



TRADE UNIONS IN DANGER

By Ian Harrison

WORKERS and youth must take the most serious warning from the 119th Trade Union Congress held in Blackpool in September.

Aided and abetted by their 'left' and Stalinist colleagues, the TUC right-wing majority have made a series of decisions which threaten the fundamental principles of trade unionism.

Throughout the week of conference all talk was of 'unity' against the Tories. But the decisions prove that the real unity is between the TUC majority and the open collaborators with the state like Eric Hammond of the EETPU electricians' union and Bill Jordan of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

Far from taking disciplinary measures against these pioneers of the no-strike deal and the single union agreement, Congress agreed to postpone any action over the role of the EETPU and the AEU for at least six months. This amounts to a green light to Hammond and Jordan to continue with their scab-recruiting, strike-breaking activities.

Miners' president Arthur Scargill, London print-workers' leader and 'Morning Star' Stalinist Bill Freeman and 'Militant' supporter John Macreadie of the civil service union CPSA all denounced the EETPU but made no call for its expulsion from the TUC. Rodney Bickerstaffe of the National Union of Public Employees and Ron Todd of the Transport and General Workers' Union demagogically spoke against single union, no-strike deals and then threw their weight behind the General Council's year-long review of 'the future of trade unionism'.

Todd successfully argued for bringing forward the decision on the EETPU and the AEU to six months time rather than waiting for the full general review to be presented to next year's Congress. His reasons, however, were less to do with principled opposition to single union deals than with a fear that Hammond and Jordan will succeed in organising groups of workers at the T&GWU's expense.

The central purpose of the policy review body, consisting of 23 trade union leaders headed by TUC general secretary Norman Willis, is to bring in so-called business unionism. Under cover of a recruitment drive, the aim is to make

fringe benefits rather than class organisation the main feature of trade unionism and to accept Thatcher's privatisation measures and 'share-owning democracy'.

The TUC gave its blessing to moves by the leaders of the building workers' union UCATT to recruit lump labour into the union.

Although Congress passed a resolution calling for no co-operation with the Tory work-for-dole Job Training Scheme, TUC leaders made it clear that this did not amount to a boycott. There would be no withdrawal from the Manpower Services Commission.

The TUC leaders delivered a calculated insult to the South African revolution by refusing to call any action against the Botha regime and merely set up a voluntary levy of members.

On the fourth anti-union law, privatisation and the defence of the National Health Service, the TUC leaders shed crocodile tears and committed themselves to nothing.

The destruction of tens of thousands of jobs was met by reactionary nationalist demands for import controls to protect 'British manufacturing industry'.

'Review' was also the key word at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton two weeks later. The Kinnock-Hattersley leadership used the June election defeat as the pretext for a further sharp shift to the right. The entire emphasis of the main policy document adopted, 'Moving Ahead', is the necessity to recognise, as Kinnock put it, 'the realities of a changing economy, a changing society and ... a



KINNOCK

changing electorate too' and to turn to those sections of the middle class who have profited from Thatcherism.

This was backed by further moves to prevent Constituency Labour Parties from de-selecting MPs who oppose local party policy by extending the vote to include inactive party members and a strengthening of Kinnock's support on the National Executive Committee. Faced with this open attempt by Kinnock to compete with the SDP on its own

terms, the 'lefts' were, if anything, even more muted than they were in Blackpool.

The lessons of the TUC Congress and Labour Party Conference must be brought home to every worker and youth, particularly within the trade unions. At stake are all the democratic rights of the working class and the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state.

We warn: the prostration of the Labour and TUC leaders will only encourage the Tories to escalate their attacks on jobs, benefits and living standards. To defeat the Tory class enemy means first and foremost to conduct an implacable struggle to expose the Labour and TUC leaders and their 'left' accomplices, and requires the building of a revolutionary leadership.

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Release Moses Mayekiso!

STATEMENT BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD



Workers from Moses Mayekiso's union at a factory near Johannesburg take strike action after his arrest

PHOTO: IDAF

THE Workers International League calls on workers, students and youth to campaign for the release of Moses Mayekiso. Mayekiso is on trial in South Africa charged with high treason for his part in organising the struggles of black workers and youth against the racist apartheid state.

Mayekiso is the elected general secretary of the second largest trade union in South Africa, the National Union of Metalworkers, an executive member of the COSATU trade union federation and chair of the Alexandra Township Action Committee, Johannesburg. He is the first trade union leader to be charged with high treason in South Africa — a charge which carries the death sentence.

The trial of Mayekiso and four comrades is aimed directly at the rising militancy of black workers and the growing strength of the black trade unions.

We denounce the campaign initiated by the Stalinists of the South African Communist Party in the African National Congress (ANC) and the SACTU trade union wing of the ANC to block support for Mayekiso. They are the authors of a filthy whispering campaign which claims that Mayekiso's defence constitutes a 'personality cult' and that his cause is best served by remaining silent. Turn to page 2 col. 1.

Release Moses Mayekiso!

From page one

This line is being promoted in the British trade union movement by both factions of the Communist Party, by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and by their right-wing allies on the TUC General Council.

John Daly, general secretary of NALGO, has gone so far as to denounce the campaign for Mayekiso as aligning itself 'against the principles and policies of the progressive democratic movement in South Africa of which COSATU is a key participant', in a bulletin circulated to branches dated August 26, 1987.

Opposition to Mayekiso's defence campaign has also been expressed by the ANC/ Stalinist-dominated executive of COSATU. Mayekiso's 'crime' is that he stresses the leading role of the working class in the struggle against apartheid and opposes the class collaborationist policy of the ANC, which is desperately pursuing a constitutional settlement with the Botha regime.

In July, ANC leaders met a delegation of prominent white businessmen and academics in Dakar, Senegal. At the end of August, COSATU called off the miners' strike despite an overwhelming vote in favour of pursuing the full claim.

The line-up between the Stalinist betrayers of the South African revolution and the right-wing traitors of the TUC General Council could not be clearer. While the overfed bureaucrats of Congress House pontificate that the Mayekiso campaign is a 'diversion', they themselves have not organised a single effective action by the British trade union movement against the Botha regime.

Leon Trotsky, in the Manifesto of the Second Congress of the Third International, left no doubt as to how these self-proclaimed 'socialists' should be viewed by the working class:

'The Socialist who aids directly or indirectly in perpetuating the privileged position of one nation at the expense of another, who accommodates himself to colonial slavery, who draws a line of distinction between races and colours in the matter of human rights, who helps the bourgeoisie of the metropolis to maintain its rule over the colonies instead of aiding the armed uprising of the colonies; the British Socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland, Egypt and India against the London plutocracy — such a Socialist deserves to be branded with infamy, if not with a bullet, but in no case merits either a mandate or the confidence of the proletariat.'

The decision of the Socialist Workers Party, organisers of 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso', to boycott the demonstration on October 10 calling for Mayekiso's release complements the Stalinists' treachery.

- Release Moses Mayekiso and his four comrades, the Sharpeville Six and all political prisoners of the Botha regime;
- The TUC must organise a complete boycott of all trade with South Africa by air and sea;
- The TUC and Labour Party leaders must be pledged to organise a campaign of national strike action and demonstrations in support of black South African workers;
- Forward to the South African socialist revolution — build soviets in every township!
- Down with Stalinism — build a Trotskyist party in South Africa!



Residents and staff of the two threatened hostels lobby the meeting of Tower Hamlets housing sub-committee

PRIVATE BUILDERS PROFIT AS HOUSING CRISIS GROWS

TORY government attacks on local councils' house-building programmes are providing a mini-boom to the private sector.

Statistics published for the first quarter of 1987 reveal that only 6,700 council homes had their foundations laid between January and March this year. The private sector began work on 49,000 homes in the same period.

During the same period in 1986, 7.9 thousand new homes were begun by local councils while 43.3 thousand were begun in the private sector. Figures for 1975 show how the attack on council house-building has developed, when the total

number of public sector foundations laid was 173.8 thousand compared to 149.1 thousand in the private sector — a combined total for 1975 of 322.9 thousand. The total for 1986 of public and private sector building was 203,500.

The burden of the attack has fallen on young working class couples, driven into the private market for lack of council housing. 11,200 couples had their mortgages foreclosed and houses repossessed by building societies last year. A further 64,120 fell into serious arrears on repayments, according to statistics released by the Building Societies Association.

The mini-boom in the private sector has by con-

trast produced a growth in profits for building societies. In 1985 they made £803 million profit after tax. In 1986 their profits rose to £1.03 billion. This has created conditions for the larger building societies to buy out the smaller ones, or drive them into bankruptcy, with the total number of societies reduced from 167 to 151 during 1986, according to reports in the 'Financial Times'.

The attacks on local government house-building programmes have led local councils to cut back on workers employed in their building departments. The Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians has responded to the attacks on its members by

sponsoring a petition (!) to defend homes and jobs. The bankruptcy of the union's leadership was made clear on July 23 when the petition was launched outside parliament. While balloons were being released, UCATT executive councillor Jack Rogers explained that the aim of the petition was to appear to Tory Housing Minister William Waldegrave, in charge of the attacks, to release money for local council house-building.

At the TUC Annual Conference, UCATT sponsored two motions calling for a paper opposition to the Tories' attacks on local government and their members' jobs. This leadership represents a major obstacle to the defence of jobs and council housing. The full scale of their treachery became apparent when UCATT leaders jointly sponsored a motion with the EETPU which opened the union's membership to 'lump' labour and self-employed sub-contractors, the scourge of the building industry.

The UCATT leadership, dominated by the Stalinists of the Communist Party, is known to be considering a merger with the EETPU. It is the same leadership that abandoned the Shrewsbury Two, Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson, during the fight against lump labour in the building industry in the early 1970s.

With the economic crisis deepening, a properly-funded programme of council house-building and maintenance cannot be won by the Labour Party and TUC leaders, right or left. Workers and youth must draw the necessary conclusions from the treacherous turn by these leaders towards 'new unionism' and the 'Guardian readers' vote'. They must build a revolutionary party to destroy the outmoded capitalist system, which is the real source of homelessness and unemployment.

Hostels under threat

By Graham Fenwick

TRADE unionists and the homeless lobbied a meeting of the Tower Hamlets housing sub-committee on September 16, but were denied the right to speak.

They were protesting against the proposed closure of two hostels for the homeless and their sale for private development.

The residents of the two hostels, Prince's Lodge which holds 200 people, and Tower House with 430, face being placed back in bed-and-breakfast accommodation or, at worst, 'cardboard city'. The staff, whose combined total is 60, face redundancy.

The two hostels were originally owned by the GLC, but when that body was abolished by the Tories, they came into the hands of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The properties are now being sold off by the Liberal-controlled council in an attempt to balance its books by attacking the homeless.

The residents and staff have been kept in the dark about whether or not the sale is actually going ahead as a deliberate tactic to try and undermine their campaign against the closures.

The policy of the council is to cater for the upwardly-mobile middle class and the City of London commuters. They have a planning agreement with the London Docklands Development Corporation which favours big business at the expense of the working class living in the borough. They have also refused to house numerous Bengali families on the racist grounds that they are 'intentionally homeless'.



OVER 200 clerical workers in the NHS came from all over Britain on September 16 to lobby the DHSS headquarters in London, the scene of negotiations for their 1987 pay claim.

NALGO leaders, who called the lobby, found themselves under attack from their Merseyside and Manchester members. In response to the leaders' call for a 'day of action', members in the North West region came out on strike, only to be told their action was not officially sanctioned by the union's emergency committee.

The strikers were left open to disciplinary action by managers, the secretary of Merseyside Health Branch among those facing the sack. Full time officers and emergency committee members had to face the anger of workers originally intended for management.

Miners must extend fight against disciplinary code

THE miners' national overtime ban against British Coal's new disciplinary procedure began on Monday September 21. As a response to the belligerence of British Coal, it is wholly inadequate and is succeeding only in encouraging management to step up their attack.

The ban is the outcome of a series of manoeuvres by the leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers aimed at avoiding a confrontation with British Coal over the central issues facing miners. These manoeuvres will have the effect of dissipating the strength of the miners which has built up in opposition to the attacks of British Coal on jobs and conditions in the pits since the ending of the 1984-5 strike.

