



LABOUR AND TUC SWING TO RIGHT

SINCE the general election in June, Kinnock and the TUC leaders have turned the helm sharply to the right. The forthcoming Labour Party and TUC conferences are being stage-managed to stamp the seal of approval on this rightwards lurch.

The depth of the economic and social crisis has abolished the reformist pipe-dream of class peace, stability and a few crumbs from the master's table. During the post-war boom, the working class was able to force concessions out of the ruling class in the form of the extension of council housing, social services, health care, education and the nationalisation of some industries. Every gain made by the working class in that period is now under attack. The Labour and trade-union leaders can no longer produce any reforms and are now openly taking on the role of policing the working class in the service of the capitalist state.

Kinnock's development mirrors that of social democracy on a world scale. In Italy, Craxi's 'Socialist' Party has joined the latest coalition of capitalist parties, following the June elections. Spain's 'socialist' government led by Felipe Gonzalez attacks workers, students and youth and is met by waves of strikes and street confrontations. The French 'socialist' President Mitterrand drives up unemployment. The Australian Labour Party government, re-elected in July, has earned praise from big business for its 'Thatcherite' austerity policies.

The Tories have their boot firmly on the neck of the Labour and TUC bureaucracies in order to carry out further massive attacks on jobs and workers' living standards. While Thatcher prepares to introduce anti-union law No.4, a poll tax, a range of attacks on the 'inner cities', further privatisation and new methods of compelling youth on to cheap labour schemes, Kinnock is working on his 'image'.

Behind the slick salesmanship and the glib advertising, the line being pumped out that Labour ran its best election campaign ever (but lost!) has a serious side. The Labour leaders are desperate to offload their electoral defeat onto the working class and face it up to the 'new reality'. On election night, the smooth-talking front-man Bryan Gould attributed the Tory victory to 'the low expectations of the British people'.

The answer according to Kinnock, Hattersley and Gould is to appeal to the 'self-interest' of the majority of 'affluent Britain' — 'the home-owning, credit card-carrying majority'. It has taken

By the Editorial Board

permanent mass unemployment for the geniuses of Walworth Road to make this discovery! This appeal to bourgeois individualism and the property-owning middle class is not accidental.

Following the miners' strike of 1984-5, the Labour and TUC leaders' slogan is 'Never Again', and they are proceeding to junk the vestiges of class politics. A measure of the Labour leaders' intentions are the overtures being made to the discredited Liberal Party in the wake of the election and amid the crisis breaking up the Alliance. The aim is to create an 'anti-Tory' consensus in which the Liberal 'tail' will wag the Labour 'dog'.

The Labour Party and the TUC are being 'restructured' in an attempt to prevent the working class from taking on the capitalist state. The 'reform' measures proposed by Kinnock are designed to make the leadership clique self-perpetuating and unremovable. They include:

- Taking selection of MPs away from the General Management Committees of local Labour Parties and instituting 'one member, one vote' ballots.
- The creation of an unelected 'leader's committee' or 'inner cabinet' to usurp the rights of the elected National Executive Committee.

A crucial role in covering up the reactionary role of Kinnock and Willis is played by the parliamentary and trade-union 'lefts'. One by one these empty windbags are declaring their support for the 'new reality'. Former GLC leader Ken Livingstone declared that Kinnock had been 'on top of his form' during the election campaign and attributed the Tory victory to the 'decline of the industrial working class'. Hard on his heels has come the spectacle of Haringey and Sheffield council leaders now elevated to parliament, Bernie Grant and David Blunkett, appealing to Thatcher not to neglect the inner cities. At the same time Grant votes to comply with the Tories' 'rate-capped' support grant for Haringey!

Numbers of 'left' MPs, including veteran Martin Flannery, have crossed over from the Campaign Group to the Kinnockite 'Tribune' Group.

On the eve of the 1926 General Strike, Leon Trotsky wrote: 'The left middleheads are incapable of power; but if through the turn of events it fell into their hands they would hasten to pass it over to their elder brothers on the right.'

Kinnock has repaid the loyalty of the 'lefts' by excluding them from all the main front

bench opposition posts, which have gone to extreme right-wingers — Gerald Kaufman, John Cunningham and John Smith.

A parallel development is taking place in the trade-union bureaucracy. The left noises made by the NUPE leadership on the eve of the election have been replaced by frightened squeals. Rodney Bickerstaffe, NUPE General Secretary has discovered that trade unions have a 'negative image' and that they have been represented as 'bullying, threatening and undemocratic'. His deputy general secretary and chair of Labour's Home Policy Committee, Tom Sawyer, chimes in with a proposal to turn towards the small-investing middle class who care 'more about their homes and their prosperity'.

They join hands with the openly right-wing TUC majority who have accepted a major policy document written by Willis calling for a 'new role' for the trade unions. It proposes an accommodation to the single-union deals of the engineering and electricians' unions and a concentration on membership fringe benefits rather than an overall 'economic and political' struggle against the Tories.

Arthur Scargill has made the theme of recent speeches the need for proportional representation. This call for coalition government with the SDP and the Liberals is the brainchild of Professor Eric Hobsbawm, leading 'theoretician' of the Euro-Stalinist Communist Party of Great Britain — whose members led the campaign to call off the miners' strike in 1985, and who are now cheering for six-day working in the pits.

The disgusting stench of betrayal exuding from Congress House and Walworth Road is in direct opposition to the struggles of miners, postal workers, civil servants, teachers and bus workers which have taken place over recent months. Trotsky wrote to British workers in 1929: 'The trade union bureaucracy is the chief instrument for your oppression by the bourgeois state. Power must be wrested from the hands of the bourgeoisie and for that its principal agent, the trade union bureaucracy, must be overthrown.'

A major crisis is opening up in reformism. The 'leaders' sit on a pyramid of nine million workers. The Labour and trade-union bureaucrats will not be uprooted by rank-and-file opposition, but only through the struggle to replace them with a revolutionary leadership.

The following programme of



THERE was a mass lobby of Westminster City Council on July 29 as it met to agree the privatisation of in-house catering and cleaning. The protest against the sale of vital services was organised by the local government officers' union NALGO and the public employees' union NUPE. NALGO members employed by the council have voted in a ballot to refuse to co-operate with any work concerned with the tendering-out of council services.

demands must be fought for throughout the trade-union and labour movement in order to expose and drive out the right-wing leaders and those who give them 'left' cover, mobilise the working class against the Tories, and build the leadership necessary to carry this struggle through to its conclusion — the smashing of the capitalist state and the establishment of a socialist society.

● The TUC leaders must end the farce of trying to persuade the Tories to talk to them —

sever all links with the National Economic Development Council (NEDDY).

● Trade unions must withdraw all support for the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) cheap-labour schemes.

● Open the trade unions to the unemployed and youth.

● End no-strike deals and single-union agreements — expel the EETPU from the TUC.

● Re-establish total opposition to the anti-union laws.

● End the 'bi-partisan' agreement with the Tories on Ireland

— repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, abolish no-jury Diplock courts, withdraw British troops now.

● Labour councillors must be pledged to refuse to implement Tory cuts and to boycott all work on introducing the poll tax.

● Councils of Action must be built in every area to unite trade unions, workers' parties, the unemployed and youth to resist attacks on jobs and living standards by the capitalist state.

● Build the Workers International League.

UNION-BUSTING DEAL AGREED BY LEADERS



ONE of the 56 Bangladeshi families evicted from their bed and breakfast accommodation by the Liberal-controlled London Borough of Tower Hamlets. On August 4, the High Court supported the council's racist claim that the families had made themselves 'intentionally homeless' when they ruled that the eviction did not breach child care and housing laws. Local authorities have no obligation to provide housing for those who have recently emigrated to Britain, said the judges.

FOUR unions representing workers at the General Motors Bedford van plant in Luton have signed away 370 jobs and accepted wide-ranging attacks on rights and conditions and the undermining of trade-union organisation in the factory.

National officials of the AEU engineering workers' union, the EETPU electricians and two smaller unions signed the agreement on July 25. Management announced that they would introduce the new regime on August 17 when the plant reopened after the annual holidays, despite the fact that the Transport and General Workers' Union, which represents nearly 30 per cent of the 1,700 workforce, refused to sign the deal.

General Motors announced its intention to hand over the plant to a new company formed jointly between itself and the Japanese motor manufacturer Isuzu in mid-May. When the plan was rejected by the union branches involved, GM issued an ultimatum to the workforce declaring that the deal would be shelved and the plant closed if 'Japanese-style' working practices were not adopted.

Three mass meetings overwhelmingly rejected the new conditions, the third vote being taken on the eve of the com-

By Daniel Evans

pany's deadline for acceptance of June 30. In desperation General Motors turned to the national union leaders. They made it known that a fight against the GM plan was out of the question and proceeded to organise a secret ballot in which voting was reduced to 'for or against closure'. By a narrow margin of 600 to 551 votes, GM's conditions were accepted but with the important 'no-strike' clause removed.

Apart from the redundancies, the new conditions will see hourly-paid production line workers lose four days' annual holiday and 24 minutes a day from the time currently allowed for personal relief. They will be reorganised into teams of twenty where, according to a 50-page 'summary' of the proposals, they will 'carry out any work within their capability, being reassigned as necessary, irrespective of their job responsibilities or classification'. Management, through an annual assessment of each worker's performance, will grade and pay the men according to what they think they are worth and not according to time served.

The Joint Union Negotiating Committee, consisting of the five unions represented at the plant, will be replaced by a Company Joint Council. The

council will consist of 11 employee representatives (one from each union and the rest elected from six company-determined shop-floor constituencies) and an as yet unspecified number of management. Should the council fail to reach agreement on pay negotiations or matters of discipline, an arbitrator appointed by the government's conciliation service ACAS will decide the outcome of the dispute.

The objections of the T&GWU centre on the fact that individual unions would not be allowed to negotiate unilaterally with management. In practice, this would mean that T&G members in dispute would be dependent on the support of Company Joint Council members not elected from the unions, and AEU and EETPU delegates, before they could proceed.

A similar set-up was negotiated 18 months ago at Ford's Halewood plant, where the threat of closure was also used by the management. But setting the pace for the latest attacks on workers in the motor industry is the Japanese company Nissan, whose new factory in Sunderland was opened last September by Thatcher. Nissan chose a high-unemployment area and struck a single-union agreement with the AEU. Jobs were given mainly to young long-term unemployed men who were meticulously screened before being taken on.

Life for workers in a Japanese motor factory was described in freelance journalist Satoshi Kamata's book 'Japan in the Passing Lane' published in 1982. Instead of the official picture of happy workers and paternalistic managers co-operating to produce an economic miracle, Satoshi discovered appalling conditions as he worked on Toyota's line for six months. Cancelled holidays, enforced overtime and vicious speed-up go hand in hand with the company's intrusion into every aspect of a worker's life. Constant surveillance and shop-floor spies are used to weed out 'non-conformists'.

These techniques, however, are borrowed and refined versions of those used in American motor factories before they were union-organised. They were exported to post-war Japan by a team of American advisors led by Dr. W. Edwards Deming and used to revitalise the war-smashed Japanese economy.

During the growth of the Ford Motor Company in the early decades of this century, Henry Ford established his infamous Sociological Department, whose staff kept minute records of every worker in the factory and would visit their homes to ensure they were living a 'decent' life. The term 'Fordism' became synonymous with the grinding hardships of conveyor belt production.

Today, in the race by motor manufacturers world-wide to reduce production costs, workers in British plants are being told that they must 'work like the Japanese'. A massive assault on workers' rights, conditions and jobs is well under way.

The reformist trade-union leaders preach 'new realism' and bend over backwards to accommodate the employers. Adapting to the new conditions of deepening slump and crisis, they endanger every gain which the trade unions have made in decades of bitter struggle.

Gala success for Durham miners

THE 103rd Durham Miners' Gala, Durham's 'Big Meeting', took place on July 11. Thousands of men, women and children poured through the streets of Durham City to the banks of the River Wear led by their banners and brass bands.

National Union of Mineworkers' President Arthur Scargill gave the keynote address, voicing the NUM executive's overwhelming opposition to flexible working and the six-day week demanded by British Coal at the proposed Margam pit in South Wales.

Scargill recounted that his day had begun with a tribute at the grave of Thomas Hepburn, the founder of the Durham Miners' Union, whose gravestone carries the inscription 'he fought for a shorter working week'. The NUM's goal was not six-day working, he said, but a reduction to four days and with it the creation of thousands of jobs for the youth presently forced onto the dole.

The Coal Board was set on destroying the smaller pits by raising production by 25 per cent through the six-day week. 'There can be no deal on Margam,' said Scargill. 'Any attempt to bring in scab labour will make Wapping look like a picnic,' he warned.

Turning his attention to current issues within the Labour Party, and much to the anger of party leader Neil Kinnock who was also on the platform, Scargill attacked the plan to change the method of selecting parliamentary candidates by stating that 'the party needs internal references to its constitution like a hole in the head'. It was a diversion, he said. What should be concentrated on was 'attacking the Tories'.

However, the way forward proposed by both Scargill and Labour MP Tony Benn was not the mobilisation of the working

By Brian Key

class — the only way of defeating the Tories — but the speedy introduction of 'proportional representation'. The call for PR was taken up as official policy by the Euro-Stalinists of the Communist Party prior to the general election. According to Scargill, it was a 'sobering thought that had there been PR we should have a Labour prime minister in office'!

David Hopper, Durham NUM general secretary, attacked the Board's attempt to divide the union prior to privatisation. He drew attention to the recent report by the Principal Inspector of Mines which stated that serious accidents in the British coalfield had gone up by 50 per cent. This was a direct result of the new Local Board managerial style, Hopper explained, and 'would only get worse if a six-day week was implemented'.

The new Disciplinary Code was a charter for victimisation and harassment, enabling the Board, under Section 42, to sack men for charges dismissed in a court of law. 'It's an attempt to put us back 40 years and we must fight it,' he said to great applause.

Hopper finished by making a plea on behalf of the miners victimised during the 1984-5 strike. 'We must not forget the 46 sacked men still locked out,' he said, 'and the 350 jailed and sacked men nationally. They are victims of the class struggle and we must fight for justice on their behalf.'



Miners and their families were joined by other trade unionists at the Durham Miners' Gala on July 11

Strikers condemn attack

GOVERNMENT policies aimed at preparing the way for a fresh round of assaults on the unemployed and their families has led to a walk-out by Department of Health and Social Security workers in Barrow-in-Furness.

Seventy-four members of the civil service union CPSA employed at the DHSS in Barrow, along with colleagues from offices in Aberdare, Peterlee, Hull East and Hull West, began an indefinite strike on June 1 when management attempted to deploy casual staff on six-monthly, limited contracts.

