

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 25p

ISSUE 786 21 February 1986

Inside...

Students fight Fowler



See Page 4

(Militant supporters to meet 12.00, Belvedere Road, Jubilee Gardens 26 February)

No

- ★ Defend party democracy
- ★ Fight the Tories
- ★ Campaign on socialist policies

expulsions

WORKERS everywhere are desperate for an end to Thatcherism. The Tories are openly split as never before, yet Labour's executive is planning a massive new purge and renewed internal conflict for the party.

When 55 per cent of voters do not believe Thatcher over Westland Labour's right want to expel Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn, the president of Liverpool District Labour Party, and up to 20 others.

The chance to fully expose the Tories' record on unemployment and cuts, is being thrown aside because of the Labour right's obsession with *Militant*.

They are too blind to see that it is the bosses and the Tory press, who want Labour to lose the next election, who are the real instigators of this witch-hunt. Thatcher is bragging

By Jeremy Birch

about a third term as Prime Minister and "seeing off Neil Kinnock". A Labour Party split from top to bottom, with mass expulsions, could let her back in again.

The ruling class wants a tame Labour Party with the spectre of *Militant* and socialism exorcised.

Tebbit's backing

In January's *Conservative Newsline* Tebbit "wishes Neil Kinnock the best of luck in purging the extremists from the Labour Party."

Now Labour's misnamed 'Solidarity Group' is threatening to have the Labour whip removed from MPs Terry Fields and Dave Nellist. Yet these two MPs have consistently supported workers in their fight against the Tories.

Thatcher and Tebbit relish the prospect of Labour convulsed by internal warfare. And some of Labour's right wing are prepared to go all the way. Rid the party of *Militant*, then no doubt Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Arthur Scargill. Where will it end?

But Labour workers in Liverpool and throughout the country will be joining the mass lobby of the NEC on 26 February. They will be demanding that their leaders see off Thatcher, not *Militant*.

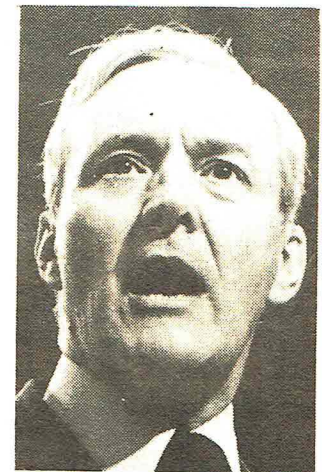
In the firing line

★ Derek Hatton—threatened with expulsion for fighting for jobs and services.



★ Terry Fields—'a workers MP on a workers' wage', the *Daily Express* is calling "for the Labour whip to be withdrawn".

★ Tony Benn—would also be in line for attack, if civil war breaks out in the Labour Party.



Who would be next? Every constituency and union left winger would be under threat of the witch-hunt.



Mass lobby of Labour Party NEC
150 Walworth Rd,
London SE17

Wednesday 26 February,
from 8.15am

Called by Liverpool Broadgreen CLP
Supported by Campaign Group of MPs

Militant rally
No witch-hunt Expel the Tories
Tuesday 25 February, 7.30pm
Doors open 7.00pm

Friends Meeting House,
Euston Road, London NW1
(opposite Euston Station)

Speakers include:

Peter Taaffe Terry Fields MP
Derek Hatton Ted Grant

Militant urges all its readers to help mobilise the largest turnout for these two events.

Defend Labour Pa

THE 26 February meeting of Labour's National Executive will again be taken up with attacks and expulsions against Liverpool and *Militant*.

Labour's right are attempting to take back all the gains won in party democracy. Liverpool, with its Labour Group of Councillors accountable to the District Labour Party, has the most democratic structure in the country.

The right-wing want a national party where their retreats on party policy cannot be challenged.

Kinnock models himself not on any of the founders of the labour movement, but on an

American capitalist politician—President Roosevelt.

But the right's 'new deal' is based on wage controls, no definite renationalisation plans and acceptance of profitability for big business to generate jobs and investment.

In contradistinction *Militant* will stand firm for the implementation of conference policies and for a socialist programme. This is why there is an attack on Marxism—a preemptive strike prior to a general election.

But Labour's ranks will have their say. The witch-hunt will be fought every inch of the way.

'Pat Wall is our choice' say party

THE LATEST attack by Labour's right wing on Pat Wall has outraged local Labour Party members and trade unionists.

They see it not only as a threat to the democratic procedure of re-selection, but also as a personal and political attack on an outstanding socialist and trade unionist.

Wall has been in the Labour party for 36 years. He was secretary of Garston CLP at 16 years of age. He has been an USDAW union branch secretary, helping to build the union at local level in Bradford, and was election agent in 1966 in Market Harborough (for a right wing Labour candidate) and for the last 12 years he has been president of Bradford Trades Council.

It is this record which led Bradford North party members to support his challenge against right wing sitting MP, Ben Ford before the last election.

Wall defeated him twice, the second time by 49 votes to 12. Ford then stood as independent Labour and split the Labour vote allowing the Tory to win. Ford has since joined the SDP.

Now Bradford North Labour party have selected Pat Wall again in a scrupulously fair selection organised and overseen by the regional Labour party organiser. But individuals like Ken Cure and Gwyneth Dunwoody see fit to question this decision and called for Wall to be interviewed about his suitability to be a candidate.

No one questioned his suitability to do all the dogsbody jobs in the party, but now he has pledged to live on a worker's wage as a worker's MP and has challenged the privileges and perks of MPs. So he has to be questioned about his

suitability.

Bradford North will back Pat Wall all the way. He has been selected three times now and if necessary the local party will wage a national campaign to force the NEC to endorse him.

Labour movement organisations in Bradford North have reacted quickly to the decision by Labour's national executive sub-committee not to endorse Pat Wall as parliamentary candidate.

Baildon ward voted unanimously at its annual general meeting to condemn the move. The resolution was sent to the District Labour Party and passed with only one abstention. TGWU 9/8 branch passed the same resolution despite the fact that they originally backed a different candidate. Similar resolutions have also been passed by the Young Socialists' branch, Bolton Ward Labour Party, Bradford Trades Council executive, ASTMS 199 branch, Bradford and Leeds University Labour Clubs, Shipley Women's section and UCATT Bradford builders' branch (which sent it to the regional party conference as an emergency resolution).

Hundreds of people have signed a petition backing Wall, including Euro MP Barry Seal who was runner up in the selection.

A public meeting is planned for Tuesday 25, at 7.30pm at the Metropole Hotel, Sunbridge Road, Bradford. Pat Wall will be speaking. It is hoped to take a bus-load to the lobby of the NEC the following morning.

A lobby is also being planned at the Yorkshire regional party conference on Saturday 1 March and there will be an anti witch-hunt meeting at lunchtime.

By Bill Reid



Eddie Loyden MP, Terry Harrison and Councillor Tony Mulhearn at the start of the Liverpool enquiry. Photo: Dave Sinclair

Intimidatory tactics by inquiry

AS PROOF of the fact that the right wing have a hit-list for expulsions, the inquiry into Liverpool DLP last week interviewed a number of well-known *Militant* supporters even though, in some cases, they had not been delegates or in attendance at DLP meetings for years.

The letter of invitation specifically said that they would be presented with "evidence" upon which they would be invited to comment. There was no such "evidence", merely another series of ludicrous allegations and a general interrogation designed to probe the support for *Militant's* ideas, and provide the pretext for expulsions.

It was like a police inquiry, with NEC members saying: "we have been told", or, "it has been alleged..." and, "we

believe it is the case that...". The only 'evidence' produced were lying articles from the *Wirral Globe* and Murdoch's *Sunday Times*.

When those before the panel asked for documentary evidence of allegations or what the purpose of a question was, they were sharply put down with, "Are you refusing to answer our question?"

Some party members with decades of unstinting work behind them were bullied and browbeaten in the most disgraceful manner. So intimidatory was the tone at times that one of the inquiry team, Audrey Wise, dissociated herself from the questions. Cathy Wilson, 12 years a party member and several times a parliamentary candidate left in tears after she was repeatedly, and falsely accused of being a *Militant* "full-

timer".

If they had been present, the overwhelming majority of party members would have been appalled at the disgraceful, often insulting tone of the questions directed at decent socialists. It begs the question as to how left wingers like Audrey Wise can remain on the inquiry. In the Philippines, when Marcos was blatantly rigging the election; 20 brave women walked out of the count as a public demonstration that it was fixed. Faced with an investigation degenerating into a McCarthyite inquisition, left-wingers on the inquiry panel should have done the same.

By Richard Venton

Hatton, Mulhearn backed

THE NETHERLEY branch of the Labour Party in Liverpool, where Derek Hatton is councillor, has unanimously voted not to accept his expulsion and will continue to recognise him as their councillor.

Equally Tony Mulhearn's Valley branch of the party has voted not to recognise his expulsion—again unanimously.

Dozens of labour movement organisations around the country are continuing to pass resolutions against the witch-hunt and the inquiry into Liverpool Labour Party.

Bates NUM at Blyth, which has successfully won a reprieve against closure, passed a resolution "deploring the suspension of Liverpool District Labour Party and urges its reinstatement with full powers without delay".

No-one in the meeting voted against and one member from the floor said: "It's time we had people like that, getting stuck into the Tories who've had

too much of their own way".

NUM branches at Arnthorpe and Hatfield Main have also passed resolutions.

A total of 100 Constituency Labour Parties, 4 District Labour Parties, 65 trade union organisations, 15 Women's Sections, over 100 ward Labour Parties, 107 LPYS branches and nine Labour Clubs have passed resolutions against the witch-hunt, and the inquiry.

The latest include: London: TGWU 1/482, Norwood CLP, Harrow UCATT. Scotland: Rosyth Docks EETPU branch, Kelty Labour Party, Kelty LPYS, Edinburgh East, Glasgow Central and Glasgow Pollok CLPs, GMBATU Leven Boilermakers' branch, AUEW Piton Edinburgh, FBU Scottish Region. North West: Chorlton, Stockport, Ashton, Macclesfield NW Labour Parties. Yorkshire: Keighley CLP, AUEW Bradford DC, Hull No 12, EETPU Hull (Plumbers), GMBATU Hull No 1. East Midlands: Nottingham East, Derby North and Nottingham North CLPs. Eastern: Basildon CLP, GMBATU Cambridge No 2.

THE LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party has a vacancy for a short-term appointment leading up to the general election for an Organising Assistant working with the North West Regional Office with special responsibility for organising within the Merseyside area.

Terms and conditions will be as for full time agents. Salary range £8,900 - £10,225 p.a.

Application forms are available from:-
The Administrative and Personnel Officer,
The Labour Party,
150 Walworth Road, London, SE17 1JT.
Tel. 703 1064 (01 for London calls)

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS JANUARY 30, 1986

The Labour Party has two vacancies in its Organising Directorate.

Secretary to the Head of the Election and Training Department. Salary range £8,260 - £9,145 p.a.

Senior Shorthand/audio typist to work in the Election Training Department. Experience in word processing willingness to learn. Salary range £7,365 - £8,455

Application forms are available from:-
The Administrative and Personnel Officer,

Advert in *Labour Weekly* for post in Merseyside area indicates that Labour's NEC has already decided to re-organise the Liverpool party before the result of the inquiry. Merseyside is not at present a separate area, but is part of the North West region.



Pat Wall in 1983 election campaign.

Party democracy



Labour Movement conference in 1982 attended by over 2,000 delegates to oppose the threatened expulsions of the five *Militant* Editorial Board members.

Fields and Nellist resist PLP attack

LABOUR MPS Terry Fields and Dave Nellist have reacted angrily to reports that the right wing Solidarity Group is pushing to have them excluded from the Parliamentary Labour Party. "We have always defended party policy in parliament and outside," they argue, "on the other hand examples can be found where Solidarity members have voted against party policy but no

action was taken against them."

Both MPs have been reselected by their local parties and endorsed by the NEC. Any witch-hunt against them will be met with anger in their constituencies and throughout the party.

The two MPs will both be on the lobby of the NEC on 26 February and are urging all other MPs and party members to turn up.

Delegate expelled

IN A blow to the right wing, Councillor Paul Green, who has been expelled from Sheffield Attercliffe Labour Party, has been elected to lead the AUEW's delegation at Yorkshire's regional Labour Party conference.

This support reflects the real feelings of the rank and file in Yorkshire in defying the democratic actions of the

NEC. It also adds pressure on Blunkett to readmit Green to the Labour Group.

A Sheffield Campaign Against Witch-hunts has been set-up, with literature, leaflets and speakers available by contacting Brian Salisbury, 90 Woodhouse Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire.

SNP cash in on Liverpool's glory

THE VOTE winning potential of Liverpool council's campaigning strategy wasn't lost on the Scottish National Party in a recent council by-election in Muirhouse, Motherwell.

SNP canvassers opportunistically tried to claim that their candidate would consider the 'Liverpool option' if elected as the only way of combatting Thatcher and the Tories.

In the event Labour won the seat with 1,106 votes

despite the fact that the Labour controlled District Council had announced rent increases of £1.18 (at 10.8 per cent, nearly twice the rate of inflation).

The Tories were humiliated into fifth place with only 67 votes, three per cent of the vote, and were beaten by the Communist Party with 71 votes.

By Colin Fox
(Muirhouse branch Labour Party)

What Militant stands for:

- ★ A 35 hour week without loss of pay.
- ★ A minimum wage of £120 per week.
- ★ A guaranteed job for every school and college leaver.
- ★ Reversal of all Tory cuts, and a massive programme of public works employing the unemployed on housing, education, health etc.

- ★ Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, banks and insurance companies under workers' control and management, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need only.
- ★ A majority Labour government committed to Clause 4 Part 4 of the party's constitution.

Teacher rep for shipyard

OFFICIALS OF the General and Municipal Workers' Union have been active in Wallsend recently.

They have blocked five of their delegates to the constituency Labour Party. Now shipyard workers at Swan Hunters are to be represented by a retired school teacher and workers at Commercial Plastics branch will be represented by a union official and an unemployed local historian.

Union regional political officer Bill Flanagan informed the party that eight of the union's delegates were to be changed, for acting, as he told the local press, "against the best interests of this union".

"The delegates from this union to the General committee are vetted by the Regional Committee," he said.

Local MP Ted Garrett is due for reselection and it is widely thought that the GMBATU wants its own nominee for the seat.

The new delegation has meant that the right wing have gained control at the party's annual general meeting.

These undemocratic manoeuvres followed the defeat of a witch-hunting motion put to the general committee in November which was proposed by the GMBATU.

A *Militant* leaflet was

distributed to Swan Hunters workers explaining what GMBATU officials had done in their name. The now right wing controlled Wallsend Party is demanding an inquiry into *Militant* as a result of the leaflet.

Also in **Sunderland South**, where left winger Chris Mullin is parliamentary candidate, the right have regained control. After their success one right winger complained to the local paper, "I suppose we are stuck with Chris Mullin, unless he decides to withdraw, which we can always hope."

By Bob Stothard

Exeter success

RECENT SUCCESSES in resorting to the courts to seek justice against the expulsions of Marxists from the Labour Party has started a trend which is being picked up by others on the left.

Three supporters of *Devon Labour Briefing* have also won an injunction against their proposed expulsion by Exeter Labour Party. An emergency general management committee meeting of the party, held on 7 February was adjourned

Sell Militant

MILITANT HAS announced a special sales' drive from February 26th, to March 5th. Sellers throughout the country are making plans to take advantage of the paper's media attention, with mass estate sales on the evening of the 26th. This will then be followed up over the next few days with additional street sales and workplace sales.

The new sales leaflet and the new sales letter are being used. Whatever else happens on 26 February, the paper campaign will see a bumper *Militant* sale.

when the high court injunction was served.

The temporary injunction prevented any discussion or disciplinary action against the three, Neil Todd, Peter Baring and Paul Giblin. They criticised the local party's coalition on the council with the Liberals and the right-wing drift of the national party leadership.

Emergency resolutions condemning the moves have been received from three wards and affiliated organisations as well as letters from the young socialists' branch. A successful meeting was held to oppose the witch-hunt.

By David Oatly

Ipswich—local purge prevented

ATTEMPTS BY right wing Labour Party branches to expel Marxists through a series of 'local purges' have been dealt a new blow.

