

# Socialist Organiser

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# DEFEND JOBS!

Encouraged by the weakness of the print unions' fight against Murdoch's Wapping lock-out and Maxwell's sackings, Express management are going in for the kill. They are demanding job cuts of one-third from a workforce of 6,800.

If the workers won't accept these cuts, a new staffing agreement similar to Murdoch's "slaves' charter", then the whole workforce will be locked out on March 31.

According to militants at the Express the new deal that management want to impose includes:

\*No full time FoCs/MoCs and non-recognition of elected shop floor representatives.

\*No recognition of Chapels.

\*No automatic job replacement.

\*Workers to be forced to report in and out with management. This is bound to involve compulsory overtime with no increase in pay.

\*No extra payments for learning new skills.

\*Complete job flexibility - management will be given the absolute right to manage - i.e. to push the workforce around.

\*No agreement on staffing levels with the introduction of new technology. This paves the way for endless job cuts.

### Inactivity

Unfortunately so far the national print union leaderships have done very little to prepare for a fight at the Express. Some Chapel officials have even surpassed Dean's and Dubbins's inactivity by accepting 'voluntary' redundancy.

But there is still a strong possibility of a fight. Express chapels have been able to mobilise workers to join other print workers at the Wapping pickets.

What has to be done is to build on this support to link the battle at Wapping to the fight to save jobs at the Express and right through the newspaper industry.

To do this there is no alternative to stopping the whole of the print. We need an all-out national newspaper strike.

Only a threat on this scale will serve to force the print bosses into retreat.

The facts of recent Fleet Street history show that this kind of action can get the bosses on the run. Back in 1983, during the NGA's battle with Eddie Shah at the Stockport Messenger, there was a complete Fleet Street strike.

That strike destroyed the unity of the Fleet Street bosses' cartel, the Newspaper Publishers' Association (NPA). After just two days of united industrial action, Robert Maxwell was offering to buy out Eddie Shah as



Last Saturday night, 22nd March, pickets prevented the scab convoy from leaving Murdoch's Fortress Wapping till 1.30 am. But when the numbers had dwindled sufficiently riot police and mounted police went in and attacked the pickets. Photo: John Harris.

the NPA's threat of a lock-out crumbled.

Tragically, this power was wasted. The action was called off and the initiative lost. The result was a defeat for the NGA, which was ordered to pay massive fines. This need not happen.

A national newspaper strike today, aimed at defeating Murdoch, Maxwell and the Express management can win. The last strike started to do just that before it was called off.

Now is the time to fight. If the print

unions don't take a stand now then within a year management of every newspaper may well have the capacity to do a Murdoch.

The print union leaderships must not be allowed to keep each struggle separate. This will only weaken each fight and could spell the end of the strength and organisation of print unionism. Linking the battles against Murdoch, Maxwell and the Express management into a unified struggle is the way to win.

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# SHUT DOWN FLEET ST!

# Stop Maxwell!!



Sue Carlyle

## WAPPING AGAINST MURDOCH

By cllr Susan Carlyle

In the third week of the dispute the local Tower Hamlets council publicly put forward its support for the sacked printers and has gone on to follow a policy of non-cooperation with News International.

What the council has to respond to is the wishes of local residents who are experiencing a very difficult way of life as a result of the police tactics and presence in the area.

The area has been taken over in the day as well as in the night. The police have not only literally ridden roughshod over trade unionists' right to picket, but are preventing local people from moving in or out of the area freely.

This has included residents being told to park their cars outside the area and walk, which in the case of women is not necessarily the best advice to follow. Other measures have included stopping people and asking their identity; escorting people all the way back to their flats to prove that they really live there.

What many people have actually complained about is that their children have been disturbed by the noise of the lorries as they go through the streets at night - so much so that they are falling asleep in school.

There is now talk of issuing passes to Wapping residents

But most people are against this move. As one woman said, "The pickets aren't going to harm me, so why are the police doing this?"

Under the present circumstances, residents want the plant shut down. They are meeting with the local printers' support group and have even joined in the actions to block the streets in protest.

This activity needs strengthening. Despite large numbers of pickets on 'The Highway', many of us have been going back into the High Street and the other back streets of Wapping and attempting to block the roads physically. This action has been partially successful and local residents have come out of their flats to help us but more people are needed.

This is the way forward, to unite our forces like we did during the miners' strike, and with the right kind of organisation we will stop the lorries.

By Stan Crooke

It's been another week of frantic inactivity at Robert Maxwell's Anderston Quay printing plant - while the printing presses have remained at a standstill, Maxwell has been working non-stop at sacking and suing his opponents and critics.

Adding together redundancy notices, "protective redundancy notices", and Maxwell's claims about workers "sacking themselves", most workers at the plant have been sacked three times already since the beginning of March.

The pretext for sacking the NUJ members was that they had allegedly broken a house agreement which required three weeks notice of industrial action. But the NUJ hit back by pointing to management's failure at Anderston Quay to follow agreed disputes procedure.

"We are ready to produce our papers with those who are ready to work. Others are now free to seek employment elsewhere," management's letter to each NUJ member bluntly stated, and also demanded immediate repayment of "monies paid in advance, such as car allowances," amounting in some cases to hundreds of pounds. By the end of the week Maxwell was inviting the sacked journalists to re-apply for their jobs through a post office box number, clearly in the hope that he would be able to re-employ only pliable journalists prepared to toe the line. But the NUJ has called for a complete boycott of Maxwell's offer of selective re-employment.

Whilst NUJ members were being sacked, Maxwell was also busy dragging SOGAT through the courts again, claiming that the refusal of SOGAT members to set an editorial when refused a right of reply to it was in breach of an earlier court injunction granted on the occasion of a previous strike at the beginning of March.

## EXPULSION OF THESE SCABS!

The activities of Scottish EETPU full-timer and Labour Party member Pat O'Hanlon in recruiting scabs to work at News International's Kinning Park plant have already received considerable publicity and cost him his place on the Executive of the Scottish Labour Party, though unfortunately not (yet) his Party membership.

But the scabs he has been so busy recruiting have so far escaped such adverse publicity. A leaflet produced by the Print Workers' Coordinating Committee (the official body set up by SOGAT to run the dispute) has now started to put this situation to rights by publishing the names of some of these labour movement "stalwarts" now eking out a living by working at Kinning Park: Jimmy Hayes, former CLP



Riot police on the move, Wapping. Photo: Andrew Moore.

Appearing in the High Court in London last Friday (21 March), Maxwell claimed that SOGAT had been guilty of "censorship", compared SOGAT Scottish full-timer Alan Watson to Hitler, claimed that the country would be in a state of chaos if it were not for the Tories' anti-union legislation, and argued that SOGAT had breached the earlier injunction he had been granted.

AT A mass meeting on Monday 24 March, Daily Record SOGAT members agreed to a return-to-work formula, but also agreed not to cross official NUJ picket lines.

The return-to-work proposal had been agreed upon by local SOGAT officials. In return for an agreement from SOGAT that it will not seek to "influence the editorial content of the papers", employer Robert Maxwell

agreed to 'talks' on "negotiable redundancies".

NUJ members at the Daily Record/Sunday Mail plant at Anderston Quay have been sacked for going on strike. With a round-the-clock NUJ picket of the plant, the Daily Record is likely to remain off the streets. SOGAT members have refused to cross picket lines in accordance with Monday's resolution.

Maxwell aims to set up two new companies - one for publishing and another for printing his titles. As a result of this separation, legal solidarity strike action would be impossible. It is similar to Murdoch's Wapping operation.

The Maxwell and Murdoch disputes need to be linked. Both employers are using similar union-busting tactics in what is becoming a general attack on print unions. The only effective answer will be united action by the print workers.

secretary and election agent for right-wing Motherwell MP Jeremy Bray, described by local Party members as "a notorious and quite unashamed right winger";

John McGrogan and Lionel Khan, members of the EETPU and of Motherwell North CLP;

Anne Rafferty, a member of the Mossend Labour Party branch;

J. Conn, a former shop steward at Gartcosh;

D. Kenny, a member of Motherwell North CLP, who helped recruit a number of EETPU members to work at Kinning Park.

Other scabs reported by the leaflet to be working at Kinning Park include the son and husband of Ellen McKenna (convenor at Honeywell Ltd) and the brother-in-law of local EETPU official Hugh Clark.

While pressure from within Motherwell North CLP has forced O'Hanlon out of all positions in the Party, right down to branch level, no such pressure has been brought to bear on scabs in Motherwell South CLP, where the right wing majority has argued that the whole affair should be kept quiet lest it bring the Party into disrepute!

All in all, left wingers in Motherwell believe that there are at least seventeen members of the two Motherwell CLPs currently scabbing at Kinning Park.

To be sure, what would bring the Labour Party into disrepute is not bringing the issue out into the open in the labour movement and kicking these scabs out of the Party, but continuing to turn a blind eye to these people, prepared to thief the jobs of SOGAT members.

## BUILDING PRINT SUPPORT

On Wednesday March 12, the Basingstoke Trades Council organised a public meeting in support of the printworkers.

The week before, the Trades Council executive met with two local branch secretaries of SOGAT who represent some 1,000 members, to discuss the setting up of a broad-based Printworkers' Support Group. The outcome was that a support group should be formed on the same lines as the previously successful Miners' Support Group. The recommendation from the Trades Council EC was unanimously endorsed at the public meeting.

Local action has already been organised and local activists, along with SOGAT members, have been picketing the local newspaper distributors, Foyles, for the last three weeks, with some success. Regular delegations to Wapping have also been organised to join the mass pickets every Saturday with support being generated from mainly rank and file trade unionists, the local UCW, EETPU, ASLEF, TGWU, NCU, Socialist Organiser supporters, Labour Party members and the SWP.

Local activists recognise that other important areas of support work, such as re-est-

ablishing the workplace and Labour Party collections, which were so successful during the miners' strike, are crucial not only to raise much needed finance for the strikers, but also to ensure that the issues are raised in every workplace and that current solidarity is developed.

### Meeting

At the public meeting itself, Cate Murphy (guest speaker from SOGAT and a Socialist Organiser supporter) drew general approval when she said that the dispute was not just about attacking print workers, but an attack on the organised labour movement; that Fleet Street had to be pulled out in solidarity, mass picketing constructed in defiance of anti-union laws and that the strike could be won if the whole of the trade union movement responded by raising finance for the strikers and mobilising to shut down Wapping.

In the coming weeks the local support group will be hoping to build the workplace collections and mobilise for the regular picket locally as well as building on the delegations to Wapping.

