

## PAYMENTS CRISIS HITS THATCHER

### Sterling crisis looms for Lawson

BY GEOFF PILLING

**IN THE wake of disastrous August trade figures an almighty sterling crisis is about to hit the Thatcher government.**

British capitalism is now running up external debts at the rate of 24 billion a year. The 2 billion August deficit was over half the total yearly deficit predicted by Chancellor Nigel Lawson as recently as the March budget which stuffed millions into the pockets of City speculators.

The balance of payments deficit now accounts for a greater slice of the national income than at any time since the immediate postwar crisis following the end of World War II.

Interest rates have risen sixty per cent in three months. Further increases to follow the eight increases since June are imminent as sterling continues to fall on world markets and inflationary pressures grow throughout the economy.

These interest rate increases alone have wiped out most of the gains of the middle class from the March tax cuts.

Mortgage rates are now bound to rise to nearly 13 per cent following the latest interest rate increase. Such increases will add a further 20 a month to the repayments on a 30,000 mortgage.

Not only individual consumption will be hit by the soaring cost of borrowing money, but the already hopeless financial position of local authorities - many surviving only through massive loans from the City - will be further undermined, bringing yet more cuts to already devastated spending programmes.

These rising costs of borrowing money will come on top of the further slashing of government spending that big business

leaders demanded in the wake of the disastrous trade figures.

Thatcher's economic policy is in near-ruins. Her government came to office in 1979 shouting from the rooftops that there would be no more credit booms bringing the sort of balance of payments disasters that had occurred under previous Tory and Labour governments alike.

But this is just what has happened. A credit-fuelled boom brought soaring imports, with a manufacturing industry in chronic decline unable to generate sufficient exports to match the mounting tide of consumer goods sucked into the economy by the boom.

This is the expression not of some 'wrong' economic policy as the Labour leaders contend but is an indication of the chronic nature of British capitalism's decline, trapped in a deepening world economic crisis.

The Tories face an immediate

contradiction. They can allow sterling to continue to slide. This would greatly increase the price of all imports and intensify inflationary pressures now mounting throughout the economy.

Or Thatcher can try to bolster sterling by further raising interest rates, thus hitting even harder at what is left of British manufacturing industry.

This is one of the sources of the bitter conflict between her and Lawson.

Once again the crisis has exposed the treacherous nature of the Labour leaders. Last week Labour leader Neil Kinnock attacked Lawson for his 'epic complacency' in the face of the mounting crisis. As though the Tories have been 'complacent' over the last eight years and more!

They have set out to destroy the living standards and rights of millions of workers; they have slashed to the bone government services on which millions of poor

and sick people depend.

These Tory attacks against the working class and sections of the middle class have been made possible only because of the open and hidden complicity of the Labour and trade union leaders.

Kinnock went on to demand that the Chancellor take 'direct measures' to control credit. In other words, such leaders are not opposed to the working class and sections of the middle class having to pay for the crisis in higher interest rates, dearer mortgages and even heavier unemployment.

They merely oppose the manner in which the Tories are seeking to impose these measures.

Their aim is the same as the Tories: to make ordinary people pay for the crisis of capitalism. Their objection to the Thatcher government's economic policy co-incides with their attitude on all other questions - they merely differ with the Tories about how to attack the working class.



Down with Stalinism! South African catering workers at their recent conference. South Africa and the TUC - editorial p 2

## South Africa and the TUC

THE Workers Revolutionary Party will be lobbying the Trades Union Congress at its annual conference this week to raise three demands.

First that they act to secure the release of Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the South African Metalworkers union, who is on trial for treason - primarily for organising the Alexandra Action Committee, an independent organ for working class struggle in the black township of Alexandra.

The two-year imprisonment and trial of Mayekiso is of great significance for the struggle of the international working class because Mayekiso embodies, along with the metalworkers' union and the catering union CCAWUSA, a layer of workers who are struggling for socialism and for the organisation of the working class as an independent force.

To this end they openly reject the class compromise politics of the ANC masterminded by Stalinism. At the recent conference of CCAWUSA banners were raised demanding 'Down with Stalinism!' and 'Freedom Charter no! Socialism yes!'

We support the demand for the release of Mayekiso not least because of the sustained and vicious campaign of the British Anti-Apartheid movement, orchestrated by South African and British Stalinists, to strangle initiatives taken by British workers to secure his freedom.

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The WRP is also raising the demand that the TUC act to prevent the implementation of the new Labour Relations Act in South Africa. This bill is modelled on Thatcher's anti-trade union laws, and will make it virtually impossible for workers to strike legally.

While demanding that the TUC leaders carry out this fight, we warn the British working class that the only defence of the South African workers lies in the struggle against Botha's most consistent backer: the Thatcher government. It is just this fight that the British trade union leaders have refused to carry out. It is their cowardly acquiescence in Thatcher's laws which has in part given Botha the confidence to unleash this new attack.

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The third demand we raise is that the TUC should defend the right to strike of South African workers. This can only be done through the defence of the right of British workers to strike. We raise the demand for the right to strike separately from the demand to fight the Labour Relations Act because it is not only Botha who hits at this basic right of the South African workers.

The ANC's Freedom Charter excludes the right of workers to strike, (as it excludes the demand for socialism) and is defended by the South African Communist Party for doing so.

