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Probe MI5!

The following resolution was passed at the North-west regional TUC meeting on Saturday 25 July. The resolution came from Greater Manchester Association of Trades Councils and reads:

'Greater Manchester County Association of Trades Councils expresses its concern at the allegations of a MI5 plot to get rid of the Wilson government and the continued penetration of the labour and trade union movement by MI5 and other secret services. The County Association of Trades Councils (CATC) agrees to campaign for a trade union and labour movement inquiry into these allegations.' (The resolution originated from Wigan Trades Council.)

TUC DRIVE OUT THE TRAITORS!

SERIOUS trade unionists can only draw one conclusion from the TUC General Council's antics last week: they could not expel the right-wing electricians' union (EETPU) because they are in fundamental agreement with it.

The only difference between them is about the speed with which they should capitulate to the multi-nationals, the Thatcher government and the state.

The corrosion of the independence of the trade union movement has been going on for many years.

Any trade unionist who doubts this should examine the deal being struck between the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) and the Engineering Employers' Federation, which sells the pass on working conditions, flexible hours and union rights (see right).

Lefts like Ron Todd of the transport union (T&GWU) and the TUC 'centre' joined with the right-wing EETPU and engineering union (AEU) leaders in acceptance of this deal.

The miners', printers' and other struggles pose the union leaders with questions



NORMAN WILLIS: following in Eric Hammond's footsteps

from which they are repelled. The 'new realism' for this bureaucracy consists of squalid manoeuvres, accompanied by empty phrases from TUC secretary Norman Willis.

President of the 1987 TUC, Fred Jarvis of the teachers' union NUT, declared demagogically that the trade union movement had 'to ensure that it organised and worked more effectively to protect the working class against the worst excesses (!) of the government': the

BY BILL HUNTER

real challenge 'comes from the changing pattern of employment,' he said.

Yes, there has been a shift to service industries and white-collar jobs. But one feature of the past few years has been the increasing militancy of these sections — town hall workers, civil servants, telecommunications workers and teachers have all been in struggle.

And what has been the record of the TUC? It organised no real fight to defend the GCHQ trades unionists. In fact it offered to police the civil service if the government would allow unions to continue at GCHQ. It put forward a 'no-strike' deal.

Rights

What did the TUC do on behalf of teachers when the government removed their negotiating rights? What did teachers' leader Jarvis do? Make speeches — and support the disciplining of union members. Then the TUC had the nerve to condemn — in words — government imposition of a pay and conditions deal!

Above all the trade union bureaucracy has betrayed the youth. They have stood by while regulations were removed governing working conditions, overtime and night work.

Connived

They have collaborated with the introduction of cheap labour schemes. They have connived in decisions which have meant the wholesale destruction of jobs; they have left a generation without a future. For their pains the government are now ejecting them from the Manpower Services Commission.

These people are a million times more frightened of the working class than they are of the employers or the Tories. Among them are some, as time will show, who

are deeply involved in personal corruption.

In his last, unfinished, article, 'Trade unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay', Trotsky wrote about the fight to remove the bureaucratic stranglehold

from the necks of the unions:

'The primary slogan for this struggle is: complete and unconditional independence of the trades unions in relation to the capitalist state. That means a struggle to turn the trade unions into organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labour aristocracy.'

In such a battle, revolutionaries in the unions will rally principled opposition to those frightened men and women who were on the platform of the Blackpool TUC, break their control of the movement, and mobilise the powerful forces growing within the working class against the Tories and their agents.



RENUKA LAKHANI has left the Hindu Temple in Leicester where she spent over a month in sanctuary to avoid Home Office threats to deport her — which would have separated her from her husband, a British citizen who has been here over 20 years, and their sixteen-week-old baby Riya.

The picture shows the Lakhani family leaving the temple escorted by their MP, Keith Vaz, (left) after an assurance that she would

not be forced to go to India while her application to stay in Britain is heard.

She reported to Immigration officers at East Midlands airport and was afterwards able to return home. Home Office Minister Tim Renton has admitted that her marriage is 'a genuine and subsisting one'. Campaigners on her behalf have collected 9,000 signatures on a petition, and received support from all over the world.

PICTURE: Mark Salmon

Deal threatens age-old gains

NOTHING less than the future of their union as a class organisation is involved in the discussions at the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, meeting at the Winter Gardens, Eastbourne next Thursday.

A lobby of the Committee has been called for 9am on that day, and every engineer concerned at the defence of his or

her unions should support it.

The National Committee meeting is to consider final proposals on the 37-and-a-half hour week. These have been drawn up by representatives of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Engineering Employers Federation after four years of discussions.

The worst fears of the rank and file militants of the AEU have now been more than justified.

This is precisely the Hammond conception of trade unionism. The trade unions have to prove to the employers that they can be useful to their profit-making.

The very first paragraph of the proposals declares: 'The prosperity of the engineering industry and the job security of those who work in it depend upon the continuous improvements in manufacturing methods, in processes and plant and the use made of them... This Agreement is made to achieve a better utilisation of the resources, human and physical in the industry.'

Time was when every new member of the AEU was told in an initiation address that the trade union advances had been won in spite of 'bitter opposition by the employing class'. They were told they should honour and strive for the day 'when the workers will end the system that creates poverty and unemployment in the midst of plenty and replace it with a just and equitable one.'

Now, they are told that their prosperity depends upon the prosperity of the employers, and the leaders want them to accept flexible, multi-skilled operations and accept working flexible hours at the mercy of the employer.

Demagogically, union leaders have declared they want the shorter week to create jobs. How can these proposals mean more jobs if they depend upon the same level of production being

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Workers Press

A spectre haunts Gorbachev

A SPECTRE is haunting the Soviet Union: the spectre of Leon Trotsky. Half a century ago in the infamous Moscow Trials, his supporters were vilified and slandered, tortured to obtain false confessions and then shot: their 'crime' was to continue the struggle for international communism begun by the Russian revolution, and to fight the rise of the bureaucracy headed by Stalin.

The Stalin clique could meet Trotsky's struggle with neither political argument nor principle. Their answer was a mountain of lies, frame-ups, and — in the case of Trotsky himself — murder by the ice-pick of a GPU agent.

Again and again the Stalinists pronounced the end of Trotskyism, or its reduction to a miserable 'disruptive' sect led by an anti-working class traitor. Stalin's chief prosecutor, Vishinsky, an opponent of the Russian revolution who found no difficulty serving the bureaucracy, served up these lies and screamed: 'shoot the mad dogs'.

But Trotskyism survived! In 1938 the Fourth International was formed, and went forward despite difficulties far greater than those of the previous workers' internationals, despite the Stalinist murder campaign against it. Trotsky fought as a principled revolutionary, building for the future. 'The crisis of humanity is the crisis of working class leadership,' he said, making that reality his starting-point, against all philistine 'worshippers of the accomplished fact' and the sacrifice-tomorrow-for-today opportunists.

Since Stalinism's first open crisis in 1956, wherever struggles against the bureaucracy have broken out — Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, China — the contribution of Trotsky has become an issue among circles opposed to Stalinism. Now, Trotsky haunts the Soviet bureaucracy itself.

The weekly German magazine 'Der Spiegel' reported in July that in Soviet Universities, Trotsky's ideas had become 'legendary'. Students are demanding: 'Who was the creator and leader of the Red Army?' 'Who was the first foreign commissar of the Soviet Republic?'

According to 'Der Spiegel', one student asked Afanasiev, director of the Institute for History and Archives: 'Are we now for the publication of Trotsky's works?' 'Yes', replied Afanasiev. An older member of the audience, presumably a Stalinist, interjected: 'We can do without'. Someone else in the audience rounds on the die-hard: 'Well your standpoint is very clear. You have read Trotsky and are sitting comfortably. Do you know how many people ended up in Siberia because of this?'

Only morsels of this discussion are known to us, through capitalist press reports and other means. But its significance should be pondered by every Trotskyist, socialist and Communist Party member. At a meeting of the Communist Party's editors and publishers on 10 July, Soviet CP leader Gorbachev said of the Moscow Trials: 'Can and should we forgive or justify what happened in the years 1937 to 1938? Never!'

To this we repeat the call already made by Workers Press and others in the workers' movement in Britain: that the names of all the victims of the Moscow Trials, including Trotsky, must be cleared. Like Khrushchev before him, Gorbachev will try to set limits on the raging discussion: above all to smother and distort the issue of Trotsky. But the discussion will not be constrained in that way.

The pace is being forced by developments in the class struggle far beyond the control of Gorbachev and bureaucratic caste he represents. The driving force is the crisis of world imperialism whose interests that caste defends in the USSR.

An indication of the deep-going nature of the developments in the USSR is the change taking place among youth. Last week, 'The Independent' reported a Communist Party Camp in the Crimea for 'Young Pioneers', aged between ten and 14. At a televised meeting, the youth began to shout at an adult speaker: 'We don't agree'. They stormed the platform and a girl shouted: 'Comrades! We have to fight for freedom.' The lights were switched off so that the television programme was blacked out.

Such developments reflect profound processes at work in the working class and Soviet society as a whole: these have compelled Gorbachev to allow a little open expression of the discontent mounting against the wastefulness, arrogance and repressions of the bureaucracy. These developments pose openly and sharply the question of removing the Stalinist bureaucracy in a political revolution.

In Trotsky's tenacious and courageous struggle for Marxist internationalism he made his greatest contribution to theory by analysing the nature of Stalinism, the Soviet state and its contradictions. Without a study of Leon Trotsky's writings, above all his 'Revolution Betrayed', nobody can understand what has happened in the Soviet Union. But further, without a study of the struggle of Trotsky and the Fourth International, the opposition in the Soviet Union cannot arrive at a correct answer to the question: What to do?

For our part, the events in the Soviet Union convince us all the more of the correctness of our fight to reorganise the Fourth International, and of the necessity to build independent revolutionary leadership based on the principles for which Trotsky fought.

TUC must expel EETPU traitors

WAPPING was again on the agenda at this year's Trade Union Congress at Blackpool and Eric Hammond, general secretary of the electricians' union EETPU was at the centre of the debate.

Hammond and his henchman Tom Rice helped Rupert Murdoch set up the 'Fortress Wapping' deal behind the backs of the print unions and the trade union movement in general, but the reaction of the TUC has amounted to no more than a 'slap on the wrist' as NGA general secretary Tony Dubbins put it.

BY ALAN CLARK

Printworkers involved in the year-long dispute want the EETPU expelled from the TUC, as does the labour movement as a whole, but the TUC leadership is afraid to take this step, and the decision has been referred back to the General Council.

On the Friday preceding the conference, the 'Guardian' newspaper revealed that documents in its possession allege that EETPU officials had breached 1986 TUC directives on reaching a settlement with News International over the 5,500 sacked workers by continuing to have regular contacts with the organisation's management.

The documents reveal that EETPU National Officer Tom Rice, who is responsible for Wapping, has held

frequent meetings with management and staff representatives.

He has introduced a check-off system for payment of

General Council defeated on reference back

'There are lies, damned lies and Eric Hammond's statements to the General Council,' said Tony Dubbins, moving the reference back of the General Council report on the News International dispute. This successful reference back reflected the anger of many delegates that the EETPU had been let off with 'a slap on the wrist'.

union subscriptions, prepared a pay claim for production workers, drawn up a draft recognition agreement between the company and the EETPU's white-collar section and has undertaken a staff survey on behalf of the company's personnel department (a case of Ricicles

for breakfast, dinner and tea...)

Another article in the same newspaper reveals the 'low morale' of the workforce inside Wapping.

Stephen Seaman, former Chair of the Salaried Staff Council claims that the company's treatment of the workforce has deteriorated since the print unions called off the pickets in February.

Seaman's other 'Guardian' allegations are very serious indeed for Hammond, Rice and the EETPU in general if they are found to be true.

The TUC General Council will now have no excuse for taking no action should these allegations prove to be true.

the TUC if the EETPU is expelled.

Perhaps Willis himself, together with the majority of the General Council, would also find it necessary to leave in such circumstances, and this is why a decision has been evaded.

Should the movement allow Hammond to get away with blackmailing other unions, making 'one union' deals behind their backs and at their expense? The answer is quite clearly NO.

Rules

The time has come when any union flouting the rules of the TUC, or working against the interests of the working class in the trade union movement must have more than a slap on the wrist. They must expect the severest penalty — expulsion — whatever the consequences or threats of breakaways.

Tony Dubbins summed it up in the debate when he said: 'Unless loyal trade unionists can be safeguarded from the jackals in the movement the TUC itself is in jeopardy.'

As the TUC steps further and further backwards, the working class marches forward confidently wanting to fight, wanting to take on this Tory government, the question workers constantly ask is, are you with us, or are you against us?

Ancoats occupation ends in compromise

BY SUE GWYER

After occupying Ancoats Hospital Casualty Unit for seven and a half months, the Ancoats Action Group withdrew from their sit-in as from Friday 11 September.

This decision is based on assurances from the District Health Authority that the Casualty is to be reopened.

The health authority has offered a reduced service to east Manchester and the city centre on the grounds of cost. An accident and emergency service with full back-up facilities would have been the safest option.

Out of 168 responses to the health authority's consultation document, 152 demanded Option 1, the restoration of the full A&E service to Ancoats Hospital.

Three responses supported Option 2, which details some form of walking-wounded service manned only during the day.

Miss M. Hall, district superintendent radiographer supported Option 2 but in her response gave an insight into the effect of the closure of Ancoats Casualty on other hospitals in the area.

Booth Hall Childrens hospital experience an increase in referrals from A&E both in normal and on-call hours.

At North Manchester general hospital, the department was already overloaded before the closure of Ancoats Casualty but has



Action Group supporters celebrate their victory

since experienced a 56-per cent increase spread over 24 hours of casualty referrals.

The consultant's office has been converted into an X-ray room and an additional clerk has been appointed to maintain the instant report service for the casualty.

New working methods have been introduced and the refurbishment of X-ray Room 1 has been deferred until October 1987, at which time de-camping space will need to be found.

Modern technology is being assessed to improve efficiency but staff are under great pressure affecting morale. Regional guidelines on workload in now radiographic room is per being exceeded by 180 per cent.

Reports by the district health authority that the North Manchester General hospital were coping with the extra workload are refuted in this response by one of their most experienced professional radiographers.

The 13 responses preferring Option 3 came from senior medical staff, some of whom stated Option 1 was most desirable but in the face of the financial constraints would have to support Option 3.

The closure of Ancoats A&E has also resulted in a 10-per cent increase in referrals to Withington Hospital. South Manchester Health Authority state that only Option 1 would obviate the problem.

Under the other two options they require further resources to be able to cope with the substantial rise in A&E attendances and admissions therefrom.

In the light of the responses to the consultation, the occupation of the casualty and the 12,000-name petition against the closure, the district health authority were forced to compromise.

The action group feel that they have gained a victory. Their fight was for the re-

opening of the Casualty and this they have won.

The basis upon which it is to re-open still has to be negotiated through the community health council with the district health authority.

The biggest fight now on the action group's hands is for 24-hour cover.

The role of the Labour group on the district health authority was to accept the implementation of the cuts and advance Option 1 as realistic in the vital authority meeting on 9 September giving financial constraint as the reason.

If ever the crisis of leadership was exposed here it is. The workers united in a fight against hospital closure and the council leaders accepted Thatcher's dictum.

Ancoats Action Group will continue to meet and monitor developments in the proposals ensuring their implementation, sure in the knowledge that you don't get anything unless you fight.

NO COUNCIL MUST FIGHT ON ITS OWN!

MANCHESTER

Education and health — one fight!

BY JIM STEAD

PANIC MEASURE cuts have been forced on to council workers in Manchester as the Labour council desperately tries to avoid bankruptcy.

All employment has been frozen for some months but the extent of the measures hit the education service only as schools and colleges returned to work.

All spending is frozen: no part-timers can be replaced in colleges, no item, little or large, can be purchased.

The message from the city council was: there is no way round these measures; you cannot circumvent them.

Budget

Catering staff on school meal services have to provide a service with no one to fill absences due to illness: £40 million has to be clawed back immediately from existing expenditure — 10 per cent of the entire budget.

If the target is not reached they will come for more cuts. Education as part of a planned social activity has ground to a halt — like the social services and others — because each service is living from hand to mouth.

No one knows what the case will be on 9 October when the council group meets again for a decision on other areas. No service can be planned on this basis: the beginning of the full anarchy of capitalism taking over the council.

A 'left' Labour authority taking these desperate measures and working to the Tory diktat can only confuse and demoralise support among the working class.

The lessons of Liverpool have not even been considered. 'Keep the left in power' was the watch-word of the recent council Labour meetings. The Labour right wing approves, saying: we told you you would have to make more cuts.

This is a warning to the entire working class in Greater Manchester. Education is third in the list of priorities after housing and health.

Family

The cuts will hit every working-class family. They must be resisted everywhere with a defensive and offensive mobilisation. Community campaigns must set their sights on bringing down this hated Tory regime.

The main defence from the council has been 'creative accounting'. This needs investigating. For example, there are rumours that the council is mortgaging all council property, including school buildings.

To defend services all such debts should be repudiated. Workers will have to repossess this property.

Now we learn that hospitals are suffering the same 'creative' treatment. South Manchester hospital is to be kept going for another year by this method.

On 17 September the health authority has to decide how to cut £1.4 million. The health and casualty units at Wythenshaw hospital are threatened with closure.

Recently consultants and ward sisters have written to health secretary John Moore but with no result.

Those fighting health cuts should consider the campaign waged by the Ancoats sit-in supporters. The occupation has been the only way to keep the fight going.

Workers should advance all means of resistance and support those leaders prepared to break ranks from the rightward moving bureaucracy. Without any exaggeration, it is a matter of life or death.

LONDON BRIDGE

Unify London fight

BY ED HALL
Secretary of
London Bridge

LAST WEEK'S London Bridge Conference, 'Our jobs and services are not for sale' was titled very soon after the election and the prompt re-introduction of the Local Government Bill which is to force privatisation on local authorities.