Union members saw immediately that the slashing of permanent staff was the first step towards implementing the new practices outlined in the 'Fowler Social Security Review'. This will introduce the hated Social Fund which will abolish many current benefit en-

titlements and replace them with loans. The flooding of highly pressurised benefit offices in the North with casual, non-unionised staff with little training would provide the government with ideal conditions to achieve their goals with the least amount of opposition.

Barrow CPSA branch organiser Julie Rawlings condemned the government tactics when she spoke to Workers News: 'The employment of casual, untrained staff is completely against national policy. We are demanding permanent posts in order to provide a real service to the unemployed and sick.'

Julie's husband, John, has also been on strike from day one and is currently the CPSA acting branch secretary. He praised the support that his members had given to the strike and pointed out that of a workforce

of 77, only three had scabbed on the dispute.

'We have had great support in Barrow, particularly from the Vickers shipyard which is the major employer in the town. The lads there have collected at the gates since we came out and have contributed over £1,000 to our hardship fund. We intend to continue the fight and take our cause into as many workplaces, community organisations and unemployed centres as possible. We're definitely out until we get proper jobs, training and services for the people of Barrow.'

Julie and John spoke for all the Barrow DHSS strikers when they appealed to trade unionists to respect their picket lines and support their hardship fund.

• Messages and donations should be sent c/o Furness Labour Club, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Telephone: 0229-36773.



Post Office workers on the picket line at London's Western Central District Office in July

Post strikes over use of 'casuals'

BEHIND the continuing series of disputes in the Post Office over the use of casual labour, lie management plans to tear up existing agreements and break up union organisation.

A series of provocative attempts to introduce casual labour without negotiation led to strikes throughout July in the major London sorting offices covering the City and the West End, along with smaller offices in the south and east. The huge Western Central District Office on New Oxford Street came out on two separate occasions and at the end of the month nearly 1,500 postal workers in Surrey and Sussex took action over the same issue.

Alan Smith, Union of Communication Workers (UCW) Outdoor secretary at Western

Central, spoke to Workers News: 'The Post Office intend to casualise the industry as a way of cheap labour for them, and as a way of making conditions of work worse.' He stressed that postal workers were in favour of casuals being employed with proper conditions of work, health and safety.

Two years ago, following a report from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission which attacked the industry's 'inefficiency', the UCW leadership accepted an agreement with the Post Office entitled 'Safeguarding the Future of the Mails Business'. Under the terms of this agreement, increased mechanisation of letter sorting was introduced. In order to overcome labour shortages, particularly in central London, and in a drive to reduce overtime payments to five per cent of the total wage bill, the Post Office

introduced the Scheduled Tenders System (STS).

Under STS, postal workers, in return for a lead-in payment of £175, must agree to work a guaranteed extra number of ten-hour stints, paid at time-and-a-third. For each two scheduled tenders, management are entitled to bring in one casual.

Having got the approval of the UCW bureaucracy for the use of casual labour in principle, the Post Office have proceeded to bring it in wholesale, in breach of the agreement, with the aim of undermining the union.

Discontent has also built up among postmen against the Improved Working Methods (IWM) bonus scheme by which lower manning levels are traded off for 70 per cent of the 'savings' which are then distributed as bonus. The aim of IWM is to set sorting offices against each

other due to the wide variations in bonus payments.

The series of provocations by Post Office management serve a definite purpose. Parts of the Post Office remain highly profitable. Overall profits for the year 1986-7 were £129 million. The drive to privatise the most profitable sections requires the breaking up of existing conditions.

But with the stage set for major confrontation, the UCW leadership under Alan Tuffin are doing everything possible to avoid a struggle. The campaign for a reduction in the 43-hour week currently worked has been put in mothballs, despite a conference decision earlier this year to hold a ballot on national industrial action on October 1. The struggle for the building of revolutionary leadership among postal workers could not be more urgent.

Tax designed to fleece workers

By Lizzy Ali

THATCHER's election-night pledge to 'do something about the inner cities' was her way of announcing a new round of attacks on working-class living standards.

Top of the list of Tory measures is the proposed Poll Tax or 'community charge'. This will abolish the existing system of local government financing under which rates are levied on both residential and commercial properties according to their rateable value.

In its place will be a flat-rate 'charge' on each adult occupant of residential property — commercial premises will continue under the present system although they will be subject to a 're-valuation'.

The expansion of local government services took place during the boom after the Second World War, when capitalism was forced by the working class to retreat and concede council housing, health and social services and other reforms.

The Tories aim to turn the clock back full-circle. The poll tax provisions involve a massive transfer of the burden of maintaining local government services away from business and rich home-owners, and onto working-class families.

Earliest estimates of the effects of the poll tax indicate the amounts involved. In the London Borough of Camden, for example, the average payment under the new system would be £76 per adult per year — 31% higher than the current average rate bill. In Greenwich the increase would be £348.

Almost all the working-class centres of major cities will suffer. A survey on Tyneside shows that 65 per cent of households in the inner-city area will be worse off paying poll tax. Those benefiting will be the Tory suburbs and shire counties — in Rochester, for instance, the rate will be £131 per person.

Since working-class families tend to be larger they will be hit several times over. There will also be increased pressure on youth to leave home, or avoid registering which will mean they are unable to vote.

Collecting the new tax will mean a massive extension of snooper squads whose job will be to check off payments against the electoral register. The huge cost of collecting it — outweighing any possible financial benefits to the government — are conclusive proof that the aim is not a 'better system' but an attack on the working class. The Tories want to completely destroy the remaining ability of Labour councils to defend jobs and services by making them 'directly accountable' in their spending to rate-payers.

The poll tax is linked closely to Thatcher's other plans for the inner cities. These amount to a massive asset-stripping opera-

tion aimed at creating a cheap-labour de-unionised economy in the middle of working-class strongholds. Alongside a relative lowering of the rates bill for business will be the establishment of mini-development corporations and enterprise zones offering tax concessions and other inducements. A foretaste of what is to come is the Isle of Dogs in London's East End.

Closely related are the measures outlined in the Queen's Speech on council housing. These are aimed at taking control away from Labour authorities and breaking up council estates by speeding up the sale of council houses and giving council tenants the 'right' to opt for private landlords.

Thatcher has only been able to proceed with her 'inner-city programme' because of the treachery of both the Labour leadership and the majority of 'left' Labour councils who betrayed the struggle against rate-capping in 1984-85. One-by-one, those council leaders who claimed to be opposed to Kinnock's instruction to implement Tory cuts — the notorious 'dented shield policy' — have made their peace with the Labour leadership.

Islington, under Margaret Hodge, with one of the largest Labour majorities in the country, was among the first to run up the White Flag in 1985. Camden, with a majority in 1985 in favour of fighting the cuts, is now planning to carry out up to £60 million worth of cuts. Meanwhile, Ken Livingstone, former GLC leader and ex-member of the Workers Revolutionary Party and David Blunkett, former Sheffield City Council leader, have become paid-up Kinnockites.

The Tories' onslaught on the inner cities shows conclusively that Labour councils cannot defend the rights of the working class in the major urban areas. This can only be done through the building of a revolutionary leadership which will fight for the formation of Councils of Action, based on the trade unions and other working-class organisations, to carry out united action against the Tories.

THE Labour Party leadership has threatened to close its three main publications, 'Labour Weekly', 'New Socialist' and 'Socialist Youth', with the loss of 45 full-time posts at its Walworth Road headquarters. All three are ailing and read by only a small fraction of the party's membership of 300,000.

The decision to close down even the mildest forum for debate within the Labour Party is undoubtedly linked to new 'restructuring' proposals before this year's conference aimed at bolstering Kinnock's leadership.

Council cuts policy opposed by meeting

By Ian Harrison

THE Labour-controlled council in the London Borough of Camden is implementing a package of cuts to meet an immediate deficit of £11 million. The cuts include an immediate freeze on 900 staff vacancies and the sacking of 300 temporary staff.

On July 29 a meeting called by Camden Labour Briefing and nine Labour councillors who voted against the cuts attracted an audience of 200 trade unionists, tenants and Labour Party members.

A statement by Camden Labour Briefing, whilst calling for a campaign against the cuts, says that no cuts

should be made prior to a borough-wide 'consultation' with 'trade unions, community groups, self-organised groups, tenants' associations and the wider community in Camden'.

The contributions at the meeting by Councillors Sandra Plummer and Kate Allen also called for a campaign to be launched, but emphasised that they did not see themselves as necessarily leading the fight. They called for a series of public meetings and stressed the

need to 'exchange information' about the cuts.

Both members of the revisionist Socialist Workers Party who spoke called for the nine 'left' councillors to resign both from the Council Labour Group and from the Labour Party. These sceptics called for immediate and indefinite strike action by the council unions, but added that this was unlikely to happen.

Two members of the Revolutionary Communist Party spoke in the discus-

sion, declaring themselves to be indifferent to any divisions in the Labour Party — the only role for the councillors was 'to support picket lines'.

Branch officers of Camden NALGO, the local government employees' union, put forward the line that the struggle against the cuts should be confined to the town hall unions, with individual departments left to decide what action to take.

However, the meeting accepted a motion which called for a borough-wide conference to be held, which would include trade unions and all working-class community organisations.

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Dollar's plunge fails to boost exports



REAGAN

THE announcement in August of the US trade figures for June precipitated a sharp drop in the dollar on the money markets.

Instead of the predicted \$13 billion, the actual deficit — the gap between income from exports and expenditure on imports — was \$15.7 billion. It was the second largest figure on record and follows a \$14 billion deficit in May which was some \$3 billion more than expected.

This is despite a policy which has allowed the dollar to decline against other major currencies by 40 per cent over the last two years, reducing the cost of US goods to overseas buyers and which should, theoretically, have boosted exports.

Prior to the May figures the deficit had been improving, giving President Reagan some ammunition with which to fight the trade bills regularly being

By David Lewis

passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. He will now be under intense pressure not to exercise his veto.

Behind the bare figures lies the reality of the continuing economic deterioration of the world's biggest capitalist country. The Detroit-based car manufacturers sold 17 per cent fewer cars in the first half of this

year compared with last year but have built about the same number. The second half of the year will see lay-offs and, with Ford, General Motors and Chrysler labour contracts expiring in September, the prospect of major strikes.

House-building is some nine per cent down on last year. The other staple industries facing continuing slump are the steel industry, where massive overcapacity is the norm, and the trucking business which has been decimated over the past five years.

Certain industries are growing: aerospace, the heart of Reagan's military machine; computers, following two years of near-collapse; and chemicals, one of the few industries actually gaining overseas markets as a result of the drop in value of the dollar. But the overall picture is one of stagnation and, behind the decaying surface, ticks the time-bomb of international debt.

Outstanding loans to the semi-colonial countries amount to \$1,000 billion. What the US and other imperialist nations most feared in the early 80s was a series of defaults by the most indebted states which would trigger the collapse of the international banking system and lead to revolutionary struggles in their own countries. This nightmare possibility has led them, since 1982, into successive rounds of debt re-scheduling — in effect, softening

the original terms of the loan and allowing a longer period for repayment.

Debtor nations, however, have seen little benefit from this policy. The punitive compound interest rates have meant that their total debt has risen substantially, despite the fact that new lending has dried up. They have at the same time experienced a dramatic drop in export earnings as commodity prices have fallen on the world market. The 15 major debtor countries now owe an amount equal to over 50 per cent of their gross national product and to 350 per cent of their export earnings.

Whilst the risk of a chain of defaults may have been held at bay, allowing the breathing space for major Western banks to reorganise so that 'problem' loans as a proportion of their total available assets are sharply down, the fundamental crisis remains.

The central purpose of the US loan programme to the semi-colonial world was to facilitate the continued exploitation of those regions and to maintain the structure of the world capitalist economy and the international trade which is its life-blood. The reality is a succession of economically and politically unstable countries which offer fast-shrinking potential as export markets for the United States and in which the working class is on the offensive.

U.S. FIRMS HEAD FOR THE BORDER

By Philip Marchant

THERE can be no clearer illustration of the economic policy requirements which determine US military involvement in Central America than the rapid growth of 'in-bond manufacturing' in Mexico.

The Congressional hearings investigating the Iran-Contra 'scandal' have revealed that the Reagan government is prepared to risk political support at home, and sacrifice leading figures in the administration, in order to destroy the Sandinistas and install a pro-Washington regime in Nicaragua.

Such a step is not taken lightly. Its necessity arises out of the deepening world economic crisis of capitalism, which is manifested with crippling intensity in the United States. Having lost the unparalleled dominance of the world market which it enjoyed in the immediate post-war period, the US is driven to cast aside the niceties of democratic government in a desperate bid to preserve Central America for its own exploitation.

Just how important the area is for boosting profits can be seen by the number of US companies setting up operations 'south of the border' to take advantage of cheap labour and special tax concessions. An estimated \$15,000 a year saving on each job transferred to northern Mexico from US-located factories has led to this new gold rush, in which the participants are some of the best-known industrial giants in the world.

In-bond manufacturing is essentially a massive confidence trick which has allowed US companies the most favourable conditions for exploiting the low wage rates in the semi-colonial world. The system enables the duty-free import of raw materials into a 'host' country,

which are then assembled and re-exported to the US, where duty is paid only on the added value.

The reason for the sudden attraction of the Mexican version — the 20-year-old *maquila* programme — is that in the world league table of in-bond wage rates, Mexico lies at the very bottom with an average hourly basic rate of only \$0.85. Add to this the fact that transport costs are only a fraction of those involved in shipping to and from, say, South Korea (top of the table at \$3.65 per hour) and it's easy to understand why there are now about 1,200 in-bond assembly plants in Mexico, most of them situated along the 2,000-mile border with the US.

Though presented as being of economic benefit to the 'developing' country, there is, of course, no requirement on the US firms to assist in any such process. Most semi-colonial countries report little or no integration of the in-bond operations into their domestic economies. In Mexico, despite the 20-year existence of the *maquilas*, locally-raised capital amounts to only 1.36 per cent of the total. Just as most of the investment comes from the US, so most of the profit returns there.

The average gross weekly wage of US industrial workers, assessed over the first half of 1986, was \$396. During the same period the rate in the *maquilas* was \$34.33 — and this is above average for Mexican manufacturing industry! Small wonder that General Motors now has 23 assembly plants

established in Mexico under the system and General Electric 14; with Zenith, Rockwell, Westinghouse, Union Carbide, ITT, Ford and Chrysler amongst the dozens of other major US companies also claiming a piece of the action. There are 18 Japanese and a handful of British firms, including GEC, involved. European interest has recently increased with West German, French and Spanish companies currently looking for suitable factory locations.

The American trade-union confederation, the AFL-CIO, is seeking to restrict in-bond assembly work from a nationalist standpoint. The union leaders' opposition is confined to supporting a Congressional committee review of two clauses concerning tariffs in the US customs code which allow the system to take place. Their sole concern is to buttress their own position by appearing to defend the jobs of US workers — at the expense of the jobs of Mexican workers — whilst avoiding the responsibility of waging a fight against factory closures and lay-offs.