The WRP invites all its contacts and supporters to join with us in raising these demands throughout the British labour movement. Nothing less than the fate of the South African working class is at stake.

## WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

In so far: £5,665.59

We have warned several times over the last weeks that our Fund is growing at a dangerously slow pace. As we explain elsewhere in this issue, the Workers Revolutionary Party has big responsibilities for the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

But to meet these responsibilities we have to provide a solid basis for our work in Britain. This means that we have to meet certain minimum requirements to pay for the publication of our paper and meet our other bills. We are not doing this and the situation is serious.

Do not treat this as a routine message. There is no doubt that the balance of payments crisis that has rapidly turned Lawson's boom into near-bust will bring a renewed wave of struggles throughout the British working class movement.

We must be prepared for these struggles and this means that we must have resources. Our future is in the hands of our members and supporters. Do not let us down. Please send in as much as you can for our Fund.

Unless you do so, we will not make the £10,000 target and this will be a serious blow to our work.

Geoff Pilling

Send donations to: Workers Press Fighting Fund  
PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

## NEW ISSUE OF 'TASKS'

THE LATEST issue of 'Tasks of the Fourth International' is now out. The main item in this issue consists of 15 Documents dealing with the work of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference of Trotskyists.

The Committee was established on the initiative of the Workers Revolutionary Party following the expulsion of its former leader G. Healy in October 1985. Its purpose was to lay the foundations for the rebuilding of the Fourth International in a period in which the rapidly deepening crisis of Stalinism provided great opportunities for this task.

One of the original members of the Preparatory Committee was the LIT, an international organisation led by the late Nahuel Moreno, with its main strength in Latin America. This issue of the journal records the process in which the concepts of the Preparatory Committee came into collision with those of the LIT.

At the centre of the disputes between the adherents of the Preparatory Committee and the LIT were questions about the nature of the Fourth International, the nature and significance of the attacks on Trotskyism within the Fourth International and the tasks of the movement today.

The record of this controversy is of vital concern not only to those who consider themselves part of the Trotskyist movement but also to the international working class movement.

The other main item in this issue of the journal is an expanded version of the original 'Ten Points' which constituted the Call made by the WRP for an international Conference of Trotskyists for the rebuilding of the Fourth International. It is this document and its further concretisation that will form the basis for the Conference towards which the Preparatory Committee is working.

### WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the  
Workers Revolutionary Party

Name.....date.....

Address.....

Trade union.....Age (if under 21).....

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



## CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPRESSION IN IRAN

THE Campaign Against Repression in Iran (CARI) are holding a picket outside the United Nations Information Office against the deportation of Iranian refugees from Turkey to Iran.

More than 50 political refugees have already been executed after their return to Iran.

The Turkish press has recently reported that Iran is paying \$700 a head for every refugee the Turkish dictatorship hands over.

The picket will also raise the question of the renewed repression against the Kurdish people by the governments of both Iran and Iraq.

### Picket:

UN Information Office  
20 Buckingham Gate  
London SW1  
8 September  
1pm - 3 pm

## IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN BRITISH JAILS

H M Prison DURHAM, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HU  
Martina Anderson, D25134  
Ella O'Dwyer, D25135

HMP LONG LARTIN, S Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ

Liam Baker, 464984  
James Bennett, 464909  
Gerry Cunningham, 132016  
Vincent Donnelly, 274064  
John McComb, 851715

Hugh Doherty, 338636 moved?

HMP MAIDSTONE, County Rd, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1UZ  
Shaun McShane, B75898

HMP PARKHURST, Newport, Isle of

Wight, PO30 5NX  
Peter Sherry, B75880  
Natalino Vella, B71644  
Harry Duggan, 338638  
Danny McNamee, L48616  
Thomas Quigley, B69204  
Patrick Hackett, 342603

HMP ALBANY, Newport, Isle of

Wight, PO30 5RS  
Liam Quinn, 49930  
Martin Brady, 119087  
Sean Kinsella, 758661  
Paul Norney, 863532

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Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP  
Ronnie McCartney, 463799  
Stephen Nordone, 758663  
Joe O'Connell, 338635  
Roy Walsh, 119083

HMP LEICESTER,

Walford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ  
Paul Kavanagh, L31888  
Brian Keenan, B26380  
Gerard McDonnell, B75882  
Patrick Magee, B75881

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Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD  
Eddie Butler, 338637  
Brendan Dowd, 758662  
Paul Holmes, 119034  
Con McFadden, 130662  
Michael McKenney, L46486  
Liam McCotter, LB83693

HMP FULL SUTTON, York, YO4 1PS

William Armstrong, 119085  
Noel Gibson, 876225  
Patrick McLaughlin, LB83694

# News briefs.

## Britain heads sick food league

CASES of food poisoning in this country have doubled in the last ten years, it was claimed recently. A record 21,000 instances were reported in 1987 alone.

The London Food Commission has just published a guide called 'Food Adulteration and How to Beat It'. One of its authors, Julie Shepherd, a science policy adviser, spoke of its reaching 'epidemic' levels.

'We have created almost ideal condition for the growth of pathogens throughout our food-producing and distributing system,' she said.

