

Workers Press

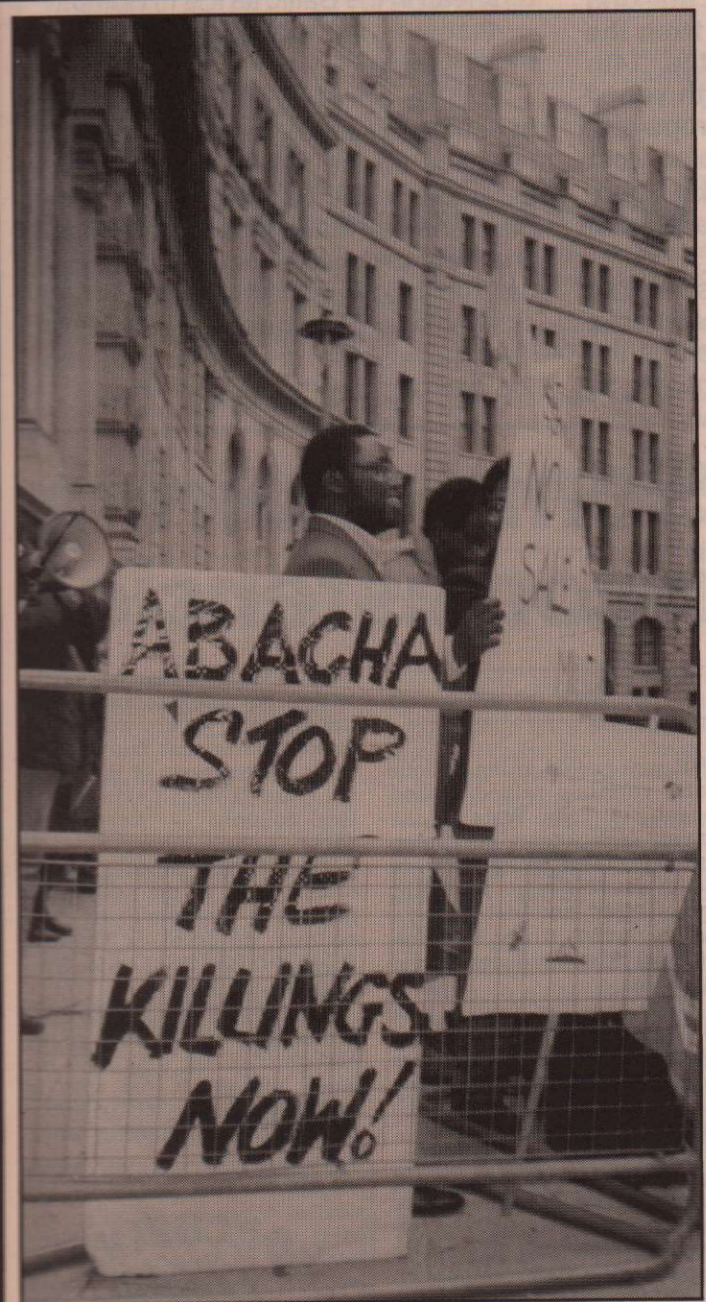
WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER 1994

NO. 426

PRICE 30p

BUILD UNITY AGAINST 'JUSTICE' BILL



Nigerians defiant

NIGERIAN workers and students are defiantly continuing their fight for democratic rights against General Sani Abacha's military dictatorship.

The Abacha regime is holding Chief Moshood Abiola, winner of last year's presidential elections, in prison where his health has deteriorated. It has banned publications, arrested trade unionists and political leaders, and taken away the passport of Nobel prize winning novelist Wole Soyinka, a leading critic.

After a prolonged strike for democracy, Nigeria's oil workers were forced back to work last month. But the fight goes on.

Last weekend, on Nigeria's independence day, police broke up a rally in Lagos which defied the ban on political opposition by launching a new National Conscience party. They arrested lawyer Gani Fawehinmi, the organiser.

In London, Nigerians demonstrating outside their country's High Commission on 30 September (see picture) were joined by comrades from Ghana and Uganda.

The Africa Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC), which organised the London demonstration, said African workers must unite against dictatorship and imperialist exploitation. Condemning Western arms sales to the military regime, ALISC says it will expose the merchants of death profiting from suffering and genocide in Africa.

CHEAP injustice is what the Criminal Justice Bill is about. And it's an attack on everyone, young and old, who wants to stand up for rights — rights that the state and the ruling class want to take away.

This weekend thousands of people will be marching against the bill. This bill would make it easier and cheaper for the police to bust up groups of people wanting to 'do something', have their 'say' or just have a plain good time; it would make it easier and cheaper for the police to cover up the embarrassment of not knowing 'whodunnit' by going through the files and seeing where the pin lands.

Some of the opposition to the bill has come from within the 'Bill' itself — do they see redundancies on the horizon?

The movement against the bill has already started to unite some of those with a wide-range of lifestyles from young people who want to go to rave parties, new age travellers and squatters, hunt saboteurs, ramblers and protesters in the ecological movement against road developments and political and trade union demonstrators. This must be strengthened and brought into the overall task of rebuilding the working-class movement.

By 'working-class' movement we don't mean those charlatans in parliament — the Labour Party MPs. In fact, these same MPs accept the Criminal Justice Bill apart from a couple of bits they tried to amend in what's called the 'committee stage' in that place MPs so comfortably refer to as 'the House'.

And anyone searching the news reports for mention of any discussion of the bill at the Labour Party conference during the week would have had a hard job.

No, by 'working-class movement' we mean the organisation of people under the leadership of the working class to fight in the interests of humanity as a whole. This bill is an attack on the working-class's ability to make that fight.

Pipeline

Despite years of anti-union laws, the government is still not happy that it has shackled working people enough. This bill is part of that attack on the unions, along with more specific legislation still in the pipeline. And, again, the Labour Party leaders are part of that attack and won't promise to repeal the repressive legislation against unions.

Historically the effects of public-order legislation has

BY THE EDITOR

usually fallen on the Labour and trade union movement, despite the fact that its rotten leadership every time tried unsuccessfully to bend over backwards to avoid the blow.

What does the new legislation mean? Two central issues of the bill are the criminalisation of various 'trespass' activities and the removal of the right to silence.

The bill defines two new 'trespass' offences: 'aggravated trespass' and 'trespassory assemblies'. 'Aggravated trespass' is one where the intention is of disrupting or obstructing any lawful activity as defined by the police. It will also be an offence to disobey the orders of any police officer who has directed a person to leave a piece of land.

But, most demonstrations have the purpose of stopping a 'legal' activity that those organising the protest disagree with. Sometimes this involves trying to disrupt or obstruct the activity itself. Aimed at the hunt saboteurs and road development protesters, this section also has implications for industrial picketing.

In 'trespassory assemblies' police can get an order banning assemblies on land without the owner's permission which may result either in 'serious disruption to the life of the community' or 'significant damage to a site of historical, architectural, archeological or scientific importance'. Police will also be able to stop people they 'reasonably' believe to be going to such an assembly.

Before these proposals the

most the 'owner' of a piece of land could do was ask you to leave and get court orders to that effect.

Imprisonment only followed 'contempt' proceedings for disobeying such orders. Now a whole range of activities to do with the relation between people and land are to be criminalised and can involve imprisonment directly.

The bill abolishes the right to silence both in the police station and in the courts.

Given the recent history of stitch-ups — the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Tottenham Three, Judith Ward, and so on — abolition of the right to silence in the police station is the last thing that should be proposed.

Prejudices

Rather than actually trying to work out who is guilty of a crime the police start with their own prejudices: 'All supporters of an Irish republic are IRA bombers'; 'All big black men are homicidal maniacs'; etc.

In the extreme case, is a prosecution going to be able to argue that the defendant is guilty given no other evidence than — silence?

Bizarre also is the abolition of the right to silence in court.

Until 1898 a defendant didn't even have the right to go into the witness box! After that a series of 'safeguards' were set up for the exceptional cases that would demand this right.

But under the new bill appearance in the witness box is to effectively become a requirement. The hope is that defendants will save time and money by incriminating themselves.

SOUTH AFRICA £5,000 FUND

IN THE huge turmoil which has followed the South African elections, thousands of workers are demanding that the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party fulfil their election promises.

Their simple and just demands are being met with accusations from the leadership of their union federation COSATU that they are 'splitting the movement' and 'undermining the new government of national unity'.

We stood in the elections for an end to the triple alliance between COSATU, ANC and

SACP, against the Mandela/De Klerk government of national unity and for an independent workers' party. Since then our members have put their heart into the workers' struggle as part of the enormous wave of strikes and demonstrations there. Some have lost jobs, some are facing death threats. But they have launched their own paper — 'Workers International News' — as well as selling Workers Press.

Our fund has been launched to raise the necessary financial resources for them to travel the large distances to meet

together, for a delegation to come to Britain and for the publication of a special pamphlet in preparation for the COSATU socialist conference in November. This £5,000 fund is worthy of your sacrifice.

Please send donations quickly so that a start can be made on carrying out this vital work. Ensure your copy of 'Workers International News' — £10 for ten issues, £5.50 for five. Send money to the Workers International, South Africa Appeal, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Cheques, etc. payable to 'South Africa Appeal'.

Demonstrate against Criminal Justice Bill

Assemble Embankment tube, London
Sunday 9 October, 12noon

On other pages: Bosnia, p.4&5; Eritrea, p.7.

Profit before life

EUROPE's seafarers' unions should launch an immediate investigation into all the circumstances surrounding the sinking of the roll-on, roll-off ferry, the 'Estonia', with the loss of up to 900 lives.

This is yet another case where capitalism's profits count for everything and the lives of workers and passengers for nothing. The Baltic ferry trade carries millions of passengers and vast amounts of freight every year in what is a highly profitable business.

After a couple of years of intense use on the most profitable routes between Stockholm in Sweden and Turku and Helsinki in Finland, the ships are pensioned off to less-popular routes such as the Estonian ones or to the English channel routes. In the case of ships like the 'Estonia', the Swedish or Finnish crews employed on the biggest Baltic routes are removed and cheaper, and often less-experienced, Estonian crews are taken on.

Passengers are never directly informed about safety measures. Safety drills for passengers never occur.

Last week the Stockholm evening paper 'Aftonbladet' reported the reactions of lorry drivers who had travelled on the ferries hundreds of times. They hate the crossings. On the bigger ferries, they reported, the tight schedules mean their lorries are practically never lashed to the car deck. In rough weather the vehicles run into each other and shift freely about — although on crowded runs there is often little space between the lorries — a foot or so.

The Swedish government now admits that six recent 'near accidents' in its waters involving roll-on, roll-off ferries had come to light since the

Workers Press

sinking of the 'Estonia'. Bjorn-Erik Stenmark, Sweden's director of maritime safety, said the worst of these incidents involved a large ferry of similar size to the 'Estonia' sailing between Sweden and Finland. The ship had been saved only by its skilful manoeuvring by the captain, after water had flooded into the cargo deck through the bow.

'The huge catastrophe with the sinking of the "Estonia" perhaps could have been avoided if the shipowners had followed the law and reported earlier close calls with ferries of the "Estonia"-type construction,' Stenmark admitted.

