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TRADE SLUMP MORE NHS ATTACKS

JANUARY'S record £905 million overseas trade deficit has once again exposed the precariousness of the much-talked-of Thatcher boom and placed a serious question mark over the prospect of a tax-cutting budget.

The deficit was caused principally by a sharp drop in exports to the two markets crucial for British capitalism: the United States and the Common Market.

The January figure marks a sharp worsening of the December figures. Over this period the gap on visible trade (goods) shot up almost 50 per cent to £1.5 billion.

The overall balance of payments deficit, with invisibles (services such as insurance and banking) taken into the reckoning soared by some £500 million.

If this trend continues throughout the year the British economy will be anything from £6 to £8 billion in the red.

BY THE EDITOR

A deficit of this proportion would bring the Thatcher speculative boom to a grinding halt, force up interest rates and taxes and bring about a further slashing of government spending.

The government tried to blame the 18 per cent drop in exports to the Common Market on new customs documentation.

But this explanation was rejected by Douglas Tweedle, the Customs and Excise official responsible for the new registration scheme. He said that the new system might cause problems in

how to classify particular exports but would not affect the value recorded.

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research warned that unless the government took action there would inevitably be a sterling crisis. It urged Tory chancellor Lawson not to indulge in tax cuts in his coming budget as this would only lead to greater imports and an even worse trade deficit.

The bankruptcy of Labour policy was revealed in the reaction of trade and industry spokesman Bryan Gould. This advocate of 'people's capitalism' said: 'The chancellor should heed the warnings of Britain's growing trade gap, invest his spare cash in the health service and in other ways that won't harm the trade balance, and cut interest rates to boost competitiveness and encourage investment.'

This is the old discredited Keynesian policy which claimed that governments

could spend their way out of economic difficulties. Printing money was the answer to economic slump.

This policy was tried and failed under the Wilson-Callaghan government after 1974. The result was a sterling crisis and severe International Monetary Fund-imposed cuts.

Prospect

If nothing else, the latest trade figures kill stone dead any prospect of Thatcher suddenly repenting and providing more cash for the crisis torn health, education and local authority services.

On the contrary, they will only drive the government to further attacks on the living standards and services of millions of ordinary people, making more urgent the building of a movement to bring down the Tory government.

'Glasnost' avoids Trotsky

Last month, the Soviet Supreme Court declared innocent all but one of the defendants in the 1938 Moscow Trial. The remaining defendant was Henry Yagoda, who as head of Stalin's secret police, had organised the earlier frame-ups of the leaders of the October Revolution.

So we now have the situation that the 'confessions' of Bukharin, Rykov, Rakovsky and others are admitted to have been faked, but men like Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek and Piatakov are still officially guilty of the most monstrous and fantastic crimes against the revolution they helped to lead.

Above all, there is no plan to clear the name of Leon Trotsky, the

chief of those indicted at all of Stalin's show trials. Trotsky, and his son Leon Sedov, were accused in their absence and so are not classified as defendants.

The Soviet leaders, with all their talk of 'glasnost', continue to avoid the issue of Trotsky's place in the history of the revolution and the USSR. Instead, in his 70th anniversary speech last October, Michael

Gorbachev repeated many of Stalin's old slanders against Trotsky, merely exchanging the lies of the 1930s for those of the 1920s.

The international labour movement must demand an end to this stance. Restore all these men to their rightful place in history! Republish their writings and make them available to the new generations of Soviet workers and intellectuals! Stop the destruction of the archives of the secret police and open them to public examination. Come to our public meeting on 20 March (see advertisement on page 9)

ANSWER APARTHEID WITH ACTION!

SOUTH AFRICA'S racist rulers are imposing new curbs on union and church funding, having already banned all anti-Apartheid and democratic activity.

They are trying union leader Moses Mayekiso, and holding six young people from Sharpeville on death row, including Theresa Ramashamola, the first woman sentenced to death in a political trial.

In Angola, South African troops, tanks and bombers are in action against the people of that country.

In Britain, Labour MPs have appealed to the Tories to reconsider their opposition to economic sanctions. But the Tories have shown time and again they will protect Botha, who protects their profits from exploiting Black workers.

Workers Press says the workers' movement internationally must answer the Apartheid rulers and their friends with action! For trade union sanctions NOW to hit our own capitalists' links with South Africa! Solidarity with South Africa's Black workers against Botha's government means we must step up the fight to smash Thatcher's government!

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Nurses lead off the march in Dundee

Workers Press

A welcome result

THE result of the executive elections in the Transport and General Workers Union must of course be welcomed. It represents a defeat for the right-wing in the labour movement. The collapse of support for right-wing chairman Brian Nicholson is especially pleasing.

Over the past two years, general secretary Ron Todd has been overruled on many important issues by the right wing majority on the executive. At the same time, he has sometimes found this situation quite comfortable.

He has been wont to indicate with a nod and a wink that, really, he was in favour of much more leftishness than he could get his executive to agree to. Now this very handy cover is blown. (Don't forget that Neil Kinnock is a T&G-sponsored MP.)

In a revealing comment, the 'Guardian' quoted a top Labour spokesperson as saying that the T&G election result was 'the worst thing that has happened to Labour in the last four years'. So the election of Thatcher mattered less in these circles!

But when the capitalist press talks about the 'hard left' taking control of Britain's largest union, we ought to take a rather more careful look. The shift on the executive is certainly a by product of profound and very rapid changes taking place in the class struggle. But these influences are reflected very indirectly indeed in the new majority, headed as it is by supporters of 'Militant' and the pro-Moscow 'Morning Star' group.

The lessons of the miners' strike have gone much deeper into the thinking of the working class than many on the left care to imagine. The struggle defend the NHS, the Ford's strike, the battle of the seamen with the Tory anti-union laws, and the re-election of Scargill in the NUM, all point in a similar direction.

We are not witnessing simply a new wave of resistance to the monstrosities of Thatcherism. Even more significant is the direct clash between this movement and the union bureaucracy, and the great speed with which the changes are developing.

The Ford's experience is vital here. The union negotiators — especially the Stalinist Airlie — sold the management deal to their members only with great difficulty. It took the direct intervention of Todd and Jordan, in secret talks with the employers, to restart the negotiations that finally managed to end the highly damaging strike.

Is the T&G's influence in the TUC and the Labour Party really going to mean anything in the struggle between the working class and Thatcher? That depends.

Is the new majority going to use its position merely to give a bit of 'left' colour to the manoeuvres of the bureaucracy? Are these people opposed to their predecessors only in urging Willis and Kinnock to project a more 'militant' image? Will they try to palm the movement off with a few slogans for a Labour government at some unspecified future date?

Or is there going to be the beginnings of a new leadership in the unions and the Labour Party? Will this powerful machine be able to respond to the needs of the working class today and break loose of its bureaucratic mountings?

'Hard left' or not, the spotlight is on the new T&G executive.

Bill Hunter: A Statement

THE WRP Congress, meeting on 20-21 February, decided on a programme of work for the Party, centred on our participation in the work of the Preparatory Committee for an international conference of Trotskyists to discuss the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

The Party also agreed to begin work on a comprehensive programme for work in Britain and to re-call the Congress later this year to discuss this programme.

At our Congress a group of some dozen members, led by Bill Hunter, walked out of the Workers Revolutionary Party and formed themselves into the British section of the International Workers League (FI), the LIT.

The walk-out came after a long series of discussions with the LIT about the nature of the Fourth International and the means by which it is to be re-built.

The action of these comrades is highly irresponsible and cuts across these political discussions in favour of organisational manoeuvres.

The method of the walk-out is itself instructive.

First, the group walked out before a vote was taken on their proposition for fusion with the LIT, an indication that they knew they had been heavily defeated politically.

Second, the group came to the Congress with their statement already written and their decision taken. This we know because a copy of their statement came into our hands during the course of the Congress, before the Hunter group chose to make it public.

They pretended to continue the discussion at the Congress, but this was a farce.

This thoroughly unprincipled method of work will never be the basis for building a revolutionary leadership in the working class.

Class

Nor does the statement make the slightest attempt to explain the political developments in the class struggle which lay at the basis of the split.

The split is presented in purely organisational terms: some wanted to join the LIT while others did not.

This was never the case. The majority considered that there was and remains the real basis for the unification of our forces and the building of the Fourth International. We remain con-

vinced that it is possible to reach out to new forces impelled into struggle by the deepening crisis of capitalism throughout the world.

But there are a series of outstanding political issues about the very nature of the Fourth International which at this point remain unresolved with the LIT. Until these questions are clarified through a process of discussion and struggle fusion with the LIT would be irresponsible.

In the penultimate paragraph of their statement, those walking out of the WRP say: 'We do not take our decision lightly but of necessity.'

But there is not a single word said about this 'necessity'. What developments in the class struggle, nationally and internationally, required this break? What was fundamentally wrong with the orientation to these developments on the part of the WRP which necessitated the break led by Hunter?

Trotsky took the decision to break from the Third International only when, on the basis of a series of experiences, he became convinced that it had degenerated beyond repair. There is not the slightest hint of this approach in the Hunter statement.

Over the period since the split in the WRP in 1985 a number of important theoretical and political issues about the nature of the Fourth International and the struggle against revisionism have

been clarified and are still being clarified.

It is this process of clarification which is coming into conflict with a series of short-cut measures through which the LIT is attempting to build the Fourth International.

The action of Bill Hunter and his group is a continuation of these wrong methods.

We repeat: we believe that the course taken by Bill Hunter and those following him are profoundly wrong and irresponsible.

The Preparatory committee met last weekend and discussed a programme of work for the forthcoming international conference of Trotskyists and for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Fourth International in 1938.

Stage

We do not consider our discussions with the LIT to be at an end but rather to have entered a new stage. We remained determined to draw the LIT into a common process of re-building the Fourth International.

We intend to play our full part in the work of the Preparatory Committee and its preparations for a forthcoming international conference.

We are convinced that experience will prove this to be the correct way forward.

The Political Committee, March 1988

Take your medicine and pay for it

Last week the working class was loaded with another increase in prescription charges effective from 1 April.

Health Minister Tony Newton said that the rise was 'in line with medical price rises'. It is now cheaper to buy more than a third of drugs without a prescription.

Since the Tories came in in 1979 prescription charges have climbed from 20 pence to £2.60.

Those worst affected are the chronically ill who do not

qualify for exemption from charges, such as asthma, multiple sclerosis and schizophrenia sufferers. For those on the dole or low incomes the charges have become prohibitive — people will go without because they simply cannot afford them.

The message coming loud and clear from Thatcher is that the health of the working class is of absolutely no interest to her. The announcement that the charges had gone up because of increased medical prices shows the Tory's firm determination to allow questions of life and death to become

just another set of figures at the mercy of market forces.

Meanwhile the Tories and their friends continue to stash away plenty of money from their investments in these same markets, not least from shares in the multinational drug companies making huge profits out of the NHS.

The announcement of the increase in charges has been put out well before budget day, to evade the rising tide of protest over the NHS due to culminate in widespread strike action on the 14th and 15th of March.

Reprieve for Camden

A LABOUR council's plans to sack over 4,000 of its workers were stopped in the High Court on Monday. (29 February)

The local government workers' union NALGO won a ruling ordering the Camden council, in North-West London, to undertake not to implement its threat to dismiss all NALGO members who refused to accept a proposed compulsory redeployment procedure.

The council also had to undertake not to make any further such threats pending full hearing of the case. The High Court decision means NALGO will be able to take legal proceedings against the council.

NALGO deputy general-secretary Alan Jenkinson said after the ruling that an important precedent had been set.

'Labour councils will now realise they cannot use the threat of mass sackings to get round existing collective agreements.'

His statement clearly indicates that in NALGO's view other councils carrying out Tory cuts have been considering similar action — in the words of High Court judge Simon Brown, 'High confrontation'

ALL OUT MARCH 8th
LONDON BRIDGE

**NO CUTS
NO PRIVATISATION
DEFEND ILEA
FIGHT FOR COUNCIL
JOBS AND SERVICES**

**MARCH and RALLY: ASSEMBLE :
KENNINGTON PARK SE II. 1030am.
March to a rally in Jubilee Gardens**

THATCHER herself has been summoned by a Commons Select Committee to answer damning criticisms in a report on the underfunding of the NHS. The eleven member committee of MPs, whose political leanings range from right-wing Conservative Nicholas Winter-ton to Labour leftwinger Audrey Wise, has a built-in Tory majority of six.

It can hardly be seen as a collection of loony lefties.

The report, timed to influence the budget, states that there will be significant reduc-

tions in the health service this year on the basis of present expenditure plans. Finance for the health service has not, as Thatcher asserts, in-

creased but has fallen short to the tune of £1,896 million.

The MPs attack the failure of the Department of Health to monitor the effects of the systematic underfunding of the NHS.

lives and welfare of millions could not be more clearly demonstrated.

The report calls for:

- An immediate cash investment of £95 million to make up for the shortfall in the current financial year.

- At least £1 billion over the next two years to pay for specific developments — information technology, building maintenance, replacing essential equipment and community care.

- Commitment to fund hospital worker's pay increases in full, and not to force hospitals to make cuts in preparation for underfunding by the government for pay awards. Low pay for nurses is the major factor in the understaffing of the Birmingham Children's Hospital — delaying the operations of 111 children, four of whom have died.

- Guarantees to fund a 2 per cent increase in services in 1988/1989.

Health secretary John Moore cannot be accused of a dilatory reply to the criticisms in the report. He said immediately 'the government will not be writing

blank cheques for anybody.'

It is perfectly clear that the Tories will take no notice of any pleas for extra funding for the NHS, not even from their own side, and are determined to use their £10 billion budget surplus to give tax concessions to the rich.

Thatcher and her ministers regard hospitals as businesses which have to finance themselves without assistance from the state. Their objection to the health service is that you cannot make money out of saving human life. Because of high unemployment the working class has become superfluous to requirements, and a liability on state funds through unemployment benefits, local government services, and the NHS. The logical extension for Thatcher is that dead workers don't cost money — and you can in fact make a profit out of selling cemeteries as her evil crony Lady Porter in Westminster has shown.

For the working class it is could not be more clear that the continued existence of the Tory government is incompatible with human life.

Thatcher — the Grim Reaper

Pressure

Financial pressure has led to a scandalous rate of bed and ward closures, cutting of services and underuse of facilities. The report says 'We have not attempted to conduct a systematic survey: only the government has the resources for that, although it is clear from the evidence given to us by the DHSS that they have not done so. That we regard as extraordinary.'

Examples given include the closure of a quarter of the beds at Birmingham Children's Hospital — the hospital at the centre of child deaths due to delays in operations — and the cancellation of 3,500 operations at the Royal Berkshire hospital.

Tory indifference to the



NUPE porters in Leicester, picketing against the NHS cuts

No time for accidents

NUPE members at the Leicester Royal Infirmary have decided to picket the hospital at lunchtime in protest against the threat of privatisation.

Tom Smith, NUPE steward for the porters, told Workers Press that the workforce had been told that it was 'more than likely' that they would be privatised.

'They said "screw yourself down so that you can win the contract"', said Tom.

'We feel very bitter about this, as we are working at the bottom level already, there is no way we can make any more cuts without the patients suffering seriously.'

'When the domestics won their in-house tender, they were cut down from two to one worker per ward.'

'On top of this they also had to clean outside. The situation is, if someone kicks a bottle of urine over, it has to stay spilt until a nurse picks it up, as the domestics' time schedule cannot cope with accidents.'

'The domestics were taken for a ride,' he said, 'and that is not going to happen to us.'

'We are making a fight of this, for ourselves, and for the people who cannot stand up for themselves.'

'Otherwise, the health service is going to be snatched from our hands.'

Education

Commenting on the call made by the local Education Alliance earlier in the week, inviting hospital workers to join the Education Alliance demonstration in Leicester on 12 March, Tom said, 'we are facing the same thing as education.'

'The government doesn't care about health unless you can pay, neither do they care about whether people learn or not. We are joining the Education Alliance demonstration, as their fight is our fight.'

Tom pointed out that the NUPE branch had voted for strike action on 14 March, but this still had to go to ballot.

'We shall probably get it,' he said.

'The point about this action is, its coming from the grass roots, we have taken the initiative to defend the health service.'

Agreement

Sylvia Ward, NUPE steward for the Domestics, was in full agreement with Tom.

'It's everybody's health service and we've got to fight,' she said.

'I believe they are trying to get rid of it.'

'I'd like to see this government out, as all they want is profit and looking after the moneyed people. Everything is being bought up, and what we should understand is that this is our heritage and we're losing more of it everyday.'

Delays

SHORTLY after the tragic death of the fourth child as a result of waiting too long for an operation at Birmingham Children's Hospital a report reveals that between 40 and 50 per cent of available operating theatre time in five health districts examined is not used — mainly because consultant surgeons are not available.

The National Audit Office report showed that in Wakefield District Health Authority 69 theatre sessions were cancelled from March to June 1986. In Oxford, according to the report, 'sessions were cancelled primarily because medical staff were not available.'

Len Peach, chairman of the NHS management board denied to MPs on the Commons Public Accounts Committee that this was because they were tied up with working for private patients.

He was accused however of not being 'perfectly frank' when he said 'Consultants have many other duties, such as teaching, research, examining people... He said that there would be

more information available within the next twelve months to enable a more accurate examination of the reasons for underused theatres.

Amidst ever increasing waiting lists and savage pressure from the Tory government for the NHS to be self financing precisely through wholesale privatisation of its facilities these are sobering statistics.

The least radical of Thatcher's proposals to revamp the NHS involves massive privatisation, and funding of public beds through more private patients.

If these plans go ahead, and short of the demise of the Tory government they will, thousands of consultants will be spending much greater portions of their time on private work — the operating theatres of the NHS will be left empty while children are dying for lack of operations.

The report also showed that it was usual in four out of the five health authorities to give only three or four days notice for operations.

Aberdeen marches

A LONG procession of health service workers and supporters marched through Aberdeen on Wednesday's day of action — the biggest demonstration for years.

The Hall Russell shipyard was closed as many of its workers joined the march.

Though relegated to the end of the march, a big contingency of the unemployed gave their support.

At a packed meeting Jurgen Thomanek, Trades Council chair said that the day of action only marked the beginning of the struggle.

Congratulations and encouragement came from Frank Doran, Labour MP.

'It's your health service — go out and save it!' he said,

to great applause.

(He did not promise that the leadership would be marching ahead.)

