

Walk Out

AS we went to press, nine hundred Glasgow postmen and four hundred from Southend came out on 24 hour strike as formal talks between the union and the employers collapsed over the union campaign for a shorter working week. Informal talks were still in progress but further walk outs from the major sorting offices seemed imminent.

PLUNGING DOLLAR HITS THATCHER

FEARS are growing in the Thatcher Cabinet that the British economy will be knocked for six by the dollar's continuing plunge.

The Americans are dumping their financial and economic problems on to Europe by letting the dollar slide.

Despite repeated promises, the Reagan administration has refused to tackle seriously its budget deficit.

For four weeks the financial universe held its breath while the Congress and President of the United States of America haggled over measures to reduce the Federal budget deficit.

When the agreement on a package of tax rises and expenditure cuts was announced two weeks ago the news was greeted with a resounding mumble.

The \$76 billion budget cut spread over two years represents only a fraction of the existing \$180 billion annual deficit.

The situation remains just as it was BC (before the crash). The stock markets continue to tumble, waiting for the next stage in the crash, and the dollar continues its downward spiral.

The reduction in the US budget deficit will in any case make things worse for world capitalism. By reducing demand it will intensify the forces creating a world slump.

The crisis demands that the American government acts in two opposite ways at the same time.

● As the centre of the world capitalist system, it has to maintain its industrial production, otherwise the market for the output of every other country will be severely dented.

● As the centre of the world financial system, it must

BY THE EDITOR

maintain the dollar's stability, or the mountain of credit will collapse with a deafening crash.

No wonder a recent 'Financial Times' leader ended: 'In present uncertain conditions, the only thing worse than continuing US external deficits would be a dramatic attempt to end them.'

It is usual to think of a debtor being made to cut his expenditure by those he owes money to. The problem here is that the debtor is more powerful than all his creditors put together, in terms of industrial, financial and military muscle.

Like the Latin American and other debtor nations, the US might try to get out of trouble by declaring itself unable to attend to its debts.

The uncontrolled inflation which followed the 1971 break between the dollar and gold was followed by the 1974 recession. The end of the 1970s brought a huge expansion of fictitious capital. But this brought no significant expansion of production. On the contrary, industry declined and mass unemployment rose in the old industrial countries.

This was the Reagan-Thatcher epoch, with the simultaneous flowering of yuppie parasitism and mass starvation elsewhere which also brought struggles of a new type, characterised by the South African mass movement and the British miners' strike.

This period came to an end on 14 October 1987. It will not be resuscitated by the decisions of US Congressmen or anyone else.

Meaning of \$ crisis

THE dollar's slide means:

- British exports to America will be hard hit as prices of imported goods into the US rise.
- American export prices will fall with the falling dollar, giving American firms a big advantage in world markets against Britain and others.
- North Sea oil revenues will plunge because oil is priced in dollars. Buoyant oil revenues have been the prop of Tory budget strategy. This prop might well now disappear.

Filthy Tube still a danger

'A TOTAL filthy ragshop' was Labour MP Frank Dobson's description of the London Underground, despite a report six months ago on fire hazards which had ordered a clean-up.

Dobson, Labour MP for Camden, accused London Underground of failing to bring about any real changes after the report, six months before the inferno which killed 31 passengers at King's Cross.

'The Underground system is still a mess, stations are full of litter and rubbish. Some stations are worse than others — but the situation hasn't changed much since the inspector's report,' said Dobson.

He revealed that cardboard boxes of escalator spare parts were ordered to be removed from King's Cross after inspectors

Sacks of rubbish on platforms and cleaning rags were among other hazards ordered to be taken away.

● Underground workers and passengers can have no confidence in official inquiries. They must mount their own investigation into the circumstances leading to the King's Cross disaster so that the real culprits can be exposed.

■ See 'Inquiry will be moved in last April. Cosmetic' page 3

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £381.32

OUR Special Fund has been established to make possible the development of our international work which centres on the struggle to build the Fourth International. We need to step up the pace if we are to achieve our goal of £20,000 by 1 May of next year. We again ask all Party branches to plan fund-raising activities over the Christmas period to give the Fund a boost. Send all donations to:

WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

PALESTINE PICKET



'Students for Palestine' demonstrated last week outside the Israeli embassy in London to demand 'Stop killing our students' and 'Open Bethlehem university'.

This year, four Palestinian students have been shot dead by

the Israeli military in occupied Palestine; four more have been exiled and hundreds imprisoned without charge. The latest student to be killed was Is'haq Abu Srour from Bethlehem university. Following Is'haq's death, the military authorities closed the university for three months.

Workers Press

The fate of Nikolai Bukharin

LAST WEEK'S ISSUE of the Soviet magazine 'Ogonoyok' carried an interview with Anna Larina, widow of Nikolai Bukharin, the Bolshevik leader who had led the 1917 insurrection in Moscow and was murdered by Stalin's GPU after the last of the Moscow Show Trials in 1938.

In the 'Ogonoyok' article, the 73-year-old Larina movingly described Bukharin's sensitivity and humility. She referred to the message he asked her to memorise before he was arrested, but was not allowed to quote it. Only when she was released in 1960, after 20 years in prisons and camps, cut off from her young son, had she been able to write this message down. It was addressed 'to a future generation of Party leaders'.

'I feel my helplessness before a hellish machine,' Bukharin had said. '... I have been in the Party since I was 18, and the purpose of my life has always been to fight for the interests of the working class, for the victory of socialism.'

I appeal to you, a future generation of Party leaders, whose historical mission will include the obligation to take apart the monstrous cloud of crimes that is growing ever hungrier in these frightful times, taking fire like a flame and suffocating the Party. I appeal to all Party members! In these days, perhaps the last of my life, I am confident that sooner or later the filter of history will sweep the filth from my head.

Know, comrades, that on that banner, which you will be carrying in the victorious march to communism, is also a drop of my blood.

Monday's 'Daily Telegraph' carried an interview with Bukharin's son in Moscow. Yuri Larin found out who his father was only in 1956, and was reunited with his mother on her release. Since then, they have appealed ceaselessly for the clearing of Bukharin's name and his restoration to his rightful place in history. (This fact was not revealed by the 'Ogonoyok' article.)

In his speech last month, Gorbachev mentioned Bukharin, and praised his fight against Trotsky, but refused to go any further towards his 'rehabilitation'. The 'Ogonoyok' interview, however, now makes it seem likely that this will follow sometime next year.

We must, of course, continue to press for the restoration of the reputations of Bukharin and the other defendants of 1936-1938. But to clear Bukharin, who was Stalin's ally in 1925-1929, and whose economic policies might be adapted to back up those of Gorbachev today, will inevitably raise the name of Trotsky, the chief accused in all the Moscow frame-ups.

Gorbachev today leads that same parasitic bureaucratic caste which usurped power from the working class under the leadership of Stalin. Trotsky and the Left Opposition led the uncompromising fight against the rise of this cancerous growth, which still eats away at the October revolution. And Trotsky gave what remains to this day the only scientific analysis of the nature of this bureaucracy.

So, while welcoming any moves towards Bukharin's 'rehabilitation', we must step up the fight for the names of all those leaders of the revolution who were victims of Stalin's murder and slander machines to be restored to their rightful place in history and for the works of Trotsky, in particular, to be made available to the new generation of Russians.

KING'S CROSS

Inquiry will be cosmetic

LONDON Regional Transport has made its first response to the fire at King's Cross that claimed the lives of 31 people. They have implemented some basic precautions, including two-hourly inspection of wooden escalators, and asking cleaners to work overtime in a big cleanup.

Among the precautions is a proposal to make it a sackable offence for staff to smoke in prohibited areas.

Brian MacNeill, secretary of the NUR Sectional Council said this week 'This is outrageous. In a short time they will change the rulebook to make it a charge of gross misconduct for rail workers to smoke a cigarette.

'They are trying to convince people that smoking caused the King's Cross disaster. After the war there was a much greater percentage of people smoking, and we were carrying a lot of passengers. All the escalators were wooden. Where were all the fires then?

'Cigarettes have been involved in starting fires, but it's not the cigarette that's the cause but the fact that it finds available rubbish.'

Experts investigating the fire now think that it was started by a mechanical fault on the escalator which produced friction.

Heat would have been conducted to plywood panels lining the escalator. The presence of litter would have aided the rapid spread of the fire. It was these blazing panels that caused the 'flashover' in the ticket office which killed the majority of the victims.

Cries for help from these horribly burned people were probably what persuaded fireman Colin Townsley to sacrifice his life entering the station without breathing apparatus.

Three days before the disaster the escalator was switched off because of over-

heating; it was making a loud 'screeching' noise for some time before the fire.

LRT has made no statement on the cost cutting drive which has taken millions off the budget for escalator maintenance, and for replacement of the old style wooden escalators — acknowledged by LRT to be dangerously inflammable. They have not commented on the cuts in both cleaning staff to clear litter from escalators and stations, and station staff to assist in evacuation in emergencies.

LRT says it has no plans to improve evacuation procedures for passengers.

Instead they point to the rulebook that says 'Unless and until the smouldering/smoke is cleared, the station immediately concerned must be cleared of passengers by using trains or escorting to the street as expedient.'

Staff receive no training in the drill, and the rule book does not explain what happens when a communication failure means that train drivers at King's Cross were instructed to drive through the station without stopping. Panic-stricken passengers were seen banging on the closed doors.

A spokesman from LRT said last Friday 'The incident hasn't suggested that anything immediate about evacuation should be done, but obviously if the inquiry decides otherwise, its recommendations will be taken on board.'

LRT has consistently failed to install vital fire precautions as a direct result of financial cuts.

Those precautions include

a system of fire breaks, part of a 57 point plan drawn up

by Tony Ridley (head of London's Underground) following a fire at Oxford Circus in 1984.

Ridley wrote 'We are determined to maintain the Underground's proud reputation as one of the safest forms of travel'.

He also proposed to review the use of wooden panelling. Ridley's programme has never been implemented because of the increasing cuts.

Tube stations are specifically designed to make it difficult for passengers to get out, in order to catch fare dodgers with the minimum of staff.

They have the minimum number of exits even though safety requires as many as possible.

The problem will worsen in the next few months after the introduction of new head-high barriers designed to catch fare dodgers. In an emergency there will be a panic button, although there is no guarantee that fit and youthful passengers will be able to find it in dense smoke, let alone the elderly, parents with children or the disabled.

Underground management has refused to learn any lessons from previous fires.

In February 1976, 25 people were hospitalised as a result of smoke inhalation from a Piccadilly line fire. The public inquiry that followed recommended improving communications, both internally in London Transport, and between London Transport and the fire brigade.

At King's Cross the fire brigade, and at least one senior Underground manager, were unaware that the main escape route from the station should have been the trains.

In June 1981, a fire at Goodge Street killed one person. The inquiry criticised LRT for allowing an accumulation of rubbish in tunnels.

A few hours before the King's Cross fire railway workers were threatened with disciplinary action for handing out leaflets pointing out fire dangers in tunnels.

In 1985 there were two serious escalator fires, one in Green Park and another in Holborn.

The volume of traffic on the Underground has risen by 80 percent over the past five years.

In much the same period the subsidy to London Transport has been halved.

London Transport was unable to say what effect the increased load of traffic has had on escalators, though there has been a noticeable increase in maintenance problems during the past year.

Unless the government produce more money, any inquiry into the wanton destruction of 31 lives at King's Cross cannot amount to anything but a cosmetic exercise — like the decision to paint the front of King's Cross for Thatcher's ghoulish visit after the fire.

The scene is already being set for an inquiry that will look at everything except the real causes.

Desmond Fennell QC has been appointed chair of the inquiry. His chief qualification is his former chairmanship of the Buckingham Conservatives Association.

Alan Norman, NUR London District Secretary for the Underground said 'I hope this will be an honest inquiry. This is an issue very much in the eyes of the media and the public.'

'I also hope that it will inquire not just into the King's Cross fire but into the whole rundown of London Regional Transport, the loss of 3,000 jobs and the dangers that those cuts bring.'

FORD: leaders avoid all-out strike

AS FORD WORKERS await the next meeting to discuss their pay claim, details have emerged of how the union officials avoided the negotiations coming to a head on 24 November — when the old agreement ran out.

The day before, on Monday 23 November, Fords put their 'improved offer' of a 5.5-per-cent, three-year productivity deal which the unions rejected.

Before the meeting adjourned the company proposed to meet the next day to continue the talks. It was officials Mick Murphy (transport union) and James

Airlie (engineering union) who proposed not to meet until two weeks later, avoiding the talks coming to a head and the consequent necessity of putting out the call for all-out strike action to secure the full claim of a 10-per-cent pay increase, a one-year deal, shorter hours, longer holidays and no productivity 'strings'.

Negotiating

A member of the union negotiating side who objected to this was told to 'shut up' by Airlie.

Ford workers should have no illusions about this union leadership. They want to avoid a strike and sign a deal at the expense of the Ford workers.

The cost to the unions in strike pay is uppermost in their minds and for them takes priority over the living standards, jobs and working conditions of the 30,000 Ford

Justification

workers.

They are trying to sell out the Ford workers' justified claim. It is widely rumoured that Airlie and Murphy are only holding out for a little more money to 'sell' the three-year deal and its drastic productivity clauses to the workforce.

The role of this leadership is extremely dangerous for the Ford workers and takes no account of the changed conditions now facing the working class following the crash on the world stock exchanges.

A warning of this was evident in new proposals introduced by Fords on 23 November. In return for a promise of 'full lay-off pay' the company wanted the unions to agree to short-term contract labour — a new layer of workers constantly living under the threat of dismissal.

Such a move would be the spearhead of the attack to speed up, cut manning and destroy trade unionism, a virtual scab force under direct management dictatorship.

The driving force for such a continuous demand for 'productivity' is the accelerating world economic crisis, the fierce competition between the car giants in a shrinking market and the pressure to increase the rate of profit.

Determined to fight poll tax!

BY SIMON PIRANI

A MEETING of 200 residents of Govan last week called on the Scottish TUC and Labour Party to resist the poll tax 'with all the methods at their disposal'.

Strathclyde Region's Labour councillors, who have voted to implement the tax and brought in extra staff and computers to do so, were condemned.

The meeting called on community and tenants' organisations to actively oppose the tax, and advocated a 'mass refusal to register'.

The meeting was organised by Govan, South Govan, Ibrox-Cessnock and Kinning Park Community Councils. (Note to readers down south: these are quasi-official committees, elected in localities, mainly to mediate with local authorities).

John Rafferty, secretary of the newly-formed Scottish Campaign Against the Poll Tax ('Stop It' campaign), told the meeting how the tax would penalise working-class families. It was an assault on democratic rights and civil liberties.

The 'Stop It' campaign — initiated by the Scottish TUC and Labour Party — would organise protest meetings throughout Scotland, activating trades councils, tenants' organisations and community councils.

A delegation will lobby Downing Street and a petition be submitted, said Labour Party member Rafferty.

Representatives of the four Community Councils pledged backing for the campaign. The 100-per-cent unanimity with which their normally conservative organisations had vowed to resist the tax was a sign of the depth of feeling.

John Foster of the Govan CC said that 'a campaign reminiscent of the rent strike struggles of the 1920s' was in prospect.

Stong disagreement was voiced over a resolution, presented by the meeting's

organisers, which called for community mobilisation.

A member of the Socialist Workers' Party said that while the resolution congratulated Glasgow District Council for non-cooperation with the tax, it ignored the Strathclyde councillors' capitulation. He told of the struggle inside Strathclyde NALGO, of which he was a member, over cooperation with the tax.

Derek Owen of the Smash the Poll Tax Campaign condemned the Labour leaders for limiting the campaign to protests.

Rafferty condemned these speakers for trying to 'put the Labour councillors' heads on a chopping-block', and breaking up anti-Tory unity.

A Workers Revolutionary Party member said unity meant resistance by the whole working class, including such representatives as the councillors.

He moved amendments to the proposed resolution: to add a call on the STUC and Labour Party, to discuss with council and Civil Service unions making the tax 'unworkable'; to condemn the Strathclyde council and campaign to reverse its decision.

The amendments were passed overwhelmingly, with a handful of Communist Party members voting against.

The substantive resolution was passed unanimously. The chairman ended by saying further steps in the campaign would be announced soon.

● The fight against the poll tax is getting under way throughout Scotland. Residents' meetings are being



No to Internment!

A 50-strong picket organised by the Troops Out Movement against the reintroduction of internment in Ireland was held outside Downing Street last Friday.

The slogans for the picket were: 'No to internment —

'Free the Prisoners!' and 'Troops out of Ireland Now!' The picket was supported by Troops Out, IBRG, LCI, Irish sections of the Labour Party, WRP/Workers Press, Proletarian, RCP and the SWP. PICTURE: TROOPS OUT

held, a student day of action was staged last week, and the labour bureaucracy — concerned that it will lose control of the movement — is moving too.

Workers Press readers are urged to take up the fight now.

1. Organise community meetings through tenants' associations, community councils or any other medium; organise local campaigns. Initiatives must be taken locally; don't wait for protest gimmicks from the 'Stop It' campaign.

2. The campaign, which has the potential to mobilise large sections of unorganised and unemployed workers (who will be hit hardest), must be directed to the organisations of the labour movement.

The demand for the Scottish TUC to mobilise, for the council and civil service unions to make the tax unworkable, is central; so is the campaign to reverse the decisions of those Labour-dominated councils (Strathclyde, Lothian and others) who have already voted to implement the tax.

Otherwise all the talk about Scotland voting against Thatcher is empty words.

Mayekiso dominates conference

CHRIS BAILEY reports on the Anti-Apartheid Conference

THE case of Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the second biggest union in South Africa, at present on trial for treason, was the main issue at the Anti-Apartheid Movement conference.

It was no accident that the argument over new rules centred on what everyone knew was going to be the main debate of last weekend's conference.

This was the first conference organised under the new rules and constitution. The meaning of these was revealed right at the start in a clash over compulsory compositing — surely a unique feature for an organisation claiming to be democratic.

Both Cambridge Trades Council and Greenwich and Bexley AA challenged the compositing of their resolutions on Mayekiso into a general one which meant that in order to raise the question of Mayekiso at all they had to speak in favour of a resolution they did not support.

Their objections were defeated by a three-to-one vote, and this set the pattern for the rest of the conference. Not one single recommendation by the national committee was defeated.

This was hardly surprising since they had given themselves the power to draw up

the new constitution which, among other things, gave them the right to speak last in every debate.

