

Militant

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France....Spain....

Youth in revolt

...mass struggle points the way

THE GOVERNMENTS of France and Spain have been rocked by the mass mobilisation of students and youth over the last week, raising the spectre of the huge French protests of 1968.

President De Gaulle fled the country when 10 million workers joined a general strike—a movement started by the students. French capitalism was teetering on the verge of downfall.

Echoing these events, thousands of workers and students marched on Wednesday against the right wing government of Prime Minister Chirac. He has been forced into a humiliating climbdown as workers from the Communist CGT union, and the Paris region of the Socialist CFDT union gave their backing to Wednesday's action.

After silent demonstrations on Monday, mourning the murder of an Algerian student by CRS riot police, Chirac announced that plans to restrict entrance into universities would be scrapped. The minister for the universities resigned and the cabinet is deeply divided.

This followed a weekend of demonstrations and street fighting with the brutal intervention of the riot police and

motor cycle squads. The French police union has revealed the use of agent provocateurs to provoke the students into violence.

Hundreds of thousands of school students also demonstrated in Spain last Thursday, yet the press and TV in Britain have kept silent. The British capitalists fear the contagion reaching here—their concern is intensified because in Spain the protests were planned months ago by the Spanish middle school students' union set up by supporters of the Marxist paper *Nuevo Claridad*. The protests are over the same issue as in France—cuts in university places, but in Spain it is part of the 'socialist' government's austerity programme.

What an answer to the leaders of British trade unions and the Labour Party who have the power to mount a similar mass movement in Britain.

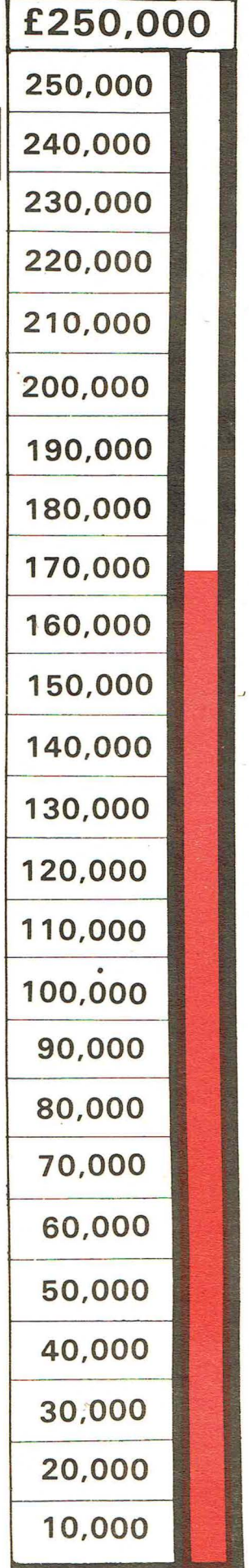
This could be the prelude to a general mobilisation against unemployment, the attacks on the welfare state and, as in France, against cuts in education, to bring an end to the Thatcher government.

Labour would be propelled into power with a large majority and a mandate to end the grievances of workers and youth with socialist policies.



Defiant youth demonstrate on the streets of Madrid last week.

Fighting Fund



WHAT A response! Once again readers have proved their determination and sacrifice to build a better and more frequent *Militant*. In the last week our cashometer shot up by £57,391 taking our fighting fund total to an amazing record figure. £165,191 collected and donated by our supporters in only four months!

We set ourselves an ambitious target but we have proved that it can be done.

The chart will appear again next week, so even if you haven't donated yet it isn't too late. Our readers have shown their willingness to sacrifice. A week's dole, a week's wages, or more. Look at the size of the collection at the Albert Hall Rally—£34,624 collected in forty minutes! This is more than the £32,627 collected in the whole of 1976. In 1984 our Fighting Fund for the year was only £158,703! Who says our support is declining?

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Militant

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Mass struggle a foretaste of the future

THE ENORMOUS movements in France and Spain have struck fear into the hearts of the capitalists. Immediately news came of the magnificent strikes and demonstrations of the French students, memories were revived of how police repression led to the ten million strong general strike and factory occupations of May/June 1968.

These movements exposed the tensions which are building up in all the countries of Europe. It is precisely for this reason that the capitalist media throughout Europe have suppressed news of the huge 4 December strike in Spain. In the same way, in the past two years alone, they have not reported widely the big school student strikes in Britain, Italy, Belgium etc. or the public sector strikes two months ago in Sweden or now in Italy. The capitalists fear that to give publicity to these movements would provide an example to workers and youth in other countries.

Only nine months after winning parliamentary elections the right wing Chirac government has been forced to completely retreat on the issue of university reform which initially provoked the movement. In 1968 De Gaulle's refusal to compromise provoked and then deepened the conflict. But terrified at the possibility of another general strike, Chirac retreated when the students adopted the policy to go to the factories seeking support for a 24 hour general strike, and the CGT trade union federation backed that demand.

But it was not only the capitalist leaders who were frightened by the movement, the workers' leaders were as well. In 1968 the CGT leaders had to work hard in order to persuade workers that their struggle was only 'economic' and that they should end the factory occupation in return for wage increases. This time the workers' leaders did not want to be placed in that situation. Despite having squandered the possibilities opened by the marvellous Socialist/Communist election victory in 1981, President Mitterrand still has a large amount of authority among workers and youth. Mitterrand used his position not to lead the assault on the right wing government, but kept silent and privately pressurised Chirac to retreat.

The French government has been seriously weakened. It has been forced to back down in the face of a mass movement. In a rapid change of consciousness the working class parents who voted for Chirac are now opposing him. Already the past few months have seen strikes developing against the Chirac government's attacks, and there is still the possibility of a new 1968 developing in the coming period.

While the movement in France was against a capitalist government, in Spain the struggle has been against the right wing policies of the Socialist Party PSOE. Less than six months since the PSOE was reelected for a second term in government, students have moved into action. The students are attempting to force the socialist government to act in their interests. The Spanish students are giving an example of how the PSOE government will come under pressure from the working class to stop carrying out pro-capitalist policies.

In Greece the Socialist PASOK government's pro-capitalist policies have come under mounting attack, including protest strikes and upheavals within the Greek workers' organisations. In Spain that process is now beginning and a similar process will occur in all countries where workers' parties are in government and carry out pro-big business measures. What is especially significant in Spain is that the students' protests were led by the Spanish Marxists, despite the fact that over the last ten years many of them have been formally expelled by the right wing leaders from the Spanish workers' organisations. This experience shows once again the impossibility of using organisational methods to separate Marxism from the mass movement.

While both these developments show the tremendous potential which exists for building a movement to change society, they also give a foretaste of how the capitalists will increasingly attempt to attack the working class. Both in Madrid and Paris the students were attacked by fascists. In Madrid the police only intervened when the students fought back, and then against the students! In France the Interior Minister, Pasqua, called on the activists of the right wing RPR party to "hold yourselves ready in case the course of events should make it necessary for us to call on the French people to join us in defending democracy (!) and the Republic." On this occasion the French capitalists decided not to risk a total confrontation with the working class. But this will not always be the case in future periods of crisis. It is the responsibility of the Marxists to help rearm the workers' movement to ensure that future mass upsurges of struggle lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the removal of the danger of reaction.

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CRS riot police with batons and tear gas rifles move in to clear streets in Paris on Sunday morning.

Photo: Popperfoto.

Workers back students

FRANCE

Monday 8 December:

THE STREETS of Paris are silent but still packed with people. Hundreds of thousands of students have marched in protest at the murder of Malik Oussekiene, a disabled student, by the CRS riot police.

Streaks of blood are left on the doorway where he tried to escape from the clubs of riot police when they attacked demonstrators at the weekend. The walls along the route of the march are daubed with the slogan 'Pasqua Assassin' blaming the far right minister, Charles Pasqua, for the death.

Three times in five days the French youth took to the streets in bigger demonstrations than during the revolutionary movements of 1968.

Cabinet split

Prime Minister Chirac's cabinet has been split, faced by the massive opposition that the plans provoked. Pasqua is linked to the sinister SAC, an organisation which planned a Chile-style solution in the 1968 revolution.

He is disgusted at his chief Chirac's capitulation, and has called on his supporters to 'come to the defence of the Fifth Republic.' Fortunately, the far right, which attacked the early demonstrations with the connivance of the CRS, has been completely dwarfed by the protests. Serious French capitalists know that at the moment discretion is the better part of valour.

