

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

HUNGARY '56



4-page special on the workers' revolt against Stalinism. Turn to page 5.

Thatcher says: No room for Asians. We say:

No room for racism!



By Brian McKenna

The tabloid grabsheets of October 15 were awash, it seemed, with terrible news of a natural disaster of the previous night. 'Asian Flood Swamps Airport' bewailed the Express; Heathrow Airport had, according to the Star resounded with the sounds of a 'stampede'.

An oriental monsoon and a raging herd of buffalo had seemingly been sent to plague those hard-pressed Immigration Service Union members who guard the sacred portals of our nation with such...

Well, not quite. The "mass invasion" to which the Express referred was one of around 3000 people mostly from the Asian sub-continent. Their arrival in such numbers was the result of the compulsory visa deadline announced ten days previously by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd for midnight of Oc-

tober 14.

Racist hysteria was the greeting they received from the really distasteful rags. The Sun conjured up some alleged 'whoppers' told by the harassed and undoubtedly frightened incomers.

The Star envisaged them "hot-footing up the M4" — no doubt bringing chaos to our roads, etc. 'Hotel UK' was apparently full up.

Racism

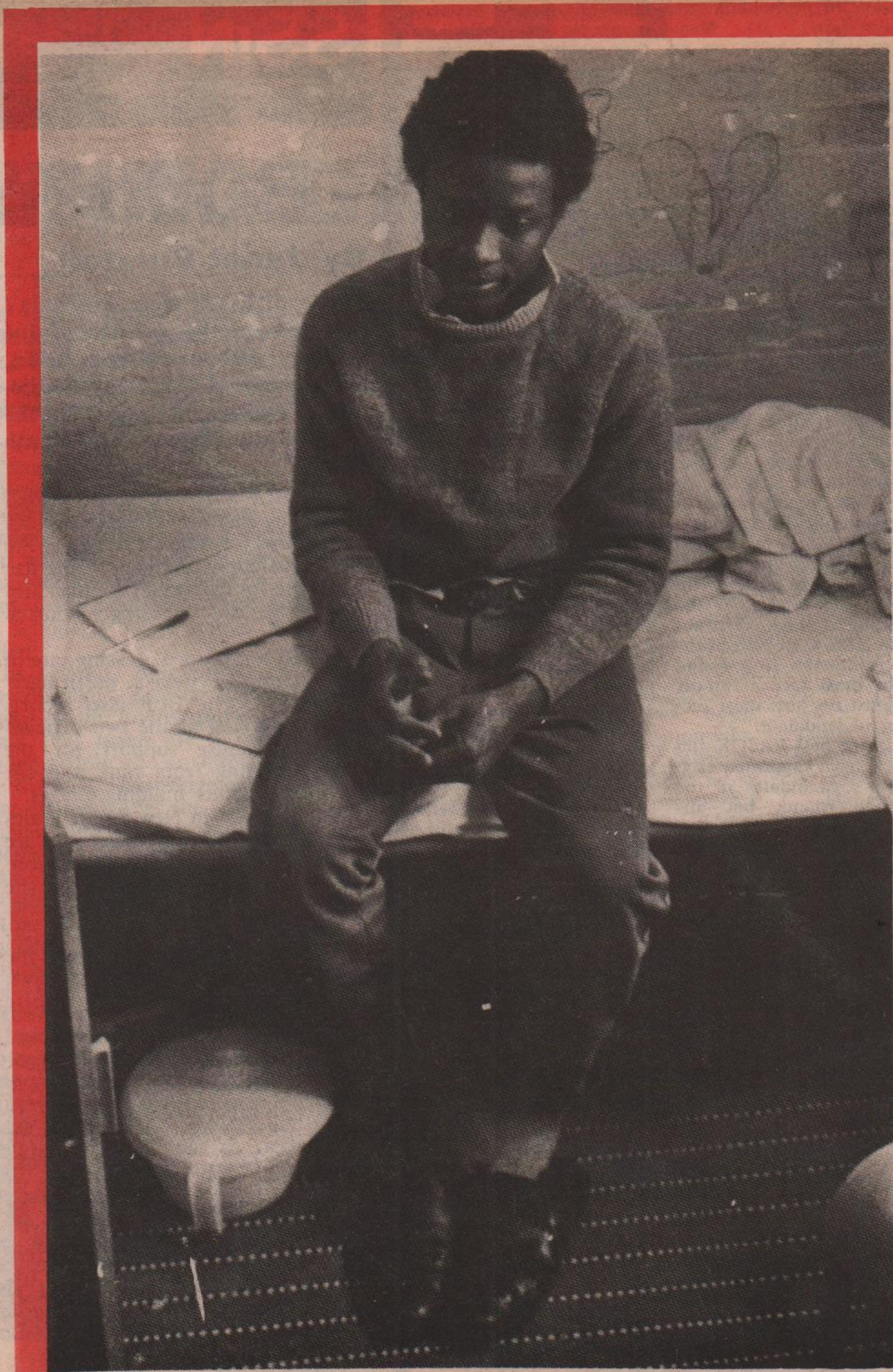
Amid the cacophony of this revolting racism, the Daily Mirror tooted on a little flute with its two discreetly factual columns on page two of its October 15 edition.

Gerald Kaufmann's response as Labour's Shadow Home Secretary was to denounce Hurd for announcing the visa laws ten days in advance. Had he brought them in straight off then all this 'chaos' need never have occurred.

Turn to page 12



Just part of the deluge of racist lies and abuse poured out by Fleet Street sewer rats. Worst of all are the sewer rats who have recently migrated to Wapping.



Left to rot inside Britain's racist prison camps

• This Ghanaian student sits it out in his cell awaiting deportation. He shares the cell with two other prisoners in Ashford Remand Centre deportation block. Why is he being deported? Because he's black. Photo: Carlos Guarita, Reflex.

Socialist students meet



Democracy thwarted

"What if we ask them nicely...and they still won't go?" inquires the centre-page feature in last week's Tribune.

Peter Crampton and Robin Ramsay reckon it is "certain" that the US and NATO will act to stop a future Labour government carrying out its commitment to remove US bases.

•A 'run on the pound' could be organised, forcing a financial crisis.

•The British military establishment would try to thwart the government by "mass resignations, refusals to accept appointments, appeals to the Queen and so on". Plans to do this have been in place since 1981.

•Crampton and Ramsay also suggest that the sacking of Australia's Labor government in 1975 by the Queen's representative, the Governor-General, was linked to threats by the American CIA to cut its links with its Australian equivalent, ASIO. Implicitly — though they don't spell this out — they are pointing to the possibility that a British Labour government could be sacked by the Queen, at the end of a campaign of destabilisation by the CIA, the British military establishment, and maybe the House of Lords and the Courts.

Formidable obstacles! But the Tribune article concludes lamely: "It is not obvious how to combat a hostile military-intelligence complex...."



Yet something has to be done. Contact could be established with David Lange's government in New Zealand, with former members of the (sacked) Whitlam government in Australia....

Lange's government has proved incapable even of upholding the decisions of New Zealand's courts on an admitted case of manslaughter against pressure from France: it was forced to release the French secret service agents who sank a Greenpeace ship and killed a crew member. And Whitlam? He might have something useful to report, for the 1975

sacking of his Labor government was met by a wave of strikes. The problem is that Whitlam tried to curb those strikes, rather than extend them.

To defeat the permanent state machine calls for mass extra-parliamentary working class action, and decisive measures to break up that machine and replace it by a new, democratic, working class administration. That's the only answer to the question "What if we ask them nicely, and they still won't go?", whether it is asked about US bases or about the capitalists in control of Britain's wealth.



Photo John Smith IFL

National NUS demo in Sheffield last November.

The hard non-sectarian left in the NUS is organised in Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN). Last weekend SSiN held its Annual General Meeting. Andy Rathbone reports.

London Poly on October 19.

This year NUS has failed to call a national demonstration as a focus for the first term's activities, even though the Tories are seriously considering scrapping grants and replacing them with loans.

The role played by SSiN in setting the agenda and fighting to provide political direction to the work of Labour Students and the NUS will continue this year, as was indicated by our well-attended AGM held at City of

SSiN

SSiN

This, and the complete drying-up of information about any of NUS's so-called campaigns has led to a great deal of confusion and a lot of very fed up activists in colleges being kept completely in the dark. It makes it impossible for anything to be done on a vast range of vital issues.

The SSiN AGM reiterated our "three-dimensional" approach to campaigning work.

SSiN

state" was overwhelmingly defeated.

Finally, we decided to make a big push to force NUS Executive to call the national demonstration that everyone wants. A motion will be submitted to Sunday's National Executive to that effect, hopefully backed up by letters from Student Union Executives, to try to force the Democratic Left majority to take account of the actual feelings of their membership.

Overall the AGM was lively and showed our ideas could actually transform the student movement into a mass campaigning body able to fight back against the Tories.

No greater contrast could be found to the bureaucratic carve-ups and stifling of debate recently seen as the norm within the NUS leadership and in NOLS.

Builders must reach out

By Janet Burstall

The last "Letter from Australia" reported on the defence of the Builders' Labourers' Federation, particularly in the state of Victoria. This report explains the state of the BLF in New South Wales.

Two BLF officials were released from Long Bay gaol after four weeks behind bars for refusing to accept the court restrictions on them. Time has also come for renewal of membership tickets in the building industry unions.

The BLF reports a pleasing rate of renewal of BLF tickets, particularly in Victoria. The BLF also reports that the gaoling of the two officials helped galvanise support for the BLF, including from rank and file members of other building unions.

Nevertheless, in New South Wales at least, conditions on many jobs are being eroded since the deregistration. The main active involvement in the defence campaign is from BLF officials. It seems that the active involvement of BLF rank and file members has been waning, as shown at demonstrations and public meetings.

Maverick

This is a reflection of the isolation of the BLF within the New South Wales official union movement, and of a rather bureaucratic structure to the BLF which has not promoted rank and file participation. It is also a reflection of the lack of perspective on the part of the BLF leaders for organising the sentiment of support among other building workers, into action.

This failure to work with non-BLF members has a long history in the

BLF, under Norm Gallagher, the Federal Secretary, who himself has only just been released from gaol. Gallagher (who is well known as a Maoist) and his supporters, have seen the BLF as a maverick union, able to flex its muscle and achieve its demands without reliance on other unions or peak bodies.

LETTER from AUSTRALIA

The BLF in New South Wales has basically confined itself to asking for general support against the deregistration and the gaolings. They have also been raising demands for police to be kept off building sites. This latter demand is at least one which other workers on building sites can support actively.

Passive

On some of the larger jobs there has been some tradition of site committees, comprising representatives of the different unions on the job. The site committees provide a partial model for how the BLF could have been mobilising passive support into united action.

The organisation of site committees would also have to be accompanied not only by demands in defence of the right of the BLF to organise, but also for general job and union demands, such as site allowances, safety conditions and wage claims.

Early confusion about whether or not BLF members should take out

tickets in other unions gave way to a "tactical retreat" in which Gallagher recommended that they should do so. This could have been taken as an opportunity to attempt to get those other unions to defend the conditions won by the BLF, and to oppose the deregistration.

Vocal

However, the old BLF prejudices have been maintained, and many builders' labourers with token tickets in other unions look down their noses at those unions, or the idea of organising within them. These unions have been labelled "scab" and "yellow" unions.

Certainly the officials of these unions have organised scabbery. But the attitude of many builders' labourers is inconsistent — on the one hand they are pleased to be able to say that rank and file building workers support them — on the other hand, those workers belong to scab unions which cannot be changed.

• Although the BLF is justifiably vocal in its criticisms of the Labor governments, it has failed to take practical steps to work with other unionists fighting the Labor governments on other scores. For example, at the 1985 ACTU Congress, the Accord Mark II was accepted, including further wage cutting provisions. The BLF did not join with the small contingent of delegates who courageously stood up against the prevailing atmosphere of "consensus" and voted against the deal.

It will be very difficult for the BLF to win that way this time. The serious left can help the BLF to win, not just by openly defending it, but also by discussing how to win, and promoting a strategy for industrial solidarity throughout the building industry.

Greek left decline

Working class hostility to the austerity measures introduced by the PASOK government in Greece during the last 12 months was clearly demonstrated in this month's local elections.

In the first round of voting on 12 October, the PASOK vote fell by anything up to 10% as workers registered their protest by switching their support to the Communist Party (KKE).

The right wing New Democracy (ND) also made gains and the combined left vote (PASOK-KKE) fell by about 3% over previous results.

The significance of this apparently small overall decline in the left vote lies in the fact that Left and Right are so evenly balanced

in Greece that a decline in support of a mere 3% would be enough, in a general election, to give victory to the right.

In the second round of elections, held last Sunday, 19th, PASOK fared even worse. Under the proportional representation system in Greece, if the leading candidate does not poll more than 50% of the votes in the first round s/he must face a run-off against the next most successful candidate.

In the past PASOK and KKE have supported each other's candidates in the second round, but this year, in protest at PASOK's refusal to make any concessions to its demands, KKE refused to back the PASOK candidate in Athens.

In the event, however, it would appear that working class militants in all the main industrial areas could

not stomach the idea of voting for PASOK in the second round and New Democracy took control of Salonika and Piraeus as well as Athens itself. PASOK won 147 municipalities (down 20), KKE 54 and ND 63.

It is widely believed in Greece that with the local elections now behind him Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu will soon announce a new set of austerity measures including a fresh devaluation of the drachma in his bid to stabilise the Greek economy.

By following the well-trodden path of a reformist leader attempting to manage a capitalist economy at the expense of his own working class supporters, Papandreu is undoubtedly preparing the conditions for the eventual return to power of the Right in Greece.

The IDA was asked for \$958 million.