The Minister of Agriculture, John Gummer has also been publicly attacked by a leading member of a government advisory committee who claimed that the government was trying to play down the threat to public hygiene by Listeria, which is a bacterium found in chilled fast food preparations, responsible for 500 cases of poisoning per year, 150 of them fatal.

Better enforcement of food hygiene standards, greater information for consumers and increased research into hazards are calls contained in the commission's charter. Britain lags behind other countries in safety standards and is the 'sick food' producer of Europe, it says.

*'Food Adulteration and How to Beat it' is published by Unwin Paperbacks, 4.95p*

## Skill or kill

FATALITIES and accidents on government youth training schemes have increased by 68 per cent since 1984, when records were first kept, according to a report to be issued by the Unemployment Unit, an independent charity.

A spokesman for the unit expressed particular concern that this figure, although alarming as it already is, will increase dramatically in the very near future when a further 90,000 16- and 17-year-olds, who will no longer be able to draw unemployment benefit when the new legislation comes into force in two weeks' time, will be forced to join these training schemes.

A severe shortage of Training Commission safety officers has meant that only 0.15 per cent of workplaces are inspected.

Consequently, fewer work places are being regarded as unacceptable.

## Leaving the rigs

CONTRACTORS trying to fill the substantial number of vacancies which have occurred on the oil rig platforms since the Piper Alpha explosion are employing less skilled operators including applicants from Youth Training Schemes. Some are using forged safety certificates, according to one report.

The introduction of lower rates of pay since the drop in oil prices, and the widespread concern

amongst oil workers and their families about safety standards have caused hundreds of men to seek less hazardous jobs ashore.

## Sportsline

EVERYBODY had heard of Seb Coe but, until last week, not everyone knew who the president of the International Olympic Committee was.

Juan Samaranch got the job in 1980. A life-long Franco supporter, during the Spanish revolution he fled to France but returned to enlist in the Nationalist army.

When the fascist dictator died in 1977, Samaranch abandoned his domestic political career to become ambassador to the Soviet Union.

It was notably with the support of the communist bloc countries that he was elected president of the IOC three years later.

## Chernobyl and the bureaucracy

THE SOVIET scientist who investigated the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, had warned that a catastrophe in a similar reactor could occur at any time.

The main cause of the accident had not been removed, he'd said. 'A reliable system for this type of power station' could not be found.

Reports of Valery Legasov's views, which he made known shortly before he committed suicide in April, have appeared in the Soviet publications, 'Pravda' and 'Moscow News'.

'The accident was the apotheosis of all the incorrect running of the economy that has been going on in our country for many decades,' Legasov stated.

## He did it their way

YOU would think from all the attention it has received that Clive James's television interview with Frank Sinatra was some world-shattering event.

The Australian journalist, whose one talent is his appetite for self-advertisement, admits he was only given the chance because

Sinatra was confident there would be no embarrassing references to subjects such as the septuagenarian crooner's alleged Mafia connections.

The reason for mentioning it here is because it inevitably recalls the run-in Sinatra had with Australian trade unionists in 1974, forcing him to cancel a concert tour of that continent.

They also refused to refuel his get-away plane until he'd made a public apology for his boorish behaviour.

## Child labour

GOVERNMENT policy of inviting foreign firms to set up operations in China has led to gross exploitation of child labour there, a Peking radio broadcast claimed recently.

In Shenzhen, which is the country's model economic zone, such enterprises are a reality, it said. Falsifications of name, age and status of children were a common practice to deceive inspectors.

In one factory where children were employed, the staff worked a 14-15 hour day with two 1-hour meal breaks. One small girl with a disability earned the equivalent of £1.50 a month.

## Psychological Games

SOME OF Seoul's slum dwellers, totalling 100,000, who were evicted during developments in preparation for the Olympics are among 'the poor people nationwide' who are being invited to participate in the opening ceremony in a fortnight's time.

Poor quality housing along the 100 mile torch route has been cosmetically walled-off by the authorities to avoid offending the visitors' gaze.

South Korean student leaders, long regarded as exemplifying the nation's 'conscience' are now among the most vociferous anti-government protesters, aligning themselves with the North Korean view that the Games are being used to strengthen national differences.

## LEICESTER DEFEND EDUCATION AND HEALTH

LEICESTER'S Education Alliance, made up of trade unionists within and outside education, parents, students and all those concerned with education as a basic right for the working class, are holding a demonstration to show their determination to defend education and health. The Education Alliance has called on other trade unionists, particularly in the health service, to join in the demonstration.

### DEMONSTRATION

Assemble 12 midday on Saturday 29 October  
Victoria Park Gates, Leicester

Details from Leicester Hospitals Branch NUPE

# EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

## Focus on struggle against apartheid

**H**OW do you make a film in South Africa about the politicisation of a man from Soweto under the nose of the government?

Oliver Schmidt, a young white South African director, got round the ever-changing state of emergency laws earlier this year by pretending his film, 'Mapantsula', was a gangster movie, and providing the censors with a specially depoliticised script.

The deception, he told a press conference in Edinburgh after the first showing of his film last week, could well make it impossible for him to make another film in South Africa.

'The state is waging war against the media,' said Schmidt. 'There was no legal basis for them to close down 'Cry Freedom' - the film wasn't even banned in South Africa.'