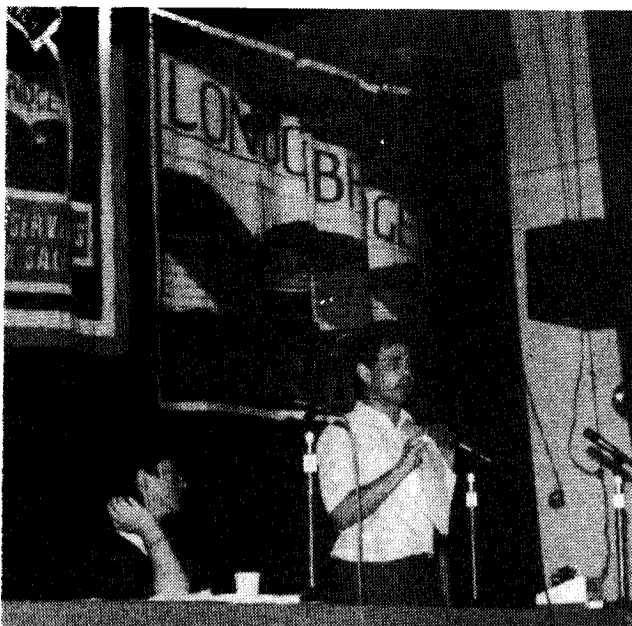
Since then the full realisation of the cash limits for 1988/9 has absorbed Labour councils. Lambeth, Haringey, Islington, Hackney and Southwark, have decided — or are at the point of deciding — to comply with Thatcherism on the basis of 'survival is best', and that a Labour cut is better than a Tory cut.

In Lambeth's case this represents a complete betrayal.

When she unveiled the permanent exhibition of the banner of the 31 surcharged Lambeth Councillors on 27 March 1987 in Lambeth's Council Chamber, council leader Linda Bellos said: 'What they did should be followed... their authority must not be used by anyone not prepared to fight.'

There has been no attempt by the London Labour politicians to organise this fight.

Former Lambeth council leader Ted Knight's speech to the conference explained the financial history of 1985/6 and that money was added to



Tony O'Brien, Southwark UCATT and London Bridge co-chair, addresses the conference

Lambeth's budget during that year.

He castigated the present leadership of Lambeth council for not considering a campaign of defiance, and joked, that in 'each September I was in office there was generally a £100 million deficit for the coming year.'

Some 150 shop stewards from 19 London authorities and from 14 unions heard him say that all was not over in Lambeth, and that the '31' would be present in events leading to the new financial year. 'There is life after disqualification' and the fight was not over.

Surcharged Liverpool councillor Tony Mulhearn concen-

trated on the 'new realism' which had been the feature of the TUC conference.

His experiences in Liverpool, which had seen the ravages of industrial decline more acutely than the south, were used to expose the folly of abandoning all the traditional elements of trade unionism, the strike, the closed shop, the branch meeting and the shop stewards system.

The talk of 'champagne and socialism' at Blackpool had not been well received in Liverpool.

Tony O'Brien, Southwark UCATT and co-chair of London Bridge, chaired the first session. He applauded the action taken by bus workers, and

introduced Peter Gibson of the London Bus Committee which had worked against privatisation, and had developed industrial action among members not traditionally militant.

Bronwen Handyside, Lambeth NALGO, chaired the second session: a debate on a resolution which hardened the strategy against privatisation agreed at the London Bridge Conference of 22 November 1986.

Her opening remarks made clear the necessity of activists to seek support in their workplaces, and argue for the struggle ahead.

She did not see arguments won among small groups of activists particularly significant without a workplace base.

The conference significantly voted for a lobby of the TUC General Council on 28 October to seek a national campaign in support of the threatened public services, and agreed to a major demonstration in February 1988, prior to final budgets being made.

It voted for industrial action in support of those taking action in other authorities, and as part of a national campaign against privatisation called on the unions to consider ballots as a tool to mobilisation.

Bitter struggles are certainly ahead as the cuts bite deeper. Labour authorities cannot expect acquiescence from already stressed workforces.

Like the teachers and the transport workers there will be strikes in local government. London Bridge will seek the role of unifying a London fight.

BRENT

Fightback begins

BY GERRY DOWNING
West London WRP

THE fight back against the cuts and privatisation in Brent, London, began in earnest on 29 July at a mass meeting attended by 1,000 council workers.

A resolution was proposed by the stewards' organising committee, a body elected from a meeting of all stewards in the council:

6 This mass meeting pledges actively to oppose all cuts in jobs and services. We will not cover for unfilled posts and we will not cooperate with the drawing up of tender documents for privatisation.

We pledge to cooperate with user groups like tenants' associations and unemployed organisations etc., to defend council services and to fight unemployment by defending job levels and demanding expansion to eliminate private contractors and improve services to the community.

We will defend with whatever means necessary, if called upon, any council workforce in London suffering cutbacks and privatisation.

We demand that our official trade union leaderships support any action in defence of jobs and services taken by their membership in the council. We will defend by industrial action any member disciplined for carrying out these policies.

We recognise that the cause of the cuts lies with central government. However, we demand that the Labour council refuses to provide cover for the Tory cuts. They must stand by the manifesto upon which they were elected to fight cuts in jobs and services. We demand that they stand with Brent workers in our fight.

Half way through the open-air meeting a thunderstorm cut proceedings short making it impossible to put the resolution to the vote.

But plans are in hand for a recall meeting this month and to set up a permanent anti-cuts campaign of councillors, stewards and labour-movement activists opposed to the council's policy.

A measure of the opposition to the fight was revealed at the stewards meeting. Practically all the full-time union officials are supporting the line of the council — for 'humane cuts'.

NUPE in particular have obviously instructed all their activists to support the cuts and have taken this line of capitulation to the Tories in all London boroughs I have reports from.

A transport union official for Brent has actually said that as councils are top-heavy with white collar staff they should go first to save manual workers jobs!

If this represents official T&GWU policy war must be declared on such collaboration.

LAMBETH

Leadership overturned

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

THE DENTED shield policies of Lambeth Council's leadership were decisively overturned at last Sunday's borough conference.

The council leader and deputy leader put forward a consultation document to the community and unions which proposed saving £60 million by recruiting to only 25 per cent of vacancies, and raising rents and other service charges including meals-on-wheels.

Toby Kichenside, chair of the Lambeth Workers Joint Trade Union Committee, brandished a 3-ft-long computer printout of vacancies in social services.

'Services are already at breaking point,' he said. 'With a 75-per-cent vacancy freeze there will be a complete collapse.'

Chris Gunther, social services steward, spoke from one of the Labour wards in support of a resolution rejecting the leadership's proposals.

'Tomorrow morning in a residential home for mentally handicapped people in Lambeth

there is only one officer available for duty from 7 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night.'

Delegates from tenants' associations protested strongly about the proposed rent increases.

Most of the 31 councillors who were surcharged and thrown out of office for refusing to set a rate turned up for a special meeting before the borough conference at which they reiterated their determination to fight cuts no matter what the cost.

Several, including Ted Knight, spoke out powerfully at the conference demanding the new administration follow in their footsteps as they promised to do when they were selected to run for office.

Councillors are unfortunately not obliged to abide by the decision of the borough conference. The crucial debate is taking place inside the labour wards.

The Joint Trade Union Committee is sending speakers to as many of these meetings as possible.

However recently trades unionists were prevented from speaking at the deputy leader's ward meeting on the grounds that one of them was a member



Toby Kichenside, chair of Lambeth joint trade union committee, shows a list of social services vacancies to last Sunday's Lambeth borough conference

of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The unions in Lambeth are holding a rally at 5.30p.m. on Tuesday 22 September at which surcharged Lambeth councillor Hazel Smith will be speaking. The rally is followed by a lobby

of the Labour Group meeting at 7p.m. in Lambeth Town Hall.

The unions will also lobby the meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee on 25 September at 7p.m. — also a crucial decision-making meeting. All are welcome.

AEU deal threatens age-old gains

● FROM PAGE ONE

maintained in the shorter week?

Hours can be varied, in order to accommodate seasonal or other fluctuations. The employers have complete control and can establish hours of production 'up to the maximum of 168 hours a week' — every hour in the week, that is.

In case that isn't flexible enough, 'the employer may determine domestically a pattern of shiftworking to suit the particular needs of the establishment (or part of the establishment).'

The union only has the right of discussion. The proposals declare that if no agreement is reached 'after the fullest discussion, includ-

ing reference to the external stage of procedure', 'it is the responsibility of the management to determine the times that will apply.'

In some cases, workers will give up conditions without securing any cut in hours. There is no hours reduction for shift workers, many of whom are already on a thirty seven or thirty five hour week. There will be no reduction for part timers. And the proposals declare 'working hours do not include meal breaks, washing time, or other non-productive time'.

So that for those who have time for tea breaks and washing time there will be very little reduction, despite all the 'Japanese style' conditions.

Of course, the proposals must be thrown out! Engineering workers should rally on Thursday to leave the National Committee of the AEU and their Executive Council under no doubt as to their opinions.

Betrayal

They are a betrayal and a capitulation to the multi-nationals. The the union membership must struggle for the shorter working week without loss of pay and without strings. Engineers need a union that will fight for that.

The reason for the AEU's headlong rush into selling its members hard-won condi-

tions is revealed in an article in the 'Times', 13 July, 1987, by AEU Secretary Bill Jordan. This spells out the complete pessimism of the trade union bureaucracy, its bankruptcy of ideas and lack of will to fight the government. This is the new realism put forward by Willis, the EET-PU and the AEU.

'The misguided tactics of the miners' leaders in 1984,' writes Jordan, 'in pushing members into a strike and not condemning the violence enabled the government to argue justification for all its union legislation. For trade unions the best reform is self-reform, however getting out of the tram lines of tradition is not easy, as demonstrated by the number of unions autonomously in each establishment.'

'Ideally we should have the sort of rational system the British trade union leaders designed for West Germany after the war — single-union industries, or at least companies. That is not to be. So the next five years will see piecemeal rationalisation by union mergers or isolated single-union deals. Such deals are here to stay. They make every kind of sense.'

The problems posed before trade unions are those of mobilising their strength to resist the attacks of the state and the employers, or face extinction. The answer of this present leadership is to crawl abjectly as people who want only to maintain their own positions and privileges.

Dewsbury parents — the real choice

ON 2 September 26 children and their parents were barred from entering school premises at Overthorpe school, West Yorkshire.

With the backing of ex-Tory MP for Dewsbury John Whitfield, they protested to Ian Macmillan, principal education officer for Kirklees, that they would not send their children to Headfield junior and infant school two miles away as the educational provision was 'substandard'.

What was meant by this became increasingly evident as the days wore on and the capitalist media devoted considerable attention to the case. Throughout the dispute we were told by the parents that their objections to Headfield were 'cultural' and not 'racial'.

Headfield school was variously quoted in the 'Guardian' in the first week as 80 per cent, 85 per cent and 93 per cent Asian.

Of the original 39 who had all appealed to be sent elsewhere, 13 won their appeal and in the course of the dispute a Labour-appointed governor Jeff Cooper agreed to send his child elsewhere but was adamant he stood in principle with the remaining 25.

The sort of 'cultural' objections made were that chapatis were made on Shrove Tuesday instead of pancakes, Christmas was not celebrated, Easter eggs and outdoor games were discouraged, Roman Britain was excluded from the syllabus, and not enough emphasis was put on Christian teaching. Kirklees authority denied all of these 'allegations'.

Education Minister Kenneth Baker returned from holiday and said he could not intervene under current law since the local authority had not acted unreasonably 'in the strictest sense'.

In fact, all of the parents lived in the Headfield 'Catchment Area'. Previously council policy, as in so many cases nationally, had been to send white pupils to 'white' schools and Asian pupils to 'Asian' schools.

This reflected the complete

BY ED PHILLIPS

segregation of the two sections of the community on housing estates in the area.

Baker stated that he was opposed to 'bussing' pupils from one area to another to improve the 'racial mix' in schools, and admitted that 'parental choice' as described in the Education Bill would lead to 'all black' and 'all white' schools. His main consideration, he insisted, was the quality of education.

The 'Guardian' in its 5 September editorial warned that Baker should be careful that his proposal to allow parents to send their children to the school of their choice does not lead to segregation on the basis of race.

We should have no illusion that this is precisely what is threatened. BBC television news on 7 September followed its report on Baker's refusal to intervene on behalf of the Dewsbury parents with a report which detailed the advantages of 'all-Muslim' and 'all-white' schools, the argument Ray Honeyford used in Bradford.

Baker's refusal to intervene was a purely tactical manoeuvre. Dewsbury has become a test case which will be used by the Tories to push through the Education Bill, to become law in 1989.

In any future 'Dewsburies' he will have the power to intervene and he will be able to divide working-class parents on the basis of race and coerce any local authority which dares carry out any sensible and fair allocations policy.

We have a duty to all working-class and middle-class parents to ensure that Baker and his Education Bill are defeated. Parents in Wandsworth know what the Tories mean by 'parental choice', since their voice was never heard when the vote was taken to opt out of ILEA control.

If we defend those who

choose to set up schools based on colour, religion or the ability to pay then we open the way for the destruction of the state education system and a divided working class.

The continual references by the Tories to 'parental choice' is deliberately misleading and designed to manipulate every parent's justifiable desire to have some say in the education of their children. Does this mean we defend the 'right' of any individual to decide not to be educated in one school since the majority of its intake is Asian? Of course not.

Parents have a right to choose, but local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that the community as a whole is educated and that state schools are able to function.

What Baker is proposing runs completely counter to all the arguments in defence of a 'multi-cultural education' which many Labour authorities, including ILEA, have stated they defend.

The national testing scheme, too, will reduce each area's record of educational achievement to a sort of football league where the school with the most 'passes' at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 will be seen by many parents to provide the best education, or to provide the best jobs prospects in a crisis-ridden economy.

The Tories do not propose that parents should decide how much money a local authority should spend on education. Instead a few extra parent-governors on school governing bodies will be deciding how best to spend a rapidly dwindling budget, i.e. to make the cuts.

The slogan of 'parental choice' has to be seen as a disguise for what the Tories foresee when the Education Bill becomes law: state schools competing with private schools, communities divided on the basis of race, and a perpetuation of the myth of limited resources.

Workers Revolutionary Party Tower Hamlets and Hackney Marxist Discussion

St George's Methodist Hall, Cable Street,
Stepney, E1 (nearest tube: Shadwell)
all at 7.30p.m.

Friday 2 October: Stalinism and South Africa
Friday 6 November: Stalinism in Britain
Friday 4 December: The Stalinist Theory of Socialism in a Single Country

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN

HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ

LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence, 464989.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence, H22338.
EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN McCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.
ANDY MULRYAN, 20-year sentence, 461576.
PATRICK MULRYAN, 20-year sentence, 461575.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.

PARKHURST

HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX

PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence, 342603.
GERRY McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
SEAN McSHANE, B75898.
TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD

HM Prison Wakefield, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG

HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.
CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662.

STRANGWAYS

HM Prison Southall Street, Manchester 3, Lancs.

NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.

ALBANY

HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS

MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.
SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

GARTREE

HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP

RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799.
STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence, 758663.
JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635.
ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.

FRANKLAND

HM Prison Finchale Ave, Bransford, Durham

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence, 119085.
BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758662.
PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.
MICHAEL J McKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46486.
EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER

HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ

PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.
BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380.
PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

WORMWOOD SCRUBS

HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE

DONAL CRAIG, 4 years.
VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.

DURHAM

HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.

MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

REMAND PRISONERS: BRIXTON

HM Prison, Sebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.

G. (DANNY) McNAMEE, L48616
LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694
LIAM QUINN, 49930

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:

CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire

PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree.

PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.

JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.

HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree.

JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.

BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland.
RICHARD McIKENNY, 509497, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.
PATRICK McLOUGHLIN, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.

The Festival of Scottish democracy

BY TERRY BROTHERSTONE

FAMILIES, unemployed youth and political activists took to the streets of Glasgow in their hundreds last Saturday, seeking a way to end the hated regime of Thatcher and her henchpersons.

They marched a shorter route than their Chartist forebears in May 1838, but they arrived at the same place, Glasgow Green, which over the intervening years has echoed to the words of great political orators, including the Scottish Marxist John Maclean.

No echoes of past struggles were, however, summoned up from the speakers at the rally. The soggy conditions and stuffy atmosphere in the marquee were matched by rhetoric about 'the Scottish ethic of fairness' and Calvinist circumlocution.

In June the Labour Party won over 40 per cent of the vote in Scotland and secured 70 per cent of Scottish parliamentary seats. Yet not one of these 50 MPs addressed the rally.

A mutely obedient platform party consisted of the Scottish secretary of the National Union of Students; the leader of the Labour majority on the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA); the organiser of the Campaign for the Scottish

Assembly; Labour's shadow Secretary of State for Scotland (the arch-right winger, Donald Dewar); an empty chair symbolising the secretary of Glasgow Trades Council; someone from the Green Party; a Glasgow District Councillor; the deputy general secretary of the Scottish TUC; a CP member and the two speakers.

First there was Bryan Gould, media mastermind of the new-look Labour Party. If the intention was to catch the attention of workers via the Sunday newspapers, he achieved very little. The 'Scottish edition' of the 'News on Sunday' ignored him, and the Labour-supporting, Maxwell-owned, Glasgow-based 'Sunday Mail' afforded the occasion only the following paragraph:

'Labour's Shadow Trade and Industry secretary Bryan Gould, speaking in Glasgow, said he would support a Scottish Assembly with revenue-raising powers.'

And that was about all he did say. It was clear from Gould's contribution, however — as it was from a long article by Scottish TUC general secretary Campbell Christie in the previous day's 'Morning Star' — that the Labour leaders and trade union bureaucrats see the call for a Scottish Assembly as just another plank in a revised political platform designed to resign all those suffering under the Tory hammer to a disciplined,

four-year-long election campaign behind Kinnock.

The one moment of dramatic tension came when the reverend chair announced that the second speaker would be 'the authentic voice of Scotland.' This was none other than Elaine C. Smith, a popular actress currently appearing in successful play about Glasgow women in a public wash-house.

She got a good response when she denounced the prime minister's recent visit to Glasgow. Thatcher had said the Scottish people do not want devolution and that projects such as the Channel Tunnel would solve their economic crisis. Smith said, to loud applause: 'Tell that to the Caterpillar workers, to Gartcosh, to Ravenscraig, to Scott Lithgow and to the miners, teachers and nurses!'

She concluded with a call to 'start the real fight for real socialism in Scotland', adding pointedly that 'we look to the Labour Party in particular to head that fight.'