Two Marxists and long-standing Labour Party members, Teresa and Roger MacKay have won their fight against expulsion by the right wing Ipswich party executive by seeking justice through the High Court (See *Militant* 785). The MacKays' is the first case where legal aid has been granted, so any continued legal action by the party would be costly.

This follows the successful High Court injunction granted to ten *Militant* supporters in Stevenage to halt their expulsion from the party.

It is a sorry comment on the right wing that there is more justice in the capitalist courts than in the labour movement under their domination.

The solicitor acting on the MacKays' behalf, sent a letter to the Secretary/Agent informing him that the EC had failed to comply with both the Labour Party rules as well as the rules of natural justice. He said the MacKays' had not been afforded the proper opportunity to know the charges against them or to be heard.

The first letter sent to them by the Secretary/Agent—invited them both for a "chat" about their alleged involvement in a *Militant* public meeting on Liverpool on 14 October.

The "chat" turned out to be more of an interrogation with a series of prepared questions being put to them.

Throughout the whole affair, the party's general management committee had never made a decision to investigate the MacKays. In fact, at the previous GMC a resolution had been passed opposing expulsions.

A resolution was proposed by the executive from a report by party officers based on the MacKays' interview. The only 'evidence' was from a letter sent by a party member known only to the executive.

The MacKays' solicitor sent a letter to the Secretary/Agent asking the executive to rescind its motion on the GMC agenda. He warned them that if they did not he would seek an order from the High Court as the officers of the party had acted as investigators, prosecutors and judges.

The executive refused to comply and the High Court judge ordered the Ipswich CLP to drop all disciplinary action.

The officers reported they would be seeking legal advice but to date neither the MacKays nor their solicitor have heard anything.

Hopefully, this will be the end of the affair. The leadership of the Ipswich CLP has always prided itself on being a law-abiding moderate party—let's see how they will act now.

Socialism beats Alliance

SOCIALIST POLICIES win elections. That is the message from Coventry's recent council by-election won by Labour's Phil Holifield in the Binley and Willenhall ward, where *Militant* supporters hold leading positions.

The SDP/Liberal Alliance thought they had the ball rolling after winning their first seat for 60 years last November, and on the eve of poll put out leaflets proclaiming a historic victory.

Labour's campaign had already been hampered by the anti-*Militant* publicity and by the ruling right wing on the city's District Labour Party which refused to recognise Holifield as a suitable candidate using the excuse that he had a "lack of knowledge" of local government.

But despite the confusion this undoubtedly caused, and a low turn-out, Labour won with 1,268 votes (47 per cent), to 937 for the SDP (35 per cent) and 563 for the

Tories (17 per cent). The Ecology Party managed 42 votes (1 per cent) and look set to push the Tories into fourth place in future.

The Tory vote collapsed to a third of what it was in 1984 and Alliance canvassers used the crudest red-scare smears to try to frighten Labour voters. They have had their answer.

Despite the atrocious weather, two public meetings were held and every house received three campaign leaflets from Labour.

Far from keeping our heads down and relying on hatred of Thatcher to win the seat for us, we took our campaign to the doorsteps. 400 to 500 posters went up for the Labour candidate, about 15 young people expressed an interest in the LPYS and a further 40 are potential members for the Labour Party.

by Pete McNally
(Binley and Willenhall Labour Party)

NO to Fowler YES to a living wage

ON WEDNESDAY 12 February, hundreds of students lobbied Parliament against the Fowler review of social security payments.

Within two years, this will mean savage all-year round cuts in the benefits which make student life endurable. It will immediately mean big cuts in student living standards.

The lobby was the opening shot in the National Union of Students (NUS) national campaign to defeat Fowler; it followed on the successful day of local action on 24 January. Incredibly though the NUS leaders invited representatives of the SDP/Liberal Alliance including David Owen to speak at the main meeting in Westminster.

Clement Freud, standing in for Steel, used the opportunity to attack the motion (right) put down by Dave Nellist MP. Freud complained that many low-paid workers would oppose the idea of a living grant for all students.

Freud's slip

He scoffed at the idea of a grant for 52 weeks of the year based on two-thirds of average earnings. But Clement then made a Freudian slip: he explained that this would mean a grant of £6,000 and he was applauded by many of the students.

What Freud was afraid of was that low-paid workers would desert their work and turn back to full-time education. This option is at present denied them by educa-

tion cuts and appallingly low student grants.

In the overspill meeting Heiko Khoo from Portsmouth Polytechnic won loud applause when he outlined their plans to fight Fowler. Many students approached him after the meeting asking for further information.

The highlight was Neil Kinnock's speech which gave a clear commitment not only to introduce a minimum grant for FE students but to restore the level of student grants to its 1978/79 level. This would mean a 20-25 per cent immediate increase.

Labour students must campaign to make sure this commitment is not scuppered by the right wing as "impossibilism". It must become a prominent part of Labour's manifesto in the run-up to the general election.

However, even in 1979, grants were totally inadequate—particularly for workers wanting to return to education. As well as Kinnock's promises, the demands in Dave Nellist's motion must become part of Labour's education programme.



London students demonstrate against Fowler on 24 January.

Dave Nellist's proposals

THIS HOUSE notes with alarm the increasing attacks being made by the government on students' standards of living, recognises the anger of students over these attacks and welcomes their increasing mobilisation through NUS.

Calls on the government to withdraw immediately the Social Security Bill which attacks the welfare of students and to instead immediately honour the NUS grant claim of a 17 per cent increase to the present maximum grant rate and a £35 a week minimum grant for all students.

Demands the government urgently reviews financial support of students with the aim of taking them out of the benefit system, and instead, providing a 'living' grant for all students throughout the year based around two-thirds of average earnings, and making future increases linked to a student cost of living index based on student needs.

We believe that there is an urgent need to co-ordinate a broad-based campaign, approaching the local government unions and civil service unions both locally and nationally to formulate a strategy of joint action to defeat the government's attacks on the welfare state and on students in particular. The DHSS staff in particular have the power to prevent the Fowler bill being implemented.

Joint strike action and a shut-down of all colleges could be co-ordinated, this could draw in the unemployed, pensioners and the 7.8 million people affected by changes to housing benefit eligibility, to a massive campaign to force a general election in defence of the welfare state.

YOUNG PEOPLE in lodgings are living in fear of the hated board and lodging rules that have now been re-introduced by the government.

Despite this aspect of the Fowler Report being ruled illegal in the courts, a few minor amendments mean that it is to have as devastating an effect as before.

Lynn and Kevin take in lodgers. They explained: "The young people who are affected will have to be constantly on the move. The maximum in one place is two weeks by the sea, four weeks in towns, and eight weeks in cities.

"Some DHSS areas are very large. From Basildon a person would have to move to London, Kent and Sussex before being able to return after the stipulated six months. Human rights are being infringed, it would be impossible to carry many personal possessions, or to form relationships. The right to vote would be lost, it would be difficult to find work, and it would be impossible to maintain a regular doctor."

A couple who have been threatened by the new rules have spoken out. Dave and his girlfriend Lynne are in lodgings. Dave explained,

Tarzan refuses

ON THE day of the student lobby Dave Nellist MP had tabled a motion in Parliament calling for students to be given a decent standard of living. Portsmouth Poly reproduced this motion and handed it out as a leaflet for lobbying students.

The leaflets had a tremendous impact (see article left). By the end of the day, 40 Labour MPs had signed their support.

Dave Nellist himself was speaking at a meeting in another room and told me: "I asked the students how many had considered themselves Labour voters. It was interesting that the majority were actually Tory or SDP."

"Yet at the same time they were puzzled that no Tory or



Dave Nellist

Alliance MP would support my motion. I particularly remember one student from Henley-on-Thames, not a working class area by any means!

"Her local MP was none other than Michael Heseltine, who at the previous weekend had been proclaiming 'caring capitalism'. She couldn't understand why he refused to see her!"

Tories tell youth: keep moving



The alternative to Fowler? Unemployed youth living in a derelict house in Barnsley and paying £20 a week rent.

"I left my previous job for another one but unfortunately it didn't work out and I have been on the dole ever since.

Frightening

"Just after signing on I received a letter saying that I only had four weeks benefit remaining for my lodgings. I immediately complained to the DHSS and discovered that I was exempt because I was living in the same accommodation as when I was

working.

"They are trying to frighten people. If I had given in I would have had to return home and to split up with Lynne. If you are on a housing waiting list you will lose your place. The time limit for moving is insufficient, from experience I know it can take two to three months to find lodgings."

The DHSS are not even checking to find out if lodgers are exempt from the official rules. Some young people will be intimidated in-

to moving unnecessarily. For many there is no choice but to sleep rough; many could turn to crime.

Basildon LPYS have produced a local information bulletin to expose the realities of the Fowler Report. The whole labour and trade union movement must launch a vigorous offensive to throw out the Fowler Report and the Tories.

By John McKay, Basildon.

Photo: Philip Gordon (Reflex)

BLOC

BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

1986 Conference

19 April, 11am
Sheffield City Hall
Tony Benn
main speaker

For details contact:
Mick Barwood, 1 Earlswood
Close, Horsham,
West Sussex, RH13 6DB

Thatcher's war on wages

YOUNG WORKERS, students and unemployed have never faced a less sympathetic government than Thatcher's.

Dave Nellist Labour MP for Coventry South East attacked the government's plans to abolish the Wages Councils in a speech in parliament last week, knocking down their crazy idea that this would create new jobs for youth. We reprint extracts below.

SINCE 1979 when the Prime Minister walked into 10 Downing Street, school leavers' wages have fallen relative to adult wages, by 12 per cent for boys and 13 per cent for girls. During the same period, youth unemployment has trebled.

Youth wages have been driven down, but jobs have not been created. Yet the government say that young people must be priced into jobs, and that if only they would accept low wages, employers would recruit them rather than skilled adults.

Job substitution

The Department of Employment statistics show that eight out of 10 jobs, which were supposedly created by the young workers' scheme and other forms of subsidy and wage cutting, are job substitution. Older workers are being driven out of jobs. The government are merely shifting unemployment up and down the age spectrum and around the country. No real new jobs are being created.

The wages councils have existed for 75 years. About 500,000 workers will be affected by the fact that wages councils are no longer to apply to those aged under 21.

SEVERAL TORY members, especially the hon. Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean), mentioned the Henry Neuberger story about 8,000 jobs being created within five years if wages councils were substantially reformed.

What do 8,000 jobs in five years mean? They mean 2.2 jobs per year per constituency. More than 7,000 people are unemployed in my constituency. Are the government saying that I must tell about 2,500 young workers in my constituency

The rates of pay range from £32 for 16-year-olds to £78 for 21-year-olds.

I have received dozens of letters from young workers, mainly young women, since I introduced a national minimum wage Bill which called—in today's money—for £120 for a 35-hour week as a national minimum wage, below which no 18-year-old should be allowed to fall.

A lass in Hounslow in Middlesex who is a dental assistant wrote:

"My boss says he can't afford to give me a rise, which I think is stupid—he has a Rolls Royce. Last year I said to him I was looking for another job. He said 'OK! Find another job then. There's 3,000 people on the dole in this area. I can easily get another little junior.'"

That show how wages have been driven down, and how employers, encouraged by the government, use mass unemployment to cow workers and their trade union organisations into accepting poor working conditions.

A 19-year-old office worker in Wolverhampton wrote:

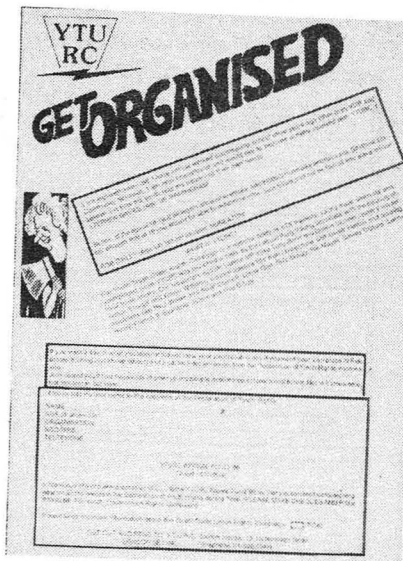
"When I was doing my training, I was on £30 a week. Now I'm kept on permanently, I get £32.50 a week. As I am 19, I do not think that this is a good wage. I will not

that they must accept wage cuts to create 2.2 new jobs a year.

If the position were not so serious, that would be ridiculous and laughable.

THE GOVERNMENT are doing nothing for youth unemployment. Last year, 517,000 youngsters left school to chase 12,355 vacancies. The chances of a school leaver getting a job in England is 39 to one.

In Wales the chance is 129 to one and in Scotland 144 to one. There were 51 careers offices without one



YOUTH TRADE Union Rights Campaign are campaigning for a better deal for school leavers. Declarations are available from YTURC, Caxton House, 13/16 Borough Road, London SE1 0AL. Send a large stamped addressed envelope.

ask for a pay rise as they will only give me the sack."

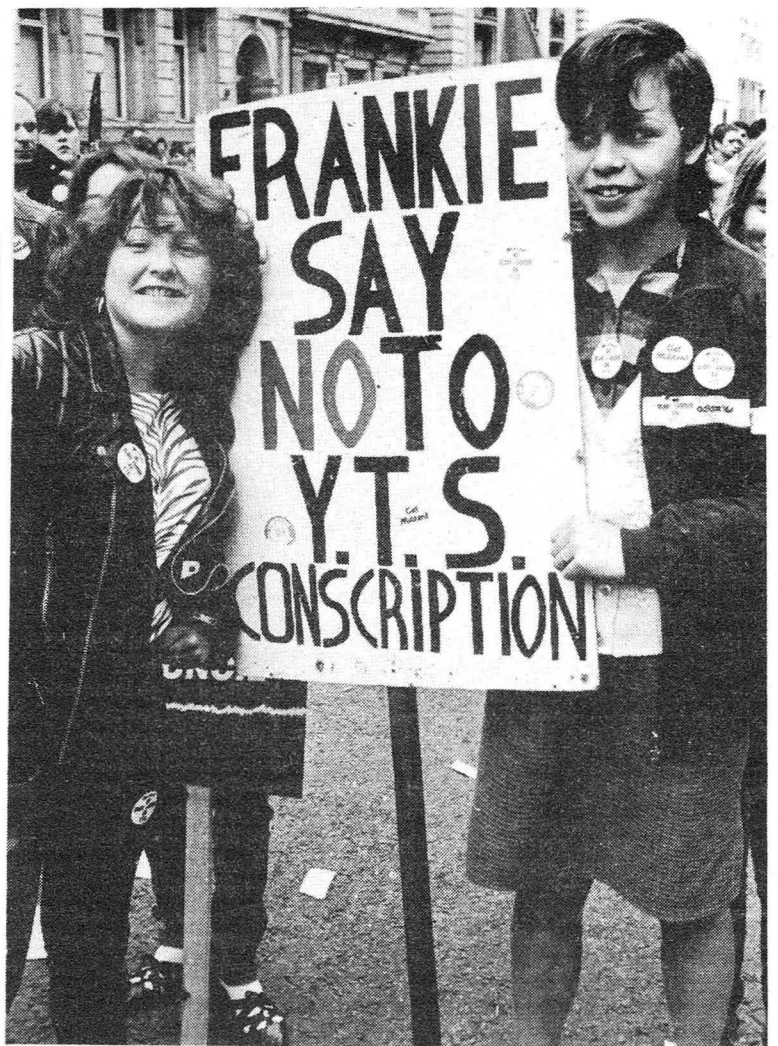
The fear of unemployment is used to keep young workers on poverty wages. A 17 year old office worker in York tells me that she is nearly 18 and is receiving take-home pay of £41 a week.

She attends night classes twice a week on her own accord, and works hard because she realises that that is the only way to get on. At 18 she should be entitled to a good rise, but she was disgusted to find out that £65.70 a week was the amount to which she was legally entitled.

She doubts if she could even get an increase to that level. All she wants to be content is to go home after a good day's work, having earned a decent wage for that day's work. If the measure is passed, there will be no contentment for 500,000 workers.

vacancy. A further 36 careers offices had only one job each to offer.