Bob Hughes, Labour MP, said that the chancellor had money spilling out of his pockets and pledged 'total support from the Shadow Cabinet' for the NHS.

Propaganda about saving extra money from private tendering was criticised by Dr Marian Hall. She referred to dirty hospitals and the

collapse of employment security and workers' conditions where private companies were operating.

'We do not want to follow "the example of England"', she said and considered that the shortfall in money should be made up by the government.

The rally called for a referendum in Scotland on the question of the NHS being properly funded and free from privatisation.

On Grampian television recently, Michael Forsyth, Scottish NHS Tory hatchetman, diverted a discussion on his own involvement in private companies supplying hospitals, while he continued his attacks on strikers.

Not just about pay

CHRIS ENOCH and Jonathan Jolly, two student nurses who last month earned £270, and £264 respectively, spoke to Workers Press on the picket line outside Prince Charles hospital (PCH), Merthyr Tydfil during the NHS day of action in Wales.

They were critical of the Royal College of Nurses' no-strike rule. They told us they had left to join COHSE, and explained why.

'The RCN is not a union — it's a professional body. As student nurses we have no vote, and we didn't feel we were being represented. The majority of nurses in COHSE and NUPE, discounting the RCN, want a strike policy. Today at PCH it is only a protest, but the

sentatives are easier to get hold of.

'Unfortunately there's a lot of in-fighting in the health service unions. Some people are second wage earners while there are others who have to manage on the low wages, and there are ancillary staff cut-backs also. COHSE is a good union. It involves all workers in the hospital and unity is strength.'

'The government want to split up the different sections placing emphasis on nurses when the real issue is funding the whole of the NHS. Maybe they would be able to fund a nurses' pay rise but it would divert attention away from the real issue. The crux of the matter is not just the RCN and nurses — the national health service is at risk.'

The greatest fear expressed by Chris and Jonathan which the TUC leaders should take note of was made in their last comment: 'Without the help of other trade unions we are fighting a losing battle.'



CHRIS ENOCH

RCN don't recognise that better cover is provided when we're on strike because minimum levels have to be met, whereas under normal working conditions we often fall below that.

'We joined COHSE about a month ago but we've been thinking about it for a long time. We weren't happy and we went along with the flow. A lot of nurses join RCN blindly — they think it offers them the most protection, but it is a false sense of security. COHSE have a six-point charter; they have definite aims and their repre-



JOHNATHAN JOLLY

RAIL-PIT LINK-UP

Possibilities for revolutionary leadership

BY GEOFF PILLING

A NEWS item in 'The Independent' (26 February) reports that discussions are taking place between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the pit deputies union NACODS and the rail unions ASLEF and NUR about a possible merger of the four unions.

The Tory government's decision to privatise electricity supply is the immediate cause of the talks. The break up of the national electricity grid would lead to severe job losses for both rail workers and miners.

The NUM itself is already threatened with a steep decline in membership resulting from British Coal's drive to close pits and introduce a six day working week — a prelude to the industry's privatisation.

The CEBG policy of building power stations on coastal sites and deep water ports would result in an enormous reduction of the rail workforce. Over 80 per cent of the coal required for electricity generation is currently carried by rail.

A union of rail workers and miners would create a body with great potential to fight against the latest Tory privatisation moves.

A glance at a map of Britain shows a network of power stations, pits and railway depots, the control of which will be decisive in the struggle against the Tory government.

So we must welcome these discussions. But we do so not from the point of view of the needs of the trade union bureaucracy. It could be, for instance, that some of the union leaders concerned see in the merger the possibility of a big union able to wield influence at the top of the movement.

No. Such a merger must be accompanied by the formation of action committees amongst miners and rail workers able to draw in other groups of workers — such as those in the National Health Service — as well as those in the communities who are facing the same threat from privatisation.

These committees must hammer out a policy and programme that can defeat Thatcher's privatisation drive. The widest possible discussion must be organised, open to all groups and opinions in the working class movement.

Such discussions must also have at their centre the issue of how to defeat all those in the labour movement who refuse to lead and mobilise the working class for such a fight.

Local action committees must become the basis for a network of regional and national committees under the control of the workers, answerable directly to those electing them.

This movement would constitute not only a powerful blow against the Thatcher gov-



NUR and ASLEF pickets supporting the miner's strike 1984

ernment but against all those 'new realists' in the trades union and labour movement whose policy is based on accommodation and collaboration with the government.

In the epoch known to Marxists as imperialism — the epoch of the death-agony and break-up of capitalism — there is no middle way for the trade union movement.

The unions become either appendages of the capitalist state, instruments for the disciplining of the working class in the interests of the employers. Or they become bodies capable of assisting the working class along the road to its fundamental goal: the overthrow of capitalism.

For the unions to become the latter the question of democracy in the organisations of the working class becomes a burning issue. Who controls the unions? Leaders whose aim is accommodation with the ruling class or the members whose jobs, services and very lives are threatened by Thatcher's policies?

The Tory drive to privatise basic industries and vital services cannot be solved by simple solidarity action amongst workers.

The creation of a nationalised coal industry, of a nationally organised electricity supply industry, of the formation of a national health service expressed the fact that the development of techniques within capitalism gave production an ever greater social character.

Such techniques increasingly stretch beyond the limits and resources of the individual firm, even of the nation state — as the growth of trans-national corporations shows.

The break up of such nationalised industries, together with the NHS, marks the decline of the productive forces and expresses the fact that capitalism has increasingly to destroy the gains of the past, including the reforms won by the working class in the course of its struggle.

This is why the struggle against privatisation poses revolutionary questions. The Tory government will not be defeated by parliamentary means, even of the most left variety. Nor will mere trade union solidarity actions, however militant, resolve the crisis facing millions of people.

A distinction must be made between those leaders who have led a fight against the Tory government and those Stalinist and reformist leaders who want a reconciliation with the UDM and have no intention of leading any fight against Thatcher.

At the same time we must stress that if leaders such as Arthur Scargill remain within the confines of parliamentary politics, however left, and purely trade union forms of activity, however militant, they will fall far short of what is required in the coming struggles.

In the struggle against the capitalist state, the question of revolutionary leadership is vital. The continuation of the 'shoot-to-kill' policy in Ireland shows that the British state continues to prepare a force to deal with the rising tide of struggle throughout the working class movement.

The herding of youth into state funded 'schemes' is another aspect of this effort to establish a force to break the working class and its organisations.

Those 'new realists' who increasingly turn their fire on the left in the movement and away from Thatcher are enemies in this struggle who will have to be defeated.

It is these same 'new realists' who will join hands with the Tories and others in a coalition of 'national unity' — should that prove necessary to defeat the working class.

The need to work over the experiences of the miners' strike is more vital than ever.

The TUC, along with Kinnock and the Stalinists in the Communist Party of Great Britain set out to isolate the miners and drive them back to work, crushed.

The miners showed no lack of determination to fight: for over a year, tens of thousands of miners, backed by many other groups of workers as well as by support committees which were built during the struggle, battled day after day with specially trained military-style police.

The miners' strike involved a struggle against the capitalist state, just as the defence of the nationalised industries and the national health and educational services will involve a struggle against this same force.

Only a leadership which is determined to carry the fight through to the end — to the overthrow of capitalism — and armed with Marxist theory will be able to resolve the crisis facing millions of workers.

The miners' strike was short of one thing: just such a leadership able to unite the movement and take it forward to the overthrow of the Tory government, as a step along the road to the socialist revolution.

The working class is being driven towards a general strike against the Tory government. It is therefore essential that the lessons of previous confrontations with the state be assimilated by the working class and its party on the eve of a new wave of struggles.

The 1926 general strike revealed above all the crisis of revolutionary leadership in the British working class.

Under the direction of the Stalin-dominated leadership of the Communist International, the young Communist Party of Great Britain subordinated itself to the politics of a group of left trade union leaders on the general council of the TUC — Purcell, Swales and Hicks.

The Party was thus prevented from drawing the essential lesson from the 1926 experience: that trade unionism, however left its leadership, could never be a substitute for Bolshevism, for the building of independent revolutionary parties based on the scientific foundations of Marxism.

That lesson was learned not in the British working class but only in the development of the fight against Stalinism internationally, a fight led by Trotsky's Left Opposition.

And it was a lesson established in struggle against Stalinism — which in the decade leading up to 1933 and the defeat of the German working class at the hands of fascism, became transformed into a direct agent of the ruling class within the international working class movement.

It was out of this experience that the Fourth International was born and through it the lessons of the British General Strike brought back into the British working class and made a part of its theoretical and political capital.

On the eve of what promises to be momentous struggles against the capitalist state the urgent necessity is to build a leadership which is based consciously on all these lessons from the past.

This is the task we have set ourselves and we ask all readers and supporters to join in carrying this struggle forward.



Food convoy in the East India Dock road, London, during the General Strike 1926

DISCUSSION: ON P.L.O.

WHEN thousands of Palestinians, young and old, women and men, face tear gas and bullets, waving their national flag, and shouting 'we are all PLO', we need to grasp what this means for them, and for us.

We are for building Trotskyist parties in every country. Some comrades accuse me of not wanting 'to see this banner planted in the Palestinian struggle.'

On the contrary, I very much want to see the Trotskyist banner planted firmly in that and every other struggle against imperialism and oppression. To do that, we have to be part of the struggle. We cannot plant a banner in thin air. Nor can we be content to unfurl a banner somewhere else, then wait for the masses to come to us.

When I referred to the affiliation of trade unions, women's organisations, students and so on with the PLO, I was not suggesting that the PLO is therefore a working class movement, let alone that it can take the place of a Bolshevik party.

I was simply pointing to the PLO's mass following, in every walk of Palestinian life. It is not just a nationalist movement, but the national movement. In the eyes of the masses, whether under occupation or in exile, it is synonymous with their national identity and struggle for self-determination.

(Likewise for their enemies. The Zionists say they might talk to 'Palestinians who are not PLO'. They have had trouble finding any. Rabin explained to Thatcher that Israel could not allow municipal elections in the West Bank because the people would only elect PLO supporters.)

We would have the same problem, if we sought Palestinians who were not PLO supporters for a dialogue. There are of course the old notables, bought alternately by Israel or King Hussein; the Islamic fundamentalists, who are not over-fond of Marxism or any other secular ideology; and small groups directly controlled by the intelligence services of this or that regime.

But you will not find many Palestinians engaged in the struggle, be they bourgeois nationalists or trade unionists, 'left' or 'right', who do not identify proudly, whatever their opinion of this or that leader or policy, with the PLO.

References to Healy's support for Fatah here are beside the point. Fatah, the main constituent of the PLO, is a big movement with more than one shade of opinion even among its leaders. Alongside it in the re-unified PLO are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front led by Nayef Hawatmeh (which adopted the 'two-state policy' even before Fatah), the Palestinian Communist Party, etc.

Whatever analogies may usefully be drawn between Ireland and Palestine, Palestine and South Africa, or any other countries, if you want to develop a perspective for Palestine, there is no substitute for studying Palestine.

Palestine was partitioned 40 years ago. The Trotskyist movement was opposed to partition, and called for the unity of Arab and Jewish workers against imperialism. Had it been strong enough, history might have been different, and there would not today be a 'Palestinian problem'. But it

THIS discussion article by CHARLIE POTTINS on the nature of the PLO and its struggle does not necessarily represent the views of the Workers Revolutionary Party. A recent letter from Charlie Pottins provoked considerable discussion about the PLO and the author here expands on his earlier points.

The article is produced in the hope

was not.

To argue now about whether partition in general is 'a bad thing', or whether there ought to be a Jewish state, is hardly facing our responsibility to the current struggle.

The Zionists succeeded, with the aid of imperialism, in bringing masses of Jews, many from Arab countries (how they were brought is another, and not very pleasant story) to Palestine and settling them on Arab land. What has been created is not just a settler colony, but a new Hebrew-speaking nationality, with its own bourgeoisie, peasantry and proletariat, its own contradictions and class struggles.

Whether or not we like it, this is a material reality, and the Palestinians, who are waging not a debate, but a national struggle, have to confront it.

Unlike the Ulster Protestant 'state', the Zionist state does not depend on a foreign military presence to maintain itself (although it is certainly, massively dependent on imperialist subsidies).

Unlike the South African economy, it does not generate huge profits for imperialism (rather the reverse), does not depend on Black (read Arab) labour, nor Black policemen to defend its rule.

Even back in 1936, when the Palestinian Arab general strike was launched, against Zionist colonisation and the British mandate, the Zionists actually gained ground, expanding their economy with Jewish labour.

Since 1967, the Zionist state has occupied the whole of Palestine, subjecting the people in the occupied territories to colonial rule and exploitation.

Palestinian workers from the occupied territories have become an important, super-exploited section of the 'Israeli' labour force, and are discovering their strength. But they are not a majority.

Exploited as workers, denied their rights as a people, Palestinians are waging a legitimate struggle for national self-determination. It is the duty of socialists, be they Palestinian, Israeli or British, to support that struggle.

It may be argued that we do not have to adopt the national movement's slogans and programme as our own. Then why is the PLO's call for a 'democratic secular state' in all Palestine treated as sacrosanct, whereas its current demand for a Palestinian state is attacked as 'betrayal'?

Surely you do not need to be more nationalist than the-nationalists to prove your commitment to self-determination? Making self-determination 'complete', as N. Wilde demands (Workers Press 13 February), is a matter of social revolution, not territorial extent.

Norah Wilde says the PLO no longer aims at 'destruction of the Zionist state' (the Zionists won't accept her assurance!), therefore it has 'capitulated' to imperialism. Nonsense!

How does she want it destroyed, by nationalist guerrilla war, working class re-

volution, nuclear weapons, or the power of prayer? (perhaps disguised as 'Left' slogans). Has she given it a thought?

It does matter. We need to evaluate the PLO's political evolution historically, in confronting its problems, and not just carelessly throw words around like 'capitulation'.

The establishment of Israel in 1948, turning a million Palestinians into homeless refugees, was a defeat for the Arab states, contributing to the Egyptian 1952 revolution, and leading a new generation of Palestinians to try and form a different kind of leadership.

Emerged

Fatah, and the Arab National Movement (out of which came the Popular Front) emerged, the former stressing Palestinian national independence, the latter seeking a wider, pan-Arab revolution. Drawing inspiration from the Chinese, Algerian, and Vietnamese revolutions, these groups turned to guerrilla warfare. They saw themselves as vanguards of a people's war.

The Israeli victory of 1967 created conditions for intensified guerrilla war in the newly-occupied territories, and also enabled Palestinians either side of the pre-1967 border to resume contact and exchange experiences.

A year after the defeat of the Arab armies, the Palestinian guerrillas' heroic stand at el Karameh strengthened their standing among their people. The PLO, previously an instrument of the Arab states, was taken over by the Palestinians, chiefly Fatah.

At the same time, contacts were made between some Palestinian nationalists and Israeli leftists. Together with the experiences of Palestinians who had lived within Israel since 1948, this led the Palestinian movement to modify its attitude to Israeli-Jewish society, no longer seeing it as merely a colonial settler community.

Broken

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which had broken from the Popular Front rejecting Habbash's claim to Marxism, and had the first contact with Israeli leftists, adopted the call for a Democratic Secular State in which both Jews and Arabs would have rights.

This was later adopted by Fatah, and the PLO, but with one change in the formula. It was to be a 'Democratic Secular state of Palestine, for Jews, Christians and Muslims'. That is, a secular state in which 'Palestinians' would be defined by religious affiliations.

The pro-Palestinian Left in Britain, including the WRP, in adapting the 'democratic secular state' slogan, either seemed unaware of any distinction or deliberately blurred it. Likewise, we blurred the distinction between a democratic secular, i.e. bourgeois, state and a social-

ist united Palestine. that it will stimulate a discussion amongst Workers Press readers, especially about the Permanent Revolution and its implication for the middle east. Next week's Workers Press will contain an article by Cliff Slaughter 'How not to report the PLO' which takes up a recent article by Charlie Pottins.

ist united Palestine.

The October 1973 war, and oil crisis, bringing a shift of power temporarily to the Arab national bourgeoisie, and the possibility that imperialism would seek their help in a diplomatic settlement, exchanging the Palestinians' rights for territorial compromise, led to a new turn in Palestinian policy.

The Palestinians, remembering how Jordan and Egypt had annexed part of their land and repressed them between 1948 and 1967, and with the still fresh bitter memory of the 1970 'Black September' massacre in Jordan, did not wish merely to exchange Israeli occupiers for Arab ones again.

With the prospect of a Geneva conference backed by both the USA and the Soviet Union, the PLO — and again, it was the Democratic Front and the Left within Fatah that led the way — adopted two important points.

One, they would insist that only the PLO could legitimately represent Palestinians, and that it must have its rightful place at any conference. Two, that the Palestinians would 'set up a state in any part of the homeland from which the enemy was forced to withdraw.'

The PLO did not abandon its aim of a democratic secular state in the whole of Palestine, but declared this its long term aim. Nor did it relinquish armed struggle as a means. So where was this 'capitulation' Norah speaks about?

Recognize

The PLO position did entail that it would recognise Israel, for the purpose of talks — and vice versa. It does mean logically that a Palestinian state would be established alongside Israel. Is that capitulation?

Was the treaty of Brest-Litovsk a 'capitulation' by the Bolsheviks? Maybe Norah would have denounced Lenin for 'imagining' the young Soviet republic could 'co-exist' with the violent, expansionist and enslaving Kaiser's Germany?!

The strange thing about the PLO's alleged 'capitulation' to imperialism and Zionism is that it has not been accepted by the other side! The Israeli leaders vehemently oppose a Palestinian state.

The US government, far from welcoming the PLO to the conference table, is trying to close the PLO's office at the UN. The Israeli government, in response to PLO 'moderation', prosecutes any of its citizens who meet PLO representatives.

The PLO did not go to Geneva in the 1970s, nor achieve its state. But neither have the imperialists and Soviet bureaucracy, Israel and the Arab states, been able to go ahead with a peace settlement without the PLO. That is not 'capitulation' in my book, nor is it a 'defeat' for the Palestinian people.

From the late 1970s, the PLO has had to withstand one conspiracy and

onslaught after another. There was the bloody civil war in Lebanon, Sadat's separate peace deal, the splits engineered by some Arab states with the aid of Palestinian 'rejectionists', the murder of PLO representatives like Said Hammami, Naim Khider and Issam Sartawi, the US-backed Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the savage camps wars.