For the US ruling class, the existence of Nicaragua presents a grave challenge to their continued economic domination over the rest of Central America. The lessons of Nicaragua's national liberation struggle are not lost on the working class and poor peasants of El Salvador, Panama, Guatemala and Mexico. Reagan's recent 'peace plan' for Nicaragua, announced on August 5, is in reality a war

plan. The arrogant proposals are deliberately designed to be rejected by the Sandinista government, to ensure the smooth passage through Congress of the next Contra-funding Bill, due to be debated in September. To defend its 'right' to mercilessly exploit workers in Mexico and throughout Central America, US imperialism will stop at nothing, including military intervention by its own armed forces.

Planned economy attacked by Gorbachev

THE Central Committee plenum of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in June gave a powerful impetus to the Gorbachev 'reform' programme. Its proposals include measures which strike at the foundations of the planned economy.

Central among these is a 'reform' of price structure aimed at a drastic reduction of food subsidies (currently estimated as running at £50 billion per year — three times the defence budget) and a corresponding rise in food prices. This would in return trigger a round of wage increases and a burst of inflation — which Trotsky described as 'the syphilis of the planned economy'.

Gorbachev's personal economic adviser, Professor Abel



GORBACHEV

Aganbegyan, has announced plans to make the rouble a convertible currency on the world's financial markets. Gorbachev has been obliged to rebuke those in the bureaucracy, such as Nikolai Shmeylev of the Academy of Sciences, who have

seized on the plenum's decisions to propose an even faster tempo of capitalist methods of compulsion. 'Some people,' he said in July, 'suggested things which went beyond the framework of our system, like giving up the planned economy.'

In an article in 'Novy Mir', an official literary monthly, Shmeylev urged the acceptance of unemployment as a necessary evil. But Shmeylev is only drawing out the logical conclusions from the law on socialist enterprises passed at the June plenum. It aims to make individual enterprises responsible for showing a surplus and to eliminate 13 per cent of concerns currently trading at a loss. Alongside this is a related policy which would force enterprises into direct competition on the internal 'market' by slashing direct state contracts to as little as 25 per cent of the economy.

A prominent campaign is underway attacking centralised economic planning. It is clear that what is under attack is not so much the bureaucratic Stalinist caricature of planning, but planned economy as such.

The most far-reaching measures to undermine planned economy are yet to come in Soviet agriculture. Gorbachev is opening an attack on collective farms as 'the sacred cows of communism'. Recent newsreel of Gorbachev discussing with collective farmers had him asking them: 'Would you like to rent your own tractors and land?' and going on to explain: 'The idea is that you would be the real owners of the land you farm.' This is the clearest indication yet that the bureaucracy intends to 'de-collectivise' agriculture.

In the attempt to get the Soviet economy 'moving', the bureaucracy are poised to revive the 'petty-bourgeois encirclement' of land-holding peasants which nearly destroyed the workers' state in the late 1920s.

Hungary: 30% price rises

AT the end of July, the Stalinist leaders of Hungary gave the clearest indication yet of the direction in which they are steering the economy when they announced preparatory measures for opening a stock market.

A new companies law is currently being drawn up which, when it comes into force on January 1, 1989, will legalise the private ownership of property and shares. It marks a further stage in the development of the 'new economic mechanism', introduced in 1968, which loosened central control over smaller firms. Together with the new bond market opened early this year, where securities issued by state companies are traded, it prepares for the extension of capitalist 'free market' measures throughout the

economy.

Prominent right-wing economists at the Budapest Academy of Sciences have long argued that the 1968 measures contained 'too many compromises'. Now, faced with huge deficits in trade and balance of payments, the Janos Kadar

regime has finally agreed to a 'reform' package which concedes to their main demand — the removal of state subsidies on what is described as 'uneconomic' production.

The new economic programme was finalised at a Central Committee meeting on July 2, after which a senior Communist Party official said that it would mean many Hungarians making sacrifices, notably pensioners and large families. There would be an increase in

unemployment, he said, and a rise in the inflation rate as subsidies are first reduced, then withdrawn completely, and as personal income tax for workers in state-run firms and VAT on consumer goods is introduced next January.

Unemployment is already officially acknowledged by the Hungarian Stalinists as a fact of life; the additional 200,000 workers who will now join the queues at the 400 job offices have led to claims that 'structural unemployment' — long-term, mass unemployment — is now inevitable.

On July 20, within three weeks of declaring the new policy, 30 per cent price rises were introduced overnight on a range of basic necessities including bread, flour and heating

oil and future increases announced on petrol, electricity, tobacco and other items. The immediate aim is to reduce the budget deficit but, more importantly, this is the first step towards ending the subsidies on essential goods. These are an historic gain of the Hungarian working class, possible only because of the planned economy, however bureaucratically deformed, based on the expropriation of capitalism after the Second World War.

The harsh policies brought in by the Kadar government are aimed at route-marching the Hungarian working class down the road of 'restructuring' the economy along capitalist lines. As in the Soviet Union, it is being accompanied by an acceleration of 'political reforms' to act as a safety-valve for discontent.

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Adoption racket exposed

THE scramble to extract ever new commodities from the most indebted countries in the world is starkly revealed in the trade in human babies and young children between South America and the United States and Europe.

Having plundered and destroyed thousands of square miles of rain-forest and sweated fortunes from the workers, peasants and native Indian peoples, capitalism is now reviving the slave trade. The commodity that is hunted today in rural areas and shanty-town slums throughout Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Chile and Argentina is the defenceless baby and homeless child.

The basis for this traffic in human beings is the endemic poverty of the urban and rural masses of the Latin American states. Childless couples in those same imperialist countries whose governments and banks demand yet more 'austerity' measures, yet more sacrifices by the working class and peasantry to ensure repayment of their loans, are taking advantage of an economic and social catastrophe to solve their problems of infertility.

Bought by so-called 'adoption agencies' for, on average, \$1,000, the babies are then sold for sums of up to \$15,000. Mothers who agree out of desperation to sell their children are not, however, the only source for this lucrative undertaking. Newly-born babies are obtained through hospitals and clinics and abandoned children kidnaped off the streets.

The trade has given rise to a vast underground network of middlemen — from 'baby-snatchers' to illegal 'adoption agencies' where potential parents can go to pick the baby of their choice.

Under conditions of economic turmoil, with landless peasants and dispossessed Indians being forced to move into shanty towns by their thousands, finding their place beside impoverished workers, the task of controlling the trade is rendered impossible.

The scale of the trade, fuelled by an apparently insatiable demand from Europe and the US, can be judged by some of the statistics. The Brazilian press claim that hundreds of children disappear in this way. In Peru, the police are investigating the illegal adoption of some 500 babies in one of the poorest provinces, Puno, in the last year; while an advisor to the Argentine courts on juvenile affairs puts the traffic in human babies at the rate of 200 per year in Argentina alone.

Next year marks the centenary of the abolition of slavery in Brazil. The right to sell the children of slaves had already been ended in 1871 under legislation known as the 'law of the free womb'.

Slavery has returned to South America in the 1980s as part and parcel of the crippling destitution which imperialism seeks to impose on the masses in order to guarantee the return of its loans. A hundred years on, with capitalism no longer a progressive system, it cannot be halted by liberal-minded abolitionists but only by revolutionary war to end class society. Such a war alone will guarantee freedom through economic independence to mother and child and put an end to this filthy trade.

'Miracle' economy in decline

UNEMPLOYMENT in West Germany — long held up as the 'economic miracle' of the capitalist West — rose by 79,000 to a post-war record of nearly 2.2 million (8.7 per cent of the workforce) in July.

By Martin Sullivan

As in Britain, this official figure conceals the real extent of the crisis, with large numbers of youth on cheap-labour schemes excluded from the figures and many immigrant workers (so-called *gastarbeiter*) sent home.

In the 1970s capitalist pundits and British Labour Party leaders dreamed of West Germany redefining the world economy out of crisis. The reverse has happened. The world economic crisis, far from passing West Germany by, is exerting the most powerful pressure on the strongest economy of Europe.

Heavy industry is particularly hard-hit. The coal industry, which has cut 25,000 jobs over the past three years, is planning to axe a further 15,000 over the next few years. Ruhrkohle, the largest West German coal-mining concern, announced losses of £185 million in early July, and 4,700 redundancies. Already this year it has closed two pits and one coking plant, including the last working pit in

Dortmund which once had thirty. It will now close another coking plant this year and one next year.

Coal is currently produced in West Germany at twice the cost of world prices and is heavily subsidised. Pressure on the Kohl government from industrialists to lower subsidies poses a further massive loss of jobs.

The coal industry has suffered the sharpest effects of the collapse of steel production and the competition from nuclear power in the electricity generating sector. Twenty-five thousand steelworkers have been made redundant in recent years. In June, Thyssen, the largest steel producer, announced a further 6,000 redundancies — part of a projected loss of up to 30,000 jobs in North Rhine Westphalia alone. Krupp, the steel and engineering giant, recently announced a fall in profits of over 25 per cent, and its annual report predicts a bleak future. Closures have been met by

mass demonstrations of miners and steelworkers, but this movement has been betrayed at every turn by the treacherous leaders of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the DGB trade-union bureaucracy. In an interview in the 'Financial Times' on July 20, Franz Steinkuehler, president of the 2.6 million-strong IG Metall metalworkers' union, says complacently: 'Germans are not made so that they like to live in conflict. They like to live well and in peace and I understand that.' Steinkuehler typifies this corporatist trade-union bureaucracy, earning £67,000 per year and, in addition, sitting on the supervisory boards of a number of large companies. Meanwhile West Germany's largest company, Daimler-Benz, now has the honour of being headed by a new chief executive, SPD member Edzard Reuter.

In the electronics and telecommunications sector, increased penetration of Japanese imports

is reflected in worsening company results for Siemens, and in Grundig projecting a further 1,000 redundancies. In construction, Hochtief announced profits down 25 per cent; the Kloeckner trading company's profits fell by a similar amount.

As rivalry with US and Japanese imperialism intensifies, the West German ruling class looks increasingly greedily to expanding its operations in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China, and the possibilities for capitalist penetration opened up by the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In recent weeks several diplomatic initiatives have been made by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the ruling right-wing Christian Democrats aimed at 'improving' relations.

West Germany's 650,000 farmers — historically a conservative reservoir of support for the Christian Democrats — face an unprecedented crisis. Over the past ten years their real in-

comes have dropped by 30-40 per cent. The latest proposals by the Reagan administration to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to eliminate all US government subsidies to farmers over the next decade would intensify competition and lead to the flooding of Europe with cheap agricultural products. Up to half of West German farmers could go bankrupt under these conditions.

The particular success of the post-war boom in West Germany was based on the destruction of German factories during the Second World War by British and American bombing, combined with a conscious policy of creating an anti-communist bulwark. Industry was rebuilt on the most modern and efficient lines, giving West German capitalism a temporary advantage over its European competitors. The break-up of the boom now poses the development of the greatest class battles in Germany for 60 years.



Tamil liberation fighters

Cease-fire trap for Tamil fighters

THE decision by the main Tamil guerrilla group in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, to accept the 'peace plan' worked out by President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India opens up the Tamil minority to the gravest danger.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Tigers have begun handing in their weapons in return for the possibility of limited autonomy for the northern and eastern provinces. The north is almost exclusively Tamil but the eastern province, with only 41 per cent Tamils, will decide by referendum whether to join the north-east merger.

Although Tigers' leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, has pledged to 'continue the struggle' for an independent state of Tamil Eelam, the agreement effectively places the Tamil masses in an apartheid-style 'bantustan' under the 'guardianship' of Gandhi. Prabhakaran told a rally of 100,000 supporters in Jaffna: 'Because we have confidence in India we are going to hand over our weapons. But India must also accept responsibility for our

security.' Only a week earlier he had sounded a different note, warning that 'we have walked into a trap'.

This newly-discovered 'confidence' in the Indian bourgeoisie is entirely misplaced and dangerous, and exposes all the weaknesses of petty-bourgeois nationalism. In early June, posing as the humanitarian 'friend' of the Tamils, Gandhi sent supplies by sea and air to Jaffna. It was a move aimed at softening resistance to a settlement and averting discontent amongst the 50 million Tamils in the southern India state of Tamil Nadu.

Far from being the saviour of the oppressed Tamil minority, Gandhi's aims are to ensure the stability of the Jayewardene regime and to divert attention from the mounting crisis within India itself, especially in the Punjab.

The 4,500 Indian troops stationed in the northern and eastern provinces are no

guarantee against further pogroms instigated by the majority Sinhalese bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, proposals for joint patrols of the narrow Palk Strait separating Sri Lanka from India will aim to cut off the guerrillas' main supply route from Tamil Nadu.

Restoring the political fortunes of the discredited Tamil bourgeoisie also enters into the joint calculations of Jayewardene and Gandhi. Each province will have an extensive administration topped by a governor, a chief minister and a board of ministers.

Among the ranks of the Tamil fighters there is clearly opposition to the deal, as witnessed in a letter to the Tigers' newspaper 'The Drum of Eelam': 'Handing over my weapon is the saddest day of my life. We collected gold from every family in the peninsula — how many girls gave us their rings and old ladies sacrificed the marriage chains from their necks? Is this the reward for our long struggle?'

Workers strike fear into Kim

THE announcement by President Chun Doo Hwan of South Korea that he will allow free elections for his successor aimed at holding back the developing mass movement of the working class and youth, has had the opposite effect.

The climb-down followed weeks of bitter street fighting in which students, supported by many workers, mobilised in their thousands in every major city. In the face of almost unanimous hostility to his dictatorial regime, Chun was persuaded by his colleagues in the ruling clique that the South Korean capitalist state would be best defended at the present time by installing a 'democratic' administration. A slate of constitutional changes was hastily put together which included a promise to relax the ferocious suppression of trade-union activity in force for the last 20 years.

But the publication of the 'reforms' on July 1 was the signal for industrial workers, who had taken no organised part in the earlier demonstrations, to enter the fray. Encouraged by Chun's retreat, an escalating series of strikes has taken place demanding wage rises of up to 50 per cent, better working conditions and, crucially, the right to form 'non-management unions'.

By mid-August, 670 companies, amongst them South Korea's most important industrial concerns, had been affected. About 15,000 miners downed tools at the 10 eastern coal mines which produce 80 per cent of the country's anthracite and over 3,000 of them occupied a key railway installation and a road junction nearby. Riot police used tear gas and baton charges to disperse them.

At the country's largest shipyard, Hyundai in Ulsan, 24,000 workers walked out and at the second largest, Daewoo Shipbuilding in Koje, 4,000 workers sealed the gates to the yard, occupied the offices and battled with police. The three

major car manufacturers have all been closed down either by strikes or by component shortages. Transport workers, including bus and taxi drivers have also been involved.

