

KEERTHI BALASURIYA

WE are shocked to hear of the death, at 39, of Sri Lankan Trotskyist Keerthi Balasuriya. Keerthi, leader of the Revolutionary Communist League, section of the International Committee of the Fourth International died after a heart attack while working at his desk.

Joining the Trotskyist movement at 17, Keerthi was a dedicated fighter for the international working class, and made several contributions to Marxist writing on the problems of Sri Lanka and similar countries. His defence of Tamil rights and his struggle for Marxism took place against the repressive, chauvinist Jayawardene regime, the legacy of betrayal by the LSSP, and the degeneration of the Healy-Banda leadership in the International Committee.

It was a great regret to us that the split engineered by US Workers League secretary David North stopped the discussion we would have had with comrade Balasuriya, and the contribution he could have made to rebuilding the Fourth International. Notwithstanding our recent differences, we extend our condolences to Keerthi's family, friends, and comrades in the RCL.

UNITE TO DEFEND HEALTH SERVICE

Infant Mortality Increases

INFANT MORTALITY has risen in Britain for the first time in 16 years, it was revealed last week

This statistic measures not just the decline in treatment for pregnant women and children under 12 months, but is universally used as an indication of the standard of a country's overall medical services. The figure has fallen in every European country, with the exception of Britain.

Thatcher last week pretended that the figures were some sort of arithmetical error.

This is small consolation to the desperate parents who are forced to the courts, to the media, to raising money through charity to save their heart-damaged children.

Janice Haycox, mother of Thomas who can't be fitted in for an operation until 1989, nailed the Thatcher lie that everybody has a choice of treatment in Britain:

'Mrs Thatcher says we've all got a choice. There's no choice for Thomas in private health insurance. They won't take him. We can join, but he can't and if they don't want to take him, they can't have us.'

Further indications of the mounting NHS crisis have appeared every day over the last week.

● A report released by the British Cardiac Society on Tuesday last week says that there are 75,000 preventable deaths occurring in England and Wales because modern treatment for heart disease is not available. It

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

recommends the provision of another 100 to 150 cardiac specialists to ensure adequate care.

Dr Douglas Chamberlain, who led the team making the report said 'Some 10 million people in Britain are not getting adequate cardiac care. Cardiology in Britain has not kept pace with other countries. Most European countries have 10 times as many heart specialists as Britain, and the United States has 30 times as many.'

● The development of a revolutionary new drug was announced last week that dissolves bloodclots and reduces the chance of a recurrence of a heart attack. If administered in time, it could prevent patients from ever having another one. It is so expensive that the chronically underfunded NHS could never afford to pay for it. (See page 5)



NUPE workers leaving Brook hospital in south-east London last Wednesday after discussing threats to jobs from private contractors. NUPE district secretary Peter Back told Workers Press that he expected private contractors to be in the hospital by the year end. At the meeting he promised backing for any members taking a stand against management cut backs.

● The Iron Lady resolutely refuses to rule out proposals to privatise pathology services. These are not ancillary services such as cleaning or catering which have already been sabotaged by privatisation, but X-ray, kidney dialysis and pharmaceutical services. The last will make the drug companies happy, and ensure that they continue to be one of the few rising shares on the stock exchange.

John Moore, Secretary of State for Social Services, has risen like a giant refreshed from his private hospital bed to shoot off a request to pathologists to advise on which part of the services it would be inadvisable to privatise. Competitive tendering for these clinical services is widely seen in the health service as the next step in the

Thatcher's aggressive privatisation drive within the NHS.

● In Birmingham 119 consultants from the five health districts stated that cancer patients' lives were being put at risk, pregnant women were getting dangerously low levels of care, and old people were being thrown out of hospital beds because of the government created crisis. They have formed an action group for the rescue of the health service and are encouraging other consultants to do the same.

Dr Bernard Hayes of Dudley Road Hospital said 'One of the cornerstones of the NHS was to give correct treatment at the time it was needed. This we are now signally failing to do for sections of the population who have no other choice.'

● Continued on p.2

WORKERS PRESS JANUARY FUND

In so far £683.27

The Workers Press monthly fund went up by £410.22 last week. This was a good effort but we are not yet on target to complete the £2,000 required by the end of the month. This money is essential if we are to maintain the paper. The battle is by no means won. We are sure that all our readers have been inspired by the mounting battle against the Tory attacks on the health service, especially the determined strike action taken by the Manchester nurses. So please make a very special effort this week to raise money from all possible supporters and contacts so that we forge ahead with the fund.

At the same time we must do everything to increase the paper's circulation. Please make sure it gets the maximum circulation amongst nurses, miners and teachers — all those who are coming forward in battle against the Thatcher government. Send all donations to:

WRP Monthly Fund
PO Box 735
London SW9 7QS

**Workers
Press**

Perfidious Albion

THE hypocrisy of the British Tory knows no bounds. The expressions of 'shock' by Foreign Office minister David Mellor, on seeing the conditions and repression in Israeli-occupied Gaza, are no exception. It has been admitted at the Foreign Office that Mellor's performance was agreed in advance.

From Amritsar, in 1919, to Derry in 1972, the bloody record of British armed repression is well known. We may add Tonyandy, to remember that bullets have also been the Tory answer to protest by British workers. From the end of the First World War to the establishment of Israel in 1948, Palestine was under British rule. It was a chapter of brutality and duplicity. It was Britain's Balfour Declaration, of November 1917, which promoted Zionism into world politics and endorsed its claims on Palestine. British statesmen had various aims, from counter-ing Bolshevism, to providing a camouflage for their sordid imperialist designs in the Middle East.

It was certainly not done out of any love for Jews. Balfour had brought in the 1903 Aliens Act specifically to stop Jewish refugees from Czarist Russia coming to Britain.

As for the Palestinian Arabs, the Declaration referred to them merely as 'existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'. They were the overwhelming majority.

In a memorandum to the British government in 1919, Balfour acknowledged frankly: '... in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country ... the four Great Powers are committed to Zionism.'

In 1936, the Arabs of Palestine began a general strike and resistance struggle against British rule and Zionist colonisation. The British authorities replied with bayonets, bullets, bombing and the hangman's noose.

After the Second World War, when the Zionists launched their own struggle, the British Mandate used similar brutality, though not to the same extent, against the Jewish population. There were curfews, mass arrests, hangings, and that peculiar proclivity of the English public school-produced officer class, floggings.

An Israeli Labour Party leader has commented on Mellor's performance in Gaza that 'the British mandate in Palestine is over'. But the Israeli practice of demolishing homes and collective punishment continues methods introduced by the British.

The Zionist state retained intact the British Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, providing for military commanders to restrict movements, close areas, ban meetings and publications, and order detention. These powers are used against the Palestinians.

We commented last week on the terrible conditions in the Gaza refugee camps, and said they might even have 'shocked' a Tory minister. We must also observe that in London, the only reason Tories are spared the upset of seeing people living under cardboard boxes within a short walk of Westminster, is that the Tory Westminster council has evicted them.

What is behind current Tory hypocrisy over Palestine, or for that matter, the rare event of the US government withholding its normal backing from the Zionists in the UN? Certainly not concern for the Palestinians, any more than for other oppressed people.

Martin Westwood (see page 12) suggests one reason — the Thatcher government's current interest in attracting Arab capital. The bourgeoisie is as full of anti-Arab racism as of antisemitism, but it harbours no prejudice against large sums of money, from whatever source!

While Thatcher was setting off to call on her loyal Black houseboy Arap Moi in Kenya, and explain why her government continues helping the racists in South Africa, Douglas Hurd paid a trip to Tunisia, to discuss 'security matters'.

Like the neo-colonial stooges in Africa, the reactionary Arab regimes have a part to play in imperialist strategy. Jordan's King Hussein has been arresting Palestinians. Egypt's Mubarak, who can neither liberate Gaza nor feed his people, has promised troops for the Gulf.

The Tories fear that the flames lit in Gaza and the West Bank could ignite dangerous social material throughout the Middle East that would blow all their plans sky high. Mellor, the visiting fireman, was trying to contain the blaze.

We intend to spread it to Britain. Real solidarity with the Palestinians is inseparable from the fight to smash the Tories.

Ford workers to ballot over claim

NEGOTIATIONS for the Ford pay claim finally broke down on Friday 8 January with the Ford management refusing to budge on their 'final offer' of a six and a half per cent pay increase tied to a three year deal and extensive job-cutting 'strings'.

Mass meetings will be held on 20 January after which balloting will take place with separate ballot boxes for each union.

The EPTU will hold a postal ballot of its Ford members.

Moves for an immediate overtime ban were defeated by right-wing union delegates on the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee.

At the negotiations, Jimmy Airlie (AEU) told management that the proposed deal 'sucks' and that the AEU would not sign a three year deal.

Since the beginning of negotiations Ford, the most profitable car company in the world, has taken a hard line while union leaders Airlie and Mick Murphy (TGWU) have repeated that they wanted a negotiated settlement to avoid a strike.

This conciliatory position has only encouraged Fords

**By a Ford
worker**

to hold out for their punishing conditions.

The management team of negotiators of previous years has been replaced by Hougham, who has a representative of the American parent company sitting at his elbow obviously determined to repeat the three year agreement signed with the United Auto Workers in the US last year.

At the talks on 8 January Mick Murphy was reduced to suggesting that on the second and third year of a three year deal increases should be three per cent above the retail price index i.e. acceptance of a three year agreement.

Airlie, the target of much derision because of his signing of the single union agreement at Dundee, has sensed that a strike may be unavoidable and has subsequently adopted a more mili-

tant posture.

Ford workers must be warned that this is in order for him to be in a better position to sell out at a later stage.

The more right wing union leaders in the plants, who have up until now opposed any action at all, including the one-day strikes, have now been calling for a 'war of attrition' of one day strikes, rolling strikes and 'chequer board' tactics of pulling out different plants for short periods on different dates — all in order to try to head off an all out strike.

Uppermost in the minds of these leaders, as well as the half a million a week strike pay they will have to pay out, are the Tory government's anti-union laws and the fear of legal action that will hit the union's funds.

Ford workers can expect their leaders to try to restrict pickets to six per gate and to rule out 'secondary' picketing completely.

This is an important issue for Ford workers. Ford's already import 40 per cent of their cars sold in Britain, so the question of picketing ports bringing in Ford cars will be a real one that will directly affect the impact of a strike.

Solidarity action by dockers and drivers (also in the TGW&U) will be vital.

Ford workers face the same state attacks as did the miners and the printers at Wapping, a struggle that their leaders are unprepared for and unwilling to carry through.

Mobilise

New leaders must come forward in the struggle and the shopfloor workers must mobilise to bring the union organisation under their control.

Regular mass meetings and a democratically elected strike committee must control the strike. Pickets must be volunteers from the shopfloor, not limited and controlled by convenors and officials.

The leaders' fear of legal attacks should not be allowed to paralyse Ford workers. In 1978 they played a prominent role in smashing Callaghan's five per cent pay limit. Ford workers who have seen their standard of living eroded now join millions, including the nurses who say: enough is enough!

South Wales leader backs Scargill

● From Page 1

Hayes went on to say 'We are talking about basic work for the general run of patients whom we increasingly have to neglect.' Dr Elwyn Elias a consultant at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, where 146 beds are closed, said 'Lack of money is preventing doctors doing their job. Consultants have been told to do ten per cent less clinical work than last year.'

Dr Elias said that one of his fellow doctors had seen a 21-year-old man with cancer, who would have had a 90 per cent chance of a cure if he had been treated within 24 hours. 'By the time he got him into hospital, the patient's chance of a cure was less than 50 per cent. That kind of thing is going on routinely.'

Thatcher and her ghoulish ministers have tried to sidestep the anger of the middle class and the working class over the deliberate destruction of the NHS, first by doling out a derisory amount of money into a crumbling system, and last week by appearing to back down over the nurses' pay cut.

The 'Morning Star', under the headline 'Climbdown', hailed the government's apparent backdown as a decisive victory and a change of heart by the Tories. This is not the case. The deepening economic crisis for Thatcher's government drives them to destroy hard-won conditions of the working class. These attacks will not go away and it is a criminal deception to say otherwise.

The NHS must be defended by the whole of the working class — doctors, nurses, ancillary workers and workers outside the health service must unite to stop the cuts. Such a movement will be one against the Tory government and all those in the working class movement who cover up for it.

The drugs industry must be nationalised without compensation in order to provide a cheap and plentiful supply of medicines to the health service.

EMLYN WILLIAMS, former president of the South Wales miners has come out and backed Arthur Scargill in the election for the presidency of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Many miners in South Wales see this as a condemnation of the actions of the present South Wales leaders who opposed Scargill.

The support from Williams and from Owen Driscoll, the former general secretary of the Yorkshire area NUM, was the first thing raised by Scargill in a speech to over 300 miners at an election rally in Pontllanfraith 1st Tuesday.

In an NUM election special leaflet the two retired leaders state: 'We have known and worked with Arthur Scargill for over 20 years. At all times he has shown unwavering loyalty and dedication to both Britain's miners and the working class in general.'

'In the forthcoming, vital

election we urge all miners to support Arthur Scargill.'

Scargill came down firmly against nuclear power, six-day working, the scab UDM, and the need for a strong united fighting union to combat British Coal's attacks, not a compliant union.

He threw down a challenge to the media to check out inside information he has received regarding pit closures and job losses of approximately 32,000 miners directly related to the introduction of six-day working.

However there was no criticism in his speech of the South Wales leaders' stand on these issues and his attitude was less than forthright as regards to industrial action against the disciplinary code, commenting that he and the national executive

committee would abide by the decision of the delegate conference in February.

It would appear, after the attack Scargill made on new realism at the S.O. Davies memorial lecture in Merthyr Tydfil just prior to the start of his campaign, that for perhaps tactical reasons, he is now drawing back the blade when the best thing might be to give it a twist.

After the decision by a delegate conference on 11 December in which delegates had no mandate, and which opposed escalation of the national overtime ban, the leaders in South Wales have called: ballot on Friday 15 January recommending a 'no' vote for escalation in the hope it will discredit Scargill prior to the ballot for presidency.

Whatever the result the ballot in the overtime ban produces, miners in South Wales will return a majority for the leadership of Arthur Scargill.

12,000 PROTEST GAY REPRESSION

LAST Saturday 12,000 people marched through London to protest against Clause 27 of the proposed Local Government Bill. This clause, which attacks the positive developments mounted by Labour councils on lesbian and gay rights, is part of an offensive by the ruling class emerging out of a period of unemployment and recession.

The introduction of clause 27, fully welcomed by Labour frontbenchers, coincides with the church's denunciation of gays, and with the introduction of the Alton Bill on abortion.

Labour's ready collusion with Thatcher and the bishops in attacking homosexuality is identical with the situation in Camden

where right wing Labour councillors are deporting Irish families. It is part of the declared intention of many Labour councils to reverse all of their policies overnight on equal opportunities for blacks, women, gays, Irish and the disabled.

On Saturday the police were obviously taken aback by the size and determina-

tion of the demonstration. On reaching Downing Street a section broke through police cordons and tried to take the march to Thatcher's doorstep. For twenty minutes or so it seemed as if they would succeed. When the police eventually gained control they used heavy-handed and aggressive policing. Black people in particular were targeted. As people left the rally the police picked off another 20 on top of the 20 already arrested. Other arrests included at least two men for kissing in public, and some for having offensive weapons, (banner poles!).

New Drug is Too Expensive for NHS

FIRST THE good news. A new drug developed in America is estimated to reduce deaths from heart attacks by 40 per cent. It could save up to 10 per cent of the 160,000 people who die from coronaries every year in Britain.

The drug, tissue plasminogen activator (TPA) works by dissolving blood clots blocking the arteries to the heart and lungs. A doctor involved with medical trials being set up in Britain said 'It is a drug which appears not only to save lives, but to improve the quality of life of those who survive an acute attack. The quality is affected by how much functioning heart muscle is left after an attack and this drug helps to maximise that.' TPA is the first commercially successful drug produced through the revolutionary process of genetic engineering.

The bad news is that the private company that makes the drug is charging so much that the National Health Service will not be able to afford it. It was licensed in the USA last November, and has already made £28 million profit for its manufacturers. In America it cost £1,300 to treat each patient.

If it is used to the same extent in the UK it would cost the NHS £40 million a year — a sum that the health authorities will find it impossible to meet. A simple equation exists now which says that the only way minimal pay increases for the nurses and other health service employees can be met is by closing beds. The biggest item of expenditure in the NHS is the bill from the private drug manufacturers.

Dr. Michael Humphreys, the company's scientific director, agreed that it was expensive but said that development costs of new drugs were enormous and that the company had had to build a plant in West Germany to make it.

Presumably private patients with unlimited funds, will be able to take advantage of this life-saver, but for the rest of us, life, or death, will go on much the same.

It is an abomination that 12,000 people who could be saved will be allowed to die this year and every year thereafter that the NHS is deliberately underfunded.

It is equally abominable

that in both Britain and America private drug companies have been allowed to assume a monopoly of medical research, and research naturally only on the basis of what is most profitable.

One such company was only recently persuaded to reluctantly release a drug which prevents river blindness, a disease which strikes only in certain parts of Africa. They agreed to give it away after hanging on to it for years because they realised eventually that the only market was amongst people who couldn't possibly pay for it.

The research into a comprehensive vaccine for meningitis, the cause of many recent deaths amongst children, has been held up for lack of state funding.

The private monopoly of research has been achieved by the simple process of starving universities and research departments of cash for decades.

The news from the stock exchange is that while most share prices are taking a dive, the drug companies are doing nicely thank you very much.

The creation of this heart drug gives us a glimpse of the immense possibilities for medical research. This potential is being deliberately suffocated at birth every single day that the system of private property is maintained.

Official strike by nurses against pay cuts

NIGHT NURSES in Manchester captured the national headlines when they went on strike last Thursday night over government proposals to cut their wages.

They picketed the gate of North Manchester General Hospital throughout the night and held a demonstration which was joined by nurses from other hospitals and other unions.

Messages of support were phoned in from nurses all over the country, from Scotland to the South West.

The Striking nurses were members of NUPE. A secret ballot of all the 109 NUPE night nurses at the hospital resulted in a unanimous vote for strike action.

The nurses arranged to leave the intensive care and accident and emergency units fully manned. Thirty eight nurses went on strike.

Intact

NUPE area officer Dave Saunders warned that nurses throughout the country will follow suit if the government do not change their minds and leave special duty payments intact.

At the moment nurses receive 30% extra for working Saturday and nights and 60

By a Manchester NUPE member

per cent extra for Sundays and bank holidays. They receive 60 per cent extra for night hours on a Saturday and 90 per cent extra for night hours on a Sunday or bank holiday

The government originally proposed to replace these extra payments by an extra £1.20 an hour. Under these proposals a charge nurse or sister who works nights would lose £40 to £50 a week. Under a mounting wave of protest the Tories have for the time being withdrawn this proposal but it will undoubtedly be re-introduced in another form.

A newly qualified staff nurse on the lower pay scale of £3.73 an hour would lose 9p for every hour worked on a Saturday or weekday night and £1.02 for every hour worked on a Sunday, bank holiday or Saturday night. They would lose £2.13 an hour for night hours worked on a Sunday or bank holiday.

The government proposals to cut these payments are

being presented to the Pay Review Body which meets every summer to decide on nurses pay rises. The government's claim that the money saved will be used to give extra pay to nurses who have completed special training courses to work in such areas as intensive care and operating theatres.

Agencies

If these cuts were to go through they will force thousands more nurses out of the NHS — resulting in more ward closures and an increased use of nurses from private nursing agencies.

Not only are the government privatising hospital catering, cleaning and laundry services but they would probably like to privatise nursing by giving nursing agencies contracts to staff whole wards or hospitals.

Blind to the reality that these attacks in payments are by a government intent on destroying the NHS, the Royal College of Nursing

leaders criticised the strike saying that the negotiations over the special payments had still to take place and the strike could have hindered them. However RCN members who were not on duty showed their support by joining the pickets.

One of the strikers, State Enrolled Nurse Karen Brown told local papers;

'I never thought I would do this — and I wouldn't have done so for more money. But what the government is trying to do is cut our wages. We are frightened what the next step could be and are tired of being trodden on. If we lose this battle some of us will leave the job altogether.'

There is no doubt that nurses throughout the country would strike over this issue and defeat the government, so giving them the confidence to fight government attacks on the Health Service. Nurses should demand strike ballots in their own union branches over this issue.

Asset-strippers at Prestwich hospital

PRESTWICH HOSPITAL is a large psychiatric hospital on the edge of Manchester. Government policy is to close all large mental hospitals under the guise of 'community care'. No extra funds are being allocated to provide community mental health services. As a result health authorities are selling off hospital sites to raise cash.

Salford Health Authority want to sell the Prestwich hospital site to TESCO and a property developer who intend to set up a hypermarket, petrol station and DIY furniture store.

The site is well served by motorways and roads and so from TESCO's point of view it is ideal.

A public inquiry into the sell-off of the site has begun. Normally it would be up to the council planning committee whether planning permission for such a development is granted. But in this case the Department of the Environment has stepped in to override the council and is holding the public inquiry to placate local opposition.