Overall, Congress cut US contributions to international aid agencies from \$1.1 billion to \$949 million. Even Reagan had asked for \$1.4 billion.

The cuts will be disastrous for poor countries, especially in Africa, which still face famine.

Last year's droughts have gone, only to be replaced by this year's threat from huge swarms of locusts. The locust pest can be defeated — only it needs money.

Other parts of the US aid programme remain intact — notably its \$3 billion to Israel and its \$2.3 billion to Egypt.

Poor count the pennies

Plenty of money for the rich, but penny-pinching for the poor. The US Congress last week decided to cut America's contribution to the International Development Association (the World Bank's agency for loans at easy rates to poor countries) from \$750 million to \$662 million.

WHAT WILL LABOUR DO ABOUT IRELAND?

EDITORIAL

Peter Archer, Labour's Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, made a speech last Wednesday, 15th, on 'Labour in Government — the Strategy to a United Ireland'.

The Irish Times reports: "What he recommended was a series of measures designed to improve social and economic conditions in Northern Ireland and stimulate political dialogue. Mr Archer did not say how Labour would promote a united Ireland..."

"The only reference to a united Ireland was that there should be an all-Ireland energy policy."

In other words, Labour in government would mean business as usual in Northern Ireland. Archer spoke of "possibly" ending the use of plastic bullets (only "possibly", though this is clear Labour Party policy); apart from that, British Army repression would continue essentially unchanged, weighing most heavily on the Catholic community.

With the support from Labour's leaders for the Anglo-Irish Accord, Labour's operational policy on Ireland has become bipartisanship with the Tories — continuing to hold the unviable Northern Ireland state together by military force, and toying with inadequate bureaucratic reforms.



Protestant youth in Belfast demonstrating against the Anglo-Irish deal

The next Labour government will continue to operate Tory policy in Ireland, just like the last one did.

Further proof that Labour's 'united Ireland' policy has become a vague ideal with no bearing on anything to be done now has come from Neil Kinnock. Kinnock has denounced the visit to Britain by Sinn Fein councillors this week and said that Sinn Fein 'is not welcome within

a thousand miles of the Labour Party'. (So much for Archer's criticism of Unionists in his speech for refusing to work with Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland councils!)

Many Labour activists want to challenge Kinnock's and Archer's policy. They will have a chance to develop discussion on alternatives this week, during the meetings round the Sinn Fein visit.

In our view Sinn Fein's politics are not adequate to bring a real solution in Ireland, and too much of the Labour left's 'dialogue' with Sinn Fein has been just thoughtless repetition of crudified versions of Sinn Fein's ideas. But real dialogue with the militant representatives of the oppressed Northern Ireland Catholic community is an urgent necessity for the British labour movement.

WOMAN'S EYE

Lesbians and gays demand equality

By Jean Lane

THE 1985 manifesto of the Labour-controlled Nottinghamshire County Council had in it a clear commitment to a programme of equal opportunities — declaring itself opposed to discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability or sexual orientation.

Very good. The Labour Party must show itself clearly in support of those sections most oppressed by Tory policy. However, it took some time and not a little pressure from socialists in the Labour Group for the policy to be acted upon. Words are OK for vote-catching, but action is much more effective for improving people's living and working conditions.

What they did do, eventually, was to set up an Equal Opportunities sub-committee on which black, disabled and women's groups would be represented. Well, that's all right. It could get something moving if it has a real active base in the community. Or, it could become just more words, only once-removed. Anyway, it's a start.

Or is it? One group has been noticeably excluded from the committee. The Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights doesn't even get the words (not of the "once-removed" variety anyway).

Manifesto

Despite the manifesto stating that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation would not be tolerated "either in the provision of services or employment opportunities", and promising an active partnership and direct link with the "oppressed sections of the community", the Labour Group has flatly refused to allow lesbians and gays onto the committee. The councillors are either embarrassed by or positively hostile to the idea, and any demands made to them to change their minds have been filed in the dustbin (or the closet?). I mean, talking about these things makes your skin crawl, doesn't it? It certainly doesn't catch votes!

Actually, what makes your skin crawl is being harassed and beaten, thrown out of work, refused mortgages or rent books and being treated like a disease.

And what loses votes is refusing to carry out democratically formed policy and proving yourself unaccountable to the community you are supposed to represent.

The majority of councillors on the Labour Group would like nothing more than the people concerned would disappear, and the whole issue with them. But they are going to be very disappointed.

On 25 October a demonstration will take place in Nottingham demanding a fair deal for lesbians and gays. It has been called by the LCLGR and has the support of local trade unions and Labour Party constituencies and branches. It is the first demonstration in favour of lesbian and gay rights which has been called for by the labour movement.

It should be supported, not only in the interest of ending discrimination, but also to put these careerist vote catchers in our party on the spot. Just who do they think they are? Let them know that their nice positions are in danger if they do not carry out the policies of the members.

STOP WITCHHUNTING GAYS!

Should homosexuality be a topic for discussion in the classroom? To judge by the outcry against the little book "Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin", you'd think that what some schools teach is how to perform various sexual acts. Rhodes Boyson at Tory Party conference denounced "anti-heterosexism which means encouraging young people to experiment with homosexuality at an impressionable age".

To this vice Boyson added single-parent families and "anti-sexism" — no doubt even more corrupting a force than the potato crisps of which Edwina Currie has warned us.

A supporter of the Haringey 'Parents' Action Group' attacked a demonstrator with a bayonet on Monday 20 October. Why? The demonstration was in support of education for young people about homosexuality. Local councils and the labour movement need to fight against bigoted frenzy on this issue.

The Tory claim is that if homosexuality is presented in a positive light, young people will become homosexual. Moreover, it follows that since it is undesirable for people to be homosexual, it is wrong anyway to present it in a positive light. Homosexuality is a threat to the family, and therefore to the civilised society in which we live. The family is the glue that holds society together; threaten it — whether through artificial insemination, 'fatherless' children, homosexuality (or, presumably, divorce) — and the fabric of society will begin to disintegrate.

The idea that putting homosexuality on the syllabus will put in on the cards for a whole generation is ridiculous. If all it takes is a positive image to make someone choose a sexual orientation, it is a mystery that there are any homosexuals at all. Despite heterosexuality, marriage and 2.3 children being the norm presented to young people, some people turn out different.

Homosexuality is discussed in school all the time by young people, least at secondary level, and generally a bit before, jokes, comments and speculations on each other's and their teachers' sexuality is a day-to-day subject of conversation. If it's not discussed in the classroom it will be discussed behind the bike sheds. Classroom discussion is likely to be a bit more informed and adult.

Young people will also 'experiment' in all sorts of things whether it's on the syllabus or not. Anyone who thinks that a young person will only start to feel sexual attraction towards a member of the same sex as a result of talking about it at school is naive almost beyond belief.

Informed discussion about homosexuality can, however, dispell many of the myths, prejudices and fears that make life a misery for young people who are lesbian or gay, or 'bisexual'. A positive image is one that simply shows the truth — that lesbians and gay men can be happy, health, loving people as much or as little as heterosexuals. It is not a 'positive' image about mysterious 'other people' — wierdos somewhere out there in the outer darkness. It is a positive image that young people who are themselves lesbian or gay can identify with, and so be less unhappy.

Learning about homosexuality and homosexuals in school might also help prevent the ubiquitous sport of 'queer-bashing'. Making society easier to live in for lesbians and gay men is not just an abstract issue: for many people it is an issue of physical violence and even occasionally death.

So much for Tory morality: protect society from the homosexuals, they cry; when in fact 'the homosexuals' need to be protected from the viciously oppressive society the Tories love so much.

Recently the image of protecting society from homosexuals has been given extra force by the spread of AIDS. The belated discovery that AIDS is a 'heterosexual plague' in Africa has simply led to a racist conversion of the anti-gay argument: keep Africans out, the media are all crying (not, you will notice, keep out white British businessmen who go to Africa...)

Gay men are being blamed for this terrible disease. In fact lesbians are being blamed too, which is even more bizarre as they are about the lowest risk group in society. In any case, to blame AIDS on its chief victims is a grotesque perversion of moral justice.

Public sympathy has been widespread for a young woman who caught AIDS off her bisexual boyfriend and who is felt to be more entitled to a new drug that can extend the life of AIDS victims. She is 'innocent'; gay men, presumably, are guilty and deserve to die.

But isn't the promiscuity of gay men to blame? No one would suppose that the answer to the spread of syphilis is to stop sex; the answer is to find a cure, and if necessary spend a fortune to do so.

It is only now, as AIDS 'spills over' into the heterosexual community, that the alarm bells are ringing.

Presenting homosexuality as it is — as simply one possible way of living — will reduce unhappiness and make life better for literally millions of people. Books like "Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin" are merely designed to eliminate prejudice; and if a child reaches puberty already inoculated against prejudice, that is something that should be wholeheartedly supported.

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 necessarily
reflect the views of
SO.

GRAFFITI



Residents of Notting Hill, West London, demonstrated outside the police station on Saturday 18 October in protest at the death of Anthony Leonard in police custody. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

Privatisation rolls on

Privatisation is rolling on. According to a report in last week's Economist magazine, over half of National Health Service cleaning, catering and laundry services have been put out to tender, and the rest are due to go out this autumn. Over three-

quarters of cleaning, laundry and maintenance work in central government has gone out to tender.

However, probably fewer than a quarter of local authorities have contracted out services.

The great majority of

the contracts in the health service — 650 out of 810 — have gone 'in-house', to the workforce already doing the job. The problem is that workers have been bludgeoned into accepting worse conditions and wage cuts in order to make themselves 'competitive'.

Good Unionisation

Guidance

In Concannon, the Labour MP who made himself doubly notorious by visiting the dying Bob Sands to tell him that Labour would never restore political status, and by backing the scab NUM, has been replaced by Labour candidate for Mansfield. Unfortunately, Concannon was not voted out; he resigned because of ill-health. However, his successor is Alan Meale, secretary of the Campaign Group of left MPs and the candidate backed by the NUM.

According to surveys previously reported in SO, 'high tech' industries have a worryingly low level of unionisation. But new research challenges this belief.

An investigation by John MacInnes and Alan Sproull of Glasgow University found that 70% of electronics employees in Scotland — including the famous 'Silicon Glen' — are in unionised workplaces. This rate of unionisation is falling, but only slowly.

The authors suggest that the common belief about low unionisation comes from the semiconductor sector of the electronics industry, which is

poorly organised but accounts for only 11% of the workers in electronics.

Rich sods

Rupert Murdoch's personal fortune is some \$725 million, according to the US magazine Forbes.

Not bad going, but he only comes 47th in the magazine's list of the richest people in the US. No. 1 is Sam Moore Walton, founder of a store chain in the Southern US, who is sitting on an amazing \$4.5 billion.

'For richer, for poorer'

The efforts of charities like Bandaid and its spin-offs do little to alter the realities of power in the world economy. A new report published by Oxfam spells out the bitter facts. The flow of resources from the developing world to developed countries amounted to £25 million in 1985. This compares with voluntary aid of £100 million dollars (£60 million) from all western countries. Britain would have to increase its official aid budget by 70% to equal average EEC levels; and C levels are not good. The EEC imports £7,000 million more from the developing countries than exports to it."

UK aid is motivated by political considerations above the need of the recipients. Last year tiny Gibraltar received almost as much aid as Ethiopia from the UK; and "the Falklands Islands received

the equivalent of £5,500 per person of UK aid, while India received 15p per person."

'For Richer, For Poorer' by John Clark is to be published by Oxfam on October 30.

British Empire

Some say the British Empire is dead, but John Elliott, the Australian capitalist who has recently taken over Courage Breweries, thinks different.

As he drives round in his Mercedes, the sound from the tape player is not Vivaldi, not Duran Duran, but Winston Churchill's speeches. Or so the Finan-

cial Times reports. "I carry tapes of Churchill in my car and whenever I'm feeling depressed I put him on", says Elliott. "By the time I get out of my car I'm usually fine."

I don't know whether Elliott's tapes include the speech in which Churchill said he would never preside over the dissolution of the British Empire.

What about Workers' Party?

AT VARIOUS points in its dialogue with Sinn Fein, supporters of Socialist Organiser state:

That 'it's wrong to deal with the Protestants as a whole unit in a supremacist sense, or to talk about them as if they were only the Protestant leaders not ordinary Protestant people as well'.