Despite this stage-managing it was clear that a spectre was haunting the conference: the emergence in South Africa of the organised working class and the international response to this, personified in the support for Moses Mayekiso.

The platform was well aware that the efforts of SACTU (the Stalinist-dominated exiled trade unions federation) to isolate Mayekiso had failed.

Delegates supporting Mayekiso were able to point to the growing world-wide support for the campaign launched by his own union NUMSA (metalworkers) for his release.

This campaign is almost certainly about to be supported by (the South African-based trade union federation) COSATU itself, despite the attempts of SACTU to bury it. Knowing this the AAM leadership was forced to retreat in the debate despite its three-to-one majority.

The first sign was the national committee's call to refer back an amendment which said: 'We are opposed to campaigns which seek to

promote individual cases above others where such campaigns have not been agreed with the liberation movement through the representatives in Britain of the African National Congress and SACTU.'

This reference back was followed by a recommendation to accept an amendment saying: 'If Moses were to be executed or kept indefinitely in jail it would represent a huge blow to the whole trade union movement in South Africa and set back the struggle to release all detainees of that most repressive regime.'

The resulting resolution of those seeking to channel support through the ANC and SACTU nevertheless represented a climb-down by the AAM. In practice, of course, the ANC and SACTU have become increasingly irrelevant to the campaign which has grown despite them and in the face of their opposition.

Powerful blows are being struck in South Africa against the 'two-stage revolution' of the Stalinists and ANC.

Growing numbers of workers are coming to the same conclusion as Mayekiso himself when he said on his tour of Britain shortly before his arrest: 'A black capitalist government could be worse than the one we have now. Our fight is for socialism.'

These developments in South Africa must be taken up in the international working class. In Britain the central task is to mobilise the organised working class in support of the South African workers. This can only be done in a struggle against the present leadership of AAM.

Resolution

Passed by 200 people at the Govan meeting

(Paragraphs marked * were added from the floor)

1. This meeting condemns the poll tax as having no democratic mandate in Scotland, and as a tax which penalises those areas and households least able to pay. We call on the Scottish Secretary of State to withdraw it.

* This meeting calls on the Scottish TUC and Labour Party, and all working-class organisations, to resist the poll tax with all the methods at their disposal. We call on the Scottish TUC to open talks with council and civil service unions, to determine how the tax can be made unworkable.

2. This meeting calls on all local community and tenants' organisations to mount an active campaign of opposition to the poll tax.

3. This meeting congratulates Glasgow District Council on its decision not to co-operate in any way with the collection of the poll tax, and in particular on its refusal to countenance any joint collection of poll tax with council rents. It calls on the Council to maintain this position.

* This meeting condemns Strathclyde Regional Council for co-operating with the tax. We suggest lobbying of councillors, and demonstrations, for this to be reversed.

4. This meeting believes that the people of this area of Glasgow should show their opposition to the poll tax by refusing to register, and urges all local organisations to conduct a campaign of education to ensure a mass refusal to register.

* This meeting calls on the 50 Scottish Labour MPs to lead the campaign by example, by declaring their intention not to pay the tax.

5. This meeting endorses the call for a Convention of all Glasgow Community Councils on the subject of the poll tax to be held before March 1988.

6. This meeting believes that if, despite the will of the majority, the government continues in its determination to enforce the poll tax, there is full moral justification for a refusal to pay.

* 7. This meeting demands that a referendum be held to decide whether or not the poll tax is introduced.



One of the weekly pickets held during 1986 outside Brixton Prison to show opposition to the strip searching of Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson held there on remand.

Stop strip searches

'STRIP SEARCHING is a degrading and inhuman act' says the London Strategic Policy Unit (LSPU) and the Association of London Authorities (ALA).

A conference bringing together groups and individuals who oppose strip-searching will be held on Saturday 5 December at

Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill between 10a.m. and 5p.m.

Sponsored by the LSPU and the ALA, the meeting aims to share ideas and discuss ways in which all sectors of society, local councillors, trade unions, community groups, medical experts can work together to end this 'degrading act'.

Research carried out by the LSPU has indicated that strip-searching by police, customs and prison officers on a random and/or one-off basis is on the increase.

Speakers on the day will include Isobelle Anderson,

sister of Martina Anderson, one of the two young Irish women held on remand at Brixton Prison in South London.

In 1985-1986 Martina was systematically strip-searched causing tremendous outrage amongst local politicians and community groups.

Brieger Brownlee, a Republican ex-prisoner, will also be present. Workshop speakers include Derek Davis, a prominent psychiatrist attached to Bristol University, Michael Fisher, the solicitor who represented the women held in Brixton Prison, Euro-MPs Christine Crawley, Richard Balph and MP Jeremy Corbyn.

Other speakers in the morning will be Susie Granic, ex-ordinary woman prisoner; Dorothy Francis who was strip-searched at customs coming back from holiday; Jennifer McCarey, and one of the Faslane women; Tracey Lambert of the health service union COHSE.

Afternoon speakers include Ann Gibson of ASTMS; Margaret Stewart of the Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searching; and a Broadwater Farm youth representative.

The conference will be chaired jointly by councillor Linda Bellos, leader of Lambeth and the chair of LSPU and councillor Anne Matthews, leader of Southwark Council.

WORKING TOGETHER TO END STRIP SEARCHING
Conference

Saturday 5 December
Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill, London SW2
10a.m.-5p.m.

Kimberly case:

Social workers not to blame

IN MAY this year 25 year old Nigel Hall was sentenced to life imprisonment for the brutal neglect and murder of his four year old step-daughter Kimberley Carlisle. The case hit the national headlines for weeks and caused a public outcry.

A report is due next week indicating the social services breakdown that contributed to her death.

It is expected to point the finger at a chronic shortage of social workers in Greenwich which meant that Kimberley's case was assigned to a manager who should not have had a caseload.

Criticism will be directed at Greenwich Social Services for not taking 'positive action' over her case. It will criticise Wirral Social Services which had Kimberley in care for a period of 15 months, but failed to produce any rehabilitation plan for a child with behavioural problems created by a violent upbringing.

If this inquiry follows the well trodden footsteps of the Jasmine Beckford and Tyra Henry inquiries in Lambeth, the blame will be laid fairly and squarely on social workers struggling to hold together a disintegrating service.

In all three cases the real problem revealed was a shortage of social workers — due to low pay scales, and a deliberate policy of economising by preserving high vacancy levels.

At least 30 of the 384 children on the 'at risk' Greenwich register were last week not allocated to a specific social worker.

These are the children that 'slip through the net' and end up in hospitals or in the mortuary. Child abuse cases in Greenwich have more than trebled in the last three years. Vacancies in the social work team are now running at more than 10 per cent.

Last Thursday Greenwich Social Services Committee met to decide how to make cuts of £3.2 million in next year's budget.

One suggested option is to cut back each area team — including the area team that covers the Ferrier Estate — by one social worker.

How long can we put up with a system which says costcutting is more important than human lives?

Area leaders oppose Scargill

SUPPORT for Arthur Scargill's bid to be re-elected as miners' leader is growing in Scotland and Wales, despite the refusal of the area leaderships to back him.

Thousands of leaflets and posters are being distributed by rank-and-file members urging miners to back Scargill against rightwinger John Walsh.

Scotland's area committee — heavily influenced by the Euro-Communists — has refused to make any nominations, leaving the decisions to the branches.

The South Wales area is seeking legal advice in an attempt to block the election.

Four branches have nominated Scargill in defiance of the area leadership and pressure is mounting amongst union members in both areas to decide nominations.

In the latest issue of the 'South Wales Miner', area president Des Duffield calls the election 'a farce' and in a hardly disguised attack on Scargill attempts to justify the legal moves.

The same issue carries a defence of the South Wales support for six-day working, asking the question: 'how many jobs are we likely to lose if flexible shift patterns are not introduced?' It condemns those 'within the NUM who refuse to face up to the reality of the industry today'.

● Walsh began his campaign to oust Scargill with a press conference in the Four Ferrets public house in Wakefield. He made clear

TGWU COMMITTEE-MEN REJECT REID

DEMANDS for the rejection of Ken Reid as Region No 1 Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union were made by the unanimous decision of the powerful Regional Committee which covers London and the South East.

The General Executive Council of the union, which met on Monday, was faced with an unprecedented lobby of over 100 elected representatives on union committees.

The lobbyists were led by Dominic Rohan, a Greenline bus driver and chairman of the Region No. 1 Committee.

Rohan, speaking to the press, said they were asking the General Executive to meet a delegation which would urge rejection of the appointment of right-winger Ken Reid.

It was reported to the Regional Committee that Reid had come seventh out of eleven in the examination for the post, but the right wing controlled sub-committee had appointed him

over the top of those short-listed.

The General Executive rejected the request to meet a delegation; it refused to listen to the tape of recordings of the examination which would have established his poor showing in the examination and it is understood to have rejected Ron Todd's request for an inquiry into the appointment.

In the last two years similar disputes have developed over the appointment of regional secretaries in No. 3 Region (West of England) and No. 7 Region (Scotland).

The case for the election of full time officers was never stronger in the TGWU.

that at the centre of his campaign will be efforts to bring together the NUM and the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers.

'We have to understand their problems as well as ours' said Walsh speaking of British Coal.

TEMPORARY WORK

Growing threat to employment rights

'The fact is that there are no permanents being employed any more. Everybody starting work at Kenwoods after January 1987 is temporary. If they are required after two years, normal contracts are issued as per legislation but these are very few. Kenwoods is taking full advantage of the current Employment Acts'.

(Reply to Labour Research questionnaire by union rep. at Kenwood Domestic Appliances)

A dramatic increase in temporary working has occurred in Britain in recent years with all this implies in terms of lost employment rights and reduced earning potential.

BY BERNARD FRANKS

A 1986 Department of Employment survey concluded that over 1.6 million workers — 7 per cent of the workforce in Britain — have now only a limited duration arrangement with their employer.

Apart from seasonal work and cover for holidays and staff vacancies there has been an increasing trend towards employers seeking to replace permanent workers with temps.

One in seven temporary

workers are employed on this basis, one in five in catering and hotel work according to a special report 'Temporary Workers' from the Labour Research Department (LRD) based on replies to a questionnaire sent to nearly 400 companies.

A significant aspect of the temping system is that, as with the part-time work with which it may coincide, workers fail to qualify for basic employment rights the fewer hours a week they work or the shorter their total period of unemployment.

An ominous aspect of this development has been the

increasing inroads made in the production and public service fields.

Utilising new technology, employers have launched a concerted drive to rationalise and simplify working operations so that only a minimum of skilled permanent workers need be employed.

The rest of the work can then easily be encompassed by casual unskilled labour which can be taken on or dispensed with as demand for products and services fluctuates.

This two-tier system, combining so-called 'core' and 'peripheral' workers, has been developed in the USA and London, but mainly in Japan where it encompasses 10.2 per cent of the workforce. LRD gives examples of attempts to introduce the system into new areas in Britain:

● In early 1987 printworkers employed by Oxford and County Newspapers, part of the giant Westminster Group, were told that they would be issued with one-year temporary contracts which would then, after the first year, be renewable every three months until they were no longer required.

● Thompson Regional Newspapers made compositors redundant at its Cardiff and Reading offices and replaced them with temporary workers.

● In June 1987 Post Office workers began a series of stoppages in opposition to their employers plan to recruit temporary workers.

● In July 1987 the report from the Inspectors of Local Education Authorities said



Women make up by far the biggest proportion of part-time workers.

that these bodies were increasingly making use of temporary contracts to create greater flexibility in employing staff.

● In August the CPSA announced a campaign of strikes against the introduction of temporary workers in social security offices while dockers voted to back a national strike against any attempt by employers to reintroduce casualisation.

The report quite rightly points out that this form of employment is not new.

Immense struggles have taken place to end casual labour operations in both dockwork and construction.

Now the system is on the way back but on a far wider basis.

For example white collar employment, where temping has always existed, has seen a huge expansion at the expense of permanent jobs.

In the non-industrial civil service for example, there were 6,722 temporary workers in 1980. By October 1986 this figure had risen to 10,641, a 58 per cent increase.

During this same period, says LRD, there was a 20 per cent cut in permanent employment.

The issue is clearly one of major importance to trade unionists, both in terms of resisting the spread of the system and of recruiting and seeking rights for those employed in this way. Their greatest battle, however, is with a Tory government which is systematically undermining rights and pro-

tection at work won in years of struggle.

Some workplaces have only managed to negotiate the maximum number of temps to be employed: Caterpillar Tractor, Leicester (10 per cent), Perkins Engines (10 per cent), G.B. Stein Refractories (15 per cent), Xidex, South Wales (20 per cent), Nabisco (25 per cent).

Other groups of workers have fought off the system. Workplaces replying to the LRD survey to the effect that they have no temporary workers include Ford Motor Co. (Dagenham), Laings (Manchester), Seddon Atkinson vehicles, United Tanners, British Rail (footplate grades), Birds Eye Walls and registered dock workers at Bristol, Dagenham and Tilbury.

Daily

At the other extreme some employers are recruiting on a daily basis or are continually renewing contracts with a short gap in between to wipe out any chance of a worker achieving employment rights.

In regard to pay, 62 per cent of workplaces reported that payrates were the same for temps as for permanent workers, mainly because unions had fought to achieve this position.

In the LRD survey 28.4 per cent of workplaces reported that all their temporary workers were in the union. A further 7.3 per cent of workplaces had succeeded in re-

cruting more than half.

It was found that women are more likely to be offered temporary work than men and they comprise 87.6 per cent of the temporary workforce in energy and gas, 61.5 per cent in banking and finance, and 60.5 per cent in hotels and distribution.

One other reason for the use of temporary employment is given. A number of employers are using it to screen for prospective future permanent employees. A union rep. at Stelrad said: 'I feel that these employees are given three month contracts to find out how reliable they are'.

It is known that the Youth Training Scheme and the new Job Training Scheme (JTS) have this same facility, while being another form of temporary employment.

Temporary work is just one component of the flexible workforce, the system which requires the breakdown of demarcation lines between different categories of employees and which seeks a position in which workers are taken on, laid off or made to work irregular hours wholly in terms of exactly fitting the workload at any given time.

Under conditions where production and services geared to profit making have been eliminated from society flexible working systems may prove an ideal development. Under capitalism they lead to heightened exploitation combined with new threats to jobs and incomes.

Table 12 Rights at work linked to service

	Working hours per week			
	less than 8 hours	8 but less than 16 hours	16 or more hours	
Written statement	•	••	•••	13 weeks
Redundancy payment	•	••	•••	
Unfair dismissal (except as below)	•	••	•••	
Dismissal/action short of dismissal for TU membership/activities	+	+	+	
Sex/race discrimination	+	+	+	
Guarantee pay	•	••	•••	1 month
Medical suspension pay	•	••	•••	1 month
Maternity pay	•	••	•••	
Right to return to work after maternity leave	•	••	•••	
Itemised pay statement	•	••	•••	
Time off for TU duties*	•	••	•••	
Time off for TU activities*	•	••	•••	
Time off for public duty	•	••	•••	
Time off for redundant workers to seek work	•	••	•••	
Time off for safety reps*	•	••	•••	
Time off for antenatal appt.	+	+	+	
Written statement of reasons for dismissal	•	••	•••	6 months
Exclusion or expulsion from TU in closed shop	+	+	+	

• no right •• 5 years + no qualifying period •• 2 years
* for recognised unions

THE government has announced the new MSC scheme 'Training for Life' to replace the failed JTS and proposed Community Programme benefit plus, combining five main training programmes.

The scheme will cater for those between the ages of 18 and retirement and will have 600,000 places.

It is due to be introduced by September 1988 and will be a benefit plus scheme. This means claimants will receive their regular unemployment giro or social security money plus a premium of a few pounds.

The scheme will be 12 months long and will be recruited through restart interviews only. By designating the scheme as

approved training those who refuse a placement will face a loss of unemployment benefit for six months or a cut in social security of 40 per cent for six months under the availability for work legislation in the Social Security Act.

A new breed of so called 'training agents' will be required to 'assess each person's needs' — as Norman Fowler put it. What he means is that hand-picked MSC

staff will operate the recruitment through Restart to prevent sabotaging of interviews by CPSA activists. These people will come from organisations like the Chamber of Commerce and voluntary and training bodies, according to Fowler.

The Treasury have stated that the premium on top of benefit can be no more than £5.

Many MSC schemes involve labouring

Slave labour till death

BY SUE GWYER

work. Under 'Training for Life' these labourers will receive only their benefit plus this pitiful sum from their employers. What this amounts to is legalising the notorious 'lump'.

The transport union is now discussing pulling out of the MSC. Geoffrey Holland, Director General of the MSC has been instructed to throw the unions out anyway — at the behest of Employment Secretary Norman Fowler.

Will the unions leave with cap in hand asking for improvements or with the intention of leaving the unemployed high and dry to fight the MSC on their own?

The government plans for the unemployed must be fought by the unions by opening the doors to the unemployed and organising with them to smash the MSC and defend the unions from these potentially devastating attacks.

POLLING-DAY MASSACRE

Right murders Haiti election hopes

RIGHT-WING terror gangs, helped by the army, last week destroyed the Haitian people's first attempt at a free election in over thirty years, drowning it in blood.

Over fifty people were killed. Many polling stations had been burnt down during the night, as was a trade union headquarters in Port au Prince which was to have been the distribution centre for ballot papers.

At one school where people were waiting to vote, a gang of 50 armed men burst in, armed with machine guns and machetes, and slaughtered the voters.

Women who had tried to hide in the toilets were hacked to death by the gangsters. In a classroom, reporters later found fifteen people, dead or dying, with horrible injuries.

The assailants were believed to be Tontons Macoutes — the former secret police of exiled dictator Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier.

Elsewhere, roads had been blocked to stop ballot papers reaching some towns. The Provisional Electoral Council, the CEP, had been promised helicopters to deliver the papers, but these did not come. The army cited 'security reasons' for refusing them!

Nor did the army, ever present to smash workers' demonstrations, provide any protection for those organising the election or the voters.

In fact, as the violence escalated in recent weeks, with gunmen shooting-up working class areas and destroying a street market, it was clear that the security forces were at least accomplices of the Duvalierist terror, if not participants.

After a weekend of right-wing terror, people in Port au Prince formed vigilance committees and on Tuesday night, 24 November, succeeded in executing rough

justice on some of the thugs.

