

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

## South Africa

Interview with trade union leaders - see centre pages

## Everybody stopped and looked...

A woman worker's experiences on a demolition site - page 5

## Printers reject Murdoch offer

# THE RETREAT STOPS HERE!

BRENDA DEAN's face on TV news told much of the story. The svelte lady looked stunned and pale, and was almost speechless as she tried to take it in that her members had balloted to continue the fight to force Murdoch to give them their jobs back.

They had rejected the offer of £50 million redundancy money, with the old Sunday Times printing works thrown in as a tip for the TUC. After more than four months on strike, a convincing majority still had stomach for the unequal struggle against Murdoch and the hordes of brutal thugs in police uniform who guard his barbed wire fences at Wapping.

### Final

Dean had done everything short of campaign for acceptance of Murdoch's offer. The statements of the SOGAT executive heavily stressed that this was Murdoch's 'final' offer, trying to put the wind up the locked-out printers.

But it didn't work. One reason was that printers know very well that the £50 million offer was not even up to the going rate for redundancy money among skilled printers.

The printers' vote is an inspiration to the labour movement. The spirit that moved in hundreds of thousands of workers during the miners' strike is far from dead.

Neither Murdoch's barbed wire, nor Thatcher's bully-boys in blue - nor a union leadership not militant enough to take a Scout pack to the neighbouring village for a friendly game of cricket - has so far been able to convince the locked-out printers to throw in the towel.

### Elect

Now their defiance has been followed by a vote by Sun journalists not to work at Wapping. Times and Sunday Times journalists may also vote not to work behind the wire. Murdoch can still be beaten.

But the action must be stepped up, even if Brenda Dean will not lead it.

\* Elect a rank and file strike committee to run the dispute.

\* Campaign to bring out Fleet Street.

\* Build the pickets at Wapping.

\* Victory to the printworkers!



Tuesday morning, Pullens estate. Photo: A Moore.

## Made homeless by a Labour council

ON TUESDAY morning 10 June the Labour-controlled London borough council of Southwark sent in the bailiffs and police, some in full riot gear, to evict between 50 and 60 people from their homes on the Rockingham and Pullens estates.

The police got more than they expected when residents fought back with paint and flour bombs.

### Squatters

The evictions are the result of the council trying to scapegoat squatters for the borough's housing crisis. In reality the cause of Southwark's problems lies in the council's refusal to take on the Tories and win more cash from Westminster.

### 'Caring'

Rather than mobilising people for a fight, Southwark council has tried to manage the system.

This has already led to confrontations with the council's workforce, like the 12 week long NALGO strike in 1984. Now Southwark's 'caring' council has turned on the homeless.

## Chernobyl The fall-out goes on

By Les Hearn

THE RUSSIAN government has admitted that radioactive fallout from Chernobyl travelled much further than originally stated.

In addition to the 30km evacuation zone from which they eventually moved some 100,000 people, they have had to evacuate a further 60,000 children from the Gomel region of Byelorussia, 150km north of Chernobyl.

### Region

In this region, people have been warned not to eat food grown on private plots of land. Instead, it is bought in centrally for checking and, if contaminated, is disposed of by burying. Some wells have been closed and new ones sunk. Radioactive dust is being removed from roads, which are being resurfaced if necessary.

Meanwhile, immediate deaths have reached 26 but are still not expected to exceed 30. US bone marrow transplant expert Dr Robert Gale reports that of up to 50 people exposed to more than 500 rads, 13 had received bone marrow transplants. Of these, five were still alive.

However, all six who had been given transplants of foetal liver were dead from complications caused by skin burns and intestinal damage.

### Sick

In Britain and France, it has been revealed that serious releases of radioactivity could have taken place during the last two years.

At Bugey, near Switzerland, the failure of two out of three back-up cooling systems took a nuclear reactor close to meltdown.

An 'accounting error' led to a build-up of plutonium in a reprocessing tank at Dounreay to near critical levels. If it had gone critical, there would have been an atomic explosion.

# MORE ON THE PRINT page 11

# WORLD Brief

## Anti-semitic vote

KURT Waldheim, the one time Hitler soldier accused of helping to deport and murder Greeks and Jews during the Second World War, is now president of Austria.

Last Sunday he won 54% of the total vote, defeating his Socialist Party rival. Austria's Socialist Party Chancellor (prime minister) has resigned in protest.

The allegations that Waldheim was party to Nazi war crimes were, it seems, a help rather than a hindrance in his campaign. Many Austrians saw the accusations against Waldheim as outrageous 'foreign interference' in their affairs, and specifically Jewish foreign interference.

Most of them didn't care, it seems, whether or not the allegations against Waldheim — who was repeatedly caught out as a liar about his wartime record — were true.

Anti-semitism is rife and on the increase in Austria, most of whose once large and influential pre-war Jewish popula-



tion vanished into Hitler's camps and gas chambers. Opinion polls have suggested frighteningly high levels of open anti-semitism. That Waldheim's accusers were the World Jewish Congress was seen by many as a point in his favour.

### Mozart

One Jewish woman, speaking to the Observer, commented:

"I came out of this concert, Mozart, really nice, and suddenly I saw this great billboard saying 'Juden something' and I felt this is how my parents must have been. I was

back in 1938'.

Anti-Waldheim campaigners have met with violence both from thugs belonging to Waldheim's right-wing People's Party, and from the police.

Waldheim denies any responsibility for war crimes. 'Like others he only did his duty', helping Hitler try to conquer and enslave Eastern Europe...

Waldheim so stressed his commitment to 'Christian values' during the campaign that he — deliberately — identified himself as the candidate of the anti-semites. Inevitably his campaign fuelled the fires of anti-semitism.

## Free Zbigniew Bujak!

ZBIGNIEW Bujak, an important leader of the underground Polish workers' movement Solidarnosc, has been arrested in Warsaw.

Bujak has been hiding from the Polish political police, the Zomos, while continuing his illegal trade union organising activities. Jaruzelski's dictatorship, which came to power in a coup in



1981 that drove Solidarnosc underground, put a high reward on Bujak's

head. His captor was promised approximately a year's wages for an average worker.

Bujak is charged with 'attempting to overthrow the state'.

The international workers' movement should demand the release of Bujak, and of all those who have been imprisoned by the Stalinist police state in Poland.

## USSR backs Waldheim

MANY foreign governments reacted with embarrassment to Waldheim's election, omitting, muting, or delaying, the customary messages of congratulation.

Ronald Reagan, however, sent congratulations as usual. And he was outdone by... the USSR.

The Kremlin's news agency, TASS, hailed

Waldheim's victory against the odds: "The US Administration and Zionist circles", it said, "resorted to flagrant interference in the pre-election struggle and launched a campaign of personal hostile attacks..."

The USSR is also said to have played a key role in getting Waldheim into his former job as UN

secretary-general, when information about Waldheim's wartime deeds was available privately to top diplomats at the UN.

But it was after all the Kremlin rulers who first developed the idea of giving anti-semitism a left wing cover by calling it 'anti-Zionism', in the big Stalinist purges of the early 1950s.

## US scraps SALT

THE US government has announced that it does not intend to abide by the existing SALT II agreement. SALT — the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks between the US and the USSR — sets ceilings on the development of new missile warheads.

The USSR claims to have abided by the SALT

agreement. The US is openly and publicly breaking it — by continuing to arm B52 bombers with cruise missiles over the SALT limit.

The threatened US action has caused rifts among the US's NATO allies. European members of NATO, and Canada, are campaigning to

change the US's stand.

Whether or not they succeed, the affair shows up a central fact of all arms 'limitation' or 'reduction' talks. Any agreement between the superpowers is only as valuable as the paper it is written on: and paper can easily be ripped up.

# Jeers as World Cup opens Protest in Mexico

THE OPENING of the World Cup, on 31 May, gave Mexicans an unusual opportunity to tell the world their opinion of their government.

As President Miguel de la Madrid began to speak at the opening ceremony, he was drowned out by howling from the 100,000 strong crowd.

Mexico has been ruled by the 'Institutional Revolutionary Party', under various names, for about 60 years. Drawing its political credit from a

genuine revolution in the early years of this century, and a not-so-genuine nationalist rhetoric, the PRI has created something near to a one-party state.

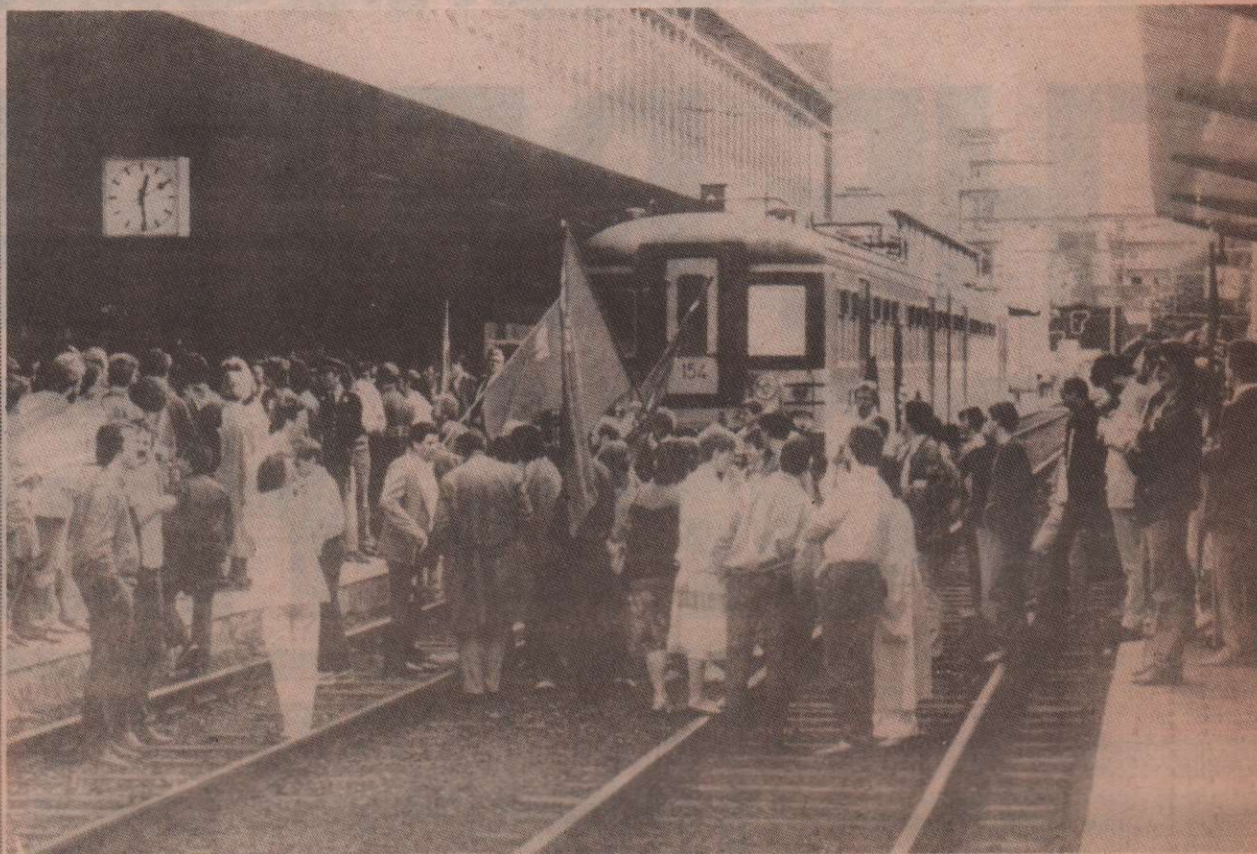
### Unions

Opposition parties are allowed, but all the major trade unions and peasant unions are component parts of the PRI, and the power of the State is used to ensure that independent organisations

do not get very far.

The PRI always wins important elections — sometimes genuinely, but sometimes, as in the Sonora state elections last July, by blatant fraud.

Discontent with the PRI is strong because of the austerity it has imposed in order to pay the international bankers their pound of flesh. According to the UN, real wages have fallen 30% since 1980, and unemployment has risen.



Rail workers occupy station

# General strikes rock Belgium

BELGIAN workers have found a way to fight back effectively against Thatcher-style cuts. Over the last month there have been five 24-hour general strikes. On 31 May 100,000 workers — the equivalent of half a million in Britain — joined a protest march in Brussels.

Belgium has two 'TUCs', the Socialist FGTB and the Christian CSC. The CSC is linked to the right-wing coalition government, and stopped supporting the strike movement after the second general strike on 16 May; and FGTB leaders have used this fact to steer the movement away from the logical next step of an indefinite general strike.

But the rank and file is militant. After the first general strike on 6 May (called for the public sector only) the union leaders probably thought that they had made their point and that was enough. But the initiative was taken from them by railworkers in Charleroi, who struck spontaneously from 12 May.

