

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 25p

ISSUE 790 21 March 1986

Inside...

Come to YS
conference

See Page 5

Shut down Murdoch

LAST SATURDAY'S picket of 'Fort Wapping' was the most successful yet. Distribution of the *News of the World* and *Sunday Times* was delayed for five hours, by the protests of 10,000 printers and other trade unionists.

By Steve Billcliff

But action must be stepped up, particularly through the TUC—to show that trade union rights cannot be trampled on. The fight for all basic union rights, are focused at present on the News International dispute.

Saturday's high turnout was due partly to the previous Wednesday, when a peaceful rally of 2,000 was disrupted by a scab lorry ploughing into it. There was no attempt to stop the truck by the hundreds of police on duty.

It was a miracle that no more than two printers were injured, and that no-one was killed.

The organised police violence on Saturday, however, must serve as a sharp warning of the response effective picketing will receive.

In short and unpredictable bursts it was worse, for cold, callous and uncontrolled ferocity than anything seen at Warrington or during the miners' strike.

One eye-witness related how mounted police charged the front of the printers' march. For a brief time, they were beaten back.

"A little later, in an act of pure spite, I saw half a dozen mounted police charge up a small dead-end road, packed with people. Pickets were scrambling to get out of the way of them—I had to climb over a railing to get onto the pavement.

"There was panic as people jumped onto the pavement, and then anger as they realised that this was a deliberate action.

"Despite this, the police only managed to hold a small area of road, so there was still no path for the lorries. All entrances were blocked, with some barricades being set up using crowd-control barriers.

"I went to the Glamis Road end. As time went on the mood got more jubilant, knowing that Murdoch was losing thousands of sales.



Wapping, 15 March. Police ride straight into peaceful pickets.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Continued on back page

Fight Labour purge

"FIRST WE'LL give you a fair trial, then we'll execute you". This in effect is what the Labour Party National Executive Committee has said to the 12 Liverpool Labour Party members who are to appear before them on the 26 March on "charges" of being active Marxists.

At Easter the LPYS hold their annual conference at Bournemouth. They had invited Derek Hatton and Tony Wedlake, Welsh representative on the LPYS National Committee to address them.

Now the well-paid apparatchniks

of Walworth Road are trying to stamp on that idea—Why? Because both men "may be expelled by the time conference comes about!" What an admission! The "hearings" will be a sham. The verdict is already settled in the minds of the right wing majority of the NEC.

Conference decisions

The real charges are that the 12 have played a massive part in making Liverpool the most vibrant and active party in the country by creating jobs and defending services.

By sticking solidly behind party conference decisions they have embarrassed the parliamentary leadership.

The right-dominated NEC

foolishly think that expulsions will appease Labour's enemies in the press and the Commons.

But as playwright Sean O'Casey said "You can't put an idea up against a barrack wall and shoot it".

The 12 will fight their expulsions and every socialist throughout the length and breadth of the country must lend their support.

Liverpool Broadgreen Labour Party are urging every party and trade union member to lobby the NEC meeting at 8am, 26 March, 150 Walworth Road, London, to demonstrate their opposition to this purge.

By Bob Stothard

Lobby the NEC

26 March, 8am. 150 Walworth Road

Brixton Public Meeting

26 March. Speakers: Derek Hatton, Peter Taaffe. Details Page 6.

Build the left

BLOC/Liverpool DLP conference
19 April. See Page 3.

Budget for rich people's capitalism

A LOT of pompous inflated verbiage came out of Lawson's budget about a 'healthy' future under the Tories, and waffle about what has been termed "people's capitalism". What this means is that the only people worth worrying about are the bosses.

This was definitely not a budget for the working class or the unemployed. After seven years of Thatcher government, all the advice Lawson could give the millions on the dole was to start up your own business or buy some shares.

The Tories now introduce their attacks on the working class, like Fowler Reviews and spending cuts throughout the year, so Budget Day can allow some 'Good News'. This year's was the penny in the



Nigel Lawson

pound off income tax. Though even there the more pounds you earn, the more pennies you save.

Most people are paying more tax overall now than in 1979, through indirect taxes which hit ordinary workers hardest.

Eleven pence went on a packet of cigarettes—for medical reasons claimed the Tories, those great defenders of worker's health, who have starved the NHS of finance and forced hospital closures throughout Britain. The Tories wanted to avoid more price rises. Low inflation caused by years of economic collapse is the only flag the Tories still have to wave.

Jobs? Well, Lawson introduced tax incentives for investment and reduced stamp duty on share transactions, which are supposed to make a new dynamic capitalism with the spin-off of new jobs. In reality, combined with deregulation

of the City of London, this will be a charter for the rich to get rich quicker. Increasing profits not increasing jobs will be their concern.

The budget tries to shuffle a few more figures off the official unemployment scoreboard. For jobless school leavers, more Youth Training Schemes on slave labour pay and expanded community programmes, but no real jobs with real pay and prospects. More money to bosses who take on young workers on under £55 a week. And for low-paid school leavers the Job Start scheme offers you your very own adviser. They will probably "advise" you to buy some shares if the Tories have anything to do with it.

In the long-term, the Tories want to change taxation to make it an economic disadvantage for married

women to work. Get back to the kitchen is Lawson's brutal message to working class women. More people off the dole queues—Tory style.

Not that the Tories are uncaring, they have reduced tax for charities! Though included amongst these charitable institutions are the private schools, very useful when the Tories seem intent on destroying state education.

Mr Lawson will have more 'good news' for us next year, provided the economy stays "healthy". But any little bleep on British capitalism's life support machine, and even the crumbs of the 1986 budget will disappear.

By Roger Shriver

Killafield



LAST WEEK the Environment Committee published its report on the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant in Cumbria.

Sellafield is notorious for almost weekly cases of radiation leaks and contamination of its workers.

The report vindicated the major claims of environmental groups and trade unions on the link between the nuclear power industry and the incidence of cancers, particularly leukaemia, amongst the young.

It questioned the economic viability of recovering unburnt fuel from reprocessing which costs more than buying fresh supplies of uranium. This also increases the overall volumes of solid waste in Britain at least ten-fold and results in over two million gallons of radioactive

discharges into the Irish Sea every day.

But the committee's recommendations are extremely vague and make no concrete provision for the health and futures of the workers involved.

The plant is situated in an area of high unemployment and many workers, although aware of the health hazard, will have this as their main concern.

The Labour party should be calling for the immediate closure of the plant but with the guarantee of alternative employment. Last year's Labour Party conference passed a resolution opposing a nuclear power programme.

Unfortunately Labour's spokesman on the nuclear industry, John Cunningham, has not assumed this position, mindful of Sellafield's 11,000 employees in his constituency and his slim ma-

ajority of 1,837 at the last election.

The nuclear industry in Britain employs around 150,000 people, many working in Labour-held seats. Clearly the jobs of all workers must be guaranteed. Alternative energy proposals could do that. Reports have suggested that insulating every home could create hundreds of thousands of jobs and end a situation where 200 old people this winter have died of hypothermia every day.

A well-formulated socialist energy policy would provide the necessary resources to develop alternative sources of energy. In the past such policies have been thwarted by the priority given to profit which puts lives at risk.

By Soraya Lawrence

Labour conference backs threatened councillors

LABOUR'S NORTH West regional conference overwhelmingly carried a resolution from Broadgreen constituency supporting Liverpool councillors in their stand against the Tories.

An official collection was held in support of the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors. The conference was lobbied by 200 party members in support of Liverpool councillors and opposing the threat of expulsions.

An emergency resolution from Liverpool Walton opposing the High Court action and calling for the next Labour government to "introduce retrospective legislation to re-pay the councillors who are surcharged" was also overwhelmingly carried. However an emergency

resolution condemning the inquiry into Liverpool Labour Party was heavily defeated, as the union block votes were ranged against it.

Regional executive member Keith Caswell made it clear that attacks on *Militant* were not just because of organisational irregularities.

Waving a copy of Trotsky's *My Life* in front of the conference he said: "Trotskyists have to be removed from the Labour Party because their politics are incompatible with the Labour Party's."

AUEW delegate Len Brindle moved an emergency resolution which was carried overwhelmingly, demanding that British Leyland remain in its present form and in public ownership. Len Brindle and other delegates in-

cluding MPs Eric Heffer, Terry Fields, Alan Roberts, MEPs Les Huckfield and Eddie Newman and UCW National Executive member Jean Jacques signed the petition against the witch-hunt.

The conference agreed to organise a mass demonstration against unemployment in the region.

Delegates to conference gave over £200 to young socialist members collecting to send unemployed comrades to national Young Socialist conference.

At the biggest-ever *Militant* readers' meeting of the North West regional conference, 120 people donated over £100 to the fighting fund.

By Bryan Beckingham

No to expulsions

LOCAL LABOUR Parties, trade union branches, and Young Socialist branches continue to pass resolutions against threatened expulsions of members in Liverpool and against the witch-hunt in other

parts of the country.

Over 100 constituency parties have passed resolutions, together with five district parties, over 70 trade union organisations, and 15 women's sections.

The latest additions are: TGWU 6/188, Newcastle USDAW, USDAW F180, Sutton NUM, Leicester TUC, West Bromwich East Women's Section, Exeter Women's Section, Hackney Women's Council, Cardiff

Central CLP, Leeds Central CLP, East Surrey CLP, Huntingdon CLP, Rushcliffe CLP, Blaby CLP, Hastings and Rye CLP, Beckenham CLP, Ealing and Acton CLP, Hampstead and Highgate CLP and Exeter District Labour Party.

Liverpool NALGO backs councillors

LIVERPOOL NALGO branch Executive Committee (BEC) have overwhelmingly supported a resolution backing the Labour councillors' struggle against the courts.

The resolution will be put to a special general meeting, reports Angela Milburn (Liverpool NALGO BEC, personal capacity).

The resolution agreed to donate £1000 from branch funds and called on NALGO members in Liverpool and nationally to make personal contributions. The NALGO National Executive are to be asked for further donations while the TUC are asked to underwrite the cost of surcharge and organise a national appeal. The statement also calls for no co-operation with the Liberals if the councillors are removed by the courts; this will also be put to the same special meeting.

Transport will be arranged for NALGO members to lobby the court on the first day of the appeal, but a call for a one-day strike on that day was not passed.

Death threat to meeting

A *MILITANT* readers' meeting in Warrington planned for Tuesday 11 March was cancelled after a death threat made to a woman over the phone. She was later in tears about it.

When the police were informed they were totally unhelpful. It is thought that fascists may be responsible, or that it is some sick person's idea of a 'joke'.

Militant supporters in Warrington will not be deterred from campaigning for Marxist ideas. Ten papers were sold in the town centre on Saturday 8 March and £1.50 fighting fund was raised. In the run-up to the

planned meeting, supporters in Warrington nearly sold out of papers.

One Warrington Labour Party member said: "I regard *Militant* as the conscience of the Labour Party". As everyone knows, once you've got a conscience, it's well-nigh impossible to get rid of it!

Several people who were going to the meeting are now going to sell *Militant* regularly. A new public meeting will be held in the near future.

By David Winfield (Warrington North Labour Party, personal capacity)

Staff anger at Brixton centre

A JOINT inquiry was set up by the GLC and trade unions to investigate allegations of racism and sexism by management at the Brixton Recreation Centre.

Black members of staff, it was alleged, were called "nigger", and female staff were told to put their work before their children. Workers were suspended without reason and fined for lateness.

A report was promised from the inquiry but it still hasn't been produced.

Management are continu-

ing with petty and vindictive actions. One worker who had been suspended, and later re-instated, was then suspended again.

The centre was threatened with closure due to the abolition of the GLC. They were expected to wait until two days before the closure date before knowing their future.

One worker told *Militant*: "We were told by GLC councillor Paul Boateng that as long as we turned up on time for work our futures would be safe. The threat of abolition was consistently

used to frighten workers about job security."

Lambeth council was to take over the centre but at first refused it and claimed that this was a protest against a breach of the equal opportunities code by the GLC.

Staff planned to launch a campaign against the threat of closure but since then Lambeth council has agreed to take over the centre.

By Neelam DeFreitas

Nellist answers threats

DAVE NELLIST Labour MP for Coventry South East has reacted strongly to comments made by Bill Jordan, right wing candidate for AUEW presidency. He said that if elected he would widen the purge in the Labour Party to include MPs like Nellist.

"AUEW members need a president who will campaign against the real enemy, the employers and the Tories", the MP said.

Dave Nellist has in the past week spoken to both Coventry East and

Coventry West shop steward's quarterlies about the implications of the Wages Bill. A number of local stewards have applied to join the Labour Party.

Nellist pointed out that thousands of West Midlands engineering workers have lost their jobs in the last five years and that privatisation of BL, Rolls Royce, water and gas threatened even more.

Last year in Coventry no fewer than 19 AUEW branches

nominated Nellist for reselection for the South East constituency. Nellist attacked the divisive nature of Jordan's threatened purge which would bring "confusion and despair" in the AUEW and "electoral suicide" for the Labour Party when maximum unity was needed to get rid of the Tories.

By Pete McNally
(Coventry SE CLP)



Caerphilly party elects Marxist president

MILITANT SUPPORTER Geoff Cuthbert has been re-elected for the third year as president of Caerphilly Labour Party at its annual general meeting.

There was a clean sweep for the left dealing a blow to right-winger and Wales TGWU leader George Wright, a member of the constituency.

Wright's local branch and the constituency party have come out against witch-hunts.

Swansea right start party war

THE ATTEMPTED expulsion of Alec Thraves and Roy Davies by the Swansea Labour Association have split the party down the middle.

Last week's association meeting with 117 delegates in attendance saw the most bitter encounter yet, with right wing councillors, and full-time officials mobilising their full strength.

Before the meeting could start there was uproar over the chair's ruling that Roy Davies, EETPU delegate for several years, could no longer attend. It was claimed that Eric Hammond had written to the secretary informing him that brother Davies' credentials had been removed as an alleged member of *Militant*.

Despite a protest from the other EETPU delegate, who informed the meeting that his branch had not even discussed the issue, the officers backed "King Scab Hammond" and refused Davies entry.

Throughout the meeting the right wing 'moderates' continuously screamed at every left delegate who attempted to speak, with some needing to be restrained from physically attacking left wingers.

Right-wing intimidation is nothing new on the Swansea Labour Association. But these individuals were silenced when the credentials of GMBATU's delegation was challenged. It had been alleged that some of GMBATU's delegates who attended the previous meeting, which overturned the association's anti-witch-hunt stance, were not even Labour Party members.

The secretary confirmed that it appeared that there were irregularities amongst the GMBATU delegation and the officers would be continuing their investigation. This will be awaited with interest as the increased GMBATU delegation represents not genuine trade union members who want to build the Labour Party, but full-time officials and their hangers on.

Much to the dismay of the witch-hunters who have a small majority, the expulsion resolution was not voted upon as time had run out.

These fly-by-night witch-hunters will never succeed. Their attacks will only bring more and more supporters into the Labour Party to fight alongside *Militant* in the struggle for socialism.

By Militant reporters

New purge in West Mids

THE WEST Midlands Labour Party conference descended into confusion and disorder as regional TGWU leader, Brian Mathers, rail-roaded through an anti-*Militant* resolution.

In potentially the most serious step yet taken regionally by the right the resolution, from Warley East, calls on the NEC to expel all known *Militant* supporters.

The delegate from Warley East has been quoted as saying that a "member of *Militant* is somebody who supported them in the sale of their newspaper .. or who appeared on the platforms of their meetings including non-*Militant* left wingers like Tony Benn".

The resolution was bureaucratically forced onto the agenda in the middle of a debate on health and went against the previous agenda proposed by the standing orders committee and agreed by the conference.

The original decision of the standing orders commit-

tee was overruled after Mathers had conferred with its chair, Bill Davis.

Angry delegates were attempting to put points of order to take the vote on the health debate, but no vote was taken.

A further resolution from Stafford which called for an end to purges was amended into a witch-hunting resolution and grouped with the Warley East motion under 'party discipline'.

The final voting took place amid general confusion as the conference ran over time. Both resolutions were passed.

The TGWU had voted against the union's national policy which is to oppose witch-hunts. This new departure will herald a period of internal fuelling in the party in the West Midlands which the press will undoubtedly play on to attack Labour.

Many delegates, incensed by the actions of the right are determined to defeat this new threat.

BLOC

Liverpool Labour Party

Conference

BUILD THE LEFT

EVERY LEFT activist and *Militant* supporter must work flat out to make the joint BLOC/Labour unity conference the biggest and most representative gathering of rank and file workers so far. The conference will launch a campaign in every corner of the labour and trade union movement against the witch-hunt and the purges of left wing activists. Its aim is for a fighting socialist leadership with a programme to defeat the attacks of the Tories and big business.

The witch-hunt in the labour movement has encouraged the bosses to attempt the victimisation of some outstanding shop floor activists. For instance Ian Schofield a track worker at Land Rover Ltd Solihull, has lost his job, sacked for no other reason than being an active trade unionist and a supporter of *Militant*.

There has never been a greater need for the left to organise. The message of this conference must be taken to every shop stewards committee, trade union branch, district committee etc. and throughout the Labour Party. With hard meticulous work, this conference will fully live up to its promise.

★ Sheffield, Saturday 19 April. Speakers include Tony Benn, Phil Holt, Derek Hatton, Ian Lowes, Geoff Bright. Arthur Scargill and Ted Knight have been invited. Information and credentials from BLOC, PO Box 464, London E5 8PT.

By Brian Ingham

Golding wrong on appeals ruling

BRAZIL RIGHT wing Labour MP and professional witch-hunter John Golding is offering advice on how to expel *Militant* supporters.

He claimed on BBC's *This Week Next Week* that local Labour parties were "sick and tired of what is a conspiracy against the Labour Party". He said: "...they must always do expulsions correctly and I hope one consequence of this programme today is that parties will get in touch with me and say, 'John, how can we do it according to the rules? How can we do it in accordance with natural justice?'"

