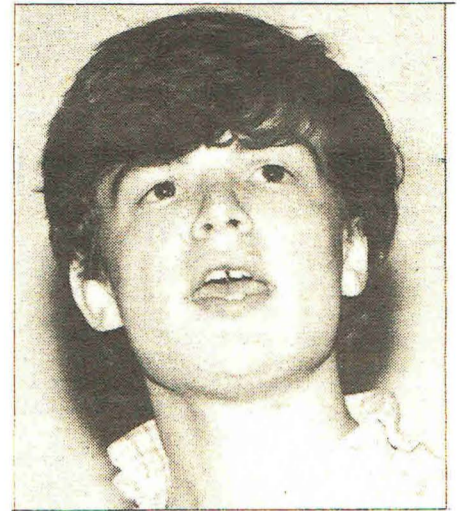


School students demand:

Scrap Youth

Training Swindle



Tony Cox.

THE STRIKE by tens of thousands of school students shows that the hatred of Toryism reaches all ages and all sections of the working class.

As their parents are booted out on to the dole young people are not prepared to be conscripted into their places at a third of the wages, and without any decent conditions or prospects.

The bosses' press have been falling over each other to condemn the school students' strike organised by the School Students' Action Committee and the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) on 25 April.

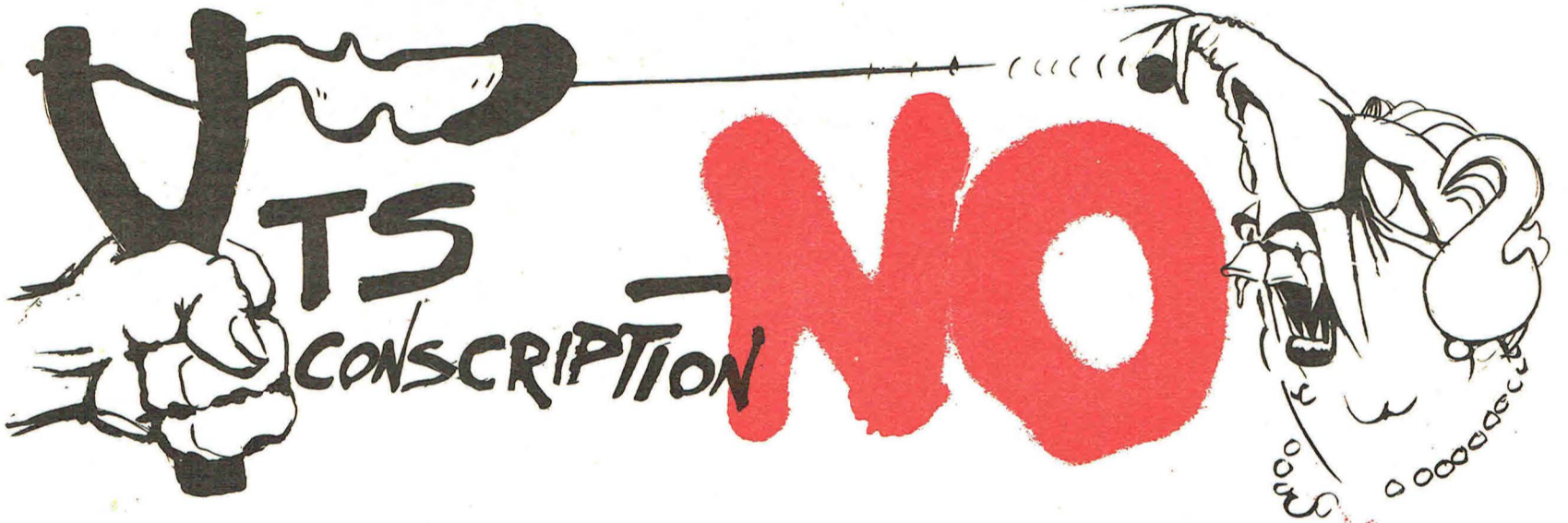
"Militant squads call out children on school strike" screeched the *Daily Mail*. Thatcher herself sang in this Tory choir, telling Liberal MP David Alton that "I totally deplore this action".

Slave labour

All this cuts no ice with school students. If the Tories, who have destroyed their job prospects, are against the strike all the more reason to take action.

Young people leaving school face little or no chance of a job, only the insult of two years compulsory slave labour on YTS. After 11, 12 or more years of education, they are told to start life on the scrap heap. School students won't accept that.

YTURC has taken the initiative in giving constructive vent to this anger and organising these school



students into a union linked up to the labour movement.

School students have been made politically aware but this is not just because of a few leaflets from YTURC activists. The first lessons in politics were given by Thatcher's ministers and the decaying system they defend. After years of mass unemployment amongst the youth, of education cuts and the threat of a 2 year compulsory YTS, school students know they've got to do something to fight for a better future.

It is sheer hypocrisy for the Tories to complain that YTURC are "encouraging children to play truant" or that they are "disrupting education". School students had their education disrupted on Royal Wedding day 1981—they were given a whole day off. YTURC asked young people to take a

half-day off to protest against the plans of Thatcher and the Tories which affect them all personally.

We also made it abundantly clear that those involved in exams should not strike and put their exam prospects in jeopardy. Indeed in Scotland, YTURC did not call for a half day strike on Thursday due to the closeness of exams. Instead there will be a big demonstration this Saturday, 27 April.

Votes at 16

The Tories don't listen to "normal" means of protest; they merely ignore them. A half-day strike was therefore the only way of making them aware of school students' bitterness over their policies. The massive protest on 25 April really underlined this anger.

The labour movement should support the school students' fight for a decent future. Labour should also take up the demand now for votes at 16. As Terry Fields pointed out in Parliament, if 16 year olds are old enough to be conscripted into government job schemes, they are old enough to vote.

Real jobs

YTURC intends to give assistance in organising these school students into a school students union. Use your anger in a positive way. Give a resounding No to the Tories YTS conscription and fight for real jobs for youth.

By Tony Cox
(Secretary YTURC)

GET

Militant

Militant is holding a special sales campaign in the first two weeks of May. We need an alternative to the poisonous lies of Fleet Street.

There are two ways to deal with poison, one is to make yourself sick, which is what the *Sun* etc do every day. The other is to give an antidote of a workers' paper.

Every reader has to see the urgency of boosting our sales still further. Give the benefit of Marxist analysis and honest reporting to even more workers. Step up sales at your workplace, college or school. Every reader impressed by *Militant's*

ideas should become a seller too. The campaign, from 3 May to 17 May is the ideal time to start. See articles page 3 and 6.

Back Militant

THE FIGHTING Fund needs your cash by 30 April. We appeal to all our readers, to send us a donation of £10 or £20.

We need to expand to reach millions of workers who have not yet read our paper. Your cash can ensure our success.

Fight for a future

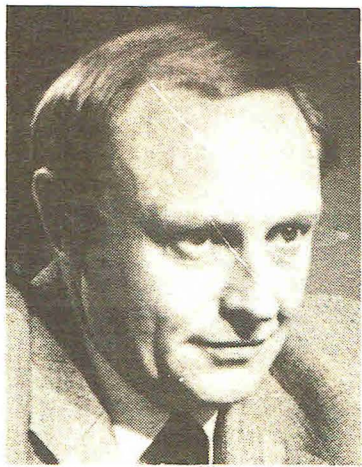
Tory press push for T&G reballot

THE EXECUTIVE of the Transport and General Workers' Union meets amidst a chorus of demands for a re-run of its election for the general secretary. Most came from Tory newspapers, aiming to inflict the maximum damage on the TGWU, trade unions in general and the Labour Party.

"The union may believe it is being stampeded into another vote by commentators who want Mr Todd to lose," says the *Daily Mirror*, "That is not the *Daily Mirror's* position."

Union members know what nonsense that is. When did the *Mirror* or any other Fleet Street rag demand new elections when right-wing candidates won?

Their aim is to discredit the union and try to arrange a second ballot accompanied by a barrage of propaganda against the left-supported candidate Ron Todd so that the union can be swung to the right.



Neil Kinnock.

Neil Kinnock has done nothing to help the union by his leaked advice to the outgoing general secretary, Moss Evans, to have a re-ballot.

He admits that he was "not overwhelmingly impressed" by the

complaints he had studied, and that a cloud has been "manufactured" over Todd's head. He concedes that a re-run of the ballot was only one option facing the Executive, but claimed it was an opinion that had the support of a lot of people.

The "people" supporting this are the enemies of the trade unions and Labour Party, the very papers which have "manufactured" the allegations. Members of the executive should take no advice from these quarters. Neither the leader of the Labour Party nor the trade unions are to be dictated to by the Tory media.

As we go to press, there is only the flimsiest evidence of ballot-rigging. Unless specific proof can be produced, the executive should throw out the call for a re-ballot.

If however, they are persuaded to run the election again, left-wing activists must ensure that the plans of the right wing and the Tory press are thwarted. Despite all the hostile

propaganda, Ron Todd can win a second time, but only if a vigorous campaign is mobilised throughout the union.

Rallies

That means rallies with Ron Todd speaking, in every major city, with workplace leafletting and meetings, and counter-propaganda to expose the inevitable media distortion. As part of this campaign, union activists must fight for the democratic reforms put forward consistently by TGWU *Militant* supporters:

1. All officials to be elected, subject to recall by the membership and paid no more than the average wage of a skilled worker;
2. Properly constituted and regular meetings of all union branches;
3. The right of all candidates in all elections to publish election ad-

dresses and campaign on what they stand for;

4. Each branch to elect rank-and-file scrutineers to count votes;
5. Counterfoils on all ballot papers;
6. Publication of results in every branch.

Meanwhile the fight goes on to defeat the resolutions at the Biennial Delegate Conference which call for supporters of *Militant* to be banned from holding office within the union and expelled from the Labour Party.

Members are urged to get in amendments to these resolutions and to send resolutions to the Welsh leadership of the union protesting at their witch-hunting resolution to the Wales Labour Party conference.

By Bill Mullins
(TGWU, West Bromwich District Committee, in personal capacity)

Councils must defy Tories

LETTERS FROM the district auditors threatening imminent surcharge and disqualification have set the sternest test so far for the councillors in five of the Labour boroughs defying ratecapping.

The letters, sent to Camden, Greenwich, Islington, Lambeth, and Southwark councils warned that the auditors might step in, issuing surcharge certificates against councillors whose 'willful misconduct' caused financial losses.

The letter urges councillors to make a rate at the "earliest opportunity" and if they fail to do so the council will be "very vulnerable to challenge and it must be possible that a certificate of surcharge would not be long delayed."

The response of Labour councillors to this 'frightener' will be a test of their seriousness in defying the Rates Act and confronting the government.

Last year Liverpool councillors held their nerve in the face of much stronger threats. Their determination forced Jenkin to the negotiating table. The Tory strategy this year is to test the nerve of the eight Labour



Picket by Southwark NALGO members on strike against ratecapping, 6 March.

authorities who have not set a rate.

Any sign of weakness will be exploited to the full by the Tories. It is vital for all the Labour groups to hold their ground.

Already in Southwark a group of councillors have responded to the pressure by arguing for compliance. All sorts of schemes, dishonestly dressed up as 'principled stands' will undoubtedly be suggested.

Labour councillors who are determined to fight on

must now turn to those organisations who have pledged support. They have tremendous support from the local authority unions, the Labour Parties and the community.

All council unions should now call meetings of stewards to take the issues back into the workplaces. Mass meetings must urgently be called to explain the possibility of surcharge.

Labour Party members must become fully active in the campaign, taking the

arguments onto the streets and estates. Mass lobbies of Labour group meetings and council meetings must be organised to support those councillors sticking to the policy of non-compliance.

Jenkin will only be forced to make concessions if he is faced by an opposition which is clearly and unequivocally determined to fight on regardless of threats. The surest way for chaos in the campaign is to panic at the Tories' opening shot.

Labour movement candidates in NI elections

THE LABOUR and Trade Union Group in Northern Ireland will contest local government elections, in both Catholic and Protestant areas of Belfast on 15 May.

Stan Dempsey, a health worker and trade union activist will stand in Pottinger ward, East Belfast.

Bobby Miller, a labourer unemployed for 4 years will contest Laganbank, South Belfast.

Mickey Duffy, Secretary of the Royal Victoria Hospital Joint Shop Stewards is standing in Upper Falls, West Belfast.

The need for a working class alternative to both orange and green Tories has never been greater. The major parties—the Unionists, Paisley's DUP, the SDLP and Sinn Fein—are all determined to turn this election

into a sectarian headcount.

But class issues are currently to the forefront in the minds of workers. The entire gas industry in Northern Ireland is under threat of closure. £97 million will be spent to axe 1,000 jobs.

The other parties may pay lip service to these issues in their manifesto but will offer no solutions.

The Labour and Trade Union Group have demanded that the unions intervene in these elections with Labour candidates fighting on class issues. This has not been done. So to provide a non-sectarian socialist alternative, the L&TUG will stand.

By Jackie Walsh
Belfast Labour & Trade Union Group

Powell's Bill attacks women's rights

THE PROTECTION of Unborn Children Bill, the so-called Powell Bill, is due for its report stage on May 3.

This Bill is just another in a long line of attacks on the right of women to have control over their own bodies. It was thrown together quickly to counter the recommendations of the Warnock report.

Powell claims to be acting on behalf of the moral majority of this country but a poll carried out recently showed his ideas to be in the minority.

Only one third of the people asked were in favour of experiments on embryos until it was explained to them that this research would help eliminate genetic diseases that were exclusive to humans.

Then 41% changed their minds and brought the final total to 51% in favour of the experiments.

This shows the need for a

thorough campaign of explanation by the labour movement and the Labour Womens' Organisation to make clear exactly what the main recommendations of the Warnock Report are and what they would mean for women.

Survey

This Bill must be defeated. Last time it was a free vote for Labour MPs and over 30 of them voted for it as it was considered a 'moral' issue.

Womens rights are not a moral issue—all Labour MPs should be instructed to vote against the Bill.

To help ensure this there was a lobby of Parliament on Wednesday 24 April. There will also be a demonstration against the Powell Bill on Saturday 27 April, starting at Lincoln's Inn Fields at 1.00 pm (nearest tube, Holborn), which will be marching to Trafalgar Square.

By Linda Douglas

School students strike for jobs

HUNDREDS OF school students in Kirkby came out on strike last Thursday in anticipation of the national half-day schools strike called this week by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign.

Two hundred school students marched through Kirkby town centre demanding a job when they leave school, and against school dinners and school uniforms. Eight hundred came out on strike in Kirkby,—when asked by TV cameras why they came out early, they said "We are practising for next week".

Two school students said that they were on strike "because they treat us like dirt. When we leave school there is nothing for us. We don't want to leave school and go on YTS at £25 a

week."

A rally held in a nearby field was broken up by police. A TGWU member Marcia Smythe said she saw hundreds milling around. "Then the police moved in and a lad was lifted off a wall and taken to the police station. The police were abusive and even 11 and 12 year olds were lifted."

Many of the school students said they would be out again this Thursday reports Brian Thompson, secretary of Merseyside YTURC.

Paula Jones from Brookfield in Kirkby summed up the feeling in Merseyside: "I see Thursday not as missing education but as a form of education". Liverpool City Council has already backed the school students' action. A state-

ment from the council says that it "places on record its full and unreserved support for the campaign by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign".

Belfast

SCHOOL STUDENTS will be striking in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland on April 25th.

The Youth Campaign for Jobs along with over 50 school students met in Central Hall last Saturday and voted unanimously in favour of a one day schools strike in protest over the Tory government's YTP conscription.

Pauline Goldsmith a representative from Sacred Heart girls school in Hollywood Co. Down, ex-



Gordon Bennet writes—

BACK IN February, I wrote that as the anniversary of VE day approached, ruling class circles would be afflicted with severe selective amnesia. This is now close to epidemic proportions.

First, Norman Tebbit's Department of Trade and Industry decided to forget completely about the war and employ a Hitler-loving ex-con who has a criminal record for organising a Nazi paramilitary group.

Next, President Reagan had to be reminded by American Jewish and ex-servicemen's groups that the Nazis weren't the good guys. He had originally only planned to visit a cemetery containing the graves of SS murderers on his trip to Germany but has now been pressurised into visiting Belsen as well.

Last but not least, Princess Michael (funny name for a woman) forgot that her old man was a Silesian Stormtrooper. In any case he was only an honorary member of the master race and showed his abhorrence of the evils of Hitlerism by *not once* wearing his SS uniform.

You can't blame people for what their parents did or didn't do. But there are two real points of interest in the saga of the princess. Firstly there has quite clearly been a massive cover up on all sides. And secondly, why anyone should be surprised that European royalty were hand in glove with some of the most loathsome tyrants in the history of humanity is quite beyond me.

Apart from the baron, Prince Philip's cousins were in the Greek Fascist Youth, Prince Charles' uncle was a brigadier general in the SS and the Queen's uncle didn't abdicate because he was a communist!

