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Number 73

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TOWER HAMLETS SUPPORT GROUP
& WOMEN AGAINST MURDOCH

RALLY

Sunday 3 May, 4p.m.
Wellclose Square
Wapping, London E1

REVOLUTIONARY WAY FORWARD

WORKERS PRESS MAYDAY STATEMENT

CPSA strike



TRADE unionists from the Civil and Public Servants Association in the London area staged a series of strikes last week over suspected de-staffing of Job Centres in the near future.

Pickets at the Brixton Job Centre (above) told Workers

Press they suspected that the Tory government intends turning the centres into 'Job Training Scheme' centres.

● Last week's action came one week before national industrial action in support of a pay claim which the government has treated with contempt.

MAYDAY 1987 sees the working class all over the world engaged in mass struggles more closely interconnected than ever before.

● In **SOUTH AFRICA**, a massively organised working class, led by its very youngest sections, continues the battle to overthrow the racist-capitalist state. Despite every effort of the ruling class to break up and behead their organisations, despite torture, mass imprisonment and repression of every kind, the struggle goes on.

● In **LATIN AMERICA**, the masses fight on against US imperialism and its military agents. The failure of the latest attempt at a military coup in **ARGENTINA** — though it will certainly not be the last — showed the great strength of the working class and the determination to defend its rights.

● The **PALESTINIAN** people fight on despite Zionist terror and treachery of the leaders of the Arab countries. The Palestine Liberation Organisation continues to mobilise the youth in particular in the struggle for their homeland.

● In **EASTERN EUROPE, THE USSR AND CHINA**, the Stalinist bureaucracy seeks a way out of its economic difficulties in still closer accommodation with imperialism. **YUGOSLAV** workers, too, have been answering attacks on their living standards with a wave of strikes. Here too, it is the refusal of a new generation of workers to knuckle under to bureaucratic rule — even in its 'liberal' phase — which is the decisive factor.

● **EUROPE** has seen big movements of workers, spearheaded in **FRANCE, ITALY** and **SPAIN** by the organised action of the students. These actions collide not only with crisis-ridden state machines, but also with their bureaucratic agents in the leadership of the working class.

● The workers of **BELFAST** and **DERRY** battle on against the British occupying forces. After 18 years of ruthless repression, the fight goes on, led by a generation which was not even born when Callaghan sent the troops in.

Each of these battles has had its martyrs. Each of them has its class-war prisoners, held in the jails of the ruling class. The Workers Revolutionary Party salutes them all and pledges its support for every move to defend their rights and secure their liberty.

All these movements, bringing to the fore the most exploited layers of the masses, women and youth, reflect the fact that the world is ripe for socialism. The decaying capitalist system,

increasingly dominated by its most parasitic sectors, is held together only by the treachery and corruption of the misleaders of the working class.

That is why, in saluting all these fighters for the liberation of the working class, we must also warn against the grave dangers to them posed by their existing leaderships. The Gorbachevs and Kinnocks of this world, in working to protect imperialism, open the way for

● TURN TO PAGE 8

PUBLIC LECTURES

A series of four lectures
by Cyril Smith

1. Subject and object (8 May)
2. Individual and society (15 May)
3. Theory and revolutionary practice (22 May)

FRIDAY evenings
7.30p.m. sharp

Duke of York, York Way
near Kings Cross Station, London WC1
Please note: No Lecture Friday, 1 May

**Workers
Press**

Waiting for Sir Jim?

THE EXTRACTS from Peter Wright's book 'Spycatcher', published last week by 'The Independent', again bring into sharp focus the nature of the capitalist state and the relationship of the reformist trade union and Labour leaders to that state.

In his book, former MI5 agent Wright claims that some 30 senior MI5 officers were involved in a concerted effort to plot the downfall of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, then head of a Labour government. According to Wright, systematic burglary and phone-tapping were among the means employed against Wilson and several Labour Cabinet Ministers.

That Wright is a notorious right-winger and virulent anti-communist merely gives added weight to his allegations against the state security system.

In the House of Commons last week, Labour MP Dale Campbell-Savours named Harry Wharton, former MI5 officer, as being a central figure in the plot. Wharton was apparently the controller of Cecil King, recently deceased head of the publishing empire IPC.

Retaliation against 'The Independent' was swift and predictable. Attorney General Sir Michael Havers instituted proceedings for criminal contempt against the paper and those which had repeated the allegations.

It is somewhat ironic that Wright's allegations should concern a Labour government, given the fact that the Labour leaders are the most loyal servants of the capitalist state. Indeed Thatcher relied heavily on these leaders last week, in her refusal to launch any inquiry into these charges. In particular, she quoted James Callaghan's exoneration of MI5, following a 1977 investigation when he was prime minister.

For Marxists, the essence of the state is not parliament. Parliament has no control whatsoever over the activities of semi-secret and sinister bodies such as MI5. This is the case whether Tory, Labour or any other kind of government is in office. These bodies are not 'the state within the state' but the essential organs of the state itself.

The role of Roy Jenkins (Home Secretary in 1974) and Merlyn Rees (Home Secretary at the time MI5 was cleared by Callaghan) demonstrates that a Labour government in office is not the working class in power. Governments come and go but the bourgeois state, defender of capitalist private property, remains.

Most intriguing of all is the continued silence of Sir James Callaghan. As the successor to Wilson as Labour prime minister, Mr Callaghan, as he then was, might even be regarded as the immediate beneficiary of Wilson's discomfiture.

Nobody should be in any doubt where Kinnock and the Labour leaders stand in relation to the Wright revelations. The secrets of the ruling class will be absolutely safe with Kinnock should he ever head a future government.

The Leader of her Majesty's Loyal Opposition was most annoyed with Thatcher at the time of the Malvinas war, when she suggested that state secrets could not be entrusted to him. The demand for an inquiry, made by Tony Benn and other Labour MPs last week, is also a deception. Such inquiries are worthless.

The state cannot be reformed. There can be no 'peaceful road to socialism', as the Communist Party preaches. The state has to be smashed, broken up and replaced with a state which rules in the interests of the working class. That is the lesson which the leaking of extracts from Wright's book again demonstrates for the working class. This is the programme for which the Workers Revolutionary Party stands.

Blackpool: USDAW report

THE CONFERENCE of the USDAW shopworkers union in Blackpool this week was the scene for a cynically stage-managed electioneering boost for Labour leader Neil Kinnock.

BY HILLARY HORROCKS

Kinnock's speech to the conference on Monday dwelt on Tory attacks already well-documented by delegates in the discussion, and offered no concrete plans to combat these. Ominously, he omitted any mention of repealing the Tory anti-union laws, but did threaten 'collaboration' between a Labour government and the unions' — in other words the im-

position of a wages policy.

The USDAW Executive used the delegates' deep hatred of the Tories to steamroller the rejection by conference of a proposal to re-elect the General Secretary every 5 years — on the grounds that Thatcher also wanted this.

The executive also urged acceptance of motions uncritically supporting the Kinnock leadership and his witch-hunt of Militant. But

they were defeated on a Militant-inspired motion urging a future Labour government not to enter a coalition government with any other parties.

Contributions from delegates reflected the drastic effect of the economic crisis on wage levels and working conditions in the retail industry. Several warned that although the unions had won a respite on Sunday trading, many employers were bringing in longer shop hours through the back door.

Part-time workers were subject to increasing exploitation, some even being engaged on contracts lasting for 8 hours. Management were constantly contravening the law on the employ-

ment of 14-16 year-olds and one delegate reported that youth had been locked in a store at night until the shelf-filling had been completed.

On the advice of the Executive, Conference defeated a motion which would have radically modified last year's close vote to cooperate with YTS schemes.

But conference passed un-animously an emergency motion rejecting support for the proposed job training scheme, and the union collaboration with YTS will obviously remain a burning issue among members.

Note: A further report and an analysis of the conference will appear in next week's issue.

Danger in moves to autonomy

WHEN the Wales TUC meets this weekend for its 14th annual conference, the first motion on the agenda is a unity motion for a Labour victory at the next election from the South Wales NUM Executive.

Their confidence in Neil Kinnock, after his despicable role in the miners' strike, goes from strength to strength. It is matched by their acceptance of the 'concept' of worsening working conditions in Margam.

Another highpoint on the agenda is an expected stinging attack (!) on the EEPTU from George Wright, leader of the T&G in Wales over the issue of 'Japanese company' style agreements and poaching of members.

Opposition to single union agreement is bound up with the more controversial issue

of autonomy in the motion from the T&G. The TUC are resisting any rule changes

which would enable a movement towards autonomy by the Wales TUC and the Wales TUC do not want autonomy without the agreement of the TUC. However, the motion calls for the creation of a Disputes Committee to deal with inter-union disputes which flies in the face of existing machinery and procedure.

Other motions include one from Merthyr Trades Council which calls on Conference to agree to those industries privatised by the Tories to be brought back under public

ownership by a Labour government.

Another, from Swansea Trades Council, calls for the replacing of TOPS and YTS with apprenticeships controlled by the trades unions with trade union rates of pay and all the other rights denied to YTS and TOPS trainees.

The newly-formed National Justice for Miners Campaign in Wales will also be holding a fringe meeting during the Conference.

The question of unity with the working class fighting against the capitalist system will be best served by a stronger trade union movement in Britain. The present

moves to autonomy represent the danger of fragmentation of the trade unions in Wales and further fragmentation in Scotland, and must be rejected.

It is contradictory to the interests of all the national unions. Any further fragmentation must reflect a movement to the right of the trades union bureaucracy.

The South Wales NUM should remember that, despite their unity motion, they eagerly joined in the right-wing witch-hunt on the Militant tendency which added to the deepening of division in the Labour Party.

Manchester May Day



IN MANCHESTER on Monday the scene of this year's May Day rally will be the health service.

BY SUE GWYER

Marching from Ancoats hospital at 11 a.m. led by the local residents who have occupied Ancoats Casualty Unity since 1 February, the march will go to Albert Square in the city centre.

Workers Press talked to 2 members of the Ancoats Ac-

tion Group about the rally.

Pat: 'I hope it's a success. We are organising for the rally to let everybody know about the cuts in the NHS.'

We want people to know it's really serious, this closure of Ancoats Casualty.

We hope May Day will

bring a lot of people together who can do something about it.

Let's have it right: we have to fight back!

Mace: 'The Tory government want to get rid of the health service altogether. They want a service only for those who can pay.'

Pat: 'It's the working people who are suffering.'

Mace: 'We hope all the

rally.'

The labour and trade union movement owe their support to all sections of workers fighting Tory cuts.

In Manchester the closure of Ancoats Casualty highlights the run-down in the NHS.

The Ancoats Action Group are leading the fight-back.

March for Ancoats and support the occupation. Save

Caterpillar return

A MASS meeting of 800 Caterpillar workers voted last Sunday to end the 103-day occupation of the plant. The decision leaves completely unresolved all major problems confronting the workforce and the working class in the West of Scotland.

By occupying the plant, the Caterpillar workers threw down a challenge to the owners and the government. They placed themselves in the front line of the battle for jobs.

They received the support of the working class not only in Scotland but internationally.

Caterpillar workers in Belgium and France warned the Company that they would strike immediately if any attempt was made to end the Scottish occupation by force

BY JOE EYRE

and hundreds of dollars were collected by workers at the main American plant in support of the occupation.

At Uddingston itself an entire corridor was used to display hundreds of messages of support from every organisation in the labour movement, official and unofficial.

Traditionally moderate, the initial demands of the workforce stood in sharp contradiction to the actual content of the struggle.

They demanded that a buyer should be found for the plant and promised complete flexibility over working practices and conditions. But by occupying they were

in fact declaring that the plant was theirs and by producing a symbolic tractor for Nicaragua they underlined their rejection of the international capitalist system, insisting that production must be organised to satisfy human need.

This living contradiction surfaced again and again throughout the occupation.

On the one hand they were prepared to look to the government, ACAS and the Scottish Development Agency to solve their problems, while on the other they grilled Communist Party member Jimmy Airlie, when he agreed to do the dirty work for the AEU leadership by demanding they end the occupation.

While vaguely mouthing support for the occupation, the leadership was in fact determined to knife it. They were not alone. The entire trade union bureaucracy was determined to isolate the Caterpillar workers from the physical and political support of the working class.

The experiences of the

Glasgow Caterpillar Support Group provide the clearest evidence of this.

The support group was set up by workers who were disgusted at the criminal inactivity of Glasgow District Trades Council which throughout the occupation did nothing to mobilise working class support.

ts initial meeting attracted over 50 and was addressed by a delegation from Caterpillar. They decided to meet weekly for the duration of the occupation.

The following day the Support Group secretary phoned the Glasgow offices of the T&GWU to book a room. The union agreed to give them a room free of charge for their meetings.

Then the T&GWU phoned back to say there had been a double booking and the room was not available. Two days later the story changed again. In a letter to the Support Group the T&GWU stated that they would not make a room available because the Support Group

was not 'accredited'.

A delegation from the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee at Yarrow's shipyard also attended the initial meeting. They gave firm backing by agreeing that their address could be used on all Support Group literature. One of them agreed to act as treasurer.

Within two days they had backed off after the convenor received a phone call from Glasgow Trades Council to the effect that the Support Group was 'WRP controlled'.

Using these methods the bureaucracy tried to ensure that no independent working class support would be mobilised. By attempting to knife the Support Group they were declaring their intention to knife the occupation when the time was right.

That is precisely what they did last week. On behalf of the right-wing leadership, Jimmy Airlie threatened the stewards with expulsion from the union unless they ended the occupation.

The shop stewards knew they had been betrayed by the union and honestly believed that there was no way to continue. In that judgement they were wrong. They could not continue in the old way but the occupation could have been sustained by a campaign to mobilise the independence of the working class in defiance of the company and the union leadership.

Many Caterpillar workers have now lost all their illusions in the leadership. They have also experienced firsthand the support of the working class which allowed them to take up weekly street collections of around £15,000. But it's not just a question of collecting money. Only the physical and political support of the working class can save the Caterpillar plant.

Nothing is solved and nothing, as yet, has been lost. Even now it is not too late for the workforce to turn to the working class and win the support they need.

An open letter to the Caterpillar workers

DEAR comrades and colleagues at Caterpillar

Now that you have voted to end your occupation, so that a new buyer can be found, you must beware the double cross behind your backs, in particular by trade union officials.

Back in 1972 Briant Colour Printing, a small firm in Peckham, south-east London, went into voluntary liquidation. When the management announced the decision the workforce of almost 200 decided to occupy the factory immediately. In fact, they had a 'work-in'.

The occupation went on for just over a year. Negotiations took place during that time between union officials, prospective buyers, and the liquidator.

A buyer was found and, after many months of negotiation, writs and more demonstrations, the occupation ended in July 1973 with many jobs having to go to satisfy the new owner. But the sting in the tail was to come just 13 weeks later.

The workforce turned up for work as usual one Monday morning to find the plant padlocked and patrolled by

security guards.

The management had caught the workforce off guard.

But the lesson here is this: if one employer cannot make a profit from a commodity then it should be no surprise that a new employer will not be able to either.

but what will always be in doubt in my mind is: did the union officials know this was going to happen?

Caterpillar workers beware!

Alan Clark, Ex Briant Colour Printing.

Liberal racists call the police

BY BERNARD FRANKS

DEMONSTRATORS who attended Monday's Tower Hamlets Council meeting to protest at a blatantly racist housing policy were set on and ejected by police called in by the Liberal Council.

