

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

MEXICO 86

The real Mexico

See this week's centre pages



Cut Botha's lifeline!

About £1.2 billion a year — that's the British bosses' pay-off from apartheid. According to the investors themselves, British capitalists account for 45 per cent of all foreign investment in South Africa.

Britain's wealthy classes have a total of over £10 billion invested in the racist state — and, with its super-exploitation of black labour, South Africa until recently has been one of the world's most profitable economies.

That is why the Tories will only apply cosmetic sanctions. But working-class action can cut Botha's lifeline.

British capitalism's strong links with South Africa mean that boycotts by British workers of trade with apartheid, and links with workers employed by the same multinationals, could be a mighty blow to the economic base of the racist tyranny.

More on South Africa pages 2&3

Repression in South Africa is now worse than at any time since the 1960s. Thousands have been arrested under the nationwide State of Emergency imposed on 12 June.

Supporters of the United Democratic Front, trade union militants, Black Consciousness activists, and revolutionary socialists have all disappeared. Many others have gone into hiding.

But the workers are fighting back. Workplace occupations and strikes are sweeping through the Transvaal.

So solidarity is more urgent than ever. The Anti-Apartheid demonstration on Saturday 28 June should be the start for a new cam-



South African youth bury a comrade

paign.

Trade unionists and anti-apartheid activists must organise in the workplaces. Trade unions should boycott all South African trade. Unions in Scandinavia have done this, and Dunnes Stores workers in Dublin have been on strike for a

year to have South African goods boycotted.

Direct contact between British and South African workers can help to develop this kind of solidarity action. Speaking tours by South African workers are enormously effective.

And our solidarity must be with *all* those fighting apartheid and suffering under the Emergency. All the political currents who are being hit by the repression — trade unionists and Black Consciousness as well as the ANC — deserve our wholehearted support.

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

WORKERS' BOYCOTT NOW!

WORLD Brief

Torture in S Korea

AMNESTY International confirms that hundreds of people are imprisoned each year in South Korea for criticising the government.

Confess

Some are tortured until they falsely confess plotting to overthrow the government or to spying for North Korea. Their 'trials' are a farce.

"You're a fish on the chopping block and we only have to serve you up for dinner", high school

teacher Lee Kwang-ung was told by his torturers during interrogation.

His 'crime'? He was accused of reading poetry and books frowned on by the authorities, listening to North Korean broadcasts, and criticising the government. Convicted in 1983, he is serving a seven year sentence.

Electric shock, beatings and deprivation of food and sleep are routine, according to Amnesty's new report, South Korea: Viol-

ations of Human Rights. Prisoners also have their heads immersed in water, are suffocated with wet towels, or are hung from a rod and spun round.

Amnesty reports cases of prisoners saying in court that their confessions were false and the result of torture — and then being convicted on the sole basis of those confessions.

South Korean law contains safeguards against torture, but only on paper.

Assembly in exile

When Loyalist politicians staged a sit-in at the old Stormont parliament building they were forcibly evicted by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) on Tuesday morning. The Unionists were protesting at the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly, when the RUC baton-charged them.

The Assembly, elected four years ago, has been dissolved by the British government because it had become a mere hard-line Orange rump.

The constitutional SDLP as well as the Republicans had boycotted it from the start. Six months ago even the small non-sectarian Alliance party withdrew.

Probably the spur that decided King and Thatcher to abolish it now is that elections are due in the Autumn, elections that would have given expression to Protestant opposition to the Anglo-Irish deal. So the British government chose to do away with it.

Loyalist leader Ian Paisley called for the Assembly to carry



on as normal and 23 Unionist MPs remained in the chamber in defiance of the dissolution order, on 23 June.

Dublin

Paisley claimed that the Queen, who signed the order, was acting under the direction of Dublin ministers. And he threatened mass Protestant action: "The time has come for every

Loyalist to get to know the Loyalists in their street and to combine, street by street, area by area, town by town, until the entire Protestant population are able to mobilise at a moment's notice and take action by force of their numbers, for the only thing we have left is the force of our numbers."

The former Assembly representatives plan to continue meeting — at Belfast's Town Hall.

Divorce in Ireland

Southern Ireland votes this Thursday, 26th, on a proposal from the Conservative Fine Gael/Labour coalition government to make divorce legal.

Ireland is unique among West European countries in banning divorce in its constitution; but it is also unique in having over 70% of its people attending Mass each Sunday. The divorce referendum, like the referendum in 1983 on whether or not to strengthen the existing ban on abortion by writing it into the constitution, is a major test of strength between the Catholic hierarchy and secular democracy.

The implications for women are perhaps greater than in the abortion referendum. The, whatever way the vote went,

abortion would remain illegal. It is possible for Irish women to come to Britain for abortions and many thousands of them do.

There is no such escape on divorce. Pro-divorce campaigners estimate that some 70,000 women whose marriages have broken down are unable to remarry because of the divorce ban. And no-one knows the number of women held in subjection to brutal or hostile husbands by the law and the power of Catholic "public opinion".

Modest

The government's proposal is a modest one, allowing divorce only after the marriage has been irretrievably broken for five

years. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is campaigning in favour of it, and the major opposition party, Fianna Fail, is officially neutral.

In statements from the bishops and archbishops, however, and in sermons from thousands of pulpits, the clergy has hammered home the message that "God says 'no' to divorce". Opinion polls show the majority for divorce, once substantial, narrowing as voting day approaches.

A vote against divorce will be harmful not only within the South, but also for the prospect of Irish unity. It cannot but convince Northern Protestants, already inflamed by the Anglo-Irish deal, that Dublin is under Rome Rule.

Terror in Peru



Peruvian paras yomping

At least 250 members of the Peruvian guerrilla group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) have died following the brutal military suppression of a prison revolt. The army's intervention in the prisons accompanies an increased presence on the streets as the Peruvian government attempts to clamp down on Sendero.

According to official figures, 124 were killed in Lurigancho prison, prompting the government to set up an inquiry to investigate 'excesses'. There is to be an investigation of El Frontou, an island prison where even more may have died; the navy has successfully blocked an inquiry.

Occupations sweep South Africa

The fight back

By Tom Rigby

"We have more than half a million members in the most important parts of the economy. And millions of others support us. Any action against our leadership and our organisation will throw this country into chaos."

That's how the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) executive replied to a journalist who asked if Botha and the regime had the strength to crush the growing independent black trade union movement.

Can the South African workers' movement survive the full-scale repression under which at least 3000 opponents of apartheid have so far been jailed? That is the burning central question in the international class struggle today.

According to reports from inside South Africa the workers are fighting back against the State of Emergency and wholesale repression. Our correspondent in the Transvaal writes:

"There are large gaps in the news because of press censorship but in the Johannesburg 'Star' there is a very interesting story about workers occupying a record pressing plant — EMI — to demand the release of a union militant who has been detained.

"Strikes and occupations are spreading against the detention of CCAWUSA (the shopworkers' union) activists. Many chain stores have been affected — OK Bazaars, BNA, Picks n Pay and also El's Dairies.

"At present it is difficult to pick up information about what is going on in the mines."

Since we received this report workers at Woolworths in Johannesburg have joined the sit-ins and the number



Metal workers during a work stoppage

taking action at OK Bazaars has topped 700.

The shopworkers' strikes are a tribute to the strong grass roots organisation of their union CCAWUSA (the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa) whose leadership have faced the full force of state repression.

Facts

Similar strikes and occupations to protest against the State of Emergency and detentions have broken out elsewhere in the country although hard facts are difficult to establish.

It's now possible to put together a rough picture of what happened on June 16, when the State of Emergency was declared.

About 2 million workers took part in the stayaway, even though there are only about 800,000 paid-up unionised workers in South Africa

The stayaway appeared to be strong-

est in those areas where successful stayaways or consumer boycotts have occurred in the past: the Eastern Cape, Pietermaritzburg and Witwatersrand.

These are the area by area figures for the number of workers staying away:

Pietermaritzburg 90%; Witwatersrand 90%; Eastern Cape close to 100%; the Transvaal 50-60%; the Western Cape 50-60%; Greater Durban 60-80%.

In most cases the stayaway was limited to one day.

The response to the stayaway call appears to have been weakest in the mines. Overall, only about 8-10% of black miners struck work.

So the overall picture from inside South Africa is that the workers are fighting back against the State of Emergency, but the industrial action so far appears to be limited and sectional, not yet on a scale great enough to pose a serious threat to the regime.

Repression in South Africa

The worst for 25 years

By Sarah Bates

The number of political activists detained under the latest State of Emergency in South Africa is between three and four thousand.

It is the most serious attempt to suppress the liberation movement since the State of Emergency declared after 69 blacks were massacred at Sharpeville in March 1960, when 22,000 people were detained.

The repression today is much harsher and more dangerous than it was in October 1977, after the petering out of the Soweto student uprising of 1976-7. The large number of trade union militants picked up shows that a central target of the regime now is the South African trade union movement.

The aim of the repression appears to be to paralyse the major political organisations and trade unions by jailing or killing the middle level organisers and militants.

Judging by the large number of documents that have been seized from both trade union and political groups, the regime is planning a major new trial of opponents of Apartheid.

Nearly every union organiser who is not already in detention has gone into hiding. Union offices are deserted. People now enter them only to do urgent business.

The unions may well be able to cope with this situation in the short term but in the long run a union deprived of a central organisational apparatus and forced into a clandestine existence will start to feel the strain and its effectiveness as a working class organisation will be impaired.

Yet the experience of Poland's outlawed trade union, Solidarnosc, outlawed in 1981 but still alive underground, proves how difficult it is for even the strongest police state to stamp out a trade union movement that enjoys mass support and is seen to stand for national liberation.

But right now the fierce repression in South Africa continues to harry the unions and break up their structures.

Over the weekend of 14-15 June the 200 delegates to a COSATU regional conference in Natal were detained. COSATU offices in Durban, Germiston, Pine Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth have been raided. All the people inside were taken away and documents seized.

Hiding

So far only one union, the giant 230,000-strong black miners' union, the NUM, has avoided large-scale repression. While Cyril Ramaphosa, the union's general secretary, has gone into hiding, only one of the union's full time organisers has been picked up.

The Detainees Support Committee have compiled a list of detainees. It breaks down like this: 153 women; 115 academics and students; 65 trade

unionists; 255 community and political activists; 44 clergy and church workers.

The organisation most seriously hit by the clampdown is the United Democratic Front — a broad based anti-apartheid organisation which is supported by trade unions, student, church, youth, women's, community and business groups.

The UDF's national executive and its regional executives have gone into hiding.

Publication of the statements of 47 different anti-apartheid organisations have been banned in the Eastern Cape and of 118 organisations in the Western Cape. These organisations include COSATU, UDF, the Release Mandela Committee, the National Education Crisis Committee and the End Conscription Campaign.

A 9pm to 4am curfew has been declared in the Port Elizabeth area in the Eastern Cape and a similar one declared around Pretoria.

The truth about Inkatha

Much has been made by Thatcher and Reagan and their backers about 'legitimate' black forces in South Africa who should be drawn into negotiations about the future of the country while the ANC is excluded.

One of the groups singled out by the Tories has been the Zulu 'cultural' organisation Inkatha, led by Chief Buthelezi, the boss of KwaZulu Bantustan.

A taste of just how 'peaceful', 'non-violent' and 'legitimate' Inkatha is was provided by this outburst from Inkatha central committee member and KwaZulu MP Thomas Shabulule:

"With this pistol I will leave hundreds of UDF supporters dead on the battlefield. I long for the day there will be open war between Inkatha and the UDF. It will prove who is who in the political battle."

The wolves have been unleashed

Bob Fine, who has visited South Africa twice in the last year, here gives an in-depth account of the crisis of the apartheid state, and the growing shift towards fascism - among whites, and sections of blacks.

Terrible repression has hit South Africa. The new State of Emergency introduced by the minority white regime is the most draconian to date.