This of course was what the Labour leaders of the Festival had no intention of doing. As one Scottish miner told Workers Press: 'We've come because we believe in devolution for the working people of Scotland not because we agree with going about it like that lot on the platform.'

'It has to be done through the factories, the pits and the unions, not by asking the blessing of the church.'



A big turn-out despite the rain

Strabane inquiry: sickening verdict

BY SIMON PIRANI

THE families of IRA volunteers shot down at Strabane have reiterated their determination for an independent inquiry into the killings, and condemned the local council for supporting the inquest cover-up.

'On the morning of February 23 1985, three local IRA volunteers were cut down in an ambush operation by the SAS at the request of the RUC and with the help of a paid tout,' say the families in a letter to 'Republican News'.

'The facts are widely known: lies and blunders made by the crown witnesses at the inquest earlier this year exposed the attempted cover-up and served to clarify the events on the morning of the shootings.'

'Many people were therefore shocked and sickened when, following 17 days of

evidence (and the blasting by John Fahy and Frank Collins of the walls of secrecy and silence surrounding the SAS role in the killings), a facile and insulting verdict of "death due to gunshot wounds" was recorded by the strangers who formed a "local" jury.'

The letter slams local Social Democratic Labour Party and independent nationalist councillors for joining with Unionists to defeat a resolution calling for an independent enquiry into the shootings.

The families of David and Michael Devine and Charles Breslin, the letter stated, 'are nonetheless determined to go to every length to expose without fear of hesitation the controversial reality lurking beneath the fairy tales told in Strabane court-house.'

'Strabane people, republican or otherwise, are clearly aware that the shoot-to-kill policy was in operation in February 1985,' the letter points out.

'The RUC in Strabane barracks will confirm that fact with great pleasure to any youth in Strabane, as they gloat ghoulishly over our fal-

len dead. Even the British gutter press openly acknowledges SAS involvement, and describes it as a "stake-out"; indeed, their reports read like orders of merit upon SAS Captain Simon Hayward (a drug pusher in jail in Sweden) for his "gallant" (sic) part in slaying the three young Volunteers.'

'Strangely removed from this reality stands Strabane District Council, surrounded in a fairy-tale aura of faith in British "justice" and "rule of law", prepared to bend and bow to each wind the British establishment sends their way. A wretched two-line letter of sympathy seems very hollow now, two-and-a-half years on; the voices raised in protest then bear witness to their double-speak today.'

The letter, from Catriona Ni Bhreaslain, on behalf of the families, ends defiantly: 'Victory to the Republican people! Tíocfadh ar la!'

British trade unionists and socialists must support the demand for an independent inquiry into the Strabane shootings. It is our responsibility to show solidarity with Irish working class.

Palestinian scholar held under colonial law

LEADING Palestinian cultural figure Feisal Hussein, who heads the Arab Studies Society in occupied Jerusalem has been detained by Israeli security forces using laws inherited from the British mandate.

Feisal, released a few weeks ago from a three-month detention order, was arrested last week and served with a further six-month sentence. The Zionists are using British Emergency Laws of 1945, which allow detention without trial for up to six months at a time.

These laws, originally designed for use against Zionist terror organisations like the Irgun Zvei Leumi, were denounced as 'Nazi' by Zionist leaders when they were first introduced.

Feisal Hussein is a respected figure in Jerusalem, and comes from a distinguished family. His father, Abdel-Qader Hussein, was a leader of Palestinian resistance killed in 1948, respected as a hero by Palestinians and as a fighter by his Zionist enemies.

Feisal's resistance has been in the cultural field. The Arab Studies Society in East Jerusalem runs a library and archives on Palestinian history, assists visiting and local scholars, promotes Palestinian folklore and culture, and helps kindergar-

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

tens and schools.

The Israeli authorities have given no reason for holding Feisal Hussein. The detention order merely cites 'security reasons and public safety.' The authorities are known to resent his association with the Committee Against the Iron Fist, a group of Palestinians and left-wing Israelis campaigning against repression in the occupied territories.

A fortnight ago, Shin Bet security police interrogated Feisal about plans for a public meeting commemorating the massacres at Sabra and Shatilla in September 1982, carried out by Israeli-backed Christian Falangists.

Floods and famine in Bangladesh

DEVASTATING floods in Bangladesh have highlighted the economic problems of one of the poorest countries in the world.

Half the country has been under water and now heavy rain in the mountains of north India and Nepal are sending an extra foot of water down the already swollen rivers which combine in the low-lying delta which is Bangladesh.

Long-term natural subsidence of the delta has made the flooding worse, but more important has been the rapid surges of rainwater pouring off the hills and mountains, particularly of Nepal. Runoff used to be checked by forests, but they have been cleared by the landless poor, desperate for somewhere to grow crops, for building materials and for firewood.

Floods are usual in the lower parts of the delta, and flood a quarter of the country every year, but this year the rivers have burst their banks higher up in districts not prepared for floodwater.

The main threat has not come from drowning — most rural Bengali houses are generally built to withstand floods, and the main rice varieties are sown into fields which have been inundated — but from epidemics spread by polluted drinking water and from starvation, which threaten about a quarter of the 90 million people of Bangladesh.

Farm

Bangladesh is one of the countries most dependent on agriculture, with little in the way of towns and industry. The farms are mostly very small, with tiny fragmented fields, yet every year the number of people without land grows.

With floodwater holding up agricultural work, the millions of wage-labourers who normally live hand-to-mouth are already desperate for food.

But agricultural yields are among the lowest in the world, and with no stocks of

BY CHRIS DIXON

food the peasant farmers also face starvation.

August is a vital month, when the spring-planted rice is harvested and the main crop is transplanted. Up to a quarter of the harvest was washed away, and it has not yet been possible to do any planting.

There may be no rice to harvest in December, when half the country's rice is normally ready.

The last time there was severe flooding was 1974, when a quarter of a million people died. This time it is worse.

Population growth without industry and opportunity other than migration to the Middle East or Britain to find work has led to the cultivation of land which is more vulnerable to flood, just as it has upset the vegetation of the hills.

Farmers are deep in debt as they have been encouraged to buy imported pesticides and fertilisers needed by the new strains of high yielding rice — and in some areas children are suffering new forms of malnutrition, especially mental retardation, caused by the poorer nutritional qualities of these new varieties.

The flood will exacerbate all these problems, of mass poverty, and has already put the hated repressive Ershad regime under a severe political strain.

● Women marched in Dacca last week protesting the government's closure of flood relief centres.



London march supports Turkish struggle

ABOUT 1,000 people marched in London on Saturday (12 September) in solidarity with Turkish political prisoners who have been on hunger strike.

Iraqi and Iranian women's groups, Irish campaigners against strip searching, Haringey Troops Out Movement, Azania Solidarity Campaign, the Workers' Revolutionary Party, Revolutionary Communist Group, and 'Proletarian' were among those who joined the large numbers of Turkish and Kurdish workers and students on the march.

These included the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey, the Turkish Students' Federation (UK), the

Kurdistan Workers' Association, and Revolutionary Path.

The Anatolia Cultural Centre and the Halkevi cultural Centre brought large contingents.

Slogans shouted by the marchers ranged from 'Fight for Democracy in Turkey' and 'No More Genocide in Kurdistan' through 'Shoulder to Shoulder Against Fascism' to 'Revolution is the Only Way'.

At the Turkish embassy, out-

side which there had been a solidarity hunger strike the previous week, officials refused to take a letter of protest from the marchers. The letter was read out over a megaphone there.

Among those supporting the demonstration and the previous week's embassy picket were the Kings Cross Women's Centre and the Stop the Strip Searches Campaign, whose banner had been forcibly removed by police.

They rightly insisted on linking the treatment of Irish and other women in British jails with ill-treatment of women prisoners in Turkey.

Women peace campaigners from the Yellow Gate peace camp at Greenham Common sent a message of support for the Turkish hunger strikers, recognising a common struggle against 'the military state' and police brutality.

OVER 200 relatives of the political prisoners on hunger-strike in Turkey were confronted by police as they tried to march through Ankara on Tuesday. One woman died and many were injured as a result of the clashes.

The march was organised by the Association of Prisoners' Families (TAYAD), who are continuing their protests in support of the hunger-strikes which are still in progress at two prisons.

After a protest meeting in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, a march set off to Sirkeci. From there they travelled by bus to Ankara, with more joining along the route at Canakkale, Bursa and Eskisehir. In Ankara the written demands of the relatives and prisoners were to be handed over at the Presidential Palace at Cankaya.

The buses of protestors met with a police cordon at the outside of Ankara and were ordered not to proceed into Ankara. The relatives sat down on the highway and were charged by police with batons. Many protestors were severely beaten during the clashes. Several journalists were also attacked and their cameras smashed. One journalist in particular was seriously injured after complaining at having his camera destroyed.

Later, a group of families entered Ankara and tried to march to the Presidential Palace. The police re-attacked and again many families were severely beaten. Over 60 people were detained. One woman, Mrs D Sensay, 51 years old, was taken to hospital and later died there. The authorities claim that she was a diabetic and died from a heart attack as a result of the violent confrontation. Her brother is in prison for his involvement with a left-wing political organisation.

At Mrs Sensay's funeral on 6 September 5,000 people joined a march in protest at her death, chanting slogans such as 'Free all Political Prisoners' and 'Humanity will win over torture'.

The hunger-strikes continue at Eskiser and Ankara Civilian Prison. The Association of Prisoners' Families are determined to continue their protest actions until the demands for improved conditions in the prisons are achieved.

● The latest news from Turkey is that a further 156 political prisoners at Buca Prison in Izmir are on hunger-strike to protest at their prison conditions.

Honecker visits old pals

THE BOURGEOIS press made much of Erich Honecker's visit to West Germany last week, intimating that this augured well for future relations between Stalinism and imperialism.

'I believe', the leading Stalinist said, 'that if we act together in the spirit of the communique agreed in Bonn... the day will come when borders no longer divide us but unite us.'

As the man who supervised the erection of the Berlin wall which to this day divides the powerful German proletariat, Honecker is an expert on 'unity' and its opposite.

When he talks glibly of 'unity' he is not of course, referring to the international working class but to international finance capital.

The high point of Honecker's tour was no his visit to the birthplace of Karl Marx in Trier, or his talk with Chancellor Helmut Kohl, but his encounter with an old and valued chum: Franz Joseph Strauss.

As the saying goes: 'If you

By Tom Scott Robson

know his friends you know the man' and Honecker is no exception.

Strauss is one of the most powerful men in West Germany today, one of the shrewdest and, without a doubt, one of the most corrupt.

Although he has persistently flouted the constitution, lied and perjured himself before parliamentary committees of inquiry, his position as leader of the Christian Socialist Union and his power base in Bavaria survive unscathed.

He counts generals like Pinochet and Stroessner among his closest chums — Honecker, of course, is another.

Strauss bailed him out of a tight spot as recently as 1984 with a desperately needed bank loan to the value of £330 million.

But despite his longstanding and fraternal relationship with Honecker, Strauss is no slouch when it comes to striking a hard bargain.

He charged the GDR 1 per cent more than he would have charged any West German, French or British capitalist. Honecker was grateful and his associates saw to it that the East German working class paid.

Three years later Honecker crawls back for more — can there be any doubt about it? — this time camouflaged as a dove of peace.

Strauss is obviously a solid man to do business with: He was born two years after the October Revolution and has been its sworn enemy all its life.

At the age of 20, while at university studying history, languages, economics and law, Franz Josef Strauss joined the National Socialist German Workers Party. From that day he never looked back.

By 1942 he was a lieutenant in Hitler's army. After the war he worked as an interpreter for the US military government. Later he became head of the local administration in Bavaria (his fiefdom in years to come) charged, ironically, with 'de-Nazifying' the area.

In 1950 he earned the nickname 'Honest Broker'. There was a dispute as to which city in West Germany should be nominated the capital. Should it be Frankfurt, Munich or Bonn? The Strauss mafia wanted Bonn, so Franz Joseph set about buying the votes of members of parliament with hard cash. Bonn was duly nominated.

By 1956 Strauss was Minister of Defence, in which capacity he

could really do things his way. His first venture was to order 10,688 combat tanks from a manufacturer who had never before made a tank. It is a matter of public record that his largesse earned him, personally, £6 million.

In 1958, now well in his stride, Strauss placed a firm order with Lockheed Corporation of America for 700 Super Star Fighters, the infamous F-104T, before even a prototype existed.

This disastrous decision led directly to the death of over ten highly trained West German fighter pilots. Strauss never lost a night's sleep over the affair, even when the scandal was made public — his 'commission' was safely salted away.

Since then Strauss has consolidated his position and seems virtually untouchable. His close ties with the police, the secret service and the Nazi old-boy network of bankers and industrialists have placed him above bourgeois law, free to do precisely as he pleases.

This unscrupulous rogue-prince of capitalism is the man that Stalinists like Honecker choose to do business with. In the middle ages it would have been called trading with the devil. Today it is an everyday occurrence. But then, that's Stalinism.

ARGENTINA:

230,000 choose Trotskyists

THE TROTSKYIST party, the Movement To Socialism (Movimiento Al Socialismo — MAS) emerged as the strongest left workers' party in last week's Argentine elections.

The MAS presented 3,500 candidates throughout the country, democratically selected in workers' assemblies in factories and areas. Despite beginning the campaign with very little resources, the MAS published 25,000 posters, 3.5 million leaflets, 700,000 stickers and covered hundreds of walls with their slogans.

During the campaign they mobilised 12,000 members and supporters, and on election day 20,000 MAS poll watchers were in action.

The MAS obtained 230,000 votes nationally (1.5 per cent of the total). Of those 150,000 (2.44 per cent) were concentrated in the highly-industrialised Province of Buenos Aires, five times more than the MAS polled in 1983.

In the constituency covering the inner area of Buenos Aires, 52,000 votes (2.6 per cent) were cast for the MAS, four times more than in 1983.

The most significant figures are those of the voting in the Province of Buenos Aires, where there is the most important concentration of the working class. With its 120,000 votes, the MAS took third place, behind only the Radical and Peronist parties.

Inside 1,000 factories where the MAS has activists in the trades unions and doing political work, it obtained between 25 and 30 per cent of the total voting.

In general, the election

By LEON PEREZ

was a disaster for the governing Radical Party headed by president Raul Alfonsín. His regime's economic policy, which gives primary consideration to the repayment of massive debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and foreign banks, has provoked numerous strikes which continued right through the election campaign.

Railway workers, postal workers, shipyard workers, telephone engineers and teachers were all on strike during the hustings. A strike by 60,000 university lecturers went on right through election day.

More fuel was poured on the flames of anti-Alfonsín feeling by the 'democratic compromise' he signed with right-wing army chiefs at Easter, which effectively pardoned them not only for their attempted military coup but for the genocidal crimes carried out under the Galtieri dictatorship.

The strongest section of the divided Peronist movement, the 'Renovators', pol-

led 6.4 million votes, 700,000 more than in 1983. There is no doubt that workers who cast their votes for this extreme right-wing bourgeois party did so to express their hatred of the government.

But neither the Renovator Peronists — whose leader Adolfo Cafiero called on workers to stop their strike campaign — nor any other section of the bourgeoisie, can solve the problem of the \$56 million foreign debt, twenty per cent per month inflation or any of Argentina's other problems.

Theme

The central campaigning theme of the MAS was: 'If you vote for Cafiero you will get another Alfonsín.'

The revolutionary policies put forward by the MAS included the demand for the torturers and murderers of the military dictatorship to be brought to justice; to support and win victory in the working class struggles; for the defeat of the trade union bureaucracy and the building of a new revolutionary leadership of the unions; for a new leadership of the working class to fight for socialism.

The MAS called for a repudiation of the foreign debt, and utilisation of the resources freed to guarantee housing, wage increases, education and health services for the working class. They called for a break with imperialism and the IMF.

The election was another demoralising blow for the Stalinists of the Argentine Communist Party

At Easter, they signed Alfonsín's 'democratic compromise', thus breaking up the 'Front of the People' electoral alliance they had formed with the MAS in 1985. Since then they have abandoned 'left' phrases of the earlier period, pressed a more openly class collaborationist line, and sought the formation of a popular-front style alliance with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties.

They failed. They grouped around them twelve minor left-wing organisations and petty-bourgeois personalities from Peronism and Radicalism — but still received, nationally, a lower vote than the MAS.

The defeat of the Stalinists was highest in the working class areas. In some cases the MAS overtook them by three-to-one.

Trying to adjust to their own 'new reality', the Argentine CP says in their paper 'What is to be Done' that the election result 'reflects the defeat of the popular camp that matured in the decade of the seventies.'

While the Stalinists imply that because they are fading the working class has suffered a setback, the MAS are quite conscious that their own gains represent the readiness of that class to fight and the potential for its own future expansion.

Yugoslav scandal threatens banks

YUGOSLAVIA'S banking and finance, as well as the political leadership, faces a dangerous crisis of confidence with the resignation of Vice-President Hamdija Posderac amid a business scandal that Yugoslav papers have called the 'crime of the century'.

Posderac had been due to become President next year.

Inquiries last month revealed that the Agrokomerc company, which employs more than 13,000 people in Bosnia, tried to conceal losses by issuing nearly £900 million worth of promissory notes with nothing to back them.

Agrokomerc's director, General Fikret Abdic, a member of the Bosnian Communist Party central committee and the federal parliament, was arrested along with several of his staff.

Abdic insisted that Vice-President Posderac had approved his conduct of the state-owned company. The vice-president denied any knowledge of malpractices, claiming he had been cheated, but then resigned last week, saying this was a matter of principle.

A few days earlier, a Belgrade newspaper revealed that security police had visited Bosnian radio's studios and taken away tapes which implicated Posderac.

Nearly 30 Communist Party members are facing criminal proceedings because of the Agrokomerc affair,

and according to Tanjug news agency, at least 130 'face the judgment of the Party and the law' in the Bosnian town of Velika Kladausa.

Agrokomerc, which has had \$80 million a year in exports, is likely to go bankrupt, and sixty-three banks could be dragged under in its wake.

The scandal, biggest in Yugoslavia's post-war history, could not have come at a worse time. Already owing \$20,000 million to imperialist banks, Yugoslavia is about to enter tough negotiations with the IMF for fresh loans and rescheduling of debts.

