

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



## SOUTH AFRICA: WHAT NEXT?

Clive Bradley argues the case for a Workers' Party. See centre pages.

## Why Zia has cracked down hard

By Ali Asgar

**THE PRESENT crackdown on the opposition in Pakistan has smashed any democratic illusions that President Zia and Prime Minister Junejo may have fostered.**

In all the major cities of Pakistan, hundreds have been killed, thousands injured, and many hundreds of political activists and trade unionists arrested. Opposition to the crackdown has been most widespread in Sind, the province which contains Pakistan's major industrial city, Karachi.

At the end of 1985 the military regime organised a general election in which the parties were not allowed to stand candidates. Then the army was returned to barracks and military courts ceased to function. A modicum of democracy was restored.

This allowed the opposition leaders to return. Controls over the media and over political meetings were relaxed. Zia wanted to test the strength of the opposition.

### Legitimacy

It was an attempt to 'ride the storm'. It almost succeeded. The Pakistan People's Party and the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy used mass pressure only as a bargaining counter to force the government to hold fresh elections without any restrictions on the participation of political parties.

As long as the mobilisation remained within those limits Zia did not feel threatened. But as time has gone on the opposition has become better organised and better coordinated, and the masses have more and more openly challenged the legitimacy of Zia's government.

The masses have consistently gone beyond the calls of the political parties, and the scope of the mass movement has now bewildered not only the Junejo government but also the opposition.

### Military

There are a number of possibilities in Pakistan now. Martial law could be declared once again, retaining Junejo's government as a purely consultative body or dismissing it altogether.

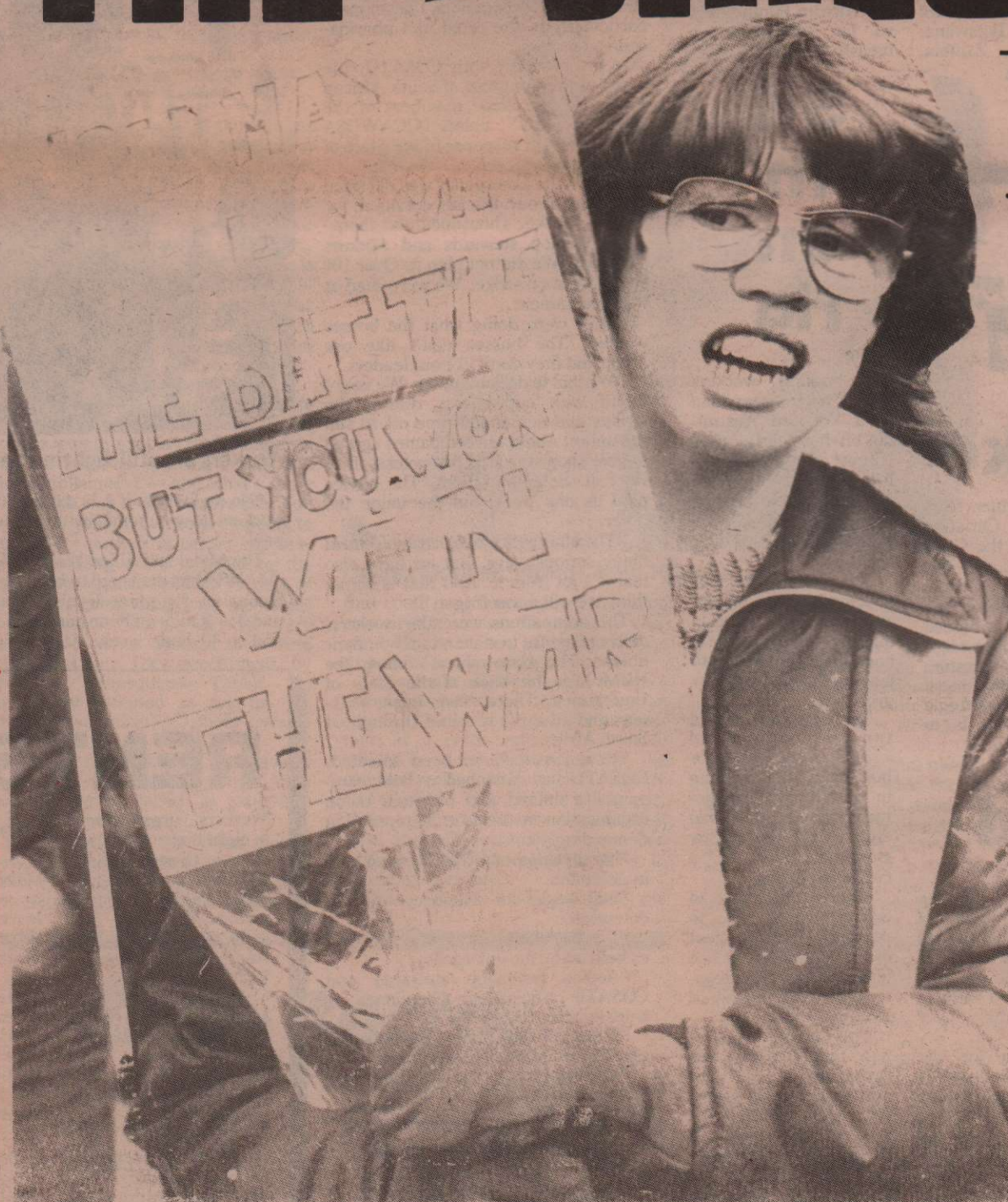
For the US government and the upper layers of the army general staff, Zia has now become so unpopular that he may no longer be considered to be of any use. So martial law may be restored under a new martial law administrator.

This would leave the way open for an agreement between the Pakistan People's Party and the generals, and

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## Tories in trouble but TUC retreats

# MAKE WAR ON THE TORIES!



## By Dennis Skinner MP

The Tories are crumbling, but the Labour and trade union leaders are failing to take advantage of it.

Instead of pledging a future Labour government to rip up the Tory anti-union laws, Kinnock and Willis plan a Labour version of those fetters on working-class action.

For its own self-defence, the labour movement must break collaboration and make war on the Tories. Dennis Skinner explains why.

Democracy? There's more democracy in a single trade union branch than there'll ever be in the inner citadels of capitalism. At the Stock Exchange, Lloyds and the City of London, self-regulation has always been the theme. And look how democratic they are! Who are the Establishment to tell us about democracy?

In recent years, two people, Peter Cameron-Webb and Peter Dixon, have managed to fiddle £39 million out of Lloyds Insurance betting shop, and not a single collar has been felt by the hand of a policeman.

There was no road block put on to stop them going to the coast or the airport. No sequestrators have been to see them in America.

And yet the fraud squad know where both of them live, in palatial residences.

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The labour movement must fight like the miners did. Photo: John Harris.



# 2-Day general strike

Bolivia's militant workers' movement staged a two-day general strike on August 21-22, on demands including the expulsion of US troops, sent to suppress the country's cocaine dealers.

About 170 US soldiers in Bolivia to help round up the cocaine traffickers, who are the country's biggest money spinners. Last year the government was forced to turn to a cocaine dealer for a loan.

The Central Obrera

Boliviana (COB), the powerful trade union federation, launched its strike in opposition to the troops' presence, and in support of striking tin miners threatened with 9,000 job losses. The government of Victor Paz Estenssoro has introduced a new round of austerity measures in an attempt to cope with the appalling crisis of Bolivian capitalism.

All the country's factories, mines and nearly all its gas and oil supplies were paralysed.

The airport was closed, and many shop assistants observed the stoppage. Reports say that bank and government employees continued to work.

Bolivia has been on boiling point for the last two years: last year the COB organised several general strikes. So far, however, it has been unable to impose a working class alternative to the economic crisis, and support for the right wing is very widespread.



Bolivian miner

# New famine

Last year, the rains finally came to Africa, bringing an end to the terrible drought. It was the light at the end of the famine-stricken tunnel.

Or so it was hoped.

But, disastrously, the rains also provided fertile breeding-grounds for grasshoppers and locusts. And now a plague of worse than Biblical proportions is plunging Africa back into the famine from which it was barely beginning to emerge.

A swarm of locusts could be expected to include 400 million insects, and to eat 4,000 tonnes of crops a day. Swarms have been recorded that were 20 times as big, covering 2000 square miles.

Grasshoppers (which drift individually on the



Aid urgently needed

wind and are therefore less awesome) are spreading across the western Sahara.

Species of locusts are infesting the eastern Sahara, and in particular Sudan (where civil war is making matters even worse), Ethiopia, and parts of Saudi Arabia.

Further swarms are moving across southern Africa — Botswana, South Africa, Zambia,

Tanzania — and threatening Zimbabwe.

The last plague ended 30 years ago, and had lasted for 25 years.

Action must be taken. Modern pesticides are available that can kill the swarms — but money is needed. The British government, which reduced its aid budget last year in the face of the African famine, has so far contributed a measly £1 million.



Chile's military regime

# Chile Strike

The savage dictatorship of General Pinochet in Chile is facing another nationwide general strike on September 4. The strike, planned by the National Civic Assembly, follows the successful two-day general strike of July 2-3.

The National Civic Assembly unites all the

opposition groups, from the capitalist Christian Democrats, to the Communist Party, and has the support of the trade unions.

The workers will need to develop independent political organisation out of their own struggles if the struggle against Pinochet is to succeed.

# US in Red

Recent figures in the 'Economist' magazine give a new index of the radical shift in the world economy over the last few years.

In 1982 the US was by far the world's richest country in terms of foreign assets. It had \$150 billion worth — 2½ times as much as the next biggest foreign investor, Britain.

But with its huge trade deficits in recent years the US has effec-

tively been running down that stock of assets at a tremendous rate. At the end of 1985 the US was the world's biggest debtor, with net liabilities of \$107 billion.

Now vying for the position of the world's biggest asset-holders are Britain (\$111 billion) and Japan, whose net foreign investments have shot up in a few years from practically nothing to \$130 billion.

# Sit in on rig

300 striking workers ended their occupation of a Western Australian offshore oilrig on 19 August. They were airlifted from the rig after agreeing to a settlement proposal from the company, Woodside Petroleum.

The dispute has disappeared from media coverage since, and it is feared that workers have been conned into leaving the rig by empty promises.

The dispute began two weeks ago when 14 workers were sacked for holding a brief meeting in worktime. Management claimed they had endangered the rig by stopping work at a crucial moment.

300 workers chose to occupy the rig to demand reinstatement of the sacked 14. Police and company helicopters were not permitted to land on the rig.

The Western Australian government was desperate to end the occupation as gas supplies to its capital Perth were about to run out. It threatened each worker with fines of up to A\$10,000 per day if the occupation continued.

Liberal South African newspapers rushed out information that has been banned under the State of Emergency, following a court ruling last week. Restrictions on the freedom of the press were lifted, if only temporarily.

Particularly badly hit by the State of Emergency have been South African trade unionists. Just four days after the State of Emergency was declared, black workers responded with the largest political strike in the country's history.

Some sections of workers reacted very quickly to the arrest and detention of union leaders under the emergency regulations, a wave of protest strikes and occupations developed, particularly in the retail and pharmaceutical sectors.

In an interview with COSATU, the paper of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, some members of the shop workers' union CCAWUSA explained their response to the State of Emergency.

"When the Emergency was declared and many of our officials detained, we went on strike. Thousands and thousands of shop stewards and workers came out. We did not plan it. Over 100 stores went on strike. We were mad at this government.

"They were doing what the bosses wanted. The bosses don't like our union and they don't like our leaders.

"We had to do something. We negotiated with our bosses during the strikes and demanded time off to run the union. About ten companies agreed to give shop stewards two weeks off to work at the union offices. The bosses paid us one week and the union the other.

"The emergency has disrupted us in many serious ways. But we have also learnt a lot from it. And that is something we will never forget."

The occupations were the workers' direct response to state attacks on their unions. The giant miners' union, the NUM, also hit back at the State of Emergency. There have been walk-outs and go-slows in mines throughout South Africa.

The unions have not been defeated. COSATU has launched a bold campaign to defend and maintain union organisation in the face of repression demanding:

\*No sackings of COSATU members in detention.

\*Full wages for detainees while in detention.

\*The backdating of all wage increases held up by the emergency.

\*Access for shop stewards and COSATU officials to telephones at work for union business.

\*Time off for shop stewards for union work outside the workplace.

\*The right to meet in working hours with no loss of pay.

**SOUTH AFRICA: LOBBY THE TUC FOR TRADE UNION SANCTIONS. 8.30 a.m. Monday 1 September, Brighton Conference Centre.**

SOUTH AFRICA

# WORKERS STILL RESISTING



Workers are still fighting back

\*No nightshifts if it is dangerous for workers to get home, with no loss of pay.

The Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) has managed to keep up their campaign for plant level bargaining and 3½ Rands an hour minimum wage and a 40 hour week, despite severe

repression of its militants including newly-elected general secretary Moses Mayekiso who is being held in the infamous John Vorster Square police station under the National Security Act. MAWU now plan to ballot their members in the metal industry for strike action over their wage demands.

