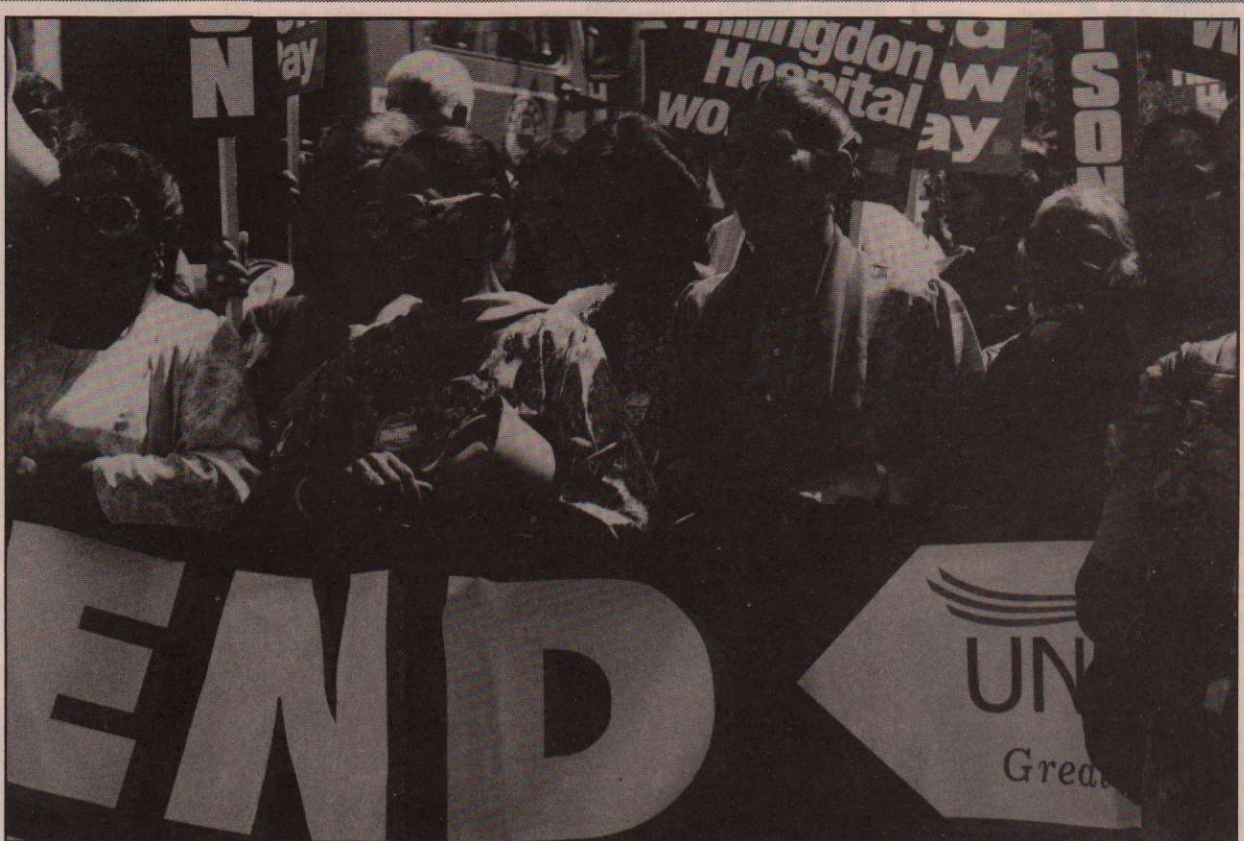


Hillingdon strikers 'wrong people to pick on'!

'Pall Mall picked on us because they thought we were weak — but they picked on the wrong people,' declared Malkat Bilku, striking Hillingdon hospital worker and Unison shop steward (centre in picture), to a 2,000-strong demonstration of supporters last Saturday.

The Hillingdon hospital workers have been on strike for ten months, through the cold weather at Christmas and the New Year and in the face of attacks by racists.

They have supported and been supported by the Liverpool dockers and the Turkish textile and JJ Fast Food workers in north London. On Friday 21 June they were to be seen on the postal workers' picket at Mount Pleasant sorting office in central London (see Workers Press, 29 June).



Three weeks' wait for next

Workers Press!

We are taking a break for a couple of weeks to 'recharge our batteries' so that we can come back fighting-fit to build up the forces for the conference in October on the need for a new socialist party of the working class (see centre pages).

There will be no paper on 27 July or 3 August. The next issue will be out on 10 August. That gives you plenty of time to get in letters, interviews photos, cartoons, articles, reports, etc. Please resolve not just to read the paper but to contribute to it!

Disband RUC! Withdraw British troops!

DOWN WITH STATE

TERRORISM

BRITISH imperialism's attempt to find a new way of ruling in the north of Ireland — the so-called 'peace process' — lies in ruins. It was based on duping the nationalist working class through the leadership of Sinn Fein that they could obtain equality in civil rights through negotiations if the IRA stopped its armed campaign and surrendered its weapons.

Last week as the RUC bulldozed and batoned the residents of the Garvaghy Road estate at Dumree on the outskirts of Portadown to make way for the Orange Order to parade they demolished a central concept of the 'peace process' — that there could be peaceful, democratic progress to democratic rights inside the six-county set-up.

Also smashed — surely forever — was any belief that the armed forces of the British state in Ireland would treat protesting nationalists in the same way as loyalists.

Yet again the rulers of the statelet — the remnant of Britain's oldest colony — demonstrated it is irreformable and that no matter how many concessions Sinn Fein make there is no basis for a peaceful, gradual road to a liberal democracy.

BY JOHN STEELE

The RUC followed up their brutality on the Garvaghy Road with an invasion of the small nationalist area on the lower Ormeau Road in Belfast, again to enforce an Orange parade.

Scores of armed vehicles and hundreds of police hemmed in the residents, many unable to leave their own houses, as the Orange Order 'brethren' strutted by with their bands.

Nationalists showed their anger at the decisions to allow the Orange marches and took on the police in pitched battles in towns across the north. Vehicles and buildings went up in flames and shots were fired at the police.

Dermot McShane, a 35-year-old factory worker, was killed in Derry when a

British army personnel carrier rammed a board he had been behind.

A section of the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force killed a Catholic taxi driver and there has surely been nothing more sickening than to hear Tory MPs praise the loyalist paramilitaries for restraint — in not killing more Catholics!

What may be seen as a simple act of a procession from a church, or the defence of the right to march, cannot be separated from the events of recent history.

Burning

Since the widespread burning of Catholic homes in 1969 and the early 1970s, working-class Catholics have tended to stay in the areas they know and these have spread in size. They are now protesting at marches going past their

houses which are organised by and include many who participated in house burnings and who have condoned every act of discrimination against Catholics.

The actions of the RUC at Dumree reflect the problems Britain has in changing the way it rules in the north of Ireland. Since the inception of the state it ruled through the Unionist party and a system of discrimination at every level against Catholics.

Now, in order to behead the nationalist revolt, it seeks to incorporate the Sinn Fein leadership in a six-county administration with limited decision making powers — the 'parity of esteem' talked about in the joint documents from London and Dublin.

Following this line RUC Chief Constable Annesley originally banned the Orange parade down the Garvaghy

Road. But, in the face of the refusal of the Orangemen to compromise, the true political character and allegiance of the RUC leadership and ranks was shown.

In scenes reminiscent of the 1974 loyalist workers' strike, the police stood by as handfuls of people wearing Orange sashes blocked main roads across the north.

Catholics were attacked and intimidated from their homes and business properties owned by Catholics were damaged.

The RUC, like the civil service and other sections of the six-county administration, has links throughout the entire British establishment forged during the 74 years when it, in conjunction with the British army, harassed, tortured and murdered Irish nationalists.

Reactionary

There can be no united workers' movement built that does not have at its centre the demand for the disbandment of this reactionary force.

These are critical and dangerous times for the working class which is divided along religious lines to a far greater degree than at any other time in the history of the state.

This is not just a political

division but, increasingly, an actual physical separation — living in different areas, attending different schools and not mixing socially. And in many areas Protestant and Catholic working-class youth are sharing the same levels of social deprivation and unemployment.

Danger

The danger is that without an independent working-class organisation fighting for the unity of the working class against the state forces many of the youth will follow the loyalist killer gangs or the blind-alley of Republicanism.

This organisation can only be built by taking to a higher level the unity of Protestant and Catholic workers which already exists in many trade union struggles.