Tried

Both Syria's Assad and Jordan's Hussein have tried to bring the PLO to heel, and impose their own proteges. Israel tried to destroy the PLO in Lebanon, and to promote its stooges, the Village Leagues, in the West Bank. All without success. Today a re-unified PLO stands firm on its aims. And the youth who have risen up in the occupied territories do not look as though they are accepting defeat.

The call they are making is for withdrawal of Israeli troops. We have supported that demand. Unless we are calling on the Israelis to 'withdraw' to Poland, Morocco, etc. we presumably support the demand they withdraw to pre-1967 Israel.

Do we want the Israeli occupiers merely replaced by Jordanian troops? If not, we must support the right of the Palestinians to set up their own state in the West Bank and Gaza, alongside Israel.

If Israel remains oppressive, aggressive and colonising, then of course there will not be permanent 'co-existence'. On the other hand, the establishment of a Palestinian state does not oblige those Palestinians within Israel to abandon their struggle for equality, nor does it mean that socialists would not aim for a unification.

Within Israel itself, the PLO's advocacy of a two-state position has given rise to a strong peace movement. This opposition to the Zionist warmongers was temporarily quieted by Sadat's success to Begin, but broke out in huge demonstrations during the Lebanon war, and dissent within the army.

Contact

The PLO has fostered contacts with this movement, no longer confined to small isolated left-wing groups. Now the mass demonstrations are for withdrawal from the occupied territories, and there are growing demands for talks with the PLO.

It is to the lasting credit of the WRP that during the Lebanon war, News Line recognised the significance of this Israeli peace movement and of winning Israeli-Jewish workers, even if we did not fully understand what to make of it.

To write-off such a mass movement as merely some clever 'tactic' by the Zionists, as some people in the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine did, and some apparently want to now, completely missing the

contradictions within the Zionist state, is not Marxism.

Refusing to be 'fooled' by the real movement, because it does not conform to some idealist expectations of it, these sectarians are completely overawed by the supposed strength of the ruling class. Without any dialectical perception, they cannot intervene, but must stand permanently on the sidelines impotently denouncing 'betrayal'.

Trotskyists within Israel would have to be involved in the peace movement, demanding withdrawal of troops, mobilising aid for the people in the occupied territories, turning the struggle to the working class. Those whom we might win to the Fourth International are involved. To stand outside on spurious grounds of anti-Zionist 'purity' would in no way assist the Palestinians, nor undermine Zionism.

It is precisely by demanding withdrawal of troops, and the Palestinians' right to their own state, that socialists can create conditions for Arab-Jewish working class unity, and the possibility of a secular, democratic workers' state in all Palestine.

If saying that makes me 'stagist', so be it. It is in my view those who call for a unified state to bring working class unity, without any idea how, or by whom, this state is to be brought about, who are guilty of utopianism.

We must reject the fetishisation of demands, whether that for a 'secular democratic state' or 'Socialist Organiser's' elevation of the 'two states' call into a maximum for all time. (They raise the demand not against the Zionists, but from the Palestinians!)

The PLO has mobilised the Palestinian masses wherever it could, both in the Arab states and under Israeli occupation, and its influence even reaches within the Israeli state.

Concentrate

Almost two years ago, PLO leaders decided to concentrate activity in the occupied territories, with mass struggle, such as strikes, demonstrations, etc. We reported this move in the Workers Press at the time. Maybe now we are seeing the fruits.

As for establishing links between Palestinian trade unionists and the working class movement here, much has been done already, by people like the Palestine Trade Union Federation, with full support from the PLO.

Last year, members of the public servants' union in the West Bank came and spoke to NUPE members and other trade unionists here. The TGWU has had a delegation in the West Bank. Only a few weeks ago, I attended a reception for a returning trade union delegation, and Khaled el Hassan, a leading Fatah and PLO member, addressed a large crowd of trade unionists.

The call for trade union action to stop Israeli goods, shipping, etc. has been made at such meetings, and in 'Palestine Post', and by myself in Workers Press in two lead articles.

If you want to criticise the PLO's shortcomings, fine, but please don't base yourself on ignoring what it actually is doing. And if we want to make the call for a Palestinian section of the Fourth International into a real programme for action, and not an excuse for inaction, we must combine serious theoretical analysis with practical solidarity, internationalism in deeds, not empty words.

Attorney General needs his attorney

UNITED STATES Attorney-General Edwin Meese has been accused of supporting a plan to pay 'protection' to Israel so an Iraqi pipeline would not be bombed.

The idea was it was to come out of the defence budget on an installment basis. It was, effectively, to be a payment to the Israelis to be good,' the 'Washington Post' reported on 25 February.

Meese's lawyer has tried to pre-empt new press revelations by releasing recently declassified documents, including a memo from Meese's friend E. Robert Wallach suggesting secret payments to then Israeli premier Shimon Peres.

Wallach is already under indictment for taking payoffs from the Weldtech Corporation to get Army contracts, through Meese's influence in the White House.

President Reagan has jumped in to defend his Attorney-General's reputation, complaining of a 'lynch-mob atmosphere' against Meese, just as more details of the pipeline affair came out.

Newspapers have quoted letters between Meese and Shimon Peres, and pointed out that the Meese referred the pipeline issue not to the State Department but to the National Security Council, where it was dealt with by Robert McFarlane.

McFarlane was a key figure in the Iran arms scandal, for which Meese was also criticised. Now the same 'Irangate' cast starts to turn up in 'Iraq-gate'!

The Aqaba pipeline, supposed to help Iraqi oil exports avoid the Gulf bomb-alley, and boost Jordan's economy, was planned after Syria halted the Iraqi pipeline through its territory in 1982.

In 1984 the Bechtel Corporation, — ex-directors include Secretary of State George Schultz and former Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger, (recently knighted by Queen) — began scheduling work. US Steel was to provide the pipe, Citibank was to find the capital, and the US Export-Import Bank, a government agency,

approved \$485 million in loans.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, recalling the 1981 Israeli bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, asked that the US secure assurances for the pipeline.

The National Petroleum Company was to have handled sales of the 30,000 to 40,000 barrels of oil expected to flow from the pipeline. Owner, Israeli-born millionaire Bruce Rappaport, reputedly an ex-Mossad secret agent, now a Swiss national, suggested a deal with Peres.

Along the way, another 'Irangate' character, CIA boss William Casey, might have helped. He reportedly had close ties to Rappaport, and was guest of honour at a dinner laid on by the petroleum magnate in Washington, attended by officials involved in the pipeline project.

Israeli Foreign Minister and Labour Party leader Shimon Peres has admitted Rappaport met him in Israel on 19 September, 1985. He says the fixer offered a \$65-70 million a year discount on Israel's oil purchases over a 10-year period. Peres says he did not mention the matter to Cabinet colleagues because he did not take it seriously.

According to letters and memos released in the United States, as much as \$700 million was to go to Israel under the 'arrangement' with Peres, including a substantial sum to be channelled through the Israeli Labour Party.

The pipeline plan was squashed by Admiral John Poindexter, also an Irangate player, when he succeeded McFarlane as Reagan's National Security Adviser in December 1985. Reagan's friend and former adviser William Clark called the payments scheme a 'protection racket'.



Christmas Day picket at International Paper. Shipbuilders' local vice-president Mickey Meader (left) joins striking paperworkers.

Jackson rides on workers' struggle

REV. JESSE JACKSON boosted his campaign for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination last week, surprising party bosses by coming a strong second in the north-east coast state of Maine.

Far from his main bases of support in Chicago's Black ghettos and the Southern states, Jackson nevertheless was only ten per cent behind the favourite, Massachusetts' Governor Michael Dukakis, in a straw poll of voters in the Democratic caucuses.

'We consider this to be an overwhelming victory' said Jackson campaign aide Ivan Suzman. In two big Maine cities the Black populist came first. Observers say Jackson's backing has come particularly from trade unionists.

Behind the Jackson success in this state, with only a tiny Black population, lies a bitter workers' struggle that he has been able to ride on.

Maine is a centre of the US paper industry. For over six months, 1,250 workers belonging to the United Paperworkers International Union have been fighting the giant International Paper Co. which has set out to drive down conditions and bust the union.

The company, whose stockholders include the Bank of Boston and Coca Cola, has hired scabs to replace union members at its Jay papermills. Strikers held a mass picket on Christ-

mas day because the scab-run plant was working. They sent a team around Maine holding meetings to get more support.

More than 400 people braved sub-zero temperatures to attend a rally on the Canadian border in January, and Canadian trade unionists have crossed to join the pickets. The strike is also being waged at International Paper plants in Pennsylvania, Alabama and Wisconsin.

On 5 February, there was a dramatic new twist to the struggle, when strikers had to alert the town council in Jay and help evacuate residents because of a massive chlorine dioxide gas leak from the paper mill. The accident was caused by scab contractors fracturing valves on the chemical tanks.

As a huge cloud of green gas hung over the plant, International Paper bosses

tried to say it wasn't serious. 'IP shows as much concern for the people of the Androscoggin Valley as Union Carbide did for the people of Bhopal,' said union Local 14 president Bill Meserve.

Although he's no socialist, nor a workers' leader, Jesse Jackson has set out to win the workers' votes with a charter declaring 'When Jesse Jackson Wins . . . Workers Win', and he declared backing for the paperworkers early in his campaign.

'Make March 8 a vote for a Workers' Bill of Rights', Jackson is urging before next week's Democratic Party primaries in 20 states. His charter calls for the right to a job, right to a democratic union, right to health and safety at work, right to freedom from discrimination.

None of these things can be expected from the Democratic Party, even if its corrupt party bosses and career men

were to find Jesse Jackson as their hopeful. Both preacher-man Jackson and his party are tied to capitalism.

Nevertheless, the big vote for Jackson in Maine, which seems sure to boost his chances further on 8 March in the southern states, is significant.

It shows that a sizeable proportion of the US voters, black and white, do want a change. There is a class struggle in the United States, reflected however dimly even in the capitalist Democratic Party, in support for a candidate who spoke to workers as workers.

Ironically, just when the 'listening' leaders of the British Labour Party and their ad-men advisers have been trying to turn their party into a version of the American Democrats, workers in the United States are expressing their crying need for a working-class party.

NORTH IN DRUGS TRIAL

LT. COLONEL Oliver North, former White House security aide at the centre of the Iran-Contra arms scandal, has been ordered to testify in a Detroit drugs trial, concerning marijuana and cocaine smuggled into Michigan from South America.

While the Reagan administration tries to oust Panama General and ex-CIA agent Noriega who has been indicted by US courts on drugs smuggling charges, Reagan aide North will be questioned about the use of US government-financed planes to smuggle drugs into the United States.



Six months' out and still fighting. International Paper workers and families at railv at Jay, Maine.

ISRAELI SOLDIERS BREAK BONES

FOUR Israeli soldiers whose brutal 40-minute beating of two captured and bound Palestinian youths shocked television viewers throughout the world were last week free, and back with their units.

MPs belonging to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's rightist Likud party demanded the resignation of Major-General Mizna, the West Bank commander who had ordered the men's detention.

Geulah Cohen, of the fascist Tehya party demanded the media be banned from the occupied territories. Meanwhile Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a Labour Party leader, told visiting

American Jewish leaders he was 'proud of the behaviour of our army'.

It was Rabin who launched the 'Iron Fist' policy in the occupied territories, and who explicitly gave the order to troops to 'beat and break bones'.

If the soldiers seen beating and kicking defenceless prisoners, and dropping boulders on limbs to break them, committed an offence from the army's point of view, it

was that they let themselves be filmed by a TV crew doing it.

Israeli families have complained at the effect the repressive policy is having in brutalising and demoralising their sons doing military service. The army sent a team of psychologists round army units in January to check morale.

Ramallah hospital director Dr. Yassir Obeid reported last week that soldiers had fired tear gas and rubber bullets in the hospital, and used rifle butts on him and another doctor, before dragging away two boys, aged 10 and 11, to tie them up and beat them.

Armenia: social issues fuel national struggle

NATIONAL problems in the Caucasus have suddenly taken centre-stage in the ongoing political drama being played out in the Soviet Union.

Over a million people took to the streets of Yerevan, capital of the Armenian Soviet Republic, on Friday, 26 February, demonstrating for the return to Armenia of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, in the neighbouring Azerbaijan republic.

Troops who had been sent into the Yerevan television studios were withdrawn when the staff threatened to strike.

Although the national aspirations of the Armenian people are genuine enough, discontent with a particularly corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy in Soviet Armenia, and over issues like appalling industrial pollution, have fuelled the explosion of popular feeling.

Talks

Two Armenian cultural leaders were flown to Moscow after the big demonstration, for talks with Gorbachev, and on Sunday night, a meeting in the Writers' Union building in Yerevan decided to give the Soviet leader a break to show whether he means to redress their grievances.

The meeting, involving Armenian intellectuals, public figures, and members of a committee that has sprung up during recent demonstrations, decided to suspend further demonstrations in Yerevan until 26 March.

There could still be demonstrations in Nagorno-Karabakh's regional centre, Stepanakert, where the local party has said it favours return to Armenia.

If the Supreme Soviet of the USSR does not set up a commission to look into the Nagorno-Karabakh issue by then, the demonstrations in Armenia will resume.

'Mikhail Gorbachev has

BY DAVID DORFMAN

enough enemies,' said poetess Silva Kaputikyan, returned from visiting the Soviet leader. 'Now he needs our help, by our calming down.' The Catholicos, head of the Armenian church, had already joined Gorbachev in appealing for 'calm' and patience.

During the Armenian leaders' talks with Gorbachev he reportedly promised their grievances would be looked into, and said he had deleted references to 'nationalist extremism' — alleged previously by the Central Committee — from his intended television speech.

At the same time, he warned them that the Armenian trouble was 'stabbing perestroika in the back'.

Slogans

Among the slogans most seen on the Yerevan demonstration was 'Karabakh — the test of perestroika'. (*perestroika*, or restructuring, is the general term used for Gorbachev's reform policies, which his section of the bureaucracy sees as necessary to strengthen their position by liberalising the economy, but the Soviet masses see as their chance to take on the bureaucracy.)

Karabakh and Nakhchevan were two regions of Armenia transferred to the

Azerbaijan Soviet Republic in 1923. Nakhchevan today has an Azerbaijani, Turkish-speaking majority population, but Karabakh remains over two-thirds Armenian populated.

Armenia, once an independent, Christian kingdom, spanning what is now the Turkish-Soviet border, has a rich history and culture. After centuries under Turkish and Russian domination, its people suffered badly in the war and imperialist carve-up that ended the Ottoman empire in World War I.

1915

About 600,000 Armenians were massacred in a savage onslaught by Turkish forces in 1915, and most of the remainder deported from Turkish Armenia. The Allied imperialists, deciding there was no mineral wealth worth grabbing in Armenia, renege on promises to the Armenian nationalists.

Soviet Armenia, set up after the defeat of imperialist intervention forces and the Armenian Social Democrats (Dashnaks) who aided them, has been the focus of patriotic feeling even for the many Armenian Diaspora communities abroad.

Their pride in its contribution to Soviet life, and the defence of the Soviet Union against fascism in World War II, has not obscured discontent with Stalinism.

Turkish

Armenian bitterness towards the right-wing Turkish regime, fanned to fury by the latter's refusal to acknowledge the 1915 genocide,

and a long conspiracy of indifference by the UN, led to terrorist outrages to force the Armenian question back on the agenda.

The Armenian Stalinists, and possibly the Bulgarian secret service (for its own reasons) may have opportunistically encouraged the Armenian Secret Army, seeing Armenian nationalism as a diversionary asset. Now, Armenian national feeling rebounds on the bureaucracy, and they don't like it.

It is highly significant that unresolved national problems have re-erupted at this historic juncture. In some of his last political battles, waged from his sickbed, Lenin warned against and fought the bureaucratic tendency of Great Russian chauvinism evinced by Stalin in his treatment of the peoples of the Caucasus.

Stalin

The Armenian National Committee, in a statement issued recently, observes: 'During the dark era of Stalin's dictatorship not only was the Leninist principle of "cultural-national autonomy" for the nationalities forgotten, but the totalitarian Soviet government, under the guise of socialism, became itself an oppressive state for the non-Russian nations within the Soviet Union.'

The committee quotes Soviet economist Abel G. Aganbegyan as saying that far from bringing promised economic development to the Karabakh and Nakhchevan territories, their incorporation into Azerbaijan had

held back their development.

Status

Although the Nagorno-Karabakh region has officially had autonomous status within Azerbaijan, the Armenian committee charges that 'for several decades it has become clear to the outside world that the Leninist nationality policy of egalitarian treatment and respect for national cultural rights, has not been carried out by Azerbaijani Soviet government.'

Last year, corruption and crime in the Armenian republic's own bureaucracy was exposed in the Soviet press. It was alleged that the republic's police chiefs were the link between the bureaucracy and organised crime.

Armenians themselves have raised serious issues about what is being done to their homeland by bureaucratic economic policies.

● Following the Chernobyl disaster in the Ukraine, it was reported that contaminated milk and other foodstuffs had been shipped into Armenia.