The new disciplinary code was introduced in March this year. It gives management the right to dismiss miners on the flimsiest pretext, for 'offences' which may have no connection with work. British Coal openly admit that their objective is to remove trade union activists who have been leading local unofficial action in the absence of a consistent nationally-led struggle.

The code came into effect almost exactly two years after the end of the national strike. In those two years, 80,000 jobs were lost from the industry and output per man shift was driven up by over 50 per cent. This was the context in which the developments around the new code have taken place.

Early in July, five miners at Frickley colliery in South Yorkshire were suspended under the terms of the new code. On July 13, Frickley came out on strike and sent flying pickets to other pits in the area. By July 16, the whole of the South Yorkshire coalfield was out. The Yorkshire area executive of the NUM under its president, Jack Taylor, moved swiftly into action and, the following weekend, instructed the Frickley men to call off their strike, recall the flying pickets and await the outcome of the ballot on industrial action, action already specified by the

By David Lewis

annual conference to be short of a strike.

On this clear betrayal of the men of Frickley and South Yorkshire, Jack Taylor's predecessor as president of the Yorkshire NUM was noticeably silent. As a mighty upsurge of anger once more lifted the Yorkshire miners into mass struggle, Arthur Scargill had nothing to say.

Scargill's silence speaks loudly of his own development since 1985. During the 1984-5 strike, Arthur Scargill expressed the combativity of the miners, their hatred of the Tories and their distrust of the TUC leaders. In his intransigent leadership of that strike, he reflected the strength of the working class. However, at the same time, he showed that pure militancy is unable to solve the problems facing the working class. The outcome of the strike showed that only a clear revolutionary line, put forward by a conscious revolutionary party could have taken the miners forward. Only an understanding of the political nature of the strike and a struggle to expose and undermine the TUC leaders by demanding that they call a general strike against the Tory government could have led to victory rather than defeat. Scargill failed on both these counts.

In order to lead the 1984-5 strike, Scargill had to distance himself from the Stalinists on the NUM Executive such as McGahey and Bolton. However, in the past two years, he has moved inexorably back into the Stalinist orbit, going so far as to advocate proportional representation as a means of putting Kinnock into Downing Street.

Now, in the latest manoeuvres around the overtime ban, the full extent of his political journey may be gauged. In an unprecedented concession to British Coal, in negotiations on September 14, Scargill and the NUM Executive offered binding independent arbitration as a means of resolving disputes. The British Coal Chairman, Sir

Robert Haslam, can recognise a sign of weakness when he sees it. Not surprisingly, his response was to threaten further pit closures and compulsory redundancies unless the NUM capitulated totally. In a move expressing further weakening, the NUM went to ACAS the following day. These talks came to nothing and the overtime ban commenced with the NUM leadership under Arthur Scargill clearly determined not to lead a consistent struggle against the attacks of British Coal.



OVER 3,500 marched from Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham, north London, to a rally in Hyde Park on October 3, two years after the police-provoked youth rebellion on the night of October 6, 1985. Organised jointly by the estate's Youth Association, Defence Campaign and Residents' Association, the march demanded the immediate release of the youths convicted on trumped-up charges and a public enquiry.

Deficit reveals industrial decline

THE most recently announced trade deficit of almost £1 billion shows that the stabilisation of the economy by the Thatcher government is more apparent than real.

In August, Britain's import bill rose by £387 million to £8,078 million — a record amount for a single month. At the same time, exports declined by £230 million to £6,545 million, leading to a balance of payments deficit in goods alone of £1,529 million.

When the assumed surplus of £600 million each month on so-called 'invisibles' — tourism, financial services, interest payments from abroad, etc — is taken into account, it leaves an overall current account deficit of £929 million, twice as large as was predicted and yet another record.

Furthermore, the trading surplus on oil alone was worth £374 million, up £90 million after several months in low figures. The deficit solely on manufactured goods, therefore, was £1,903 million. It is this figure which gives a true indication of the state of Britain as an industrial nation. In a word — declining.

This is the resultant of two forces: the world economic recession and the deliberate policies of the Thatcher government. Since 1979, the Tories have systematically dismantled industry and encouraged the get-rich-quick financial manipulators in the City of London.

By July this year, manufacturing output had only just managed to get back to the level it was in 1979, before Thatcher came to power. While this compares favourably with some colonial and semi-colonial countries, it places Britain firmly at the bottom of the league compared with the other major industrial countries.

The Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry recently pointed out that manufacturing production over the ten years to 1986 had fallen by three per cent in Britain, compared with increases of five per cent in France, 18 per cent in Germany, 15 per cent in Italy, 34 per cent in the United States and 56 per cent in Japan. The price for this staggering feat has been paid by the working class. Mass unemployment means that current manufacturing output is being produced with a quarter fewer workers than in 1979.

The stated objective of Thatcher in attacking industry and the working class was to stabilise the economy, specifically by eliminating inflation. While apparently successful in the short term, signs are now emerging that inflation is

poised to take off once more. In August, the annual rate of price inflation, at 4.4 per cent, was the highest of all the major industrial nations. Worried sympathisers with the problems of the ruling class, such as the Labour shadow employment secretary, Michael Meacher, were very disappointed, especially as price rises were widespread, indicating general inflationary pressure rather than special factors.

Playing a central part in this inflationary pressure is the rapidly rising level of consumer credit. It rose in July by one per cent, £228 million, to £21,276 million. Even more ominously, the increase over the year to July was 18 per cent.

Although the retail price index for September showed that inflation had dropped back to 4.2 per cent, the dramatically worsening trade deficit brings with it the possibility of an added inflationary factor — a devaluation of the pound designed to boost exports. If inflation does indeed take off again, then, in spite of high unemployment, the relative class peace will undoubtedly be broken as workers are once more obliged to fight for high pay rises. At the same time, many of the beneficiaries of the Thatcherite economy will find that the decline in value of their savings and investments because of inflation will take some of the gloss of their BMWs.

Faced with intensified international competition and a legacy of outdated and inefficient manufacturing capacity, the Tories' main concern is to destroy trade unionism, which presents the major obstacle to their unbridled exploitation of the working class. Since 1979, output per worker has risen by 56 per cent, a measure of how far they have already travelled in this direction. The huge trade deficit shows how much further they intend to go and must serve as the most serious warning.



COLOMBIAN exiles in Britain mounted a picket outside their London embassy on Thursday October 8 to mark one year since the murder of Hebert Marin. A political opponent of the right-wing Colombian regime, Marin was a leader of the Latin American community and an active trade unionist in London. He was tortured and killed by an army unit the day before he was due to return from Colombia after visiting his family. The picket, supported by the T&GWU catering branch of which Marin was a member, called on the Colombian government to make public the results of its 'investigation' into his murder.

DURING the Labour Party Conference in Brighton at the end of September, the leadership launched an attack on the ranks of its young members.

Mrs Diane Jeuda, speaking on behalf of the National Executive Committee, accused the Labour Party Young Socialists of being pitiful in number, bureaucratic, sectarian, intolerant and incapable of getting its message across to young voters.

The Executive's recommendations to reduce the age limit for the LPYS from 26 to 23, effectively halving

the number of members; to replace its regional branches with so-called Youth Campaign Committees; to confirm the closure of the movement's paper 'Socialist Youth'; and to replace its representatives on the NEC with 'young trade unionists' were passed by more than four million votes.

Intended to curb the influence of the Militant tendency and what Mrs Jeuda refers to as 'other Trotskyist groups', the new policy merely serves to tighten the grip of the party's right wing and further alienate its young members.

CHINA

Workers pay for leaders' turn to West

ON October 25 the Chinese Communist Party leadership will convene for its 13th Congress to receive the draft programme for the next five-year plan.

The draft programme will take China further along the course laid down in March 1978 when a new constitution was adopted which strengthened party control, promoted the rule of law and restored for the first time since the revolution in 1949 formal guarantees for the rights of the individual and of property.

The architects of that constitution led by Deng Xiaoping, China's 84-year-old

By Martin Sullivan

leader and veteran of the 'Long March', will be expected to hand over control to a younger generation of bureaucrats led by Zhao Ziyang, the 68-year-old prime minister.

The 13th Congress was originally scheduled for June but was postponed in the wake of nationwide student demonstrations earlier this year which were supported in some regions by factory workers. The leadership of China's Communist Party has been engaged for several months in back-door diplomacy and power-broking, arguing over four drafts of the new five-year plan and

posts to be taken up on the Central Committee and Politburo.

The crisis of leadership in China has been deeply aggravated by the 1978 constitution and the decisions flowing from it. The introduction of incentive schemes, concessions to peasant farmers which have led to the breaking up of communes, have thrown up new contradictions for the Chinese economy. Workers' expectations have been raised, stimulating demands for an increased range of goods and a higher standard of living.

After ten years of the new constitution, it is clear that the working class and poorer



Chinese students demonstrate in Peking

peasants are paying for the turn to the West. The price of vegetables has risen this year by an average 17 per cent, meat and poultry by ten per cent. In an attempt to curb public criticism of the 'reform programme', the Communist Party bureaucracy has been forced to reinstate subsidies on some basic food items and fix ceil-

ing prices on others. This, however, can only be a temporary measure and will not resolve the new problem of unemployment created by the introduction of profit incentives in factories and on peasant farming communes.

China's population, currently estimated at 1.06 billion, could reach two billion by the year 2050. The expansion of population has created enormous strains on the housing programme, so much so that nearly 40 million people have set up home in China's ancient cave systems. In areas where ready-made caves do not exist, poor peasants group together to dig houses terrace-style into the hillside where the roofs on one level act as roadways for those above. In the large cities the government has been forced into crash building programmes of multi-storey flats with families sharing cooking, washing and toilet facilities.

The concessions to wealthy peasants to further enrich themselves under the new constitution has created increasing shortages in staple diet cereals. China has been forced to divert funds from industrial development into buying grain supplies at world market prices. By mid-August China had purchased more than double the total quantity of cereals imported in 1986. Orders for over 12 million tonnes of grain were placed with Canada and Australia. China's grain harvest has continued to decline since its peak in 1984 in spite of the boost given to production by the import of expensive fertilisers.

Reports from regions throughout the country indicate that rural consumer spending exceeds by a wide margin investment in farm production and that more and more arable land is being converted into building plots for the development of small-scale rural industry. Provincial officials report that large numbers of peasants are hoarding grain and refusing to release it for the markets.

Such developments, proceeding in an unplanned way in a country whose

population is expanding at the rate of 14 million a year, have created deepening splits among China's leading Stalinist politicians, economists and intellectuals.

The struggles between 'liberal reformers' and hardline conservatives have begun to take their toll. Early this year Hu Yaobang, Communist Party general secretary, was forced to resign, while leading astrophysicist Fang Lizhi was sacked from his post as vice-president of the academy where the student protests began.

Throughout the spring, so-called 'black dossiers' were compiled by the ageing bureaucrats among the Stalinist leadership. Intellectuals who had been prominent in the ranks of those calling for 'reforms' and 'liberalisation' were earmarked for expulsion. In the run-up to the 13th Party Congress horse-trading began between factions of the leadership. Among those reportedly expelled from the party in August were Su Shaozhi, director of the Institute of Marx-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought (Peking), Wang Ruoshi, a leading political writer, and Wu Ziguang, a playwright now in his 70s frequently attacked over the last 30 years since China's Cultural Revolution. China's military leadership has not escaped the events of the student demonstrations unscathed. Young Shangkun, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, responsible for sending troops into Peking to suppress the students, will be removed from his post at the 13th Congress.

LEADERS of the FMLN guerrilla movement in El Salvador met with senior representatives of the government of President Duarte in early October with the aim of securing a peaceful settlement to the eight-year-old civil war. They are prepared to end the armed struggle in return for immediate participation in a provisional government prior to taking part in elections at some future date.

EASTERN EUROPE

Gorbachev line prevails

UNDER pressure from the world economic crisis, the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe are closely following Gorbachev's policy of economic 'restructuring' and a turn to the capitalist West.

The compromise between the state and individual 'enterprises' was first introduced on a national scale in Yugoslavia in the 1950s, resulting in so-called 'self-managing market socialism'. Faced with a \$20 billion debt to Western banks, 120 per cent inflation and over 7,000 loss-making enterprises across the country, the regime of Branko Mikulic, under its new Bankruptcy Law, has introduced further measures of capitalist coercion into the economy.