Inflation is running at 116 per cent, there are 1.2 million unemployed, and eight thousand more workers have been sacked as a result of the new bankruptcies law. It is expected that dozens of factories could close in the next few months under this law.

Workers resisting state pay laws have waged 900 strikes this year, in factories and mines. More than 8,000 are on strike in Belgrade now, mostly at the IMT machine tool factory.

Canada Spy Row

CANADIAN Security Intelligence Service director T. D'Arcy Flynn has had to resign after a court heard the agency gave false information to a judge to obtain a warrant for tapping the phone of a Sikh activist. The CSIS was strongly criticised by a parliamentary report last June for keeping 30,000 files on Canadians.

France-Arab Talks

FRENCH Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond had talks with Saudi leaders and with Syrian vice-president Abdel Halim Khaddam in Jeddah last week.

The French government had kept quiet about the trip, which followed an exchange of messages between premier Chirac and Syria's President Assad.

Death of a young athlete

by TRUDI JACKSON

One of the major talking points here in Germany at the moment surrounds the death of the young woman heptathlete, Birgit Dressel.

Aged only 26, Birgit was one of the bright hopes of German athletics.

She aimed to participate in the World Championships in Rome. Everything was in reach: new records, personal success, national glory and financial security for the rest of her life.

But Birgit died on April 10, having suffered three days of indescribable physical torment from which nothing was able to save her.

Her place in the annals of athletics history will not be as the winner of an Olympic crown or World Championship gold medal, but as the young woman whose body literally collapsed from the over-stimulation of medicants and drugs prescribed with her training to become a superbeing in the world arena of big business sport. The outcry evoked when

physical potential, it is a necessity.

Birgit, for example, took male hormone pills and injected herself with the type of drugs developed by the medical industry for use with cancer patients to repair and build-up muscle tissue.

Medical supervision on a virtually daily basis becomes indispensable to the athlete, monitoring progress as part of their training programme to achieve so-called healthier and stronger bodies.

Der Spiegel, who recently came into possession of the dead athlete's medical file, ran this story as their lead article last week. It showed rows of proprietary brand medicants — 101 in all — found to be part of Birgit's recent intake.

Birgit Dressel's doctor is a professor in Freiburg. He is regarded as the super guru and father-figure of all German sports doctors.

The clinic he runs treats 2,400 top athletes per year.



Birgit went to see him every four to eight weeks.

In the last three days of her life, more than two dozen doctors tried everything possible, including the most expensive treatment available, to remove her pains.

Her father stated very clearly 'Birgit has become a victim of the pharmaceutical industry'. Her mother accused the doctors: 'They did not help but only intensified her suffering.'

This case proves beyond question that to achieve success in sport one has to put one's life at risk.

Birgit Dressel was regarded as being in 'exemplary health'. In reality she was a chronically sick young woman pumped full of medicants.

The sport to which she devoted her life made a cripple of her, destroyed her joints

and prematurely used up her inner organs.

She did not listen to her mother's warnings. 'I need all this,' she told her. 'De-cathletes are taking double the amount I do.'

There is no heavy labour which can even approximately be compared to the effects on the body which competitive sport has on top athletes.

Stamina training makes the heart grow up to three times its natural size, beating only 35 times per minute.

An exceptional few are able to do without drugs and remain free of the damaging effects on their bodies which appear sooner or later from constant over-straining.

There is a whole regiment of sports cripples and early invalids to whom nobody pays any attention.

Live-cell therapy is still

extremely widespread despite all warnings and a recent West German government ban because of its known side-effects.

To build more muscle, sportsmen are taking anabolic which in many countries are forbidden from use in animal fattening feed.

Treble doses of the contraceptive pill is common for women as well as the male hormone testosterone.

Although much criticism was expressed by some doctors of members of their profession, the public prosecutors and expert witnesses in the case could find nobody responsible.

The blame was put by many onto the victim, whom, they said, had out of her own free will and decision taken up competitive sport.

SOUTH AFRICA CAMPAIGNS



Worksop march

BY DAVE TEMPLE AND PAUL HENDERSON

BANNERS flying and flags waving, miners and anti-apartheid activists marched through the centre of Worksop on Saturday.

They chose Worksop to draw attention to the activities of the Worksop-based multinational Burnett and Hallamshire, who are heavily involved with importing South African coal.

The march was organised by Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire NUM and Worksop Trades Union Council. Other banners were from anti-apartheid groups, NUM Durham Mechanics, Nottingham Sacked Miners and Families, the Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press) and Nottingham Socialist Action.

At a well-attended meeting at Worksop Town Hall, Ron Press of SACTU (the South African Congress of Trade Unions), himself imprisoned in South Africa in the 1950s, told the meeting:

'Not only has the Church declared apartheid as anti-Christ but now 9 million workers are organised in COSATU. The UDF is 4 million strong.

'Their ability to express opinions however is very limited. People disappear, bodies are found in ditches. That is why the underground struggle to organise a military force is important. It is necessary for people to arm themselves. That is why the ANC supports the armed struggle.

'The miners' strike woke up the people of South Africa. In South Africa every strike is met with state force. Moses Mayekiso has been arrested and charged with treason.

'A railway leader during the recent railway strike was arrested and so abused that he required psychiatric help. The railway workers' strike was illegal but they fought on. They burned buildings and tore up tracks.

'It is not nice to burn buildings but it had to be done. We have learned to fight fire with fire.'

Praising dockers in Liverpool for refusing to handle Namibian uranium, and the Dublin shop workers sacked for refusing to sell South African goods, Press warned that many more actions like these were necessary.

Warning of the dangers of fragmentation of the opposition to apartheid, Press said 'We must not each paddle our own canoe, we must become a flotilla.'

Itala Pandeleni, of SWAPO, reminded the meeting of the 62 years of illegal colonial rule of Namibia by the forces of the South African state.

'Uranium,' he said, 'is being mined in Namibia illegally and illegally imported into Britain.'

He was pleased to report that Ben Ulenga, leader of the striking Namibian miners, had been released from prison (see story page 11). The pressure of the trade unions throughout the world had

played its part in his release. 'Miners in Namibia,' he said, 'recognised the connection between your struggle and our struggle.'

'We have a common enemy and the oceans no longer divide us. Our victory in Namibia will be your victory.'

'No degree of capitalist organisation can crush a people united and inspired by revolutionary responsibilities.'

Crush

'They have failed to crush the miners' strike in Namibia despite evicting them from their hostels at gunpoint. The support the Namibian Union of Mineworkers received from the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain is crucial.'

'The action of the Liverpool dockers is crucial. But we must build upon it. Remember when we achieve independence we will ask you what you were doing when we were struggling.'

Joe Ashton, MP for Basildon, spoke of the 'conspiracy of silence' surrounding imports of South African coal.

'Out of 20 questions I have tabled in parliament,' he said, 'only three have been answered, making it impossible to find out the true situation regarding these imports.'

He went on to warn that

the plans of the Thatcher government to privatise the electricity industry heralded a massive shut-down of pits. 'Their aim,' he stated, 'is to by-pass British miners altogether.'

Helen Arthur, from Nottingham Anti-Apartheid, told the meeting that Namibia is one of the most militarised countries in the world, with one South African soldier for every six members of the population.

A fiery speech from Betty Heathfield, speaking on behalf of Women Against Pit Closures, drew together the British miners' strike and the recent actions of the South African revolution.

The source of violence, she pointed out, was not people fighting back for their rights to jobs and living standards, but the system of oppression which condemned them to misery and degradation.

'Miners can answer where the source of violence comes from,' she said, 'we know this from our strike. Bad laws are made against working people which we didn't vote for and we will have to fight them.'

Peter Heathfield, general secretary of the NUM, was the last speaker. He pointed out that the problems were the same in Latin America, Asia, America, Africa and Britain.

Stressing that the call for sanctions had been made by the leadership of the South African people, he pointed to the role of the working class in other countries when he said 'Our efforts will determine how long South African people will live in slavery.'

Sheffield Conference

Trade unions must act!

THIS weekend's conference at Sheffield jointly organised by the NUM and the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) is of great importance.

The South African regime is backed to the hilt by world imperialism in its attacks on the black working class.

BY BOB MYERS

South Africa is the largest producer of gold and the regime plays a major role in keeping other southern African countries in economic serfdom to Europe and America.

When the South African NUM took on the mine-owners they were indeed taking on the ruling classes of the world, yet like the British miners they were left to fight alone.

The Sheffield conference must play a part in overcoming this isolation. But before it can do that there is one major problem which must be stated.

Many of the leaders of the AAM and the trade unions here are opposed to solidarity action. The trade union leaders who love to use South Africa to bolster their Sunday militancy know that any action would bring them into headlong confrontation with the anti-union laws.

The AAM leaders demand 'mandatory' sanctions — imposed by Thatcher or the EEC governments or the United Nations.

The only action it calls for union members to carry out is a consumer boycott i.e. individual, not union, action.

Can anyone seriously expect Thatcher, who sought to destroy the British NUM, to come to the assistance of the South African NUM?

Can anyone believe that the governments of Europe who are all seeking to curb the powers of their trade unions are going to support the South African trade unions?

It is a fraud — and the AAM leaders know it. These people — Liberals, Labour politicians, union leaders and members of the Communist Party of Great Britain — who make up AAM policy are the same people who opposed the British miners' strike, who called for ballots, who spoke out against mass picketing and above all made sure that solidarity was confined to putting money in the bucket.

So with South Africa they seek to hijack any action of solidarity and turn it into a futile gesture of protest to 10 Downing Street.

The trade unions can and

must impose their own sanctions. This policy of the AAM is seen in the attitude to jailed metal workers leader, Moses Mayekiso. While Arthur Scargill had rightly called for a campaign to force the release of this man who faces the death sentence the AAM leaders are busily opposing it.

They argue we should campaign for all prisoners, not just Moses Mayekiso. The fact is they will never secure the release of anyone.

The Durham miners who recently took action demanding the reinstatement of Geoff Hartnell and all sacked miners know that if you get a victory on one you aid the fight of all.

Moses Mayekiso, elected leader of the second biggest union in South Africa, must not hang! British trade unions must mobilise to secure his release.

There is a powerful movement emerging here in support of the struggle in South Africa. Last week the NUM demonstrated in Worksop. In three weeks the Liverpool dockers march against the Namibian uranium imports.

Instead of spending their time undermining campaigns and knocking on Thatcher's door, the AAM should be seeking to broaden this movement out into a general boycott of work on South African goods.

The strength of the British and European trade unions must be mobilised against Botha and his allies — the capitalist governments of Europe — especially Thatcher.

The Sheffield conference must call for:

- 1 A campaign for the immediate release of Moses Mayekiso and all South African detainees;
- 2 A blockade of the wharves where South African coal is imported to strengthen this demand;
- 3 A boycott led by the trade unions of all South African goods and services, especially at London Airport where the bulk of South African trade — gold — arrives;
- 4 An end to all treacherous calls for Thatcher to help this struggle.

Docks ban on apartheid goods

BY FRANK FITZMAURICE

'I PLEDGE to the representatives of Africans in struggle that no South African products will be knowingly or unknowingly unloaded in the port of Liverpool.'

The speaker was Jimmy Nolan of the Liverpool dockers' shop stewards Committee who spoke from the platform last week at a meeting organised by the Merseyside Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Trade Union Liaison Committee.

He outlined how, from the formation of the Shop Stewards' Committee, in 1967, the issue of South African goods had been on the agenda. Time after time they had refused to handle South African goods, only to see them taken by other ports.

He was especially bitter towards the TUC and leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union for allowing this to go on without putting up a fight against it.

'One official even used the excuse,' he said, 'that it was

no use banning South African goods without a full European ban.'

Nolan commented that the official had thus 'turned what would have been a goal to be aimed at into an excuse for doing nothing.'

He ended by saying that his best wish for South African workers was that 'they would not fall into the hands of a leadership like that of the TUC.'

A speaker from the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) said that the situation in Namibia is crucial. The country is occupied by 100,000 troops who are killing and abducting activists. The working class pressing its demands is being met with savage repression.

He declared that it is impossible to determine the exact number of detainees as the army of occupation is preventing travel to or from the

north. He said that the wealth of Namibia is being run by South Africa on behalf of the imperialist nations.

A South African Confederation of Trade Unions (SACTU) speaker said that the number of miners out on strike in the recent South African struggle was greater than the number of members of the South African National Union of Mineworkers.

He then went on to say that the adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) meant that 'Socialism was not on the agenda in South Africa' and that 'we must all take our lead from those in struggle and must not impose our policies on them from afar.'

The way to overthrow the apartheid regime was by mass pressure by the people — disinvestment and sanctions. This included workers, bishops and even Tories'. He said that he would even talk to Tory MPs to enlist their help in

pressurising Thatcher to impose sanctions.

In the discussion, another port shop steward put forward very strongly that action by the organised workers was 'not just a component in a "people's sanctions campaign" but was decisive, stemming from the dominant position of the working class in production and the movement of goods.'

South African workers cannot succeed without international assistance — neither can the British workers. They confront the same enemy. Botha and Thatcher have the same masters: finance capital and the multi-nationals.

This is certainly recognised in the programme of COSATU regardless of their demand to implement the Freedom Charter.

If we are in a common struggle do we not have the duty to work out a common strategy and warn each other of dangerous policies?

Diary

Saturday, 19 September. Sanctions against South African Coal conference. SHEFFIELD. Delegate conference organised by AAM and the NUM. Speakers include Arthur Scargill, Cyril Ramaphosa, Betty Heathfield. 10a.m. - 5p.m. Sheffield City Town Hall. Details from AAM, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW. (phone number: 01-387 7966.)

Saturday, 19 September. Labour Movement Conference. BIRMINGHAM. Organised by Birmingham Anti Apartheid. 9.30a.m. onwards. Council House, Victoria Square. Speakers include: Claire Short MP, Sid Platt, West Midlands TUC, ANC, SWAPO, SACTU. Details Pat Tough, phone 021 236 1240.

Tuesday, 22 September. Meeting on Moses Mayekiso at Islington Central Library, Fieldway Crescent, LONDON N1. 7.30p.m. nearest tube: Highbury. Organised by the Revolutionary Communist Group.

Saturday, 26 September. Second Conference for Trade Union Sanctions Against Apartheid. BIRMINGHAM. 11a.m. - 3.15p.m. Carrs Lane Church Centre near Birmingham New Street Station.

Saturday, 3 October. Campaign against the Namibian uranium contract. Regional demonstration, LIVERPOOL. Details from Namibia Support Committee, 01-267 1941/1942.

Saturday, 10 October. National March for the release of Moses Mayekiso. Assembling 12 noon Clerkenwell Green, LONDON. March to South Africa House. Bring banners! Organised by March for Mayekiso Committee.

Saturday, 24 October. AAM National Demonstration for Sanctions. London. Assemble 12 noon EMBANKMENT. March to Hyde Park for 3p.m. rally. Chief speaker: Sam Nujoma, president of SWAPO. Details: 01-387 7966.

THE LONG MARCH — Tour of Britain 1967

Play by the Sarmcol Workers Co-operative. 15-19 September, London Hackney Empire. 21 September, Derby, West Indian Hall. 22 September, Leicester, Highfields Community Workshop. 23 September, Coventry, West Indian Hall. 24, 25, 26 September, Birmingham The Cave. 27 September, Brighton, Labour Party Conference International Evening. 29 September, Brighton, Co-op Hall. 30 September, WALSLEY. 1 October, WALSLEY. 2 October, WALSLEY. 3 October, WALSLEY. 4 October, WALSLEY. 5 October, WALSLEY. 6 October, WALSLEY. 7 October, WALSLEY. 8 October, WALSLEY. 9 October, WALSLEY. 10 October, WALSLEY. 11 October, WALSLEY. 12 October, WALSLEY. 13 October, WALSLEY. 14 October, WALSLEY. 15 October, WALSLEY. 16 October, WALSLEY. 17 October, WALSLEY. 18 October, WALSLEY. 19 October, WALSLEY. 20 October, WALSLEY. 21 October, WALSLEY. 22 October, WALSLEY. 23 October, WALSLEY. 24 October, WALSLEY. 25 October, WALSLEY. 26 October, WALSLEY. 27 October, WALSLEY. 28 October, WALSLEY. 29 October, WALSLEY. 30 October, WALSLEY.

Bring internationalism and the black the British work



During and after the 1907 strike by skilled (mainly immigrant) white miners, inexperienced Afrikaners were brought into the mines. They learnt a great deal from black miners 'on the job'.

THE South African miners strike — three years after the heroic miners' strike in Britain began — is an urgent call to place the working-class movement in Britain on a completely new political basis.

In South Africa today, organised systematic scabbing is taking place on the part of the white mine workers' union (MWU), whose leaders and a majority of whose members can only be described as very close to fascism in their political thinking.

This section of the proletariat of course is in political solidarity not with the third-of-a-million strikers but with the capitalistic empire that directly and indirectly rules all southern Africa and which is served by its ferocious bands of human-killing guard-dogs, the police, army and judiciary.

Let there be no mistake that within the white minority of the

proletariat within South Africa there is mass support for the murder-machine of the South African state in its terroristic assaults upon the strikers.

On the whole and speaking generally, no form of mining anywhere in the world under capitalism could offer more secure conditions of employment — I am not talking about mine safety here — than the deep-level gold mines of South Africa for its upper stratum of supervisory and more highly skilled workers. Up to now these have always been exclusively white and have enforced their own egoistic sectional interest over the whole class through legislation and other means.

It was the historic fate of Marxism in southern Africa that it took root first in this imperialistic, racist, fanatically arrogant, narrow and brutalised upper stratum. To this day the main Marxist current in South Africa has never yet lost the taint of those beginnings. Hence its persecution of David Kitson and many, many others.

In 1922 the first individuals who supposed themselves to be Marxists in South Africa marched under the banner: 'Workers of the World, Unite and Fight for White South Africa'.

This incredibly grotesque, bizarre slogan — promoting racist slogans through the form of Marx's words — gives the clearest illustration in the world of how the dominant upper stratum of the workers internationally has for a century been able to mask its pro-

imperialist self-interest through the organisational forms and phrases of the workers' movement.

Two years later in 1924, this party, the so-called Communist Party of South Africa, actively campaigned for and voted for and helped to elect the first Afrikaner Nationalist government of a unified capitalist South Africa which immediately proceeded to enact its programme of complete segregation down the mine and throughout society.

