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# Socialist Voice

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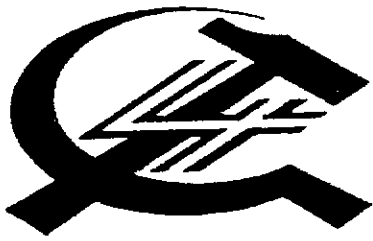
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INSIDE ▼ ASLEF INTERVIEW / UNION NEWS

KURDISTAN / NAMIBIA / ARGENTINA ■



**SOCIALIST VOICE**

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SOCIALIST  
LEAGUE**

**BRITISH SECTION  
OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
WORKERS  
LEAGUE**

**[LIT]  
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

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**SOCIALIST**

**VOICE**

## **Argentina: The Hungry cannot wait**

*"Argentina appears to be on the brink of economic catastrophe ...is sinking deeper and deeper into economic chaos and is utterly unwilling and unable to service its external debt", declared a financial report quoted in the International Herald Tribune of 29th May.*

Food riots have been reported in all the major areas of working class concentration in Argentina: Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario, Mendoza and Mar del Plata. The Alfonsin Government have declared a state of emergency in Rosario to try and contain the situation.

After the Argentine elections Britain's media virtually ended reportage. They had, of course, only written on the elections and not reported what was happening to workers and their families. They avoided mentioning the parties of the working class. No mention was made of the United Left, the fourth force in the elections. The left in Britain also made very little comment on these events. That is why we reprint here part of a comment from the MAS, our sister party in Argentina and the largest party of the International Workers League:

*"Carlos Menem won overwhelmingly with more than seven million people behind him. The great majority of workers, fed up with the lying Government, celebrated the success of the Peronists. Many workers also welcomed the news of the election of Luis Zamora as a national deputy.*

*They came to power with the promise that: 'with democracy we eat, we can cure and we can educate.' But for six years the Radicals have done nothing except squander the wealth of the country, the economic crisis has worsened and our salaries have collapsed, price rise after price rise, all for the benefit of the IMF and the large firms.*

*For this reason more than 60% of the population repudiated the Government. But they will continue till the end of the year with more price increases and austerity plans.*

*Maybe you are one of the millions that voted for Carlos Menem and rejoiced at his triumph. In this way you expressed your anger with the Radical Government, hoping that Menem will improve things. Comrades, we totally support your anger against the Government, we have always been with you, every time you fight against them.*

*It is a Government for the IMF and the large capitalists. We still affirm that there is no solution to the problems of the country outside of a Government of the workers and the people who can take the necessary measures and lay the foundations for socialism.*

*More than half a million workers and other struggling sectors supported our programme. They support the proposals of the United Left, which allowed Luis Zamora to be elected as national deputy, Silvia Diaz of the MAS provincial deputy in Buenos Aires and Gustavo Coppola of the FRAL (a front of the Communist Party), councillor in the capital.*

*We have to continue fighting together to defend our salaries, defend all our conditions. The inflation of May is estimated at 50%. It does not look like they are going to stop the stampede of prices. Maybe this week there will be a new price increase. At the same time big and small companies are sacking and suspending people. Nothing has changed with the elections, for the workers and the people. On the contrary there will be new and brutal developments which the IMF support. It is the workers that carry the weight of the crisis on our backs.*

*Because of this comrades we call for a common struggle for an immediate rise of salaries of 100%, for a real price freeze controlled by the workers and the people. Against sackings, layoffs and to defeat the economic plans of the Government. Many workers throughout the country are fighting: in the provinces of Salta, Mendoza and Santa Cruz, the teachers of Santa Fe, university professors, metal workers of Ushuaia, council workers of Monte Grande and many more. We call on them to extend these struggles to all the factories and firms because the hunger of our families cannot wait."*

### **£1,500 International Fund**

**The International Socialist League makes an urgent appeal for finance for its international work. So far £670 has been raised.**

**One example of the development of our international is the publication (see advertisement) of the International Courier for the first time in English. As the sections of the IWL grow in the English speaking countries more translations will be possible - but only if the funds continue to grow.**

**Send all donations to: ISL, PO BOX 9, Eccles SO, M30 7FX.**

# POLL TAX



The only alternative for Labour councillors, who genuinely want to fight and represent the interests of the communities who elected them, is to assist, in every way possible, those groups and organisations actively fighting outside the council chambers, on the estates and in the communities against the introduction of the Poll Tax.

The Poll Tax is seen by the Tories as a way of slitting the throat of any opposition to its policies from local Government. In particular, they hope to curb the control of municipal Labour councils. If councils refuse to operate the Poll Tax they will be starved of finance for vital services or removed and replaced.

The money being raised through the new Uniform Business Rate (the poll tax to be levied on all businesses in England and Wales) will go to central government as opposed to local. The Tories will redistribute what's collected as a top up to the rate support grant. The 'rebates' will be calculated on the population figures for an area and the services the Government feel need to be provided. The Government have the power to withhold the money if they disagree with the use it is being put to.

The result will be that those councils opposed to privatization and tendering of services will be targeted for cuts in their rate support grant. Tenants will find themselves subsidising local businesses through a higher individual or standard poll tax rate and/or face cuts in local services. The first to go will be the social services; meals on wheels, home help, community services developed for minority and vulnerable groups.

The poorest sections of society will suf-

fer a double blow as they are forced to pay the Poll Tax and suffer the withdrawal of services created to alleviate their poverty.

The North West Campaign Against the Poll Tax has calculated that there will be a net transfer of £800 million from northern towns and cities to the south in the first year of the tax's introduction.

The effects that the Poll Tax will have on local authority services and jobs have gone largely unrecorded. Thousands of council workers' jobs are on the line.

Successful Labour candidates in elections will implement Tory Government policies or be replaced.

The only alternative for Labour councillors, who genuinely want to fight and represent the interests of the communities who elected them, is to assist, in every way possible, those groups and organisations actively fighting outside the council chambers, on the estates and in the communities against the introduction of the Poll Tax.

The TUC has been forced to call a national march against the Poll Tax. It will be in Manchester on 1st July - so get your Poll Tax banners down there.