Contact Basingstoke Trades Council on 0256-24704 or 0256 28460 for further information.

# A MAJOR MISTAKE

Is it right to make tactical use of the courts to defeat, or at least beat back the witch-hunters in the Labour Party?

Militant supporters have won court injunctions in Stevenage and in South Wales to hold off expulsions. And supporters of Labour Briefing have adopted the same course of action in Exeter.

Court action seems to be working.

But in the long term it will not work. It violates an essential working class principle, that the capitalist state should not be permitted to interfere in the internal affairs of the labour movement, and so it undermines the struggle to win the labour movement as a whole to socialist ideas.

The class struggle is increasingly shaped by the law. Anti-union laws, and legal restrictions on local authority spending, have proved central to recent battles: the printworkers (in 1983 as well as now), transport workers, and of course the miners; and the



Workers must rely on their own strength. Photo: John Smith

surcharges of Liverpool and Lambeth councillors.

The labour movement has learned some bitter lessons from these experiences. That the state is not neutral; that the courts as well as the police will be used by the bosses against the labour movement; these are recognised as realities by many labour movement activists.

But not so the movement's leaders, and therefore not so those thousands of workers who look to them to lead. Keeping within the law, hold-

ing onto legality, are the watchwords of labour movement leaders from Neil Kinnock to Brenda Dean.

The left needs to draw on recent lessons and to hammer home the message: the law is the bosses' law; the courts are the bosses' courts. They should be kept out of our movement.

The labour movement, if it is ever to be a force for radical, socialist change, needs to assert and defend its independence from the ruling class

and its institutions. That means maintaining and insisting upon the principle that the labour movement decides upon its own affairs, free from state interference.

Reliance, even tactical reliance, on the capitalist courts to mediate in labour movement affairs, undermines the long-term role of socialists to develop independent working class consciousness.

Of course, socialists are not anarchists: we support and advocate legal enforcement for democratic rights; and there is no reason in principle not to make use of the courts against the bosses. In South Africa, trade unions have often scored important victories through skillful use of the courts against their employers.

That is a different issue. But in any event, socialists would not rely upon the state; we rely upon the strength of the working class.

Turning to the courts necessarily undermines a campaign against witch-hunts in

the short term, too.

Once the courts are involved, the matter becomes 'sub judice'. The right wing and soft left can easily use this as an excuse to suppress discussion: the mobilisation of a campaign becomes correspondingly harder.

And the financial costs for the local party in defending itself in court can be considerable. 'Hauling the party through the courts' can be a catch-cry for the right wing in deflecting the real issues.

Whatever the short-term successes, the tactic of court action is certain to rebound on the left. The capitalist courts can and do sometimes decide in favour of the working class, or the left; but they are the natural ally of the right.

The more the courts are involved in the labour movement, the worse it is sure to get. The left should be guarding against more court involvement, not preparing the way for it.

## 550 NUJ SCABS

The number of NUJ members who have refused to cross picket lines at Wapping or left News International since the dispute began has now risen to 42. But over 550 journalists are still scabbing.

The fact that the number scabbing is still so high is to a large extent the fault of the NUJ leadership who have done very little to discipline the scabs.

More effective has been rank and file SOGAT and NGA pressure on Wapping scabs who work shifts on other papers. The Observer was forced to get rid of its scab last week when print union members threatened to stop the presses.

One new recruit at Wapping to the Sun labour staff is Carson Black, former FoC at the Birmingham Post and Mail and a notorious opponent of the NUJ's policy against voluntary redundancies.

## A WORKERS' ANSWER

Tom Rigby argues for a strategy for workers' control of the print industry to deal with the issues posed by new technology

At the mass rally of printers at Wembley on March 12, Brenda Dean said that she could not give any details of the negotiations taking place between the print unions and News International.

This, combined with Dean's willingness to negotiate with Murdoch "without preconditions", has increased the fear among striking printers that there may well be a sell-out looming.

### Control

There is only one way to stop this happening. That is for rank and file printers to fight for control over this strike.

But rank and file control needs to be linked to a programme for dealing with the introduction of new technology.

The joint NUJ/NGA policy for the provincial press was a step in the right direction.

NGA members will be

allowed to transfer to sub-editors' jobs, but will hold dual NGA/NUJ membership; paying union dues to the NGA, but represented for bargaining purposes by the NUJ.

The left in the print unions has tried to build on this. The NGA Broad Left has put forward the following platform:

a) all new technology deals to be negotiated jointly by all affected chapels on the principle of only union fingers on the equipment and based on the following prerequisites:

1. No loss of jobs.
2. All new technology to be operated by union members only. This to be the base for building 100% trade union membership in editorial, advertising, clerical, composing and machine rooms, distribution and maintenance.
3. Common rates and conditions build on the best in any production area.

b) To campaign among our members at chapel, branch and national level for:



Injured picket is taken to hospital. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

1. Joint chapels in new technology areas.

2. No crossing of picket lines of chapels in dispute.

3. No preparation of copy for non-union companies and no processing or distribution of non-union originated material.

4. Amalgamation of all unions in the industry based on 100% trade unionism.

A fight by the unions for such a policy now would represent a major step forward in comparison to the backtracking of Dean and Dubbins.

However, the left's policy needs to be supplemented by a commitment to work-sharing without loss of pay.

Without this commitment, the bosses will, over time, be able to claw back any gains made, using redundancies and overtime.

A genuine working class response to new technology has to include this commitment. It would mean a step

forward from the already existing, negative control that the best organised sections of the print unions exercise over the labour process, to a new positive control.

Control over the whole range of national newspapers by a handful of millionaires who have enough cash to enter the market, together with the big advertisers, is not a 'free

press'.

The printworks and news agency services should be nationalised without compensation by a Labour government, and put under democratic control. Each current of opinion with a minimum of support in the working class could then be allocated facilities to produce its own paper; open opinion columns and the right of reply could be established.

We could get a genuinely varied press, and one open to the concerns, interests and perceptions of the working class.

In turn such a policy needs to be linked to a class-wide response to retrenchment and flexibility including:

- \*no redundancies;
- \*no sub-contracting;
- \*permanent, full-time contracts.
- \*reduction in the working week without loss of pay;
- \*trade union control of training and retraining.

The Union of Printworkers Support Groups has been set up. It aims to link together all the printworker support groups in the country.

The next meeting is on April 3 at Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, at 6pm. Contact Steve Masterson on 01-435 5652.

## PICKET IN WALES

Last Friday night, 21 March, 200 people picketed the TNT depot in Llantrisant, South Wales, one of Rupert Murdoch's distribution points.

The picket was made up mainly of printers from London with a sprinkling of local activists and miners. Distribution was delayed for two hours as the police waited for reinforcements.

If the pickets are built for seriously, especially among the South Wales miners, then they can be more successful in the future.

Another picket is expected soon.

**MASS RALLY**  
In support of printworkers  
**Thursday 27 March**  
at 5.00 p.m.  
at Murdoch's Glasgow Plant, Portman St., off Paisley Road West  
**KINNING PARK**

LONDON REGION  
**SOGAT · AUEW · NUJ · NGA**  
Calls on all supporters, branches and chapels to join the  
**MARCH TO FORTRESS WAPPING**  
Saturday, March 29  
ASSEMBLE  
8.30pm, Tower Hill  
Come and see for yourself

## BLOC CONFERENCE

Saturday 19 April at 11.00 a.m.  
Sheffield City Hall  
£3 per delegate, up to five delegates per labour movement organisation



Stalin: old hat

# KGB

Are you one of those victims of Western imperialist propaganda who has been duped into believing that the KGB, the Soviet secret police, is a force which ruthlessly suppresses democratic rights in the Soviet Union? Well, the speech by comrade Chebrikov — head of the KGB — to the recent congress of the Soviet "Communist" Party shows just how wrong you are.

Chebrikov explained how the KGB differed from Western secret services: "Our security organs, unlike the secret services of the imperialist states, do not stand above the people. They always have been and always are the flesh of the flesh of the Soviet people (Applause) . . . We constantly strive to strengthen and extend our connections with the workers, to ensure that our activities are understood by the Soviet people, and that they find amongst them approval and complete support."

### Caring

The KGB, kind, caring people that they are, even go so far as to adopt a preventive approach to crime. No, this does not mean locking people up before they do anything. As comrade Chebrikov explained: "Above all, we struggle for every Soviet individual who stumbles. Helping such an individual, preventing him from carrying out a crime against the state — this is one of the principal tasks, it flows from the humanist essence of our social order."

As for accusations about infringements of human rights, what the capitalist West really means is "giving people the right to break the laws of our socialist state without being punished. But we shall never grant such a right to anyone at anytime. (Applause)". Foreign tourists who abuse Soviet hospitality for pursuing anti-state activities should beware in particular. "Of necessity we must suppress attempts by various — if you will allow the expression — guests to exploit international links in pursuit of goals hostile to our country."

### Paradise

But, of course, a policeman's lot is not a happy one, not even in the workers' paradise of the Soviet Union. Of particular concern to comrade Chebrikov is the emergence of video-technology, a "positive and progressive phenomenon in and of itself" unless of course it is used for "the propagation of ideas alien to us, of the cult of violence and viciousness, of amorality. In our socialist society, like in a well-kept field, there must be no weeds. (Applause)."

As for the future, things can only get even better. The membership of the KGB, basing themselves on "fundamental Leninist principles", explained their head man, "unanimously and fervently support the proposals and conclusions of the Political Report (of General Secretary Gorbachev) and the strategic course of the party, leading us to the great goal — Communism. (Applause)".

# The thoughts of Captain Bob

undertake to safeguard its and honour all trade union agreements."

July 1984 when he took over Mirror Group Newspapers

To safeguard the survival of this Company we have no alternative but to notify the Department of Employment that we will need to declare redundant between 300 and 500 of our 1,050 strong workforce."

Letter to staff, February 22, 1986

The Daily Record and Sunday Mail have gone from success to success. Their circulations rise and they make profits. They have not suffered from the very gross over-manning which made our other titles ruinously expensive."

Statement in the Record, February 22 1986

This scandalous overmanning will no longer be allowed to continue."

Letter to employees, February 23, 1986

"Drastic action will not be necessary at Anderston Quay."

Statement in Daily Record, February 22, 1986

"We must make severe staffing economies. These will range up to 40 per cent in some departments. In no department is the figure likely to be below 25 per cent."

Statement to staff, Anderston Quay, February 23, 1986

"No company has ever succeeded by closing down."

Letter to staff, February 17, 1986

"The Daily Record will not be published today."