But he refused to ban the use of such ships. He is awaiting 'further inquiries' before deciding whether to place restrictions on their operations.

As the testimony of eyewitnesses suggests, the sinking of the Estonia bore all the hallmarks of the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' disaster in 1987. Yet despite the 'concern' of governments and vessel owners, nothing has been done to deal with what is clearly a lethal type of ship.

The reason nothing is done is the cost that would have eaten into the profits of the owners. The British government calculated that it would cost up to £85 million to improve standards on the 57 vessels in the British ferry fleet, with a further £22 million in extra annual running costs. With intense competition from the soon-to-be-opened Channel tunnel, shipowners are reluctant to spend such money.

The cynical comment of the 'Financial Times' (30 September) says it all: 'Higher costs would inevitably lead to higher fares — unwelcome to ferry operators when, on the short cross-

Channel routes, they face competition from the Channel tunnel. But the difficulty of pushing through fare rises would be nothing like as damaging to the ferry companies as another disaster.'

So the ferry companies should make necessary improvements — but only to safeguard their own interests and long-term profits.

Speaking to Workers Press, a representative of the shipping officers' union, NUMAST, said that the disaster came as no surprise, given the fundamental crisis in world shipping.

He criticised the over-concentration on the technical aspects of the tragedy and pointed out that the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' disaster occurred essentially because a crew member fell asleep after long hours at work. Six years later there is still no effective control of working conditions on British ferries.

It is this and all related matters that seafarers must investigate.

Return to the Middle Ages

THE spectre of the plague stalking India is like a horror story from the Middle Ages. It was in the 14th century that the Black Death wiped out 25 million people in Europe and half the population of Britain. Most of the deaths were caused by bubonic plague passed on by the fleas of infected rats.

A disease that most of us thought was confined to the medical books threatens to sweep India. Here is the legacy of more than two centuries of

colonial plunder of the sub-continent by colonialism and imperialism, above all by British imperialism.

It is because of the lack of the most basic sanitation and the absence of drugs that the lives of thousands of people in India are threatened, the country that former Labour leader Michael Foot and others liked to call 'the world's largest democracy'.

But this is only part of the spread of equally deadly diseases throughout the world. They include AIDS, new strains of cholera and hepatitis — caused by contaminated food and drink — and Kawasaki disease, which has affected the hearts of more than 100,000 children in Japan. Malaria, transmitted by mosquito bites, is spreading rapidly; it is estimated that it killed 1 million people last year.

Cholera is a growing danger in southern Russia. And typhoid, likely where sanitation and water supplies are poor, has flared up in eastern Europe. Tuberculosis last year killed 2.7 million people, the vast majority in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The ruling class is trying to blame the crisis on the emergence of new, virulent strains of old diseases which are immune to traditional methods of treatment. This is a cynical lie. It is the absence of adequate medical research by capitalism — for which life is as cheap in the Baltic as it is in Bombay — that is at the root of the spread of these diseases.

In the spread of bubonic and pneumonic plague we see capitalism's real face on the eve of the 21st century. This is the capitalism that Tony Blair and the Labour leaders defend and help prop up. It is a system not only unable to raise the material and cultural level of humanity. It is actually plunging millions of people back into the darkness of the Middle Ages.

Letters

Unite against temporary posts

I RECENTLY lost my job in a London local authority because I refused to sign away my statutory rights.

I had been working on fixed-term contracts for just under two years. As a temporary worker I had no right to claim unfair dismissal or redundancy payments. Had my continuous service (all my contracts added together) added up to two years or more I would have gained these rights, so I was asked to sign them away.

Before the contract that I refused to sign, I had had nine contracts in 22 months. I began working to eight of these before they were available to me. In two cases the contract conditions changed before I received a copy to sign. The last contract only had the conditions I objected to added the day after the previous contract had expired.

When it finally arrived I was only given four days to sign. That was the only time a deadline was included. Unable to get legal advice in time I made a tactical error in refusing to sign. When I returned to management, having consulted the union, I was told the offer no longer stood, probably because I had consulted the union, and friends had raised a petition of 40 signatures in my defence.

Even after I left, the witch-hunt did not abate. When the department director heard I was applying for a job in another department he instructed

my boss to pass my references to him before despatch. Luckily my boss found a way round this.

I was not alone in this treatment by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. During my four years in the planning department two workers suffered nervous breakdowns. Attempts were made to sack them when they took long-term sick-leave. Despite both workers having the proper documentation, one attempt succeeded. In another case a woman employed on one-month contracts injured her back. Because she was temporary she was easily dismissed.

My UNISON branch's feeling was illustrated when I put a resolution calling for a strike ballot if temporary staff in permanent posts were not given permanent contracts. This was passed unanimously!

This situation is becoming usual. From 'UNITE!', the paper of the Community and Union Action Campaign, I know that Camden's new employees are offered far inferior contracts, in Manchester workers are employed on temporary contracts, in Tower Hamlets permanent jobs are replaced by agency staff.

Local authority workers are losing all job security and other benefits such as maternity leave and sick leave, as temporary workers are replacing permanent staff and cannot get these benefits.

A campaign must be waged to end temporary contracts without dividing workers on these contracts from permanent employees.

Ed Barbor
UNITE!

Barrier is one of leadership

'BROTHERSTONE must answer my questions,' commands Jim Young (Letters, 1 October), causing the aforesaid delinquent to rummage through his debt-ridden memory bank in an effort to remember what the questions were; and to reflect that, if he has been avoiding them, it is probably because he doesn't know the answers.

'The Scottish question', like the 'Scottish play', always seems more eloquent in rehearsals than in actual performance. But I think we have to ask: Why are we discussing it in a communist newspaper?

The deeper the crisis of British and international capitalism becomes, the more impossible is the relationship between the working class and the parties claiming to represent it. The main 'Communist' (Stalinist) parties have collapsed — though their counter-revolutionary politics have not gone away. And the British Labour Party . . .

In its struggle for socialism, beginning at least with Chartism in the mid-19th century, the working class in Britain has fought many noble and instructive battles. Recently these have included the 1984-85 miners' strike and the 1994 signalers' action.

The barrier has not been that they fought in a class, rather than a 'national' way, but that they have been unable to get past a leadership which will not,

or cannot, cut its umbilical link with capitalism.

Will particular Scottish perspectives help in driving that leadership back into the bourgeois womb where it belongs, allowing the working class itself to confront the enemy confident of its ability to walk tall and take power?

Some observations. Several sincere enough Caledonian socialists in recent years have abandoned their struggle in the Labour Party, but avoided fully confronting the lessons of their experiences of reformism/ 'Labourism', by establishing a more left-wing Scottish party. They tend to end up in the Scottish National Party. I hastily add that this is not at all Jim Young's trajectory.

But, anything that gives the SNP credibility in the Scottish working class is not to be encouraged.

But, Young is surely right that the study of different political, ideological and cultural traditions must be an important aspect of any new party that aspires to represent and lead the working class.

May Jim Young and others on the poetry of Rabbie Burns and much more long grace the pages of Workers Press.

And, what about the English? This discussion will disappear up its own orifice if it is not seen in the context of how we imagine the revolution will actually happen in the British Isles. Some of you Londoners who visit us for our scenery, wonderful summer weather, superior culture and whisky must have a few thoughts. Surely you must!

Terry Brotherstone
Aberdeen

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Some Blairing inconsistencies

BY MIKE COOKE

THE well-heeled in the Labour Party certainly rallied around to get old Tony Blair in the driving seat. Among the contributors to the £88,000 raised were 'South Bank Show' presenter and alleged novelist Melvyn Bragg, thriller writer Ken Follett and film producer David Puttnam.

Blair benefited from a load of dough made by London Weekend Television managers — including Bragg — when they made more than a million each on a share option last year.

Other LWT donors were former director of corporate affairs Barry Cox and former chief executive Greg Dyke. Indeed Cox took time off work to help organise Blair's campaign.

And these rich backers came up trumps because Blair only spent £79,000, leaving £9,000 in his piggy bank. Meanwhile, other contenders in the election only managed to spend measly amounts: John Prescott shelled out £13,000 on publicity and Margaret Beckett went on a £17,000 binge.

Following Blair's example, Labour local government spokesperson Jack Straw MP recently appealed for funds to help him win a seat on the party's national executive committee.

Now if you want to help Tony Blair you can send your money to the Labour Party HQ, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT (071-701 1234).

But I hope the majority of Workers Press's readers would prefer to help us — seeing we

don't have any media personalities in our pockets and, more importantly, we are working to build a party that truly represents the interests of the working class ('I wasn't expecting a fund column!' — 'Nobody expects . . .').

So get those cheques, postal orders, etc., in the post made payable to 'Workers Press'. The address, as usual, is Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB (071-582 8882).

Of course, if any of those LWT managers have any spare change they can send it to the same address. If you want to make a regular contribution please write for a standing order.



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Mother fights on for truth of son's death

SHEILA HENRY, who has been fighting for the release of a vital report into her son's death, went to the Labour Party conference last week to get support for her cause.

Anthony Lloyd Roswell, Sheila's son, died eight years ago, at the age of 18. There was an inquest at which the coroner found the cause of death to be Orphenadrine poisoning and returned an open verdict. However, the inference was made that the overdose was self-inflicted.

Sheila, an auxiliary nurse for more than 21 years, did not accept the verdict. She explains that her son refused to take these tablets, and the empty container that was found in her dustbin had been thrown away after the tablets it contained had been removed. These tablets were in fact handed over to the coroner's court.

Released

Sheila thinks that her son's death could be connected to modedate injections that he received. She also maintains that the full report of the post-mortem examination was never released to her.

Sheila fought for the exhumation of her son's body for further tests and three years after his death a new examination was made. However, despite Sheila being told by medical experts that the key to the case would be Anthony's heart, this along with other vital organs were missing. There has been no clue given by the authorities as to the location of

these organs. The toxicological analysis was carried out at the Charing Cross and Westminster hospital medical school.

Solicitors asked the authorities at the school to search for and provide them with slides relating to the post mortem. In November 1993, they decided not to release the toxicology report requested by Sheila Henry's solicitors.

On 25 May this year, Sheila's solicitors received a letter from the medical school's head of toxicology: 'I have been unable to locate either slides or organs relating to this case. I have found four histology blocks. Could you please let me know if you wish me to send these to you.'

Sheila demands to be treated with respect. Why can the toxicology unit not release the report? Where are the vital organs? Can someone clarify what a 'histology block' is?

Sheila has already demonstrated for her rights — on the roof of Hornsey coroner's court and by painting and sticking posters on its front door, and when she went to her general practitioner's surgery to ask for his help to get the report released.

Please send letters demanding the release of the report to: The Head of the Toxicology Unit, Charing Cross and Westminster Hospital Medical School, St Dunstons Road, London W6 8RP.

Sheila Henry can be contacted through Unite!, Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, 12-14 Thornton Street, London SW9.

Fraud behind IRA ceasefire

JOHN STEELE comments on the criminal deception being perpetrated by Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein

IS IT correct for socialists to characterise the current IRA ceasefire as a betrayal? Do those who say it is a sell-out believe that the Irish Republican Army should continue with its campaign of planting bombs in shopping centres and shooting of civilians?