As a system of government, monarchy by definition has precious little to do with democracy. Despite the efforts of the media to convince us all otherwise, the British Royal Family are not there simply as an ornament or a tourist attraction. They have enormous potential power under the British constitution and just because it's not used at the moment doesn't mean that it won't be at some stage in the future.

There is a long and honourable tradition of republicanism in Britain that goes back centuries. Today the only people with the bottle to maintain that tradition are the Marxist left in the Labour Party.

Here's some other Royal friends of the Nazis: Queen Victoria's grandson, the Duke of Albany fought for Germany in both wars and was a dedicated Nazi in the 1930's. A close relative of Queen Mary was a Nazi police chief in the area of the Buchenwald death camp. — Eds.

Militant launches sales drive

MILITANT'S NATIONAL sales campaign covers the issues of 3 May and 10 May and aims to double sales.

By Andy Beadle

Every group of sellers should think how they can double their own sales for those two weeks.

Sellers in Sheffield have a local target of 1,000 sales for the May campaign. In Dundee and Tayside area groups of sellers are picking out factories and housing estates where *Militant* is not yet regularly sold.

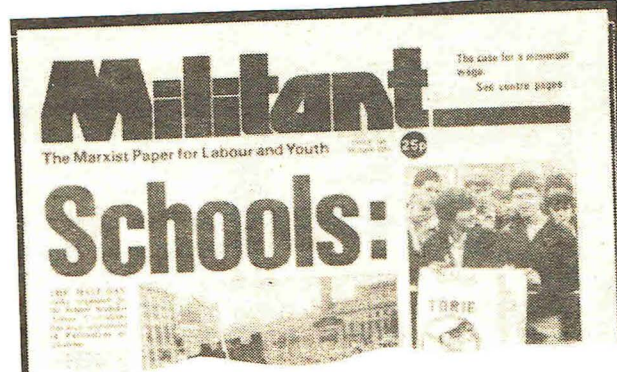
Oxford readers aim to go around estates in the Cowley area to sell to factory workers. BL workers at Longbridge and Rover Solihull will be able to get more copies at the factory gates.

Supporters in Staffordshire are approaching NUM branches to take bulk orders, and plan a paper blitz on Newcastle-under-Lyme to hit back at the witch-hunters.

Southampton

Southampton comrades are aiming to get all Labour Party members to take a regular copy.

There could be no better time to boost our sales. *Mili-*



tant is the best known paper in the labour movement. The miners' strike has shown to thousands the brutal reality of capitalism.

There cannot be any significant workplace, any high street, any Labour par-

ty or housing estate where *Militant* can't be sold. Using the May campaign to realise this potential and pushing the sales to new heights is the best way to answer *Militant's* enemies.

National amnesty meetings success

THE TORY press has been full of tales of *Militant's* decline yet more than 1,500 have already attended 40 meetings all over the country in support of a general amnesty for sacked miners.

Already nearly £3,000 has been raised for the fighting fund, and more meetings are being held this week and next.

Manchester achieved the biggest collection—£286—with Southampton, Hertford, and the Amman Valley in South Wales all raising over £200. At Newcastle-under-Lyme, where the Labour Party has expelled a supporter of *Militant*, £107 was collected.

Scottish miner

In London over 400 heard sacked Scottish miner Tom Dury describe the "police assaults, trumped-up charges and 'supermarket justice' miners were subject to. "Every miner sacked, whatever the conviction, has been victimised for fighting for his job and must be reinstated."

At the Islington meeting, Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, said: "The great battle of the miners, although it

had meant severe hardship and did not produce a victory, brought forth something more precious. It introduced a whole new generation of young workers into the class struggle. Now, ever wider layers are going through this process—council workers, postmen,

teachers and now even school students.

"Part of this struggle is to rebuild a fighting trade union movement with bold socialist policies and

dedicated leaders. And *Militant* is in the forefront of that campaign."

By John Bulaitis



Delegates at the Scottish TUC applaud Mick McGahey NUM Vice-President after his speech supporting sacked miners. Photo: Rick Matthews.

How the monarchy became linked to Nazis

THE 'PRINCESS Michael affair' has been presented as a one-off skeleton in the cupboard of the Royal Family yet

many of the monarchy's German relations threw in their lot with the Nazis.

The fact that so many of them joined or showed sym-

pathy with the Nazis shows the attitude of the ruling classes towards fascism and dictatorships.

In Germany in the 1930s capitalism was faced with cataclysmic upheavals and the threat of revolution. The remnants of the German monarchy were quite prepared to dirty their hands with the Nazi party to defend their class interests.

There is no possibility of Nazism returning today—rather than handing over complete power to the racial maniacs of Nazism and repeat the disastrous consequences it had for them in the 1930's and 40's, the capitalist class prefer military dictatorships under their direct control to defend their system. This has been the case in southern Europe and South America.

Prince Phillip

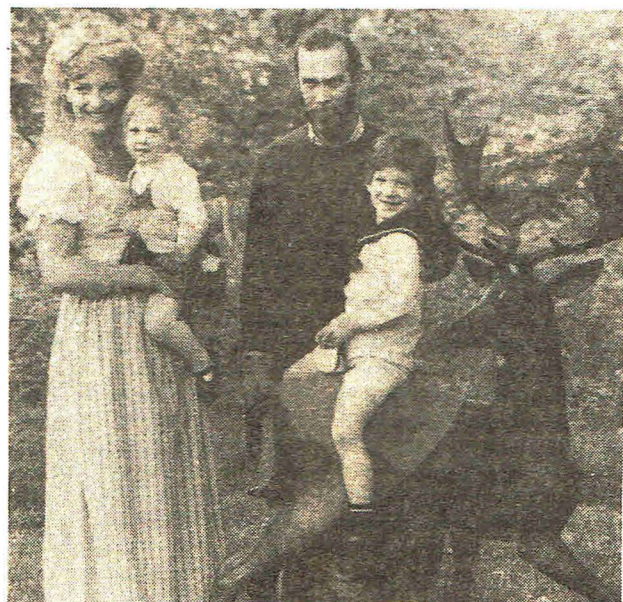
This attitude of the ruling class was mirrored by the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Phillip, when he visited

Paraguay in the 1970s. He heaped praise on the country's dictator, President Stroessner, and was enthusiastic about the military regime.

Prince Phillip is not alone in his views. Under conditions of growing capitalist crisis, the British ruling class could use such dictatorial methods in the future. Indeed, sections of the ruling class openly discussed military coups against Labour governments in 1974, and in 1968 when the plotters proposed Lord Mountbatten as a figurehead for the new regime (see *Militant* 262). And this was in a period of relative economic stability.

The media have complained that the Princess Michael episode is 'raking up the past'. The labour movement must concern itself with the role the monarchy will play in the future.

By Bob Wade



Princess Michael of Kent and family. Her father was 'only' an honorary member of the SS.

Order your extra papers now for the sales drive.

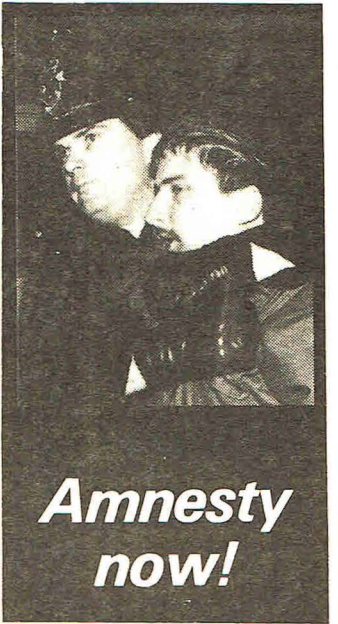
Contact *Militant* Circulation Department.

Also available for the campaign:

'Get *Militant*' posters 'Why I read *Militant*' sales leaflets.

Letters to newsagents asking them to stock *Militant*.

Available from Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3-13 Hepscott Rd London E9.



Amnesty now!

Young Socialists adopt miners

LABOUR PARTY Young Socialists on Merseyside have adopted four miners from Hem Heath colliery in Stafford, who are locked up in Walton jail, Liverpool.

Letters have been sent out by the YS appealing for these men to be adopted by the labour and trade union movement.

Please send letters of support to the miners, and remember to include their prison numbers on the address, otherwise they will only receive their mail after they've been released.

The miners are Raymond Patton, H21047, Willie Banister, H21046, Steve Lowe, H21045 and Mick Jones, H21048.

Prosecution dropped

IN A recent case at Sheffield Crown court the prosecution has dropped proceedings against 19 miners charged with offences at Orgreave on 1 June last year. The judge bound them over to keep the peace and sentenced one, who pleaded guilty to assault, to two month's imprisonment, suspended for 12 months.

This case shows like many others, the very flimsy evidence which is being brought to prosecute miners. The prosecution spent most of the day trying to find a way of avoiding a costly defeat, their main argument being that the scenes at Orgreave were "very ugly and dangerous".

Militant

Editor: Peter Taaffe
 Militant, 3-13 Hepscoth Road London E9 5HB.
 Phone: 01-533 3311.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Militant; printed by Cambridge Heath Press (TU) Ltd., 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. ISSN 0144-9275

Nearly-new jobs group

REPRESENTATIVES OF the labour and trade union movement have no business participating in the newly-formed *Employment Institute*, an organisation composed overwhelmingly of various shades of Toryism, and one basing its entire economic outlook on capitalism.

The organisation aims to "analyse the causes of unemployment" and put forward "remedies", but it represents all the old and failed policies of the past, even in its personnel, including its little band of former Prime Ministers, Ted Heath, Harold Wilson, and James Callaghan.

The main participants of the institute are Tories and businessmen, "wets" like Francis Pym, Ian Gilmour, SDP members like president Shirley Williams, and many chairmen and chief executives of industrial and finance companies. For good measure there are also a few journalists and churchmen, giving the organisation the air of the "Establishment in Exile", as one newspaper described it.

That such an organisation should come into being at all is a reflection within a significant section of the ruling class of the fear of the social consequences of Thatcher's economic policies. A month ago a MORI/LWT opinion poll indicated that 62 per

cent of the population believed that the government's economic policies, if unchanged, would lead to inner-city "riots and disturbances". Even among Tory supporters, the figure was still as high as 45 per cent.

These supporters and apologists for capitalism have no answer to the problems created by their system, but that does not stop them being alarmed about the growing tide of social unrest and class consciousness.

But if the *Employment Institute* was composed only of Tories, Liberals, Social Democrats and businessmen, it would have no effect. What gives it some credibility is the participation of Labour Party figures and trade union leaders.

Right wing leaders like Wilson and Callaghan have been joined by prominent trade unionists like David Basnett of the GMBATU and David Lea, assistant General Secretary of the TUC. Even more surprising is the participation of Michael Meacher, a member of the Labour Party NEC.

The economic policy advocated by the *Employment Institute* is the failed Keynesian policy of the past. But these policies will only lead to cuts in living standards by different means. Even if increased budget deficits were to produce a fall in unemployment—and it could only be a modest fall—because of the weakness of British capitalism,

they would lead to an explosion of inflation. Cuts in living standards would have to be enforced through an incomes policy. It is no accident that the chairman of the executive committee of the Institute is an SDP professor who is a leading advocate of tax-enforced incomes policies.

The participation of labour representatives in such a body can only sow dangerous illusions in the idea that capitalism can somehow readjust and overcome its economic crisis, that the problems of workers can be solved within this system. At the same time it leaves the door ajar to the "coalition" mentality still lingering in the extreme right wing of the Labour Party.

The representatives of the labour movement should withdraw from this coalition in the making and should campaign instead for the policies of the labour movement, independent of the methods and policies of capitalism. The Labour leadership should not campaign for tinkering and fiddling with an economic system which has failed utterly and which has outlived its usefulness. They should campaign instead for fundamental change, for the socialist transformation of society, as an answer to unemployment. The capitalist system has enough spokesmen of its own. Labour MPs are elected to be the public spokesmen of socialist change.

Mobilise to support Newham 7

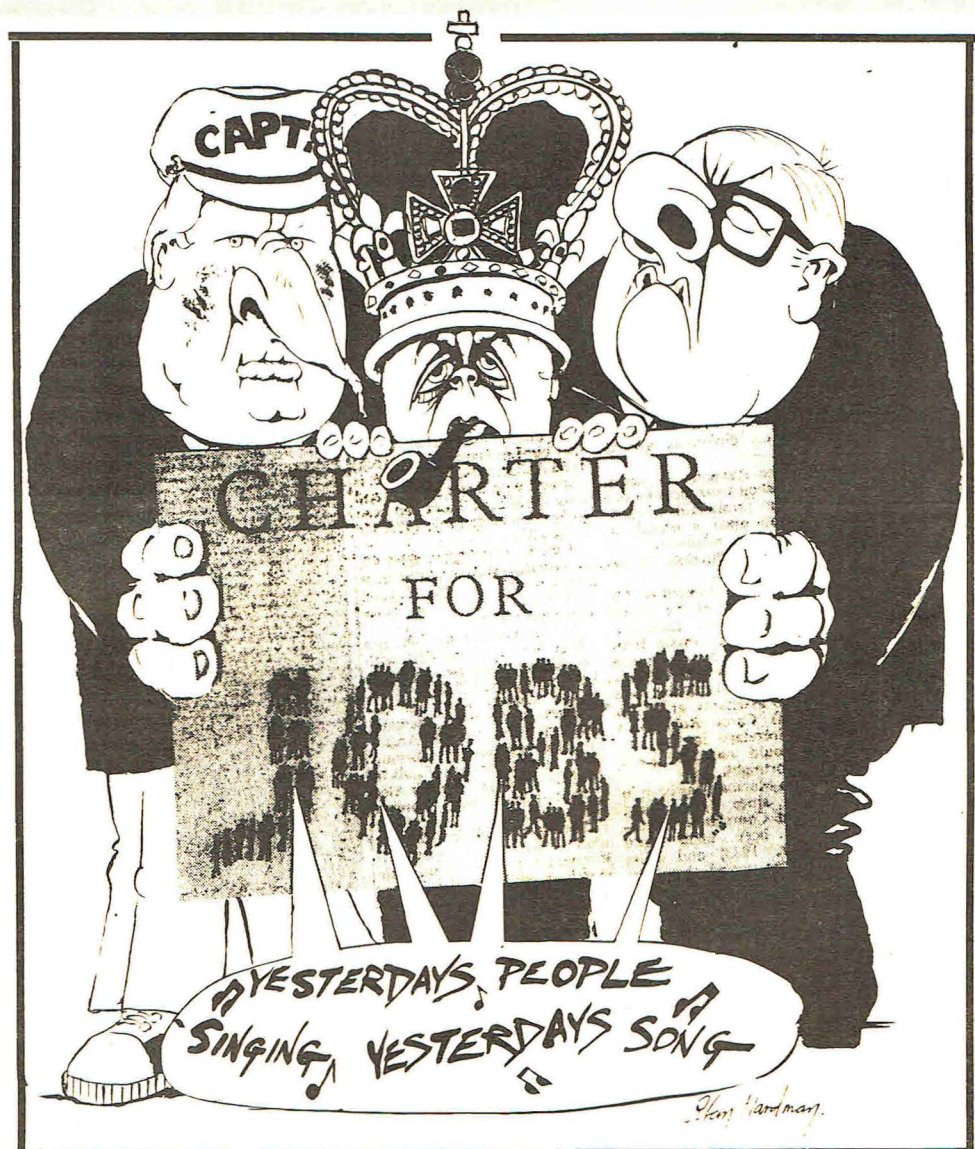
THE NATIONAL Front have announced that they plan to march in Newham next Saturday 27 April, the same day as thousands will be marching against racism in support of the Newham 7.

The NF threat is clearly a ploy to attempt to get the Newham 7 march banned. The Newham 7 Defence Campaign wish to make it clear that the demonstration will go ahead. Members of Labour parties and LPYS branches and black groups should definitely turn up on the day.

It must be made absolutely clear to the police and the courts that when the police do nothing about gangs of fascists attacking black communities then those communities will defend themselves.

The NF and BNP have recently attempted provocative demonstrations and meetings in London. Each time they have been sent packing.

Join the LPYS contingent on the march—meet at 1 pm, Plashet Park, Plashet Grove, East Ham, London on Saturday. For further information ring East Ham LPYS on 01-552 3204.



Police protect Leicester fascists

POLICE barricaded off streets in Leicester on Saturday to protect a so-called 'election' meeting of the fascist British National Party. Local residents had to prove their identity to get to their homes. 30 police vans lined up the street outside the meeting place.

Over two hundred anti-fascists demonstrated outside the police 'lines'. As it was a 'public' meeting, some anti-fascists were allowed into the BNP meeting in line with electoral law. The fascists were heckled and then fighting broke out.

Eight anti-fascists were arrested, including four LPYS members.

Local residents are demanding to know why the meeting was allowed to go ahead. Asian youth are taking assault proceedings against the police.

Marxists win in council elections

LABOUR HAS scored two important by-election victories in areas where the party has a strong Marxist influence.

In Bradford North the Labour candidate, Marxist Ken Little, won the fight for the county council seat by nearly a thousand votes ahead of his nearest rival.