Botha's government, he explained, had just created a 'Ministry of Film' consisting of right-wing film-makers whose job is to veto any new projects. Cannon Distributors, said Schmidt, are taking part in this inquisitorial body.

'Mapantsula' was shot on location in Soweto and Johannesburg, and tells the story of a petty crook, Panic, who is treated with contempt by other black workers in the township because he is known to give information

to the police.

The hostility and example of freedom fighters he meets in jail eventually convince him to take a principled stand. The film ends with his refusal to sign a statement implicating political activists in his community.

'We wanted to look at the little man in the crowd, and how he lives under apartheid,' Schmidt explained. 'We hope very much that this film is shown inside South Africa, because we want characters like Panic to see it and think about their lives.'

Schmidt is happy that the film should be seen as an antithesis to films like 'Cry Freedom'. It deals exclusively with the oppression of the blacks and - to a limited extent - the political struggles within the black communities to fight apartheid.

In a particularly effective scene, an elegantly-suited black councillor is shown trying to justify his support for rent rises to an angry meeting.

'Mapantsula' was made by a crew made up equally of blacks and whites as part of a deliberate policy to train those who find it virtually impossible to find such work under the apartheid regime.

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**U**NLIKE 'Mapantsula', the Edinburgh Film Festival's other offering on South Africa, 'A World Apart', focuses on several months in the life of a white oppositionist. It is based on the life of Ruth First, writer and prominent African National Congress and South African Communist Party member who, as



'Nines' (Paul Savage): the Baxter Theatre's 'District Six: the Musical'

a note at the end reminds us, was assassinated by a letter bomb in Mozambique in 1982.

Although the struggles of the black masses in Alexandra township feature powerfully in the film, its main subject is the impact of repression on a white family. But the film - the directorial debut of Oscar-winning cameraman Chris Menges - should not be dismissed on this account.

It was scripted by Shawn Slovo, Ruth First's daughter, and the courageous battle of the mother (given the fictional name of Diana Roth and tautly played by Barbara Hershey) is seen very much through the eyes of her 13 year old daughter - an outstanding performance by Jodhi May.

To describe it as the portrayal of the devastating effects on an adolescent of her mother's political commitment, as much of the film's advance publicity has done, is an entirely wrong assessment.

It shows, rather, the growing political awareness of the young girl - beginning with her close relationship with the family's maid, who even in such an enlightened household is compelled to leave her children behind in the township - and the eventual dawning of the daughter's understanding of her mother's conviction.

There is a great sensitivity to the different treatment accorded blacks and whites in jail. Solomon, the maid's brother, is immediately tortured and finally killed, while Diana's interrogators use more subtle psychological torture.

They criticise her for being a 'bad mother'; bring her children to see her but move her to another jail; and, most harrowingly, re-

lease her at the end of the ninety days' detention, then re-arrest her as she lifts a public phone to contact her family.

A mark of the film's sharpness is its complete avoidance of the pitfall of sentimentality, a tribute both to Menges' cinematography, which never allows the camera to linger a moment too long on a child's face, and to the naturalness of all the young black and white actors involved.

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**T**HE 1960s was a key decade in the development of apartheid repression. The Sharpeville massacre of 1960 overshadows 'A World Apart'.

The Baxter Theatre of Cape Town's 'District Six', a musical also set in the mid-1960s, was written and performed by many who lived in the area known by that name which was bulldozed in 1966 under the infamous Group Areas Act.

The multi-racial community was driven out and the area designated a white group area - obliterating the home of South Africa's first proletariat, and destroying a centre of ethnic culture.

Forty thousand blacks, 'coloureds', Asians and poor whites were forced to leave their homes and were herded into townships miles from their work.

Unfortunately too little of this vivid and turbulent past is conveyed by the company, whose material really does not do justice to their obvious energy and talent.

Hilary Horrocks

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# POLITICS AND LITERATURE

## Connections with Gorbachev

A PLAY presenting an honest account of Trotsky's struggle against Stalin and the policy of 'socialism in a single country' could now be staged in the Soviet Union, a noted associate of general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and supporter of perestroika claimed at the Edinburgh Festival last week.

But Alexander Gelman, now a popular playwright in the USSR, who was unsuccessfully proposed as a delegate to the recent party conference by Gorbachev himself, made it abundantly clear that he would neither be writing nor encouraging such a work.

Gelman was speaking at a public conference at the Traverse Theatre, where his current Moscow hit, 'A Man With Connections', is playing to packed houses at its British premier.

Journalist Alex Renton, chairing the conference on behalf of its sponsor, the 'Independent' newspaper, said that the play, which has been running in Moscow since 1983, had been seen in New York, Greece, Sweden, Finland and Turkey before at last being staged in Britain.

'A Man With Connections' is a naturalistic, domestic tragedy, showing personal relationships and individual integrity being destroyed by the corrupt managerial system operating in the Soviet Union, the blame for which Gorbachev's supporters place on the 'the period of stagnation' under Brezhnev and his shortlived successors.

It was seen by Gorbachev, a personal friend of Gelman - although the playwright asked the Traverse audience not to go away with impression that 'I have lunch with him every day' - before he became general secretary.