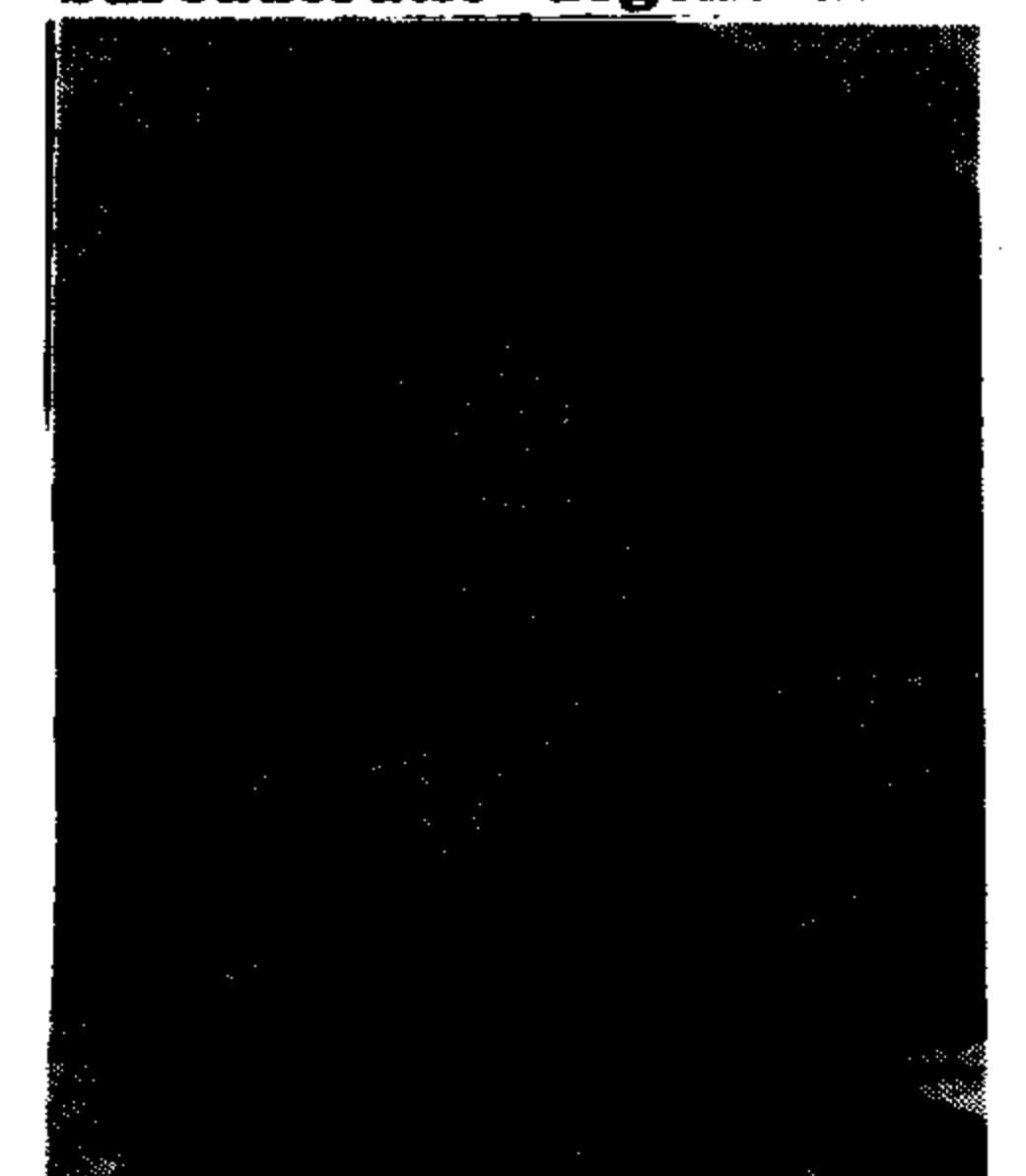
● Fears were expressed that a major nuclear disaster could happen in Armenia, where a nuclear power station has been built in an active earthquake zone. Opponents point out also that 20 per cent of electricity generated in Armenia is exported to nearby countries.

● Lake Sevan, Armenia's main water resource, has become seriously polluted by industrial waste.

● Armenian towns are among the most industrially polluted in the Soviet Union. Large amounts of chemicals and gases have accumulated in the atmosphere around Yerevan, and have reportedly caused a high rate of sterility among the population and birth defects.

Armenians say that for many years they were unable to say what they thought and felt about issues. Now all their accumulated grievances and resentments are finding political expression. The calls for *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* have unleashed forces the bureaucracy does not control. The genie is out, and they may be unable to get it back.

The nationality issue was among the first on which the bureaucratic degeneration



Stalin that was Stalinism showed itself. The struggle that has erupted in national form in Armenia is not just an 'Armenian question', but an opening battle in the struggle for genuine workers' democracy throughout the Soviet Union — the political revolution. As such it is an international question.

Secret deal against Iranian refugees

TURKISH prime minister Turgut Ozal flew to Iran on 29 February for a three day official visit.

Embraced as he stepped off the plane by Iran's prime minister Hussein Musevi, Ozal said he was 'glad to come to Iran a third time', and emphasised they would be discussing all aspects of relations between the two countries.

Turkey is seeking to boost its trade with Iran to \$1,400,000. There are also plans for a new oil pipeline between Ahvaz and the Turkish port of Iskenderun.

Another item was undoubtedly on the two leaders' agenda, though not referred to in the official communique. It was the conditions and fate of the Iranian refugees in Turkey.

Steal

There are about one million of them, and every day more steal across the border, despite the risks of being shot by border guards, or being extradited after they have got through.

The refugees include political opponents of Khomeini, young men refusing to serve in his reactionary 'holy war'

or simply masses of Iranians who cannot stand life under the Islamic fanatics' regime.

In return for Turkish help in clamping down on the refugees, the Iranian regime is prepared to connive at Turkish operations against Kurdish guerrillas.

Although some Kurdish groups operate from Iran in actions against the Iraqi regime, so far the inviting target of Iraq's oil pipeline has been protected by Turkish troops.

Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was discussed between Ozal and Mussevi. Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky was

in Tehran recently to explain Soviet plans to the Iranian authorities.

Fits

In this way, NATO governments have been able to learn where Afghanistan fits in Soviet-Iranian relationships, since Turkey is a NATO member. Ozal was in Tehran for Western imperialist, as well as Turkish capitalist interests.



Ozal

We are calling on the workers' movement internationally to give full support to the rights of Iranian refugees, and support the struggles to get rid of Ozal and Khomeini.



Iranian refugees and their supporters picketing the Turkish airline offices last Saturday, against the visit of the Turkish prime minister Turgut Ozal on an official visit to the Islamic Regime of Iran.

One out, All out

ALL 43 executive members of Turkey's opposition Social Democratic People's Party resigned with general secretary Fikri Saglar, after Parliamentary leader, Professor Erdal Inonu announced on 28 February that he was resigning as party leader and from parliament.

Inonu, son of a former president, led the new party to second place in November's general election. It is now reported divided over the Kurdish issue and economic policy.

Azerbaijan clashes

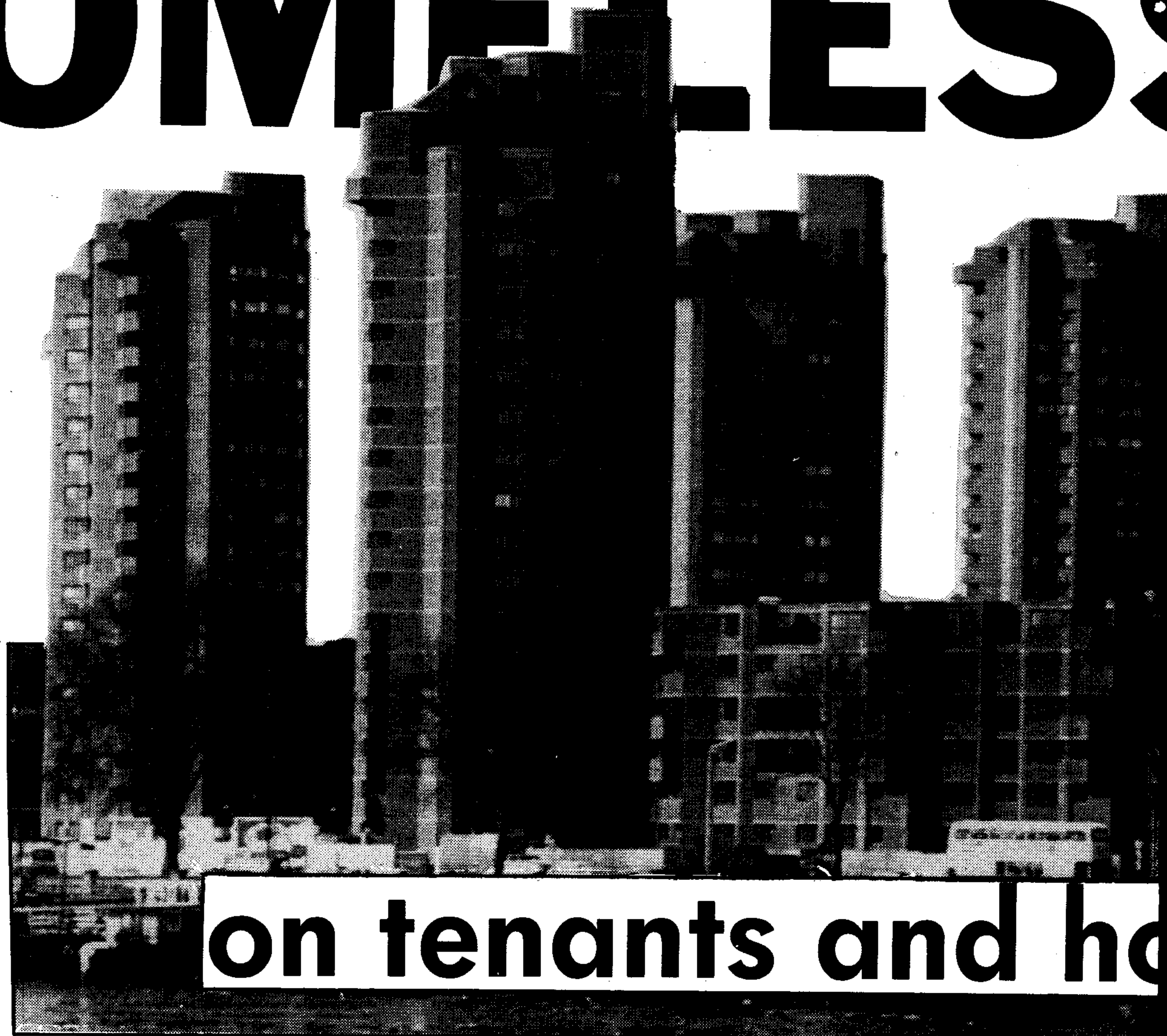
SOVIET police and armoured cars intervened in clashes in Azerbaijan, the Soviet republic between Armenia and the Caspian Sea, bordering Iran.

Blaming a 'group of hooligans', the official Tass agency spoke of a 'rampage and violence' in the industrial city of Sumgait, north of Baku. Later reports said several Armenians had been killed in the city.

HOMELSS

Tory housing

blitz



on tenants and ho

TOTAL freedom for private landlords to force up rents and evict tenants at will along with the right of property firms to grab occupied council housing are key aspects of the Tory Housing Bill, on course to become law this summer.

The pamphlet, 'Just Homes?' from the London Housing Unit (LHU) summarises the proposals and warns of their certain devastating effects on the homeless and on ethnic minorities, women, the low paid, disabled people, lesbians, gay men and people on a variety of state benefits.

It sees as the general aims of the bill promotion of competition in the rented housing sector, further encouragement of owner occupation, a new reduction in the role of local authorities as providers of housing and the break up of the larger concentrations of council housing in the inner cities to the benefit of the major property developers.

Rented accommodation

In the name of increasing the supply of private rented accommodation the Tories are planning to remove legal controls over rent levels and to virtually eliminate security of tenure on most new lettings.

They believe that allowing landlords to evict at will and make vast profits from continuously rising rents will entice them into releasing more property onto the rented accommodation market.

Under the new rules: 'an assured tenancy would be given for a fixed period of a number of years or would simply run from week to week or month to month.

Tenancy conditions and the rent would be agreed between the landlord and tenant. Where they cannot agree, a Rent Assessment Committee would assess a "market" rent to ensure that the return to the landlord is adequate.'

The LHU adds 'It should be noted that landlords will probably be able to charge in excess of a Rent Assessment Committee level.'

With short term tenancies, landlords would have the right to retake possession of the property on expiry of the rental period, which legally may be as

little as six months.

LHU warns that new grounds for eviction are also planned, for example being in arrears for any amount, no matter how small, and being late with the rent.

The report concludes in regard to rented accommodation: 'The results of decontrolling rents and reducing security on new lettings as the government proposes will therefore not be an increase in the number of new affordable tenancies available, but simply higher rents and more insecurity for all lettings of existing property in the market. And of course greater pressure on existing tenants to move out or pay higher rents.'

Acquiring public sector housing with secure tenants

A new landlord, which may be a private company or a housing association, will have the right to acquire council housing over the heads of sitting tenants.

Occupiers will probably be given entitlements to an 'assured tenancy' once the property has changed hands, but on the basis described above for new rented accommodation, i.e. vastly inflated rents and a far wider basis for evictions.

Housing action trusts

These will likely be boards of local bigwigs and property developers, appointed by the Secretary of State, with powers to renovate and sell off homes acquired and transferred to them by the government. Sale will be to non local authority landlords.

The LHU report states that Housing Action Trusts 'will have a major impact on a local authority's ability to meet the housing need of local people because they will reduce the pool of available accommodation even further.'

Break up of council estates

The Tories' declared aim is to 'break

up existing council estates, either individual tenants 'exercising the right to buy' or through the introduction of a new type of tenancy. The proposed Housing Action Trusts will be the key distribution mechanisms in this respect.

Changes to succession rules

The Tories plan to drastically change the rules by which a private tenancy can pass on to next-of-kin on the death or departure of the occupier. A relative of a former tenant (by spouse) will need to have lived with the former tenant for five years before they are entitled to acquire the tenancy. This would clearly disbar returning, offspring who have a family home to marry or live independently but who have found no other accommodation.

Implications

The LHU believes that the Housing Bill will have several effects on the great



Squatters under threat of eviction from a London Council estate

BY BERNARD FRANKS



Homeless

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already disadvantaged people in public and private rented accommodation or in none.

The homeless:

A huge increase in the use of bed and breakfast hotels to house homeless families has occurred in recent years, a product of the fall in the numbers of houses and flats that councils can make available to new tenants. The number of such dwellings has fallen by 40 per cent since 1981 yet the number of people referred to housing departments under homelessness legislation has doubled in that period.

LHU sees the new proposals as leading to a further reduction in the pool of available accommodation.

Meanwhile homelessness will increase dramatically because the new high rents will put accommodation beyond the reach of an ever increasing mass of low paid people or those on benefits unable to afford decontrolled tenancies.

Minorities:

The majority of the report is taken up with the huge increase in discrimination against particular groups that the new law will allow and may even encourage. Landlords will have far greater licence and more excuses at their disposal or bar those they fear might have difficulty paying, those who they see as nuisances (for example wheelchair users) and those they are prejudiced against: Asians, black people, families with children, lesbians, gays, young people or other matters affecting poor people: changes in the social security system and housing benefit due this April may have a direct effect on the ability of many more people to pay for accommodation.

For example supplementary benefit is to be abolished and replaced with Income Support which will pay no addition for householders (who currently get a higher rate than those living with friends or relatives).

It is also likely that the Tories will eventually bar the vast majority of under 18s from Income Support to force them into YTS and other schemes.

Meanwhile, some £640 million in total is being removed from the Housing Benefit budget with over two-thirds of recipients losing out. Clearly, in the face of this new inroad into the elementary right to be housed public and private tenants have a direct interest in linking with the minority groupings and with the homeless to plan community action in defence of their rights.

Unity with trade union organisations and the formation of national organisations is vital if the government onslaught is to be defeated.

At the same time local communities should begin to think in terms of taking responsibility and planning for their own housing needs, removed from the influence and control of property developers, financiers, Tory politicians and their associates.

This must certainly involve seizure and occupation of long-term empty properties as well as vigorous campaigns against speculative commercial development in residential areas.

● 'Just Homes' obtainable from The London Housing Unit, Berkshire House, High Holborn, London WC1V 7AA

For an International Conference in 1988 for the Re-organisation of the Fourth International

MOSCOW TRIALS CAMPAIGN PUBLIC MEETING

CLEAR THE NAMES OF STALIN'S VICTIMS!

Sunday 20 March 1988

2.30 p.m.

**Kingsway Princeton College,
Sidmouth Street
(off Grays Inn Road) WCI
(near Kings Cross)**

THE WAY FORWARD

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RE-BUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

MANCHESTER

Sunday
March 27th, 2 p.m.
Committee Room 10,
Manchester Town Hall,
St Peters Squ are.

CARDIFF

Thursday
April 7th, 7.30 pm,
Brownhills Hotel

GLASGOW

Sunday
March 20th, 11 a.m.
Blythswood Hotel,
320 Argyle Street.

LONDON

Sunday
April 17th, 2 p.m.
Kingsway Princeton
College
Sidmouth Street
off Grays Inn Road
London WCI

LEICESTER

Wednesday
March 23rd, 7.30 p.m.
Unemployed
Workers' Centre
Charles Street

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM

Lectures at Room 301, Kingsway Princeton College, Grays Inn Road, London WC 1
All lectures start at 7.30pm

Thursday 3 March

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 10 March

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 Fourth International.

Thursday 17 March

The Significance of the Preparatory Committee

THE Workers Revolutionary Party has issued a Ten Point Call to revolutionary Trotskyists throughout the world to prepare a conference in 1988 for the re-organisation of the Fourth International. The campaign for the Preparatory Committee and its work in progress sheds new light on many fundamental problems of revolutionary leadership.

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*

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £1,924.92

WE received £73.02 this week for our Special Fund.

We are determined to play our full part in the Preparatory Committee campaigning for the International Conference of Trotskyists to take place later this year.

This means raising our fund to finance international travel and communication so that the Committee can reach out to those new forces coming into the struggle against imperialism all over the world.

The Fourth International was founded in the struggle

against Stalinism, and we must now engage in a far reaching campaign to build Trotskyist parties in every country against the treachery of Stalinism today.

Meetings are being held to discuss this conference and the principles on which it has been called.