The seat covers three wards in the Bradford North constituency. The success of the campaign was the result of a united local Labour and trade union movement. The by-election was caused by a former Labour councillor defecting to the liberals, because of "left wing infiltration". But the party dismissed this nonsense, with members considered on the right wing of the party working hard alongside *Militant* supporters for a Labour victory.

It was a real test for the Tories as their proposals to abolish the Metropolitan counties were the election issue, as well as Thatcher's policies—both were decisively rejected by Bradford workers.

There was much support for Labour's campaign particularly from the TGWU who provided two campaign buses on election day and produced a leaflet explaining the Tory threat to bus services. The Liberals complained about busmen canvassing in uniform, saying it would influence people to vote Labour (!)

Another important test for Labour was in Liverpool, where the city council's fight against the government was the campaign issue. In a by-election in Speke, Labour scored its second highest vote in a district election. Labour romped home with nearly a 2,000 vote majority—a tremendous vindication of Labour's programme on urban regenera-

tion, on home building and its stand to get more resources from the government.

These victories were only marred by the result of the Dingle by-election in Liverpool, where the Liberals scraped in by 87 votes.

Needless to say the Liberals are crowing that this shows 'growing dissatisfaction' with Liverpool City council. Nothing could be further from the truth—the combined Liberal/Tory anti-Labour vote was actually down on last year.

Bradford	
Labour	4,308
Tory	3,333
Liberal	2,333
BNP	405
Liverpool Speke	
Labour	2,621
SDP	636
Tory	246
Liverpool Dingle	
Liberal	2,488
Labour	2,401
Tory	236

Besides the usual scurrilous smear campaign by the Liberals now expected in Liverpool, the real problem for Labour was that many Labour voters did not turn out, clearly dissatisfied with housing repairs and bin collection in the area.

Tony Mulhearn, City councillor and President of Liverpool DLP said: "This is a clear indication that the cleansing services in this area are totally inadequate and the Liverpool labour and trade union movement must get to grips with this problem. We see the result as a hiccup in our campaign and, once this problem is resolved, we can go on with the job of building mass support for the fight against the government, to ensure that our city gets the full resources it needs".

Support slumps for Tories' council policy

TORY HOPES of recapturing the shire counties, which Labour gained in the exceptional year of 1981, took a tumble recently. The government ordered English councils to suddenly cut their budgets by an average 1 1/2 per cent so that it could claw back £123m.

The government has decided that £8,500m is the total amount it can give to local government in 1985/6. Unfortunately some councils, such as the GLC, have spent below their target, so no longer fall foul of penalties and are therefore entitled to more grant. If more goes to them, then less goes elsewhere.

So Tory county councils such as Kent have been ordered to cut £3.25m from their budget. Unfortunately they have already fixed their rate, so the only way they can make up the loss is to either cut or dig into their reserves. Some councils such as Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire, have already used up most of their reserves ahead of the May elections, so they will have to cut into the bone.

A recent opinion poll showed that public support for the Tories local government policy goes from bad to worse.

Three times as many people wanted services improved, even if it meant raising rates, than wanted rates cut at the cost of services. 55 per cent of people opposed rate-capping, 7 per cent took no view and only 38 per cent supported the idea. It could be a lean time for the Tories in the May county council elections.

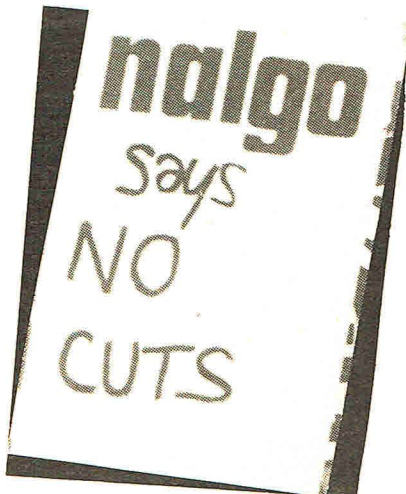
By Colin Barber

Action by mentally handicapped people against cuts

MENTALLY HANDICAPPED people normally get the worst deal from society. Yet it is they who will badly hit by the Tories' rate-capping proposals.

In the East London borough of Hackney where I work, services for mentally handicapped people are already inadequate. Yet their problems will be compounded if the cuts go through. It would mean home helps and meals on wheels being cut, a jobs freeze, a new residential unit for the mentally handicapped remaining unopen and their transport facilities restricted.

The council and the trade unions are fighting this threat—the council workers' Joint Shop Stewards



Committee have organised mass lobbies to back up the Labour councillors in their stand. However, more involvement of the workplaces and the local communi-

ty is still needed.

This was the view of the social services section of my union, NALGO, who recommended organising campaigns at the workplace. As shop steward at the Morning Lane Adult Training Centre I raised this with other NALGO members. A meeting was called of the staff, mentally handicapped trainees and parents, addressed by a Labour councillor and myself from the union.

After the issues were spelt out a 'campaign day' with a demonstration and rally outside the town hall was called. The staff sorted out the leaflets, parents contacted the media for publicity while trainees, students, staff and parents made up banners.

We linked up with the borough's

other ATC residential establishments and community projects. On the day of the demonstration, April 17, nearly 300 staff, mentally handicapped people and parents, joined the demonstration—one of the noisiest Hackney has seen for years!

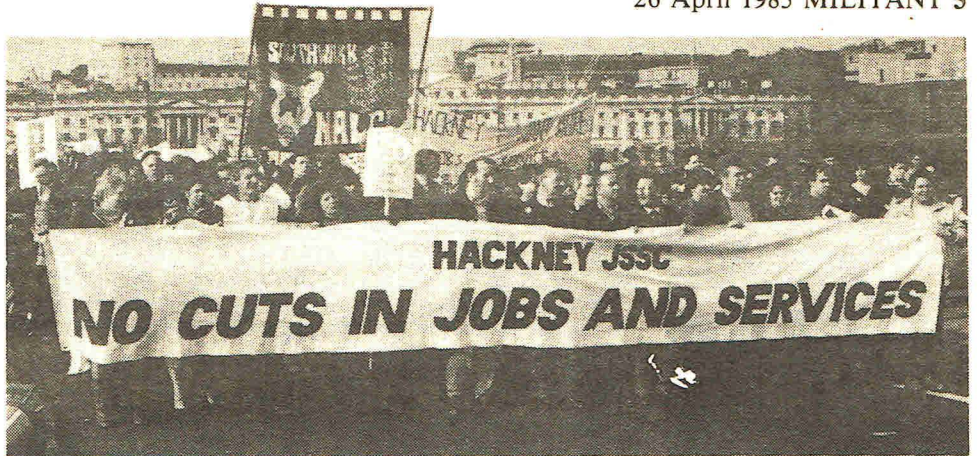
Town Hall rally

At the town hall it was addressed by local MP Ernie Roberts, councillors, staff and the JSSC. Most importantly though, mentally handicapped users of these services spelled out their opposition to Tory cuts. As one of them said "What does Mrs Thatcher expect us to do—sit at home and look at four walls all day! We need our centres." Mentally handicapped people are the victims of the cuts

and therefore have the right to voice their experiences and their political opinions.

The courts have given Hackney a 'reprieve', saying they have until the end of May to set a legal rate. The Tories hope by backing off and playing for time other Labour councils will fall into line, leaving Hackney isolated. The next six weeks must be used to step up the fightback—a similar campaign to ours organised on a borough wide basis would attract the support of thousands, involving local authority workers and the community. Then the Tories would be forced to back off for good.

By Maureen Wade
(NALGO shop steward, personal capacity)



Cleaners picket Hammersmith Hospital over privatisation plans last year.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Health staff pay hit by privatisation

HEALTH SERVICE ancillary staff are fighting on four fronts. Poor pay, cuts in staffing levels, closures and privatisation constitute a major attack on our jobs and conditions.

Private profiteers, big business, and any cowboy, are clamouring after the rich profits to be made from the cleaning, catering and laundry services.

The effect on staff is devastating. Between 1978 and 1984 18,000 ancillary jobs were lost. 11,000 in 1984 alone as privatisation took its toll.

Privatised workers have only two weeks holiday a year, no sick benefits, and face cuts in pay and hours.

and for better wages and conditions.

Wakefield

In Wakefield this has led to laundry workers losing £8 a week bonus payment to win the in-house tender. Three months later they were told to take another £4 a week cut due to a management mistake.

Even where workers have cut wages and won the tender the government have forced authorities to go private at higher cost.

The unions have no choice but to resist cuts, and to respond like Wakefield laundry workers by telling management where to stick their pay cuts.

Like their brothers and sisters at Barking, Hammersmith and Addenbrookes and increasing numbers elsewhere they are learning the lesson that the only way to defeat the contractors is through industrial strength.

The fight to defend the NHS involves all working class people, and a massive campaign must be undertaken to unite against Tory attacks.

Together we must demand

- ★ £100 minimum NHS wage for 35 hour week
- ★ United campaign on pay, cuts and privatisation leading to NHS industrial action.
- ★ No tendering on the basis of lower wages and worse conditions.
- ★ Return of a socialist Labour government committed to free and democratically controlled National Health Service.

By Adrian O'Malley
(Branch Chairman COHSE Pinderfields General Hospital, Wakefield)

"A waste of a young life"—cervical cancer tests

TWO THOUSAND women die from cervical cancer every year. 90% of them have never had a smear test.

One girl I knew died recently at the age of 26. It started as cancer of the cervix and because it wasn't treated in time, it more or less went through her whole body, leaving behind a husband and family who feel very bitter at the waste of such a young life. If a bit more care had been taken in the early stages of cancer, she might be alive today.

Until 1981 this country had a National Computer System that sent out reminders to all women that their smear test was due.

This however was scrapped by the Tories and put into the hands of the Family Practitioners Committee (FPC), but these committees admit they haven't got the equipment or the manpower to carry out this service.

Out of 201 District Health Authorities in England and Wales, 77 have ignored the directive and 52 say that without computers the service is insufficient. A third of the country have no system at all, including cities such as Birmingham and Leeds.

Twenty per cent of cervical smear tests which gave negative results are likely to be in error. Because of this high margin of error and because the disease spreads far more rapidly and widely

now, the gap of five years between each test is dangerously long.

The number of women under the age of 35 with cervical cancer has doubled in the past five years, but the majority in the 20s age group are still not being called for tests. All women over 20 are at risk especially those who have been sexually active since their teens. Yet these women are not automatically entitled to a smear test. The only women who are supposed to qualify are women over 35 or with three children. For a lot of women it would be too late, because they will be already be dead by the time they are 35.

A national reminder scheme would only cost £17

million to set up and only £2.4 million a year to run.

Resources

It would be a great step forward, but it's nowhere near enough. We need more resources in the NHS itself to deal with the problem—more staff, more laboratories, more clinics. Tests need to be every two years at maximum, but tests should be available whenever it is felt necessary.

Well-women's clinics should be set up where women will feel confident to go along and discuss their problems and get rid of any worries they may have, without the fear of being fobbed off by the local GP.

This is just another example of how the Tories callously put profits before health.

By Katherine Armstrong
(Aldridge-Brownhills LPYS)

ads

CLASSIFIED: 10p per word, minimum 10 words. SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres. All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

PUBLIC meeting 'The situation in Cyprus' Speaker: Andros Payatsos (Editor of Socialistiki Ekfrasi, Cypriot Marxist paper) Tuesday 30 April, 7.30pm at Tottenham Community Project, 628 High Road, London N17.

Wales BLOC conference Saturday 11 May 10.30am-4pm AUEW House, Orchard St. Swansea.

Speakers include: John Tocher (AUEW Pres cand) Bill Connor (USDAW Gen Sec cand) & leading activists from the NUM, T&G, local authority workers. Credentials from Phil Lloyd, c/o POEU office, Gors Road, Swansea. (£1 per delegate)

MILITANT address books, 60p, bookmarks 40p, Plastic paper sleeves 20p, Pens 20p, Sew on badges 50p. Plus postage to Mike King, 10 Rodney Ct Southampton SO2 8RU.

"LIVERPOOL MILITANT Labour" badge with Labour logo, "Black and white youth unite" badge with red Militant logo, 25p each plus 25p minimum p&sp. FF cheques payable to P Cooper, 31 Balmoral Road, Fairfield, Liverpool, L6 8NB.

Defend SALEP against Labour Party proscripton! Buy a SALEP T-shirt! £3 & postage. Also still available: SALEP bulletin with NUM member Roy Jones report on his visit to SA NUM. 20p & 13p postage. Available from Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP) 28, Martello Street, London E8. Phone: 241-0434

Militant Meetings

Hull Militant May Day Meeting "The Coming World Socialist Revolution" Hear: Chilean and South African speakers. 7.30pm. Wednesday 1 May at Hull Trades and Labour Club All Welcome

SOUTHAMPTON: Marxist Discussion Group meets every Sunday, 7.30pm, 206 Honeysuckle Road, Bassett, Southampton. Tel: 551420 for details of subjects or any further information.

UCW Conference Militant Public Meeting Defend Political levy Reject sell out deal Defend Jobs Fight Unemployment Tuesday 21 May 8pm. Winterbourne Hotel, Priory Rd. (on West Cliff) (2 minutes from BIC) Bournemouth. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, Eddie Thorpe UCW Oldham (pers. cap) Alan Short UCW Bridgend (pers. cap) Chair: Phil Waker UCW East London Counter (pers. cap)

MAKE some Fighting Fund for your Area! Militant "No Slave Labour on YTS" stickers now available. Price: £1.50 for 100—but they must be sold for a donation! Send order to Militant, 3-13 Hepscott Rd, London E9. Cheques/Po's made payable to Militant.

Marxist Mega Mix. "Funk Thatcher out of office" As sold at LPYS conference. Price including postage and packing £2.25. All proceeds to Fighting Fund From 20A, Blenheim Avenue, Leeds L2 9AX.

Irish comrade desperately needs accommodation in London for approx a month (Brixton preferred) Contact Wayne Farrell 674 0496

CO-OP stamps wanted for F/F. Send to Circulation Dept, 3-13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB.

This week: £2,404

EVERY PENNY must be rushed in now! Better still, send fivers and tenners. Every area could reach its Fighting Fund target with a massive push.

See every reader, every supporter. One South West London supporter has committed himself to raising £100 this quarter and he's only got £12 to go! How many other comrades can match that. Write in and tell us.

Ask every YS branch, trade union branch and Labour Party branch to donate. Parties and videos nights can still be organised for this weekend. From Pie and Pea suppers to booze and baked potatoes—anything goes at socials. Have fun and make money. We are asking every supporter to raise a minimum of £10 or £20 this week.

Appeal sheets

Organise a team of people to go out with special appeal sheets. Take collections in factories and workplaces. Littleton NUM members have raised £50 from a collection in the pit. In addition, Chris Brown from Lit-

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1620		2900
East Midlands	1565		2800
Humberside	916		1850
London East	1595		3250
London West	1037		2150
London South East	1091		2000
London South West	742		1600
Lancashire	549		1100
Manchester	882		2750
Merseyside	1711		6000
Northern	1098		4900
Scotland East	844		3000
Scotland West	1196		3800
Southern	1828		5000
South West	1107		2000
Wales East	226		2450
Wales West	552		2150
West Midlands	1802		4400
Yorkshire	1985		5900
Others	6012		10000
Total received	28360		70000

tleton pit has redeemed his IOU given at YS National Conference of £50. This is only one example from many, of miners making Militant's fund the top priority. Have you redeemed your pledge? If not do it now.

One of the best examples, we've heard about this week is the group of school students from Our Lady's High School in Motherwell who raised £45 selling Pontoon tickets in school. They are also going to take a collection amongst their classmates to send us May Day greetings!

We never cease to be overwhelmed at the fantastic effort that our young comrades in particular make to

raise money. This week we recieved the following letter.

"During the YS Conference, you may have noticed two young comrades going around the hall raffling a miners lamp. By the end of the conference Lisa and Kevin McEwan had raised a magnificent total of £46.16. Their ages? Lisa is 14 and Kev a mere 11 years old. Even the very young members of our class understand what needs to be done and that's to fight for socialism".

THANKS TO:

Johnny Burgess, GMBATU member, Waterworker, Coppermills who has agreed to give the £1 he was giving the strike committee for the

miners to the fighting fund every week. He's also trying to get some of his workmates to do the same. C. Boff, Cannock £2; T. Beathis, Coventry, £5; Mary Taylor, Miners wife 50p; retired miner from Keresley, 50p; Mark Allen, Leicester, £2.50; G. Littlejohns, East Midlands 65p; Church caretaker £3.75; G. Webster, 75p.

Oxford East YS £17, R. Pallin £1, NUPE; G. Young, Notts FTATU £1.50; J. Rutherford, Cotgrave NUM £1.05; J. Halford, Arnold ASTMS, £1; B. Shepperson, Gedling NALGO, £1; Alan Riley, Coventry School Student £1; J. Davies, Coventry TGWU £1; Mavis Seals 50p; Nick Barlow, Notts NUM 50p.

