

# Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

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Inside...

Wapping  
police riot  
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## War in Wapping



Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report).

Tories  
on the  
run

**SWEEPING LABOUR** gains in the local elections will have given new heart to all workers hit by seven lean and mean years of Thatcherism. The Tories are on the run. They can no longer fool even many of their own supporters. The fall-out cloud from the Thatcher disaster hovers over every area, every job.

Labour must now go on the attack. Don't let the Tories have another two years in office. Labour's leadership should use these elections as the springboard for a massive campaign to fight for a general election now.

Print workers are struggling for effective trade unions at Wapping; more and more people are worried over Thatcher's commitment to nuclear power and her kowtowing to Reagan's military plans.

The new Labour councils themselves will plunge immediately into battle over rate-capping and cutbacks. Having managed to isolate Lambeth and Liverpool councils last year, the Tories have more attacks up their sleeves for other councils.

### More cuts

After Birmingham council won a court case against the government's punitive block grant system, the environment minister will be introducing retrospective legislation to legalise his actions.

That will mean more cuts as the government makes ridiculously low estimates of the needs of councils, particularly in the inner cities. They still hold the threat of court action over hundreds of Labour councillors who defied Tory laws last year.

But that must not make Labour councillors hold back. The Tories could only threaten councillors in 1985-86 because of the capitulation of most Labour local authorities.

This year Labour councils will face even worse attacks. They need to hammer out immediately a united policy of defiance, preparing to mobilise local workers and voters in action to force more cash out of this government.

If the Labour Party nationally and locally campaign on socialist alternatives to the chaos of Toryism and capitalism the last days of the Thatcher government will be near.

By Roger Shriver

**LAST SATURDAY**, in some of the worst scenes of violence ever seen in this country, the police unleashed a vicious attack on print workers, women and children. Demands were immediately raised to stop Fleet Street. SOGAT London Machine Branch members agreed there and then to push for this.

So great was their anger that this demand was being raised even among many who had opposed it, but now saw the need for a greater demonstration at Wapping. Fleet Street at a standstill would show the printers' bitterness and rally the campaign to defeat Murdoch. Now should be the time to widen the action and advance to victory.

### Severe setback

However, the decision of the SOGAT Executive Committee to bend the knee to the Tory judges and purge their contempt has dealt a severe setback for the strikers.

"It's like being punched in the stomach with a copper's truncheon like on Saturday", said Carol Hall, Deputy MOC, *Times* Clerical.

It is now a priority that the strikers themselves take firm control of the dispute. If that is done the strike can still be won. It is only when the rank and file have taken initiatives that the strike has had successes. A national campaign must be launched to prepare the ground for wider action. It will be like starting the dispute again. The leaders of the unions, by confining the dispute mainly to News International have isolated the strikers and limited the strike's effectiveness. Yet this can be reversed if the printworkers spell out why Murdoch can and must be smashed. The strikers must take over the campaign to approach Fleet Street

# Defend printers

By Peter Jarvis  
(London Region NGA)

workers to come out on strike as the first stage in rebuilding the campaign to win this battle. Touring the country will raise the cash necessary to maintain the battle and will expose the leaders' argument that Fleet Street could not be stopped as it was the only means for raising cash.

The boycott campaign is having little effect. It may or may not have brought Murdoch to the negotiating table but he is certainly not on his knees.

This cautious approach led them to believe that there was no option but to yield to one newspaper boss after another.

Deals that would have been previously been thought a nightmare have been recommended. If Murdoch is allowed victory then even these will be worthless. The press barons will want Murdoch's tame and docile company union.

This strike must be won. It can result in victory if the strength of the trade unions is brought to bear.

Regardless of SOGAT EC's deci-

sion, the strikers will have no option but to continue the fight. But one thing is clear—a new leadership is necessary.

The trade union leaders have shown themselves unwilling and unable to lead the struggle, but with the correct tactics and leadership, victory can be won.

Interview with printer—see back page.

### Another magnificent fighting fund quarter

IN THE final two days of the fighting fund quarter, a huge £6,069 rolled in, giving an overall total of £41,653. Since 1 January this year £71,069 has been raised in the fighting fund and building fund from our readers and supporters.

In just four months we have raised more than *double* the amount for the whole of 1976! Forward to the daily *Militant*.



# Militant

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## Debate ideas

THREE LEFT Labour NEC members—Michael Meacher, Margaret Beckett and unfortunately Eric Clarke of the NUM—have sadly chosen May Day to issue a statement attacking *Militant*.

They have at least concentrated on *Militant's* ideas. *Militant* welcomes genuine discussion of its policies, and would happily debate them publicly, including with any of the three.

It is because the right cannot answer the full socialist demands of *Militant* that they resort to organisational manoeuvres and expulsions. Fear of the growing influence of *Militant's* ideas, resulted in the travesty of the Liverpool inquiry, which prompted the walkout of seven NEC members.

Creditably Margaret Beckett cosigned a minority report rather than go along with the unsubstantiated allegations in the Liverpool inquiry majority report. Eric Clarke participated in the walk out.

Michael Meacher, sat tight, even appearing at Kinnock's subsequent press conference, where the leader claimed that the walkout had "reinforced the determination of the NEC", to press ahead with disciplinary action.

Clearly the three signatories of the May Day statement differ over organisational methods and voting with the right.

But incredibly they level the charge that on several issues "even though opinion on the left may be divided, *Militant* readers can be relied on to vote solidly with the right."

Many rank and file left wingers, not least NUM members, will be stunned that Eric Clarke could, with Michael Meacher accuse *Militant* of lining up with the right. It was only Meacher's 'lining up' with Kinnock that swung the NEC to oppose the reimbursement of the miners' fines at last year's conference.

In the statement it is the familiar caricature of *Militant's* policies that is taken up, not the policies themselves. On nuclear weapons it places *Militant* in the same camp as the Solidarity Group. Yet *Militant* supports unilateral nuclear disarmament, the closure of US bases and the nationalisation of the arms industry, while explaining that only the successful struggle for socialist democracies internationally could guarantee world peace. Do the three really believe this is the position of Healey or Hattersley?

The opposition of *Militant* to the establishment of black sections within the party is well known. But would the right or even these three NEC members support *Militant's* demand for a proper campaign against racialism by Labour, including a commitment to repeal all immigration controls, which would politically attract black workers to the party, far more than separatist internal structures.

*Militant's* call for a Northern Ireland party of labour—a policy agreed at party conference in 1981—is criticised, apparently because of the idea that it should be established "before reunification". But has not the mobilisation of Protestants against the limited Anglo-Irish Agreement (and Meacher and Beckett voted for the agreement in parliament) demonstrated the need to politically cement class unity? On a capitalist basis, ie without a socialist campaign, reunification of Ireland is unrealistic.

It is true that *Militant* opposes "positive discrimination for women, ethnic minorities or gays," in employment etc. *Militant* fights all forms of discrimination, but considers that a strategy of redistributing poverty or unemployment, will do grave damage to the workers' unity needed to fight for full employment and decent living standards for all.

Strangest of all is the suggestion that *Militant's* approach to pay is "over simplified." The pressure is now on from Hattersley, Kinnock and several union leaders for a new wages' policy. Is it over simplified to oppose it? The 1978 conference on the eve of the 'winter of discontent' passed a resolution (moved by a *Militant* supporter) by two million votes, including those of the NUM, declaring that Labour "will only support the planning of wages when prices, profits and investment are planned within the framework of a socialist planned economy." Perhaps Eric Clarke should ask Michael Meacher where he stood on the social contract, that did so much damage to Labour's standing.

What is especially unfortunate is that these three NEC members have chosen this moment, when the right are hoping to close in for the kill against *Militant*, to attempt a political answer, however disingenuous, to Marxism.

They have at least committed themselves to opposing expulsions on political grounds, and must be held to it. But if they were to examine the right wing's motives for the witch-hunt they would see that all the threatened expulsions are political.

It would be a pity if under the pressure to back the purge on the NEC, they should become viewed as overeager to 'ideologically' distance themselves from *Militant*. For the result is not an informed interchange of ideas. For that they should have done *Militant* the courtesy of presenting its real programme, and attempting a reasoned argument.

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# Labour admits purge unjust

A LETTER has gone to Labour Parties from head office advising against any further action against *Militant* supporters, in the light of the recent legal decision which found the procedures up to now to be unfair. On these grounds Walworth Road advised Eddisbury CLP to reinstate Peter Naylor who was expelled in January.

The Party organisation department is to bring in a new procedure which this time "will incorporate the concept of natural justice and will attempt to give the maximum protection to parties

taking action and to the individuals concerned..."

The Labour Party are thus admitting that the procedures adopted so far, including those used to expel most *Militant* supporters over the last few years, are null and void. In any legal sense these expulsions must be considered as being invalid.

All the other 38 Party members expelled on various *Militant* charges, therefore, should immediately seek advice and demand their reinstatement to full Labour Party membership.

## Liverpool 12—no case to answer

HAVING EXAMINED their revised charges, the 12 Liverpool Labour Party members summoned to the National Executive Committee on 21-22 May to face possible expulsion are even more adamant that they have no case to answer.

By Tony Aitman  
(One of the Liverpool 12)

Allegations that the 12 are "members of the Militant Tendency" are now justified by no more than their support for *Militant's* ideas, speaking at meetings, writing articles or signing leaflets. No such activities have ever been against party rules. Many party members, including MPs and NEC members, have spoken at *Militant* meetings or written articles for the paper, yet are not being charged.

"Reading, selling, purchasing, publishing or writing for newspapers, including *Militant* were specifically cited by former general secretary Jim Mortimer as activities which should not be precluded by the NEC.

Other charges relate to the conduct of the District Labour Party Executive Committee. Those of the 12 who are DLP officers are alleged to have "caused or contributed to causing an unconstitutional concentration of power within the Labour Party in Liverpool to reside in the EC of the DLP by...arrogating to the DLP the improper function of dictating group strategy and action to the Labour Group on the Liverpool City Council".

Those accused of this preposterous charge have acted entirely within the rules and standing orders of the DLP, which have never previously been challenged by the NEC, and the rules of the national party itself.

The Party's Model Standing Orders for Labour



Lobby of NEC in March. Make sure you attend the mass NEC lobby on 21 May, 8am at 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Groups state: "The local government election policy shall be determined by the local party in accordance with the terms of its constitution as approved by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party."

It further makes clear that: "the provisions for consultation between party and group set out in these model standing orders are the minimum arrangements required, and parties and groups are encouraged to secure the greatest possible degree of co-operation and consultation on all matters concerning local administration in their area".

Furthermore, the Liverpool DLP's practice of determining the political programme of the council's Labour Group has been adopted by other District Parties. The Bristol party manifesto for the elections on 8 May, *A Socialist Strategy for Bristol*, states that the next Labour administration will take steps to ensure "that real control of the council and its policies remains in political hands". It specifies that this means exercising political control over the key council officers' posts, appointing political advisers and research

assistants and abolishing the office of Lord Mayor.

The Labour Group leader, Graham Robertson, is no less aware of the significance of the DLP programme, though he himself openly rejects it. "One becomes a bit emotive when writing manifestoes. They are great things; they are people's aspirations. But they are not always possible to implement".

### Control leaders

He even says that there is no question of the manifesto being put before the full council because "the procedures don't allow it".

The Bristol party members are acting to curb such arrogant contempt for the party programme by their 'leader'. Years ago Liverpool faced exactly the same attitude from council leaders. In both cities, the membership has strived to ensure democratic control of party representatives so that election promises are actually carried out.

Yet only in Liverpool is this deemed an 'offence' worthy of expulsion, just as in Liverpool, only some of the DLP officers are being charged. This proves that the

allegations about DLP irregularities are just a cover for the political attack on supporters of *Militant*.

This becomes most blatant in the allegations that the agenda of the DLP was extended "to deal with issues other than those related to local government" and that the accused "initiated and allowed discussion to take place and decisions to be taken on national and international issues". No branch, constituency, district or regional Labour Party has not committed such an "offence". Members will be staggered to read that their leaders have such a blinkered, parochial view of politics that such discussion is considered to merit disciplinary notices.

**Members' anger now needs to be converted into action, through a mobilisation for a massive lobby of the NEC at 8am on Wednesday 21 May at 150 Walworth Road, London SE17, to make sure NEC members understand the outrage of those they represent and are persuaded to drop this show trial and turn the party back to driving the Tories from office.**

## Merseyside Labour carries on fighting

A FUND has been established to finance the fight against attacks on Liverpool District Labour Party and the threatened expulsion of 12 members, by Labour's National Executive Committee.

The DLP are under constant attack both by the Tories, Liberals and now by the Labour Party and union leaders.

The NEC spent thousands on an inquiry into the DLP and on sending the report to every branch and constituency, even though this report is discredited and has been dropped by the NEC as the basis for the expulsions. A reply to this report has been written and circulated



Felicity Dowling through the labour movement.

The 12 members have had to take legal action to ensure a fair hearing. After this the NEC was forced to change

the procedure for meetings to meet the requirements of natural justice.

However, all this is costing thousands of pounds which the councillors don't have; four have already been surcharged as Labour councillors. This appeal is for all individuals and organisations who wish to fight the undemocratic attacks, witch-hunts and expulsions.

### Donate

Send donations and requests for speakers to Felicity Dowling, "Defend Liverpool Labour Party" c/o 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool L1. Cheques to "Defend Liverpool Labour Party".

THE MERSEYSIDE trade union movement has reacted in outrage at a proposal by the Labour Party NEC to close the joint office of the DLP and Trades Council. Liverpool MPs, the MEP, trade unions, the Trades Council, CLPs, Labour councillors and the DLP completely oppose the closure of an office which provides a vital service for the whole Merseyside labour movement.

The move to set up what would solely be a regional sub-office of the Labour Party was also condemned at a recent meeting of the Liverpool Temporary Coordinating Committee.



# Police run riot at Wapping

SINCE THE general strike sixty years ago, only at Orgreave during the miners' strike, have trade unionists faced the kind of premeditated brutality unleashed by the Metropolitan Police at Wapping last Saturday.

Orgreave and Wapping are the living proof that we have now entered a new period of bitter struggle. All pretence of police 'neutrality' was abandoned as Rupert Murdoch's private army rampaged through the crowds of demonstrators and local residents.

## Horses charged

Headed by the 50 marchers from Glasgow and Newcastle, the demonstration from Fleet Street had been noisy and boisterous, determined to show that Murdoch could be beaten.

As the march reached the road leading to the main entrance of the News International plant, it was met by the second march of SOGAT members. Suddenly, as if it was a pre-arranged signal, a smoke-bomb exploded among the police blocking the road. Immediately their ranks opened and the horses charged out, sweeping along The Highway into the ranks of the march, scattering everyone to the sides.

Hundreds fled into the street which led to the platform where the May Day rally was due to begin. They were no safer. Up this narrow street charged wave after wave of riot police, lashing out with truncheons

## Eyewitness reports

"The LPYS arrived at the same time as the SOGAT marchers from the other direction. As they approached, the coppers grabbed the SOGAT banner. The riot police charged up the street where the unions' vans were. I saw a woman injured in the road. I picked her up and as I carried her to an ambulance I was pushed back by a copper."

*Paul Lennox, Hampstead and Highgate LPYS.*

"The police went totally berserk. I got dragged off and got a right old kicking. I was taken to the police station at Victoria and released at a quarter to four with a caution. The police were picking up pieces of wood to use as 'evidence'. They were totally crazy."

*Bob Pratt, Chairman of Ilford North LPYS and Fairlop Labour Party.*

"The police were running into anyone they saw, indiscriminately lashing out with their truncheons and shields, forcing the crowd back. They were using mobile searchlights and chasing people on to the estate. I saw one who had to knock somebody up to escape. They got our Labour Party banner; we got the banner back, but not the poles."

*Bernie O'Connor, Chairman, Southwark Bermondsey Labour Party.*

"I saw a 15 year old boy hit right in his face with a baton. A 12 year-old with him had to be snatched away or they

By Pat Craven

at random, driving people against the fence with nowhere to escape. For the best part of an hour foot soldiers and cavalry took turns to charge and wade into the crowd.

They surged round to the back of the platform, ignoring pleas from the speakers to withdraw. No-one was spared. Women, teenagers and the old were clubbed about the head and body. One of the marchers from Glasgow suffered a heart attack. A stream of injured, some with blood streaming from their heads were carried to the make-shift first-aid centre.

## Camera smashed

The speakers, MPs Tony Benn and Ron Leighton, and print union leaders, were forced to abandon their speeches to make appeals for ambulances to be let through, for help in tracing a missing child, and to plead in vain for the police to withdraw.

A BBC camera was smashed; an ITN reporter was amongst those taken to hospital when the police finally let the ambulances through.

The police claim that they

would have had him too. The horses were charging on to the pavement, forcing women and children against the wall and the riot police were forcing people against the horses."

*Bob Law, NUR District Council, London Transport, and Southwark Council Labour candidate.*

"The riot police went into the square where the platform was. I saw a blind bloke whose friend was having to push the riot police away to stop them hitting him"

*Gerry Feasey, Ilford North LPYS.*

"A 16-year old Harlow school student was arrested and charged with threatening behaviour. At the police station he was asked why he had gone to Wapping. While explaining to one officer about solidarity, another spat in his face and told him that the printers would be better off without help from his sort.

