

JOIN 'BIG STICK' DEMONSTRATION

WORKERS PRESS calls on all our readers and supporters to join the 'Big Stick' demonstration outside the Trades Union Congress headquarters in London on 5 July.

The TUC has called a bogus 'Conference on Full Employment' on that day. 'Keynote' speakers will include Tory employment minister David Hunt and Howard Davies, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry.

The fact that such people are invited into Congress

House is yet another insult to every working-class family in the country, many of whom have faced a decade

BY PETER JEFFRIES

and more of ruthless attacks from the Tory government and the employers.

Freeze

Hunt is member of a government that is attempting to impose a wage freeze on signal workers, with the hope that if they defeat this section of railway workers they will impose similar conditions on the rest of the working class.

The TUC's class-collabor-

ationist move is its latest one towards corporatism. John Monks and company want an alliance with big business and the state against the working class.

The greater the disarray the Tories find themselves in the warmer the hand of friendship the leaders of the TUC extend to them.

The conference called by the TUC will not be about full employment. Neither the TUC nor the leaders of big business have the slight-

est belief that full employment can be restored.

Tony Blair, favourite for Labour leader, won't even give a target level for the reduction of unemployment by a future Labour government.

Candidate

John Prescott, another candidate for Labour leader, says that the party should get unemployment down to three-quarters of a

million within its first term of office, but doesn't have any policy to achieve even this modest aim.

The present government has cynically manipulated the unemployment figures to disguise the fact that over 4 million people are today effectively unemployed, with millions more in part-time work for miserable wages.

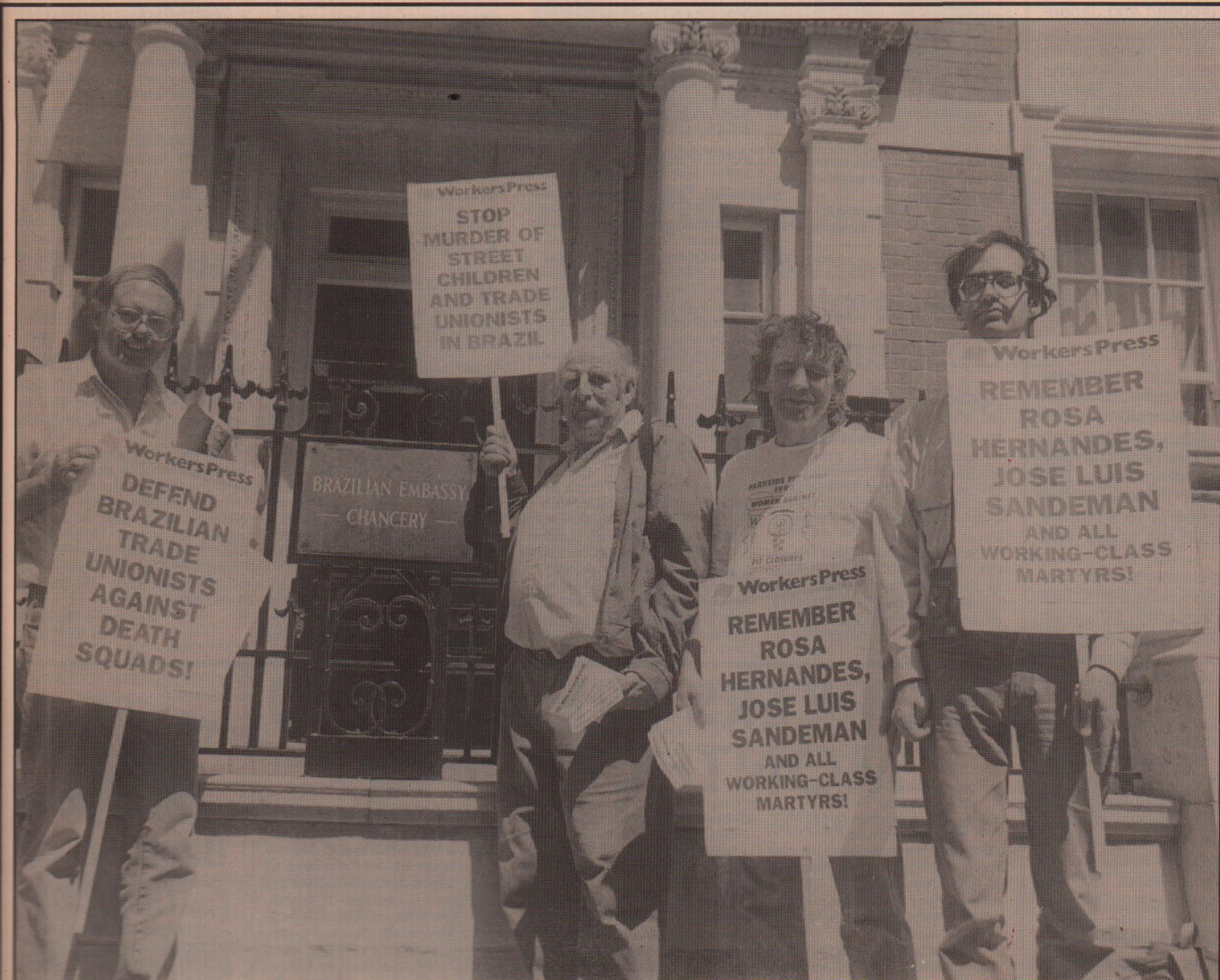
The TUC conference is part of the preparations for a future Labour government. Sections of big business know that the Tory government is in near ruins. It is a government less and less capable of dealing with the crisis that big business faces.

That is why bodies such as the CBI are turning to the Labour Party and to the trade union leaders, hoping they may still be able to discipline the working class.

Mistake

Monks protests that he no longer has a 'big stick' to beat the government and the employers with. Make no mistake, the last thing such leaders want is any weapon with which to fight the Tory government and big business.

Monks and Co. are tied hand and foot to capitalism. They will do anything to defend it from the threat of the working class.



Members of the Workers International, the International Workers League (LIT-CI), and Militant Labour picketed the Brazilian embassy in London on Friday 24 June to protest at the murder last month of two trades unionists who were members of the LIT's Brazilian section, by it is thought professional assassins. Rosa Hernandez and Jose Luis Sandeman were workers' leaders, and Sandeman had recently been involved in a national strike. Photo: Maggie Nicol

'BIG STICK' demo

5 July, 8.30am
TUC Congress House,
Gt Russell St,
London WC1
(Tube Tottenham Ct Rd)

Stop the TUC's
'Full Employment'
conference on
5 July!

Called by Camden, Merseyside, Wirral, Merton, South Sefton, Preston, Newcastle, Durham and Darlington trades councils

What price 'regulated capitalism'?

DESPITE last week's slight recovery of the dollar on the world's money markets, the underlying forces that have seen it plunge to an all-time post-war low against the Japanese yen have not gone away. Even a short time ago anyone suggesting that one day the dollar would be worth only 100 yen would have been considered crazy.

Only massive intervention by the Federal Reserve, supported by the Bank of England and the central banks of Japan, Canada, France, Italy, and ten other countries of Europe prevented an even steeper fall into double figures. It is calculated that some \$3 billion was spent on these frantic efforts to prop up the dollar.

But one thing this intervention did not achieve was a marked strengthening of the dollar, the world's principal trading currency.

It is noteworthy that the support from the German central bank — the most powerful in Europe — was extremely modest, reflecting fears that too powerful an intervention would bring a strong inflationary increase in the German money supply.

* * * * *

HERE is an expression of one of the contradictions of today's capitalism. The Europeans and the Japanese fear that a plunging dollar will give US capitalism an enormous advantage in world trade. They are quite right. Every point knocked off the dollar makes US exports that much cheaper and imports into the US that much dearer.

At the same time they know that intervention to defend the dollar involves them buying dollars in exchange for their own currency which adds to the money supply and thereby stokes up inflationary pressures. This in turn makes European and Japanese exports that much less competitive.

Another notable feature of the recent plunge on the world's stock exchanges was the steep fall in bond prices, that is the price of government stock. Behind this fall stands the enormous state debt in which the leading capitalist countries are embroiled.

Falling bond prices reflect the fear that the US government will soon be forced to raise interest rates to halt the dollar's further decline. Not only will this threaten any 'recovery' in the American economy and drive up the cost of borrowing in the rest of the world. It will also considerably increase the cost of servicing the budget deficits of all the leading capitalist nations. This will mean either increased taxes to raise the money or yet more borrowing.

* * * * *

THE budget deficits of all the major capitalist powers are in part an index of the degree to which they have been forced to make concessions to the working class for almost half a century. For much of these deficits have been incurred through the financing of welfare benefits of various kinds. The capitalist class, however fearful it may of the prospect, is being forced ever nearer to a frontal attack on these benefits, with all the social and political risks this involves.

The near-panic of last week puts into perspective both Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's idiotic boast that the boom-bust cycle has been 'conquered', as well as Tony Blair's promise of a 'regulated capitalism' under a future Labour government. Even former Chancellor Lord Lawson had to say that Clarke was talking nonsense.

Every day some \$300 billion flows through the financial markets. Most of this money is quite out of the control of any government. Indeed the ultimate ownership of much of it remains a mystery. This capital knows no frontiers. The only word it knows is 'profit'. It moves where the gains are greatest, whatever havoc its movement creates.

It is not governments that regulate these 'financial markets' as Blair and company pretend, but the financial markets that regulate governments. This was graphically demonstrated when sterling was ejected from the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM) in September 1992, and later when the speculators forced the French franc out of the ERM, thereby dealing a devastating blow to the prospects of monetary union in Europe.

From its first day in office a Labour government, tied as it will be to the interests of capitalism, will be a prisoner — and a willing one at that — of finance capital whose nature has once again been so clearly revealed over the past few days.

Letters

Serbian open terrorism

I WOULD like to add my own observations to the description given by Sue Morrison in her reflections (Workers Press, 11 June) on the joint convoy between UNGA LIV, a Swedish children's charity, and Workers Aid for Bosnia that took medical supplies and trucks to the Kliniki centre in Tuzla, an effort in which we both took part.

Six lorries carrying valuable medicines went in to Tuzla — four trucks were then donated to the hospital which suffers from a severe shortage of roadworthy vehicles.

The small Workers Aid team of six and three Bosnians then returned to Zagreb, Croatia.

At Visoko, a Workers Aid truck that had been left on the way was recovered and repaired.

Although black-market prices had fallen in Tuzla, they were still far above the derisory wages paid to most workers. Hopefully the recent Bosnian army advances will secure an asphalt route into the town, but such success is not without a price.

As the Serb Chetnik forces are pushed back, so they resume their terror campaign, firing occasional random shells at any promising target, including schools, markets and the hospital complex.

We experienced such a volley — two shells landed 100 yards from us as we unloaded our aid.

The shells used make no noise in flight — the first thing you hear is the explosion. Then it is a matter of running and hiding, trying to guess whether a second will follow — or a third!

There is no military value to this — it is straightforward terrorism against the working people of Tuzla.

Tom Battersby
London NW1

Seeds of Bosnian sell-off

PLANS for the privatisation of collectively owned property, workplaces, etc., revealed by the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina signal future conflicts with the working class (Workers Press, 25 June).

Before the war began 80 per cent of all assets were collectively owned with no 'registered' owner. In a plan presented by a group headed by Sead Delic, on the advice a firm called Lipton,

Saks and Thompson, the collectively owned property would be nationalised, become state property, to enable it to be sold off to private owners. A law has already been submitted to the highest executive bodies of the state for consideration.

