

Tories hit low paid

Expelled by decree

Labour MP attacks top people's pay bonanza

NOTHING HAS more vividly illustrated the class the Tories represent than their two announcements last week on pay. The day after they scrapped the limited protection given to workers under 21 by wages councils, they proclaimed that top civil servants and judges, generals and admirals, will get massive pay rises, in one case of 46 per cent.

Labour MP for Coventry South-East, Dave Nellist, angrily denounced the government as "two-faced and operating double standards".

"Mass youth unemployment and poverty wages go hand in hand," Dave Nellist told *Militant*: "Since the Tories came into office in 1979, young people's wages, relative to adult rates, have fallen by 12 per cent for boys and 13 per cent for girls—while youth unemployment has trebled!

"Yet Tom King, the Tory Minister of Unemployment says that minimum wage rates 'inhibit the creation of more jobs, and that is especially true in the case of young people'.

"On the other hand, 2,000 already highly-paid heads of

the civil service, the judiciary, and the armed forces are said to need 'fair but not generous' pay rises in order to attract 'people of high quality'."

The average rises announced by the Tories for their friends in high places are almost three times the limit they've set for millions of teachers, local government and civil service workers.

Gin and tonics

The wage council rates which Thatcher wants to deregulate, range from £29.71 at 16, to £78.50 at 21 and over. "For some Tory MPs, that wouldn't cover a week's gin and tonics!" says Dave Nellist.

Because of international conventions, the abolition of



Dave Nellist MP confronting Employment Secretary Tom King.

the wages councils for young workers is unlikely to take effect before July 1986.

That gives 12 months not just for a massive campaign of opposition, but more importantly, for a huge recruitment drive by the trade unions.

Dave Nellist backs the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign: "It will play a crucial role in winning hundreds of thousands of young workers into union membership.

"Their programme of a national minimum wage of £115 for a 35-hour week at 18 years olds and over, with 75 per cent for 16 year olds and 85 per cent for 17 year olds will gain growing enthusiastic support.

"If the Labour leaders were to commit themselves to the immediate introduction of such policies, the votes of nine million low-paid workers in Britain could give Labour a bigger electoral landslide than 1945!"

IN A dirty and unconstitutional manoeuvre, five socialists have been expelled from the Labour Party. They opened their mail on Tuesday morning to find a letter from the secretary of Sheffield Attercliffe Constituency Labour Party, which said: "I write to formally notify you that the general management committee has excluded you from membership of the party for one year, dating from the meeting held on 17 July 1985".

At that meeting, it had been decided to suspend *Militant* supporters for a year, but no specific names were read out. The secretary was only prepared to say that they had a 'list of names' against whom they would be taking action. It was then decided also to suspend Dave Milsom for three months for 'talking to the press'.

In flagrant defiance of all democratic procedures, the five were given no charges and no opportunity to state their case. They were bluntly told: "You are excluded from party meetings, etc. The NEC is the appropriate body to contact should you wish to challenge this decision."

The five are: Paul Green, member of Sheffield City Council, a member of the party for nine years, Dave Milsom, member for nearly

eight years, founding secretary of Attercliffe Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and Sheffield Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign; Sharron McDermott, secretary of Attercliffe LPYS; Alan Hartley, member for 15 years; and Geoff Bright, Chairman of Tinsley Branch of the National Union of Railwaymen, whose district council has already passed a resolution condemning "the attack being made against members of our union active in the Labour Party".

Coming just a week after the exclusion of Chris Peace from the party's Welsh executive, these expulsions will be a warning to every party activist that there are those on the right who are hell-bent on helping the Tories to win the next election.

(Continued on back page)

Support us with cash

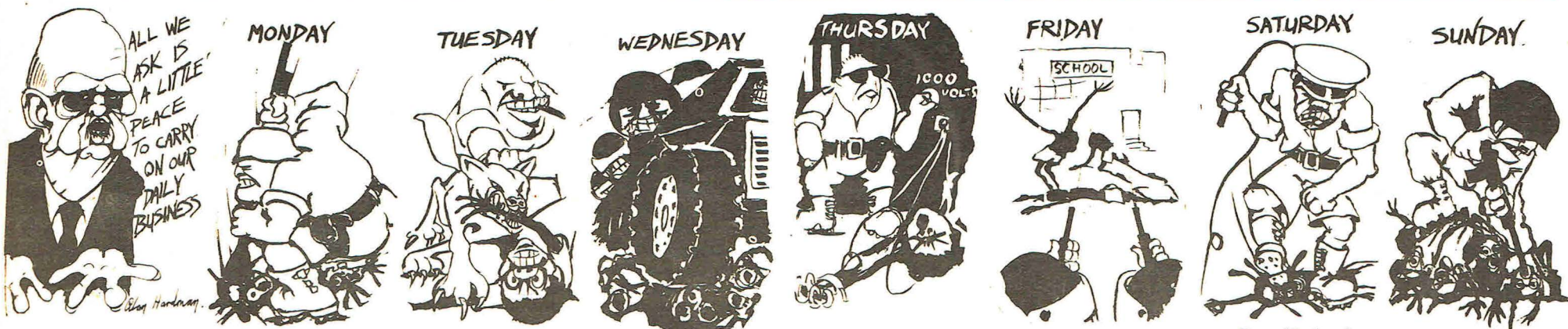
THERE IS just one week to go to the end of the Fighting Fund quarter. We need the biggest ever last minute effort and we can reach our best ever total.

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Send a donation today to help our funds. £20, £10, £5—whatever you can afford.

Militant has consistently campaigned the cause of the working class against Thatcher and the Tories—giving a socialist alternative to the horrors of capitalism.

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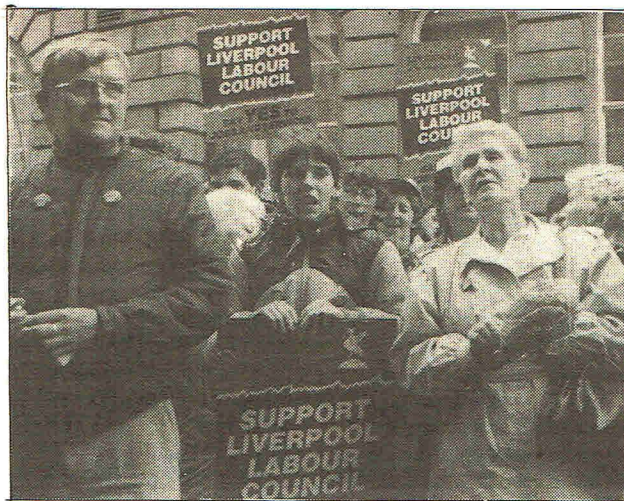


Auditor threatens Li

"Hands off our city"

THE DISTRICT Auditor in Liverpool was left in no doubt about the strength of feeling of Liverpool Labour councillors, their wives, husbands and families and local authority workers when they demonstrated outside his office last Friday.

Over 300 people, led by Labour MPs, the Labour Group and their families, delivered a letter from the councillors replying to the Auditor's warning of possible surcharges. As the delegation went in to see the District



Lobby outside District Auditors' office

Auditor, they could clearly hear the singing and chanting outside. The mood was tremendous. Spirits were high despite the pouring rain. The singing was led by

the Pirrie-ward campaign group where women members of the ward Labour Party had written their own words to famous songs giving support to the council.

Photo: Dave Sinclair



Maisonettes in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool, due to be demolished if the Labour council are victorious. Some are still occupied

Photo: Dave Sinclair

PATRICK JENKIN was in Liverpool as the lobby was taking place. He still refused to meet Labour councillors, saying on TV later that it was outrageous that they had "paraded their wives and children" in their campaign. What he doesn't realise is that the families were not "paraded", but had responded themselves to what they regard as their battle for the future for Liverpool.

The power of the auditors

IN THEIR detailed, closely-argued document presented to the District Auditor, Mr McMahon, the 49 councillors threatened with surcharge and disqualification forcefully rejected the allegation that they have been responsible for "losses" or "deficiency" as a result of "wilful misconduct".

In his warning letter of 26 June, Mr McMahon, told the 49 that he was considering whether to issue certificates of loss for over £100,000. Under Section 20 of the Tories' Local Government Finance Act, District Auditors can investigate through extraordinary audits, as McMahon has done.

They can then certify that certain councillors are responsible, in the auditor's opinion, for losses through "wilful misconduct". If this works out at over £2,000 per councillor, then they are liable not only for surcharge but for disqualification for five years.

The Auditor, in effect, can act as judge, jury and executioner. When a certificate is issued, councillors have 14 days to appeal to the High Court. But the onus is on the councillors to prove their innocence.

The Labour councillors consider that in negotiating

with the government over this year's block grants and in adopting a no-cuts budget and setting a nine per cent rate on 14 June 1985 they were acting in an entirely responsible way. They have a duty to implement their electoral mandate, to protect services and jobs, and to safeguard the interests of the people of Liverpool.

However, the Auditor claims that by not setting a rate until 14 June, the Labour councillors incurred a "loss". To justify this he has arbitrarily picked on two items.

Unlike 1984 when the rate was not set until July, the DHSS this year refused to pay rent and rate rebates before a rate was set. The auditor claims that the council therefore lost over £90,000 interest on the £7 million withheld by the DHSS.

McMahon also claims that the council has lost £14,000 in interest that would have been collected on £1.6 million which Crown property in Liverpool would normally have paid 'in lieu of rates'. In fact, the Crown did not pay last year until after the rate was set, but the Auditor ignored it then.

In his letter McMahon warned that these losses were continuing to accrue at nearly £3,000 a day. He also warned that he might well find other "deficiencies"

MP challenges double standards

TERRY FIELDS MP has written to Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment, demanding an enquiry into the failure of the Audit Commission to comply with Section 29 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, which resulted in the Commission incurring a deficit of £22,000 in the year ended 31 March 1984. (See *Militant* 757).

In his letter Terry Fields MP said: "How can the Audit Commission be relied upon to fairly and properly investigate the financial management of Liverpool City Council when the Commission is clearly unable to properly manage its own financial affairs?..."

"49 Liverpool City councillors have been warned by the District Auditor that he is considering taking action to surcharge and disqualify them from public office under Sections 19 and 20 of the Act, yet 16 members of the Audit Commissions are apparently immune from action under the Act. "This is a clear case of double standards", Terry went on, "One law for the members of the Audit Commission, and another for the Liverpool City councillors who are attempting to save jobs and services. If there is nothing to hide, the Secretary of State will launch an enquiry, and appropriate action taken."



Paul and Pam Luckock and their baby at the councillors' families' support group meeting in Liverpool

Photo: Tina Carroll

and "losses" which he could surcharge later on completion of his extraordinary audit.

This letter, undoubtedly the most serious sent by the Auditor, followed eight letters and reports sent to councillors since March 1984. Last year, he sent threatening letters before the council's budget meeting warning that the proposed budget would mean losses of over £14 million for 1984/85. In the event, Liverpool's campaign forced Jenkin and the Tory government to cough up enough extra cash to cover this gap.

That kept the auditor at bay for the time being.

Given the legal-administrative apparatus set up by the Tories to enforce cuts on local authorities, however, the District

Auditors inevitably become, at best, watchdogs. When it comes to the crunch, however, they can move in as policemen armed with special powers to set a "legal rate" by a date arbitrarily decided by themselves.

In Liverpool, the Labour councillors believe that they were completely justified in holding back from setting a rate. On 7 March the council decided that £265.4 million was the very minimum necessary to meet the council's commitments. The limit set by the Tories for Liverpool's spending is £222 million.

Faced with this gap, the only responsible thing to do was to fight for the government to raise the target, remove the penalties, and come up with the realistic level of rate support grant.

More councils at risk

IF THE TORIES get away with their attacks on Liverpool councillors through the District Auditor, hundreds more Labour representatives could face surcharge and disqualification from office.

A letter to Sheffield council from the District Auditor there blames Labour councillors for a loss of income in

excess of £100,000, through their delay in setting a rate. If this letter is a preliminary to action being taken to surcharge the councillors, it will clearly open the door to action against Labour councillors in Southwark, Camden, Greenwich and Islington.

When there was a gap last year, energetic negotiations between the council and the Department of the Environment, backed up by the labour movement campaign in Liverpool, persuaded Jenkin to come up with extra money under the Urban Programme. This, after penalties were reduced, was worth an extra £14.5 million.

Furthermore, Jenkin after his visit to Liverpool, when he acknowledged the extent of the city's problems, indicated that his department would take a sympathetic attitude to applications for further Urban Aid, housing investment allocation programmes, and other grants for 1985/86. Negotiations between Liverpool councillors and officials and the government have gone on non-stop right up until the beginning of this May.

Then Jenkins made it brutally clear that he was reneging on last year's promises of further aid. Additional grants to Liverpool were drastically cut back, and then Jenkin announced he would be withholding DHSS rebate payments.

Nevertheless, despite all the dire warnings from the Auditors the Liverpool council would have been completely irresponsible if it

had just dropped its demands for the cash the city needs.

When it was clear that nothing more would be forthcoming, the council set a rate. This leaves a gap of £29 million. However, after the Tories have imposed penalties of £88 million this becomes a chasm of £117 million.

This is why the city faces financial crisis. It has not been caused by the "wilful misconduct of Labour councillors", but the wilful vendetta of the Tory government.

In its most recent Annual Report to be published, even the body responsible for appointing District Auditors, the Audit Commission itself, is forced to confess that: "Some authorities are receiving less grant than their circumstances might warrant..." The Commission should draw this to the attention of Mr McMahon before he goes any further.

The Labour Party, the trade unions, tenants, and the people of Liverpool generally certainly intend to demonstrate their views in the event of the Auditor attempting to surcharge or disqualify their elected Labour representatives.

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Price: 20p each + 15p p&p
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Send to: R McHale, 44 Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, Merseyside.

Liverpool City Council have organised a pre-party conference rally for the 21 September with speakers from Edinburgh, Lambeth and national MP's.

Liverpool councillors

Tory rumours answered

OVER THE last week the Tories seem to have mapped-out a new strategy in their attack on Liverpool City Council. Environment Minister Patrick Jenkin, in discussion with the Liverpool MPs, said that he would not negotiate but that the City Council could get off the hook by applying to the High Court to have the 9 per cent rate quashed.

A few days later the supposedly independent District Auditor parroted the self-same words in a new letter to councillors. "The council's problems could be solved" he wrote, "if the present inadequate rate were challenged and quashed and the council would then make a rate at a level to meet whatever level of expenditure it considered appropriate".

At the same time the District Auditor has threatened councillors with the possibility of "criminal charges", if the council does not meet its financial commitments. He also warned that action may arise at a later stage because of the introduction of the so-called "illegal" budget.

Because the legal process with the District Auditor may well occupy a considerable time and for the

Tories time is running out, Jenkin may be relying on a High Court action to quash the agreed rate.

That would put pressure on the Labour Group, they hope, leading to a split and then a new rate with a "fudged" budget. Given the stand of the Labour group up to now and the support from their families and local authority unions, this is a rather forlorn hope.

But it is clear that any weakening by the council would only embolden the Tories to press ahead with all the measures that the district auditor is now threatening, including disqualification from office.

The Tory press are also trying to conjure up the spectre of bankruptcies and a breakdown of services. The Tories claim there is a plan to let wages go unpaid, to let services breakdown, hitting the poor, the sick and the underprivileged, to close schools, let rubbish collect in the streets and to leave the dead unburied. And then to impose direct rule on Liverpool?

Already rumours have begun to circulate that 30,000 redundancy notices have been prepared. The District Auditor has said that most of the Council's 30,000



Some of Liverpool's new housebuilding.

staff could face redundancy in 12 weeks unless there is drastic action to reduce spending. The Council finance chairman has categorically denied this. No redundancy notices will be issued by the council.