Statement to staff, February 23, 1986

"I do not intend to go the Murdoch way. I prefer to negotiate rather than dictate, to safeguard jobs rather than end them, to give security rather than create insecurity."

Letter to staff, February 17, 1986.

"I must give you formal notice to terminate your contract of employment and ask you to accept this letter as your notice of dismissal."

Letter from company to all employees, March 13, 1986



Above, Robert Maxwell berates SOGAT FoCs after smashing up the print presses at his BPC plant. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

# Very Scottish

SOGAT's Scottish whizz-kids have come up with an imaginative idea to improve the boycott campaign of Wapping publications: the latest SOGAT leaflet for mass distribution in Scotland does not simply call for a boycott, but also lists various Scottish newspapers which news-hungry consumers can purchase instead.

The leaflet explains that the examples given are "a small sample of excellent national and local papers serving Scotland's needs. We don't need Mr Murdoch or his papers. Support your Scottish press. It's our culture! It's our press! Defend it!"

Only lifeless pedants would dare suggest that such illustrious publications as those mentioned on the leaflet — the Ayrshire Post and Troon Herald, the Kilmarnock Standard incorporating the Ayrshire Weekly News and Irvine Weekly News, and the Irvine Herald and Kilwinning Chronicle, for example, do not represent the apogee of Scottish proletarian culture, or are in any way journalistically inferior to an amateurish publication like The Times.

Even so, there are a couple of minor drawbacks with the

leaflet.

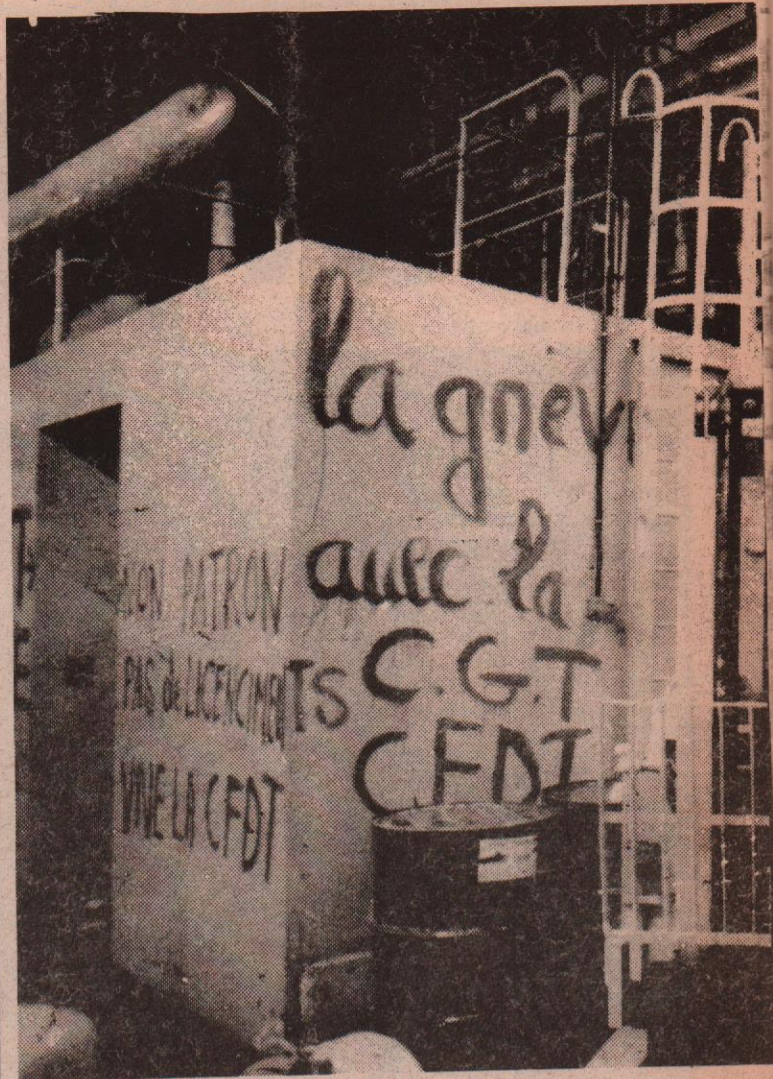
One notable omission from the list of worthy Scottish papers is the most widely read Sunday paper of all: the Scottish Sunday Post, published by the non-union and anti-union D.C. Thomson's in Dundee. If the Sunday Post doesn't sum up the essence of the Scottish newspaper industry, what does?

Another snag with the leaflet is that the publication heading the list of the "excellent national and local papers which serve Scotland's needs" is none other than Robert Maxwell's Daily Record.

Since this has not been published since March 8, anyone buying a copy would hardly be privy to the most up-to-date news. And any copy produced in the foreseeable future is likely to be produced by scab labour, in the tradition of recent events at News International.

### Sacked

Still, there's no shortage of people available to distribute this leaflet calling on class- and nation-conscious readers to buy the Daily Record. There's 600 SOGAT members just sacked from the Record, for example, who are free to spend all day distributing the leaflet.



# The price

By Martin Thomas

The French Communist Party has long been one of the world's great armies of organised workers. It controls France's major trade union federation. Street names in the working class suburbs of Paris — Avenue Lenine, Boulevard Thorez — testify to its strength in local government. Traditionally it has had 20% of the vote.

Jean-Marie le Pen is a crank and a thug, long a prominent figure in the half-world of France's far right grouplets but nowhere else.

And now the CP and le Pen's fascist National Front are suddenly on a level. In last week's parliamentary elections both got about 10% of the vote and gained 30-odd seats.

This horrifying about-turn — accompanied by a rising wave of violent attacks on North Africans in France — was not caused by state persecution of the CP. On the contrary, it comes from a period of left government, with the CP holding office from 1981 to 1984.

France has long had a fairly sizeable pool of people with right-wing views and a taste for street politics. Its social structure includes a much bigger proportion of small shopkeepers, petty business people, and small farmers — classes often aligned to the right — than Britain for example.

In the late 1940s De Gaulle's RPF movement had a strong-arm squad of several thousand. De Gaulle returned to power in 1958 through a military coup, and later bolstered his position by setting up a semi-official paramilitary group, the Service d'Action Civique (SAC). France's new

Interior Minister, Charles Pasqua, has SAC connections.

In between times, in the early '50s, Pierre Poujade's right wing movement, heavily based on shopkeepers, had big electoral successes.

But why has le Pen been able to pull together this raw material into a mass movement now? The background is the economic difficulties of French capitalism. But why was not the CP's impressive party machine — strongly placed after 1981 — able to turn those difficulties to its own advantage and to combat the right wing?

Middle class people and workers hit by the decay of capitalism need answers. A genuine socialist government could have shown them answers. Instead the CP and the Socialist Party tinkered with capitalism. They promised to create jobs, and ended up raising the unemployment rate from 6% to 11%.

### False

Bitter and demoralised, people have turned to other, false, answers.

Fascism denounces the evils of capitalism but blames them on a scapegoat. It was the Jews in Germany; it is mostly North African immigrants in France.

The CP could not combat this demagoguery because it goes half way along the road to accepting it.

In December 1980 the CP mayor of the Paris suburb of Vitry led a gang which smashed up an immigrant workers' hostel. Their aim, they explained, was to stop more African immigrant workers being

# Putting the YS in the forefront

The Fowler attacks on benefits, increased fascist activity on the streets, Gillick's crusade against under-age sex, and, of course, the continued use of young people as cheap labour on YTS schemes, this is life for young people in Thatcher's Britain.

It's obvious we need a strong, unified fightback. The YS should be leading this fight and in the forefront of bringing young people into the labour movement.

But as it exists, the YS is an empty shell. Reports from

By Lynn Ferguson, candidate for Labour Party National Executive Committee

Regional Conferences this year show the same pattern — small, low-key affairs, literally just going through the motions.

Socialism means the common ownership of the means of production together with working class control. The present bureaucratic, secretive, privileged, hierarchical state machine must be replaced by delegate democracy, with the right of recall

over delegates, completely open government, and no privileges.

This socialism cannot just be legislated from above. It can be created only by the direct struggle of rank-and-file workers. And we have to count with the fact that the ruling class and its stage will resist violently.

Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley are preparing for a Labour government in the style of 1975-9. To win a Labour victory in the next general election is vital — but it must be coupled with preparing to fight for working class interests independently from and where necessary against Kinnock and Hattersley.

The LPYS should organise school students and trainees against conscription onto YTS. It should be in the forefront of campaigns like Anti-Fascist Action. Its meetings and its paper should be forums for lively, open discussion on the issues that concern youth.

So what's going wrong?

The answer lies in the politics of the dominant grouping in the YS, the Militant Tendency.

Militant combines propaganda for the nationalisation of the 250 monopolies through parliament with bread-and-butter immediate demands.

This approach allows no real bridge between day-to-day struggles and the socialist goal; and it misses out on many of those day-to-day struggles, the ones that are less straightforwardly bread-and-butter.

For instance, the Militant's programme for Ireland consists of calls for working class unity, to be built up from bread-and-butter trade unionism. To the acute questions of Protestant/Catholic conflict and the Border, it answers, basically: 'Think about trade unionism instead'. This approach effectively rules out any challenge to the political status quo short of socialism.

We, in Socialist Organiser, believe that this is a degenerate view of Marxism.

## Transform

The task of revolutionaries is not to stand on the sidelines, programme in hand, denouncing those who do not agree. A revolutionary programme is a tool for action which socialists need to develop struggles as well as the consciousness and organisation of the working class.

We are fighting for an LPYS which involves itself in struggles taking place in the here and now and organises youth into the labour movement in order to transform that movement.

An influx of youth educated in struggle rather than bureaucratic manoeuvring would play a central role in transforming the labour movement into a machine which fights for us, not against us.

We are standing a candidate, myself, for the LPYS place on the Labour Party National Executive Committee, to put these arguments across.



In 1984 African workers led a major strike at the Talbot Poissy car plant. Such was their bitterness about France that one demand of a section of the strikers was for more money to finance repatriation to their countries of origin.

# of patriotism

housed in their suburb; they had "too many" already and the suburbs controlled by right wing councils should take a bigger share.

The CP followed this up with a big demonstration, attended by their general secretary, Georges Marchais, demanding a halt to all immigration. After 1981 the SP-CP government did indeed close all the loopholes which previous right wing governments had left for African workers to enter France.