In early September, 5,000 workers were sacked and five enterprises shut in the poorest republic, Montenegro, adding to the 15 per cent already unemployed.

In the course of putting the new law into practice,

and as a result of opportunist manoeuvring in a bureaucracy divided over tactics, a major financial scandal came to light in late September. The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina's largest enterprise, Agrokomerc, employing 13,000 workers, was found to have been issuing worthless promissory notes to banks and other enterprises to the tune of \$1 billion to finance its operations.

Sackings, expulsions from the party and arrests followed and the Vice-President, Hamdija Pozderac, who was due to take over the presidency next May, was forced to resign.

Inter-enterprise credit is conservatively estimated at around \$20 billion. Though resulting in a growth of the productive forces, this inflationary policy has proved to be a time-bomb, fuelling anger and opposition amongst the working class to the bureaucracy's rule.

In Bulgaria, plans to introduce a policy of 'self-financing' of state enterprises similar to that now operating in the Soviet Union were outlined by veteran Stalinist leader Todor Zhivkov at the Central Committee plenum of the Communist Party in July. Managers are to be given powers to vary wage rates and productivity targets in each enterprise. Amidst ritual invocations of 'inertia', 'mismanagement' and 'inefficiency', Zhivkov called for a 'democratisation

of foreign trade' — a clear indication that the state monopoly of foreign trade is to be weakened in favour of enterprises establishing their own trading links. In a further move to integrate itself in the world market, Bulgaria has recently applied for membership of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). One sweetener to encourage its capitalist member nations to accept the application is Bulgaria's decision to honour debts to British holders of pre-war Bulgarian bonds.

Romania, which has suffered acute food shortages over the past two years, is attempting to repay its foreign debt by sharpening the squeeze on workers and peasants. Despite domestic crisis, President Ceausescu announced plans for an 'export drive' in early September.

The economy of Czechoslovakia shows every sign of deep stagnation. Economic growth went below two per cent in the first half of this year. Here too, reforms have been introduced to sharpen competition between 'profitable' and 'unprofitable' enterprises.

In Poland, where inflation is currently running at 20 per cent, rifts are opening up within the bureaucracy. Attempts to abolish centralised wage rates have so far failed in the face of workers' opposition. The Finance Ministry is urging

major price rises on basic commodities to claw back wage increases. The National Bank, meanwhile, is warning against the inflationary consequences. One factor in Polish inflation is the series of currency devaluations which reduced the value of the zloty by over 30 per cent against the dollar since the beginning of the year in an attempt to make exports more competitive. Poland's private employers have been given official permission to form their own organisation, the Economic Society.

Stalinist leader of East Germany Erich Honecker's state visit to West Germany in September laid new foundations for collaboration and the extension of trade. For the first time, the Stalinists have afforded full diplomatic status to West Germany and quietly shelved references to German reunification. During his visit, Honecker was cordially entertained by extreme right-winger and ex-Nazi Franz Joseph Strauss and was given a glittering reception at the headquarters of Krupps, the steel giants who supplied Hitler's war machine. Honecker is taking to heart one of Krupps' earlier sayings: 'We want only loyal workers who are grateful from the bottom of their hearts for the bread which we let them earn.'

Albania has followed suit and recently established diplomatic relations with West Germany for the first time.

Manchester Martyrs

120th
ANNIVERSARY
MARCH

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 22

Details from:-
Grass Roots, 1 Newton St
Manchester 1

SOUTH AFRICA

THE ending of the South African miners' strike by the NUM and COSATU leaders is a stab in the back for the black working class and its revolutionary struggle to destroy the apartheid state.

The leaders took fright in the face of the most powerful movement of the organised working class ever witnessed in South Africa and capitulated to the mine-owners on the grounds that further action would invite a blood-bath.

Two-and-a-half weeks into the strike and over 300,000 mineworkers were more determined than ever to win a 27 per cent pay rise. Six strikers were dead and thousands sacked, yet the men voted overwhelmingly in a ballot, three days before the strike was called off, to continue until all their demands were met.

They occupied several of the pits owned by their main employer, Anglo American Corporation, and organised to defend themselves against the company's goons. The demand from other sections of workers for the COSATU trade union confederation to organise a general strike was growing.

As far as the COSATU and NUM leaders were concerned, things were getting out of hand and they searched desperately for a formula to end the strike. Anglo American obliged by threatening to evict miners from company hostels — a move which prompted NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa to say that he had underestimated how 'tough' the employers were. The same day he announced the return to work.

Defending the decision, Ramaphosa said it was a strategic move to ensure that the union remained intact and added: 'This strike has proved there is no such thing as a liberal bourgeoisie.' This combining of 'left rhetoric' with capitulation in practice bears the trade-mark of the

By Daniel Evans

Stalinists of the South African Communist Party who infest the ANC and the trade union movement.

The SACP's counter-revolutionary brief is to avoid the socialist revolution at all costs. They seek to tie the working class to the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the ANC and launch a search for liberal whites and even 'liberal' racists who are prepared to do a deal.

This Stalinist popular front tactic received a boost in 1984 with the establishment of the Tricameral Parliament to which Indians and so-called 'Coloureds' elected representatives. Enormous unrest ensued

and the United Democratic Front was hastily formed to control the situation. Described as a 'multi-racial anti-apartheid movement', the UDF encompasses hundreds of organisations including the church and former members of the white Progressive Liberal Party.

The SACP's line is tailored to suit both the petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership of the ANC and the forces hostile to the independence of the working class within the UDF. Its aim is the maintenance of capitalism in South Africa under majority rule — the full force of the working

class must never be unleashed in case it goes beyond these limits.

The UDF and the ANC work energetically to enforce this policy. They took over and 'cooled down' the youthful Comrades' movement which emerged during the spontaneous township uprisings of the last three years. Many of the new young leaders joined the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, and were removed to the neighbouring black states for training. Apart from occasional guerrilla attacks to maintain the fiction that the ANC are conducting an armed struggle against

apartheid, they have remained there ever since.

Though faced themselves with daily provocations from the state and vigilante groups, the UDF have waged a bloody war against the left wing of the nationalist movement, the Azanian People's Organisation.

Outright civil war is inevitable in South Africa, when the white ruling class will unleash its shock troops currently being marshalled by the fascist political parties. Meanwhile they rely on the petty-bourgeois nationalists, white 'liberals' and the Stalinists to demoralise the working class with their treacherous opportunism.

MINERS' FIGHT BETRAYED!

NICARAGUA

Concessions made to 'peace plan'

By Philip Marchant

THE Central American Peace Plan represents the gravest danger to the working class and poor peasantry throughout the region and must be opposed at all costs. Signed in Guatemala City on August 6 by five heads of state, including Nicaragua's President, Daniel Ortega, the plan's main purpose is to destroy the Sandinista regime.

It deliberately sows the illusion that by making concessions, the Sandinistas will undermine Reagan's attempts to push through a new package of aid for the murderous Contra rebels (the last package having run out on September 30).

Despite the Reagan administration's now indifferent, now hostile, public attitude to the plan, the part played by US imperialism in its drafting is clear.

The plan calls for a general cease-fire, a 'guarantee of human rights' and an amnesty for political prisoners. The petty-bourgeois Nicaraguan leadership has already begun to carry out its side of the 'bargain'. Opening the door to a strengthening of the counter-revolution internally, Ortega has agreed to the reopening of 'La Prensa', the paper of the pro-imperialist Nicaraguan bourgeoisie closed for printing pro-Contra propaganda; the end to restrictions on hostile Catholic radio stations; the release of mercenaries captured in clashes with the Contras; and a unilateral cease-fire in several regions.

Also looked for by the sponsors of the plan is the release of members of ex-President Somoza's National Guard, a possibility which has provoked a storm of opposition inside Nicaragua; and the return of confiscated land originally owned by exiled opponents of the Sandinistas.

In early September, Reagan suddenly declared that Ortega's concessions were a fraud designed to stop the next package of aid for the Contras going through Congress, which would be reneged on as soon as the bill had been defeated. He announced an increase in the aid package to a massive \$270 million.

The aim of US imperialism is to open a second front against Nicaragua by encouraging the Sandinistas to legitimise the counter-revolution internally, whilst increasing its military aid to the Honduran-based Contras. The workers and poor peasants of Nicaragua must oppose the steps being taken by the Ortega regime and mobilise to defend the gains of the national revolution.



South African NUM members outside the mineowners' headquarters during their three-week strike

State-owned industries to be sold off

TWENTY thousand workers in Austria's nationalised industries — more than one fifth of the workforce — are to be made redundant. They are the first victims of a 'rationalisation plan' aimed at preparing the state-owned companies for privatisation.

Behind this attack on post-war Austria's most fundamental guarantor of job security and high wages is the growing foreign debt — currently 700 billion schillings (£35 billion). The familiar monetarist vehicle of national asset-stripping is being cranked into action by the Socialist Party-led coalition government of Chancellor Franz Vranitzky in a bid to make the working class foot the bill.

At the close of the Second World War, Austria was occupied by the armies of the Soviet Union, the USA, Britain and France. In the

various rounds of horse-trading between Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt over 'zones of influence', it had already been agreed that Austria would be re-established as an 'independent' (i.e. capitalist) state.

The Red Army, however, controlled the eastern part of the country where the new heavy industry was concentrated — the result of Nazi investment after Austria's incorporation into the Third Reich. The USSR pushed for war reparations in the form of the seizure of these assets, but agreed to drop its claim if the industries were integrated into a state-owned economy. Rather than disrupt 'peaceful' relations between East and West, Stalin abandoned the Austrian working class to capitalism.

Wholesale nationalisation was conceded by the US, Britain and France as much the lesser of two evils. Between

AUSTRIA

By Eugene Ludlow

July 1946 and March 1947, the provisional coalition government of Dr. Karl Renner, which ruled under the auspices of the four occupying powers, enacted a series of bills to this effect.

When the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 ended the occupation and restored a 'sovereign, independent and democratic state', the nationalised economy was part of the inheritance. Most of this public sector, in capitalist terms, has run at a loss ever since, depending on taxation of the 7.5 million population and foreign borrowing to maintain it.

The bonanza for the private sector has already got under way. The income from selling 49 per cent of the profitable OEMV — the

Austrian oil refining company — on Europe's stock exchanges will be used to 'streamline' the remaining state-owned companies, a euphemism for redundancy payments and the purchase of more advanced technology.

At the same time, former Finance Minister and banker Chancellor Vranitzky is pushing the working class squarely between the hammer and the anvil. Pensions and state benefits have been cut. Newly-marrieds no longer receive a £750 tax allowance. Most Austrians put their savings in pension schemes and government bonds: interest on these has been cut. Double taxation on share speculation has been cancelled and the *boerse*, Austria's stock exchange, will not only be opened to the public but will also open all day on Saturday when shops are traditionally closed from midday.

Unemployment in Austria,

until now one of the lowest in Europe, has already risen to 7.5 per cent of the 3.1 million workforce — the highest for 30 years. Saddled with a trade union leadership which has not led a single struggle since it was rebuilt after the war, the working class is nevertheless taking steps to defend itself. On May 1, 5,000 demonstrated in Vienna's Volksgarten and, as privatisation plans were announced later in the summer, angry workers from the public sector protested outside the capital's Chancellery.

As the administration prepares to face what it predicts will be a 'long, hot autumn of industrial strife', the future of the working class rests on drawing the fullest lessons from the monumental betrayals of Stalinism. This can only be accomplished in the building of a Trotskyist party.

EDITORIAL

Defend Iran against imperialism

THE six-nation war fleet assembled in the Gulf is aimed at directly imposing an imperialist solution on the region.

Oil tankers reregistered under British and American flags play the role of stalking horses to provoke a direct conflict with Iran.

At the same time, a blind eye is turned to attacks by Iraq on shipping, even where this involves an attack on the USS Stark. Thatcher and Reagan's sudden concern for the fate of merchant seamen is the hypocritical cover to prepare military intervention into Iran.

The second string of this manoeuvre is the 'peace' mission of UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, whose aim is to explore the divisions in the Iranian bourgeoisie and encourage the group around Rafsanjani towards a deal with imperialism.

The intervention in the Gulf is determined by the need to maintain the reactionary, pro-imperialist regimes of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman as strategic bases for the continued political and economic domination over the region and its oil resources.