By Ruth Campbell

MILITANT SUMMER DRAW

- 1st Prize—Holiday worth £500 in resort of your choice
- 2nd Prize—Portable Colour TV worth £200
- 3rd Prize—Camera worth £100
- 4th Prize—two prizes—a Cassette Recorder worth £50 and a Personal Stereo worth £50
- 5th Prize—five prizes of £20 worth of socialist books

Price of ticket: 10p Get your ticket now from local Militant sellers. To be drawn 27 July.

General amnesty NOW



Five: Tuesday 30 April. Speakers: Bob Wylie and David Cairns (sacked miner, Solsgirth pit) Royal Hotel, Dunfermline 7.30pm. Lothians: Wednesday 1 May. Speakers: Bob Wylie and Tam Dury (sacked SCEBTA member, Monktonhall). Cross Keys Hotel, Dalkeith. 7.30pm. Chatham: Monday 29 April. Speakers: Keith Dickinson and Jack Collins (Secretary Kent NUM). Chatham Town Hall. 8.00pm. Liverpool: Wednesday 1 May. Speakers: John Pickard, Tyrone Simpson, Liverpool Councillor and Terry Fields MP. AUEW Buildings, Mount Pleasant. 7.30pm.

Glasgow: Tuesday 7 May. Speaker: Peter Taaffe. McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. 7.30pm. Newcastle-under-Lyme: Thursday 9 May. Speaker: Dave Nellist MP Wakefield: Friday 10 May. Speakers: Peter Taaffe and Nigel Pearce (NUM). Wakefield Labour Club, Vicarage Street, Wakefield. 7.30pm. Welsh Labour Party Conference: Friday 17 May. Empire Hotel, Church Walks, Llandudno. South East London: Tuesday 30 April. Speaker: Mike Suter. Erith Town Hall. 7.30pm.

This week £1626

WITH CAPITALISM in crisis, all political ideas are being tested. Twenty years ago when Militant was first published, there was a boom, and all sorts of wonderful ideas about the economy and politics could be held.

But now, working people and youth in particular are demanding, not just theories, but practical solutions to their problems—and only the ideas of Marxism can provide them.

School students are protesting at their lack of future.

Practical solution

Postmen, teachers and other groups of workers are striking in protest at conditions. Today's school students are tomorrow's young workers and will be the best fighters for a socialist society. They will see the need for an

Marxist Daily Building Fund 1985

	£		£
Eastern	2208	Scotland West	2029
East Midlands	2596	Southern	2834
Humberside	1595	South West	720
London East	2736	Wales East	1673
London West	3722	Wales West	1428
London South East	1709	West Midlands	1541
London South West	1614	Yorkshire	1118
Lancashire	383	National	1292
Manchester	1451		
Merseyside	3690		
Northern	2322		
Scotland East	2128		
		Total	38,791

education which means something worthwhile and for jobs which are not a means of being exploited but a useful asset to society.

Any preparations we can make now will make our job easier in the future. When we build a Marxist Daily paper we will face the future better prepared for reporting on the battles we will face, and for aiding struggles. So the contributions received this week for the Marxist Daily

Building Fund are further blows for socialism.

And once again, it is those who have least to lose who are among the best contributors this week.

Miner's donation

Yorkshire miner, Gary Ironmonger, who has already donated a week's picketing money during the strike has sent a further £50 donation. Paul Severn, a

NUPE member from Loughborough has donated his week's wages of £57.40. M Murray and K. Gilmore from Lothian have donated £75 each and Vivien Seal from Manchester has sent £100.

Keep the donations rushing in so we can finish clearing our debts and start laying the basis for a Marxist Daily Paper.

GET Militant

IN PREPARATION for the national sales drive, Militant sellers in Hull have just completed a local campaign. Despite bad weather and the paper arriving a day late, sales increased by over 50% in the first week.

Thatcher's mug-shot on the front page helped sales. But we have noticed a tendency amongst local people towards individual terrorism—"Help us to get rid of Thatcher" we shout.

"Yeah shoot her" comes the reply. Nearly 200 papers were sold on the streets with 50 being sold on both Friday and Saturday.

Street sales can be enjoyable especially if comrades work in shifts, taking a break but still keeping the sale going. Fundraising for a workers' paper is easy if sellers carry the rattling tins—we got at least one dozen "£1s for the paper" in one week.



You can sell Militant anywhere.

Every buyer must be asked to become a regular—carry pen and paper! Sales grew largely through hard graft but we also sold in new areas and in pubs. Sales outside workplaces were doubled and the FE college was covered every dinner-

time. Finally, "socialist competition" resulted in three comrades selling over 50 papers each. Forward to a daily.

By Paul Bottery

Young homeless— Tories turn the screw

FROM 29 April, any person under the age of 26 who is receiving DHSS Board and Lodging Allowance will find their payments severely cut.

Furthermore in most areas of Britain, the allowance will only be paid for a maximum of four weeks, eight weeks in some city centres, but only two weeks in most rural and seaside locations.

The only exceptions to this decree will be the disabled, single parents, those pregnant or those recently released from care. There is no right of appeal.

For the rest the government's intentions are clear—either find work in four weeks time or move to an equally deprived region. Having moved, individuals will not be allowed to re-sign on in their home town until a period of six months has passed.

Since the Tories came to power there has been little or no expansion in the provision in council housing.

The existing stock has been terribly eroded in recent years. The developments which took place in the sixties are now uninhabitable and in decay.

Secondly, the Tories have encouraged, and where necessary forced, local authorities to sell-off their council house stock. Obviously many of the better built traditional homes have since gone under the ham-

By Ian McDonald
(Secretary, Swansea
Uclands Ward LP,
personal capacity)

mer, shrinking the provision for those in a less fortunate position and unable to contemplate the private sector.

The last five years have

Hard-to-let

resulted in many young people, married couples and families applying for council accommodation only to find waiting lists years long ahead of them. The 'lucky' ones are only offered 'hard to let' accommodation, such as high rise flats, riddled with damp and structural defects.

In some areas, even this choice is unavailable. In a city the size of Swansea alone there are 4,000 housing applications awaiting attention, but even this figure is less than half of those who should be entitled to housing.

Every large town and city has its areas of down-grade hotels, hostels and bed-sits but most recently these areas have been unable to cope with the demands of the student population, let alone

this influx of the homeless. Nevertheless many families and young unemployed now find themselves forced into living in single shared rooms in some of the most run-down conditions. Young people who found themselves in over-crowded home environments where conflict within the family was the music of the hour, have nowhere else to go but into the these rabbit warrens of exploitation.

When the Housing Benefit System was restructured into the responsibility of local authorities, many landlords saw their illegal and unregistered flats and bedsit activities threatened. To dodge tax and high rate payments, escape health, safety and fire regulations it was necessary for these unscrupulous beings to keep clear of the local authority officials.

Landlords

Instead of the usual meagre list of "flats to let" adverts in the local press, the common feature nowadays is "Accommodation available—DHSS welcome". Bedsit property is now being used as shared board and lodging houses with vacant landlords. For them the pickings are rich—in London £110 was the top line by the DHSS for bed and



Increasingly the only offers to people on council waiting lists are 'hard to let' flats on run-down estates. Above, tenements in Liverpool

breakfast.

One LPYS member living in such conditions has estimated the earnings of her landlord to be in excess of £1,900 per week for the three properties he is known to own.

In board and lodgings there is no security of tenure, but it is often the only form of accommodation available for the young homeless in many regions.

There are other implications however. What is now

being discussed is that nomadic youth will not be able to register on the electoral role. Many youth will be deprived of their democratic right to vote.

Rather than forming policies to assist the unemployed, and improve their living conditions, this government chooses to punish in any way possible. This new legislation is an attempt to herd young people back to their parental homes and their parents' limited finan-

cial support.

The only way these new proposals can be fought is if the young unemployed get organised within the labour movement. All sections of the labour and trade union movement should place their full weight behind the LPYS and YTURC campaigns. In particular, the civil service unions must move immediate resolutions and acts of non-compliance with the Tories' new moves to hit at accommodation payments.

Fowler's 'review' spells clampdown on benefits

WHEN THE Tories start a 'review' you know that something bad is going to happen. The Fowler review into the Social Security system is no exception. Under the guise of a "radical but sensible reform" the government is intent upon the most devastating attack ever on the benefits system.

By Harriet Stevens
(CPSA, DHSS, Bristol,
personal capacity)

The composition of the review team and the fact that their recommendations have to be on a nil-cost basis give no grounds for optimism.

The "Children and Young Persons" review team includes Barbara Shenfield of the Adam Smith Institute (which calls for ending child benefit as a universal benefit) and T Parry-Rogers, of the Institute of Directors (which is calling for the abolition of Child Benefit). Moreover, the minister responsible, Norman Fowler, will be reporting back to none other than... himself!

Women affected

This latest and most dangerous 'review' comes in the wake of a whole number

of far-less publicised attacks on benefits, particularly those affecting women and single parents, which include:

★ The change in some areas from weekly to monthly-paid Child Benefit.

★ No increase this year for Family Income Supplementary recipients.

★ Attempts to stop women with young children claiming unemployment benefit by questioning their availability for work.

At the same time "equal treatment" legislation—forced upon the government by the EEC, which allows women to claim Supplementary Benefit instead of their partners—has been given a very low profile. Staff in DHSS offices are often uncertain of the new regulations because of lack of proper training.

The Fowler review makes previous changes seem insignificant by comparison. The major target is Child Benefit.

The Tories have never really liked Child Benefit. It allows the parent, usually the mother, an independent, regular (albeit inadequate) income. In their propaganda, the Tories are claiming piously that benefits are being "wasted" on the "wrong" people which is stopping the "really needy" getting them.

To assist in the deception

we've been shown a TV interview with Tory MP Edwina Currie in the sitting room of her luxury home saying that though she was well-off she received Child Benefit—and what a waste this was. This is just a smokescreen for legitimising the means test—something which we all know is a means of disqualifying the poor from their entitlement and not a means of making the system "fairer".

Other 'ideas' from the reviews are replacing cash allowances with benefits in kind—food vouchers instead of giro cheques—on the basis that the poor cannot be trusted to spend their money wisely.

Fight threat

Such proposals are monstrous and amount to the virtual replacement of the welfare state by a punitive state. The labour and trade union movement simply has to get its act together on this issue and fight this threat to the welfare state.

But neither can we be satisfied with simply restoring the 'status quo'. Our aim must be the establishment of a truly caring welfare state where poverty is abolished and 'social security' is a reality.

Photo: Militant



The Housing office at the Castlemilk estate in Glasgow—applications, transfers, repairs and rebates are all being hit under this government.

'Its how they want us to be'

ONE OF the things some workers are driven to when they're on the dole trying to make ends meet is to go on the fiddle.

One of my mates told me of his experience of a 'job-on-the-side' he had done:

"I've been on the dole over two years and when you get the whisper that there's a chance to do a job on the side you think of the money, the debts that can be paid. 'Maybe this will put you right', as well as putting one over on the Social. Not to mention just the feeling of working.

"So I did a week or so,

but the £200 I was promised I never got. What can you do?

"All the people you see and tell about it, they all say 'He's done that before'—which is no comfort. It makes you feel worse, you feel a right fool. What can you do, where can you go to complain—there's no trade union.

"When I went to see him the second time he told me to p*** off. I was a nobody who could do nowt about it.

"The dole I had got I spent paying bills. When I didn't get paid I was living from hand to mouth

for a while. I had to go for dinner and tea around my sister's and mother's.

"Every time I thought about it and the money he made out of me; and maybe it was going to be like this for me forever, things got on top of me. I didn't feel like getting up and going out. Just felt empty. Like everyone else you see on my estate. I never thought it would get me like that.

"I've got myself straight again. I keep thinking its Thatcher's fault—that's how they want us to be."

By Phil Umpleby

Ten years since United States defeat

Vietna

TEN YEARS ago, on 30 April 1975 at 7.53 am local time, the last few US marines hurriedly vacated the rooftop of the US embassy in Saigon in a military helicopter. This was the end of America's long and bloody involvement in South Vietnam.

After a decade of war, the richest and most powerful state in the world had been defeated by the Vietnamese liberation forces.

Since the last century, until it was occupied by the Japanese in 1940, Vietnam had been a French colony. During the war, the Japanese occupation was fought chiefly by the Viet Minh, which, although nominally a "people's" movement, was led by the Vietnamese Communist Party. The Japanese were defeated on the basis of a revolutionary peasant war, led by these ex-Marxists, with land seizures and expropriations.

Yet at the end of the war the Vietnamese CP maintained the Moscow line, that the country should remain in the Western sphere of influence. Despite land seizures and spontaneous factory occupations, the VCP held that "our government is a bourgeois government, even though Communists are now in power." Such a lack of perspective and programme allowed French imperialism to regain a foothold.

But there was no basis upon which Vietnamese capitalism could be established. French imperialism found itself facing a new revolutionary peasant war—a war it could not win, especially after the Chinese revolution of 1944–49.

After a 55-day siege at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the French were defeated and forced to withdraw.

At the armistice negotiations it was agreed to partition the country along the 17th parallel. Reunification was planned for 1956, following all-Vietnam elections. Neither the reunification nor the elections occurred.

Nationalised

In the North, the regime nationalised the bankrupt and ramshackle remains of Vietnamese capitalism as well as the former enterprises of imperialism. The landowners, like their city cousins, were also expropriated, so the "People's Republic of Vietnam" came to be modelled on Stalinist Moscow and Peking.

There was never any stage in the Vietnamese revolution in which power was held by democratic organisations of the working class—such independent movements were held in check by the peasant-based army of Ho Chi Minh. But leaning upon the army and the working class, the Viet Minh nevertheless were able to sweep away all the remnants of the old state and carry through a social revolution, albeit in a grossly bureaucratic form.

As Marxists explained at the time, the elimination of capitalism and landlordism represented a big stride forward for society. The organisation of a plan of production—even on bureaucratic lines—would allow for the alleviation of the worst of the horrors and hardships inflicted by imperialism. But the absence of workers' democracy and the narrow nationalist outlook of the Viet Minh bureaucracy inevitably led at a later

By Steve Appleton

stage to new economic crises and restrictions, that can only be resolved by a *political* revolution, to bring the workers to power.

In the South the state was led by a succession of US-backed corrupt military dictatorships, whose only function was to eliminate the Viet Minh (renamed the National Liberation Front), suppress trade union and democratic rights, and maintain South Vietnam as a safe client state for imperialism.

Eisenhower

The major cities, especially the capital Saigon, were ruled by private armies of drug dealers, extortionists, religious fanatics and brothel owners. Most of the countryside, however, throughout this period, belonged to the National Liberation Front. US President Eisenhower admitted in 1954 that: "Had elections been held... possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh".

To maintain the regime the US was forced to consider increasing military aid. Slowly, under the supposedly liberal, Democratic President Kennedy, the number of US troops began to increase. By the end of 1962 there were 11,000 US military personnel in South Vietnam. But the war had not yet hit the headlines.

To cultivate "world opinion" it was important for the US government to appear to be supporting a besieged Vietnamese government against foreign Communist "aggression", rather than aiding a military dictatorship crush its own people. In August 1964 therefore an incident was engineered in the Gulf of Tonkin. North Vietnamese seaborne military units were supposed to have attacked US ships, and this gave the US government the excuse it needed for positive escalation, including the bombing of North Vietnam.

The most intense period of the war was reached around 1969 when the world's newspapers were filled with horrifying pictures of Buddhist monks opposed to the Saigon regime publicly committing suicide using flaming petrol; and when Nixon ordered the secret bombing of Cambodia. The amount of explosives dropped in this operation alone amounted to four times that dropped on Japan during the Second World War—including the two atom bombs. The full story was not revealed until the Watergate scandal broke in 1973.

US strategy was to rely on government repression and massive military superiority to defeat the NLF. Such efforts as there were to win the "hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people failed utterly.

Plain terror was therefore utilised, combined with an attempt to physically separate the rural population from the guerrillas.

The war killed two million US soldiers. No fewer than had been deployed since conflict cost America \$1

Eight million tons of bom nam, mainly by US B52 bombers to four times the entire budget of the Second World War. Six million tons of artillery expended.

Forty per cent of the rural people were herded into "strategic hamlets"—camps or villages surrounded by barbed wire fences and minefields. Those inside the camps were vetted to ensure they were not NLF supporters. They all, of course, declared they were not! The areas outside the hamlets were strafed or demolished by bombs, or defoliated. A total of 38,000 square kilometres of forest and plantation was destroyed by poisonous chemicals.

For the majority of people in the cities, according to the historian Michael Maclear: "In the general crowded squalor, the fear was not of war but of disease and hunger. At different times there was every kind of epidemic, from typhoid to bubonic plague." US Senator William Fulbright called South Vietnam, "a society of prostitutes and mercenaries".