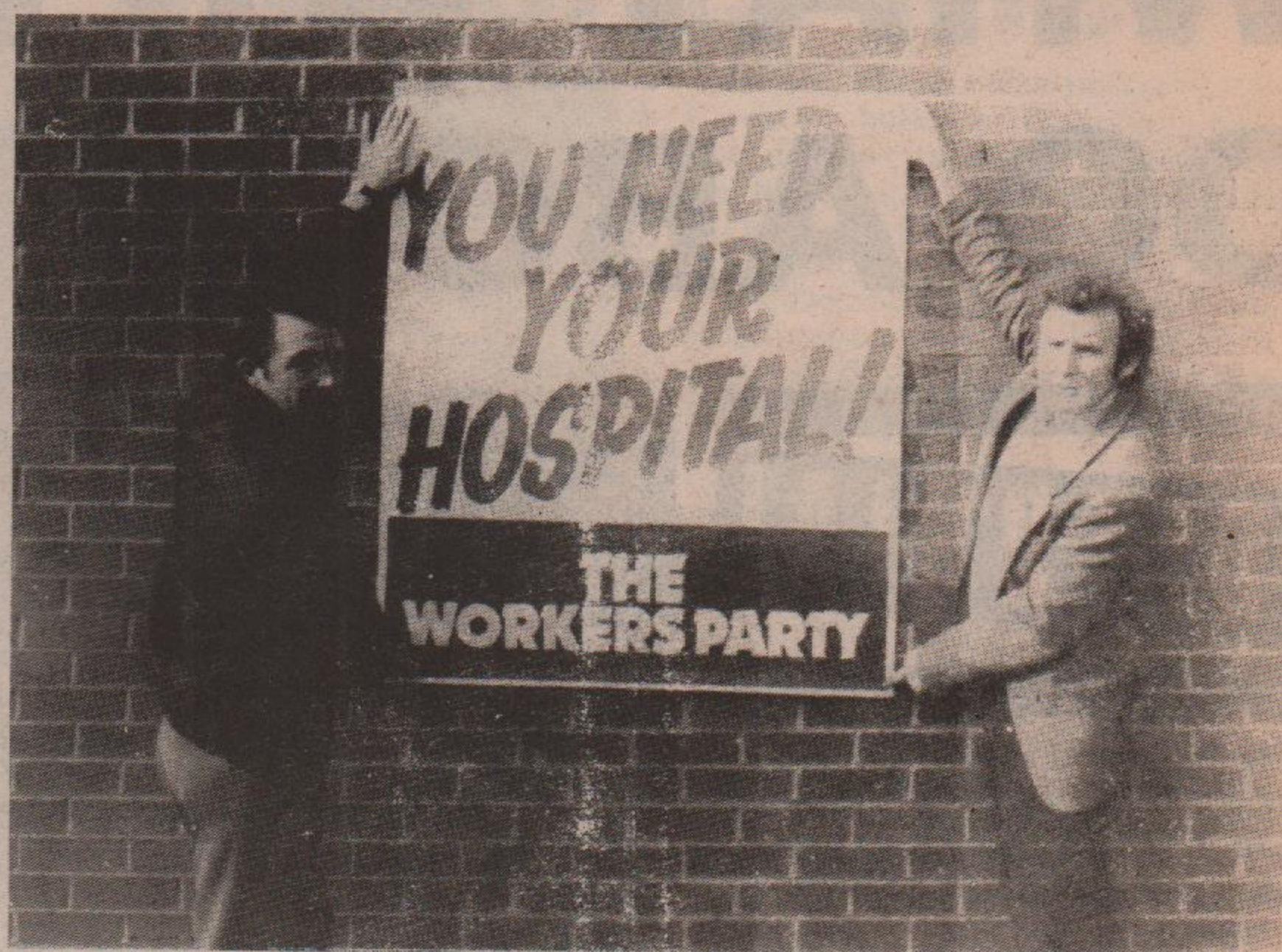
That 'you do not get a united Ireland until you've got a united working class'.

That 'you will not get a united Ireland by Catholic conquest of the Protestants'.

That 'the point is to have a basic democratic programme that will allow workers to talk to workers, allow socialists from either community to assure people from the other community that they respect their identity, and does not propose any form of sectionism or national oppression'.

That 'we have to break from conventional Catholic-Irish nationalism, and return to traditional republicanism — uniting the Irish people'.

Shouldn't Socialist Organiser then be having a dialogue with the Workers' Party, who have held and



Workers' Party showing the way forward?

acted upon these beliefs for more than 15 years? The Workers' Party stands for uniting the Irish working class across artificial borders and over sectarian divisions in order to

create a democratic, secular, socialist republic. Can't say fairer than that, can you?

MATT SMITH,
Birmingham.

Kronstadt was proletarian

That Bough, who accused me of stressing the role of Trotsky in the suppression of Kronstadt and thus engaging in personalities, when I did no such thing, should now turn round and claim that I am "incapable of reading what people actually write" is rich (Letters, SO 284).

He denies that he said that 1938 was the first time the question was raised, but he mentioned that date, referred to no earlier debate, and talked of an alliance then and now; and if he doesn't think that the plain wordage of his letter was to accuse Ciliga and Serge of being — perhaps unconscious — Stalinist agents then he is incapable of reading what he himself writes.

He quite rightly says that I only instanced a government decree:

except that I also mentioned that full and exhaustive publication of the personnel, naming names, was done by the sailors at the time, in the publications of the Kronstadt Soviet; and mentioned a number of people who have subsequently written on the issue after reading this evidence.

In fact I forgot to mention that there was one sailor who had been allowed to retire, he had already been over retiring age at the time of the October Revolution, and had been wounded severely, and had been allowed to return home. The authors of the "Cahiers" of the Kronstadt Commune dug him out as the only example of a sailor who "had been posted elsewhere" they could find.

It is a traditional Stalinist and degenerate Trotskyist ploy to accuse anyone who opposes the party line of being petit bourgeois. Thus the workers of Budapest were petit bourgeois, as of course is Solidarnosc, as were the East Berlin workers in 1953; and so for Bough it appears were the workers of the Vyborg Quarter and the sailors of Kronstadt.

LAURENS OTTER,
Salop.

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

'Star bores' never change!

By Jim Denham

"The cuts in armaments at the different stages of the disarmament process must not reduce the level of security enjoyed by the various partners in the process. No-one must feel threatened by a loss of security. The balance of armaments must be maintained at all times."

Was that the Daily Mail arguing in favour of NATO and US bases? Or the Mirror wagging an editorial finger at Labour's unilateralists? No! It was the Morning Star's editor, Tony Chater on "How the US's Strategic Defence Initiative contravenes international law".

Since the collapse of the Reagan-Gorbachev pow-wow at Reykjavik, the Morning Star has been banging away (if that's the right expression) on this theme of defence and disarmament with new found vigour — if not always with very much coherence.

Thursday's editorial column, for instance, appeared initially to be attributing a progressive role to Star Wars: commenting on a broadcast of Gorbachev's in which he talks about

PRESS GANG

not just limiting nuclear arms but "the liquidation of nuclear arms in a comparatively short period of time", the Morning Star enthused: "that is an important change in what is now possible to envisage as a realisable aim. It reflects the developing shift in the world balance of forces against imperialism and the military-industrial complex which stands at its heart."

"And it arises from the very nature of technological developments, in particular Star Wars..."

The Morning Star doesn't really think Star Wars is a good thing, of course. It just seemed like that for a moment because Tony Chater's editorial was as usual such an exotic melange of incoherent jargon and convoluted double-think.

In fact, the column in question was entitled "Time to rethink peace priorities" and concluded thus: "The CND, the trade unions, the Labour Party organisations, all who have an

interest in disarmament must now rethink their priorities and place the campaign against Star Wars and for a nuclear test ban which would seriously hamper its development at the top of the agenda".

Here we have the key to understanding the Morning Star: the campaign against Polaris, Trident, Cruise, and the US bases may, it concedes, be "very important". But the real task now is for all of us to fall in line behind the Russian bureaucracy and its latest set of "peace proposals".

Campaigning against our own ruling class and their "defence policy" is all very well but the Morning Star would much prefer us to become a diplomatic pressure group for Mr Gorbachev.

Yes, it's reassuring to see that some things never change.

The Morning Star may have gone tabloid but it's still just as dishonest, predictable and boring as ever.

Some good activists still buy it, of course, because it seems to be on the side of the working class and often gives sympathetic coverage to strikes. You can seem like a really rotten sectarian if you attack it or if you point out that it is only kept going by massive orders from the governments of Russia and Eastern Europe.

On Wednesday, though, the Morning Star did give me a momentary shock. An article entitled "Stop interfering" turned out to be about Afghanistan. Had the Morning Star finally plucked up the courage to voice some criticism of Russian foreign policy? No! The "interference" referred to was that of Pakistan.

★ Star comment

US organises kangaroo court

TOMORROW marks the third anniversary of the killing of Maurice Bishop in Grenada, a deed which epitomised the tragedy of the divided revolutionary leadership of the Spice Isle.

World-News

Afghans near to success

Morning Star as master of the double standard (last Saturday); justified outrage at US invasion of Grenada, and all-out support for the USSR invaders of Afghanistan.

Hungary '56: workers against Stalinism



Fighting for a socialist democracy

Arnie Prout tells the story of the great workers' rising against Stalinism in Hungary in 1956.

Thirty years ago this week the Hungarian working class was waging a life or death struggle for socialist democracy. From the capital Budapest to the smallest village on the great plains, workers and students, often armed with little more than petrol bombs, were desperately resisting the invasion of thousands of 'Red' Army tanks. It was in the industrial areas that the fighting was fiercest; areas like Czepele — 'Red Czepele' because it had such a high proportion of Communist Party members.

The Russians knew that, despite their own lying propaganda about "fascist counter-revolution", their real enemy was the Hungarian working class and its workers' councils. It was against the proletarian neighbourhoods that the greatest firepower was concentrated; at the end of four days' fighting, Czepele and Dunapentele had been pounded into ruins.

Throughout the world the Stalinist press heaped abuse and lies on the uprising, describing it as "Fascist inspired", "funded by imperialism" and a "return to capitalism". The Daily Worker (now the Morning Star) made its own contribution to this systematic distortion by at first rewriting and then suppressing altogether the reports of Peter Fryer, its own correspondent in Budapest.

All the squalid dictators of Eastern Europe, fearful for their own safety, supported the Russian intervention. Now, on the 30th anniversary, they all keep silent about their bloody victory against an alleged 'return to fascism'.

Our 'democratic' capitalists also mute their voice on this anniversary. True enough, thirty years ago they squeezed the Hungarian workers for every drop of anti-socialist propaganda. The death count in Hungary made good ammunition in the Cold War.

Revolution

But in reality the Western powers had no intention of aiding the proletarian revolution. The world had been carved into spheres of influence at Yalta in 1944, and following the logic of this, Dulles, then US Secretary of State, openly defended the legality of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe. At the height of the struggle the New York Times reported that the US government was



On the streets of Budapest

opposed to the uprising and embarrassed by it.

The years between the Hungarian Revolution and today have shown it to be only one particularly dramatic and tragic episode in the continuing crisis of Stalinism. The revolt of the Czech workers in Spring 1968 and the strikes of August 1980 in Poland which created Solidarnosc, a ten million strong workers' movement, show many of the same characteristics, although none has yet reached the proportions of an armed uprising.

In each case we see the working class demanding not a return to capitalism but an end to bureaucratic Stalinist tyranny — demands that control of social and economic life pass into the hands of the working class itself.

The origins of the Hungarian Stalinist bureaucracy lie in the advance of the Russian army at the end of 1944. The fascist Horthy regime collapsed in the path of the Russian advance. But Stalin had no intention that it should be replaced by working class power. Throughout Eastern Europe the Red Flags raised above the factories were ordered to be lowered, and the managers and owners were restored.

Stalin had decided that the workers

and peasants were to be liberated from fascism in order that "ordinary" capitalism might continue. To this end the Russians set up a Provisional Government of social democratic, Communist and peasant parties. Its first proclamation was announced on Radio Moscow in December 1944. It states that: "The Provisional Government declares that it regards private property as the basis of economic life and the social order of the country, and will guarantee its continuity". It was read by General Bela Miklos, Knight Grand Cross of the Iron Cross, and Stalin's choice as new President of Hungary.

Many other fascists were to find amenable positions in the administrative apparatus of the new government especially in the AVH (the Security Police). It was by tight control of the police that the Communist Party came to dominate the government. The Stalinists used the method later described by Rakosi as 'salami tactics'. Through the Ministry of the Interior the Party brought trumped up charges against leading members of the other parties who were "removed". The process was continued until virtually all the other parties had been sliced away,

leaving only a rump of intimidated yes-men.

The working class played absolutely no role in this process, and Rakosi later revealed that discussions of it were limited to only the innermost circle of the Party leadership.

Neither did the workers play any role in the nationalisations and land collectivisation of 1948, which followed on the opening of the Cold War. Over the Easter holidays the now CP-dominated government briefly announced that large scale industry had become state property. The nationalisations involved working class direct action even less than in Britain!

Deep freeze

The years 1948-56 were the coldest years of the Stalinist deep freeze. The Rakosi regime maintained itself by systematic terror. The AVH played a key role by constructing a pervasive spy network. The so-called trade unions became simply policemen of the draconian labour laws introduced in 1950. Those found guilty of even minor crimes were given long sentences in labour camps.

The Hungarian economy was transformed into a milch-cow for Russia; in 1948 Finance Minister Er-

no Gero announced that 25% of national expenditure went to pay Russian war 'reparations'. This placed an enormous burden on the Hungarian workers and peasants.

These were also the years of the 'personality cult' of the "Great Stalin" and the "Wise Rakosi". It is recorded that Rakosi admonished a Central Committee member for describing a Party decision as "wise" — that term, he pointed out, was reserved for himself! This mockery of party democracy was enforced by terror. Between 1948 and 1950 almost half a million party members were purged, and a large number paid for even the mildest criticism with their lives.

The most notorious show trial was that of Laszlo Rajk, veteran party leader, who was executed in 1949 after "confessing" that he was a secret "Tito-Trotsky-Fascist". These judicial murders were common to the whole of Eastern Europe. A feature of them was that those Communist leaders who had been exiled in Moscow were used as a battering ram against the 'indigenous' Party leaders of the wartime underground, as Stalin whipped the parties into line.

Turn to page 6



Hungary '56: workers against Stalinism



Symbols of oppression were destroyed

Watching events in Poland

In Hungary the "problems" of destalinisation were slower to develop and initially took a very different form.

In April 1956 a group of young communists formed a literary discussion club called the Petofi Circle. It soon became a centre for critical discussion and demands for literary and intellectual freedom were voiced by it in 'Hirodalmi Ujsag' (Literary Gazette). Thousands began to attend its meetings, and as they did, their political demands grew.

At one meeting Julia Rajk, widow of Laszlo, demanded that those guilty of his execution should be punished. By July there were calls for the resignation of Rakosi. After futile attempts to suppress the Circle, the government began to bend. Rakosi 'resigned' and Rajk's corpse was reburied on October 6. His funeral quickly assumed the character of a political demonstration as 200,000 marched behind his coffin. The execution of Rajk had become a symbol of everything the masses hated.