The DoE has appointed the chair of the inquiry who will make a recommendation to the minister Nicholas Ridley, after listening to the objectors and the appellants (TESCOs and Clayform Properties). Seven out of the ten local authorities in Greater Manchester are objecting to the development as well as Prestwich Residents Association, Bury South Labour Party and Prestwich Hospital NUPE.

Most of the objections are based on the detrimental effect the development will have on local shopping centres. However Prestwich NUPE object because it is another case of the government selling off public assets. A delegation of 20

by a Manchester NUPE member.

hospital workers from NUPE went to the opening of the inquiry to hand in their letter of protest.

They say 'The proposed sell-off is entirely due to the government's policy of deliberately underfunding the health service, thereby forcing local health authorities into desperate and dangerous acts to make money. What the health authority is planning is ill-advised and certainly not in the best interests of patients and staff.'

'If this goes ahead we believe that some patients and people who would have been patients will end up on the streets or in prison as documented many times on TV and in the newspapers. Jobs will definitely be at risk.'

The health authority say that patients will have a better quality of life once they are resettled outside of the hospital, which they describe as a Victorian Institution. With the £25 million they will raise from the sell-off they claim they will be able to resettle all the long-term patients. This sounds humane on the surface. However one study showed

that approximately 50 per cent of long term patients want to stay in the hospital — some have been there as long as 40 years.

The buildings may be Victorian but the patients have a social life and friends there and feel safer. Would their quality of life be better outside where they might experience loneliness, ridicule, exploitation and poverty?

Many hospital staff are sceptical how far £25 million will go when the health authority is already millions of pounds in debt. To satisfy TESCOs and Clayform the site must be handed over within three years which is a short timetable for the resettlement of 600 patients.

The hospital has been running a programme of rehabilitation and resettlement for long-term patients for the last 25 years and experience has shown that it is a time-consuming process which cannot be rushed through.

However it is clear that the government is not really concerned with the welfare of mentally-ill people. At one time it suited the needs of capitalism to confine the mentally ill in isolated institutions with a purely custodial function.

But since the Second World War there have been changes. Staff in mental hospitals have won better conditions and wages. Scandals about conditions and ill treatment in mental hospitals have forced governments

to improve the facilities and staffing levels. Hospitals are no longer seen as purely custodial, but as having a therapeutic role. All this has made such hospitals more expensive to run.

At the same time since the war there has been a system of welfare benefits providing a subsistence level of income for the surplus population who are unemployed or unable to work. Before this existed most families could not support a mentally or physically disabled relative without themselves being dragged into destitution.

Now that benefits exist it has become a cheaper option for the state to close mental hospitals and place the burden of looking after the mentally ill back on families and relatives.

If they have no families then there is a boom industry in private rest homes and boarding homes where the owners can claim £130 a week from the DHSS for each resident. The provision of mental health services is being privatised in this way. Private mental hospitals are being set up for those able to pay for treatment. Meanwhile all large mental hospitals in the country are being closed as DHSS policy. Community care is a sick joke at the moment, health authorities, already underfunded, are being told to sell off what they can to raise money for community facilities.

MANCHESTER Royal infirmary faces bankruptcy and its worst ever crisis, the hospital's general manager Stewart Clapperton said last Wednesday.

Clapperton sent a letter to the hospital's 2,500 staff warning that money to pay their wages may soon run out.

'To all intents and purposes we are bankrupt' he said, warning that 150 jobs would have to go.

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Name date

Address

Trade Union Age (if under 21)

SEND TO:

Secretary to the Central Committee
PO Box 735, London SW9
7QS

Kilroy-Silk attacks VMDC

VIRAJ MENDIS has now been in sanctuary in a church for over a year.

His case was recently the subject of a 'Kilroy' TV discussion programme.

BY STUART CARTER

The only people presenter Robert Kilroy-Silk could find to oppose the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign were a motley collection of racists and fanatics.

Their arguments were so clearly based on pure prejudice that they discredited themselves.

Following the programme, Kilroy-Silk, the supposedly impartial presenter, made his own attack on the campaign in an article in the 'Times'.

Viraj's fight against deportation has become even more significant now that the new Immigration Bill comes into force this year.

The Bill effectively removes the right of appeal from people threatened with deportation.

They will not be able to appeal in Britain but only after they have been deported.

It is not explained how people will be able to appeal from countries they have been forced to flee because

of persecution by the authorities.

People have used the right of appeal in Britain to delay their deportation orders, giving them time to build up a defence campaign. Many campaigns have been successful.

We were always told that under British law you are innocent until proven guilty, in theory anyway. But the Immigration Bill completely reverses this assumption.

Black people will be illegal immigrants until they can prove themselves innocent.

Former Labour MP Kilroy-Silk states his support for racist Immigration Laws. He was MP for Knowsley North and proved to be a right-wing careerist who did nothing for the working class in his constituency.

When the constituency Labour Party campaigned for his re-selection, he resigned, claiming that he had been hounded out by 'Militant' supporters. He is still a Labour Party member.

VMDC's letter to 'The Times'

This is the text of a letter sent to 'The Times' by the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign in response to an article by Robert Kilroy-Silk

ROBERT Kilroy-Silk's article in 'The Times' (9 December 1987) takes us through a phoney logic which concludes that the police should take Viraj Mendis out of his sanctuary in Manchester, thence to be deported to Sri Lanka. The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, described by him as 'spurious' is writing to refute his argument. We believe that Mr Kilroy-Silk has substituted political prejudice for facts in a dangerous and dishonest manner.

It is his arguments which are spurious. Nothing better illustrates this than the contrast between his introduction which accurately describes Viraj Mendis as having lived in a tiny sacristy in a church for twelve months, and his conclusion which describes this as a 'privilege'. Viraj Mendis has endured the hardship of his year in sanctuary — during which time there have been numerous fascist attacks on the church — because it is recognised that he will face persecution if deported and because he has lived all his adult life in Britain.

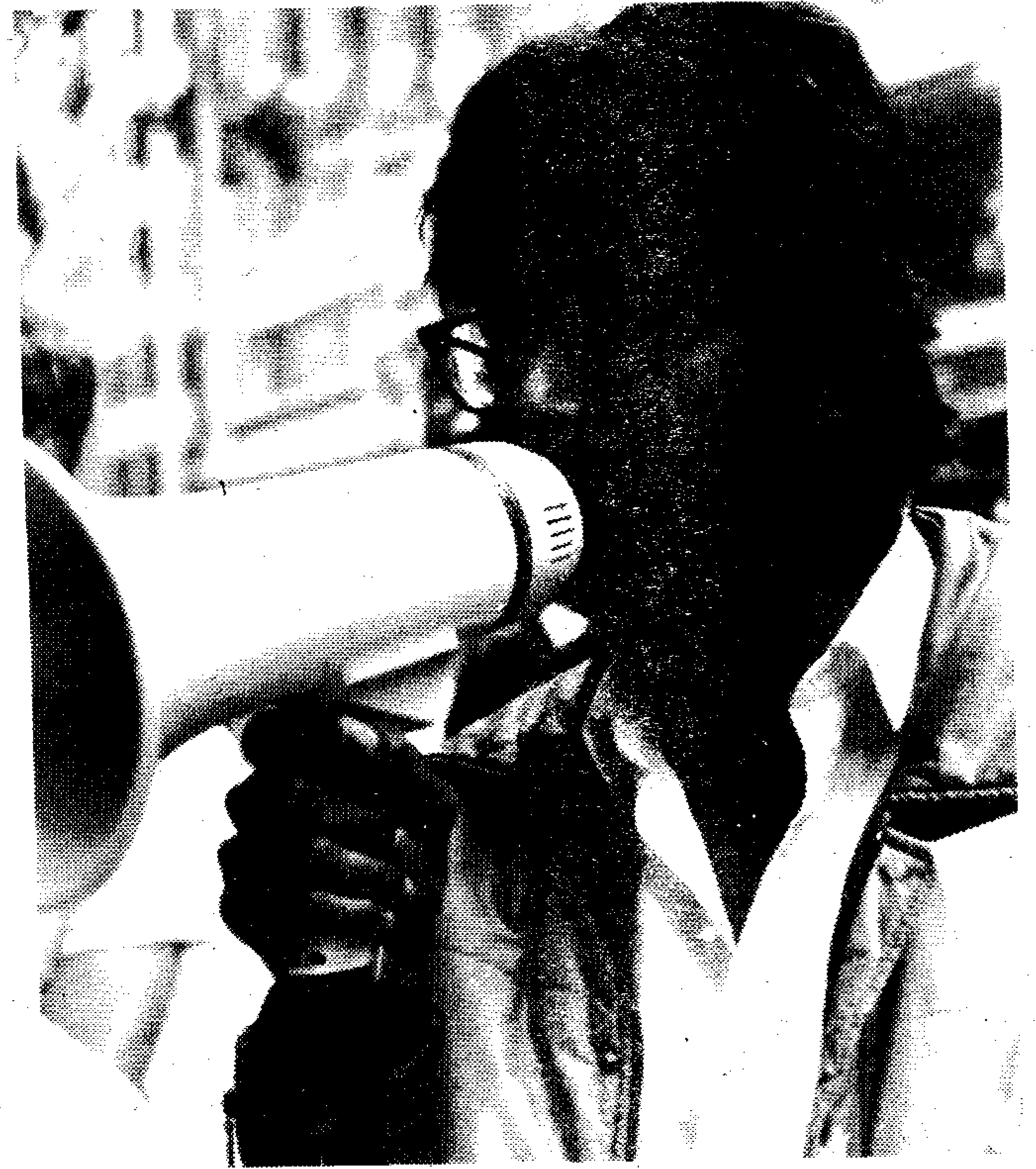
Mr Kilroy-Silk describes the argument concerning Viraj's safety in Sri Lanka as 'irrelevant', yet he devotes one quarter of his article to arguing that there is no threat to Viraj's life. He states that 'I don't believe that many if any Sri Lankans have ever even heard of him.' What are the facts? Viraj's case has featured widely in both the British and international press, including the mass media in Sri Lanka ('The Daily News' and 'The Sun'). These articles have frequently reported Viraj's support for the Tamil struggle for self-determination. He has spoken at Tamil marches and shared platforms with Tamil organisations, including the Tamil Tigers over a period of five years. The Home Office has never contested this. Representatives of the Foreign Office attended his initial hearing before an adjudicator. Representatives of the Sri Lank-

an High Commission attended his judicial review. The so-called 'assurances' of Viraj's safety from the High Commission were received unsolicited by the Home Office in 1985. These 'assurances' are in fact a statement that Viraj Mendis is not wanted in Sri Lanka for any criminal offence, something which is not in dispute. The Home Office readily admits that the President and Security Minister in Sri Lanka are familiar with Viraj's case. Finally, Viraj was visited by two Sinhalese men in August who threatened the well-being of his family in Sri Lanka if he failed to publicly voice support for the Indo-Sri Lankan 'Peace Accord'.

Heard

Many Sri Lankans have heard of him, including undoubtedly many of those responsible for the deaths of 15,000 civilians in the last four years. It is for these reasons that organisations such as Amnesty International, which have much better information about Sri Lanka than Mr Kilroy-Silk, have stated the danger Viraj Mendis faces if deported. Dr Robert Bradnock, Chair of the Liberal Party Foreign Affairs Commission, who visited Sri Lanka after the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement said: 'In August I had the opportunity to talk with a man who has been very close to President Jayewardene over the last two years and who has played a part in negotiations with the Tamil Tigers this year on the President's behalf. He approached me directly on the question of Viraj Mendis, about whom he had heard, and said that in his view it would be highly dangerous for Mr Mendis to be returned to Sri Lanka, particularly in view of the publicity that his case has now had in Britain as well as Sri Lanka.'

Resting on these facts and others, the Campaign has won substantial broad support. There has been no 'duping' on our part since the truth is on our side. Rather, it is Kilroy-Silk whose political prejudice against 'the



Viraj Mendis

Left' is well known, who has been duped by the Home Office. This is particularly disturbing when you consider that the National Conference of the Labour Party, of which, to our knowledge, he is still a member, this year carried an emergency resolution unanimously recognising the danger Viraj faces if deported and therefore supported his right to stay.

Accuses

Mr Kilroy-Silk accuses the Rector of the Church of the Ascension, Father John Methuen, of being 'elitist' and acting on his own. Father John's stand is supported by the Hulme and Moss Side Christian Fellowship, the Bishop of Manchester and thousands of Christians throughout Britain. Mr Kilroy-Silk's stand on the other hand is completely contradictory to that of his entire party. Who is being elitist?

Finally, Mr Kilroy-Silk argues that Father John's stand will encourage every 'criminal and malcontent' to defy the law. In a recent conference on sanctuary in the Church of the Ascension on 12th December 1987, Rev. Kenneth Leach, Director of the Runnymede Trust, drew parallels between the sanctuary movement and religious opposition to the Nazis in Germany. Hitler, like Jayewardene, was, of course 'democratically elected' and many church leaders were prominent in the resistance against fascism. Would Kilroy-Silk describe their stand for human rights as encouraging 'criminals and malcontents'? We think that Mr Kilroy-Silk's article, with its advice to the police to enter the sanctuary, will also provide encouragement to the real criminals and malcontents' in our society, i.e., the fascists who have consistently responded to articles such as this by physically attacking the sanctuary.

Ridley runs amok

IF YOU have been thinking that when it all gets too much for you living in the big city you will up and build yourself a nice tee-pee in a nature reserve, think again. Nicholas Ridley has got there before you. His latest 'scam' is to privatise the lot.

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

He began his career by privatising the buses as Transport Secretary, and thereby succeeded in increasing traffic on the overloaded and failing underground system by 50 per cent. This will add immeasurably to the death tolls in future tube disasters, and also puts a lot of people out of a job.

He is now happily engaged in selling off the Water Board, which must engender some apprehension amongst the water drinking poor.

This time he has surpassed himself. His latest good idea is to sell off Britain's 240 National Nature Reserves.

This cunning plan is a result of Ridley's personal enthusiasm for flogging the nation's assets. Before he became Secretary of State 18 months ago officials had asked the Nature Conservan-

cy Council, which administers the reserves, to carry out a routine evaluation to ensure their list of what they owned was up to date. Ridley has turned this low key updating into a drive for privatisation.

Wild life sanctuaries in private ownership have been extensively ravaged. More than 200 areas designated 'Sites of Special Interest' were destroyed in 1987, 74 more than in 1986.

If the present 240 sites are sold off it could lead to Britain breaking several international treaties for the protection of wildlife.

Conservationists feel sure that the government wants voluntary bodies to take over sites. Bodies such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds could only afford to buy and maintain the reserves with the allocation of central government

grants. This would cost the government more in the end than if the status quo was maintained.

Nigel Ajax Lewis Glamorganshire Naturalists Trust conservation officer said 'With private or voluntary ownership, the public would have to pay to see wildlife and if they will not pay enough conservation will suffer.' He added that conservancy council wardens are of the opinion that the review of reserves is a manoeuvre to channel more funds to rich landowners facing agricultural cutbacks.

Breathe very deeply while you're waiting for Ridley to figure out how to privatise the air.

United campaign on torchlight procession

THE TREVOR MONERVILLE Campaign and Justice for Tunay Campaign recently led a torchlit procession in London. The March was organised in alliance with the Police Committee Support Units of Hackney and Haringey.

Focal points of the militant 700-strong demonstration were the notorious East End police stations of Hackney, Stoke Newington and Dalston, designed to draw particular attention to the racism and thuggery of Stoke Newington police.

The demonstration was called to remember Trevor Monerville's ordeal one year ago, Tunay Hassan's death on 25 June 1987, Colin Roach's death five years ago and the deaths of Aseta Simms (1971) and Michael Ferreira (1978) whilst in police custody.

A wide-range of organisations took part, including the Union of Turkish Workers, the Union of Turkish Women, Campaign against Police Repression, the Union of Medical Practitioners, City Group AA and other political organisations. Particularly noticeable was the extraordinary amount of media attention, doubtless

hoping for conflict between the heavy police presence and the demonstrators.

At the end of the demonstration a rally was held in the pouring rain. Peter Chalk, chairman of the Haringey Police Committee Support Unit demanded a public inquiry and a 'fair and just' inquest into the death of Colin Roach. The support unit was also demanding an independent complaints committee and a democratically elected police authority, said Chalk.

Pauline Roach said that although it was five years since the death of her brother, no one had forgotten and would continue to fight,

especially over the inquest into Colin's death.

This theme was taken up by Trevor Monerville's father. He said that the police not only acted as if they were the law, but acted above it. But the police were a minority and the people a majority who had to marshal all their forces against these thugs.

Angela Lennox, speaking on behalf of the anti-deportation campaign, expressed her sympathies and solidarity with the bereaved families and urged people to fight for maximum community participation in these campaigns.

Called at short notice, the very successful demonstration and rally ended with a message of support from Pat Wall, Bradford MP saying that the Tories had created a nightmare situation for black workers which would not end until capitalism was smashed.

Medieval Judges

ANOTHER SAVAGE old Tory judge spoke out of the Dark Ages last week. Of a 12 year old who had been raped 'In other days you would have said she was asking for trouble.' He said she was

foolish to go to the rapist's bedsit for a coffee, and that the rape was not serious because the youth had not used violence, 'only' his greater strength.

Tailor of taste goes for a Burton

AFTER more than 80 years, Burtons — the 'tailor of taste' has stopped making suits.

Norman Harding

The Burton Group's announcement reflects the collapse of a large part of the British clothing industry and the flight of capital out of manufacturing into the City of London.

Burton's decision spotlights the severe decline of union membership in the clothing trades.

In the post-war years union membership in the Leeds clothing industry was more than thirty thousand, organised in three branches — with the Burtons membership playing a prominent role in one of the branches.

Cutting rooms and the rooms where the various types of sewing machines were used were as large, and

in some cases larger, than football fields and were sometimes on more than one level.

This concentration of workers produced a large layer of militants who were not only active in their trade union, but also on a wider political arena. Many joined the Communist Party in the pre-war and postwar period. From Burtons and the other clothing factories workers went to fight with the international brigade in Spain in 1936.

TV-AM lock-out continues

OVER two hundred ACTT members at TV-am have been locked out since 23rd November 1987. This followed a one day strike by Union members in defence of their terms of employment.

The management have now outlined a number of conditions which they require the union to concede as a precondition for ending the lock-out. These non-negotiable points call for the union to accept roster changes across the board; the unlimited use of contract staff and facilities; the abandoning of involvement in TV-am news coverage overseas; unmanned studios; a reduction in TV-am produced programmes and a fifteen percent reduction in annual leave.

Relinquish

Management also demand that the union relinquish rights to negotiate the allocation of work or staff and renounce industrial ac-

tion on these issues. In return the company will reduce staff by means of voluntary redundancy to an unspecified level.

This ten point ultimatum so outraged Union members that the entire document was rejected by a 97 per cent vote at a December shop meeting. The members remain defiant and are currently on the picket line 24 hours a day.

TV-am's television output has been reduced to reruns of old 'Batman' and 'Happy Days' programmes and the company is clearly violating its charter which demands a particular level of news coverage. What news there is has to come from Australia and the USA.



The ACTT picket line at TV-AM on Monday

Sacked for union work

BUS workers' representative, Steve Warwick, aged 32, was sacked by Devon General in December because he was an active member of the NUR.

BY GEORGE SMITH

On 8 January his case went to an industrial tribunal. At the tribunal the employers made it clear that they threw him out because he had been an active trade unionist in Liverpool where he worked for the city council.

While working as a pest control officer in Liverpool, Warwick held a number of important posts in the General Municipal and Boilermakers' Union.

The tribunal heard that nobody could find any evidence of him acting improperly. It also heard that he left Liverpool with a good reference from his employer.

The chairman and managing director of Devon General, Mr Harry Blundred, was forced to admit that Warwick's work was satisfactory. Blundred even admitted to the tribunal that he had 'an almost irrational

prejudice' concerning Liverpool workers.

The tribunal hold that Warwick was wrongfully dismissed and that he should be reinstated by a majority of three to nil. It rejected Blundred's argument that he was solely concerned with Warwick's past activity.

Blundred was forced to admit that he wanted to stop Warwick's future trade union activity. Such is the employer's determination to break trade union organisation in Devon General that Blundred greeted the decision by saying that Warwick must stay sacked.

The issue before Exeter busworkers is to fight for Steve Warwick's job, not to reduce the issue to one of compensation.

Fourth attempt to expel

AT ITS general committee meeting on Friday 8 January Exeter Labour Party decided to endorse an executive committee recommendation that persons be appointed to 'investigate the alleged unconstitutional behaviour of comrade P Bowing'.

The proposal came from the NUR trade union branch of which city council leader Chester Long is a prominent member. The alleged 'un-constitutional behaviour' concerns a letter which Bowing wrote in the 'Flying Post', December 1987, which was critical of the leadership of Exeter Labour Party.

This is the third time in

four years that the executive committee has attempted to expel Bowing. The last attempt in 1985 led to the Labour Party having to pay several thousand pounds in legal costs when a successful injunction was taken out against the party.

Long has been involved in all three expulsion attempts. At a general committee over the summer he said publicly that he would sell his house to get him (Bowing) out of the party.

Huge redundancies facing ILEA staff

THE Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) has distributed a document to all the unions involved in education proposing compulsory redundancies for 9,000 of its staff, amongst them 2,500 teachers.