Golding's comments on the right of appeal were entirely misleading when he claimed that all those threatened with expulsions have the right to appeal to annual conference. As Dave Nellist MP pointed out on the programme, out of the 50 or so expulsions only the five *Militant* Editorial Board members have ever had the right to appeal to party conference.

This has also been confirmed by national agent David Hughes in a letter in the Campaign Group information sheet *Witch Hunt News*. Hughes states that ac-



John Golding

cording to the Party's rules it is "only when the NEC itself expels an individual or disaffiliates an organisation that it has to report its action to annual conference.

Individuals expelled by local parties can appeal to the NEC but: "Nothing in the rules gives the appellant a further right of appeal against the NEC to the annual conference," Hughes says.

As Nellist said in the programme: "It is clear from John Golding's comments today that he is setting himself up as the witch-finder general—get in touch with me after this programme and I'll tell you how to go about it".

By Ben Eastop

Walsall witch-hunt is beaten off

RIGHT WING officials in Aldridge Brownhills constituency Labour Party have been defeated in their threat to expel member Nigel Wheatley.

They have also lost control of the party's executive committee at its annual general meeting.

Regional officials intervened after protests were made against the threatened action, and objections raised over clear cases of breaking of party rules.

The executive had called for an inquiry which it claim-

ed would look into a *Militant* public meeting which Wheatley was said to have chaired.

A special meeting was called to discuss the issue with only 48 hours notice. But immediately party and regional officials were overwhelmed with anti-witch hunt protests. Four out of the six ward branches had voted against expulsions and witch hunts.

A petition organised by former striking miners collected 163 names in the space of two shifts at the Littleton and Lea Hall collieries.

NUM branches and a miners' wives' group sent official protests.

Wheatley's own union branch, ASTMS Walsall which elects him as a delegate to the party also protested.

Objections were made of abuse of party rules where aggregate executive meetings took place and non-delegates spoke and voted. Delegates were sent from a Labour Club which doesn't allow women as full voting members, the young socialists' delegation was suppressed and seven-day

notice of meetings was not given on many occasions.

The regional officer who attended the special meeting ruled the whole procedure out of order and many of the objections raised by the ASTMS branch were upheld. The young socialists' delegation was restored.

It is thought that party officers were warned of the possibility of legal action. Regional officials may fear the overburden of work which expulsions, legal action appeals and protests would bring.

Militant

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

Bankrupt budget bankrupt system

FOR THE four million unemployed and the one in seven who live below the poverty line, Lawson's budget is a kick in the teeth. It will do nothing to reduce unemployment and aims to bring down wages to a level at which workers might just as well be on the dole. Yet again it will be those already wealthy who rake in the biggest benefits.

Lawson claimed that: "The strength and durability of the current economic upswing continues to confound the commentators". Workers will be confounded at this rosy picture, when they know from their own experience that British industry is in tatters and living standards in decline.

Their experience is borne out by the government's own Manpower Services Commission whose *Labour Market Quarterly Review* has reported that: "It now looks as though growth will be at a slower rate during early 1986 and unless it accelerates again it is difficult to see any major reduction in unemployment."

The report exposes the collapse of industry, with a 24.3 per cent fall in the number employed in manufacturing between 1971 and 1981, a figure which reaches 63.7 per cent in the town of Middlesbrough.

Thirty years ago exports of manufactured goods were three times as high as imports. Last year there was a £3 billion deficit in manufacturing trade. The growth of services will not fill this gap. For every £100 worth of output, manufacturing industry exports £33, services only £11. Over those last thirty years, the decline in Britain's share of the world market for services, from 18 per cent to seven per cent, has been even steeper than the decline in its share of world manufacturing trade.

Only oil exports have saved British capitalism from disaster with a surplus last year of £8 billion. The halving of the oil price means that surplus will now disappear. The slowdown in the American economy, revealed in the low growth figure for January, will spread its effects to the rest of the capitalist world, in which Britain is the least able to compete. Economic catastrophe looms.

It is not only Lawson who has failed to recognise the depth of the crisis. The Labour leaders share their illusions. Roy Hattersley's pre-budget strategy paper proposes to redistribute wealth from the "top five per cent of income earners" to finance higher pensions and child benefits and the extension of the long-term rate of supplementary benefit to the long-term unemployed.

This will be very attractive to workers suffering from the inequalities and injustices of Tory Britain. But while any move to ease the burdens of the poor is to be welcomed, Hattersley's proposals cannot be sustained on a permanent basis. It is not the first time that Labour's right have made similar pledges. In the early 1970s, Denis Healey promised to "squeeze the rich until the pips squeak". Mitterrand in France came to power with similar ideas about redistributing wealth.

The 1974-79 Labour government and the now defeated Socialist government in France, however, not only failed to make any inroads into the wealth and power of the rich but ended up introducing incomes policies, austerity measures and public expenditure cuts, which forced workers to pay for the economic crisis of capitalism.

The next Labour government will face a far worse economic crisis. Kinnock will immediately be confronted by the capitalists with demands to drop any measures to curb their wealth and impose austerity on the workers.

A Labour government which tries even to clip the toenails of big business will be confronted, as Wilson later admitted he was, by a strike of capital. The 200 or less big industrial and financial monopolies who dominate 85 per cent of British industry will use their power to blackmail a Labour government into abandoning even the modest reforms that Hattersley is proposing.

That is why Kinnock is already condemning any further reforms, such as a 35-hour week, a £115 minimum wage, or a guaranteed job for YTS leaders, as 'impossible'. His solution is not to make promises so that he will not have to break them.

For workers the conclusion to be drawn is the very opposite. If the top five per cent are not prepared to give up a tiny proportion of their wealth to pay for the minimal reforms Hattersley wants, then there is an overwhelming case for taking their wealth out of their hands. The next Labour government must be committed to nationalise, with compensation on the basis of need alone, under workers' control and management, those top 200 companies, so that their wealth can be redistributed to relieve those in poverty and used to rebuild ruined British manufacturing industry.

Lawson's budget has shown that under capitalism, while the rich get richer, the poor face a nightmare of unemployment and poverty. The conclusion for Labour must be that the whole system needs to be transformed.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Militant; printed by Militant Publications, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. ISSN 0144-9275.

The King with no clothes- Scottish Labour debate

THE SOFT left Labour Co-ordinating Committee had always prided itself in Scotland on being much harder than its English and Welsh counterparts.

At the 1983 Labour Party conference when such luminaries as Peter Hain led the retreat from socialism (was he ever there?) the Scottish LCC refused to 'give an inch'.

Now that's all in the past. The Scottish Labour Party conference last weekend was a triumph for Neil Kinnock—his arguments, ideas and strategy. Labour is to be the party for the sanctity of the law, where the ravages of capitalism—gone-bust, putting 371,000 on the dole in Scotland, are to be solved by the introduction of a Scottish assembly. Michael Connarty, a

former hard left high priest of the LCC said on TV: "No, selling council houses is not an anti-socialist measure. We are not selling council houses, we are allowing people to buy them."

Connarty has been highly critical of Liverpool council, whose policy to deal with the housing crisis is to build new council homes which ordinary people can afford to live in.

Retreats

Retreats on housing policy were matched in the debates on local government, nationalisation and law and order.

Ian Smart from Paisley North constituency party, and clone of Donald Dewar, the blustering right wing shadow secretary of state for Scotland, said in the law and

order debate: "Labour is the party of the police. We will spend more resources on the police than the Tories." Then in a rousing crescendo he announced: "Labour is the party of law and freedom." This isn't even diluted Thatcherism.

As Kinnock says these days: "The law is the law is the law." Alex Wood, leader of Edinburgh District Council moved a composite motion defending Labour councils who are brought in to conflict with the law for defending local services, but it was defeated.

The argument of the right wing, from Scotland NUPE leader Ron Curran, was: "You can't defend jobs and services from behind bars".

But what is their alternative? To implement Tory cuts?

If the whole movement

stood up to the government imposed cuts, backed by Kinnock and the trade union leaders, then the question of the law would not arise. You can't jail hundreds of thousands of activists.

When it came to the *Militant* all other principles were dropped as NUPE held hands with the right wing, and the Union of Socialist Labour Clubs to sponsor an emergency motion calling on the National Executive to take action against *Militant* supporters.

Backing

However an emergency motion calling on Labour to retrospectively lift the surcharge and disqualification against Liverpool and Lambeth councillors was passed.

So what happened to the left in Scotland? There is an old fable of the King and the tailors who sell him fresh air as a new set of clothes. They explain that although the King seems naked, the most intelligent and cleverest of people can see that he is adorned in garments of most wonderful quality. The fawning acolytes of the court all agree lest they appear stupid. Only when the King goes before the ordinary people is his nakedness exposed in ridicule.

Clearly, then, the King has many court admirers in the Scottish Labour Party. But any common-sense observer can see that the King has lost his socialist clothes.

By Militant reporters

Militant bashing

IN A *New Statesman* article headed '*Militant*-bashing wins friends and influences voters', political editor Peter Kellner sets out to prove that "voters approve when Labour's leadership takes on *Militant*."

His conclusions are based on the rather limited 'evidence' of council by-elections held during the week after Labour's NEC decision on 26 February to move to expel Liverpool party members.

If Kellner is right, Neil Kinnock's unwarranted attack on *Militant* and Liverpool at October's party conference presumably should have enhanced his standing with the voters. Apparently it did. "In October the 'Kinnock effect' showed up in local by-elections for three weeks." A more sustained improvement may be needed to guarantee a Labour government however!

But the Marplan index for March published two weeks after the 26 February meeting, shows Kinnock's standing have fallen 3 per cent since November, and still being 3 per cent behind Thatcher despite Westland and record dole queues.

Kellner thinks "expelling Liverpool's *Militant* leaders is a start in winning over the doubters." Not so; all it does is dismay Labour and trade union activists who are the key to bringing out the Labour vote.



Bob Wylie, threatened with expulsion, speaking at Labour Committee Against the Witch-hunt meeting at Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth. Photo: Steve McTaggart (IFL).

Labour right urges cuts strategy for councils

WHILE LIVERPOOL council has been castigated for its efforts in fighting Tory cuts, right wing Labour councils haven't been making the headlines in pushing up the rates and passing cuts budgets.

Langbaugh Labour council has surpassed many in attempting to implement openly Tory policy by selling off one of its estates. The council proposed to sell the Spencerbeck estate to private developers and is taking tenants to court who refuse to move.

After months of pressure

from Langbaugh District Labour Party and local party branches and individual members the National Executive Committee has intervened to stop the council taking this action.

The executive passed a resolution saying that the action was unacceptable and an official from Walworth Road said that Larry Whitty would be writing to the council.

However the Labour Group have refused to comment on the NEC's decision until it receives the letter from Whitty. Meanwhile the district party and party branches will step up their cam-

paign to force the council to back down from its mad course of action and implement socialist policies which benefit the working people it represents.

★ ST HELENS' Labour council is proposing a budget which will involve a 14 per cent rate increase and an increase of £2 per week on the rents.

Sixty Labour party members who attended a meeting to discuss the budget were told by the council leader that there was no alternative but to make cuts or put up the rates while the Tories remained in power.

Last year the District Labour Party agreed that there should be no rate increase above the rate of inflation and that the council should seek support by linking with other Labour councils to demand more money from the government. The council leader has since admitted that the group is not carrying out party policy, and said that: "If you don't like that you have the opportunity to replace me."

Previously St Helens South Labour party had instructed ward parties not to select councillors who had disobeyed the decisions of the district party. This was ruled out of order by the National Agent David Hughes.

Newcastle rally

MILITANT SUPPORTERS in the North East are holding their biggest ever rally in Newcastle's City Hall in support of Liverpool Labour Party and those threatened with expulsion.

Jane Harker, an employee of Newcastle council who is going to the rally said: "Labour front bench spokesmen are supporting 'sensible' councils like Newcastle. I don't think it is sensible for a council to implement cuts in jobs and services, and still have one of the highest rates in Britain.

"Rates in Newcastle are equivalent to having a second mortgage. My mother and father live in a three bedroomed house and pay £65 a month in rates.

"There is enormous discontent with the City Council among people on the housing estates. I hope some of the councillors will be attending the rally to hear what a socialist council like Liverpool can achieve."

Militant Rally, Newcastle City Hall, Thursday 20 March, 7.00pm

One week to Bournemouth

YES, IT'S only a week away, the biggest event of the Labour Party Young Socialists' year, the national conference.

Make sure you get to Bournemouth over Easter from 28 to 31 March. You'll have three days of discussions, discos, bands, theatre and a chance to meet other young socialists from all over Britain—and from many different parts of the world.

Young workers, unemployed, students and school students will all be there. Why don't you join them? A group of YS members will be going from your area.

Details from Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT or from your local LPYS branch.

On the march

THE HULL 'marchers for a future' are on our way to Bournemouth for YS conference.

We recently travelled through Nottinghamshire and saw the kind of police harassment that made Notts notorious in the miners' strike.

Despite there being only five of us, the forces of law and order found it necessary to keep us under close scrutiny. As we entered Pleasley near Mansfield the police stuck to us like glue. On marching into Mansfield a full squad of cops and their van escorted us.

Pointless police

When we left Mansfield the next day for Nottingham another police van accompanied us complete with 10 uniformed police. The van began to 'leap frog' the marchers; going a couple of miles ahead then waiting until we caught up, then shooting ahead again.

The expense involved in the pointless exercise must have been enormous to pay for the ten officers and their frequent cups of tea, not to mention the petrol money.

You seem to have no right

to walk where you want to in Notts: when we decided to take a minor road into Nottingham, the police became furious and demanded to know why we had taken that route without consulting them first. Since when has hiking become an offence?

Whilst expecting this kind of treatment from sections of police, we were totally dismayed to receive the same kind of treatment from some Mansfield Labour Party members. Most of them were very welcoming, but when we entered Mansfield Labour Club, after walking 18 miles, the Young Socialist leaflets I had in my hands were seized from me and scrutinised to see if they had anything to do with the *Militant*. After looking me up and down I was passed as 'safe' and allowed to enter the club.

Despite this, Mansfield LPYS members made us very welcome indeed. Our thanks also to the Labour councillors and landlord of a Pleasley pub for providing us with sandwiches, and also to Mansfield Labour Party for laying a buffet on for us, prepared by LPYS members.

By Ray Duffill

Waiting hand and foot



Catering—a low paid service industry.

I AM a morning waitress in a plush Hertfordshire hotel; I can assure you there is no 'glamour' in waitressing.

I work six mornings a week, and have to be in work for 6.45am, to lay the tables for breakfast.

As the various businessmen and building contractors sit down for their breakfast I have to wait on them "hand and foot"! I am expected to smile and chit-chat about the weather, and other boring topics of conversation as well as acting teas-maid and cooking the toast.

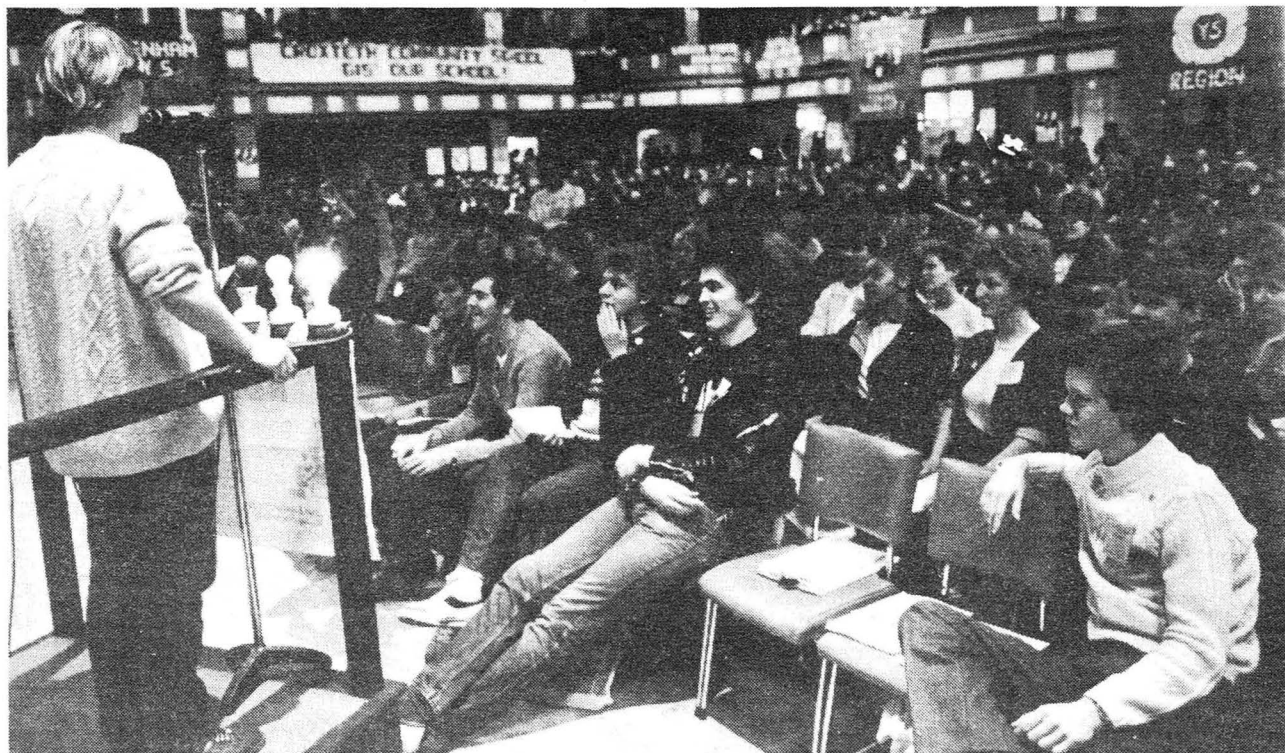
I also have to polish the tables and windowsills, clean all the inside windows and vacuum all the carpets at the end of the morning.

All in all I wait on around

30 customers a morning and work for 21 hours a week. For this I am paid the paltry wage of £33! Admittedly, there are the odd perks such as a free breakfast every day, but that is nothing, for a hotel that is really raking in profits, night after night.