During most of World War II, it was the task of this so-called Communist Party again and again to prevent the Black workers in the gold mines from mobilising as a class in their own interest through strike action against imperialist capital.

All through this time, it was the argument of this party that the interest of black people and of black workers in particular were best served in the war against fascist imperialism by the hardly less racist and imperialist, all white South African army.

This same army is today slaughtering blacks on a vast scale in Namibia, Angola, Mozambique (where its routine massacres have brought about one of the worst famines in the world), in Botswana, in Lesotho, in Zambia, and not least in South Africa itself.

This party today puts forward the perspective of a harmonious, peaceful, negotiated elimination not only of racism but of capitalism itself in South Africa, the country of the most concentrated dictatorship of capital anywhere in the world.

WITH the exception of certain minor, secondary, qualifying conditions, a single giant capitalistic colossus rules the whole of southern Africa — the Oppenheimer empire.

Nearly all mining, nearly all banking, nearly all industry is ruled by this enormous corporatist conglomerate [the Anglo American group], which serves as the decisive gold producer among all capitalist countries of the world and which controls

the world diamond cartel, with its offices in Hatton Gardens in London.

The South African coal mines, which were intended this year to supply one quarter of the world trade in coal, are decisively controlled by this colossus, which controls also the biggest bond-trading firm on Wall Street, Salomon Brothers.

Both sets of political negotiations outside Azania since 1985 with leading white bourgeois figures have been held directly or indirectly with this gigantic empire of modern slavery. [Lusaka, 1985: ANC and business leaders; Dakar July 1987: ANC and motley cultural/religious leaders].

Yet it is against this world nexus of capital — armed and defended by the killer battalions of the South African police and army — that these one-third-of-a-million mine-workers of Azania have now thrown their combined, collective strength.

This strike is an event of world history. Never before in the whole of history has there been such a massive, single class action by gold miners, anywhere.

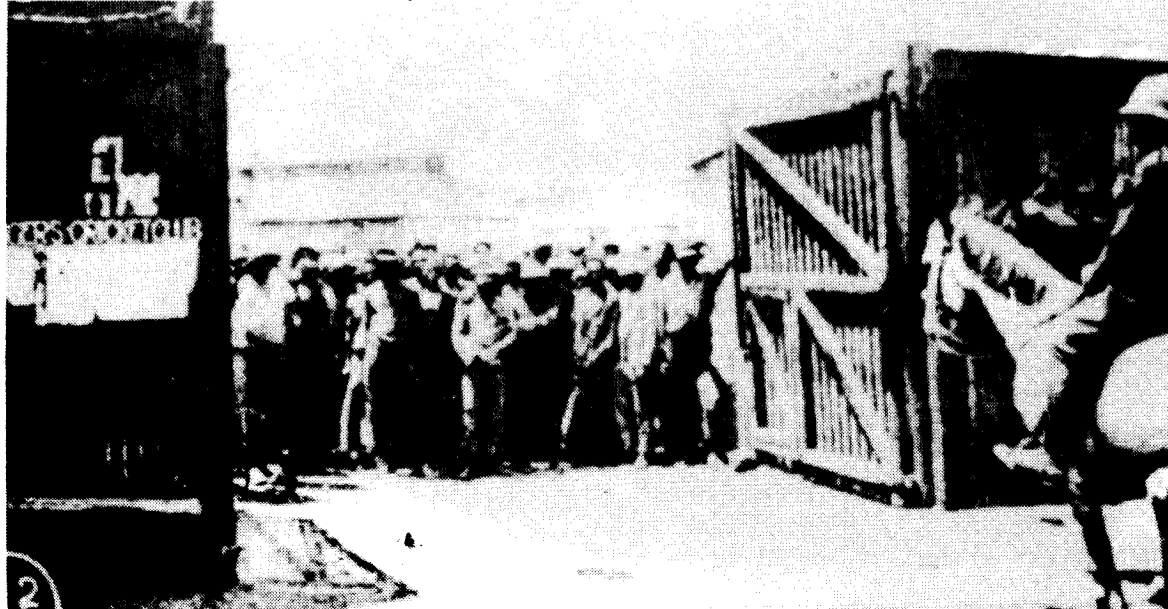
The only action of its kind with which it could adequately be compared was the goldminers strike on the Lena river in northern Siberia in Tsarist Russia in March and April 1912, in which hundreds of miners were shot down by the

THE article below is taken from a speech on Saturday 22 August 1987 at the African Embassy at a City of London meeting on the trade unions and the black struggle in Africa. It deals with the background to the 300,000 black miners, then the history of the racist trade union leaders. Most important, Trewhele discusses the possibilities of the British labour movement. OUR thanks to Paul Trewhele for a

Tsarist state in the classical South African manner.

This 1912 strike by the Siberian gold miners, working on mines owned by British capitalists, was of the very greatest world importance — it revived the whole working-class movement in the Russian empire from the defeats inflicted on it through the crushing of the 1905 revolution, and formed the indispensable class mobilisation of the proletariat between the defeated revolution of 1905 toward the victorious revolutions of 1917.

One quarter of a million Russian workers came out on strike in nearly all the great industrial cities of the Russian empire in outrage at the shootings.



In 1913 there were separate strikes by both white miners and 13,000 black miners. In 1920 the biggest strike in the history of South Africa took place (above) when 71,000 black miners struck, stopping 21 mines.



South African mineworkers were not only divided along racial lines. Migrant workers preferred to be with friends from home and division and hostility. All the strikes by black miners, including the

AFRICA

International revolutionism miners' spirit into working-class movement

From PAUL TREWHELA's August outside the South anti-Apartheid Group rally cooperation struggle in South ground to the strike by over entering its third week, and union of white mineworkers insists on the responsibility of the movement.

allowing us to print the speech.

There can be no doubt that mass shootings of the South African miners would produce the same result in South Africa as well. Lenin's words on the Lena river shootings could have been spoken word for word about the conditions of the struggle of the Azanian miners:

What was characteristic of those events was the complete absence of any kind of elementary legality. The characteristic feature was that an agent provocateur, a spy, a secret police agent, a minion of the Tsar, resorted to mass shootings without any political reason whatsoever. It is this general lack of rights, typical of Russian life, this hopelessness and impossibility of fighting for

particular rights, and this incorrigibility of the Tsarist monarchy and of its entire regime, that stood out so distinctly against the background of the Lena events as to fire the masses with revolutionary ardour.

(*The Revolutionary Upswing*, 17 June 1912. Lenin's Collected Works, Vol.18, Progress Publishers, 1987. Page 104)

IT IS indispensable and compulsory upon us to find the route into the fighting section of the workers' movement in all countries so as to develop real solidarity with the South African miners.

They have struck so magnificently against capital despite any number of deaths by shootings since 1973 when the class movement within Azania revived, and despite hundreds and hundreds of deaths every year through the capitalists' contempt for safety down the mine.

Rather, it would be more correct to say, not despite this constant loss of life, rather because of it, the proletarians of Azania have mobilised for war on capital precisely as the South African Communist Par-

ty has never so insistently preached peace.

Against this never-ending war on the proletariat, the miners of Azania have themselves made war in their own immediate self-defence.

And what has been the response so far of Her Majesty's tame and loyal Labour and trade union opposition here in Britain? Precisely what it was in the miners strike of 1984/1985 — that is to say, for all effective purposes, zero.

But in war for an army section not to move the full weight of its forces to the front when the decisive battle is engaged is treachery and is punished most severely in all armies.

The role of the official trade union movement during the miners' strike in Britain was precisely to isolate the miners, to give overt and covert support to the state and thus to sabotage the fight. That is precisely the role that this stratum of the workers' movement in Britain and internationally is now carrying out in relation to the mineworkers of Azania.

For real effective solidarity with the workers of South Africa, who are the backbone of the fight against racist and oppressive conditions there, a workers' movement of a new kind requires to be built internationally in which the fighting British miners of 1984/1985 will have an important place.

In the fight to build such a movement it is necessary to declare ruthless war on the shameful egoistic spirit of the comfortable and better off, with their callous indifference and hostility to the life-and-death struggles of the wretched, the most rebellious and the most oppressed — a standpoint which finds its inevitable complement in systematic racism, systematic opportunism, systematic hypocrisy and systematic cowardice.

No workers' movement here in Britain is worth a straw that does not place first on its agenda the aggressive defence of the Black and Irish hostages of British capital inside and out of Britain.

Until that time the workers' movement of this country must, in the last resort, always betray the workers of Azania, South Korea, Kenya or Nicaragua, just as it failed the British miners in 1984/1985, and just as it has gaily presided over nearly 20 years of jingoistic carnage in Ireland administered by the British state.

In modern post-war western

Europe it is not Germany but Britain that most brutally dominates and divides its neighbour, with the actual practical endorsement of the labour movement.

Rhodesia

I repeat the words of the Liberal leader David Steel concerning the sole means of survival of the Ian Smith regime in the former Rhodesia for 14 years:

'Those who shipped in the oil were not hostile powers,' says Steel. 'They were British companies, backed by the British Foreign Office, with the connivance of British Cabinet Ministers and the knowledge of the Prime Minister . . . The sanctions-busters were our own leaders!'

(10 September 1978. Quoted in Martin Bailey, 'Oilgate', Coronet, 1979. Page 15)

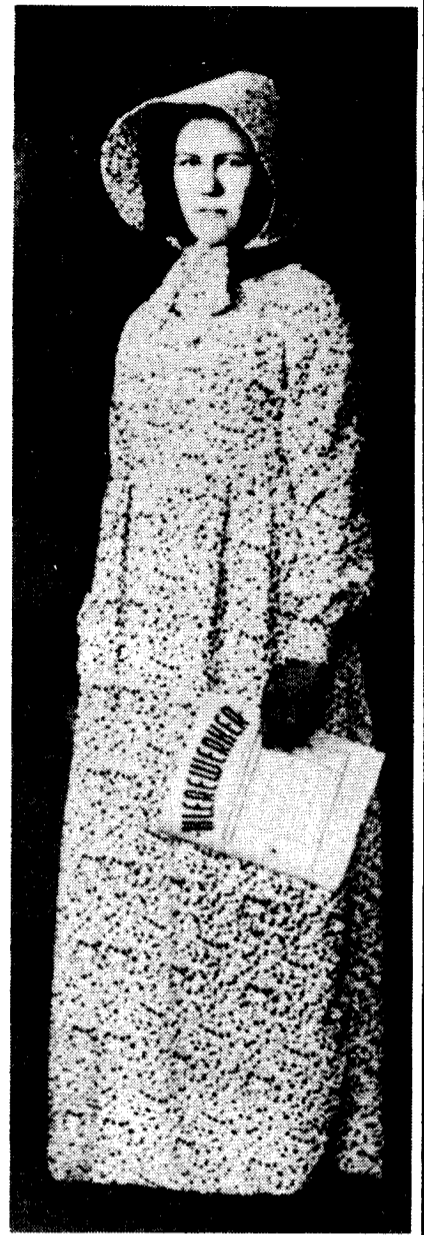
The point is that through all but five of those 14 years, those Cabinet ministers and those prime ministers were of the Labour Party, backed up and endorsed by the trade union movement which of course made no serious challenge to this hypocritical arrangement.

These were the Labour governments of Lords Wilson and Callaghan, of the Cabinet ministers Benn and Ennals and Elwyn-Jones.

Having hypocritically initiated the sanctions campaign against the Rhodesian regime at the United Nations in 1965, these representatives of the British Labour movement then systematically covered up the the oil supply to the terroristic white regime by the international oil cartel — including BP, owned largely by the British state itself — in conjunction with the South African government and the Oppenheimer empire in South Africa.

With such friends the people of South Africa have no need of enemies. Of what use can such a pro-imperialist labour movement be to the blacks of South Africa, bound as South Africa is to the imperialist world not merely by its oil market, not only by investments and by credits and by profits, but literally by chains of gold — the material of money of the banking system?

One must be frank: the international of labour as it exists at present and as it has existed for more than half a century is no match at all for the international of gold, entering the vaults of all the central banks from the labour of



The centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938 stirred up Afrikaner national consciousness. The Garment Workers' Union participated, trying to show that nationalism and class struggle were not contradictory. Above: A GWU member dressed as a 'Kappie Kommando' carries a copy of the union paper 'Garmentworker'

the South African miners.

In a few days, the defiant, unrepentant Nazi Hess will be buried in Bavaria, not far from Wagner's Bayreuth, amid the adulation of the fascists of many countries.

Within the upper stratum of the workers on the gold and coal mines of South Africa, Hess's Nazi politics has found an aggressive and open successor.

The battle is joined, and it takes a form at times not unlike the civil war within the class. Our duty is to bring the spirit of international revolutionism, and the standpoint of the black mineworkers of Azania into the workers' movement here.

In the world historic contest that has opened up in southern Africa, the decisive determinant is that this movement towards revolution unites the class struggle of the workers internationally with the centuries-long fight for emancipation of an oppressed race and an oppressed continent.

To the call of the International and of Marx that the workers of all countries unite, we add the call of the man born 100 years ago this month, who first made a reality of the international organisation of black people, Marcus Garvey:

'Up, up you mighty race'



Labour and the compound system kept black workers divided among the managers encouraged separation along ethnic lines, resulting in a recent strike which ended last month, superseded these divisions.



Above: White trade unionists in action. Their banners say: 'Unity makes might' and 'For freedom and for right'. From its early days the South African Communist Party was tainted with the racialism which dominated the more privileged layers of white workers.

SOUTH AFRICA

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The fight for a Bolshevik party

The struggle for socialism

'In the place of the minimum programme of the reformists and centrists, the Communist International puts the struggle of the concrete need of the proletariat, for a system of demands which in their totality disintegrate the power of the bourgeoisie. . . . (Communist International, Theses on Tactics, 1920)

'The real essence of the present phase of our revolution is not the winning of socialism, but the winning of people's democracy.' ('African Communist', Journal of the South African Communist Party)

'From day to day, in the light of the living facts, we have the chance to expose all the emptiness, all the absurdity, and at the same time the terrific danger represented by the fiction of a middle-of-the-road, intermediate revolution.' (Trotsky)

Trotskyism, the Bolshevism of today, fights for socialism now — Stalinism postpones the struggle for socialism forever!

IN PART Three of this article (Workers Press 5 September 1987) we argued the necessity of struggling for socialism in South Africa — a necessity imposed by the real material conditions of the class struggle.

As Engels said: *'Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex in thought of this actual conflict (between productive forces and mode of production), its ideal reflection in the minds of the class which is directly suffering under it — the working class.'*

The permanent revolution perspective is the scientific socialist means of consciously grasping 'the real essence' of the revolution, and defining the tasks of the revolution as they are thrown up by the objective material conflict that presently is tearing South African society apart.

We concluded that the South African proletariat urgently needs to be armed with a transitional programme for socialist revolution which, in a revolutionary dialectical manner, combines 'minimum' and 'maximum' demands.

The realisation of this programme will result in the complete overthrow of apartheid-capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This approach is identical to the one outlined in the quotation from the Communist International's Theses on Tactics. Trotskyism is the living continuity of revolutionary Marxism.

The aim of the transitional programme of the Trotskyist party in South Africa is no different from the programmatic aim of the Communist International under Lenin: to 'disintegrate the power of the bourgeoisie', by struggling on the basis of the immediate material needs of the proletariat.

Only 'reformists and centrists' insist on postponing the struggle for socialism, and limiting the proletariat now to a struggle for a minimum programme for 'a middle-of-the-road, intermediate revolution', for people's democracy or national democracy.

Workers and youth, don't be fooled by cheap talk of socialism! Fight for a

permanent revolution! Fight for socialism now!

THE whole fabric of black workers' lives bears the ugly marks of apartheid-capitalism.

This is why, when the struggle assumed such profound depth and breadth over the last three years, the whole system of apartheid-capitalism came under attack.

Despite the vacillations of the African National Congress-South African Communist Party leadership, talk of socialism filled the air of the townships, the mines the factories, and other workplaces.

Despite the ANC-SACP warnings against 'ultra-leftism' and cautions to the trade union federation COSATU about adopting socialism as a policy, tens of thousands of workers and youth have instinctively become 'ultra-leftists' and militant fighters for socialism.

The latest 'theoretical' offerings of the Stalinists are a rearguard effort to render its formula of 'two-stage revolution' more profound.

There is talk of 'a continuing and inseparable link between the struggle for democracy and socialism'. There is talk of 'strengthening this link'.

There is talk of 'an uninterrupted transition to socialism'. But talk is cheap! This can be proved by a closer scrutiny of recent propaganda of the SACP.

In 'Umsebenzi — Voice of the South African Communist Party', we read:

'Real liberation will only be complete in all its aspects when we achieve a socialist transformation. But the immediate content of our struggle is to win the aims of the national democratic revolution: a revolution of the whole oppressed people.'

Note that tiny word 'but'. The SACP's advice is profoundly simple: it is all very well to talk about socialism or to dream about socialism, but . . . right now, at this stage, do not attack capitalism, do not fight for socialism.

Instead, concern yourselves only with the immediate content of the struggle, that is, struggle only to win the aims of the national democratic revolution.

This, after all, will not be some narrow, single-class revolution but a revolution of the whole oppressed people.

At the very moment when the most concentrated revolutionary energy of the working class is required, at the very moment when the whole system of apartheid-capitalism is tottering on the brink of collapse, when the greatest socialist fervour is gripping the advanced workers and the youth — the SACP plays the role of dis-



African National Congress representatives Ahmed Qono and Thabo Mbeki met Frederik van Zyl Slabbert (right) and other representatives of the South African bourgeoisie at talks in Dakar, Senegal, last July

orientating the working class and dispersing its political energy, it rises in reformist defence of the threatened capitalist system, it pours cold water on the widespread enthusiasm for socialism.

No democracy without workers' democracy; no democracy without socialism!