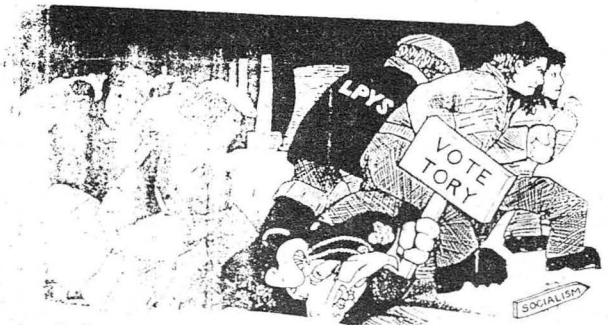
How will cutting the wages of kids on £35, £40 or £45 a week increase the jobs on offer in careers offices? To get those jobs, the first thing that we must do is get rid of those on the Treasury Bench and ensure the return of a Labour government prepared to take the economy into public ownership, plan the economy and give the workers rights and a say in how that economy is run.



School students on strike last spring for a better future. Real jobs, not YTS or slave wage occupations.

Yorkshire YS march for jobs

YOUTH MARCH FOR A FUTURE



The local charter

"WE ARE marching for a future!" With these words at the LPYS Yorkshire conference, Neil Ward explained why he and 30 other Young Socialists from all over Yorkshire and Humberside are marching 300 miles to attend the LPYS National Conference in Bournemouth (29-31 March).

The Yorkshire 'Youth March for Jobs' will pass through some of the major cities in England. In each of these we hope to stage public meetings, rallies, demonstrations, lobbies or concerts and gigs.

Sponsors needed

The march has been organised to expose the conditions facing young people under the Tories. The march will be used to generate support amongst young people for the return of a Labour government at the earliest possible moment. So, the march will highlight Labour's Youth Charter; also a local Youth March 'Charter for a Change' has been produced. That draws attention to the YTS, low pay, the hous-

ing shortage and the Fowler Review.

We hope to march as representatives of the local labour movement. Factories, workplaces, offices, Labour Parties, trade union officials and MPs are all being approached to support the march. The YS are drawing up a list of campaign sponsors.

In 1922, members of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, who organised the famous hunger marches, swore a common oath.

"... Further, realising that only by the abolition of the hideous capitalist system can the horror of unemployment be removed from our midst, I here and now take upon myself a binding oath to never cease from active strife against this system until capitalism is abolished and our country and all its resources truly belong to the people".

We hope to follow in the proud tradition of the NUWM.

By Ray Duffill
(Hull)

Press hypocrisy on schools racism

LAST WEEK an incident at University Community Comprehensive School in Edge Hill, Liverpool got widespread coverage in the national gutter press.

The Sun and the Star on 13 February had headlines: "Whites flee school of fear" and "school of race hate" respectively. They alleged that white pupils had been victimised and beaten up by black students at school, as a result of which 10 pupils had been forced to stay at home. In reality, a relatively minor incident has been blown up out of all proportion.

Since Labour took control of the city council, part of the "education for all" programme has been the reorganisation of secondary schools in Liverpool into 17 community schools. University School comprises Blackburn House girls school and the Institute for Boys, both former grammar schools, and Paddington Comprehensive.

In general the merger programme has worked successfully, increasing the general standard of education. However as could be expected, there is some animosity initially as a result of the old

'rivalries' between different schools. This has tended to take a racial form. It has been widely accepted that pupils from all the former schools were involved in the incident.

The press coverage has been hypocritical. As in many other areas racial attacks on black pupils have been commonplace in Liverpool; many black school students have been driven out of other schools and never mentioned in the press let alone given banner headlines.

Code of practice

Sam Bond, the city's Race Relations Advisor pointed out: "The extent of racism and discrimination and its effect on the education and career achievements of 'Liverpool blacks' led the Swann Report on education to comment that they fared worse than any other group studied in Britain."

The city council sees the problem of racism and discrimination as one of the most serious social problems it has to tackle. It has appointed 17 race relations co-ordinators to oversee the city council's anti-racist strategy and ensure that the code



Pressures are growing on Liverpool school students.

of practice in education is put in action in all schools.

Fascist and racist groups are increasing their attempts throughout the country to make political capital out of the pressures Tory Britain puts on inner city school students. Teachers and school students' unions, the Labour and trade union movement and the council itself must redouble their efforts to eradicate racism in Liverpool.

Answer the purge-sell Militant

MILITANT SELLERS everywhere are answering the attacks on their paper by going on the offensive with sales.

Every time the Tory hacks, from the comfort of their Fleet Street offices, pour out more hate against *Militant*, our sellers brave the elements and take to the streets with the paper.

Whenever Labour's right wing, blind to the damage they do to the party, try to expel *Militant* supporters just for selling their paper, our sales are carried out with renewed vigour.

Defiant

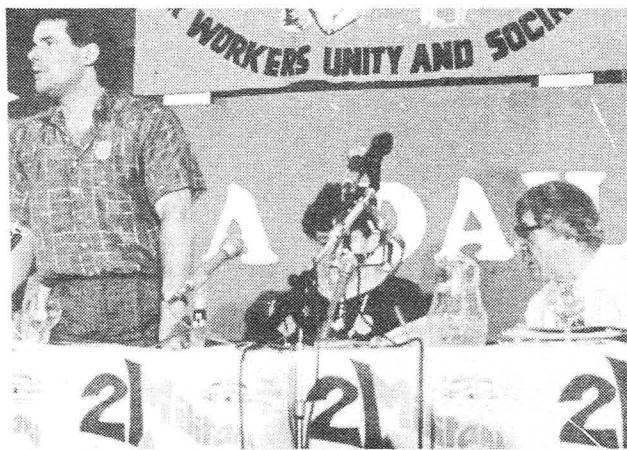
Militant sellers will not be intimidated. We were assured three years ago by the then Labour leader and the general secretary (Michael Foot and Jim Mortimer) that selling *Militant* would not be sufficient grounds for expulsion. But in some constituencies this has been the only charge levelled against *Militant* sellers, who have subsequently been expelled.

Yet party member Robert Maxwell (of the 'Millionaire Tendency') can continue to own a national daily, with a third of the workforce being

made redundant. Labour's parliamentary candidate for Stevenage continues to cross the picket line at 'Fortress Wapping', to collect his thirty pieces of silver.

All this just makes *Militant* sellers more defiant. Every witch-hunt, every attack, every inch of press coverage will be used to build our sales further. *Militant* sellers will turn to the thousands of workers and young people who want to join the fight against the Tories and against the purges. They will want to read *Militant*.

In two nights, 45 papers were sold door-to-door on the Forgewell estate in Motherwell, where the local Labour Party branch had passed a witch-hunting resolution. In Chorley in response to local expulsions, 18 copies were sold in the streets. Attacks in Ipswich, Llanelli and Cannock have been answered by special estate sales. Despite security police harassment, 15 were sold outside the Land Rover plant in Solihull, where a *Militant* supporter is being



Militant's readers meeting at the 1985 Labour Party Conference attracted a record attendance. Party members will oppose expulsions and buy *Militant*.

witch-hunted out of his job. *Militant's* intervention around the printing dispute has also produced big sales.

Printers

In addition to hundreds sold in Fleet Street, 50 were sold at the big rally in Glasgow. Cardiff sellers showed the way selling nine to the printers on the *Western Mail*. In addition Scottish sellers sold 42 in the shopping centre at Easterhouse, Scotland, and 40 in the streets of Dunfermline.

Now, on 26 February and for the following week every seller must redouble their efforts in the sales drive. The publicity and the interest in *Militant* will be greater than ever, following the Labour Party NEC devoted to the inquiry into the party in Liverpool.

This will be a golden opportunity to show all those attacking the paper, that with our best-ever sales, *Militant* fights on.

By Jeremy Birch

Get Militant

Become a subscriber



Read **Militant** weekly

"We wish the Leader of the Opposition well... in his forthcoming purge of *Militant* tendency supporters from the Labour Party." — Norman Tebbit in the House of Commons.
 "The *Militant* left will not be beaten by brave words and ritual disclaimers. If the Labour leadership is genuinely against these people why don't they expel them." — Margaret Thatcher at the 1985 Conservative conference.
Militant is under constant attack in the capitalist press and even in Parliament. Behind this onslaught are the Tories and the bosses themselves. All they can offer is mass unemployment and cuts. But they can see that this is only driving more and more workers and youth towards the fighting socialist policies of *Militant*.
 The Tories want a tame Labour Party, and Labour's right wing are enthusiastically falling into the trap. Instead of uniting the working class to defend jobs and services and to get rid of the Tories, they are witch-hunting *Militant*.
 Show your support for *Militant* and your commitment to the fight for socialism, become a subscriber.

**Fight the witch-hunt
Fight the Tories**

New *Militant* sales leaflet. Available from Circulation department, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

ads

CLASSIFIED

15p per word, minimum 10 words.

SEMI-DISPLAY

£2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free.

All advertisement copy should reach this office by Saturday.

MILITANT scarfs: Two colours (red and yellow unless stated) writing lengthways. Two/three colours writing across width. Cost £5 each, £4 each if five or more brought from: Mick Fallon, 64 Woodbrook Avenue, Mixenden, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX2 8PZ.

MILITANT carrier bags—now reduced. 10 bags for only 50p. Please enclose 25p P&P. Send order to: Fighting Fund, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9.

HACKNEY South LPYS rally "Unite against the Tories". Monday 24 February 7.30pm. Assembly Rooms, Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street. Speakers: Frances Curran (Labour Party NEC, personal

capacity) Harry Smith (Liverpool councillor) and speakers from the Hackney Labour movement.

A3 POSTERS for sale. "Stop the racist attacks". 50 for £3 + £1 P&P; 100 for £5 + £1.50 P&P. Post free on orders of 200 or over. Send orders to: Bow and Poplar LPYS, c/o 172 East India Dock Road, London E14, or phone 01-515 1718, or 01-515 6222.

CRICKLEWOOD *Militant* supporters: fighting fund disco on Saturday 1 March at the Cricklewood Hotel, Cricklewood Broadway, NW2 (near Cricklewood bus garage), 8pm—midnight. Bar until midnight. Buses: 16, 32, 266, 245. Tube: Willesden Green. Admission £1.50, £1 unwaged.

Socialist Workers Party rally "The Socialist alternative to Kinnock". Speakers: Paul Foot and Tony Cliff, 6 March, 7.00pm. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road. All Welcome.

MARXIST LPYS band need guitarist in London area (Clash style). Must be YS age and have your own guitar. For more details contact James Morbin on 582-8390 or Mark Bedford on 874-8420.

Militant Teacher Day School

Saturday 1 March, 11.00am—5pm

At: Woolton Labour Club, Childwall Valley Road, Liverpool

Speakers include: Tony Mulhearn and leading member of JSSC

Sessions on: Liverpool, local authority workers fightback Pay campaign

Creche/overnight accommodation if required

Phone: (01) 743 2993 for further details

"Militant fights back" meetings

North East

Ashington: Saturday 1 March. LPYS Regional Conference fringe meeting.

Gateshead: Monday 24 February.

Yorkshire

Bridlington: Saturday 1 March, Labour Party Regional Conference fringe meeting. Speaker—Brian Ingham.

North West

Blackpool: Saturday 15 March 1.00pm Labour Party conference fringe meeting. Lecture Hall, Central Library, Queen Street, Blackpool.

Midlands

Mansfield: Tuesday 4 March. Speaker—Steve Morgan.

London

London Labour Party conference fringe meeting: Sunday 2 March, 12.45pm, Brixton Recreation Centre, SW2.

DULWICH: Speakers Cllr Brian Kelly, Pete Jarvis (NGA) Debbie Lonnar (LPYS). Wednesday 26 February 7.45pm. Tenants Hall, Priory Court, Cheltenham Road, SE 15.

All London meeting: Thursday 13 March, 'Northern Ireland—the socialist alternative', Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Speakers—Joe Higgins (Irish Labour Party Administrative Council, personal capacity) and Peter Hadden (Labour and Trade Union Group secretary).

Eastern

Colchester: Sunday 23 February, 7.30pm, Colchester Labour Club. Speaker—Mike Waddington.

St Albans: Tuesday 25 February, 8pm, Bee Hive pub, off London Road.

South and West

Margate: Saturday 22 March, Southern Labour Party conference fringe meeting.

FIGHTING FUND

Quarter ends
30 April

Collected so far

£1779

AT THE public meetings all over the country *Militant* has been explaining 'What we stand for'. Workers who turned up to listen have responded with a stream of marvellous collections.

Workers have put their much needed cash into the *Militant* Fighting Fund. This is where we raise our money, not from any rich backers but the pockets of ordinary working-class people who have had enough of Thatcher and the Tories.

If this is the first time you have read this column why not join thousands of others who, in the last few weeks, have contributed to our fund. Send us a donation to help us in our fight.

Potential

Militant is giving a lead to all those workers who want to fight back. Young people in particular see where their future lies. The £303 collected at the Southern Region LPYS conference shows who they back. Other collections include a marvellous £839 at the Merseyside Rally, £267 in Dagenham, £186 in Peckham, £166 in Cardiff and £87 in Newton Abbot.

These collections show how much workers are prepared to give their cash. Ask every worker who comes across our ideas to help with a donation. In this way our target will be met, such is the massive potential for building the influence of *Militant*.

By now plans should be

drawn up in your area to reach your target. We want to see last Quarter's amount well beaten and the full £70,000 met. Just think how it can be done. All the new readers could see us to the target on their own if we ask them all.

But on top of this have you got fund-raising events organised in your area. Video-nights, jumble-sales, discos, parties, sponsored events—the possibilities are endless; easy ways of raising money for Marxism.

The National LPYS conference is getting nearer and nearer. Have you laid plans for making Fighting Fund? Food and drink on the coaches, as well as the raffles, are simple to organise. Every YS branch and every individual going should be prepared to make a donation to the fighting fund collection.

We are already into the

third week of the quarter. Let's step things up and show how *Militant* backs its great ideas with cash.

DONATIONS INCLUDE:

Students at North Staffordshire College £15; T Seagraves Knowsley North

CLP £10; G Willis Knowsley North CLP £5; B Walsh Brentwood CLP £7; A Scarborough Hackney £25; P Walter Coventry £2.40; S Hatherley Southampton £20; C Longhurst Tunbridge Wells CPSA £10; The Horses Maesteg £10.

Militant



Day School on the Latin American Revolution

Saturday 22 February
Main Session 10.30am-1pm

Peter Taaffe—Chile on the brink

Commissions 2pm—5pm

1. Nicaragua
2. Guerrillaism and the armed struggle
3. History of the Chilean popular unity government 1970-1973
4. The Latin American revolution

Speakers include: Lynn Walsh
Rob Sewell
+ Video—Battle for Chile

Venue: Princeton College, Sidmouth Street, London WC1
Entrance fee £1. Unwaged 50p

Marxist Daily Building Fund

Don't forget to send in your tenners to the Marxist Daily Building Fund to produce all the material we need and bring a more frequent paper nearer.

Life behind bars

BOB HARKER, a Militant supporter from Gateshead, served 20 days of a 30 day sentence at Durham prison for a crime he did not commit (see Militant issue 770). Below Bob tells of his personal experience inside Durham and highlights some of the problems within Britain's prisons today:

Durham prison, I was told, was built in 1875 and due to be closed in 1975. Today however, far from being closed they are actually building a new reception area to help cope with the ever increasing intake of 'part-timers' and 'remands'.

There are many 'part-timers' in Durham such as old men 'rounded up' from shop doorways, drunk and incapable, who really need help and not prison, also young lads serving days or a couple of months for minor offences—many who wouldn't even be in this situation if they had a job to go to on 'the outside'.

With quite a number of remanded prisoners, some who have been waiting months on end for their hearings in courts and the more serious offenders, it is little wonder that Durham prison is vastly overcrowded.

In a cell barely eight foot across and 16 foot in length, hardly enough for the one inmate it was built for, no fewer than three of us had to sleep, eat and share a bucket to urinate in at night. This was common throughout the prison.

Cockroaches

Every cell has a number of old air vents which, if they weren't already blocked up with muck, were deliberately blocked up by prisoners using tissue paper or cardboard. The reason for this was simple: to stop the cockroaches getting in. Durham is absolutely crawling with cockroaches, mice and rats which are mostly found in the kitchens, washrooms and around the hotplates on every wing. At one stage we actually had three mice scurrying through our cell which caused quite a stir throughout our wing and earned us the nickname 'The mousemen of Durham'.

