UCS MEN READY FOR S IT IN

'Her won't accept sackings'

SW Reporter

GLASGOW: The fight to save the jobs of 8,000 workers at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders is continuing. On Tuesday it was reported that the management of Connell's yard had suspended work on a Clyde-designed container ship, No 121, even though all the materials were already on site.

This was discussed on Wednesday at a meeting in Govan of the Shipbuilders' Co-ordinating Committee, where it was decided to have a meeting with the company on Thursday to demand resumption of work on the ship. If this is not agreed to, then 'We will tell the workers to build it themselves', was the view of the Len-
house division of the ITF.

He added: 'We are not going to accept any redundancies or closures of the shipyards. If any are declared we will take over and run the yards ourselves. We have made all the necessary arrangements for this.'

Unemployment in Scotland has now reached crisis proportions and if the yards are closed it is estimated that a majority of workers will find other jobs.

UTOLD

by Laurie Flynn

THERE IS A SLAUGHTERHOUSE in the little Yorkshire town of Hedden Bridge. Its victims are human beings, people who have had the misfortune to work for Cape Asbestos since it brought its mill there after the last war.

Many three men in Hedden Bridge have already been forced to suffering from asbestosis, the killer industrial disease. Another 19 are suspected to have the same disease.

Every one of them works for Cape Asbestos. Reporters on Granada's World in Action team showed the work that Cape Asbestos had brought about this situation by deliberate and flagrant breaches of the industrial safety regulations. The 1931 Asbestos regulations insist that only specially designed boxes should be used for asbestos fibres. The men in Cape's warehouse were using sacks which let the dust through until the 1960s.

Nowhere in the mill were there proper extractor fans to take the dust away. In defiance of the regu-

lations, Cape let the employers breathe it.

Machines should be used to clean the mill but Cape Asbestos used the hand method until 1962. When a factory inspector came near the place the men were instructed to cover this up.

Cape Asbestos deliberately sacri-

ficed the lives of their employees in their quest for a cheap product and high profits.

A lawyer with some know-

ledge of the case told Socialist Work-
er this week that Cape had been com-
mitting murder in the cause of profit. What they had done was, he said, 'just as criminal as bomb- ing people with napalm. In fact the casualty rate at Cape is probably proportionately higher than in Vietnam. There is little chance of escape from asbestos.

Burly three men, aged 33, 40 and 50, in their forties, were afflicted by the disease, all employed in the same department.

These three workers who have ever had the pleasure of seeing their labour in the Accident Mill.

There was an attempt to unionise the factory after the war. Cape, however, put the dreadful specter of the General and Municipal Workers' Union firmly in its place. The reluc-
tance of the GMWU and the trade union movement in general to take up the health question made sure there was never any other attempt to take the employers on.

Mr C J Plumbe, Chief Inspector of Factories, is on record as having said: 'The Inspectorate has never aimed at, and has never achieved, a rigorous enforcement of the act such as a Teutonic country might attempt.'

Prices jump—and to come worse

FOOD PRICES are continuing to shoot up at a record rate. Over the last 11 months they have gone up by 10.4 per cent.

The head of the Grocers' Feder-
ation has estimated that they will rise another 19 per cent in the next year. And if the government is successful in its Common Market efforts, they will rise even more. The Financial Times calculated that this could boost the price of beef and butter 'by as much as 50 per cent'.

Such figures give the lie to the Tories' claim that 'excessive' wage claims are responsible for rising prices. Even the Food Manufacturers' Federation has pointed out that the major cause of rising food prices has been 'dearer raw materials and pack-

The government is going ahead with its attempts to force down wage rises to an average of less than 5 per cent. Workers who are not successful in defeating the government's move are going to find themselves forced to eat less. Their families will have to trim and save, cutting down on the necessities of life.

IRISH CONFERENCE

Irish unease is felt at last 15 BRANCHES: Irish conference Saturday 3 July, 7pm at B Cornmarket Gardens, London E2. Open only to 15 members. These sessions including, 'Cowards and nation in the Irish struggle', 'The left in Ireland', 'Solidarity and the role of IS in Britain'. Please notify national secretary immediately of names of all delegates.