"I met a Wapping resident, who had not even been on the picket; on his way home he was kicked in the back by a mounted policeman. As he fell he grabbed the reins of the horse and was promptly arrested. He told us he was charged with 'cruelty to animals'. We laughed at the joke...until he showed us the charge sheet, which confirmed his story!"

*Danny Purton, Chairman, Harlow Trades Council.*



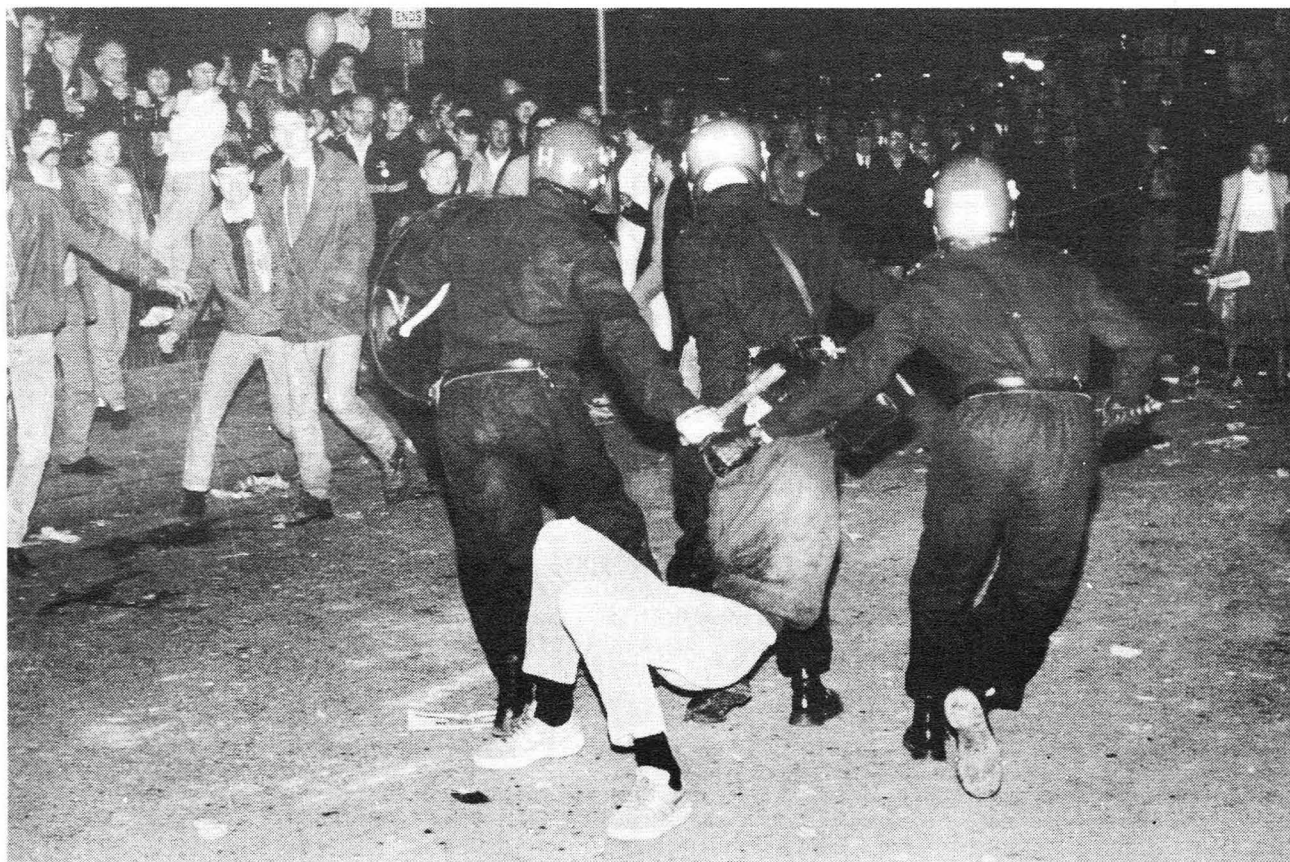
acted in retaliation to attacks is fantastic. Only after the charges did some demonstrators try to defend themselves as best they could against heavily protected and organised riot police. Most were stunned by the ferocity

of the attack and did no more than doggedly try to stand their ground and vent their anger on the uniformed thugs.

The effect of these events will be profound. The mood of defiance was getting

stronger with each police charge. SOGAT leader Brenda Dean had to react with a tough speech, promising there would be no surrender. It will be far harder now to reach any settlement. The mood now is that the rest of

Fleet Street and the wider trade union movement must become actively involved in what is now a fight for the most basic trade union rights—to picket, march and hold meetings.



One of the 81 arrested demonstrators being dragged away by riot police.

## AUEW—'a significant vote for change'

THE AUEW presidential election result—victory for right-winger Bill Jordan with 119,220 votes to 95,511 for the left candidate John Tocher—is a serious blow to engineering workers who are fighting to rebuild their union, halt the decline of manufacturing industry and safeguard jobs, wages, training and trade union organisation.

Given the size and the influence of the AUEW, Jordan's attacks on *Militant*, his call for action against MPs

Dave Nellist and Terry Fields and his talks with EETPU general secretary Hammond, his election is a setback too for the wider labour movement.

Nevertheless, the result was far closer than either the press or the union right-wing had expected. "We got nearly 100,000 votes" commented John Tocher, "45 per cent of those cast. That is a significant vote for a change. We did not disguise what we stood for. On wages, protection of shop stewards, all the major issues, we want to get the

AUEW back into the mainstream of the trade union movement, not the extreme right."

The vote for John Tocher is even better when considering the odds stacked against any left candidate in the AUEW. The press was biased in Jordan's favour and the right wing control the union machinery from the head office and executive down to divisional level in many areas.

The election campaign has laid the foundations for a future left victory. John Tocher covered thousands of

miles over a two-year period, speaking at union meetings.

It must now be made clear to Jordan that his election does not give him carte blanche to ignore the members' wishes. The pressure must be on him from Day One. The Broad Left must be rebuilt as a campaigning force in every area at shop floor level. In the prevailing mood of 'new realism' among the union leaders, this election indicates that in the AUEW the left are on the way back.

By Martin Elvin



# Case against nuclear power

THE CHERNOBYL catastrophe has catapulted the whole issue of nuclear power and its safety into national prominence.

Radiation from the disaster has been detected in milk and in the environment in many European countries including Britain. There is now speculation that the number of cancers in Europe will increase over the next few years.

The nightmare of further nuclear accidents has raised demands for a full appraisal of all aspects of nuclear power.

The question of using alternative forms of providing energy is now being taken more seriously by the scientific establishment and some governments. But in general western governments and the Eastern Block remain committed to the existing nuclear power programmes despite Chernobyl.

## Weapons

Nuclear power, apart from being a highly profitable industry to big companies such as Westinghouse, is central to the nuclear weapons programme in the west and in the east because it produces weapons grade plutonium as a by-product.

The reliance on nuclear weapons and the entanglement of civil and military interests ensures that the questions of safety and even economic concerns are pushed to the background.

Nuclear reactors, which use a controlled chain reaction to raise steam for driving turbines, produce a lethal cocktail of fission products, mainly plutonium. All these emit extremely harmful radiation which is almost impossible to contain. There is now clear evidence to show that there is an

abnormally high incidence of leukaemia in children in areas surrounding the nuclear installations. Levels within the so-called safety limits have produced disturbingly high incidences of cancers. 80,000 medical studies over the last 70 years have conclusively demonstrated that there is no safe level of radiation.

The problems of disposal and storage of the waste products has not been resolved. Plutonium is officially described as the most toxic substance ever developed, and it remains toxic for millions of years.

In order to maintain credibility for the nuclear power programme the white-coated bureaucrats of the industry continue to assure us that nuclear power is absolutely safe. But it is clear that it is not safe and that a Chernobyl type accident could happen here, particularly in the older Magnox reactors which have no outer containment building.

Those who back nuclear power also argue that it is cheaper than other forms of energy, such as coal and oil. The official figures show that coal-fired power stations produce energy at a cost of 1.23p per unit, and nuclear stations at 0.76p per unit. But these figures are for the operating costs only and fail to take into account the extremely high costs of research and development, initial high capital costs and the cost of decommissioning (taking out of service) for nuclear power.

If these costs were put into the calculations then nuclear power would appear very unfavourably compared to coal or oil. This is quite apart from the costs in terms of damage to the environment, and ultimately to human life.

# Hiding behind Secrets Act

THE PRESS, and the nuclear establishment have condemned the Russians for the secrecy surrounding the Chernobyl disaster and have been at pains to convince the public that the industry's record here is second to none.

But the nuclear industry in Britain is shrouded in secrecy and is by no means accident free. The *Observer* (5 May 1986) reported that an accident had occurred at the Dungeness power station in Kent some weeks ago, but the details have been covered up.

Certainly, the labour movement must condemn the secretive manner in which the Chernobyl accident has been dealt with by the Russian authorities, and the disregard for the health and safety of Russian workers.

But the promotion of Britain's nuclear industry as safe and open to public scrutiny is pure hypocrisy.

Lord Marshall, the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board, said that "Britain could never suffer this kind of accident." He added that the "British public are protected by open discussion on safety".

Yet in 1957 there was an accident at the Windscale plant, then used for military purposes, which killed 33 people. There have been hundreds of minor

accidents and leaks at the plant since then, and at other plants.

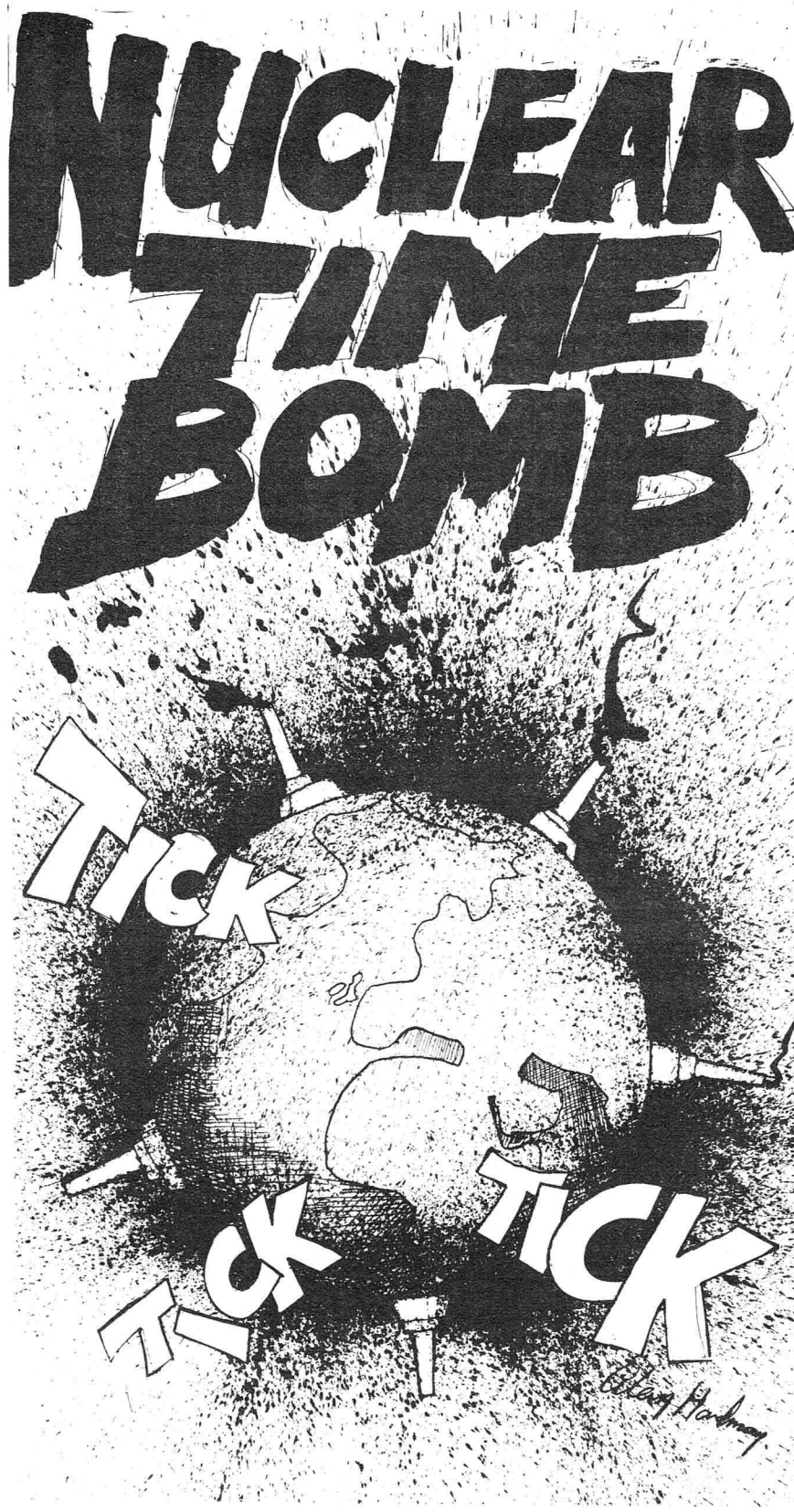
The industry in Britain hides from public investigation behind the Official Secrets Act. Some MPs have recently claimed that they could only obtain information on radiation leaks from parliamentary question time.

## Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1976) the trade union safety representatives have a legal obligation to examine the workplace for potential hazards. Any workers who infringe the Act by giving information of accidents could face imprisonment. Management have consistently refused to comply with the Act on the grounds of protecting national security.

Now leading scientists believe that their publications are being systematically censored by government agencies in conjunction with the industry. Publications in the field of industrial pollution and environmental radiation, they claim, have been delayed for publication or even blocked completely.

Many so-called independent institutes such as Rothschild have contractual obligations which effectively bind researchers to silence.



Feature by Ronnie Sookhdeo

# Socialist energy plan

**IF NUCLEAR power is unsafe what are the viable alternatives?**

Only a tiny amount of investment—£17 million—has gone into researching alternative methods of energy production compared to £600 million for enlarging Sellafield's nuclear reprocessing plant. But even this limited research shows that under a socialist planned economy, subject to democratic control, energy production could be made safe and dependent on renewable resources such as wind, solar and geothermal energy (extracting heat from hot rocks). These forms of energy do not produce harmful pollution and irreversible damage to the environment.

Under a socialist energy plan an immediate programme to eliminate waste through insulation and conservation would be implemented. This could save energy and create thousands of jobs in the building industry. It has been calculated that 75 per cent of heating for homes is lost through walls, roofs and floors.

It is estimated that over 60 per cent of total energy in power stations is lost as heat—through cooling water—into the environment. Now, combined heat and power stations can supply heat in the form of hot water to entire communities which would otherwise have consumed 45 per cent of energy needs. These stations are already in use in Denmark, where they supply over half the country's heating requirements.

Such a programme could be linked to re-equipping existing power stations

to make them more efficient. Coal fired stations, presently only 30 per cent efficient, can be made far more efficient using fluidised bed combustion for coal burning, (air is blown through a moving bed of coal).

A Department of Energy paper has estimated that such a programme would create half a million jobs between now and the year 2,000. Valuable coal and oil reserves would also be conserved.

## Renewable

A socialist plan for energy would give priority to the development of renewable sources of energy. Research in the US has shown that a programme based on these forms could provide up to 6.6 times as many jobs as the equivalent nuclear programme. The prestigious National Science Foundation of America recommended in 1972 that an investment of \$3.5 billion in solar energy would provide 35 per cent of the country's heating and cooling needs, 40 per cent of fuel and 20 per cent of electricity.

A similar study in Britain in 1974, which has recently been re-examined, showed that solar power, mainly for domestic and industrial heating, could provide 14 per cent of energy needs here, and wave power could provide 30 per cent.

Recently the development of a new type of photo-voltaic cell, which converts the sun's rays directly into electricity has meant that this form of

# Labour's policy

THE LABOUR leader, Neil Kinnock and shadow environment spokesman, Dr John Cunningham have spoken out in favour of nuclear power, despite last year's party conference voting by almost a two thirds majority to oppose this policy.

Kinnock said in a TV-AM interview that he would give the go-ahead for the new re-processing plants at Sellafield and Dounreay.

Cunningham has previously stated that a Labour government could 'live' with nuclear power—an expression of deadly irony in face of the recent accident. This is completely in contradiction to the policy adopted by the conference which calls for "a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants."

It is clear that Labour's policy of opposing nuclear power would win widespread support. There is growing opposition to the proposed new plant at Sizewell and to the safety record of Sellafield. Even before the Chernobyl disaster only 11 per cent supported any expansion in the nuclear power industry. Now 55 per cent are not convinced by the industry's claims that it is completely safe, according to a recent Gallup poll.

The Tories have put themselves squarely in the nuclear camp and Labour has the opportunity to trounce them on this issue.

Instead of bowing to the nuclear establishment the Labour leaders must campaign to implement Labour's policy of phasing out all existing nuclear power plants and establishments and the provision of alternative local work.

Labour should also demand: the setting up of a full scale trade union and labour movement inquiry into all aspects of nuclear power and an end to secrecy; a massive increase in the resources available for research into safe, non-polluting forms of energy with a priority given to those dependent on renewable resources; a fully nationalised energy industry, including those denationalised assets, under democratic workers' control and integrated into a socialist plan for the safe use of all energy resources.

energy is now possible on a wide scale, if it were given enough resources for development.

