

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

A woman in the building trade page 10

"... there was I in steel-capped boots, overalls with the crotch down to my knees, a 'benny-hat' on my head, and they felt embarrassed about swearing in front of a 'lady'!"

Jean Lane

Millions strike against Botha's terror



Black workers demonstrate at funeral of worker leader

The power to beat the racists

THE LARGEST strike in South African history has swept the country as millions of workers commemorate the Soweto revolt of 1976. The strike is the focus for mass opposition to the state of

emergency declared by the racist apartheid regime.

Many thousands of opponents of the brutal racist regime have been arrested. A lot of them are key figures in the South African trade union movement. Many anti-apartheid militants have dis-

appeared.

But the general strike shows once again where the power that will settle accounts with apartheid is to be found in South Africa — in the organised black working class.

South Africa's black workers — starved, beaten, jailed, and deprived of basic civil and human rights

as they are — have organised a great and inspiring labour movement.

For our part we in Britain must build a mass campaign in support of the struggle of the black people of South Africa. Trade unions should organise a boycott of all South African trade, to help South African trade unionists bring down apartheid.

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST APARTHEID
Assemble 11 am
Sunday June 28
Hyde Park, London

WORLD Brief

Irish emigration

40,000 people are likely to emigrate from the 26 Counties of southern Ireland this year. The total population of Ireland is about 5½ million, 4 million of whom live in the 26 Counties.

Many of those who go will be young people. Ireland has the youngest population in Europe. Over half are under 25. 70,000 of the 26 Counties' registered unemployed are under 25.

And unemployment is growing.

What this means in human terms can already be seen in London, where large numbers of young Irish girls and boys now come in the usually vain hope of finding something better here than at home. They join the influx of young people into London from the British provinces, and many of them become homeless. Others join up with relatives in Kilburn or Camden Town.

In the 1950s, there were just a little under



Sicker capitalism

three million people in the 26 Counties. Yet an average of 50,000 people left every year, mainly for Britain. It was a vast uprooting.

Emigration slowed down in the '60s when the 26 Counties economy began to expand. By 1970 it had more or less stopped — and it ceased for about 15 years.

Now mass emigration has started again, and on

a scale that is already being compared to the terrible days of the '50s.

Capitalism in independent Ireland is even sicker than it is in Britain — and just as savage.

It is little wonder that the coalition government of (Conservative) Fine Gael and the small Labour Party is badly discredited and looks certain to lose the election due in about a year's time.

Sri Lanka terror

According to the Sri Lankan government, Tamil guerillas are now attacking Sinhalese villagers and causing civilian casualties with blows at economic targets.

The government has every interest in inflating such stories. It is a government of the island's Sinhalese majority, which has launched a civil war to subdue the Tamil north and east.

The Tamils speak a

different language from the Sinhalese, and are mostly Hindu while the Sinhalese are Buddhist. After independence, Sri Lankan nationalism took an increasingly narrow Sinhalese form, and the Tamils faced discrimination. Full-scale conflict broke out with anti-Tamil riots in July 1983.

Hundreds of Tamils are killed every week. Thousands have fled overseas. The government has sys-

tematically evacuated Tamils from previously mixed areas and brought in Sinhalese settlers.

The stories about Sinhalese civilians being massacred may of course be true: such is the logic of civil war.

The only solution is for the Tamils to set up the separate state they demand in the Northern part of the island where they are the majority.

Kremlin fumbles

The Gorbachev government is attempting a clumsy clampdown on the 'black economy' in Moscow.

Every resident between 16 and retiring age will have to show their local housing department a certificate proving that they have a legal job.

According to Martin Walker in the Guardian, over one million people live in Moscow without official residence permits or legal jobs. The new measure is unlikely to stifle under-the-counter enterprise.

Many people are not officially registered as

residents, so the housing departments do not know about them. And one measure cannot touch that large part of the black market which is made up by workers stealing and selling equipment or products from their workplaces.

UN plan snubbed



Kept hungry by the rich

The United Nations has approved a plan drawn up by African states to revive agriculture and banish famine in the continent.

The plan requires \$46 billion in aid from outside Africa, over five years — a tiny amount in proportion to the resources of the richer countries in the UN. Yet not a single wealthy country has promised to contribute anything.

Resisting reform

Patrick Murphy looks at the latest manoeuvres by Dublin and London as they face the Orange backlash.

As the inter-governmental conference set up by the British and Anglo-Irish governments last November met again on Tuesday, there appear to be two main growth areas in the North of Ireland this summer: Catholic expectations of good results from the Anglo-Irish agreement and Protestant anger at what they believe to be London's betrayal of their interests to Dublin.

Events in recent weeks highlight the British government's inability to deal with either.

Last week, the Secretary of State, Tom King, announced that he was dissolving the Northern Ireland Assembly. Set up in 1981 by Jim Prior, the Assembly was one of many attempts to set up a framework in which Protestants and Catholics could arrive at an agreed solution to the troubles.

But the Assembly was never supported by the main Catholic party, the SDLP. Recently even the non-sectarian Unionist Alliance Party withdrew because the Assembly was nothing but a bigoted Orange rump.

And that was the real reason King closed it down — it was being used by the Unionist parties as a forum for opposition to the Accord.

The matter was made urgent because new Assembly elections were constitutionally due this Autumn. The Unionists would have won massive victories, embarrassing the government. Hence: dissolve the Assembly, and rule through the Inter-Government Conference.

Under the deal signed last November the Dublin and London governments share political control of the North of Ireland, though the executive — and the decisive voice should the Anglo-Irish Agreement break down — remains British.

The only argument for this undemocratic arrangement is that it may redress some of the worst grievances of the Six County Catholics. In the last few weeks, however, Catholics have been viewing that argument with a familiar cynicism.

The reason for this is the way in which the latest inquiry into the RUC 'shoot to kill' policy has ended. The chief investigator, John Stalker, has been removed in the face of spurious charges of misconduct.

The first inquiry into the RUC 'shoot to kill' policy ended when the local ombudsman resigned, because the

police refused to cooperate in his investigation.

It seems that the recent investigation was going to confirm what socialists and republicans have been saying for years: that the RUC were operating a shoot-to-kill policy authorised by senior officers, and were ignoring even the minimal guidelines laid down by Northern Ireland's repressive laws.

We shed no tears for John Stalker, who is Deputy Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, or for the Northern Ireland Assembly.

But there are a few lessons to be learned about Northern Ireland. Throughout its history it has been governed with exceptional repression, and can exist in no other way. Every

attempt to introduce serious reform has failed, and the Nationalist people are becoming very tired of being promised solutions to their grievances and receiving none.

The irony is that it is the atmosphere after the Accord and the pressure on the RUC from Protestant opponents of the Accord which have ensured that nothing is done to challenge the shoot-to-kill policy, for fear of embarrassing and further demoralising the police.

The government is caught up in the logic of the Accord which, as we pointed out in Socialist Organiser when it was signed, managed to cause the maximum bitterness among the Protestants while offering little of substance to the Catholics.

BELGIUM



Belgium's biggest-ever workers' march

Still dribs and drabs

By Colin Foster

Belgium's socialist trade union federation, the FGTB, has announced the next steps in its campaign against the right-wing government's £3 billion cuts plan. After region-by-region rolling strikes, there will be another 24-hour general strike on 20 June.

Meanwhile, the government has offered talks with the unions. There was a meeting on 13 June. But the government is making no real concessions: prime minister Martens insists that he will stick to the same total amount of cuts, and will discuss only where they are to be made.

An International Monetary Fund report leaked on 12 June indicates that many more cuts will be attempted after the current Martens plan to restore Belgian capitalism to health

Belgium's other union federation, the Christian CSC, however, says that it does not contest the need for £3 billion cuts ("or even more") — it disputes only the way the government is doing it.

Many rank and file CSC workers have joined with FGTB militants in the fight against the cuts. But the FGTB leaders are still using the CSC's attitude as an excuse to limit the campaign to dribs and drabs.

On the bit demonstration on 31 May in Brussels, according to the newspaper Le Soir, workers "violently heckled the closing speech of Andre Vandembroucke, throwing eggs and lemonade at the president of the FGTB."

"General strike, general strike", chanted the militants at the end of Vandembroucke's every sentence. Wiping down his suit, the trade union leader continued imperturbably with his speech, which was very far from rousing."

FRANK COUSINS

A left who believed in capitalism

Frank Cousins, a leading figure on the Labour left in the 1960s, died last week, 11 June. John O'Mahony looks at Cousins' career.

COUSINS was secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union from 1955 to 1969, and in those years he did much to swing the labour movement 'left'. He did much also to shape and limit that leftism.

Before Cousins took over the TGWU had been led by stone-age right-wing bureaucrats like Arthur Deakin. They thought their job was to police the working class for the employers — they held back wage demands and stamped on militancy.

Working his way up the full-time trade union bureaucracy, Cousins emerged on top as a man with different ideas. The union began to be mildly militant over wages and conditions.

It remained as undemocratic as ever (CP members were forbidden to hold

office until about 1970), but now the union machine was in the hands of a man of the soft left. Cousins threw a TGWU block vote of one million behind the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament at Labour Party conference, for example.

In fact Cousins reflected and tried to contain the growth of rank and file militancy, which mounted steadily — though not without setbacks and interruptions — from the mid-'50s to the mid-'70s.

Docks

When 16,000 Hull, Liverpool and Manchester dockers abandoned the TGWU and tried to form a new militant union in 1955 it was a warning to the transport union leaders that they could not go on as they had been going. Cousins got the message and then the death of 2 general secretaries in quick succession — Deakin and Tiffin — opened the way for Cousins to take control of the union.

Though Cousins remained a bureaucrat the TGWU was slowly shaken up,

and even democratised a little under Cousins and his chosen successor Jack Jones. Yet the main struggles of that period were not official but unofficial strikes, often with the official union strikebreaking.

On the docks, for instance, the union helped destroy a high degree of workers' control over working conditions — and thereby opened the way for the destruction of the docks industry.

In politics Cousins stood on the soft ineffectual left of the Labour Party. He took leave of his union office in the mid-'60s to become Minister of Technology in Harold Wilson's Labour government.

This left trade union leader believed that the way forward for the working class was by the modernisation of British capitalist industry! But this government policy, and Minister Cousins, were both failures.

Characteristically Cousins resigned in protest when the Wilson government imposed an incomes policy backed by legal sanctions in July 1966.

He lived in retirement after 1969. Cousins was a sincere, honest and somewhat naive reforming trade union bureaucrat.



Filthy rich jackals

El Salvador comes to Ireland

WHY WAS the Deputy Chief Constable of Manchester, John Stalker, suspended three weeks ago?

Officially no-one is saying. They have not even told Stalker what the charges against him are.