After the next general strike on 16 May (again, public sector only), railworkers in the south of the country stayed out over the weekend. The third general strike, on 22 May, included the private sector. Flying pickets brought factories out; militant members of the CSC, which had not backed the action, protested outside their union offices; in many areas the strikes continued for several days.

By Colin Foster

On 29 May the FGTB called transport workers and some others out on 48 hours strike.

### Cuts

The government wants to cut £3 billion from public spending. This would mean 28,000 jobs lost, increased health charges, cuts in pensions and unemployment benefit, dearer school buses, etc. The government's plan also includes a cut in company

taxes and an increase in military service from 10 months to 12.

Belgium, like Britain, was one of the pioneer countries of the Industrial Revolution, and is now hard hit by the decline of old basic industries. Unemployment is even higher than here, and the country also has a vast foreign debt.

But the Belgian workers have shown that effective industrial resistance is possible even in the midst of a slump. The strikes have been stronger in the French-speaking south of the country, Wallonia, where unemployment is highest, than in the Dutch-speaking north, Flanders.

## Dr Death speaks out

THE ALLIANCE between the Liberals and SDP was looking a bit shaky last week.

David Owen is always desperate to live up to his reputation as the Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse, the herald of doom. Last week Doctor Death tried to insist that a future Alliance government would retain Britain's ability to contribute a sizeable bit to the nuclear obliteration of civilisation, and probably indeed of humanity.

An Alliance government, he insisted, would replace Polaris.

The whole Alliance is committed to

keeping Britain nuclear-armed — only some of them want to be more 'moderate' about it, and scrap the Trident programme completely.

Sweet, twittering, endearing little David Steel has to keep an eye on the Liberal Party's rank and file, so he felt he had to sulk a bit, and make a sweet, twittering, little fuss. Which he did.

The Liberal-SDP bubble has not exactly burst because of this disagreement, but the credibility of the Alliance as a candidate to form 'the next government' is being given a bit of a battering.

# Free the jailed miners!

THE MINERS' strike came to its bitter, glorious, tragically avoidable end 15 months ago.

It was tragically avoidable because with proper TUC and Labour Party backing the miners could have won. But they didn't get it. From both TUC general secretary Norman Willis and Labour leader Neil Kinnock they got weaseling, double-dealing and back-stabbing instead.

The miners had dared challenge the all-powerful god of the Tories and their capitalist system — profit. They dared assert that human beings, and immediately the miners and their families whose livelihoods were being choked off by pit closures, should come first. They tried to make their principle prevail by taking on the Tories and the capitalist state in the greatest strike Britain has

experienced in half a century.

For a while the miners gave new heart to the labour movement. But inertia and our treacherous leadership finally carried the day, and gave the Tories a victory they did not deserve.

There are some heroic miners for whom the battle with the Tories still goes on — those victimised and sacked, those who have had to put up with the arrogance of the triumphant MacGregor and his stooges, and those who have to wage their long, lonely, private battle against the Tories behind prison bars.

18 miners are still in jail 15 months after the strike. Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland of South Wales are serving eight year sentences at Gartree maximum security prison. Terry French is still serving a four year sentence.

Chris Tazey is serving three years. And there are 14 others serving lesser sentences.

Neil Kinnock continues to refuse to commit a future Labour government to release jailed miners and reinstate those sacked and victimised. This is the true measure of what Neil Kinnock and the leaders of the Labour Party stand for. It is a scandal for the labour movement. Tony Benn, who tried to introduce a Bill in Parliament granting amnesty to the miners, speaks with the real voice of the labour movement on this question.

Today many miners, in jail and out, continue the battle which started with the strike. So, in his own way, does Neil Kinnock. He scabs on the jailed miners now like he ratted on the NUM during the strike. Everywhere he goes, Kinnock should face the demand that he support the jailed and victimised miners.



Terry French, Kent miner jailed for five years - for fighting for jobs.

# Arguing for socialism

THIS IS the first issue of the redesigned Socialist Organiser. Readers should be able to see the improvements. We hope there will be other improvements in the coming weeks.

## Profits

One of our main aims is to get across the basic arguments for socialism, against capitalism, more clearly and simply. At a time when capitalism is rotting into chaos, yet Labour's leaders proclaim that they 'believe in high profits', this task is urgent. We'll be trying to help organise Labour activists to campaign on socialist politics in the run-up to the next general election.

In so doing we continue Socialist Organiser's original aims. SO was founded in October 1978 by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV). This was a broad coalition of left-wing trade unionists and members of the Labour Party set up at a conference in London in July 1978.

The SCLV set itself the task of organising a distinct socialist presence in the upcoming election (it was held in June 1979).

Labour was then in power, as a minority government propped up by unsavoury House of Commons deals with Liberals, Ulster Unionists and others. It was a government which put itself rigidly under

the control of those brutal ring-masters of international capitalism, the International Monetary Fund. It imposed cuts in the welfare state and fought to hold down wages.

But the Thatcherite Tories, their claws and fangs newly sharpened, were waiting in the wings as the alternative to the Labour government. Socialists knew that even a right-wing Labour government was better for the working class than Thatcher's Tories. Even the worst of Labour governments is more open to working-class pressure than a Tory or Liberal government. And Labour remained the only mass political party of the working class.

So, even though it was with gritted teeth, the Jim-Callaghan-led Labour Party had to be supported in the coming election. But the left could not give Callaghan unqualified support.

## Campaign

From this dilemma arose the idea of a left-wing campaign within Labour's own campaign. Constituencies and wards could exercise some measure of control over the election campaign they fought and the political literature they distributed. The SCLV set out to organise those local Labour Parties who wanted to campaign for socialism in the election and to service them with leaflets.

Of course, a socialist campaign like that also meant that those who conducted it thereby pledged themselves to continue to fight the anti-working-class measures that were to be expected from the right wing Labour government they were forced by circumstances to work to re-elect.

From late 1978 Socialist Organiser was produced as the SCLV's monthly paper. It went fortnightly in 1980, and weekly in 1981.

## Local government

But the left unity of 1978-9 did not last long. After the Tories won the election the left divided.

Tragically the left in local government decided to roll over and to pass on the Tory cuts — in the most gentle way possible. They raised local rates to compensate for the withdrawal of central funds: for the working class it was still a cut in income. Worse than that, nobody could mobilise and inspire a working class fight back against the Tories with such a policy. Nobody did.

The local government left made many left gestures, adopted liberal attitudes to good causes like lesbian and gay rights, did some useful things to fight racism. Apart from that, and a lot of left talk, it was routine business-as-usual Labour local government administration. The local government left

wasted its strength, and gradually settled into the role of administrators within the system.

SO stood by the original SCLV policy of class struggle. But our support was too weak to stop those in the forefront from wrecking the Labour left by miring it in compromises with the Tory government. Now a section of the erstwhile left has rallied to the new Kinnock establishment in the Labour Party — to those who will, at best, form a new Wilson/Callaghan-style Labour government if we succeed in driving the Tories from office in the upcoming election.

Today, when the broad left has temporarily gone into deep retreat, the urgent job of socialists is to resist. We want to replace the capitalist system, root and branch, with a different system, socialism — which is working-class economic and political democracy. Socialism is the only real answer to the savage red-in-tooth-and-claw Toryism now in office.

## Central

The working class needs a paper that proclaims that central truth — but without reducing socialism and Marxism to narrow, mindless, ignorantly-dogmatic credos, as Militant does. It needs a paper that places the working class and its struggles at the centre of all our

concerns — but which also, unlike Socialist Worker, is guided by the understanding that working-class politics in Britain centres in the mass party that the working class has built up over many decades of struggle.

## Comments

We ask all our readers to help us develop the paper. Sell it, write for it.

Make a special effort with this week's paper. Launch, re-start, or expand door-to-door sales on council estates. Do a Saturday sale in the town centre or in other shopping areas. Do special sales at student unions. Look out for labour movement and left meetings, and sell at them.

Visit other left-wingers in the local labour movement. Ask them to agree to have the paper delivered each week, or to take a few papers regularly to sell. Ask local left bookshops to take the paper, if they don't take it already.

Sell the paper at work. Try people who have refused in the past: suggest they try out the revamped paper.

Send in comments, appreciative or critical.

Write to Socialist Organiser at PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# GRAFFITI

news they won't print

## Ms Brand's excuse for losing

COMMENTS have appeared in the press which explicitly or implicitly accuse Socialist Organiser and some of its supporters active in student politics — who are part of Socialist Students in NOLS, SSiN — of either Jew-baiting (the Sunday Telegraph) or benefiting from anti-semitism in elections to the National Union of Students (NUS) Executive (the Guardian).

Nothing else can be understood from what the Guardian said but that Simon Pottinger, a SO supporter, beat Linzi Brand in the NUS elections because an anti-semitic campaign was waged against her.

"Ms Linzi Brand, the NUS anti-racism officer, said that at the conference she had failed to be elected to a further sabbatical post largely because she was Jewish". Quoting Linzi Brand directly, the Guardian continues

### Far left

"People were saying they weren't going to vote for a left-wing yid, that kind of thing. Anti-semitism can be a good recruiting agent for the far left".

It is not even excluded by these words that Simon Pottinger himself, or his SSiN and SO associates, were among the organisers of this supposed campaign.

The Sunday Telegraph cites Socialist Organiser, and only Socialist Organiser, as the 'outside agitator' source of the anti-semitism which it — correctly — says is rampant at South Bank Polytechnic.

"Linzi Brand is a Zionist. Like a beleaguered factory manager she blames 'outside agitators' for the troubles. By this she means Trotskyite splinter groups like Socialist Organiser, some of whom are powerful with

in the Labour Party's Waltham Road headquarters. But she also points to pro-Khomeini Iranians".

Both papers cite Linzi Brand as the source of what they say or imply about SO.

The truth is very much the opposite of what is said in the Sunday Telegraph and Guardian about SO and its student supporters. We have campaigned against left-wing anti-semitism openly, in the NUS and in the columns of SO.

### Lose votes

If Linzi Brand did lose votes because of anti-semitism, and we think she probably did, then Simon Pottinger, who openly attacked the anti-semitism implicit in 'Israel-must-be-destroyed' anti-Zionism, cannot be held responsible for this in any way. And since he beat Linzi Brand by 100 votes, anti-semitism alone cannot explain her lack of appeal.

On the same day Michele Carlisle — a Jewish SO supporter who defended the right of Israel to exist, and openly denounced left-wing anti-semitism — topped the poll in another election.

### Smear

We protest at these smears and misrepresentations of SO and SSiN students. Linzi Brand, irresponsibly and small-spiritedly, has reduced the serious and increasingly important question of left-wing anti-semitism to factional trivia to excuse and explain her failure — as the right-wing candidate of the SDP, the Communist Party, and Labour Students leaders — to beat the left-wing candidate, Simon Pottinger, in the election for the post of NUS vice president welfare.

## SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR FIVE MONTHS

Peter Jordan, a 62 year old retired school teacher, is now serving a 14 year sentence in Armley Prison, Leeds, for conspiracy.

Arrested and jailed in December 1984, he was finally tried in February 1986. Since then he has been kept in solitary confinement under appalling conditions.

The authorities first classified him as a category A, maximum security, prisoner. Then in August 1985 he was reclassified as an 'ordinary' prisoner, on remand. On being sentenced he was again returned to category A. Why remains a mystery.

Jordan, a life-long socialist, was a delegate to Bristol Trades Council and a vigorous campaigner against Apartheid.

### Necessary

Why has it been necessary to impose such a harsh sentence on a man like this? Peter Jordan has harmed no-one. His mistake was to trust others, and to allow himself to be used in an ill-conceived attempt to strike at a military target in Britain, in solidarity with the Irish republican cause. He pleaded guilty to the charge of conspiracy. An appeal against his savage sentence is

**LETTERS**  
Write to: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

due to be heard in the Autumn. Peter Jordan has devoted his life to supporting and upholding socialist principles. He now needs your support. Contact PO Box 45, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1, for petition forms. Write to MPs and the Home Secretary, protesting at the severity of the sentence. JACK MCGARRITY

## Ignoring the real Israel

Having accepted that "Israel's apologists attempt to morally blackmail critics of Israel into silence with cries of 'anti-Semitism'" and having, quite correctly, described such behaviour as "contemptible" John O'Mahony is guilty of exactly the same behaviour himself.

There can be no other interpretation of the phrase "some 'anti-Zionists' like Tony Greenstein, a prominent member of the LMCP". Given the context of the article, the inverted commas can only mean that I am an anti-Semite masquerading as an anti-Zionist. I suggest that O'Mahony either substantiates this allegation or retracts it.