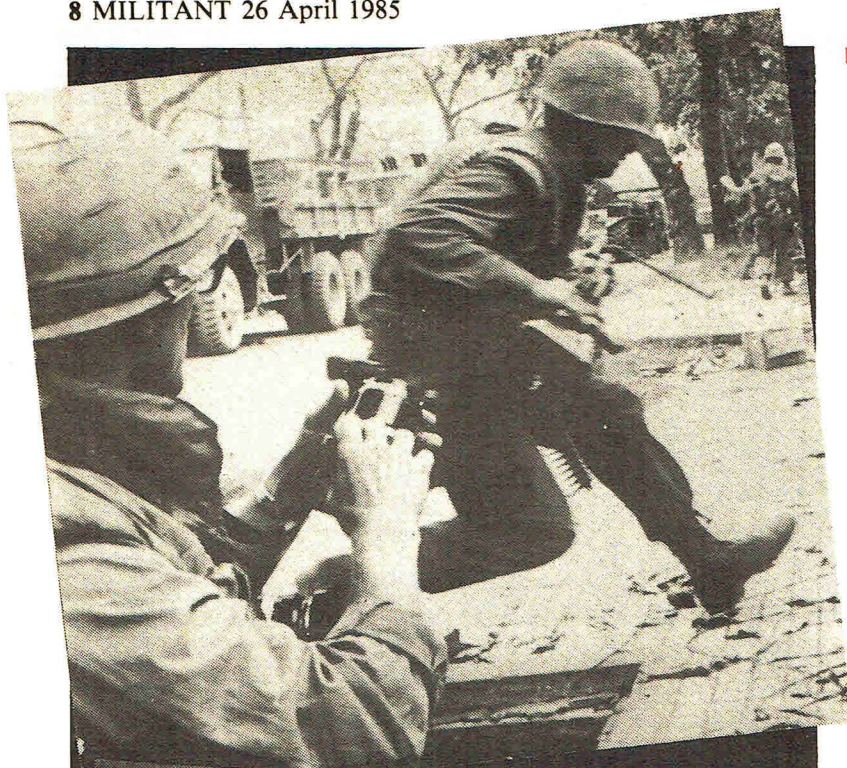
After the Christmas bombings of North Vietnam in December 1972 a peace treaty was signed between the US and North Vietnam which left the Saigon government in the lurch. The US then began rapidly to withdraw, whilst increasing the supply of military hardware to the ARVN (the Army of the Republic of Vietnam).

US pullout

The extent of the popular support for the NLF was demonstrated by the collapse of these South Vietnamese forces after the US pullout, even though the ARVN had three times the military manpower and up to seven times the firepower of the combined NLF and North Vietnamese forces. As the ARVN retreated further south it melted away. Many soldiers went over to the PRG (Provisional Revolutionary Government); the remainder "disintegrated into hordes of thieves, murderers and rapists", (historian Joseph Buttinger).

The fall of Saigon was the collapse of a decomposed society. About 65,000 people were evacuated by the US in the final weeks. According to Julian Manynon, a reporter for London's Independent Radio News: "How you got out depended on how rich you were, or how well connected". The owners of "Air Vietnam", who helped the Americans with the airlift, took out \$20 million in gold bullion. Frank Snepp, the CIA's senior analyst in Saigon, noted that after the operation was completed: "The gold dropped out of sight, undoubtedly into some expatriate's coffers."

For the mass of people, however, the end of the war and the ignominious exit of the mighty US were greeted with unbounded relief.



The Vietnamese were subjected to the most advanced and deadly weapons of war, yet the forces of the mightiest power on earth were humbled by an army of poor peasants, fighting for the liberation of their country for nearly 40 years.

ted in South East Asia

m war

Vietnamese and 57,000
in 2.8 million US troops
the early 1960s and the
2,000,000,000.

s were dropped on Viet-
members. That is equivalent
tonnage dropped dur-
nd World War. A further
y and shells were also

Army disaffection

THE DEFEAT of US imperialism, representing the most powerful military force on Earth, was an event of immense importance. US military and political prestige was fundamentally damaged. The victory of the NLF was a massive encouragement for national liberation forces around the world and the ability of the US to intervene in those struggles was limited for a whole period.

Besides the overwhelming support which the NLF enjoyed from the people of South Vietnam, in particular the peasants in the countryside, a number of other key factors contributed to the United States' defeat. These were the rapid and extensive disaffection of the US and ARVN forces and the opposition to the war in the US itself.

Tarnished shield

The extent of the demoralisation of the US Marines and GIs by 1972 was truly remarkable. George Alton, a colonel in the US Army wrote in his book, *The Tarnished Shield*, that: "Never in its long history has the US Army been so torn by rebellion, weakened by drugs, fragmented by desertion as it is today... Unquestionably if current conditions in the US Army are not corrected, the country stands in considerable danger... How else are we to explain that an army of half a million with the greatest fire power and air supremacy in history is unable to defeat a foe that runs around the jungle in sandals made of old automobile tyres?"

By 1972 the AWOL (Absence Without Leave) rate for the army and marines had reached 17 per cent. About 40 per cent of the US ground troops used soft drugs, whilst about 18 per cent used hard narcotics such as heroin. By 1971, 20,529 soldiers had required medical treatment for drug abuse—about four times the number of troops being treated for combat wounds!

Between 1969 and 1972 there were 551 cases reported of "fraggings"—a practice whereby unpopular officers had fragmentation grenades placed beneath their beds and detonated. At least 86 officers were killed in this way whilst another 700 were injured.

During the closing months of the war, before the 1973 armistice, there were ten cases of full-scale mutiny. "Working it out" became commonplace. This was a system operated by GIs and Marines for discussing the orders of senior officers before deciding whether to



VIETNAM PEACE!

"...To robbery, butchery and rapine, they give the lying name 'government' they create a desolation and call it peace..." TACITUS in 98 AD, on the Roman Emperors

Militant cartoon by Alan Hardman, from 1972, when US President Nixon signed a peace treaty with North Vietnam.

carry them out. In April 1970 an example of this was actually caught live on television by crews filming the C Company of the 7 Cavalry. The captain ordered his troops down a jungle clearing on a "search and destroy mission". The cameras recorded the troops informing the captain, in the more direct and informative language of the troops, that his orders were nonsense and would not be carried out.

This level of disaffection was being felt not only in Vietnam but also amongst the troops on the bases back home and those stationed abroad in places like Germany. During the Vietnam period, "less than honourable" discharges totalled 563,000 for the US armed forces.

A wide variety of unofficial armed forces publications were produced during this time. In 1972 the US Defence Department reported that 245 newspapers or bulletins had been or were being produced. They had names like: *Fatigue Press*, *GI Press Service*, *Redline* and *FTA* (initials taken from the army recruitment slogan—Fun, Travel and Adventure, but usually taken to mean "F...k The Army").

The morale amongst the ARVN forces was even lower. Their pay was only one-sixteenth that of the GIs and by 1966 desertions had reached 125,000—an average rate of 21 per cent. In 1967 the US military authorities calculated that the ARVN was "80 per cent ineffective".

Draft dodging

IN THE USA growing opposition to the war threatened to get out of hand and become more generalised and political. Rallies in opposition to the war were often over a quarter million strong. A rally in Washington in April 1971 was upward of 300,000-strong and was led by 500 GIs. Over 250,000 young Americans avoided the draft and one million committed draft offences. A further 15 million avoided immediate call-up by pleading special educational or career circumstances. This generally benefited middle class youth. As a result the troops in Vietnam were more predominantly working class and black than the general population.

Furthermore, by the early 1970s the financial cost of the war was



US troops evacuating one of their wounded.

becoming prohibitive. It was costing \$500,000 to kill each enemy soldier.

All these factors, combined with the manifest impossibility of defeating the NLF by "bombing them back into the stone-age", led to US withdrawal.

Although defeat for the US was achieved in the end, a Marxist policy by the NLF would have shortened the war considerably.

Perhaps most important of all, was the failure to make any class appeal to the US forces or the ARVN. The composition of the US Army was disproportionately working class with a large minority of black soldiers.

Demoralisation

The hellish conditions of the conflict, the vileness of the regime they were helping to prop up and the radicalisation of American youth—all contributed to large-scale demoralisation, restlessness and a widespread questioning by the soldiers of the reasons for their being in South Vietnam.

Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese and American lives could have been saved if the policies and tactics of the Vietnamese Communist leadership had been based on the approach which the Russian Bolsheviks adopted towards interventionist troops after the revolution. It was their unceasing efforts to make common cause with the German soldiers, and those from the other states, that led the German General Hoffman to later admit that: "Immediately after conquering the Bolsheviks, we were conquered by them. Our victorious army on the Eastern front became rotten with Bolshevism... We did not dare transfer some of our Eastern divisions to the West."

Winning the support of the ranks of the ARVN and the people living in the cities could have been an even easier task had the NLF offered the prospect of a united socialist Vietnam. Instead, the main slogans of the NLF were—"Neutrality, democracy, peace, independence".

A statement from Tran Bach Dang, a Central Committee member of the Lao Dong Party, sums up the programme for which millions of heroic Vietnamese were fighting: "Democracy for us means a real national people's democracy based on the unity of workers, peasants, intellectuals and patriotic bourgeoisie of all tendencies. We are carrying out a national democratic revolution with the unity of all sections of the population... Our present people's democratic alliance must approve measures (when in government—SA) acceptable to this upper strata as well. It may seem strange to outsiders to find Communists fighting for the interests of the upper class, but we understand the vital necessity of unity at the highest level, not only now during the period of struggle but for the years of the post-war reconstruction as well... We propose the formation of a national democratic coalition

government based on the highest attainable level of national unity. Within such a government there could be elements almost at the opposite end of the political spectrum from us—pro Gaullist nationalists for instance, even pro-American nationalists as long as they break with the puppets and are for genuine national independence".

This policy is an example of the "two stages" theory according to which the next stage in the development of South Vietnam would not be socialism but democratic capitalism. This policy meant that a class appeal to the US or ARVN troops was impossible.

In any case the "popular coalition" of workers, peasants and "patriotic" capitalists was a myth. The NLF based its strategy on a classic peasant army conducting a revolutionary war. There was never any basis for stable capitalist development in the South any more than in the North. However, a Marxist strategy, drawing the peasantry behind a movement of the working class in the cities, would have had a big echo among US and ARVN troops.

Cities neglected

The policy of the VCP placed the peasantry, not the working class, in the leading role in the Vietnamese revolution. In consequence the cities were neglected even though they were the nerve centres of the economy. In an effort to speed up the withdrawal during the closing few weeks of the Saigon regime, North Vietnamese General Van Tien Dung even fired artillery and rockets into the slum areas of the capital.

Throughout the conflict, *Militant* supported the struggle of the Vietnamese people. It sounded a warning note, however, that the policies of the VCP leadership would lead not to a democratic socialist state, but to a *bureaucratically-deformed workers' state* modelled on that of North Vietnam. Events since have confirmed this view. As in the North, capitalism and landlordism were immediately expropriated and a state-planned economy organised on an all-Vietnam basis.

Without doubt this represented a massive leap forward by comparison with the murderous US-backed dictatorship, but it is also preparing the ground for new troubles for the Vietnamese people. The new state serves the interests of the privileged bureaucracy of the re-united Vietnam and this in turn has led to conflict with the nationalist interests of totalitarian bureaucracies of the adjacent states—including "socialist" China and Kampuchea (Cambodia).

Without doubt, however, the upheavals pending in countries like the Phillipines, Thailand and South Korea, with powerful industrial working classes, will provide further opportunities to move towards establishing a free association of socialist states in South East Asia.

Argentina, Peru

ALMOST NOTHING remains of Raul Alfonsín's optimism at the time of Argentina's 1983 elections. The problems have wiped the smile from the Radical Party leader's face.

By Alejandro Mendoza

"We won't let them impose an austerity plan" Alfonsín never tired of saying this in 1983; but in December he signed a pact with the IMF which includes wage cuts and public expenditure cuts.

"We will fight financial speculation!" But things go from bad to worse. Argentina still has about the most tolerant financial legislation in the world. Anyone who had invested \$1000 in deals on 1 January 1984 would have picked up \$2800 profit by 31 December just by knowing how to speculate a little and by previously having converted dollars into pesos.

"Our armed forces are democratic and within the constitution!" But every week there are threats of a coup or provocative gestures by some officer or section of the army.

"We're going to increase workers wages!" But in 1984 they fell by 25% and the government have now signed a pact with the bosses and the CGT union that they will rise by a maximum of 90% of the inflation rate.

There is now a permanent strike wave. The government will not provide statistics of disputes but they are increasing in every sector, industrial, public sector employees, shops, schools, railways. Some workers are demanding wage rises, other factories are occupied after sackings. Peoples' canteens are being organised during long conflicts.

From early 1984, the government has been trying to arrive at a social contract with the bosses and CGT union leaders but neither side could agree guidelines for a truce. Finally on 6 February the bosses made a promise not to introduce redundancies while CGT said they wouldn't call strikes. On 7 February bosses were still sacking workers and there were still spontaneous strikes!

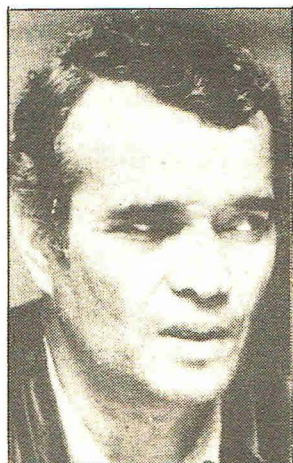
Discredited

Workers are becoming ever more hostile to the government, but luckily for Alfonsín, the opposition party, the Peronist PJ, is going through a crisis, worsened by its electoral defeat but with more long-standing deeper causes.

The discrediting of the Peronist leadership during and after the 1976-83 dictatorship meant that government disasters did not produce a rapid swing to the Peronists. The workers' protest stayed at the level of union struggle, allowing the Peronist bureaucracy to maintain their leadership for 14 months without provoking the crisis which has been on the cards since 1973.

When the PJ conference met on 15 December, after a bitter factional fight, a new right wing national committee were installed by thuggish means, using pistols etc. (see *Militant* 25 January). A group of PJ members *renovadores* (reformers) met in a local hotel, refused to

Splits in government Chasms in opposition



Peronist right winger Iglesias.

accept the new leaders and called another conference on 2/3 February; the official PJ called their conference for 1 February.

To the official Jamboree came 289 of the most static and right wing section; followers of the right wingers Hermino Iglesias and Lorenzo Miguel. They discussed mainly how to keep control out of the hands of the reformers.

Class struggles

395 delegates attended the reformist conference. They were able to discuss issues without fear of being beaten up for disagreeing with the leadership, reawakening many groups including the Peronist Youth. Conference slogans were for democratisation, for ending the killings by the bureaucracy's gangs, the "Potatas", and for direct elections of leaders. The conference elected a parallel leadership though like the official sector they kept the increasingly disliked Isobel Peron as president.

Peronist politics often produces strange Machiavellian pacts and many in both official and reformist movements want a compromise but there are many factors which could produce a decisive split.

In previous articles we have put forward the perspective of a split along class lines in the interclass organisations of Peronism. Class struggles will find their way to the heart of the Peronists who were on the point of splitting before the 1976 coup cut across developments. The dictatorship physically destroyed the left leaders but gave many right wing leaders their chance to collaborate with the junta.

If the Peronists had had an ounce of democracy, workers would long ago have fought to overthrow the bureaucracy. But this was unthinkable in an organisation which had produced the terror group AAA in the 70s to fight the Peronist left and the left in general. Reports are ten a penny in Buenos Aires of the coup planning activities of Hermino Iglesias with the army officers and big business. These kind of people with their near-fascist training never tolerate inter-



Juan Peron and second wife Isobel on the balcony of the CGT union in 1973. The class collaborationist PJ could not survive the end of the boom without enormous class divisions.

Inflation is out of control: in 1984 it ran at 766%, double 1983's rate. The productive sector of the economy has now fallen to the level of fifteen years ago. Income per head was 15% less than in 1974 and real wages fell by at least a quarter from 1983. Manual wages in manufacturing only equal those thirty years ago.

These failures cost the main economic minister and the director of the Central Bank their jobs. We now have the third

new minister in fourteen months.

Economic problems have split the Radical Party (U.C.R) into various factions. The governor of Cordoba for example launched a furious attack on one government sector. Like many others, he wanted better provision for his province in the national budget. The provincial economies are in ruins, in some cases provincial administrative staff are paid in coupons!



Argentines besiege a Buenos Aires bank in 1983, fearful of a collapse.

nal debate. Internal struggles are convulsive between opposing groupings, the bureaucracy backed by the capitalists and on the other side the working class.

Right wing attacked

At present the PJ is nearly empty. The working class and youth are not involved so the struggle will not be directed. But Peronism is a movement with complex relationships. Lorenzo Miguel's power bases are the Metalworkers union UOM and the "62" the political wing of the PJ formed in the CGT Union federation to resist the 1955 coup d'état.

Elections are being held in the CGT industrial union for new leaders. The bureaucratic right wing 62 are losing ground to the "Group of 25" a newer wing of Peronism which grew out of the opposition to the col-

laborationist "62" during the Videla dictatorship. The right are losing their base, workers are indirectly pushing out the right wing bureaucrats.

The leaders of the "reformers" are the least short sighted of the bureaucracy; many were recent backers of Iglesias but now announce themselves as 'life long reformists'. They are prepared to sacrifice people like Iglesias, partly because he is personally repulsive and would be no asset in the forthcoming elections!