But increasingly it looks like the real answer is that Stalker is innocent of any breach of police discipline, but is being discredited like this because he had got too close to uncovering an organised South-American-style political murder gang operating within the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

For the last two years Stalker, heading a team of eight detectives, has been investigating the shooting of six unarmed men by special SAS-style units of the RUC in late 1982. One of the victims, Michael Tighe, was 17 years old.

Gervais McKerr, Eugene Toman and Sean Burns died in a hail of bullets when their car was stopped at a roadblock. Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll were shot and killed. Michael Tighe was shot dead at point-blank range, and Martin McCauley was seriously wounded, in a hay barn in Ballyneery.

The shootings in the hay-shed are at the centre of Stalker's conflict with the RUC.

For a tape-recording of what happened in the barn was made by police who had set up listening devices there. Stalker's efforts to get the tape recording were blocked repeatedly. On 29 May he was told he had been suspended from all duty, and was off the investigation.

What seems to have happened at the barn — which was an IRA explosives dump being watched by the police — is that the police deliberately shot two unarmed youths, and it was a close thing that they didn't finish off the wounded man. A tape-recording of this incident would obviously be dynamite against the RUC. Stalker had already submitted a report believed to recommend structural changes in the RUC and in the relationship to the CID (which is supposed to control them) of the four SAS-trained police squads used for special work against the IRA.

He wanted seven RUC men prosecuted for conspiracy to murder and for covering up murder. One was a superintendent and another

a chief inspector.

But the Northern Ireland Director of Public Prosecutions decided that Stalker's report was only an interim one, and he would not act until some outstanding questions had been cleared up. And then, on the eve of a return trip to Belfast, Stalker was suspended, putting a stop to his too inconvenient investigation.

A desperate and lawless section of the RUC decided to act as judge, jury and executioner on suspected Republicans — and they killed at least six unarmed men. In El Salvador today, and in other parts of Latin America, free-lance police and army 'death squads' routinely slaughter political activists. In 1982 the RUC were under intense pressure, and it seems some of them decided to resort to the death squad method — an El Salvador style private terror operation. It was identified quickly by the Republicans and the left as an RUC 'shoot to kill' policy.

The labour movement must demand the full facts on Stalker's suspension, and launch its own inquiry into the methods of the RUC and the British Army in Northern Ireland.

OLIVIA Channon, whose father is a Tory minister, died in her sleep after a binge to celebrate the end of exams at her Oxford college. A young woman choking to death on her own vomit can arouse no feelings in any halfway decent person other than feelings of horror and pity and regret.

The gutter press — run by the old filthy rich — has brutally exploited this sad event to provide itself with sensational stories, peeping-tom speculations, and hypocritical moral tut-tuttings about the decadent young filthy rich. Few things are more disgusting than Britain's vile popular press drunk on synthetic moral indignation.

Moral

This oh-so-shocked press is the same that pollutes the moral atmosphere daily with its diet of cheap smut and news reduced to mindless pap. The same gutter press that has done so much for so long to dig out, murder and bury those little bits of social solidarity and decency that the labour movement had managed to infuse into British public life in a century of reforming effort. The same that — blatantly, dogmatically, unscrupulously — defends the super-rich and the capitalist system that breeds and nurtures the super-rich.

The moralists are the same people who fulminate against trade unions, and poison the political atmosphere

with their lying campaign against the left, sustained at screaming pitch for years on end. Who indulged in an orgy of gloating, scapegoating, and spite against the Stonehenge hippies.

Yet even the press's appetite for sensation and peeping-tom copy didn't lead it to depart very far from its class bias.

Dragged

Olivia Channon could be dragged across the front pages. But the living filthy rich aren't. The press celebrates and glorifies the ideas and the lifestyles of those who are rich and prosperous in Thatcher's Britain — those whose indecent displays of opulence are a moral and social affront to Britain's underfed and underheated old people, to the millions of unemployed, and to the dwellers in the inner cities and the slump-devastated towns.

Contrast that with the treatment for the striking miners, not to speak of the hippie convoy.

What was special and interesting about the life of Olivia Channon was not that she drank too much and took drugs. Unfortunately, that's something she had in common with a lot of people, many of them workers.

What was special about Olivia Channon was that she was an offspring of the rich who live off the fat of the land, squandering the wealth workers produce in a society where millions go short. The press never take them to task for that.

Like the jackal, it attacks only the dead, the defenceless, or the vulnerable.

Sir Ian deserves it

SIR IAN MacGregor deserves his knighthood!

There he was, in the mid '70s, an old man of retiring age, living in sunny Florida, a life's work already done and richly rewarded. Then came the call from the rulers of his native land: 'Come back Ian, we need you'.

Special

For Ian MacGregor had special skills. He had learned the trade of union-busting during the early '70s in the murderous war which the mine-owners successfully waged against the open-cast miners of Harlan County, Kentucky. Now British capitalism needed him to help smash up the unions.

He was on the board of British Leyland when Michael Edwardes (now Sir Michael) went to war against rank and file power on the shop floor. Mrs Thatcher put MacGregor in charge of butchering British Steel, a job he carried through with true knight-like brutality

and ruthlessness. He had no regard for the devastation that the closures were bringing to the steel-working areas. Yet all this was still mere apprentice work.

The grand finale of Ian MacGregor's life was yet to come. He was given the job of crushing the miners and their union.

His appointment to head the Coal Board in 1983 was a declaration of war on the miners. The war came in 1984. The miners had their own ranks divided when most Notts miners decided to scab; they were betrayed by the TUC and the leaders of the Labour Party, and refused effective solidarity by most other workers.

Victory

MacGregor won a very important victory for the bosses over the miners who had already beaten them in 1972 and 1974.

Now the bosses reward MacGregor. And who can deny he has earned it?

Neil Kinnock is both ridiculous and cheap when he protests.

Kinnock would have done better to

have protested more convincingly and bravely against the dirty work MacGregor is knighted for doing.

Why shouldn't the ruling class 'honour' its faithful servants? Knights, lords, ladies — it's all theirs, not ours. Kinnock is outraged at the honouring of MacGregor because he believes in the honours system. He wants a decent 'Labour' honours system. But there is no such thing.

Duty

If Kinnock and the TUC leaders had done their duty by the miners during the great strike, then they would not have to protest now. MacGregor would not be an honoured and knighted servant of the ruling class. He would have been a miserable old failure, pushed off back to Florida.

Pits would not have closed, miners would not have been sacked, and 16 miners would not now be in jail.

It isn't only Thatcher who has knighted Ian MacGregor. If you think about it, the new Sir Ian has more to thank the TUC and Neil Kinnock for than Mrs Thatcher.



The young filthy rich

Photo: John Harris

GRAFFITI

news they won't print

Glued to the flag

The funniest thing about the World cup is, of course, the comments of the brain-dead have-beens wheeled on to pontificate about the state of play. Like Kevin Keegan's "This is against all odds but not impossible".

And Mike "I-am-the-biggest-pillock-ever-to-appear-on-TV Channon: "We need to start kicking the ball . . . Just kick it about a bit and knock it in the net . . . Score goals."

And the viewers become experts, just like Mike Channon. "Too many square balls . . ." they comment, knowledgeably — which sounds either aerodynamically improbable or physically rather uncomfortable.

But funnier still are the effects that the competition has on some socialists. Sitting glued to their square box, cans of lager in hand, some comrades rapidly descend into vulgar nationalism.

The transformation is remarkable. One minute: 'the workers of any country have more in common with each other than with their bosses, etc., etc.' The next — watch: the body tenses, the shoulders shake, a lip is bitten. The legs are crossed; then uncrossed. The body shifts position; tries to relax; tenses again as some uppity foreigner separates a British player from the ball that is rightfully his.

Watch: the foot kicks a little, the toes nervously curled up within the shoes. Then the foot makes a little kicking motion in a vain attempt to participate in this quest for national glory.

The vocal cords move into action. 'Oooh', 'Aaah', 'good pass'. Again the foot makes a tense kicking motion. But alas, like the British team, it fails to 'score'.

The gladiatorial chauvinism of international football outdoes even



global warfare in the way it unites the nation behind "our boys".

Patriotism is certainly odd. Why support England if England are a miserable bunch of misfits who don't deserve to win?

Fixed

So England beat the Poles? No: the match was fixed. For some sinister reason best kept to themselves, the Poles let England win.

After days of national mourning the fans in Mexico could dance and the goggle-eyed socialists back home leap to their feet and roar, hands clapping, teeth baring, their ideological degeneration complete.

For the sake of socialism, switch off your TV set and pray to God that someone else wins.

3.6 million yes

3.6 million workers voted yes to political funds in the Tory-imposed ballots which have just been completed.

All 38 unions with political funds voted to keep them, and another two unions voted to start new political funds.

The biggest majority for keeping

Disrepair

According to a recent Parliamentary committee report, Britain's public sector housing stock has a backlog of £19 billion needed repairs.

The Tories have cut government spending on housing by half, and the low level of current maintenance means that the backlog is increasing.

The £19 billion total works out at an average of £4000 each for the 3.8 million dwellings (out of 4.6 million) needing repair.

Unis cut

Figures announced in Parliament last week show that government funding for universities has been cut by 11% since 1981.

14 universities have had their funds cut by over 20%. Salford University has suffered a 43% cut. Keele 35%, and Bradford 33%.

political funds was in the train drivers' union ASLEF (93% to 7%) and the narrowest result was among the cine technicians, ACTT (59% to 41%).

ACTT was, however, typical of a number of unions where the vote for the fund was against all odds. Before the ballot only 1700 of the union's 24,000 members paid the political levy. Now about 4000 are paying.

(Source: Labour Research).

Sold off

British Coal (the old NCB) are clearly not only concerned with preparing the high profit pits for privatisation. The process has already started in other areas.

Two weeks ago Coal Board tenants in Kiveton Park received a letter from P. Langton, the Area Estates Manager, telling them that their houses were to be sold off over their heads, "on the open market". The only people not allowed to buy are the tenants themselves!

To add insult to injury, the tenants were informed that this was all in their best interests, because of the possibility of structural faults in the prefabricated reinforced construction. But if it's not alright for the tenants, why is it alright for the property sharks? So they can have an excuse for selling at knock-down prices "on the open market"?

LETTERS

North East socialist campaign for Labour

Socialist Organiser supporters in the North East plan to launch the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory at the Durham Miners Gala on July 12th.

The Durham Miners Gala is a traditional annual event that has taken place for more than 100 years. Every NUM Lodge in the North East marches through Durham City to the racecourse to hear speeches from leading labour movement politicians.

Traditionally the leader of the Labour Party is invited to speak at the gala and Neill Kinnock will be

there.

SO supporters have produced a petition to be presented to Kinnock at the gala. It demands that a future Labour government review the cases of jailed miners, reinstate all victimised miners and pay back union money confiscated under the Tory anti-union laws.

Gala

At the gala and prior to the gala SO supporters and sympathisers will be collecting signatures for the petition. We say that the miners,

particularly the victimised miners, should not be sacrificed in the general election campaign.