One person I work with is even more exploited than me. The cook! She starts work at 6.10am every morning, cooks all the breakfasts and cleans out the toilets. She is putting in nearly double the amount of working hours for exactly the same wage as me.

Being a waitress has taught me a very sharp lesson. We must fight for an entirely different type of society—socialism—which will put an end to 'money-grabbing' sharks, bad conditions and low pay.



National conference—the highlight of the LPYS year.

Raising the money

THE YOUNG Tories held their conference in Blackpool a few weeks ago—you can bet your life few of them had problems finding the money to go.

At a debate with the Young Tories in Chester a few weeks ago, the Thatcher Youth came out with some gems: "I am a member of the Young Conservatives because I've worked bloody

hard", "my sister used to be unemployed, now she employs 27 people".

Clear difference

The difference between us and them was clear, our 'mummies and daddies' cannot spare a few teeny weeny fifty pounds to send us to a conference.

More than ten people

from my own YS want to go to National LPYS conference. Finance is not going to stop us from going.

Factories and workplaces are being visited not only for donations from the trade unions but also for bucket collections on pay day. The party's wards, General Committee and the MP are also being asked for a donation. We are asking individual members for a donation, this apart from appeal sheets being taken door to door for donations.

Pubs are being visited with collecting tins. (we raised £7 in one pub). We hope to raise enough for everyone to go to conference.

YS National Conference is the highlight of the year and even with the attacks on Liverpool, the YS branches are going to ensure a massive turnout from this area.

By Rob Owen
(LPYS National Committee, Merseyside)

An offer we must refuse

YET ANOTHER sensational takeover bid! An ex-management team has made an offer for the Labour Party.

The bidders introduce themselves as "Jenkins-Owen Enterprises, purveyors of sensible policies to HM The Queen", whose main product is the Social Democratic Party. The directors David Owen and Roy Jenkins, held a press conference in a wine bar in Wapping: "just to show how classless we are".

What had they got to offer? "Well" said Owen: "we were both part of the top management team at the Labour Party in the '70's, went abroad on jaunts at taxpayers' expense, while keeping down wages for the *hoi polloi*, it all helped us to forget Labour's conference policies.

Better class

"We want to make Labour acceptable again by merging our two parties. We want to sell shares in the Labour Party, so you get a better class of person controlling policy".

Jenkins went on: "Kinno and Hattersley have started to improve their product. You get less of that nationalisation stuff, not so many of those terrible promises and they are trying to get rid of the left. We keep telling them they don't want to scare off the shareholders with socialism, it's an impossible dream, ICI shares would plummet!"

"We get all our policies from here", he said, swinging an empty wine bottle around his head, "bodge-it-up Nouveau".

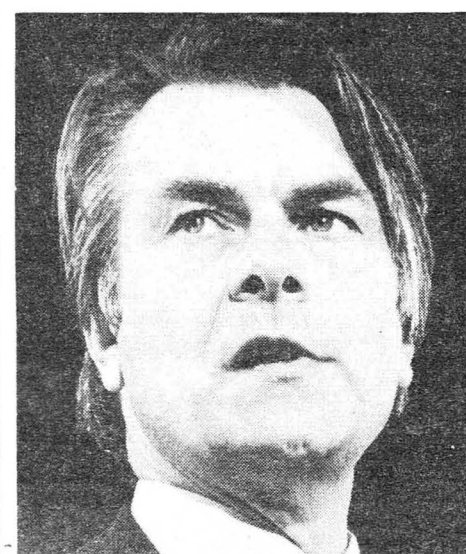
"If we can buy out



Jenkins—vigorous, youthful policies?

Labour" said Owen: "and Heath makes an ex-manager's offer for the Tories, we could have a great team, and stay in power for ever, like Marcos or the Shah" Jenkins whispered in Owen's ear. "Roy tells me those two gentlemen have gone—but I'm sure the Shah will be very successful in his new newspaper.

"We're a very successful,



Doctor Owen—the wrong prescription.

go ahead firm, we've just seen off a take over bid from Walt Disney. We should stand a good chance, we've even made our names sound Welsh to impress Mr Kinno, we used to be called Dracula and Darth Vader".

"But what about Labour's rank and file?" asked the reporter from *Militant*: "What about the 4 million unemployed, the

poor, the ghetto dwellers, the trade unionists, the school leavers, the part time women workers who want to see a Labour government committed to socialism...

"All right", snarled Owen, "there's no need for a Marxist rant, they'll be all right. I'm sure they can club together and buy a few shares".

Students and the Tories

MILITANT IS totally opposed to reactionary racist ideas which are used by the stooges of big business to divide the working class.

However, readers could be misled by the report of the demonstration against Tory MP John Carlisle at Bradford University ("Tory Bigot Turned Away", *Militant* 7 March). We support protest against Carlisle's vile views, but *Militant* would not deny free speech to Tories even if they mouth reactionary or racist ideas.

With members of fascist par-

ties, it is a different question. They want to abolish free speech and freedom of organisation which the working class has won over centuries, in order to crush the workers' movement.

The Tories and the ruling class undoubtedly, at present want to restrict the working class. But they do not want to annihilate the organisations of labour.

Picketing reactionary MPs, shouting them down—the "no platform for racists" policy—plays into the hands of creatures like Carlisle, and the capitalist media, which hypocritically por-

trays left-wingers as "totalitarian".

We are certainly not advocating inaction against the Tories' disgusting ideas. The best way to counter people like Carlisle is by campaigning against racism and organising against Tory attacks on black and Asian workers and their families.

Meetings in every college Labour club, jointly organised with Labour Parties, union branches, LP Young Socialist and other labour movement bodies—and fully involving the black and Asian community—will do far more to fight racism than hundreds of such gestures.

Waiting for your call

SELLING DOOR to door in Liverpool, *Militant* supporters came across one man who asked them: "Where have you been? I've seen you on the telly and I've been waiting for you to call".

Thousands of workers are waiting for you to knock at their door. You can find them in your area: the 26 papers sold on St Saviours estate in Leicester testify to that.

Get out on the streets and the estates straight after the six 'o clock news on 26 March when the Labour Party NEC meeting will again give us TV coverage; make sure people get an antidote to the media lies and

help build our support. Why not build up to a meeting in your area?

A new idea from sellers in Holywell in North Wales. They organised a *Militant* discussion group in the pub room next to a paper sale. They invited passing shoppers to take part, and now they are organising a public meeting as a result of the interest shown. Why don't you do the same in your area?



Answer the lies—sell *Militant*.

Give us a big donation

FIGHTING This week: **£2,210**
FUND Quarter ends 30 April

ONE WEEK before LPYS conference, we are asking all *Militant* supporters in the YS to make a big donation to the fighting fund over Easter.

If the witch-hunt in Liverpool goes on, it threatens the left in general and in particular the YS. Support our paper's right to put forward socialist ideas. We are appealing to all delegates and visitors to give us £5, £10 or £20 and make a collection at your YS meeting before conference.

Make sandwiches or drinks for the coach, minibus or train going to Bournemouth. Have raffles and games like 'guess the time of arrival' to raise money for *Militant*.

Petitions

Militant supporters in the areas should by now have got our 'one million signatures' petition; use it to collect finance as well.

Before those meetings you are organising have a week or two of action, knocking on every door on

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London East	1308		3500
2 London South West	520		1500
3 Manchester/Lancs	1490		4200
4 London West	929		2900
5 East Midlands	729		3050
6 London South East	491		2200
7 Humberside	455		2350
8 Southern	590		3100
9 Merseyside	1064		6900
10 South East	371		2400
11 West Midlands	663		4500
12 Eastern	466		3450
13 Yorkshire	737		5600
14 Scotland West	391		3850
15 South West	205		2150
16 Wales East	141		1450
17 Wales West	307		3150
18 Northern	341		4550
19 Scotland East	215		3200
Others	994		5000
Total received	12408		70000

an estate, particularly if the meeting is on that estate. Ask people to sign the petitions, give a donation and come to our meeting. Bring the petitions and the cash collected to the meeting.

Take round a petition and rattling tin at your workplace, college or school and even your pub or club. In Cannock, Judy Griffiths raised £12.10 by rattling a tin in a pub, mostly from Lit-

leton miners before a picket of a TNT depot.

On Merseyside, supporters in SOGAT have sent us £25. Local meetings in Huyton and St Helens have raised over £80 and in Wirral over £150.

Donations

THANKS TO R Bullard, Gedling NUM Notts £5. M Clewings and A Buxton, Cotgrave NUM £10 each. C Thorpe West Brom-

wich East CLP £10. D Mitchell, Lincoln CPSA £2. Marie and Michael £3. P Large £1. B and J Ford £1. T Lowes (NUKHW) £2.50. E Guildford NUPE Taff Vale £10. David Jones GMBATU £10. Lisa Newbury GMBATU £5. G Jones unemployed £5. S Bindle £5.

Sylvia, single parent from Huyton £10. Halewood school student £4. R Sage Taylor £2. K Bradley Norwich £20. T Tobin Hackney EETPU £5. H Ross £2. T Lewis NUPE £9 and Eve Amor £10.

Meetings oppose the witch-hunt

MILITANT HAS been holding mass rallies in major cities throughout Britain, but *Militant* supporters want to hold meetings on every estate around the country.

In Wallasey and New Ferry on the Wirral, two meetings attracted over 50 people and raised £95 for the fighting fund. In Wallasey the audience were still asking questions at 10.40 when the meeting closed.

One worker, who had heard about the meeting but did not know the time it started had waited on the steps outside the meeting room for an hour and a half before the

start.

In Waltham Forest, East London, the majority of the audience were new to the ideas of *Militant*. Six people agreed straight after the meeting to sell *Militant* regularly.

Organise a meeting in your area now. Use the petition to canvass support; one reader in Hackney raised £8 fighting fund from just nine signatures. They were unemployed DHSS hostel lodgers!

Get the ideas of Marxism in your area—and get the Tories out for good.

Doncaster: Monday 7 April. Speaker: Cheryl Varley.
 Leeds West: Sunday 23 March, 7.30pm, White Horse pub, Armley.
 Pudsey: Monday 24 March, 7.30pm.

LONDON

Forest Hill: Thursday 20 March. Speaker: Nick Wrack, St Saviours Church Hall, Brockley Rise, SE23.
 Bermondsey: Rockingham Estate, Thursday 20 March, 7.30pm, Rockingham Estate TA hall, Falmouth Road, SE1.
 Peckham: Bells Garden Community Centre, Peckham Hill Street, SE15, Thursday 27 March, 7.30pm.
 Dulwich: Dulwich Baths, East Dulwich Road, London SE22, Thursday 3 April, 7.30pm.

EASTERN

Colchester: Sunday 6 April, 7.30pm. Speaker: Bob Edwards. Colchester Labour Club.
 Norwich: Thursday 27 March, 7.30pm, Duke Street Centre.

SOUTH AND WEST

Margate: Saturday 22 March. Southern Labour Party Conference fringe meeting. Speaker: Harry Smith.
 Oxford: Tuesday 25 March, Cowley Community Centre. Speaker: Kevin Ramage.
 Sittingbourne: Tuesday 25 March. Speaker: Dave Fryatt.

MASS RALLIES

Newcastle: Thursday 20 March, 7pm, Newcastle City Hall. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.

Birmingham: Monday 24 March. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe. Digbeth Civic Hall.

Islwyn Thursday 17 April. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.

READERS' MEETINGS

NORTH WEST

Manchester: Thursday 20 March, Civic Hall, Stretford. Speaker: Lynn Walsh.
 Macclesfield: Wednesday 2 April. Speaker: Terry Fields MP (Liverpool Broadgreen).
 Wythenshawe: Thursday 27 March, 7.30pm, Forum Small Hall.
 Stretford: Thursday 27 March, 7.30pm, Old Trafford Centre, Shrewsbury Street.

YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE

Huddersfield: Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm, Zetland Hotel, Queensgate. Speaker: Jon Ingham.
 Halifax: Tuesday 15 April, 7.30pm, AUEW Club St James Street.

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.

BERMONDSEY LPYS public meeting. Hear: Derek Hatton (Liverpool City Council); John Bryan (Southwark Council); and a printworker.

On Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm at Rotherhithe Civic Centre. Buses: 47, 70, 188 near Rotherhithe Tube.

MILITANT scarves made in colours of your choice. 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. Hats in two or three colours. £2.30 each from Mick Fallon 64 Woodbrook Avenue, Mixenden, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX 8PZ.

DOVER Militant Discussion Group: Wednesday 2 April—The World Crisis of Capitalism, Wednesday 9 April—Reform or Revolution? Wednesday 16 April—Is Russia Socialist? Wednesday 23 April—What is happening in the Labour Party? All meetings at 8pm. For further details (0303) 43541.

inqaba YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress

OUT NOW. New edition of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress. Price £1 plus 20p postage; Subscriptions £4 for four issues. Surface mail-all countries. £7.90 airmail-all countries. Orders from: Inqaba, BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

"Militant fights back" meetings

STEVENAGE Militant "Defend the Ten' Campaign. Disco and bar and two live bands. Saturday 22 March, 8pm. Bowes Lyon House, Town Centre, Stevenage. Tickets £2.50, £3 on the door.

CRICKLEWOOD Militant Readers meeting. Monday 24 March 7.30pm. Anson Primary School, Anson Road, London NW2.

COVENTRY Militant Readers Public Meeting. "Stop Car Industry Witch-hunts" Wednesday 26 March 7.30pm. Speakers: Ian Schofield (sacked Range Rover senior steward) and Cllr Phil Hollifield. Venue Tile Hill Social Club, Jardine Crescent Coventry.

SHEFFIELD: "What *Militant* stands for". What *Militant* stands for. Speaker: Alan Anderton, Royal Oak pub, High Street, Beighton, Sheffield. Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm.

VIDEO . . . VIDEO . . . VIDEO Teamster Rebellion—Minneapolis 1934. A proud page in American labour history. 35 minutes VHS video with archive footage and an exclusive interview with 1934 picket captain Harry DeBoer.

VIDEO . . . VIDEO . . . VIDEO 45 minutes highlights of the 25 February anti-witch-hunt rally and the lobby on the 26th. Wish you were there? Now see it as it really was, not the media lies!

Available only on VHS. £3 to hire, plus £7 deposit or £10 tp buy.

INTRODUCTION to Marxism Study Pack: Updated. Includes: What we stand for, British perspectives, Northern Ireland: A Marxist analysis, Ideals of October, Transitional programme, Communist Manifesto Today, and The State—A warning, plus study

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

STRETFORD Militant Readers Meeting, 'What we stand for'. Speakers: surcharged Liverpool councillor, Monica Rothwell, SOGAT MOC Bonar-Cooke Cartons, Greater Manchester and district branch committee, Jane Briars. At Old Trafford Community Centre, Shrewsbury Street, Trafford, Manchester. Thursday 27 March 7.30pm.

ROCHDALE: Monday 24 March 7.30pm. Speaker: Cheryl Varley, at Brunswick Hotel, Baillie Street (near Bus Station), Rochdale.

BRIXTON: Public meeting: 'No expulsions—defend Lambeth and Liverpool councillors'. Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm, Brixton Recreation Centre, London SW2. Speakers include: Derek Hatton, Peter Taaffe, Jock McPherson-Quinn.

notes and booklist all in a wallet folder. Only £2.50 (plus £1 postage). 10 or more post free.

VIDEO . . . VIDEO . . . VIDEO Liverpool fights the Tories—the truth about Liverpool Council's proud record. An excellent introduction to a meeting on the witch-hunt or on Liverpool. 35 minutes. £5 to hire plus £5 deposit. £10 to buy.

FIGHT the Tories, not the socialists—90 minutes cassette, highlights of the London anti-witch-hunt rally. Features: T Mulhearn, D Hatton, P Taaffe, T Grant, etc. £1.25 plus 25p postage.

ORDER all the above from World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

May Day Greetings

We invite your organisation to place May Day greetings to the labour and trade union movement in *Militant*. *Militant* is read by thousands of labour movement activists in Britain and internationally.

Send your greetings of solidarity with the labour movement. Help build a paper that fights for socialism. The closing date for copy is 22 April.

Prices. Semi-display 3 column centimetres £6. 6 Column centimetres £12. Display 1/16th page £20. 1/8th page £30, 1/4th page £60. Cheques to *Militant* Publications, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Back Liverpool and Lambeth councillors

LABOUR COUNCILLORS in Liverpool and Lambeth have been surcharged and banned from office. They are still considering whether to appeal against the High Court ruling in favour of the penalties imposed by the District Auditor. LYNN WALSH looks at the role of the District Auditor and the Labour leaders' response to this attack on elected councillors who have been fighting to carry out party policy.

INSTEAD OF expressing outrage at the ousting of elected representatives by unelected judges, the main concern of Labour's front bench spokesmen appeared to be to bend a knee before the courts in a symbolic act of submission.

In his TV appearances, John Cunningham, Labour's spokesman on the environment, made little effort to conceal his satisfaction that the judiciary had meted out vicious punishment to the Labour right's socialist opponents.

So eager are Labour's right wing leaders to establish their respectable credentials in the eyes of the guardians of capital, that they are silent about the profoundly undemocratic, anti-working class implications of the High Court's decisions to uphold the District Auditor's surcharge and disqualification of Liverpool and Lambeth councillors.

The serious spokesmen of big business have no such inhibitions. They bluntly spelt out the real meaning of the judgement. Ironically, they also showed more awareness than the Labour leaders of the reaction which could be provoked by the court's intervention.

The surcharge and disqualification was described by the capitalist press as "appropriate...municipal punishment."

"It is essential," said the *Telegraph* (7 March), "for ratepayers having means of redress anywhere it can be proved that their money has been used for political indulgences by local councillors."

"Political indulgences," of course, means building new houses, modernising homes, providing better services, improving education, and creating new jobs.



This is what the trial was really about. At the start of the case, media comment made it clear that the court would be trying the new municipal socialism. It would be judging the conduct of a generation of Labour politicians. Whatever the court might say it would be making judgement about the legitimate distribution of power in society. In short it would be engaging in politics.