GREECE

# RENTS DOUBLE

Workers' organisations in eight major towns and cities in Greece organised a four-hour stoppage on 20 August to protest against the latest austerity measure of Andreas Papandreu's PASOK government.

A law ending rent controls came into effect on 1 August and resulted in massive rent increases of up to 200-300% and a sharp rise in evictions.

The measure was intended to encourage private landlords, who have been withholding rented property because

By Ian Swindale

of the low rate of return, to put it back on the market and ease the shortage of rented accommodation. There is no indication that the measure is having the desired effect.

A worker living in Athens can now expect to spend up to half his or her monthly income on renting a three bedroom flat.

Hardest hit by the deregulation of rents are the low paid for whom no state provision of

rent subsidy exists.

Earlier austerity measures, including a two-year wage freeze, a reduction in the amount by which inflation is offset by adjustments to wages, a 15% devaluation of the drachma and massive price increases on imported goods and public services have also hit the lower paid particularly severely.

The electoral impact of these austerity measures on the Greek working class will be revealed in local elections due to take place throughout Greece this autumn.

# A dangerous conspiracy

John Stalker was framed by a police establishment desperate to put a stop to his investigation into the Royal Ulster Constabulary. No other explanation of the bizarre Stalker affair is plausible.

## Sympathy

Socialists can have no particular sympathy for Stalker himself. Although he seems uncommonly honourable, Stalker is a high-ranking officer in the Manchester police force. Official murder in Northern Ireland may have divided him from his Chief Constable, James Anderton — who is one of the most vocally right-wing

policemen in Britain. But in the day-to-day business of harassing striking workers and Manchester's black people, Stalker is at one with the rest of the police establishment.

Nevertheless, the affair has stirred up a lot of dust that is unlikely to settle overnight. Stalker himself has said that a conspiracy against him (which would almost certainly involve Anderton) could not be ruled out.

## EDITORIAL

The involvement of the police committee in deciding Stalker's fate shows the benefits of even that limited degree of democracy which we now exercise over police matters. It had the power to reject the Samson report and wisely it used it.

## Elected

But no elected body could decide to investigate further into the whole affair. Much of what lies behind it all,

we may never know.

Moreover, the public spotlight has only been played on this affair because Stalker is a high ranking police officer. How many more lowly members of the police force — or other state employees — have been buried in vilification and slander in order to cover up the truth?

## Misconduct

Police investigations into its own misconduct are notoriously inadequate. People are beaten up by the police, or even die at their hands, and the culprits get off scott free.

The answer is to replace the police force with democratic bodies based on and accountable to working class communities.

# Jekyll & Hyde

By Jim Denham

You can never be sure when one of the tabloids is going to turn from salacious Mr Hyde to sanctimonious Dr. Jekyll.

Usually it is in response to what the competition is up to: if "Star" photographers are accused of hounding the royals, the "Sun" will launch into a tirade about invasion of privacy; if the "Sun" is caught out fabricating an "interview" with the widow of a Falklands war casualty, the "Mirror" will sound off about journalistic ethics.

The "Star" (formerly "Daily Star" — downmarket cousin of the "Express") last week sprang to the defence of Leslie Grantham, better known as "Dirty Den", the "East-Enders" publican we all love to hate. It seems that certain newspapers (notably the "Sun") have recently been making a big deal out of the fact that Mr Grantham killed a taxi-driver twenty years ago, while on army service in Germany. Apparently this unwelcome publicity has badly upset the actor, who is even considering dropping out of the series as a result.

But the "Star" wants no part of this vindictive campaign. Tuesday's front page was headline: "Dirty Den: get off his back you rats — Starman speaks out". Inside, Starman Geoff Baker ("the actor's only true friend left in Fleet Street") tells us how Grantham is being "slowly crucified", and is "racked with fear, regret and — most of all — anger."

## Press GANG

Baker concludes his powerful piece with a heartfelt plea to all "Star" readers: "Maybe he doesn't realise just who is out there fighting for him. Maybe he can't see through those eyes so close now to tears of rage and anguish that he's got friends — millions of us."

And rally round they did, those big-hearted "Star" readers. The next day the paper described how "a wave of support for hounded EastEnders star Leslie Grantham" had flooded into their offices.

Presumably secretary Sarah Lambert and her family don't possess the same capacity for pain and suffering as Leslie Graham. The unfortunate Ms Lambert went missing over the weekend after meeting a man who had said he was offering her a £12,000-a-year secretarial post. It was feared at one point that she might have fallen victim to the mysterious "Mr Kipper" who abducted a young woman under apparently similar circumstances nearly a month ago.

Fortunately, Sarah turned up on Monday, albeit in a state of considerable distress and confusion.

But the "Star" is in little doubt as to what really went on. Intrepid Starman Joe Clancy and Bill Akass lost no time in descending upon the Surrey hotel where Sarah had spent the weekend and by Wednesday the "Star" was in a position to publish their findings, under the headline "Sarah's nights with bogus boss".

Hotel manager John Stenhouse told the paper how he knew what the score really was: "They spent so much time and attention on each other that it was obvious they weren't married." He added, "it was also noticed that one of the beds had not been used — but that is none of our business."

But it is, of course, the business of the "Star", as is the revelation (from receptionist Peter Norfolk, 22) that "they huddled together drinking lager."

Well, there you are then. Bloody obvious, eh? Oh yes, it's wicked what they're doing to that Dirty Den bloke, innit?

# Make war on Tories!

From page 1

All very unlike the experiences of miners and workers generally who are clobbered by the police and the courts — in many cases for doing nothing apart from having had their head kicked in by the police.

There are laws for workers and there are laws for the Establishment — and whatever about formal rights, they are different in character. There's one law for the rich and another for the poor.

There was a figure that came out the other day from the Economist Intelligence Unit. It showed that people are coming here to Britain now because it's a tax haven. Well, it's not a tax haven for those that live here, that pay their taxes here, because taxes generally have gone up from 39% to 44%, for the average wage earner. After seven years they've got mass unemployment, higher taxes, and a tax haven for the rich.

It's the job of the labour movement and the TUC to stand up for workers and not to assist the Establishment in knocking them down. For the life of me I just can't see how it can help a group of trade unionists who are battling against the bosses, to improve their wages and conditions, to be forced into ballots when it suits the employers.

## Proposal

Yet the key proposal going to this year's TUC from the Labour Party NEC is the pledge that a future Labour government will introduce legislation compelling trade unions to hold pre-strike ballots.

A number of us on the left of the Labour Party NEC attempted to delete those passages, but we lost to a majority made up of the right wing and the cuddly left. Seven of us voted to delete the proposals, but 19 voted for them.

It takes us back to the days of 1969 when Barbara Castle introduced a

Labour government Bill to shackle the trade unions, 'In Place of Strife'.

By a strange irony such was the climate at the time that ex-Prime Minister James Callaghan, along with some others scuppered 'In Place of Strife' at an NEC meeting in 1969.

But now the right wing, aided by the soft left, are introducing a document that even Jim Callaghan couldn't stomach 17 years ago! Such is the climate of these times.

They're doing it now because the Tories have been able to introduce and establish as normal their anti-trade union legislation.

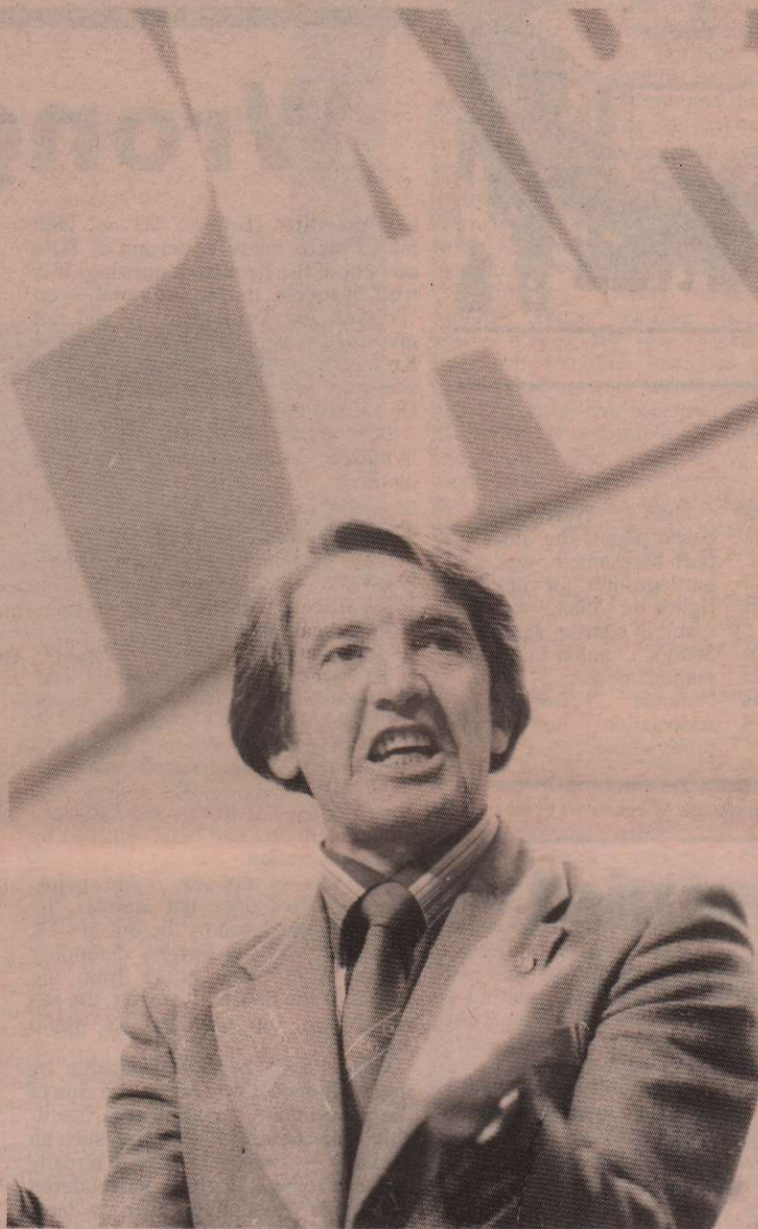
## Votes

Obviously, if they get it through the TUC it will help them at the Labour Party conference because trade unions, by and large — with some honourable exceptions — tend to vote in accordance with the way they voted at the TUC when they get to the Labour Party conference. And in many cases there is usually little discussion on such subjects when the right wing leaders can claim that the movement has been through all this before at the TUC and that common policy has been agreed. Yes, it does have a tremendous effect.

The left have got to try to educate people into understanding that this is not the way to support trade unionists who are in battle with the bosses and the Establishment — and what's more it's not the way to win an election. You don't win general elections by going to the polling stations in carpet slippers, or by banking down and hiding the arguments against the Tory vandals or by meekly going along with the Tories over secret ballots. It is very ironic that secret ballots, that were introduced by a Tory government, by Prior and subsequently Tebbit, are now being accepted as par for the course by an incoming Labour government.

They are now talking of setting up a new kind of industrial court. That would better be called, in plain language, a court for scabs!

If a majority of the union took a certain action, and there was a small minority that didn't want to take that action and get involved in the strike —



Dennis Skinner. Photo: John Harris.

they could go to court against the union majority! It means the minority can, with the assistance of the judiciary, thwart the wishes of the majority.

Individuals will be allowed to bring complaints before this tribunal over an election or a strike. There will be sanctions if a union refuses to include ballots in its rule book. It brings the courts directly into industrial disputes and elections. This tribunal will be part of the legal machinery of the capitalist state and will eventually be provided with sanctions to compel unions to accept its decisions.

So the CBI and the bosses generally

will look upon this idea very favourably.

I think the TUC are going to try, in their own way, to be all things to all people prior to an election, and as I've already said that is not the way to win.

I believe Labour is strongest when it's on the attack and when the temperature is raised, so that people have a clear-cut vision of what the Party is and what the movement stands for.

It's when politics become muddy and grey that people feel unsure of themselves. Since there is a muddy grey party there, waiting in the wings, then muddy grey thinking can lead people to vote for a muddy grey party — like the SDP-Liberal Alliance for example.

That's why there's even an electoral advantage in being more clear-cut this time than ever before.

People are looking for a way out of mass unemployment, and it can't be done by magic. It will be done by taking some hard decisions, and that means backing working people and not letting them down.

And if people are battling for more money, in the form of wages, it's the job of the TUC to support them and not put obstacles in their way like media-run ballots. And make no mistake about it, that's exactly what they'll be — obstacles in the path of those who are seeking to maximise their wage.

## PAKISTAN

# Zia's terror

From page 1

an election could be held very soon afterwards.

This is the option most favoured by the leaders of the PPP. The possibility has most probably been discussed already during the visit of PPP leader Benazir Bhutto to the USA.

Pakistan right now is the country of

most strategic importance to US imperialism in Asia. American imperialism would want guarantees about the government's position towards Afghanistan.

Doubts and uncertainties as to who can most effectively deliver the goods for imperialism in the area may now be the only thing that stands between a dictatorship and a new, army-granted and army-delimited, bourgeois democracy.

Socialist Organiser  
PO Box 823, London SE15  
4NA.

01-639 7965.

