

Defy UNISON ban on support to Sefton Two

FIGHT FOR UNION RIGHTS

SUPPORT for two members of the public sector union UNISON fined for breaking the anti-union laws has poured in from branches across the country despite opposition from the union's general secretary Alan Jkinson.

A lobby is to take place outside UNISON's national executive meeting today (Saturday 24 September) in support of the two.

Sefton UNISON secretary Nigel Flanagan and chair Martin Murphy were fined £1,250 by Manchester Crown Court on 29 July after leading a strike — because they held their own ballot when the national union refused to let them vote for action.

Despite protests from UNISON lawyers that the union had opposed the action — and it had certainly done that — it was fined as well.

The message is clear. The anti-union laws mean that unions are to be made into organisations that police workers' struggles on behalf of the employers and the state. This policing is to be paid out of the union members' own pockets.

In this case, the court decided that UNISON had not done its job! Jkinson sent around a letter to UNISON branches after the case saying:

'It is essential for the protection of the union's funds and to allow it to continue to operate and fight successfully for its members' interests, that all members in all branches do nothing to support financially or in any other way the acts of Mr Flanagan or Mr Murphy that were admitted by them to have been in contempt of court. In particular, no union funds, at branch level or anywhere else, must be used to pay their fines or costs.'

The Labour Party and trade union leaders will not fight the anti-union laws — in fact they support them. Instead of 'fighting for members' interests', by issuing such diktats they are doing the exact opposite.

We must support the Sefton Two because theirs is the fight for unions that defend the pay, conditions and rights of the working class.

Without such unions the

BY THE EDITOR

working class cannot go on to defend itself against the government's attack on public services.

UNISON members and others trades unionists should fight to defy and protest against Jkinson's ban on financial support for the Sefton Two as part of the fight against the anti-union laws that stop unions being unions for the members.

Prepared

Trades unionists must be prepared for similar battles in their own unions as more and more employers wield the anti-union laws.

■ Protests should be sent to Alan Jkinson, UNISON General Secretary, Holborn Tower, 137 High Holborn, London WC1V 6PL. Tel 071-404 1884, fax 071-404 1694.

■ Messages and money made payable to the 'Sefton 2 Defence Fund' should be sent to Sefton No.1 UNISON, 38 Crosby Road North, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 4QQ. Telephone 051-920 6140, fax 051-928 0298.

■ Comment on last Saturday's 'fightback' conference called by Sefton UNISON, see page 3.

■ The lobby of the UNISON executive is outside the Bloomsbury Crest Hotel, Coram Street, London at 8.45am, 24 September.

Burnsall striker remembered



Narinder Bassi speaks at a memorial meeting in London last Tuesday for her mother Surinder, a leader of the Burnsall strike, who died earlier this year. Among other speakers at the meeting were NUM President Arthur Scargill and two marchers from the London March for Jobs '94. For an appreciation of Surinder's life see p.7

Photo: Faruk Ibrahimovic

News from South Africa

Mass sacking at hospital

SOUTH AFRICA's government of national unity has sacked more than 2,000 striking nurses and other health workers at the King Edward VIII hospital in Natal.

The workers were striking against racial imbalances, corruption at hospitals and other demands, which even the regional African National Congress health minister, Zweli Mkhize, acknowledged as legitimate.

Despite this, the regional health ministry issued an ultimatum to the workers to return to work by 29 August — or be fired!

The actual sackings were strategically held off until after the COSATU union federation national congress on 7-10 September, where it was decided to strengthen the alliance with the ANC and the South African Communist Party.

The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa) demands the immediate reinstatement of the King Edward VIII hospital workers and calls on all workers, organised and unorganised, to urgently discuss ways of showing solidarity with them and of forcing the government of national unity to heed the workers' demands.

Who are the real racists?

A SOUTH Johannesburg township community that rose up for the scrapping of electricity arrears and a flat-rate rent/rates charge of R45 in all working-class areas irrespective of colour has accused the new government of perpetuating apartheid.

The demand for a flat-rate and the scrapping of electricity arrears in all areas is in response to a deal reached between the National Party and the ANC that covered only 'African' townships like Soweto.

Protesters from the township styled themselves the 'real revolutionaries'.

Meanwhile, the regional premier Tokyo Sexwale has denounced the protesters as 'racist' for making these demands. Speaking at a memorial for assassinated Communist Party leader Chris Hani, Sexwale threatened that while the government did not want to use force, 'if they [the protesters] want to play games we will respond and it won't be nice'.

The Workers International points out in a press statement that while Sexwale attacks workers trying to unite across racial barriers around legitimate demands like the scrapping of arrears, he sits in a government with members of the racist National Party, the former apartheid government.

■ See 'Monthly Fund', page 2, for details on how you can help the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa).

On other pages:

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Swedish 'dreamland' turns to nightmare — p.6

Remember Surinder Bassi — p.7

Haiti hypocrisy — p.8

Real frauds ignored

IT APPEARS the government is preparing to crack down on fraud in the city of London. It has 700 people in its sights — but it's not the billions made fraudulently by big business they're after.

Instead, they're worried that the homeless sellers of the paper 'Big Issue' might be claiming a few paltry benefits that they *might* not be legally entitled to!

The 'Big Issue' is sold by many homeless people in London and they get 35p of the 60p cover price.

'Big Issue' editor John Bird has been threatened with prosecution unless he divulges the names of the sellers to the employment department.

The 'Big Issue' 'names' are then to be compared with computer records of those signing on for benefits and are therefore breaking restrictions on the number of hours spent in paid employment and the restriction on earnings to a measly £5 a week.

John Bird pointed out to Workers Press that landlords, meanwhile, were making millions — many with the connivance of local authorities. They often charged £100 a week for a bed space in hostels and seedy hotels.

In London, 40 per cent of the homeless were previously in the armed forces, Bird said, many having served in the north of Ireland. Such people are often disoriented and in need of help.

* * * * *

WHILE the government launches yet another callous attack on the unemployed and the homeless, at least 864,000 potential homes are unused, according to a report from two charities, the National Housing and Town Planning Council and the Empty Homes Agency.

The attack on the 'Big Issue' is part of the government's 'crackdown', in other words its continuing attack, on the homeless and poverty-stricken, which was expressed by Prime Minister John Major's statement in May that it was 'not acceptable to be out on the streets'.

Major doesn't mean that it's 'not acceptable' that capitalism throws people out on the streets when they have no money. What he means is that it's 'not acceptable' to him that people who have no homes make themselves a visible indictment of the system he defends. His sheer hypocrisy is demonstrated by there being more than enough homes to house the homeless — if they had enough money.

But Major is under instructions from the real fraudsters — the banks in the City — to cut the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement, the projected government debt.

The attack on the 'Big Issue' is part of the growing government attack on the poor which is aiming to slash the housing benefit bill. Major's comments earlier this year was in the spirit of making homelessness illegal, like it is in parts of the US, for example in San Francisco (see p.7).

Such criminalisation of the homeless opens the way, first for their harassment and, ultimately, for their physical 'liquidation' as in the death squads that kill street children in South America. This is the progression to barbarism of a modern capitalism in decay.

The workers' movement must protect its own against these attacks on the homeless. The consequences for the working class of not acting against the attack are incalculable.

Workers' organisations must back the 'Big Issue's' refusal to hand over the names of sellers to the state. Messages of support can be sent to the 'Big Issue', Fleet House, 57-61 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1M 5NP.

Letters

An appeal from Tuzla

This letter originally appeared in the 'Guardian' (10 September).

WE APPEAL to the democratic and anti-fascist world to put pressure on governments and international institutions to stop the crimes against humanity that have been taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina and recently in the Tuzla region.

Tuzla, which has managed to preserve its multi-ethnic, cultural and confessional spirit in spite of the war and national tensions, has the moral right to ask the international community to fight more to protect universal human principles.

Since the end of July, Serbian fascists have expelled more than 2,000 Bosnian Muslims from the towns of Bijeljina and Janja. Ethnic cleansing has also been taking place in the area of Bosnian Krajina. From Bijeljina, 660 more refugees have been expelled to Tuzla. Unspeakable methods were used against them.

We ask you to insist that the UN High Commission for Refugees and the Red Cross monitor what is happening so as to draw public attention to this terrible tragedy. We also appeal for help for the enclave of Srebrenica, where more than 47,000 people have lived for more than a year surrounded by the Serbian army. Despite the fact that Srebrenica is a UN-protected area, there is a shortage of food, medicines and salt. Endemic diseases are beginning to spread.

The only secure supply route is through Tuzla airport, opened for humanitarian flights in March 1994. Not a single humanitarian shipment yet been delivered. The only effective humanitarian solution for the area was and is the opening of Tuzla airport. This would help Tuzla, and helicopters from Tuzla could also reach Srebrenica.

Please ask the representatives of your government to come and see what is happening.

Seslim Beslagic
Mayor of Tuzla

Desperate situation

This letter was sent to the 'Guardian' but not published.

AS A resident of Tuzla, and a journalist currently visiting Britain, I would like to add to the mayor of Tuzla's letter (see above), to assist in a better understanding of the desperate situation facing the town's 800,000 inhabitants.

As revenge for the break-up of his relationship with Serbia, the Bosnian Serbs leader, Karadzic, is strangling the Bosnian enclaves of Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde and even Tuzla, to force the easing of sanctions against the rump Yugoslavia.

The opening of Tuzla airport

is now decisive. Uncertainty about a political solution to the crisis and the possible lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia has caused some humanitarian bodies to withdraw, giving greater importance to Tuzla airport.

In April the United Nations special envoy, Yasushi Akashi, arrived at the airport with a symbolic two tons of aid, announcing that much more would follow. Since then not a single plane has landed.

The Bosnian government agreed to place the airport under the control of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR). But Karadzic's Serbs threatened to shell the runway if planes landed without their permission. After they did so, Danish UN troops arrived with 13 Leopard tanks, which have yet to show their claws.

If this goes on, the people's fate is left in Karadzic's Serbs' hands. They insisted on inspecting the aid deliveries at the airport. They would take some for themselves and deliver the rest to UNPROFOR, excluding the UN High Commission for Refugees and the Red Cross.