Only mass action on the streets can defeat the Poll Tax. We need a huge turn out on 1st July which should be seen as just the beginning of a fightback■

## LOCAL NEWS

### Liverpool:

Smithdown Road Anti-Poll Tax Group held a very lively and enjoyable social at the 147 Club in Picton Road. Two 'out of this world' bands, "Fiddle The Meter" and "Why Fear Tomorrow" played. A great time was had by all. A series of public meetings, on the tactics community groups should adopt towards registration, are planned. Meetings are also to be held by Dingle and Lark Lane Anti-Poll tax groups. So, before you line the litter bin with your registration forms or flush them down the toilet, come along to one of the meetings to discuss what we can do together - as a community.

### Manchester:

Hulme Tenants Against the Poll Tax meets every Monday at 6pm at the library, opposite the Church of the Ascension. Everybody is welcome, so come on down. The campaign focuses on building community and trade union opposition to the Poll Tax.

### Collyhurst Tenants' Action Group:

"If you want the support of the people who elected you, stand up and be counted", said Andy Shannon of Manchester's Collyhurst Tenants' Action Group, after a public meeting voted unanimously not to pay and not to register. Big worries for the Labourites though - they also voted to withdraw their support for the Labour party in the next local or general election. Well what do you expect when not one of the invited councillors turned up to their meeting.

### Stockport:

Stockport Anti-Poll Tax Campaign held a public meeting at Brinnington Community Centre. Brinnington is a large council housing estate - a solid Labour area. The leader of the Labour Group on Stockport Council pledged full support to all local groups. A call was made at the meeting for a group to be set up on the estate. Six local residents came forward and pledged to build a Brinnington Anti-Poll Tax Group. At the meeting a local resident quoted Shelley: "...we are many and they are few..." - although the meeting laughed at the unexpected poetry recital everyone agreed that Shelley was on the ball!

# Old Left Collapses

## NUCPS

**Pete Money on the National Union of Civil and Public Servants - conference delegate - in a personal capacity**

Last month's Annual Conference of the National Union of Civil and Public Servants showed once again the absolute bankruptcy of the old lefts in the British Trade Union movement.

The NUCPS has for years been led by a "secret" Broad Left dominated by the Morning Star wing of the Communist Party.

In the first individual ballot held under the Government's regulations, virtually the whole of the old leadership was removed from the NEC, including the retiring President, Peter Palmer. They have been replaced by an executive on which the right wing is now dominant.

The lefts, all through conference, bleated on about being defeated by the Tory election rules and though, of course, postal voting favours the right wing, with its emphasis on individualism, this is not enough to explain the absolute debacle suffered by the old leadership. For example, Peter Palmer, out of a possible 86,000 votes could muster only 4,907.

The real reason for their defeat lies in

the fact that, particularly since the miners' strike, they have been ducking and weaving in a desperate attempt to avoid any confrontation with the Tories and the anti-trade union laws.

When their members were sacked at GCHQ they opposed any call for strike action by the TUC and even refused to include all their own members in the strike ballot for fear of infringing the secondary action laws. Similarly, in 1987, they unilaterally called off the joint pay campaign with the CPSA, without any consultation with the membership, when the CPSA leadership decided to ballot on an all-out strike and then signed a "concordat" with the Tories over widespread changes in conditions, promotion procedures etc.

This year, they broke all the decisions of annual conference and agreed to accept regional pay and performance pay just at a time when the Tories are planning to break up the Civil Service into a series of semi-autonomous "agencies" and to move thousands of jobs out of London with a resultant massive job loss.

The result of this capitulation to the trade union bureaucracy by the "left" leadership has, on the one hand, led to a big turn away from the union by many thousands of civil servants whilst on the other caused a massive resentment at the increasingly bureaucratic and undemocratic practices of the old leadership. For example, a censure motion on the executive, for breaking conference decisions on referring any long term pay deal to conference, was carried not very far short of unanimously.

In the NUCPS, as in all the unions in Britain, the left needs to be rebuilt as a matter of urgency. At present there is a massive vacuum of leadership and the Tories are planning a major attack on civil servants pay, conditions and job prospects. An effective leadership to combat these attacks must be based on the traditional twin working class principles of democracy and independence from the state. A union tied to the needs of the bureaucracy, which refuses to take on the anti-union laws, is incapable of defending itself or its members■

## NATFHE

**Martin Ralph - conference delegate - reports in a personal capacity**

The executive of the Lecturer's union were defeated time and again in the union's May conference.

In one of the most important votes, their attempt to prevent the membership from taking local action, by altering how a majority should be counted, was overwhelmingly repudiated.

The present leadership showed their intention of preventing, at any cost, members defending their jobs, conditions and salaries.

They have no programme to defeat the Tory plans or answer the immediate problems of the union. They have, for instance, little idea on what the structure of the union will be in six months time or if they have it is kept silent!

The Government intends to do away with further and higher education we know it. The polytechnics' management intend to make new and management staff work a 37

hour week and cut annual leave to six weeks a year from September. Already advice is coming from the business sector on how local firms can make best use of colleges when they are in control of the college Governors.

College buildings are being sold to provide for car parks or sold to hotel chains. Colleges or whole departments are being set up virtually as business ventures. Managers intend to make profit out of education or rather turn colleges into businesses, employing trainers rather than teachers; courses will be tuned to the immediate needs of industry. All this means redundancies and rapid deterioration of conditions and services.

The Government can be defeated on these plans, but not with the present leadership or that of the Broad Left. The conference reflected the increasing militancy of the rank and file. Successful action in Lancashire,

Birmingham and Coventry has resisted the introduction of the new conditions in the polytechnics and the colleges.

The Broad Left in NATFHE has become part of the broad right. It supported the reelection of Peter Dawson as General Secretary who was widely recognised as right wing. That itself has created rifts in the Broad Left. The Broad Left has more delegates on the NEC for 1989/90, this may well increase the divisions to the point of splits between those that control and those that are closer to the rank and file.

For years NATFHE has followed the teachers' unions, specifically the NUT, over wage demands - now they are in the front line.

Many lecturers are seeking a way forward and want a democratic and fighting union.

The union must seek the broadest alliance with all those that work in and use education■

# STUMBLING TORY ECONOMY

Kevin Bulman on ten years of the Thatcher 'miracle'

THATCHERS' tenth anniversary was completely overshadowed by a cloud of unrest and agitation amongst wide layers of workers including many professional and traditionally moderate sectors.