MURSEYSHIRE UNEMPLOYMENT—SPECIAL REPORT PAGES 4 & 5
Europe: no bubbly for the workers

THE LEADERS of the Tory Party have resolved their difficulties in Luxembourg. They have at long last overcome the difficulties of the successful integration of British big business into the Common Market. The champagne flowed freely as they celebrated the prospect of a more profitable future.

One hurdle still faces them. They have to manoeuvre to ensure a parliamentary majority for entry. And they believe that they cannot be sure of a majority unless the Party votes with them.

All this has little to do with 'democracy'. Under the present organisation of society, those who have economic power also have political power. The last Labour government followed the policies of big business, not of the majority of people who voted for it. At present unemployment rises, although the 'majority of people' want employment. But in order to make people believe that they themselves make decisions, big business has to give the pretence that parliament and elections have any meaning. It has to avoid the appearance of the difficulties that be. On odd occasion, however, it does. The Common Market issue could be one. A small section of the Tory Party opposes the Common Market on the basis that it would be in the interests of big business. Everyone who seriously stands for the interests of the working class should support them.

But this does not mean any support for the antics of many of the opponents of the Common Market. More often than not they are the working class themselves. The working class does not have a common market strategy. It does not operate like the labour aristocracy to defend the interests of big business. The working class has fought in the struggle against the Common Market because it is a betrayal of Britain (Morning Star, 24 June). The Midlands Communist Party has even given its support to the opposition to the common market sale with the slogan 'Market No On' a Union Jack background.

Successful by people who claim to have the interests of the international working class in mind. They are deaf to the demands of the working class. This is a flag which has been used to con successive generations of workers to the fight against British big business. A flag that through the Third Front and the Socialist League before has stood for exploitation and robbery.

These antics create the illusion that British workers and British employers are now leading a united struggle against big business. The reality is that the battles play into the hands of those (whether 'for' or 'against' the Common Market) who demand wage cuts and productivity bargaining in order to help "our" industry. This battle is fought by Britain's employers for the benefit of the bosses.

The Common Market is an attempt to bolster up the strength of big business in Britain. This is seen by the attempt to fight capitalist policies on all the line—against unemployment, antiunion laws, welfare cuts and the like. The alternative to all of this is the success of the opposition to the Common Market in a Socialist United States of Europe. And that struggle cannot benefit if it is not from any form of joint campaign or verbal concessions to flag waving with reactionary ideas.

A SNIFF FROM THE SEWER

EVERY NOW AND THEN some leak, or revelation gives an insight into the workings of the bourgeois ruling class. The sneer of the leaders of the Northumbria Power Station workers that they had "sawed through the heads of all the Esk statesmen" is one. The revelations aren't that startling. What socialists have been saying for years is now being admitted to the imperialsists' minds, even though they denied it in public. In 1964 President Johnson of the US said publicly that the aim of the war was to secure an 'independent, nonCommunist South Vietnam'. By the mid-60s McNamara was agreeing that the real goal was 'not to help friends but to contain China'. His assistant McNaff had put it more squarely in 1965. In 1964 one point out to issue a few leaks to the public, and if they didn't work, then he went. One per cent—to keep South Vietnam territory from Chinese hands. One per cent—to permit the people of South Vietnam to enjoy a better, free way of life.

The whole history of world imperialist aggression has only come into the open—because the capitalists have been afraid to raise the issue during the cold war period, because they feared that the 'liberation' processes have failed totally in their task of 'liberating' Vietnam. Robert Kennedy only came out on the issue when Senator McCarthy had shown that he could vote his way. The heroic fighters of the National Liberation Front have transformed the ordinary American's awareness of the world he lives in and the politicians are in danger of being killed in the hands that place themselves at the head of this new movement.