The Bosnian government suggested that the aid be inspected when the planes were first loaded. Karadzic refused, preferring the presence of his inspectorate on the airport, six kilometres from Tuzla.

Neither UNPROFOR nor Akashi has a solution to this — they are too busy flirting with Karadzic's Serbs who openly threaten to close all roads to humanitarian convoys.

Croat extremists also oppose the opening of the airport. With Tuzla airport open the importance of land corridors through so-called Croatian Herceg-Bosnia would diminish. They protect their interests by controlling convoys bound for Tuzla and collecting taxes to finance Herceg-Bosnia and its paramilitary units (HVO).

For the same reason they also oppose the opening of the northern corridor — the shortest route to the Tuzla region.

Winter will soon be upon us, and there is a real fear that aid will not get through the snow- and ice-bound roads. With this stalemate there is only one solution: UNPROFOR must leave the airport and hand it back to the Bosnian army.

After May 1992, when the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) left Bosnia, the airport was controlled and protected by the Bosnian army, which repaired the buildings and runways blown up by the JNA before it pulled out.

The risks involved in this solution would be slight compared with the starvation of 800,000 people. The airport has become an instrument of political games behind the backs of people who are so dependent on the aid. These wrongs are deeply felt. We appeal to your readers for support.

Mirza Mukic
Tuzla

Optimism and tenacity

IT IS consistent with his life as a leftist that John P. Mathieson (Letters, 10 September) now identifies with the older Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

Consider the implications of that 'Great Britain'! According to him the CPGB was at its best when it was committed to 'the British Road to Socialism' and 'the integrity of the United Kingdom'.

Mathieson must explain why a British road to socialism is valid and a Scottish road not. Furthermore, whether he used polemical tricks or not, it is significant that he did not confront the distinctiveness of Scottish radicalism and socialism. They were distinctive and no one can alter historical facts.

But the saddest aspect of Mathieson's letter is his 'optimism' after his picture of an allegedly spineless and apathetic Scottish working class in 1994. This reflects his *miseducation* in the CPGB. It is a tribute to his tenacity that he goes on and on without being able to identify sources of disaffection from the established social order.

When the CPGB was 'strong' and 'powerful' members were taught that the only yardsticks for measuring militancy and socialist consciousness were trade unions' and left-wing parties' membership figures. (Does Mathieson realise that reactionaries think *the past superior to the present*?)

In the good old days before the World War I, non-trades unionists and non-socialist workers in Scotland expressed disaffection by poaching, resisting corporal punishment in state schools, etc. If Mathieson expanded his imagination and sharpened his perception, he would see Scotland is not what he assumes!

There is more disaffection with and antagonism to the Tories than I ever remember. Detestation for the parasitic royal family did not exist when I was a young socialist in the 1940s; the middle classes who opposed the health service and student grants now stoutly defend such 'collectivist' provision. Even Tom Nairn, who made his name measuring class-consciousness in the inherited 'left' way, is now compelled by reality to acknowledge the disaffection in contemporary Scotland. Nairn now speaks of a distinct Scottish national inheritance rooted in 'the Calvinist Reformation and... the incorporation of a Celtic sub-society'.

At a Labour Party meeting in 1959 the fascist Colin Jordan's thugs broke two of my ribs, so I don't need a lecture on fascism. As Boris Souvarine pointed out, Stalin deported ethnic groups from the Volga to the Caucasus, and wanted to liquidate the Jewish minority à la Hitler's 'Final

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Solution'. Mathieson might consider the French Communist Party's encouragement of racism, opening the way for Le Pen.

I am no defender of the Scottish National Party but, unlike various Communist Parties, it has not been responsible for racist attacks on black people or minority groups.

James D. Young
Falkirk

Threatening merger

THE reports from South Africa, about the huge upsurge of strikes, in last week's Workers Press were great. An inspiration to all of us in the workers' movement here who have solidified with the struggle by that country's unions and youth.

The empty promises that were used to temporarily end the anti-imperialist struggles in the rest of Africa will not work in the same way in South Africa. People have not struggled for so many years just for the right of a few black politicians to drive big cars and own ranches.

But it is not just the workers who are mobilising. The 'government of national unity' has appointed F.W. de Klerk to head the new intelligence service. It will be made up of the personnel from the old BOSS state security organisation, merged with the ANC intelligence service.

This is not just a threat to South African workers. A Ghanaian refugee has told me how worried workers were in other African countries about the threat to them from the South African military machine.

BOSS agents were responsible for rooting out all opposition to apartheid. They organised the 'Third Force' killers. Now joined by the ANC security, which in its military camps beat up, killed or jailed any young fighter who questioned the authority of the ANC leaders.

The Cape Town author of last week's article explained that one man accused the strikers of undermining the ANC government. Millions of people voted ANC. It is vital that the strikers — still a small minority — do not become separated from all those who have fought for liberation.

Why don't militant workers call for the real end of apartheid? Clear out all the old rubbish completely. Make the ANC and South African Communist Party break their alliance with these people who are plotting to suppress workers in South Africa.

Down with the 'government of national unity'. ANC — you won the election now use the power the people gave you. Kick out the apartheid bosses from government. Kick out the murderers. Disband the old regime's organisation of terror.

Bob Myers
Manchester

Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fund

In so far: £1,422.04

WE'VE only been able to get about £600 in this week. We're already behind for the month and the problems this causes just keep piling up. A comrade said at the weekend 'Workers Press is far too good for its circulation'. Such unsolicited testimonials are 'most acceptable', but they must be backed up with a drive to get the paper out into the wider workers' movement. That means getting your friends and organisations you are involved in to buy it weekly.

But there is also the 'South Africa Solidarity' fund and 'Workers International News', paper of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa). Our comrades in South Africa

are in the centre of struggles there. They get sacked from their jobs in the trades unions, receive death threats and other harassment. They think that eventually they won't need financial support except from South Africa. But, in the meantime, they need our help. Donations to Workers Press help our comrades in South Africa, because money to them often comes from Workers Press funds. Otherwise make cheques payable to 'South Africa Fund'. Also, subscribe to their paper for £5.50 (five issues) or £10 (ten issues).

Mike Cooke

Send money to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

COMING SOON

TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER: Hackney community care workers lobby of Hackney Independent Living Team's agm. Defend workers' rights. 6pm, Anne Taylor Centre, London Fields (off Westgate Street), London E8.

WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER: Alliance for Workers Liberty London forum — 'Ireland after the ceasefire'. John Steele of Workers Press

debates with Sean Matgama of 'Socialist Organiser'/AWL. 7.30pm, Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road (King's Cross end), London WC1.

WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER: Free Malcolm Kennedy: Justice for Patrick Quinn campaign public meeting. In May, Malcolm Kennedy was convicted of manslaughter of Patrick Quinn in a police cell. Kennedy has always maintained that he saw police officers assault Quinn, who suffered terrible injuries and

was murdered, says the campaign. Kennedy was originally convicted in 1991, but a 1992 'World in Action' documentary showed that police had lied. Two re-trials followed. The Hackney Community Defence Association and the Hammersmith & Fulham Irish Community Forum are heading the campaign for a judicial inquiry into the case. 7.30pm, Halkevi Community Centre, 92-100 Stoke Newington Road, London N16.



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Call for an international conference:

The future of Marxism

Change of date:

London, Friday 21 April - Sunday 23 April 1995

AS THE 20th century nears its end, the ruling class more and more turns away from reason and science as the basis for its outlook and ideology.

No longer believing in the humanising and liberatory role of education and science, or in the idea of a society founded on reason, the ruling class is increasingly driven to repudiate the cultural and ideological conquests of the past.

In the name of the rejection of all ideology, the bourgeoisie gives up any pretence of trying to grasp the laws of development of modern society as a whole. It even celebrates the 'end of history' as the end of a single, coherent process.

Instead of trying to grasp 'the historical process as a whole', bourgeois thought — in philosophy, sociology and other branches of the 'social sciences' — focuses increasingly on the supposed problems of the individual, sundered from his or her living social connections.

The progress of the natural sciences is increasingly threatened by the fact that their development is ever more subordinated to the needs of capital and its production for profit rather than production to satisfy human needs. At the same time, the absence of any coherent world outlook on the part of the ruling class also serves to impede the development of the natural sciences.

Garish

Indeed, throughout the present century we have seen the periodic and garish revival of mysticism, as astrology remains popular, religious cults mushroom, and seances and witchcraft are fashionable pastimes — obsessions even — in 'educated' circles, as well as providing research materials for the 'social sciences'.

And yet the growth of scientific thinking that marked the rise of the bourgeoisie in the modern world was a great human achievement. This achievement found its highest expression in the sphere of social thought, with the conviction that science could provide the basis for the control of society in the interests of human beings.

The Marxist world outlook took the principal achievements of bourgeois thought — English classical political economy (Smith, Ricardo), French theories of socialism and classical German philosophy — and overcame the contradictions

within them. Marx and Engels did this by placing these achievements in their real context or unity, from which unity came the force that alone could really overcome these contradictions — the working class.

The task of the working class in emancipating itself from capitalism was to lay the basis for a truly human, classless society which would carry forward the entire cultural achievements of the past. That is why, in calling this international conference in defence of the achievements of reason and science, we do so from the standpoint that in the last resort they can be defended only through the development of Marxism.

Grotesque

In the past many of the best intellectuals, who wanted genuinely to investigate present-day society and its crises, were turned away from Marxism because, in their minds, it was equated with its grotesque perversion: Stalinism. But the Stalinist regimes in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have collapsed, along with the ideology of the Stalinist bureaucracy that for decades was able to pass itself off as Marxism.

We therefore see this conference as a forum for discussing the various aspects of the social and ideological crisis engulfing society, and thus providing an opportunity to continue the renewal and development of Marxism.

■ We invite papers for consideration at the conference. If you intend to produce a paper for consideration, could you please send in your proposed title and a brief abstract as soon as possible. The final deadline for the receipt of papers is 31 January 1995. We intend to publish the conference proceedings and in turn make the conference the basis for a new journal to carry forward its work.

■ The conference fee will be £20 (£5 concessions) which will include admission for the three days, together with conference materials.

■ Admission for any one day is £10 (£2.50 concessions)

■ Arrangements for accommodation will be announced shortly.