With an estimated increase of 50,000 in pupil rolls for the 1990s, and extra teachers required to implement the Tory 'national curriculum', the educational system is approaching a point of complete breakdown.

The Labour leadership in ILEA under Neil Fletcher had previously proposed a repeat of the redeployment exercise of last year which created such bitterness among ILEA teachers. They now propose compulsory redundancies as part of a 15 per cent cut in their budget.

In some schools NUPE members responsible for cleaning schools are already engaged in time and motion studies in order to compete with private contractors. They face a 50 per cent cut in wages — and are expected to complete the work in half the time.

ILEA has also given heads in schools the power to suspend teachers without pay should they be found in breach of contract. They have already deducted pay from teachers in some schools for refusing to cover for absent colleagues, for refusing to attend certain meetings outside of teaching time, or even for leaving a meeting 10 minutes before the end. Some teachers have lost pay for failing to complete pupil reports on time because of pressure of work.

ILEA and other

Labour-controlled authorities have shown no interest in any mass mobilisation to defend education and other services in the face of the Tory drive for privatisation. Instead they are turning on their own workforce and on the community to implement massive cuts on behalf of the Tory government.

In the London Borough of Haringey a cuts budget was eventually debated by ILEA in a locked room in the face of lobbying by the community and employees against such proposals.

After agreeing to cover for absent colleagues the NUT faced a cut in 50 supply staff who had previously carried out cover duties. Existing vacancies are not being filled in schools in the borough. Secondary school staff are cut by 10 posts, and primary school staff by one. Nursery provision may disappear altogether.

In Manchester a £20 million cut has been proposed which includes 1,000 teachers and lecturers. As part of a further £11.3 million cut in Manchester's education budget, the school meals provision is not merely threatened with privatisation but with abolition.

The same situation is being repeated in other parts of the country in the absence of any fightback by these labour authorities.

Any campaigns organised either against the cuts in education or on the opting out proposals have emerged despite the capitulation of the treacherous leaders in the Labour party, the education unions and the TUC.

The campaign must be developed and widened to include all those in the community, in their trade unions and among women, and youth to take on the attacks by the state and to throw out all those leaders who refuse to fight.

A lobby of Tower Hamlets borough council has been proposed for the 27 January at 6pm, to protest the proposals by the Liberal majority to opt out of ILEA control and to set up seven 'neighbourhood committees' instead to run schools in the area.

The call was made by the Parents Action Group in Education (PAGE) in Tower Hamlets, which was set up by a number of parent governors in ILEA schools. At a meeting attended by 50 trade unionists, Tower Hamlets trades council agreed to back the call to defend state education and East London Teachers Association (ELTA) have agreed to campaign to make the lobby a success.

One hundred of those governors who have met have opposed the proposal and parents have objected to the refusal of the Liberal controlled council to consult them. Baker says that if eight boroughs agree to opt out of ILEA the remaining five will be forced to follow. He has offered £100

million over the first two years to Tower Hamlets council should they agree to opt out. After that runs out they will be on their own.

Parents will then be forced to contribute to the cost of books and other resources previously covered by the richer boroughs. The government is paying £2,500 for 15 days work to its own advisor to convince the Liberals to opt out. Under government legislation which comes into force this year, boroughs will be given until February 1989 to decide.

Only after that will objections be noted. Parents have only one month March 1989 in which to object — after which the councillors are under no obligation to take any notice of them at all.

In April 1990 ILEA's responsibilities are due to be transferred to those boroughs who agree to opt out and individual governing bodies are empowered to make budgets for schools in their area. Individual tax payers will pay £639 a year each after registering for the poll tax. This is the third highest figure in the country, exceeded only by Hackney and Camden. Part of this will go towards the cost of maintaining schools in the area.

Not only is the working class faced with huge cuts in education, but it is also being forced to pay every last penny it has towards an educational system in which 'parental choice' will be a privilege enjoyed only by the wealthy.

HOMELESS FREEZE TO DEATH IN U.S.

A homeless woman was found dead in an alley behind Chicago police headquarters. In Detroit, a young man froze to death in the car park behind a church, where he had wandered after being turned out of his lodgings.

Nearly 30 people died as sub-zero temperatures took their toll of America's homeless in the first week of January. Thousands suffered frost-bite and hypothermia.

In Chicago, homeless people demanded the city's housing authority open its vacant apartments. Seven people who had entered an empty flat on the Henry Homer project were evicted by security guards.

'People are dying on the streets. I'd rather be in jail than freezing to death on the street,' said Otis Thomas, of the Chicago-Gary Area Union of the Homeless.

In Oakland, California, 17 people were arrested when police waded into a group of 200 homeless who were taking over empty homes in the city's Preservation Park.

Organisations helping homeless people in the Un-

ited States say there are now three million of them, a 25 per cent increase within a year, and ten times the Reagan administration's official figures.

At least a third of these are families with young children. In New York city, there are 20,000 homeless children. Nearly a quarter of the homeless are working, but so low paid they cannot afford a roof over their head.

As the cold spell drove both homeless and people from unheated sub-standard apartments to seek emergency shelter, hostels were finding it difficult to cope.

At Detroit's Salvation Army shelter, an official said two thirds of the beds were occupied by children.

'In my 32 years in the Salvation Army I've seen the type of people change who are seeking shelter,' said Major Londa Bord. 'It used to be the transient, a hobo-

type, who would go from city-to-city. Now it is an entirely different picture.

'We have families, young, 30 and under. We have small children, children under 12, and teenagers. We have complete families, single women with children, and this year we had four men with children.

Jobs

I've seen it happen in all the states where I've worked: Michigan, Illinois, Iowa,

and Missouri. It's the loss of jobs and other factors that does it.'

In Chicago, until about ten years ago the majority of homeless were male alcoholics over 50. Now nearly 45 per cent of the homeless are workers classified as 'economically disabled' — that is, they've lost their jobs.

'I was making good money until the layoffs came in 1980,' said ex-steelworker Henry Raymond. 'I have never been able to find a job that paid that well, and from then on it was downhill. To

make a long story short, I went from having a family, a nice house and plans for the future, to living in shelters for the homeless.'

Elsie Armstrong stays at a women's hostel in a converted fire-station. 'I have arthritis in my right leg and I'm unable to work. I'm from Detroit where I used to pack brake shoes, then I worked in a laundry for 20 years.

Live

'You can't find a place to live on \$151 a month General Assistance. I know people who have to sell their food stamps just to pay the rent. People need jobs. And there should be more places like this. You can't hang around public places without bus or train tickets.'

There are about 20,000 homeless in Chicago, but the various homeless shelters only have about 2,400 beds. And in 1983, the city council passed a law forbidding overnight shelters to stay open more than 12 hours a day. So even those fortunate enough to have a bed are put out on the streets in freezing weather in the morning.

Afghan May Day present?

SOVIET troops could begin withdrawing from Afghanistan on 1 May this year, according to 'Pravda'.

The Soviet paper said an Afghan-Pakistani agreement by 1 March would allow Pakistan two months to close guerrilla bases on its territory.

Withdrawal as a May Day present for the Soviet people would boost Gorbachev's popularity at home and abroad.

Recent fierce fighting in large-scale operations can be seen as a last attempt by each side to gain vital ground before any settlement.

US undersecretary of state Michael Armacost, visiting Pakistan a week ago assured guerrilla leaders he met that the US would not abandon them.

Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnaze said in Kabul the same day that the Soviet Union hoped to withdraw its troops this year. According to 'Pravda', they are optimistic the US will guarantee an Afghan-Pakistan agreement.

Pennsylvania oil slick disaster

A HUGE oil slick heading down Pennsylvania's Monongahela river could leave three-quarters of a million people without drinking water, and may take a month to clear up.

Over a million gallons of diesel oil were spilt into the river when an 80-foot storage tank belonging to the Ashland Oil Company burst, on Saturday, 2 January, as it was being filled.

By the Tuesday, more than 16,000 residents of Robinson and North Fayette Districts were without water. The West Penn Water Company, which serves 750,000 residents in communities west and south of Pittsburgh had to close its pumps.

Thousands of people had to be evacuated from their homes near the Ashland Company's plant when the spillage occurred, as petrol from a damaged pipeline was also leaking into the river, and there were fears of an explosion.

The slick spread a six-inch layer of diesel oil stretching over 30 miles downstream. Officials of the Environmental Protection Agency said it

had spread so rapidly it was difficult to catch up. They had no idea how long it would take to clear up.

Pittsburgh was not affected by the water contamination, as it gets its water from the Allegheny, which joins the Monongahela to form the Ohio river. However, there is a danger that Wheeling, West Virginia, and Cincinnati, Ohio could be affected.

The USX Clairton steel works had to lay off some workers because barge traffic was halted, and other firms laid off staff because of the water shortage. Hospitals and schools were affected too.

Fire department officials for the Jefferson Township area said they had no record of the Ashland Oil Company having received permission to locate its oil tanks there two months ago.

News Briefs

SIX thousand Porsche car workers in West Germany have gone on short-time, and Daimler-Benz have reported a 9 per cent drop in 1987 US sales, their main export market. The falling dollar and US stocks crash could hit both firms further.

Workers at Krupp's Rheinhausen steel works are continuing to fight closure. Economics Minister Martin Bangemann said last week that 30,000 jobs must be shed in the steel industry.

The Tory government has offered to train and equip Tunisian security forces. During a three-day visit to Tunis, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd discussed joint action against 'terrorism' with President Abidine Ben Ali.

Although details were kept secret, it is understood that Libya's international policies were discussed, and that Tunisian leaders asked Hurd to act against Tunisian political dissidents in Britain.

Vampire victim?

THE death from AIDS of popular Brazilian cartoonist Henrique de Souza Filho, a haemophiliac, has sparked off a campaign for state control of the country's blood banks.

Nearly 80 per cent of the haemophiliacs in Rio De Janeiro, where he lived, are believed to have the aids virus as a result of blood transfusions.

Rio health secretary Sergio Arouca has blamed the unregulated private blood trade. 'It is carried out by human vampires collecting blood from people without the minimum conditions of hygiene, without tests, and often in exchange for money.'

Henfil, as the 43-year old cartoonist was known, was highly-regarded for his satires on the former military regime, and on social injustice. Political leaders, trade unionists, and artists attended the funeral.

'Henfil was murdered, just as I and other haemophiliacs who have contracted aids during blood transfusions will be killed,' said his brother, a musician, also suffering from the disease, who was brought from hospital in a wheelchair.

US court has heard from a former maintenance worker employed by the American Tobacco Co. that toxic DDVP pesticides were routinely sprayed on raw tobacco and finished cigarettes during production of Pall Mall brand.

The jury, hearing a lawsuit by a woman whose husband died of lung cancer, was also shown company memos saying the level of DDVP in Pall Mall was over four times the legal maximum.

'It was the government that killed him,' said his other brother, sociologist Herbert de Souza. 'If the political will existed, the blood banks could be controlled. A government that builds nuclear power stations but leaves its people to die has something wrong with it and has to be radically changed.'

Health officials in Rio say there are about 160 private blood banks registered in the city, but many clandestine ones. Chagas disease, which is spread by mosquitos in rural areas, and causes heart degeneration, has been transmitted to 20,000 people via blood transfusions.

Many bloodbanks get their blood from beggars thronging the streets, in exchange for a bowl of soup. They use dirty syringes and have poor storage facilities.

Near Henfil's grave a group of hospital workers held up a banner saying: 'Henfil cannot die in vain. Blood must be state-controlled. The blood trade kills. Blood is not merchandise.'

'This will sound awful, but you have to understand that a million people isn't a market that's exciting. Sure it's growing, but it's not an asthma or a rheumatoid arthritis.'

● A vice-president of Hoffman-LaRoche, explaining why the pharmaceutical giant was not making a priority of researching an AIDS drug.

WARSHIPS HEADING FOR HAITI

THREE Canadian warships and a battalion of infantry are in the Caribbean, ready to intervene in Haiti, where elections which many people see as likely to be rigged are due on Sunday, 17 January.

The warships — two helicopter-carrying destroyers and a supply ship — arrived last week, ostensibly to take part in an exercise of Puerto Rico with the US Navy.

Secrecy about the mission was broken when sailors told reporters they had suddenly been recalled from New Year leave, told they were going to Haiti, and ordered to load the supply ship Pre-server.

Canadian official sources then said there was a plan to rescue Canadians and other foreigners if Haiti's elections this Sunday turned into a bloodbath again.

It was also reported that 140 soldiers from a crack French-speaking infantry regiment, the Royal 22nd., were being sent to the US Navy base on Puerto Rico.

Last November, right-wing thugs seen as a continuation of dictator 'Baby Doc' Duvalier's hated Tonton Macoutes caused havoc in the lead up to the election, and massacred voters in polling stations on the day.

People in the working class slums who had fought back against the Tontons were in no doubt that the Haitian army was complicit in the right-wing terror. Suspecting Reagan's CIA of being implicated, people were cynical about US expressions of concern.

This weekend's election, organised by a military-picked electoral commission, are being boycotted by four major candidates because the ballot will not be secret, observers are barred from polling stations, and parties must distribute their own ballot papers.

General Namphy's regime has threatened to jail anyone who advocates a boycott. In a late attempt to make its election look more credible it has banned known Duvalier associates from standing.

A meeting of Caribbean governments earlier this month was persuaded by Washington to drop a call to General Namphy to postpone the elections. Leaders like Jamaica's Edward Seaga fear that if the military fails to establish stability, Haiti's masses could revolt and produce a left-wing regime.

John Osborne, Governor of the British colony of Montserrat, in the Leeward Islands, said on 10 January that the United States should intervene in Haiti as it had in Grenada. He said a US 'peace-keeping' force was necessary to ensure 'democracy'.

Haitian opposition leaders have stressed they do not want US intervention. British and West German ships are participating in the two-week NATO manoeuvres in the Caribbean, along with the US Navy and the Canadians.

Middle East crisis:

Egyptian troops for Gulf?

EGYPT'S President Hosni Mubarak has promised military aid to Gulf Arab states in a confrontation with Iran. He made the pledge in talks last week with US and Saudi officials in Riyadh, the Saudi capital.

Mubarak's tour of Gulf states marks their restoration of relations with Egypt after a nine-year break because of his predecessor Sadat's treaty with Israel.

Iran's successes in the Gulf war with Iraq have been a major factor in persuading Arab states to accept Egypt back in the fold. The Egyptian government already sells an estimated \$1 billion worth of arms a year to the Iraqi regime, once among its fiercest critics.

Mubarak's first stop was for talks with US Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd. They discussed the US Naval presence in the Gulf, and Mubarak told Fahd his regime was prepared to implement a 1950 joint Arab defence pact.

Egypt has one of the largest armies in the Arab world, with an experienced officer cadre, and a growing arms industry.

Mubarak is believed to have raised with Carlucci a proposal that US-designed weapons could be assembled in Egypt for marketing to pro-US regimes in the Middle East. They also discus-

sed US use of military facilities in Egypt as a staging post, in the event of war with Iran.

The Egyptian leader would not say afterwards whether Egypt was already involved in installing a missile defence system in Kuwait. He dismissed press reports that in return for military assistance, Gulf states might help pay Egypt's \$4.5 billion military debt to the United States.

Unrest

Nevertheless, it has been estimated that the Gulf oil states might have already provided up to \$1,000 million in aid to Egypt last year, and Mubarak badly needs more. The threat of Iranian attack to the Gulf states is far less real than the threat of social unrest in Egypt.

Big US aid since 1979, part of the deal for the treaty with Israel, has benefitted American and Egyptian capitalists rather than the masses. Egyptian government is under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to curb inflation by cutting subsidies, a commit-

ment it had to make to have its foreign debts rescheduled.

The result is a huge increase in the cost of living. Millions are already on the breadline, and now the middle class is also starting to feel the pinch.

In January, 1977, when IMF-imposed policies brought big food price rises, thousands of Egyptian workers went on strike, and there were mass riots in which the poor fought police and burned the clubs of the rich.

In 1986, poverty-stricken conscripts in the security forces mutinied over low pay. Recently, the rumour of a fresh round of price increases brought talk of more riots.

The eruption of mass revolt in occupied Palestine has put a fresh spark to unrest in Egypt. In recent weeks, police arrested about 30 people and broke up demonstrations by students and Islamic activists protesting Israeli repression of Palestinians, and Egypt's ties with Israel.

Mubarak has had to criticise the Israeli repression, but resisted PLO demands that he sever relations. Fears that his regime could be discredited, just when it faces explosive unrest from the Egyptian masses, may have motivated the hypocritical attempts by his US and British imperialist friends to take their distance from the Israeli repression.

Palestinians insist on their right to state

As more Israeli troops were sent into the occupied Gaza Strip last week, and the death toll from their repression mounted, Palestinian leaders were considering whether to proclaim the formation of a government in exile.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has urged Arab states, including Egypt, to take action over the Israeli repression and deportations. PLO chairman Yasser Arafat reiterated that only the creation of an independent Palestinian state could bring a solution.

Israeli troops opened fire on people coming from Friday prayers in Bureij refugee camp, in Gaza, killing one man and wounding others. Curfews were imposed on five refugee camps over the weekend.

A curfew was imposed in Ramallah, on the West Bank, after troops used tear gas and rubber bullets to break up demonstrations. Police also attacked demonstrators in East Jerusalem, arresting twenty people, and beating some of them.

Although the youth in Gaza and the West Bank have only had stones and burning-tyre barricades against the Israeli army, Yasser Arafat has warned that the PLO command may reverse a previous decision not to use firearms in the civil insurrection.



PLO chairman Yasser Arafat

At a rally in Kuwait, Arafat said the PLO must carry on the struggle. 'The children hurling stones in the Occupied Territories and the RPG kids in the Lebanon camps are the generation that will achieve victory.'

Although at present it was only stones, 'each time has its weapons and we are ready to use them at the time and place of our choosing.'

Referring to an agreement which Israeli Foreign Minister Peres said he received in London, drawn up by the United States and endorsed by Jordan's King Hussein, Arafat said neither Israel, the United States, or Arab regimes would succeed in ignoring Palestinian rights.

'We will foil the London paper', the Palestinian leader said. 'The only solution was an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem its capital. An international

conference, under UN auspices, must include the PLO as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

'We know there are Arabs with Arabic tongues and Israeli hearts', Arafat said, 'and we know also know they will fail to set up a condominium in the West Bank and Gaza.'

This was clearly a reference to the Peres plan to establish joint Israeli-Jordanian rule over the occupied territories, enlisting the imperialist-backed Jordanian monarchy to help crush Palestinian aspirations.

In an interview with Italian television, Arafat said this was a form of joint control 'in which the Palestinian people would be put under colonial rule. They want to transform these territories into South African-style Bantustans.'

He emphasised that the PLO 'had never taken part and could never take part in any negotiations of this kind.'

The PLO leader has also urged Israeli 'democratic forces' to make themselves heard as they did during the 1982 Lebanon war in opposing their government.

He told the Kuwait rally the PLO 'co-operates with all Israeli democratic forces that recognise our people's rights to self-determination and the creation of an independent state'.

As Tories arm Indonesian dictatorship

INDONESIA MEDDLING IN PAPUA



Thatcher and Suharto

INDONESIA'S armed forces commander Benny Murdani, who admitted last week that his forces have still not subdued the guerrillas in East Timor, has also been caught interfering in the politics of neighbouring Papua-New Guinea.

Papua-New Guinea's former army commander Ted Diro, who quit the military to enter politics and became Foreign Minister, has admitted to receiving a secret \$139,400 contribution from Murdani for his election expenses.

The former commander has also warned that Papua-New Guinea could face a military coup like that in Fiji.

Diro, appearing before a commission of inquiry in Port Moresby on corruption charges dating from when he was minister for forestry,

Indonesian dictators to 'buy British'.

● Tory Under-Secretary of State for Defence procurement Timothy Raison and Overseas Development Minister Christopher Patten visited Indonesia in October last year. Patten announced there would be regular meetings between senior British and Indonesian officials to identify projects for British aid.

Two weeks later, Rolls Royce executive director Ralph Robins signed a technical co-operation agreement with the Indonesian military aviation company IPTN.

● British Aerospace has been supplying Rapier missiles to the Indonesian forces, and announced a contract last year for a military control system. It is hoping the Rolls agreement will help it win a deal to sell its Hawk 200 sub-sonic fighter, which has a Rolls engine.

● Both Vickers and Alvis are bidding to supply light tanks to the Indonesian army. Two Indonesian rear-admirals were at Portsmouth for the Royal Navy Equipment Exhibition in September, and another high-powered delegation is expected for the British Army Equipment Exhibition at Aldershot in June.

When Thatcher visited dictator Suharto her only excursion from Jakarta was to see the IPTN plant. British Aerospace had already got

its missile deal. As one paper commented:

'With commercial prizes like these, there will be little likelihood that Mrs. Thatcher will be making strong representations over Indonesia's invasion of East Timor or the bitter resistance struggle that has been waged since then.' (Guardian 10 April 1985).

Besides East Timor, the Indonesian military has had a struggle to control West Papua, or Irian Jaya as they call it, where the OPM has waged a guerrilla struggle for independence. By 1984, more than 12,000 refugees had fled Indonesian reprisals, into Papua-New Guinea.