This means fighting for workers' defence groups against sectarian attacks and the development of a campaign around the central issues of state terrorism, disbandment of the RUC, repressive legislation, and the withdrawal of British troops.

■ See page 2 for Irish Republican Socialist Party response to the death of Dermot McShane.

Tolpuddle Martyrs Rally
 Sunday 21 July
 Programme commences 12.30pm
 March 2.30pm
 Old Dorchester Crown Court will be open 10am-1.30pm

Close Down Harmondsworth
 Saturday 27 July
 Picket 12noon-2pm
 Outside the detention centre on the Colnbrook bypass (A4). Transport: 81 bus from Hounslow West or U3 bus from Heathrow airport.
 See page 2 for further information

There can be no united workers' movement built that does not have at its centre the demand for the disbandment of this reactionary force. These are critical and dangerous times for the working class which is divided along religious lines to a far greater degree than at any other time in the history of the state. This is not just a political

What a Labour government will face

IT IS becoming clearer by the day that an incoming Labour government will face a far more serious economic crisis than could have been anticipated even a year ago. The 'recovery' which the government boasts about involves:

■ A rapid deterioration in public finances which must mean rising taxes and yet more severe cuts in state spending;

■ A drastic worsening in the trade balance as consumers buy more and more imported goods and exports show every sign of stagnation;

■ Increasing tension on the London stock exchange where prices fell drastically last week in response to an even bigger fall across the Atlantic.

Some 'recovery'!

ONLY two weeks ago Chancellor Kenneth Clarke was painting a glowing picture of the British economy: the inflation rate was set to fall, unemployment likewise; Britain was attracting inward investment at a growing rate, and so on. The middle class was led to believe that tax cuts before the election might still be possible.

Bank of England governor Eddie George put this windy nonsense into perspective only a week later with his warning that interest rates would have to rise to check the rising tide of consumer spending.

George's warning came on the day that £12bn was wiped off share values in London, and figures were released of government borrowing that were far worse than expected.

The Treasury was forced to borrow £3.65bn in June alone to bridge the yawning gap between its income from taxes and its spending. The City had expected a shortfall of only £3bn. In addition the borrowing figure for May was revised upwards by £350m.

Nobody now believes Clarke's estimate, made only last week, that the government's borrowing requirement for the year would amount to £27bn. A far higher figure is now expected.

Receipts from taxes are far lower than the government estimated at the time of the last budget. This reflected the far slower rate of growth in the economy than Clarke predicted and the fact that businessmen are finding more and more ways of avoiding paying their taxes.

The government will have to finance this growing deficit, and the only way it can do this is to borrow from the banks and other financial institutions. Hence George's warning that interest rates may have to rise to secure the necessary loans.

The dive in share prices came as a result not only of the latest dire borrowing figures. The London market was following a serious drop in share prices on Wall Street, which on Tuesday alone saw 3 per cent wiped off the US market.

With inflationary pressures mounting, US interest rates look set to rise and the fall in bond and share prices is an anticipation of this. Analysts were last week warning of 'a vicious circle in which turbulence would spread back and forth between shares, bonds and currencies', as the *Evening Standard* last week put it.

A LABOUR government will inherit this crisis. It will be a government tied to the needs of the capitalist class, and one therefore forced to attack head-on the working class and sections of the middle class. Millions of workers still cling to the hope that things might be better under Labour, if only slightly so.

They are in for a great shock. To prepare for this shock NOW, to bring together as many of the most advanced layers in the working class as possible in order to lay the foundations for a new party of the working class, is the decisive task for today.

Engels and genocide

IN THE newly published volume of essays in memory of Tom Kemp (*History, Economic History and the Future of Marxism*, edited by Terry Brotherstone and Geoff Pilling) there is a passage concerning me which needs clarification.

On page 344, Terry Brotherstone mentions a controversy in the letters page of the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1991. Someone accused Marx and Engels of 'advocating genocide'. This charge was 'rebutted' by Nicholas Jacobs, but then Brian Pearce made a contribution that was 'more sympathetic' to the position of the accuser. However, he received a 'riposte' from Jacobs.

Readers should know that I simply quoted from Engels's 1849 article 'The Magyar Struggle', where he writes: 'At the first victorious rising of the French proletariat... the Austrian, Germans and Magyars will be set free and wreak a bloody revenge on the Slav barbarians.'

'The general war which will then break out will... wipe out all these petty hidebound nations [he means, primarily, the Czechs and the Croats], down to their very

names. The next world war will result in the disappearance from the face of the earth not only of reactionary classes and dynasties, but also of entire reactionary peoples. And that, too, is a step forward.'

Jacobs's 'riposte' consisted of saying that Engels was not advocating anything, merely prophesying, and of describing my quotation as 'syntactically inaccurate and misleading'. He did not offer a different translation.

The one given above is taken from Volume 8 of the *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, page 238. Mine was identical except that I wrote 'annihilating' where this version had 'will... wipe out'. The German original is 'vernichten'.

Brian Pearce
New Barnet, Herts.

Correction

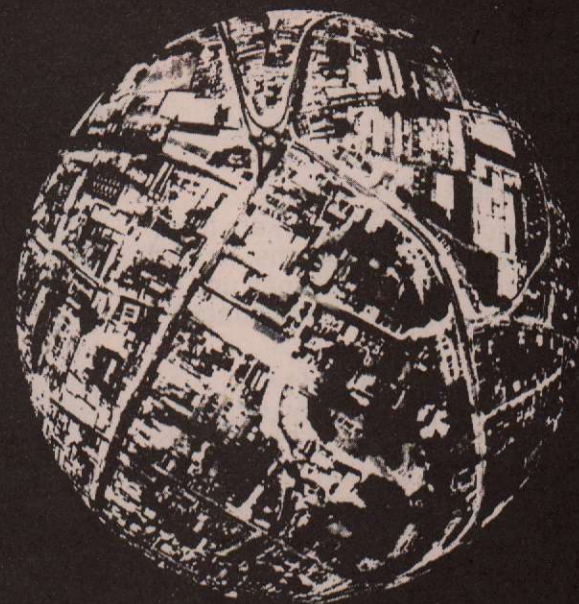
THE quote from Albert Einstein on the letters page two weeks ago (6 July) missed a sentence before the sentence beginning 'For large densities...'

The sentence runs: 'In reality space will probably be of a uniform character and the present theory be valid only as a limiting case.'

History, Economic History and the Future of Marxism, Essays in Memory of Tom Kemp (1921-1993), edited by Terry Brotherstone and Geoff Pilling, is available from Porcupine Press, price £14.95. Individuals may order direct (add £1.50 for postage) from Porcupine Press, Woburn Bookshop, 10 Woburn Walk, London WC1H 0JL. Tel: 0171-388 7278. Fax: 0171-263 5196.

HISTORY, ECONOMIC HISTORY AND THE FUTURE OF MARXISM

ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF TOM KEMP



EDITED BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE AND GEOFF PILLING



Dermot McShane protest in the Falls Road, Belfast

Irish Republican Socialists tell British Army/RUC, 'Leave our community', after Derry death

Statement from Derry IRSP Ard Comhairle (executive committee) member Ciaran McLaughlin:

THE Irish Republican Socialist Party are outraged at the death of yet another young Irishman at the hands of the British army.

Local people in Sackville Street say that the victim was seen cutting through the area and was not part of the ongoing civil unrest.

He was next seen prone on the ground at the rear of a British army armoured personnel carrier.

This state murder rests at the

door of a weak and Unionist-manipulated Tory government.

The IRSP refuse to play any part in attempting to calm the fears or placate an angry nationalist community. The people are fully justified in their anger and we will support whatever way they wish to vent it.

It is for those who created this situation to accept responsibility for whatever happens as a result.

The IRSP are not calling for either Patrick Mayhew, the RUC chief constable or the British army GOC to resign, we are calling for them to leave our country and take their gunmen with them.

Stop all detentions in Harmondsworth!

EVERY year up to 10,000 people are imprisoned under immigration legislation — half in 'detention' centres like Harmondsworth in West London and the other half in prisons and police stations.

Since the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Act the numbers detained have doubled and the number of detention places has increased with the opening of 100 places at Haslar and Rochester prison.

The latest Tory Immigration and Asylum Bill is likely to lead to even greater numbers being detained in the following ways:

■ The new fast-track procedure will lead to very rapid refusals of asylum and is likely to be applied to people from countries with high refusal rates. It is currently being piloted at Gatwick, where a new 50-bed detention centre has just opened.