## Fusion

Under a socialist plan for energy all types of energy production would be considered on the basis of safety, efficiency and environmental concern. With a planned economy it would be possible to devote far more resources in the search for an efficient and clean energy system. It is not ruled out that some form of nuclear energy, based on nuclear fusion and not fission, is possible.

In the fusion process deuterium (heavy water) is made to fuse together under extremely high temperatures and in doing so liberates energy. Deuterium is present in vast quantities, sufficient for millions of years of fusion, in the oceans of the world. Nuclear fission, in contrast, relies on limited supplies of uranium ore. Nor does the fusion process produce any dangerous by-products. However the limited amount available for research has meant that there are technical problems still to overcome.

Under capitalism, science has developed in a distorted and irrational manner which has resulted in many disasters, and now has created the possibility of the nuclear destruction of the planet. A planned socialist economy would harness all technological and scientific development for the benefit of society as a whole.



# Workers celebrate May Day

## Chile

THE FIRST of May in Chile saw thousands of workers and youth march right into the centre of Santiago. The regime was forced to deploy the greatest display of military force since the 1973 coup. Troops in combat gear and with blackened faces surrounded the Moneda government palace as hundreds of angry youth attempted to storm it.

One estimate claimed 1000 arrests and there were many injuries as the police used tear gas, riot control pellets and water cannon to disperse them. As the almost daily demonstrations show, these violent methods no longer intimidate the Chilean

working class. They are determined to overthrow Pinochet.

## South Africa

MORE THAN 1,500,000 South African workers responded to the call from the recently-formed Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to celebrate May Day. On what amounted to South Africa's first ever national general strike, between 70 and 100 per cent of workers in major cities took strike action and participated in mass rallies. The *Financial Times* reported: "City centres were emptied and many mines and industrial plants closed in what was seen as a practice run for the June 16 three day

General Strike."

The strike has shown that workers have not been taken in by Botha's sham reforms of the Pass Laws, which still leave virtually all of the migrant labour system standing. The attempts of "homeland leader" Gatscha Buthelezi to launch a "pro-capitalist" splitaway union federation on the same day met with little support.

## Northern Ireland

IN SPITE of growing sectarian violence in Northern Ireland 3,000 trade unionists marched in Belfast to celebrate May Day and there were smaller demonstrations in other parts of the north.

## Fight fascism

ON THE pretext that they were holding a local election meeting, the fascist British National Party were authorised by a High Court ruling to use the Jon Spiers primary school in Bethnal Green in opposition to the wishes of the Inner London Education Authority.

The school hall where the meeting was to take place had been decorated by the teachers, with an exhibition on the story of Ann Franks, the famous Jewish girl who left a graphic diary of her life before she was murdered by the Nazis.

The meeting was booked to start at 2pm. There were about 2-300 people outside the school at this time. The police were there in numbers and refused to allow anyone into the school.

Well after 3pm a group of 40 fascists and Tyndall were given a police escort from Stepney Green tube station to the meeting. How many

"local people" travel to a local election meeting by tube? In order to maintain the pretence that it was a public meeting the main entrance was then partially opened and those who had been waiting for over an hour were allowed to enter in groups of five.

In the meeting the local anti-fascists were loudly heckling Tyndall. At a signal from their fuhrer the fascists turned in military fashion and attacked the rest of the audience. The police then intervened to see that the meeting could continue without the anti-fascists.

At a little after 5pm the fascists were hustled out of a side door and escorted by the police back to the tube. Inside the school hall the Ann Frank exhibits had been torn down and chairs had been broken.

By a Militant reporter



Grey-faced Labour leaders launching their SDPish Freedom and Fairness Campaign. After its Liverpool rally *Militant* with its red-blooded socialist ideas has attracted 9,400 people to its last nine public rallies.

## Liverpool workers rally to Militant

1,400 LABOUR Party members and trade unionists attended the MILITANT Rally in Liverpool 4 May. The determination to defend the gains made over the past three years was reflected in the standing ovation given to the Labour councillors threatened with disqualification from office and for the twelve comrades threatened with expulsion by the Labour Party leadership.

One woman said "I thought my heart was going to burst." Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant* and Derek Hatton expressed their commitment to fight the Tories and the Liberals. Ted Grant and Tony Mulhearn and a

THE LABOUR Party nationally have been sending out letters, seemingly at random, to individuals asking them to vote Labour in the council elections and inviting them to join the party.

One of them has been sent to *Militant's* editor, Peter Taaffe, who the right wing wasted time and money expelling in the 1983 witch-hunt. The letter had a Neil Kinnock signature and gave details of Peter Taaffe's electoral number and his local candidates.

But wait a minute. When Labour's leaders furred up the Red Flag and crossed out the left-wing bits in the manifesto, they said they were going to concentrate on "good organisation". Perhaps the Walworth Road computer is an infiltrator.

number of other speakers reflected the trade union battles going on—Silentnight and Addenbrookes.

£1,785 was raised in the Fighting Fund collection, in-

cluding a donation of £100 from Ricky Tomlinson—Bobby Grant in Brookside—one of the Shrewsbury Two in 1974 and £10 from a Silentnight



Ricky Tomlinson (Bobby Grant)

striker. 200 copies of *Militant* were sold at the meeting.

## Witch-hunter resigns

WITCH-HUNTER Terry Hancox has resigned as Chairman of Wrekin Constituency Labour Party, after the party reversed a previous ruling to block the transfer of Peter Jackson from Stafford.

The party had ruled that he could not attend party meetings in Telford, even as a visitor, until he had been investigated by the executive committee on the totally false claim that he is a *Militant* full-time organiser—he has in fact a full-time job with Telford Development Corporation. Hancox complained to the press of a "deliberate and premeditated snub" and described the vote as "a significant victory for the *Militant* Tendency in the Wrekin".

By our Telford correspondent

## Northern Ireland—trade unions must act

THE NORTHERN Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions held its annual conference in Portadown 29-30 April. On the opening day Irish news reported 79 sectarian attacks on Catholic homes and 50 attacks on Catholic churches, shops, schools etc.

These are the ominous statistics of the dramatic increase in sectarianism since the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement. Yet criminally the annual report to the conference stated that since the agreement "deals with political and constitutional matters, the NIC, in line with its policy over the years, has not discussed or considered the document."

Faced with the possibility of civil war if the agreement is not withdrawn, and the very existence of the unions in jeopardy, any trade union leadership worthy of its name should have used this con-

ference to hammer out a class programme to counter sectarianism and bigotry.

In fact the conference chairman was forced to speak out against the Loyalist stoppage held on 3 March. As a result of this and more importantly the points raised by delegates from the floor, the Democratic Unionist Party issued a statement calling for Loyalist trade unionists to break away from the Congress.

However a motion from Belfast Trades Council for the 'Better Life for all Campaign' launched in 1976, to be reactivated, was carried unanimously. An emergency conference of the labour and trade union movement must be called to discuss the political objectives of the campaign.

By Bill Webster  
(Chairman Labour and Trade Union Group)

## Northeye witness report

THE PRISON population in Britain which stands at 47,000 is now the highest in Europe outside Turkey. Mass unemployment, cuts in benefits and the increasing frustration of young people are the direct result of Tory policies.

These are the causes of the spiralling crime rate which has meant a huge expansion in the prison building programme. To compensate for this the government aims to cut staffing levels and wages of prison officers which has provoked the present dispute, and subsequent riots.

The riot at the semi-open prison of Northeye, near Bexhill, Sussex caused much consternation in the press and the Home Office. Why had a Category C prison with a supposedly 'relaxed' regime and inmates with no more than 18 months to serve, been the site for the worst prison riot in Britain for years?

Anne McKay spoke to a *Militant* supporter who spent the last few

weeks of his sentence in Northeye:

"Although it says in the press that Northeye only has prisoners with a maximum of 18 months to serve, prisoners are sent there to get accustomed to more freedom before being released. Often they have already served long sentences in a closed prison, so tensions are high.

"At Northeye, although you have more freedom—you are not locked-up all the time—the regime is very strict. You are penalised for petty things such as running in the prison grounds or for swearing at a prison officer. For that you lose remission.

"The workshops at Northeye provide work for the inmates. The prison had contracts to produce things like parachutes or toy tractors. Again they are all very tedious jobs, which don't exactly relieve boredom and tension. Also the prisoners know they're making money for other people. The contracts are to private companies. The wages are really pocket-

money, bonuses are calculated in halfpennies! You only earn enough to buy a bit of tobacco or sugar.

"Although the prison is supposed to be freer, there is no freedom to move about or do what you like. Everyone is allocated a job, either in maintenance, the gardens or the workshop, you don't pick and choose, and you have to work all day and rest on the site.

"There is a bit of freedom—you're allowed to watch TV so you see the outside world, but you're still kept away from it, so pressures build up.

"The vast majority of prisoners would support the industrial action which they realise is to improve conditions for inmates—it would allow them to make better use of the recreation facilities.

"In prisons, although there is a certain 'us and them' atmosphere between officers and inmates, which is inevitable in any institution, you still have to get on with each other. The officers also realise that they have got to do something to alleviate the pressure in the prisons, if the pressure goes on building up the roof-top protests would be nothing compared to the riots that could erupt."



# Liberal - the Tories' B team

**"We won't be fooled again"**

**WORKERS ALL over Bermondsey are beginning to see through the cheap synthetic image of the Liberals.**

Hard campaigning by the Labour Party in Bricklayers ward has helped exposed the Liberals as just a reserve team for the Tories.

As one woman in Lynton Road admitted: "I've always been a Tory and I think Maggie's great, unfortunately no Tories are standing so I'll be quite happy voting Liberal."

## Thumbs up for Labour

The local candidates Bob Law and John Bryan have been canvassing and touring all over the area. The response has been tremendous, with thumbs-up signs and even passing motorists tooting Labour workers in the shopping centre.

On the doorsteps the big push to consolidate the

Labour vote has started. A typical comment heard from local workers is: "We were conned in the general election, we won't be conned again."

Bermondsey is not noted for its landed gentry so it came as shock when a butler opened one door in Grange Road and told the canvasser. "The master will not be voting Labour, and I won't be voting at all." Obviously a Liberal infiltrator.

This election has shown the enormous reservoir of support for Labour. Party members are enthused by the response on the doors and many are committing themselves to making sure that this carries on after the elections.

A mass campaigning Labour Party can ensure the return of the supremacy of Labour in Bermondsey and the return of a Marxist MP at the general election.

By Bernie O'Connor

## Alliance's alliance

**THE SDP/Liberal Alliance's poor showing in the Fulham by-election was largely due to the Alliance councillors keeping the Tories in power in Hammersmith and Fulham.**

The local SDP Chairman says: "People are watching their social services and housing stock run down and they don't like it." But in all the Alliance material through my door this year not a mention is made of the fact that the Alliance have councillors let alone that they hold the balance of power!

They could have stopped the Tory attacks. But in their eight years of 'glory' no council houses have been built, in fact they have been sold off.

## Gross overcrowding

Yet the Alliance have the audacity to say in their newsletter: "Let's take a look at our borough. It has the highest proportion of overcrowded homes in London; a quarter of all homes need over £3,000 spent to put them right; two thirds of all the homes in the Borough were built before 1919."

"Incredibly, despite these problems, spending by the council on improvement grants and direct repairs to council homes has been cut. After allowing for inflation, the capital programme has been cut by at least a third since 1979."

The pathetic solution of one of their candidate geniuses is; "it's in all our interests that the money is found from somewhere." They blame the Tory government for "constraints" on spending but as throughout the rest of the country reserve their venom for Liverpool's Labour council and *Militant* supporters.



Protesting at a visit by Steel to Liverpool.

Every newsletter, press release and leaflet churns out completely unsubstantiated claims about Liverpool.

They "note that *Militant* is on sale at the tube stations and demand of the Labour group leader that he unequivocally condemn *Militant's* activities... and prove that the Labour Party in the borough did not include supporters of the banned *Militant* organisation."

These 'Liberal/Democrats' prove that they are neither. They stand for accepting the economic "constraints" of capitalism. Liverpool's crime is that the "somewhere" "that the money had to be found" was not from the pockets of local people but by mobilising local workers to force the government to pay.

By Keith Dickinson

# LEFT and RIGHT

## Too poor to be lucky

SHIRLEY PURCHASE of Yeovil is unemployed. So she thought her lucky day had arrived when she won a C registration Mercedes in a petrol company's competition. But the DHSS have told her she will lose her £27.50 a week supplementary benefit as a result.

She can't afford to tax, insure and run the car, and if she sells it for £12,000 (its value) she has been told she will have to live off the proceeds and produce receipts to show she has spent the money "wisely" before she can get benefit again.

If you are unlucky enough to be out of work you can't afford to be lucky enough to win competitions.

## Energy-saving

REMEMBER THE advertisement on 1 April in the *Times* and the *Guardian*, supposedly informing the public of a shift in the Earth's axis. The Department of Energy now say this 'April Fool' joke cost them a mere £18,000. Oh well, a few jobs here and there will meet that.

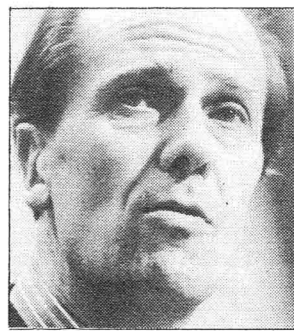
## Accountability down the pan

NOT THAT the government wastes money. The Lord Privy Seal (isn't he the man who locks the House of Lords toilets up?) says that MPs travel expenses between Westminster and their constituencies and the means of transport used could not be divulged to parliament. "This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost".

## Brains picked for £100

A SURVEY by the Industrial Society shows that firms' suggestion boxes saved 90 organisations more than £8 million last year. Some firms pay out £10,000 or more for suggestions, but the average award to the worker who came up with the ideas was only £100. The bosses pick our brains very profitably, but tell us that workers' control and management is utopian—that we are all too thick.

## Tebbit: "We was robbed"



IF NORMAN Tebbit had his way, many of our readers who voted to kick the local Tories out on 8 May would lose their vote. He told the Tory faithful that local elections were 'unfair'. The results were 'slanted' by poor people who have votes but don't pay rates.

The Tories have already suggested a poll tax. But have they thought about voting vouchers, purchasable at your local Tory office, and usable at the polling booth of your choice?

Let's have the fresh breeze of market forces through the ballot boxes!

## Britain: Europe's poor relation

EMPLOYMENT IN manufacturing industry has gone down more in Britain than in any other EEC country, from 8.2 million in 1968 to 7.2 million in 1979 to 5.6 million in 1983.

Only two EEC countries, Greece and Portugal, with a small manufacturing base, had more manufacturing jobs in 1983 than in 1979. The rest have fallen, West Germany has declined from 9 million in 1968 to 8.3 million in 1979 to 7.6 million

in 1983.

But the UK has lost more manufacturing jobs than any other Common Market country and has had a faster percentage decline than any other country other than the tiny duchy of Luxembourg whose manufacturing was totally dominated by steel.

BRITISH WORKERS do no better in comparison when they retire. After the recent increase in pensions a single person receives the luxurious

minimum income of £38.70 while a couple get £57.

Only Greece, Spain and Portugal have lower pension entitlements. Ireland has a minimum of £41, while the more affluent European countries are far more generous. For instance, Belgium offers 75 per cent of gross earnings since 1955 for a single person and 85 per cent for couples while the Netherlands gives £65 single minimum and £93 minimum for couples.

## Education for socialists

THE LIBYAN Crisis: What are the reasons for the US attack? What are the prospects for world peace? Is Reagan really concerned about the spread of "International Terrorism" or is this an excuse for adopting a more aggressive foreign policy?

What is the attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy towards both Libya and the US?

Read recent material in *Militant* (issues 794 and 795) and *The Coming World Revolution* by Ted Grant especially the chapters concerning "Relations between the powers" and "The Middle East".

## Low Pay

With the threatened abolition of the wage councils this summer the last safety net preventing many workers from sinking below the poverty line will effectively be removed. Why not

organise a discussion in your area to help prepare for the demonstration against low pay organised for 31 May.

Reading: *Charter for Women Workers* produced by Manchester and Rochdale Labour Women's Councils (40p).

All books and pamphlets available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Orders under £5 add 25 per cent post and packing. Over £5 add 10 per cent, over £10 post free.

## May Day greetings

May Day greetings from Newcastle North *Militant* supporters. Fight the Tories Not the Socialists Reinstate Bill Hopwood

May Day greetings to the labour movement from Weetwood branch Labour Party (North West Leeds)

MANCHESTER Labour Womens Council

"Women and youth fight back against poverty wages and privatisation. See you at the rally on May 31."

May Day greetings from East Kent *Militant* supporters.

Moulsecoombe Ward - Brighton Labour Party still flies the red flag for socialism!



# The "Masters and slaves" Bill

**THE WAGES Bill** currently passing through Parliament is the latest Tory attack on the wages and conditions of workers in Britain. As usual the hardest hit by the government's proposals will be young people.

Wages Councils are Britain's only system of legal minimum wages. Most minimum rates are between £65 and £78 a week but many are much lower. For example, an apprentice hairdresser is entitled to a mere £33.90 for 40 hours of work.

The new bill will mean that these already low rates will no longer apply to under 21 year olds, thus reducing the wages of half a million young people to below poverty levels.