Chirac had to climb down. At the start the mood was naively non-political, mainly because of the recent

disappointment of the socialist government—its education minister previously drew up similar plans. But the riot police's brutality and the effectiveness of the protests has changed the mood within a few days.

Supporters of the Marxist paper *L'Avance Socialiste* received an ecstatic response at the Montperre University last Friday when they proposed an appeal to workers for a united demonstration and strike.

Perhaps ten out of 6,000 voted against. On Monday's demonstration queues formed for *L'Avance Socialiste* leaflets calling for a 24 hour general strike and the resignation of the government. They were received with comments like: "At last someone is saying what I've been thinking."

In the provincial cities there is more euphoria over Chirac's climbdown, but in Paris where a third of all French students are concentrated the government cave-in made no difference to Monday's demonstration.

The feeling of most students now is that they have won a victory, but they will be back on the streets in April when parliament reconvenes and the government may try again. Most

important is that the students have won the overwhelming support of the working class. CGT members approached the Montperre students with the words: "Give us the call and we'll be back with you."

Unemployed

A contingent of young workers and unemployed youth also went to the students' leading body with the suggestion that they take up all the problems facing French youth.

The Marxists are demanding that a Committee of Action is set up, of workers and students, to hold a genuine inquiry into Malik Oussekiene's death and to plan the next step in the movement to deal with all the grievances of the youth and working class.

These stormy events have shown that the students, the trade unions, the Socialist Party and Communist Party have a tremendous opportunity to sweep the right from power and accomplish the socialist transformation of France.

By our Paris correspondent

TERRY FIELDS, MP for Liverpool Broadgreen has put down the following early day motion, which received the support of 16 other Labour MPs.

"That this house: is outraged by the murder of Mr Malik Oussekiene in Paris on Saturday 6 December;

- ... condemns the brutal tactics of the CRS, including the illegal horizontal firing of tear gas, which resulted in one student receiving a fractured skull and a second losing an eye;
- ... seeks this government's disassociation from such violence and an assurance that British police personnel are not being trained in such methods;
- ... welcomes the fact that the French students have forced the government to retract its reactionary plans for further education;
- ... applauds the decision of the French trade unions to take sympathy action for the students; and
- ... would draw the attention of HM Government to the consequences of constantly attacking education and the welfare state, which could only result in similar mass movements by British workers, students and youth.

The

Police provocation

THE VAST majority of student demonstrators in Paris were orderly and disciplined. Predictably however, the TV cameras swooped on violent incidents in the hope of revealing 'extremist agitators'.

What their film actually showed was evidence of police agents provocateurs in the thick of the events.

A police trade union leader has admitted on TV that members of the CRS riot force were used as provocateurs. French TV showed a group of 'demonstrators' wearing helmets being allowed through a police cordon to reach the demonstrators on Saturday 6 December. Later the same people were seen throwing stones around the streets. One of them was filmed telling a reporter that: "We, on our side, are French; we are white and we are intelligent. On the other side are the Communists."

In another film, a very prominent figure with his face hidden by a yellow scarf is seen with a sackful of paving stones. He is seen being ejected by student stewards but keeps re-appearing in the centre of the clashes with the police. The TV reporter had to ask why such an obvious target was never arrested.

Other journalists reported seeing police stand aside while shop windows were smashed, shops looted, cars set on fire and barricades erected. One even claims to have seen helmeted youths leaving Paris City Hall before the violence erupted.

The CGT union federation has demanded an inquiry into "the small groups of agitators who are known to the police, who allowed them to act without intervening and then asked to disappear."

spectre of 1968

SPAIN

A MASSIVE movement of school students has taken the 'Socialist' government of Felipe Gonzalez completely by surprise.

From our correspondent in Madrid

The sheer scale of the movement, in which there were hundreds of thousands of school students on strike, surprised even the organisers, the School Students' Union. Although planned three months ahead, well before the French students' strike, it was undoubtedly given extra momentum by the events in Paris last week.

There is an enormous reservoir of anger among workers and youth at the relentless austerity policies of the PSOE (Socialist) government, an opposition that finds little outlet given the complete stifling of the Young Socialists and PSOE members' branches by the party bureaucracy.

This movement of school students, although mainly confined to that one section, nevertheless represents the first national opposition to any government since the fall of Franco. Leading government circles are seriously concerned that it could become a more widespread struggle on the scale of the May 1968 events of France.

What is also significant about the strike is the degree of organisation it has shown, different to the normally "spontaneous" traditions of Spain. Here and there sometimes the strike seemed a little chaotic, but the majority of even the capitalist press has commented on the way a "hitherto unknown" school students union has exerted such a great degree of "authority and discipline."

Organisation

The strike—an earthquake for the whole of Spanish society—began on 4 December. It was the product of three months patient organisation and propaganda by the School Students' Union among the 14-18 year old high school students. The union, which was involved in school strikes twelve months ago, was set up by supporters of the Marxist newspaper *Nuevo Claridad*.

The main demand of the strike as in France, revolved around the government's decision to cut university places, so that exam passes were no longer a guarantee of a place as they had been in the past. The school students were demanding the admission of all students qualified to go to university. In addition, they were angered at reported plans of the 'socialist' government to cancel altogether next September's entrance examination and to activate Francoist school regulations drawn up in 1952, but effectively shelved for a number of years.

Finally, the union was demanding a broadening of democracy in schools, to involve teachers and students.

The strike on the 4th proved a colossal success, far surpassing anything that the organisers hoped for. Every labour movement grouping and party had opposed the strike call, except the organisers, around *Nuevo Claridad*. All the different 'Com-



Photo: Nuevo Claridad.

150,000 students on strike in Madrid on 4 December. 80 per cent of schools closed.

munist' Parties and groups and all left sectarians opposed it, as did the radical nationalists in the Basque Country, on the scandalous grounds that it was a "Spanish" issue that did not involve Basque students.

Yet according to the most conservative estimates, at least 400,000 school students came out, and hundreds of thousands were involved in demonstrations. There were probably many more small towns and villages that came out, unknown to the organisers because in the majority of cases the strikes took place on the basis of no more than a letter or a phone-call to the school from the students' union.

Typical was El Ferrol in Galicia, where seven schools struck, involving 7,000, of whom 3,000 were on the demonstration. In Barcelona at least 21 schools were out, involving 20,000. The 8,000 strong demonstration was attacked by the police and there were many arrests. In protest, the students struck for another day and successfully demanded the release of their arrested comrades.

The march was refused permission, but it was so huge police could only stand by as it swept past

In the biggest demonstration of the day, in Madrid, there were 150,000 students as 80 per cent of schools closed. The organisers of the march were originally denied permission to march to the Ministry of Education and were limited to going to the Plaza de Espana, but such was the militancy and so huge the numbers that the police could only stand by and watch as the demonstration swept towards the ministry.

Not only did the students reach their goal, but the ministry was forced to meet a delegation of the students, all supporters of *Nuevo Claridad*, led by Juan Ignacio Ramos. The minister was pushed into making quick concessions. He agreed to restore the September entrance exams that were going to be shelved and to suspend the re-introduction of the Francoist school regulations. However, the



Felipe Gonzalez

main demand of the students—the admission to university of all those qualified—was not agreed, because of its link to the government's economic austerity plans, and so the campaign of the union is continuing.

The demonstration was attacked by groups of fascists, as the police stood by and watched. Incensed by the attacks, the students fought back. When they began to get the upper hand, the police waded in to attack the students. The slogan of "self-defence" has now become a main issue in the student meetings, and they will not be prepared to go on demonstrations in future without having organised their own protection against both the fascists and the police.

The students are demanding the expulsion of known fascists from schools and colleges, the sacking of the 'socialist' minister responsible for the police and are approaching workers' organisations to help protect them in the future.

In Zaragoza, by way of exception, the school students were joined in their action by the whole of the higher education sector from colleges and universities. An estimated 50,000 were on strike and 15,000 took part in a demonstration, not counting the many demonstrations in small towns and villages.

Since the strike, the Workers' Commissions (trade union federation) and the largest parents' association in Spain have expressed support. The switchboard of the School Students' Union has been jammed with calls, including offers of support, financial assistance and

requests from schools for affiliation.

The policy of the union now is for mass meetings to continue to take place in the schools and for the campaign to be kept up until the main demands are met. There is an enormous groundswell of support in the schools, so much so that many thousands not involved in the strike at first, for example in Leganes and Guadalajara, near Madrid, came out on strike on the day after.