Strong opposition is emerging. Delic states that his intention is to create a 'socio-economic system based on private ownership'. Privatisation would take place within 90 days of 'nationalisation'.

Trades unions insist that it is not true that the present owners are 'not known' — the owners are the workers themselves. But the trade union leaders are not necessarily opposed to privatisation.

Lawyer Plamenko Custovic said: '[Collective ownership] is branded the property of all — and nobody. The state treats it as the property of nobody. Collective property is truly everybody's and that is why it is necessary to establish who "everybody" is.'

During the war workers have sacrificed to keep their workplaces operating under the most terrible conditions, often working for nothing in the factory and then picking up a rifle to serve their turn on the front line.

Bourgeois forces threaten to rob them and hand over their workplaces into the hands of the speculators. Some of the seeds of the present crisis can be seen to have existed in the days of Tito, who allowed and encouraged private ownership and part-ownership of workplaces.

Keith Scotcher
Barking

Critical revolutionary tactics

JOHN ROBINSON ('Letters', 25 June) describes as 'sectarian' Simon Pirani's attack on the policy of 'critical support' for reformist, Stalinist or nationalist forces ('Letters', 18 June).

Robinson says that this is just a tactical question — that is, that the revolutionary movement has to look at each concrete situation and decide what policy will help to break the working class from non-proletarian forces.

If this was all the discussion was about then I am sure that Pirani would agree. But it is not. Behind what was originally a tactical question for the revolutionary movement there developed within the Fourth International an orientation that in giving these non-revolutionary leaderships 'critical support' began to see in them an actual progressive role in society.

One example from the pages of Workers Press. A South African Trotskyist reported that at the time of Zimbabwe's libera-

tion he attended a trade union conference in Harare, where a local union leader told him not to make the mistake they had made in playing second fiddle to the bourgeois nationalists who were now in power and arresting trades unionists. Very good advice for the present situation in South Africa.

What was the WRP of the day doing at this time, under its corrupt leadership of Gerry Healy — expelled in 1985?

It was giving advice and support to the nationalists. Their representatives were cheered at our rallies and the party's paper, the 'News Line', gave political advice to Mugabe to maintain an electoral alliance with Nkomo.

The message of that trade unionist did not appear in the propaganda of the revolutionary movement. This was what the tactic of 'critical support' had actually become.

And Robinson himself makes it clear why Pirani is right to go on the attack against the history of this degeneration of revolutionary theory. Robinson says that despite the Vietnamese Stalinists' murder of Vietnamese Trotskyists they did lead the Vietcong to crush imperialism.

But not only did they murder Trotskyists, lead a military defeat of US forces, they also crushed the Vietnamese workers' movement, isolated it physically and politically from the world workers' movement so that today capitalism can re-enter this territory.

I therefore agree with Pirani that 'critical support' has become a strategy of subordinating the working class to imperialism and unless there is agreement in the ranks of the revolutionary movement that none of these bourgeois nationalists, Stalinists, or social democrats, like the Labour Party, are capable of playing any progressive role — then to discuss tactics is meaningless.

Bob Myers
Manchester

Clear alternative needed

I MUST respond to the article by Phil Edwards taken from the rank-and-file teachers' magazine 'Chalkface' and reprinted in Workers Press (18 June).

To criticise anti-fascist groups such as the Anti-Nazi League, the Newham Monitoring Project, and so on for not coming out with a clear call for a Labour vote [in recent by-elections] is surely missing the point entirely.

Phil states that the working class is 'deeply disillusioned with the incumbent administrations'. This is correct but the

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point is that it is also the Labour Party they are rejecting in droves. Are we to respond to this by calling for a Labour vote — with 'no illusions'?

Surely the section of the working class who vote for the fascist British National Party realise the shortcomings of the Labour Party to such an extent that they are desperate enough to vote for the BNP. No, the answer cannot be a clear call for a Labour vote but the clear need for a left alternative to Labour.

Dave Parks
Exeter Anti-Fascist Action
(personal capacity)
and WRP

Great romances of our time

WHENEVER the rail dispute is mentioned, all the contenders for the Labour leadership appear to be struck dumb. Instead of expressing solidarity with workers — saying in the words of clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution that they have the right to the fruits of their labour — they try, embarrassingly, to side-step the issue.

Presumably, Tony Blair would rather the money goes to future shareholders in a privatised railway system rather than to those whose toil has produced the extra output. If so, it is an example of history repeating itself.

Tony Blair looks as if he will be the second MP representing a County Durham constituency to lead the Labour Party. In 1929, Ramsay MacDonald was returned for Seaham.

Three years after the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, Lord Londonderry, who was the biggest coalowner in the region, had decided to press home his enhanced bargaining position. He planned to cut miners' pay. A dispute ensued.

In their struggle, the miners looked to MacDonald for support. But he refused to help. Instead he showed solidarity of a rather different variety. He began a love affair with Lady Londonderry!

Numerous passionate letters flew to and fro between them. Ramsay MacDonald began his epistles 'Dear Circe', after the Greek goddess who inflamed men's hearts, and ended by signing himself 'Hamish the Hunter'.

News of the great romance became common knowledge. It led the Clydeside rebel MP, Jimmy Maxton, the Dennis Skinner of his day, to make a useful suggestion. He proposed that the Labour Party should abandon 'The Red Flag' as its anthem and replace it with 'The Londonderry Air'.

Raymond Challinor
Tyne and Wear

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ONE glaring gap that readers may have noticed in the Workers Press is Rwanda. In the last few weeks I have seen some pictures of that tragedy that make you want to weep.

Human beings, like you and me — thinking, feeling, desiring — reduced by barbarism to piles of bones and a minimal amount of flesh.

Why am I using 'emotive' language? Where's the 'Marxist' analysis?

In some ways that is the point. The 'analysis' is inadequate before such denial of humanity. Such denial created ultimately by

the drive of imperialism — capitalism in the 20th century — to squeeze profit out of everything. What can't be profitable must be destroyed.

One founder of the German Communist Party, Rosa Luxemburg, was killed in 1919 by reactionary right wing precursors of the Nazis, the 'Freikorps', with the blessing of the German social democratic leaders, 'leftwingers' compared to the British Labour Party leaders, then and now.

I mention Luxemburg because, as many readers of this paper know, she made the observation that the choice facing humanity was 'socialism or barbarism'.

Our 'analysis' of Rwanda, and Bosnia, must end in the 'synthesis' of that force able to destroy imperialism before it destroys all humanity and creates barbarism.

From his analysis of capitalism, Marx found that the only force that could destroy it was actually created by it. That force is the working class. Our task in Workers Press, the WRP and the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International is to be part of finding the means of synthesising the working class into a united whole against imperialism.

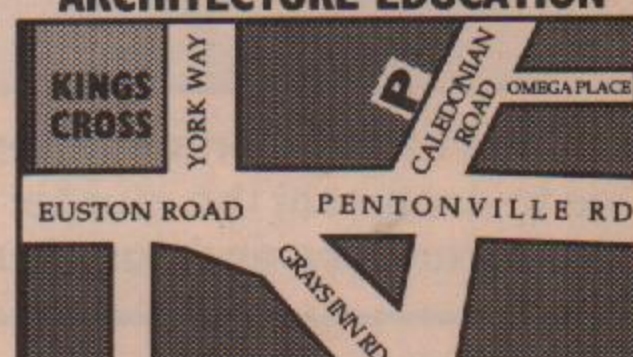
Mike Cooke
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Lecturers fight on against 'slavery'

BY OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE lecturers' struggle goes on — and the Tory minister responsible for further education, Tim Boswell, has been encouraging them in their resistance to wholesale changes in their contracts.

Addressing the College Employers' Forum (CEF), the government-inspired quango which organises the managements of nearly all the semi-privatised colleges — now known as 'corporations' — in England and Wales, Boswell said British lecturers were 'world class'.

But, he added, it was necessary to 'liberate them all from restrictive, outdated practices', which would 'hamper colleges in responding flexibly to their students and jeopardise the successful expansion of the sector'.

And what are these 'restrictive practices'?

- Insisting that everybody work only during term;
- Insisting that they don't teach more than ten mornings, afternoons, or evenings in any one week;
- Insisting that they have a timetable of not more than 21 teaching hours a week (many currently have more than 19 hours' teaching, even so!);
- Insisting, in fact, that there should be a limit to the working week!

It is opposition to this CEF model 'slave contract' that has

sparked recent disputes.

Boswell 'sincerely hopes' that the union won't 'cling to an outdated clockwatching concept' and won't be 'fearful of change', but will 'resume a constructive dialogue with CEF and stop their campaign of industrial action'.

But how can you have a 'constructive dialogue' with a body, the CEF, which refuses to negotiate. It refuses to talk nationally with NATFHE, the college lecturers' union, and, further, in many colleges the dispute is with a management that will not negotiate nationally.

One south London college was told that after nine hours NATFHE had not accepted the

contract offered and 'therefore' there could be no more negotiations — and since there was no new contract there could be no pay rise this year.

Many of the thousands of lecturers who are taking strike action are doing so for the first time in their lives.

Rally

Last week hundreds of them attended a mass rally in working time at Croydon, one of the largest colleges in the south of England, whose principal (i.e. the manager of the 'corporation') is a close friend of CEF secretary Roger Ward.

Some lecturers, receiving no

lead from NATFHE nationally, neither voted for action nor took part in the rally. However, a majority did both.

So the college stayed open while NATFHE national president Doreen Cameron and some Labour MPs addressed the mass meeting on the lawn outside.

When lecturers in Croydon get angry, Boswell and Ward should look out for themselves! So should their political masters.

With the end of term approaching, the 'slave contracts' issue more than a year old, and 95 per cent of all lecturers still on the old, 'restrictive' Silver Book contracts, NAT-

FHE meetings are being held this week to decide on action in the autumn term.

But NATFHE can't solve the problem by itself. Links must be forged with the rest of the trade union movement, and with stu-

dents, parents, and the local community.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to hit back at the Tory government — though the loyal Opposition wishes the problem would go away.

Head teacher brings in scabs

BY JILL OXLEY

AMID chaotic scenes, agency teachers have been used as a scab labour force to break a strike at a London school — probably for the first time in the history of the National Union of Teachers.

Balloted by the national action committee, Langham school in Haringey, north London, voted overwhelmingly for strike action over 12 redundancies, which threatened class sizes exceeding the NUT limit of 30.

The governing body justified these cuts because of a budget deficit.

When 42 teachers withdrew their labour, 20 teachers from two agencies, Timeline and Teachers' Employment Agency, were drafted in. They believed they would be invigilating examinations, but found they were expected to teach the full range of classes.

Not surprisingly, there were scenes of chaos within the school. The head teacher — a member of the NUT — failed to tell parents of the strike. Many pupils stayed away only because teachers leafleted them in the street the day before.

Attempts to register the pupils failed, and many were left unsupervised. Eventually the sounding of the fire alarm by the head led to scenes of utter

confusion, as none of the agency staff was familiar with the fire drill.

But there is one surprise! Given the vigour with which Tory governments have pursued anti-union legislation, it is amazing to find that it is an offence for agency staff to be brought in to scab during an official dispute under the 1973 Private Agencies Act. Indeed, fines of up to £5,000 can be levied!

The chair of the of Langham's governing body is a Labour councillor and vice-president of Haringey Union. Some Labour councillors have protested against this infringement of trade union principles. It remains to be seen how deeply they will probe to find out whether there was collusion by the Labour authority.

The strike has brought a negotiated settlement — class sizes will not exceed 27 from September — but the issue of scabs remains.