■ People from the new 'white list' of countries will automatically have their asylum applica-

tions rejected with very limited appeal rights and are likely to be detained as soon as a claim has been made.

■ The Bill increases the categories of people defined as 'illegal immigrants' and therefore the number of people who will be locked up.

Up to 150 asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants are held in Harmondsworth. The average detention time is four months but some detainees are held for up to two years — all are held without charge or trial and are continually threatened with deportation by the Home Office.

The Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign is organising a picket on 27 July (see front page for details) as part of a series of ongoing activities. It is part of a national network of local campaigns, campaigning for the closure of all detention centres and the releasing of all detainees.

For details of its activities call 0181-571 5019.

Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign,
c/o 52 Norwood Road, Southall,
Middlesex. Tel: 0181-571 5019.

Index Bookcentres

Central London
28 Charlotte Street,
London W1 1HJ
0171-636 3532

Brixton
10-12 Atlantic Road,
London SW9 8HY
0171-274 8342

International Trade Unionist Bulletin

Only 50p from ITUSC, PO Box 18,
Epsom KT18 7YB.
Tel: 01372 817 778.

Socialist Labour Party Public meeting

Wednesday 31 July, 7.30pm
Rivoli Ballroom, Brockley Road, London SE4
(opposite Crofton Park Station)
Speaker: Arthur Scargill

THIS autumn sees the 50th anniversary of a historic event in London. One evening, as workers restoring a luxury apartment block near Lords went home, one waited behind. He opened the doors.

Up rolled vans with 50 working-class families and their belongings, and the squat began. Similar occupations took place in Kensington and Westminster. Workers back from the war didn't see why their families should suffer homelessness or overcrowding, while empty properties were available for the rich.

When police surrounded Abbey Road, 2,000 people blocked the road outside until food was allowed through to the families inside. Factory workers sent messages of support. The Labour government cut essential services off through the medical officer of health and they must leave the water on, as children were involved).

Five Communist Party members were arrested for 'conspiracy to trespass'. The squatters were evicted, and moved into hostels, having made their point.

Fifty years later, capitalism keeps thousands homeless, and thousands of building workers unemployed, while it stays monopoly with buildings and land.

This spring, campaigners declaring 'the land is ours!' took over 13 acres by the Thames at Wandsworth. 'DIY politics is the way to solve the housing problem', enthuses John Perrin *The Working Wolf* (Summer 96).

Oddly, though exhorting people to 'problem-solvers, rather than risk-takers', *Living Marxism* (July-August), takes a dim view: 'a group of scavengers scavenging an existence off the real economy'. So does the landowner, Guinness, trying to evict the squatters.

Whatever the ideas of the Wandsworth 'villagers', their action raises questions of the 17th century English civil war 'Diggers', and the 1946 squatters. And the issue neither 'radical' publication considers: how poverty confronts property, and power.

... Liberty!

Not content with misappropriating socialist poet William Morris, the ex-Communist Party Democratic Left paper (and 'New Labour' platform) *New Times* (22 June) cast a covetous eye on surrealism, 'the art that the left could not love'.

'Breton's volatile group attempted to work alongside the French Communist Party — which accepted their membership but none of their ideas — before the remaining surrealists renounced with Trotskyism at the end of the 1930s,' says Kevin Davey.

André Breton wanted to join the Communist Party in 1926: 'I was sought before several control commissions, at which I was asked, in tones of outrage, to account for the reproductions of Picasso, Andre Masson and others which appeared in the journal I edited.'

He joined with fellow-poet Louis Aragon, but their paths soon parted.

Breton opposed Stalin's Moscow trials and betrayal in Spain: 'Let's make no mistake, the back-stage bullets from Moscow in January 1937 are directed against our comrades in the UOM. After them they attack our anarchist comrades, in the hope of finishing off everything which lives, everything which carries a promise for the future in the struggle against fascism in Spain.'

In 1938, Breton visited Trotsky in Mexico. The Stalinists urged that his work be 'systematically sabotaged'. But the manifesto *Towards a Free Revolutionary Art*, written with painter Diego Rivera following discussions with Trotsky, appeared that autumn.

In 1951, Breton addressed an Open Letter to Aragon, in defence of Zhebravskaya, framed and murdered in Czechoslovakia. So hands off André Breton!
Charlie Pottins

Marxists for a Socialist Party

The basic lines

THE WRP congress of the 6-7 July resolved to set up a new political organisation of all those who are for building a new socialist party of the working class founded on Marxism. It will be called something like Marxists for a Socialist Party (MSP).

Workers Press is now open for discussion up to and including the October conference to establish the MSP, on the programme, aims and structure of the new organisation.

How we envisage this is that the MSP will be an organisation combining all those who are agreed on the following:

1 The party the working class needs must be based on **Marxism**.

2 It will be **internationalist** and international. This means, open to all men and women who agree with its socialist aims and rules, regardless of national origin; and it will aim in all its work at the building of a world party of socialism of which it will be part.

3 It will be founded on the basic principle that the **emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself**. It follows that the **reconstruction** of the working-class movement, so necessary after the definitive failure of Stalinism, of social democracy and Labourism, is the task of the working class itself. The new party is part of that self-reconstruction; not a party 'supplied' to the working class but one built by the working class.

4 It will be a party aiming at the achievement of socialism **not through parliamentary representation** but through the self-organisation and activity of the working class as a class, together with its allies. Parliament is part of the capitalist state, essentially the instrument of control over the working class. For the new party, parliamentary elections and activity are a subordinate part of the class movement of the working class.

5 It will therefore reject the

Last week Workers Press reported that a 'new political organisation of Marxists who will fight together to move towards a new party of the working class will be formed this October'. This followed a resolution at the WRP's congress two weeks ago which said:

'The WRP proposes the formation of a new Marxist political organisation, to be founded at the October recall conference decided on 16 March, called provisionally "Marxists for a New Party".'

'Workers Press and all other resources of the WRP will be resources of this new organisation. The WRP will then cease to exist as a separate organisation.'

This week CLIFF SLAUGHTER writes on the basic lines on which the WRP will be working towards this aim

6 It will fight for the end of British rule in **Ireland** and will work with all those who fight for a socialist united Ireland.

7 It will be formed and built not through some amalgamation or 'regroupment' of existing socialist groups, but from all those workers and other socialists who come forward in the struggles of the working class and form its **vanguard**.

8 It will work for the closest relating with, and through its members to influence, all working-class, youth, women's, community and popular organisations and movements. Its members will participate in the struggles and activities of these organisations with the aim of ensuring their growth and success and their contribution to the **building of that unity and consciousness of the class as a whole** which is essential in preparing the decisive struggles for socialism that are ahead.

9 It will therefore at all times work for **united front actions** and movements with the organisations of the working class.

10 It will be a party which **brings together in a common strategy and socialist aim all movements against capital and its state**.

Building up the forces for the new party

The MSP's members and branches will work to reconstruct and to build up the **solidarity and support networks** from which will come the membership and the organisational framework of this new working-class party. At this point in time, support for the Liverpool dockers' fight is the core of this work.

The MSP will concentrate, in all regions, on **political education and study**, drawing in all those who will take responsibility for the study and development of Marxist theory. (Organising this work will be the responsibility of the research and policy unit decided on by the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference last March.)

The MSP will direct its work to towards the **organised working class** in the trade unions and also to the organisations of the unemployed, building on the work of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign.

The MSP will work to **unite the struggles** of all workers, whatever their national origin, for trade union rights, for wages, working conditions

and shorter working hours, and against casualisation and discrimination on any grounds.

The MSP will work in the closest collaboration with, and seek to unite, all **refugee and liberation movements**, in particular in continuing the international solidarity work of Workers Aid for Bosnia, the fight against the Asylum and Immigration Bill and all immigration controls, against the British government's support of repressive regimes, and against British imperialism's rule in Ireland.

The MSP will carry out **open and intensive propaganda and discussion work** to build for the new socialist party in the course of the coming general election campaign. It will bring into that campaign the struggles of the working class, first and foremost that of the Liverpool dockers, concentrating on the preparation of the working-class movement to deal with the attacks of a 'New Labour' government and its anti-union laws, and on recruiting to the MSP from the Labour Party and the trade unions.