What could be clearer? The case was a test of the legal apparatus—a series of statutes banning supplementary rates, introducing rate-capping and the penalty system, and strengthening the powers of District Auditors—introduced by the Tory government to cut back spending on local government services. Inevitably, the same legislation fetters elected representatives put into office to defend jobs and services.

After the judgement, the serious

press bluntly concluded that the judges had hastened the decline of local government by raising yet another barrier to decision-making by local councils.

The press supported calls for the Audit Commission, following the judgement, to move against over 300 Labour councillors who also delayed in setting a rate last year. While acknowledging the support of lefts like David Blunkett for Neil Kinnock's purge against *Militant*, the *Telegraph* (7 March) is not prepared to advocate a reprieve: "Mr Blunkett may now be firmly ensconced in the pragmatic, careerist section of the Labour Left, but his leading role in last year's campaign should not be forgotten."

On this point, the press is clearly echoing the demands of Thatcher and co. The *Telegraph* revealed that "Government ministers are at odds with members of the Audit Commission on the issue." The watchdog, it seems, is reluctant to bite. "Some Tories feel that the Commission has become 'soft' on the issue. The Commission argues that the Lambeth and Liverpool cases have tied up two auditors for more than a year. The costs already exceed the sums alleged to have been lost".

Political role

Conscious of the widespread anger at the ousting of elected councillors by the judges, the head of the Audit Commission, Mr John Banhan, who privately has SDPish tendencies, might well be wary of taking sweeping punitive action against over 300 councillors. The Commission, reports the *Telegraph*, "feels that it has been cast into the role of an arm of the government, rather than an independent advisor."

In worrying that the audit is being used as a political instrument, however, the Commissioners are politically naive. Despite their name, local government auditors have never been genuine auditors, merely checking the books. Historically the auditors have always been used to check expenditure on welfare and social reforms.

In the 19th century and the early part of this century, auditors were used to keep poor relief down to an absolute minimum. When Labour councillors and Poor Law Guardians in Poplar fought in the 1920s to pay decent levels of "outdoor relief" to the unemployed, they were constantly harassed by the auditors. A whole series of surcharges were imposed on the workers' representatives in Poplar. But because of the strength of the movement, successive Tory and Liberal ministers were forced to "remit" these charges, that is wipe them out as unrecoverable.

In 1927, however, when the Poplar movement began to subside and especially after the defeat of the 1926 general strike, the government passed a new Act, which reinforced the surcharge with powers of disqualification. This was consciously seen by representatives of big business as a means of using the courts to defeat representatives who time and time again were re-elected to carry out policies unacceptable to Tory governments.

More and more councils were taken over by Labour in the course of the 1930s. The powers of District Auditors were used to fend off the social reforms being pushed for by the labour movement—the development of state education,



Liverpool councillors at the High Court in London

Photos: Dave Sinclair

District Auditor's draconian powers



Council supporter on one of the many marches through Liverpool

council housing, and public health.

During the period after the Second World War, on the basis of the long economic upswing and the greatly increased strength of the labour movement, there was a vast expansion of local government services, which formed a key part of what was popularly termed the 'welfare state'. This was the fruit of decades of socialist education and struggle by the workers' mass organisations.

All these reforms are now under threat. In the present period of crisis, the capitalists regard all reforms as intolerable overheads. Even past reforms are seen by big business as a barrier to the restoration of their desired level of profitability.

Once again, therefore, the District Auditor has come into his own as a bastion against "municipal socialism" and "political indulgences".

The idea, promoted by the Controller of Audit, that the Commission's role is simply to promote "local government efficiency", "value for money", "good housekeeping", etc, is belied by the co-ordinated offensive against Labour councils attempting to de-

fend jobs and services against cuts. In reality, the new national Audit Service, prepared under the last Labour government and set up in 1983, is an apparatus designed to play a key part in rolling back the boundaries of the "welfare state". All the Tory government had to do was to arm the auditors with a battery of new legal powers.

Autocratic element

Under the 1982 Local Government Finance Act the District Auditor was given draconian new powers. These allow the District Auditor, under the direction of the National Audit Commission, to investigate local councils and act as judge, jury and executioner in issuing certificates of surcharge and disqualification. When councillors appeal to the High Court the onus is on them to prove their innocence.

Even from a legal point of view, the process of issuing an auditor's certificate, which allows the councillors no right to a proper hearing, is an anomaly. From the point of view of any system of government which claims to be democratic, it is a totally autocratic element of state power.

Even the spokesmen of capital have to concede this.

Editorials agreed the surcharge was a heavy punishment. It was even harder, they admitted, to impose on councillors the cost of action, the first to test the operation of the 1982 Rates Act and other laws. They remarked how few other public officials, elected and unelected, stand to have their financial decisions scrutinised by officials like the District Auditor. They admitted that there are many public officials who, without penalty, have lost taxpayers considerably bigger sums than the £230,000 involved in the Liverpool/Lambeth case.

Millions will feel outrage at the judges stepping in to oust elected representatives and then imposing ruinous financial penalties on them. Instead of pontificating about "upholding the law", the Labour leaders should be giving political expression to this feeling.

Speaking on behalf of Labour's front bench, John Cunningham, has said that the next Labour government will abolish the surcharge and disqualification. This is a minimum.

Retrospective

However, Cunningham has said that it is "unthinkable" that a Labour government would lift the penalties from surcharged councillors on the grounds that this would be "retrospective legislation". Even from the point of view of liberal jurisprudence this is nonsense.

The traditional objection to retrospective legislation is based on the generally fair principle that no-one should be convicted and punished for doing something that was not a crime under the law at the time. But if a future Labour government abolishes a law which, as John Cunningham admits, is reactionary and oppressive, what legal principle stands in the way of that government giving recompense to those who suffered under an out-dated, oppressive law?

The idea that democracy can only be preserved by upholding the laws, regardless of the character of those laws, contradicts the whole experience of the labour movement. Almost every democratic right worth having was won through struggle by the labour movement, in most cases in defiance of undemocratic, oppressive laws. Democratic rights in society are guaranteed, not by the constitution, by statutes, by judge-made laws, but by the democratic organisations of the working class which provide the fundamental barrier to the dictatorial tendencies and aims of big business.

TWELVE LABOUR Party members from Liverpool face expulsion. They have been summoned to appear before the National Executive Committee next week. Party workers are already incensed that members who have played leading roles in the historic battles of Liverpool City Council should be faced with expulsion. They will be even more enraged at the way in which the NEC intends to conduct their 'trial'.

Star Chamber

THE PROCEDURE to be faced by the twelve at the NEC on 26 March will be like that of the *Star Chamber*. Originating in the murky feudal era, the Star Chamber was used by Tudor monarchs as a tribunal to deal with potential rivals. The court was used by James I and Charles I as a tool of absolute government and became notorious for its arbitrary procedure and the oppressive punishments inflicted on its victims.

By Lynn Walsh

The NEC, evidently on legal advice, has drawn up elaborate schedules of charges which would not disappoint a magistrates' court. They also append numerous documents, including leaflets and press reports.

The fact remains, however, that crucial charges rely on "oral evidence given in confidence". Those accused, and facing expulsion from the party, will be given no details of this evidence, and so will not be in a position to refute the most serious, and pernicious, accusations on which the right have constructed their case.

The people who have pointed the finger will not be present, and the twelve will not be able to question them. Moreover, despite assurances given at the beginning of the "investigation", the twelve will not even be shown the written submissions from these people.

This in itself justifies the description "Star Chamber". The NEC's procedure is even worse than that of the non-jury Diplock courts used in Northern Ireland. At least the "Super Grasses" relied on in these courts have to be produced in front of the accused—even if they are spirited off to Australia afterwards!

At the last NEC meeting right-wingers argued that witnesses could not be asked to give oral evidence because of the "atmosphere of intimidation" in the Liverpool Labour Party. This is an absurd excuse. Those around the Liverpool Labour Left and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) who have devoted themselves to providing ammunition for Labour's witch-hunters have for months been conducting an open political war within the party against those who support the ideas of *Militant*.

Yet while this minority, who are not prepared to work democratically for change within the party, conduct their campaign of attacks on the DLP leadership, they are allowed to anonymously submit dossiers of secret allegations which remain unanswerable.

When this minority is engaged in a constant campaign of criticism within the wards, constituencies and trade union branches on Merseyside, it is absurd to claim that they cannot reveal their evidence for fear of intimidation. The real reason is obvious: the "evidence", if openly revealed, would not stand up to serious scrutiny.

Comments circulating about the "evidence" given to the NEC by John and Jane Kennedy indicate that some of it—including scandalous and untrue claims of intimidation—is based on the assertions of an ex-Labour Party

member who long ago defected to the Social Democrats.

A more direct indication of the dubious character of the so-called "evidence" comes from the minority report of Audrey Wise and Margaret Beckett.

While favouring changes in the procedures of the DLP, they come out against expulsions on political grounds: "We are very conscious of the terrible dangers involved if action is taken on the basis of assertions that cannot be easily, and sometimes not at all, be provable without question... Most importantly we feel that if expulsions are contemplated where doubts exist as to the quality of the evidence on which they are proposed we are on a very slippery slope where such proposals might be made on more and more tenuous evidence and thus in reality on the grounds not even of real political convictions, though that would be dangerous enough, but even of personal likes and dislikes".

Much of the evidence is clearly a venomous political attack on the policies and campaigning record of Liverpool DLP—disguised by a catalogue of whingeing grievances, petty criticism and spiteful political recriminations.

The people behind these allegations have proved incapable of winning an influence amongst workers in the Liverpool labour movement. They have been clearly defeated in the intense debates of the last period. To give a poisonous sting to their lame allegations they have evidently added on, with a cover of confidentiality, a venomous catalogue of charges of corruption, intimidation and violence.

The procedure set out for the hearings of the 26 March breaks every one of the rules of natural justice.

For this reason, those facing disciplinary charges are planning to take legal action in an effort to force the NEC to give them a fair hearing. It is a sad comment on the right wing majority of the NEC that they stand more chance of getting a fair hearing from the courts than from the NEC itself.

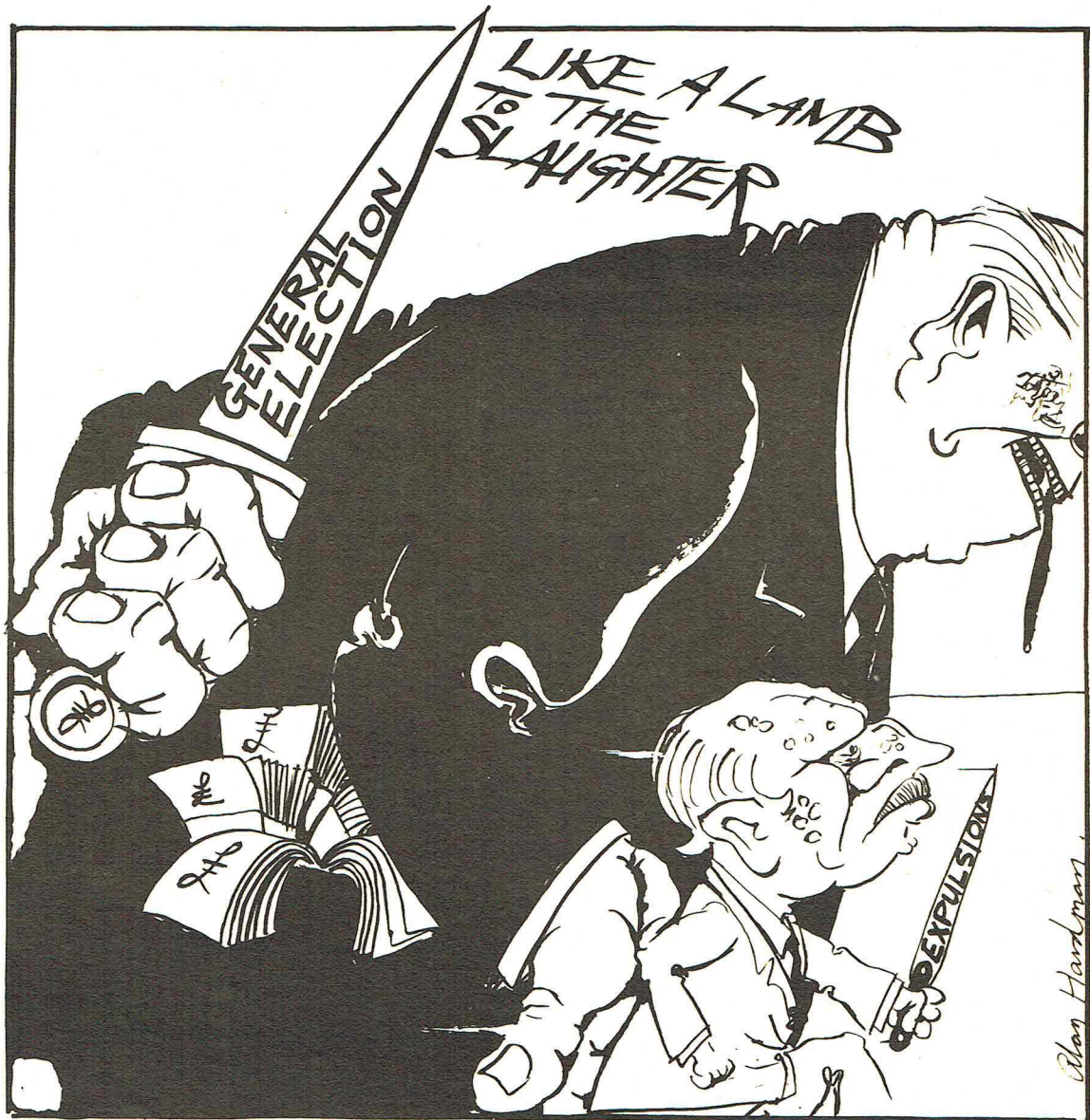
Recently, Neil Kinnock described Murdoch's methods of management as "feudal"—as though that were the strongest condemnation he could think of. Yet Neil Kinnock has put his support behind the Star Chamber procedures to be used against the twelve—a pre-eminently feudal device of leaders with a scant regard for argument and debate who rely on arbitrary methods to suppress opposition and eliminate those perceived as a threat to their throne.

A political attack

THE CHARGES framed by the NEC's right wing majority against the twelve—four Labour councillors, three officers of the DLP, and five other members of the Labour Party—in reality have nothing to do with the party's constitution and rules. They have been drawn up, following a totally undemocratic 'investigation', to provide the formal, legalistic justification for a political attack on one trend of socialist opinion in the party.

Since Labour won a majority on Liverpool City Council in 1983, on bold socialist policies, the Labour Group and DLP has given determined leadership to an unparallel-

Labour's



ed campaign against Tory cuts and in support of reforms which have benefitted workers and their families.

While leaders of some Labour Groups declared their opposition to Tory cuts and rate-capping but caved in when the crunch came, Liverpool council was intransigent in its struggle. Despite threats from Tory ministers, dire warnings from the District Auditor, and lack of support from the national Labour leadership, Liverpool kept up the struggle, and even when they were forced to retreat last November, succeeded in mitigating the worst effects of the cuts.

The tirade of attacks from Thatcher, Tebbit, Baker and company on Liverpool in general and the *Militant* in particular is not surprising. Scandalously, however, they have been joined in an unholy alliance of vilification by the right wing Labour leaders. Liverpool is an embarrassment to Labour's right-wing because its fight highlights the national leadership's incapacity to wage an active, mass struggle in defence of workers.

The parliamentary leadership has been beguiled by the capitalist press, controlled by Labour's enemies, into believing that the repudiation of campaigns and struggles will improve Labour's chances of winning the next general election. This simple-minded notion is belied by the swing to Labour in Liverpool constituencies in the 1983 general election and successive increases in support for the Labour council. Nevertheless, in an effort to separate themselves from the struggle in Liverpool, just as the front bench worked to distance itself from the NUM leadership during the miners' strike, the right-wing leadership has launched a witch-hunt and purge

against the leaders of Liverpool Labour Party.

Even worse, however, is the fact that former lefts, like Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett, who previously proclaimed support for the fight against rate-capping and cuts, have joined the unprincipled anti-Liverpool alliance.

Writing in *Tribune* (14 March) David Blunkett attempted to draw a distinction between "different historic events". The inquiry, he says, "is nothing whatever to do with the rate-capping campaign nor is it to do with the policy decisions taken by the Liverpool party and the Group. It is, however, to do with the way in which the party's constitution and rules are being manipulated and broken and the way in which individuals have used the party in a manner which would be considered outside the acceptance-parameters of behaviour for democratic socialists." socialists."

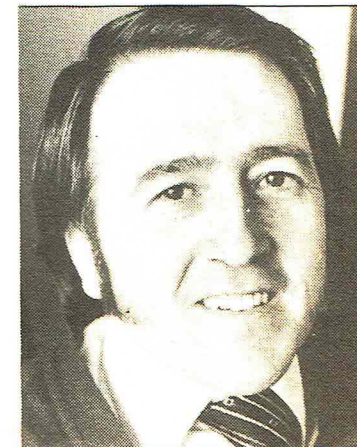
Nonsense

In other words, David Blunkett thinks it is right to support Liverpool council's stand, up to the limits acceptable to him, but otherwise joins Neil Kinnock in attacking the council.

It is deceptive, unscrupulous nonsense to try to separate the witch-hunt from the struggle conducted by Liverpool DLP. The 'procedures' of the DLP, which were originally the subject of the NEC's 'investigation', are inseparable from the involvement of the party's membership in a campaign to mobilise mass working class support.

In their minority report, Margaret Beckett and Audrey Wise draw attention to the fact that "everyone in Liverpool... is living

in an extremely stressful situation. This applies to a very high degree to all members of the Liverpool Labour Party who are struggling to help their city." They recall the "dramatic events of the past few months" and the "major efforts (required) to rally the labour movement" in opposition to "the government legislation and the District Auditor's attack on the city councillors." Only the pressure on the miners' leaders during the year-long strike are comparable.



