

## Mersey pensioners rally

OVER 300 pensioners campaigning for higher pensions marched to Liverpool town centre for a rally last Wednesday as part of nationwide campaign for a better deal for pensioners.

Harry Keedan, an ex-county councillor, spoke: 'We worked and fought for this country and now Thatcher is attacking us.'

Mark Dowd of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and a Labour councillor, said, 'Peak bus fares now cost 40p. Commer-

cial fares will cost 80p in October and they will go up again in January. The services will be decimated.'

He said he would fight to keep the transport in Liverpool free for pensioners.

Jean Williams of the Merseyside Pensioners Committee, said:

'Half a million pensioners have no living relatives to visit them. One in seven lives alone.'

Frank Degan, secretary of

the Merseyside Pensioners Association, a veteran hunger marcher and an International Brigade volunteer, said:

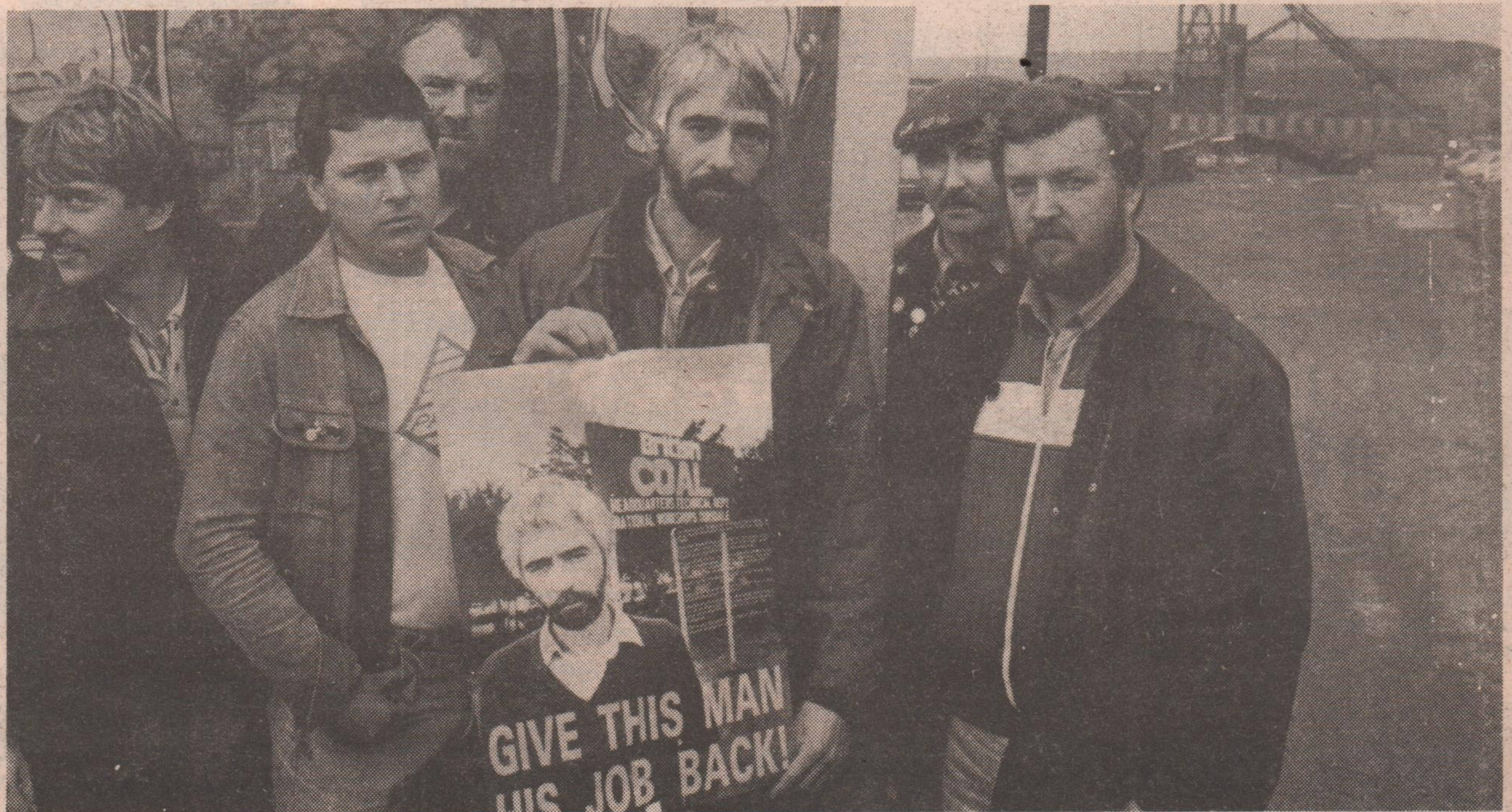
'This is one of many campaigns that the mass media won't touch. The employing class are well represented by the Tories, who are making money for their kind through privatisation.'

John Hamilton, Liverpool City Council leader, also spoke of the need to break Thatcher's laws to provide services for people.

## DURHAM MINERS STRIKE TO SAVE PIT

# HANDS OFF!

**Reinstate Geoff Hartnell!  
Keep Seaham open!  
Give back the pay you stole!  
Restore Procedures!**



Sacked miner Geoff Hartnell (with poster) on the picket line during the one-day strike.

**ON MONDAY September 22, Murton colliery mechanics scored a resounding victory over the NCB in achieving a total stoppage of the colliery for 24 hours.**

**The picket line was respected by all the trade unions working at the pit with the exception of a handful of deputies, the only ones to heed the advice of their lodge officials to go to work.**

**Of the 20 members of the UDM at the colliery, only two presented themselves for work.**

As picketing began on Sunday night, scores of miners packed between the pit gates, evoking vivid memories of 1984.

Two mini-buses loads of police were quickly rushed to the scene but, in the absence of the huge numbers they were accustomed to, they were forced to take the taunts and jibes of the pickets and could only passively appeal for 'common sense' to prevail.

The atmosphere was further electrified as wives, girlfriends and well-wishers joined the men on the gate and stayed talking till the small hours of Monday morning.

One mechanic summed up his feelings when he said: 'I am two years younger than when I turned out tonight'.

As Monday progressed, the pubs and clubs of Murton filled with high-spirited miners discussing old times and future action.

Not a defeatist soul to be seen.

This strike was the first in a series of lightning stoppages being organised by the Durham Mechanics section of the NUM after a secret ballot resulted in a two-to-one majority for this policy.

The action is to force the NCB:

1. to reinstate Geoff Hartnell and all sacked miners
2. to force the Coal Board to pay the back money stolen from them
3. to restore the conciliation

machinery in the industry 4. to stop the closure of Seaham colliery.

At Murton colliery a vote in favour of strike action on all four counts was as high as 82 per cent, a decisive indication of a new combativity developing in the coalfields.

Two days after this magnificent vote, 8,000 miners in the Durham Miners Association section of the union followed up with a 66 per cent majority in favour of banning mid-week overtime.

These results are the miners' response to the continued intransigence of the NCB.

Since the strike, the north east area NCB has been one of the most hated of all areas.

After encouraging men to break the strike at Herrington colliery with promises that the pit could be saved, they immediately axed it after the strike. Sacriston, Hordon, and Eppleton were soon to follow.

Bates was closed despite a ruling by the Independent Review Body that it should remain open.

Even the colliery review procedure, which in any case leaves the final decision on closure to the NCB, has become an embarrassment to the Board.

Frequent revelations of mismanagement, dubious accounting and the downright lies of the Coal Board published in the Durham Miner have hardened the resolve of miners to fight the closure.

The Board parries this resistance by manoeuvring to deny the unions even the dubious privilege of using the review procedure at Seaham colliery.

By linking the colliery with neighbouring Vane Tempest colliery, via an underground belt line, the Board has designated it a combined colliery.

They are now transferring the men from the Seaham to the Tempest shafts and use the excuse that, since only 47 men are to be made redundant immediately, it does not qualify for the review procedure.

Fuelling the fires of discontent is the deliberate suppression of the miners' bonus earnings.

This notorious scheme, de-

signed to give the management total control over earnings, is being used to reduce bonus earnings, in many cases to the level of 10 years ago.

The decision of many miners to opt for redundancy has been dictated by this desperately low level of earnings.

To those who are left it is fostering a growing wages militancy.

At the centre of the industrial action however is the continued victimisation of the sacked men.

Uppermost in the minds of the mechanics is the plight of Geoff Hartnell, sacked two months after returning to work for an alleged incident in August 1984.

Geoff was completely exonerated by an Industrial Tribunal, who instructed the NCB to reinstate him by July 1986 and to refund him his lost earnings.

The Board has cynically refused to do so.

The action of the Durham Colliery Mechanics Association was the result of a considerable debate in the ranks of the union as to the best way of rebuilding the unity of the workforce and overcome the problems inherited from the year long dispute.

Delegates to the area council debated the merits of one-day strikes as opposed to an overtime ban.

Uppermost in the delegates' minds was maintaining the unity of the men.

There is an enormous disparity in collieries between the basic rates of the surface worker and a miner working

on the coal face.

No-one could argue that the coal face worker should not receive a higher rate of pay but that does not change the fact that a surface worker on basic pay can take home as little as £80 a week.

For him overtime is essential to receive a living wage.

A surface worker reduced for a prolonged period to his basic wage suffers much more than a power loader, who may receive no reduction in his income as a result of an overtime ban.

In the past, total overtime bans have led to much friction between men and mechanics.

In almost all cases mechanics' overtime has a direct bearing upon the earnings of those who produce the coal.

If shafts and machinery are not examined during overtime, this leads directly to men being reduced to a four day week or a reduction in bonus earnings.

Particularly, the mechanics argue, in view of the need to unite all sections at the colliery, a form of action is necessary that affects most members as equally as possible.

Some argued that this was more important even than the effect that the action would have on production.

Perhaps the most important consideration that determined the mechanics' decision was the estimation of what the political strength of a strike would be.

The fact that they demonstrated that the union is capable of taking a collective

decision to strike and carry this out into practice, even for a day, is an enormous blow to the Board and the government.

This point should not be lost on all those who too readily spoke of a definitive defeat for the NUM.

New revelations make it clearer the miners' strike was provoked to destroy the NUM and break the militant leadership of Scargill and Heathfield.

Since the strike ended area leaderships, particularly in Scotland and Wales, have united to isolate Scargill and prevent the organisation of a fight back by miners on a national basis.

At Tenby they scorned Scargill's proposition that industrial action may yet again be necessary and counter-posed compromise with the UDM.

Within weeks South Wales miners overthrew their area leadership and imposed a mid-week overtime ban.

Simultaneous with the action taken in Durham, Yorkshire miners are demanding some form of industrial action.

The question is posed — if the strike was provoked to smash the NUM and prevent it taking further industrial action, are we not witnessing living proof of their failure to do so?

The corollary of which must be that those who hold the miners back from industrial action are acting in the direct interests of this vicious and hated Tory government.

BY DAVE TEMPLE, WRP Central Committee & Delegate, Murton Colliery Mechanics



# Labour Party Conference round-up

# NO TRUCK WITH KINNOCK

## STATEMENT BY THE WRP POLITICAL COMMITTEE

**THE TORY GOVERNMENT** is thoroughly hated. Britain in 1986 is a country with five million unemployed, a national health service in crisis, cities in decay, youth with no future, families with no homes, trade unions, local councils and communities under attack by the Government. There is an underlying fear of nuclear contamination.

On the other side, the Tory government provides a bonanza for speculators and rich gamblers with its tax policies and selling of state industries.

The multi-nationals and the state make the workers pay for the economic difficulties of capitalism by breaking up traditional trade union practices, by exploiting the cheap labour of youth and women, by the criminalising of pickets and the use of state violence against them.

The leaders of the Labour Party are expecting a general election and a Labour government in a very short while.

But what sort of Labour government will it be?

That is a question that will be worrying a great many delegates at the Labour Party conference.

The conference, together with the mass of the working class, will be united in a desire to remove Thatcher and the Tories.

However, there is surely not a union delegation — except those well-versed delegations of right-wing unions — that does not share an uneasiness and apprehension at the policies of a future Labour government in relation to the unions.

The transport unions, for example, go to the conference in the same month as the Tory government introduces its Transport Bill — but the reformist leaders are unable to develop a unified transport policy to oppose it.

As for the constituency parties, suspicion will be rife. The right-wing leaders have become so cynical that they can now muster little of their demagogy on socialism or a brighter future.

When the Justice for Miners Campaign is refused official permission to set up a stand in the conference hall, we are told everything about the Labour leadership.

They care nothing for the five hundred miners who are still in jail or barred from work because they defended their union, their livelihood and their communities.

They are as hostile to them as they were hostile to the miners strike itself.

And if leaders are compelled to express sympathy for miners in South Africa, that sympathy is hypocritical.

Miners throughout the world will feel a bond with the black miners of Kinross, where 177 of their comrades were killed — choked to death by fumes from burning foam, which is banned in British mines.

The Labour leaders do nothing but mouth words on South Africa. Their demands on Thatcher to impose sanctions is a diversion from taking action themselves.

One firm statement that, when elected, that they would break off all trade and diplomatic relations with South Africa would have an immediate effect.

Internationalism demands they assist African workers directly and concretely to smash the Botha regime and answer the demands of the South African unions.

A real Labour and internationalist leadership would also link British workers' organisations directly with African — and international — organisations of peasants and workers to draw up a plan for economic development to overcome poverty and starvation.

Are the skills and labour of men and women unemployed in Britain really so surplus to requirements when millions are in poverty and starvation?

But Kinnock and Company are not internationalist. Thatcher won her second term of office by playing on the chauvinism which the 'loyal Labour opposition' championed during the Malvinas war.

Nor is there any reason to hope that a Labour government will end the imperialist partition of Ireland or stop the oppressive British occupation of the six counties.

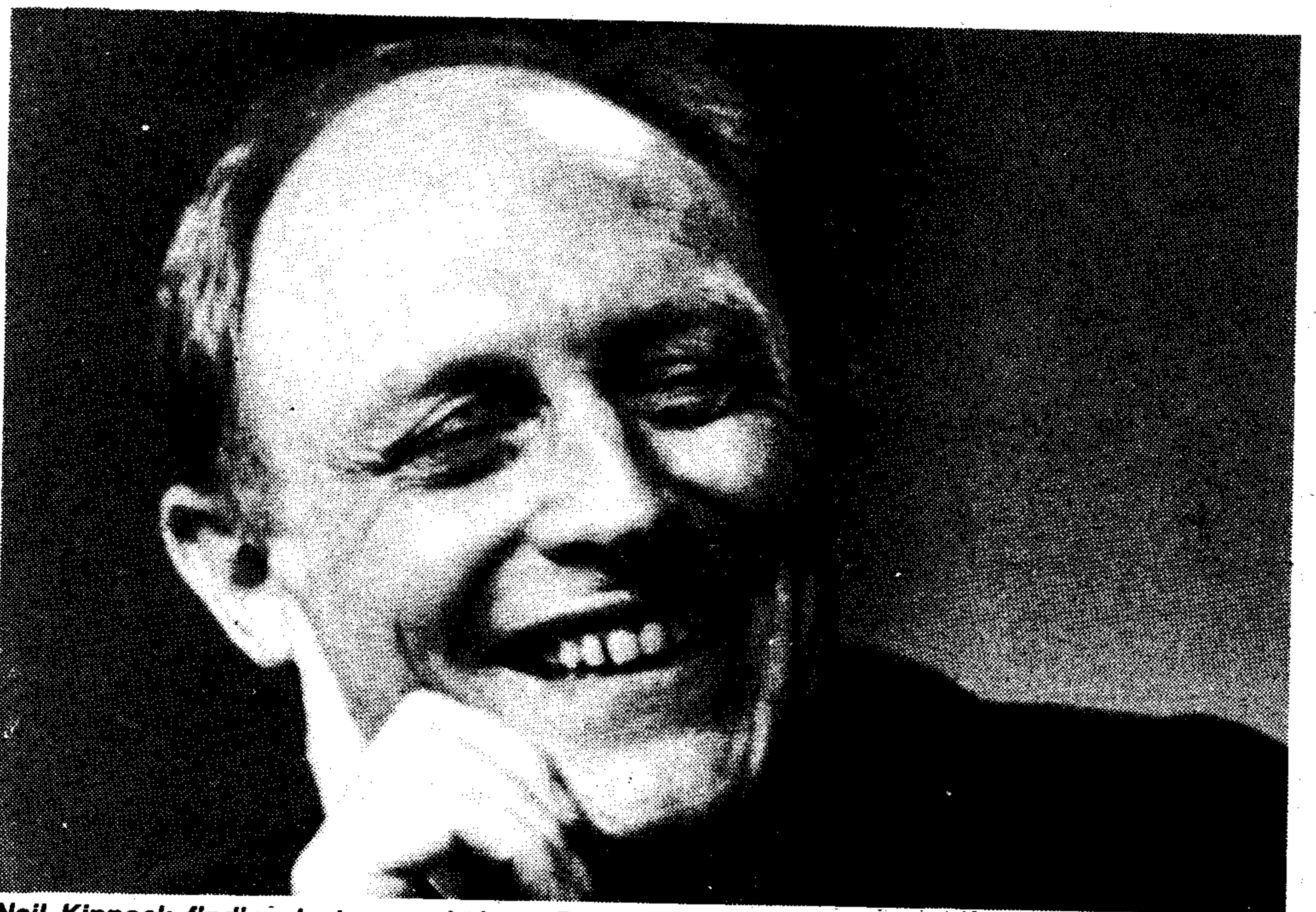
There is every indication that the Labour leadership is just as committed to the maintenance of an Ireland divided geographically and ideologically as the Tory Government.

The Labour Party has no plan to pull out of the perilous Anglo-Irish Accord and will renege even on the most basic of human rights demands, such as the repatriation of Irish POW's in Britain and the murder of innocent civilians with plastic and rubber bullets by the British security forces.

On 'defence' policy they will continue to serve the interests of British imperialism, tied to NATO and American imperialist strategy.

The demands of the capitalist state and the electoral considerations of Sellfield MP Cunningham rate higher than the overwhelming opposition to nuclear energy.

Kinnock and Company have no intention of disman-



Neil Kinnock finding last years Labour Party Conference amusing.



What does a Labour government offer the unemployed and police-harassed youth of Britain.

ting the anti-union laws.

Already a Treasury campaign is under way against the 'high, inflationary' wage increases which workers have recently won.