Members of homeless families and Labour councillors alike were bundled violently down the stairs and 6 arrests were made. Men and women from the Bengali community in East London massed outside Bethnal Green police station to demand the release of the Six.

They were joined by members of the local community and Tower Hamlets Trade Union Council which adjourned its AGM and marched to the scene behind its banner. Everyone outside the police station agreed not to leave until all those arrested had been released.

The 6 were freed individually over the next four hours with the 2 Bengalis involved held until last.

Three people have been charged with assault and three more cautioned.

The Liberals who gained office at the last Council

elections in Tower Hamlets aimed to drive well over a hundred Bengali families out of their temporary bed and breakfast accommodation. So far 40 have been told that the council intends to cease paying for their accommodation. And a further 80 families are being lined up for similar treatment.

The Liberals say that people who have come to Britain from Bangla Desh to join their families have made themselves homeless and cannot expect to be rehoused.

Families who have lived and worked here for years can therefore be driven out of temporary accommodation if joined by such a member. This is clearly a racist interpretation of conditions that could apply to anyone.

It also has sinister hints of a repatriation policy, matching anything advanced by the National Front or right wing Tories.

The same Liberal Council is also introducing a 'sons and daughters' policy which will give housing priority to

the offspring of sitting tenants and will also discriminate against immigrant families.

'No doubt we will be criticised yet again for racial discrimination', said Liberal Councillor Jeremy Shaw, chair of the Housing Subcommittee, when explaining the proposal.

Everyone should take warning from these examples of Liberal policies in action.

In particular those now advocating tactical voting in the forthcoming elections should explain how this will keep Tory policies at bay when the Liberals are at best running neck-and-neck with their Tory counterparts in respect of racist measures.

A public meeting has been called by campaigners on behalf of the threatened Bengali families for 3.00p.m. Saturday 2 May at the Brady Centre, 52½ Hanbury Street, London E1.

All supporters and supporting organisations welcome.

Day of judgement

JUDGE Maurice Gibson, executed last week by the IRA, was Britain's second most important judge in the occupied six counties and one of the most hated. Gibson administered the system which processed members of the nationalist community, denying them even the meagre norms of bourgeois justice.

One form of judicial repression after another has been tried but has failed because of the heroism and tenacity of those who found themselves in the system.

After internment without trial came the Diplock — no-jury — Courts, then the paid perjurer ('supergrass') trials, and finally what Gibson called the 'final court of justice' — the shoot-to-kill policy.

He made this remark after acquitting three RUC officers who had ambushed and killed three men suspected of being members of the IRA.

All the hoo hah in the press about a breach in the security system following Gibson's demise is simply to draw attention away from the painful fact that the IRA not only have the know-how and technology to mount such an operation, one of an increasing number in the last few months, but also the requisite popular support.

BY JOHN SIMMANCE

In the House of Commons debate on Monday, none other than Roy Mason, former Northern Ireland Secretary, called for a 'higher security profile in previously quiet areas', with more British troops drafted into the six counties.

He called on the army and police to stage more joint patrols, and for extra facilities for the British army and 'special forces' so they could retaliate and capture 'terrorists' more effectively.

Mason has long been the central spokesman on the Labourites' position on Ireland and the Tories no doubt will take his advice, but Ireland's fight for self-determination has exposed every reformist.

Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman, Stuart Bell, not only condemned the IRA action outright, but said the IRA 'seeks to be its own judge, jury and executioner and it seeks by violence what it cannot achieve by election.'

'This House of Commons has often been described as the mother of democracies,' he said.

'How long, therefore, will it take by those who perpetrate violence to understand that this House and this country will never bend the knee to terrorists.'

To paraphrase what Winston Churchill said, what kind of people do the IRA think we are?'

His message to the government was to ensure that the Anglo-Irish agreement was strong enough to survive these attacks.

It took the cowardly SDLP MP, Seamus Mallone, to call for greater cooperation between the Irish and British governments, including military.

The 'special forces' now being called for are of course undercover units of the SAS.

They have been used in the past to operate the 'shoot to kill' policy.

Only last week, the three-month hearing by the Strabane Coroner in County Tyrone restarted.

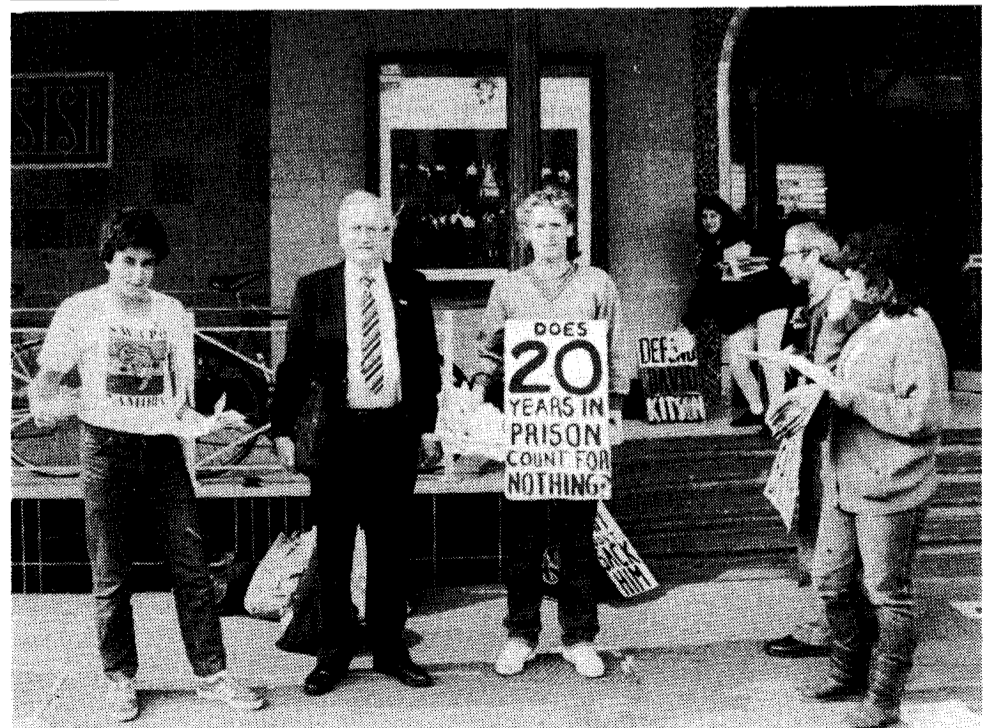
It is dealing with the killing of three young IRA volunteers, murdered by 'special forces' without warning.

Cover-up

The families have fought to expose the cover up, and have now refused to attend any further hearings because of the way the inquiry is being conducted.

The 'shoot to kill' policy and the harassment of the nationalist population will go on.

The responsibility lies at the feet of British imperialism, who maintain the occupied statelet by force, and the Labour leaders have shown that if elected to government they will continue to be the imperialist lapdogs.



DAVID KITSON (above with tie), 20 years a prisoner in South African jails for his role in the military wing of the African National Congress, was a delegate at the TASS conference in Bournemouth last week.

Activists from City of London Anti-Apartheid Group lobbied the conference in support of Kitson whose promised funding and fellowship at Ruskin College, funded by TASS, is under threat by supporters of the 'Morning Star'.

Wapping: Not a defeat but a lesson for whole working class

COMMENT ON THE
NEWS INTERNATIONAL DISPUTE
BY ALAN CLARK

THIS weekend sees the anniversary of the battle of Wapping which took place on Saturday 3 May, 1986. The event was supposed to be a celebration of the long printers' march from Glasgow to London.

Riot police and police on horseback waded and smashed into the printers and their supporters as they demonstrated outside Rupert Murdoch's plant on that night one year ago. They turned the celebration into a near funeral.

Though the printworkers' dispute was with News International, it was the police who the printers battled with.

The Wapping plant was protected night and day by Thatcher's boys in blue (or paper boys, as the printers called them). Pickets could not get anywhere near the building in sufficient numbers to close the place down.

They were unable to stop Murdoch's papers coming out at any time during the dispute, which obviously proves how well planned Murdoch's whole operation had been and how ill-prepared the union leadership were.

The printworkers and their supporters had many more violent battles with the police. The last one was on 24 January, just before the union leadership called the strike off (against the wish of the strikers) on 5 February.

There is no doubt that the printworkers dispute will rank alongside many other great disputes in the working class movement, for the way they fought and stood firm for trade union principles, in the face of unprecedented police violence.

The dispute will be remembered also for the way the sacked printers turned down offers by Murdoch of more than £50 million, (after being recommended by the union leadership), not once, but three times.

Dean and Dubbins caved in and left the printers, and the working class, with another betrayal like so many other leaders before and since.

What really angered the printworkers was the way the TUC leadership ran away from any fight against the EETPU and its leader Eric Hammond.

Hammond, it was, who organised the scabbing operation inside Wapping in collusion with Murdoch long before the dispute started on 24 January 1986.

Yet, the TUC would do nothing about his anti-trade union action apart from a slap on the wrist.

The TUC have long been the apologists for the ruling class. One day the working class will have it's revenge.

Because the dispute was betrayed and Murdoch is now allowed to print his papers unhindered with scabs, the other proprietors in Fleet Street are now pressing for legally binding agreements.

The managements have been able to get away with this since the News International dispute started just over a year ago, because they saw that the union leadership was weak.

The Wapping dispute showed them that Dean,



Dubbins and Willis were not going to make any challenge to the state.

Instead the unions relied on a 'Boycott Campaign' to defeat Murdoch, which Dean (twelve months later) had to admit did not work.

Brenda Dean, in calling the strike off, so soon after the magnificent march and rally of 30,000 trade unionists on January 24th, the first anniversary, only confirmed the printworkers' worst fears, that they were betrayed.

Though Dean and the National Executive preferred to call it, 'in the face of a renewed legal onslaught on the union.'

But many printers will argue, what is a union with plenty of money and assets but no bottle to fight.

Without doubt, the dispute was lost at the beginning, which the March 87 issue of the SOGAT journal says 'was the longest, most serious and most bitter dispute SOGAT has ever faced.'

Militants within the rank and file Fleet Street Support Unit knew long ago that the rest of Fleet Street should have been called out immediately the strike started.

When you come up against an enemy such as News International, backed up by the state, you produce your strongest weapons.

If you don't, the enemy will cut you down very quickly, for they have no hesitation in using the strongest weapon in their armoury.

What is needed, not only in the printing trade unions, but in the working class, is a leadership that is not going to betray and cave in every time the Tory government opens it's mouth.

The print strike showed, just like the miners strike before it, that men and women are prepared to fight.

Women's support groups and Print Support Groups were set up immediately.

The residents and tenants of Wapping also demon-

strated and made their voice heard on many occasions alongside of the printers.

The miners' and printworkers' strikes, like Silentnight, Hangers, Caterpillar and many others, prove that the working class want to fight.

They are not defeated, it is the lack of leadership that holds them back from doing the historical job of getting rid of the Tories and Capitalism forever, and bringing about Socialism, the only system that can take the working class forward.

The Wapping dispute with Murdoch was not a defeat but a lesson for the whole working class movement.

Unity with action — or gangrene?

COMMENT ON THE
NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS CONFERENCE
BY JIM STEAD

AT EASTBOURNE the National Union of Teachers' executive were forced to reveal their hidden agenda for accepting the Baker Act and policing the new deal for teachers.

The rhetoric of fighting Baker remains, but gone is the pretence of implacable resistance to the destruction of negotiating rights and new working conditions.

The executive now say they are instructing members on a work-to-rule on Baker's new conditions! Just how the membership is supposed to hold the line is not explained.

The guidelines to the membership to implement Baker were not going to be presented to conference. Direct action by certain fighters within the union published them and hundreds were unofficially handed to delegates.

Predictably the majority of the executive howled. Ian Morgan said: 'I consider this an act of treachery.'

He then authorised the distribution of the guidelines.

The hidden agenda on Baker had been agreed by a joint committee of one member

each of the NUT and the NAS/UWT.

This committee does not even appear to have produced any minutes.

As Norma Rya (Bradford delegate) said: 'The way the joint action committee was being used was so mortifying that there was imminent danger of gangrene setting in.'

For this speech, proposing greater action in unity with the NAS/UWT, Norma was given a unanimous standing ovation.

The executive on the platform, however, sat through the ovation as if gangrene had already actually set in.

Those on the executive who support NUT general secretary Fred Jarvis are seeking unity with the NAS/UWT for two reasons.

The first is that by such a unity they hope to build a bulwark against the developing militancy of the membership.

Secondly, sensing the financial difficulties from

the loss of membership they are becoming desperate for such a unity.

Jarvis said: 'What has to be recognised is that if we put unity first we cannot present each other with faits accomplis and that working out plans for action and guidance for members is bound to take time.'

Therefore, went the argument, any criticism of the national executive is criticism against unity.

Certainly in the vote for the Cover motion, 100,000 votes in favour, showed that many teachers understand there are two types of unity: a unity forged between fighters and a unity forged between those more terrified of the independence of the membership than they are of the Tory government.

Jim Ferguson, Liverpool executive member and Euro-communist, continued the attack by saying that the organisers of LAPACC (Local Associations' Pay and Conditions Campaign) wanted to split the union.

In this witch-hunting atmosphere there was a move to make such a body illegal, against the union rules. Conference voted not even to discuss this executive-proposed rule change!

The executive did give notice that they may well try to drive out of the union all those who are forced to take

up a fight.

The executive have expelled three members from London and suspended the Inner London Teachers' Association officers.

The fight for their reinstatement and the fight against Baker is in essence one and the same fight.

Only those who stand for the fullest union democracy such as supporting the right of local areas to take action in defence of their conditions will be able to lead a fight to defeat Baker.

The teachers are part of the emerging mass movement internationally.

Jarvis attended a 300,000-strong rally in France last year and teacher delegates at the conference from Palestine and Nicaragua revealed the developing connections.

The attack on education is not a British phenomenon but an international one.

There are literally millions of teachers fighting for the right of youth to be educated, and as part of that, their right to decent conditions and pay on this planet.

Nothing therefore can be or was solved by the decisions of the NUT conference, important though some of those decisions were.

The NUT executive were overturned by the conference on six or seven occa-

sions. The size of the vote against Cover shows the resistance that emerged against the Coventry and Nottingham agreement has been maintained and is growing.

In this situation, when the Stalinists such as Ferguson and Ken Bore (ex-Maoist supporter of 'The Worker') played the dirtiest role so far, what is the position of the left?

(Only a few years ago the Socialist Teachers' Alliance tried to make an unholy pact with Ferguson when he was a new member of the executive.)

Executive member for Outer London Ken Jones said at an STA meeting at the beginning of the conference: 'We have to realise that we cannot defeat Baker', he went on to outline how the STA could manage to do the best of a bad job.

It was an unfair slander of the STA that the executive said they had handed out the hidden guidelines earlier in the conference.

No, on the contrary, Bernard Regan, suspended executive member, said members should pressurise the executive to hand out union guidelines on Baker.

This was the position of Socialist Action and the International Group.

Surely in developing a Marxist policy for the entire

education sector, the fight against the executive, the Stalinists and all those who do not want to realise or help lead the mass actions of the teachers must be opposed.

We state clearly: the teachers, like the working class, are not in retreat. There are setbacks, but if a section of teachers can draw the necessary lessons for the next battle then the struggle itself is strengthened a thousandfold.