The leaders of the opposition Reunification Democratic Party, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, took advantage of the mass student protests to further their own political ambitions. Immediately on hearing Chun's promise of 'democracy', they stopped their 'anti-dictatorship' campaign and started a wrangle over which of the 'two Kims' should stand for president.

Now, Kim Young Sam has nailed his colours even more firmly to the mast by accusing the striking workers of 'threatening reforms'. The strikes 'will give anti-democratic forces an excuse to hamper democratisation', he told a party meeting.

'The reason for the disputes is that the workers' rights have not been guaranteed', he said. 'But however rightful these demands, they cannot be solved all at once.'

Kim Young Sam's rival for the opposition party's presidential nomination, Kim Dae Jung, has a more 'radical' reputation, having spent years under house arrest. But the two have agreed in advance that their factions will share power in any future administration, whatever the outcome of their party's autumn presidential candidate contest. Kim Dae Jung is the 'left' face of this alliance.

Neither of these bourgeois would-be parliamentarians can defend 'democracy' against the dangers of a right-wing coup aimed at refurbishing the dictatorship. Only the workers and youth of South Korea, united under the banner of revolutionary socialism, can smash the police-military conspiracies. Their top priority must be to fight for the revolutionary reunification of Korea, divided at the end of the Second World War as part of Stalin's deal with the leaders of imperialism.

EDITORIAL

Secret state

THE recent revelations concerning the activities of the security services show the fear with which the Tories viewed the wave of militant working-class struggles of the early 1970s.

The government of Edward Heath had provoked a storm of protest by introducing the Industrial Relations Act — an attempt to place legal shackles on the unions. The growing economic problems, compounded by the massive rise in oil prices in 1973, forced Heath to partially shut down the economy, at the expense of the working class, in the 'three-day week'.

The MI5 smear campaign directed at Labour politicians during this period, and at the Harold Wilson government that followed Heath's downfall at the hands of the miners in February 1974, was an expression of the turn by sections of the ruling class towards an 'extra-parliamentary' solution.

As the 'Sunday Times' revealed on February 22, 1976, Heath had put martial-law government, in the form of the faceless regional commissioners, on standby in December 1973. In January 1974 tanks, troops and police carried out joint manoeuvres at Heathrow. Heath wavered at the brink and a minority Labour government was elected.

MI5's campaign from 1974-6 was not only directed at leading figures in the Wilson government; it extended even to Heath himself and Jeremy Thorpe, then Liberal leader, with the aim of clearing the path for a new ultra-right Tory leadership.

Wilson resigned in 1976 amid a cloud of rumours concerning MI5. His successor, James Callaghan, loyal as ever to the capitalist state, gave MI5 a clean bill of health and declared the matter closed. Evidence has since emerged of the role of MI5 in supplying dossiers on trade unions and left-wingers to leading Tories for use in the 1983 general election campaign, and in carrying out assassinations in Ireland.

A crucial interconnection exists between the activities of the security services and the associations built up by Labour's right wing. Hugh Gaitskell, Denis Healey, Anthony Crosland and William Rodgers (now of the SDP) were among those connected in the 1950s with the Congress for Cultural Freedom and 'Encounter' magazine, both subsequently revealed as being CIA-funded. Healey also played a prominent role for two decades in the conferences of the anti-communist 'Bildenberg' Group. In 1961 a group of leading Labour right-wingers approached the security services for 'help' in investigating 'left' MPs and activists.

The conspiracies of MI5 are the clearest antidote to illusions in a 'parliamentary road' to socialism. Wilson, Callaghan and the Labour cabinet of 1974-9 must be made to break their silence and reveal everything they know. All the allegations must be investigated by a labour movement enquiry, formed by the trade unions and all workers' political parties, and its findings published to politically arm the working class.

ANC treachery

THE much-publicised visit to Dakar, capital of Senegal, by white South African liberals to meet leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) took place in early July. Although not the first such meeting, it represents a new stage in the treachery of the ANC leadership.

The spine of the ANC is the South African Communist Party (SACP). Loyal to the counter-revolutionary Kremlin policy of 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism, the SACP is exerting the maximum pressure within the nationalist movement to divert it into constitutional, 'peaceful' channels.

The assembled clerics, businessmen, writers and academics who met the ANC stand closest to the banking and industrial section of the ruling class who realise that to defend their private property and obscene privileges, it is necessary to 'liberalise' the apartheid regime.

In deepening their turn to the white liberal forces, the ANC leaders and the Stalinists are consciously trying to create a counterweight to discipline the black working class. Far from widening the anti-apartheid 'front', it is a stab in the back for the black trade unions, and the 330,000 coal and gold miners who struck on August 10. While the Senegal circus was taking place, the collaborationist town council in Soweto was forced to admit that a rent strike had resulted in 85 per cent of rents being withheld.

While Nelson Mandela has refused release from jail in return for renouncing 'violence', the ANC leaders are desperate to demonstrate their peaceful intentions.

While the youth who follow the ANC are dying in the jails of Pretoria, the leaders are preparing a Zimbabwe-style sell-out.

Only the building of a Trotskyist revolutionary party can guarantee the victory of the black working class through the socialist revolution and the complete expropriation of the white ruling class.

THE GPU MURDER

'THE task of the GPU was to prevent the masses from going beyond the limits of what was acceptable to King George, Chamberlain, President Lebrun, etc. This great goal could not be reached except by suppressing the workers' and peasants' movement, destroying the revolutionary party, and organising kangaroo courts.' Leon Trotsky, October 22, 1938.

THE murderous, counter-revolutionary activities of Stalinism in the Spanish Civil War were, predictably enough, left out of the majority of books which flooded onto the market to cash in on the fiftieth anniversary of its beginning, last year.

Amid the 'celebrations', the publishing house of the Communist Party of Great Britain reissued the war correspondence of Claud Cockburn, which faithfully upholds Stalin's line that the Trotskyists, left-wing anarchists and members of the POUM were agents of fascism, in league with Hitler and Franco¹.

One of the most honest accounts of the Spanish Civil War, by Burnett Bolloten, assesses the role of the GPU/NKVD as follows: '... the Soviet secret police, operating in intimate association with Spanish and foreign communists, with crypto-communists in the ranks of the socialists and the republicans, and with the communist-controlled Spanish secret police, became the decisive force in determining the course of events in the anti-Franco camp²'.

This summer marks the fiftieth anniversary of the unleashing of counter-revolutionary terror in Republican Spain. The summer of 1937 saw the kidnap and murder by the Stalinists of POUM leader Andres Nin. It was accompanied by the imprisonment, torture and murder of thousands of left-wing opponents of the Stalinists and the Popular Front republican government. The full extent of the actions of Stalin's gravediggers of the Spanish Revolution may never be completely established.

The Trotskyist movement has never published a systematic account of the GPU's activities in Spain. Yet they form a crucial interconnection with the high-water mark of Stalinist counter-revolution — the murder of Leon Trotsky in Mexico in August 1940. Almost all the members of the gang which planned Trotsky's murder were trained as GPU operatives in Spain. Other Stalinists in Spain took leading positions in the 'People's Democracies' in Eastern Europe after the Second World War. Today, world Stalinism remains the most counter-revolutionary tendency in the workers' movement, armed with the same treacherous Popular Front policy it pursued in Spain. Far from being dry, purely historical questions, the lessons of Spain must be learnt afresh by a new generation of workers and youth.

The fascist rebellion launched by Franco on July 17, 1936, caught the Popular Front government, which had been swept to power five months previously, entirely unprepared. It opposed arming the workers, who besieged it demanding guns. As the fascists advanced, the hastily formed CNT militias heroically stormed army barracks with a few hidden weapons they held and anything else that came to hand.

The Spanish Popular Front was an alliance of four capitalist parties — the Republican Left, the Republican Union, the Catalan Left and the Basque Nationalists — with the Stalinist Communist Party, the Socialist Party and with the sup-

By Richard Price

port of the anarchist CNT leadership. The task of the Popular Front was to prevent the working class from overstepping the limits of 'democracy' by subordinating it to the leaders of the 'liberal' capitalist parties.

The only party which could have given an independent revolutionary leadership, the POUM, was formed in 1935 out of a merger between the former Spanish section of the Trotskyist Left Opposition with the Spanish Right Oppositionists — supporters of Bukharin. The POUM had a substantial working-class base, particularly in Barcelona, capital of Catalonia. Its strength grew from 8,000 on the eve of the civil war, to over 30,000 after the first few months of fighting.

Its leadership, however, which had broken decisively with Trotsky, transformed the POUM into a 'left' appendage of the Popular Front. In February 1936 it had entered into the Popular Front electoral bloc. In September it entered the regional government of Catalonia in coalition with the republican capitalist parties.

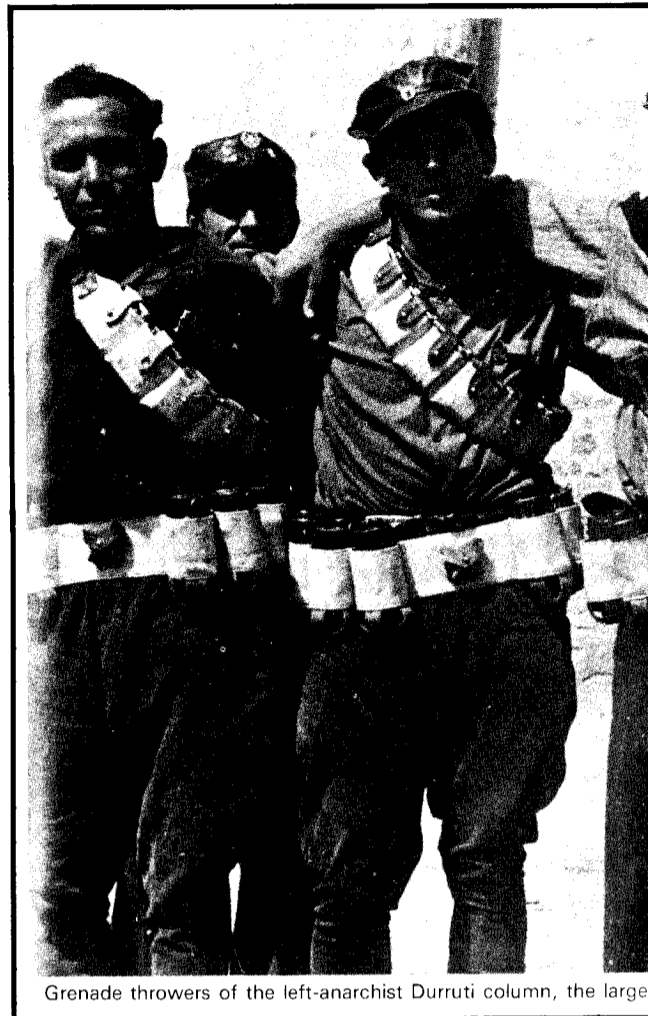
In the opening months of civil war, a regime of dual power developed within Republican Spain. Workers' militias were improvised, factories were seized and placed under workers' control. The giant CNT militia columns, notably that led by the left-wing anarchist Durruti, uprooted landlordism, handing over great estates to the control of peasant collectives, and destroyed the power of the Catholic Church.

Large sections of the bourgeoisie had fled to join Franco's fascists. Those sections which remained on the 'wrong' side of the lines in republican territory were powerless to prevent this development. Unlike the workers' parties and trade unions, they had no life-or-death interest in the defeat of fascism. The capitalist state and its government, however, remained.

The role of the Communist Party was to act as the most energetic defender of the policy of restoring the rights of private property and the capitalist state. With only a few thousand members in July 1936, it rapidly recruited from the middle class, officers from the old army and bourgeois elements.

Stalin's policy in Spain was to prolong the war as long as possible, but to ensure that Republican Spain remained a bourgeois republic. Stalin's foreign policy was aimed at securing an alliance with the so-called 'democratic' imperialist powers, France and Britain, in order to gain them as allies against the threat posed to the Soviet Union by Hitler's Germany. To this end, both a fascist victory, which would menace France's southern border and Britain's trading routes, and a socialist revolution, which would ruin the chances of such an alliance, were to be avoided for as long as possible.

The role of the GPU, therefore,



Grenade throwers of the left-anarchist Durruti column, the large

was to crush all opposition in the republic to the Stalinists on behalf of the liberal bourgeoisie. Trotsky wrote that 'the GPU acted in this instance only as the most resolute detachment in the service of the Popular Front³'. Through their control of the supply of armaments, the security services, their growing grip on the army and their suppression of working-class opposition, the Stalinists made themselves indispensable to the bourgeoisie.

Stalin did everything possible to disguise and deny Soviet intervention in Spain, under the slogan 'Stay out of range of the artillery fire⁴', in order to avoid being directly drawn into the war.

With the march of Franco's forces on Madrid during August 1936, the republican government established close contact with Arthur Stashevsky, the Soviet trade envoy, to explore the possibility of arms shipments from the Soviet Union. Three republican officials were then despatched to Odessa. According to Walter Krivitsky, the senior Soviet intelligence officer who defected in 1938, Stashevsky was secretly charged with manipulating the republic's finances.

On August 26, Alexander Orlov was detailed to head the GPU's operations in republican Spain, where he arrived in early September⁵. At the Politburo meeting in Moscow on August 31, arms shipments to, and purchases on behalf of the republic government were approved. But Stalin was giving away nothing. Payment was made in the form of the shipment of the vast bulk of Spain's gold reserves of £140 million to the Soviet Union on October 22. This highly secret operation was supervised by a GPU detachment led by Orlov.

Meanwhile, a network of arms purchasing companies was established in Western Europe by GPU agents who included Krivitsky, Uritsky, Umansky, Slutsky, Zimin and Ignace Reiss. Among this group were a number who, in spite of their service with the GPU, had preserved their revolutionary

beliefs and sincerely hoped for a victory in Spain which would reverse the Stalinist degeneration in the Soviet Union⁶. All of them would die at the hands of Stalin.

The chief task for the Stalinists in restoring the capitalist state lay in breaking the power of the militias. The Fifth Regiment was established in September 1936, with the aim of restoring a regular army. Into it flowed all the elements hostile to the actions of the CNT and POUM militias, to factory and land seizures. Its chief political commissar was Italian Stalinist and future senator Vittorio Vidali, who later helped plan the assassination of Trotsky. Once Soviet arms shipments began to arrive in early November, the cream of the weapons were diverted to Stalinist-controlled units, notably the Fifth Regiment.

The POUM, despite a substantial militia of its own, failed to provide any alternative leadership. Together with the right-wing CNT leaders, it agreed to the formation of regular regiments under the old military code and opposed the election of soldiers' committees — bodies which could have rapidly developed as soviets.