They have no intention of altering the immigration laws or ending racial harassment of immigrants.

Their philistine, careerist heads are empty of any thoughts about the future of youth.

They reflect the hostility of capitalist society to youth; they offer it no prospect.

Their talk of helping the low-paid with a minimum wage is only meant to sell incomes control.

Were they serious about youth, they would be pledging that a Labour government would abolish all MSC cheap labour schemes, institute training for youth under trade union control and develop a programme of public works for youth — all at trade union rates.

Above all, these leaders have no intention of taking power in British society out of the hands of banks, finance companies and multi-nationals.

The sort of Labour government they are preparing is shown by the witch hunt they

have unleashed to prepare for it.

The expulsions of those accused of being Militant supporters are directed not just against Militant but against the whole struggle of Labour councils and the trade union rank and file.

Our criticisms of Militant have been put forward in Workers Press — but the Labour leadership are not hostile to them because of their weaknesses in the fight.

They are being expelled because they fought the cuts in jobs and services and resisted the arbitrary strengthening of central government against local councils.

The opposition to the right-wing comes from the sharpness of capitalist decline in Liverpool.

That is why councillors are prepared to face surcharging and penalties and continue to meet with their expelled officers despite the NEC's bureaucratic edicts.

The economic problems for British capitalism continue to increase. The Labour leaders who carry out its policies will have even less room to manoeuvre than in 1974, when the Wilson government was in power.

The Labour government in prospect — or the coalition

which may follow a 'hung' parliament — will be a government of crisis.

The miners are now coming back into struggle and showing that their fighting spirit was not defeated in their long strike.

The printers are revealing a bitter resistance to the plans of capitalism.

This spirit in the working class, which Labour Party members expressed during the miners' strike, is what a Labour government will have to face.

The union vote at the conference to support the witch hunt has been tied up — but this is only another stage of the fight to expose the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party.

The bureaucracy may be able to blur and confuse issues to a certain extent at the Labour Party conference, even if there is scarcely any confidence in it.

However, illusions cannot last for long — least of all if the Tories are defeated and Labour leaders are placed under the heat.

Those who base themselves on the capacity of the working class to struggle are going to have the opportunities to develop a principled socialist leadership.

## Who DOES edit 'News Line'?

A LITTLE bird with a penchant for migration tells us that claims by the News Line, paper of the Healyite 'WRP', that their editor is Alex Mitchell are indeed false.

We recently mentioned in Workers Press that Mitchell had returned to Australia, if not for good, at least for the foreseeable future.

We were, of course, correct. His by-line has now appeared in the 'Sun Herald', a Sydney-based Sunday paper owned by John Fairfax, one of New South Wales' three press barons and a rival to Packer and Murdoch.

The lyric of the bird's song also tells of how he writes for 'The Herald', a daily from the same stable — but not under his own by-line.

Rumours that he has gone to lead the 'Russian Section' of the International Committee of the Fourth International — recently heralded by News Line as leading the political revolution in the USSR, despite no-one's having heard of it before — are presumably, therefore, spurious.

News Line's readers may well wonder who their editor now is since recent Healyite correspondence still claims that Mitchell fills the post.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

### 30th Anniversary

of the

### HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

Speaker at all meetings: Peter Fryer

correspondent for the

Daily Worker, eye-witness to the events in Hungary and author of 'Hungarian Tragedy'

London

October 26, 1pm - 9pm

Kingsway-Princeton College

Sidmouth Street

Grays Inn Road, London WC1

with speakers: Michael Varga (Balasz Nagy): Hungarian Trotskyist, one of the former secretaries of the Petofi Circle

Cliff Slaughter: Expelled from the Communist Party for opposition to Stalinism after the Khrushchev speech, and the Hungarian events in 1956; A Trotskyist for the last 30 years; Member of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party

Bob Pennington: A Trotskyist for 37 years; Member of the Editorial Board of International

Bill Hunter; Long-standing Trotskyist; Member of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party

Also exhibition and workshops. Tickets £2

Organised and sponsored by the Workers Revolutionary Party, International Group and Workers Power

Glasgow

Sunday October 19, 300pm

Ingram Hotel, Ingram Street

Manchester

Tuesday October 21, 7.30pm

Basement Theatre

Manchester Town Hall

St Peters Square



# IRELAND — BANISHED TO THE FRINGE

## STUART BELL'S SHADY ROLE

### LCI left out in the cold, Sinn Fein are snubbed

THE LABOUR Party conference will not be debating the question of northern Ireland.

This emerged when Stuart Bell MP, the party's deputy spokesman on northern Ireland, wrote to all constituency parties:

'Since there is not likely to be a debate on northern Ireland at this year's conference, delegates might like to attend two fringe meetings.'

One of these is organised by the Campaign for Labour Representation, which wants the party to organise in the six counties.

But Bell's letter does not refer to the fringe meeting organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI) being held on Wednesday October 1 at 5.30pm at which Bell himself is an invited speaker, as well as Ken Livingstone, Bernadette McAliskey, Seamus Mallon of the SDLP and Tommy Carroll from Sinn Fein.

#### Debate

The LCI has reacted angrily to the exclusion of debate.

'We believe a debate on northern Ireland must take place if Labour is to have any credibility with the Irish in Britain and those involved on campaigning work on this issue,' said a statement issued by Cllr Richard Chesum, the LCI's press officer.

It goes on to say that this seems to be another shabby and opportunist manoeuvre to brush inconvenient subjects under the carpet until a general election takes place.

It also slams Bell for publicising the 'Unionist' campaign for Labour representation and omitting the LCI fringe meeting — likely to be the biggest on Ireland — from his letter.

So there you have it: the Labour Party, who sent in the troops in 1969, will not debate the question.

That there is a meeting at all on the question of 'Labour Representation' is, of course, nothing short of imperial arrogance: the six counties are not, and never have been, part of Britain.

What worries me about the LCI's position is that they fear that if a debate does not

### COMMENT BY CHARLIE WALSH

take place the party will lose the votes of Irish people in Britain at the next general election. This is opportunism.

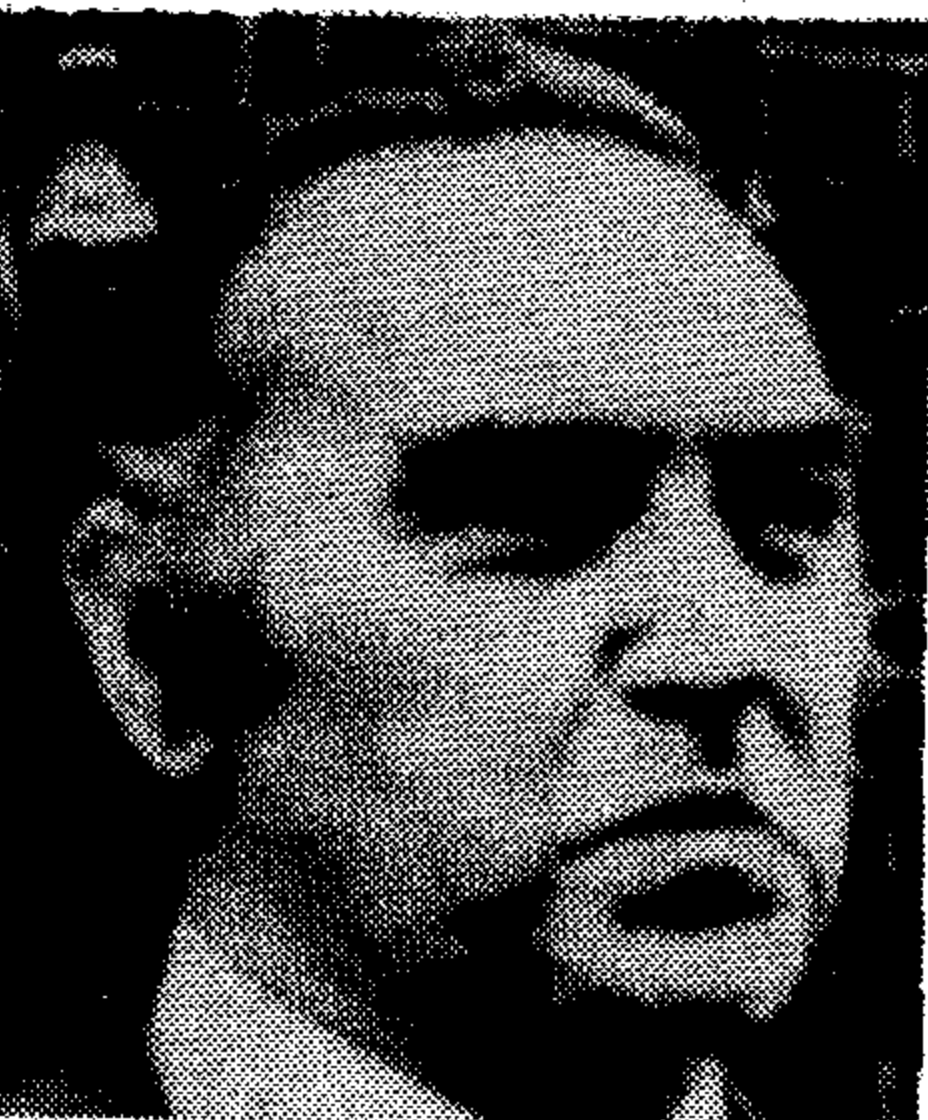
General election or no, it is the responsibility of all those like the LCI who say that they support Irish freedom, to raise the question at conference, to fight for the withdrawal of Britain militarily and politically from Ireland without any pre-conditions.

Labour or Tory governments during the last 60 years or more have never had a mandate from the Irish people to partition or occupy Ireland.

All Labour governments have aided and abetted the repression of Ireland by British imperialism.

Who can ever forget Roy Mason?

The freedom of all oppressed nations who live under the tyranny of imperialism, whether Ireland, South Africa



ROY MASON — who could forget his role?

ca or Chile, has to be supported by all who claim to be socialists.

This support has to be given without any conditions or strings attached.

Any other kind of support is meaningless and a sham.

Stuart Bell has now revealed that he is unlikely to speak at the LCI if Sinn Fein is on the platform.

Bell, who thought that Sinn

Fein President Gerry Adams MP, rather than Councillor Tommy Carroll, was to speak, commented:

'We are not in the business of giving Gerry Adams a platform and, if he is asked to speak, I will have to look again at what I do.'

#### Role

Bell's comments sum up exactly the role of a future Labour government in relation to Ireland.

It would continue with the occupation of the six counties, military repression of the nationalist working class, no-jury courts, supergrass trials, use of plastic and rubber bullets etc. etc.

There are seven resolutions submitted to the conference calling for a united Ireland and opposing the Anglo-Irish Accord and criticising the Labour leadership's support of it.

Sheffield/Hillsborough calls on conference to reaffirm its support for a united Ireland and calls on the next Labour government to terminate Britain's sovereignty and to 'withdraw militarily within its first term of office.'

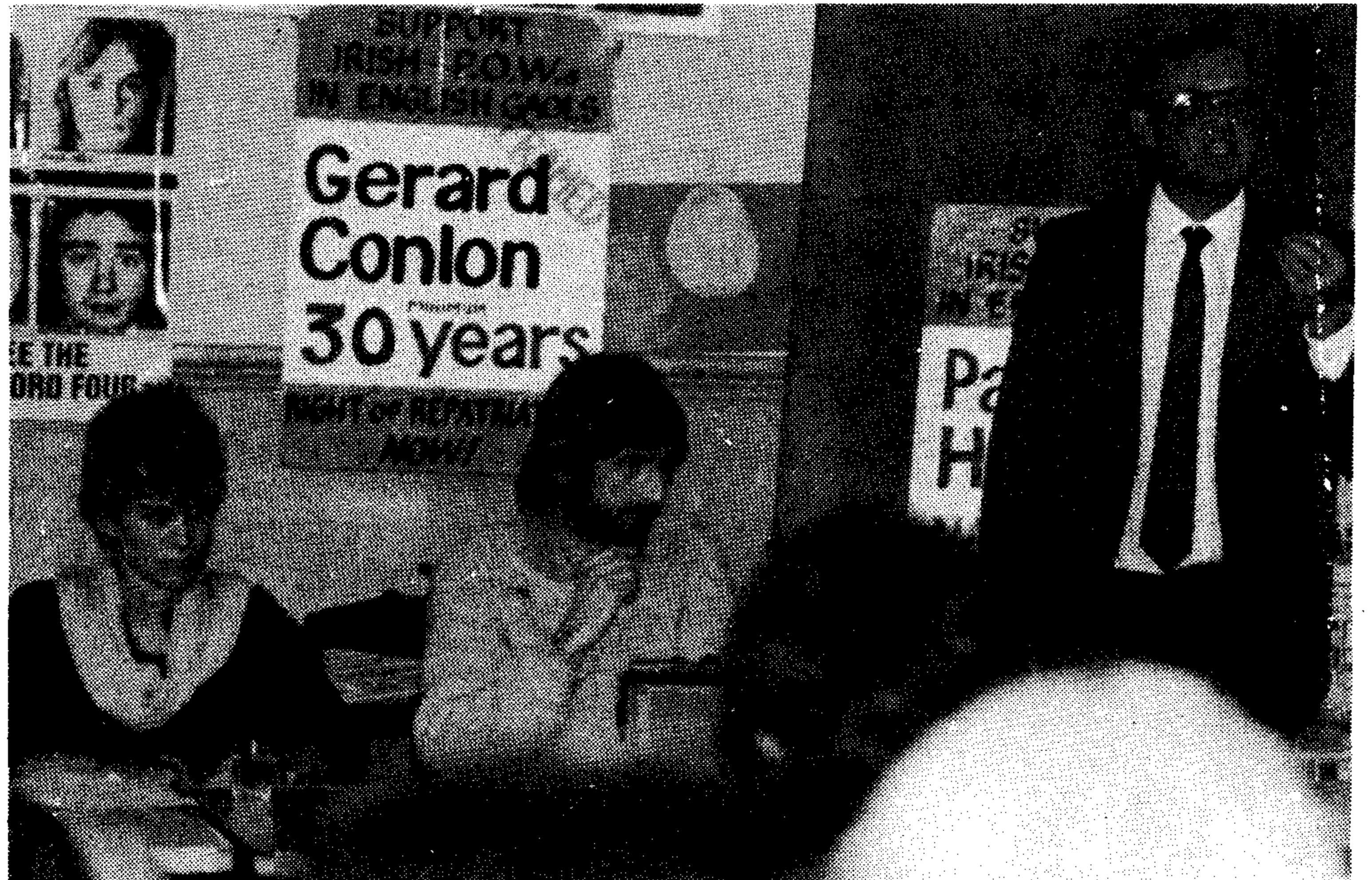
Their resolution also calls for the Labour government to provide all possible economic assistance to a government of a United Ireland!

#### Excluded

Throughout the Wilson and Callaghan era Northern Ireland was excluded as a conference subject.

However in latter years it has been debated, but never as a foremost topic.

Three years ago conference adopted a resolution supporting a United Ireland 'by consent' and this has since remained party policy.



Alastair Logan speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Free The Guildford Four Campaign.

## Pressure mounts for the Guildford Four

A FRINGE meeting at the Labour Party conference will ask delegates to shoulder the special responsibility that they have to secure the release of the Guildford Four.

It was under a Labour government that the Guildford Four, three young Irish men and a young English woman, were wrongly convicted for the 1974 Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings.

BY PHIL PENN

They have already served twelve years of what were some of the longest sentences in British legal history. One of the Four, Paul Hill, was condemned to spend the rest of his life in jail.

The arrests and trial took place in an atmosphere of anti-Irish hysteria whipped up by the press and encouraged by the Government in the aftermath of the 1974 IRA bombing campaign.

The kind of hysteria generated in 1974 can be seen now in France where Jacques Chirac has given the go-ahead for the use of torture on those suspected of taking part in the current bombing campaign in Paris.

How reliable can the evidence be of those who, in the words of the French premier, are 'made to talk'?

Under pressure to produce results, the police satisfied themselves with beating confessions out of four frightened youths.

the case has received recently, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has ordered an internal review of the case.

Alastair Logan, solicitor for the Four, dissatisfied with this, has called for a public enquiry into the case, a demand which has been endorsed by the Free the Guildford Four Campaign.

Merlyn Rees, Labour Northern Ireland Secretary at the time, has openly stated that he was carried away by the 'emotional' atmosphere of the time and has voiced concern about the continued imprisonment of the Four.

Another emotional character, Roy Jenkins, who was Labour Home Secretary at the time of the trial and oversaw their convictions, has recently confessed to harbouring doubts about a similar case concerning six Irishmen now serving life for the Birmingham bombings.

The Fringe meeting has been called by the Labour Committee on Ireland, which has affiliated to the Free the Guildford Four Campaign.

Speakers will include the uncle of Paul Hill, Errol Smally. Delegates will be asked to support the call for a public enquiry and to campaign for the release of the Guildford Four.

### WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PUBLIC LECTURES

Please note changes:  
All on FRIDAY evenings, start at 8.00pm sharp  
CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, London, WC1  
PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIALISM  
Lecturer: Cyril Smith  
October 3 — What is a human being?  
To be followed by classes on  
Marxist Political Economy - G Pilling  
The State and Revolution - B Archer  
The Revolutionary Party - D Bruce

## Justice Campaign to mount picket

THE NORTH EAST Campaign for Justice for Mineworkers is to picket the Northern regional TUC conference on October 4th at Darlington Town Hall.

The decision was made at a special meeting called the day after 3,000 Durham Mechanics voted by a clear majority to strike over victimisation of sacked miners to co-ordinate the work in the area to reinstate sacked men and release the jailed miners.

One day later, the Durham Area NUM, covering 10,000 miners, voted to implement an overtime ban over unpaid back pay.

BY KEVIN TOWNSEND

Delegates to the Justice meeting heard of the useless token support the regional

TUC were giving to the sacked and jailed men.

The decision to hold a series of one day strikes at the pits should be used to demand wider trade union movement support for the victimised men.

It is their duty and should not be overlooked at the expense of putting Kinnock into No 10.

The Justice meeting also decided to support the case of Eleuterio Gutierrez, a jailed Bolivian miners' leader,

who has been held in prison for nearly a year with no trial in sight.

Justice affiliates will be circularised and the campaign headquarters in Bolivia are to receive support.

Another proposal accepted was to hold a Justice for Mineworkers Rally in Newcastle in ten to twelve weeks time, inviting other area's and composing a resolution to take to the TUC from the rally.