Wages Councils cover one in eight of all employees, who are usually not in trade unions and therefore already the most vulnerable section of the workforce.

As the shopworkers' union USDAW has pointed out: "The general deterioration of wages and standards among the unorganised will inevitably have a knock-on effect not just on the organised in these sectors, but on workpeople generally".

Kenneth Clark, the Minister for Unemployment has justified the new bill by the assertion that workers "price themselves out of a job".

Since Thatcher walked in-

to 10 Downing Street in '79, her government's own figures show that school leavers' wages have fallen relative to adult wages by 12 per cent for boys and 13 per cent for girls. During the same period youth unemployment has trebled.

Tory MP David Maclean said recently: "The proper legal definition of the relationship between employer and employee, is that of master and slave". The Tories make no attempt to hide their hypocrisy. Recently the government claimed that in order to get the right people in the job they needed wage rises of 30, 40 or 50 per cent for 2,000 generals, top civil servants, judges and other worthies.

It is clear who the Tories represent. Together with the Fowler Review, and the new two-year YTS, the Wages Bill will create a generation of youth slave labour.

The Tories could be beaten, though. If the trade unions launched a massive recruitment drive amongst unorganised workers to bring them under the labour movement's protection, the Bill could be totally undermined.



LPYS members march against YTS and other slave labour schemes in Glasgow.

Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL) II

North West Region Labour Women

**Demonstration and Rally**

**End Low Pay  
Fight  
Privatisation**

**Saturday 31 May**

Speakers from:

Women Against Pit Closures  
Silentnight  
Tailor and Garment Workers Union  
USDAW

Assemble: All Saints (near Mancunian way) Manchester 11.30am  
Rally: Crown Square, Manchester  
1pm to 1.30pm

Creche available at the start of the march

## Young trade unionists turn to the LPYS

**MORE AND MORE** young workers are becoming actively involved in the Labour Party Young Socialists.

A recent Young Workers' Day School organised by Blaydon LPYS attracted workers from a wide range of unions, including AUEW, UCATT, NUM, NUR, EETPU, NALGO, GMBATU and NUPE.

Local union officials were the main speakers but LPYS members also put their views during the excellent debates.

Steve King, NUPE Divisional Organiser, addressed the meeting on privatisation. Joe Mills, Regional Secretary TGWU and Northern Regional Labour Party chairman, spoke on the success of the recent political fund ballots and the marvellous opportunities this presented for the Labour

Party to recruit workers.

He congratulated the YS on organising the Day School and said that it was one step nearer full participation and representation for Youth Sections in the Labour Party and the trade unions.

### Participation

The unions want more participation. A resolution was carried unanimously at the Northern Region LPYS Conference, from the Trade Union Youth Sections, called for representation at YS Conference and also on the YS regional committee.

At the AUEW Conference in March, where many of the resolutions discussed and carried were similar to those of the YS, seven visitors were selected to go to YS National Conference. But the young workers wanted to send

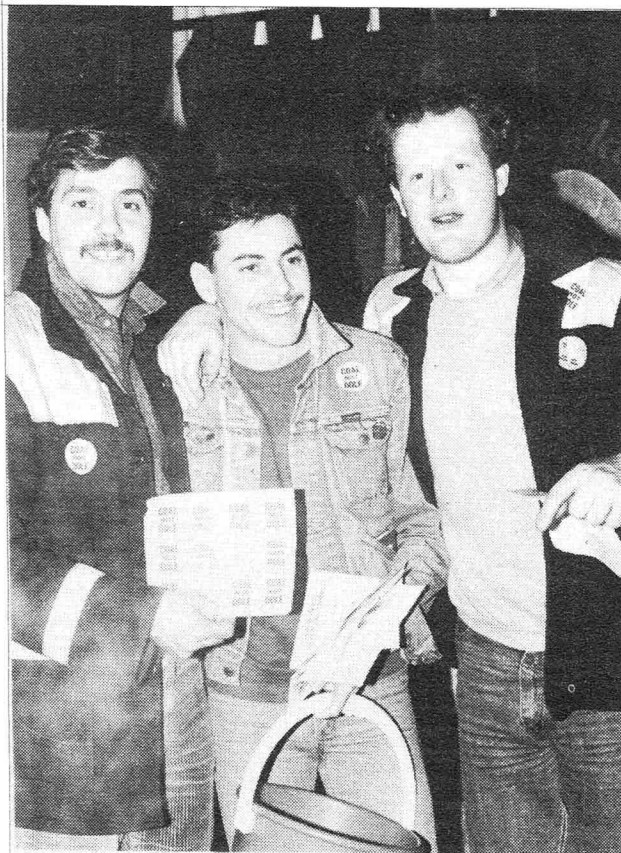
along their own delegates.

Young workers campaigned as hard as anyone else for the ballot for political funds. They pay their union dues. The union is entitled to delegates to Labour Party Conference and young workers should be entitled to delegates to YS Conference.

In fact the Chair and Secretary of AUEW Tyne Joint Works Committee had to seek delegates to YS conferences through their respective YS branches.

The growing support for the LPYS from trade unions and young workers in the Northern Region shows the fight the Labour Party leadership will face in their attacks on the YS.

By John Killen  
(Blaydon LPYS  
and Secretary  
AUEW Tyne JWC)



Young NUM members make a collection for sacked miners at LPYS conference. Get your union involved. Photo: Militant

## Sell Militant

**RAILWORKER JIM** Urquhart from Bedford always has a copy of *Militant* sticking out of his back pocket and he never misses a chance to sell to his mates.

He has built up regular sales in this way, selling three or four every week at his local pub. If he misses them, the landlord lets him leave the papers behind the bar, and Jim collects the money the next week.

Another publican—in Newcastle—sells a dozen a week, that's the kind of 'landlordism' socialists can agree with!

Each week readers like Jim show us new ways to build sales. Even if you can't sell at your local you can join in local sales.

Sellers outside Bootle Giro sold 16 papers and reported a great response to their leaflets with passers by pushing money into their rattling tins. Walton supporters sold 16 in County Road shopping precinct and went on to sell another 12 outside Jacobs.

Still in Merseyside, supporters are systematically covering the housing estates in Speke and reported 22 sales in one evening. They are getting five or so people who ask to take a regular copy every time they go out. By selling on the estates near a large workplace we can make inroads into the workforce itself.

We must aim to set up regular sales in every workplace and on every estate. Make sure everybody gets *Militant*, the only antidote to the dangerous fallout of the Tory press.

By Andy Beadle

## "We'll Fight"

**LAST WEEK** young people in Scotland started on a 120 mile march for jobs from Glasgow to lobby Tory party conference in Perth.

Chic Boyle a 15 year old school student told YTURC why he was going on the march, despite the fact that his exams will be at the same time.

"I leave school this year after my exams with nothing to look forward to, if I'm lucky I'll get a YTS because there are no real jobs.

"I've seen my pals leaving school, going on the dole and YTS, I know I'll be the same, there's nothing for us now. I want to show the Tories I want a real job and that our generation will fight them all the way."

## Scottish Labour Students move left

**FOR THE first time** in the history of the National Organisation of Labour Students, two Marxists, Charles Collins, (Paisley Tech), and Steven Russell (Dundee University) were elected to the regional committee of Scottish Labour Students.

This move to the left was reflected in the policy passed at the conference.

The SLS conference represented an important stage in the struggle to build in the student movement a leadership with a strategy to defeat the Tories' attacks on education. Undoubtedly the policies passed are a blow to the LCC and to the Kinnockite Democratic Left leadership of NOLS.

Through their control of NUS they have failed to link up effectively with the public

By Simon Kaplan  
(NOLS NC '85-86 personal capacity)

sector trade unions in defence of education. As a result none of the major attacks on education have been defeated. Instead the NOLS leaders backed up by former lefts on Labour's NEC have merely attacked those who call for a reversal of education cuts as "impossibilist".

This is now backfiring.

It will come as a shock to Labour's Youth Subcommittee chairman, Tom Sawyer, who has supported the neutering of the LPYS in speeches made at previous SLS day schools, that conference opposed cuts in the LPYS budget, the witch-hunt, and the inquiry into the Liverpool District Labour Party.

The conference also called on the SLP regional committee to campaign against the merger of the party's national youth and student officers' posts. Also *Militant's* demands for non-implementation of Fowler and a guaranteed job for all YTS

trainees were supported.

The Democratic Left refused to support the YTURC march to Perth to lobby Tory party conference. Those who spoke against the motion implied that the YS members had only got support from leading trade unionists like Eric Clarke by deception!

A resolution was passed by one vote changing the delegation entitlement to next year's conference. But the mood of conference shows that changing the goal posts will not stop the legitimate demands of students for a fighting leadership.



# General Stri

## The most magnificent movement

THE VERDICT of history on the 1980s will be that it represented a watershed between two entirely epochs, both in Britain and internationally.

The tranquility of the '50s and '60s and part of the '70s—at least in the advanced capitalist countries—has given way to a period of unparalleled upheavals. A ferocious outbreak of the class struggle is affect-

ing Africa, Asia, Latin America and the advanced countries of capitalism. General strikes in many countries have shaken the foundations of landlord and capitalist regimes.

All these movements are a harbinger of a mighty collision between the classes which will characterise the 1980s and 1990s.

It is in the light of these events that a study of the 1926 general strike, whose 60th anniversary we celebrate this month, is particularly topical. Marxists do not study history for the sake of it. An analysis of the factors which gave rise to the strike will show that society is heading towards social conflict in this decade on an even wider scale than in 1926.



THE GENERAL strike grew out of the explosive state of British capitalism after the First World War. The chronic weakness of the economy was shown by the fact that in 1925, imports and exports reached respectively 111 per cent and 76 per cent of the pre-war level. It was revealed particularly in the coal industry, especially after the revival of the German Ruhr coal industry.

By Peter Taaffe

In March 1925 the coal bosses demanded wage reductions and the lengthening of the working day. The miners believed that the coal owners' proposals meant up to eight shillings a week reduction in pay. Their leader Arthur Cook issued the battle cry "Not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day". Tory Prime Minister, Baldwin, made it clear that the cut-backs in the coal industry were only a prelude to a general attack on wages: "...all the workers of this country have got to take reductions." When the miners appealed to the TUC, they threatened the Tory government with a general strike.

Faced with an embattled working class the British capitalists have always been prepared to retreat, bide their time and prepare to do battle at a later stage under more favourable conditions. Thus Thatcher, in 1981, retreated in the face of the determination of the miners to resist pit closures. She then utilised the period between '81 and '84 to bolster the state machine, to alter the social security codes, to pile up supplies of coal.

The same cold cruelty and cunning was displayed by Baldwin in 1925. The Tory government bought time by proposing a nine-month subsidy to the coal industry in order to allow for the same wages to be paid, and established the Samuel Commission to examine the industry. The ruling class used the time to build up under Churchill, a scab army (Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies—OMS), involving the fascists, to be used in the event of a general strike.

On 13 April 1926 *The Times* declared "Nothing except the lengthening of the working day will save the industry".

It went on to declare: "in some districts the sacrifices must unhappily be severe. . . the miners have to make a fateful choice. To refuse a reduction of wages for the men, other than the lowest paid, is to choose unemployment on the scale of a disaster". It threatened: "have the leaders contemplated the extent of the catastrophe that an unwise decision will bring upon them?"

On 23 April the same journal is railing against the mineworkers' leaders: "...if the wages of the higher-paid men are not reduced there will be no wages at all for

hundreds of thousands." The next day a colliery owner Evan Williams admitted: "It was an absolute impossibility with the present hours of work to provide a wage which I do not shrink as describing as miserable" (Our emphasis—PT).

The ruling class were preparing for war. Lord Londonderry summed up their feelings: "Whatever it may cost in blood and treasure, we shall find that the trade unions will be smashed from top to bottom". Such sentiments were not restricted to right wing Tory backwoodsmen or brutal coal owners. Sir Alfred Mond, later high priest of class collaboration stated: "A communist agitation is going on in the coalfields, organised by men, many of whom have never been down a pit and who were not necessarily of British origin. They were trying to alienate people who would work peacefully and happily together. We must stamp on the face of these reptiles, we cannot tolerate them in this country. They are out to destroy its commerce and life (cheers). I will support the government in any steps they consider necessary to put an end to such propaganda" (*Times*, 26 April).



Jimmy Thomas.

WHILE THE strategists of capitalism carefully laid their plans, the working class were lulled to sleep. Thomas, leader of the railwaymen, boasted that he had "grovelled" before Baldwin in an attempt to avert a strike, and was prepared to accept a cut in miners' wages. The TUC strike-organising committee met six days before the strike began! The right wing were hoping that some miracle could be conjured up to avoid an all-out conflict.

Thomas declared on 19 April: "To talk at this stage as if in a few days all the workers of the country were to be called out is not only letting loose passions that might be difficult to control, but it is not rendering the best service either to the miners or to anybody else. For my part I want as I am sure every sane miners' leader wants, as every employer also wants and certainly as the nation wants—peace. Therefore instead of organising, mobilising and encouraging a feeling that war is inevitable, let them concentrate on finding a solution

honourable and satisfactory to all sides".

The only 'honorable' and 'satisfactory' agreement for the bosses and the government was a reduction of wages with an extra one-hour to work each day. Just to ensure that all this was 'legal' the government was prepared to set aside the "1919 (Seven Hours) Act" and pass legislation to allow the temporary working of extra hours.

On the eve of battle, at a meeting of union executives, Thomas pleaded: "Don't lose your heads. We have striven and pleaded and begged for peace because we wanted peace. We still want peace. The nation wants peace and those that want war must take the responsibility."

The implacable hostility of the ruling class to such pleadings was shown in a *Times* editorial, with the headline: "An Impossible Demand". It stated: "The effort to prevent a stoppage of the mining industry has failed. The responsibility rests with the miners".

Thomas acted in 1926 like Hammond and the right wing during the miners' strike of 1984-5. These aides-de-camp of capitalism are prepared to accept any 'sacrifice' in the rights and conditions of working people to maintain 'class peace'.

The labour leadership in the 1926 general strike was as lamentable as during the miners' strike of 1984-5. Labour leader, MacDonald, lamented the "revolutionary psychology which has spread with amazing rapidity within the past year".

Unpreparedness and confusion also reigned in the Communist Party. The main responsibility for this rested, as Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition demonstrated at the time, on the shoulders of the Stalinist leadership of both the Russian Communist Party and the Third International (Comintern).

Under its influence the British CP supported in 1924 the setting up of the Anglo-Russian Committee, a bloc between the Russian trade unions and the general council of the TUC.

The British representatives on the committee were TUC 'lefts', Purcell, Hicks and Cook. All three played a crucial role during the strike, the first two by openly betraying, Cook through confusion and lack of perspective, giving no clear lead to the miners or the rest of the labour movement. The building up of these leaders as 'left wingers' by the Comintern, on the basis of verbal support of the Soviet Union, prompted the British Communist Party to adapt itself to the left and to tone down their criticisms. This position was maintained even when Purcell and Hicks acquiesced to the expulsion of the CP from the Labour Party in 1925.

The failure of the CP lay

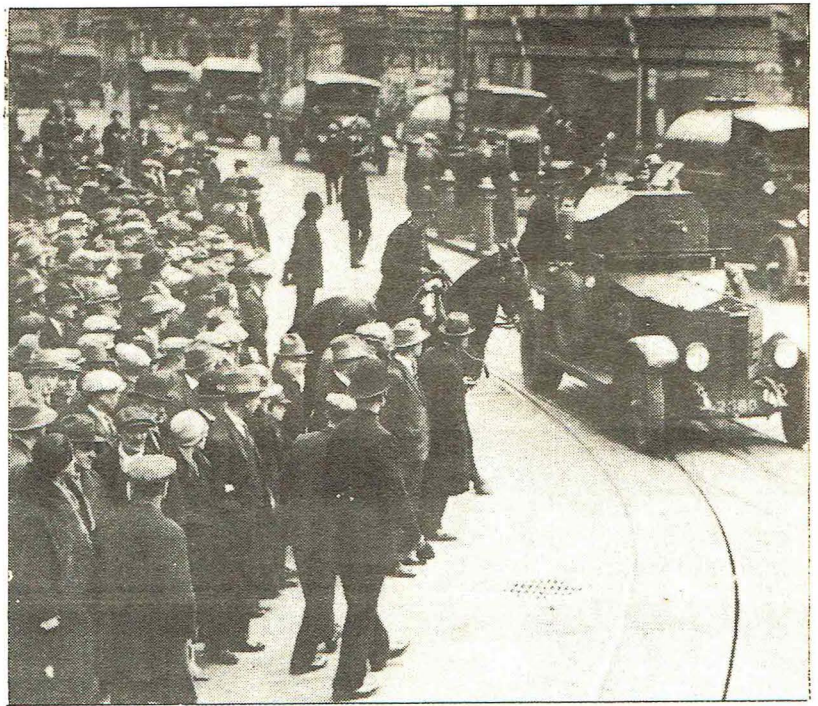


# Like 1926

## of British workers



Left, trade unionists march through London. Above and right, police and troops escort scab buses and lorries.



and nationally, and the programme for taking over the commanding heights of the economy. Without this perspective the general strike is a demonstration with folded arms.