Local education authorities no longer employ teams of 'supply' teachers to cover for absentees because of the change in legislation giving budget control to individual schools.

But these meagre budgets force schools to turn to private agencies for supply teachers because they are cheaper. Agency teachers are paid much less than the going rate and there are no proper safeguards on their working conditions.

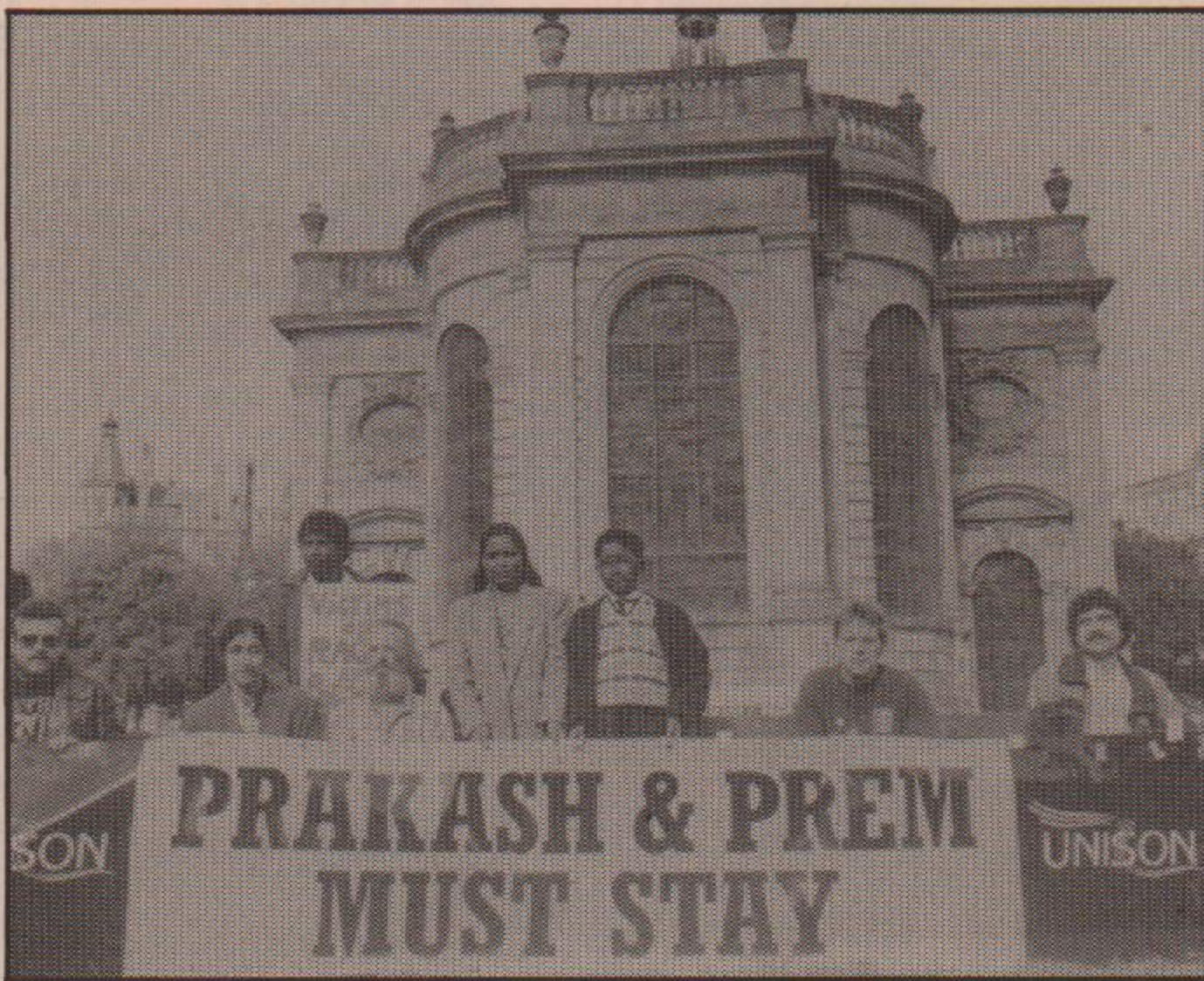
Hunger strike against deportation

PRAKASH Chavrimootoo and her son Prem live in daily fear of being deported since their application to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal was rejected at the beginning of June.

Prakash left her husband, a British citizen, within 12 months of coming to Britain following her suffering domestic violence. This is the grounds on which she is under threat of deportation.

On 22 June, Prakash's supporters (see picture) held a 12-hour hunger strike outside St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham.

Photo by Mark Salmon



'Help us lead a normal life'

— an appeal from the Tuzla women's basketball team

BY BRONWEN HANDSIDE

I WENT to the Bosnian mining town of Tuzla on an aid convoy taking food and medical aid in April this year.

While I was there an appeal was made to me from Tuzla's multi-ethnic basketball team, which has fought to remain multi-ethnic along with the other citizens of this working-class town.

They are asking for basketball gear, because the shoes and clothes they have are worn out, and they cannot get any more because of the blockade imposed on them by the war.

Only the bare minimum of starvation rations is coming through the blockade, along the very hazardous, mountainous southern route via Split in Croatia. Everybody in the town is very thin, and prone to illnesses because of malnutrition.

Workers Aid for Bosnia

The team consists of young women aged from 15 to 22, and they have continued to practise throughout the shelling of their town, and all the hardships of the winters when temperatures went as low as -10 degrees C, and they only had four hours of electricity a day if they were lucky — and no food.

The father of the family I stayed with was a coach of this team, and his 15-year-old daughter, Jasmina, was a team member. During the blockade Jasmina caught hepatitis, and was very ill — her parents could not get the proper food for her to eat, and she ended up in the under-supplied hospital and had to have blood transfusions for 10 days.

The mother, Leyla, is a nurse who has continued to work long

shifts throughout the war, despite the fact that the 1,200 DM (about £480) a month salary she got before the war has been reduced to 5 DM (about £2!) a month.

You will get some idea of what this means when I tell you that one loaf of bread on the black market — the only source of supply aside from aid parcels — costs 6 DM (about £2.40).

The family is also supporting two elderly grandparents who are both diabetic, and who cannot get the proper food for their special diets, nor proper medication.

This family, which was so-called 'Muslim', introduced us to their best friends, who are Serbian and Croatian, and who also are involved in the basketball team.

Despite their enormous problems, this group of Serbs, Croats and Muslims have kept their team going. It is part of their struggle for a normal — and above all, multi-ethnic — life for themselves and their children amid the hideous destruction of this war.

■ The Tuzla women's basketball team needs kit (tops, shorts, socks and boots). If you think you can help phone Workers Aid for Bosnia (071-582 5462). If you want to send money for this specific purpose, make cheques payable to Workers Aid and send it to Basketball Appeal, Workers Aid, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

The boots are not cheap and one way to get them would be the 'never, never', i.e. hire purchase. If you might be able to make a regular commitment for the boots we'd be interested to hear from you — phone or write to us at the same address or telephone number!

Cellist Vedran Smailović played for 22 days in the ruins of the Bosnian National Library in Sarajevo after the bread queue massacre of 22 people. He has travelled the world using music to call for peace in Bosnia, Ireland and elsewhere.

Workers Aid for Bosnia is proud to present him and other Bosnian musicians as part of an evening to raise money for its work, which includes taking desperately needed aid from Britain, France, Spain, Sweden and support from other countries to Bosnia. Four Workers Aid convoys have reached Tuzla, a mining town, and three more, including one to Sarajevo, are planned.

■ Contact us on 071-582 5462 for details

Vedran Smailović, Cellist
Osborne: Adagio for Vedran;
Cresswell: Lacrimae

Aida Gavrilova, Pianist
Shostakovich: Four Preludes;
Mozart: Fantasia in D Major

Zoran Jančić, Pianist
Granados: Maya and Nightingale;
Papandopolou: Three Studies

Lejla Ibrahimović, Pianist
Bach: Prelude and Fugue No.16;
Chopin: Nocturne in E Major

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Royal Academy of Music,
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Peter Undrill

WORKERS PRESS regrets to announce the death of Peter Undrill, a long-standing reader in Newham, east London.

A journeyman French polisher by trade, Peter was a Labour councillor for the West Ham ward from 1978 to 1986.

Early in 1978 there was serious opposition to the first wave of cuts in public expenditure instigated by the Newham Labour group, and Peter was one of six Labour councillors who led this opposition.

He voted against the cuts and was suspended from the group. His ward reselected him to run in the following year. He resigned from the council in 1986.

Peter had been ill for several

years and for over a year had been on the waiting list of Bethnal Green's London Chest Hospital for double heart by-pass surgery.

The 'Newham Recorder' was moved to say: 'Nobody should be denied what is instantly granted to those with ability to pay.' Peter's family are considering calling for an inquiry.

Peter's detailed knowledge of the history of local politics in Newham often cast new light on our struggle.

Members of East London branch of the Workers Revolutionary Party send condolences to his wife Beryl and the rest of his family in their sad loss.

JO

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Inside left

...
 bluff John Prescott beats bland Tony Blair to become Labour Party leader and potential prime minister. Will the secret police let him have his file? Although he had already left the sea to study at Hull University, Prescott's name was being pushed to Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson for his vigorous speech blaming the 1966 'carers' strike on 'politically-activated men'.

MI5 boasted they had bugged the National Union of Seamen's south London headquarters. Wilson himself was still to be targeted for their intrigues (bitten by the hand that feeds it?). Now that nice Stella Kingston of MI5 has been on television saying that everything her organisation does is above board, about access to its files? Labour's first prime minister, James MacDonal, took office in 1945. Intrigued to hear the security services had a file on him, he asked to have a look. Nothing doing! Within a year they had brought Labour to power with the forged 'Zinoviev letter'. In 1994, MI5 holds onto files on such subversives as Harriet Harman MP, Vanessa Redgrave, former Liberty secretary Patricia Hewitt.

Even the dead can be dangerous. George Lansbury (1859-1940) was a revolutionary, though as mayor of Poplar, east London, in 1921 he set a precedent today's Labourites would think of, going to jail rather than impose hardships on the poor. During World War II Lansbury's son-in-law and biographer Raymond Postgate handed the official papers to the Cabinet Office, expecting he'd be allowed to see them later.

The 'Guardian's' Saturday columnist 'Smallweed' (25 June) reveals the papers have disappeared. The Cabinet Office says try the Public Record Office (PRO), the PRO says ask the National Register of Archives, the Registry suggests the London School of Economics (LSE), and LSE says 'Yes, we've lots of Lansbury records — except the ones the Cabinet Office kept'.

Should Lansbury's grand-daughter Angela ('Jessica' in the TV series 'Murder She Wrote') trace the missing papers? Her detective stories are fictional, like Britain's 'in government'.

Boilt
 DEFENDING Leon Trotsky's reputation against two dubious American academics, 'Socialist Organiser' (24 June) spoils the medicine with questionable ingredients of its own. After a Stalinist machine-gun attack on his home in Mexico City in May 1940, Trotsky wrote to Mexico's attorney-general exposing Stalin's GPU secret police operations in the Communist International.