The London tube and bus workers joined by Network South East railworkers have paralysed the transport system in the capital causing chaos the likes of which hasn't been seen since the 1926 General Strike. Now, North Sea oil and gas platform workers have joined the action and are occupying the rigs.

Dockers, doctors and nurses, BBC television staff, polytechnic and university lecturers, students and youth on YTS are involved in, or are gearing up for, some form of strike or protest action.

There is wide-scale opposition, revealed in many opinion polls, towards the Tory Government and its plans to privatise water and electricity and to its hated Poll Tax.

"She's gone too far" is the most popular comment of workers towards Thatcher. Workers who may have been briefly attracted to the glossy but fictitious ideal of home and share ownership prosperity, under some kind of "peoples capitalism" are now finding themselves in opposition to Tory policies on education, health, and environmental issues.

What good, many are asking, is home ownership, share ownership or tax cuts, when mortgage interest payments have risen by £12 per week, when gas and telephone bills continue to rise and won't it be more of the same when electricity and water is sold off to big business?

And what good are tax cuts anyway, if they are translated into the withdrawal of benefits for our sons and daughters and the destruction of the NHS and the ideal of free education for all.

Despite the hype of a government that tells us that the economy is strong and that we have a more affluent society, the fresh surge of discontent is beginning to crack the varnish of the 'supposedly' unstoppable Iron Lady. The back bench Tory wets are pleading for moderation and distancing themselves from Thatcher.



Beneath the scare stories put about by the media about 'secret plotters' stirring up militancy the real reasons for the unrest can be found in the economy and the cost of living under Tory rule.

Under Thatcher, prescriptions for medicine have risen from 20 pence to £2.80, which represents an increase of 30% for every year the Tories have been in power.

The Tories give to the rich with one hand what they take from the poor with the other. Government Treasury figures admit that an average household has seen its total tax burden increase from 35.1% of income in 1979 to 37.3% for 1988/89.

Inflation, at 8%, is higher than in any other major industrial country and double the average for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Britain, once the central and dominating exporting capitalist nation, is steadily increasing its trade deficit. Last years' deficit was £14 billion and it is expected to rise further this year.

The chief source of homelessness in Britain today is caused through repossession of homes as a result of occupants defaulting on mortgage repayments.

If workers aren't having their homes repossessed then they're having their belongings seized by bailiffs to pay off outstanding bills for rent, rates and water charges. In Tyneside alone, 17,000 warrants were issued for seizure of property from working class families who had failed to keep up credit payments to banks, credit companies, shops and

loan sharks, last year.

Is it any wonder that in this climate workers are beginning to rebel against their union bosses and are beginning to take independent and increasingly unofficial rank and file action against their employers?

As a percentage of average earnings, every unemployed worker has had Supplementary Benefit (now called Income Support) and Unemployment Benefit reduced in the last 3 years, according to the recently released government Department of Social Security (DSS) figures.

The Tories have savagely attacked the unemployed, particularly the youth. They have actively searched for ways of eliminating any last buffer to absolute poverty of the post-war welfare state. The greatest crime of the trade union bureaucrats has been their willingness and indeed eagerness to leave the unemployed and youth face the ravages of the Thatcher years alone. They fear the movement of the working class more than they oppose Thatchers' policies.

One thing is certain, despite the spinelessness of the trade union officials, the working class is heading for big confrontations which will raise the accountability of their leaders to the fore.

The power workers have won a wage rise of 9.2%, which has now created a target for rail workers and for 800,000 workers in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU).

Settlements across the board, above the rate of inflation, are the economic nightmare besieging the Tory 'miracle'.

Despite the treachery of the Labour and trade union leadership the Tories have been unable to deal a definitive blow to the working class.

The rising tide of militancy in the organisations of the working class will leave the institutionalised left bureaucrats - the so-called "Broad Lefts" standing alone. We can look forward to a mushrooming of unofficial action and rank and file organisation in the unions and as socialists we must aid that development of the independent movement of the working class ■



# STOP MURDER AT WORK

1988 - 160 DEATHS IN  
CONSTRUCTION

The increasing number of deaths on building sites was highlighted at a recent public meeting at Hackney Town Hall reports Mark Metcalf in "Hackney Union News".

The meeting, entitled '*Stop Murder at Work*', was jointly organised by members of the recently formed Construction Safety Campaign (CSC), the Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG) and workers from the Hackney Trade Union Support Unit.

The meeting was informed that 160 workers were killed in the construction industry in 1988 and it was noted that young Irish workers were in particular danger. **Thirteen of those killed in 1988 remain unidentified - most of these workers were thought to be Irish.**

In addition to those killed at work it was reported that there is an ever increasing number killed by long-term industrial diseases. These included people like Alan Powell who, at the age of 33, died of pericardial mesothelioma, or exposure to asbestos.

The horrifying increase in deaths and accidents in the building industry were the reasons for the formation of the Construction Safety Campaign by rank and file building workers. The campaign recently held its first annual conference and the 90 workplace delegates who attended reaffirmed their intention to keep highlighting the serious dangers which exist on most of London's private sector building sites.

It is hardly surprising that dangers have increased when one considers that the average fine in 1987 for a firm found to have caused a workers death was £474. The campaign is seeking much higher fines and demanding the imprisonment of employers found to have caused a workers death. The campaign is also demanding that no worker be sacked for raising the issue of health and safety on a site.

The illegal blacklist operated by many construction firms has reduced union organisation to a minimum on many sites and the CSC is pushing construction unions to support victimised workers and to have an active recruitment policy.

The Construction Safety Campaign's secretary is: Tony O'Brien, 72 Copeland Road, London. SE16 L01.

TEL: 01 732 3711.

## READERS' LETTER

*Dear Editor,*

London, under the harsh regime of Thatcher for the last ten years, has become the divided city. On one side the rich and on the other the poor. One has only to look in any estate agent's window. If that doesn't have any effect, travel around at night and you will find thousands of people, of all ages, sleeping rough (100,000 homeless at the last count).

All this is not taking in account the new Housing Bill and most recent changes in benefits. These will add thousands to the growing army of homeless people. This is Thatcher's capitalism in practice.