Sections of the officers of the council and middle-management have in some cases taken it upon themselves to inform staff that "overtime is no longer available" or "toilet rolls can't be ordered".

None of this is being done under instructions from the Labour council, which has told the workforce that it is "business as usual".

Nevertheless, over the years the Liberals and Tories created jobs for "their boys" so there is no doubt that financial uncertainty could create a breeding ground for acts of political sabotage by layers of management. It seems that no major

financial crisis will come until the end of August or the beginning of September. However, the labour movement has to ensure that rumours and financial problems do not distract from the main aim—to take the campaign out.

Above all it has to be stressed that Liverpool has a fighting socialist council, defending socialist principles and promoting a socialist alternative to capitalist chaos.

At last, there is a local leadership which is prepared to stand and defend the interests of the working class. The District Labour Party has now resolved to publish, daily if necessary, information bulletins to keep the council workforce informed of every day affairs.

By Dave Cotterill

Edinburgh: lobby on 1 August

ANOTHER STAGE in Edinburgh District Council's battle against George Younger took place in the council chambers on Sunday at an emergency meeting.

To public galleries packed with council workers, LPYS and Labour Party members, the council discussed a court order to cut rates by 1.8p and to cut £5.8 million from the Housing budget.

The Labour council did not vote to defy the law but they managed to save the housing programme by other measures, including selling council mortgages and re-

scheduling loan repayments.

The council decision has been described by the Tories and their friends as a "climbdown" or "defeat" for Labour.

Many workers in the City however, are hoping that this is merely a tactical move by the Labour council. The time must be used to build the campaign towards the crucial council meeting of 1 August.

On that date the council must meet demands by the government to cut £16.2 million from the general

budget. This could only be achieved through cuts and back-tracking on Labour's programme.

Alex Wood, the Labour group's leader made it clear on Sunday that he would not be prepared to vote for cuts in services or job losses.

It is clear now that a massive lobby of support must be organised for the council meeting on 1 August. Tenants groups, local authority workers, and Labour supporters in the city can show their opposition to any cuts whether implemented by Labour or the

Tories.

The LPYS has organised joint meetings with tenants' groups in areas such as Granton, Craig, and Bingham in order to maintain the campaign.

On Saturday despite the wind and the rain, LPYS members and *Militant* supporters held a street meeting where 38 *Militants* were sold as well as many *Socialist Youth* and LPYS badges. 13 names were also collected for the LPYS.

A cleansing lorry stopped in the middle of the road in order that the driver could run out and buy a copy of the *Militant*.

By Andy Clachers

Support grows

DAVID SKINNER, a former Clay Cross councillor, spoke to a public meeting organised by Liverpool Women's Council to assist the Council Families Support Group.

He explained that Liverpool City Councillors were guilty of the same "crime" as the Clay Cross councillors—defending jobs services and our class.

But he was confident that Liverpool would win.

Terry Fields MP said: "There are enough of us; if we campaign correctly we will force the Tory government back."

Margaret Creear, of the Women's National Committee of Labour, explained that

Labour Women's conference had passed a resolution in support of Liverpool council and now it should be implemented.

If the support groups and Women's Councils unite the women of Liverpool this would act as a tremendous inspiration to other women workers.

Lynne Cheatham, of the National Committee of Women Against Pit Closures from Point of Ayr Colliery, spoke of the help that Liverpool had given them and hoped that they could repay some of that support.

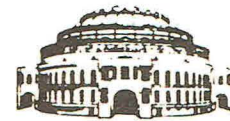
Wenda Lynden, secretary of the Families Support Group, outlined what they had been doing so far.

WIRRAL TRADES Council set up a committee to campaign in support of Liverpool after a resolution backing the council was passed unanimously. The motion also called for solidarity action in Wirral if it is called for by the Liverpool shop stewards committee.

SOUTHWARK NALGO overwhelmingly agreed full support to Councillors and Trade Unionists in Liverpool, Lambeth and Edinburgh in their fight against surcharges and cuts.

The resolution called for the branch to make arrangements for members wishing to contribute to existing fighting funds. Most importantly it called for a special branch meeting to be convened to consider "supportive industrial action" in the event of trade unionists in these authorities taking action themselves.

ABERYSTWYTH Labour Party unanimously passed a motion of full support for Liverpool Labour City Council with support for any solidarity action called. It agreed that a campaign of leafleting should be launched.



Militant Third National Rally

21st Birthday celebration
Sunday 3 November, 1985
Royal Albert Hall

Speakers include:

Peter Taaffe Ted Grant Harry De Boer

All tickets £3 (Cheques to "Militant Rally")
(Crèche available, but places must be booked)

JACK COLLINS, general secretary of the Kent miners' union, is to speak at this year's *Militant* rally on one of its themes—amnesty and reinstatement for jailed and sacked miners.

As the campaign to defend Liverpool City Council gains support, Derek Hatton, the council's deputy leader, will be addressing the rally on this other major theme.

Harry de Boer, veteran American socialist, will bring a flavour of the battles and heroic traditions of the American working class.

With Peter Taaffe (editor of *Militant*) and Ted Grant (political editor) also speaking, the rally promises to be one of the most enthusiastic events ever held in the Albert Hall and a marvellous demonstration of the growth of support for *Militant*. Be there!

Booking Form:

We would like Tickets and enclose
(Payable to *Militant* rally)

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Organisation

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CRECHE: Places must be booked in advance. We will be bring the following children

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Address

Please return to:

Militant Rally, 3-13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9

LPYS summer camp

HUNDREDS OF young people will mix the best of discussion and sun at the LPYS Summer Camp.

In the recent activity the LPYS has gained many new members. At the camp we can debate the major issues, including Liverpool, the miners' amnesty, the future for Labour's youth, as well as events in Chile and South Africa. We will also enjoy ourselves.

While the top people will be jetting off to far-away exotic places with their new pay rises, the working class youth will be planning the quickest way to end their rotten system.

By John Hird



A threat to unity

THE EXPULSION of Chris Peace from the Welsh executive of the Labour Party, despite having topped the poll in the election, is a warning to the party's activists. It shows that a small minority of MPs and trade union officials will stop at nothing to try and purge the party of its Marxist members, no matter how long their record in the party or the extent of their support. Even a ruling from the party's regional organiser that their action was unconstitutional was brushed aside.

That only one resolution calling for action against *Militant* supporters is on the agenda of this year's conference shows how little support these witch-hunters have. But that will not stop them from coming back time and again, as the reports on these pages demonstrate, to try to pick off individuals or groups and campaign for a more general attack.

The failure of the right wing to make any impact on this issue on the conference agenda reflects both the membership's desire to unite the party and defeat the Tories, and the campaigning work that has already been done by party activists to defeat witch-hunts. Continued and intensified pressure within the constituencies and trade unions is vital. The West Midlands Labour Unity Campaign and the conference planned in Wales, are models of the kind of fightback that is needed in every area.

Party members need to be more vigilant than ever to stamp out any new purges. They should arm themselves

with those statements by Jim Mortimer and Russell Tuck and especially the letter sent to Finchley Labour Party by David Hughes, the National Agent, which spell out that neither conference nor the national executive have ever said that selling, reading or supporting *Militant* is a ground for expulsion. (See report on the Isle of Wight on page 5).

The key to success, however, lies in taking the argument to all corners of the movement. Trade unionists and party members want more than anything to see the back of the Thatcher government. They see a united fighting Labour Party as indispensable to achieve that. If it is explained in branch and workplace meetings, on the doorstep, through leaflets and visits, that unity is being put at risk by a section of the leadership, and that the rank and file's support is needed to push back the threat, the response will be enthusiastic.

Underlying these witch-hunts is the party leadership's fear of the economic catastrophe which they will face when they come to office. They are already hedging their commitments and watering down their policies for fear of making promises they will not be able to fulfill. They know that there will be opposition from the movement's ranks to any failure to reverse the damage inflicted by Thatcher and want to silence the Marxists within the party who they know will be the spokesmen and leaders of that resistance from the ranks.

The right's fears are shared by the ruling class, whose press manufacture 'public opinion' to the effect that Labour must disown 'extremism' if it is to win the election. When the Tory press express such concern for

Labour's chances of winning elections, they are invariably doing it to damage the party.

They too are alarmed at the growth of Marxist ideas within the Labour Party and they too understand the pressure that the movement will exert upon the next Labour government. So they are trying to make sure that the Labour leaders keep within the confines of the capitalist economy and leave untouched the profits, wealth and power of the big business interests which dominate the country. To help to achieve this, they are egging them on to take action against supporters of *Militant* in order to contain the inevitable unrest.

It would be a disaster if Labour's ranks let this happen. As the 1945 election proved, Labour stands its best chance of a sweeping victory when it stands on a programme for radical change. There was the same scaremongering by the Tories then about Labour's 'extremism'; yet the party romped home.

The very people and ideas which the Tory press and the Labour right would like to see driven from the party are the ones capable of inspiring workers and their families, the unemployed and all exploited sections of society to vote Labour to transform their future. They are also those who will oppose most strongly any move to retreat from their programme by the subsequent Labour government.

The struggle against expulsions is about much more than individual members of the party, important though they are; it is about the future of the whole movement and the British working class. It is a fight that has to be won.

Fight these attacks

Wales

THERE IS growing opposition in Wales to the right-wing's expulsion of Chris Peace from the executive of the Labour Party in Wales. Chris Peace won the highest vote in the constituency party section elections to the executive at this year's Labour Party Wales conference. Yet the right-wing led by George Wright of the TGWU and Ray Powell MP barred him from the executive.

Chris Peace's party, Cardiff North, have condemned this action, calling on the national executive to instruct the Welsh executive to recognise him. Ceredigion and Pembroke North Labour Party have also protested.

Send letters of protest to: Anita Gale, Wales Labour Party, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff. Copies to Chris Peace, 21 Manor Street, Heath, Cardiff.

Faversham

FAVERSHAM Labour Party will haul up three members of the Sittingbourne branch before its General Committee on 2 September. The three—Malcolm Young, Tom Seddon and Alan Ursell—have been charged with the heinous crime of 'selling *Militant* on the High Street'. The 'soft-left' are uniting with the right wing to have these three expelled.

Protests are growing however. Already local members of the National Graphical Association have said they will take their seats on the Faversham general committee, while a lobby will be held outside the 2 September meeting. A 'Fight the Tories, not the socialists' meeting attracted over 30 people. Meanwhile letters of protest against the threatened expulsions are coming in, including one from Jack Collins, Secretary of Kent NUM. Protests to Faversham CLP Secretary, c/o 117 Shortlands Road, Sittingbourne, Kent.



Chris Peace.

NUPE

AN INQUIRY is to be held into NUPE shop steward Ann Bennett, a *Militant* supporter in South Wales.

At the South Glamorgan NUPE branch on 9 July, the full time official berated Anne Bennett for voting, as a NUPE delegate to Cardiff Central Labour Party, against witch-hunts. She was told this went against the decision of NUPE national conference. However, the Welsh regional NUPE conference has voted against witch-hunts.

The full time official called for an inquiry into Ann Bennett, and then said he would head it—but this was rejected by the branch. The inquiry will now be headed by the regional organiser.

The attitude of NUPE members present was summed up by branch member Fred Asquith who told *Militant*: "What angers me is the amount of energy and emotion used to discredit this one shop steward when the Tories are the real enemy."

Campaigns against expulsions

A WEST Midlands Labour Unity Campaign has been launched to campaign for party unity and fight for the reinstatement of Bill Mullins in Warley West and Dugald McKinnon in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The campaign has called a major conference for 21 September at the Dr Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham. Speakers include Dave Nellist MP, Derek Hatton, Liverpool City Council and

Havant LPYS attacked

HAVING SUSPENDED the LPYS branch, Havant Labour Party right wing have expelled one Young Socialist and reprimanded another. Their 'crime' was to hand out Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign leaflets in Portsmouth (not Havant) urging support for April's school students' strike.

The two YS members were 'invited' to meet individual officers of the party only, and were not allowed to know what they were accused of. They had no opportunity to defend themselves to either the executive or the party's general committee. Despite this, the expulsion move was only narrowly passed by Havant Labour Party, 11 votes to nine—and

this without the two LPYS delegates lost through the suspension of the Young Socialists branch.

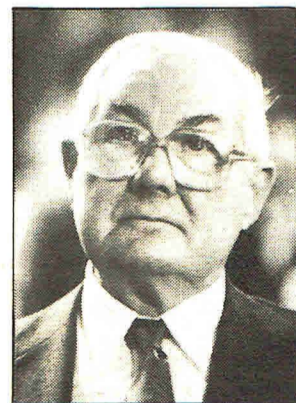
Havant socialists are urging protests to be sent to the Havant Labour Party, c/o A Gledde, 42 Fourth Avenue, Denvilles, Havant (copies to S Thorp, 43 Olinda Street, Fratton, Portsmouth).

● The expelled YS member, Delia Hazrati, has since moved to St Helens. The constituency secretary of St Helens South Labour Party has told her that her transfer from Havant may be unconstitutional in view of the expulsion. However, her ward party have accepted her membership provisionally, saying they did not find the YTURC leaflet 'detrimental to the Labour Party'.

Cardiff

THE JULY meeting of Cardiff South and Penarth Labour Party saw tirades against *Militant* by two veteran witch-hunters, former Prime Minister James Callaghan and his election agent, Lord Brooks.

At the meeting, it was reported that the local LPYS branch had held an unauthorised—but successful—meeting in the local park. This was used as an excuse to attack two general committee delegates, *Militant* supporters Andrew Price and Dave Bartlett—neither



James Callaghan

of whom are in the LPYS. Callaghan and Brooks urged the party to take up the issue at its September meeting.

Ian Schofield, Senior Steward, Rover. Five delegates allowed per labour movement body; £2 per delegate. Details from P Pritchard, 115 Ridgeway, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B17 (cheques to West Midlands Labour Unity Campaign Fund).

Petition

A conference against expulsions is planned in Wales.



Labour Party members protest outside the party headquarters in 1983 during the expulsion of the *Militant* Editorial Board.

Appeals farce

THE MEETING set up to hear Dugald McKinnon's appeal against exclusion from Newcastle-under-Lyme Labour Party was abruptly abandoned on 12 July when Dugald made it clear he was not going to put up with a bureaucratic rubber-stamping exercise.

Freda Westwood the party's Regional Organiser, acting for the national executive's mis-named Appeals Committee, claimed "this case is closed". But this is far from the end of the matter.

Transfer

Last year, Dugald, who was backed by his old party in Ayr, was refused a transfer to Newcastle CLP. Last April the general committee in effect expelled him. The only allegation actually made to him was that he 'sold the *Militant*'. Contrary even to the NEC's advice to the CLP, no written details of the allegations or so-called 'evidence' were shown to Dugald.

The assertion that Dugald was 'a member of the *Militant* Tendency' was made for the first time in a letter confirming the decision to expel him.

Dugald was not prepared

to accept the same farcical 'appeal' procedure that Bill Mullins, recently expelled from Warley West CLP, was subjected to. One of the regional EC members supposed to be impartially considering Bill's appeal had just moved a resolution at the regional conference calling for expulsions!

Faced with the same undemocratic approach, Dugald took legal advice. His solicitors consider that his expulsion was invalid because of procedural and constitutional irregularities, and advised him not to take part in the so-called appeal.

The solicitors wrote to Freda Westwood inviting her and the CLP to reconsider Dugald's case, going back to the general committee for a proper hearing. "Should this course be taken," Dugald told *Militant*, "I am confident that the executive's case will crumble."