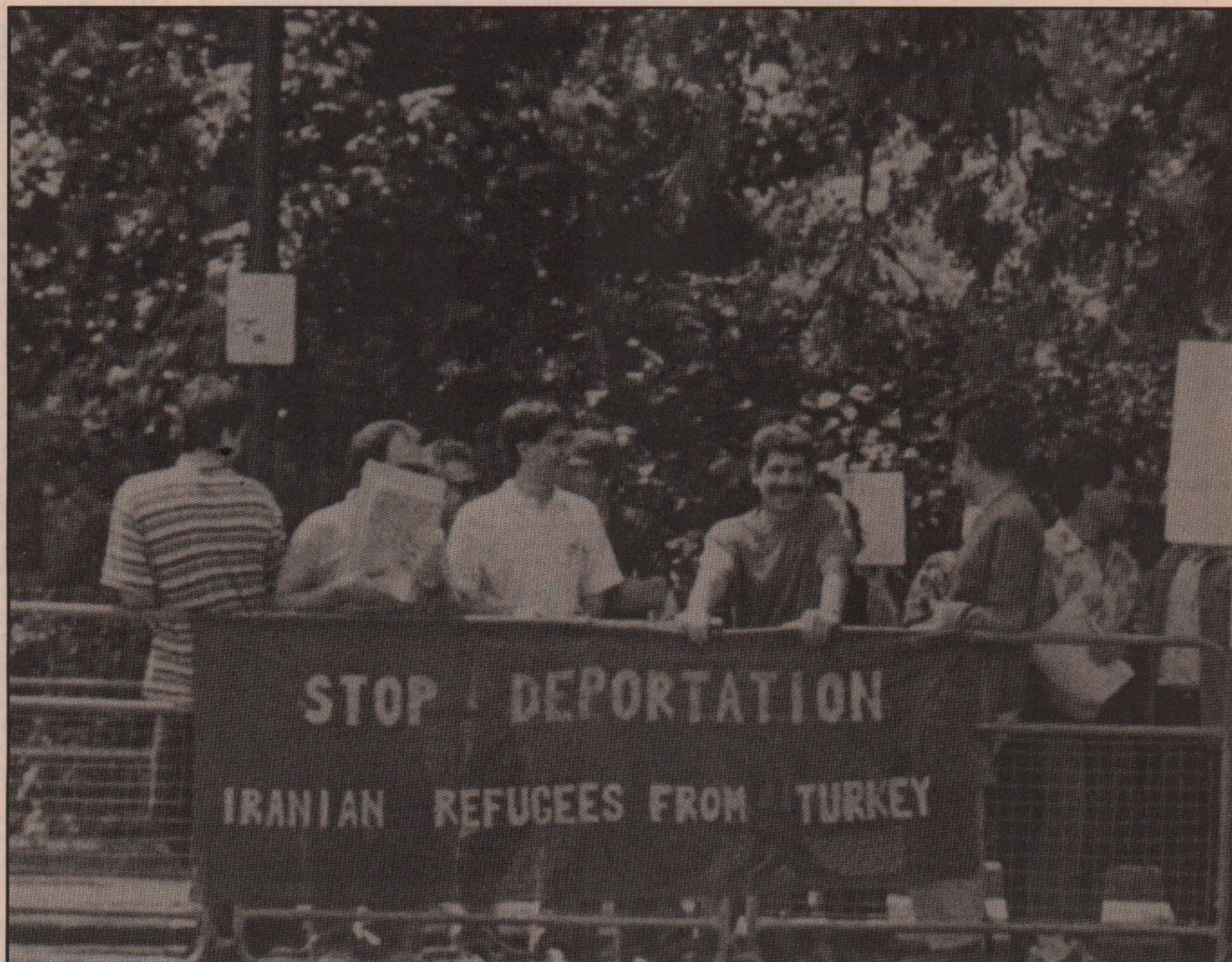
'Socialist Organiser' says: 'Trotsky called for the intervention of the Mexican bourgeois state against the Stalinists, regarding them as a "terrorist" agency against the working class and an obstacle to the labour movement. Against the GPU in its operations against the left, Trotsky was obliged to collaborate, on his own terms, with the bourgeois state, as he would have collaborated with bourgeois-democrats against the Stalinists.'

Trotsky publicly confronted Stalin's disinformation that pretended the murder attempt was a 'putch'. Turning his defence into 'a political alignment' with the GPU against the Stalinists, 'Socialist Organiser' forgets that the GPU's disgraced former leader, late Gerry Healy, used such arguments to finger Iraqi opponents. You don't defeat Stalinism by copying it!

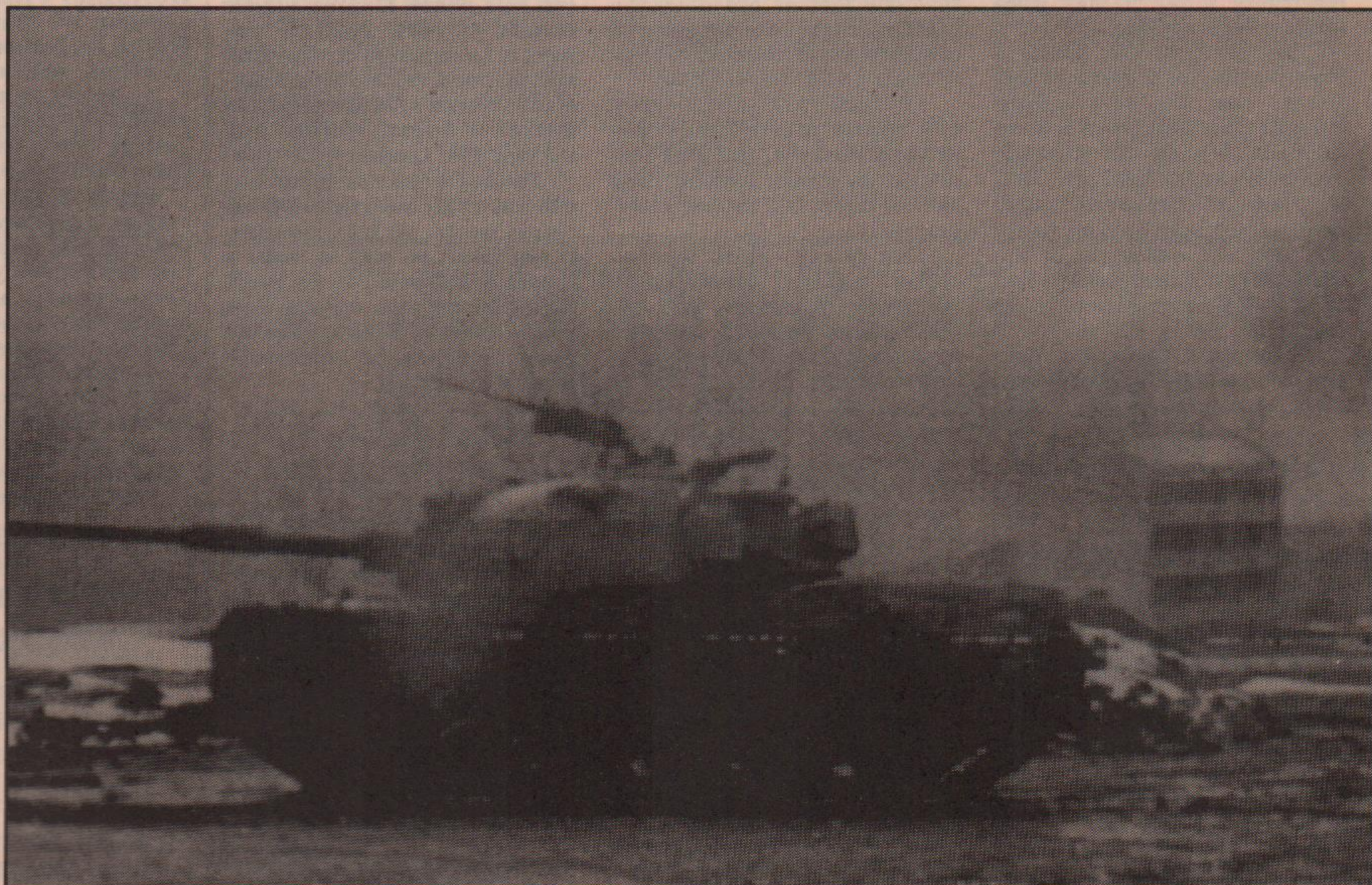
Charlie Pottins



The Turkish regime bombed this village. Now Iranian refugees in Turkey are to be exchanged for Kurds held in Iran



Iranian workers' groups united for the first time in a picket of the Turkish embassy in London against the security pact



Turkish tanks being used against Kurds in 1992

Ira Co

On these pages we have the aspects of the struggles in that divide Kurdistan between Turkey.

MIKE COOKE reports on developments in Iraqi Kurdistan. Turkish embassies and consulates elsewhere in Europe and in the US and Canada. SIMON reports on a demonstration in Germany of Kurdish people from across

FOUR months ago the Turkish and Iranian governments came to a mutual agreement — a 'security pact' — to extradite 'terrorists' hostile to their regimes. In practice this has meant political opponents being sent home into the hands of these repressive regimes.

On Friday 24 June, a picket was held in front of the Turkish embassy in London against these deportations. There were also demonstrations outside Turkish embassies and consulates elsewhere in Europe and in the US and Canada.

The international demonstration in London united for the first time a number of Iranian workers' organisations: Unity of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar),

Peopl

AN ANTI-WAR movement has surged up among the impoverished workers of Iraqi Kurdistan, in response to fighting between the two nationalist movements there.

There have been armed clashes between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talabani, and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) of Marsoud Barzani.

The situation has been further complicated by attacks on the cities of Iraqi Kurdistan by Islamic guerrillas, armed by Iran and reinforced by undercover Iranian soldiers.

The workers of Sulemaniyah and Arbil have not only kept out of the fighting, they have actually organised demonstrations against it.

The upsurge in political activity comes in spite of terrible poverty, resulting from the UN sanctions against Iraq which have helped to bring local industry to a complete halt.

The background to the intra-nationalist tension is the growing pressure in the imperialist camp to

50,000 march for

A HALT to the Turkish regime's offensive against the Kurdish people was demanded by some 50,000 people as they marched through Frankfurt, Germany, last weekend. They called for the German government to stop arming Turkey and harassing Kurdish refugees.

Another 2,000 would-be demonstrators heading for Frankfurt were denied entry at the Dutch, Belgian and French borders because, German authorities claimed, they lacked proper travel documents. Kurds briefly blocked

Iranian workers' groups unite to condemn political extradition

Free reports on different three of the five countries between them: Iran, Iraq and

demonstrations outside embassies against a new pact between them to exchange political prisoners. PIRANI details some of the demonstrations in Iran. Also reported is a demonstration in London attended by 50,000 people in Europe.

The Workers' Party of Iran, Workers' Socialist Notebook (Iranian Revolutionary Socialists), Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar), Organisation of Iranian Peoples' Fedai Guerrillas (Activists Abroad), Committee to Call a Unity Conference, and Cadres of Fedai Minority.

A member of Iranian Revolutionary Socialists on the London demonstration told Workers Press that the unity of these groups was a real step forward against the tendency to sectarianism in the Iranian workers' movement.

'Following the new security pact signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey, extradition between the two states has reached

a new and dangerous pace,' says an open letter from these organisations to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International and 'all democratic parties, organisations, individuals and publications'.

'Iranian political refugees seeking asylum in Turkey are forcibly exchanged for Kurdish fighters held by the Islamic republic.'

On 16 June, the Turkish foreign ministry announced that it had handed over 16 people to the Iranian regime under the agreement.

The next day, the newspaper 'Ressalat', the mouthpiece for the Iranian regime, reported that the Iranian home secretary Besharati was in Turkey finalising the agreement. Earlier Iranian President Rafsanjani's brother, Mohammed Hashemi, and Besharati had gone to Turkey to reinforce the pact. The Iranian regime argues that

those handed over are Mojaheddin carrying out acts of terrorism. In reality, the people handed over have been militant refugee workers or Kurdish guerrillas.