If the Labour Party leadership will not support the NUM what can other workers expect from them? And what kind of Labour government can we expect when the leader of the Labour Party blatantly scabs on striking miners?

Copies of the petition can be obtained from: Gary Scott, 34 Newcastle Avenue, Horden, Peterlee, Co. Durham.

PAUL HETHERINGTON

Black Sections 'NEO-COLONIAL' LABOUR?

Dear Comrades,

At Annual Party Conference last year the Labour leadership offered the Black and Asian Advisory Committee as an alternative to Black Sections.

The Labour Party's Black and Asian Advisory Committee attempts to divide black Labour Party members. The Black Section in contrast has united Africans, Caribbeans and Asians in constituency Black Sections across the country under their own self-definition of Black.

The British Labour Party's whole approach to black people in Britain has been fashioned by the colonial experience.

Consulted

The NEC Working Group had previously produced a consultation paper, 'The Labour Party and the Black Electorate'. This discussed the issues raised by Black Sections and invited comments from the whole labour movement. The consultation was one of the widest ever conducted by the Party. An overwhelming majority of the respondents, including constituency Labour Parties and trade unions favoured fully constituted Black Sections.

Nevertheless the Labour leader said on 23 May 1985, "I am adamantly against Black Sections . . . I



Black section members trying to speak at Labour Party Conference.

would not give a damn if the whole Labour Party was against me on this". Indeed, two-thirds of those consulted were against Mr. Kinnock.

The last 25 years have seen the leadership produce one Bantustan advisory committee after another. All have closely followed the colonial models used in Africa and India, all have come to nothing.

If women, youth and Jewish people (through Poale Zion) can elect members to represent them,

why can't black people? Advisory committees to advise white policy makers is not good enough. We don't just want a slice of the cake, we want access to the recipe.

We ask all those who are sympathetic to Black Sections who have accepted membership of this committee to resign immediately. They are unwittingly collaborating in a neo-colonialist structure which history holds in contempt.

PAUL SHARMA,
(Labour Party Black Section)

ISRAEL AND RACISM

It is a pity that Tony Greenstein has not bothered to read John O'Mahony's position on Palestine. Maybe then he wouldn't take isolated comments and give them ludicrous importance, inventing a political position that doesn't exist.

In fact O'Mahony's writings like those in Socialist Organiser generally, have persistently sought to condemn the nature of the current Israeli state. Indeed SO condemns racist policies in states all over the world, including Britain.

But condemning the racist nature of Israel does not mean that the Palestinian Jews are not a nation or that there cannot be a smaller non-racist Israel where Arabs have full rights, including regional rights to cede to a Palestine Arab state.

Greenstein may be right to say that Israel "is overtly racist and the fascist right is growing". It may even be true that "Israel follows a path not unlike that of Nazi Germany".

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

But then is he suggesting that Germany has no right to exist because of its Nazi past? That any state which is "overtly racist" forfeits its right to be a nation?

Considering the widespread occurrence of racism in the world it appears to me there would be few people left with national rights in Tony Greenstein's world.

Jewish

Thus any solution in Palestine which fails to recognise the existence of two nations there is not a solution at all because it seeks to build class consciousness by trampling on the national rights of the Jewish workers.

Tony Greenstein sees no political difference between Jewish national rights and the present Israeli state. Greenstein is not an anti-semitic but he fails to recognise the proposed secular democratic state has massive anti-semitic implications for the Jews in Palestine. Indeed, it is only achievable over the dead body of the Jewish nation, which is both impossible and undesirable.

LIAM CONWAY

Women talking

I want to congratulate Socialist Organiser on the relaunch. It is a much sharper, clearer paper, yet its analysis of working class people and their struggles, past and present, has not lost any of the urgency or political honesty that a left wing paper should provide.

Jean Lane's article was brilliant. So refreshing to read working class women talking about working class politics in their workplace and life. Women like Jean are an inspiration to other women working in manual trades.

Her article was both funny and sad, a reflection on the attitudes of working class men towards their "sisters". Women like Jean are the ones taking on the sexist and racist shit from our "brothers".

Hopefully it will be easier for women in the future to be employed in manual labour. Working class men have to realise that without women we can never overthrow capitalism.

We need more women like Jean to give us strength and courage. Thanks for paving the way.

Yours in comradeship,
TRACY WILLIAMS

Photo: Andrew Ward, (Report)

Botha's state of terror

The declaration of a nationwide state of emergency and the mass strikes across South Africa from 16 June onwards represent a major escalation of the struggle against apartheid. Tom Rigby and Clive Bradley look at the state of emergency, the workers' response, and the events leading up to this week's drama.



ACCORDING TO reports from inside South Africa, the response to the 16 June stayaway call ranged from 60 to 70% in the Western Cape and the Transvaal (which includes Soweto) to a turn-out of close to 100% in the Eastern Cape, a United Democratic Front stronghold and the centre of South Africa's automobile industry.

The overall turnout was about the same as, possibly more than, on May Day. Between 1½ and two million workers struck.

It looks like strikes will continue at a lower level for the rest of the week.

There was a poor response to the stayaway call in the mines. Only between 8 and 10% of black miners struck. The main reason for this appears to be that 'Sowe-

to Day' is considered by many miners as something purely to do with students and youth.

As we go to press, the number of arrests that have been notified stands at around 3000, though more may have 'disappeared'.

Those detained represent a broad cross-section of anti-apartheid activists, from the Dean of Cape Town, through PROUDF academics like Raymond Suttner, to trade unionists like Philoshaw Camay, the general

secretary of the Council of Unions of South Africa, and Jay Naidoo, a leading 'populist' on the executive of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Revolutionary left activists have also 'disappeared'.

right to indefinite stay. However it is clear that without a consistent fighting campaign the result could very well have been the opposite.

One important aspect of Shahid's campaign was the involvement of his union, NALGO, alongside the traditional community groups, MPs and others. NALGO has been the first union to defend its members against deportation by actively campaigning.

The successful campaign against the deportation of Birmingham shop steward and social worker Muhammad Idrish was the starting point of NALGO's involvement.

NALGO is now attempting to stop the deportation of Rose Alosa and her son to Uganda — where they fear political persecution.

Trade unions should be made to fight for the interests of their members outside the shopfloor. Defence campaigns against deportations, and other racist immigration laws have

traditionally relied on the strength of the black communities. It is the job of all activists to turn the labour movement to these struggles.

Deportation is one of the sharpest laws of state racism. There are perhaps over 250 deportations every month. Even in the cases where the deportation threat is lifted, immense suffering will have been caused through stress, sometimes leading to mental illnesses. However there are other ways that black communities are attacked.

Another cynical racist rule was introduced last July. According to this rule spouses applying to come to Britain to join their partners have to prove that the 'primary purpose' of their marriage was not immigration. Waiting time for interviews in Bangladesh are up to two years. Many are turned down on the basis that they are not 'related as claimed'.

NUPE has pledged support at its recent conference for the Chunnun sisters who are threatened with being deported to Mauritius.

Viraj Mendis

Support is growing for Viraj Mendis, the Sri Lankan threatened with deportation after 12 years in Britain.

A written declaration has been made to the European Parliament by Labour European MPs Glyn Ford and Eddy Newman, opposing Viraj's deportation to Sri Lanka.

When Viraj's appeal was turned down his campaign decided to organise a march from Manchester to London in protest at Viraj's treatment and the immigration laws. Viraj's final appeal to the Immigration Tribunal will be heard on 3 July at 10.00 a.m. at Thanet House, the Strand, London.

South Africa



special report

Behind the clampdown

THE declaration of South Africa's nationwide state of emergency came as a surprise to many people. But in fact the signs of a turn towards more repression by the regime have been visible for some time.

South African newspapers have been full of rumours that a declaration of martial law was imminent. The government itself openly said that it saw the 16 June commemoration of the Soweto uprising as a 'showdown' and a 'trial of strength' between the black liberation movement and the racist state.

The atmosphere surrounding the government became increasingly hysterical.

The Ministry of Information produced a photo of Nelson Mandela (the first legal publication of a picture of Mandela in over 20 years!) as an incidental part of its hysterical campaign to 'prove' that the ANC and the South African Communist Party are the same thing and intend to blow up the whole of white South Africa in an orgy of destruction.

Botha's dilemma was that his little reforms did not even begin to satisfy the blacks, but merely encouraged them to fight harder against apartheid. The people affected by the reforms were the whites. More and more of them became alarmed and destabilised by the bewildering combination of a white racist government dishing out fifth-rate reforms to a black revolt which grew daily bolder, broader, and more threatening.

The result was a mushroom growth of an ultra-racist backlash. The base of the regime was dividing against itself. Botha was compelled to resort to savage repression against the blacks to stop the bleeding away of white support for his government.

Yet it is probably wrong to think that Botha simply acted in a blind panic to head off the growth of white ultra-racist opposition. Wrong also to think that the state of emergency marks the end of attempts to broaden the base of the racist regime by way of petty reform.

Botha appears to have a clear basic strategy for dealing with the black revolt and the crisis of white rule. Large-scale repression — aimed at eliminating, maybe physically, the leadership of the liberation movement and the black trade unions — is to be combined with the bait of sweeping reforms geared to providing a new system of social supports for the white regime. The South

Turn to page 6

Race & Class

By Payman Rezai

NALGO fights deportations

Last week saw the victory of Shahid Syed's campaign against deportation. For three years Shahid, his wife Nasreen and their two young daughters have been at the mercy of Britain's racist immigration laws.

The Home Office used its powers of 'discretion' to allow the family the

From page 5

African economy's need for ever greater numbers of skilled and semi-skilled black workers, and the growth of a powerful black capitalist elite in the bantustans, mean that Botha must look outside white society for support. It will be difficult if not impossible to do this now without making some concessions to the black majority. (But only concessions: the racist regime can never grant the basic demand of the blacks — one person, one vote — unless it decides to commit suicide).

On this basis Botha is prepared to go it alone and to ignore international capitalist opposition, even from allies like Thatcher and Reagan.

There is a strict limit to what the South African regime can concede to the blacks without destroying white rule — which it surely will never do voluntarily. Botha knows that he can never really satisfy the demand of the blacks for equality. Reagan and Thatcher have the interests of international capitalism in mind: the South African whites, their own racist caste interests.

That is why they pursue different policies; and, in the final analysis, that is why international capitalist sanctions will not coerce the whites into agreeing to dismantle white rule and accept majority rule.

This regime will not reform itself, or be forcibly reformed by international capitalism. It will have to be overpowered and broken up, and every part of its vile repressive system forcibly dismantled.

A new wave of terror raids by the South African military into neighbouring states aimed at liberation movement bases can also be expected in the wake of Botha's drive against 'terrorism' at home.

What now for South Africa?

The regime has big problems.

The rand — the South African currency — is collapsing on world markets, leading to inflation. White unemployment is higher than it has been for decades. The fascist Right is growing.