Gelman praised Gorbachev for his interest in the arts and asserted that no play had been banned in the Soviet Union since perestroika began.

He contrasted this with the struggle in 1982 and 1983 to get 'A Man With Connections' performed.

Gelman spoke, with an apparent frankness that clearly impressed his audience, about the problems confronting the Gorbachev openness.

'There are still certain areas closed to criticism', he said, and he later identified these primarily as military questions, 'some pages from the history of the party leadership', the KGB archives, and, in terms of current politics, closed sessions of the central committee.

'I think it is wrong', he said, but went on to explain the problem in terms of two conflicting traditions in Russian history: that of conservatism, identified in the period since the revolution with Stal-

inism, and that of liberalism and democracy, by far the weaker of the two.

A question was then asked: 'There are those who would claim that there is third tradition, the tradition associated with Trotsky, and that it is in this tradition that the concept of socialist revolution and cultural freedom are most closely linked. When do you think that a play or a novel, portraying favourably or even honestly, Trotsky's struggle against 'proletkult' and against the theory of 'socialism in a single country' will be seen in the Soviet Union?'

Gelman, replying through a conscientious interpreter, said, 'We have now seen the rehabilitation of most of those whom Stalin put in prison - Bukharin, Rykov, Kamenev and so forth. Trotsky was never put in prison so he cannot be rehabilitated.'

'If there were a good play about Trotsky, I think it could be put on, but, as I understand it, Trotsky was close to Stalin. He too wanted to turn the screws.'

'When Stalin got rid of Trotsky, he took over a great deal of Trotsky's programme. I personally don't have much sympathy with Trotsky....'

There followed a poignant little slip by the translator which Gel-

man at once pounced on, showing that, while not feeling able to conduct the interview in English, he was following the rendition of his replies.

'I personally don't have much sympathy with Trotsky - especially his aesthetic programme' was quickly corrected to 'especially his ethical programme.'

The conference revealed a good deal about the mentality of the progenitors of perestroika and glasnost, and provided interesting information on developments within the Soviet artistic community.

But no-one listening to Gelman could imagine that his thinking is much influenced by the central Marxist concept that the independent strength of the working class constitutes the most progressive force in modern society.

He seemed set on a course of becoming an artistic emblem of detente with western liberals, and a man from the BBC made a public bid to contract him for a radio play. The only problem, joked Gelman, is that state taxes account for up to 80 per cent of writers' earnings on foreign contracts.

'Hardly matters,' cracked the chap from the Beeb, 'we don't pay much anyway.'

## The importance of Hugh MacDiarmid

TEN years after his death, the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid (1892-1978) was acclaimed as one of the major talents of twentieth century literature at an important conference held in Edinburgh during this year's international festival.

This view was advanced by almost all the contributors to a two-day gathering organised by the indefatigable Richard DeMarco, an Edinburgh painter, gallery owner, and maker of otherwise unnoticed international artistic connections.

By no means all the speakers belonged to the established coterie of the poet's devotees. The cosmopolitan Scots-born journalist and historian, Neil Ascherson, summed the meetings up by saying that they had established once and for all that MacDiarmid was a figure of literary genius. Any debate on that basic question should now be regarded as over.

Opinions differed as to which were MacDiarmid's most important works, and as to whether it was essential to put his Lallans poetry at the centre of his claim to a much-enhanced reputation. In the 1920s especially, MacDiarmid (real name Christopher Murray Grieve) wrote in a language sometimes

known as 'synthetic (synthesised) Scots'.

His most famous poem at this time was 'A Drunk Man Looks At The Thistle,' which, in Scottish literature, might be compared to T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' in England. MacDiarmid's poem includes a section entitled in some editions 'The Ballad of the General Strike'.

The attempt to initiate a debate on MacDiarmid should be of considerable interest to Workers Press readers. For, from the early 1930s, the poet was a committed Stalinist in his politics, although he was expelled from the Communist Party as a result of his Scottish nationalist convictions.

He never repudiated his attacks on Trotsky in the late 1930s, and was allowed to rejoin the Communist Party after the Krushchev 'secret speech' and the

invasion of Hungary in 1956. He declared himself a 'Stalinist-Leninist' not long before he died.

Some would argue that these were acts and statements born of perverted moral courage or mere eccentricity rather than political cynicism.

However that may be, the long delayed recognition of MacDiarmid as a major twentieth century poet must raise afresh the important issue of the relationship between literature and politics in the epoch of imperialist decay and proletarian revolution.

To a genuine wrestling with such questions, serious readers of Leon Trotsky's 'Literature and Revolution' and later works on related subjects will have a great deal to contribute.

Terry Brotherstone

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## An open letter to Beatrix Campbell

LAST week, at a press conference held to launch the latest draft of the Communist Party programme, 'The British Road to Socialism', you declared:

'We believe you can't put a white male skilled toolmaker and black school dinner lady from Brixton in the same "working class" category and expect them to think in the same way.'

And the new CP programme, which you helped to write, insists that social, moral, sexual, and ethnic divisions 'can no longer be a secondary agenda, after the "class" struggle', but must be 'alongside it, centre stage'.

Those quotation marks around the word 'class' tell their own story. It is a story of your party's abandonment of every last shred of the Marxist method.