# Tory government proposes to screen African visitors for AIDS: A FOREIGN OFFICE FRAUD

**A FOREIGN Office report on AIDS was leaked last week and its contents show the deliberate confusion of facts on this disease by the government.**

**It proposes that certain groups of people be medically screened for the virus associated with AIDS before being allowed into Britain.**

The FO report suggests that students coming to Britain from Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania are at particular risk.

One look at the reality of the situation shows this to be no serious attempt at curbing the spread of AIDS.

In the US, the people

BY BRIAN DEMPSEY

largely at risk from AIDS are the three H's: Homosexuals, Haemophiliacs and Haitians.

So far, in Britain, there has not been the racist angle in this scaremongering by the right-wing but the

leaked report shows that racism is never from the minds of the British establishment.

The facts: First, AIDS is a major problem in the three countries named.

## Victims

However, the largest number of AIDS victims are thought to be in the United States and the number of US visitors is far higher than from Tanzania.

There are, correctly, no proposals to test US visi-

tors. This is blatant racism on the part of the FO.

Second, the reason AIDS is spreading in some African countries is the poor level of health care and the limited resources for sterilising needles and screening blood donors.

Third, AIDS is not contagious. It is not easy to pass the virus from one person to another.

Fourth, any testing at ports of entry would mean quarantining people for at least six months, since the tests can prove negative for

up to this time after contact with the virus.

The cost of these intensified, racist immigration controls would be vast and would be better spent improving conditions in Africa than hounding victims.

## Proposals

**The government is not putting forward serious proposals to safeguard people from disease: it is using the disease to spread fear and to strengthen prejudice.**

Workers must support the scrapping of all immigra-

tion controls.

● A video has been produced which addresses the anxieties of those who fear they may be at risk, particularly through their employment. It would seem to be a serious attempt to overcome the irrational and reactionary scaremongering put forward by the media.

'You can't catch aids by...' from the Film and Television Unit, Royal Society for Medical Services, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE, £23.00 inc post.

# Wapping: Freeman reports SOGAT NEC's 'neutrality'

**LAST Saturday, after the printworkers march from Tower Hill to Wapping, dispute organiser Bill Freeman spoke to the hundreds of pickets who had gathered at Wellclose Square.**

**Freeman is a member of the London Machine Branch and newly-elected onto SOGAT's NEC.**

He explained last Thursday's meeting at SOGAT's headquarters between the NEC and strike FoCs and MoCs.

'The NEC announced that they had decided to put this latest offer to ballot.'

'We had to say to them that the NGA had taken the course of consulting their members before they even

BY ALAN CLARK

discussed it at their executive council.

'But in SOGAT, true to form, the executive discussed it, then called in the chapel representatives to tell them, after the decision had been made.'

Freeman went on: 'We

forced Murdoch back to the table. How come you didn't pick up that message and tell him what to do with this "final offer" that is so different?'

Dean replied that it wasn't a new offer but the same one re-jigged.

## Insult

Other representatives told her: 'In that case you had no need to put this to a ballot. It's an insult to the people that have suffered during this long hard dispute.'

'You should have thrown it out and gone back to the TUC

and demanded the electricians be stopped from doing our work or expelled.'

But the executive decided otherwise — by 17 votes to 10.

Freeman also told the pickets: 'Your chapel representatives at the meeting did you proud.'

'They made the point to Brenda Dean and the executive that they had no business being neutral.'

'They told us they were putting the ballot papers out with no recommendation on which way to vote.'

'But they were told in no uncertain terms that...

you are elected by the membership to defend the union, to lead it and defend the interests of those who have got to follow.

## Coward

'You are not there to be neutral'. 'The neutrality of a trade union official or executive council member is only a refuge for a coward.'

Jack Freedman, FoC of The Times night machine chapel, backed this statement, saying: 'You are not going to be offered jobs in there, if you are interviewed

for a job you will be examined by members of the EETPU.'

'Union recognition will be absolutely zero. There will be no FoC, no chapels and no national executive that will look after everyone's interest.'

'In fact, what it says in the document is that you will be asked to join one of the four unions. But you have to belong to a union to work in there.'

Freedman thought that the proposal should never have been balloted. He pleaded with the pickets to put a cross for rejection.

# Mendis campaign back RCL's defence

● WORKERS PRESS is pleased to reprint the following letter from the Viraj Mendis Defence Committee, which confirms their principled support for the WRP's call for all revolutionary organisations to campaign for the

release of Viran Peiris and Brutan Perera, members of the Revolutionary Communist League of Sri Lanka jailed by the Jayawardene regime for their stand in defence of the Tamil people.

Viraj came to Britain from Sri Lanka at the age of 17 to continue his studies.

In 1975, due to shortage of money, he had to leave college and work as a labourer. As a result he did not renew his student visa.

Eight and a half years later, the Home Office decided to take action against him as an overstayer. On August 8, 1985 Viraj was arrested, racially abused and strip-searched.

However, due to the support of a strong campaign, false charges brought against him were dropped.

Viraj is a known supporter of the oppressed Tamil people of Sri Lanka although he is himself Sinhalese.

If deported, he will face certain persecution at the hands of the brutal Jayawardene regime.

All legal channels for this fight for political asylum in Britain have now been exhausted but Viraj will not go back to Sri Lanka.

The campaign launched in Britain by the International Communist Party (ICP), British Section of the Fourth International, is now calling for support for a weekly picket of the Sri Lankan Embassy to demonstrate against the persecution of RCL comrades in Sri Lanka.

This picket is now supported by the WRP/ Workers Press who, of course, fought for the VMDC.

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign sees the necessity for solidarity between the two campaigns just as there is complete solidarity between the racist Thatcher government, with its witch-hunting deportations, and the Jayawardene regime, which does the bidding of imperialism in Sri Lanka.

The political differences between the different communist groups in Britain can in no way be allowed to obstruct the campaign. There is a common struggle.

**VMDC believes that if your hatred of other groups and organisations is more than that of the Jayawardene regime then there is little point in fighting.**

Unity will strengthen the campaign; all campaigns.

We once again send our solidarity message and would welcome any further information about the plight of the RCL.

Yours in struggle  
VMDC

Dear Comrades

THE VIRAJ Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC) expresses solidarity with the persecuted members of the Revolutionary Communist League of Sri Lanka.

Viraj Mendis is a black communist who has lived in Manchester, England, for 13 years.

He has been actively involved in anti-racist and anti-deportation campaigns as a supporter of 'Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!' the party of the Revolutionary Communist Group of Great Britain.

**The Campaign to free Eleuterio Gutierrez is organising a picket of the Bolivian Embassy on the first anniversary of his imprisonment**  
**Tuesday September 30**  
**11.00am - 2.00pm**  
**105 Eaton Square**  
**London SW1**

# FORDS LONDON PLANT CLOSURE THREAT

**TREVOR FRANKLIN, the senior shop steward at Fords component plant in Woolwich, SE London said, 'It's a betrayal of the workforce if this factory should close down'**

**The management of the Woolwich plant announced recently that the factory will be closing with the loss of over 250 jobs, though most will be offered alternative employment at the Dagenham factory, say management.**

Greenwich Council's Employment and Industry Committee have said they are prepared to assist the workforce in stopping the planned closure.

'We have to save these jobs for the future,' said Lesley Seary, chairperson of the committee.

John Austin-Walker, Leader of Greenwich Council, met with management and said he would be telling them that it would be a disaster for the area if the plant should have to close.

He said he would remind management that the highly trained workforce has created a factory that is efficient, profitable and produces quality work.

Franklin, who has worked at the factory for most of his life, said, 'Many of the workforce have spent their whole lives here, like me.'

## Decision

'We have had only three strikes in thirty odd years and all of them have been national strikes.'

'Obviously, the decision has been taken from Detroit,' Franklin said bitterly.

He told Workers Press that the unions will be meeting over the next few days and that some action will be planned to try and stop the closure.

## LISTINGS

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

**FREE THE GUILDFORD FOUR PICKET OF THE HOME OFFICE.** Monday October 6, 5pm-6pm. Outside the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

**SOCIALIST ACTION: BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM.** Weekend

November 22/23, in London, a major political event with speakers, debates and discussions. Details from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM.** Workshops and forums on the theme of an alternative socialist strategy in Europe. October 17-19, Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth Street, London WC1. Details from Symposium, PO Box 503, London N1 1YH.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: RACISM.** The spectre haunting Europe. Aston University, Birmingham, November 2, 1986. Speakers from anti-racist organisations in France, Germany and other European countries, as well as

Workers Against Racism and other British anti-racists.

**PALESTINE AND ISRAEL** See for yourself, and meet the people. Join a tour with a difference. Jerusalem and Peace Services, 13, Goodwin St. N4. (01-226-7050) for brochure.

**'ESCAPE FROM GENOCIDE'** Video on Tamil refugees, produced by Tamil Women's League. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1, 27 September, 7pm. Funded by GLC Women's Committee. Information 809 4630, 226 2367.

**CONFERENCE** for all groups and individuals to increase co-ordination of opposition to the Public Order Bill, organise the

'Saturday After' march, discuss subsequent tactics and action. Organised by Campaign Against Police Repression, Sunday September 28, 12 noon to 4pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. No creche.

**SUBVERSIVES' SPONSORED STROLL** Round State Surveillance Sites. Organised by Campaign Against Police Repression, Saturday September 27. Meet 12 noon outside Imperial War Museum (Lambeth North Tube) for 10 mile 'guided' walk through central London.

**BROCKS FIREWORKS PICKET** by the United Campaign on Plastic Bullets, October 6, Dumfries (address and

time to follow).

**'ACTION DAY' BREAK THE CHAINS!** October 11 — Political Prisoners Day; City of London Anti-Apartheid Group 12-6pm, Outside South African Embassy.

**'DEFEND THE LAMBETH 31'** Lambeth Fighting Fund Fringe Meeting at 1986 Labour Party Conference, Monday September 29, 1-1.45pm, The Renaissance Restaurant, Winter Garden Complex. Speakers include: Ted Knight; Joan Walley; Anna Tapsell; Helen Crossfield. For further information, contact Stephen Bubb (274 5906 or 388 6191).

**OPEN EYE WORKSHOP** catalogue of work now available. Film, Video and Anima-

tion. Videotapes on Women & trade unions, International issues, Media representations. ACTT Franchised 90-92 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1 6EN (051-709-9460)

**MARCH AGAINST THE PUBLIC ORDER LAW** Taking place the Saturday after the Government's Public Order Bill becomes law. Contact Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938) Creche available.

**LONDON STUDENT MARXIST FORUM** Sunday October 5: 'A Marxist Analysis of Money' — trip around 'Money' exhibition at British Museum. Meet on the Museum steps, 3.30 pm. Organised by N London WRP



# TWENTY-TWO WEEKS OF NON-STOP PICKET:

## WE PLEDGE OUR TIME

# THEY PLEDGE THEIR LIVES!

## CITY GROUP'S LONDON RALLY

A LARGE and lively meeting in London on Friday called loudly for more action against the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

The City of London Anti-Apartheid Group is celebrating 154 days of non-stop picketing outside South Africa House and the meeting reflected the spirit of the picket — as well as seeing the launch of Norma Kitson's book, 'Where Sixpence Lives' (see review, page 15).

Dave Douglas, from Hatfield Pit in Yorkshire, said there was a movement in the Yorkshire NUM to blockade the import of South African Coal.

Speaker after speaker called for more grass roots action and denounced the Labour Party and trade union leaders, whose words amounted to nothing because they were not backed up by action.

Peter Gibson, Chairman of the London Bus Committee, said: 'We have more in common with the workers in South Africa than we have with the Thatcher government in this country.'

He went on to say that the anti-apartheid movement must get into the working class and the unions so that they can make a difference.

The Labour candidate for Nottingham East, Sharon Atkins, stated: 'We can make our voices heard and we can say to this government to put sanctions on now.'

Bill Holdsworth, an AEU shop steward at Bonar Brentfords in Crawley, told the meeting of the action being taken by workers there.

Ted Knight said that the fight against Apartheid wasn't a moral question but a class question and called on an incoming Labour government to be prepared to raise funds to arm the African workers.

Darren, who has been on the picket at Trafalgar Square for 125 days of the 154, announced to the meeting: 'I am a skinhead and I hate the fascist, racist skinheads. I'm making a stand against the racism in Britain as well.'

Laila, who is 14 years old, has been on the picket every day since it started. She said that the youth of Britain are

finally taking a stand against apartheid and, referring to the youth of South Africa, she said:

'We pledge our time, but they pledge their lives.'

Gary, who has been on the picket 81 days, with five overnight stints a week, talked about the problems of the oncoming winter:

'We're taking precautions against the cold, we're buying a van and the WRP has given us some raincoats. Overnight we hold a picket university where we hold discussions on all sorts of things.'

Dr Maire O'Shea said most of the things said about South Africa could also be said about Ireland.

'Apartheid and racial discrimination do not have so much to do with skin colour as with colonialism,' she said.

Karen, one of the Dunnes strikers from Dublin, talked about their dispute and the success they have had in forcing the Irish government to ban South African food-stuffs.

'If eleven people in Dublin can get that amount of result in Ireland, imagine what we can do here,' she said.

David Reed, from the RCG, reminded the meeting that Cyril Ramaphosa had told British miners that Britain is the only country standing between apartheid and liberation in South Africa.

He made the point that many people who had sat on a similar platform in 1982 during a previous non-stop picket had now changed their positions, including Bob Hughes, who, with the leadership of the Scottish TUC, had tried to break the blockade of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games.



Non-stop picket outside South Africa House. Police harassment is constant and often petty. Here the picketers have been told that they must not sing.

Sarah Hippersome, who has spent three and a half years at Greenham Common, talked about the value of having that presence and equated it to the Trafalgar Square picket.

Carol Brinkley, Co-ordinator of City Group, paid tribute to Norma Kitson, whose book has just been released and said:

'Norma's activity on the picket has been enormous. She has trained a whole new generation of rebels.'

She also pointed out that City Group came into conflict with the National Anti-Apartheid movement when they set up the picket to free Dave Kitson.

Then again, when City Group supported the miners, AA told them that they were a 'single-issue' group in spite of the importing of South African coal by the government in its battle against the miners.

Billy Etherington, from the Durham NUM and Chair of the National Justice for Miners Campaign, talked of the direct economic ties of many MPs with South Africa, including Labour ones like Roy Mason.

He applauded the Non-stop picket and the City Group's

support for the NUM during the strike.

The final speaker was Dave Kitson, who spent 20 years in jail in South Africa. He described the last two years of continuous and growing opposition to the oppressors in South Africa and stressed that the moving force in that struggle was the youth.

In the schools and townships young people were fighting and prepared to die for that. At the heart of that fight was the armed struggle.

He described the growth of the 'Hands off Russia' campaign in Britain in 1917 which had played a part in ensuring the victory of the most important revolutionary event of the century.

### Campaign

That had to be repeated now with the sanctions campaign in which all groups, whatever their differences, could and must unite.

The meeting was a fight-

ing example to the National Anti-Apartheid movement whose only activities now seem to be cycle rides and attacking the City Group.

Several speakers urged people to join AA and fight at its January conference for the AA movement to end its inactivity.

● Saturday October 11 is South African Political Prisoners Day. City Group plans a mass picket between noon and 6pm. Get your branch, Trades Council etc up there.

## Picket protests police thuggery

A LIVELY and aggressive picket was held on Wednesday September 24 outside the Cannon Row police station.

It was decided to transfer part of the non-stop City of London SA embassy picket to the station to protest at the disgusting tactics that police from Cannon Row were using on the picket, in particular against women and black people.

Instead of restricting themselves to plain old-fashioned brutality, pickets allege the police have been involved in racial abuse and sexual assault against women pickets.

In the space of a week, eleven people were seized in a wave of violent arrests.

Black picketers were called 'niggers' by the police and three women were assaulted during their

arrests.

Two of them were thrown around violently by police in a police van and also at Cannon Row.

A protest picket was called in response to these attacks to publicise them and to attempt to embarrass the policemen involved by making their names and numbers known.

They must not be allowed to get away with it.

## Building militants launch union democracy fight — conference call

THE NATIONAL Building Worker meeting last Saturday, attended by representatives from Scotland, Durham and DLO and private sites in London, pointed to union democracy as the main question for the struggle to revitalise the union.

For example, only 113 delegates represented 250,000 members at the biennial conference this year, almost one for every 2,500 members!

Ballot rigging in Ireland and elsewhere has occurred with the EC defending even proven guilty ballot riggers.

Albert Williams had secretly connived with John Laing to victimise striking bricklayers and signed a letter to this effect.

Dominic Hehir, the London regional organiser, was banned from office for ten years for exposing this state of affairs.

The local authorities pay claim this year was 100 per cent — at a time when morale was low, yet 40 per cent did vote to fight.

Now the point was not simply to accept a Broad Left strategy to replace one set of officials with another but to alter fundamentally the structure of the union.

Albert Williams, Jack Henry, Charlie Kelly and

BY GERRY DOWNING & BRIAN HIGGINS

George Brumwell were all Broad Left candidates — now they lead the right wing attack, not to mention the sacked and totally discredited 'Broad Left' Peter Kavanagh, ex-TGWU No.1 Building Regional Secretary. (Maybe the T&G will tell us sometime exactly why he was sacked.)

The group are campaigning for:

- A rank-and-file lay Executive
- An Annual Delegate Conference
- No selection committees

It was made clear at the meeting that the group would make a united front

with all those fighting for union democracy, Broad Left, Charter Group etc., but would fight on its own policies.

As a start, branches must prepare for the Rules Revision Committee in 1988 by submitting resolutions after April 1987.

Practically the entire rule book is bureaucratic and must be changed.

The next meeting will be in November and a national rank and file conference is being prepared for the New Year from rank and file teachers in Scotland, miners, builders etc.

# 1936 THEY SHALL NOT PASS 1986

March, rally and festival in commemoration of The Battle of Cable Street SATURDAY 4th OCTOBER 1986 Assemble 12 noon, St. Mary's Churchyard, (Opp Aldgate East tube)

SPEAKERS: Jeremy Corbyn, David Kitson, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Dennis Skinner, Phil Parratin & others

Sponsored by SE Region TUC, Greater London Labour Party, Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Tower Hamlets Trades Council, Bethnal Green & Stepney Labour Party, Anti-Fascist Action, Searchlight, Tower Hamlets Unemployed Centre



# WEAPONS OF



Brenda Downes

## IN IRELAND

### MURDER WITNESSED BY THE WORLD

#### Part four of a series on the campaign against plastic bullets — by a reporter in Belfast

In the last three parts of this series on plastic bullets, we have dealt with the way the security forces are using plastic bullets in Northern Ireland, the damage that plastic bullets can do, and the way that the whole state machine rolls into action to blacken the name of the victim and justify each death.