The National Party of P W Botha, which has ruled South Africa since 1948, is beginning to show signs of the strain. A split may be on the way, as the 'Nats' are pulled apart between pragmatic 'reformers', who seem to be considering a link-up with the 'liberal' Progressive Federal Party, and stand by Botha's slogan 'Adapt or die', and die-hard racist, unhappy about reforms.

The growing support for the far right indicates that part of the social base of the National Party — white workers, middle class, and farmers — is becoming more and more fascist. It is by no means clear that large-scale repression of the liberation movement will suffice to win the 'Volk' back to confidence in the National Party.

Botha still faced massive irreconcilable opposition from the black majority. It is unlikely that the regime will be able to put down the township revolt in the short term. Any more talk of reform is likely to have the same effect as the abolition of the pass laws — exciting the appetites of the black majority without delivering any real change, and thus fanning the flames of revolt.

The threat to the township revolt comes from the fact that it is not organised, and therefore liable at some stage to turn in on itself from lack of direction. The growth of 'vigilante' and 'elders' groups in the townships is an ominous warning of what may lie in store.

Made in Britain

British capitalists have £12 billion invested in South Africa — £400 for every child, woman and man in the country.

This estimate (by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, for mid-1985 puts Britain ahead of all other investing countries. The US has £10 billion, and all other countries are way behind. British capitalists account for 38% of all foreign investment in South Africa.

Britain is also a major trade partner for the apartheid regime, exporting about \$1.7 billion worth

of goods there each year (IMF figures). In the trade figures Britain comes no. 4, after the US, Japan and West Germany.

Denmark has recently banned all trade with South Africa, and Sweden has imposed restrictions. These bans follow trade union action against South African trade. The amounts involved are, however, relatively small, and the impact is nothing like what a British ban on trade and investment would have.

The fuse burns

- August 1984: Successful boycott of 'Coloured' and 'Indian' elections to Parliament.
- 3 September 1984: Riots begin at Sharpeville and Sebchery near Johannesburg, over rent rises.
- 5/6 November 1984: Two-day stayaway in Transvaal.
- 21 March 1985: Police attack march in commemoration of 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre.
- May 1985: Shop steward Andries Raditsela dies after police detention. Federation of South African Trade Unions call one day general strike.
- 20 July 1985: State of Emergency declared in Johannesburg and Eastern Cape, giving new powers to police.
- October 1985: State of Emergency extended to Cape Town.
- 2 November 1985: Government clamp down on reporting.
- 31 November — 1 December: Formation of Congress of South

- African Trade Unions (COSATU), largest non-racial union federation in South African history.
- 15-18 February 1986: Massive battles between blacks and police in Alexandra township.
- 4 March 1986: State of Emergency lifted.
- 23 April 1986: Government announces intention to end "pass laws".
- 1 May 1986: One and a half million workers strike demanding May Day be a paid holiday.
- May 19 1986: South Africa launches raids into Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- 12 June 1986: New national State of Emergency declared, giving police vastly extended powers. Mass arrests begin.
- 16 June 1986: In commemoration of Soweto uprising, 1976, biggest general strike in South African history.

Military power

The regime still has substantial strength. Despite some (mostly die-hard ultra-racist) dissent, it has fairly solid support among whites, about 16% of the population.

It has a huge machinery of repression. Between 1961 and 1981 South Africa increased expendi-

ture on its armed forces 40-fold. The paramilitary South African Police was increased from a strength of 27,000 to 77,000; the South African Defence Force, from 79,000 to 515,000.

Compulsory conscription for adult white males was introduced in 1967. Call-up periods were extended in 1977 and 1982.

The milita



Inkatha thugs attack militant blacks in Natal

UWUSA: the Chief's union

Tribalism, and "tribal" movements like Inkatha (the Zulu organisation led by Chief Buthelezi, leader of the fake Zulu homeland of KwaZulu) pose a very serious threat to the unions and the liberation movement in South Africa.

In 1976 in Soweto it was Zulu-speaking hostel-dwelling workers who were mobilised to attack the protesting students.

Inkatha has set up a 'trade union' UWUSA in the Natal area to compete with COSATU. Led by a shopkeeper, it has no rank and file structures or stewards and appears to be just a working class wing of Inkatha with the job of competing for the hearts and minds of Natal's Zulu workers.

Alongside Inkatha's usual methods of terror directed against workers' and progressive organisations, Buthelezi

has developed a highly cynical but sophisticated and clever critique of the populism of the ANC/UDF tradition.

Some of Buthelezi's main slogans are:

"A vote for Cosatu is a vote for the comrades" and "a vote for Cosatu is a vote for unemployment." UWUSA's main slogan is "Jobs not Hunger".

In this way Inkatha have been able to play on the conservatism of many older workers by arguing that ANC policies like sanctions will lead to mass unemployment for blacks, and that the constant tension in the black townships is caused by the 'comrades' and the ANC's call to "make the townships un-governable".

The populists' tendency to boast about the 'sacrifices' that will have to be made by the workers to achieve

liberation has been very clearly turned against them by Buthelezi.

Zulu nationalism — which has been an organised force since the 1920s and plays on much older imagery including the defeat of the Boers — has proved to be a much more potent mobilising force than the more abstract 'black' or 'African' nationalism of the populists.

The poor turn-out of between two and three thousand at Inkatha's June 16 rally — the only legal one in the country — seems to suggest that Inkatha is not that powerful but it would be a fatal mistake for the left to underplay the danger represented by tribalism and the Bantustan leadership elites as the struggle continues at a very high level in the black townships but without any clear leadership or direction.

The far right is growing

If an election were to be held now in South Africa — on the present racist vote roll — analysts say that the far right would win one in four or one in three of the seats in the House of Assembly.

And as apartheid's fuse burns towards a tremendous explosion, the strength of the far right is growing. There are three main groups:

*Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party.

*Jaap Marais's Herstigte Nasionale Party and

*the rapidly growing 'Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging' (AWB) of Eugene Terre Blanche, whose name, ominously significant, means White Land.

This extreme right is building on discontent among the Afrikaner (Dutch) speaking population, caused by the too-little-too-late reforms of P.W. Botha's government. And it harks back to the racist tradition of Both's National Party itself.

Tied

'Apartheid' means 'separate'. And the policy of 'separate development' was implemented by the National Party after it came to power in 1948. South Africa was saturated with racism before, of course. But 'apartheid' tied up the loose ends.

It categorised all the inhabitants of the country as 'white', 'Indian', 'coloured' or 'African' and rigidly separated them out. 'Coloured' who previously had the vote — and would never vote for the 'Nats' — lost it. And all blacks were subject to increased repression.

Apartheid as such, as an institutionalised system, has always been closely linked therefore to Afrikaner nationalism. The enemy of Afrikaner nationalists — apart from the semi-enslaved black people — was 'British imperialism'.

The Afrikaners, including the Afri-

kaner working class, saw their interests as quite distinct from English-speaking whites, who at that time were generally more affluent.

Afrikaner nationalists had often been critical of the rival United Party's Second World War support for the allies. They saw it as a 'British' war they had no interest in supporting.

Nazi

Vorster, who later became a Nationalist Party leader and Prime Minister, was imprisoned during the war for Nazi sympathies. Indeed pro-Nazi sentiment has, since then — not too surprisingly — run deep and wide on the Afrikaner Right.

Now the Nationalist Party itself is fragmenting under the strain of apartheid's crisis. It is losing support to the far right.

The ANB, who have a symbol directly modelled in the swastika, were until recently the 'lunatic fringe', even by the standards of the racists. Now they are building into a serious movement, whose strength was demonstrated in their recent widely-reported fight with the apartheid state's police.

Terre Blanche has explained the AWB's attitude: "To each national grouping its own territory (that is racial separation) . . . There are two logical and realistic alternatives to this: race war on the one hand and the oblivion of the melting pot on the other . . ."

Dutch

The AWB advocates a separate Afrikaner state in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and northern Natal, "legally white man's country".

The far right's racism does not extend only to blacks. They are anti-semitic, too; bitterly hostile to the 'English Jews' who run many of the gold and coal mines. And they propose

to restrict immigration to Dutch speakers.

Bizarre ideas: but the far right is no joke. The mass base for reaction is huge in South Africa. Even as the National Party leaders look, desperately if unconvincingly, towards reform, the supporters of the Party are growing more and more 'fascistic' in their style and substance.

And if the civilians look as if they are losing 'control' over a disintegrating South African society, there are generals waiting in the wings.

Union

ACCORDING to sources inside South Africa at least 38 militants of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have been arrested since the declaration of the state of emergency.

Rumours abound that the security forces are looking for COSATU's national leadership, which is said to have gone into hiding.

40 members of the black-consciousness-oriented Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) are also reported to have been detained.

COSATU has called for the immediate release of all detainees.

We print below the names of some of the COSATU members detained.

J Vilane, vice-president, Metal and Allied Workers Union
W Mchunu, Northern Natal branch secretary, MAWU
J Nthombela, COSATU regional chair, Natal, and president, Trans

ant workers



The declaration of the nationwide state of emergency comes at a time when the black trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is undergoing a serious crisis of direction.

COSATU, which was formed last year, unites over half a million workers in the largest non-racial trade union federation in South Africa's history. It is strongest in the mines, docks, car, engineering and metal industries.

Within the federation there are two major competing political viewpoints.

The so-called 'populists' and 'workerists'.

The 'populists' identify with the nationalist political tradition of the African National Congress (ANC) which is represented in South Africa today by the United Democratic Front — a broad campaigning body with well over 600 affiliates including trades unions, church organisations, sports organisations, student organisations, youth organisations and some sections of black business.

The 'populists' tend to favour a 'high profile' political style of trade unionism. Arguing that the workers must participate in wider community struggles and build alliances with all progressive groups committed to fighting apartheid.

The 'workerists' on the other hand, though committed to the wider struggle against apartheid are wary of alliances with non-worker controlled organisations in which the distinct voice of the working class may be submerged. They stress the need for patient organising, educating and building on the shop floor.

The 'workerists' are strongest in the larger industrial unions such as the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

Not surprisingly, there are many in the unions who don't fit easily into one category or the other — the leader of the black miners' union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Cyril Ramaphosa, is the most vocal representative of this middle ground.

Populist

Right now the 'populists' are in the ascendant within COSATU.

They control the organisation's main committees. They have been able to shape the federation's image and political style for the first seven months of its existence.

This has led to a very close identification between COSATU and the UDF — both are central to the National Educational Crisis Committee which made the original call for the 16th June stayaway and both organisations co-sponsored May Day rallies in the black townships.

The 'workerists' hoped that the 'populists' dominance was just a temporary affair and would end when the smaller UDF-aligned unions were integrated into industrial unions.

This has not happened. The different components do not seem to have gelled into one force.