Perhaps McNaff should have the last word. He is credited with being involved about 'the likelihood that you people are now just not going to believe in the government, and in their history'. It's our job to tell them.
Repression in Mexico to please American big business

Mike Gonzalez reports on the crackdown by government-supported gangs of thugs

ON 10 JUNE a student demonstration on its way from the Polytechnic Institute in Mexico City was savagely attacked. Gangs of youths armed with submachine guns, rifles and bamboo spears killed and injured hundreds of people. Later the gangs broke into the hospital where the students were receiving attention, stopped operations, raped nurses and finished off several severely injured students. Their final score was some 40 dead and nearly 2000 injured. The police and the army, who were present, stood by and did nothing.

Behind the incident lies a far wider political issue. It was an answer to the question: how would the new government react to the rebirth of the student movement previously decimated after the murder of nearly 400 people in October 1968?

The thugs are not merely street gangs, but organised groups of civilian shock troops who have been undergoing military training for over a year now at No.1 Military Camp in Mexico City. They are recruited from among the poor, the uneducated, the peasants recently arrived in the city and who live in the shanty towns that ring the metropolis.

It has been common for politicians in Mexico to make use of such ragged armies, but they have become almost a permanent feature of post-1968 Mexico. In 1970, for example, five school children died in the High Schools as a result of a sustained reign of terror in the schools and universities.

The porraz, as they are called, are gangs of thugs, often armed, some of whom go to school for more than a decade. Their role seems to be that of dividing and terrorising school children and students, to stop them organising themselves either politically or for simple self-defence purposes.

The gangs were originally organised by the Director of the High School system himself as a strong-arm support for his own political party. And they have been used time and again for directly political purposes. In 1966, for example, armed thugs were responsible for fixing the resignation of the Liberal Rector of the University.

Power in Mexico is held by a single party, the PRI—Revolutionary Institutional Party. The opposition parties are puppet organisations, maintained in order to preserve the appearance of democracy.

Mexico has become a model for ordered development along the Western model in Latin America. A middle class has made up some 10 per cent of the population, enjoys around 75 per cent of the national income. A majority of less than 2 per cent holds more than 50 per cent of that sum and runs government and country according to its will.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910, far from destroying the old ruling class, simply amalgamated it with an emerging middle class, and out of that alliance have come today's rulers. The PRI is more than a party. It is the national organisation that functions in the name of the whole of life to maintain oppression.

Ruthless

Whatever the gestures towards liberation and the declaration of a "new order" run along totalitarian lines. The trade unions, even when independent, have no more life than 1968. They are dependent on government spending, led by its appointees and controlled at every level by party members. Grass roots activity is quickly ruthlessly smashed (the railwaymen's movement of 1958, the doctors' movement of 1965, the Ayotla textile strike of 1970).

The system has no legality since corruption is not only rife but systematically organised. All public activity is tightly controlled, all dissent absorbed or crushed. What was significant about the 1968 movement was that the children of the middle class, the future administrators of a new order, and for that reason so quickly crushed as the workers challenged the system in its own terms. They went in no direction in their political programme but, enthused by the declaration of the Constitution but they did it at a time when Mexico's democratic image was being sold to the world.

Stability

The middle class, always anxious to be convinced, was not the signs it was looking for. Octavio Paz, for example, poet and one-time opponent of the system, recanted and led his personal following into the government camp. The middle class followed suit: after all, all they were interested in was a guarantee of stability and orderly progress.

Nevertheless, it was still necessary for Echeverria to ruthlessly put down all signs of opposition in order to prove his toughness and reliability to the United States. Despite the fact that Mexican law forbids foreigners to hold majority shares in any key industry, United States' investors in fact control the Mexican economy. While agriculture is in native hands, for example, the distribution of agricultural products is in Anderson Clayton monopoly.

The links between the two governments are very close. Now, faced with the threat from the nationalist military regimes of Peru and Bolivia, as well as from Chile, the United States has seen the urgent need for an peaceful alliance in Latin America to counteract their influence.

This alliance, based on the repressive militarist dictatorships of Central America, will, it believes, be led by Mexico.

Top: porraz brutally attacking a demonstrator in Mexico City this month.