The move by imperialism to escalate the war in the Gulf has been given the green light by the Soviet bureaucracy as a sign of its sincerity in the current round of arms control talks.

Throughout the seven-year Iraq-Iran war, imperialism has fulsomely supported Iraq and supplied it not only with arms but with military advisers and intelligence, including AWACS from Saudi Arabia.

The invasion launched in September 1980 by the Iraqi bourgeoisie, already wading in the blood of its own working class, was a cowardly blow struck at the height of revolutionary turmoil and mass strikes in Iran with the aim of securing sole control over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway. Whatever the rights or wrongs of this territorial dispute, Iraq's war has wholly served the interests of imperialism.

The Iranian bourgeoisie, for its part, has utilised the external war threat to further repress its 'own' working class, dissolve its trade unions and outlaw its political parties.

The 'sides' in the conflict are, however, far from symmetrical. Iraq's war has increasingly become emmeshed in imperialist plans to re-establish direct control in Iran. The plan to feel out a 'moderate' wing of the Khomeiny regime is not at odds with this policy; it is supplementary to it. A victory for Iraq would directly facilitate this end.

Notwithstanding the undoubted territorial ambitions of sections of the Iranian bourgeoisie, to argue that the war may develop into an Iranian war of conquest is premature. Lenin long ago wrote that opposition to legitimate national wars on the grounds that they *might* become transformed into wars of national oppression was the shortest route to sophistry. Iraq remains in control of substantial sections of disputed Iranian territory.

Neither is the attitude of the working class symmetrical in each country. The Iraqi working class must fight with all its strength for the defeat of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime and its pro-imperialist war.

The tasks of the Iranian working class, however, lie not in a passive indifference to the national war but in the fight for its own political and organisational independence in the struggle against imperialism. This requires the building of a Trotskyist party.

Whilst resolutely opposing any war of conquest 'to the gates of Baghdad', the working class must not surrender the front to imperialism. At the same time it must oppose the military policy of the bourgeoisie, for example, the use of 'human waves' and the conscription of schoolchildren, and call for fraternisation with Iraqi troops. It must fight for independent proletarian military units.

Under conditions of illegality for all working class organisations, the demands must be raised: a Constituent Assembly; legalisation of all workers' parties and trade unions; the eight-hour day; self-determination for the Kurdish and Baluchi minorities; land to the poor peasants. Only with this programme can the working class win away from the Khomeiny regime its base of support in the peasantry and the semi-proletarians of the city slums.

The British working class must work for the defeat of its own ruling class. Defeat for Iran will only strengthen the Thatcher government. The TUC must boycott the transport of all war materials and the servicing of ships bound for Iraq or the imperialist armada in the Gulf. Trade unionists must combat attempts by the bureaucracy to support the Thatcher regime by organising strikes, pickets and demonstrations in support of the Iranian working class.

70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By Richard Price

ON the seventieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Stalin's heirs are striking a series of blows aimed directly at the foundations of planned economy. Despite sixty years of Stalinist gangsterism, bureaucratic degeneration and the physical liquidation of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, the essential gains of the Russian Revolution remain embodied in the nationalised property relations.

Frightened of the multi-millioned Soviet working class, Gorbachev's 'reform' programme takes the first steps towards capitalist restoration. Over fifty years after Stalin proclaimed the 'final victory' of socialism in the USSR, Gorbachev is rehabilitating so-called 'market economics', encouraging private trade and commodity production.

The unequalled development of Soviet economy over the past seventy years is the greatest tribute to the superiority of nationalised property relations, in spite of the rule of the parasitic bureaucracy. Impressive as these achievements are, they cannot be considered in isolation, as the Stalinist dogma of 'socialism in one country' attempts to do; they must be measured, as Trotsky insisted, 'against the coefficients of the world market'. These clearly reveal not only that the Soviet Union lags well behind the advanced capitalist countries, but that far from being immune to the world capitalist crisis, it is under the greatest pressure from it.

It is this world crisis and the upsurge of revolutionary struggles across the world which have exacerbated all the contradictions of the degenerated workers' state.

The election of Gorbachev, the son of an immigrant collective farm manager, and a generation younger than many other Stalinist leaders, represents an attempt by the bureaucracy to screen its corruption from a working class which has grown greatly in numbers and in self-confidence.

Under the banner of 'openness', 'restructuring' and the struggle against 'inefficiency', Gorbachev has been forced to tackle the mounting crisis of Soviet economy, which threatens to engulf the privileges of the bureaucracy itself, and set in motion a mass movement of the working class.

In tackling the crisis, however, the bureaucracy proceeds by methods of its own — attempting to overcome the acute problems of industrial backwardness, high production costs, low levels of technique and labour productivity by using capitalist methods of compulsion to drive up output.

Gorbachev's chief economic adviser and architect of restructuring, Abel Aganbegyan, voices the authentic attitude of the bureaucracy to the working class in an interview with the 'Financial Times' (August 28):

'They have been paid a lot of money in the past for doing very little. But now, they have to work harder for the same money and will lose some of their privileges.'

By making a series of cosmetic concessions — a minor liberalisation of censorship; the semi-rehabilitation of certain Old Bolsheviks; official encouragement to criticise 'mismanagement' — Gorbachev has sought to create a constituency of support among the intelligentsia. This was the purpose of the much-publicised congress of the Writers' Union in June 1986 which elected as its secretary, former penal colony inmate, Vladimir Karpov.

The 'turn' to the intelligentsia is a bridge to the policy of large-scale concessions to the more prosperous collective farmers. In a visit to the Ramensky farm complex near Moscow in August, Gorbachev told a carefully assembled group of farmers: 'The idea is that you would be the real owners of the land you farm.' Collective farms are now able to sell 30 per cent of their produce on the 'free market' at higher prices, provided targets are met. Further plans will provide for a vast extension of private rented plots 'sub-contracted' from collective farms.

What is threatened is a reversal of the process of socialist accumulation based on an agricultural surplus financing industrial development into one in which the working class of the cities shoulders the burden of a revived Kulak class in the countryside.

The policy of 'restructuring' ('perestroika') outlined at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1986, and set in motion by the Central Committee plenum of July 1987, establishes the principle of 'self-financing' of state enterprises. In a closely related policy change in December 1986, 21 ministries and 70 enterprises were allowed to trade directly and independently with capitalist countries in areas such as cars, chemicals and agricultural machinery, thereby breaching the monopoly of foreign trade established by the October Revolution.

By setting enterprise against enterprise, accompanied by the 'stick' of price restructuring driving up the cost of essential basic commodities, and bank 'reform' to tighten up state credit to the less prosperous enterprises, Gorbachev reveals the essence of his economic programme — the preservation of bureaucratic privilege at the expense of the working class.

The results of 'self-financing' have not been slow to make themselves felt. It is now conceded that three million Soviet workers in manufacturing industry have lost their jobs. And it is skilled workers who have suffered most.

'In Soviet political literature,' wrote Trotsky in 1936, 'you often meet with accusations of "bureaucratism" as a bad custom of thought or method of work. (The accusation is always directed from above downward and is a method of self-defence on the part of the upper circles). But what you cannot meet anywhere is an investigation of the bureaucracy as a ruling stratum — its numbers and structure, its flesh and blood, its privileges and appetites, and the share of the national income which it swallows up.' In this respect, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Gorbachev lifts the lid on 'inefficiency' and 'inertia', and offers a handful of the most corrupt bureaucrats as sacrificial

lambs to the working class. But 'glasnost' reaches its limits at the point where a workers' demand for an audit of the overheads of bureaucracy will begin.

The rapid growth of social inequalities, and the wave of inflation which is threatened, will provide the mainspring for the development of a mass workers' movement against the bureaucracy. The tremors of this are already reflected in the turmoil of the intelligentsia.

First among the demands of the working class will be the formation of free trade unions. The recent strike of bus workers in Chekhov, outside Moscow, in September, against attempts to link their pay to 'efficiency', is a measure of what is to come.

This year's celebrations in the

This article, appearing for the first time in English, was written by Leon Trotsky in August 1917 for the Bolshevik paper 'Proletarii'. At the time, Trotsky, along with other Bolsheviks, was in prison as a result of a campaign of slander and terror by the Provisional Government and right-wing political parties. Two months later the Bolsheviks led the working class to power in the October insurrection. 'With Blood and Iron' shows Trotsky's profound grasp of the dialectic of the revolution and the class forces at work within it. It has been translated by James Reid.

ANY intelligent person (or any fool) knows that to save Russia a merciless struggle with 'anarchy on the left and counter-revolution on the right' is essential. This constitutes the essence of the entire programme of 'Izvestia', 'Narodnoe Delo', 'Rabochaya Gazeta' . . . Kerensky's 'historic' speech at the 'historic' state conference amounted to variations on this very theme. 'With blood and iron against anarchy on the left, counter-revolution on the right.'

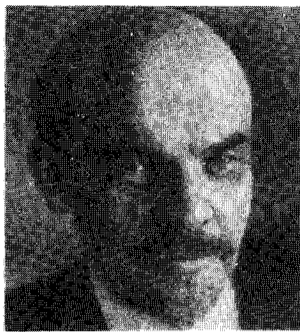
This sounds very good, in any event symmetrical. But does it make sense? When they speak of counter-revolution, they have in mind not certain attitudes or random, disorderly actions, but particular class interests, incompatible with the securing and development of the revolution. It is the landowners and imperialist capital who support the counter-revolution. Which classes are supporting 'anarchy'?

The mayor of Moscow, the SR Rudnyev, answered this very clearly. He welcomed the 'state conference' on behalf of the 'entire' population of Moscow — minus those 'anarchic elements' who had arranged a general

protest strike in Moscow. But who arranged the strike? The Moscow trade unions. Against the wishes of the government, the Moscow military authorities, the SR-Menshevik majority in the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the trades unions decreed and brought about a general strike against the government's foisting of a counter-revolutionary parliament on Moscow. The trades unions are the purest, most unadulterated organisations of the proletariat, i.e. of that class which by its unstinting toil creates Moscow's power and wealth. And it is these trades unions who unite the flower of the working class — the fundamental driving force of the present-day economy; it is these trade unions that the SR mayor of Moscow has called anarchic elements. And it is against these conscientious, disciplined workers that the 'iron' of the government's violence will have to be directed.

Do we not see the same thing in Petrograd? The factory committees are not political organisations. They are not created at short meetings.

ANNIVERSARY RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



LENIN

Soviet Union to mark the 70th anniversary of the revolution are being stage-managed to conform with the spirit of 'glasnost'. They have been preceded by a carefully timed article in 'Sovetskaya Rossiya', an official publication of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which acknowledges the existence of Leon Trotsky as a Bolshevik leader during the revolution, but which repeats the hoary old lie that 'Trotskyism was ideologically crushed during Lenin's lifetime and with Lenin's decisive participation in the struggle'.

In a speech to Soviet journalists at the end of July, Gorbachev gave the press guidelines on how to write about the coming anniversary. His guarded criticisms of Stalin, obliquely

referred to as 'what happened in 1937 and 1938', were set against a call to recognise that the great achievements since 1917 override any quibbles about method.

The Stalinists' celebrations are based on an historical lie which continues to cover up for the murder of the entire leadership of Lenin's party, and the slaughter of millions of peasants, workers and Red Army men.

Only the Trotskyist programme of political revolution can defend the gains of the October Revolution by purging the Soviet Union of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. In celebrating the victory of Bolshevism seventy years ago the Soviet working class must build a Trotskyist party to lead the political revolution.



Soldiers loyal to Kerensky's Provisional Government open fire on a demonstration in Petrograd during the July Days 1917

WITH BLOOD AND IRON

The mass of workers nominally those who, locally, in everyday life, have proved their determination, efficiency and devotion to the workers' interests. And of course the factory committees, as has been shown once more at the latest conference, are in an overwhelming majority made up of Bolsheviks. In the Petrograd trades unions everyday practical work, just like the ideological leadership, lies wholly with the Bolsheviks. In the workers' section of the Petrograd Soviet the Bolsheviks constitute an overwhelming majority. So Bolshevism is equivalent to 'anarchy'. On that score Kerensky is in agreement with Miliukov, Tseretelli is with the sons of Suvorin, Dan with the counter-intelligence. In this way anarchy is the organised representation of the Petrograd proletariat. And it is against this class organisation of advanced workers that Kerensky with his Avksentyevs, Bernatskys, Prokopoviches, Skobelevs and other Saltykovs promises henceforth to fight with blood and iron.