Over the last years what has happened to the recognized leaders of the working classes? The best one can say is that they have been A. W. O. L. (Absent Without Leave) - in war they would have been shot long ago for desertion in the face of the enemy. If one needs an example, the miners strike is the most clear. While the miners were standing up, battling the armed state, what were the leaders of the Labour Party doing? Standing up in Parliament and condemning these brave class fighters for using violence and demanding that all protest should be by peaceful means.

The leaders of trade unions are in the same camp with the Labour Party. When it was very clear that a victory for the miners needed more than just empty words of support, trade union leaders worked very hard in keeping the rest of the working class from entering the battle on the side of the miners thus forcing them into isolation and the resulting defeat.

The same happened with the printers dispute at Wapping, the state and the labour leadership played their role on the side of capital in opposition to the needs of workers.

In every dispute that has arisen since those days all that is needed is the prospect of the threat of the anti-union laws and the trade union leaders run for cover trying to call off every dispute. But what happens to the workers? They cannot run and hide in some fancy union office - no, they have to face up to the ravages of Thatcherism.

Not one labour or trade union bureaucrat has, in the last ten years, been able to stop Thatcherism. The only thing that Thatcher fears is the working class. The working class at the moment is a class without leadership. There are many small groups all claiming to have the right answers, but on their own they will build nothing.

It is in this context that the question of the independent labour movement poses itself against and despite the Labour Party.

As revolutionary Marxists we commit ourselves, wherever it is possible, to defend the economic and political rights of the working class with the Labour Party. However, this does not mean entryism in place of having an independent political party. Independent parties, whatever their size, are the future form of the present struggles. They must develop and pose themselves as a political reality. In this context there is also the question of electoral tactics: it is a must that the revolutionary groups and parties establish an electoral front.

*Peter Rickard*

# NAMIBIA

In May the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) was launched as the major trade union federation in Namibia. It embraces unions in the public sector and in the mining, food, metal, and transport industries. 50,000 workers are organised in these unions. The total population of Namibia is just over a million.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has issued a statement explaining to African workers and workers in other countries that: *"Botha and the bosses want the kind of 'independence' for Namibia that they gave to bantustans like Ciskei and Venda."*

COSATU declared that: *"The oppressed people of Namibia want real independence from South African oppression and exploitation. They want to take power into their own hands to build a Namibia that will put the interests of the oppressed people first."*

The Namibian people are defending themselves against the plans of the South African apartheid government which has put into operation a programme of privatisation and is accused of preparing for the future election by registering South African forces and Unita soldiers as voters.

The railway system has already been sold and COSATU reports that: *"Hospitals are apparently being sold to American and Italian companies and even some schools have been sold to the capitalists."*

There have been several mass rallies against privatisation and against armed attacks on the people. Crops and homesteads have been destroyed and people killed and assaulted.

COSATU appeals to the South African workers, declaring: *"Workers in Namibia suffer worse repression than workers in South Africa. Workers are more exploited in Namibia. Wages are low and working conditions are bad. Average wages are around R150 a month (about £20 per month). Workers in Namibia also do not have the same trade union rights that we have won."*

Trade union leaders in Britain should blush with shame at the appeal of COSATU. A number of trade union activists are raising money for Namibian trade unionists who have recently appealed for assistance. Their activity is to be commended but it is an indictment of the British trade union movement if the prospect can only be to give a van to assist the trade unionists in Namibia and even that depends on the activities of a handful of trade union rank and filers.

Time was, in the fifties and sixties, when the trade union leaders of Britain would give out money eagerly to send teams of trade union leaders to assist the development of un-

ions in African countries. Of course, the leaders were anxious that the new unions should learn the values of the moderation of the British trade union bureaucracy. In other words their mission was one of corrupting the new union leaders into the ways of class collaboration.

The masses in Namibia are not so enamoured of such collaboration. Those internationalists in the British trade union movement, those who earnestly desire to assist the Namibian struggle, must demand that their trade unions immediately give at least worthwhile financial help to build the Namibian unions.



Ben Ulenga - General Secretary Mineworkers Union of Namibia

## MARCH FOR NAMIBIA

### Saturday 24th June Rally at All Saints Oxford Road 11am

Organised by Manchester Namibia Support Group and Anti Apartheid  
c/o One World Shop, 13 Paton St,  
Manchester. M1 2BA.

## SISTER OF THE LONG MARCH

Our deepest sympathies go out to the friends, relations and comrades of Jabu Ndlovu, who was attacked in her home on returning from a NUMSA (National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa) conference on Sunday 21st May.

Jabu is a senior shop steward in the 'Prestige' factory in Pietermaritzburg and toured Britain last year with the 'Sisters of the Long March' play, raising support for the famous SAWCO/BTR strikers.

Somebody threw a gas cylinder into her home - there was an explosion - and a group of people burst in shooting.

Jabu's husband, Jabulani Ndlovu, was killed, along with her eldest daughter, who was just 19 years old. Jabu herself was shot twice in the head. She is now in hospital, in a critical condition. She has recently had pneumonia and received 35% burns over the whole of her body in the attack. Although she has now recovered from the pneumonia she is still too weak for the doctors to remove the bullets from her head.

The funerals of her husband and daughter have had to be called off because the Inkatha warlord 'chief Zuma' has stated that if COSATU and the UDF turn up for a funeral in 'his' town he will kill them all.

The attack took place in Pietermaritzburg but Jabu's home town is a place called Impendle.

Meanwhile, there is an ongoing exchange of letters between COSATU/UDF and Chief Buthelezi, leader of Inkatha. They have been negotiating to end the violence. A few weeks ago they had arranged to have a meeting, Ulundi, which is a stronghold of Inkatha, was proposed by Buthelezi, so that he could claim he'd forced them to come. This was rejected by COSATU and the UDF.

The people of Pietermaritzburg are very angry and the situation is tense. Trade union activists have been fleeing the town in fear of their lives. The workers in NUMSA are discussing what action they will take.

As we go to press we have yet to hear what form of action/support they are asking of the trade union movement in Britain. Whatever call is made, these barbaric attacks on union activists must be stopped and every effort must be made to assist our brothers and sisters in defending themselves.

**An injury to one is an injury to all.**

# Independence for

Hundreds of Kurdish refugees have arrived in Hackney, East London, since 2nd May 1989. They are fleeing from the war zone in South East Turkey and persecution by the Turkish Government and its' armed forces.