Their well publicised struggle is but a pale reflection of the class battles going on. The "renovadores" had to adopt class slogans, against the thugs, for democratisation and for direct voting to get workers' support. They have no policies, just vague reforms. They define PJ as anti-imperialist and non aligned,

but they remain within the confines of Peronism.

But the Peronists are still seen by Argentine workers as their traditional party in the fight to transform society. Even the timid ideas of the reformists, after years of dictatorship and Peronist bureaucracy, could have a far greater effect than intended.

Catalyst

Workers' pay rises are immediately eaten up by price rises. Union struggles in a time of capitalist crisis become political struggles. The reformers' declaration about a strong organised opposition to the government could act as a catalyst for political involvement which could rapidly increase political consciousness.

If demagogic reformers win the battle in the PJ (the most probable outcome) their policies will also fail. Trying to combine the interests of workers with those of a capitalist class which has developed nothing in South America but torture chambers is utopian. Peronism only brought major gains in the beef boom years after the war.

Events are dividing Argentina clearly into exploiters and exploited; they cannot thrive together. Behind the manoeuvres of the Peronist cliques stand millions of workers and young people burning to overthrow the most corrupt Peronist bureaucrats. They will then want to build a fighting organisation for the socialist transformation of Argentina.

Peru's new government of pressure

THE ELECTIONS in Peru have produced a victory for the left of centre Social Democrats APRA.

APRA led by Alan Garcia gained 48% of the poll while the left wing coalition Marxist United Left became the main Parliamentary opposition. There is a question mark over the role of the military, who have always tended to intervene in any election whose result they did not like.

The economy is declining, there is a \$350 billion foreign debt and an unemployment rate which may be over 50%. Frustration at the problems has led to the rise of the Maoist influenced terrorist group *Sendero Luminoso* who the government have used as an excuse for systematic repression, particularly of Indian communities. More importantly, in the long run, there have been a series of strikes and general strikes throughout Peru.

The new government will face conflicting pressures from the bosses and the working class. Even though the election manifesto was very vague, talking of a better deal for Peru, the low vote for ex-President Belaunde's Accion Popular, only 5% of the poll, shows the hatred for the capitalist parties.

The full count will not finish until May but already pressure from the working class has forced Garcia to threaten to ignore the International Monetary Fund in any debt negotiations. From 28 July when the new government takes office, the leaders will face a state of constant crisis.

Indonesia, Singapore, Zimbabwe, USA

Genocide Man

THATCHER WAS stupid enough to think she was in Singapore when she visited Indonesia. But she can hardly be as ignorant of President Suharto's bloody history nor of his present record.

By Tim White

When Suharto seized power in 1965-66 he carried out a murderous settling of accounts with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), killing possibly a million members. Thousands more were arrested: some of these are still in jail. The PKI had between one and two million members through unions, student organisations and other groupings. The majority of society was behind it; the capitalists had little basis.

There had been huge demonstrations for independence from Dutch colonial powers. After independence the PKI grew to a mass party. It would be logical to assume that the Communist Party would push to one side the irrelevant capitalists and fight for



President Suharto.

a socialist Indonesia.

But the Chinese Stalinist leaders advised their Indonesian comrades to form a Popular Front with the "national progressive bourgeoisie" ie form a coalition of workers and capitalists. They supported the President, Sukarno, a nationalist general with some mildly radical ideas.

With this support of the PKI even the revolutionary unrest of 1959, when the workers took over the plantations, could be crushed. In 1965 using the alleged killing of some army officers by members of the PKI,

General Suharto, a right-winger, staged a military coup. Instead of organising a struggle against the army, the Communists relied on the 'progressive' Sukarto. But he was far too scared to arm the people against the military and did nothing.

The result was a blood-bath. Executions were organised gestapo fashion, men and women lined up in trenches then shot. In the countryside Moslem reactionaries beheaded Communists and their families. Fascist gangs backed by army thugs were let loose in the city streets. Many more died in prison camps as the Generals consolidated power using fascist methods, though without the mass middle class base Hitler achieved in the 1930's.

The regime has not softened with age. In East Timor, the generals are trying to colonise the former Portuguese colony against a people who want independence.

Refugees claim that hundreds of thousands have died in battles, from torture or from starvation.

The main islands themselves allow few human rights. Thousands of people have disappeared in recent years. "Security forces" in Sumatra have been told to shoot "criminals" on sight. Suharto's definition of criminal is very elastic.

All this has benefitted only a few. The government elite at Jakarta, and the generals are well rewarded (retired generals have recently been given massive timber concessions and even a coal mine), and a few capitalists. The rest get high unemployment, child labour, wages averaging under £9 a week, hunger, and landlessness which are being made worse by a growing economic crisis. This is the land of Suharto, friend of Mrs Thatcher, the self-styled saviour of the Falklands from fascism.

Two of Thatcher's heroes

Profitable tyranny

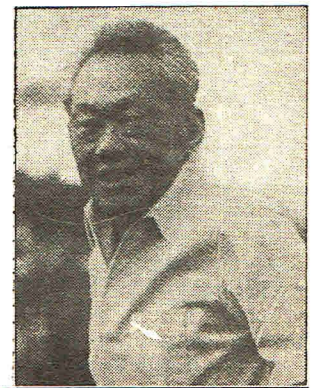
SINGAPORE one of the stop off points on Thatcher's Eastern jamboree has many attractions for the high priestess of exploitation.

It is an Asian "success story" with one of the biggest growth rates in the world. Living standards are still low (though they are catching up with Britain's). Thatcher also likes Lee Kuan Yew's method of solving problems.

Before he took over in 1959 he claimed like many leaders in the third world to be a socialist. But he had imprisoned most of the left leaders of his People's Action Party (PAP) and consolidated his own rule. If economic success did not win electoral support, Lee would threaten areas who didn't vote for him with withdrawal of grants, etc.

People who show their opposition can be held for two years without trial and can be sentenced to three years jail for creating "hatred for the government". A police permit is needed for a meeting of more than five people.

Racism is government policy. Malays and Indians get the worst jobs and are threatened with deportation if they are deemed "trouble makers". Malays are "strongly encouraged" to have no more than two children. Working class women get very heavy low paid jobs, for in-



Lee Kuan Yew.

stance scraping congealed crude oil off the walls of oil tankers with small scrapers.

Profitability has one drawback for the Lees and Thatchers of the world; it tends to build up the working class, the gravediggers of capitalism. Despite the relatively high living standards, workers' frustration is easily seen in incidents in the high rise flats of the island, with numerous cases of people throwing heavy goods such as fridges out of the flats at passers by.

The growing health of the economy will not last for ever. Shipyards and shiprepair, one of the traditional industries, is moving to South Korea where labour is cheaper if less well trained. When the bubble bursts, Lee hopes the frustrations will take a racist form to keep the people split. It will be up to the working class movement to ensure that socialism keeps the workers united and removes Thatcher's heroes from power. Lee is already losing popularity.

At present, the government-controlled unions are just tame channels for Lee to get PAP policies accepted by the working class. The TUC are a major employer, owning most of Singapore's taxis. The first task in Singapore will be for the workers to win their own organisations back.



Letter from Zimbabwe

Two of the socialists who have been imprisoned in Zimbabwe have been deported. The other active trade unionists imprisoned at the same time had earlier been released (see Militant 8 March, 22 March).

At a press conference in London on 18 April, David Hemson and Darcy Du Toit, together with Anneke Poppe, who had also been detained, described conditions in the prisons and explained the aims of their work of socialist education in Zimbabwe. A fuller report will appear in a future issue.

In the last few days Militant has received the letter below from young workers in Zimbabwe.

Dear Militant,

We are youth who like to read your paper.

We want to congratulate you for the work you are doing in Britain, but also for the role your paper has played in our country.

In Zimbabwe, we have achieved some rights for the workers, some as a result of struggles led by fellow comrades who have been inspired by the ideas of Militant.

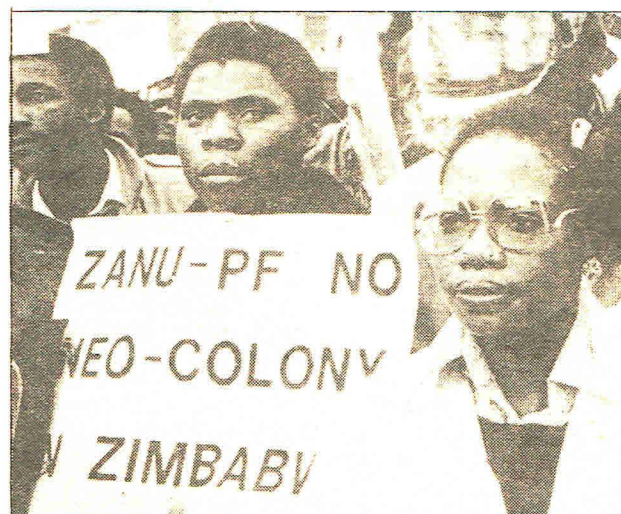
We are hoping to win a lot more rights for our fathers, but as our support grows, we are having problems with the government.

As you will know by now, some of our com-

rades have been arrested, because they were teaching socialism. However, they have been falsely accused by the Minister of Information of having been plotters against Zimbabwe. This lie must be publicised.

Despite these attacks, we are confident of resisting them with the help your readers have already given us.

The workers' problems are very great. In mining, for instance, where there are 68,000 workers, many miners have to build their own houses (hovels is the term used by one newspaper) out of mud



On a demonstration in 1979, workers supported Mugabe on the understanding that he would fight capitalism and imperialism.

and grass. Toilets and washing facilities have to be shared, and clothes washed in the river.

This is what we are fighting against, and we want our government to be quite clear on that.

We need your help fully 100% in this struggle. We are small, growing, and very strong.

We cannot give our

names or addresses at present for security reasons, but you must believe us. (In any case we are the ones suffering as we cannot get Militant regularly now.)

We wish you good luck in your struggles.

Workers Unite!
Forward with Socialism!
From
Youth of Zimbabwe.

Fighting the US coal bosses

ALTHOUGH THE new contract with America's miners' union, UMWA, was signed last October several coal companies have so far refused to sign with local unions.

Altogether 2,500 UMWA mines are out on strike to get the contract signed. They are now in the fifth month of strike and for many it looks like the struggle will go on for a long time yet.

Long contract strikes are not unusual in America. Many have lasted over 12 months, inflicting severe hardships on the strikers. But in the present struggle the miners are receiving some strike pay from the Selective Strike Fund. The fund was started last year after miners had voted for a 2½% levy on working members.

Additional financial help is also being given to the locals on strike. Many have now been adopted by working local unions who organise collections and send regular donations. Working

miners are also getting involved in the picketing and day to day running of the strikes. Such moral and physical help often boosts the morale of isolated strikers and helps counter the propaganda war carried out by the coal companies.

Amongst the coal owners holding out against the contract is AT Massey. The company has a record of using union-busting tactics of the type employed by MacGregor. Indeed when UMWA made enquiries about US coal being used to break the NUM's strike they found much of the coal came from Massey non-union mines. The company also has interests in the South African coal industry.

But whether the strikes are taking place in such huge concerns as AT Massey or in small independent mines UMWA members are determined that no concessions will be made.

By John Chapman
(Houghton Main NUM)

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London. E9 5HB

A woman's right?

Dear Comrades,

The united strength and resolve of the striking miners' families, and the important role of women and their support groups, has led many feminists to reassert the 'women's right to work down the mine'.

These women should look back at the history of the working class for a minute. The Royal Commission on the Mines in 1842 and other protective legislation, the Factories Acts of 1819 etc, bringing women and children out of the mines was a direct result of 'moral panic' by the ruling class and in probable response to growing working class action and solidarity. These hard won concessions of bygone days are not the playthings of an irresponsible few.

This demand of the feminists is not new, in 1925 the Open Door Council, a group of ultra feminists, produced a pamphlet called *Women and the right to*

work in the mines. They claimed that current unrest in the British coal industry was due to female exclusion, without this, the public conscience would have insisted on improvements in the industry, which it had ignored, since only men were employed underground.

Such arguments fail to recognise the power and greed of capitalism. The American women miners have, alongside their brothers, improved health and safety standards in some mines, but the overwhelming reason for these women working underground is the lack of protection in their jobs, coupled with low pay. These women work long, hard, and dangerous hours to keep the wolf from the door, not to prove they are better than men. I oppose the call to women to seek to work underground, and see this as a regression of workers rights, not an extension.

Ann Bennett
NUPE Shop steward
(personal capacity)
Cardiff

Cause or effect?

Dear Comrades,

A recent report in *The Times* (5 April, 1985) reveals that sections of the establishment look towards legalising cannabis as a means of containing the heroin epidemic. It is put in terms of being a trivial offence, "like riding a bike on the pavement". Against a background of growing discontent within society, particularly amongst the youth, it should be noted that this solution comes from the political enemies of

the working class. Also, their concern is with the effects not the causes of drug taking. Legalising cannabis would increase the despair of whole sections of workers and blunt any movement towards changing society. The trade unions, Labour Party and Young Socialists must oppose these solutions. Rearming the working class with the practical tools of socialism to overcome the causes of drug taking.

Yours fraternally
Jim Greer
EETPU

Student protests

Dear Comrades,

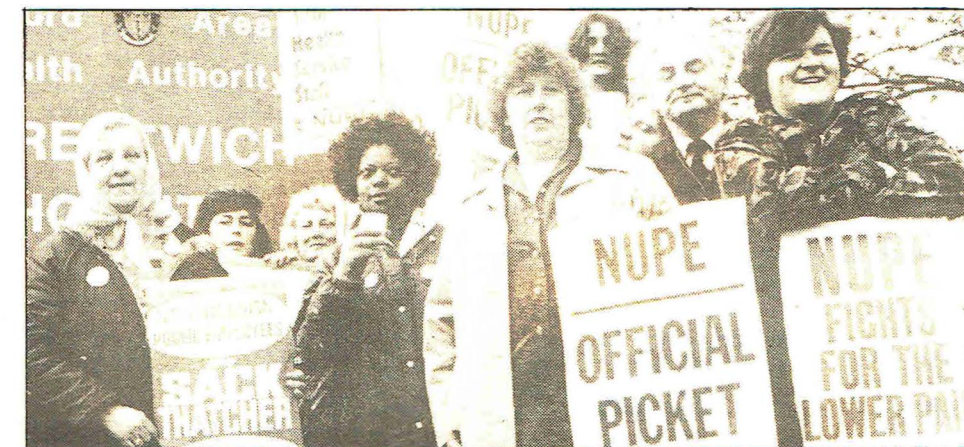
On 21 March whilst viewing *Afternoon Plus*, I was stirred from my armchair by the sounds of riotous shouting and chanting. Outside in the street 50 or 60 schoolchildren of between 12 and 15, were marching towards the local school chanting slogans.

They were protesting against the teachers' strike and how it was preventing them from doing their 'O' grades. Incidentally, in another part of Glasgow on the same day, hundreds of kids were striking in favour of the teachers' strike.

At first, I felt angry at our local kids protesting in opposition to the teachers' cause, but these kids understood this one issue which was affecting their future—their right to sit 'O' grades, however, unlike the other kids in Glasgow, they could not yet grasp that the teachers' struggle was theirs also.

If at this young age, these children can march the streets in protest, however as yet misguided, what will they do when they are forced on to a YTS scheme, when they have no rights to supplementary benefit, when they are forced to live off their parents' income, and finally when they understand that their future under capitalism is nil?

Yours fraternally
Ann Lynch
Drumchapel Labour Party
Glasgow



Attacks on NHS workers are a symptom of cut-backs in the service, particularly amongst staff.

Work pressure in NHS

Dear Comrades,

I read with interest Debbie Cusack's letter (issue 744) on the attitude where she works to staff taking time off sick. As I found out recently, to my cost, this sort of thing is growing more frequent.

I work for the NHS, am in the union and I thought that I was safe from this type of thing—some hopes!

I am pregnant and early on I took one day off sick because I was very ill with vomiting, dizziness and shaking. When I arrived at work the next day I was told by my supervisor that the boss thought it was "a bit much to take a whole day off just because of a little bit of morning sickness". I went to see him straight away (as soon as I had cooled my temper down a bit) to sort things out. Although we established that it had been a misunderstanding on his part due to the fact that the supervisor had not told him the real reason why I was off (she said it was depression), he still had said that he had looked through my file and that I had taken too much sick leave in the two and a half years I had worked for him. Even though he knew I was pregnant and I stated in very clear terms that it was not just a case of feeling a little sick he just said that any further days off "might result in difficulties with future job references".

I was very upset over this which did not help my physical state much. After two more months of pressure being applied on me not to stay at home if ill, disapproval if I rested in facilities provided at work and even at one point, pressure being applied for me to work more than the two hour day safe limit on a VDU, even though more use could have affected the baby. (Needless to say I did not do more than I had to, but I felt terribly guilty about it). I ended up going home in tears almost every day and could not get rid of the sick feeling I had. My husband got so worried about me I went to the doctor under pre tests, and he made sure I did not have to go back to work. I am still not at work even though I do not officially leave till 20 May. I am very grateful now that he was so understanding.