DESPITE attempts to spread confusion, workers and youth, in growing numbers, are realising that 'the demand not to transgress the bounds of bourgeois democracy signifies in practice not a defence of the democratic revolution but a repudiation of it' (Trotsky), and, similarly, as Lenin concluded about the Russian Revolution: *'Under actual conditions of revolution, to hold a position of supporting democracy, pushed to its logical conclusions — opposing socialism as "being premature" — meant, in politics, to shift from a proletarian to a petty bourgeois position.'* (Lenin)

The SACP position is, and has always been, a petty-bourgeois fraud. Revolutionary Marxism teaches us that there can be no democracy while a small minority of the population (the bourgeoisie) owns and controls the means of production, thereby wielding enormous material and ideological resources: unlimited funds (to sponsor political campaigns, to bribe and corrupt), the means of communication (newspapers, television, radio) and, when these fail, it can muster the necessary armed, physical means to brutally put down any threat to its existence.

For the oppressed masses to exercise a genuine democracy this stranglehold of the bourgeoisie must be broken. The bourgeois state must be smashed and replaced by a workers' state, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie must be deprived of the source of its power over the majority — it must be expropriated. Thereby the masses will for the first time be in a position to exercise the fullest democracy — workers' soviet democracy.

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat and through soviet democracy, the wasteful, destructive and

anarchic system of private ownership of the means of production — capitalism — must be replaced by a system of social ownership of the means of production and a planned economy — socialism.

That is the the immediate unpostponable goal of the proletariat. That goal will only be attained by fighting for a permanent revolution and hand in hand with the world proletariat in a struggle for a world socialist revolution.

Forward to the world socialist revolution! Expose the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the Stalinists!

AS Trotskyists, even on an international and world plane, we are irreconcilably opposed to a stagist approach in the struggle for socialism.

From beginning to end we act as proletarian internationalists. For us the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism in South Africa coincides with the simultaneous struggle for a federation of southern African socialist states and the struggle for a world socialist revolution.

On the other hand, the Stalinists are consistent in their anti-Marxism. How far removed from proletarian internationalism, from the struggle for world socialist revolution, is the SACP doctrine of two stages, carried to its logical conclusion on a continental plane. Quoting in full:

'Our national democratic revolution is aimed against imperialism, it is the continuation of the African revolution whose ultimate goal (within the context of the historical limit imposed by the anti-colonial character of the struggle) will be the total liberation of the continent, with the emergence of an independent Republic of Namibia and the democratic Republic of South Africa — and these two states will be members of the Organisation for African Unity.' (Majola in the 'African Communist')

The perspective is clearly not that of a revolutionary Marxist but of a petty-bourgeois nationalist. Yet the words are those of a

prominent theoretician of the SACP. It is the same man who writes of 'the uninterrupted transition to socialism'.

Here there is no talk of an immediate goal but of an 'ultimate goal' which will signify 'the total liberation of the continent', the climax of which will be Namibian and South African membership of the OAU!

There is no contradiction in all this. The vision is that of a typical Stalinist whose ideal world is one of peaceful coexistence with capitalism.

It does not matter that the OAU is staffed largely by representatives of Bonapartist regimes and military dictatorships. It does not matter that these regimes are viciously undemocratic.

It does not matter that these regimes vigorously protect the interests of the propertied few, and systematically stifle the aspirations of the great mass of workers and poor peasants who lead a wretched and deteriorating existence.

Let the leaders of a totally 'liberated' Africa gather in the OAU to strive for the common good. But for goodness sake, breathe no word of democracy, let alone class struggle, proletarian internationalism, proletarian dictatorship, socialism, or world revolution!

While courting the support of repressive capitalist regimes in southern Africa against that 'crime against humanity', apartheid, the Stalinists utter not one word about the criminal oppression and exploitation of the masses by those very regimes.

It is entirely against the policy of peaceful coexistence to mobilise the international proletariat against the class rule of the bourgeoisie for a world socialist revolution.

Proletarian internationalism, the highest form of the class struggle, is complete heresy to these charlatans who, while hypocritically swearing allegiance to Lenin, trample every revolutionary Marxist principle into the dust.

To workers, socialism means freedom! To Stalinism, freedom means peaceful

coexistence with capitalism!

ON HOME ground, faced by a working class that strides on to the political stage with a new confidence, the SACP has to resort to juggling with phrases.

It has had to appear to 'go along' with the workers' 'unfortunate infatuation' with socialism. But the recent eagerness of South African workers and youth to embrace socialism has made it difficult to keep up such appearances.

The SACP now warns: *'We must . . . take guard against premature attempts to formally incorporate the objective of socialism into programmes of trade unions and the federation to which they belong.'* ('Umsebenzi', second quarter 1987)

Such 'foolishness', according to our 'Marxist-Leninists', would simply 'narrow the mass character of the trade union movement'.

Furthermore, socialism cannot be adopted by 'proclaiming aims from the top', for this would be tantamount to a bureaucratic and undemocratic imposition on the 'bulk of the membership'.

How relieved the apartheid-capitalists must feel when the 'vanguard' of the South African proletariat firmly advises the most militant workers in the biggest trade union organisation in South African history against the adoption of socialism! And this at a time of revolutionary crisis when the struggle verges on an all-out civil war!

How confused the workers of COSATU must be when its self proclaimed 'vanguard' says it would be undemocratic for hundreds of democratically elected worker representatives, with a constituency of almost a million organised workers, to vote for an end to the bosses' system of apartheid-capitalism and for socialism!

This at a time when the central task is to prepare the worker-masses for an all-out assault on the whole barbaric racist system that oppresses and exploits them!

What is most ironic is that on the very page where 'Umsebenzi' admonishes against socialism in bold print, there appears a photograph of the recent South African NUM conference

SOUTH AFRICA

showing a huge banner proclaiming 'Socialism means freedom!'

Workers, fight for your class interests, fight for socialism! Expose the undemocratic manoeuvres of the enemies of socialism!

HAVING insisted that it would be undemocratic for a COSATU congress, the highest democratic forum in the million-strong organisation, to vote for socialism, the SACP goes on to say:

'The adoption by the recent NUM conference of the Freedom Charter reflects the mass popular mood and understanding.'

The propagation of socialism as a policy, according to the reasoning of the Stalinists, stands in direct opposition to the real strivings of the masses 'in the present phase'. Presently, only the struggle for bourgeois-democratic demands represents a 'realistic linkage between the economic and political struggle'.

In short, a vote for socialism is an undemocratic imposition, but a vote for bourgeois-democracy 'correctly reflects the popular mood'.

This political hypocrisy won't do. The fight for a permanent revolution conception of the South African struggle will be victorious because it alone grasps the real nature of South African society.

The two-stage conception, as the frantic efforts of the SACP patently demonstrate, traps the working class, leaves it hamstrung. It can discuss socialism but cannot fight for it now.

It can struggle against apartheid but it must not attack capitalism. Marxist theory and living experience say that this is counter-revolutionary rubbish.

What better evidence of the correctness of the permanent revolution perspective is there than the concrete developments in the workers' movement in the last few years?

The spread of socialist ideas is no accident. It is not simply some intellectual current that somehow has come into vogue.

No, the ideas of socialism are firmly rooted in the material conditions of the working class, in all the immediate and sharply felt contradictions of a decaying apartheid-capitalist system, which is but a particularly rotten part of the crisis-ridden world system of imperialism.

COSATU fights for transitional demands and for socialism!

The resolutions passed at the founding congress of COSATU, and subsequent decisions, powerfully illustrate these concrete developments.

The decisions themselves are the mature, collective product of countless militant battles by the workers of the unions that gathered to found the giant federation.

They proclaim (and the specific demands and aims are extracted verbatim):

- jobs for all at a living wage;
- worksharing on full pay;
- bosses' profits are not the workers' problem;
- fight for a programme of national works;
- if the bosses say they can't pay they must open their books for inspection by the workers;
- wages should go up automatically with price increases;
- migrant labour and hostels should be abolished;
- workers and their organisations must seize the initiative and build control over the economy;
- we must set up price committees in every work place

to work out what living wage we need.

It is no accident that these demands appear to have been drawn directly from the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International, drafted by Leon Trotsky.

Some would cry 'conspiracy', and suggest that the COSATU demands have been simply 'smuggled' into meetings by 'ultra-leftists', and sneaked into resolutions against the real interests of simple minded shop-stewards and rank-and-file workers.

No, it is apartheid-capitalism itself that has 'conspired' to reveal its true nature.

And workers, hundreds and thousands of workers, through decades of painful experience, through practically scrutinising every aspect of this rotten racist system of private property, have 'thought up' and formulated these 'dangerous' transitional demands that serve as a direct bridge to socialism.

COSATU adopts a permanent revolution perspective and rejects the two-stage perspective!

IT IS not only the formulation of specific demands that reveals how far the semi-spontaneous adoption of a permanent revolution perspective has taken place.

The NUM, the largest COSATU affiliate with over 300,000 members, has said at different occasions (again, the wording is verbatim):

- apartheid and capitalism are two inseparable evils that must be smashed;
- the workers in this country are not only striving for better working conditions on the mines but for a democratic socialist society controlled by the working class.

Furthermore, the metalworkers' union NUMSA, the

second largest affiliate with over 80,000 members, has said:

- We are committed to building socialism;
- the organised working class can only take the lead in the struggle if it has a clear programme and aims, which clarify exactly what is wanted by the working class and what is meant by their demands;
- it should be a priority of the new union and other organisations of the working class to build a clear political programme.

In these formulations we see a conscious and decisive straining by the organised labour movement towards political formulations that correspond with the concrete experience of the urban working class.

And what a rich treasure of experience the last seven or more years have been: the exponential growth of unions, the consolidation of independent unions into two mighty federations, the steeling of the organised workers through numerous strike battles, the growing political confidence of workers as they increasingly participated in mass political strikes and other political struggles.

Every episode of this experience has drummed home in the most decisive fashion one single truth: apartheid-capitalism must go!

This is the indisputable truth that the SACP tries to dispute, that mocks the hollow insistence by the Stalinists on confining the struggle within bourgeois-democratic limits.

They dress up their old formulations to save face with the thousands of proletarian militants who want nothing less than a complete end to the apartheid-capitalist system. Their opportunistic manoeuvres must be thoroughly exposed.

Workers and youth: break from the fraudulent

two-stage position! Build a Bolshevik party!

THE arch-liquidators of revolutionary Marxism can only be stopped in their tracks by bold and ceaseless efforts to construct a genuine Bolshevik vanguard party that proudly holds aloft the banner of the permanent revolution.

Proletarian militants, in every site of political struggle in the townships and workplaces of South Africa, must form communist cells to ensure that the vanguard of the South African proletariat is armed with the last word in revolutionary Marxist theory and practice.

Alongside the enormous possibilities are equally enormous dangers. The confusion sown by the Stalinists already has had debilitating effects within both the labour and the youth movements.

The advances made in COSATU and the rest of the organised labour movement must be built upon with greater vigour. We must have no illusions, and events have already begun to prove this, that the centrist leadership inside the trade unions will buckle under the pressure of revolutionary events unless a rock-solid revolutionary Marxist leadership is forged.

The communist cells must be welded together on the basis of firm principled political agreement into a highly secret, disciplined and democratic centralist organisation — a Bolshevik party.

Time is short, but not too short. Strike now! We have a world to win! Let us march forward with our battle-cry — permanent revolution!

- Break the crisis of revolutionary leadership!
- Arm the proletariat with a programme for socialist revolution!
- Build a Bolshevik party!
- Reorganise the Fourth International!

New moves against unions

IN recent moves to curb South Africa's growing Black trade union movement and interfere with international solidarity, the racist regime confiscated the passport of union leader Jay Naidoo, as he was about to board a plane for Australia.

In South African-occupied Namibia, miners' leader Ben Ulenga has been arrested and could face indefinite detention under so-called 'Terrorism' laws.

Naidoo, general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and prominent in its 'living wage' campaign, had been invited to address the Australian Congress of Trade Unions.

He was the fourth COSATU official to have his passport taken away, and COSATU said denial of the right to travel was 'a further attack on the rights of trade unions'.

Police made a pre-dawn raid on the home of COSATU accountant Diggle Kock near Johannesburg on 7 September, and seized documents.

IN Namibia, where 4,000 copper miners were sacked by Consolidated Goldfields' subsidiary Tsumeb mines for taking strike action, Mineworkers' Union general secretary Ben Ulenga was arrested on 26 August after returning from talks with European unions.

Ulenga, a former political prisoner on the notorious Robben Island where Nelson Mandela is held, had been due to address last week's TUC in Blackpool.

He returned to Namibia knowing he was likely to be arrested. On 18 August, police had seized his fellow-trade unionists Anton Lubowski, National Union of Namibian Workers treasurer, John Pandeni of the Food and Allied Union, and leading members of the internal leadership of SWAPO, the South West African People's Organisation.

Students

Union offices and those of the Namibian Students' Organisation were raided, and documents confiscated. Major-General Koos Moiburgh, Commissioner of Police in Windhoek, said those detained were being held under Section Six of the Terrorism Act. This provides for indefinite detention without trial.

Before leaving London on 20 August, Ben Ulenga said he understood a warrant was out for his arrest. 'Whatever happens to us, whether we are arrested or not, we feel that the growth of the unions must and will continue.' He appealed to British and other unions for support.

In a statement smuggled out just before his arrest in the Namibian capital Windhoek, Ulenga said: 'Any infringement of my freedom can only be seen as an act of evil and unprovoked repression of the Namibian workers, especially the mine-workers whom I represent. These acts of repression and uncalled for provocation against the workers will not weaken our resolve to fight against exploitation and colonial oppression.'

● Tsumeb Corporation, part-owned by Consolidated Goldfields of the UK, has begun evicting striking miners from their hostels, with the help of police and the army.

● Mercedes Benz of South Africa Ltd. gave an ultimatum to 2,800 black workers that they would be sacked if they did not return to work last Wednesday. Workers at the West German company's East London (Cape province) factory had been on strike over pay since 4 August.



Workers and youth have taken up socialist demands in opposition to attempts by the Stalinists to limit struggles to bourgeois-democratic demands. Above: school students in Athlone, Western Cape.

NATIONALISATION

The dream or the nightmare?

PART V

Into the wild blue yonder

THE 103rd Durham Miners Gala sees the Tories still in control of state power. They still have their hands on the machinery which inflicted so much damage in 1984/1985 and since.

One of the key battles Durham miners will have to face is moves towards privatisation.

There is no doubt that the planned changes in the industry — extensions of the working week and working day, deregulating of safety in the mines and stepping up of computerisation and other new technology — are geared to making the pits ripe for take over by private capital.

The change in the industry's name to British Coal is a small indication of things to come.

Thatcher's government, in line with all its other 'free market' policies, is intent on selling off Britain's coal mines once they have been dressed up using public money.

At the moment she has a problem. The world price of steam raising and coking coal has slumped, and oil is cheap and plentiful. She must squeeze more and more out of fewer miners to produce coal at an 'economic' price. She will use public funds to invest in the more promising pits, while letting others go to the wall.

Meanwhile, it is likely she will privatise the electricity industry — our main market. No doubt the CEBG will take coal from the world market at prices with which British coal cannot hope to compete. Even though the CEBG is still in the public sector it is taking Colombian coal. That coal is owned by the energy multinational company Exxon and mined by poorly-paid labour.

In Durham, the NCB intends to push for more opencast coal. There were a rash of applications for new opencast sites this year.

The latest is for a 3.4 million tonne site at Marley Hill — a village where the colliery was closed only four years ago. The West of Durham could become one big strip mine if the government and the NCB have their way.

The most superficial and cynical stroke played by the state is the establishment of the British Coal

THIS year is the 40th anniversary of nationalisation of the coal industry. To mark the event, Durham Miners' Association produced a commemorative souvenir brochure for their Gala, giving an incisive account of what nationalisation has meant to the Durham coalfield. As a union they feel it is important to raise questions as to why a whole coalfield has been virtually destroyed under public ownership while millions of tonnes of coal have been sterilised. To battle against privatisation, they say, they must understand how they have fared under state control.

In 1947 nationalisation seemed like a dream, but in the 1980s that vision seems tarnished. The Durham Miners' Association hope their analysis is of benefit to those who may, once again, have the chance to bring their industries under public ownership. WORKERS PRESS is pleased that the Association has given us permission to reprint their account. Copies of the souvenir brochure are available from them — see advert right.

The year the state struck back

IT WAS March 1, 1984, when the miners of Cortonwood were told that their colliery was to close in five weeks. By Monday, March 5, the Yorkshire Area NUM set the 1984/1985 struggle for jobs in motion by announcing strike action for its 58,000 members. The following day Ian MacGregor announced his plan to cut 20,000 more jobs from the industry through 20 pit closures in a year.

The NUM took him at his word that collieries would close on 'economic grounds' and calculated that 70 pits and 70,000 jobs could go in three years.

Most of Durham had been called out on strike on March 12, as had Kent and South Wales.

We need not dwell on the suffering inflicted on the mining communities of this country and Britain as a whole throughout that long year. It has been well documented elsewhere through personal reminiscences, photographs, books, plays and films. It was a drama in which those involved remember every detail.

What needs to be said is that miners and their families felt the full force of the British State, which in 1947 may have seemed so benign and helpful.

Simple rights, once taken for granted, disappeared. Miners were denied the freedom to travel and the right to approach fellow workers to present their case. Whole villages were laid siege to by police who wore the garb of Latin American dictatorships. Communities were battered to the ground by riot police running amok.

Out of that siege came the great strength of men and women in the communities. The women in par-

ticular emerged as a major political force which sustained the industrial struggle of their menfolk.

In the North East they created one of the largest support groups, built out of 56 organisations in Northumberland and Durham.

Miners were fighting not just for their own jobs or those of their sons. They were battling for the same ideal which inspired the campaign for Nationalisation in the days of the coal owners.

All that was demanded was peace of mind and guarantees for their children to have a better life. Nationalisation, they hoped, would set them free from the ebb and flow of markets and the cruel order of the profit motive. In that belief they were fighting for every working class person. But to succeed they needed everyone to fight alongside them.

In the end that was not to be. The trade union and labour leadership could not fully support the miners' demands against the state. Even though they supplied financial help by the millions, and some workers such as dockers and railwaymen struck in support, the miners' battle was essentially isolated from the rest of the labour movement. The NUM's problems were added to by the lack of unity in its own ranks, with Nottinghamshire miners working throughout the year.

The Tories, by skilful use of the state, an open public cheque book and years of strategic planning, engineered the massive defeat which beset the NUM in March 1985.

And they are still campaigning on the spoils of that victory. Miners, in Ian MacGregor's words,

are still 'paying the price for their insubordination'.