Latest date for reports: first  
post Monday or by phone,  
Monday evening.

Editor: John O'Mahony.

Typesetting: Ian Swindale.

Published by Socialist  
Organiser, PO Box 823,  
London SE15 4NA.

Printed by East End Offset  
[TU], London E2.

Registered as a newspaper at  
the Post Office.

Signed articles do not neces-  
sarily reflect the views of  
SO.

# Cyprus and Nationalism

RHODRI Evans (Letters, SO 280) is right to draw lessons for Ireland from the Cyprus tragedy. An additional point is also worth making: Cyprus illustrates how blind chauvinist nationalism can bring catastrophe to the people whose national feeling it caricatures and seeks to champion.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 was triggered by a violent takeover of the Cypriot government by Greek Cypriot chauvinists bent on 'settling with' the Turkish Cypriot minority and on uniting Cyprus with Greece. Their chauvinist drive brought catastrophe for the Greek Cypriots — invasion, slaughter, rape and pillage followed by partition.

The coup was fronted by the former EOKA gunman Nicos Sampson. Neophytos Tofias (SO 279) calls Sampson a fascist. Perhaps. But during the EOKA war against British occupation

in the 1950s, Sampson was known to left-leaning Irish Republicans as part of 'the left wing of EOKA'.

Some Irish 'Republicans', especially the 'left', including the IRSP/INLA, are in fact uncompromising Catholic-Irish chauvinists towards the Protestant-Irish minority. They define and dismiss them as just 'pro-imperialists', and in fact think of them as either foreign colonists or renegade Irish. They denounce the idea of according them the rights of a distinct minority as weakness towards imperialism.

Instead of helping to unite Ireland, such 'anti-imperialism' and 'anti-Unionism' is most likely to help bring the catastrophe of sectarian civil war on the people of Ireland. And after the Protestant/Catholic massacres would inevitably come a permanent repartition into two new sectarian Irish

states. It would be the end forever of Wolfe Tone's Republican goal of sinking the communal and religious animosities of Ireland into the 'common name of Irish'.

Without themselves being nationalists, socialists fight against national oppression by championing national independence for those who demand it — and full minority rights for groups like the Irish Protestants or the Turkish Cypriots. Lenin truly said that the nationalism of the oppressed is not the same as the nationalism of the oppressors. But chauvinism — whether of the oppressed or the oppressors — defiles and corrupts all those contaminated with it, no matter how fiercely anti-imperialist their intentions may be.

THOMAS CAROLAN  
Camden.

# Wrong on Trotsky

Laurens Otter (Letters, SO no. 280) makes some harsh criticisms of SO's account of the Kronstadt uprising. It is true, of course, that the editorial — on 'Tribune and Trotskyism' — did not give an exhaustive account of events at Kronstadt in 1921, where the Bolsheviks suppressed a revolt by sailors. Of course, more can be said.

But the general point comrade Otter is making does not seem to me to be justified. This is that "bureaucratic degeneration (in the USSR) had already begun before Lenin's death", whilst "Trotskyism is always anxious to pretend that (it) began with Stalin". Lenin and Trotsky share the guilt.

Kronstadt, says comrade Otter, is a case in point: "The rebels the Bolsheviks suppressed had been the real heroes of the revolution".

In fact, this last point is false. In terms of *personnel* the Kronstadt sailors of 1921 were not the same as 1917. The revolutionary sailors had gone off to defend the revolutionary government and had been replaced by a new generation.

But this is not the main point. Laurens Otter does not address the issue as it was faced by the Bolsheviks. Kronstadt was the fortress defending Russia from naval attack from the Baltic. At the time of the revolt, the sea was frozen, but soon the ice would melt.

Once Russia became accessible by sea, if Kronstadt was not on the side of the government, invasion was inevitable. The chances of defeating such an invasion — after years of war already — were remote. To have surrendered Kronstadt would have been to have 'thrown in the towel'.

If anyone wants to argue that the revolution was not worth the political cost of attacking the Kronstadt sailors, they should do so honestly. I think it was worth it. If only *innocently* on the part of the majority — if we can



Red army firing on Kronstadt.

concede that much, and I'm not sure I do — their revolt was going to aid the counter-revolution.

Much more fundamentally, the Bolsheviks at that time had a perspective of developing an international revolutionary movement. 'Hanging on' in Russia was a vital component of a European revolutionary strategy. They correctly saw the fate of the Russian and world revolution as inextricably connected.

To have given up on the Russian revolution would have meant giving up on any revolution anywhere, because its overthrow would have been a defeat — and felt as such — by the whole international movement.

Because of that — that Lenin and Trotsky based their actions upon an international perspective — it is

absurd to compare their actions, or the bureaucratic deformations of the state (which they frankly acknowledged, let us remember) to the monstrous *nationalist* tyranny of the Stalinists a few years later.

In retrospect you might want to say, given the defeat of the international revolutions, of the Left Opposition, of subsequent revolutions, that it was not worth the cost, and the world would have been a better place without Stalinist tyranny. Lenin and Trotsky could not, even conceding this point too, have had the virtue of retrospect.

TOM RIGBY

# Hatton

Steve Revins (Letters, SO 280) complains that our editorial on the LPYS was a "despicable", "personal" attack on Derek Hatton, who "has put everything on the line — his house, job, possessions...for his socialist beliefs".

No doubt he has. He also demanded of Liverpool council's workforce that they put *their* jobs, houses, etc on the line or be denounced as class traitors. Hatton flaunts his lifestyle, and can't complain if people notice it.

Our criticisms of Militant and of Liverpool City Council are *political* criticisms. *Politically*, Hatton is even more deserving of criticism than his comrades. That might upset Steve; but it's Hatton, not SO, who is "despicable".

BAS HARDY,  
Liverpool

Letters are welcome: send to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 300 words or less, please, or we may have to cut them.

# GRAFFITI

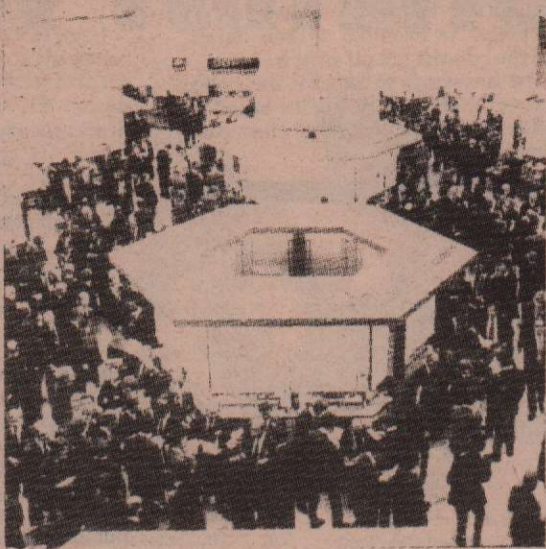
## The City

# Millionaires market

A new Bank of England survey puts the daily turnover of the London foreign exchange market at £60 billion a day.

Worldwide foreign exchange turnover is about \$200 billion a day — mostly dollars to deutschmarks, dollars to yen, or dollars to pounds. Almost half of this business (\$90 billion) is done in London.

Foreign exchange trading is some 25 times bigger than trade in goods and services, so a very big part of the money-swapping is high-level gambling on exchange rates.



## Print

# Eddie Ha!

Sharp-shooting Eddie Shah has scurried back to Warrington with his face a bit red. His hi-tech 'Today' newspaper failed to haul in the millions he had hoped, and he's handed it over to Lonrho to let them have a try.

The desperately bor-

ing colour daily was reaching only half its expected circulation. Shah's bid for national success has proved a bit of a flop.

A spokesperson for Today admitted that morale on the paper was not as high as it could be.

Shah's Warrington-based paper, the Stockport Messenger, was a battleground for union rights in 1983. As a result of a strike against Shah's union-busting management, the National Graphical Association had its funds sequestered.

## Nationalised industry

Almost all large-scale industry has been state-owned since 1946 in Austria; and, as a result, one of the chief ways to get rich there is to win favour from a political party so that you get put into a top job in a nationalised industry.

Some people, however, still have to resort to private capitalism. And chief among them is...the Austrian Communist Party, which (according to a report in the Guardian, 21 August) ranks as "one of the

# Communist Capitalist

giants of Austrian private capital."

Since the post-war USSR occupation of Austria, the CP has owned a major oil company and most of the haulage business for exports to Eastern Europe. With a small membership of about

15,000, its businesses have an annual turnover of £500 million.

The Communist Party of India does a similar serving-Marx-and-Mammon trick, holding a very strong position in India's big import/export business with the USSR.

## Students

# Tory Rag

The brouhaha about the Tory student magazine 'New Agenda' is instructive on two counts.

First, about the values of the Tory leaders. An accusation against former prime minister Harold Macmillan pushed Tory party chair Norman Tebbit into action against the loony-right students.

Compare that with what he has let pass with benevolent tolerance: open racism, vocal support for South Africa's apartheid regime, backing for the

Nicaraguan contras under slogans like 'Kill the Reds'.

The second lesson is about the media. If a Labour left-winger proposes scrapping the House of Lords, nationalising lots of industry or giving equal rights to lesbians and gays, then they are immediately demanding to know what Neil Kinnock will do to purge this threat to civilisation.

But their attitude to the Tories' extreme right wing — including its fascist fringes — is one of relaxed amusement.

## Ballots

# Never

All credit to Alan Sapper, leader of the cine technician union ACTT, for appearing on TV last week to attack Neil Kinnock's plans for a law to force unions to ballot before strikes.

But it didn't help his case when he assured his audience that 'the majority of his members had told him that they never wanted ballots'.

It sounded too much like Alan Sapper's friends in the governments of the USSR and similar countries, who assure us that they have only one party because the majority of their people want no others.

# EETPU Expulsion

Last week's editorial on the EETPU's expulsion from the TUC rightly argued that, under present conditions, expulsion is no answer. We need a campaign among the EETPU rank and file to expose the class collaborationist leaders of the EETPU as traitors, and replace them.

I agree, but I don't think the EETPU leaders do want an alternative trade union centre. The only evidence for this is Hammond's meeting with Roy Lytk of the UDM during TUC Congress '85, and other secret meetings.

The EETPU leaders say categorically that if expelled they will take legal action against the TUC.

Expulsion from the TUC would create many problems for the EETPU. The union might split. Electricians and plumbers are skilled specialists and this means that the EETPU has small numbers of members in many work-

places where other unions are present in much greater strength. Those members could simply join another union, especially in workplaces where the local EETPU leadership is out of sympathy with Hammond. The EETPU leaders, like the TUC bureaucrats, also fear a recruiting war.

It may be that if the EETPU is expelled an alternative centre will be set up, but there is a great danger in just emphasising the dangers of such an alternative centre rather than developing an analysis of the EETPU's philosophy.

We need a campaign to alert, educate and organise thousands of militants in both the EETPU and other unions to the dangers of scab unionism. The left in general does not seem to want to tackle this problem and hopes that it will go away.

ALAN FRASER,  
Basingstoke

# THE REALITIES OF RAPE

By Jean Lane

Over 25,000 women responded to a Woman's Own questionnaire on rape. About 12% of them were rape victims.

If anyone still believes that rape is committed by sex-starved strangers on women who "ask for it" on dark streets, they should read this report.

41% of those raped had been between the ages of 16-24 and 29% had been raped between the ages of 10 and 16. Most of these had been attacked by a relative.

Of all of the victims, only 21% had been raped by a stranger, the rest were committed by husbands, boyfriends, other relatives or acquaintances. Of the victims in the 35-44 age bracket, 35% had been raped by their husbands.

Only 29% of the rapes had occurred out of doors. Most had been committed in the victim's own house, including many of those carried out by complete strangers.

## Murdered

As for "asking for it", 60% of the women who had been raped by their husbands were also afraid they might be murdered. 22% of them needed hospital treatment. 68% were frightened for their lives. Who asks for that? And how does an 8 year old child "ask" to be raped?

"...the victim was my daughter, then aged 8. Even though the rape happened four years ago, she still has bad dreams and now sees a psychiatrist.