Mass meeting

Last Saturday, a mass meeting of school students representing over 40 schools from the city took place in Madrid. The mood was electric, with some angry calls for the expulsion of fascists, school occupations and other measures.

Things may change very rapidly in this very volatile situation, but the mood for a fight is still very much in evidence among the youth. The union has been using the long weekend break, including the Monday (a national holiday in Spain), to consolidate, organise and involve more schools to prepare for the future. If the basic demands are not met by the government there are plans for further action, possibly on 17 December.

The next strike, the union is determined, will be bigger than the last, and steps will be taken to make sure the youth do not come onto the streets just to be beaten by fascists. Approaches are being made to local workers' organisations and shop-stewards committees, many of whom supported the

actoin, for their assistance and support. The school students plan to go firstly to workers in education, teachers, lecturers and other students, but also to those in industry.

In the meantime, if there are spontaneous movements of students, the union will have to put itself at the head of these to give the necessary purpose and direction.

In the highly charged situation in Spain, it is not ruled out that there could yet be an explosive movement encompassing both students and workers. For years the 'socialist' government of Felipe Gonzalez has carried through brutal austerity policies no better than those of Thatcher in Britain, while using its credentials as a 'workers' government to deflect criticism. There has been very little outlet for opposition, given the support by the official labour movement tops for "their" government. But this magnificent schools students' strike has broken the ice. For the workers and especially the youth, this strike is a turning point that will mark a new phase of militant mobilisation and struggle against this government of counter-reform and against Spanish capitalism in general.

British students to send delegation

THE NATIONAL Union of Students conference took place as news broke of stirring events in France and Spain. The ideas long propounded by Militant supporters in the NUS and the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) of students linking in struggle with workers, were being confirmed in action.

The conference supported a call to send a delegation to France, but the Labour President of NUS, Vicky Philips, was instrumental in defeating a call to send a message of support to the new union of school students in Spain. She said that a mass movement of students had not taken place and that mass unions could not be built overnight.

Stevenage's new 'crime' - selling Militant

THREE O'CLOCK in the morning. Thud. Something drops through a letter box in Stevenage. It is an envelope with a mass of "evidence" compiled by the right wing of Stevenage Labour Party to expel ten socialists from the party. The car drives away.

A Jeffrey Archer novel? If only it was! This is just the latest instalment of the Stevenage witchhunt farce.

A right wing clique, huddled together in the "Kinnock Society", a local branch of the Solidarity Group, have over the last eighteen months been trying to expel at least ten, sometimes 12, *Militant* supporters. Their targets include the chair and secretary of the very active Womens Council and a number of LPYS members. Two of the ten no longer live in the constituency.

Breaking rules

They tried once before, last year and they failed. After accusing *Militant* supporters of being irrelevant, they spent many months hounding us. After saying *Militant* supporters were against the constitution they went on to break every rule in the Labour Party book through fabrication of evidence, doctoring of minutes and threats to young members.

The right ignored protests from their local wards and union branches.

We were forced to take the issue to court where the judge had no option but to grant an injunction to restrain the right from expelling us.

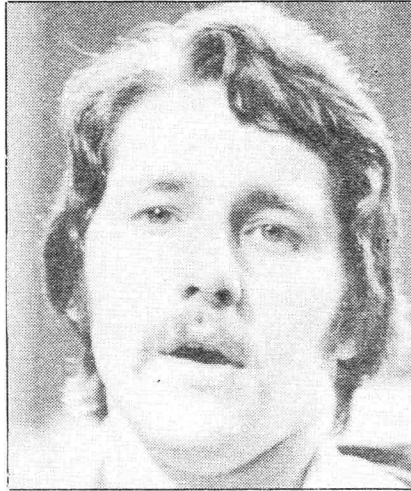
Dangerous precedent

Now they are trying again. New procedures outlined in Clause XVI (3) adopted at this year's Labour Party conference give a step-by-step guide for do-it-yourself witch-hunters. But these defenders of democracy have again ignored the rules in many ways. A blatantly biased investigation sub committee has been set up to *prove* the case of the right, not investigate it.

The charges including such damning evidence as selling *Militant* "at sometime in the summer of 1985", and of attending *Militant* jumble sales. Miraculously none has been charged with giving us the jumble.

For all the farce, the implications are serious. Threats of expulsion for selling, writing or taking photographs for this paper are dangerous precedents for the whole movement. We will oppose them and build a campaign of opposition amongst Labour's rank and file.

By a Stevenage reporter



Steve Glennon, one of the ten threatened members.

Defend the ten

THE ATTACKS in Stevenage threaten the democratic rights of Labour Party members everywhere.

The Defend the Ten Committee was set up last year to help raise money for the £2,228 legal costs incurred fighting the unconstitutional expulsions.

The committee will be swinging into action again but it still owes £1,000 which needs to be raised straight away to clear the decks to fight the latest attacks. If every reader sends just £1 we can pay off the debt and start Round Two of the struggle.

Send donations to Defend the Ten Campaign, c/o Joan Cummins, 45 Walden End, Stevenage, Herts.

Knowsley inquiry threat to party democracy

A LABOUR Party NEC inquiry team comprising Joyce Gould, national director of organisation and Phil Robinson North West Assistant regional organiser visited Kirkby to interview Knowsley North Labour Party officers on 6 December.

The NEC inquiry was asked to "investigate whether in the interest of the party locally and generally Knowsley North ought to be disbanded and later reconstituted or have its proceedings supervised..."

The constituency officers protested at the lack of any notice of either the format of the inquiry or its subject matter. Their legal advice was not to participate in these circumstances but they decided they had little choice.

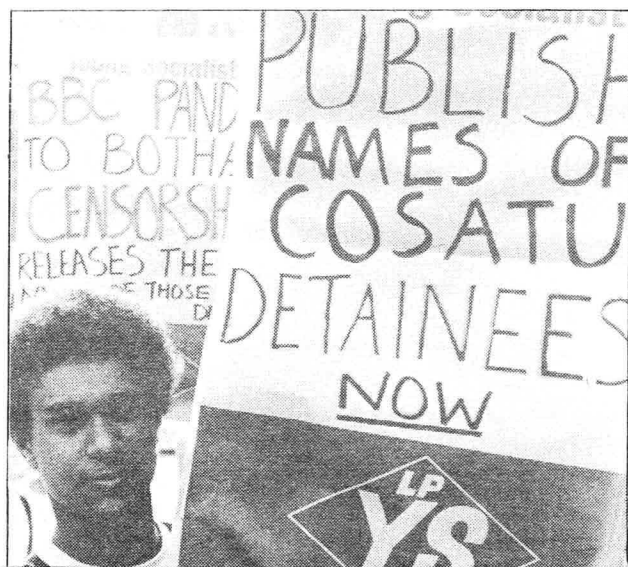
The officers are confident they have answered the questions comprehensively and convincingly and that there is no basis for disciplinary action on any matters raised. They are however concerned that allegations might be made between their hearing and the 17 December NEC meeting which they would have no opportunity to answer. These could be used to justify disciplinary action.

The NEC are to consider the inquiry on 17 December. Party members around Britain would see any disciplinary action as a measure against party democracy and accountability. That would open up the serious danger of a split party, a demoralised membership and electoral defeat.

Make sure the NEC know of your opposition to any action and that of your union/Labour Party branch before 17 December.

By a Militant reporter

LPYS oppose apartheid store



LPYS members protest at BBC's compliance with Botha's news censorship.

BRITAIN'S BIG business is up to its neck in apartheid. Slave labour and huge profits attract all capitalists but none in Europe more than Britain's.

Over £12 million was invested in South Africa last year by British firms. Nearly half the companies who invest there give money directly to Tory Party funds. They know who's looking after them. One in every four Tory MPs is directly associated with a firm investing in South Africa.

Benetton of Italy is just one amongst many firms which invest in both Britain

and South Africa. Glasgow LPYS members started a campaign on Benetton's links because of its youth clientele and its hypocritical "united colours of Benetton" advertising slogan.

To protest at the arrests on our second major demonstration in Glasgow and to widen out the campaign the LPYS national committee have called for a day of action on 13 December. Leafletting and picketing of Benetton's stores and street meetings will build opposition to apartheid and recruit to the LPYS.

THE RECENT arrests have not deterred the LPYS from the campaign against apartheid.

The Benetton 25 Defence Campaign has been set up to:— a) raise money for the defence of our comrades in court and pay any possible fines; b) continue exposing links Benetton's and other firms have with South Africa.