The press is not allowed to report any activities of the forces of repression — not even the names of detainees, without permission of the authorities.

The offices of the radical press, like the Weekly Mail, have been entered by the police, and newspapers have been seized.

New legislation has been passed allowing the Minister of Law and Order to declare any area an 'Area of Unrest', and to enforce whatever regulations he wants. The police have been given the power to detain for up to 180 days anyone that they wish to detain.

All rights to judicial review of the security forces has been removed.

The apartheid state has indeed bared its teeth.

Power

Many people talk about the seizure of power by military dictatorship. What the State of Emergency and the new Security and Public Safety laws mean in effect, is that the military shall rule. Military rule is being introduced under the constitutional forms of parliament and the rule of law. The ground was prepared a few years ago with the constitutional reforms of parliament. While the focus was on the establishment of Coloured and Asian parliaments, the drift was vividly shown by the president's overruling of their opposition to the new security legislation. Behind the scenes the military was consolidating its hold.

While apartheid has always been the bastion of institutionalised racism and barbarous exploitation, we now see that the "reform" of apartheid is creating an even worse monster.

Who know what assurances Botha received from his friends in the West — Thatcher, Reagan and co. — before the State of Emergency was declared? In any case he called the bluff of the Western governments.

So far, despite a lot of huffing and puffing about sanctions he has got away scot free. Those who still rely on Thatcher, Reagan and co. to pressurise the apartheid tiger to lie on its back with its claws in the air, now have a faith belied by the evidence.

In South Africa one of the most worrying developments is that of fascism. On the Afrikaner side, the AWB under Terre Blanche, is drawing considerable numbers out of Botha's Nationalist Party to its Swastika banner. It is reported to have great influence in the army and especially with the police. It threatens Botha's own constituency from within. The lunacy of its separatist philosophy and the pure Afrikaner State should not be equated with political impotence. White South Africa is still a force to be reckoned with.

In Natal, Buthelezi's Zulu Nationalist Movement is mobilising brutally against the independent trade unions of COSATU and the UDF. He set up the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) in direct opposition to COSATU. It is clearly a sweetheart union. Its general secretary is Simon Conco, a Zulu MP and ... businessman.

it receives support from the infamous head of the International Section of the American AFL-CIO trade union confederation, Irving Brown; and the director of the Afro-American Labour Committee (AALC), Patrick O'Farrell. Its slogan of 'Jobs not Hunger' is directed against the disinvestment campaign, blamed for black unemployment, and in particular against COSATU's support for the campaign.

Puppet chiefs however are not necessarily impotent. There were 70,000 Zulus bussed into the inaugural rally of UWUSA. At the end of the rally 10,000 migrant workers marched back to their hostels in an around Durban in formation.

"Liberal" support for Buthelezi has rubbed off on press agencies like Reuters. Thus one report of Reuters declares "two black South African trade unions yesterday wrangled about who was responsible for clashes at Hloboane goldmine, in which eleven people were killed. UWUSA said its workers were attacked by men of the NUM".

Denunciation

Trade union leaders like Jeffrey Vilance, former president of MAWU and ironically himself an Inkatha member, have been attacked. Buthelezi, for all his denunciation of ANC violence has mobilised a highly violent reaction on the basis of a refurbished tribal traditionalism.

This kind of quasi-fascist black reaction is not limited to the Zulus. In the Ciskei, Sebe has been in the forefront of instituting terror in the homelands, albeit in a way far less sophisticated than Buthelezi.

What has been going on in Kwa-Ndebele provides yet another example of the growth of traditionally based vigilantism of the right. Kwa-Ndebele is the "fifth of the homelands to receive independence". The apartheid regime proclaimed this "reform" as "requested by the legitimate leaders of KwaNdebele", and an example of "one man, one vote" in a plural democracy.

It forgot to mention the fact that of the 72 man assembly, only 16 places were to be filled by election, and the rest by nominees, administrators and chiefs. "One man, one vote" means just that, excluding women.

In the words of the new chief minister and businessman Simon Skosare, "women first have to be taught by their husbands how to vote". Well, not all the people of Kwa-Ndebele went wild about



South African police in Johannesburg their newly imposed independence.

The Pedi tribespeople of neighbouring Moutse, now to be incorporated into the new independent state of KwaNdebele, revolted. So too did many of the youth of KwaNdebele itself. A vigilante organisation was set up by Skosare, called Inbhokoto. David Beresford of the Guardian accurately called it a "bunch of thugs, enjoying official patronage".

It seeks to impose its own type of tribal fundamentalism, even enforcing certain so-called "tribal customs" of circumcision of all the men in the area. Inbhokoto has been reported to have carried out savage attacks on both the Pedi and the youth who are "resisting independence". It would seem that hundreds have been killed, in what the state likes to call "black on black violence".

Crossroads

A final example is Crossroads. There, a vigilante organisation has been set up by a racketeer by the name of Ngxobon Gwana, who has run Crossroads for many years with his own private police force and under state tutelage. His vigilante organisation receives active support from the South African Defence Force (SADF). Amid the squalor of Crossroads squatter camp Ngxobon Gwana owns a huge mansion and drives around in a gold plated car.

His source of revenue? A tax imposed upon squatters who want to come into the camp; fines imposed by his own court; his

own businesses and services; also, to some extent, I believe, rents on the land.

Attacks on radical youth have been especially vicious. Scores have been killed and thousands forcibly removed from Crossroads by the novel method of burning them out.

The government's long-planned urban removal of squatters from Crossroads is being forced in barbarous fashion. The vigilantes are mobilised on the basis of fear, patronage, appeals to traditional authority and in the name of "order", against the "violent excesses of the comrades".

There can be little doubt that the forces of the right are mobilising fast and hard. In the Eastern Cape there are reports of Coloured vigilantes organising in response to the somewhat anarchic militancy of the predominantly African youth who are the backbone of the urban revolts.

What is new is not so much the existence of collaborators in the black population. This is a longstanding fact of life. What is new is the mobilisation of popular support behind these traditionalist leaders of reaction.

The dangers are very real. Critics of apartheid have long talked about fascism in South Africa, but this has been more hyperbole than reality. Now however the spectre of fascism is looming.

It is not inevitable. It depends on the capacity of the liberation movement and the workers' movement to resist.

To this issue of the strengths and weaknesses of the political and trade union opposition I shall return next week.

Whetton's
WEEK

Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

Bad laws must be challenged!

I applaud the 'declaration of intent' for a 24 hour strike in support of the sacked miner, passed last week at the Scottish NUM.

The Scottish NUM's decision to organise a march from Scotland to London through the different coalfields will help get the message home to Haslam, the new chairman of the Coal Board.

If the lads stay down in London perhaps we can have a get together outside Fortress Wapping.

At the Scottish conference there were many appeals for reconciliation with UDM members and talk of winning them back. Nobody needs to tell the Notts miners about the need for unity. We've had to take the unpalatable decision to recruit scabs back into the NUM. It was hard for many to take, but they agreed because of the reality of the situation.

However, there's just no way we'll accept scab leaders like Lynk and Prendergast back into the NUM. What they've done has put them beyond the pale, and we regard them as completely "untouchable".

Colours

At its conference the UDM showed itself up to its own rank and file members. Even UDM members have been saying how appalling it was to see Tory Cabinet ministers and Sir Ian MacGregor get standing ovations. They've shown their true colours.

Last Friday the High Court ripped up the 1946 agreement which gave the NUM sole negotiating rights.

They awarded costs against us and then gave a large hand-out to the UDM. The court's decisions had nothing whatsoever to do with justice, and everything to do with trying to smash up the NUM.

But it did raise interesting questions. If both the NUM and UDM are now going to be recognised, will the NCB recognise two unions in Notts where it now only recognises the scabs' union?

Clearly the bosses want to drive men into the UDM — that's why they talk about a 1% pay rise for us and 6% for them. And last week we also saw writs being taken out against some of the Wapping picket organisers...

I think those writs should be ignored and the issue taken out to the rest of the trade union movement. We need to start going onto the offensive. People are reluctant to go to the TUC because that's the sell-out shop, but we can't let the TUC off the hook.

Challenge

Bad law must be challenged. If it hadn't been in the past we never would have had a trade union movement.

I went to the Yorkshire miners' gala yesterday with the sacked miners from Notts. We had a tremendous reception from them. It was nice to go into the club after the march and speeches and still see young lads defiant. We've seen pit closures and men saying, "sod it", I'm going to take the money and run; it was beautiful to see young lads standing up and saying they were going to fight on.

Over the last week, while the nation riveted its attention on football, state murder on a vast scale has been taking place in South Africa. People want to get their priorities right.

The people of South Africa want to get rid of Botha, of apartheid and the mass exploitation they suffer. Sanctions aren't going to bring that about.

The only way to solve the situation in South Africa is for people to go out on the streets and take power there.

WORKERS' LIBERTY

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September 1985
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Breaking the chains

Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa

Available from Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

GRAFFITI

news they won't print

Loyalty checks at Austin Rover

Austin Rover — the mass-production part of British Leyland cars — is to step up political vetting of new workers.

Everyone who applies for a job in the car factories will have to undergo a two-day assessment, and they'll be asked to bring their spouse, parents, and/or children along, too!

The objective, according to a company official, is to ensure that workers' "aspirations are the same as the company's".

BL has been notorious in recent years for victimising militant workers — Derek Robinson and six other workers, including SO supporter Jim Denham, at Longbridge, and Alan Thornett, a group of Socialist Action supporters, and Bob Cullen at Cowley.



The poorest city. Photo: John Smith, IFL.

Soft Left

Ken Livingstone, former leader of the Greater London Council, and Gavin Strang, a Scottish Labour MP, both want to be Treasurer of the Labour Party.

Strang is backed by the Campaign Group of left MPs and by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Ken Livingstone puts on a left face for his manifesto in Briefing, but evidently the once-notorious 'Red Ken' is now the soft left candidate.

The old safari-jacket, bed-sit style is a thing of the past, too. Livingstone is evading demands from Brent East Labour Party (where he is the Parliamentary candidate) that he follow left MPs like Terry Fields by taking only a workers' wage and turning over the rest of his MP's salary to the party. He moans about the cost of buying a house in Brent, though he has recently received a £60,000 publisher's advance on the book he is writing.

About 2,500 different measures of import restriction have been introduced across the world over the last two years, according to the World Bank.

The pressures for protectionism arising out of the shaky state of world capitalism are still being kept within limits — tariffs on imports in the industrialised countries are still low. But non-tariff restrictions cover much of the EEC's agricultural, textiles, and clothes imports.

These restrictions particularly hit Third World countries.

Takeover

The famous Gdansk shipyard, where Lech Walesa worked, could be taken over by the USSR management, according to the Polish underground paper Wola (translated in 'Voice of Solidarity', May 1986).

A number of Polish enterprises, according to the paper, have already been taken over in this way. The advantage for the Kremlin is that these enterprises have international contracts and thus access to Western technology.

Liverpool

Three economists at the University of Reading have tried to construct a league table of the relative prosperity of the big cities in EEC countries. And Liverpool comes bottom of the list, as the poorest and most run-down of the 103 cities surveyed.

Eight other British cities, and Belfast, are in the bottom 20.

Of the top 20, 11 are West German — headed by Frankfurt — and the rest mostly Italian.

A square

"I was summoned to the Commanding Officer's office to be told that he had just seen a black Grenadier on parade and what could I do about his medical discharge? I told him that . . . he was much fitter than any of the cadet recruits . . . Some weeks later . . . I noticed that the Grenadiers had lost their one black recruit. . . An aptitude-IQ test had discovered that our black recruit was too intelligent for life as a guardsman and he was therefore transferred . . . for training in motor vehicle maintenance."

Such is the story of racism in the army's elite units told by an 'eminent surgeon' in the very Conservative Sunday Telegraph, which also claims that Charlie Big Ears himself is worried by the master-race mentality of the military hierarchy.