A genuine Marxist leadership would have given critical support to the lefts in their struggle against the right, but would have warned that they would inevitably have drawn back from an all-out struggle against capitalism; "Betrayal is inherent in reformism" (Trotsky). Only by means of a friendly but firm criticism would it have been possible for the rank and file of the Communist Party to have influenced the best workers and prepared them for the inevitable betrayal of the lefts as well as the right during the general strike.

Instead the press of the Communist Party was used to foster illusions in the role of the lefts. During the strike, any independent stance against the hesitations of the left was thus made impossible. No serious criticisms were made by the Communist Party in their journal either before or during the strike. Thus the working class, and particularly the advanced workers, were taken completely unawares by the betrayal from the top. It is true that the Communist Party doubled its forces in the aftermath of the strike, but it gained one-hundredth of the members that would have flocked to them in the event of correct policy and programme.

From the outset the general council conspired with Sir Herbert Samuel, chairman of the Samuel Commission, who had recommended drastic cuts in wages, to have the strike called off. Without consulting the miners, the General Council informed the government through Samuel that the miners would accept cuts in wages and a lengthening of the working day. With the exception of Arthur Cook, the so-called lefts on the general council, as well as the right, accepted the cuts.

Yet each day the general strike had grown in intensity. The rank and file greeted the decision to call off the strike with anger and bitterness. The General Council had not even insisted on no victimisations, such as their eagerness to have done with the general strike. Baldwin had declared on the radio that there were 'no conditions' for the strike being called off. *The Times* over a headline which declared "The nation's victory" gloated: "In a conflict such as was that which has been fought out in this country during the last ten days there could be no question of a drawn battle. Its abandonment was one-sided, conclusive and unconditional". It gave a crushing verdict on the right wing of the General Council. "... The General Council, led in this matter by men who have never concealed their repugnance for the general strike, have seized it as their opportunity to recede from an unpopular and impossible position".

And yet when the conditions being demanded by the employers were broadcast, the railmen, dockers, engineers and other workers renewed the strike. Two

days after the strike had been called off there were a hundred thousand more on strike! Other workers declared that they were prepared to come out.

Faced with a hurricane of opposition against the demands for savage cuts and victimisations, Baldwin declared on the radio that the employers must take back the workers on the old terms.

Thus the general strike which began as the most magnificent movement in British history ended as a defeat because of the cowardly role of the workers' leaders.

THE GENERAL strike grew out of the worsened conditions of British capitalism in the post-First World War period. Today we have an even worse future facing British capitalism. The conditions which resulted in the general strike in 1926 are present in outline in Britain now. At the same time there are important differences in the situation. The relationship of class forces is now overwhelmingly weighted in favour of the working class. In 1926 the employers could rely on students, teachers, civil servants, etc as blacklegs. The recent teachers' strike, the movement towards the left in the civil service and the recent upheavals amongst the students as a result of the Fowler Review, mean that the social reserves of capitalism have been undermined. However they still have reliable props in the leadership of the trade union movement as they did in 1926.

The lessons of 1926 should be absorbed by all thinking workers in the labour movement today. A colossal collision between the classes is rooted in the terrible collapse of British capitalism and the attempt of the ruling class to unload the responsibility on the shoulders of the working class.

In the aftermath of the miners' strike, the majority of the working class has moved from the industrial to the political plane. There is a powerful urge for the return of a Labour government committed to real socialist policies. However the refrain of the right wing of the labour movement that all struggles should be postponed until a Labour government is elected will not cut much ice with the working class. Faced with a serious challenge, a general strike can be put on to the agenda once again.

The merest hint of a 24-hour stoppage over the threat to sack union members at GCHQ was sufficient to compel the government to beat a hasty retreat.

Only the ideas of Marxism can answer the problems which face the labour movement and the working class at the present time. Under the shock of great events which impend in Britain the demand for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, consistently advanced by the Marxist wing of the labour movement, will gather increasing support. The issue of a general strike will come back onto the agenda of the labour movement in this decade. The study of the lessons of 1926 will prepare us for these great events.

capacity for improvisation of the workers was shown, as over 100 trades councils became effectively organs of power in their areas.

BUT A general strike poses the question of power. Either it leads to workers' power or a severe defeat for the working class. The general council of the TUC were terrified that once the general strike had begun, the reins would slip out of their hands. No sooner had the strike begun than the main concern of the right wing trade union leaders was how to get it called off. Thomas confessed: "What I dreaded more than anything else was... if by chance it should have got out of the hands of those who would be able to exercise some control, every sane man knows what would have happened" (*The General Strike*, Symons).



Arthur Cook

Even the ruling class were taken aback by the scope, enthusiasm and élan of the working class once they moved into action.

MacDonald and Thomas could plead for peace and declare that the strike was 'not political'. But Baldwin declared in the Commons: "stripped of all accessories... it (the government) finds itself challenged by an alternative government (loud cheers) and a government ignorant of the way in which its commands are being carried out, and incapable of arresting disobedience to them."

Churchill declared in the same debate: "It is a conflict which, if it is fought out to a conclusion, can only end in the overthrow of Parliamentary government or in its decisive victory (cheers); there is no middle course open."

This brutal representative of capitalism understood that in a

general strike the question is 'either or'. In such a situation the right wing of the labour movement did not hesitate to come out in support of capitalism upon which their privileged position in the labour movement ultimately rests.

Some of the lefts also played a treacherous role during the strike and its aftermath. Purcell was the chairman of the TUC Organising Committee and a participant in the negotiations which led to the end of the strike! Hicks was foremost in rejecting out of hand the £1.25 million donated by the Russian workers to assist the strike, as "damned Russian gold".

Arthur Cook was a sincere working class fighter with enormous support amongst the miners and the working class generally, but he lacked any perspective or programme to guarantee victory.

In the period running up to the strike he did pose in a clear fashion the general significance of the attack on the miners. On 19 April he declared: "They have reached a stage when it is not a mere wage issue that is involved. The government is not out to back the miners", he said: "The struggle must involve not just the miners, but the whole of the working class... the cost of a strike of the miners would mean the end of capitalism".

He answered the threat that troops would be used: "97 per cent of the recruits of the past two years have come from the working classes, and thousands of them miners, who will not shoot against their kith and kin when the order comes and we shall not be afraid to advise them (cheers)." (*Times*, 20 April).

Contrast this to the statement of Thomas that: "Anyone who has invited or suggested insubordination or mutiny by troops or sailors is to be repudiated... we want to make it an industrial strike and nothing else".

In reality the general strike could have been the beginning of the end of capitalism, but only if a bold leadership was prepared to mobilise the workers to take power. This would have entailed the extension and broadening of the strike, together with the Councils of Action, linked together, both locally

especially in its inability to use its influence in the left wing Minority Movement—involving one and a quarter million workers—to shape events. (A further analysis of this will be in the next issue of *Militant International Review*).

### Display of power

THE RESPONSE of the working class to the strike call in solidarity with the miners, was absolutely magnificent. The ruling class was shaken. They had taken the cowardice of the tops for the real mood of the working class. All layers of society were affected. Four out of five and a half million came out in the greatest display of power in British history—"There were no trains, no buses, no trams, no papers, no building, no power. In a strike, 100 per cent is an unobtainable figure generally, but even this real 100 per cent was frequently achieved" (*The Common People*, Postgate and Cole).

Non-unionists struck and joined the unions in massive numbers. Some even preceded trade unionists in coming out. There were big demonstrations and clashes in all the major cities. Repressive measures were taken, primarily against rank-and-file workers' leaders, by the government and the police. The CP leadership at national and local level were arrested, about 3,000 in all. The *Workers Weekly*, organ of the CP, was raided. The government brought gunboats into the Thames. One which was brought into the Tyne was withdrawn after the threats by the Council of Action in the area.

Real power resided in the labour movement. Churchill's army of black-legs were largely ineffective in the face of the power of the working class. Such was the strength of the Councils of Action in the North East that the government commissioner (the country had been divided into 11 areas, with dictatorial powers for the commissioners) humbly begged the labour organisations for help, offering to withdraw troops from the area. With no preparation and little organisation the enormous



# Aquino regime will not stem revolution

This is the second part in a three-part article by TED GRANT. The first part appeared in *Militant* 2 May.

**MANY TIMES** in the history of the Philippines, one capitalist regime has replaced another, only to play, very rapidly, the same role as the old. Marcos himself came to power as a reformer with a programme of land reform.

The new Aquino government and the new regime of capitalists and landowners would like an agreement with American imperialism. It wishes to carry on as if nothing had happened except for the removal of the Marcos oligarchy. But as the *Financial Times* ominously remarked: "Mrs Aquino may find that 'People's Power' once unleashed is not easy to channel".

As the Haitian regime is finding out, it is not sufficient merely to drop Duvalier and leave his faithful lieutenants with key positions in the government. In face of the massive demonstrations of the population against them, they have had to drop the generals who were associated with Duvalier.

Now in the Philippines, Juan Ponce Enrile, Marcos' Minister of Defence and General Fidel Ramos, Chief of Staff, have dominant positions in the government. Seeing the writing on the wall they switched sides at the twelfth hour. They have continued in power and, together with their colleagues, constitute the most reactionary element in the government.

## Establishment

It is a government in the mould of Thatcher and of Reagan themselves. The Finance Minister, Ongpin, gave an interview to the *Wall Street Journal* in which he said: "I think governments should get out of business completely. Privatised everything. There is to be a minimum of government interference." He speaks of liberal reform. He has a significant influence on Mrs Aquino and wrote her major economic speech. Her other economic advisers are two bankers.

In other words, the revolution has brought to power the old orthodox and 'respectable' establishment.

But despite this the Aquino government has been forced to give some temporary concessions to the masses. The Labour Minister in fact has spoken of the government's 'socialist' policy of profit sharing, while at the same time assuring the capitalists that his policies do not mean the "abolition of capital". The government is split between the military who want to go on the offensive against the guerillas, those around Ongpin who want to pursue 'Chicago Boy' policies (which in Chile resulted in destruction of the great part of industry) and those Filipino capitalists who want to retain tariffs etc to protect themselves from competition. Outside the government there is the growing mass movement and the continued pressure from the Marcos supporters.

50 per cent of exports go to pay interest on debts. Production fell

**In the last few years per capita income fell by 15 per cent and industry is only working at 60 per cent capacity. 40 per cent of the land is not being cultivated. Half of the workers in agriculture and industry are unemployed or semi-employed.**



Above: Support for Aquino in Manila. Below: Sugar mill on Negros island—12 of 15 mills have been closed down. Left: Grandmother feeding her grandchild in Belwen village—but 60 per cent of children suffer from malnutrition. Photos: Piers Cavendish (Reflex).



by 10 per cent during the course of the last two years. Now there is a possibility of inflation as a result of Marcos spending \$500 million more than the IMF authorised to pay for bribes in his election campaign.

"A new period of austerity will be required to mop up all that inflationary credit", remarked Ongpin. He has even insisted on retaining Marcos' central bank governor, Jose Fernandez.

On the enormous sums which have been smuggled to other countries, principally the United States, legally and illegally, Ongpin's priority is "to convince Filipinos to invest in their own country". "We are confident", he said, "that if we achieve that the foreign investors will follow". In other words he wants a continuation of the Philippines as a neo-colonial field of investment and exploitation by the multinationals.

Yet, faced with a guerilla movement, Ongpin remarked: "We must dismantle the foreign monopolies", and called for 'land reform' based on the Malaysian model, not confiscatory but one which would give full (in reality excessive) compensation to those whose land would be taken away.

This is living in a dream world,

because the money does not exist. The annual budget is \$6 billion. Marcos in his last years removed \$3 billion a year. It would be impossible to compensate the landlords without a disaster for the economy.

With a programme of this sort, the Philippines will rapidly move to the next stage of the revolution. New demands will be put by the masses. Ongpin and his ministers will not last for very long.

## Warlords

The landlords are medieval bosses who were established in every province as satraps of Marcos and his party, the KBL, who run their areas as fiefs like medieval warlords with armed retainers. They are not prepared to give this up without a struggle. A great part of the deputies that these war lords have will go over to the Aquino government. But that means it will not be possible to carry through even a caricatured land reform on the lines sketched by Ongpin.

The Gross Domestic Product of the Philippines is \$35 billion and the National Debt is \$27 billion. In the last few years *per capita* income fell by 15 per cent and industry, even with the tariffs mentioned above, is still only working at 60 per cent capacity. 40 per cent of the land is not being cultivated.

In 1985 there was a *per capita* income of \$600 per year, no higher than in 1927. Half of the 21 million workers in agriculture and industry are unemployed, or employed for only part of the year.

Living standards have fallen by

one-sixth in four years and the economy is so weak that even under the best circumstances of 'boom' it would require five years to even reach the income level of 1981.

The standard of living of the working class is so low in the cities and in the agricultural areas that an explosion has been threatened for the last decade or two. A *Guardian* reporter interviewed some of the agricultural workers on the 'sugar' island of Negros. Although the minimum wage is £1 a day the agricultural workers get 50p a day.

Only 25 per cent of the native planters even pay the minimum of £1 a day which is not sufficient for the labourers to feed their families. The reporter asked some of the women who he interviewed: "What do you want?". They replied: "Cheaper rice". When he asked the men they said: "An acre or two of the land to support my family".

The population, which has produced fabulous wealth for the planters, live in rudimentary bamboo houses built in silt. There is no electricity and no sewerage. The medieval method of share-cropping still exists for many of the labourers who are paid in kind for work on the crops.

The overwhelming majority, at least 60 per cent of the children in the whole of the Philippines, suffer from malnutrition, in one of the most fertile and richest areas of the globe. Half the children die before the age of seven because of weakening through malnutrition. They are susceptible to various diseases that exist in the tropics,

**"If Mrs Aquino is prevented from doing what is needed by her class interests, in two or three years time there will be another revolution..."** (A Young worker).

apart from conditions of dirt and disease under which they have to live in the slums.

The land stands idle, the workers are idle and many of the sugar barons are bankrupt. The Bishop of Negros, Antolio Fortich, said that the island and the whole of the Philippines was a 'social volcano'. The sugar workers' union is militant, with connections with the guerillas.

The liberation priests and planters in the area agreed that the whole of the area was charged with the possibility of a social explosion. Even the official police agreed on the possibility of outbreaks of mass violence.

There is enormous hatred of the Americans and of their bases. 20,000 prostitutes work in the surrounding areas. The collapse of Marcos has meant bitter strikes by the workers employed in the bases themselves demanding an increase in wages.

The Kauslang Mayo Uno (KMU) is the radical federation of trade unions. Formed in 1980 with 50,000 workers directly affiliated, it now has 500,000 members plus a further 400,000 in 'workers alliances' influenced by the KMU.

There has been a rash of strikes in Manila and other cities since Marcos fell, over wages, reinstatement of sacked union members and removal of pro-Marcos bosses most of which have been victorious. The struggle against the employers takes a very bitter form. Many employers, like the landlords, have their own armed retainers which they use to fire on the workers. During 1985 over 80 trade unionists were killed in the course of 405 strikes, the highest number the Philippines had seen until this year.

## Strikes

That is the grim reality of the social situation that exists in the Philippines and no amount of sugary promises and words will make any difference to the grim attitude of the starving or semi-starving mass of the population, not only in the cities, but in the rural areas. The Marcosite warlords, like the Somozistas in Nicaragua, are only waiting for an opportunity to get their revenge. The armed retainers and armed thugs remain under their control.

However, the situation is explosive, as in Spain in the sunny days of 1931. The difference is that even now, certainly in the countryside, there are not the same illusions as existed in Spain in 1931. Speaking to a young worker without any political connections who he asked about the support for the new regime, a *Guardian* reporter heard this sober reply: "If Mrs Aquino is prevented from doing what is needed by her class interests, in two or three years time there will be another revolution. . . Next time the armed struggle will take precedence."

Continued



# Reagan's home front



FOLLOWING THE US bombardment of Libya, and with a massive media propaganda barrage, Reagan has gained considerable support.

One opinion poll showed that 15 per cent of the US population considers 'terrorism' the number one problem. The overwhelming majority supported Reagan's actions.

Patriotic fervour is being whipped up similar to how it was during the Iran 'hostage crisis'. Driving across the Bay bridge, I noticed one of the men taking tolls had a small US flag hanging out of his booth.

A junior high school student (13 years old) reported that everybody in her class supported Reagan because he was showing Libya "who is boss". The only two exceptions were herself (she thought it was "stupid") and a young man who was afraid of having to go to war. (The question of the draft is starting to become an issue among youth again.)

In my union hiring hall, two young black members were discussing it. (I mention their race because it seems generally black workers are less taken in by 'patriotic' propaganda.) One supported Reagan's actions, saying we can't let "them" push us around forever. The other carpenter responded that it was "all about the big money boys".

At another work site, a comrade reported that the overwhelming sentiment was to support Reagan, although

LUNGING AND snarling at Libya, Nicaragua, Angola etc, US imperialism is fighting the advance of the colonial revolution. At home, Reagan is waging an equally ruthless struggle against the working people of the USA itself.

"Reaganomics" has meant soaring military spending, cuts in social services, wage cuts and massive unemployment, combined with union-busting by the bosses and the administration. Real wages in 1984 were 14 per cent lower than in 1972.

it seems they were also a bit cautious. The general feeling was that the government had to do "something" about terrorism.

