

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

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APRIL 2nd:

Strike with the miners!

By Mark Serwotka, left candidate for CPSA President.

AT LAST THE National Union of Mineworkers has named the day for strike action in protest at the Tories' crazy pit closure plans.

April 2nd will be the first day of national strike action in the pits since the end of the 1984-85 strike.

It should also be the focus for every worker who wants to fight back. All the signs are that the railworker's union RMT, will also vote for support and solidarity from other groups of workers.

Their appeal deserves to be answered with strike action on April 2nd.

In the civil service, where I work, management are planning a mass attack on jobs,

pay conditions and rights. They are already beginning the process of "Market Testing" which will lead to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs.

A one day protest strike on 2 April alongside the miners and railworkers would be a great way of kick-starting the campaign to defeat Market Testing.

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Unite to stop sackings, sell-off and cuts!

The press campaign against children and youth

Giving the victim a bad name

"Magistrates and judges have reacted to the juvenile crime scare by increasing dramatically the number of jail sentences handed out to young offenders.

Courts have increased by 43 per cent the number of those under 18 in prison.

In the next few weeks, the number of young offender places in a juvenile unit at Deerbolt, Co Durham, will double and new cells will open in Brinsford jail, near Bristol. The Home Office hopes this will help ease the crisis."

Independent On Sunday, 14.3.93

WHEN A ROBBER robs individuals, the robber gets a bad name. When big gangs of "civilised" European robbers went overseas in armies to kill, maim, plunder and enslave whole tribes and nations of people economically less developed than themselves, then it was the victims who got the bad name, not the robbers.

People who were generous and free before rapacious gangs of white Christians made war on them went down in the history written by their murdering, peonising opponents as stupid, vicious and savage. They had to be treated rough to save them from themselves. And anyway, they deserved what they got.

So it is with the Tories and the children of Britain, against whom a ridiculous but malignant campaign is now being waged by the Tory press.

In the last 14 years, this plundering Tory government has done terrible things to Britain's children.

Everything done against the working class and against the poor has hit the children, the weakest, exceptionally hard. Everything rotten in our world bears down on children with exceptional and sometimes with crushing force. They are the least able to fend for themselves, the least able to compete on equal terms for scarce resources within the family.

Look at the facts.

26% of British children now live in households with less than half the average income (twice as many as in 1979 when the Tories took over).

British Child Benefits are the lowest in Western Europe. France spends three times as much as Britain on family allowances.

According to the Low Pay Unit, two million school children in Britain work illegally (a quarter of them at less than £1 an hour).

Children suffer from the chaos in education, from the shortage of nursery places, from our miserable level of maternity leave — which is, like so much else in Britain, the worst in Western Europe.

And then when they leave school, they cannot find jobs. They learn that there is one thing under capitalism worse than to be exploited by capitalism — not to be exploited! To be unable to find anyone who wants to use you. To find no place in society at the beginning of your adult life but



Young people demonstrate in Leicester. Tory cuts have hit the weakest — children in particular — hardest. Photo: Mark Salmon

the scrap heap, alongside the aged and the sick.

The lives of millions of children have been fearfully but needlessly impoverished and in some cases warped because of what the Tory custodians of capitalist civilisation have done to them, to their parents and to the rest of the working people of Britain in the last 14 years.

UNDER THE Tories, Britain has raised, and is raising now, generations of young victims. And now — triggered by proper public shock at the killing of a two year old, Jamie Bulger, allegedly by two children in Liverpool — comes the campaign to give these victims a bad name, and to blame them entirely for what the Tories have made of them.

"In the last 14 years, this plundering Tory government has done terrible things to Britain's children."

The children of Britain have had things too soft, the newspapers tell us. They are spoiled. They have no discipline. They are raised as "Little Emperors". Parents no longer have them under sufficiently firm control. Britain must get tougher with its kids!

When you know that authoritative estimates put at 62% the proportion of children who are getting 'smacked' before they

reach the age of one — that is, treated by adults in such a manner that other adults could sue if it were done to them — you are left wondering what "getting tough" will look like.

Of course it is the old story — everything some of the oppressed in their suffering, confusion, desperation, anger or bloody-mindedness say and do is used as evidence against all of them and cited in support of those who mistreat them and of the thesis that, when dealing with those brutalised and demoralised by ill-treatment, the answer is to treat them worse! Virtue? That is what the ruling predators choose to do, whatever it is.

However horrible the killing of Jamie Bulger was, and however one may condemn such "youth" crimes as mugging, taken as a whole the children and the young people of Britain are victims. Those who now traduce and scapegoat them are those whose victims they are.

WHAT OUR children need and deserve is not tougher and harsher treatment but better and more gentle treatment. They need proper social nurturing, from adequate medical care at birth to good food, clothes, and nursery and school care as they grow up.

They need parental nurturing in which they are treated with care, love and respect. Where their natural weaknesses and immaturities are compensated for and not used as an occasion to victimise them or lord it over them. Where they are never subjected to violence, or to the arbitrary diktats of domineering adults prepared for their own convenience to brutally override the child's drives and con-

cerns. Where adult-child relations are not, as in the main they now are, relations which teach the child to respect and submit to arbitrary power, and to look forward to the time when he or she will get a share of such power and people to exercise it on.

In short, children need to be brought up in such a way that their formative relationships do not put reason, co-operation and respect for others at a discount and lead them to the conclusion that such ideas are for mugs, or for when you have no choice.

"It falls to the serious left to throw the scapegoating back in the face of the predatory capitalists."

And when they are grown they need proper education, and then proper jobs.

Love and care from parents and from society is the only way to rear children into loving and caring adults with a properly developed sense of belonging to the human race and to a worthwhile society, whose common disciplines they can share and respect. The miracle now is that most children do, despite everything grow up to be decent human beings.

It is poverty, neglect, the example of the ruling class, exploitation — think of it: two million school children working illegally in Britain in 1993! — and incessant propaganda for the Tories'

dog-eat-dog philosophy that brutalise Britain and, inevitably, some of the children of Britain.

If the labour and trade union movement's leaders were not the beaten and dispirited creatures they are, the Tories and their press would not get away with this indiscriminate branding of their young victims as a generation of criminals and potential criminals.

The Tories would be branded and hounded as the real criminals, and the system they serve condemned for what it has done and is doing to the children of Britain.

But the Labour and trade union leaders are what they are.

It falls to the serious left to throw the lies and the vicious scapegoating back in the face of the predatory capitalists and their press now — just as we did when they slandered and misrepresented the peoples they were robbing and ill-treating at the far corners of the world.

"The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race."
Karl Marx

Socialist Organiser
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA
Newsdesk: 071-639 7965

Latest date for reports: Monday

Editor: John O'Mahony

Sales Manager: Jill Mountford

Published by: WL Publications Ltd,
PO Box 823 London SE15 4NA

Printed by Trident Press, Edenbridge

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office

Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Socialist Organiser and are in a personal capacity unless otherwise stated.

Bob Fryer: man of principle

Sometime around about 1980, I had cause to attend a meeting of the British Leyland Combine Committee. This was a semi-official body of convenors and senior stewards from most of the BL Cars plants of the time. Predictably, it was dominated by Stalinists and their hangers-on. Equally predictably,

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

it was a thoroughly bureaucratic affair with little obvious relevance to the big struggles then taking place in the plants. Suddenly, a diminutive figure with a heavy mid-European accent intervened. I forget what it was about, except that he kept saying "this is a matter of principle!" The assembled Stalinists and lower-ranking bureaucrats looked very put out: this guy was definitely *not* part of their club. That was my first encounter with Bob Fryer.

Bob was then the Convenor of the BL Cowley Assembly plant and one of the very few Leyland senior stewards who was neither a Stalinist nor a right winger. You got the distinct impression that he was also one of the very few that habitually used the word "principle". Bob had worked at Cowley since the plant re-opened after World War 2; in the 1950s and '60s he had been one of the relatively small group of militants who had got the place properly unionised — a high risk, activity that could very easily have got him the sack.

Fryer knew all about taking risks. As a youth in Hungary before the war he'd taken part in the anti-fascist resistance and had been arrested trying to escape to Switzerland. It was little short of a miracle that he lived to tell the tale: the rest of his family (who were both Jewish and Communist) perished in the concentration camps.

For most people that would have been enough danger for one lifetime. But Fryer, finding himself in Oxford after the war threw himself into the campaign to get Cowley unionised.

Unlike many of even the best rank and file trade unionists, he was also highly political. Despite his CP background he never joined the party and, outraged by the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, he began working closely with the Trotskyists of the *Socialist Labour League*. By the late 1960s, he was Convenor of the Cowley Assembly plant, but his Trotskyist (or at least, semi-Trotskyist) politics brought him into conflict with the TGWU bureaucracy. In 1974, he was removed from office (together with his deputy, Alan Thornett) by the "left" leadership of the TGWU under Jack Jones.

Once again, Fryer showed his superior moral calibre and working class principles: no longer a young man, he went back "on the tools" and worked as a rank and file trade unionist. Remarkably, he was rewarded by being re-elected as Convenor in 1977 — a position he kept for the next 10 years. Even his political opponents had to admit the man's sheer courage and determination.

Bob Fryer never achieved much in the conventional sense: money, possessions or fame. But he achieved one hell of a lot for the workers he represented — and, no doubt, in terms of his own self-respect. In these days of "new realism", cynicism and Jimmy Airline-type sell-outs we should all give thanks for Fryer and the tradition he represented. He died last month, aged 70.

Boris Kagarlitsky reports from Civil war loo

Russian President Boris Yeltsin's dramatic decision to try and run Russia as a market economy, which for 60 years was a bureaucratically run command economy, has inevitably caused chaos. Unemployment, starvation, and mass poverty now stalk Russia. For another such act of blind dogmatic action by a head of state in modern history you have to turn to Joseph Stalin's forced collectivisation of agriculture 65 years ago.

Like Yeltsin, Stalin was ignorant and subjective, and he did not care about the human cost of what he did.

Stalin, of course, gave direct orders for acts of mass murder and Yeltsin merely folds his arms as millions of lives are wrecked. That, of course, is an important difference. Another important difference is that Stalin was an all-powerful dictator and Yeltsin is not, though he shows signs of wanting to be.

Yeltsin faces a powerful opposition in the Russian parliament. Russia is now locked in a head-on conflict between President Yeltsin, the executive head of state, and the Parliament over the question "who rules". Civil war is talked of as a real possibility. Boris Kagarlitsky of the Party of Labour gives his views.

Yeltsin has lost the Congress, but as this happens the danger increases of a Yeltsin counter-attack. A coup attempt is now widely expected. I think Yeltsin is actually in a quite weak position, but perhaps as a last-ditch effort he might try such a move.

One issue for the western labour movements is the support which western governments are giving for the idea of a coup. They are actually encouraging Yeltsin to break the constitution and organise a coup. Here the famous western democracy is trying to organise another Chile! Fortunately Russia is not Chile and they do not run the army — thank God!

There are some good sides to the current situation. Yeltsin looks as though he is losing most of his power. His threat of a referendum sounds extremely weak.

Yeltsin still insists that he is more popular than the parliament — something often quoted in the western press. What you may not be aware of is that both Yeltsin and the parliament are very unpopular.

Opinion polls estimate that only 6% of Russian people believe that Yeltsin is doing a good job, compared to 4.5% who say the parliament is performing well.

The parliament is even less popular than Yeltsin. Around 60% of the people believe Yeltsin is doing a positively bad job.

The opposition in parliament opposed the referendum only because they

wanted Yeltsin to pledge that he would respect the results of the vote. They wanted him to take responsibility. They want him to agree to resign if he loses.

The only way Yeltsin could possibly win such a vote now is if 60 or 70% of the people just did not bother to vote.

The referendum was announced for 11 April; parliament decided not to go ahead; Yeltsin said he would go ahead anyway at the end of April. He simply may not be able to.

If Yeltsin does not, in the end, get his referendum then there remain two courses open for him. Either to accept the slow-down of the economic reforms, or to decide for new elections. If there were new elections Yeltsin, or his candidate, would fail. They would win few seats in a new parliament.

The parliament we have now is clearly anti-Yeltsin, but is does not have any sharp political profile. Any new parliament would be more left wing. There would be a number of major new forces after a new election.

FIRST, THE centre-right and centre-left coalition, the Civic Union. The left here is strong, with many people who are critical of the privatisations and want to keep public property. Then there would be a strong Communist Party. Then there would be the Democratic Left, virtually unpre-

sented in the current parliament.

The Party of Labour wants elections as soon as possible. We are ready and confident. We would get a respectable vote, probably on a slate with other left-wing organisations. The main point is that the unions will back us.

It is difficult to estimate the size of vote we would get, but it would be over 5%. The precise strength of our vote would depend on the positions of the Civic Union and the Communist Party. If the Communist Party is as nationalist as it is now and if the Civic Union presents itself as centre-right rather than centre-left, we will get a better vote.

The CP acts as a left-nationalist party rather than a party of working people. If they shift, and become more reasonable, perhaps they would take some of our support.

The Party of Labour's basic stand is to defend the public sector. We want the survival and reconstruction of this sector. We want a clear reform of the Labour Code, fixing rights for the unions to participate in decision making in the public-owned enterprises. This would be a form of participation beyond the German system, a mild form of workers' control. The unions are not prepared to go beyond this step.