"The Guards", one 'senior Army source' told the Telegraph, "will form a square and refuse to budge on this."

And yet some people in the labour movement still believe that this same military hierarchy would cheerfully and peacefully accept socialism legislated through parliament.

The Union of Democratic Mineworkers, at its recent conference where Sir Ian MacGregor was an honoured guest, claimed to have 35,000 members.

True or false? The New Statesman magazine last week had some interesting facts.

British Coal official Kevin Hunt gave a High Court affidavit on 13 May putting UDM membership at 27,000. And NUM receiver Michael Arnold — hardly a biased Scargillite — has estimated the UDM at 18,850 members.

Nukes, technology and the left

Many serious socialists are out of touch with the reality of civil nuclear power. It is argued, for instance, that opposition to nuclear power is a sort of Luddism — an anti-technology struggle; the problem is that safety cannot be guaranteed under capitalism, so what we really need is new technology and socialism.

But this doesn't make sense. Many independent scientists seriously doubt that this technology can ever be safe.

Of course we should not be Luddites about nuclear power. But it is far from clear that even workers' control would mean safe nuclear power.

In any case nothing is guaranteed under capitalism. So we must support movements against nuclear power now.

Better safety provision for nuclear

technology is no answer. Before we reach "nuclear safety" there might have been four or five 'China Syndromes' and Chernobyls across the world. And no safety is mistake-proof.

Building

It is not like fighting for safety helmets on a building site or guards around dangerous machinery. A big accident in non-nuclear industries might kill hundreds or even thousands — but would the surrounding countryside, wildlife, water and thousands, perhaps millions of people be threatened with long-term pollution as they would with a major reactor explosion.

The idea that the enemy is not

nuclear technology, but capitalism is simplistic and naive. There is clear evidence that even the peaceful use of atomic energy threatens us with nuclear catastrophe.

As socialists we should fight not only for working class control of technology, but for working class choice of technology. And, let's face it, there are other, better choices.

The coal industry not only provides relatively safe power, but also happens to be home for many militant, class conscious workers. Safer still are wind, solar and water power. Surely the long-term prospects for these renewable sources of energy are better than the infinitesimal amounts of money capitalism invests in their research?

Yours fraternally,
LIAM CONWAY

Sexist abuse?

Brenda Dean is a reformist trade union leader and has responded to the militant demands of her members as many reformist leaders have done so before.

So what possible justification can there be for patronisingly describing her as a "svelte lady" (front page of SO, 7.6.86)? What possible relevance can this have to our criticisms of her misleadership of SOGAT?

In the past, SO has led the way in arguing against the use of sexist abuse against our enemies (i.e. Thatcher) because it actually demeans the female majority of our working class movement.

I hope the new look SO will not go back to an old style attitude to women.

Yours for socialism,
LES HEARN

Class abuse

*Editor's note: Abuse, yes, but it wasn't sexist abuse. It was class abuse: a comment on this trade union leader's calculated upper-class voice, dress, manner and grooming. Thus "lady". Plainly these are things she works at, and no doubt pays out for. And it was this strikingly posh person who



Dean at SOGAT conference. Photo: J. Harris.

tried to rat on the locked-out printers.

Perhaps any comment on Dean's expensive upper class person, conventionally feminine as it is, risks stirring

up sexist hostility to her, and therefore should be avoided, even if that means ignoring her arresting class image. But that still wouldn't make what we said about Dean "sexist abuse".



MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLIDARITY

The left has missed an ideal opportunity to build local and national anti-apartheid activity.

The ten days of Local Authority Action Against Apartheid, which began on 16 June to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising, should have had every Labour council in Britain organising or sponsoring publicity (public meetings, displays, school special lessons, local authority unions workplace discussions, etc.).

Local anti-apartheid groups could have been built and linked up with local authority workers to demand that Labour councils "put their money

where their mouth is" in fighting apartheid.

Sadly, it looks as though this chance has been lost in many areas. This was to be expected from the Anti-Apartheid Movement's "soft centre" — the Communist Party, Liberals and Kinnockites.

But the sectarian left helped them by dismissing Labour councils as irrelevant or reactionary, and by being more interested in macho "mass action" (demos, etc.) where their paper sellers could pester people with simplistic slogans.

Yours fraternally,
ALAN THEASBY,
Teesside

English chauvinism

Congratulations on the re-launch. I do, however, have some reservations about the paper of 5 June.

The slogan under the masthead, 'For Workers' Liberty East and West', is presumably to make clear our opposition to both capitalism and Eastern bloc state oppression. Unfortunately new readers are going to associate this with the SWP's slogan 'Neither Washington or Moscow', which lends itself easily to English chauvinism.

Furthermore, it will be seized upon by 'Third Worldist' critics of SO, who will say that it's typically Eurocentric in missing out the "South".

Small points, perhaps, but if slogans like this are not crystal clear, as well as being correct, I don't see the point of using them.

Rope

Finally I was concerned about the picture on page 9. It seemed to be a woman tied up with rope. Use of such pictures, (normally chosen by publishers because they exploit), have to be justified by the text, which in this case it wasn't.

Yours fraternally,
STEVE MACARTHUR

The art of the put-down



By Jean Lane

As time went on I got to learn new skills and to know the other workers better. At training school I was learning the basics of brick work, concrete and drain laying.

At work I learned how to saw wood properly, how to knock a chimney breast out, how to carry long pieces of wood without falling over.

I was also learning more and more about the attitudes of sexist men.

On my first day I remember realising that they had been warned a woman was starting. They were all waiting for me to arrive and I got introduced to them all, one by one. No one starting after me got such a reception committee. It was, "All right, mate?" and no more.

Curious

They were all really curious as to what was going to come through the door — "does she look like the back end of a bus?" — and had certainly been discussing it for a few days. No one ever told me what had been said, but, knowing some of them now, it wouldn't take much imagination to work it out.

Dipstick, for instance, (so-called because he was so tall and thin you could almost use him to check the oil) would very tentatively have defended the right of a woman to do such work, but then would quickly have fallen in with the jokes about now being able to have a quick fuck in the bogs before starting the day's work.

He was a very bony, angular young man, a bit like one of those jointed metal rulers. He didn't stand up. He unfolded.

When he went to pick up a brick to clear it he could stand with his legs apart, dead straight; bend from the hips with his back also dead straight, joints cracking. He would grab the brick with both hands like a mechanical digger. As he came back up his face would go through several different contortions; cheeks puffed out, mouth pursed, eyes squinting and brows rapidly moving up and down. And as he clicked back into shape he would blow the air out of his cheeks. Puffing and blowing, he would clean the brick, put it aside, and the whole process would start again.

After about five bricks, he would stand up straight, feet still firmly rooted to the ground, shoulders well back, elbows stuck out to each side, fingers linked together in front of his chest, and say, "Take five, lads, take five." (Five minute break). It was a joy to watch.

He made up for his weird appearance and funny antics by knowing "everybody" . . . personally. He knew the secretary of the local miners' strike committee and he knew the chief of the local fraud squad. And he talked of both as if they were of equal importance in his life. He knew the Coventry boxer Errol Christie, whom he called "Es" and he had had tea with, and given advice to, the lord mayor.

Dippo hated the Tories (Maggie was a "cow") and loyally defended the Labour Party against all comers. But his political fervour would rapidly be turned into a joke in his desperate need to be "one of the lads". Hence my, probably accurate, guess about his attitude to my starting work.

Dippo was everybody's butt and mine, too, I'm afraid. If he joined in with "the kids" about how heavy the work must be for a woman, for example, I would say, "You're not exactly King Kong yourself". And everybody would laugh because they agreed, while possibly thinking that they themselves were.

Cocky

But I had learned at the Post Office, where sexism and sexual harassment was rife, that the quickest and easiest way to put a cocky man down was to make his friends laugh at him. At the Post Office there were other women. You could always get someone to laugh with you or back you up. In this job I was alone so the put-down was an even more necessary tactic.

Then there was Eric the Red. He got this name, not because of any political affiliation, but because he spent all his spare time acting out battles between the roundheads and cavaliers. I don't know who started the nickname but history wasn't a strong point with any of us.

Eric lived for these weekend battles and told us all about them during the week. He really looked the part too. He was a big man with masses of black, wiry hair which exploded in all directions when he washed it. He had a small pointed beard and a moustache, and one roving eye which looked at somebody else while the good eye was looking at you.

Apart from faking battles, Eric went to college in the evenings and was try-

"I had learned at the Post Office that the quickest and easiest way to put a cocky man down was to make his friends laugh at him. At the Post Office there were other women. You could always get someone to back you up. In this job I was alone, so the put-down was an even more necessary tactic"

ing to get to university. He had spent about 25 years in engineering factories and wanted out. Power to his elbow, as they say, but he felt that embarking on an academic life set him above everybody else.

He knew or had an opinion about absolutely everything. He didn't talk to you — he told you, even if he'd walked into the room half-way through a conversation.

You get one everywhere. At some places they are called 'Ino' because these are the words which invariably precede all others. At the Post Office he was called "Aspro" because it gave you a head ache just listening to him. It always is a him. I've never met a female "Ino" yet.

Well, Eric knew everything. He even knew all about sexism and would explain it to me patiently despite the fact that twice a day I would have to tell him "fuck off" for telling the others not to swear in front of a "lady".

Being superior to everybody else in



Women in manual trades: standing alone

the yard, Eric liked to think of himself as a gaffer. He would tell people what to do, including Pete who was the gaffer!

He worried and moaned about how Pete was running the place — like, not charging customers enough for bricks or fireplaces. When Eric walked into the workshop we would say, "Quick, look busy, the gaffer's coming" and rush to find a hammer or a saw. And when Pete came in we'd say, "you'd better watch your step, mate, or we'll tell Eric on you."

The gaffer, not feeling too comfortable in that role, used to compete with Eric for his job, rather than tell him where to get off. Sometimes they would row and one time it almost came to blows. They behaved like a couple of stags, locking antlers over who was running the yard.

Putty

But Eric was like putty. If you stood up to him or shouted at him, he wilted. If you told him he was wrong about something he would agree — and then become a noisy advocate of your argument, as if it had been him saying it all along.

I remember him saying to me once, how terrible it is that there is no such thing as an all-British car and about

British industry needing to stand on its own feet. So I said that an unemployed Detroit car worker would probably not see it like that — that we are all members of the same class with the same bosses, whichever country we come from. Immediately, he proceeded to explain the evils of international capitalism to me. But the effects didn't last. A few days later he was again shaking his head sadly and expressing his sorrow that there is no such thing as an all-British car . . .

Better

Unlike Dippo, Eric was not concerned to be "one of the lads" so much as to be better than them. Like Dippo, he was everybody's butt. In fact he never joined in some of the worst sexist comments — but he never objected to any of it either.

Everybody there had something — a weak spot — that the others worked on. Pete "Pedrosa" was bald; Tom had permed his hair and wore an earring; Alan was fat; Kevin had a cherry tattooed in his arse.

But Dippo and Eric were the butts. And I was a woman. What a disability! And when I came in for the flak, knowledgeable Eric kept quiet and political Dippo loved it. Because while the pressure was on me, it was off them.

Race & Class

By Payman Rezaei

A white influx from SA?

The idea that British culture is in danger of being "swamped" is a ritual argument of racists from Enoch Powell to Margaret Thatcher when they advocate immigration controls or propose to tighten them up

It is their big argument for stopping immigration of 'secondary sources' (that is dependents of settled blacks) and to potential sources of future immigration (this was done by the Nationality Act — affecting ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong — a British Dependent Territory).

But what will their attitude be to a potential source of an enormous new wave of immigration into Britain from South Africa? Over one million South African whites are legally entitled to settle in Britain!

According to the Home Office contingency plans already exist to deal with a sudden and large influx. The million South African whites 'qualify' technically because they have one British grandparent.