For the record I have been active in the anti-fascist movement all my political life.

### Responsibility

Nor is it true that I "smear the Zionists with some of the responsibility for the crimes of the Nazis for the holocaust of six million Jews." On the moral and political level, the responsibility is solely that of the Nazis.

There is no serious historian — Zionist or otherwise — who has not raised the question as to whether the Zionist goal of statehood did not act at cross purposes to the need to rescue as many Jews as possible.

It is equally untrue to suggest that the Zionists tried to get "the best deals" from various anti-Semites from the Ottoman dignitaries to the Nazis. Unless you mean the best deal for the Zionist movement. In Czarist Russia they did their best to undermine Jewish participation in the revolutionary movement. In Weimar Germany they abstained from all anti-fascist activity, even the most minimal bourgeois kind.



Palestinian refugees

The tragedy is that with his talk of the Israeli army being a "citizen army" (i.e. a conscript army like South Africa) and being "extremely democratic" for its Jewish majority, O'Mahony has now adopted identical positions to those of traditional left Zionist apologists for Israel. Even for the Jews of Israel, the options are narrowing as Israel follows a path not

unlike that of Nazi Germany and South Africa today. It is overtly racist and the fascist right is growing, not the left Zionists that O'Mahony identified with. Unfortunately O'Mahony ignores the reality of Israel today in favour of ideological abstractions.

Yours sincerely,  
Tony Greenstein

## FASCISTS IN BIRMINGHAM

Over the past few months there have been a number of attacks on left wing bookshops in Birmingham: Key Books and the Star Club (run by the Communist Party) have been raided by thugs; the Peace Centre, associated with CND, has been completely closed down following an attack; and the Other Bookshop, run by supporters of Socialist Action, has been repeatedly raided and broken into but has managed to stay open.

### Police

The Birmingham police say that they regard these incidents as 'isolated acts of vandalism', but 'do not rule out a political motive'!

This note (right) was sent to the manager of the Other Bookshop last week. It provides an interesting insight into the psychology of fascists, as well as into their factional disputes. It might also persuade the cops that they are right not to 'rule out' a political motive for the attacks...

**W.F.N.F. WHITE MAN FIGHT BACK!**  
UDA  
The NF was happy to hear some members of the B.N.P. edged to nick some scumlight from your shop and got attacked by some of your members. I like to point out it was B.N.P. members who attacked.  
IF it was NF members, you attacked the Red scum who would try to attack the NF would have a lot of knife notes in them. Because the BHAM NF DON'T MESS AROUND That's why your shop is like a fort.  
The B.N.P. ARE WANKERS that's why they don't fight back.  
To prove we don't mess around ask the Star Social Club (member of GA) about the knife point or their banner or their scumlight and so on.  
To keep you on your toes look out we might pop in?  
I like to say hello to that cunt with the beard.  
**NIGGER-LOVERS ARE TRAITORS!**  
**STUFF THE RACE ACT**  
**A.V. FREE F.C.**  
**JOE PEARCE!**  
EL ROBE NITE  
NATIONAL FRONT: 01-684 0271

## The witch hunt in Motherwell

In Motherwell South, the right wing majority have joined the witch-hunt against Militant, aided and abetted by local MP Jeremy Bray.

The General Management Committee has decided to start an investigation into sellers of Militant newspaper.

During the debate, Dr. Bray named certain delegates present as members of Militant. By fingering young comrades in this way, most of whom he has known for years, Dr. Bray undoubtedly influenced the 30-23 vote decision.

Dr Bray then continued the attack in

his regular weekly columns in Motherwell Times and Wishaw Press, branding the young comrades around Militant as brainwashed political Moonies.

In Motherwell at least, the character of the young Labour Party members who sell Militant bears no resemblance to such a description. It seems that Bray knows exactly what he is doing in thus showing complete contempt for the confidentiality of internal party members. Dr. Bray is encouraging the old guard of rabid right-wingers who still control the local party, despite the emerging challenge of an, as yet, unorganised opposition on the left.

In Motherwell South, as elsewhere, attempts at witch-hunting can be prevented by a determined campaign. A wide-ranging, but disciplined Broad Left has to be built up to do this.

ROB DUNCAN,  
Motherwell South CLP

We welcome letters: 400 words or less, please. We may have to cut longer letters. Send to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## CO-OP calls cops

On Saturday 24 May myself and another member of the Executive Committee of North Staffs Trades Council — Andy Day — were arrested for 'obstruction' and 'conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace'. In fact we were handing out leaflets to protest at the continued sale of Silentnight beds by the Co-op. The manager of the store had rung the police to ask them to move us.

The trades council has complained to the Chief Constable and we are also writing to the Police Committee, the Co-op Party, and Society, and to USDAW to complain about the actions of the store manager.

ARTHUR BOUGH,  
President, North Staffs Trades Council,  
in personal capacity.

A woman's experience on a demolition job.

# Everybody stopped and watched....



By Jean Lane

I started work as a labourer last November, on a Community Programme (CP) Scheme. This is really a jumped-up YTS for adults, the main qualification being that you have been unemployed for over a year.

Lasting for one year, the job was designed to give you a job and a wage (if you can call it that) while you looked for full-time work.

I stuck it out for just five months — and I would think very carefully before doing it again, however long I had been unemployed.

I was employed by the City Council as a "labourer-driver". I worked, with about ten others, in a conservation store, attached to the architecture department. What we did was knock down buildings that weren't wanted, and clean up the materials (bricks, slates, tiles, fireplaces) so they could be resold. So we didn't just sledgehammer them down, we took them apart brick by brick.

The job could be anything from demolition, to cleaning bricks, to driving bits of wood round to somebody's house. On that level it was good. It was hard work but I enjoyed it. As I'll explain, it is not the nature of the work that would make me think again.

There was always a quick turnover of staff — people leaving either because they had found a job (rare) or because their year was up. I found out after some weeks that many of the men there spent one year on CP and one year unemployed alternately and had been doing so for some years — the job situation being so bad. What we were doing basically was doing council workers' jobs on the cheap — and with no prospects.

All of the other workers were men apart from the secretary who worked part time and had nothing to do with the manual labour.

I was the only woman who worked as a labourer. In fact I was the only woman who had ever applied. And that is why I got the job — as a result of a policy of positive discrimination by the council.

Positive discrimination is all right if it means giving women the right of equal opportunity as men to obtaining skills, getting highly paid and harassment-free work. What it meant in this case was the right to low pay, non-skilled labour and subjection to quite vicious sexual harassment because positive discrimination hasn't extended to enough women in the construction industry to make much of a difference.

I don't know how many women there are in this line of work. There are some women now in the construction industry, but it is still very rare and I get the impression that it is rare for women to go into it as a labourer. Mainly it is women who have slipped the net to get onto training schemes and gone to work in building with a skill: chippie, brickie, electrician or whatever. Such training schemes were virtually non-existent in my town unless you could manage six months on £38 a week after



It is still very rare to find women in the building trade

which you still wouldn't be skilled enough to compete on the job market anyway. Apprenticeships are just unheard of.

I have done heavy work before. My job at the Post Office involved loading mail bags onto station wagons and trains. I had no idea however, what to expect on my first day at this job. I went there with a completely open mind. I was careful, though, to read my copy of the Guardian so that a women's page article on lesbianism wasn't showing. I did know that I was going into an all-male environment and one where the men probably had little experience of working with women and I wasn't prepared to open myself out just yet to either jokes or abuse.

Despite my job at the Post Office, I wasn't sure if I would be physically capable of the job. Women aren't often given the opportunity to find out what they are physically capable of: except having babies or moving dead-weight bodies from one bed to another. That work is devalued, not considered heavy manual work, so that though women do the heaviest work going, we tend to think we can't handle heavy jobs.

Well, the day I started they had just finished demolishing an old barn and I was told to go with three of the men to clear up the site and pick up all the materials to be brought back and cleaned.

When we got there, there were loads of bricks and stuff lying around, bits of wall that still had to be knocked down and concrete slab foundations to be lifted from the ground.

We couldn't get the pick-up truck close to the site but had to put it on the other side of a field. That meant we had to load wheelbarrows up and push the stuff to the truck across bumpy, hard waste ground with holes and pits and old bicycle wheels and god knows what else lying around. Then the barrow had to be pushed up a ramp onto the back of the truck.

When I saw this I wondered whether I was going to be able to do it — and they were obviously wondering the same thing.

So I mucked in and started loading a wheelbarrow up with bricks. When the barrow was full I almost instinctively went to stand on one side to let one of

the men push it to the truck. But then I thought "no". I couldn't let them think I was only prepared to do the light work or that they had to carry me on the job. I had to prove that I was prepared to work just as hard as them or it would always be assumed that women can't handle the job. I had to start the way I meant to carry on. So, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, I picked up the end of the barrow.

And everybody stopped...dropped whatever brick or slab they were holding and watched. And I was really sweating because I did not know if I could get that barrow anywhere near the truck, let alone up the ramp. Well, I started to push. It was really heavy and the bloody thing was swerving and toppling about all over the place, dropping bricks out on the way.

"... it would have reinforced their view that women can't work."

One of the men shouted, "do you want a hand?" I could feel their smiles on the back of my neck. I thought I could say "you don't ask other men that, do you?" or "no, no, I can handle it", but I didn't if I could! So I decided that honesty was the best policy: "I don't know but if I do I'll shout".

Somehow I got that barrow across the ground — minus a few bricks — up the ramp and onto the truck. I don't know to this day how I did it. But I had a little feeling of triumph despite how foolish I must have looked.

I can do it now. There is a skill involved in pushing a loaded wheelbarrow which is not just to do only with physical strength (though that helps)

but is also about balance, weight distribution and sense. You have to keep the back of the barrow as close to the ground as possible without touching it and keep your arms straight so the wheel takes the weight and not you.

But I didn't know that at the time. There was me lifting it as high as I could and trying to run it across the ground with my arms bent up and straining like mad, losing balance all over the place. It wasn't until about two months later that one of them showed me how to push a barrow.

Well, we did that for the rest of the day. By the time I got home my muscles were screaming. Everything ached. I felt really sorry for myself.

Since then I think I have developed physical strength that I didn't have before. I can now lift much heavier weights. One of my later jobs was lifting large blocks of sandstone from the ground to above waist level onto the truck. If I'd had to do that on the first day I would have been in serious trouble. But you develop gradually.

I don't think there is anything biological about women's ability or inability to develop strength. The only problem specific to a woman that I had was when I was on my period — which I was that first week. I lose a lot of blood and feel very weak and lethargic. But I never mentioned that, or used it to get out of work. If I did it would have reinforced their view that women can't or shouldn't do the work.

If one of the men came in one morning with a hangover and said "I feel tired today, you lift it for me" it would have been "John feels tired". But if I had done it, it would have been women — not Jean — can't handle the job.

So for women who suffer very badly with their periods (pains, sickness, fainting) it would be another big hurdle to get over as far as men's attitudes are concerned, and I was very little help in crossing it for any women who came after me. I felt I had enough to handle just by being a woman and being there.

My biggest hurdles were yet to come and I'll describe them in the next instalment.

## Race & Class

By Payman Rezaei

### Why more Blacks are jobless

RACISM, defined as 'prejudiced attitudes', is rife in Britain. According to the British Social Attitudes Survey, 90% of the population reckoned that there was racial prejudices against West Indians and Asians. Whites make up 94% of the British population.

Even worse, in a survey published in February this year, 42% of white secondary school and college students defined themselves as racially prejudiced.

However, the degree of racism in British society is most accurately measured in the labour market. Black unemployment rates are twice those of whites, and blacks are likely to be out of work longer.

In the 16-24 age group the differences are most dramatic. Last year the rates of male unemployment were: whites 20%, Asians 25%, and West Indians 40%.

In some city areas things are a lot worse. According to Birmingham city council, two in three of young blacks in Handsworth — scene of last year's riots — are unemployed.

On leaving school, although more blacks tend to join government training schemes, they are less likely to get a job at the end of it.

For those working, wages show a racial gap. According to the Policy Studies Institute (1984) the median wage of a white worker was £129 per week. Similar figures are £111 for Asian men and £109 for West Indians. (If the wages are arranged from lowest to highest, then the median is the 'middle' wage).

The effect of low wages is felt worst by Asian families, who typically have 2.8 dependents for each wage-earner, compared with 1.8 dependents in a white family.

#### Gap

One study of the Bradford textile trade found that when lower-skilled jobs were cut by introduction of new technology, whites were 'preferred' for the new work. White workers were thought to have more 'brains' for this work. English language fluency tests were used to exclude Asian workers.

The legal position is that discrimination is illegal. The Race Relations Act 1968 makes refusing jobs on racial grounds illegal. Also the 1976 Race Relations Act outlaws 'indirect' discrimination — such as the language tests used in Bradford. But the laws have achieved little.