If they refused to reconsider, however, Dugald said he would definitely be taking legal action. "I find it ironic and disturbing that I may have to resort to the capitalist courts to seek justice when I have been denied it in the Labour Party. Any action will be forced on me by the rules being bent to exclude me from the party."

Only one anti-Militant resolution

LABOUR'S RANKS are overwhelmingly in favour of party unity. The lack of support for witch-hunts, proscriptions and expulsions is revealed in the resolutions submitted to this year's Labour Party conference.

Only one resolution out of a total of 528 calls for action against the 'Militant Tendency'. This resolution, from Ogmere Labour Party, is an attempt to widen out the attack by Ogmere MP Ray Powell and TGWU right-winger George Wright, who initiated the witch-hunt against *Militant* supporter Chris Peace who has been expelled from the Welsh Labour Party Executive.

Ray Powell is also trying to get the same treatment meted out against *Militant* supporters in Ogmere constituency—including the miners' leaders in the fight to save St John's colliery from closure.

Another resolution from Neath Labour Party however declares that "splinter groups have no part in the general socialist movement". Although there are 'Solidarity' (right-wing) members in this party, who are keen for a witch-hunt, they are obviously under pressure, having to content themselves with vague talk of 'splinter groups'.

Yet resolutions from Workington, Durham North West, Coventry South West, Kilmarnock and Loudoun,

By Rob Sewell

and Ceredigion and Pembroke North call for party unity, against public attacks that play into the hands of the Tory press, or against expulsions in general. Plymouth Devonport and Lincoln constituencies warn against measures that "will only re-open internal divisions and thus damage Labour's public standing and support."

The General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union (GMU section) and Edinburgh Pentlands Labour Party call for a "shift in emphasis in regional officers away from 'policing' the party constitution", and the need to make "our party more welcoming and less intimidating to new members".

Meanwhile Ceredigion and Pembroke North Labour Party "opposes all attacks on the LPYS and refuses to expel socialists at a time when we should be using our energy preparing for the next general election". It calls for the "misnamed Appeals and Mediation Committee which has



undemocratically initiated countless 'disciplinary enquiries' to be disbanded".

The publication of the resolution, booklet will have been a sad day for right wing MP for Swansea, Alan Williams. He told the *South Wales Evening Post* (19 July): "There will be no shortage of trade union sponsored motions put forward for debate at Labour's an-

nual conference in the autumn, calling for the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party".

Labour's rank and file must however remain vigilant. Any attempts to sneak in last minute amendments must be defeated at all costs.

Removed from panel

A MILITANT supporter who in last year's council elections halved a Tory's majority, has been removed from the panel of prospective candidates for Glasgow City Council.

Last year David Churchley was the Labour candidate in one of Glasgow's safest Tory seats. Even so, Labour's vote increased by 30 per cent, achieving Labour's highest vote in the ward.

Yet at this month's meeting of the Glasgow district Labour Party members of the pro-Kinnock Labour Co-ordinating Committee blocked his renomination to stand again. At the party's executive meeting, LCC members tried to hide their political opposition to Churchley behind claims that he was 'not suitable'. This ignored his 15 years' Labour Party membership, several of them on the District Party and the council candidates' panel, and a whole list of trade union activities, with shop steward, branch and regional responsibilities.

When the executive's decision went to the District



David Churchley.

Labour Party, no discussion on the matter was allowed by the chair and renomination was narrowly defeated by 50 votes to 43.

The issue will now go back to the Churchley's local Labour Party who unanimously endorsed his renomination last time around. They have the right to appeal to the Scottish Labour Executive. While the LCC predominate on the Scottish executive, not all of them fall into the camp of such open and obvious witch-hunting

By Bob Wylie

Young want politics

THE RECENT Labour Party broadcast on youth on 17 July was a welcome break from the political broadcasts of the past. But while the songs of Billy Bragg and Jimmy Somerville came across well, the broadcast was devoid of actual policies. Instead it relied on general platitudes like "Labour listens and cares about youth."

This broadcast followed a recent trend of Neil Kinnock's office and the Jobs and Industry Campaign ignoring the democratically



Labour's youth marching to support Liverpool council, 29 June.

elected bodies and committees of the party. This 'youth' broadcast did not involve Labour's 15,000 strong youth section, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS)—nor were they mentioned on the broadcast.

Neil Kinnock's advisers know that Labour has to win the youth vote, so he has taken to courting celebrities and pop stars. There is nothing wrong with

brightening up Labour's image. The LPYS and the Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign have led the way in this field, but not at the expense of policies.

If Neil Kinnock's advisers think policies 'scare people away' the LPYS broadcast in 1982 proved otherwise. It was a similar format to the 17 July broadcast, with music from Steel Pulse but with the policies spelt out.

Afterwards Labour headquarters received 2,000 applications to join the Labour Party.

Young people want answers; they do not want gimmicks, no matter how well packaged. As Billy Bragg says: "Its not enough just to wear badges in days like these."

By John Hird

Sales ban on the Isle of Wight

THREE MILITANT supporters face possible expulsion by the Isle of Wight Labour Party after selling *Militant* outside recent party meetings.

The IOW's party executive has set up an inquiry into three party members, Vic Dale, Pat Westmore and Gerry Dominey. The result will be discussed at the next executive to which the three are invited.

This action follows a decision at the general management committee of the party to ban the "sale of any literature at organised meetings of the Isle of Wight Constituency Labour Party (CLP) other than official Labour Party literature."

In a circular notifying branches of this decision the party's secretary Robert Jones says that the "sale of the *Militant* newspaper has been expressly forbidden by the NEC at Labour Party meetings", and that "the party has the right to take appropriate disciplinary action against any individual contraven-

ing this decision."

The NEC ruling only stated that Labour Party facilities could not be available to the Militant Tendency, but didn't specifically ban the sale of the paper. Moreover, former general secretary Jim Mortimer

National Agent

stated in January 1983 that action against the *Militant* tendency "should not preclude Labour Party members from reading, selling, purchasing, publishing, or writing for newspapers including *Militant*." Russell Tuck, when chairman of the NEC's Organisation Sub-committee said that "the decision (of the July NEC) is only about providing facilities for the sale of the *Militant* on LP premises. It does not stop those who want to read it from doing so. It is their business".

Now, to put the issue beyond doubt, the party's national agent, David Hughes, has stated that selling the *Militant* outside branch meetings is in itself not sufficient grounds to justify expulsion. (See *Militant* 758).

But in the Isle of Wight, as elsewhere, Marxists are being vilified in a climate of intolerance to prevent them becoming a focus of opposition.

In a statement in *Tribune*, 19 July, in the name of the Isle of Wight Labour Party—although this was never put before the party's general committee—it is claimed the IOW party cannot start to improve its electoral standing "while we are saddled with the incumbency of the *Militant* Tendency."

Yet in the recent county council elections, six out of ten candidates fielded by the Labour Party were *Militant* supporters, including the most successful, who trebled the

party's vote.

Jones is unequivocal about how he would like to deal with the *Militant*. He says, again in *Tribune*, (12 July), that he would like to do without expulsions, "but if it stops this CLP falling into the dead hands of the *Militant* again, I'll support the expulsion of any self-serving factionalist who raises his head—and I'd be betraying the Labour Party if I didn't". (our emphasis). Is this not a statement of intent to expel anyone who dares

Not consistent

to oppose the position of the party's leadership once the opportunity arises? This flies in the face of the Labour Party's tradition of democratic debate and free speech.

Moreover Jones' own record is far from consistent. Three years ago he had a letter published in *Militant* arguing against witch-hunts. He praised the hard work

By Militant reporters

Militant supporters had done in building the Labour Party and the Labour Party Young Socialists. He said then: "If it had not been for *Militant* supporters and the work they did, we would not now have a Labour Party here on the Isle of Wight, or in many other areas."

He went on to say: "For as long as I am Party secretary, there will be no expulsions in my CLP, and I will fight for the rights of members who may be under threat elsewhere."

Jones is typical of many once on the left wing, who have been disorientated by Thatcher's victory in 1983 and are now travelling to the right. The attack on Marxists in the Isle of Wight and in other areas doesn't rely on political argument but on arbitrary discipline.

● We apologise to any readers who may have been misled by the report on the Isle of Wight in *Militant* (28 June). The resolution which banned sales of literature other than official Labour Party literature was passed at the IOW general management committee, not at Ryde branch, which the article seemed to imply.

South Africa state of emergency

Isolate apartheid, build links with workers

THE SOUTH African government's state of emergency is an admission that the apartheid regime can only maintain its rule by bloody repression of the black workers and young people.

Up to 500 people have died in political violence over the last year. Unarmed school children have been shot down by policemen. But Botha hypocritically gives huge new powers to the state machine to "prevent murder and anarchy".

The aim of repression is to defend the apartheid system and the interests of the capitalist class. Apartheid is not just white supremacy and petty discrimination. It is a system which denies the black working class political rights, keeps them in low wages, and tries through the migrant labour system and the pass laws to keep workers cowed, fragmented and unorganised.

Black unions

The main reason for Botha's panic has been that opposition is growing fast and that potentially extremely powerful black unions are playing a central role, threatening the bosses' super profits from black labour power. Riots in the townships, growing youth and community organisations and a militant trade union movement spell disaster for Botha.

But the black working class do not have an easy task in defeating Fortress South Africa. The capitalist class have a powerful state machine to defend their

By Roger Shrivess

power, wealth and privilege. The massive army can dominate the whole southern African region; there is a powerful and well armed police force and at present they have the backing of the vast majority of armed white South Africans.

International solidarity will be vital to victory. Pressure is already growing for sanctions against South Africa's government; to break off all trading, commercial and investment links with South African capitalism and isolate the regime. The foreign investment of £22 billion in South Africa in 1979 showed how willing capitalists were to take advantage of low pay and lack of organisation.

But that isolation must not apply to apartheid's main enemies, the black working class.

An armed mass movement based on the working class and pulling behind it the rest of the population is the only way to end this sick system. The politicised youth are already demanding action against big business as well as arms to fight the regime. The mass of the population live in towns and are wage earners, they will be forced into a bitter struggle against the big business props of

apartheid, forced into a fight to the finish against the industrialists and bankers.

Miners in South Africa are on the verge of a national strike. There have been strike movements in Fords and Volkswagen and strikes and shop boycotts over replacement of union by non-union workers at BTR Sarmcol, a subsidiary of British multinational BTR.

Now the unions have grown to around 750,000 members. The forthcoming struggles for national liberation and socialism will have a strong militant base. But the working class will need worldwide solidarity.

The South African union federation FOSATU announced last year its support for direct links between trade unionists in South Africa and internationally.

Solidarity action

Striking British miner Roy Jones visited rank and file and leading members of the South African NUM last November, visiting the mines and workers' living quarters and attending conferences. Roy also saw the need to build direct links.

The oil companies and other big business concerns coolly bused United Nations sanctions against Smith's minority racist Rhodesian regime in the '60s and '70s. We cannot trust capitalism to act against apartheid. We must strengthen the arm of black trade unionists to lead the fight for freedom and



socialism.

The Dunnes strikers (see below) were denied entry to South Africa, but their long and courageous fight to refuse to handle South African goods has heartened black trade unionists. The British TGWU has backed strikers at an ICI subsidiary. Workers in San Francisco and in Australia have struck in support of black workers in South Africa.

Even without the surge of revolutionary feeling in South Africa today, workers would want to repay their gratitude to the South African NUM for their backing during the British miners' strike by showing solidarity in the NUM's own dispute.

Now it is doubly important for unions to give every

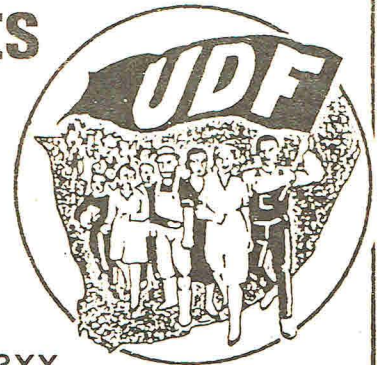
possible moral and material backing to the workers' struggle. It is the most practical method for British and

other international workers to aid the fight against apartheid and for socialist revolution.

Bulletin of UDF militants

As reviewed in last week's *Militant*.

60p (inc postage) from
Inqaba,
BM Box 1719,
London WC1N 3XX



Botha's police ban Dunne's strikers

STRIKING WORKERS at Dunnes stores, Dublin, have been refused entry to South Africa. They have been on strike for more than a year, since Mary Manning was sacked for refusing to handle South African goods.

Although she was reinstated, the right not to handle goods from the apartheid regime was not conceded, so the strike continues.

Their attempt to visit South Africa followed an invitation from Bishop Tutu of the South African Council of Churches.

Mary Manning told Conor McLiam, of Dublin Labour Youth, what happened:

We were supposed to be over there for the anniversary of the strike this Friday (19 July). The organisers tried to send us an itinerary but it was sent back to them. We were going to meet the equivalent of our own union, visit some of the homelands and meet Nelson Mandela.

When did things go wrong?

In Heathrow all the strikers' names were called and told to contact information and when we did we were told that the South African Embassy had informed British Airways that

we weren't to board the flight.

For about three hours they looked for our Boarding Passes which we refused to give to them. They told us that if we didn't they would call the police and get us arrested. We refused to meet or recognise a representative of the South African Embassy when he came up to the room and handed letters to seven of the eight strikers. The letter stated that our Visa exemption was withdrawn.

Our baggage was taken off the plane and someone from British Airways came up and said: "If I told you you could board the plane now would you?". One of the girls told him that the South African government wouldn't let us and he said: "Forget about that; if I told you that you could go would you?" She told him to wait and contacted us and then we went to board the plane.

We were stopped again at the boarding gate, but a British Airways official came up and said to let us through.

We found out later that the captain had announced just before we boarded the plane that the delay (which was 3¾ hours) was due to a technical fault and the other problem about the people who were refusing to board. For the 12 hour flight our

seating was spread out and the rest of the passengers thought we had caused the delay, and were very hostile.

What happened in Johannesburg then?

We got off the plane and went to check through immigration and we were in the queue when a British Airways official approached us and asked us if we were the group travelling from Dublin and told us someone from immigration wanted to talk to us.

Frightening

When we went over to him we were surrounded by army and plain clothes men, eight of them armed with sub-machine guns. Then we were brought up seven flights of stairs, it was frightening because they were armed and didn't tell us what they were going to do with us.

When we asked them what was happening they said there would be someone up to talk to us. Everyone on the plane with an Irish passport was brought up with us, another four people. They were let through after about an hour. We were left for one to two hours with about 20 guards, two of them blocking the exit.

An official came up and gave all of us letters. He said we needed these. Then he left

and an hour later a British Airways official came and said we were being sent back on the next plane.

Once we knew we were going back we got a bit braver. We played charades and sang "Free Nelson Mandela". Before we were allowed to change, the guard searched all our bags, read our letters and diaries.

Finally to get to our plane we had to walk between two rows of armed guards and right to the end of the terminal. We were treated like terrorists the whole time we were there.

Are you going back?

Definitely, we don't think it as a wasted trip. We didn't have to go past the airport to see apartheid in action. We are planning for October. We have to see about getting Visas first.

Why do you see this trip as so important?

Firstly, they say they are open to criticism, but they wouldn't let us in to see for ourselves. We want to make contact with the people in South Africa who we are out on strike for and to see apartheid as it really is.

The experience has made us more determined to go on with the strike. Obviously they are afraid of a boycott. We'd urge more people to boycott South African goods.



Dunne's strikers return to their picket line in Dublin after being turned back at Johannesburg airport.