This means they can bring over spouses and children under 18.

Now of course the main criteria — and central concern — of the immigration controller is colour. This was shown pretty openly when Asian British citizens from Kenya were barred entry in 1968 under panic legislation specially brought in to stop them coming in.

It was the then Labour Home Secretary and later Prime Minister James Callaghan who did that. Enoch Powell won great notoriety at the same time for a speech prophesying "rivers of blood" in Britain if black immigration was not stopped.

Powell talked — Callaghan did the shameful deed.

Even many South Africans who lack a British grandparent would also be allowed into Britain as 'persons of independent means' — those of them who have £150,000 in assets or an income of £15,000 a year.

Of course not all South African whites may 'choose' to come to Britain — previous trends show that only about one-third of those leaving South Africa come to Britain. Already as the struggle in South Africa has intensified more South Africans are leaving than entering the country. This is a welcome change — better than whites emigrating to South Africa to enjoy a high exploiter's standard of living on the backs of the black workers.



Powell

THE WELFARE STATE IN CRISIS

Safe in their

Between 1978-9 and 1985-6, the Tories have cut public spending on housing by 59%, transport by 8% and education by 1%. The education cuts look very small — indeed hardly cuts at all, since the number of pupils in schools has dropped 14% since 1979-80.

Capital

Partly this is because central government does not directly control education. Each year the government has planned for education cuts, but local authorities have spent more, making good the difference from the rates.

But in fact there have been real cuts. Reduced rolls do not necessarily make schools cheaper to run, and the decline in pupil numbers has been concentrated in primary schools (which are less expensive), while the number of students over 16, in school or in further or higher education, has risen.

Capital spending on buildings and equipment has been cut by 60%; school meals prices have been raised (or the whole service abolished, in some areas); and money for further and higher education has been cut by 11%.

Health spending seems to have risen, by 20%. Again, the truth is different. Prices of medical equipment

Despite their defeat in the House of Lords on Monday 23rd, the Tories will press ahead with their decimation of the Welfare State. Norman Fowler's latest plans to slash social security have aroused bigger opposition than ever from unions and claimants' and community groups. But, Stan Crooke argues, the fight back cannot limit itself to simple defence of the old Welfare State.

and drugs have risen faster than general inflation, and the over-75 population is increasing rapidly; so to provide the same real service costs more each year.

Report

According to a report commissioned by the British Medical Association and

other groups, real revenue spending on hospitals and community health has been static since 1982.

Travel

Hospital waiting lists are about the same as in 1979. Many hospitals have been closed, so that patients have to

travel further. There have been major cuts in the London and Oxford regions, which the Tories consider to be over provided.

The time spent by patients in hospital has been cut, and more cases are now treated as out-patients. This would not necessarily be a bad thing — except that the Tories have also been trying to cut the money for care in the community through home helps, meals on wheels, etc. Here, as in education, local authorities have softened the blow.

Spending

Social security spending has increased 34% since 1978-9 — mainly because of the big increase in the numbers of unemployed, and the rise in the number of pensioners. Earnings-related unemployment benefit has been abolished altogether, and child benefit has been cut in real terms.

The Tories now plan new cuts. Their Social Security Bill, which goes to the House of Lords this Monday, 23rd, will cut pensions and reorganise social security with cuts for most claimants.

The government's overall plan is to cut social security spending by 0.2% by 1988-9 (despite the increased number of claimants). It also plans to cut education spending by 10%, transport by 6%, and housing by a further 6%.

'Tackle the root cause - capitalism'

ON TOP of all their previous cuts, the Tories now plan to slash another £1000 million from the social security budget. Major cutbacks and extensive privatisation are also being used to attack other aspects of the welfare state.

Right-wing politicians throughout the world have long hated the very idea of a welfare state. Writing about Sweden, the 'model' welfare state, Roland Huntford claimed in his book, 'Welfare Dictatorship':

"Since the party has control of the state, its apparatchik rules the country... It controls and permeates society to such an extent that it can easily be compared with the Soviet Communist Party... Only Sweden can point to a direct and faultless descent from Marx...

"Completely reasonable parents live in constant fear that their children will be taken away from them if their methods of upbringing do not completely agree with the conceptions current at that time".

Outlandish

With the rise of Thatcherite monetarism, similar outlandish claims are gaining currency in this country. "The moral fibre of our people has been weakened... The State spends all its energies taking money from the energetic, successful and thrifty to give it to the idle, the failures, and the feckless", claims Social Security minister Rhodes Boyson in his book 'Down With The Poor'.

By Stan Crooke

For Tory backwoodsmen the welfare state smacks of giving people money for nothing. It is a redistribution of wealth, on a small scale. It weakens 'family responsibilities'; it undermines the notion of the 'self-made men'; it seems to pave the way for a 'Big Brother' state, and so on.

The welfare state must be defended against the Tories. But we cannot ignore the limitations of any welfare state under capitalism.

Last year's TUC congress affirmed "its commitment to the Beveridge principles of the Welfare State based on the redistribution of wealth..." But the 'Beveridge' welfare state which emerged in this country after World War 2 was not based on socialist ideas and policies.

Beveridge was a Liberal, committed to capitalism and opposed to any fundamental changes in the social structure. At best, he wanted 'capitalism with a human face'.

The inspiration of the welfare state in other countries has been similar. In 'model' Sweden, for example, the SAP (Swedish Labour Party) laid the bases of the modern welfare state in the 1930s, at the very time when it was explicitly moving away from Marxism.

'From Class Struggle to Cooperation' was the symptomatic title of a book by Ernst Wigforss, the architect of the SAP's economic policies in the '30s. And the words 'socialisation' (of industry) and 'socialism' failed to appear in SAP election manifestos for the first time in 1932 and 1936.

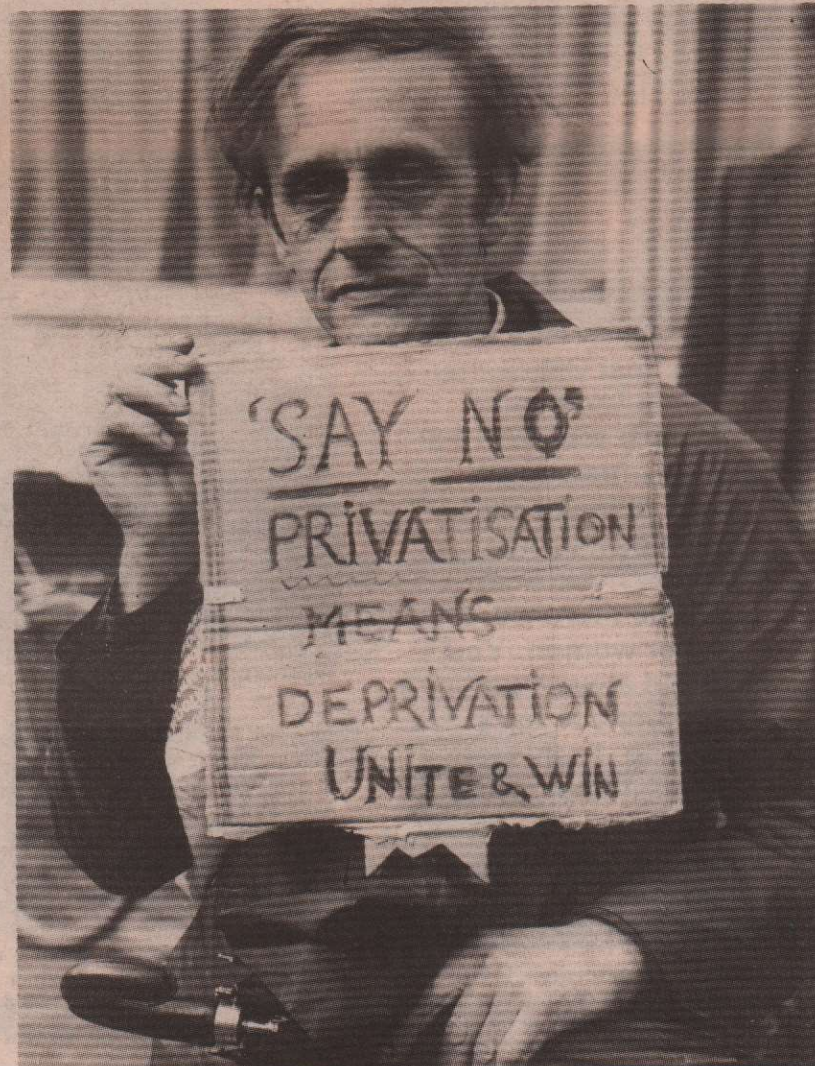


Photo: John Harris.

The basic ideas underpinning the welfare state, in this country and in others, are ideas used to hide the source of poverty in capitalist society. They substitute spurious strategies for the elimination of poverty within capitalism for the working-class struggle against capitalism and for its replacement by socialism.

For socialists, poverty is the inevitable result of the inequalities of power and wealth in capitalism. But the ideas behind the welfare state see poverty as resulting from the bad character or other failings of particular people — they are 'work-shy', cannot 'cope with money', or are not 'bright enough' to

get a decent job, etc.

To fight poverty effectively means to fight capitalism — but not so from the point of view of the welfare state. Instead, the emphasis is put on rescuing the impoverished claimants and ironing out his or her supposed behavioural defects.

For example, the Tories plan to introduce loans from a 'Social Fund'. As a condition of such loans being granted, changes will be demanded in claimants' spending and living patterns. A similar system is already well established in America.

In this way the welfare state strengthens the ideas that tie people to capitalism. More: as miners learned in

Photomontage: Peter Kennard

their pitched battles with the state during their great strike, the state is the bosses' state. But since the welfare budget is controlled by the capitalist state, and it appears to be helping the worst-off victims of society, that helps the bosses' class state disguise its real character. It makes it appear neutral and even benevolent.

The welfare state has little to do with a real redistribution of wealth, or achieving equality. This can be seen from the fact that the criteria for intervention by the welfare state are formulated entirely negatively. Family Income Supplement is for those whose wages are not high enough. Additional Requirements payments are for those whose Supplementary Benefit is not high enough. And so on.

Positive

To set positive goals for the welfare state — real equality, decent housing for all, etc — would have to mean tackling the root causes of the problems — tackling capitalism.

Operating within the framework of capitalism, the welfare state also discriminates against those sections of the population who suffer discrimination from capitalism in general, especially women and blacks.

hands?



The 'Beveridge principles' were based on the idea that a woman's place was in the home. 'Full employment' for Beveridge and his contemporaries meant full male employment. Some of the changes currently proposed by the Tories — such as that the new 'Family Credit' should be paid not to the main breadwinner (in practice usually a man) — reinforce such aspects of the welfare state. Blacks also get a particularly raw deal from the welfare state. The Child Poverty Action Group's booklet 'Passport to Benefits?' stresses the "connections between immigration law and the welfare state... the links between the DHSS and the Home Office, the widespread DHSS practice of passport checks to operate a form of internal control... and the failure of Britain's welfare system to take account of, and make appropriate provision for, the different customs, cultures and languages of many black people who are forced to claim benefit".

Strikers, too, have been faced by a welfare state which has been on the side of a government hostile to their interests. In the 1984-5 strike, for example, miners in Kent and other areas were told that no forms were

available for applying for Family Income Supplement.

The figure for notional strike pay (which strikers are assumed to receive from their unions, but generally do not) was increased to £16 half-way through the strike. And Specialist Claims Control teams ('super-snoopers') were sent into mining areas.

The booklet 'Let Them Eat Coal' concludes: "Political interferences has been apparent in the administration of benefits for strikers... The strike is notable for being a vivid and concrete illustration of the way in which a supposedly neutral and independent government department has been manipulated for direct political ends".

Help

The welfare state does help the worst off in society. It provides a flexible fall-back for capitalism — maintaining a healthy and educated working class without the capitalists having to pay for it directly — and also for the working class.