What can the labour movement do to change the situation? Trade unions must be involved in monitoring discrimination, for example by being present on interview panels. Labour authorities must provide apprenticeships and real training, leading to permanent jobs.

Most importantly, Labour councils have to fight for the provision of more jobs — redividing the existing jobs is totally inadequate, and divisive too.

Interview with union leaders

# Building the workers' voice

On May Day this year 1½ million black workers struck across South Africa as part of their campaign to make Workers' Day a paid public holiday. Next Monday even more workers are likely to take action to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprising. Factory occupations are spreading across the country.

The force that has been central to these developments is the Congress of South African Trade Unions. On this page we reprint an interview with the COSATU executive committee in which the federation's leadership spell out their commitment to working class leadership of the struggle for liberation in South Africa.



Women workers are fighting for their demands

problems of workers — their experience of hunger, starvation, of no political rights, of bantu education which was made to keep workers in wage slavery.

We want our new society to be the complete opposite to that. It must be a non-racial and united nation.

It must be a democracy where all people have political rights. And freedom from economic oppression must go with these political rights.

So change does not mean only a new government with a different colour skin. It must be change to a real democracy that benefits the people who produce the wealth of the country — the working class.

Workers must lead the struggle for freedom. And after liberation they must be the leaders in the making of a new society.

*That means we must build democracy at grass roots level.*

We strongly support democratic ways of working in our organisation. Worker leaders must get mandates and direction from members. Workers

**"COSATU gives workers a chance to play a leading role in the fight to end apartheid and cheap labour".**

must control their trade unions.

We believe these methods of worker control must also be used when workers take part in township struggles.

There must also be democracy in the running of factories. Today the bosses alone make decisions about how to run the factories and how to share profits.

COSATU says this is undemocratic. Workers must have control over the

way production in the factory is planned and over the profits that workers make.

That is the way we see the building of democracy — in our organisations and in the whole of our society.

*How do you see the working class reaching this kind of democracy?*

All progressive organisations believe the working class will lead any struggle for national freedom.

For this to happen workers must take part in other organisations and struggles. They must also lead these organisations and struggles.

In this way the main ideas of working class democracy are spreading through SA today — ideas such as mandates from members, report backs from leaders and grassroots organisation. These ideas are taking hold in the townships as people build street committees and area committees.

*Why do you say workers are the main force in any struggle for freedom?*

The working class runs the mines, the factories and the farms. They create the wealth of the country. Because of this the workers are very strong in all countries. If the working class is organised, then it has the power to force many changes in the way a country is run.

Because of this, it is the working class that will — and should — play the most important part in the struggle for freedom.

*COSATU has over half a million members. What role do you see your organisation playing in this struggle?*

We do not claim to represent the whole working class. But we believe we are an important weapon of the working class. We are strong in big factories and most sectors of the economy. If people want any struggle to succeed, then we believe COSATU must take part in it.

*COSATU talks about the 'wider working class'. What is this?*

We know we are not the only force in the struggle. People are fighting over many different issues.

We will look closely at the struggles of other organisations. If we agree with them, then we will fight in a disciplined alliance.

But we want a clear idea who our closest friends and allies are. These are the people who have the same feelings and interests as the workers. The unemployed are a part of the working class. Poor people in the rural areas,

the farmworkers and the militant youth are also part of the working class — not only people who work in the factories.

But other classes and groups, outside the working class, are fighting for freedom. We will join their fights. They are our friends.

Like the End Conscription Campaign which is an important part of the struggle. It is made up mostly of whites.

*What do you mean by a disciplined alliance?*

A disciplined alliance must be between organisations — not individuals. Organisations who fight together in struggle must discuss and take decisions together.

For this to be strong the organisations must have clear and regular arrangements to meet and discuss issues. We see structures emerging where different organisations can meet in this disciplined way.

As many people as possible should be involved in these discussions. So it is best for structures to grow at a local level — in different townships and regions of the country.

If disciplined alliances are made at local level then shop stewards will be able to meet and plan with the youth and other progressive organisations.

*You recently met with the ANC and SACTU. What is your relationship with*

Mineworkers' shaft stewards: the

*these organisations?*

We have no formal relationship with the ANC or SACTU.

We decided to meet the ANC because of the crisis in SA. Many people believe the ANC is a leading organisation in the struggle. So we decide to exchange views, because COSATU is also an important force.

*What connection is there between strong organisation on the factory floor and the struggle for people's power at community level?*

The growth in township struggles has influenced the way the trade unions fight for their demands.

Workers have taken notice of the bravery of the youth, who have been in the front in the struggle.

And workers' struggles have given the youth an example to follow.

*COSATU's constitution says South Africa is in a state of crisis. What does this mean?*

The policies of the government and the bosses have caused the crisis. Their policies cannot satisfy the needs of the masses. They cannot meet the demands made by workers and other organisations in the country.

The people do not believe the government when it says it is making changes. The so-called 'reform process' is in tatters. The people have rejected things like community councils and the new tricameral parliament.

The economy is in a bad way. Three million people are unemployed. Big companies are taking over, or monopolising, smaller firms. Factories are closing every day. And the policies of the government and the bosses can do nothing to help.

That's why we say there is a political and economic crisis in the country — and it's getting worse.

The only way for the crisis to end is for the people to fight for their demands and put these into practice.

The launch of COSATU last year was very important. Because of this organisation, workers can add their strength to the struggle that will end the crisis. COSATU gives workers a chance to play a leading role in the fight to end apartheid and cheap labour.

*Who are the main actors in the crisis?*

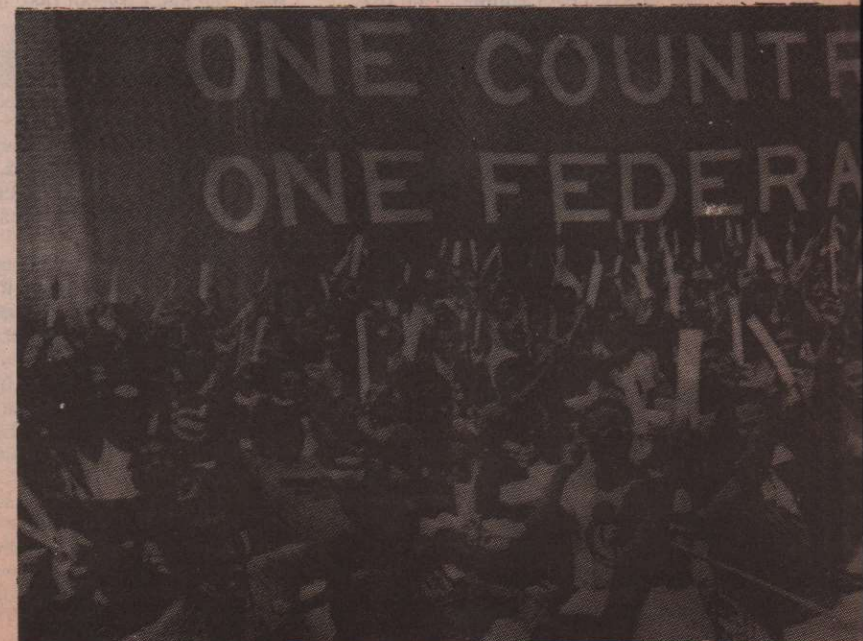
The main actors on the stage are divided into two groups.

On one side we have the masses and their democratic organisations. These organisations include COSATU, civics in the townships, student organisations and banned organisations like the ANC.

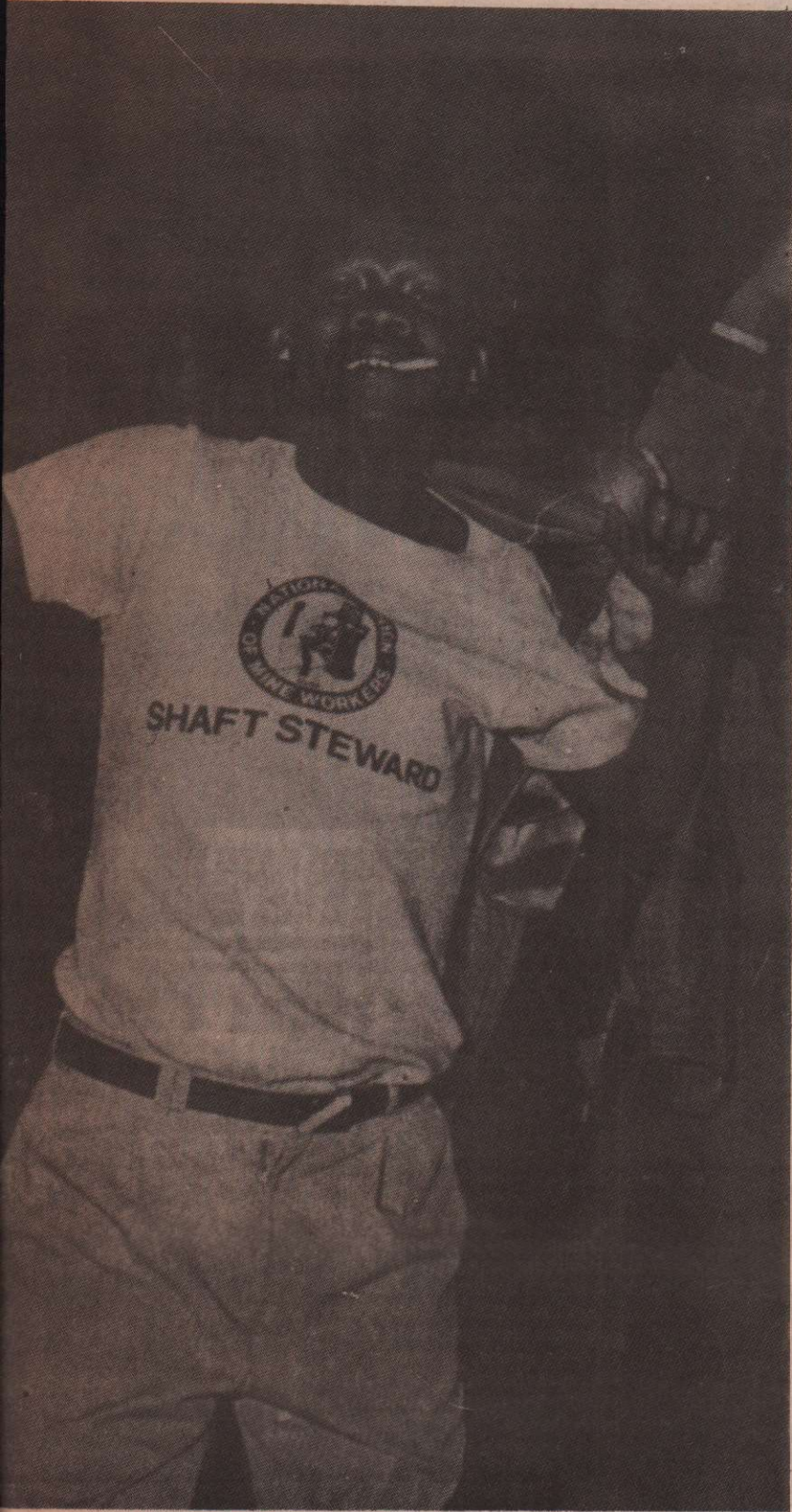
On the other side we have the groups that want no real change: the government, the bosses, the bantustan puppets and other so-called leaders who support the government.

*COSATU and many other organisations say they will fight to build a democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation. What do you mean by that?*

COSATU knows all about the daily



Mass worker participation in the founding conference of the Congress of South African Trade Unions



backbone of the union

Our experience of organisation, the way we fight campaigns and the way we build our organisation, are seen as an important force.

In this way the working class has helped the struggle to grow in places outside the factories.

Can you tell us about some of the joint struggles workers are fighting outside the factory floor?

We've seen students in the townships and workers in the factories fight together before — like in the Simba-chips boycott when students and workers fought together for workers' rights.

Then in November 1984 workers stayed away from work to support the demands of students.

Workers and other organisations are making the same demands — for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, the unbanning of banned organisations, and the lifting of the state of emergency.

We've seen joint action in the Vaal around rents. We fully supported the demands for lower rents in the Vaal.

In Springs the shop stewards local and students are working together.

In the Eastern Cape, trade unions and community organisations have worked together on the consumer boycott.

In the struggle for a better education, unions and organisations are beginning to work together at national level, through the National Education Crisis Committee structures.

What has been the response of workers and other groups to COSATU's formation?

The launch of COSATU made organisations feel stronger at a time when they were being attacked in the middle of the State of Emergency. Our decision to join political struggles outside the factories encouraged people to fight back.