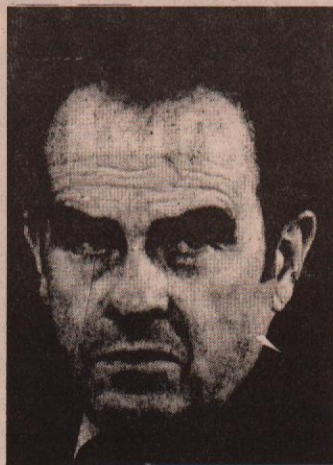
The CP explained — in terms barely different from right-wing Tories in Britain — that, of course, they supported equality for immigrants within France, but any more immigration would increase unemployment and social problems. No wonder that many French people draw the conclusion that the unemployment and social problems which exist already are due to the immigrants there already — especially when the CP's own favoured remedies for unemployment and social problems prove so ineffective.

In any case the CP was lying. It does not support equality for immigrants in France. While it was in government from 1981 to 1984, there was no move to give immigrant workers even the elementary right to vote which they possess in Tory Britain!

## Nationalism

Nationalism, shading over into chauvinism, is the curse of all labour movements. But it has been particularly bad in France.

The roots of this, paradoxically, go back to the French Revolution. In that



CP boss Marchais

era nationalism — the idea of the people of a given territory and culture deciding their own future, rather than being ruled by a dynasty of kings and queens — was a progressive and revolutionary idea; and nowhere more so than in France.

France had the world's first real socialist movement, emerging from the left wing of the French Revolution and continued by the dauntless revolutionary Auguste Blanqui. Blanqui contributed many of the ideas which later became 'Marxism', and many of his followers later found their place in the internationalist, Marxist movement. But Blanqui was a fervent nationalist. In 1871, the year of the Paris Commune, the Blanquist paper was entitled 'La Patrie en Danger'. Translate that into English, and try to imagine the revolutionary left in Britain calling its paper 'The Fatherland in Danger'.

In Britain a politician waving the Union Jack and using the National Anthem would be identified as a fascist or a

very right-wing Tory. In France the tricolour and the Marseillaise are claimed as emblems by the left.

It was, however, also France that gave the world workers' movement its anthem, the Internationale. And the French Communist Party was founded in 1920 to organise that tradition in combat against all shades of nationalism.

Then came Stalinism. And the CP sank. It pandered to nationalism and used it cynically. In World War 2 the CP called for a united front with 'patriotic French fascists' against the German army. In recent years the CP has had posters saying 'I love my country, therefore I'm joining the French CP' (illustration: a map of France); 'No other text or slogan'; 'No to a German Europe'. CP trade unionists fighting cutbacks in the steel industry have been encouraged by their party to empty trainloads of German steel over the railway tracks, instead of making common cause with the equally threatened German steelworkers.

## Chaos

Now, with capitalism in chaos and the Stalinist model of socialism increasingly discredited, the poisoned fruits of this policy are ripening. North African workers in France are already paying the price, and the rest of the French working class could do so soon.

It's a terrible warning for us in Britain. Catch-penny flag-waving about Westland or Land Rover may seem like a cheap and easy way for Neil Kinnock to win votes. But the patriotic card is a tainted card.



# Keeping black sections united

Political purges are not the way, argues Keyvan Lajavardi-Khosh

I have been suspended from the youth committee of National Black Sections for a month. The reason: arguing that the Youth Fightback editorial board should allow its supporters a free choice in the LPYS election of the NEC rep, that is, allowing comrades from 'International' to vote for Kingsley Abrams, (the Black Sections candidate), whilst allowing Socialist Organiser the right to stand its own candidate.

However the story goes further back. At an earlier meeting of Black Sections youth, I had given my reserved backing for Kingsley's candidature. I had demanded that the campaign should have nothing to do with 'witch-hunting' groups on the left within the YS, such as the LCC or the NOLS leadership. These groups have a record of being very 'soft' on issues such as women's and blacks' self-organisation but, on the whole, are hostile to working class politics.

A decision was made to put out a programme jointly written by Kingsley and myself. However, Kingsley had begun to circulate his own platform, now officially sanctioned by the Black Sections leadership; and continued to

seek 'broadest' support from Clause IV, etc.

Kingsley Abrams is a member of Wimbledon YS, which is controlled by supporters of the LCC. The Branch has passed witch-hunting resolutions. Kingsley Abrams is the chair of the branch.

My decision to vote at the Youth Fightback EB was consistent. After all I had been directly elected to the Editorial Board at the Youth Fightback conference on a Socialist Organiser platform. I argued that supporting Kingsley would be a step back from fighting Militant programmatically.

Subsequently I was called to 'account' for myself at the Black Sections executive. (Kingsley was already on the executive as appointed youth organiser).

By itself, 'self-organisation' is insufficient. All organisational questions in our movement are in the end subordinate to political necessities.

Surely a united basis of action is the willingness to build Black Sections on the ground and argue for greater black representation within the labour movement on that basis. However, black representation, like the representation of other oppressed groups, is part and parcel of the need to build a united working class movement.

# BLACK WORKER

## FIGHTING UNEMPLOYMENT

The founding conference of COSATU adopted resolutions on a number of important issues. Here we reprint some of the main ones from 'Congress News'.

Believing:  
That all able bodied men and women have a right to work.  
Noting:

1. That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing every worker at all times.

3. That these unemployed workers are used as a reserve pool of labour by the bosses to keep wages low and to provide a source of scab labour in the event of strikes.

3. That the interests of all workers, whether employed or unemployed, are the same - the right to a job at a decent living wage.

4. That the unity of employed and unemployed workers is essential in the struggle against scabbing and to advance the struggle for the right to work at a living wage.

5. That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing workers at all times and is a waste of the human resources of this country.

And further noting:  
1. That in South Africa there are millions of unemployed - a number that is increasing daily through retrenchments.

2. That the introduction of new technology for profiteering purposes is making the whole unemployment situation even worse. This is further aggravated by pressure from employers for higher productivity.

3. That many are abandoning all hope of finding suit-

able employment in the immediate future.

4. That for thousands of school leavers there is virtually no prospect of getting employment and therefore no possibility of drawing UIF benefits.

5. That unemployed workers are not organised in South Africa.

Congress therefore resolves to:

1. Fight as one united force to defend all jobs threatened by retrenchments; fight the closing of the factories; and fight for participation in and control over - right from the planning stage - the implementation of any new technology. And fight all attempts by employers to make workers work harder and attempts to rationalise production, because in the present system this always leads to unemployment.

2. Campaign for a 40 hour week at full pay and a ban on overtime.

3. Fight for free and increased unemployment benefits and that these benefits be paid in South Africa.

4. Fight for a subsistence fund, in addition to unemployed benefits, supplemented by rent, transport and medical concessions for all unemployed workers.

5. Demand that the state initiate a national programme of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed and to improve services and facilities in working class communities.

6. Fight for work-sharing on full pay whenever workers face retrenchments.

7. Establish a national unemployed workers' union as a full affiliate of the new federation to struggle for the realisation of the right of all to work and security.

8. Struggle for a fair, democratic and rational political and economic system which can guarantee full employment for all people in Southern Africa at a living wage.

9. To give full support to efforts by retrenched and dismissed workers to establish co-operatives based on the principles of COSATU.

Composite resolution.



## COOPERATION

This federation noting:

1. That foreign and South African multinational corporations (MNCs) have for years exploited workers in Southern Africa by reaping huge profits and exporting them to Europe and America.

2. That workers in Southern Africa are employed by the same MNCs and subjected to similar conditions of control, exploitation and oppression.

3. That many of them are union bashers and have undermined the legitimate right of workers to organise trade unions.

4. That these MNCs, as the major agencies of imperialism, have cooperated with reactionary regimes in pursuit of super-profits.

5. That MNCs can only be

resisted in there is unity and worker to worker contact in various countries of Southern Africa.

6. That the problems faced by the workers of Southern Africa are integrally linked and that their futures are tied together.

Therefore resolves:

1. That unions affiliated to COSATU should actively pursue links with progressive unions in Southern Africa so as to strengthen worker unity.

2. That COSATU should form constructive relationships with fraternal federations in Southern Africa.

3. That every effort be made to unite workers of Southern Africa and improve solidarity work.

Proposed by NUM.

## THE BANTUSTANS

The Congress noting:

1. That the bantustan system was imposed on the African people, against their will, with a view to thwarting the just struggle for One Person One Vote in a unitary South Africa.

2. That various bantustan administrations have practised extreme forms of oppression against the oppressed people - including trade unions.

Noting in particular:

The banning of SAAWU in the Ciskei, the banning of all unions in the Boputhatswana bantustan and the killing of trade unionists and other democrats by tribally based organisations.

Hereby resolves that:

1. The bantustan system be totally rejected and that the federation struggle together with other democratic forces - for the creation of a democratic and unitary South Africa.

2. We shall not hesitate to exercise our right to organise in plants based within the bantustans and that we are fully prepared to defend ourselves against repression by whatever effective means at our disposal.

3. That we are completely and absolutely opposed to



This is the emblem of COSATU. After the intervention of women delegates congress voted to have it redrawn to include the figure of a woman.

the super-exploitation occurring in these areas and declare our commitment to reject the idea and practice of workers receiving less wages and worse conditions of work.

4. That we express our sol-

idarity with those communities around Durban and elsewhere who are struggling against being incorporated into the bantustans.

Composite resolution.

## MIGRANT LABOUR

This federation noting:

1. That pass laws were legislated by the apartheid regime to control and dehumanise the lives of the working class in South Africa.

2. That pass laws and influx control served to strengthen the hand of capital to exploit and oppress the working class in its endeavour to generate super profits.

3. That the economic and social hardships of the migrant labour system includes the break-up of family life and relationships.

4. That the migrant labour system seems to further divide the oppressed and exploited workers into permanent residents and migrants.

5. That if the apartheid

regime persists threatening to repatriate migrant workers to the homelands and neighbouring countries.

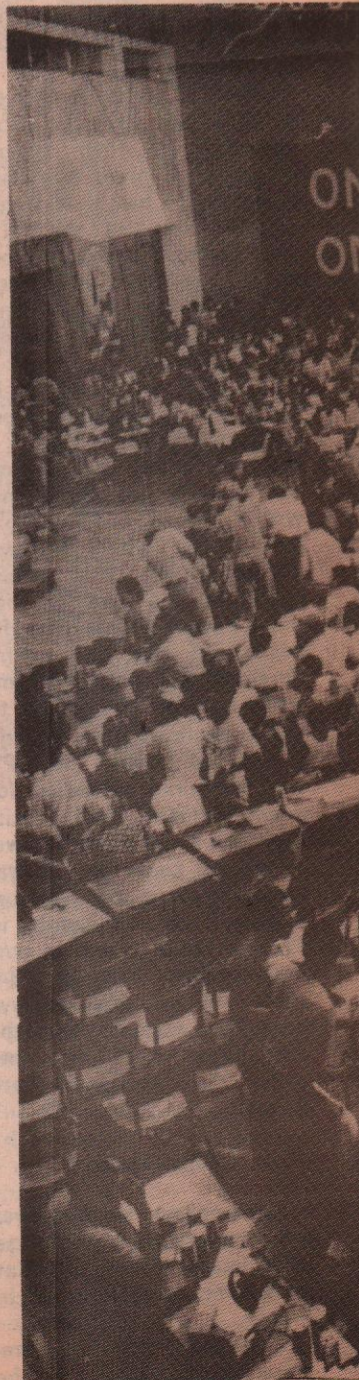
Resolves to:

1. Fight for the scrapping of the migrant labour system including pass laws and influx control.

2. Fight for the rights of workers to seek work wherever they wish and to reside with their families wherever they wish and that proper housing will be provided for them.