Most of the prisoners, because of overcrowding and shortage of staff, were locked up night on 23 hours a day. I, however, was regarded as one of the 'lucky' ones. Being detailed to help the B Wing cleaners on the day after I arrived, I had to brush, mop, slop out the swill bins and scrub the floors twice and sometimes three times a day.

At the same time, believe it or not up to our eyeballs in muck, cleaners had to serve the meals from

hotplates to every prisoner on our wing. On top of all this we were only allowed one shower a week!

In all the time I spent in Durham I was never once taken out on exercise. The only time I got fresh air was when I slopped out the swill bins or on the odd occasion I was ordered to take up the tea urns to the hospital wing.

With Durham being a top security prison geared towards long-term offenders, inmates had to serve a minimum of three months before they could apply for recreation. This meant that the likes of myself and many others were not allowed to watch TV, play darts or table-tennis or indeed to associate with other prisoners during the recreation period from 6pm to 10pm.

I was also barred from the main library, having to make do with a small bookshelf which consisted mostly of Westerns. I must thank the comrades from Region 6 TGWU who sent me the book *The rise of black trade unions in South Africa* which was the only decent book I got my hands on. By the time you got hold of a newspaper it was usually three days old. Visiting periods at Durham were once every month and, if you were a convicted prisoner, lasted only half an hour.

With overcrowding and poor conditions the tensions inside Durham are very high. Setting fire to mattresses is not uncommon. On one occasion I witnessed an old man throw his food and mug of tea down the stairs towards a prison officer. On a different occasion I saw another old prisoner being taken to the hospital wing covered in blood. He had slashed both his wrists and neck with a razor blade. Prisoners also told me about young lads over the years who had hung themselves.

The officers themselves are very much aware of the tensions. I overheard one officer saying: "Bloody hell do you want to cause a riot!". The whole atmosphere can change at a moment's notice.

Throughout my short sentence I was nicknamed by other prisoners on our block as "Scargill" and, as luck would have it, I came across a lad who was a Tory supporter. We managed to organise a 'debate' in our cell in which about nine or



Boys as young as 14 are the victims of Thatcher's "short sharp shock" detention centres.

ten other prisoners crammed in at first to mock but then listen and eventually participate with the two of us arguing about the miners' strike, Liverpool and Northern Ireland. It wasn't the best disciplined meeting I've been to, with about nine different voices often interrupting with remarks such as "bring back hanging for Tories".

Thanks to the many letters I received from comrades throughout the country and from Northern Ireland, my morale was very high. All incoming mail and the two letters per week I was allowed to send out were read by the prison staff which is 'normal practice'. However, what isn't supposed to be 'normal practice', was an incident which happened barely 15 minutes before I was due to be released.

Grilled

When you come into prison you are stripped naked and searched "in case you try to smuggle stuff in" and when you leave you are searched again (fully clothed) in case you try to smuggle notes out. Your letters and possessions are quickly flicked through, a process which usually lasts a minute or two.

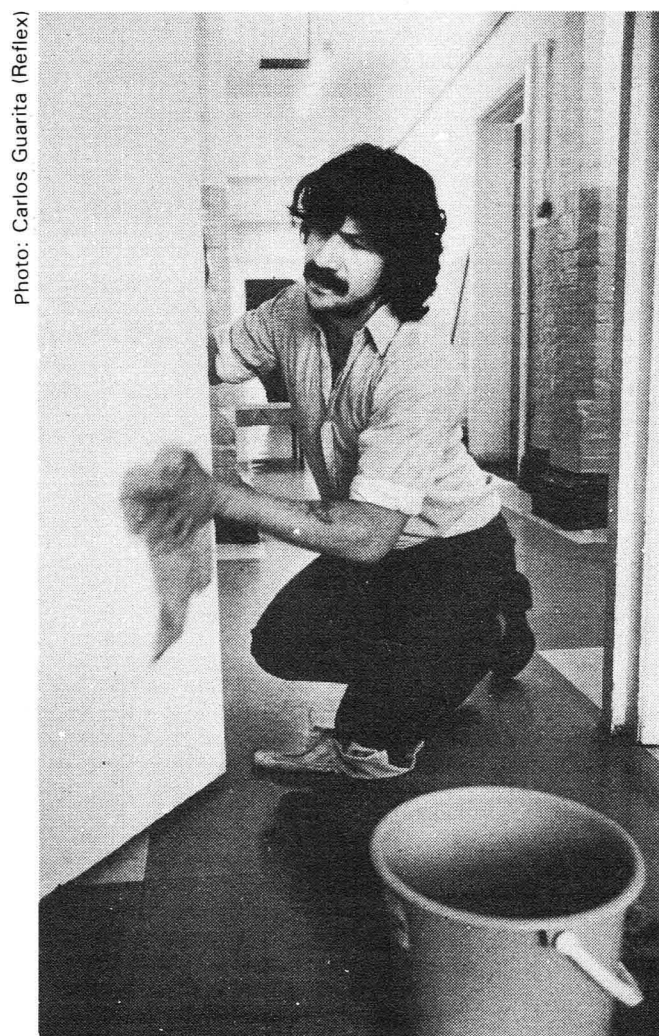
There were five of us be-

ing released that morning I was the second to go through the 'out search'. When the first lad was called a prison officer holding his record simply said to the searcher "burglary" then called for me. The officer who was to search me asked for "details" to which came the reply: "aah!... political". At this the first lad was let through without being searched at all and I was given what I think is termed "the works".

Not only was I thoroughly searched from head to foot but all my letters were opened and re-read. Then, on reading my Northern Ireland letters, the questions came in thick and fast. "Do you have relatives in Ireland?... How many times have you been there?... Are you a supporter of the IRA?..."

Barely managing to keep my anger in check I told them sarcastically that I was an ex-soldier which seemed to do the trick. However, they then turned towards derogatory remarks about the miners before eventually passing me through and releasing me.

I must also point out, however, that most of the prison officers were OK with me and with the other prisoners.



In many prisons chores like these are considered a privilege—you get out of the cell for a couple of hours.

Victims and Victors

"Christ, it was cold in that punishment wing. About 20 cells, below ground level, housed those on bread and water or other dietary punishment."

SET IN the 1950s when capital punishment was still around Don describes his life of crime that led to borstal and progressed to prison. One thing his book does not do however, is glamorise these institutions or the horrific violence that goes on there inflicted by both inmates and warders.

For those of you who were a bit naive about what life in borstal and prison is really like, this book, often humorously, knocks out any illusions you may have. He says of borstal: "It was considered a privilege to be picked to go to Reading prison for a fortnight's holiday... it had been condemned as unfit for habitation some years before".

Don, earlier a member of the Communist Party, now a Labour Party member for some years, buys *Militant* regularly. Anne McKay

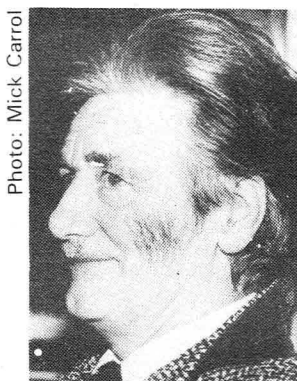


Photo: Mick Carrol
Don Tomson.

spoke to him about his book.

Q. Why did you decide to write about your experiences?

A. To make people aware of the terrible things that can happen to people when they become the victims of others. Many people don't believe that the police can commit brutalities—I want to correct that misconception.

Q. At the end of your book you point out that prison inmates still hand-sew mailbags. Do you think

By Don Tomson,
Pluto Press,
£3.95

Don Tomson
**Victims
and
Victors**

The life of
a wilful survivor

prisons have changed at all since you were inside?

A. Many stupid, petty rules still exist, like not being allowed to take out written material. I couldn't believe that the last 35 years had not seen any change in such a stupid rule. If anything things have got worse. When I was inside, three men to a cell was only just being introduced, now it's the norm and without any increase in staff or facilities like toilet blocks. Educational classes have been curtailed so things are even worse now.

Q. You did a lot of reading in borstal and prison. Had you always been interested in books?

A. No, I developed an interest in education after being sent to borstal. Hours of solitude and boredom meant I developed an interest in books.

Q. Later on you became involved in union struggles and disputes, did your experiences of prison life influence you?

A. I set about trying to right wrongs while in prison. I came across books by Lenin and Engels in the prison library, they had the theories I had been struggling to reach on my own.

I was punished for informing on the activities of

some of the prison officers, but I realised eventually that officialdom looks after itself. It's the system that must be changed. Bullying by inmates can be prevented, but bullying by the screws can only be stopped by changing society and the running of borstals.

Q. Do you have any plans to write more about your life?
I'm a manual worker, so writing is difficult. It's in fits and starts. It's impossible to write in a disciplined way when you're worn out in the evenings. But I've always been a writer and I hope to get more published.

Victims and Victors, is available from: World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Liverpool Labour leaders vindicated



DLP officers, (left to right) Felicity Dowling, Terry Harrison, John Hamilton, Tony Mulhearn with MPs Eric Heffer and Eddie Loyden arriving at the NEC inquiry.

THE INQUIRY into Liverpool District Labour Party has been a contemptible travesty. For weeks when there should have been an onslaught against a brutal yet shaken Tory government, the Labour's national executive committee have been grilling the party's Liverpool leaders in a vindictive attempt to find some pretext for disciplinary action.

"Natural justice is not something that concerns you at the moment", Charles Turnock, the inquiry chairman told one witness, summing up the spirit of this McCarthyite inquisition.

Liverpool City Council, following policy laid down by the District Labour Party, have built new homes, created jobs and held down rents and rates in one of the most deprived cities in Europe. They are currently advertising places in 58 nurseries at a time when other councils are closing them down. Their record is a shining example of how to fight back against the Tory attacks.

High Court

The councillors defiance has put them in the dock, to defend themselves against the District Auditor's attempt to impose massive fines and ban them from office. Yet even while they were appearing in the High Court, council and party officers were forced to

defend themselves on another front, against the NEC's inquisition.

They were interrogated for hours about the DLP—how unions pay their affiliation fees, bank accounts, how delegates' credentials are checked, how votes are counted, who can attend aggregate meetings and invitations to guest speakers. The most petty details were subject to a minute examination.

Yet the DLP officers proved that despite the momentous events around the council's battle with the government, the DLP remained a model of democracy. It not only acted scrupulously in accordance with its rules, but pioneered new ways of involving party members in the formulation of policy and strategy.

All the hours of prying and probing by the Torquemadas of the inquiry team have proved that they are not only innocent of any of the allegations thrown at them, but that they have set an example to the

rest of the country of how thousands can be mobilised and involved in a struggle to transform society.

Not the flimsiest shred of evidence has come before this inquiry which could justify any move to disband the DLP or expel its officers. Any such move would be a political attack on the elected leaders of thousands of Merseyside party and trade union activists.

Trounce Tories

The NEC must fling out any expulsion threats and record its full support for the Liverpool DLP. Then it can turn to inquire into the Tory corruption in the Westland affair, the selling-off of BL to multi-national monopolies, the allegations of favouritism by the Director-General of Fair Trading towards firms which backed the government over Westland and the claims that honours are sold to companies who donate to the Tory Party.

With the Fulham by-election imminent and the council elections only weeks away, it is now vital for the NEC to abandon all the purges and inquisitions which are going on within the party, so that the whole labour movement can be united in the fight to trounce the Tories in Fulham, the town halls and the next general election.

Our outstanding record

TONY MULHEARN, chairman of Liverpool District Labour Party, issued the following statement on 16 February, as the NEC inquiry completed its investigations:

THE LIVERPOOL DLP has an outstanding record. It has won an outright majority for Labour on the council. It has brought about a high level of participation by Labour Party members and trade unionists.

The inquiry was instituted "in view of the statements made by some councillors and party members in Liverpool, the accusations and charges levelled against the party, the trade unions, and others, and the damaging and deliberately provocative nature of the attacks made through the media".

Yet throughout this investigation it has produced no evidence to substantiate these accusations. There are no statements or resolutions of the DLP which contain provocative attacks on the Labour Party or trade unions.

May elections

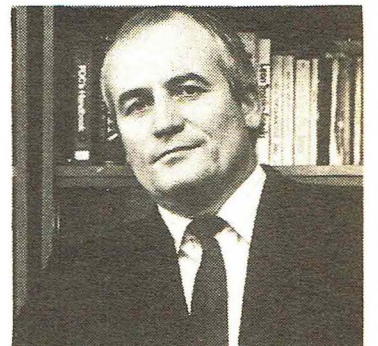
The DLP has now been suspended since December 1985. This has coincided with the councillors' appeal against the District Auditor, the Old Swan by-election, and now the preparations for next year's budget and the May elections.

Some statements by leading Labour Party and trade union figures had a very damaging effect on support for Labour in Liverpool. Publicity created by this inquiry has also seriously prejudiced the councillors' High Court appeal.

The suspension of the DLP has been unjustifiably prolonged and the investigation has been conducted in a totally unreasonable way.

The arbitrary treatment of the DLP is in contradiction even with the recent guidelines from Labour Party headquarters to regional staff on "action against units of (the) party organisation".

In a letter of 22 January 1986 David Hughes says that in relation to suspension or other disciplinary action "there is a requirement to observe natural justice to the in-



Tony Mulhearn

dividuals concerned and to be reasonable in the use of their authority".

The NEC has not followed these guidelines in relation to the DLP. We were given no "previous warnings". The inquiry is not following the guidelines and "taking swift action to ensure the proper working of the... organisation".

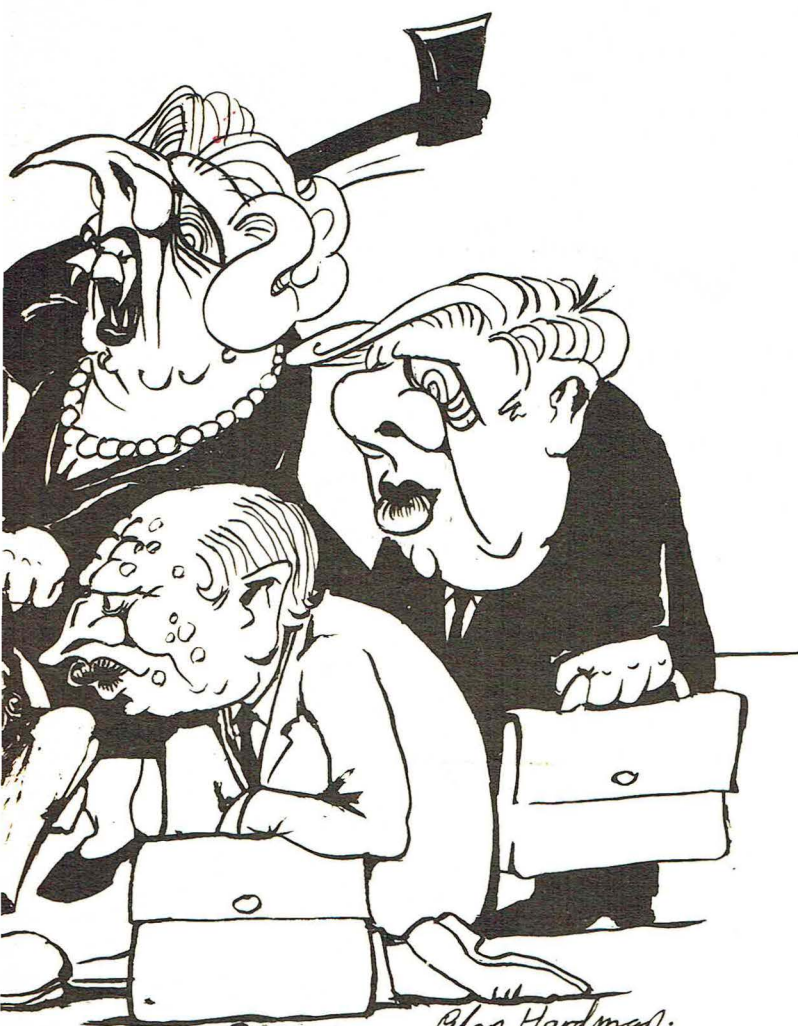
We wish to protest strongly at the inquiry's treatment of Labour Party members who attended last week.