Yes, a turn to Marxism, Trotskyism, is decisive but this cannot be done in a bookish way.

What is required is not a consensus of agreement but a commitment towards Bolshevism. The role of Bolshevism today in the teachers' struggle is to analyse all the contradictory processes that emerge and to be optimistic and confident in the membership's ability to take up an independent fight against the executive.

We will prove in the course of the struggle that the WRP will be the most implacable fighters against the bureaucracy. We will fight in a disciplined, non-sectarian way alongside any teacher who wants to maintain conditions and also dreams of what education could be like if all the modern technology could be harnessed for the benefit of the youth.

'No woman's worth £98 a week', says HFW boss

'We'll show him what we're worth!'

'NO woman is worth £98 a week', says Paul Jackson, managing director of HFW Plastics, Gateshead, where a dispute has raged for the past six weeks.

Under attack are gains made by women workers over the past ten years. Twelve months ago Jackson asked these women to take a pay cut of £10 a week, to help the company over a bad patch.

Having agreed to this sacrifice many of them began to realise that Jackson's plea of difficulty was nothing more than a manipulative manoeuvre.

Some of the women explained to Workers Press the divisive methods that were used to implement the pay cut.

'He wanted to cause bother among the girls', said one. 'I was one of those girls who wasn't asked to take it, and I couldn't walk past them without they were saying: "Oh, there's the elite."'

As soon as the wage cut was secured orders began to flow into the factory and workers were required to work a lot of overtime.

On 18 March the workers voted unanimously to implement an overtime ban in support of a wage claim which, if successful, would have brought the first wage rise in the factory for four years.

The following Monday, workers were handed an ultimatum. They were required to answer 'Yes' to a demand that they resume 'normal

BY LYNN BEATON

working practices', meaning compulsory overtime.

Workers were given only 30 minutes to respond, and they described the harassment they were subjected to as they deliberated.

One of the women told us: 'Management were walking up and asking if we'd signed. One woman who didn't normally work any overtime was worried she would have to from now on.'

'There was no chance to talk to anyone about it. We just had to sign in a hurry.'

Eight workers who refused to sign were sacked on the spot. A couple of days later 37 workers came on strike in support of them and received dismissal notices the next day.

Management immediately introduced scab labour whom they have paid £30 a week less than the original workforce. Most of the scabs are young and straight off the dole queue.

At Easter Jackson made even greater increases to his profits. He handed his new scab workforce an Easter egg each and then told them that he would only pay them £30 a week and they would have to claim a further £24 from the Government on the job opportunities scheme.

Since then the dispute has



Scabs cutting their way through the factory gate with oxyacetylene

been conducted on the picket line. The management has secured an injunction against the union, and each day the picket-line's strength is tested by the police.

The collusion of management and police has ensured that the scabs have gained access to the factory so far, though many hours of pro-

duction have been lost each day as pickets have delayed the scabs' entrance.

On 22 April five of the pickets were arrested. Jason Stevenson was the youngest of the pickets to be found guilty of wilful obstruction and fined £25 and £10 costs.

Jason's plight shows the depression in the area and the importance for the whole trade union movement to fight these attacks.

Seventeen-year-old Jason's parents are both unemployed, as is his 18-year-old brother.

Jason left school at Easter 1986 and has never had a job.

The HFW Plastics dispute raises many fundamental questions for the whole British working class.

The company is clearly trying to pioneer sharp attacks on workers in the area. At the same time the striking workers are conscious of the dangers to their whole class and are determined, not only to get their jobs back, but ultimately to defeat the attacks.

Although the dispute started over wage demands, the company was obviously prepared for a showdown. It

has now become clear that it has been stockpiling materials for some time and has spent £5,000 on security devices in its preparation for this dispute.

Following close on the heels of the SOGAT leadership's capitulation at Wapping, and recent Tory attacks on the unemployed, the strike is another stage in the brutal onslaught the Tory government and employers are waging to try and preserve British capital.

At the heart of this dispute is a drive to cut wages and return workers to the non-union Dickensian conditions of Victorian Britain.

This is a conscious attempt by British capitalists to return to the time of their greatest profits and expansion.

Consistent with this is the need to deny workers the gains they have won in struggle and paid for in blood.

The HFW dispute makes it very clear that without the Tory anti-union legislation the company could never have made its attacks.

This attack on a group of SOGAT members is a further test of that union after the

weakness it showed at Wapping.

The dispute is also a test to see if the working class in the depressed North-East will accept the Tory view that workers in areas of high unemployment must accept lower wages than workers in other areas.

The dispute leaves no doubt as to the dangers of employment schemes paying less than trade union rights.

Bitter arguments over JTS, YTS, etc. have raged in the trade union movement, but the dispute at HFW makes it absolutely clear that while these schemes dominate the employment market their rates of pay will become an accepted rate unless they are fought against.

Managing director Jackson is trying to set a precedent for extremely low wage levels in the North-East. There is a danger that unless he is stopped all workers in the area will be reduced to working for supplementary benefit levels of pay.

So this dispute begins to show the way the Tories, if re-elected, will try to introduce compulsory labour for those on the dole.



Police arrested Mehmet Aslan, a member of a contingent supporting the picket from the Krupp's steelplant in Duisberg, Germany, at the beginning of April

LISTINGS

Listings are published free by WORKERS PRESS for organisations in the labour movement. Please send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Friday.

MAY DAY MARCH & RALLY Stop Cuts in the National Health Service. Saves Ancoats! Save Lives! Assemble: Ancoats Casualty, 11.00a.m. March to Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square. Rally at 1.00p.m. Speakers/Bands/Celebrities/Live Entertainment/Carnival fun events for children. Reclaim May Day — The Workers Holiday

MAY DAY SOCIAL In Aid of Victimised Miners. Saturday 2 May, 8.00p.m., Ruskin Hall, Church Road, W3. Speakers: Terry Harrison (Kent NUM), Broadwater Farm Defence Committee, Paul Kenny (GMBATU). Live Music with Maria Tolly; Balaleika Dance Group. Late Bar; Disabled Access. Waged £3; Unwaged £1.50; Free to Victimised Workers. (Organised by Hammersmith and Ealing Trades Councils; Support Groups; WLTUC.

SOCIALIST PLATFORM Public Meeting: 50 Years Since the Barcelona Events of 1937. Speakers: Staff Cotman (ex POU) and John Sullivan. Saturday 23 May, 7.30p.m., Duke of York, York Way, Kings Cross.

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S CAMP To all women — we are still here; we still need your support! Near Newbury, Exit 13 on M4, or BR Newbury, Berkshire.

THE HANGERS MARCH Saturday 2 May, Assemble 10.00a.m. Telegraph Road, Putney Heath, SW15. March to Rally in Bishop's Park, Fulham 12.30P.M. — 2.30p.m. Speakers include Arthur Scargill, Alf Dubs and Ken Livingstone

UNEMPLOYMENT, TRADES UNIONS AND THE MSC Conference Saturday 2 May 10.00a.m. — 5.00p.m. The Hampden Community Centre, 150 Ossulston Street, NW1 Speaker: Dann Finn, Unemployment Unit. Organised by Joint Unions Steering Group Opposing MSC (Further information: M.Arkwright)

BLACK FLAG VIGIL To commemorate Sixth Anniversary of 1981 Republican Hunger Strike. Tuesday, 5 May in Kilburn Square at 7.30p.m. Organised by Bobby Sands Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee.

BOBBY SANDS COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE Fortnightly meetings to organise a march in London at the end of June commemorating the deaths of the 10 Irish Republican hunger strikers in 1981. Next meeting 7.30p.m. 13 May 203 Seven Sisters Road, N4.

LONDON MAY DAY MARCH AND RALLY Friday 1 May. Assemble Temple Green, Embankment at 6.00p.m. March via Fleet Street and Farringdon Road to Clerkenwell Green.

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House in Trafalgar Square, London. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Weekly planning meetings are held every Tuesday, 7.30p.m., Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Road, N16. All are welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, London N4 (01-881 2938)

BRING BACK VICTORIA WILIAMS! Campaign meetings take place on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month at UCA, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, Acton (7.30 p.m.)

TALK POLITICS WITH THE RCG Weekly discussion meetings every Sunday, 7.00p.m. at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Sunday 3 May: Ireland — the key to the British revolution (Part One).

20 YEARS OF OCCUPATION Speaker from West Bank women's delegation. Jewish Socialists' Group meeting. Friends' International Centre, Byng Place, Torrington Place, WC1. (near Goodge St. tube). Saturday 2 May, 7.45pm.

FIGHT BIGOTRY! FIGHT RACISM! Smash the Backlash! Demonstration, Haringey Black Action and Positive Images. Against reactionary attacks on gays, lesbians and black people. Saturday, 2 May, Assemble 1.00 pm, Ducketts Common. Turnpike Lane tube. Mobile creche and disabled facilities.

BRENT EAST LPYS DISCO Saturday 9 May, 8.00p.m. (bar open to 12.30a.m.) Cricklewood Hotel, Cricklewood Broadway. £2 (£1 concessions)

VIRAJ MENDIS BENEFIT Tuesday 12 May, 7.30p.m. — midnight, London Lesbian and Gay Centre, 67 Cowcross Street, EC1 (Farringdon tube). VMDC Video; Cabaret: Maria Tolly; Christopher Eymard; Horns of Jericho; Zubop Trio; Ken Hughes. Disco: DJ-Rankin Josie. £2 waged, 75p unwaged

FREE ELEUTERIO GUTIERREZ Campaign meeting, Duke of York, York Way, Kings Cross, Monday 4 May 7.30p.m.

FLEET STREET SUPPORT UNIT RANK & FILE PRINTWORKERS PUBLIC MEETING

Anniversary of
The Brutal Police Attack
May 'Wapping 1986'
THURSDAY 7 MAY, 7p.m.
John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Road
London S.E.1.

END IMPERIALIST VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
National Demonstration

DURHAM

Saturday 13 June, 2p.m.
Coaches meet Student Union, Denelm
House, New Elvet
STOP STRIP SEARCHES IN
MAGHABERRY & DURHAM

Botha's plans in disarray

PRESIDENT Botha's plans for the whites-only general election to take place on 6 May with opposition silenced by bullets and jailings have broken down.

The revolutionary struggles of the black masses were temporarily driven underground by the state of emergency imposed last year.

They have now come decisively to the surface again.

The eight-week-old railway workers' strike is the heart of the upsurge.

Sixteen thousand members of the rail and harbour workers' union (SARHWU) have been sacked for refusing to return to work after an ultimatum on 21 April. Unemployed whites are now queuing for their jobs.

The South African Transport Service deployed huge numbers of military and security personnel at their installations. On 22 April railway workers attending an illegal meeting in Germiston were fired on by police and three strikers were killed.

Railwaymen in Johannesburg began to march to Germiston but they too were attacked by police and another three were shot dead.

These killings took place near the headquarters of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

The union HQ was immediately surrounded by police armed with machine-guns, and no one was allowed to leave for several hours.

When people were brought out many were beaten unconscious by police and soldiers.

A two-day national strike has been called by COSATU on 5 and 6 May in response to

huge pressure from workers outraged by the killings, even though many union leaders were reluctant to have a confrontation with the state.

Unrest has also boiled over again in the townships. The rent strikes and evictions in Soweto continue.

The day the strikers were killed, crowds marched on the Soweto Council buildings demanding an end to the evictions. A three-day stay-away was enforced by youth in Soweto, who called for the release of detainees.

Buses were stoned, hijacked and set on fire. Rioting also broke out in the 'coloured' areas of Natal, with at least three grenade attacks on policemen's houses.

Fighters from the Pan Africanist Congress also carried out a daring raid on a police training college in Soweto. They hurled grenades into the parade ground, killing one recruit and seriously injuring 64 others.

While six ANC fighters were killed by police in attacks on two hideouts, Joe Slovo, head of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC military wing, resigned from his post in order, he said, to concentrate on leadership of the South African Communist Party.

In reality the move is to enable leaders of the ANC to seek deals with world imperialism and sections of the South African whites untainted by 'communist' connections.

The divisions among the whites were clearly revealed in riots at two universities.

BY BOB MYERS

At the liberal Cape Town university, police attacked demonstrators protesting against the South African army raid into Zambia, which left several Zambians dead in buildings the ANC had used in the past.

And at Stellenbosch, an Afrikaans university, fighting broke out when students invited a striking railway shop steward to address their meeting. When a plainclothes policeman tried to arrest the steward students fought back and, though reinforcements came up, helped the steward to escape.

Judges have ruled that sections of the press clamp-down under the state of emergency are illegal. They also have allowed moves to enable Nelson Mandela to appear in court as a defence witness in a conspiracy trial.

The struggles of all sections of the black masses against apartheid despite police and military oppression highlight the cowardice of British trade union and labour leaders.

The TUC is happy to pay large sums of money for South African trade union officials to be trained in 'our methods of trade unionism', but when trade unionists on strike are shot dead they do nothing.

All socialists, trade unionists and opponents of apartheid must do everything possible to halt the movement of goods to South Africa. Trade union leaders must be forced to act.

The non-stop picket of the South African embassy in London must be expanded to make it a focal point of the demand for the ending of collaboration with apartheid by Thatcher and the British ruling class.



IGM compromise in hours fight

WESTERN Europe's biggest trade union, the IG Metall of West Germany, has stepped back from a fight for the 35-hour week for which members had been preparing.

After top-level talks at Bad Homburg, on April 22, IG Metall chairman Franz Steinkuehler and employers' leader Werner Stumpf announced that the working week for four million workers in iron, steel, and engineering would be reduced in two stages, to 37 hours in 1989.

The union had been de-

manding a phased reduction to 35 hours, and a five per cent pay increase. Workers had already staged warning strikes in preparation for an all-out strike which the union was expected to call.

In 1984, a fight over hours in engineering led to a seven-week strike, paralysing West Germany's car industry.

There are 2.4 million un-

employed, almost 10 per cent of the workforce, and big employers like Thyssen plan mass redundancies. The union had said shorter hours were necessary to fight unemployment.

Under the agreement, the working week will be reduced by one hour next April 1, and by a further half hour the following year. Wages are to rise two per cent next year, and a further two and a half percent the year after.

SA terrorists bring famine to Mozambique

THE LIVES of 4.5 million people in Mozambique, more than a third of the country's population, are in danger as a result of food shortages, according to the US Agency for International Development.

The South African-backed right-wing terror has done more than drought to cause Mozambique's problems, according to experts.

John C. Hammock of Oxfam-America said last week that a major international effort was needed to cope with the famine threat in Mozambique.

'If we wait until next fall and have it come out in the news in October, like it did in

Ethiopia, you're going to be in the same Ethiopian syndrome.'

'If you catch it now, you're hopefully catching it ahead of time.'

Hammock said about 1.6 million people had been displaced by the South African-

backed war. More than 40 per cent of the country's schools had been destroyed in attacks, and villagers fled from cultivating their lands.

The rightists had 'a strategy of trying to terrorise the people rather than trying to win them over,' he said. At one refugee camp he visited, a population of 3,000 in December had risen to 8,000 recently.

Mozambique's Prime Minister Mario Machungo says right-wing forces have destroyed 484 health clinics, 25 per cent of the total. He describes his country's crisis as 'extremely severe'.

Polish history test

SOVIET leader Gorbachev's 'glasnost' (openness) promises could face a tough test — Polish history. Following talks in Moscow, Gorbachev and General Jaruzelski issued a statement on April 21:

'The Soviet and Polish parties attach great importance to joint research in the history of relations between our countries, parties and peo-

ples. In this history, there should be no blank spots.'