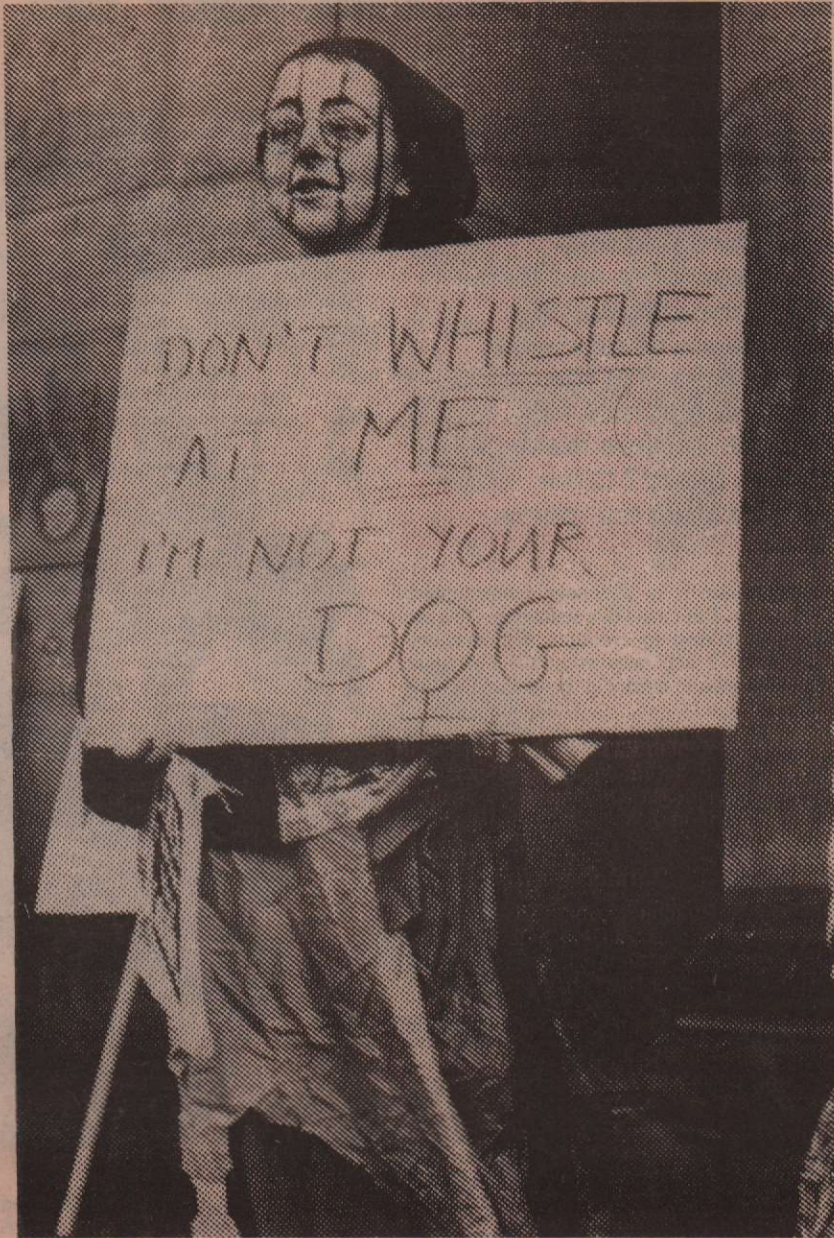
"She also has to go to hospital because she has bad pains in her tummy and private parts. They have to put her under anaesthetic because she goes mad if anyone tries to touch her. This has ruined her life, yet the man who attacked her, an ex-policeman, was fined just £125 and told to do community work".

29% of those who took their case to court saw their attackers go free, with a non-custodial sentence; 26% were sent to prison for less than two years; 29% were sentenced to between 2-6 years; 4% between 6-8 years; 9% for a longer time.

That's bad enough, but most of the women had felt that they were on trial, and had had their sex lives discussed by a room full of strangers.

"...Go to court, look like filth, as if it's all been my fault, have to repeat every sordid detail in front of complete strangers — all for him to get two years? No! No! No!"

The women themselves would have been far more severe in doling out punishment. 81% wanted to see auto-



Women protest — but others stay silent in fear

matic life imprisonment, 39% said bring back hanging; 60% favoured castration.

It is not surprising that over half the victims of rape would like to see their attackers castrated. Those of us who have not suffered this physical and mental torture have the luxury of sitting back and saying this would not solve the problem.

Supposing they caught the wrong man? The police could use this, or hanging, as a more brutal repression against the people they do not like. We could not give them such powers. The legal system is not fair. Many of the rape victims know this.

## Police

76% of the victims in the survey didn't tell the police. Why? Because they thought they wouldn't be believed; they were afraid the police would be unsympathetic; they couldn't face the questioning and the internal examination; and many because they wanted to forget the whole experience.

The survey makes angry reading. It blows a lot of myths put out by "experts" and "official" reports when women themselves talk about their own experience. But it also doesn't mention a lot of things.

Despite the fact that the majority of victims don't report their ordeal and even less get to court, the survey only mentions changing the law in regards to the sentences meted out to rapists. Although the law and the treatment of rape victims by the courts and the police does need to be changed, this is only one area where the safety of women can be dealt with.

In another survey carried out in London, many of the women had other demands which attempt to prevent rape happening rather than deal with it after the event. They wanted to see cheaper, better staffed and more frequent public transport; better street lighting; more security on housing estates; demands that make it safer for

women to leave their homes.

But they also mentioned the need for immediate rehousing of women and children from violent husbands and financial independence from husbands and co-habittees.

At the moment, when a woman is faced with a rapist for a husband or so-called "lover", she is stuck. She can take to the streets and have the threat of her children being put into care or she can pay for her "security" at home with her body.

The other thing that the Woman's Own survey doesn't mention is the women's definition of rape. The figures given by the survey are frightening enough. But they can almost certainly be doubled if you add a) the women who couldn't bring themselves to write about it; and b) the women who don't recognise unwanted sex as rape.

I once knew a woman who was hiding from her husband. He came home drunk every night, stinking of stale beer and cigarettes, and demanded his "rights" as a husband. She would let him into her bed because she knew that if she refused she would be beaten. It was easier to let him have his way.

## Pig

She knew her husband was a pig, a drunkard and a violent man. But she could not accept that he was a rapist.

The image of this word conjured up for her of a dirty old man leaping out on unsuspecting victims did not fit. Besides, husbands can't rape their wives. She never had a bruise to show. She was just letting him have his rights.

Such a survey as Woman's Own has carried out is long overdue. The more women this kind of thing reaches the better. But the women must be able to decide the terms themselves, not just answer the questions in terms already laid down by a male-dominated, sexist and way out of date legal system.

# Blowing the place up

During my five years of working for the Post Office I must have heard the words, "I'd like to blow this place up and everyone in it" more times than I've had hot dinners.

Last week in America postal worker Patrick Sherrill went into work and set about shooting every other worker in sight. He killed fourteen people before shooting himself dead.

When I read about this gruesome incident I felt a slight tinge of sympathy mixed with my revulsion — or perhaps it was just recognition.

No doubt Patrick Sherrill had more reasons for his actions than the threat of losing his job.

Perhaps his loneliness after the death of his mother. Perhaps his experiences in the marines or of living in a 'gun law' state. Perhaps being a man in a male society, he felt loss of manhood by his threatened inability to earn. Or perhaps he was just mad.

Who knows? No one can ask him now. But if working for the Post Office in America is anything like working for them here, anyone with personal pressures will find them compounded by the pressures at work.

Disciplinary letters drop like confetti. You're walking too slow. You're sorting too slow. Talking too much. Late too often. It was an offence to be sick. You were automatically not believed. After five absences you were hauled in for a disciplinary interview and warned. One woman at my office was treated to such an interview where two supervisors did the old hard and soft routine. Being afraid to take more time off she returned to work and later died of a heart attack.

I was subjected to one of these interviews myself. I had had 14 days off in about 2½ years and was asked to sign a statement saying that if I took one more day off they could start dismissal procedures.

This was beside the hassle of the job itself. You were encouraged to carry bags over the stipulated weight and even to carry two bags at the same time to get the job done quicker.

Can you imagine carrying a bag on each shoulder loaded with mail and packages, while shaking a dog off your trouser leg that, fortunately, has failed to grab any of your skin and at the same time explain to someone desperate for their dole cheque that you can't hand it over in the street?

This is no exaggeration. The only variation being that sometimes the dog finds skin.

One woman in my office had a chunk ripped out of her thigh by an alsatian. When the owner of the dog saw what was happening, he shut his door!

She was off work for ages and no doubt came in for the inevitable confetti treatment.

One regular item of mail for us to deliver the Post Office called 'rebate' and we called 'rubbish'. It came in buff, windowed envelopes, with a big R in the corner and had things like "You too can win £150,000 in our super competition" all over it.

There would be one for every house and from the moment you got to work at 5.30 a.m. you would have to hassle with your supervisor over how much overtime you would get for delivering them and how long you would take to do it.

You worked a flat week of 43 hours for a take-home pay of £60-£65 a week. So many people relied on Rebate or some other form of overtime to make their money up. If your face fitted you got a good deal. But if the supervisor

## Woman's WEYE

"In order to change the conditions of life we must learn to see them through the eyes of women".

Trotsky

By Jean Lane

didn't like you, you took the rubbish out for next to nothing.

There were instances of supervisors giving women more overtime if they were allowed to touch them up. If you objected, forget it!

The day was one long rush and an even longer argument from start to finish, with the occasional disciplinary interview to provide variety.

The answer to these conditions is obviously not to shoot your mates, even if you do get a hated supervisor into the bargain. Union action would be a far better alternative. Though the union in the Post Office is often a sort of third or fourth line management, keeping the workers in check, which has got sucked into the old paternalistic ways of the Post Office.

Some supervisors are former branch secretaries. One at my office was very strict and mean who had clearly used the union as a springboard into management.

During my first Christmas there, a woman who turned out to be the union rep for my section came round collecting money from us all. Everyone was putting something in and I thought someone had retired. When I asked, she said it was for the supervisors' Xmas box.

## Really bad

I refused to give and received the immortal words, "You should count yourself lucky we've got this supervisor. We could have had one of the really bad ones."

The union locally and nationally was remote from most of the members who only took part in a meeting when the pay deal came round. The deal always went through because no-one had any confidence in the leadership putting up a fight.

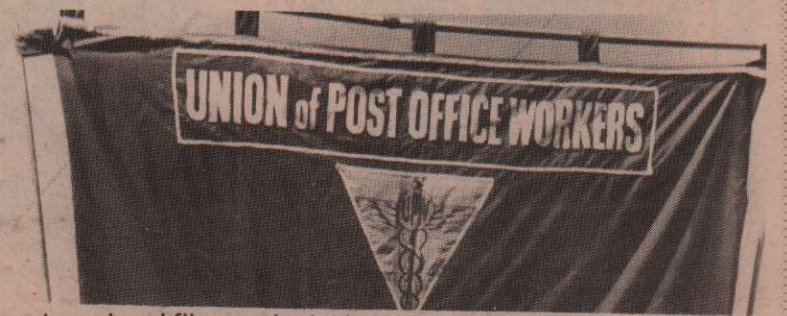
Since I left in 1984 much of this is changing. Action has taken place in many offices, spreading up and down the country, particularly since the threat of new technology cutting jobs and productivity deals getting more work for less time and money, and despite the attempts by the union leadership to stop it. Decisions now go regularly against them at conferences.

What is needed most of all is a rank and file organisation which will take up all the issues affecting postal workers from pay, overtime and technology to dog bites and sexual harassment and which will encourage more members to become involved in union issues.

This is just what the management and the union leadership don't want because it would bring together the very widespread dissatisfaction into one powerful force for change.

The workers will no longer be scratching each other's eyes out for scraps of overtime or criticising each other's work record but driving the present dealers out and replacing them with leaders.

Until that happens, I must admit, the thought of firing off bullets in frustration may seem a pleasant prospect.



'We need a rank and file organisation'

## A socialist view of Ireland

### Socialist FORUM

Number 2



Ireland 69-85

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# The Workers' O

THE IDEA that the trade unions should form a political party in competition with the existing bourgeois parties has a long Marxist pedigree. Engels raised it in connection with Britain, subsequently supporting the formation of the Independent Labour Party, and arguing for it in turn to fight for a trade-union-based party.

In the 1930s, the American Trotskyists made a lot of propaganda for a Labour Party, and the American Trotskyists continued to do so after World War 2.

The essential idea is simple: the workers' organisations should break with their existing reliance upon, or alliance with, the bourgeois parties (Liberals in Britain, Democrats in the USA). They should strike out an independent path.

It is worth quoting Trotsky at some length.

"The question of the labor party has never been a question of principle for revolutionary Marxists... before the crisis of 1929, and... until the appearance of the CIO, we could have hoped that the revolutionary, that is, the Bolshevik party would develop in the United States parallel to the radicalisation of the working class... Under those conditions it would have been absurd to occupy oneself with abstract propaganda [for a] 'labor party'."

But:  
"The situation since that time, however, has radically changed... The powerfully developing trade unions, under the conditions of a deepening crisis of capitalism, will project themselves all the more irresistibly upon the road of political struggle and thus upon the road of crystallisation into a

**Black trade unionists in South Africa have talked about creating a society based on 'worker control'. Yet the political arena seems to be dominated by very different ideas, ranging from the extreme right wing and Botha through liberals who want formal equality while maintaining the substance of capitalist privilege, to the 'two-stage' theory of the African National Congress (democracy first, socialism later). How can the workers make their own independent voice heard? Clive Bradley argues the case for a workers' party.**

labor party".

('The Problem of the Labor Party', in *Discussions On The Transitional Program*, Pathfinder Press, p.107).

### Development

The crucial factor that put the Labour Party question on the agenda was the development of CIO industrial unionism, in the context of a major 'decline of American capitalism'.

Some of Trotsky's comments are useful:

"Are we in favour of the creation of a reformist labor party? No. Are we in favour of a policy which can give to the trade unions the possibility to put its weight upon the balance of forces? Yes.