These questions need clarification, particularly as some of those organisations claiming to be Marxist have welcomed the IRA decision as 'a step forward'.

Both the Socialist Workers Party and Militant Labour — in a grotesque attempt to portray the revolt of the nationalist youth as separate from the class struggle — claim that the ceasefire will allow 'normal class politics'. Similarly 'Socialist

Organiser' says it 'opens doors that have long been closed', because 'the war is — maybe — over'!

But the actions of the IRA and the support that Sinn Fein has won cannot be wished away. They are the product of real conditions in which the crisis of revolutionary leadership has to be fought out.

The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International has consistently attacked the methods of the IRA as being ones against the interests of the working class. We have said that they acted as a substitute for the necessary forms of organisation needed by the working class, and that they could not remove the partition of Ireland or bring socialism.

The role of these methods was to funnel off the profound hatred of the nationalist youth and to create the conditions in which the Sinn Fein leadership could do a deal with imperialism.

But, at the same time, we have resolutely defended all

those members of the Republican movement who have fought against British imperialism and its campaign of torture, imprisonment and murder. Above all, we have defended their right to take up arms.

The history of the past 25 years since British troops were sent onto the streets of Belfast and Derry has shown that there can be no peaceful, parliamentary settlement.

Every concession won by the civil rights campaign was made meaningless because of the British state's increased repression through draconian laws and the armed forces' brutality.

But now the Sinn Fein leadership insists that 'there are peaceful methods of resolving the conflict'. This is the essence of the betrayal. The IRA ceasefire is tied to the fraud of the so-called 'peace process' — that imperialism can be negotiated out of Ireland.

Apparently Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams believes that British imperialism can take on a progressive role. His main

argument with the Tory government is that they should be acting more as 'persuaders' in convincing the Unionists that their interests lie in a united Ireland.

This is a criminal deception. Even if there has been a change in the direct economic interests of Britain in the six counties, its policy is directed at maintaining control and 'stability'. It lives in mortal fear of armed resistance.

Sinn Fein could not have won the leadership of the youth without claiming to be a socialist party. But now the aspirations and sacrifices of the nationalist population for — in Adams' words — 'an Ireland free from exploitation, deprivation, sectarianism and poverty' are presented as compatible with the interests of New York bankers, US president Clinton, British prime minister Major and Irish prime minister Reynolds.

Is this a betrayal that must be explained and fought against, or a 'step forward' for socialism?



Protesters for the right of 600 Asians in Manchester's Gorton constituency to be Labour Party members gathered outside its HQ in Walworth Road, south-east London, on Wednesday 28 September, when reports were to be heard on the national executive
Photo: Marg Nicol

Cuts in cancer research spending

A FALL in donations has led the Imperial Cancer Research Fund to cut its planned spending for 1995-96 by about 10 per cent and to announce the closing of several research centres.

The fund will spend only £54 million — £6.5 million less than originally planned, and about 30 of its 1,600 staff may have to be made redundant.

Researchers due for retirement or taking other jobs will not be replaced. Other contract staff will not be replaced when their contracts run out.

The fund's clinical research units in hospitals will face cuts of up to 20 per cent during the three financial years up to September 1997.

Jobless centre defies eviction

BY HILARY HORROCKS

EDINBURGH's independently-run unemployed workers' centre is fighting for survival. Volunteers who run the centre, along with many local activists who have used the building for meetings and events, are defying a court eviction order obtained by the owners, Lothian regional council.

A spokesperson for the centre said: 'Does this Labour council really want to use sheriff officers and police to violently evict the children from our creches?'

'The regional council is against us for political reasons.

It doesn't like independent centres — especially not ones run by its users and used by grassroots groups resisting the Criminal Justice Bill, VAT on fuel, and other injustices.'

Edinburgh's is the only community-run jobless centre still in existence in Scotland, where the labour bureaucracy has withdrawn support from one after another, on the ground that they have become 'too political'.

Speakers at a support rally held in the centre last weekend, as the eviction order was due to come into force, stressed its long tradition of opposition to government policies: the building was a particular focus of activity during the anti-poll-tax

campaign. The centre has been occupied round-the-clock since July, and supporters are appealing for support from all who can help resist the eviction.

The centre is at 103 Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1. Tel: 031-557 0718.

Connolly marches again

BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE

THE right to demonstrate was gained for the first time in more than three years in the Lothian region, after a sustained campaign against a council ban on public order grounds.

Several hundred participated on the heavily-policed Connolly memorial march organised by the James Connolly Society (JCS), the Republican bands alliance and Red Action.

JCS spokesperson James Slaven dismissed the idea that the permission to march was the result of the IRA ceasefire. It was the result of a long campaign, including the organisation of an illegal march in 1993. Slaven praised everyone from all parts of Britain who had either attended that march or had supported the campaign for those arrested and fined after the 1993 demonstration.

Slaven also explained that standing in the local elections had played its part — not to gain votes, but to publicise the demand for free speech and freedom of assembly for those who support the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination.

That election campaign had resulted in the defeat of the Labour chair of the transport committee responsible for the bans.

Sinn Fein councillor Sean McKnight found it difficult to raise a round of applause, far less a cheer, from the otherwise exuberant audience.

McKnight claimed that 'his-

tory records' that the 1916 Easter uprising in Dublin was not popular with Irish workers and that its socialist leader, Connolly himself, was not fully convinced of its timing.

McKnight did not mention the fact that any of Connolly's doubts were based on how his socialist, class-based struggle related to a revolutionary uprising still under nationalist control. McKnight spouted the view of the Irish establishment that the only significance of 1916 lay in its exposure of the repressive incompetence of the British state.

Most of McKnight's speech was devoted to denouncing Prime Minister John Major for disrupting the 'peace process' against the weight of international opinion; and to call on Ulster Unionists to be reassured about their future and to be 'flexible'.

The march was much less tense than one I attended in the late 1980s. Handfuls of aggressive loyalists threw V-signs (carefully recorded by the press cameras), sang badly 'The Sash' and danced around the fringes of the police-line. Most of the Edinburghers were either supportive or quizzically neutral. At worst, they gave the march troubled frowns.

The bands on the march were on their best form as they played their way along behind the Irish tricolour, the Scottish saltire, the flags of the four Irish provinces and the 'Starry Plough'. Not far behind were the less elaborate red flags fluttering unapologetically in the Edinburgh wind.

A Workers International pamphlet 'Defend Workers Aid for Bosnia: A case study of Stalinist distortion' Pamphlet answers the smears against Workers Aid spread around the labour movement by the International Communist Party

Available at 50p + p&p from PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

PUBLIC MEETING Uganda — reviewing 32 years of independence

Sunday 9 October 12 noon to 8pm

Lambeth Unemployed & Trade Union Resource Centre, 12-14 Thornton Road, London SW9.

IRIS BEARDSMORE

IRIS BEARDSMORE, a member of the South-West London branch of the Workers Revolutionary Party, died this week. Workers Press sends condolences and will publish an appreciation of her life.

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Inside left

Trouble in the house that Jacques built

BRITAIN needs a 'sense of nation' and an economy based on selling services rather than its old manufacturing strength. We need to get away from 'the old public sector system, which found it easier to act as a channel for funds than as an enabler of self-employment . . .'

Labour too often 'still believes in the monopolising power of local authorities'. We need 'partnership', with 'social entrepreneurs', churches, charities and trusts; public spending must be 'focused' more, 'with government as purchaser of services rather than provider', and 'emphasis on quality'.

So says 'An open letter to Tony Blair' from the 'non-party independent think-tank' Demos, offering advice on 'what kind of government Britain needs in the second half of the nineties' ('Guardian', 27 September). It sounds not unlike the Thatcher government recipes from the 1980s ('partnership' is a trendy word now for privatisation). But that's not surprising.

Funded by various trusts and big companies, some of which are also major contributors to the Tory party, Demos was the home found for Martin Jacques after he waved goodbye to his Communist Party friends.

As editor of 'Marxism Today', welcoming to its pages Tories like Peregrine Worsthorne and Sir Alfred Sherman, Jacques led the way in decrying 'old-fashioned' class-struggle politics and extolling the 'freedom' and higher living standards we'd all gained under Thatcher. In the 1980s, says Demos, the mantle of a classless society . . . passed decisively to the Tories'.

SOME of the strains and stresses in this society, which Demos smoothly glides over, have caused a sharp rift between two of Jacques's old Communist Party colleagues.

A recent BBC TV 'Panorama' programme, 'Babies on Benefits', focused on a Cardiff housing estate where, according to Tory Secretary of State for Wales John Redwood, 50 per cent of houses were occupied by single parents. The Tories wanted us to believe that reckless young women get pregnant just to get a council house on the estate and live off benefits; and their children grow up to be 'jobs'. The Broadcasting Complaints Commission upheld complaints that the BBC programme was biased. The National Council for One Parent Families (NCOF) was able to demolish the programme's statistics, and show how it suppressed the facts — even the mother of our featured on 'Panorama' was trying to get off benefits, but this hadn't been mentioned.

As 'Weekly Worker' (24 September) pointed out, the current editor of BBC TV weekly programmes, David Aaronovitch, and the director of the National Council for One Parent Families, Sue Slipman, were both once in the leadership of the Communist Party.

When Sue Slipman deserted the CP for the S[ocial] D[emocratic] Party without so much as a stop-over with Labour, fellow "communist" David Aaronovitch regretted her going because he had learnt so much from her.

Aaronovitch's career, like Slipman's, was launched through the National Union of Students. Now, on behalf of the BBC, he tells the 'Guardian': 'Put bluntly, NCOF does not owe a first duty to the truth; it will tell us what it wants us to believe.' Unlike the BBC, of course. Or the late but unlamented Communist Party of Great Britain.

Charlie Pottins

FARUK IBRAHIMOVIC went to see 'Bosnia', an extraordinary exhibition of paintings by Peter Howson, the Imperial War Museum's 'official war artist'

TO PRODUCE his vivid and disturbing artistic record of the tragic events in Bosnia, Peter Howson spent most of his two visits to Bosnia around the United Nations Protection Force's base at Vitez in central Bosnia. His paintings show the tragedy of people and events at Travnik, Prozor, Gornji Vakuf and Vitez. But they are true of the whole of Bosnia; they reflect Bosnian suffering caused by the two years of aggression.

Villages are burnt down, towns heavily damaged and deserted. They seem more like extra-terrestrial landscapes. People forced out of their own homes move aimlessly along the the roads. They carry a

'The unavoidable black market, weapons, check-points in the darkness of the night, the threat and fear that accompany this war — all are shown.'

few personal belongings in small bags or wrapped in scarves. They go towards the unknown, just to escape the horror, just to save their lives. Or they sit by the roadside waiting for something. What? On their faces fear, anxiety, disbelief — the expressions of those who cannot accept that their misfortune is caused by their neighbours.

Elsewhere, a young woman hangs her family's washing on the line, children along the road ask for a bon-bon, a column of people go . . . somewhere, into the night. These images do not truly reflect the whole tragedy in the hell of this hardest of all wars. But the trace of smoke out of the house on the far

hill and the children's faces, old before their time, their innocence lost — these give an idea of what is happening.

The unavoidable black market, weapons, check-points in the darkness of the night, the threat and fear that accompany this war — all are shown.