3. Call for a national strike should the apartheid regime carry out its threat to repatriate any migrant workers.

Proposed by the National Union of Mineworkers.



Above and top: scenes from CO

# WORKERS' NEW POWER



## MINIMUM WAGE

Seeing that:

1. The majority of workers in South Africa are earning starvation wages because of the present economic system, constantly rising prices (inflation) is making what little money workers have worth less and less every day.

2. Employers in South Africa continue to make massive and completely unrealistic profits when compared with employers in other capitalist countries.

3. Many millions of workers do not have any minimum wage protection whatsoever.

4. The issue of a living wage is one of the strongest points for organising the unorganised.

We hereby resolve:

1. That the Central Executive Committee establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage.

2. To initiate and conduct - in alliance with other progressive organisations and trade unions in the country - an ongoing campaign for a legally enforced national minimum living wage for all workers in South Africa, by

amongst other things fighting in every industry through worker action and negotiation for that minimum living wage to be paid by all employers.

3. To fight for this minimum living wage to be automatically linked to the rate of inflation.

4. To struggle for the abolition of GST on all essential items and worker control over all deductions like pensions and UIF, which are being financed by workers but used against workers by the racist and anti-worker government.

5. To fight to open all the books of every organised company so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system, and on that basis can demand their full share of the wealth they have produced. Should the wealth not be there, then it will only prove the inefficiency of employer management and strengthen the case for worker control and management of production.

Proposed by CCAWUSA.



COSATU's first president, Elijah Barayi

## RIGHT TO STRIKE

This federation noting:

1. That the strike is a legitimate right and necessary weapon of the working class in their struggle against bad working conditions and low wages.

2. That the strike is internationally accepted as an essential element of collective bargaining.

3. That freedom of association, assembly and picketing for strike action are also fun-

damental rights, internationally in industrial struggle.

4. That the infringement or curbing of these rights is detrimental to the social and economic interests of the workers.

5. That the right to strike is severely curtailed in South Africa.

6. That a strike involves a democratic form of struggle.

7. That picketing is an integral part of a strike and of

morally persuading fellow workers not to break a strike.

8. That essential service workers are not allowed to take industrial action in pursuing their demands.

Therefore resolves:

1. To continue a relentless campaign which will allow workers full freedom of association, assembly and picketing for strike action. This requires that all forms of security legislation that denies these rights be removed.

2. To ensure that where workers have followed mutually agreed dispute procedures with employers, there will be full job security during such strikes. This requires that eviction from accommodation and other such measures be outlawed.

3. To campaign and respond vigorously against police and state intervention in strikes or industrial disputes.

4. To fight for the right of trade unions to establish strike funds.

5. To ensure that strikers are free to establish and control strike committees.

6. To fight for the removal of the designation of essential services and that all workers be allowed to share equal rights.

Composite resolution



## FEDERALISM

This Congress noting that:

1. South Africa's bitter history of industrialisation and exploitation has forged one nation.

2. The attempts by the apartheid regime to create and reconstruct separate states and nations which will be combined into some federal system are fraudulent and undemocratic.

3. That the intention of the proposed federal system is to maintain power and control in the hands of the present minority and perpetuate an oppressive and exploitative system.

4. That the demand of all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa is for a unitary state based on One Person One Vote.

Resolves to:

1. Reject as a total fraud the new proposed federal solution.

2. Re-affirm our belief in a unitary state based on One Person One Vote.

3. Work towards the destruction of all barriers and divisions so that we are united irrespective of language, race or creed.

And further believes that:

Only with the total unification of all people into South Africa will we be able to rebuild our rich land and make a real contribution to breaking the chains of poverty and economic exploitation that bind Africa.

Proposed by the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union.

## WOMEN

This Federation noting:

1. That women workers experience both exploitation as workers and oppression as women and that black women are further discriminated against on the basis of race;

2. That women are employed in a limited range of occupations, doing boring and repetitive work with low and often unequal pay;

3. That due to overtime and night work women workers are subjected to many dangers while commuting;

4. That women workers often suffer sexual harassment in recruitment and employment;

5. That most women workers in South Africa lose their jobs when they become pregnant;

6. That pregnant women often have to work under conditions harmful to themselves and their unborn child.

Resolves to fight:

1. Against all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the federation;

2. For the equal right of women and men to paid work as an important part of the broader aim to achieve full and freely chosen employment;

3. For equal pay for all work of equal value - the value of work must be determined by organised women and men workers themselves;

4. For the restructuring of employment so as to allow women and men the opportunity of qualifying for jobs of equal value;

5. For childcare and family facilities to meet

workers' needs and make it easier for workers to combine work and family responsibilities;

6. For full maternity rights including paid maternity and paternity leave and job security;

7. For the protection of women and men from all types of work proved to be harmful to them, including work which interferes with their ability to have children;

8. Against sexual harassment in whatever form it occurs;

9. For adequate and safe transport for workers doing overtime and night work.

Now commits itself:

1. To actively campaign in support of these resolutions;

2. To negotiate agreements with companies wherever possible as part of this campaign;

3. To actively promote within its education programme, a greater understanding of the specific discriminations suffered by women workers and ways in which these can be overcome;

4. To establish a worker-controlled sub-committee within its education programme to monitor progress made in implementing this resolution and to make representations to the education committee.

5. To budget for the workings of such a sub-committee.

6. To actively promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the federation.

Proposed by CCAWUSA.

# The politics of COSATU

By Clive Bradley

The formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) at the beginning of December 1985 was the single most important event in the history of the liberation movement in South Africa. The existence of a democratic workers' movement makes possible a revolution that destroys not only apartheid, but capitalism as well. And the resolutions we reprint in this week's Socialist Organiser (see centre pages) indicate the developing socialist ideas of this workers' movement.

COSATU has stressed that it is a political force, a part of the liberation movement. For many years, many of the non-racial unions have kept their distance from overtly political campaigning. They argued that it was necessary to strengthen shop-floor union organisation first.

That view, often criticised from different standpoints as 'economistic', is no longer tenable. The intensification of the struggle against apartheid, the revolt in the townships, the State of Emergency (recently officially ended), have all forced the unions to take on a political role.

## Workers' control

Unions from different traditions came together to form COSATU. The largest non-racial federation since 1979, the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) was central to the union-unity talks that led up to the foundation of Congress.

FOSATU had developed some distinctive positions, in trade union matters, and (if only embryonically) on political questions. FOSATU stressed working class democracy and workers' control both within the unions themselves and, as an objective, in the workplaces; it was FOSATU that most thoroughly rationalised the 'economistic' perspective of building up union organisation as a priority above political campaigning.

But FOSATU developed a perspective of creating an independent working class movement which necessarily would participate in the political struggle. It stressed the importance of maintaining the organisational and political independence of the workers from political movements that may not represent workers' interests.

From within FOSATU, profound and vital debates have emerged on the nature of the future South Africa, on workers' control, on the character of the Freedom Charter, and so on. FOSATU members have been associated with the idea of a 'Workers' Charter' to express working class demands.

In sharp counterposition to the South African Communist Party, which dominates the ANC, FOSATU stressed its support for workers' movements in Eastern Europe.

FOSATU's positions were by no means developed Marxist ones, and there was a strong syndicalist bias

to them; but they did, and do, represent nascent working class politics.

A second current involved in COSATU is that associated with the United Democratic Front (UDF) — the broad anti-apartheid coalition that more or less identifies with the exiled ANC tradition.

These unions, principally the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), have tended to organise on a broad, community-wide level, distinct from FOSATU's (and now COSATU's) concentration on industrial unions. Part of the agreement that created COSATU entailed the reorganisation of general unions into industrial unions.

The third, and more diffuse strand in COSATU, is unions that were affiliated neither to the UDF or to FOSATU. These include the huge National Union of Mine-workers (NUM), which split from the moderate Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) because (the NUM said) the federation was dragging its heels over trade union unity. Other 'independents' are the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA), and the General Workers' Union (GWU).

These 'independents' do not form a single bloc politically. Some are syndicalist-inclined; others are closer to the UDF.

So within COSATU there are different strands. Of course the formation of COSATU was made possible by a relative coming-together of these strands; and it would be false to suppose that there are, at the moment, explosive tensions within the new federation. But it would be equally false to suppose that all debate has come to an abrupt end, and that COSATU is politically all of one piece.

Many of the central concerns of the old FOSATU current are dominant within COSATU. Industrial unionism, a focus on the development of strong, industry-wide, democratic unions, is COSATU's chosen form of organisation: one of its chief slogans is 'one industry, one union'. The emphasis on the distinct organisation of the workers is equally prominent. Barayi, who is from an ANC background, responded to the claim that COSATU is a front for the ANC quite clearly:

"We have no links with any organisation... It must be clearly stated that COSATU, as a workers' organisation, will put the interests of workers first." (Congress News, page 9).

Nevertheless, the pro-UDF forces within COSATU seem to be politically in the ascendant.

COSATU has met with SACTU and the ANC in exile and issued a joint statement. Each organisation stated its own role in the struggle separately. But a key passage states: "... the fundamental problem facing our country, the question of political power, cannot be resolved



Uprising in Alexandra township, near Johannesburg

without the full participation of the ANC, which is regarded by the majority of the people of South Africa as the overall leader and genuine representative."

When the newspaper, the 'Sowetan' said there were conflicts within COSATU over the joint meeting, COSATU, alleging bias, organised a boycott of the paper.

A further indication of pro-UDF positions can be taken from decisions of the NUM conference earlier this year. The election of Nelson Mandela as honorary president was widely reported. Equally significant was NUM's decision to forge links with Arthur Scargill's Stalinist International Miners' Organisation.