Thousands of workers came to our offices wanting to be organised — from sectors where we don't even have unions.

Farmworkers from far off places came to our offices when they heard about the decision to set up a farmworkers' union. The unemployed also want to be organised.

We were powerfully strong when we started — and now, after four months, we are over 650,000 strong.

But we have a problem — we don't have the people and the resources to handle all the new members.

How have employers and the government responded?

The bosses have said there has been a massive increase in militancy in the

last few months. They are very worried and they blame COSATU. They have often asked us to go and speak to them.

The conservative bosses are getting into a panic. We can see this in the Lowveld-Nelspruit stayaway. There the employers threatened to fire workers, pull out of the area, and they called in the government and police to help them.

At the other end, particularly with the larger monopolies, employers have lost hope in the government.

They are in a difficult position. The bosses and the government don't know what to do. They have no direction.

That is why leaders from big business went to see the ANC. They want to find out what to do and to try to get some protection in the future.

And the government — it wants to smash COSATU. They banned the launch of our congress in the Eastern Cape. The police have attacked many striking workers. They've used their tools to fight us — like in Natal, the decision to form UWUSA [Buthelezi's 'union'].

In Bophuthatswana they beat up anyone who wore COSATU T-shirts.

But we don't think they have a clear idea of how to handle us.

Do you think these forces have the strength to crush COSATU?

It's hard to say. We have more than half a million members, in the most important parts of the economy. And millions of others support us. Any action against our leadership and our organisation will throw this country into chaos. And I think they know this — but you never know what this government will do.

Because the world is watching the government, I think they will first try to use their stooges — like the bantustan police, vigilantes and companies like Gencor — to break our unity.

What links would COSATU like to have with the world trade union federations?

We will not join any of the world trade unions or confederations.

They are complicated organisations and we believe they are fighting a war of different ideologies and political ideas.

We don't feel we have enough experience or understanding of that fight.

And in SA we don't have the freedom to choose openly. If we join a confederation that the government does not like then the government could crack down on us.

But we won't stand back and not join up with workers in other parts of the world. We want to build up direct links between workers here and workers in other parts of the world. This is an important way to build solidarity.

For us, solidarity means more than help with money. Solidarity means workers in different parts of the world taking part in each others' struggles.

This is beginning to happen — like CCAWUSA who supported the 3M

**"... a real democracy that benefits the people who produce the wealth of the country — the working class".**

strike in America, during the Coca Cola campaign in our country, and the solidarity action of VW workers in West Germany with VW workers in Uitenhage.

What campaigns will COSATU fight?

Our members are discussing the issues that were raised at the first CEC — May Day, June 16, a living

wage, health and safety and deregulation.

A law for deregulation is now being discussed in parliament. It will give Botha the power to remove minimum wages and reduce the wages our unions have fought for. This is an important law to fight.

We also plan to organise the unemployed and farmworkers.

COSATU has called for an end to the pass laws. The government knows the old pass laws have failed. But now it is planning to make pass laws in a new form.

These documents will tighten control over the movement of workers. They will not allow people to move about freely in search of jobs. So COSATU will fight this law. In so doing it will fight for a central working class demand — an end to the controls that have allowed employers to make such big profits in the past.

This will be a big campaign and we will plan it with many organisations.

We will also demand the release of Nelson Mandela, Oscar Mpetsha and all political prisoners, and the unbanning of banned organisations.

**"Any action against our organisation or our leadership will throw this country into chaos".**

Why is it so important to organise the unemployed?

In the past, the bosses have used unemployed workers to make the unions and progressive struggles in the townships weak.

Scab labour is often used to replace striking workers and weaken their union.

At the NECC conference in Natal, Inkatha used mainly unemployed workers to attack the organisers and disrupt the conference. A lot of violence against members of unions and other progressive organisations in the townships is by the unemployed.

This has made many divisions for workers and people in other parts of the struggle. So we see the organisation of the unemployed as a crucial way to maintain the unity of the oppressed.

How will COSATU help in the struggle against Bantu education?

COSATU fully supports the demands of the students.

We have called for the unbanning of COSAS, for democratic SRCs, and for people's education.

We have called for all students to celebrate May Day with us, and we support the call for a stayaway on National Youth Day, June 16.

Will Inkatha's attempts to build a new union federation be a major problem for COSATU?

Inkatha's new federation, called UWUSA, might cause some divisions amongst our members. But we believe our organisation is strong enough to stand firm against this attack.

UWUSA and Inkatha do not understand what worker organisation is all about. Their shop stewards are different to ours. They do not consult their members and they control the workers.

Our members meet COSATU shop stewards daily. These shop stewards are the strength of our organisation and they are loyal to COSATU.

So we don't believe UWUSA will succeed in the factories.

But outside the factories there has been much violence against our members. The homes of many officials have been burned down. Many of our members have been beaten up — even their children.

But our organisation is strong — and we are growing stronger every day.

Slightly abridged from SASPU Focus Vol.5 No.1.

# 3 day general strike planned

AS SOUTH Africa's privileged white racist rulers fall out among themselves, black South Africa prepares for the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising of 1976.

16 June 1976: the youth of Soweto braved the bullets of the apartheid state, and many paid for their bravery with their lives. A youth revolt spread across South Africa, and a general strike gripped the Soweto area, as the black workers joined in the struggle. There was a second general strike in September.

'Tribal' divisions were manipulated to weaken the revolt, as Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi nailed his colours to the mast of 'moderation', which means collaboration with those who enslave South Africa's blacks.

The revolt subsided. Apartheid had survived.

Now, ten years later, the black revolt has re-emerged with new force and power. Apartheid faces its biggest crisis ever.

South Africa's independent trade unions plan mass strikes to commemorate Soweto. A three day general strike has been called, to follow up the unions' massive success on May Day, when workers organised the biggest strike ever in South African history.

Whole areas of the country were paralysed. More than a million and a half workers struck, and the vile racist regime was rocked to its foundations.

## Repressive

Faced with the prospect of new mass protests on 16 June and after, the South African government has rushed through new repressive legislation — harsher even than the State of Emergency imposed last year. This legislation will allow for massive detention without trial.

All indoor and outdoor meetings are banned for the duration of the anniversary. But it is certain that the ban will be ignored. Soweto will be commemorated by the most powerful black working class self-assertion so far.

In Britain, we must go all out to mobilise for the 28 June Anti-Apartheid demonstration. It could and should be the biggest anti-apartheid demonstration ever in Britain. Build for it!



Soweto 1976

# Where We STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty, East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles

and workers' struggles world wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a free and united Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small financial contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

## Activists' DIARY

FRIDAY 13 JUNE. Lambeth printworkers support group: Betty Heathfield (WAPC), Carol Hall (deputy MoC Times Newspapers SOGAT Clerical), S.African NUM shaft steward. 8pm, Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall.

SATURDAY 15 JUNE. 'Freedom for imprisoned Polish trade unionists. Free jailed miners, reinstate sacked men'. Stefan Bekier (Polish trade unionist). 3pm, Royal Mile Primary School, nr Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. Same speaker on Sunday 15 June, 7.30 at Stirling Miners' Welfare, and Monday 16 June, 7.30 at McLellan Galleries,

Sauchiehall St, Glasgow. MONDAY 16 JUNE. Glasgow Anti-Apartheid rally to commemorate Soweto uprising. 7.30, City Chambers, George Square. TUESDAY 17 JUNE. Anti-Apartheid lobby of Parliament.

SATURDAY 21 JUNE. National conference against the witchhunt. 10 to 5, Regents College, Inner Circle, Regents Park, London NW1. Two delegates per Labour Party or trade union body; credentials £3 from Hackney North CLP, 96a Stoke Newington High St, London N16.

SATURDAY 21 JUNE. Irish hunger strike commemoration rally, 2pm, Digbeth Civic Halls, Birmingham.

SATURDAY 12 JULY. Third World First conference for trade unionists. From 10am at University of London Union. £2.50/£1.50. Contact: Third World First

8 Lower Clapton Rd, London E5

SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS: on strike since June 1985. Donations urgently needed, to FTAT Cravendale Branch 92 Strike Fund, c/o Mrs A King, 10 Rainhall Cres, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs BB8 6BS. They are also appealing for labour movement bodies to 'adopt a family' of strikers — contact Mr & Mrs Williams, 41 Lower West Avenue, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs BB8 6DW. Tel 0282 814556.

'THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE IN EASTERN EUROPE': Issue no. 2 of the bulletin of the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign. Articles on Polish political prisoners, Polish peace group, documents from East European workers' and socialist groups. 30p from V Derer, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH. Tel: 01-458 1501.

Socialist Organiser public meetings: 'Where We Stand'.

SHEFFIELD: Thursday 12 June, 7.30 at the Centre Against Unemployment, 73 West Street. Speakers: Alan Fraser (victimised UCW member), John Bloxam.

BASINGSTOKE: Thursday 3 July, 7.30, Chute House, Church St. Speaker: John O'Mahony (editor, SO).

Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory news.

Petition now out reminding the Labour leaders of the 1985 Labour Party conference resolution on the miners, and stating 'We believe that the Labour Party should actively campaign for the above rightful demands in the run up to the next General Election'.

Copies from: G Scott, 34 Newcastle Avenue, Horden, Peterlee, Co Durham.



## Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

# Join the anti-nuke alliance

There is a ferment in the labour movement around the question of nuclear power. This has been gradually developing as the scandal of years of cover-ups has come to light.

And now Chernobyl has brought the matter to a head. It is essential for revolutionary socialists to join in, support and focus the movement against nuclear power.

There is of course more than one outlook in the anti-nuclear movement. There are the backward-looking utopian greens who tend to be against technology in general. They have little influence, particularly in the labour movement, but supporters of nuclear power find it useful to label all their opponents as being anti-technology and backward-looking.

More important are what might be called the *green socialists*. These are concerned to safeguard energy supplies for a future socialist society. They are concerned to preserve and expand jobs in the energy industry now and in the future.

Revolutionaries must become part of the latter grouping. Our participation must be wholehearted and unconditional, not depending on whether our allies support our exact line on nuclear energy in some future society.

### Unite

We can all unite in the fight to close down the *existing* nuclear power industry, fighting for job security for all workers involved, arguing for workers' control of safety standards in the industry while it still exists and while plants are being decommissioned, and helping to develop a socialist energy policy.

Discussions on nuclear power tend to raise many technical questions. SO supporters will need to try to familiarise themselves with some of the issues, arguments and concepts to be able to take part in such debates.

SO has carried many articles on nuclear power, as well as on the alternatives available for a socialist energy policy. Local groups could collect or send off for copies of these for discussion meetings.

Alternatively, local groups could club together to buy a copy of the book 'The Energy Fix' (reviewed below). One comrade could be delegated to read the book first and then lead discussions in the group.

The book starts by showing that, despite pit closures, radioactive pollution and fuel poverty (leading to deaths from hypothermia), the left has given little consideration to energy policy.

Part 1 sets British energy policies in an international context, showing how policies in individual countries are deter-

mined or distorted by the world capitalist system. It then looks at the energy alternatives — fossil, nuclear and renewable — available in Britain.

Part 2 examines Labour, Tory, and green energy policies. Labour's policy only appears positive when set against the Tories'. Labour went along with nuclear expansion, baulking only at the Pressurised Water Reactor. Research into alternative renewable sources of energy ran at only one-fortieth of the level of nuclear research, even though both fossil and nuclear fuels are in limited supply.

Since the Tories came to power, though, the anti-nuclear, pro-renewable wing of the labour movement has been growing in strength and confidence.

The policies of the Green movement are also dismissed. The authors criticise the utopian dismissal of 'industrialism', and the class struggle, arguing instead for a 'green socialist' approach.

Part 3 tries to develop a *socialist* theory of the politics of energy, rejecting the model of the so-called socialist countries.

### Allies

Allies in the socialist campaign for a new energy policy include the NUM, with its struggle to save the coal industry, preserving resources for the future; the workers' plans movement, including the Jobs From Warmth campaign started by trade unions at NEI Parsons; local authority energy initiatives — mainly energy conservation programmes; the anti-nuclear movement, including Greenpeace, which won the support of the National Union of Seaman in its successful struggle against sea dumping of radioactive waste.

The last chapter tries to work out a socialist energy strategy. Crucial in this would be workers' control of planning and decision-making.

It is seen as part of a socialist economic programme, based on socially useful growth (as opposed to the 'zero growth' or 'negative growth' of parts of the green movement). One priority, for example, would be to eliminate the fuel poverty which affects many working class people.

Finally, the book argues for the energy industry to be taken out of the profit system, making it a sort of bastion of socialism. The authors recognise the problems of having socialism in one industry and, even more so, socialism in one industry in one country, but don't really answer them. Perhaps that would be expecting too much of what is an excellent, readable, informative and useful book.