More disturbing, the paintings portray the immediacy of the war's atrocities. They show monstrous scenes: rape, castration and torture. These are scenes the painter obviously did not witness and no camera was able to record. But they are events we know have happened, things we have imagined and many have suffered. The truth is, women get raped in war, men do get castrated, children do turn into monsters.

Controversy

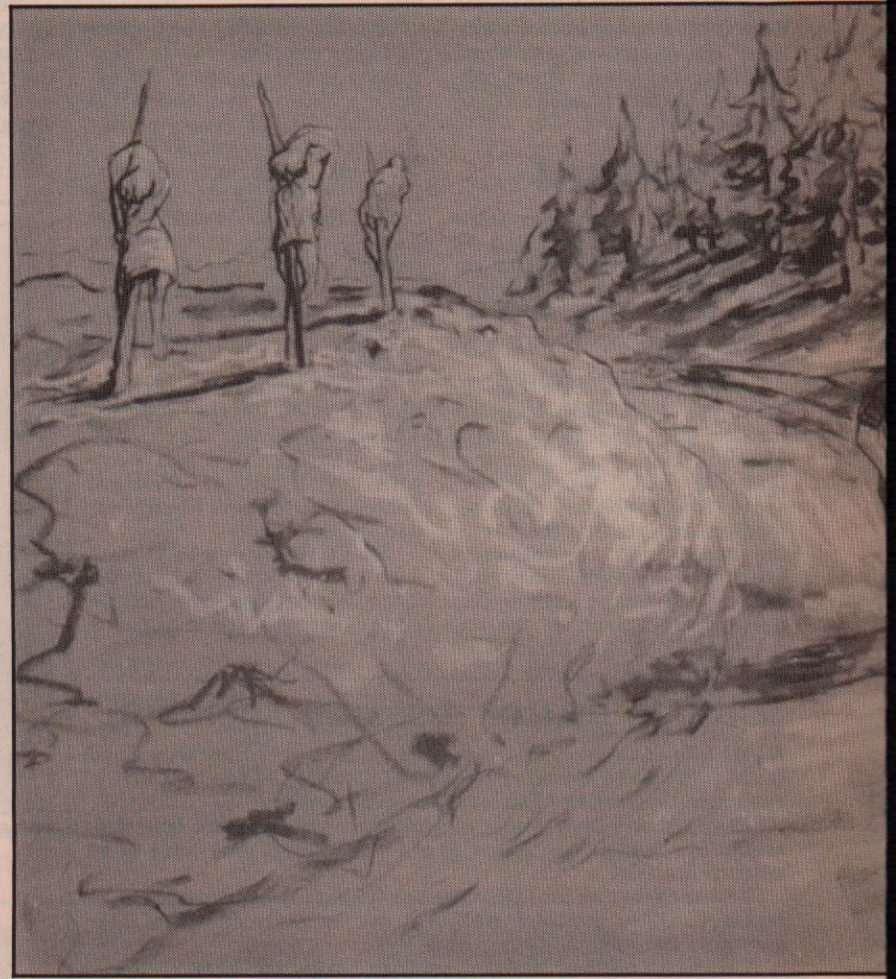
The paintings are bound to provoke controversy. 'I am not aiming to be controversial,' explains the artist. 'But I wanted to cut all the reportage. It's not my job to do that. My job is to do the things you don't see, that the army doesn't get to see, not to be an illustrator, not to tell stories, but to produce strong images of things.'

Some may ask whether a painter should avoid such terrible scenes. But war artists have a clear right to deal with the degradation on its own harsh terms.

Anyone who expects a painter to sanitise the evils of the battlefield is gravely misguided. Artists returning from the front line fail if their work avoids the full, repellent reality of the events they have been courageous enough to witness.

The 'Bosnia' exhibition by Peter Howson, sponsored by 'The Times', is on display until 13 November at the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1. And at Flowers East, 199/205 Richmond Road, London E8 until 30 October.

Bosnia suffering on canvas



'Ustazi'

After this week's Labour Party conference, the working class is faced with the need to examine what sort of party it needs to represent its interests. Here NICK LEE contributes to this discussion by analysing the nature of the current Labour Party leadership

A KEY part of the reconstruction of the Labour Party being carried out by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown is the theme of a new beginning. They are seeking a redefinition of 'socialism' relevant for the modern — or postmodern — world of the 21st century.

Beneath all the hype and froth and the traditional opportunism of the Labour right wing, what are the fundamental changes that mark off the new leadership as a real, qualitative, change in the nature of the Labour Party?

Post-war Labourism

UNLIKE its continental counterparts, which had some contact with Marxism, the British Labour Party during the heyday of its power in the post-war period was dominated intellectually by two Liberals: Keynes, the theorist of the 'mixed economy'; and Beveridge, the architect of the 'welfare state'.

The role of the Labour Party was to deliver the working class into the hands of capital, through the trade union bureaucracy, as part of the 'post-war settlement'. The price extracted from the ruling class for this capitulation was a degree of economic planning to secure full employment and welfare rights, to secure a reasonable standard of living, education and health care

for all. The price was a small one under conditions of generalised world capitalist expansion following the slump of the 1930s and the massive destruction of the war.

In this scheme of things, the relation between the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour leadership was central. Tony Blair — and John Smith and Neil Kinnock before him — has worked hard to sever that link, to paint the trade union movement as an impediment to the election of a Labour government. This is the most visible sign of the ending of the post-war historical task of the Labour Party. And with it is changing the whole political map of Britain.

Newly redundant, the Labour Party — as Joe Rogally suggested in the 'Financial Times' last week, even the name is now an embarrassment — has to compete with the Tories and the Liberal Democrats for the 'middle ground'. The result is a step forward in the 'Americanisation' of British politics: competition between two parties that have only small differences in policies and — despite some regional and residual class loyalties still remaining — appeal to the same electorate.

Brave new world

PREVIOUS gurus of the Labour

right, such as Anthony Crosland in his once famous book, 'The Future of Socialism', written at the end of the 1950s, argued that class struggle was over and Labour's goals achieved because capitalism had accepted the 'mixed economy' and the 'welfare state'.

Now the boot is on the other foot. As shadow chancellor Gordon Brown, speaking at a seminar on the global economy the week before the party conference, put it: 'Past Labour governments tried to counter injustice and failings of the free market forces by substituting government for market. . . . The fact is that these policies cannot work in the highly integrated world economic environment in which we live' ('Guardian', 28 September).

He is, of course, right. Economic planning on a purely national scale is now impossible. For a time the Labour lefts tried to sustain the old Keynesian ideas about a mixed economy with reactionary nonsense about import controls and an Alternative Economic Strategy. But we do not hear much about that any more.

For Blair and Brown the impossibility of the old Keynesian policies is the signal for a shift further to the right. Just how far this shift has gone can be seen by looking at some of the other arguments on which they draw: if globalisation

has made the mixed economy impossible, a combination of technological, economic and social changes has rendered the welfare state redundant.

In a paper to a conference of left-of-centre academics and social democrats last year — recently published as 'Reinventing the Left', edited by David Miliband — Brown argued that a much more sophisticated welfare policy was

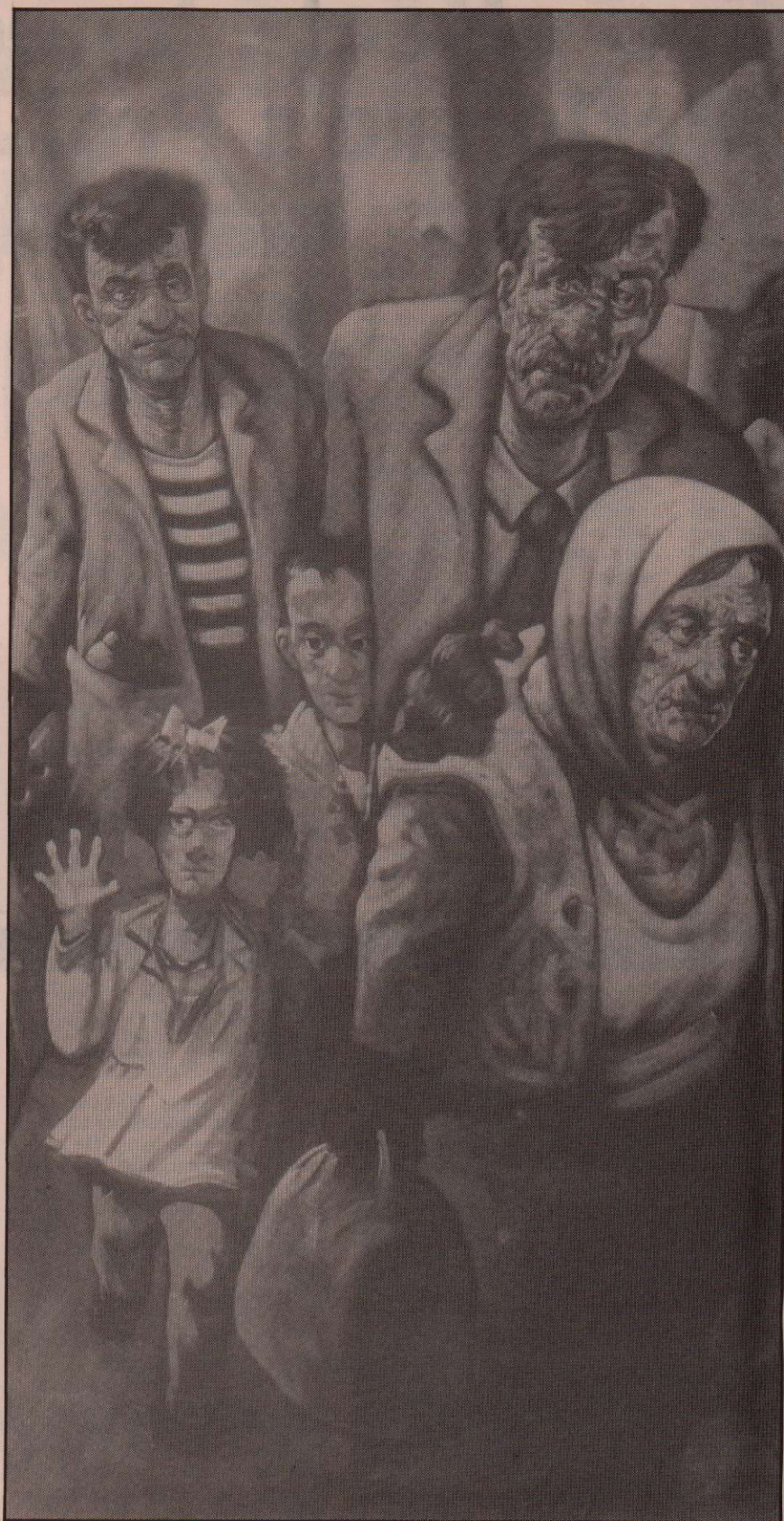
'The Labour leaders' ideas are a modernised and freshly jargonised re-run of Tory ideas of the "property-owning democracy" of 30 years ago.'

needed to replace the old idea of 'setting a floor of rights to social security, employment, health care and educational opportunities'.