Terry Harrison, DLP vice-president

Moreover, the majority report undermines most of its own arguments when it admits that the leadership of the DLP has massive support within the party and amongst workers on Merseyside generally: "there are undoubtedly large numbers of supporters of the broad line taken by the *Militant* in Liverpool, and others are prepared to go along with most of the policies, particularly whilst *Militant* has appeared to be the only credible focus of left-wing activity within the party in Merseyside." According to the resolution adopted by the NEC on 27

show trials

Liverpool seamen condemn expulsions

THE LIVERPOOL branch of the National Union of Seamen has voted unanimously to urge the national executive of the Labour party to resist calls for the expulsion of Labour Party

members from Liverpool. "The gains from such expulsions will be other political parties' gains" they say: "The media will go on dictating more expulsions, resulting in a split so

damaging as to end all hopes of peace within the party. We sincerely hope you heed this call, for once on the road to expulsions there is no going back."

Go for a million!

A MILLION signatures by the Labour Party conference in October! That is the target for *Mili-*

tant's new petition against the national executive committee's witch-hunt. Send for your supply now and take them around everywhere you go—at work, meetings, union conferences, door-to-door and in the pub. Cash in on the huge support amongst workers everywhere for our supporters' right to remain in the party.



Mass lobby of Labour's NEC meeting on 26 February

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

November, the investigation team was to inquire into the "procedures and practices of the Liverpool DLP". In spite of this, the main outcome of the investigation is that 12 members of the DLP will face expulsion proceedings on the grounds of that they are members of the "Militant Tendency", an organisation declared by the NEC "ineligible for affiliation to the party"—that is proscribed.

The charges include the ludicrous allegations against, for instance, Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn, that they "have worked full-time or part-time from 2 Lower Breck Road as an organiser for *Militant*"! Evidence to back these charges comes from a selection of leaflets, press reports, and adverts for meetings. But it is clear that the NEC is relying heavily on "oral evidence given in confidence"—that is hearsay, the details of which are not being divulged to those facing discipline.

Five members of the DLP are also being charged with "responsibility for particular abuses of the rules, constitution and standing orders of the DLP, and also two, Derek Hatton and Ian Lowes, are being charged with "bringing the party into disrepute".

There is an elaborate 'schedule' of breaches of the rules. This catalogue of petty infringements, however, is clearly a smokescreen for a political attack on a group of DLP members on account of their politics.

It is difficult to see, for example, how other officers like the vice-president (Eddie Loyden) and the treasurer (John Hamilton), can not be involved in the "abuses" alleged by the NEC, especially in relation to affiliations and affiliation fees which must be the concern of the treasurer. Yet clearly for political reasons, these two officers do not face any charges.

Many of the complaints which are used as the basis of disciplinary charges are petty irregularities, of the kind that could be found in any investigation of almost any DLP in the country.

International issues

ONE COMPLAINT is that the DLP discussed political issues, like South Africa, Nicaragua, Chile, East-West relations, etc. As Eric Heffer MP has commented: "the truth is that if any DLP does not discuss these types of questions, then it is not doing its job. Local government cannot be and is not totally insulated from wider developments in society and politics. Virtually every DLP in the country has discussed such issues."

Insidious

The reality is, that during the campaign since 1983, the leadership of the Labour group and executive of the DLP has had the confidence and support of the overwhelming majority of DLP delegates and Liverpool Labour Party members. It is a small minority, who have lost the debate over policy and tactics, and failed to win support amongst one of the most politicised and active sections of the working class in the country, who have come to the fore with allegations of "abuses" and have tried to give them more weight by insidious allegations of "corruption" and "intimidation".

Yet the majority report produces no real evidence to substantiate such allegations.

The minority report, on many points, undermines the majority report. For instance, Margaret Beckett and Audrey Wise say: "Some other people who were critical did nevertheless say that the chair conducted the meetings in accordance with the rules of debate and it seems clear that people with views contrary to the general trend of the meetings were called to speak."

On intimidation they say: "Feelings of intimidation are very subjective. It is very difficult for those not present to take a firm view on

all complaints. It is clear that there was often a good deal of noise and verbal abuse. One instance of physical manhandling seems to be established." Note the "seems" (many of these allegations were answered in *Militant's* reply to the LCC dossier, see *Militant* 31 January 1986).

Mass campaign

SIGNIFICANTLY, ONE group of charges relates to the alleged domination of the DLP by the executive committee, and in turn the domination of the Labour Group by the policy-making DLP. Linked to this are the complaints about the "aggregate" meetings, involving DLP members as visitors as well as delegates. This complaint is echoed by the minority report, too.

However, in 1985 there were nine DLP meetings, only one less than in 1983. There were 30 EC meetings and eight aggregate meetings, many of them held at crucial stages in the struggle. It can only be concluded that the real complaint is that the leaders of the DLP involved the widest possible number of DLP members in the consultation over policy, strategy and tactics.

Liverpool Labour council would not have been able to sustain its fight without the mass campaign, and it could not have aroused a mass campaign without the fullest possible involvement of the party activists. The tiny handful of votes against the crucial recommendations of the DLP executive demonstrated that the EC had the confidence of the overwhelming majority of members.

Behind the allegation of the majority report that the Labour Group was made subordinate to the DLP, lies the right-wing's objection to any real accountability by Labour councillors to District Labour Parties. It is not hard to see the political motives of Labour's front bench spokesmen, who are striving to assert their independence

from party conference in their moves to ditch radical conference policies and undermine the democratic reforms carried within the party over recent years.

In Liverpool the Labour Group has accepted in the recent period that policy is made by the DLP, and they have voluntarily accepted in the spirit of democracy that they are accountable to the DLP. How many other Labour Groups throughout the country have regrettably gone against the policies of their DLP, taken decisions behind closed doors without consulting the DLP, and carried out cuts which undermine support for Labour and discredit the party in the eyes of working people?

Nomination rights

A SECOND group of charges, which have been seized upon by the capitalist press and scandalously taken up by some of the former lefts on the NEC relate to the alleged "employment abuses" in the Liverpool local authority.

In fact, in section 13 of the majority report, it is claimed that while trade union nomination rights are "to be welcomed", "there are serious allegations that this right has been abused with peo-

ple being given preference specifically within the areas of 100 per cent nomination rights for the GMB..." But this whole section is full of phrases like "it was put to the investigation team", "we received assertions...", "it was suggested", etc. In the concluding paragraph (13.4) the majority report admits: "it has not been possible to investigate these practices in detail. We are, however, satisfied there is some validity to these assertions." They produce no facts, no substantial evidence. They do not even give specific detail of the allegations. Yet this has been used as a key plank of the inquiry team's allegations against the leaders of the DLP!

Since Labour won a majority in 1983 it has greatly extended nomination rights of the unions. The union has generally enhanced the conditions and extended the rights of trade unions.

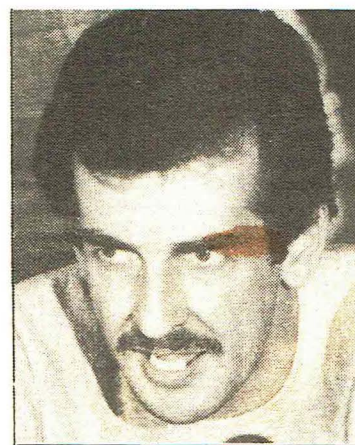
Most of the unions represented in the local authority have the right to nominate people for entry grades. The council, mainly through council officials, have the authority to make the actual appointments. All appointments have been made through the agreed procedure, and some of the specific complaints that are circulating have only surfaced recently, and there was no complaint from either trade union representatives or council officials at the time.

Yet sensational allegations are now being echoed by Blunkett, which in the main originated with the Liberals in Liverpool.

What angers the Liberals and the Tories is that among the trade union nominees are workers who have been trade union activists in other industries, including some who have been victimised and blacklisted by private employers. Given the support for the policies advocated by *Militant* among workers on Merseyside, it is inevitable that some of the nominees are *Militant* supporters. The only way this could be avoided is by the trade unions or council officials adopting a policy of positive discrimination against *Militant* supporters. If that is what they want, parallel to their desire to expel *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party, they should come out openly and say so.

12 will be vindicated

THE LIVERPOOL twelve, with the support of all genuine socialists and class fighters, will answer false allegations and trumped-up charges being hurled against them. In the course of the struggle, on the basis of facts, argument, policies, and above all the record of active struggle, they will be vindicated in the eyes of all workers striving to organise around socialist policies, for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society.



Ian Lowes, GMBATU convenor.

Spain, USA, Finland

Why Spain said 'yes' to NATO

BOTH THE capitalists and the right wing of PSOE (Socialist Party) knew exactly what was at stake in the referendum on 12 March on whether Spain should stay in NATO.

A "No" vote would have been a heavy blow against Gonzalez's Socialist government, which is favouring the interests of the bankers and bosses.

The government has made an about-turn from an anti-NATO to a pro-NATO position. In fact, this retreat is part of a whole policy of concessions to the capitalist class, which has meant abandoning the promise of "change" for which PSOE was elected to govern by the working class and youth.

The PSOE right wing and the capitalists wasted rivers of ink during the referendum campaign, trying to justify a "yes" vote and to explain the doom and gloom that a "no" vote would bring.

This position caused intense confusion amongst organised workers. Their natural instinct is to oppose capitalism and its military alliances. They would have viewed the referendum on NATO as a chance to express this opposition.

On the other hand, most workers remain loyal to the PSOE, in spite of the pro-capitalist policies of its leaders, because they fear the return of a right-wing government. PSOE's leaders exploited this loyalty by making the referendum virtually a vote of confidence.

Blackmail

Even so, the question is how the "Yes" vote could win when everything pointed to a victory for the "No" vote.

The government used the following arguments, and publicised them continuously in the mass media:

- 1) If we leave NATO our position in the EEC will deteriorate. We can't participate on an economic basis only and not on a 'defensive' basis.
- 2) If we leave NATO the multinationals won't invest in Spain any more. This would mean a commercial boycott and more unemployment.
- 3) If we leave NATO we won't be able to keep up with technological developments, and will become isolated from Europe.
- 4) If the government loses the referendum it will mean early elections and a new menace from the right.

The government's threats can perhaps best be summed up in the words of Felipe Gonzalez: "for Spain to withdraw from NATO would have unforeseeable consequences".

None of these threats had any foundation but they were used to persuade a large number of workers to close ranks around the government.

Therefore the "Yes" vote should be interpreted not as a vote of support for NATO, nor as a vote of support for the government's policies. It was the government's blackmail that won.

In fact the result reveals a contradictory process. This is reflected

By a PSOE member
in Catalonia

in the following conversation between two workers' wives, reported in the bourgeois press.

One woman says: "I voted 'no' because I don't want my children to die in war." The other says: "How could you? Don't you feel sorry for Felipe?"

Conversely, it is significant that the "No" vote won in some of the most industrialised parts of Spain. In the Basque country up to two-thirds voted "No". In Catalonia 50 per cent voted "No" and 43 per cent "Yes".

Another important fact is that the youth vote (18 to 25 years old) was overwhelmingly "No". The percentage of "Yes" votes went up in proportion to the age.

On the other hand, those who led the "No" campaign stood out by their lack of clarity. The Euro-Communists and the Stalinists both approached the question of NATO from an extremely nationalist and opportunist standpoint, without presenting any alternative.

Both took a pacifist position, putting forward ideas of "neutrality" instead of a programme of class struggle.

The leaders of the CCOO (Communist-led trade union)



PSOE leader Felipe Gonzalez

didn't distinguish themselves either, in spite of the fact that their rank and file played an exemplary role in the campaign. If there had been a united struggle by the CCOO and the UGT (Socialist trade union federation), the result would have been completely different.

The CCOO leaders, however, latched on to the middle-class pacifists who have no authority among the workers.

Not only the UGT called for a "No" vote, but also the *Izquierda Socialista* (a left-wing faction of PSOE) and the JS (Socialist youth).

One of the most important aspects of the campaign has been the tensions which emerged among different tendencies in the workers'



Photo: Julio Echeart (Report)

Anti-NATO demo in Madrid. On 12 February Tony Benn addressed a rally of 750,000 marking the start of the campaign for a 'No' vote.

organisations and their leadership. This has further deepened the differences which opened up last year between the government and the UGT over the cuts in pensions.

These conflicts are a symptom of the discontent at worsening social conditions among the rank and file, particularly in the trade unions, which have a more active membership than PSOE.

Campaign

But, unfortunately, those leaders in the Socialist movement who oppose NATO did not carry out any real campaign before the referendum.

Pablo Castellano, leader of *Izquierda Socialista*, called for a 'campaign' on an individual basis only. The UGT, in spite of announcing a campaign, limited this to reminding workers a few days before the referendum to vote "no".

The leaders of the JS, who had also promised a campaign, made an about-turn at the last minute and called for a "Yes" vote!

Only the Marxists in PSOE, supporters of the newspaper *Nueva Claridad*, carried out a real campaign, going to factories and colleges, organising meetings and handing out their manifesto. They were alone in explaining that while NATO should be opposed, withdrawing from NATO cannot guarantee peace. The only basis for peace lies in the socialist transformation of society—in the East as well as the West.

Those courageous Socialists who took part in the campaign despite threats of expulsion from the leadership, and the masses of workers and youth who seek an alternative to the crisis conditions of capitalism, will now be looking more seriously to the Marxists.

In spite of the defeat of the "No" vote, the right wing of

PSOE cannot rest easy. The ongoing radicalisation of the workers and youth is inevitable. The "Yes" vote will anger even more the layers who are already critical of government policy.

The Marxists have gained support during the campaign. This is the most important symptom of the process taking place.

Finland

A GENERAL strike by 250,000 Finnish workers ended after three days with substantial concessions by employers. The SAK trade union federation was demanding 4 per cent wage increases and a 35-hour week.

This huge movement in relatively stable Finland shows the potential for struggle and gains by the working class in many countries of Europe.

US meat workers' strike

MEATPACKERS at the Hormel pork processing plant in Austin, Minnesota, have been on strike since 17 August 1985.

The Hormel Company, which operates nine plants in the Midwest, has won concessions from its workers since 1978 by playing on workers' fears of plant closures and international competition. In spite of Hormel's increasing profits, local unions at eight Hormel plants signed new conces-

sionary agreements in 1984.

But Local P-9 in Austin, with a newly-elected militant leadership, refused. In retaliation, the company cut the wages and benefits of the Austin workers by 23 per cent.

"Lost cause"

The union local tried to win back the workers' pay through arbitration and negotiation, but the government ruled against them. National leaders of the

UFCW urged the local to accept the company's demands, telling workers they were fighting a lost cause.

But the 1,500 workers voted overwhelmingly to strike and to launch an appeal to the rank and file of the US labour movement.

Local P-9 members have distributed literature to half a million homes in the Midwest. Mass mailings to 50,000 union locals all over the country have won substantial support. Teams

of P-9 members have spread news of their struggle in several states, talking with thousands of union members at plant gates and union meetings.

But UFCW President William Wynn and AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, instead of putting the full power of US labour behind the Hormel strikers, have increased their denunciations of P-9. This has led activists in the movement to begin organising themselves for a fightback.

The company has in the meantime tried to reopen the plant with scab labour, but union members blocked ac-

cess to the plant. The National Guard was called to keep the plant open. Courts have issued injunctions against picketing. Dozens of meatpackers have been arrested.

Roving pickets

With the power of the state mobilised against them, Local P-9 called on workers at other Hormel plants to strike. Hundreds of Hormel workers honoured P-9's roving picket lines in Iowa, Nebraska and Texas in spite of intense pressure. Hormel fired more than 500 of those workers.

It is clear that meatpackers are unwilling to accept further cuts in living standards. But the industry is plagued by overcapacity, and profits cannot be kept up if workers get higher wages. As the impasse continues, workers will increasingly see that a system based on private profit offers no solution, and the call for nationalisation of the industry will rise in their ranks.

Messages of support to: UFCW P-9, 316 4th Ave NE, Austin, Min. 55912, USA.

By Bruce Hamilton
(Member of Amalgamated Transit Union, AFL-CIO)

Central America, India

In Reagan's backyard

REAGAN has been waging a weeks-long campaign demanding \$100 million from Congress to finance the dirty war by right-wing "Contra" gangs against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Reagan claims to defend "democracy" but this is completely bogus. In reality he is trying to prevent the spread of revolution from Nicaragua to the rest of Central America, to Mexico and ultimately to the US working class itself.

A look at Reagan's allies in the region gives the clearest indication of his real intentions.

Reports by Ian Hughes

Nicaragua

MOST OBSERVERS are taking very a dim view of the Contras' prospects. According to official figures, the Sandinista army killed 4,608 of them in 1985, at a cost of 1,143 dead. Correspondents now speak of the Contras' "virtual defeat" (*Guardian*, 11 March).

Who are these hitmen of Reagan?

Following the overthrow of Nicaraguan dictator Somoza in 1979, most of his brutal National Guard fled across the border into Honduras. Tolerated by the Honduran government, many could be seen enjoying the capital's squalid night life, while their superiors took it easy in Miami.

Had it not been for Reagan, they would almost certainly have merged into the Caribbean underworld, like the forces of defeated Cuban dictator Batista 20 years before.

But, with the active collusion of the Honduran military, the CIA worked to transform the various National Guard factions into a united force, the misnamed "Nicaraguan Democratic Force" (FDN).

FDN camps were set up in

Honduras near the Nicaraguan border, with logistic backup from the Honduran army for their terrorist operations. The number of US troops in Honduras was increased, from 25 in 1980 to 33,000 during the "manoeuvres" of May 1984. These exercises were intended not only to intimidate the Sandinistas and prepare for an invasion of Nicaragua; they also left huge quantities of military equipment behind for Reagan's proxy war against the Sandinistas.

But the Contras are rotten from top to bottom. Associated Press reports that "Contra leaders, over the past two years, (have been) implicated in the smuggling of Columbian cocaine to the US".