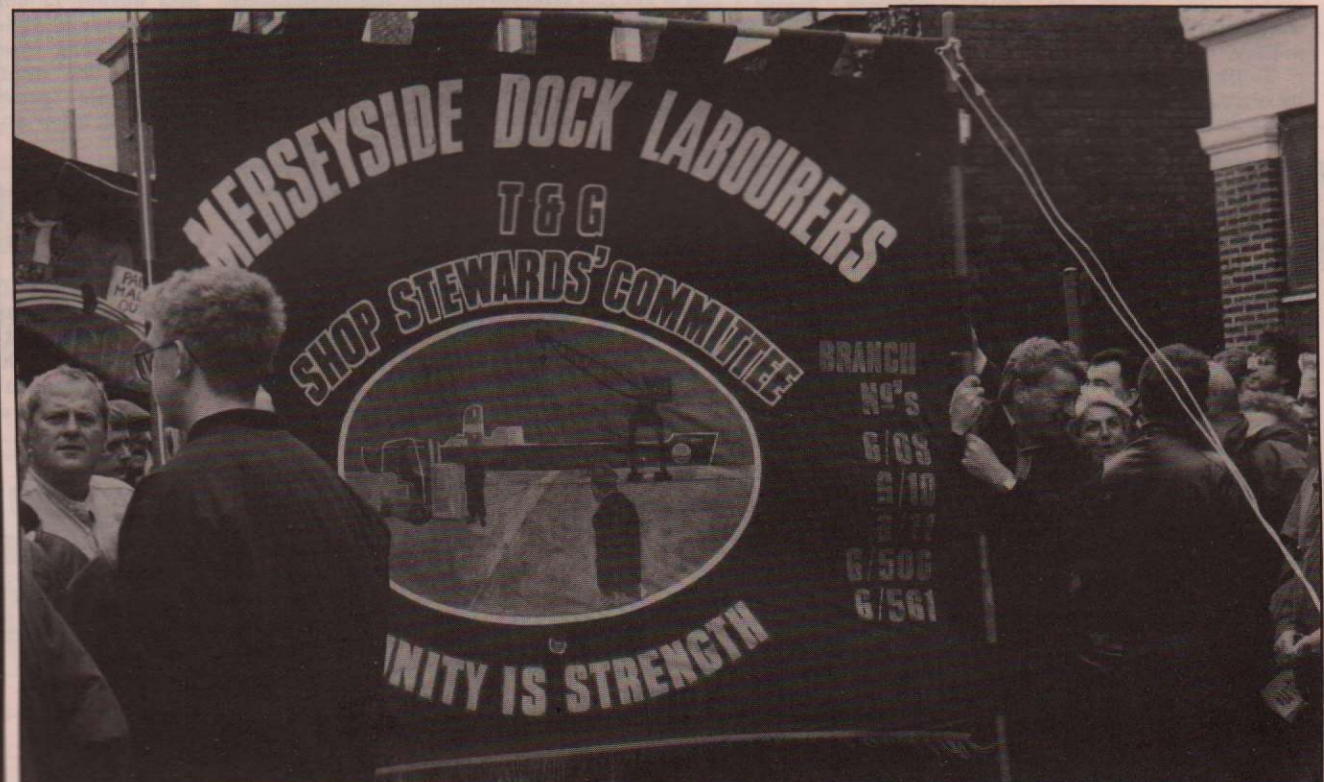
The MSP will set up special working commissions to plan activity directed at organisations and movements of **women and youth**.

The MSP will seek to work with, and to bring into closest relation with the organised working class, the **anti-racist and anti-fascist movements**.

The MSP will support and work shoulder-to-shoulder with all those who come into struggle to **defend communities and the environment** against their exploitation and destruction by capital.

The MSP will work to support and to unite with all those who come into conflict with the capitalist state in defence of the **health and education services** and in defence of **democratic rights**.

These are the basic lines along which the WRP is pledged to work for the new organisation, Marxists for a Socialist Party. We put forward these points as a basis for discussion. For a more elaborate exposition of the WRP's decision there is a new pamphlet being published called *A new party for socialism*.



Support for Liverpool dockers is the core of work to reconstruct and build solidarity networks

Resc

We republish the main resolution passed at the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference on 16 March moved by Liverpool dockers' benefits advice worker Will Thomson:

This conference resolves that the working class needs a new party for socialism. Now the task is to take the discussion on the programme, organisation and the formation of a new party as widely as possible into the working class.

We affirm that it must be a party of the working class, formed out of its struggles, and not a party 'supplied' to the working class.

Conference constitutes a steering committee, open to all present and all who share this common objective.

The next tasks are:

■ To organise in every area a report meeting on this conference.

■ To participate actively in the main struggle of the day, building a network of support committees for

of our work



Marxists for a Socialist Party' will work in the closest collaboration with, and seek to unite, all refugee and liberation movements, continuing the international solidarity work of Workers Aid for Bosnia (top), in the fight against the Asylum and Immigration Bill and all immigration controls, and against the British government's support of repressive regimes, and against British imperialism's rule in Ireland (bottom)

olution from 16 March

the dockers. This network can be the basis of permanent working-class organisation to support such struggles.

The discussion in every area should firstly centre on how to unite the working class on the problems confronting the dockers, and at the centre of this need for unity is the urgent need for a socialist party.

Out of the dockers' fight must come the bringing together of the vanguard of the working class in one party.

We must seek every avenue of discussion and united action with members of the Socialist Labour Party and discussion and participation with the Socialist Alliances in various areas.

The steering committee should work to set up a 'Policy Research Unit' to assist in all struggles.

Conference resolves to reconvene in October this year to discuss the next step.



'Crisis in the labour movement' conference on 16 March

British Energy

ANY small-scale investor hoping to make a few bob on the privatisation of British Energy, the country's nuclear power industry, is in for a disappointment. Shares in the company were launched at the start of last week with a price of 203p.

This was much lower than the government had hoped for, but was forced on it by uncertainties surrounding the world's stock markets as well as a growing crisis in the power stations themselves.

But even the 203p price is likely to be too high and many small speculators are likely to end up with burned fingers. All in all the government is likely to get only half what it wanted for the sale of its nuclear power stations.

Of more interest is the scandal surrounding this latest privatisation. Consider what has happened so far. The government, in a frantic search for cash to finance pre-election tax cuts for traditional Tory voters, puts up for sale a package of eight nuclear power stations. The taxpayer is left to finance those considered less saleable.

These hand-picked cherries were then put up for sale at a price roughly half the amount it costs to build a single one of these plants. Investors were then invited to buy shares in the new privatised company, British Energy.

A couple of hours after the deadline for share buying came the news that two of the stations had been closed for safety reasons.

On top of this, as reported in last weekend's *Observer*, faults have been discovered in a third plant, Sizewell B, just 12 months after it became fully operational.

Sizewell B was meant to be the jewel in British Energy's crown. Millions and millions of taxpayers' money has been poured into nuclear power and yet they are receiving only a pittance in return. Small shareholders, deciding to have a flutter in British Energy, have now discovered that only five out of eight of the firm's plants are operational.

Even the Stock Exchange is perturbed by this latest turn and has decided to look at whether the government should have told potential investors that two of the stations were not running, and whether it should have known that a third, soon to be inspected, was also to close.

As could only be expected, the Labour leaders made their usual song and dance. There has been 'organised deceit on a substantial scale', cried Margaret Beckett. Naturally there are no plans by Labour for the renationalisation of the industry.

Poor old Sid

AS A footnote to this latest tale of privatisation is the admission last week that millions of people who bought shares in British Gas were conned. Former British Gas chairman Sir Denis Rooke says that private investors who bought into the privatisation in 1986 — dubbed 'Sids' after the TV advertising campaign — had lost out.

'Over the years, Sid has been conned because people have moved away from the prospectus a great deal and nothing's ever been done and there's not even been any real explanation,' Rooke told BBC's Nine O'Clock News last week.

That elusive factor

WHATEVER that much-talked about but still mysterious 'feel-good factor' may be, it is not being felt by most businessmen.

For they are now more pessimistic about their order books than at any time for the last four years, making the Treasury's hopes for a spurt in business activity before the general election increasingly forlorn. The

proportion of companies expecting a drop in orders has risen to 40 per cent as against the 35 per cent figure for the last quarter, according to a report from Dun and Bradstreet, the business information group.

The survey, covering 1,800 directors, pointed to weaker profits and poorer job prospects throughout much of the economy.

Should this sort of pattern prevail the outlook for public finances will be even grimmer and the pressure on the government to cut back further on its spending even more intense.