For further details, please write to Geoff Pilling, Conference Organiser, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

London signal workers support groups public meeting

Thursday 29 September

7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,

London WC1 (Holborn tube)

All welcome

Trotsky, Trotskyism and the Transitional Epoch

Discussion meeting with David Gorman of 'Radical Chains' and Helen Ticktin and Mick Cox of 'Critique'

Friday 30 September

7pm-9pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,

London WC1 (Holborn tube)

Tickets £1.50 (75p concs.)

Workers Aid for Bosnia

Irish Night for Bosnia

Saturday 21 October

8pm-12 midnight, Camden Irish Centre, Murray Street, London NW1

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Workers act over public pay limit

TUBE workers in the Rail Maritime and Transport union have voted overwhelmingly to take strike action in rejection of a derisory 2.5 per cent pay offer from London Underground — 2,072 in favour and 809 against.

And nurses are coming in behind the offensive against the government's public-sector pay ceiling with a claim of more than 8 per cent.

Pitiful

When you see that this would only lift the pay of a nursing auxiliary to a pitiful £150 a week before stoppages, the need to break the government pay limit becomes crystal clear.

College lecturers in the

BY THE EDITOR

NATFHE union are set to go back on the war-path against the College Employers' Forum, which is trying to impose its new 'slave contracts' using a pay

increase of 2.9 per cent to those who sign.

Teachers are claiming 4 per cent and many other public-sector pay battles are in the offing.

Separate

The signal workers' strikes continue, despite the move towards further negotiations by an RMT rank-and-file advisory conference in Great Yarmouth last weekend.

Their decision, to separate the talks on payments for past productivity and talks on 'restructuring', was aimed at en-

couraging Railtrack back to the table.

'Restructuring' is another name for job losses and more work for the same pay.

The need in the coming offensive against the public-sector pay ceiling is for co-ordination of these actions, against the anti-union laws, if necessary.

The support groups that have begun to spring up in the wake of the signal workers' action and the Community and Union Action Campaign will be necessary components in the forging of this unity in action against the government.

UNISON attacks its own members

UNISON, the public sector union, has set an unwelcome precedent. It has become the first union to discipline its own members for breaches of the Tory anti-union laws.

Four social services shop stewards are being charged with 'participating in and/or supporting unlawful industrial action', following a strike against racist practices at Fairfield Day Centre in Liverpool.

The union's national executive committee, which refused to support the action by seven of the 20 members at the centre, said that it was 'irrelevant' whether racist practices took place or not.

The members' complaints

were vindicated, ironically enough, by a statement from the city's director of social services acknowledging that these practices had taken place. It expressed regret that management had not taken steps against them.

Prides

As a UNISON Liverpool branch bulletin comments: 'It comes to something when a union like Unison, which prides itself on its equal opportunities policies is less progressive than management.'

As in the case of the Sefton Two (see article below), the UNISON leadership has refused

to support its members when they come into conflict with management, and has bowed before the anti-union laws. However it has taken that capitulation a step further in Liverpool, where it is now policing its members on behalf of management.

The case has highlighted how the anti-union laws work in practice. The UNISON Liverpool branch bulletin points out that where working conditions have become intolerable, as at Fairfield Day Centre, delaying to allow the union to organise official action can mean defeat.

Not only does it give employers space to regroup but, as the bulletin says, 'it allows the

union leadership to string the dispute out in the hope that members will get demoralised and give up'.

The bulletin continues: 'A union should be working for its members, not against them. Members don't take industrial action lightly: when they do act, it is the duty of their elected representatives . . . to support them.'

The branch warns that the leadership will discourage this kind of action in order to keep control of the membership. For this reason it is imperative that every support be given to the four stewards, and they must be defended against the UNISON leadership.

Lack of direction at Sefton Two meeting

BY JIM SMITH

UNISON members linked up last Saturday to fight against the complicity of their union leadership in the anti-union laws, by building solidarity with the Sefton Two, union officers fined for leading a successful unofficial strike to save jobs and stop privatisation.

But UNISON public sector union delegates at the Liverpool meeting, dominated by Socialist Workers Party members, avoided serious debate on the implications of the Sefton Two case for working-class leadership. Few were able to connect the fight for UNISON's national pay claim with the attack on trade union rights illustrated by the victimisation of the Sefton Two.

Ballot

UNISON public sector union Sefton branch secretary Nigel Flanagan and chair Martin Murphy were each fined £1,250 by Manchester Crown Court on 29 July (see Workers Press, 10 September). The union's general secretary, Alan Jinkinson, had refused to allow Sefton branch to ballot for an official strike. He later told UNISON branches that they must not use their funds to pay the fines, or to give any other support to the Sefton branch.

The 'Fightback' conference, called by Sefton branch at the Crosby Civic Hall, near Liver-

pool, was attended by 200 delegates from 70 branches. Flanagan told the conference how at the court he and Murphy had been opposed not only by barristers representing Sefton council but also by barristers representing UNISON!

Flanagan and Murphy have refused to pay the fines but, despite Jinkinson's opposition, financial support has been pouring in from UNISON branches. Flanagan told the delegates that he felt it was particularly important that financial aid should be paid from branch funds, thus defying Jinkinson and the anti-union laws by making 'illegal' payments.

A proposal at the conference for a steering committee to be set up to build a further delegate conference in December clashed with the conference planned earlier by the Campaign for a Fighting Democratic UNISON (CFDU). An attempt to link the two was ruled out of order, and the proposal for a December delegate conference was lost.

But the conference unanimously passed a motion calling for strike action against privatisation and urging branches to call for an official special delegate conference of UNISON. It also called for continued support for the Sefton Two.

■ There is a lobby of the UNISON NEC in support of the Sefton Two today (Saturday 24 September) at 8.30am outside the Bloomsbury Great Hotel, Coram Street (near Russell Square), London WC1.



Nigel Flanagan, of the Sefton Two, speaks to the conference

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Lloyd's high rollers on the slide

THAT great gaming house, Lloyd's, where many expected to make great sums of money, has fallen on hard times. Lloyd's is now over £2 billion in debt. Some 3,000 of its 'names' owe £375m. They do not have the money.

The Lloyd's Hardship Scheme is to be wound up. The scheme was set up, with Lady Archer as chair, to reach settlements to leave indebted names with not less than £17,000 per year of income and a £150,000 house. Only 1,800 people applied to the committee. They obviously do not feel that £17,000 a year is a liveable income. The total number of names at Lloyd's has fallen from 29,000 to just 17,500 in the last four years.

Inside left

Delayed departure

LABOUR Party general secretary Larry Whitty is being put out to grass. Some papers tip as possible replacements Tom Sawyer, of the public service union UNISON, or Jack Dromey, of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Sound familiar? Back on 25 April 1992, Workers Press asked readers if they fancied a career with Labour:

'Word is there may be a vacancy soon for Labour Party general secretary, as they're thinking of letting Larry Whitty go, blaming him for losing the election.'

'Mind you, you'll face some tough competition. Current chairman Tom Sawyer, well-liked by Neil Kinnock, has fallen out with his gov'nor in the National Union of Public Employees, Rodney Bickerstaff, and is likely to be seeking a job after it merges with NALGO and COHSE. And another probable entrant is Jack Dromey...'

OK, our announcement was a little early! Former GMB general union official Whitty had work to do before he could go. 'Tribune's' Dave Osler says (9 September): 'Whitty it was who shouldered the thankless task of keeping the show on the road during last year's bitter in-fighting over one member one vote. Some Christian socialists obviously don't subscribe to the maxim that blessed are the peacemakers.'

Alongside this 'Tribune' advertises its fourth annual fund-raising dinner — a £45-a-head beano on 27 October at the Oval banqueting suite, featuring 'after-dinner speaker Tony Blair MP'.

Condemning Labour leader Blair for usurping the national executive committee's prerogative to hire or fire general secretaries, Osler says the right-wing Labour Co-ordinating Committee published a critical management consultant's report last year. The 'Guardian' had a copy before the Labour Party conference, and has since carried unattributed quotes calling Labour's Walworth Road headquarters 'a repository for second-rate union officials'.

The Oval banqueting suite is in Lambeth. Some Labour Party members blame the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and its friends at the 'Guardian' for the witch-hunt there, which brought expulsions, lost council seats, and sackings. I hope there'll be no unpleasantness on 27 October.

Feathers ruffled

POOR 'White Eagle' David North, leader of the US Workers League. His lies about Workers Aid for Bosnia 'gun-running for arms dealers' fooled nobody. His follower David Hyland has fallen back on asserting that a satellite telecommunications fish, which Workers Aid was going to transport, constituted 'military equipment'.

To back this, Hyland cites a United Nations officer reporting Serb 'Chetnik objections! It's because they speak for the imperialists and Chetniks that I've dubbed North 'White Eagle' (the Chetnik symbol).

Tim Wohlforth was ousted from the Workers League in a phoney 'security' row 20 years ago. His girlfriend, Nancy Fields, had been brought up by an uncle employed by the CIA.

At a launch for Wohlforth's book 'The Prophet's Children', North ignored the chair, to make a speech denouncing Nancy Fields. He was drowned out by an aged anarchist angrily banging his walking stick on the table.

Later, flanked by his minders, North advanced on Wohlforth, but was stopped in his tracks by the writer's teenage daughter. Whatever she said, the only thing 'red' about 'White Eagle' North after was his face.

Charlie Pottins

Unite behind signa

The signal workers' dispute is sharply posing the question of democracy in the workers' movement and the role of the labour bureaucracy, write REX DUNN and MIKE HOWGATE

A GENUINE united front of the left is being built with the creation of the North London Signal Workers' Support Group, which held a public meeting on 12 September to discuss the way forward. Two key issues were agreed: the raising of money to sustain the strike; and that there must be a political discussion with the signal workers, and in the labour movement generally, about how the strike can be won.

The north London group has been attempting to link up with the Haringey and Enfield support group, which is dominated by the Socialist Workers Party. Proposals have been put to this other group for a united group based on democratic structures and for a national network of support groups.

The strike cannot be won simply by getting out on the street with a bucket, or even by workplace collections, the meeting was told by an underground driver and local branch secretary of the Rail Maritime and Transport union.

Workers who go on strike are directly confronted by the capitalist state in the shape of the anti-trade-union laws. Ways must be found to break through them. A victory for the signal workers is vital to raise the morale and combativity of all rail workers in their struggle against job losses and worsening conditions, in the run-up to privatisation.