In a further move to strengthen its control over the army, the Comintern issued the call for the formation of the International Brigades. This was approved by President Azana and Prime Minister Caballero on October 22. Recruits were carefully vetted. All non-Communist Party volunteers were interviewed by GPU officers and doctors at the French border, and checked for political reliability.

The structure of the GPU in Spain was comprehensive. In addition to Soviet units operating directly under Orlov's command, there was a unit attached to each of the International Brigades. These units came under the command of leading European Stalinists. These included André Marty (a leader of the French party), Vidali, Walter Ulbricht (future leader of East Germany), Heinz

ORDER MACHINE IN SPAIN



Some of the most formidable of the organisations fighting on the Aragon front

Neumann and Ernő Gerő (police chief and butcher of the 1956 revolution in Hungary). This group in turn liaised with Orlov, and controlled the system of political commissars appointed to Brigades. Ramon Mercader, Trotsky's assassin, is known to have served as a commissar on the Aragon Front.

GPU agents were also sent into the Socialist and republican parties, the Assault Guards and the Civil Guards. According to Felix Morrow, local GPU units were formed from the dregs of Spanish society — ex-members of the fascist CEDA movement, brothel racketeers, passport forgers and sadists.⁸

Other Stalinist officials involved in overseeing the GPU's work were ambassador Rosenberg, consul Antonov-Ovseyenko, 'Pravda' foreign editor Koltzov and General Akulov (alias Kotov), who organised military intelligence in Catalonia, and was the lover of Ramon Mercader's fanatical Stalinist mother, Caridad.⁹

By December 12, 1936, the Stalinists felt sufficiently strong to demand the removal of the POUM from the regional government of Catalonia. Five days later, 'Pravda' showed the significance of the move: 'As for Catalonia, the purging of the Trotskyists and the Anarcho-syndicalists has begun; it will be conducted with the same energy with which it was conducted in the USSR¹⁰'.

With the activities of the GPU proceeding unchecked under the patronage of the 'Socialist' republican coalition government, the exiled Italian libertarian Camilo Berneri wrote: 'A certain smell of Noske is floating in the air¹¹'. (Noske was the right-wing social democrat who organised the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919). Berneri would himself be murdered by the GPU.

Arriving back in Spain in February 1937, Franz Borkenau — certainly no friend of Trotskyism — was astonished to note the changes since the previous August: '... the GPU have exterminated dissident

socialists and communists... The man who was trembling every hour to see himself arrested, tried, possibly executed, was in August the aristocrat, the priest, the industrialist, the rich merchant, the wealthy peasant. Today, besides direct agents in the pay of Franco, he is the man who disagrees with Communist policy, even on minor items¹²'.

Early in 1937, Ignace Reiss in Paris received a letter from Slutsky which stated: 'Our whole attention is focussed on Catalonia and on our merciless fight against the Trotskyite bandits, the Fascists and the POUM¹³'. This letter finally persuaded Reiss to break with the GPU and attempt to contact the Fourth International.

In March, Victor Serge met a young woman in Brussels who

told him: 'A prominent Communist from Spain has been to see my husband. I heard him say that in Barcelona they're getting ready to liquidate thousands of anarchists and POUM militants, and that it's going along very nicely¹⁴'.

In Catalonia, the Stalinists, having liquidated the Central Militias Committee, carried out a purge of the socialist youth in the Stalinist-controlled United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC), evicted the POUM from the government and begun disarming workers who held weapons, now prepared a major provocation aimed at battering down the counter-revolution within republican territory.

On March 15, sixteen CNT members were murdered by a Stalinist gang in Villanueva de Alcardete in Toledo province. The CNT forced the arrest of another Stalinist gang in Murcia on April 8, and had the civil governor removed for maintaining private prisons and torture chambers. During the same month, the CNT charged two members of the Stalinist Central Committee, José Cazorla and Santiago Carillo (later to become the 'godfather' of Euro-Stalinism) with illegally seizing workers already acquitted by popular tribunals. Its paper, 'Solidaridad Obrera' wrote on April 25: 'It is becoming clear that the Chekist (GPU) organisations recently discovered in Madrid... are directly linked with similar centres operating under a unified leadership and on a preconceived plan of national scope¹⁵'.

On May 3, 1937, the PSUC police commissioner, Salas, with three truckloads of assault guards, launched an attack on the CNT-held central telephone exchange in Barcelona. A detailed account of the week of barricade fighting, which became known as the 'May Days', lies outside the scope of this article¹⁶. While the working class took to the streets to defeat the counter-revolution, the CNT and POUM leaders betrayed their own members. The Trotskyist Grandizo Munis wrote afterwards: 'Betrayed by their organisations, abandoned and handed over to the Stalinist scoundrels, the Barcelona

workers made a heroic attempt in May 1937 to defend the conquests of 19 July... Once again, a revolutionary party had a magnificent opportunity to join the rising revolutionary movement, to drive it forward and lead it to victory. But while the leading anarchists placed themselves right from the start on the other side of the barricades, the POUM joined the movement only to hold it back. In this manner victory was presented to the Stalinist hangmen¹⁷'.

With the close of the May Days, the Stalinists moved to eliminate all revolutionary opposition. Camillo Berneri, the Italian left-anarchist, was murdered on the night of May 5-6. The Friends of Durruti, a dissident left-anarchist grouping, reported thirty comrades found horribly mutilated¹⁸. Acting according to a preconceived plan drawn up by the GPU, the Premier, veteran left-Socialist Largo Caballero, was targeted for removal. At a cabinet meeting on May 13, at which the Stalinists demanded the immediate suppression of the POUM as 'agents of Franco', Caballero resigned and a new pro-Stalinist cabinet headed by right-Socialist Negrin was installed.

The punishment for the vacillations of the POUM leadership was swift and terrible. On May 28, its paper 'La Batalla' was suppressed and, on June 16, all forty members of the POUM Executive Committee, unprepared for illegal work, were arrested. The POUM headquarters in Barcelona, the Hotel Falcon, was turned into a prison for those who had previously controlled it. Other POUM leaders were conveyed to St Ursula's Convent in Barcelona — 'the Dachau of republican Spain¹⁹' — and to underground prisons in Madrid. Their party was outlawed the following day. According to the account published in 1953 by former leading Stalinist Jesus Hernandez, Andres Nin was abducted, driven by car to Alcalá de Henares and there tortured by Orlov and Vidali. Having refused to talk or submit to a show trial, a 'rescue' mission was simulated on June 22 or 23

by German members of International Brigades posing as Nazis. Nin was murdered north of Madrid, although his body was never found.

Further repression rounded up other leading cadres, so that by mid-July the POUM had virtually ceased to function. Rovira, commander of the POUM 29th Division on the Aragon front, was lured back to Barcelona and arrested. Georges Kopp, a Belgian serving with the POUM's Lenin Division as a major, was jailed in Barcelona and then murdered.

The CNT leadership in Catalonia remained silent throughout, despite 8,000 of its members being imprisoned and sixty reported missing between mid-June and mid-July. On July 24, 'Solidaridad Obrera' reported that 150 foreign volunteers had been imprisoned in Valencia for 'illegally entering the country'.

With the main task of crushing the POUM and the left-anarchists well underway, Stalin moved to destroy those of his own officials who knew too much of the GPU's operations. Consul-General Antonov-Ovseyenko, who had led the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917, General Berzin, head of the Soviet military mission, with a brilliant record in the Russian Civil War, and Stashevsky were recalled to the Soviet Union in August and promptly liquidated²⁰. José Robles, Berzin's interpreter, was executed in Spain.

The number of victims of the terror of the summer of 1937 cannot be accurately estimated except to say that it probably runs to several thousand. They include Erwin Wolf, former secretary to Leon Trotsky, murdered in Barcelona in August; Winter (alias Moulin), a German Trotskyist of Czech origin and editor of 'La Voz Leninista', the paper of the Bolshevik-Leninists, arrested by GPU and disappeared in August; Kurt Landau, a POUM supporter and former leader of the German Left Opposition; POUM militants José Cullares, José Navarro Lopez and Marciano Mena, shot after court-martial packed with Stalinists; Marc Rein, son of Menshevik exile, Rafael Abramovich; Bob Smillie, son of the British miners' leader, who died in a GPU prison in Valencia under mysterious circumstances²¹.

Those imprisoned number several thousand more. According to the POUM leader Gorkin there were 1,500 anti-fascists imprisoned in Valencia alone in late 1937. Two leaders of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Trotskyists), Munis and Carlini, were arrested in 1937 and held until the collapse of the republic

in 1939. Walter Schwarz, a German exile serving with the POUM, was arrested in August 1937 and charged with being a Gestapo agent.

When John McGovern, Independent Labour Party MP, visited a jail in Barcelona in November 1937, he was greeted by 500 anti-fascists, predominantly anarchists and POUM members, singing the Internationale. These included many women, among them Landau's widow, Katia²². When the POUM executive was reformed, its leaders were again arrested and put on trial in 1938. George Orwell wrote to a friend in February 1938 that he estimated that there were 3,000 political prisoners in republican jails.

From 1938, a new Spanish secret police force was formed — the Servicio de Investigación Militar (SIM) — which increasingly took over the GPU's role. With the recall to the Soviet Union and liquidation of many GPU operatives, Orlov took the opportunity to defect to the United States²³.

Parallel to the ruthless operations against the POUM, left-wing anarchists and Trotskyists, were those conducted within the International Brigades. Operating through spies within every unit, the GPU ruthlessly uprooted even the mildest opposition to Stalinism. Heinz Neumann, who was himself later liquidated in Moscow, headed the hunt for Trotskyist elements among the German volunteers²⁴. Americans George Mink and Steve Nelson also worked as top level agents. Of Bill Rust, who was to become editor of the British 'Daily Worker', it was said: '... any anarchist and any socialist were the enemy to him, and he was prepared to shoot anybody who didn't carry out instructions²⁵'.

André Marty, Stalinist boss of the International Brigades, admitted to having executed 500 volunteers. Ernest Hemingway left a chilling portrait of Marty (barely disguised as 'Massert') in 'For Whom the Bell Tolls': 'He is as crazy as a bedbug. He has a mania for shooting people²⁶'.

But neither Stalinism nor its GPU murderers were crazy — they acted as the saviours of the 'liberal' bourgeoisie from the socialist revolution. 'Only from this broader point of view can we get a clear picture of the angelic toleration which such champions of justice and freedom as Azana, Negrin, Companys, Caballero, Garcia Oliver, and others showed towards the crimes of the GPU²⁷', wrote Trotsky. In doing so, they made certain the victory of Franco and fascism.



Andres Nin, leader of the POUM, who died at the hands of the GPU

NOTES

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- 15 A. Brenner: 'Class War in Republican Spain' and 'Dossier of Counter Revolution', Modern Monthly, September 1937.
- 16 See Bolloten, pp.403-30; Morrow, pp.86-113; for an eye-witness account see G. Orwell: Homage to Catalonia, Penguin.
- 17 Bolloten, p.418.
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IN DEFENCE OF THE THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION

PART ONE

THE development of the world economic crisis, unprecedented in its duration and depth, poses the working class with fighting for power through the socialist revolution on an international scale, both in the advanced capitalist countries and in the colonial countries. The conscious struggle for the unity of these twin processes of the world revolution requires above all the building internationally of revolutionary Marxist — Trotskyist — parties to lead the working class and oppressed masses.

'The world political situation as a whole,' Trotsky wrote in the founding document of the

Fourth International, 'is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat . . . All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet "ripened" for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only "ripened"; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.' Almost fifty years later these words fully retain their significance.

'Trotskyism' without the theory of permanent revolution

BY RICHARD PRICE

is like a clock without a spring. Trotsky's theory, first elaborated in 1904-5, anticipated and guided the first successful seizure of power by the working class of backward Russia in 1917.

The imperialist epoch extended the capitalist mode of production throughout the world, but it did so in its own anarchic manner, grafting onto the most backward countries the latest word in capitalist technique. This, Trotsky was to term combined and uneven development. 'Only the correlation of these two fundamental tendencies — both of which arise from the nature of capitalism — explains to us the living texture of the historical process.' ('The Third International After Lenin', New Park, p.16).

Trotsky's analysis of Russia's combined and uneven development and its class relations showed that the Russian bourgeoisie would be incapable of carrying through a bourgeois revolution because of its stunted development and its ties with imperialism and the Tsarist autocracy. Only the working class, drawing behind it the poor peasantry, would be able to complete the bourgeois revolution by taking power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The destruction of the remnants of feudalism, the land question, the oppression of national minorities — none of these could be solved except through the working class taking power.

Lenin and Trotsky — co-

leaders of the Russian revolution — understood it to be the first step of the world revolution. Bolshevik internationalism had nothing in common with platonic feelings of sympathy for the oppressed, but on the contrary, was rooted in a scientific analysis of world economy and the world nature of the class struggle.

The Soviet state could only defeat the imperialist powers encircling it by extending the socialist revolution throughout the world. Thus the 'permanence' of the revolution acquired a two-fold significance: the working class in power could not stop short at 'democratic' tasks and had to 'reconstruct' the nation from top to bottom through socialist measures; secondly the Russian revolution would necessarily be the prologue to the world revolution.

Trotsky's theory, although it initially addressed itself to class relations in the Russian revolution, has an immense international significance for all countries with a belated capitalist development. In no such country has the bourgeoisie been able to carry out a bourgeois revolution.

Not until November 1924, after Lenin's death, did Stalin dare advance his infamous doctrine of 'socialism in one country'. Stalin, articulating the outlook of the rising bureaucracy, made the isolation of the Russian revolution a virtue. Hand in hand with the declaration that a self-sufficient 'socialism' could be built within the national boundaries of the Soviet Union was the turn away from the world revolution and the task of constructing and guiding the young Communist Parties in favour of a series of opportunist 'alliances' with non-proletarian forces.

The disastrous results of the line pursued by Stalin from 1924-7 were felt internationally: the defeats of the General Strike of 1926 in Britain and the Chinese revolution of 1926-7 and the derailing of the Communist Parties of Asia into fruitless attempts to build 'worker-peasant' parties — all this under the banner of the struggle against the theory of permanent revolution.

In all the countries which had not yet completed bourgeois revolutions, Stalinism resurrected the 'two-stage' theory of Menshevism, smashed on the rocks of 1917 — support for the 'national' bourgeoisie to establish a 'democratic' capitalist regime with socialism relegated to the distant future. Every revisionist trend which has arisen within, and broken from, the Trotskyist movement has been obliged to attack the theory of permanent revolution. This has meant reproducing all the essential features of Menshevism and early Stalinism.

The followers of Michel Pablo in the Fourth International in the 1950s, having pioneered the idea of the 'self-reform' of the Stalinist bureaucracy, proceeded to argue that the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders emerging in Africa and the Middle East could, under the influence of 'mass pressure', be forced to carry out the socialist revolution.