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants will fight to the death to prevent the return of the gangsters, torturers and butchers of Somoza. Direct US invasion will in the end be Reagan's only option for bringing down the Sandinista government, as he clearly wants to do.

Guatemala

IN "DEMOCRATIC" GUATEMALA, notwithstanding the election on 14



US Ambassador Pickering with El Salvador's military chiefs.

January of the first civilian President since 1970, ferocious violence continues.

To clean up its image, the regime has virtually disbanded the secret police DIT. But the effect has been dampened by the increasing activity of 'private' death squads.

Demands about the fate of the country's 33,000 'disap-

peared' are likely to be blocked by the military old guard. The new President Cerezo has said he will not open the books on human rights cases.

One of the last acts of the outgoing junta was to grant themselves 'lifelong immunity' against prosecution in any court!

El Salvador

IN EL SALVADOR 4,000 troops were mobilised on 9 January in an offensive to try and clear the guerrilla-controlled zone of Guazapa.

It was preceded by 15 days of air and artillery bombardment, during which 60,000 lbs of explosives were used.

The US-backed regime of President Duarte is being maintained in power at a rising cost in blood and suffering. A human rights agency said that at least 1,655 non-combatants were killed in 1985 by pro-government forces, mainly right-wing

death squads.

Victims of the regime have included US Embassy employees such as Graciela Menendez, who was arrested in September on charges of involvement with the FMLN guerrillas. She was tortured, drugged and raped before being released in October for lack of evidence.

US security personnel were present during her interrogation, a fact admitted by the US Embassy.

With the economy sliding deeper into crisis, all the conditions for massive class

struggles are present. Private investment has fallen by up to two-thirds during 1985, and \$2 billion of capital has been moved out of the country. To pay for a war budget of over \$1 billion, Duarte announced an austerity package in January, involving measures such as a 20 per cent rise in public transport fares.

Thousands of trade unionists marched through San Salvador on 18 January to protest against these measures, and 40,000 workers came out on strike. State employees were on strike since December, demanding a wage increase and Christmas bonuses.

The guerrilla war continues, with 10,000 FMLN fighters controlling a third of the country in the face of the Salvadorean armed forces of over 40,000. The guerrillas claim to have inflicted 6084 casualties on the army in 1985, compared with 5286 in 1984.

Unfortunately there is no



Nicaraguan peasant defends his family.

political leadership yet with a programme for linking the guerrilla struggle with the struggle of the urban masses, and mobilising the power of the working class to topple the regime.

A revolutionary victory under working-class leadership would spell the end of capitalism and landlordism throughout the region, and free millions from the horrors of poverty and oppression which they are enduring.

Rajiv's 'honeymoon' is over

ON 26 FEBRUARY the working class brought India to a halt with a 24-hour general strike in protest at the hike in food prices by Rajiv Gandhi's government.

Sixteen of the 22 states saw massive action, while others had already staged general strikes earlier. The strike was further supported by a staggering 6,300,000 state employees protesting against a recent legal change empowering the government to sack workers without giving reasons.

The figures have not been added up, but the strike probably involved ten to twelve million workers. This magnificent movement has brought Rajiv Gandhi's 'honeymoon period' in government to a decisive end.

Sympathy vote

Rajiv came to power after the assassination of his mother, Indira, in 1984. The assassination was exploited to the full by the ruling class to mobilise a sympathy vote for Rajiv, the son and heir.

Because no credible alternative was offered by the opposition parties or the workers' leaders, Rajiv and his Congress(I) party won a huge majority.

However, all the razzmatazz and euphoria surrounding the new administration have been shattered by the stark realities of Indian capitalism in hopeless decay.

On coming to the 'throne', Ra-

shiv Gandhi talked about taking India into the 21st century. But with 65 per cent of India's 750 million people below the poverty line, and only 0.4 per cent of the people rich enough to tax, he would do better to dream about taking Indian capitalism into the 18th century!

Rajiv tried to liberalise imports and encourage trade with multinationals. As a result, the 1985 trade deficit is likely to be twice as large as in 1984. To further aggravate matters, there is the increasing burden of repaying loans to the International Monetary Fund.

The World Bank has estimated that India's exports will need to grow at 7 to 9 per cent per year until 1990 if a balance of payments crisis is to be avoided. But in a time of world recession, with a further slump forecast for the next few years, there is no chance of achieving this.

Thus India will become, for the first time, a permanent debtor nation like those of Latin America. This pressure, on top of a massive budget deficit (32 per cent higher than forecast for 1985-86) has been the cause of the recent hike in prices.

With these policies Rajiv has aroused the mighty Indian proletariat, with a capacity to struggle unsurpassed in the world.

Unfortunately, the heroism and tenacity of the working class faces its opposite in the leadership of the workers' parties. Neither the Communist Party (India) nor the

'Communist Party of India (Marxist)' has put forward any clear programme based on the workers' struggle.

The CP leaders describe the attacks by the Gandhi government as "anti-people". This vague, non-class characterisation has led them to fall in behind the capitalist opposition parties in the campaign against the price rises.

When a meeting of opposition parties was held on 1 March to discuss further action, the CPI(M) general secretary did not bother to attend—but nevertheless approved of all their decisions as "standing up for the people"!

Pale

Even Rajiv Gandhi felt bold enough to taunt the CP leaders: "What has happened to the red-blooded Communists? Can it be that they have become pale from mixing with other colours?"

In their own opportunistic way, the capitalist opposition leaders have grasped more clearly than the CP leaders the strength of opposition to Rajiv's attacks on workers and peasants. Echoing the mood from below, they have called for another wave of struggle.

Such a struggle will reach every corner of India. It is due to begin on 30 March, culminating perhaps in another *bharat bandh* (general strike).

Capitalism in India today is "horror without end". The future



Bhopal workers commemorate the Union Carbide disaster.

holds further impoverishment and misery. In the Punjab, Assam and other states there is the unsolved, burning national question. On a capitalist basis the balkanisation of India into many bleeding fragments is inevitable.

Protests called by the capitalist opposition can demonstrate the power and anger of the proletariat. But it cannot solve the problems of the masses.

Only a socialist programme of

struggle, put forward by the workers' own movement, can offer a solution. A socialist federation of the Indian subcontinent, with full rights for minorities, would free the masses from the nightmare of class, caste, sex, race, religious and national oppression in which the capitalist system has plunged them.

By Jai Agarwalla

Committed selling

Dear Comrades,
Every Monday at 7.30 am I sell *Militant* outside a local factory. I have two sons, a demanding two year old and a young baby. The baby has to be fed and changed before I leave every week and as soon as I get back my husband goes to work.
I cannot pretend that it is

fun, exciting or relaxing, but it is a very real hope for a better future and towards that end workers everywhere must have the opportunity to read and understand the ideas of *Militant*.
Yours fraternally
Jayne Roberts
Dover

Looking after their own

Dear Comrades,
When the latest increase in prescription charges comes into effect this month, charges will have risen by 1,000 per cent since the Tories took office in '79. The police get their prescriptions free. Taking on average one item per officer per year—a very modest average—the bill now stands at approximately £2 million.

The Tories obviously want the boys in blue fit and healthy to police industrial disputes. What will it be next—free multi-vitamins for scabs to give an added boost when crossing picket lines?
Yours fraternally
Alison Grundle
Coleraine
Young Socialists
Northern Ireland

Letters

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

Issues clouded by jargon

Dear Comrades,
As a member of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff, I have eagerly been awaiting the opportunity to vote 'Yes' to the retention of our political fund. I didn't need the propaganda to convince me which way to vote so I proceeded to the ballot paper and looked for the question "Should we keep our political fund?" I didn't find it. What I found was a question which went like this: "Do you vote in favour of the resolution approving the furtherance of the political objects set out on this ballot paper as an object of your union?"

There wasn't a 'Don't know' box so I was stuck with a choice of 'Yes' or 'No'. Although I had an answer to the question I had expected, I didn't have an answer to hand for this conundrum. After a few minutes of looking at it, start to finish, upside-down, back to front, I decided that my cross should go in the 'Yes' box. I wonder if any other comrades had the same doubts as myself when they filled in their forms.
Yours fraternally
P Durrant
ASTMS
Sheffield

Mini-cabs Mini-strike

Dear Comrades,
In the mini-cab firm where I work our controller sent out a cab. The driver sent had been sitting in the office for about three hours waiting. When he got to the address the boss' cab was sitting outside the house. The driver returned to the office and told us what had happened. We decided to strike. This was totally spontaneous and considering these men are all self-employed and non-unionised this was the last thing I expected.
We pay this 'thing' 20 per cent of all fares collected and he still takes the cream jobs.
The outcome of all this is there are now four men looking for a job, myself included as he took on five new drivers the next day. I now have union membership forms with me at all times and have two regular sales of the paper.
Yours fraternally
Phil Tracey
London

Tories boost prostitution

Dear Comrades,
"They are united by a common bond of unemployment and desperation". These are the "Thatcher girls" featured on ITV's *Central Weekend*—the growing numbers of girls who are turning to prostitution because there is no work.
In Nottingham's Hyson Green only one in four girls are reckoned to get a job. "Why do you do it?"
"To get some money so I can go shopping tomorrow. I get £40 with two kids off the Social".
Some of the girls are badly beaten by the pimps or their husbands. Others are ripped off.
"They go on the game to feed themselves and their kids. The government is the cause. Every time there is a Fowler Review it puts more

women on the game." A member of the British Collective of Prostitutes.
Derby Tory MP Edwina Currie rejected that out of hand with the hypocrisy you expect from this £14,000 a year politician:
"It's nothing to do with unemployment. It's greed. They've got no sense of moral dignity or self-respect. They should be at home with their mother."
Home for some of these girls is the Hyson Green flats which are due for demolition.
The programme was a bitter comment on what Thatcher means for women—at least working class women.
Yours fraternally
Chris Ridge
Nottingham East
Labour Party



NHS crisis—cuts to blame not staff

Dear Comrades,
We are all aware of the crisis that this government has brought about in the NHS. Mental health, however, has always been the cinderella of the NHS and has therefore been hit even harder.
Tory health spokesmen surpass each other in hypocrisy as they proudly talk of the falling numbers

of patients in our crumbling Victorian institutions. They neglect to boast of the cold, damp boarding houses or the streets in which many discharged patients end up.
In the hospital where I work a young nursing assistant has been suspended while the police investigate an allegation that he hit a resident. Most people who know him recognise that it is

very unlikely that he committed the offence.
His crime was that he was left on his own in a workshop containing between fifteen and twenty residents many of whom had been detained under the Mental Health Act because of previous violence. With no-one to witness his actions he cannot prove his innocence.

Rather than investigating his actions the police should investigate the callous system that puts a boy in charge of a group of potentially violent patients who even experienced staff are wary of.
Yours fraternally
COHSE member
Blackburn

Hattersley—wooing the Liberals

Dear Comrades,
Recently in Exeter university, some SDP student members received application forms to join the Solidarity group in the Labour Party, of which Roy Hattersley is a prominent member.
In the covering letter, the SDP students were urged to take over the university Labour club. Some SDP

students made overtures to the Labour club to form an alliance, but they were told in no uncertain terms where to go.
I think it is very illuminating to see where the right-wing of the Labour Party are now recruiting members.
Yours fraternally
Martin Broderick
Exeter Labour Party

Friedrich who?

Dear Comrades,
I noticed in a recent *Guardian* the following from Roy Hattersley's weekly piece:
"As I read on through the thousand or so words of Mr Engels story, *déjà vu* began to come up like thunder."
Could Hattersley have finally seen the light? Was the sense of *déjà vu* the fact that Labour lost votes after the last round of expulsions? Sadly not. The Engels story in question belonged to Matthew Engel, *The Guardian's* cricket correspondent.
No doubt all Labour Party members will be delighted that in the week that the Lambeth and Liverpool councillors were surcharged,



Roy Hattersley their deputy leader was more pre-occupied with the plight of Geoff Boycott in the West Indies.
Yours fraternally
Dave Gorton
London

Guerrillas key to revolution?

Dear *Militant*,
Your contributor to the recent upheaval in the Philippines, Philip Hutchinson, writes of the army and the church there as if they had suffered a sudden pang of conscience and become champions of the people.
His "crucial sectors of the army together with the church" are the same who had either carried out the suppression of the people or had acquiesced it by their silence.
Whilst paying some credit to the guerrilla army in the Philippines, Hutchinson states: "It (the departure of Marcos) refutes those who hold a guerrilla army is the key to removing a dictator". As in South Africa, if the armed police and army went to town it could dispose of unarmed demonstrators at will.
In the case of Marcos the fact that this did not happen was because the US with the collusion of most of the army, the church, and who knows, Mrs Aquino, put pressure upon him in order to preserve its hold on the country. Mrs Aquino has already started to toe the US line by accepting the US



Ex-President Marcos Photo: Piers Cavendish (Reflex) II
bases and troops.
In point of fact it was the presence of the guerrilla army which led to the demonstrations when it became obvious that that force was going from strength to strength which is further backed up by the release by Aquino of

leading members of that guerrilla army from gaol and this in spite of the fact that she has many of the old Marcos army leading lights in her 'government'.
Yours faithfully
AF Farr
London



Gone to the dogs

ON THE day when the High Court decided to surcharge Liverpool and Lambeth councillors to the tune of thousands of pounds, the *Liverpool Echo* which has shown a touching concern for every move of the council up to now, surpassed itself with the front page headline: "Mugger robs dog of £30".

Deserting the sinking ship

MATTHEW PARRIS' decision to resign as Tory MP for West Derbyshire and take the lucrative job as presenter of *Weekend World* couldn't have anything to do with a lack of confidence that the Tories will win the next election. After all, he said a couple of years ago after 'experiencing' a whole week on the dole: "What struck me... was the attitude of those whom I met towards government in general and the Tories in particular. An attitude of total cynicism and distrust".

Contributors include Mick Hagan.

Fight victimisation

STOP PRESS

THE SACKING by Land Rover management of Ian Schofield, senior steward and *Militant* supporter is part of the process of softening up the workforce for privatisation and for further attacks. But it also represents an industrial witch-hunt against left-wingers.

It was clearly prepared well in advance. Before

Christmas members of management were overheard discussing that his sacking was on the cards, and that they were out to get rid of anyone associated with *Militant*.

An internal management document examining the virtues of Nissan's deal at its new factory with the AUEW exposed management's intentions. This is a single-union, non-closed shop agreement, with total flexibility and mobility of labour

written in.

The document was produced before Ian's dismissal, but while the company was refusing him recognition as senior steward. It comments that at Nissan the AUEW has "accepted that any representative who has been disciplined beyond a verbal recorded warning stage will have his credentials withdrawn by the trade union."

"Within the Land Rover group we can only refuse to

recognise unilaterally and usually against the opposition of the trade union. Our recent refusal to recognise Ian Schofield as a senior representative in Range Rover is a case in point".

Ian was victimised ostensibly for an error on his application form when he started at Rover 14 years ago. Apparently he had not mentioned that he had worked there for a fortnight two years previously. However at his appeal the company tried

to use against him leaflets produced opposing his dismissal. In Land Rover apparently you can be sacked for opposing your sacking! This is the management that the Labour leaders are supporting for a management buy-out of the company.

Six weeks on there is still a mood of anger among Range Rover workers that the company has been able to attack one of the leading stewards.

In response to a letter from national officer Jack Adams giving five days notice of industrial action, Land Rover management are querying whether the procedure has been exhausted and what action will be taken. They are obviously worried.

Are they also saying that Schofield should not have been sacked before the procedure had been exhausted?

By Ian Parker

Car workers need socialist lead

THE FUTURE OF British Leyland's volume car sector looks fragile. Ford's bid for Austin Rover has been rejected by the Tories, already stung by criticism for handing over Westland to American capitalism. But all the car multinationals look with dread towards the next economic recession.

In the present 'boom' there is a 2.5 million car surplus capacity in Europe. In the race for a share of what will be a diminishing market, medium sized producers like BL could be elbowed aside.

Workers at Longbridge, by sweated labour, have increased productivity from six to 14 cars per man year. With a larger home market of 1.8 million cars in 1985, BL sold 16,000 more cars than in 1984. But by the end of the year it found itself with only 17.7 per cent of the market, compared with 18.2 per cent the previous year, and they had 47,000 unsold cars on their hands.

Lay-off's

For the workers at Cowley and Longbridge, it meant lay-offs. "It seems some of the men have worked themselves out of a job", commented one TGWU official. Back in 1970 BL's market share was 40 per cent. Between 1973 and 1983 the workforce was slashed from 171,000 to 81,000. With the privatisation of Jaguar cutting into profitability, BL is now a small fish in a troubled sea. And there are plenty of greedy sharks about.

In the fifties the UK car industry was second only to the Americans. Up to 1972 it was producing two million cars per year, now it is just half of that.

In 1972, 42 per cent of British car production (850,000 cars) was exported, that is now down to 24 per cent (250,000 cars).