Settled

RMT is balloting its driver members over strike action in support of their pay claim. The ASLEF train drivers' union has just settled its 1994 claim — within the government's pay guidelines. This is one reason why it is losing members to the RMT. The best way RMT drivers can show solidarity with the signallers is to ensure that there is a 'yes' vote for action.

After 15 weeks of determined action by the signal workers, the strike is at a crossroads. The RMT

leadership threatens to undermine this action and to lose the initiative for the signal workers.

Railtrack is being allowed to win the propaganda war over the level of service being operated on strike days; and there is inaction over health and safety. This issue could be used to extend action to other members of the union. But this requires leadership from the top and cannot be left to individual members.

If the drivers' ballot brings a 'yes' vote, the leadership could bring the membership out by the end of the month.

A north London signal worker and RMT delegate expressed a popular view among activists in arguing that the next stage should be all-out strike action. This policy was to be proposed to an RMT special conference of signal workers. He said a five-pence-a-week levy of every TUC member would give £80 a week strike pay to every striking signaller.

Condemnation

An issue repeatedly raised in the meeting was the role of the Labour Party, a millstone around the neck of workers. There was general condemnation of the Labour leadership for refusing to support the striking signal workers. Many called for the levy to Labour to end and the money to be paid to the strikers.

Workers are also faced with the treachery of the TUC bureaucracy, which speaks of the rights of the individual worker as a consumer of services, not of the collectivism of the trade union movement. The TUC leaders are also seeking to build close relations with Tory ministers, the Confederation of British Industry, and the Liberal Democrats. Meanwhile the Labour leadership is saying a labour government would give equal treatment to the unions and to the CBI.

At the beginning of last week, the TUC leaders had persuaded the



Tube workers supporting the miners in 1992-93. A signallers' victory would raise

RMT leadership to drop its precondition to talks with Railtrack, that a productivity payment be made, and to go to arbitration through ACAS.

Activists in the Labour Party should fight to get their wards and branches to support the signallers' action. Outside the party, the left

on the RMT executive is calling for the union to reassess its relationship with Labour, a sign of the politicisation of the trade union rank and file.

But it is not enough to say that the levy to Labour should be cancelled and the money used to finance each new struggle. The

Little more than ch

BY MARK METCALFE
of Hackney Trade Union Support Unit

PROBLEMS in building a united and democratic movement behind the signallers were ably demonstrated at the meeting of the 'Hackney Signal Workers Support Group' on 16 August. Also the meeting was allowed no real discussion on either the future work of the group or on how the strike might be won.

Four members of the Hackney Trade Union Support Unit (HTUSU) went to the meeting. We were disappointed that no one from the group had bothered to make contact with us beforehand — the HTUSU had been the base for local support groups for the miners in 1984-85, printworkers in 1986-87, seafarers in 1988-89, Kurdish refugees in 1989, dockers in 1989, ambulance workers in 1990, bus workers in 1991 and miners (again) in 1992-93. The unit also has the largest single list of local trade union contacts — many of whom are HTUSU members.

The platform speakers were both SWP members and trades unionists, one being a member of the RMT rail union but not a signal worker. About 30 to 35 people were there, most being workers. The chair refer-

red to the anger of the working class and the public support that the signal workers are enjoying. During the contributions that followed, about six or seven SWP members got up to say how much they had collected at work, on street collections and on visits to various workplaces. An impressive total of £1,000 had been raised.

The only proposal on taking the strike forward was a call for pressure on RMT leader Jimmy Knapp to call for the TUC to organise a demonstration. But the miners marched with 250,000 in 1992 and still lost the battle against pit closures, so what difference would this make?

Ignored

When an ex-railworker and former RMT executive committee member got up and spoke of how they had tried to organise in the early 1980s and work for similar organisation in the 1990s, the chair of the meeting ignored his contribution and said the speech showed 'the anger within the working class'.

The meeting began degenerating into something akin to a church service with people getting up to say how much they had collected and receiving applause. A HTUSU member said that while collecting money

was very important there was also the need to ask how the strike could be won, as Railtrack, backed by the government, seemed determined to resist the signal workers' modest demands.

The HTUSU member spoke of the need for solidarity strike action by other groups of workers, not least other RMT members. This being the case the 'Signal Workers Support Group' should, at least, put out propaganda arguing for this. Reference was made to the lack of rank-and-file organisations within the unions and how no single left organisation has a significant base within any section of working people. It was a very modest contribution and was greeted by stony silence.

The chair of the meeting told of the actions planned for the next two weeks, giving details of two street collections. He was interrupted by an HTUSU member who told him that we had come along to the meeting to discuss ongoing work and not simply to be told what to do. We asked who made the decisions, how people could become involved and how the group intended becoming a democratic organisation.

The HTUSU members put two proposals to the meeting:

■ To organise picketing with RMT members — it turned out that no members of the

audience had pre-

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the morale of all rail workers

working-class movement needs to reconstruct itself; it cannot rely on the spontaneous struggle alone. The working class must develop its independent ideology again. The question of whether the working class needs a new party should also be raised. And of what kind of party this should be.

arity

outside of the HTUSU members, previously been picketing. At the group should produce leaflets, other groups, arguing for solidarity. Chair tried to end the meeting without the second proposal to the meeting, intervened again and grudgingly the agreed, but only if we wrote the and brought it to the next meeting.

Blatant

activities of the 'Hackney Signal Support Group' are a blatant by the SWP to boost its ailing membership through organising collections in and presenting itself as 'radical'. no democracy within the group; all decisions are held by SWP members and actions made by them. group's activities amount to little in charity (many will remember that the 1984-85 miners' strike the SWP had those collecting for the miners as 'workers') — although it is vitally charity.

This article is an edited version of a piece issued by the Hackney Trade Union Unit.

Scurrilous charge of MI5 conspiracy

JOHN SPENCER reviews a book on the life of the WRP's disgraced former leader, the late Gerry Healy

THE explosion in the Workers Revolutionary Party that expelled its long-time leader Gerry Healy in 1985 was a watershed in the lives of most of the people closely involved in the movement. The chain reaction of splits and recriminations that followed is still in progress nearly ten years later, and the passions the event aroused have not died.

Even before I joined the WRP's predecessor, the Socialist Labour League, in 1963, the organisation had acquired some of the features of a cult with built-in mechanisms — excessive security, isolation from other political currents, hyper-activity and a network of internal spying — which inhibited members from thinking for themselves. The study of materialist dialectics had already begun to turn into a demonstration of the infallibility of Healy's personal mental processes.

Cultish features may arise naturally and are perhaps inevitable in a party built on Leninist lines and kept in being for decades waiting for the objective situation to match its revolutionary aspirations. The search for the 'correct' political line, and the need to defend past party decisions, harden into a rigid orthodoxy.

The accumulated weight of the absolutely correct decisions of the past — each building its own absolutely inevitable quantum of error — ultimately breaks the party's back.

Healy's disgrace brought frag-

'Of course MI5 has agents in left-wing organisations, but it was an act of bad faith for Healy to find them always among his political adversaries.'

mentation. Everyone became his or her own judge of the right line, on which no two members could agree.

With the exception of Bob Pitt's interesting and painstaking attempt to piece together Healy's biography in 'Workers News', only the Healyite diehards Corinna Lotz and Paul Feldman have proved capable of getting together a book-length piece of writing about him, 'Gerry Healy: a Revolutionary Life'.

Beyond vaguely worded references to the slanders of the bourgeois press, Lotz and Feldman choose to ignore the awkward fact that Healy was a serial sex abuser.

In Lotz's part of the book there is no mention of sex at all. Feldman has one throwaway reference to Healy's secretary, Aileen Jennings, having made 'poisonous allegations about the 71-year-old Healy's sexual behaviour' in a letter to the WRP's political committee.

Lotz tells Healy's life story from the events immediately before his expulsion, ignoring the months of ferment which went before, up to his death. It is an affecting personal memoir, putting Healy in an attractive light, which recalled for me the days when I myself thought him to be the greatest contempor-

LABOUR MP Ken Livingstone has returned to his witch-hunting of the Workers Revolutionary Party. In his review of 'Gerry Healy: A Revolutionary Life' in the 'Guardian' (6 September), he again claims that MI5 was responsible for the split in our party in 1985.

Neither the book under review — which also makes the charge — nor Livingstone provides a shred of evidence in support of this claim. Healy was expelled from the WRP by the overwhelming majority of members on quite specific charges: that, using his authority, he had sexually and physically abused party members, many of them young women.

If Livingstone has evidence to back his

ary political figure. Feldman, in a constipated plod through his hero's official biography, starts his account with Healy's birth and takes us up to 1985.

By skating over the crucial issue of sexual abuse, the authors create a gaping narrative void into which MI5 can be injected. Their essential accusation, baldly put, is that five named individuals in the party's finance department — Dot Gibson, Clare Cowen, Robert Harris, David Bruce and Aileen Jennings — were agents of the security service.

The 'proof' for them is in Corin Redgrave's financial report published in October 1985. 'What had almost certainly begun as a misguided and behind-the-scenes attempt to overcome party problems had been transformed into full-blown sabotage, driven on by state intervention,' says Feldman.

Shorn of its final five malicious words, Feldman's description is not a bad way of looking at what happened to the party's finances. Since they actually had to balance the books, those in the finance department became aware long before the rest of us that the show was over. But no agent would have poured money into the party as Redgrave's report shows Gibson and Cowen did.

As to sabotage, Healy had long exercised personal control over the finances and neither the political nor central committees were told the sources and destination of funds. As emerged from the welter of litigation after the split, much of what most members thought belonged to the party was in fact owned either by the Redgrave duo,

ference of the Healy clique towards these vulnerable comrades that made the final spark.

Attempts to justify Healy's activities failed dismally. True believers fell back first on denial and then on pretending that the sex abuse charges were so unspeakable as to be beneath discussion and capable only of being an MI5 fabrication.

Of course MI5 has agents in left-wing organisations, but it was an act of bad faith for Healy to find them always among his political adversaries. In reality, agents are as likely to be in one faction as another.