I did go to the union at one point, in fact I went twice, but on each occasion I was not taken seriously.

I hope this letter will encourage all workers to join their unions. No matter how right wing it may seem now it can be changed and a leadership elected that will defend its members' rights and understand that certain sections of staff have certain problems which must be taken seriously.

Fraternally
Mara Dale
Isle of Wight

In search of the 'promised land'

Dear Comrades,

Jews across the world have just celebrated "Pesach" or the festival of the Passover. This festival is based on the mythological events of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt led by Moses, to the so called "promised land" of Israel.

This year the festival had as its backdrop, the war in Lebanon, killings and reprisals, mounting unemployment and inflation in Israel. The raging inflation only kept down through a social contract between prices and wages.

For many Jews the festival is just a family reunion. The religious aspect is fast disappearing. Others see it as an act of defiance, maintaining an existence against all odds, threatened extinction in the past in Nazi Germany or persecution today.

In Jewish homes the candles were lit for the festival whether in the rich suburbs of London and other cities or in the blocks of high rise flats and slums, walls daubed with Fascist obscenities. They are a people looking for security. Some Jews as bosses, are accepted into bourgeois respectability as members of the ruling class. They look to their religion and past as a form of Masonic Brotherhood. A larger payment into the coffers of the local synagogue guarantees them a better burial plot or a seat in the synagogue next to others of the same class, so much easier to discuss business transactions.



Israelis protest against the Beirut massacre.

Those Jews who have not "made it", the small businesspeople, the marketeers and predominately the workers are forced by rising costs not to pay into the Synagogues, to drop religious practices and traditions. A "Kosher home" is no longer viable.

The phrase "Next year in Jerusalem" which ends the service at Passover once again means for Jewish working class families that distant dream of peace and security, for enough money to feed and clothe the kids, pay the rent, whether you'll have a job at the end of the week, needs that remain

despite the promises of Zionism.

Jewish workers once again must take up the fight against the ideas of Zionism that breed on the needs of imperialism. As Trotsky pointed out the aim for a separate Jewish state would become a nightmare. What Jew does not know the names "Sabra and Chatilla"?

The Fellashas, if accepted by Rabbis in Israel as Jews, may be the last large body of Jews to enter Israel. They have been met by massive unemployment, raging inflation and colour prejudice. The code name for the "Ex-

odus" of the Fellashas was "Operation Moses". It should be remembered that Moses never reached the promised land.

Capitalism means for the working class, Jews or not, a future of increasing poverty and misery. Only by throwing out the ideas of Zionism by Jewish workers and by unifying as a class with other workers internationally and fighting for socialism will a safe and secure future be possible.

Yours fraternally
Eric Segal
Kent

LEFT and RIGHT

Fact and Fiction

THAT 25 person and a dog outfit, the Labour Coordinating Committee Youth Activist group produced some "stunning evidence" to LPYS conference. In a leaflet handed out to delegates they admitted, yes, the LPYS was growing under the leadership of *Militant* supporters, but: "... because of the decline that set in when *Militant* took over, the YS is still only just bigger than it was in 1970. Meanwhile the Labour Party itself has grown massively, probably doubling in the last 15 years."

Well, spoilsports that we are, here's the facts. In 1970 when *Militant* supporters "took over" there were well under 150 LPYS branches. Today there are 573. Although there has been a slight increase in Labour Party membership last year, which we all applaud, sadly Labour Party membership over the past 15 years has had a downward trend.

Tories' far-right friends

WHILE THE Tory leadership piously condemns the rabid reactionaries in the Federation of Conservative Students, across the water in Strasbourg they are snuggling up to them. Tory MEPs have been looking for ideological partners to team up with against the red menace in the European Parliament. The new team-mates for the 'Democratic Group' of Tory, Ulster Unionist and Danish MEPs are members of the Spanish Popular Alliance. This far-right Spanish party is led by a former minister who served under the Franco dictatorship.

The Empress's new clothes

Taxpayers up and down the country will be pleased to hear that on her trip to Italy, Lady Diana has taken four tons of luggage, which includes £100,000's of new clothes.

Teachers and school students strike

JANE MILLER, a Southampton teacher and member of NAS/UWT talked to Gary Hollands, a local YS member, about the teachers' dispute and the school students strike.

THERE ARE a number of causes of our dispute. For a start, the value of teachers' wages has fallen by 35% over the last ten years. We've had no wage rise above the rate of inflation since 1979.

An indication of how far our wages have dropped is that the wages an eighteen year old police constable starts on are higher than those of a fully qualified and experienced teacher.

Another cause of discontent is lack of promotion prospects. Promotion is virtually the only way teachers can improve their living standards. But the cuts in teaching staff have meant that the chances of promotion are almost non-existent.

With this, many local authorities have been attacking teachers' employment contracts. We have up to now carried out duties such as supervision of pupils during break times, after school clubs, trips, etc, on a voluntary basis.

The Tories say that as we've been doing this for a long period of time then it should automatically be part of our contracts. Well if that's the case then we

should be paid for it.

We are also facing the implementation of Keith Joseph's assessment plans. Under these proposals pay increases are to be linked with assessment results. All the interviews for assessment are to be carried out by the headmasters/mistresses. With all the other work they have to do how can they do this efficiently? Plus, anyone the head doesn't like can be got rid of easily.

Joseph's plans are totally impractical. They are clearly designed to attack our jobs, wages and conditions.

With all this being thrown at teachers there was no other alternative but to take strike action. The present action started when the NUT walked out of negotiations over arbitration, saying that last year's arbitration was a stitch-up.

The NUT were right in saying that the government had no intention of settling fairly with the teachers because Keith Joseph withdrew a 7½ per cent pay offer from our union and went on to deny he had ever offered it.

We are now refusing to

carry out the voluntary duties—in effect a work-to-rule. We have been staging limited half-day and one-day strikes, bringing out selected schools.

So far my school has only been brought out for one half-day strike, which was 100 per cent solid. The union is now escalating strike action. But I don't think we've yet made very much progress. The Tories see this as an easier version of their confrontation with the miners. We definitely need to escalate the action.

I think we should call an all-out national strike, to give the strike tactic its maximum impact and also counter the isolation some areas feel. I also think we should hit exams as well. The government couldn't afford to allow a whole year of pupils to go without qualifications.

The Tories and some of the teachers' leaders say that hitting exams will permanently damage school students' prospects, is that true?

Not at all. The Tories concern for the pupils is sheer hypocrisy, school students are virtually being educated for the dole queue. For instance, only five out of about 150 fifth years at my school have jobs when they leave.

I believe that the pupils' prospects will suffer far less

damage through the refusal to supervise exams than the bits and pieces of action we've been taking.

At the moment lessons are being disrupted but school students will still have to sit exams, their results will probably be affected and I don't think employers will bother to take this into account when they interview them.

If we hit exams it would be no great problem to arrange that students take the exams once the dispute is over, I think many students would welcome the extra time for studying anyway!

What has been the reaction from parents and what can be done to forge links with them?

Because of the lack of campaign from the unions, parents have little idea about teachers' wages and the effects of cuts in education. As a result a lot of teachers feel isolated, they don't have the backing of the communities in the way the miners had.

The trade union movement has got to take our case to the parents, many of whom are trade unionists, and gain their active support. This should be done in the form of literature, meetings and rallies with crèches available.

This dispute needs to be

made political, after all, the Tories' attitude to the teachers is a reflection of their attitude to education generally.

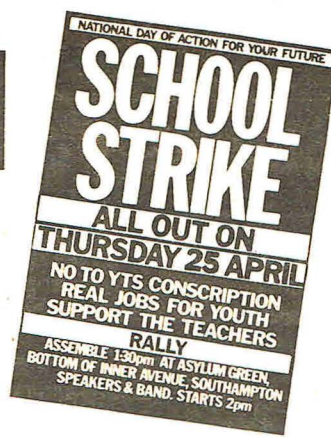
What do you think of YTURC's call for a national school student's strike on the 25 April?

The strike has my full support. It's their education. They should fight for it as well.

If they're old enough to be affected by what goes on around them then they're old enough to protest about it. Anyway pupils in South Africa strike against the regime there and get shot at for it, no one can say that they don't know what they're fighting for.

A further point that should be made is that the organisers of the strike shouldn't expect a favourable response from the teachers initially. That's because the first wave of strikes were anti-teacher, which was quite demoralising.

I think the teachers will be wary to start with. The good thing about the strike is that the school students will be taking the teachers' case home at tea time, which will go some way to building solidarity between teachers, parents and pupils.



Trouble bubbling in Post Office

POST OFFICE management is determined to get rid of long standing agreement which they see as a challenge to its authority to manage. In other words to increase productivity, cut pay and cut jobs.

The latest in a long series of disputes in the postal industry swept throughout Midlands and South East over the last week. It spread as far apart as London—Preston—Manchester, as postal workers took industrial action in defence of agreed working practices and suspended colleagues.

Postal workers in the Union of Communication Workers have never agreed to scab on other postal workers in dispute. The latest industrial action, which began in Northampton, soon spread as post office management tried to break the action by diverting work to other offices. As those offices refused to handle the blacked mail, postal workers were suspended.

The action spread at lightning speed until around 30 offices had been shut down with around 8 or 9 thousand workers on strike and over 20 million items held up in the post.

The industrial action by postal workers, much of it without support of the union leadership, is an indication of the anger that exists against the deal set up by our union leaders with management on an increase to 22,000 part time workers and a compulsory productivity scheme.

Only last month our special conference rejected by five to one the introduction of any of the above proposals, and yet the union leadership has seen fit to sign an agreement with management proposing a deal be made.

At the May conference we have to reject the introduction of part time/casual and compulsory productivity schemes. We have to begin the campaign now to defend jobs.

By Eddie Thorpe
(UCW Oldham Indoor Branch, personal capacity)

Armed police intimidate strikers

POLICEMEN ARMED with submachine guns and self loading rifles tried to intimidate striking hospital workers at Royal Victoria Hospital, West Belfast, on 22 April.

All Northern Ireland hospitals face a 2% cut, RVH will be cut by 3%, £1.5 million. This will mean ancillaries' hours being cut, nearly trained nurses being laid off and cuts in wages.

On Monday, when the cuts were due to start, the JSSC organised a very successful one-day strike. It is intended as the first step in a massive campaign of public meetings, and joint activity with the major health unions. On the picket line one woman had her toes broken by a scab who

drove through the pickets.

On Tuesday, when we returned to work, staff refused to clear the backlog as demanded by management. Workers were handed letters asking them to do extra work.

Management may have singled out Royal Victoria as a militant hospital to "teach us a lesson" and stamp out active trade unionism. We will be taking this dispute to all hospital workers and all trade unionists in Northern Ireland.

By Mickey Duffy
(Secretary, Joint Shop Stewards Committee, North & West Belfast Health/Social Service branch)

Class solidarity not bombs

THE PLANTING of two incendiary devices in the Henry Street branch of Dunes Dublin last Saturday has been condemned by activists involved in the nine month strike over boycotting South African goods as part of the union's policy of opposing apartheid.

The shopworkers' union IDATU condemned the action as did other trade unionists backing the strike, and Irish Labour Youth. The strikers are furious. "It is not the kind of publicity we want," said Karen Gearon shop steward, "support and publicity have been particularly good the last few weeks and moves were made to negotiate with management, the first in nine months deadlock. This action can set us back weeks."

The Irish National Liberation Army which claimed responsibility, said they did it in support of the strike and as a warning to those supporting apartheid. But the INLA and its political wing the IRSP have not been in any way active or involved in the strike since it started.

Saturday's events show the backward role of individual terrorism in the struggles of the working class.

Trade unionists and socialists in Britain are urged to keep up their support and send messages and donations to Karen Gearon IDATU, 9 Cavendish Row Dublin 1.

By Angie O'Laoghaire



Photo: John Smith (IFU)

Picketing your local

THE STRIKE at the Windsor Castle pub in Liverpool, provoked by the sacking of Margaret Molloy, who has worked 37 years for Tetley, 27 years at the "Castle" is continuing. The 6 bar staff have picketed now for re-instatement of Mrs Molloy for 2 months. The strike has now been made official by the TGWU. Mrs Molloy and Mrs Joan Donague, strikers at "Windsor Castle" spoke to Roy and Val Farrar. (Warbreck Branch Labour Party).

Three months ago a new manageress was put in and started pressurising and picketing on us. She insisted that younger women were better and said that people over 40 weren't as good as younger people for the job. About eight weeks ago Mrs Molloy was accused of making a clerical error on the till. The manageress said no money was missing, but Mrs Molloy was still suspended for 2 days, on Saturday 25 Feb, and then sacked! The union was never consulted!

The pub has 3 doors and it has been hard with only 6 of us to cover. We picket from 8.00am in the morning, to stop the draymen from delivering (they have now agreed to call later in the day) to 8.00pm every night. No beer has been delivered for eight weeks—the support from regulars and locals has been terrific—on Grand National Day every other pub was bursting but only 4 visitors went in the "Castle"!

We feel it is an attempt by the Brewery to replace contract labour with casual workers. They prefer this because they don't have to give holiday pay and other benefits. If they get away with this they will try it out in other pubs."

DHSS

THE PREDICTIONS of Militant supporters that the defeat of the DHSS Newcastle Central office shiftworkers strike would lead to a counter offensive from management have unfortunately been borne out. On 23 April Data processors at Longbeaton voted by approximately 300-50 to come out on strike if management carry out their plans to compulsory transfer six DPs to the DHSS complex at Washington.

These six would be the first, and even more would follow as the increasing flow of New Technology enters the DHSS system. Doreen Purvis, the Branch Secretary and Barry Fuge, the Branch chairman are today in London at the CPSA HQ in an attempt to get the National backing which will be necessary.

Further details in next weeks paper.

**For Broad
Left policies
and leader**

THE 1985 USDAW Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) this weekend in Blackpool offers a decisive opportunity for the membership to decide which direction the union will travel in the next decade.

By George Williamson
(Eastern Divisional Councillor)

The ADM will be overshadowed by the imminence of the election for the next General Secretary. For the first time in the history of the union we have an opportunity at the ADM of both planning a strategy to fight off the offensive planned by the Tories and employers, and then electing a leadership capable of carrying through such a strategy.

The most burning issues facing USDAW members are those of wages and conditions. For years, at successive ADMs, motions have been passed committing the union leadership to campaign and mobilise the membership to fight for a living wage, and usually setting a target minimum wage. This year there are several demands for a minimum wage of £110 for a 35 hour week.

This is a modest demand, but when compared with the actual gross earnings of most shopworkers, it represents an enormous increase. For example, the Non-Food Wages Council order which came into operation on 1st April lays down a statutory wage for shopworkers (aged 19 and over) of £76.00 for a 39 hour week. For 18 year olds, who are usually classed as adults in most trades, the gross wage is £64.60 for 39 hours.

There are hundreds of thousands of workers in retail distribution whose wages and conditions are not set by a Wages Council. In recent years though, Wages

Seize chance for USDAW change



Bill Connor, the Broad Left candidate for USDAW general secretary. A national officer of the union with a long record in the labour movement as a fighting representative of his class, Bill's election would help defeat the many attacks on USDAW members and mark a major advance for the labour movement.

Council rates have increasingly been used by the employers as a 'rule of

Plan of action

thumb' for their wage offers.

This has led to the situation where even trade union organised workers are little more than 50p per week better off than their Wages Council counterparts.

This has come about because our union leadership has refused to take a determined stand against the

employers. Proposition 156 from Newcastle branch calls for: "A national campaign involving the whole membership, utilising industrial action if necessary" and calls on the union "to give total support to any section of the membership which takes industrial action in line with the wages policy." Clearly this motion must be supported as a starting point to any concerted effort to fight low pay.

Low pay among retail and distributive workers will on-

ly be eradicated if the union leadership is prepared to wage a properly planned and determined campaign against it. USDAW should discuss a plan of action with other unions organised in the industry and launch a national campaign. The employers will only be moved when the union is seen to mobilise all our forces and is prepared not just to threaten industrial action, but is determined to carry it through.

Right fail to fight Sunday trading

A KEY issue for shopworkers is the question of trading hours. This section of the ADM agenda has attracted no less than nineteen motions and amendments.

By Mick Wainwright
(NW Divisional Councillor and Blackpool Retail Branch)

The government is preparing to put the boot into shopworkers. They intend to abolish the 1950 Shops Act next year, which would sweep away all the legal protection shopworkers have had on their working hours since the post-war Labour government.

The government enquiry into shop hours published its findings in February. The now notorious 'Auld Report' recommended complete abolition of the 1950's Shops Act, despite accepting the arguments of the union that deregulation of trading hours would lose up to 160,000 jobs in retail distribution, to say nothing of the spin-off effect.

Casualising retail?

Abolition would mean bankruptcy for thousands of small businesses and would give the major retailers a virtual monopoly in the high streets. This would lead to higher prices in shops run on a skeletal staff.