A trade surplus for the automotive industry including components, was transformed into a £2.1

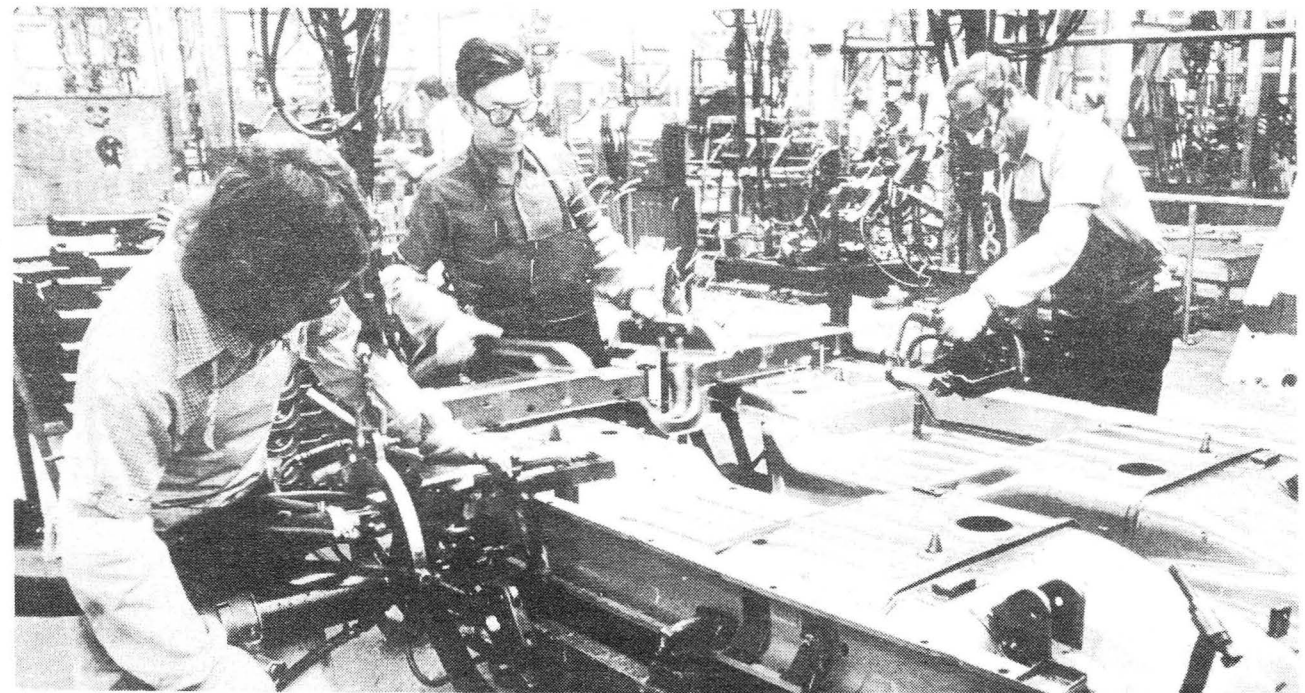
By Bill Mullins

billion deficit by 1983. The estimate for 1988 is for an £8.1 billion deficit. The impact of this decline on jobs has been staggering. In Birmingham, the centre of the car industry, 140,000 jobs have vanished in manufacturing in ten years. In Roy Hattersley's inner-city constituency of Birmingham Sparkbrook, unemployment is now 50 per cent.

Nationally car manufacturing employment had plummeted by 1983 from 464,000 to 289,000 in six years. And for every one car worker's job there can be another seven jobs dependent on it. Now a TGWU pamphlet *Cars and jobs: the decline of the motor industry*, predicts a loss of a further 71,000 jobs by 1988.

It is the responsibility of the labour and trade union leaders to explain to car workers the nature of the crisis facing the industry, and to point a way forward. But instead they are chasing after shadows. Whether it is the slogan of "Keep BL British" in response to the American giants' bids, or the campaign for import controls to protect the ailing home car manufacturers. The TGWU pamphlet outlines seven options comprising import controls, reduction in hours and even wage restraint.

Option two proposes progressively reducing the share of imported cars on the UK market from the present 57 per cent to 35 per cent by 1988. Apparently that would create an extra 65,000 jobs. However the document is forced to recognise that "the problem would be to con-



vince our EEC partners that the ability of their home manufacturers to export to the UK market (with some of the highest profit margins of any European market) should be restricted in the manner suggested".

The authors are forced to recognise that retaliation against import controls would be inevitable. *Militant* has always explained that retaliation would follow any moves towards protection, in which the weakest economies like Britain would suffer. It does not offer any guarantee of a secure future for car workers.

Japanese imports

Option three suggests that Japanese imports be restricted to just three per cent of the British market, compared to 11 per cent now. With this 'only' 32,000 jobs would be lost by 1988.

But "the effect would seem to hold relatively small, mostly short-term gains", and "such action might sour relationships sufficiently, however, to put at risk some of the collaborative links between UK and Japanese manufacturers". And the TGWU favours these deals if they are 'mutually

beneficial'.

The document finally puts forward the idea that most European car workers would go along with imports being reduced to 35 per cent of the UK market (despite the inevitable adverse effect on their job security) if there is an "agreed and co-ordinated campaign to reduce working time right across the European sector".

But the international solidarity needed for this campaign would surely be cut across by British workers lining up behind their own bosses to keep out cars produced by workers abroad? When BL was semi-nationalised in 1975 by Labour most car workers saw it as a step forward.

But their experience since then particularly when the same Labour government appointed anti-union boss Michael Edwardes has soured some of them towards public ownership. But how under capitalism can jobs or shorter hours be guaranteed?

The next Labour government must be committed to nationalisation of the whole motor industry as the alternative to the inglorious decline of the car industry in the bosses' hands.

A PROGRAMME for Labour in the motor industry:

- ★ Re-nationalisation of all privatised sections of BL with minimum compensation based on need only.
- ★ Nationalisation of the whole automotive and components industry, and the creation of a single motor corporation under workers' control and management.
- ★ A socialist transport policy integrating road, rail and air transport, etc, and planning production for those industries with a guaranteed job for all those working in them.
- ★ Reinstatement of all victimised public sector trade unionists.

Keep Land Rover public

'KEEP LEYLAND British and public'. That was the campaigning slogan of the West Midlands TUC at a recent rally held to oppose Land Rover's sell-off to General Motors.

Five hundreds workers gathered to hear how they could stop the plundering of public assets. But John Smith, Labour's trade and industry spokesman, tried to convince them that it was only in parliament that the privatisation of BL could be opposed.

Renationalise!

Incredibly the Land Rover deputy convenor commented: "I'd say we would rather be British slaves than American slaves!"

How can any support be given to British bosses and a

management buy-out, when right now Land Rover management are shedding 290 workers. 200 of these will be from amongst the short contract workers. Recently no-one has been employed at Land Rover on the shopfloor for longer than three months. The other 90 will be 'selective redundancies'.

The whole labour and trade union movement should be campaigning to retain Land Rover in public hands, demanding renationalisation with compensation on need only.

Industrial Reports

Explosion in Coal Board 'laboratory'

Derbyshire miners vote to strike

THE 63 per cent vote for industrial action by Derbyshire miners against the NCB's attempt to impose a new incentive scheme has answered claims that the NUM's fighting spirit has been broken.

The existing scheme retains bonus rates for outbye and day wage workers, thus maintaining some semblance of parity throughout the Area. This lessens the pit versus pit

character of schemes in other Areas which the NCB want to introduce here.

The change would entail reduced earnings, in some instances by up to £25 per week. And there is also a fear, especially in the smallest pits, that the scheme would make closures easier as men could be lured to super pits by the attraction of higher bonuses.

The NCB issued an

ultimatum that after twenty eight days they would remove the fall back rate and operate a pit by pit scheme. The NUM officials tried to negotiate but the NCB were intransigent. The ballot result is their answer.

Pit by pit

At time of writing it is not clear how the NCB will react. One thing is certain however,

after a year back at work, the spirit of the Derbyshire miners is being rekindled.

This was the Area used successfully by the NCB during the strike as a laboratory in which to experiment with methods of strikebreaking. When the strike ended, 70 per cent of Derbyshire miners were back at work. Since then, management have used a host of methods to undermine the NUM.

But the UDM is virtually non-existent. At Markham colliery, out of 2,200 miners, of whom 1,800 were back at work by the end of the strike, there are only 10 UDM members. Strikers maintained all branch positions held just after the end of the strike.

By a Derbyshire NUM member

AUEW election

AUEW PRESIDENTIAL voting papers must be returned by 28 March. Until then there is everything to fight for in the most important election in the AUEW for many years.

As Broad Left candidate John Tocher explained: "I shall be keeping the momentum going right to the very end.

"In the past the attitude has been that once the ballot papers are out we've done all we can. But the campaign must now be kept going all the way.

"In the first ballot only 28% of the membership voted, and we intend to improve on that."

To this end Tocher will have been in Birmingham for a major debate with the right wing candidate, Jordan, on Monday followed by

a visit to Sheffield and then Leeds the following day.

That is the approach that needs to be followed by every AUEW shop steward and shop floor activist. Some 70% of AUEW members usually don't take part in the postal ballots for elections. There are many votes which can be mobilised in support of John Tocher.

Favourable

Reports from Scotland, the North East, the North West and North Wales are favourable to Tocher. Ireland also looks promising. The picture from the West Midlands and the South is less clear at this stage.

This issues, however, as John Tocher explained, are



John Tocher

very clear: "I'm against the no strike and sweetheart deals that are at stake at Wapping. It is now a question of whether this union remains in the mainstream of the trade union and labour movement, or whether with the other candidate we go into isolation on the far right."

Get the message out—and the votes.

By Martin Elvin

A National Organiser election is also currently taking place in the AUEW. The Broad Left candidate is Richard Casey of Coventry.

What the right wing stand for

WHEN COVENTRY AUEW members vote in the current union elections AUEW members will be looking for a leadership that can organise a fightback against the thousands of job losses locally in engineering over the last few years.

But judging by their behaviour in Coventry the right wing's energies will not be spent on fighting the employers, but in witch-hunting socialists.

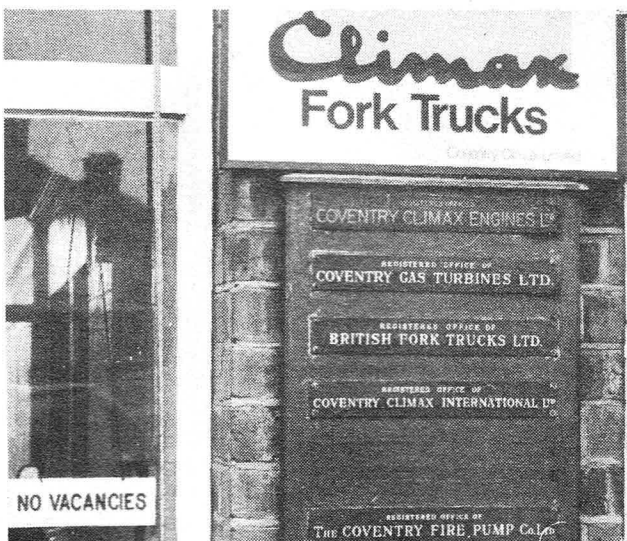
The Coventry Division of the AUEW is presenting a resolution to the union's national conference demanding the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party.

Taking the "credit" for this witch-hunting motion is Mel Griffin, president of the Coventry West District and the right's candidate for Divisional Organiser.

Mr Griffin is more enthusiastic about throwing people out of the Labour Party than he is about keeping workers in employment. In fact he recently sold his own job at Massey Ferguson!

Even the Coventry *Evening Telegraph* was forced to comment that "one of his worse electoral liabilities may be himself," and reports he was saved several times from the sack over his record of absenteeism by left-wing convenor Ken Tyrrell.

His is so discredited in the factory that the Joint Shop



Stewards' Committee have said they will not have him negotiating on their behalf.

The right wing's McCarthyite moves are executed over the heads of the membership. Experience so far shows that when AUEW members see *Militant* supporters' records they are vehemently opposed to the witch-hunt.

Cure worse than...

When Ken Cure banned a meeting in support of Liverpool council from the AUEW's Coventry premises, the secretary of the Rolls Royce Parkside branch protested by sending back a long service medal Cure had presented to him.

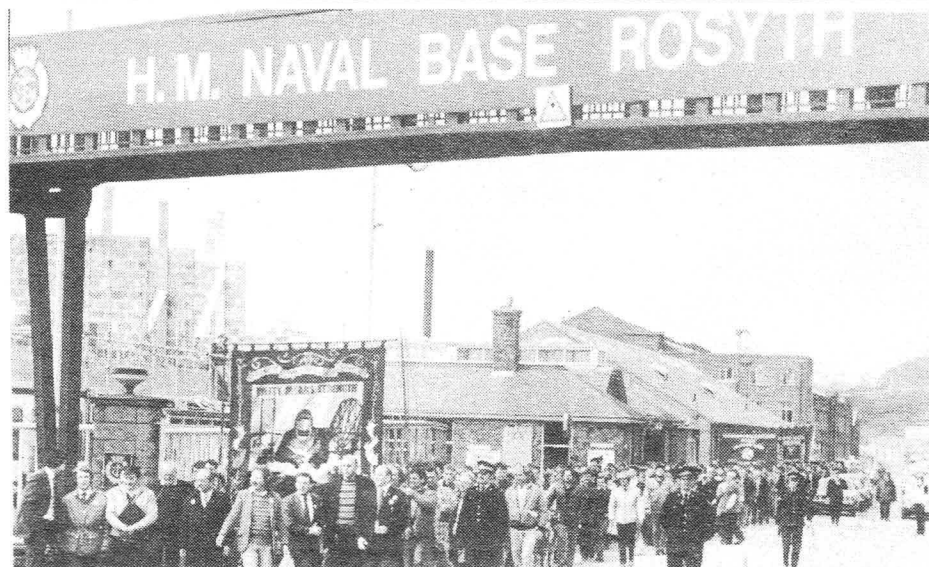
Nineteen AUEW branches were sufficiently impressed

with Dave Nellist's record as MP to nominate him for reselection. And Dave Nellist recently spoke at Griffin's own Coventry West, Shop Stewards' Quarterly.

The stewards were horrified to hear that the Labour Party NEC has been so busy attacking the Liverpool party that they have not got round to discussing the Tories' plans to abolish the Wages Council and their attacks on the low paid! At that meeting, six stewards joined the Labour Party.

Coventry *Militant* supporters are confident that they can persuade many more engineering workers to join Labour to stop the right's wrecking tactics and fight for socialist policies.

By Tony Cross



Jock Penman at head of Rosyth demonstration.

THE CAMPAIGN to save Rosyth and Devonport dockyards from privatisation is entering a crucial stage.

Although we have had continual assurances from the National Officers, in particular Jack Dromey, that the fight could be won in Parliament, it is now obvious that this avenue is closed.

Militant supporters have said all along that we would win nothing there. But most of the trade union reps were loyal to the national officers and our MPs, and would not listen.

But the fight is not over. It is merely beginning in earnest. During the period I was chairman of the conveners committee, I was arguing the Broad Left strategy. This was not what the conveners wanted to hear and eventually they voted me out of the chair.

They had been given encouragement by the fact that the mass shop stewards committee had narrowly voted to ban our bulletin *Broadside*.

Though they had no power to do so, we complied with their decision. This was a wrong move. We should have stated our case on a special bulletin.

The stewards had been influenced by National Officers and conveners, and were looking for someone to blame for the frustration they were feeling. Soon after this, I was removed as chairman, the mass shop stewards' meetings stopped, leaflets stopped, and morale sank.

But my own shop stewards' committee took the initiative, and put a vote of no confidence in the conveners' committee at the first available mass shop stewards meeting.

Wider accountability

We went further, demanding that the new committee be elected by the mass shop stewards committee, and that it be accountable to the shop stewards.

Eventually a compromise had to be reached and a new committee was elected. This new committee is much smaller than the last. Each rep is elected by their own union organisation, rather than by the mass stewards' organisation.

This is a tremendous step forward for the Rosyth workers. There has never been such intense discussion

on the leadership, and the new committee will be constantly tested. If it fails, the stewards will again decide on a new leadership, and how it is elected.

The Broad Left must again show the way forward.

We must continue to fight for the building of links with workers in other industries, in particular those who are threatened with privatisation.

There must be a real campaign against privatisation, involving the members and also the community. A conference must be called to unite workers under threat, and to work out a common strategy.

A series of public meetings must be organised to state our case and explain the consequences of privatisation.

All of this must inevitably lead to a one-day general strike in Fife should the Tories attempt to implement their strategy.

We must demand that the next Labour government immediately takes back into public ownership all the industries and assets that the Tories steal from us in this wild gamble which is privatisation.

By Jock Penman

Management panic at IMI Baildon

AS THE strike at IMI Baildon enters its fourth week against the sacking of deputy convenor, Bill Clarkson, it is obvious that the management are beginning to panic.

A number of letters have been sent to strikers saying that the strike is not official—which is an outright lie, and that numbers of strikers are returning to work—which again is a total lie.

The growing success of

this campaign has forced management to resort to lies in order to try to split the workforce. However the response of the strike committee has been to counter them with an official bulletin, and to step up the mass picketing to show any doubters the support that exists.

Attempts to recruit scab labour through the Manpower organisation have failed, with new recruits turning back at the gate. However the police have

been doing everything in their power to allow the handful of working scabs through the picket.

Local support has been excellent, with a food parcel service organised as well as a hardship fund, mass meetings and a regular bulletin. Morale is high. With the support of the labour and trade union movement, this dispute can be won.

Send all monies and cheques to: IMI Radiators Strike Committee, AUEW Offices, 2 Claremont, Bradford BD7 1BQ, West Yorkshire.

By Keith Narey
(Baildon Labour Party, personal capacity)

Industrial Reports

Glasgow takes on Maxwell

MAD MAX'S Anderston Quay soap opera took another interesting turn last week as "negotiations" between management and the trade unions stuttered along.

It began with Maxwell demanding an apology from Alan Watson the SOGAT branch secretary over the issue of the union's blacking of an editorial state attacking SOGAT and the Scottish Labour Party for condemning his continued membership of the Labour Party.

"Hell will freeze over first" was a typical printworker's response. The *Record* and *Sunday Mail* remain off the street.

The central issue now seems to be job reductions, with Maxwell wanting job losses of 250 out of 830 printers and 50 out of 220 journalists.

The North English edition of a new paper and Irish edition of the *Mirror* which were the main issues of earlier discussion now seem to have disappeared.

Management's aim seems to be to improve the current annual profit of £6.5 million which comes from the 750,000 circulation of the *Record*. But they are losing £75,000 per day in advertising revenue.

The NUJ are on official strike over a breakdown of negotiations and are picketing the plant. SOGAT, NGA and AUEW are in occupation. All 1,050 workers have been served a "dismissal

notice", apparently in preparation for the closing of the current companies and opening of separate companies on 1 April for publishing, producing and printing the papers with much reduced staffing levels.