"It can become a reformist party — it depends upon the development. Here the question of program comes in..."

"... I would not say that the labor party is a revolutionary party, but that we will do everything to make it possible. At every meeting I would say: I am a representative of the SWP. I

consider it is the only revolutionary party. But I am not a sectarian. You are now trying to create a big workers' party. I will help you, but I propose that you consider a program for this party..."

"... we must be part of the movement..."

Engels' comments are equally instructive:

"The great thing is to get the working class to move as a class; that once obtained, they will soon find the right direction, and all those who resist... will be left out in the cold with small sects of their own".

(Marx/Engels Selected Correspondence, Moscow 1975, p.376).

### Movement

The point here is not textual authority; it is to establish the basic framework and political method of the classical Marxists.

To be 'part of the movement': to assist the development of the working class from the point of view of its most advanced ideological current; to help the working class learn, rather than make lectures to it: this, we think, is the essence of their approach.

The idea of a workers' party in South Africa is not one we would advocate at all times. It depends upon 'concrete circumstances'. What are these?

- A significant layer of the working class has begun to discuss a new, independent politics that is a major departure from the populist-Stalinist traditions of the past. The idea of a workers' party has come from sections of the workers themselves — it is an issue up for discussion.

- This layer of workers is the product of one of the most important developments of industrial trade unionism anywhere in the world.

- Its political development is the product of a lived experience of class struggle — looked at with great freshness and creativity.

- As yet, the tendencies towards bureaucratisation of this movement are not very far advanced. On the contrary, the unions have developed democratic practices that are consciously seen as prefigurations of future society.

- Alien class forces and ideological movements — i.e. the populist/Stalinists — are hell-bent upon controlling and neutralising this movement as a whole.

### Challenge

The dominant culture of the independent unions has been distinctly syndicalist. This was only viable so long as (a) they were regarded with indifference by the populists; (b) the general political struggle was at a low ebb. Since 1984, neither of these conditions has held. The populists are desperate to derail the development of an alternative political pole; and the rise of the mass movement has been enormous.

Moreover, the rise in the movement has given greater political weight to



COSATU's founding congress

the populists, which in turn gives them greater weight in the unions.

In these conditions either the nascent working-class politics that have developed are drawn out, given a coherent programme, and the socialists in the workers' movement actively combat alien class ideologies; or the populists will be victorious.

### Political

The Workers' Party theme codifies the development of working-class politics very sharply. It proposes a political rather than narrowly trade-union objective to the socialist militants in the unions (and more generally), and provides an important opening through which revolutionaries can make propaganda — or even direct proposals — for a coherent Marxist programme.

It takes actual developments within the workers' movement as its point of departure, and connects with them. Rather than abstractly counterpose a 'revolutionary party' to the emerging political movement, it seizes on those real developments in the class and takes them a step further.

What are the alternatives? Alex Callinicos of the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) and others have put great stress on the need to build a Marxist nucleus — a small propaganda group. We absolutely agree on the priority of this, and I will discuss it further in a moment.

But what will the nucleus say? What will it argue for?

One possibility is for the small Marxist group (and by small I mean anything less than several tens of thousands) to concentrate on Marxist propaganda in various forms: education, discussion, and promotion of major Marxist ideas (permanent revolution, for example), propaganda for socialism.

This would combine with an intervention into the unions, workplace and community struggles, etc.

This perspective for the building of a revolutionary party would seem to be simply one of one-by-one recruitment.

Gradually the party could grow out of the various struggles until it takes on mass proportions.

One particular problem with this perspective strikes us as central. If the populist/Stalinists dominate the political struggle and dominate the trade unions, this will be a setback for any future Marxist movement.

In other words, a challenge to the populists now — i.e. the development of a serious political alternative — will radically determine the possibilities for a Marxist party in the future. And the formation of a Marxist nucleus with a perspective of one-by-one growth is no

**"The Workers' Party poses a political challenge to the socialist unions."**

challenge to the populists now.

In fact this perspective is based upon an acceptance that 'for now', the populists/Stalinists will dominate the workers' movement. 'Our day will come...', but for now alien class forces will ideologically dominate the workers' movement.

It is of course possible to argue for the trade unions to engage in political action without forming a political party. A case can be made for this in terms of avoiding an unnecessary provocation of the Stalinists. As a tactical issue that is of course very important. As an alternative perspective to that of a party, it is not a good one.



Workers rally to celebrate launch of COSATU. Picture: IDAF.

# own Voice



The unions can 'engage in political action' at all sorts of levels. But a serious involvement in the political struggles requires not just participation, but leadership — and that requires a strategy and a programme.

The more coherent the political strategy, the more effective the workers' political intervention, the more inexorable the logic of forming a party to embody that programme and strategy.

The Workers' Party idea follows from all this. The alternatives of Callinicos and others amount to an acquiescence in populist domination of the movement in the present, in the name

very good slogan.

Assuming that the Marxists are in a minority, then their job will be to organise within the party, win it to a Marxist programme, and thereby win a majority. (This of course does not rule out all sorts of possibilities — splits, expulsions, etc. etc.)

Callinicos objects that a party based on the unions would by definition not be revolutionary, as it would include all different layers of the class, whereas the revolutionary party includes only the most class-conscious.

This completely misses the point. Of course the revolutionary party, in the sense of the Marxist organisation, is demarcated ideologically from the rest of the movement. It is principally an ideologically selected group: a collective body attempting scientifically to understand the world, the better to know how to change it.

In that sense, a party based on the trade unions cannot, by definition, be a 'revolutionary party' even with a Marxist programme. In terms of formal definitions, therefore, Callinicos is right. The 'revolutionary party', i.e. the Marxist party, properly understood, would be an ideological organised group within a trade-union-based party even under conditions where it commanded a majority.

This issue does not to me seem very interesting. The point about building a Marxist party is to develop an ideological current. On the formalities of that there is no dispute between Callinicos and us.

There is, however, a great deal of political substance in dispute, and the differences over the Workers' Party idea express a good deal of what distinguishes us from the SWP.

Our point of departure is that mass revolutionary parties will be built out of actual living developments in the workers' movement, or they will not be built at all. They cannot be called into being by self-proclamation. ('We are the revolutionary party...')

Developments within the workers' movements, outside of major upheavals, tend to be excruciatingly slow. But

Marxists cannot *bypass* those real developments by an effort of will. Our task is to seize on actual developments and be 'part of the movement', to participate in the workers' own experiences, and to help them remake their own movement.

That does not mean (after the style of the Mandel tendency) looking about for the latest flagship of the 'world revolutionary process' and jumping aboard, leaving Marxist politics somewhere in transit. We try to build ourselves as a hard, distinct, ideological core — but as *part* of the labour movement, rather than counterposed to it (or, in Britain, counterposed to its political wing, the Labour Party).

### United front

An important spoke in the Comintern's programmatic wheel was the idea of the united front. This relates to the Workers' Party discussion. Should revolutionaries make proposals for action to the workers' movement as a whole? Should we set objectives for the movement as a whole?

We think categorically, yes we should.

The Workers' Party would be precisely this: an objective for the movement as a whole. It seems to us that it is only by this approach that revolutionary politics can be made relevant to the working class.

To conclude: there are, of course, technical objections to the idea of a Workers' Party — principally that it would be illegal (an objection with particular force since the declaration of the State of Emergency). I don't want to minimise the importance of this issue. Of course it would be stupid to invite repression, either on socialists or on the unions in general.

The essential question is the programmatic one, though. Is the Workers' Party a necessary next step for the movement? If it is, propaganda should be made for it. Tactical considerations about how to form it, when and where are vitally important, but secondary.

# Australia on the skids

By Tony Brown

## LETTER from AUSTRALIA

The fourth Labor budget since its election in 1983 is the most anti-working class budget introduced since the early days of the Fraser coalition government.

All indicators show that the tide is turning against Labor, who will now face an electoral backlash from its working class supporters.

Treasurer (Finance Minister) Paul Keating's budget speech was aimed more at the New York and London Stock Exchanges than at the Australian electorate. He was determined to prove to the international money market that Labor can deliver an austerity package better than any the Coalition (Australian Tories) could provide.

The two major decisions of the budget are the cutting of the deficit from A\$6 billion to A\$3.5 billion, and the forcing through of a 2% wage cut at the next National Pay case.

(The money markets were pushing for an A\$4 billion deficit. There were gasps of surprise (and pleasure) when Keating announced A\$3.5 billion).

The low deficit of A\$3.5 billion has been achieved by cutting A\$500 million from Social Security; by cutting back on education spending, especially in areas of great need (though private education financing got a boost!); by reintroducing fees for tertiary education (which, ironically were abolished in 1973 by the Whitlam Labor Government); by introducing fees for overseas students; and by delaying a pension increase for three months.

Funding to state governments has been slashed, and the Federal Public Service is to lose 2,000 jobs. These will be through attrition rather than sackings.

### Uranium

To bring in a bit more money, the Labor government has decided to begin selling uranium again to France, in defiance of a National Conference decision taken only last month.

The 2% wage cut, if implemented, will be the second cut in a year.

At the September 1985 ACTU (Australian TUC) Congress, the Prices and Incomes Accord was renegotiated to include a 2% wage cut, in return for spending on the "social wage", a national superannuation deal, and tax cuts.

All these three promises have been broken — but the 2% wage cut remains. Now we are told we must sacrifice still further for the sake of

Australia's trading position.

Yet in 'Australian Business', we learn that Robert Holmes a Court increased his personal wealth by A\$6 million a week this financial year, while Alan Bond gained A\$200 million over the year.

Drastic measures are needed to halt the accelerating decline of the Australian economy. Inflation is 8%; unemployment is 8% and rising. The balance of payments deficit on current account was A\$13.7 billion for 1985-6. It is predicted to rise to A\$15 billion this year.

The national debt is A\$75 billion — more per head than Brazil or Mexico. The Australian dollar is worth 60 cents against the US dollar. In March 1983, when Labor was elected, it stood at 93 cents.

### Keating

Even with such a budget as Keating has introduced, all indicators show that the economy will remain static or will worsen. Keating has underestimated the factors affecting the economy.

There has been a reduction in Gross Domestic Product of 0.4% over the past three quarters. That, coupled with the slowing of the US and Japanese economies, points to the fact that Australia is on the verge of a recession similar to that of 1981-2. Unemployment will rise by more than 36,000; the deficit will exceed A\$3.5 billion.

The Opposition Leader, John Howard, says that Labor's 'successes' — a A\$1.7 million fine against the Meat Workers Union (for industrial action); the sacking of 1,000 electricity workers; the deregistration (and ultimate smashing) of the militant Builders' Labourers' Federation; and the 2% wage 'discount' (a cut in any language) — will be built upon and expanded under a Coalition Government.

Labor's actions have lent credibility to this kind of hard right wing rhetoric. Howard plans to introduce a wage freeze, abolish various statutory authorities, deregulate the labour market, abolish premium pay rates for weekends and on holiday pay, and permanently reduce state spending, should the Coalition win the next Federal election.

Next week: the labour movement and the budget.

Party . . . pro-  
al rather than  
-union objective  
militants in the

of 'building a revolutionary party' in the future. The alternatives, in other words, give the populists a free run.

The formation and building of a Marxist nucleus is nevertheless a priority. Indeed, without that the slogan of a Workers' Party has no revolutionary content whatever. If we don't always follow the references to a Workers' Party with a call for a revolutionary organisation, that's because we don't think you have to say everything all at once. And it makes little sense to appeal to the broad spectrum of trade unionists to form a select Marxist nucleus! 'A workers' party provided there is a revolutionary nucleus' isn't a

## More on South Africa

Workers' Liberty special on South Africa: 75p plus 18p postage from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15

WORKERS' LIBERTY  
Breaking the chains



Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa

# REMIND KINNOCK!

DESPITE FURIOUS efforts by Norman Willis and Neil Kinnock last year's TUC Congress passed the NUM resolution supporting the sacked and victimised miners.

It called on the next Labour government to repay the money stolen from the NUM by the courts. The Labour Party conference took the same decision a few weeks later.

What has the leadership done since to act on the democratic decision of the members? Absolutely nothing!

The same bureaucrats this year will spend a lot of time saying that the trade union movement should be seen to support democracy. They're hypocrites! They'll only support democracy when it goes their way.

The leaders of our movement need to be forcefully reminded of what their own members have



Grimethorpe, Yorkshire, October 1984: police arrest a 13-year old 'violent picket'.

decided and demanded. For this reason the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory is circulating the following petition:

*We the undersigned wish to remind the Labour Party leadership of the motion passed at the 1985 Labour Party conference which called for:*

1. The reinstatement of all victimised miners.
2. A review to be carried out

by a future Labour government into the cases of jailed miners.

3. Reimbursement of all union funds sequestered under the Tory anti-union legislation.

We believe that the Labour Party should actively campaign for the above rightful demands in the run-up to the next General Election.

The petition started in the

North-East, where many signatures were collected at the Miners' Gala and in the pit villages. It is now being circulated nationally, and will be presented to the Labour leaders by a sacked miners at this year's Labour Party conference.