In a glowing foreword to the book, written in March 1994, Ken Livingstone MP states: 'MI5 clearly felt that they had to stop the growing influence of the WRP. I have never changed my belief that the split in the WRP during 1985 was the work of MI5 agents.'

Since the book effectively lays the charge of MI5 involvement at the door of named individuals, Livingstone is here endorsing a spiteful factional campaign. Worse, he admitted to 'Esquire' magazine in November 1993 that he has no evidence.

Of course, Healy started muttering about state intervention from the very moment of the split, before anything had appeared in the press about its causes. He might even in his paranoia have been convinced of MI5 involvement — but he had powerful reasons of his own to say that.

Lotz describes a meeting between Healy and a libel lawyer brought in by Corin Redgrave to discuss how to deal with the 'charges against Gerry' — which

allegations that the real reasons for Healy's expulsion were quite different, why has he failed to make it public to the labour movement? We again challenge him: if you have the evidence, present it to the movement.

One final point. Since Healy's expulsion Livingstone has lent his support to bodies such as Workers Aid for Bosnia and the Kilburn Defence Campaign in which, as Livingstone knows, members of the WRP who fought for Healy's expulsion have been actively and prominently engaged.

Why has Livingstone been prepared to associate with people who at worst were agents of the security services, or at best their dupes?

believe Healy's MI5 story, in her case perhaps because she knew of the sexual abuse and regarded it as an adequate explanation for the behaviour of the anti-Healy faction.

Healy's response to his disgrace and expulsion was to redouble his efforts to reach the holy grail of mental domination of the material world. According to Lotz, he made spectacular progress 'advancing far beyond his teaching and writing of the late 1970s and early 1980s'.

'The concentration now was on how to train the mind directly and immediately under any conditions that presented themselves. It would allow party members to function in all political circumstances, quickly uncovering the essence of all developments.'

Fortunately the results have not been lost! The book contains a pull-out diagram — 'Relation between the essences' — concentrating this wisdom into just 67 red words and 178 black ones, linked by 45 arrows.

As the years passed, Healy's supporters drifted away: Torrance pursued her own agenda and carried on publishing the party's former paper 'News Line'; 'News Line' editor Alex Mitchell returned to Australia.

Loyal

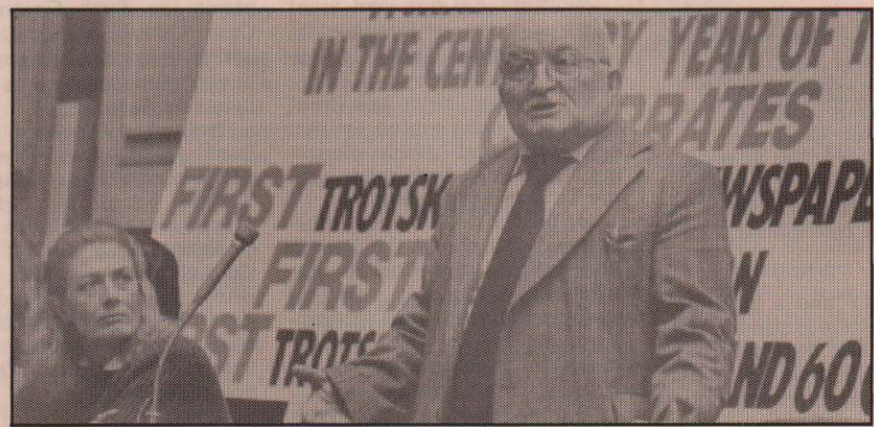
By the time Healy died, only the Redgraves and the Lotz-Feldman group remained loyal. And they split up within months of Healy's death. The Redgraves accused Lotz of being an 'agent provocateur' and claimed that Healy had been done in by MI5, MI6, Special Branch, the South African security service BOSS, the Israeli security service MOSSAD and the CIA. The Redgraves set up an inquiry that has yet to report!

Feldman and Livingstone had nothing to say publicly about the alleged international conspiracy to murder Healy. They were ready to denounce the charge against Lotz as 'a flagrant violation of the democratic traditions and procedures of the labour movement having more in common with the methods of a military dictatorship'.

None of these three worthies has any qualms when it comes to laying a similar and equally baseless charge against the 1985 'conspirators'.

Though the book provides a good deal of unintended entertainment and is an antidote to anyone who thinks Healy was all bad, its authors really ought not to get away unchallenged with their scurrilous line about MI5.

'Gerry Healy: a Revolutionary Life', by Corinna Lotz and Paul Feldman, Lupus Books, London. Price £15.



Vanessa Redgrave and Gerry Healy before the 1985 explosion in the WRP

Corin and Vanessa, or by Clare Cowen.

Previous dissident groups in the SLL/WRP had known of Healy's harem, but Robin Blick and Alan Thornett, for example, rejected the idea of exposing this aspect of the Healy cult.

The new factor in 1985, alongside Jennings's letter to the political committee, was the vocal campaign of several young women party workers, children of people who had joined in the 1960s, who accused Healy of forcing his sexual attentions on them. It was the indif-

she characteristically doesn't describe.

'After listening to the arguments which the lawyer said would form the substance of the case, Gerry rapidly decided that such a court action could never succeed. The real issues would be obscured by a smokescreen of details about his personal life.'

For the majority of his party, the details of his 'personal life' were the issue.

Significantly, a large section of his own faction, headed by party organiser Sheila Torrance, did not

John Spenser was acting-editor of the 'News Line' at the time of Healy's expulsion from the WRP.

A dirty business

THE outcome of the Colin Stagg case has left the police, the partisans of 'psychological profiling' (that brain-child of an FBI agent), the stipendiary magistrate who committed Stagg, and the Crown Prosecution Service with enough egg on their faces to make an omelette the size of Wimbledon Common.

There is not one single redeeming feature of this case. It was a fiasco, a monumental piece of botchery, a complete and utter mess.

No one involved emerges well out of it, save only the woman officer 'Lizzie James', who, in a lengthy and fruitless effort to trap Stagg into a confession, volunteered both to write him increasingly lurid pornographic letters and to meet him.

However misled, she was undeniably courageous. And she was almost certainly several degrees brighter than her handlers. She could hardly have been less bright than they showed themselves to be.

From start to finish, the police and those who advised them — faceless CPS lawyers and the forensic psychologist Paul Britton — conducted themselves with a bungling amateurish zeal that not only calls in question their professional competence but also raises grave doubts about their grasp of reality.

Read, if you haven't already done so, the defence counsel's speech to the judge, as reproduced in last weekend's 'Independent Sunday', detailing the 'process of suggestion and seduction drawn out over several months' by which the hapless policewoman 'induced Stagg to say things the police wanted him to say, so that his psychological profile would conform with the psychological profile they had prepared of the Nickell murderer'.

The picture of police methods and police mentality this devastating speech presents almost defies belief. If it came out of a novel, most readers would dismiss it out of hand as far-fetched rubbish.

Yet it did happen. Month after month, the policewoman was instructed to provoke this wretched, sexually inexperienced and desperately lonely man to write increasingly sadistic sexual fantasies, to admit to a homosexual experience in his teens, to 'confess' to an imaginary murder committed when he was 12 years old.

Again and again, she ups the stakes. She offers to visit him at his home. She offers to go on holiday with him. She spins yarns about having taken part in human sacrifice, about having cut a woman's throat with a knife. Again and again, she does her best to shape his response.

Referring to the Wimbledon Common murder, she tells him: 'If only it had been you.'

With what result? None whatever. There is no confession. The whole sordid operation ends in failure.

And the upshot is that the atrocious murder of Rachel Nickell in front of her infant son is unsolved, and likely to remain so.

FOR the British working-class movement these clumsy efforts to trap Stagg into confessing that he murdered Rachel Nickell have a special resonance that goes far beyond the pros and cons of 'psychological profiling' and legal niceties about admissible and inadmissible evidence.

In her efforts to trap Stagg 'Lizzie James' was acting as an agent provocateur.

The British workers' movement has been obliged to cope with such vermin ever since it came into existence. The use of agents provocateurs — wretches paid to incite strikers, rebels, and political activists to engage in criminal activity for which they were then jailed or ex-

PERSONAL COLUMN

ecuted — has been a mainstay of the British capitalist state for the best part of 200 years.

The so-called Cato Street conspiracy was one of the earliest examples of the successful use of this method.

Following the 1819 Peterloo massacre, when Manchester factory-owners, merchants and shopkeepers slaughtered unarmed demonstrators, and radicals all over Britain were thirsting for justice, the agent provocateur George Edwards, brother of a policeman, proposed to a radical group that they execute the Cabinet whom they held guilty of this crime. The execution would serve as the signal for an insurrection.

It was Edwards who suggested every single detail of the plan, including the purchase of muskets, ammunition, pistols, pikes, and other weapons.

The five conspirators were arrested and tried for high treason before the Lord Chief Justice and a series of carefully selected juries.

Edwards wasn't called as a witness. Instead he was packed off to the Channel Islands to protect his hide.

The accused were sentenced to be hanged and then beheaded, and the sentence was carried out, before a crowd shouting 'Murder!', early on the morning of 1 May 1820.

Twenty-eight years later William Cuffay, black leader of London's Chartist, and two of his comrades were convicted of 'levying war on Queen Victoria'.

Cuffay's conviction — he was transported for life to Australia — was obtained through the evidence of two police spies and agents provocateurs.

The first, Thomas Powell, generally known as 'Lying Tom', admitted in cross-examination that he had told the Chartists how to make grenades:

'I told them that gunpowder must be put into an ink-bottle with an explosive cap, and I dare say I did say that it would be a capital thing to throw among the police if it had some nails in it.'

The other spy, George Davis, who sold second-hand books and furniture in Greenwich, where he was a member of the Chartists' 'Wat Tyler brigade', told how he had attended its meetings and 'reported within two hours all that had occurred at each meeting to the inspector of police'.

For the previous few weeks, he added, the people of Greenwich had suspected him of being a spy, and he had lost his trade as a result. Then as now, those who practised his more furtive trade were loathed by almost everyone.

The Metropolitan Police had been paying Powell a weekly handout of £1. They paid Davis a lump sum of £150.

As Cuffay pointed out in his defiant speech from the dock: 'The present Government is now supported by a regular organised system of espionage which is a disgrace to this great and boasted free country.'