The deterioration in confidence has been especially marked among wholesalers and operators in the service sector.

'The deterioration in optimism for new orders bodes ill for the chancellor's hopes of gross domestic product growth reaching 2.5 per cent in 1996,' said Philip Mellor, senior D&B analyst.

What is perhaps most significant about the survey is what it says concerning the export sector, where optimism has dropped to its lowest point since 1992, especially among construction and manufacturing firms.

D&B warned that the upswing in consumer spending on the high street was proving inadequate to fill the gap left by falling export orders.

The 'recovery' in the economy about which the Tories are constantly boasting was brought about by the sharp devaluation of sterling that followed Britain's ejection from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992.

The fall in sterling's value made exports cheaper while simultaneously raising the price of imported goods. This was why it provoked growing hostility from the French and German governments.

The news on the export front places an ever bigger question-mark against the external trade balance, which is also threatened by a tendency among consumers to concentrate their spending on sectors with high import penetration.

A study by the analysts Robert Fleming reveals that the ten sectors in which consumer spending has grown most over the past year have an average import content of some 40 per cent.

A far from rosy picture that Blair and company will inherit.

European building crisis

OVER 250,000 European building workers will lose their jobs as governments continue to slash spending in an attempt to meet the Maastricht criteria for monetary union.

To join in the common currency system a country's public spending has to be 3 per cent or lower of its GDP. Hardly any of the member states of the European Union currently meet this figure.

A report last week from the European Construction Industry Federation reveals that job prospects are grimmest in Germany, where employers plan to sack at least 110,000 workers by the year end. Some of the jobs will be filled by imported, cheaper labour.

On 9 July it was announced that the recovery in the German labour market has stalled and that the number of unemployed had risen again in June.

In France the forecast is for 30,000 job losses this year. The French building industry has been in recession for the last five years, the longest since the end of World War II. British firms are expected to get rid of 24,000 workers by the end of 1996.

The building industry is one of the most significant economic indicators, employing some 7 per cent of Europe's labour force, with capital investment worth 12 per cent of GDP.

English grammar again

PERSONAL COLUMN

shown to be fallacious and full of errors.

As long ago as 1935 the American pioneer of scientific linguistics, Leonard Bloomfield, in his book *Language*, wrote of the schools of his day that they were 'utterly benighted in linguistic matters'. And he added:

'Their attitude is authoritarian; fanciful dogmas as to what is "good English" are handed down by educational authorities and individual teachers who are utterly ignorant of what is involved. . . . [T]he differences between standard and prevalent non-standard forms . . . are made the subject not so much of rational drill as of preaching about "ignorance", "carelessness", and "bad associations".

'All of this, moreover, is set in a background of pseudo-grammatical doctrine, which defines the categories of the English language as philosophical truths and in philosophical terms.'

The Tories clamour for a return to the authoritarian, fanciful-dogmatic methods that held sway when they were at school. I gave some examples on 22 June, not in order to focus on possible abuses, but to show where such a return to the methods of the 1930s would lead.

Here's another example. Take the question of parts of speech or, as educated people now prefer to call them, word classes. No one in their right mind would claim that children should not be taught how to classify, according to function, the words they use.

But here again, the old school was in the grip of the 'classical languages were superior' fetish. Even the category 'part of speech' is a literal translation of the Latin *pars orationis*, a term that was itself borrowed from the Greek: that's why 'word class' is now thought preferable.

The idea that there must be eight such categories — not seven or nine — derives from a list made by the grammarian Dionysius Thrax in Alexandria some 2,100 years ago. His original eight categories were ideal for the description of classical Greek, which has an article. Latin having no article, Latin grammarians filled the missing place in the list with the interjection.

Medieval grammarians kept to eight categories by inventing the adjective (formerly shoved in with the noun as 'substantives') and sidelining the interjection. When the list was applied to the English language, the participle was relegated to a sub-category of the verb.

So now there were only seven 'parts of speech', not eight. What was to be done? Easy — bring back the interjection, so that English might have the correct number of 'parts of speech'!

Modern grammarians have abandoned such abject formalism. They now recognise several word classes that have no place among the traditional 'parts of speech'. They speak, for instance, of 'determiners', which are words and phrases that introduce or limit noun phrases.

Determiners include what used to be called the definite article ('the'); the indefinite article ('a', 'an'); demonstratives ('this', 'that'); possessives ('my', etc.); indefinite pronouns ('some', etc.); and certain phrases, such as 'plenty of'.

So there is a third choice. We don't have to continue with 'progressive' teaching that turns out people who are illiterate and inarticulate. Nor do we have to go back to ancient formalism, authoritarianism, and fanciful dogma.

What we must do is abandon shibboleths of every kind and ground the teaching of English on the recent work that has been done on the true nature of the language and its history.

Peter Fryer

Bolivia: lessons of the general strike

The following is based on material from Poder Obrero Bolivia (Workers Power), the Bolivian Section of the Liaison Committee of Militants for a Revolutionary Communist International

SUNDAY 21 April marked the end of a five-week indefinite general strike launched by the COB (Bolivian TUC). This was the third one-month general strike in two years.

On 5 March the COB had called a one-day general strike. On 12 March, the COB organised a national hunger strike of union leaders. On 18 March, the indefinite general strike began.

In Bolivia the minimum living family wage is \$500 and the official minimum wage is only \$45. The government only offered an increase of 8 per cent. This increase was lower than the 12.5 per cent inflation in 1995. The COB demanded an increase of at least 200 per cent. People are also angry with the denationalisation of the railways (ENFE) and the Bolivian airlines (LAB).

President Sanchez de Losada has also been trying to privatise the biggest company in Bolivia: YPFB (gas and oil). YPFB produced more than half of Bolivian exports.

The mass of the population is against this because they are afraid oil prices will increase and that sale of the company that generates half of Bolivian exports will benefit only the multinational companies.

BETWEEN 1982 and 1986, Bolivia was in a revolutionary situation. Its high points were the March general strike (in which the miners took over the capital La Paz for two weeks) and the September five-week general strike in which the MNR (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement) government managed to divide wage workers from small owners and imposed the beginning of the neo-liberal counter-reforms.

In August 1986 a general strike with a 15,000 strong march from Oruro to La Paz was defeated by the army. Since that time there has been a reactionary demo-liberal offensive.

Ironically, it was the MNR that made the 1952 'revolution' bringing land reform, the nationalisation of the mines and universal suffrage. In 1985, the MNR returned to office and, like all the bourgeois nationalist regimes, it became a direct agent of 'Thatcherite' policies.

Then, in 1989, the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR, a Castroite guerrillaist party founded in 1971), took office in alliance with the ADN of general Banzer (the Bolivian 'Pinochet' who ruled between 1971 and 1978). The MIR-ADN alliance continued all the neo-liberal policies.

IN 1993, the MNR again returned to office in alliance with the MRTKL (the nationalist movement of the indigenous peoples), and the MBL (the Bolivian section of the Castro-Lula-Aristides international of the Sao Paulo Forum).

The MNR president, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, destroyed the biggest state company (COMIBOL) that controlled the majority of the big tin mines and that was the main company for decades in Bolivia.

Sanchez's company (COMSUR) bought many former COMIBOL pits and now is the biggest private tin-mining company. Sanchez's programme is based on three 'terrible laws':

■ 'capitalisation' of all the state companies (that is, to sell the majority of the shares to foreign capital);

■ education counter-reform (to destroy the powerful teachers' union and the university's economic autonomy, to promote private education and to give all the schools to poor city councils that can't afford to run them); and

■ 'popular participation' (to give money for public works to the peasant communities and popular districts with the aim of destroying the unions and dividing the peasants against the teachers and public workers).

The last law has some popular support. Teachers and students have managed to avoid the worst aspects of the education counter-reforms but not all.

Although the government has managed to sell 50 per cent of the shares of the telephone company, in one of the largest cities the sale was stopped because of one of the biggest city strikes.

The strike

IN THE last ten years the MNR and the MIR-ADN governments launched four 'states of emergency' in which hundreds of union leaders were put in jail and the right to strike and constitutional rights were suspended.

This year, the strike coincided with an international conference of the Rio Group and the European Union in Bolivia. The government created a semi-

gained some ground. Workers developed more radical methods of fighting and the government is weaker.

Why didn't the strike win?

THE government said that 'capitalisation' of YPFB was the 'mother of the battles'. If the COB wanted to stop privatisation it was necessary to prepare a serious battle. The union bureaucracy started the 'mother of the battles' with a national hunger strike of more than 200 union leaders on 12 March.