This week we focus on the case of John Downes (referred to as Sean Downes by the bourgeois media), who was shot at point blank range by an RUC gunman. John's case is different from all the others in that his shooting was witnessed by the international press and because of this, and only because of this, the RUC's attempts to cover his shooting in the usual way were unsuccessful and his murderer has been charged and tried.

John's case is also significant because whilst the Security Forces have claimed that nearly all the killings have taken place in a 'riot situation' which eye-witnesses have disputed, John Downes was undoubtedly shot in a situation which was called by all who witnessed it, a riot situation. But it was the armed security forces who rioted, the occasion has been dubbed, by even the most conservative of observers — a police riot.

When I spoke to John's wife Brenda about the killing she described the horror of that day and the insensitivity of the hospital staff when she was finally told that her husband was dead.

John was shot at the Anti-

internment Rally in Belfast, in 1984. Anyone who has attended an anti-internment rally will know that for the participants it is not a time of violent resistance.

The armed struggle of the Republican movement is conducted in a disciplined way by the Republican Army. The anti-internment

rally is very much a peaceful demonstration and a time when the nationalist community get together to share the suffering they have all endured since internment and to express their solidarity and their nationality.

On August 12th 1984 Brenda and John Downes went to the rally with their baby

daughter Clare. Brenda described the scene when they reached the Andersonstown destination, the Sinn Fein Office:

'We were at the back of the march and even when we first arrived I was really scared because the whole atmosphere that day was very bad.

'Police were opening up with plastic bullets before the whole crowd had even got in.

We went to the side of the chapel, out of the way. I knew John wanted to listen to the speeches so I told him to go up to the front and we'd wait for him.

#### Shooting

'We must have waited half an hour and there was no sign of him. I couldn't get back down the hill because the police were shooting plastic bullets everywhere. People were panicking and running everywhere.

'A lady brought us into her house and kept us there. It was about an hour before I could get out again.'

When Brenda got home she discovered that John had been hit and she was advised to go to the hospital, but no-one seemed able to give her any more information. She said:

'When I got there they didn't even know whether John had been admitted or



John Downes

not because they had that many casualties. They had to send a lot of people to another hospital. So she asked me to wait.

#### Wait

'Then a sister came and asked me John's name and what he'd been wearing and for a description of him, and then I went back into a cubicle where I had to wait again.

'Another sister came in and asked me again for a description of John and then said that a doctor wanted to talk to me.

'The doctor wanted another description and then asked me if John had any tattoos and when I told him and described them, he said, "I've got very bad news for you, your husband's dead."

'Well it was just hard to believe and I really didn't take it in. We had been together so peacefully just a couple of hours before and now they were telling me that John was dead.

'They handed me pills and made me take them. I refused to identify the body. I couldn't believe it could be John. I thought there must be some mistake.

'They wanted me to ring his parents and I wouldn't do that either. A priest rang his parents and in the end his father came and identified the body.

'I went back to his parents place where a doctor gave me more pills.'

A neighbour of Brenda's described the scene at the anti-internment rally that day: 'You couldn't say plastic bullets were coming this way or that way, plastic bullets were coming everyway. Men, women and kids were being hit. At one stage we had to get in a car to cross the road, just to cross the road.'

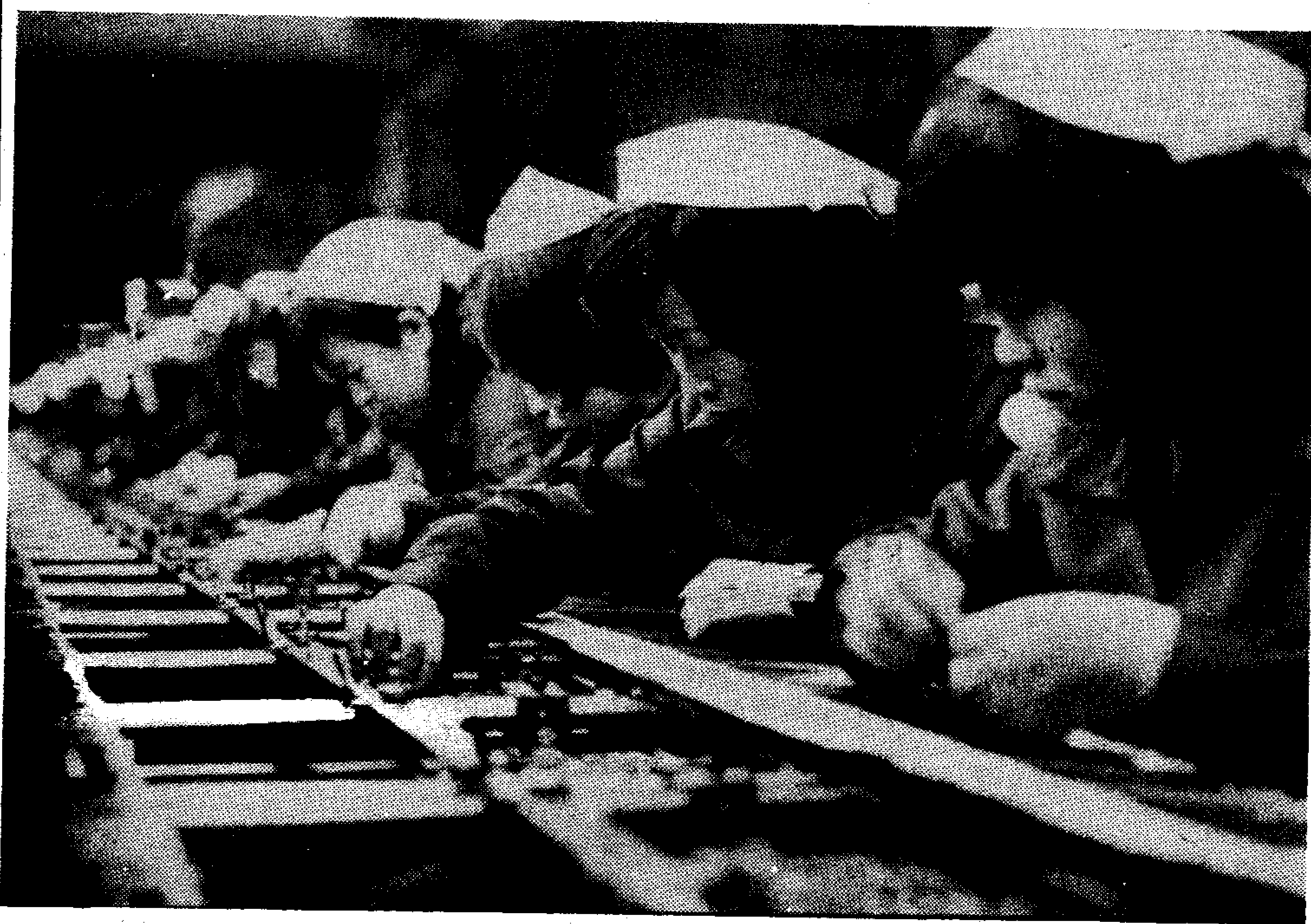
The same woman described seeing ambulances arrive and being packed with people who were all injured, 'as soon as they filled one, another would arrive', she said.

#### Bullet

Police issued a statement immediately after the shooting saying that the bullet which hit John was a ricochet, but eye-witnesses denied it. The RUC Press statement said:

'At 3.40pm today police on duty on Andersonstown

# LABOUR COMES CHEAP STRUGGLE COSTS DEAR



The following is an extract from a contribution in the West German Garment and Textile Workers Union magazine, September 1986, translated by Trudi Jackson.

UNION HEADQUARTERS in the Bang Hak Dong suburb of Seoul, Korea are heavily guarded these days.

A union leader from the 'Peace Market' — the area of highest concentration of the textile industry — said that the secret service of Korea (KCIA) had moved into the neighbourhood.

'They cut off our water and electricity supplies too often', he added.

But this is only a small problem compared to the many with which this young union has to struggle.

Much worse is that leading members of the union are subject to increasing harass-

ment and prosecution by the South Korean police.

The names of all those currently in detention are written on a blackboard in the yard of the union house at Chun Tae-il.

There were five. 'But we take into account that it can increase very rapidly at all times', said a young woman.

#### War

The police and the secret service have started to wage a war against the union.

1985 was the most active year of the workers movement since the military group around President

Chunboo Hwan took power in 1980.

The tailors and machinists of the Peace Market were in the forefront, twice organising major demonstrations of 5,000 workers and students.

The union was founded ten years ago with the words: 'we are not machines, take notice of the rules for work'.

On November 13, 1975 a Chun Tae-il tailor set himself alight and burnt to death in this district. 'He tried in vain for years to put forward workers rights' said his sister.

He was one of 20,000 workers who were producing clothing for the local Korean market in the early seventies in inhuman conditions.

Under the regime of ex-president Park he began to defend the rights of his colleagues, under the threat of death. His appeals to the press and to officials were completely ignored.

His sister is now a shop



# REPRESSION

## IN BRITAIN

THE issuing of plastic bullets and CS Gas to police in Britain has happened without more than a murmur of protest.

However the Northumbria police committee have challenged the right of Home Secretary Douglas Hurd to issue the police with these lethal weapons.

It has always been the role of police committee's to issue local police with equipment but in this case it was done without even any consultation.

Until now opposition to the in-

roduction of plastic bullets in Britain has mainly taken the form of proving that they are lethal.

This is not in doubt. The experiences of Northern Ireland don't have to be brought to Britain for us to know that plastic and rubber bullets kill.

The Northumbria challenge may have important implications, about the use of these weapons in Britain and also about the growing inclination of the police force to be directed centrally.

Road in connection with the anti-internment parade were attacked by stone-throwing youths on three occasions as the parade approached Connolly House, provisional Sinn Fein headquarters in Belfast.

'Police occupied the roof of the adjoining property after removing the stone throwers using plastic baton rounds when necessary. At 2.47pm Mr. Gerry Adams introduced the excluded member, Mr. Martin Galvin, who then appeared on a platform erected at Connolly House.

As Galvin was about to address the crowd who were seated on the roadway, police moved forward to detain him.

'They were attacked and obstructed by groups within the crowd which numbered in excess of 2,000, obviously determined to prevent Galvin's arrest and who had been instructed from the platform to do so.

To protect themselves from those throwing missiles and to effect entrance to Connolly House, the door of which had been barricaded after Galvin had entered, a total of 31 plastic baton rounds were discharged, a number of them in the air, to disperse the crowd.

Initial reports indicated that 20 persons were taken to hospital three of whom have been detained and a 22 year old man who was identified as a rioter

was found to be dead on arrival at hospital.'

Other reports though were in stark contrast.

Sinn Fein issued a statement which said: 'However during the speeches the senior RUC man on top of the single level shops opposite Connolly House appeared to give an order over the radio for a baton charge and for volleys of plastic bullets to be discharged, not at rioters because there were no rioters but at sitting men, women and children.

During the attacks on the demonstrators and the Sinn Fein office, Gerry Adams continued to appeal for calm. An RUC inspector seized the microphone from him and ordered two other RUC men to smash the speaking equipment.'

The Irish News report of the events was an eye witness account which described the result of the police charge as 'sheer pandemonium.'

### Warned

She went on to say that reporters and photographers were truncheoned and warned not to take any photos of plastic bullets being fired into the crowd.

She continued: 'It was ten minutes before I could get across the road and plastic bullets were still being sho-

wered on the panic-stricken crowd.

'A plastic bullet had left a gaping wound on one youth's face and he lay on the ground gurgling blood as it bubbled and streamed from the hole in his swollen left cheek.

'Sean Downes had been sitting on the wall behind me and was hit in the chest and mouth. He lay in the street struggling for breath while a man desperately tried to give him the kiss of life.

'His shirt was opened and we could see the round scars and purple mark where the bullet had struck his chest. Efforts to resuscitate him were all too obviously in vain.

'He lay back motionless and his skin started to turn blue.'

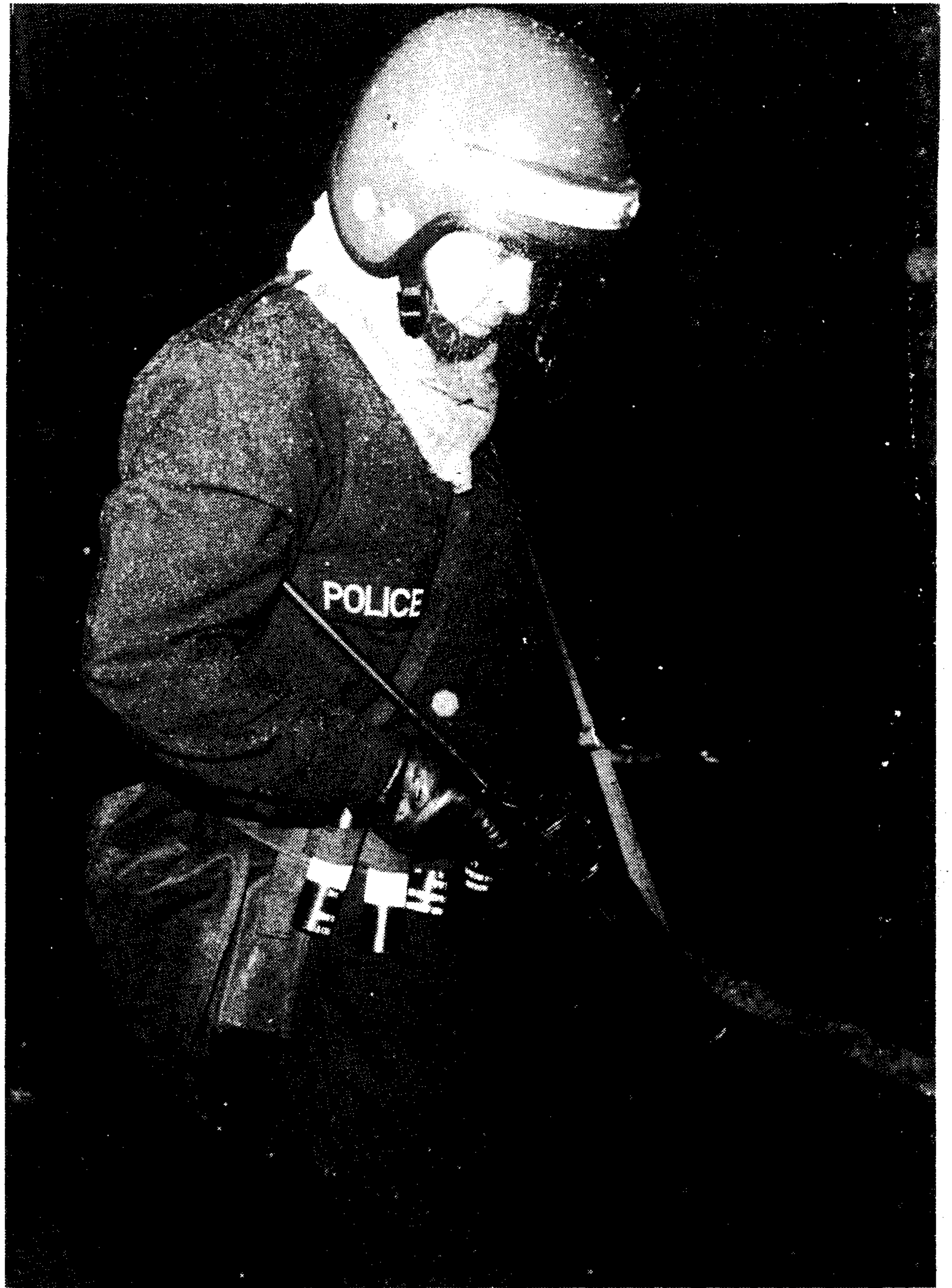
The international press were unanimous in their condemnation of the police onslaught.

As a result, the RUC officer responsible for shooting John Downes was charged and suspended from duty.

When I spoke to Brenda she had no confidence that his trial would be other than procedural, two years had passed and it hadn't been brought to court.

However last week the case was heard in Belfast. As we go to press we are not aware of a verdict having been reached.

Jim McCabe from the United Campaign Against Plas-



There is no longer any doubt about the imminence of plastic baton rounds being fired in Britain. Above, police with plastic baton launcher at Broadwater Farm during riots in 1985.

tic Bullets said to me, 'This is typical of the way they work. The trial just started, we weren't informed it was coming up. Brenda wasn't informed, she is on holiday at the moment and doesn't even know it's taking place.

RUC Reservist, Nigel Hegarty, was originally accused of murder and the charge was dropped in favour of manslaughter.

### Pretext

Last week when his case came to trial it was the Prosecution who provided a pretext for the murder. Their forensic expert claimed that part of the fore sight of Hegarty's plastic-bullet gun was broken off.

It is believed in Belfast that this pretext might well secure Hegarty's acquittal, but is clearly irrelevant to his guilt.

Photographs clearly show that Hegarty, like other RUC men that day, did not use sights when they fired.

Hegarty was no more than two metres from John Downes when he shot him. The regulation minimum laid down by the RUC is twenty metres and the excuse that the police were protecting themselves doesn't wash when thousands witnessed them shooting into a seated crowd.

However nationalists in Belfast are prepared for an acquittal.

The case concluded with the Judge reserving his judgement.

## KOREAN ECONOMIC UPTURN - based on sweat

steward in one of the 800 factories in the district.

Whilst Korean workers

### Hours

have to work a world record of 53 hours a week, the workers from the Peace Market often reach up to 100 hours.

In one room in a stuffy, narrow factory, employing less than 20 workers, a second floor was put in above the heads of the workers. They can only work sitting down and it is not rare for the whole thing to collapse and bury everyone underneath.

There are many accidents and wages are low.

Young female workers are forced to earn their living at thirteen. They take home between 80,000 and 120,000 won (£18.20) a week.

Even a fully trained tailor after five years of work experience only gets £56 per week.

It is common practice for three or four workers to share a room measuring 10

square metres which costs £16 per week.

'If there are many orders we don't leave our work place. We sleep there because we finish work at 3am', said a garment worker.

Of the 20,000 workers in the Peace Market, 1120 are union members. Often they are refused any recognition.