A CENTURY and a half later the same system is still in place, though it has become much more sophisticated. Everyone in the working-class movement knows that police spies and agents provocateurs are still used against us.

We don't get paranoid about it, but take obvious precautions. Sometimes, though, we need a reminder, and the Stagg case surely provides one.

Not only is it a prime example of police tunnel vision: an *idée fixe* carried to the absurdest lengths. It also reminds us how far the police are prepared to go in their dirty business of entrapment.

Peter Fryer

Swedish 'dreamland' turns to nightmare

THE return to office of the Social Democrats in Sweden in the midst of a deepening economic crisis can provide valuable lessons for workers in Britain and the rest of Europe, especially those who still hope that the election of social-democratic or Labour parties can answer their problems.

The Social Democrats won 45.6 per cent of the popular vote, an increase on their 37.7 per cent in the general election of September 1991.

Commenting on the results, the 'Financial Times' (19 September) said:

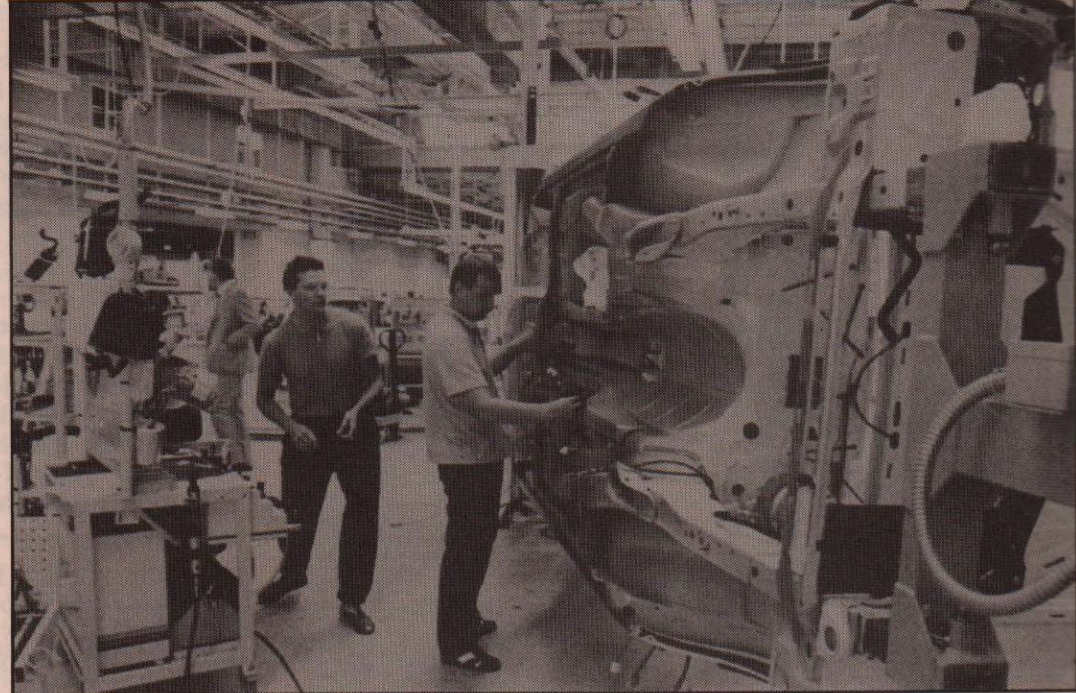
'The outcome is a nightmare scenario for financial markets concerned that a Social Democratic government dependent on the left might be unable to implement tough policies to tackle Sweden's deep budget deficit and fast-rising public debt.'

Repudiated

But Social Democratic Party leader Ingvar Carlsson immediately repudiated the idea that there would be any coalition with the Left party. This is the former Communist Party. With 6 per cent of the vote it achieved is its best result since 1945.

Carlsson had been hoping to form a coalition with the Liberal party — a member of the outgoing right-wing government. But the Liberals made such a poor showing that this plan has been scotched.

The Social Democrats fought the election on a programme of public spending cuts designed to reduce a budget deficit that is expected to total the equivalent of 11 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) this year.



Volvo production: unemployment in Sweden, currently 14 per cent, is set to soar even higher

Carlsson also promised to stabilise the mounting public debt — now running close to 100 per cent of the GNP.

Before being installed in office the Social Democratic leader promised 'very strong measures' to tackle the country's public finances.

'Our main policy will be an economic policy which gets down the budget deficit, stabilises the state debt and reduces unemployment,' he said.

But the cutting back of government spending is bound to increase sharply the level of unemployment, already at 14 per cent.

Right-wing leaders of the

Labour Party in Britain have long looked to Sweden as their 'dreamland'. An extensive programme of welfare benefits, a system of tripartite relations between the trade union leaders, the employers and the state seemed to have brought lasting prosperity to that country.

Sweden's relative prosperity was based entirely on its ability to export valuable raw materials, such as wood, as well as highly specialised commodities, such as quality cars and engineering products, to the world market, especially to the European market.

It is the crisis in Europe and the consequent stagnation of

markets for Swedish exports that has plunged the country into the biggest recession for almost 50 years.

It is this that has brought a sharp rise in unemployment and the consequent strains on welfare benefits.

In Sweden, a Social Democratic government is now called upon to spearhead the struggle by the employing class to take back from the working class all the gains it has been forced to concede throughout the post-war period.

It is a government that must rapidly come into collision with the working class, as Carlsson has already indicated.

Slanderers slammed

BY COLIN PENDLETON

DELEGATES at Barking and Dagenham trades council gasped as a letter was read out. 'Is there an address?' asked one trade unionist. 'Does it say which planet?'

The letter was from David Hyland's Rotherham-based International Communist Party (ICP), its latest attack on the Workers Revolutionary Party and Workers Aid for Bosnia.

Workers Aid has sent eight relief convoys to Bosnian refugee camps and the beleaguered mining town of Tuzla, where Muslim, Serb and Croat workers remain united against aggression and 'ethnic cleansing'. Links have been made with the Tuzla trades unions.

As part of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, the Workers Revolutionary Party is proud to participate in this real international solidarity, which was initiated by a Serb comrade of the Workers International.

But the Workers Aid convoys have been made possible by three things. First, the support and generosity of trades unionists and ordinary people in several countries, who have contributed money, food, clothing and whatever they could.

Second, the steadfastness of Bosnian workers, artists and refugees, and the welcome the Workers Aid convoys have received in Tuzla.

Third, the willingness of young workers (and some not so young!), unemployed people and students from several countries to endure mountain tracks, hardships, and bureaucratic delays to drive into a war zone with help for the Bosnian

people. The horrors of war in former Yugoslavia, the bombardment of hospitals and schools, the torching of villages, the rape camps and 'ethnic cleansing', evoking memories of Hitler's fascism, impel most people to feel something must be done. They arouse no such passion from the International Communist Party (ICP).

The ICP and its colleagues in the US Workers League have not demonstrated at the Foreign Office or the United Nations against imperialist partition plans, or Serb Chetnik and Croat Ustashi fascist atrocities which these encouraged. They haven't sent so much as a tin of beans to Bosnia.

But when Workers Aid for Bosnia held a fund-raising benefit in London, featuring cellist Vedran Smailovic (who had played on the shell-torn streets of Sarajevo to protest at the slaughter of his people), the ICP were outside accosting concert-goers, accusing Workers Aid of concealing its politics behind humanitarian works. They impressed nobody.

The ICP has sent every trade union and Labour MP who supported Workers Aid for Bosnia an expensive booklet denouncing the WRP and Workers Aid as 'gun-runners'. It asked people to believe that the imperialists whose UN forces control Bosnia's roads and airports, enforcing their arms embargo, entrusted strategic arms supplies to Workers Aid's worn-out lorries, travelling over mountain tracks and through half a dozen hostile checkpoints.

While Workers Aid supporters were out collecting funds for diesel and new tyres, the ICP assured anyone daft enough to believe it that Workers Aid convoys operated under 'commer-

cial contracts paid for by European arms dealers'.

It also declared the WRP an 'appendage of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy', likely to join a Tory coalition. (However, David Hyland leaves this out of his letters to MPs!) No wonder a brother at Dagenham wondered when Hyland would get around to mentioning little green men and flying saucers.

Insulted

Many trades unionists and other Workers Aid supporters feel insulted by the Hylandites' patronising suggestion that they don't know what they are supporting. Bury, Radcliffe and District trades council secretary Brian Marsden replied to the ICP's letter:

'Dear Mr Hyland, I have just received your letter in respect of Workers Aid for Bosnia, and take exception to the suggestion that I, or Bury, Radcliffe & District Trades Council are being "duped" or are naive in our support for Workers Aid. The Trades Council supported Workers Aid politically, as well as on humanitarian grounds. Who was behind the initiative was not an issue; however, the organisers deserve credit for developing Workers Aid.'

'The accusations you make in respect of WRP/Workers Aid are very serious. Unfortunately you do not back them up with any hard fact. If you wish me to take them seriously, you will have to provide tangible evidence.'

'If you wish to engage in a polemic or trade insults with the WRP that is entirely your affair, not one for the Trades Council.'

Workers Press pointed out that lies about 'gun-running'

were used by Serb forces as a pretext for attacking convoys, and could endanger the lives of Workers Aid volunteers. The Hylandites said this was nothing to do with them. They affect surprise at being branded allies of the Serb-nationalist Chetniks.

The only way people in Tuzla and refugees abroad can keep in touch is by satellite telephone link. Workers Aid for Bosnia has acknowledged that it was asked to carry a satellite telecommunications dish for Tuzla Telecom, although as it happens this was sent by other means.

'The charges are proven', declared Hyland's 'International Committee' (statement, 5 August). 'WRP admits role in transporting satellite dish to Bosnia! Once again, unions, trades councils and MPs were circulated. Somehow references to "gun-running", "arms dealers" and coalition governments have been dropped, at least from print.'

But backing the claim that telecommunications equipment constituted 'strategic military equipment', the 'International Committee' cites authority.

'According to Ron Redmond, spokesman for the UN High Commission for Refugees headquartered in Geneva, telephone equipment much less sophisticated than a satellite dish has been held up at the Sarajevo airport for months because of Serb objections to its transport into the Bosnian capital.'