\* 'The Energy Fix', by Andy Porter, Martin Spence and Roy Thompson (all members of the Labour Party and of the Socialist Environment and Resources Association). 190pp, Pluto Press, £5.95.

# Socialist Organiser Summer School July 4-7

Friday 4 July to Monday 7 July, at Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester.

Speakers invited on the following themes: SOUTH AFRICA: Socialism and nationalism; the making of the African working class; the trade union movement; women in South Africa; international solidarity.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION: Labour councils and women; the way forward for Labour women's sections; reproduction under capitalism and socialism; black women in the labour movement; women in the Third World.

IRELAND: speaker invited from Sinn Fein; debates on the political heritage of James Connolly, the Protestant working class and the national question, etc.

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SPONSOR money is still coming in for the cycle ride which Manchester SO supporters Nigel Bodman and Andy Barrett did on 1 April. Another £16.80 arrived this week.

Thanks also to: Pete Keenlyside (sale of old pamphlets) £9.10; Christine Priestley £11.50, Barbara Broughton £0.50, Nottingham SO social £14.50; Tim Cooper £50; Alan Johnson £10; Nik Barstow £1.18; Tracy Williams £10; Jean Lane £5.

The total so far is £11,493.81. Most of the local groups with larger targets have now reached them; of the others, North London is on 90% of target, Manchester 97%, East London 96%, and Glasgow/Edinburgh 71%. But to meet the full cost of moving into new offices and re-equipping ourselves, we'll have to raise the full £15,000 target and more.

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# Debbie Williams tells the story of 'Union Maids'

## The other America

While ITV and BBC bring us daily coverage of the 1986 World Cup, Channel 4 have scored a hat-trick with the first of a series of documentaries about American labour.

Union Maids, shown last Thursday at 11.25pm, focuses on three women who were part of the rank and file labour movement and their experiences in organising workers during the 1930s and 1940s in Chicago.

Having watched most of the coverage from Mexico so far, I found more spirit, inspiration and determination in each of the women than in all of the assembled players in Mexico put together.

Using archive film, photographs, songs and interviews, the film recreates the reality of America between the Wars — the unemployment and hunger, low pay and the 14 hour day, evictions and homelessness.

### Courage

Alongside this, the film shows the tremendous courage and ability of those who fought for the basic rights of workers to organise. Sylvia Woods, Stella Nowicki and Kate Hindman "rose to the demands of their time and became militant organisers for their class".

For those who believe that the American working class is entirely reactionary, and, black and white, non-political, this film will come as something of a shock. There is a long history of American workers' struggles that we have much to learn from. This film in particular and the series in general is evidence of this.

The women came to Chicago in the late '20s, looking for work at the beginning of the Great Depression. All three were unskilled. Sylvia (who is black) took a job in a laundry where "black women and poor whites worked." When a white woman who did not know the job was appointed as supervisor over the black women, Sylvia organised a factory sit-down. The management's response was swift and the police were called in to remove the women.

Sylvia described the confrontation: "We fought the police. Had it been today, someone would have

been killed, because we fought back with glasses and bottles. They finally got us out and we didn't know what to do."

There was a lot of militancy and determination among the rank and file workers to get organised with the realisation that workers could not make any gains without the strength of a union behind them.

The American Federation of Labour was made up of small craft unions and refused to organise amongst the increasing numbers of unskilled workers. Out of this the Confederation of Industrial Organisations emerged in the mid-'30s, "from the need for a new kind of union, dedicated to democracy, militancy and rank and file control."

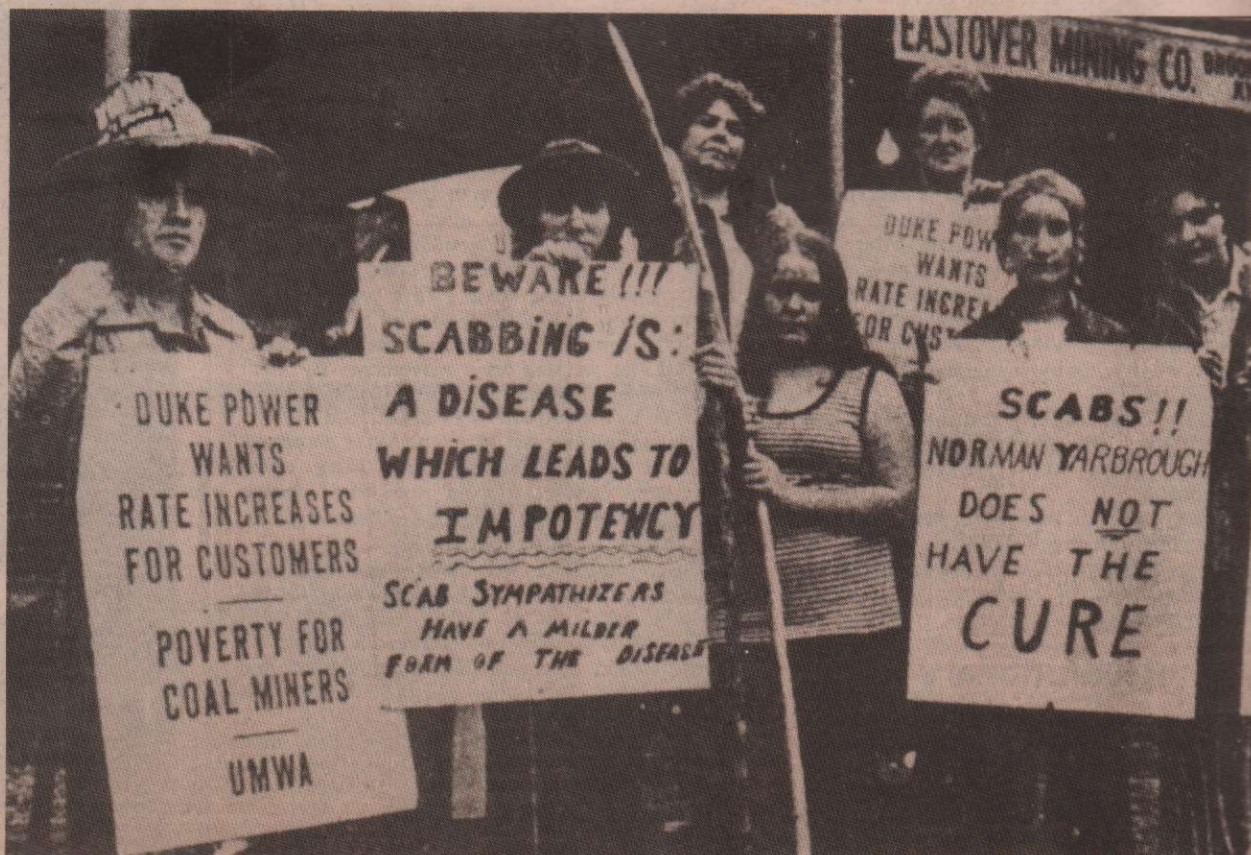
### CIO

Stella explained the involvement of the CIO after this period. "By the early 1940s the CIO had grown from a small number of organising committees into a powerful force of several million workers. But it didn't come easy. A militant labour force scared big business and they fought back in every way."

All three women testified to the specific problems faced by women. Sylvia looked at why there was a lot of absenteeism and lateness at a factory during the war. "These women are working a seven-day week. Their work does not stop when they leave here. They have to go home and do washing and so on. They don't have a minute, they work 24 hours a day."

Few women were able to combine the responsibilities of being married and having children with being a union activist. Women did not only have problems because of their housework, as Stella pointed out: "There were real sexist attitudes in society in general and amongst the radicals themselves. Men had all the leading roles and the few women who did aspire to be leaders had to take a lot of gas."

Kate (at the time a union official), having been ignored by her male colleagues, went to lunch with a woman typist who worked for the union. A male official was alarmed at this and told Kate that she could damage the union's



US mining women

image. In response to this, Kate questioned whether the union "was a workers' movement or what".

Racism was spreading throughout America and weakening and dividing the working class. Black workers were paid less than white for the same job. And the jobs open to them were the hardest. Their experience of racism left many highly suspicious of white people. Sylvia originally didn't care what happened to white workers. Her attitude changed when a white woman faced dismissal and alienation from her fellow white workers when she tried to get a black man a job in an all white tool room.

### Learn

"I changed. I learnt that you can't go anywhere unless you go together. I'd never heard, I never believed that such a thing could happen. I found my people fight-

ing for the same thing, working together is the only way you are going to get anything."

It is a telling example of how white workers can prove to our black sisters and brothers that we are serious about fighting racism.

Alongside the fight for those in work for the right to organise, went campaigns of unemployed workers. These often centred on the consequences long term unemployment has for workers. Between 1932 and 1935 over 20,000 families were evicted from their homes in Chicago. The campaign to stop these evictions proved to be a further arena for confrontation between workers and the armed police.

As Kate recalled: "The police were vicious, using clubs, brass knuckles, anything they needed. It was class warfare. You fought them and they fought you."

There have been many developments in the union movement since the 1930s and 1940s. Radical unions were kicked out by the CIO, the McCarthy period had drastic repercussions on union organisation and unions became less responsive to the needs of their rank and file.

The state of the union movement in 1976 when the women, all in their 60s, were interviewed, was a far cry from what they set out to build. However, they were still determined and unbroken and remain confident in the ability of working class people to change the society they live in.

As Stella put it: "There is such tremendous potential in people, in labour people, in working people, in union people. I think they are very democratic. There is a tremendous militancy below the surface and it will rise up. I don't think that the American people are going to let down their country. And I don't think that any fascist bastards are going to take over here."

And Kate added: "I still believe in socialism, but I'll tell you something. I don't know if there is one single European country that has the kind of socialism that I would want. To me, socialism means that the greatest amount of say-so belongs to the people themselves. Let the people decide."

### BOOK

## A story of surrealism

When Luis Bunuel's early film 'L'Age d'Or' was first shown in Paris in 1930, right wing groups smashed up the cinema and ripped surrealist paintings on show in the foyer. The police closed the cinema and the film was banned for 50 years.

To the day of Bunuel's death in 1982, he kept the same wry anarchistic outlook that had inspired L'Age d'Or. But when he died he was almost respectable. Films like Belle de Jour and The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie were famous. The BBC marked his death by screening a whole season of Bunuel films.

"I can still", Bunuel remarks in this autobiography written shortly before his death and recently reprinted, "see the sadness and vulnerability in Breton's eyes when he told me so many years later that no one could be scandalised any more."

For the poet Andre Breton, as for Bunuel, the function of their surrealist art was to scandalise, to shock, to defy, and thus to serve the social revolution.



Bunuel directing Catherine Deneuve in 'Belle de Jour'

Breton joined the Communist Party and then briefly collaborated with Trotsky. Bunuel, while always plainly on the left, was (by his account in this book) more quizzical and detached about his politics.

He recounts an experience as a student in Madrid. The King's carriage draws up next to him and the King asks for directions. "Speechless at first (I was theoretically an anarchist at that moment), I somehow replied with per-

fectly shameful politeness, addressing him correctly as 'Majestad'. Only when the carriage pulled away did I realise that I hadn't removed my hat. The relief was overwhelming: my honour was still intact."

This spirit does not make for very consequential politics. It does make for films which have a laconic bite, however much establishment approval is poured on them, and a very funny autobiography.

### WORLD CUP

## It can be beautiful

By Alan Johnson

BEEN A bit of an anti-climax, hasn't it? All that build-up, just for an endless round of cynical fouls, time-wasting, amateur dramatics and sun-drenched pundits urging us to support 'our boys' (Englands, that is) through another display in the art of the square ball.

For me, as Emlyn 'I've got English blood pouring out of me' Hughes would say, the best entertainment is often at half-time, as the assembled experts offer their incisive comments on the game.

The old classics have been sadly missed so far: 'football is a game of two halves', 'you've got to score goals to win matches', and the perennial 'the game's never over until the final whistle'.

Mind you, Terry Venables' comments after the Soviet Union's unexpected repeat performance of the 1956 invasion of Hungary, 'the Hungarians have been goulashed', is definitely up there with the best.

### Obscene

Joking aside, though, there is something obscene about this World Cup. There is an embarrassed silence about last year's earthquake, except to bemoan its effects on the quality of TV pictures. (The TV centre was destroyed in the quake).

Demonstrations of Mexicans outside the ground protest at the price of tickets — three dollars a game being an average day's wages for a worker in Monterrey. Players wilt in games which start in noon's blistering heat because the TV companies, with their £½ billion investment, dictate so.

Even Archie McPherson is forced to comment on the sickening contrast between Scotland's luxury hotel in the hills and the dirt track and shanty town they pass through to get to the ground.