Pursuit

Indonesian troops and planes crossed the border in anti-guerrilla pursuit, and pressure was put on the Papuan government to hand refugees back.

In March last year, Ted Diro went as Papuan Foreign Minister to Jakarta to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation with Indonesia. He has told the commission in Port Moresby that this was when he approached General Murdani for help. The general agreed to provide money from a construction firm in which he has interests.

The money was sent in a diplomatic bag, via the Indonesian military attache in



Indonesians in West Papua

Port Moresby. Diro, who was being investigated over forestry contracts, has now been sacked as Acting Foreign Minister, for saying it was 'quite normal for political leaders to receive money from abroad.'

A few days later, the sacked minister warned parliament that New Guinea was heading for a military coup. He said the country was in a crisis, with an economy over 67 per cent owned by Australian capital. On Murdani's payments, he claimed 'every penny received by the general was legitimately spent.'

With the backing of the Tory imperialists, Indonesia's military rulers are building their strength to dominate the entire area and guard the most ruthless capitalist exploitation of its resources and peoples.

The hired stooge Diro has blown the gaff on this conspiracy. Just as the Tories are allied with the murderous dictator Suharto, we must regard those fighting the Indonesian dictator as our comrades in arms in the struggle to destroy Thatcher.



Kohl and Reagan

AS 1988 OPENS, world capitalism faces a crisis worse than anything it has known since the 1930s, the dimensions of which are impossible to gauge.

At the centre of the vortex is the United States, the debilitated nominal leader of the capitalist world whose government, like that of other countries, is, significantly, unable to propose any new policies likely to solve the crisis.

The one-time purveyor of capital to the rest of the world has, within the space of two or three years, become the largest debtor. A large part of the rapidly growing national debt is held by foreigners who have built up huge surpluses in their trade with the USA.

The bicentenary of the US Constitution, with its famous 'separation of powers', sees Congress and administration working at cross purposes with the result that no decisive policy can emerge or be applied.

Since the Wall Street crash of 19 October, 1987, the Reagan administration has been chiefly notable for its inarticulate impotence. It has been hoping that the crisis would somehow sort itself out without any strong measures likely to alienate Republican electors during an election year.

While the White House calls on foreign governments, especially those of Federal Germany and Japan (now the world trade giants) to do something to avert catastrophe, foreigners somehow hope that by some brilliant stroke Washington can save the day.

Until the day of the Wall Street crash, the Reagan administration was boasting that it had brought 59 consecutive months of expansion. What it did not explain was at what cost this 'expansion' had been sustained. Nor was any balance sheet presented of so-called 'Reaganomics'.

Reagan came to power with the slogan that government was not the solution but the problem. Less government activity, de-regulation and a hefty tax handout to the rich, while social expenditure was cut back, was expected to put US capitalism back on its feet.

The theory of Reaganomics was brilliantly simple and quite simply wrong. It was assumed that if the rich were allowed to keep more of their income they would invest more. This would make US industry more competitive and enable it to compete more effectively with its foreign rivals.

Not so in practice. The rich took their tax handbacks and rolled over into more luxury consumption, at the same time multiplying their paper wealth by joining in the bull market on Wall Street. Share prices soared but industrial investment remained at its prevailing low level. The surge of foreign imports continued unabated.

Another crucial part of Reaganism was increased military spending to give the Pentagon, and the giant corporations which held the prime contracts for military hardware, everything they wanted, and more. The military-industrial complex had never waxed so fat; sections of it, as the Iran arms scandal showed, had become a law unto itself.

The 59 months of expansion was made possible not by balancing the budget — as Reagan had promised — but by deficit financing, mainly for military purposes, on an unprecedented scale in peacetime. Government borrowing soared, fuelling a credit boom, creating millions of new jobs in the wildly ballooning services sector.

While fast food outlets and similar activities sprang up like mushrooms after the infrastructure deteriorated, industrial investment and research were deprived of funds and the poor got poorer. But for the wealthy these were good times; pragmatists by nature they just collected their money without asking whether their good fortune was due to Reagan's declared intentions, or the actual policies — which were quite different.

The legacy of 59 months of the Reagan expansion was thus a huge budget deficit and a rapidly deteriorating foreign trade position. And that was not all. Over the same period the huge lending spree of US banks in the developing countries had gone sour. They now held massive amounts of virtually worthless paper representing these loans.

Meanwhile, the world outside was changing distinctly to the disadvantage of the US. Investment in other industrial countries continued at a much higher level, especially in Germany and Japan. The low-wage countries undergoing export industrialisation were flooding the market with cheap machine-made goods. The trade deficit grew correspondingly.

There were other contradictions involved in this situation. Many US industrial firms ceased to be competitive and closed down. The big multinational corporations had already taken the lead in shifting their manufacturing facilities to low-wage countries.

As the trade deficit grew so it became increasingly apparent that the exchange value of the dollar was artificially high. World markets were awash with dollars in surplus supply. Moreover, the high exchange value of the dollar kept import prices low while making US exports costly to foreigners.

After several attempts by international agreement to stabilise the dollar rate it began to fall and before the end of 1987 it had fallen to below its historic low and was still going down. However, there was little sign that the lower dollar was stimulating exports or making imports dear enough to bring down the trade deficit.

The twin deficits which hang like the accursed albatross around the neck of Reagan and his co-stars in the sordid scenario being played out in Washington have a functional role, not only in sustaining US capitalism, but in postponing the slide into depression of the whole capitalist world system.

Without the 'military Keynesianism' of the budget deficit the expansion of the US economy could not have been sustained during the Reagan era. A deficit arising from civilian spending on welfare or public works would not have been acceptable to business. So the Reaganite 'supply-siders' allowed Keynes in again through the back door, linked to the military budget dear to the economically illiterate President himself.

Continued public deficit spending, blamed by the administration on Congress, has enabled a precarious, debt-ridden expansion to continue. But it has been helped along by a huge import of goods supplied on credit by the manufacturers of other capitalist countries.

Why have they been willing to help the United States to live beyond its means, accepting dollars or other paper assets for their exports? Simply because the US market has provided a means of realising the surplus value embodied in these products; to some extent some European countries, including Britain (with its own sizeable trade deficit) have also played this role.

For example, the Japanese motor industry produces 40 per cent more vehicles than can be absorbed by the home market. Without foreign sales, therefore, there would be an overproduction crisis in Japan. Federal Germany, though not so dependent upon the United States, also requires a foreign outlet to keep its industry going and avoid a slump.

While foreigners are calling for a reduction in the budget deficit which they would believe would strengthen the dollar, they overlook the fact that without the deficit the US economy would be in deep slump. In that case they would have to say goodbye to much of their export trade. Already the

1988: OFFICE



Thatcher

stock market collapse and the weakening dollar had begun to cut into the sales of luxury German cars in the United States.

In a sense, then, the US deficits have become functional for other capitalist countries. Without them they would face serious problems of overproduction and unemployment which, for the present, they have avoided. The result is now becoming clear: the US has almost overnight become the major debtor country, the deficit piles up, the interest burden of the national debt grows and the dollar falls.

In the present balance of forces between a Democratic Congress and the lame duck Presidency, decisive policies are not to be expected. The budget cuts so far agreed have little more than token value. Reagan is still not willing to sanction increases in taxation falling upon the rich. Sober observers hoping to find a 'solution' agree that living standards (i.e. wages and salaries) will have to come down in real terms. The 'Amer-



Friedman

ican dream' is coming to a chilling end.

When the Great Depression of the 1930s struck the United States it was still a young and vigorous nation with untapped sources of accumulation and profit-making. The Keynesians say that the slump could at least have been alleviated by bold government expenditure and big budget deficits.

Their arch rivals, the monetarists, say that injections of fresh money at the right time and in the right amounts could have prevented a recession, brought on by the Wall Street crash of 1929, from becoming the worst and longest slump in history. In fact it was not overcome until the US entered World War Two.

What the various defenders of capitalism are saying is that the 1930s crisis was not an organic crisis of capitalism. They maintain that the means to overcome the crisis were there but there was lack of will to use them. They weave a web of sophistry to evade the Marxist conclusion that the crisis of the



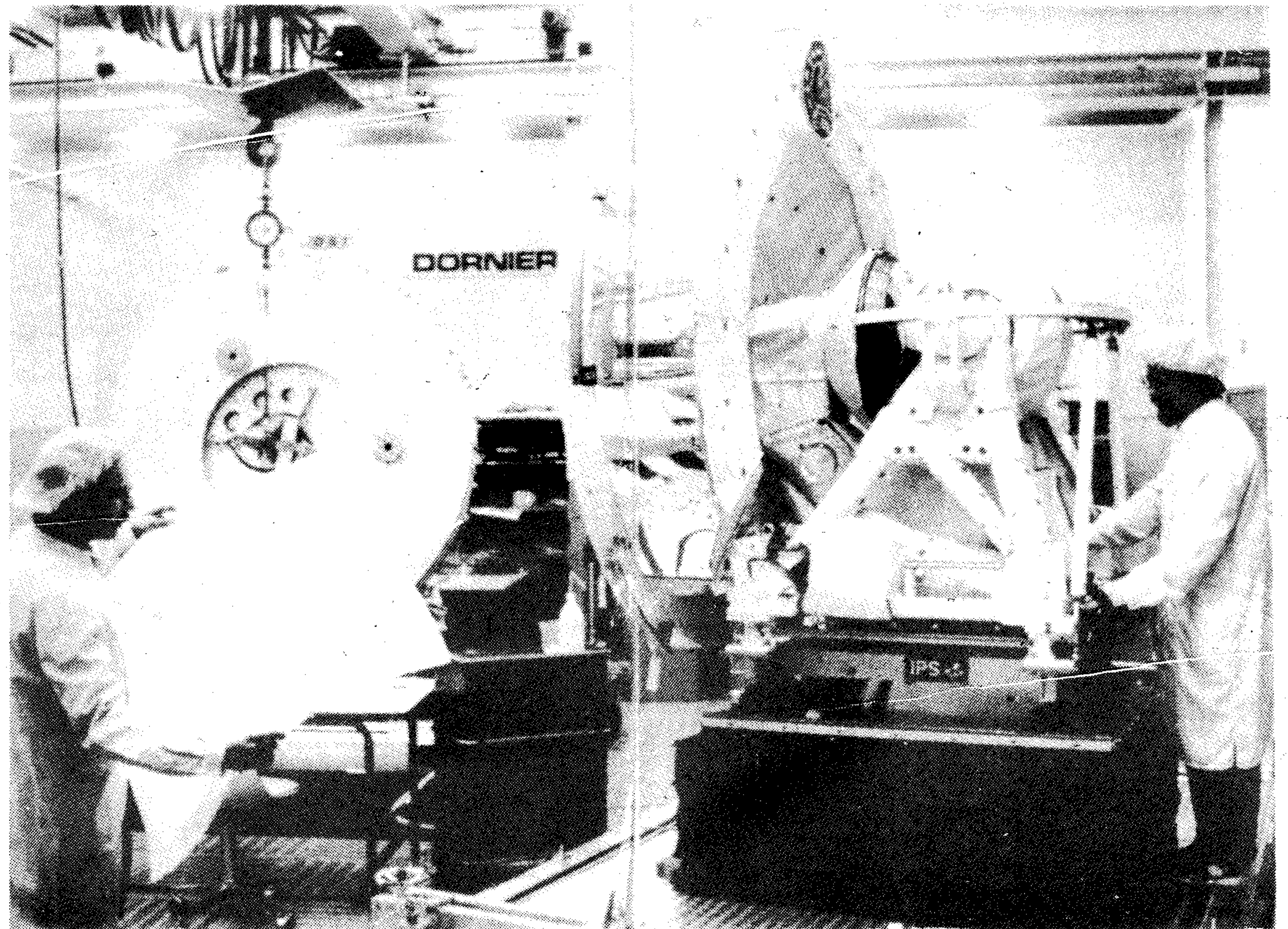
Marx

1930s, like that of the 1980s which is its continuation, was organic; even the lack of will was not accidental.

Significantly, today neither the Keynesians nor the monetarists of the Friedman ilk have any credible answer to the crisis. Increasing the money supply will only fuel inflation; reducing it will precipitate a slump. Even Reagan's (and Thatcher's) claims to have controlled inflation are phoney. Commodity prices have fallen (further impoverishing producer countries and driving them into debt) and the current rate of inflation would have been regarded as dangerously high 20 or 30 years ago.

Powers

It is obvious to all that the Federal Reserve Bank has no miracle-working powers. It is subject to objective forces more powerful than Mr Greenspan and his colleagues can cope with. Confidence in the dollar has been shattered and the world monetary system is in a



Production of instruments for US space shuttle by Dornier (66 per cent owned by Daimler-Benz)

YEAR CRISIS



Keynes

state of flux and uncertainty.

At a time when the budget deficit is already dangerously high by any standard a tendency to slump cannot be dealt with by the orthodox Keynesian remedy of deficit spending. Indeed, in fairness to Keynes he would not have expected that it could. It is probable that he would have called for measures like those he put forward, with success, during the Second World War.

That is to say stringent

medicine, shock treatment, to bring down the patient's fever before any recovery could be expected. Higher taxes, a reduction in real incomes, bringing down the volume of credit, import controls and similar deflationary measures would seem to be in line with the Keynesian canon in dealing with the present crisis.

Needless to say such policies do not win elections and, in any case, would be as likely to kill the patient as to cure him. They would not commend themselves either to the Reagan administration or to any likely successor. Not only is there no easy way out of the crisis, there is no 'hard' way out either, short of some kind of dictatorship.

No US administration is likely to be able to lead the capitalist world out of its crisis, especially because the US is suffering from its own crisis of leadership. One has only to look at the Republican succession and the Democratic challengers to realise that this is not just an economic crisis, but that it has widespread social and political ramifications.

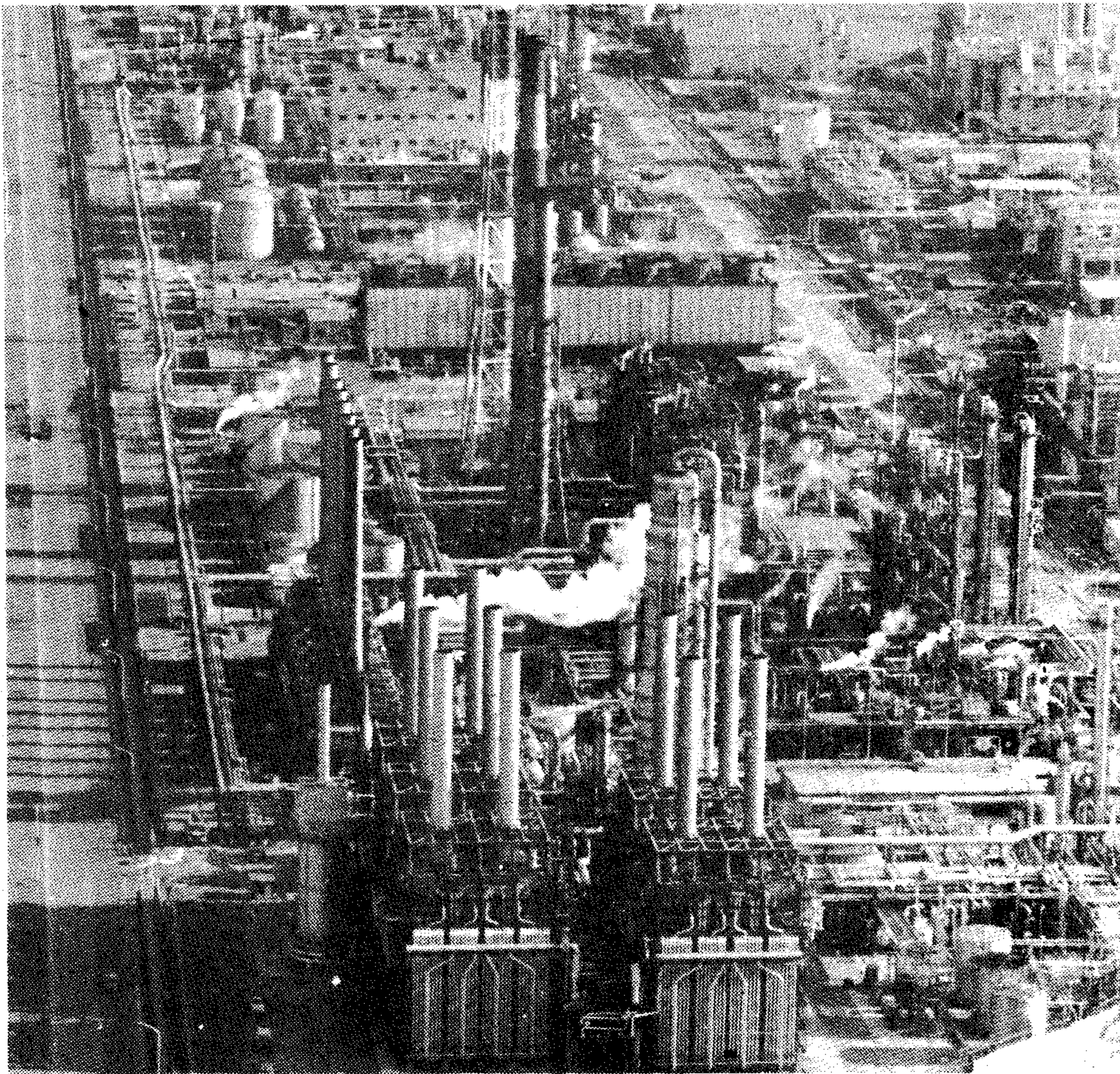
Political corruption and

jobbery extends from former members of the Republican administration and personal friends of the Reagans, through New York City to every major town in the United States. To keep up with the cases actually going through the courts would be virtually a full-time job.

The past year saw the Iran-Contra affair which, in its political implications (notably the challenge to Congress and the role of the President), had deeper implications than Watergate. It is not yet over.

One of the famous television evangelists who keep millions of gullible people spellbound and rake in millions of dollars to finance their activities was shown to be a philanderer, a spendthrift and a swindler. He is still free, living in luxury and honoured by many of his former followers.

Before the Wall Street bubble burst a series of revelations had shown how smart operators had used inside information not available to the ordinary investor to make millions for themselves, enabling them to live the lives of the ultra-rich. While a number of the cul-



Japanese Industry

prits have spent not too uncomfortable spells in prison it seems likely that they will be able to get away with at least part of their ill-gotten gains.

The get-rich-quick-by-whatever-means mentality was never more widespread in the US than it is today. It played a big role in the boosting of stock market prices in the past few years out of all relation to the value of the enterprises represented by the stock being traded. Vast paper fortunes were thus created and young men fresh out of business school were aiming at making a million before they were 30.

Decline

No wonder Reagan is (or was) popular with such people and with the US rich in general. They have never had it so good. For some it is already the end of the road: for the first time for many years rich people have lost large sums of money — that part blown into a bubble, and collapsing as fast, thanks to the bull market and its subsequent demise.

Putting it all together, isn't one obliged to speak of the crisis of a civilisation, of a country which has passed its peak and is on the downside of a perhaps irremediable decline?

It will perhaps be said of US capitalism that despite a prolonged post-war boom owing to very special circumstances it never generated subsequently those long-term forces of expansion able to drive it forward into a durable upward phase. Wars, military spending and credit creation on a large scale fuelled the boom more than innovation and technological change. Nothing came along like the railway in the 19th century or the automobile in the present one to open up new profitable investment fields.

Nuclear power proved incapable of providing an alternative to the irreplaceable fossil fuels. The market for cars and consumer durables eventually became saturated. Without continued growth in these fields much of the capacity built up in the old-style and capital goods industries became superfluous. Thus the rust-belt and de-industrialisation of whole areas in the US and the other older industrial countries.

The new technologies, symbolised by the silicon chip, did not require the vast investments of the older types of industry. They lent themselves to mass production in low-wage, low-skill countries like South Korea or Taiwan even when development had first taken place in the United States.

The typical US multinational corporation carries on a large part of its manufacturing operations outside the USA. The trend continues. A successful US exporter is likely to follow the same course as has happened recently with the supplier of turbo-chargers for Japanese cars. So to see export growth as a solution to the balance of payments problem may also turn out to be illusory.

Loss of leadership in manufacturing is one of the sure signs of economic decline. In the case of the US it goes alongside a reduction in the proportion of national product provided by manufacturing and the growth of the service (or tertiary) sector. The latter includes everything outside manufacturing and agriculture and related activities, from the surgeon or engineer to the fast-food server or dancing girl — most of which Marxists would describe as 'unproductive labour', in the sense that it does not produce surplus value.

In the USA the tertiary sector now occupies about 67 per cent of the labour force, against 31 per cent in manufacturing industry. Some apologists see in this a sign that the US is becoming, or has become, a 'post-industrial society'. It is undeniable that as income per head rises, a higher proportion will be spent on services and this will be represented by the occupational distribution of the population.

But there are limits to this process, and it has to be seen in a global context. A large service sector has to be sustained by a highly productive industrial base; it cannot itself form the basis for a capitalist, or any other kind of, economy. There are signs that, in the United States, the process has gone too far and has become a serious source of weakness.

Importer

It has been compounded by the activities of the multinational corporations in shifting manufacturing plant to low-wage countries. To an increasing extent, then, the USA has become an importer of manufactured goods (and an exporter of agricultural products) with a negative balance of trade. Hence vulnerability to outside shocks and the instability of the dollar.