We also stand for a new agreement on price and wage controls. Prices should be frozen. Wages should be renegotiated and

French left slumps

By Colin Foster

A right-wing victory seems certain in France's parliamentary elections, due to take place in two rounds on 21 and 28 March.

The right-wing coalition, the Union Pour la France, could come out with 75% of the seats. The landslide is due not so much to the UPF gaining votes — its score should be a bit over 40%, roughly what the established right have been able to count on for many years — as to the disarray of all the other parties.

The Socialist Party, which has controlled the presidency and (bar 1986-88) the government for 12 years, since 1981, is in a mess. Its opinion-poll score is down to 18%. It could end up with no seats at all in the Paris area.

Its candidate for the presidential election due in 1995, Michel Rocard, has called for the dissolution of the Socialist Party in favour of a new broad 'centre-left' movement, free from even those feeble links which the SP still has with the working class, and apparently modelled on Bill

Clinton's US Democratic Party.

The SP's manifesto for the election is tired, bland, and empty, as if they have given up on the contest. The party, never very solidly-rooted, has been gutted and demoralised by 12 years of administering capitalist cuts and unemployment, and by a series of corruption scandals.

In other times the Communist Party might have made gains as a left-wing alternative to the discredited SP. But now, like CPs elsewhere, it is decaying and dying. Its leader Georges Marchais may lose his parliamentary seat to the Greens.

With the fascist National Front stable at a little over 10% of the vote, the Greens have gained ground as a new alternative. They have some policies: a cut in the work-week to 35 hours (with corresponding wage cuts, except for the lowest-paid); cuts in military spending; a shift from nuclear power and roads to renewable energy sources and railways... They also have some colourful candidates, including France's best-known anti-racist campaigner, Harlem Desir, and the country's best-known Marx-

ist economist, Alain Lipietz.

At one point the Greens were outstripping the SP in the opinion polls, although now their score has settled down to 12 to 14%.

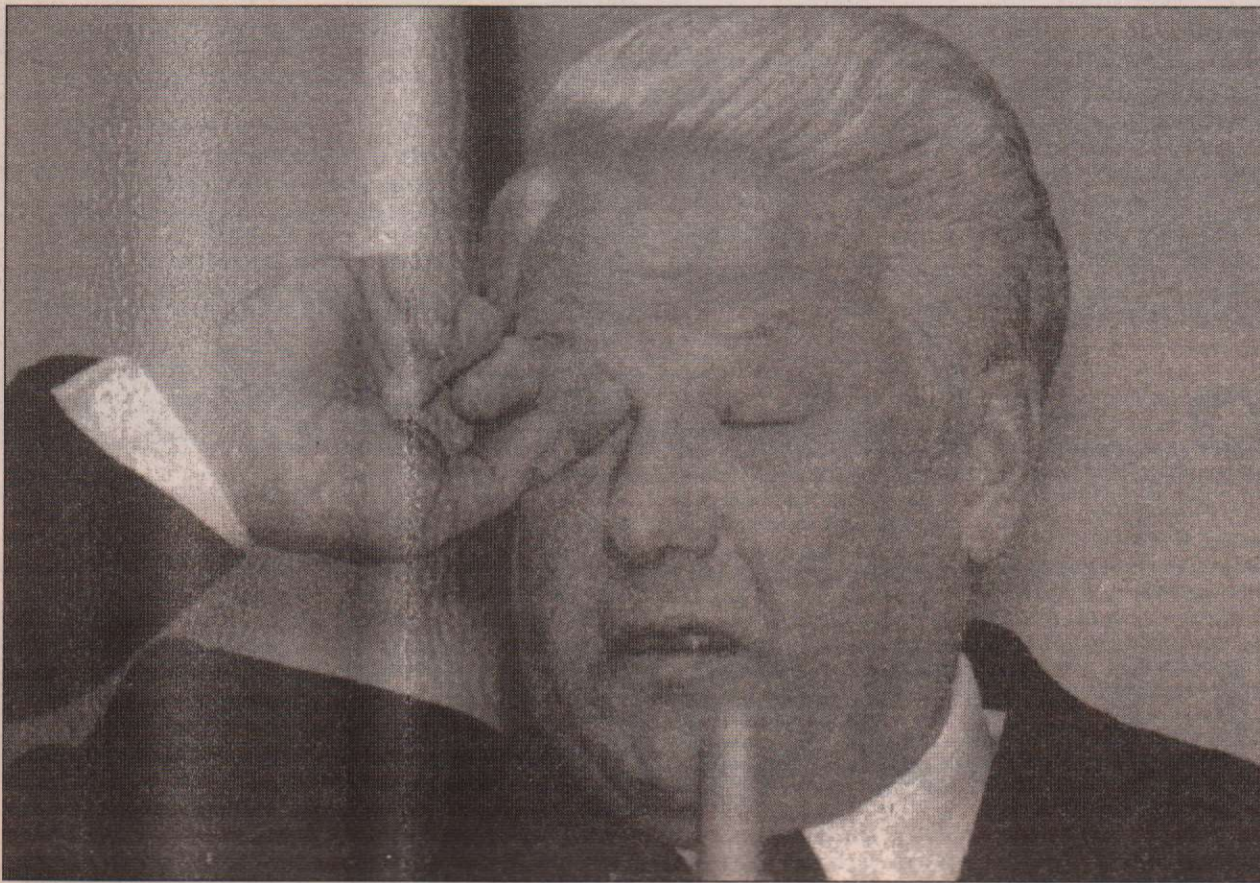
But the Greens are split into two factions, allied only temporarily and uneasily for the election, and are well on the way to selling out all their radical promises for political deals with the SP or the right wing. Green leader Brice Lalonde, formerly a minister in the SP-led government, makes it clear that he is ready to do deals on either side.

France's three main revolutionary left organisations are also standing candidates. Lutte Ouvriere has 247 candidates, focusing on basic economic agitation under the slogan "Make the Rich Pay!" The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire has 70; their slogan is "The Real Left", but they have blurred their profile with a largely unsuccessful search for alliances with various not-very-left-wing grouplets and individuals who have split away from the CP or SP. The oddball sectarian Parti des Travailleurs has 84 candidates.



Moscow

ms in Russia



Yeltsin does not care about the human cost of his economic policies.

then frozen. An enterprise director in the public sector currently earns one hundred times the salary of a teacher. We want the wages of the administrators and bureaucrats to be cut and workers' wages raised.

On the national question the main issue is not so much that of national

minorities inside Russia, where — with the exception of the northern Caucasus which is a special case — there has been some balance achieved. The main issue is external relations. We favour a new confederation with very limited central power. This would be a free union where the

republics will be free to join. No force, no return to the old Soviet Union. Here there is a big difference between us and the Communist Party.

The CP want to restore the Soviet Union as it was. There will be a big debate on this issue.

None of the Politburo

members have rejoined the CP. The top bureaucrats have gone to the right-wing parties. But there are some old CP Central Committee members who have joined. The CP is now largely a new party, and a party of opposition. They are Stalinist-nationalists, but they are not corrupt.

Italy: as corrupt as capitalism

Bob Sugden in Milan reports on Italy's political crisis.

Readers of Socialist Organiser will undoubtedly be disappointed to hear that what is being described as Italy's "Peaceful Revolution" is being led by the country's judges and magistrates!

A quarter of the members of the Italian Parliament, including the former Prime Minister Bettino Craxi and the former Foreign Minister Gianni de Michaelis, have been accused of corruption, while three members of the Cabinet, including the Ministers of Justice and Finance, have had to resign.

Probably the majority of the towns and cities in the country are now without a mayor, as the momentum of "Tangentopoli" ("Tangenti" means "back-handers") shows no signs of weakening.

Central to this process is the northern commercial capital, Milan, a Socialist Party stronghold, which has for decades prided itself on

being an efficient, law-abiding, European-style centre of integrity and business, in contrast with time-serving capital, Rome and the mafia-dominated South.

Principal among the accusations is the charge that the political parties have primarily funded themselves on the proceeds of institutionalised corruption — illicit money that is paid, for example, by construction companies to get planning permission, or contracts for public works. The construction of the Milan Metro, and major roads in the Lombardy region, have been given as examples of this.

A recent move by the Socialist Party Prime Minister, Giulio Amato, to give immunity to politicians under accusation (while leaving non-politicians still liable to prosecution!) has failed because President Scalfaro refused to agree to it.

The political parties most intimately involved in this corruption scandal appear to be the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats (Italy's Tories).

Italy's Communist Party, which used to be the largest in Western Europe but which has declined since it changed its name three years ago (in line with the times, and with its established position as a "responsible" opposition party) to "The Democratic Party of the Left", seems to be relatively "clean". It has, however, refused to come out unequivocally for the resignation of this government and of law-makers who have consistently flouted their own laws.

Only two very small parties in Parliament have called for resignation — the fascist Movimento Sociale Italiana, and the Refondazione Comunista, which is an alliance of left-wing groups including what was left of the Stalinists after the PCI (Communist Party) became the PDS (Democratic Party of the Left).

Popular feeling about this scandal is, not surprisingly, running very high, even though Italians are normally cynical about politics. The workers have been partially successful in forcing a climb-

down on some of the stringency measures brought in by Amato's government last summer and autumn.

Unfortunately, with the traditional parties discredited and the left disorientated, these events seem to offer golden opportunities to "protest-vote" parties such as the Northern League, which combines right wing social policies with federalism (or secessionism) based on the "racism" which exists between Northern and Southern Italy.

Whatever happens in the forthcoming April elections, the present governmental crisis means the destruction of the old, corrupt and incestuous "partyocracy" based in Rome, under which politics has stagnated in Italy since the war. If this is combined with success for Lega Nord, as seems likely, it will be a setback, although to what extent Lega Nord could implement its programme (insofar as it has one) and maintain its "clean hands" (insofar as its hands are clean) remains to be seen.

Their English and ours

EDUCATION FOR BARBARISM

By Colin Waugh

THE GOVERNMENT wants all 14 year olds in state schools to do Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in English this summer. Ultimately they mean to turn English into narrow communication skills training with a dash of literary heritage appreciation. English teachers are campaigning for a boycott and have won support from teaching unions, parents, hitherto pro-Tory education experts and even private school heads. This could damage the Tories' whole education strategy and every socialist should support it. However if these English SATs are scrapped, differences could surface amongst the campaigners over the goals of English teaching, allowing

The system terrorised children into acquiring just enough literacy

the Tories to counter-attack.

This struggle shows how, in education, union issues of pay and conditions are linked to ideological issues, of curriculum content and teaching and assessment methods. Until now the left in education hasn't recognised this, so there is no coherent left critique of liberal progressivist approaches and hence no agreed basis for working class struggle against the Tories' dismantling of them.

By stripping away the remnants of progressivism, the Tories are returning schools to what they were like before the 1944 Education Act, in effect to the system shaped by the 1870 Act which set up state schooling and the 1902 Act which scrapped elected school boards. So to understand Tory policy now, you have to see what their class was trying to achieve then. As now, English was central.

Up to 1867 Parliament opposed state provision of schools. Then massive union campaigning won the vote for better-off workers. Immediately the

MPs, led by Robert Lowe, a former chancellor and bitter opponent of extending the franchise, reversed their attitude. As Lowe said, "I believe it will be absolutely necessary to compel our new masters to learn their letters". State 'elementary' schools were now set up under regulations first framed by Lowe in 1862 for controlling church schools. Under these, teachers, many of whom were themselves senior pupils, had to drill classes of up to 120 organised in 'standards' rather than age groups,

in reading and writing, plus some arithmetic and religious knowledge. Salaries depended on how well pupils could repeat what they'd learnt to visiting inspectors. After 1902 attendance became compulsory, enforced by truant officers and the police.

The system depended on the cane. It terrorised working class children into acquiring just enough literacy to read (but not to criticise) the gutter press, and simultaneously crushed any broader interest in studying or writing by linking them with pain and humiliation. It was the capitalist state arrogantly presuming to instruct people in their own language by methods which deprived them of power over that language. Despite repeated waves of strikes by children, it survived virtually intact until 1944, and, alongside some liberal innovations, much of it has survived till now, ready for Patten to make it dominant again.

English Literature dates from the same period, and Robert Lowe was one of the main people behind that too. Teachers for the elementary schools were recruited from amongst the lower middle class and the working class itself, and it was necessary to imbue them with an ideology which would help them see themselves less as mere disciplinarians and more as

professional educators. At the same time this ideology must set them apart from other workers and make them loyal to the state. The invention of English Literature as an academic subject in teacher training colleges and university departments was a way of doing this. The writings of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton etc were lifted out of their historical settings and relocated in the context of the development of English, from Saxon times onwards, as a language destined to rule the modern world, just as Latin had ruled the ancient world through the Roman empire. When Patten bans critical analysis of soap operas from the English curriculum and lays down which Shakespeare plays must be studied, he's harking back to this ideology.

Ever since 1870 the ruling class has used English as weapon against working people. The SATs struggle offers us a chance to seize this weapon, re-shape it and turn it back against them. To do so entails developing a set of demands about English teaching which the majority of teachers, students and parents would support, based on valid elements in current practice but also pointing beyond them.