They were asked questions completely outside the stated terms of reference of this investigation, as reported to the High Court in Larry Whitty's affidavit. Although the letters of invitation said they would be asked to comment on "evidence", they were not told about specific evidence.

There was an atmosphere of intimidation and harassment of the Labour Party members interviewed. Some of them were asked totally unjustified personal questions, which were shocking and insulting to the comrades concerned.

We are prepared to answer questions today within the terms of reference of this inquiry. But we believe that the suspension of the DLP should be lifted immediately so that we can get on with the job of preparing for victory at the May elections and drawing up an effective strategy for the council in the face of further draconian cuts imposed on Liverpool by the Tory government.

How other District Labour Parties are run



HELP US?
PRACTICES OF MILITANT SUPPORTERS

TEN GLASGOW Labour City Councillors and over 30 delegates to Glasgow District Labour Party have written to the NEC inquiry. Their submission, from which these edited extracts are taken, deals in particular with the attempts by the Merseyside Labour Co-ordinating Committee to smear the Liverpool DLP leadership. It exposes the inconsistencies between the LCC's policies in Liverpool and Glasgow.

Also KIRSTIE MACLEAN compares the structure of Bradford DLP with that of Liverpool and concludes that the Liverpool DLP "is run in a model fashion".

IT IS part of the constitution of Glasgow DLP that trade unions affiliate directly to the management committee of the District Party, thereby facilitating their involvement in discussion and decision. This is done on a city-wide basis and ensures the accountability of TU delegates to their trade union body. It does not preclude TU delegates to Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) being subsequently delegated to the District Party, although in such a case those comrades would be accountable to their CLP, not their trade union.

We certainly regard the direct affiliation of trade unions as a crucial link in the forging of a stronger and more unified movement in our city and would be most concerned at recommendations which moved in the opposite direction.

Three questions

ONE OF the objections raised in the Merseyside LCC submission is the question of so-called loyalty oaths. Three questions are asked: 1. Who makes policy? 2. What would you do in the event of a conflict between the ward you represent and the DLP? 3. Are you prepared to stand anywhere in the city?

These very same questions form the basis for interviewing candidates for the District Panel in Glasgow and we can see no objection to them which is sustainable. Candidates are also questioned on their knowledge of local government and their reasons for wishing to be a councillor. The basis for acceptance or rejection is supposed to be the competence or otherwise of the candidate to be an effective councillor.

It has become clear, however, that the LCC now uses its position of predominance on the DLP executive in order to manipulate the lists of candidates and to exclude from it those whom they regard as political opponents.

A case in point, to illustrate the issue, is that of David Churchley, a well known supporter of *Militant*. At the last district elections, he stood as a Labour candidate in an unwinnable seat but still managed to boost the Labour vote by over 70 per cent. Last year, in an occasional topping-up exercise, he was removed from the panel. At the DLP meeting no explanation was given by the executive as to why he was being excluded and, indeed, the chairman ruled that individual cases could not be discussed. Despite this, protests were made that Comrade Churchley, and others—not all supporters of *Militant*, were being excluded solely on the grounds of their political stance within the party and the opposition to same from the LCC controlled executive.

In a subsequent discussion at that Party meeting a member of the EC (also incidentally, the Scottish Secretary of the LCC), admitted that this was the case. This is a practice with which we disagree.

Obviously, we cannot comment on the details of the Merseyside LCC submission but we can readily testify to the manipulation of the panel by their Glasgow counterparts, who dominate the executive of Glasgow District Labour Party.

paigns seldom have any real foundation.

Pre-condition

IT IS quite clearly accepted in Glasgow, by the DLP, that the main responsibility for the development and making of policy lies with the party. The role of the Labour Group is then to implement that policy. As stated earlier, willingness to do so is a pre-condition for acceptance onto the panel of candidates.

Glasgow District Labour Party wishes to take this matter further, as it recently requested the Labour Group to re-consider its standing orders in order to allow the EC of the party to be involved in the potential disciplining of group members. This proposal came as an EC recommendation to the GMC.

We have no objections to the closest links possible between the DLP and the Labour Group but we do find it a little strange that the organisation complaining about this in Liverpool is the same one pushing for it, along with others, in Glasgow. We would be happy to see the situation which exists in Liverpool, where the Labour Group actually carries out the wishes of the District Party, repeated in Glasgow.

Double standards

IN CONCLUSION there would appear to be a set of double standards abroad which serve as a vehicle for substituting organisational manoeuvre and manipulation for political debate.

If the NEC inquiry decides to take further action against Liverpool District Labour Party we can only assume that your next port of call will be Glasgow. Such a visit we believe would represent a further waste of time and energy by the NEC of the Party when, in all honesty, we should be uniting and pressing home our attack upon the Thatcher government.

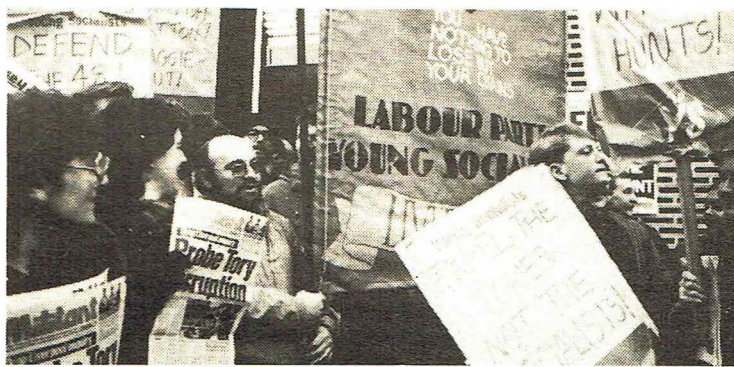
Bradford

THERE IS little attempt to scrutinise delegates' credentials at GMC meetings in Glasgow, the normal practice being to circulate an attendance book which is ticked or signed by those present. Indeed, the first roll-call in several years took place at last budget-discussion meeting, called for by a supporter of *Militant*.

At the same meeting a large lobby of tenants was allowed to attend the meeting on a verbal assurance, by general assent, that they were all Labour Party members.

It should be made clear that we have no objection to such procedures, and in the case above we would have argued for the right of the lobby to stay if the chair had suggested otherwise. The point remains, however, that in the light of our experience in Glasgow we find the 'evidence' of the Merseyside LCC to be somewhat flimsy.

The second point on the conduct of meetings relates to the question of alleged intimidation. Quite frankly, we believe that some of the comments made would be better left to scandal sheets, such as the *Sun*. Certainly there is no atmosphere of that nature in Glasgow, although there have been at least two incidents in the recent past, including a physical assault on a councillor who supports *Militant*, which could be generated into a general smear if someone was sufficiently perverse to do so. As we know from our experience of the capitalist press smear cam-



Lobby of Liverpool inquiry at its first meeting.

Glasgow

I AM a delegate to Bradford District Labour Party, where *Militant* supporters are in a minority amongst the delegates, executive and officers. The leadership is mainly in the hands of the soft left and yet the 'abuses' complained of by the LCC in Liverpool are replicated in Bradford, only more so.

Nominees for the panel of candidates are not only asked whether they are willing to abide by District Party Policy (something I think all DLPs should insist on) but are given an in-depth interview about their political experience, political views etc. A number of nominees were in fact excluded this year by the executive on what were, in my view, pretty spurious and subjective grounds. Most of them were eventually reinstated by the GMC with the help of *Militant* supporters' votes. (Only one out of the six excluded was a *Militant* supporter).

There is no check done on delegates' credentials, because we are not sent any—even the sending out of agendas is somewhat haphazard. Delegates merely sign an attendance list, if they remember. All DLP meetings are open to non-delegates and they were positively invited to the recent policy conferences. It is taken on trust that non-delegates will not vote.

Whilst, clearly, Bradford DLP could do with tightening up some of its procedures, I guess it is fairly typical of DLPs around the country. Compared to Bradford, Liverpool seems to be run in a model fashion. The only obvious conclusion one can draw is that Liverpool DLP was suspended because it has democratically voted to follow the policies put forward in the *Militant*.

By Kirstie MacLean

'The TGWU will have no part in purges or witch-hunts'—Ron Todd

FULL SUPPORT for Liverpool District Labour Party has been expressed by the Transport and General Workers' Union. In their formal submission to the NEC inquiry, they "repudiate totally all suggestions of intimidation or procedural irregularities within the Liverpool DLP".

"Our group of delegates to the DLP" they say "has made no complaints whatsoever about proceedings or conduct of the DLP. Nor indeed are we aware of any other group or individual having made such complaints". Of the chairmanship of the DLP meetings, they say that in their opinion this is "of an extremely high standard".

The TGWU feels that "the suspension of the DLP seriously damages the ability of the Labour Party in Liverpool to conduct its business and promote its policies".

The union endorses the relationship which has been developed between the DLP and the Labour Group of the City Council, calling it "the cornerstone of the advancement and politicisation of the labour movement in Liverpool".

That relationship is "based on the DLP being the policy making body and the group implementing these policies. Under previous administrations" they point out, "there was little or no consultation between the DLP and the Labour Group on matters of policy...The present system allows for and encourages full and free debate on all subjects. Further than that it allows and encourages the fullest involvement in the decisions relating to the running of the City Council from all the various sections of the Labour Party".

As a result, the union believes that "policies are democratically decided by the movement in its broadest form, and, perhaps more importantly, these policies, as presented to the electorate, are carried into practice, rather than abandoned as soon as power is gained".

"The TGWU recognises that the policies and actions adopted by the Liverpool DLP have made a major impact on the electorate, and that this has resulted in increasing

the percentage of votes for the party, increasing the number of Labour councillors elected, and played a major role in the party's success in Liverpool at the last general election".

On the role of trade unions, the TGWU "is gravely concerned that certain individuals or groups within the movement may attempt to use this inquiry as a means of limiting the involvement of trade unions and their delegates within the Labour Party, not just in Liverpool but elsewhere". They believe that such moves would be totally unacceptable and that "the traditional and basic relationship between the unions and the party must be preserved and strengthened".

The union expresses serious concern about some aspects of the NEC inquiry, "which seem to invite accusations of breaches of natural justice".

It specifies:

- ★ the absence of any published terms of reference for the inquiry;
- ★ the haste with which it is being conducted;
- ★ the apparent absence of any right to reply to accusations against individuals and the DLP and the opportunity for questioning those making allegations;
- ★ talk of secret witnesses, anonymous evidence, and safe houses;
- ★ the arbitrary selection of those called to give evidence.

"All these features leave the inquiry wide open to allegations which in our opinion can only bring the inquiry into disrepute."

"We do not believe it right or possible to deal with Labour Party matters on the basis of gossip, hearsay or rumours", they argue, "especially when these are open to the distortion which the media so often subjects our business to." They quote the words of their general secretary, Ron Todd: "No examining body should be going to Liverpool with guns blazing towards individuals, and the TGWU will have no part in purges or witch-hunts which obscure the real problems which Liverpool faces".

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka - sweat shop capitalism and genocidal war

THE RIGHT-wing Sri Lankan government of President J R Jayawardene is now into its ninth consecutive year of rule—the longest in the country's post-independence history.

But those years have been marked by periods of intense class struggle and instability.

However, a certain development of the economy has occurred via the infusion of massive doses of foreign aid and loans and temporarily favourable export and tourist earnings.

Jayawardene's strategy has been to "out-sweat" the sweated economies of south-east Asia in a bid to attract multinational investment.

However the sharp shocks now battering the economies of Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong (which have all suffered or face negative economic growth) show how economic development for the colonial world under capitalism remains an illusion.

The most important single Sri Lankan export today is human labour power—over 350,000 labourers are working in the Middle-East oil-doms as semi-slaves. Emigration to the Middle East has served as a crucial safety valve for popular discontent by offering the dream of rapid riches.

But the relative development of the economy since 1977, far from raising living standards has taken place at the expense of the masses.

Sri Lanka's press reported recently of 100 young

By T Vallipuram in Jaffna and a reporter in Colombo

women workers from a multinational factory in the non-union Free Trade Zone. They contracted severe food poisoning and were rushed to hospital as a result of eating the midday meal provided by the factory owners.

Such industrial accidents and diseases, arising as they do out of capitalism's rapacious quest for higher profits are endemic throughout the island's 15,000 factories—yet only 17 factory inspectors exist nationwide to check such Victorian conditions.

Economy

But on all fronts the regime is reaching an impasse; the economy faces head-long decline. The collapse of world commodity prices has severely cut Sri Lanka's export earnings. The fall in world oil prices will mean a contraction in the Middle East labour (and tea) market and repatriation of foreign workers. The foreign debt now consumes up to 25 per cent of export earnings.

President Jayawardene has over the years constructed a parliamentary bonapartist state where the trappings of parliamentary democracy remain but where state power has been concentrated in the Presidency. General elections have been abolished, he rules by

emergency decree.

J R has kept power by demagogically balancing between the classes, ethnic groups and parties in society. He combines brutal repression of all opposition (such as the sacking of around 40,000 striking workers in 1980) with the manipulation of chauvinism amongst the Sinhala majority, and repression of the Tamil minority. This acts as a diversion from the daily misery of the Sinhala poor.

But this policy of racial divide and rule has blown up into an uncontrollable and unwinnable racial war in the Tamil provinces.

The reactionary 1983 massacres of Tamils led to a qualitative change; the national question became the all-important factor in the island's politics.

The Tamil guerilla struggle for an independent Tamil state—Eelam—is based on the primacy of the armed struggle and the Maoist concepts of "prolonged peoples war" and the establishment of "rural liberated areas". Such methods and policies have nothing in common with Marxism despite the claims of the guerillas.

The government has no basis of support in the Tamil area. For the last two years the government has tried militarily to smash the Tamil "boys". But no amount of brutal repression can defeat

the will of the Tamil masses for national and democratic rights so long as the material basis for the sustenance of Tamil nationalism remains—that is the failure of capitalism to provide jobs, living standards and national democratic rights.

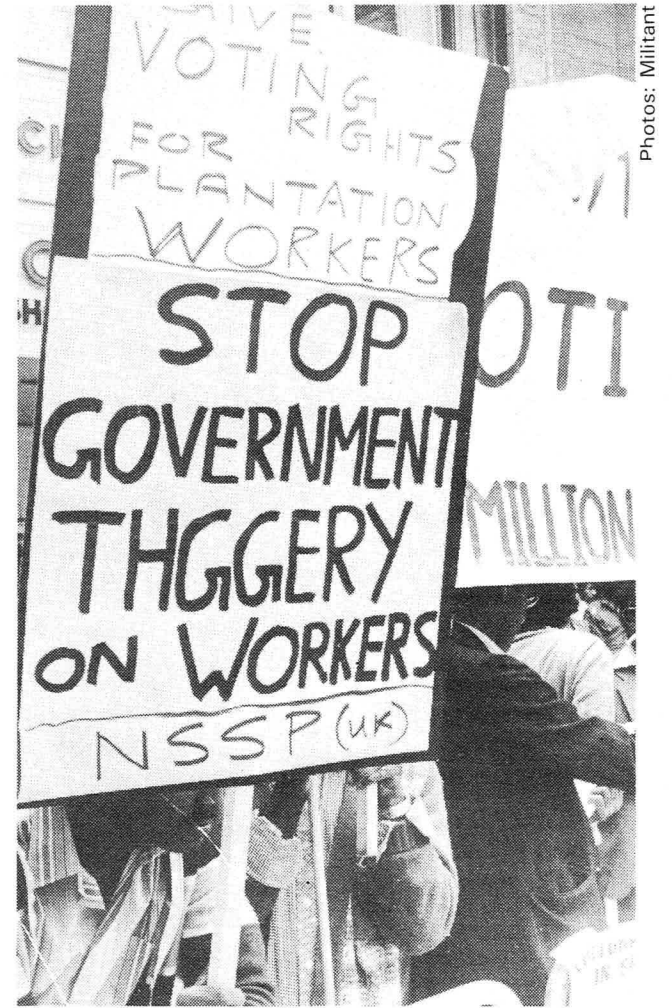
Such is the isolation of the Sinhala state from the Tamils, every police station in Jaffna has been wiped out by the guerillas. Instead there are eight army camps in Jaffna from behind which the army occasionally ventures.