The last four or five years have seen relative political stability in the US while all around the world there has been turmoil. While there is much concern about the high level of imports of steel, autos, stereos etc., in the coming period the number one import will be exactly this political turmoil.

Reagan's bombing of Libya is part of a drive to stir up support for an invasion of Nicaragua (for which there is still not much popular support). Probably, in the future, he will manufacture some way to link that country with "Libyan terrorism".

Once a war is on, the union leadership will almost entirely fall right into line, and use an invasion to dampen the growing mood of discontent among the rank and file.

Initially, overwhelming support for the war would almost certainly be whipped up—especially if the economy has moved into recession here. (Some workers still say that the only way to really revive the economy is through a war.)

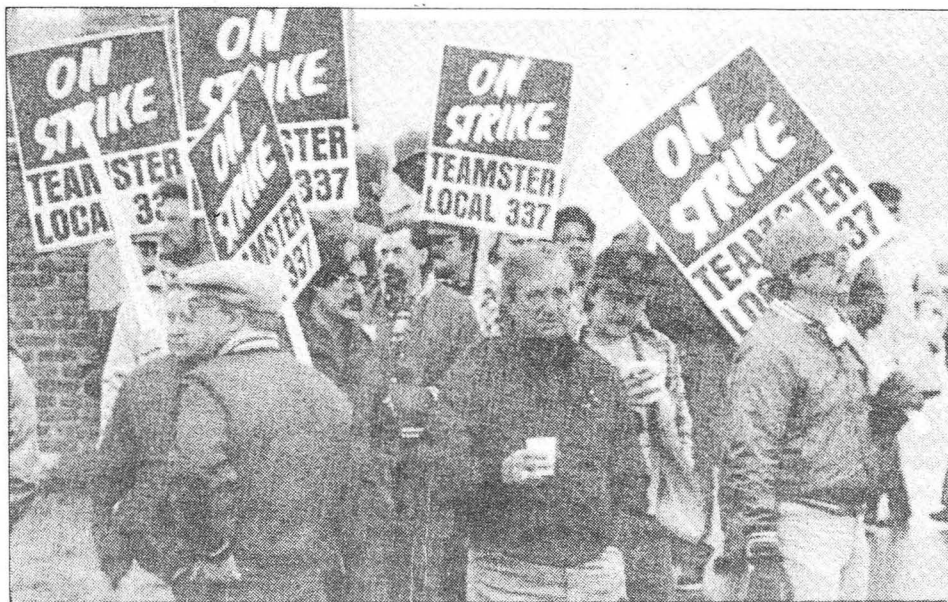
However, once the US



Ludington official tosses application forms at job seekers (See report below).

Now the international situation is being manipulated by the capitalist politicians and media in an attempt to whip up "patriotism" and divert attention from the deepening social crisis at home.

These reports by JOHN REIMANN in California and LAWRIE DRIVER in Michigan give a glimpse of the conditions being faced by US activists at present and their determined struggles which go without mention in the capitalist press.



Ludington workers on the picket line.

starts to get bogged down in Central America; once the body bags start coming back home; once it becomes clear that workers will have to pay for this war financially—then the sentiment will start to change. The union leaders' support for the war will then start to alienate them even further from the membership.

Even in the worst of times, when there is widespread patriotic fervour, these developments will open the way for deeper political discussions within the working class. Small numbers of the most determined workers will become more conscious and hardened by fighting against the stream.

Ultimately, these events can only add further fuel to the fires of class struggle here in the "belly of the beast".

## Detroit strikers dig in

A BITTER dispute is unfolding in Detroit where unemployment has fallen to 18 per cent.

Ludington's, the US equivalent of WH Smith, has asked the Teamster Local 337 to accept higher output, lower wages and pension cuts. Their three year contract expired on 1 April. The company is highly profitable but has seized the opportunity to attack workers' pay and conditions.

### Desperate jobless

With over 100 workers on strike, the company advertised for new workers at rates \$1.75 below that received by the strikers. Monday 22 April, saw a near riot as desperate job-seekers arrived at the site guarded by police to fill in application forms.

There is a school of thought amongst union activists that Ludington's have observed keenly events in Britain where newspaper magnates

Maxwell and Murdoch have deliberately antagonised unions. Murdoch's magazines are handled by the company. It is not clear yet what the union response will be.

Over the years the Teamsters, despite their long tough history, have been recruiting college boys with no real work experience into leading positions, and have fallen into the "business suit" negotiating style. The workers are unchanged, however, they have to fight for everything and fight to keep anything.

Pressure from the strikers and a militant union tradition in the Motown area will keep the issue hot. Men and women who may lose their jobs know there is a better chance of the Queen of England working before they do!

Although some scabs entered the plant early and a few scab trucks got away before the 7am picket start, other workers have respected the line.

## "P-9 strike" continues

SATURDAY 12 April saw demonstrations from all over the USA and Canada supporting the UFCW workers of Local P-9 in their 8 month strike against the giant Hormel Corporation in Austin, Minnesota. (See *Militant*, 21 March).

The UFCW leadership, on the other hand, has removed its endorsement of the dispute and ordered the men and women back to work. The leadership, typical of "business-suit" types straight from college, has taken this stand because other Hormel plants around the country have voted to accept the cuts in wages and conditions!

To the embarrassment of the UFCW leadership, however, the AFL-CIO continues to support P-9 in its battle. The district leadership of the UFCW, led by Jim Guyette, is facing court action by their national leadership to force the Hormel strikers back to work.

Even Rev Jesse Jackson has visited Austin, appealing for "commonsense" etc to prevail on both sides. He likened the Hormel dispute to civil rights protests of the early 1960's.

During Saturday's demonstration, actions by the police led to the reading of the riot act and 14 arrests. However, American trade unionists have a history of resisting state brutality with vigour and 17 policemen are 'on the sick' as a result. It will take more than tear gas and night sticks or indeed court actions to dampen the resolve of the P-9 strikers.

See appeal for support on letters page.

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## Out with Pinochet! Collect on 10 May!

ON 26-27 APRIL, in a church on the outskirts of Santiago, several hundred delegates gathered. Ranging from poor peasants to professionals, they demonstrated the opposition of all sections of Chilean society to 12 years of military dictatorship.

The meeting, styled a National Assembly, issued a 50-point document. While it failed to point out the need for socialist policies to end the horrors of the decaying system, it reflected the intense pressure of the mass movement. Among its demands are: an immediate return to democracy; wholesale changes in economic and social policies; and an end to human rights violations.

Speakers warned that if these demands were not heeded, Chile could be plunged into civil war. The govern-

ment was given until the end of May to respond. Failing a response, the assembly set out plans for a mass campaign of civil disobedience, including a general strike in June.

A significant feature of this programme of action is that, for the first time, it has the active support of groups which previously supported the regime, such as the lorry drivers.

Clearly, the regime's days are numbered.

In Britain, the struggle against Pinochet and for a socialist Chile stands at the centre of the work of the Chile Socialist Defence Campaign. The CSDC raises money through street collections, donations from Labour Party and trade union branches and individual donations, and sends this money to workers in Chile.

Over the past few years we have sent thousands of pounds in direct cash aid.

On Saturday 10 May the CSDC is organising a countrywide collection. Every YS branch and every comrade should be out with their rattling tins.

Properly organised, a street collection can be very successful, as was recently shown in Newcastle where £60 was collected in just a few hours.

In solidarity with Chilean workers daily risking their lives, make sure that on 10 May you play your part in the fight to get rid of Pinochet!

Chile Socialist Defence Campaign

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# Starvation wages for seasonal jobs

Dear Comrades,

With the onset of the summer season unemployment in Blackpool has gone down more than in other areas, but with the recession things have changed quite a bit.

This June a new complex opens with 250 jobs on offer. The local paper reported that over 2,000 had already applied for jobs with that

figure expected to rise by a further 1,000 when the deadline for applications was reached the following day.

With so many chasing these jobs is it any wonder they can pay starvation wages for long hours.

Yours fraternally  
Kevin Taylor  
Blackpool

# Letters

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

## Sectarianism in West Scotland

Dear Comrades,

Sectarianism is used to try to break the spirit of the workers in Northern Ireland. But how many comrades know the extent of this evil in the west of Scotland?

The recent appointment of Graeme Souness as boss of Glasgow Rangers, (the only football team in the world who 'traditionally' do not sign a football player if he is a Roman Catholic) has set the imagination of many Rangers fans alight.

Souness, like the two previous managers announced he would sign a player regardless of religion. But his problem is finding a player brave enough to go to Ibrox.

Sectarianism will not stop at the crowd it will continue on to the field.

At a recent supporters club meeting two players from Rangers went to pick up awards. At the end of the evening one of the players stood up and led the singing of *No Surrender* a version of *The Sash*, a loyalist song.

The players in question were not named and appear to have got away with this disgraceful action. It seems that Souness has a hard fight ahead of him.

Yours fraternally  
John Templeton  
East Kilbride  
Labour Party



Community-policing American style. US bosses are notorious for their strike-breaking tactics.

Photo: Duane Clinker

# Taking on the strikebreakers

*Militant* has received the following letter from Local P-9, United Food and Commercial Workers in America (see *Militant* 790).

I bring you greetings from the 1,500 striking members of Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota. We are meat packers who are into our 18th month of strike.

Ours is the most modern plant in the industry, that the workers helped Hormel to build by freezing wages and going out of pocket \$12,000 to \$14,000 per employee in the interest free loan to the Hormel Co., for which the company promised no further concessions.

Instead, the company has decided that a 33 per cent increase in profits from 1984-1985 is not enough, and

while demanding wage concessions from its workers, has increased manager salaries by up to 68 per cent in one year.

While it is the newest plant in the industry, the plant also is the most dangerous meat packing plant in America. Total injuries averaged eight injuries per 100 workers in the industrial sector of America in 1984, the Austin plant alone had 202 injuries per 100 workers. Workers go to and from work looking like they were in a WW2 battle.

Hormel has cooked up a fantasy of 'mob violence' in the streets to convince the Governor of Minnesota to call out the National Guard in order to escort scabs into the plant. The local police authorities have turned their

heads at scabs bringing baseball bats and guns into the plant while arresting and brutalizing strikers.

We appreciate any help you can find within yourselves, or the organisations you represent, to give us. Today workers are confronted with companies that are national and international in scope and as workers we must be able to find ways to help each other.

In solidarity  
James Guyette  
President Local P-9  
UFCW

Send donations and messages of support to: UFCW P-9, 316 4th Ave NE Austin, Minnesota, 55912 USA.

## Profiting from poisoning children

Dear Comrades,

I have just read a letter in *Militant* 794 about additive 924 and how profitable it is to use it in the baking industry.

I have a son who has shown signs of being allergic to food additives so I have tried to cut them out of his diet. This seems to be working and he is a much happier child and his eczema is starting to clear up.

Looking for something

that my son could safely eat and that both of my children would like I discovered Sainsburys sell additive-free fish fingers and ice cream.

The catch is that additive-free fish fingers cost 77p for 10 while Economy ones cost 49p for 10. The same with the ice cream; with colouring 99p per litre, without £1.25.

I bought the more expensive ones just this once, but it is obvious that as I'm a single parent on Family In-

come Supplement, fish fingers will be a treat. It costs more to give my children fish fingers than roast chicken.

Profits are being made at the expense of our children's health and will continue to do so until the food industry is taken into public ownership.

Yours fraternally  
Val North  
Brighton Labour Party  
Womens Section

## United campaign?

Dear Comrades,

Recently when I joined the Labour Party I received a booklet *Welcome to the Labour Party*. On looking through the booklet I noticed that the first paragraph read:

"Joining the Labour Party is a big step. It takes you into a community of people united round the campaign for a caring, socialist society."

If there are expulsions from the Labour Party then surely the people that should be expelled are the careerists who show no accountability to the working class who put them in their respective positions. Not the Labour Party members who are actively involved in the duties that the above paragraph indicates.

Yours fraternally  
David Payne  
EETPU Rosyth Dockyard

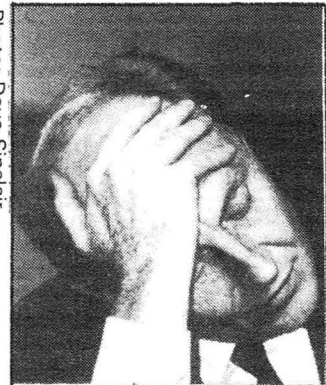
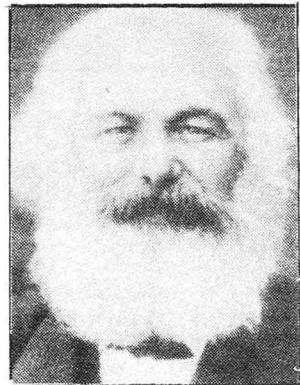


Photo: Dave Sinclair



It's back to school for Neil Kinnock who still thinks Karl was one of the Marx brothers.

## 5/10—could do better

Dear *Militant*,

Most readers will have heard Marx's famous saying: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world... the point, however, is to change it."

Imagine my surprise, on reading Neil Kinnock's Foreword to Nye Bevan's book *In Place of Fear* when Kinnock praises Bevan's

book for sticking to this formula.

Still, that was written eight years ago. However, that isn't all: Kinnock refers to the quote as "Lenin's phrase". Five out of ten for effort Neil.

Yours fraternally  
Pauline Maniscalco  
Leicester West

## No freedom to support Militant

Dear Comrades,

As secretary of a constituency Labour Party I receive regular correspondence from Labour Party headquarters at Walworth Road. Last week in the envelope were items about the investigation into Liverpool District Labour Party.

An item headed

*Disciplinary Action* says that the NEC will send out a procedure for taking disciplinary action against members and requesting that CLPs wait to receive this before initiating action, and including the suggestion that if you need advice about this sort of thing to contact your regional office.

In the same envelope is a

letter from Neil Kinnock about the launch of a new campaign. It is called *Labour's Freedom and Fairness Campaign*. Ironic isn't it?

Yours fraternally  
Pete McNally  
Coventry South East  
Labour Party

## Classified ads

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.

○ Perspectives for the United States of America by Rob O'Neil and Tom Williams. £1 each or 10 for £8 available from LM Publications, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

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

○ The annual report of the Zimbabwe Trade Union Defence Campaign is available now. Price 25p (plus 20p p&p). From ZTUDC, 28 Martello Street, London E8 3PE.

○ Bristol East *Militant* Marxist discussion groups (held fortnightly) Wed 14 May 'Will the economy crash?'. Start 7.30pm. For details of venue etc. ring Bristol 650318.

□ Leicester Fight Low Pay Rally. Saturday 17 May. 2-4.30pm. West End Neighbourhood Centre, Andrewes St., Leicester. Speakers: Angie Donisthorpe (Joint Union Co-ordinating Committee, Leicester City Council) Dave Neillist MP (promoter of low pay bill).

□ 'Militant Fights Back' meetings  
□ Mansfield. Lecture Theatre, Library, West Gate. 13 May 7.30pm. Speaker Rob Sewell.

□ Bracknell. Coopers Hill, Youth Centre. 13 May 7.30pm. Speaker Keith Dickinson.

□ Sheffield, Chapeltown *Militant* public meeting. Newton Hall, Chapeltown. Tues 27 May. Speaker Brian Ingham.

□ Bristol NW 'What we stand for' public meeting. Thurs 15 May 7.30pm. Lawrence Weston School, Stiles Acre.

□ Portsmouth. Central Library. 19 May 7.30pm. Speaker Peter Taaffe.

□ Acton. Town Hall, Uxbridge Road. 13 May 7.30pm.

□ Westminster. Marble Arch School of English. 21 Star St. WC2. 15 May 7.30pm. Speaker Keith Dickinson.

□ Airdrie "Expell the Tories, not the socialists". Tues 20 May 7.30pm. Tudor Hotel, Airdrie. Speakers: Bob Wylie, Patricia Moore (LPYS), Sam Harty (TGWU Convenor Imperial steelworker).

□ Ellesmere Port Civic Hall, Ellesmere Port. Thurs 29 May 7.30pm.

□ South Manchester. Thurs 15 May, 7.30pm. Longsight Library, Stockport Road.

□ Welsh Region Labour Party conference Fridge meeting, Friday 16 May.

□ Southwark Thursday 22 May, 7.30pm, North Peckham Civic Centre, Old Kent Road, London SE15.

□ Newbridge Marxist Discussion Group, every Monday 7pm. Newbridge Miners Institute, High St, Newbridge.

□ Hackney North 'Militant Fights Back' meeting. The Old Fire Station. 14 May 7.30pm.

□ Penge. Penge East Community Centre, Station Rd, SE20.20 May 7.30pm.

□ North Peckham. Civic Centre, 21 May 7.30pm.

IN MEMORIAM: Ian Burge ASTMS Secretary London Hospital JSSC who died on 18 May 1980. In memory of friend and fighter.

### MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOLS

MIDLANDS/SOUTH WEST Birmingham, 14-15 June Cost: £6 (£4 unwaged), weekend, £3 (£2) one day. Bookings to 'MWES' c/o T Cross, 12C Samuel Vale House, St Nicholas Street, Coventry, CV1 4LS.

NORTHERN Leeds 7-8 June Cost: £5 (£3 unwaged) weekend or £2.50 (£1.50) for one day. Bookings to 'MWES' c/o 63 Lincoln Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 0EP.