If a boss hears about union members he gives them the sack immediately.

The secretary of the workers movement, Min Chon-do and the leader of the textile workers union have been detained since last summer.

They are charged with founding an 'illegal union', organising a demonstration in April 1985 and occupying the Ministry of Labour.

Five union leaders who were in the union headquarters when a commemoration rally took place on November 13 last year were beaten up by the police who stormed the building that day.

The office of the Peace Market has since been secured with iron chains.

If there had not been an international trade union donation to the Chun Tae-il headquarters it would have thrown back the workers movement in the biggest Korean production and trading place for textiles.

'Cheap labour power for wealth' they call South Korea. 'A bonanza for investors'. But the bosses say they make very little profit, the investments are low and they claim to have exceptionally high debts.

### Hungry

But the economic development of South Korea in the last twenty years has brought it from a hungry 'have nothing' to a country with an average yearly income of \$2000.

With orientation to exports South Korea has advanced from a country with poor natural resources to a world record holder of economic growth, based on her only wealth - cheap labour power.

A steel and shipyard industry has been built which is feared by European, American and even Japanese competitors and puts to the wall workers from these countries with wages which are below the poverty line.

Korean steel of the lowest quality classification is offered three times cheaper than Japanese.

There is another side to the success story of this military dictatorship.

Often praised in the west as a model for the Third World, South Korea is \$55 billion in debt and fourth in the list of debtor nations.

This is potentially explosive because the growth rate is under five per cent while seven per cent is necessary to employ the 350,000 school leavers every year.

70 per cent of the workers live below the poverty line with the peasantry providing the cheap labour to the cities.

The land is still owned by speculators and landlords.

40 per cent of earnings go into rent. Every member of a peasant's family has an average debt of \$3,000.

The price of rice is only 80 per cent of the cost of production.

There is a growing movement of country-wide opposition against the government.

## PUBLIC MEETING AND DISCUSSION 1974

The events surrounding the expulsion of Alan Thornett from the WRP

October 12, 1pm - 6pm  
East Oxford Community Centre  
Princes Street, Cowley Road  
OXFORD

Session 1. MEETING 1pm - 3pm  
Speakers: Alan Thornett  
From WRP (to be announced)  
Chair: Steve Howgate (Oxford & Swindon WRP)  
Break  
Session 2 DISCUSSION 4pm - 6pm



# SA: INTERNAT SOLIDARITY

**THE CAMPAIGN for mass workers' sanctions against South Africa is rapidly gathering momentum in Britain and Ireland.**

Isolated actions have been taken by individual sections of workers and anti-apartheid activists for years, notably the Dunnes Store strikers, Portsmouth NUPE and others like the Namibia Support Committee and Spartacus R of the Cultural Awareness Programme.

**The demand for a nationally co-ordinated campaign to bring together and organise systematically all the different groups committed to a campaign for workers' sanctions is emerging day by day with increasing urgency.**

There is now a campaign in operation with this proposal as its main object.

It started earlier this year with a lobby of the July TUC General Council meeting called initially by Birmingham Trades Council.

Within a very short space of time, at least a dozen trade union organisations, including the Lambeth Trades Council, had decided to support the aim of imposing trade union sanctions and to come to the lobby to pressure the TUC into giving their backing to workers carrying out boycotting action.

Following that lobby, a meeting was held nearby which decided that the campaign must be continued and broadened out to draw in the widest possible layer of the labour movement and that a lobby and a fringe meeting for that purpose would be held at the TUC conference in September.

These two events were organised by the Lambeth Trades Council.

A special train was looked from London to Brighton. Within four weeks, in the month of August when a substantial proportion of organisations do not meet at all, 20 labour movement bodies became official supporters and participants in the campaign.

Amongst them were: Reading Trades Council, Hammersmith Trades Council, Lambeth Trades Council, Charing Cross Hospital Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Lambeth Joint Trade Unions, Lambeth NALGO, Crawley AEU, Mid-Glamorgan District AEU,

Merthyr Trades Council, Marylebone NUR, Durham Mechanics (NUM), the Walkley Labour Party, City of London Anti-Apartheid, the Namibia Support Committee, and the London Bus Delegates Conference, who also organised their own leaflet on the question of sanctions which they distributed at the lobby.

The lobby and the fringe meeting have both been reported in detail in Workers Press.

It should be recorded again that the remarkable feature of all the events of the campaign has been the influence it has had in fighting through sectarian differences between different groups to unite around the question of trade union sanctions against South Africa.

This has not by any means been an easy fight.

Certain groups have stood out by their resolute determination to try to exploit the campaign to prove that their little sect has the best policies on South Africa and that therefore everybody should join their little party and drop this silly notion of expanding the sanctions campaign into the mass national movement which it has every possibility of being.

These organisations have not had the grace to stand back and allow a campaign to develop but in fact have done their absolute best to sabotage it at every level.

When you look at the enormous possibilities of the campaign, their actions begin to take on an increasingly sinister light.

We have to ask why they

don't want a successful sanctions campaign.

When you look at the influence such a campaign could have in orienting the South African struggle towards a class struggle rather than a nationalist struggle like the one which took place in Zimbabwe, I think we have to recognise that objectively these organisations are against a socialist revolution in South Africa.

I refer specifically to the 'News Line' Healyites of the bogus WRP who have tried at every step of the way to insist that the campaign cannot proceed unless it incorporates their ultra-left demand for a fund to arm the African workers.

Their premise seems to be that it doesn't matter two hoots what kind of political parties are in the ascendance in South Africa when the revolution takes place, as it inevitably will. — the possession of a large quantity of arms will ensure socialism.

At the moment the ANC is the most influential group.

Their avowed policy is for a two-stage revolution: first the bourgeois revolution and then many, many, many years later, the socialist revolution.

They are totally opposed to the theory of the permanent revolution.

The Healyites say we must accept this scenario and in fact, in proposing their addition to the sanctions policy on the Lambeth Trades Council on the setting up of a fund for arms, they stipulated that the ANC, as well as the PAC and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, should be notified.

Would not the ANC, if they accepted such a fund (which they show no signs of doing), use the resultant weapons to

**BRONWEN HANDYSIDE is the Assistant Secretary of the Lambeth Trades Council and convenor of the Trades Council's South Africa sub-committee which has been involved in the organisation of the National Sanctions Campaign. In this article, she reports on developments in the Campaign and sums up some of its experiences so far.**

knock off any bona-fide revolutionaries who happened to be around?

The Healyites are proceeding with besotted and grim-faced determination along the same dreary dead-ends pursued by us in the past.

You don't have to build revolutionary parties internationally, because revolutions will spontaneously erupt, led by Stalinists and bourgeois nationalists.

This is also the reason why the Brixton and Toxteth riots were seen by Healy's WRP as a revolutionary upsurge.

It is perhaps because we made absolutely sure, in every recent wave of the struggle of the working class, that we remained a tiny and ever-diminishing sectarian group on the outside of the class, that we ended up in this position.

The kindest thing you can say is that it is in no shape or form a Marxist position.

Such was the chauvinism of the old party that in practice the only place we tried to build a party was in Britain.

But you cannot build a party or wage a successful struggle in Britain without building it internationally.

The other organisation which has used its best endeavours to knock this campaign on the head as quickly as possible has been the Anti-Apartheid Movement itself.

When they were invited to participate in the lobby of the TUC and the fringe meeting, their response was not only to decline that invitation, but to organise a so-called mass leafletting of the conference completely separate from the other events of the campaign.

They further used their influence on the Birmingham Trades Council, through Socialist Action, to persuade them to drop out of the cam-

paign which they had initiated themselves, and to join in the separate leafletting.

Instead of joining forces with others fighting on the same issue to widen and strengthen the campaign, Anti-Apartheid decided to do their best to draw forces away, to split up and divide and thus to weaken their own efforts and ours.

The crowning irony was, of course, that when Birmingham Trades Council arrived in their coach, having started travelling at the crack of dawn to get to Brighton on time, the 'mass leafletting' organised by the AAM consisted of two members of Brighton AAM.

If these people had any conviction at all of the validity of their tactics in opposition to ours, surely they could have got together a few dozen people out of the thousands who attended the AAM march through London to Clapham Common earlier this year?

It would appear, from the facts, that not only are they opposed to organising a mass sanctions campaign themselves, they will do everything in their power to prevent anybody else doing it either.

Though appearing to come from the opposite direction to the Healyites, Anti-Apartheid's intentions look exactly the same.

The Healyites and the AAM members who sit on the Lambeth Trades Council South Africa sub-committee are the two factions that appear to be in the most irreconcilable conflict.

The lesson to be learned is that groups who have the most overt and nasty arguments with each other can in fact be fundamentally in total agreement.

The way that organisations are going to be tested in this campaign is not by seeing which one can cling most ferociously to its secta-

**Workers Revolutionary Party  
West of Scotland branch**

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Joint lobby of trade union branches and political groups calling for workers' sanctions outside TUC General Congress.



South African miners' calling for sanctions from the NUM National Conference.



# IONAL CLASS

## not petty squabbles

rian viewpoints, which turn out in the end to be all directed to the same purpose, but through what it concretely produces to assist the South African struggle.

South African workers are not interested in which little British group is winning arguments with which other little British group, and particularly not in which one can gain the most members out of this campaign.

They are waiting to see what we are going to do, and the action they have asked for is for sanctions.

We have no right to dictate to them what the course of their struggle should be.

The full significance of the sanctions campaign should not be overlooked.

Sanctions will not bring

Botha to his knees, but an effective boycott campaign by British workers, who will in many cases be laying their jobs on the line, must orient the struggle in South Africa closer to a conscious class struggle and away from the direction of replacing a white bourgeoisie with a black one.

It must also make a difference to the trade union movement in Britain itself.

It is very easy for union branches to vote through a resolution in support of South Africa — even to vote through money for arms — but if workers decide to carry out a sanctions campaign, they will have to look at a situation where they may be making very material sacrifices on a day-by-day basis.

The forces that come for-

ward out of the trade unions on this question will be of a very different nature from the bureaucracy and will learn enormous lessons in the course of the campaign, like the Dunnes Stores workers.

The objective that we must direct our efforts towards, is a socialist revolution in South Africa.

If that objective can be achieved, a major change will take place in the balance of forces influencing the course of world revolution.

The eyes of the world are on South Africa.

The next stage of the campaign decided at the Birmingham meeting which planned the TUC lobby is a proposed national organising meeting early in December.

It is proposed to invite everybody who is prepared to carry out action on a boycotting campaign, with a view to setting up a national body to co-ordinate and direct a national campaign.



Bronwen Handyside, Billy Etherington and David Kitson share a platform at Brighton TUC fringe meeting on sanctions against South Africa

### Union call to end killings

ON APRIL 28, 1986, two union members were travelling home from a building site. As they drove past Crossroads, their vehicle was suddenly stoned. The vehicle picked up speed, skidded and slammed into a tree.

While Rashid Abrahams and David Ndude were seriously injured and trapped inside the vehicle, a petrol bomb was thrown in.

Rashid Abrahams was burnt alive and died an agonising and painful death.

David Ndude, who was very seriously injured with 90 per cent burns on his body, eventually died six days later in a slow and tortuous way.

Why? Why should anyone kill two workers, two victims of exploitation and oppression?

Who are victims of the madness where the oppressed kill the oppressed and the exploited kill the exploited?

They did not die in vain. We will not allow that. Their death gave birth to our commitment to a **Stop the Killing Campaign** which has been initiated by our union.

The response to the call to end the violence which has divided organisations and set communities against each other has been amazing.

The union, along with a large number of progressive organisations, is totally committed to the **Stop the Killing Campaign**.

Even though COSATU (Western Cape) attended the first meeting as observers, the **Stop the Killing Interim Committee** has received no official response regarding COSATU (Western Cape)'s position.

No reply to its written request to meet with the COSATU regional executive has been received.

However, some of the organisations who attended that first meeting were quite impressed with the honest and concerned comments made by the COSATU (WC) chairperson.

The UDF, on the other hand, has not replied at all to verbal and written requests to join the **Stop the Killing Campaign**.

The Interim Committee has not received a reply to its letter requesting a meeting with the UDF Western Cape executive.

The Gardens Region of the UDF is the only UDF affiliate to come forward and actively participate in the campaign.

We hope, of course, that the whole of UDF eventually decides to become full campaign participants.

Meanwhile, progress has been slow because of the State of Emergency but our union remains committed to the **Stop the Killing Campaign**.

We declare that our noble objectives for a free society should not be disgraced by such shameful acts of terror against the victims of oppression and exploitation.

'Our sense of justice must be greater than that of our oppressors, not less.'

The union condemns:

1. Necklacing and all those involved in these murders.  
2. Kangaroo Courts as structures of terror that have no mandate from workers and our oppressed community.

● THIS article is reprinted from 'Sparky', the newsletter of the Electrical and Allied Workers Trades Union of South Africa, Cape Town Region.

### Bold strike by Plessey workers — needs British support

SOUTH AFRICAN workers from the Plessey's factory in the Western Cape are calling on Plessey's workers in Britain to assist them in their bitter struggle against management.

The EAWTU, the Electrical and Allied Workers Trade Union which has organised the majority of the workers of the three Plessey factories in Cape Town, is waging a fight against the starvation wages paid by Plessey South Africa.

The Plessey Renak subsidiary responded by victimising workers, who hit back with an overtime ban to back their wage demands.

The company then employed white third and fourth year engineering students from the University of Cape Town to work as scabs.

Armed security has been introduced in the factory and security cards issued to workers. Barbed wire security fences have been erected.

The workers have already had three short strikes in support of their rights. The company is now threatening workers with the security legislation which can result in 10 years imprisonment and a £7,500 fine for illegal strike activity.

An indication of the level of courage of these workers is that, although very recently unionised, they are actually prepared to carry out this fight under the extremely

Here are some of the brand names to look for:

Cigarettes: Rothmans.

Fresh/tinned/dried fruit: Cape, Outspan, Golden Jubilee, Gold Reef, IXL, Koo, Silver Leaf, del Monte, Goddess, John West, Sharwoods, S&B, Gants, Turban, Libbys.

Canned meats: Apex, Armour Star, Union, S&B, Bull Brand.

Canned Fish: Glenryck, Armour, John West, Puffin, S&B.

Wines and Spirits: Zonnebloem, Lanzerac, Koopmanskloof, Rembrandt, SA Sherry, SA Burgundy.

Health foods: Shapers, Koo, Rooibosch.

dangerous circumstances of the present State of Emergency.

Plessey's Laingsdale subsidiary is regarded as a national security keypoint in terms of South African legislation.

They manufacture weapons and military equipment for the South African Defence Force. This enables management to use all kinds

of legal dirty tricks against the workers.

Management's response to the union's majority presence in the factory and its fight for a living wage was a terror campaign.

Workers were threatened with 180 days in detention, army intervention and dismissal if they remained with the union.

Of the 120 members who belonged to the union, 70 resigned in the face of the intense management victimisation. This has broken the union's majority in the factory and stopped, for the present, the fight for a living wage.

Plessey workers in South Africa are calling on British workers for solidarity action.

They are calling in particular for Plessey workers here to put pressure on their management to try to effect a change in the South African factories, but they are also calling for financial support and action from other trade union bodies.

A representative from South Africa is in Britain now, campaigning on these questions. Workers Press will carry more details and an interview the week after next.

In the meantime we are publishing a list of South African goods which are commonly carried in retail stores, and urging everybody to boycott them.



Part of 20,000-strong crowd which travelled from all over South Africa to the Guguletu Stadium in 1985 to pay their respects to victims of the state slaughter.



# WORKERS PRESS talks to JOE AUSTIN vice chair, Sinn Fein in the six counties



JOE AUSTIN

## PART 4

IN THE FIRST three parts of this interview JOE AUSTIN discussed how Sinn Fein in the six counties is grappling with the problems of developing political consciousness within the working class.

He explained the role of Sinn Fein's electoral struggle and the breaking down of the existing relationship between elected representatives and those whom they represent.

He talked about the importance of the national question, the relationship between the armed and the political wings of the struggle and how together they challenge, not only the British occupation of the six counties, but the capitalist class system.

He also discussed the confusion of Republicanism with the Irish Free State and described the struggle as he sees it after the removal of British occupation: how the capitalist class will try to re-establish control over all of Ireland.

This week, the interview is concluded by Joe Austin talking about his views on a two-stage revolution and his hopes for serious and critical support from Communists in Britain.

**HOW DO you see your struggle fitting into the debate among communists about a two stage or a permanent revolution?**

I THINK that you have to look at the subject matter and from that you have to develop a strategy.

The long term strategy of the Republican movement is the establishment of a democratic socialist republic.

As a first step, you have to have the means of bringing about that change.

Now that means in the North, where we have an army of occupation, 44,000 members of British forces supported by unlimited military resources, that we have to pitch our resistance at a realistic level — parallel to that.

What we have to do of course is develop politicisation.

Then, in the South, we have a situation whereby there isn't an army of occupation, there is an economy of occupation; there's an economy of dependency; there's a social and psychological dependency on Britain and support of it by a capitalist class.

We have a populace unhappy with the economic situation, who see themselves as observers looking at the struggle in the North, being fed a diet of propaganda and having a gut reaction that the British occupation should end but not really seeing themselves openly involved in it.

Who would blame their economic despair, not on British occupation, not on economic occupation but on another incompetence — in terms of political parties.

We have attempted, as part of our long term policy, to link all those issues and to link them with the British occupation.

We have a situation whereby, at this phase of the struggle, it is highly unlikely that we have either the strength or the logistical opportunities of removing the British occupation suddenly and establishing a *de facto* socialist government.

So it has to be two stages, because what we're dealing with is a situation where a section of the population, of the Irish Free State population, see their particular part of that revolutionary struggle, or that armed resistance, as being over.

Now, we don't believe that the Free State is Republican, but there are huge sections of that population who believe it is a republic.

So the call to arms, if it was made, wouldn't affect that section of the population.

Historically, the Republican movement has looked to the South for support, for the struggle in the North. But the population in the South was hypnotised by events in the north.

The attitude that the political struggle can wait until the issues in the North are resolved is actually politically wrong.

The result of that policy was that, for a number of years, the issues that faced people on a day-to-day basis in the South were not seen as the business of the Republican movement or Sinn Fein.

In terms of how people perceived their lives in the South, Sinn Fein became irrelevant, the business of Sinn Fein was seen as an issue that affected the North and didn't affect them.