For copies, contact 'SCLV Petition', G. Scott, 34 Newcastle Avenue, Horden, Peterlee, Co. Durham, or John Bloxam, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## Activists' DIARY

**SUNDAY 31 AUGUST.** National Justice for Mine-workers TUC Fringe Meeting. Speakers: Arthur Scargill, Billy Etherington, Eric Clarke. 6.30 p.m. Queens Hotel, Brighton.

**THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER.** Lambeth Trades Council TUC Fringe Meeting. 'Trade Union Sanctions against South Africa'. 7.30 p.m. Royal Pavilion Hotel, Old Steyne, Brighton.

**SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER.** NOTTS NUM MINEWORKERS GALA. Assembles 10.30 am, Mansfield Leisure Centre, Chesterfield Road, Mansfield, to march to West Notts College of Further Education. Speakers include Mick McGahey and Dennis Skinner.

**THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER.** Campaign Group News Rally, 'Campaigning for

Socialism'. Speakers include Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Joan Maynard, Eddie Newman. 7.30pm, Free Trade Hall, Peter St., Manchester.

### Socialist Organiser meetings

**NORTHAMPTON. Thursday 4 September.** 'Where We Stand'. 7.30 p.m. Northampton Centre Against Unemployment, 3-7 Hazelwood Road.

**PETERLEE. Tuesday 23 September.** Speaker: John Bloxam. 7.30 p.m. Eden Lane Community Centre.

**JARROW 86.** March from Jarrow to London (Trafalgar Sq), October 5 to November 2. Contact: Jarrow 86, The Electric Press Factory, 39 Cookridge St., Leeds LS1 3DW.

**NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINEWORKERS CAMPAIGN**  
The South-East Region Steering Committee has just opened a London Office, where sacked miners will be based for campaigns, meetings, etc. The office is at Hammersmith Unemployed Centre, 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London W6. Tel: 01-603 1831.

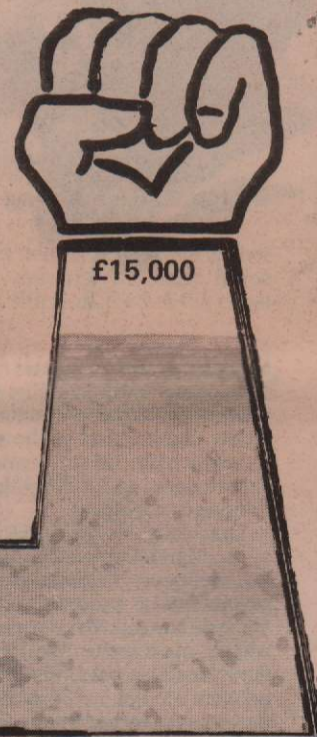
Fund-raising ideas were discussed last weekend at a school for new SO supporters.

Nottingham comrades reported how they've managed to raise 127% of their £1000 target. Regular local socials have not only kept a steady flow of money into the fund, but also helped to hold the group together and attract new contacts.

Thanks this week to Tony Serjeant, £14; Belinda Weaver, £1.30; and Tunbridge Wells readers, £1.95. We've also raised £19.48 so far on a sale of books by Trotsky. Total to date: £12,564.04, 84% of our £15,000 target.

Send donations to: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

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## Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

# OZONE

**Over the last 80 years, there has been a vast outpouring of new chemicals — chemicals that have never before existed on Earth.**

One example are the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), first made in 1928. These are related to methane (natural gas) and have similar physical properties, i.e. they are gases or volatile liquids. Chemically, they are quite different. They are non-flammable and, indeed, are virtually inert.

CFCs quickly found uses as coolants in refrigerators and air-conditioners but really came into their own with the invention of the aerosol can in the '50s. In these, pressurised CFCs deliver a fine spray of paint, oil, hair lacquer, deodorant, insecticide, etc. Once used, they just float away in the air.

### Troposphere

Since 1928, many millions of tonnes of CFCs have spread harmlessly throughout the whole troposphere, the lowest level of the atmosphere, reaching a height of eight miles.

In the early '70s, Professor Sherwood Rowland and Doctor Mario Molina, chemists at the University of California, decided to see what was actually happening to the CFCs.

Now, all gases can be broken down by ultra-violet light (UV). This is produced plentifully by the Sun but is largely filtered out by the ozone layer in the stratosphere. Rowland and Molina realised that the CFCs would eventually reach the stratosphere and would be broken down to release atoms of chlorine. They calculated that each atom would start a chain reaction that could destroy tens of thousands of molecules of ozone. At 1974 trends, some 10% of the world's ozone would be destroyed in 100 years.

There were several responses to Rowland and Molina. Environmentalists called for an immediate ban on CFCs and there was a consumer boycott. The chemical industry called for more research while carrying on with CFC use.

The government set up a task force to do more research. Eventually, restrictions on CFCs in aerosols were agreed in the US but few countries followed suit. The next phase — reducing their use as a coolant — was indefinitely postponed under Reagan.

Further research produced

## THE CASE FOR LABOUR



new estimates of ozone loss, some higher, some lower. The National Academy of Sciences thought levels might even rise!

Actual measurements were not so reassuring. In the early '80s, European researchers recorded their lowest levels ever, 7-8% below average, while a drop of 3% was found over Canada, giving an average drop of 5-8% in the Northern Hemisphere. All previous estimates of CFC effects seemed now to be too conservative.

Worse was to come. British scientists had detected sizeable losses in ozone over Antarctica since 1977 but assumed their measurements were faulty. However, their findings were confirmed, showing a loss of ozone of 40% in October 1983, growing to 60% by October 1985. These losses are partly seasonal, with some replacement during the Antarctic summer but the results show that the predicted effect of CFCs is taking place.

If this continues, there will be a substantial increase in UV radiation reaching the Earth's surface.

### WHERE DOES OZONE COME FROM?

Human activities are altering the composition of the atmosphere at an alarming rate but this is not the first time living things have done this.

Some 3 billion years ago, the atmosphere contained lots of carbon dioxide and very little oxygen. The Earth's surface was bathed with harmful UV light, sterilising the land and top layers of the sea. Living things were confined to lower levels in the oceans.

Blue-green algae used carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to make food by photosynthesis, giving out oxygen as a waste product. Gradually, the amount of oxygen increased and with it a form of oxygen called ozone. This is produced when UV strikes oxygen molecules.

Ozone is highly efficient at filtering out UV light and when sufficient had been produced, UV was prevented from reaching the Earth's surface. Chemical reactions then removed ozone from the lower atmosphere (just as well as it is poisonous to living things) but a layer survived in the stratosphere.

Thus, life was able to colonise the upper layers of the ocean and then to conquer the land.

**FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO TORY BRITAIN**

Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory pamphlet, 15p plus 12p postage of 10 for £1 post free from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



# Rock'n' roll suicide

Tim Anderson is reminded of his youth by the film "Sid and Nancy".

'Sid and Nancy' attempts to tell the 'real' story of Sid Vicious, bassist with the pioneer punk band, the Sex Pistols, and Nancy Spungen.

They met and became lovers sometime in mid-1977. 18 months later Nancy is dead from knife wounds.

Sid, charged with Nancy's murder and released on \$50,000 bail, died four months later from a drug overdose.

Director Alex Cox says Vicious thereby kept his side of a suicide pact.

Ten days after Nancy's death, Sid slashed his wrists, and the fatal dose of heroin must, according to his mother and others present at the party, almost certainly have been taken in the knowledge that it would have killed him. Sid had been cleaned out while inside and was not under any physical compulsion to take heroin.

### Suicide

If you want a bet on suicide, go for Sid, not Nancy!

I wasn't sure what to expect from this film and I'm still not sure what Cox is getting at.

I don't know how old Cox is or where he was at the time, but one of the striking things about 'Sid and Nancy' is the feeling that he missed the whole thing first time round.

Interestingly, he did decide to make a film about the Pistols first and then picked on Sid and Nancy.

But one has the reasonable right to expect their known history would remain unchanged. No such luck, which is quite distracting. It doesn't help, either to have things happen in an incorrect chronological order.

The soundtrack (re-recorded Pistols by Glen Matlock, the original bassist,



Never a genius

and others) is truly dreadful.

Heroin addiction and what it does to two people is obviously the main theme of the film. The general message appears to be Heroin Screws You Up.

But Cox himself has said he thinks TV is as bad if not worse at 'screwing you up' as heroin is.

Sid was never a genius but his portrayal here is outrageous, the whole part has been done as an over-the-top caricature of a brainless subhuman.

Either forget this film is supposed to be about Sid and Nancy and regard it as a film about two junkies in love or give it a miss and see 'The Great

Rock and Roll Swindle'.

You'll have to sit through a fair bit of Malcolm McLaren's ego but it is worth it for the early videos of The Pistols with the real Sid, and his acting, such as it is, later on.

By the way, his real name was John Simon Ritchie (Sid Vicious was the name of John Lydon's hamster).

# Death of a king

By Mick Ackersley

The right of local Labour Party's to select their candidate before each general election — "reselection" — was one of the gains won for the Labour Party by the left in the early 1980s.

Before that, a sitting Labour Member of Parliament was normally chosen to fight the seat in the upcoming election without challenge or competition. Exceptions were very rare. A sitting MP acquired something like rights over the local party. The Parliamentary Labour Party was an entrenched oligarchy.

Yet the Left's democratic fight for reselection brought us a prolonged mudstorm of abuse and misrepresentation from the Press and Television.

Last Sunday's ITV play "Long Live the King" went a little way towards making up for that.

It was a powerful drama about the struggle in a local Labour Party between the sitting MP "Tommy" (John Stride) and a left wing challenger, "Clive" (John Duttine) for the chance to fight a safe Labour seat.

Tommy has been an MP for 20 years, a back-bench time-server with no shred of principle left. "We're talking about my living here" he shouts at his wife who retains scruples.

It is just a job to him — a good, soft, well-paid job; and former union official Tommy has come to love Westminster, "the best club in London".

Back home he's a burly local champ: "The King is here" he announces when he arrives at the Labour Club. He can windbag about "the cause" and "the movement".

But he's arrogant, with wounded pride perhaps: but like Coriolanus he can't bring himself "to crawl" and solicit votes before the crucial reselection meeting. He brings his wife to do that. He gets drunk and alienates support.

In fact he's bitterly resentful that he should be challenged.

# on the Box

John Stride's Tommy was a composite portrait of the dead head, dead-souled, well-heeled and fat-bottomed "salt of the earth" rank and file PLP-man (and occasional woman) who was the political ballast on which the last two Labour governments rested; and there are an awful lot of them left, unfortunately.

Unlike most Labour MPs who have recently faced reselection, Tommy gets his comeuppance.

The selection meeting is tied and decides to have the candidates in for five more minutes each of questioning. Meanwhile, at the last moment Tommy's secretary has arrived with proof that Clive is, or was, gay. Tommy's threat to use this publicly makes Clive agree to withdraw "for the sake of party unity".

But Clive is brave and sincerely wants to clean up the Labour Party. He goes back in to say he's withdrawing — and then tells them why.

One candidate is left — but not home and dry. The meeting votes down a motion to endorse him. Tommy's wife and son call him a rat and walk out.

We last see him, drunk in the House of Commons bar, talking to a Tory who is eager to 'take over' his "clever", mercenary secretary.

"Long Live the King" was not only good drama and fine performances. It was plainly on the side of reselection and by implication on the side of those who want it.

And that's a lot rarer than good drama on TV!

Tracy Williams will definitely be back next week.

# Flexibility: why the bosses need it

IN APRIL 1984, management at Lucas Electrical, Birmingham, proposed that clerical and manual workers should be brought together in a single grade of 'Materials Controllers'.

Was this event part of a major change now taking place in the class structure of Britain, and therefore in the potential for working-class struggle?

The Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) thinks it was. In *Flexibility — Who Needs It?* they argue:

"The range of drastic measures wrapped up as 'flexibility' which the bosses are now attempting to push through are "the most serious challenge to trade unions for decades".

### Anywhere

In 'functional flexibility', workers go anywhere and do anything, and they get paid roughly the same rate. Demarcation lines are out. At Nissan's new factory at Washington, Co. Durham, the only grades are 'manufacturers' and 'technicians'.

'Numerical flexibility' is a new name for casualisation. Alongside a group of 'core' workers, the bosses want a pool of 'peripheral' workers, usually unskilled and on part-time or fixed-term contracts, to be recruited and fired when and where they are needed. Such workers are usually women or young people.

The study rightly points out that there is no reason in principle why trade unionists should defend demarcation lines, or oppose workers learn-

By John Bloxam

ing a wide variety of skills. Indeed, in principle we support such changes provided that they are not at the expense of workers' wages and conditions.

The point is that under capitalism they are introduced under capitalist control to give the capitalists advantages over the workers. Redundancies are always part of the 'flexibility' packages. The drive to tear down demarcation lines goes with a drive to weaken union organisation.

The element of new training is flimsy, too. In place of the old apprenticeship system, you get YTS schemes or 'training' on the job, done by older workers — who are themselves then often made redundant.

Any job can be done by anyone, as long as it can be done 'safely'. But safety is a relative term. "There is evidence that health and safety standards deteriorate".