# Parasites on the Health Service

**YET ANOTHER private hospital, the London Bridge, opened recently within walking distance of a large NHS hospital, Guy's.**

Private hospitals have to be near NHS hospitals as they are parasitic on them. They often do not have the equipment or expertise to deal with routine or emergency treatment.

This hospital cost £14 million to construct courtesy of the Arab states and no doubt money from consultants at Guy's. £7 million was spent on furnishings, and more was spent on plants than has been spent on cancer services at Guy's Hospital!

## Scrounging

For this luxurious treatment the first 11 patients will no doubt be paying up to £500 a day for a room with a view of the Thames.

In their first week this "independent" hospital tried to 'borrow' dressing packs from Guy's and a Wilton Orthopaedic frame for their operating theatres. Consultants from Guy's are already dividing their time between hospitals and taking their registrars with them. Those consultants will obviously need to speed up their one-minute consultations in their NHS sphere to

see their private patients.

What an insult to local people who never in a million years could afford private medicine, to see the money spent on and in this hospital.

They face the closure of four local hospitals, reductions in beds, longer waiting lists and severely reduced services. Over the next two years we can expect 1,056 redundancies in Lewisham and North Southwark district.

The health authority have to save £12 million over the next eight years. London Bridge cost more than we are losing.

We are also told that the domestic department are facing privatisation and catering may be under threat with new Quick Chill facilities being discussed.

It's obviously one Health Service for the rich and a poverty-stricken service for the working class.

The building of this private hospital next door to Guy's has incensed local healthworkers, who will demand that a returning Labour government end all private medicine and implement a full socialist programme to reverse all the cuts in the NHS.

By Ruth Herdman  
(NUPE Nurse,  
Guy's Hospital)



NHS workers march in the North East. No more private hospitals, no more 'privatisations'!

★ A community nurse with two children, is being evicted from her health authority flat. Government Minister Fowler's name is being used so that West Surrey health authority can plead 'crown immunity' to avoid complying with the 1977 Rent Act which protects tenants.

## Who cleans up profits?

**THE DAYS of crown immunity from prosecution for hospitals were ended earlier this year.**

Even this government was forced to draw up plans to bring hospital hygiene in line with the outside world after the salmonella deaths at Wakefield's Stanley Royds hospital.

But the government has offered nothing to bring about improvements. Instead privatisation is being prompted throughout the NHS, cutting costs and corners.

At Stanley Royds itself the laundry, which covered the whole area, has just been privatised with alarming results. The work is now being despatched to a private laundry in Hull. In the first few weeks one ward was down to only three clean dresses for a 30-bed ward.

Others had no clean bedding and patients had to have uncomfortable and aggravating paper sheets. Several staff at the hospital had at times to wear ridiculously oversized overalls or paper ones.

Other Wakefield hospitals were also affected. Paper nappies had to be used at Manygates hospital. At the city's Clayton hospital operations were postponed due to a lack of clean laundry.

## Resources

Only 11 staff were kept on at the laundry for sorting. Meanwhile there had been a build up of soiled laundry as cleaning at one stage was even sent to Blackpool.

The day after the report into the Stanley Royds outbreak was published, all the staff received letters which instructed them "not to



Norman Fowler, privatiser... and bailiff. talk"

But we must talk! In a real drive to improve hygiene in hospitals the employees directly involved, the patients, everybody right through to the cleaning staff, need to be involved and have a say.

And we will tell them that if the lifting of crown immunity is to have any effect the government must be made to provide the resources for wide-ranging improvements—and stop privatisation.



NHS laundries—many are threatened with privatisation.

## Standing up for themselves

DAVE NELLIST MP has put down a motion in Parliament demanding action to improve the treatment of handicapped children. This followed a moving documentary 'Standing up for Joe' on BBC on 1 April.

The film showed children in Hungary iceskating. They had been wheelchair bound before attending the Andras Peto Institute for disorders where conductive education has been developed over the past 40 years.

The BBC received 7,000 letters, mainly from parents, after the film, requesting further information on what help might be available for their handicapped children.

Conductive education is not a therapy, but a complex educational system. It is not a cure but learning to function despite the underlying physical condition.

A spastic child may learn to walk and write neatly with a pen, a child with spina bifida learns continence, a stroke patient

learns to use the arm again and an elderly person with Parkinson's disease 'un-freezes', writes and walks again.

As a result children are able to develop, and not only physically. They are also able to expand their personalities as they no longer depend on others but rely on themselves.

Since the mid-1960s numerous visits have been made from Britain to the Institute in Hungary. Unfortunately attempts to copy the system in Britain and the USA have not been so successful as in Budapest. Only in Japan where teachers have been fully trained for four years in Budapest are the results really successful.

The motion before Parliament demands that the government find £¼ million funding for a project in Birmingham. The city council and Dr Barnardo's have already each promised £200,000. It will be a chance for people to go to Budapest to train as teachers.

Lobby your MP to get him or her to support the motion.

THE END of the quarter brought many excellent donations reflecting the widening layer of support for Marxism in the Labour Party and trade unions.

"Please find enclosed a donation of £10 to the *Militant* Fighting Fund. Labour's right wing might expel Marxists from the party, but they can't expel Marxism!"

"Keep up the good work—history is on our side. Phil Ashmore, High Peak"

Thanks Phil, and thanks also to Skipton AUEW branch who sent us £5 in response to the witch-hunt. Gavin Laird may stop our journalists reporting AUEW conference but our support amongst the rank and file is constantly growing.

Another trade union leader, Alistair Graham of CPSA, is moving on to more lucrative pastures, but support for *Militant* in his union grows stronger. Thanks to Kevin O'Connor from Wood Green CPSA (DHSS) for sending £5. Thanks also to Ian Taylor, Glasgow SOGAT (*Daily Record*) for £5.50. Two teachers (Lynn

## Fighting Fund This week £3410

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London East	3543		3500
2 London South East	1977		2200
3 London South West	1251		1500
4 London West	2299		2900
5 South East	1400		2400
6 Humberside	1342		2350
7 East Midlands	1516		3050
8 Manchester/Lancs	2080		4200
9 Eastern	1680		3450
10 Merseyside	3206		6900
11 Scotland East	1445		3200
12 Scotland West	1697		3850
13 South West	936		2150
14 Yorkshire	2482		5600
15 Southern	1316		3100
16 Wales East	557		1450
17 Northern	1525		4550
18 Wales West	989		3150
19 West Midlands	1362		4500
Others	2657		5000
<b>Total</b>	<b>35261</b>		<b>70000</b>

Final chart next week

Marsh from Newcastle and Terri Paterson from East Scotland) sent £100 each to our fighting fund from their back pay.

Striking Silentnight workers J Kelly and Alan Ideson this week gave £1.25! So while Neil Kinnock condemns *Militant* as anything from 'dafties' to 'impossibilists' from 'parasites'

to 'insignificants' our readers can see for themselves from the weekly examples in this column that our ideas are building in support.

DONATIONS included: Ivan Modaczyk, UCATT, Coventry £1; H Hawkins, Sittingbourne Labour Party 50p; A Tait, Glasgow, APEX £2; P Charnock, Leicester South CLP £2.25; K Jackson, Leicester West CLP £1;

Alan Longford Coventry NALGO, £1.35; Cyril Kavanagh, Westminster NALGO £3; Dr J Bramble, West London £25; John Penn, Cowie £2; NUPE members, Mid Lothians £3; J Eggleston, Coventry £2; Yorks FTAT members £3.55; RA Curtis, Bognor Regis £5; Adam Chard, Colnbrook £2. Disco in Paisley raised £105; Spring fair in Basildon raised £46. *Militant* readers' meetings in Fulham, Bridgend, Maesteg and West London raised £364 after expenses!



# Industrial Reports

**Unite  
NCU  
and  
UCW  
action**

## Refusing to be silenced



Silentnight picket

Photo: Trevor King

**MAINTENANCE**, construction and Motor Transport members of the NCU employed in the Post Office have voted in workplace ballots to take industrial action in defence of jobs.

Disguised as measures to improve efficiency and quality of service new staffing levels due to be introduced are in fact a result of arbitrary budgetary cuts designed to maximise the Post Office profits. Reduced maintenance routines for sorting equipment and motor vehicles will in fact lessen the quality of service.

The National Executive Council looks set to call a national token stoppage and possibly introduce a national overtime ban or work to rule.

Whilst the NEC must be congratulated on preparing the members for action, this has not been linked to the NCU's Broad Strategy to defend jobs—central to which is the union's claim for a 32 hour 4 day week.

### Broad strategy

The Post Office look prepared for a confrontation. The Post Office section of the membership must not be left to fight in isolation. An immediate campaign to prepare the whole of the NCU members in a fight to defend jobs on the basis of the unions Broad Strategy must be launched. Urgent discussions should be held with the UCW.

The UCW National Executive are proposing to their Annual Conference industrial action to stop the Post Office's Re-organisation proposals. In essence the Post Office and British Telecom objectives are the same—job cuts. A united response by the NCU and UCW would stop them in their tracks.

With NCU and UCW amalgamation being put to the respective annual conferences what better way could there be to provide the foundations for a new union than unity of action?

**By Roy Wemborne**  
(London Postal Engineering Branch NCU)

**THE MOOD** On the Silentnight picket lines is growing livelier, and spirits are high, as the 17 May demonstration in Keighley in support of Silentnight strikers draws near.

Already tremendous support has been shown at mass pickets during the last two weeks in April, and the picket lines still regularly receive visits from supporters and other workers in struggle from various parts of the country.

### Women support

Last week a party from Sheffield came up to the picket, and I spoke with some women from the Sheffield Women Against Pit Closure and Rotherham Miners Support Group.

As we talked about the Keighley rally, a woman from Cortonwood told me that all the miners' action groups in Yorkshire who had been informed about the rally would be represented there.

**By Linden Stafford**  
(Skipton Labour Party)

Another woman, from Kiveton Park, said: "Wherever we can go and give our support, we do it."

Strikers have been talking about how they feel after eleven months on strike. "We've probably learned more about trade unions and politics in the past months than most working people learn in a lifetime", striker Gerry Cumiskey told me. "We've seen how the Tory anti-union laws attack ordinary working people like ourselves, and how they encourage employers like Silentnight to treat their employees."

Striker Peter McHale stressed the contrast between millionaire chairman Tom

Clarke, interested only in increasing his profits, and the low paid workforce fighting for their right to be organised. Management had announced that 'steps' were needed to restore 'efficiency and profitability', and three months later they sacked their workforce. "That's why I'm still on the picket line!"

### All change

Mary Vickers, of the Sutton Silentnight Women's Support Group, explained that by travelling all over the country, speaking at meetings and raising support, "We have been able to put on a breakfast and dinner for the lads on the picket line. All the strikers at Sutton are very proud of their support group. The lives of

the Women have changed rapidly," she said. "We realise nothing gets done from behind a kitchen sink".

She also stressed that when the dispute is over the women's support group intend to carry on, in order to give support to others in dispute.

Strikers expect the rally to draw the crowds, particularly with speakers like Derek Hutton and Dennis Skinner. Convenor Charlie Gee said they will be campaigning at the rally for the blacking of Silentnight products by trade-unionists and labour movement activists.

"We're asking people not to buy Silentnight beds, and we're also going to ask them to boycott any shops that stock Silentnight goods."

"Anyone who has got a mail-order catalogue selling

Silentnight beds should write to them saying that they're changing to another catalogue, and explaining why."

Despite all the hardships of this strike—one of the longest-running disputes in the country—strikers are not afraid of continuing their battle.

"We're looking forward to the summer when we can sunbathe on the picket line and have barbecues," striker Alan Ideson told me. "The rally in Keighley will demonstrate to everybody who are our friends now—the people we meet as we go around the country. We know that are a lot of socialists in this country, whatever the press may say."

## Hackney home helps help themselves

ON MONDAY 28 April at 6.25am, NUPE home help steward Joan Bickerstaffe (no relation to Rodney, she emphasises) marched into Hackney Town Hall, announced to the porter that the home help stewards were taking over the building, and locked the door. Reinforcements—two NUPE and two GMBATU stewards—arrived a few minutes later.

The action arose because the Labour group had offered 1,400 lowest paid workers a rise of only £20 per week spread over two years.

1,200 of these workers, half of them home helps, work in social services. Nearly all are women, many part-time, and a large proportion are from black and ethnic minority groups.

The gross pay of the workers was between £96 and £113 for a 35 hour week. Social Services management had backed the workers' claim to receive wages of between £135 and £150 per week within two years.

At a routine Joint Negotiating Committee two days after the Labour group decision, the angry stewards pointed out to their sympathetic management how scandalous it was that a council boasting an Equal Opportunities Policy should

treat women earning far less than nearly all male manual workers so badly.

"It is just because we're women, our members care for their clients like the old people, and don't like hurting them by taking industrial action for better wages."

### Not so silly

Right wing, rate setting deputy council leader, Jim Cannon, (favourite phrase—"management's right to manage"), described the stewards' action as "short-sighted, silly, pointless and anti-democratic. They won't achieve anything."

But on the occupation's third day a deal was struck which brought the low paid workers far closer to their target. So who was silly and short-sighted Jim? And does Mary Cannon (Chair of



Hackney Town Hall during the rate-capping campaign

Social Services) share your view?

The five stewards were satisfied. Instead of a 'promise' by Labour group which would still have had to be ratified by the incoming council after the elections on

8 May, they had achieved a signed agreement.

Over drinks in the Borough Club an hour afterwards, the women exchanged pleasantries with their unions' male leadership.

"I felt sorry for Johnny

(John Chalkley, NUPE General branch secretary)", said Joan. "You should have seen his face when he arrived at the town hall to find it occupied. He knew nothing about it. We really landed him in it and sent him to lead the negotiations."

"They used me like an old broom", sighed Johnny. "But don't quote that or I'll do you for libel."

### Happy ending

Mike Dunn, NUPE General branch chair, had the last word, as managers and councillors have grown to expect: "It has ended on a happy note—at least we found our branch banner which we'd lost in the town hall a while ago."

"And now I can slip back into the slough of being a town hall boss—it was hard while the women were locking us out. They just don't know their power."

**By Nigel Bloch**  
(NUPE Hackney Officers, JSSC Information officer, personal capacity)  
**and Lynne Faulkes**  
(Prospective Labour councillor)

## News in Brief

### Coventry

40 WORKERS at Neta Engineering in Coventry have held two ballots on industrial action over their pay claim. The second ballot, held after the boss complained that he had not seen the wording of the original ballot paper, produced a larger majority for a strike than the first.

Management are offering 5 per cent. The TGWU the main union is claiming 16 per cent.

The factory mainly deals in making components for the mining industry and a major

customer in Dowty Mining Equipment. The premises are one of several 'industrial estate' locations which have mushroomed over the last ten years, often with terrible working conditions.

*By Pete McNally*

### Fire service

THE FIRE Brigades Union (FBU) conference starts next Wednesday in Bridlington. It meets after a year of activity by the union up and down the country against the recruitment freeze imposed as a result of abolition of the

metropolitan county councils.

Whilst the demonstrations and lobby of parliament have been successful in raising the issues amongst the membership and attracting publicity it has not stopped job losses.

The attitude of the Tories towards public servants has been highlighted in their dealings with the prison officers.

The FBU must recover the militant tradition established in the 1977 strike if we are to defeat the attempts to re-introduce overtime, erode wages by fiddling the upper quartile and cut jobs.

*By Mick Eaves*

### Aircraft

BRITISH AIRCRAFT Corporation's (BAC) refusal of negotiations has led to an all out strike by over 6,000 manual workers at 3 BAC plants (Warton, Preston and Salmesbury).

The unions concerned are UCATT, EETPU, T&GWU, TASS (Craft), AUEW and FTAT. They put in a claim for a 12½ per cent increase and a cut in hours to 37½.

Management registered a 'failure to agree' and imposed a 5.1 per cent increase with no

cuts in hours. This was done without consultation.

This resulted in an overtime ban and a two hour stoppage of work.

On the weekend of 26 April management inflamed the situation by carrying out work on aircraft at the Warton division. Workers at Warton stopped work in protest and were subsequently taken off the clock.

All manual workers at Warton, Preston and Salmesbury plants (over 6,000) walked out.

*By Melanie Horridge*



# A new agenda for the CPSA

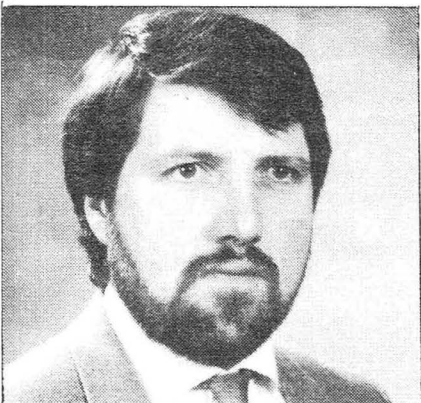
THE Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) conference in Brighton next week will begin to pick up the pieces after the disastrous reign of departing general secretary Alistair Graham.

His resignation has not dulled his hatred for the powerful CPSA Broad Left. At the pre-conference national executive meeting his political stance was even more right wing than usual. It shows that once the constraints of union office are removed he will end up bitterly opposed to the labour movement.