The result is that different parts of the federation are pulling in different directions. The 'populist' controlled leading committees in one way, the larger 'workerist' dominated industrial unions in another.

Meanwhile in the workplaces the bosses, particularly in the car and metal industries have gone in for large scale victimisation of stewards.

This puts COSATU in a weak position to face the State of Emergency but thankfully so far only a small and apparently random number of militants seem to have been picked up. Despite COSATU's closer identification with the ANC/UDF.

The state has not swooped on the tens of thousands of stewards who provide the federation's highly visible militants.

These problems are not the result of COSATU getting involved in politics as such. Rather they flow from the particular trend of populist and nation-

South Africa



special report

alist politics that the UDF supporters have fought for within the federation.

In fact with the crisis of South African society at the level it is, it would be impossible to avoid the unions getting involved in politics.

The solution is for the best militants in COSATU to fight for an independent working class line both within the federation and in the broader liberation movement.

Already some 'workerist' militants are discussing the idea of a Workers Charter — a set of specifically working class demands, based on the idea of workers' control in any post-apartheid society and the idea of a workers' party to provide an organised political alternative to the 'populists'.

The situation right now is starting to look like a repeat of the fifties when the non-racial trade union federation, the South African Congress of Trade Unions was used as a stage army by the populist leadership of the ANL.

In 1958, for instance, the ANC leadership managed to convert a strike movement coming from the SACTU rank and file on the issues of a wage increase and the abolition of the pass laws into a protest strike on election day demanding that the all-white electorate kick out the nationalists and replace them with the slightly more 'liberal' but equally racist United Party.

The difference between now and the 1950s is that the left is a much stronger force in the trade unions today. This means that rank and file worker hostility at being 'expected' to follow the populists' calls for action — calls that have not been discussed in the rank and file — need not lead to demoralisation and defeat but instead could lead to the growth of a powerful left-wing leadership in the trade unions.

victims of state terror

port and General Workers Union
Tom Mkhwanazi, organiser, Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union, Natal
V Mkhonza, shop steward, SFAWU
M Olifant, COSATU regional secretary, Natal
A Bird, education secretary, MAWU
V Mavu, industrial organiser, Chemical Workers Industrial Union
C Bonner, Transvaal secretary, Chemical Workers
Sipho Khubeka, Transvaal secretary, Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union
Bashir Valley, education officer, Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union
C Khumalo, COSATU regional secretary, Pretoria
S Ramahobye, organiser, National Automobile and Allied Workers Union
V Mohakwe, organiser, NAAWU, Pretoria

L Mamabola, shop steward at Robert Bosch, MAWU
J Mogakwe, member, MAWU, Pretoria
P Jaantjies, Transvaal secretary, MAWU
R Peterson, organiser, Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union, Bloemfontein
O Maroeletsi, organiser, CCA-WUSA, Bloemfontein
S Mkhwanazi, shop steward, National Union of Textile Workers, Harrismith
P Maphalala, shop steward, NUTW, Harrismith
A Nyati, shop steward, NUTW, Harrismith
R Mnculwane, organiser, CCA-WUSA, Harrismith
F Mazibuko, shop steward, CCA-WUSA, Harrismith
M Cindi, shop steward, CCA-WUSA, Harrismith
N Williams, COSATU regional vice chair, Western Cape
N Marawu, organiser, General Workers Union, Western Cape

A Mentoor, organiser, Food and Canning Workers Union, Western Cape
N Macdonald, organiser, FCWU, Western Cape
W Zweni, shop steward, FCWU, Western Cape
Two ex-MAWU members, names unknown, now working for BTR-Sarmcol Cooperative, Howick, Natal
D Neer, organiser, Motor Assembly and Component Workers Union, Port Elizabeth
Duze, organiser, MACWUSA, Port Elizabeth
Lentor, shop steward, Food and Canning Workers Union, Fort Beaufort
P Pheko, organiser, MAWU, Benoni
D Pathe, coordinator, National Union of Mineworkers.
The international workers' movement must demand the release of our South African brothers and sisters.

Workers' Liberty

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Breaking the chains



Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa

Workers' Liberty on South Africa, 75p plus p.p.c. from 114, Sardinia Court, London N1 2SY

Where We STAND

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

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

We stand:

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

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

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

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

Activists' DIARY

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

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

WEDNESDAY JUNE 25. Union of Printworkers Support Groups meeting, 7 pm, Camden Town Hall (by St. Pancras station).

TUESDAY JULY 1. Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign Benefit Con-

cert. 7.30 - 1. The Fridge, Brixton. Tickets £4, £3. 01-326 5100/354 0844.

SATURDAY 12 JULY. Third World First conference for trade unionists. From 10am at University of London Union. £2.50/£1.50. Contact: Third World First 8 Lower Clapton Rd, London E5.

SATURDAY JULY 5-26. Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign march, Manchest-London. Tel: 061-795 3870. c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AL.

SATURDAY JULY 12. BLOC Conference, 'Fight Privatisation'. Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Credentials: £3 per trade union delegate. BLOC, PO Box 464, London E58PT.

SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS: on strike since June 1985. Donations urgently needed, to FTAT Cravendale Branch 92 Strike Fund, c/o Mrs A King, 10 Rainhall Cres,

Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs BB8 6BS. They are also appealing for labour movement bodies to 'adopt a family' of strikers — contact Mr & Mrs Williams, 41 Lower West Avenue, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs BB8 6DW. Tel 0282 814556.

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

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS NORTH LONDON.

Sunday, June 22. 'South Africa: Building the workers' voice.' Bob Fine, recently returned from South Africa 7.30 pm. Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London.

BASINGSTOKE Thursday July 3. 'Where we Stand'. John O'Mahony [SO Editor]. 7.30 p.m. Chute House, Church St.

SCLV NEWS SCLV Meeting. Monday June 30, 7.30 p.m. Wallasey Labour Club. Speaker: John Bloxam.

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

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



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Replacing the seed-corn



dump near Idaho. Some rodents are receiving doses of radiation of up to 40 rads per day. Such a dose would significantly increase rates of mutation and cancer.

Colonisation

This colonisation, unforeseen by the advocates of waste dumping, must result in radioactivity entering food chains as predators eat the rodents. Also, burrows dug in the dumps allow rain water to penetrate and wash out radioactivity.

In any case, the dumps are not as secure as was thought.

New Ground

THE SUMMER issue of the green socialist magazine *New Ground* has just appeared, with its main theme being the end of nuclear energy and its replacement.

Other articles include three views on the Channel Tunnel. A Green Party representative opposes the Channel on grounds of likely harm to the environment and to jobs in the ferry ports (up to 100,000 redundancies are predicted). Many local Labour Parties oppose the Channel for this reason.

Efficient

Two authors support a rail-only tunnel. NUR general secretary Jimmy Knapp sees a boost to railways generating or saving many jobs. Both he and SERA member John Sawyer argue that getting freight off roads and onto rail is more efficient energy-wise and is better for the human environment.

A recent visitor to Tigray describes how the Ethiopian regime is using the famine to fragment its opposition. One way is by forcing emigration to supposedly more fertile lands in the south. And yet conservation programmes run by the Tigray People's Liberation Front and others have shown that it is quite possible to rehabilitate the northern soils.

In an interview, Jack Munday, former secretary of the New South Wales Builders' Labourers' Federation, describes the 'green bans' policy of the union. Between 1968 and 1973, the BLF not only imposed bans on building developments that threatened the environment or historic buildings, but also used its industrial strength to support women's, black and gay rights and to oppose the Vietnam war.

Nowadays Munday is an activist on environmental issues and an advocate of red-green cooperation and unity. The BLF itself is under severe attack: Australia's Labor government has recently passed a law to deny it recognition as a trade union and to force its members to join other unions instead.

Most interesting to me is an article on the politics of nitrogen. Nitrogen is an essential plant nutrient and its circulation through nature has been seriously disrupted by the rise of capitalism, with its concentration of people in towns. This was noted and criticised by none other than Karl Marx in volume 1 of *Capital*. Present-day consequences include loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, and increased use of artificial fertilisers, which wastes energy and causes nitrate pollution of drinking water.

New Ground is available from left bookshops or from NG (SO), 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG. Send 80p for single copy or £3 for a year's subscription. *Special offer to SO readers:* send six 12p or four 17p stamps for introductory copy.

IT IS a sad paradox that some of the aid raised for the starving people of sub-Saharan Africa is actually adding to their long-term problems.

The trouble starts when the farmers are forced to eat their 'seed-corn'. In arid regions of Ethiopia, this is not really corn but varieties of millet and sorghum. These crops, the world's fourth most important grain (after wheat, rice and maize) originated in Ethiopia some 5000 years ago and have evolved to be able to cope with the inhospitable climate.

Thus, Ethiopian millet can yield a harvest on as little as 250mm (10 inches) of rain per year (something like one third of the UK average). Sorghum can cope with the low rainfall, as well as with waterlogged soil, which occurs in semi-arid lands where the entire year's rainfall may come in a single cloudburst. Sorghum was grown on the dustbowl soils of USA in the '30s, when the maize crop failed.

The grains keep well, are highly nutritious, and can be prepared in a large number of ways.

Problem

So what's the problem? It is that aid workers tend to replace the eaten seeds not with Ethiopian varieties of millet and sorghum but with maize or varieties of sorghum used to more congenial climates. These do not thrive in semi-arid conditions. Maize, for example, needs at least twice as much rain.

What is needed is for aid to reach farmers before they are forced to eat their seed or, failing this, for gene banks (places where plant varieties are preserved as their seeds) to keep more stocks of varieties suited to the conditions in which the majority of the world's population live, rather than varieties suited more to Western agriculture.

HOT RATS

A DRAWBACK has arisen to the established practice of burying low-level radioactive waste in shallow trenches — small burrowing mammals.

Scientists in Idaho have found that deer mice and kangaroo rats infest one

Socialist Forum: no. 1 on the 'British Road to Socialism', no. 2 on Ireland, no. 3 on Afghanistan — 50p each.

Socialist Organiser magazine back numbers. Available from SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Miners 75p; 'Illusions of Power' 60p; add 20p post.

Fighting £UND

Contributions this week to our £15,000 fund for new premises and equipment include £62.50 from a sponsored stop-smoking effort by Stan Crooke.

We've also had another £20 from Nigel Bodman's and Andy Barrett's sponsored cycle ride in Manchester.

And thanks to: East Durham readers £2.77, Richard Moore £30, Simon Wynn-Hughes £5, Kath Brierley £10.

That brings Manchester to 99.6% of its fund target and Glasgow to 82%. North London is still stuck at 88%.

The overall total to date is £11,624.08. Send donations to: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



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A class game?

What has football got to do with the class struggle? Alan Johnson explains.

In amongst the flood of glossy books and magazines on the World Cup comes one with a difference — *Off The Ball*. It is a collection of articles written by academics on everything from football violence to the fate of Ali McCloud [remember Ali?] to how the sectarian divide affects football in Ireland, and football as an object of class struggle in Brazil.