The Communist Party is now, in several important respects, well to the right of the Labour Party. And it presents a picture of such abject theoretical decay that even your colleague Monty Johnstone, who has cheerfully swallowed a vast amount of feculent matter in his long inglorious career, just can't bring himself to swallow this ultimate dollop of do-do.

By abandoning the primacy of class analysis and class struggle, you and your colleagues are abandoning science. In its place you are asserting, in practice, the primacy of mere style.

The journal 'Marxism Today', to which you are a frequent contributor, neither throws light on the inner workings of capitalist society nor shows its readers how that society can be changed.

Instead it regularly purveys a very British, very superficial, very academically flavoured brand of radical chic, several degrees more vapid and more disgusting than the American variety anatomised in the 1970s by Tom Wolfe.

You and your friends are in fact trendy pseudo-communists, for whom the really vital things in life are how you dress and where you eat. So, for instance, 'Marxism Today' offers its readers a 'Cred card', for use 'at our selection of over 100 of the yummiest restaurants'.

The word 'yummiest' here might just as well be spelt 'yuppiest'. For 'Marxism Today' caters above all for a sub-set of yuppies: those who permit themselves a social conscience and would feel naked without their 'Release Nelson Mandela' badges.

Those yummy yuppy restaurants, it's safe to say, are not often attended by that 'black school dinner lady from Brixton' whom you so knowingly, and so patronisingly, invoke.

I wonder how many 'black school dinner ladies from Brixton' you have in fact met, in the intervals between your painfully trivial and profoundly servile interviews with such Tory luminaries as Edwina Currie - interviews which the 'Guardian' is always so eager to reprint.

At Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic last year two separate reliable witnesses heard you say that you favoured a 'popular front' which would include Tory women.

What would your 'black school dinner lady from Brixton' make of that one?

Black women in Britain are thrice oppressed. They are oppressed as black people, as women, and as workers. And a growing

number of them are conscious of this multiple oppression, of the need to struggle against it and, not least, of the centrality of class in that struggle.

Your 'black school dinner lady from Brixton' did indeed come 'centre stage' four times in the 1970s: at Imperial Type-writers, Leicester, in 1974; at Grunwick in 1976; at Fitters in 1979; and at Chix, Slough, in 1979-1980.

And each time she did so as a member of the working class. Her militancy; her courage and toughness on the picket line, especially in the face of police repression; her formidable political awareness; above all, the rapidity with which she developed as a class fighter in the course of the struggle: these shining qualities astonished all observers.

The day is coming when women workers will once again display 'inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice'. When that day comes where will you and your party be? Not, I think, 'centre stage'.

### A clarification

WHEN I wrote here on 13 August welcoming the Hungarian Trotskyist journal 'Negyedik Internationale' ('Fourth International'), I was under the impression that it was a brand-new venture.

Since then I've received a translation of the editorial in the first issue, which makes it clear that this publication is in fact the revival, under a new name and after a long absence, of 'Szocialista Forradalomert' ('For the Socialist Revolution'), first published in 1963.

After writing last week about the need for accuracy I'm both obliged and happy to make this necessary clarification.

AS I SEE IT



BY TOM OWEN

## Festival of the Oppressed

I AM sure that Workers Press readers will be pleased to know that 'The Guardian' has recently launched its Mediterranean edition for those temporary and not so temporary expatriates who suffer from crossword withdrawal symptoms in their villas and *gites*. (Some of them may be simply mono-lingual or just too lazy to read *Le Monde* or *La Vanguardia*.)

One of its obsessive preoccupations is British hooliganism on the Costas. In one of its early editions, an intrepid reporter joined the Costa Brava 'Zorro Squad' - a team of Spanish cops, hand-picked for their physical fitness and 'psychological balance' who patrol the resorts of Lloret, Callela, etc to deal with the brawling drunks from Northern Europe.

These 'well balanced' lads relax in the Catalan Hill Street Blues atmosphere after a stint in Euskadi (Basque country) as 'anti-terrorist' elite forces.

They have their origin in Franco's 'anti-subversion' units. The reporter's conclusion after an exciting and well protected night on the town was that the trouble seems to come from anyone from the age of 16-25 who is on holiday at the time - English, French, Swedes or even nearer to their temporary bits of England, the 'crooks and perverts' from Barcelona.

The later editions moved on to more serious threats of disorder, as Peter Fryer pointed out in connection with the Notting Hill Carnival.

I have been in a number of European cities this summer - London, Paris, Lyons, Barcelona, Madrid. Each of them has its severe 'social problems' of destitution, drug addiction, urban decay etc. Each has a flourishing criminal community.

These cities act as a magnet for millions of people and in one form or another provide a number of popular celebrations, carnivals and festivals.

London has Notting Hill, Paris the non-stop street entertainment of the Pompidou Centre and the Latin Quarter, Barcelona has its great urban 'festes'.

In terms of size, the largest outside London is the Festival of Gracia, the enormous inner city *barrio* of Barcelona, which was one of the last working class strongholds to fall to the fascist armies in 1939. The

streets bear witness to its revolutionary traditions - Carrer de la Libert, Carrer de la Revoluci, Carrer de Mozart... For mile after mile the streets are decorated lavishly, families eat outside to live musical entertainment and thousands of people take over the huge crumbling, decaying area.