EETPU members have been told to cross picket lines by their officials but "it looks as though management have told them to stay at home to avoid trouble according to one printworker.

Maxwell used the *Sunday Mirror* to put out a statement trying to make out the NUJ are the bad guys but these tricks will not work, and the confederated chapel is rock solid. Other Maxwell plants watch with horror and amazement as they wonder what he's got in line for them.

The dispute is creating strange bedfellows. Michael Hirst, young Thatcherite Tory MP attacks Maxwell. Jim Sillars ex-Labour MP, ex-SLP, now SNP, at a press conference with SOGAT member Bob Cumming, attacks Maxwell. The fact that Bro. Cumming repeatedly took the union to court over the miners' levy seems to be forgotten.

This issue is being exploited to the hilt by the Tories and SNP and the workers are demanding the Labour leadership come out and openly condemn Maxwell.

Alvis out in Coventry

WORKERS AT Alvis, Coventry have been locked out and are picketing the plant. After four weeks, management upped their offer from 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent plus another 3 per cent if workers would accept changed working practices.

But pickets are deeply suspicious of management. One said: "Two years ago we accepted a nil wage rise in return for no redundancies. Since then over 100 jobs have gone."

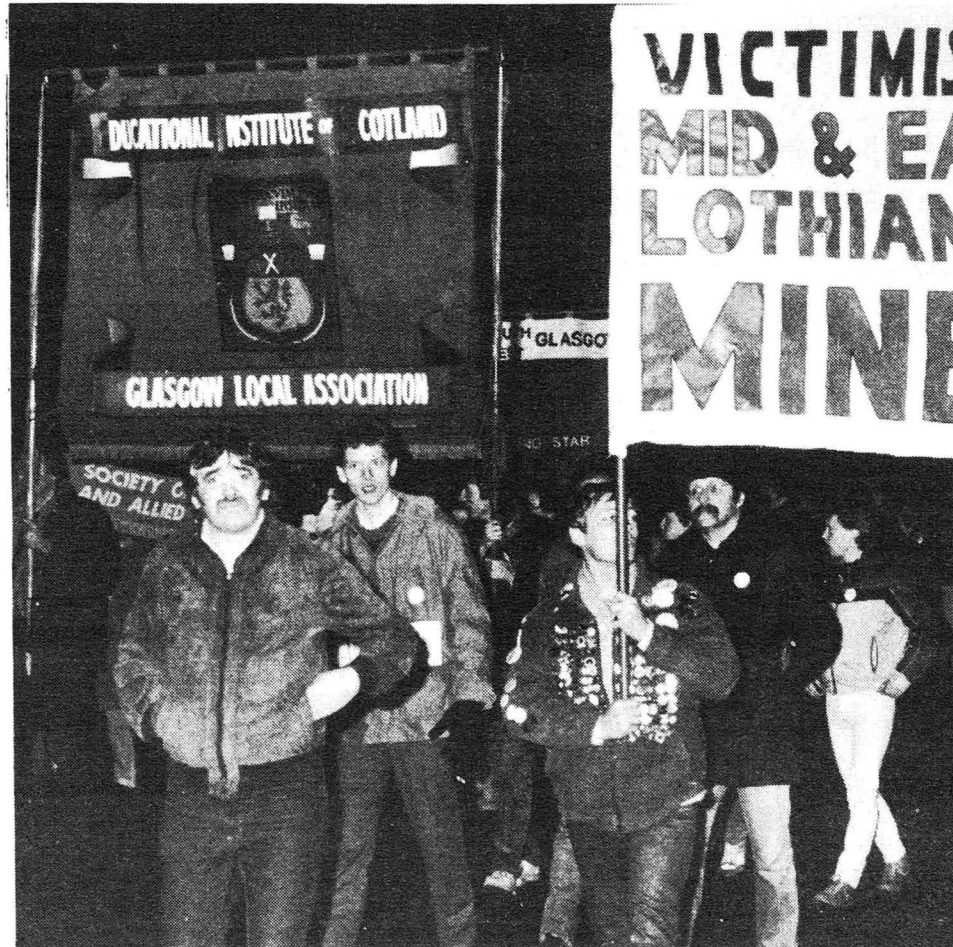
The workforce is down to about 500 yet recently more than 2,000 were employed.

"The Tory way of thinking has always betrayed us" remarked one picket.

GCHQ Tory retreat



Under threat of massive trade union response the Tories have abandoned their threat to sack union members at GCHQ.



Picket of Murdoch's Glasgow plant.

...and Murdoch

MANY OF the activists are disappointed at the withdrawal of the 24-hour picket at Murdoch's Kinning Park Plant in Glasgow. Attempts at mass pickets had begun to strike a chord and according to activists a more vigorous campaign of leafletting and factory visits could have brought on a massive response.

But its not all serious. The people who look like *Sun* journalists going into the plant are greeted with cries

such as: "Are you the brain who writes the four lines at the bottom of the dirty pictures".

Last week among the derelict ground and dirty factories which make up that part of Kinning Park, the *Sun* journalist missed a real "human interest" story.

At the small church 20 yards from the gate a wedding was taking place. Unusually for Glasgow the bride and groom were leaving in a horse-drawn car-

riage. It would have made a nice picture.

"The reason the *Sun* wouldn't cover the story is the bride wouldn't strip for page three" said one picket.

Friendly advice was then given to the scabs leaving work as to what they could do with the horse manure left on the street.

Reports by
Ronnie Stevenson

London bus re-ballot

IN A move reminiscent of the chaos in Birmingham last year the London Bus Committee have decided to re-ballot the membership after getting a yes vote for a strike from 24 March. Let's hope it doesn't take three ballots needed in the West Midlands before they get a no vote.

The Committee is bowing to management squawking about a low turnout—about 6,000 out of 17,000. But this is the second time the leadership have backed off recently. They got a mandate for industrial action over the pay claim last year and then settled. And they probably didn't expect an enthusiastic response to the indefinite strike posed in the ballot.

There are no shortage of grievances. Privatisation, closures and 'rationalisation' are hitting bus workers hard. Management have arbitrarily suspended long-standing agreements in the 'Red Book' affecting wages, jobs and conditions and arbitrarily closed garages.

Mass meetings will be held in all garages on 26 March and a new ballot will be held on 27 March over strike action starting 27 April.

Not so A-one on brutal Bootle picket

ALL ELEVEN workers at the A-one Feed Supplement factory in Bootle have been on strike since 10 January the day after fitter Bob Coalbran and mill-worker Fred Thomas were sacked.

Despite having both been congratulated on several occasions for the quality of their work, after organising themselves into a union the two men were told it was now unsatisfactory and were promptly sacked.

The workers have suffered appalling conditions. As one explained: "Management were forcing us to work a 72 hour week for £102.

"We work on unguarded machines; the fire escape is coming away from the wall; the roof leaks so that we

walk in mud; the lighting is bad; and the canteen used to be a toilet—it still looks like one!"

"We work with dangerous chemicals like arsenic, but the protective masks are useless."

Although a relatively small family concern, A-one Feeds Supplement Ltd has a £10 million annual turnover. Despite the violence and intimidation against the strikers, morale is high.

Picketing is having an effect. It's estimated the company has lost over £¼ million since the strike began. Lorries are being turned away despite blatant strike-breaking tactics by the police.

Building workers take battle to Laings

THE LONG-RUNNING battle with builders John Laing by workers sacked from a site in Surbiton and then refused reinstatement despite the recommendation of the national conciliation panel continues to escalate.

Under threat of imprisonment for ignoring an injunction obtained by Laing the workers have continued to extend picketing of sites around the country.

Laing sites in Manchester

and Edinburgh were hit last Monday and shop stewards at various other sites have promised solidarity action this coming Monday.

A picket of Hayes Wharf is also planned for this Monday and all building workers are urged to support it. This is an important dispute not just for the building industry but defence of trade union rights.

Information, support, donations: Tel. 278 4444 ext.2556.

Strategy to win in print

THE STRATEGY of wider industrial action in the print is increasingly recognised as central to the future of the dispute. It is widely discussed amongst the members and provoking a response from the leadership.

Those who argue that other Fleet Street workers will not strike were the ones who never expected the seven to one majority for the strike at News International.

The people who argue against wider action also say, contradicting themselves, that a Fleet Street strike, even a one-day stoppage, which has been widely canvassed, would be self-defeating by giving a clear run to sales of Murdoch's papers.

But if Fleet Street workers came out on a Saturday night and marched to Wapping, especially combined with a national mobilisation there and at other distribution points, we could stop distribution.

Some also argue that for other Fleet Street workers to strike would open them up to the kind of arbitrary sackings suffered by the News International workers.

Confidence

That would not happen if the Fleet Street proprietors know that we are solid and determined—that they will lose all their revenues if they try to do a Murdoch—and, ironically, that whilst they were stopped Murdoch would pinch their circulation.

To keep the spirits of the members up, the print union leaders have to show to our own members that we have a strategy which can deliver successes.

And from showing willingness to struggle in the print we can win solidarity action from other workers. Why should other workers make sacrifices in solidarity when many of our own members are not?

Above all, this dispute cannot be allowed to drift on indefinitely. That is not a strategy for victory.

To allow things to drag out, relying on public opinion and the boycott campaign, important as they are, gives Murdoch time to iron out his printing and distribution problems.

Wider issues

To let things appear to drift allows demoralisation and confusion to be spread amongst print and other workers by our enemies. It also allows time for the other print bosses to prepare similar assaults.

This is not an ordinary dispute. It is about defence of basic trade union rights in a whole industry and thus the very existence of the print unions. That is why the TUC should be organising solidarity action and a one day general strike.

It also means the industrial campaign must be coupled with political action. Neil Kinnock, just as with the miners, seems unprepared to give full support. Speaking at a rally on the other side of London is not enough. How can he grasp the realities of police violence from the safety of Westminster.

There can be no better time to launch a campaign against this government. They are shaken by scandals and open splits. Wider industrial action, backed by the TUC and the Labour Party, can finish them off.

By Peter Jarvis
(London Region NGA)

Militant

Spanish Referendum
See Page 10

French election warning to Labour

THE DEFEAT for the left in the French parliamentary elections is a sombre warning to the labour movement in Britain.

The Socialist administration of President Mitterrand was elected in 1981 amid great enthusiasm and high hopes on the part of workers and youth. This has now been frittered away.

Four years ago, the Socialist and Communist Parties won 55 per cent of the votes, more than the Labour Party has ever received. It was the highest vote ever recorded by the French left. They held the presidency and the majority in the assembly. Now they have handed that majority back to the parties of the right, the RPR and the UDF.

Workers voted in 1981 for a socialist 'change', and they believed that the left parties would deliver it.

In its first 12 months the Socialist government did raise the minimum wage, cut the retirement age to 60, reduce the working week and nationalise a few important sections of the economy. A programme significantly to the left of Kinnock and Hattersley.

Laws of capitalism

But with the overwhelming majority of the economy in private hands, inevitably the laws of crisis-ridden capitalism still operated. The permanent instability of capitalism internationally also bore down on the government.

The French bosses themselves, as is only to be expected, invested abroad undermining Mitterrand's economic plans.

The leaders of the workers' parties were not

By Jeremy Birch

prepared to mobilise the workers to break the power of the ruling class. They chose the only other alternative, to offload the burdens of the economic impasse on to the masses.

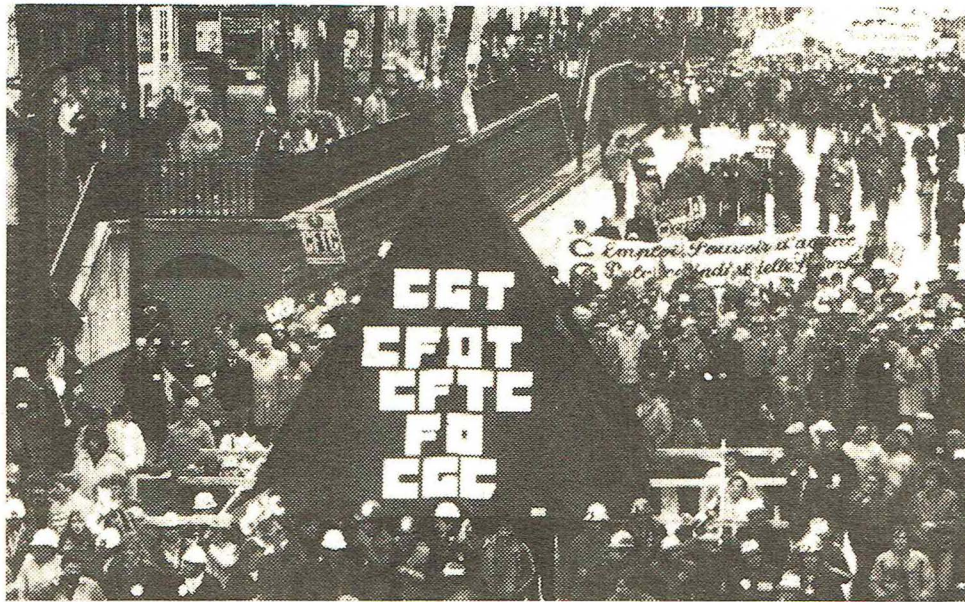
After a year in office Mitterrand was forced into a 'U'-turn. Wages' freeze, devaluations, cuts in public spending—policies commended even by Mrs Thatcher. Despite the pre-'81 promise to reduce unemployment, joblessness rose from 7 per cent to nearly 11 per cent.

The popular reforms of the first period have been cancelled out by the austerity measures introduced since.

Yet the loyalty of the class conscious workers to the Socialist Party has been unshaken. The Socialists are still the largest single party in the assembly.

Compared to the 20.7 per cent of the vote they received in the 1984 Euro-elections, the 30 per cent gained this time is almost a victory for them. There was certainly no celebrations at the headquarters of the UDF or the RPR. Their combined overall majority is just three seats.

Workers rallied behind the SP in alarm at the threats from the right's programme. Denationalisation, more cuts and easing of the labour regulations making redundancies less difficult, comprised their reactionary manifesto. Now their limited parliamentary majority and



French workers demonstrating against Socialist government's deindustrialisation plans.

the determination that the workers have just shown may well constrain its implementation.

But while the mainstream right may have been held in check, the racist National Front scored 10 per cent of the vote and has made its first entry into parliament. In traditionally socialist Marseilles, their vote matched that of the Socialist Party. Their growth is a sign of despair by some at the inability of the left to solve the basic problem of the French people, but they are a threat to the unity of the workers' organisations.

At the same time the CP

slumped to its worst result since 1932. Even since 1978 its share of the vote has halved. It has not gained as yet from the Socialist Party's retreats. It was in the government and sat through the turn to monetarism only withdrawing in the last two years.

Experiment failed

France was held up as an example of how the gradual, reformist road to socialism could work. The experiment has failed. Like the last Labour government it has proved that trying to operate within the confines of

capitalism, in the end only benefits the capitalist parties.

But France is a wealthier country than Britain, with annual GNP per head at \$10,500 compared to Britain's of \$9,200. Britain also has substantially higher unemployment. If the policies of Mitterrand have been completely inadequate to defend the interests of French workers, what confidence can British workers have that the same approach from their leaders will be any more successful. The French experience should recommit workers in Britain to defend the ideas of real socialism within the Labour Party.

For France a period of political instability has been ushered in. An SP president, with a right parliamentary majority that is in turn divided among itself. A presidential election now looms within two years.

A great debate will open up in the ranks of the SP and CP following the electoral setback. Undoubtedly in the SP especially the ideas of Marxism will win increasing support.

ELECTION RESULTS

	Seats	% of vote		
SP	198	(210)	31.19	(37.77)
CP	35	(44)	9.8	(16.1)
Other left	17	(6)	4.36	(1.90)
RPR	150	(88)	40.86	(40.07)
UDF	127	(63)		
NF	33	(-)	9.7	(-)
Other right	15	(11)	4.0	(3.0)

1981 results in brackets.

Shut down Murdoch

(Continued from Page 1)

"Road blocks were set up by pickets to stop scabs getting out. One 'Group Four Security' van was turned back and a Jaguar reversed at speed down the Highway after the driver was asked where he worked!

"Then, at about 2.20 am, without warning, the pickets at the junction at Glamis Road, were surprised by several transit vans and coaches speeding down the road.

"Out of nowhere, the crowd seemed to be outnumbered by riot police running towards us. Naturally, there was panic and the police chased the crowd about a 100 yards down the road. The crowd by this time were very angry.

"Five hours later, the trucks finally came out. Murdoch's distribution was severely limited. Singing, 'We'll be back, we'll be back!', the printers had shown they will not be beaten into submission."

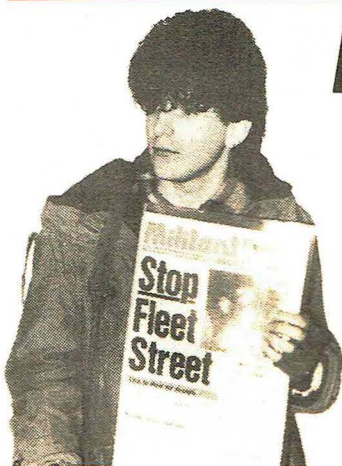
This modest victory shows what can be achieved by mass picketing. If it was properly organised on the basis of wider industrial action by the print unions coupled with a call for a national mobilisation at Wapping this weekend, it could be even more effective.

Denied rumours

National Graphical Association leader Tony Dubbins gave a boost to such a prospect when he denied rumours that print union officials had been discouraging other workers, including the miners, from attending the picket. He said he is: "encouraging other trade unionists to attend."

That lead should be taken up enthusiastically by all officials, indeed all printers, not just the activists. The leaders of the print unions have a duty to campaign for a mass mobilisation as part of a national movement to stop the murder of unionism in the industry.

Thatcher and her class would have to take notice of the whole membership of the print unions backed by thousands of other trade unionists rallied in action against the sacking of 6,000 of our members.



BECOME A
Militant
SUPPORTER!

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

Name
Address

SUBSCRIBE!

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

Name
Address

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

Donate

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

Sell

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