Among these demands could be that English should: provide a grounding in logical reasoning as well as communication 'skills'; involve modern writing (including writing for TV) as well as earlier 'texts'; include material translated from a wide range of languages; link 'texts' to their social contexts and to how they were produced (eg as printed books, plays for the popular theatre etc); investigate the origins of words; value spoken language, including patois and other non-standard forms; and give young people the confidence to speak to a group.



Conditions in Britain's prisons are so appalling that riots are often the only means for prisoners to fight for change. Strangeways prison (above) was the scene of rioting in 1990

An account of the brutalising regime in Brixton prison

Banged up

Edward Ellis recently visited Brixton Prison. This is his report.

BRIXTON PRISON has improved a lot over the past year. The numbers have reduced drastically, and the notorious "Hospital Annexe", previously known as F Wing, has been closed: the television cameras were even there to celebrate it.

F Wing was the section for those inmates known by other prisoners as "fraggles": men suffering from mental problems and on heavy medication. In the past it was compared to Bedlam, the legendary asylum, complete with screams. All that has gone. But the men in Brixton are still left with appalling living conditions. Most prisoners are on remand, in other words waiting for trial, but there is little difference between their conditions and those of convicted men.

There are no toilet facilities in cells. Each morning begins with the ritual of "slop out", the emptying of the previous night's piss down a communal hole while the breakfasts are collected. Men are locked up (or "banged up"), in their majority, from the evening meal the previous day: meals are early, so they spend hours stuck in their cells with nothing to do.

During the day, prisoners are allowed out of their cells for various activities. These include, in addition to collecting meals, attending classes if they choose to (usually there are classes twice a day); legal or social visits; an occasional video, which in the convicted wing is an hour once a week; and association periods. There is a little more freedom for remand prisoners, particularly in one wing where cell doors are often unlocked during the day, but this usually depends on the whim of the officers.

Some prisoners, the lucky ones, join the workforce, meaning they get to do menial work, such as

cleaning or serving at the hot plate. These spend a bit more time out of their cells. Some prisoners, however, can spend almost twenty three hours a day banged up.

Other luxuries include Church or Mosque services, showers (two or three times a week), and exercise, which consists of walking round a small courtyard in circles. There is a small gym. Recently, cardphones have been introduced, and prisoners are allowed to buy a limited number of cards (which takes no account of the distance of the calls they need to make).

Prisoners — remand and convicted — are paid £2.50 a week, supplemented by doing other activities. The most basic work-force wage, as well as for inmates attending education, is an additional £1.50. They are allowed to spend their own money at the 'canteen' (a kiosk in each wing, only open at certain times), but there are strict rules about how much, and what they can spend it on (not cigarettes, for example).

Brixton is known as one of the worst prisons. Pentonville, for example has a larger gym, to which more prisoners have access, and, in common with most London prisons, a modern education block.

In Brixton there is no education block at all, and classes take place in converted (or sometimes unconverted) cells in the wings.

Part of the prison is being renovated, but most of what is currently occupied is in a terrible state of repair, not much disguised by fresh licks of paint. Cells are small, usually with two prisoners in them, often with tiny windows (barred, of course). They are extremely claustrophobic. In Europe, prisons often have TV sets in the cells, but Brixton doesn't even have a TV set for communal viewing, except in the most liberal wing, which houses short term inmates on the work-force. Convicted prisoners have a few pool tables they can use dur-

ing the association, but for the most part entertainment is whatever men can find to do in there cells.

Apparently the problem with drugs is smaller in Brixton than in many other prisons, partly a function of the fact that almost all inmates are only for a relatively short time: sentenced men are usually sent elsewhere. Drugs, nevertheless, obviously exist.

The first thing that strikes a visitor is the smell, a mixture of school dinners and excrement. Men tend to be, if not dirty, at

"The idea that locking up is a solution to crime is visibly absurd."

least a bit dishevelled, because they can change their clothes only rarely and don't have daily showers. Officers often communicate with inmates by shouting out their names, which can be alarming.

The place is minimally clean, but dour and depressing, more so than other prisons. There is little natural light.

SOME PRISONERS complain of claustrophobia. Certainly, many are depressed, and there is little real treatment. Psychological problems are generally dealt with by drugs. Recently a case hit the news of a suicide in the convicted wing; a prisoner was found hanged in his cell and was dead by the time he reached hospital. Suicide rates are said to be falling, however.

Some of the men in Brixton have done terrible things, of course. But many are held on remand for months on end for no justifiable reason. Many of these are innocent, but when they are acquitted receive no compensa-

tion for the time stolen from their lives.

Of those that admit their guilt, two facts are striking. Some have every intention of reoffending when they are released, believing that there is no legal way they can hope to earn as much money; this is true, for example of men convicted on drug trafficking offences.

This is also true, apparently, of many sex offenders, who receive no psychiatric help.

Others are plainly not a serious threat to society. Undoubtedly there are young men who learn in prison how to be more efficient criminals, who could have been "rehabilitated" far more effectively in some other way.

The experience of prison is brutalising. It is a regime of dictatorial whim, with few meaningful channels for redress. Some men cope with it philosophically, others don't cope at all. In addition to the authority of the officers, there are the inevitable tensions between prisoners, although far less naked brutality, in Brixton at least, than popular imagination has it.

But it is a kind of microscope reflection of the dog-eat-dog society 'on the out', a daily matter of coping with potentially explosive situations — how to refuse a fellow inmate tobacco you need yourself, or be taken as a soft touch for the rest of your 'bird'; how, indeed, to recognise danger when it arises; how to avoid conflict with the officers while standing up for yourself.

Time in a prison like Brixton might deter a few people from committing crime. But the idea that locking up is a solution to crime is visibly absurd. The prison system claims to seek the rehabilitation of its inmates, but it clearly doesn't work. Probably most prisoners in Brixton have been in prison before. Prison life helps breed a culture of offence and reoffence, which far from being a solution, helps make the problem more acute.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

Thurs 17 March

"Public sector cuts — how to fight back"

Glasgow AWL meeting

7.30, Room 4, City Halls

Tues 23 March

"Arabs and Israeli Jews — how to stop the conflict"

City Poly AWL meeting.

12.30, Calcutta House, Coffee Lounge

Wed 24 March

"Where now for the trade union left?"

AWL London Forum.

8pm Florence Nightingale pub, corner Lambeth Palace Road/Westminster Bridge Road, Waterloo. Speakers include Mark Serwotka.

Thur 25 March

"Labour Must Fight"

Manchester AWL meeting.

7.30 Town Hall.

Anti-deportation

Sat 3 April

Defend the Rahman Family demonstration. Assemble 12.30 Sunninghall School, Bolton. Details: 16 Wood Street, Bolton BL1 1DY.

Yugoslavia

Fri 25 March

END meeting. Speakers from Bosnian and Croatian peace campaigns. 7.00 Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road, London.

Labour Party

Sat 17 April

Socialist Campaign Group Conference. 11.00-5.00 Sheffield Hallam University. Details: Jeremy Corbyn MP, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7.

Miners

Thur 18 March

Dagenham Labour Party meeting.

8.00 Labour Party Offices.

Speaker: Arthur Scargill.

Saturday 20 March

Demonstration. Assemble 11.30 Bradbury Street, London N16.

Hospital Workers

Tues 23 March

Demonstration to save Barnet College of Nursing. Assemble 6.00, Trafalgar Square, Central London

Why are people turn



Martin Luther King with the young Jesse Jackson. The fight against racial discrimination and oppression in the US has a long history

Out of slavery

The US Civil War ended in 1865 with the defeat of the South and the freeing of the slaves.

During the next twelve years the North intervened into the South in the period known as Reconstruction. The northern bourgeoisie were met with a massive white Southern reaction — which produced white terror organisations like the Klu Klux Klan and reimposed black subordination on the new basis of "Jim Crow" racist segregation.

The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow have poisoned American life — North and South — right up to the present day.

Here are the key steps in the fightback, up until the murder of Martin Luther King.

18 September 1895: Black leader Booker T Washington makes Atlanta Compromise speech, accepting black social and political inequality in return for educational help. 112 black people were lynched during 1895.

1903: WEB Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* issued. He attacks Washington for not fighting discrimination. Du Bois says "The problem of the 20th Century is the colour line".

1909: In response to a major race riot in August 1908 in Springfield, Du Bois, together with liberals and socialists, forms the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) to demand black equality.

1917: A Jamaican, Marcus Garvey moves to New York. Garvey's black nationalist Universal Negro Improvement Association grows massively during the next few years. Garvey is jailed for two and a half years then deported in 1927.

1919: Between June and December, 79 black people are lynched and there are 25 race riots.

1930: There are 12 million black people in the US, nearly 10% of the population. Nearly 80% of black people live in the "Jim Crow" (racially segregated) southern (ex-slave) states. 22 major trade unions officially discriminate against black people.

1940: Life expectancy of white men is 62.1 years; for black men it is 51.5 years.

1941: The US goes to war, with a segregated armed forces. The black union leader A. Philip Randolph calls off a black march on Washington which was to demand jobs for black workers. President Roosevelt had made a slight concession. The Communist Party had opposed the march as detrimental to the US war effort. More black workers do, however, get jobs in the factories of the North as the war effort boosts demand. Millions of black families move to the northern cities.

17 May 1954: Supreme Court decides that segregation in schools is unconstitutional. White citizens' councils set up to oppose desegregation in the South.

1 December 1955: Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat for a white man. The Montgomery bus boycott begins, to be led by Martin Luther King. Boycott lasts until 1956, when a Federal Court declares bus segregation unconstitutional. Mass desegregation struggles and voter registration drives spread across the South. The focus is on equal rights and "integration".

1960: For the first time over half of the US's 19 million black people live outside the South. Non-white unemployment rates are twice those of whites.

1961: 'Freedom Rides' begin.

1963: 250,000 march on Washington to hear Martin Luther King say "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: All men are created equal". King moves the desegregation campaign to the heart of the beast — Birmingham, Alabama. 200,000 march in Detroit, and 220,000 Chicago youth protest against discrimination in schools.

1964: President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act on 2 July, which forbids discrimination. Malcolm X resigns from the Nation of Islam and sets up the black Organisation for Afro-American Unity. In the summer there are riots.

1965: Voting Rights Act outlaws racist qualifying tests for voter registration. 1,000 are arrested during a registration campaign in Selma. Malcolm X is murdered on 21 February. Five days of rioting in Watts, Los Angeles.

1966: Stokely Carmichael of SNCC and Floyd McKissick of CORE champion Black Power. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale set up the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. King marches in Chicago.

1967: 43 are killed during July riot in Detroit.

1968: Martin Luther King assassinated on 4 April. In response, riots erupt in 125 US cities.

FORUM

By Gail Cameron

FIRSTLY I WANT to ask why the politics of black nationalism and of Malcolm X are gaining ground among black people in Britain.

We could say it is just a matter of fashion and hype. And there must be some truth here.

But I think that the growth comes from a series of failures. It comes from a collapse of black community organisations and from a failure of the labour movement to address a number of issues facing black people in Britain. Over the last 20 years there has been a big change in what could be broadly described as black politics. If you compare black politics and struggles of the 1970s with the present day, you will find big differences.

After World War II black people coming from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean faced racism which forced them to take the worst jobs and face a colour-bar in housing. These black people were excluded from the labour movement.

Black organisation was influenced by the radicalisation in America and by Black Power. 'Black' was being used as a political term. It was no longer pejorative. It was claimed as something positive.

'Black' expressed solidarity between peoples of the Caribbean and Asia living in Britain. It was reinforced by a common experi-



Black youth protest against racist murders in Manchester last year. This accounts for the rise of black nationalism. Photo: Paul Herrmann

ence of fighting colonialism back at home. 'Black' was used as a term for that solidarity and to promote solidarity.

I do not want to glorify them but, when I entered politics in the late 1970s, black organisations existed which were genuinely rooted in communities and which spanned the ethnic divides.

I think that experience, and the use of the word 'black' to unify

campaigns, was very positive. People of different ethnic origins could identify themselves as being black without excluding other identities. 'Black' was about a shared experience and a shared fight.

"The labour movement's retreat from class politics has left it unable to answer many of the issues faced by black people in Britain."



Malcolm X opened the way for clear thinking about strategy, valuable then and now

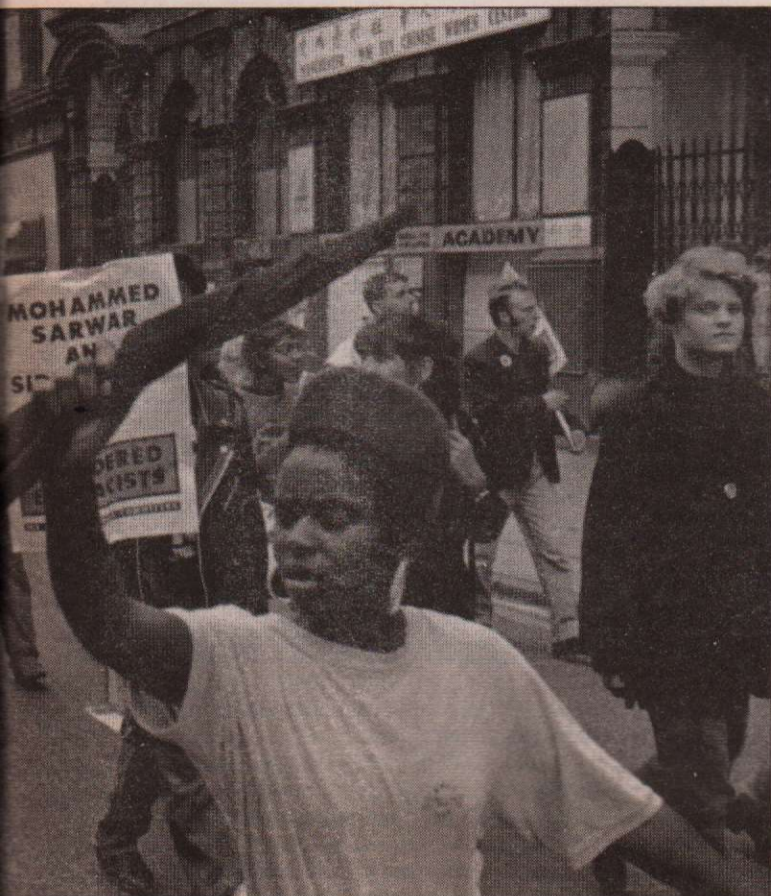
TODAY, HOWEVER, it is no longer possible to talk of an anti-racist movement based on black communities. That has disintegrated, and part of its passing has seen the rise of the assertion of different ethnic and cultural identities.