John Humphreys' essay on Brazil is one of the best. Football was introduced to Brazil by the British at the turn of the century to a Brazilian white elite imbued with notions of the 'amateur' and the 'gentleman'. Black players, of course, could be neither.

Battle

A battle was fought for many years before black players were allowed to participate on equal terms. In 1900 black players were caking their faces in rice powder to whiten them before taking the field.

Even as late as the '20s and '30s black players were tolerated as employees of the club but socially shunned and not admitted as club members.

Moreover a European style of play was forced on the Brazilians by coaches imported from Europe. Not until the 1950s did black Brazil win the right to play football as they wanted, as a celebration of artistry, skill and a commitment to all-out attack.

Brazil

So Brazil's 1958 World Cup victory led by players such as Pele, Garrincha and Didi, were seen by Brazilians as the victory of Brazilian values over European, and of popular values over those of the elite.

Football is used the world over as a symbol of national strength and unity. Its immense appeal is harnessed behind a chariot of reaction almost as coarse these days.



Bryan Robson on his way to another injury

Brazil was no exception.

The 1970 World Cup victory in Mexico coincided with the height of the military repression in Brazil. All civilian and democratic rule had been abolished, Congress closed, habeas corpus suspended, and a dirty war against radical opposition was in sway.

In Mexico, Brazil stormed past all opposition, with the best team that has ever walked on a football pitch anywhere. Back home the military embarked on a massive propaganda campaign to produce a popular image of President Medici by associating him with the team and its success.

Slogan

"There's no holding Brazil now" said a government slogan on the hoardings, superimposed on a picture of Peres celebrating one of his numerous goals. By 1983, however, a national championship match witnessed spectators chanting "direct elections now" from the terraces.

John Humphreys' essay is a useful antidote to those lefties who out of what I suspect is an ignorance of the game and of how people come to adore it, argue that football is just about violence, machismo, nationalism and reac-

tion. I'm not saying that football isn't full of all of these. It is and always was. In the 1914-18 War, recruiting offices were set up at every football ground and speeches made before every match. In 1914 half-a-million recruits were made for the slaughter at football matches.

Many people have seen the film 'Gregory's Girl', but how many know that in 1978 12 year old Teresa Bennett won a court case against the Football Association who had banned her from playing for Muskhams United under-12s boys team.

The Court of Appeal supported the FA and denied her the right to appeal to the House of Lords.

Football has become a focus for the activity of various fascist groups. The NF runs its own "racist league" of hooligans. The fascists recruit here because it is an atmosphere filled with notions of violence and nationalism, produced not by the game (how could a game produce nationalism) but by the racist, nationalist society in which it operates.

Steve Redhead's article on the international transfer market shows how the Daily Mail in 1981 used the Professional Footballers' Association's (PFA) desire to limit overseas players to coopt English foot-

ball as a surrogate "poor white" being driven by an "already overcrowded profession" by a flood of "cheap foreign imports".

Those who talk of banning sport completely, however, (ah, yes... we may have collapsed in face of rate-capping, but by god we'll make you stop those disgusting displays of uniformed machismo) completely miss the point.

Distorts

It is not the football itself, the game, the competition, that distorts and cripples football today. From my own experience I remember back in 1970 at the ripe old age of 9 that my friends and I wanted Brazil to win the World Cup because they played the best football. We all adopted a Brazilian footballer. I was Jarzinho. We were more concerned to learn how to bend the ball like Gerson (ever tried to bend a Fido?) than to cheer just for England. Even when England lost the quarter-final against Germany we spent the next day imitating Muller's spectacular winner, rather than cursing the "squareheads" as Greavesy might today.

The racism was learned from society and then football was seen in a different light.

One tradition is not mentioned at all in "Off The Ball". It is probably unheard of by the Municipal Socialists. The 1920s and '30s saw attempts to organise a culture which expressed an independent, working class viewpoint. A workers' photography organisation was part of this movement, based on the idea that "you need the eye of a certain class in order to see the signs of prevailing social conditions". Sport was an important part of this general movement. Workers' sports movements had an enormous following in Europe. In Germany the ATUF — a body coordinating the labour sports and gymnastics groups — had a membership of 1.2 million and 60 sports newspapers.

The German Communist Party had its own sporting organisation of some 250,000 people. The European workers' movement organised their own Workers' Olympiad — counterposed to the official Olympic Games.

The values of these games were different — cooperation, not competition; internationalism, not nationalism.

In 1931, 100,000 sportspeople from 26 countries were cheered by a crowd of a quarter of a million in Vienna. The importance of these organisations was understood well by the Nazis who suppressed the ATUF in 1933 and its Austrian equivalent the ASKO in 1934.

The ever changing plot

By Tracy Williams

I'm convinced that everybody alive now has watched or will watch an episode of *Dynasty* at least once in their lives! I'm also convinced that once is enough.

There's always someone getting divorced or married for the third time round; always a long lost relation coming back to the family; always someone on the verge of bankruptcy, etc. Yet it's a very shallow kind of TV drama. The glitter and tension fades quickly and leaves as much impact behind as one of Joan Collins' ever-changing, ever bizarre outfits.

The myths and "values" packed into this international viewing soap — excitement, 'glamour', unconvincing melodrama — are false, hollow, shoddy, empty, cheap and nasty. The viewers are forever kept waiting for the real scandal, the real action to begin. The fare is unsatisfying because it lacks substance, weight or depth.

Unless you are an ardent follower of *Dynasty* (and god help you if you are) it's difficult to keep up with the irritating ever-changing plot. You never quite know who is supposed to be sleeping with whom, or who's knifing who in the back over the next oil deal.

Women play a major role in *Dynasty* — the leader of the clan being Alexis Colby (Joan Collins). Alexis is the ever powerful, shoulder padded woman. The evil-hearted dynamic business tycoon. Yet Alexis still finds the time, energy and effort to look like the million dollars she's supposed to be — like a true *Dynasty* woman should.

There's only one black leading woman in *Dynasty*. The rest are "white anglo-saxon protestants" — healthy,

on the



wealthy and groomed. And don't they know it.

Any sense of sisterhood is naturally a non-starter. The women compete and scramble to get each other's lover or husband and do each other down by way of one-upmanship, swanking over the latest diet or the slinkiest cutting figure.

Dynasty confirms the worst sexual stereotypes. *Dynasty* is the all American way of life where men are men and women are women and there's really no room for Steven, who's gay.

Family life was a dominant feature in Friday's episode. It is the most crucial aspect of their existence. In reality, this cosy, capitalist, ever-loving, ever-providing pillar of strength and security is nothing but a competing vindictive battleground of disgusting lies, deceit and disloyalty. A real glittering snakepit!

For example Joan's daughter Amanda is now sleeping with Dex, Joan's husband. Blake's daughter in law Sammy Joe helped kidnap Chrystal, Blake's current wife. Joan's long lost sister is back in town with a best seller to scandalise Joan — give me the simple life anyway!

Television is the easiest, most powerful way of influencing working class people, so it's both disgusting and sad that we are subjected to this trivial nonsense — and that so many of us eagerly lap it up.

At least soaps like *Brookside* or *Eastenders* attempt to portray real people with real problems. Do we care whether Chrystal has got two dresses or 200? Do we care if Blake makes two million or two hundred million dollars a year?

In a world where working class people are hungry, cold and dying we should demand something better and more honest from TV "entertainment".

Dynasty, BBC1, Fridays, 8.10pm.

Down and out comedy

Martin Thomas reviews 'Down and out in Beverley Hills'.

'Down and Out in Beverley Hills' is the box-office no. 1 in London and it has had good write-ups from the reviewers.

I thought it might make a pleasant evening out, with not too many insights or artistic depths, but a few laughs. I was wrong.

It is a remake of Jean Renoir's classic film, 'Boudu saved from drowning', the story of a tramp taken into his home by a businessman. The tramp resists all attempts to domesticate him, abuses the hospitality, and eventually takes to the road again. The location has shifted from France to California.

All sorts of things have been added in a strenuous attempt to make it funnier: the effect is like eating a cake drowned in synthetic cream.

Stereotype Iranian and black neighbours, a stereotype Mexican housemaid, and stereotype Californian religious cultists, have been added to provide a range of stock jokes. They are only mildly offensive, I suppose, but



Nick Nolte as the tramp, Richard Dreyfus as his helper

not even mildly funny.

The whole point of the story is, or was, the interaction between the peasant-like slyness of the tramp and the bourgeois earnestness of his helper. But the remake completely destroys it.

Spiv

The end is the worst. Instead of going back on the road, still an irrecon-

cilable drop-out, the tramp (Nick Nolte) stays with the family. But it's not really a triumph for bourgeois values, because the tramp's distinct character had never emerged anyway.

He is much more like a successful entrepreneur than his benefactor is. The story simply becomes one spiv outwitting another. Why Nick Nolte ever became down and out, rather than prosperous, is incomprehensible.

A woman's experience on a demolition job pt 2

Working with the macho men



By Jean Lane

I BEGAN to find that most men have very short memories.

If I worked particularly hard and well one day, I would get a comment like: 'Well, you might be a woman, but I'd rather work with you than so-and-so, the lazy bastard'. But only the next day I might be doing the same work, at the same pace, and slip or drop something, or not manage in some way. And there would immediately be smiles and comments about how hard the work must be to women.

The fact that you did well before is never remembered. It puts you in the position of constantly having to prove yourself. You can never let up.

This was especially true when new men started. As I said last week, people were coming and going quite quickly, since it was a one-year Community Programme scheme. And every time a new man started you had to work at being accept and proving yourself capable of the job all over again.

Pressure

I can't think of any men who work under that kind of constant pressure. None of them had to prove themselves daily. I did it for 5½ months.

My main problems in terms of being accepted, however, extended beyond the actual work.

From the first day I arrived on the job I felt that they were having to modify their behaviour because I was there. We used to have a 15 minute break in the morning, and a half-hour break at the middle of the day. At these times we sat in an old hut at the back of the yard with a table and chairs in it, and made a massive pot of tea.

These breaks, as time went on, became a time I dreaded. But at first it



Real women's work?

was just a feeling of unease. I had to say to myself consciously: 'I am not in their way. I have every right to be here'.

On the first day I think they expected me to pour my tea and go and sit with the secretary. And, to tell the truth, I was so nervous that's exactly what I wanted to do. But then I would have been out of that hut for the whole of the year.

So I forced myself to go in and sit down. The first thing they wanted to know was, am I married and do I have kids. The second thing was why I wanted to do this job.

But mainly I felt that more questions were unspoken than asked; and that many things would have been said had I not been there.

The first real manifestation of this was 'Don't swear in front of a lady'.

I mean, there was I in steel-capped boots, overalls with the crotch down to my knees, a 'benny-hat' on my head, and they felt embarrassed about swearing in front of a 'lady'! I hardly looked like a dainty little sparrow.