We appeal to the labour movement to defend our action against apartheid by passing resolutions of support at LPYS, Labour Party and union meetings.

Messages of support and for further information, write to: David Archibald, LPYS Scottish Chair (personal capacity), 17 St Kenneth Drive, Linthouse, Glasgow G51.



The Tories' tax changes over the last seven years have helped those on £50,000 plus salaries but not ordinary workers. Benefits have lost in real value. Hence the protest.

Harlow protest at tax conference

THE HARLOW Benefits Action Campaign protested last week outside a conference in London to tell big business how to avoid paying tax. They said "Imagine the press headlines if the unemployed held a conference on how to get more out of the DHSS."

Photo: Tim Bolwell

Southampton Tories rejoice at Labour witch-hunt

"MILITANT HAS deeply penetrated Southampton City Council and will take over the council's labour force" claimed Tory MP James Hill in parliament last month.

"We are honoured that they think we have that sort of support" replied Dave Campbell at a public meeting called by *Militant* supporters in response to proposals for a local enquiry into *Militant*.

After media attacks on *Militant's* alleged office, which they claimed proved that *Militant* was an organisation, they used four wards to pass an emergency resolution to the general committee calling for an inquiry.

The constitution was breached by the right wing themselves when they fixed the date of the meeting to en-

sure that councillors could attend but failed to notify delegates.

Meeting closed

Stunned, the witch-hunters had to admit their error, and close the meeting after ten minutes. Regrettably Southampton's two Labour prospective candidates, John Denman and

Alan Whitehead (also council leader) seem determined to carry out expulsions.

With an election coming up the Labour leaders are not concentrating their fire on the Tories, who are delighted to have attention diverted from their seven years plunder. There is still time to turn the party outward and win support for socialist policies.

Expelled socialist tops further education poll

THE NATIONAL Union of Students (NUS) conference proved that expulsions of fighting socialists from the Labour Party will always rebound on the right wing.

Cheryl Varley, convenor of 72,000 Merseyside students and chair of the Further Education Labour Students (FELS) was elected onto the national committee of the FE sector of NUS with the highest ever vote recorded for a single candidate. Out of 199 votes cast, Cheryl received 83, double the number of her nearest rival.

FELS motions on joining with the Labour and trade union movement were passed, including one committing FENC to organising a lobby of the

Manpower Services Commission, with trade union involvement. Also passed were FELS resolutions on racism and how to win a £35 week grant.

Week of action

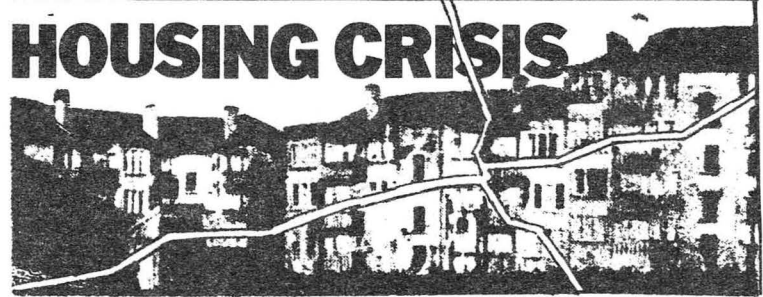
Many delegates were incensed by the refusal of the national executive to give its backing to a resolution calling for parity between FE and students in other sectors. After refusing to recount a vote on the issue, the national president Vicky Philips, was removed from the chair for the rest of conference, the first time this has happened since Labour won control of NUS.

Discontent with the failure of the

NOLS leadership of NUS to provide a fighting lead was expressed throughout the conference. The executive's report and plan was rejected as a whole, while NOLS were defeated in many of the strategy debates. Against their advice, NUS is now committed to a national week of action and a demonstration in the new term.

The *Militant* Readers' Meeting summed up the attitude of the most conscious students at the conference. With over 100 attending, £650 was collected for the fighting fund. In contrast to all other political groups, there was enormous confidence about the developing struggles in Western Europe.

THIS IS the first part of a conclusion to the series on the housing crisis in Britain. It takes a critical look at Labour's plans for mortgage tax relief to deal with inequalities in housing, and argues the case for a socialist programme for home-owners. The final part deals with Labour's public housing policy, and whether it is adequate.



Socialism for homeowners

Labour leaders' dilemma over mortgage reform.

HOME OWNERSHIP could become a major election issue, with over 60 per cent of households owning their own homes.

In the 1983 election the Tories exploited the 'right to buy' legislation, playing on the advantages of home ownership, against the rising rents, immobility and increasing disrepair of council housing.

Labour was caught unaware, without a clear policy. Already, under the previous right wing Labour government, a 1977 White Paper came out in favour of the 'right to buy', undermining the Party's policy of opposing council house sales. Campaigning on the doorstep in 1983 was an uphill struggle for Party members trying to explain the dangers of depleting some of the best council house stock through selling-off.

Immediately after the 1983 defeat Labour buckled beneath the popular support for the 'right to buy' generated by the Tories' propaganda, and relaxed its opposition to the policy. Jeff Rooker, Labour's housing spokesman, has enthusiastically endorsed this new stance, even trying to outdo the Tories by offering discounts on council flats 10 per cent more than the government's.

Labour's failure

Yet the mood towards home ownership, which caught Labour off-guard, developed as a result of the previous Callaghan government's right wing policies and its failure to provide the necessary resources for public housing. New council house starts slumped from 144,700 in 1975 to 69,400 in 1979.

Many of the system-built and high rise blocks of the 'sixties and 'seventies encouraged by subsidies to developers under Labour and Tory governments, have now turned into modern slums, adding to the dissatisfaction of council tenants.

Had Labour governments been committed to a public housing programme, of building comfortable high quality homes to a standard expected by home-owners, then the issue of council house sales would have been made far less relevant.

In power, the Tories jumped at the chance to create a property owning boom and a bonanza for the banks and building societies competing with each other to lend money. Thus with a further decline

in all house building, house prices in the private sector began to rise sharply. Comfortably well-off house owners, in the South East in particular, suddenly found themselves living in a handsome chunk of real estate—assets which they could then use to borrow more money, helping to boost the explosion in credit and fuelling the property boom.

But the rising prices brought difficulties for first time buyers, and the burden of high mortgage payments have led to an increasing number of defaults, particularly amongst the young.

The increase in home ownership has led to growing, and now stark, inequalities in housing. Well-off home owners benefit from huge sums given out in mortgage interest tax relief—a single person on £30,000 a year gets an average of £1,700 mortgage relief (and may be able to claim other tax allowances), compared to someone on £4,000 a year who would get an average of £280 in the mortgage tax relief.

Even the Tory wets have acknowledged these inequalities in housing. The cost of mortgage tax relief to the government has now soared to £4.5 billion while council housing investment has slumped to £2.5 billion. In 1979 the subsidy to council tenants was £1.23 for every £1 of mortgage tax relief. By 1983 the situation had more than reversed with the subsidy for council tenants being 53 pence for every £1 of mortgage relief.

Labour's leaders at least recognise that the Party's basic support rests on a commitment to attack blatant inequality. Without this, even from the right wing's point of view, the Party would be indistinguishable from the SDP/Liberal Alliance. But if the Labour leaders avoid any commitment to fundamental socialist change, then they will be forced to deal with the inequalities within the limits of capitalism.

So Neil Kinnock keeps returning to the idea of abolishing mortgage tax relief for the well-off or for second or third time buyers. This policy is also supported by the Alliance, Tory wet Michael Heseltine, various housing pressure groups, *The Guardian* and others. One thing which unites all these trends of 'liberal capitalism' is the fear of the social consequences if the growing inequalities under capitalism are allowed to get worse.



High rise blocks built in the 'sixties, now being demolished in Hackney because they are 'uninhabitable.' Previous Labour governments have brought council housing into disrepute, bolstering the rise in home ownership—and the rise in house prices.

So how to eliminate inequality, and the bias in favour of better-off house owners? Or rather, how to raise the standard of living of everyone to that of the comfortably well-off middle class?

The narrow perspective of Kinnock and Hattersley, which avoids any challenge to big business rule in the economy, must find ways of financing 'reforms'. Roy Hattersley must be eying with relish the nearly £5 billion going on mortgage relief with the thought of at least some of it being used to finance the promises made on housing investment.