These need to be replaced, he said, because we are now living in a world where 'labour and skill are increasingly more important than capital', and 'where in society . . . just about everybody has become a decision maker in his or her own right'.

Labour's

an ng was



Detail from 'Road to Zenica'

radical change

These two gems of utter nonsense form the basis of a position that becomes indistinguishable from that of the Tory free marketeers. If skilled labour is more important than capital then trades unions are really not that important. They can be replaced by good investment in high-quality education and skills training.

The old-style 'social contract' between capital and organised labour — which rested on the trade union bureaucracy delivering the working class to the bosses — is now to be replaced by skilled workers, as individuals and groups at the level of the firm, using their strength and technical knowledge to both increase productivity and improve their living standards. In such a scenario trades unions have a purely technical function, which could well include that of raising labour productivity.

'Indeed', continued Brown in his conference paper and taking up ideas that bourgeois economists have been playing with for decades, 'where the success and failure of an economy depends on access to knowledge more than access to capital, individual liberation arises from the enhancement of the value of labour rather than the abolition of private capital'.

Here 'old-style' trade unionism appears as a purely sectional in-

terest. The logic of severing the connection between the Labour Party and the labour movement is made clear. The individual is what matters.

This individualism is reinforced in the second theme: that everyone is a 'decision maker'. This is derived from fashionable ideas in bourgeois sociology — again, by no means new ones — that social classes have fragmented out of existence, and have been replaced by a sort of social kaleidoscope of individual identities in which being male or female, gay or straight, black or white, or even what videos and computer games you are into, is far more important than class.

What is required therefore is not a welfare state that sustains common ideas of reasonable living standards, but one that empowers individuals to develop their own diversity and potential and, basically, come to their own decisions about life and — the other side of the coin — take responsibility for their own decisions.

Tragedy and farce

EXPERIENCING the 'new Labour thinking' inevitably conjures up Marx's remark that history repeats itself, 'the first time as tragedy, the second as farce'. What we have is indeed farce. The Labour

leaders' ideas are a modernised and freshly jargonised re-run of Tory ideas of the 'property-owning democracy' of 30 years ago. These were the ideas with which Tories 'set the people free' after the first post-war Labour government.

That was during the post-war boom. To reinvent these ideas, fresh as a daisy, in a world in which insecurity and violence, long-term unemployment, poverty and widening social inequalities are affecting ever-greater numbers of working-class people, and in which the global capitalist economy is more volatile and unstable than ever before, is farce several times over.

As Professor David Marquand, doyen of the Liberal Democrats, has remarked, Labour has made the final stage of the transition to a fully fledged social-democratic party shorn of all reformist socialist pretensions at a time when such parties right across Europe are 'in deep, possibly terminal, crisis. The prodigal son has come home only to find his father's farm in the hands of the bailiffs and his parents begging' ('Guardian', 9 September).

As with the collapse of Stalinism, the final death of reformism clears the way, under radically new conditions, for a new political organisation of the working class and other oppressed groups.

City Lights

The strange case of the missing upturn

OVER the past weeks, the financial press has been talking incessantly about the strong 'upturn' that is supposed to be taking place in the world capitalist economy. There can hardly have been a stranger 'upturn' in the history of capitalism.

Not only does disease, pestilence and hunger ravage millions of people throughout the world, even in the major capitalist countries — the members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) — some 35 million are unemployed.

In the 'Group of Seven' leading capitalist powers, some 24 million are without jobs — and this is on the basis of 'official' figures. These seriously underestimate the true levels of unemployment; millions are forced into part-time jobs involving wages well below subsistence level.

Within Europe the growth of unemployment has been most mar-

per cent of the population.

According to a recent study (Charles R. Bean's 'European Unemployment: a Study', in the 'Journal of Economic Literature', June 1994), the cause of this is a 'major puzzle'. This was especially so as the rising unemployment of the 1970s was accompanied by sharply rising prices: 'stagflation'.

A recent OECD report reveals that:

■ One in five young people are out of work in Europe

■ The proportion of those of working age actually in work in the EU dropped from 95 per cent in 1960 to below 80 per cent in 1991.

The secular growth in unemployment, the fact that many people in their 30s have never had a job, is one of the reasons for the demise of Keynesianism.

It was Keynesianism that claimed that if in a period of downturn in the trade cycle governments spent more than they received in taxes, then this would create the conditions for a revival of the economy; during the subsequent upturn governments could then take more in taxes than they were spending and thus, over the trade cycle, balance their books.



German workers waiting to hear confirmation of their sacking last year

ked. One of the most decisive features of this growth is the sharp increase in those defined as long-term unemployed, that is those who have been out of work for more than a year.

This is what economists refer to as 'structural unemployment' to distinguish it from 'cyclical unemployment', caused by the periodic expansion and contraction of the capitalist economy.

Taking the European Union as a whole, in 1979 29.3 per cent of those unemployed were in the long-term category. By 1988 the figure had risen to 54.8 per cent and is now undoubtedly even higher. The comparable figures for the United States were 4.2 per cent and 7.4 per cent, and for Japan 16.5 per cent and 20.6 per cent.

Prior to the first great surge in oil prices at the beginning of the 1970s the rate of unemployed in the EU was below 3 per cent. Thereafter it rose remorselessly, peaking at 11 per cent in 1985. It then fell to a little over 8 per cent by the end of the decade, but has since increased again and is now over 10

City fraud

DURING this year there has been a sharp increase in 'insider-dealing' investigations by the London Stock Exchange.

The exchange's surveillance group, which examines share deals for signs of criminal activity, has opened 116 cases for investigation, which includes 75 into alleged insider dealing — that is share buying on the basis of privileged share-price information. This is a 50 per cent increase on last year.

The Department of Trade and Industry is responsible for deciding whether to prosecute those suspected of having engaged in insider dealing. So far this year it has appointed inspectors in only five cases, including that of Lord Archer's order to buy 50,000 Anglia TV shares. And there has been one trial.

In the 14 years since insider dealing became illegal, just 23 individuals have been found guilty of the offence.

Threadneedle

Death of a liar

'YOU are the enemy, you lying old swine!'

This outburst by the victimised Briggs shop steward John McLoughlin at the Hammersmith congress of the British Communist Party in 1957, a few months after Soviet tanks had crushed the Hungarian workers' uprising, is the only appropriate epitaph for Andrew Rothstein, who died last month, four days short of his 96th birthday.

McLoughlin's angry shout, interrupting Rothstein's speech about the 'spineless intellectuals' who had dared to question the party leaders' wisdom and had 'turned in upon their own emotions and frustrations', was one of that congress's truly electric moments. 'Labour Review' commented afterwards, a shade optimistically:

'All the instinctive revulsion of the working class towards the bureaucrats who batten on them, delude them and crush them with tanks welled up in this worker's outburst.

'It was the clearest possible warning to the platform that the proletarian members of the party, once they see what has been and is being done, will settle accounts with the GPU, the AVO [Hungarian security police], the aristocracies of functionaries, the lies, the corruption, the rottenness — which Rothstein personifies.'

WHAT appears to have been Rothstein's first pamphlet, published under the pen-name 'C.M. Roebuck' in 1920 when he and the Communist Party of Great Britain were very young, was called 'The Nationalisation of Women: The natural history of a lie'.

On that subject he seems to have written no more, and within five years he was occupied with the far more important task of elaborating his own lies, about Trotsky.

Harry Wicks, in his autobiography 'Keeping My Head' (1992), describes his appearance at the celebrated 'London aggregate', or meeting of all London members of the CPGB, called in January 1925 to discuss the conflict in the Russian CP:

'Well groomed, in gold rimmed glasses, with the dignity of a party cover name ("Roebuck") and close links to the Russian party [he was the son of the émigré Russian Theodore Rothstein, who later served as Soviet ambassador to Tehran], and with his services as translator to the recent Russian trade union delegation well known, he . . . radiated authority.

'He concentrated his attack on those who pleaded a lack of information as an excuse for not condemning Trotsky. To my astonishment, he appeared to convey that it was un-Bolshevik to require all the information before making a decision.

'In other words, when members were trying to influence the party line, all they needed to know was — what was the party line?'

Rothstein showed his mettle when, at that meeting, he dismissed Lenin's so-called 'Testament' as 'a gross forgery'. (First published in the CPSU journal 'Kommunist' in 1956, this document is printed as 'Letter to the Congress' in vol. 36 of Lenin's 'Collected Works'.)

In a comment on this meeting in 'Workers Weekly', Rothstein called Trotsky's proposals for an economic plan 'anti-party, anti-Bolshevik', 'the outlook of the petty-bourgeois intellectual, subjectively prompted by an enormous desire to assert his own individuality'.

Trotsky's supporters 'played the game of Menshevism' and were supported by the capitalist class. Those who hesitated to condemn Trotsky on the basis of a mere summary of his book 'Lessons of October' 'only show that they have a terrible deal to learn yet before they become real communists'.

PERSONAL COLUMN

In 1929 it was Rothstein who denied, in the teeth of the facts, 'the harrowing story of how "Trotsky and his friends have been arrested, violently dragged out of their houses, shipped into the desert under police guard", and so forth'.

In the same year he defended the suppression of Trotsky's critique of Bukharin's draft programme of the Communist International, on the ground that this critique was 'a flagrant breach of the constitution of the CPSU'.

And so it went on. In 1935, using the fairly transparent pen-name 'R.F. Andrews', he described the Marxist Group of Trotskyists then working inside the Independent Labour Party as 'renegade Communists and political adventurers who are the mouthpiece through which Trotskyism focuses counter-revolutionary confusion and disorganisation into the ranks of revolutionaries'.

Two years later, pouring venom on Kamenov, Zinoviev, and the other victims of the second of the Moscow show trials, he wrote (as 'A.R. Andrews') in the 'Daily Worker' that 'the criminals have received their well-merited sentences' and that 'millions of people have had their eyes opened to the inner essence of Trotskyism'.

He described Trotsky as 'a malignant, avowed and still dangerous criminal' and the 'Daily Herald', for merely doubting that the verdict was just, a 'Shameful Blot on Labour'.

But Rothstein met his match in C.L.R. James, who was so formidable a debater that Britain's Stalinist leaders preferred not to lock horns with him.

According to Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson, 'Against the Stream' (1986), James managed to manoeuvre Rothstein into a debate on the Moscow trials 'by arranging it with someone else to begin with, then going along instead'. From then on 'the Stalinists refused to debate with the Trotskyist leaders'.

The crowning achievement of Rothstein's career, in the sense that it brought his twisted version of history to the widest possible audience, was probably 'A History of the USSR', published by Penguin Books as a Pelican paperback in 1950.

Kevin Morgan, in his 'Guardian' obituary last Monday, calls this book 'a truly woeful assemblage of official lies and distortions'. That, it seems to me, is putting it mildly.

'ANY man's death diminishes me', wrote the 17th-century poet John Donne. I wish I could find it in my heart to apply this generous maxim to the unspeakable Rothstein.

But it's not possible. Future historians, not having lived through the Hungarian revolution, not having seen the bloodied bodies of some of Stalinism's victims, will no doubt be able to muster up the necessary objectivity to write a 'balanced' account of this man's life and work.

Such a task, I have to confess, is quite beyond me. The life was ignoble, the work vile.