Links

By September, the student movement had begun to win battles outside its own camp—among workers, the small farmers and even the petrol workers, even the bureaucrats when they were forced to march in support of the government, changed their descent through the streets.

Conventional methods of police repression had not worked, and what had been called a student ramp was becoming a national political movement it had to be crushed.

On 2 October nearly 400 people were systematically massacred. The official versions were that all dead were shot in the street.

The prisoners remained in jail awaiting their sentences, until the beginning of this year. They were all accused of being gang members and given long sentences ranging from ten years to life on occasion.

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Nevertheless, it was still necessary to persuade the incoming dictator, Luis Echeverria, should be able to display his authoritarianism by releasing them assuming power.

In fact, they were released in drips and drabs, during the first five months of this year. Most were sent into exile, though the best known were freed unconditionally in order to placate international public opinion.

The new president, Echeverria's strength lies in his control over the sprawling bureaucracy responsible for administering power. Although the membership of the party is by no means unanimously behind him, his control over the actual machinery of power permits him to adopt a totally uncompromising attitude.

He has now embarked on a systematic elimination of the opposition. Yet only a few months ago liberal intellectuals were insisting that Mexico was about to enter into a new phase of democracy that might be possible to found a meaningful opposition. This view is a reflection of the intellectuals' own lack of any political tradition and position of compromise within the system.

With the leadership dead, in hiding or in jail, and those who had participated demoralised and afraid, the movement of 1968 collapsed and the people were silent for more than two years.

1970 ended the presidential term of Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. During that year, Echeverria toured the country, promising agricultural progress, greater democratization, anti-imperialism and a permanent public dialogue.

When he assumed power, a number of young professionals were given posts in the new regime, absorbing into the power structure a sector which might, had its ambitions been frustrated, proved to be troublesome in the future.

Vital reading for all Socialists and trade unionists

The Fight against Racism

by Mike Caffoor

SPECIAL ISSUE ON TRADE UNIONISM

International Socialism 48

The Fight against Racism

Mike Caffoor

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Merseyside trade unionists will march on Saturday at Kirkby to Livingston

ON 17 JUNE, redundancy notices were sent out to half the labour force at Fisher-Bendix, manufacturers of household appliances, on the Kirkby Industrial Estate, 605 workers’ jobs have been threatened. This follows the threat of 176 jobs earlier in the year.

The factory was built by BMC to manufacture Bendix washing machines and other appliances and was designed to employ 2,350 employees, although it never took on more than 2,500. In February the company decided to discontinue production of sink-tops and 175 workers were made redundant.

In May, the company was taken over by Thorn Electrical Industries. Later they announced that they would stop manufacturing washing machines. A company spokesperson said, "The Bendix business continues to lose money, but we think it is capable of paying its way with the additional skills and efficiency gained into it."

It is now known that the company has signed an agreement with a Spanish firm to manufacture 20,000 tumble dryers a year, which the trade unionists say will be the same plan of operation as the factory in Kirkby.

The Tory government cannot provide the necessary investment in a cheap and durable labour force skilled enough to make the necessary changes to the plant to turn it into a Spanish factory for the production of tumble dryers. It is the task of the shop stewards’ committee and the company management to find a solution from the company and the government to which the workforce will have no say.

The company management agreed to start redundancies in the JUNE 1978 edition of the CUN 1978. The Fisher-Bendix redundancies were called to a halt by the shop stewards committee which has been able to stop the redundancy process.

The redundancies of workers to a whole scale of redundancies on Merseyside which have been given notices of redundancy. The majority of shop stewards — AES, FOGWU, and the local TUC — have been made aware of the workers’ concerns and are similarly threatened.

The workers have taken action to defend their jobs. They returned their redundancies to the management and blocked the exit gates for the day. Balcony structures had also been taken down.

The situation is as bad elsewhere on Merseyside. Among the most affected are the employees of the company’s other factory, which is at present closed.

The total workforce on Merseyside and the government have a responsibility to ensure that effective action is taken to prevent the loss of jobs on Merseyside.