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

Militant/NSSP public meeting

Sri Lanka—Workers fightback against repression

Speakers:

- Dave Nellist MP
 - Vasudeva Nannayakkara, leading member of NSSP, recently released from prison
 - Tamil speaker with eye-witness account of events in Jaffna
- At: Conway Hall (nearest tube—Holborn)
Friday 26 July, 7.15pm.

LETTERS

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

Birkenhead builds support

Dear Comrades,

The fight to defend Liverpool City Council is not just confined to Liverpool itself. *Militant* supporters in Birkenhead, across the river from Liverpool, have seen the need to build solidarity action for the threatened councillors in this area.

Every day of the week *Militant* supporters are in Birkenhead precinct with the petition (in defence of the council), leaflets, copies of *Militant* and the special *Militant* broadsheet in support of Liverpool.

On Saturday 6 July there was a day of action where hundreds of people signed the petition, 30 copies of *Militant* were sold and nearly a dozen people said they were interested in joining the Labour Party, LPYS or attending *Militant* readers meetings.

One old woman, when signing the petition said: "I'd like to stick my fingers in Thatcher's eyes" and added: "But don't worry, Liverpool will win because they've got the right people leading them".

Yours fraternally
Dave Clark and
Gerry McKinley
Birkenhead Labour Party



Liz as a chicken while working in Wimpy's on YTS.

YTS gone fowl

Dear Comrades,

My experience of YTS in waitressing, was a year wasted and a certificate that might, if I am lucky get me

a job sweeping the roads. Through this I also dressed up as a chicken and paraded under a sign: "The biggest burger under the bun", how degrading and just to help the bosses bring their profits rolling in.

If I had only known of the LPYS and *Militant* at that time, I could have prevented my mistake, but now as people read this, maybe it will prevent them making the same or a similar mistake on these schemes. Join the LPYS and fight back against the Tories, fight back with *Militant*.

Yours fraternally
Liz Cairney
Stirling LPYS

Reading Militant

Dear Militant,

I began reading *Militant* in May 1984 because of its reporting on the miners' strike. But it was while reading the paper that I became aware of other workers' struggles throughout the country and the rest of the world.

In particular, I began to realise the plight of the black South Africans who are being shot and killed for fighting for better wages and conditions.

Yet, despite their struggle

they still sent money and support to the British miners during the strike.

There are many more struggles that I have learned of through *Militant* which I would normally not have heard of, or would not have heard the true facts from the biased capitalist press. It is because of this that I feel the need for a daily *Militant* is not only necessary but essential in order to combat the 'Goebbels-like' propaganda coming from Fleet Street every day.

Yours fraternally
Brian Gregory
Easington NUM

The companies we keep

Dear Comrades,

Last week a builder in our Labour Party branch showed me a leaflet, *Dealing with the problem employee*. For £51 plus VAT they will take a day to answer such questions as: —What does being reasonable mean? How far can I act under suspicion? What about refusing overtime? Can I withhold salary

increases for poor results? etc.

Before now I had always wondered if employers acted in the same way out of instinctive animal cunning. Perhaps being a bastard comes naturally to them and all they have to do is practice it at it.

It is things like this which remind us what we face is a class; organised, cold-blooded and ruthless in its own interests.

Who goes to these

meetings you ask? BP, GEC, Unigate, Courtaulds, Prestige, Trent Regional Health Authority, the NE Midlands Co-op, Trustee Savings Bank, to name but a few, and... the National Coal Board (you're shocked, admit it).

If you work for one of these, organise to get them before they get you!

Yours fraternally
Graham Lewis
Erewash Labour Party

Labour Women's Conference

Dear Comrades,

In reply to Kathleen Jones, (*Militant* 758), the article in question starts out by stating quite truthfully that this year's national conference of Labour Women was "dominated by a preoccupation of the mainly middle class majority with constitutional changes in the Labour Party aimed at making special provision for women."

Our conference opened with such a debate because the majority who control the

National Committee and Conference Arrangements Committee, see organisational change as the main priority.

According to my reckoning there were about 60 delegates who failed to vote after the very first debate on organisation. Where were they, for the crucial debates on the economy, privatisation, health and safety, employment and child care?

I met Margaret (see *Militant* 756, pg 4) at the conference and learned of her battle with the medical profession over their hyperactive son. The GCHQ ban on unions was the spark, her ex-

periences on joining the Party and particularly her response to the conference, reflects the class composition of the Labour Women's organisation at the present time.

It is vital for us to have an open campaigning women's organisation with the kind of policies that will convince working class women that the only way there can be any future is by building a socialist party with socialist policies.

Yours fraternally
Cathy Wilson
Ex-Southern Region
Women's Committee
member

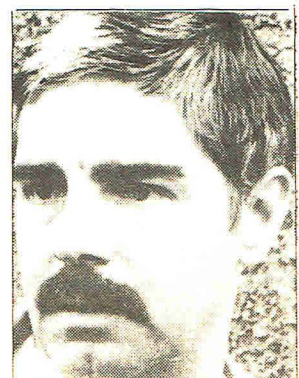
The missing Lynk

Dear Comrades,

If people like Lynk, Prendergast, the so-called 'Silver Birch', and the dynamic duo from Yorkshire (Fulstone and Brown) had put as much effort into helping the NUM win our strike as they have into destroying our union, we would have achieved a lot more.

If he achieves the Notts breakaway, Lynk will end up selling his members down the river.

Four months ago, this comedian was on the Jimmy Young radio show. When he was asked about the overtime ban, his reply was: "Well Jim, I don't know if



Chris Butcher, alias 'Silver Birch'.

you know it, but us in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and parts of Derbyshire have already taken the overtime ban off. The reason is that my members are on that low

a wage that they need the overtime".

I think my sides were still aching from laughing a day later! If that's the type of leader Notts NUM can get to represent them, God help them. He doesn't seem bothered about a decent wage for them as long as he can get them plenty of overtime.

I personally don't want to lose Notts from the NUM as there are a lot of good union members there. If they do split from the NUM it will hurt the union, but in the long run Nottingham will be the real losers.

Yours fraternally
Ken Ambler
Sacked miner
Wistow NUM



Troops on their way to the Falklands. Life in the army isn't all its cracked up to be.

Soldiers arrested at Greenham

Dear Comrades,

Jackie from Basildon spoke to me about a recent experience at Greenham Common:

"Our camp lies right next to the fence, so we see many of the squaddies. Some come over for a chat. On a Saturday night two of the squaddies returning from the pub asked if they could come and sit round the fire.

"They brought some beer along and they casually chatted about life in the army explaining it was not as exciting a life as they had been led to expect; in fact life stationed at Greenham Common was quite boring.

"After about an hour an

MOD van pulled up and arrested them. They had their identity cards taken away and were confined to barracks. Their car was left behind with the keys, so we put a message of support in the boot. Their car was picked up the following day by the MOD.

"This small experience shows that the leaders of the armed forces fear fraternisation between soldiers and civilians. All we were doing was having a chat".

Yours fraternally
John McKay
Basildon LPYS

Sales to police

Dear Comrades,

When we were going in to a YS meeting recently we all noticed two policemen stan-

ding outside talking to the caretaker of the community centre. During the meeting the usual jokes about police harassment and policemen in general were thrown about.

When we were leaving the building one of the policemen said to me: "Can I buy one of your papers?" (*Militant*) I laughed and walked on. He then said he wasn't joking, so I gave him one but asked for the money first, I still didn't trust him. He gave me 50p and then said: "They might own my body, but they don't own my mind".

I was shocked, as I fumbled for change in my pocket, he said: "Keep the change". It is now in the fighting fund.

Yours fraternally
Joe Singh
Pollock LPYS

Just deserts

Dear Comrades,

One scab miner won't be joining any breakaway union. He is taking his redundancy pay despite only being 26.

He was one of the leading organisers in Northumberland going door to door with computer sheets supplied by management with names and addresses on them. This just shows how the coal board has rewarded these people. He was suspended from the union and nobody speaks to him at work.

Yours fraternally
J Murdie
Ellington miner

Obituary

MILITANT supporters in Hove are sad to report the death of Kevin Folley at a tragically early age.

Kevin could always be relied upon to fight for policies representing the interests of working people. As a member of Hove LPYS and a *Militant* supporter, Kevin was an extremely likeable and genuine socialist who will be deeply missed by many people.

We send our condolences to Kevin's family and salute the passing of a fine comrade.



Lord Aid

LABOUR MP George Foulkes is demanding an investigation into the legal aid system after two cases in Scotland. The Earl of Cassillis was recently in court for a divorce action against the Countess. The Earl, heir to a £25 million fortune, was granted legal aid. Meanwhile, striking miner from nearby Killoch, George Spiers, was also up in court for breach of the peace. At the time he was trying to survive on £25.65 a week. His application for legal aid was turned down.

Curiouser and curiouser

THE LABOUR leadership blame the left for the narrow defeat at the Brecon by-election. The leadership along with the *Daily Mirror*, have now even discovered an opinion poll that backs this up. According to the *Mirror*, (12 July), a poll carried out by Gallup found that "5 per cent of those who considered changing their vote to Labour, but didn't" blamed "extremism". Yes, but what did the other 95 per cent think?

Hedging their bets?

TONY BENN last week dared to point out that President Reagan, seriously ill and pumped full of pain-killing drugs, still has his finger on the nuclear button. The *Daily Express* was furious. "Fury over Benn's sick Reagan jibe" screamed their page two headline (19 July) while the article gave full vent to Tory chairman Selwyn Gummer who attacked Tony Benn for his "shabby scare story". Meanwhile on the same day in the *Express's* sister paper, the *Daily Star*, Labour MP Joe Ashton wrote in his column of Ronald Reagan: "... a doddering infirm hand on the nuclear trigger brings Doomsday nearer for the rest of us". A *Daily Express* editorial lambasting the *Daily Star* is eagerly awaited.

How a Glasgow strike won against the odds

THIS STORY of a strike some time ago at Flexible Ducting Ltd, Glasgow, shows that even during a recession, workers can fight and win.

In this interview with Pat Craven, the sub-convenor at the factory, ANDY MARTIN, whose dismissal sparked off the strike, explains how it came about and how it was won.

Our factory is a small one, with a total workforce of about 200, making industrial and domestic tubing, most of it for export. It is part of a multi-national, Smith Industries.

The union has existed here for about ten years. But up until about three years ago things went along quite smoothly. The factory was making profits, we were getting our wage rises and there wasn't a great deal of hassle between the management and the union.

I became a shop steward in March 1982. The convenor at that time had been negotiating redundancies. He was ex-Communist Party, a real Stalinist in his attitude. He was very hostile towards me, as I had already started selling *Militant* in the factory and had pulled a small group of workers around me.

While he was negotiating, he applied for, and got, a job as foreman!

I was then elected shop steward for the department, and sub-convenor, a number of shop stewards changed and the shop stewards' committee became more democratic.

We affiliated to the Glasgow District Trades Council, sent delegates to the Garscadden Constituency and Glasgow District Labour Parties, affiliated to other CLPs and participated in the District Committee of the TGWU.

Real enemy

What tended to happen before in wage negotiations was that day shift workers would argue that the money should be put on the basic rate and the other shift workers would argue that the money should be put on the shift allowance. So a split developed within the workforce.

We managed to head that off. The way we put it was that the real enemy was management, and gradually, over a period of six months, we built up quite a good relationship with the shop floor.

Then, round about September 1982, profits started to drop and the pressure started to be put on the workers. For the previous six months the convenor and myself were constantly having meetings with management, three or four times a week.

They were trying to put across to us the need to work together and accept changes in working practices. They felt that if they could convince us then they could convince the branch. Eventual-

ly when they found that we were not giving in to their pressure, they moved to attack our sick pay agreement.

They picked out a case of somebody who had been off work with sunburn and tried to make an example of him by not giving him sick pay, to establish that they could control who was and who was not getting paid under the sick pay scheme.

The shop stewards immediately called a meeting. Management refused to put the dispute into procedure and so there was immediate strike action. It lasted for five days and ended with a compromise agreement that the dispute would be put into procedure and they withdrew their comments about who they could pick and choose. That dispute was the starting point of the conflict becoming apparent on the shop floor between the management and the union.

As the recession bit, management felt that changes in work practices would have to be pushed through and there was a determined effort to smash the shop steward's committee because it was seen as a stumbling block.

In February 1983, I was called out to an incident on the night shift. Things got heated and there was a lot of argument. Management used this as an excuse to sack me. They never gave me a chance to call witnesses. The evidence they produced from the Production Manager and the foreman who was on the night shift was conflicting.

It was a clear case of victimisation of a shop steward. Management saw it as an opportunity to beat the union movement inside the factory.

We immediately called a stoppage of work and there was a unanimous decision that we take strike action until I was reinstated.

Once the workers had taken that decision to hit the street, within a matter of just two hours we had been down to the Trade Union Centre, produced a leaflet and were back on the picket line with them.

People were due to collect their wages and we knew that the management would have propaganda in the form of letters for everybody as they went in, giving them their side of the story. So we felt that we had to counteract their arguments.

The strike lasted three weeks. One of the main reasons it lasted so long was the tremendous support we got from local trade unionists from the big factories in the area like Yarrow's and Barr & Stroud. Also the way it was covered in the *Militant* helped.

We received a letter from a shop steward in Cardiff, saying that he had read about the dispute in *Militant*. He was working in a low-paid job and knew the circumstances of victimisation because he was involved in it himself—"please



find £1 enclosed for your strike fund".

It wasn't the fact that the guy had sent £1; it was that somebody in Cardiff had associated with a dispute so many miles away in Glasgow—it was a real morale booster.

Another significant part of the strike was the involvement of the women on the picket line. They didn't see their role as the tea-makers. They were actively involved and took their turn on the picket line rota, and they were on some occasions the most militant. They stopped lorries, linked arms across the picket line, saying "you're not going to knock down women", which gave a boost to the workers on strike.

We formed a strike committee right at the start, with

never set foot in the factory again", trying to break the workers' morale. They openly produced a hit-list of workers who they did not want to start back in the factory. Obviously I was on the top, because I was already sacked according to them. The rest were the shop stewards' committee and one or two other individuals.

As the dispute was nearing its end, management issued a final ultimatum to the rest of the workers that if they didn't return to work they could consider themselves dismissed because they were breaking their contracts. These letters were issued on a Friday, they arrived on the Saturday morning of the Scottish Labour Party conference.

There was an immediate convening of the strike com-

The union does not just exist within the four walls of the factory, and to be victorious, disputes need to be taken out into the wider industrial and political struggle.

the shop stewards and two or three people from different areas of the factory to broaden it out, and we called regular meetings to keep the workers informed.

Tactically we were always one step ahead of the management. Every time they produced a letter or a leaflet, we counteracted it. Every time they got in contact with the people on the picket line, there were always one or two of us there to counteract their arguments.

Management would be making blatant statements like: "Andy Martin will

mittee and we decided to send two delegates to the conference. We aimed to get support on a wider scale for our strike, on the basis that it was not just over an attack on a shop steward, but on the trade union movement, an attempt to break the union within that factory. We produced extra leaflets and distributed them at the conference.

At this point the Regional Secretary of the TGWU, Hugh Wyper managed to convene a meeting at ACAS with full-time officials and the managing director and

his staff. But management were determined to carry out the sackings. They were only going to ACAS to tidy up with the full-time officials that everyone was sacked and that as from next Monday they would be employing new labour in the factory.

What showed their contempt for the talks was that on the very day that they went in to them, they issued an ultimatum to the foremen and office staff that if they didn't run the machines then they could join the workers out on the picket line.

We were well aware of this and were prepared to counteract their moves by occupying the factory if talks had broken down at ACAS. They had brought in security guards who were patrolling the grounds with dogs, and all the fire doors were locked; so we consulted the shop steward from the local Fire Brigade and the company was fined £300 for breaking the safety regulations.