Throughout September and October the Hungarian people had watched events in Poland. As it became apparent that the Poznan rebels were being lightly treated, and that the Polish government had succeeded in defying the Russians, confidence grew.

The Petofi Circle called for a demonstration of solidarity with Poland. In the absence of Erno Gero, Party Secretary, the government sanctioned the demonstration. Fearing the effects of a ban, they hoped to lead it in a relatively harmless way. When Gero returned on 22 October, a day before the demonstration was

due, he demanded that it be banned. An announcement to this effect only stiffened the determination that it go ahead.

The next day a crowd of 100,000 marched through Budapest to the statue of General Bem, a Pole with an honoured place in the struggles for Hungarian national independence. Here, a resolution from the Writers' Union was read out which called for the removal of the Rakosi clique, for the formation of a new government including Imre Nagy, free elections, control of the factories by the workers and specialists and equality of social and economic relations between Hungary and Russia.

'Rabble'

As the crowd moved on to the Parliament building, Gero broadcast denouncing them as 'fascist rabble'. Outside Parliament, the march halted as dusk fell. A delegation was sent to see the Party leaders. After an hour the delegation had not returned and people grew restive.

Almost jovially, the huge bronze statue of Stalin was toppled. Demands for the return of the delegation grew — hurled through the dark at the AVH guards. Machine gun shots rang out and several unarmed demonstrators were killed.

At last, patience snapped. The AVH were overpowered and street fighting continued throughout the night as the rebels seized all but the main public buildings. By morning, Budapest being under rebel control, a desperate bureaucracy installed Nagy as Prime Minister. Later that day, martial law was declared, and an announcement made that Russian troops had been called in.

Workers demand control

The demonstration on 23 October ended the first phase of the revolution. Up until then, the writers and students had made up the vanguard. But although they could spark off rebellion, they had no means of pressing it home. For example the demands of the Writers' Union contained no clue as to how they might be carried out.

Suspended in this way, they were more appeals to the government than a programme for action. A more astute and sensitive operator might have calmed the situation down by selectively accepting the demands. Gomulka had managed something like this in Poland, and the Hungarian bureaucracy saw a similar role for Nagy.

But they were too late. By now the Budapest working class had begun to assert itself. Throughout September unrest had been growing in the industrial areas as the news from Poland filtered through. Copies of the Literary Gazette had found their way onto the shop floor.

Democracy

The first demands of the workers were for genuine trade union democracy and workers' control. In-

itially the Party tried to fob them off with promises. Now the workers seized control themselves.

On the evening of the 23rd, the workers of Csepel Island struck. Armaments workers distributed guns around the factories. By the next morning the strike was general throughout Budapest, and each factory had elected a workers' council to represent them.

Link-up

Within the day, these had linked up to form a Revolutionary Council, whose authority was accepted by virtually the whole population. Eight years of cynical propaganda had made an impact. The workers had been told that the factories and the state were theirs. Through the workers' councils this lie was transformed into a reality.

Throughout the other towns of Hungary, the same phenomenon was seen. The workers of a factory would strike and elect a council. The factory representatives would link together, seize the radio station, disarm the AVH and begin the distribution of food and supplies. By the end of Wednesday, 24th, effective power lay in their hands throughout the country.

The next step, of linking the councils together, was never fully completed. The first Russian intervention tended to isolate them, especially as it



For 100 hours armed workers con-

was the Councils which usually organised the resistance. However, in the lull between the first and second interventions regional links were made. And on the 29th a widely representative meeting was held in Gyor.

Soviets

Many western observers find it ironical that the Russian tanks were confronted with a working class organised in a form virtually identical to the Soviets of 1917. This is ironical only if Stalinism and Communism are identified.

The Hungarian workers rejected only Stalinism, and with it they repudiated all symbols of 'Com-



Stalinist destruction



No room for any compromise

Caught between the Russians and the workers' councils was the Nagy government. Nagy's acceptance of the post of Prime Minister was widely welcomed by workers and intellectuals alike. He was, at least at first, seen as an honest and cultured communist, a victim of the Rakosi clique, who would strive to implement their demands.

the workers drew revolutionary conclusions, he tailed behind them — but was visibly unwilling to draw those conclusions himself. Russian confidence ebbed, especially as his constant appeals for the rebels to lay down their arms met with no response. When Nagy, in response to mass pressure, reluctantly declared Hungarian neutrality and withdrew from the Warsaw Pact (the Russian-dominated alliance set up in the early 1950s as a counter to NATO and the imperialist rearmament of West Germany) this was too much for his Russian masters.

But except for its most hardened members, the bureaucracy saw Nagy as a last chance to save themselves, a 'liberal' figurehead who might quell the rebellion by his reputation and sweet promises.

Withdrawal

Nagy himself had a vision of Hungarian communism at bottom no different from that of the other bureaucrats. But he did want to cleanse the regime of its more obvious corruptions and injustices. Above all, he wanted the regime to take on a more 'Hungarian' flavour; less crude control from Moscow and more freedom for intellectuals.

On 30 October Nagy announced that the Russians had agreed to withdraw. Within two days, it was crystal clear that he had been deceived, and on 4 November the second assault on Budapest began. For a week an all-out battle raged, until in the end the insurgent workers were crushed by overwhelming military might. The Russians, who had had to withdraw the troops used in the first assault because they were 'infected' by the spirit of those they were fighting and had become 'unreliable', brought in fresh troops for the final showdown. They had been primed with the lie that those whose resistance they were to smash were fascists and counter-revolutionaries.

From the beginning he tried to serve both the Russian bureaucracy and the workers. He ended up satisfying neither. He welcomed the workers' councils, but cautiously, as healthy new groups with which to sweep out corruption, rather than as organs of working class power. At the same time he sincerely believed that he could 'win the confidence' of the Russians, and persuade them that he was capable of retaining Hungary inside the Russian bloc.

As the Russians approached, Nagy found that overnight the bulk of his 'government' (a government in name only) had reneged and capitulated. He and a handful of supporters took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy. A government entirely subservient to Moscow was installed, led by Janos Kadar — who is still there to this day. Nagy's fate was to be different. Leaving the Yugoslav Embassy with an assurance of safe conduct, he was arrested together with Pal Maleter; in 1958 he was shot.

But a situation of dual power allows for no such compromises. The situation moved too quickly for subtle and diplomatic manoeuvres. As

The fate of Imgre Nagy shows clearly that those who hope for a self-reforming bureaucracy will be disappointed. The road to socialism in Eastern Europe, as elsewhere, is the road of independent working class action. The Stalinist bureaucracy is an obstacle on that road, and the working class will have to destroy it utterly.

The Hungarian workers were defeated because they were isolated and overwhelmed by force of superior arms. But the cancer at the heart of Stalinism is still eating away — even in Russia itself. When the rumblings there explode into a mass movement for workers' power, the bureaucracy will be hard-pressed to find a means to crush it.

The heroic action of the Hungarian proletariat in 1956 lacked an organised revolutionary party which could raise the struggle to a higher level of effectiveness. That such a vacuum should have existed underlines that we should remember the Hungarian revolution not just as a historic struggle in the battle for socialism, but as a sharp injunction to our international duties and responsibilities today.

filled the streets

ism': the red star, the hammer and sickle, etc. All of these they correctly identified with their oppression of workers and as Hungarians under the domination of Russia.

But they did *not* reject the essence of the Communist programme: political and economic control by the working class democratically expressed through their own state organisation.

The programme of the workers' councils was never fully proclaimed. It was often confused or partial, and expressed undue confidence in men like Nagy. But everywhere three things came clearly through:

That the workers control economically and politically. That the corrupt Stalinist

bureaucracy be overthrown.

That small nations like Hungary have the right to self-determination.

Nowhere do we find the workers demanding that the factories and large estates be returned to their former owners. It is true that there were demands for the return of land to the small-holding tenant farmers, and for the right of the Catholic Church to freely worship. But genuine communists have never argued for the forcible collectivisation of small peasants or the forcible suppression of religious belief, however reactionary we may consider it to be.

Stalinists to this day proclaim that had the Russian tanks not intervened, the result would have been the restoration of capitalism and landlord-

dism. In reality the situation was fluid. Right wing elements may well have seized the chance for themselves. But are we really to believe that the workers having claimed their right to rule would quietly hand over control to their former oppressors of the Horthy regime?

Collapse

In any case, a struggle for socialism by a genuine mass workers' movement is preferable to any amount of bureaucratic manoeuvring. Thousands of Hungarian communists themselves chose the former, and aided the rebellion. As an organisation, the CP virtually collapsed during the revolution.

The growth of resistance

throughout the period leading to the 1956 uprising, some resistance was growing. The conditions precluded strikes or demonstrations, but slumped productivity, soaring absenteeism and sickness, and indifference to authority were all symptoms of working class opposition. When the Kremlin announced in March 1953 that Stalin had died, the East European workers began to strike blows against the regime of oppression that had been forced upon them. In Plzen, Czechoslovakia, there were mass demonstrations in June, and two weeks later the workers of East Germany rebelled.

Although the German revolt was crushed by Russian tanks, it led the Kremlin to ease up. In Hungary, there was a slight relaxation as

Rakosi was 'advised' to retire as Prime Minister, to be replaced by the more 'liberal' Imre Nagy. However, he remained in complete control of the Party, the real power centre.

From then on for two years there was to be a gut-of-war between the 'liberals' who formed the 'face' of the regime and the Rakosi-ites who had the real power, and frustrated their opponents' efforts at reform.

But whenever tyrants make concessions they must take care that they are not interpreted as weakness. The Kremlin vacillated. By mid-1955 Nagy was expelled from the Party as an 'incorrigible right deviationist'. Beneath the surface, however, a new mood was developing among both the workers and the intellectuals.

When Krushchev made his 'revelations' about Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the effect was startling. Although he only

attacked the 'excesses' of Stalin, and in fact covered up for the bureaucracy as a whole, Krushchev had in effect challenged the authority of a god; panic swept through the bureaucrat-priests of East Europe. But no amount of historical revision could wipe out the past for the workers.

Poznan

On the morning of June 28, 1956 the workers of the Zispo Locomotive Factory in Poznan, Poland, struck. A pre-elected committee presented management with demands on pay and conditions. Workers from other plants joined the strike and the demands soon became political: 'Out with the Russians', 'Freedom and Bread'!

Russian tanks surrounded the city but it was Polish troops who were used to crush the strike. The immediate

'disturbances' were suppressed, but the bureaucrats were worried. Cautiously at first, changes were made. "Disgraced" Communists like Gomulka were brought back into the leadership and in September when the trial of the Poznan workers began, defence rights were given for the first time. Sentences were relatively mild and further trials were abandoned.

When in October Krushchev himself suddenly arrived in Poland, accompanied by large-scale troop manoeuvres on the border, armed groups of workers appeared on the streets. Negotiations were carried on between the Polish party leaders and Krushchev for a tense 24 hours. But at the end, only ritual declarations of friendship were made. It was apparent to all that for the first time a satellite state had refused to toe the Moscow line.



Hungary '56: workers against Stalinism

WORKERS' POWER AND THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

John O'Mahony reviews 'Hungary 1956' by Bill Lomax

The defeated Hungarian Revolution of 1956 is to the struggle for direct workers' power in the states where Stalinist parties rule, what the Paris Commune of 1871 was to the anti-capitalist revolution.

Of the Commune Engels said: "That was the dictatorship of the proletariat" — and Marx and he set about analysing and learning from it. Hungary in 1956 was what Trotskyists had been calling the anti-bureaucratic 'political' revolution for two decades.

It vindicated what Trotsky had outlined as the necessary programme for communist revolutionaries in the USSR, from 1935, and what some of the post-war Trotskyists had adapted and applied to the new Stalinist states: the programme for an anti-bureaucratic revolution to overthrow the mis-rule and the privileges of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and to dismantle and destroy the totalitarian state machine which serves it.

There had been many revolts against bureaucratic rule in the USSR itself. In 1953 there were the strikes and uprisings in East Germany. In 1956 in Poland there was the Posnan uprising.

None of these, however, had reached the stage of creating an alternative power structure. In Hungary, the combination of internal CP

leadership struggles around destalinisation, an intense Hungarian national sense of grievance against Russian overlordship, and direct action by the working class, led to a movement which did create the outline of an alternative political system of working class self-rule.

In fact the Hungarian workers created a specifically working class system of workers' councils, and counterposed it to both capitalism and the Stalinist bureaucratic system. They were defeated and crushed by the Stalinist Russian army, as had been the Paris workers by the army of Versailles. But in the Central Workers' Council of Budapest they recreated the classic form of working class democracy, the lineal continuation of the Commune, of the Russian Soviets in the pre-Stalinist era, and to an extent of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919.

Before Hungary a writer like Isaac Deutscher could base himself on the social analysis which Trotsky made in the late 1930s of bureaucratized Russia, and counterpose that analysis to Trotsky's political conclusions after 1935. He argued that a political revolution was not necessary, and moreover that there was no rooted antagonism within Russian society, or within the other Stalinist states, that would produce a decisive confrontation between the bureaucratic caste and the working class.

There was no equivalent to the worker-bourgeois antagonism, and consequently there would be social progress, an easing of tensions and conflicts, and, ultimately, a reflect adjustment of the level of political democracy to the advancing level of technology. The bureaucracy did not come into fundamental conflict with the potential for growth of the economy, but could adjust — consequently there would be no political revolution.

Stalinist

Others, regarding the Stalinist system as an utterly reactionary system in which the workers were little different from slaves, had also dismissed the working class under Stalinism as a potentially revolutionary class.

The Hungarian Revolution refuted all of them. It raised up in real life and, in defiance of Stalinist might, fought for an alternative working class political system to bureaucratic rule. Replicating the Russian Soviets of 1917, it showed they had been no accident or aberration.