Maybe the UN should let the 'Hyland Light Infantry', with its sensitivity to 'Serb objections', check all lorries heading for Bosnia, and decide which aid organisations are 'genuine', i.e. not likely to upset the Chetniks? Liars like the ICP certainly don't belong in the workers' movement.

Remember Surinder Bassi

'Always the first to challenge...'

SURINDER BASSI was on the picket line for over a year outside the Burnsall's factory in Smethwick. She had gone on strike for the right to join a trade union (the GMB general workers' union), for health and safety, and against forced overtime and the meagre wages for dirty and gruelling work.

Surinder, together with Darshan Kaur, became a spokeswoman for this historic strike of Asian workers. They travelled the length and breadth of the country — speaking to the Timex strikers in Dundee; at the benefit concert held for the Burnsall strikers in London; to standing ovations in Chesterfield and Sheffield and at the Women Against Pit Closures rally in Hyde Park where, with Darshan holding the microphone for her, Surinder spoke

'It is very cold and very hard standing on the picket line. But to be honest with you, we are not tired. We are very happy. Yesterday at the demo we saw bosses going past with their heads down — they have never done that before... Our kids are really pleased with us... Even if what we have done doesn't help us, the kids will get something out of it'
— Surinder Bassi (19 February 1950 - 11 July 1994).

A memorial meeting was held in

abandon the strike.

In December 1993, Surinder and Darshan came to London for what was to be their last trip to the city together. They went to receive the Martin Ennals Award for Civil Liberties, in recognition of their courageous struggle for fundamental trade union rights which are currently denied to workers.

Earlier this year Surinder used her industrial tribunal award on equal pay to take her daughter Narinder on a holiday to India. Soon after her return

she was taken ill. She died on 11 July in the Queen Elizabeth hospital, Birmingham.

History

Surinder came to England from India in 1968. After her two children Narinder and Kamaljit were born, she worked for many years in the textile industry in Bradford. Later she was self-employed when the family ran a mini-market, before moving to Smethwick where Surinder took her place in the history of the

trade union movement and the ongoing struggle of Asian women in Britain against exploitation and racism.

In the words of the song written by Tej Purewal for the Burnsall strike:

*I am tired of bowing down
The time has come to rise up
and stand tall
From today, I vow to have
no fear...*

■ For information contact the Burnsall Strikers Support Committee (London) 071-713 7907.



Surinder Bassi

simply and directly to thousands of people about the reality of their experiences: the industrial injuries, the daily abuse, and the employers' sheer contempt for workers' rights.

Surinder was always the first to challenge the racist management, the strikebreakers, and the police who continually harassed the strikers. Her determination and enthusiasm and her vibrant personality gave the Burnsall strikers the tenacity and strength which carried them through the long months on the picket line and enabled them to resist the continual efforts by paid trade union officials to make them



The low-paid Burnsall strikers went on strike for the right to join a trade union—the GMB

City lights

Not a penny more...

THE Lord Archer-Anglia Television saga refuses to die.

The story so far. Lord Archer, best-selling novelist and Tory politician, is married to Mary Archer (she prefers to be called Dr Archer), one-time Cambridge University lecturer and since 1987 director of Anglia Television, the commercial station holding the franchise for eastern England. She is also chairwoman of the Lloyd's hardship fund and is variously described by friends as 'fragrant' and 'punctilious'.

Lord Archer, formerly Mr Jeffrey Archer, was created a life peer in 1992 and was deputy chairman of the Tory party from 1985 to 1986. He is a close friend of the prime minister. But for the Anglia franchise affair, it was confidently predicted that Archer would have been given a ministerial job in the latest reshuffle.

He has had what can only be described as a volatile career. He became Tory MP for Louth in 1969. In 1974 he stood down after a businessman started proceedings against him to recover funds that Archer had invested in Aquablast, a Canadian company that turned out to be fraudulent. Archer was financially ruined but bounced back with millions after he discovered a talent for producing popular fiction. 'Not a Penny more, not a Penny less' was the work that launched him back on his way to fortune.

In April of this year, Lord Archer started fund-raising activities for the Kurds of northern Iraq by organising a pop concert. This brought him into contact with Brooks Saib, a London-based Kurdish businessman. Saib ran two companies which were wound up in 1991 with unpaid debts of over £70,000.

BACK to Anglia. In September 1992 the board laid down strict rules for share dealing by directors and their spouses.

It also included dealings by people having connections with Anglia's officers who could be deemed 'interested' parties. Specifically, dealings by Anglia directors or their spouses were prohibited in the period from the end of the financial year, 31 December, to publication of the company's accounts in mid-March.

In May 1993 the government changed the rules that had previously prevented any company from holding more than one major broadcasting franchise. Under the new rules Anglia, as a smaller broadcasting company, became a prime takeover target by one of the larger franchises.

This made its shares highly attractive. In seven days in January 1994 Anglia shares rose by 13 per cent. Experts said that in the absence of a possible takeover the share price may well have dropped.

A possible takeover of Anglia by MAI — the company that controlled Meridian Broadcasting, the southern England ITV company — was discussed by the Anglia board for the second time on 12 January 1994. The very next day Lord Archer phoned Simon Wharmby, who worked for the stockbrokers Charles Stanley.

Lord Archer eventually placed orders to buy 50,000 Anglia shares. The broker assumed that Archer was buying the shares for himself and was therefore surprised when he was told that the transaction was to be recorded in the name of Saib, who had no account with Stanley. Saib was to be contacted at the Archers' London home on the Albert Embankment.

Stanley's finance director Peter Hurst was concerned at the size of the order in Saib's name. For, given that payment need not be made until 'account day', Stanley was in fact giving

the unknown Saib a loan of £121,000.

What if on account day he failed to come up with the money? When challenged by Hurst, Wharmby said that Archer had in fact placed the order. Stanley was convinced that Archer would have been liable in law for payment if Saib had failed to come across with the cash.

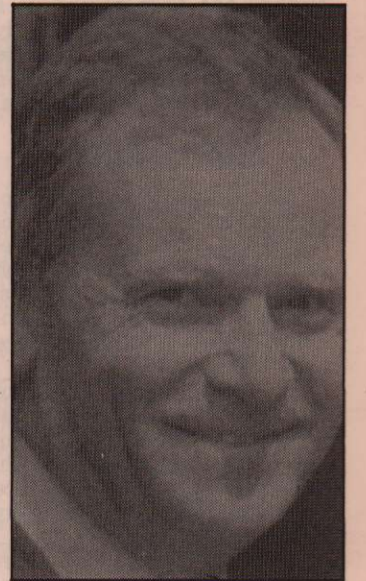
In fact, because of the clever way in which Archer had arranged the dates for purchase no cash was needed for the transaction.

On 18 January Anglia recommended the offer made for the company by MAI and the share price soared. The same day Archer instructed Wharmby to sell all 50,000 shares.

Over £77,000 was made on the deal, with not a penny being laid out.

The directors of Stanley themselves ordered an inquiry into Lord Archer's share purchases, which as one director put it were 'well-timed'. It was then that an employee of the company pointed out that Dr Archer was a director of Anglia, at which Stanley's managing director exclaimed: 'My God, this is front-page stuff.'

The Stock Exchange began an investigation into Lord



Archer: placed the order

Archer's dealings, the results of which were passed over to the Department of Trade and Industry. The DTI found that there was no case to answer.

After seeking legal advice, Stanley had sent a cheque for £77,000 which was posted to Lord Archer's London home. On 10 February the cheque was paid into Saib's account at the National Westminster bank in Cromwell Road. The payment had gone ahead so as not to alert Archer to the investigation that was under way.

There were three significant withdrawals from Saib's account. There were payments to two external accounts totalling £22,000 concerned with individual organisations unconnected with Lord Archer. There was a cash withdrawal of £10,000.

We shall see whether the fact that the Anglia share transactions in which Lord Archer was involved were carried out in the prohibited period will lead to further actions.

Homeless easy targets

THE Department of Employment is threatening to prosecute the editor of the 'Big Issue', the magazine sold by homeless people, unless he discloses the names of the 700 people who sell it.

John Bird is liable to a series of daily fines under the 1986 Social Security Act if he fails to comply with the demand. The department wants to check the names of the sellers on their computer to find out if any seller is claiming social security but working more than the permitted number of hours.

Threadneedle

Homeless in the 'Land of the Free'

BY PAUL HENDERSON

MOST readers of Workers Press will be familiar with the 'Big Issue', the newspaper sold by homeless people, which prints articles of general interest, not necessarily related to homelessness.

'Street Sheet' is a monthly paper produced by the Coalition on Homelessness in San Francisco, California. Less 'up-market' than the 'Big Issue', it is written by the homeless, and its articles are about homelessness and the homeless community.

Brutal

It describes its writers' hopes and aspirations, and gives tips to the homeless about how to stay alive. Most of all, it gives a monthly catalogue of the brutal treatment, little removed from barbarism, meted out to the homeless.

California is probably one of the richest areas in the world, and San Francisco is one of its richest cities. Yet in this city homelessness is increasing rapidly, fuelled by the collapse of jobs in the so-called Silicone Valley hi-tech industrial region. The response of the city authorities has been to drive the homeless off the streets, dressing up their attacks in liberal phrases about 'help for the homeless'.

cisco is illegal. This may seem strange, in that it cannot be easy to find people who actually want to be homeless; in fact, the homeless don't really have a choice in the matter. What the laws against homelessness do is give the police a free hand in harassing the homeless, who usually end up with fines they cannot pay or in jail. It also gives a green light to thugs who regularly assault and even kill people living on the streets.

Just over a year ago, in August 1993, the Matrix Program came on stream, instigated by the mayor of the city, Frank Jordan. Matrix's stated aim was to use the resources of the city to find the homeless homes. In reality, only a tiny minority were helped in this way. For example, according to 'Street Sheet', social services department figures show that out of 2,246 people contacted between August 1993 and April 1994 by Matrix, only 136 moved into permanent housing.

Failure

The failure of Matrix left those who could not be found housing subject to the other parts of the programme. 'Street Sheet' describes these parts as 'nothing more than a system that justifies harassment and violates civil rights'.

The paper adds that 'though the program was adapted to include a semi-liberal, social ser-

vice pretext, all it's really done is levy fines on poverty-stricken people, take their belongings, pass out "information and referrals", cart homeless people off to jail, and throw them back onto the street where they were in the first place'.