So we weren't involved in any resistance in the South to that whole social, economic conspiracy we spoke of earlier as inherent in Capitalism.

We are involved now and

we have made limited breakthroughs.

We will obviously need to combat it and to develop it as the situation develops.

But I don't think that we can look at Ireland and say there is a strategy which was successful somewhere else.

We have to develop a strategy which takes into account our limitations, which takes into account the political, geographical, cultural, social and economic realities that exist.

The strategy that can win must be pitched at that level.

To go back to your reference to Vietnam. The nature of imperialism has obviously changed.

100 years ago imperialism was almost totally an economic imperialism. In Ireland what we have today is a political imperialism.

If you listen to what people like Prior say in terms of Ireland and what they say to justify their presence in Ireland, it isn't overtly that there is an economic need to be here, but it is on the basis that they need to stop revolutionary development on their doorstep.

What makes it more complicated is that geographically the larger section of Ireland, to a casual observer, is free.

Now we both know that it's not free, but that complicates that issue. Again that takes us to a step which is actually of great importance to the Republican movement and that's our attitude towards abstentionism.

There is a realisation that, however bad or incompetent or uncaring or conspiratorial the Government or the administration in the South may be, the vast majority of people see it as their Government.

That complicates what we are trying to do because

when that Government is seen to be in support of British imperialism, or at least is seen to be anti-Republican, people become confused.

Now the reason they're anti-republican is because we pose an economic and a cultural threat to what they are involved in and to where their interests lie.

The Accord is the coming together of all those class, cultural, religious, political interests.

They are coming together to defend their interests, which are under threat because the Republican movement poses an economic, social, cultural threat to them.

The Accord is lethal because, as far as those forces are concerned, it is a blue print for victory, it's a blueprint to maintain their interests and it's a blueprint to defeat the strength that we pose.

Dressed up of course to

bringing about radical change either at local or national level, we have been to the forefront and we've carried that struggle.

Now that doesn't mean that we exclude all others, but that's the logistical reality of it.

We see issues that lend themselves to broad fronts, we see issues that lend themselves to the national concern and consideration — such as strip searching, plastic bullets, the conditions of prisoners — all of those are issues that the 'left' and the liberal section of our society has a responsibility to play a role in.

The reality of the Communist Party, in terms of day-to-day life, in any section of the community, but certainly in the oppressed sections of the nationalist community, is that they're totally irrelevant.

The smaller Trotskyist parties don't really have

see British imperialism, we also disagree with them.

We are republicans, we are socialist and their view of that would almost be a benign view of it.

So there are major economic differences in how we perceive what occupation is about, what imperialism is about.

**WHAT ABOUT your differences with the Trotskyist parties?**

WE HAVE our differences with the Trotskyist parties. The primary difference between ourselves and those groupings is that we're republicans and they are Trotskyists.

In terms of the Trotskyist groupings, we don't subscribe to Trotskyism: there's an economical, cultural, political difference between our own political theory and theirs — and that difference is what makes us Republicans and them Trotskyists.

Having said that we are politically in conflict with them, there are issues where there is at least some degree of common ground.

Now I think we shouldn't take things out of proportion in terms of numerical strength, in terms of parties and in terms of popular support for political parties, it's a Goliath and David situation.

That doesn't mean to say that we don't see that they have the right to exist, we obviously do think they have the right to exist.

But they don't contribute in any meaningful fashion to bringing about either revolutionary change, or revolutionary assistance to the economic situation that prevails in the South.

The cultural conditions that exist in the South, the political realities in the South are the struggle in the North.

**WHAT ARE your theoretical differences with Trotskyism?**

We're not Trotskyists, that's our theoretical differences. In terms of how they perceive the struggle in Ireland and the end result of that struggle in Ireland.

We believe that the struggle in Ireland is a struggle for national liberation. Social and democratic social structures and institutions will govern, based on, of course, working class needs.

We believe that our role in terms of the international struggle is of support as well as of conscious concern and as one of politicisation in terms of what is happening around the world.

*'I think the left must take on board Ireland, not only as a problem for the Irish but as a problem for the left in England.'*

make it acceptable is the facade of limited changes, the facade of the Accord being in the defence of the nationalist interest.

We are now told the Accord is going to be successful because it allows the nationalist population to fly their national flag.

You've been here a number of days — we don't need an Accord to fly the national flag.

We don't need legislation that allows us to speak our language. We don't need legislation that allows us to oppose British occupation but that puts the sugar on a very bitter pill.

I think that the Accord's failing, I think it's failing for a number of reasons, but primarily because the nationalist population have been brought down this road before and seen it's a cul-de-sac.

I think that we have a task of course, a formidable task, to work against this latest blueprint but I'm confident of the fact that that's what we'll do.

**WHAT IS the relationship of Sinn Fein to Communist parties in Ireland?**

AGAIN I think the situation is, in terms of those forces that are in the business of

either the personnel or are not in a position where they contribute in a meaningful way to bring about change.

This isn't to be derogatory and it isn't to dismiss them.

We politically disagree with them of course, but I mean they aren't that relevant to the current situation.

**WHAT ARE your political disagreements with them?**

WELL, THERE are a number of disagreements with them.

For instance, in terms of the Communist Party of Ireland, while opposing British occupation, it opposes it from an armchair position.

They, for instance, are opposed to armed struggle. We have policy and support the armed struggle, see the armed struggle as a legitimate means to resist British occupation.

They would disagree with that, they fundamentally disagree with our position.

We don't believe that the working class can be united under British imperialism and we don't believe that they can be united while the country is geographically divided; we believe that that's the reason for the division.

They would disagree, I would imagine, with how we





The British army presence, who infringe on every part of daily life, are a constant reminder to the nationalist communities in the six counties that they are an occupied people.

We don't believe our primary concern, our primary responsibility is to fight the Palestinian struggle in Ireland, but to make our people aware of the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle.

We also believe in, and we're very conscious of, the need for armed struggle. They don't.

In terms of our economic and social direction it is primarily one of needs for the Irish people.

Their's tends to be one of a hypnotic look at what was happening in the 1913 or 1914 period in Moscow in Russia and trying to carbon copy that onto Ireland.

We don't believe that that works.

We also are very detached from the incessant, internal struggles of the left. We don't have those problems.

We don't particularly want those problems and while we do on occasions understand them, the continual divisions don't either help the left in general or help those whom the left purports to defend — and that's the working class.

So its a major problem, major difficulties, major differences.

The place to fight the revolutionary struggle is not in five-hour sessions, it's in the street is where that struggle is going to be won or lost.

That's not what happens with the left now.

What happens is the never ending argument about whether the bottle is half-full or is the bottle half-empty.

That perpetuation of internal discussion doesn't match what is required.

We are very much in the business of attempting to do what is required.

What is required in the street is not being the 'vanguard of the revolution' but being part of the revolution and trying to maximize and spread that.

That only happens, and life only happens, on the street and I think that's a major problem with the very microscopic left that we have in Ireland.

Having said that, we don't pretend that we have all the answers nor do we pretend that we are the bastion of the revolution, we are not.

If others can make a conscious and realistic input into it they're welcome.

That's it, and that isn't to say they have to substitute their identity to do it within the revolutionary movement.

There is, a role and they have to find that role.

**FINALLY, what would you ask of British revolutionaries to help forward your struggle?**

I THINK that what has to happen is, number one, that the lessons of Ireland have got to be transmitted in the most practical fashion to what's happened in England.

The manifestations of police using riot shields that were initially used here, the

stock-piling of plastic bullets, the various shades of legislation are only the tip of the iceberg.

What has happened, of course, is that the British state is learning all of the lessons of repression in Ireland and they're prepared and in fact have already begun the process of using them in England.

But the left should look upon it, the same way the oppressive forces look upon it, as a massive training ground of alternative political views.

Whether it's in terms of how they deal with Greenham Common, or how they deal with the Miners strike, or Wapping or whatever, its very conscious and those lessons are being learned and they're being implemented.

The second thing is that, Connolly said that a country that enslaves another country cannot in itself be free. That has to be understood.

You mentioned, earlier on, the discussions that the international communist communities have on Ireland. I don't believe those discussions take place as a conscious decision.

I think there are certainly comrades who are very concerned about what happens in Ireland and are very supportive and very fraternal.

But I think that the left must take on board Ireland, not only as a problem for the Irish but as a problem for the left in England. All of those lessons have to be learnt.

But primarily we have to establish a normality of relationships with progressive forces. That has to be done as a matter of instant importance.

And that doesn't entail blind allegiance to what we do, in fact that would be counterproductive to what we were seeking.

We're not looking for that, we're looking for critical understanding of what happens in Ireland.

We're looking for advice. We're looking for discussion.

We're looking for all of those things that are the normality of progressive forces.

I don't mean that you leave your Trotskyism behind on the boat when you come here, or that we leave our Republicanism at home when we come there.

But it means that that relationship has got to be developed.



The British miners strike made it clear to the British as well as the Irish working class that there is one common enemy, the British ruling class. This mural which dates from the Hunger Strikes and has been defaced by British troops carries the same message.

Jonathan Swift, when talking about what the Irish should do about the English, said we should burn everything English but their coal.

I think that we have to some extent inherited that concept and that has damaged us as much as it has damaged the left.

We have constantly and consciously tried to move away from that. In terms of the number of Sinn Fein speakers going to England, there is no comparison to what it was a number of years ago, two years ago.

You spoke earlier about the effects of the miners' strike. I think for the first time it should have demonstrated to the left what the opposition was capable of doing.

But it also demonstrated to the more politicised sections of the Irish people that it isn't the English who are at war with the Irish, it is the English ruling classes who are at war with the Irish and who are also at war with the English working class.

Now that's not to say that us 'politicos' discovered that the day the strike began.

But in realistic terms and in visual terms, it demonstrated to the Irish people that there is a common enemy and there is a common front and that front, at whatever level, has got to be found.

### REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

#### LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ

LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984.  
JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989.  
EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637.  
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016.  
GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016.  
JOHN McCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715.  
ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576.  
PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575.

#### PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX

NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence 879225.  
PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603.  
TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence, 69204.  
PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880.

#### WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG

HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636.  
SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661.  
CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662.  
PAUL NORNEY: Life sentence, 863532.  
NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644.

#### ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS

VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.  
HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638.  
BILLY GRIMES: SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418.  
STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence 758663.

#### GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP

ROBERT CAMPBELL: 10-year sentence, B32954.  
RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799.  
JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635

#### FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085  
MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087.  
BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662.  
PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034.  
EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.

#### LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ

PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888.  
BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380.  
GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882.  
PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881.

#### HULL

HM Prison Hedon Rd, Hull, Humberside

ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083.

#### DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.

MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134.  
ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.

#### INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719; HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire  
PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree.  
PAUL HILL: 462778. HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.  
GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.  
JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.  
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree.  
JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.  
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.  
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland.  
RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.  
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.

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

### Announcement for WRP members WRP Irish Commission WEEKEND SCHOOL

Saturday-Sunday September 27th-28th  
College of Marxist Education, Derbyshire

#### DISCUSSIONS ON: IRISH SOLIDARITY WORK

THE IRISH WORKING CLASS AND THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE  
PROSPECTS FOR TROTSKYISM IN IRELAND TODAY

Cost £12 plus fares from areas. Please make bookings with WRP Irish Commission, 21b Old Town, London W4 0JT.



**LETTERS**Your letters are welcome at Workers Press,  
21b Old Town, London SW4 0JT.

# Whither the Irish Socialist League?

WHEN GERRY Healy was expelled by the WRP in October 1985 he ran away from his own party and refused to account for his actions.

His supporters convened their own conference and, in farcical fashion, expelled the majority.

The Hyland minority, too, by their hysterical behaviour, made serious discussion on the history of Trotskyism since the war impossible.

M. Banda left the Party Centre in December 1985 and never contacted us again.

But the majority of the party were determined to re-examine all aspects of our history.

At the end of September the sentiments expressed by Cliff Slaughter — of willingness to discuss with all sections of the world Trotskyist movement and of the possibility of reconstructing the Fourth International — were warmly received by the party membership.

Of course such re-examination both endangered individual reputations and tested the loyalty of party members.

But we had to develop the members to think independently as Marxists in the battle with other political tendencies to regroup the forces of Trotskyism.

Our theory and theirs we would test out in practice.

Joint co-operation on specific campaigns would lend substance to theoretical discussions.

In this spirit we approached the Irish Socialist League.

After a number of friendly visits all contact suddenly ceased and, with no prior warning, an article appeared in the Irish Socialist Press denouncing us as counter-revolutionary.

Is this the attitude of serious Trotskyists determined to fight for principles?

No opportunity for discus-

sion would be denied to the comrades.

The party had rejected the cowardly chauvinism of the Healy era in regard to Ireland as one of the major issues of the split.

It is worth mentioning some of the worst positions.

In the 1960s, Healy had a 'two nations theory', a workers and farmers government in Stormont (!) (the SLL had members who were protestants).

He had a Derry branch, a Belfast branch and, fantastically, a Dublin branch campaigning in the early 1970s to bring down the Tory government.

As the Irish revolution could not take place without the permission of the British revolution, we had to have protestant and catholic unity so the barricades in the 'no go' areas had to be removed(!)

The News Line's 'outrage' at the Brighton bomb outraged the members.

This is history — so how are we to overcome it by proclaiming 'we are the Trotskyist Party in Ireland' as D. Kane does in the Irish Socialist Press of July 1.

Comrade F. Quigley tells us in the same issue that we are capitulating to republicanism while 'protestant workers are fighting huge battles with the RUC'.

But, as socialists in Britain, are we not primarily obliged to combat chauvinism in the Labour movement here?

And were not these loyalists only concerned to get the RUC out of their road to carry out pogroms on the nationalist community?

Are we so light minded to confuse revolutionary resistance with fascist terror?

D. Kane also advocates 'arming the working class in all areas regardless of religion to call Paisley's bluff'.

Are you mad? To arm protestant workers without first breaking them from the

reactionary loyalist ideology is just suicidal.

On the question of Stalinism we must be careful. National liberation movements like Sinn Fein, as they attempt to take up real struggles on behalf of workers, reach an ideological crisis.

The two stage theory of national revolution now, socialist revolution later, comes into conflict with the working class base.

De Valera's 'Labour must wait' is still there to be overcome by the Irish working class.

The Republican Congress of 1934 foundered on just this issue because of Stalinist in-

tervention.

Permanent Revolution does not deny there may be stages or a period in a revolution when a 'democratic' or national revolutionary government overthrows the colonial regime.

The point is that such a government arrives too late in history (the epoch of imperialism) to solve the national problems without mobilising the full force of the working class.

This government must then either abolish all the social gains of the revolution and defeat the working class or abolish itself and establish socialism.

The latter has never hap-

pened in history — but we have had Stalinists that defeated imperialism due to the Red Army or the proximity of the workers states.

However, they always maintained peaceful co-existence by controlling and defeating the working class themselves.

Proof of this is their hostility to nationalism in Ireland — where they cannot control Sinn Fein, and their strident advocacy of nationalism only in countries like South Africa where they do control the ANC.

The history of the twentieth century is littered with proof of Lenin's April theses and their essential unity with Trotsky's permanent revolu-

tion, from the Irish Free Government of 1922 to Robert Mugabe today.

To oppose a stageist perspective from either Mike Banda (the position on Vietnam), the Stalinists or Sinn Fein does not mean a sectarian justification of chauvinism.

It means that differences are fought out in the struggle against the common enemy while always maintaining the independence of the working class.

To do less smacks of a patronising attitude and could open the door for a repeat of the fate of the Shanghai soviet of 1927.

Gerry Downing



Belfast section of the old WRP

## On the statutory minimum wage

THE PLAN for a statutory minimum wage, devised by the TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee and endorsed by a large majority at the TUC Congress, is a fraud, a scheme designed to cover for the introduction of an incomes policy under a Labour government.

Even without strings attached, the projected £80 per week minimum (gross full-time pay before deductions) would be a shocking pittance which could only confirm the continuing existence of low pay, not eliminate it.

Such a figure would be a target minimum for low-paying employers, who currently pay above it.

Others would be happy to offer just a few pounds more to be able to claim that they were providing above minimum rates.

It is clear from the Liaison Committee proposals, however, that there is also an expectation that fixing a statutory minimum wage for the low paid will be paralleled by 'restraint' exercised by those with higher incomes.

This achieves the ideal sought by every employer; collective bargaining reduced to a battle between workers to divide up a sum fixed in advance.

Basically, this is the deal that has been stitched-up by the 32-member TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee.

The body includes MPs Tony Benn and Eric Heffer, for the Labour Party National Executive Committee; Rodney Bickerstaffe (NUPE), John Edmonds (GMBU), Ron Todd (TGWU) and Norman Willis (TUC general secretary) for the TUC and MPs Roy Hattersley, Neil Kinnock and Gerald Kaufman for the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The Labour movement has always been clear on the need to win enforceable protective legislation on such

matters as health and safety at work, sick pay, holiday, maternity and redundancy pay and ending discrimination on grounds of sex, religion or colour.

At the same time, workers have been equally resolute in opposing state interference in wages and conditions bargaining, whether this be regulation by a Tory Industrial Relations Act, a Pay Code, Statutory Pay Policy or an Industrial Relations Court.

Or by a Labour government's prices and incomes Board, a threshold mechanism, an 'In Place of Strife' cooling off and strike ballot plan or a 'Social Contract'.

The danger of a statutory minimum wage, even without restraint strings, is that it stands midway between the areas where protection at work and free bargaining apply, with a foot in both camps.

This problem was discussed by trade unionists at the turn of the century who were seeking to provide protection for non-union low paid women workers in the under-cutting 'sweated' trades, without undermining free wage bargaining.

Their answer was to reject the national minimum wage and instead to call for legislation to cover only the trades where unions and collective bargaining were virtually nonexistent.

The first Trade Boards in Britain — later named Wages Councils — were established in 1909 to cover just four trades of this type.

Later, the number of employments covered was expanded, but a mechanism was included for winding-up Trade Boards where unions had improved their positions and free collective bargaining could operate.

Today, as many as eight million workers are on poverty wages.

For these and for many more the position is being further undermined at a

time of high unemployment by the turn to increased use of part-time contract and casualised labour.

The subject of a national statutory minimum wage is complex and needs discussing, but a major concern for Marxists is the greater unity of the widest possible sections of the working class.