It demonstrated that the unevenness of developments in different Stalinist states made impossible any overall bureaucratic control except by military force, and created the possibility of explosive interactions.



National oppression made Hungary exceptionally explosive

It demonstrated that the bureaucracy could not tolerate independent initiatives; simultaneously it showed that the distance between the first criticism of the Stalinist bureaucratic system and demands for its end is extremely short, precisely because of the arbitrary and unnecessary 'function' of the bureaucracy.

Even within a phase of destalinisation, which many then took to be an evolutionary 'thawing' of the bureaucracy, it resorted to ruthless force, and felt obliged to smash and destroy every vestige of the independent working class organisations that had begun to grow in 1956.

National

No doubt the national oppression made Hungary exceptionally explosive — but when the explosion came, it resulted in specific working class types of organisation and weapons of struggle, such as the general strike. Conditions specific to Hungary and Poland created the conditions where the workers were no longer prepared to be ruled, and the local bureaucrats were no longer able to rule (though the Russian bureaucrats were able and willing to rule); but the classic working class character of the Hungarian Revolution is proof that its essence is not limited to states where national oppression is adjoined to bureaucratic rule.

Bill Lomax's chronicle of the activity of the Hungarian working class in 1956 establishes beyond serious argument the revolutionary working class nature and significance of the Hungarian Revolution. He is especially clear in bringing out just what the counter-revolution carried out by the Russians and their local allies and stooges meant in real terms to the workers. He describes how the means of production were literally seized from the control of the working class. Also valuable is his description of the Communist Party opposition groupings, crippled by party 'legalism'.

His conclusions (chapter 7) however, are weak. He defines the sum of the activity of the post-1956 Kadar CP as 'substituting' its own 'power-political interests' for 'the direct class interests of the Hungarian workers'. The main fault of the oppositional 'Communists' was that they were a half-way house between these two. Rakosi before 1956 and Kadar after it were 'substitutionist'.

This in turned flowed from 'loyalty to Leninist conceptions of the revolutionary party and its relationship with the masses', in which 'can be seen the continuity between the orthodox Marxist-Leninist idea of the Stalinist party leadership and the revisionist beliefs of Imre Nagy and the reformist opposition, a continuity which was only challenged and eventually

broken by the Revolution itself' (p.197). These ideas originated in Lenin's 'What is to be Done?' and 'the development of the totalitarian party-state was carried even further by Lenin's successor, Stalin, under whose rule the party was turned into a mere instrument of the Stalinist state power.'

But Lomax himself brings out clearly the fatal role of the vacillating and unsure policy of those who found themselves reluctant leaders of a revolution. It surely follows that a different type of leadership might have made the difference between the defeat which occurred and the victory which was possible. Certainly the revolt could have been spread to Poland and perhaps beyond.

A revolutionary organisation which had a clear programme and trained cadres involved with the masses might very well have changed the course of events. Such a conclusion flows logically and inescapably from the picture Lomax himself paints of what was wrong, what was missing.

But Lomax believes that any such party would necessarily be 'substitutionist'. Indeed he says that the mode of operation and the goal of all political parties are necessarily in conflict with the self-liberation of the working class, which exercises its self-rule directly through its control of the factories. It has as little need to 'take power' once it has control of the factories as it had need in Russia in October 1917 to appoint a 'People's Tsar'.

Conceptions like 'taking power' relate to an entirely different system. Control is power; power other than self-control develops towards self-substitution for the working class's direct control.

It is not at all clear how the different factories which are controlled by the workers would interact. Through a form of market? Or if there is to be planning, how is it to be organised?

This reaction against the Stalinist experience leads to a denial of any positive role to any revolutionary party.

Lomax seems to believe that the Hungarian councils system is historically unique. He does not refer to the Russian or other experiences. He substitutes fairy tales about Bolshevik substitutionism for any implicit or explicit reference to the experience of how the Bolshevik Party interacted with the spontaneous activity of the Russian working class in 1917. And the identification of the Stalinist state machine and its purged, broken and careerist-ridden 'party' with Lenin's ideas in 'What is to be Done?' is simply nonsense on the factual level.

The Stalinist state grew out of the isolation of the Russian Revolution

and backward material conditions in Russia. If the highly centralised party became a factor in the growth of totalitarianism, it was only after it was swamped by careerists (1924) and then purged until there was little left even of the original membership.

In 1905-7 and 1917 Lenin's ideas led the Bolsheviks, not to substitute themselves for the working class, but to be the most clear-headed elements within the organs of self-control and action which the working class set up. Had they not existed, and had they not led in stabilising the gains of the working class by setting up a workers' state, then a counter-revolutionary state would have been set up.

The experience of Spain, where in the Republican areas, from July 1936 to mid-1937, the workers had real control, even though workers' councils did not emerge, proves this. The political vacuum was filled by elements hostile to workers' control. The anarchists who did not believe any state power was compatible with liberation wound up accepting the need for some state, of the impossibility of a vacuum if fascism was not to be allowed to create its own state — and opted for the counter-revolutionary Popular Front. The gains of the working class in the Republican areas were liquidated.

Things can only be otherwise if there are no enemies of working class revolution, internal or external, and if conditions in society are such that no state power is necessary. Lomax ends with a quotation from Saint-Simon: "The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things". But this relates necessarily to the fully communist society — more advanced materially than even the most advanced societies today. Between capitalism and communism there is transition, which Marxists understand as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

'Semi-state'

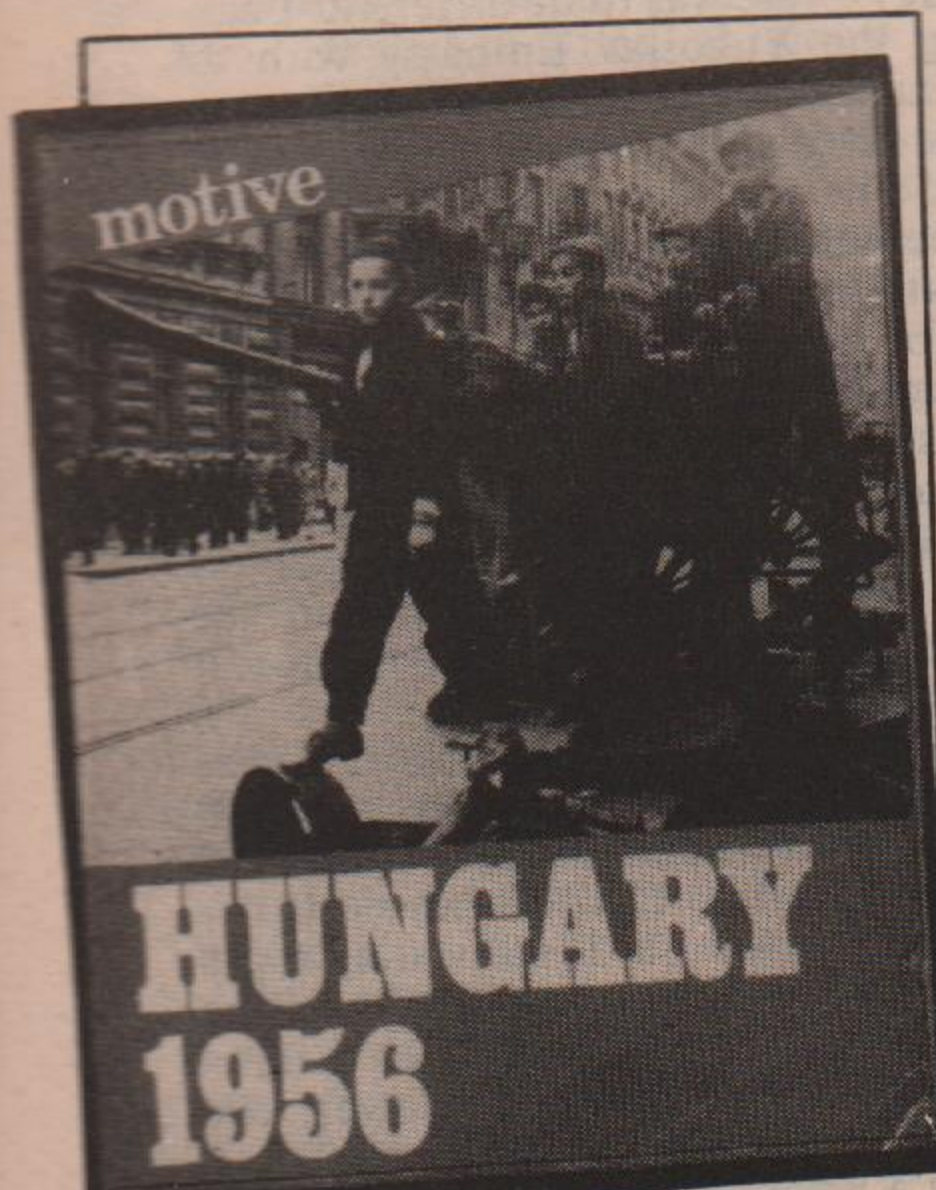
Certainly this is a 'semi-state', differing centrally from all other states in being rule of the majority over the minority, and therefore direct rule, needing no bureaucracy. But equally certainly such a transitional stage is essential and unavoidable. It is rooted in the material conditions of capitalist society — conditions that can only be changed after the revolution.

The attempt by revolutionaries to avoid it will produce conditions where the 'state' vacuum is filled by anti-working class forces. Either that or revolutionaries will never dare act until all conditions are propitious and until an immediate transition to a situation where only things are administered is possible. With this paralysing purism, only simultaneous revolution, in at least the most advanced countries would allow what Lomax envisages to be the first step.

Indeed, sadly lacking this very important book is any sense of internationalism, either in terms of international perspectives for the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, or even in the account of the October Revolution and its degeneration. Everything is simply read off from the organisational conception which Lomax attributes to Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and he ignores the international revolutionary perspectives of the Bolsheviks, the failure of which was the precondition of the Stalinist degeneration.

The conclusions of anarcho-syndicalism are as futile for revolutionary politics now (even when presented as 'conclusions' from the experience of Stalinism — as they were in the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War. But at least they allow Lomax to depict vividly the tremendous revolutionary capacity developed by the Hungarian commune of 1956. And that is an important achievement. Read Lomax's book.

Next week's SO will include 'The Lessons of Hungary' and a review of Peter Fryer's 'Hungarian Tragedy'.



Well worth reading

'Hungary 1956', by Bill Lomax. Published by Motive. £2.95 from all good bookshops.

Lessons from Paxmans

By Paul Suff

The dispute at Paxman Diesels in Colchester is over. A mass meeting of the locked-out workers voted — by a majority of 24 — to accept the management's pay offer.

The previous weekend we had all received a letter from the company demanding that we accept the pay offer and threatening that otherwise we would all be sacked. These letters have now been ceremoniously burnt.

For those of us who were active in the dispute, to say that we are 'pissed off' would be putting it mildly. But the closeness of the vote shows we have a solid body of people on which to build a fightback.

When, after 17 weeks with little or no money — but with tremendous hardship — almost half the workforce wanted to carry on the fight, then there's tremendous potential. Certainly something we never had or dreamed of, 18 weeks ago.

So what happens now? We all return to work on Monday with a 5% pay increase and wide ranging

changes in our conditions and working practices.

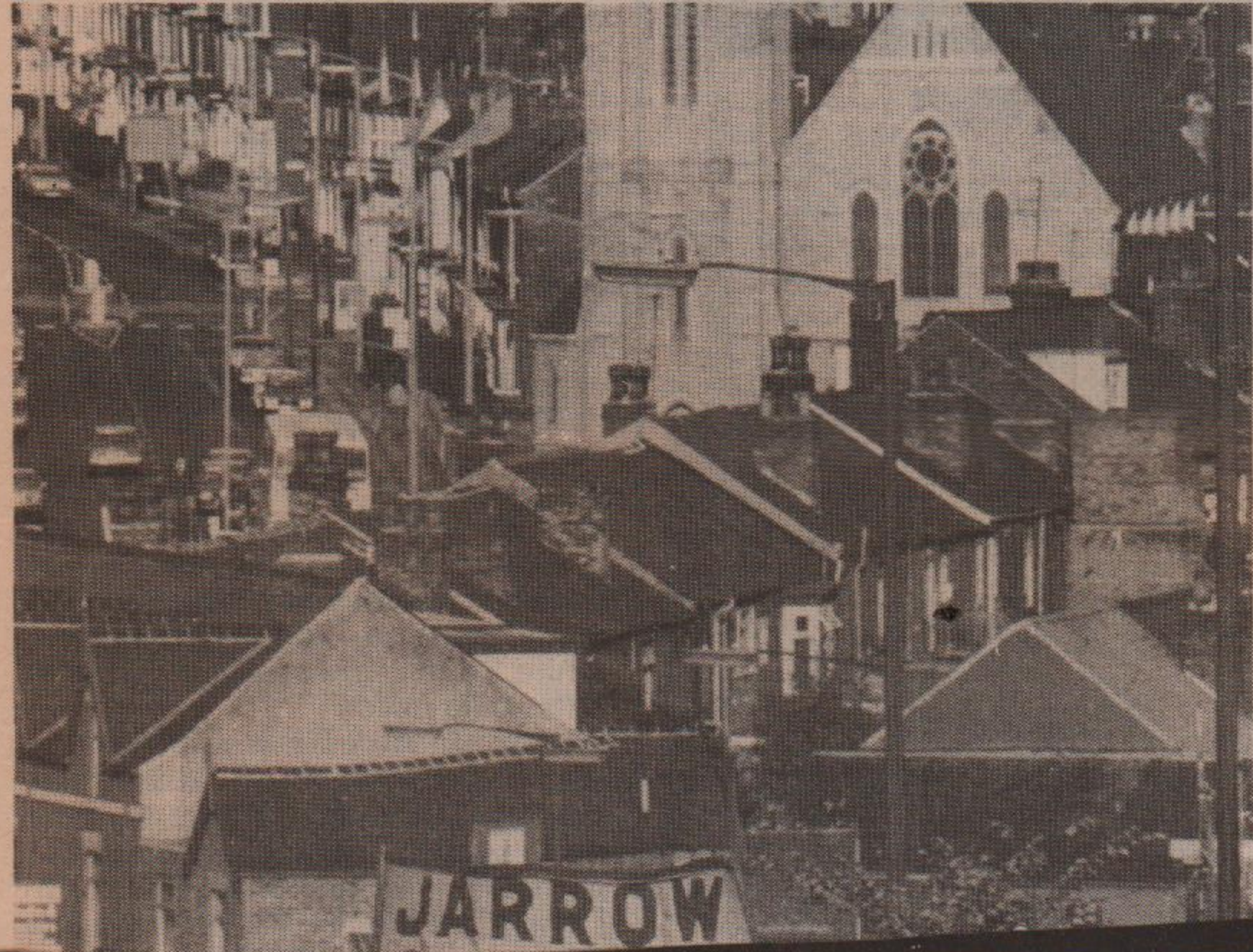
We know management have made a 'hit list' of people active in the dispute. Now with the bosses in such a confident mood we have got to be ready to fight attempts at victimisation.