Since mid December the army has launched aerial bombings on Tamil villages reminiscent of the saturation bombing of Vietnamese villages by the US army. However, all this has been unable to dislodge the "boys"—it has instead provoked a wave of demonstrations from Jaffna Tamils in which the trade unions have played a prominent role.

Class unity

On the other hand the Tamil guerillas, splintered into six main groups and 30 smaller ones have proved unable to drive out the Sinhala army. What exists today is a bloody stalemate—according to Sivapalanthe, nominee of the Tamil guerillas on the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, the army and Sinhalese home guards have destroyed almost every village in the Trincomalee district resulting in 50,000 refugees from this area fleeing to Jaffna and India.

The mass of the Tamils, because of the nature of guerrilla war, have been unable to participate in



NSSP lobby in London.

determining the strategy and methods of the struggle. They are thus relegated to the role of passive supporters. Hence in late 1985 there was a growing dissatisfaction among many Tamils against the arbitrary methods of the "boys" (lamp post executions, extortion, robbery, etc).

However, the incomparably worse, genocidal policy of the Sinhala army ensures the majority of Tamils swung behind the guerillas.

But the key to Tamil liberation lies in linking up with the class forces of Tamil and Sinhala workers in the south.

The defeats of the army and the real situation in the Tamil north and east are hidden from the Sinhala masses who are fed on a daily media diet of 'victories'. Once the Sinhala masses realise they have been duped, an enormous anger will explode against the government.

For Sri Lanka's bourgeoisie a catastrophe looms. The military now consume up to 15 per cent of budget expenditure—a colossal waste of resources. In the developing economic crisis this cannot be maintained indefinitely. The war has driven away tourists, leaving hundreds of hotels empty, scared off foreign investors and dislocated local industries. In addition Tamil guerillas have threatened to poison tea exports and blow up dams.

In the long-term the Sinhalese army would face defeat. In the event of the guerillas winning the war they would be under strong pressures to take steps against capitalism and landlordism (albeit in a distorted Stalinist way). This is what terrifies the Indian ruling class and would probably force them to invade Sri Lanka in order to smash such revolutionary develop-

ments and prevent them from spreading to India.

The fate of such deformed workers states such as Mozambique, Ethiopia and South Yemen, wracked by coups, civil war and famine demonstrates that despite the advances made, the problems of development and the national question cannot be solved on a national stalinist basis but only on that of international socialism and a healthy workers' democracy.

Guerillaism

The war in the north has also helped to revive guerillaist trends amongst Sinhala petit bourgeois youth. They argue that the working class is defeated and demoralised and therefore vanguard actions by armed bands of guerillas are necessary as an 'example' to arouse the southern workers into action.

But such attacks would have the opposite effect of lowering class consciousness and strengthening the repressive state apparatus. For example, the government has used the bogey of guerillaism to arrest 200 Sinhala youth and activists.

Sinhala guerillaism represents a grave warning to the southern labour movement. It has arisen only because of the rotten leadership of the main workers parties. These parties—the Communist Party (CP), Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and Sri Lankan Mahajana Party (SLMP)—have formed themselves into a common front but have failed to mobilise the workers and poor peasants against the government. They have played a divisive role by refusing to take the Marxists of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) into their so-called "United" Left Front.

Furthermore, in recent



Slums are found throughout Sri Lanka despite the slight development of the economy.

Sri Lanka, South Africa

Worldwide backing for South African workers

THE RECENT GMBATU chemical workers' conference showed positive solidarity with chemical workers in struggle in South Africa.

A resolution moved by Gordon McKinley, works convenor at SAI Leith Docks was passed unanimously.

It deplored the sackings, threats and intimidation against workers in the SA chemical industry, the worst incident being last year's murder of senior shop steward Andries Raditsela. The resolution urged solidarity action wherever possible.

The international chemical workers' body the ICEF has monitored the disgraceful treatment meted out by British and European multinational chemical companies over the last decade.

Since the upsurge in strike action around 1973 these companies have taken more brutal concerted action against workers in fully or partly owned SA operations.

Recently an ICI part-owned company sacked over 600 workers belonging to the South African Chemical Workers Union (SACWU) for action against pathetically low wages. Despite company threats and intimidation, the struggle was won, through the workers' self sacrifice and heroism. Important aid came through international solidarity by ICEF affiliated unions, particularly through pressure on ICI in Britain by GMB stewards and officials.

The best tribute to Andries Raditsela would be to invite an activist from SACWU to address next years conference and conduct a tour like the highly successful visit by Maxwell Xulu of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU).

This suggestion, voted on separately was passed unanimously.

David Warburton the ex-national industrial officer for chemicals supported both the resolution and the proposal. He said the GMBATU Finance sub-committee had passed Bro Warburton's proposal for financial aid for workers in struggle in SA. A magnificent £10,000 had been donated to an ICEF appeal fund and £1,000 directly to buy food for workers attacked by the British multinational BTR.

Urging solidarity action when ever possible he said it was not enough to put articles on SA in our journal, the sort of links made by Maxwell Xulu's visit were absolutely vital.

By Gordon McKinley

(Scottish delegate, personal capacity)



Photo: Militant

Military presence everywhere

weeks, this left front has avoided campaigning for an immediate general election. One Party in this front—the SLMP—even published a racist statement opposing the granting of citizenship rights to a section of the Tamil plantation workers.

Voting rights

In early 1986, sensing perhaps the dangers inherent in society, Jayawardene announced two unprecedented measures. Firstly; Sirimavo Bandaranaike (leader of the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party-SLFP) was given back her civic rights. Secondly; some 94,000 plantation workers disenfranchised by the UNP government in 1948 were given back their voting rights.

These decisions reflect, on the one hand the pressure of imperialism and India upon the government to reach a compromise with the moderate Tamils on the national question, and on the other hand the pressure of the anti-government masses and the need for JR to broaden the base of his regime.

In the last analysis the bourgeois care neither for religious nor racial prejudice. They are prepared to sacrifice all upon the golden altar of their god, profit, and the defence of the profit system.

Therefore in relation to the Tamil question, too, because of the horrendous alternative the Sri Lankan bourgeois, despite their chauvinism, will most likely be forced to a compromise with the Tamils. They could possibly concede provincial autonomy with powers similar to those of the Indian states, the return of Tamil MPs to parliament etc.

Capitalism

Such a deal would not solve the national question so long as capitalism remains. None of the underlying economic problems could be solved and inevitably the question would resurface, with redoubled vengeance. Such a process is occurring within the Punjab. Nothing short of the socialist revolution, which alone could guarantee full national rights, can solve the Tamil national question.

The promise to return voting rights to plantation workers has been wrenched out of the government by the unions' threat to launch a weekly half-day prayer cam-



Photo: Morris Zwi (Reflex)

Black youth at the funeral of trade union activist Andries Raditsela did not only mourn a murdered hero, they celebrated their new found determination. Last weekend, police and "security forces" were stepping up repression against a new wave of anger throughout South Africa. The unions must give strength to the anger of the masses by well organised campaigns, demonstrations and strikes against apartheid and capitalism.

Unity to beat reactionary Sarmcol bosses

THE TRADE unionists victimised by management at BTR Sarmcol in South Africa have won widespread support.

The bosses at Sarmcol, part of the British Tyre and Rubber combine got full backing from the British multinational when they sacked workers last May for striking. The workers are still out, demanding reinstatement and recognition of their union MAWU.

From the start MAWU appealed for international trade union support. The British TUC has approved support but has done little to mobilise active support at shop floor level. SALEP and other socialists are trying to rectify this.

Support has been solid from BTR and Dunlop plants where the issues have been clearly put. Sarmcol managers from South Africa visiting Britain have seen this. At the BTR plant in Preston these bosses saw MAWU's appeal for support on the notice board, and asked to meet the shop steward to 'explain' but they were turned down.

Shop floor

They wanted to visit the shop floor but the answer came back "if you come in one door, workers would walk out the other." In the end managers had to sneak round the factory while workers were having their

dinner.

Resolutions backing the workers have been passed at various BTR shop stewards committees and union branches and many donations and messages of support have been sent to MAWU. £100 came from GMBATU Preston, £200 TGWU in Leicester, both organising BTR workers, £250 came from NALGO Manchester and an excellent £83.15 from Dunnes' strike support group in Cork in Ireland.

At the GMBATU rubber workers' conference, a resolution led to a call for all rubber industry branches to take collections and pass around petitions of support for Sarmcol workers.

Great results can come

when the rank and file are motivated and mobilised. But more pressure will be needed to force management to climb down. BTR workers in Britain, MAWU members and Sarmcol workers need to discuss the strategy and tactics to force the bosses to

retreat.

If nationwide solidarity action were organised in South Africa headed by COSATU then the support from BTR internationally could tip the scales in defeating the reactionary Sarmcol management.

Tony Benn backs BTR strike

BEST WISHES and fraternal greetings of solidarity in your campaign. The struggle is the same for workers everywhere and victory is assured.

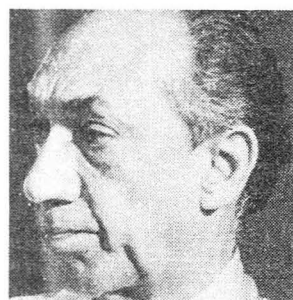
**Yours in peace and socialism
Tony Benn MP**

paign (ie half-day strikes) for three months.

Indeed such is the developing mood of militancy amongst the tea workers that when, in late January, Sinhala chauvinists attempted to intimidate them, the workers spontaneously resorted to violent resistance, the attacking of police patrols and railway stations, and a stay-away from work. The police were forced to abandon the tea gardens, and 24 hour curfews were imposed on the plantation districts.

This demonstration of the power of class action crushingly answers all Sinhala and Tamil guerillaists who have written off the working class as the motive force of the Sri Lankan revolution.

Since having had her civic



Jayawardene

rights restored, Mrs Bandaranaike's SLFP has been holding large rallies around the country. But the SLFP took up a racist campaign of opposing Tamil voting rights being restored. The only reason the SLFP has begun to draw the rural masses is the ineptitude of the United Left Front (ULF). The biggest mistake would be for the left parties—the CP, LSSP and SLMP—to join a new

popular front government with the SLFP—although the leaders of these parties would far prefer ministerial portfolios to leading a revolution.

All the adverse developments of the last decade—the crushing electoral defeat of the left in 1977 and the erosion of democratic rights, the development of guerillaism, nationalism and racial pogroms are all ultimately due to the historical betrayal of the LSSP and CP in joining the bourgeois SLFP in the 1970 popular front government.

At the 1984 May Day demonstration of workers, the anti-government forces rallied massively behind the ULF. But after two years of inaction by the ULF the tide has recently begun to change

in the opposite direction.

Nevertheless, a beautiful opportunity exists for the ULF to launch a mass struggle against the government. Apart from the estate workers, the doctors have just won a five day strike and the Joint Trade Union Committee has called for a national delegate conference on 2 March to be followed by a day of protest (although the SLMP and LSSP are still not participating in the committee).

Opportunity

Up till now the ULF has failed to intervene and lead the struggle of the doctors, estate workers, Tamils and peasants. If they let the coming opportunity slip, then the danger will arise of the bourgeois SLFP becoming

the national focus of opposition.

The ULF rank and file must force the workers' leaders to take the NSSP into the ULF and launch a massive campaign on the burning class issues of the day—minimum wage rise; end closures of corporations; abolish water taxes, national and democratic rights for Tamils; for an immediate general election etc.

This should culminate in the proposed day of protest which should involve massive industrial action and draw in the struggles of the urban and estate workers as well as the Tamils and the peasants. This would be the beginning of an extra-parliamentary struggle to bring down the government and take forward the fight for a socialist future.

Scrap Murdoch



SOGAT members demonstrate outside Murdoch's plant at Wapping. Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dear Comrades,
 "There are a number of people working in Fleet Street who are grossly overpaid and carrying out tasks that are nowadays outdated. Doing things, in fact, that society's modern technology has rendered obsolete. Not only that, but they and their organisations pose a serious threat to press freedom and the right to free speech".

The media would have us believe I'm talking about the printworkers. I am instead, referring to the handful of millionaires who own and control the British press.

These people abuse their enormous powers, and slander the trade union and labour movement. Between them, Maxwell and Murdoch have thrown 7,000 workers onto the scrapheap in the last few weeks.

The next labour government must ensure that access to the media is decided on the basis of electoral support for the parties concerned and not to the size of the proprietor's bank balance.

Yours fraternally
 Brighton NUJ member

Tourism to save economy?

Dear Comrades,

At the turn of the century Llanelli was firmly established as a major centre in Britain for the manufacture of tinplate. Only one tinplate works remains now, which along with Cynheidre colliery, Rn Llangennech, Fishers, and British Leyland car factory, are the major employers in and around Llanelli. All have question marks hanging over their futures.

Since the Tories came to power their policies have devastated the local economy.

According to the borough council tourism is to be the saviour of Llanelli.

If you have ever been to Llanelli you would know what a joke this is. We have the dirtiest beach in Wales. When swimming you have to keep a wary eye open for excrement. If you swallow a mouthful of seawater it's a stomach-pump job.

Tourism is no alternative to heavy industry. Tourism creates no wealth and very few long term jobs. It is some of these people pushing tourism that have chosen to attack *Militant* supporters in Llanelli Labour Party stating we are an embarrassment to the local party.

I let you be the judge who's an embarrassment, socialists fighting for a socialist transformation of society, or people who recommend we all become deck-chair attendants on Llanelli beach!

Yours fraternally
 M Evans
 Llanelli Labour Party
 (personal capacity)

Roy's ramblings

Dear Comrades,

Andy Beadle's letter on the ramblings of Roy Hattersley in *The Guardian* comes as no surprise. Last October while Liverpool was at the height of its cash crisis, Roy laid bare his soul to his readers.

Apparently he dreads the last Wednesday in the month because he's forced to sit in on the NEC meetings. Being the sort of chap who constantly gazes out of the window he wrote complaining that the derelict South London skyline was not to his taste. He then went on a long, self-indulgent voyage around the world recalling exotic skylines that he knew and loved. My heart ached for his suffering!

Why is Roy so selflessly putting himself through this monthly ordeal? Could it be that he thinks it's better that he occupies that chair, rather than a real socialist?

Yours fraternally
 George Knell
 Huddersfield

Chosen for their policies

Dear Comrades,

Langdon Hills ward in Basildon has just undergone a reselection process to select a councillor to fight a by-election coming up in March.

Three of the four candidates chosen to attend the reselection meeting were women. We did not adopt a policy of positive discrimination. The women were chosen for the record of work done in the party and their policies.

Ironically, the only male candidate when asked how Labour could attract more support from working women said the party should adopt positive discrimination!

Yours fraternally
 Kim Waddington
 Basildon

Hospital cuts

Dear Comrades,

During my stay in Leighton Hospital in Crewe, Cheshire whilst I had my baby, the lack of government funding and harsh cuts were very obvious.

For our babies, we had to provide our own nappies, talc, soap, etc which up to a year previous had been provided by the hospital.

The lack of staff on our ward was very evident. One particular night two nurses had the responsibility of 19 babies, two of which were in a special care incubator.

Another day the nurses were so understaffed that some of the mothers were helping nurses by collecting laundry, whilst other mothers were running the

maternity ward's canteen.

I got talking to an electrician who told me how management was laying off lots of his workmates and they had begun a new system of temporary contracts lasting three months at a time. In this way they could avoid paying sick pay, holiday pay, paternity leave and could try and stop union activity as known activists would not get renewed contracts.

Unless we overthrow the Tories and have a Labour government committed to socialist policies this will only be a taste of more brutal cuts to come.

Yours fraternally
 Rebecca Hunt
 Cheshire

Forgotten

Dear Comrades,

Militant 783 does well to highlight the plight of pensioners. However no more is it the case that only senior citizens are suffering the indignity of cold and hunger, teenagers in Southampton are in the same position, and have been for years.

It is obvious that hundreds of people in this area of the so-called 'prosperous South' are living in bad conditions and not eating enough.

What makes this worse is the disease of loneliness which people young and old alike suffer, particularly in cities and when you're on the dole.

I have never seen statistics for loneliness, it is a hidden factor which is caused through community breakdown, broken marriages etc, as well as by looking for work in other parts of the country.