A high legal minimum known to everyone — possibly starting out with the £3 an hour 'decency threshold' advocated by the European Commission — would block bidding-down by contractors, non-unionists and scabs and would give a substantial rise to millions of low paid workers.

If seen to be fought for and enforced by the major unions it would be only the first step in a drive to unionise the lowest paid and would therefore be a development towards dispensing with the need for state involvement in pay altogether.

At the same time, without restraints attached, it would leave the strongest sections of workers in a position to continue to spearhead the battles for better pay and conditions as they have always done.

Certainly many employers will scream that higher pay must lead to them having to sack workers.

On the other hand, many will clearly make a profit, even when paying higher wages and will be reluctant to close down their operations when it comes to the point.

The worry that such a scheme will eliminate differentials is surely something of a 'red herring' as it is precisely the erosion of differentials that advances them.

As for those at the TUC Congress who rightly opposed the Liaison Committee's proposals (aside from Eric Hammond of the EET-PU, who sounded like any employer in his concern that wage protection might in-

hibit the drive for world markets) we have yet to see if this is a principled opposition or merely a preparing of the way for their own involvement in some form of voluntary restraint scheme, some deal with Kinnock and Co under which the unions would do the work of the state in policing their own members.

Equally significant at the TUC was the attitude of the union leaders who were calling for support of the Liaison Committee minimum.

Bemoaning the inroads of contract and casual labour systems into employment, leading to the rise of an alleged 'servant class', they had clearly thrown in the towel in the battle to unionise the low paid.

Instead they are looking to a Labour government and the state to do their job for them.

Clearly they have lost all confidence in the ability of the working class to make new developments in the face of the employers' and the state's offensive.

Yet ironically, their own strong position as union leaders stems precisely from the vast upsurge in the fighting determination of health, council and other low-paid workers to defend jobs, services and livelihoods a decade and more ago.

As for a Labour government, the Labour Party's programme does not seek to challenge capitalist property relations in Britain but on the contrary maps out a plan for protecting them.

Wage restraint, whether state enforced or voluntary (through some form of 'social contract') is the system for robbing the working class to pay the owning class.

● Delegates to the Labour Party Conference should be perfectly clear that this is the road they are being called on to take.

Bernard Franks

### Crawley Branch WRP

### Day School

Political Economy — Geoff Pilling

Sunday, October 5

10.30am - 4.30pm

Ifield Community Centre

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Entrance £1, Creche and refreshments available

### MARXIST DISCUSSION GROUP

Bryant Street Methodist Centre

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Sunday September 21, 7.30pm

'The Workers International League'

Speaker: Sam Levy

Sunday September 28, 7.30pm

'Dialectics of Nature'

Speaker: Mike Howgate

Sunday October 5 7.30pm

'Background to the Hungarian Revolution'

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Organised by Workers Power

Every other Wednesday, 7.30pm

Upstairs at the Landor Hotel

Landor Road, SW2 (Clapham North ⊕)

September 24: Hungary 1956

October 8: Cable Street 1936

October 22: The Popular Front in France 1936

November 5: The Moscow Trials 1936



# LETTERS

## Fight out differences within a single unified Fourth International!

### Two questions for Trotskyism

LIKE MOST Trotskyists, I greeted the transformation which took place in the WRP after the expulsion of Healy with unconcealed joy.

At last, a refreshing wind was sweeping through the murky sectarian corridors of Clapham.

From conversations with comrades in the WRP and the changing content of the articles which now began to appear in Workers Press, it was clear that a majority of comrades were determined to get to the roots of their own history.

But up to now, it seems to me that what I will call the 'Khrushchev Syndrome' still prevails.

Khrushchev, in his famous 20th Congress speech, exposed the crimes of Stalin and re-habilitated some of the purges' victims but stopped short of a fundamental critique of how stalinism arose.

This, to some extent, is also true of the self-critique within the leadership of the post-Healy WRP.

Thus we find that 'Pabloism' is still treated as origin-

al sin. The most recent examples can be found in Cyril Smith's otherwise excellent article introducing the series on Hungary 1956 and in Tom Kemp's 'Vietnam — Le Duan and Trotskyism' (WP September 6).

'Undoubtedly we must never hesitate to examine critically the past.

This includes a study of the policy documents which, in WRP jargon, are usually referred to as 'Pabloism'.

### Policy

I may add, in parenthesis, that when the policy first appeared in the resolutions of the Third Congress of the FI, the only opposition to it which I can recall came from Betty Hamilton and myself, as I pointed out at the fateful meeting in Caxton Hall in 1953 which preceded the split.

I said then that, in my view, the differences were not of such a fundamental nature as to justify an organisational split.

I went along with the majority of the British section, despite my doubts — I

abstained on the crucial resolution — because my work with John Lawrence on Socialist Outlook had convinced me that he was set on a Stalinist trajectory and that there was no future for a British section under his leadership.

This issue — was the organisational split necessary? — is one of the prime issues which has to be answered.

Despite the dire forebodings, it is an historical fact that the Fourth International (IS) did not liquidate itself into Stalinism and, after the re-unification in 1963, has remained the largest internationally organised body of Trotskyists in the world.

The second question we have to answer is: Why did the WRP under Healy's leadership not enter the re-united International?

No one demanded that they should give up any of their most cherished viewpoints, even the patently absurd one that Castro's Cuba was a capitalist state.

The FI (USEC) was a 'broad church' within the Trotskyist tradition (in some

respects, in my view, too broad) and there was full rein for tendencies.

I agree with Cyril Smith (Letters September 13) that we should not simply try to blame individuals.

But the role of the individual in history cannot be ignored by Marxists.

Is there not a kernel of truth in the thought that Healy, who enjoyed his role as kingpin not only on the British stage but also within the International Committee, saw this role threatened within the larger international body where, at best, he would only be one of the leaders?

I am glad to see in his reply to Paul Stevens, that Cyril Smith seems to be moving in this direction.

### Transition

I would agree with him that 'the transition to a socialist world demands the independent, conscious movement of the working class.'

But history has determined in Eastern Europe,

China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Nicaragua that the overthrow of the existing social order and the establishment of a workers' state can be carried out under the leadership of centrist, petty-bourgeois parties.

Trotsky foresaw this possibility in the transitional Programme.

These states would, in greater or lesser measure, be bureaucratic, deformed workers' states with a total absence of workers' democracy and patterned on the Stalinised Soviet state.

(Cuba and Nicaragua are, in many respects, not wholly within this framework.)

Does this mean that there is therefore no need for genuine revolutionary parties in these countries or for a genuine communist international to co-ordinate the revolutionaries in all countries?

Of course not! The revolution is permanent, not only because in the age of imperialist decay it combines the national democratic with

the proletarian revolution; not only because it rejects the revisionist theory of 'socialism in one country' but because the revolutionary process continues after the conquest of power by the proletariat.

### Rule

In all countries, whether still under capitalism domination or under the iron rule of Stalinist bureaucracies, we need independent, revolutionary working class movements under the leadership of conscious revolutionary Marxist parties.

In short, sections of the Fourth International.

There is no place within such a movement for the British exclusivism of Healy, the Militant Tendency or the SWP.

And there is no reason why all who support this view should not be able to fight out their theoretical, strategic or tactical differences within a single, united Fourth International!

Charlie van Gelderen  
Member, International Group

# Do I know you . . . ?

I REFER to the letter of Brian Thomas of Workers Power in last Saturday's Workers Press.

Although Tom Kemp and Bernard Franks will no doubt reply in their own right to the principal points at issue, I would like to mention Thomas' criticism of the apparent failure of Bernard Franks to distinguish between capital and commodities.

Marx does not make a distinction between them.

In part 1 of volume 2 of 'Capital', entitled 'The Circuit of Money — Capital', Marx gives the following formula for the circuit of industrial capital as a whole:

$M-C^1_{MP} \dots P \dots$

$C'(C+c)-M'(M+m)$

'C' represents . . . wait for it! Commodities.

Briefly, the formula describes the transformation of money into productive capital (P) and then into products and finally back into money (M').

C' represents expanded value, hence the 'c'.

The small letters are the surplus value created by labour (L).

Finally, MP represents constant capital, being the means of production (looms, yarn, etc).

Brian Thomas makes a fundamental mistake in distinguishing between capital and commodities.

As far as the payment of

wages being after the work has been done, Marx merely refers to this as an example of how a worker is doubly cheated and how this factor has no real effect on the theory of Marxism.

It should be noted that Marx makes the point that crises in capitalism arise from the fact that the circuit of money capital does not depend on the commodities being sold finally to the ultimate consumer.

In most cases, the industrial capitalist will sell to a merchant, capitals being attracted into a sphere of production and production continuing up to the point of crisis — crisis being inherent in the capitalist system.

This fundamental mistake in an attack on two articles in Workers Press makes me suspicious of Workers Power's 'Marxism'.

I believe their problem is the fact that they originate out of the State Capitalist school of revisionism.

Their strength was that, before the WRP's break with Healyism, they organised outside of its sectarianism.

But this strength evaporated once Healy was ousted.

I have no contact with Workers Power but I was at a series of lectures on Capital given by Geoff Pilling in Liverpool at which two members of Workers Power were present.

My observation was that,

in discussion after the lectures, it was as if someone had 'wound them up' like a clock-work toy and they carried on talking without trying to develop a dialectical discussion.

This matter is serious because, if the WRP is to play an important role in developing Marxism and the independence of the working class, it must take a firm line against any group which tries to continue a sectarian line, such a 'line' being fundamentally un-Marxist.

In this respect, readers of this letter may be interested in what Trotsky had to say concerning the attitude of Marx and Engels as revealed in their correspondence.

The correspondence between Marx and Engels was, for me, not a theoretical one but a psychological revelation.

'Toutes proportions gardées, I found proof on every page that to these two I was bound by a direct psychological affinity.

Their attitude to men and ideas was mine. I guessed what they did not express, shared their sympathies, was indignant and hated as they did.

Marx and Engels were revolutionaries through and through.

But they had not the slightest trace of sectarianism or ascetism.

Both of them, and espe-

cially Engels, could at any time say of themselves that nothing human was strange to them. But their revolutionary outlook lifted them always above the hazards of fate and the works of men.

Pettiness was incompatible, not only with their personalities, but with their presences. Vulgarity could not stick even to the soles of their boots.

Their appreciations, sympathies, jests — even when most commonplace — are always touched by the rarified air of spiritual nobility.

They may pass deadly criticism on a man, but they will never deal in tittle-tattle. They can be ruthless, but not treacherous.

For outward glamour, titles or rank they have nothing but the coolest contempt. What philistines and vulgarians considered aristocratic in them was really only their revolutionary superiority.

It's most important characteristic is a complete and ingrained independence of official public opinion at all times and under all conditions.

'When I read their letters, I felt, even more than when I read their writings, that the same thing which bound me so closely to the world of Marx and Engels placed me in irreconcilable opposition to the Austrian Marxists.' (My Life, page 216)

Peter Windeler

## ANNOUNCING A NEW EDITION OF

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PETER FRYER



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

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He saw people in arms demolish a regime of fear and poverty and take power in their own hands. He saw security police atrocities — and the people's terrible revenge. Then he watched appalled as a nation's new-born freedom was relentlessly crushed.

Peter Fryer's eye-witness account, first published in December 1956, had an immediate impact, bringing home to many things which they wished were not true.

Thirty years later his Hungarian Tragedy, now published by New Park Publications with a new introduction by the author, still stands as a model of journalistic insight and integrity and is as valuable now as it was in 1956.

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## WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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Why and how Exeter must support the striking printworkers

Speaker: Alan Clark

(WRP & Fleet Street Support Unit, personal capacity)

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West of Scotland branch

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The tasks of the Fourth International, the degeneration of the International Committee and the 1971 split

Tuesday October 28, 7.30pm

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All welcome Admission 50p, unemployed 25p



## REVIEWS

# DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH

SEPTEMBER 25 is the 80th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, Dmitry Shostakovich.

## 1906-1975

Born in St Petersburg (now Leningrad), the son of an engineer, from the beginning Shostakovich's life as a composer was intertwined with the historic events of October 1917, the seizure of power by the Russian proletariat and the subsequent problems of the revolution.

In the events leading up to the February revolution, he saw the police execute a young boy in the street. It had a profound emotional effect on him.

In April 1917 he stood amongst the crowd that greeted Lenin's arrival at the Finland station and, although he could not get close enough to hear Lenin's speech, he identified with the struggle of the Bolsheviks.

His first childhood musical works, 'The Soldier', 'Hymn of Freedom' and 'Funeral march for the victims of the revolution', composed in 1917 at the age of 11, clearly reflect this.

In 1919 he entered the Leningrad conservatoire as a pupil of the Russian composer Alexander Glazunov. His genius as a composer was immediately recognised.

### Letters

The conditions under which he was educated during the civil war, however, are shown in two letters by Glazunov to Lunacharsky, then People's Commissar for Education, in 1921 and 1923.

In these letters Glazunov pleads for an extra bread ration for Shostakovich, who was in poor health: 'The death of such a man would be an irremediable loss for the arts the world over.'

The young Shostakovich was forced to justify his right to exist as a composer.

Throughout his life he fought to explain the role and importance of art in society, but his early struggles left him with something else. His music could never be written for just a small intellectual elite.

BY CHRIS BAILEY

For him, 'art should serve not the upper ten thousand but millions of ordinary people.

'The people's love of music is inspiring, but it also makes us check the direction of our searching and question whether our art satisfies the requirements of a limited elite or of a wide audience of music-lovers.'

At the same time he reviled 'the vulgar pop song'.

'The composer's work entails great responsibility. He is not just a creator: he is an educator, responsible for the people's general level of musical culture.

'Let us recall Lenin's words: "Our workers and peasants deserve something greater than spectacles. They have earned the right to real great art."

'We should not lower ourselves to the "average" cultural level of the masses, but raise them and give them access to the greatest aesthetic treasures.'

It was this sense of responsibility in his music which guided Shostakovich throughout his life.

There has been much discussion in recent years concerning Shostakovich's 'opposition' to the Soviet bureaucracy, particularly following the publication in the West of his so-called memoirs by his friend Solomon Volkov.

There is undoubtedly much truth in some of Volkov's assertions, but his attempt to include Shostakovich within the circle of his friends and relatives who de-

fectured to the West is too simple.

Shostakovich would undoubtedly have sympathised with their attack on the restrictions placed on cultural development in the Soviet Union, expressed in Rostropovich's open letter to the Soviet bureaucracy.

At the same time, however, he would have been saddened to see their tremendous talents restricted to performances before small rich audiences in the West.

Discussing his visit to the Edinburgh Festival in 1962, which had been largely devoted to his work, he described his meeting with Lady Rosebury — 'a very pleasant lady, who attended all the concerts faithfully' — as very depressing.

She took him to see her estate.

### Wealth

Shostakovich says: 'I saw it all and wondered: why is such colossal wealth concentrated in the hands of this one lady? ... I told the lady I thought the estate was too big for her and her family.'

'Yes, she replied, 'It really is a lot of bother looking after everything — what with the Factor stealing, the ...

'She did not understand me: we were poles apart.'

'I retain many other impressions of my trip, especially of my meetings with the so-called "ordinary" people of Britain.'

'Allow me to digress a little: I don't really understand the term "ordinary people". What is an ordinary person?'

'Is a cleaning lady an ordinary person and a manager not an ordinary person? I don't know. All people are ordinary, and all are extraordinary.'

The truth is that Shostakovich did not constitute a poli-

tical opposition to the bureaucracy.

There is a strong case for Volkov's assertion that Shostakovich's 11th Symphony '1905', written immediately after the Hungarian revolution, was actually inspired by the events of 1956 and not so much those of 1905, but the dilemma Shostakovich was in was shown clearly with his next symphony.

All his life Shostakovich wanted to write a great work of music in honour of Lenin.

His attempt to do this with the 12th symphony was a failure. In his own words 'it wouldn't come out right'.

Like masses of other people throughout the world, he was determined to defend the gains of the October revolution, but possessed no analysis of its degeneration. He should be judged, however, the way he always asked to be judged, by his music.

Following the first successful performance of his first symphony in 1926 he wrote: 'If only I can manage to make ends meet, I shall work ceaselessly in the field

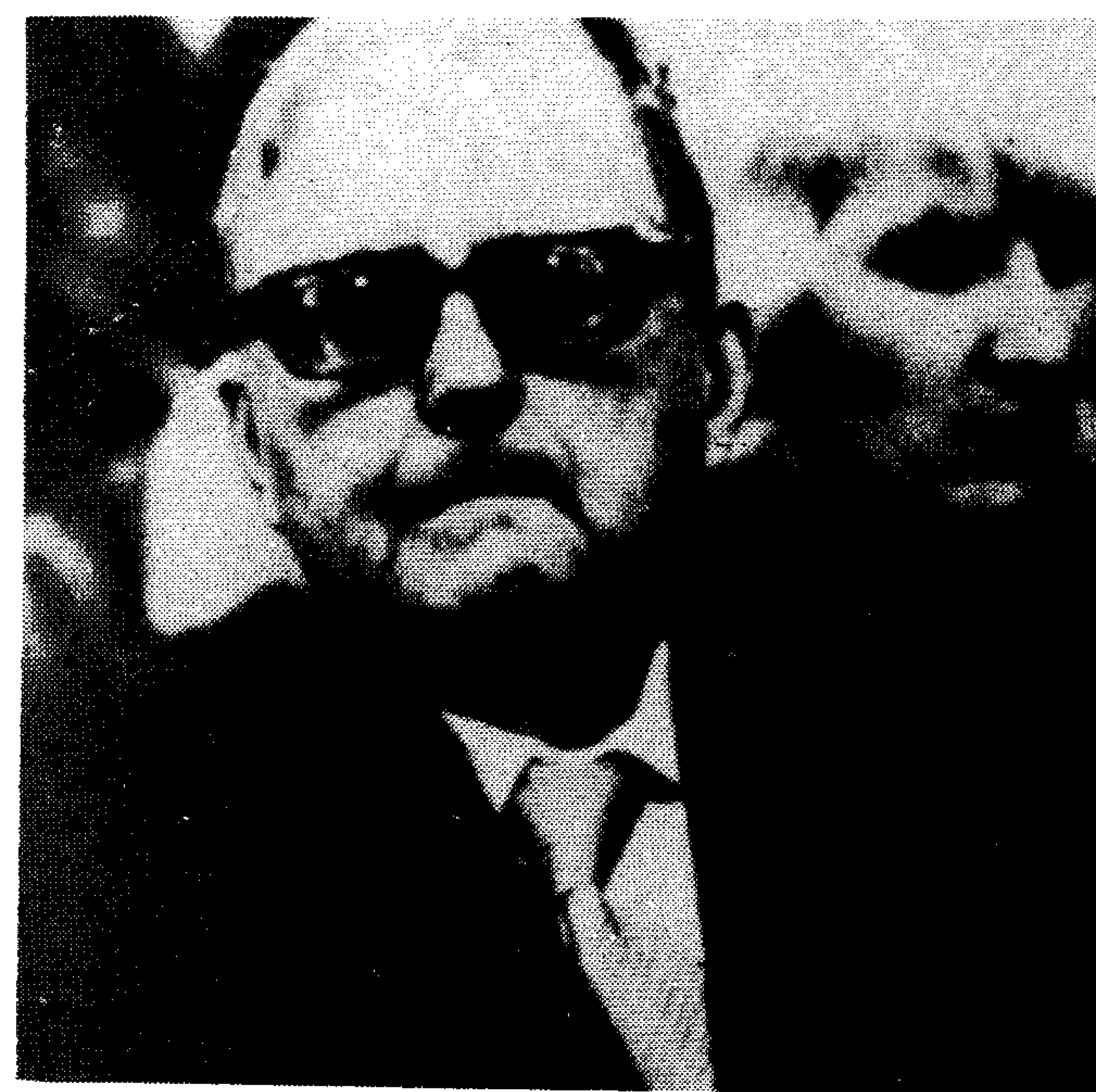
*If music is incapable of 'getting through' to anyone, then who needs it?*

of music, to which I shall dedicate my whole life.'