As I am sure you can understand, there are many things I could say about this dispute — about the lessons we have learnt (some of them the hard way) and other things that maybe should and could have been done which might have brought a different result. But at the moment I'm not feeling in the best of spirits.

I would just like to send a message to other engineering workers out there: beware! Paxmans and GEC have set a trend. Other companies have been watching this dispute carefully and you could be next.

Finally we have had tremendous support from people up and down the country. It brings a lump to my throat just to think about it. From the North Sea oil rig where a worker had a sponsored hair cut for us, to the old age pensioner who put a pound in our tin every week we have had great support.

We thank you, every one of you.



Crews aboard the Earl Godwin who on Monday 20 October voted to continue their strike and occupation of their ship against union instructions

ENGINEER ORGANISE PA

By Jim Denha

THE LEADERS of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) are preparing to surrender long-established shopfloor rights in exchange for a vague commitment

has circulated them to the ship. From these minutes certain that Jordan and the of the CSEU have already a principle to:

The making of the Jewish state

By Mick Ackersley

'Pillar of Fire' was made, as the credits say, for Channel Four the Israeli Broadcasting Authority. It is therefore likely to be dismissed by the left as 'Zionist propaganda'. It couldn't be.

Zionism is a term that has now ceased to have any very clear meaning. It originally meant a Jewish political movement aiming to set up a Jewish state in Palestine. The Zionists were a minority of Jews until after Hitler took power in Germany.

With the founding and consolidation of the state of Israel in 1948 and after, the original 'Zionism' was consigned to history.

What does 'Zionism' mean today? The right of the Jewish state of Israel to exist, even if you would like to see it radically changed? In that sense probably a majority of politically aware people in the world, vastly though their outlooks differ, are 'Zionist'. In that sense, too, Socialist organiser is 'Zionist'.

But the 'Zionism' that is denounced on the left is not some vast amorphous body. It is far narrower than that. In practice it means the 'Zionist' hard core of activists and enthusiasts, that is the Jews.

The commitment of large chunks of the left to the destruction of the state of Israel inevitably leads it to adopt attitudes of deep hostility to Jews — not racist hostility, for the left is not racist, but political hostility — except that it is political hostility to almost an entire people, and on a matter of life and death.

'Pillar of Fire' tells a story which should make every 'anti-Zionist' socialist who sees it examine his or her conscience. For the facts do not lie. And though inevitably the story told by 'Pillar of Fire' is the story as seen by the Jews, and the series is thus 'biased', beyond that the facts are straightforward.

The late Isaac Deutscher compared Israel to a 'liferaft state' — the Jews who have survived the Holocaust fled there. The tragedy was and is that there were people there already.

Hitler — the most terrible enemy in the history of the Jews — made the state of Israel. In the '30s hundreds of thousands of Jews went to Palestine — because no other country would have them.

The great American democracy, whose Statue of Liberty invites the world to 'give me your poor, your huddled masses', could not find room for Jewish refugees even to save their lives. A shipload of Jewish refugees crossed the Atlantic but the few hundred passengers could not get permission to land in the USA — or

ON THE BOX

anywhere else on the two American continents.

They returned to Europe on the eve of World War 2. Most of them perished.

There are many pictures of the millions of Jews of Eastern Europe going about their daily lives — traders, peddlers, scholars, children playing in the street — almost all of them destined to die soon at the hands of Hitler's racist maniacs.

In 1937 a Commission of Enquiry was set up by the British government which then ruled Palestine, and it recommended that Palestine be partitioned, giving the Jews their own state. It was shelved because of Arab opposition.

The Arab opposition was understandable enough: but maybe if the Jewish state had been set up, the Jews of Europe would have had a refuge, and millions might have survived. Instead the Jews of Europe were trapped on a continent which soon offered them nothing but death.

Palestine itself came close to being a death-trap for the Jews there. If the Germans and Italians had won the battle in the Western Desert in 1942,

then Palestine would have been theirs. In fact the British had plans for evacuating Palestine.

Last week's episode told of the Holocaust — the systematic extermination of Jews which began with the Nazi invasion of the USSR in mid-'41. In Poland, the Jews had been treated with great brutality and herded into a ghetto in Warsaw: the Jews the Nazis encountered in the USSR were slaughtered immediately.

Then came the extermination camps. All in all, nearly six million Jews died.

Presumably the next episode will show what happened when the few survivors of the death camps tried to pick up their lives again. In Poland, many were attacked and driven out: they fled, mostly to Palestine.

The terrible truth is that 'Zionist propaganda' had all its work — and much more — done for it by the virulent anti-semites and those who either connived with them or looked away.

'Pillar of Fire' made the telling point that though the Allied airforces had control of the air over Europe from mid 1944 and hit innumerable airports, depots, munitions factories, etc. (not to speak of cities), and though what was happening in the death camps was known to the Allied governments, no attempt was made to destroy the death factories or the railway lines leading to them.

Watch what's left of the series.



By Les Hearn

SCIENCE

Radiation causes cancer

The latest embarrassment to Britain's nuclear industry comes from the public inquiry into the expansion of Dounreay. Evidence last week showed that rates of leukaemia within 25 km of the plant were nearly ten times the expected level.

Now, leukaemia is such a rare disease that the "expected" number of cases in the area was less than one, on average. Therefore, even one case would have been more than "expected". According to the laws of probability, there is a small chance that the six cases observed would have happened anyway and are nothing to do with the Dounreay Prototype Fast Reactor. After all, similar excesses have been found in a few areas without nuclear installations, such as west-central Edinburgh and south-west Perth.

However, five of the Dounreay cases were in children under 15 and five were within 12½ kms of the plant. The chances of these occurrences are very slight indeed.

Witnesses for the UK Atomic Energy Authority denied the relevance of the leukaemia evidence. One, David Wilkie of the Royal Statistical Society, used a footballing analogy:

"The frequency of goals scoring three or more goals on a Saturday is low. However, it is rare for any footballing Saturday to occur without three or more goals being scored by one or more teams."

The lie is given to this reassurance by the list of leukaemia black spots:

Leiston, near Sizewell, Lydney, near Berkeley and Oldbury; Wook, near Winfrith; at Springfields uranium plant; at Aldermaston and Burghfield nuclear weapons factories; at Hunterston and Chapelcross nuclear power stations; at Hinkley Point nuclear power station; near Amersham, where radioactive isotopes are made; at Rosyth and Holy Loch nuclear submarine bases; and, with 24 times the regional average of leukaemia, Seascale, near Sellafield.

Leukaemia is not the only cancer caused by radiation. Two massive surveys of nuclear industry workers have shown excesses of bone marrow, bladder and prostate gland cancers, excesses linked to the amount of radiation exposure.

The Chapelcross reactor, which together with Calder Hall, produces plutonium for Britain's nuclear weapons programme, suffered a partial meltdown accident 19 years before Chernobyl. Details were buried in obscure technical literature to be rediscovered recently by Liberal MP Paddy Ashdown. He is asking for full details of the accident which resulted in the contamination of two workers "harmlessly", according to BNFL, and in the release of radioactivity, which may have some bearing on the present excess in leukaemias. It would be interesting to be told by the then Minister of Technology, Tony Benn, how much he was informed by his advisers.

Information from New Scientist and from SCRAM Journal.

SCRAM Journal is published by the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace, 11 Forth St., Edinburgh, EH1 3LE. £7 sub for one year. It is a most informative and interesting magazine.

The ABC OF MARXISM

Marxist method

By Martin Thomas

In this column so far I've dealt, really, with just two basic issues. I looked at human nature, and argued that it was not fixed but changeable. In class struggle people change both society and themselves.

Then I looked at 'free enterprise' and 'equal exchange'. These sorts of freedom and equality belong to capitalism. They are not eternal or god-given. Other societies have different sorts of freedom and equality. And from the point of view of the working class, free enterprise and equal exchange generate unfreedom and inequality, wage-slavery and exploitation.

These two issues, I think, illustrate the Marxist method of looking at things. And Marxism is mainly that — a method. It is not a dogma or a set of articles of faith.

What can we say about the Marxist way of approaching these issues?

It is historical. It takes no values or concepts for granted, but looks at where they come from, and what circumstances generated them.

Liberal

A classical liberal thinker would say that 'freedom' is a good thing — the same eternal concept of freedom is a good thing in the same way, for the same reason, in all times and places. The liberal would gauge the progress of society by the measuring-rod of that concept of freedom in his or her head.

Marx would reply that this just comes down to measuring all human history by the standards of an idealised capitalist society. Capitalist freedom — free enterprise — was progressive against feudal restrictions. But it is also unfreedom for the working class and in the course of class struggle it will be replaced by a new sort of freedom — by workers' liberty.

So Marxists do not look at society statically, as a snapshot without any past or future. They try to study things in their development, to understand them as part of a historical 'moving picture'.

In other ways, too, Marxists try to understand society as a whole, not just piecemeal.

Split up

Orthodox social science splits itself up into many specialisations. Economists study laws of supply and demand, but say that questions of fundamental economic institutions are outside their scope. Political theorists talk about this or that modification, but explain that the basic economic underpinning are beyond their remit. And so on. Somehow the basic issues of changing society turn out to be outside everyone's specialist area!

While the orthodox economist is off calculating how much increase in the supply of potatoes will reduce the price by 1p, the Marxist economist is probing the concept of 'price', reducing it to more basic concepts like value, labour, labour-power, exchange, and setting them in their historical context.

Orthodox social science and Marxism share a commitment to checking their theories against the facts. But they go about it in different ways. I'll discuss that next week.

Hungary '56: workers against Stalinism

S'

AND

IAN

ION

'Hungary 1956'

Leadership struggles around Stalinisation, an intense Hungarian national sense of grievance against Russian overlordship, and direct action by the working class, led to a movement which did create the line of an alternative political form of working class self-rule.

In fact the Hungarian workers created a specifically *working class* system of workers' councils, and interposed it to both capitalism and the Stalinist bureaucratic system. They were defeated and crushed by the Stalinist Russian army, as had the Paris workers by the army at Versailles. But in the Central Workers' Council of Budapest they created the classic form of working class democracy, the lineal continuation of the Commune, of the Russian Soviets in the pre-Stalinist era, and to the extent of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919.

Two factors have dominated the view of Peru from abroad. One is President Garcia's unilateral decision to limit Peru's debt repayments to 10% of its export earnings. And the other is the ongoing war with the guerrillas of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path — a name taken from Jose Carlos Mariategui, a Peruvian Marxist prominent in the 1920s, and probably Latin America's most distinguished Marxist theoretician).

Peru, the third largest country in Latin America but with only 15% of its land area usable for agriculture, is divided into three main areas: the narrow coastal plain where over 50% of the population live; the massive highland region, and the sparsely populated, huge jungle, Amazon area.

The immense diversity and spread of Peru has made both national integration and national politics problematic. Equally problematic has been the ethnic divisions. Although Amerindians are 50% of the population, and mixed 39%, the white 12% of the population have always dominated politics and the economy.

The great rebellion of Tupac Amaru in 1780 had as its aim the establishment of an Indian and mestizo republic, and an attempt to revive the Inca resistance to the Spaniards. It was brutally repressed, and in its aftermath, the Quechua language and traditions were banned.

When mass politics emerged in Peru in the twentieth century, it had to come to grips with the problems of the Indian population. To ignore the



National oppression made Hungary exceptionally explosive

It demonstrated that the bureaucracy could not tolerate independent initiatives; simultaneously it showed that the distance between the first criticism of the Stalinist bureaucratic system and demands for its end is extremely short, precisely because of the arbitrary and unnecessary 'function' of the bureaucracy.

Even within a phase of destalinisation, which many then took to be an evolutionary 'thawing' of the bureaucracy, it resorted to ruthless force, and felt obliged to smash and destroy every vestige of the independent working class organisations that had begun to grow in 1956.

National

No doubt the national oppression made Hungary exceptionally explosive — but when the explosion came, it resulted in specific *working class* types of organisation and ethnic problem, as the new Communist Party did to its cost, was to court political failure as a mass political movement. Mariategui clearly saw this, and advocated a worker-peasant alliance which recognised the specific problems and concerns of the Indian population.

He argued strongly that neither the middle classes with their racist disdain for the mass of the population nor a national bourgeoisie were capable of carrying out the tasks of national economic liberation. It was, he argued, "not possible to be effectively nationalist and revolutionary without being socialist." However Mariategui's theories within the Peruvian Communist Party were defeated, and instead the CP adopted the then Comintern position and formed a small purely proletarian party which lapsed into sectarian isolation. Fifty years later many on the left were to officially call themselves Mariateguists, but in some cases, as with Sendero, perverting his analysis.