One man they killed was later identified by local people as a policeman. He had been shooting up the neighbourhood since the previous afternoon. Two other corpses were later identified as private security men. A fourth was that of a police officer.

The night before Sunday's election, carloads of armed men went around the streets, shooting at people. Army trucks followed them sometimes, but the soldiers did not interfere. In some cases, they joined the gunmen firing on the people.

Mortars and grenades were used in some of the Duvalierist attacks. The popular Catholic radio station Radio Soleil was put off the air. The homes of some politicians and electoral officials were destroyed.

From the start, General Namphy's military regime

had made clear its hostility to those who wanted democratic elections. It tried to interfere with the electoral council, even suspended it for a time.

It was only a general strike and mass demonstrations by Haiti's workers and poor people — often met by army bullets — that defended the people's right to vote.

In the countryside, the Tontons Macoutes were revived with backing from

Organising

landowners to attack the poor peasants who had begun organising.

Meanwhile, the United States administration made clear its backing for General Namphy, in words and deeds, saying the army was the only viable institution to run the country, and pouring in millions of dollars to re-equip it.

Last week, three hours into polling day, the CEP decided to throw in the towel and called off the elections.

Many of the candidates were in hiding. The US government hypocritically announced that it was suspending aid.

But as one Haitian worker remarked of the US, during the pre-election violence, 'it's really them doing the shooting.'

The workers and poor people of Haiti, who defied right-wing terror to queue by the hundred outside polling stations at 7am on a Sunday morning, eager to exercise their democratic rights after decades of brutal repression and poverty, deserve our admiration and solidarity.

They will win their rights, with or without the permission of the military, the rich, the lumpen-thugs, and the US imperialists. The 'peaceful road' has been tried. The masses must now be organised and led to struggle for power. They have shown their determination.

Release Klebanov

SUPPORTERS of the Ukrainian Peace Committee picketed the Soviet embassy on 25 November demanding the release of miner Vladimir Klebanov, held in a 'psychiatric hospital' for almost ten years after trying to launch an independent trade union movement.

Klebanov, incarcerated in 1978 under Brezhnev's regime, was sent in 1983 to Tashkent, far from his home and family in the Ukraine's Donbas region. He has reportedly been subjected to forced drug injections and solitary confinement.

In reply to a letter from Labour MP Eric Heffer in October, the Soviet embassy claimed accusations of psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union were 'malicious and without foundation', and that there was 'no reason to doubt the professionally made diagnosis' of Klebanov's 'mental disorder.'

Lone raider's havoc in Israeli camp

ISRAELI army morale and government policy have been thrown into crisis by one Palestinian's daring airborne commando raid, which left six soldiers in a top security base dead, and an Israeli civilian shot by confused troops looking for other raiders.

Landing silently by powered hang-glider, near the town of Kiryat Shmoneh, on the night of 25 November, the Palestinian went straight to the army camp, shooting dead an officer driving a truck on the road outside.

Entering the camp, apparently without much trouble, he shot up a group of soldiers, killing five and wounding seven more, before being killed himself.

Another Palestinian commando who had taken off on the raid crashed short of the target area. After the attack, truckloads of Israeli troops carried out a massive search for more commandos in the area, but succeeded only in shooting a local kibbutz worker who failed to raise his hands quick enough when challenged.

The raiders had come from the Bekaa valley in Lebanon, which is Syrian-occupied, and the mission was claimed by the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (General Command), also known as the Ahmed Jibril group, from its founder.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to say whether his forces would carry out a reprisal raid, of the kind that have usually followed Palestinian attacks, and usually hit mainly civilians. A former chief of staff, Mordechai Gur, warned last week that any action against Syria could easily escalate into full-scale war.

The Israeli authorities said they were conducting an inquiry into how their camp had been caught napping, despite an alert up to 25 minutes before. Several soldiers were to be disciplined. Besides damaging the military's efficient image with the Israeli public,

however, the raid has also exposed problems for the Israeli government's reliance on brute force and retaliation to deal with the Palestinian liberation struggle.

Hitting targets in a virtually undefended Lebanon is one thing. Palestinian fighters there were on the alert for such an action. But Syria is a military power to be reckoned with, and besides its support from the Soviet Union, has been improving relations with Israel's patrons, the United States.

The US government sent its ambassador back to Damascus earlier this year, and the State Department claimed the Syrian regime was becoming more moderate, as instanced by the removal of Abu Nidal from Damascus.

Although the Syrian government condemned Iraq and other Arab states for restoring relations with Egypt — a step the Israeli government welcomed — the State Department may still be hoping to coax Assad away from his Iranian allies and into the US-backed 'moderate' Arab fold.

For its prestige among the Arab masses, the Syrian government's press has not hesitated to bask in the glory of the Palestinian raid, claiming it 'proves that Syria's path is the right one.'

The Israeli government has to deliberate between the risk of stepping out of line with its US paymasters, and that of disquieting its own people with the worry that it cannot assure security by its reliance on military means.

The Palestinians can rightly be proud of their fighter's courage and sacrifice in this attack on a clearly military target. They can also draw encouragement and some satisfaction from its results.

JAMES BALDWIN, died at his home in France last week, aged 63.

Born in a poor Harlem neighbourhood, the descendant of slaves, and son of a Baptist preacher, James Baldwin worked in a factory and as a waiter before breaking through as a writer. He was a fiery prophet of Black people's rights and dignity, first making his name as a novelist with 'Go Tell It On The Mountain'.

His essays, published in 'Notes of a Native Son' spoke eloquently about Black identity in white America, while 'The Fire Next Time' caused a sensation, accurately predicting the mass riots in America's ghettos in the 1960s.

Never one to fear controversy, Baldwin took on more than one kind of oppression, expressing himself not only as Black but as homosexual. 'Giovanni's Room', in 1956, had a homosexual theme, at a time when few established writers dared breach conformity in this way.



Vanunu honour

AS the trial of Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu resumed in a closed Jerusalem court last week, British nuclear scientist Dr. Frank Barnaby warned of the dangers of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, and said Vanunu's motives were 'honourable'.

Vanunu is being tried on treason and espionage charges for having revealed the extent of Israeli nuclear weapons development to a British newspaper. He was kidnapped and taken back to Israel last year by Mossad secret service agents.

Vanunu's lawyer Avigdor Feldman renewed his plea to the Supreme Court for at least part of the trial to be held in public. He also argued last week that the treason charge should be dropped. 'The fact that the story was sold to a newspaper means he intended it for the whole world, not the enemy,' Feldman told reporters.

Iraq blames Soviet Union

IRAQI Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz has accused the Soviet Union of dragging its feet over a UN arms embargo on Iran, in order to gain favour with the Ayatollah's regime.

At the same time, the Iraqi minister said his government's relations with the Soviet Union were otherwise 'going just fine'.

In 1982, the Soviet authorities lifted a ban on arms sales to the Gulf war combatants, and resumed supplies to Iraq. They have supplied about \$5.5 billion worth of arms and ammunition to the Iraqi regime.

Iranian parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, possibly the most powerful political figure in the Ayatollah's Iran, and certainly the most vociferous, said recently that Iran

might try to renegotiate its security treaty with Moscow.

This was actually signed with Czarist Russia in 1911.

The lapsed treaty would give the Soviet Union the right to intervene militarily if Iran was attacked by another Great Power, and Rafsanjani plainly had the United States imperialist threat in mind. Whether Gorbachev would be inclined to honour such a pledge, or give any commitment, seems unlikely, but Rafsanjani is reported planning to visit Moscow.

A Soviet guided-missile destroyer turned back an Iranian frigate that had

approached a tanker convoy in an incident last month. It was after an Iranian gunboat attacked a Soviet freighter heading for Saudi Arabia that the Kremlin said it would provide escorts for its ships. Soviet reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers opened the way for the Reagan administration to step in on the act.

Relations

Recently Soviet relations with Iran have been improving, and an oil pipeline has been opened so Iranian oil can be exported through Soviet ports.

While the Iranians are concerned at the US threat, Gorbachev is hoping the Iranian regime can help him out of the Afghanistan mess.

In the past, the fiercely anti-communist Ayatollah supported the Muslim rebels in Afghanistan. Some of the US and British-supplied weaponry which went to Iran, including Blowpipe missiles, reached the CIA-backed rebels.

Now, there are reports that the Iranian regime has agreed to help the Soviet Union negotiate a settlement of the Afghan war that would allow the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The right-wing military regime in Pakistan, where most of the Afghan guerrillas are based, but which has also been having troubles of its own with political unrest, Baluchi rebels, and allegedly Afghan-backed sabotage raids, is also now accepting wooing by Soviet diplomacy.

Polish voters humiliate Jaruzelski

POLAND'S referendum last week on economic and political reforms resulted in a humiliating vote of no confidence in General Jaruzelski's military bureaucratic regime.

Asked to endorse an austerity programme including massive price increases, on the promise of benefits later, and to entrust the regime with democratising itself, less than two-thirds of the voters bothered to take part.

Of those who did, results show only 44 per cent prepared to accept the economic policy, and only 46 per cent ready to try the General's promise of 'profound democratisation' and 'expansion of citizen's rights'.

Besides the immediate threat of huge price increases in food and other essentials, the Polish workers are facing a government policy of tying jobs and wages to 'results' — that is, not to how hard they work, but to export sales figures and profitability.

Anxious to assure Western capitalist bankers and the IMF that it could attack workers' living standards and get away with it, the government hoped that more than 50 per cent of the voters would endorse its programme, with the carrot of 'reform'.

Only one in three did so. Trying to carry out Thatcherism, Stalinist-style, Jaruzelski has got no more enthusiastic backing from the voters than Thatcher did.

The banned union Solidarnosc called on people to boycott the poll, and on the day of the vote riot police were called out to break up a 3,000-strong march by workers in Gdansk, always a mili-

tant stronghold.

Several workers were injured, after the police attacked them with batons. Demonstrations and clashes were also reported from Cracow, Lublin and Wroclaw.

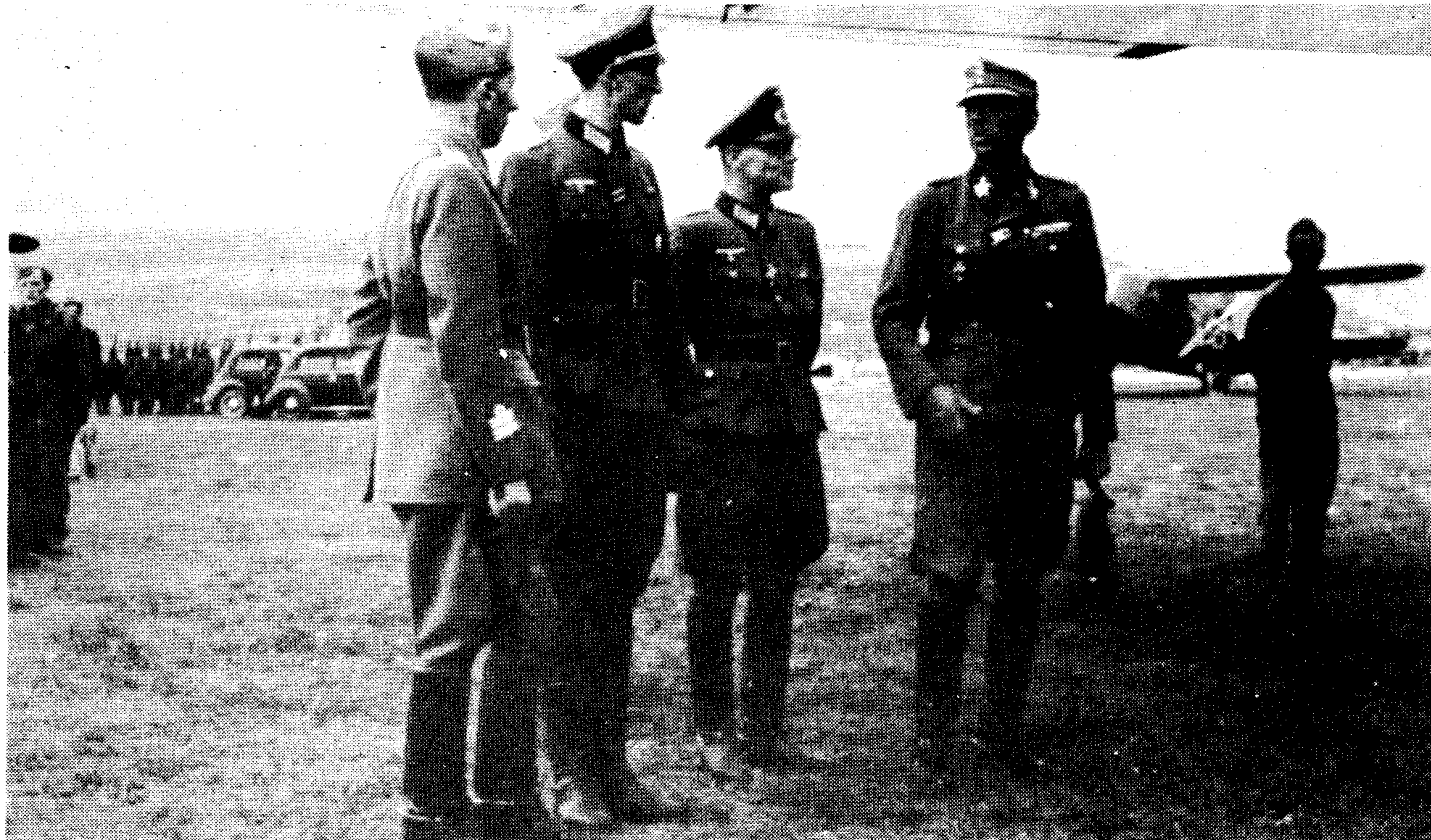
Well-known oppositionist Jacek Kuron said after the results of the vote were known that it 'does not mean society is opposed to swift economic and political reform, only that it is opposed to those carrying them out.'

Government spokesman Jerzy Urban admitted the vote had fallen far short of what the government had wanted, nevertheless insisting: 'This outcome does not persuade us to correct the direction of our reforms, because the alternative would be stagnation and economic degradation.'

Had the voters endorsed the proposals, food prices would have doubled, and rents trebled. The World Bank and the IMF had indicated they would look more favourably on loan applications if the state could impose such measures, although they weren't sure it could move so quickly.

Jaruzelski made a point of linking his policy with Gorbachev's 'restructuring', and kept using words like 'consultation' and 'partnership' to advertise his referendum.

Now the regime will try to introduce its programme more gradually, but the Polish working class have made it clear that most don't see him as an acceptable partner. More struggles are on the way.



Waldheim's Nazi record

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

AUSTRIA'S President Kurt Waldheim last week rejected suggestions that he ought to resign after documents released from UN war crimes files pointed once again to his involvement in atrocities.

Although the Historians' Commission called in to examine the files is still to report, the evidence they have found is said to confirm that Waldheim took part in:

- The killing of thousands of Yugoslav partisans and civilians in so-called 'reprisal' actions in Yugoslavia in 1942. Nearly 70,000 people were sent to concentration camps.

- The Nazi onslaught against the Greek Jewish community in Salonika, from where over 40,000 Jews were despatched to death camps in the period March-April 1943, on Wehrmacht trains. Waldheim was in a military intelligence unit assisting the SS.

- Carrying out Hitler's 'Commando Order', under which British and other prisoners of war were murdered by the SS after interrogation.

For years, former UN Secretary-General Waldheim denied knowing anything about Nazi war crimes, claiming he had been a simple soldier. When the allegations about his Nazi involvement came up as he stood for president, he again denied them.

As more evidence came out, from West German archives and from witnesses, the Austrian president — elected with the backing of the conservative People's Party, and congratulated on his election by Thatcher — claimed he would welcome an inquiry.

He urged people to wait until the Historians' Commission delivered its report. But last week he insisted the results would be 'in no way binding on me... There is nothing in their brief about knowledge of events, only whether there is personal guilt.'

One of Waldheim's supporters, Foreign Minister Alois Mock, has already tried to interfere with the commission's work, demanding that it restrict itself to the narrow question of the President's 'personal' guilt. The head of the commission, Dr. Hans Rudolf Kurz from Switzerland, rejected this attempt to influence them.

In 1947, Waldheim's wartime superior, General Lohr, was executed by the Yugoslavs for war crimes. A Wehrmacht list from 1943 shows Waldheim was Special Missions Officer 03 in Lohr's Army Group, and its third highest ranking intelligence officer.

In 1943, this force was in action in Montenegro against Yugoslav partisans. Its orders declared 'The troops must move against the hostile populace without consideration and with brutal severity... Some 16,000 Yugoslavs were killed.

Families were shot or burnt alive. In the village of Bukovac, a six year old child was cut to pieces in front of its mother.

Sending

When the Italian army in Greece surrendered, Waldheim had a hand in sending 100,000 Italian soldiers to slave camps in Germany. In 1944 his command carried out mass round-ups of Jews from Rhodes, Crete, and Corfu to be sent to the concentration camps.

As intelligence officer, Waldheim advised the German army units carrying out anti-partisan operations in Macedonia in October 1944. His report claimed some 739 'bandits' had been killed. Only 63 had been carrying weapons. Three villages were wiped out.

Earlier that year, Waldheim had been responsible for 'Prisoner Interrogation' when British commandos were captured in the Aegean area. A document said to be signed by Waldheim reports that Sergeant John Dryden was handed over to the SD

'in compliance with the Fuhrer's orders'. He was never seen again.

Whatever new evidence the Historians' Commission has found, and however Kurt Waldheim and his backers want to interpret the notion of 'personal responsibility', there is ample evidence available already to show how he pursued his career in the Nazi murder machine.

Nazi

Waldheim was a Nazi. He had joined the Nazi students organisation in Austria in 1938, and the SA. He knew the regime he was serving, and he knew what was done. He lied about his past for years to become Secretary-General of the United Nations.

But Waldheim had accomplices in this cover-up.

He could never have got away with it without the complicity of first the United States military-intelligence complex which enlisted many Nazis like him after the War, and second, the Soviet bureaucracy, which for reasons we can only speculate, also kept silent about what it knew for years, and has continued to defend him.

The United Nations Organisation itself sat on its war crimes files for all those years, while its secretary-general was among those incriminated, because the great powers evidently wanted it that way.

Last week, Labour MP Greville Janner called on the British government to release its own files on Waldheim. A Foreign Office spokesman would not say how much they knew about him when Britain supported his appointment at the UN.