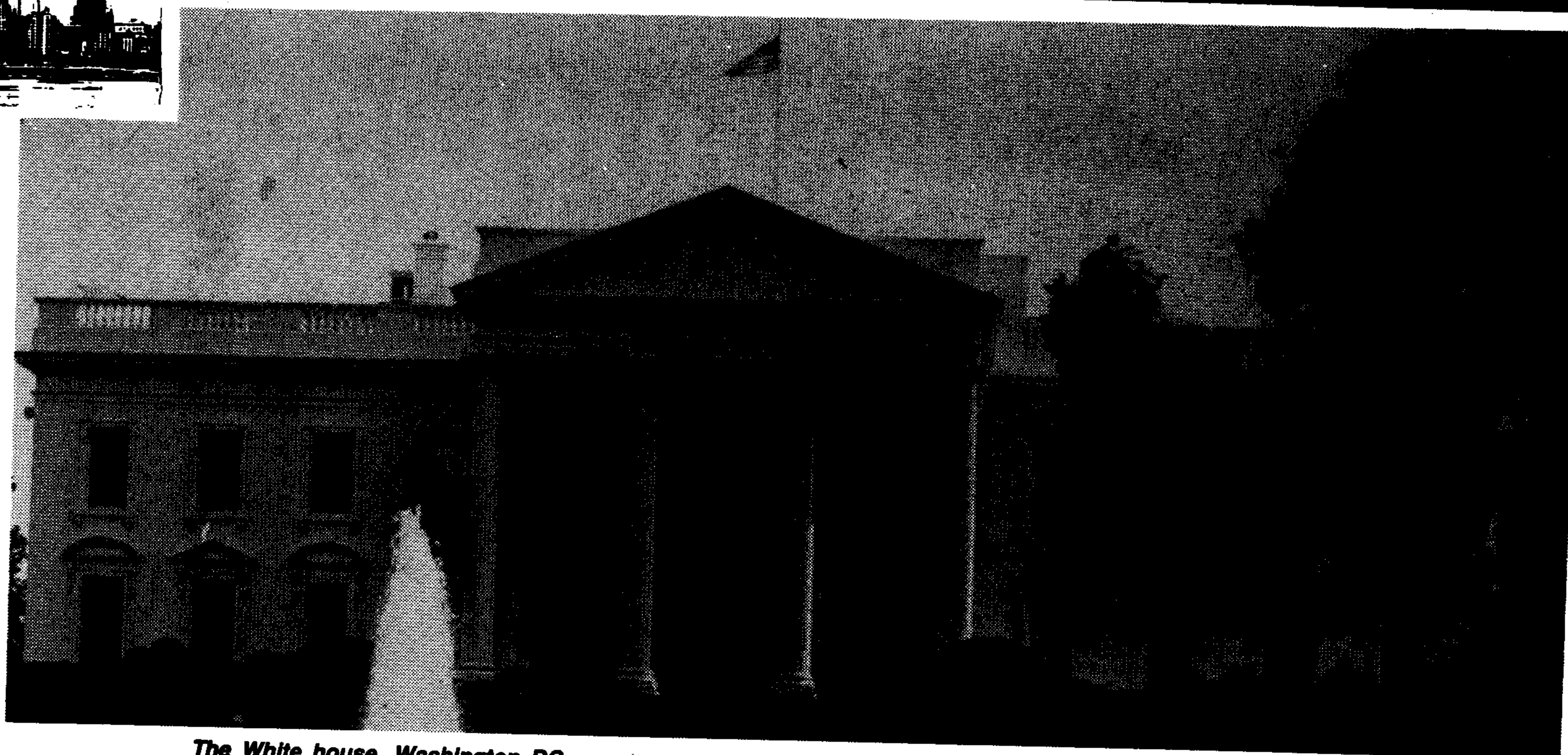
Help us in this work. Every donation, large or small will be greatly appreciated. Please make collections and send in donations to:

WRP Special Fund
PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS



GEORGE LORMIN IN THE USA

Land of the free



The White house, Washington DC

Slaughter on campus

A BAND of highway patrolmen entered a university firing as they came. Within minutes three students lay dead or dying and another 27 were injured; mostly they had been shot in the back or sides fleeing from the police. Where did this happen? In Paraguay or South Korea, or perhaps in the Soviet Union (frequently accused of being negligent on human rights)?

Wrong. The campus was not situated in South Africa or the Lebanon, but in the good old USA. To be precise, it happened on 8 February, 1968 on the mainly black campus of the South Carolina State College in Orangeburg.

The students were carrying on a peaceful demonstration over the segregation of a local bowling alley; more generally they were calling for the rights they supposedly had under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The incident received little attention at the time. The Associated Press put out a false report that the killings took place in 'an exchange of fire', but there is no evidence that the students were armed or bent on violence. The indifference arose from the fact that the victims were black and that the university was situated in the deep South which still practiced discrimination despite the Civil Rights Act. A Federal Jury declined to issue indictments against the patrolmen. Nine of them were later charged with imposing summary punishment without due process of law. Although the defence tore to pieces the state's version of events, there were no convictions. In any case, the maximum penalty on this charge was one year in gaol. The Orangeburg massacre caused no outcry like that which followed a similar incident at Kent State where the victims were middle class and white.

It still goes on

At time of writing 200 students were occupying buildings at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst protesting racialism on campus. The occupation was decided on in protest at nothing being done about the beating up of two students by five whites.

In another incident campus police seized seven black students at random for a line-up after a white student claimed she had been harassed by a black man.

The sit-in is to demand a tougher civil rights code and a full investigation of the incidents.

Racial incidents on the Amherst campus are no new thing. In October 1986 a black student was set upon. Blacks represent about five per cent of the 20,000 students. With growing support it seems likely that the ruling university bodies will have to accede to the demands of the protesters, but it is unlikely that this will improve race relations in the university.

Corruption as a system of government

RONALD REAGAN has presided over a wider range of official misdeeds than any other president in our history' claims the liberal weekly, 'The Nation', and that is saying something.

Particularly involved in the jiggery-pokery are a number of Ronald's best cronies from his California days. They include Lyn Nofziger, who has recently been found guilty of violating the Ethics in Government Act which prevents former high administration officials from lobbying former colleagues within one year of leaving office.

Influence peddling has also been widely alleged against the incumbent Attorney-General, Edwin Meese and another Reagan intimate, Michael Deaver.

Apart from a few people of this kind with high visibility, the House Committee on the Civil Service has a list of more than 200 Reagan appointees accused of legal violations and ethical lapses. They include unauthorised use of government funds such as padding out expense accounts, using government cars for private purposes, putting girl friends on the pay-roll and billing for more days of work than were actually done.

Corruption is endemic in American politics. Many politicians are on the take and on the make whether Republican or Democrat. The big corporations desperately need contracts and have plentiful funds which lobbyists use to gain the support of Congressmen and officials on behalf of their clients.

Meanwhile, in the drive for de-regulation under Reagan several government agencies which the administration (facing a hostile Congress) is not able to abolish are being stripped of their teeth, to the detriment of workers and consumers. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration which is supposed to maintain standards of health and safety in industry, has practically given up. In effect, officials and employers are in collusion not to apply safety standards.

The head of the agency from 1981/1984, Thorne Auchter, had to resign when it was found that he had approved the dismissal of penalties for breach of safety regulations by a firm of which he was president. In the case of nuclear power, the official regulatory body, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, has practically abdicated and a body formed by the privately-owned power generation firms has taken over responsibility for the safety of nuclear power and the inspection of nuclear power stations.

The body called the Legal Services corporation, set up to help low income people to obtain legal advice, has been deliberately starved of funds. Reagan appointees have milked it in their personal interest. The chairman of this agency from 1981/1982 submitted an expense account which included travel expenses of \$442 per day. The LSC director, William Olson, besides his salary, received hefty consulting fees from the government.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission, a watchdog organisation set up after prodding by Ralph Nader, is also particularly hated by the Reaganites although they have been unable to abolish it altogether. Concerned with protecting the consumer against unsafe products (responsible for 130,000 deaths and injuries each year) its budget has been slashed so that it has been unable to check many products which might prove dangerous or even lethal. It has not issued a final safety regulation since 1984.

Although it finally banned three wheel all-terrain vehicles, responding to public outcry, it did so only after years of delay, during which there were nearly 700 deaths and 300,000 injuries.

The head of this agency, Terrance Scanlon, was accused of using office staff to deal with his real estate. Despite ample evidence of abuse of office, Scanlon was confirmed in the job in 1986.

The treatment of the Civil Rights Commission also illustrates the Reaganites' contempt for minorities. The Commission under its boss, Clarence Pendleton, has been fighting against, not for, civil rights. Pendleton was sued by a former employer on charges which included fraud, breach of contract, intent to deceive and defraud and misuse of funds.

Meanwhile, the General Accounting Office cannot account for \$175,000 of the agency's funds. The Reaganites have found it is useful to keep these regulatory bodies in existence because they can use them to personal advantage. Under the cloak of high morality, their greed drives them to seek more money, sometimes at the public's expense, or as a pay-off for the favours they are able to do, or get performed on behalf of their friends in the business world.

Freedom of religion

EARLY this year a handful of religious fanatics gave up their jobs, dropped out of college and shut themselves up in their tiny church.

They said that they were protecting themselves from a destructive tornado which would express God's wrath at the wickedness of man.

The state authority removed five people from the church under a court order. A 47 year-old teacher and her daughter of 16 were forced to undergo psychiatric examination against their will. Two children were seized, put in charge of a relative and sent back to school, while a man was ordered to undergo a kidney and dialysis treatment.

Where did all this happen? In Chile? In the Soviet Union? Wrong again, it was in Gary, Indiana.

The church sitters-in have seen several predicted dates for the tornado come and go, but they remain undeterred in their faith. Weather experts say that tornados seldom strike in Indiana at this time of the year.

Perhaps it will end as a bloody shoot-out similar to that when dissident Mormons barricaded themselves in, in a house in Utah.

The era of belt-tightening

EUROPEANS and Japanese do like to get their own back on the once almighty dollar. This was illustrated recently at a conference in Switzerland on the theme: 'The new state of the world economy' attended by about 1,000 top business executives, civil servants and economists.

A popular theme was that the US, with its vast trade deficit, was living beyond its means and that, as a result, consumption should be cut and belts tightened.

When proposals of this kind are made in such an atmosphere it is obvious that the Americans who assented to this were not intending to tighten their own belts.

After all, they were meeting in an expensive alpine resort and guzzling down that ample Swiss food.

They were thinking of cutting wages and social expenditure benefiting the working class. Their call to the rich is to get richer; the same old capitalist slogan. Nevertheless, it must have been galling for the

Americans present to have to listen to one European or Japanese speaker after another making this demand for belt-tightening and other forms of austerity.

It must have sounded very much like the demands of the World Bank on poor underdeveloped countries trying to borrow a bit more money to avert total collapse. The gratuitous advice to the USA included the encouragement of savings, higher interest rates, increased taxation and, especially, a lower level of consumption.

The finance minister of tiny Holland, Omno Ruding, did not hesitate to prescribe a whole programme of measures of this kind for Washington. To rub salt in the wound he added that the United States has become a debtor country and hasn't yet become conscious enough of its new position.

A speaker from another tiny, if wealthy country, Mr Frehner of the Swiss Bank, was pessimistic about the possibility of the US overcoming its trade deficit by exporting more goods to Europe.

'What does the US produce that we import?' he demanded with typical Swiss courage.

'It hardly makes televisions any more; it hardly makes cameras. If we import more goods we'll probably buy them from somewhere other than the US.'

(Although the report does not say so, he probably turned to the Japanese and Koreans at this point and winked.)

All this means that the surest way to reduce the American trade deficit is for the US to consume less, which means importing less (at this point a grimace probably passed across the faces of the otherwise inscrutable Japanese and Koreans).

James Howell, from Stanford University, tried to present the American case.

The fall in income, he claimed, would only be about four per cent and would only have to last about 12 years.

Some participants saw this as a certain recipe for another depression. On the whole they seemed to be a gloomy lot; as usual, looking to Washington to do something. They wanted to prevent the dollar from falling further, and the exporting countries' spokesmen did not want to see American imports fall away.

How this could be achieved at the same time as the trade balance was restored and the standard of living cut remained a riddle without a solution at this, and similar, gatherings where the brightest capitalist intellects grapple with that puzzle, more testing than Rubrik's cube: how to keep capitalism going into the 21st century.



Civil rights demonstration USA 1964

BOOK REVIEWS

The Fatal Shore. By Robert Hughes. Pan, £5.95

AN ASTONISHINGLY detailed account of the experience of 160,000 men women and children transported to Australia in the white invasion of that continent. Highly recommended now it is in paperback.

As well as terrible accounts of convict work and convict punishments, it is full of insights into important questions in the history of Australia which have been highlighted by the government's attempt to stage a 'bicentenary' — the fate of the Aborigines, most important of all, and the origins of the organised labour movement, which Hughes argues can be traced, at least in part, to the transportation of political prisoners, particularly Irish republicans.

And The Band Played On. By Randy Shilts. Penguin, £8.95

A MASSIVE month-by-month journalist's account of the suffering of AIDS patients.

their family and friends, particularly centring on the San Francisco gay community which the author knows best. It cannot fail to be moving; it also manages a gossipy lightness which invites browsing. More seriously, it blames the epidemic's spread on official homophobia and perpetuates the belief that AIDS began in Africa.

The Global Fix. By Ben Whitaker. Methuen, £7.95

READ this and reopen the 'pot or not' debate in recent issues of Workers Press on drugs and the law. It is an alarming account ('Every banknote in Miami has an average of 35 micrograms of cocaine adhering to it') which deals with the profits and losers of the illegal drug industry.

Whitaker makes passing mention of the irrational, capricious laws, which mean drinking meths is legal, and ignore problems caused by the alcoholic and the chain-

smoker, but his particular form of liberalism may be summed up when he says:

'Recreational drugs are, for the most part, evasion: a running away from reality, when today's world all too obviously cries out for concerned involvement.

And later: '... the rise in the use of drugs owes less to their intrinsic appeal than to many people's dislike of present-day existence.

The Museum Time Machine. Edited by Robert Lumley. Comedia/Routledge, £9.95

PARENTS and teachers who have been disturbed to find museums presenting the 'free enterprise' view of the industrial revolution or showing women as housewives in carefully reconstructed kitchens or using MSC teenagers to renovate the relics of the past will be pleased to know this book exists.

Here are the museum

professionals worrying about such issues, from the most general discussion of the limitations and commercialisation of recycled nostalgia to specific instances of bias, such as the influence exerted by British Nuclear Fuels to keep social questions out of the nuclear displays at the Science Museum.

The Mother Machine. By Gena Corea. Women's Press, £6.95

DOES the new reproductive technology of the test tube baby era render women in Britain and more especially the third world 'invisible', to be sold as 'alternative reproduction vehicles' (in the words of an American judge awarding a baby to the sperm donor who had contracted to buy it).

Perilous medical procedures, including egg capture which has already led to a number of deaths, eugenic techniques, the abortion of female babies and so-called surrogate motherhood in which women (often in the poorest countries of the world) are effectively sold, have aroused the anger of

feminists like Gena Corea, one of the founders of the Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE).

Her powerful book argues that they have some of their strongest support in Germany, where the experience of 'breeding' racially 'desirable' children in Hitler's 'Lebensborn' (fountain of life) experiment has not been forgotten.

Nicaragua. By Doreen Massey. Open University Press, £4.50

MANAGUA, already home for a third of Nicaragua's people, continues to grow, with migrants from the rural areas building themselves houses as best they can in ever more sprawling squatter settlements.

Open University professor and urban researcher Doreen Massey has worked with the Nicaraguan Institute for Economic and Social Research.

She describes the difficulties confronted by beleaguered Nicaragua, trying to plan the economy in the face of United States economic and military hostility. The

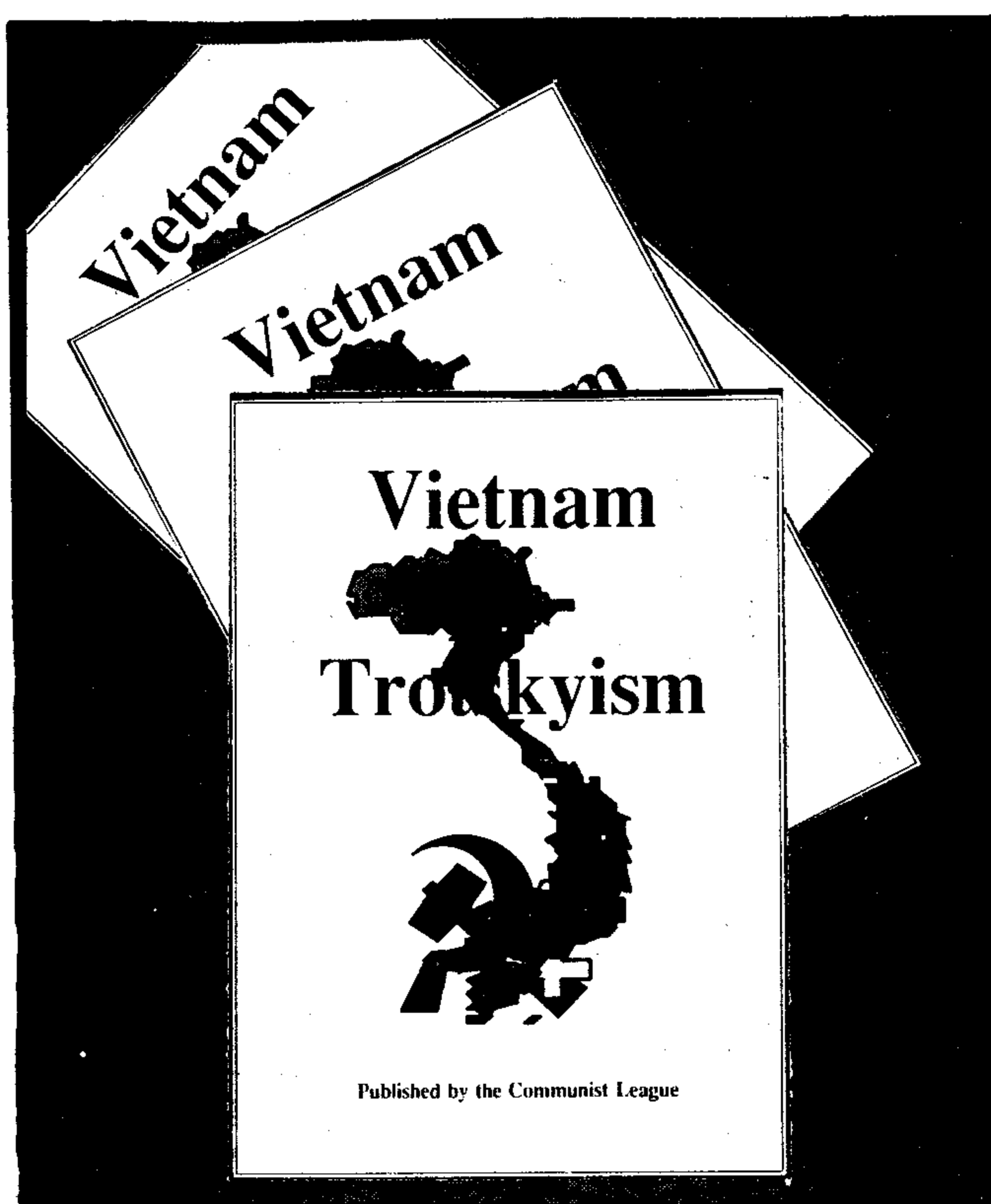
Sandinista regime is faced with a desperate shortage of building materials for the town dwellers, and needs to prioritise help for the countryside where the peasants are under constant Contra threat. The strategy, she says, is survival.