The CAITS study is labelled 'A Trade Union Guide', and it is a useful summary of a whole range of attacks aimed at trade union organisation and conditions. But it often raises more questions than it answers.

For example, any shop steward trying to convince his or her members to oppose 'flexibility' measures would be greatly helped by having facts on the increase of accidents. But the study just mentions 'evidence', with no details.

More important, little picture is given of the spread of casualisation or struggles against it.

In Japan, the bosses' model for 'flexibility', over half the workers are a



'floating reserve', non-unionised, with inferior wages and conditions, on contracts of three to 12 months, and doing the worst jobs.

In Britain, if you leave aside industries like building where casual labour has always been rife, it has been confined, until recently, to a few jobs like teaching. Now it must be expanding.

A recent report — quoted in Labour Research — into the 1.8 million vacancies filled by job centres in 1984 found that 32% were for temporary jobs.

The town hall workers' union NALGO reports an increase in the number of temporary contracts in public services. At British Alcan, 48% of the workforce were made into 'permanent temporaries', with contracts to be renewed every six months.

Last year, with the assistance of the UCW union leaders, the Post Office pushed through a big increase in their number of casuals. But that agreement has still not been fully implemented,

and remains the source of many guerrilla struggles.

The CAITS study thinks the prospects are gloomy. The pamphlet offers guidelines for trade union negotiators, making some sensible if limited suggestions. Limited? Yes, because their basic answer to 'flexibility' is that it should be negotiated by trade unions and not imposed.

Fine: but negotiate what, and how?

The pamphlet does not even mention a future Labour government, let alone discuss what the labour movement should demand of it. At a minimum, Labour must legislate the same rights for part-time and temporary workers that full-time workers have.

But the basic reason for the authors' gloom is that they don't think that workers are going to fight the attacks. And if you don't think it's going to happen, then there is little point in discussing tactics for resistance.

Yes, unemployment, defeats, and bureaucratic betrayals have made it much more difficult to fight. But there are already many examples to prove that workers will fight back.

The history of capitalism is the history of repeated radical changes in techniques of production and organisation of labour — and of the working class eventually getting the measure of each new system and fighting back. This time it will be no different.

Without the perspective that the workers will fight back, studies of 'flexibility' are like diagrams of a watch which don't take account of the spring.

'Flexibility: who needs it'. £1.95 from CAITS, North London Poly, Holloway Rd., London N7.

## What is a fair wage?

By Martin Thomas.

Several political conclusions go together with Marx's theory of exploitation.

1. The workers' struggle for shorter hours and better pay should be pushed forward without any hesitations about leaving a fair profit or anything like that.

2. The working class cannot, however, achieve liberation just by fighting for such immediate economic aims.

"A rise in the price of labour, as a consequence of the accumulation of capital, only means, in fact, that the length and weight of the golden chain the wage worker has already forged for himself allow of a relaxation of the tension of it." (Capital).

3. In the day-to-day working class struggle, what is most important is not the immediate economic gains, but the growth of the organisation, self-confidence, and class consciousness of the workers.

Within the framework of the old socialist arguments, the bourgeoisie had an unanswerable case when they said that a certain level of profits was necessary for any industrial progress. And indeed, having established that point, they were often willing to concede that some profits might be excessive.

"As you will see, I just make a fair profit; but my competitor Mr. X really exploits his workers. And the financier Mr. Y pockets a large fortune without even producing anything. They're the ones you should go for!"

So the trade unions came to demand (as they still do today) that profits should be reduced to a fair level, and wages raised to a fair rate.

Marx showed that this approach is essentially bourgeois and utopian. Utopian because:

"What is a 'fair' distribution? Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is 'fair'? And is it not, in fact, the only 'fair' distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production?...have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about 'fair' distribution?" (Critique of the Gotha Programme).

"To clamour for equal or even equitable retribution on the basis of the wages system is the same as to clamour for freedom on the basis of slavery." (Wages, Price and Profit).

And bourgeois, because it accepts all the economic relations of bourgeois society and only wants to rejig them in favour of the working class.

Marx argued that: "Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work' (the trade unions) ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword 'Abolition of the wages system'." (Wages, Price and Profit).



Marx

## What are the lessons of the Popular Front for today? — Clive Bradley concludes his series on the Spanish Civil war:

The military base of the Spanish fascists, for the first six months of the war, was Spanish Morocco. Franco recruited from the 'Moors' of Morocco.

Morocco had been conquered by Spain, with the help of France, between 1912 and 1926. Although the great days of the Spanish Empire — the conquest of most of America south of what is now the USA — were long over, the Spanish ruling class still put in its own feeble bid in the 'scramble for Africa'. A junior partner to the powerful imperialist states to its north, Spain nevertheless did its best to reap the fruits of modern imperialism.

### Morocco

The Republican governments after the fall of the monarchy in 1931 had no intention of relinquishing control of Morocco. Even when the Moroccan leader Abd el-Karim offered to organise an uprising against Franco, if Leon Blum would release him from his Popular Front prison in France to do it, the Popular Front in Madrid turned him down.

An uprising against Franco would inevitably have taken place under the banner of Moroccan independence from Spain. The Popular Front could only have built an alliance with the Moroccan people through a radical democratic policy of self-determination for Morocco. This they refused even to consider.

Indeed, in February 1937, the Foreign Minister delivered a note to Britain and France on the subject of Morocco. It said: "The government is disposed to make certain sacrifices in the Spanish zone of Morocco, if the British and French governments should take steps to prevent Italo-German intervention in Spanish affairs."

They were prepared to give Morocco to the British or French imperialists, but not to the Moroccan people. As they rejected an alliance with the Moroccans, so the Moroccans rejected them.

Morocco thus remained a military base for Franco and his international fascist allies. And so the imperialistic policy of the Republican government contributed to its military defeat.

What motivated this suicidal policy? An anti-colonial revolt in Morocco could not be seen in separation from an anti-colonial policy throughout Africa. Republican Spain may have been the bulwark of 'democracy' — but that democracy had strict limits so far as the capitalists were concerned.

For the colonial subjects of Spain, Britain or France there was to be no democracy. And allowing democratic national rights for Morocco would merely be the 'thin end of the wedge'.

Accepting the limits of capitalism, the Popular Front was forced to act as a capitalist government. A break with the imperialist policies of the capitalists was far more than the 'alliance of classes' could bear.

It was the same story in France: Leon Blum's government never countenanced independence for the French colonies.

In Spain, the Popular Front adopted a similar attitude towards the national minorities in Spain itself. Basque and Catalan nationalists were viewed with intense suspicion by the Republican governments after 1931.

All the aspects of Popular Front policy, in Spain and France, have important lessons for the labour movement today. The Popular Front was an appalling failure. But not only have the lessons not been learned, the essential



The Popular Front led Spanish workers to defeat

policies have been repeated time and time again.

For a socialist-dominated government that accepts the limits of capitalism, attempts to work within them, and ends up with an economic mess, demoralised workers and a growing fascist menace, we need look no further than the France of Francois Mitterrand since 1981.

That was a modified variant of the Popular Front. But Popular Frontism has explicitly been copied across Latin America and the so-called Third World for decades. There have been many 'Spanish civil wars'. Again and again, the Popular Front has delivered the workers into the hands of their enemies.

### Chile

In Chile in 1970, a 'Popular Unity' government was elected, led by Salvador Allende, on a policy of uniting the people against imperialism and the top layers of the Chilean ruling class.

The masses moved into action; and the forces of the right, backed up from the USA, mobilised to counter the potentially revolutionary struggles of the workers and poor peasants.

The Socialist and 'Communist' leaders trusted the army, the military wing of the capitalist state, to 'defend democracy' from the Chilean fascists.

In 1973 the Chilean generals repaid that trust with a coup that led to the deaths of 30,000 or more working class militants. A regime was imposed that is only now — 13 years later — showing signs of weakening before a reviving working class.

Yet the disastrous Popular Front policy is being urged on the Chilean masses again.

All historical experience proves that it is when the organised working class sets the pace of the struggle for democracy, or in defence of it, that the middle class, the peasantry, the urban and rural poor, are pulled en masse on the side of historical progress. If the workers are forced to hold back, or if working class action is kept channelled into safe grooves that divert them from a challenge to capitalism, then the middle classes — confused and demoralised — are easy prey for reactionary movements.

In 1930s Spain a revolution was in progress around the themes of democracy. The 'democratic' Republicans in fact proposed extremely limited objectives for that democratic revolution.

Independence for Morocco? A radical redistribution of land to the peasants? Breaking the power of the Church? Democratization of the Army? These purely democratic issues were too radical for the bourgeois radicals.

The Trotskyists proposed that the workers take the lead in struggling for the most radical and consistent democracy; that the democratic revolution be given its tempo and motive force by the class struggle.

On the basis of that democratic struggle, distinct working class organisations could and should develop that could themselves take on the role of a government — more democratic than even the most radical capitalist democracy.

The relevance of this policy for the world today is enormous. Of course there have been many changes since 1936-39. But all the core ideas of the Trotskyists' policy are still relevant and valid. All the core ideas of Popular Frontism are demonstrably false and dangerous.

Consider South Africa today. A revo-

lutionary movement mobilised essentially around democratic issues; a struggle whose pace has been set, increasingly over the past ten years by the organised working class; there are many parallels with Spain.

And the South African Stalinists advocate a policy strikingly similar to that of their Spanish antecedents — putting 'the struggle against apartheid' where the Stalinists of the 1930s put 'the struggle against fascism'.

### Blood

The latter-day Stalinists who want us to 'celebrate' the unmitigated disaster of fifty years of Popular Frontism have good reason to want to hide its lessons.

If we look closely we will see that Stalinism has working class blood on its hands. The object of recalling the real history of the Popular Front is to see to it that next time revolutionary workers do not suffer the same fate. By learning from the defeats of the past we can prepare for the victories of the future.



South Africa today: there must be no repeat of the disastrous policy of the popular front

# Let the strikers have a say!

The first talks since June were held between Rupert Murdoch's News International and the print union leaders last Friday. The EETPU were represented at the talks, set up by TUC General Secretary Norman Willis and electrician's leader Eric Hammond.

SOGAT leader Brenda Dean was quoted as wanting a better deal than the one the strikers threw out in June. The Financial Times reported that the union leaders made "a claim for jobs inside Wapping, some form of recognition and compensation in excess of the rejected £50 million".

The handful of jobs they might get,

## John Bloxam looks at the current situation in the print

the tightly controlled and gutted recognition, the extra money — these are calculated as the extra sweeteners to swing the 5500 sacked workers. They will also be counting on demoralisation among workers who know that the strike is cynically being led nowhere.

### Secret

Friday's talks are likely to have the further objective of diverting attention from the TUC Congress debate on the Wapping dispute. The talks are due to resume next Friday, two days before the Congress opens in Brighton.

Socialist Organiser spoke to Larry Hyett, SOGAT and News International striker:

"Since the 'no' vote we have not seen the fighting leadership that the strikers demand, but a leadership unworthy of their support.

"There has been no consultation with the strikers about the way to win. The talks have been held in secret without strikers' participation. These leaders have been unprepared to defend either jobs at News International or jobs and conditions in the industry as a whole.

"Our reaction must be to call for

mass meetings of the strikers. These mass meetings used to happen regularly but have been dropped by the London District Council leaders because they were getting shown up as people who pose left and act right.

### Resumption

"The strikers must demand the resumption of these meetings. If the London District Council will not call them then the rank and file must, and extend the invitation to workers at the Observer and the Mirror to join us in taking strike action.

"At the TUC the print union leaders will talk about the unity of the strike. But what sort of unity can there be with

leaders who run before the courts; that encourage normal working by those who should be on strike defending trade unionism; that instruct strikers not to make picketing effective?

"We wanted a much better resolution at the TUC, calling for a stronger action and not just a boycott. All workers should participate in the boycott, certainly, but the call for solidarity strike action should have been made, even if it was on a 24 hour, regional basis to start with. That's what happened with the mineworkers.

"Strikers are organising a lobby of the TUC on the Monday, jointly with the workers' sanctions lobby. We must link international workers' solidarity with the struggle here."

## GMBU CAMPAIGN

# Under the gloss

By Linda Mouldsdales

AMAZEMENT was the first thing that hit me when I read an article outlining the GMBATU's new campaign, FLARE (Fair Laws and Rights in Employment).

Launching the campaign, general secretary John Edmonds said: "The GMB is trying to persuade the labour movement and British people generally that we should have good laws. These must be on the side of the chambermaid, not the likes of Rupert Murdoch".

Is the GMB finally waking up to the real world that low-paid workers face, the misery of not being able to afford adequate accommodation and food, the instability of their jobs, and the appalling health and safety conditions?

It certainly looks like it on the surface. The demands include:

- Halt the drastic erosion of workers' employment rights which are suffering

further vicious Tory attacks

- Set up new legal rights providing badly-needed job security
- Pressing for a minimum wage and fixed hours, together with the right of employment protection from the first day of work
- New Health and Safety laws
- Improvement in maternity rights
- New rights for part-timers
- The right to equal treatment regardless of sex, race, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

All of which seem very positive.