But it does this job in such a way to add a dimension to the oppression of women and blacks, and to give the state another weapon *against* those who defend their jobs and living standards by strike action.

Now the Tories have turned against the welfare state — because of changes in capitalism.

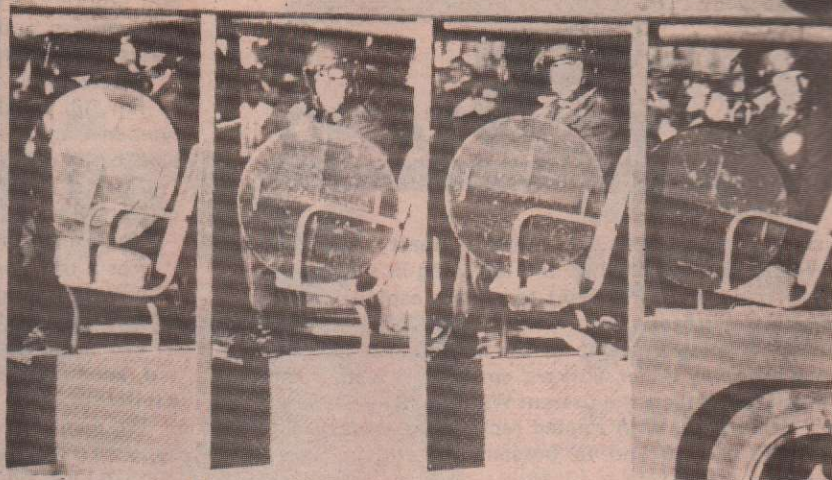
The depth of the economic crisis makes the welfare state an economic burden for capitalism. Even if it does not redistribute wealth much, the welfare state still costs a lot of money. By reducing the welfare state, resources are freed to restore flagging profit margins.

And cuts in benefits will help force people to accept lower wages.

For socialists to respond to Tory attacks on the welfare state simply by defending the old Beveridge system is inadequate. The welfare state brought undeniable benefits for the working class, but it was locked into the whole mechanism of functioning of capitalist society, providing it with one of its stoutest props.

Opposition to Tory attacks on the welfare state, and demands for its democratisation, must therefore be linked up with a strategy which attacks the root causes of poverty and inequality — the capitalist nature of a society rooted in class exploitation and oppression.

In response to the Tory attacks on the welfare state, workers need aggressive class politics too.



Riot police in Mexico City.

The real Mexico

By Alan Johnson

THIS weekend the World Cup final will be shown around the world with the aid of the most advanced and expensive technology. Beyond the glare of the TV cameras, another 40,000 Mexican children will die this year, as every year, as a result of diarrhoea.

This other Mexico, the one beyond the football stadiums, is in the throes of a desperate economic crisis. When Mexico's president, Miguel de la Madrid, came to office in December 1982, he said: "We are in an emergency".

Mexico came close to defaulting on its staggering \$86 billion foreign debt, made worse by rising interest rates and a fall in the price of oil, the country's main export. Inflation was at 100% and rising. Only one in every two workers was fully employed, while 800,000 more people entered the job market each year. 80% of the rural population suffered from malnutrition.

Howled

If you wondered why the President was howled down by 100,000 Mexicans at the opening ceremony of the World Cup, the answer is simple: his solution to the crisis of Mexican capitalism was to make the poor poorer. Living standards for most Mexicans have fallen 30% in four years. In a country where 14 million people eat neither meat nor eggs, subsidies on over 2700 commodities were abolished. Social services were slashed, and wages cut by half.

Against this background, it's easy to understand the government's much-vaunted anti-corruption campaign. Pay offs, kick-backs, bribery and fraud are endemic in Mexico, and de la Madrid wanted a few rich, prominent heads on a plate to show how even-handed was his appeal for Mexico to 'tighten its belt'.

Out of the gallery of crooks, he picked a former director of the oil industry, jailed for a \$34 million bribe, and the ex police chief of Mexico City. The police chief, aside from embezzling millions, had developed a sordid little scheme to deduct a chunk of every policeman's wages to provide proper burials for those killed on duty — only problem being, he never buried them.

To say this is only the tip of the iceberg is understatement indeed. In Mexico City, some police cadets would literally take a week off from their academy training to learn from veteran officers how to take bribes.

During the presidency of Lopez Portillo (1976-82) maybe as many as one million phoney jobs were created while government officials and others siphoned off the pay cheques of the non-existent workers.

As a monument to the whole corrupt dung-heap stands 'Dog Hill', an Olympian 32-acre complex of palatial

homes built by Lopez Portillo for himself and his children, high above Mexico City's smog line.

The Mexican workers' movement has been blocked in its fight back against the austerity programme by a union bureaucracy which is, in reality, an arm of the government. Its head for 45 years, Fidel Velazquez, said: "If we sought to keep up the wages with the needs of the workers, we would deliver ourselves over to uncontrollable inflation".

Violence is employed by both the state and the union bureaucrats in the service of Mexican capitalism.

The early 1970s saw a 'revolt from below' among Mexican workers. In rail, mining, oil, electricity, strikes were coupled with the formation of rank-and-file 'democratic tendencies' seeking to recapture control of the labour movement from the gangsters and time-servers.

They failed — under the weight of government tanks, which rolled in to break the electrical workers' strike, and of the union bosses, who expelled the 'democratic tendencies' from the unions.

Repression is sharpest in the Free Trade Zones. Here, entirely foreign-owned companies set up labour-intensive assembly shops in a 12½-mile wide strip along Mexico's northern border. Mexican workers are paid a fraction of US wage rates. The companies contribute virtually no taxes or import duties to the government.

Almost all the workers are young, unmarried women, between 14 and 22, recently migrated from the countryside. The end result is a barbarous combination of capitalist exploitation and sexual oppression.

Wonder

It is little wonder that productivity is some 40% higher than in the US, as these women suffer speed-up and a 9½-hour day, with no health and safety cover.

'Capitalism creates its own gravedigger', Marx said — the working class. Mexico is no exception. When British miners fought to defend jobs in 1984-5, a smaller strike was taking place in Rey Nosa.

In the midst of the Free Trade Zones, sweat-shops, and macho overseers, 70,000 workers, mainly women, struck for a wage increase, for the release of Daniel Lopez — an 18 year old rank and file union leader whom the union had had jailed — and for the resignation of the union leadership.

Though the police moved in on Rey Nosa, as they did against British miners, the strike was a sign of things to come.

As the drive to jack up productivity amidst recession, wage cuts, and layoffs cuts away the bureaucrats' grip and the government's claim to the heritage of the Mexican Revolution, it is just possible that Mexico may be hitting the headlines for something other than football in the near future. Those jeers may come to haunt de la Madrid yet.

Where We STAND

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

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

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

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

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

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

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.
For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

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

Activists' DIARY

TUESDAY JULY 1. Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign Benefit Concert. 7.30-1. The Fridge, Brixton. Tickets £4, £3. 01-326 5100/354 0844.

SATURDAY 5 JULY. Socialist Teachers' Alliance AGM. 11-5, Central London Poly, New Cavendish St. Contact: Martin Allen, 29 Greenhill Park, NW10. 01-961 6503.

Labour Briefing Local Government Conference. 2pm. Lambeth Town Hall. Registration £1. Open to Labour councillors and LP members. Details: 01-732 1872.

Lesbian and Gay Festival Carnival Parade, Hyde Park to Kennington Park.

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.

TUESDAY 8 JULY. CND Lobby of Parliament. 'No to Star Wars, Yes to Nuclear Disarmament'. 2.30-10pm. THURSDAY 10 JULY. Islington rally for print workers. Speakers: Tony Dubbins, Dennis Skinner, John Lang, Ann Lilburn, Martha Osamore. 7.30 pm. Red Rose Club, 125 Seven Sisters Rd., N7.

SATURDAY JULY 12. BLOC Conference, 'Fight Privatisation'. Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Credentials: £3 per trade union

delegate. BLOC, PO Box 464, London E58PT.

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.

TUESDAY 15 JULY. Public meeting called by Brent East and Brent South CLPs: 'Support the Sacked Miners'. With Paul Whetton and a speaker from Women Against Pit Closures. 7.30, Anson Hall, corner Walm Lane. Nearest tube Willesden Green.

TUESDAY 22 JULY. Campaign Group of MPs Public Meeting 'Which Way for the Left?' Speakers include Margaret Beckett, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner. 8pm. Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill. Admission £1.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS

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

CO₂ and the "green-house effect"

Readers may have been intrigued (and not entirely displeased) at the prospect of the sea lapping at the doorstep of the White House. This would be due to something called 'the green-house effect', known to climate scientists for a long time but only recently discovered by the mass media.

The effect depends on the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. This gas is only a minor constituent of the air — about 3/100ths of one per cent — but it is a crucial one. Plants combine it with water to make glucose, using the energy in sunlight, releasing oxygen as a waste product. This is the process of photosynthesis without which virtually all life would be impossible.

About as fast as it is removed by plants, CO₂ is replaced by animals who breathe it out as they "burn" the glucose to get energy.

The balance is not perfect. CO₂ levels were higher once, before the excess was locked up in the vast stores of fossil fuels — coal, gas and oil. Since the last century, human activity has upset the balance again as these fossil fuels have been burnt in increasing amounts. In conjunction with the cutting down of vast areas of forest, this has driven CO₂ levels up by about 25%. In the last 30 years alone, the level has increased by 10% and the rate of increase is accelerating.

Greenhouses

So what has this got to do with greenhouses? The temperature of the Earth is determined by the radiation of the sun. Harmful rays such as ultra-violet and x-rays do not penetrate the atmosphere but merely warm its outer layers. Light and infrared rays (heat) penetrate the air and hit the ground. Some rays are reflected back into space while others are absorbed and warm the Earth's surface. This then gives out heat rays, some of which warm the air and others of which escape into space.

This is where the CO₂ comes in. CO₂ is very efficient at absorbing heat rays. The more CO₂, the less heat escapes to space and the warmer become the air, the rocks and the seas. This is what is meant by the "greenhouse effect".

It is difficult to demonstrate the effect of the quite small rise in CO₂ levels since the weather fluctuates quite a lot normally. However, it seems that average temperatures have gone up by 1/2°C (about 1°F) this century. This should have caused some polar ice to melt, raising sea levels. In fact, levels have risen about 8cm (3 inches).

The effect is likely to increase as the rate of fuel burning and forest clearance has reached a

fever pitch. Computer models predict a rise in sea levels of 1-2 metres within the lifetime of many people alive today.

This would increase the danger of flooding in low lying areas with damage to agricultural land and risk to lives. It might also cause unpredictable disruption to weather patterns. An illustration of what might happen was provided recently by "El Nino", an unusually warm current of sea water in the Pacific. It resulted in hurricanes and damage to fisheries in Central America.

Over a period of several hundred years, sea levels could rise by 6 to 10 metres. This would threaten to inundate such cities as Beijing, Seoul, New York and London, not to mention fertile river deltas and other agricultural land.

One positive effect would be that increase CO₂ levels stimulate plant growth, increasing agricultural productivity. However, weeds seem to be stimulated more than crops.

Oceans

There is an enormous uncertainty in the predictions about the greenhouse effect. The size of the effect may depend on the ability of the oceans to absorb some of the excess CO₂. This ability may get less as the seas get warmer, causing a run-away warm-up. This may result in quite fast shifts in temperature and sea-levels at some point. This may have occurred naturally some 95,000 years ago, when there was a sudden rise of 15 to 20 metres in sea-levels within a single century.

This is not the only time that CO₂ levels have risen — the polar ice caps have melted in the past; low lying areas have been flooded before; world temperatures have been higher. But this is the first time such changes have been put in train by the activities of a single species.

As socialists with the vision of a sustainable prosperous society, we have to seriously consider how we can resist capitalism's squandering of the Earth's resources which has brought the risk of a run-away greenhouse effect.