Part of the reason is the left's retreat from class. In the process a lot of understanding has gone. Racism is no longer understood as something constructed by particular circumstances and experienced differently at different times.

In the 1980s a lot of left-led local authorities took up race questions in a very detrimental way. The fight was not so much a fight but for racial identity.

Many of those involved in organising at the grass roots have become anti-racist professionals. A belief has grown that racism can not be fought without a grant and a paid worker.

Coming to Malcolm X?



labour movement's failure to relate to issues faced by black people

One of the people who has taken up this matter is A. Sivanandan. He argues that anti-racism floated towards a belief that there is an absolute difference between peoples. 'Black' as a political term began to break down into its constituent parts — Afro-Caribbean and Asian — and then further into Indian, Pakistani, etc., then to Sikh, Hindu, Muslim... There is a celebration of cultural differences and also a slackening of the struggles against racism.

Race and other oppressions have become isolated. But race does not exist outside of the conflicts in society.

A useful way to look at the matter is to examine the current Burn-sall strike. A group of mainly Asian women workers are in dispute because of appalling working conditions, bad pay and lack of union rights. The anti-racist ideas of the 1980s do not lead to any real understanding of what that dispute is about. Race and gender come into play, but the central issue is the clash between workers and bosses.

ONE problem with asserting ethnic identity as a person's most important identity is it avoids the possibility of conflict within cultures. For instance, I work at a museum which is about to put on an exhibition about the Atlantic slave trade. I find people reluctant to recognise the fact that some black people took part and benefitted from the African slave trade. There is supposed to be one, homogeneous, conflict-free, black African culture.

Nationalist ideas dovetail with those of Thatcherism: self-reliance, self-discipline, self-help,

communities looking after themselves.

Among black nationalists in the US the talk is of managing communities, of black people only buying from black shops, of developing banking and other services for the black markets.

There is a black capitalism largely based on providing for black communities.

"People of different ethnic origins could identify themselves as black. 'Black' was about a shared experience and a shared fight."

That is OK if you think it does not matter if you are exploited by a black capitalist, and if you forget about the idea of changing the world as a whole.

What is crucial is the exclusion of class. For black people there is much, much more to liberation than the fight against racism. And class is central, no matter that it is mediated by other oppressions.

Modern British racism is a historical phenomenon, constructed in the fire of capital and its colonial and imperialist expansion.

Class politics offer the opportunity to get rid of the whole system. The labour movement's retreat from class politics has left it unable to answer many of the issues faced by black people in Britain.

Was Malcolm a socialist?

Martin Thomas looks at George Breitman's book, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (Pathfinder, £7.95)

THIS BOOK, written over the year after Malcolm X was murdered in February 1965, sets out to prove that from June 1964 until his death "Malcolm was a revolutionary — increasingly anti-capitalist and pro-socialist as well as anti-imperialist".

On one level, it is solid and convincing. Shortly before his death Malcolm said plainly that his struggle was not "a racial conflict of black against white, or... a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter".

"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing... but I don't think it will be based upon the colour of the skin, as [Black Muslim] leader Elijah Muhammad had taught it". Anyone who uses Malcolm X as authority for narrow black nationalist politics is being disloyal.

In his last year Malcolm became willing to work with the (liberal-led) mass civil rights movement.

He called for a struggle of both black and white people, not black people alone. "When the day comes when the whites who are really fed-up — I don't mean these jive whites who pose as liberals... — learn how to establish the proper type of communication with those uptown [in Harlem] who are fed-up, and they get some coordinated action going, you'll get some changes... And it will take both".

He dumped the Black Muslims' vague talk of a "black state". "No. I believe in a society in which people can live like human beings on the basis of equality". Immediately after quitting the Black Muslims, he summed up his philosophy as "black nationalism" — but by January 1965 he had rejected that. "I haven't been using the expression for several months".

He dropped the Black Muslims' line of promoting black capitalism, in a way which Breitman shows must have been deliberate and considered — though he never openly argued against it, and never came out clearly with an alternative.

He denounced capitalism. "You can't have capitalism without racism... You can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic; you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist..." He told Breitman's comrade Harry Ring that he "felt it necessary for his people to consider socialist solutions to their problem. But as the leader of the movement, he said, it was necessary to present this concept in a way that would be understandable to his people and would not isolate him from them".

The basic statement of his "Organisation of Afro-American Unity", in June 1964, had cited "the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Constitution of the USA and the Bill of Rights" as "the principles in which we believe"; but in December 1964 he urged the OAAU to look wider: "The

man doesn't want you and me to look beyond Harlem or beyond the shores of America".

He told the OAAU to consider socialism because, he said, that was the system that the new independent countries in Africa and Asia (and Scandinavia, too, he said in passing) were using to get rid of poverty and provide a decent life and decent education for everyone.

That those countries were not as he thought them to be does not undo the importance of Malcolm's preaching of social provision for need in place of "vulturistic" profit. Unfortunately, however, Breitman's own illusions here blur the argument of the book.

He weaves his presentation into a general notion of "the tendency of revolutionary nationalism to grow over into and become merged with socialism", and thus blurs over both Malcolm's sharp change of direction in 1964-5 and the deep differences Malcolm still had with working-class socialists.

Breitman, who died recently, was a Trotskyist, a long-standing member of American Socialist Workers' Party (no relation to the SWP-Britain). When the SWP went Castro-Stalinist in the early 1980s, he fought against the turn and, nearly 70 years old, was expelled. He knew that the new states in Africa were not socialist at all.

"You can't have capitalism without racism... you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist..."

All that, however, was blurred in his mind by a concept which he shared with all the "mainstream" Trotskyists of the time: that a great process of "colonial revolution" was sweeping the world which somehow had an inbuilt and semi-automatic tendency to "grow over" into socialism, and within which class issues were secondary details.

Malcolm's identification with Third World states was thus, for Breitman, an identification with the "colonial revolution" and ipso facto an identification with a movement or process tending towards socialism. Moreover, for Breitman, Malcolm was also himself an example of that movement or process.

Breitman's general summings-up, as opposed to his detailed documentation, therefore blur Malcolm's change of direction. And Breitman gives a very blurred picture of the socialist view which he says Malcolm was moving towards.

THE SOCIALIST answer to racism is black and white workers' unity on a programme of eliminating disadvantage by levelling up at the expense of the capitalists and capitalism. The principle of unity should not stop socialists supporting black people who start struggles

against racism before any large number of white workers are ready to back those struggles; revolutionary unity can be established only by building on struggles, using them as a lever to change consciousness, not by dampening them down to get "unity" in silence and stillness. Nevertheless, class unity remains the basic principle.

Breitman mentions this issue quite clearly. "It is important to note that Malcolm... was talking about [alliance with] 'militant whites', not white workers... He did not share the belief of the Marxists that the working class, including a decisive section of the white workers... will play a leading role".

But Breitman's blurred vision stops him developing this, or another important point he makes: "class questions are often expressed in racial terms", that is, "racial" issues often have to be demystified by exposing class issues inside them.

Breitman concludes: "Malcolm was not yet a Marxist". Not yet! But it was not only a matter of time!

Malcolm was not a Marxist. Whether he would have become one if he had lived longer depends on whether he would have become convinced on the key issues separating the sort of socialism at which he had arrived (with various state-capitalist and bureaucratic regimes as models, and without any special connection to the working class) from Marxist working-class socialism. It was not just a matter of trundling a little further along an automatic conveyor-belt.

On another level, it seems to me, Breitman misses the point.

Malcolm was beginning to think and read about socialism. He was not, and could not have been, anywhere near producing a new socialist strategy against racism.

For a dozen years before that, he had had a strategy against racism — the "Black Muslim" strategy of building black self-respect and pride, encouraging racial separation, and using black resources to build up black (capitalist) businesses in black communities. Malcolm had rejected that strategy.

Malcolm was and is a great political figure not because he offered strategic guidance. His most famous slogan was "Freedom — by any means necessary". The phrase "by any means necessary" shattered all the liberal taboos about non-violence and not demanding "too much", and the black-separatist taboos too. In place of all talk of gradually scaling down racism, bit by bit, it put the basic human demand: we will not tolerate any racism any longer!

It was a revolutionary principle. But it said nothing about which means were suitable and effective! It offered no strategy.

All it did was to open the way for clear thinking about strategy — and that was a great thing to do, especially at that time and in that place. Malcolm opened the way for others (and for himself, in his last year) to think for themselves.

And to string together "Malcolm X's strategy" from whatever selection of Malcolm's statements suits your prejudices, black-nationalist, Muslim, or socialist, is not the best way to think for yourself. It is not the best way to learn from Malcolm X.

The Paris Commune

When the workers

18 March is the anniversary of the first working class revolution — the Paris Commune. Joan Trevor traces the events and the lessons of the two month Commune, which was bloodily defeated by the bourgeoisie on 28 May 1871.

IN THE GREAT FRENCH Revolution of 1789 the bourgeoisie of France struck its first blow against feudal, monarchical government and cut off the head of their king Louis XVI. They opened a period where different sections of the bourgeoisie and of the surviving aristocracy fought for ascendancy, and over the best way to rule France. They also learned how to enlist the support of the French proletariat for their revolutions and how to put them down again when the workers advanced their own independent demands.

Almost a century later, in 1870, socially and economically much had changed, including the character of the French working class, but politically there was still great turmoil.

Industry and infrastructure were far more developed. There was a population of more than 30 million, of whom about 8 million were allowed to vote. But France had again, under Emperor Napoleon III, an autocratic government which brutally repressed socialists but courted popular support in expensive wars with its neighbours. When Emperor Napoleon engaged in a disastrous war against Prussia [the biggest of the then-divided German states] in July 1870 many in France were disgruntled enough to consider the possibility of overthrowing him. Napoleon's army was defeated at the Battle of Sedan in early September and the Emperor himself was captured. Prussian troops surrounded and besieged the French capital. But the war was not yet lost.

On 3 September the Parisian workers proclaimed the Third Republic and allowed a bourgeois politician, Adolphe Thiers, to form a "Government of National Defence".

Though Thiers came to power as the head of the Republic he plotted to overthrow it and restore a

liberal monarchy. He also wanted to make peace with Prussia as quickly as possible so that he could turn his attention to defeating the powerful Parisian workers.

In January 1871 Thiers' government capitulated to the Prussians.

During the siege of Paris the working class had been organised in a National Guard and, though Prussia had won the war, the Guard did not come under the terms of the armistice. The arms had been bought from public funds raised by the Parisians themselves and did not belong to the government which was pursuing peace.

To satisfy Prussia, and to remove the threat to his own ambitions Thiers aimed to disarm this Guard.

"The workers quickly elected and proclaimed their Commune, the world's first workers' government."

The prospects for independent working class action against him were not very good. 60% of French people lived and worked on the land. Of the Parisians, only 40% were wage workers.

However, the National Guard was a strong defence force over which the workers themselves had gained a great degree of control through "vigilance committees" and an elected Central Committee. Many of the government's own troops were still prisoners of Prussia. And the people of Paris, including many of its capitalists, wanted not another monarchy but more democratic government over which, through an extension of



Communard barricades

the franchise, they could exercise control.

There was also an influential minority of convinced socialists among the Parisian workers. These people had opposed Napoleon's imperialistic ambitions and wanted an end to the dynastic squabbles which led to expensive wars. They thought they could convince the peasantry of France, who had in the past usually ended up paying for these wars through increased taxation, that they had common interests with the industrial working class.

In March 1871 Thiers forced the hand of the workers by sending a force to disarm the National Guard. The workers refused to give up their arms. Two officers sent by Thiers were killed — one of them by his own troops when he ordered them to fire on a peaceful demonstration.

Thiers' government, until then resident in Paris, fled to the Palace at Versailles.

Thiers negotiated with Paris for the return of hostages captured during the exodus. But, for the next two months, his troops bombarded the walls of the city, and brutally murdered any participants of the Paris uprising they caught. And Thiers began negotiations with Prussia for the return of French prisoners of war to put down the workers.