NUM, like COSATU as a whole, has voiced the determination to 'link up with community organisations' and the political struggle. But if they do so on the political programme of the UDF — which is what it is likely to mean in practice — there is a big danger of the independent workers' voice being submerged.

The formation of COSATU has also, of course, forced a more positive attitude towards the working class on the ANC. Not so long ago, the unions were condemned by the ANC and SACTU as 'economistic' and worse; now the ANC and SACTU are anxious to prove that they are the driving force in COSATU — and have been the driving force in the unions all along...

There are still some sizeable black workers' unions outside COSATU. The two federations which lean towards Black Consciousness — the moderate CUSA

and the more militant AZACTU have remained outside. AZACTU fears that 'non-racialism' can be an ideological cover for 'white liberalism'. In its place they propose 'anti-racism'.

This is a semantic and sectarian argument; and unity between COSATU and other federations will probably depend upon a big shift in the hard-line Black Consciousness position. For the present the fact that CUSA and AZACTU are out means that a number of political militants who are often to the left of the ANC are outside the main union organisation, and the UDF/ANC influence is that much less challenged.

All of this takes place against a backdrop of growing workers' struggles.

South Africa is in the middle of a deep recession. Since 1982 over 100,000 jobs have been lost in the metal industry alone. The mining industries are the only ones to have escaped the effects of this recession and that is one factor behind the growth of the NUM.

## Longer strikes

Yet despite the recession, unemployment and defeats for localised workers' struggles, the combativity of the working class is increasing. In 1985, 239,816 workers were involved in strike action, as against 182,000 in 1984. In January 1986 alone, 385,000 working days were lost.

Strikes are getting longer and more bitter. Experts expect 'protracted trials of strength' to be the

norm of the future. And increasingly, new tactics are being adopted: factory occupations are spreading.

There is a growing politicisation of industrial relations. Economic demands are featuring less centrally, and wildcat strikes against 'racial incidents' are more common.

Strikes have had to take on a more political character: both the major disputes of 1985, the miners' strike in September and the Sarmcol BTR strike that still goes on, were supplemented with consumer boycotts taking on broader political issues — opposition to the State of Emergency.

This will be the pattern of the future. The workers' struggle and the general struggle for freedom are, and will increasingly be in practice, inseparable.

Collaboration between the unions and community-based groups is vital in this. Both the building up of democratic, community-based organisation, and the unionisation of the vast reserve army of unemployed, will be crucial.

But big political questions remain to be answered. FOSATU's syndicalist bias has resulted in a political vacuum that can only be filled, at the moment, by the UDF. If the workers' movement is left to the control and unchallenged influence of the UDF, the result, for certain, will be that the workers do not see the fruits of the revolution that will depend for its victory upon their power.

The creation of a new, independent working class political party must be discussed urgently.



# IRELAND: A NEW WAVE OF BIGOT MURDERS?

ON THE afternoon of Friday 14 March John O'Neill, a Belfast Catholic, was kidnapped from the centre of Belfast, probably by the outlawed Protestant paramilitary organisation the Ulster Volunteer Force.

The following morning his body was found near a stream bordering the Orange Tynedale housing estate. He had been tortured and beaten to death.

Belfast runs fleets of cheap bus-like communal 'people's taxis' which follow regular routes into the Catholic or Protestant working-class areas. O'Neill, it seems, was tricked by his murderers into getting into a taxi marked as one serving the Catholic areas. He found that he had put himself in the hands of the murder gang.

O'Neill had no political or paramilitary affiliations or connections. He was picked at random and killed because he was a Catholic, with the object of terrorising other Catholics and exacting vengeance for the Anglo-Irish agreement.

The falsely-labelled taxi trick to net victims was much used by sectarian murder gangs in the terrible days of the '70s when a vast orgy of such killings occurred.

Last November, in the run-up to the signing of the Anglo Irish agreement, Kim McPolin, a Catholic, was gunned down in Lisburn, victim of random sectarian assassination. In January there were two random killings of Catholics, Leo Scullion and Martin Quinn.

From 1972 to about 1976 many hundreds of sectarian killings occurred in Northern Ireland. For example, of the 322 civilians killed in 1972, 122 were classed by the RUC as sectarian assassinations.

The bulk of the victims

By John O'Mahony

were Catholics, but many Protestants picked at random were also killed. In 1972 82 of the victims were Catholic and 40 Protestant. The single most terrible incident of sectarian slaughter was the killing of ten Protestants travelling to work on a minibus at Bessbrook in South Armagh in January 1976. Five Catholics had been killed in the area the previous day.

It will be a true miracle if the Protestant backlash against the Anglo-Irish agreement does not include a big new wave of random sectarian killings.

The Orange demonstration at Portadown on 31 March still looks like it may be the occasion for major clashes between Orange demonstrators and the police and army.

More than that, it will be a major new political test of the loyalty of the RUC to the British government and to the Northern Ireland Office.

## RUC

At least 90% Protestant, the RUC is at the front line of the conflict between government policy and mass Orange opposition to it. Their problem is that while the RUC men's jobs, their bought-and-paid-for loyalty in a society where jobs are very scarce, tie and commit them to serve the government, their Orange hearts and souls are on the other side in this conflict.

Now members of the RUC are coming under immense pressure from their own immediate friends, relatives and neighbours. Only a handful of RUC families have so far been driven out of their

Protestant neighbourhoods, but the pressure on them is said to be very great. And they are subject to open appeals — in newspaper ads and speeches — by Ian Paisley and James Molyneux (a member of the British Privy Council!) 'not to be used' by the British and Irish governments against their own people.

## Mutiny

In other words they are being asked to mutiny.

During the strike of 3 March many scenes were recorded of policemen standing idle or laughing and joking with those manning illegal roadblocks, but it is not clear how much of this was the result of a central police decision to take it 'softly' and how much a matter of unwilling policemen.

The Northern Ireland Office is now reduced to taking out its own newspaper ads to reply to Paisley and Molyneux.

The Chief Constable, Sir John Hermon, has suggested that the RUC should be taken out of the political firing line in the run-up to the Orange marching season of July and August, when big clashes are expected. He says decisions to ban or re-route marches should be taken out of the hands of the RUC and put into the jurisdiction of a specially created police commission.

## Kite

Hermon may be flying a kite for the NIO. But that would not do very much good if the RUC is still left to impose any decision to re-route an Orange march away from its traditional triumphalist progress through a Catholic area.

How little the RUC is protected by being considered 'our own' by the Orange militants was shown at Portadown last year, when many RUC were injured backing up a decision to re-route the Orange march. The feeling 'they're our own' easily turns into hate-filled indignation at the 'treachery of these, our own'. Resignation of a sizeable number of RUC must surely be likely in the months ahead, as well as passive or active mutiny.

If the RUC proves an unusable tool, then what? The deployment of British police? A substantial intake of Catholics into the RUC? Increased reliance on British soldiers to police the Protestant areas?

The experience after 1969 of soldiers as policemen in the Catholic areas where the RUC were no longer acceptable suggests that a significant number of soldier-policemen would almost certainly deepen and poison the already dangerous gulf between Britain and the Orange community.

While the Ulster Defence Association continues to recruit rapidly and the largely rural Ulster Clubs mount a campaign for a 'boycott of Eire goods' ("if you buy Eire goods you assist Dublin take-



Orangeists' stop and search, 1974

over", as one placard puts it), the decision has been taken to stand Orange candidates in Tory marginals in Britain.

But Northern Ireland is now in political stalemate. Both the British government and the Orange politicians want to resume talks. But the Unionists say they will only talk if the Anglo-Irish deal is scrapped or suspended. The government is not placing any preconditions on talks, but it is not accepting any either.

A similar unbridgeability exists between the positions of the Unionists and of the constitutional nationalist SDLP on talks about devolved government in the Six Counties. The SDLP say they are willing for talks without any preconditions — talks that will take place within the framework of the Anglo-Irish agreement. The Unionists want the SDLP to agree to talks about devolution outside the framework of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

## Framework

Devolution within the Anglo-Irish agreement would be a bulwark and a justification of the agreement, they say; devolution outside it would be an alternative to the London-Dublin framework.

If Gerry Adams and Charles J Haughey have insisted that the Anglo-Irish agreement 'copper-fastens' partition, for Official Unionist MP John Taylor devolution and some sort of sharing of power within the Anglo-Irish agreement would 'copper-fasten the Anglo-Irish agreement'.

"There can be no advance within the context of the Anglo-Irish agreement. To accept it would be to guarantee the future of a Dublin role in Northern Ireland, to give Dublin a say in Ulster

policies from which Unionism's own elected representatives at either Stormont or Westminster would be excluded".

The politicians are caught in stalemate, and meanwhile the Orange paramilitaries prepare and the sectarian assassins sharpen their knives and clubs.

The partners in the agreement, Dublin and London, are now disagreeing publicly. Dublin wants to end the supergrass trials, but London, which holds the executive power in Northern Ireland, says they will continue.

But despite the Inspector Clouseau level fiasco for Britain of the attempt to extradite Evelyn Glenholmes to face trial in England, collaboration goes on apace: Northern and Southern police are now having joint training sessions on how to fight the IRA.

One new political initiative has come from discussions between former Official Unionist leader Harry West and a few SDLP mavericks like Paddy O'Hanlon (who face party censure and discipline). They have produced a 'Charter' proposing:

\* A written constitution guaranteeing both traditions in Northern Ireland, and Northern Ireland in the UK.

\* The 'best possible' guarantees of the majority Irish tradition, including some structured and regular three-way liaison between London, Dublin and Belfast.

\* An immediate Belfast assembly with fully devolved powers to run the Six Counties. It would be elected by Single Transferable Vote and its executive or cabinet would reflect the electoral strength of the parties. That is, there would be institutionalised power-sharing, as in 1974.

\* Legislative scrutiny and administrative monitoring by a system of committees formed to reflect the overall party composition of the legislature.

As with many of the other ideas being tossed about in the political ferment created in Northern Ireland by the Anglo-Irish agreement, these are remarkable ideas to come from their author. Harry West helped to defeat power-sharing in the mid-'70s.

But there is no reason why the SDLP should abandon the high ground of the London-Dublin framework for ideas like this which are very unlikely to command a majority.

## Vanguard

When the popular hero and martyr of hard-line Unionism, William Craig, came out in 1975 for temporary 'war-time' power-sharing with the SDLP, he was quickly repudiated and cut down by his own 'Vanguard' organisation. Harry West is in semi-retirement.

The Department of the Environment has still not put the 18 rebel Unionist councils under commissioners, though the Department has itself made a rate for all 18 areas whose councils refused in protest at the Anglo-Irish agreement.