Over 4,000 Kurds have been killed in the last year. Amnesty International estimates that in the last eight years, 250,000 have been tortured. As the refugees continue to arrive in Britain longing for a life free from persecution the Tory Government are preparing to open up prisons in the South of England in which to intern them. We must not let this happen - we must house the refugees.

The Kurdish Workers' Association and the Halkevi Community Centre have battled against the odds to feed and accomodate all the refugees, some with families and children. But much more help is needed.

A Kurdish Refugees Support Group was set up on 5th May. They are appealing for money, heaters, food and cooking equipment, bedding and clothing, toiletries and access to bathrooms, volunteers and above all accomodation.

Offer your support to: **Kurdish Workers Association, 531a Kingsland Road, London E8. 01 254 0442/7558**  
**Kurdish RefugeeSupport Group, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8. 01 249 6930**

## Kurdish leader calls on unions to support an independent Kurdistan

Socialist Voice interviewed Ishan Dadie, Coordinator of the Kurdistan Workers' Association.

The Kurdistan Workers' Association and the Kurdish Refugee Support Group, recently set up in the London borough of Hackney, are fighting against the deportation of Kurdish refugees and for the British settlement of refugees fleeing persecution at the hands of the Turkish military and the genocide of the regimes of Iraq, Syria and Iran, which occupy and border Kurdistan.

Ishan explained why there had been a continuous stream of Kurdish refugees fleeing to Europe:

"The military coup d'etat increased the persecution of the Kurds - they began to flee to every country in Europe. Very few then came to Britain. Britain was the only European country not to condemn the take-over by the military.

"I would remind the British Government of its historical responsibilities - Britain and France divided Kurdistan at Lausanne in 1923.

"In March 1988, after the bombing of Halabya, a town in the Kurdistan area of Iraq, the British press was full of stories about the atrocities on the Kurds. But a £400 million



February 1989 - Kurdish and Turkish workers march against police raids and deportations in London.

**"There are fifteen million Kurds, but officially they do not exist ...Kurdish associations are forbidden."**

credit was granted to Iraq by the British Government and British firms went with enthusiasm to a trade exhibition in Baghdad. The british labour movement should not be part of this hypocrisy. It should denounce it.

"For thousands of years, Kurds of various religions have lived together in peace. There are Christian Kurds and Muslim Kurds. There are Kurds who are Zoroastrianists - one of the oldest religions in the world, which goes back to the seventh century BC. There are also Jewish Kurds."

Ishan continued: "There are fifteen million Kurds, but officially they do not exist. In Turkey they are officially referred to as Eastern Turks or Mountain Turks. Kurdish associations are forbidden.

"The Government appointed a Governor

General over the Kurdish areas. He has powers above the President of Turkey. He has uncurbed powers of arrest and powers to order the removal of populations. He is not accountable to Parliament.

"With its aim to destroy the Kurdish nation, the Turkish Government has now raised all villages to the ground which are within ten miles of the Iraqi border. Iraq has followed the same policy seeking to separate the Kurds in Turkey from the Kurds in Iraq."

Ishan accused the Turkish Government of depopulating the Kurdish areas. He spoke of the South East Anatolian project which aims to create a huge artificial lake in the Urfa region of Turkey. With irrigation, it can be a very rich agricultural area, with a harvest three or four times a year.



# Kurdistan

"The dams for the lake" declared Ishman "are being built with money from the IMF, the World Bank and the multinational banks. Japanese, British, American and German representatives are in the area. At least fifty two villages will go under water as well as two towns. One town - Samsat - has a history of six or seven thousand years. The Government is not offering homes for displaced Kurdish people in Kurdish areas. Their policy is to split up and disperse the Kurds. There are now two million Kurds outside Turkish Kurdistan - one million of them are in Istanbul. There are 400,000 in Germany.

"The Government has been implementing a deforestation plan for a large area where the Kurdish guerrillas have bases. Troops have been clearing the Kurdish inhabitants from the area. Those in the villages who refuse to move are arrested and tortured as guerilla collaborators. To terrorise other villagers the military then take them round as an example."

Ishan talked of the multinationals benefiting from the atrocities of the Turkish Government against the Kurds.

Confirmation comes from the "Transnationals Information Centre". Their Bulletin No. 4 for December 1987 to February 1988 was devoted to the powerful Unilever company which is the world's largest tea buyer and distributor.

Unilever has built an exceptionally large factory in Turkey. The bulletin declared: "The Turkish Government has passed a law which will enable it to evacuate up to 9.3 million people living in the highlands of eastern Turkey. The plan is to cut down vast areas of forest, encourage agricultural settlers, and replant with commercial forests. The Kurdish community is a particular target of these evictions as the Government aims to break up Kurdish cultural and political organisations..."

"This is an extremely attractive market: Turkey's population of 50 million drinks 120,000 tonnes of tea a year, making it the eighth largest consumer in the world."

According to the Unilever magazine: "The urgency of the operation and size of the plant indicate the company's determination to gain a place in the quality end of the market..."

"Another important consideration is likely to be nearby export markets, notably Syria and Iran, which would look more favourably on exports from Turkey than from the UK. Perhaps too, the company has an eye on the outcome of Turkey's application to join the European Economic Community (EEC) -

which would make it the only tea growing country within the Community and open it to favourable tariffs.

"...The forced migration will cause suffering to millions, and will affect the Kurdish community in particular..."

Ishan Dadie ended the interview by declaring:

"The British labour movement should take a stand on Kurdistan and support the Kurdish liberation struggle. When is it going to take some action against our oppression and the destruction of our people?"

"We call on the TUC General Council and the NEC of the Labour Party to declare unqualified support for Kurdish national liberation. The Kurdish issue is the apartheid issue of Turkey and we think that rank and file members of the Labour Party and the trade union movement should mobilise in defence of the Kurdish nation."

The Kurdistan Workers' Association has every right to call on the British working class to assist them.

To prosecute the interests of profit an alliance of transnational firms and a corrupt, brutal government is destroying the Kurdish nation.