'All episodes, including dramatic ones, must receive an objective and clear interpretation...'

Among questions Polish workers might want to raise are:

The fate of the Polish Communist Party leadership, liquidated by Stalin in 1937.

The fate of two leaders of the Polish Jewish Workers' Bund, Ehrlich and Alter, who crossed Soviet lines after the Nazi invasion in 1939.

Whether the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939 was a move against Nazi Germany, or in alliance with it, under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact.

Whether the Red Army really had to halt in its

tracks just across the river, during the heroic 1944 Warsaw uprising against the Nazis.

Who really killed the 15,000 Polish officers whose corpses were found in the Katyn forest?

The Gorbachev-Jaruzelski declaration says 'History should not be a topic of ideological speculation or a pretext for kindling

nationalistic sentiment.' In Stalinist parlance, 'nationalistic' is rarely applied as an epithet to Great Russian nationalism.

The Soviet news agency TASS reported Gorbachev expressed satisfaction with positive changes in Polish life after the crushing of the Solidarity independent trade unions.

Sri Lanka Death Toll

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) say 200 civilians were killed in Sri Lankan airforce bombing of the Jaffna peninsula, although the Sri Lankan government claimed its planes only hit guerrilla bases.

The new government

offensive followed a bomb blast which killed 150 people in the middle of Colombo, and wounded over 200. An attack on buses in the north-east resulted in 127 deaths.

The Tamil Tigers and the Elam Revolutionary Students Organisation (EROS) both denied responsibility. 'We have never targeted our attacks at civilians',

EROS spokesperson Velupillai Balakumaran insisted.

President Jayawardene has spoken of arming large numbers of young Sinhalese to settle in the Trincomalee area. Trincomalee, an important naval harbour to US-British Indian Ocean strategy, is a mixed population area between the main Tamil-populated areas.

PLO Unity Worries Enemies

Re-unification of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has upset the Palestinians' enemies on all sides.

US special envoy Richard Murphy has condemned chairman Yasser Arafat for steps which won the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and others back to the fold.

Israeli Foreign Minister Peres says he'll persevere talking to King Hussein of Jordan, not the PLO. But Israeli experts say the unification was a victory for Arafat, and Palestinian independence, and that Hussein's regime is at risk.

Israeli armed forces are bracing themselves, fearing

paper closures, deportations... retaliatory and preventive measures across the Lebanese border.'

The Algiers PNC also signified a defeat for Syrian leader Assad's long campaign to divide and dominate the PLO. Militant groups formerly under Syrian tutelage said the camps war in Lebanon had finished any trust they had in Assad.

Morocco's King Hassan is upset because the Polisario Front, fighting for independence in the Western Sahara, was represented at the Algiers conference.

ISRAELI Shin Bet secret police officers are threatening a 'strike' if the Supreme Court accepts an appeal by jailed army officer Azat Na'aso, who says he was framed by them in a 1981 treason court-martial.

The Nafso case comes after last year's scandal concerning the murder of a Palestinian youth prisoner for which eleven Shin Bet men were pardoned by President Herzog.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Alfonsin appeases Army Argentine workers resist

Argentine workers will almost certainly take to the streets again soon if President Raoul Alfonsin tries a further move to appease right-wing army officers.

Jorge Vanossi, a member of the ruling Radical Party and legal adviser to Alfonsin, disclosed last week that the government wants to suspend trials of officers accused of kidnapping, torture, and murder for up to four months.

Alfonsin would use the interval to introduce legislation enshrining his 'due obedience' argument — that officers can be acquitted if they were 'acting under orders from above'.

This argument was most notoriously used by a former temporary resident of Argentina, Adolf Eichmann.

It will certainly not impress militant workers, or the mothers who have doggedly demonstrated each day in the Plaza de Mayo remembering their sons and daughters who 'disappeared' under military rule, and demanding justice.

Walking a tightrope between an army that has tasted power and a powerful working class, Alfonsin's bourgeois government leans towards appeasing the officers.

There were three army mutinies in a week this month by middle-ranking officers demanding an amnesty for those facing

trial for crimes committed during the 1976-82 'dirty war', when thousands 'disappeared'.

Alfonsin went to the Campo de Mayo barracks near Buenos Aires on April 19, to negotiate 'surrender' of rebel officers. While foreign capitalist newspapers reported his 'bold step', sceptical Argentines asked who was surrendering to who, noting that the government was changing the army high command to suit the rebels.

What prevented an all-out retreat before the military was the response of the masses. The capital's Plaza de Mayo square was packed with over 200,000 people demonstrating that they would not tolerate any move back towards military rule.

At the northern city of Salta, about 250 officers and men of Engineer Company C5 surrendered on April 22 after hundreds of workers gathered outside the base gates to demonstrate.

The Trotskyist Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) was prominent in the Buenos Aires demonstration and leading the workers at Salta.

Together with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the MAS was the only organisation that refused to sign a pact with Alfonsin during the military crisis, which talks about establishing degrees



Argentina's workers flooded onto the streets to resist the military revolt

of responsibility for past crimes.

Using this formula, Alfonsin tried to rope in opponents behind his efforts to make a deal with the military. Now, prominent Peronist opposition leaders are reported backing away from this policy — probably realising that if they don't distance themselves more from Alfonsin, their working-class supporters will distance themselves from them.

The English-language 'Buenos Aires Herald', which had its editor locked-up during military rule, remarked moderately that the military rebellion 'cast doubt on the stability of democracy in Argentina'.

Alfonsin's dilemma is that his capitalist democracy

needs the Army for when workers revolt against austerity measures, and the officers will require unquestioning obedience to orders, to carry out their repressive role.

That's why bourgeois democracies — not only in Argentina — are always more ready to appease the military than the workers. But having suffered military rule once, and alerted by this latest crisis, workers are not trusting their fate to Alfonsin.

Here, the role of a revolutionary leadership, which the MAS aims to provide, will be crucial in determinedly asserting working class political independence, and influencing the rank-and-file conscript soldiers too.

Holiday isle struggle

Club Mediterranée's new Caribbean holiday spot in the Turks and Caicos islands, has been hit by a strike against racist behaviour by management.

The Club Med resort closed just over a week ago, and 375 guests were flown out, two days after the 170 workers went on strike.

The British-ruled island chain's acting Attorney General Patrick Ellum pre-

ferred not to describe the problems as racial. 'You have to bear in mind that the hotel management personnel are white, being French, and most of our people are Black. You could call any dispute racial.'

Local people complained at being turned away from the resort by Club Med security guards, and the company's regional manager admitted there had been several incidents between managers and workers.

In the richest capitalist country in the world, up to 20 million poor people experience hunger at least part of each month.

This figure was arrived at in a study by the Physicians Task Force on Hunger in America, a group of eminent doctors coordinated from the Harvard School of Public Health.

While, as Workers Press reported last week, thousands of US farmers are going bankrupt, recent studies make a sick joke of claims by President Reagan last year that no-one need go hungry in America.

● In the state of Massachusetts, the Department of Public Health found 10,000-17,000 poor children were stunted, due largely to malnutrition.

● Doctors at Cook County Hospital, Chicago, found striking increases in the number of young children being admitted to hospital for health problems linked to malnutrition.

● The US Conference of Mayors, which has mayors from both main capitalist political parties, and the Christian charity Bread for the World, both found sharp increases in the number of families needing emergency food help.

In 1980, over 29 million Americans were recorded as having incomes below the official poverty line. By 1984, the figure was 33.7 million below the line (defined as \$5,400 for an individual, \$10,609 for a family of four, in 1984).

That year, the slight business recovery and more jobs reduced the poverty figures, but not as much as the drop in unemployment might have meant in previous



years. In other words, real wages did not recover.

Reagan's 'trickle down' theory — that if the rich get richer, everybody benefits by more spending in the end — has proved a fraud. Official census data show the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Both poor and middle-income families have had their lowest share of national income since 1947 under Reagan.

More than a third of Black people and nearly a third of Hispanics are below the poverty line. The poverty rate for Hispanics, particularly Puerto Rican-Americans, increased even when the overall poverty rate was falling.

With unemployment rising again, and firms imposing pay cuts, the situation is getting worse.

More than two million children have been added to US poverty rolls since 1980. Over 13 million children were officially counted as poor last year. Almost a quarter of all those under 6

were living in poverty.

Despite this, the Reagan administration's policies have led to cuts involving 2 million children being dropped from the school meals programme, and 700,000 taken off welfare and Medicaid schemes.

The number of people below the poverty line but not receiving food stamps increased by two million since 1980.

A total of \$12 billion was cut from the food stamp programme and child nutrition schemes like school meals, between 1982-5. The much-publicised 'Hands Across America' charity stunt last year could not raise even one per cent of the amount Reagan and his gang had stolen from poor families.

The Reagan administration wants to make even bigger cuts, and is ending Federal contributions to local charitable agencies helping the hungry and homeless.

Canadian farmers face bankruptcy

While famine spreads in Africa, and appeals are made for aid, farmers in Canada are being told there's too much grain in the world.

Every week about fifty Canadian farmers are applying for government aid to quit the land and find other employment.

For the second year running, the Canadian government has told farmers it must cut farm prices. It is blaming a farm subsidy war between the United States and the European Common Market.

Canada's farm crisis is already being felt in bankruptcies, and the break-up of families and rural communities.

There are 140,000 Canadian wheat, barley and oat growers. Guaranteed prices are lowest in 15 years, and fell 20 per cent last year.

Wheat Board minister Charlie Mayer announced a further 18 per cent cut on April 21. He said top-grade Red Spring wheat, Canada's most important crop, will fall to 110 Canadian dollars a metric ton, compared with 130 dollars (\$99 US) last season.

The Wheat Board markets all Canadian grain. Last year it had to absorb a record 200 million dollar loss when world prices fell below forecasts.

Mayer said last week Canada must lower prices to find markets in a world glutted with grain. The main price-depressing factor has been the very large export subsidies used by the European Economic Community and the United States, the minister said.

held in 1988.'

Canada produces twice as much food as its own needs. Now, the more farmers grow, the worse prices could get. Many are diversifying from grains to beans, peas, and mustard seed. The government expects wheat acreage will decline about seven per cent this year. But soil and climate in the northern prairies are not suitable for other crops.

Thousands of farmers are facing bankruptcy. The Farm Credit Corporation which has agreed under pressure to a temporary moratorium on foreclosures estimates 14,000 farmers are insolvent.

After the price cut announcement, Bruno Friesen of the Alberta wheat pool said: 'It's another blow. Producers don't see much of a chance for recovery now.'

In the breadbasket province of Alberta, farmland has lost 50 per cent of its value in five years, Friesen said, and farm debt was breaking-up communities and families.

'We're seeing a lot of stress on the farm family and an increase in suicides. Many are just going to give up. That's the real tragedy.'

Bolivian Miner

The campaign to free Bolivian miner Eleuterio Gutierrez, 'fitted-up' on false theft charges by the mineowners, gets a boost here on Monday, May 4, when fellow-militant Maro Delgado speaks in London. (see Listings)

Eleuterio helped lead miners marching on La Paz to oppose closures and sackings, and also stood for the Trotskyist POR in council elections in the mining town of Oruro, where Maro Delgado is also active. •

REVOLUTIONARY WAY FORWARD

● FROM PAGE ONE

this outmoded world order to counter-attack.

The nuclear missile offers of Gorbachev to the US imperialists do not lessen the danger of war preparations, nor can they defend the 70-year-old struggle of imperialism to destroy the first workers' state. Such moves are bound up with secret deals at the expense of the working class and the national liberation struggles. They will weaken the anti-imperialist movement — the only force which can really avert the danger of war.

In this country, many sections of the 'left' are prostrate before what they see as an invincible Thatcher. For them, the struggles of the past few years — the miners' and printers' especially — were hopeless rearguard actions against the onslaught of the Tories.

The Workers Revolutionary Party, like the workers involved, scorns this miserable and reactionary pessimism. What characterises these struggles above all is that they point beyond the framework of reformism.

These were battles for the very existence of groups of workers and their families. The degree of self-sacrifice of these workers, and their determination to continue the struggle, are even more important than the original issue. The new forms of organisation which arose brought workers and their communities together with other sections, in opposition to the 'official' trade union machine.

The workers who occupied the Caterpillar plant went even further. In fighting to keep their jobs, they also aimed to produce tractors that could help workers abroad. No wonder they struck terror into the hearts of the trade union leaders. And no wonder that the Stalinists were in the lead of the effort to bring the dispute under control.

The battle of the teachers with the Tories, which has gone on continuously for several years, moves into a new stage with the fight against Baker's Act. They refuse to acquiesce in the removal of their trade union rights, while their leaders struggle in vain to smother the movement, reducing it to the level of protest action.

This is the background to the coming General Election. The Labour Party enters the campaign without a single policy to answer the problems of the working class or, indeed, of the middle class.

Social-democracy, now split into two parties, no longer even pretends to offer workers the prospect of reforms within the framework of capitalism. Unemployment and welfare cuts condemn big sections of the class, especially its youth, to a life of misery.

What, at best, is the alternative offered by Kinnock? It is 3 million out of work, instead of four!

The Labour leader's witch-hunt of Militant and of the

Black Sections is not just aimed at reassuring the electors of his respectability. More importantly, it is a promise to help the ruling class in disciplining the working class after the election.

When the state security forces are revealed to have organised against the Wilson Labour government in the 1970s, Kinnock hurries forward to protest his unswerving loyalty to the cause of the 'security' of the capitalist State.

Of course, millions of workers will give their votes to Labour candidates, as the only electoral way open to them to weaken Thatcherism. But many of them will feel as they vote that there is no electoral answer to their problems.

In this they are right! Parliamentary Labour politics have reached a blind alley. But is this a reason for despair, as wide sections of the left believe? We do not think so. For the lesson of all the movements since 1984 is that the conditions now exist for the building of revolutionary leadership, in Britain and internationally.

Whatever the outcome of the election, there is no way forward except in the development of such a leadership. The preparations now in progress for a world conference to reorganise the Fourth International are vital for the whole of the working class.

The resources already exist to provide jobs, health, housing and education for everyone. A revolutionary party is urgently needed to unite the working class in a struggle to take control of these resources.

Nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions, the land and the factories under workers' control — these are the only way that the future for workers and their families can be assured.

For this, the state machine of the ruling class has to be broken up. Class war prisoners, including Irish freedom fighters, must be liberated. The police force, the army and the secret services must be disbanded.

A workers' Britain would join with fighters against imperialism in every part of the world. Trade union action must be mounted to aid the South African workers' fight to destroy apartheid.

Imperialist military occupation of Ulster must be ended. This must open the way towards the establishment of a united socialist Ireland.

Together with workers all over the world, we would begin the planning of the world's resources to utilise the enormous potential of modern technology, at present perverted and destroyed by capitalist exploitation.

In sending May Day greetings to all trade unionists, Labour Party members, unemployed workers, and young people, who want to fight to rid the world of this rotten capitalist system, the Workers Revolutionary Party calls on them to join in this work.

Deck officer removed

MEMBERS of the merchant navy officer's union NUMAST took strike action in 1982 demanding an officer be put in charge of the deck area and the closure of the bow doors on the sister ship of the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' which sank in Zeebrugge harbour.