Markets: To prevent the government from the system of investment grants is a half measures solution.

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By Gerry Conroy Unemployed Kirkby worker

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pool to protest at unemployment in the area

WHAT MUST BE DONE

A CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

The situation is dire. Unemployment is rising. People are losing their jobs. Workers are being exploited. It is time to take action against this unscrupulous capitalist system.

Shutting down businesses is one way to protest against unemployment. People need jobs, and the capitalist system is failing them. This is a call to action.
Tory anti-union legislation

by ROGER ROSEWELL
Social Worker Industrial Correspondent

TORQUAY Town Hall is a dreary place, a special venue last week for the launching of the Confederation of Employers and Engineering Unions to hold their annual Conference. For four days they discussed the most vital problems facing three and a half million engineering workers. They talked about wages, conditions, the Industrial Relations Bill, procedure agreement and the hardship of unemployment. They passed resolutions on these major problems and yet it was clear throughout that, with one or two exceptions, they had no serious intention of doing anything about them.

Confederation conferences are a special treat for these assorted union leaders. The sessions do not start until 10 in the morning and the lunchbreak lasts for two hours. The speeches are usually read from notes and some years ago one right wing and confused speaker read out a wrong speech in a discussion on the aircrew industry. It was several minutes before he and the delegates woke up to the fact that regional unemployment was not referred to in the motion.

For some delegates the uninflected highbrow was an adequate form of reception. Three coaches were provided to take them to the event, but to justify that equality hasn’t yet penetrated the union type of hangover and was quite prepared to do for the members of the executive.

The reception was held at Oldway Manor, the former home of the Singer Sewing machines family Dynasty. A writer of Mr Paris Eugène Singer, the third son of the founder and of the Singer being alread in 1904 to the style of the Palace of Versailles.

The journey saw states and imperial and government buildings and the fitting surroundings as the delegates queued at the door of the, Victoria Room, where a green carpet, was announced, then receive a hand-shake of the delegates to the music of a local Palm Court quartet.

It was the first time a conference had been attached to a some of this month. The leaders said that the union had been included at the request of a speaker in a debate on the Industrial Relations Bill. But the education of the executive members. Jack Young of the Woodworkers, present, last but not least, said: “We’ve got this finished in order that we can go and have a bit of a rest.”

Resolution

The fact that the Tory semi the most recent anti-trade union legislation over a century paid into insignificance compared to the battle for capital.

On Wednesday morning Hugh Scrase, the Engineers’ President, moved the main resolution calling for a debate, an impressive motion and was carried unanimously. He demanded that a full debate on the measure be held in the House of Commons. Scrase has grave danger. He recommend that, when the agreement ends, shop stewards should attempt to sign local political unions with their employers incorporating the approved “statutory” condition. It was pointed out that the states quota clauses existed, among others. A British Transport Docks, the basic industry, gold and jewellery and in nuclear instrumentation. He neglected to say, however, that in the Act, it would be less that in these circumstances, some of the local agreements might become legally enforceable. It might also be difficult for weak and poorly negotiated factories to operate the proposals.

Industrial action

The only way that this dangerous fragmentation can be avoided is by shop stewards refusing to negotiate local agreements. The risk of this would be to be that any agreement reached in industrial action could be taken. Food with this kind of situation there is little doubt that the employers who announced last week that a poll of 80 per cent of them to vote for the employers’ demands, could be faced to retreat.

An additional cause for concern is that the unions have accepted that the first agreement in any new agreement will become to insecurity that manages the rest of the negotiations.

The best hope of the whole conference was made during the debate on the Industrial Relations Bill. It came from Mr. Cook, Director of the General and Technical Section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineers Workers (General Data).

He called on the Confederation to use its industrial strength to defeat the Tory Act. He also, local agreements that this situation could not be allowed to the workers. He was one of the leaders that condemned the Bill for its means.

Two speakers opposed the motion. Ken Baker from the General and Municipal did not explain why, but did surprise the audience by saying that the Confederation had to call a special conference to consider whether or not to register. Everyone present expects that they will decide to do so.