The Tories have in the last few years been refusing to open files they have, including some on the war criminals Josef Mengele and Klaus Barbie.

It is known now that several Nazi 'small fry' have been living in Britain for years, under both Labour and Tory governments, thanks to the protection they were given by the intelligence services after the War.

By their friends shall ye know them. It is not only Waldheim that is guilty, but an entire class, and its collaborators.

Ceausescu desperate

ROMANIA'S Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, facing an explosion of workers' anger against his corrupt bureaucratic regime, has responded desperately with repression and a party purge.

The DIE secret police have been rounding-up supposed 'ring-leaders' of workers' protests in the industrial city of Brasov. The Romanian president has ordered them to identify all those who took part in demonstrations there, and punish them along with the 80 people already arrested.

Over 10,000 people marched through Brasov on 15 November, demanding 'We want bread', and 'Down with dictatorship!'. The demonstration was sparked off by an attempt to impose seven-day working in factories there.

The demonstrators were attacked by security police backed by armoured cars, and several people were injured. At least two policemen were reportedly among those killed in the fighting. Armed troops were later patrolling the streets and guarding factories.

University students staged a second demonstration, marching through the city with placards supporting the workers. Again there were clashes as the police waded in to attack.

Bread, meat, sugar and other basic foods have been in short supply in Brasov for some time, and electricity cuts leave many factories and homes unheated much of the time.

In recent weeks, Ceausescu has dismissed more than twenty ministers. Now a politbureau meeting in Bucharest has complained of 'negative' developments in provincial party cells, and demanded changes in the whole party and state apparatus.

This statement is assumed to have Ceausescu's authority, and taken to mean a big purge is on the way.

Ceausescu has ruled Romania since 1965. His much-vaunted 'independence' from the Soviet Union has simply meant national Stalinism. The regime is now almost a dynasty, with 35 relatives in top posts.

Ceausescu's son headed the Young Communist League, and now administers a region. His son-in-law heads the state planning committee, and his daughter is in charge of science and technology. While the workers lack bread, the Ceausescu family reputedly live like lords, with expensive champagne and jewellery.

Leading party members have warned that relations between the Party and the workers have entered 'a period of crisis', and that unless concessions are made, the Brasov explosion will prove only the beginning.

HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY

PETER FRYER



The Hungarian revolution of 1956 and its brutal suppression by Russian tanks was a watershed in the history of socialism.

In October 1956 Peter Fryer was sent to cover these events for the Daily Worker. He reported what he saw — only to have his despatches suppressed and to be suspended and then expelled from the Communist Party.

He saw people in arms demolish a regime of fear and poverty and take power in their own hands. He saw security police atrocities — and the people's terrible revenge.

Then he watched appalled as a nation's new-born freedom was relentlessly crushed.

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Education 'reform'

COMMENT BY GERALDINE THORPE

THE Tory government plans to guillotine discussion on two long, complicated reform Bills on education and housing so that the Lords can take them before Easter.

The two Bills not only mean privatisation of more state services so that their benefits are transferred from the working class to the employers and entrepreneurs in the private sector; they mean a wholesale disintegration of the two areas which are fundamental to the cultural, intellectual and material life of the working class, which is largely dependant on the state for their provision.

The material basis of collective thinking and action — the essence of working-class development — and the material basis of local democracy, are about to be destroyed.

For privatisation — the political and economic weapon of the capitalist class — to have reached education and housing at only the beginning of the third term of the Tories indicates the depth of the crisis of political leadership of the working class.

The Parliamentary Labour Party — and the TUC — incorporated into bourgeois democracy, are no longer effective as 'opposition'.

This collapse of social democracy is not confined to Britain — it can be seen in European and Commonwealth governments who still call themselves 'labour' or 'socialist' but are carrying out comparable policies to the Tories here.

With the social democratic front for Stalinism going, its form of leadership is increasingly dependant on the methods of control of the working class employed by politicians in capitalism.

For privatisation to be seen snapping at the heels of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' in the Soviet Union underlines the imperative of establishing the Fourth International.

OUR political task in fighting for education in capitalism is to expose its class nature and to demand a state education that is democratically accountable, in the first instance, which can then be placed under workers control.

Two points need to be clear concerning education's class character in capitalism:

1. The working class pays for all education in the public and private sectors through profits and taxes wrested from it. The proposed poll tax increases the levies from the working class.

2. The capitalist class controls resources, organisation and content of the curriculum. The political character of the philosophy and theories of education is masked by so-called 'neutrality' in the classroom practice.

The main, general point about the Education Reform Bill is that it firmly shifts English education from a national system which is locally administered to an international system which is administered by the employers and their lackeys with the assistance of the government of the day.

The interest of the capitalist class in the education and training of the world's working class is to ensure that the maximum possible is recouped from losses in mounting crisis that it cannot control.

Picking the crumbs from the table of finance capital who reap mega-profits (and mega-losses) are the small employers who are to be found on the boards of governors and validating bodies directly influencing the training of the future workforce.

The Education Bill ensures the maximum training in school to meet the needs of employers:

● There will be a 'national' curriculum of nine to ten subjects

for the five- to 16-year-olds, with a 'core' of English, maths and science — little change from the reading, writing, arithmetic and religion of the 19th century, as few will make sense of the science they are given.

This is to rest on a meagre foundation of music, art, geography, history, technology, physical education and perhaps a modern language. Notably absent are the social sciences and interpretive history.

At 14, apart from the few who slip through the net into academic streams, the majority — well 'tested' at seven, 11 and 14 — will be subjected to 'vocational' routes in courses such as TVEI, YTS etc. which, in all areas, are oriented to the requirements of the employers.

● Educational institutions will be expected to manage their finances; to assist in 'economy'. The heads and governors are to be empowered to hire and fire staff.

● Polytechnics and institutions of higher education are to be separately funded. Research funding may be topped up by employers who need highly skilled workers in our generally 'medium-skilled' economy. A dozen elite universities will be funded by the government to carry out research.

● Enrolments will be expected to increase to full capacity and 'under-subscribed' institutions will have to either raise their own funds or be forced to close.

● The 13 boroughs in the Inner London Education Authority will be encouraged (bribed) to 'opt out' of ILEA's control.

This may appear to be a dismal prospect. However, there is a problem.

Bourgeois democracy rests on the quicksand of the armed forces of the state and the judiciary to maintain its law and order, the alienation and ignorance of the masses of the population and their dreams of riches through DIY self-employment and indebtedness to credit and mortgage companies.

In fact, it exposes the true character of the state as the instrument of the ruling class and cannot stop questions being asked. It has little to counter unemployment and disillusion.

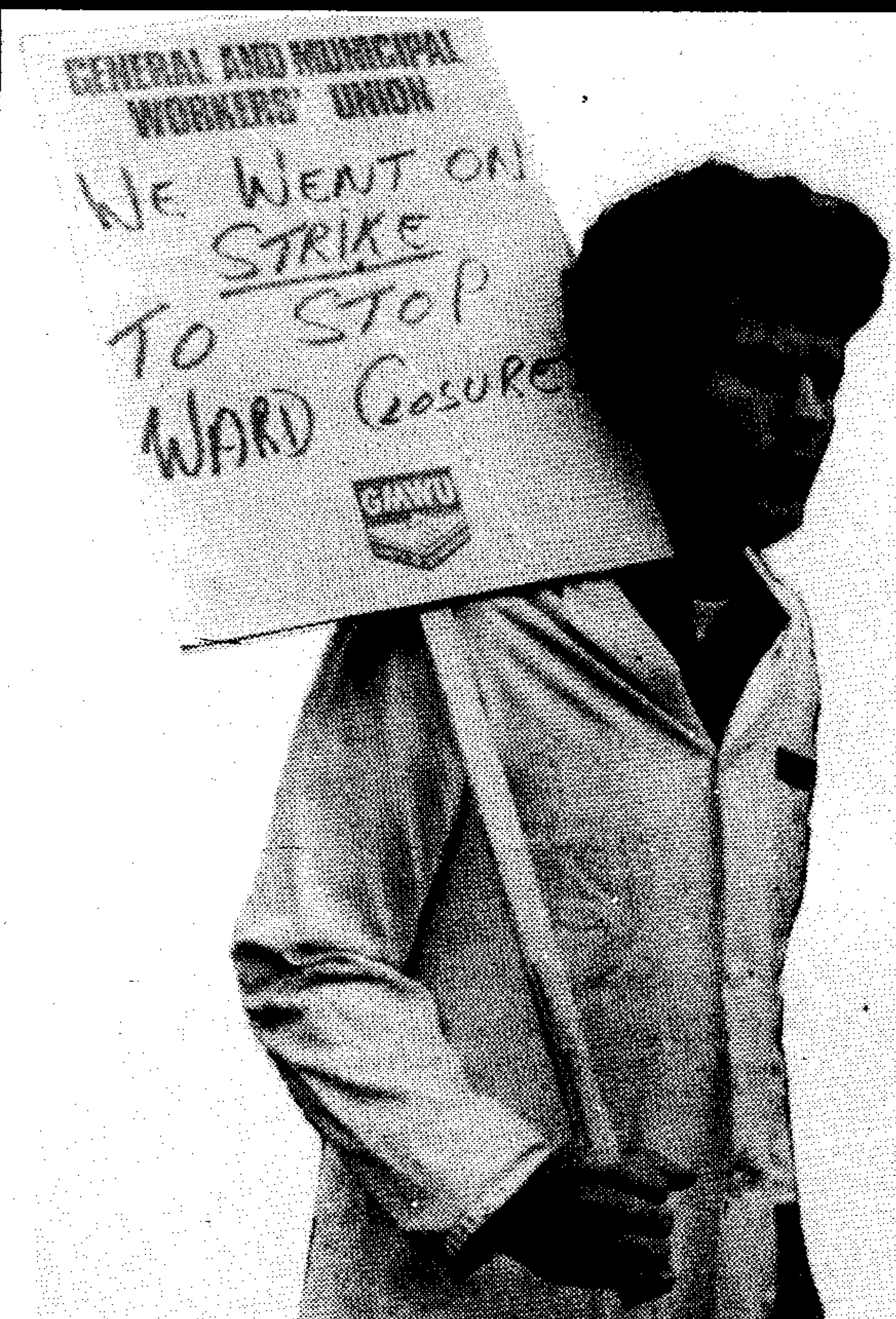
The most immediate problem for the capitalist class however, is that in attacking the educational provision for a working class which is **not defeated** it is creating the conditions for an independent working-class education to develop.

It has not learnt the real lessons of the miners' and subsequent strikes and struggles — that the working class can create its own, independent organisations — strike and occupation committees, workers' support groups — if the traditional organisations begin to fail it.

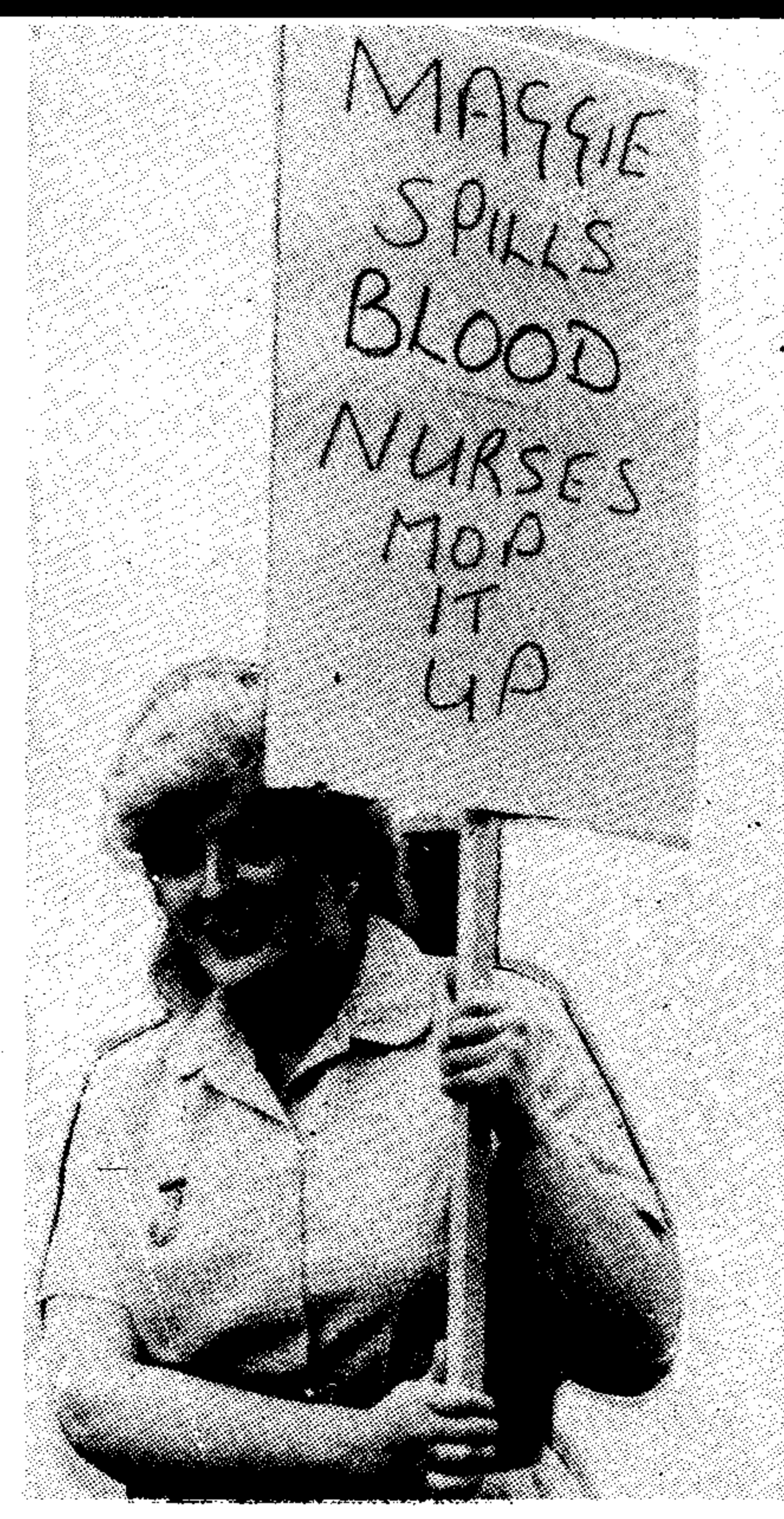
Bring the demand for education into these independent groups — as is already happening — and we have the conditions vital to the development of an independent leadership for our class: a revolutionary leadership that will lead us to socialism.

Our failure to oppose privatisation so far makes our political task that much more difficult at home and internationally. We must develop our method of debate, discussion and action under the transitional demand of 'workers control'.

THE NATIONAL



Nurses, doctors, cleaners, porters, radiologists, lab technicians, canteen and maintenance workers have all fought to keep the NHS. . .



They went to Downing Street



And they went to the TUC



but cancer patients suffer

CANCER patients are missing out on new discoveries as a result of cuts and delays in the NHS. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund is already spending £1.5 million a year on the children's cancer ward at St Bartholomew's hospital, London which would close without this injection of funds from the charity. Now ICRF has agreed to pay £500,000 a year for treatment services associated with its £6 million research unit opening next year at the Churchill hospital, Oxford.

A scandalous situation exists where ICRF has a budget of £35 million a year and is pioneering techniques to diagnose and treat cancers — work which should be carried out by NHS research. But even with this ICRF input the government's university and hospital cuts means that the NHS is incapable of providing the supporting services. The Department of Health has failed to carry out the necessary research to find out which new discoveries were worth translating into treatment.

This is Margaret Thatcher's 'Victorian values' at work again. Cancer patients, denied their basic right to proper care and attention under the NHS, are to be provided for by charity — if they are 'lucky'.

TORY privatisation of hospital laboratories is being fought by ASTMS members in St Thomas' hospital, London. They see this as part of a plan to hive off all NHS medical research work.

Dr Paul Noone, consultant microbiologist said: 'Putting the work of Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers out to tender is the thin edge of the wedge of privatising the whole of the clinical services.'

HEALTH SERVICE CRISIS

THE OLD

CARE of the aged is the work of trained nurses. Not only does it require a knowledge of the diseases of old age, but it is necessary to know how to lift, bathe and feed old people in a way that enables them to maintain a dignity of life. Nursing is not a skill which can be acquired without lengthy training and experience.

The government now plans to conscript 7,000 youngsters on YTS to do the job. The cadet nursing scheme, where young people received a proper training for a nursing career at £60 a week has been dropped.

Labour MP Alice Mahon warned that real jobs are going in the National Health Service, with auxiliary jobs being run down. 'This is a recipe for disaster,' she said. Untrained youngsters are already being used to nurse elderly patients in the private sector. They are left with no supervision and are a danger both to themselves and the patients.



Doctors take stand against Thatcher

BY DOT GIBSON

GREAT ORMOND STREET children's hospital is world famous and greatly respected. Its name has inspired confidence in hundreds of thousands of families whose children have been treated there. But this week it is in the news for a very different reason.

Mr Jaroslav Stark, the hospital's heart surgeon, together with Dr Elliot Shinebourne, cardiologist at the Brompton hospital, and seven other world-famous specialists have signed an appeal to Margaret Thatcher for action on the National Health Service's mounting crisis. The other seven specialist centres signing the appeal are those in Leeds, Birmingham, Southampton, Bristol, Liverpool, Newcastle and London's Guys hospital. They are responsible for the 5,000 babies born each year with serious heart problems.

Speaking of the chronic shortage of intensive-care nurses Shinebourne explained: 'We can no longer compete with the private sector. Individual hospitals are powerless to act on their own. We want the system changed and proper recognition given to the role these skilled nurses play. We are finding it increasingly frustrating, and it appears to be getting worse.' These doctors have been driven to write their appeal after a petition sent to the DHSS a year ago was ignored. Their plea for a face-to-face meeting was refused as 'unnecessary'.

Signs of the near collapse of sections of the NHS pile up every day:

- Women needing urgent treatment for breast cancer are having their operations cancelled four or five times.
- Some 800 beds have been scrapped by South East Thames health authority because of spending cuts.
- Waiting lists have gone up by 20 per cent this year.
- More than 1,000 nurses a year are leaving the NHS for the private sector, including 200 with specialist operating theatre training, according to a study by Sheffield University's Professor Brian Williams.
- The burden of providing an adequate health service has been shifted to regional health authorities — but the necessary money has been taken from them by the Thatcher government.