In 1963 the Pabloites were joined by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, which ten years previously had declared decisively for 'orthodox Trotskyism' against Pablo. The SWP, with whose leaders Trotsky had worked closely in his last years, argued that the petty-

bourgeois nationalist Fidel Castro had, as a result of 'mass pressure', become an 'unconscious' Marxist.

If 'unconscious' Marxists could unwittingly lead socialist revolutions, then the role of Trotskyism was relegated to that of a radical ginger group, cheering on the Castros, Nkrumahs, Ben Bellas and Nassers. By 1982 the logic of the SWP position had worked itself out. Its leaders Doug Jenness and Jack Barnes launched a frontal assault on Trotskyism, publically denouncing the theory of permanent revolution.

The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), whose predecessor, the Socialist Labour League had led the struggle against Pabloite revisionism, particularly after the capitulation of the SWP in 1963, took a different path, only to arrive essentially at the same position.

In 1977 the International Committee of the Fourth International (of which the WRP was the British section), at its Seventh Congress, undertook a 'turn' to the national liberation movements. Under the cover of a 'turn' to revolutionary forces, a series of uncritical 'alliances' was made with various bourgeois-nationalist regimes in the Middle East and Africa which sacrificed the political independence of the working class in these countries. A survey of some 80 editions and 4,000 pages of the WRP's theoretical journal 'Labour Review' from 1977-85 reveals scarcely a single article devoted to the question of permanent revolution.

Little wonder, then, that when the WRP split explosively in 1985 the leading theoreticians of the party (now members of the 'Workers Press' group) sought to heap blame exclusively on G.Healy, while leaving out their own role in this immense theoretical and political degeneration.

Among the organisations to emerge from the WRP, the 'Workers Press' group combines propaganda adherence to the theory of permanent revolution with a platform of 'regroupment' with sections of the Pabloite movement and the Morenoite MAS of Argentina — until recently participants in a popular front with the Argentinian Stalinists and various bourgeois parties.

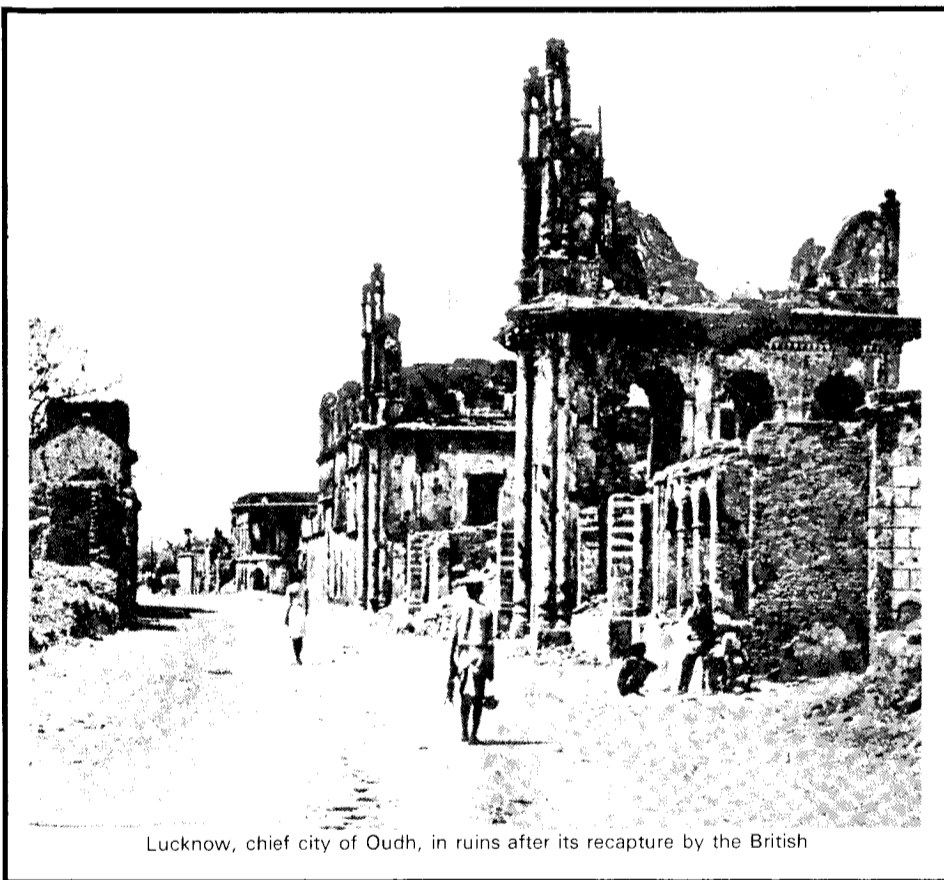
The most insolent attacks on the theory of permanent revolution have come in the series of articles in 'Marxist Review', published by the 'News Line' group — which the Workers International League broke from in February 1987. This group has discovered that the bourgeoisie in the East (where exactly is this??) 'can play a revolutionary role', and calls for the formation of 'alliances' with 'bourgeois-feudal elements' in the Middle East and Asia.

This is indeed the most explicit repudiation of the theory of permanent revolution yet. Among these self-styled 'Trotskyists' there is now a bourgeois 'gut' feeling that Trotsky may have been alright in his day, but it is time publically to junk permanent revolution. This is the most profound expression of bourgeois class pressure and is inseparable from the stage of development of the world crisis. These attacks, the essence of which is to deny the continuity of Trotskyism and the theory of permanent revolution with the entire history of the Marxist movement, will be dealt with in further articles.

The British Raj in flames . . .

'If the uncontested possession by the rebels during a month of the traditionary centre of the Indian Empire acted perhaps as the most powerful ferment in completely breaking up the Bengal army, in spreading mutiny and desertion from Calcutta to the Punjab in the north, and to Rajputana in the west, and in shaking the British authority from one end of India to the other, no greater mistake could be committed than to suppose that the fall of Delhi, though it may throw consternation among the ranks of the sepoys, should suffice either to quench the rebellion, to stop its progress, or to restore the British rule. Of the whole native Bengal army, mustering about 80,000 men — composed of about 28,000 Rajputs, 23,000 Brahmins, 13,000 Mohammedans, 5,000 Hindus of inferior castes, and the rest Europeans — 30,000 have disappeared in consequence of mutiny, desertion, or dismissal from the ranks. As to the rest of that army, several of the regiments have openly declared that they will remain faithful and support the British authority, excepting in the matter in which the native troops are now engaged: They will not aid the authorities against the mutineers of the native regiments, and will, on the contrary, assist their "bhaies" (brothers). The truth of this has been exemplified in almost every station from Calcutta. The native regiments remained passive for a time; but, as soon as they fancied themselves strong enough, they mutinied.

. . . In the Punjab, open rebellion has only been prevented by disbanding the native troops. In Oudh, the English can only be said to keep Lucknow, the residency, while everywhere else the native regiments have revolted, escaped with their ammunition, burned all the bungalows to the ground, and joined with the inhabitants who have taken up arms. Now, the real position of the English army is best demonstrated by the fact that it was thought necessary, in the Punjab as well as the Rajputana, to establish flying corps. This means that the English cannot depend either on their



Lucknow, chief city of Oudh, in ruins after its recapture by the British

. . . 130 years ago

THE summer of 1857 saw the outbreak of the greatest struggle conducted by the Indian people against British colonialism in the 19th Century.

Throughout April and May mutinies in the Indian army developed, with Indian regiments killing their British officers. The movement rapidly became national in its scope and character, overcoming the religious divisions which the British rulers had cultivated in order to 'divide and rule'. When the uprising, which had started amongst Hindus, reached Delhi a Moslem king was placed on the throne.

This mighty rebellion, which anticipated modern national wars of independence, shook British colonialism in India to its foundations and was only put down with the greatest brutality. Its development was closely followed and warmly supported by Marx and Engels. Describing British rule in India, Marx wrote: 'It suffices to say that torture formed an organic institution of its financial policy.' The following extracts are from 'The Revolt in India', an article by Marx published in the 'New York Daily Tribune' on August 4, 1857.

sepoy troops or on the natives to keep the communication open between their scattered forces. Like the French during the Peninsular war, they command only the spot of ground held by their own troops, and the next neighbourhood domineered by that spot; while for communication between the disjointed members of their army they depend on flying corps, the action of which, most precarious in itself, loses naturally in intensity in the

same measure that it spreads over a greater extent of space. The actual insufficiency of the British forces is further proved by the fact that, for removing treasures from disaffected stations, they were constrained to have them conveyed by sepoys themselves, who, without any exception, broke out in rebellion on the march, and absconded with the treasures confided to them. As the troops sent from England will, in the best case, not ar-

rive before November, and as it would be still more dangerous to draw off European troops from the presidencies of Madras and Bombay — the 10th Regiment of Madras sepoys, having already shown symptoms of disaffection — any idea of collecting the regular taxes throughout the Bengal Presidency must be abandoned, and the process of decomposition be allowed to go on.'

—To be continued—

The Workers Press, Brockway and . . . Trotsky



The statue of Fenner Brockway in London's Red Lion Square

FIFTY years after the infamous Moscow Trials, in pursuit of their 'campaign' for the rehabilitation of Trotsky and other Old Bolsheviks, the WRP/Workers Press group have acquired a highly dubious ally in the shape of the 99-year-old Lord Fenner Brockway — one of Trotsky's most consistent centrist opponents of the 1930s.

A letter to the 'Guardian' published on June 3, calling on the Soviet government to review the cases of those condemned by the Moscow Trials, bears ten signatures, including those of Brockway, anti-Trotskyist Tariq Ali, Labour 'left' Eric Heffer, Professor Fred Halliday of the London School of Economics and long-standing WRP member Cyril Smith.

This support for the rehabilitation of Trotsky on the part of Brockway is in marked contrast to his role at the height of the Moscow Trials.

On November 27, 1936, a delegation of British Trotskyists visited Brockway, then leader of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), to seek his support for an

international commission of inquiry into the Moscow Trials. Harry Wicks gives the following account of their bizarre encounter:

"We went over to Ludgate Circus, to Bride Street, where the ILP had a bookshop and their premises . . . The CP was running these campaigns of meetings where we were intervening, and we wrote to Brockway, and went to see him at his office. There was Henry Sara, Stewart Purkis, and myself, and he said "Gentlemen, sit down. What was the question? The Moscow Trials? Oh, excuse me." And he goes into this little office, and he comes out with an all-red grandee's velvet uniform, with gold braid hat, to show us. "This

is the Spanish Revolution. The Revolution is on in Spain. This is the grand Spanish struggle. Now the Moscow Trials — if the sky was clear, if the clouds weren't big in the sky, we would really do something about the Moscow Trials. We would call meetings, we would have discussions, we would counter. But the Spanish Revolution is on, and the Spanish Revolution is dependent on Russian arms, so there is nothing we could do in the matter." Now that is still vivid in my recollection, and from that moment on Brockway to me was a nothing' (Quoted in Bornstein and Richardson's 'Against the Stream' pp.230-1).

Early in 1937, Brockway's opposition to the formation of the

Dewey Commission, and his call instead for an inquiry into the role of Trotskyism, brought the response from Trotsky that he was playing the role of 'Pritt Number Two' — a reference to the pro-Stalinist Labour MP and barrister, D.N. Pritt, who enthusiastically defended the Moscow Trials.

While Brockway, in the interests of a bloc with the Stalinists in Britain, was refusing to defend Trotsky, his co-thinkers in the POUM were being liquidated by the GPU in Spain, accused of . . . Trotskyism.

It should also be recalled that when Brockway moved to disband the ILP at the end of the Second World War, and opened negotiations with the Labour Party leadership, part of the horse-trading involved the expulsion of the remaining Trotskyists in the ILP. Afterwards Brockway played an important role in grooming a generation of opportunist leaders in the national liberation movements through the 'Movement for Colonial Freedom' (now known as 'Liberation'). Fittingly, Brockway has ended his long opportunist career in the House of Lords, and acts as a figurehead for the 'peace movement', arm-in-arm with the Stalinists. All this is, we are sure, well known to the 'Workers Press' group.

For Brockway now to endorse the 'appeal' by 'Workers Press' at the distance of fifty years is utterly worthless. For the 'Workers Press' to enlist the services of this old rogue is more significant. It is entirely in line with their opportunist popular-front politics. Even their round-robin letter is phrased in such a way as to appeal to any liberal. It claims that it is 'astounding' that under the policy of 'glasnost' the victims of the Moscow Trials are still considered guilty. Sentiments worthy indeed of a liberal professor — but alien to a Trotskyist.

Euros push six-day week

THE 'Morning Star' may no longer be the organ of the leadership of the Communist Party but it still knows when to keep quiet about the activities of its Euro-Stalinist comrades in the National Union of Mineworkers.

The report which it carried on July 9 about the overwhelming vote against six-day working at the annual conference of the NUM in Rothesay did not even mention the pre-conference efforts of Mick McGahey to turn the vote in favour of this so-called flexible working. Nor did George Bolton, new Scottish NUM President and Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party, rate a mention for leading the attempt at conference to turn the tide in favour of flexible working, or at least avoid a vote against it by getting the issue referred to the Executive.

In an interview published in the July issue of the Communist Party's magazine 'Marxism Today', McGahey reveals that it was he who first raised the possibility of supporting flexible working on the NUM National Executive.

By the way of an explanation, he offers the following: 'Listen to the miner and pose the question — you can have a week in every month in which you can be off work . . . but to do that you will have to go into job and shift flexibility. I don't know, the miner might say, "hey, I am for that". Payment for change is an important question. Yes, we have got to be thinking. If you never move an inch, this is not a movement — that's a monument.'

Inside the conference, Bolton concentrated on trying to frighten delegates into acceptance of six-day working by warning that opposition could lead to the creation of the first non-union pit in the country, using private contractors. Piling on the agony, he said: 'If we say we are not discussing these questions, yes we will have dignity and our principles, but if you wash your hands it is the men who will be crucified.'

In his own conference contribution, McGahey said that the union should be prepared to accept flexibility in return for shorter hours, longer holidays, better pensions and other improvements. The 'Morning Star' may have turned a blind eye to

By David Lewis

all this but the 'Financial Times' editorial of July 9 was most enthusiastic about such a package deal, recognising that the bitter pill of flexible working would go down better if it was sugar-coated.

Even after the vote had been taken, the Stalinists and their co-thinkers made it clear that they would not accept it. Bolton indicated that his area would consider flexible working at the proposed new Seaford-Francis development whilst Labour Party member Des Duffield, South Wales NUM President, said that his area would proceed to



McGAHEY

organise Margam and that this was all right since it would not be in production for another five years. George Rees, another delegate from the South Wales Area, took up this theme in a television interview. He accused the national union of being a 'dictatorship' and claimed it was not unconstitutional for the Area to organise a new pit

whilst it was in the pre-production stage. 'We will carry out the rules of the union . . . and we will organise Margam,' he said.