The hunger strike is a defensive tactic to be used when you or your relatives are in jail. But when you are trying to defeat the government's neo-liberal plan and to increase wages this measure is completely ineffective.

Most Bolivians live in a state of a permanent involuntary hunger with little wages and food. The hunger strike couldn't defeat the government.

Instead of putting hundreds of thousands of union activists in isolated rooms without food, they should have organised street meetings, blockades and pickets, and pressed all the unions to enter the strike.

A total general strike means that transport, the banks,

several blockades (especially around Cochabamba, the biggest peasant area in which the peasants are fighting for the legalisation of coca production). But most peasants didn't participate in the strike.

Factory unions, instead of organising a general stoppage with occupations, said that only their leaders would enter into a hunger strike and that the workers should picket at lunch or breakfast breaks. Therefore the strategic mining companies (like Inti Raymi, ENAF and COMSUR) were not paralysed by mass strikes.

The teachers, students and the population created self-defence pickets that were able to beat the repression on several occasions. What was needed was to develop and centralise such bodies. The COB didn't do that.

A general strike means that it is necessary to create new workers' power bodies and leaderships. The COB should have launched people's councils and assemblies with the popular districts, transport and all the industry sectors to organise and direct the strike.

These bodies should have had delegates elected and recallable by rank-and-file assemblies. The same principles would have to be applied to a national strike committee. This body would have to



Striking Bolivian miners' march in La Paz, 1989

militarised La Paz without an official state of siege.

In the five weeks of the strike, Bolivia was shaken by the biggest demonstrations in years. Every day La Paz and other cities were paralysed by demonstrations and blockades.

People were not afraid of the police and constantly the demonstrators beat the police. Thousands used dynamite and slings against the repression.

On 26 March the repression killed one person. On 28 March tens of thousands organised a 12km march to La Paz. On 2 April private transport was completely paralysed and thousands destroyed or burned several cars and trucks of the new privatised railway company.

Nevertheless, the general strike did not defeat the government. At the end Sanchez de Lozada increased the 8 per cent on offer by 1 per cent.

The government said it would liberate all union prisoners except the COB's number three, Lucio Gonzales, who has been in prison since early 1996 under the false accusation of participation in an MRTA kidnapping of a businessman.

The government postponed 'capitalisation' (that is, privatisation) of YPFB to July. While the strike didn't win a victory it was also not a serious defeat. Workers

telecommunications, post office and production should stop completely. Nevertheless, the COB only managed to stop schools, state universities, the health sector, state mines and a few companies. It was an indefinite general strike but mainly in the service sector.

The streetsellers and the pensioners played a significant role in the daily demonstrations but the strike didn't manage to stop the majority of production.

On some isolated days several cities were completely paralysed because the transport and the civic committees decided to launch regional stoppages.

In Beni, on 24 April, the streets were empty and students formed a 'civic police' to replace the police.

The oil workers are a privileged workers' aristocracy that in the past constantly broke general strikes. Nevertheless, this year they started to fight. But the oil union should have made its task the occupation of the oilfields. They didn't prepare for the strike and the army broke them.

Had the oil union managed to stop production of gas the strike could have had a big impact in damaging the economy.

The peasants in 1979 were able to blockade cities and stop the rural goods entering. In this strike the peasant unions made

lead the strike under the control of the rank and file.

This time, the bureaucracy was able to authorise the different unions to deal separately with the government and in the end they betrayed the strike.

The left

THE Bolivian left is in a serious crisis.

Dr Morales D. Vila, the leader of the radical left *Workers Tribune* paper, is leading a 'National Committee for the Defence of our Natural Resources and National Sovereignty' in alliance with Banzer's ADN, the MIR and the bourgeois-populist CONDEPA.

This is a popular front in which the left is subordinated to a programme of defence of the national capitalist economy with more state production and fewer privatised companies.

The majority of the left is capitulating to anti-Chilean slogans. Some demonstrations have burnt Chilean flags.

We are against every private company but defend Chilean workers and condemn every expression of national chauvinism. We demand a halt to this anti-Chilean campaign and that the COB and the Chilean CUT (TUC) make a coalition to fight against private companies in both countries.

MI5, the 'fight against crime' and capitalism

BY NICK LEE

THE security services (MI5) are to get the power to assist the police in dealing with 'serious crime' but without the same legal regulation of their activity as the police, after the recent passage of the relevant bill through the House of Lords.

The bill has been justly attacked by liberals and civil libertarians as yet another example of Tory whittling away of civil liberties and individual rights, particularly since the bill defines as serious any criminal acts which could carry a sentence of three years or more.

Meanwhile Tory Home Secretary Michael Howard plans, in the White Paper published last April, to introduce mandatory (automatic) minimum sentences of seven years for repeat drug offenders, three years for repeat burglars, and automatic life sentences for second-time rapists and serious violent offences.

In short, the security services will be able to get involved in most sectors of crime control and obtain evidence by previously illegal means — such as entry to premises without warrants and telephone tapping.

At the same time other changes, such as the partial abolition of the right to silence, weaken the position of the defendant in criminal trials. For Howard this is no bad thing. Civil liberties, or the rights of defendants, must not be allowed to get in the way of 'fighting crime'.

The plans for mandatory sentences have brought Howard into collision with the judiciary right up to the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, who accused him of undermining the judges' power to decide each case on its particulars rather than impose an automatic sentence.

Howard has responded by playing to a populist line of 'protecting the public' from rocketing crime rates and has accused the judges themselves as being out of touch with public opinion.

But liberal critics tend to see these things as simply 'wrong policies' or the particular result of Michael Howard's personality and his obsession with the USA — where mandatory sentences have sent prison populations rocketing. The same thing will happen here.

The political support for Tory policies comes from a growing concern, particularly among the middle classes, with the instability of life in the modern city.

Rowdyism

Rising crime, rowdyism and aggressive behaviour in public are of course real problems, consequences of unemployment and social breakdown.

Middle-class concern is heightened, however, by fear that they may drift down the social ladder and closer to such problems as a result of 'downsizing' by employers and the elimination of white-collar as well as manual jobs.

Tony Blair and Shadow Home

Secretary Jack Straw are playing to the same fears with Straw's recent 'clear the streets' themes of heavy policing and curfews for young people.

Liberal criminologists and penologists will calmly point out that these policies do not 'work'. They are not particularly effective in reducing crime and they lead, as in the United States to the expensive incarceration in increasingly overcrowded prisons not of serious villains but vast numbers of young petty offenders. But the real issue is whether they are intended to 'work' in the old sense.

With a growing army of young unemployed and a population surplus to the requirements of capitalism, the aim of reducing serious violent crime and rehabilitating offenders becomes subordinated to the issue of 'managing the underclass'. That is, finding somewhere to put the unemployed where they will be under control and out of sight.

One side of the solution is an increasingly authoritarian criminal justice system which is prepared to send people to prison automatically for repeating trivial offences as well as serious ones.

The other side is the growth of the power of private property to defend itself directly against anything considered 'undesirable'.

The growth of private shopping precincts in city centres has been accompanied by private security guards, paid for by the traders, who move on or march off the premises any person con-

sidered not simply a criminal threat but 'exhibitionist' or in any way bad for trade.

This resembles in some ways a return to the early years of the 19th century when, before the development of the modern police, the bourgeoisie paid directly its own hired 'thief takers' to defend its property.

Growth

Likewise the growth of what the Americans call 'gated communities' or private housing estates where hired private security will keep out all strangers and 'undesirables'. This development is strongest in the US where the right to use firearms and defend private property by deadly force is more entrenched than in Europe, where the state still retains a monopoly of legitimate force and the police regard the private security industry with a measure of suspicion.

But the trend is still there. It is this combination of a growing authoritarianism in aspects of the state, with the direct power of private property to deploy its own force to maintain the geographical segregation of the poor and unemployed into the older urban areas.

The science fiction scenario depicted in John Carpenter's 1980s film *Escape From New York*, where the entire centre of the city is a sort of prison area into which the poor have been herded and left to rot surrounded by barbed wire and floodlights, seems to be getting closer!

Bronwen Handyside reports

Two nations



Low pay bad!

MEMBERS of parliament last week voted themselves a 26 per cent salary rise.

Bone-headed loyalists of both sides, who in all other matters would sooner die than disobey the whips, flocked into the yes lobby in defiance of party leaders' recommendation that they restrict themselves to 3 per cent.