THE WORKERS quickly elected and proclaimed their Commune, the world's first workers' government. A workers' government by virtue of the fact that it was elected by universal [male] suffrage from the different municipalities of Paris, a fact which led to the ruling body being composed overwhelmingly of "working men or acknowledged representatives of the working class".

And the Commune immediately enacted political measures which would safeguard the interests of the workers in the regime.

The Central Committee of the National Guard dissolved itself and put the Guard under the control of the Commune. The Com-

mune abolished conscription and the standing army. Defence would be carried out by the Guard, in which all Parisian men were to serve for limited periods so that they could not get used to "bossing".

The Commune abolished capital punishment and burned the guillotine in front of crowds of cheering onlookers.

The French proletariat had also had plenty of experience of being "bossed" by bureaucrats. To guard against the development of a new bureaucracy unaccountable to the people, the Commune decided on measures which could protect the workers from the Commune itself.

"To guard against a new bureaucracy unaccountable to the people, the Commune decided on measures which could protect the workers from the Commune itself."

It made itself immediately recallable by the electors.

The representatives of the people would not just *decide* the measures of the Commune, they would *carry them out*. They became not just the legislature [a talking shop or "Parliament"] but the executive [government] as well.

To put an end to careerism, corruption and the influence of vested interests, no functionary of the new state would earn more than the average worker's wage. The judiciary would henceforth be elected.

The Commune ended the influence of religion in the affairs of the people by the separation of the church and the new state, the expropriation of the church and the ending of religious instruction

in schools.

They opened education to all Parisian children, free of charge.

All these measures were necessary immediately to replace the repressive and inefficient bourgeois state with a state functioning under the control of the workers.

Unfortunately, the work could only be begun, and improvements in the social sphere lagged somewhat behind these immediate political achievements. The way the Commune might go in the future was shown in a small number of economic measures enacted in the interests of the working class.

The Commune compiled statistics on all the factories which had been closed by fleeing capitalists so that they could be taken over by co-operative organisations of their former workers.

Payments of all rents were postponed. Unsocial nightwork for bakers was abolished. The pawnshops were closed.

An earnest of the fact that the Communards intended the workers' government to spread, they drew up plans for similar communes in France which would enter into a voluntary union and send delegates to a national convention. In fact the Commune *did* inspire similar uprisings, in Lyons and Marseilles, but these were quickly put down.

The Communards were convinced they could also appeal to the interests of the peasantry. They promised them cheaper government than they had ever before had to pay for with their taxes, and a role in the new national commune system.

THE COMMUNE, they hoped, would be a model for other European countries. They appealed for support to the workers abroad. There were a number of foreign workers amongst the delegates elected to the Commune and they were confirmed in office on the first day. The Commune also pulled down the Vendôme Column, a monument to the first Napoleon's European conquests.

Some useful dates

1789-93: French Revolution sweeps away the old feudal privileges and establishes "liberty, equality and fraternity" — in the capitalist market-place.

1815: Battle of Waterloo. France defeated. Monarchy restored. The new capitalist order is reshaped in the interests of the richest landowners and capitalists.

1830: "July Revolution" ousts the king, replacing him by a more liberal relative.

1832: Workers' uprising in Lyon (then the foremost industrial city in France).

1839: Attempted socialist uprising led by Blanqui.

1848: "February Revolution" ousts monarchy, introduces "Second Republic". Workers' uprising crushed in June 1848. Louis Napoleon (Napoleon Bona-

parte's nephew) becomes president in December 1848 and makes himself Emperor ("Second Empire") in December 1851. Policy of colonial expansion.

July 1870: Napoleon declares war on Prussia (the biggest of the states into which Germany was then divided).

September 1870: Napoleon's army capitulates. Parisian workers and bourgeois politicians declare "Third Republic" to continue struggle against invading Prussian troops.

March 1871: Republican government capitulates. Paris workers proclaim Commune.

May 1871: Commune suppressed.

1871 (to 1940): "Third Republic".

stormed heaven

These were the achievements of the Commune during the 72 days it lasted. And, during the latter part of the Commune, they might have achieved more if they had not been increasingly distracted from the tasks of government by the need to defend themselves against Thiers' attacks.

By mid-April Thiers was confident enough to break off negotiations with Paris. Troops were returning every day from captivity. Paris was largely cut off from the rest of France, and the Communards were unable to make their appeals to the workers and peasants beyond the city walls that could spread the rebellion.

On 21 May a traitor opened one of the gates of the city to Thiers' troops and the battle for Paris began. The western part of the city was soon under Thiers' control and they pushed towards the east where most workers lived.

This was not a story of perfect heroism. 167,000 workers had been enrolled in the National Guard, but only about 20-30,000 actively participated in the last defence of the Commune.

Those who hid or deserted might not have been as courageous as we would like, but they had actively supported the Commune in its heyday. Given time, the Commune might have so impressed them that they too would have defended it to the last.

In any case there was not enough time and the bourgeoisie had clearly won this class battle.

By 28 May the final slaughter of Communards took place around the Père Lachaise cemetery. Those parts of Paris already in the hands of the government quickly — indecorously! — returned to normal life while the last Communards were being rounded up, shot — around 20,000 of them — or sent into long exile on distant islands governed by France.

On the strength of his defeat of the proletarian upstarts — “the vile multitude” — Thiers remained President until 1873. In the aftermath of the Commune the socialists suffered increased repression. The government appealed to other European governments to suppress international socialist organisations like Marx's own International Working Men's Association, members of which had been active in the Commune.



Proudhon: his ideas were rejected by the Proudhonists during the Commune!

Lessons of the Commune

A practical step

The Commune taught socialists many lessons they could never get from, in Lenin's words, “hundreds of programmes and arguments”.

The first pupil was Karl Marx who, though he lived in London, was in the thick of the events through his contacts with members of the International Working Men's Association [IWMA — the so-called “First International”] in Paris.

On 9 September 1870 he had warned the Parisian workers against making things difficult for the fledgling Republican government while Paris was still besieged by Prussian troops. But when their hand was forced Marx supported the Communards' heroic fight.

Just two days after their final defeat he published *The Civil War in France*, his account of the events and valuable lessons of the Commune, which was put out in the name of the Council of the IWMA.

The Commune and the state

THE EXPERIENCE of the Commune led Marx to the view that the working class must smash the bourgeois state. They must replace it with their own state — the “dictatorship of the proletariat” — to do the things necessary — suppression of the bourgeoisie, transfer of private property to social ownership — for guaranteeing the end of class rule altogether.

When they had done that there would be no ruling class as such, and the need for any sort of state would — over time — shrivel and die. The state would “wither away”.

After the Commune, Marx was so impressed by this fact that he made the only revision he ever felt necessary to *The Communist Manifesto* [first published in 1848] by including in its Preface this comment from *The Civil War &c.*:

“the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes”.

The Commune certainly acknowledged this truth when they abolished the standing army and replaced its functions with their people's militia, the National Guard. This they did in recognition that in the past the bourgeoisie had frequently used the army to put down independent working class uprisings at times of revolution.

The Commune and violence

THE POPULAR, bourgeois image of working class revolutionaries is that they are bloodthirsty hooligans. The Commune provided yet new proof that bloodthirstiness is all on the side

of the bourgeoisie. They had no qualms about murdering tens of thousands of men, women and children without even stopping to find out if they had been active in the Commune. Even journalists for British Tory papers were disgusted by the violence of the troops who put down the Commune.

In contrast, the Communards had been remarkably merciful in their treatment of prisoners, hostages and conspirators against the Commune. This was not because they were naive: remember, they had abolished the army in order to be safe from it in future. They acted from principle.

Engels later, in 1891, accused the Communards of not having been bloodthirsty enough against their enemies. The question is somewhat confused by the fact that most enemies of the Commune had fled the city. Engels suggested that it would have been better, while the “Government of National Defence” was still in turmoil, to go to Versailles and smash them before they had the chance to smash the Commune.

In *The State and Revolution* Lenin brought out many of the lessons Marx learned from the Commune. He was very clear that working class violence was essentially an act of self-defence and that “the working people need the state [their state, the dictatorship of the proletariat] only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters”.

That the Parisian working class was essentially humane had been shown in their attitude to the Franco-Prussian War. Emperor Napoleon had organised jingoistic, pro-war demonstrations in Paris, but the workers responded with peace demonstrations. On 12 July 1870 the IWMA published their manifesto “to the workmen of all nations”, which said:

“War for a question of preponderance or a dynasty, can, in the eyes of workmen, be nothing but a criminal absurdity... Brothers of Germany! Our division would only result in the complete triumph of despotism on both sides of the Rhine...”

The triumphant Prussian bourgeoisie finally proved that it had common interests with the French bourgeoisie when it aided their suppression of the Commune.

Socialists and the Commune

THE COMMUNE was that thing which had been missing up to that point: not only a living example of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat — that is, the democratic rule of the working class — but of what that dictatorship might look like in practice. This was why it was so exciting to Marx and to socialists



“The Commune is harassed by ignorance and reaction”

generally, and why it provided so many helpful lessons in developing socialist ideas.

Most of the people elected to the Commune were themselves socialists. Of these, the majority were Blanquists; the minority were members of the IWMA, Proudhonist in their views. Almost immediately, what they did diverged wildly from what they had previously thought they might do in such a situation.

Blanquists believed a small group of disciplined socialists could seize control of the bourgeois state and use it against the bourgeoisie until the mass of the population were convinced of the necessity of the revolution the Blanquists were carrying out in their interests.

In the event the Blanquists found themselves appealing for support to the other industrial cities of France to form a large union which would replace the existing state, not take it over.

Proudhon had been hostile to “association” of the producers — trade unions — because he thought this would interfere with people's freedom to do what they want. He was hostile to the large-scale enterprises which were developing under capitalism because they forced “association” on the producers.

“Association” was precisely what the Commune was all about; and the big enterprises were to be kept intact, but put under the control of co-operative groups of workers.

After the Commune, most of the Blanquists came over to Marxist ideas, while Proudhonism practically died out in the socialist movement, though it survived in some strains of anarchism.

As for the Marxists, if they had been more numerous they might have helped the Commune avoid some fatal mistakes. For instance, Engels described how the Communards left the Bank of France alone during the Commune. If they had had a better understanding of economics they might have seized the Bank's assets. This would have been a valuable negotiating tool with the Thiers government at the least.

Trotsky wrote a number of essays on tactical mistakes in the Commune. The socialist leadership had the advantage of operating within a sophisticated working class that had already learned numerous valuable class lessons in political and day-to-day economic and social battles with the bourgeoisie. But the failures of leadership, not this, was the decisive feature of the Commune. For Trotsky the great and abiding lesson of the defeat of the Commune was the need for an adequate revolutionary organisation to give leadership. He put the lessons he learned to use during the Russian revolution.

The socialist ideas most discredited by the experience of the Commune were those of the Utopians who, as Marx always refused to do, drew up blueprints for a future society, and then set about trying to persuade large groups of people, the bourgeoisie included, of their desirability.

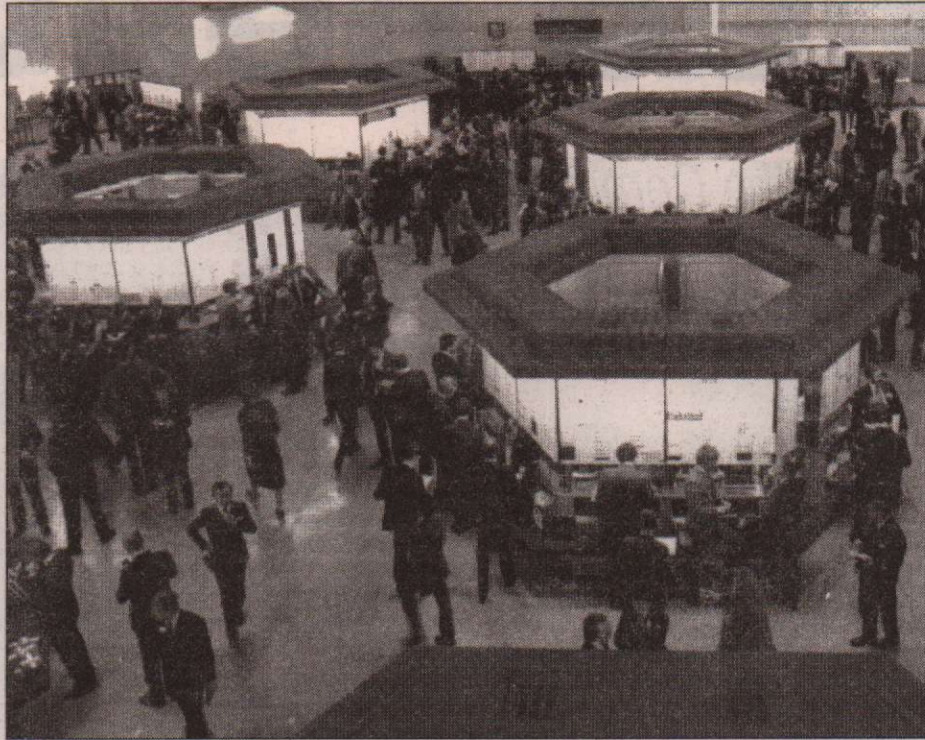
Marx insisted, and the Commune proved, that socialism would be the creation of the workers themselves. The Communards proved that it was not only desirable but possible for the workers to rule themselves and to develop solutions to problems they, better than anyone, understood.