It would be unforgivable, however, to believe the leaders of the petty-bourgeoisie when they promise to fight the right and left with equal strength. That is not happening and cannot happen. In spite of its numerical strength, the petty-bourgeoisie as a class is economically and poli-

tically weak. It is extremely unco-ordinated, economically dependent, politically unstable. The petty-bourgeois democracy is in no position to struggle simultaneously with two such powerful forces as the revolutionary proletariat and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. All the experience of history proves this. For serious political struggle the present-day petty-bourgeoisie in the towns and the country needs not only an ally but also a leader. As it enters the struggle with 'anarchy', in the person of the organised proletariat, the 'democracy' of Kerensky and Tseretelli, whatever they may have said, inescapably falls under the leadership of the imperialist bourgeoisie. That is why attacks on the right remain only at the planning stage, and come to be replaced by bows of humility to the right.

The Provisional Government has closed 'Pravda' and about ten other Bolshevik newspapers which were the guiding organs of the advanced proletariat. Avksentyev's attack on the right was the closure of 'Narodnaya (Malenkaya) Gazeta'. But was 'Narodnaya Gazeta' the guiding organ of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie? No, it was solely the clandestine organ of those swine the Black Hundreds. The role played by 'Pravda' for the revolutionary working class, was played among the imperialist bourgeoisie

by the newspaper 'Rech'; but is it not clear that at the mere thought of closing 'Rech' those most gallant power-bearers are quaking with fear? The Central Committee of the Kadet party is indisputably — even in the eyes of the SRs and the Mensheviks — the headquarters of the bourgeois counter-revolution. Nevertheless, the representatives of this headquarters are in office, whereas the recognised representatives of the proletariat leadership are outlawed. That is what the SR-Menshevik struggle on two fronts actually looks like.

But let us return for a minute to the Moscow strike. 'Rabochaya Gazeta', that most pitiful organ, which attempts to reconcile Marx with Avksentyev, emits the usual stock abuse aimed at the strikers, who are destroying the power of 'revolutionary democracy'. Here is 'betrayal', 'the stab in the back' and 'anarchy'. But we know already that the supreme power destroyed by the Moscow proletariat is the power of revolutionary democracy minus the organised proletariat, which means power to the petty-bourgeoisie. Thus 'Rabochaya (!) Gazeta' regards the workers as criminals for refusing to subordinate their own class struggle in all its manifestations to the will of the non-proletarian section of the



TROTSKY

Moscow Soviet. The supremacy of the petty-bourgeoisie over the proletariat is elevated to the supreme principle of social democratic principles. For a coalition with the imperialist bourgeoisie Tseretelli and his party are prepared to make monstrous concessions and humiliations, but the coalition of the proletariat with the petty-bourgeoisie for them reduces to a simple rejection on the part of the proletariat of their own class independence. In other words: the leaders of the lower middle class demand from the workers the very attitude towards the petty-bourgeoisie that they themselves display towards the representatives of capital.

The independent policy of the working class places internationalism in opposition to imperialism — that is the 'anarchy' hostile to the wealthy classes throughout the world, independent of the form of organisation of the state beneath which the interests of capital are hidden. At the same time,

Avksentyev, whose wisdom impressed no-one at the Moscow conference, is nevertheless considered sufficiently wise to smash the workers' press and to imprison Bolsheviks by 'extra-judicial procedure': at the same time Kerensky exercises his iron on the parties of the proletariat — behind them hobble the Tseretellis, Chkheidzes, Dans, as they sprinkle the holy water of Menshevism on the repressions of 'dictators' who are out of control and who spread the disgusting slanders that the organised proletariat is sowing 'anarchy' in the country and at the front. But political retribution is not slow in coming. At the same time Tseretelli, whom the Menshevik courtiers called the 'conscience of the revolution', humbly apologises in Moscow on behalf of democracy, which, he says, on account of its youth and inexperience embarked too late on a campaign of destruction against the Bolsheviks; at the same time Tseretelli gathers the applause of the people's inveterate enemies — in Petrograd even the worker-Mensheviks are banishing Tseretelli from their list of candidates for the city Duma.

Retribution is not slow in coming. Hunted, persecuted, slandered, our party has never grown as quickly as of late. And this process will not be slow to spill over from the capital to the provinces, from the cities into the country and army. The peasants can see and hear that it is those very authorities, for the very same reasons, that are crushing the land committees and are persecuting the Bolsheviks. The soldiers can observe the wild hallooing directed at the Bolsheviks and at the same time sense the counter-revolutionary noose growing ever tighter round their neck. All the working masses of the country will learn from their new experiences to tie their fate to the fate of our party. Not for one minute ceasing to be the class organisation of the proletariat, but, on the contrary, completely fulfilling this role only now, our party will in the fire of repression become the true leader, the support and hope of all oppressed, crushed, deceived and persecuted masses.

'Proletarii' No. 5
31st (18th) August 1917

Translation © Workers International League 1987

N.D. Avksentyev (1878-1943) Right SR; Minister of Interior under Kerensky.

N.S. Chkheidze (1864-1926) Menshevik; Chairman of Petrograd Soviet until summer 1917.

F.I. Dan (1871-1947) Menshevik leader; member of Petrograd Soviet.

A.F. Kerensky (1881-1970) Leader of Provisional Government overthrown by October Revolution.

P.N. Miliukov (1859-1943) Kadet leader and academic; Foreign Minister March-May 1917.

S.N. Prokopovich (1871-1955) Economist; Minister of Food in Provisional Government.

M.N. Skobelev (1885-1937) Menshevik; Vice-President of Petrograd Soviet; Minister of Labour in Provisional Government.

A.S. Suvorin (1834-1912) Reactionary journalist; publisher of right-wing 'Novoye Vremya' (edited by his sons).

I.G. Tseretelli (1882-1959) Menshevik; member of Executive Committee of All-Russian Soviets; Minister of Posts in Provisional Government.

'News Line' and 'Workers Press'

LIQUIDATORS CONVERGE

By Richard Price

TWO years after the split in the Workers Revolutionary Party, the two rump groups with the dubious honour of continuing to compete over its name have arrived at essentially similar political positions.

Ritual accusations of each other as 'counter-revolutionaries' or 'supporters of rape' cannot hide the fact that their differences are not principled but those of two groups of rightward-moving liquidators arriving at similar conclusions down different routes.

Nowhere could this be clearer than in their attitude to the South African revolution, and their cover-up of the betrayal of the three-week South African miners' strike in August.

On August 28, 'News Line' sustained illusions that the COSATU trade union confederation was about to call a general strike in support of the miners — 'COSATU threaten all out action' wrote its 'foreign staff', acknowledging that there had been a 'massive vote to reject the latest offer' from the employers.

While 'News Line' was giving an unsolicited blank cheque to the leaders of COSATU, they were, together with the NUM leadership, working behind closed doors to arrive at a deal with the employers which failed to settle any of the miners' demands in full, and which broke their mandate from their own members.

With the ANC/Stalinist-inspired leaders of COSATU desperate to call off the strike before it developed into an all-out struggle against the apartheid state, 'News Line' was on hand on September 1 to whitewash the weekend sell-out. In an editorial, which managed to avoid the role of Stalinism and the ANC entirely, it quoted NUM leader Cyril Ramaphosa approvingly that the strike had been a 'dress rehearsal'. The sole critical note was entirely misplaced. It attributed the ending of the miners' strike to the 'limitations of trade unionism'. This is an insult to the 330,000 black miners who had numbers of their comrades killed in the course of the struggle against the mineowners' goon squads and the state forces.

In fact, the development of mass black trade unions in South Africa is a profoundly revolutionary step forward. The central problem is the opportunist nature of the political

leadership of a majority of the COSATU-affiliated unions. These pro-ANC leaders, soaked in theories of 'two-stage revolution' and multi-racial harmony are the greatest dangers to the struggle of the black workers.

'Workers Press', meanwhile, greeted the ending of the miners' strike reassuringly: 'The miners are NOT defeated' (September 5). In a front page article, Cliff Slaughter, while conceding that South African miners 'will rightly be critical of secret negotiations and refusal of the NUM leaders to come back and consult the rank-and-file', manages to make his central point the need to build 'support groups' in Britain. This, as will be seen, has much more to do with a cover for Slaughter's opportunism in Britain than it has with the struggle of South African miners.

A two-page 'analysis' of the miners' strike by a group of anonymous 'South African revolutionaries' in the same edition attacked, among all things, the NUM leaders' action in calling off the strike as 'completely bureaucratic'. Two weeks later the same 'South African revolutionaries', in a statement purporting to deal with the fight for a Bolshevik party in South Africa, announced 'COSATU adopts a permanent revolution perspective and rejects the two-stage perspective'. Given that COSATU's leadership has recently adopted the ANC's treacherous 'Freedom Charter', this is the most dangerous cheerleading which diverts attention away from the struggle for revolutionary leadership, and implies that it has been largely solved.

While 'Workers Press' hails COSATU's leaders as unconscious fighters for permanent revolution, 'News Line' gives this accolade to the Maoist New People's Army of the Philippines (see article page ten).

If we turn to the British trade union movement, both 'News Line' and 'Workers Press' have discovered a surrogate 'revolutionary' leader in the shape of Arthur Scargill and are competing in such mining areas as their papers reach. In place of educating the working class on the role of centrism, we have the flattery of courtiers. Both papers censor out of Scargill's speeches his call for proportional representation so as not to expose their 'ally'. Perhaps the leaders of the two WRPs would care to tell their readers whose inter-

ests this silence serves.

Superficially it might appear that substantial differences exist between the two groups. The 'News Line' group's leaders have found a novel method of 'organising the general strike' — withdrawing almost all their members from active work inside the trade unions.

Members of the 'Workers Press' group on the other hand, potter around the labour movement pursuing their particular hobbies or special subjects. The main activity of Slaughter's group is around so-called support groups, whose role is to spread revisionist scepticism and the politics of the soup kitchen.

The common feature of 'News Line' abstentionism and 'Workers Press' rank-and-fileism is the refusal to fight for an alternative revolutionary leadership in the trade unions.

A selection of 'News Line' headlines from its coverage of the recent TUC Congress reveals how, in its desperation to 'market' its 'product' to TUC

delegates, it covers up the real dangers facing the trade unions at the hands of Willis and Co: 'Notice served on Hammond'; 'TUC "No" to JTS slavery'; 'Take steps to protect health service' etc, etc.

Nothing to worry about, according to 'News Line'! — the TUC General Council is 'isolated' and 'powerless' (September 12).

'Workers Press' showed how disorientated it has become in its post-TUC issue. Its front page solemnly declared 'End of an era'. Correspondent Dave Temple, reporting from the TUC, quoted Arthur Scargill's statement that the deferred decision on the EETPU was 'a typical TUC fudge'. Temple went on: 'In the event the TUC fudge won the day and no-one was surprised'. Immediately above Temple's dispatch was an editorial statement which declared 'no — this is not a "typical TUC fudge"'. Confused? You should be!

Those who bow to the petty-bourgeoisie in the colonial revolution and the trade union bureaucracy in Britain must

conciliate with Stalinism. Such is the logic of capitulation.

'Workers Press' (October 3) carries a highly dubious account of 'socialist' dissident groups in the Soviet Union which embrace 'humanism' and 'democracy' and deny any claim to a 'monopoly of truth'. This 'socialist' opposition includes, according to 'Workers Press', the restorationist 'Movement for Socialist Renewal'. Whilst supporting some policies of Gorbachev, says the report, 'they are challenging his tradition in the name of true socialism.'

'News Line', like its mentor G. Healy, meanwhile continues to look to elements within the bureaucracy to lead the political revolution. A panegyric to poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko claims he 'had to fight hard against the bureaucracy and risk imprisonment at least, for every line of poetry he has published ... he understands the huge responsibilities he carries, to establish the truth about Soviet poets, to take forward their work and also (!) fight for the principles of the

October Revolution, and this is his most important contribution' (August 21).

With due deference to the poetry of Yevtushenko's youth, this is palpable nonsense. In our opinion he made his peace with the bureaucracy a long time ago and is operating as a roving cultural attache for Gorbachev, with unrestricted travel and rights to publish in the West — privileges he has enjoyed for a long time and refused to many more talented Soviet writers and artists.