Meanwhile, the only successful attack the English team have mounted was on the picket line outside their hotel in Chicago when they arrived in America.

For football fans among us, we can only be thankful for the games, and echo the magnificent Preban Elkjaers' words that 'Football is nice and can be beautiful'.

# Legal attacks on the unions are nothing new

# When unions were illegal

By Ian McCalman

ATTACKS upon trade unionism by the government, acting on behalf of the employing class, have a long tradition in British history. Already by the end of the eighteenth century there were more than 40 Acts of Parliament to prevent workers from combining in defence of their wages and conditions. The employers had not hesitated to use these on many occasions.

But by the last decade of the eighteenth century these were seen to be inadequate, for, with the Industrial Revolution then in progress, came a rapid growth of 'combinations'.

In face of the extreme, marked exploitation of that period, workers saw the need to build organisations for their defence. The alarm of the ruling class is expressed by two local Justices of the Peace in a letter to the Home Secretary in 1791:

'We have also now a very general spirit of combination amongst all sorts of labourers and artisans who are in a spirit of general disaffection to all legal control'.

It was in this atmosphere that the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 were introduced, making all combinations illegal, with sentences of fines and imprisonment.

The motives behind these Acts were not simply economic, but were directly political.

These were the years when the spectre of the French Revolution, of Jacobinism, haunted the European ruling class.

## Revolutionary

Both landed aristocracy and manufacturers feared the revolutionary effect of a coming together of working-class unrest and the radical ideas of the Revolution.

The aristocracy wanted to suppress Jacobin 'conspiracies', while the manufacturers wanted to crush 'conspiracies' for more wages. The Combination Acts served both purposes.

But the response of the working class was also political. The Combination Acts only served to bring closer together the two strands, illegal Jacobinism and trade unionism.

In face of this repression the leading organisers of unions in different regions were naturally those most radical politically. Men who adhered to the democratic ideas of Thomas Paine and of Jacobinism became the most active and militant trade unionists.

Political radicalism thus became part of the heritage of the British working-class movement from an early date.

Political clubs became known as 'Union Societies'. In the early nineteenth century workers began to read radical papers, such as 'The Political Register', 'The Cup of Liberty' and 'The Republican', with their attacks on monarchy, aristocracy and industrialists.

This radical sentiment was not simply limited to demands for reform. The Jacobin tradition was revolutionary.

As early as 1801-1802 there are reports from spies in the Home Office papers of big meetings of workers on the Midland moors in the evenings, addressed by radical agitators, threatening the overthrow of the existing order.

This threat to the employing class took two forms.

In its earlier phase, especially, some radicals thought in terms of a conspiratorial coup. There was a strong element of this in the politics of Thomas Spence and the organisers of the Cato Street conspiracy. [An unsuccessful radical plot to kill members of the Tory Cabinet in 1820. An agent provocateur may have been involved].

## Roots

But radicalism had deep roots in the working class movement, as seen in the mass meetings held by radical orators after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, addressed by Orator Hunt and others. The reports of spies and government officials in the Home Office papers reveal the awareness of the ruling class of the extent to which the spirit of Jacobinism, or radical politics, gripped the working-class movement. By 1815 almost every industrial area of England was regarded by the authorities as 'disaffected'.

This radicalism grew up in a period of enormous upheaval and distress for the working class. The rapid acceleration of industrial change brought about the growth of an industrial proletariat as never before.

This, combined with the impact of the Napoleonic War, meant great deprivation for the working class, due to high prices, low wages and atrocious working conditions and housing.

The working class organised 'combinations' and strike actions. The ruling class struck back with their anti-trade union legislation.

It has sometimes been claimed that the Combination Acts were not very repressive, as they were not often implemented. But many employers preferred to use older laws, some dating back to the sixteenth century, as these could be made to work more rapidly, carried heavier penalties, and put the onus of prosecution upon the government rather than the individual employer.

Moreover, like all such legislation, it gained its effectiveness by its use at critical points of working class development or action. It was used against the important strikes of the Glasgow weavers in 1813 and the Barnsley linen weavers in 1822, with great effect.

Despite the many defeats and oppressions inflicted upon the working class at this period, the trade union movement continued to grow.

Meetings of members were held in public houses in conditions of great secrecy. Their lives were constantly threatened by the prevalence of spies, and the caprice of local magistrates.

The workers matched the repressiveness of the authorities with increased vigilance and organisation.

## Moors

The Society of Ironfounders, founded in 1810, is traditionally stated to have had to meet at night on the moors in the Midland area, with its books and records buried in the ground.

Much oath-taking and ritual were involved in trade union membership in order to tighten security. Members were thus warned of the dangers which they would encounter if they com-



The Cato Street Conspiracy

promised with the class enemy in any way.

Blacklegs were dealt with severely, as was necessary.

## Concede

Realising they had gone too far, the terrified government rushed through the Act of 1825, which, while conceding the right of collective bargaining, the right to strike and other points, imposed new restrictions with the aim of protecting employers and non-unionists.

Lord Lansdowne declared 'that no manufacture could be carried on if workmen could dictate to the masters who should be employed, and prevent men from exercising their right of labouring on whatever terms they might please'.

The employers of that age were certainly more candid in expression although little different in outlook from those of today.

Despite these restrictions, trade unionism, through a hard struggle, continued to grow. This independent struggle of the working class remained, as it had been throughout the period 1800-1825, the only true guarantee of the continu-

ance of trade unionism.

Now, as then, political manipulation or legal wrangling by either political radicals or trade union bureaucrats are no substitute for the independent struggle of the working class.

The second lesson to be learned by Marxists from this period is the political nature of the conflict.

For the early trade unionists there was no separation between political and industrial struggles — their trade unionism was seen as part of their struggle for political democracy and social reform.

## Politics

Political radicalism and trade unionism were inseparable.

Now, as then, we must train trade unionists to be primarily political in outlook, but on a higher level than ever before.

It is essential that trade unionists become revolutionaries. Only in this way can we fight for the independence of the trade unions from the state, and for the mobilisation of the working class for the purpose of taking power.

# Can we change human nature?

HUMAN nature is greedy and selfish. Therefore socialism is impossible.

So say the defenders of the status quo. If capitalism — society based on the drive for profit — did not exist, human nature would invent it.

## Forms

Historically, however, it was not an eternally-fixed human nature that created capitalism. Capitalism, coming after many previous and different forms of society, has changed human nature.

Economically backward American Indian societies, for example, did not know the drive for profit. An early French explorer reported: "They think it strange that someone should have more goods than others, and that those who have more should be more esteemed than those who have less".

In such societies, if a concept of private

## The ABC OF MARXISM

wealth developed, the wealth would be displayed not by accumulating riches but by lavish gift ceremonies.

## By Martin Thomas

Money, exchange, commerce, the basic germs of capitalism, go back long before capitalism itself, and have been remoulding human nature for thousands of years. It took them a long time to create the modern capitalist spirit.

In the Middle Ages, for example, merchants and craft workers had elaborate codes and regulations to curb the drive for profit. It was considered morally wrong for one to outdo the other by more efficient production or keener pricing. Established morality condemned lending money on interest as a sin.

As one historian summarises it, the idea was: "Society, like the human body, is an organism composed of different bodies. Each member has its own function... Each must receive the means suited to its station... Within classes there must be equality... Between classes there must be inequality; for otherwise a class cannot perform its function or enjoy its rights".

Even capitalism's 'human nature' has a split personality. At work, in the marketplace, we are supposed to be motivated entirely by money cost/benefit calculations; at home, within the family, our 'human nature' is supposed to change. Love counts for everything, money calculations for nothing.

Yet the modern family is no more 'natural' than the modern marketplace. Previous societies have often had large extended family systems in which care for children is a shared responsibility. In the Middle Ages, though hospitality and social solidarity was often much warmer than today, people generally cared very little about children. It was not thought unnatural to kill unwanted babies.

## Drives

Today those who have money hire nursemaids and buy places in boarding schools so that their children are kept at a distance.

There may be some fixed drives underlying human personality. But history, and even the variety of human reactions within present day society, show that these drives can express themselves in very different ways. If we can change society, human nature will change with it.

# After the sell out BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

By John Bloxam

POST Office bosses were unpleasantly surprised by the rapid spread of strikes after they locked out postal workers in Leeds two weeks ago.

By Tuesday morning, 3rd, 6000 workers in Yorkshire were on strike.

This panicked management into agreeing to reinstate the suspended workers. They quickly dropped their demand for a written statement that they would 'work normally'. Now the workers were offered a possible extra 1½ hours break a week in return for the work study proposals management had tried and failed to impose unilaterally.

But this offer, accepted by the union leaders, fell short of what the strikers asked for — an extra 2½ hours break a



week, as well as bonus from the new work-study-based scheme. Union leader Alan Tuffin accepted 1½ hours extra break to be negotiated locally *against* a proportion of the bonus.

Overtime is being cut by the new work study scheme, so the result of this agreement will be a dog-fight in each office between conditions and money. UCW members will be split and divided by different agreements.

It was not necessary to give management what Tuffin gave them. The strike made it possible for Post Office workers to beat them — perhaps for the first time in years.

For example, the dispute could have been tied to the demand for a reduction in the present 43 hour working week. The union leaders' cynical sell-out threw all this away.

The union leaders grabbed at the bosses' offer because they too had been alarmed by the spread of the dispute. Tuffin bluntly explained why the deal was accepted and the strikers ordered back: "There was a genuine desire to avoid a national strike".

When Tuffin made this deal, a ballot on industrial action was being held in the 11 sorting offices next in line for work study. Reports that all favoured

action are backed up by the fact that in the Yorkshire area every suspension for refusing to cross picket lines was immediately answered by strikes.

Understandably union militants were very angry with their leaders. At a Sheffield mass meeting, the workers initially voted not to allow 'left' EC member Gerry Casey to speak. Then they relented, but they gave him a very rough time of it.

## Shift

Attention now shifts to the 11 offices next in line — Belfast, Brighton, Cardiff, Derby, Edinburgh, Exeter, Liverpool, Norwich, Romford, Sheffield, and WDO London. These are some of the most militant UCW branches. The key to the future is to build up rank and file organisation and get regular coordination between union militants.

## MINERS NUM win pay victory

By Paul Whetton

LAST WEEK miners won a victory of sorts with the decision by the industrial tribunal that the Coal Board was out of order to pay scab UDM miners at Ellistone pit, Leicestershire, more than NUM members.

They were found to be in breach of Section 23 of the Employment Protection Act.

The situation in Notts has been different because we were paid alongside the UDM. We had no say in whether we wanted it or not.

But the fact that the union was able to win something gave a terrific boost to our members in Nottinghamshire.

It is the same with the national pay claim and the Coal Board's attempts to make us trade off pensions against pay. It isn't a question of sitting down with the employer and negotiating. We are having to resort to the courts again. It's making a mockery of the term 'negotiations'.

## Slow

Progress may seem slow on a day to day basis, but we have come a long way since we had to virtually set up a new union in Notts last October. We've got functioning branches at every colliery in the area; we've got an area executive committee and an area council; we've got area officials and now, area offices; common law claims are starting to come through; we've got facilities at a convalescent home. So what the members have achieved in Notts in spite of all the harassment from the employers and the government in that short period of time is absolutely magnificent. We need other victories and support from other trade unionists in order to take that struggle forward.

The Coal Board are being ten times more vindictive than the old coal owners were on the issue of miners' welfares.

They are trying to take them off us by setting up committees made up exclusively of management and UDM, and completely freezing out the NUM, but we are not prepared to stand for that.

We had the Coal Board preaching to us about law and order right throughout the dispute, and now they are totally ignoring agreements, legally-binding model rules, etc., and just doing as they want.

Another thing which has given a boost to our members in Notts is that we are sending members to the Derbyshire miners convalescent home. We have had a lot of help from Derbyshire and that is something we can look to and draw support from.

## PRINT



# Where to from here?

*What did you think of the ballot result?*

George: I thought the ballot result was a wonderful example of the commitment that has been shown throughout this dispute. Despite the leadership's attempt to ensure a yes vote, the rank and file trade unionists in this dispute gave a clear answer: they want to continue the fight for trade union recognition and jobs, not compensation.

*What do you think Brenda Dean and the SOGAT leadership will do now?*

George: I think she will sit on the dispute. I think she'll try, under the auspices of the TUC, to set up more talks with Murdoch.

*What about other organisations in Fleet Street? What have they done round the dispute? What have working chapels in Fleet Street done? Have they done enough?*

Socialist Organiser spoke to Carol and George Hall, News International strikers and members of SOGAT London Clerical branch

Carol: I think at the moment, because of the national leadership and the way they have been conducting the dispute, they have encouraged people in the other Fleet Street papers to be apathetic.