How capitalism keeps moving on

Rosa Luxemburg wrote the best short summary of the gist of *Capital* volumes 2 & 3, in a section which contributed to Franz Mehring's book *Karl Marx*. This week we print the first part in which Luxemburg looks at Marx's discussion, in volume 2, of how and with what crisis Capitalism, without any central economic planning, develops a balance between production and demand.

THE REAL SOURCE OF capitalist wealth was revealed for the first time in the first volume of *Capital*, which wasted no time either in finding justifications for the capitalists or in reproaching them with their injustice. Marx showed for the first time how profit originated and how it flowed into the pockets of the capitalists. He did so on the basis of two decisive economic facts: first, that the mass of the workers consists of proletarians who are compelled to sell their labour-power as a commodity in order to exist, and secondly that this commodity labour-power possesses such a high degree of productivity in our own day that it is able to produce in a certain time a much greater product than is necessary for its own maintenance in that time. These two purely economic facts, representing the result of objective historical development, cause the fruit of the labour-power of the proletariat to fall automatically into the lap of the capitalist, and to accumulate, with the continuance of the wage system, into evergrowing masses of capital.

Thus capitalist wealth is explained not as any compensation to the capitalists for imaginary sacrifices or benefits granted, or as the result of cheating or theft in the generally accepted sense of the words, but as an exchange between capitalist and worker, as a transaction of unimpeachable legal equity proceeding exactly according to those laws which govern the sale and purchase of all other commodities. In order to explain thoroughly this unobjectionable transaction which gives the capitalist the golden fruits of labour, Marx had to develop the law of value discovered by the great English classical economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, i.e. the explanation of the inner laws of commodity exchange, to its logical conclusion and apply it to the commodity labour-power. The first volume deals chiefly with the law of value, and, resulting from it, wages and surplus-value, i.e. the explanation of how the product of wage-labour divides itself naturally and without any violence or cheating into a



"We are living in a planless anarchic society ... nevertheless a whole must result"

pittance for the wage-worker and effortless wealth for the capitalist. And here lies the great historical significance of the first volume of *Capital*. It demonstrated that exploitation can be abolished only by abolishing the sale of labour-power, that is by abolishing the wage system.

IN THE FIRST VOLUME we are all the time at the point of production, in a factory, in a mine or in a modern agricultural undertaking, and what is said applies equally to all capitalist undertakings. We are given an individual example as the type of the whole capitalist mode of production. When we close the volume we are thoroughly acquainted with the daily creation of profit and with the whole mechanism of exploitation in all its details. Before us lie piles of commodities of all sorts still damp with the sweat of the workers as they come from the factories, and in all of them we can clearly discern that part of their value which results from the unpaid labour of the workers and which belongs just as equitably to the capitalist as the whole commodity. The root of capitalist exploitation is laid bare before our eyes.

However, at this stage the capitalist has his harvest by no means safely in the barn. The fruit of exploitation is present, but it is still in a form unsuitable for appropriation. So long as the fruit of exploitation takes the form of piled-up commodities the capitalist can derive but little pleasure from the process. He is not the slaveowner of the classical Graeco-Roman world, or the feudal lord of the Middle

Ages, who ground the faces of the working people merely to satisfy their own craving for luxury and to maintain an imposing retinue. In order to maintain himself and his family "in a manner befitting his social station" the capitalist must have his riches in hard cash, and this is also necessary if he is to increase his capital ceaselessly. To this end therefore he must sell the commodities produced by the wageworkers together with the surplus-value contained in them. The commodities must leave the factory and the warehouse and be thrown on to the market. The capitalist follows his commodities from his warehouse and from his office into the stock exchange and into the shops, and in the second volume of *Capital* we follow the capitalist.

THE SECOND STAGE in the life of the capitalist is spent in the sphere of commodity exchange, and here he meets with a number of difficulties. In his own factory the capitalist is undisputed master, and strict organisation and discipline prevail there, but on the commodity market complete anarchy prevails under the name of free competition. On the commodity market no one bothers about his neighbour and no one bothers about the whole, but for all that it is precisely here that the capitalist feels his dependence on the others and on society as a whole.

The capitalist must keep abreast of his competitors. Should he take more time than absolutely necessary in selling his commodities, should he fail to provide himself with sufficient money to purchase raw materials and all the other things he needs at the right moment in order to prevent his factory coming to a standstill for lack of supplies, should he fail to invest promptly and profitably the money he receives for the sale of his commodities, he is bound to fall behind in one way or the other. The devil takes the hindmost, and the individual capitalist who fails to ensure that his business is managed as effectively in the constant exchange between the factory and the commodity market as it is in the factory itself will not succeed in obtaining the normal rate of profit no matter how zealously he may exploit his workers. A part of his "well-earned" profit will be lost somewhere on the way and will not find its way into his pocket.

However, this alone is not enough. The capitalist can accumulate riches only if he produces commodities, i.e. articles for use. Further, he must produce precisely those kinds and sorts of commodities which society needs, and he must produce them in just the quantities required, otherwise his

commodities will remain unsold and the surplus-value contained in them will be lost. How can the individual capitalist control all these factors? There is no one to tell him what commodities society needs and how many of them it needs, for the simple reason that no one knows. We are living in a planless, anarchic society, and each individual capitalist is in the same position. Nevertheless, out of this chaos, out of this confusion, a whole must result which will permit the individual business of the capitalist to prosper and at the same time satisfy the needs of society and permit its continued existence as a social organism.

TO BE MORE exact, out of the anarchic confusion of the commodity market must develop the possibility of the ceaseless circular movement of individual capital, the possibility of producing, selling, purchasing raw materials, etc., and producing again, whereby capital constantly changes from its money form into its commodity form and back again. These stages must dovetail accurately: money must be in reserve to utilise every favourable market opportunity for the purchase of raw materials, etc., and to meet the current expenses of production, and the money which comes flowing back as the commodities are sold must be given an opportunity of immediate utilisation again. The individual capitalists, who are apparently quite independent of each other, now join together in fact and form a great brotherhood, and thanks to the credit system and the banks they continually advance each other the money they need and take up the available money so that the uninterrupted progress of production and the sale of commodities is ensured both for the individual capitalist and for society as a whole.

Bourgeois economists have never found any explanation for the credit system beyond calling it an ingenious institution for "facilitating commodity exchange", but in the second volume of *Capital* Marx demonstrates, quite incidentally, that the credit system is a necessary part of capitalist life, the connecting link between two phases of capital, in production and on the commodity market, and between the apparently arbitrary movements of individual capital.

And then the permanent circulation of production and consumption in society as a whole must be kept in movement in the confusion of individual capitals, and this must be done in such a fashion that the necessary conditions of capitalist production are assured: the production of the means of production, the maintenance of the working class and the progressive enrichment of the capitalist class, i.e. the increasing accumulation and activity of all the capital of society. The second volume of *Capital* investigates how a whole is developed from the innumerable deviating movements of individual capital, how this movement of the whole vacillates between the surplus of the boom years and the collapse of the crisis years, but is wrenched back again and again into correct proportions only to swing out of them again immediately, and how out of all this there develops in ever more powerful dimensions that which is only a means for present-day society, its own maintenance and economic progress, and that which is its end, the progressive accumulation of capital. Marx offers us no final solution, but for the first time in a hundred years, since Adam Smith, the whole is presented on the firm foundations of definite laws.

Next week: Luxemburg on Marx's discussion, volume 3 of *Capital*, of how the surplus value is divided among the industrialists, bankers, merchants and landowners.

Businessman's song of the commodity

Bertholt Brecht, translation P. Sedgwick

Rice is growing down the rivers.
In the provinces upstream people need rice.
If we keep the rice in storage
Rice will be dearer for them.
Those who tow the rice boats will earn even less of it
Then the rice will be cheaper for me.

What after all is rice?
Do I know what is rice?
Do I know who knows that?
I don't know what rice is
I only know its price.

When winter comes on people need clothes.
Then is the time to buy in cotton
And keep it off the market.
When the cold comes on, clothes will be dearer for them.

There is too much cotton around.
What after all is cotton?
Do I know what cotton is?
Do I know who knows that?
I don't know what cotton is
I only know its price.

A man needs too much food
Which makes men dearer for me.
To make food, men are needed.
Those who cook make eating cheaper, but
Those who eat make it cheaper for me.
There are too many men around?

What after all is man?
Do I know what a man is?
Do I know who knows that?
I don't know what a man is
I only know his price.



Wilfred Owen denounced war

Anthems for doomed youth

Wilfred Owen, the greatest of the 1914-18 "war poets" was born one hundred years ago and died crossing the Sambre canal in the last week of the war, November 1918. He was 25 years old when he died, one of the millions of doomed youth whose anthems he wrote while serving with them in the trenches.

1914

War broke: and now the Winter of the world
With perishing great darkness closes in.
The foul tornado, centred at Berlin,
Is over all the width of Europe whirled,
Rending the sails of progress. Rent or furled
Are all Art's ensigns. Verse wails. Now begin
Famines of thought and feeling. Love's wine's thin.
The grain of human Autumn rots, down-hurled.

For after Spring had bloomed in early Greece,
And Summer blazed her glory out with Rome,
An Autumn softly fell, a harvest home,
A slow grand age, and rich with all increase.
But now, for us, wild Winter, and the need
Of sowings for new Spring, and blood for seed.

Periscope

One to video: the highly acclaimed Marxist film director Ken Loach (*Kes*, *Riff Raff*) will discuss his work and his views on censorship in the *Guardian Interview* (Channel 4, 12.15am Sunday 21 March).

Earlier the same evening at 10.15 Channel 4 is showing *Hidden Agenda*, Ken Loach's film about Northern Ireland. *Socialist Organiser's* review was critical of this film, whose politics it saw as simplistic, and in class terms middle class Irish nationalist — but as a thriller it works quite well. See it!

Dulce et decorum est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed
through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped
behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, —
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori*.

* It is sweet to die for one's country. Sweet! and decorous!

The lighter side of life

Film

Dan Katz reviews *Leon the Pig Farmer*

IF YOU LIVE in London your life will like mine, be driven to Victor Meldrew levels of irascibility by the *Evening Standard*. It really is a foul and rancid right wing paper!

I bought a copy last Wednesday to get the latest on the busworkers' strike: I got a few unsympathetic column inches.

The *Standard* was dominated by an intra-Tory debate on Maastricht, and also a "discussion" on "film violence".

There was a sanctimonious "Standard" open letter to Anthony Hopkins about screen violence, obviously written by someone who had been badly potty-trained. Hopkins has dared to express doubts about making a follow-up to *Silence of the Lambs* because he is worried about the effect on the audience. The *Standard* said, in effect: well, Anthony, the damage is done now.

The *Standard* would like a lot of the

darker bits of life repressed and hidden. I believe that they are wrong, and that it would do us all good if they loosened up a bit; but I did feel, as I left *Reservoir Dogs*, that I'd seen enough of Harvey Keitel killing people.

So I thought I'd give *Romper Stomper* a miss and see *Leon the Pig Farmer* instead. *Leon The Pig Farmer* is nice, clean fun — a bit of sex outside marriage, but no genitalia.

Gary Sinyor, the Jewish co-director has had a hit with his first film — and for £160,000 too — a tiny amount compared to the *Malcolm X* budget.

Sinyor's film centres on the trials of Leon Geller, a nice young Jewish man from North London and son of Sydney, "a net curtain magnate". Leon discovers his biological father is in fact a pig farmer from Yorkshire. Crisis!

There then follows a discussion on what it means to be Jewish. Sinyor says his point was to "show Jews as they are, not as some Christians perceive them".

It's funny, there's no blood anywhere, and there's even a happy ending. See it!

Transgressing the unspoken laws

Television

Katrina Faccenda reviews *Washing Away the Stains* (BBC1 Monday 8 March)

THE MAGDALEN Laundries were prisons for the thousands of women condemned to life in them. The girls and women who worked within them could be guilty of anything or nothing: their main crime was to have embarrassed their families and society.

They were petty thieves, or girls thought to be at risk from men's attention because they were too attractive, or unmarried and pregnant or women just not conforming to expectations of how they should behave.

Many were guilty of being the daughters of women who had not been married; it was commonly believed that their weakness to sins of the flesh lasted for seven generations. Above all the women sent to the Magdalen Laundries were the women who nobody wanted.

Patricia Burke Brogan's recent play *Eclipsed* really opened the book on the laundries. She is an ex-nun who worked in one of the laundries, and the accuracy of her play made it uncomfortable for all of those who had known how these institutions had been run.

The institutions, which existed in Britain as well as in Ireland, were supposed to be homes for girls rejected by society, where they could be given food, shelter, clothing and work in a laundry. In the days when there was a lot of

business for laundries, the Catholic Church was only too happy to have them as unpaid workers.

They were condemned to long days of monotonous work in terrible conditions, and fed so badly that they stole from the nun's leftovers being sent as pigswill.

The washing was supposed to symbolise the washing away of the sins.

The Magdalen institutions no longer exist. Most were closed down in the '60s. Good riddance to these relics of the Victorian workhouses!

Few women have spoken of their experiences because of the stigma, and the terrible memories of having been deprived of their youth and their children.

The story of the Magdalen institutions is another chapter of the story of collusion by church and state to deny women their rights and to impose a code of conduct, with strict penalties for those who did not obey.