Middle class

The Labour leaders' answer is to take from the middle class to give to the poor. This gives the Tories a golden opportunity to whip up anti-Labour sentiments, claiming that 'socialism will be paid for on

the taxes'. This policy typifies the attitude of the right wing. Ironically it means that instead of attracting middle class support with 'moderate' policies, these very policies will turn them back into the clutches of big business and the Tories. It is one reason why Labour remains stuck in the 38 to 40 per cent position in the polls.

Under a future Labour government these policies would encourage a ground-swell of reaction, and help make way for a new right wing government.

Marxists are not opposed to super taxing the really rich. They are not against raising general taxes to help pay for a massive investment in public services. But this can be done only as part of a general increase in living standards and incomes, ruled out on the basis of sick British capitalism.

The worst policy for Labour through tax reform, or other

policies aimed at reducing the advantages of home-ownership, would be for the redistribution of wealth downwards within the narrow limits of capitalism. Labour's policy must be directed towards breaking the power of big-business to provide the resources for housing and other needs. The Labour Party must campaign to win support for a genuine socialist programme for housing and homeowners.

The nationalisation of the banks and insurance companies would be relevant and beneficial, even to middle class voters, if it meant the provision of cheap credit at stable rates, or state-assisted mortgages.

This approach would enable the breaking of the Tories' 'natural' supporters from the party of big business to the side of socialism.

By Ben Eastop

Political somersaults of Ken Livingstone

KEN LIVINGSTONE is completing the most amazing political somersaults as, along with others on the soft left, he rapidly shifts to the right.

A former supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) programme for the Middle East, he recently spoke at a London meeting of the United Zionist Workers' Party (MAPAM). He said he had fallen in love with Israel after spending a week there.

He sees kibbutzes, apparently, as an example of socialism beating capitalism at its own game. He did however criticise Israel's arms sale to Iran to fight Iraq which he seemed to think was a more 'pro-

gressive' society.

Asked about his former support for the PLO slogan 'for a secular and democratic state of Palestine,' he answered that this would not come about in his lifetime. In the short term he said, the most Palestinians could hope for was just a state on the West Bank.

This lightning conversion from Palestinian nationalism to left Zionism, amounting to a left justification of the status quo in the Middle East, has been under the pressure of a vocal pressure group including the Zionist Poale Zion group, in the constituency where he is prospective candidate, Brent East.

Neither his old or his new position can solve the Middle East's intricate national and social problems. Livingstone and other 'trendy' lefts have never taken a clear class standpoint. How can the Israeli capitalist class or the reactionary Arab regimes that arm and finance the PLO show the way forward?

Livingstone has merely changed capitalist horses in midstream. He should have studied the analysis of Marxism, and worked out a socialist solution to attract Jewish and Arab voters with the programme of workers' unity and a socialist federation of the Middle East.

QUIZZED DURING the meeting about his attitude towards the Labour Party witch-hunt, Livingstone attacked Derek Hatton, saying he "portrayed a thuggish attitude" every time he spoke and "represents the unacceptable face of the Labour Party". "I'll tell it as a joke so nobody can sue me for libel, but I would not be surprised when they open up the files that Derek Hatton was working as an agent for the British secret services to discredit the labour movement".

When asked by *Militant* to confirm that he had made this remark, Livingstone said: "That's right."



Ken Livingstone—from 'Palestinian nationalism' to 'Left Zionism'.

Murdoch and Hammond arranged

'The end of the street'

AW SHUTE, a retired London NGA member, reviews *The End of the Street* by Linda Melvern.

Fleet Street newshounds are getting their evidence together for an inquest on the Wapping dispute.

Linda Melvern, former *Sunday Times* Insight Team journalist has written a book, *The End of the Street*: a history of the printing industry trade unions' struggle of the century. It gives a detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the dispute, with an abundance of thumbnail sketches of the participants, but it lacks any political depth.

The excitement and tension of drama is provided by the chronicled cloak and dagger, undercover atmosphere in which Murdoch recruited his "Foreign Legion" of Australian, American, Canadian, Dutch and British operators, mostly skilled in the ways of new technology. In a climate dominated by secrecy and security, they were held undercover in safe houses to await the dead-line for 'Project X' the code name for a mock-up of electronic gadgetry that would produce photographically the type formerly produced by NGA compositor members.

'Project X' was held together by Joan Herring, project manager of Atex, an American electronics firm, who some years previously had helped to defeat the International Typographical Union of America.

The electronic mock-up was in a run-down warehouse owned by Convoys Ltd. of Woolwich, a subsidiary of News International. What would have particularly interested the print unions about the project was that the mock-up had no provision for the type setting of *London Post*, Murdoch's proposed new London evening newspaper,



Womens' march in support of sacked printers led by Brenda Dean. The leaders have not matched the determination of the rank and file.

and a key factor in the negotiations between Murdoch and the print unions.

And the date was just before the middle of 1985. Over six months before the balloon went up.

Outsmarted

On 9 April, 1985, Tom Rice, National Secretary of the EEPTU visited America to inspect the latest electronic newspaper production equipment and methods.

His travelling companion was Murdoch employee Christopher Pole-Carew, notorious as a union basher when managing director of T. Baily Forman Ltd. a Nottingham newspaper printing and publishing firm. Print union activists invariably produce torrents of colourful obscenities when they remember his role in the

Nottingham *Evening Post* dispute.

In view of such organisation, and the wealth at his disposal it comes as no surprise that Murdoch's set-up out-manoeuvred and out-smarted the union leadership at every turn.

This could be clearly seen with SOGAT's leadership where the open and unashamed class leadership of people like Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, AJ Cook and Arthur Scargill took second place to presentation and Come all Ye Faithful Salvation Army morality.

With the NGA's general secretary, Tony Dubbins there were glimmerings of hope that things may be different. Speaking at the 1984 TUC Conference he said: "It is not possible to have an effective industrial dispute and remain within the law,

because Tory law is designed to outlaw effective industrial disputes." That statement could lead workers to believe that he had accepted the Marxist evaluation of the judiciary as being part and parcel of the capitalist state. Unfortunately he did not.

The entire leadership of the dispute seems irrevocably welded to the policy of class collaboration.

Discouragement

During the first few weeks of the strike I went to Congress House for a meeting of the All London Trades Councils Association (ALTCA). Members were addressed by Chris Robbins, London SOGAT official, who spoke on behalf of the striking trade unionists. A spokesman for the ALTCA

said that as soon as the organisation received a request from the unions in dispute, it would organise support units comparable to those it had set up for the twelve month long miner's strike.

I do not believe that that offer was ever seriously taken up. In fact, early in the dispute other union members were discouraged from giving active support on demonstrations, especially if they were miners.

The End of the Street gives a detailed account of how two printing trade unionists, at considerable risk to themselves, through moles in Fortress Wapping, built up a names list of Wapping employees, together with plant sketches and much other invaluable information. This was eventually handed to top SOGAT of-

ficials who merely thanked the two activists for their help!

The discouraging of grass roots activity finds expression in the "don't rock the boat" policy of the official labour movement. Trade union officials generally do not learn from history.

In this Wapping dispute they are and have been like people defending themselves with feather dusters (leafletting, etc) against mad dogs.

What the situation cries aloud for is the dynamism that 50 years ago and a few hundred yards away won the Battle of Cable Street: 100,000 demonstrating the length of Wapping Highway. If the Thatcher government's attacks on the working class continue, there might be no boat left to rock.

Left and Right

Free, fearless Frank

FRANK CARLUCCI is Reagan's new national security advisor, the fifth since 1980, after Admiral Poindexter took the rap when the Irangate story became public. Carlucci was deputy director of the CIA under President Carter, and a defence department bigwig under Reagan and Weinberger.

This defender of freedom has been accused of complicity in the assassination of the radical President Lumumba of what is now Zaire, the overthrow of Allende in Chile, the downfall of politicians in Brazil and Zanzibar, even in the kidnapping of Aldo Moro in Italy. Other experts now believe he was involved in setting up a secret CIA paramilitary plot against the small Stalinist state of South Yemen. The move ended in disaster for Reagan when the CIA trained teams were captured and executed.

Frank is flexible, he doesn't only work with far right fanatics to save capitalism. As US ambassador to Portugal in 1974 he worked with German SPD leader Helmut Schmidt to push funds to Mario Soares' Socialist Party in Portugal to keep it on a rightward path and stop the Communist Party reaching government.