These statements of intent to ignore the national conference policy serve to underline the dangerous nonsense put forward by that other daily, the 'News Line'. On the eve of the NUM conference it carried a comment ('This Morning', Saturday July 4, 1987) which exuded what can only be described as optimistic fatalism. While attacking McGahey and the other Euro-Stalinists for their capitulation to British Coal, it disarms the miners and the rest of the working class in the face of the necessity to eliminate the cancer of Stalinism by referring to the 'failing influence of the Communist Party'.

It goes on to characterise this

as 'a period in which leaders must call for a defence of all gains through industrial action'. No mention here of what kind of leaders, but we may infer that 'News Line' has Arthur Scargill in mind. Thus all the lessons of history are forgotten, and the teachings of Lenin on the need to build a conscious revolutionary party in conflict with the spontaneity of the working class and those of Trotsky on the need to destroy Stalinism as a force in the working class are thrown out.

Adherence to Lenin would upset the WRP/News Line group's cosy, uncritical relationship with Scargill. On the other hand, too much Trotskyism would jeopardise their popular front with the 'hardliners' around the 'Morning Star', such as the erstwhile leader of the Wapping strikers, Bill Freeman.

Stalinists mourn Tsar

GORBACHEV's 'glasnost' policy, as well as taking the road of closer co-operation with imperialist powers, is resulting in a new bout of historical falsification. An article by historian Genrikh Ioffe in the official publication 'Sovetskaya Rossiya', July 12, describes the execution of the butcher Tsar Nicholas II and his family in July 1918 at Ekaterinburg as 'tragic and inevitable'.

While Gorbachev's clique in the Kremlin describe the Tsar's fate as 'tragic', they maintain a wall of silence in relation to the murder of Leon Trotsky and thousands of Lenin's closest comrades — the founders of the Soviet state.

Audibly sighing with regret, Ioffe claims that the execution of the Tsar 'was not the result of malice, or the revenge of the Revolution', but that it was due to the action of a local soviet which contained anarchists, Left Socialist Revolutionaries and 'extremists'.

In reporting that Bolshevik leaders had favoured putting

the Romanov family on trial, Ioffe naturally omits to tell his readers that the role of prosecutor was to have been carried out by Trotsky.

In his 'Diary in Exile, 1935', Trotsky recounts the following:

'My next visit to Moscow took place after the fall of Ekaterinburg. Talking to Sverdlov, I asked in passing: "Oh yes, and where is the Tsar?" "It's all over," he answered, "he has been shot." "And where is the family?" "And the family along with him." "All of them?" I asked, apparently with a touch of surprise. "All of them!" replied Sverdlov, "what about it?" He was waiting to see my reaction. I made no reply. "And who made the decision?" I asked. "We decided it here. Ilyich (Lenin) believed that we shouldn't leave the Whites a live banner to rally around, especially under the present difficult circumstances . . ." I did not ask any further questions, and considered the matter closed. Actually, the decision was not only ex-

pedient but necessary. The severity of this summary justice showed the world that we would continue to fight on mercilessly, stopping at nothing.'

What a gulf separates the founders of the Soviet state, who defended this revolutionary act — fully justified by Tsar Nicholas' bloody crimes and under acute conditions of civil war — from the apologetics of today's Stalinists!

Just as with the acceptance last year of responsibility for the foreign debts of the Russian Empire, repudiated in 1917, these things have more than a symbolic importance. They show that the Gorbachev 'reforms' are aimed more and more directly at the very foundations of the Soviet state. Out of the woodwork of the bureaucracy are now crawling 'historians' shedding tears for the Romanov dynasty.



TSAR NICHOLAS II

The class nature of the Libyan state

JONATHAN BEARMAN's book provides much valuable factual and political material and because of this should be met with the warmest welcome.

The cornerstone of Trotskyism is the theory of permanent revolution. Trotsky showed that the national bourgeoisie in a semi-colonial country is incapable of defeating imperialism and establishing a truly independent nation state.

Bearman shows that before the September 1st Revolution in 1969, Libya was a country where capitalist development had almost exclusively been a function of foreign investment and control:

'Libya was characteristically a *rentier* state. Typically, the country received large external payments, best classified as rents, in return for the use of land under the control of the Libyan state. Indeed, the two most important forms of income, base rentals and, particularly, oil revenues, come within the classification of rents . . . In short, the Libyan state accrued most of its income in the form of rents from the provision of land which could provide a natural basis for production.' (pp.38-9).

Under such conditions, the national bourgeoisie could never be an independent social force — it could function only as an executive for foreign capital. While it is true that a certain stage of 'independence' can and has been reached in countries such as Libya, this does not mean that the bourgeois revolution has been completed under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie as it had been in England three centuries earlier.

For many members of the former Trotskyist organisation, the Workers Revolutionary Party, a definite class analysis of 'independent' countries like Libya has always remained a mystery. The absence of such an analysis was determined by the state of relations with the bourgeois nationalist movements.

Bearman's book provides a detailed look at the Libyan state apparatus. The Gaddafi regime is a Bonapartist regime resting on capitalist state foundations. The September 1st Revolution certainly swept away the monarchy, but it did not qualitatively alter the state structure. Gaddafi replaced the monarch's lackeys with men loyal to himself.

**Qadhafi's Libya by Jonathan Bearman
Zed Books £6.95**

**REVIEW ARTICLE BY
GARY HOLLINGSBEE**

Gaddafi's unstable Bonapartist regime balances between the native capitalist class on the one hand and the workers and rural poor on the other. The nature of such a regime is determined by the fact that the working class is unable to seize state power (because it lacks revolutionary leadership) and that the capitalists are too weak to wield political power in their own right.

This has determined the zig-zag course of Libyan foreign policy. Progressive policies directed against imperialism have to be weighed against the welcome afforded to a succession of dictators, racists and right-wingers — Idi Amin, Emperor Bokassa, Louis Farrakhan and a delegation from the Ulster Defence Association amongst them.

After seizing power from the corrupt, pro-imperialist regime of King Idris, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) led by Gaddafi declared its fundamental goals to be Arab unity and the ending of foreign exploitation of Libya. Influence over the oil companies was gradually increased through control of prices and production quotas.

On September 1, 1973, the government issued a decree forcing the major oil companies to accede to a 51 per cent controlling interest by the Libyan state. In some cases (as with BP), outright nationalisation was carried out as a direct political reprisal for hostile actions by imperialist governments; elsewhere it occurred as a result of company profits being squeezed to the point where nationalisation was the best financial option open to them.

The breaking of the grip of the Western oil companies over the economy has been the most important factor in raising the standard of living for the Libyan people. It has turned Gaddafi into the leading bogeyman for world imperialism — the target for a continuous hate campaign and periodic assassination attempts.

Gaddafi leans on the working class and rural poor in his struggle against imperialism. To do this, he is forced to give large economic concessions to the masses — a major expansion of

housing, health services and education. This is all charted in the book in some detail.

There are those so-called Marxists (and even Trotskyists) who proclaim that Libya is a new type of socialism. They cite that Gaddafi has removed private ownership and has set up a system of workers' and peasants' control. 'Qadhafi's Libya' provides information to refute this.

The author explains that Gaddafi followed the Nasserite theory of state intervention in economy. He draws the conclusion that the overthrow of the monarchy by the revolution led by Gaddafi was necessary for the development of a large-scale industrial capitalism:

'Libya was integrated into the world economy by the production and exchange of oil: faced with a negligible local market, foreign capital exhibited no interest in the development of industry. The commercial bourgeoisie, lacking the necessary concentrations of capital, preferred expansion into landowning. The state, the body with the capacity to diversify the economy, encouraged this trend. Controlled by elements socially and ideologically antipathetic to the growth of industrial capitalism, the state diverted the financial surpluses derived from oil into largely non-productive ends, including the luxury consumption of the ruling families, or the purchase of arms, which posed no danger to the social stability of the monarchical dictatorship. Not until the overthrow of the monarchist regime were the preconditions set for the transition from merchant capitalism to productive capitalism.

Under the RCC, the state pursued a policy of state capitalism. Acting as a *collective capitalist*, the Libyan state intervened in the economy, by investing in plant and machinery and organising production . . .

' . . . Libyan state capitalism was not untypical of the experience of other modernising states at a similar early stage of industrialisation. Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Algeria had all, before Libya, transformed the state into an instrument designed to organise and promote industrial capitalism.' (pp.124-6).

This is essentially correct. The longer that capitalism continues to exist without the socialist victory of the working class, the more that the capitalist economies in semi-colonial countries will have to adopt measures which conform to the character of modern industry, division of labour and communication — yet still restrict the economy within the contradiction of capitalism. Anyway, facts tell us a little more than just that private property has been abolished:

'The revolutionary committees, heeding Qadhafi's call, mounted a "march on the factories". The owners of industrial enterprises were dismissed and workplace "vocational congresses", with powers of managerial control, established in their place. *Full compensation and financial indemnity were granted.*' (p.191 My emphasis — GH).

Neither extensive nationalisation of this type, nor the weakness of the bourgeoisie alters the class nature of the state. Bearman in a crude way explains that: 'No specific class exercised control over the state apparatus . . . the state in Libya did not govern on behalf of a ruling class; it was the *embodiment* of the ruling class.' (p.136).

When answering those who wrongly used the term for an analysis of the USSR, Trotsky explained the meaning of state capitalism:

'The term "state capitalism" originally arose to designate all the phenomena which arise when a bourgeois state takes direct charge of the means of transport or of industrial enterprises. The very necessity of such measures is one of the signs that the productive forces have outgrown capitalism and are bringing it to a partial self-negation in practice. But the outworn system, along with its elements of self-negation, continues to exist as a capitalist system.

'Theoretically, to be sure, it is possible to conceive a situation in which the bourgeoisie as a whole constitutes itself a stock company which, by means of its state, administers the whole national economy. The economic laws of such a regime would present no mysteries. A single capitalist, as is well known, receives in the form of profit, not that part of the surplus value which is directly created by the workers of his own enterprise, but a share of the combined surplus value created throughout the country proportionate to the amount of his own capital. Under an integral "state capitalism", this law of the equal rate of profit would be realised, not by devious routes — that is, competition among different capitals — but immediately and directly through state bookkeeping. Such a regime never existed, however; and, because of profound contradictions among the proprietors themselves, never will exist — the more so since, in its quality of universal repository of capitalist property, the state would be too tempting an object for social revolution.' ('The Revolution Betrayed', New Park, pp.245-6).

Libya remains a capitalist state. It is ruled by a radical sec-



Celebrating the September 1st 1969 Revolution which overthrew King Idris and brought Gaddafi to power

tion of the petty-bourgeoisie who have been compelled to take extensive state capitalist measures to compensate for the lack of a developed national bourgeoisie.

On the point of workers' and peasants' control, Bearman explains that the creation of the Jamahiriya in 1975 was supposed to hand over control of the country completely to the people. But this was not the case:

'In theory, following the Sebha Declaration, all political control was vested in 187 Basic People's Congresses and 47 Municipal People's Congresses. In practice, the existing political leadership continued to exercise varying degrees of power and influence. Whilst the RCC was formally abolished, Qadhafi and his four colleagues retained important positions within the state apparatus: Qadhafi was himself Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces; Abu Bakr Younis Jaber was Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces; Mustafa Kharoubi was Chief of Staff; Khweildi Hamidi was Commander of the Police; and Jalloud, whilst holding no formal office, was a key figure in the conduct of foreign policy and trade negotiations. In fact,

neither the police nor the armed forces are mentioned in the *Green Book*; despite the creation of the Congress system, known as the *jamahiri* system, their established structures remained intact.' (p.155).

Bearman's book does not offer any coherent guesses at Libya's future. Not being a Marxist, he places the country on the same level as that of the USSR, as a kind of 'transitional' country somewhere between capitalism and socialism.

The Workers International League supports Gaddafi in his struggle against imperialism. But unlike the so-called 'Trotskyists' in the WRP/News Line group, we will not join in the uncritical adulation of him. We do not have any illusions in petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders. For the Libyan people, the defence of their country will come from the complete smashing of imperialism. This will not take place under the leadership of Gaddafi.

The Fourth International was founded on the basis that: 'The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.' There is no other road to the overthrow of imperialism than that of the socialist revolution under the leadership of a Trotskyist party.



Gaddafi addresses a rally shortly after seizing power.

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Kingdom of ignorance



Martin Jacobs as Boris and Janet McTeer as Katerina in *The Storm*

SEEING Ostrovsky's most famous play in this new production at The Pit, it's easy to understand why Leos Janacek used it as the raw material for his opera *Katya Kabanova*.

The storm, which threatens from the opening exchanges and finally crashes over the heads of the characters in Act 2, has to compete with the outburst of long-suppressed emotions on stage. Nick Hamm's production points up the operatic extravagance of these feelings by introducing a solo piano accompaniment after the style used in the silent cinema.

But just as the characterisations of the early cinema lacked the extra dimension given by sound, so the inhabitants of *'The Storm'*, written in 1860, are stunted by the rural backwardness of Tsarist Russia and the superstition and ignorance of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Ostrovsky, who was to become one of the leading playwright

The Storm
by Alexander Ostrovsky
RSC at The Pit

By Philip Marchant

representatives of the liberal intelligentsia, developed a profound hatred for the rich peasant and merchant through close observation of the species. His father's legal practice, his time spent as a law student and, later, a court employee, taught him that they were a class of rapacious petty tyrants, mean and cowardly, with a fondness for cheating their neighbours and drinking too much vodka.

'The Storm' shows how exploitation by the merchant class, policed by all the paraphernalia of social convention and obligation borrowed from Tsarism, the promise of religious ecstasy and the threat of eternal damnation, was unable to take society for-

ward. Dikoy, the drunken, narrow-minded representative of this class in the play, is described by his nephew, Boris, as a man who would, if crossed by someone at work, bite his lip, go home . . . and beat his wife. This castrated provincial petty-bourgeois can only function as the local custodian of autocratic rule and feudal backwardness.

Katerina, young wife of Tikhon, the morally undistinguished son of a rich merchant, mourns the passing of the naive religious fantasies of her childhood and their replacement by dreams of sexual fulfilment outside her marriage. A prisoner of the repressive ideological outlook ('once a woman gets married here, she might as well be buried alive', observes Boris), she attempts to recapture the former and stifle the latter; and when that proves impossible she can only conclude that 'my world is all sin'.

Labouring under this burden she is, nevertheless, driven on by her desires. When her husband

is packed off to Moscow by his dominating mother, the most full-blown portrait of that society's hypocrisy ('the filth of the mind rivals the mud of the Volga in full flood'), she has an affair with Boris.