Mafia Business. By Pino Arlacchi. Oxford University Press, 4.95

THE THREE biggest banking crashes in recent times, says Pino Arlacchi, were caused by illicit financial deals. So his colourful history of the Mafiosi ends with his worries about their influence on the stability of capitalism.

The reader might be forgiven for thinking the 'firm' he describes, the large-scale entrepreneurs, personifies the values of capitalism in general rather well — as he says, the Mafia are innovative, with an aggression he characterises as 'animal spirit', and exhibit an 'element of rationality and of capitalist calculation'.

To his shock and surprise, these qualities of enterprise do not make for the 'collective good'...



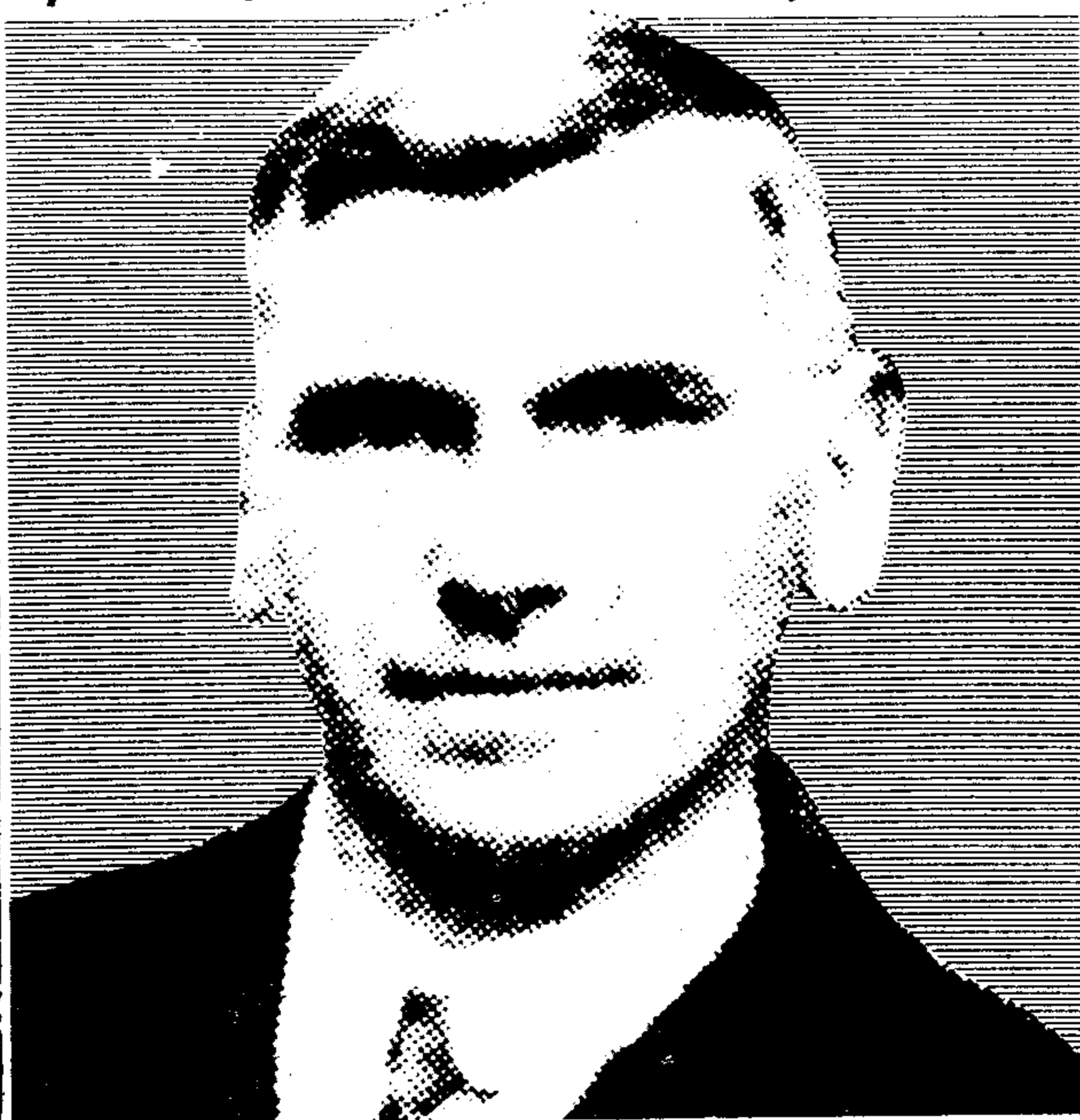
Vietnam and Trotskyism:
An important new publication from the Communist League of Australia comprising a series of articles by Simon Pirani on the struggle of the Trotskyists in Vietnam. Together with additional material from the Communist League, it makes this booklet indispensable for all socialists concerned to learn the real history of the Trotskyist movement and its life and death fight against Stalinism.

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ACCUSER of CAPITALISM

John Maclean's

Speech from the dock, May 9th 1918



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STALINISM IN FRANCE

Tom Kemp

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LETTERS

Please send your letters to Workers' Press, PO Box 745, London SW9 7QS. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

A genuine all trades unions alliance

A. THOMAS asks some pertinent questions in his letter, Workers Press 20 February.

He asks: now that the call for the one day general strike on 14 March in support of the health service workers has been taken up widely in the labour movement, how is this to be achieved?

He wants to know whether we should call on the TUC to organise it; whether we should organise at the grass roots; what we would do next and if it were to result in the bringing down of the Tory government what we would replace it with.

The nurses and other health workers actions on 3 February and since have demonstrated their determination to defend the NHS against Thatcher's plans to destroy it.

But the lessons of the miners' strike, Wapping and other major struggles, show that no section of workers is strong enough to defeat the Tories on their own.

The health service belongs to everybody — not just to those who work for it. It is necessary to mobilise the maximum support of the entire working class in its defence.

In calling for the TUC to call a one day general strike in support of the health service, do we really expect them to do it? I believe not. It was the TUC leaders who, after all, left the miners isolated for a year. If allowed, the TUC will also betray the health workers.

We place demands on the TUC in order to expose their unwillingness to defend the interests of the working class and in so doing attempt to create the conditions where an alternative leadership can be built.

The fight to defend the health service can only be won by bringing down the Thatcher government. What would we replace the Tories with? Another Labour government would be unable to provide an adequate health service. The attack on the health service is dictated by the international crisis of capitalism. Capitalism in decline can no longer afford a health service and the Labour Party are the most willing servants of capitalism.

Therefore the struggle to defend the health service has a revolutionary content; only the complete overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of socialism can provide health care for the working class.

Today the working class is on the offensive. Large sections of workers (eg: seafarers and car workers) have defied their trade union bureaucracy to confront the Tories in defence of pay and conditions.

Health workers now find themselves in the forefront of the struggle against Thatcher. There is massive support in the working class for their fight and, as with the Frickley miners and the car workers at Ellesmere Port, many workers would support a call for solidarity action.

If the call for the one day strike is to be successful it must be organised in opposition to the TUC's attempt to hold back on the issue and sew confusion.

I believe now would be an appropriate time to call for an All Trades Unions Alliance (ATUA) conference, on the issue of the health service.

The ATUA used to be the industrial section of the old WRP before the split of 1985.

Under Healy the ATUA degenerated into a propaganda organisation, which held an annual conference in a bid to recruit new members to the WRP.

Very little work was ever done between conferences and the organisation made no serious intervention in the class struggle — at least not in the ten years I have been in the party.

We must learn from our past experience. Only a revolutionary Trotskyist party can lead the struggle for the health service to a successful conclusion. The conditions are fast maturing for such a party to be built. I believe we have not yet reached a point where workers will turn en masse to such a party.

A genuine all trades unions alliance, led by Trotskyists opposing the trade union bureaucracy, could win the support of thousands of workers and prove to be a major influence in the coming struggles.

John Holmes
Croydon

Lormin criticised

GEORGE Lormin's article in last week Workers Press, 'New aspects of racism in the USA' (27 February) presents a one-sided, male chauvinist position which should not pass without comment.

Quoting from an article in 'Black Scholar', comrade Lormin appears to accept uncritically the views and statistics put forward by University of California professor, Robert Staples.

Judging by the excellent pieces the comrade regularly writes for the paper, I doubt if that is really the case.

For example the view is expressed that it is black males who bear the brunt of American capitalism.

Aren't there many black women living in poverty, with not even the very slimmest opportunities, and confronted by the same problems black men are exposed to?

Do they not suffer the consequences to an even larger extent?

Are black women not discriminated against on the grounds of the colour of their skin but also for their sex?

We need to explain the reason why 'invisible racial barriers' exist for blacks, male and female, and dismantle those barriers in order to go forward.

In contrast to the overall impression the article gives, the photograph chosen to illustrate it shows a black woman at the head of a demonstration in Alabama in 1963.

The importance of the role of black women in the struggles to come should not be underestimated.

Trudi Jackson
South West London

Coming home to roost

IN parts of Britain, journalistic horizons are becoming dark with chickens coming home to roost. Payment for the crossing of printers' picket lines and the acceptance of Judas money for doing the jobs of compositors and typesetters is now being demanded, not by their fellow trade unionists, but by the print bosses.

Graham Parrett, president of the Newspaper Socie-

ty, speaking at Newstec Conference (a gathering of provincial newspaper panjandrum) climaxed his address with: 'And, dare I say it, the provincial newspaper industry will gradually become de-unionised.'

Trouble, there is, and not only in the provinces.

The current issue of the UK Press Gazette carries on its front page in large black type the headline: Show-down at the Sun, followed in body sized text by: The News International has set Friday as the deadline for its journalists to accept a new pay and conditions deal, which includes surrendering the four day week.

Further in the edition it is reported that the North Wales newspaper's aim to become non-union when moving to its new £2.5 million computerised headquarters. Commenting on the position, the NUJ northern organiser stated: 'The company are definitely out to deunionise. The managing director has treated us with nothing but contempt all the way through the negotiations.'

The combined unions have approached Delyn Borough Council, a Labour authority, which helped the firm relocate with a lucrative site offer. Thompson Regional Newspapers are also brandishing the big stick, attempting to replace union/company deals based on old agreements with new contracts that remove the right to collective bargaining and other established basic union rights.

The dispute at the North London Group of 'give aways' continues with Howard Hannah, one of the 13 striking journalists, being arrested and charged with obstruction.

These are some of the current disputes involving the NUJ which as a trade union is now in the position previously occupied by compositors: they transform the written word into page form and eventually the printing plates and are key factors in the production of the outlook-shaping and public opinion-forming media.

The way forward for the activists in the newspaper unions is difficult. At the present time, because of the Wapping experience, the grass roots consider 'unity' to be a very dirty word. Most of the members view relationships on a 'me first' basis, an attitude that in varying degrees has always been present amongst organised workers, but today is more pronounced. Although 'big' is not always beautiful, it is my opinion, that campaigning for the 'bigness' of one union for all print workers, is a major step demanding the attention of all print trade union activists.

A.W.Shute
retired NGA member

Make way

THAT there is a 'crisis of leadership' in the working class movement cannot be disputed.

However, this crisis is not to be found at source in the working class itself.

In every new struggle militant and potentially revolutionary leaders are produced.

That these new leaders are not developed into revolutionary cadres is the fault of the organisations of the left.

Your editorial, 27 February: 'TUC must call a general strike on 14 March!' typifies the cause of this 'crisis of leadership' displayed by what should be vanguard party leadership.

With hundreds of thousands of workers having taken class action despite

their union leaders; organised independently of their TU bureaucracy through strike committees; uniting their ranks as a class across trade and industrial divisions — these masses of workers who have taken the initiative to struggle against capitalist oppression and scared the living daylight out of the TU bureaucracy are advised by your editorial to 'demand the TUC call a general strike'!!

Is this what you call Marxist leadership — a revolutionary call to action?!!

You state that the workers are 'looking for leadership to mobilise a mass movement. . .', and despite the fact as you correctly state . . . Labour and TU leaders . . . compromise and block every working class assault on their (Thatcher) regime' your leadership is to tell the workers to depend upon those very TUC and Labour fakers to provide leadership in their struggles.

Have we not experienced through struggle itself the gross betrayal of the miners teachers, Ford workers etc by these traitors who now call for a day of action on 5 March only to seek to re-establish their credentials with the rising mass militant movement only in order to mislead and betray it at a later stage?

My personal experience of talking with strikers is their fear that the TU bureaucrats will step in to take control out of the hands of the strike committees and militant leaders and betray the struggle so causing defeat and demoralisation and set back the movement for years.

The slogan should surely be: 'No trust in the TU leaders — build the rank and file leadership and organisation'.

Nurses, car workers, pub-

lic employees etc. are rising up and are far ahead of the TU leadership — they have gone beyond the limitations of the bureaucracy.

Surely it is a retrograde step to suggest that the TUC could give leadership by stating 'if the TUC will not take action to lead the struggle then they must make way for those who will'.

To tell nurses etc. to submit to their TU leaders, to forsake their own independent leadership and organisation is surely a step back from militant class action.

Do we resort to the TU ballot box to replace these leaders as an alternative to independent class action?

As revolutionary Marxists we must call on the rank and file to demand that their strike leaders and committees strengthen and extend their rank and file organisation with representatives from all sections of the working class movement, i.e. pensioners, unemployed, tenants etc. including socialist organisations, so that a leadership and organisation not beholden to the TU bureaucracy and anti-TU laws can mobilise the masses in the struggle against the evils of capitalism.

Only by such a method can a revolutionary Marxist party be built, the new workers' leaders nurtured into becoming revolutionary class leaders, and the struggle for socialism advanced.

Tom Cowan
West Norwood

● WE are certainly not asking the working class to depend on or submit to their reformist and Stalinist leaders. Experience from the past has shown that on every decisive occasion these leaders will betray the working class

into the hands of the capitalist class.

But has the working class achieved a consciousness of this fact long known to Marxists? We believe not. To say that the working class has gone beyond the bureaucracy would mean that the working class, or at any rate decisive sections of it, have broken with reformism. Unhappily, that is not as yet the case, although we are convinced that in the turbulent struggles now developing the basis for that break exists.

But such a break cannot be made spontaneously. Marxism does not arise from the working class. It is developed in and through a Party which consciously works over the whole of human experience, including the class struggle, as the basis of its intervention in the struggles of the working class.

The fact is that the working class still turns to its reformist-led organisations, the trade unions especially, when it is confronted with problems. The swing to the left in the Transport and General Workers Union is but one recent expression of this fact.

How to break the illusions that the working class has in its existing leaderships? We believe it is still necessary to place demands on these leaders in order that they can be tested out before workers, many of whom (in local government for example) are coming into conflict with the employers and the state for the first time.

This tactic of course does not exclude the building up and our full participation in committees of action which will unite all sections of workers involved in struggle. The WRP will fight for its policies and programme in such committees as part of the building of an alternative revolutionary leadership.

Editor

Bring down the Tories



Veeder-Root workers who were locked out for joining the Dundee day of action

IN THE biggest demonstration seen in Dundee since the Health Unions' strike of 1982, 4,000 marchers, overwhelmingly NHS and industrial workers, turned out to protest against Tory plans to smash the NHS.

Workers are clear that whether it is cuts made by private sharks or by in-house tendering it means deaths.

Some leaders are not so clear about this nor, it seems, about the nature of this Tory government, because they think pressure will force them to hand over the money.

That was the main theme of the speeches despite the many correct points made (about city sharks etc.) after the demonstration had wound its way through the city streets, lined with supporters including a grim-reaper with placard, to the Caird Hall.

All trade union banners were present and each one brought onto the stage behind the platform got a rousing welcome especially from the women.

awareness' would force the Tories to 'begin to pump the money back'.

Harry McLevy of the STUC, an ex-Dundee shipyard worker, said 'Millions see the issue of the NHS as a means of mobilising mass resistance to the Tories'.

He said the cuts were to 'feed the careers of yuppies in the City of London. Resources should be planned to meet the needs of people'.

He urged everyone to 'walk into Michael Forsyth's constituency in Stirling on 5 March, tell him the game is up, and force him to defend the National Health Service'.

Workers Press Seminar

Saturday 12 March
10am — 4pm

Room 7 Lambeth Town Hall

Come along and learn the journalistic skills to write articles for the Workers Press

Personal Column

Peter Fryer

A ban is lifted, a ban remains

SO George Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', first published in Britain in 1949, is to be published in the Soviet Union. I wonder whether Russian readers will be told in the introduction that this book is a quadruple plagiarism (there is, I'm afraid, no other word for it).

Orwell borrowed his title-idea from '1984', a satirical look into the future by the French author Andre Maurois, published in 1929.

For his content, Orwell drew heavily on 'The Managerial Revolution', written in 1940 by the American ex-Trotskyist James Burnham (and itself largely based on ideas about 'bureaucratic collectivism' put forward in 1939 by the Italian ex-Trotskyist Bruno Rizzi in 'La Bureaucratization du monde' and criticised by Trotsky in the same year in a letter reprinted in 'In Defence of Marxism').

Orwell's enormous debt to Burnham's already highly derivative book is made clear in his essay 'Second Thoughts on James Burnham', published in the magazine 'Polemic' in 1946; and the society disapprovingly presented in 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' is very similar to the society approvingly forecast by Burnham.

'Nineteen Eighty-Four' owes an obvious debt, too, to Aldous Huxley's anti-Utopian satire 'Brave New World' (1932), which was itself largely based on 'We', the satirical novel of the 1920s by the Russian writer Evgeny Zamyatin, who died in Paris in 1937.

'We', the first anti-Utopian novel of any literary importance, was never published in Russian, but appeared in New York in an English translation, as well as in French and Czech.

This fantasy about the 26th century AD was Orwell's fourth and principal source for 'Nineteen Eighty-Four'. There are many close similarities between the dystopian societies portrayed in the two novels, just as there are striking resemblances between their plots.

George Woodcock wrote in his study of Orwell, 'The Crystal Spirit' (1967): 'Between "We" and "Nineteen Eighty-Four" the resemblances are so close in both detail and structure as to leave little doubt of Zamyatin's direct influence on Orwell, who admitted it freely.'

Orwell in fact contributed a review of 'We' to 'Tribune' in 1946, in which he was apparently the first to point out that Huxley's 'Brave New World' was partly derived from it.

This purely factual and wholly un-moralising account of Orwell's multiple literary debts in no way qualifies the admiration for his style which I expressed here on 19 December, when I ranked him, with Bernard Shaw and James Baldwin, as one of the present century's three masters of English expository prose.