The 'Spirit of Free Enterprise' had an officer appointed to do the job, but when the ship's route was changed, officers of the 'Herald' agreed to do the Zeebrugge run without the extra man.

Last autumn officers de-

manded that the man be reinstated but Townsend Thorensen refused and stated that safety standards had to be balanced with expense.

NUMAST officials also submitted a three-page document to Senior Marine Superintendent Jeff Devlin, arguing their case for safety cover on the bow doors.

General secretary Eric Nevin said of the Zeebrugge disaster: 'Under the company's arrangements there were three jobs to be done at the same time but only two officers to do them.'

THE FIRST INT

MAY

MAY DAY is the day on which the working class traditionally demonstrates its international solidarity. It is a day which has been celebrated by the workers of the world since 1 May 1890.

That the first day in May should be celebrated simultaneously by the working class of the world arose from a decision of the Second International which had been established in the previous year, 1889.

The first May Day marches demanded legislation to enforce the eight-hour day and the implementation of other measures to improve the condition of the working class which had been decided at the Congress.

'This was the best of what our congress achieved,' said Frederick Engels in a letter to Laura Lafargue. Engels had been the moving spirit behind the foundation of the International, just as Marx had earlier inspired and led the First International when it had been set



Paul and Laura Lafargue, leaders of the French working-class movement at the time of the Second International



Engels on the platform in Hyde Park during the 1892 May Day demonstration

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY MAY DAY

up in 1864. Tens of thousands of workers filled the streets of the major industrial centres of Europe on 1 May 1890.

In some towns in Germany, France and Denmark the day was marked with strikes at a number of factories. Many cities saw unprecedentedly massive turnouts.

There were 100,000 demonstrators in Vienna, 60,000 in Budapest, some 40,000 to 50,000 in Marseilles and Lyon, 35,000 in Prague, over 25,000 in Roubaix, Lille, Stockholm, Chicago and many other towns.

Over 20,000 marched in Warsaw and 3,000 in Lvov. Despite a state ban there were demonstrations and rallies throughout Italy.

In Spain and Britain the day of international working class solidarity was marked on the first Sunday in May, the 4th. In Barcelona nearly 100,000 people marched and rallied. An even larger demonstration occurred in London's Hyde Park, where more than 300,000 people gathered, including representatives of French, German and Russian socialists.

Engels had looked forward impatiently to this great day. Now aged 70, he participated fully in organising for the Hyde Park demonstration and helped his followers break down the opposition of the reformist trade union leaders, who wished to limit the number of demonstrators and ban political slogans and demands.

Engels also clashed with the sectarians in the Social-

Democratic Federation. Nominally Marxists, they were accused by Engels of playing at radicalism and talking of social revolution only when it was safe to do so.

The great May Day rally was not a united demonstration. It was split into two. The SDF marched with the leaders of the old, conservative trade unionism, separated from the great mass of workers who had recently come into the movement, 'who want to win their complete emancipation by themselves, jointly with allies of their own choice, and not with those imposed by a small socialist coterie', as Engels put it.

'It was apparent even to the blindest where there was fresh life and where there was stagnation. Around the seven platforms of the Central Committee were dense, immense crowds, marching up with music and banners, over 100,000 in the procession, everywhere was harmony and enthusiasm, and yet order and organisation. At the platforms of the combined reactionaries, on the other hand, everything seemed dull.'

A Central Committee had been formed to organise the event, assuring the participation of the radical workers' clubs and socialist organisations as well as the New Unions which were being formed amongst the unskilled workers following the London dock strike of the previous year.

A fierce struggle was waged by Engels and his supporters against the old conservative leaders of the skilled workers, many of them rep-

resenting the London Trades Council. They were bitterly opposed to the slogan for the legal eight-hour day, because this raised the question of politics in the working-class movement and especially action which involved the state directly.

'This is our first great victory in London,' said Engels on the eve of 4 May.

On that morning, Engels, along with Lafargue, Edward Aveling and other socialists, climbed on to one of the goods waggon serving as a makeshift speaker's platform. A magnificent picture unfolded before Engels. 'As far as the eye could reach,' he told Bebel shortly after, 'there was an ocean of heads, 250-300,000 people were there, out of whom more than three-quarters were demonstrating workers.'

The speakers included French, German and Russian socialists. 'Altogether it was the most gigantic gathering that has been held here,' said an enthusiastic Engels. 'What wouldn't I give for Marx to see this awakening, I carried my head two inches higher as I climbed down from the old waggon.'

'It seemed as though the whole population of London poured parkwards,' said one contemporary report. All sections of the working class united around this central

slogan for the legal eight-hour day. Thousands of dockers turned out, alongside top-hatted gentleman compositors. East London women were represented in great numbers, inspired by the matchgirls strike at Bryant and May the previous year, a strike which had done much to stimulate the great wave of unionisation amongst the unskilled.

Engels summed up the experience in the following stirring words:

On May 4, 1890, the English working class joined the great international army. And that is an epoch-making fact. The English proletariat has its roots in most advanced industrial development and moreover possesses the greatest freedom of political movement.

Its long slumber — a result on the one hand, of the failure of the Chartist movement of 1836-1850 and, on the other hand, of the colossal industrial upswing of 1848-1880 — is finally broken. The grandchildren of the old Chartists are stepping into the line of battle.

For eight years already the wide masses have been stirring, now here, now there. Socialist groups have emerged, but none has been able to outgrow the bounds of a sect... This will stop before long, just as it has stopped in Germany and in Austria.

The powerful movement of the masses will put an end to all these sects and little groups by absorbing the men and showing the officers their proper places. Those who don't like it may sneak away. It won't come off without friction, but come off it will, and the English proletarian army, will, much sooner than some expect, be as united, as well organised and as determined as any, and will be jubilantly hailed by all its comrades on the Continent and in America.

The ruling class reacted to the celebration of May Day with its usual violence. There were clashes with the police in Italy in 1890 and in France, Italy and Spain the following year. In the small industrial town of Fourmies a peaceful May Day demonstration was met with rifle fire.

At least 50 workers, some women and children, fell to the ground. Ten died instantly. At a Parliamentary by-election, the socialists nominated as their candidate Paul Lafargue, who was then in prison for speaking out against the shootings. The election swept Lafargue into the Chamber of Deputies.

But nothing could stop the annual celebration which continues down to the present.

THE LONDON May Day 97 years ago was split into two distinct trends. May Day 1987 sees this same basic split, but even more clearly.

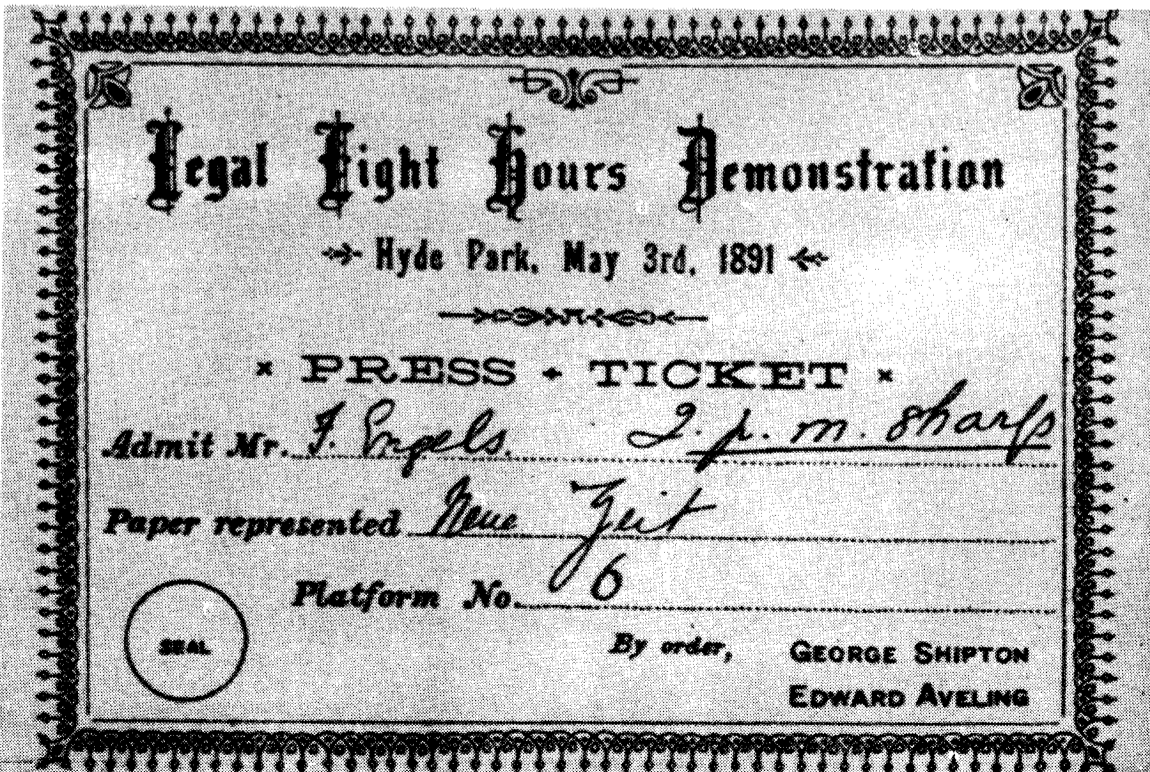
On the one hand stands the working class — miners, printworkers, health service workers, teachers and many others who have fought relentlessly against the Tory government.

On the other are the cowardly Labour and trade union leaders, collaborators with this very government, terrified of the independent movement of the working class. In the middle stand a motley crew of socialist sects, many claiming the name Trotskyist, tied to the coat-tails of a Labour Party in deep crisis, unable and unwilling to find a road to the working class.

The task of revolutionary socialists, now as then, is to break out of this sect-like existence and provide revolutionary leadership for the working class. If the story of May Day reminds us of that fact alone, the work of the pioneers of 1890 will not have been in vain.



Tom Mann (left) and Ben Tillett, two of the leaders of the unskilled workers who played a key role in events surrounding May Day 1890



Press ticket issued to Engels to the platform in Hyde Park for the demonstration on 3 May 1891

A programme of action for the South African revolution

IN THE first part of this article we alerted all serious workers to the fact that a revolutionary situation exists in South Africa and that this imposes certain urgent tasks upon them. Our call was for all communist revolutionaries to begin organising themselves immediately into a disciplined and centralised Bolshevik-Leninist party which alone can rescue the class struggle from the impasse that it has reached.

In the process of struggling to build the party, the class-conscious fighters must at the same time agitate for and work towards the construction of a **WORKERS' UNITED FRONT** that would be able to bring about the unification of the mass movement by substituting a national and revolutionary **PROGRAMME OF ACTION** for spontaneous, disparate, sporadic and regional struggles.

We present here our programme of action for the South African revolution. We will fight for it to be adopted by the workers' united front.

Fight for a workers' government!

THE sustained offensive of the masses has thrown the political system of the racist rulers into disarray.

The community council system lies in tatters; only the worst kind of opportunists give the tricameral parliament any credibility; the surrogate régimes of the 'homelands' survive only by brutal suppression; while within the racist state itself the ruling class is racked by indecision and dissent.

The struggle of the masses reflects their deeply-felt desire for a political system over which they have control and which is based on the will of the majority of people in South Africa.

Because of the integral links between apartheid and capitalism, nothing less than a **workers' government** will be able to bring about the thorough-going democratisation of South African society.

The working class alone, as the most revolutionary class in South Africa, can be relied on to lead the struggle. And as this class suffers most under apartheid, it alone can be trusted to destroy every last vestige of apartheid once it comes to power.

Advance the struggle for democracy!

GUIDED by the slogan: 'For a workers' government and workers' democracy', we must begin mobilising for a mass united campaign which includes the following demands:

- Universal suffrage for everyone from the age of 16 in a single, unitary and non-racial South Africa!

We must resist very strongly any idea that 'minority' rights need to be protected in South Africa. The South Africa which emerges from the struggle for democracy must reflect the will of the majority of its people.

The central role that the students and youth are playing in the struggle makes it necessary that they be given full recognition in the political system which replaces apartheid.

- An immediate end to the state of emergency, the release of all detainees, the unbanning of all political organisations, the lifting of all restrictions on people, political organisations and the media!

The absence of democracy in South Africa is shown most glaringly in the extreme, repressive legislation which the racist rulers use to keep apartheid-capitalism intact.

As revolutionaries we have a duty to ensure that the class struggle takes place under the best possible conditions for the

masses, and that every attempt which the state makes to reverse the gains of the masses is vigorously opposed.

- A unitary, non-racial and democratic educational system controlled by parent-teacher-student associations; and universal, free and compulsory education for all South Africans from pre-school to university!

The gross inequalities which characterise apartheid are nowhere more glaring than in the educational system. In few other areas is the racist state so determined to maintain complete control.

The state's heavy-handed response to the students' struggle reveals just how crucial the educational system is to the perpetuation of apartheid-capitalism and how afraid the state is that the student struggle will grow over into a full-blown workers' struggle.

Complete support must therefore be given to the struggle for **PEOPLE'S EDUCATION** — but at the same time it is our duty to point out to the students that only a **WORKERS' GOVERNMENT** will be able to ensure that this is achieved.

- The abolition of the 'homelands' system, migrant labour and single-sex hostels!

The masses have no illusions about the 'homelands'. They know they have not been designed to satisfy their democratic aspirations. They know from bitter experience that the true role of the puppet régimes in the 'homelands' is to act as the executioners of the oppressed and exploited.

To these 'union-free zones' the bosses are increasingly moving their factories, the better to be able to subjugate the workers. These state policies, which are aimed at weakening the ability of the working class to fight, and so driving them into submission, have to be strenuously fought against.

The system of migrant labour not only makes possible the ultra-exploitation of the working class but, together with single-sex hostels, is the principal means the racist rulers use to create divisions and foment 'tribal' hostilities amongst the masses.

The National Union of Mine-workers' demand for a commitment by the bosses to abolish migrant labour and its insistence that in the interim the *induna* [hostel guard] system of controlling the hostels (the main reason for 'faction fighting' on the mines, says the NUM) be scrapped and that democratically elected **HOSTEL COMMITTEES** replace it, must therefore be generalised throughout the country.

This must become the means whereby the 'tribal' divisions and hostilities that the racist

rulers are constantly trying to foster among migrant workers are resisted.

- The right of people to live where they choose, the abolition of influx control, and an immediate end to the uprooting and resettlement of people!

The acute economic crisis in South Africa throws increasing numbers of workers into the ranks of the unemployed. Fearful of the consequences of having a large army of unemployed in the main urban centres, the racist ruling class is increasingly using the 'homelands' as dumping grounds for the thousands of 'surplus people'.

Once in the 'homelands', these

BY A SOUTH AFRICAN
REVOLUTIONARY

people are so driven to despair by the surrogate régimes of apartheid-capitalism, that many of them, out of sheer desperation and the seeming absence of any other alternative, join the vigilante squads of these hangmen of the working class and themselves become instruments of reaction and repression.

While struggling for the abolition of the 'homelands' system, we have also to be struggling simultaneously against the state's attempts to condemn workers to poverty and a merci-

less reign of terror in these concentration camps of apartheid-capitalism.

- The unconditional right to strike and the unconditional right to picket!

The organ of rule of the bosses, the state, always acts to safeguard the interests of the capitalists against those of the proletariat. This is most glaringly shown in the many obstacles the state erects in the path of the working class to prevent them from being able to mount a serious challenge against the exploiters.