We should therefore oppose the destruction of the tropical rain forests (such as the Amazon forests).

As for the burning of fossil fuels we have a problem. The labour movement is coming to recognise that nuclear power is not a safe option which at present throws us back onto the burning of more fossil fuels. We must therefore start developing a strategy of improving the efficiency of fuel-burning, reducing energy use with public as opposed to private transport, and developing alternatives such as geothermal ("hot rocks"), wave, wind and solar power.

Socialist Forum — no. 2 on Ireland, and no. 3 on Afghanistan, 50p each plus postage.

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

Fighting FUND

£3,375.92 to go for our £15,000 fund target! With an all-out effort we can make it over the weekend of our summer school, on 4-7 July.

And we need the final few thousand. Although the bulk of the renovation work on our new premises is finished, there is still a lot to do: finishing painting, repairing brickwork and windows, replacing a rotten floor in an outbuilding.

We also need more equipment. So start collecting now. We'll be looking especially for money from the remaining IOUs from our AGM: Matt Cooper £10; Mick Sidaway £10; Jill Mountford £20; Keyvan Lajevardi-Khosh £5; Trudy Saunders £10; Reb Short and Rosanna Pierson £5.

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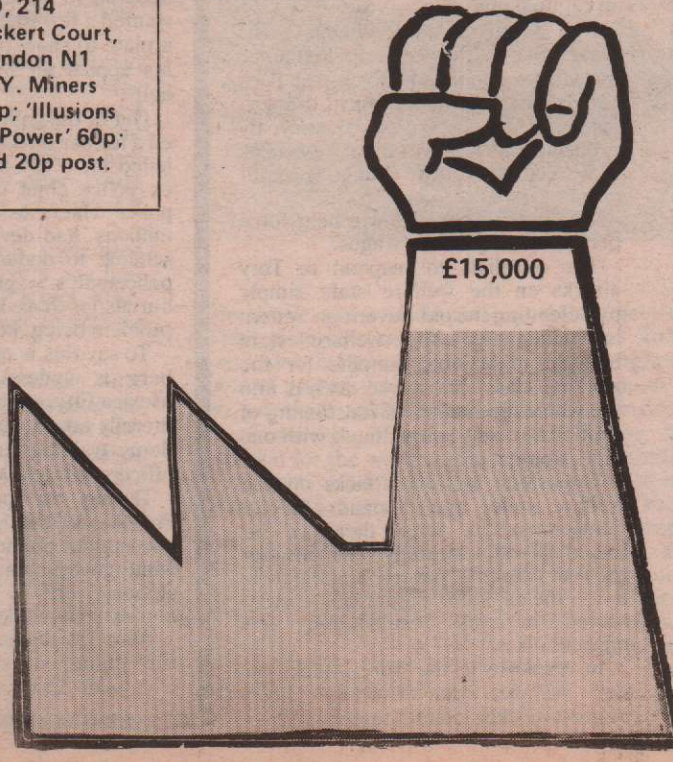
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Benny Goodman

The swing king

**GUCCI,
YUPPIE,
SOPPY**

By Tracy Williams

Television can capture — and corrupt — hearts and minds, and it does.

Young people are glued to the "Wide Awake Club" or the wacky races. Adults will wait anxiously to see if the Rovers Return survives the recent fire, or talk enviously about the next lucky victim in the very popular "The Price is Right" — arguably the most vile thing on television right now.

But young people come off worst in my opinion. Television programmes for young people between 16-25 are limited in scope and pretty dire anyway.

There's "Top of the Flops" which can show anything from the sexist Chas and Dave to the boring Olivia Neutron Bomb.

Its DJs presenting the shows that really crease me up. Like Janice "Go for it kids" Long (I always wondered just what we were supposed to be going for) desperately trying to have fun.

Yes, let's party on down Janice, in front of the cameras — while the floor managers are busy pushing the punters out of the way and pursuing their neverending search for just about anyone's crotch.

Music is vitally important to young people. It can shape their attitudes to political issues — Irish rebel songs, for example, or South African freedom songs or the music of the bands who worked with the Anti-Nazi League. Most recently, of course, Red Wedge seemed to have the right idea.

Yet a lot of working class youth are still caught up in the Duran-Duran-Aspiration-Syndrome. Yuppie city slickers who sail in and out of dancers, romances, grooving and moving in their smoochy Gucci style of soppy poppy records. But, of course, if you don't possess this street-chic-meets-"Miami Vice" machismo, tough.

"Solid is soul" is by far the best of the bunch, especially for the funkster youngsters. Strictly for "slick chicks" and "dandy dudes", maybe you'll be as hip hop don't stop as me one day, baby, and stomp away to the snazzy jazzy rhythms — hey baby this is well crucial, man, yes wicked sugar.

Do the pop shows reflect the lives of young working class youth? Well, I suppose the scally casual set can always check out the latest cut of the solid soul dancers' clothes. Or the urban punks may hope to catch a glimpse of which shade of mascarra Sique Sique Sputnik are currently donning — but essentially the programmes offer nothing more than pure escapism.

Some of the groups playing in the shows are political, but it's a flashy right wing orientation — Spandau Ballet, Duran, Aha!

If you are broad enough, blond enough, have the right connections and wear expensive-enough clothes, and have at least three houses then you too can be like me. Thanks. Even the Style Council type of bands are still caught up in a lifestyle light years away from working class youth.

Television offers very little else apart from such music shows, yet working class youths are involved in tremendously important struggles.

Young people in South Africa have shown tremendous spirit and strength fighting against apartheid. Young working class youths in Britain are unemployed, pregnant and homeless, unorganised on YTS schemes, on smack, yet none of these problems are dealt with directly through television.

It doesn't even touch on the issues. And that's a great pity because what we really need is a lively, politicised young working class.

Asking TV to help create this would be stupid, but TV could provide a forum for discussion and debates for young people.

Benny Goodman, who died on Friday 13 June, was not a particularly nice man. In his youth he was a calculating plagiarist; at the height of his success as a bandleader in the late thirties and forties, he was a ruthless authoritarian; in his old age he was cantankerous and stingy.

He did, however, have a thoroughly benign influence upon the popular music of the 20th century. He brought authentic, hot jazz to the ears of a mass audience for the first time. Someone or other would probably have done it if Goodman hadn't, but the fact remains that he blazed the trail.

He was also the first white bandleader to feature black musicians on a regular basis: for that, if for nothing else, he deserves to be remembered by all of us.

Goodman was one of a number of young white Chicagoans who listened with awe to the black masters — King Oliver, Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong — in the 1920s. But unlike most of the others, Goodman came from a working class home. His parents had made real sacrifices to pay for classical clarinet tuition so that their boy could become a symphony orchestra musician. Instead Goodman's inclinations led him to jazz, but the idea of eventually making money out of music remained very much part of his plans, especially after his mother was widowed and Benny became, at 17, the breadwinner of the family.

This hard-nosed approach set him apart from the rest of the white Chicago gang, most of whom were middle class kids who loved jazz, wanted to play it, but didn't need to worry too much about the economic viability of the music profession.

Benny Goodman joined the Musicians Union at twelve years of age and became a respected jazz soloist while still in short pants.

Migrated

In the late twenties, like many other Chicago jazz players, Goodman migrated to New York, hoping to make a living as a freelance musician. He found reasonably lucrative work in pit bands, cabarets, society jobs and the occasional recording and radio date. When Wall Street crashed, he had the foresight to realise that life for itinerant jazz musicians was never going to be the same again.

In the winter of 1929 Goodman went to ground, reportedly resentful and discouraged. In fact, he took the time to brush up on his music reading and arranging skills. He knew the days of the free-wheeling, musically illiterate "blower" were numbered. The study was to pay off.

John Hammond, a jazz critic and enthusiast, fixed up some recording

By Jim Denham

dates for Goodman in the early thirties (including Bessie Smith's last session and Billie Holiday's first) and in 1934 persuaded a dubious Goodman to form his own band.

Goodman and Hammond hired some of the best white jazz talent around at the time, including trumpeter Bunny Berigan, pianist Jess Stacey and a flashy young drummer from Chicago, Gene Krupa.

Perhaps more importantly, he used the arranging skills of Fletcher Henderson, a black band leader who had pioneered the art of writing tight jazz scores for big bands, giving whole sections of an orchestra the drive of a hot soloist.

The early days of the band were pretty disheartening for all concerned. Audiences were used to the sweet, syrupy sounds of bands like Guy Lombardo's and Russ Colombo's. And although the leader deliberately kept the jazz content of performances to a minimum, the outfit was just too loud and exuberant for the refined patrons of joints like the Hotel Roosevelt in New York, where the band's first engagement was cancelled after two weeks.

When the band set off for a cross-country tour in June 1935, most of the musicians, Goodman included, were about ready to call it quits.

They flopped badly in Denver, and by the time they arrived at the Palomar Ballroom, Los Angeles, they had all accepted that this would be the final fling. Thinking he had nothing to lose, Goodman dug out the best of Henderson's jazz arrangements and gave his hot soloists free reign.

The audience went wild, crowding round the bandstand and refusing to let the musicians off. August 21 1935 at the Palomar Ballroom marked the official birth of the "swing era".

There was plenty that was pretty unsavoury about the "Swing era" that Goodman ushered in. In fact most of the nastier aspects of today's music business really began then — the domination of the recording and broadcasting monopolies, the financial shenanigans of agents and promoters, the dependence upon commercial sponsorship, the cynical exploitation of young fans, especially the female fans, known then as 'bobby soxers', and the generally debilitating atmosphere of hype and hypocrisy.

But Goodman somehow seemed to ride above all that, keeping his musical standards high and not letting the "King of Swing" tag swell his head too much. Others didn't fare so well: Bunny Berigan was just one of many swing era stars who burnt themselves out — in Berigan's case, destroying himself with booze.

But the worst aspect of the swing era was that all the bands who made it commercially and all the musicians



Goodman [right] with Count Basie

who struck it rich, were white.

In retrospect, most people with any pretence to good taste acknowledge that by far the best music to come out of the swing era was that of black bands like Duke Ellington's and Count Basie's. But at the time, the record companies and the posh hotels and the PR executives wanted white faces on the bandstand and in the publicity photos.

To his credit, Goodman kicked against this, and right from the early days featured black musicians like pianist Teddy Wilson and vibraphonist Lionel Hampton.

Swords into ploughshares



About Turn: The alternative use of workers' skills. Text by Bill Evans, photomontage by Peter Kennard, Pluto Press, £2.95.

Packed with striking photographic images and a crisp, easy-to-read text, this short book argues the case for socially useful replacements for 'defence' spending.

The book shows that defence spending is economically damaging as well as dangerous. While the British government spends more than most of its NATO partners on 'defence', people are in desperate need of more hospitals, better schools, and other welfare facilities.

The defence industry could be turned over to useful production.

Although it isn't written from a revolutionary standpoint, this is an interesting book, and the photomontages make it well worth the money.

The left in Solidarnosc

The Workers' Opposition is a new alliance of left-wing groups within Solidarnosc, the Polish labour movement, which continues to operate underground despite having been banned and repressed by martial law in December 1981.

Solidarnosc emerged as a movement ten million strong from a strike wave against price rises in 1980, after several years of underground activity by small "free trade union" opposition groups. At its height it threatened the bureaucratic police state, and it still continues to be active and to debate policies.

Within the left wing of Solidarnosc is being forged the leadership of the Polish workers' revolution that will bury Polish Stalinism.

This is the first part of an interview with a representative of the Workers' Opposition, sent to the Western left press.

What is the Alliance of the Workers' Opposition (POR) and why was it set up?

The POR is an alliance of various groupings within the Polish opposition movement. These groups vary in both size and form — some are large, some are small, several represent the editorial boards of underground bulletins (it was four of these bulletins that originally launched the POR), while others are opposition groups organised at the level of plants, towns or regions.