West Germany, the most powerful European economy, retains over 42 per cent of its working population in manufacturing and only 56 per cent in services. Together with other factors this helps to account for the industrial successes of Ger-

many and its strong place in world markets.

German cars such as BMW and Mercedes-Benz are widely sold in the US. Ford imports models from its German factories when it aims at the high quality market. US products, outside a few special categories, do less well in export markets. Even a cheaper dollar is not likely to boost sales, especially in those industries like steel which suffer from over-capacity.

Their passion for quick returns has drawn US capitalists and capital into mergers, take-overs and speculative financial activities to the neglect of technological development and new investment. They have only themselves to blame if their rivals have crept up on them and overtaken them in many vital fields.

Problems

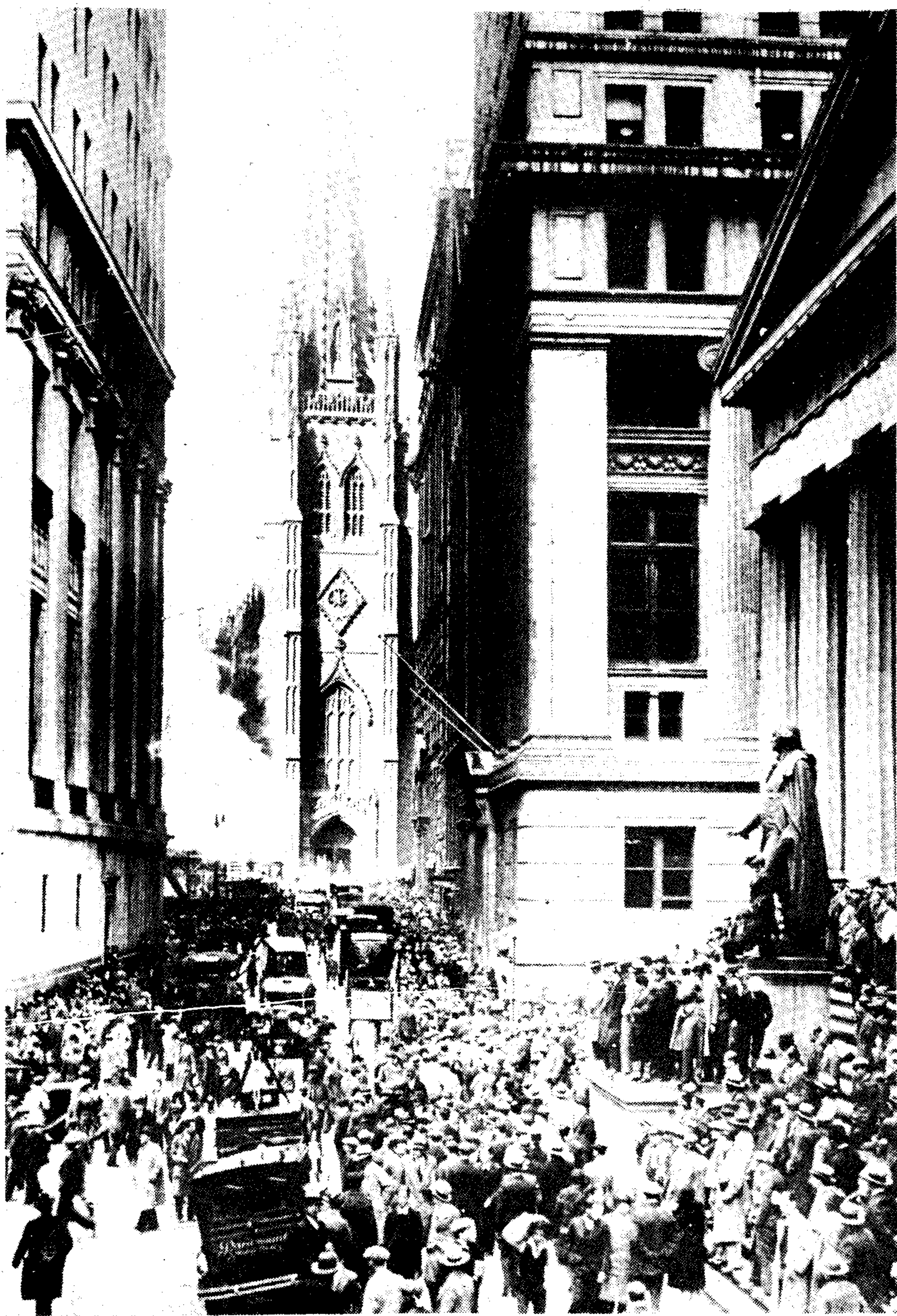
Yet, as has been seen, the US's challengers, including Japan and Germany, still depend upon the US market for the realisation of surplus value. There is no such thing as a separate national capitalist economy able to solve its problems in isolation. Inherent rivalries between the ruling classes of the national states nevertheless prevent more than nominal cooperation in dealing with the economic problems of the contemporary crisis.

The prospects for world capitalism in 1988 will very much depend on the repercussions which the Wall Street crash will have upon the weakened US as outlined above. The development of the crisis in other parts of the world will, in turn, play back upon the United States. Debt defaults by the former colonial and semi-colonial countries could shake the banking and financial structure.

The collapse or financial difficulties of some of the Japanese business giants built up during the latest expansion in the US could have worldwide repercussions.

Attempts to solve the problems of the crisis at the expense of the working class could ignite big class struggles even in countries where the working class at present seems to be dormant, such as Germany, Japan or the United States.

The present state of world capitalism presents so many possibilities for things going wrong and getting out of control makes crystal ball gazing even more unreliable than usual. The watchword should be: prepare for the unexpected but expect sharp and sudden changes.



Wall Street in the middle of the 1930s

Privatisation and the capitalist crisis

IN a week that saw the announcement of plans to privatise the country's nature reserves and warnings that the government intends to privatise a large chunk of the pathology service, Arthur Scargill warned that the Thatcher government wants six day working along with greater flexibility in the pits as a preparation to return the mining industry to private ownership.

Scargill is undoubtedly right. The Tory government is aiming to slash the industry to around 70 pits, employing some 70,000 miners on six-day shift systems. Such an industry would be highly attractive to the sharks in the City who have been to the fore in gobbling up the state industries already sold at knock-down prices by the Tories since 1979.

Thatcher's policy over the last eight years has been in marked contrast to the policy of Tory governments from 1951-1964. Apart from the partial denationalisation

BY GEOFF PILLING

of long-distance road haulage and the steel industry these governments left largely intact the industries nationalised by the postwar Attlee government after 1945. Indeed the Heath government of 1970-1974 was forced to take over the ailing Rolls Royce company.

Why this change in policy?

It represents in part the attempt by the Tory government to preserve some degree of budgetary stability in a period of rising unemployment — entailing increased expenditure on unemploy-

ment benefit that Thatcher has not yet felt strong enough to cut to any significant degree.

Big cuts have been made in important areas of government spending but the fact is that despite all the propaganda, the proportion of national income absorbed by government expenditure is little changed since Thatcher came to office in 1979.

The sale of state assets has been one way in which government revenues have been boosted. Such assets, as well as those from North Sea oil, have been vital components of Thatcher's economic policies.

But the privatisation of the former nationalised industries has a deeper significance.

The nationalisation programme of the post World War II Labour government — including the mines, the railways, gas and electricity supply, transport and the major airlines — was un-

doubtedly a reflection of pressure from the working class. This was clearly the case with coal mining where there had been a long and bitter struggle against the old private owners.

Capitalist

These measures at the same time reflected the needs of the capitalist class. Much British basic industry had declined sharply during the inter-war slump, bringing to a head a longer process that can be traced back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The railway system and the coal mines were on the very edge of collapse at the end of the war. Private capital could not have restored them to the level required by the rest of the economy. The state had to assume responsibility for their reorganisation.

The same was true of the expansion of the welfare state in the years after 1945.

On the one hand this expansion was a product of the widespread determination in the working class that there would be no return to the inter-war years of poverty and destitution. At the same time it also indicated that the capitalist class needed a healthier, better educated working class if it was to make profits.

From the point of view of capitalism, all state expenditure is unproductive. That is, it does not produce surplus value but on the contrary is a drain on such surplus value. Only under conditions where capitalism was able to expand, in however distorted a form, was the maintenance of such expenditures possible.

The drive to return the former nationalised industries to private ownership marks a new stage in the crisis of capitalism. It is an indication of the weakness of the ruling class and not its strength that it is forced to such measures.

Everything must now be subjected to the unmediated laws of the market, to the laws of commodity production. No room is left for any modification in the ruthless struggle for profit.

Election

That is why the election in the miners' union is so crucial. Whoever wins the election will be faced with a crisis in the industry which goes far beyond the industry's bounds. For reflected in the drive to return the coal industry to private ownership some forty years after it was nationalised is expressed a profound social crisis that engulfs the whole of capitalist society.

Only a revolutionary programme and a revolutionary leadership in the working class will be able to answer this new situation facing miners and the working class as a whole.

Collapse of British industry

BY OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

MRS THATCHER opened 1988 with a series of hollow claims about the achievements of the Tory government. She boasted that she had put an end to the 'British disease', that is, that she had rolled back the working class. No sooner had she made the claim than a strike engulfed the whole of the south Yorkshire coalfield as miners took up battle against British Coal's imposition of draconian disciplinary measures in the pits. This incident alone again underscores the fact that Tory boasts and Labour leaders' hopes that the miners were definitively defeated in their 1983-84 strike are without foundation.

Thatcher's claims that her policies have revitalised the British economy are just as hollow when the fate of manufacturing industry is considered. The fact is that the decline of what was at one period the heart of British capitalism — its manufacturing industries — has accelerated during the period of the Thatcher governments.

This has been the result not of deliberate government policy, as many on the left imagine. Nor is it the result of too much government spending, as many right wing economists contend.

In the last resort it is the product of the long drawn out historical decline and increasing parasitism of British capitalism.

The facts are clear. As recently as 1960, Britain took almost 17 per cent of world manufacturing exports: that figure has now dropped to well below 10 per cent and is still falling sharply. Over the same period the share taken by Japan grew rapidly while France, Germany and Italy more than held their share.

Britain's share of world

manufactured goods produced has declined just as drastically: from 25 per cent in 1950 to well under 10 per cent today.

Meanwhile there has been a great structural change in British imports. Before 1950, they consisted mainly of foodstuffs, and raw materials, with manufactured goods consisting of under a fifth.

This pattern reflected an international division of labour that Britain had been able to establish and impose on the rest of the world in the last century. Britain exported her manufactured goods — coal, cotton goods, engineering products — and imported cheap food and raw materials.

The last three decades has brought a decisive change in this pattern. By 1985 import penetration of manufactured goods had taken place to such an extent that manufactured and semi-manufactured goods made up some two thirds of total imports.

The proportion of imported manufactured goods to those domestically produced rose from some 7 per

cent in the mid-1950s to its present 30 per cent level. The problem for British capital in the 1950s and 1960 was how to win back lost export markets. Its problem now is how to hang on to its domestic market.

Reflected in these figures is the chronic decline of British capitalism. As the first industrial nation in the world, British capital gained considerable advantages.

In the well-known phrase, Britain became the workshop of the world, supplier of the means of industrialisation to other countries.

But these advantages turned into their opposite. As rival capitalist countries began to build up their industries they did so at a higher technical and organisational level — often learning from the negative aspects of British experience. In some instances — the United States is the classic case — these countries were able to take advantage of large internal markets and considerable natural resources not present in Britain.

The decline of British industry can be traced back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But the consequences of this decline were avoided by the emergence of the City of London as the world's leading financial centre, able to earn vast sums through its banking, insurance, broking and commodity dealing activities. Sterling became the world's leading currency which again gave considerable advantages to British capital.

These activities hid the mounting problems of an increasingly uncompetitive industry, and even made those problems worse. While easy money was to be had in the city there was little incentive

Talking in whispers.

THE US Presidential task force report on the October stock market crash is a damning indictment of the parasitism at the heart of world imperialism and reveals the fragile state of the international financial system.

BY KEITH GIBBARD

The report, headed by Nicholas F. Brady, a Republican senator and chairman of Dillon Read and Company, a Wall Street securities firm, landed on Reagan's desk last Friday afternoon.

It reveals that a handful of big institutions dominated the massive US securities market crash which began on 19 October.

Like rats abandoning a sinking ship they trampled over the small private investor in an attempt to minimise their losses.

Although the report does not name any sellers, two of the largest are understood to have been Wells Fargo of San Francisco and Fidelity Investments, in Boston, the largest US mutual fund complex.

'Much of the selling pressure was concentrated in the hands of surprisingly few institutions' the report said. The top four 19 October sellers accounted for \$2.85 billion, or 14 per cent of total

sales.

At mid-morning on Black Monday after the initial crash, just as the situation seemed to be stabilising, Wells Fargo launched a devastating sell programme, identified by the task force as 13 waves of almost \$100 million each that continued until 2p.m.

'Monday 19 October was perhaps the worst day in the history of US equity markets' the report concludes, but for the world financial system Tuesday was even worse.

It was at mid-day, Tuesday 20 October that the securities markets and the financial system approached breakdown' according to the report.

Leaks from the Brady Report prior to its official release, coupled with news of a \$30 billion dollar leap in the US budget deficit, led to the 140 point fall in share prices last Friday 8 January, the third biggest fall in Wall Street's history.

to undertake the risks of industrial investment. The British banks, unlike their European counterparts, were unwilling to invest in industry, preferring to lend their money abroad.

This division between the financial and industrial sectors should not be over stressed. The city and those in industry had and still have much in common. It was certainly never the case that those involved in finance constituted the 'reactionary' wing of the ruling class while the industrials were somehow progressive, as Stalinism has for long claimed.

The decline of British manufacturing has had serious implications for the pattern of employment. The share of manufacturing in total employment has fallen from its 1960 level of 36 per cent (some 9 million jobs) to

around 25 per cent in the mid-1980s (something over 5 million jobs). The share of manufacturing in total output declined over the same period from 37 per cent to 24 per cent.

The principal factor preventing the complete collapse of employment was the rapid growth of the 'public sector' (education, health, government administration) which brought an extra million jobs in the 1960s and 1970s. But the expansion of this sector could not compensate for the enormous job losses in manufacturing.

In turn the rising unemployment bill has been financed out of North Sea oil revenues which alone have allowed the Tories to avoid slashing unemployment and other state benefits.

The decline of British manufacturing was for a

The main recommendation of the report, a system of 'circuit breakers' whereby markets would cease trading if prices fell below a certain limit, was not being taken seriously by Wall Street dealers.

If Wall Street closed, stocks would simply be dumped in Tokyo or London and traders have not forgotten the experience of the Hong Kong exchange which was closed in October only to lose one third of its total value upon re-opening.

Reagan is reported to be unhappy with the findings of the task force. He had expected that the blame for the crash would fall on Wall Street, but in fact the report suggests that the administration's budget policies were a major factor.

However, according to the 'Times' Washington correspondent, administration officials are saying privately that the White House was anxious to avoid any remarks or negative impressions which might further destabilise the dollar or share prices.

It seems that the capitalist financial system is now so sickly that Reagan and company have to talk in whispers for fear of a further collapse.

long period a relative decline: Britain's relative share of world manufacturing was dropping but the absolute volume of world manufacturing was growing.

But over the last decade or so this decline has become absolute. Since 1973 the fall in output in the manufacturing sector has averaged some 2 per cent per year. This is the measure of the depth of the crisis.

The question can be asked: from the point of view of capitalism does this near-collapse of industrial production matter? Does it matter whether workers are employed in making steel or making hamburgers? As long as capitalism can make profit from such activities does the erosion of the industrial base matter? We will look at these questions next week.

A Soviet Oppositionist speaks

If a Soviet military victory is out of the question now, what future do you see for Afghanistan?

I don't think that the genuine left factions of the Afghan resistance are strong. Maybe Astan Amali has a following in the minority national regions. But the liberal and progressive factions of the Islamic parties are strong. And what is more important is that the Afghan emigration (in Pakistan) does not represent the real equilibrium of forces inside Afghanistan.

Inside the country, (and Soviet military personnel coming back from Afghanistan support this view), there is a process of change going on.

The victory of the rebels would not mean a return to the pre revolutionary status quo. On the contrary, there is an important process of change taking place at the grass roots level. Otherwise, without this, the resistance would be incapable of fighting the Soviet army efficiently.

The most exciting experience is that of Commander Massoud of the Panshir region with whom the official Soviet authorities in Afghanistan are forced to negotiate.

The resistance that is operating inside the country is therefore a very good possibility as a political force to inherit power from the Karmal regime. The problem is that now the resistance depends on western aid more than it did some years ago. This means that outside influence in Afghanistan is growing.

Ties

So when speaking of the western left, I think it is very important to have ties with the Afghan resistance, and to help strengthen the progressive tendencies inside the resistance against the reactionary tendencies as much as possible. Well, it depends on the western left to act — that is, the western left as a combined force. It is able to influence the situation.

Why give the Afghan resistance up to Reagan and other reactionaries? Why give them the possibility of being influential without attempting to conquer a political space, to contest that influence? It seems that the western left has lost a lot of opportunities in this way — but not all possibilities. Because there still is a chance.

Here in the Soviet Union, the problem is to mobilise popular pressure against the war. It's very difficult — the situation here is not like the United States during the Vietnam war period but there have been some demonstrations and revolts — even if these were not efficient.

Nevertheless, they show that pressure exists and is very real. It should be mentioned here that at least one article by a Soviet observer, writing under a pseudonym, has appeared in, I believe, the Washington Post — which gives specific details of the demonstrations against the war.

The second point is the need to lobby the official reformist circles. This is something which we do and will continue to do. Maybe this kind of activity is not the most traditional for leftists, but it is a necessary activity in the current, specific situation. That is, trying to influence the reformers and trying to give them concrete ideas on how to get out of Afghanistan, because it will be more difficult to get out later.

Do you hold the position that the measure of social progress being introduced by the Soviet Union into Afghanistan justifies the invasion?

Well, I think Marx had some interesting things to say about the role of the British in India... that objectively the British presence assisted in the modernisation of India. But, at the same time, from the moral standpoint, there is no reason to say that the British were in the end right to invade and colonise India.

The process, it must be said, initiated by the British invasion of India finally helped the process of social transformation, but the invasion itself, as a moral act, cannot be justified by the final outcome.

A final outcome (here I 'interpret' Marx) is not only produced by an invasion — it is produced by the invasion and the resistance to the invasion. This is my view of Afghanistan. The final result in Afghanistan is something that will be produced by the invasion and by the resistance to it.

Do you mean that the Soviet forces play a counter revolutionary role, but that a revolutionary resistance could develop by way in response to it?

Yes. I should say that the Taraki regime was not revolutionary or socialist in any way. It was a technocratic, modernising regime along the lines of the Shah's regime in Iran. The Shah's regime was more organic and technically pro-western, though it had good relations with the Soviet Union.

Taraki's regime, like the Shah's, had almost no social base except in a limited strata of the bureaucracy. It was from the very beginning dependent on Soviet aid, political and military. You cannot speak of that regime in terms of social progress. It was anti-social because it tried to impose a model of development on a society against its will.

The society revolted, as in Iran, and also as in Iran it was a combined revolt of progressive and reactionary forces — all of whom had one common aim: to get rid of the regime which was destroying the society as a whole. That is why it is a kind of national liberation struggle. It is also true that within it there are also counter-revolutionary fundamentalist elements.

It is a combined revolt of a society against elements which were introduced by foreign influence — and when those elements were almost smashed by the resistance — there appeared an open foreign invasion, which is also destroying the social fabric, the social life of society. You cannot introduce real social progress by destroying the entire structure of a society by military force.

Progress

We don't know anything about real social progress in Afghanistan. The Soviet Army's principal role is military. They don't even attempt to give the people a say in how the country is run... simply because the people are against them. So it's a very strange kind of social progress which is against the will of the people. It's not progress, of course, it's reaction. It is anti popular.

At the same time, however, the resistance itself produces the momentum of a social movement. The people begin to solve their own problems by themselves, without any outside agency. They have the power of weapons in their own hands.

SINCE the demise of the human-rights movement in the Soviet Union in the 1970s there has been a marked increase in groups opposing the Stalinist bureaucracy. Between 1977 and 1982 underground bulletins such as 'Variations' and 'Left Turn' were published in Leningrad and Moscow. An attempt was even made to form a federation of 'Democratic forces of a socialist orientation', but this was broken up by the state before it could be properly established.

The following interview with Soviet oppositionist Alexander Severukhin (a pseudonym) reflects the deepening political crisis in the USSR. The first two parts of the interview were printed in the last two issues of 'Workers Press'. This is the final part.

Workers Press is printing this interview despite the fact that we do not consider the views expressed to be those of a Trotskyist; we consider the use of the term 'left oppositionist' to be misleading. The Left Opposition, (the precursor of the Fourth International established in 1938) was led by Leon Trotsky. It rejected the theory of Socialism in One Country, advanced by Stalin and Bukharin. At the same time it stood for the unconditional defence of the nationalised property relations of the USSR against imperialism and rejected all notions that the Soviet Union was in any way capitalist.