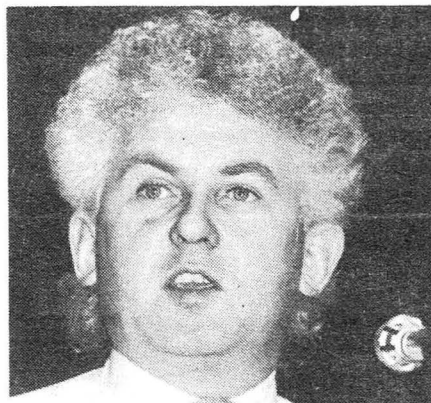
Conference will debate the consequences of another year of right wing rule. The miserable pay offer has been resolutely backed with total inaction by the right wing/BL 84 dominated executive.

Emergency motions demand the rejection of the offer and implementation of the special pay conference policy to achieve a reasonable increase. An increasing majority of members recognise

## Broad Left candidates for treasurer and general secretary



**EDDIE SPENCE** (left), standing for general treasurer, has been a member of CPSA in Liverpool for eleven years, holding positions from sub-branch secretary to national executive committee member. **JOHN MACREADIE** (right), general secretary candidate, has been a CPSA national officer since 1971, joining the union in 1964 as a Clerical Officer.



the need for a Broad Left executive. Reports indicate that a left wing majority will be returned in the current elections.

### Political fund

The changing mood of civil servants, indicated also by the political fund ballot in tax union, the IRSF, is likely to result in a yes vote in the CPSA political fund ballot in the autumn.

CPSA executive have tabled motion 1393 on this subject. Paragraph 14, however,

would commit the union to a further ballot specifically on re-affiliation to the Labour Party. Broad Left supporters will be arguing that motion 1394 is heard instead, which rejects splitting the two issues. Delegates are urged to support the relevant reference back.

The other major political debates will be on union democracy, mergers, women in the union, senior full-time officers' salaries and employment legislation.

The right wing are attempting to drastically reduce

democracy in CPSA through an attack on conference powers, branch autonomy, and restricting the strike fund.

### Debates

Delegates are urged to oppose motions 1106, 1137, 1162, 1165, 1183, 1203, 1241, 1253, 1315, and to support 1107, 1145, 1168, 1186, 1224, 1254, 1326, 1334 and 1356.

For the second year in a row the bureaucracy have manoeuvred off the agenda

on the grounds of legal advice, motions which seek to restrict the inflated salaries of senior full-time officials. Motion 528 and the 24 motions in the composite will not now be heard.

Once again *Militant* supporters will be at the forefront of attempts to democratise control of the union's journal *Red Tape*. Hopefully this year an editorial board will be set up.

A significant development is the large increase in motions submitted, particularly on women in the union,

reflecting the large female membership of the union.

The wide range of issues covered in this section also shows the increasing political maturity of the debate on this issue, moving away from the previous concentration on narrowly internal matters.

The employment debate will also reflect the growing politicisation of the union, with CPSA likely to be one of the few unions to reject government cash for ballots.

The union's parting present to Alistair Graham is likely to be rejection of the clerical and data processing review, an attempt to sell jobs for short term financial gain. Graham has already attempted to smear Broad Left branches with ballot-rigging allegations because of the massive vote against him in some areas.

The truth is that the members have seen through him and his deal with the Tories. Conference will kiss both of them goodbye—with no regrets.

By Bill Boyle

## Left show way on new technology

**CPSA CONFERENCE will witness an attempt by an alliance of the right wing and the so-called "Broad Left '84" to ditch CPSA's policy of no loss of jobs as a result of computerisation.**

By Chris Baugh  
(Land Registry Section,

port of the right wing in CPSA grudgingly admitted in a paper to the NEC that: "...several important agreements containing no job loss guarantees have been achieved...".

Many civil service departments are about to take advantage of the new technology available. They stand on the brink of introducing new computer systems or substantially changing old ones.

In each case the impact upon jobs and working conditions could be disastrous. Yet this gives us an unparalleled opportunity to achieve our policy.

A national campaign that co-ordinated the work of sections dealing with these major projects would enormously strengthen CPSA's bargaining power.

Unfortunately, under the guidance of Alistair Graham the current NEC's only move to action in 1985 was to obstruct members at DVLC Swansea from fighting to achieve pay parity between clerical and data processing (DP) grades doing the same work. Instead they have been immersed in secret grading talks with the Treasury.

One result of these secret negotiations is the Clerical/DP Grading Report. It proposes abolition of the data processor (DP) and senior DP grades and their re-grading to a lower basic rate. This is supposedly compensated by the payment of an allowance subject to "annual review".

The report's major defect, however, is that it fails to even address the key issue of jobs. The Broad Left have led the way in exposing the dangers of the re-grading proposals and campaigning for a resounding rejection vote in the membership ballot.

A technology agreement recently secured in the Land Registry is a further indictment of those who would meekly accept job loss.

The use of computers in the Land Registry has been limited until now but the preceding 12 months have seen protracted negotiations between management and the union covering computerisation of the longstanding manual Registration of Title system.

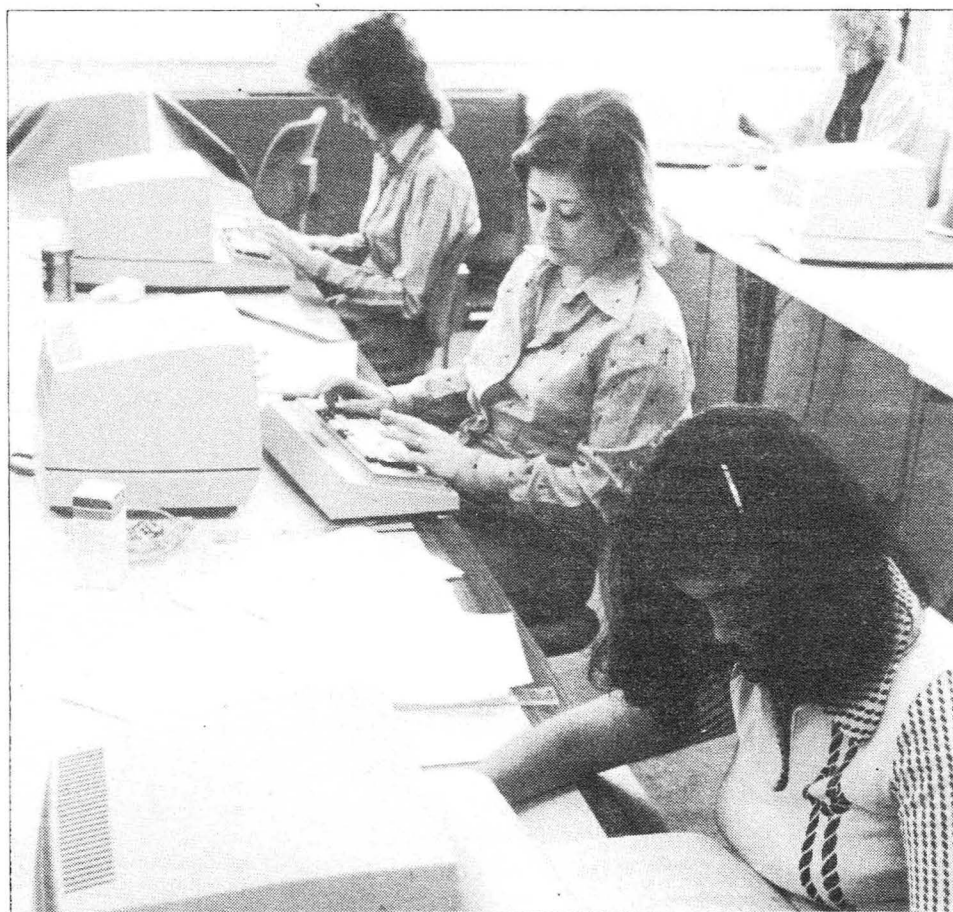
Unlike the NEC, the section officers provided regular and detailed reports to the SEC and branches who were able to influence the negotiations at each stage.

### 1983 dispute

The section took the initiative by producing a "nine point plan" of objectives before our co-operation with computerisation would be granted. This was endorsed as the union's programme. The real strength of the section's position lay in the fact that it had conducted a successful dispute in 1983 which prevented a downgrading of work and a cutting of costs.

The support amongst CPSA members and unity between CPSA and SCPS had a traumatic effect upon a management who were eventually forced to back-off and accept the union's right to real consultation in the future.

Alistair Graham and the right wing have forgotten the most elementary law of trade



union negotiation. It is the balance of forces that will ultimately determine what management are prepared to offer. To modify a famous maxim—industrial action is merely the continuation of negotiations by other means.

Any close scrutiny of the Land Registry agreement will reveal the protection of jobs it contains. Aided by an extension of land registration

and increasing intakes of work we have secured a commitment that no jobs will be lost as a result of computerisation.

The agreement states that the overall complement will not fall below 7,880 (nearly 600 posts higher than present) for the duration of the agreement which is expected to last well into the 1990s.

Separate sections of the

agreement also cover grading, improved promotion prospects, working environment, health and safety and the need for consultation and agreement with the unions. The Land Registry agreement is both a "living" example of what can be achieved and refutation of those who dismiss no job loss as "impossible".

## Goodbye Graham

One of the architects of the TUC's so-called 'new realism', Alistair Graham, has resigned as general secretary of the CPSA in favour of £50,000 a year as head of the Industrial Society, advising and training management. There can be no better illustration of where his ideas lead. The labour movement should be warned.



### 'Guidance'

However the Tories have sought to restrict what departments could concede to the unions by issuing "guidance". A memo was sent to all departments stating:

"Departmental or project agreements should not include any provision which amounts to a pledge of no job loss or which could be interpreted as such".

Despite this warning, agreements covering micro-computer and word processor systems have been secured which include no job loss clauses.

Within a few months of rejecting the interim agreement even deputy general secretary, John Ellis, a sup-



# Militant

## CPSA right resigned to defeat

Alistair Graham's resignation as general secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association and splits in the right wing are reflections of their failure to resist constant Tory attacks, even when they have been backed up against the wall, as over GCHQ.

By Steve Dunk  
(Prospective CPSA NEC candidate)

On the other hand the loss of 150,000 jobs and cuts in real wages to the extent that many members are receiving state benefits have transformed the attitudes of the rank and file — and not towards 'new realism'.

Reports from Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) workplaces indicate big votes for Broad Left candidates in the national executive and presidential elections.

If this swing is typical of

other sections the Broad Left will be returned as the largest group on the executive—confounding our opponents on the left and right.

The right wing's victory in recent trade union elections in the tax union the IRSF, engineering union the AUEW, and communication workers (NCU) has fuelled propaganda that the left is on the retreat.

The resignation of leading right winger Alistair Graham and the strong showing of the left in these elections shows that the large, well

organised, open and democratic CPSA Broad Left has been able to tap the real feelings of the rank and file. It provides a model for the left in other unions.

The 'new realists' represent only the tired tops of the labour movement and their bureaucratic shadows, not the membership.

The success of the Broad Left is doubly impressive given the 1984 split by the Communist Party and Kinnockite 'soft-lefts'.

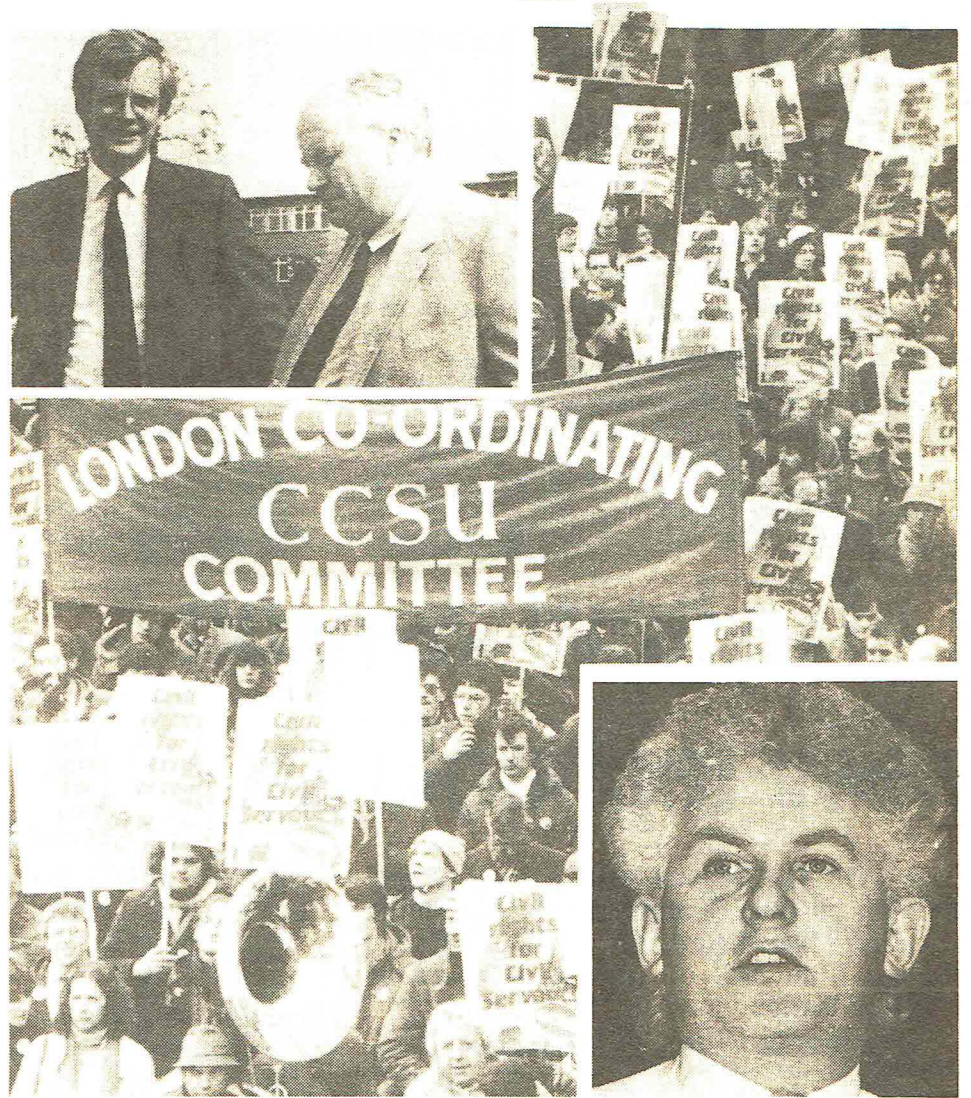
Their joint campaign with the right wing to destroy *Militant's* influence in the biggest and most active Broad Left in the country has been well and truly buried. The right wing and the so-called lefts are completely out of touch with the rank and file of the union.

### Future

70 per cent of our members are under the age of 26, 73 per cent are women. They are the true reflection of Britain's future. The vast majority are low paid. Their response to the Broad Left's campaign shows what can be done if a clear programme which reflects the membership's needs is put forward by a leadership which proved its willingness to struggle.

Conference will be making key decisions on pay, jobs, new technology, merger and an array of other issues. For the first time in five years the members will have a chance to elect a new general secretary.

Broad Left candidate, national officer John Macreadie, is the only candidate who will seriously attempt to carry out conference policies and has said he will not accept Graham's inflated salary. A massive national campaign must be waged to ensure he is elected.



Alistair Graham and Norman Willis (top left) failed to preserve trade union rights at GCHQ despite the willingness of trade union members to fight, shown in the national demonstration. John Macreadie (above) has proved he is prepared to struggle.

### Printers will win

"THE DECISION of the SOGAT executive committee to purge their contempt has made me totally sick," said John Bloom, a member of the SOGAT London Central branch.

"This comes just one week after my branch, the largest in the union, unanimously voted against purging the union's contempt.

"The decision is a stab in the back for the strikers and our wholesale members.

"The injunction was granted because our wholesale members were instructed to stop handling the scab titles. In London these members have stayed solid,

despite threats of redundancies and wage cuts.

"There is no guarantee that they will get the work back. TNT who distribute Murdoch's scab paper have gained enormous experience and could pose a threat to not only the London wholesalers but those also who have handled the titles.

"There are still six injunctions outstanding, any of which could put the union back in court. Worse still, it leaves those who continue to refuse to handle Murdoch's papers in the position where they could be open to legal action as individuals.

"Our branch has been at the forefront of this battle fighting on behalf of the whole of SOGAT and the wider trade union movement. This is a big setback but the fight will go on and we will win."

### Militant Readers Meeting

#### CPSA Annual Conference 1986

Peter Taaffe Editor Militant

Derek Hatton  
Deputy leader,  
Liverpool City council

Kevin Roddy  
CPSA Broad Left  
Chairman (personal capacity)

Brighton Conference Centre  
(Hewison Hall)

Monday 12 May 1986  
7.30pm

97BLOOM p1 2nd copy

**KEIGHLEY TRADES COUNCIL  
SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS**

**March and Rally  
Keighley**

**SATURDAY 17 May 12.00**

"11 months on strike—show your support for the Silentnight strikers"

Speakers

**BEN RUBNER** FTAT General Secretary  
**DENNIS SKINNER MP** Labour Party NEC  
**DEREK HATTON** Deputy Leader Liverpool City Council

**TERRY BENNETT** Chairman FTAT Cravendale  
**STEVE PRICE** FTAT Convenor

**WOMENS SUPPORT GROUP**

Assemble: 12.00 PM Lund Park  
March: Leaves 12.30PM  
Rally: 1.15PM Cliffe Castle

"Forward together — always together"

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