The mass popular party which did emerge from the 1930s was APRA, founded in 1930 by Victor Raul Haya de la Torre. APRA (the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) finally came to power on its own in 1985 when its candidate, Alan Garcia, took 46% of the vote in the Presidential election. Haya de la Torre founded the party, as its name suggests, as a continent wide movement, but the movement never really spread beyond Peru.

Haya argued for a national anti-imperialist revolution which would implement a programme for national capitalist development. The key group to bring about such a revolution was the middle classes. Inspired more by the Mexican Revolution

broken by the Revolution itself" (p.197). These ideas originated in Lenin's 'What is to be Done?' and 'the development of the totalitarian party-state was carried even further by Lenin's successor, Stalin, under whose rule the party was turned into a mere instrument of the Stalinist state power.'

But Lomax himself brings out clearly the fatal role of the vacillating and unsure policy of those who found themselves reluctant leaders of a revolution. It surely follows that a different type of leadership might have made the difference between the defeat which occurred and the victory which was possible. Certainly the revolt could have been spread to Poland and perhaps beyond.

A revolutionary organisation which had a clear programme and trained cadres involved with the masses might very well have changed the course of events. Such a conclusion is "Americanism without empires". But the tradition of an anti-imperialist rhetoric remained strong within APRA as can be seen from President Garcia's speeches.

Disastrous

The 1945-8 government was a disastrous period for APRA as their populist, but incoherent economic policies led to rising inflation and economic chaos. The military easily overthrew them in the coup of 1948. Thereafter APRA tended to degenerate into a purely opportunistic party, even supporting for periods the oligarchy.

In the 1950s and 1960s the rural poor slowly began to organise. Militant strikes, rent strikes, and land invasions swept across the highlands of Peru. In one strike and land invasion in La Convencion, a Quechua speaking Trotskyist, Hugo Blanco, led a year long struggle that also became an armed rebellion. After the Cuban revolution there was an attempt to establish focus in the sierra.

As was in keeping with the voluntaristic enthusiasm of the times, young students took to the hills, not speaking Quechua or understanding the Indian communities, believing there would be spontaneous support from the campesinos. When this failed to materialise the army had little problem in brutally wiping out the focus. When Sendero emerged in the 1980s, it was to be solidly rooted in the local communities.

Growing social unrest, economic difficulties, and the failure to take a sufficiently nationalistic line against the American oil company, IPC, led to a bloodless military coup against the government of Belaunde in 1968.

and backward material conditions in Russia. If the highly centralised party became a factor in the growth of totalitarianism, it was only after it was swamped by careerists (1924) and then purged until there was little left even of the original membership.

In 1905-7 and 1917 Lenin's ideas led the Bolsheviks, not to substitute themselves for the working class, but to be the most clear-headed elements *within* the organs of self-control and action which the working class set up. Had they not existed, and had they not led in stabilising the gains of the working class by setting up a workers' state, then a counter-revolutionary state would have been set up.

The experience of Spain, where in the Republican areas, from July 1936 to mid-1937, the workers had real control, even though workers' councils did not emerge, proves that. The political vacuum was filled by elements hostile to workers' control. The anarchists who did not believe any state power was compatible with liberation wound up accepting the need for some state, of the impossibility of a vacuum if fascism was not to be allowed to create *its* own state — and opted for the counter-revolutionary Popular Front. The gains of the working class in the Republican areas were liquidated.

Things can only be otherwise *if* there are no enemies of working class revolution, internal or external, and *if* conditions in society are such that no state power is necessary. Lomax ends with a quotation from Saint-Simon: "The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things". But this relates necessarily to the fully communist society — more advanced materially than even the most advanced societies today. Between capitalism and communism there is transition, which Marxists understand as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

'Semi-state'

Certainly this is a 'semi-state', differing centrally from all other states in being rule of the majority over the minority, and therefore directly of "labour communities" in the private sector whereby workers were to participate in management and profits, the creation of state enterprises and state investments in industry, education reform which increased literacy and made Quechua a second official language, and introduced a nationalist Third World relevant curriculum, an extension of social security, and an attempt at mass mobilisation through the government agency, Sinamos, the National System for the Support of Social Mobilisation.

Split

Not surprisingly when faced with these top down, but crucial reforms, the left split on how to respond to military reformism. For the Maoists the Velasco government was fascist or semi-fascist, and after a bitter strike with the Maoist dominated teachers' union, the government cut back on its educational reforms.

Some former guerrillas joined the government. The pro-Moscow Communist Party initially strongly supported the military, but began to distance itself from the regime when the government set up a trade union federation (led by gangster elements) to challenge the CP and other left influence in the unions. As in many parts of Latin America the unions were divided along different ideological lines.

The military reformers however ran into a whole series of problems, not least with their own colleagues. The USA tended to portray Velasco as a beach-head for Soviet communism in Latin America, particularly when the Soviets made large arms sales to Peru.

Lessons from Paxmans

By Paul Suff

The dispute at Paxman Diesels in Colchester is over. A mass meeting of the locked-out workers voted — by a majority of 24 — to accept the management's pay offer.

The previous weekend we had all received a letter from the company demanding that we accept the pay offer and threatening that otherwise we would all be sacked. These letters have now been ceremoniously burnt.

For those of us who were active in the dispute, to say that we are 'pissed off' would be putting it mildly. But the closeness of the vote shows we have a solid body of people on which to build a fightback.

When, after 17 weeks with little or no money — but with tremendous hardship — almost half the workforce wanted to carry on the fight, then there's tremendous potential. Certainly something we never had or dreamed of, 18 weeks ago.

So what happens now? We all return to work on Monday with a 5% pay increase and wide ranging

changes in our conditions and working practices.

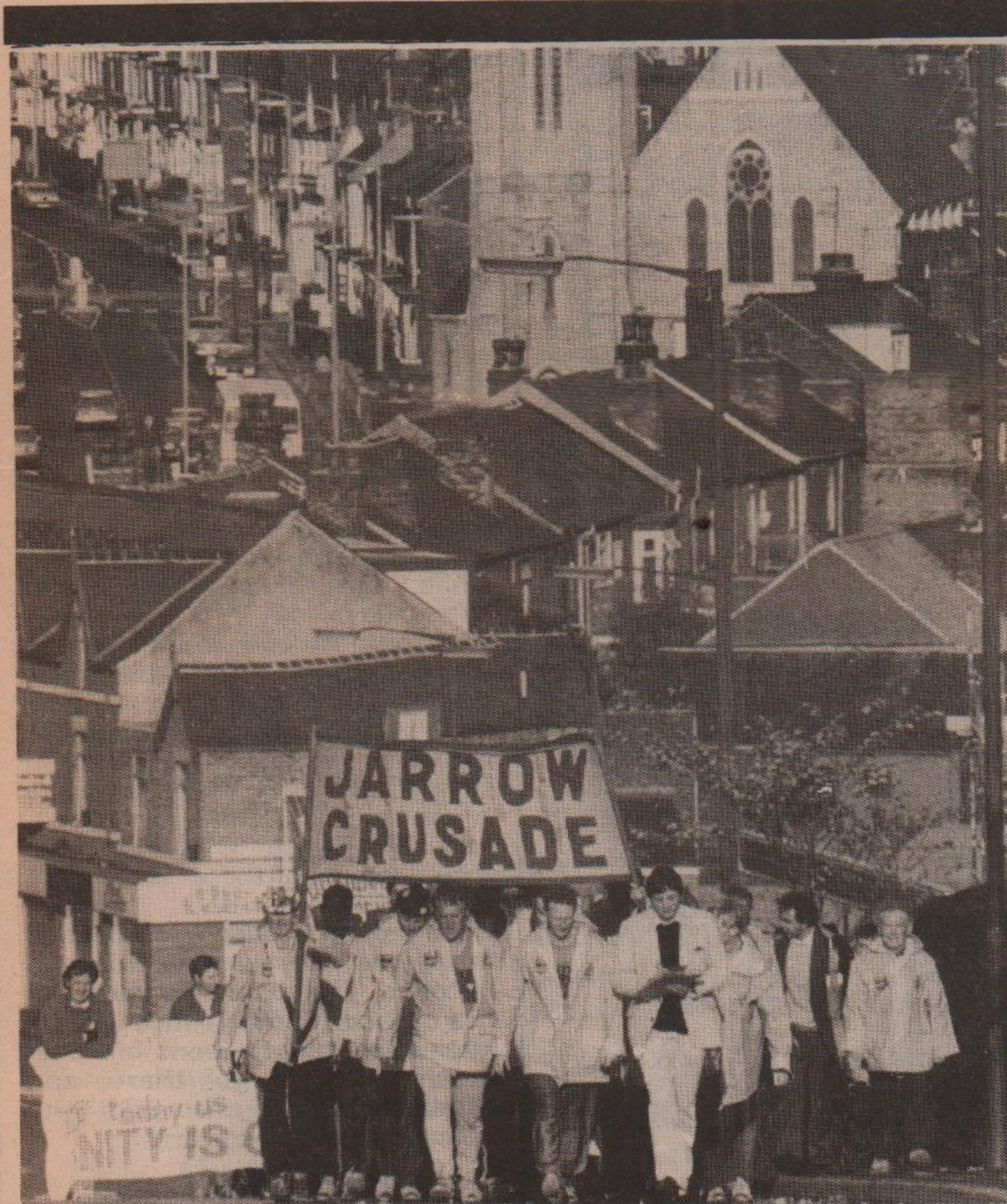
We know management have made a 'hit list' of people active in the dispute. Now with the bosses in such a confident mood we have got to be ready to fight attempts at victimisation.

As I am sure you can understand, there are many things I could say about this dispute — about the lessons we have learnt (some of them the hard way) and other things that maybe should and could have been done which might have brought a different result. But at the moment I'm not feeling in the best of spirits.

I would just like to send a message to other engineering workers out there: beware! Paxmans and GEC have set a trend. Other companies have been watching this dispute carefully and you could be next.

Finally we have had tremendous support from people up and down the country. It brings a lump to my throat just to think about it. From the North Sea oil rig where a worker had a sponsored hair cut for us, to the old age pensioner who put a pound in our tin every week we have had great support.

We thank you, every one of you.



Marchers en route from Barnsley to Sheffield in a repeat of the famous Jarrow unemployment march 50 years ago. Photo: John Harris, IFL.



Crews aboard the Earl Godwin who on Monday 20 October voted to continue their strike and occupation of their ship against union instructions

Seafarers decide to fight on

IN AN inspiring display of solidarity seafarers voted this week, 20th October, to continue their occupation of three Sealink UK ferries in support of their season crew colleagues.

The 200 or so seafarers, sitting-in on board the Earl Godwin, Earl Harold and Earl William ferries berthed at Weymouth, are dissatisfied with the agreement negotiated last week between the National Union of Seamen and the company that brought to an official end the two-week dispute that disrupted sailings to Ireland and the Continent (see last week's SO). They are concerned that it does not provide the 40 seasonal employees with redundancy pay.

Meanwhile, 2000 National Union of Railwaymen workers employed by Sealink UK voted by more than three to one to take industrial action in support of 41 of their members made redundant by the company last month at Weymouth and in the Channel Islands.

And clerical workers in the Sealink Transport Salaried Staffs Association have balloted over whether to take strike action in support of 150 of their colleagues also made redundant last month, and against the threat — faced by all the unions in Sealink — of more job losses at other Sealink operations.

Photo: Jez Coulson, IFL.

ENGINEERS

ORGANISE PAY FIGHT!

By Jim Denham

THE LEADERS of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) are preparing to surrender long-established shopfloor rights in exchange for a vague commitment from the employers to bring in shorter hours.

The CSEU leaders, supposedly 'representing' over one million engineering workers, have been holding secret talks with the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) on the subject of 'flexibility' for two years.

In recent weeks, as the national pay talks between the CSEU and the EEF have officially begun, rumour has been rife as to what the union leaders (principally Bill Jordan of the AEU) have already agreed to.

But the members of the 13 unions making up the CSEU have had to rely on the national press for their information. So far only TASS has officially informed its members of the proposals under discussion (through an article in the union's journal), and even from TASS the information was no more detailed than has appeared in the press.

However, the London North committee of the AEU has been able to obtain minutes of the meetings and

has circulated them to the membership. From these minutes it seems certain that Jordan and the majority of the CSEU have already agreed in principle to:

- total flexibility of labour, giving management the right to move workers from job to job 'according to a person's capabilities and not his/her union membership'. In other words, all demarcation to be abolished.

- flexibility of hours, giving management the right to vary the working week according to fluctuations in demand so long as the total hours worked annually are within an agreed limit. Thus, some weeks could involve very long hours indeed, others virtually no work at all. It is the end of the guaranteed week.

- 'Joint union bargaining' — putting plant-level bargaining power into the hands of works committees dominated by the largest union on site. This is the sort of deal that Rupert Murdoch and the EETPU have struck at Wapping.

Such deals would ensure the domination of the AEU, and mean the end of the road for smaller craft unions.

In exchange for all this, the CSEU

is asking for a 'substantial rise' on the national minimum pay rate, a 35 hour week, six weeks annual holiday, and the adult rate at 18. Bill Jordan is emphasising that the claim is 'not inflationary', and he is telling the truth. Any reduction in hours likely to be agreed by the bosses (probably 37 or 38 hours, not 35) would be more than offset by the savings from 'flexibility'.

The AEU leaders will try to ensure that the deal is finalised and signed before being taken to the membership at plant level. The AEU Broad Left and the Engineering Gazette have begun a campaign of opposition to the deal. But the fight needs to be stepped up.