It has not yet been reported what dreadful punishments have been inflicted on them for their hitherto (and hitherfrom I suspect) unprecedented independence of thought. I am sure they will get the same treatment Labour MP Clare Short got when she proposed raising taxes for the middle class.

Tory MP Tim Sainsbury told the Commons that he knew how vital it was to attract and retain men and women of the highest calibre. MPs were not taking the money for themselves, you understand, but in the interests of the nation.

Another job that is carried out in the interests of society is the care of young people in local authority homes.

The money given to workers to carry out that job is pathetically low. The level of wages is not designed to attract trained and educated people with the skills to deal with vulnerable and difficult young people who have in most cases already suffered some form of abuse.

Councils have had to accept more or less anybody who cared to apply for the job, and quite a few applied for the job because they got something out of it over and above the money — an unlimited opportunity to abuse children.

Local authority residential care workers went on a series of strikes in the early 1980s to try and win a higher wage. Their demands were resolutely opposed by local authority organisations, both Labour and Tory.

Since then wave of scandals have broken about the organised abuse of children by workers in council homes, and the destruction of those children's lives as a result. Drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, prostitution, suicide — these are a few of the avenues such children go down.

But the local authorities are saving some money. And the children of Members of Parliament don't end up in care.

And after all, it's an excellent way of keeping up the supply of vulnerable young people to be abused by the likes of our politicians.

Low pay good!

THE day after our politicians selflessly voted themselves a £9,000 a year increase for the good of the nation, a South Korean company decided to invest £1.7 billion in two new factories to be built in Wales.

A spokesperson for the company said they had picked Wales because of financial incentives offered by the Welsh, and because of the region's low wages. He said that wages in Wales were half those in South Korea.

The Welsh Development Agency coyly declined to divulge how much of tax-payers' money has been used to persuade the firm to make its decision. He also said that the jobs created would be 'high quality, not unskilled assembly roles'.

So to attract a high calibre MP you need to pay high wages, but

to attract a high calibre, skilled Welsh worker, you need to pay low wages. Simple really.

John Major described it as a magnificent achievement for Wales and a massive vote of confidence in the UK economy.

The Labour MP for the area, Paul Flynn, said the investment was marvellous news for an area that had suffered from the decline of the coal and steel industries.

Neither remarked on the interesting fact that the basic wage in the area, at £160 a week, was £20 less than the increase MPs have just awarded themselves.

The Korean firm will provide 6,100 jobs. Unemployment in the area is 9.8 per cent, and 40 per cent of all unemployed people in Wales live within an hour's drive of the proposed site.

The economic history of Northern Ireland is littered with identical scenarios. Foreign firms are bribed to set up a factory with massive amounts of government cash — in Northern Ireland the money usually comes from the British government.

The firm sets up, stays a year or two, and then finds it can get bigger cash incentives, or lower wages somewhere else, so it closes down and opens up in the Philippines, or China, or Thailand.

It does not have to return any of the government money it has been given, and it has no obligations to the workers it employed.

Royal tragedy, Act 53

POOR Princess Diana. Hounded by paparazzi the length and breadth of London, pictured breaking down in tears in the tabloids.

But somehow the phrase 'crying all the way to the bank' is the one that springs most insistently to mind.

Di will get £15 million — which should keep the colonic irrigations flowing for a few more years at least — though apparently it only produces an income of £500,000 a year. It is of course enough to keep a half a dozen hospitals or schools afloat for a few more years — but hey, isn't it more important for us to have a bit of glamour in our lives?

A footnote to history: I presume it is in deference to the princess's medical history that the newspapers have stopped referring to a 'gagging' clause in the divorce agreement.

The housing crisis

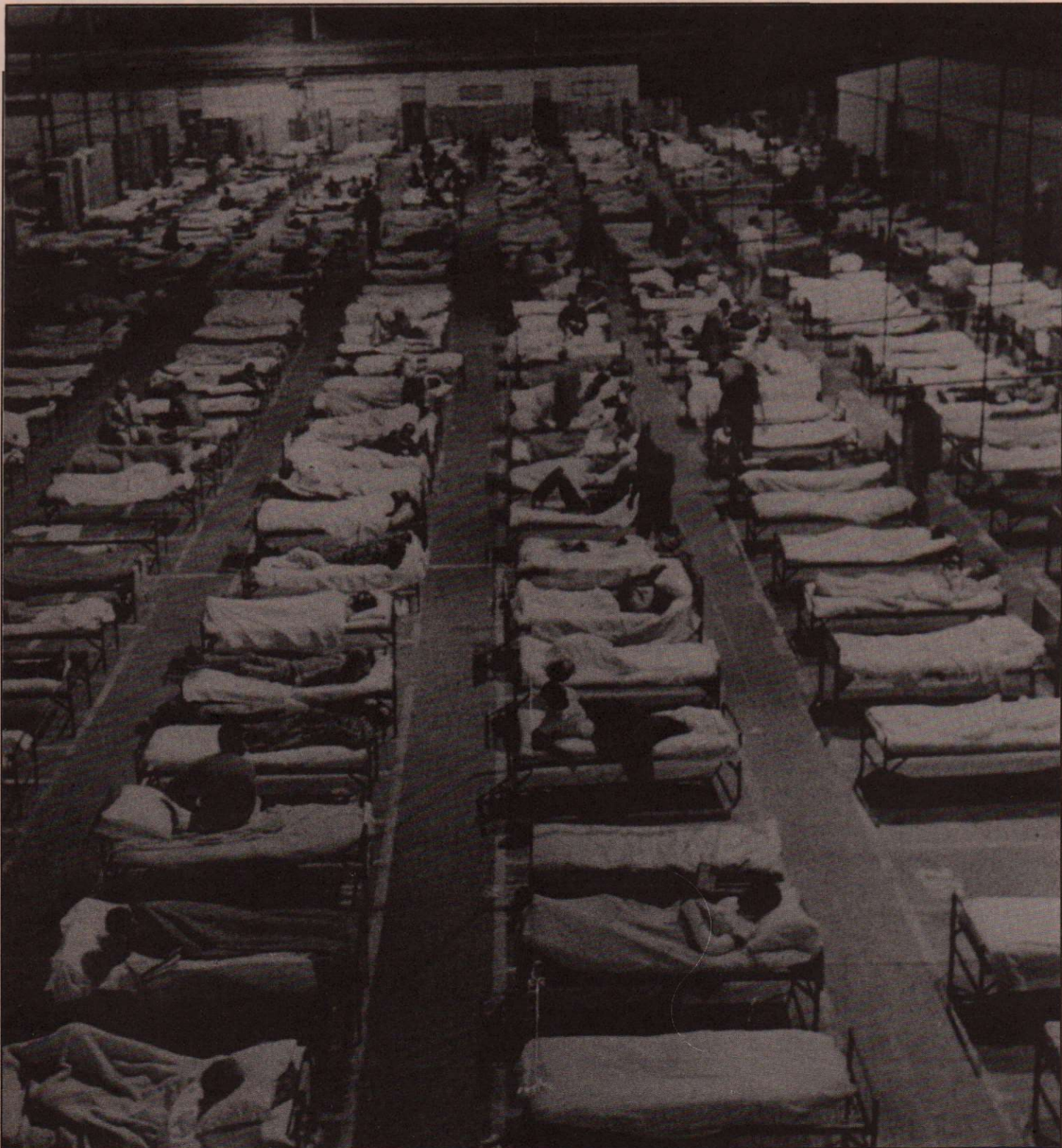
A FEW facts and figures from Shelter, the campaigning organisation on homelessness.

Local authorities spend over all £65 million on keeping homeless families in bed and breakfast, because they do not have the housing stock to rehouse them.

The National Health Service spends £2 billion a year on illnesses related to poor housing and homelessness.

And, finally, £2 billion invested in a home building programme over the next five years would provide jobs for 30,000 people.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me at Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.



Is there any 'escape from New York' for these homeless of Manhattan?

Turkish police attack textile workers

TURKISH police have brutally attacked trade unionists attending a conference in support of striking textile workers, arresting more than 60 workers and several union leaders.

The state attack took place while delegations of European trade unionists and Turkish human rights campaigners were visiting Antep, where 20,000 textile workers employed by the UNALDI company had been on strike for two weeks, demanding union recognition, an eight-hour day and social insurance.