After the battle

IN THE aftermath of the strike Durham had lost six pits — Herrington, Horden, Eppleton, Sacriston and Seaham, with Bearpark closed during the dispute.

Over 4,500 jobs have been lost in the coalfield and the coal board is looking to cut back further.

Three Durham collieries fought brave campaigns to keep their pits open. The coalfield was in the forefront resisting the coal board, despite the defeat of the strike.

The Independent Colliery Review procedure was one of the gains of the strike. An independent arbiter was to be the last line of appeal against proposed closures.

But the NCB never intended to abide by the independent decisions, as they showed when they went ahead with the closure of Bates pit in Northumberland, despite a recommendation that it should be kept open.

Horden miners fought a long drawn out battle through the independent review, but their efforts were thwarted. Eppleton men, too, campaigned through the same channels, but to no avail. Seaham also mounted a campaign to save the pit.

Since the strike Durham has been in the forefront of resistance to the harsh treatment dished out

by the new hard line management.

Durham miners have staged an overtime ban throughout the county and their comrades in the Durham Colliery Mechanics Association held a series of one day strikes.

The action was aimed at the board's refusal to give a pay rise, reinstate men sacked during the strike and the closure of Seaham colliery.

There have also been a number of strikes at individual collieries such as Westoe and Murton.

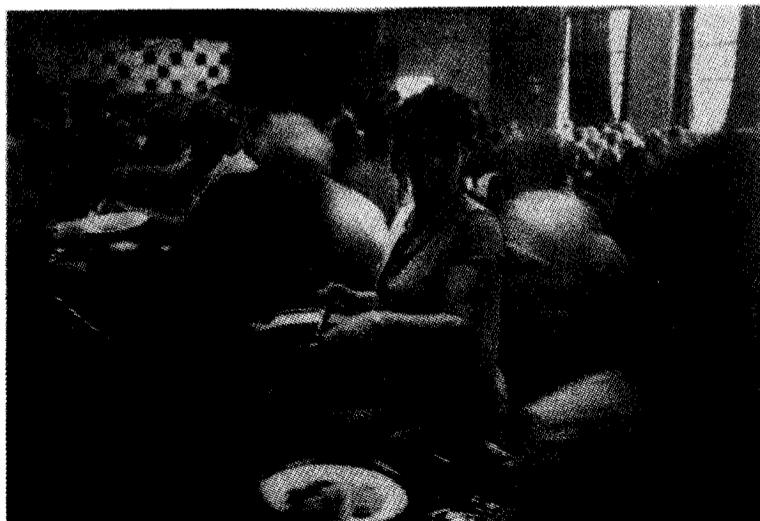
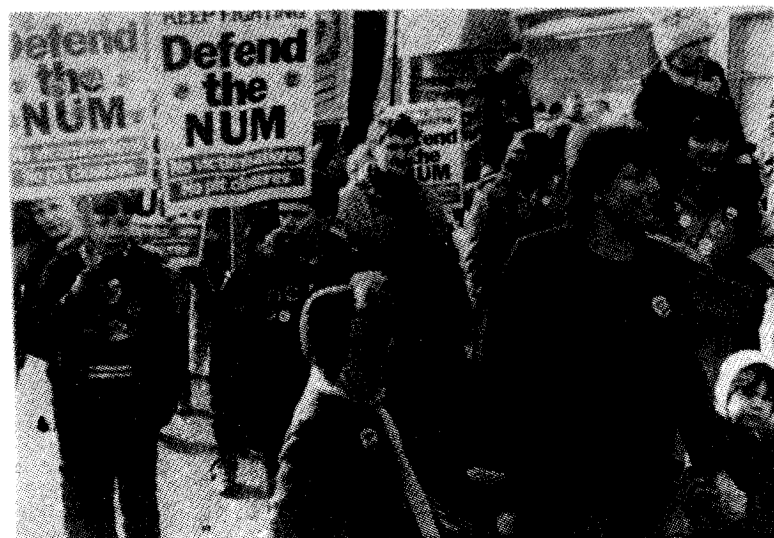
Management have tried to consolidate their victory during the strike by scrapping the conciliation machinery in the industry and over-riding pay negotiations by imposing pay deals on NUM members.

They also used the breakaway union, the UDM, as a foil in pushing through changes.

For the Durham Miners Association, as well as the other federated bodies of the NUM, cosy deals with governments are a thing of the past. They now find themselves in direct conflict with a hostile management spurred on by a government committed to private enterprise and the free market.

The industry is still nationalised, but preparations are being made to shed the hard fought gains, such as statutory regulation of the mines. Management are also pushing for dramatic changes in the working day and week.

They are all moves towards selling off the nations mines to private capital.



PERSONAL COLUMN

Peter Fryer

In less than two months' time there falls the hundredth anniversary of one of the pivotal events in the long struggle for freedom of speech in Britain.

On 'Bloody Sunday', 13 November 1887 (not 20 November, as I wrongly stated when writing here about Annie Besant some time ago), over 80,000 Londoners defied a ban on meetings in Trafalgar Square and were brutally dispersed by police and troops.

This anniversary is of the utmost topical interest, and not only because the freedoms won by the British working class in struggle are currently under attack. For the immediate background to 'Bloody Sunday' was the struggle for Irish freedom, and this link shows yet again how closely the fortunes of the British workers have, historically, been tied up with those of their brothers and sisters in Ireland.

In 1887, Ireland was seething with discontent over the prosecution of the patriot William O'Brien, MP and militant leader of the Land League's 'Plan of Campaign'. A protest meeting at Mitchelstown, County Cork, had been fired on, and a coroner's jury had found the police responsible for the deaths of three men.

At the beginning of November O'Brien was in Cork jail and other Irish patriots were also imprisoned, together with an English supporter, the poet Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. The Metropolitan Radical Federation, strongest working-class organisation of the day, called a protest meeting in Trafalgar Square.

For months there had been bitter unrest among London's unemployed, who in February 1886 had stoned the windows of Pall Mall clubs and looted West End shops; and it was no doubt this unrest which prompted Sir Charles Warren, chief commissioner Metropolitan Police, to prohibit the protest meeting and all processions near Trafalgar Square.

The Tory press bayed its support for the ban. The Liberal 'Daily News' took the line that the

Free speech and 'Bloody Sunday'

Square was 'not a suitable place for a constant succession of public meetings', which brought the following rejoinder from William Morris (one of the leaders of the Socialist League that had broken away from H.M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation three years before):

'Discontent is growing on all hands, and the Government, with the usual wisdom of reactionaries, thinks the safest course is to sit upon the safety valve. . . . If an impressive protest is not at once made against this act of headstrong folly, the liberty of free speech in London is gone, and will have to be slowly and laboriously won back at the cost of great suffering to those whom conscience and duty put forward in the battle.'

On Sunday, 13 November, processions with bands and banners converged on Trafalgar Square from all parts of London: Notting Hill, the East End, Bermondsey, Deptford, Battersea, and the traditional radical gathering-point of Clerkenwell Green.

But, as the processions came to the bottlenecks of Waterloo Place, St Martin's Lane, and Westminster Bridge, they were attacked and broken up by 4,300 police who lay in ambush in side streets, used their truncheons freely, and took special delight in ripping up the decorative banners. The marchers defended themselves as best they could, with sticks and banner-poles.

Thousands managed to reach the Square, which was lined four deep by police on all sides. Among those who broke through the cordons were the two leaders of the Battersea contingent: John Burns, who was to lead the historic dockers' strike of 1889,

and the MP Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, whose colourful and unmistakable figure was a target for furious police attack.

Officer after officer lashed out at his head with fist or truncheon, and he was arrested with blood pouring down his face. But he wasn't the only target. He wrote afterwards in Morris's journal 'Commonweal':

'I saw repeated charges made at a perfectly unarmed and helpless crowd; I saw policemen not of their own accord, but under the express orders of their superiors, repeatedly strike women and children; I saw them invariably choose for assault those who seemed least able to retaliate.'

Though the Riot Act was read and 300 Grenadier Guards with ammunition and fixed bayonets came on the scene, followed by two squadrons of Life Guards, the fighting went on until late in the evening. Over 150 people were taken to hospital, and three of those later died of their injuries; 77 police casualties were reported, including one constable said to have been stabbed with an oyster-knife.

Nearly 300 demonstrators were arrested, among them Burns and Cunninghame Graham, who were each imprisoned for six weeks for 'unlawful assembly'. One of the witnesses was the writer Edward Carpenter. Asked in court if he had seen any rioting, he replied: 'Not on the part of the people.'

The people were back in Trafalgar Square on the following Sunday, 20 November; it was then that a socialist worker called Alfred Linnell was killed outright by a baton blow from a mounted police-

man. Though the authorities tried to hush the matter up, a vast procession of 120,000 mourners marched behind his coffin from Soho to Bow Cemetery. William Morris, one of the speakers at the graveside, memorialised Linnell in his moving 'Death Song'

*Not one, not one, nor thousands must
they slay*

*But one and all if they would dusk the
day.*

'Bloody Sunday' was not a defeat, but the starting-point and inspiration of a massive free-speech campaign waged against the background of an upsurge of working-class militancy and the rise of the 'new unionism'. And in 1892 the government finally gave way, and conceded the right of meeting in Trafalgar Square.

I haven't yet heard of any plans to mark the hundredth anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday', nor is there a lot of time left to organise a suitable commemoration. We owe so much to our predecessors of 100 years ago — our grandfathers and great-grandfathers — that it would be a great shame if none were organised. In fact, I'd call it a scandal.

FURTHER READING: The best recent account of 'Bloody Sunday' known to me is in 'Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography', by Cedric Watts and Laurence Davies (Cambridge University Press, 1979). This ought to be easy to obtain through local libraries.

There's a lively eyewitness account in Charles J. Finger's autobiography, 'Seven Horizons' (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co. Inc., 1930), but this may be a hard book to get hold of since, so far as I know, it was never published in Britain.

A commemorative pamphlet by T. L. Humberstone, 'Battle of Trafalgar Square', appeared in 1948; and William Morris's writings on 'Bloody Sunday' were usefully reprinted in 'Journal of the William Morris Society', vol. I, no. 1 (Winter 1961), pp. 28-31.

BILL DOUGLAS's new film 'Comrades' (PG) is like a cinematic poem or a set of variations on a theme suggested by the story of the Tolpuddle martyrs. It is very beautiful, almost indulgently so; and delivered at a pace so controlled as to seem almost languorous.

Yet it is based on cruel events which move so rapidly in directions over which the main participants had no control.

If you go to it expecting a definitive study of the six men of Dorset legally framed and transported to Botany Bay in 1834 for forming a union to resist wage reductions, you will be disappointed.

Three hours long, it begins with a brief depiction of machine-breaking, rick-burning and official brutality in south-west England in 1830, which is immediately counterposed to the age-old virility symbol on the hill at Cerne Abbas.

It then proceeds through a series of episodic images of the events of 1834 and the stories of the transported men in the penal colony, ending with their being pardoned and returned to England in 1837, long before their seven-year sentence had been served.

A final caption reveals that, despite their triumphant return, most of the martyrs later emigrated to Canada, but, in keeping with the spirit of the film as a whole no explicit lessons are drawn.

On its own terms, 'Comrades' achieves near perfection. Almost every frame, whether from the dark, Dorset sequences, or from the aggressive light of the Australian section, could be abstracted and hung in an art gallery. The film manages to be deliberately allusive about many aspects of the story, yet to be never boring.

If you feel the British cinema is long overdue a major epic about the history of the working class, and that Bill Douglas's uncompromising, brilliantly bleak trilogy on his upbringing in an East Lothian mining community (released in the 1970s) suggested that he might be the person to make it, your initial reaction to 'Comrades' might be frustration, even anger.



The context of the developing workers' movement, the general unions, the disillusionment with the bourgeois parliamentary reform of 1832, is not even sketched. Nor is it made at all clear that the source of the violent injustice meted out on the Tolpuddle men was the Whig government of Lord Melbourne, not merely a backwood group of Dorset landowners.

There was a great deal more to the decision to pardon the men than the mobilisation of the middle-class, liberal conscience in the London-Dorset committee. It was tied up with the complex process in the 1830s which saw the industrial capitalists coming decisively on to the political scene and establishing their authority over the aristocracy in order that both could exercise state power over the working class.

But if you're prepared to be patient about that long-awaited epic and accept 'Comrades' as what it is, there is a great deal to be got from it.

The film is really about storytelling, about the handing down of tradition, about film-making, about what happens to history. This is established not only by the Cerne Abbas symbol but by the constant appearances of the

REVIEW

Scots actor Alex Norton in a variety of roles — mainly (but, annoyingly, not always) to do with the communications technology of the time.

Douglas's other device — the casting of relatively unknown actors in the principal parts and of familiar faces (the aristocracy of the profession, as it were) in minor roles as figures of authority — seemed to me less successful. The leading players are generally superb, but the shooting stars mainly produce cameos of themselves.

But maybe this too is deliberate and Douglas is saying: 'Look, I had to put them in; this is what

happens to the real story of the struggle — its simplicity gets confused by the prevailing assumptions of the moneybags.'

For anyone whose stomach turns at the annual turn-out of bureaucratic 'new realists' from the TUC to commemorate the principled Tolpuddle men, it may be that 'Comrades' will be an inspiration to find out more about who they really were and what happened to them; or to rethink old knowledge in a fresh way.

It certainly cannot be accused of seeking to provide a substitute for thinking for yourself.

TERRY BROTHERSTONE

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NY Art Now

Saatchi Gallery, 98a Boundary Road, St John's Wood, London.

CONTROVERSY and contradiction which today accompany all new art shows are both well to the fore in the exhibition just opened at the Saatchi Gallery.

Charles and Doris Saatchi — whose gallery it is — have been on another of their spending sprees, this time to New York's East Village, an artist's colony which has only been in existence for approximately five years.

Work of nine of the artists lately identified with the area is here on display and open to public viewing on Friday and Saturday afternoons.

(To give some idea of the turnover of fame and fortune to which young artists are exposed, eight of the artists included in this exhibition were not given a mention in an extensive review of the East Village scene which appeared in an American arts magazine in the summer of 1984.)

Virtually all the exhibits quite deliberately evoke the work of earlier art trends — what, after all, is the best art about if not about art? — but the most obvious acknowledgement is, of course, to Marcel Duchamp who set art-lovers and non-art lovers in a flap 70 years ago from which they have still to recover (if they ever do).

The Saatchis' practice of influencing the taste and direction of the contemporary art market cannot for one moment be overlooked. Theirs is not the over-indulgence of millionaire eccentrics. These are very shrewd and calculating operators, projectors of ruling class ideology, and the riches they have been ploughing into art acquisition as a means of investment has brought a whole new aspect to the process.

Whilst there have been reports that some artists are now resisting selling their work to the Saatchis to protect their future careers and reputations, their policy of bulk-buying (and therefore bulk-selling where applicable) has played and will undoubtedly continue to play an enormous role in the direction contemporary art takes.

Young and little-known artists whose work engages the attention and interest of the Saatchis' cheque book understandably see the association as a launch-

pad to international acclaim. But how long can such a situation last? Art product as investment is but one of the more recent aspects of the corrupt and degenerate manifestations of a fast decaying capitalist system.

The search for profit is still the name of the game, and the ruination of a few hundred creative lives and reputations mangled in the process (not to say millions in the wider context) is of no consequence to the likes of the Saatchis.

The one notable difference is that the artists being ruthlessly exploited are not dead ones but very much alive and active. (Of course a few do achieve a degree of wealth in the meantime, but only a few.)

Having made this point at some length the show in question, NY Art Now, is recommended for its exuberance, vitality, wit and audacity. There are a great many thought-provoking pieces in the show. Of course the overall display of bourgeois individualism is nothing to be surprised at.

Yes, the stacked cavasses, da-glow colours, vacuum cleaners, chrome bunny, floating footballs and digital clocks are here all staking their claim as works of art.

I think the show is a must, especially for anyone concerned to assess the social role of the artist in society.

Brief as this review is, its main object is to stimulate discussion on that precise topic in the pages of Workers Press amongst readers who visit the show which I urge as many to do as possible.

JEFF JACKSON

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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LISTINGS

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

SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN AGAINST STRIP-SEARCHING Public launch including discussion, exhibition, videos, meetings. Saturday 19 September, 1.00p.m.-5.00p.m. Cowane Centre, Stirling.

CONFERENCE ON REPATRIATION OF IRISH PRISONERS Speakers include ex-prisoner, prisoner's relative, Gareth Peirce (solicitor), National Association of Probation Officers. Saturday 19 September, 10.00a.m.-5.00p.m. Trade Union 7% Community Centre, 2a Brabant Road, Station Road, London N22. Followed by Evening Social.

HANGERS ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT Proceeds to Sarmcol Workers in South Africa. Saturday 19 September, 8p.m. Emerald Centre, 263 Hammersmith Road, Hammersmith Broadway. Live music with: German Girl, Disco and Late Bar. Waged £4 Unwaged £2. Free to victimised workers. Organised by Hammersmith and Fulham Trades Union Council.

SUPPORT MORDECHAI VANUNU! CND Vigil at Israeli Embassy. Monday 21 September, 12.30.-2p.m. Palace Green, Kensington High Street.

Camden Unemployed Action Centre

Statement by the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party

THE Workers Revolutionary Party stands unreservedly for the maintenance of the Camden Unemployed Action Centre (CUAC) against the cuts policy of the Labour Council.

On 18 July 1987 an article was published in Workers Press about CUAC. This complains that those in charge of the Centre were very lax in their attitude to some people who use it when they displayed racist and sexist tendencies. It also alleged that intimidation and violence were used against women and black people.

The article provoked opposition on the grounds that the allegations were untrue and that, since CUAC is under threat of closure, any criticism plays into the hands of the right wing.

Although our Party has no actual evidence of the allegations, we know that such things can occur and our members are expected to take a stand against racism and sexism wherever they arise, and not sweep these things under the carpet.

In October 1985 the WRP expelled G. Healy for sexual abuse of women members and assault of members. We

believe that these practices cannot be separated from politics, and it is impossible to build a leadership against the class violence of the Tories whilst turning a 'blind eye' in our own movement.

The working class movement itself must overcome these problems. We know from experience that there must be no hesitation in taking whatever action is necessary to investigate and deal with anti-working class actions — far from weakening the fight against the class enemy such actions strengthen this fight.