The POR was set up to coordinate the activities of those in the opposition who believe we have to base ourselves firmly on the working class, both in our current struggles and in our strategy, in the political perspective we present. Generally speaking, this means a strategy of developing the self-organisation of the working class.

I think the POR could best be described as that current in the opposition which sees the independent self-organisation of the working class as the key to success in our coming struggles, and at the same time the key to solving Poland's political and economic crises.

How does the POR relate to Solidarnosc?

On the one hand, we are all, as individuals, members of Solidarnosc, and all the structures involved in the POR either developed out of old Solidarnosc structures or contacts or were organised by Solidarnosc activists.

On the other hand, neither the

POR itself, nor any of its constituent structures, are controlled by or responsible to the regional and national leadership bodies of Solidarnosc that still exist.

Some of the groups in the POR formally function as Solidarnosc structures, while others don't.

To understand the situation properly, you have to understand what Solidarnosc is today. I think the easiest way to explain that would be to say that Solidarnosc is simply the sum of the whole Polish opposition. With a few minor exceptions, all groups in the opposition regard themselves as being part of Solidarnosc, that is they identify themselves with the legal mass movement that existed in 1980-81.

But Solidarnosc is a very heterogeneous movement. It includes the old leadership bodies, workplace structures in the factories and mines, new inter-factory organisations that have sprung up since martial law, groups of people organised on a neighbourhood basis, and — perhaps most importantly — a whole host of underground bulletins. I've no idea how many of these there are at present — the last figure I heard quoted was around 600 coming out regularly — but it's these bulletins that are the lifeblood of the opposition.

Yet they represent widely differing political positions, which reflects the growing politicisation of the movement. Nevertheless, the essential unity of the movement, expressed in the general identification with Solidarnosc, indeed in the very name 'Solidarnosc', has been maintained.

And of course, the POR, as a current within the opposition and Solidarnosc, represents no threat to that unity of the independent workers' movement.

What do you mean by the "politicisation" of the movement?

The term "politicisation" is generally used in the Polish underground press to refer to the emergence of groups and currents on the basis of distinct political programmes or positions. In other words, it refers to a process of internal political differentiation within the movement.

This process is of course only natural; it would be absurd to think of Solidarnosc and the whole opposition as some sort of political monolith. To a large extent, this process was already under way before martial law, but martial law speeded it up, because the independent press became the most important element in the opposition. Since the various bulletins had to fend for themselves in very difficult



conditions, they inevitably began to develop their political positions independently.

As a result, while some bulletins, particularly factory ones, remained essentially informational in content, others began to represent distinct political lines. This whole process has again picked up speed recently, with many people in the opposition calling for a more clear-cut political differentiation within the movement, for the establishment of political parties, etc.

For our part, we think this process is generally positive, since a healthy political pluralism can only strengthen Solidarnosc and the opposition. That pluralism should have a clear programmatic basis, with different groups and currents clearly explaining the tactics and strategy they are proposing for the movement as a whole.

In addition, the fact that many factory activists are calling for the increased politicisation of the movement reflects their rejection of any concept of forcing the authorities into a dialogue that would result in some sort of "historic compromise", most probably involving a return to the status quo prior to December 13, 1981.

In other words, they recognise that Solidarnosc can never be forced back into a purely trade-unionist

role, and that its legalisation cannot be won by simply putting pressure on the state power or negotiating with it.

Of course, the calls for politicisation also reflect dissatisfaction with the tactics currently being pursued by the Solidarnosc leadership, and its failure to put forward a coherent strategy. There is one danger here, however.

Certain sections of the opposition — the nationalistic wing and large parts of the intelligentsia — see the idea of "politicising the movement" as something counterposed to the idea of mass struggle. They have no perspective to offer the working class today. In fact, they are increasingly isolated from it, so they put forward the idea of politicisation as an alternative.

What they are actually saying is: there's nothing we can do now, so let's start organising political discussion clubs and our own little political parties, then at some point in the future, when the workers revolt again, we can force the state power into giving us political pluralism, and then our parties can start functioning. That concept is in our opinion totally ridiculous; it is a recipe for disaster.

It also reflects the instrumental way in which the nationalistic and

intellectual opposition groups view the working class — as the "muscle" that is needed to bring the state power to its knees, after which the workers should go home and leave the politics to the intellectuals.

The POR sees politicisation in a completely different way. What we have to do is to combine day-to-day struggles with a developed political perspective. This means making the link between today's struggles and the strategy we need for the working class to achieve direct democratic control of and power over the economy and the state.

That all sounds very good, but what does it mean in practice? Your founding document, i.e. the Draft Platform of the Workers' Opposition, which I've read, is very general. There's a lot about strategy in it and a number of praiseworthy political principles, but there's not much about the day-to-day struggles you're talking about.

That's true but then that was precisely the purpose of the document you are referring to — to serve as a declaration of principles. At that time, where the POR was being launched, the point was to present an overall outline of the strategy and positions that differentiate us from other currents in the opposition. But that doesn't mean we are not involved in concrete practical struggle.

As I've said, all the structures in the POR developed out of Solidarnosc structures or were organised by Solidarnosc activists, mostly in the factories. And it's in the factories that the vast majority of our work takes place. In contrast to many other currents in Solidarnosc — and that includes a significant section of the old leadership — we believe that struggle in the factories, mines and shipyards is not something for the future, even the very near future, but something for today. This is in fact borne out by what is happening in Poland.

Despite the experience of the martial law, despite the repression and intimidation, despite the fact that many leading activists in the factories have been sacked, can't get new jobs, and are seeing their families face severe hardship — scarcely a week goes by without some form of struggle or protest action in at least one major factory, often in several.

In our opinion, this is what we have to build up, and all our efforts are directed towards developing and supporting these struggles, and in particular developing the forms of workers' self-organisation that they immediately produce.

Turning capitalism upside down

OUR MASTHEAD says 'For Workers' Liberty'. We chose the phrase to sum up our commitment to freedom, as against bureaucracy, and to class struggle, as against reform from above.

The same term, in a different context, can be found in the writings of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist leader in the period after World War 1. He summed up the main theme of his politics as "the idea of workers' freedom being realised in practice initially in the Factory Council".

What did he mean? The answer to this question also tells us a lot about a question I raised last week: why and how do revolutions happen?

Control

Through factory councils the Italian workers were fighting for control over production. This meant fighting to turn capitalist relations upside down. For even in the most democratic capitalism the factory is a dictatorship.

The ABC OF MARXISM

By Martin Thomas

"The worker in the factory", Gramsci wrote, "fulfills merely an executive function. He [or she] does not follow the general process of labour and production. He is not a point that moves and so creates a line; he is a pin stuck in a particular place, and the line is made up of a succession of pins that an alien will have arranged in accor-

dance with its own ends."

Or as Marx put it: "It is not the worker that employs the instruments of labour, but the instruments of labour that employ the worker".

Fight

The fight for workers' control challenged the capitalist — and it also changed the workers themselves. Each worker was no longer an individual cog in the machine, but part of a collective; no longer just an agent for the capitalist's production plan, but an initiator and a contributor to the workers' production plan.

Italy after World War 1 was in great ferment. From June 1919 Gramsci and his comrades had been agitating for the 'internal commissions' — rather lifeless, bureaucratic bodies — to be transformed into democratic factory councils. Their efforts flowered in September 1920, when, in pursuit of a wage dispute, the workers occupied the factories and started running them under the

control of the factory councils.

The same sort of thing has happened elsewhere. In Portugal in 1975, after the fall of the Caetano dictatorship, the workers in many factories kicked out the capitalists and took control through workers' commissions, while demanding nationalisation. During the May-June 1968 general strike in France, workers at the CSF factory in Brest continued production to make walkie-talkies for the use of strikers.

1926

In Nantes, the whole town was controlled for a week by a Central Strike Committee, which monitored traffic, regulated petrol supplies, and organised food distribution. The same happened in some towns in Britain during the 1926 general strike.

All these great workers' struggles started with quite limited demands. Struggles for limited demands, once they grow beyond a certain size, can transform both themselves and the workers taking part in them.

Expose rail bosses' lies!

By Rob Dawber

We are in the final few days before the ballot on railway workshop redundancies and British Rail bosses are waging a shameless campaign of lies and false promises to persuade railworkers to accept 6000 redundancies.

Local workshop reps are being told that while every other workshop will have redundancies, their area will — somehow — be spared the hatchet. Blatant lies!

Requests that the union side be put at workplace meetings are refused. With the exception of Jimmy Knapp, whose exclusion would generate too much bad publicity, all other union reps are banned from workplaces.

They don't want to have their lies contradicted too much. So we are having to rely on meetings outside work time and workplaces, and on leaflets to expose their game.

Nonetheless the tide does appear to be shifting in our direction, as the case is spelled out for resisting yet another round of swingeing cuts in the workforce.

We must continue to show up and expose the bosses' campaign of lies and false promises. We must be ready for any tricky moves by BR and BREL.

The chances are that extra redundancy money will be announced a few days before the ballot. Or they could choose to turn the heat up by sackings — as they did with the guards — of workers who refuse to handle work transferred from threatened depots which is being boycotted under union instructions.

NALGO: not so bad

The conference of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) did not exactly turn left, but it did resist the Kinnockite 'New Realism'. Delegates showed that they are aware that NALGO leaders have a double-sided banner. On the front it says 'NALGO united for jobs and services' and on the back 'Only if we don't have to do anything about it'.

The NEC's proposal to drop NALGO's successful anti-deportation campaigns was defeated. NALGO preserves its campaigns for lesbian and gay rights.

NALGO has electricity, gas, water,



London SOGAT FoCs and MoCs vote to step up action. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

Fleet Street is still key

By John Bloxam

Rupert Murdoch soon got the message from the rotten deal organised between Brenda Dean and the London leadership at the SOGAT conference. On Friday 13 June he started proceedings for an injunction to stop mass pickets at Wapping.

Murdoch has delayed the court hearing to 7 July and there are rumours it will be delayed further. The cause of this delay has been pressure from the TUC — not on

Murdoch, but on SOGAT. The TUC are now redoubling their efforts to get the strike called off.

Murdoch's writs include evidence of the effect of the picketing and the boycott. On Murdoch's own estimate, his strike-breaking operations are costing nearly £400,000 a month; he also cites much demoralisation among the scabs inside 'Fortress Wapping'.

So present union strategy is having an effect. But we should not be fooled. It is an irritant and not the kind of blow needed to secure reinstatement and union recognition.

The picket at Wapping is far too small to have any chance of stopping Murdoch's operations. Last Saturday night there were little more than 1000, although it was a national NGA mobilisation.

Closing down Fleet Street could bring decisive pressure on Murdoch; it would also massively increase the possibilities of gaining support from other trade unionists.

Every plant doing work for Murdoch should be picketed.

Militants should argue at this Saturday's mass meeting for a date to be named for a Fleet Street-wide strike in solidarity with the News International strikers and as the best possible response to Murdoch's threatened writs.

Post strike

Postal workers at London's Eastern District Office in Whitechapel were able to block a management attempt to impose flexible working and a cut in pay by taking swift strike action on Friday 13 July.

Management had wanted Postmen Higher Grade (PHGs) who normally deal with outgoing mail, to work on incoming mail, which is normally done by postal grades. The PHGs were to be paid for the extra work out of the postmen's bonus.

The postmen came out on Friday and management backed down. They returned to work on Saturday and went in on Sunday to clear the backlog. Management tried the same tactic and were answered by another strike.

Joe, one of the strikers, told us: "Management have backed down for the moment but they're just biding their time. They want to bring in casuals to do the delivery while we do all the sorting in the office."

"The sort of flexibility they want could involve us working split shifts — four hours in the morning and then four hours in the evening."