While we think that much of what Severukhin says is confused, such confusion is only to be expected as the working class and sections of the intelligentsia enter a new stage in the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

They organise their own social structure.

It is interesting that in the beginning the idea was to destroy the Muslim clergy, the traditional aristocracy, the landlords and so on. They were expelled from the country — but the state merely took their place, without any basic change in the social relation between oppressor and oppressed — one oppressor simply took the place of the other.

Then, when the system failed to suppress the popular resistance, the Karmal regime tried (and now the Najib regime tries) an opposite tack. Now they are trying to find some form of reconciliation... but with whom? Not with the people... but with tribal chieftains, some elements of the clergy, as we read in the Soviet press, with the so-called 'progressive landlords', and also with elements of the bourgeoisie collaborating and trading with the Soviet Union.

In the Soviet press you can read about an illiterate landlord who started out in opposition to the regime, but then realised that the government was not a threat to him. He now supports the revolution — and why? Because now, for some traditional elements of the Afghan military class, it is better to support the current regime than the social movement. Because the regime is no longer perceived as a danger to them while peasants who have weapons and know how to defend themselves are more dangerous in that situation.

What do you estimate will be the outcome of the war? What might be the best solution, and the worst?

I'm afraid there are a lot of 'worst' possibilities, but I also see two or three better ones. To be truthful, I fear an 'Afghan Kampuchea'. One cannot avoid thinking of the possibility of fundamentalists gaining the upper hand and destroying the

society using Khomeini-type methods with Pol Pot's efficiency. A possible combination of Pol Potism and Khomeinism is not to be excluded, especially of the left wing and liberal public fails to support the most progressive elements of the resistance.

Second, there is the possibility of a 'reactionary reconciliation' — the most reactionary elements of the Babrak regime, such as 'progressive landlords', uniting with some reactionary elements of the resistance forces and of the society in general — and such a reactionary reconciliation is possible, although I don't think this would give the Soviet government a way out — to Afghanise the struggle — to leave Afghans fighting among themselves and withdrawing. That would be very dangerous.

On the other hand there are positive aspects. There is the possibility for real dialogue. But for this to happen the Soviet government will have to say that the so-called 'bandits' are not bandits at all but armed peasants, and we must speak to them first of all.

There is also the possibility of a withdrawal without pre conditions if the situation inside the Soviet Union deteriorates... in that case I cannot say what would happen in Afghanistan, except that the civil war would probably continue.

Of course, there are other possibilities of civilized compromise between the factions also. There are many possible roads still open, but we must recognise that there are many dangers.

The only thing I exclude absolutely is the possibility of a military victory by the Soviet Union. I don't exclude the possibility of a military defeat now, because the army is in a very bad way. I have learned a lot from people coming back. But I cannot even imagine the possibility of a military success

by an army which is so seriously demoralised by this colonial war.

You have often referred to Marxism in the course of these discussions. What kind of 'Marxists' exist in the Soviet Union today?

As you know, we have an official ideology called Marxism-Leninism which is, I think, not Marxist nor particularly Leninist. I cannot say that official ideology has nothing in common with Marxism and Leninism, but the Stalinist idea — the idea of the Stalinist 'ethocracy' — was clear.

They used Marxism and they used Leninist ideas for their own purposes, creating a new ideology using Marxism merely as raw material from which the new, opposed, in some senses anti Marxist, ideology was made.

It is very difficult to be a Marxist in a society where the official, oppressive ideology is called Marxism (even when it isn't 'Marxism' it is still very difficult). One of the main requirements of official ideology is to make people believe that it is Marxist and Socialist: 'If we are Marxists and socialists' they say, 'we can take care of everything. Just be patient and wait for the promise of Marxism to be realised by us, by the party'.

There is much sentiment which is critical of Marxism. Even among people genuinely on the side of the left, many still prefer not to call themselves Marxists simply to avoid misunderstanding, to avoid any comparison with the official camp.

Dogmatism

Nevertheless, there used to be another kind of ideological dogmatism which was that of the dissidents. I don't see a lot of difference between the dogmatism of official propaganda and the dogmatism 'reproduced' by dissidents.

A lot of dissidents and emigres — especially emigres — managed to work out their own brand of dogmatism which looks like a twin of official Marxism-Leninism, though it is inverted, like a mirror image of the official ideology.

When younger intellectuals came to understand this there was, once again, a movement toward Marxism. So, ironically, it was dissi-

dents and dissident anti-Marxists who helped us to get back in touch with Karl Marx and develop an interest in his original work.

In this sense some of our sources are in traditional Marxism — Karl Marx himself — people are once again reading Marx. There is also the Marxism of Gramsci, who is fairly 'traditional' in terms of the western left.

Some people have managed to acquire and read original texts by Marcuse and the Frankfurt School; others have studied Sartre of the Marxist period, 'Critique de la raison dialectique', for example.

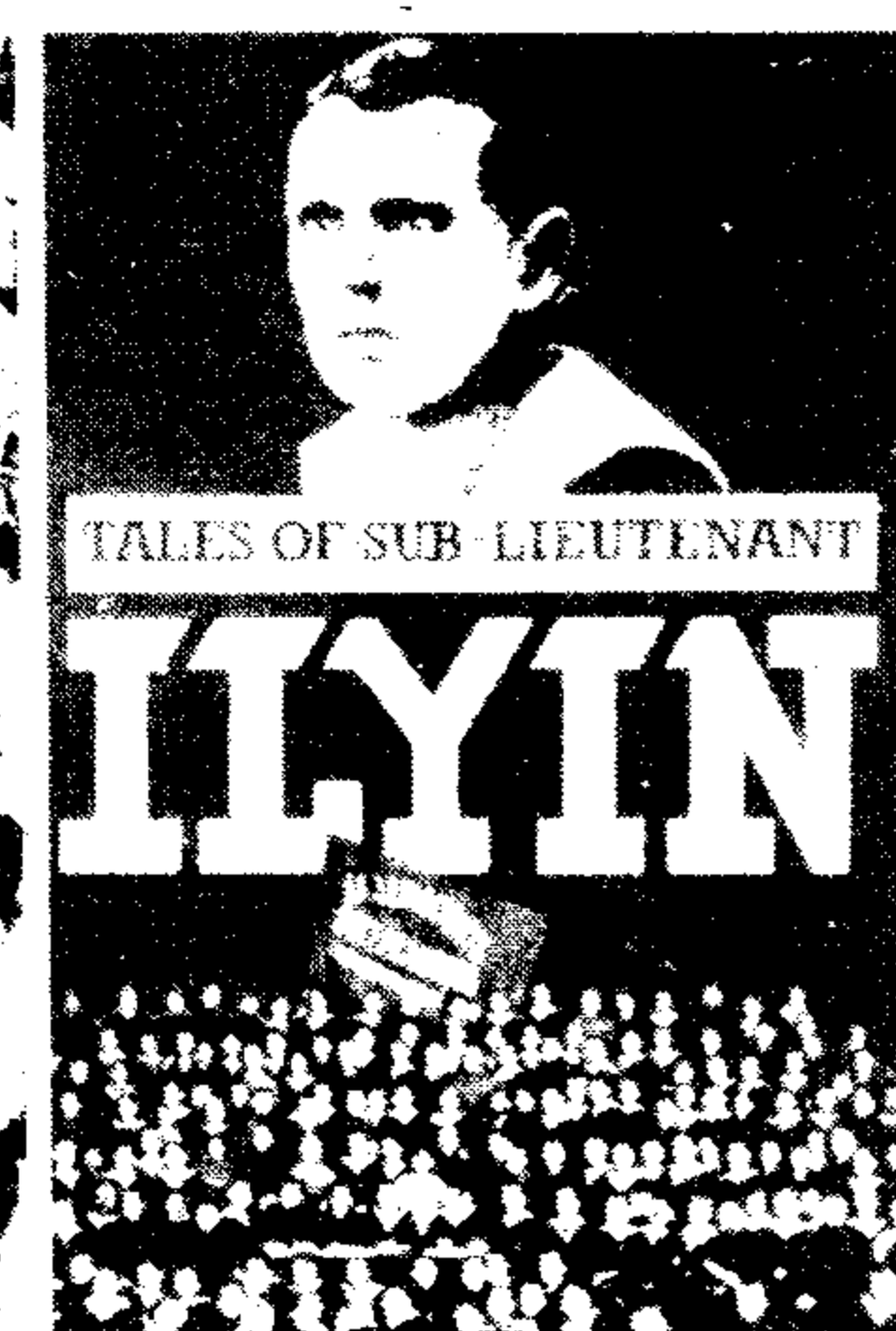
Aside from an interest in western neo-Marxism, people have studied Kandel and Yugoslav, self-management theorists and theorists of market socialism — Vladimir Brus, Otto Sik and the Czechoslovak revisionists.

There are also some particularly Russian sources of intellectual influence: the first is Herzen. Herzen was a Russian philosopher who had the same intellectual origin as Marx himself — that is, Left Hegelian. There are many parallels between them (though Marx was by far the greater of the two). Herzen was a Left Hegelian socialist but one who knew Russia very well.

He had one trait which was quite unsympathetic to Marx: he was concerned with the 'mission of Russia' to the world. But he was not a Slavophile in the traditional sense — not even any kind of 'left wing Slavophile'. He had some interesting thoughts on the position of Russia in Europe. Russian views of the west, and the west's view of Russia. In that sense Herzen is quite 'actual' for us as a thinker. I'm afraid Marx was not just in his criticism — calling Herzen an 'aggressive Muscovite' and so on — though Herzen himself made a lot of mistakes.

Another important current is what we call 'Legal Marxism': liberal, official ideologists who seek to integrate some elements of real Marxism into the official pseudo-Marxism. They are trying, perhaps, to 'remake' the ideology — reintroduce the original sense into it. I don't think they can succeed; the official ideology is incurable. But this is still an important step: to move from the official ideology to Marxism itself.

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LETTERS

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Healy history

WHILST Charlie Van Gelderen is correct to complain in Workers Press (2 January) about Vanessa Redgrave's hagiographic sketch of Gerry Healy's political history. I suspect that his dating of Healy's joining the Trotskyist movement is incorrect.

Van Gelderen states that Healy joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935. At the time of the first Moscow trial (1936), he was a leading member of the WIL.

The above account is contradicted by Mary and John Archer's statement that Healy joined the Militant Group in August 1937 ('Notes on Healy's Role in Early Days of the British Trotskyist Movement' in 'Healy's Big Lie', New York, December 1976, page 30).

The WIL did not exist in 1936.

It was formed at the end of 1937 or early 1938 (ibid page 31; Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson 'War and The International', London 1986, page 5).

Has anyone more information on Healy's early days in the Trotskyist movement?

Barry Buitekant

On nationalism

SIMON PIRANI in 'Trotskyism and Nationalism' (Workers Press 2 January) misses the whole point of the criticism levelled against Trotsky's attitude toward national liberation struggles.

The issue is not one of whether Trotsky supported national liberation struggles, which he undoubtedly did; the question is, did he appreciate the 'significance' of such struggles; did he recognise the role and mechanics of the national liberation struggles relative to the perspective of socialist revolution?

The genius of Lenin that made him a master tactician able to build a vanguard party and lead a socialist revolution was that he recognised and took into strategic consideration all the social forces that contributed however little, toward the destabilisation of capitalism and the development of the process toward the socialist revolution.

This is fully exemplified in Pirani's quote from Lenin:

'Socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements.'

Just as Lenin recognised and took into strategic consideration the role of the peasantry in Russia, and thereby formulated programme and policy accordingly — Peace, Bread and Land — so he recognised and strategically considered the role of national liberation movements — rights of nations to self-determination — and thereby harnessed the revolutionary potential of non-socialist forces to the struggle for socialist revolution.

Lenin viewed events as a dialectical process; the momentary coincidence of interests of basically contradictory forces which could be galvanised to add momentum and added force to the objective forces of revolutionary socialism under the hegemony of the working class and vanguard party.

To realise this temporary fusion of contradictory forces toward socialist revolution, that is, to ensure the leadership of the working

class and vanguard party involved the question of how to utilise the contributory social forces such as the discontented petty bourgeois nationalists and peasantry.

This was not realised by conceding policy or programme to these non-socialist forces or by supporting their leadership and organisations critically or otherwise in order to appease them or win their acquiescence to the struggle; such an approach would be self-defeating and would relinquish leadership to backward elements, who travel the anti-capitalist road only so far, but not to its final socialist conclusion.

The strategy of Lenin was to strike with these forces against capitalism under the banner of independent working class struggle and at all times asserting the leadership of the vanguard party, and in the course of struggle through practical experience, to either win the backward elements for the socialist struggle or to expose and discard those that placed restraints upon the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

The revolutionary potential of these non-socialist forces was utilised until events and developments exhausted the revolutionary nature of their fight.

Lenin like other Marxists recognised the objective counter-revolutionary role of nationalists and peasantry, but unlike other Marxists he both recognised and was able to utilise in practical revolutionary politics the transient revolutionary nature of these forces, and so was able both to build a vanguard party and lead a successful socialist revolution.

Tom Cowan

More on nationalism

I WRITE to raise the issue of Scottish nationalism because I do not think it is being properly dealt with in Workers Press.

An important issue is being side-stepped by the blind opposition of internationalism to what, in this case, is a progressive republican movement.

Internationalism is a principle that should be fought for and upheld within the working class against the vulgar nationalism of the Scottish National Party but to underplay or ignore — as Workers Press does — the deep rooted national aspirations of the working class itself is not the position of internationalism but of adherents of 'little England' conceptions.

Is the WRP opposed to Scots for having the temerity to call for the right to have a more direct say in the management of our own affairs, and for the restoration of our own identity and integrity as a nation?

It would be better advised to turn its guns upon the 'little England' chauvinism that has seeped like a poison into the fibres of the British labour movement.

Britain is a multi-national state made up of three recognised nations, the most powerful of which dominates, by whatever means, the other two.

To ignore Scottish aspirations is to defend English chauvinism and makes a mockery of your support for the Irish Republicans.

The problem does not lie in any particular statement which has appeared in Workers Press but rather in the lack of one.

The subject is broached only through hint and allusion, giving the impression that it is not regarded as all

that important.

At a time when the Labour Party and the SNP are using discontent in Scotland to further their own opportunist aims, it is important that a Trotskyist party put the issue upon a sound Marxist-Internationalist footing.

Instead the WRP, while supporting nationalist movements across the world, turns to Scotland with a hint of that infamous English arrogance and views what is happening here with an indifference bordering on contempt.

To us the determined resistance of our Irish compatriots to colonial rule has long been a source of political inspiration because in that struggle we see a concrete expression of our hopes and aspirations.

The antagonisms born into the British capitalist state are at last beginning to boil over.

Is the WRP going to get scalded?

Rab MacDonald

Pot black

I READ with some concern the controversy in your paper regarding the use of cannabis.

I find it hard to believe that Peter Fryer can be so naive as to maintain that cannabis is less harmful than alcohol or tobacco.

For some years I have been forced to watch the effects of cannabis on some of the adolescents at the comprehensive school at which I teach.

I have had to witness the sudden deterioration in the school performance of many who have taken to smoking 'pot'.

I am led to believe that a number of vicious and unprovoked attacks on others — on some occasions with knives and other dangerous weapons — were preceded by the smoking of cannabis.

I do not state this lightly. For some considerable time I, together with other colleagues, have tried to pinpoint the precise nature of the troubles that we encountered. Although harder drugs have not been unknown at the school these are not the main problem. Neither are amphetamines. Nor is glue-sniffing. It certainly is not alcohol.

We are now almost unanimously agreed that the principal culprit is cannabis.

We intend to publish our findings in due course.

It is interesting and encouraging to note that, when we have persuaded youngsters to give up cannabis, there is usually a marked improvement both in school performance and in behaviour generally.

My colleagues and I have noticed that a frequent feature of cannabis abuse is the loss of the ability to accept reasonable criticism from others or to be self-critical.

Since this may lead to all sorts of awkward social situations, including the taking of harder drugs, I would suggest that this fact alone, which appears to remain ignored by the medical profession, should classify cannabis as a dangerous drug.

Jonathan Byart

Hopping pot

I HAD intended to write a lengthy reply to Peter Fryer's views (2 January) on my attitude towards cannabis (12 December) but the

letter from 'London reader' (9 January) now makes this hardly necessary.

'London reader' makes an exceptionally valid point about the questionable nature of much allegedly 'objective' medical evidence.

His letter also really highlights the dangers of cannabis. He describes clearly what harmful effects the drug has had on him. Over the years I have encountered dozens of similar cases in which mental disturbance and distress has been caused by the smoking of cannabis.

I have heard of many more.

The fact that some people can smoke the drug without any immediately apparent adverse effects is irrelevant.

In any case, as 'London reader' points out, the adverse effects of cannabis can be very subtle.

I find it hard to understand how Peter Fryer can maintain (5 December) that cannabis is less harmful than tobacco.

John Robinson

Cross pot

PETER FRYER'S articles 'Police pot boiler' (5 December) and 'The dangers of crying wolf' (2 January) were welcome contributions on an issue which the WRP has remained profoundly ignorant, a fact reflected in John Robinson's letter 'the dangers of cannabis' (12 December) which was prejudiced, misinformed and downright offensive.

As Peter showed in his articles the vast bulk of research into cannabis supports the conclusion of the Wooten Report (1969) in that the 'long term consumption of cannabis in moderate doses has no harmful effects' (paragraph 29).

Estimates of the number of people in the UK who have smoked cannabis at least once are as high as 4 million.

However it would be safe to talk of several hundred thousand who smoke/use dope regularly to a greater or lesser extent.

The vast majority will never show up on police/Home Office files (or in JR's consulting room), are not, never have been and never will be psychotic, and, as far as capitalism in decay allows, have jobs.

JR's method: 'A' smokes dope, 'A' is psychotic; therefore dope causes psychosis, is one which would be rejected by even bourgeois sociologists let alone Marxists.

John's rejection of Marxist theory on this question leads him to ignore the main point that Peter was making — the power and role of the state.

Along with the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Misuse of Drugs Act has for years given the police virtually unlimited powers to stop and search, enter houses, confiscate documents and intimidate and criminalise individuals and groups it chooses, especially the young and particularly blacks (witness the police raids on the Peace Convoy and Brixton).

I was for years searched and often stripped for no better reason than 'Your perfume smells suspicious' or, 'crime of crimes, 'You sounded happy'!

To describe dope smokers as 'brain damaged, unkempt and deluded', apart from being ridiculous is also racist.

Cannabis came from the colonies of British imperialism and has been used in the cultures of these countries for centuries.

For groups of Rastafarians it is an important part

of their culture.

Are these groups incapable of holding down a job or having ideas which are 'trivial and not worthy of consideration'?

I think not.

If anyone 'lacks adequate knowledge' on this subject, it is surely John Robinson.

A Workers Press reader

Drugs and Society

AS WAS indicated by Peter Fryer in his reply to John Robinson's letter on cannabis, there are serious questions of methodology involved in how we interpret behaviour supposedly resulting from the abuse of cannabis (or any other drug).

Whether or not the behaviour John Robinson claims to have observed in cannabis users is indeed connected with the drug, empiricist methods cannot resolve this question. . . . many users find it difficult to hold down jobs (if indeed they can get one in the first place). . . . writes John Robinson. Does he then believe that cannabis causes unemployment? Surely not — yet that is the logic of his argument. Does he believe that a tendency 'to blame others. . . (namely society) rather than themselves (namely the individual) is an evasion, an expression of a 'lack of self criticism'? Surely not — yet that is the logic of his argument.

To make the point clearer: the black youth of Brixton make wide use of cannabis, suffer around 80 per cent unemployment, are convinced that they are the victims of systematic police harassment — as opposed to 'imaginary police raids', are certainly not inclined to blame themselves for their predicament, nor do they accept 'professional' criticism of their behaviour and lifestyle. All of this would fit John Robinson's observations of the severe effects of cannabis abuse. If this is indeed so then perhaps this socially enlightening drug is worthy of recommendation!

The fact is that policing policies towards black communities are often rationalised as anti-drug campaigns — and the victims are frequently accused of paranoia (there are also cases of incarceration on this pretext).

How do we explain that there is a massive drug problem affecting millions of the socially deprived worldwide? Are we to blame the victims or seek to understand the social conditions responsible — which means attempting to understand in addition to physiological effects of drugs the complex social and psychological aspects of drug dependence and abuse. (Naturally these are denied by many bourgeois commentators or reserved for excusing the current indulgences of the more privileged)

The comments of 'A London reader' on bourgeois law and the implications for revolutionaries are also politically questionable. Bourgeois law is entirely hypocritical in its attitude to drugs: vast profits are made out of saturation pill-pushing by the pharmaceutical industry via legal medically sanctioned outlets — many of these drugs have serious long-term effects and are actually better described as administered for the purposes of social control rather than therapeutic ones: proven dangerous drugs which have become unacceptable or illegal in western markets are dumped in the third world; a blind-eye is turned to the involvement of individuals from the ruling class and the security forces in the illegal trade in drugs whilst bourgeois politicians and the media indulge in sickening moralism towards the plight

of millions of addicts.