At the ACAS talks, officials had been sent up from the multi-national Smith Industries who were prepared to go along with management's statement that everybody at the factory was sacked and that they were going to employ new labour.

The TGWU officials were now faced with the same kind of people that we had been faced with for the past six months. The union responded with an ultimatum that if management were going to adopt that attitude, they would take the industrial action to every factory belonging to Smith Industries in Great Britain.

This immediately brought the officials from Smith Industries to their senses. They

asked for a recess, came back and said that if we were to accept arbitration, then they were prepared to reinstate the workforce.

The final settlement was a face-saving exercise for management. The terms of reference for the arbitration were to be drawn up by the union and the union could choose the arbitrator. So it was a total capitulation by management.

I was re-instated on full wages until the outcome of the arbitration. This came through in June—a full reinstatement with no loss of earnings or service, with only a written warning that I should abide by "reasonable requests".

Boss resigns

When it was known I was re-instated the Managing Director resigned. This was the guy who during the strike had been making statements that no way would I set foot in the factory again. So his credibility as far as the workforce was concerned was nil.

The lesson from our dispute is that where the unions are involved with a multi-national, only when they threaten industrial action on a national basis does it bring the bosses to their senses. It doesn't matter how well organised you might be within your factory, the union does not just exist within the four walls of the factory.

We could not stand and fight alone—it has to be both an industrial and a political fight, not just against the local employer, but the multi-nationals who control the economy. //

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Lewisham hospitals under threat

Tory surgery kills

THE CRUNCH for employees of the Lewisham and North Southwark Health Authority has arrived.

At the end of the next financial year, it is expected that its group of hospitals will 'overspend' around £5.4 million.

By Dave Osborne
(Secretary, NUPE Guys Health Branch, personal capacity)

The blame for this financial nightmare can be laid fairly and squarely at the door of this Tory administration which believes in 'balancing the books' rather than providing adequate funding for the job that needs to be done.

The staff are informed that the main cause is the underfunding of Regional Specialities that are carried out at Guys Hospital.

These are the Renal and heart services (£1.74m overspent) that are provided to other Health Districts for which there is no cross-charging.

The second main problem is that provision for inflation in the district's budget has been held back to 5% when we all know that the true rate is nearer 7%.

Thirdly, the Authority is expected to dip into its allocation to provide this year's pay award if it goes over 4.5%.

Another factor is the Resources Allocation Working Party (RAWP) decision that a proportion (£1.1 million) has to be 'lost' from the budget to enable those Regions who need the cash for improvements to receive more money while London loses out.

We all know however that all over the country, hospitals, beds and services are being butchered so



Public 'funeral service' for five closed wards at Guys hospital early last year

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

RAWP is obviously yet another device for clawing back much needed capital.

Recently Guys Hospital closed 109 beds in an attempt to save some money, this resulted in approximately 40 posts being lost. But despite this the loyal and dedicated staff managed to treat the same amount of patients with less facilities.

On top of this a vacancy freeze was proposed to those

departments that did not have a bonus scheme, resulting in already hard pressed administration and clerical staff and nursing and medical staff having to cover jobs just to ensure that things kept 'ticking over'.

Twenty-five workers have taken voluntary redundancy and 40 posts have been lost due to bonus scheme reviews.

Despite this lack of fun-

ding and the loss of beds and staff, the waiting lists in this Authority increased by around 5% in the last year.

Stewards committee

On top of all this the Authority were 'loaned' £1m last year, by the RHA that has now to be paid back.

The District Joint Shop Stewards Co-ordinating

Committee, being very concerned about all these problems has repeatedly asked the management to be involved in the decision making which needs to be done.

We were never consulted.

Then at the June meeting of the Health Authority the spectre of compulsory redundancy was raised. It was then shelved for another month due to the fact that not all of the sub-committees

had been consulted.

It was then brought to the July meeting, where, after a vote of 12-7 the no compulsory redundancy agreement was thrown out of the window with no consultation or negotiation.

Management stated that at 1 April 1985 the total number of whole time equivalents (40 hours = 1WTE) to be shed would have to be 346 to effect the savings needed.

For each month that the decision is waived another 30 WTE need to be added. Therefore as at 1 August 1985, 466 jobs are at risk from this exercise alone!

Job losses

But this decision is only the tip of the iceberg because with this agreement being rescinded the Authority is now more able to proceed with its decision to close Hither Green Hospital, New Cross Hospital and Sydenham Children's Hospital.

That would entail a probable loss of over 1,500 jobs. It would now mean a loss of over 700 beds.

It paves the way for the contracting out of catering (230 WTE), laundry (100 WTE) and domestic services (500 WTE).

These figures show that not only are the waiting lists going to rocket but so is the local dole queue, with over 2,700 redundancies.

For the protection of our patients, our services, and our members we will oppose this undemocratic decision by an unelected quango.

Hopefully with the support of all organisations and unions in the Authority we will be able to go all the way and stop this madness before any of our patients are turned away to die.

Miners re-build

SID BUTTERFIELD, a miner from Stillingfleet pit, Selby, recently elected to the lodge committee, assesses, in a personal capacity the situation in his pit, in this interview with CHRIS HILL of Leeds Central Labour Party.

How did the strike end at your pit?

It ended with 67 men out of 360 still on strike. The majority went back before the end, but some by only a few days. All the lodge committee were still out save one.

What's happened since then?

John Brooke, who had been suspended for acts committed during the strike has now been reinstated on our instigation and has been voted lodge president. We have a branch committee now that is far more left wing than before the strike.

What's the mood in the pit now?

There's a mood of non co-operation and unrest. No one's happy the way it is at the moment. Even some of the ones who went back in January are saying they realise they should not have gone back and now want to have another strike to show that this time they will support the union and not cross picket lines.

What do you think should be done about the attempts of Notts to set up its own union?

Firstly the national union must launch a campaign to keep those who don't want to join a scab union in the NUM, and if the scab union is formed it must be made clear to the rest of the labour and trade union movement that they are dealing with a scab union, led by people only interested in themselves and their positions which they have not been elected to.

NUM members must campaign amongst other unions for Notts coal to be blacked as being scab coal in any future dispute.

Secondly, we must make sure that the breakaway union is not recognised by the TUC, Labour Party, or anyone else.

Do you think there's a role for the rank and file Yorkshire miner in the campaign in Nottinghamshire?

Because of what happened during the strike, Yorkshire miners going into Notts would probably be counter-productive. Instead every facility must be given to those miners in Notts who stayed loyal to the national union to mount their own

campaign and if necessary call on us for support.

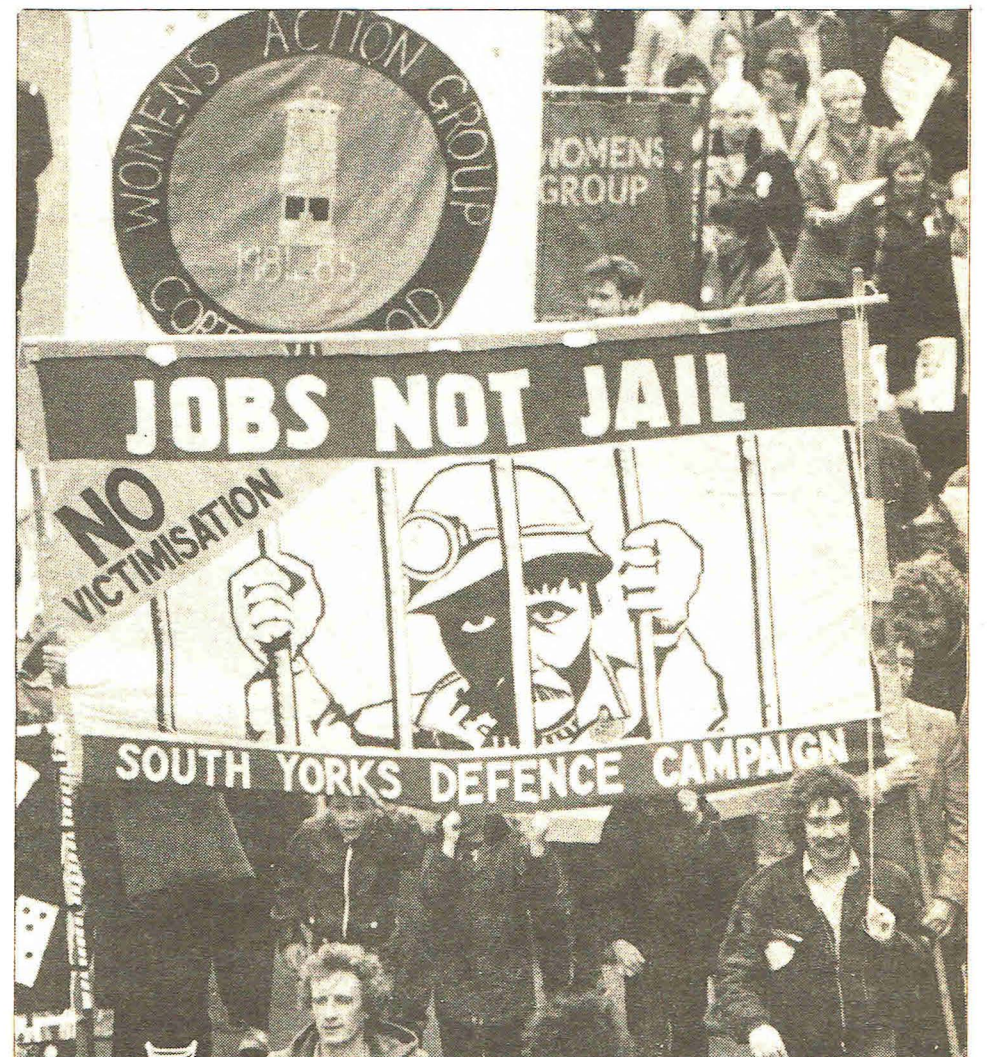
Scargill, Heathfield and McGahey should go to every pit in Notts, approach all lodge committees, go to every branch and speak to each member they reach.

What do you think the prospects are for the union over the next couple of years?

That's the sixty-four thousand dollar question! What I think is going to happen is that you will see a stronger NUM than you had before, but a split Notts union possibly joined by South Derbyshire and Leicestershire, though these themselves will be split. I think there will be another miners' strike within two years.

Jack Taylor (Yorkshire President) has said that he doesn't think the NUM in Yorkshire should use its votes to deselect any MPs. What would you think?

I don't think Jack Taylor is reflecting the views of the rank and file. If any MP didn't support the miners during the strike or only gave half-hearted support, he should be deselected.



What do you consider is the role of the Broad Left and Militant in the NUM?

At the moment there isn't an organised Broad Left in the NUM. We ought to have one to allow the rank and file to get directly involved. We should be campaigning on the continuing fight against

pit closures, explaining to people what the effects of privatisation will be on the Selby coalfield and how new technology will be used to destroy jobs.

We are setting up a Labour Party workplace branch and would like an NUM youth section as well.

A youth conference and youth delegate on the NEC would be a good idea.

Militant can play a big role in the NUM by helping to build Broad Lefts in all the branches and by giving us the answers to questions that we haven't got the answers to already.

Rail workers not intimidated

AT SHIREBROOK, management's attempts to impose Driver Only Operation (DOO) have completely backfired.

On the first day all five ASLEF drivers refused to attend a training class and were sent home. The same is expected to happen every time they try. Some members at the

depot moved coal during the NUM dispute, but these men too are refusing to co-operate.

Just 13 drivers and seven guards are in the so-called 'union' the FPRF and only their drivers are co-operating.

But even the guards in this scab union are embarrassed at their 'col-

leagues' efforts to sell their jobs. Instead of driving a wedge between the men, the arbitrary actions of management are unit working them.

Tony Morgan, Shirebrook NUR spoke to Geoff Bright, Chairman, Tinsley NUR

RAIL MEN have responded magnificently to attempts by management to impose Driver Only Operation.

British Rail Board tactics have been the same as usual: divide and rule, bribes, blackmail and victimisation.

They have offered drivers large cash incentives to sell guards' jobs. They have sent men home at Immingham, Shirebrook and Port Talbot who have refused to co-operate with the trials and the training. Iron ore has even been put into lorries where men have refused to take it to Llanwern by driver only.

These brothers must not be left to fight alone, with only financial support from the unions.

A 24-hour strike of guards must be called to unite the grades in the struggle against Driver Only Operation.

A campaign must be launched to explain to all drivers that they have nothing to gain by selling guards' jobs.

It must convince guards of the fact that any compromise will lead to the elimination of all guard's job.

Every single railway worker must get the message that we are all under threat and only a united struggle can defeat the BRB's plans.

By Bill Esmond
(Nottingham NUR)

Tower Hamlets Council caretakers hit back

SIXTEEN HOURS on the working week for no extra pay! This is the deal Tower Hamlets 'Labour' council in London's East End is trying to enforce on the borough's 160 resident caretakers. Dave Fryatt and Rob Holt of Bethnal Green and Stepney LPYS asked caretaker Julian Farrow about the dispute.

FOURTEEN WEEKS ago the council sent us all copies of new work rotas. They meant an increase in the working week from 39 to 55 hours without any more pay. There were no negotiations with the unions.

Every one of the lads voted to refuse the new rotas. The council then sent us all letters saying we were in breach of contract and were suspended without pay until we accepted them.

They also said they would charge us rent and rates on our council flats which we get free as part of our wages.

The non-resident caretakers refused to cross our picket lines to collect materials and the council then suspended all of them without wages as well.

The dust and tradesmen are not crossing our picket lines, and the local NALGO have been having collections.

If the council get away with this then any other employer could just tell their workers that in 12 weeks time they will have to work every evening for no extra pay.

The lads are really angry with the way they have been treated. If they could get other jobs they would leave.

The council have let us know that any caretaker who leaves will not be replaced. Their behaviour would be shocking from the Tories—from Labour it's really disgusting.

These people are supposed to be trade unionists and socialists. We need to get rid of them. The councils in Lambeth and Liverpool were prepared to fight—that's what we need here.

Coke-works walk-out

ON THURSDAY 11 July, all the mechanics on the 3pm shift at Hawthorn coal washery/coking plant, (County Durham) walked out in protest at the bloody-minded attitude of management.

An engineer and under-manager insisted upon a fitter doing the job of a motor-mechanic on an earth scraper, breaking a 1977 agreement.

All 20-30 men (members of the Durham Mechanics Union) walked out, led by the lodge secretary, elected by "moderates" at the end of the strike to replace the pro-strike secretary.

By Dave Ridley

Skin Prontaprint

MEMBERS OF the NGA at Prontaprint in Liverpool are on strike for trade union recognition.

Management refused negotiating rights to the NGA after six workers joined the union.

Peter Loftus, a printer who had been taking home £60 to £68 a week, well below NGA rates of pay, was made redundant a month after he had joined the union.