Posh parasite Peregrine

THE HON Peregrine David Euan Moncreiffe is, according to the *Daily Express* the first beneficiary of the big bang to get a £1 million salary under the age of 40. The second son of the 11th Baronet Moncreiffe of that ilk and the 23rd Countess of Erroll, Lord High Constable of Scotland, he is hardly *nouveau riche*. But his job playing the markets for American brokerage house EF Hutton helps pay the bills.

"He's very spiritual and religious and is always incredibly polite to waitresses at Marks Club" says a friend. He's fluent in Russian and Tibetan. All of which helped him to whizz through many of the world's top finance companies. He always carries a phone with him in case something nasty happens to the dollar.

As an Old Etonian who edited the school mag in Ancient Greek he believes in fagging, where junior public school boys waited hand and foot on the older ones. "With the top rate of tax down to 60 per cent, parents are spoiling their children more. Most 13 or 14 year olds are cockier. It might have done them good."

British Telecom

Well out of order

OFTEL, BRITISH Telecom's toothless watchdog has had 63 per cent more complaints a year than since before privatisation.

Three per cent of public phone boxes weren't working in 1983, now the figure is believed to be 17 per cent. In three years BT have reduced staff by around ten thousand; most kiosks are out of order due to money not being emptied regularly, only a minority are due to vandalism.

More people are complaining about the size of bills (local calls are far more expensive than in any other major country) and the speed with which BT now cut off phones.

BT profits are now £5 million a day but the BT claims that privatisation would make the industry go "from strength to strength" are rubbish for both workers and consumers.

Prepare for weekend of sales action

SOME AREAS have decided to "jump the gun" on the weekend of action (12-14 December) by improving on their normal sales activity last week!

Sellers in Musselburgh organised a day of action in their shopping centre, they not only sold 25 papers but raised £40 for our fighting fund using the famous rattling tins.

Each Saturday our sellers can be found in the Bull Ring in Birmingham. Last weekend, we doubled sales. Is this an anticipation of even better sales next weekend?

In Coventry the potential support for Marxism was put to the test in the weekend canvass for Dave Nellist MP. As well as recording the support, 81 papers were sold on the doorstep.

Developments in France and Spain will be of great in-



terest to school and college students throughout the country. Our coverage is second to none. If you are quick you can get *Militant* to the colleges before they break up for the Xmas recess. Don't miss this opportunity to reach new readers.

By Gerry Lerner

East End health crisis

New hospital, but same old problems

NO DOUBT the new Homerton Hospital in Hackney was on the famous list of Tory NHS "achievements" which Norman Fowler waved in front of TV cameras at their conference.

What he wouldn't have told his faithful audience is that this new hospital now has to deal with all the births in Hackney after the recent closure of the Mothers' Maternity Hospital and the entire maternity wing of St Bartholemew's.

The new ante-natal waiting area is so congested that women at the end of their pregnancies have to stand up for as long as three hours, due to the lack of space and shortage of doctors and midwives.

At each of my visits to this clinic the staff explained how intolerable the situation was for them as well as the preg-

nant women. At the start of my pregnancy, doctors at St Barts urged me to see them for all my appointments if I wished, but by the end, the doctors in Homerton Hospital were forced to ask me to see my GP instead as they can not cope with their workload.

Cuts were obvious in other ways; new equipment often did not work and routine urine tests were suddenly halted even though these can detect the onset of complications.

Raiding parties

During labour, my delivery room was constantly being raided for vital equipment by midwives from neighbouring rooms. I thought there would be nothing left by the time my baby was born. After the birth I waited in a wheelchair for 20 minutes holding my 3

hour old baby while the nurse searched in vain for a porter to transfer me to the ward. She had to transfer me by herself in the end.

On arrival in the post-natal ward I asked how long I would be there: "Three days if we need the bed, five days if we don't."

It is a new hospital but the ward was short of staff, beds and equipment. Two student nurses had to virtually run the ward and do work unsupervised although much of this was against the rules. They could never leave on time after their shift as there was always vital work to be done. There was a shortage of basic equipment for caring for the new babies, for example the same thermometers were used for mother and baby, which is normally avoided.

Despite their enormous problems, I could not fault the care and dedication of

nurses, midwives and doctors. But the effect of these Tory cuts is clear.

In 1939, before the NHS, out of every thousand childbirths, three women would die, 38 babies would be stillborn and 50 more would die before they were a year old. The Health Service made an enormous difference, making childbirth for working class women far safer.

If we don't want to return to the '30s, we must fight every cut today and fight for a massive increase in health spending.

Needless to say, I was asked to leave the hospital after three days, not five. Homerton is the hospital where sextuplets were successfully born a few weeks ago. Under present conditions this is a miracle indeed.

By Judy Beishon



Expectant mother being scanned. Such new technology can save lives. Photo: Carlos Guarita (Reflex)II



Pickets try to save Bethnal Green Hospital in Tower Hamlets in 1982. The fight for the local health service is carrying on.

THE GAP between rich and poor is widening in death and disease. Tower Hamlets in East London has poor housing, high unemployment and low living standards. All these have a direct effect on health.

A recent report by the local Health Authority said that the health of people in Tower Hamlets was more typical of the days before the National Health Service.

Illnesses common in the 1930s have returned—respiratory conditions, TB, (both due mainly to cold, damp, overcrowded living conditions), infant death and dysentery.

While health is bad in Tower Hamlets, the health facilities can't cope with de-

mand. In 1984 the percentage of GPs over the age of 60 was three times the national average; only 15 per cent were under 40. A large proportion of GPs in the area work in small, inadequate rooms and are forced to take on more patients than they can deal with. Records become disorganised and notes are lost.

The main hospital is the 'London', a teaching hospital with many specialist beds, treating people from as far away as Southend. There is one other general hospital—now threatened with losing its casualty department and a number of beds over the next couple of years.

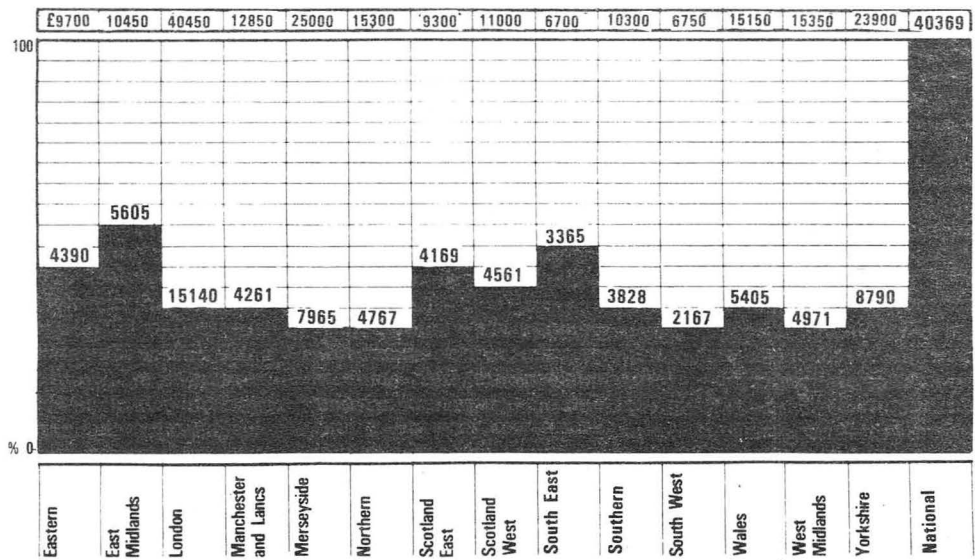
There is a psychiatric hospital and a hospital for the elderly which at present

is short of 40 nurses and refusing new admissions. One hospital, closed in 1979, is to re-open.

The former London Jewish Hospital now belongs to United Health Services, an American multinational company. It will be staffed by consultants and nurses trained at the expense of the NHS and the taxpayer who will now be treating only private patients. Is this the solution to the health problems of the working class of Tower Hamlets?

By Rosey Wrack
(NUPE Nurse, Bow and Poplar LPYS)

Fighting Fund: our best quarter ever



'WELL DONE comrades. We have raised over £119,000 in just three months, with money still flooding in.

This has been our most successful quarter ever, thanks to the tens of thousands of workers, unemployed and students who contributed. Every area has pulled out the stops to rush cash in.

The highlight has been the tremendous response to our appeal for a week's income. Thousands of readers did just that, cutting back, giving up holidays or savings to find a way to send us their weekly wage or giro. The only way a workers' paper can

expand is with this kind of financial backing and sacrifice from its readers and supporters.