Both groups of opportunists have kept a discreet silence on each other's international activities. Slaughter is 'regrouping' with the right-wing Argentinian revisionist MAS. Torrance's 'News Line' group claim to be holding an 11th 'World' Congress of its bogus and non-existent 'International Committee'. The political bankruptcy of these two anti-Trotskyist groups is the logical continuation of a degeneration of the Old Guard of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The resistible rise of Le Pen

By our own correspondent

IN a radio interview on September 13, Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the fascist French National Front, described gas chambers as 'a minor detail of the history of the Second World War ... still being considered by historians'. It was a conscious move to raise the political temperature and put Jacques Chirac's right-wing Gaullist government under pressure from the right.

In the course of the subsequent uproar, a 4,000-strong demonstration outside the National Assembly on September 17, called by the National Jewish Students of France, demanded the lifting of Le Pen's parliamentary immunity. The demonstration, headed by leading Socialist Party figures, included the banners of the teachers' union, the two main trade union confederations, the Union of Communist Students, SOS-Racism and the Pabliste LCR. Demonstrators chanted 'Dissolve the National Front', 'Racism will not pass' and 'Hitler-Le Pen, the same struggle'.

The conditions for the growth of the National Front's racist demagoguery have been created by the betrayals of Stalinism and reformism. The Socialist Party/Communist Party coalition, which ruled from 1981-4, drove up unemployment to record levels and attempted to put forward a policy of 'repatriating' Arab and African workers. One Stalinist mayor in a Paris suburb had an immigrant workers' hostel bulldozed. While Stalinist ministers supported President Mitterrand's massive 'rationalisation' of the steel industry, Stalinist trade union officials raised the demand 'French jobs for French workers'.

The reactionary nationalism of the French Stalinists and reformists has discredited both parties in the working class and encouraged the fascists, whose support has swelled from disoriented sections of the middle class.



The demonstration outside the National Assembly in Paris on September 17



JEAN-MARIE LE PEN

The Stalinists are utterly opposed to mobilising the working class to drive the fascists off the streets. As a result, the task of confronting the NF has largely been left to the spontaneous movement of youth, especially students, and there has been a rapid growth of the 'non-political' anti-fascism of the SOS-Racism organisation, led by Harlem Désir. Fascist thugs, who murdered a Socialist Party election worker during the 1986 parliamentary election campaign, recently rampaged through the Arab quarter of Chateauroux, attacking residents with iron bars and baseball bats.

Stalinist presidential candidate André Lajoinie reacted to

Le Pen's statement complacently. Le Pen, he said, 'has descended a further step towards ignominy'. In fact Le Pen's support, in the face of this passivity, has, if anything, strengthened while the Stalinists' fortunes have continued to fall. Latest opinion polls give the NF 14 per cent of popular support (and up to 30 per cent in some areas). Le Pen's personal popularity is running at 16 per cent.

The growth of the NF has been assisted by Chirac's neo-Gaullist RPR and Giscard D'Estaing's UDF, who operate electoral pacts with it in such cities as Marseilles, Nice, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Montpellier. In this southern belt, the NF draws support from former Algerian

settlers and ex-OAS members. In Languedoc-Roussillon and Ile de France (covering the Paris basin area) right-wing regional councils depend for a majority on fascist support. A joint delegation of Gaullist and NF MPs recently visited South Africa and praised Botha's 'courage'. Le Pen aims to make his support indispensable to Chirac's presidential campaign in spring 1988.

In a bid to outdo Le Pen, Chirac is pledging to bring in a new nationality act, denying French citizenship to children born in France to foreign nationals. Only after they have applied for naturalisation between the ages of 16 and 20 and satisfied language tests will citizenship be granted. Measures already passed enable the government to expel foreigners more easily. In 1986, 101 Mali citizens were deported.

The overt anti-Semitism of Le Pen's speeches has not prevented him from establishing links with ultra-right Zionists. In February 1987, he met 24 representatives of US Zionist organisations at a secret dinner in New York. These included Jack Torczyner, a representative of the Herut Party in the United States, member of the executive of the World Jewish Congress and New York spokesman for the World Zionist Organisation.

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IN DEFENCE OF THE THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION

PART TWO

THE most important independent development of Marxist theory made by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, was the theory of permanent revolution.

Every generation of revisionists within the Trotskyist movement — whether it be those who claim to 'improve' or 'update' permanent revolution or those who are its unashamed opponents — from Pablo in the 1950s to the leadership of the SWP of the United States in the 1960s to the Healy-Banda-Slaughter-Torrance leadership of the Workers Revolutionary Party, have one essential feature in common: in the name of a new concrete 'reality', they seek to overthrow Trotsky's theory as the strategy of world revolution and deny the historical continuity of Trotskyism as the Marxism of today.

In doing so they join hands with all manner of bourgeois academics who either indulge in crude slanders, accusing Trotsky of upholding theories of 'simultaneous revolutions in all countries', or condescendingly credit him with 'inspired guesswork' on the course of the Russian Revolution.

The theory of permanent revolution is indissolubly connected to the life-work of Marx and Engels. Indeed its

name derives from their famous summary of the lessons of the revolutions of 1848. The working class, they wrote in the 'Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League' of 1850, 'must do the utmost for their final victory by clarifying their minds as to what their class interests are, by taking up their position as an independent party as soon as possible and by not allowing themselves to be seduced for a single moment by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty-bourgeois into refraining from the independent organisation of the party of the proletariat. Their battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence.'

In the final section of the 'Communist Manifesto', published in February 1848, only days before the outbreak of revolution in France, Marx and Engels wrote that the Communists, in fighting with the bourgeoisie against absolute monarchy, 'never cease, for a single instant, to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat . . . The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution . . . the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.'

The course of development of the bourgeois revolutions which swept Europe in 1848 at the point at which the working class entered for the first time upon the historical stage could not be solved in advance. The June events in Paris, when the bourgeoisie turned on its working class allies in four days of bloody street fighting — the first modern civil war — shattered the alliance of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, peasant and working class forces, and marked an historic new point of departure of the class struggle.

In Germany, Marx and Engels, who took an active role in the revolution, stood at the extreme left of the revolutionary democratic movement, fighting for the implementation of the most radical democratic programme: unification of Germany as a democratic republic through the overthrow of the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties and the abolition of all feudal obligations.

The German bourgeoisie, confronted with carrying through the bourgeois revolution to the finish, vacillated, transforming the National Assembly into an impotent talking shop, before siding openly, like their French elder brothers, with the counter-revolution. The more treacherous the actions of the 'liberal' bourgeoisie, the more directly Marx and Engels, through

By Richard Price

the columns of the 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung', addressed themselves to the working class as the only force capable of fighting for a genuinely democratic solution to the tasks of the bourgeois revolution.

The editorial of the last, defiant edition, printed in red ink on May 18, 1849, closed with the words: 'In bidding you farewell the editors of the "Neue

Engels in their writings on Africa, India, China and in 'Capital'. The working class in most colonial and semi-colonial countries had hardly begun to be born until the end of their lives. Nevertheless, a letter from Engels to Kautsky dated September 12, 1882, contains the following prognosis: 'In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population —

against 'idle hypotheses' as to future developments in the colonial countries — which could not become fully apparent until the imperialist epoch opening with the end of the nineteenth century — there is not a line in any of his or Marx's writings to suggest that the emerging bourgeoisie in such countries could play a more progressive role than it had in its heyday in Europe.

The question of Russia's development occupied a considerable portion of the last years of Marx's life. Marx accumulated a sizeable volume of material in manuscript form on Russian social and economic relations intended for publication in Volume III of 'Capital'. He was reluctant to commit himself with finality on the course of capitalist development in Russia. A draft reply to the editorial board of the Russian journal 'Otechestvenniye Zapiski' written in 1877 argues that 'if Russia continues to pursue the path she has followed since 1861, she will lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a people and undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime.'

In 1881 the Narodnik Vera Zasulich wrote to Marx requesting his opinion on the possibility of the Russian peasant commune offering the prospect of avoiding a period of capitalist development and moving directly towards socialism. Marx made no less than four drafts of his reply which, nonetheless, expressed itself conditionally: ' . . . this community is the mainspring of Russia's social regeneration, but in order that it might function as such one would first have to eliminate the deleterious influences which assail it from every quarter and then to ensure the conditions normal for spontaneous development.' Elsewhere Marx writes: 'To save the Russian commune a Russian revolution will be necessary.'

Within a decade, Russia had embarked on the path of rapid capitalist development. Yet contained within Marx's apparent 'mistake' was a brilliant anticipation of events. Far from the working class having to serve an

indefinite apprenticeship under capitalism in a mechanical repetition of western Europe as the Mensheviks argued, the theory of permanent revolution was to show, and the seizure of power in 1917 would prove, that only the working class could 'regenerate' the nation.

It was the first Russian Marxist, G.V. Plekhanov, who, in 1889, declared: 'The Russian revolution will either triumph as a revolution of the working class or it will not triumph at all' — this at a time when as yet no workers' movement existed in Russia. Yet Plekhanov, despite his indispensable literary and philosophical work, was not without formalistic prejudices on the future development of class relations in the Russian Revolution.

'Plekhanov not only segregated the bourgeois revolution, as the immediate task, from the socialist revolution, which he in turn relegated to the vague future, but he foresaw distinct combinations of forces for each of them. The proletariat would secure political freedom jointly with the liberal bourgeoisie; then, after many decades on a high level of capitalist development, the proletariat would proceed with the socialist revolution in direct conflict against the bourgeoisie.' (Trotsky: 'Stalin', Vol. 2, Panther, pp258-9).

Around the axis of relations between the working class, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, three distinct theories arose in the Russian revolutionary movement in the early years of the twentieth century — those of the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and Trotsky's 'permanent revolution'.

Despite Trotsky's erroneous position on party organisation, which separated him from the Bolsheviks, only the theory of permanent revolution critically assimilated the lessons of the bourgeois revolutions of the nineteenth century and derived their lessons for the impending Russian Revolution.

To be continued



MARX



ENGELS

'Rheinische Zeitung' thank you for the sympathy you have shown them. Their last word everywhere and always will be: *emancipation of the working class!*

Returning to the solution of the aborted 1848 revolution, Marx wrote to Engels on April 16, 1856: 'The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid . . . Contained in this summation of the task facing the working class in supporting itself upon the rural poor in a struggle against the bourgeoisie are profound implications for all countries with a belated capitalist development and a stunted bourgeoisie incapable of completing 'their' bourgeois revolution.'

The rapid development of European colonialism in Africa and Asia, and the emergence of national liberation struggles were closely followed by Marx and

Canada, the Cape, Australia — will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population which are simply subjugated — India, Algeria, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions — must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence.' Although Engels was quick to warn

LETTER

GPU in Spain

I FOUND Richard Price's article on 'the GPU murder machine in Spain' in September's Workers News to be the kind of informative article we need more of.

One statement in the article needs commenting on. The article states that Georges Kopp, a Belgian serving as a major in the POUM's Lenin Division, was jailed by the Stalinists and then murdered. However, according to Bernard Crick, Kopp survived his imprisonment, left Spain, joined the French Foreign Legion, and then came back to Britain. (A. Coppard and B. Crick: 'Orwell Remembered', Ariel Books, 1984, p.158). Another account of Kopp's survival is given by Don Bateman in a footnote to John McNair's 'Spanish Diary' (Greater Manchester ILP Branch pamphlet, p.20, no date). Kopp died in 1951.

B.R. Buiterkant
London E5

Editor's note: The reference to Kopp was drawn from Hugo Dewar's book 'Assassins at Large'. We are grateful for this information and would welcome any further correspondence on the role of the GPU in Spain.

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TREACHERY IN THE PHILIPPINES

BEHIND the July-August events in the Philippines, with an unsuccessful 'fifth coup attempt' by the military, lay the rapidly maturing struggles of workers and peasants seeking an end to their present intolerable living conditions.

World crisis destroys sugar industry

Philippine industry and agriculture, sucked dry of investment by former president Ferdinand Marcos and his 'cronies', has come increasingly under pressure from the deepening world economic crisis. Today the country has debts estimated by the government at \$28.3 bn (£17.3 bn). When the Marcos regime was brought down the debt was around \$22 bn.