Next weekend's demonstration at Portadown will show whether there has been any sobering up since the 3 March strike. It is most likely to show once again — and probably violently — the depth of hostility that exists in the Unionist population against this inadequate agreement produced by the two Tory governments in Dublin and London.

Socialist Forum No. 2.



# IRELAND '69-85

contains articles on: 16 years of conflict; why Militant and the IRSP are twins; James Connolly; For a Federal United Ireland. PRICE 50p & p&p AVAILABLE FROM: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# Call 'Nuclear Jack' to order

Neil Kinnock is outdoing that other great left talker, Harold Wilson. Wilson at least waited until he was in power before abandoning Labour policy. Kinnock, apart from his other activities is now lining up with right wing unions and PLP figures to reject Labour policy on phasing out nuclear power.

For nuclear power are the AUEW and EETPU, who represent many nuclear industry workers.

Against are such unions as the TGWU and NUM, part of a 62% majority at the last Labour Party conference. In the case of the NUM, it is not just self-interest, since it voted support for an energy policy based on coal, energy conservation and alternative non-nuclear sources.

The TGWU represents many nuclear industry workers and will come under increasing pressure to change its stance. This pressure will arise over fears of job losses and can only be resisted if these fears are tackled positively.

In Parliament, Labour Environment Spokesperson John (Nuclear Jack) Cunningham continues to defend nuclear power. This scandal has led Peter Hain of the Labour Coordinating Committee to write in Tribune accusing Cunningham of repudiating party policy.

The LCC have called for Cunningham to be switched to another post. This has been bluntly rejected by Kinnock, supported by the entire Shadow Cabinet.

## Nuclear job fears

Obviously the fears of workers for their jobs in areas with few alternatives is a major obstacle for anti-nuclear campaigns. One group, CORE (Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment), has addressed this problem, pointing out that reprocessing at Sellafield employs far less than the 11,000 total workforce.

Closing the reprocessing plant would necessitate the building and running of vast alternative storage facilities while many more workers would be needed to decommission and clean up an old plant.

In a similar vein, Friends of the Earth calls for Sellafield to be made a centre of excellence for the safe disposal of nuclear wastes, instead of the centre of unsafe reprocessing it now is.

## Strategy

Three major environmental organisations have joined forces to produce a strategy for phasing out nuclear power.

SERA, FoE and Greenpeace have put it all into a punchy pamphlet called "The End of the Nuclear Era". Aimed at the labour movement, it reminds readers of the historic Labour conference votes and then tackles the problem of alternative jobs. It shows that Britain can do without the electricity produced from nuclear power and describes the many alternative sources of energy available.

It ends with an assessment of the labour movement's current position on the nuclear issue and a checklist of things to do to help the campaign.

This includes:

- \*getting motions through your union or party branch



to go to national conferences;  
 \*getting speakers from SERA, Greenpeace or FoE to your branch;  
 \*writing to John Cunningham asking for a statement on his attitude to Labour Party policy.

I would also suggest getting motions through criticising Labour's poor showing on the Sellafield issue and getting affiliations to SERA who have been largely responsible for getting the new policy adopted by the Labour Party. (See below for details).

For a copy of the leaflet, send SAE to me at Socialist Organiser.

## Model resolution

The following motion will be considered by my GC this week:

"Recognising that the latest leaks from Sellafield are part of a long history of leaks spills and contaminations which have caused stress and illness (including cancer) to workers and residents alike, this GC requests that the Environment spokesperson of the Parliamentary Labour Party begins to promote the Labour Party Conference policy, adopted by a 62% majority, of phasing out nuclear power and providing useful safe employment for its workers. If the environment spokesperson finds himself unable to do this, this GC suggests that he resigns.

We also call on the Leader to argue for the inclusion of this policy, which is not only right but popular, in the next Manifesto.

In recognition and support for its work in encouraging the Labour Party to commit itself to progressive environmental policies (including phasing out nuclear power), this GC resolves to affiliate to Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA).

## New Ground

The Spring issue of New Ground is now out (price 60p) with articles on Reds and Greens in the US and Australia; Environmental policies in China; Pesticide action in Britain; Practical wave energy in Norway.

There is a special supplement on local government environmental policies, produced for the local elections.

Subs £3 for one year. (Special offer - send 6 12p stamps for introductory copy). Membership of SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Association): £7/£3 unwaged/£12 organisations (includes New Ground subscription). Cheques to SERA at 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.



# EASING THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

## Edward Ellis reviews 'Out of Africa'.

Adventure, heart-felt Passion, and deep Tragedy.

Here is the Africa of which we all dream: awesome sun-drenched panoramic scenery; vast plains trodden by innumerable species of wildlife, surviving as God intended beneath the vast equatorial sky. Here is Africa as a life-consuming, living, breathing Entity of its own, transcending the everyday concerns of mere humanity.

And here is a marvellous story in which the elemental passions of this, God's Africa, rise to the surface of mortal existence and find expression in the lives of two, ordinary people.

It is Karen Blixen (Meryl Streep) and Denis Finch-Hatton (Robert Redford)

who express this existential continental presence. She is an ordinary Danish baroness who moves to Africa to make her fortune from the growing of coffee. Her new husband lacks personal quality; and he gives her syphilis. She narrowly avoids death.

## Doom

But she finds love with Denys, a handsome, roving adventurer, psychically and spiritually merged into the broad horizons of his chosen home: a wild thing, like the beasts he so lovingly shoots, Denys cannot be tamed, even by love, or even by Karen. And so, at once victim of Africa's impersonal powers, and personification of its natural freedom, Denys crashes to his doom in his aeroplane.

Such personal tragedy, of course, merely reflects the underlying historical reality: colonialism itself, in great spasms of syphilitic agony, is dying.

This is true Drama. It is telling it like it is. Karen, as beautiful as the white clouds that whisp across the rolling hill-tops, cares deeply for the uncivilised, somewhat darker-skinned peoples around her.

She builds them a school, tends to their needs, even prostrates herself before the colonial authorities to secure them land to live off when her company has gone bust.

And she is no snob. She even puts some elbow-grease of her own into it to bring the harvests in.

And of course she is loved dearly by the savages in her care. They will miss her when she is gone. Even though she is not British, therefore, she is the living incarnation of colonial purity: they will miss her when she is gone.

The black people, of course, play little or no part in this great, unfolding, tragic drama. They are, quite rightly, merely part of the scenery; merely symbols for the uncontrollable energies of the Dark Continent.

They are like the lions and the herds of buffalo: part of Africa. There was no reason to treat the natives, or the lions, badly, and it would have been so awfully sad if they had been left extinct.

But for sure, as Out of Africa so accurately reveals, the African people themselves had and have no history. Do the lions have history? Do the buffalo have history? Do the rolling plains have history?

No: such history as the Africans have was given to them, like everything else, by Imperial providence.

Out of Africa has already received 11 Oscar nominations. It deserves them all, and more. It has helped ease the white man's burden. Let us pray and be truly thankful.



Awesome, sundrenched, panoramic scenery . . .

# We will respond

I went down to Wapping for the first time last Saturday. It's ironic that I have to wait until I'm unemployed before I can get there.

Seeing the plant for the first time, I would have thought that it was the easiest thing in the world to picket.

I would have thought that it could be closed down just by mobilising sufficient numbers of pickets. If the print unions themselves are unable to do that, then they should be turning to other unions. If the print union leaders are reluctant to take that step then I think there has to be a direct appeal from the rank and file of the print to the rank and file of the other trade unions.

Two or three successful pickets down there would make all the difference. It is a completely different ball game to the miners. We were trying to picket workers out, whereas in the print, all you have to do is delay the papers for a few hours and they become absolutely useless.

Given that massive numbers could block the roads right off, I can't understand the reluctance of the print union leaders to call for that



Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM and has recently been sacked by the Coal Board for his union activities.

help from other trade unionists.

When the miners were picketing power stations, we had to do it round the clock, whereas this picket is on Saturday night, through to Sunday morning.

I'm sure that if the call were to come the NUM would respond.

It seems different to me from our strike. During the miners' strike we had confidence in our leadership and they had confidence in us. At Wapping I didn't hear anyone singing "Brenda Dean walks on water"!

Other things which struck

me included the degree of fraternisation between the pickets and the police. I don't know how long this will continue before the pickets catch on to what the police are about at Wapping.

We've been continuing our fund raising activities for sacked miners - the total in Nottinghamshire now stands at 29 - and have met with a good response. Recently we visited the ACTT conference and we regularly visit local labour movement bodies. The message I am putting over is that every worker has to understand that the employers will be coming for them, soon, in the same way as they tried to smash the NUM.

It is also important to try and keep the issue alive now that there is no longer the publicity about the miners' strike and people can tend to think that it is all over and done with.

This does make it difficult to raise the issue, to remind people that there are miners who remain sacked and miners who remain in prison as a result of our fight for jobs.

An important focus is the National Justice for Mine-

workers Campaign. I hope it will not just raise the issue of sacked and jailed miners but the political issues of the reasons behind the dispute. There is a basic attack on the trade union movement and that attack has got to be resisted at all costs. The Tories are pressing home the attack and the message that has got to come from the rank and file is that we have retreated so far and we will retreat no further. It is time we went onto the counter-offensive against this Tory government.

While we don't need the backing of the Tory courts to underline the justice of our case, the Coal Board, by its stand on the pensions issue and on its refusal to recognise the NUM in Notts is forcing us to go to the courts in order to challenge their illegal actions.

The NACODS on-off saga continues. During the dispute the NACODS leadership had a ballot vote of over 80% in favour of industrial action and declined to use it. Now they've taken another ballot. They didn't try and win the argument with their members and we now see the result when the vote goes against them.

avoid rate-capping, so the logic goes, the council must comply with a set formula of "grant related expenditure plus 20%".

This means a budget of £270 million - £34 million short of 'no cuts'!

The most immediate cause of the cash crisis is the rate support grant announced for Sheffield for 1986-7. This totals £48 million or a cut in cash terms of around £49 million.

But the lack of any will for a fight from the council leaders has deeper roots.

Throughout 1980-4 the council tried the "easy" option of putting the rates up, rather than a fight with the government.

In 1985 the council decided not to set a rate. But a minority of the Labour Group defied the whip and got a rate set by the May 7 deadline.

No effective action has been taken against this group of rebels, and most have had no trouble securing selection for the May elections.

After the rate was set, the council leaders avoided cuts by spending the remaining reserves of around £27 million as a once-off measure, while deferring some expenditure until 1986.