A leading London lawyer, Mr Geoffrey Bindman, of Bindman and Partners, believes that a successful court case could be won against a health authority: 'There is a duty on the Secretary of State under the National Health Services Act, 1977, to provide hospital services "to such an extent as he considers necessary to meet all reasonable requirements".' Is this an adequate answer to the problem?

Diane and Phillip Barber took the case of their six-month-old son's hole-in-the-heart operation to the High Court. Mr Justice Macpherson refused to intervene on their behalf. He represents the same people as Social Services Secretary John Moore who was treated in Parkside Clinic, Wimbledon, at £195-a-night.

'What are the Labour and trade union leaders doing about this crisis?' is the main question for workers and their families. The last Labour Party Conference told us that we would have to put up with Thatcher for at least another four years, and that Labour should make its main appeal to middle-class yuppies.

The trade union leaders have cringed before Thatcher's anti-trade union laws, failed to build up mass support for the miners and printers, refused to give support to the hundreds of other tenacious strikes like Silent Night, Senior Coleman and HFW. These leaders stand aside while thousands of jobs are destroyed, and our housing, education and health services are smashed.

● A mass movement is building up against the destruction of the health service, despite the cowardly trade union and Labour leadership. Workers Press will take its full part in the build-up of this struggle which must be directed at the Thatcher government and those in the labour movement who refuse to fight the government.

● A socialist plan for the economy must be drawn up, as part of this campaign. The plunder of the health service by the drug companies and their City friends must be exposed and a balance-sheet of the economy's resources established.

● The nationalisation of the banks is the only way to get money for the cash-starved NHS. The creation of the NHS nearly 40 years ago was a considerable step forward for the working class, but the Labour leaders refused to deal with the financial sharks who ran British capitalism then and still run it now.

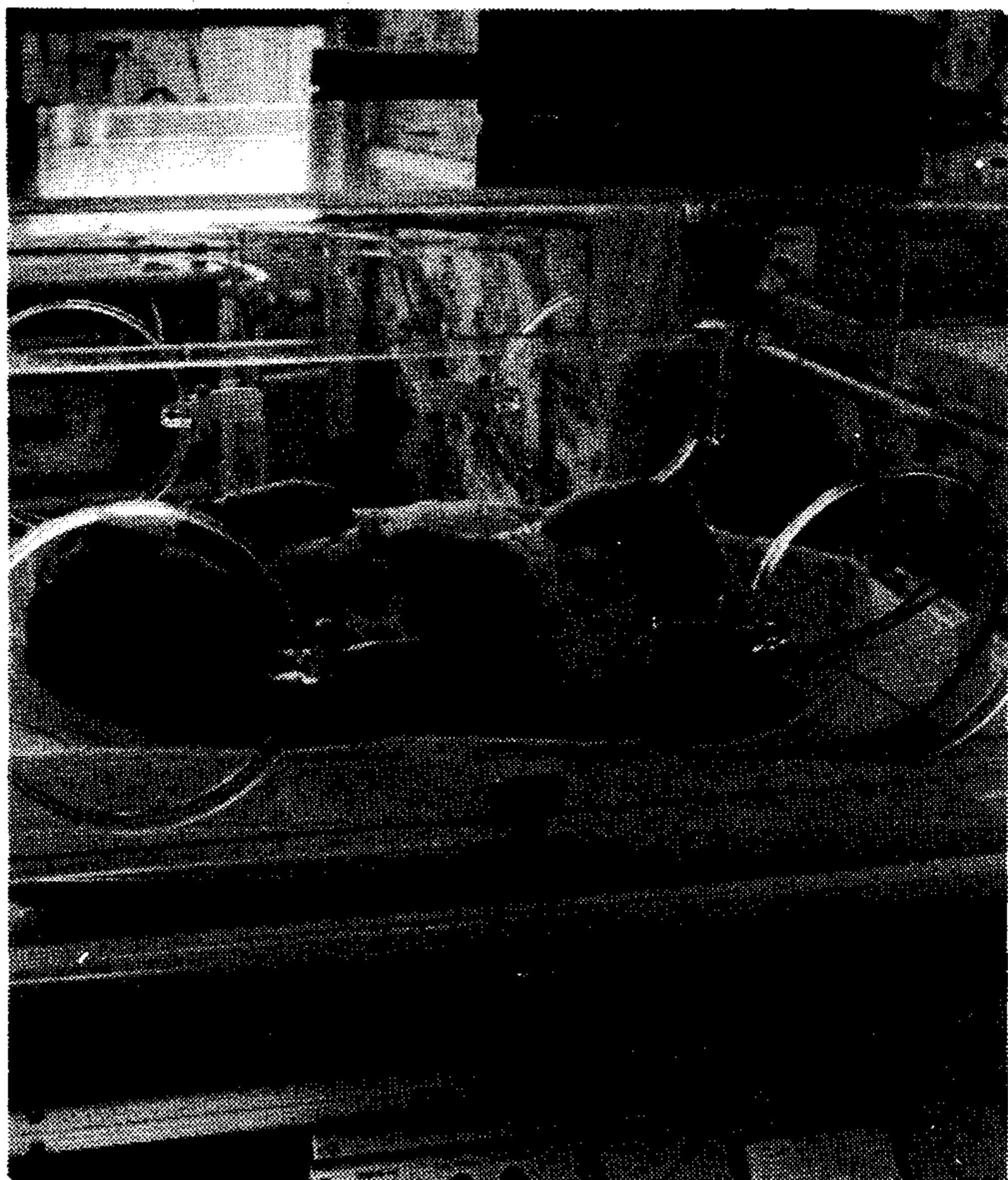
The stand of senior members of the medical profession shows that important sections of the middle class can be won as allies of the labour movement in the struggle against Thatcher's destruction of the Welfare State.

THE YOUNG

'We have reached the end of the road.' Malcolm Chiswick of St Mary's Hospital, Manchester made this statement announcing the closure of five intensive care cots. Understaffing means that the unit is at risk of saving critically ill premature babies but leaving them handicapped.

Chiswick said: 'The writing has been on the wall for five years. During this time we have run the unit with staffing levels way below those recommended. For years we have covered up the deficiencies but now it is compromising the quality of care.' The unit needs 20 extra nurses at a cost of about £200,000.

St Mary's is already turning away half the requests for admission and the closure of the five cots will mean that babies will have to go to Hope Hospital, Salford, which is already turning away babies. After that Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham will be asked if they can take them. Chiswick said: 'Sadly these very premature babies die if they cannot reach hospital in time. The number who will die can now only increase.'

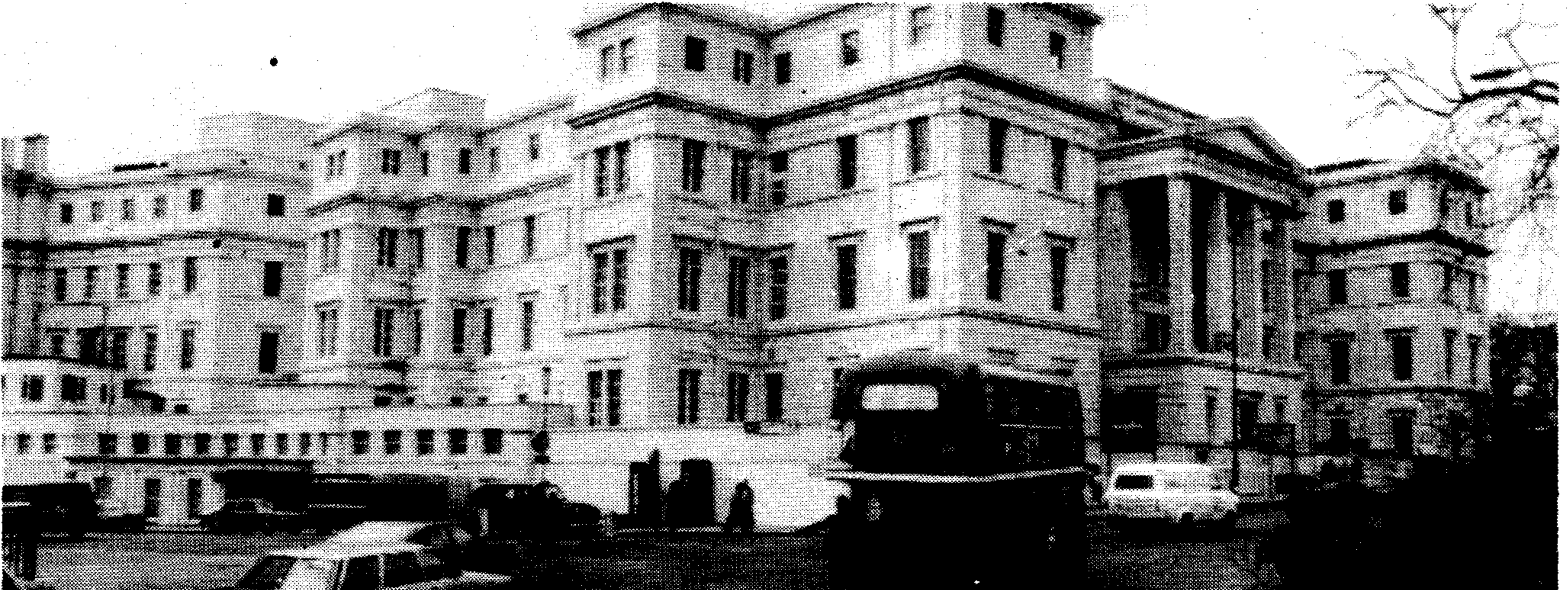


CLOSURES



A ward at St Benedict's hospital after ejection of elderly patients

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT



St George's hospital at London's Hyde Park Corner is to be turned into a luxury hotel

Politics from the prisons

WORKERS PRESS has campaigned consistently for the two years of its existence on the issue of Irish Republican Prisoners of War — a campaign for which no amount of energy is enough.

Having driven from the Workers Revolutionary Party the old Healy leadership which chauvinistically turned its back on the Irish struggle, we resolved to make the support for Ireland's fight against British imperialism — and the prisoners in particular — a priority.

We placed in Workers Press a list of the Irish Republican prisoners in English jails. We underlined the fact that those 30 odd names symbolised all the young Irish men and women incarcerated by British imperialism in the six counties and in the Irish bourgeoisie's Portlaoise prison — over 1,000 all told.

In 1981 the prison issue was placed, irrevocably, in the centre of the struggle against British imperialism by the courage and self-sacrifice of the hunger strikers. Today, the prisoners are putting themselves in the front line of the struggle in another way through a massive growth of political discussion.

Some months ago a journal, 'Congress '86', appeared in Ireland, written by prisoners in the six counties who describe themselves as communists. This week we publish two articles from it. (This does not

imply that Workers Press agrees with all the contents).

The first article, 'For a new Congress', makes a call for a new Republican Congress, modelled on the 1934 congress organised by Michael Price, Peadar O'Donnell and other left-wingers who split with the right-wing IRA leadership at the time.

The second article, 'Sinn Fein: revolutionary or reformist', discusses the perspectives of Sinn Fein and the unity and conflict, of Republicanism and socialism. The writers call for the building of a Marxist-Leninist party, although they do not make clear what Marxism-Leninism means to them.

This will be followed next week by a comment from Simon Pirani of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

In future issues of Workers Press we will review the book 'Questions of History' (Sinn Fein publications, Dublin) in which Republican prisoners discuss the history of their movement. We welcome letters and discussion on the issues raised.

To all our readers we say: step up the campaign for political prisoners' rights, and the repatriation of Irish PoWs in English jails!

Support all those fighting imperialism! Down with the British occupation of the six counties and forward to a socialist united Ireland!

For a new Congress

Republished from 'Congress '86', shortened at places indicated by . . .

FOR FAR too long the cause of labour and the cause of Ireland have looked upon each other with suspicion.

With one notable exception, the concept of unifying, both have failed.

On occasions failure has been due to the lack of will by either or both sides. At other times short-sighted political sectarianism has caused a breakdown.

And yet another method of attempting to combine the both in one party has merely married the reformist elements of both. In this latter case a multitude of contradictions has meant inevitable recrimination which fuelled splits.

In Ireland socialism and Fenianism are not mutually antagonistic forces. They share certain limited common objectives.

They are however different forces. Socialism with its insistence on a workers' state is not identical to Fenianism with its insistence on an egalitarian Republican state.

Any unwillingness to face up to this difference or any attempt to gloss over it, prevents a fruitful union of the two. It would be, as always it

has proved to be, utterly disruptive for one to subvert or override the other.

Until socialism and Fenianism learn to cooperate on common objectives, while each retains freedom to organise the propagation of their unique principles, neither will make measurable progress.

Once and once only during this century has this desirable situation been achieved successfully. Connolly and Clarke had the range of vision coupled with the strength of personality to build a united front between socialist and Fenian.

Though they did not live to see it, they changed the face of Irish history. Without them their adherents became increasingly lost.

Irish Labour, abdicating its commitment to national liberation, drifted from one compromising liaison with reaction to another. Fenian Republicanism, with its concentration on national liberation to the exclusion of social liberation, survived with only minority support. Both suffered by rejecting the other.

It will continue to be so until the message of Connolly



JAMES CONNOLLY

and Clarke is relearned. The two men recognised their respective party's strength and weakness. Easter 1916 would have been a poor showing without Dublin's contribution.

And without the drive and organisation of The Citizen Army would Dublin have fought so well? By the same token The Fenian Organisation was to give the Movement its eventual country-wide scope. That both were to be eventually betrayed was not the fault of either Connolly or Clarke.

The events leading up to Easter Week and its aftermath are now matters of historical fact. What remains relevant is not so much the ebb and flow of battle but the concept which underlay the realisation of Socialist and Fenian of the need for cooperation and the form which unity took. Of equal relevance too is the sad and sorry tale which arises from the failure to work together since.

Any party of Labour which fails to recognise the role of British imperialism in maintaining capitalism in Ireland, does not merit the title

socialist. Without actively campaigning to end partition, such parties represent in effect socialist chauvinism.

Should a Fenian party refuse to cooperate with a genuine Socialist Party (i.e. one which strives for social and national liberation), their Republican Fenian faith must be called into question. Fenianism is a movement for the establishment of the Irish Republic.

To refuse to assist any group genuinely seeking the same on grounds of party political sectarianism would be a negation of Republicanism. It would furthermore be a lingering manifestation of infatuation with partitionist parliamentary aspirations.

So what do we propose? We advocate the refounding of the Republican Congress. The idea of course was excellent in its conception, its execution was the reason for its failure.

It would be futile to now apportion blame. Faults lie on all sides. To say that a congress must collapse now because it did so in the past would be as illogical as declaring that because Repub-



DE VALERA

licans failed in 1867 they were bound to fail again in 1920-1921.

Past mistakes should be viewed as invaluable lessons which prepare the ground for future success. The essential first requirement for success in this is that there exists a mutual will to reach agreement.

If we can accept this obvious first step, several other important points must be understood.

The first step must be a general acceptance of each party's freedom of organisation and expression. Even to the extent that each party retains the right to voice reservations on the others' policies, if one group expects the other 'to toe a party line' they are not asking for cooperation but for capitulation.

Since the parties retain their own distinct programmes it then becomes imperative that areas of common agreement are established. Several aspects should emerge where there is little divergence.

On such issues maximum cooperation should be possible and positively encour-

aged. National Liberation must be one such area. The Peoples Economic Liberation must be another. . .

It goes without saying of course that on several issues there cannot be total agreement. In fact there may be fundamental differences. But unless these differences were of such a radical nature that they obviated the principles of the common limited objectives, an accommodation can be arranged.

Take for example the emotional debate on abortion. Socialists and Fenians might well have diametrically opposing views. Fine.

As democrats we can argue our respective positions and abide by the majority. Indeed debate of this nature is healthy and can only strengthen the pact.

It can show us a practical path for avoidance of internecine strife in the post-unification period.

A final stipulation is that no party presumes to speak for the other. Unless there is unanimous agreement, declaration must be made on an individual or party basis. . .

Sinn Fein: Revolutionary or reformist?

Republished from Congress '86. The Sinn Fein Ard Fheis referred to is not the recent 1987 one, but the 1986 one where it was agreed that Republican candidates would take their seats in the 26-county parliament in elections.

THE recent Ard Fheis allowing Sinn Fein delegates if elected to enter and take their seats in Leinster House has left many Republicans and socialists within the movement and the class as a whole reappraising their role within that movement.

The walkout and formation of Republican Sinn Fein is well enough documented elsewhere not to warrant further debate or discussion here.

What is worth much more discussion and debate is in what light should the revolutionary socialist element view the decision to end abstentionism in particular and Sinn Fein's philosophy as expounded by Sinn Fein in general.

It would be a great mistake to try and separate the two, as only when we examine Sinn Fein's philosophy from a materialistic analysis can we truly see the decision to end abstentionism in its true light.

The taking of seats in bourgeois parliaments is generally seen by revolutionaries as a tactical option and is the line most often quoted by those who support the decision to enter Leinster House.

The taking of seats in bourgeois parliaments is indeed a tactical option for revolutionaries.

However, at this stage it is necessary to point out that sometimes those who call themselves revolutionaries are in fact opportunists and reformists, hiding behind revolutionary rhetoric.

Irish history affords us the opportunity to analyse those who in the past called themselves revolutionaries and socialists and who took the same path to Leinster House as Sinn Fein are preparing to do at present.

Fianna Fail in the 1920s. Clan Na Poblachta in the 1940s and The Workers Party (nee Official Sinn Fein) in 1969. All these parties have one thing in common, they all claimed that they were only going into Leinster House for tactical reasons and would never allow themselves to sink into the mire of what passes for politics in the Free State.

History is the final judge and, as we all know, each of the above-mentioned parties not only sank into the mire but they re-emerged as staunch upholders and guardians of the status quo as dictated from Leinster House.

On hindsight it is easy for us to see that the above-mentioned parties were merely opportunists and reformists hiding behind their

own particular forms of rhetoric.

Tragically the fact remains that at the time many people put their faith and trust in these parties only to have that faith and trust betrayed at a later date.

For those of us who believe that only socialism, only communism can end the ruthless economic exploitation, political oppression and foreign occupation of our country we have a direct obligation to ensure that no such betrayals ever again, by any political party, shall hinder us in our forward march towards a socialist republic.

The marriage between Republicanism and socialism has never been a happy one, and could be at best described as a marriage of convenience.