When I think about the dead Rothstein, I see in my mind's eye those rows of corpses lying in the Magyaróvár, cemetery, among them the bodies of teenage girls, of a little boy aged about six, of an 18-months-old baby.

For these brief lives snuffed out by Stalinist machine-gun bullets, Andrew Rothstein never had one word of pity or sorrow. He hardened his heart.

I do not rejoice at his death. But I cannot and shall not grieve.

Peter Fryer

Additive effects 'anecdotal' says McDonald's Prof Ronald

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

ADDITIVES used by fast-food chain McDonald's might cause allergies to 'one in a thousand' people, a company expert has told the High Court. There was 'anecdotal' evidence that four of the additives, which have been tested on animals, provoked hyperactivity in children, Professor Ronald Walker said.

Two environmental campaigners, David Morris and Helen Steel, who are unemployed, are fighting a libel action against them over a leaflet handed out five years ago at McDonald's head office in East Finchley, north London. The issues raised include nutrition, treatment of the environment and farm animals, and the rights and working conditions of McDonald's staff.

The 'McLibel Two' were refused a jury trial, because the company said the case was too 'complex'. Legal aid is not available in libel cases, so the

Two are defending themselves; the company has engaged a team of lawyers. The case, together with a counter-claim brought by the defendants that McDonald's libelled them, is expected to continue until at least March 1995. Each side is calling a host of expert witnesses.

On 15 and 16 September, Stephen Gardner, a former assistant attorney-general of Texas, gave evidence for the defence, describing how several US states brought pressure upon McDonald's to provide information to customers about ingredients and nutrition. Gardner said the company 'had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the fold', but later issued a press release claiming it was voluntarily 'pioneering a unique project to provide this information'.

Gardner also referred to what McDonald's had called an 'informational' campaign launched the following year. On 24 April 1987 three attorney-generals wrote to McDonald's:

'The attorneys-general of Texas, California and New York

have concluded our joint review of McDonald's recent advertising campaign which claims that McDonald's food is nutritious. Our mutual conclusion is that this advertising campaign is deceptive. We therefore request that McDonald's immediately cease and desist further use of this advertising campaign.

Deceive

'The reason for this is simple: McDonald's food is, as a whole, not nutritious. The intent and result of the current campaign is to deceive customers into believing the opposite. Fast food customers often choose to go to McDonald's because it is inexpensive and convenient. They should not be fooled into eating there because you have told them it is also nutritious . . .'

Answering questions about McDonald's attitude to trades unions, Robert Beavers, senior vice-president of McDonald's in the US, agreed that in the 1970s, when US unions were trying to organise fast-food workers, the

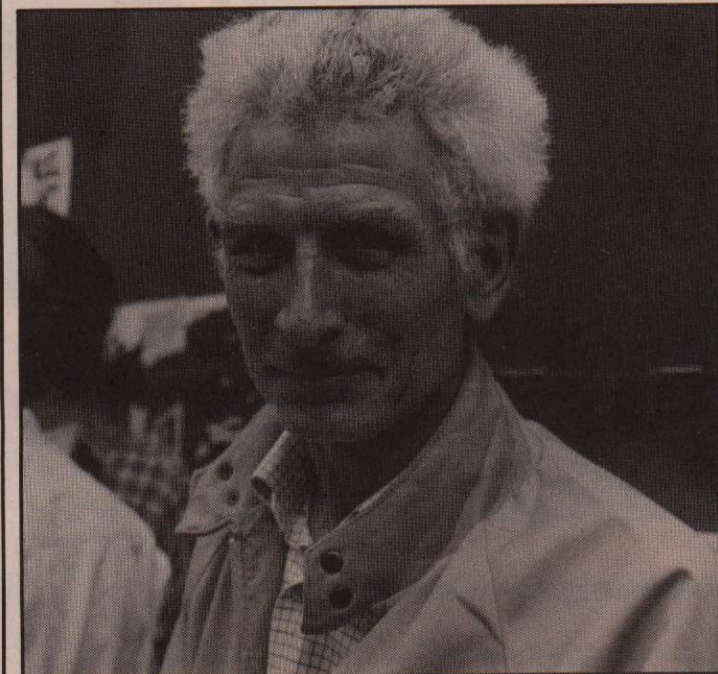
company established a 'flying squad' of experienced managers who were sent to any restaurant the same day any attempt to unionise was reported. However, McDonald's UK president told the court in July that staff have the 'right to join a union if they so please'.

Former McDonald's employees are to give evidence. The trial entered its eighth week on Monday, with expert witnesses on diet and health called by the two defendants. The trial is open to the public, and starts at 10.30am each day at Court 35, Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand, London WC2. For more information, contact the McLibel Support Campaign, tel/fax: 071-713 1269.

■ A McDonald's workers support group is offering help and advice to McDonald's staff on such matters as employment rights, unions, health and safety, etc. It can be contacted c/o Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, Colin Roach Centre, 10a Bradbury St, London N16. Or phone 071-249 8086.

Obituaries

EDDIE MUNRO (1937-94)



Eddie Munro: ready hospitality and humour

EDDIE MUNRO, a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party since 1983, died last week at his home in Blantyre, near Glasgow.

A year ago, 56-year-old Eddie was diagnosed as having contracted asbestosis. He contacted the energetic Glasgow organisation Clydeside Action on Asbestos, which campaigns on behalf of victims of the disease. The group immediately helped Eddie to file claims against several firms for which he worked in his youth, and where he would have been exposed to the lethal fibre.

Eddie was born in Anniesland, Glasgow, the youngest of nine children. He worked in a variety of jobs — in power-station construction, in the shipyards, on building sites: for nine years he worked at the Hoover factory in Cambuslang, and latterly as a postman in Blantyre, where he was already well known in the community.

A shop steward everywhere he worked, Eddie was often victimised and sacked for his defence of trade union rights in the

workplace. With his wife Margaret, Eddie was also very active in the local anti-poll-tax campaign during 1989-91.

Despite the severe pain he was suffering (which, characteristically, he made light of), Eddie was determined to understand the progress of his disease objectively, studying any information he could get his hands on.

Reading was his great passion: Eddie was always deep in a book on history, politics or philosophy, and consequently brought to his political activity a well-informed body of knowledge. With the support of Margaret (herself an active trade unionist) and his children Janice and Thomas, Eddie was able to pursue his interests during his illness. This summer he and Margaret went to the Isle of Skye to find his grandmother's old home.

Well known for his personal warmth, his ready hospitality and his humour, Eddie will be sorely missed. We send sincere condolences to all the Munro family.

WILLIE TAIT (1910-94)

WILLIE TAIT died in an Edinburgh hospital on 28 August 1994. A man who took Marx's advice to 'doubt everything', he hated hospitals, did not trust modern medicine, and rejected most of the institutions of bourgeois society. A worker, a Scot and an internationalist, he was my friend. He was a good friend and I will not forget him.

He was, in a phrase invented by the Glaswegian punters, 'a baptised socialist'. When he was born in England in 1910, his father Tommy was a soldier in the British army. Before Willie reached the age of 12, he had moved around the world without receiving, as he put it, 'much of an education'.

During the so-called 'Great War' 'to end all wars', Tommy Tait became a revolutionary socialist. A member of a dissident De Leonist group in Edinburgh, Tommy eventually helped Frank Maitland and others to form the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) in Edinburgh.

The RSP, born out of a pre-World War I dissident De Leonist group, affiliated to the Fourth International in 1938. By then Willie was committed to the socialist revolution. Attending meetings in London with black socialists, he often described to me his astonishment that, while he slept on various floors in his pyjamas, C.L.R. James and some African comrades slept on the floor in their birthday suits.

He took the chair for James at a meeting in the Picardy Place Hall, Edinburgh, on 25

October 1938. A press statement said: 'The James Meeting has had a stimulating effect on our work. It opened the eyes of many workers who have hitherto regarded the RSP as an isolated group to the fact that all over the country and the world there are workers fighting on the same lines, towards a real revolutionary party and the Fourth International.'

When I repeatedly asked Willie about James, he praised him for speaking as 'a black worker' to working folk in Edinburgh in simple, egalitarian language. The socialists in Edinburgh liked James, he said, because he conveyed an idea of 'the basic forces' that guided society.

Willie particularly liked the pan-African socialists' view of world society, and he recalled the consternation caused by James's revelation that Stalin supplied the petrol for Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia.

But the De Leonists broke with the Fourth International over an obscure doctrinal point. Nevertheless both Willie and his late wife Mary worked from inside the Independent Labour Party in Leith to encourage strikes and spread anti-militarist propaganda.

In later years he corresponded with the De Leonists in America to revive interest in the propaganda of the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies)

and Daniel De Leon. Active in the 1970s and 1980s in the Humanist Society and in the John Maclean Society, he joined picket lines, marches and demonstrations as a 'De Leonist' with Trotskyist sympathies.

He took a great interest in labour history, and donated rare De Leonist and Trotskyist books and pamphlets to the University of Stirling.

The first time I encountered him was at a mass Labour Party meeting in the Free Gardeners' Hall, Edinburgh, during the Suez crisis in 1956. When a group of young socialists moved an amendment to the official resolution calling for 'a general strike now', he and Mary were on their feet to support us. After denouncing the Labour leaders — ones who would now be too left-wing for the present Labour Party — I was thrown out. It was some years later before we were introduced to each other. We became, and remained, firm friends.

Mary, whose death was recorded in Workers Press in 1991, was his soul mate. After her death he went downhill with personal grief and a growing pessimism about what 'capitalism is doing to the human environment'.

The last time I saw him in action was at a meeting of the Scottish Labour Society in Edinburgh in, I think, 1987. He got stuck into Campbell Christie, general secretary of the the

Scottish Trades Union Congress, for not exposing and fighting 'the capitalist system'. At first Christie was confident, and, I suspect, predisposed to dismiss a Willie Tait he did not know as another eccentric veteran from the lost world of the past; but he was soon rendered speechless.

Although Willie worried needlessly about his lack of formal schooling, he earned his living after World War II as a French- and Spanish-speaking guide for bus tours to the Continent. A modest, gentle, self-sacrificing and self-effacing man, he went to Paris in 1938 for the Fourth International, and he met George Padmore and Boris Souvarine. He always kept in the background except when the timidity of the Labour leader provoked him into speaking out for the rank-and-file.

A simple man in the best sense of that much-abused word, Willie Tait was a vegetarian teetotaler who believed in herbalism. But this never got in the way of his down-to-earth conversations with comrades like the late Harry McShane who enjoyed a good dram.

A good conversationalist who took solidarity seriously, he always refused to engage in gossip. It is a lesson that needs to be learned anew. A self-taught comrade I was proud to call my friend, he was a model socialist in his quiet dignity, modest and commitment to the 'good old cause' of socialist internationalism.

James D. Young

Devastated Eritrea is ripe for exploitation



Dergue prisoners taken during the Eritrean struggle for liberation

ALISTAIR GUEST looks at the hardships facing the Eritrean people since liberation and the failings of bourgeois nationalism

ON 24 May 1991 the fighters of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) smashed the might of the Ethiopian Dergue regime, led by Mengistu Haile Meriam.

They marched victorious into the capital, Asmara, and made Eritrea free for the first time in its history. Celebrations continued for at least six months.