Tikhon's return coincides with a violent thunderstorm which causes panic amongst the townspeople, being generally interpreted as the wrath of god, and specifically by Katerina as his anger at her infidelity. She confesses, is locked up in her room, but escapes and runs down to the river. Boris finds her and explains that he is being sent by his uncle to Siberia, but despite his liberal's outrage at what has happened and his recognition that she is about to kill herself, he refuses to take her with him.

Katerina's only escape is the river. She cannot accept the conditions imposed on her by society, neither has she the strength and knowledge to reject them — 'home or the grave, they're all one to me'.

'The Storm' is often criticised for being a particularly pessimistic example of early Russian 'naturalism'. This is not the case, but the evidence to support this opposing view is masked by the vividness of the central theme and the fact that Janacek's opera, which is much more familiar, downgrades the character of Kuligin, the watchmaker. For Kuligin, who acts as political commentator and conscience of the play, lightning is not god, but electricity; the key to the future not piety, but the death of the old order.

A classic case of paternalism

Fathers and Sons
By Brian Friel
Lyttelton Theatre

Review by
Robert Williams

THOUGH characterised by its author as a play 'after the novel by Ivan Turgenev', *Fathers and Sons* is very much Friel's political view of the world.

Set on the eve of Alexander II's emancipation of the serfs in the Russia of 1861, Turgenev's novel describes the impact made by two returning students upon a conservative provincial society. Arkady, the sensitive romantic, and his mentor, the would-be doctor Bazarov, carry home with messianic fervour the newly-fashionable nihilist doctrine of the intelligentsia.

Turgenev registers upon them the effects of romantic passion. Arkady, whose love for young Katya is quickly returned, soon makes his peace with the ineffectual old order of his father's generation. Bazarov, meanwhile, resisted by the icy elder sister, Anna, and confused by the chemistry of his own emotions, throws himself back into study and scientific experiment.

Less about conflict between generations, but much more about humility and reconciliation, *Fathers and Sons* validates the old Russia's paternalist values. Through marriage, domesticity and careful agrarian administration, the sons of the rural gentry must help continue a settled system which can only be improved by gradual change from the top. In direct conflict with this, Bazarov's punishment proves to be that of his own annihilation.

The Irish senator and writer Brian Friel wildly ransacks Turgenev's cautionary tale to produce a clumsy melodrama. Nineteenth-century Russia becomes a Celtic Anywhere of half-witted peasants and bumbling gentry, the latter jealously guarding their cultural inheritance of musical and literary classics. This sterile condition Friel endorses as a timeless bulwark against dangerous change.

Anna guarantees a bright future for Arkady and Katya by demonstrating how to set a ramshackle farm into good capitalist order, while Friel sends Bazarov to a heroic off-stage death. The nihilist turns back from terrorism to die among the typhus-ridden peasantry he tirelessly ministers among during the epidemic. Such a stale resolution would surely have appalled even Turgenev himself.

Union struggle at Coke plant

Soft Drink, Hard Labour
Guatemalan Workers Take On Coca-Cola
Latin America Bureau 95p

Review by Paul Stickley

GUATEMALA is a mainly agricultural country of sugar and coffee with a small 'low technology' industrial sector. A few landlords own most of the land.

Since the 'democratic' government of President Jacobo Arbenz was brought down in 1954 by a CIA and United Fruit Company-engineered coup, a succession of military regimes has faced all opposition and driven many to the main guerrilla organisation, URNG (National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala).

This booklet tells of the heroic nine-year-long fight of the workers at the EGSA Coca-Cola

bottling plant in Guatemala City to form a union confronted by government-controlled death squads, police raids and lock-outs. In the period April 1979 to June 1980 four workers were shot and wounded, four disappeared and seven were killed.

Their determination forced the international labour movement to take notice, a resolution of support being passed at the 1980 TUC Conference. Boycotts and strikes at other Coca-Cola plants forced the company to recognise a union and similar action coupled with an occupation of the EGSA plant rescinded a closure notice in 1984.

The book records the courage



EGSA workers during the occupation

and determination of the working class in Guatemala to struggle for its basic rights — in a country where to engage in open trade-union activity is to invite the attention of the death

squads. As Dan Gallin, the general secretary of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations, who is given the last word, correctly points out: 'If the Guatemalan

workers had not stood fast, international support would have been to no avail.'

• Available from: Latin America Bureau, 1 Amwell Street, London EC1R 1UL.

Tragedy behind the scenes

Chronicle of a Death Foretold (It/Fr 1986)
Directed by Francesco Rosi with Rupert Everett, Ornella Muti, Gian Maria Volonté, Irene Papas and Anthony Delon

By Malcolm Key

American masculinity or *machismo*.

Marquez is known for the sense of strangeness he creates by writing in his clipped style of small town life in South America. The point of this style is that nothing he describes comes out sounding reasonable. Actions stand in need of a justification which is clearly missing. They demand our effort to understand them. This is a powerful effect to achieve in a novel because it makes its readers think.

Rosi is easily capable of translating this effect onto film. He has done it to some extent in his *'Mattei Affair'* and *'Illustrious Corpses'*. In this film too he includes those pieces of evidence which we use to review the causes of a victim's death. For example, no-one has any alternative to offer to the male code which will result in this death — the victim himself is someone who treats women in the same way as do his killers. There comes a point where it is only the audience who are left

to reject the idea of treating the sexual experience as a commodity, the idea which alone makes the events of the story possible.

That this point comes is the measure of the film's success. But it may not come for everyone, and in particular it may not come for those who are used to accepting the screen version of life without discomfort. Hollywood thrives on making us enthusiasts of primitive manhood. In dealing with this subject there is something which a film must do in order to prevent our simply taking on board the idea that 'a man has to do what a man has to do'.

You finally have to admit that this film may be hedging its bets by giving its characters the kind of sentimental charm which is introduced most noticeably at

the end of the action when, older and wiser, the survivors are reconciled to each other. Once you have made this admission you can see how much Rosi has been seduced by the exotic location of the story, producing lush photography in a spirit of overindulgence, and has faithfully observed the conventions of representing male protagonists, stage-managing their anguish so as to exclude the realities of life which support them.

Nevertheless, the film does preserve some of the austerity of Marquez's writing which makes it possible for him to control the violently coloured environment of his fiction. And that is something worth digging out of the film. It is no mean feat.

A STRANGER comes to a small town in Colombia in search of a wife. Because he is wealthy he is able successfully to court a young girl by impressing her family. He marries her, then returns her to her mother on their wedding night, claiming that she is not a virgin.

Her mother and brothers compel her to name the person who has taken her virginity. Her brothers spend a day in the centre of the town drinking, openly saying to all that they are waiting to kill the person she has named. Despite this warning, no-one takes action to prevent the murder taking place.

These are the bones of this story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Nobel prize-winning Colombian author. Francesco Rosi's film of the same name is, for its best parts, a close examination of these events with a straightforward narration which pushes the tragedy along. What the story is about is Latin

YOUTH MUST JOIN UNIONS

Don't let the Tories divide and rule!

By Graham Fenwick

THE third term of the Tories in power will see an escalation of attacks on youth. Mass unemployment, the abolition of the Wages Councils and with them the minimum wage for under-21s, the strengthening of MSC schemes and a vicious assault on spending in education are the legacy of the two previous Tory governments.

Thatcher's latest proposals outlined in the Queen's Speech on Parliament's opening day included the ending of benefit rights for 16 to 18-year-olds who refuse a place on YTS. This will affect hundreds of thousands of youth leaving school and will mean a ready pool of cheap labour for employers.

School and college youth, already hit by Tory cuts, are also under threat. The government intends to allow schools to opt out of local authority control, raise part of their own finances through private sponsorship

from industry and charge parents for so-called 'extras'. The next step would be a compulsory privatisation programme. Many children whose parents can't afford the fees will get a second-class education.

Behind these attacks lies the deepening economic crisis of capitalism which the Tories are determined to push onto the working class. A new round of anti-union laws is an attempt to render the unions harmless for this purpose. Side by side with these laws is the deliberate policy of mass unemployment and the increasing role of MSC schemes, like the YTS and JTS, used in order to undermine the wages and conditions of the working class.

Youth automatically rebel against these attacks, but in an unorganised way. The Tories seek to divide young workers from adult workers in the trade unions. Union organisation on MSC schemes is more often than not denied. At stake is the right of the working class to organise itself independently of the state. These schemes are an attempt to wipe out the rights already won by the working

class through over a century-and-a-half of struggle.

It is therefore vitally important for youth and workers to heal this division. The trade unions must open their doors to the youth and organise both those who are unemployed and those on schemes.

During the miners' and printers' strikes and the Brixton and Broadwater Farm riots, youth showed their enthusiasm for battle against the state and the employers. This determination is needed in further struggles in order that the whole working class can resist attacks from the capitalist state. It is vital for trade unions to recruit the youth into its ranks.

This will bring shudders to the bureaucracy in the TUC and labour movement, for these youth will be an opposite of those compromised servants of the capitalist state whose support for the MSC is vital for the maintenance of Tory cheap-labour schemes. It will bring closer their downfall.

Trade unions on their own, however, can only struggle for better conditions. They are defensive organisations and in

themselves do not threaten the continued existence of capitalism. The only way to end unemployment, state attacks and pauperisation for ever is by the working class taking the power.

Above all this requires the building of revolutionary leadership in the trade unions. The youth must play a vital part in building that leadership. Trotsky, the founder of the Fourth International, made clear the role of youth: 'The Fourth International pays particular attention to the young generation of the proletariat. All of its policies strive to inspire the youth with belief in its own strength and in the future. Only the fresh enthusiasm and aggressive spirit of the youth can guarantee the preliminary successes in the struggle; only these successes can return the best elements of the older generation to the road of revolution. Thus it was, thus it will be.' (The Transitional Programme, New Park, p.57).

We urge youth to join the Workers International League, to take up the fight for Marxism in order to lead the working class to victory. The Workers International League says:

- Trade unions must open their door to the youth.
- Full trade-union rights for all youth on MSC schemes.
- The TUC must withdraw from the MSC — no to cheap labour schemes!
- TUC must fight for full training and apprenticeships under trade-union supervision and rate of pay.
- Build revolutionary leadership — join the Workers International League.



Linda (seated on steps) and other residents of Beacon House

No jobs or homes!

By Alistair Wrightson

THE housing crisis for young people is becoming increasingly acute. Workers News spoke to Linda Carpenter, 24, who is staying at a hostel in east London, about the vicious circle of unemployment and high rents which tens of thousands of youth face.

'I moved to London from Hartlepool to look for work. Brent housing services sent me to Beacon House. Although the conditions are good, you have to pay £51 per week, with one week in advance.

'When you first come to London you don't know anywhere. You are forced to

move from one place to another. I used to stay in River Point for two days at a time. It was disgusting — eight to ten beds in one room. Most hostels won't even let you in straight away.

'If you're homeless, you have to go on a waiting list, but there is no preference for homeless people. If you haven't got an address, you can't get a job. I went on a Community Programme to try and get some work experience with children. But it's cheap labour — all you get is £57 a week which means you can't afford to rent a flat.'



Chilean youth in action recently against the Pinochet regime

Students defy junta

STUDENTS and working-class youth are in the forefront of the struggle against General Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile.

Since mid-June several major universities have seen growing discontent on their campuses. By early July three of the most important — the University of Chile, Santa Maria University and Concepción University — were occupied by students protesting against cuts in the education budget. Their demands include calls for strike action in support of the student struggle and for solidarity with the victims of repression by the military junta.

At the University of Chile in Santiago, where sixty students were arrested in one confrontation with police, following the

occupation of the main site, students are demanding an enquiry into the murder of a student in previous clashes.

The students also draw attention to the murder earlier this year of twelve members of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (widely believed to be the military wing of the Chilean Communist Party) and call for the offensive against the junta to be escalated.

The student occupations have been joined by an indefinite strike of university lecturers and administrators opposed to education cuts and demanding 30 per cent pay increases.

In the past five years 500,000 youth have been detained by the military authorities. Since the CIA-organised coup in 1973 which brought Pinochet to

power, 7,000 students have been expelled from university for political 'offences'. Thousands more have been tortured and killed.

Only one in four Chilean youths have jobs; on average they earn only half the meagre wages paid to adults. Half of all young people receive no formal education at present. So much for the economic 'miracle' admired by Thatcher's favourite economist Milton Friedman.

- A new version of the Popular Front — the 'United Left' — has been formed. It unites on a common programme the main capitalist opposition party, the 'left' Christian Democrats, with the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR).

Police 'hooligans' jailed after 4 years

By Daniel Evans

FOUR police constables and a sergeant were jailed last month, four years after carrying out an unprovoked assault on a group of schoolboys. Passing sentence, the judge said they had behaved 'like vicious hooligans and lied like common criminals'.

On August 6, 1983, five boys, then aged between 13 and 16, were walking home from a fair through the Holloway area of London when a District Support Unit van pulled up alongside them and three police jumped out. The boys were, in the words of the trial prosecutor, subjected to a 'sudden, quick and ferocious attack'.

They were truncheoned, kicked and punched. One sustained a fractured nose after being kned in the face, another needed stitches, all were bruised and cut. The three police then jumped back in the van and made a quick getaway. 'I gave him a good smack,' one is reported to have said to his colleagues in the van. Another's comments were 'I feel better for punching that lad' and 'he got a good kicking'.

Two inquiries by CIB2, Scotland Yard's complaints bureau, not surprisingly, failed to unearth the guilty men who,

after the incident, had met in a park to 'fix' their story. The case was passed on to the newly-formed Police Complaints Authority in April 1985, which in February last year issued a report saying that little progress had been made in their investigations and a prosecution was unlikely.

Public outrage ensued and Scotland Yard was forced to announce a fresh investigation. Immunity from prosecution for any of the police in the van who had not taken part in the assault was offered if they 'told the truth'. Within hours three police came forward and spilled the beans. Two of these three, despite their part in covering up the crime, are still in the police force.

The light sentences passed on the guilty police (between 18 months and four years for assault and 'conspiracy to pervert the course of justice'), the fact that three are still at large and the tiny amount of compensation paid to the boys who were attacked, point to anything but 'justice' having been done.

In fact, it is the police who believe they have been hard done by. A letter to the 'Independent' newspaper, dated July 17, justifies the assault on the grounds that the police are over-worked and under stress. It paints a picture of youth as thugs and demands that 'allowances' be made for this kind of thing.

Already, police chiefs are using this case to increase their demands for more manpower. Since the Tories were elected in 1979, numbers have increased by 11,300 officers and 6,200 administrative and other staff. They have received large pay rises, widespread training in the use of fire-arms and more sophisticated equipment and organisation.

Attacks on young workers are not new, but the Holloway incident shows that, with the economic crisis deepening, the police are being more and more openly encouraged to act with indiscriminate brutality in an attempt to terrorise youth into accepting a Tory future of unemployment and cheap-labour schemes.