The whole question takes on a new sense of urgency in the light of the abstentionist issue and recent remarks made by the President of Sinn Fein Gerry Adams in an interview which appeared in the Irish Times 10 December 1986.

Mr Adams stated that 'socialism was not on the agenda'. Also in his recently



GERRY ADAMS

published book 'Politics of Irish Freedom' he said: 'Republican struggle should not at this stage of its development style itself socialist Republican as this would imply that there is no place in it for non-socialists'.

The historical precedent which immediately springs to mind is the now infamous caution of De Valera when he stated that 'labour must wait'. Not a very encouraging precedent.

In no sense of the word can such an ideology be regarded as revolutionary and clearly must be delegated to the marshy ground of opportunism and reformism.

For those of us who believe that if there is to be a revolution there must first be a revolutionary party and that without a revolutionary party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses to victory, the weakness and flaws in the ideology of Sinn Fein are obvious for those with the courage and clarity to see them.

The question now arises, what is to be done? Firstly we must learn from history. The old cry 'Don't embarrass Sinn Fein' must never be allowed to be converted into 'Don't embarrass Sinn Fein'.

It is clear that we as revolutionary socialists must vigorously struggle against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology in the working class.

As revolutionaries it is our duty to expose all flaws and weakness that are inherent. The time comes in the life of any socialist when there remains only two choices: submit or resist.

That time has come for Irish socialists. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to resist.

The time has come when the unhappy marriage between Republican and revolutionary socialists must be terminated. We must put our faith in the most creative class, the working class and the broad masses.

We must set about the task of building a revolutionary party, a party built on the Marxist-Leninist theory. Then and only then shall we be equipped and capable of leading the working class and masses to victory.

Socialists everywhere must get together, expose, plan organise and build the very defence of our people. Our future and our freedom depends on our ability to tackle the tasks ahead.

Comrades let us not be found wanting in the months and years of struggle ahead...

ROBSON'S CHOICE

The Silly Season

THE advent of the silly-season is already clearly stamped on the radio and TV schedules as we enter December. Investigative-type programmes hardly get a look in; documentaries have been cut to the bone to make way for new waves of trivia in one disguise or another, or pure escapism. It is definitely 'stop thinking' time, as far as the programmers are concerned. Only here and there do we come across the occasional exception...

On Saturday, at 10p.m.(BBC2), Luis Bunuel's last, teasing, feature film, *That Obscure Object of Desire*. At 11.45p.m.(BBC2), Paul Cox's delightfully original *Man of Flowers*.

On Sunday, at 12.20p.m.(Radio 3), Richard Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*, in a Bayreuth Festival production. At 5.30p.m.(BBC2), *Music in Camera* presents the singing group *Sweet Honey in the Rock*. At 6.35p.m.(BBC1), in what must be the sickest programme of the week, Pauline Webb brings you *Songs of Praise* from Zimbabwe, a 'peace in our time' sing-in interspersed with the thoughts of the reactionary Sir Garfield Todd and The Rev Dr Caanan (what's in a name) *Banana*. At 7.50p.m.(BBC2), *The Great Philosophers* introduces Husserl, Heidegger and Modern Existentialism. At 9.20p.m.(BBC1), a musical romp by newcomer Lee Drysdale called *Body Contact*. At 10.35p.m.(ITV), *The South Bank Show*, looks back at the musical career of Eric Clapton.

On Monday, at 7.45p.m.(BBC2), *Open Spacetells* the story of families in South Wales, part of a group of 'travellers', and their battles with the south west Glamorgan council over the right to educate their children and provide basic amenities. At 9p.m.(BBC2), Woody Allen's *Manhattan*. Never has a comedy been more beautifully photographed (Gordon Willis). At 9.30p.m.(BBC1), *Panorama* looks at the social cost of the credit card boom. At 10.10p.m.(BBC2), episode five of *A Perfect Spy*. At 11p.m.(C4), *The Eleventh Hour* presents new experiments in video produced by European artists.

On Tuesday, at 7p.m.(Radio 3), *Music for Machines*. At 8.30p.m.(BBC1), *Rivers of Fire* looks at spectacular volcanic eruptions around the world. At 9p.m.(C4), final part of *The Hot House People*, an investigation into education control and biogenetics. At 9.30p.m.(BBC2), *Footsteps* follows Reginald Le May (1885-1972) to Thailand and the Valley of the Kilns. At 10.05p.m.(Radio 3), first of a new series to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the birth of the great Lubeck organist and composer, *Dietrich Buxtehude*. At 11.15p.m.(C4), a filmed report: *Angola: South Africa's Dirty War*.

On Wednesday, at 8.10p.m.(BBC2), *Timewatch* presents: *Judgement in Jerusalem*, based on the work of independent thinking Jewish philosopher, Hannah Arendt, in which she questions the legality of the trial and explores questions of Jewish resistance and co-operation with the Nazis, to the consternation of the Zionist lobby. At 9p.m.(C4), *Opera on Four* presents Rossini's comedy *The Barber of Seville*, from La Scala, Milan. At 9.25p.m.(BBC2), part-six of *The Perfect Spy*. At 11.30p.m.(C4), a documentary: *The Amish - Not to be Modern*.

On Thursday, at 7p.m.(Radio 3), *The Left-Handed Legacy*, is about pianos, not guns. At 9p.m.(C4), Woody Allen in *Play it Again Sam*. At 10.35p.m.(C4), *Partisans of Vilna*.

On Friday, Arena presents: *Stop Making Sense*, and fails to follow its own advice.

TOM SCOTT ROBSON

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

<p>LONG LARTIN HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984. JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464989. PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22338. EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637. ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877. GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016. JOHN MCCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715. HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636. VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.</p> <p>MAIDSTONE HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.</p> <p>PARKHURST HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603. PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532. SEAN McSHANE, B75898. TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence 69204. PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.</p> <p>WAKEFIELD HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644. NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.</p> <p>ALBANY HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of</p>	<p>Wight, PO30 5RS MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087. HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638. BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647. SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.</p> <p>GARTREE HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP RONNIE MCCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799. STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence 758663. JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635. PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence. ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.</p> <p>FRANKLAND HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085 BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662. PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034. CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662. MICHAEL J McKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486. EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.</p> <p>LEICESTER HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888. GERARD McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882. BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380. PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.</p>	<p>DURHAM HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham. MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134. ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.</p> <p>REMAND PRISONERS: BRIXTON HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF. LIAM MCCOTTER, LB83693 PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694. LIAM QUINN, 49930</p> <p>INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE: CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree. G.(DANNY) McNAMEE, 25-year sentence, HM Prison, Parkhurst PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, HM Prison, Gartree GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin. PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Long Lartin. JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham. HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.</p> <p>They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.</p>
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We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.

FREE THE Framed Irish Prisoners!

If the (Birmingham Six) win it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous... This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: it cannot be right, these actions should go no further. (Lord Denning, denying the Birmingham Six the right to proceed with an action against the police for injuries received while in custody). 1985

A new pamphlet outlining the cases of framed Irish prisoners, including the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four. Copies available from Free the Framed Irish Prisoners, c/o BM 1320, London WC1 3XX.

LETTERS

Send your letters to Workers Press, 21b Old Town, London SW4 0JT. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

How Labour's soft left moves right

I AM A member of the Labour Party who has read Workers Press since it appeared in its new format and have been impressed by its politics and sincerity.

Your readers will appreciate that presently the inner London Labour Parties are experiencing some upheaval. In Southwark, Peckham LP has been effectively disbanded and Bermondsey may be suspended because of alleged Militant infiltration. Only Dulwich LP, haven of the soft left, is not under threat.

At the last meeting of Dulwich General Committee, Margaret Pedler, Deputy Leader of Southwark Council, presented a document 'Southwark in Crisis' which path should we choose' and outlined the 'stark realities' facing this Labour Council. The author of the document was Ann Mathews, Labour's leader on the council.

Ann Mathews must be given credit for submitting her policy to scrutiny, welcome and novel behaviour for a Labour leader. One of the surcharged councillors, Ann Mathews is an honest, open and sincere person who finds she has to choose between administering Southwark Council within the ever tightening noose of Tory policies, running away or putting up a fight outside the traditional limitations of the Labour left. In such a position the political reality of the soft left is clearly revealed.

At the Dulwich GC Councillor Pedler described how, for the present leaders, the only realistic policy was to remain in office and run Southwark to ameliorate the worst Tory excesses. The required price would be redundancies and cuts in services.

Interestingly, she saw no contradictions in having to vote with Tories against the majority of Labour members to secure higher council rents.

What was missing from Cllr Pedler's presentation and Ann Mathew's document is any concept of a working-class fight back, extensions of the struggle geographically to seek alliances with others in the same position, or independent mobilisation of working-class strength.

Indeed the major argument advanced for having to swallow the bitter pills of Thatcherism was remarkable. It would appear that the last Labour administration managed Southwark so badly that 'anyone could do better'.

Labour must hold on to office at almost any cost to avoid such a public humiliation. Quite apart from the obvious question of how can we have confidence in people whose major claim to office is their self-professed incompetence, what about the tenants and workers of Southwark who will suffer?

Dulwich GC voted overwhelmingly to protect its leaders in the belief that those likely to be declared redundant would easily find jobs in the City, and that the newly competent council with its efficient management would be so good at getting extra monies from the DHSS that no tenant would really suffer.

What is so revealing about the situation in Southwark is the speed and openness with which the soft left has moved to the right.

When Lambeth and Liverpool were preparing to fight it was the soft left which undermined the fightback with a series of proposals on how to avoid cuts by manipulating council budgets, leaving Lambeth and Liverpool isolated. (I make no com-

ment on Kinnock's role here.)

Now that budgetary manipulation has been effectively stopped and the choice between cuts and fighting back can no longer be postponed, we see where the soft left stands. Gone are the promises made at the last election about protecting jobs and services.

Such talk is now considered unrealistic. Instead we are asked to accept that a successful fightback is impossible, and the justification given is precisely that Lambeth and Liverpool did not win!!

The vacillations of the soft left are more apparent than real. Their policies have a very firm and consistent core, lack of confidence in independent mass mobilisations of the working class and a belief that bourgeois democratic processes will, in the last resort, save the day.

Member of Dulwich Labour Party

Incident at 70th Anniversary

A NUMBER of comrades have drawn to my attention an incident towards the end of the 8 November celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution which seems to have caused some confusion amongst sections of the audience.

Towards the end of Cliff Slaughter's speech he appeared to tell the audience to 'shut up' during a bout of applause.

This was not the case. What happened was that during his speech, Slaughter said that two years after the split the leadership of the WRP was in better fighting shape than ever.

This remark was greeted with applause but also an interruption from a member of the International Communist Party, the Dave Hyland-led split from the Workers Revolutionary Party who was sitting right at the front of the meeting.

It seems that many members of the audience were not aware of the ICP attempt to disrupt the meeting.

This same person refused to stand when the meeting commemorated the lives of all those who had fallen in the struggle against Stalinism as well as the death of Hugo Moreno, leader of the Workers International League.

Dave Temple
Chairman, Workers Revolutionary Party

Military repression and liberal oppression

'THE state has got to ensure your education as well as your security. If it does not ensure your security and your education what is going to happen? The state has to provide both.

'This won't happen with words and stories. We need to have primary schools everywhere. In order to get good citizens of the state one must teach Turkish. But Turkish is not taught. It is not right to accuse someone because his mother-tongue is Kurdish or because he speaks Kurdish.'

This was Erdal Inonu, a leader of Turkey's so-called Social Democratic Populist Party, the SHP, opposing the idea of building more police headquarters at the expense of primary schools in Kurdish-speaking areas.

Instead of using direct means of repression against the Kurdish minority he

proposed a more pernicious method of annihilation of Kurdish culture: the assimilation by the dominant Turkish language and culture. He just wants one form of exploitation replaced by another.

In Turkey, one fifth of the population speaks Kurdish but doesn't have the right to speak its own language. For just listening to Kurdish songs on a cassette you can be sent to jail. At school, in the army, in administration, the Kurdish language has been outlawed.

The legal opposition to the right-wing military-controlled government doesn't really think differently. They pretend to be socialist but they refuse to recognise the existence of the Kurdish people.

The right-wingers think you have to get rid of minorities with sheer repression. The pseudo left-wing leaders think you can get rid of the Kurdish identity by means of imposition of the Turkish culture through a repressive school system. The goals are the same, only the means are slightly different.

Member, Kurdish Workers' Association

Oppose anti-IRA hypocrisy

WORKERS PRESS has been given a copy of a letter written to the 'Glasgow Herald' by a member of the Clydeside Troops Out Movement. The letter was in reply to an article by 'Herald' reporter Hugh Dougherty in the wake of the Enniskillen bombing, condemning Republican supporters in the West of Scotland.

Claiming that this support is 'romantic', and based on the 'myth, ignorance and sheer exploitation', Dougherty wrote of the IRA: 'the present band of maniacs has nothing at all in common with the men who fought in the old IRA against military targets in the Irish War of Independence'.

Their supporters in Scotland, he said, 'must bear some of the guilt of those who planned the bomb' at Enniskillen.

Action should be taken, Dougherty concluded, to wipe pro-IRA slogans off Glasgow walls, against Celtic football supporters who chant pro-Republican slogans, and, ominously, against what he termed the 'rising menace' of the young Republican bands in the West of Scotland.

The 'Glasgow Herald' has not printed the reply. We do so below:

AS A non-Catholic, non-Celtic supporting socialist Republican, with a mixed Scots-Irish ancestry, it was with utter disbelief that I read the article by Hugh Dougherty in the 'Herald' on 12, November.

Celtic FC are no doubt capable of answering Dougherty's slurs on chants and Irish connections which the club encourages — I've always understood the club encouraged connections with supporters from all foreign nations.

He states he had 'made a mental and cultural jump... to realise there is nothing romantic about the IRA' — and goes on to romance about the 'old IRA'.

Now, we all know that, unlike today's 'maniacs', the 'old IRA' never shot unarmed civilians, never shot a local 'bobby' in the back and never at any time attacked a train killing troopers and horses on a scale that would make the Hyde Park bomb look like a bloody nose. This myth is totally exploded by a Sinn Fein pamphlet 'The Good Old IRA'.

Dougherty goes on to describe the green, white and orange tricolour — roughly translated as green for

Catholics, orange for Protestants and white for peace between the two — as the flag of the Irish Republic.

True. But of a 32-county republic as proclaimed long before the partition of Ireland and, as such, the 26-county government has no moral right to fly such a flag.

He also writes of 'the rising menace of the Republican bands which flourish in the most squalid streets of Glasgow'.

These are mainly young people who demonstrate their opposition to imperialism on Scottish, Irish, Welsh, anti-racist, anti-nuclear, labour and a host of international issues, and never, might I add, with the sectarian Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Finally, on the Enniskillen bomb, which prompted Dougherty's article, no one in the Republican movement has condoned the tragedy. To suggest otherwise is misleading and libellous. Even the RUC militia accepted the fact that the killing of civilians was unintentional.

Yes, we in the various political support groups recognise the right of the IRA to use force of arms to overcome the gerrymandered sectarian statement.

We also note the hypocritical voices raised in outrage which were strangely silent after Bloody Sunday, silent while children were being murdered with plastic bullets and are silent when people are murdered by Loyalist assassins, merely because they are, or associate with, Catholics. These voices include those of the Catholic hierarchy.

Donnie Pollock
Clydeside Troops Out Movement (in a personal capacity)

Scottish Anti-Apartheid Movement

I SHARE James D. Young's concern (letter 14 November) about the attempts by the Scottish Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement to censor David Kitson, who has been invited to speak at a Falkirk Anti-Apartheid group meeting.

The disgraceful actions of the Scottish Committee do not surprise me at all. Their record over the past three years has been one of never-ending censorship, cover-ups, and scabbing.

The Scottish Committee of the AAM has always stifled debate about the way forward for the anti-apartheid movement in Scotland. I can remember them attacking the Glasgow University AA group for 'daring' to invite a speaker from the City of London AA Group.

Members of the Scottish Committee have also publicly debated with South African racists, in contravention of AAM policy.

And most significantly, they scabbed on the boycott of the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh last year, when their chairman, Brian Filling publicly called on the black nations organising the action against Thatcher not to boycott the games!

I hope that the Falkirk AA Group sticks by their decision to invite David Kitson to speak at their meeting. Democratic, open debate is the way forward.

Gareth Jenkins
Glasgow Revolutionary Communist Group

Worst-off will suffer most

THE government's plans relating to poll-tax are based on their theory of 'accounta-

bility'. This means that all workers and unemployed persons need to pay rates in order to appreciate the services they receive.

In fact, it is a veil behind which economic attacks are aimed at unemployed and low-paid workers.

The Draft Statutory Instruments 1987 outlines the Tory plans. From April 1988, a new system of benefits will be introduced. At present, those on Supplementary Benefit receive a full rent and rate rebate; in the case of council tenants, these are paid directly by the DHSS to the Housing Department.

In the new regulations the maximum rate rebate will be 80 per cent. This means that unemployed persons will be required to pay 20 per cent of their rates.

Introducing this in parliament, Secretary of State John Moore presented the Income Support Rate of £33.40 for single and £51.45 for couples which includes a £1.30 average rate payment.

A typical rate for a council flat in Coventry is £10.17 per week, including water rates. This means that £2.03 would need to be paid if water is included, £1.70 if not.

Tory MP Jill Knight claimed that all extra payments would cease. For example, this would mean that the 'no-fines' payments for extra heating needs due to the concrete used would no longer be payable and thousands of people would lose their payment of £2.20 or £5.50 per week.

This would wipe out the increase of 4.5 to 5 per cent which the Income Support Rate gives over Supplementary benefit, leaving people £1.50-£4.50 a week worse-off.

These changes would go along with the 'Social Fund' loans which are to replace Special Needs Grants (see Workers Press 24 October 1987).

These preparations for the imposition of the Poll-Tax should be resisted both in parliament as well as by DHSS workers who should try to organise boycott actions to prevent these proposals going through and should link up with unemployed groups and other unions where possible to fight the implementation of these cuts.

Adrian Behan
Karl Forman
Coventry

Banda hi-jacks name

I AM absolutely flabbergasted by the news of Mike Banda's attempt to use the name of Marxist Philosophy Forum.

The Forum was established in January 1987 in Newham (official address is 55 West Ham Lane, E15). It is a collective, consisting of

eight political activists.