Only cowardice and opportunist chauvinism of those who call themselves socialists in the British trade union movement will prevent them from rallying to the cause of these Kurdish refugees and demanding their unconditional asylum in Britain ■

## MODEL RESOLUTION

This meeting notes that hundreds of refugees have recently fled from the Kurdistan region of Turkey to Britain. We recognise that they are attempting to escape torture and political persecution by the Turkish Government. This meeting:

1. Condemns the policies of the Turkish Government which is forcing Kurdish people to flee from their homes.
2. Demands that the British Government gives the refugees permanent residence and allows their families to come and stay with them.
3. That the Government provides the refugees and their families with adequate accommodation and benefits.
4. Demands that the Union nationally publicises the case of the refugees and supports their demands.
5. Agrees a donation of £..... to the Kurdistan Refugees Support Group.

## HUNDREDS OF ILLEGAL DEPORTATIONS

Sue Gwyer

Francis Okanlami's deportation order was illegally served, the Appeal Court adjudicated on 15th May.

A leaked document from the Home Office makes it clear that immigration officers cannot issue a deportation order. Only the Home Secretary or Home Office officials can take such powers to decide to deport. This means that hundreds of people have been illegally deported since immigration rules were changed nine months ago.

The decision in August; to empower immigration officers to deport people without reference to the Home Secretary or special officials, is against the law, says the document from the Home Office's legal advisors' branch to B3, the deportation division.

The document supports the view of advice workers that immigration officers have been exceeding their powers since the rules were changed, by turning up at peoples doors with deportation orders. Deportation orders have sometimes been signed just hours after a period of leave to remain in the country has expired.

The powers of immigration officers as set out in the 1971 Immigration Act "...do not include the power to decide to deport."

In 1988 1,388 people were deported, a 50% increase on 1987, when 923 were deported.

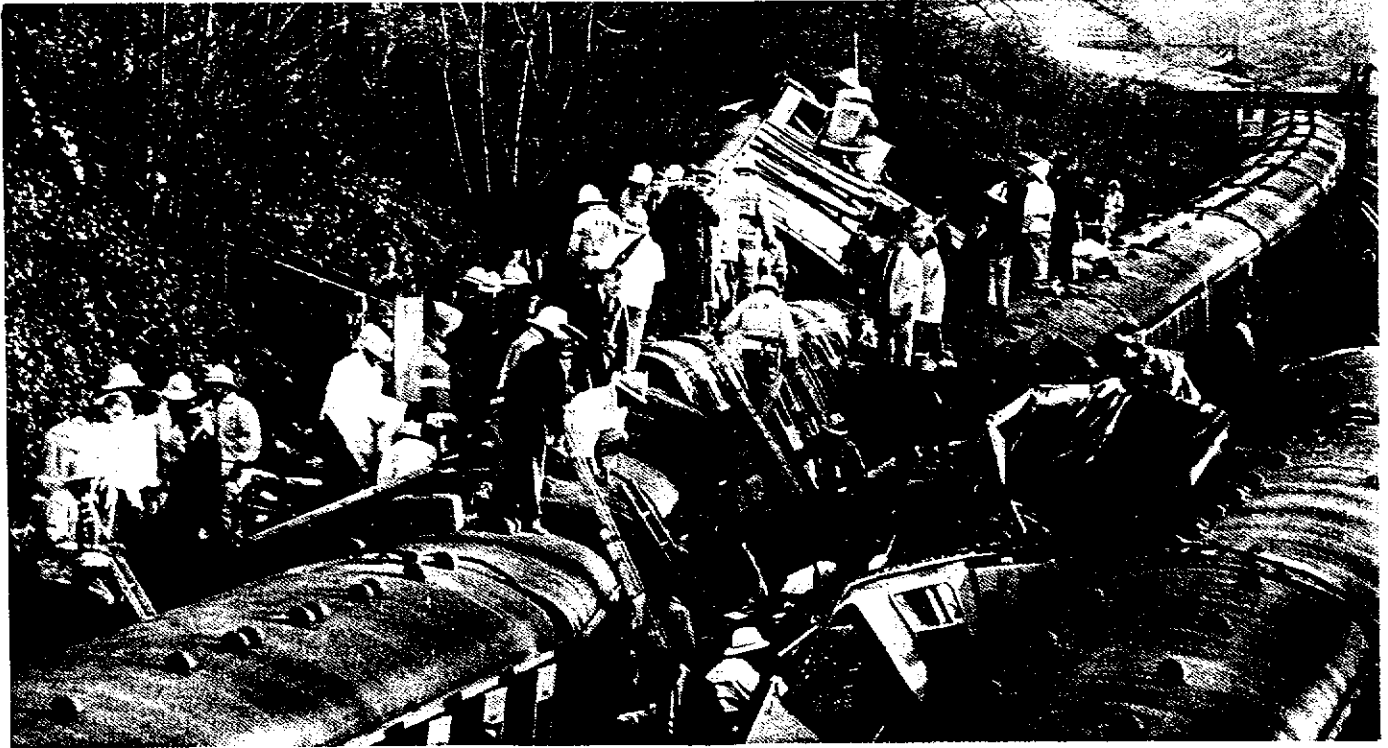
The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants believes that the delegation of powers to immigration officers together with the removal of rights to appeal is directly responsible for the sudden rise in deportations.

The Home Office will now move to serve the deportation order on Francis 'legally'. The trade union and wider labour movement has the responsibility to publicise and mobilise against the racist immigration laws which, extreme as they are, are being broken and illegally extended by her majesty's immigration officials. We must demand appeals for all those 'illegally' deported in the last nine months. We must force the question of immigration, nationality and deportation onto the agendas of all trade unions ■

STOP THE DEPORTATIONS!

# SAFETY ON THE LINE

Challenge British Rail's plans - build a joint union fightback



Socialist Voice interviewed Peter Grant, a train driver, member of Manchester ASLEF and Secretary of the Local Department Committee (joint shop stewards) over the movement developing amongst railworkers for a united fight against British Rail.

**SV:** Why was the joint ballot between the NUR and ASLEF a good idea?

**PG:** Well, because it got unity between the two unions. The fact that ASLEF members say the NUR scabbed on us in 1955 and 1982 and the NUR quote other examples where ASLEF did the same. This has always been something that plagued the railway industry.