Refugees in Turkey have to report to the local police station every

two weeks and it is at that point that people are detained and sent back.

'Political refugees extradited to Iran face imprisonment, torture and often death,' says the open letter. 'The Islamic regime in Iran has a notorious record of human

rights abuses against its political opponents, in addition to its suppression of women's rights, along with those of national and religious minorities.

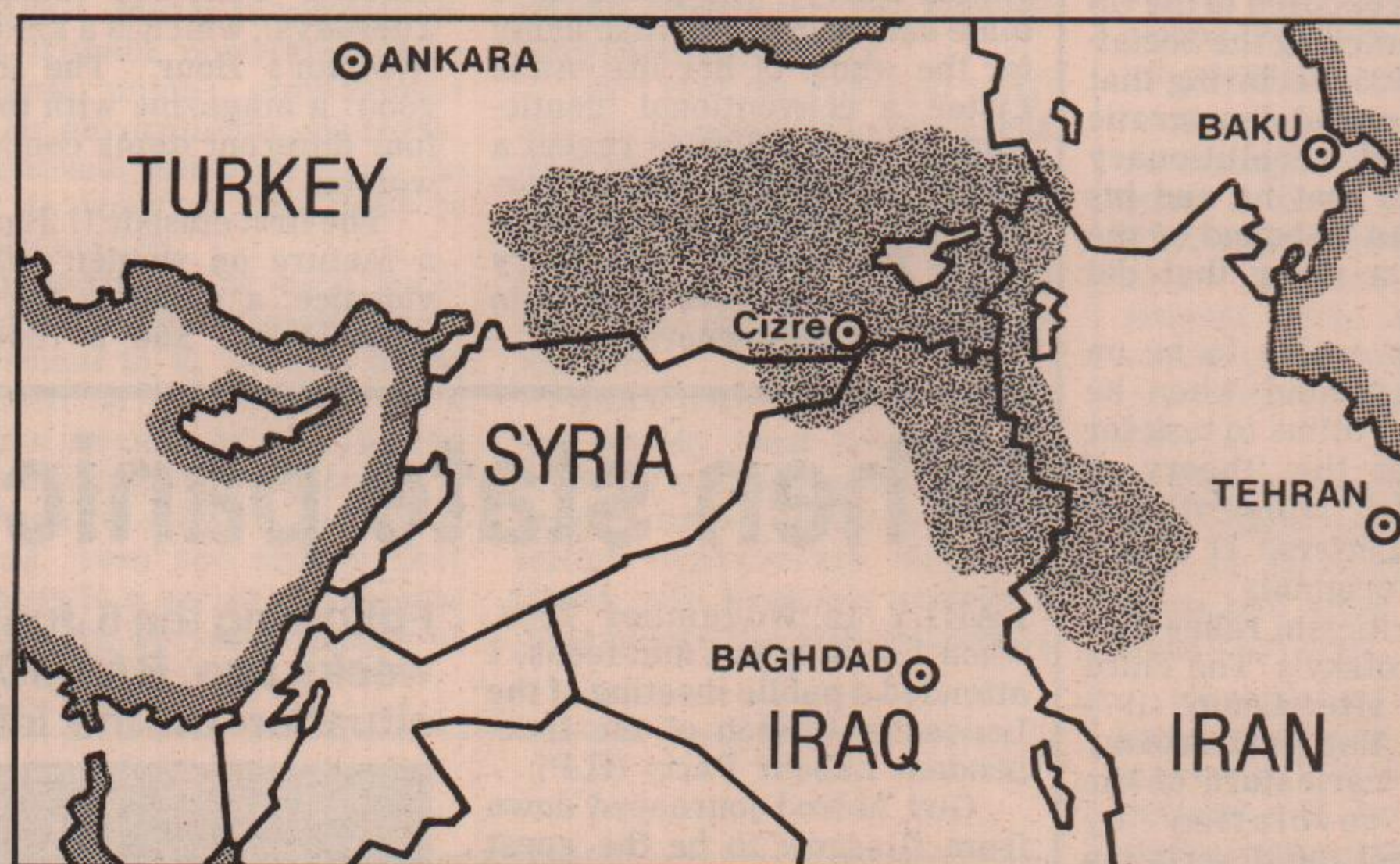
'The only way for opposition forces in Iran to achieve democracy, freedom and human rights is to overthrow the Islamic republic.'

'It is a recognised right of political refugees in Turkey to be under the protection of the UNHCR while a safe passage to a third country is being arranged. This right is being overtly violated by the Turkish government.'

The organisations signing the letter 'strongly condemn this inhumane policy of the Turkish government and demand the immediate nullification of the new pact between Iran and Turkey'.

They call on 'all democratic organisations and freedom-loving people of the world to join [them] in expressing their outrage against this inhumane pact'.

Mike Cooke



We reject nationalists' clashes in Iraqi Kurdistan

bringing the Saddam Hussein regime 'back in from the cold'.

An Iraqi Kurdish socialist in exile in London, interviewed by Workers Press, said that the European imperialist powers — with an eye on opportunities for trade, especially in oil, and investment in Iraq — are ready to end the UN sanctions.

It is the US imperialists, who fear Saddam may disrupt their efforts to re-divide Palestine, that are holding back — covering their entirely strategic considerations with laughable statements about 'human rights'.

Worried

The European powers are particularly worried that UN sanctions could permanently disrupt their supplies of oil from Iraq.

The main Iraqi oil pipeline through Turkey to Europe has been closed on UN orders since the Gulf war, with 12 million barrels of oil stuck in it. Turkey is getting ready to re-open it whatever the UN says,

Kurdish freedom

at the Dutch border road near Aachen, and on the French border stones were thrown at police.

Four demonstrators were arrested for carrying the banner of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which has been banned in Germany following attacks on Turkish offices around Europe last year.

However, a feature of last Saturday's march was the presence of German trade union and political groups, including the Green Party and the Pro Asylum-seekers.

because it will be irreparably corroded if it is not flushed out.

In the longer term, the collapse of the USSR and the new relations in the Middle East have resulted in speculation about new pipelines from various countries to Europe. The oil companies don't want Iraq left out of their calculations.

A recent report in the 'Daily Telegraph' said that as well as oil-hungry France and Turkey, Russia (owed £4 billion by Iraq and hopeful of selling arms and construction labour), and China (also keen on building projects) are enthusiastic advocates of an end to sanctions.

Our Iraqi Kurdish socialist comrade gave this report:

Kurdistan remains impoverished. Its economy faces an 'embargo' not only from the UN but from Saddam himself, from Turkey and from Iran. The economy is in a state of collapse.

About six months ago, the Islamic movement intensified its activity in Kurdistan, with material backing from Iran and Saudi Arabia. Supporters were given good weapons and paid \$100 a month — an enormous amount of money in a very poor country.

Root

Historically, Islamism has never taken root in Kurdistan, but with this direct aid the Islamists were able to bring around a few people and they began military activity.

On the one hand, there has been this campaign by Iran. On the other, a fraction of the Iranian

Communist Party (which has split many times) has become active in Iraqi Kurdistan.

With the protection of Jalal Talabani and the PUK — who were using them for their own purposes, that is to maintain a 'left' face among the people — these Communist Party people began to organise an Iraqi Communist Workers Party in the Kurdish cities.

Seven months ago, Talabani proposed in the Kurdish 'autonomous parliament' that this Iraqi Communist Workers Party should be legalised. This group was organising both military and propaganda activity inside Iran. The Iranian government went crazy and redoubled its support for the Islamic movement — which directed its attacks specifically against the Iraqi Communist Workers Party.

We can't say this party was really representative of the working class, but Talabani thought he could use it to influence young people who are attracted to left-wing ideas.

On May Day, the Iraqi Communist Workers Party was given permission to organise a rally in the football stadium in Sulemaniyah. The night before the rally, the parties of Barzani and Talabani decided that they, too, would support this rally.

May Day arrived and the rally began. Red flags and pictures of Marx and Lenin were displayed. The Iraqi Communist Workers Party controlled the area and no one could do a thing about it.

After the rally, fighting broke

out between the supporters of Barzani and Talabani. On 2 May Talabani's people attacked Barzani's headquarters in Sulemaniyah. While this conflict continued, the Islamists attacked Halabjah and took control of it.

By 5 May the conflict between Barzani and Talabani spread. But, very importantly, the vast majority of people refused to join in. Rather than take sides and fight each other they gave up their weapons [the majority of Iraqi Kurdish households have some form of arms].

Comrades wrote from Iraqi Kurdistan to say that the situation has changed. The fighting was being done mainly by teenagers who had nothing better to do, but the majority of people rejected the nationalists.

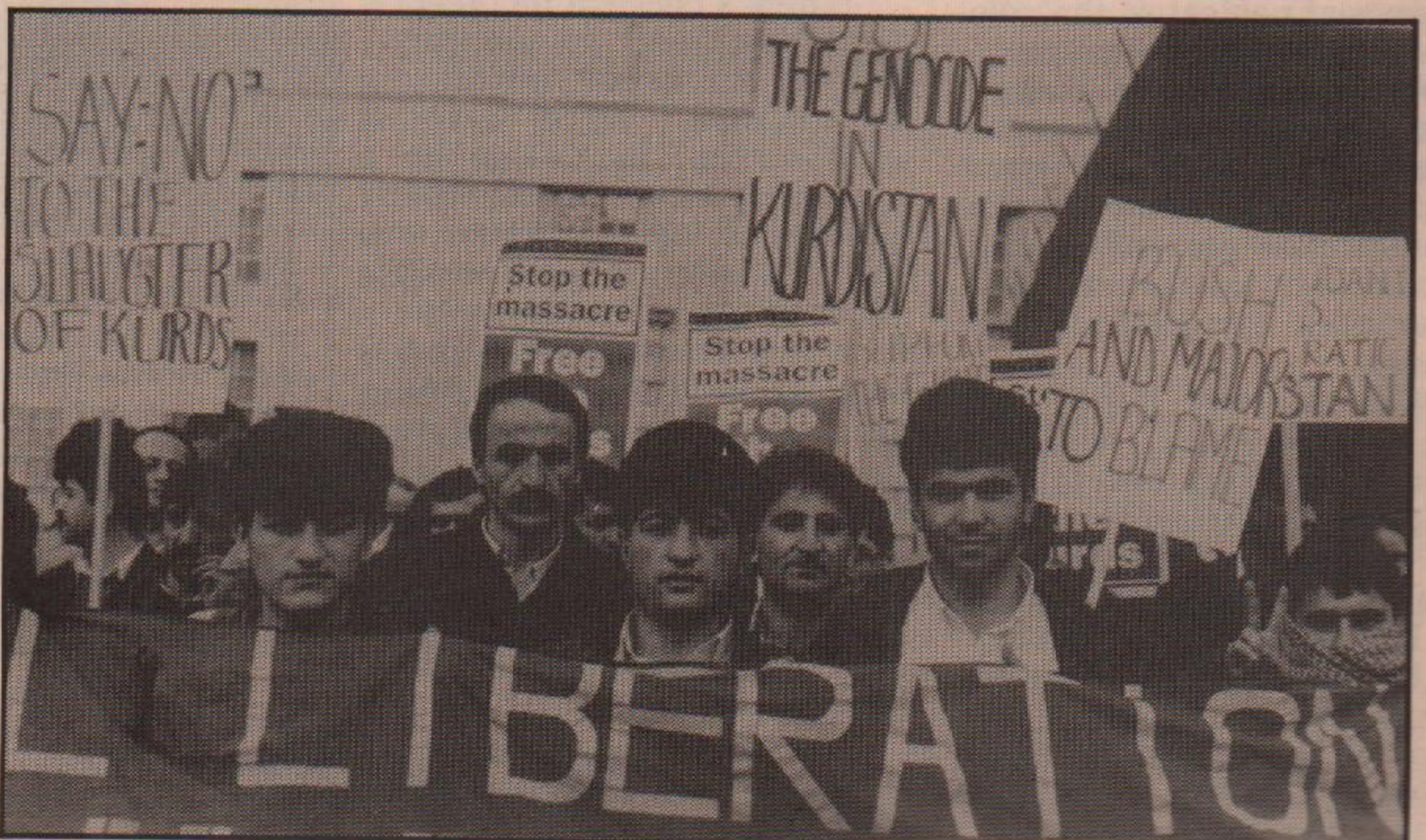
In Sulemaniyah and Arbil there were demonstrations against civil war. A peace march of about 1,000 women was held, starting from Sulemaniyah and going to Arbil.