No progress

The Union of Communications Workers is asking the union's members to accept an increase of 5.8% on basic pay. Though backdated to April 1 1986, it would not affect overtime rates until October 1 1986.

Annual leave is increased for those with under five years service. On the claim for a shorter working week there is no progress.

In reality the increase to 5.8% has been bought by rescheduling monies from other sources — i.e. overtime rates — something the UCW said they would not accept this year.

Strike over GCHQ

By Trudy Saunders

On Thursday night 19th the government announced its intention to "punish" GCHQ workers who had rejoined their unions after being bullied into leaving them by Thatcher and Howe.

For those members of the Civil and

Public Services Association and the Society of Public Servants who dared defy Thatcher, the financial penalties will be heavy.

These workers will lose amounts of up to £3000 over a period of two years through the loss of increments and the recent stingy pay rise offered to civil servants. The low paid clerical officers and clerical assistants will be plunged into poverty.

On Friday, civil servants all over the country walked out in protest. In Nottingham 50% of the membership walked out, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries as well as the DOE and DHSS office.

At my own office there was a walk-out, although the branch has not been militant in the past and many members didn't know what was happening.

Thatcher's attempt to give the naughty girls and boys a vicious rap on the knuckles is unlikely to be successful. The treatment of trade unionists at GCHQ strikes fear into the hearts of even the most right wing members in the CPSA and SCPS. It could be their turn next.

health and transport sections, but the local government section is the largest with 500,000 out of a total membership of 750,000. This section rejected the offer of a 5.9% pay rise while other sections agreed to accept 5-6%. This could mean a ballot on industrial action by way of rolling strikes of 2-3 days.

The main debate of the conference was around South Africa. A long motion reaffirmed support for the victims of South African repression, but an amendment proposing to open up direct links with South African unions was defeated by a small majority.

Labour campaign on witch hunt

By John Bloxam

A CONFERENCE of Labour activists last Saturday, 21st, decided to support the Constituency Labour Parties who are defying the National Executive's attempts to expel members, and to set up a delegate Steering Committee to continue a campaign against the witch-hunt.

In the past Militant have insisted on campaigning on the witch-hunt quite separately from the rest of the left. On Saturday, however, they were there, and arguing for a united campaign. We hope they will stick to this.

National Executive member Audrey Wise told the conference that the recent expulsions were all 'totally unjustified', with charges ranging from 'the monstrous to the ridiculous'. She pointed out that the left is 'in favour of correct procedures and against improprieties', but 'the biggest improprieties occur on the NEC itself'.

The NEC's case against Liverpool was centred on alleged breaches of rule by the District Labour Party. But the only DLP officers charged were Militant supporters. Other, like council leader John Hamilton, are untouched.

The controversial issue at the conference was the extent to which the case of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally in Birmingham — both mainstream Labour leftists — should be separated out from the Militant expulsions.

A separate 'Campaign to Reinstate Kevin Scally and Amir Khan' has been formed. Everybody at the conference supported it. But the danger is obvious. We could come close to what Michael Meacher and David Blunkett are saying — expel Militant supporters, but not the 'legitimate' left.

One issue not debated was the use of the courts. All those currently being expelled — both the Militant support-

ers, and Amir Khan and Kevin Scally — have taken the Labour Party NEC to court. Such action was defended strongly by Audrey Wise, but there was no chance at the conference to put the opposing view, that we must not call on the bosses' courts to sort out disputes in the labour movement.

WITCH HUNT NEWS. June/July issue just out. Articles include Dennis Skinner on 'The witch hunt is widening', Ian McCalman 'The Scottish Witch Hunt', and details of the action against Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN). Kevin Scally and Amir Khan write about their expulsions. 20p per copy, £1 for ten copies. Order from c/o 36 Melbourne Rd., London E17 or from Socialist Organiser.

SOCIALIST STUDENTS IN NOLS

Win the Labour vote!

Last week was National Union of Students Executive training and planning week, when the Executive discusses its campaign plans for the new year.

Or, as last week, it doesn't bother.

During the week, Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) argued that we need to plan all our campaigns now in the context of the run-up to the general election. The dominant Democratic Left (the Kinnockites), couldn't see the point. This left them looking very much like the sectarian Socialist Workers Party — wanting a campaign here and a campaign there, but with no real overall focus or drive.

For SSiN the best way to organise for a Labour vote is through action. This would mean, for instance, linking up students with rank and file trade union campaigns, against Fowler's cuts, and with community campaigns for nurseries, etc., etc.

Red and grey

But the Democratic Left seem to think that the best way to win a Labour vote is to print posters in red and grey, and hope that students realise that their wonderful union is run by Labour and so they would vote for a Labour government.

NUS needs a youth rights manifesto/charter to pull the disparate campaigns together. It needs to organise roadshows to go into Further Education (FE) colleges with NUS national and local labour movement campaign stalls which will help FE activists to draw new students into campaigns right at the start of the year.

Our campaigns should be geared to help develop FE unions and we should use polytechnic and university resources to do that.

The national executive should change its style and go out and fight for the demands of the youth rights charter/manifesto. They should go into the colleges and convince people that its demands are right. They should help organise campaigns to achieve them.

Stand

That sort of campaigning would automatically raise the question of the general election. For almost all of NUS's demands point to the need for a Labour government — or at least to the urgent need to kick out the Tories.

In fact — to achieve most of them would require mass campaigns against even a Labour government.

If NUS is serious about organising for its policies then its Democratic Left leaders should not run away from taking a clear pro-Labour stand on the forthcoming general election.

Organising for a Labour vote involves convincing people, telling them about the policies of the main parties. Most of all it must mean organising campaigns to draw students into activity alongside the organised working class as we work to develop Further Education students unions.

The focus of the NUS must now be an earnest drive to develop our union, frankly linked to the aim of kicking out the Tories. There are over 30 marginal seats — the 'education' marginals — where student votes will determine who wins.

Winning students for Labour is therefore no small part of winning the next general election.

Therefore activity against the Tories has to be the focus and direction for NUS in the next year. If not, then in another five years of the Tories threatens loans instead of grants, voluntary membership of students unions and more cuts.

*SSiN steering committee, 7pm, PCL, Bolsover Street, (Gt. Portland St. tube), Friday 27th. All welcome.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Summer School July 4-7

From 1pm Friday 4 July to 4pm 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, Jabu Sindane, and Frances Kelly.

Sessions on: the trade unions; the left; solidarity and the situation now; what 'national liberation' means; Namibia.



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), Austen Morgan, John O'Mahony, and Niall Power.

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.

Special introductory offer to Socialist Organiser.

10 issues £2.50.

Write to: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15.

Socialist Organiser day school on Ireland Sunday 29 June, 10am to 4.15pm in London. For venue phone 01-639 7967 or 7965. Sessions on: The Protestants; the national question, Republicanism, populism and socialism; Ireland and the British labour movement

Home helps occupy Town Hall

By Nik Barstow

A huge hand-drawn sign covers the Town Hall window — "Home Helps still here, Day 37".

It was almost the last day of the five week long occupation when I spoke to Pat Ripley, a NUPE steward and a stalwart of the occupation. Despite having lived 24-hours a day in a council committee room for over five weeks, trying to force the councillors to negotiate, Pat was still determined and optimistic.

Islington council expected to be able to push work changes through when they 'decentralise' the home helps service this year — but they reckoned without the women workers.

She explained: "This is the first action taken by home helps. We had a one day strike some time ago as a warning to the Council — that got us nowhere. The only other time we'd come out was over rate capping — to

support them!

"Until five years ago we weren't particularly involved in the union. Then we realised we needed a union.

"It must have really shaken the councillors to realise we were willing to strike. They ignored us. They didn't think of us as a body of people with minds and ideas of our own.

"For years and years we just did whatever they told us or whatever they handed out. We just accepted it. We'd never stand up for ourselves. But now we are really making a stand. We're fed up with being pushed around."

Pat talked about the home helps' claim for more pay. They'd been offered just an extra 15p an hour "to do an impossible job description. They want us to be social workers, finance advisers, to call the doctor . . . We already do the shopping, cleaning, laundry and everything else. We have to work alongside social workers at an equal level and get paid next to nothing. We get paid £3.20 an hour. Compare that to social workers. Yet we're expected to do their work as well as our own."

Pat explained the cheerful spirit in which she and the other home helps — Rose Rowe, Joan Coulson, Sue Southgate and Norma James — had run the occupation for 38 days.

"No other body of people but women would have been happy to stay here for so long. Obviously we've got homes and families and we'd like to get back to them — but this is our stand.

The councillors promised that a substantial offer would be made as soon as they vacated the Town Hall. A day later the occupation ended.

The Council has been condemned by both Islington Labour Parties. A revolt in the Labour Group only just failed: 14 councillors voted for the home helps and 19 for the council leaders.

Still, it looked like the council leaders would be forced to move.

But the result was a shabby trick. The offer was raised by 1p and an immediate reduction of the working week to 37 hours. But the Labour Party's election manifesto in Islington had promised to introduce the 37 hour week for all council manual workers. And Margaret Hodge, the Islington group leader, had personally promised home help stewards that the new offer 'certainly wouldn't be just 2p'.

Offer

The offer was put to a mass meeting of home helps on Tuesday 24 June where the home helps voted to continue their action. Other Islington council unions are now planning supportive industrial action.

Pat's views on the Labour leaders of Islington council are strong but fair.

"They're not acting like ordinary working class Labour people at all — they don't seem to have any idea. They don't understand how we feel, they don't understand our jobs — I don't think any of them has ever come out with a home help to see how our job is done.

"They seem to think it's just a bit of shopping and cleaning and then we rush off as soon as we can. But you don't, you get emotionally involved and you help with a lot of personal problems, you're really part of the old people's lives.

"These councillors don't back manual workers like us — most of them have got highly paid office jobs and they've no idea what it's like doing really basic work. But without us they wouldn't have a social services.

"The girls really don't want to hurt their old people but it's reaching that stage now. It seems to be the only thing left for us to do."

The disgrace is that by lies and deceit Islington council have put some of their most caring workers in a position of having to make that choice.

RUC murder scandal

Labour must find the truth

THE SUSPENDED deputy chief constable of Manchester, John Stalker, is the victim of a frame-up.

The reason for the frame-up? Because his investigations into the shooting of six men by the Northern Ireland police in 1982 had uncovered evidence that a lawless murder gang had been organised by policemen to assassinate political suspects.

Apparently he had proof that they murdered at least six unarmed men — one of them 17 years old and non-political.

Stalker found that policemen up to the rank of superintendent were involved in the murders and had helped cover them up. Stalker demanded that they be prosecuted.

The Stalker inquiry was set up at the request of RUC chief constable Sir John Hermon. But Hermon refused to back Stalker's demand for prosecution.

The inquiry had been set up before the Anglo-Irish agreement set the Northern Ireland unionist majority at odds with Britain, placing the Protestant RUC in the political front line. Stalker's imminent report could not have come at a worse time for the RUC.

For the last 8 months the largely Protestant police force has had to confront petrol bombs and Protestant bullets, and face down outraged Protestant mobs. Many police have been driven from their homes in Protestant districts. Their morale

has suffered badly.

And it looks like they will have to face intensifying Protestant hostility in the months ahead. Stalker's report would have struck a big blow at RUC morale and credibility.

So somebody decided to discredit Stalker, and thereby his report.

On the basis of rather vague insinuations that one of Stalker's friends had criminal associations, Stalker was removed from duty and another senior policeman took over the investigation.

But this blatant attempt to eliminate Stalker has failed. It has drawn massive attention to the affair — and to the six RUC murders.

The labour movement cannot trust the Tory government or the police to tell the truth about the Stalker case. We need a labour movement inquiry into the record of the RUC and the British Army in Northern Ireland.

Because of our summer school, Socialist Organiser will take a break the week after next. No.275 will be dated 3 July, and no.276 17 July.

Fight the witch hunt!

Join the Labour Party!

Write to 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.