This week we received £65 wages plus £15 overtime from Tracey Gearie, a student nurse in Edinburgh. Samantha Anderson a school student saved up £10 from her pocket money. Special thanks to Mike Luff from Bradford who donated £600 back pay on top of £200 already given.

Martin Dean a civil servant from Leeds donated his first wage packet of £101. Andrea Capstick a student and single parent from Skipton sent us £50.

With Christmas just

around the corner, don't miss out on the fund raising opportunities, like socials, a Christmas appeal and selling the raffle tickets. Readers in Swansea have already sold 83 books of tickets, an easy way to make fighting fund.

OTHER DONATIONS include: £15 Simon Poole, unemployed; Local raffle Pentlands Edinburgh £11.22; £53 video night in Wakefield; Daisy Rawling Memorial Meeting raised £600 of which £170 is coming to the Fighting Fund; £7.79 collected at Girobank Bootle; G Gabbitas Grimsby LPYS £5 expenses from job interview; Barry Davidson Hackney £10; H Wobey Hackney £14; J Marquis Liverpool GMBATU (health service) £8.

Our prescription—Militant every week

Militant supporters are fighting the attacks on the health service. It is the madness of capitalism that forces four million out of work while hundreds of old hospitals are left to rot and new hospitals are left short of staff and equipment.

If you work for the NHS or even if you are just concerned for its future, why not let us know what is happening to the health service in your area?

And if you want to fight back why not sell Militant at work, by filling in the form on the back page.

Tapes for Christmas

1. The origins of Bolshevism (1860-1900). Woods
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10. The South African Revolution (rally 6/86) Sejake, Simpson, Nellist
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Enrile and his armed supporters.

ON 22 November an attempted coup was planned by colonels associated with Defence Minister Enrile. The coup, dubbed "Operation God save the Queen", was intended to make President Corazon Aquino a figurehead stripped of executive powers.

The plan involved the "elimination" of left-leaning Cabinet members and prominent leaders of the left, especially *Partido ng Bayan*, whose intention to participate in the coming local elections has caused an uproar among conservative politicians.

The brutal murder of Rolando Olalia, labour leader and PhB chairman, timed for the precise moment when the President was returning from Japan, confirms this.

The coup plan resembles that implemented in Indonesia in 1965, when President Sukarno was stripped of his powers one by one until he was politically impotent.

Believing a coup at this stage to be premature, Chief of Staff Ramos eventually blocked the coup, but not without prolonged back-door negotiations with Enrile.

With little hope of achieving political stability or ef-

fectively implementing the long-delayed economic recovery programme, President Aquino made a desperate bid to strengthen her government by ousting Enrile, and asking for the resignation of all cabinet members as a prelude to revamping the government.

She has attempted to strengthen her hold over the military by appointing a new Defence Minister, General Rafael Ilete, whose background is highly acceptable to the US administration.

Ramos' move in foiling the coup marks a break in his partnership with Enrile, built up during the February revolution. Ramos now seems to be playing the role of arbiter between the President and her opponents on the right.

President Aquino is becoming more dependent on Ramos who, it appears, may become more influential in both political and military decisions.

From A. Paul Guerro in Manila

THE DOWNFALL of the Marcos dictatorship was celebrated by workers throughout the world. As with the fall of the Shah in Iran, a movement of the workers and youth had succeeded in overthrowing a hated tyrant propped up with US arms and cash.

By Martin Riley

Marcos was hated for his murderous despotism, his Byzantine greed and corruption.

The Philippine revolution began with the widening split between the rival capitalist cliques of Marcos and his upstart 'cronies', and Aquino and the older-established millionaires.

The Aquino faction resented Marcos' cronies exploiting his monopoly of political power in order to rob the economy mercilessly. They might have been prepared to tolerate that, if it was not becoming increasingly clear that the greed and incompetence of the regime was leading the whole system to catastrophe.

Concern mounted among the capitalists at the growth of the peasant army in the countryside, and the revival of the class struggle in the towns. In 1969, the originally Maoist CPP's guerrilla army, the NPA, consisted of 60 men with 35 rifles, in one province. Today, estimates of its strength range from 16,000 to 24,000 fully-armed guerrillas, plus 10,000 to 20,000 in its part-time militia. The NPA is active in 62 out of 73 provinces.

The success of the NPA in recruiting fighting youth from the poor and landless peasantry, highlighted the weakness of the existing state, which had become corrupt and parasitic. The army was in a shambles. The state apparatus was rotting and the relentless advance of the NPA posed a growing threat to the very survival of the ruling class.

The 'cronies' were filching foreign aid; they were misappropriating the resources of the state, which should be the instrument of the ruling class as a whole; they were dangerously weakening the armed forces.

The crisis of the ruling class was

focused most sharply of all within the armed forces. Enormous cracks developed among the officer caste. An open opposition (RAM) was formed against the corrupt military establishment.

Eventually, Marcos had no choice but to call elections. It was necessary to contain the growing revolutionary upsurge within relatively safe electoral channels.

But the calling of elections in these circumstances only encouraged the mass movement of opposition. Two million people attended the final opposition pre-election rally. Huge crowds guarded the ballot boxes. Volunteers helped to supervise the count.

The elections had not after all defused the crisis. On the contrary, the prospect loomed of mass revolutionary upheavals which could not be contained within the limits set by the liberal bourgeois leadership. It was at this point that Enrile moved into action, enlisting Ramos' assistance, with the 'mutiny'.

They were loyal henchmen of Marcos. Enrile was himself a completely corrupt 'crony', Marcos' Defence Minister for 15 years, a millionaire who siphoned off American military aid on a massive scale. Ramos was Marcos' third cousin, a conscientious military butcher blooded in the Korea and Vietnam wars; as Chief of Police he had been responsible for the massacres of striking workers.

Enrile intended to exploit the collapse of the Marcos regime to instal himself as the new dictator of the Philippines. When his plans were leaked and fearing arrest, Enrile and Ramos were forced to gamble by resigning and holing up in their respective headquarters. Cardinal Sin, representing the church and the true interests of the capitalists, broadcast the crucial appeals to the masses to form a human barricade to protect the rebel generals.

Marcos made five personal calls to General Olivas, Chief of the Manila riot police, ordering him to disperse the crowds. On each occasion the answer was given: "Yes, sir". Finally, after midnight, General Olivas braced himself to give the dictator some bad news:

"Sir, the crowd is beyond the capability of my men to disperse." At 3 am Marcos received a telephone call from President Reagan's representative Senator Laxalt in Washington, advising him to "cut, and cut cleanly: the time has come." After a pause Marcos replied: "I'm very disappointed."

It was the appeals of the workers, housewives, students, unemployed, etc to the rank-and-file soldiers that brought about the sudden collapse of Marcos' power.

Paradoxically, counter-revolutionary generals with dictatorial ambitions, found themselves sheltered behind huge crowds of their intended victims. With a million workers surrounding their camp, they had no chance of proclaiming themselves dictators. They had no option but to hand over the power to the sole candidate invested with the confidence of the masses—Cory Aquino.

If Marcos' military commanders had obeyed the order to deploy the troops against the crowd, there would have been a mass uprising and sections of the troops would undoubtedly have come over to the side of the people, just as happened in Iran in 1979. But the capitalists managed to intervene in time to prevent a confrontation between the troops and the masses, which would have resulted in the collapse of the old state machine.

The February upheaval marked the decisive beginning of the Philippines revolution. Whether this revolution is carried through to a victorious conclusion depends on the subjective factor—a mass revolutionary party with a conscious Marxist perspective.

But the CPP played absolutely no role in these events. It was completely bypassed: it abstained! It made a fatal blunder during the elections, and called for a boycott.

It was created out of discontent among the PKP pro-Moscow activists. Tragically, the radicalised students who made up its principal cadres were seduced by the false ideas emanating from Maoist China. The programme they put forward, as an alternative to the PKP, actually belittled the role of

PHILIPPINES

The rev



The masses take to the streets in Manila. Photo: Reflex.

the proletariat still further.

The founder of the CPP, Sison, in his critique of the policies of the old PKP, wrote: "The leadership... failed all the time to stress that the main contradiction within Philippine society then was between US imperialism and feudalism, on the one hand, and the Filipino people on the other... The matter of national liberation was obscured by the slogans of class struggle between the capitalist class and the working class".

For all the courage and self-sacrifice invested in it by tens of thousands of heroic fighters, the CPP/NPA became depoliticised, devoid of theory. They were only interested in the tactical 'practicalities' of accumulating arms and starting a guerrilla war.