Yours fraternally
 Mike King
 Southampton

YC Rally

Dear Comrades,

Nine LPYS members took on the Young Tory rabble outside their National Conference in Blackpool recently. 32 copies of *Militant* were sold and over £5 raised for the fighting fund. Three or four papers were even sold to Young Tories—although we charged them a consultation fee as well!

Two new members helped give out over 1,500 leaflets to local youth advertising our own LPYS regional conference in Blackpool on 15/16 February. Many names and addresses for the LPYS were collected.

The best part was when Granada TV started filming the outside of the conference. A gang of local youth grabbed our leaflets and began handing them out and the TV reporter bought a copy of the paper for £1.

Yours fraternally
 Phil Forrester
 LPYS Regional Committee

Letters

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

Handicapped exploited

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to your paper to highlight the plight of the physically handicapped on the labour market. In times of high unemployment the physically handicapped find it virtually impossible to gain employment thus being forced to accept low wages.

I speak in particular of a workshop for the disabled in Liverpool which is funded by the Manpower Services Commission. Although this is intended as a one-year's work experience for the disabled, what frequently occurs is that by the end of their 52 weeks the physically handicapped return to the home with little hope of continuing employment.

In what is supposed to be a non-profit making

organisation, a profit of £2,000 in the first year of operation and an aim of £5,500 in the second indicates that the original seemingly philanthropic ideals of the scheme have drowned in capitalist business principles.

Recent events, such as the expansion of the scheme means that the needs and interests of the physically handicapped will soon be forgotten. With this in mind a union representative has been contacted and all participants have been urged to join a union; a lesson to be learned for all employees on MSC schemes.

Yours fraternally
 Member of Broadgreen
 LPYS

Freedom or equality



Photo: Militant

Dear Comrades,

Neil Kinnock on *Week-end World* said that he thought the struggle for the "freedom of the individual" came before the struggle for "equality".

I am a single parent with two teenage children. Perhaps, Neil, you can explain how I can have the 'freedom' to have urgent surgery unless I can afford to pay. Or how I can be guaranteed the 'freedom' of a decent home without the fear of eviction, unless I can pay my mortgage and bills out of my £59.45 social security payments.

Perhaps Neil, you can explain to all the old people why after working all their lives, they have to eke out the remainder of their lives in poverty, freezing to death because as 'free individuals' they cannot afford decent food, warm clothes and high heating bills.

In Bournemouth there are a lot of retired—sorry, old people, who have never done a day's work in their lives who do have the 'freedom' to live in luxury—but Neil, that's because they are 'rich'.

Yours comradely
 Julie Harris
 Poole

All the Tories can offer young people is the 'freedom' to escape the dole queue by joining various low paid schemes.



It's a hard life

DEBRET'S MAGAZINE, for the House of Lords contains a fascinating article on in-car telephone systems. The phones cost from £1,250 to about £3,000 each. Lord Brocket was commissioned to try them out. He has "installed a completely integrated telephone system throughout his range of cars..." but complains: "There are, however, serious imperfections in the system... Sometimes you lose a call for no apparent reason and it will cost you 25p to dial again!" Is there no end to it?

Luxury pad for 'copter boss

WESTLAND HELICOPTERS may have been in financial trouble but somebody is doing alright. Alan Bristow the major shareholder who claimed he was offered a knighthood if he voted for the Sikorsky take-over bid, has just spent a million pounds on improvements to his Surrey home. It now has a giant swimming pool, rifle range, billiards room and sauna.

AUEW election . . .

JASON HUNTER, is AUEW convenor at Thorn-EMI's Main Gas Appliances site, Padiham, Lancashire. In the article to the right he explains how the local campaign for John Tocher, the left's candidate for AUEW president, was run in his area. Below is an edited version of a document he wrote for use in the campaign.

In the first ballot Tocher won 50,754 votes to the main right wing candidate, Bill Jordan's 72,311. There were six candidates. Four of whom drop out for the second ballot. On the same turn-out there are about 100,000 votes to be re-distributed. Only Gerry Russell's 25,000 could be expected to go to the right wing candidate. But even those may have been cast on a regional basis.

John Tocher is a time-served fitter and has a long record as a committed trade unionist and left-wing Labour Party member.

Jordan must be defeated. Jason Hunter outlines the total failure of the AUEW right wing's industrial policies below. On the political front Jordan is firmly in the Sir John Boyd/Terry Duffy mould and has constantly opposed socialist policies and attempts to democratise the Labour Party.

Ballot papers will be out on 9 March, and but must be back by 28 March.

Shopfloor campaign for Tocher

IN BURNLEY, the Broad Left discussed the John Tocher election campaign and circulated material to the main factories and workplaces in the town as well as to retired members.

The material was mainly that provided by *Engineering Gazette*. Unfortunately there was not enough for every member in the District so it was necessary to improvise.

Explain ideas

In the Main Gas Appliances Factory, Thorn EMI Ltd in Padiham (700 members) at which I am convenor, I began the campaign at a shop stewards' meeting. I decided that it was not enough to take for granted shop stewards' support for Tocher and so spent some time explaining the case. I did this with the help of a document I wrote (see below).

Whilst not referring to Tocher by name, it served as a reminder of the many occasions upon which we had reason to criticise our national leadership at the

Padiham Factory.

It was well received by the shop stewards, each of whom were given a copy, as well as displaying it on the three notice boards to which the union has access.

Having spelt out the need for a change in direction of our leadership, and the key importance of the Presidential election, it was then a case of explaining why Tocher, as against the other six candidates, fits the bill.

Apart from distributing a substantial number of leaflets to each shop steward, including: copies of the *Engineering Gazette*, *Engineering Gazette* leaflets, copies of the biographical statement on Tocher, and photocopies of the back articles in *Militant* ("Tocher of the AUEW" and "My programme for the AUEW"), I went through in some detail how Tocher stood on the



John Tocher, Broad Left candidate for AUEW presidency.

main issues affecting our members. I referred in particular to his electoral address.

Active support

As a result of all this, the shop stewards agreed to support and circulate the material for John Tocher. I feel it is vital that shop stewards are convinced of the need to back him, rather than just say "Tocher's the man" and leave it at that, if they are to do a job of work for the campaign.

In addition to the leafletting, I took the opportunity

at a series of sectional meetings to explain Tocher's case to a significant number of members as we were holding meetings on the wage claim at the time of the first ballot.

I also put in large letters on the noticeboard a last minute reminder of the need to vote at the beginning of the last week of polling. I am told that the right wing have traditionally a better record for polling in the last week, so it is important that the campaign continues right up to the date of the polls closing.



The price of right wing failure

THE PLANNED retirement and premature death of AUEW President, Terry Duffy, gives the membership of our union an opportunity, for the first time in years, to push for a change in the style of leadership practised at national level.

This is not a question of personalities, but about the position our union, one of the biggest in Britain, takes on the day to day bread and butter issues that affect the vital interests of our members.

Following a period of so-called moderation, under the leadership of Duffy and his supporters, a period seen by many members as one of capitulation and backing down to the employers, we need a more dynamic and progressive leadership.

Working week

We have to restore the living standards of engineering workers to former levels, and to make the employers realise that our national union will fully back the struggles of members rather than allow them to be walked over.

Many members will remember the 1979 AUEW national strike for

a reduction in working hours to 35 per week. In spite of the dedication many of our members showed in supporting that struggle, their efforts were rewarded by a settlement regarded widely as a 'sell out'.

The end result was a 39 hour week, not to be introduced until November 1981, the selling of personal days for long service people, and an agreement that these issues (working hours and holidays) would not be discussed again for four years. Our members were not consulted when this settlement was reached by the national officials.

In 1983, discussions were reopened on working hours and holidays. No progress has been made, and again settlements have been reached on the AUEW national claim without any attempt to consult our members.

If the national negotiations are to mean anything at all to rank and file members, they must be fully consulted in future before a claim is dropped. This is one area where a new leadership can bring change.

Again, looking back to 1979, members will remember the failure of the leadership to give their full support to the sacked convenor of British Leyland Derek Robinson. His only misdemeanour was to distribute literature opposing the

management 'Edwardes Plan' for major redundancies in the car industry. This opened the door to a whole series of attacks on union organisation and facilities.

Wages and jobs

More recently, again at British Leyland, the AUEW refused to make official a strike by our members rather than stand up to the anti-union legislation. Our union leaders let the Transport and General Workers stand alone and receive massive fines, rather than standing together with other trade unionists in defending the right to strike.

Many shop stewards will remember the letter of condemnation our shop stewards committee sent to the NEC and to the *AUEW Journal* and the discourteous way in which we received no reply.

On wages, we have seen the national officials make progress at a snail's pace in increasing the national minimum rates, currently resting at as little as £96.40 for skilled men and £69 for unskilled.

Most engineers earn more than this because of organisation at site level. Therefore, the national wage claim means little to us. Yet, with little or no assistance from national

level, it is increasingly difficult to make gains at site level.

A strong national leadership is needed to develop a pay claim of relevance to all members and to use the full force of the union to restore our members' pay levels to a reasonable living wage.

On defence of the right to work, the Duffy leadership presided over thousands of redundancies and job losses in engineering without any nationally inspired fightback.

This might have been forgivable if the union had given support to workers who, off their own bat, were prepared to take action against redundancies. However, when workers at Lawrence Scott's in Manchester took industrial action to stop the closure of their plant, the national union withdrew official backing when the workers refused to accept a deal involving a small number of jobs being saved.

The result of this climbdown will be remembered from the television showing scenes of helicopters carting off the factory's plant and equipment under heavy police protection, and the workers facing defeat.

In general terms, the national union has failed to adapt to the attacks on our movement in the

1980s. Workers who have tried to organise meetings with other workers in the same company or combine have had to do so without the support, assistance or approval of our national union leadership.

Meanwhile, on the question of internal union democracy, our union's postal ballot system continues to see at least a quarter of members never receiving ballot papers, and a good half not bothering to vote because they do not know the candidates involved in an election.

Renew respect

A system based on factory balloting would seem a far fairer system to operate, quite apart from being less expensive.

The high cost of postal ballots encouraged the union leadership to break TUC policy in accepting government money for ballots. The result of this is that our union could be expelled from the TUC, isolated in the labour movement.

Above all, increasing reliance on a hostile government could compromise the union's independence at some stage in the future.

A new, progressive leadership could restore the dignity of our union, increasing its credibility with members and employers alike, and thereby massively increase membership involvement and influence over key decisions with a corresponding improvement in wages, conditions and defence of jobs.

Fleet Street crisis...

Pickets attacked

TONY PRIDE, a UCATT member, said after the march on Saturday night at Wapping:

Police attacks were indiscriminate—young or old, male or female.

Mick Moore, London Region LPYS committee, recalled:

The violence and the sheer hate of the police towards marchers will be unforgettable to those who witnessed it. But this has increased the determination of many others that the printers will win, police brutality or not.

Martin Craxton, an ASTMS member, said:

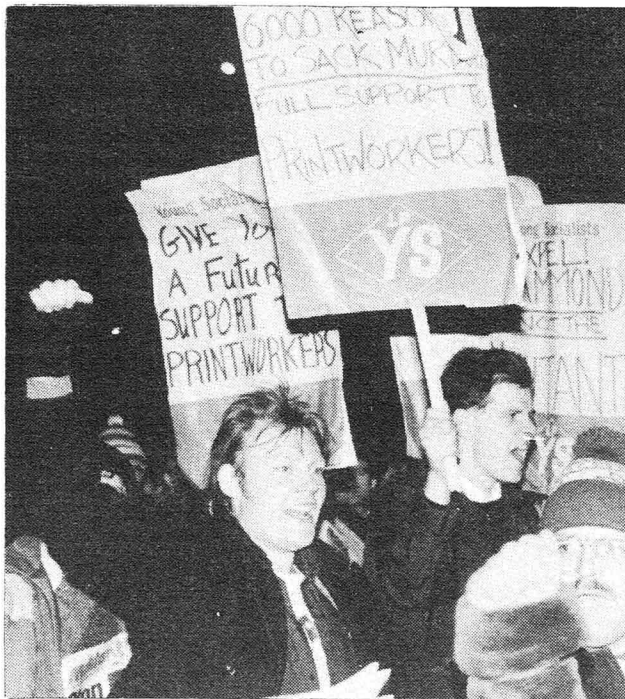
The discussion amongst printworkers was how there was a need for every trade unionist to rally behind the dispute and stop work. SOGAT and NGA members must realise the picket in itself is insufficient.

Max Ali, a LPYS member:

This was my first time on a picket line, but despite witnessing the ferocity of the police I'll be back every week to support the printers' fight against Murdoch and his paid bully-boys.

Marie Blake, unemployed LPYS member:

Police went mad—there was hate in their eyes and they were grabbing anyone. "We'll get the whole f***** lot of you!" they were screaming.



LPYS members at Wapping

Pam Anson, a NALGO member:

The police charged straight into us. A female comrade beside me was punched in the mouth by a copper. It was unbelievable.

Jess Beishon, LPYS National Committee Elect, South London told Militant: Over 200 LPYS members marched from Tower Hill to Wapping with sacked printworkers. When the 5,000-strong march arrived it

was greeted by police clad in riot gear backed up by horses. Random arrests using 'snatch squad' tactics followed. The police laughed as one of their colleagues remarked: "I hope this goes on as long as the miners' strike—I'll be able to buy another house then".

Even as pickets were dispersing the police continued their manoeuvres, practising for future and bigger confrontations.

Nellist shows Murdoch illegal

DAVE NELLIST MP through questions in parliament has revealed that the razor wire fence around Fort Murdoch at Wapping does not have the required planning permission from the local authority of Tower Hamlets.

The plans submitted for

the site included fencing but the nature was unstated and it is thought the existing fence does not comply with requirements and may have to come down. Razor wire is commonly found sited at prisons and is extremely dangerous.

Murdoch has claimed

News International 'did not know permission was needed until last week'. Funny, they seemed to have coped sufficiently in the law courts gaining injunctions and causing union funds to be sequestered.

Journalists Broad Left

IN THE wake of the events at Wapping, the first steps have been taken within the National Union of Journalists to develop a Broad Left.

A group of activists from all journalist sectors met in London last week and agreed to form a Broad Left. The inaugural meeting will on Saturday 22 March in London, when speakers involved in the Wapping dispute and in coming national elections will address the meeting.

A proper democratic structure and membership will also be presented, as well as a discussion on policies to support at the NUJ Annual Delegate Meeting in Sheffield from 15-18 April.

For further details, NUJ members should contact: Bob McKee, Acting Secretary, 141 Hydethorpe Road, London SW12. Telephone: 01 675-7027.



London EETPU Press Branch banner on Wapping picket.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

SOUTHAMPTON HAS become infamous for its role in providing many of the scabs recruited by the EETPU for Murdoch's plants at Wapping. Murdoch's distribution firm TNT also has a big depot at Eastleigh, just outside Southampton.

A site has been specially developed to distribute the scab papers, a fleet of vans bought, and the normal barbed wire fence built all

By a Southampton EETPU member.

around it.

In the bitterly cold early hours of Thursday 13th February, pickets arrived outside to try to stop distribution. Printers and other trade unionists from Southampton and Portsmouth should have been joined by two coachloads of

Escape from Fort Murdoch

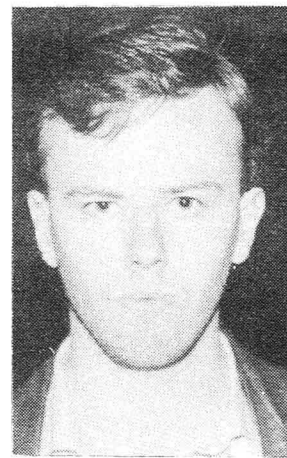
A YOUNG Socialist from Tower Hamlets tells *Militant* how he nearly became a Murdoch scab.

I was in the Job Centre at Watney Market in Poplar and saw a card for a job working as a labourer on gardens around the Tower of London. The woman at the Job Centre booked me in for an interview in a week's time.

The following week I went back and was interviewed for about ten minutes by the bloke advertising.

There weren't any general questions. He mainly seemed interested in whether I was prepared to graft. There didn't seem any problem and he said he would phone me at home that evening to say whether I'd got the job.