Since then this conflict between Talabani and Barzani has quietened down but could flare up again.

The imperialists desperately want calm in the area now. They want to lift the embargo on Saddam and use him to keep control. It was in their interests to provoke the conflict between the PUK and the KDP and deepen divisions among Iraqi Kurds, in preparation for the imposition of a new settlement.

In the midst of this we need to rebuild the workers' movement independently both of the nationalist parties and the Islamists.

Simon Pirani



Protesters against the imperialists' complicity in the slaughter of Kurds

A paper industry

IT SEEMS I wasn't altogether wide of the mark when I wrote in Workers Press ten months ago that British communist history was on the way to becoming 'a minor academic industry' (28 August 1993).

There dropped into my letter-box the other day a staggeringly heavy parcel, sent by an unknown benefactor, containing 23 papers delivered at the 'Opening the Books' conference on British Communist Party history, held in Manchester last January. There's talk now of setting up 'a loose, non-affiliated network of CP historians', presumably on similar lines to the 'Historians of American Communism' in the US, which 12 years ago already had about 100 dues-paying members.

I've not yet had time to do more than glance through the Manchester papers, some of which are to be published eventually by Pluto Press. The purpose of this note is to signal some of the most interesting; I'll report later if I've missed anything important in this cursory survey.

On the industrial front, there is much new material in Nina Fishman's 'The British Communist Party and Trade Unions, 1926-56' (her book on the same subject, but on the 1933-45 period, is due from the Scolar Press in November); Alan Campbell has a well-researched paper on the CP in the Scots coalfields between the wars; Hywel Francis probes the enigma of Arthur Horner in 'Mining Union Leadership and the CP, 1920-85'; Sue Bruley breaks fresh ground in 'Gender, Class and Party: the CP and the crisis in the cotton industry'.

Three prominent figures from the early days of the CPGB are investigated in some depth.

Ralph Darlington writes on J.T. Murphy, whose claim to fame rests on rather more than the fact that he moved the 1927 resolution to expel Trotsky from the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Murphy himself was expelled from the CPGB five years later).

Robert Duncan begins to rescue from the shadows J.T. Walton Newbold — the first British MP to be elected as a communist — and Mike Squires summarises the life and career of another communist MP, Shapurji Saklatvala, who also sat for a time as the first black Labour MP.

Historians of the British CP have not hitherto paid much attention to the Young Communist League, so it's refreshing to find two papers on the YCL by Mike Waite: one with the forbidding title 'Us and Them — the Party and the YCL — Inter-generational Conflict and Generational Issues with the British Communist Movement' (the content, fortunately, is less forbidding); the other on 'Jewish Young People and the YCL in the Thirties'.

In what is a mixed bag of papers, a few of them quite obviously boiling the pot, the one I find outstanding is Marika Sherwood's 'The Comintern, the CPGB, Colonies & Black Britons, 1920-38'.

Sherwood pulls no punches, writing with commendable sharpness about the CPGB's racism and neglect of the colonial struggle.

'What makes the Party's attitudes and position inexcusable is that it had been instructed many times [by the Comintern] to root out its own racism and to support anti-imperialist struggles in the colonies. . . .

'Was [Harry] Pollitt [CP general secretary, with one short break, from 1929 to 1956] completely indifferent to colonial work? . . . [The Party as a whole, sitting in the heart of the British Empire, surrounded by Black Britons residing in all the major ports and major cities . . . did nothing.]

Douglas Hyde — my news editor on the 'Daily Worker' for a few months — never spoke to Desmond Buckle, a communist

PERSONAL COLUMN

from the Gold Coast, because he 'didn't know what to say' to a black person.

Here Sherwood dips her pen in acid; but what she doesn't say, and may not know, is that this racist individual Hyde, soon to become a Catholic, was the person on the 'Worker' editorial staff entrusted with the task of gathering intelligence on fascist organisations in Britain!

PS. If whoever kindly sent me the 'Opening the Books' papers drops me a line I will refund the cost of postage, which was considerable.

Permanent stumbling-block

SIMON PIRANI (Letters, 18 June) had a little trouble trouncing A. Thomas as Trotsky had, 59 years ago, trouncing Hugo Oehler, whose last living British follower A. Thomas surely must be.

Oehler was opposed to the US Trotskyists' entering the Socialist Party in 1935, declaring that entry into a social-democratic party violated revolutionary principles and that he and his group could not be bound by the discipline of a party that did such a thing.

But Simon seems to be on less certain ground when he takes Charlie Pottins to task for writing about the 'theory of permanent (i.e. *uninterrupted*) revolution' (Letters, 11 June; italics in the original).

Simon's criticism relies on a passage in Trotsky's 'The Third International after Lenin' (1974 edition, p.67). But what Trotsky here calls a 'caricature of the permanent revolution' by Bukharin is not the description of it merely as 'uninterrupted' but as 'an uninterrupted revolutionary offensive'.

Elsewhere in the same volume (p.144) Trotsky himself uses 'uninterruptedly' as a synonym for 'permanently':

'This goal [of socialism in China] could be achieved only if the revolution did not halt merely at the solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks but continued to unfold, passing from one stage to the next, i.e. continued to develop uninterruptedly (or *permanently*) and thus lead China towards a socialist development' (italics in the original).

In his 'Results and Prospects' (1906), Trotsky wrote: 'When the idea of uninterrupted revolution was formulated in the socialist press . . . our "progressive" press raised a unanimous howl of indignation' ('The Permanent Revolution', 1962 edition, pp.212-13).

Nor are these the only examples of Trotsky using 'uninterrupted' as synonymous with 'permanent'. In his 1937 introduction to the first Afrikaans translation of the 'Communist Manifesto', Trotsky wrote: 'The transformation of the economic foundation and of all social relations assumes a permanent (uninterrupted) character' ('Writings of Leon Trotsky 1937-38', p.25).

Simon's concern for 'theoretical accuracy' is admirable, but the expression 'permanent revolution', used without explanation, can often be a stumbling-block to the many readers of Workers Press who are not yet as familiar with Marxist theory as Simon is.

The word 'permanent' in this expression clearly does not bear its normal English meaning: 'lasting or designed to last indefinitely without change'. A gloss is therefore advisable.

And the gloss Charlie provided happens to be identical with the one Trotsky provided in 1937.

Peter Fryer

Television

Feminist programmes

Review by Roger Horrocks

MEN have dominated television behind the scenes, and on the screen, for over 40 years, and still do.

Recent research by the Broadcasting Standards Council shows that men appear on TV two and a half times more frequently than women, and in some areas, such as news and current affairs, four times more frequently.

However, there seems to be an increasing number of programmes on TV with a feminist slant, although previous attempts at a regular magazine-type woman's programme have failed.

'A Skirt Through History' (BBC2) has just finished a six-week series, and was basically a 'woman's view of history'. Many books have been written recovering some of the forgotten women in history, and this programme dramatised the lives of such women, including James Barry, who posed as a male doctor in the British army for the whole of her life, Anne Lister, a conventional 'gentlewoman' whose diaries reveal a secret lesbian life, Bessie Parkes, who founded the first newspaper for women, and Mary Prince, a black slave brought to London by her owners.

The technique used was the fashionable one of dramatising letters and diaries. This has the advantage of bringing to life an otherwise rather dry written document.

However, I also found something rather deadening about the technique. After a while, watching Anna Massey (who played James Barry) delivering a monologue to the camera began to pall.

A more important criticism is that the reliance on diaries and letters gives such a programme very much a middle-class slant. One exception was the programme on the slave Mary Prince, whose life was contrasted with Lady Maria Nugent, a slave-owner. But in most of the programmes, I yearned for some working-class liveliness, wit and aggression.

The same criticism can be made of 'First Sex' (Channel 4, Tuesdays), which is a kind of TV 'Woman's Hour'. The idea is good: a magazine with three or four different items concerning women.

The first episode (7 June) had a feature on women's fear of violence, a guide to the European Union, and a report on

women surfers. But it seemed so earnest to me, so full of intellectuality and abstraction.

Politically, such programmes tend to be cautiously liberal, and are therefore unable to really get to the roots of the oppression of women.

Of course a programme such as this needs to bed down and find its own style. I just hope it can get out of this middle-class earnestness, go down to the factories and housing estates and talk to working-class women about their problems.

Better still, why not let them make the programme? However, this is a problem with feminism in general: so often it speaks with a white middle-class voice.

Both these programmes were left standing by TRUE STORIES: 'Desperate Choices' (Channel 4, 16 June), which looked at the furor over abortion in the US. It wasn't a polemical programme, the camera simply recorded events during one week in an abortion clinic in Pittsburgh. It showed the great dignity, courage and sadness of women making the decision to have an abortion, and the compassion of the women and men

working there. Made in contemporary documentary style, with no narrator, no smooth editing, and with stark photography, it could be accused of being intrusive, even filming women having an abortion.

I found it a quite brilliant piece of documentary TV.

It also filmed women talking about the bad old days, when they had illegal abortions, and were seriously injured by backstreet butchers, or tried to abort themselves with coat-hangers. These women talking directly to the camera had heart-rending stories to tell.

The anti-abortion campaigners were also allowed to speak, most of them coming across as hysterical Christians, rooting around in dustbins for three-month old foetuses, who were then christened and given a 'Christian burial'. I wonder if such people care as much about the living as about the unborn.

You might criticise this programme politically, since it didn't really bring out the ways in which the right wing uses sexuality and reproduction as weapons against women, gays and poor people. But that would be a carping criticism: it stood as a magnificent piece of reporting.

When state panicked at workers' threat

Following the 6 June D-Day commemorations a few weeks ago, RAYMOND CHALLINOR reflects on the situation on the left at the end of the war



In 1944, the problem was demobilisation — not recruitment

Naturally, this defeat was very bad for Home Guard morale. In the following weeks these part-time soldiers kept their heads down, slinking around Lancaster, hoping to avoid ridicule. They were afraid of being asked the embarrassing question: 'If a few conchies can beat you up, what would happen if the Germans came?'

Actually, in the fight the Home Guard had acquitted itself quite well. A lot of conscripts were billeted in Lancaster and the surrounding district.

Though it violated army regulations, leaving them open to severe disciplinary charges, many soldiers had acquired the habit of going to ILP meetings in their civilian clothes.