Since the letters on this controversy appeared in Workers Press, further letters and articles have been received. We feel sure that readers of the paper will agree that this important issue is best resolved in the working class movement in Camden rather than being followed in detail in Workers Press.

In the end it is only by taking a firm stand on socialist principles that a leadership will be built to defeat the Tories and the capitalist state which gives rise to unemployment, homelessness and violence.

BUS SHOWDOWN

● FROM PAGE 16

was nothing unlawful in the proposed procedure.

In other words the drivers could be sacked, offered new contracts at lower rates of pay and longer hours — and if they declined they were not entitled to any redundancy payments.

The strike campaign

IN A series of ballots, London busworkers voted for industrial action. In a message to busworkers following the court case the London Bus Committee said: 'We may have lost our case before the court, but we have not lost our legal right to fight.'

The Norbiton drivers, who had already been striking for one day a week since the announcement, were told early in August that, if they continued, London Buses would be forced to hand the routes back to LRT and the garage would close.

The Norbiton drivers' response was to step up the action to two days' strike per week. This was in the spirit of the busworkers' delegate conference decisions, to refuse to budge from the principle of 'no wage cuts or longer hours'.

An offer from the government's Arbitration and Conciliation Service (ACAS) to bring the two sides together was rapidly grasped by TGWU full-time officials. After 27 hours of talks, and a joint investigation team looking at the management's proposals, the average rostered earnings of the drivers at Norbiton still remained £185, and management still demanded the right to rota up to 45 hours a week with a maximum working day of 9 hours.

A TGWU bus delegate conference on August 20 received a report of these discussions and voted to call a 24 hour strike the following day; engineering staff had already voted to strike.

With London strike-bound, London Buses announced that they could no longer operate the Norbiton routes to the standards set in the tender and were giving them back to LRT.

This crude threat to the Norbiton workers did not have the desired effect — they voted, cheering, by 97 to 28 against the ACAS proposals. They would rather see the garage closed than give up the principle of the main agreement.

The fraud of tendering was exposed! The 'fierce competitor' whose existence was used to cut wages and lengthen hours has yet to come forward to take over the routes. At the time of writing, LRT says it has not been able to find another operator.

A service in crisis

EVEN without the effects of de-regulation, London bus services are in great difficulties because of cutbacks. At Norbiton itself, 30 per cent of services cannot be run because so many busworkers have left or are off sick. Even without the projected increase of hours, stresses are enormous: contributory factors are traffic congestion, the effects of One Person Operation (OPO) under which busworkers have not only to drive but also to deal with fares, complaints, and problems of disabled and elderly passengers. So there is a high rate of high blood pressure, ulcers and other stress complaints.

Despite the introduction of two-way radio and assault screens, around 1000 busworkers are assaulted each year. George Pantney of Thornton Heath Garage lost an eye when hit with a bottle. Conductor Babu Shah, from Leyton, was stabbed in July and despite four emergency

operations died in August; despite appeals from his family to call off a planned strike, over 1000 busworkers attended the funeral.

Under these conditions management are desperate to find a way of compromising the union and get an agreement signed for lower pay and longer hours.

In the face of busworkers' intransigence, London Buses boss Beasley set up a meeting between TGWU general secretary Ron Todd, LRT chairman Sir Keith Bright, with himself and TGWU national bus secretary Cliff Twort.

Bright and Beasley were desperate to demonstrate, to the government, their ability to cut wages; Todd and Twort, believing that the working class cannot win a battle with Thatcher, were looking for a way out.

It was agreed to set up a 'Think Tank' — made up of a limited number of management and union representatives, similar to the working parties which had been set up to cut costs at the Aldenham and Chiswick works — to look at the problems of future tendering. As for the tenders won by London Buses at Norbiton, Harrow and Woolwich, Bright insisted it was too late for anything to be done.

The London Bus Committee reported to a special delegate conference on Wednesday September 9 its willingness to discuss tendering with London Buses — but only if the full elected-committee was present.

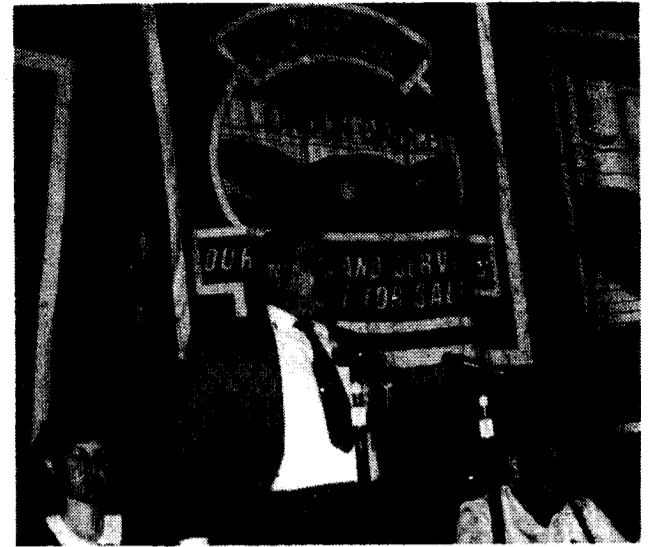
No deal at Norbiton

LONDON Buses, faced with constant industrial action at Norbiton, offered the workers jobs in other garages covered by the union agreement. A resolution calling for rejection of the offer, since it could not solve the basic problem of tendering, was debated by the London bus delegate conference — and it agreed to leave the decision to the Norbiton workers themselves.

On September 11, the Norbiton workers — who have been on strike almost every week since London Buses won the tender in February — received the report of London Buses' proposal with overwhelming hostility. Now they will ballot on whether to resist it on Thursday September 17.

The Norbiton busworkers are the acknowledged leaders of the fleet; they have led by example. Every garage representative knows that what is posed is further action in their support. It is clear that no worker can expect to avoid this confrontation with the Tory government.

A letter to every busworker from London TGWU District Secretary Terry Allen, and Bus Section Divisional Officer Ken Fuller, sent out before the offer was made, sets out the position clearly. It called for all busworkers



Peter Gibson speaking at London Bridge conference last week

to act together to fight the 'creeping pattern' across London; each garage picked off in its turn.

The wider implications

THE DEFENCE of wages and conditions on the buses clearly cannot be separated from the earlier fights over Aldenham and Chiswick works. Nor can it be separated from the Tories' attacks on other public services.

The lessons of in-house tendering in hospitals, school cleaning and meals must be learnt. As soon as a compromise is made in an attempt to defend jobs, the employers come back for more cuts, and experience shows that no jobs are saved.

Bus de-regulation in the rest of the country has resulted in massive cuts in services, the sacking of drivers and engineers and the closure of garages. In Greater Manchester alone 500 buses were taken off the road in one year. In many rural areas bus services have disappeared altogether.

In London apart from separating road, rail and engineering into different companies, London Buses has also been split into five separate districts. A restructuring programme planned for the next five years aims to make each garage a separate organisational and financial unit, ready-made for management buy-outs or privatisation.

Their plans are for a separate union agreement for each garage enabling them to play off one against another. Indeed in the new Red Arrow base at Walworth they have gone even further, splitting drivers into a number of separate teams (brown, blue, green etc) each under an assistant manager with the object of playing one group in the garage off against another. (As one driver exclaimed when told which team he was in: 'I've always wanted to be a brownie!')

Because unemployment has not hit the south-east so hard as other areas, there is



Pickets defiant

still a shortage of PSV drivers, and this has made it more difficult for the employers to impose wage cuts than in other parts of the country. Neither can London Buses recruit from high-unemployment areas outside London because of the chronic shortage of council housing and the inflationary prices of private dwellings.

At a recent national conference of bus managers complaints were made that they could not reduce bus driver' wages below £3 per hour in London, while in the rest of the country they had at times gone below £2.

London busworkers have now been through a number of experiences. They have demonstrated that there is no answer to the problems of the working class in the courts, or at ACAS: they have voted consistently to reject any lowering of wages and refused to sign anything which differs from the main agreement. Many have voted with their feet by leaving the job. Some have moved to other garages to work under the main agreement.

London Buses has sought to avoid an all-out confrontation with the whole fleet by seeking to get the wages cut garage by garage. The defence of pay and conditions by the London Bus Section delegate conference, which has stood firm on the main agreement, has so far blocked their path. But management is clearly desperate for a signed agreement with the union for lower rates of pay and longer hours at a big bus garage in order to break the main agreement.

London Buses now seeks to use the method of sucking the union into talks which are really about how to make tendering work. They are attempting to get the same kind of collaboration from the union they got at the Chiswick and Aldenham works which led to the run-down and eventual closure of the works.

But the busworkers have made it clear — there will be no meetings between management and full-time officials where backdoor agreements can be reached over the heads of the elected London Bus Committee.

But the provision of a safe and effective public transport service is not a matter for bus and rail workers alone any more than the provision of education is only a matter for teachers or the health service a matter only for doctors and nurses.

At the TGWU biennial conference in July the London Bus Section put forward a 'Passenger's Charter'. This won the unanimous support of the conference, and thus became the policy of the whole union. A further article will deal with this.

The London Bus workers have begun, and must now continue, to win support from the rest of the trade union movement, and from the communities they serve. Their fight is part of the fight of the whole working class against Thatcher.

SHOWDOWN ON BUS JOBS, PAY

LONDON bus workers are now in the front line of the fight against the Tory government's attempts to impose de-regulation on all transport services.

To prepare de-regulation, London Regional Transport (LRT) intends to split the bus company into individual garages, each with its own separate agreement, with lower wages and longer hours for busworkers, and cuts in services to passengers.

With London's integrated bus system — and its workers — thus split, the road to de-regulation would be clear.

De-regulation has already been introduced in areas of high unemployment outside London and the south-east. Drastic cuts in services have resulted; there is a 'surplus' of Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) drivers. Thus the employers have driven down wages and conditions.

The TGWU national leadership has made verbal opposition to cuts. But local agreements have been signed which give up hard-won working conditions. The cut-throat 'cowboy' firms are back: privatised public transport is using old unsuitable vehicles, employing ill-trained drivers who work under extreme pressure and frequently suffer from stress illnesses, and destroying routes considered 'unprofitable'.

But the fight in London has proved far more explosive:

● London Bus, tendering for its own routes against the cowboys, has presented 'non-negotiable' terms to London busworkers — which mean wage cuts from £4.17 to £3.20 per hour, increased hours from 38 to 45 per week, and the maximum time behind the wheel without a break increased from five and a half hours to six hours

● London busworkers have refused to compromise on the union agreement covering all 15,000 workers, which together with the closed shop has grown up over years of struggle. Insistence on maintaining the principle of the union agreement is a stand for the inde-

BY PETER GIBSON, member of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party; chairman of the London Bus Committee of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

(Comrade Gibson is writing here as a WRP member; the views expressed are not those of the T&GWU or the London Bus Committee).

pendence of the union — any move to break that principle would be tantamount to handing over the union to LRT which is part of the Tory state.

● In contrast to other areas where the surplus of drivers meant unemployed labour could be used as a battering-ram against trade union rights, there is a shortage of PSV drivers in London. London Buses — even now, after cuts in its network, is 700 drivers short; Eastern National and London Country buses (both National Bus Company subsidiaries), who took over red bus routes on London's outskirts, were unable to operate the services for months because of driver shortage — and were bus-sing drivers 50-60 miles to work.

Tendering was a political decision by the Thatcher government which is hell-bent on pushing through de-regulation; the fight against it is a political one linked with other workers' struggles, which could not be waged by busworkers alone.

An essential step in that fight was the defence of the London agreement which was a tangible gain of busworkers' struggles, an embodiment of their independence which had to be maintained at all costs.

One of these costs was the job losses to the cut-price companies which would result from London busworkers' refusal to back down from the agreement.

How the break-up of LRT began

LRT was reorganised early in 1985: Three subsidiaries were set up: London Underground Ltd, London Buses Ltd, and Bus Engineering Ltd.

The programme of buying new buses was run down and a series of individual routes were put out to tender. London Buses won the tenders for some of their own routes, but others were handed to the cut-price cowboys.

The loss of these routes was used by management to put the squeeze on busworkers. Lower wages and lon-

'Scrap right of silence' — top cop

BY PHIL PENN

PETER IMBERT, London's new police chief, has called for the abolition of the 900-year-old right of a suspect to remain silent. Effectively this will end the notion that a suspect is innocent until proven guilty.

Douglas Hurd is expected to announce the government's plan to abolish the right against self incrimination at the forthcoming Tory Party conference.

Speaking to reporters at a police seminar last week Imbert said: 'Innocent people are only too willing to explain themselves, it is the guilty ones who remain silent.'

His remarks sound an ominous note, not only for those who will find themselves in the hands of the police in the future, but also for the framed Irish prisoners.

Jailed after false confessions were beaten out of them by the police in 1974, the Birmingham Six are now having new evidence

effecting their case put before the Court of Appeal. A police Officer who was there at the time says that he saw the men 'mistreated'.

But two MPs wrote a letter to 'The Times' in July complaining that the police who are investigating this evidence are 'displaying an unhealthy preoccupation with discrediting' the police officer 'rather than establishing how the convicted men came by the injuries, which no one disputes they received during their first three days in custody'.

New evidence showing that the Guildford Four are innocent is also being 'investigated' by the police. Jim Sharples, the man in charge of the investigation, it

turns out, is an old friend of the men who led the interrogation.

Ex Special Branch man and 'anti-terrorist expert' Imbert was present when the Guildford Four made their false confessions. He testified at the trial that they were made freely and without duress.

They were given some of the longest sentences in British legal history. Two months later Imbert oversaw the capture of an IRA Active Service Unit (ASU) after the siege of Balcombe Street. They told him that they had done the Guildford bombings, but Imbert sat on this information.

During the subsequent hearings it was shown that Imbert, members of the Bomb Squad, the Department of Public Prosecutions and Home Office forensic experts had conspired to hide evidence proving that the ASU and not the Guildford Four had done the bombings. Imbert, it seems, has never believed in the right to remain silent unless you happen to be a police officer.

plaints on tendered services have increased and that the state of their vehicles is worse.

London busworkers pushed up their wages last year in the face of the de-regulation drive. Then LRT embarked on a new tactic: instead of putting single routes out to tender, whole networks would be put out together.

The target areas were Norbiton, Harrow, Woolwich and Wimbledon.

The fight at Norbiton

WHEN London Buses was invited to tender for the Norbiton network they asked for a top level meeting with the T&GWU's National Passenger Secretary, Cliff Twort. Along with elected representatives from the TGWU London Bus committee, Twort met Telford Beasley, chairman of London Buses, and made it clear that the union's policy remained the same. There could only be an agreement if the routes were run with full rates of pay and conditions.

A week later, Beasley said that unless they tendered at lower wages and longer hours, London Buses could not win the routes and 'save jobs' (his words!) because of fierce competition.

When the results of the tender were announced, London Buses had won all the routes but one. The exception was won by London Country Buses, which revealed that it would have to de-man standing services, in order to operate this one tendered service.

Management announced they would start a new company, Kingston Buses Ltd — and issue all staff with 90 days' notice of dismissal, saying there was no redundancy money due because there was a job available at the new company, driving 'their own' buses from 'their own' garage... for less pay and longer hours.

Average rostered wages for the 38 hour week under the main agreement is £207 — at Norbiton, for a 45-hour week, wages would total £185.

This was so obviously unfair and unjust that busworkers could not believe that it was legal. Despite legal advice that the only course open was industrial action, the union decided to take London Buses to court, and to spare no expense in acquiring a top-level legal team to argue the busworkers' case. It was necessary to take every step to reveal the true position to the maximum number of union members.

On July 15 1987, Mr Justice Hoffmann ruled that, providing the drivers were going to continue to be employed by London Buses Ltd and not Kingston Buses Ltd, there

● TURN TO PAGE 15



Busworkers are in the forefront of the fight against Thatcher

ger hours would save jobs in future, they claimed. But the TGWU London Busworkers' delegate conference had adopted a 12-point policy on tendering, centred on the principle of no lower wages or longer hours.

The conference adopted the position that tendering was a form of blackmail: if you paid blackmailers once, they always came back for more. Busworkers' leaders made the point that in reality it was busworkers' wages that were up for tender.

London Bus management asked for talks with the union's Bus Committee prior to the next set of tenders; the union said it would discuss any tender based on the wages and conditions covered by the main agreement.

Despite this, management tendered for routes on the basis of lower pay and longer hours — and when they won tenders in Potters Bar, asked the union to agree to these, stating that jobs would be lost otherwise.

But the TGWU London Bus Section would not compromise on the 12-point policy; the staff at Potters Bar garage were offered severance or transfer to other London Buses garages covered by the main agreement. New staff were recruited at Pot-

ters Bar at lower pay and with no union agreement.

London Buses then won tenders for new mini-bus services in Orpington, Kent, to serve the Bromley area, and at Stanwell, Middlesex. They proposed new rates of pay, very long working hours and flexibility of operation on these routes. Again the TGWU London Bus Section refused to agree; again London Buses went ahead regardless, setting up an operation with no union agreement, under cover of subsidiaries 'Westlink' and 'Roundabout'.

Flexibility of operation is just the type of feature London Buses aims to introduce everywhere. And the mini-bus can hardly be called a service: they are not available all day, but only at special times which suit management; their design means hardship and inconvenience for the most important section of the travelling public — the old, disabled and families with push-chairs and shopping, who often have to dismount every stop or two to let others on or off.

The union fought back with a drive to organise the subsidiaries. Within a year they were unionised, and negotiations began (these are still in progress) to bring them with-

in the terms of the main agreement.

Two facts about the London Buses subsidiaries, and other private companies not covered by the main agreement, speak volumes about the blatant disregard for health, safety and the quality of public transport which characterises the de-regulation drive:

1. They are employing many drivers who were dismissed as medically unfit (rather than being kept on sick pay) in London Buses' cost-cutting drive. Many of these drivers, who have left London Buses at the rate of 500 per year with heart attacks, fainting fits or high blood pressure, are now working for private companies on LRT-tendered routes... for less pay! So the very strict medical standards, adopted by the old London Transport after a series of horrific accidents in the 1950s, have been abandoned.

2. On many privatised routes, new buses have been replaced with 10- to 12-year-old second-hand vehicles; public complaints of unreliable services have increased, and the London Regional Passenger Committee, the Government's own watchdog, has minutes at their July meeting that com-