'Street Sheet' points out that 'the true backbone of Matrix is its law enforcement component'. Between August 1993 and February 1994, the police cited 6,268 homeless individuals for

'What the laws against homelessness do is give the police a free hand in harassing the homeless, who usually end up with fines they cannot pay or in jail.'

violating police and park codes. As most of the homeless also have no money, most of the \$78 fines become jail sentences. In a city that has closed 90 per cent of its public toilets, the police have issued 609 citations for 'urinating in public'.

'Street Sheet' describes a scene as homeless people are fed from a soup kitchen:

'A woman of mild manner was about to be served her lunch when the Matrix police approached her. Erica was hungry, but they wanted her not to accept the food that was being offered. Why would the police condone hunger? She was arrested

for conspiracy to serve food and resisting arrest.'

The San Francisco police take the supermarket trolleys into which are loaded the only possessions of the homeless — their blankets, sleeping bags and other things — and throw them into the garbage crusher. They wake the homeless in the morning with truncheons, boots and obscenities, to drive them out of the city squares.

Foremost

This is the situation in one of the US's foremost cities as the social problems thrown up by the crisis multiply. It is clear that the homeless in San Francisco, as much as the travellers in Britain, the mentally ill and the street children in South American cities, are rapidly becoming 'surplus to requirements', a 'luxury' for a capitalist system that can no longer contain its contradictions.

One problem for the authorities is the changing social composition of this surplus. In the case of the homeless and the unemployed, in all countries they are being joined by increasing numbers of people who are literate and articulate, people who will not sit down and silently accept their situation.

In the US, sister papers to 'Street Sheet' are in Chicago ('Street Wise') and New York ('Street Watch'), and there may well be others.

Death threats to Brazil journalists

JOURNALISTS who exposed the activities of an 'extermination group' allegedly linked with senior police officers and responsible for killings in the Brazilian state of Sergipe, have been threatened themselves.

Cesar Gomes Gama, Jose Antonio Moura Bonfim, and Marcos Cardoso, journalists with the newspaper 'Ciniform', and commercial director Elenaldo dos Santos Santana and other employees of the paper, published in Aracaju in Sergipe, have had death threats.

In the past few years 1,800 peasants have been killed in Brazil, mostly by assassins hired by the landlords. In June the vice-president of the university workers' union FASUBRA, Jose Luis Hernandez, and his partner Rosa Hernandez Sundermann, a farmworkers' leader, were murdered at their home in Sao Paulo. Rosa and Jose were members of the United Workers' Socialist Party. Nobody has been named as a suspect for their killing. Nobody has been brought to trial for the earlier murder of Amazon peasants' leader Chico Mendes.

Allegations

Since July 1994, the newspaper 'Ciniform' (Clasificados e Informacoes) has published reports about an extermination group called A Missao (The Mission) and allegations that members of the state military police have been involved.

On 14 September, as two of the journalists made a broadcast about the extermination group from their office, it was surrounded by heavily armed men. Since then armed men have repeatedly passed the building.

Workers Press urges journalists and other trades unionists to send messages to the Brazilian government demanding that it guarantees the lives and safety of the 'Ciniform' journalists, and other workers and their families.

Ask why the federal authorities have taken no action after the serious allegations concerning state police in Sergipe; and what the government intends to do to stop the death squads, and bring the murderers to trial.

Send messages of protest to:
Sr Alexandre Dupreyrat,
Ministro da Justica, Ministerio da Justica, Esplanado dos Ministerios, Bloco 23, 70.064 Brasilia DF, BRAZIL. Faxes to: +55 61 321 5145/224 2448;

H.E. Rubens Antonio Barbosa, Embassy of Brazil, 32 Green Street, London W1Y 4AT. Fax: 071-493 5105.

Messages of solidarity can be sent to: 'Ciniform' (Clasificados e Informacoes), Rua Laranjeiras 741, Aracaju, Sergipe, BRAZIL.

Clinton's invasion is Haiti hypocrisy

PRESIDENT Clinton has sent US troops into Haiti for the second time in a century, under a deal negotiated by ex-president Jimmy Carter that will leave the military — Haitian and US — in control.

On the night the US forces went in, Haitian police armed with clubs and semi-automatic weapons attacked supporters of exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide gathered by Port-au-Prince waterfront.

The agreement signed by Carter and Haiti's military dictator General Raoul Cedras did not require the general to leave, nor provide for president Aristide's return.

Aristide, overthrown in a bloody military coup after winning the country's first democratic elections four years ago,

has rejected the agreement. The former radical priest, who won the hearts of Haiti's poor with his sermons against the rich exploiters, gained 67 per cent of the votes in 1990. It is thought that as a returning exile he would gain more.

But the US administration wants to treat Aristide's years

in exile as his term of office, making him face fresh elections, while leaving the army, which murdered over 3,000 Aristide supporters after it took power in 1991, a force to be reckoned with. In the countryside, where the majority of Haitians live, this is reinforced by private armies maintained by local warlords.

Aristide's popularity with Haiti's poor is the reason he is thoroughly disliked by Haiti's rich super-power neighbour, which for all its talk of freedom has always preferred right-wing gangsters who will guard capitalist interests. The US state department published a book denouncing his short-lived government, the CIA told con-

gressmen he was mad, and Republican Senators like Jesse Helms and Bob Dole claimed the Catholic priest was really a Marxist.

Just over a year ago, General Cedras signed a 'power-sharing' agreement providing for Aristide's eventual return. But before it could be implemented the justice minister was shot dead, probably with the connivance of police chief Michel Francois. Some of Aristide's opponents are already boasting they will do the same to Aristide. Could they be counting on CIA approval?

Some 25 countries — including Britain, France, Jamaica, Argentina, Jordan and Israel — have been cajoled or leant on to

provide units to reinforce the US. But Clinton's political calculations, whether attempting to strike a pose on the domestic or international scene, are likely to be subordinated to US strategic interests, as perceived by the Pentagon and Washington Street.

It could be that by the time Haiti is due for elections, US interests expect to have ready stooges they can trust. The last time the US marines went into Haiti was before the World War I. They stopped economic penetration by imperialist rivals, and stayed around to give Haiti a constitution, and a president Jean-Claude Duvalier, better known as the infamous 'Papa Doc'.

BY PIERRE DUPONT

British general helps strangle Sarajevo

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

SERB nationalist forces have tightened their stranglehold on the people of Sarajevo, Bosnia's capital, and British United Nations commander Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose is helping them do it.

People in Sarajevo are facing their third winter under siege. Serb forces have cut off water, electricity and gas supplies. They have closed all roads into the city. Last week, as Bosnian forces tried to weaken their grip with a mortar attack on a Serb-held road, General Rose threatened to call in NATO bombers — against the Bosnians!

Serb forces elsewhere in Bosnia have stepped up their racist 'ethnic cleansing', forcing more than 3,000 Muslims from their homes in the Bijeljina district, beating and robbing them before herding them over the front line. The UN protests, but does nothing.

Instead, the brave British general, knowing the Bosnians have neither planes nor air defence, threatens to bomb them for defending their own people and capital city! NATO headquarters in Brussels said it was

ready for action, and 'heartened' that the UN commander felt the same.

Rose claimed the Bosnians were trying to 'provoke' the Serbs into retaliation so as to invite UN intervention. The NATO bombing threat is the culmination of almost eight months of treachery, lies and suffering inflicted on the people of Sarajevo.

In February, with great publicity, NATO issued its ultimatum to the Serb forces, to stop their shelling of Sarajevo and to get them to withdraw heavy weapons. As Workers Press said at the time (26 February), this merely enabled the Serbs to regroup for action elsewhere. In March they began their onslaught against Gorazde in the east.

Forgotten

General Rose announced that Sarajevo was to become an 'open city', with safe access for aid. But Serb forces continued to surround the city. Even the Pope couldn't fly in. The UN wants Sarajevans to feel the world has forgotten them.

'The feeling now is of being in a room with all the windows closed,' says Jasmin Spahovic, a police officer. 'When I think of the coming winter, I think of having to burn my furniture for heat. We're broke, we're surrounded and we feel like animals in the zoo.'

Doctors at the Kosovo hospital say stress-related illnesses have soared. In the first part of the war there was shock, but people found reserves of strength, says psychologist Zeljko Trogranic. 'But this year, since the shelling eased off, we



War victim in Sarajevo: a British UN general threatened to bomb Bosnians for defending themselves

have seen mounting suicide, depression, apathy and alcoholism. We estimate that stress disorders are now at nine times pre-war levels.'

Last month Serb forces closed the one route left into

Sarajevo, over Mount Igman. Their next move was to cut water, electricity and gas supplies.

On the far side of the UN-controlled airport, the suburb of Hrasnica remains cut off from the rest of the city, and overlooked by Serb Chetnik snipers. Many youngsters have been killed or wounded trying to cross the airport at night to fetch food for their families.

Release

Locals claim UN troops who capture the bread-runners at night release them during daytime to try and get back under fire from the snipers.

A few months ago, when Bosnian forces were regaining

ground north of Tuzla, France UN spokesperson called for a strike against 'whichever side was on the offensive.'

General Rose's threat, following European Union mediator Lord Owen's clear statement that the purpose of UN forces in Bosnia was to enforce the arms embargo, shows which side the UN and NATO are on. They are the Bosnians' hands, letting imperialist's local thugs — Croats, Ustashi and Serb Chetniks — do their dirty work.

This doesn't just expose the bankruptcy of liberals and Labour leaders who urge reliance on the UN. It exposes those who, behind 'anti-imperialist' smokescreens, oppose solidarity with the Bosnian workers.

Keeping sport out of politics

DISABLED Chinese sportsman Fang Zheng has a good idea why, despite hard training, he was kept out of this month's Far East and South Pacific Disabled Games. The 28-year-old chairbound discus champion thinks it might have had something to do with the circumstances in which he became disabled.

In 1989 his legs were crushed by an army tank sent to put down the students and workers demonstrating in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. Not the kind of thing Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping wants people abroad reminded of.

But Deng's son Deng Pufang, who heads China's Handicap Association, denies having anything to do with Fang being kept home.

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