But Russian readers are obviously not going to be given access to Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' because of its English prose style. And to understand why glasnost is now to be extended to the hitherto anathematised 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' we have to disentangle, as I have tried to do, that book's complicated but in no sense obscure pedigree.

The artistic progenitors of 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' are Maurois, Zamyatin, and Huxley; its political and intellectual progenitors are Rizzi and Burnham. And in this latter fact we have the key to the whole puzzle.

The Soviet bureaucracy can now tolerate — indeed, can promote — a variety of 'anti-Stalinism' that has nothing whatever to do with Marxism and that was in fact developed in active opposition to Marxism.

What it cannot tolerate, and will not republish, is a Marxist analysis of Stalinism. So 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' is to be published, while the writings of Trotsky remain banned.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Soviet bureaucracy are busy putting up defensive earthworks against the spread of Trotskyist ideas inside the USSR.

The rehabilitation of Bukharin is, in a sense, one such rampart; the publication of 'Nineteen Eighty-Four', an ambiguous piece of writing which can easily, though falsely, be presented as a sort of quasi-Trotskyism, is clearly another.

How effective these transparent defensive devices will be in preventing the spread of Trotskyist ideas within the Soviet Union remains to be seen. Thoughtful and inquiring young Russians will inevitably become aware of the existence of a Marxist critique of Stalinism, and will inevitably want to read that critique for themselves.

Bearing in mind what has been happening in Armenia, it seems to me that the time is now ripe for some enterprising organisation here in the west to publish the original Russian text of Trotsky's 'The Revolution Betrayed' (1937), which Isaac Deutscher describes as 'one of the seminal books of this century', and to do everything in its power to get copies of it into the Soviet Union.

Sauce for the gander

A LONDON bookshop owner was fined £2,000 last week for selling manuals or how to kill, maim, and kidnap. The magistrate who fined him said the material was cruel, barbarous, and sadistic, glorified violence, and constituted blatant encouragement to indulge in violence.

I hold no brief for the publishers and pedlars of 'survival' handbooks and military memorabilia — which generally, in practice, seems to mean Nazi memorabilia. These neo-fascist gentry deserve far more than a £2,000 fine, and a workers' government would put them out of business within 24 hours of coming to power.

But material that precisely corresponds to the magistrate's summary is freely

available in bookshops and public libraries all over the country.

I read last weekend, for instance, a disgusting novel called 'The Pious Agent', by John Braine, published by Eyre Methuen in 1975.

This is as 'cruel, barbarous, and sadistic' as anything I've read outside the British Library's Private Case, and ends with a gloating description of a KGB agent wetting himself with fright because of the tortures he is about to endure under interrogation by the British security services.

If there is to be censorship, should it not be impartial?

A lot too much

'I HAVE a passion for words', claims Education Minister Kenneth Baker in the 'Sunday Times'. 'I want schoolchildren to grapple with language, to search for the right word', he adds. 'English is close to my heart.'

In the same article, Baker tells his readers:

'Though natural in politicians, whose official lot is to read, hear, speak and write an awful lot of words, this professional immersion has not dulled my appetite.'

A person who claims to have a passion for words and produces a sentence like that has about as much credibility as a TV evangelist caught in a brothel.

Words of a feather

WHILE we're on the subject of words, here's a puzzle whose answer, I freely admit, I wouldn't have known until last week.

Antediluvian; electricity; hallucination; incontrovertible; insecurity; literary; medical; precarious; retrogression: what do all these words have in common?

Answer next week.

Airlie and the Fords strike

'LEFT' COVER FOR BUREAUCRACY

AS FORD workers reflect on the role their leaders played in selling out their pay claim, and consider how they can fight against these leaders and remove them, the role of AEU leader Jimmie Airlie should be studied.

On the eve of the old pay agreement running out Airlie went 'AWOL' failing to turn up at the Fords National Joint Negotiating Committee (FNJNC) meeting on 23 November and instead attended a press conference to announce that he had signed a single-union agreement with Ford US in Detroit to build a Ford's electronic plant in Dundee.

Initial outrage from the other unions who had been shut out of the deal was soon replaced by the common need to tackle a more pressing issue: how to prevent a strike resulting from the Ford pay claim.

The issue of Dundee was put aside — Jimmie was needed to do a more important job.

The Ford workers showed what they

BY A FORD WORKER

thought of Airlie at the lobbies outside the pay talks as they sang: 'My name is Jimmie Airlie, I'm here to sell you out.'

Typically Airlie would try to throw these workers on the defensive by challenging them 'are you ready for a long strike?' and 'if you want to take on the Company,

then I'm your man'.

But behind the scenes Airlie was one of the most conservative on the negotiating team. When negotiations reached the point that even Mick Murphy decided the time had come to declare a strike Airlie wanted 'corridor talks' with management and opposed the fixing of a strike date.

Murphy announced that the strike would begin on Monday 1 February but the next day back-peddled and called for another meeting with the company, whereupon the strike was postponed and a recommendation made to accept the three-year deal at a national ballot on Wednesday 3 February.

At that FNJNC meeting Airlie withdrew instructions to AEU delegates to reject and himself abstained along with fellow Communist Party members and Transport & General Workers Union officials Jack Adams and Steve Hart so enabling a majority to accept.

The leaders' treachery was repudiated when one

stewards committee after another defied the recommendation and called for rejection. The ballots rejected by 60 per cent Murphy's 'historic deal'.

Following Murphy's capitulation to Fords, Airlie took over the role as the leader most apparently opposed to the three-year deal with strings; those who listened closely to him noticed that he concentrated on the strings as they applied to the skilled men.

It emerged that Airlie and Lou Britz of the EEPTU had been having separate meetings in an attempt to get a special deal for the skilled men but had failed.

When the FNJNC met again on Friday 5 February to consider the ballot result, Dagenham's PTA plant and the lorry drivers had already walked out and were picketing the plants. Many others came out when they heard that the talks had broken down and a strike had been declared from Monday 8 February.

That Monday morning saw Fords shut down completely. Yet while the pickets were bracing themselves for a long strike, union leaders Ron Todd and Bill Jordan were moving quickly to bring it to an end. Todd, Jordan and Airlie secretly met the company on Thursday 11 February and have still not revealed what took place at that meeting.



JAMIE AIRLIE

Ford workers read in the Tory press the following Monday that new moves were afoot; the FNJNC met the Company on the Tuesday and the two-year deal was revealed — most of the strings were still attached.

The officials grabbed at the slight move by the Company and recommended acceptance; 16 convenors (a majority) voted against. Airlie's enthusiasm for the agreement was such that he called for a return to work on the Wednesday morning before the ballot had taken place.

The extent of the secret undertakings given in secret 'corridor' talks at this meeting have still not been fully revealed. John Hougham Ford's chief negotiator, was later reported as saying:

'the agreement is not just words; there is a meaning behind them which is to positively promote change by agreement. I have the trade union leaders' undertakings. I accept they are men of honour.'

This makes it clear that the officials will side with the company if resistance to changes are taken to national level.

The role played by Airlie. Adams and Hart shows that Stalinism in the unions is still a force to be reckoned with although it has lost its mass base. The Communist Party dominated the shop stewards movement in Fords in the 50's and early 60's; today they don't have one plant leader since Sid Harroway retired and Dan Connors died. Their emphasis now is to take official positions and act as the left cover in the bureaucracy and often being revealed as being to the right.

Airlie's history since he helped Jimmy Reid sell out the Upper Clyde Shipyard struggle has been to use his 'reputation' to get on to the executive as the leader of the Broad Left in the AEU but as an official has sold out struggles such as the recent Caterpillar occupation and played up to nationalist sentiments in signing the Dundee single-union agreement. Airlie has become a stalking horse for the far-right leaders of the AEU who are now forming a block of unions to collaborate with Thatcher and state anti-union laws.

ROBSON'S CHOICE

On **Saturday**, at 3.25p.m. (BBC2), the short *Letter to a Rebel*, a classic example of 50s paranoia, followed at 3.40p.m. (BBC2), by Howard Hughes' first contribution to the 'reds under the beds' hysteria, *The Woman on Pier 13*, directed by Robert Stevenson in 1949. (The film's original title was 'I Married a Communist'. Hughes is rumoured to have offered the picture to 18 directors. Their refusals were taken as evidence of communist sympathies.) At 4.30p.m. (Radio 4), *Science Now*. At 6.35p.m. (Radio 3), the music of Froberger in *A Cosmopolitan Musician*. At 8p.m. (BBC2), *Arena* presents the second of two documentaries on *flamenco*, *An Andalucian Journey*. At 10.05p.m. (BBC2), John Boorman's thriller, *Point Blank*. At 10.45p.m. (Radio 3), the first of three cautionary tales by Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889) in *Saltykov's World*. At 11p.m. (Radio 4), Stephen Sheridan's *Fallen Arches*. At 11.30p.m. (BBC2), Robert Altman's film *The Long Goodbye*. At 11.50p.m. (C4),

Richard Rush's *The Stunt Man*.

On **Sunday**, at 7.50p.m. (Radio 3), John Lill plays two Beethoven piano sonatas. At 8.45p.m. (C4), *Ten Modern Writers* looks at T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. At 9.50p.m. (C4), Delmer Daves' excellent western, 3:10 to Yuma. At 10p.m. (ITV), the return of the satirical comedy series *Hot Metal*. At 11.35p.m. (C4), Tunisian director Nouri Bouzid's *Man of Ashes*.

On **Monday**, at 8.35a.m. (Radio 3), *Composers of the Week* features Ferruccio Busoni. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), Verdi's opera *Un Ballo in Maschera* direct from Covent Garden. At 11p.m. (BBC1), *Business Matters* presents *A Tale of Two Mills*. Also at 11p.m. (C4), Ann and Eduardo Guedes' film *Rocinante*.

On **Tuesday**, at 9.35a.m. (Radio 3), Schubert's *Death of a Maiden* string quartet. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), Trevor Griffiths' play *The Party*. At 9.40p.m. (Radio 3), a radio play by American dramatist Edward Albee, *Listening*. At 10p.m. (C4), Carl Rainer's

comedy, *The Man with Two Brains*.

On **Wednesday**, at 4.05p.m. (Radio 4), *File on 4* investigates the National Health Service in the second

of two reports. At 7.10p.m. (BBC2), *Review Special* looks at three London painters with current London exhibitions. At 7.45p.m. (Radio 4), part four of *Lenin of the*

Rovers. At 8.45p.m. (Radio 4), first in a new series, *The Judges*. At 9.25p.m. (BBC2), *A Very Peculiar Practice*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), a look at the forces at the heart of the

hurricane that hit Europe last October in *Q.E.D.* At 10.29p.m. (BBC2), another documentary in the series *Up North*. At 10.30p.m. (C4), a television comedy, *Tickets for the Titanic*.

On **Thursday**, at 3p.m. (C4), Humphrey Jennings' 1943 documentary, *Fires were Started*. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 4), *Pain: the Final Threshold*. At 8p.m. (BBC2), *Out of Court*. At 9.30p.m. (C4), Malcolm Mowbray's hilarious comedy, *A Private Function*, written by Alan Bennett. At 11.20p.m. (C4), another documentary by Dennis O'Rourke, shot in Papua New Guinea, *Ileksen*.

On **Friday**, at 1.50p.m. (BBC1), George Cukor's entertaining *Dinner at Eight*. At 8p.m. (Radio 3), *Letters, Discreet and Indiscreet*, fourth play in the series *Whose is the Kingdom?* by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy. At 10.45p.m. (Radio 3), *The Idealistic Carp* in *Saltykov's World*. At 11p.m. (BBC1), Alan Pakula's well-made political thriller, *All the President's Men*.

Tom Scott Robson



Michael Palin and Maggie Smith star with pet pig Betty in 'A Private Function', Channel 4 Thursday

PARKINSON'S LAW WRECKS THE C.E.G.B.

BY CYRIL SMITH

Privatisation of electricity

OUTLINES of the most massive and destructive of Thatcher's privatisation schemes are now beginning to emerge. Last week, the recently-rehabilitated Cecil Parkinson presented his White Paper on the future of the electricity supply industry in England and Wales. Privatisation of the industry in Scotland will be the subject of another document next week.

Plans involve the break-up of the entire structure of the industry. Vitaly important as it is for the UK economy, the generation and distribu-

tion of electricity are going to be put into the hands of a number of competing companies, which will be sold off to private inves-

tors in the next few years.

The Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) is to be broken in two, the larger piece including all nuclear power generation. Despite a vigorous campaign by the present twelve area boards, they are to be sold off, shattering the national distribution system, and cutting it off from the production of power. A separate company will control the high-voltage grid.

New companies will be encouraged to produce electricity and sell it to the local distributors, who will themselves be allowed to go into production if they want.

Privatisation is sure to increase the danger of powercuts. The promise of central regulation and the safeguard of customers' interests looks a bit sick in the light of the experience of privatised gas and telecommunications.

The price rises needed to get the industry's balance sheets to look appetising for potential shareholders are already being imposed. They will certainly be maintained, in an industry where the customer is at the mercy of a monopoly supplier.

Two further issues are involved.

The electricity industry has a major impact on the environment. Parkinson did not even mention the word when he unveiled his plans at Westminster.

The 'acid rain' problem, which results from the emission of sulphur and nitric oxides, owes much to power stations burning coal. But there is no provision for private producers to be forced to take measures to reduce pollution.

The other question is nuclear power. The Parkinson plan will set the local distribution companies a minimum proportion of their power - perhaps twenty-five percent - which they will have to buy from nuclear sources. Price differentials with other sources will not affect this obligation.

The reactionary character of this policy is most striking. The necessity for electricity production to be centrally coordinated and distributed to be organised

through a national grid has been understood for many decades.

Today, the possibility of international exchange of power supplies is also of growing importance. A link with the French grid is already available.

The story about competition leading to lower prices and higher efficiency is complete nonsense. Privatisation reflects the desperate search by surplus capital for more profitable opportunities for investment.

Altogether, the privatisation of electricity is a blatant illustration of the violent clash between finance-capital and society as a whole, and between the world's productive forces and the system of national production for private profit.

LRT 'VERY TOUCHY'

LONDON BUSES have announced that they will be replacing the highly inflammable seat filling which gives off toxic fumes with fire retardant seat filling.

The move follows the exposure of the danger by the Capital Transport Campaign in its monthly bulletin. The bus engineers craft alliance spokesperson of the TGWU said that following the closure of the two London Transport bus engineering works at Aldenham and Chiswick, seats with slashed covers now take several weeks to replace instead of a day.

The danger of toxic fumes from burning bus seats was first raised by the TGWU London bus committee more than two years ago after fires on buses in Croydon and East London.

London Bus's response at that time was that after consulting the fire brigade, they could announce that the seats were safe.

A member of the T & GWU London bus committee told us that following the exposure of London Regional Transport's cuts policy over the Kings Cross fire, management are 'very touchy' on safety issues.

A DRIVER'S LOT

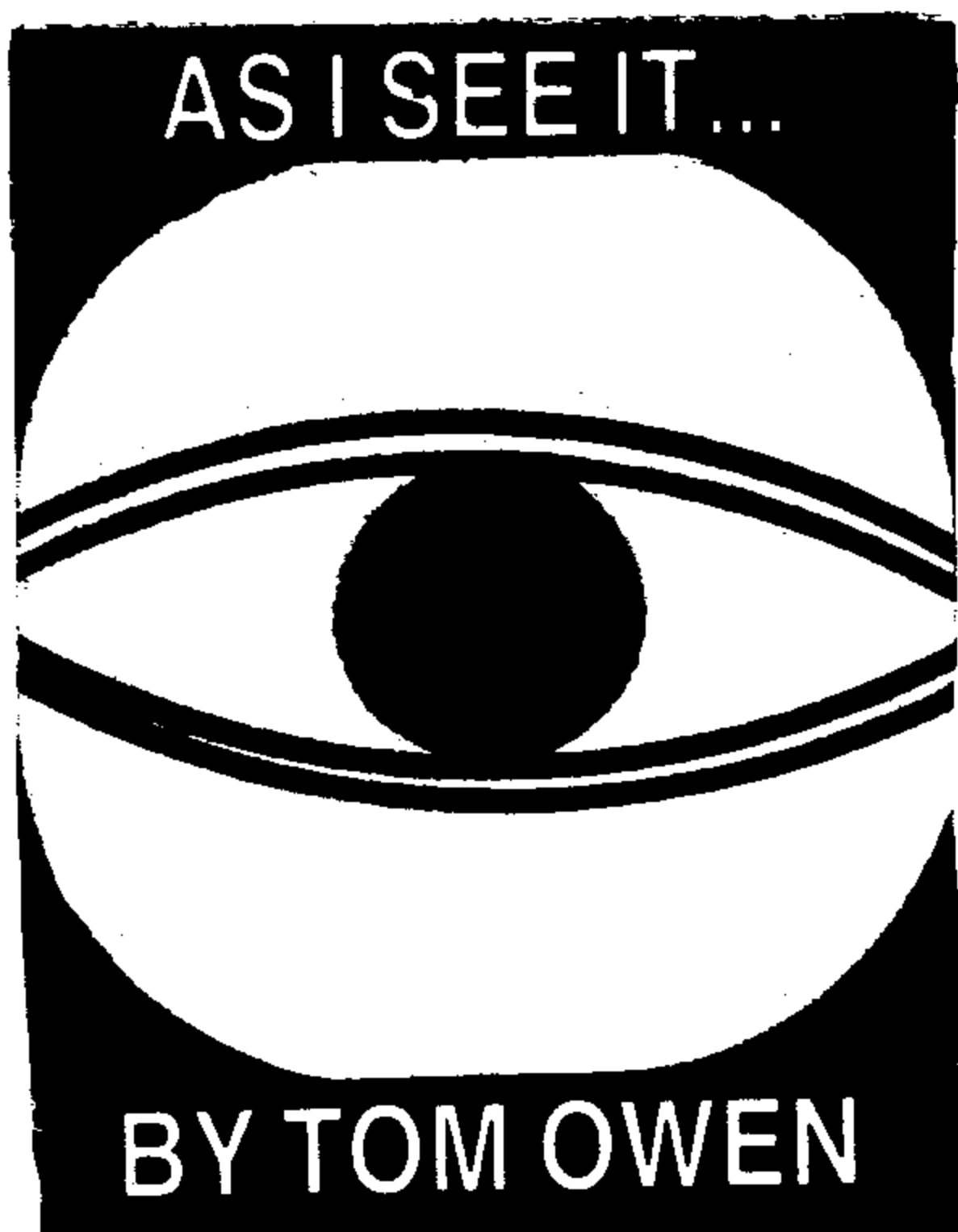
T & GWU London Bus Committee submitted a claim this week for £5 per hour for driving a big bus in London. The present rate is £4.17 an hour for 38 hours. They are also claiming one hour's reduction in the working week and improved sick pay and holidays.