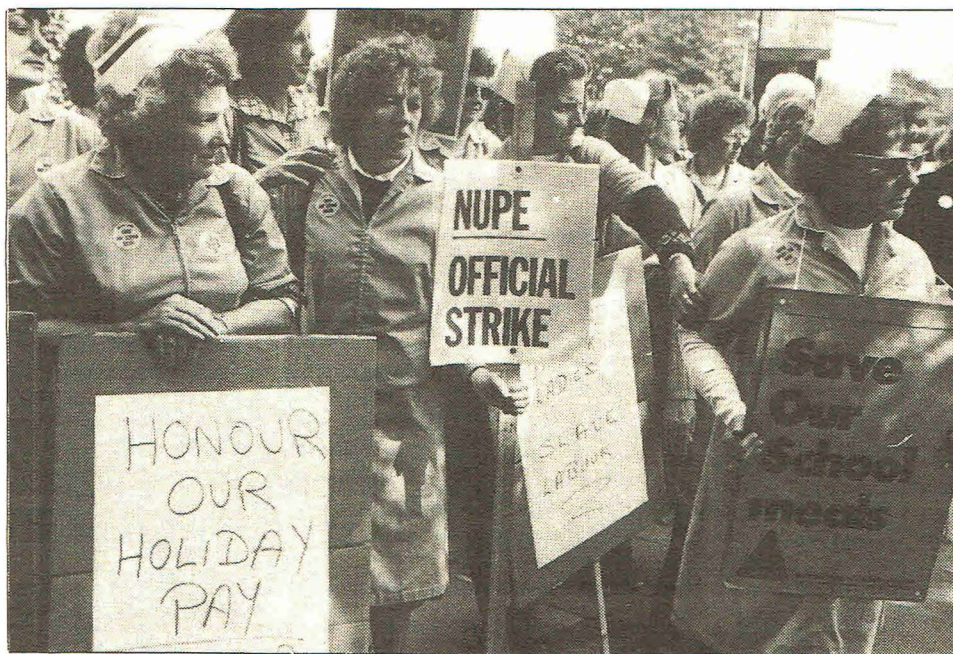
The other printers were offered his wages but all the NGA members, with the

support of the NGA unemployed branch, are setting up picket lines at Prontaprint shops in Liverpool.

A city council worker who passed the picket line suggested the slogan: "Prontaprint will end up skint".

Support the fight for trade union rights by sending donations and messages of support to: Ray Williams, Graphic House, 107 Upper Duke Street, Liverpool 1.

By Annette Moir-Bussy
and Dominic Irwin
(Broadgreen LPYS)



Kent dinner ladies (above) have fought off a series of Tory attacks.

Dinner persons attacked

THREE HUNDRED school dinner ladies in the London Borough of Hillingdon marched angrily on Uxbridge civic centre last week to stop the Tory council making a cut of £30 to £40 in their wages.

Their new contracts would also end payment during school holidays and their right to free school meals.

The Tory council has threatened the 1,000 school meals workers with the sack if they do not sign the new contract by 16 August. The ending of pay during school holidays

will break a national agreement with local councils.

If the Tory council gets away with this they will still only make a 16p profit on each meal.

They seem intent on taking on the council workers, starting with the dinner ladies.

A united response from all Hillingdon council workers is the way to make the council back down.

By Mike Piper
(Uxbridge LPYS)

Fishponds shopfitters

ONE HUNDRED workers at the Parnall Shopfitting factory in Fishponds, Bristol have been on strike a week for a seven per cent wage increase.

Management has offered four and a half per cent. This is the culmination of years of cuts and speed-ups, with the unions estimating wages as £35 below the TUC poverty line.

Management arguments for the cut are unconvincing when they have recently

received a 23 per cent increase!

Management have threatened to sack all the strikers on Wednesday 25 June if they do not return to work.

The mood remains determined despite the union not having made the strike official and calling on other staff for support.

By Comenico Hill
(Bristol West LPYS)

APEX

POLITICAL FUND BALLOT RESULT

IN FAVOUR	39,465	Vote YES for a voice
AGAINST	14,380	

Yes for a voice

Members of the white-collar union APEX voted 39,465 to 14,380 in favour of maintaining their political fund. As a traditionally right wing union representing managers, supervisors as well as computer and clerical staff the result is a big blow for the Tories.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Silentnight demo

THE STRIKE at Silentnight Bedding Company in Barnaldswick, Lancashire, and Sutton, West Yorkshire is now in its sixth week.

Management have broken an agreement over redundancies and refused a rise on basic rates for those on piece work.

After unsuccessful attempts to frighten strikers back to work, including a MacGregor-style advertisement in the local press, management sent out letters threatening to sack over 600 production workers.

At a mass meeting on Sunday, workers voted overwhelmingly to stay out. On Monday only a handful of production workers went in, and the strike at both Barnaldswick in Lancs and Sut-

ton in West Yorks remains solid.

No strikers have yet been sacked. Chairman Tom Clarke has now said he will carry out his threat after sending out more letters on Wednesday 24 July.

On Saturday 27 July a march and demonstration in support of Silentnight strikes will take place at 10am in Victoria Park, Barnaldswick.

Messages of support and donations to: FTAT, Craven-dale branch No 92, c/o Kay Fletcher, 10 Lupton Drive, Barrowford, Nelson, Lancashire.

By Linda Stafford
(Skipton Labour Party)

Wirral privateers chased out

FOUR HUNDRED ancillary workers walked out in protest at the visit of six representatives from private companies all competing for the domestic cleaning services, at Arrowe Park Hospital in the Wirral.

They offered a 50 per cent cut in wages, a reduction in the workforce, and for many

workers a loss of pension, health and safety and holiday rights.

The workers at Arrowe Park held a meeting, in the morning. A large majority decided to put up a picket line to stop the contractors entering the premises.

Unfortunately they crept in through a side entrance.

This proved to be a mistake because 200 angry pickets searched the hospital, found them and chased them out of the grounds, to shouts of "go home" or something similar.

As a result of this action, three of the six companies have pulled out of the deal.

Militant Teacher

Militant Teacher—new issue out in September. Please send in articles by 21 August. Send cash for outstanding issues and new orders. Contact Helen Mullineux, 50 Wellington Gdns, Charlton, London SE7 7PH.

Militant

Italian Communist Party See page 10

Apartheid's iron fist

AROUND THE world, the workers' movement has responded angrily to the latest extreme repression of the South African regime.

Blanket censorship, arrest without warrants, and the removal of any legal responsibility on the police and army for their actions means that the state can literally get away with murder.

The South African state was notorious for its brutality even before these new powers. In the last 11 months 450 people have been killed including the slaughter at Uitenhage and the murder of a 23 year old pregnant woman.

The blacks are fighting for life. In the Ciskei homeland 89% of children are malnourished. Throughout South Africa the consumption of the basic food, maize, has fallen 20%. At school a black child has 1/10 the expenditure of a white. At work the average wage differential is 1:6. A black mine worker gets a basic monthly rate of £87 for 60 hours a week underground.

By Bill Hopwood

Apartheid and capitalism are fused together into one exploitative system. Capitalism exists to make a profit out of the toil and sweat of the working class. Apartheid with its pass laws, reserves of unemployed and desperate blacks in the homelands, and a racially divided working class have produced for South African and world capitalism huge blood soaked profits.

Capitalism will not stand back while apartheid is removed and the workers reclaim the stolen gold of profit.

The continuing struggle of the workers, youth and communities has shaken the Botha regime. They tried but failed to buy off a section of blacks.

The resolution and audacity as the blacks strug-

Photo: Julio Etchart (IFL)



At last weekend's Tolpuddle rally, two South African trade union leaders Matthew Oliphant and Bonile Tuluma called for British workers' solidarity with their struggle.

gle to defend their unions, drive out collaborators, resist rent rises, and to oppose undemocratic laws has shaken the regime.

Botha has been caught between the conflicting pressures of the blacks' resistance and the whites' fear. The declaration of a state of emergency shows the regime's growing lack of confidence.

The ruling class are worried because in spite of the repression the movement gathers strength. Now the spread to Soweto, the storm centre of the 1976 uprising, and the threat of a national miners' strike have pushed them to this gamble.

They hope to intimidate the masses by bringing back memories of the last emergency in 1960, following Sharpeville, which effectively suppressed the trade unions and liberation movement for a decade.

But how the world has changed. The independent black trade unions now have 50,000 members and are growing. The black townships are seething with community, youth, and

womens organisations which have combined to build the United Democratic Front. A leadership has been born in terrible conditions of repression and they are undaunted by the new regulations

Inqaba ya basebenzi, the Marxist voice in the African National Congress, had previously pointed out that massive repression was possible but that it would "further weaken the morale of the ruling class and middle class for it plainly offers no way forward". In contrast, the demoralisation of the mass movement is ruled out.

Workers internationally must stand with their brothers and sisters in struggle in South Africa. The British labour movement has a special role given the major involvement of British capitalism in South Africa.

The fight against apartheid and capitalism can be helped by ending all support for the regime and at the same time giving direct assistance to the heroic struggle of the black unions and youth movement.

See articles P.11

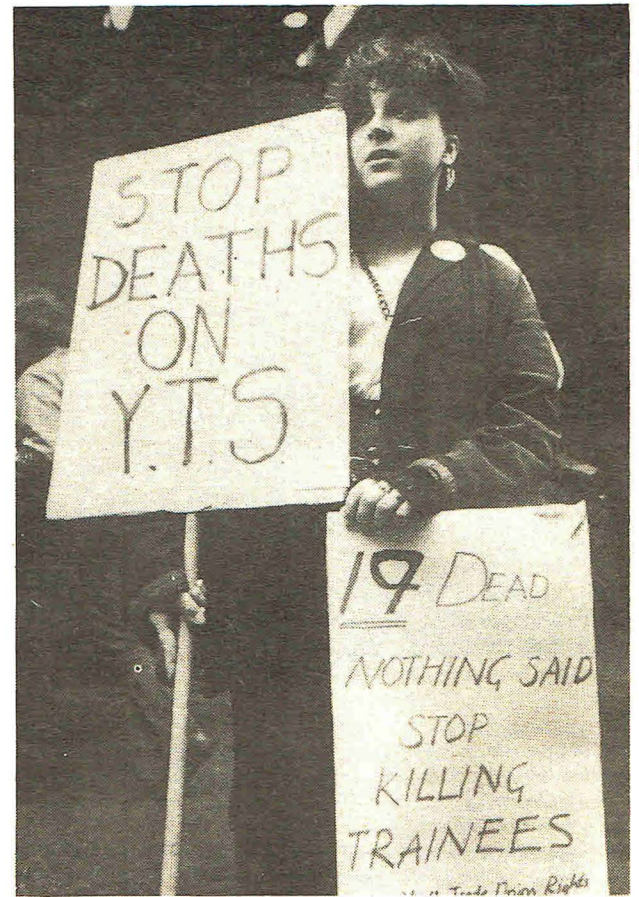


Photo: Militant

Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign protest at YTS deaths.

Death on YTS

THE GRIM total of deaths of teenagers on YTS schemes was increased by one on Wednesday 17 July when Stephen Bourne, a 16 year old, was killed at the William Boulton factory at Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent.

Stephen's body was not discovered until early on Thursday morning. The supervision on this YTS course was so bad that no-one saw Stephen throughout the whole of Wednesday and it may be that he lay dead for nearly 24 hours before being discovered.

It was not unusual for him to work alone. His father told the local press that sometimes no-one except Stephen turned up in his particular section and conse-

quently he had to work alone.

The Manpower Services Commission are to make inquiries into what took place but it is unlikely that anything will be done to prevent this sort of thing happening again. Only the labour and trade union movement can safeguard the lives of young workers.

A campaign to ensure that all Youth Training Schemes are the subject of adequate supervision, the required health and safety provisions and proper trade union control is the only way to stop the tragic deaths such as that of Stephen.

By Dugald McKinnon (Newcastle-under-Lyme)

Expelled by decree

(From page one)

Attercliffe MP, Pat Duffy, has already said that "the party must deal with the enemy within".

Members will be sickened at the way in which five party stalwarts have been summarily dismissed, at a time when the party should be united and bringing new members in, not throwing them out.

There will be waves of protest from around the country at these expulsions. Pressure must be exerted to get them reversed. Send letters and resolutions to Rob Murray, Secretary Attercliffe CLP, 102 Handsworth Road, Sheffield 9.

For more Labour Party news, turn to pages four and five.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)



Part of Monday's protest picket outside South Africa House, London.

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Health hazards

Asbestos and man-made fibres are killers

ASBESTOS CAUSES cancer. This is now widely known amongst workers. Even the asbestos manufacturers have begun to phase it out in most applications.

They are now investing heavily in asbestos substitutes, like glass fibre and rockwool, known as 'man made mineral fibre' (MMM).

But is MMM safe? Rolf Peterson, a Danish doctor and specialist in occupational lung diseases, has shown that it doubles your chance of dying from cancer. His research, initiated by the Danish building workers' union, also showed that exposure to rockwool or mineral wool fibres causes dermatitis, conjunctivitis, and other painful inflammations of the nose, eye, throat and skin.

Cancer

Now, the death rate from cancer as a result of exposure to asbestos may be between 10 and 20 times that of the rest of the population, so you could say that MMM was safer than asbestos. But something that doubles your chances of dying from cancer can hardly be called safe.

Workers in the asbestos industry don't want to die of cancer, and they don't want to lose their jobs either. But they won't be fobbed off with rockwool as a 'safe'

alternative. They are already demanding a proper study of real alternatives.

In Denmark it is quite common for trade unions to have medical or scientific research done at universities. There is even a foundation which supplies funds for this kind of work.

In Britain, universities do research almost entirely sponsored by industry and government. If unions want information about the health hazards of certain materials or the impact of new technology on jobs and skills, they have to do it themselves, or rely on the information supplied or sponsored by the government or the bosses.

The Danish building workers have taken up the issue of mineral wool hazards. The Copenhagen insulation workers' branch is claiming occupational disease compensation for their entire membership. Rockwool hazards have been publicised in the union journal and discussed at branches all over the country.

The Danish government has been obliged to set up a committee to make recommendations on safe working procedures and exposure levels. Community groups have forced local authorities to agree to have glass fibre removed from ceilings and ventilation systems in schools and other public buildings.

Local councils and, particularly, the bosses of the MMM firms and the

building companies have made every attempt to suppress the information about the cancer hazards of mineral fibres. They have tried to discredit Rolf Peterson's work. They have refused to co-operate with the government committee on rockwool, and refused to negotiate with the union.

While he was working on the rockwool project Rolf became a supporter of the Danish Marxist paper *Socialisten*, which has taken up the rockwool campaign.

Facts

Employers usually present the results of scientific research as a series of objective facts, neutral in class terms: at least when the facts support their own arguments. But if the workers find scientific information to back up their own case, it suddenly becomes labelled as 'biased' and 'unreliable'—and so do the doctors or scientists who supplied it. At best it is kept quiet for years.

The dangers of asbestos were definitely established in a 1930 UK government report: but it took the Yorkshire TV programme *Alice: A Fight For Life*, shown in July 1982, to change society's view of the hazards of asbestos in a way no other programme has ever achieved, and to catalyse the most effective series of trade union struggles against the material in Britain.



Research done for trade unions instead of employers can catalyse workers' action, as can the rare unbiased TV programme. Scientific information that backs up the workers' case against the bosses gives everyone much more confidence to fight. But in the final analysis it is the organised strength of the workers which will ensure working conditions that do not threaten our health or our lives.

By Viv Seal



Above: Acre Mill near Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, which suffered widespread asbestos pollution. Right: Worker at Lancaster Moor Hospital without protection against asbestos dust. Below: Asbestos dumped on a rubbish tip in Lambeth.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report II)

Smoking is good for the government

TAXES FROM tobacco sales provide the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the third biggest source of consumer revenue.

In 1981, the total treasury income was £22 billion. This included £11 billion from VAT; £3.6 billion from hydrocarbon oil; and £2.8 billion from tobacco. In other words, the government receives £12.8 million from their tax on tobacco.

Yet the evidence on the dangers of smoking are well-known. The medical profession estimate there are 100,000 avoidable deaths every year in Britain due to cigarette smoking.

Treatment of smoking related diseases costs the NHS £165 million every year and 50 million working days are lost every year. Despite this, successive governments have failed or have been reluctant to inflict serious restrictions on the tobacco industry.