The trade union movement must consistently fight against all attempts by the state to impose a system of 'compulsory arbitration' upon it, and must also consistently fight to challenge the 'freedom' of scabs to break strikes.

Fight for a Constituent Assembly! No to sell-out negotiations!

THE struggle to smash the apartheid state places the call for a **CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY** foremost on the agenda of the struggle for democracy.

Such a sovereign body arises out of the struggle of the masses. It will be constituted on the basis of universal suffrage, with every delegate subject to recall. It will be convoked under conditions where the armed forces of the racist state have been disarmed and a workers' militia formed. And it will draw up a new constitution for the country that expresses the true will of the exploited and oppressed.

Nothing less can be trusted with the fate of the revolution. Only by consistently agitating for the convocation of a constituent assembly will we make it plain that our aim is the victory of the masses and **not** the preparation of conditions for their betrayal through a sell-out settlement.

Capitalism is in its death-agony!

THE struggle for democracy in South Africa takes place against the background of an economic system in its death-throes.

In its desperate struggle to survive, capitalism is heaping indescribable miseries on the working class. Between 4 million and 6 million blacks are unemployed: almost half of the economically active population.

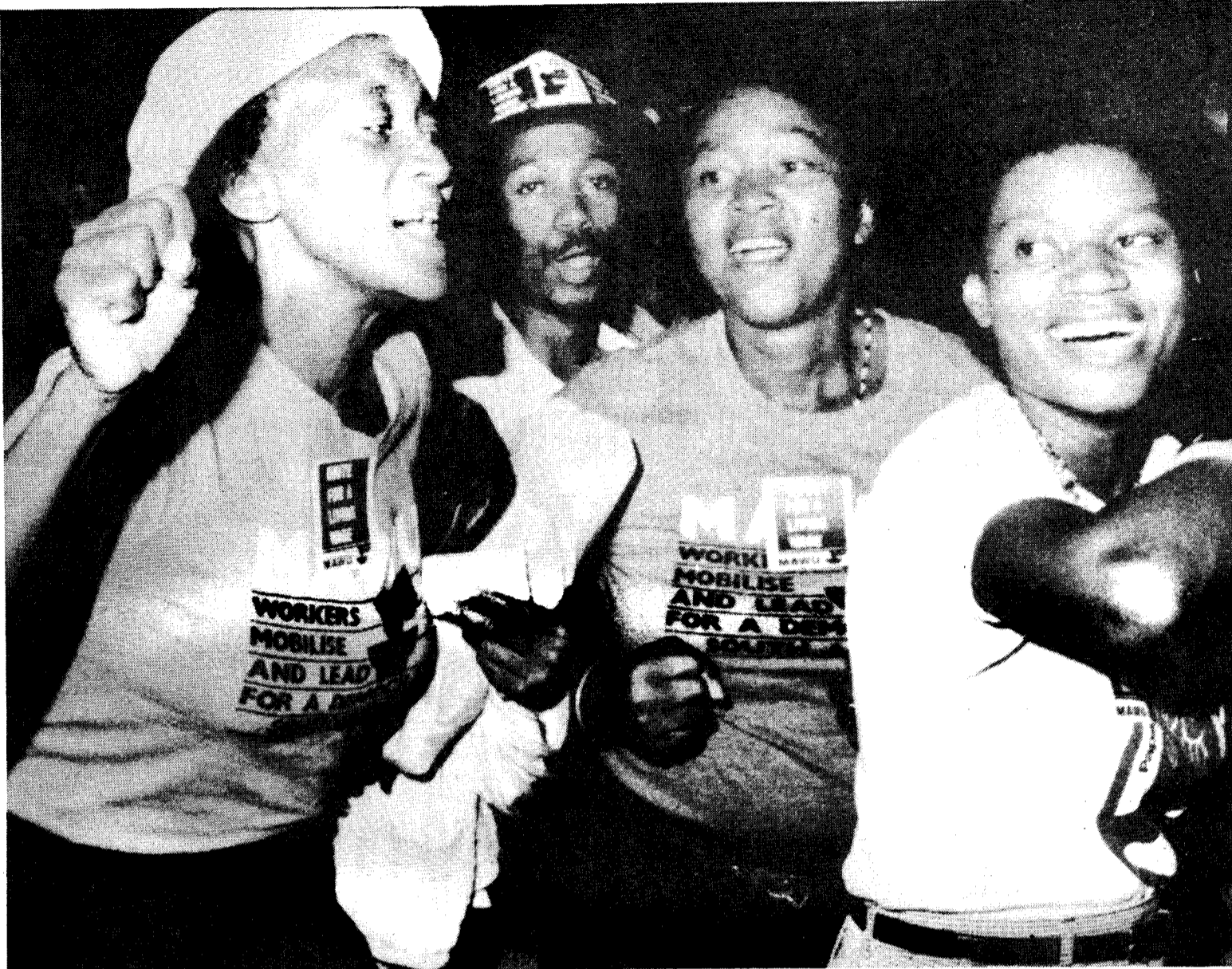
No fewer than 40,000 jobs are wiped out each year as the crisis of capitalism deepens. It has been estimated that at least 80 per cent of Africans aged between 18 and 26 have never had permanent employment. And all this while only 83 per cent of South Africa's productive capacity is being used and about one fifth of its factory space lies idle.

It is hardly surprising therefore that a member of the racist white parliament could warn that 'the plight of unemployed blacks in present-day economic conditions does not encourage them to support the free-enterprise system'.

More and more black workers are being reduced to poverty and starvation as wages fail to keep pace with inflation and prices constantly rise. Even white workers who always believed that apar-



Farm labourers — and domestic workers — are least protected against their bosses.



Women constitute over half the South African working class and must be brought into the forefront of the struggle.

they would guarantee them a secure livelihood are being forced to learn new lessons.

Inflation and recession know no 'colour bar' and are incessantly gnawing away at the living standards of all workers.

Nor is the black petty bourgeoisie being spared from the ravages of decaying capitalism. Deep-seated recession and monetary instability lead to more and more small businesses being closed, with the banks only prepared to extend credit to the major conglomerates, which are considered to be 'safer' investments.

Struggle on the basis of transitional demands

THE rotten nature of the economic system makes it imperative that our struggle be guided by transitional demands.

These demands begin from the day-to-day struggles of the exploited and oppressed, but they are so formulated as to expose in a consistent and revolutionary way the true source of the masses' misery and impoverishment — the system of capitalism itself.

Work for all! For job-sharing without loss of pay!

IT IS OUR duty to ensure that it is **not** the working class who is made to bear the brunt of the decline of the capitalist system.

Unemployment and pauperisation not only limit the capacity of the working class to engage their class enemies in battle, but it is also from these 'declassed' sections of the masses that capitalism is often able to recruit the 'human dust' for its vigilante squads.

Under dying capitalism our principal demand must therefore be the **RIGHT** to a job for all. If capitalism is the 'best' of all possible systems, as the bosses never tire of telling the workers, then it must prove it by guaranteeing **WORK FOR ALL!** It must guarantee that there will be no retrenchments.

Furthermore, it must guarantee that if a factory is no longer able to function at its full capacity there will be no lay-offs, but that instead the working day will be equally divided among the workers without any decrease in wages.

If the capitalists cannot provide the basic right to a job, then, as Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has said: 'We don't want the bosses' system'.

For wages linked to inflation! For every price increase, a wage increase!

THE WORKING class has suffered sustained attacks on its standard of living. We must therefore raise the demand for wages which guarantee the workers a secure standard of living and, above all, which keep pace with the rate of inflation.

An old and 'favourite' trick of the bosses is to take back quickly with the one hand what they give with the other. Built into all wage agreements therefore must be the proviso of automatic wage increases with any price increases.

We can best ensure that unions will not be caught off guard if we establish **PRICE COMMITTEES** to monitor the situation constantly. These committees should be made up of members of all groups of the oppressed — workers, unem-

ployed, students, housewives, etc. — and should become key organs of the united front, regularly providing the unions with information vital to a successful struggle against the bosses.

For worker control to end secret deals and the withdrawal of capital!

WE MUST demand greater control over the workplace by the workers themselves. With capitalism in its death-throes, the workers' position becomes increasingly insecure.

Decisions to relocate factories or to form mergers are taken behind the backs of the workers, invariably leading to a worsening of their plight. We must therefore demand an end to all secret deals and an end to all business secrets!

The world-wide crisis of capitalism, coupled with the political crisis inside South Africa, makes the international bourgeoisie fearful for their investments in the country. They are constantly on the look-out for ways in which they can withdraw their capital, not be-

cause they want to isolate the South African government, but because they are beginning to lose confidence in the government's ability to guarantee the former high returns on their investments.

The sanctions and disinvestment campaigns have become useful pretexts for finance capital to withdraw large sums of money from the country. Those corporations which have left would of course have withdrawn their capital, sanctions or no sanctions, if their investments no longer proved profitable.

Withdrawing under the guise of 'sanctions' gives them, they believe, a certain 'credibility' which will stand them in good stead if a black petty-bourgeois nationalist government is installed in power.

We certainly have no wish to see the international bourgeoisie remain in our country. They can leave if they choose but without taking any capital out of the country in whatever form. This is

wealth that the South African working class has produced and it is the workers who must decide what happens to it.

We must therefore call for the establishment of **FACTORY COMMITTEES** which monitor every aspect of the running of a company, and independently of which the bosses are not allowed to take any decisions. As a vital component of the united front, the factory committees will be able to translate into concrete reality the demand for greater workers' control over the workplace.

The recent strike of the General Motors workers in Port Elizabeth who (after the fake pull-out of capital by the American parent company) demanded that worker representatives also serve on the board of the company, is testimony to the fact that the working class is learning from its own experience, that unless they have greater control over their bosses there is no guarantee of a secure future for them.

Win over the unemployed! Fight for a programme of public works!

UNLESS WE take up the struggle of the unemployed in a serious and consistent way we shall see more and more of their numbers being recruited into the armed forces of the state, its 'kitskonstabels' and its vigilante squads.

But it is not enough to call for the establishment of unions for the unemployed. To win the unemployed over to the side of the class struggle means to convince them in practice that only by uniting with the rest of the proletariat is there any hope of a solution to their problem.

We must therefore take up the fight that the government begin a **PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC WORKS!** As an immediate priority the students need schools and the oppressed need houses. Such is the sharp shortfall in only these areas that just to provide this will absorb hundreds of thousands of unemployed.

We must also never tire of pointing out to the masses the complete absurdity and wanton wastefulness of the capitalist system. Despite the fact that there is this chronic shortage in schools and houses for the oppressed, more than 27,000 jobs have disappeared in the building industry since 1982!

In the campaign to win over the unemployed, the establishment of **LOCALS** can play a crucial role. If these structures are made open to all of the exploited and oppressed — unionised workers, non-unionised workers, unemployed, youth, housewives — they can become the main organs which link the factory struggles with township struggles in a dynamic fighting unity.

What gives **LOCALS** such a special significance is the fact that the strongest organisation of the working class, COSATU, has called for their formation.

● TURN TO PAGE 12



The three-year 'rent strikes' struggle is in grave danger of being drowned in blood. Above: an evicted family

A programme of action for the South African revolution

Recognition of unions for farm labourers and domestic workers!

AMONG THE different sections of the South African working class it is certainly the farm labourers and the domestic workers who are least protected against their bosses.

The fact that their unions do not have legal recognition (in reality farm workers do not even have the right to organise), and that they are not covered by any minimum wage legislation, means that they are forced to eke out an existence on a starvation wage. Farm labourers and domestic workers also do not qualify for unemployment benefits or for old age pension.

It is our duty to ensure that all members of the working class are always in the best possible position to conduct their struggle against their capitalist exploiters. By advancing the call for the recognition of unions for farm labourers and domestic workers we will not only create more favourable conditions for their struggle to be waged, but will also bring their struggle into closer unity and harmony with that of the rest of the proletariat.

Women workers are proletarian fighters!

MORE THAN half of the South African working class is made up of women. Yet only a small percentage of women workers is represented in the organisations of the masses.

We must consistently strive to bring more and more women workers into the class struggle. This means ridding ourselves of our chauvinist ideas, promoting the formation of a women's section in the united front, and consistently agitating for the establishment of crèches and child-care centres which will relieve women of the sole responsibility for child rearing and thereby free them in increasing numbers to take their place alongside the men workers as equals and comrades-in-arms.

To perpetuate the existing divisions between men workers and women workers is to weaken substantially the fighting potential of the working class and to delay for a long time the day of reckoning between the bosses and the proletariat!

Students and young workers are the battalions of the proletariat!

NO ONE CAN deny the vanguard role that the youth have been playing in the struggle over the past few years.

Through their heroism and readiness for self-sacrifice they have acted as catalysts, drawing greater and greater numbers of the oppressed masses into the struggle.

Of all the sections of the working class, the young workers are always the most ready to do battle against the bosses. Their youthfulness makes them susceptible to new ideas, and while some older workers may still have illusions about the capitalist system more and more young workers are enthusiastically embracing socialism as the only alternative to the system of wage slavery.

In their exuberance and boundless energy however the youth often run far ahead of the rest of the exploited and oppressed. Often, too, they incorrectly interpret the caution of the older workers (gained from years of experience) as 'dragging of the feet' and conservatism.

Certainly the youth must always strive to infuse the struggle with a greater militancy and must always be looking for ways in which to raise the struggle to a higher level.

But the youth must be made to realise that unless the working class as a whole leads the struggle, there is no hope that apartheid-capitalism will be overthrown. The task of the young proletarian fighters is therefore not to try to usurp the role of the proletariat but to

harmonise their struggle with that of the working class.

Patience with older and less militant workers must replace the tendency to be dismissive. Careful and repeated explanation of the goals of the struggle must replace compulsion; young workers must show a readiness to learn from the older members of the proletariat; above all, joint and carefully drawn-up plans for the struggle must replace 'adventurism'.

Given the role that the youth have been playing until now, there can be no doubt however that it is the youth who will form the main fighting battalions of the proletariat.

Build defence committees to protect the struggle

THE ONLY way in which the racist rulers can maintain their vicious system of wage slavery is through the institution of a merciless reign of terror.

Suppression of the trade union movement; harassment and arrests of union officials; the beating-up and murdering of workers (BTR Sarmcol, OK Bazaars, Gold Fields Ltd, etc.); this is the reply of bankrupt capitalism to the demands of the working class for a proper standard of living.

More and more also the racist state is using vigilante squads of which Inkatha is the most prominent in an attempt to beat back the offensive of the masses.

COSATU's call for DEFENCE COMMITTEES to protect the struggle of the working class must therefore occupy a central place in the programme of action. When workers are on strike, when they are picketing, when they are involved in a factory occupation or sit-in strike, defence committees must be built as the fighting detachments of the united front.

At the time this is written, one of the most significant battles of the masses of the past two-three years stands in grave danger of being drowned in blood.

The countrywide rent strike, which has been a source of inspiration for all of the exploited and oppressed, is seen by the racist rulers as too serious a threat to allow it to continue indefinitely. They are hatching all sorts of plots to reverse the gains that the masses have made, and as soon as they detect any sign of weakness they will not hesitate to bring the full might of the state to bear on the resisters.

To delay in building defence committees will thus mean making it easier for the racist state to succeed in breaking the resistance of the masses.

Prepare for insurrection! Organise towards the general strike!