Scandalous

Roy Ghanam from the Clerical and Personal Office Workers was the other opponent. He made a scathing contribution. One of his more remarkable comments was: “Since we stopped having these debates we’ve saved 28 million on the balance sheets.”

The motion was finally carried with the Metal Mechanics and Patternmakers joining the 570 votes for the motion. The Electricians and Boilermakers both voted against.

No fighting leadership came from the General Council. That, at any rate, was the subject of the meeting.

Democratic rights don’t add up to real democracy

By DUNCAN HALLAS

The Greek philosopher Aristotle classified governments according to which class effectively ruled. There was aristocracy, the rule of land- owning nobles; oligarchy, the rule of the town rich (merchants, moneylenders etc.) and there was democracy, the rule of the people (which he meant the free citizens of a city state) over and against the other classes.

The modern social scientist, M Albyow, sums up the view of conservative, liberal and labour educationalists and propagandists, that Aristotile’s ideas are all adapted to modern social scientific requirements. It is the modern wish to enforce democracy on every form of the rule of class, but as rule for the good of the whole people.

For modern social scientists, the ruling class and you have the matter in a nutshell. In any society divided into classes there is necessarily a ruling class, that controls the means of production—the means that is of keeping the society going, from the factories and gold, and of the more exploited classes that actually produce the wealth that is shared very unequally between the classes. And in ‘modern social scientific’ Britain’s 3 per cent of the population own 75 per cent of the wealth, 10 per cent own 80 per cent of the wealth and the overwhelming majority—90 per cent—own between them only 20 per cent of the wealth (Income Distribution and Property Ownership by Professor J E Meade).

These figures actually underestimate the position because the percentage of the population owning has been rising. The really key indicator is the fact that 1 per cent of the population own 80 per cent of all share capital. That 1 per cent is the core of the ruling class.

Now rule for the good of the whole people is out of the question when there are conflicting class interests. There are no heaven-blessedsentiments standing outside society who are about the struggle and able to rule in the common interest. Nor is there a common interest. In short we do not have democracy in Britain. We have what Aristotle called oligarchy.

Yet most people believe that Britain is a democracy and it is not simple ignorance that makes them think so. Compare Britain with Spain or Russia.

Where we have trade unions that are not simply part of the state machine, we have a considerable degree of free speech. Papers like Socialist Worker can attack the system work in and work out with only very occasional prosecutions. We can even cast votes, six or seven times in a lifetime, that can actually turn out a government. Not one of these things is true of Spain or Russia or indeed of the majority of countries in the world.

Fought for

We have in fact some very important democratic rights. They have not been fought for in a plain. Each and every one of them has had to be fought for by working people. And they are continually eroded when they look like becoming a threat to our rulers. They have to be defended—they are our conquests. But they do not add up to democracy.

The whole propaganda machine of the ruling class—TV, radio, press, schools, churches and universities—spends a great part of its efforts trying to hide this fact. Aristotle wrote in a society in which most people could not read. He could afford to tell the truth. His modern counterparts are in this position. They have to lie and to erect their lies into a whole system of hypocrisy.

It is possible for the rulers of countries like Britain to use ‘democracy’ as an ideology because they have been able in various ways to minimise the effects of democratic rights and to use the forms of democratic rule against democratic policies.

Our ‘free press’ is a good example. When newspapers first appeared they were subject to government licence. Then there was a tax—a stamp duty—put on each copy so that the price of a paper was far beyond the means of working men. Working men produced illegal, unstampable newspapers. One of the most famous was Hetherington’s ‘Poor Man’s Journal’. It proudly advertised itself as ‘A Established contrary to law, which will contain news, intelligence, opinions and remarks and observations therein, tending decidedly to excite hatred and contempt of the government and constitution of the country as by law established and will be published for the sum of ONE PENNY’ (the stamp duty was sixpence).

More than five hundred men and women went to prison in less than four years for selling the ‘Guardian’. In the end they won. The stamp duty was abolished. ‘The Guardian’ went on until the end of the century, abolished. The free press had arrived. It did not last long.