Although cigarette sales have fallen from 137 billion in 1974 to 101 billion in 1983, the tobacco barons remain a powerful economic and political force.

Cigarette advertising was banned from television by the Wilson Labour government in 1965. Since then, the cigarette companies have resorted to alternative methods of



promoting their products on television.

The most obvious is sponsorship. Embassy snooker and darts; Benson and Hedges cricket; John Player and Marlboro racing cars, have all received for their brand names extensive TV and press exposure in excess of what they could expect had they had been paying for it directly.

Mike Daub, a lecturer in community medicine at Edinburgh University has stated that "the tobacco companies get 250 hours

of free TV ads every year—more than they ever got when they were allowed to advertise".

A part of the government's cosmetic opposition to smoking includes the independent Scientific Committee (ISC) which it set up to advise on the health aspects of tobacco.

One of the few positive steps taken by the ISC is to help the tobacco companies promote 'safer' low tar brands.

However, the latest report by the Royal College of Physicians shows that low tar cigarettes have produced an appreciable reduction of the instances of lung cancer, but no significant effect on coronary heart disease caused by smoking.

Link with civil servants

A major factor in the smoking industry is the relationship between the government, the civil service chiefs and the tobacco companies.

Between 1978 and 1982, British and American Tobacco guests' list included 36 civil servants from government departments, including customs and excise, the treasury, department of industry, and the cabinet office.

Sir George Young, probably the first health minister to make any serious attempt to curb smoking

was quickly transferred after pressure from the tobacco lobby.

The former Arts Minister (Norman St John Stevas) was used by BAT to launch their £600,000 Du Maurier music sponsorship, describing such generous patronage as 'particularly gratifying'.

The Trade and Industry department backed the Queen's award for industry to Carreras Rothman and have spent well over £30 million in grants for tobacco factories since 1972.

However, the tobacco industry employs about 29,000 workers. Under the present economic climate, to curb the manufacture of cigarettes, which cause illness, disease and death, would mean throwing thousands onto the dole.

The tobacco industry of course, still exists and continues reaping in the profits. In 1982 Imperial Tobacco made nearly £150 million profit, up 50 per cent on 1981. Rothmans were up from £105 million to £140m and BAT industries made a total of £856 million in 1982.

Interestingly, in the same year BAT also made nearly £5,000 donations to the extreme right wing organisations AIMS (formerly Aims of Industry) and the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), which was established in 1974 by Thatcher and Joseph.

In its 'Declaration of beliefs' the CPS states: "The prevalence of private wealth serves to protect the personal liberties of every member of society".

At present many workers are aware of the dangers of cigarettes but look upon smoking as one of their few pleasures. A socialist society based upon a planned economy, full employment and a shorter working week could ensure that those presently employed in manufacturing cigarettes could be re-employed in more socially useful production.

Equally important, it could ensure greater health care and greater leisure and recreation facilities for working people and their families.

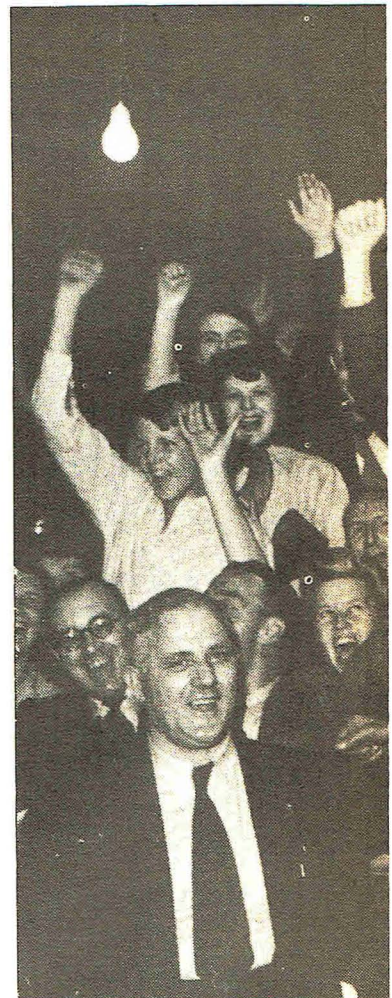
Recent surveys show that many smokers would like to give up permanently. In a socialist society a genuine campaign against smoking could be launched, as part of a democratically run health service, without the pressures of the big tobacco industries.

The sooner the working class relegates capitalism to the ash-tray of history the better.

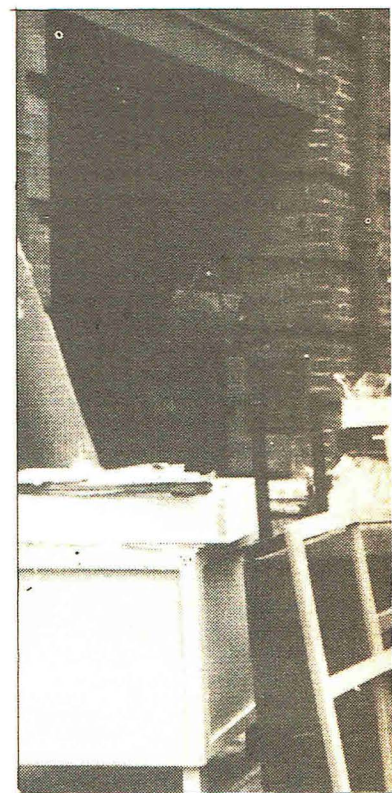
By Stephen Wright
(East Kilbride LPYS)

1945 election victory

Lessons of Labour's landslide



Jubilation in Transport House, Labour a government been elected with such



Homeless families after the war started of Bedford House, Kennington, in Sep

FORTY YEARS ago this month the Labour Party won its biggest ever electoral victory. The generation of workers who had grown up amid the miseries of the thirties was determined that it was time for a change. They gave Labour an overall majority of 146 seats. The anniversary falls at an appropriate time. As the conditions of the thir-

EVEN BEFORE the 1945 election, the Marxist paper *Socialist Appeal* was predicting "this will be one of the most fateful general elections in the history of the British working class...it offers the opportunity for the workers to protest against the horrors that have been brought about by the system of capitalism."

"Two world wars within 25 years, the slumps and depressions, mass unemployment, starvation and want in the midst of the destruction of food; misery and insecurity, the menace of fascism, bad houses, low wages, insanitary conditions, ill health and inadequate food; the oppression and exploitation of hundreds of millions in the colonies. That was the picture of capitalist Britain before the war."

Apart from the wars, little of that would need to be changed to describe Thatcher's Britain today.

The war in fact was a major factor in Labour's triumph. Wartime evacuation of children from inner city areas to the country had brought home to wider layers of the population the extent of deprivation. Conscription into the armed forces brought together workers from all over the country. They discussed politics and were adamant that after all the deaths, injuries and hardships of war, they were not going back to the Britain they had come from. "The men in the armed forces" wrote *Socialist Appeal*, "conscripted to fight in the interests of British imperialism and hardened by their experiences in the Army, Navy and Air Force, have turned overwhelmingly against capitalism and everything it stands for."

Labour's victory was not, however, widely expected, least of all by the party's leaders. Although their manifesto was more radical than any before or since, this was not reflected in the kind of campaign they waged. "The Labour leaders waged the campaign on the basis of presenting themselves as much like the Tory Party as possi-

ble" said *Socialist Appeal*. "Instead of exposing the hollow sham of the Tory pretence to represent the whole nation, by presenting a strong class policy, the Labour leaders vied with the Tories in claiming to be a 'national party' representing no particular class but all sections of the nation."

In his first speech in parliament as Prime Minister, Attlee made an appeal for "the continuation of something of the spirit which won the war, a spirit which did not allow private or sectional interests to obscure the common interests of us all, or the love which we all have for our native land and for our people".

Socialist Appeal continues: "While the masses have gone left, there has been a tremendous swing to the right by the leadership. Over the whole electorate, a mood of apathy prevailed because there was no real struggle, no clearly defined issues." Indeed it was only pressure from the party NEC which forced the leadership to leave the wartime coalition and have an election at all.

Gestapo slur

The Tories campaigned on two main issues—Churchill as the great war leader, and scaremongering about a Labour victory. "No socialist system can be established" broadcast Churchill, "without a political police. They would have to fall back on some kind of Gestapo."

In another broadcast he said that a socialist government would "plan all our lives and tell us exactly where we are to go and what we are to do, and any resistance to their commands will be punished."

As with Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn today, an 'extremist' was discovered—Harold Laski, chairman of the NEC who had campaigned for the end of the coalition, was accused by Churchill of "laying down the law to the leader of the Labour Party".

Yet on policy, the Tories of 1945 differed significantly from those of 1985. They tried to disown their responsibility for the pre-war slump. They took credit for some

ties reappear in Thatcher's eighties, Labour could again be poised for victory. There are rich lessons to be learned from the experience of the 1945-51 government, if the social evils of the eighties are to be permanently eliminated by the next Labour government.

of the social reforms which had already been implemented by the war-time coalition, when war had forced the ruling class to try to alleviate some of the most glaring social evils, in a bid to create 'national unity' behind the war effort.

The introduction of free or subsidised milk in 1940 led to the doubling of milk consumption by the end of the war and infant mortality in 1944 was the lowest on record.

Speaking of what the Tories meant by 'freedom' Lord Woolton said: "I do not mean the old mid-Victorian idea of complete freedom for the employer to do what he likes. The government must set standards of working conditions in factories and shops, standards of social welfare—and, I personally believe, standards of wages—below which employers should not be allowed to operate their works." Compare that with Thatcher's relish for "mid-Victorian ideas".

The Labour leaders in their election speeches reflected the workers mood for change. "We have not fought and suffered in this war," broadcast Sir Stafford Cripps, "to protect the private power of property of the financiers and industrialists, and their ability to exploit the people of this country...private enterprise too often tends to keep down outputs so as to keep up prices, an artificial scarcity is created to maintain profits."

"This election," said Herbert Morrison, "is about who is going to organise the producing power of our country, and how, and to what ends; about whether a great national plan can win the peace as it won the war, or whether the speculators, the barons of Fleet Street, the sluggish leaders of big business monopolies and cartels are to sit comfortably on our backs for another shameful period of national decline."

Such anti-capitalist talk certainly puts in the shade recent speeches of, for example, Roy Hattersley. In words, the party was well to the left of today's leaders. It reflected the urgent pressure coming through the ranks for fundamental change.

Yet they were not putting forward

a programme which would achieve this. Several major industries were to be nationalised, but they were the ones in danger of collapse. The coal industry had already been taken over by the war-time coalition. After the war it was still vital for all other industries as a source of energy.

The urgency to rescue the coal industry was summed up by Ernest Bevin, when he said: "We must give the miners proper conditions, remembering that if they were free to leave the mines many would leave now and the whole coal situation this coming winter would be jeopardised...their conditions in the past have been so bad that thousands of parents in mining districts have but one desire—to ensure that their children never go into the pit. If this continues it will lead to the death of this vital industry, and the nation cannot afford this to happen."

State ownership

The same was true of the railways, gas, electricity and road transport. Without state ownership, they would have collapsed. Hence the ruling class was not so bitterly opposed to their nationalisation. In a speech you would never hear from Thatcher or Lawson, Sir Anthony Eden said: "There are certain enterprises which are by their nature public services. It should be up to Parliament to decide whether enterprises or services of this type should be managed singly or locally under private or state control."

There was nothing in Labour's programme about democratic workers' control and management. The leaders were still thinking in terms of the kind of 'control' of industry by the state which had been operated during the war. "Our industries," said Cripps, "ought to be conducted by fully trained managers and technicians who know their job...The workers, too, must have their full part in *advising upon methods and processes*" (our emphasis).

It was also taken for granted, not even an election issue, that full compensation would be paid to the

former owners of the nationalised industries. While the wealthy owners would be lavishly rewarded for their past incompetence and disregard for their workers' conditions, Bevin was warning the workers: "Even if we win, we shall have hard times before us. To convert industry to peace production with lower wages as a result will be an enormous problem."

These serious flaws in the programme were not enough to prevent the landslide victory. "The general election has resulted in a smashing victory for the working class," wrote *Socialist Appeal*. "Despite the lies, slander and misrepresentation of the Tories and the capitalist press, Churchill and his following have been overwhelmingly defeated." Even in his own constituency where Labour did not put up a candidate, an 'unknown crank' received 10,000 votes, to Churchill's 27,000.

The King's speech included the radical reforms of the election manifesto, but as *Socialist Appeal* warned "reforms such as are proposed in housing, social insurance, education etc can only be granted if the economy of the country is ascending and growing from year to year."

That will be much more the case for a Labour government which comes to power in the late eighties.



at headquarters, when the 1945 election victory is announced—never had an enthusiastic mandate for social change.



occupying empty homes and buildings. Above, families move into Duchess in November 1946. Aneurin Bevan described this as a 'campaign of violence'.

After 1945, helped by loans from America, the British economy did begin to grow, the great post-war boom was beginning and as a result, the 1945 government was able to implement much of its programme. Under the pressure of the working class, it achieved more to improve the lives of working people than all other Labour governments before and since put together.

Welfare state

It nationalised coal, steel, road and rail transport, gas and electricity and the Bank of England. It established the National Health Service and a system of pensions and national assistance. It improved education, housing and town and country planning.

For the next Labour government, coming to power in a recession, the situation will be very different. There is no way such a programme could be carried through now within the confines of capitalism. Gains like these cannot be permanent.

Moreover the success of the 1945-51 government was not achieved without a price, which came to be summed up by the word "austerity". Wages were held down, strikes condemned, taxes were raised, many goods remained

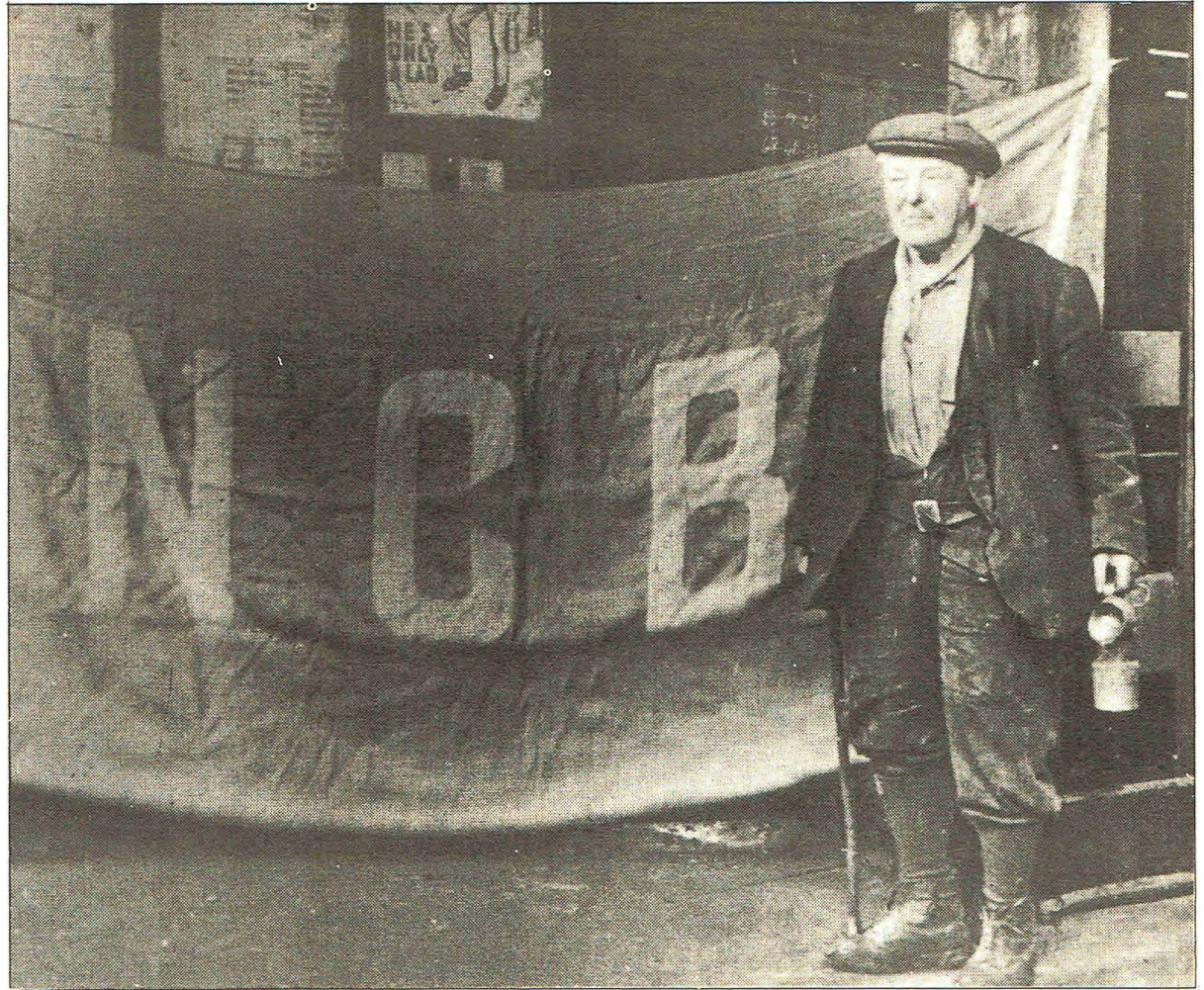
rationed and next to nothing was done to redistribute wealth. As early as September, commenting on speeches by Cripps, Attlee and Morrison, *Socialist Appeal* wrote "had the Tories won the election, they would not have attempted any different policy than that now put forward. It is nothing but a rehashed version of Churchill's toil, tears and sweat speeches. Jam yesterday, jam tomorrow but not jam today."