WHILE OUR programme of action must of necessity begin from defensive struggles, we must also realise that every forward march that the masses make is going to bring them into ever greater conflict with the racist rulers.

Increasingly, defensive measures are going to give way to offensive ones and more and more the struggle of the masses is going to assume the form of civil war as apartheid-capitalism is shown as not only unwilling to satisfy their demands but also incapable of doing so.

The role of the working class as the leading and most revolutionary class in South African society is going to be decisive in this coming battle. Only the working class will be able to provide the struggle with the weapon which can dislodge the racist rulers from their seemingly impregnable position — that is, the GENERAL STRIKE.

To 'predict' when the general strike will take place, or how many such actions will be necessary before the racist state is overthrown, is a futile exercise. Of more importance is for militants to be clear about the role that the general strike plays in the struggle!

The general strike places the call for INSURRECTION on the order of the day. Through it all the resources of the working class are

marshalled for battle. It unifies the whole working class, gives it a concrete sense of its power and strength and, by drawing the rest of the oppressed masses behind the working class, creates the conditions for the masses to struggle for power.

A programme of action that stops short of placing such revolutionary tasks before the mass of workers will not be able to mobilise them even for defensive struggles.

Only if we present the masses with a programme which not only calls on them to make sacrifices for the struggle but also prepares them for victory, can we expect them to give it their full support.

Not bosses' sanctions but international working-class action!

WE MUST reveal to the working class in South Africa who its true allies are — the international proletariat.

The mass of workers must be taught to place their faith not in sanctions that are dependent on the 'goodwill' of bourgeois governments, nor on the 'conscience' of finance capital, but on international working-class solidarity action.

Militants in Britain and in other countries who successfully implement trade union action against South Africa — provided that this is done in harmony with the South African working class — will be able to speed up the development of a truly revolutionary consciousness among the workers in South Africa.

The fraternal links that have been established between the NUM (Britain) and the NUM (South Africa) and the trip abroad of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) representatives to secure international working-class support for the striking OK Bazaars workers are the first promising steps in this direction.

The programme of action and the united front are demanded by the masses!

THE LONGING for greater unity in the struggle is felt deeply and acutely by all of the oppressed and exploited. It is felt particularly sharply by those who are newly entering the struggle — militant young workers.

But the older and more experienced layers of the masses are also becoming impatient with their leaders' lack of clarity and sectarianism. They want to be given the opportunity to struggle in unity with all the oppressed and exploited.

To fail to provide the struggle with a programme of action — to obstruct in any way the building of the united front which alone will be able to implement it — is to desert the masses in their greatest hour of need.

The proletarian party alone can ensure victory!

THE PRINCIPAL duty of all revolutionaries is to establish communist cells in the mass movement and to fight conscientiously for the adoption of a revolutionary programme of action in the place of the 'ad-hocism' and regionalism that now characterise the struggle.

They must also consistently agitate for and work towards the building of a united front to implement this programme.

Only if these revolutionaries at the same time fight for the building of a centralised proletarian party that is guided by the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, will the programme of action and the united front not only see the light of day, but also become the means for victory of the exploited and oppressed over the racist ruling class.

■ Forward to a workers' government!

■ Forward to a revolutionary programme of action for the South African struggle!

■ Forward to international working-class solidarity with the South African revolution!

■ Forward to the building of a Bolshevik-Leninist party in South Africa!

ROBSON'S CHOICE

On Saturday, another chance to see Elia Kazan's *East of Eden*, 2.50p.m. (BBC2), the film based on a fragment of John Steinbeck's novel which catapulted the young James Dean to fame, fortune and an early grave. At 7p.m. on Radio 4 you can listen to Luigi Pirandello's most popular play: 'Six Characters in Search of an Author'. If you enjoyed Malcolm Lowry's tortured novel *Under The Volcano*, make sure you miss the Guy Gallo-John Huston attempt to transfer it to the screen (10p.m.C4). At 11p.m. on BBC2, Antonioni's *Blow-Up*, a film set in the so-called swinging sixties. Antonioni had experimented with the non realistic use of colour in a previous film, *The Red Desert*, his first colour film. In *Blow-Up* he paints paths in the park, and even goes to the length of painting a whole terrace of Victorian houses bright red, to generate the effect he wants.

On Sunday, at 7.45p.m. (BBC2), another Giuseppe Verdi opera, this time *A Masked Ball*, with Pavarotti in the title role of Gustav III of Sweden. (As Radio Times indicates, if you have a stereo radio, tune in to the simultaneous broadcast on Radio 3. Turn off the customarily lousy TV speaker, place your radio speakers either side of the TV and enjoy the best of both worlds). For light relief, watch *Sunset Boulevard* at 10p.m. (C-4).

May Day is packed with high-class epics: Sergei Bondarchuk's *Waterloo* (2.25p.m. BBC1) and Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1.30p.m. ITV). At 10p.m. (C-4) you can follow Jean-Luc Godard's stylish descent into trivia with *Hail Mary!* and, at 12p.m. (C-4), a Dutch documentary that looks at Argentina's economic crisis.

On Tuesday, at 10p.m. (Radio 3), *Loose Tubes* if you feel like jazz. At 10.25p.m. (BBC1), *The Trial of Klaus Barbie*, a documentary about the Nazi chief stationed in the city of Lyon during the German occupation of France. At 10.35p.m. (ITV), *First Tuesday* runs a story entitled *Bitter Harvest*, 'the startling



Butcher of Lyon: The Trial of Klaus Barbie is on BBC2 at 10.25 on Tuesday

story of children killed or maimed in horrific accidents on British farms'.

On Wednesday, at 7.45p.m., a continuation of the BBC2 series *Only One Earth*. At 8.15p.m. (BBC2), painter David Hockney uses an electronic paint-box in *Painting on Light*. At 10.20p.m. (BBC2), Duncan Campbell continues to explore the state-within-the-state in *Secret Society*. On Thursday, at 9p.m. (C-4), the delightfully funny, *Letter to Brezhnev*. At 12p.m. (C-4), *Larissa*, a documentary tribute to the late Soviet filmmaker, Larissa Shepitko, whose finest film, *The Ascent*, can be seen at the ludicrous hour of 12.20p.m. — strictly for insomniacs!

On Friday, at 9.30p.m. (BBC1), Omnibus presents *George Grosz: Enemy of the State*, a dramatised biography of the great German painter and satirist, who depicted the moral collapse of the German bourgeoisie and the rise of fascism with such accuracy that he was deported for his pains. It may not have helped his case that he was also a longstanding member of the German Communist Party.

PART III of Norman Harding's series on **Class Struggle USA** will appear next week.

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BOOKS

AN INTERVIEW WITH VINCE DONNELLY

Control units and prisoners-of-war

THE control chiefs at the prison department have tried a number of different techniques.

At the start of the 1970s, disturbances in the newly-founded 'dispersal' prisons brought a change. The big boot was to be faded out and 'control prisons' were to be run by psychological methods then being developed by a small clique in prison GHQ.

There would be a generally liberal regime with cell association, gymnasium etc. for 'conforming' prisoners. The non-conforming few would be catered for by the use of 'lie-downs'.

This procedure (which is not technically a punishment) involves sending a prisoner to another prison where he is kept in solitary confinement, usually for the maximum allowed 56 days, with no visitors. On lie-down the boot can still be applied, leaving officers in the dispersals with a goody-goody image.

The ultimate deterrent of the 1970s: the control units of Wakefield and the Scrubs.

Only one of these functioned (Wakefield) but it was shut down fairly quickly due to public outcry after it was revealed that their methods were, in effect, to crack the recalcitrant few by sensory deprivation.

These methods had already been

WHEN a prisoner of war is captured, that is not the end of the war. In British jails the struggle of Irish prisoners continues; the prison system wages war on the Irish prisoners. The Special Control Unit torture-cells secretly introduced during the 1970s were officially closed down after a public outcry against them. Now all the signs point to their reintroduction.

Irish prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs have been targeted for special, provocative searches. The implication is unmistakable: if they refuse to comply with them, they will disappear into special units. VINCE DONNELLY, an IRA volunteer at the moment doing life in Wormwood Scrubs, told PHIL PENN about the special efforts being made to try and destroy the political prisoners.

tested in the north of Ireland by the army in 1971-72.

Simultaneously, right-wing armies were being formed to defeat the miners. Cecil King was plotting a coup-d'etat. Behind all these were the familiar faces — Airey Neave, McWhirter and the leader herself.

Generally speaking this approach lasted until the Albany riots in 1983.

Not that all was above board in between times. The stick and carrot theme was in practice.

Long Lartin was the ultimate in easy-going regimes. At the other end Wakefield was the shit-house

of the system (with its control unit techniques still functioning unofficially, but watered down a little).

In between were the other five dispersals with graded regimes.

The same specially trained staff for the Wakefield unit were still there until the start of 1980.

A lot of the regime was still applied in the unit — silence, no talking or hands in pockets on exercises, no shouting out of windows, beds out all day whether on 'cellular confinement' (for 'cellular' read solitary) or not.

Three different pitches of fans were employed (very loud) around

the clock which left one's head numb.

On return to the main wing after punishment, you took very nearly a week to acclimatise and get a regular sleep pattern back.

That has all been fully documented elsewhere (Micky Williams v Regina around 1982).

The system of lie-downs or coolers (10/74) was used extensively particularly against political and alleged subversives, to provide maximum disruption to social life and visits.

Gradually though, especially via the European courts, the coolers became better. Radios etc. were allowed — and the staff learned to fear the growing knowledge of their rights of their regular 'visitors'.

Obviously this could not be allowed to last.

Enter the old gang in the 1979 election.

About this time numerous strikes and work stoppages were organised. Prisoners demanded concessions such as the right to know when parole has been refused and parity with northern Ireland prisoners.

This culminated in Albany, May 1983, when the screws, not the inmates, rioted.

This was preceded by a similar action at the Scrubs in 1979.

The big stick was back and Leon Brittan was organising a return to the brutal methods of pre-1968.

Almost immediately the boot started going in all over the place.

Lincoln in particular was selected for regular 'headlines'.

Almost everyone sent there on 10/74 got a kicking.

The governor at that period had figured in the trials of staff at the Rampton Special Hospital.

Leeds, which was always known as a kicking nick, had its staff suddenly reinforced by almost the complete squad of our old friends from nearby Wakefield.

Most of them are presently in charge of security at Leeds, having been promoted.

The remaining few of the control unit staff are to be found in various 'blocks' around the country, one in the Scrubs, one in Wandsworth.

A brief look at the locals.

Privileges are less than in dispersal, but the same basics apply, i.e. radio, the right to a daily paper and political papers.

Most will concede this while occasionally sticking the political papers in your property so you don't even know they are there until you get them when you leave. Leeds will not issue any 'left'

political papers unless the Board of Visitors (BOV) approves.

In the blocks no-one sees a paper.

I quoted the European Convention on prisons to the BOV chairman after being given 56 days cellular confinement. He was forced to concede and order me a daily paper.

However, the governor stopped all my papers.

I queried it again and was told they were stopped under standing order 5b 34/C: in effect 'subversive' and 'could jeopardise national security'.

The papers were Socialist Worker, FRFI, Sunday News, Guardian, the Next Step; in fact most of the available socialist papers.

I was given one ordinary letter in eleven weeks, and had to wait five weeks after applying for a VO (visiting order).

I was moved out a few days before my projected visit, so I was virtually incommunicado for 11 weeks.

Simultaneously, the 'parent' nick was returning all incoming mail to sender.

In retrospect, this and then other events, convinced me that this was a trial run for the once-again promoted control units ordered by Brittan.

How long could they keep a man out of the way before organised resistance from outside could get flowing?

Obviously quite a while.

Of late, new searches for prisoners of war on visits are being introduced.

Refuse them and it is on the record, so that if you disappear into a unit they can use your refusal to isolate you, whether or not you apply for a VO there.

In the last 12 months a record number of lie-downs have occurred with men either on the circuit (tour of locals) or permanently on GOAD (good order and discipline, a catch all rule) in blocks.

Coincidentally, these are all most likely candidates for the unit.

As usual, the projected regimes are tested elsewhere. Scotland has been the testing ground this last two-and-a-half-years.

Hence the real reason for the recent riots.

This is known by the capitalist media who continue to collaborate with the government by not giving space for the truth about the torture regimes.

● In next week's Workers Press, Vince Donnelly gives details of repression in jails.

Music and entertainment at the Irish prisoners' Benefit.

BY CHARLIE WALSH

MUSIC by singer/songwriter Maria Tolly, Ken Hughes from the RCG, and Colin Gleeson, a singer from Brixton, were the highlights of a benefit at the Brent Irish Cultural Centre last Friday evening in aid of the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign.

Maria's support for benefits and political campaigns is unstinting, whether it is on the question of Ireland, the miners' strike, anti-deportation campaigns or whatever.

She sang some songs of her own and some by Christy Moore: songs about repression and the millions who emigrated and died in the terrible Irish famine during the years 1845-1847.

Maria also sang one special song which she wrote after she had met Mrs Lilly Hill, Paul Hill's mother. It tells of a mother's thoughts and feelings about her son's imprisonment for life.

Ken Hughes also sang about the Irish struggle, songs which he wrote himself and some about the struggle of black people here in Britain.

Colin Gleeson, like Maria and Ken, is a great supporter of campaigns for the Irish prisoners. His rousing and inspired numbers included one about the strip-searching of Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer, Irish PoWs in Durham prison.

The highlight of the evening was the appearance of Phil Penn who earlier in the day had been released from Wormwood Scrubs prison. Before his imprisonment Phil had been convenor of the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign and, before that, joint convenor with Tony Sheridan of the Guildford Four Campaign.

He had spoken to Paul Hill who at the moment is in the Scrubs.

Paul had said the fight to free the framed prisoners cannot be separated from the war in Ireland, and the left in Britain have a duty to fight on this question. If they failed

WORKERS PRESS welcomes all reports on the treatment and struggles of other prisoners of war and political prisoners.

Benefit.



Phil Penn speaking at the Benefit

to do so they would be making a rod for their own backs.

Phil said that the policy of framing innocent people had not ended as can be seen in the case of

Patrick McLaughlin who was framed and given a life sentence last December for the bombing of Chelsea barracks. He too is in the Scrubs.

Phil also met Billy Power and Richard McIlkenny, two of the framed 'Birmingham Six'. He also met Liam Quinn, now on remand in Brixton, and prisoners of war Vince Donnelly and Patrick McLaughlin. The benefit raised £160, while a donation from the WRP/Workers Press of £62 brought the total to £222.

The Campaign to Free the Framed Irish Prisoners must be intensified and the issue raised throughout the labour and trade union movement. Likewise the left must be forced to fight not just for the framed prisoners but also for the PoWs and their repatriation to prisons in Ireland.

West Belfast's 'illegal' Easter March



Demonstrators ignored the police warnings (see banner on top of armoured car) that the 71st Commemoration of the Uprising was illegal.

PERSONAL COLUMN

It's time to resist

HARDLY a week goes by, it seems, without some fresh threat to our civil liberties. The latest such threat, though it has passed largely unnoticed, is profoundly disturbing.

Everyone knows of the desperate and rapidly worsening crisis that afflicts the British prison system. Prisoners are crammed three to a cell in ancient, insanubrious buildings and subjected to a regime that deprives them of every last shred of human dignity.

The victims seize whatever chance they can of protesting. At a prisoners' rights conference in London last weekend Gerry Bermingham, MP, a member of the House of Commons Committee on Home Affairs, warned once again that the prisons are going to erupt. He dreaded to think what would happen, he said, when the prison population rose above 55,000.