The Gracia Festival was banned under Franco. Its celebration is a victory for working class democratic rights. There are no cars, hardly any tourists and this year I saw only two policemen.

This is not the city's only Festival. I witnessed a breathtaking trapeze ballet to jazz and classical music in front of the old Gothic cathedral, along with an enormous, appreciative crowd - again no cars, no cops, no trouble.

I have no illusions as to the viciousness of the Spanish state with its ex-Falangist Guardia Civil and other para-military forces. One has only to remember what they did in the Reinosa strikes and occupations over the last twelve months.

So someone may ask: is this popular entertainment more bread and circuses? I do not think so and would like to speculate a little.

Recently Douglas Hurd announced measures to streamline court procedures dealing with public disorder at football matches, carnivals demon-

strations etc. What has become noticeable in Britain is the increasing policing of everyday life. For example at Brixton market on a Saturday afternoon people go about their weekend shopping, surveyed from every street corner by van loads of bored young police thugs. Is shopping, taking a child out, or even drinking a can of beer on a hot day a threat to the state?

At the end of the Franco period, the Spanish working class fought for democratic rights in what at the time often seemed to us bizarre ways.

In a state which declared three a subversive crowd, games of chess or draughts in a cafe would become the focus of huge argumentative crowds who would constantly disperse into the anonymity of the street and then re-form at the next opportunity.

What Hurd and Thatcher seem to be doing is to make the connection between subversion and any form of collective activity. They have criminalised advanced forms of political assembly like the picket line; they are politicising and criminalising mundane collective activities such as sporting events, dances, festivals and even shopping.

Could this fascination of our everyday culture be a response to what Karl Marx described as that greatest 'Festival of the oppressed' - the Revolution?





# CENTRE FOR REBUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

**AN EXTENDED** meeting of the Preparatory Committee for an international conference of Trotskyists concluded a four-day meeting last week with a unanimous decision to set up a Centre to rebuild the Fourth International.

The Committee is now working on plans to launch a fund to provide the political and material resources for this Centre and Workers Press readers will be kept fully informed of this decisive project. A full report of the Committee meeting will be published later.

The decision to establish the Centre was reached after intense discussion amongst representatives from several countries about the work of the Preparatory Committee. The decision marks a new stage in the work of the Preparatory Committee.

Special attention was given to the history of the Fourth International and the struggle against revisionism within it.

There was general agreement amongst the delegates that the history of the Fourth International was a matter not of academic interest but of vital concern in deciding the concrete tasks now facing the Committee.

It was re-affirmed that the central struggle within the Fourth International had been

against Pabloite revisionism, a revisionism that reflected the ideological and political pressure of Stalinism on the movement.

It was in the course of this struggle alone that the continuity of the movement had been assured.

This struggle, and a knowledge of its history, is of importance not simply for the Trotskyist movement. Millions of workers throughout the world are now entering struggles which the Stalinist bureaucracy headed by Gorbachev desperately seeks to betray on behalf of world imperialism.

The long drawn out fight against Stalinism in all its forms within the Fourth International has been the indispensable preparation for these struggles of the working class.

It is this new upsurge in the struggles of the international working class that makes possible and necessary the rebuilding of the Fourth International in this, its fiftieth, year.

The unfolding of the political revolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a central feature of the agenda. The organic links between this unfolding revolution and the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries for the social revolution was brought to the fore. A report on this aspect of the Committee's

work was given and plans for its development agreed. The Workers Revolutionary Party carries a considerable responsibility for this new stage in the Preparatory Committee's work, especially for the successful setting up of the Centre. We urge all WRP members and supporters, together with Workers Press readers, to give as generously as possible to our International Fund.

We particularly ask you to attend our rally in London on 9 October to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Fourth International. This rally will hear an eye-witness account of recent developments in the Soviet Union as well as further plans for the establishment of the Centre for the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

We urgently need your financial assistance! Over the last month the Fund has risen by only £569.38, bringing the total raised since November 1986 to £18,764.85. We have to tell you that this is far too slow.

In the light of the announcement we have made can you please make a really special effort to raise some substantial funds for this work?

Please send your donations to International Fund, Workers Revolutionary Party, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS.

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# TASKS

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# TUC CRISIS

BY TRAVIS GOULD

**THE** impending expulsion of the EETPU from the TUC at this week's TUC Conference is a positive development in the class struggle.

Previous arguments to keep the EETPU in the fold and remove the right wing EETPU leadership that some lefts have clung to for a long time have crumbled, overtaken by events.

Now that the EETPU is on its way out, different views are being put forward about what to do: stay in and fight, join a new union for electricians affiliated to the TUC, or join an existing affiliated union.

The decision on whether to remain in the EETPU or not flows from the decision to expel the EETPU in the first place.

We are in a battle, a historical battle in the trade union movement, and one that may determine the future of trade unions in the years ahead, important years as the capitalist crisis deepens.

How revolutionaries working in the unions act in relation to the TUC-EETPU split will be a valuable test and experience in the battle to transform the unions into organs of revolutionary struggle.

Both left and right (with very few exceptions) in the trade union top circles want to go along the same road as Eric Hammond and the EETPU. It is only their relationship with their members that at this stage prevents them from doing so.