Meetings must be organised in the major plants and rallies called in the districts to stop the sell-out. The TASS leaders, who show signs of being half-heartedly opposed to the deal, must be forced to stand openly against it and to give a lead to the rest of the CSEU membership.

Jordan and Co. can be stopped — but rank and file engineers must organise now to fight back!

Lobby of CSEU Executive called by Engineering Gazette: Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1, 6 November.

BUSES

Drivers' strike

ALL 3,600 West Midlands bus drivers struck for 24 hours on Saturday 18 October. Drivers from Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull, and the Black Country voted by two to one in favour of the strike, and garage meetings are being held this week to discuss further action.

The strike was prompted by the sacking of driver Donald Randall just four weeks before he would have retired with a £21,000 golden handshake. But underlying the drivers' anger is the prospect of deregulation from 26 October, and changed work patterns that will result in wage losses.

Unfortunately the TGWU's campaign has so far concentrated on demanding extra overtime working to keep wage levels up. Instead, the drivers should be preparing for all-out strike action against deregulation and for decent wage levels without overtime.

PICKET

Fleet Street Support Unit calls for a solidarity picket outside the TUC, Great Russell Street, on Wednesday 22nd at 8.30.

It is demanding:

- Expel the EETPU
- Release the jailed strikers (NUM and print)
- Industrial action in support of print workers.

TEACHERS

Scots teachers still under attack

By Ian McCalman

County Committee of the main Scottish teachers' union, the EIS, have condemned the report.

At a meeting of the EIS executive last Thursday, supporters of the Campaign for a Fighting Union (CAFU) and one other member moved for rejection of the Report but lost by 20 votes to 5.

Nevertheless, many of the 20 remain confused as to their next move and we must step up the campaign at all levels to secure rejection at the Special General Meeting on November 8 and in the subsequent ballot.

THE review of teachers' pay long campaigned for by Scottish teachers' unions has now emerged in the form of the Main report.

It is a thoroughly reactionary, elitist document which recommends substantial worsening of teaching conditions. The working week is to be made two hours longer, and the SJNC, the forum in which pay and conditions are negotiated, is to be abolished.

Already the Grampian Regional Executive, the Glasgow Committee of Management, and the Lanarkshire

That will not be an easy task. If the union rejects the report, the government will withdraw the 16.4% pay offer attached to it. To convince members to refuse that 16.4% and press on with a pay claim will require hard campaigning and careful planning.

Supporters of CAFU at leadership levels in the union have fought over the past two years to change the direction of the campaign to a straight pay claim. At the February Council of the union we secured 40% of the vote to go for a 30% rise over two years. But we failed to convince the majority.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

SOUTH AFRICA

BEHIND THE BOYCOTT

Conor Cruise O'Brien's recent visit to South Africa provoked outraged opposition from anti-apartheid activists in the country. O'Brien is an

By Bob Fine

outspoken opponent of apartheid, but an equally outspoken opponent

of the policy of an 'academic boycott' of apartheid. Police had to defend his lectures from angry protesters.

But recent events suggest that changes may be introduced into the African National Congress policy of a blanket boycott. The old policy — that no South African academics should be met by foreign counterparts — has been abandoned for a number of different conferences.

In York, a lot of South African academics attended having been previously ratified by the ANC, who themselves sent representatives. A number of South African academics attended one recent conference of the Review of African Political Economy.

At a Critical Legal Studies conference there was some confusion over the barring of a South African Marxist lawyer, who was eventually accepted. The attendant lawyers and others concluded that no one should be barred on grounds of nationality or country of origin.

SOUTH AFRICA/MOZAMBIQUE

WHO KILLED MACHEL?

Speculation is widespread that the South African government or security forces are responsible for the plane crash that killed Mozambique's President Samora Machel and 28 others.

South Africa cannot deny that its sabre-rattling against the black African state to its north has reached fever pitch in recent weeks. The South African-backed Mozambique

Resistance Movement has carried out actions against the regime of Machel's FRELIMO that came to power a decade ago. Parts of the country have degenerated to a state of civil war.

Economic sanctions by South Africa against Mozambique, coupled with military action against African National Congress bases alleged to be sited in the country have caused chaos for FRELIMO. The threat of invasion has been looming over their

heads, and now, coincidentally, Samora Machel — who Pretoria has promised to overthrow — is dead.

Whether or not Pretoria sabotaged the plane, the honeyed words of sympathy from apartheid spokespeople are nauseating hypocrisy. In the short term at least, South Africa's rulers will benefit from the greatest crisis Mozambique has experienced since it won independence from Portugal in 1975.

There is a real danger that the deteriorating economic situation will provide fertile soil for the right wing guerillas to take power. If that happens, South Africa will benefit in the long term, too.

Apartheid's imperialistic actions towards its neighbours must be condemned as much as its repression of the people of South Africa itself. Mozambique — and Angola, and Botswana — must be defended against apartheid's attacks.

STRIKE AGAINST VICTIMISATION

FOLLOWING his dismissal, Mick McGinty immediately went for an industrial tribunal — asking for reinstatement pending a full hearing. That hearing comes up at the end of this week.

I'm quite confident that the injustice to Mick will be quite evident when it's argued in court. Having said that, it remains to be seen with the latest round of tribunals if there is any softening of attitudes.

There was a magnificent response — UDM as well as NUM.

The UDM leadership tried to get men to go to work as normal. There was the disgraceful sight of UDM branch officials on the picket line urging men to cross it, to go to work, and to sell Mick McGinty's job down the river. Even some UDM members couldn't stomach that.

Every time they do something the UDM put their foot in it.

The tactic now is to wait to see the outcome of the tribunals — in the Welbeck case, Mick's case, and my case. We've got to take some positive steps to safeguard future jobs, even if we don't get our own jobs back. We won't stand by and see other branch officials and union activists picked off.

The Coal Board has said it's prepared to backdate its pay deal, but in return it wants an agreement to take the pensions out in all future strike action. I think that is a non-runner.

I'm sure that most of the rank and file lads who want their backdated pay rise are not prepared to sell out on that basis. I hope the National Executive will stand firm and say: pension rights are not up for negotiation on pay issues.

There's been talk of the Coal Board looking for a no-strike deal. But if the right to pensions is not up for negotiation, the right to withdraw labour definitely isn't either. I don't think the Executive would even discuss that issue.

Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

WHETTON'S WEEK



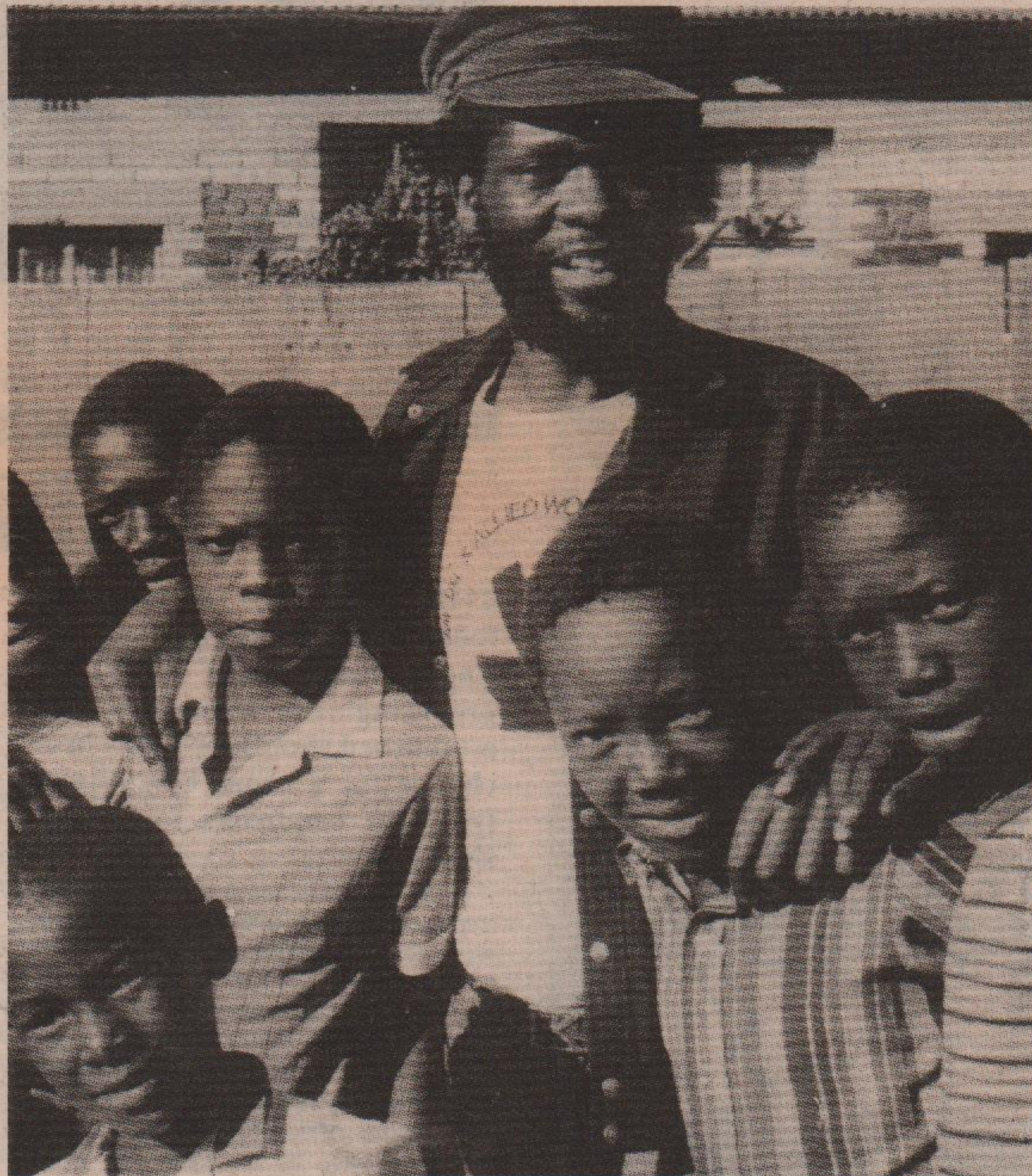
I think all sorts of excuses will be thought up, and we might have to wait for a Labour government before we can begin to hope for our jobs back.

There was a magnificent 24 hour stoppage at a pit here last Wednesday against Mick McGinty's dismissal. It was very successful, although the Coal Board played it down.

Of course, they can't hide the facts from the men. Listening to the news in the Welfare, there must have been about 300 men who fell about laughing to hear that 'only 70' were on strike.

They can put that out to the general public, but they can't hide the real facts from the men.

SOUTH AFRICA



Moses Mayekiso and children

Free Moses Mayekiso!

MOSES Mayekiso, the general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa and chair of the Alexandra Action Committee, has been detained for four months under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

Moses is being held at the infamous John Vorster Square torture centre.

According to Owen Bieber, president of the American carworkers' union UAW, Moses is "kept in a cell with lights on 24 hours a day, and TV cameras monitoring him at all times,

and has been denied basic necessities such as reading materials other than the Bible".

The International Metalworkers' Federation, of which MAWU is a part, has produced a postcard to be sent to P W Botha demanding the release of Moses and all other detainees. Trade union branches up and down the country should follow this lead and write to:

P W Botha
President
Union Buildings
Pretoria 0001
Republic of South Africa,
demanding Moses' release and the release of all detainees

Controversy

There was controversy at the World Congress of Sociology over the attendance of an academic from the University of Natal, who was known to have links with Buthelezi.

In fact the academic boycott has been broken in practice for many years: there are a lot of South African students in Britain, and British academics have been visiting South Africa. What is now being recognised more publicly, is that there has to be some discrimination on political grounds over who, and who not, to boycott. It cannot be enforced across the board, and certainly using simple racial criteria (only boycotting white South Africans) would be an untenable policy.

In South Africa the equivalent of the Association of University Teachers are trying to set up their own 'vetting' body. And the ANC, naturally, consider their own decisions to be crucial. As yet the issue is unresolved.

Conor Cruise O'Brien's visit focuses some of these issues quite sharply.

For certain O'Brien's actions and comments were extremely provocative. Moreover, the outcry it has caused in South Africa will put strains on the freedom of other academics to go there and establish or strengthen links with opponents of apartheid.

Criticism

There has been some criticism, too, of the methods employed against O'Brien. These were reminiscent of much of the 'no platform' tactic employed on campuses in Britain, and suffered from similar problems. Conor Cruise O'Brien is not a socialist, but he is a serious and obdurate liberal. Opposition to the tactic of the academic boycott should not put him outside the pale of democratic opinion. Suppression of his right to speak smacks of an anti-socialist authoritarianism that is not a force for liberation.

Socialists of course should aim to isolate supporters of the racist regime in South Africa, as part of a general campaign of solidarity.

But links between opponents of apartheid, inside and outside the country, and in particular links between socialists, help rather than hinder the struggle for liberation. The exchange of experiences and ideas; the discussion of common and divergent problems, can be of enormous value to the international labour movement as well as the South African movement. Erecting artificial national barriers between progressive individuals should not be part of the practice or the programme of socialists.

OUT NOW!

Workers' Liberty no.5: The debate on Ireland. A unique confrontation between the views on the left, including representatives of Socialist Action, People's Democracy, Labour Briefing, the RCP, and the 'two nations' theory, as well as Socialist Organiser. £1 plus 18p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

WORKERS' LIBERTY



Provos, Protestants, and working class politics

The debate on Ireland

RACISM

No room for racism!

From page 1

The central truth though is that all these people support the existing racist immigration laws in their fundamentals.

But the press's foul black-baiting

racist outcry and the prison camp for blacks they have set up at Heathrow are a product of these racist immigration laws.

The Labour Party leaders should pledge now that they will repeal those laws when they form a government.