Obviously the number and proportion of His Majesty's forces attending ILP meetings fluctuated from week to week. It is impossible to say how many were at the Aldred meeting. Usually about a quarter of the audience were soldiers.

When the Home Guard charged through the swing doors, they found themselves in a very unequal battle. Physically-fit young men, trained in unarmed combat, were pitted against older men, many out of condition.

The younger men also had something to fight for — if their presence at the meeting became known to their officers, they might find themselves consigned to the glasshouse. So the outcome was hardly surprising.

But the Home Guard's humiliation must have started official minds ticking.

Wasn't it rather strange, they might have thought, that so many people at the Guy Aldred meeting could fight so well? Eventually they must have discovered the reason.

It had an important result. On the morning of 19 December

1944, four soldiers stationed in Lancaster Castle were told not to go on their normal duties. They were arraigned before their commanding officer.

Two plainclothes police officers from Scotland Yard entered the room. They had journeyed up from London to investigate their political activities. The belongings of every soldier at Lancaster had been searched without their knowledge.

Independent Labour Party, Trotskyist and anarchist literature had been found in some lockers. What disturbed the authorities the most was evidence that moves were afoot to form soldiers' councils.

The 'New Leader' of 30 December 1944, which gave news of these developments, stated that other searches of soldiers' belongings had taken place at army barracks in the Midlands and East Anglia.

Target

The report went on to hint that 'War Commentary', the anarchist journal, seemed to be the main target. The authorities had unearthed a network of contacts in the armed forces. With every copy of 'War Commentary' sent to a serving soldier was a monthly newsletter.

John Olday, a talented refugee from Nazi Germany, produced it. He had established a network of 200 contacts, mainly during his years in the Pioneer Corps. Attractively produced and illustrated, the monthly newsletter strived to articulate many grievances of the armed forces and promote action against them. Soldiers' councils needed to be created.

Alongside this there was a plethora of pamphlets, including one entitled 'The Wilhelmshaven Revolt'. It gave an exciting account of the mutiny of the

German navy that sparked off the German revolution of 1918-19. Written under the *nom de plume* 'Icarus', the author, Ernst Schneider, had been a member of the Hamburg workers' and soldiers' council. Describing those stirring events, his message was simple: go and do thou likewise.

Besides the anarchists, both the ILP and the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist Party maintained organised factions within the armed forces. The ILP Forces group, whose first secretary was Ken Eaton, followed by Cyril Hughes of Manchester, produced a regular bulletin. Its articles dealt with grievances, such as bad food and poor pay, and a writer called 'Bellerophon' discussed topics like street-fighting and revolutionary military tactics.

He pointed out that struggles would take place on the troops' home territory, where they would know the places of key military value. He stressed the importance of always getting workers and soldiers united in struggle. Even those who remained loyal to capitalism would be overwhelmingly workers (ILP Forces' bulletin, May and June 1945).

Discontent found extensive expression. Acts of insubordination were widespread. In various shapes and forms, incidents like that at Lancaster must have been repeated up and down the country.

The state felt impelled to make a pre-emptive strike, prosecuting the Trotskyists over the Tyneside apprentices' strike and, a few weeks later, four anarchists over Freedom Press publications.

The four accused stood charged with conduct liable to damage recruitment to the armed forces. This 'War Commentary' trial ended on 26 April 1945. But by then World War II was ending. Germany surrendered unconditionally a fortnight later. Nothing any publication wrote could affect the outcome. The big problem facing the British government was not to increase recruitment; rather it was to increase the speed of demobilisation.

So the why did the state bother to continue to pursue the case? It deeply feared the armed forces turning its strength against the British ruling class. As German socialist Karl Liebknecht said of World War I: 'The enemy is at home.'

All bull and business babble

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

IN George Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' there was 'Newspeak'. In some circles today it is said, *political correctness is de rigueur* (though I haven't come across it half so much, as upon people moaning about it, but I probably move in the wrong circles).

But there's another kind of mind-bending jargon you can't avoid, which pollutes the workplace and is piped out like effluent in public places. It's the use of language to brain-wash us into accepting Tory 'free market' philosophy and whatever forms of exploitation and rackets capitalism is currently imposing.

Last year I had a go at the way British Rail had taken to calling us 'customers', how hospitals no longer treat patients but 'customers' (who had better be patient), and how the job centres and benefit offices deal with 'clients', who're supposed to be pliant ('Let's stop the rot!', Workers Press, 5 June, 1993).

I might also have mentioned hospitals referring to portering, catering, cleaning and maintenance as 'hotel services'. You may have waited a long time for a bed, but wait till you see the bill!

A television programme last year showed how staff in burger chains and similar places are pressed to use certain set phrases when talking to customers, to cajole them into buying more. It should make them easier to replace by robots, if these become cheap enough to

replace cheap labour. Personally, I prefer places like the little cafe near Trafalgar Square — strong tea, crusty bread, and a sign saying: 'We speak English, Irish, Yiddish and Rubbish'.

In many workplaces, both public and private, and in politicians' speeches, there's the special use of certain buzzwords and expressions — like 'quality' or 'core values' (cor, what a load of cobblers) — which come and go, often accompanied by over-paid consultants with clipboards and the latest fashion in felt-tips.

In the 'Independent on Sunday' on 12 June, Nick Cohen and Roger Trapp quote examples collected by the public service union Unison in the health service. Complaints — presumably the kind we make rather than suffer from (or maybe not?) — are now 'negative performance indicators'. If the performance is seriously negative you may end up with a 'negative patient episode' (death where is thy sting?). Presumably customers become 'patients' again once they can no longer complain, er, 'indicate negative performance'.

Alien

At the BBC, the authors found management's language problems had contributed to the current strike wave. 'It's like dealing with an alien life form,' a staff member told them. 'The BBC prides itself on making sure the public can understand every word it broadcasts. But inside we've been taken over by management consultants and their disciples who are earning

a fortune by talking rubbish.' Cohen and Trapp provide a handy 'new English dictionary' of business babble. For instance:

Choice: Use this word a lot. Widen it, extend it, enlarge it, even increase it. Choice is always a good thing so long as it is compatible with company aims.

Competitive salaries: Two distinct meanings, not to be confused. Competitive salaries are low for workers — who must compete against workers' salaries in the Far East. But they are high for managers — who must compete against managers' salaries in the US.

Downsizing: Firing staff. See *rightsizing*.

Performance-related pay: Pay freezes for everyone except management.

Rights: A tricky one. Management must have the right to manage — that is to make decisions without opposition from the staff, unions, employment laws or governments. Workers, by contrast, must not have the right to work or the right to representation.

Rightsizing: The word *downsizing* has an unfortunate, negative sound to it, so it is being replaced by *rightsizing*, which implies a company is doing the right thing by sacking people.

Work teams: A concept arising from the theory that business is a series of projects carried out by small groups of

people with complementary skills. A term to use freely; you will appear to be changing the *culture*, but you won't have to do anything.

If the bosses' babble, of which this is a small sample, seems to overwhelm you, don't despair. By the time we've learnt it, they'll probably have changed it, and they'll be no nearer understanding themselves, let alone us. Nor will they understand what makes their system tick, and will make it stop ticking.

Gurus

'The management gurus who come up with these phrases do not address the growing world of sweatshop, non-union Britain,' says former Department of Employment official Neil Milward, a senior research fellow at the Policy Studies Institute. 'There is a gap between language and reality.'

Isn't that the constant idea? But it's reassuring to think that, as Cohen and Trapp observe, the saying that employers and workers 'do not speak the same language' is truer than ever. It means the brain-washing hasn't worked!

And it's worth reflecting that the society most notorious for refusing to call anything by its proper name, when a roundabout euphemism could be found, was France's *ancien régime* before the 1789 revolution.

City Lights

Alarm bells over the growth of derivatives

LACK of adequate control of the so-called mushrooming 'derivatives market' is threatening to bring chaos to the financial system in the US and internationally, according to a recent report of the General Accounting Office (GAO) of the US Congress.

What are these strange things called derivatives? To understand them we have to deal with such arcane terms as 'interest rate swaps' and 'currency options'.

These financial devices essentially are used as a hedge against future price movements. For example, two parties to what is called a 'swap' agree that for a stipulated period they will exchange regular payments.

■ In an interest rate swap, for example, one party pays the other a fixed rate of interest (say, 10 per cent) calculated on some notional (principal) amount, while the other pays a variable rate of interest which changes as market rates change.

This means that a company with liabilities based on a variable, or 'floating', rate can turn them into what are effectively fixed-rate ones.

Governments are increasingly concerned that any movements in interest rates they initiate will be countered by such arrangements.

■ In the case of options this gives the holder the right to sell (what is known as a 'put option') or buy (a 'call option') something in the future at a price which has been decided at the outset.

For instance an institutional investor which has made gains as a result of buying shares wants to protect these gains, that is hedge against a fall in their price on the stock exchange. Such an investor might buy put options which would guarantee a minimum level at which it can sell the shares in the future — without at the same time limiting its potential gains.

■ Finally there are what are called futures. These are largely bought and sold on regulated exchanges. The buyer or seller of a contract puts up a margin at the outset, which acts as a buffer against future price changes.

The margin is then regularly adjusted, depending on whether a contract has gone down in value — in which case the holder of a contract has to provide more cash — or up, in which case he or she receives cash.

As their name implies, derivatives are based on some supposed underlying cash value of 'real' assets. But so great are the sums involved that an Alice-in-Wonderland situation is rapidly approaching where the price of derivative instruments may well control the price of the assets that are supposed to underpin them.

Losses in these sort of activities can be spectacular. Earlier this year Kashima Oil, a Japanese company, found that it had lost \$1.5 billion in foreign exchange derivatives trading.

Germany's Metallgesellschaft lost \$1.4 billion in oil derivatives, while the US consumer products company Procter and Gamble sustained a modest loss of \$102 million on interest-rate contracts. Such instances explain the bad press received by derivatives traders and have intensified the fear that derivatives are a billion-dollar accident waiting to happen.

According to the GAO, derivatives trading is concentrated into the hands of a very small number of institutions: just seven US banks accounted for 90 per cent of all derivatives activity in the US at the end of 1992. More important, these activities are global in character.

Many of these banks have recruited thousands of what are called 'rocket scientists'. These are people with advanced degrees and doctorates in mathematics, statistics, and even astro-physics who have been lured from the universities, attracted by stupendous rewards.

The banks need such people because ease with computer models and advanced mathematical knowledge is necessary to calculate the inherent risk involved in such complex deals. If a bank badly miscalculated such risks and sold billions of dollars worth of contracts that went wrong, its capital could be wiped out by having to foot the bill.

It is often pointed out that the sort of speculation that derivatives trading activity involves is a 'zero-sum game' — what one set of institutions loses is matched exactly by the gains accruing to another set of speculators.

But given that the market is a global one, it is quite possible that an increase in US interest rates, for instance, might produce a negligible response in the US, while tightening policy in Japan. This would be the case if Japanese institutions proved to be net insurers of their US counterparts against such a rise.

If this is so, it means that governments have less and less control over the giant financial institutions that are speculating with billions of other people's money. That is why the GAO's proposals for 'control' of the derivatives traders is so much hot air.

These developments also put into perspective the claim by Labour that it intends to 'regulate' the economy if it assumes office. Quite the opposite is more and more the case. It is finance capitalism that will regulate the activities of bodies such as the GAO — as well as a Labour government, indeed the activities of any government.

Paradox of the stronger yen

THE collapse of the Japanese government following the enforced resignation of Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata — the fifth premier to be dumped in the last five years — might, paradoxically, strengthen the yen and send the dollar falling faster and further.