The protection of wages and maximum number of hours that can be worked would be undermined. Even the 'Auld Report' suggested that Wages Councils would have to be strengthened to protect the poorly organised and the unorganised shopworkers.

But the government, far from giving assurances that Wages Councils would be strengthened, have announced their intention to abolish them!

The Tories are out to casualise the retail distribution industry. They want to see supermarkets staffed by part-timers with no industrial muscle and no legal protection. A nightmarish future is opening up for shopworkers.

The very existence of USDAW as a major union is at stake. If shopworkers are to be entirely part-time, young and female, then wage levels will fall through the floor.

The question of seven-day, twenty-four hour trading, is an important issue for the whole trade union movement. If Sunday opening becomes the norm, then other services, like public transport, refuse collection and banking will be under pressure to do likewise. If Sunday then becomes another normal working day, the employers will seek

to remove premium payments for Sunday working, and so all living standards will suffer.

The present USDAW leadership is utterly bereft of ideas about how to fight this onslaught.

The Executive Council statement to the 1985 ADM on trading hours and statutory protection runs to twelve pages and thirty two paragraphs and comes forward with one recommendation: "It (the E.C.) recommends to the 1985 ADM that the union's established policy on the 1950's Shops Act be maintained and promoted actively in campaigning and organising to defeat the unacceptable recommendations of the Home Office Committee of Inquiry into proposals to amend the Shops Act".

If the delegates to the ADM are hoping for a strategy from the right wing leadership to combat the government's plans, they will be disappointed.

There is no lack of determination amongst the rank and file to fight extensions of opening hours. The union has the industrial muscle and the influence to combat the main enemy—the major retailers.

Industrial action

USDAW members must be prepared for industrial action against those employers who attempt to extend trading hours. Various tactics could be used—picketing the shops has been effective in the past. Industrial action may be necessary. If all else fails workers involved on the distribution side should be pulled into the fight to stop deliveries and financially starve the employers into submission.

This strategy must be coordinated on a national scale if we are to be successful overall.

It is quite clear that the cosy deals struck with some employers in the past would be torn up and the fight between union and management intensified. The union's future is at stake. It is absolutely essential that we have a leadership which is prepared to campaign and fight on this issue.

Women in the front line

AT THIS year's USDAW Annual Delegate Meeting one of the liveliest and most important debates will be on women.

By Helen Gasking
(Booksellers and Stationers)

For the 61% of USDAW's membership who are female these last six years of Tory government have been a disaster. Living standards have fallen due to real levels of wages being cut, and with the abolition of the Wages Councils worse is yet to come.

The Tories seem to think that women just work for 'pin-money' as a supplement to the 'family' income. In fact, according to the Low Pay Unit, if it wasn't for the wages of women the number of families living below the poverty line would treble. 400,000 women are the sole wage-earners in their family simply because of their husband's unemployment.

For women who work in retail and distribution it means low pay and a constant battle to meet the needs of their families. Add to that all the other

Tory measures being introduced: cuts in nursery education, school meals, housing provision; the attacks on social security payments, and it's not surprising that women in USDAW are taking a more active interest in what their union is doing to fight the Tory attacks.

Organisation and politics

More and more are participating at local and national level—a lot more are now coming to the ADM. There's been a growing demand for the union to involve and cater for women at all levels. In an attempt to respond to this, the Executive Council have set up a National Women's Committee together with similar committees in the divisions and there are plans to appoint a national women's officer.

These moves must be welcomed. But it should be recognised that the success of these committees depends on the willingness and ability of the union to combat the evils of low pay and poor working conditions.

An important proposition to this year's ADM from Newcastle branch (no. 61) spells out how to win female members into activity and how to ensure their struggles for better living standards are successful.

It calls for the union to negotiate meetings in works time, improved nursery facilities, an end to discrimination in jobs, for a 35-hour week and a minimum wage of £110 per week. I hope every delegate to conference will support the motion, but more importantly take it back to the branches and workplaces and campaign to see it implemented. That must also apply to the national leadership.

There can be a danger, when discussing women's involvement in the labour movement for debate to centre on purely organisational questions. It is the determination of USDAW's women members to fight for a practical programme, to deal with the economic and social problems we face in Thatcher's Britain, which can ensure this debate is the highlight of conference.

ANY TRADE unionist seeing the length of the dole queues would welcome the ending of overtime and the introduction of a shorter working week, provided that it's accompanied by no loss in pay and by new starters getting the same pay and conditions as themselves.

MARGARET CREEAR argues that the trend to increased part-time working doesn't meet any of these standards.



THE RECENT dispute in the Post Office concerning new technology and part-time working has highlighted a general trend towards the casualisation of labour. Although the industrial action at Mount Pleasant concerned the operation of new technology, the PO has made it clear that this will be accompanied by the introduction of part-timers rather than a shorter working week, which was the demand of the UCW conference.

At present 8,500 part-timers are employed, compared with 120,00 full-time workers. It's proposed to increase part-timers by 1,200 after 17 June as the first instalment in a rise to a total of 28,500. Management say this will cope with 'peaks and troughs' and seasonal changes (which suggests fixed term contracts as well).

The main reason part-time working is increasing generally is that it saves the bosses' money. The total PO package will save £180 million a year. This will arise partly from cutting a £200 million overtime bill by employing part-timers to do work normally done at overtime rates.

This move by the PO is typical of recent developments in employment, especially involving women workers, not just in Britain but in most of the advanced industrial countries.

In 1961, in Britain 13 per cent of service workers were part-time. By 1979 this had risen to 29 per cent and is still rising.

Many part-time jobs are not "new" but replace formerly full-time workers eg, in mail order. In any case the rise in part-time work has been accompanied by a steep decline in full-time work for women. This will eventually be the case in the PO.

Although management has agreed to no compulsory redundancies, six per cent of the workforce leaves every year and won't be replaced. Therefore the number of full-time jobs will decline with fewer opportunities for those already hit worst by unemployment, the youth.

Bosses' logic

MANY PART-TIMERS and some full-time workers face increasing insecurity and loss of job protection and benefits because of the increase in fixed term contracts.

In summer 1980 it was estimated that in the EEC countries one in ten workers were on such contracts. The bosses have created a layer of workers who can be returned to the dole queue at a minimum cost and inconvenience to themselves at the next serious downturn in the economy.

From the point of view of the bosses, this trend towards casualisation has many advantages. The hourly earnings of part-timers are lower than for full-timers.

In a recent Department of Employment survey into women's employment the hourly rate for part-timers was on average £1.60 compared with full-time women workers on £1.90.

54 per cent of part-timers earn less than £1.50 an hour compared with 30 per cent of full-timers. 65 per cent (2.3 million) part-time women workers were classified as low-paid along with 33 per cent (0.2 million) part-time men.

Such workers have little or no prospect of training or promotion, and often work unsocial hours for the basic rather than overtime rate. They also lack many benefits and protection.

Part-paid women

WOMEN WILL fill many of the part-time jobs created if the PO forces through its proposals.

Between 1971 and '81 part-time working in the UK rose from 15 per cent to 20 per cent of total employment. This represents a rise of one million part-timers—almost all of them married women.

As the Department of Employment survey says: "Nothing epitomises the impact of domestic social responsibilities on women's working lives than the amount of time women with varying domestic commitments spend at work during the week and the times of day they work."

78 per cent of workers on the twilight shift are women with children under 16. 69 per cent of part-time night workers had dependent children.

Many of these women worked full-time before they had children and tried to increase their hours as their children got older.

Some women have two part-time cleaning jobs—one in the morning, one in the evening.

Full rights for part-timers



Part-time work is not the benign, convenient asset for women that it is presented as being. What it means is that women continue to carry the bulk of responsibility for unpaid domestic work and childcare on their shoulders.

Because of cuts in public expenditure this burden is increasing. They then fit in a second low-paid, dead-end job.

For an increasing number of women the on-

ly time they don't work is when they are asleep.

Labour must lend response

THE LABOUR movement has to reject this approach. Instead of agreeing to more part-time casual work, it must fight for a shorter working week to enable all workers, men and women, to enjoy leisure, spend time with their families, continue educa-

tion, etc.

At the same time there must be a fight for better child-care and other facilities to lift the burden of domestic responsibility from the shoulders of women.

The trade unions also need to look seriously at the position of those workers who have now been taken-on part-time. Only one in five are in trade unions. Many of them are now under attack in both the public

and private sector.

Because part-timers often work in specific areas in a particular industry—even at different times than the rest of the workforce (eg. in catering and cleaning), their struggles can become separated from those of other workers.

For example, at Atomic Energy at Risley, Cheshire, the part-time women cleaners are on strike against wage cuts and abolition of paid holidays. They are employed by a private contractor 'Exclusive'.

The other workers at the site, some of them in the same trade union as the cleaners, took 24-hour action on Monday 1 April, partly in support of their own pay claim and partly to support the cleaners.

Unity

The two struggles need to be drawn together. The muscle of the full-time workers can be used to help the cleaners. In doing so the full-time workers will strengthen their position by serving notice on the company that they won't stand further privatisation which could well threaten their own jobs.

The trade union leadership must take up a serious campaign for pro-rata payments for part-timers, access to training and promotion and for all the rights and benefits of full-timers to be extended to part-timers. We must also demand that temporary jobs are made permanent when they represent a permanent vacancy.

Militant

Vietnam—10
years after
—p. 8-9



Miners hitting back

Askern

At Askern near Doncaster, believing that all the fight had been knocked out of us, management made a number of attacks on the union. Disputes, we were told, would be sorted out by middle-management, not by the union. A 12-year old agreement for craftsmen was thrown out of the window and many locally negotiated agreements were totally abandoned, reducing rights and wages to the minimum.

This created amongst the workforce an attitude of: "Wait until the coal starts coming, then it will be our turn. We'll take it for now, but our turn will come".

When the first unit was ready for production, the management claimed they were under instructions from area level to negotiate a contract directly with the men, ignoring the union, and outside the provisions of the Incentive Scheme.

After producing a substantial amount of coal, the men in this unit decided to force management's hand by stopping work. They demanded a meeting between the branch officials and the management to negotiate a contract. Management refused, and after the men had gone home for two shifts, they sent home the rest of the underground workers and,

MINERS AT Askern and Westoe collieries have not lost their fighting spirit. Despite all the hardship of the last twelve months and their mountains of debts, these miners are still prepared to fight for their basic rights by withdrawing their labour.



Police stand by as pickets hut at Askern burns down last November during the 12 month strike

24 hours later, all the others, except certain safety workers.

When the strikers reiterated their position not to go to work until the management and union had met to negotiate a contract, the management continued to send home 1,000 men each day.

Only after being assured the following Saturday that the management team had agreed to negotiate did the men agree to return to work and allow these negotiations to take place.

This dispute showed that cosy tete-a-tetes between

management and union officials do not defend worker's rights; it takes industrial militancy, taking away produce that the management requires, ie coal.

When we returned to work seven weeks ago, the balance of power lay with the management, but now that the colliery is returning to productive capacity the balance is swinging back into the hands of the workforce.

By Mark Thornton
(Askern NUM)

Westoe

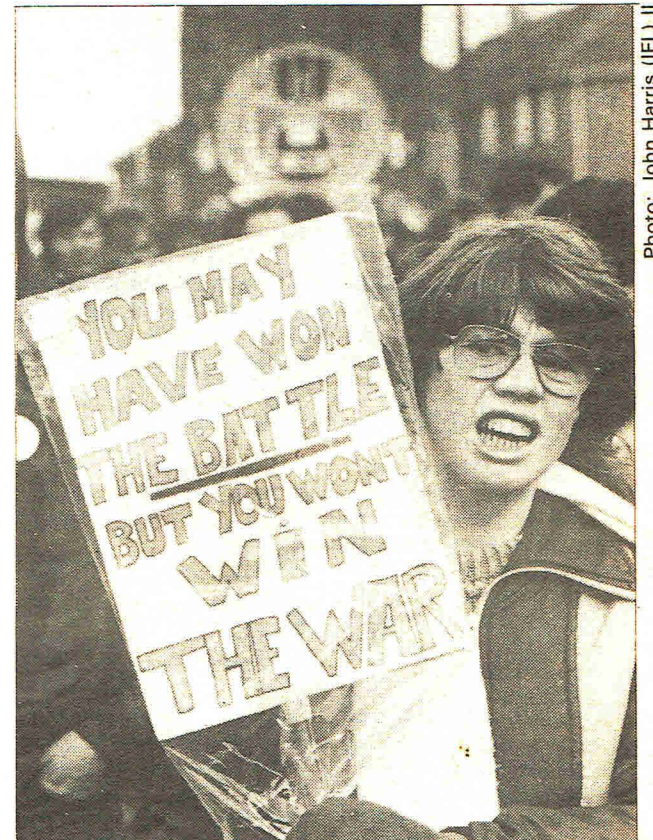
AT WESTOE colliery in South Shields, a 48 hour strike against management victimisation of union activists took place. Keith Smoult, an active picket throughout the strike, was sacked after allegations that he had kicked a scab in the back.

The incident is supposed to have happened as 50 men travelled underground in the cage in pitch blackness. As Keith Smoult said: "There's not enough room in there to scratch your nose, never mind kick someone in the back."

Disgusted

John Chapman, the lodge chairman, said: "We didn't call anyone out. The lads just stopped work of their own accord. Even men who had returned to work before the end of the strike were disgusted and came out too." Only the handful of members of the Colliery, Trade and Allied Workers Association,—a scab union—continued to work.

The management are



Defiant miners' supporter on march through Rossington at the end of the strike

attempting to smash the NUM in order to replace it with the 'moderate' CTAWA. Three other NUM activists were also due to be disciplined. After the overwhelming majority of miners at Westoe demonstrated their continued loyalty to the NUM and that they

are still prepared to fight, management have now backed down from sacking the other three men. Union officials are now fighting for the reinstatement of Keith Smoult.

By Mark Potter
(Jarrow LPYS)

NEC attacks school strike and Coventry activists

TWO DECISIONS taken by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee on Wednesday will provoke an angry response from the party's ranks.

They passed a resolution, from Tom Sawyer of NUPE, condemning the school strike called for the following day and calling for an enquiry into the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign.

An amendment moved by Tony Benn, with the support of Frances Curran, Dennis

Skinner, Joan Maynard, Jo Richardson, Audrey Wise, Michael Meacher and Eric Heffer was defeated, and the substantive motion passed by 17 to seven, with Audrey Wise abstaining.

Enquiry report

They also accepted the report of an enquiry held on 16 December 1984, 18 months after the event, into the conduct of Coventry SE Constituency Labour Party during the 1983 general election campaign.

The report, from the NEC's Appeals and Mediation Committee, is a disgrace. It is a scurrilous attack on the CLP and MP Dave Nellist and has far-reaching implications for every Labour Party member.

In it there is a serious and libellous allegation that the CLP secretary altered the minutes of the General Management Committee meeting. In response, the CLP unanimously agreed to send a statement correcting the glaring inaccuracies and distortions of the report.

The report censures the CLP for allegedly running an election campaign "by and on behalf of the Militant Tendency rather than the Labour Party".

Blatant lie

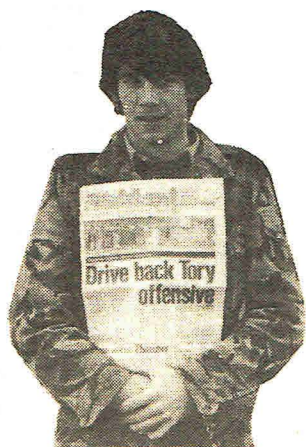
It recommends that the CLP be advised that "to sell *Militant* as part of any Labour Party campaign" is "against the decisions of Annual Conference". (This is a blatant lie. There is no conference decision banning *Militant*.)

It further recommends that "on evidence being presented of such activities by individuals or organisations, the party should take action to draw the attention of these members or organisations to the requirement to protect the Labour Party Constitution and Rules".

This recommendation was passed by the NEC on Wednesday, a decision tantamount to a witch-hunt against the activists of Coventry SE, whose magnificent campaign led to

a Labour victory. In the report the success of the campaign is completely ignored.

The NEC has also created a precedent which right-wingers in other CLP's may well interpret as an invitation to expel any member selling the *Militant* anywhere, a serious escalation in the witch-hunt. The members of Coventry SE are determined to fight this decision with every means at their disposal to defend their party and MP. They must be joined by all other sections of the movement in a tidal wave of angry protest to the NEC.



**BECOME A
Militant
SUPPORTER!**

Name
Address

Send to 3/13,
Hepscott Road,
London E9 5HB.

SUBSCRIBE!

BRITAIN & IRELAND	EUROPE (by air)	REST OF WORLD (by air)
13 issues . . . £5.00	26 issues . . £11.00	26 issues . . £16.00
26 issues . . £10.00	52 issues . . £22.00	52 issues . . £32.00
52 issues . . £20.00		

Name
Address

Make cheques payable to *Militant*, and return to the Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Donate

I would like to donate
£ . . . p each week
/month to the fighting
fund.

Sell

I would like to sell _____
papers per week
(minimum 5) on a sale or
return basis.