Among those arrested, along with strike leader Huseyin Ozdemir, chair of the Textile Workers' Association in Antep, and members of the union executive, were Motor Vehicle Workers' Union president Sabri Topcu; journalist Sevdal Cetinkaya of *Evrensel*; human rights official Nail Utas; and several leading members of the Emek (Labour) party, including its president, Levent Tuzel.

Some of the 60 workers detained were reportedly injured in the police attack.

The Turkish Labour party's London office has issued an appeal, together with the North East London Textile Branch of the TGWU and the Day-Mer Human Rights Committee, for all trade unionists and supporters of democratic rights to protest the

police attack at Antep. In a statement on Tuesday (16 July), they say the Turkish state has increased its attacks on the working class and political opponents in the past few months.

'There are police attacks and extra-judicial murders by police every day. Two thousand political prisoners are on hunger strike over 56 days, 207 of whom are now on the verge of death. It is imminent that death news will start coming out from prisons.'

Strike

'At the headquarters of ODP (Freedom and Solidarity Party) over 100 people, prisoners' families, went on hunger strike in support of political prisoners.'

'This morning police raided the ODP Ankara office and arrested everybody who was on hunger strike, as well as ten more people around.'

The same morning, armed police raided the offices of the daily paper *Evrensel* in Istanbul, claiming they were looking for a 'terrorist'. After occupying the premises for an hour, and threatening staff, they left.

The previous day, police had raided a flat in the Gultepe district of Istanbul, killing four people with heavy machine-gun fire. They claimed those killed were members of an outlawed left-wing organisation.

Those killed were Huseyin Onat, Yavuz Alakir, Gulizar Simsek, and Suna Gil. Two women, Sema Turkdogan and Gulpinar Aydar, were seriously wounded by police bullets.

■ Faxes of protest over the attacks should be sent to: Prime Minister N.Erbakan 00 90 312 417 0476 Interior Minister M.Agar 00 90 312 418 1795 Justice Minister S.Kazan 00 90 312 417 3954 Ministry of Labour N.Celik 00 90 312 212 0781.

For more information, contact: 0171-275 8440, Fax 0171-275 7245.



North East London TGWU Textile branch banner on a Liverpool dockers' protest

Miners and music for united Bosnia

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

BOSNIAN miners had a warm reception from other workers at the Durham miners' 'Big Meeting', the gala, last weekend.

Led by union president Fikret Suljic, the Bosnians marched with their banner at the head of a Workers Aid for Bosnia contingent, including Bosnian refugees living in the North east, and Scottish TUC members with their banner.

In the best of working-class traditions, the gala was an international affair, with Australian mining trade unionists taking part too.

And following the time-honoured tradition of the colliers' bands, the Bosnians paused beneath the balcony at the County hotel, singing accompanied by their accordionist, for the guest speakers, several of whom later referred to Bosnia in their rally speeches.

Next day, the Bosnian miners were off to Liverpool for a second meeting with the battling dockers, before heading out on a strenuous tour to meet Workers Aid supporters and trade union-

ists in Brighton, the West Country, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Meanwhile, Workers Aid for Bosnia and the Bosnia Solidarity Campaign were preparing to help send an aid convoy with a difference to Bosnia at the end of this month.

Artists for United Bosnia, as the international project is known, is taking performers and equipment for the Tuzla arts festival, and aid for artists, schools and colleges there.

Proud

Tuzla people are proud of their contribution to cultural life. Theirs was the first theatre in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the first jazz band in the whole of Yugoslavia.

It was the Kreka miners' union that gave the town its big concert hall, re-opened at the end of last year.

At the first threat of conflict in Bosnia, when trade unionists marched for peace and unity in Sarajevo, the miners with their banners were to the fore.

Tuzla miners charged Chetnik snipers who had opened fire on the march, and overwhelmed

them. In four years of war and suffering the Tuzla workers have proudly upheld their traditions of solidarity and multiculturalism, while defending their town against aggression from without and reaction within.

The 'Sloboda' (Freedom) international arts festival is very much in line with the same spirit.

As Mayor Selim Beslagic said in a message to Artists for United Bosnia welcoming their initiative in April: 'Both the festival and the convoy have similar objectives, to state in the words of the Bosnia Solidarity Campaign that the artists will not sit aside while mixed, tolerant societies are destroyed by forces of fascism.'

Tuzla council hopes to make the Sloboda festival an annual event.

The message was taken to the Bradford Mela, Asian music festival, on the weekend of 6-7 July, when convoy workers ran a stall, with Spanish paella and traditional Bosnian roast lamb, and collecting £600 in donations and hundreds of signatures to a hand-crafted book pledging support

for Bosnia and a multi-ethnic Europe and Bosnia.

A Bradford Asian restaurant has decided to make a unique contribution, despatching two chefs and a mobile canteen to the Tuzla arts festival.

The same weekend, Workers Aid supporters in the Midlands held a benefit at the Varsity in Wolverhampton, featuring solo guitarist Rick Williams and Black Country-based rock groups Womb and Roseville. Some £273 was raised, and lots of literature and Workers Aid or Bosnia Solidarity tee shirts sold well.

Leicester Workers Aid is sending a lorry on the convoy.

Last week, after Friday's sombre but spirited commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre, with a picket in Whitehall and Bosnians delivering a protest to John Major, Bosnia Solidarity campaigners enjoyed themselves, and raised £1,000 for the artists' convoy, with a benefit at the Hackney Empire featuring Bert Jansch, Dodgy (who are travelling to Tuzla) and comedian John Hegley.

Ugly

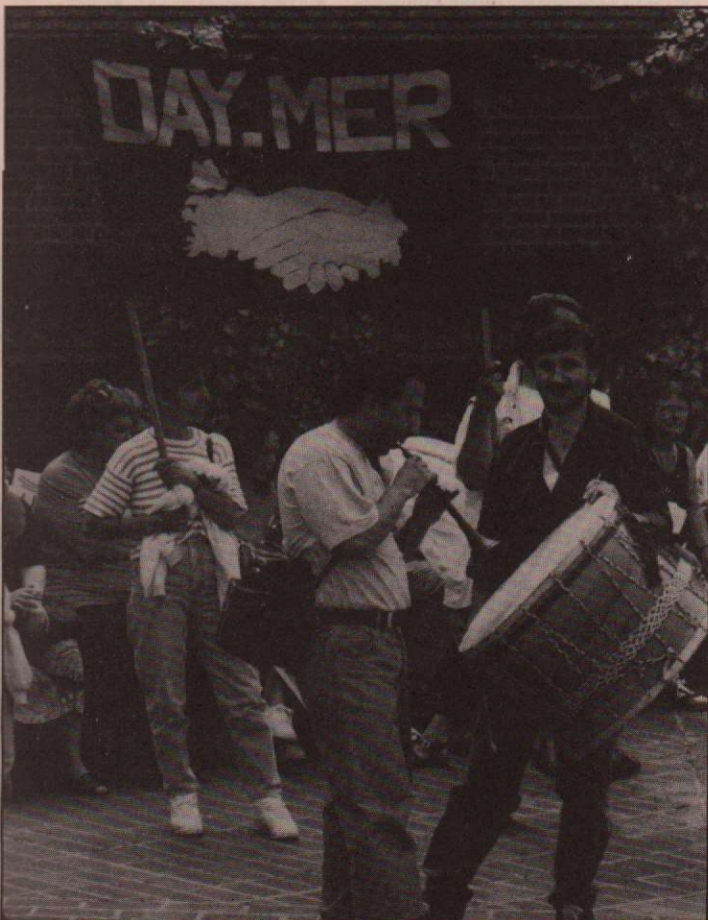
On Friday (19 July), ex-Ugly Rumours guitarist (and Bosnia Solidarity stalwart) John Guilfoyle and folk artist Judith Silver perform at Harlesden's Fiddler's Elbow.

It's all happening — and of course, the next issue of Workers Press will have on-the-spot coverage from Bosnia. So make sure of your copy!

■ Artists for a United Bosnia welcomes cash, offers of help, or donations in kind. To find out what's needed and how you can help, call: John Davies 01132 622 705; or Amanda Sebastyen 0171-608 3865.

For more information on Workers Aid, or the Bosnia Solidarity Campaign, call: 0181-806 0249, or in the Midlands, 0116-253 1053.

(Thanks to John Davies, Bob Myers and Oz for information.)



Day-Mer Human Rights Committee banner in Hillingdon

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'Remember Srebrenica' protest opposite Downing Street last Friday Photo: Alan Clark