I was really pleased to get the call saying I should start the next day and he would pick me up at Watney Market. It all seemed to be going well when he arrived in



"£120 a week snatched".

a pick-up and we set off for work.

When he turned down to the News International site, straight past the pickets and through the gate I was well choked. The guards wanted to search me but the bloke persuaded them not to. He parked, we got out and he

offered to show me round.

It was really tightly organised. There were security locks on doors which you had to know the numbers to punch in. There were security men everywhere. The workers had different colour boiler suits on for different floors, possibly different jobs, except in the loading bays.

When we'd looked round he said 'Right, let's get started.' By that time I'd got myself together a bit and told him I supported the print workers and wasn't prepared to work there. He said: "Oh no, not again" and I walked off.

I spoke to the pickets and explained what had happened. They gave me a cheer but I didn't stop. I just felt sick. I had to go home and tell my family that somebody had just snatched £120 a week out of my hand. I hope the printers smash Murdoch.

Milton Keynes—stop scab labour

MILTON KEYNES, Britain's 'brand new city', is being used as a centre for recruiting scab labour in the Wapping dispute. Chris Hill, of the local EETPU, reports:

EVER NIGHT at 6.00pm a coachload of 'roughnecks' depart from the bus station for Wapping. Unemployment in the city is 13.9 per cent and Murdoch's blood money of £50 per night is a temptation some workers can't ignore.

Scabs are recruited through the Job Centre by an un-named local contractor. It also appears that a coachload of scabs are going on a dayshift—possibly doing cleaning work. The

coaches are owned by Wahl's—a non-union London firm—which ignore the noisy picket set up by the local Pullmans workers. However, we hope that contingents of Fleet Street printworkers will make the 50 mile journey up the M1 to assist.

Plans are now being drawn up to bring the whole of the city's labour movement into a major and sustained offensive against the scabs. Staffordshire miners are to be asked to return the help given them from Milton Keynes during their strike.

We are determined that Milton Keynes will not become known as 'scab city'.

Murdoch ultimatum to NUJ

AT A recent meeting of the Press and PR branch of the National Union of Journalists, Greg Neal FOC at *The Times* explained how News International management delivered an ultimatum to journalists working for the group's titles.

"We were called into a room by the editor who just informed us that from then on the paper would be produced at Wapping. We either went to work there 'without any reservations whatsoever' or we took the consequences". Existing terms and house agreements built up over decades were dispensed with at one stroke.

Greg Neal argued that the journalists had been in a unique position of power and if they had stayed firm, they could have stopped Murdoch's operation, as he needed their skills. But through a mixture of fear, old antagonisms with the printers, and downright greed, the majority voted to go to Wapping.

The vote was still very close at the *Sunday Times* and a more on the ball attitude from NUJ officials might have increased the numbers prepared to back the national executive position. As it was, only a small minority have stayed out, including all the original chapel officials.

Now many working at Wapping were regretting it and were looking for other jobs. But the pressure must be stepped up by the NUJ executive. The executive had voted to black copy to Wapping and put a picket on, but it had voted ten to nine not to call out NUJ members working there.

The Press and PR branch went on to pass a motion calling on the executive to make an official strike at News International and instruct NUJ members to leave Wapping or face disciplinary action.

By Bob McKee
(Press and PR NUJ)

**Soton
TNT
picket**

Firefighters march on Parliament

THURSDAY 25 February sees a demonstration and lobby of Parliament by members of the Fire Brigades Union. **ANDY DARK 'A' Division Secretary, London FBU (personal capacity)** explains why:

IT HAS never been doubted that the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan authorities would herald the dawn of a new era for the FBU after a decade of 'relative' stability. This factor coupled with many others indicate that the union's problems will begin almost immediately.

With the political fund ballot now in its closing stages, the FBU will soon face the legal arguments over what is and isn't 'political' for the purpose of defining where the funding for any campaign should come from.

Moreover, if some negotiation is deemed political, then to call for strike action in pursuit of our interests could be 'unlawful' as it would then be deemed a 'political strike'.

Already the bosses are also renewing their calls for strikes in the essential services to be made illegal.

Firefighters, who were last forced to strike nine years ago because of low wages may very well be forced to resort to strike action again.

With abolition upon us the political balance on the National Joint Council has swung in favour of the Tories. Judging by their past record whilst sitting as part of a minority grouping we will soon find our conditions under attack.

Possible targets include the Upper Quartile Pay Agreement won at the end of the 1977 nine-week strike, and the shift system.

We know that local authorities up and down the

country are downgrading some of their stations from whole-time-manned to just day-manned or retained (ie. manned by part-time firemen).

This means at best a loss of income and at worst a loss in job. In terms of public safety it will result in longer turnover times. The 20 February march through London to lobby Parliament, marks the end of a series of rallies which have taken place in Manchester, Sheffield and Liverpool over the past four months.

The FBU are attempting to bring public attention to the dangers caused by the recent budget limitations and recruitment freezes imposed by the Home Office.

It is clear, however, that this series of demonstrations alone will not alter the attitudes of the employers.

An extensive campaign must be launched by the FBU to speak to the membership, to impress the importance of fighting now—in order to 'stop the rot'.

Similarly, a campaign should be waged, aimed at the public, extending the leaflet-drop along the route of the march to a mass circulation of information complemented by public meetings on a joint platform with local Labour councillors involved in fire authority work.

On this basis we could call a series of successful one-day strikes, backed-up, if necessary, by an all-out strike against cuts and attacks upon our conditions of service.

Action spreads in DHSS



MANCHESTER DHSS workers on one-day strike. There have been a series of such actions recently around the country. Frustration is at breaking point in many offices. Claimants are being asked to wait to up to five hours while their supplementary benefit claims are being dealt with. This leads to a few claimants venting their frustration in acts of violence, breaking windows, furniture and the protective screens between claimants and receptionists. Frustration on the part of DHSS workers who have to work in an environment of ever-increasing workloads means many experienced DHSS workers leaving to go to other jobs or so fed up with all the pressures they go on the dole themselves.

This is why the CPSA DHSS section campaign for more staff in DHSS offices coupled with a successful pay campaign is vital to raise morale of DHSS workers and to stop the social security system from completely breaking down.

By a DHSS worker

Photo: John Smith

Halewood challenges Ford pay structure

FOR NEARLY two weeks there has been no car production at Fords' Halewood plant on Merseyside. 1,700 line workers are still on strike over up-grading. All overtime has now been stopped

a the plant for the 9,000 workers there.

Martin Lee spoke to a group of Ford workers: "Everyone in the plant has sympathy with the men. Everyone accepts they

should be C-grade, but if management back down on this they'll be facing another 20,000 similar claims in Britain. There could even be a knock-on effect in Europe.

"The attitude will be 'If they win the C-grade, we want B-grade'. Unfortunately the meetings that have been called have been for B-grade workers only. This had tended to isolate the men to a certain extent. However, in Fords now there are hun-

dreds of different problems with management's new work proposals.

What is needed is a unified campaign against management. This latest upgrading claim is just the start. National officers are meeting at Halewood this Wednesday to persuade the other workers at the plant to give active support for line workers which is what is needed if the dispute is to be won."

Scottish Electric

AUEW MEMBERS at Scottish Electric in Dundee have been on strike for more than three months to win the reinstatement of their convenor and other members who were dismissed shortly after setting up a union in the factory.

They are going to win since nothing is moving in or out of

the factory due to the support of T&G drivers refusing to cross the picket lines. Morale is high and was boosted recently by a weekly mass picket every lunch time at the factory.

Threats by the boss to close down the factory have only hardened resolve. The strikers urge as many people to attend a

mass picket as possible and welcome support on the picket line at any time.

For donations, messages of support, requests for speakers, etc, write to John Kidd, AUEW District Secretary, 26 South Ward Road, Dundee. Tel: (0382) 22406.

By Ted Goodman
(Executive, Dundee Labour Party, personal capacity)

London printers sacked for defending health and safety

TWELVE SACKED NGA members have spent three months picketing their factory Clearview Ltd/Unicorn Mills Ltd for reinstatement.

The twelve members decided to improve health and safety at the factory, and after a meeting with a health and safety official found that certain machines were safety risks.

They informed their employer, asked him to rectify the matter within two weeks and said while repairs were done they were prepared to do other jobs.

When the two weeks were up, the twelve members saw the repairs carried out had only been superficial and refused to work with dangerous machinery. Attempts to meet the management were quashed. Harassment and victimisation began.

One worker was singled out and threatened with loss of wages if he did not accompany management to the director's office.

Once in the office he asked for his FOC. His request was denied. He asked for another member. This was also denied.

Then, with his exit blocked by a management, he was forced to sign a letter saying his machine was safe and he would work it.

He was then allowed back to the factory floor, in a very confused state, where he again refused to work his machine. He was told to go home without pay.

On hearing of these events, the FOC went to the director's office and found another member being harassed.

He told the member to leave, and then asked for the suspension without pay to be put in writing but was refused.

He was told to leave the premises and the management even called the police. He was told not to waste police time and to sort the matter out reasonably. The FOC left the offices and the two other members went home without pay.

The next morning the twelve members asked for a meeting with management and were told

that if they refused to work the dangerous machines they were all to go home without pay. They asked for this in writing and were again refused.

That evening between 7.30pm and 11.00pm, members were visited at their own homes by the Director and handed dismissal notices for "breaking their contracts without just cause".

One week later all health and safety points mentioned to the management by the twelve NGA members were completed. Then the factory inspector was called in and the factory was passed.

We have been victimised and eventually sacked for union activity. We will continue to picket Clearview Ltd/Unicorn Mills Ltd until we are all reinstated.

All the moral and financial support possible is needed. Please visit at "The Car Park", Crouch End, or outside Clearviews Ltd, 40 Coleridge Road, Crouch End Hornsey N8. Donations to: Clearview NGA 54 Linzee Road, Hornsey, London N8 7RE.

Leyland steward sacked

BRITISH LEYLAND Range Rover senior shop steward Ian Schofield has been summarily sacked on trumped up charges.

He is supposed to be guilty of gross misconduct. In fact his crime is not to mention in his application form fourteen years ago that he had worked for Land Rover for two weeks in 1970.

At a meeting on Monday which lasted over three and a half hours management attempted to broaden the charges. They accused him of refusing to attend a meeting when instructed to. The reason was that they had only given him fifty minutes notice and he had an appointment arranged with his full-time union official at the same time.

They have also complained about a leaflet campaign at the site by Militant supporters against his victimisation. Though he was not personally involved in the drawing up or distribution of the leaflets management are merely being hypocritical. They want to be able to carry out their victimisation of a leading shop steward



without publicity or opposition. The truth is that this dismissal is an attack on every single Rover employee. Management are using this attack on one of the leading trade union activists in an attempt to behead workers' organisation in preparation for privatisation and mass redundancies.

They have even gone to the

lengths of issuing their own leaflet, a so-called 'employee briefing' in an attempt to justify their actions and divide the workforce.

But the union response has been inadequate. Rule 11, clause 4 of the TGWU rule book calls for immediate action by the union to defend a shop steward. A delay can prove fatal. Incredibly the Wednesday meeting of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee demanded that Schofield disassociate himself from Militant.

This is crazy. Militant never demanded Derek Robinson renounce his 'Communism' in return for support at Longbridge. We would argue for full backing in defence of a shop steward with Tory views. It is about solidarity in defence of shop floor organisation.

Any diversions or excuses play into the hands of management. And anybody dodging their basic responsibilities only puts themselves and other workers next in line for the same treatment.

By Ian Parker

Silentnight

SILENTNIGHT MANAGEMENT two weeks ago threatened to take out an injunction to stop strikers distributing leaflets outside shops selling their products.

Whilst the union (FTAT) takes legal advice the leafletting campaign has been resumed with a new set of leaflets.

Strikers are continuing their campaign for support and funds throughout the country. During the next few weeks they will be touring the West Midlands and South Wales where good contacts have been made with the the National Union of Seamen.



Militant

Print dispute Page 14

AUEW election Page 13

Bold print strategy

“POLICE SNATCH squads attacked after a section of us were forced into a barricaded side street. I was pushed in the face and was grabbed by my hair... Another girl and myself were caught by surprise and knocked to the ground. My head hit the pavement.

“When you see police violence on television like Orgreave you know what side the police are on, but when you actually see people lying in the street injured after a police charge it really brings it home to you. The police fought as if it was an all-out class war.”

These words of a seventeen year-old girl amongst the 5,000 demonstrators at Wapping last Saturday night bring home the brutal truth about this confrontation with Rupert Murdoch.

The print dispute is no longer a struggle against Murdoch alone. Already the courts have begun impounding our funds. Murdoch has called on the full force of the state.

Behind him stand the press barons, big business at large, the Tory government, their anti-union laws, Tory judges. And in front of his scab printing plant stand the police. The gauntlet has been thrown down to the entire labour and trade union movement.

Any hesitation on our part will only strengthen Murdoch. The only possible course of action is to deepen and extend the dispute. We must show total determination to win. Weakness only ever invites more aggression.

Already the *Express* wants a 50 per cent cut in their workforce. *The Guardian* wants a massive job cut. The fate of every print worker depends on the outcome of this struggle. The print bosses are out to smash the pre-entry closed shop, the bed-rock of our strength.

SOGAT's decision to pay the fine and co-operate with the sequestration is like embracing the hangman before the execution. As in the case of the NGA and Eddie Shah the judge will only impose further and bigger fines.

This is not just another dispute. It is an attack on basic trade union rights.

By Peter Jarvis
(London Region NGA)

Print workers must give a lead. How can we demand solidarity action, ask other workers to take risks with their jobs on our behalf when our own members are still working?

★ Fleet Street must be stopped, as the first step to a national print strike.

Energetic agitation must be launched to ensure complete solidarity. It will be argued that wider action will make Murdoch's titles the only ones on the streets. A complete shut down would have to go hand in hand with vigorous picketing, including flying pickets going out to every plant and distribution depot. Offers of help and the beginning of support committees in the areas are already being seen. The miners showed how cash can be raised. This is the way to finance an all-out strike.

★ Mass picket at Wapping and flying pickets.

The picket at Wapping can become a central focus for the dispute. The plant can be closed as was Saltley Gate during the 1972 miners' strike. The women's demonstration and the growing size of the Saturday pickets show what can be achieved even without a lead from the unions.

But it will take a massive mobilisation and determined leadership. The print unions have to be seen to be fighting. The NGA has to stop boycotting the Wapping demonstrations.

And we have a duty to properly organise such action. It cannot be left to a couple of 'leaders' from



Photo: Dave Sinclair

The police are consistently being used to support employers' attacks on workers. Snatch squads were in brutal action at Wapping last Saturday.

amongst the officials who bother to attend.

Sufficient stewards aware of that evening's strategy must be appointed in order to give the action cohesion and direction. They must also be positioned to deal with idiots and provocateurs who are mostly doing more damage to other protestors and the strategy of the picket than to the police.

Up and down the country the print unions must be hammering home the message, "We can win! Murdoch must be stopped." But this can only be done by broadening the dispute.

The trade union leaders hope that financial pressure and disruption to Murdoch's papers will bring him to the

negotiating table. The longer this tactic alone is relied on, the easier it will be for him to iron out his problems and working class opposition to be demoralised.

Murdoch is trying to isolate print workers from other trade unionists through the courts. Already the UCW have faced an injunction. Without solidarity the trade unions are nothing. The only answer is to go on the offensive.

★ The TUC must call a 24-hour national strike.

Action has to be taken to defend trade union rights and union funds. The wider implications of this dispute

cannot be ignored. The retreat of the trade union leaders must be halted.

The Tories are split, opinion polls show them trailing third behind the SDP. Now is the time to show them our strength. We must campaign to force a general election and finish off this crippled Tory government.

The miners showed the capacity exists in the working class to fight this bosses' government. Teachers, hospital workers, car workers and many more are currently in action around the country. The leadership of our movement must seize the time. If a decisive lead is given we will win.

Adverts blow

DESPITE THE blarney, News International is refusing to publish results of the research of distribution for the first two weeks of the dispute. Advertising agencies are expecting to receive them. Alan Cophedge, Associate Director of TMD Advertising said: "(this) research obviously shows dire results. News International is putting two fingers up to the advertising world".



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