The members of the collective are from different political organisations and the Forum's sole purpose was and still is to invite speakers from different significant political organisations and particularly from anti-imperialist bodies.

We feel that in East London there is a need for a Forum like ours where we could generate a healthy political debate. The Forum does not have any intention to turn to a party.

We invited Mr Banda to address us on two occasions but that was the only involvement with Mr Banda.

He did attend our seminars on an almost regular basis, but so did other comrades from other organisations.

The Forum has not organised any seminar since July 1987 and we will not start our 'talks' before January 1988.

Whatever Mr Banda is doing has got nothing to do with our forum — though we feel very strongly about this attempt to hi-jack the name.

As you can very clearly see from our letterhead — the members of the Forum never belonged to WRP as quoted by Mr Banda.

Please convey our feelings to the Jewish Socialist Group.

Dipak Basu
co-ordinator for the Forum
[Forum Members on letterhead: Patrick Ainley, Sonia Chatterjee, Denis Swaine, Julian Wootton, Ann Basu, Abu Bakar, Dipak Basu, Jo Peckson]

Kashmir appeal

I AM writing to ask for your help to raise £20,000 for the building of a hospital for women and children in a remote part of Kashmir.

Medical and Educational Aid for Kashmir is a charitable Trust based in Scotland. The Trust was formed last month and the aims are to establish medical clinics in remote parts of Kashmir and to provide scholarships for Kashmiri students.

Since we have just been formed we do not have enough funds to advertise in national newspapers. We are therefore asking you to help us to raise this fund through your readers.

If we can raise £20,000 by Christmas then we will be able to start building the first hospital in early 1988.

We know that at this time of the year many charities will be appealing to you but we hope that you will seriously consider our request since we are newly formed and we need all the help we can get.

Khalid P. Rahim
Hon. Secretary
Medical and Educational Aid for Kashmir

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 5. The Founding Theses of the IWL(FI) - Theses on the Necessity of an International and a revolutionary leadership
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SPECIAL OFFER FOR BRITISH READERS

PERSONAL COLUMN

Peter Fryer

Writing for workers

A WRITER in last week's 'New Statesman' described the Workers Revolutionary Party as 'a fanatic, sectarian left-wing group'.

This calls for comment, though it's perhaps not quite such an egregious blunder as the characterisation in the 'Sunday Times' of the WRP's former leader Gerry Healy as 'a veteran Irish nationalist', which had me fairly choking on my toast and marmalade last weekend.

I am an enthusiast; you are over-zealous; she is a fanatic. We stick to our principles; you are bigots; that lot are sectarians. From the pen of a Jane Dibblin both 'fanatic' and 'sectarian' are convenient ready-made poison labels, no doubt based on impressions that were formed years ago, that have not been revised in the light of recent developments, and that save the labeller and her readers the hard work of research and the still harder work of thinking for themselves.

From what I know personally of Gerry Healy, and from what I've been told of the regime inside the WRP when he was its grand seigneur, there was clearly much fanaticism and sectarianism to be found in the organisation: though that doesn't tell the whole story, by a long chalk.

But however much fanaticism and sectarianism — with or without quotation marks in each case — some of its members may have inherited from the former regime, the party which braced itself to overthrow Healy and succeeded, and now publishes Workers Press, has changed

beyond recognition.

One indication of this is that it has invited a non-member to be tutor at the seminar on 'Writing for the Revolutionary Press' which is being held this weekend. To have an outsider doing such a job would have been unthinkable under the old regime.

I hesitated a long time before accepting this invitation. I wasn't sure that I was really qualified to help other people improve their writing; the last time I tried to do anything of that kind I came a cropper; the best I could do, I thought, was suggest a few tricks of the trade picked up along the way.

That would do very well, said Workers Press. So I've been rereading useful texts like Gowers's 'The Complete Plain Words' and Fowler's 'Modern English Usage', and trying to decide which of their precepts are out of date and which are useful for those who, in the late 1980s, want to write for working-class readers.

My own bias, as some readers may have guessed, is very much on the side of clarity. By which I mean more or less what Daniel Defoe had in mind when he wrote, nearly 300 years ago:

'If any man were to ask me what I would suppose to be a perfect style of language, I would answer, that in which a man speaking to five hundred people, of all common and various capacities, idiots or lunatics excepted, should be understood by them all, and in the same sense which the speaker intended to be understood.'

Or, as a lesser but scarcely less perspicuous writer put it more recently:

'The final cause of speech is to get an idea as exactly as possible out of one mind into another.'

Workers Press should in my view be trying to build a bridge to Marxism for militant workers and others coming into

struggle. Dense fogs of jargon; impenetrable thickets of abstractions; ready-made poison labels: these aren't a bridge, but a barrier.

I'm sure these ideas and others will be thoroughly thrashed out this weekend. I'm equally sure I'm going to learn at least as much as I shall have to teach.

Police pot-boiler

ABOUT 20 years ago I was one of the signatories of the celebrated advertisement in 'The Times' calling for the decriminalisation, as trendy people used to say, of cannabis.

Nothing I've read since those days has caused me to change my view that the use of cannabis is on the whole medically and socially less harmful than the use, until recently almost obligatory in our culture, of alcohol or tobacco; and that possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use is the supreme example of a victimless crime.

Yet British legislators have completely ignored whatever reason has to say, and it does have quite a lot to say, on this subject.

When you ask yourself why the anti-cannabis law hasn't been eased somewhat in these two decades, as might have been expected, you're driven to the conclusion that the police have found it so handy an instrument in their task of 'social control' that they have fought stubbornly and successfully for its retention.

So many young people occasionally carry a bit of dope on them, even if they're not regular pot smokers, that it's clearly extremely useful for the police to have this excuse to stop and search and take to the station.

No one in the late 1960s, it's safe to say, would have forecast that 20 years on we would be witnessing the consummate lunacy, the staggering incompetence, manifested in a police raid on a London house the other day.

The house in question happened to be that of a BBC woman reporter, which ensured that the incident got a little more publicity than it otherwise might have done.

Five members of the drug squad turned up with a search warrant because they suspected that a plant, boldly displayed in the front window alongside some geraniums, might be a cannabis plant.

They pulled some leaves off and sniffed them, but they weren't sure. So they took the plant away and showed it to a botanist.

He assured them that, though unquestionably a member of the cannabis family, it wasn't in fact the dreaded hemp. They'd nicked the wrong plant.

The police took the innocent plant back to the bemused reporter, who had bought it six months ago for £1.50. She was even more bemused when they advised her not to put it back in her window 'because you might get raided again'.

The clear-up rate, as it's called, for serious crime in London is a howling disgrace to a police force so prodigally funded, and with such an arrogantly high opinion of itself, as the Met.

Surely these highly paid public servants have more important things to do than pry through people's windows and arrest their pot plants, genuine pot or not?

WORKERS PRESS

SEMINAR

Writing for the revolutionary press

Tutor: P. Fryer

Sunday 6 December
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There will be three sessions:

1. Writing
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Emphasis will be on practical work. Bring copious supplies of pencils and paper.

For WRP members. For details of venue (London) ring 01-733 3058.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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Led by Anton Moctonian
7.30pm Sunday December 6
Bryant Street Methodist Church,
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Workers Revolutionary Party

**Tower Hamlets and Hackney Marxist
Discussion**

St George's Methodist Hall, Cable Street,
Stepney, E1 (nearest tube: Shadwell)
all at 7.30p.m.

Friday 4 December: The Stalinist Theory of Socialism in a Single Country

LISTINGS

LISTINGS are published free by WORKERS PRESS each week for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thursday.

DISCUSSION — The Bund's politics and today's socialism. Jewish Socialists' Group meeting with Clive Gilbert (JSG), Majer Bogdanski (Bund), Nira Yuval-Davis (Khamsin), and Charlie Pottins (Workers Press). Friends International Centre, Byng Place, WC1. (nearest tube Goodge St.), Sunday, 13 December, 7pm.

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

NON-STOP PICKET RALLY Friday, 4 December 6p.m.-7.30p.m. Outside South Africa House. Followed by City Group members' meeting, 8p.m. at Camden Town Hall.

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

VMDC London Support Group Weekly Campaign Meetings. Thursday evenings 7.30p.m. Camden Town Hall. All welcome. (Further details: 01-837 1688.) **24-HOURS FOR VIRAJ MENDIS** Sponsored Vigil outside Downing Street. 5.30p.m. Thursday, — 5.30p.m. Friday 10-11 December. Come and join us or pledge a donation.

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Tom Kemp

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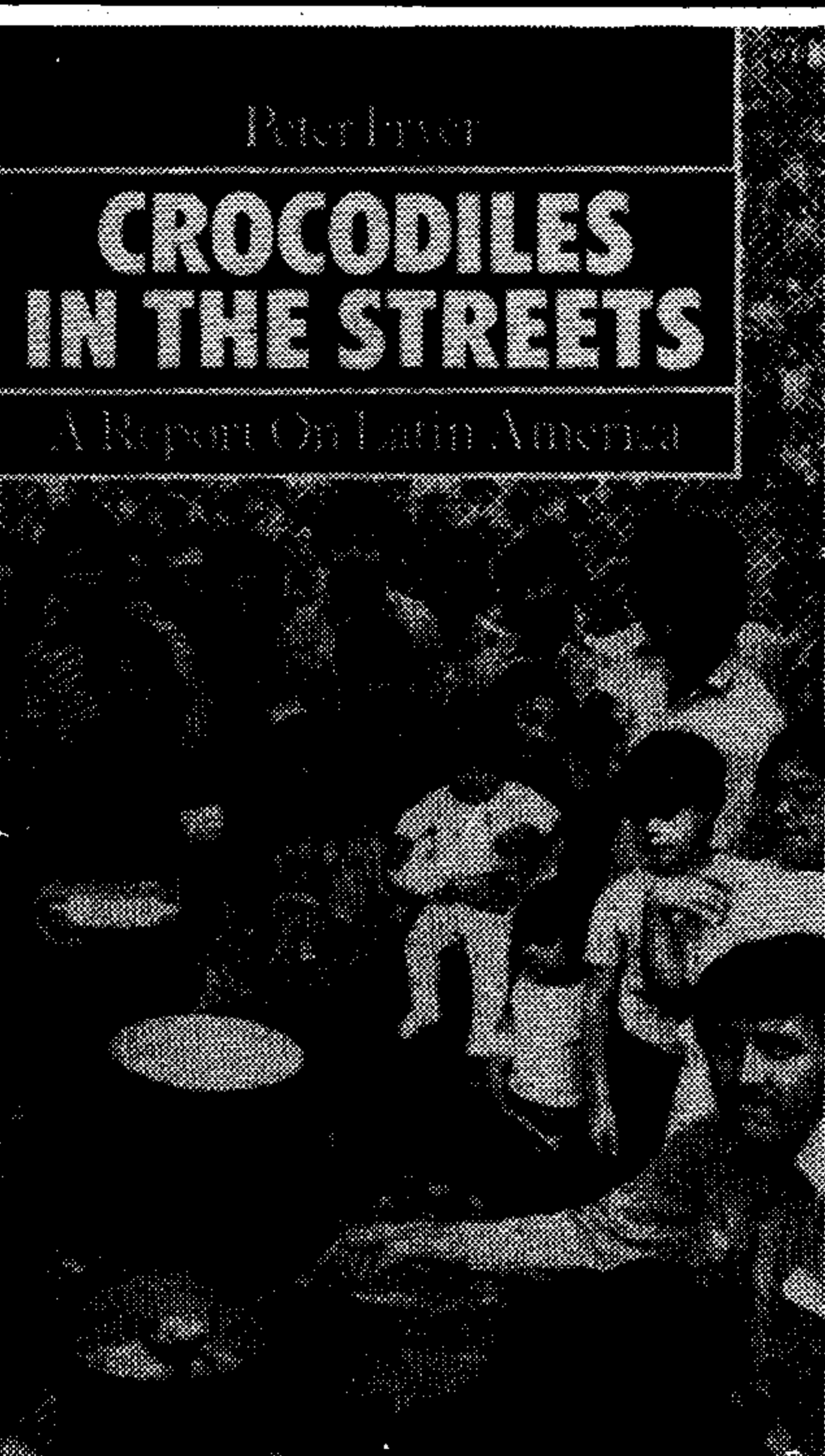
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Peter Fryer

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Women and Islam



The authorities reserve the most humiliating and brutal tortures for women political prisoners.

The devastating effect of war

AMONG the apparently unrelenting stream of outrages the Islamic Republic inflicts upon women, the most barbaric would seem to be those reserved for members of minority groups.

The devastating effect of the war imposed on Kurdistan provides some particularly horrifying examples.

Women active in opposing the Iranian regime face brutal treatment when imprisoned. Mothers are tortured in front of their children and vice versa.

The Islamic ideology allows all that to happen as it considers women political prisoners as spoils of war who are, ultimately, subject to their captors.

The Law of Retribution (Qesas) exercises extreme forms of punishment for all who do not respect the 'sanctity' of marriage. 'Adulterous' women and prostitutes are stoned to death. Lesbians are executed.

State-controlled prostitution, however, is practised in the shape of 'temporary marriage', sanctified by a mullah, which could last as little as a few minutes.

Whilst there were one or two reforms gained under the Shah's regime, a woman's social position did not alter fundamentally. The rights of women to obtain a divorce and oppose polygamy, although recognised, were extremely difficult to enforce.

But today a woman may only divorce her husband in extreme circumstances and opposition to polygamy is denied.

Whether or not mob mentality has exacted its own form of punishment by throwing acid in or razor-slashing the offender's face,

BY JEFF JACKSON

a token lashing of 75 strokes or imprisonment is the state penalty for a woman going without a scarf covering her hair. Repeated offences result in execution.

As in capitalist economies, in the Islamic Republic of Iran women are the first to lose their jobs in a recession and with the expansion of production they are brought in to fill unskilled and poorly-paid employment which the men refuse to do.

Impact of Gulf war on Iranian women

'EQUALITY' for Iranian women is expressed under the shadow of Islam in sending them as soldiers to the front line in the bloody war between the governments of Iran and Iraq.

This conflict has been going on for more than six years; both reactionary regimes employ chemical weapons, nerve gas etc.

At the outset Khomeiny was able to take advantage of the defensive mood prevalent amongst the Iranian people. National chauvinistic and religious propaganda used recruitment for the war front extensively.

Today the regime is confronted with a massive wave of opposition to the war. To

counter this position it is rounding up all young people from schools, colleges and off the streets.

There is no legal age for military service in Iran. To refuse to serve means disqualification from employment, permission to marry and any other social right. Many choose to serve simply to escape, through Pakistan or over the Turkish border into Europe as refugees.

To encourage volunteers the regime has introduced a new tactic: the 'key to heaven'. According to the doctrine all those wearing it who are killed in the war automatically go straight to heaven!

The deterioration of the women's position since Khomeiny came to power has considerably worsened with the escalation of the war.

Food shortages have added to the burdens of working class women. They must now spend hours queuing for basic supplies such as bread, milk, eggs, and soap. Gas and electricity are frequently cut off. Powdered milk is rationed and is only issued after breast checks by a special unit. Drugs and medicines are reserved mainly for war casualties.

These pressures must add to the growing opposition to the war and the Khomeiny regime.

IRANIAN women, like their sisters in many developing countries are victims of dual repression.

Islamic culture and traditions have played a historic and contemporary role in the regression of the position of women.

While the sudden development of capitalism in the 1960s and 1970s brought its own forms of repression, the inevitable contradiction of economic infrastructure and the religious superstructure of recent times has brought its own devastating consequences.

In the 1920s, with the development of capitalism in Iran, the advent of the constitutional revolution and the need for women's participation in production, Reza Shah and his son, in their attempt to portray Iran as a 'modern' capitalist country, tried to improve the plight of bourgeois women.

During this period Iranian society was divided by an enormous gap between the 'modernised' rich and the 'illiterate' poor.

While the massive import of luxury consumer goods, encouragement of fashion-consciousness and the westernised media helped middle-class Iranian women to imitate the worst aspects of western life, peasant and working-class women lived in poverty, in conditions reminiscent of a different era, deprived of any social rights.

The half-hearted reforms of the Shah's regime — the right to vote, the right to remove the veil and the family protection law — in reality only affected the educated women of the cities.

In 1979, with the rise of the protest movement, Iranian women joined the demonstrations, strikes, etc. in the hope of gaining their rightful position in society. However the new Islamic government has deprived them of even the superficial freedoms of the Shah's era.

Religion

With the interference of religion in the affairs of the state, the Islamic authorities meticulously controlled every move of men and women.

ISLAMIC law (Sharia) treats women as second-class citizens. Women are not allowed to work outside the house, women must cover their hair, they are deprived of the right to be judges, become witnesses or martyrs, of the right of custody of their children, divorce...

In short the role of Moslem women is to reproduce and prepare the means of com-

Reprinted from a pamphlet published by the Iranian Women's Association

fort and entertainment for men. These are not specific to Khomeiny's brand of Islam, but stem from the teachings of the holy book, the 'Koran', and the 'lessons' left by the prophet Mohammed.

According to the Koran, men should guide and teach women. If the women fail to obey they should be beaten up.

The imposition of the mediaeval law of retribution, expulsion of women from the judiciary, from offices and factories, the creation of an unbearable atmosphere to force women to give up their jobs, brainwashing children into acceptance of women's roles, the abolition of the family protection law, flogging of women who fail to wear their veil, brutal execution and torture of politically active women — these are a few examples of the repressive policies of this mediaeval regime against Iranian women. (But the Tudeh (Stalinist) Party found it most progressive!)

However the important question to emphasise is that the deplorable conditions of Iranian women are the inevitable consequences of the interference of a religious state.

THERE are different interpretations of Islamic law and Sharia, but the different outlooks still confine themselves to the teachings of the Koran.

Such interpretations at best propose a reform of the existing Islamic thought. One such 'new Islamic approach' belongs to the Mojaheddin.

The failure of the Mojaheddin to condemn outright the laws of retribution, the fact that women members and supporters of Mojaheddin 'choose' to wear an Islamic veil (accepting the illogical argument that women's hair excites men) demonstrate clearly their Islamic line of thought.

Their recent 'nomination' of a woman as 'co-leader' — of necessity the wife of 'the leader' — as a 'gesture' towards women's equality exposes the backward character of this Islamic opposition to Khomeiny's rule in Iran.