They have been conditioned that way, because the union said they could only deal with one major dispute at a time. Instead of coming together in solidarity, they are trying to section it off. People in other houses [papers] are obviously very worried about worsening conditions and losing their own jobs, and so they sit tight and hope that everything will be all right at the end of the day.

It is up to us as the rank and file, up to the branches and the London district council, to change that — to go to the chapels in Fleet Street and explain the situation. It is going to be a difficult job.

*So it's going to have to be the rank and file Fleet Street support group that does the work?*

Carol: the Fleet Street support group is not in place of the leadership: we are there to put pressure on the leadership and force them to take action. It's a meeting of people who support the News International strike, and a place where they can voice an opinion.

## Boycott

SINCE THE beginning of the Wapping dispute, the London College of Printing student union has supported the workers sacked by News International. They believe that the outcome of the dispute will affect the future of 3000 students in the printing, journalist and photography departments of the college.

Students in the pre-entry Periodical Journalism department are boycotting lectures given by News International employee Stanley Baldwin, who is a lawyer for the Times.

Asked by the students to clarify his position, he stated, "I'm proud to cross the picket line. I'd rather be a scab than a running sore".

All but two students walked out immediately, demanding that Baldwin be sacked. As a result Eric Winter — head of department, and NUJ Father of Chapel! — threatened to fail all the students boycotting Baldwin.

An emergency student union meeting supported the journalism students and decided to picket Baldwin's lectures.

## Equal opportunities?

ONE HUNDRED Islington home helps visited the headquarters of the National Union of Journalists on Monday morning, 9th. Their purpose? To deliver a petition asking for immediate negotiations on their pay claim to Sally Gilbert, who happens to be the NUJ's Equal Opportunity officer.

Gilbert does not only work for the NUJ. She is chair of Islington Labour Council's Personnel Committee, and as chair she refuses to talk to some of the council's lowest-paid workers — predominantly part-time women. Gilbert gets her money from promoting equal opportunities for the NUJ, and, it seems, her kicks from being a thick-skinned council bureaucrat in Islington.

The home helps claim more money for doing extra jobs which, in the words of one help, "would make us social workers — without social workers' wages".

The 100 women made it clear that they had no quarrel with the NUJ — only with a leading member of a council which claims to be centrally concerned with equal rights for women and with wiping out low pay, but in fact refuses even to talk to low-paid women and their unions, NUPE and the GMBATU.

Because councillor Gilbert wasn't there, the NUJ's president, Bob Keogh, took the petition and said he'd hand it on.

## SOCIALIST STUDENTS IN NOLS

### 'Democratic' witch hunting

MIGHT IS right, and those with the ear of Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) can afford to gloss over the truth.

That's the only conclusion on offer from the latest round of bullying by the Democratic Left (DL) faction in Labour students. They have referred leading Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) supporters to the NEC.

In the DL's usual style of asserting something, and then denouncing opponents who point out that when the actual details are taken into account their picture crumbles, the DL have accused SSiN of standing against official Labour candidates in National Union of Students (NUS) national executive elections and in the NUS London committee elections.

But in NUS, SSiN candidates were all elected, and so were all the Democratic Left's. One Democratic Left candidate was elected in a different constituency from the organisers' plan, but not because we stood. The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) organisers arranged for 40 NOLS supporters to vote for an independent instead, in the hope of electing two pro-DL candidates.

SSiN stood in multi-member elections done by Single Transferable Vote and in the Vice President Welfare election, in a 'head-to-head' contest with an independent, not a NOLS candidate.

In NUS London we did stand against 'official' NOLS. But we contest the 'official' tag. The selection meeting was rigged, the DL candidates' manifesto declared them as Labour Students candidates before the selection meeting, and in any case there is absolutely no constitutional provision for such a selection meeting.

The DL are well into deep water. Having refused to debate us in Brighton, Manchester and Birmingham they are now resorting to telling tales, and untrue tales at that.

## Bad crop

OUR SUPPORTERS on NUS Executive have been given a particularly bad crop of responsibilities — agricultural, architecture, placement and social work students, and CND. However, Melanie Gingell, now the Anti-Fascist Action student convenor, has co-responsibility for anti-racism/anti-fascism, and Michele Carlisle has co-responsibility for women.

The rising star of the Democratic Left is Cathy Doyle, who has almost twice as many responsibilities as anyone else.

## Fowler

NORMAN Fowler may have backed down on his proposals for cutting student financial support. However, this will probably not be confirmed or denied for another week. Until the announcement is made, plannin for next term's campaigns should continue.

If the proposals for students are dropped, then the government has declared that the £45 million must still be cut from the total social security budget somewhere. So if the cuts do not fall on students then they will fall on someone else.

## SSiN to meet

THE SSiN steering committee is at Central London Poly at 7pm on Friday 27 June. All supporters are welcome and accommodation can be arranged for comrades staying over for the Anti-Apartheid march on the 28th.

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# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

## Fascists blocked in Liverpool

Over 1,000 anti-fascists were successful in keeping the NF from marching in Liverpool on Saturday. The NF had boasted that they would hold a "Free Joe Pearce" march until the city council refused them permission to use the Town Hall. Joe Pearce is a fascist thug jailed for incitement to racial hatred and a leader of the NF.

The fascists are few in number in Liverpool. At the moment they attack 'soft' targets such as isolated black people, paper sellers and left

wing book shops. They have also been peddling their racism in schools, trying to recruit there. So it was important to stop the fascists from breaking out of their isolation.

The fascists hope to gather support from Liverpool's Orange stronghold by mixing the slogan 'Free Joe Pearce' with that of 'Ulster Says No'. On Saturday's evidence they failed dismally. The counter-demonstration was organ-

ised by Merseyside black organisations, Anti-Fascist Action and Merseyside LPYS. The 30 or so fascists were chased around Liverpool until put onto trains to scuttle back home by the police.

One fascist was arrested after pulling a knife. A number of anti-fascists were also arrested on the day.

An Anti-Fascist Action group will be established in Liverpool to continue the fight against the racists.

# Rail: yes for action!

THIS TIME we must fight. Only action will stop the British Rail Engineering (BREL) bosses and their Tory backers who have had it all their own way so far. A fight to defend jobs can arrest the decline in railway workshops.

In 1981 35,000 worked for BREL. Today that figure is under 22,000 - down by more than one third.

Sheldon, Temple Mills and all bar the foundry at Horwich, have gone.

Springburn in Glasgow has been reduced to less than 600 and is now lined up for closure.

On top of this BR are making new proposals - to split Main Works into Maintenance and a New

## By Rob Dawber

Build and Repair group.

BR will keep the sites with the least capacity for maintenance, while the biggest sites - Crewe, York, Derby Loco, Derby Litchurch Lane, Doncaster Works and Horwich Foundry - will face further reductions in their workforce to prepare them for privatisation - that is, being sold off at knock-down prices to the Tories' friends.

Some of the local leaders in these places have told the members that the rundown of other sites in BREL will safeguard their jobs. And that NUR policy of refusing work transferred from other

sites should be ignored.

Such ideas are treacherous and suicidal.

They say that some of these works 'have a future' - the ones to be separated off in the new BREL. But it is not much of a future.

Main Work reps on the NEC have the same ideas and there has been little lead from the national union.

The closure of Temple Mills, Sheldon and Horwich did not save Glasgow Springburn. The rundown of Springburn has not made Derby, Crewe, York or anywhere else any safer. The lack of any resistance has encouraged BR to press on with plans to sell off the most profitable parts of BREL to their Tory friends - at knockdown prices.

At Derby Litchurch Lane they now want a further 640 jobs to go, and at Derby Loco a further 300, Doncaster - 1,000 jobs to go. What is left of Horwich is to be cut still

further, down to 300, while Crewe is to lose a further 200.

They will lose any automatic right to fulfil orders for BR. Instead they will compete for orders with all comers. That will inevitably mean a reduction in working conditions, wages and bonuses, as costs are cut to undercut the competition.

## Eastleigh

Meanwhile, Eastleigh will lose between 300 and 500 jobs, Springburn will close in March 1987 to become a Regional Maintenance Depot. Swindon loses its last 388 jobs and Wolverton loses 1,000.

It is not only the Main Works that are to be "rationalised". 16 Regional Maintenance Depots are to close and a further 17 run down with the loss of a further 1,400 jobs.

All this adds up to over 6,000 jobs lost without mentioning the

continual run-down of regional workshops, whose work is increasingly given to private contractors and whose staff are not replaced when they leave.

We cannot just sit back and let this go on. Now is the chance to stop the rot. A stoppage in the works, particularly in maintenance, can grind the railways to a halt in days. Vote yes for action!

\*Strike committees must be formed in each works or depot or groups of depots involved in any action.

Where necessary, these committees must overturn the local leaderships and replace them with those who do want to fight and do want to win.

\*These committees should link up nationally to coordinate action.

\*Immediately, the job is to get the biggest 'yes' vote possible. Use these arguments to convince your workmates of the need to fight.

## Whetton's WEEK



Paul Whetton is a member of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

## Brilliant!

I THINK the decision to reject Rupert Murdoch's 'final' offer by the printworkers was a brilliant victory for the rank and file, not only against Murdoch but also against the leaders of the print unions, particularly SOGAT, where the leadership has never really campaigned and has been as obstructive as possible.

The question is, where do they go from here? Looking at it from the outside it seems to me that they have got to step up the action. I know the arguments that have been put forward for not shutting down Fleet Street, but I think they must now look towards calling Fleet Street out. They've got to hurt the other employers and the people who advertise to pressure them into turning to the government and saying that the dispute has got to be settled.

## SOGAT

So I think there should be an escalation - and in Wapping as well.

If the leadership don't issue a call from the SOGAT biennial conference this week to shut down Fleet Street, then I think the rank and file must get up and demand it.

I spoke at a meeting of the Basingstoke Print Workers Support Committee on Friday night, just after the result of the ballot was announced. I had been on tenderhooks that we would have to go in and announce that the printworkers had caved in, but in the event everyone was very pleased with the ballot result.

Unfortunately the postal workers were not so lucky. I believe they were willing to fight on the issue but they were sold out by the leadership. It seems to me that many trade union leaders today are in the business of selling off many of the hard-won rights and conditions that workers have fought for over many years and that is what has happened in the Post Office.

I think many of these union leaders are just trying to survive until the next Labour government comes along in the hope that they can do some sort of deal then.

In the meantime they are doing enormous damage to the trade union movement as a whole and their own unions in particular.

Neil Kinnock once said that while Mrs Thatcher wasn't herself a fascist she was paving the way for fascism. When you look at the discrimination against any minority group then it points to exactly what happened in Germany in the 1930s. Gypsies, blacks, hippies, any small minority can be hounded and hounded and it all points in the same direction. The police are turned out to batter them in order to impose the government's will on anybody who doesn't conform to their norms. The hippies are the latest example, but we have had constant harassment of the black communities, gays and so on. The question people need to ask is who the hell are they going to go for next? It won't only be hippies who face attack for refusing to conform. It will include trade unionists who refuse to accept decisions of the government and its courts.

Meanwhile, my own industrial tribunal has been put back while we await some necessary documentation from the Coal Board.



Tenant arrested as police evict squatters in Southwark (see p.1). Photo: Andrew Moore.

## The witch hunt spreads

THE NATIONAL Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party at its meeting on Monday 9 June voted by 13 to 12 for the expulsion of Kevin Scally and Amir Khan from Birmingham Sparkbrook - Roy Hattersley's Constituency Labour Party.

Both Scally and Khan are well-known non-aligned left-wingers, and both were charged with 'bringing the party into disrepute'.

The case against Scally stems from his participation in the Channel 4 TV Bandung File programme last year in which he made allegations of widespread malpractice within Sparkbrook CLP. Amir

Khan (a Birmingham city councillor) was also charged with cooperating with the same programme, and has additionally incurred the wrath of the Sparkbrook right-wingers by starting to organise a black section in the constituency.

A regional inquiry into the affair carried out under National Agent David Hughes and AUEW right-winger Ken Cure accused Scally and Khan of attempting to 'damage the standing of the Deputy Leader'.

Both Khan and Scally have received widespread support from the labour movement in Birmingham and outside. Their own branch party, Sparkhill, has expressed full support for them, as have numerous

other branches and CLPs.

Birmingham Trades Council, which is usually somewhat reluctant to involve itself in Labour Party affairs, has given its backing to both of them. And the far from left wing Labour Group on Birmingham City Council has voted to continue to regard Khan as a bona fide Labour councillor.

The expulsions of Kevin Scally and Amir Khan should be a warning to those on the soft left who think that the current wave of witch-hunts can be limited to supporters of Militant. Quite clearly anyone who challenges the present Labour leadership from the left is now at risk.