Let no one suppose the authorities are unaware that they are sitting on a barrel of gunpowder. Various expedients are being discussed by our rulers, and one of them was briefly canvassed on the television news one evening last week.

The idea is to take out of prison certain categories of offender, who would each be required to wear an electronic tagging device strapped to wrist or ankle for a specified period. The bleeps emitted by this device would be picked up at the local police station, enabling officers to keep tabs on the wearer's whereabouts.

This idea has already been tried out in the US with some success, it seems, and viewers were shown American prisoners being fitted with the bracelets that would enable them to be freed from jail.

At first glance there might be something to be said, from the point of view of the individual prisoner, for a scheme that enables you to serve out your time in your own home and not in some festering hellhole, enduring all the squalid indignities of overcrowding, slopping out, and petty sadism.

But before this scheme for easing the strain on Britain's prisons is widely hailed as a great humanitarian reform, I think we should look a little more closely at some of its implications.

To start with, on both the ITV and BBC versions, every American prisoner shown wearing, or being fitted with, the electronic bracelet happened to be black.

Now, there are proportionately twice as many blacks behind bars in Britain as there are whites. That was what Rudy Narayan told last weekend's conference, but we don't have to take his word for it: all the

relevant information can be found in Paul Gordon's 'White Law: Racism in the police, courts and prisons' (Pluto Press, 1983), and the situation has, if anything, worsened since that book appeared four years ago.

A few weeks ago we had the Appeal Court decision to permit the sterilisation of a young woman branded as mentally defective: a decision which, in the words of the 'Guardian', takes us a step nearer to a society which decided that, in the interests of progress, all black people, Labour voters, claimants and people with low IQs should be sterilised.

What sort of a society would the electronic tagging device take us a step nearer to? I don't want to be alarmist; on the other hand, I don't think we should underestimate either our rulers' intelligence and far-sightedness, or their mounting appetite for 'social control'.

They are obviously toying with the idea of easing the strain on the prison system, and averting the threatened eruption, by releasing several thousand prisoners and fitting them with electronic bracelets.

Magistrates would no doubt find this form of non-custodial sentencing an attractive option, and for certain types of offence it would clearly, for the police, have many advantages over probation. It would give the police something they would like very much: total surveillance over the movements of an increasing number of people.

Young black people — already largely stereotyped as 'muggers' and 'drug-pushers' by many who ought to know better — would be among the first victims.

But Thatcher's 'enemies within' are legion. They include strike pickets and political activists and a lot of other people who are not 'one of us', and over whose lives and movements the state would dearly love to exercise control, once it managed to get them into court.

Let us not dismiss this scenario as a science-fiction fantasy. The technology exists; the will to use it in this way and the excuse for using it in this way both exist; and the deafening rhetoric for presenting it as a humanitarian advance is, so to speak, waiting in the wings.

It can't be emphasised too often, or too strongly, that civil liberties were won, here in Britain, in the course of a long and bitter struggle against a ruling class which gave away no freedoms whatever. Every advance was bitterly contested. Many pioneers of the working-class movement were jailed, transported, and executed.

We are now in the midst of a large-scale, determined, and sinister effort by the British capitalist state to put the clock back. Thatcher has said that she intends to eradicate socialism. The erosion of civil liberties is a necessary part of that process.

That is why every attack on our ancient liberties, even if it comes in the guise of 'humanitarian' electronic surveillance de-

VICES, must be staunchly resisted — while there is yet time.

The Monerville case

IN September 1976 a posse of police from Stoke Newington police station in north London unlawfully entered the home of an elderly black couple, David and Lucille White.

The couple were badly injured by the police and were later charged with assaulting the police. Acquitted, they brought an action for damages.

For what the judge described as 'a catalogue of violence and inhuman treatment', they were awarded £51,000 in April 1982.

The judge said that, in trying to cover up their wrongful acts, the police had been guilty of 'monstrous, wicked and shameful conduct in the name of justice'.

It might be supposed that in the past four years the Stoke Newington police had taken these words to heart. The case of Trevor Monerville suggests that they have still some way to go.

Arrested and detained by Stoke Newington police on 1 January, Trevor suffered serious injuries. The Family and Friends of Trevor Monerville Campaign Committee has demanded written answers to a number of questions, but no answers have yet been forthcoming.

Was Trevor injured when police found him? Did he have bruises and cuts over the length of his body? If so, why was he not taken straight to hospital? If not, how was he injured while in police custody?

Why did it take six policemen to secure Trevor's fingerprints? Why did prison officers destroy some of his clothes? Why did police invent a brain tumour for him? And why have Stoke Newington police suddenly dropped all charges against him?

The Campaign Committee, which is trying to turn this case into a major national issue, can supply a petition, a model resolution, and a poster, each listing these and other questions. The Committee's address is 42 Brooksby's Walk, London E9, and its telephone number is 01-985 6878.

Peter Fryer

ployment benefit? Or the new 'Restart Programme' which seeks to force the unemployed into schemes and down blind alleys? On one of these, if they are put on a selected job paying under £80 per week they will receive a top-up of £20 for the first six months.

Should we, while holding hands with Mrs Thatcher on 3 May, not mention her latest proposals to expand the Job Training Scheme? For a full week's work the unemployed, mainly youth, will receive only their usual benefit rates — still to be paid fortnightly by a Giro cheque from the Unemployment Benefit Office.

We are fast going from cheap labour schemes to slave labour schemes.

Unemployment is a party political issue. The Tories are to blame for the ever-increasing real figures of unemployment.

Holding hands will not solve the problem, but will provide a smokescreen for the Tories. Only through the unemployed uniting with the trade union and labour movement, throwing out this government, and electing a Labour government, can we begin to work out socialist policies to solve the unemployment problem in Britain.

Mike Farley
Secretary
Wigan Trades Council

● Hands Across Britain plan to organise a continuous human chain to join Hope Street in Liverpool to Downing Street in London on Sunday 3 May. Supported by

churches and voluntary organisations they were also hoping to involve the trade unions. Prominent names of supporters include Jimmy Savile, Lord Young of Dartington, Most Reverend Derek Worlock, Sir Bryan Hopkin, Chief Rabbi Sir Immanuel Jakobovits and of course Norman Willis.

More on Project 2,000

I WAS astounded to read Sally Gooch's assertion (Saturday 4 April) that [health service unions] COHSE and NUPE support Project 2,000 'in principle'.

This is certainly not the case so far as it concerns COHSE, which has repeatedly asserted that the proposals contained therein are incoherent and in part unworkable.

For example, Colin McKane, one of the union's full-time officials, pointed out that due to demographic changes in some areas it would be necessary to recruit everybody leaving school with five 'O' levels to nursing, just to stand still — plainly a ludicrous proposition.

Both COHSE and NUPE have long recognised the ambiguous position of the enrolled nurses. But the solution to this problem is to give them a clear job description and adhere to it, not necessarily abolish them.

If the present proposals are carried out we will only perpetuate this ambiguous

position for a further 20 years! Furthermore, to say that these nurses will have their job protected for the rest of their nursing careers is naive.

Many nurses, because they are women, have to leave employment because of reactionary policies: to bring up children or look after ageing relatives or because their husband's work takes them to another area.

To suggest they will be able to take advantage of conversion courses is also a dubious statement because there will be no guarantee they will get their old jobs back if they fail the course at any stage.

As it is, with many colleges of nursing run, it must be said, by directors of nurse education who are Royal College of Nursing members, unilaterally ceasing to train enrolled nurses, there will be a shortfall of 40,000 trained nurses by 1990.

Since many of these used to enter the 'Cinderella' areas such as mental handicap, psychiatry or geriatrics, these areas will once again feel the brunt of inappropriate management decisions.

As for the much-vaunted 'student status' of learners, this is leaving the profession open to a vast cost-cutting exercise. The government will be delighted to convert them from salaried workers (low though their wages be) to students on a means-tested, inadequate grant, thus ensuring that future generations of nurses will be scions of well-to-do families à la Nightingale, or will en-

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We have gone beyond our target for April and, as we go to press, still have a few days left in which to make it a record month. Our finances remain extremely precarious so every day is crucial. One way to increase our income is to get prepaid postal subscriptions (it also saves on the shoe-leather and petrol bills!):

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A Preparatory Committee has been formed and has held its first meeting to organise the International Conference of Trotskyists, planned for later this year, to reorganise the Fourth International.

The Workers Revolutionary Party Special Fund is the only source of money for our party's contribution to that committee, and it is therefore urgently needed.

- Please send donations, large or small, to: WRP Special Fund, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

Workers Revolutionary Party Series of Classes on:

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AUEW House, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool 7.30p.m.
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Highfields Community Centre
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5 May: Stalinism and the Soviet Union: Capitalism and the Labour Bureaucracy

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Public Classes

Stalinism and Trotskyism (Part Two) — Sunday 3 May
The WRP's Call for an International Conference of Trotskyists — Sunday 10 May
Lectures Start at 6.00p.m.
Blythwood Hotel, 320 Argyle Street, Argyle Street, Glasgow
(between Central Station and Anderston Bus Station)
Speaker: Joe Eyre

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The Struggle to Re-Organise the Fourth International
Speaker: Geoff Pilling (Workers Press editor)
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ter the profession with massive overdrafts.

So who will do the work? Price Waterhouse were to cost these hare-brained ideas and came up with a total of £400 million extra funding.

The government's response was to agree to supernumerary status but to refuse any further funding. They also announced that the age of entry for nursing would be lowered from the present statutory limit of 17 years to 16 years and that YTS schemes would now operate in nursing.

So we have the scenario: a small elite of trained nurses, students on a means-tested pittance, dwindling numbers of enrolled and auxiliary nurses, gradually replaced with 16-year-old economic conscripts on £27 per week.

Any union worth its salt would be crazy to agree to this. In fact only the pseudo-union RCN has agreed to it, precisely because the RCN does not even represent the State Registered Nurses (SRNs), but senior nursing officers and directors of nursing education.

Rather than seeing the way forward as attaining good pay and conditions for everyone in the NHS, it tries to make of nursing a 'restrictive practice' and ensure a scarcity value for it.

My advice to Sally Gooch is to join a real health service union, affiliated to the Labour Party and the TUC, open to all who work in the health service.

David Fowler RMN RGN
Assistant Branch Secretary
COHSE 929 Larbert branch

LRT builders redundancy threat

AS LONDON busworkers prepare for industrial action, workers in the 'in-house' building section of LRT are preparing to fight against the redundancy of 40 of their 400-strong workforce.

Their senior convenor is listed as redundant in management's notice of a reduction in various trades.

Jobs in LRT builders have been decimated by two-thirds in the three years since the LRT act made their

work tenderable. A meeting of London Transport TUC shop stewards last week called for the Executive Committees of all its constituent unions to take the necessary action to protect jobs and earnings.

London busworkers vote to fight

LONDON'S bus drivers, conductors and engineering workers have voted by a majority of 9-1 to take industrial action against the effects of tendering on their jobs and wages.

The workers are organised into three sections: the bus crews into the TGWU London Bus Section; the mechanics into the TGWU Inside Staffs Section; and the skilled craftsmen, who are members of various craft unions, into the Craft Alliance.

As this paper goes to press, the committees of all three sections are meeting to discuss what form the action should take.

The voting took place at the same time as London Buses management are trying to force the workforce at Norbiton bus garage to accept pay cuts of around £30 per week and work six and a half hours longer.

The 1984 London Regional Transport Act took London Transport out of GLC control and put it into the hands of the secretary of state for transport.

The act split London Transport into its constituent parts — Buses, Underground, Catering, Services, etc.

The work of these parts then has to be tendered on the open market.

In the case of buses, the LRT subsidiary has to compete with private companies to operate routes.

All the routes in London's Kingston area were put to tender. The majority were 'won' by London Buses Ltd.

It is now apparent how they tendered so low.

Staff at Norbiton bus garage which operates the routes have been told that after June they will no longer have a job with London Buses Ltd.

They have been sacked from 25 June.

But the workers were told that there would be no redun-

BY AN INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

dancy pay because jobs at the lower pay rate and longer hours are being made available to them at London Buses Ltd subsidiaries — Kingston Bus Company and Stanwell Buses Ltd — driving buses from the same garages on the same routes.

This has proved to London's busworkers what their fate will be unless they take action to defend themselves.

In the words of Norbiton drivers' representatives: 'We are being asked to do six days' work for four days' pay'.

Contracting

The whole tendering set-up is not to improve London's public transport system, but to reduce public investment by reducing services, cutting pay and contracting the industry.

This is not just an attempt to cut busworkers' wages. Every worker in London is directly affected by what is happening to the transport services.

Conversion of routes to the hated OPO is a result of preparing routes for tendering.

Reduction of service levels is preparing for tendering.

Closure of bus garages is to reduce overheads in pre-

paration for tendering.

The government does not care how it affects people's lives by the tendering process, as long as it cuts costs and provides profits for private contractors.

This is not to say that everything was rosy before the LRT act, but the Labour GLC had started to show how suitable investment and affordable fares could induce more travellers out of their cars and on to public transport.

They thus provided the basis for further improvements in public transport to fulfil Londoners' needs.

The industrial action taken by London's busworkers must not just be to protect the earnings in this or that particular garage or prevent their closure, but must be for the future of the industry and Londoners' future travel needs.

It is no use them putting faith in the possibility of a Labour government being elected. The Labour transport policy is quite clear.

Although it sets out some nice scenarios for public transport it also admits that within capitalist constraints it won't be able to implement them.

On behalf of the capitalist class which she represents, Thatcher is trying to beat a crisis which can't be solved.

She is trying to do it by attacking the living standards of the working class.

Attacks

The attacks on public transport and busworkers' wages are inextricably linked with the attacks on the Hangers workers, the teachers, the health service and all other sections which have come up against this government.

Busworkers must link up with every other section which is fighting back.

This Tory government must be brought down. If it is replaced by one of another shade who try to do the same thing, then that must be brought down too.

The living conditions and rights of workers must come before the colour of the political party trying to save capitalism.

Busworkers must learn this is not a dispute solely about wages.

It's no good them protecting one corner of the whole picture, because management, acting on the government's orders, will snip away at the rest of it.

This dispute is the real McCoy. It's political — they are taking on the capitalist state.

They must join up with others who are doing likewise.

This is not a fight of London busworkers alone, but of all workers and their families.



CND march

THE BRONZE soldier on the Cenotaph was drafted again last Saturday.

But this time the involuntary enlistment was in support of over 50,000 anti-nuclear campaigners who were on the march from the Embankment to Hyde Park.

In the park, the CND campaigners heard speeches by transport union

leader Ron Todd and enjoyed the music of Billy Bragg.

A crowd carrying different coloured balloons formed a human 'radio-active' symbol.

Meanwhile, in another part of the park a full-size hot-air balloon was launched with a giant CND symbol painted on the side.

be imposed as a condition. City Anti Apartheid Group are appealing against these

bail conditions and have called a picket of Tunde's trial on 29 May. 9.30a.m.

Picket

TUNDE Forest, arrested on 22 January, appeared at Bow Street Magistrates Court on 23 April, charged with assaulting a police officer, allegedly in the National Car Park near the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square.

The case was adjourned until 29 May. When the prosecution request for bail to be refused was dismissed, they demanded that a one mile 'exclusion zone' around the South African Embassy

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