The story of these women reminded me of the story of the actress, Frances Farmer, who was put in a mental institution and eventually lobotomised because of her unconventional behaviour.

The story is not over. Girls and women are still institutionalised for not conforming to the roles society demands of them, or for being too difficult to handle. The judiciary still treats women more harshly than men because the crime they have committed is doubly bad, being against the law and against the unspoken laws which decree how women must behave.

Incident at Vitry, or how the French CP prepared the way for Le Pen

Don't save the Morning Star!

AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna

Dave Osler's passionate defence of the *Morning Star* [SO 554] serves to illustrate why *Socialist Outlook*, which Osler supports, is in such a bad way.

He says the *Morning Star* should survive because it has valuable leftwing ideas and reporting for the labour movement.

He then says that you can't trust the *Star* on trade union questions because it is tied to trade union bureaucrats.

But, apart from its trade union coverage, there is nothing else — certainly not foreign policy, now that the USSR is no more — really distinctive about the *Morning Star*. A paper like the *Guardian* will carry almost everything else in fuller versions than the *Star* carries. I hate to be the frigid sectarian at the ecumenical grope-in, but, believe it or not, Dave, politics is important in these matters. The idea that the *Morning Star* can serve the politics of either *Socialist Outlook* or *Socialist Organiser* is desperate fantasy.

Osler is wrong to imply that the record of the *Morning Star* stinks only in the distant past.

What about the Gulf War two years ago, when with Ken Livingstone and Socialist Action they turned the anti-war movement into a bureaucratic madhouse?

And how does he feel about the *Star* defending and justifying an attack by 60 racist thugs on black immigrants in France? [*Morning Star*, 15.1.81] The racist thugs were "Communists" led by their mayor in the Paris suburb of Vitry, doing the sort of thing which helped Le Pen's National Front to grow at the CP's expense.

Osler's article set me rooting in the files of *Socialist Organiser* for a piece I wrote about this incident. It contains detailed quotations from the *Morning Star's* defence of the racism of the CP.

This is an incident that deserves to be much more widely known. As a contribution to the discussion I reprint it now.

THIS [SEE BOX AT TOP] was the fine front page of the *Morning Star* on 15 January. It goes straight to the target.

The Nationality Bill is a racist Bill. The report makes it clear why immigrant groups are vigorously opposing it, and why the broad labour movement must fight it too.

The front page might dispose one who doesn't think much of the so-called Communist Party (which publishes the *Morning Star*) to wish the *Star* well in its struggle to get through its current financial crisis.

But now turn to page 2, where there is a report on the policy of

the French Communist Party on immigration to France, and an attempt to explain the recent incident at Vitry, a suburb of Paris. There, just before Christmas, the CP mayor of Vitry, Pauli Mercieca, led a gang of 60 men, reportedly CP members and supporters, in a 'direct action' to stop 300 immigrants from Mali being rehoused in Vitry.

The gang turned off water, gas and electricity, and used a bulldozer to smash up the hostel. Later the CPF, which is now already campaigning for the Presidential election in April, in which Georges Marchais, its general secretary, will be the Party's candidate, made it clear that Mercieca's gang acted according to Party policy.

On the weekend of 10-11 January a big anti-immigration (which, in the real world of tensions and scapegoating, means anti-immigrant) demonstration was organised in Vitry to support the mayor's action and the Party's immigration policy. Over 10,000 people attended and Georges Marchais was one of them.

According to the *Guardian*, the Vitry policy is now being generalised. The 'Communist' town council at Rennes in Brittany has cancelled a building permit for an Islamic centre. And "...other Communist councils have, said that they will resist attempts to settle more immigrants" (*Guardian*, 16.1.81).

What does the *Morning Star* (and the CP) have to say about the scandalous antics of its French comrades? It excuses them, covers for them, and thereby supports them.

The article, by one Harry Samson, 'reporting from Paris', denounces the comments in the press as a 'smear' on the French CP. His version of what happened more or less admits the facts — but presents the actions of the mayor of Vitry and his gang as acceptable and reasonable.

He describes attempts to move immigrant workers into 'Communist'-controlled municipalities as "a dumping operation". He implies that the Vitry mayor's vigilante operation was a valid means of defending the interests of the workers in Vitry, a proper communist response to an action by the middle-class, conservative-controlled St. Naur municipality, which was trying to "get rid of the immigrants and at the same time whip up feeling against a Communist (sic) municipality".



Vitry, you see, "already has two 600-bed immigrant hostels, a 17 per cent immigrant population (twice the national average), and a 3,500 long waiting list. The town council wants decent conditions for all the town's inhabitants — French and immigrant...". That, it seems, justified action against the immigrants.

But Henry Samson doesn't want you to run away with the idea that the 'Communist' mayor of Vitry has the reflexes of a fascist thug, or that the first thing he did was to send for the bulldozer and the other thugs. Not at all. First he talked to the Mali workers. He cut up rough only when he couldn't persuade these bewildered strangers in a strange and obviously hostile country to leave the hostel peacefully and go back to St. Naur: that is, to abandon the accommodation they had been allotted and put themselves on the streets.

"The CP mayor led a gang of 60 men to smash up an immigrant hostel."

They wouldn't listen to reason; they were too unsophisticated to understand that the mayor was a 'Communist' and not an ordinary racist gangster.

It was only then says Samson, that "some local inhabitants took it upon themselves to destroy symbolically the gates leading to the premises and to turn off the water, gas and electricity". So it was only 'symbolic'. Or perhaps the writer — or his subconscious — is trying to say that they should be grateful that the 60 thugs didn't Klu-Klux it properly and kill a few of the black intruders?

Samson's account implies that contrary to the reports in the serious bourgeois press the mayor and the CP had nothing to do with it. It was only "some local inhabitants".

So what was the mayor doing while it was happening? What is

the CPF doing calling an anti-immigrant demonstration in Vitry (or anywhere)? Samson shows that he is a calculating liar when he explains why "some local inhabitants" made the hostel uninhabitable. They did it he says to "prevent [the premises] from being occupied, so as not to play into the hands of the St. Naur council".

Better to "play into the hands of" the racists, fascists and chauvinists. Better to abandon the only policy that undercuts attempts to divide the working class by blaming immigrants for the social problems capitalism creates — united working class action and opposition to all scapegoating. Better to trample the ideas of communism, socialism and even decent liberalism in the mud churned up by the bulldozer and in the noxious waste matter of people like Henry Samson who now takes on the job of rationalising what the CPF is doing.

THIS DISPLAY of rancid chauvinism lines up the CPF with the French racists. It must encourage them and make their poison more palatable to sections of the French working class who would be ashamed to find themselves consciously adopting racist attitudes.

In 1968, the British Labour Government's racist decision to stop British passport-holding Kenyan Asians entering Britain was followed first by Enoch Powell's speech predicting and threatening "rivers of blood" unless immigration was stopped, and then by an enormous shift of 'mainstream' British politics towards that open racism which has unashamedly been expressed in all immigration legislation and immigration-control practice since. Racist definitions, concerns and obsessions were moved from the crank right wing fringe of politics to centre stage.

Nothing less than this can be the result of what the CPF is doing now and French racism will probably be more virulent and explosive because of the widespread unemployment.

How many of the 10,000 demonstrators who turned out to march behind Georges Marchais

in support of the Communist heroes of Vitry can be assumed to be free from the taint of racism?

And finally, all this must be seen in the context of the eruption of anti-semitism in France which has taken the form of terrorist attacks on Jews. In Paris right now a heavily armed CRS man carrying a sub-machine gun stands guard outside each synagogue.

THE CPF CALLS for a halt to all immigration. The *Morning Star* justifies this too. Samson explains that many of the four million south European and north African immigrants live in "overpopulated badly-adapted unhygienic hostels and are subjected to racism, police harassment and insecurity". Many of them had known unemployment in their own countries and are experiencing it again in France.

The CPF opposes racial discrimination, says Samson, and in a recent document "condemns all threats to the dignity of these men and women living far from home and reaffirms its solidarity with them as it has always done in the past". And so?

He then goes on: "It is for this reason that in the present economic crisis and to avoid adding to the two million French and immigrant workers already unemployed that the CPF is calling for a halt to immigration in the mutual interests of all workers in France irrespective of their origin".

Apart from the reference to the working class, you could travel far rightwards across the ranks of the Tory Party — as far as the repatriationists in fact — and get more or less exactly the same sort of reasoning to justify this policy in Britain. It is the declared policy of the Tory Party!

And that is the ground on to which their justification of the CPF now takes the *Morning Star* and the CP. The *Morning Star* and the CP of course have long refused to oppose all immigration controls. Refusing to accept that all immigration controls are intrinsically racist, they only oppose the 1971 Act and its later refinements. But this is a new departure.

For if the Tory policy is correct for France when pursued by the CPF, then in principle it must be correct for Britain too. How can the front page of the *Morning Star* carry conviction when page 2 champions stringent and inevitably racist immigration laws for France and justifies and excuses racist violence and gangsterism?

On this basis, the weaselling of the right wing and soft-left Labour politicians is good working class policy to defend the workers black and white already here. At any rate, those who smear themselves publicly with the racist filth of Marchais' party won't carry much conviction with themselves or anyone else when they try to fight these policies.

The *Star* should pause for breath and tell first itself and then the left to which it is appealing for a financial rescue just where it stands on immigration controls.



The actions of the French Communist Party helped the rise of fascist thugs like Le Pen and his National Front

Build busworkers' fight!

FOLLOWING LAST Wednesday's (10 March) bus strike in London, another day of action will take place this Wednesday 17 March, with a march through central London.

The busworkers are striking against new contracts which would mean a drop in pay of between £30-£60 per week, and an increase in hours to 9.5 per day.

The anger among busworkers is high, but no follow-up action has yet been announced and there is a danger, if this is not done, that the anger will turn to demoralisation.

It would not be the first time that this has happened.

In 1989 bus workers voted massively (6:1) in favour of action against the pay deal. At that time the tubeworkers were taking unofficial, one-day action, every week. Together

we could have brought London to a halt.

But, every time management offered another 0.25% or even just an offer of talks, the action was called off; management would agree nothing, another ballot would be held yielding another, smaller, vote for action. Gradually, the will of the membership to fight was whittled away: 6:1, 5:1, then 3:1, finally, a narrow vote against action.

All in all, we had gained an extra one or two points on our pay deal and another step towards privatisation of our bus routes.

We were called out, in the end, just three times, and only one of those coincided with the tubeworkers' action. This was a terrible episode in the leadership (or lack of it) of London's busworkers against the attacks on their conditions in the run-

up to privatisation.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the vote this time round, despite the massive extent of the attack on their wages and conditions, was only narrowly in favour of strike action.

In order to be willing to fight, you need to feel you can win and, with such a history of terrible leadership, it is admirable that the busworkers voted the way they did.

On the day, last Wednesday, over two-thirds of busworkers came out. That is due to the hard work of militants at garage level. That work needs to be built upon, not dissipated like before. And it could be.

The level of dissatisfaction and anger among busworkers is such that the action could be stepped up if the union leadership fought for it in the garages.

One day here and there is

OK to build up confidence among the membership, but it must not stop there. If they are to defeat this latest attack, the action must be spread. The management are only feeling strong because the union is behaving as if it is weak. But it need not be so:

- increase the action;
- strike on the same day as BR and the miners;
- inform the membership all along the way about what management are saying and doing;

- if the leadership won't lead, the rank and file militants should link up across the garages, make links with those on the Underground and BR, and organise unofficial action.

Remember, you do not save jobs by keeping your heads down. That way, management think you are a pushover. You stop them by fighting back.

Colleges ballot for strike on 1 April

By a NATFHE member, Southwark College

FELLECTURERS across Britain are due to ballot for a one-day strike on 1 April. The battle over management attempts to impose new contracts is due to escalate.

On 1 April colleges become "incorporated": they become privatised, competing businesses. Government strategy is to end national agreements on pay and conditions and to encourage "ambitious" (union bashing) principals to impose draconian new contracts.

The College Employers' Forum (CEF) wants to tear up our present conditions (the 'Silver Book') and "break" NATFHE's "monopoly".

In response, colleges organised by the 'Birmingham Liaison Committee' engineered a dispute and a second one-day strike last Wednesday (10 March). They were joined by colleges in the Black Country and a single college outside the West Midlands. This was Southwark College, which managed to organise an unofficial strike despite intimidation — mainly from our own union executive!

Some Birmingham colleges have now won "assurances" from their principals that they will not introduce the new contracts.

The nationwide ballot is being organised by the National Action Committee of the NEC. All principals have been asked to guarantee not to introduce the new contracts. Colleges receiving such "assurances" will be "exempted" from the ballot. By last Friday, a quarter of branches had been exempted.

The danger is weaker branches being left to fight alone. But our priority must be to win the maximum support for a strike in those colleges which are balloted, and to organise successful action on 1 April.

"Exempted" branches should encourage members to join in local rallies and demonstrations. They should also pass motions demanding to be brought back into the struggle. It is obvious that the CEF are co-ordinating a national offensive against us. Another strike day is planned for 28 April to keep up the momentum.

The key issue is co-ordination and control of the strike action. We need pressure to recall a Special Maintained (i.e. FE Sectoral) conference to co-ordinate the action. Pressure must be channelled through the Regions to call and lobby this. Regional delegates should be mandated to extend the action on a national basis. We should aim to broaden representation on the National Action Committee beyond NEC members.