As time went on, things got easier. They, or at least most of them, began to feel easier about talking and swearing in front of me. One of the men,

Eric, insisted on being a 'gent' for many months to come.

Another, Alan, when things eased up, began to say and do things that he had obviously wanted to do from the start. A woman working there was a threat to him, and he was going to make it as nasty and as uncomfortable for me as he possibly could. In fact his intention was to drive me out. But that's another story, which I will relate later.

Gaffer

After I had been there for about two weeks, we were given a new building to knock down. It was a big square brick building with a flat roof and enormous coping stones round the edge of the roof.

A group of us went there in the truck to take the coping stones down and get the roof off ready to start on the bricks. We went without the gaffer, which everybody liked because it meant we could work to our own time and have a laugh.

After a while I noticed that the roof was made of asbestos and said that none of us should touch it. We should get the council in to remove it properly

before we got on with the rest of the job.

None of us were wearing gloves or masks. We just had hard hats and overalls on. Most of the men didn't even bother with the hard hats.

Anyway, everybody laughed and carried on ripping the roof up. I tried to argue with them, but got nowhere, so I just refused to handle it myself, and when we got back to the yard I mentioned it to the gaffer. He just shrugged his shoulders, and when I got back on the site nothing had been done about it.

This was a man who had worked in industry (mostly engineering) for about 30 years.

During the course of the day I must have mentioned it to him about three times. So the next day he turned up on the site and handed out gloves and masks, and told everybody to wear them.

Well, everybody hated this. Firstly because I was responsible for bringing the gaffer out on site, but mainly because they now had to wear the safety gear.

The objections to this were that they were so uncomfortable — which they were: bloody awful rubber masks that

strapped behind your head and made your face sweat. But mainly because it was 'cissy'. You know, 'I'm a big man. I can handle it'.

And my not handling it was largely put down to my being a woman and needing an excuse to get out of the work.

I was the problem, not the asbestos.

I tried to argue it out with them — about the effects, about how it takes years for the effects to show, about the kind of safety procedures that ought to be used to remove it — pointing out that gloves and a sweaty mask weren't the answer.

Their response was 'we have it in our council houses, so we've already had contact with it anyway', or 'I smoke. I die one way or I die another. What's the difference?'

The one argument that got any kind of a positive response was when I said that Steve McQueen had died from cancer as a result of working on lagging ships with asbestos several years before. Macho-man personified had been brought down in his prime.

Asbestos

But the main response was laughter and 'cissy'. They actually started ripping bits of asbestos off the roof and throwing the lumps at me!

The next day I went and introduced myself as a new member to the union office on the other side of town. All the workers at the yard were in UCATT, but no-one else took much interest in the union.

The only reason most of them were in it was because they had to. And the union took little notice of them as well, being only on a one-year scheme. The union rarely showed up at the yard.

Well, I asked the official what the council or the union policy was on asbestos. He said, 'we haven't got one'. He asked me what it looked like, and when I told him, he said, 'oh well, it's safe asbestos'. When I said that there is no such thing, he told me not to worry about it.

As I was leaving the union office I asked the official if there were any other women in my branch. He immediately said no — and then... 'oh yes, there are... two women... they're brickies as well' (shock, horror). And then: 'Well, it does us no harm, does it?'

'Harm?' I said. 'Harm? We're doing you a favour, mate'. He said, 'Well, there's no need to take that attitude, darling'.

I did no more about the asbestos issue except to refuse flatly to handle it myself while making sure that I found equally heavy work to do instead, so that the idea of me shirking could never be used against me.

What revolution is all about

LAST WEEK I argued that human nature can be changed by changing society. But who will change society? People have to change their own attitudes before they will change society: so which comes first, changed people or a changed society?

"The educator", as Marx put it, "must be educated". In fact, attitudes and society change together: people change themselves as they struggle to change society.

Most of the time, most people are smothered and overwhelmed by their daily toil and struggle for existence. If they have any notion of how society could be different, it is a distant dream. For now all their effort is to survive within society as it is.

Reality

But there are times when dreams become reality, and 'imagination takes power'; when the mass of working people realise that they can act as a collective to change society, and begin to do so. These are called revolutions.

The ABC OF MARXISM

BY MARTIN THOMAS

'Revolution' brings to mind bullets, barricades, and bloodshed. Those things are part of it — by choice not of the revolutionaries, but of the old ruling classes, who always resist with violence. But the main weapons of revolution are not guns and bombs, but words.

John Reed describes 1917 in Russia: "All Russia was... reading — politics, economics, history — because the people wanted to

know... Then the Talk... Lectures, debates, speeches... meetings... What a marvellous sight to see the Putilov factory pour out its forty thousand to listen to Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, Anarchists, anybody, as long as they would talk..."

Or listen to French comrades about May-June 1968, when a student revolt sparked off the biggest general strike in history and widespread factory occupations. What they remember most is the explosion of ideas.

There were meetings, discussions, arguments, conversations everywhere. People called each other 'comrade' and meant it. About 12,000 different leaflets went out in a few weeks, as well as newspapers, wall posters, graffiti.

Debates

The occupied Renault factory at Cleon, for example, had mass meetings twice a day, films, plays, debates. (On all sorts of subjects — they had four debates on sexuality, as well

as the more obvious political and trade union issues).

The miners' strike of 1984-5 gave us a little taste of the way that people revolutionise themselves in mass struggle. A revolution is when the whole working class does what about one per cent of the working class — the mining communities — did in 1984-5.

Ideas

One French worker, reflecting on 1968, commented: "In a stabilised society, there is no permanent mixing of ideas, because there is no struggle. These blokes talk to themselves. It is a society in which one talks to oneself".

In a revolution people start talking to each other. But why, how and when do revolutions happen? What can we do now when no revolution is in sight? And if a revolution does happen, how do we stop the old misery returning once the excitement dies down? We'll look at these issues in coming weeks.

POSTAL WORKERS

How we were sold out

By Alan Johnson

Last week Socialist Organiser told the story of how the Union of Communications workers sold out the postal workers. This week we talk to a militant at the Liverpool Post Office. For fear of victimisation he wishes not to be named.

"The membership are disgusted with the settlement. We had the Post Office on the ropes. Now the union leaders are going into negotiations on pay and being offered 5.1%, well below what other public sector workers are being offered.

The desire to fight was there but it was sabotaged. I think we will pay a heavy price for that. Alan Tuffin is being called the Grand Old Duke of York in Liverpool.

Despite our insipid leadership, the postal workers' vote blew a hole in the myth that postal workers are not prepared to take action. In most offices that were balloted it was 75% in favour. In Belfast it was 86%; in Liverpool about 5 to 1.

The new practices the bosses are bringing in will make it more like working in a car factory than the old Post Office. There will be more pressure on individuals, and jobs will be lost. In Liverpool we stand to lose up to 200 jobs.

In Liverpool there will be resistance to the new work practices. The problem is that there is no national resistance.

The sell-out of the Leeds dispute showed that we still rely too much on national officials — and what happens when we do. The fact is that the Broad Left failed, after some initial success, to develop any coherent fight-back. On the EC some "lefts" have been indistinguishable from the right. We urgently need to develop a national fightback."

guns against strikers

By John Bloxam

On June 9 bosses at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Falls Road, Belfast, turned the latest screw in what Inez McCormack, NUPE Regional Organiser, has called "a month long petty and vicious vendetta against the lowest-paid staff." They suspended three workers without pay.

Immediately, the 13 other workers in their department walked out to join transport workers who have been on strike and picketing for the last five weeks.

The dispute arose when the Eastern Health Board attempted to impose £5 million cuts in the wages, hours and jobs of Belfast's domestic and ancillary workers. The Royal Victoria Hospital is to lose £800,000 off the support services budget. Drivers are to lose two



Glasgow teachers day of action against cuts in education.

Photo: Rick Matthews, IFL.

Teachers: regroup the left!

On Friday 13th leaders of the National Union of Teachers met the new Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, and agreed to end the union's opposition to the new GCSE exam. GCSE will start in September, replacing O levels and CSE exams.

The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers had already abandoned its boycott of GCSE exam preparations.

Both union conferences had carried very strong motions against introducing the new exam this year. Now, less than three months later, official union opposition has collapsed totally.

In fact, this collapse was prepared by the NUT leaders' sell-out over pay.

NUT leaders settled for a pathetic

By Cheung Siu Ming

5.3% pay increase. They also entered into ACAS [a government-sponsored "conciliation" Board] talks which the employers are using as a forum for re-defining teachers' contractual duties.

Subsequently the NUT lost a High Court test case against employers who had docked pay from teachers who refused to cover for absent colleagues or to attend meetings outside school hours.

Step by step the union leaders have frustrated and demoralised the biggest wave of industrial action by teachers for 40 years.

All that is now left are some strong schools in inner city areas defending their hard-won right not to cover for absent colleagues dur-

ing their preparation and marking time.

What the left in the NUT has to do now is soberly to re-assess what has happened and understand why it has been so easy for our leaders to demobilise the fight for pay and better working conditions.

Inner-city

It's true, we have gained ground in terms of conference votes but we have still a lot of work to do, especially to win support outside of the inner-city areas.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance AGM on July 4 will be a useful starting point for the left to regroup our forces and to prepare for the inevitable fight over the outcome of the ACAS talks.

Why we oppose GCSE

The new GCSE examination was first opposed by the unions on the grounds that it required at least £100 million of new resources and training.

In the end, Baker's extra few millions to top up the £20m ceiling set by his predecessor Keith Joseph was enough of a lifeline for the NUT leaders to grab and hold onto. They accepted GCSE.

But socialists in teaching had opposed the new exam on different grounds, because it means the setting up of national criteria for courses.

Curriculum

*The curriculum will be more firmly controlled from the centre.

*Efforts by progressive teachers to build anti-racist, anti-sexist and pro-working class themes into exam courses will now be very difficult.

*Creative developments involving classroom teachers will now be

replaced by centralised examination boards, ideologically more inclined to make education less autonomous an more subordinate to "the needs of industry".

This development is just as big a success for Thatcherism as the cuts in resources for education, though it is lyingly dressed up as some egalitarian step to replace the two-tier divisive O level and CSE exams.

Scots move left

By Ian McCalman

This year's annual conference of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) marked a significant political radicalisation of Scotland's largest teaching union.

Decisions to campaign for a ban on army recruitment in schools, to ballot for a political fund, to affiliate to Anti-Apartheid and to adopt a very progressive anti-racist stance are all indications of this trend. Conference also voted for a special general meeting to discuss the outcome of the Main Inquiry on teachers' pay, before any part of it goes out to the membership in a ballot. Unfortunately a motion to name the end of November as the date for renewal of strike action in the event of no satisfactory outcome on pay having been achieved was rejected.