## 'New realist' road

This is the 'new realist' road which will end up with compliant unions working openly hand in glove with the employers and policing the membership to obtain maximum profits in a crisis-ridden capitalist market.

To say we have this situation today would be wrong: we are not yet living under a corporate state.

Hammond is of the same ilk as leaders of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers. Hammond recruited scabs from outside the printing industry and used them to smash the year-long Wapping strike and struck a heavy blow at SOGAT and the NGA.

Those who say that the UDM is a scab union and the EETPU is not, must remember that leaders of the former union organised scabbing within the NUM when they disagreed with the majority decision to strike in 1984-1985, going on to split the NUM and form a union outside the TUC.

Hammond will soon be joining them. The Hammonds, Lynxes and Prendergasts are alike in their unswerving, treacherous, loyalty to their capitalist masters.

Do the Militant, the SWP or anyone else advocate staying in the UDM or do they support the NUM policy of winning members away from the scab union in order to smash it?

To leave lefts in the EETPU fighting against the right wing leadership will detract from the main issue at stake in the EETPU-TUC split. The duty of revolutionaries is to clarify the issues involved and raise the consciousness of the working class. This can best be done in the struggle to widen and deepen the split.

## Transforming the unions

The task of transforming the trade unions into revolutionary organs struggling for power will be developed in the struggle against the 'new realist' road which the majority of the trade union bureaucracy want to take. That is why the EETPU expulsion is a positive development in the class struggle.

If electricians and plumbers stay in and fight, while they are busy fighting Hammond from within, the rest of the trade union leaders, including Todd and Airlie, will have a free hand to go along the same path as Hammond. The acceptance of single union, no-strike sweetheart deals will end up with a servile trade union movement that the electricians could then re-join either through amalgamation with the AEU or by some other path. That is why the EETPU must be smashed in the fight immediately ahead of us.

The objective conditions that lie behind the EETPU-TUC crisis give electricians a great opportunity to defeat the right wing leadership in the EETPU.

If a new union for electricians and plumbers is formed, there must be no hesitation in joining such a union and winning members away from the EETPU. This is the immediate step required to defeat scab trade unionism and prevent a powerful right-wing bloc from forming.

# SWAPO pleads for sweetheart deal with Botha

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

**THE** SOUTH West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) has stated shyly but firmly its determination to betroth itself to South African capital. Following hard upon the Reagan-Gorbachev summit stitch-up of the Southern African revolution with the agreement for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, its president Sam Nujoma has made it clear that SWAPO has not only not the slightest desire to assist the South African working class in the overthrow of apartheid-capitalism, but the firmest intentions of keeping wealth out of the hands of the working class and in the grip of the most brutal capitalist exploiters inside Namibia also.

At the recent 23rd congress of Zambia's United National Independence Party, Nujoma stated that on coming to power, SWAPO would not provide bases for ANC fighters inside Namibia. He said that the struggle against apartheid was 'the task of the ANC and the South African people, and not of outsiders.'

SWAPO has openly abandoned all proposals for extensive nationalisation of Namibian industry - much of it South African and foreign owned, or to take over the vast stretches of white farmland - out of fear of driving its 75,000 whites into exile.(1)

For the one or two enterprises that 'may' be nationalised by the first Namibian parliament, 'appropriate compensation' will be given. The land distribution which is a major part of SWAPO's manifesto is unlikely to involve large scale seizures, or even enforced buy-outs of white farms - the only targets will be the 300 or so farms owned by absentee landlords in Germany and South Africa.

## Forgive and forget

Nujoma assured his listeners that SWAPO seeks 'as cordial a relationship as possible' with its former colonial rulers, and will adopt a 'forgive and forget' policy towards the Namibian government which acts as a direct agent of Pretoria in the savage suppression of Namibian workers.

Presumably 'forgive and forget' applies also to the actions of those South African troops which open fire on Namibian schools whenever guerrilla activity takes place nearby. And let us hope that the relatives of children killed under those circumstances have also been informed of this attractive new policy.

Nujoma spoke 'glowingly' of Pretoria's good intentions, and said that South Africa appeared genuinely to be pursuing peace. SWAPO fully endorsed the talks on withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, and has fallen over itself to issue 'strict instructions' to its soldiers not to engage South African troops in Angola or Namibia except in self defence. Such gossamer scruples don't seem to hamper those South African troops in Namibia and Angola for whom Botha has personally intervened to circumvent charges of common murder of innocent civilians.

## Stalinism's dirty deal

SWAPO's indecent haste to assure Pretoria that a takeover in Namibia would make not one iota of difference to their degree of exploitation of Namibian labour is the direct result of Stalinism's dirty deal with Reagan to abandon the workers of Southern Africa to the mercies of South African and foreign capital.

SWAPO and the ANC are the agents inside the movement who hope to assist in carrying out the plan.

South Africa is an imperialist country which has subjugated, with force, the economies of its neighbours.

Gorbachev's betrayal has enabled SWAPO, as a petit-bourgeois movement, to feel free to come clean on its own complete agreement with and subservience to the domination of South African capital, and its readiness to deliver the Namibian working class into the hands of its class enemy.