This reader says 'breaking the law can be politically justified but only when it serves the purpose of world socialist revolution'. Are we then to condemn those millions of women who resort to illegal abortions? Or millions of claimants who break the law by undeclared work 'on the side'? Or illegal immigrants? Are we to demand that homosexual comrades under 21 abide by the law? This list could be very long. For many millions to live within the law is a luxury they cannot afford and the only political conclusion that can be drawn from moralistic prescriptions for members of a revolutionary party is that we should recruit only from the privileged and secure sections of society, and certainly not from outside the ranks of the labour aristocracy. Herein lies the political connection with Healyite moralism on such questions.

If we don't understand that the use of drugs by, for instance, unemployed working class youth, is an expression of desperation, alienation and atomisation among those who feel no hope for the future, but instead join in the reactionary moralistic condemnation of Thatcher and Company then our capacity to recruit unemployed youth and build the party could be greatly impaired. The self hatred, anger and frustration which sometimes finds vivid expression in drug abuse can be overcome and this anger re-directed to the underlying cause of the problem. In some estates plagued by drug pushers the working class have, on their own initiative, organised to drive out pushers and to give community support to addicts. Clearly this response can build self confidence, class consciousness and class organisation.

Borrowing from the methodology and conclusions of bourgeois psychiatry, the individualism and moralism of bourgeois attitudes to drug abuse and other social problems, can only serve to mis-educate and mis-direct the party. This represents a far greater danger to the party than either cannabis or alcohol abuse.

Louise Cerovecki
Sue Wilson
North London WRP

● This correspondence is now closed — Editor

What moves a Tory?

I GAINED the impression from Charlie Pottins' front page article on the Palestinians last week that he was floundering for a reason why David Mellor had spoken out about the conditions in the camps.

It has been reported (since denied by the Foreign Office) that Mellor had a meeting with the Kuwaiti government's representative on 4 December, apparently to encourage the Kuwaiti Investment Office to bail out the Thatcher government over the B.P. share collapse.

We can't know for certain, but I suggest that some sort of deal was probably done between Mellor and the Kuwaiti government, along the lines of 'Help us out with BP and we will shout about the Palestinians for a couple of days.'

What we do know for certain is that Tory ministers are not 'moved' by the plight of the Palestinians. British imperialism is moved to protect its own strategic interests in the region, and if that includes a deal with Kuwait which also saves their greedy necks in this country, so much the better.

Martin Westwood

Learning from 1968

MY most vivid and painful recollection of 1968 is of being picked up bodily by two policemen and slung over a low hedge on to the unyielding turf of Grosvenor Square.

Then, as I lay spread-eagled getting my breath back, another policeman stepped forward and kicked me, deliberately, dispassionately, and very hard, in the balls.

It's a measure of the credulous innocence of those days that I wrote a letter to the 'New Statesman' about so commonplace an incident. The only results were a farcical and fruitless inquiry, and an anonymous postcard expressing the hope that the kick was still painful and that it had occasioned me permanent impotence and infertility.

This memory was brought to mind by Ronald Fraser's just-published '1968: A Student Generation in Revolt' (Chatto & Windus, 14.95).

Here is a collaborative effort by nine oral historians in six countries — the USA, West Germany, France, Italy, Britain, and Northern Ireland — who between them interviewed 'more than 230 participants' or '175 participants' or 'over three hundred people who took part in the student movements'.

All three figures are cited in various places, though in fact only 172 people, including such faded celebrities as Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, Tariq Ali, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Robin Blackburn, and Jack Straw, are named in the 'List of Contributors' at the back. '1968' claims

to be the first large-scale international oral history of its kind and the first comparative study of the student movements in the six countries concerned.

Though some 350 pages long, it uses only 5 per cent of the interview material that was gathered. It is greatly to be hoped therefore that the other 95 per cent will in the fullness of time be placed on public deposit at some convenient library, so that historians and other students can have access to it.

It has to be said that '1968' is sloppily written and sloppily edited. The English verb 'to militate' has not yet, thank heaven, acquired the meaning of 'to be politically active', and I hope never again to see the ugly and unnecessary coinage 'artisanal'.

Such barbarisms result from hasty and careless translation, and any half-way competent editor would have spotted them and stopped them getting into print.

It must also be said that this book is short on what many readers of Workers Press would recognise as serious political analysis. What it's long on, as one would expect, is eyewitness accounts of particular struggles, before and after 1968 as well as during that pivotal year.

So we revisit Berkeley in 1964, Madison, Washington, Milan, Turin, and the London School of Economics in 1967, Grosvenor Square and Nanterre in March 1968, Paris in May 1968, the Long March from Belfast to Derry in January 1969, and many other scenes of occupation, anger, rebellion, confrontation, repression, and, in the end, defeat.

These eyewitness accounts are frequently exhilarating and sometimes moving, though in the case of the May 1968 events in Paris a rather clearer picture of what was going on can often be gained from contemporary accounts: Solidarity's 'Paris: May 1968', for instance (republished by Dark Star Press and Rebel Press, 1986), or even the somewhat breathless reports from Paris by Paul Johnson in the 'New Statesman', which its author would probably prefer to remain buried in the archives.

It's noteworthy how '1968' really begins to come alive when the working class enters the scene: in Paris, when young workers from the suburbs swarm in to join the students on their barricades; in France as a whole, when 9,000,000 workers come out on strike against de Gaulle and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators surge through the streets; at Billancourt, where Renault workers fraternise with students; at Gennevilliers, where workers have a dozen lorries loaded with stones ready to plunge down on the police and, at a tar plant, the tar is kept constantly boiling and the hoses ready to spray it.

In Turin, the Student-Worker League, formed in the spring of 1968, argued — against considerable student opposition — for the need to link up with the working class and called for a general assembly of workers, at the university.

Hundreds turned up, many of them migrants, and poured out their feelings about their miserable working conditions. This led to an extraordinary grassroots solidarity movement, with students picketing the enormous Fiat Mirafiori plant, students helping workers to write leaflets, a massive strike movement, bloody clashes with the police, and the election of rank-and-file committees or workers' councils throughout Italy's industria north.

In Naples, medical and engineering students formed a safety and health commission to investigate conditions in a local Olivetti factory. Eight hundred workers left the factory to open a passage through security guards to let them in.

On a smaller scale, solidarity between students and workers was expressed in London, too, when students occupying the LSE joined the picket lines of a building workers' strike nearby.

One British student at least drew two important lessons from his 1968 experiences. First, 'students by themselves would never get anywhere'. Second, 'the contribution of student activism, intelligence, humour and organisational ability had to go into the workers' movement in some way'.

It's a great pity that, despite this occasional flash of insight, '1968' never really gets to analytical grips with what eventually emerges as its central theme: the role of intellectuals in the revolutionary movement. There is plenty of raw material here from which valuable lessons could be drawn; but somehow they rarely are.

A German 'independent socialist' contributor comes closest to the heart of the matter when he speaks of the temptation he felt as a student to let himself be persuaded — by others, or by vanity — of his own importance.

'It's not a coincidence that it was intellectuals in revolt who so grossly overestimated themselves', he says. This has led him, he adds, to react strongly against the kind of jargon which emerged at the time. And indeed, some at least of the then fashionable r-r-revolutionary rhetoric does seem downright silly 20 years or so later.

On the other hand, students as well as workers were willing to fight and, in many cases, to die for what they believed in. And many of them learnt in a short time some useful, if elementary, political lessons: about the sinister role of Stalinism, for example, which did all it could by fair means or foul to 'contain' the movement, to prevent any serious threat to the bourgeois state.

'Now tell them to go home' was more than once the message from French CGT bureaucrats to workers' and students' leaders.

Provided it's read critically, '1968' is a useful contribution to our knowledge of the not-too-distant past.

And, provided it's read self-critically (some Marxists in the 1960s held aloof from the movements it describes, and I think they made a big mistake), this book can help arm and prepare us for the next round of major struggles.

It can do so above all, I think, by sharpening our readiness to recognise new forms of struggle, however small or localised, as the seeds of what can swiftly become movements of major significance.



Paris, May — June 1968: Police baton charge fleeing students

ROBSON'S CHOICE

Electoral Interference by BBC

LAST MONDAY'S Panorama demonstrated, once again, why the ruling class loves secret ballots: it gives television and the press the opportunity to distort issues, sow confusion if it can, and indulge in crude character assassination, as it did in *Arthur Scargill Evermore?*, in the hope of affecting the outcome of an election.

But on this occasion the job was so ineptly handled that, even from Thatcher and the Coal Board's point of view, it lost all plausibility.

What miner in Britain could believe that the four fellow workers from Hatfield Main in Yorkshire who appeared in the programme were a representative cross section of the workforce?

Panorama tried to reduce one of the most militant, left-wing pits in the country to a sorry quartet of thoroughly confused men. The first hero-worshiped Scargill but planned to vote for Walsh; the second loathed Scargill's ideas and would definitely vote for Walsh; the third reckoned there would never again be an all-out strike in the British coalfields but would vote for Scargill; and the fourth saw the future as hopeless but would nevertheless vote for Scargill 'out of loyalty'.

When the Hatfield Main vote is known (I doubt it will be less than 75 per cent for Scargill) workers will be able to draw their own conclusions regarding the BBC's class-determined sense of 'balance'.

The main drift of the programme was to give the impression that pit closures and the hardships endured by miners and their families during the year-long strike were the fault of Arthur Scargill. Unprecedented attacks by the government

and the NCB did not enter into the equation.

Scargill's methods of defending his members interests — I continue to paraphrase — were now out of date (according to Jimmy Reid, who looked more out of date and out of condition than anything in the programme), and miners had lost faith in him.

In an attempt to prove this point Panorama singled out Wooley Colliery, where Scargill had worked for 20 years as a young man, and tried to show how — despite Scargill's call to resist closure — the men voted to shut the pit. What the programme failed to mention, of course, was the enormous pressure the men had been subjected to by the Coal Board, with promises of good jobs nearby if they moved immediately. Given that they could place no faith in the Coal Board's review procedure, what other options were open to them? Could this really be construed as loss of faith in Arthur Scargill?

The only line of dialogue worthy of a wry smile in this otherwise appalling programme came from the lips of Bert Ramelson, former industrial organiser of the Communist Party, when he said that Arthur Scargill had 'always been Marxist enough...'. For those of us who did not already know, this is precisely what Marxism means to leading Stalinists: something you can have 'more or less of', rather like cough mixture or an aphrodisiac.

On **Saturday**, at 2p.m. (BBC2), Luis Bunuel's unique film *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. At 6.35p.m. (Radio 3), piano music for four hands, features music by Debussy, Mozart and Mendelssohn. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), a musical farce with music by Haydn, *L'infedelta delusa (infidelity outwitted)*. At 10.10p.m. (BBC1), *Carrott Confidential*. At 10.10p.m. (Radio 3), *Camden Jazz Festival* pays homage to Thelonious Monk. At 10.15p.m. (Radio 4), *The Saturday Feature* traces the impact of tobacco on 17th century English society. At

11.55p.m. (BBC2), Josef von Sternberg's film, *The Saga of Anatahan*.

On **Sunday**, at 7.35a.m. (Radio 3), Schnabel's *Beethoven Concertos*, the first of five programmes in which the incomparable Artur Schnabel plays all five concertos. At 12.35p.m. (BBC1), *Farming* looks at a feudal relic: the tied cottage. At 1.30p.m. (C4), Opera on Four presents Domenico Cimarosa's *The Secret Marriage*. At 7.15p.m. (BBC2), part two of the series on the civil rights movement in the US, *Eyes on the Prize*. At 8.45p.m. (C4), *The Modern World: Ten Great Writers*, focusses on Joseph Conrad. At 10p.m. (BBC2), Screen Two presents *Dead Lucky*, by Barbara Rennie. At 10.30p.m. (ITV), *The South Bank Show*.

On **Monday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), final part of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. At 6p.m. (BBC2), Tay Garnett's film *The Joy of Living*: At 7.40p.m. (BBC2), Barry Douglas plays Beethoven. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), *Horizon* looks at the crippling emotional illness, manic depression. At 11p.m. (C4), *Radio Bikini*, a powerful documentary shown at the Edinburgh and London film festivals last year. Using previously unseen and recently declassified archive footage, *Radio Bikini* tells of the first, utterly cynical, American peacetime nuclear weapon tests on the Pacific atoll of Bikini in 1946.

On **Tuesday**, at 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), part-two of John le Carré's *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*. At 9p.m. (BBC2), an update of the 1948 film of the same name, *Johnny Belinda*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), Peter McDougall's play, *Down Where the Buffalo Go*. At 10.35p.m. (ITV), *Viewpoint Special: The Last Dream*, with the loquacious John Pilger. At 11.30p.m. (C4), *Off The Page*, features writer, Roger McGough.

On **Wednesday**, at 11a.m. (Radio 4), *The Year of Dreams*, a six-part review of the turbulent year of 1968. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), *Q.E.D.* investigates children's nutri-

tion in *Your Child's Diet on Trial*. At 10p.m. (C4), *McMillan's Mayerling*, a ballet recorded for television at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

On **Thursday**, at 2p.m. (Radio 3), *Verdi's opera I due Foscari*. At 7.40p.m. (BBC2), *The Education Programme* looks at how the Education Reform Bill will affect vital research prog-

rammes such as those at Hull University. At 8p.m. (C4), *The New Enlightenment*, which purports to chart the history of socialism and explain why governments 'are now turning away from planning and back to market forces'. At 8.10p.m. (BBC2), another slice of Max Hastings' *The War in Korea*.

On **Friday**, at 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), Lord Byron's

dramatic poem *Manfred*. At 11.10p.m. (BBC2), Luchino Visconti's haunting film, *Death in Venice*, based on the novel by Thomas Mann. At 11.30p.m. (C4), first in a new series, *Ghosts in the Machine*, a new video-art production which 'catapults a party of modern American tourists into the world of Sergei Eisenstein's classic 1926 film *Battleship Potemkin*'.



Scargill during the miner's strike

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.
SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

MICHAEL J MCKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486.
EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

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.

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.

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.

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

MAIDSTONE

HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent
DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.

GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicestershire 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.

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.

DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

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.

WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

REMAND PRISONERS:

BRITTON
HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Britton, London SW2 5XF.
LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694.
LIAM QUINN, 49930

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Basic Principles of Marxism

Six Lectures at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC 1.

Friday, February 5, 1988, at 7.30.

The Crash of '88.

WHAT are the implications of the financial and economic crisis for the working class?

Thursday, February 11, 1988, at 7.30.

What is Revolution?

MARX understood the revolutionary transformation of society as expressing the conflict between the advance of the forces of production developed by human beings and the social relations between them.

Thursday, February 18, 1988, at 7.30.

What is Capitalism?

WHY does the social system under which the working class is exploited appear to some people to be in line with 'human nature'? How does this system operate, and how will it be destroyed?

Friday, February 26, 1988, at 7.30.

The State and Revolution

HOW does the state exercise power over the working class? Can that power be broken? What will take its place?

Friday, March 4, 1988, at 7.30.

The Russian Revolution, Stalinism and Trotskyism.

SEVENTY years ago, the Russian workers, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrew Tsarism and capitalism, and the world socialist revolution began. The rise of a bureaucracy within the Soviet state led to the betrayal of the revolution, but not its destruction.

Thursday, March 10, 1988, at 7.30.

The Fourth International Today.

FIFTY years ago, Trotsky led those who fought to continue the work to prepare the world revolution in the foundation of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution. After decades of crisis, the time has come for the re-founding of the FI.

READING:

Cliff Slaughter, *Marx and Marxism*

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*

Lenin, *The State and Revolution*

Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*

EXHIBITION

'Reason and Emotion in Contemporary Art'

Edinburgh International: Reason and Emotion in Contemporary Art: Exhibition at Royal Scottish Academy, Princes Street, Edinburgh until 14 February

AT THE physical and metaphorical centre of this surprising but serious exhibition is a huge double room containing six wall-sized paintings by Sol Le Witt, collectively entitled 'Form and Colour 1987'; and a towering, blunted column of basalt blocks by James Lee Byars. The latter is called 'Figure of Death'.

Reading something about the authors of these ambitious creations in the exhibition catalogue (edited by Douglas Hall) — a book which strives hard to be helpful without being patronising, but some of which is so allusive as to be, in my opinion, inaccessible to all but a limited circle of people — provides one possible key to the sort of discussion 'Edinburgh International' should, and is perhaps intended to, provoke.

Byars, we are informed by a contributing critic, sees art as 'a unity capable of gathering into itself the Cosmic All, as one page among the pages of the Great Book, in which each page contains all the others.'

For him, art is 'an esoteric message, a probable indicator of possible paths, of converging routes that bring the out-there and the in-there, East and West, closer together. . . a journey of initiation into consciousness and knowledge. . . an instrument of individual and collective liberation, an ethical system that aims at recomposing the fragments within one single body.' (p.68)

But, just when you are thinking that that doesn't leave much for the rest of life to be about, you are assured that most of us do not need to worry since 'a work of art, an exhibition, as too a thought that affirms

the potential inherent within an object, are for him by all means manifestations of the power of being, but they are first and foremost deliberately ephemeral signals, for those few who would in any case have happened upon them more or less by accident.'

Le Witt's work, one of the exhibition selectors, Martin Kunz, tells us in his version of its rationale (the other selectors, Hall and Michael Compton also have their say), is 'classical' in the platonic sense of the 'embodiment of the pure idea' (p.27).

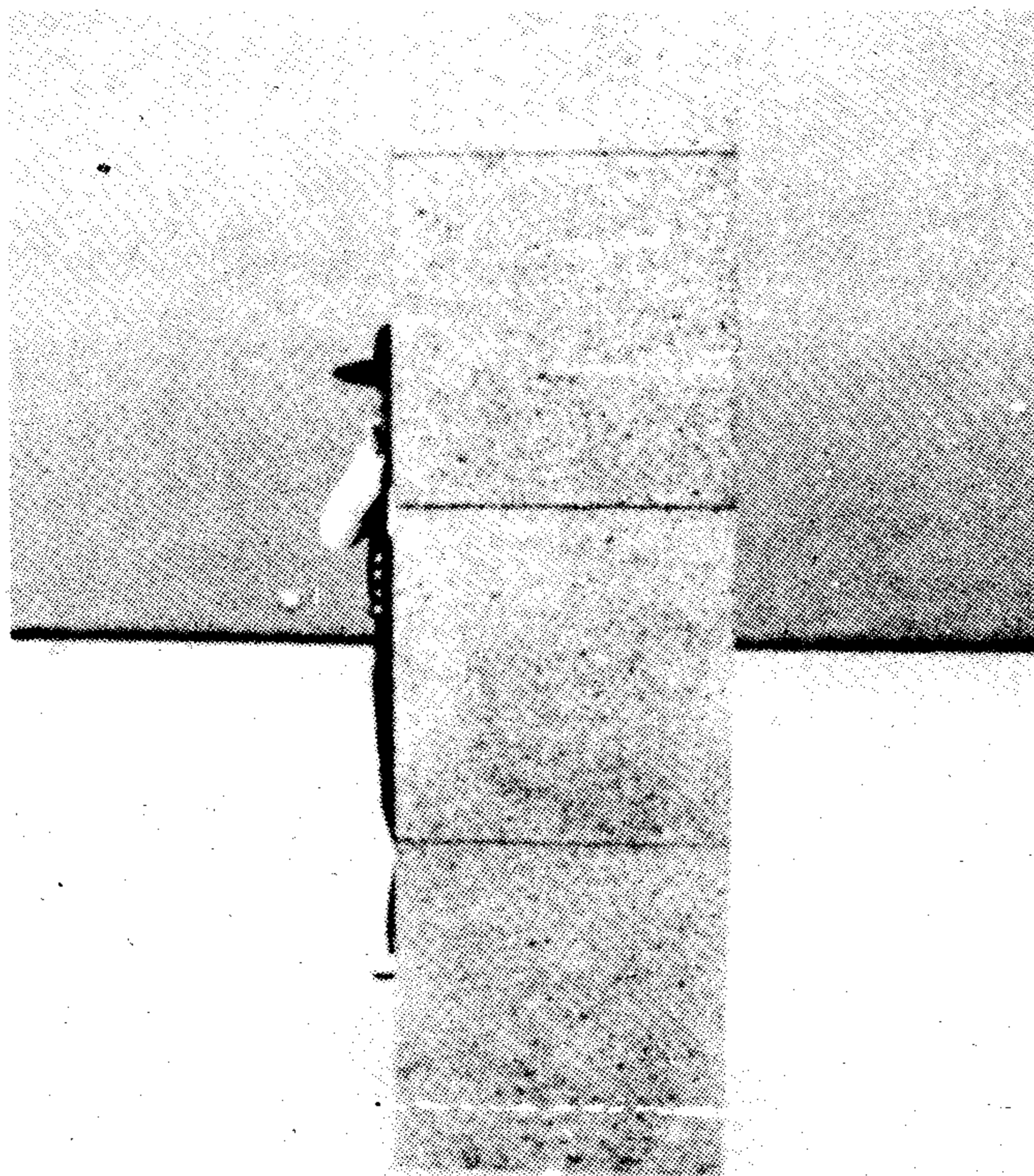
It has been chosen as the single example of this form of classicism, since the selectors came to see 'how rare such a pure realisation of this concept is today. So Le Witt forms as it were the backbone of the exhibition.'

Yet the contemporaneity of this form of pure idealism, another critic remarks (pp. 104-105), lies in its repeatability.