Labour's first budget in November 1945 was greeted enthusiastically by the Tory press. "The first socialist budget," wrote *The Times*, "showed itself generally sympathetic to business." "A good budget" was the *Daily Mail's* headline.

Socialist Appeal on the other hand commented: "The generosity and solicitude of the Labour government towards big business is in vivid contrast with its harsh and niggardly attitude towards the workers."

The workers were not slow to respond. As early as October 1945, there was a wave of strikes by dockers, building workers, engineers, railwaymen and transport workers.

Workers also moved into action over homelessness. After the demobilisation of the troops, thousands had no homes to go to.



George Short, a miner since 1884, proudly stands by the new 'NCB banner'. Millions thought that Labour's reforms, like coal nationalisation in 1947, would lead to a socialist society.

In the summer of 1946 the homeless began to occupy some of London's luxury flats and hotels, as a protest.

This was described by the minister responsible, Aneurin Bevan, as "a campaign of violence and organised lawlessness". He sent the police to stand guard on other empty capitalist-owned property and instructed the local authorities to cut off supplies of light, heat and water to the squatters.

Nationalisation was confined to those bankrupt basic utilities which had ceased to be profitable but were vital to the private sector. The relationship between the sectors was summed up by Bevan, when he said "we shall have for a long time the light cavalry of private competitive industry".

Less than a quarter of industry's productive capacity had been nationalised. As early as June 1946, Attlee declared that "the government has gone as far left as is consistent with sound reason and the national interest". The boards of the newly nationalised industries were appointed by the government and were overwhelmingly comprised of capitalists and managers. Trade union representation averaged one fifth and these were generally full-time officials in no way accountable to the union's members.

Wage restraint was enforced throughout the period. Although this was supposed to apply to the whole of society, as always with 'incomes policies' within a capitalist society, it was the workers at the bottom of the wages ladder who suffered. The employers were prepared to accept small limits on a policy to keep the workers' wages low.

Redistribution

The same applied to taxation. Despite some increases in top-earners' rates, Cripps reassured them in April 1949: "There is not much further immediate possibility of the redistribution of national income by way of taxation in this Country. . . . We must. . . . moderate the speed of our advances in the extended application of the existing social services to our progressive ability to pay for them by an increase in our national income. Otherwise we shall not be able to avoid retrenching, to an intolerable extent, upon the liberty of spending by the private individual for his own purposes".

Gaitskill, who succeeded Cripps as Chancellor, also showed his concern for the private sector's liberties. He said in 1951: "In an economy three quarters of which is run by private enterprise, it is foolish to ignore the function of profit as an incentive."

Reform was turning to counter-reform. When Labour's programme came up against the 'function of profit' it had to go into reverse.

In April 1951, after Labour had scraped back in the 1950 election, Aneurin Bevan, Harold Wilson and John Freeman resigned in protest at the imposition of prescription charges. They reflected the deep disappointment of many party activists at the direction the government was now taking.

With a single-figure majority, the 1950 government lasted for only 20 months. In the 1951 election Labour achieved its highest ever vote, but the collapse of the Liberal Party let the Tories win a majority of seats.

Labour's record vote is a tribute to the government's achievements. The overwhelming mass of workers stayed loyal to their party. Yet the leaders had failed to make major inroads into the Tory vote as they could easily have done if they had not confined their policies to the limits laid down by the dominant three-quarters of industry which remained in private hands.

That is the main lesson for the Labour Party today, but with one crucial difference. The next Labour government will not come to office at the start of a 30-year economic boom, but in the middle of a recession. Big business will not be prepared to contemplate the kind of reforms carried out by Attlee. They will be baying for the continuation of the counter-reforms of Thatcher.

Even with its draconian cuts and its sale of public companies, the Tory government has failed to bring down public expenditure to the level being demanded by the CBI and the bankers. They will be insisting on further cuts from the next government. What is more, tax revenue from North Sea oil will be starting to decline by then, and the American economy could be leading the capitalist world into a new sharper slump.

Far more than was the case in 1945, the Labour Party will be faced with a stark choice. It can collaborate with the owners of industry and finance in a programme of austerity, or it can remove their

wealth and power by means of an enabling act to give it power to nationalise those big monopolies which control the economy.

Only if it owns and controls the commanding heights of the economy can the next Labour government reverse the economy's collapse and carry out measures to provide jobs and raise living standards for the workers. They will also have to restrict compensation only to those in need and ensure that the nationalised industries are managed by elected representatives of the workers, both within each industry and nationally.

Yet today's leaders are moving further away from such a programme. Neil Kinnock refers to the 'new realities' which will limit the scope of what the next Labour government can achieve. Nationalisation is being abandoned in favour of a 'partnership' between government, unions and industry.

Even the limited measures of state intervention in the economy contained in the Alternative Economic Strategy have been diluted in the Jobs and Industry Campaign. There is little more than vague talk of 'reflation' and the direction of investment to create jobs.

New era

If the 1945 government, with a much bolder programme and far more favourable conditions could not escape from the straitjacket of the capitalist economy, then there is no chance that a Labour government with this sort of programme could now succeed.

The leaders would find even more quickly than Mitterrand in France that any government which stays within the confines of capitalism is forced to do the bidding of those who own the wealth and wield the power, and turn to cuts and wage restraint.

Attlee expressed the mood of 1945 when he said, just after the election, "we are facing a new era. . . . we are on the eve of a great advance of the human race". His government began that advance, only to halt and then retreat. It is up to the ranks of the Party and trade union activists today, especially the young, to hoist again the banner of 1945 around which those young servicemen and workers rallied.

By Pat Craven

Italy

Italian Communist Party loses ground

TWO AND a half million unemployed, a five per cent drop in jobs in industry in 1984, prices rising rapidly, particularly after the 8% devaluation of the Lira this weekend and youth unemployment at over 30 per cent. This is Christian Democratic (Tory) Italy today. A correspondent in Italy examines the effect of this crisis on the workers' movement, in particular the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

You would imagine that in May's local elections the PCI would have increased its vote. Instead there were setbacks for the party in every area.

Since the previous local elections in 1980, they lost 122,000 votes, while the Christian Democrats gained 70,000 and the PSI (Socialist Party) in a coalition government with the Christian Democrats, also gained. Yet in last year's European elections the PCI got more votes than the Christian Democrats for the first time in history.

In 1984 there was also the lowest number of strikes for 20 years, a pattern continued in 1985. In 1969 over 300 million worker hours were lost through strikes and 7,500,000 workers took part in strike action. The figure remained high right up to the mid '70s. Why the change?

In the 1976 election the Communists got 34 per cent of the votes; but instead of using this base to mount a campaign on the problems facing the workers, party leaders came to an agreement with the Christian Democrats. They didn't enter government but they were 'consulted' on policy. In return PCI leaders, through the CGIL (PCI dominated union federation), told workers to sacrifice today to be "better off tomorrow".

Wages battles

This often meant PCI leaders going to mass meetings to stop strike action. This agreement lasted three years and as Natta (PCI secretary) recently admitted: "Even if we didn't have ministers... for the common people we were to all intents and purposes in government."

After three years collaboration with the CDs, the general election in 1979 saw the PCI vote fall to 30 per cent, the first time since 1948 that the PCI had lost votes. The result forced PCI leaders to the left, at least in words. The party no longer stood for the "historic compromise" (government with the Christian Democrats) but for the "democratic alternative" (government without the Christian Democrats, but leaving room for the smaller right-wing parties such as Republicans and Social Democrats).

In 1980 came the big clash. Fiat wanted to sack over 20,000 workers. Workers replied by occupying all Fiat plants for 35 days. Workers from all over Italy went to Turin to help the pickets.

Berlinguer (the late PCI



PCI's late leader Berlinguer.

secretary) called on the workers to fight, saying the PCI would stand behind them, but instead of leading the fight the union leaders, including CGIL leaders, signed an agreement which laid off 24,000 workers; they are still laid off today. The signing of that agreement had a long lasting effect.

The Fiat agreement was used as a model throughout industry. This year, union leaders signed an agreement with Pirelli allowing their plant in Milan to close by 1989. 3,000 workers will lose their jobs. Pirelli bosses are going to open a new factory in another city with just 600 workers, working three shifts, six days a week, and the union leaders presented this agreement as a 'victory'!

It is not just on jobs that these leaders put up no fight, but also on wages. Ever since the war, wages in Italy have been linked to a trade union index ("scala mobile"). Every three months workers' wages go up depending on the rate of inflation. In 1975 an agreement between the unions and the Confindustria (CBI) gave every worker the same increase, whereas before there had been differential increases.

In June 1982 the bosses revoked this agreement, forcing union leaders to renegotiate. Only after three weeks of spontaneous workers' protests did the union leaders call a national demonstration of 500,000 workers where they solemnly swore they would never give in.

Three days later they were already talking with the bosses on cuts in the "scala mobile". In December 1982, while talks were still going on, there were spontaneous strikes, workers set up road blocks, occupied stations and held big demonstrations. On 18 January 1983 hundreds of thousands marched in Milan, Rome and many other cities. Then on 22 January union leaders signed an agreement which effectively cut the "scala mobile" by about 20 per cent.

In Autumn 1983 new negotiations opened on a further cut in the "scala mobile". The union leaders thought they could now talk



The Italian Communist Party, the biggest in the capitalist world, on the march

with the bosses without any opposition from the workers. But in February 1984 the movement suddenly exploded again, with spontaneous strikes in Milan, led by the shop stewards from the city's major factory councils.

Milan's example was followed by the rest of Italy. The workers struck to pressurise their leaders, worried that they would sign another cuts agreement. The CGIL leaders then had to refuse to continue negotiations because of anger in their own ranks.

So the government had to intervene directly by introducing a bill to cut the "scala mobile". Until then the government had never used a bill to fix wage increases, this had always been done through management-union negotiations, with the government counting on trade union leaders to get their proposals accepted.

The massive strike wave which followed again pushed PCI leaders to the left—in words. The strikes were organised by factory councils which had set up area committees. The PCI rank and file was active in these co-ordinating committees so their leaders had to take this into account.

Demands for general strike

The strikes got bigger and bigger. In Turin 80,000 workers demonstrated. The official unions had never managed to get such a large number of workers onto the streets. The CGIL national leadership sat on the fence waiting to see how things would develop. In parliament the PCI MPs backed up the action with "obstructionism". In Italy a bill must be voted on within 60 days of being presented; otherwise it can not be passed. The PCI presented numerous amendments. The 60 days went by and the bill wasn't voted on.

Meanwhile the movement was building up. On 6 March over 5,000 shop stewards from all over Italy met to call for union democracy and a programme against unemployment. With a

Marxist leadership there could have been a move towards a general strike to bring down the government.

Italian unions are split into three organisations, CGIL (Communist-Socialist), CISL (Christian Democratic) and UIL (Socialist, Social Democratic and Republican). The leaders have used this fact to split workers at factory level.

The 6 March conference united shop stewards from all three unions in a common struggle. As workers commented the real split is between all the leaders and their rank and file.

Throughout the strikes was a widespread demand for a general strike, but the lack of an alternative leadership allowed the CGIL leaders to step back. Instead of a general strike there was a Saturday demonstration when over a million workers marched through Rome. The CGIL leaders wanted the demonstration to be a great big safety valve.

The government were by then presenting a second bill. This time the PCI leaders just put up a token opposition and the bill went through.

However the fact that PCI leaders had put up a fight, even though it was due to pressure from below led to a big increase in the PCI vote (33.3%) in the 1984 European elections.

Last summer the PCI leaders organised a campaign to collect signatures to hold a referendum to abolish the bill. The signatures were collected. The bosses' reply was: "if the referendum is held and a majority votes to stop the bill, we will revoke the scala mobile altogether".

This could obviously provoke the workers into action, so the Communist leaders of the CGIL did everything they could to get the referendum called off! They tried to negotiate an "alternative agreement" to the referendum but negotiations failed.

The leaders dared not call off the referendum, which the rank and file of the PCI wanted. But stretching out negotiations right up to the last minute meant there wasn't a campaign. The referendum on 9 June rejected the PCI proposals



Workers will still look to the PCI for a lead

by 54% to 46%.

All this has led to a fall in the credibility of the PCI leaders. The party lost most votes in working class districts, 45,000 in Turin, mainly in the poorer areas where unemployment and lay-offs are high. Workers who have lost jobs or been laid off through union "agreements" gave the PCI a warning "do your job, or we won't vote for you".

Marxism

The PCI leaders pose no alternative policies. They keep asking workers for "sacrifices" to make Italian industry more competitive. They believe in cuts in public spending and where they control local councils just apply the cuts imposed by central government.

A few days before the elections Natta (PCI Secretary) was asked if he totally excluded forming a government with the Christian Democrats. He replied that it wasn't possible now but given certain conditions in the future it could be possible.

When asked, "Is the average Italian citizen better

or worse off than a year ago?" he replied: "Overall I don't think there have been any major changes". Not for him, maybe, but for thousands who lost their jobs 1984 was a disaster.

The week following the elections saw an influx of new members into the PCI and FGCI (Communist Youth). However they are not coming in with blind faith in the leaders, they have a critical approach. These are the first signs of possible open criticism of the party line. Divisions have opened at the top, with already three or four different factions developing.

The PCI workers and youth will learn that compromises with the bosses lead to defeats, whereas struggles, such as last year's over the "scala mobile", lead to victories.

1984 may have been a low year for strikes, but then so was 1965, which was soon followed by the "hot autumn" of 1969. A new "1969" will develop in the not too distant future, but this time the Italian working class will struggle for a Marxist leadership worthy of their fighting traditions.