In May 1993 a referendum of all Eritreans, including refugees in other countries, ratified independence by an overwhelming majority. This gave a mandate to the provisional government, led by veteran fighter Isaias Afewerke, to draft a constitution and prepare

for multi-party elections.

But, despite the joy of millions of Eritreans and the admiration of many throughout Africa and the rest of the world, all was not well. For 30 years Eritrea's economy had been bled dry, first by Haile Selassie's Ethiopian empire and then by the Stalinist-backed Mengistu regime.

During the struggle against the Dergue, almost a million peasants and nomads had fled the terror-bombing for the wretched conditions of the camps in neighbouring Sudan. Eighty thousand workers, intellectuals and politically-conscious peasants had died.

Neglect

War had sharpened the effects of a decade of drought and crop failure. Years of neglect and war damage had devastated the basic infrastructure of Eritrea — roads, water supply, agricultural land, forests, docks and factories.

In Asmara unemployment in

some districts is as high as 75 per cent. While the city is apparently quiet, friendly and safe, the majority of the population remains dependent to some degree on food aid from national and multinational donor agencies.

Apart from basic trade in food and clothing, some necessities, and luxury items for a fortunate minority, the Eritrean economy has broken down. The amount of foreign trade is negligible. There is a huge demand for housing because of the numbers wishing to return. But it is in short supply and what there is in a terrible state of repair.

Construction in the capital has come to a virtual standstill, apart from the odd office block or luxury apartment block. The rent for barely adequate family housing is as high as £900 per month. Thousands of returning Eritrean families are having to stay in one or two rooms.

There are few places in the world where a visitor meets such deep pride from a people about their achievements. Nor

such conditions so ripe for exploitation by imperialism and its agents in the United Nations and the World Bank.

The pressure on the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), into which the EPLF transformed itself in the run-up to the first elections, has been enormous. On 24 August this year its resistance seems to have crumbled, when it endorsed the provisional government's economic policy.

The provisional government's investment law aims to attract finance capital, with guarantees against nationalisation and confiscation. Full net profits can be repatriated, as can foreign capital in its original currency. There are no statutory obligations for the formation of joint ventures with the state, no export taxes, no tariffs, no mention of royalties from exports of Eritrea's natural resources.

Eritrea — like Pacific Rim countries — has a pool of surplus labour, low wages and workers' organisations that

have only just been reformed after 30 years of repression. The PFDJ is going for the 'market economy' or bust.

Despite its military resourcefulness and lack of compromise during the liberation struggle, the bourgeois-nationalist EPLF has finally shed any semblance of socialist aspirations and rhetoric.

Its capitulation to imperialism is no reflection on its individual leaders, who have shown great personal courage — the limitations of nationalism, when placed under imperialist pressure, lead to gross betrayal.

Sacrificed

Those betrayed are the tens of thousands of young workers, peasants, and intellectuals who sacrificed all when they launched their liberation struggle. In the 'field' they developed their own moneyless economy, and created a culture and an unstoppable force.

About a year ago, the provi-

sional government began to disarm and demobilise all but the elite of the liberation fighters. Young people are now sent in their thousands on national service to the most remote and inhospitable areas, and under control of this elite.

In 1990 during the war, I remember asking a young fighter if he would voluntarily give up his 'Kalashni' when liberation was achieved. He replied 'No!' and I asked him why. 'Other enemies will come', he answered with a smile. On the T-shirt that he wore with pride it said 'Eritrea — Never Kneel Down'.

The coming period in Eritrea and neighbouring Ethiopia is one of imperialist super-exploitation. But that means the working class will grow, among it demobilised fighters and their culture.

Illusions in nationalist politics will be confronted by the reality of its dead-end content, and its new and growing allegiances with the UN and the big imperialist blocs.

Naked hypocrisy of Greek nationalists over Albania

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN ATHENS

AFTER the recent jailing of five ethnic Greeks in southern Albania, there has been a new upsurge of Greek nationalism. The Greek government has responded with large-scale expulsions of Albanian refugees.

But the hypocrisy of the Greek government's action is clear. Many of the expelled Albanians were members of the Greek minority that had come to Greece to find work. In Greece, they are 'thieves' who 'steal' the jobs of Greek workers. Out of Greece, they are 'our oppressed brothers'.

In fact, when 'our Greek brothers' come from Albania to Greece to find work, they are

exploited in the worst possible way.

Greek trades unions have the responsibility of defending Albanian refugees and protesting against the racism that is fuelled by the ruling class.

In the fight against nationalism and racism, Greek workers must find a way to collaborate with Albanian workers. This fight is also vital for the Albanian workers to begin the same fight against their own nationalists.

The history of the Albanian-Greek conflict began at the start of the century. In 1913 Albania gained its independence, and in the following year Greece mounted an armed intervention in Albania, subjugating the southern part of the country. Greece even now calls this region North Ipiros.

Later the area was abandoned by the Greek military. After World War II, Greece did not pursue its territorial ambitions in the region, but the ruling class has used the claim for nationalistic purposes.

According to PASOK, the ruling social-democratic party, and other social-chauvinists in Greece, it was the provocative Albanians who, with the imperialists' help, were responsible for the sentencing of the five Greeks in Albania.

Oppressing

The right-wing says that it is the Great Powers and Turkey that are oppressing the Greek minority in Albania and threaten stagnation in the area.

Many fascist groups are using this question to build their

organisations. They use it to attack the left as 'traitors'. The Greek ruling class use it to justify their strategic interest in the Balkans.

Following the collapse of Stalinism, the Greek government encouraged the growth of Greek interests in the Albanian economy, and gave financial support to the free-market Berisia.

Greece's government at that time, the conservative New Democracy party, sent ultra-right-wing Orthodox priests into Albania to claim openly that southern Albania was Greek. The government has also supported fascist groups in Greece which call for 'autonomy for North Ipiros'.

Units of the Greek army are trained specifically to prepare for conflict that may arise over this issue. They are under the

control of fascist generals who have close links with the extreme nationalists of the southern Albanian Greek minority.

This nationalist manoeuvring led, some months ago, to MAVI, an ultra-right-wing paramilitary group, crossing the border and killing two Albanian soldiers. The Greek authorities refuse to investigate.

It is in this political climate that the five Greeks have been jailed. It is not clear whether they have been made scapegoats because of their nationality, or are supporters of the ultra-right with genuine connections with the Greek army.

Compared with many minorities in the Balkans, the Greeks in Albania continue to be recognised, can use their own language, and have their own schools and teachers.

Sometimes they are persecuted by the Albanian authorities. But, in the main, economic repression of this minority is a part of the repression of the Albanian people as a whole.

The Greek workers' movement must oppose this nationalist demagoguery. Not to do so means to allow the ruling class to increase the tension between the two peoples, bringing closer the danger of war.

The nationalists' call for protection for the Greek minority in Albania mirrors Hitler's call for protection of the Sudeten Germans, used to justify Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia.

If these nationalists care so much for the human rights of national minorities they should first tackle the protection of the Macedonians and Turks in Greece.

Venezuelan peasant leader faces jungle jail Secret police torture political detainees

A PEASANT leader in Venezuela, Gabriel Rivas Granadillo, could be deported to a remote jungle penal colony called El Dorado, where conditions are worse than Devil's Island.

Gabriel Rivas, a leader of La Chivera peasants' union, was arrested by state police in Valencia, in the state of Carabobo, on 2 July. They had no warrant.

Last month it was reported that he was being held in the police station annex in Valencia, where conditions are notoriously bad. Reports say prisoners are frequently beaten by the warders. There is severe overcrowding, inadequate sanitary facilities, and lack of medical care. The food is so poor that prisoners have to rely on relatives bringing in provisions.

The arrest of Gabriel Rivas came after he acted on behalf of peasants contesting ownership

of an area of land called Mount Vernont in Valencia.

He has been sentenced to a year's administrative detention under the ley de vagos y maleantes (the law on vagabonds and wrongdoers), which permits administrative detention for periods of up to five years, without judicial appeal or review, of people deemed by the police to be a danger to society, but against whom there is no evidence of punishable crimes.

The Venezuelan authorities use this law against political and community activists and against poor people in general. The majority of people detained under the law are sent to the remote jungle colony of El Dorado, where conditions are known to be appalling. Its extreme isolation means inmates have no access to legal or medical remedies, and no one is able to check on their well-being.

Amnesty International has declared Gabriel Rivas Granadillo a prisoner of conscience, and says the law he is held under contravenes all internationally accepted standards on human rights.

Workers Press urges trades unionists and anyone who defends democratic rights to protest to Venezuela's President Doctor Rafael Caldera at the Palacio de Miraflores Caracas, Venezuela. Fax: (+58) (2) 838239. And to the Venezuelan ambassador, Dr Ignacio Arcaya, Embassy of Venezuela, 1 Cromwell Road, London SW7 2HR. Fax: 071-589 8887

Demand the release of Gabriel Rivas Granadillo, the closure of El Dorado prison colony, and the abolition of the ley de vagos y maleantes. Demand that the Venezuelan police stop torturing prisoners. Let us know of any messages you have sent, and any response.

SECRET police in Venezuela are torturing political prisoners, according to reports coming through Amnesty International.

On 17 August, police in Guacara, in Carabobo state, arrested Jose Manuel Flores (a teacher and community organiser), Jose Gregorio Guedez, Ruben Sanchez, and Jose Luis Sanchez. The four were taken to Caracas, the capital, and kept incommunicado. They have been accused of transporting weapons and of belonging to Bandera Roja (Red Flag), an armed opposition group.

Relatives of Jose Manuel Flores say he told them the four had been subjected to electrical shocks to the testicles, armpits and mouth, hung by the hands with chains and beaten severely on the back and buttocks by members of the Directorate of Intelligence and Prevention Services (DISIP) in Valencia be-

tween 17 and 20 August, before they were transferred to Caracas. They are now in the hands of the Military Intelligence Directorate (DIM) in Caracas.

Freddy Perez Paniagua, an engineering student at the University of Carabobo was detained by the DIM in Valencia on 26 August, and held incommunicado for three days.

A law student named Parra, who was detained with him and released shortly afterwards, says he was tortured with electricity by the DIM, using the method known as the *garrocha*, a type of electrical prod wrapped around in a cloth. He says Freddy Perez was also tortured.

A member of the human rights commission of the Carabobo state legislature visited Freddy Perez on 29 August and confirmed that he showed signs of having been tortured.

In June this year, following a

banking crisis, President Rafael Caldera suspended constitutional safeguards against wrongful arrest and interference with a person's home or freedom of movement. Police can hold someone for up to eight days without bringing them before a court, and there are frequent reports of ill-treatment and torture.

In the past, particularly after the serious rioting in 1989 and the two coup attempts in 1992, lack of clear guidelines on whether civilian or military jurisdiction was in force — for example regarding procedures for habeas corpus and other guarantees which had not been suspended — left the population in a state of uncertainty.

This lack of clarity persists to this day, leaving the door open to arbitrary acts by the security forces, with little chance of redress for the victims.

Mexican killing an inside job?

THE shooting of Mexico's ruling party's general-secretary, Francisco Ruiz Massieu, six months after that of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, appears to have been ordered by elements within the ruling class.