Ken Jones, a supporter of the Socialist Teachers Alliance and a member of the national executive of the National Union of Teachers spoke in a personal capacity at a fringe meeting organised by Glasgow and Renfrew Campaign for a Fighting Union and Lanarkshire Teachers Action Group. Further moves to cement alliances between the left among teachers throughout Britain will be very welcome.

LABOUR AND LESBIAN/GAY RIGHTS

Counter the AIDS hysteria!

By Matthew Davies

In 1985 Labour conference voted to oppose all discrimination against lesbians and gay men and to set up a campaign against discrimination.

The NEC was instructed to draft a lesbian/gay rights policy which would:

* "declare that lesbian/gay relationships and acts are not contrary to public policy or the law..."

... repeal all criminal laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men..." etc.

Labour local authorities were called upon:

*to "adopt and enforce equal

opportunities in relation to lesbians and gay men along the lines of the GLC (etc)."

The victory for gay rights at Labour Party conference in 1985 was won by the hard work of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

But the support might not have been won if lesbians and gay men had not shown through their support for the miners that we understand the battle for a just and equal society, free of discrimination is also a battle for a socialist society; that the struggles of lesbians and gay men is the same battle as that waged by the rest of the working

class.

This year, lesbians and gay men have organised support groups for the sacked printers and for the strikers at Silentnight. In so doing we build support in the lesbian and gay community for workers in struggle and we also set about eradicating the prejudices many workers have towards lesbians and gay men.

With the media whipping up anti-gay hysteria over aids, socialists must campaign for the trade unions and the Labour Party to fight to defend and extend lesbian and gay rights — now! — and for an end to all discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

SOCIALIST STUDENTS IN NOLS

Defend student union rights!

Many students unions have a policy of preventing fascists and racists from being given a platform — "No platforming". What this means in practice carries from union to union — from administrative bans, to peaceful demonstrations through to attempts to break up meetings.

There have been large protests against some far-right MPs, particularly John Carlisle and Harvey Proctor, which have resulted in the police moving in to violently disperse the demonstrators.

Last week a government backed amendment to the Education Bill went to the House of Lords. Had it not been defeated then "no platforming" would have been made illegal.

In the same week, the incoming sabbatical officers, elected full-time student union officials, at York University, received a writ from the University's solicitors giving them 28 days to sign a declaration pledging them to ignore or change the union's policy.

Illegal

The University argues that militant mobilisations against racists or even fascists are illegal.

Certainly in some cases the 'no platform' policy is abused, or carried to absurd lengths. It can be used against Christians who say they are against homosexuality, for instance; or against drama societies producing "sexist" plays, or against Jewish Societies, but that is not the point. Socialist students can campaign amongst students against such extravagances.

The issue now is that student union autonomy is under threat. And the whole issue must be fought on these terms: if the government or governing bodies are able to determine union policy and practices then they will not stop with getting rid of "no platform".

There also needs to be a clear discussion of what we mean by 'no platform' and how that fits in with the need to defend civil liberties, and in particular freedom of speech.

Essex action on racists

THE RACISTS Milson and Boyle who published election leaflets at Essex University declaring white supremacy were suspended — for two days.

The trust placed in the university authorities by some people proved to be completely unfounded. It has come to light that the authorities only suspended the two because they failed to keep a Board of Studies hearing, not for their open racism.

The union executive eventually reacted by deciding to boycott all university retail outlets, i.e. the shop and coffee bar. Picketing was organised and proved to be very successful.

Only by applying this sort of pressure on the university can we expect to win.

The Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN) steering committee will meet at 7.00 p.m. At the Polytechnic of Central London, Bolsover St., on Friday 27 June. The meeting is open to all supporters.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

Summer School July 4-7

From 2pm Friday 4 July to 4.30pm Monday 7 July, at Manchester University Student Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Four days of debates, workshops, forums and videos, plus a social, creche facilities, and free accommodation. Workshops will cover the basic ideas of socialism and the following main discussion themes:

SOUTH AFRICA

Speakers include Bob Fine, Baruch Hirson, Frances Kelly, and South African trade unionists.

Workshops on:

- The trade unions and the state in South Africa now
- Socialism and nationalism: what does the Freedom Charter mean?
- Trotskyists in South Africa
- South Africa's forgotten colony: Namibia
- How to build solidarity in Britain.



WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Speakers include: Liz French (Women Against Pit Closures), Sue Himmelweit, Rajes Bala (Tamil Women's League).

Sessions include debate with speakers from Women's Action Committee and Briefing on the way forward for Labour women's sections, and:

- Why Wendy Savage has been witch-hunted
- Women, child care, and capitalism
- Women workers in the Free Trade Zones of the Third World



IRELAND

Speakers include: Daisy Mules (Sinn Fein; to be confirmed), Austen Morgan, John O'Mahony, and Geoff Bell (to be confirmed)

Workshops and debates on:

- The Anglo-Irish deal and what it means
- The Protestant working class and the national question
- How to build a solidarity movement in Britain
- The political heritage of James Connolly.



Tickets in advance: £5 waged, £2 unwaged for the whole school, or £2.50 (£1) per day. It will cost more on the door. Write to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA, or phone 01-639 7967.

Organise solidarity in Fleet Street

Carol and George Hall, News International SOGAT strikers, spoke to Socialist Organiser

WHEN the Fleet Street support group meets, it gives people confidence and we can take our feelings then to mass meetings.

Against both the national leadership and the London leadership the Fleet Street support unit has a clear role: to state clearly time and time again that Fleet Street should come out in dispute. That is the lead that the Fleet Street support unit have consistently argued for.

We'll also keep pointing out that you cannot have faith in the national leadership or the London officers.

What the TUC should have been doing, though, is putting a call out to the rest of the labour movement to mobilise behind us.

But it still comes back again to Fleet Street because the answer you get from a lot of other trade unionists is, well, when your colleagues in Fleet Street support you, we will.

You have to take the Fleet Street issue first, while simultaneously putting the call out to other trade unionists. But the response would be massive if Fleet Street came out.

As for Kinnock, it is disgraceful that he has ducked the issue once again.

Kinnock is playing exactly the same role that he did during the NUM's courageous struggle.

Therefore, I think that we, as rank and file Labour Party members and trade unionists have to take up the fight for democracy in the party and movement and also to elect a leader who is willing to stand up for the working class like Thatcher is for the ruling class.

We ought to be putting out a bulletin about what is happening at the Mail, what has happened and is happening at the Express, and again at the Mirror. We need to broaden out the printworkers' group beyond the News

International issue and that will gain more solidarity from workers at other papers.

We should start up groups in each individual House, and send delegates to the Fleet Street unit. That is the way to stimulate debate, plan actions and build up what we desperately need, which is a rank and file printworkers' movement.

The whole labour movement should be heartened by the ballot result. It has shown that although we've been out now for 20 weeks we don't intend to give up and the reasons why we came out still stand — we're defending our jobs and trade union rights and recognition and even if the union EC aren't prepared to fight, we are.

With clear leadership at chapel level the workers are prepared to fight. They have got to realise that their interests lie only in joining the News International workers in their struggle and that means out on strike.

As for the SOGAT leadership, if Fleet Street came out they would have to respond or make way for people who are willing to lead

If we can build the dispute into a Fleet Street wide one then Brenda Dean will either have to back that dispute or back down. We can well do without these people who are accountable to no-one, these general secretaries are elected for life.

The role of women in the strike has been different to that played by the women in the miners' strike because in this dispute more than 50% of the clerical chapels are women who are fighting for their own rights and jobs.

If you go down to Wapping at 3.00 am, the pickets are not all macho men, there are a lot of women as well and they are not frightened or intimidated. I think it has shown the equality that can be achieved and should be recognised in this dispute — that women can fight and do fight for their jobs.



Dean at SOGAT conference. Photo J Harris

Murdoch slaps a writ

RUPERT Murdoch has slapped a writ on national picketing coordinator Bill Freeman. He is the first print unionist to receive such a writ.

It signals Murdoch's intention to get heavier with the pickets, following last week's decision by SOGAT members to continue and step up the strike.

SOGAT conference last week seems

to have ended with a compromise deal between the London District Committee and the National Executive. The precise details are unclear. But the deal offers little to the strikers.

What is needed is still:

- to extend the strike
- to bring out Fleet Street in solidarity, and
- to build on the firm base of rank and file support expressed through the ballot that rejected Murdoch's offer.

What about the serfs?

IAN MACGREGOR has been knighted. So has Bob Geldof. We've finished up with a Black Knight and a White Knight, and the question is: what about the serfs?

MacGregor got his knighthood for doing to coal what he did to steel: carry out Tory Party policy, and try to smash the unions. The one thing that comforts me is that he hasn't smashed the NUM. He's had a damned good try, but the NUM is still there, it's still fighting, and it will go on fighting.

I'm not impressed by stories that the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) are going to give MacGregor a hard time at their conference this week. The UDM will dance to whatever tune MacGregor plays. They are in no position to assert any authority.

There is talk that the UDM want to go for a five-year pay deal, to bring industrial peace. This is absolute madness. It's crazy to plan five years ahead for wages when we have no checks on other factors affecting the cost of living.

A five-year deal is exactly what the bosses want, to tie wages down, to let profits soar, and to make money out of the workers. And it's a dangerous road: the next thing will be to tie wages to no-strike agreements.

In the Notts area the UDM has a majority, so even when the NUM has a majority in a particular pit — like in Bolsover — the Coal Board won't

recognise the NUM. It just ignores us.

We've got the ridiculous situation now where NUM recruitment forms are offered to people under the canteen table, to avoid victimisation. We're even having to smuggle copies of 'The Miner' (the NUM paper) into the pits. It shows the lengths management are prepared to go to in helping the UDM.

But in the end the NUM will win those members back.

In Ollerton, in the Home Coal Services, NUM and UDM members stood against each other for election to the committee at the pit. The NUM virtually had a clean sweep.

Since last October we've achieved a lot in Notts. We've now got branches at every colliery, with near-majorities in some. We've got full-time officials, and now we've got premises. We've virtually set up a trade union from scratch in the space of seven months.

I described last week how the UDM are trying to take control of our miners' welfare. The UDM and management arrived on Friday morning and were told, 'You're not coming in!'

There was going to be no clandestine unconstitutional meeting held in that welfare. They were sent packing with

their tails between their legs. We're going to continue running the welfare, and we've got the full backing of the welfare membership.

This week is the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising in South Africa.

Successive British governments have failed to deal with the problem of South Africa. This government has got the same objective as the South African — to exploit the workers. And South African workers are being exploited by British capital exported over there.

Black workers had suffered for so many years under such a terrible regime that they had no alternative but to resort to violence. No amount of talking will solve the problem. The black workers will have to take the power for themselves.

Just as, during the miners' strike, Notts miners had to go out and tell other workers what it was like in the Notts coalfield, it is essential for us to hear about South Africa from South African workers. That kind of direct links can help build solidarity.

Paul Whetton is a member of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

Whetton's WEEK