The main export crop and dollar earner, sugar, has lost its privileged place in the world market where it was guaranteed sales in the United States at above market prices. The change came in 1974-5 and has been making itself felt ever since throughout the Philippine economy. The United States, itself hit by world recession, began purchasing sugar from Australia and Hawaii where modern mechanised plantations could produce sugar at 2.5 cents per pound. The world market price stood in 1975 at three cents per pound while Philippine sugar cost five cents per pound to deliver to the market.

As a consequence, a quarter of a million sugar workers in the Philippines are permanently out of work, mills are forced to shut down production, and on the main sugar-producing island of Negros 80 per cent of the farm estates (*haciendas*) are ruined by debt and faced with foreclosure by the banks.

The sugar industry, which at its height employed hundreds of thousands of seasonal labourers, was based on a system of near feudal servitude with labourers living on loans from farmers and plantation owners living on loans from the banks. The world economic crisis has devastated the industry. Tens of thousands of rural workers have been uprooted and forced to migrate to the towns in search of relief. For the majority there is none; they are forced to join the poorest layers of the working class in the slums and shanty towns.

Aquino imposes austerity measures

Secondary exports, meat and coconut products, are also hit by the world slump in commodity prices. The only recourse left for the bourgeois regime of President Aquino, faced with crippling interest payments on foreign borrowing, was to adopt the programme of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and attack the

By Ian Harrison

standards of living of the working class and peasantry.

The most recent attack, which saw sharp increases in petrol prices and cuts in subsidies for rice, led to a one-day general strike in August led by the Kilusan Mayo Uno trade union confederation (May 1 Movement). The general strike, supported throughout the Philippines, followed hard on the heels of demonstrations by landless peasants and unemployed rural workers in July. Their return to demonstrate in the Philippine capital, Manila, at the historic Mendiola Bridge was of deep significance. The Mendiola Bridge, situated next to the presidential palace of Malacanang, has been the scene of some of the sharpest class battles in Philippine history. When peasants last demonstrated there during the Marcos regime, they were brutally attacked and their spokesmen murdered by the army.

Land reform

When Aquino was swept to power her first task was widely seen as delivering a programme of land reform. Liberal sections of the bourgeoisie and plantation owners threatened with bankruptcy recognised the need to concede small plots of land to the unemployed rural workers and peasantry to prevent an agrarian revolution. The landowners and small farmers were unable to meet their obligation to sustain the peasants and seasonal workers with loans when they themselves were facing bankruptcy. The land plots would have stabilised the rural poor who are not entitled to unemployment benefit or free health care.

It is among the unemployed sugar workers that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has been winning increased support through its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA). The Filipino bourgeoisie recognised that without concessions to the rural poor, wracked by malnutrition and spiralling infant mortality, the floodgates of revolution would open up throughout the Philippines and attempts to isolate the struggles of the working class would fail. Conditions among the Filipino peasantry have deteriorated to the point where disaffection is becoming widespread throughout the lower ranks of the army with soldiers handing over their weapons to, or in some cases going to fight with, the NPA.

When Aquino, whose family farm over 15,000 acres,

signed the long-awaited land reform bill on July 22 this year, it became clear that there was no relief on offer to the rural poor. Aquino refused to use her executive powers or the mandate won in the sweeping election victories for seats in the newly-restored two-tier administration. She referred the draft bill instead to Congress for amendment by the landowning ruling class. The bill will be amended out of existence on its 90-day passage through Congress and Senate.

The landowners represented in parliament are divided into those who concede limited reforms are necessary and those who have signed a pledge in blood to defend their land against any reform. It is the latter who have close links with the army officers of the Philippine Military Academy. They want an urgent and bloody settlement with the working class and peasantry and have consistently supported demands by their military spokesmen for stepping up the war against the NPA and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the southern Philippines. It is their death squads who continually harass and murder the leaders of the trade union movement and their supporters in the towns and rural provinces.

The Stalinist CPP-NPA betrays

While the landowners are split and the years of the Marcos regime have left large sections of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie opposed to the army and big bankers, the Communist Party split in the upheavals following Marcos's downfall. A section led by the founder of the NPA, Bernabe Buscayno, have gone over to the side of the bourgeoisie, standing in the May elections in support of Aquino's government.

Buscayno shared a prison cell with Aquino's late husband under the Marcos regime. His political development, however, is the logical outcome of Stalin's theory of the two-stage revolution. This theory, which is the programme adopted by the CPP-NPA, pursues as two separate stages the 'democratic national revolution' to free the Philippines from world imperialist domination and the seizure of power by the working class.

Such a strategy obliges the CPP to arm their cadres in the rural areas while leaving the most decisive force, the working class, unarmed. The CPP uses its influence in the KMU trade union federation to hold back the

struggles of the working class, while advancing its military wing (the NPA) among the rural poor in the provinces.

At each new point of departure in the unfolding class struggles since Marcos was overthrown, the CPP-NPA have kept the strikes of workers and demonstrations by peasants apart. Their support for the Aquino regime and the popular front politics of 'people's power' serves to disarm workers, students and the best elements of the petty bourgeoisie.

This treachery buys precious time for the Filipino ruling class and the army, backed by the most reactionary elements in the United States, enabling them to prepare for return to open military rule. The 'fifth coup attempt' on August 27 was only made possible by the CPP-NPA's refusal to arm the working class politically and militarily with the necessity of overthrowing the Aquino regime, the 'left' face of the bourgeoisie, seizing power and smashing the state.

'News Line' and the Philippines revolution

The 'democratic' regime of President Corazon Aquino is reactionary to the core. It is the 'legal' cover for the conspiracies of the Philippine military. The Aquino family have a long history of treachery. They enriched themselves under Japanese imperialist occupation in World War Two. Former vice-president Salvador Laurel's father served as a quisling president occupying Malacanang palace while the Aquinos were open collaborators and lived in the palace precincts.

Every attempt by the military during the five fail-



NPA soldiers

ed 'coups' to push Aquino further down the road to wholesale slaughter of the working class and peasantry has been met by appeals from Aquino for 'peace' and 'prayers'. The reshuffling of inner cabinet positions and posts in her government do nothing but placate the central banks and the military officers of the Academy.

In 1986, the 'News Line' (daily paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party) and its general secretary Sheila Torrance hovered around the policy of 'critical support' for the Aquino government. Aquino was referred to affectionately as 'Cory'. Today, the reactionary nature of the Aquino government has become so transparent that the 'News Line' has transferred its allegiance to the Stalinist CPP-NPA.

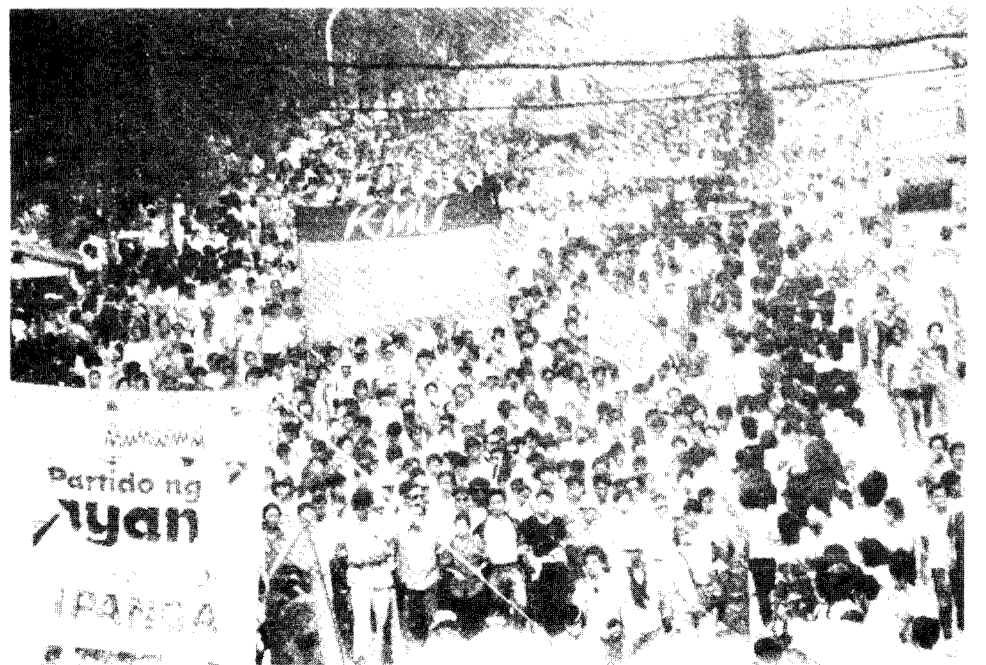
In the wake of the most recent 'coup attempt', a 'News Line' editorial (August 31) had this to say: 'In continuing their armed struggle, and refusing to follow Soviet instructions to lay down their arms, the NPA is fighting in the spirit of the theory of permanent revolution, as are those workers who organised the general strike.'

This is in fact a further

crude attack on the theory of permanent revolution which is reduced to 'armed struggle' and Maoist-inspired peasant guerrilla warfare. The NPA become, according to this scenario, 'unconscious Trotskyists' and the need for a Trotskyist party to lead the working class is completely abandoned in true Pabloite fashion.

Revolutionary leadership

With large sections of the bourgeoisie paralysed by impending bankruptcy and land foreclosure, the right wing and the handful of bankers can be smashed. What is necessary is the building of a Trotskyist party armed with the theory of permanent revolution. Such a party would fight for the leadership of the working class against the Stalinists on a revolutionary programme calling for the nationalisation of the banks and industry under worker's control, repudiation of all foreign debts, confiscation of landed estates by the poor peasantry and landless labourers, and the smashing of the capitalist state and the army.



Half a million workers march through Manila for the funeral of KMU trade union leader Rolando Olalia, assassinated on November 13, 1986.

CINEMA

Martyrs minus the politics

IN 1834 six farm labourers from Dorset who had combined to stop drastic wage cuts were sentenced to transportation to Australia, convicted of swearing illegal oaths of allegiance.

Trade union membership itself, albeit within strict limits, had not been a crime since 1824. For the ruling class the Tolpuddle events provided an opportunity to stifle the growth of unions by terrorising potential recruits.

For writer and director Bill Douglas, however, it was not the politics but the 'humanity' which guided the making of the film *Comrades*. By his own admission he 'couldn't hold a two minute conversation . . . about politics' and this shows in the heavy emphasis on the six individuals, their experiences and relationships. As little detail of the lives of the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' is known, much is left to the imagination of the director. The wider context in which the events arose and developed is only hinted at and sometimes not very clearly.

In agricultural com-

By Paul Stickley

munities the position of the labourer had worsened considerably. Parliamentary Commissioners were redistributing land to the gentry in accordance with the numerous Enclosure Acts between 1770 and 1830 and as a result of this 'privatisation' of over six million acres of common land, the peasant was reduced to a possessionless pauper or vagabond.

Rights associated with common land gave the peasant a limited security. Now he was becoming an agricultural wage slave. And these wages were being forced down due to a combination of agricultural depression, a glutted labour market and payment of parish relief.

Spontaneous revolts broke out in 1830, involving burning of haystacks, smashing of machinery, poison pen letters and petitions to the local notables. There was little violence and no-one killed, but the ruling class responded in a time-honoured way with 250 death sentences (nine actually executed), 500 transportations and 600 jailed.

Against this background, the simple act of forming a Friendly Society took centre stage in the class struggle in Britain. Although not directly involved in the Swing rebellions, disturbances in the Tolpuddle locality brought retribution by the local landlord and magistrate, Frampton, who was later to play a leading role in the 1834 prosecutions.

Another important factor, drawn out in the film in a number of memorable scenes, was the influence of Methodism — a contradictory mixture of respect for an existing state ordained by God and equality of men. Before the former came to predominate, Methodism was equivalent to sedition in

ONCE again the Taviani brothers, Paolo and Vittorio, have turned to the theme of an Italy whose economy is so stagnant that thousands of youth are forced to emigrate to the industrial cities of Germany and the USA to find work.

Good Morning Babylon begins in the period prior to the First World War in Tuscany and follows the emigration of two brothers to the United States where



Pay day for the Tolpuddle farm labourers — a scene from 'Comrades'

the eyes of the established church. Vestiges of its dissenting origins remained in outlying areas and had a profound influence on radicals like George Loveless, the leading Martyr.

