of COSATU which numbers 750,000 members and grows larger and more powerful day by day.

On 28 June 1986 he, along with three others, was detained by the South African security forces for the sixth time, and has been charged with high treason, which carries the maximum sentence of death.

Amongst the charges are: 'The accused (Moses Mayekiso) held or expressed *inter alia* the following views:

- 'that the working class (also referred to as the proletariat), as the vanguard for liberation, should be in the centre of and in control of the struggle,
- 'that the working class, including the unemployed, the youth and other members of the community, should be mobilised, organised and united against the capitalist system and the state,
- 'that the working class or its unions and the so-called progressive organisations should seize control of the means of production and of the residential areas,
- 'that the so-called capitalists must be forced into a situation where they are unable to exercise control.'

From the charges it is apparent that Moses Mayekiso is not a trade unionist of the Norman Willis kind. Consequently it is no surprise that the South African state has reacted to him with the greatest savagery.

He was badly beaten the first time he was detained, and has this sixth time been kept in solitary confinement in a win-



dowless room which is brightly lit 24 hours a day.

His only companion during these months has been a television camera on the wall, recording his every movement. He has also suffered from ulcers and eye problems.

It is no surprise that the apartheid regime would like to destroy Mayekiso and all that he stands for. What is surprising is that they should be actively supported in Britain by leading trade unionists and by a number of left political parties.

The first move in the conspiracy came from the Socialist Workers Party. Despite their participation in a campaign for a petition which won the signatures of a large number of leading trades unionists and others they have refused to join or support a more active and vigorous campaign initiated by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

The City Group convened the 'March for Mayekiso Committee' which is conducting a campaign including meetings throughout the country and a major march and demonstration through London on 10 October, shortly before the opening proper of the trial.

A letter from the SWP by Sheila McGregor says:

'In response to your letter, notifying us of the formation of the March for Mayekiso Committee and the demonstration called on October 10th, we believe that it is important to build the maximum support for the national Anti-Apartheid demonstration on October 24th.

The cause of Moses Mayekiso and his fellow accused, as well as that of other detainees will be best served by taking part in that demonstration.

To attempt to build a demonstration on October 10th, only two weeks before the main demonstration can only weaken the opposition to the apartheid regime. Hence we are not prepared either to sponsor the demonstration on October 10th, nor send delegates along to the March for Mayekiso Committee.

We will of course continue to support the campaign by the Friends of Moses Mayekiso for his unconditional release and that of his four comrades.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the trade union wing of the African National Congress (ANC), closely connected with the South African Communist Party (SACP), has issued a statement on the campaign the 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso'.

The SACTU trade union federation does not have any constituent unions in South Africa, (although there are unions which are still closely connected with the ANC in COSATU).

This resurrected corpse of a trade union is wheeled out by the Anti-Apartheid Movement every time a hatchet job needs to be done on an independent campaign and the authority of the South African working class invoked.

The SACTU statement has been supported and circulated to all branches through the general secretary of at least one union, the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO).

The SACTU statement reads:

'Let us firstly state that there should be no affiliation to the Friends of Moses Mayekiso Campaign ... the Congress Movement does not endorse

## a conspiracy unmasked

any such sectarian groupings. In addition this group launched the Campaign without any prior or subsequent consultation with SACTU, ANC or AAM.

SACTU discourages the adoption of individual trades unionists. We call for the campaigning for the release of all detained South African trade unionists by British trade unions operating in the same industrial sector.

We believe that the South African unions themselves are in the best position to decide how financial, material and personal solidarity should be handled.

Therefore the majority of COSATU affiliates have set up Legal and Relief funds in their unions, which gives support to all detained members of the union, and not just one detainee.

The union also itself evenly distributes this relief amongst the families of detainees. We believe that this is very important in avoiding animosity, unpleasantness and jealousy creeping in because large sums of monies are being channelled to one detainee and his/her family.

We believe that it is the union which should be left to make the decision as to how these relief funds are best used and distributed.

This of course does not exclude trade unions or organisations using the names of trade unionists detained in South Africa to generate support and solidarity internationally.

We know it is easier to raise support through personal identification, so we are not saying that individual names and particulars should not be used at all. We do stress that unions should campaign in their industrial sector.

We therefore request you to consult your headquarters — write to the International Department of NALGO and ask them about campaigns. Your Head Office will advise you.

We say unions should work through their Head Offices to forge solidarity with unions inside South Africa.

The 'Observer' of 13 September got hold of the story and reported that the AAM was contacting leading trades unionists in order to oppose a campaign on Moses Mayekiso.

The following week, after the AAM had panicked about this report, the 'Observer' printed a retraction saying that the AAM was campaigning around Mayekiso, and that the chairman Robert Hughes MP raised his case with the Foreign Office Minister of State, Mrs Lynda Chalker, on 9 September.

Not exactly a mass campaign to galvanise thousands around the issue of Moses Mayekiso, and not exactly what Arthur Scargill, Jimmy Knapp, Harry Conroy, and Alan Tuffin were asking for in the letter written to the 'Guardian' several months ago which called for a mass campaign throughout the labour movement.

The TUC, which has the central responsibility for waging such a mass campaign is conspicuous by its absence. Norman Willis, who met Mayekiso when he went on his 'fact-finding tour' to South Africa last year has announced that the TUC will be sending an 'observer' to the trial.

Presumably they will also be able to observe him and the four others on trial being sentenced to death.

The AAM and SACTU attended a meeting called by Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Council on Moses Mayekiso and screwed up leaflets advertising the 10 October march and tried to tear down a banner which showed Nelson Mandela and Moses Mayekiso together — because (they said) Nelson Mandela represents the South African people and Moses Mayekiso does not.