Le Witt formulates his grand designs, his 'wall drawings', as concepts which can, in principle, be executed by anyone in variable circumstances without loss of authenticity.

If you happen to have a certain technical ability, and access to a large enough space, you can presumably bring into being, not a reproduction Le Witt, but the thing itself.

Now, what do these two ideas — that of art as all embracing philosophy which, however, only the already initiated happen upon, and that of art as the



'Figure of Death', 1986 James Lee Byars

infinitely reproducible concept — do for the great cultural questions of today?

Does art — which has its own laws to be sure and must be permitted to explore their evolution in its own way — have no responsibility even to ask questions about how its search for pure forms and new content relates to the struggles and consciousness of the masses?

Is everything to be reconciled in the continuing approximations to ultimate perfection which a few people may chance to see — and notice — in a private collection, an art gallery or even a public building?

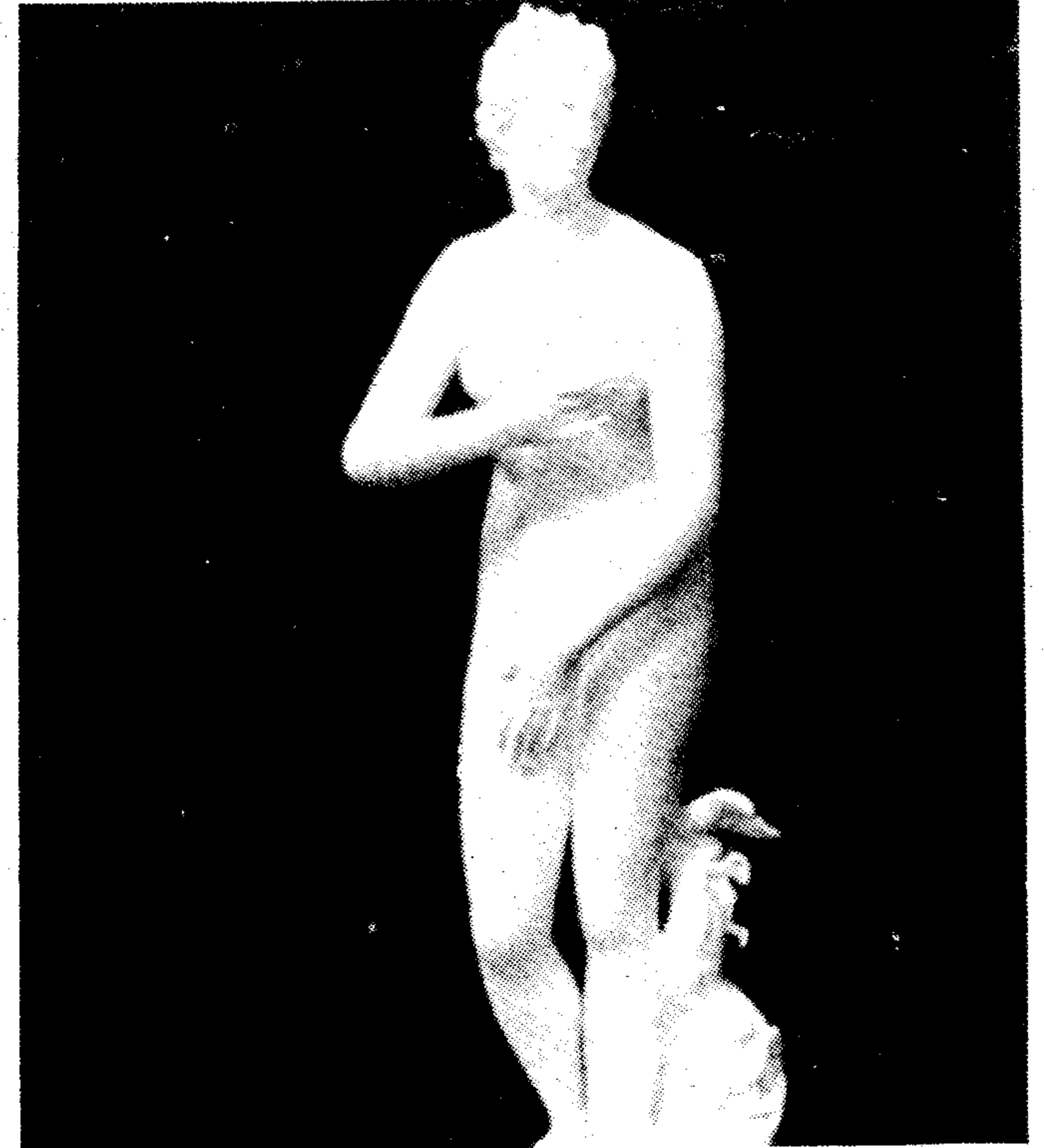
And how can the concept of 'value' imposed by a degenerate capitalist economy seeking objects in which to secure private wealth (for example a painting by Van Gogh which the artist could not sell for a sou a hundred years ago now sells for millions) stand up in the light of the infinitely repeatable concept?

If an exhibition like this were able to generate wide

ranging discussion on such matters perhaps it might fulfil the subversive purpose to which some of the allusions in the catalogue — if I understood them — seem to be aspiring.

It could be a contribution to the defeat of the philistinism of the 'gilded youth' of Thatcher's entourage, the Mamon-worshipping City set, and their international equivalents, whose control over the resources necessary for a real flourishing of art is satirically mourned in 'Edinburgh International' by the Scots poet and sculptor Ian Hamilton Finlay's beautifully simple, historically articulate 'Aphrodite of the Terror'.

Important questions are addressed in this exhibition, and sensuous experiences are to be had by visiting it: the grand simplicity of Le Witt, the compulsive attraction of Rebecca Horn's oily repellent 'Black Bath', the tactile wit of Hamilton Finlay, to name but three out of the 19 American, British, Italian, French and West



'Aphrodite of the Terror', 1987 Ian Hamilton Finlay

German artists represented.

Yet there is an uneasy air to the show as a whole. This permeates right through from the lack of an immediately apparent, all-encompassing unity in the exhibits themselves, to the well-meaning but often obscure tone of the catalogue's attempt tentatively to supply a theme by explaining the multi-faceted nature of 'post-Modernist' classicism in contemporary art, and even to the way the exhibition is promoted.

Much is made of the idea that Edinburgh, as a centre of the 18th century Enlightenment and the home of the British Establishment's major post World War II arts festival, should be bringing its citizens — and all who will come here in winter — coherently into contact with international developments in contemporary art.

The imposing classicism of the Royal Scottish Academy itself is highlighted in the explanation of the principles underlying the exhibition and in some of the

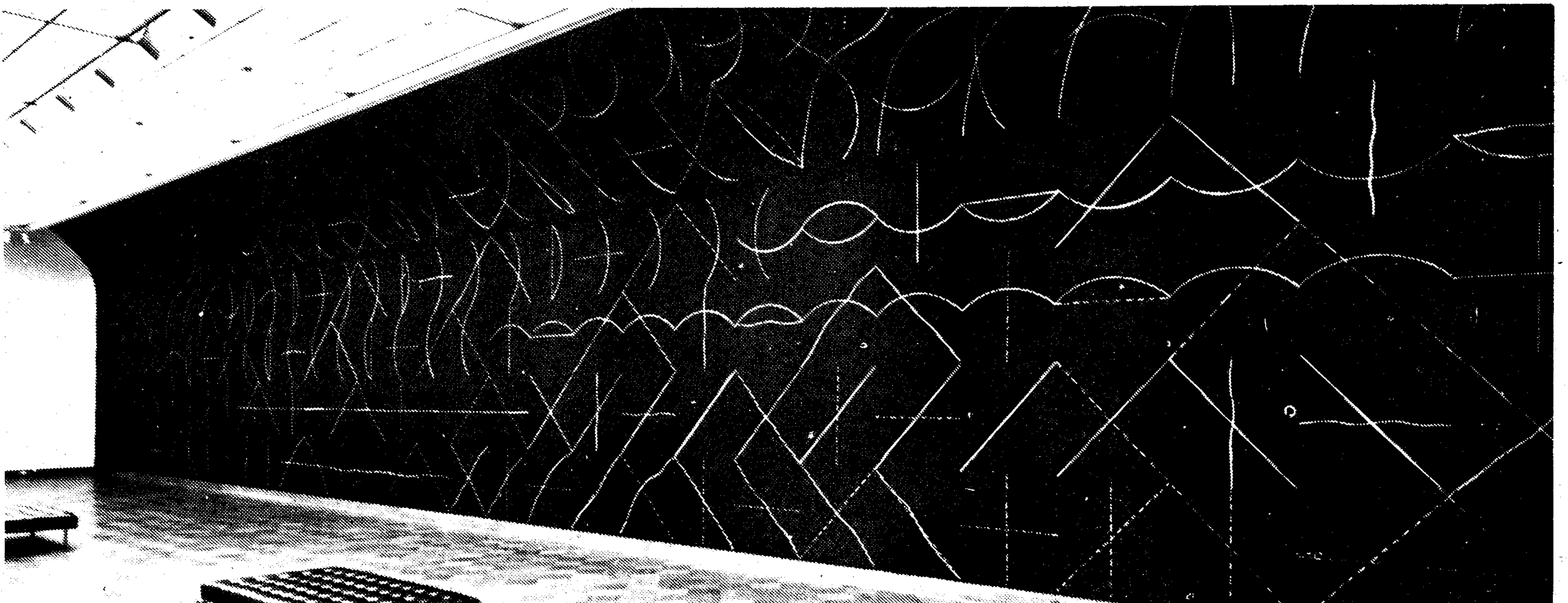
exhibits themselves.

But the incongruous billboard at the periphery of the Academy's mid-19th century portico promising a cafe within, and the makeshift nature of this welcome facility, suggest a degree of uncertainty about which citizens are expected to attend and just how angry about capitalism's hostility to genuine creativity in art they are supposed to be when they leave.

Are we, in other words, being invited to participate in an exercise in justifying art galleries to the governmental philistines by getting the ordinary punters in? Or are we participating in a genuine statement against philistinism?

It is difficult to say. But Byars monumental 'Figure of Death' is perhaps a symbol not only of our ineluctable mortality, but also of an aggressive creativity which will not be suppressed.

TERRY BROTHERSTONE



'Wall Drawing No. 260', Sol Le Witt (not in exhibition)

Workers Press

Saturday January 16 1988, Newsdesk 01-733 3058

Scottish miners to support Scargill

SCOTTISH MINERS are organising for a large majority for Arthur Scargill in the ballot for the National Union of Mineworkers presidency, to the deep embarrassment of the Communist Party-dominated Scottish leadership of the union.

Chairing the recently publicised Scottish Committee to Re-elect Arthur Scargill (SCRAS) is victimised miner Michael McGahey junior, son of the now retired area president Mick McGahey.

McGahey senior's fellow-Communist Party member, George Bolton, has foisted a policy of 'no nomination' on the Scottish leadership, in what can only be seen as a shamefaced attempt to boost the chances of right-wing challenger John Walsh.

A dispute over use of the union rule book at one Fyfe branch will come to a head this weekend as pro-Scargill miners seek to overturn what they are convinced was an unconstitutional vote to back the area executive line.

Should this result in a shift to a pro-Scargill recommendation a majority of branches in the area will have come out against the executive policy, in what would amount to a vote of no confidence in Bolton and his Labourite area secretary, Eric Clarke.

Clarke has already faced resignation calls when addressing a meeting of Lothian miners in an attempt to justify the executive's position. Both Lothian branches, Monktonhall and his own Bilston Glen snubbed him by coming out for Scargill.

Ayrshire has taken the same position leaving the Bolton-Clarke line with branch support only in the official Communist Party's last remaining serious sphere of influence in Fyfe.

Bolton's conception of leadership was further exposed with British Coal's decision to close the Seafield colliery at Kirkcaldy with the loss of 670 jobs.

With one economist describing this as 'Armageddon' for the Scottish coalfield, Bolton was at pains to downplay this warning and to place the burden of deciding whether to resist

BY A SCOTTISH CORRESPONDENT

closure entirely on the shoulders of the Seafield men themselves.

He welcomed the tentative possibility of the re-opening of nearby Frances colliery, floated by British Coal's Scottish area director George McAlpine as a sweetener to encourage passive acceptance of the Seafield decision.

McAlpine made it clear that any consideration given to this project would not be a concession to public concern about the Scottish economy, but would be tied to boosting profits through flexible working and a six-day week.

Scargill's opposition to capitulation on these issues is praised by SCRAS which — in its paper 'Miner: Election Special' — endorses his claim that it would lead to the closure of 32 more pits and the loss of up to 40,000 jobs in the British coalfields as production is increased at the larger pits.

The SCRAS election statement particularly endorses Scargill's call for all miners to rejoin the NUM and his rejection of the conciliatory attitude, pioneered before his retirement by Mick McGahey senior, towards the breakaway so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers.

SCRAS points out that Scargill has honoured his 1981 pledge 'to fight relentlessly for pits, jobs and a decent basic wage.' He has still stayed loyal to the membership 'despite the most vicious attacks from the Tory government, British Coal and the media made against any trade union leader since A.J. Cooke,' it says.

'The Tories are increasingly desperate to privatise our industry,' warns the election statement, 'opening the door to the multi-national companies that make huge profits by exploiting our Black colleagues in South Africa.

No school closures

THE closure of my children's school, St Andrews High in East Kilbride, was first proposed three months ago.

BY IAN McCORMICK

My reaction at the time was disbelief, because the school was only built eight years ago.

At the Parent-Teacher Association meeting, there was standing room only. There are 696 pupils at the school, and most of their parents were there. Subsequent meetings on the closure threat have all been as large.

The main speakers were two members of the local Review Group set up by Strathclyde Region for schools in the area: the local Regional councillor, Pat Watters, and Norman Bissell from the teachers' union EIS.

The proposal was that St Andrew's should merge with St Bride's, which is two-and-a-half miles away. It was pointed out that St Andrew's was not just a school, that after it closes at 4:00 it is used for adult education classes, parent-toddler groups, old age pensioners' groups and youth activities.

It also has a very good academic record; it is the right size to ensure a good relationship between staff, and pupils.

It is obvious that if the closure is allowed, pupils' education will suffer. A school of 700 pupils will be added to one that already has over 800 of its own. This is going to happen all over Strathclyde — and although the council denies that there will be redundancies among teachers and other staff, it will inevitably come to that in the end.

As a result, children due to take exams are thinking of leaving school early. The proposed closure is proving extremely disruptive, especially for those pupils who like my daughter are preparing to sit exams this summer.

Local review group meetings were held in East Kilbride. The public were

admitted but on condition that they were completely silent. The meetings were at 1:00 pm in the afternoon, so many parents had to leave early in order to collect younger children.

Pat Watters and Norman Bissell fought consistently for the retention of all schools. Other members of this group came up with some hair-raising proposals: at one point, one of them suggested merging primary and secondary schools.

The review group ended its deliberations at the beginning of December. There was agreement that all East Kilbride schools should remain open, except for Jackton, the smallest primary school. But the chairman, Mr Andrew McGowan, Labour Regional councillor for Cambuslang, would give no commitments.

These decisions went to the central Regional Review Group — and last week we were told that five schools in East Kilbride would go: St Andrew's High, Hurber High, and three primary schools.

The Review Group meetings were a complete sham

because this central Review Group had obviously made up its mind already. The Tories' general strategy is to pauperise the working class with cuts in health, education and social services. On the issue of school closures, working class people are identifying Strathclyde's Labour-controlled regional council with the Tories — a Labour council who were given a massive mandate at the last election to fight the Tory cuts.

Don't they care what will happen to their votes in the coming regional elections? Or are they so out of touch with people who voted for them and who pay their wages?

Those councillors who voted for the cuts should be identified, and made to face the parents, and the whole working class, at local level.

I have voted Labour all my life, and advocated that other people should vote for them, critically.

These councillors should be replaced by those willing to fight for socialist policies beginning with the fight against the cuts.

Lobby against Strathclyde threat to schools

HUNDREDS OF parents and teachers will lobby Strathclyde Regional Council's ruling Labour group on Monday, when it meets to discuss proposals to close 69 schools.

Council leader Charles Gray and his right-wing allies will recommend acceptance of proposals from a Review Group which would close 22 secondary schools, 44 primaries, two nursery schools and a special school — and cut Strathclyde's education spending by £12 million.

The threatened school cuts have provoked a furious reaction in Strathclyde's huge housing schemes and new towns, where it will mean a drastic lowering of educational standards and loss of community facilities.

In Easterhouse, a series of protest meetings have been held in the threatened Westwood School, and last Tuesday parents there invited anti-closure groups from throughout Strathclyde — Britain's largest local authority with a population of 2.4 million — to a joint meeting.

The Easterhouse parents' leaders have warned that they will campaign against Labour at the coming District council elections if closures go ahead.

There have been public meetings in nearby Cranhill, Springburn and Royston, and in East Kilbride new town. There have also been

BY SIMON PIRANI

protests in Paisley: right-wingers and Tories have used the threatened closure plan as an opportunity to demand privatisation of the local grammar school.

The school closure issue is splitting the labour movement locally into two camps.

In East Kilbride, the Trades Council, District Council and local Labour Regional councillor have all declared full support for the fight against cuts. Many teachers in the closure-hit areas have vowed backing for the campaign.

But now a 'middle-of-the-road' position — that the Regional Review Group's plan is an 'unacceptable scale' of closures, and if a few schools were knocked off the list it would be OK — is being put about by the Stalinists of the Communist Party and 'lefts', to try and find a way of making people swallow the cuts.

Given the overall level of Tory attacks on the Labour movement, no cuts, closures or job losses are 'acceptable'. The closure programme must be rejected outright, not because it is going a bit too far.

When the Regional Council working party report 'Adapting to Change' — which advocated closures on the grounds of falling numbers of pupils — was first published, the regional leadership of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) teachers' union rejected it, and warned of strike action against closures. They were supported by the Strathclyde Joint Trades Union Committee (SJTUC) which brings together all unions representing the Region's 90,000 employees.

Then began a series of manoeuvres to soften this outright opposition.

● — The most shameful role was played by the Glasgow Trades Council, which is dominated politically by the Communist Party. Last Wednesday night, an emergency resolution from the EIS's Glasgow Association, calling for the council to back the anti-closure campaign, was defeated by 33 votes to 24.

The decision — which breaks the most basic rules of trade union solidarity — was supported on the grounds that the EIS motion was 'badly worded' and 'insufficiently debated'.

● — National leaders of the EIS met at the Presidents' Council last Friday and decided that Monday's lobby of Strathclyde should be supported only by 400 EIS delegates, cutting across calls from Strathclyde associations for a one-day all-out strike.

This decision not only helped take the heat off the Regional councillors, who should be getting 'roasted alive' on the issue, but also sought to put future EIS action firmly under the national leadership's control.

● — At last Monday's Strathclyde Region EIS executive, calls for all-out

strike action this Monday, from Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire associations, were put aside: instead the limited lobby and a campaign of area-by-area strikes, strictly under the control of the EIS national leadership, was agreed.

Members of the Scottish Federation of Socialist Teachers, who argued for all-out strike on Monday, fear that the campaign will be centred on the 'unacceptable level' of closures — opening the door for a future 'compromise'.

The danger is that if the Regional Council agrees to reduce the list of school closures, EIS national leaders may agree to them over local teachers' heads.

This is the same EIS leadership which signed the rotten sell-out deal on teachers' salaries, hours and conditions a year ago — a miserable capitulation, which itself gave the Tories and right-wing councillors the green light for their proposals on school boards, nationally-dictated curricula... and school closures.

● — EIS members must fight for a strike campaign, under the control of regional and local bodies, on the policy of 'NO closures, NO cuts'.

● — Other trades unionists in education must join in such actions and the closest links built with working-class parents who are fighting to defend local education.

● Trade unionists must back the anti-closure campaign; branches affiliated to Glasgow Trades Council should fight for its position to be reversed.

● — Labour Party members must fight for those councillors that voted for, and recommended, cuts and closures, to be de-selected and thrown out of their positions.

A storm should be raised in every Labour Party branch and constituency against those who have betrayed the countless mandates given them by the working class to resist the Tory cuts.

Advertiser Charges Reduced

THE FOUR arrested on the picket line at the North London Advertiser dispute had the charges against them reduced when they appeared before magistrates at Hendon on 12 January.

News editor Howard Hannah, reporter Susan Doyle, vice-chair of Brent Trades Council, Tom Durkin, and a bystander,

Ivor Segal pleaded not guilty to obstruction. They were originally charged with wilfully obstructing the police.

After solicitor Mark Stephens, for Hannah, Doyle and Durkin, said the defence planned to call between twelve and fourteen witnesses and expected the hearing to last for two days, the case was adjourned until Friday 6

May with the following Monday set aside for the hearing to continue.

Before the hearing the four attended a mass picket outside the free sheet's Ballards Lane, Finchley office, just up the road from Margaret Thatcher's constituency office. More than 70 supporters heard NUJ president Lionel Morrison, and vice-president Barbara Gunnell, reaffirm the union's headline

support for the strike. When the four arrived at the court they were cheered by a second picket of NUJ and Brent's council members.

The dispute arises out of the compulsory redundancy of six journalists, including the sports editor, who had worked there for seven years, and the subsequent sacking of eight others who came to the support of the six.