There are over 1000 drivers short in spite of cuts in the past year reducing the number required for the new schedules.

More than 500 drivers were sacked last year as unfit. Stress illnesses are rife in the industry. Members of the union told Workers Press: 'a drivers' lot is not a happy one!' OPO (one person operation) buses mean that a driver is expected not only to drive 'a glasshouse on wheels' on London's crowded roads but deal with the public as well as the cash (apart from taking fares there are over 140 different travel passes).

3,000 copies of the 28-page claim are being circulated to London's 50 bus garages as part of the campaign to back the claim.

Battle of the books



Yorkshire, and some of the London boroughs, these sentiments are commonplace.

The jargon and buzz words are all there. . . 'elitism' is replaced by 'confidence building' in 'workshops' to 'share our experiences'.

What are the qualities of this writing freed from 'literary merit'? Well, as expected, the contributions are naive, some hardly literate and all have a minimal grasp of

literary form. The only politics to appear amongst this radical 'writing' is the plea to vote Labour. At least that should please its sponsors.

The material is in fact the product of Adult Basic Education and literacy classes packaged by the middle class cultural missionaries on their expensive cybernetic toys and presented as 'real' writing from 'real' people.

This 'creative writing' has as much to do with poetry as a rates demand note.

It is the pedagogic fiction of an increasingly philistine middle class radicalism.

In areas like South Yorkshire this flourishes under the patronage of the natural ally of the radical middle class — the Labour bureaucracy and Stalinism.

Middle class careerists champion their special causes: 'women, blacks, gays etc' hectoring their own workforce in the public sector about their 'backwardness'. If you work in education or any cultural activity your elitism is decried. This careerist tomfoolery provides ammunition and cannon fodder for the conscious racists and allows them to spread moral panics and witch-hunts against those people who suffer specific oppression from capitalism.

For the Labourites, this workerism serves a twofold purpose; it allows them to play off their manual workers against white collar workers under a radical veneer of sentimentalism and also camouflages their endless pursuit of further funding from their diminishing rate-capped funds. In their desperate rout before the Tory offensive they court central government agencies like MSC for grants.

In Sheffield for example, it is estimated that in two year's time 60 per cent of post-16 education funding will come from central government sources. In education this means that educational Taylorism will dominate the curriculum. The crude jargon of managerial behaviourism is already established by our radical democratisers. Teachers no longer teach knowledge but develop 'inter-personal skills'; they 'negotiate their expertise' in 'delivery teams'.

Writers do not write but 'com-

municate their experience' in order to 'service their communities'. The caring professions do not care. . .

Thus the simple-minded populism of the reformists complements perfectly the economist culture of right wing Thatcherism. Both share a ruthless anti-intellectualism and both conspire at the trivialisation of culture and knowledge.

But Thatcherism has the initiative. The Labourites only serve the illusions of their own reformism, whereas the crisis of capital insists more and more that all phenomena be expressed at their exchange value and when that does not suffice it will proceed to destroy all aspects of capital — machinery, science, art, books, human beings. That is the role of fascism and war.

The 'Closing of the American Mind' was a best-seller in America last year. It attempts to explain, like a number of other publications, why the USA's 3,000 higher educational establishments produce students whom they consider barely literate. The problem is that these institutions are claimed to have 'all the resources. . . the problem is that they have no intellectual vision'.

The cause of this decline, in the view of the traditionalists, is the curriculum: 'you can't talk about Chaucer without someone saying "what about the women's perspective" what about "the third world perspective"'. It is very hard for

people outside to believe how extreme this has become.

However much the traditionalist criticism has a purchase, it has a far more serious purpose than knocking down its own Aunt Sallies. What it sees as the real villains of the piece are the '60s generation' now in positions of pre-eminence and which they claim to have been influenced by the old mole, Karl Marx.

But then the traditionalists run up against a problem. Marx spent more time in the British Museum than they spend in meetings and common room bars.

The Marxist tradition is particularly rich in its philosophic and cultural writings. Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci — all turned their attentions to questions of culture not because they chose to be 'mature' or 'civilized' but because they took responsibility for the total evolution of human society.

So when next you hear the terms 'workshops' or 'consciousness-raising' or 'centres of excellence' or 'academic credibility', reach for your theory.

May I suggest a quotation from the foreword to Trotsky's 'My Life'? 'A well-written book in which one can find new ideas, and a good pen with which to communicate one's own ideas to others, for me have always been and are today the most valuable and intimate products of culture.'

Need anything more be said?

LISTINGS

Listings published free for labour movement organisations. Send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thurs.

WOMEN IN PALESTINE. Jewish Socialists' Group meeting with Dima Milhem and Nira Yuval-Davis. **Tuesday, 8 March, 7.45 for 8pm.** Quaker International Centre, Byng Place, WC1. (nearest tube Goodge St.)

SAVE THE SHARPEVILLE SIX! Women's picket South Africa House, **Wednesday 9 March, 6pm to 7pm.**

PICKET DURHAM PRISON! Stop strip searches! End British torture! On International women's day **Sunday March 13, 1 pm.** Organised by the Irish Republican POW Campaign Committee. Transport: £10 (unwaged £5). Tickets available from Green Ink Books (263-4748).

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. S Africa House, Trafalgar Sq — City AA.

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

VMDC London Support Group Wkly Campaign Meetings. **Thursday evenings 7.30p.m.** Camden Town Hall All welcome. (Further details. 01-837 1688.)

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S CAMP To all women — we are still here; we still need your support! Near Newbury, Exit 13 on M4, or BR Newbury, Berkshire.

BULLETIN OF THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

(BIRMINGHAM) Now available on subscription: £2 per year (3 issues incl. pp). From: Tiocefaidh Ar La c/o IHSCC, PO Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN EVOLUTION A series of 10 **Thursday evening lectures.** (Started 14 Jan) 7pm. £1 (includes light refreshments). Lecturer: Mike Howgate. Venue Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London.WC1.

BENEFIT for Irish Prisoners Appeal and Troops Out Movement, Old White Horse, Brixton Road. Thursday 10 March, 8pm. Entertainment by the 'Jacket Potatoes' and other groups. Raffle of toys made by Gerry McDonnell and other prisoners.

DEMONSTRATION AND RALLY. Unite to Defend Education. Organised by the East Midlands Education Alliance. **Saturday 12 March 12.30pm.** Assemble Victoria Park Gates, Leicester. Rally at Town Hall Square.

MINERS STRIKE Benefit in aid of victimised miners. **Saturday 5 March 8pm.** West London Trades Union Club, 33-35 High Street, Acton, W3. Live music, late bar. £3 (unwaged £1.50). Organised by Hammersmith and Ealing support groups.

VIRAJ MENDIS DEFENCE CAMPAIGN. Lobby of House of Commons. **Wednesday 9 March 7.30pm.** Freedom ride — London to Manchester. Visit Viraj and join the campaign events. **Friday 18 March 11am,** return Saturday evening. Transport £5 (unwaged £3). Phone 01-837-1688 to book. — Street rally **Saturday 26 March 11am-3pm.** Speakers, singers, bookstall, exhibition by Sainsburys, Fye lane, Peckham.

DEFEND THE NHS Victory to the health workers. Public meetings to organise active support in the community for the health workers struggle called by the RCG. **Tuesday 15 March 7.30pm.** Southwark town hall, Peckham road, SE5. **Wednesday 16 March 7.30pm.** Camden black parents and teachers centre, Kentish Town road, NW5.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

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.	PAUL HOLMES , Life sentence, 119034. CON McFADDEN , 20-year sentence, 130662. MICHAEL J MCKENNEY , 16-year sentence, L46486. EDDIE O'NEILL , 20-year sentence, 135722.
MAIDSTONE HM Prison County Road, Maidstone, Kent SHAUN McSHANE, B75898 DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.	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.
PARKHURST HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603. PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532. TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence, 69204. PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.	DURHAM HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham. MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134. ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.
WAKEFIELD HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644. NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085.	REMAND PRISONERS: BRIXTON HM Prison, Jobb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF. LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693 PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694. LIAM QUINN, 49930
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.	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, L48616, 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, Long Lartin. JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin. BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Gartree. RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs. PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Gartree. Wormwood Scrubs, Ducane Rd, London, W12 0AE. They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.
GARTREE HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799. STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence 758663. JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635 PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence. ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.	FRANKLAND HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662.

We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.

RELEASE JAILED MINERS

SOUTH WALES DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale - Eight year sentence. Gartree Prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.	DURHAM MICHAEL STEPHENSON: Wearmouth - Three year sentence from June 1986. RF8756 HM Prison Acklington, Morpeth, Northumbria.
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International women's day

PICKET DURHAM PRISON



Sunday 13 March 1 pm

STOP STRIP SEARCHES! END BRITISH TORTURE!

Saturday 12 March women only events

Details from:
c/o Irish POW Campaign
PO box 540 Sparkhill, Birmingham B11
Creche details supplied by writing to above PO box with details.

The Paperbacks Centres

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Tel: 01-636 3532

10-12 Atlantic Road, Brixton, London.SW9 8HY
Tel: 01-274 8342

Workers Press

Saturday March 5 1988, Newsdesk 01-733 3058

SOUTH WALES NHS DAY OF ACTION

A MAGNIFICENT response in South Wales to the call for industrial action on St. David's day, 1 March, in defence of the National Health Service was reported throughout the region — nearly every hospital participated in one way or another.

The strongest reaction came from the three psychiatric hospitals in Bridgend which had initiated the call — the Park, Glanrhyd, and Pen-y-fai where 600 staff struck for 24 hour hours.

1,500 hospital staff were also engaged in 24-hour strikes in Mid Glamorgan and Gwent.

At Tonteg hospital 64 staff joined in the 24-hour strike to protest against the decision of Mid Glamorgan Health Authority to close the pre-convalescent ward for geriatrics.

At the University of Wales hospital (Heath), in Cardiff, 20 operations were postponed. Union representatives had informed the hospital administration four days in advance that operating theatre staff would be joining the strike.

Postponed

A NUPE spokesperson for the members concerned said they regretted the fact that individuals would have to wait a few more days for their operations, but they felt the action was essential to ensure adequate staffing levels in future so that people would no longer have to wait years for surgery.

Lunchtime protests were held outside many hospitals and at Prince Charles hospital in Merthyr Tydfil an all-day rolling picket of off-duty nurses and ancillary workers was staged.

Maerdy miners joined the lunchtime protest outside Llwynypia hospital in the Rhondda Valley, while one of the largest protests in South Wales took place outside St. Davids maternity and geriatric hospital in Cardiff.

Nurses

Two second-year student nurses working at Prince Charles hospital in Merthyr Tydfil reflect the changing mood amongst nurses, who are determined to defend the NHS against the Tory government's attacks.

Chris Enoch and Jonathan Jolly (see interview on page 3) said the crux of the matter is that it is not just nurses' pay but the whole of the health service that is in danger, and their warning for the TUC was:

'Without the help of other workers we are fighting a losing battle.'

HUNDREDS of thousands of workers have taken part in strikes and demonstrations in defence of the National Health Service. Thatcher's plans to break up the national health service has provoked anger from large numbers of workers and professional people.

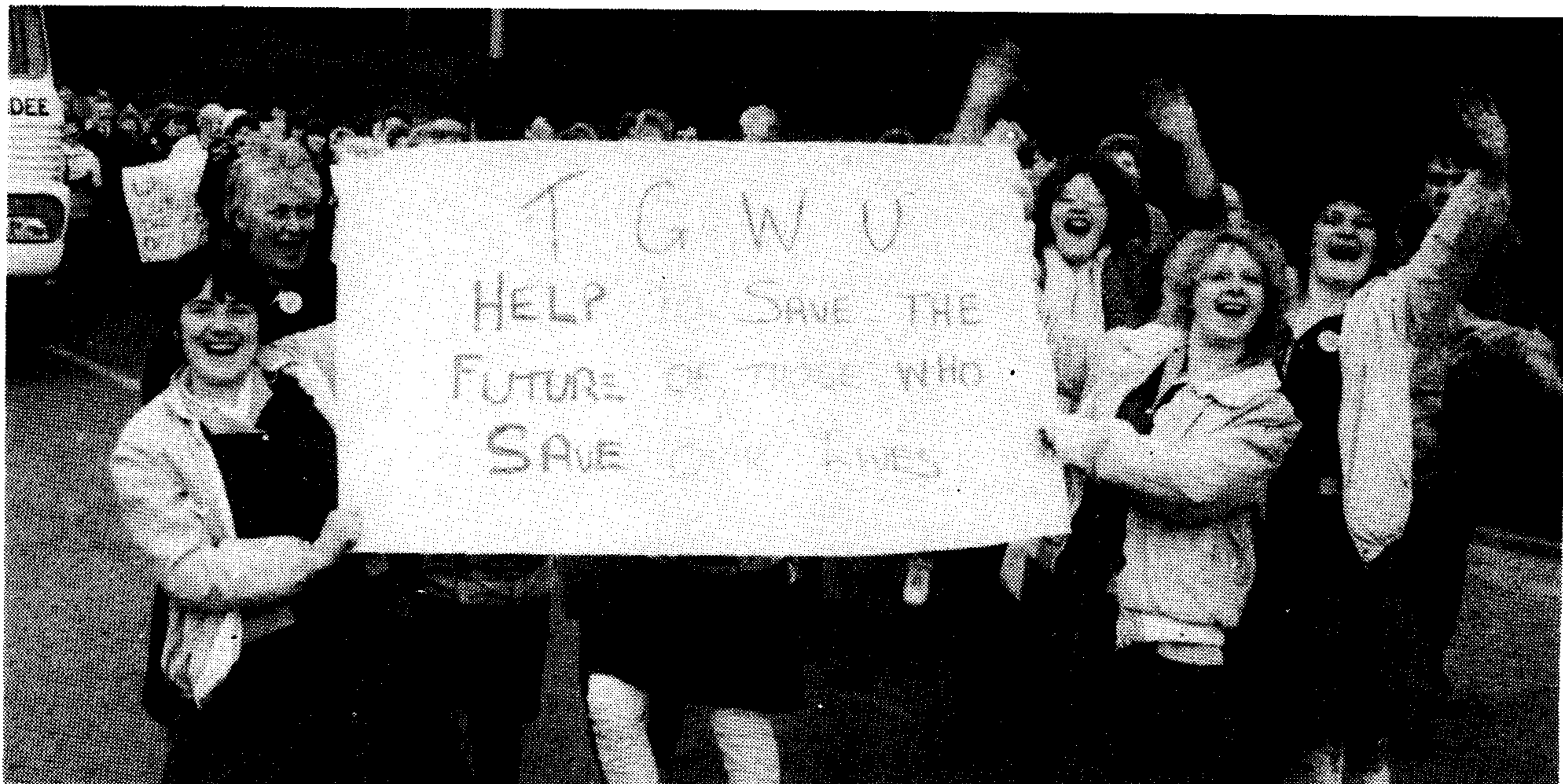
But facts must be faced.

● since 1981 protest demonstrations, pickets and conferences have been held, thousands of people have signed petitions; but wards and whole hospitals have closed down all over the country; even occupations have not stopped this onslaught.

● Privatisation means that the tremendous advances in medical science over the last decade are taken away from ordinary people and only the rich reap the benefits.

● Working conditions for hospital workers have deteriorated; patient care is maintained only at the expense of the health of NHS staff; many patients wait years for treatment; new techniques are either unavailable or remain unused due to lack of funds.

DEFEND THE NHS! TUC MUST CALL GENERAL STRIKE



Members of the TGWU in Dundee last week on the Scottish day of action against NHS cuts

● There are growing debts to the multi-million drug companies and a shortage of blood for transfusions in the NHS, whilst private hospitals have saved £200,000 and wasted at least 7,000 pints of blood on a sale or return scheme.

The Tories have no mandate to kill our children and destroy the welfare state and they could not stay in office if the Labour and trade union leaders did not block every working class assault on their regime.

Whilst millions support the health workers and demand united action in defence of the NHS, the TUC makes no moves to unite this movement, but encourage a situation where different unions are calling different days of action. The London hospitals strike co-ordinating committee is taking action on 14 March supported by COHSE, but NUPE is calling on their members to take action on 15 March.

Workers Press urges all trade unionists to unite behind the London hospitals

strike co-ordinating committee (elected from hospital workers especially for this campaign) and demand that the TUC organise a general strike on 14 March.

We also say that this must be the start of a campaign for an all out general strike to bring down the Tory government.

Don't let the TUC isolate the health workers as they did the miners. The strike committees being formed in hospitals should turn to the whole community with the aim of organising workers

both inside and outside the health service in committees to rally the whole community in defence of the NHS

● The campaign must demand: full funding for the NHS; reversal of privatisation; nationalisation of the big drug companies and control of the NHS by committees of NHS workers and NHS users.

● Only a general strike can defeat Thatcher. These policies and this demand must be fought for throughout the trade union and labour movement.

ALL OUT ON 14 MARCH!



Kronstadt and Petrograd in 1917
In 1917, the sailors of Kronstadt were at the centre of the Russian Revolution. Raskolnikov, aged 25, was their leader. This is his day-by-day account of the Bolsheviks' struggle to seize power.

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WORKERS PRESS FEBRUARY FUND

In so far: £1,247.03

Our fund has ended £753 short of the £2,000 target. That sum is the minimum we must raise to maintain Workers Press in its present form; we must therefore face the difficult position that the paper cannot continue to be published each week on its present financial basis. The costs of printing and overheads are very high, and increasing.

Our aim has been to produce a campaigning paper with Marxist analysis, covering both international and home news. There has been considerable interest throughout the labour movement here and abroad — especially because we expelled the rotten Healy leadership from the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1985.

But we must tell our readers that we will not continue to publish Workers Press and build up debts. We are prepared to take the difficult decision to cease publication and enter into full discussions throughout our Party and with all our friends and supporters to prepare properly for the future.

Our main concern is to build a leadership founded on Marxist theory and tested in struggle. If that means that we have to take a step back in order to go forward, we will not hesitate.

We thank you for raising £1,247 in the short month of February and urge you to continue your support.

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