However, casting my mind back to the four years I spent as a shop steward in a hotel in Central London, I remembered all the other equally good campaigns, the glossy colour leaflets, with pictures of women looking tired and drawn under a weight of heavy towels, blankets and sheets. They called for the end of low pay and for better conditions, too.

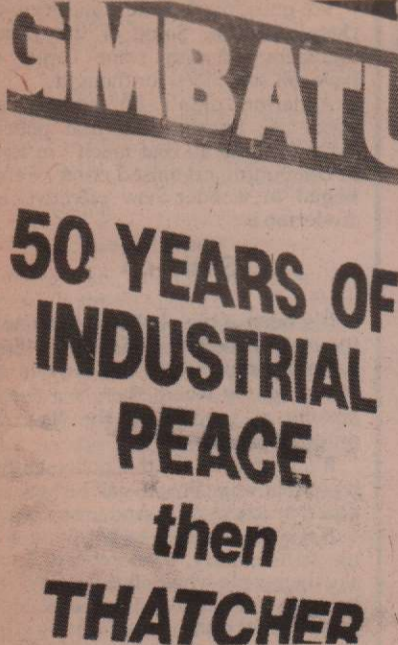
Yet in the real world, outside of the cosy national and regional offices, the GMBU's record is very bleak. There are a few much-publicised victories, but usually there is no follow-up at all to the glossy leaflets.

The here-and-now issues, such as dismissals, pay rises, industrial injuries, and so on, are always a case for compromise — even if that compromise means a worker being sacked or agreeing to a poor pay deal. And the line is always: wait until the Labour Party comes to power, and then everything will be rosy.

What John Edmonds and his co-thinkers don't seem to realise is that the only way we are going to make any gains as a class under this system is by fighting for our rights now. The glossy campaigns run from above always seem to be waiting for tomorrow.

We should be campaigning for a workers' trade union charter — fought for by workers.

We will have to fight the Tory government for our demands — and continue fighting for them to be introduced by a Labour government.



Auld Lang Syne... Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report

# Stitch-up at TUC

By Steve Battlemuch (CPSA delegate to TUC, in personal capacity)

THE 118th Annual Trades Union Congress meets from 1 to 5 September.

Most matters will be well and truly stitched up before delegates arrive in Brighton.

The majority of unions have lined up behind the composite on industrial relations law, with only TASS and the NUM submitting amendments.

### Abolition

The composite calls for abolition of Tory anti-trade union laws and a Bill of Rights for workers and their trade unions, but also includes Kinnock's favourite clause about "a right to have a secret ballot" in strike situations. Thus we are going to have the TUC agreeing to state interference in the trade union movement supposedly to help get Labour elected.

The TGWU was originally with the

NUM in amending this, but then switched 180 degrees after pressure from TGWU member Kinnock.

### Outvoted

At the CPSA delegation meeting last week the left was outvoted on every issue. On nuclear power, 'we are for it because we have members who work in the industry'. On South Africa, an excellent amendment from USDAW "calling upon the General Council to urge unions and members not to handle South African goods and support any members victimised for so doing" will be opposed by CPSA and presumably other right wing unions although CPSA members are currently in dispute for refusing to handle work to do with South Africa. John Ellis, the deputy general secretary of CPSA, thought the motion was dangerous because there could be strikes all over the place!

On the whole it is going to be a dreadful week being a leftwinger on the CPSA delegation voting with Hammond and Co all week.

## PAXMANS Scare story

By Shaun Hayes

AS PAXMANS workers enter the tenth week of their lock-out, the press has begun to take sides in the dispute.

The local paper had a front page story on Thursday saying that the AUEW had split from the joint shop stewards committee, and are arranging peace talks with Paxmans.

The AUEW have totally denied these reports and stressed that the unions and local labour movement remain solid.

The local paper is trying to demoralise the workers and there are now moves to stop deliveries to them in retaliation.

In fact the workers' resolve has been greatly strengthened by this scare-mongering, and they have begun to realise that the press is on the bosses' side.

Send donations and messages of support to: The Secretary, Paxmans JSSC, 77 Artillery Street, Colchester, Essex.

## LABOUR PARTY

# Support for Khan and Scally

ROY Hattersley, the deputy leader of the Labour Party, has been working overtime with his right-wing mates to reverse a recent decision of his local Labour party.

### Reinstate

Birmingham Sparkbrook Labour Party's General Committee voted to ask the Labour Party conference to reinstate three members the same GC had expelled last November.

By Gerry Bates

The right wing have used their majority on the local Executive Committee to call a further, special, GC this evening (26 August). They will try to overturn the previous GC's decision.

### Boat

Even if they succeed, they still will have missed an important boat.

When the GC voted for readmission, it did so in the form of an

amendment to a resolution for this year's Labour Party conference. That amendment cannot be recalled now. It should be printed in the conference's final agenda, which is due out early next week.

### Anger

Such is the anger in the Constituency Labour Parties at this local witch-hunt that the Sparkbrook amendment will stand on the agenda together with 30 others calling for the reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

# Scots walkout

By Ian McCalman

WITHIN the first full week of the new term, three Strathclyde secondary schools experienced strikes as ten teachers walked out in protest at the decision to dock a day's pay for their refusal to cover the classes of absent colleagues.

The strikes are a signal to the

management of the determination of Strathclyde teachers to continue to implement EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland) policy of no cover after three days of absence (a campaign that is separate from the ongoing wages dispute).

There are indications that Labour-controlled Strathclyde Regional Council may be seeking a compromise formula. Continued determined action by teachers could bring substantial advances on this front.

**INSIDE STORY**

# Stalker the truth

Sam Darby, a Manchester councillor and member of the Police Committee, told Socialist Organiser the inside story of the police inquiry into John Stalker.

# VICTIMS IN A RACIST WORLD

In Sri Lanka, three million Tamils face persecution and slaughter by the Sinhalese majority. In India, hundreds of thousands of refugees live in camps on £20 per household per week. Thousands of other Tamils seek a safe place to live elsewhere.

And, like the 155 'boat people' who arrived in Canada, they face harassment, hysteria and prejudice.

But Canada's record is a model of enlightenment compared to Britain's. Despite the existence of a big Tamil community here, and the fact that Tamils are more likely to speak English than other European languages — let alone the sweet-talk about Commonwealth links — Britain has admitted hardly any Tamils.

Payman Rezai reports.

**THE PLIGHT of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, who struggle at home against the racism of Sri Lanka's Sinhalese state, has also vividly exposed the racism of international immigration controls.**

Like previous waves of refugees fleeing persecution — like Asians fleeing Idi Amin's brutal regime, or the Iranian leftists seeking asylum from Khomeini's butchery — the Tamil 'boat people' face unwelcoming and racist hosts.

There are few countries to which the Tamils can escape. East Germany

is one: unlike most Western countries it does not seek 'visa' permits that the Tamil refugees cannot get. From there, many cross over the Berlin Wall into West Germany.

## Courts

West German courts have ruled that Tamils do not face persecution in Sri Lanka and therefore have no automatic right of asylum. Each case has to be fought on its merits.

Tamils in Germany face a racist backlash and are severely restricted in their daily life and movements. West Germany has a gastarbeiter (guest



worker) system under which Turkish and other workers (mainly from the Mediterranean countries) are recruited to work in Germany for extremely low wages with few political rights. They have no right to settle in the

country.

There are already calls to impose 'tougher' restrictions on the entry of Tamils.

In Canada the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney has promised never to turn away refugees washed up on its shores. However, the experience of the 155 Tamils recently 'caught' by the authorities indicates a different picture.

Although there are only 8000 Tamils in Canada, the authorities plan to rush through new restrictions on immigration, and the Canadian Liberal Party is calling for the refugees to be put in 'detention camps'. The press has hounded these illegal immigrants and 'liars'.

Since last May Tamils attempting to enter Britain have had to apply formally for visas. Applying for a visa in Sri Lanka can mean greater persecution or even death.

## Heathrow

On arrival at Heathrow, Tamils are kept in squalid detention centres. Most applications to enter Britain are refused, though Tamils sent back to Sri Lanka face near-certain death.

The Tamils are now the latest to experience the thoroughly racist character of immigration controls. In Britain, over the years of the present Thatcher government, 188,000 more people have left Britain than have come in to live here. Recent EEC statistics show a similar pattern across Europe. Yet politicians still agitate about the danger of their countries being 'swamped' by mass immigration.

All socialists should defend the right of the Tamil Refugees, and all refugees, to escape from repression. And all workers have a right to work wherever they choose. Immigration controls are racist, and should be abolished.

The police committee rejected the report because most of the Labour Group could see that the report was insubstantial. It was a matter of guilt by association and innuendo. Even one of the Tories on the authority said he could see that. The report was insufficient to justify the accusations.

Stalker himself has said that he couldn't rule out a conspiracy to discredit him and therefore discredit his inquiry into the RUC.

A few of us in the Labour Group thought that there is a major probability that that was the cause of the affair.

It was so phoney — there had to be something else, and it seemed likely that the shoot-to-kill policy of the RUC was it. Chief Constable Samson was questioned quite closely about that during the closed session.

## Investigate

The report just said: 'We don't think there's been any interference by secret service agencies or the RUC' and left it at that. There's clearly been no attempt to investigate the possibility.

Samson did assure us that the investigation into the RUC would continue. His implication was that the investigation would go ahead and come up with some honest results.

From the beginning it was clear that there was quite a large majority in the Labour group who just did not accept the report in any way, shape or form. There was some opinion that favoured a reprimand — but those people were defeated.

One of the big unanswered questions is this: What was Anderton's role?

Whatever has been going on, Anderton either knew about it and was complicit in it, or deliberately let it happen.

We questioned Anderton during the closed session. Some of the Labour members and even some Tories will have got some food for thought.

Anderton didn't do himself any good. He himself said that policing "wasn't up to all that much" in terms of combatting organised crime. People began to wonder how effective Mr. Anderton is.

## Shake-up

It's been a big shake up for one of the new police authorities. It's shaken Anderton's prestige, certainly in the Labour group where there's a certain amount of support for the 'law and order' approach.

It's been good for this police authority in that way. People will be less prepared to accept what Anderton says.

If it was designed to get Stalker off the RUC inquiry, it succeeded. I dare say the people who pull the strings will be quite satisfied to have succeeded in that. But they have paid for it by creating an enormous scandal. And it hasn't died down yet — not by a long chalk.

# Time for action

For a long time we have been told by various leaders that the lads are not ready for action. Keep your heads down until the election of a Labour government and then everything will be hunky-dory — that's the message.

But South Wales miners, Durham miners and miners at other individual pits have already taken action, much of it unreported in the press. This indicates that the lads are ready — not, perhaps for a major strike, but certainly for some sort of reckoning with the Coal Board. They're willing to take on the Coal Board to sort out some of our outstanding problems and injustices.

Most of the unrest in the pits up and down the country is being provoked by the Board in a desperate attempt to have a go at the NUM. But they should have learnt by now that the NUM isn't ready for caving in and the UDM isn't so much a dying swan as a dead duck.

Personally, I don't think that the Board will move at all, at least until MacGregor goes and Haslam takes over on 1 September. Haslam may try to pacify the NUM with a few crumbs.

On Friday, 200 NUM members at Ellistown pit in Leicestershire struck after the bosses had kicked them out of the union office at the pit and tried

to hand it over to the UDM. It just shows how two-faced the Board is.

If they are saying that they are only prepared to recognise one union on site, why is it then that where the UDM has only a handful of members the Board gives them certain rights like the right to post notices? What they're trying to do, of course, is to prop up the UDM.

This is also the aim of another Board



tactic, used particularly in Notts. Prior to the strike, Bevercotes was the only colliery in the Notts coalfield that had private contractors. The union kicked them out.

Now we've got private contractors in five or six collieries.

It is a two-pronged attack on the NUM. Firstly, the Board want to bring in privatisation by the back door. Secondly, it's a way to force men into a particular union, because many of these private contractors make membership of the UDM a condition of employment.

Our demand is that those men should be allowed to join a union of their choice.

Harassment in the Notts pits is continuing. One member filled in three separate forms saying he wanted his money paid to the NUM, but the Board still sent him a letter saying that, as from this weekend, there will be no trade union contributions stopped whatsoever. As long as they intimidate members from the NUM, the Board don't care whether they go to the UDM or become non-trade unionists.

The big issue is still the fight to win recognition of the NUM in Notts. We've got all sorts of problems, but they all stem back to that one issue — recognition. I hope the NUM refuses to sit down and talk with the new British Coal boss Haslam until he recognises the NUM in Notts.

I hope the TUC won't make concessions on fundamental principles, whether to employers or to a future Labour government.

My message to TUC delegates is simple. What's happened in the Nottinghamshire coalfield will happen to you — if you let them get away with it. The only way to stop it is to take a stand now. Fight for trade unionism! Demand the reinstatement of sacked miners; the release of imprisoned miners; and one industry, one union.

Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

**Whetton's WEEK**



**LABOUR PARTY**

**Join now**

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Write to 150 Walworth  
Road, London SE17.**