This is so because with the Japanese government in disarray the likelihood of an agreement with the US about how to reduce the huge Japanese trade surplus looks less and less on the cards. Yet it is precisely this trade surplus that has been the source of the yen's strength and the corresponding weakness of the dollar, now at an all-time low against the Japanese currency.

Should the yen rise in the coming weeks, this, by making Japanese exports relatively more expensive, will add further strains on Japan's exporters as they struggle for a larger slice of world trade, in the face of an extremely fragile economic 'recovery'. And a continuing fall of the dollar will make an increase in interest rates by the US government almost certain.

Threadneedle

Book review

Trial by ordeal

WHEN the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six were released there were misguided people — mercifully few and confined to the right-wing pundits of the press — who believed that the shock suffered to the 'best criminal justice system in the world' would result in a radical overhaul so such miscarriages of justice would never happen again.

There were others who warned that the British state, of which the judicial system is an integral part, is a cunning animal when cornered and that it would find its own way of deflecting the criticism the better to be able to dole out its injustices more easily later. With the Criminal Justice Bill about to become law, the state and the government have succeeded in turning the disasters of the Irish trials to their advantage.

Deal

How the judicial system came to deal with the Irish political trial is succinctly summed up in the evidence submitted to a royal commission by the Irish Prisoners Support Group (IPSR), now published with updated materials as 'Trials by Ordeal'.

The presumption of the state when dealing with Irish defendants charged with terrorist offences was and remains 'guilty until proven guilty'. The state moves into smooth and ruthless action once someone is on the hook.

The police arrest, intimidate and collect 'evidence'; the Crown Prosecution Service sifts, sorts and suppresses evidence; the security service vets the juries and promotes and protects *agents provocateurs*; the Crown's experts are expert only in suppressing unfavourable results to the prosecution's case; the judge is there to sum up and mis-direct

the jury when the evidence unravels in court.

Tagging along behind is the tame press reporting the lurid and unproven opening address by prosecuting counsel and then ignoring or playing down the defence's arguments. And when the evidence of injustice becomes overwhelming, there is the Home Office to stall and stifle debate, followed, when the pressure gets too much, by the Court of Appeal armed with a logic born of hatred to turn reality on its head.

Ignore

All this is detailed in 'Trials by Ordeal', and its premise that the royal commission would ignore the real issues raised by the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six has now been confirmed by the Criminal Justice Act.

This pernicious piece of legislation drifted through the House of Commons with only a few token 'amendments' in opposition from the Labour Party.

Echoing the cross-party acceptance of the Prevention of Terrorism Act brought in by a Labour government, leadership favourite Tony Blair is busy parading himself as a 'reasonable' member of the 'law and order' brigade.

Thus the government has got away with effectively abolishing the right to silence, creating a whole raft of new offences for criminal trespass notionally aimed at New Age travellers and other 'trespassers', increased powers to lock up young children, controls on the movement of people with increased powers to stop and search, the power to sequestrate 'terrorist funds', and new restrictions on the right to bail.

While the House of Commons worked itself up into a frenzy over video nasties, the really



Outside the appeal court on the Birmingham Six's release

nasty stuff is brought in without a whimper from Labour.

The injustice done to the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six continues. Since their release not one police officer has been convicted. The experts who were caught out have been retired on fat pensions. Prosecuting barristers have progressed up the greasy pole towards becoming judges themselves.

No doubt when the next round of Irish trials begin these

learned gentlemen will direct the jury: 'When asked where he had been on the day in question the defendant kept silent. Members of the jury, it is a matter for you, but would someone who was innocent of this charge not volunteer this information?'

The next victims are waiting.

Martin Westwood

■ 'Trials by Ordeal' is available from BCM IPSR, London WC1N 3XX, price £4.99.

Press clashes in Indonesia

INDONESIAN police wielding rattan canes have attacked demonstrators demanding press freedom, and made over 50 arrests. Three news magazines, 'De Tik', 'Editor' and 'Tempo', have been closed after exposing corrupt officials, and the government said this should be a warning to others. But Indonesia's well-known poet, Rendra, among those arrested, said: 'Openness is not finished. We are going to push for it. This is just the start.'

Russia enters 'partnership' with NATO

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

GERMAN and Russian armed forces are planning joint military exercises under the 'Partnership for Peace' signed by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and NATO ministers. German Defence Minister Volker Ruehe announced the joint exercises at a meeting with reserve officers in Kiel recently.

'There is a general agreement between him and his Russian counterpart, [Pavel] Grachev, that in 1995 and 1996 both countries will exercise together,' confirmed Lt-Colonel Wolf-Reinhard Vogt, a defence ministry spokesman.

Fascist

An earlier plan for US troops to join a Russian military exercise this month was cancelled at the end of May, following objections from Russian nationalists including the fascist Zhirinovskiy. But Russian naval forces participated in NATO's 'Baltops

94' manoeuvres early in June. The German announcement came three days before US Secretary of State Warren Christopher flew into Brussels for the NATO 'partnership' signing. On 24 June in Corfu, Russia's President Yeltsin signed a partnership and co-operation agreement with the European Union. This month he will join leading capitalist powers — the Group of Seven — in Rome to discuss world issues, including Bosnia and Korea.

Proposed

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd is thought to have had Bosnia particularly in mind during his recent visit to Moscow, when he proposed there should be 'no veto [by Russia], no surprises [by NATO], and substantive co-operation'.

He has praised Yeltsin's willingness to assist. But former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev warned that Russia was 'relegating its role to that of a subordinate satellite of NATO'.

Italian fascists greet Chetniks

ITALIAN fascists are linking up with Serbian Chetniks, extreme nationalists. Bora Mikelic, a leading Serb nationalist, has been invited to meet the Italians in Trieste.

The line-up recalls the deals Chetnik forces made with the Italian fascist military occupiers during World War II. Anyone in the labour movement who clings to illusions about Serb nationalists 'defending Yugoslavia'

should look at who their friends are.

Mikelic, so-called prime minister of the 'Serb Krajina republic' in Croatia, has endorsed the fascists' territorial claims on Croatia and Slovenia, by declaring that the 1975 Osimo treaty settling Yugoslavia's border with Italy is void.

The treaty gave Trieste to Italy, while the neighbouring Istrian peninsula and port of Rijeka remained Yugoslav, and are now parts of Slovenia and Croatia. The Italian fascists claim that since the Yugoslav

federation has broken up, the treaty is no longer valid. They are even reviving Mussolini's claim to Croatia's Dalmatian coast.

Bilateral

Italy's foreign minister, Antonio Martino, arrived in Zagreb, the Croatian capital, last week urging that statements should 'not be over-emphasised to create problems where they don't exist', and proposed a bilateral commission to negotiate differences.

But Silvio Berlusconi's gov-

ernment, with its five fascist ministers and de facto agreement on European Union (EU) affairs with British Tories, has successfully lobbied against Slovenia's application for EU membership.

The Italian government the second NATO and EU member to lend open assistance to Greater Serb nationalism. A Serb forces continue to encroach on Macedonia to the south, the Greek government restricting Macedonian trade in breach of EU rules, and refusing to allow Macedonia's shipping to use the port of Salonica



The fraudster owner of a firm making equipment for sugar factories and environment technology, at Sangerhausen, near Leipzig in eastern Germany, has gone bankrupt. Now 1,200 workers are joining the millions made unemployed since reunification

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Strikers in battle for Bangladesh

THOUSANDS of Bangladeshis marched in the capital, Dhaka, last week demonstrating against right-wing religious reactionaries who are trying to impose their rule on the country.

Trades unionists and opposition parties backed a call by students for a one-day general strike on 30 June to oppose the restoration of citizenship to Golam Azam, leader of the Jamaat e Islami party. The opposition Awami League urged people to 'resist all anti-independence forces and those who trade religion for political gain'.

Golam Azam collaborated with Pakistani forces during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence, and has been blamed

for the death of thousands of Bengali nationalists. In his first public speech after the Supreme Court restored his rights, the Muslim fundamentalist backed demands for the punishment of feminist writer Taslima Nasrin, who has had to go into hiding for criticising Islamic Sharia law.

The extreme right-wing Islamic Morcha called a half-day strike of its own last week. It wants the government to pass blasphemy laws and execute Nasrin. A Muslim cleric, Mufti Nazrul Islam, has put a 100,000 taka (£1,600) price on the writer's head.

In a message to the New York-based international women's committee of the writers' organisation PEN, Nasrin said: 'I am in great danger. Any

time the fundamentalists will kill me. The government is against me. So I have no scope to escape from this dangerous situation.'

Nasrin fears being thrown to the wolves by a government that is out to appease religious reactionaries whom it wants as allies.

Closed

The battle over Bangladesh's future, as a secular democracy or clerical dictatorship, is being waged against a background of growing class struggle.

Government offices, banks, shops, and schools and colleges in Dhaka were closed by an eight-hour general strike in sup-

port of teachers on 14 June.

About 5,000 striking school teachers were holding sit-down demonstrations in front of the education ministry, blocking a main thoroughfare in the capital, to back their charter of demands, including nationalisation of all 11,000 private registered schools in Bangladesh, which the government said it could not afford, although it offered to subsidise the salaries of teachers in the private sector.

More than 150 journalists have been arrested in the past three years, and 12 were jailed in the last six months. Two editors of the daily 'Janakantha', which has exposed corruption and opposed religious fundamentalism, are on bail facing 'blasphemy' charges.

Korea: workers and students resist police

WHILE the media's hype about North Korea's aged Stalinist dictator Kim Il Sung and whether he has nuclear weapons gave way last week to diplomacy, South Korea's capitalist regime showed what it means by 'freedom'.

Five thousand riot police, firing volleys of tear gas, stormed Seoul's Kyonghee university on Sunday, where striking rail and underground workers were meeting with students. Workers, joined by several hundred students, fought back with lengths of pipe.

Later riot police went to Dongduk women's university, where workers and students had reassembled to protest the first raid. Police said 168 arrests were made at the two campuses. A further assault by 2,000

riot police on a building used by Christian organisations netted 271 striking railworkers.

In the centre of Seoul there was a heavy police presence to stop any demonstrations. Chonnodae, the national council of union representatives, which the government does not recognise, confirmed its intention of calling out other workers in solidarity with the underground and rail workers.

Spreading

Strikes had already begun spreading after the government arrested 613 train drivers a few days earlier. The 4,500 underground workers in Seoul came out on strike on Friday 24 June. On Saturday, the authorities sacked 30 leading trades union-

ists, but promised workers they would not be punished if they returned to work. The same day underground workers in Pusan, South Korea's second largest city, joined the strike.

About a third of Seoul's 14 million people normally commute to work by train or tube, and the underground alone has 4 million passengers a day. Emergency supplies of fuel and other materials were brought into the capital, but shortages may hit other places.

In any case, workers in industry are joining the action. About 3,500 workers at the Kumho Tire Company came out on strike last week. On Monday, the 22,000 workers at the world's biggest shipyard, owned by Hyundai Heavy Industry, were to stage a five-hour sympathy

strike to back the railworkers.

The rail and underground workers have demanded up to 14.5 per cent pay increases, and shorter working hours. Management claimed it could afford no more than 3 per cent, in line with a government pay policy 'to fight inflation'. Chonnodae announced earlier this month that it would challenge the pay freeze.

Broke

The government says that as state employees the transport workers are not allowed to strike, and that the underground workers broke a mandatory 'cooling-off' period. It announced that it would send 380 soldiers in to run the trains. Korea has begun another hot summer.