The AAM is becoming a little more cautious about open but-

al opposition because it goes over so badly with ordinary workers.

**WHY have these organisations united so decisively around this issue?**

THE Stalinists, their fellow travellers and defenders are terrified that the working class is beginning to see the identity of apartheid and capitalism and is calling for socialism as the only solution — and not any form of black capitalism.

The metal workers' union and its leader Moses Mayekiso goes way beyond the political limits set by the SACP, the ANC and SACTU: NUMSA and Moses Mayekiso are of enormous current strategic significance internationally.

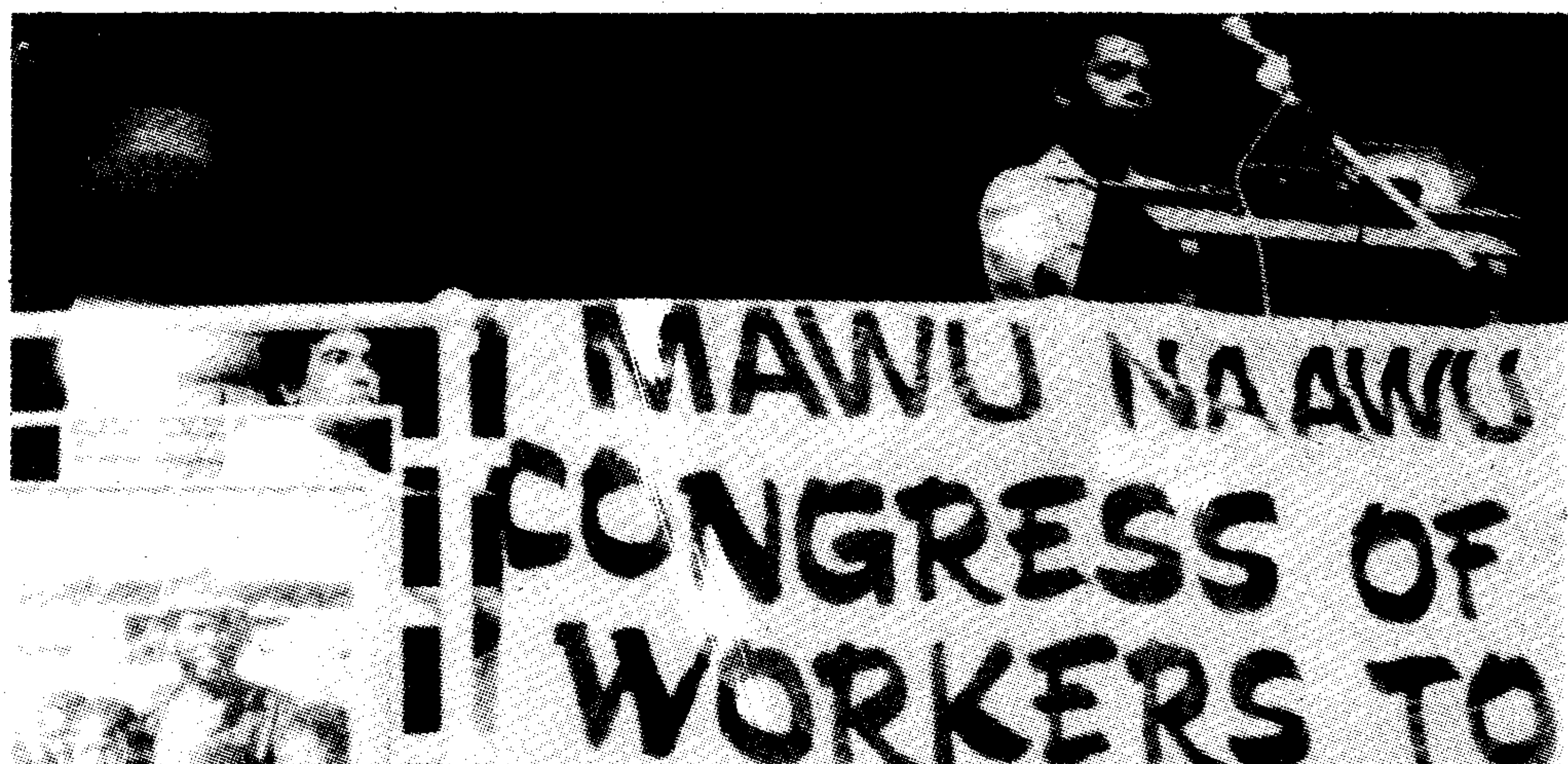
The reactionary alliance of classes which the ANC-SACP-SACTU is attempting to set up with the industrialists of South Africa, notably the Oppenheimer empire, is directed towards facilitating a pro-imperialist tendency within the COSATU leadership which is opposed to the socialism of NUMSA.

The clearest signal has been given to the international working class to fight to the utmost to defend Mayekiso and NUMSA. In doing this we strike a blow against Stalinism the world over.

The BTR/ Sarmcol workers, members of NUMSA have made it clear that they are in favour of any and every initiative to free Moses Mayekiso. Not so these defenders of Stalinism here.

Workers Press says:

- Free Moses Mayekiso!
- Hands off COSATU!
- An end to British collaboration with apartheid/ capitalism!
- Workers sanctions now!
- Rally support for the 10 October march, the meeting at Broadwater Farm on 1 October, and the meeting in Lambeth Town Hall on 8 October.



NUMSA president Daniel Dube addresses the conference where three unions merged to launch the powerful metalworkers' union. To the left is a poster of Moses Mayekiso, NUMSA's imprisoned general secretary