**SV:** Does the ballot reflect the growing support for unity between the two unions?

**PG:** There is a realisation that unity has been needed for a good few years now. The unions have organised at a national level in the federation and that has begun to filter through to the thinking at local level. People can be easily divided by using things that have happened in the past to argue against action but it is not difficult to get people at a local level to understand that unity is vital.

**SV:** What's the managements' offer?

**PG:** Management offered 6.5% last November and gave the rail unions twelve

months notice of their intention to scrap the national bargaining machinery. Since, the unions have rejected the abolition of the national bargaining machinery and have been arguing over pay. The Railway Board upped the offer to 7%, which seems to be the magic figure offered to public sector workers, without interference from No. 10! That was totally rejected as unrealistic, because it is below inflation which now stands at about 8%. The whole union campaign on railway pay was centred around the fact that British Rail has traditionally been a low paid industry and it was time that this was changed.

**SV:** How would the management deal affect the safety of the railways?

**PG:** Last year, the chairman of the Railway Staff National Joint Council, which arbitrates on pay, declared that the fact that British Rail was a low paid industry affected the safety of the line.

That's obviously been proved by the Clapham disaster. Traditionally, railway workers have had to work excessive hours in order to boost their pay up to reasonable levels, the majority of railworkers being on a basic pay of below £100 per week. In order to live they have to work twelve hours a day; they have to work their rest days; Sundays. They are actually working twelve hours a day, week in-week out, for months on end. When this happens they become worn out and tired and start making mistakes. That's

what caused the disaster at Clapham. It's more serious on the operating side, where drivers have to have an extremely high level of concentration at all times. As soon as that concentration lapses mistakes are made. The normal mistake is that you miss a platform, you can misjudge the breaking or pass a red signal. It could lead to a serious collision. Excessive hours should be stopped.

**SV:** What do they want at a local level?

**PG:** What British Rail is attempting to do is split the bargaining machinery down to local units and local sectors to line it up ready for privatisation. At the moment everything is conducted from a local level up to the national. What they want is to give the power to local area managers to decide on everything, including rates of pay. They talk about pay rates being competitive with the needs of the market which obviously means that in London, for instance, where they are short of guards, they will pay more than in Manchester where there is greater unemployment. And where the provincial network does not make the same amount of money as, say Network South East, they will want to pay less. That means you could have two train drivers working the same train on different rates of pay.

They haven't come to us with any suggestions on health and safety. They have no idea how health and safety is going to operate after 1st November of this year.

At the moment there is the LDC which is four members elected by the drivers at Manchester Piccadilly. Longsight have an LDC of four, Victoria have an LDC of four. The LDC's meet management to sort out local issues, rostering etc. One of them is a health and safety representative. The next stage up is a Sectional Council, covering a much wider area, and if this body cannot resolve a dispute then it goes to national level. Pay and conditions are negotiated at a national level. What the Railway Board is proposing is that all this is abolished. Local areas will be changed and the train crews will elect one representative to go onto an Area Council to negotiate with management and that person does not have to be a member of a trade union.

**SV: What needs to be done now that ASLEF is not going ahead with the ballot?**

**PG:** In my opinion what we need to do is to put pressure on the Executive to call an immediate ballot on the pay issue. They cannot overturn the Annual Conference decision not to separate the issues of pay and negotiating machinery but the decision does not mention what should be done about the pay. They have said that the issue of scrapping negotiating machinery will be balloted in July. Now is the time to strike, we must link up with the NUR ballot. The immediate task is to put pressure on leaders by putting resolutions through branches demanding a ballot on pay.

Long term, the rank and file in ASLEF need to organise separate of the union structures so that this sort of confusion does not happen again. The left wing in the union should organise itself for national conference to get policies through that are fighting policies that will take us forward not backwards. This withdrawal of the ballot might have been done for good reasons because they did not think they should link two issues together. What, in effect, they have done, is sabotage the joint union campaign which was more important than the discussion on whether the two issues should be linked. They have sacrificed the possibility of winning to the whims of argument in conference.

London transport members of ASLEF have probably shown us the way forward in the fact that they have taken unofficial action organised by the rank and file. They managed to completely circumvent the law because London Regional Transport cannot find anyone to slap a writ on so nobody can be sequestered. No actual names can be produced in a court of law.

Arguments on whether to strike or not, based on the legal considerations, have to be overcome. If we do not win the fight against the new machinery we might as well pack up as trade unionists■

## MANCHESTER METRO LINK

**SV: "What are the dangers for the public and the railworkers in the new Metro Link?"**

**PG:** "The Metro Link is the new tram system that is going to operate in Manchester. There will be a small section of what we call 'on street running' that will see lines on the streets in the centre of Manchester, linking Manchester Piccadilly, Victoria and Altrincham. The majority of the system will run on the existing system.

"From our side there will be job losses; Bury depot will become none existent, Altrincham will go the same way. As the system expands to the Rochdale loop line; to Hadfield and Glossop; Rose Hill and New Mills; it will affect Piccadilly because that covers the majority of the work we do.

"Our concern is the agreement between the railway unions and British Rail over the conditions of service connected to running this system. The running of the Metro Link has been put out to contract. British Rail and some building firm have got together in a consortium and called it British Rail Light. They are asking for a single union deal, compulsory overtime working and various other unsavoury conditions like complete flexibility. Drivers will be asked to sweep platforms if they are not required for train driving or to clean out the trains and collect tickets. Supervisors will be required to know how to drive trains. Maintenance staff will be required to drive trains. The demarcation lines that are part of our agreement with British Rail will go completely.

"What worries us a great deal is the compulsory aspect of overtime. There is a clause in the agreement which we call the 'good boy clause' where you will lose 4% of your pay if you refuse at anytime to work overtime. This is a scheme which allows management to make staff do what they want. A driver might feel incapable, through tiredness, of taking another train out. If management insist and he refuses he will lose 4% of his pay. He will have to choose between the dangers of taking a train out or loss of wages.

"This threatens directly the safety of the travelling public. In fact if the clause is adopted then I would say the Metro Link would be unsafe. Local Authorities initiated this link but because the Government has insisted on tendering they are not interested in the operating side, that is the working conditions we are going to suffer.

"Local Authorities should argue with us against these working conditions which will endanger the safety of the travelling public in their cities■

## International COURIER

Now for the first time  
in English  
the international  
theoretical and political journal  
of the IWL

We are extremely proud to announce the publication of the "International Courier" (Correo Internacional) in English. It is the theoretical and political journal of the International Workers League - Fourth International (the IWL).