However, no amount of sensitively evoked and beautifully photographed

scenes of rural life (which abound in the film) can substitute for the lack of class-based analysis. 'Comrades' comes tantalisingly close at times to acknowledging the primary role played by the working class in securing pardons for the Tolpuddle Martyrs, but

always returns to Douglas's New Testament view of *all* men as brothers.

For Douglas, the Martyrs were good men, ill done by. For the working class, they represent the unbridgeable antagonism between capital and labour and the necessity to organise.

they eventually find work in the Hollywood studios of D.W. Griffiths. A subject which the Taviani brothers might have been expected to treat well.

However, it must be said that this, their first film in English, marks an all-time low in the Taviani's output and confirms a trend among a number of leading Italian film-makers who are increasingly unable to get to grips with reality, turning

instead to costume drama and nostalgia for a 'golden past' as a way out.

The Taviani brothers' 'Padre Padrone', produced a decade ago, stands as the high point of their work. 'Good Morning Babylon' adds nothing to that film's penetrating analysis of life in an Italy long since ripe for revolution, descending at times into the pursuit of cheap laughs. As the film unfolds, the cutting between

scenes, which are by turn serious and comic, becomes hopelessly mistimed.

The finale, set on a battlefield in the Tuscan hills during the First World War, degenerates into vulgar slapstick and pantomime as troops are bayoneted. What the Taviani portray of early cinema is sentimentality, buffoonery and childishness, a hollow travesty of the work of the early masters of silent movies.

Bolshevism and parliamentary tactics

BOOK REVIEW

Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma
A.Y. Badayev
Bookmarks £5.95

By Wendy Upson

WRITTEN in 1929, this book gives a personal view of the events surrounding the election of six Bolshevik deputies to the Tsarist Duma of 1912, and the two years up to the outbreak of the First World War concluding with the arrest of the deputies and their subsequent trial and exile.

The author, Badayev, was one of the six deputies elected. He represented St. Petersburg. The others were Malinovsky (Moscow), Petrovsky (Yekaterinoslav), Muranov (Kharkov), Shagov (Kostroma) and Samoylov (Vladimir). They formed the Bolshevik Duma fraction of the Social Democratic Labour Party. The Menshevik fraction succeeded in gaining seven representatives to the Duma.

This event was no mean feat in a Russia where the electoral system was directed towards limiting the rights of the most progressive workers — where a landowner's vote was equal

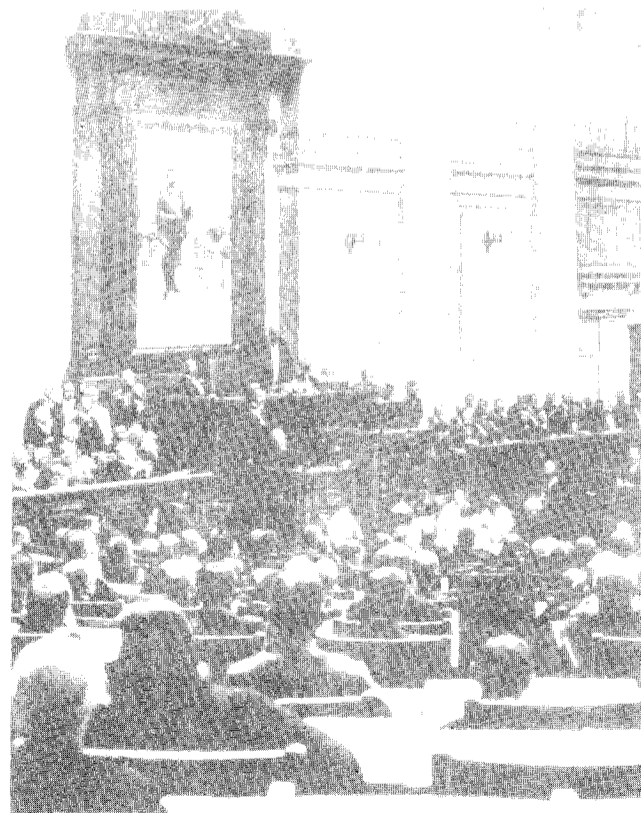
to 15 peasants' votes or 45 workers' votes. The electors from the workers' curiae (an electoral college and one of four groups: landowners, the urban middle class, the peasants and the workers) constituted only four per cent of the voters.

In 1912 the Bolshevik leadership was either in internal exile, in prison or abroad. Despite this fact they were still able to lead an extremely organised campaign. They also possessed a powerful medium through which they influenced the masses. The paper 'Pravda' began publication in June 1912, just a few months before the elections. The election platform of the Bolsheviks was: a democratic republic; an eight-hour day; the confiscation of all landlords' estates. The latter addressed the demands and aspirations of one hundred million Russian peasants.

The Mensheviks cut down and adapted their position, causing sharp divisions bet-

ween the two fractions once they came to operate within the State Duma. They used their one extra vote to obstruct the work of the Bolsheviks, whose sole reason for taking part in the parliament was to agitate against the government from the Duma rostrum. In addition, Lenin had instructed the deputies to remain in touch with the masses and all working class organisations, legal and illegal, and to take part in work outside the Duma. This created further tension between the Bolshevik and Menshevik fractions (because of Menshevik opposition to illegal work), making a united Social Democratic front very difficult.

After a year of being formally bound into a united fraction, the differences were so great that the Bolshevik six issued the Mensheviks with a demand for either equal treatment or a split. The Mensheviks refused and the split was effected on October 25, 1913. This action set in motion a far wider split within the party groups and the party organisations who were compelled to join one of the two wings of the formerly united party. As the strength of the Menshevik fraction lessened, so the strength of the Bolshevik fraction grew.



The last Duma session before the overthrow of the Tsar in February 1917

Throughout 1913 and 1914 there was a series of massive strikes. With the outbreak of the First World War, patriotic demonstrations were staged as a wave of chauvinism swept the country. This gave the Tsarist police the opportunity to settle accounts with its old enemy, which was seen to be proclaiming

anti-war propaganda and organising a widespread movement against the war. Inside the Duma, tensions were heightened between those on the right who supported the war and those who condemned it. One of the six deputies, Malinovsky, resigned his position on the Duma. Later evidence showed that his real talents

lay in being an agent for the police and that his resignation became necessary once it became obvious that his work would not stem the growth and influence of the party.

In November 1914, following an abortive attempt to hold an international congress, the five remaining deputies were arrested, the Duma turning a blind eye to this violation of parliamentary immunity. The workers who staged protest strikes were brutally put down by the police.

The book bears some marks of the period of Stalinist reaction and falsification in which it was written. It falsely attributes the leading work of directing 'Pravda' to Stalin, and attempts to cover up the serious errors made by the Bolshevik deputies when war was declared. Nonetheless, as a record of the Bolsheviks' intervention in the Duma, which Lenin described as 'not only useful but essential . . . in order to prepare the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the socialist revolution (October 1917)', it remains valuable in demonstrating how to carry out revolutionary work in even the most reactionary of parliaments.

ASIAN YOUTH LEAD ANTI-RACIST MARCH

OVER 350 people marched through the London Borough of Camden on September 26 to show their determination to combat the rising number of racist attacks.

A large contingent of Bengali youth led the demonstration which was supported by Asian and black workers' organisations, teachers, trade unionists from local government, women's groups and political parties.

The march was organised by the newly-formed Camden United Asian Youth (CUAY) in response to the stabbing of two Bengali youths by a gang of racists on September 5.

After three further attacks in the same week, local Asian youth called an open meeting on September 22 to launch an ongoing campaign of self-defence.

They issued a warning to have no confidence in the police. A speaker from

Camden's Refugee Forum told how 17 of its members were summoned to Scotland Yard and told to drop their investigations into the activities of racists living in the Euston and King's Cross area. After reporting incidents of racial violence to the police, many have found themselves the subject of 'illegal immigrant' enquiries.

The meeting heard how police racism had led to four young Chinese waiters from the Diamond Restaurant in Soho receiving two-year prison sentences after being attacked by white customers who refused to pay their bills.

CUAY are calling for co-ordinated action throughout the country to fight back against racism.



The anti-racist march on September 26 organised by CUAY

Build a revolutionary student leadership

AS students return to college this autumn, the Tories are set to mount a further large-scale attack on higher education.

Universities have had their finances massively cut and the Tory White Paper on the organisation of higher education threatens to bring in even tighter state control through a system of 'contracts' between a new Universities Funding Council and individual universities. Many lecturers have been forced to retire, and many universities are on the brink of bankruptcy.

Polytechnics, which have already taken strides towards becoming industrial and business training centres, will be removed from local authority control, and placed under contract to a Polytechnic and College Funding Council. This means that local authority representatives and lecturing staff will be replaced by the nominees of industry and commerce.

Education Secretary Kenneth Baker has pledged to smash local authority control over further education colleges and bring in City Technology Colleges, whose role will be to extend cheap-labour MSC schemes.

Students and their unions face disciplinary action if they breach Tory-inspired

By Gary Hollingsbee

codes of practice guaranteeing freedom of speech... for fascists and racists.

The real brunt of these attacks is borne by students themselves. Already, thousands of students live in squalid conditions and in perpetual debt, unable to afford rented accommodation.

What drives forward these savage attacks on education is the economic crisis of the capitalist system. In order to compete in a declining world market and under conditions of mass unemployment, the ruling class must dispense with the boom-time utopia of

'education for all'. This demand will only be achieved under socialism through the smashing of the capitalist state.

Faced with this onslaught upon education, the reformist-dominated executive of the National Union of Students (NUS) has refused to mobilise students to defend their rights and take on the Tories.

The Workers International League puts forward the following demands for students:

- Guaranteed low-cost accommodation for every student;
- No means testing — full

index-linked grants for all;

- Defend student unions against state attacks;
- Higher education for all;
- No state control over research or teaching;
- TUC and the teaching unions must end collaboration with MSC schemes. Full training or apprenticeships under trade union control on adult wages;
- The NUS leadership must mount a campaign to fight every cut in education. Occupy all colleges threatened with cuts or closure;
- Build a revolutionary leadership among students — join the Workers International League.

TUC 'forum' a fraud

By Graham Fenwick

THE TUC has rejected a call to extend the powers of its annual Youth Conference by giving it the right to debate resolutions.

A motion to this effect, put before the TUC Congress in Blackpool during the first week of September by the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union, was heavily defeated after being opposed by the General Council.

The Congress voted instead to abolish the Youth

Conference and go ahead with the General Council's idea of a 'youth forum'. This is designed to stifle any initiative amongst youth to fight against unemployment, homelessness and cheap-labour schemes and for a secure future.

It will consist of 12 young workers nominated from the trade unions who will meet only three times a year with six General Council

members! They will be groomed to impose the TUC's right-wing policies onto youth. There will also be an attempt to hold a larger conference at which youth will be invited to 'discuss issues', but will be unable to decide policy.

The 'youth forum' is an attempt to boost youth membership of the trade unions at the same time as shutting young people's eyes to the real problems that face them.

Young claimants to pay poll tax

By Lizzy Ali

THE Tories' poll tax is being introduced in stages — Scotland in April 1989, Wales in 1990 and England between 1990 and 1995. Among those hardest hit will be young people under 25.

Those on low incomes or receiving income support will get a rebate of 80 per cent of their poll tax. However, they will only receive an 'average' amount to cover the remaining 20 per cent. Since poll tax contributions will vary enormously up and down the country, this 'average' will not be enough to cover the difference in many inner-city areas where the poll tax — and youth unemployment — is higher than average.

In the London boroughs of Camden and Hackney, at the top of the list for poll tax

payments, it will mean young claimants paying £2.11 and £1.76 per week out of their already meagre benefit.

This will come hard on the heels of the Social Security Act which comes into effect in April 1988. Single unemployed people under 25 and without children will get £6 per week less income support than older people in the same circumstances. Low-paid workers under 25 will receive lower housing benefit. This will result in losses of up to £11.80 per week.

Youth on the Job Training Scheme will also be hit by the poll tax. Their 'allowance' is paid at a rate equivalent to benefit and they will suffer from the same regional variations as the unemployed.

TRADES UNIONS against the M.S.C.

CONFERENCE

Dr. Johnson House
40 Bull Street Birmingham

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7

TUC must withdraw from MSC!
Demand real jobs and training!

Credentials: 30 Pembroke Road, London E17