Daniel Aguilar Trevino, who was arrested for the murder of the general-secretary of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), confessed to having been hired by a man called Jorge Rodriguez. Rodriguez, in turn, told police last week that he and his brother had been hired by a congressman, Manuel Munoz Rocha, to organise the killing.

One theory blames drug barons, another says entrenched elements within the PRI resented Ruiz Massieu's attempts to reform the party and reach agreements with the opposition. He was on the way to meet a leader of the opposition Democratic Revolutionary Party when he was shot. A poll by two newspapers found 72 per cent of readers thought the killing of Ruiz Massieu was linked with that of Colosio, who was shot at an election rally in March.

Assassin

Colosio's killing has become like Mexico's 'John F. Kennedy case'. A factory worker called Aburto was charged as the lone assassin, but before this six other men had been arrested as accomplices — all former policemen, hired by the PRI as security guards.

An inquiry has been ordered. Among evidence being examined are a video film of men clearing a path in the crowd for the assassin, and Aburto's diary, which contains the address of a PRI leader in Tijuana who claims he never met Aburto.

It is eighteen months since Cardinal Posadas Ocampo was killed in a shoot out between rival drug gangs at Guadalajara airport, and the two men accused have never been caught. In Tijuana, the police chief was shot, it is thought by his own officers in the pay of a gang.

With a corrupt ruling party and police forces trained to kill workers and peasants, it is hard to draw a line between the state and the criminals.

Lives sacrificed for ferry profits

THE LOSS of some 900 lives aboard the ferry 'Estonia' is yet another tragic example of profits being placed before human life.

There is every evidence that this disaster could have been avoided had the shipping companies tried to learn the lessons of previous accidents.

The 'Estonia' appears to have sunk for similar reasons to the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' in 1987. The ferry's bow doors seem to have allowed water on to the car deck, destabilising the craft when it tilted in the storm. There has been speculation that steel pins securing the bow visor or vehicle ramp of the 'Estonia' may have been rusty.

Roll-on, roll-off ferries are huge vessels, taking hundreds of lorries and up to 3,000 passengers. To maximise profits, the shipping companies squeeze on as many vehicles as possible. The easiest way of doing this is to leave it as one open deck.

In the paper 'Aftonbladet', lorry drivers who often travel on the ferries said their lorries are practically never lashed to the car deck. In rough weather the vehicles run into each other and shift about freely.

With an open deck, a film of water just half an inch deep is enough to capsize the ship as it pitches in high waves. If the car deck were separated into compartments it would be unlikely that enough water to destabilise the ship could collect.

Ignored

Compared with road and air transport, sea safety regulations are weak and poorly enforced. It has emerged that failings were known and ignored.

Since the disaster, other ferries have carried on with the old routines almost as if nothing had happened. The marine inspectorate banned one or two ships from sailing, but in view of the general neglect of safety regulations this looks more and more like a token gesture.

Schedules for ferries are intensive. The Baltic ferry trade carries millions of passengers and vast amounts of road freight each year and is highly lucrative. The ferries are used intensively on the most profitable Baltic routes and then are moved to the Estonian ones or the English Channel. And the experienced Swedish or Finnish crews are replaced with less-experienced Estonian crews.

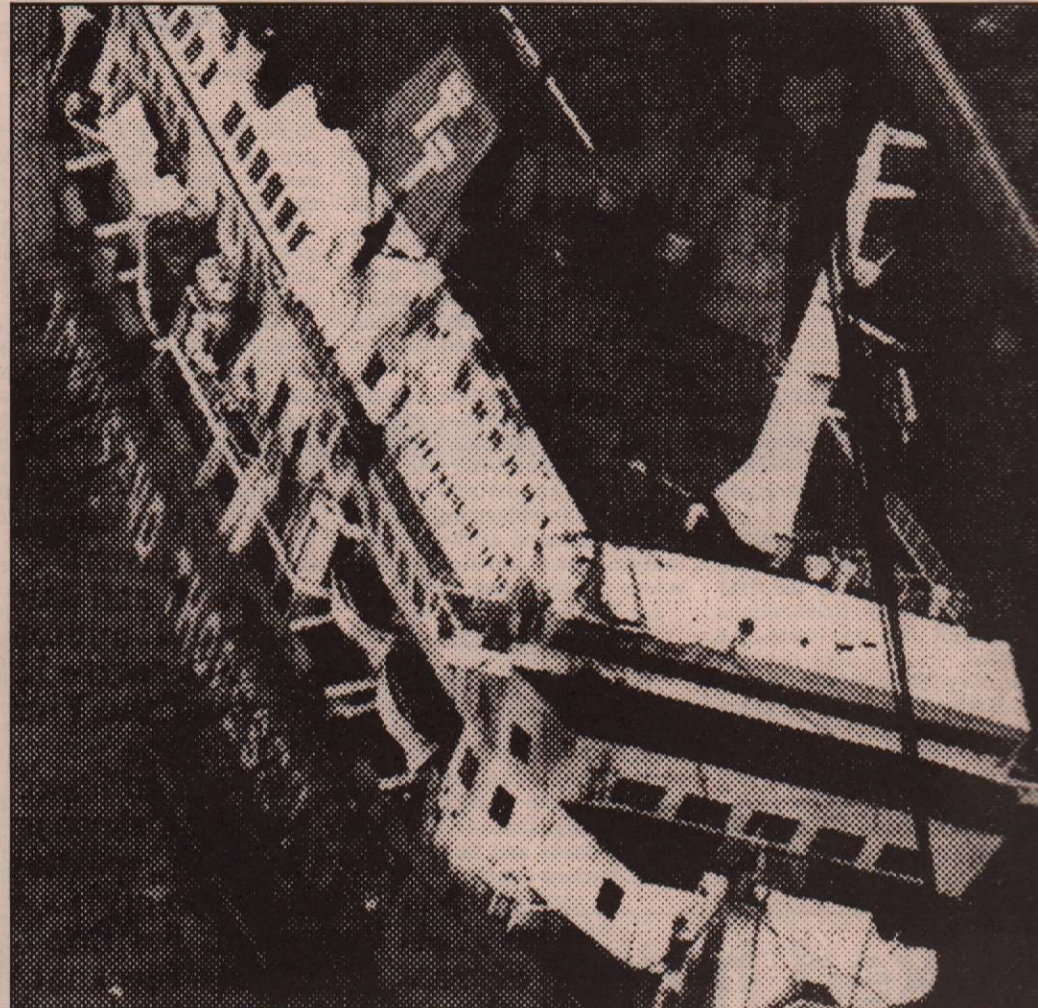
BY BILL WILLIAMS
IN SWEDEN
AND PAUL DAY

The ferry companies are always quick to blame the crews for such disasters, yet the crews have to work with unsafe vessels to make the companies a quick buck. It does not occur to companies to inform passengers directly about safety measures. There are no safety drills.

On the 'Estonia', many routine on-board safety operations did not work, reducing the probability of rescue. Because of the instability of these ferries, and the speed with which they will sink, even a thorough knowledge of all safety routines and the efficiency of all on-board operations will only be of partial value.

Several trade union groups were on board the 'Estonia'. Some union leaders have called for a boycott of ferries until safety is improved. This has had little effect so far — bookings are down by only 5 per cent.

■ See editorial page 2.



'Estonia' appears to have sunk for similar reasons to the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' in 1987 (abc)

Arafat is 'playing with fire'

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

AFTER 40 of its supporters were detained last weekend, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) hit out at what it called a 'stupid campaign of repression' being carried out by police controlled by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on behalf of the Israeli occupiers.

'Arafat's servile authority is playing with fire and sowing the seeds of discord,' the DFLP warned in a statement from Damascus, Syria.

Arafat's Palestine National Authority (PNA) ordered a clampdown, claiming a pamphlet distributed by the DFLP

'threatened civil war'. The left-nationalist DFLP opposed the PLO's US-brokered 'peace' deal with Israel.

Under the deal, the PLO has control of only the Gaza Strip and an enclave around Jericho, and Palestinian police have no powers against armed Zionist settlers. Yet the police are starting to throw their weight about against Palestinian opponents.

Arafat has told his officials to prepare for elections to a 100-member legislative council in November, although Israel says a 24-seat administrative authority should do.

There is tension within Arafat's Fatah group as to who should stand in the elections. 'We will refuse any list appoint-

ed by the leadership, or by Mr Arafat,' said Fatah's general-secretary within the occupied territories, Marwan Barghouti.

The PNA's closure of the newspaper 'An-Nahar' at the end of July reinforced widespread fears about the its attitude to democratic rights.

Masked

On 27 July, hearing copies of their paper had been confiscated at the Erez checkpoint into the Gaza Strip, 'An-Nahar' staff assumed, from past experience, that the Israeli military were responsible. But that afternoon masked men came to 'An-Nahar's' offices in east Jerusalem, and announced that the PNA had forbidden distribu-

tion of the paper in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem.

'An-Nahar' had upset people by supporting the Washington agreement between Israel and Jordan, which recognised the latter's King Hussein's stand on Jerusalem religious sites.

'The PNA has not liberated one inch of its land, cannot boast of one real achievement, yet already silencing its opposition,' the Jerusalem magazine 'Challenge' (September-October issue) commented.

'The PNA lacks even the gusto to create its own oppositional policies: it uses Israeli regulations and decrees. This is indeed telling about the nature of the budding Palestinian authority.'

Brazil young socialist dies in police cell

SOCIALISTS in Brazil are demanding a full investigation into the death of 18-year-old Vitorio Almeida, who was found hanged in a police cell in Parantins, in Amazonia state.

Vitorio, a student from a poor family who had to work to support his mother, was a member of the United Workers Socialist Party (PSTU). He was a candidate for the party in student union elections in Bumbodromo.

On Friday 2 September, Vitorio was on his way home from a party with a friend when they were stopped by military police and arrested. The following morning he was

found hanged in his cell.

The corpse was sent to the family with a death certificate, but there was no autopsy. The town does not have a coroner.

Exhumed

Ernesto Gradella, a PSTU member of the federal parliament, sent a fax message to the Amazonia state secretary for justice and public security, who agreed that Vitorio's body could be exhumed for a new inquest.

Dr Jose Carlos Cataldi of the Order of Brazilian Lawyers Human Rights Department has been nominated to represent the PSTU Amazonian comrades if

they need a lawyer.

But the PSTU says it is convinced that nothing will be done without a popular response, especially from the trades unions.

The party says Vitorio's death is one more in the continued brutal repression against workers, and especially black people, women and youth.

Two leading PSTU trades unionists, Jose Luis and Rosa Hernandez Sundermann, were murdered at their home in Sao Paulo in June. Months later, according to a PSTU journal, the police are no nearer identifying suspects.

The party has won wide sup-

port from the workers' movement and civil rights groups a committee for investigation and punishment.

The metalworkers' trade union at Sao Bernardo do Campo is producing campaign stickers in preparation for a rally on 13 October in the ABC industrial belt outside Sao Paulo.

Messages expressing concern over the death of Vitorio Almeida and demanding justice can be faxed to Dr Mario L. Campbell Marques, Brazil Secretary of State for Justice, Public Security and Citizenship, 092 622 3725.

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