It is a journal which confronts the tasks of building a Trotskyist International and its aim is to aid the construction of sections of the IWL in every country of the world.

This issue contains articles on Nicaragua, Brazil, Palestine and Poland. It contains first hand experience of the actual conditions and problems that face the building of mass movements and a trotskyst leadership.

We live in times that give unprecedented opportunities to trotskysm. We in no measure support the prevailing attitude of pessimism or of lack of faith in the revolutionary role of the working class.

We make a bold claim that nothing quite like this exists within the workers movement in Britain. The Courier becomes a vital part of our publications in Britain, supplementing the Socialist Voice.

As our sections grow, so our journal, helping in confronting the real tasks of the world's oppressed masses will be read by wider layers of the workers movement.

This journal is especially welcome in Britain because of the need to rediscover and develop the internationalist consciousness of the working class.

One of the main questions that we face in Britain is how to maintain and extend workers' democracy within the organisations of the class. In one form or another workers are demanding this democracy all over the globe, from the bureaucratised workers states to South Africa, from the United States to Latin America.

We direct our readers' attention to the article on Argentina, *The Primary Elections of the United Left* and urge all socialists to prepare for the outcome of the growing revolutionary crisis in Argentina which could see, for the first time, a revolution being lead by a Trotskyist Party as part of a Trotskyist International.

We urge all socialists to subscribe to and read our International Courier.

available from the ISL  
£2+ 26p p&p

# UNEMPLOYED & EMPLOYED FIGHT WORKFARE

David Dunnico on the rank and file fight against government slave labour schemes

The Governments' Work-for-Dole scheme, Employment Training (ET), is running into problems.

In Manchester, the largest voluntary sector scheme, Council for Social Aid, has gone into voluntary liquidation. They didn't want to go down the same road as neighbouring Churches Work Scheme, which ran up debts of £80,000, and recently laid off half its' staff.

Nationally, McAlpines, the builders have pulled out before taking on a single trainee. Sainsbury's, after hawking around our cities for free advertising space, promising the workers without the jobs - the jobs without the wages - are still waiting for their first trainee!

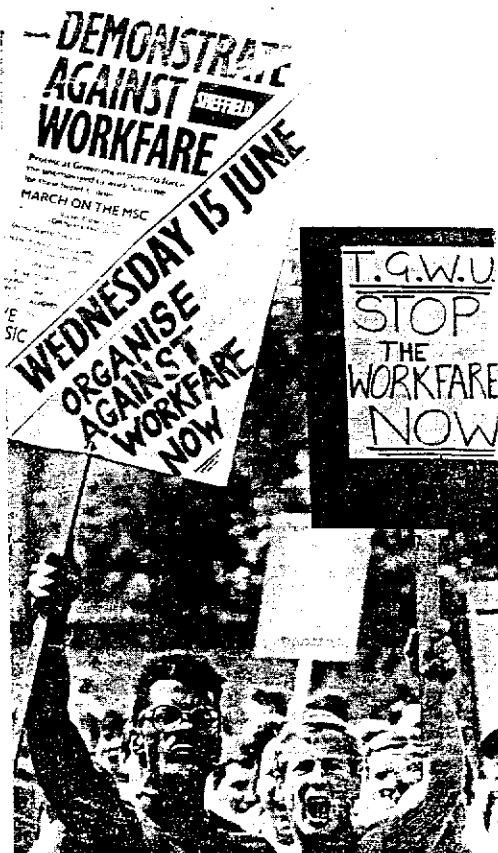
Workers, who ran the schemes, are now facing the prospect of becoming participants themselves. They have learned the lesson that ET is not just an attack on the unemployed. Staff in Job Centres and Dole Offices, teachers and lecturers, construction and council workers are all directly affected by the scheme.

Seventy per cent of scheme placements are with building firms, which says a lot about the quality of training.

The construction industry provides a shining example of what ET is really all about. In the North West Laing's ET participants are being sub-contracted out to Gallingsfords - so Laing's are selling labour that they get for free to sub-contractors who use the ET'ers for general labouring - clear job substitution - and what about health and safety - where do the trainees stand if injured on site?

UCATT and TGWU activists have waged a fight against the 'lump' within the industry. Laing's don't need to offer unemployed labourers money on top of their social for work on the side; the Governments' Training Agency have saved them the expense and trouble - ET has 'legalised' the lump.

Employment Training is collapsing - not



because of action by the trade union leaders - but because the unemployed recognise the real aim of the scheme and are refusing to enlist and because the Tories are not yet ready to make it compulsory, like they have YTS. But ET will not be allowed to die quietly like its fore-runner, JTS, the Tories have too much riding on it.

The only way to stop ET and all other attempts at forced work conscription is to take action to defeat the schemes. The only ones who can defeat them are the working class and their organisations - the ones workfare is designed to enslave.

As part of the campaign against 'workfare' strikes and demonstrations are being organised for June 15th.

Last year 3,000 people marched on the

Governments' Manpower Services Commission HQ in Sheffield. This year a series of local actions are planned. These have received the support of numerous CPUSA, TGWU and NALGO Branches, showing that employed workers are recognising the attack that the schemes represent on those in work.

The introduction of ET into the Civil Service this month means CPUSA members, in particular, are threatened. They have been fighting the introduction of compulsory YTS into the Civil Service - June 15th gives them a focus for fighting ET.

Support the strikes and demonstrations in your area - if nothings organised then travel to a demo or organise something yourselves. Build the links between the employed and the unemployed.

June 15th is the opportunity to show not only the Tories but the labour movement that the schemes can be defeated.

## DEMONSTRATE

**LONDON**  
ASSEMBLE 2pm  
Camden Town Hall  
Bidborough Street  
Kings Cross

**LIVERPOOL**  
ASSEMBLE 12 noon  
St Georges Plateau  
March to Pier Head

**MANCHESTER**  
ASSEMBLE 11.30am  
Bridge St  
[rear of Central M/cr College]

**NATIONAL THURSDAY FOR MORE INFO**  
**DAY OF ACTION JUNE 15TH CONTACT**  
**PHIL GRIFFIN**  
**061 736 1407 X 34**