This dispute shows the need for a serious rank and file movement in NATFHE, based on the Birmingham Liaison Committee and the Socialist Lecturers' Alliance.

The Liaison Committee should call for a national rank and file conference to thrash out a national, co-ordinated strategy and act as a counterweight to the NATFHE NEC. But it must not be sidetracked by a fixation with unofficial or illegal action. General calls for such strikes lead not to a co-ordinated policy but a branch-by-branch, piecemeal strategy.

FE lecturers are not the only ones in the Tory firing line. But the scope and speed of the changes dwarf the schools "opt-outs" in secondary education.

Lecturers have an opportunity to build a genuine rank and file broad left. The stakes are high. Responsible activists must link up immediately.

Liverpool dockers need support

THIRTEEN sacked stevedores on the Huskisson Dock in Liverpool are continuing their fight for reinstatement.

The workers were sacked in mid-February after voting to reject a 3% pay offer. The following day their employer changed his company's name so that any picketing of the dock would technically be "secondary picketing".

Even so, the stevedores have maintained a round-the-clock picket at the dock. Local lorry-drivers have refused to cross the picket line, but most drivers form further afield have ignored the pickets. Management has hit back at the stevedores with a "dirty tricks" campaign.

Talking to lorry-drivers has been hyped up into "picket line violence", and the stevedores have been accused of being behind the alleged disappearance of ten wagon-loads of timber — hardly the kind of thing you can slip into your back pocket on the way out of work.

As the stevedores themselves stress, the dispute is a test case. If they are beaten, then employers along the whole length of the docks in Liverpool will adopt the same union-busting and pay-cutting tactics.

The stevedores should be getting more support from other sections of the labour movement in Liverpool, and campaigning for solidarity from other dockers needs to be stepped up in particular.

Donation/requests for speakers should be sent to: TGWU, Islington, Liverpool L3 (phone 051-207 3388).

Make cheques payable to: "TGWU (Huskisson Dock Appeal)".

PLATFORM

The truth about Burnsall's

FOLLOWING Sleeper's comments on the activities of the Birmingham Burnsall Strikers' Support Group, perhaps you will be willing to print the contents of the attached letter to Danny Parry, local official of the GMB, and then allow your readers to decide for themselves how valid his comments are:

Richard Bashford
Member B'ham Burnsall Strikers' Support Group
(Dated 22 February 1993)

Mr Parry,
I am writing to you with reference to your letter dated 28 January, which was received by our secretary on the 3 February. The letter was addressed to the Birmingham Support Group.

We wish to make the following points.

1. The initial request for the formation of a Birmingham-based Burnsall Strikers' Support Group came from the strikers themselves and with full endorsement from the GMB officials involved in the dispute.
2. The first two B'ham support group meetings held (before your letter arrived) took place with representation from GMB union officials, the strikers themselves and support group members.
3. The resulting actions from these meetings were all agreed on unanimously by all those present. They involved:

- i. The printing and distribution of the approved bilingual leaflet.

ii. The raising of funds for the strikers.

iii. Informing the union of any requests for speakers through the strikers' shop steward or a union official.

iv. The building of numbers of people visiting the picket line in order to prevent further attacks on the strikers.

All these actions were unanimously endorsed at the meeting of Tuesday 19 January 1993 by the two GMB officials, the strikers present and the support group members.

One further action we have undertaken since that meeting is to set up a food rota whereby supporters arrange to provide a hot meal for the strikers on the picket line at 1pm.

Given the above points, we were shocked and somewhat puzzled at your letter refusing to 'accept the involvement in any aspect of the Burnsall dispute by members of the Birmingham Support Group'.

Indeed, further confusion was sown a week after your letter by a request to our support group by union official Mr Jo Quigley, asking us if we could provide transport for the strikers and their families to 'London social. Which we did!'

Clearly a number of misunderstandings have arisen, and we look forward to meeting you with a view to resolving them, so that we can harness our full energies towards bring a "Victory to the Burnsall Strikers".

K. Hayes pp Birmingham Strikers' Support Committee.

Negotiate to build action

SO 548's privatisation pull-out was right in arguing for a national fightback and against "reliance on in-house bids". Practically, public sector trade unionists need to discuss what "don't rely on in-house bids" means on a day-to-day basis.

The article argues that "serious trade unionists... will avoid involvement with in-house bids". If this means trade unionists should not go in and sell jobs and terms and conditions in the hope of winning the contract, then this approach is correct. If it means trade unionists should not negotiate with management about CCT then the approach is flawed.

In response to CCT, public sector managers are drawing up plans to cut jobs and erode terms and conditions. As part of our opposition to CCT we should not reject negotiations but use those negotiations to argue for the defence of jobs and terms and conditions.

At the end of the day our aim must be to mobilise public sector workers to fight privatisation. The key to this is a national fightback. But we

must also look for local fightbacks.

If we will have any chance of mobilising workers on a local level for industrial action against CCT then we will need to have shown that serious trade union representatives have sought to use every avenue open to defend jobs and conditions. That means going into negotiations arguing no cuts.

If serious trade unionists adopted a no negotiations stance then we would open the way for other trade union representatives to go into talks on an agenda of relying on in-house bids and on agreeing cuts in jobs and conditions. A no negotiations stance will push workers into the arms of those who will negotiate cuts.

The principle is to get a fightback against CCT. Tactically, we should use every means necessary to help prepare the rank and file for that fight. To exhaust the negotiating possibilities is often these days an essential precursor to getting a successful vote in favour of industrial action.

Tony Dale
Manchester

Industrial briefs

NALGO's national "day of action" on 18 March looks set to be a bit of a missed opportunity. Only a small number of branches will take action.

What is needed is a clear call for properly coordinated action alongside the miners on 2 April. The starting point would be for the NALGO leadership to officially approach the NUM and RMT to see what can be done together.

The strike at Hilliers engineering in Reading is continuing. Send messages of support/donations/requests for

speakers to: AEEU, c/o Nick Murtagh, 1 Rustington Close, Lower Earley, Reading, Berkshire RG6 4DQ.

White collar and supervisory grades at Ford began a series of strikes of limited duration this week.

The first action will last until next Monday 22 March.

The action is in protest at compulsory redundancies. A series of unofficial strikes by manual workers at both Dagenham and Halewood have already led management to withdraw the threats of compulsory redundancies against them.

Rank and file accept the case for action

CAMPAIGN DIARY

By Mark Serwotka

THE FIRST few weeks of the CPSA presidential campaign have been very interesting.

I've been up and down the country doing a number of branch AGMs. From DSS offices in places like Crewe, Oldham and Merthyr Tydfil through to the Lord Chancellor's Department and the High Court in London.

What I've heard at those meetings is that the members want to fight back against Market Testing.

At Merthyr, for instance, a packed meeting held a very detailed and serious discussion on all the main strategic questions facing workers. Questions like: what do we do about the anti-union laws? What do we do about sabotage from the full-time officials?

I certainly did not pick up the kind of nonsense you hear from some people who are supposed to be on the left, along the lines of: the members do not want to hear about strike action. All the members I discussed with were prepared to accept the argument that a nationwide, full-scale attack like Market Testing [the contracting-out to private contractors of Civil Service jobs] requires a full-scale response of national, strike action. This attitude is reflected in the fact that over 30 branches have nominated me for President, including places like Newton DSS in north

Wales, the scene of a long-running staffing dispute which backed me without any opposition.

The mood to fight amongst ordinary members stands in very stark contrast to the vindictive mood amongst Militant hacks in the union.

Last weekend, Militant and some of their allies held a completely unconstitutional and irregular emergency DSS Broad Left conference. Guess what the 'emergency' was?

Market Testing? Staffing levels? Building support and solidarity with the miners?

If only! The 'emergency' was in fact that I am standing for President against Militant's pet maverick Albert Astbury, a man that even Chris Baugh, Militant's vice-presidential candidate has called "an opportunist".

As a result, Militant and their friends are now trying to claim that I am no longer the Broad Left candidate for DHSS Vice-chair. That shows you Militant's priorities. For them the Broad Left is not a fighting rank and file movement — it is an electoral machine, pure and simple. If only the Militant were as determined to defend the members and fight the right wing as they are to hold kangaroo courts and to expel socialists.

Militant have proved that they are prepared to use "any means necessary" — including breaking the Broad Left's constitution — to "deselect" me. Let's see if they are prepared to fight in the same way for a one-day strike against Market Testing and alongside the miners on 2 April.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Lamont has no answers



Jon Kydd (right) and Willie Leslie

Stewards face jail

Back the mass picket at Timex

JON KYDD, the convenor at Timex Dundee, and his deputy Willie Leslie face jail under Tory anti-union laws for organising 200-strong mass pickets in defiance of a court order telling them not to. Their case goes to the High Court this week and, unless Timex back down, they could be in jail by Friday 19th.

The 350-strong Timex workforce, mainly women, are fighting layoffs and blatant

attempts by the US-owned company to break union organisation in the plant. The workers have now all been sacked.

Jon Kydd, Willie Leslie and the others are not intimidated. Picketing continues. They need support. If they are jailed they need that other workers should act in protest.

Charley Malone, one of the sacked Timex shop stewards, talked to *Socialist Organiser*.

LAST THURSDAY (4 March) we decided that we needed to take back the initiative in this dispute. Four of us hired three vans and drove up to the factory gates at the start of the shift. The security guards suspected nothing and opened the gates! We drove into the compound and, after the gates were shut, we reversed the vans against them, closing the factory!

There was a tremendous atmosphere; all the pickets were cheering and the security guards and police running around in a panic! The police eventually opened the vans and we were arrested and charged. The magistrate considered a more serious charge of obstruction but this was rejected.

We are up in court on 14 June but, until then, four of us, including the convenor, have been given a half-mile exclusion order from the factory.

The management have tried to recruit former employees and other scab labour to give the impression that they are working normally. But, so far, they have been pretty unsuccessful. Only four former employees have been taken on and management are now reduced to visiting local schools to try to recruit school leavers.

Because the jobs will be advertised in local job centres, it is certain that pressure will be put on claimants to apply.

Timex normally work 24 hours, but, so far, they have only managed to put on a day-shift —

mostly packing. This means that picketing and other pressures have been successful in stopping production.

The backbone of the strike are the women. 80% of the 340 workforce are women. They are always the first on the picket line. Their morale is tremendous.

It is important that we maintain as big a presence at the factory gate as possible because, although the police are enforcing the maximum of six official pickets, the roadway and footpath are a public right of way. We certainly won't be sending anyone away if they want to come and protest, as they have the right to do.

The next step for us is the national demonstration on 20 March. We have distributed thousands of leaflets and posters and are confident of a huge response. It is essential that the labour movement throughout Scotland supports the demonstration.

Timex is predominantly a sub-contractor. They are very scared of losing clients like IBM who would be frightened by the show of strength represented by a huge demonstration.

We are quite clear what is at stake. Only four workers voted against the strike during our ballot, and if MSF had come out alongside us then the dispute would be over and done with by now.

We are not going back under worse conditions and effective de-recognition of the union. We would rather see the factory close.

We have always been looked on as the best

"Timex have to realise that imprisoning shop stewards would be a massive escalation of the dispute. It is highly unlikely that people up and down the country will stand idly by in the event that Jon Kydd and Willie Leslie go to jail".

A Timex striker

THE MOST remarkable feature of this year's Budget is not anything that was in it but rather what discredited Chancellor Norman Lamont left out of it.

After all the kite-flying and the testing of the waters of recent months, there was no sign of the threatened food tax.

That is good news, but the game is not over yet. There will be another budget in November. If they think they can get away with it without having to pay a crippling political price, they may proceed with it then. Watch them.

For the rest, Lamont's Budget was a tinkering and dispirited neo-Thatcherite businessman's Budget which, in various ways, lifted the "tax burden" on business by £1 billion.

One of the most significant things in it may prove to be an experimental pilot scheme for linking the Unemployment Benefit of 60,000 long-term unemployed with them doing 'voluntary work'. It may be the beginning of a sort of adult Youth Training Scheme.

VAT on domestic fuel (coal, gas and electricity) will be 8% next year and 17.5% by 1995.

30,000 long-term unemployed are to be allowed to do full-time study while still drawing benefit.

Against that, there are Thatcherite stupidities like state-managed efforts to promote 100,000 small businesses. In this climate!

With real unemployment now standing at around four million, this is a "fiddling while Rome burns" Budget.

We need vigorous government action to create job-making public works; trying to turn unemployed people into small business-owners while small businesses are collapsing left, right and centre is the act of a government which doesn't give a damn.

Full analysis in next week's *Socialist Organiser*.

organised and the most militant workforce in our area. The management have decided to break us, and we are not going to let them get away with it!

We have started to receive strike pay, but it is still going to be financially difficult for all the strikers. Financial as well as political support is essential.

If we build for a huge demonstration on 20 March and try and get solidarity action from MSF and others in Dundee then we are confident of victory.

Send donations/messages of support/requests for speakers to: AEEU, 2 Union Street, Dundee. Tel: 0382-22406.

National demonstration in Dundee
Saturday 20 March

Assemble: 11am, Barrack Park

Speakers: Jane Mackay and Campbell Christie

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