Today the owners of the whole mass circulation press and practically all periodicals and magazines—not to mention commercial television—could comfortably assemble in a small room. The power of money, of capital, has been able to take the democratic form and put into the most undemocratic content. ‘Democracy’ under these circumstances means capitalist rule.
CINEMA

IT HAS at last become possible for those of us who do not live in the West End of London to see Visconti’s much admired Death in Venice (some North London ABCs). It is easy to see why this adaptation of Thomas Mann’s short story received such ecstatic applause from reviews in the Sunday Times. It has been called ‘one of the greatest films since the war’.

As always in a Visconti film the photography is quiet and beautifully and absolutely central to the film’s overall impact. So much is this the case that the dialogue of the film occupies only 5-10 minutes out of the 130 minutes of running time.

Again, sensitive and intelligent use is made of Mann’s Third and Fifth symphonies to result in a magnificent visual and aural experience.

But the location of a film and Death in Venice is fatally flawed by Visconti’s failure to realize the characters and indeed the only relationship in the film. This is between Gustave von Aschenbach, an ageing and distastefully but friendly lecher, and a beautiful Polish youth whom he meets in a recuperative holiday in Venice.

While bringing out the inevitably obsolescent affections of a young relationship, Visconti fails to provide the dreamer with the essential background to the character of Aschenbach which is important for an understanding of his fate and tragic passion.

Part of the problem is that in Mann’s story, Aschenbach is a writer, not a composer and is a man who has struggled all his life with the temptations of the flesh, of laxity and levity, and this is highlighted in his novels just these same moral problems.

The blooming of his desire for this perfect youth attain a tragic dimension by way of his gradual rebellion of all he has ever written about sex and love. By his rebellion he contracts all his own deeply-held moral beliefs—this is his immense and private tragedy.

In the film this is hinted at but never mentioned. We do see the composer arguing over the principles of art and the meaning of art and the discussions are abstract and generalized and fail to illuminate the film’s central dilemma.

For Mann, Death in Venice was an illustration of his life-long concerns with the tension between art and reality, between the unfettered realm of imagination and the stern discipline of work. In Visconti’s hands this complex and specific problem is reduced to a vaguely but fairly commonplace illustration of the odyssey of growing old.

As such, Death in Venice is an object lesson of the dangers of adapting novels or stories, for the screen. Mann’s story is a deep and wholly serious attempt to come to terms with the problems of artistic creation.

In the final analysis, Visconti is only able to understand this theme although he uses all of his many talents in so doing. The film is a tremendously visual success.

Dick Bogarde gives the performance of a lifetime in a role he is infinitely pitiful figure of a middle-aged man overcome for the first time in his life by an obsessive passion. And Mahler’s music makes a fascinating and sometimes rather beautiful illustration to the ancient beauty of the city of Venice.

But this is not enough. Films are more than pretty views and excellent music. Sadly I can only advise readers to read Mann’s short story and see the film at home for its own sake. It is too rare for photography and haunting music.

Martin Tomkinson

WITH Bernard Braden having ‘stuck’ off to the commercial side, the late-night Saturday talk show on BCB has passed to Michael Parkinson, a familiar small screen face, but still unknown for his Sunday Times column where he has mercilessly poked fun at the deadeath of sport and, in particular, the MCC signs anxious to play ‘non-potential’ cricket with South Africa.

As an inexact instrument, I hoped that Parkinson’s reputation might enhance the meandering boredom of weekend television. The former cricketer has a depressing ability to squeeze the life out of radishes, to turn them into smooth spokesmen for the prejudices of the ‘average’ middle-class viewer.

Kenneth Alpe of 24 Hours in another example of a writer who has often shown sympathies for the oppressed and exploited but who on television frequently acts like a tetchy schoolmaster confronted by rebellious pupils. What turns a verbal radical into a visual conformer? There may be open prejudice against them from the television bosses, but I suspect the truth is that they themselves feel they must conform and not be too outspoken if they are to survive in the lucrative celebrity opportunity market.