In a shameless portrayal of this 'nomination' as an 'ideological revolution', the

Mojaheddin claim that the participation of a 'wife' in the ranks of the leadership guarantees women's emancipation.

As if Argentinian women under the rule of Eva Peron or Indian women under the rule of Indira Ghandi were liberated overnight!

As the revolutionary movement in opposition to Khomeiny's regime gathers momentum, the bitter experience of the Islamic Republic has taught women to beware of religious, bourgeois alternatives.

Overthrow

For them only the common struggles of women, workers, peasants and the national minorities to overthrow the existing social order can lead to true emancipation.

- At least 1,450 women have been executed.

- Virgin girls are raped before their execution, since 'Islam places a dead virgin in heaven'.

- Many pregnant women have been executed. Sometimes execution is delayed until the termination of pregnancy and happens immediately after giving birth.

- The authorities reserve the most humiliating and brutal tortures for women political prisoners.

- Women in general, and women prisoners in particular, are deprived of proper health and medical care. The squalid prison conditions encourage sickness and disease. Women do not have sufficient sanitary towels and are only allowed a very short shower with lukewarm water once a week.

- In war zones, prostitution is very common amongst young girls because of poverty, hunger and unemployment.

- Women, especially the urban poor, have to spend up to five hours in food queues because of food rationing.

- There is no job security for women in private or public sector. Most nurseries are now closed down by the state. Statutory maternity leave is now lowered from 90 days to 70 days. There is, however, no guarantee that women returning from maternity leave will get their jobs back!

- There is no safety for women in the streets unless



The official age of marriage for girls is nine. Women have no right to divorce and no right of guardianship over their children.

in Iran

they have the proper Islamic cover. If not, they will be attacked, arrested and lashed 75 times and, if repeated, jailed for six months.

● The state ideology does not regard women as reliable! According to article 33 of the Law of Retribution: 'The case of a wilful murder can be proven only on the basis of two righteous men's testimony.' If a man enters a girl's school and commits murders in front of witnesses, he can not be proven guilty unless he confesses to the crime.

● The law denies women the right to choose subjects such as agriculture in Higher Education. Women cannot be judges or presidents.

● A recent government legislation states that women students seeking higher education abroad are allowed to leave the country only if they are married and accompanying their husbands.

● Men are allowed to have up to four permanent wives and as many temporary ones as they wish.

● The official age of marriage for girls is nine (it was 16 during the Shah's time). The choice of husband for a woman is purely the decision of her father or male guardian.

● Women have neither the right to divorce nor the right of guardianship of their children.

● Women 'convicted' of adultery, prostitutes and lesbians are stoned to death.

● Abortion is illegal and contraceptives are restricted, with the tragic consequence of back-street abortions.

● War Widows are forced to settle in a centre to await temporary or permanent marriage, because the regime does not approve of women remaining unmarried for a long time.

● Sex segregation, another attack on women's rights, is

observed in many areas: food queues, public transport and universities. In Tehran University all women teachers have been sacked. Women students are separated by a dividing curtain from men — they are neither seen nor heard and can only raise their questions at lectures in writing. Talking to male students is an offence and can lead to imprisonment.

● During a recent bombing of Iranian towns by the Iraqi Army, a public bath was destroyed and the officials decided not to save women from the rubble as the Islamic ideology forbids men seeing women's bodies.

The Iranian Women's Association was set up in December 1984 in London to:

■ Expose the criminalisation of women and denial of their basic human rights by the Islamic Republic regime of Iran;

■ Conduct research on the situation of Iranian women from a historical point of view;

■ Work closely with progressive women's movements of other developing countries and the women's movement in Britain;

■ Organise various events, public meetings and cultural programmes to discuss the situation of women in Iran and also to initiate Iranian women's activities and promote Iranian art and culture;

■ Work closely with migrant, immigrant and refugee women and organisations in the struggle against the British racist state.

If you or your organisation is interested to find out more about us or our activities, please contact us at the following address:

Iranian Women's Association, c/o Migrant Services Unit, 68 Chalton St. London NW1 1JR.

REDGRAVE SLANDER

MI5! she cried



VANESSA REDGRAVE

VANESSA REDGRAVE and other supporters of former Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) leader Gerry Healy have sunk — if it is possible — to new political depths.

A recent letter from Redgrave in the Italian newspaper 'Repubblica', a 'heavy' bourgeois paper comparable to the 'Times', says that Healy's expulsion from the party in 1985 was the work of 'state agents'. The allegation is not new, but it has never been made so brazenly in public before.

Redgrave's letter goes on to praise Gorbachev and 'glasnost', in line with the support for the Soviet bureaucracy by the 'Marxist Party' to which she and Healy now belong.

Her letter, which appeared in 'Repubblica' on September 9, under the heading 'An actress for glasnost', stated:

‘Your article of August 23 ‘Redgrave and her brother found a Marxist party’, which I read only on September 2, contains a series of inaccuracies which result from a massive operation initiated in 1972 by MI5, the British Secret Service, against the Workers’ Revolutionary Party.

In his book ‘Spycatcher’, Peter Wright, the former MI5 agent, explains that in 1972 it was decided to transfer surplus facilities and personnel of ‘Section K’ (counter-espionage against the Soviet Union) to ‘Section F’ (responsible for operations of the State against the unions and the parties of the English labour movement).

Wright describes how at the time he recommended to the head of MI5 to concentrate the efforts of his agents on the destabilisation of the WRP. This operation led to the expulsion of myself, my brother, and comrade Gerry Healy in October 1985.

Comrade Gerry Healy had founded our Marxist Party after his expulsion from the British Communist Party for denouncing Stalin's trials of Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev.

Your report from London omits completely the fact that I was the principal speaker at the meeting of August 23 and spoke exclusively about the 15th Moscow International Film Festival, making an appeal in support

of ‘perestroika’ and ‘glasnost’, which signify above all the struggle for socialist democracy against the bureaucracy and against Stalinism.

At the Moscow festival the most concrete symbol of this political revolution was the decision by the Filmworkers’ Union to show ‘Commissar’, a film by Alexandr Yacovlevitch Oskaldov. For anti-Semitic motives, this film had been censored for 20 years.

I should like to add that at the London meeting no one sang any praises and that the words quoted in the article are not those of myself or of any of my colleagues.

The Marxist party continues to defend the principles of V.I. Lenin and of the Soviet Union, maintaining that the revolution of 1917 is the most important event in the history of the struggle against imperialism, against Stalinism, and against the bureaucracy, a struggle initiated by Lenin himself and by his comrade Trotsky. ♪

Vanessa Redgrave, London

FIRST of all we should point out some obvious factual errors. Healy could not have been expelled from the British CP for denouncing the trials of ‘Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev’, since Trotsky was never

tried in Moscow but sentenced to death ‘in absentia’.

Equally it is nonsense to talk about the 1917 revolution being ‘the most important event’ in the struggle ‘against Stalinism, and against the bureaucracy’. Although Stalin and some other Bolsheviks only supported the revolution after a bitter internal struggle, they were at that time Bolsheviks and not part of the bureaucratic caste which could not form itself until the 1920s.

As for the major political questions raised by Redgrave, they were taken up by a letter to ‘Repubblica’ from Dave Temple, WRP chairman, sent at the end of October but not published. This read:

‘The letter of Vanessa Redgrave (September 9) in response to your article ‘Redgrave and her brother found a Marxist party’ (August 25) needs to be answered. Ms Redgrave claims that Peter Wright, the former MI5 agent, ‘recommended to the head of MI5 to concentrate the efforts of his agents on the destabilisation of the WRP. This operation led to the expulsion of myself, my brother and comrade Gerry Healy in October 1985.’

This is a grotesque slander. Healy was expelled from the WRP, a British Trotskyist organisation, for three reasons: sexual abuse of female comrades of the party, physical violence against party members, and

slander of political opponents.

Healy made no use of the facilities guaranteed by the party to refute these charges, but disappeared from public life.

The Redgraves, among others, acknowledged the truth of these accusations, but maintained that they were not valid grounds for expulsion.

The Redgraves publicly denounced the WRP, and set up a new organisation of their own. Consequently they were expelled.

It is thus evident that the MI5 had nothing to do with this (although it is true that the MI5 had, of course, attacked the British labour movement — and the WRP which expelled Healy is campaigning for an independent enquiry organised by the trade union movement, into Wright's allegations).

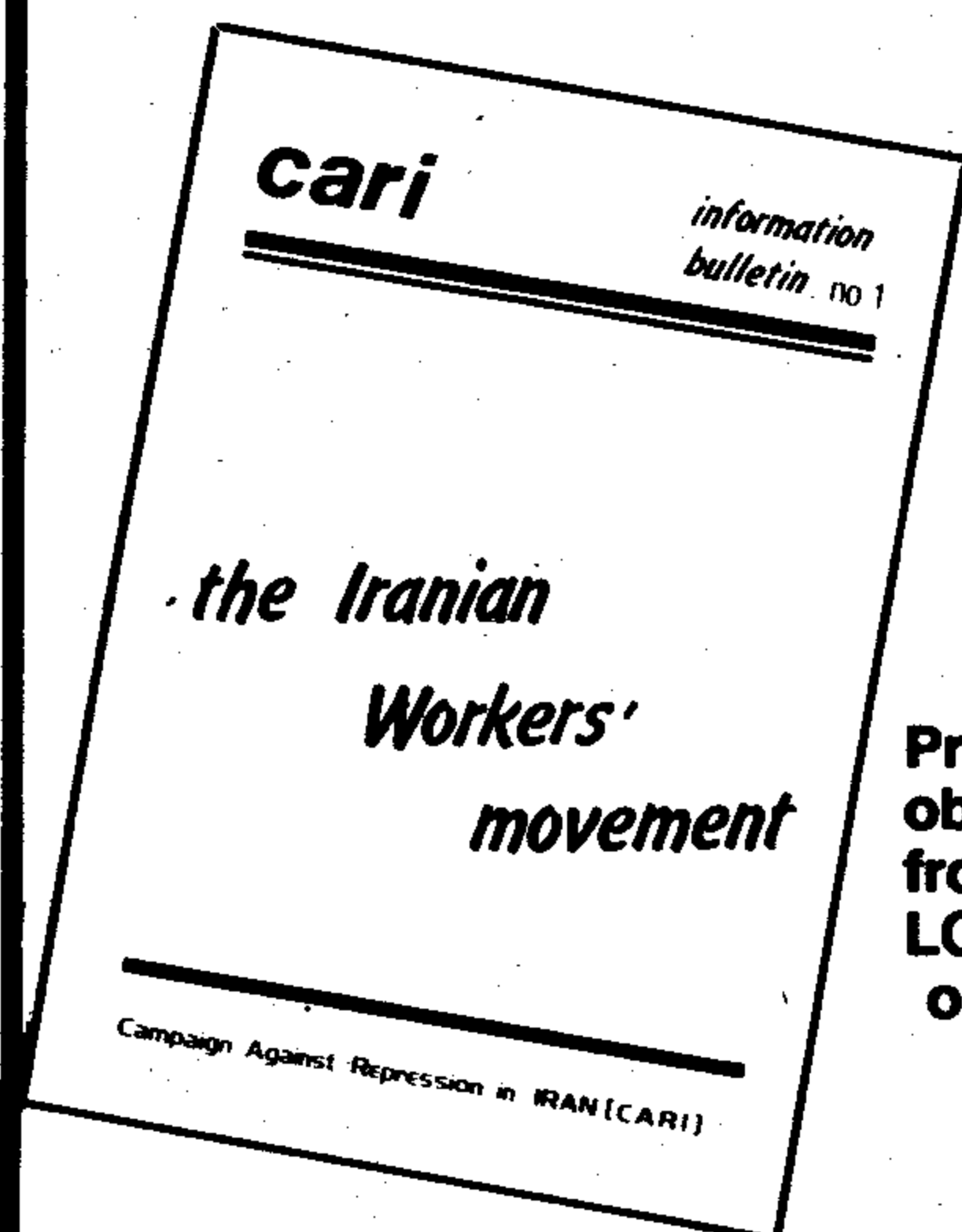
A final word: Ms Redgrave says that she supports ‘perestroika’ and ‘glasnost’ which ‘signify above all the struggle for socialist democracy and against Stalinism.’

This is directly opposite to the Trotskyist position, according to which only the working class can carry through the struggle against the bureaucracy and against Stalinism, and that ‘perestroika’ and ‘glasnost’ are, in part, reactions to that struggle, not manifestations of it.

Just as she had defended the ‘infallible leader’ Healy against the struggle of the WRP, so Ms Redgrave defends the ‘leader’ Gorbachev against the struggle of the Soviet workers. ♪

Yours faithfully,
Dave Temple
Chairman, WRP

Two important pamphlets on Iran



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

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



ROBSON'S CHOICE

See page 11

Correction

LAST week's article in Workers Press on the release of Govan Mbeki contained an error. Instead of 'Fight the convocation of a Constituent Assembly' the article should have said 'Fight for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly'.

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Camden Nalgo Stands Firm

BY OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

MEMBERS OF THE Camden branch of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) voted overwhelmingly to continue their resistance to the Labour Council's vicious attacks on jobs and services at a packed Annual General Meeting on 26 November.

In spite of a determined council-backed attempt by the right wing and supporters of the Euro-Communist 'Marxism Today' to reverse the 'no-cooperation' policy adopted last summer, the meeting reaffirmed the branch commitment to the 'defence of jobs, services and working conditions'.

The divided right wing received only a handful of votes for their amendment calling on the Council to 'balance the books' — in other words, make Tory cuts.

An emergency composite motion condemned Camden Council for its repatriation of homeless Irish and Bengali families.

Supported by the Executive Committee, Camden Black Workers Group and the Camden Irish Workers Group, the motion said that Camden Council made history last month by giving homeless families tickets back to their countries of origin.

The motion recognised that 'the racist decisions are a direct result of the council's failure to fight the Tories over cuts, but instead to try and balance the books.'

Both motions pledged support to Camden workers suffering increased harassment for campaigning against the Council's reactionary policies.

The Executive Committee's report drew attention to a recent memo from the Chief Executive that directly threatens freedom of speech.

Disciplinary action may be taken, the memo says, if council workers 'use their official position to distribute union publicity material or undermine the policies of this council in correspondence to, or contact with clients, tenants, members of the public, residents, rate-payers or any other outside organisation or individual.'

Another major attack on the independence and strength of trade unions is contained in a new 'Redeployment and Work Reallocation Procedure', branch secretary David Eggmore reported to the AGM.

NALGO and the Building Workers Shop Stewards Committee have rejected attempts to impose this new compulsory redeployment scheme on the workforce.

The Camden branch of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) have

accepted it in line with their collaboration with making cuts in jobs and services.

The scheme follows last month's offer of voluntary redundancy to all Camden workers and would give management the right to move employees around to different jobs and change job descriptions without agreement and would effectively remove the right of appeal against management.

Councillors proposing this new procedure have admitted that if implemented Camden workers would have only two options — compulsory redeployment or compulsory redundancy.

Labour Councils all over Britain are taking the Tory road of attacking the working class instead of fighting the government. The clearest indication of the speed of events is Camden's decision to repatriate homeless families.

Only six months ago this Council was considered among the most 'looney' on the left. Now they are implementing openly racist policies and making the most vulnerable pay for the crisis.

In a statement to all NALGO members, the 11 Manifesto Councillors, who are standing by their election platform of fighting the cuts, say:

'As far as we are concerned there is no alternative to a fightback — a campaign of active resistance, developed as a strategy involving workers and communities, not just in Camden but across London.'

● The trade union and labour movement must join black and ethnic minority groups in setting up defence committees to protect those communities threatened with repatriation.

● Take up the fight throughout the Labour Party against this policy!

● Defend workers refusing to carry out Camden's reactionary policies!

● No collaboration — for trade union independence!

● Full support to those Labour Councillors fighting against the cuts!

● Come to the demonstration called by Camden Workers Against the Cuts on Saturday, December 5, Camden Town Hall, 12 noon.

An open letter to Labour Party members in Camden from the Workers Press Editorial Board

HANDS OFF THE CAMDEN 11!

CAMDEN COUNCIL has the dubious distinction of being the first Labour-controlled authority to implement a discriminatory housing policy which involves the effective repatriation of Irish and Bengali families.

They are following the same path as Liberal-run Tower Hamlets Council who have operated a similar policy against Bengali families.

Camden's policy is worse than the provisions of the Tory 1985 Housing Act which specifies that those at risk of domestic violence should not be returned to the districts they left.

One of the cases involving return to Ireland concerned a single mother who left home to get away from domestic violence. She was returned with her baby to the same district and is very much at risk of further attack.

This racist policy arises from the council's refusal to fight the Tory government cuts programme. Camden

Council has:

● **Broken** its election manifesto commitment never to carry out Tory cuts. Labour's 1986 Manifesto said: 'Labour in Camden has never carried out Tory cuts and never will. We can, and will protect and improve local services — for the sake of everyone who lives in Camden.'

● **Abandoned** its much-publicised equal opportunities policies — designed to ensure that all groups can have the same access to council services and jobs

● **Failed** to consult with Labour Parties, trade unions or community groups on the course of action to be taken in the face of the council's financial crisis.

● **Cut** council departments by amounts ranging from 20 per cent to 40 per cent. This involves the wholesale 'deletion' of jobs and is having a devastating effect on council services and council workers' morale.

● **Scrapped** local trade union agreements in favour of mini-

mum national agreements established by Tory law.

● **Slashed** grants to community groups in an atmosphere of secrecy and red-baiting, with some grants disappearing completely.

To their credit, 11 Labour councillors have refused to go along with this policy. For their principled stand, they have been removed from the leadership of all council committees and have been threatened with the withdrawal of the Labour whip.

We urge you to take up the defence of these 11 councillors.

● **Pass resolutions** in your ward and constituency Labour parties condemning the policies of the Labour majority

● **Raise the issues** in your trade union branch

● **Fight in all the community groups and tenants' associations** in defence of the 11

● **Lobby the next Labour Group meeting** on 7 December at Camden Town Hall at 6p.m.

WORKERS PRESS NOVEMBER FUND

Fund closed at: £1,520.67

AS readers will see, we were well below the total required for the month. We are repeatedly warning that each time we fall short on the £2,000, which we must get in each month, the continuation of a weekly Workers Press remains in grave danger.

This month, with the run up to Christmas, inevitably makes greater demands on everyone's finances. But it is also a time when we know readers and supporters of the Workers Press come forward to make even bigger sacrifices for the paper.

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