The momentum that was built up during the rate-capping campaign linking local party activists, trade unionists and service user groups like tenants associations, has been dissipated.

The campaign can still be rebuilt, but this will involve forcing a major change in direction within the DLP and its leadership.

The lessons of the climbdown last year need to be learnt, consolidated and where necessary remedied. Unless this happens Sheffield is surely on "the road to nowhere".

have not been kept on as members of the retired members' association within the TGWU.

A large majority of members have not been made aware that they can stay on as members once they retire.

The number of unemployed has grown through redundancies or companies just simply closing down.

Now a large majority of these members should not have been lost because of this. Obviously some workers may well find other work and then join unions other than the TGWU.

In our region of the TGWU we have now got education for both retired members and the unemployed. Every region throughout the UK should have the same.

We cannot be apathetic towards the unemployed and just accept their fate.

We must deplore it and remember it is the evil scourge of the decade.

We have to fight to get people back to work.

If people remain as members of their union when they become unemployed then they stay united with their workers rather than leaving them separate and isolated.

Also, if the union does not help and try to do something positive about unemployed people, then why should people want to join unions anyway?

John Matthews, TGWU branch secretary

## Sheffield's next budget

Next year's budget from the left-wing Sheffield City Council could include draconian measures such as an 18 month freeze on all vacancies and recruitment and increasing the rates by 20%.

In order to maintain spending and services at the current level, and without any expansion, the council needs to increase its annual budget from £246 million to around £304 million. The increase simply takes account of inflation and the transfer of expenditure from South Yorkshire County Council to the new joint boards run by the city.

No improvements to services in education, social services or housing would be included.

But this £304 million budget, argues council deputy leader Alan Bilings, would require a rent increase of 71%. And Sheffield would be rate-capped once more the following year. To

## Laings Lock Out

The Laings Lock-Out Committee will be reviewing their tactics this week, following the turning away of a significant number of TGWU lorries by the Monday pickets at the London Bridge site.

The Lock-Out Committee, six building workers sacked by Laings during a fight against the 'lump', will be looking to mount daily pickets at the London Bridge site.

Laings have used the anti-union Tory laws to gain an injunction against each individual striker, leaving them vulnerable to immediate arrest and imprisonment. They are calling on all trade unionists to join their picket line.

The Laings Lock-Out Committee can be contacted at PO Box 551, London SE5 8JJ. Send donations and invitations for speakers.

## Organise the unemployed

Over the last six years of this present government, the TGWU has lost three-quarters of a million members.

Some have retired and



Socialist Students in NOLS

# POLICE HARASSMENT

Two students at Manchester University who have suffered intensive police harassment for the past year were recently beaten up again, one of them very seriously.

Steve Shaw, a politics graduate, had his nose broken, his eyes blacked and had cigarettes stubbed out on his face. Last year he suffered rupture as a result of an internal 'examination'.

Sarah Hollis was also beaten up at the end of January.

The background to these attacks goes back to the so-called 'Battle of Brittan' at Manchester University on March 1 last year. Manchester police responded to a student protest demonstration against a visit by Leon Brittan, then Home Secretary, with violent force.

Steve Shaw has suffered the worst harassment since. At one point his flat was burgled, and the only thing stolen was his research for a thesis on police technology.

Sarah Hollis has also had her flat burgled. The burglars claim that the police put them up to it.

It is absolutely clear that these two people have been singled out for harassment

by the police. There has already been an inquiry into the events last March and into subsequent incidents.

But the police continue to ignore such inquiries.

There is a clear lesson in this for the labour movement, and for students. The Tories' stress on 'law and order' is not merely a right-wing ideological campaign; it goes hand in hand with greatly increased arbitrary powers for the police.

New 'public order' proposals will strengthen the power of the police still further.

The government and the state are more than ever determined to harass and intimidate its critics and opponents.

We need a serious campaign against state repression - which is what it is. In the immediate term its focus must be to oppose the Police Act and the Public Order White Paper.

In the long term we need to look towards a different system altogether, in which working-class communities police themselves, without an undemocratic 'police force' separated off from society at large.

## WHOSE PROGRAMME?

The Militant tendency are usually thought of as rather stick-in-the-muddish about politics. One of their essential characteristics is that they say the same thing, year-in, year-out, no matter what the circumstances or what the subject.

So it is with some surprise that we note a rather dramatic change in Militant in the student field. No more are they given to repetitious lectures on the need for 'a Marxist programme' (or what they understand to be such a programme).

In fact, Militant seem to be doing their utmost to beg, borrow or steal the political positions of Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN). At National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) conference they managed to

hijack SSiN's position on South Africa - killing it, in transit, of course.

They studiously avoided talking about women's autonomy, as is generally their wont.

And they have some model motions into NUS conference on Ireland that concentrate very uncharacteristically on 'troops out'.

Of course, if Militant is genuinely shedding their sectarian/opportunist positions on South Africa; changing their attitude on women's autonomy; and adopting a principled position on Ireland - SSiN can only welcome it.

But are we just cynics to think maybe Militant is prepared to drop its own 'Marxist programme' in an effort to rebuild its dwindling support?

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee  
Public Meeting  
FOR FREE TRADE UNIONS EAST AND WEST

Saturday April 5  
Langside Halls, Pollokshaws Rd., Glasgow  
South Side. 10.30 am.

Speakers:  
Marek Garzdecki  
Solidarnosc  
John Cunningham  
Scottish trade unionist

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Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance - groups are established in most large towns. We ask £5 a month minimum (£1 unwaged) contribution from supporters.

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# Socialist Organiser

# Cycling for socialism

## Reagan: world's no. 1 terrorist!

By Colin Foster

"Officials have said privately that a show of US military strength in the Mediterranean could rally public support for Mr Reagan's defence budget, currently in trouble on Capitol Hill . . .

"The Reagan Administration has made it quite clear privately that it would welcome the prospect of a military clash with Colonel Gadaffi, whom it has accused of sponsoring international terrorism and subverting US interests. A Pentagon official told Time magazine, 'Of course, we're aching for a go at Gadaffi'."

Thus the Financial Times. The US's attack on a Libyan patrol boat and missile base on 24 March was designed as a gesture to boost Reagan's policies. It was, or so Reagan hopes, a sort of mini-Falklands for him.

As well as pushing his defence budget, Reagan is trying to undo his defeat in the House of Representatives on 20 March over maintaining Nicaragua's 'contras'.

### Reverse

Reagan hopes to get a modified programme of aid to the contras through the Senate this week and then try again in the House of Representatives on 15 April. He only needs to sway a few votes to reverse the 222-210 decision against his demand for \$100 million aid, of which \$70 million is military.

And experience the last time Reagan's plans were defeated in Congress suggests that what cannot be done with Congressional approval will be done covertly. The



Reagan: new hat

contra forces are directed by US advisors and propped up by US aid. Conservative Nicaraguan exiles have broken their links with the contras because of this US domination.

Reagan has tried to rally the votes in Congress with rhetoric from the cold war of the 1950s. "Will we permit the Soviet Union to put a second Cuba, a second Libya, right on the doorstep of the United States?", he asked on TV.

Not to help the contras to victory was "to allow the Soviet Union a beachhead in North America, just two days' drive from Harlingen, Texas".

Reagan is also a long way

off convincing the majority of the American people. Journalists heading down to Harlingen, the southernmost town in the US, found the citizens sceptical about any threat to them from the Sandinistas. One of Reagan's leading Congress supporters says "People just don't get cranked up about this. In my district they're worried about jobs and losing their farms. That's the problem out there."

### Tirades

The Libyan incident shows all the signs of being contrived. US aircraft and ships were deliberately sent into territorial waters claimed by Libya, for no reason other than to try it on with Gadaffi. The aircraft were fired at, but apparently their high-tech defence systems make them pretty secure against the sort of missiles the Libyans have.

The US government would quite like a small war with Libya. The US would certainly win. Given the unpopularity which the Gadaffi regime has brought upon itself by its maverick nationalist policies and its aggression in countries

like Chad, the kick-back would be small. And the war

his military drive against the much more popular Nicaraguan government.

Opinion polls show a majority in the US against aiding the contras. Reagan's claim that the contras represent the true values of Nicaragua's 1979 revolution has little grip when people know that the National Guard of the former dictator Somoza is their hard core.

In Nicaragua itself, whatever criticisms people have of the Sandinistas, they certainly prefer them to the contras.

The chief immediate threat to Nicaragua is the economic effect of the US trade boycott, the war, and the contras' economic sabotage. Inflation and unemployment are high; many goods are only available on the black market; prices of basic foodstuffs were increased 100 or 200% earlier this month.

The US government's hope must be that the economic pressure will eventually wear down the will of the Nicaraguan people, erode support for the revolution, force the Sandinistas into harsher and more unpopular measures, and thus open the way for the right wing.

Defend Nicaragua!

US hands off Central America and the Middle East!

Next Tuesday, 1 April, two SO supporters will be cycling round the boundary of the Greater Manchester Council to mark the abolition by the Tories of the metropolitan authorities and to raise money through sponsorships for our premises fund.

If you can sponsor them - anything from 1p to £1 a mile - write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

### Installed

We are now installed in our new offices, but a lot of the renovation work is still to be done. In the next couple of weeks we will be moving in our new printing press on

which we will be able to print more pamphlets, magazines and leaflets.

### Thanks

Thanks this week to: Martin Snowdon £5, Gary Scott £10, Glasgow readers £1, Andy Chapman £2, Shepton Mallet reader £6, Melanie Gingell £30, Bruce Robinson sponsored slim £19.94 (making £117.19 so far, with more to come), Mike Grayson £4, Pete Gilman £10, North London readers £0.95, jumble sale stall £10, from sale of books £6.

Send donations to Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## Nearly two-thirds

Local Group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	1291.68	81%
Nottingham	1000	955.01	96%
South London	800	896.26	109%
Manchester	1000	778.95	78%
East London	760	648.12	85%
Merseyside	500	487.50	98%
Cardiff	600	462.50	77%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	363.00	65%
Durham/North East	200	291.80	146%
Sheffield	400	251.91	63%
York/Harrogate	300	213.10	71%
West London	500	200.00	40%
Coventry	350	200.00	57%
Stoke South	200	198.00	99%
Stoke North	200	172.75	86%
Basingstoke	560	127.47	22%
Birmingham	100	65.00	65%
Colchester	100	47.80	48%
Aberdeen	20	46.00	230%
Oxford	40	40.00	100%
Canterbury	90	43.00	48%
Southampton	60	16.00	27%
Leeds	60		
Central/general	5000	1525.30	30%
Total	15000	9293.63	62%



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