In his first programme Parkinson produced the self-confessed ‘socialist’, Ray Bellisario, who makes a living from taking intimate photographs of the Royal Family and proceeded to harangue him indignantly with the help of a spokesman from the Monarchist League, for his ‘extravagant international private’ and private’ and private’.

I do not see much adulation for Mr Bellisario’s chosen personality by both trade unionists, black people and pop festival supporters who are tried and abused daily by the millionaire press and television, the people people more worthy of Parkinson’s defence than the shooting, rich and rich parasites who constitute the Royal Family. In spite of Parkinson, the second show last Saturday came to life with a lively appearance of American film actress Shelley Winters, who in fact had spoken a few words which she interpreted with fear or favour in every quarter. Virtually brushing aside the slumber.

‘I’m a great fan of yours’, interview. Miss Winters doesn’t hold back over the show and told of her pre-Hollywood experience of groupie unionism in Woolworth’s in London. For a few minutes the thin whine of the audience drudged up as a real, warm-hearted lover of television’s growing and bouncy end of the screen. Great television. Television has many sides to it. It can be a weapon used by intelligentsia and to combat the fatalism.

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Strange goings on in the Methodist Church. The Methodist Conference last week expelled the Rev Raymond Billington because part of a book he has written were held to be inconsistent with church doctrine.

Mr Billington’s book, The Christian Outsider, was published by the official Methodist book house and was described by them as a ‘moral contribution to the debate about the future of the Christian presence in human society.”

Mr Billington said: “This has hardly come as a surprise... I have said in public that I am an atheist. The word ‘god’ has never been used to describe a service I have conducted over the past three years and yet I gather I am more in demand to conduct...”

Maxwell’s house

EMPLOYEES at Pergamon Press in Oxford suffer harsh working conditions. They have no sick pay until they work for the firm for six months, if they are 15 minutes late for work they lose an hour’s pay, half an hour late and they are docked half a day. They need permission to eat the lavatory and four times a day a voice books over the Tannoy system: ‘It is now time to start work. Go to the allocated working time.’

The firm’s managing director is the Rev Raymond Billington. Mr Billington said: “This has hardly come as a surprise... I have said in public that I am an atheist. The word ‘god’ has never been used to describe a service I have conducted over the past three years and yet I gather I am more in demand to conduct...”

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No pit city

MEMO to Sir Keith Joseph, government overlord of the social services. The great nightmare that haunts his waking hours is the number of shambles work shy individuals living off the state.

Hard-hearted in New York City have come up with a solution that will do little appeal to Joseph. Under new state welfare legislation, the city has sent notices to some 30,000 of its 1,200,000 welfare cases advising them that they will have to work for the city to continue receiving public assistance.

The corporation is finding it difficult to staff some of its essential services so it has hit on the bright idea of using people on welfare to work in hospitals, schools and parks.

‘What do you mean, you’ve only got one leg?’ ‘If you’re a hadn’t, isn’t it?’

David East
Steel call for plant takeover

SW Reporter

SHEFFIELD: Shop stewards are threatening to occupy local steel plants if employers go ahead with plans to "rationalise" and make some 5000 workers redundant.

The stewards' announcement follows a statement this week that the British Steel Corporation is entering into a deal with members of the National Labour Relations Group (NALGO) to rationalise its operations. Thirteen plants operated by the company in Britain are to be cut to seven. The company says that this will save 5000 workers' jobs, but the union claims that the plan will result in the loss of 5000 workers.

In the wake of the announcement, shop stewards have called for a one-day strike at the River Don works in Sheffield on Wednesday. The strike is planned as a protest at the rationalisation of the River Don steelworks.

Harry Brown, the managing director of BSC, welcomed the acquisition of the steel plants by the new private company.

In a statement, the SMMT said: "Following the Humber strike, we are concerned that the situation at the River Don works is likely to be similar to that at the Humber works. This is why we have called for a one-day strike at the River Don works on Wednesday."

The union executive has already rejected the employers' offers of £400 and compensation for the workers. The strike is expected to last for one day.