Shostakovich accepted the dictates of the bureaucracy, but he was never a 'hack'. Perhaps his greatest triumph, in this sense, was his 5th symphony.

At the end of 1935, a Pravda editorial entitled 'Noise not Music' launched an attack on Shostakovich's opera 'Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District'.

The opera was to have been the first of a trilogy on the position of women in



SHOSTAKOVICH at a performance of his last string quartet in Leningrad, 1974

Russia before and after the revolution.

It was rightfully acclaimed as one of the greatest operas ever produced in Russia, and was being performed at three different theatres in Moscow at once.

Overnight Shostakovich was in disgrace. He withdrew his 4th symphony and it was never performed until the 1960's.

Other lesser composers began to produce trivial and dutiful works for the bureaucracy, but not Shostakovich.

In his 5th symphony, 'An artist's answer to just criticism, he conformed to the

Communist future includes the struggle for the working class to take up and grasp the cultural heritage of mankind.

Shostakovich sought to provide the bridge by which this could be done:

'Music becomes a fact of life, alive and effective, only when it is heard and understood by those for whom it is written. This is axiomatic.

'But how difficult it can be in practice! The path to understanding a work of music is not easy, and the first steps must be made by the composer himself.

'At every stage in his work he should think about how his composition will be perceived by his listeners.

'Accessibility is an essential quality in music, however complex it may be in language and form.

'If music is incapable of 'getting through' to anyone, then who needs it and who will be interested in it apart from its composer?'

'The composer must seek contact with his listeners. This is his artistic and moral duty.'

'He must be heard, otherwise his work loses all meaning.'

An excellent opportunity to begin to listen to Shostakovich's work has been provided by the recent release by HMV of a new low priced set of recordings of his 15 quartets by the Borodin quartet.

A good one to start with is the eighth quartet.

Written in 1960 in Dresden whilst Shostakovich was involved in the making of the film about the bombing of the city, it is dedicated to the victims of the war and fascism.

The drone of the planes and the bomb explosions are clearly heard in the fourth movement. Such sounds were all too familiar to Shostakovich.

He wrote his 7th symphony, 'Leningrad', in the middle of the siege of Leningrad by the Nazis.

The quartet also had a special emotional meaning for him (he broke down in tears when he first heard it played by the original Borodin quartet) and is in part autobiographical.

It contains quotations from four of his symphonies, his first cello concerto and his 'Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk'.

The Russian dance in the second movement first appeared in his trio and is a reference to his close friend Ivan Sollertinsky who died in a Nazi death camp in 1944.

Shostakovich had heard that the Nazis made their victims dance on their own graves.

● Note: Almost all quotations are from Shostakovich's 'Open letter to musicians of the world' first published in 'Soviet Music' in 1975 only weeks before his death.



WITH bomber pilots in 1942. Shostakovich took his wartime duties seriously



The composer's patron, Marshall Tukhachevsky — later purged by Stalin — with his wife Nina

The struggle for a com-



# REVIEWS

# MEET THE 'CHEVRA'

Where Sixpence Lives, by Norma Kitson. Chatto and Windus. £9.95

I SPENT the TUC week campaigning against Dave Kitson's treatment at the hands of the TASS leadership. An old comrade who put me up told me of a Russian with whom he had worked who had taken part in the October revolution and used to tell of the huge street meetings.

'When Lenin spoke you marched. When Trotsky spoke it was like flashes of lightning.'

Now of course there's a great difference between street oration and a written analysis. But yesterday, as I read yet another dull but correct analysis of the South African events, I thought of this memory of October.

In getting it all straight the analysis had managed to eliminate the heart of the S.A. volcano — the struggles, sacrifices, hopes and despairs of the oppressed millions.

Then I read Norma's book. Of course, again, there's a great difference between someone's autobiography and an analysis but here was everything that those dull tracts had somehow excluded — the fight itself.

I don't intend to give a summary of Norma's life. You will have to read the book for that.

It is crammed with things from the small and domestic to the great historic events like Sharpeville, the Klipfontein Congress and the Rivonia trials with which Norma's own life was entwined.

The title refers to the son of one of the servants in the rich white Durban household where Norma grew up.

'Where Sixpence Lives' is the world of the black masses beyond the sight and comprehension of the whites. In the land of swimming pools, parties and yacht clubs, these servants move in and out as extras, non-human.

But to Norma many of

them become friends and it is a contact with the African people that develops, with the assistance of allegorical anti-imperialist bedtime stories from her father, into a hatred of apartheid.

This world, where Sixpence lives, underlies the whole book. The struggle of the people fighting against the oppressive system, their sufferings and their fighting spirit has clearly always dominated Norma's activities, even in exile and cut off from the movement.

It pushed her into the South African Communist Party (SACP) and eventually into conflict with it.

Her first public speech, at a meeting of white progressives addressed by Walter Sisulu, contained the seeds of this future conflict.

## Position

'Little did I realise that by taking the position that the whites should serve the Liberation movement I was challenging the most dearly held concepts of the white so-called communists.'

Throwing herself into Congress activities after experiencing first hand the brutal exploitation of the black miners, she is asked to go as a delegate to the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Warsaw.

Stopping over in London she met and fell in love with David Kitson, already a CP activist working for the liberation movement.

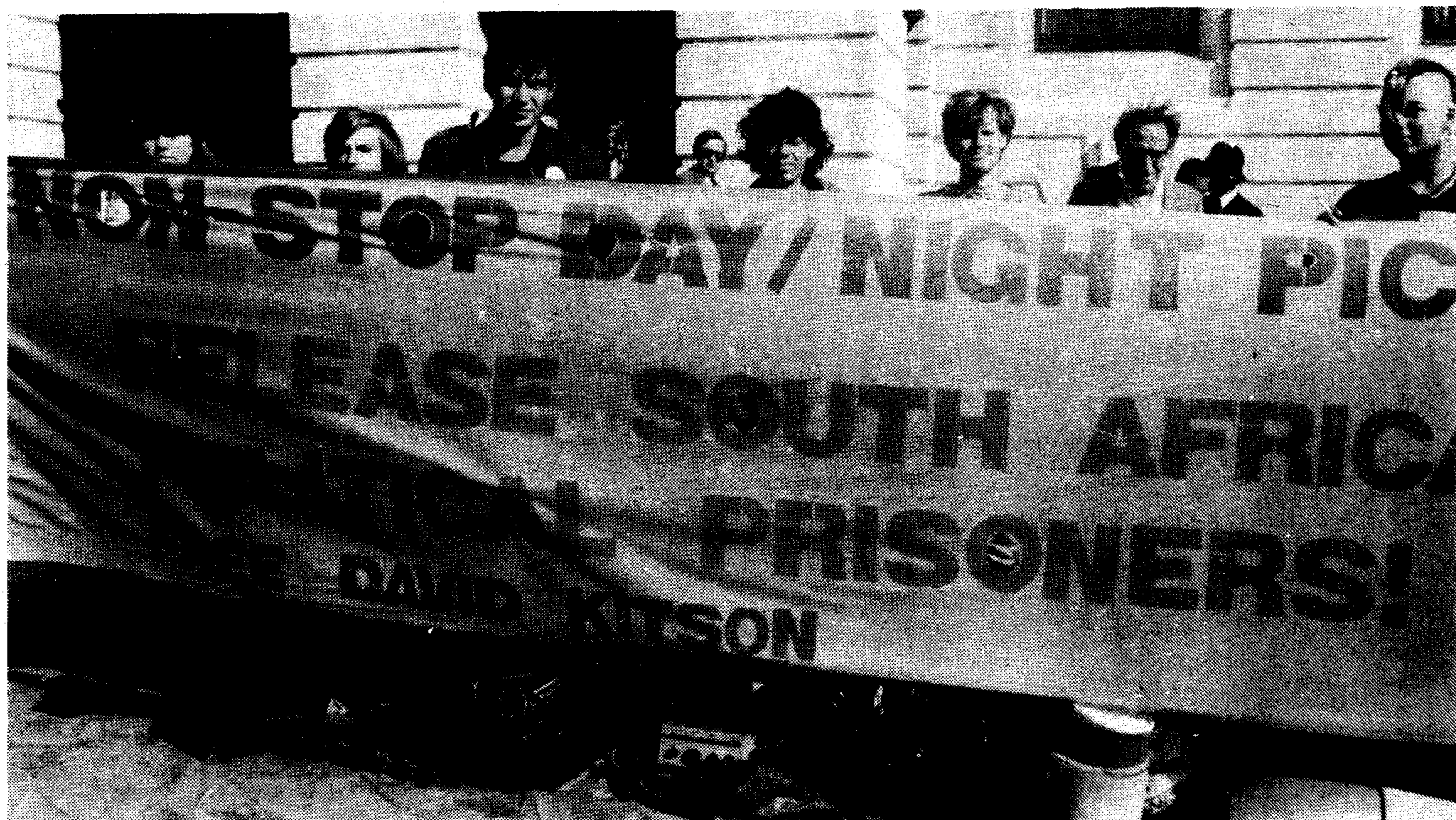
They return to S.A. and David becomes a leader of Umkhoto we Sizwe. In 1964 he is arrested and jailed for 20 years.

Its easy to write that in one sentence. Again you must read the book to grasp what 20 years actually means.

It is after his jailing, when Norma has to flee to London with their two small children, that the real nature of the 'so called communists' becomes clear.

As many other CPers who have fallen foul of the law have found out, she was abandoned by the Party.

Moreover every effort on



City AA non-stop picket in Trafalgar Square.

her part to raise the issue of the political prisoners and to campaign for their release is smothered, stifled and killed.

Her sister Joan, later to be murdered in S.A., talks to her:

'Imagine what its like for him (David) in there knowing what a battle you're having, picturing you lonely in London.'

'Does David think that?' I asked. I believe he imagines the chevra are friendly and supportive.

'The who?'

'The chevra. That's what Sidney calls those members of the SACP in London.'

'Chevra' is short for Chevra Kadisha — you know, the Jewish Burial Society. Chevra is Yiddish for comrades.

'If anyone starts any activity that is not under their control, they 'bury' them — immobilise them, or manoeuvre them out of the solidarity movement.'

'The Chevra hold sway

over the London ANC and have influence in the Anti-apartheid Movement and David's trade union TASS.

'They're a very small, powerful group over here — mainly middle class whites who left S.A. before the going really got tough.'

The Chevra — the Burial Society. The learned reviewer of this book for The Guardian rubbished this aspect of the book but anyone who has tried to raise real support for the liberation movement will know the truth.

They will have met the Chevra.

When I raised support for Dave in my TASS branch, the Chevra's British allies were there.

When the young man from Brighton AA, collecting money outside the TUC for the MAWU strikers was told he must stop — it hadn't been authorised — he met the Chevra.

And now they have suspended Norma and Dave from the ANC, disaffiliated

City Group A-A for their activities in support of S.A. prisoners and cut off Dave's financial support from TASS.

But every attempt to silence or buy them off has failed.

The book is a compelling story of their struggle. The problems, financial, political and emotional: anybody who reads of their reunion after 20 years and doesn't have to wipe away a tear has lost all feeling.

It's great strength is the honesty of the picture it creates. While the Chevra distort, lie and turn everything to serve their bureaucratic ends, Norma has tried to put the S.A. revolution first and, in her experiences whatever political disagreements we may have, we can learn a great deal.

It has its flashes of lightning and it is certainly written to make people's feet march and to set them in the right direction. Workers Press next week begins a

discussion on that direction with an article by Moeletsi Mbeki, son of Govan Mbeki jailed for life with Nelson Mandela and we welcome any contribution from those in the liberation movement or in the solidarity campaign here.

The policies of the SACP today repeat the subordination of the Chinese CP to Chiang Kai Shek in 1925 and, if unopposed, will lead to the same blood bath for the working class.

But Norma's book is the other side to Joe Slovo's recent speech on the 65th anniversary of the SACP.

Against class collaboration, against beaureacratism, there are the thousands and thousands, some well known like the Kitsons, many more who will never be known, who have fought against apartheid and for the socialist revolution.

I recommend that every party branch buys a copy for members to read.

Bob Myers



Trade unions and community groups joined in the campaign to defend Lambeth Council.

# HE WAS ONLY THE DISTRICT AUDITOR...

LAMBETH and Liverpool Councillors stand outside the High Court, preparing themselves to present their case for local democracy in their respective boroughs.

Despite a long campaign, the law of the land decided that the interests of central government came streets ahead of the interests of the people of Lambeth and Liverpool — or anywhere else for that matter.

The Lambeth Fighting Fund has produced a history of the ratecapping campaign in excellent quality photographs, entitled 'He Was Only the District Auditor, But...'

The book has a foreword by Tony Benn and costs £3 plus 10 per cent P&P.

It can be obtained by writing to Stephen Bubb, Treasurer, Lam-

beth Fighting Fund, 171 Clapham Road, London SW9 0QE or it can be purchased from The Paperbacks Centre, 10-12 Atlantic Rd., Brixton, London, SW2.

The photos record all aspects of the fight, the many demonstrations and marches held over the two years that the campaign carried on. We are now at the stage where things appear to be over, but we must not forget the sacrifice that these councillors made.

It remains the responsibility of the trade union movement, and especially the Labour Party, that these people do not suffer financially from their stand.

They are now in the position of having to pay off £5,000 a month over the next three years in order to avoid bankruptcy. Donations towards the fund to help the councillors pay off their surcharge can also be sent to the above address.



### A question for the Labour Party conference: NO DEBATE ON IRELAND —

# WHO PAYS THE PRICE...



The Downes family before John's life was snatched away by state terror.

ON PAGES six and seven, Workers Press presents Part 4 of a series on the use of plastic and rubber bullets by the British Government in northern Ireland — the case of John Downes.

On Wednesday — since the article was written — John Downes' killer, RUC Officer Nigel Hegarty, was acquitted of a manslaughter charge brought against him by the Director of Public Prosecutions in Belfast.

**JIM McCABE, of the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets, told Workers Press after the acquittal was announced, 'It's as we expected. We saw the trial all along as a cosmetic exercise.**

**'This verdict is proof that the whole thing was a total and complete whitewash. It shows that the judiciary are now adding their voice of approval to the RUC and British Army use of plastic bullets in the killing of innocent men and women.**

'John Downes was the fifteenth victim. Fourteen people have died before but this is the first time any of those responsible have been brought to trial.'

With a Labour Party conference upon us, the question which burns to be asked is — what do they intend to do about the use of these lethal weapons on innocent civilians?

This verdict also comes as a grave and sinister warning for the British working class.

If state murder can take place on the streets of Belfast and be exonerated by the 'impartial' judiciary — it can happen here.

When delivering his verdict, the Judge said that Hegarty had only two or three seconds in which to decide what to do.

He said that, having regard for the stress of the moment and the obvious determination of the deceased, he was not:

'Satisfied that the Reserve had been in breach of the regulations governing the



A vigil commemorating the anniversary of John Downes death. His killer has been exonerated making the judiciary complicit in the shooting.

firing of the baton round or that he could have interposed himself between the deceased and the two policemen so as to take the force of the attack himself.'

The 'attack' is an unproven allegation that John Downes was running towards two police officers with a stick in hand.

Even if this is true, and eye-witness accounts are conflicting, what damage could a stick do against two heavily armoured police?

Hegarty could have shot from a distance, tried to intervene or shouted a warning to the two police supposedly in danger.

But instead, Hegarty waited until John Downes was at point blank range and

then fired a plastic bullet into his chest.

RUC regulations on the use of plastic bullets insist that they must be fired at a range of more than twenty yards and below the waist.

Hegarty broke both the regulations and John Downes is dead.

But a court has now ruled that Hegarty was not using his plastic bullet gun unlawfully.

So confident was Hegarty of his acquittal that no defence case was brought before the court.

Hegarty himself didn't take the stand, nor did his lawyers bother to bring forward any evidence of his innocence — the sham prosecution did it all for them.

The trial took place while Brenda Downes, John's young widow was holidaying abroad.

When I talked to Brenda on a recent visit to Belfast, she told me that although she didn't expect justice to be done, she was living in hope that it might.

Now the case has been brought to court without her even being informed and the killer of her husband has been exonerated by the state without her even having the opportunity of putting her case.

Jim McCabe said, 'This shows their unsympathetic attitude. Of course this verdict will have an enormous effect on Brenda — but they didn't even let her know the

trial was coming up.'

It is well past time that the whole of the British Labour Movement started to take some real action to force the British government out of Ireland and to stop their reign of terror on the nationalist population of the six counties.

Brenda and John Downes' right to a peaceful and full life was snatched from them by the British state.

It cannot and must not be tolerated.

Refusal by the people of Britain to act against this condones it.

Do we have to wait until plastic bullets kill in the streets of Britain before we act?

# HOW JOHN DIED

## — page 6

# FOR LABOUR'S TREACHERY?