Role of workers

But although it was the working class of Manila which played the main role in the February events, its organisations did not set up revolutionary institutions (soviets). The CPP did not mobilise the workers on an independent platform, or try to organise the soldiers. The 'February revolution' could already have been followed by an 'October', if there had been in existence a Marxist party. There could have been a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government in power today in the Philippines, and at the cost of hardly a drop of blood.

Mrs Aquino's first Cabinet was an unprincipled bloc of incompatible forces. On the one hand were rats who had at one time or another

deserted Marcos' sinking ship: Ongpin, Enrile, Laurel, etc. On the other stood accidental, ornamental figures, sterile liberals: Sanchez, Arroyo, Pimentel, etc. Balancing and juggling between them was Aquino herself, symbolic and weightless. The generals demanded the dismissal of Arroyo and Sanchez; the workers, the dismissal of Enrile. Mrs Aquino has solved the problem by chopping off from the right and left. But even without Enrile, the workers cannot tolerate for long a so-called 'revolutionary government' that contains Ongpin, Marcos' Finance Minister or Ramos, Marcos' Deputy Chief of Staff.

Mrs Aquino's economic policy is if anything more reactionary than that of Marcos. It is a programme of wholesale denationalisation. The Philippine National Bank and a whole number of companies have been privatised.

In the USA she assured the capitalists: "The Philippines now has a government that sees private enterprise as the engine of the economy." Her Finance Minister Ongpin, sums up his programme of social welfare: "A new period of austerity will be required to mop up all that inflationary credit."

It would be fatal to imagine that the danger of a coup is over. On the contrary, these policies will further disillusion the workers and peasants, while the appetite of the right has been whetted. Once the workers have become sufficiently demoralised for their resistance to be undermined, the counter-revolution will strike. Enrile has been given a free hand to organise a more effective conspiracy.

PHILIPPINES

Revolution continues



Cory Aquino.

Enrile's campaign of 'dirty tricks' was premature. A coup at this stage would have been greeted with a massive general strike and an uprising. In this situation, he could not have relied upon the troops to resist the inevitable appeals of the workers.

But even with a new coup, there is no possible prospect of a stable capitalist regime. No matter how murderous, it will be undermined by the economic catastrophe, the surviving traditions of the revolution, and especially the continuing guerrilla war.

The only alternative to the socialist revolution, led by the proletariat, is a long and hard guerrilla war, ending with the NPA, in accordance with their schema, 'surrounding the enemy-controlled cities' and marching into Manila at the head of a conquering peasant army.

The CPP fights for correct demands, such as land to the peasants, expropriation of 'bureaucratic capital', and expulsion of 'imperialist capital' and military bases. But they have not thought this programme through to a conclusion. The achievement of this programme will inexorably lead to the expropriation of all capitalist property.

As with Mao, Castro etc, the attitude of the NPA is in effect: let's take power first, and decide our programme later! Once the NPA were to conquer the power and enter the cities, they would take over the plantations and the big estates. Then they would nationalise 'bureaucratic capital' and foreign capital...and after that there would be very little left!

It would not be a healthy workers' state, in which the creative energies of the workers and peasants could be harnessed around a programme of socialism and internationalism. However sincere its leaders, such a state would soon degenerate into bureaucratic corruption, since there would be no checks on the leadership, no organs of workers' democracy. From the start it would be a bonapartist regime, resting not on the conscious collective will of the proletariat, but on the structures of military discipline, on the basis of the passive support of the peasantry.

'People's power'

At the moment the capitalists and landlords have no alternative but to tolerate the Aquino Government for the time being, no matter how harshly its rhetoric of 'people's power' may grate on their ears. They have had to resign themselves to the fact that the workers are not yet demoralised. On the contrary since their demonstration of over half a million behind the coffin of the murdered trade union leader Olalia only four days before the attempted coup, their capacity for resistance is all the greater.

The future for the ruling class is fraught with grave problems. The most serious threat is the NPA guerrilla war. Enrile has pointed out that the number of insurgents is "growing at an alarming rate" and called the peace talks "an exercise in futility." That is why at least one faction of the military establishment has done all it could

to sabotage the peace negotiations. The arrest of Salas, and the murder of Olalia, were moves in this game.

The Aquino faction hope that a policy of 'reconciliation' may save them from eventual defeat at the hands of the NPA. But despite the recent conclusion of the cease-fire agreement, it is impossible for this government to solve the land question, expel foreign capital, or create new jobs. It is equally impossible for the NPA to capitulate without wresting these guarantees. Therefore a continuation of the war is inevitable.

The economic situation is catastrophic. The gross domestic product is expected to decline by 1.3 per cent in 1986, unlike the other Asean countries. The economy has shrunk by nearly 12 per cent since 1984!

The flight of capital out of the Philippines since 1983 is estimated at \$15-25 billion, and the inflow of foreign capital, on which industry relies to finance the import of materials and parts, has been cut off for the last two years. Industry has been crippled and is now operating at below 50 per cent of capacity.

The unemployment rate is running at more than 20 per cent, and under-employment approaches 50 per cent of the remaining adult workforce. 70 per cent of the population are living below the official poverty line.

The decline in the international prices for all major primary products after 1979 has sent sugar and coconut prices plummeting, and the terms of trade for Philippine exports fell by one third between 1980 and 1983.

The foreign debt will reach \$27 billion by the end of 1986. The debt service ratio will similarly rise from 35.7 per cent in 1985 to 41.9 per cent in 1986. The Philippines has received more standby credit facilities from the IMF than any other country in the world, except Haiti!

But the downfall of the old regime has emboldened the workers and encouraged them to stand up for themselves. This is reflected in a dramatic increase in strikes, from half a million days lost in 1983, to over 3 million this year.

From the standpoint of capitalism, it is necessary to return as soon as possible to a regime which will terrorise and cow the working class. Even under the Aquino government, striking workers are regularly murdered as they stand on the picket lines.

Capitalism will be unable to stabilise itself. It will stagger from crisis to crisis, coup to coup. If it avoids the fate of falling at the hands of the revolutionary proletariat, it faces a lingering death agony as the peasant guerrilla war drains its lifeblood.

Opportunity

If the working class were to harness once again the invincible power that it deployed in February to overthrow Marcos, then nothing could stand in its way. The opportunity still exists to carry the revolution forward to victory, to the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government.

The trade unions must perfect their own defence organisations

and instil a sense of vigilance among their members. They must organise within the armed forces. They must launch a vigorous campaign, mobilising their members in demonstrations throughout the country, demanding the dismissal from the government of all the capitalists, landlords and generals. They must fight for work or full pay, workers' control of production, a living wage; resist privatisation and demand the nationalisation at least of all "crony" and monopoly companies for a start.

Marxists will welcome any steps taken against landlordism and capitalism by the NPA. But if a mass revolutionary party of the workers is built in time, it will still be possible for the proletariat to carry through, in the eyes of the whole world, a victorious socialist revolution, not along the distorted lines of the Chinese revolution, but on the basis of soviets, workers' democracy, and internationalism, as with the October revolution in Russia.

Videos for Christmas

Lenin, Trotsky and the Russian Revolution (15 mins) £3.
The Great Frame Up—Stalin's Purges (15 mins) £3.
Teamster Rebellion—USA 1934 (35 mins) £3.
Chile on the Brink (20 mins) £5.
Liverpool Fights the Tories (35 mins) £3.

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Japan, Iran, South Africa, Hungary

Japanese railworkers fight privatisation

THE NAKASONE government has decided to divide Japanese National Rail (JNR) into eight private companies and to eliminate 93,000 jobs in the name of "rationalisation".

From a correspondent in Japan

Nakasone's Liberal Democratic Party used their majority to steamroller the bill through Parliament despite the claim by the Socialist Party (which is against division but for privatisation) and Communist Party (which is against both division and privatisation) that they had not finished their questioning yet. So now there is virtually no way to block it.

The biggest issue about this bill is the employment of the JNR workers. The management is going to sack all the workers at the time of the break-up of JNR and re-employ them immediately in the new private companies. But it is apparent that they are not going to re-employ all of them. This makes the workers very anxious and affects the unions.

There are more than 10 unions among the JNR workers. Many of them are break-away unions from Kokuro, the main union (National Rail Workers Union). Only Kokuro kept on objecting to the dismissals and the bill itself.

Kokuro claims that JNR's enormous deficit—the main reason for privatisation given by the management—was not caused by the unprofitability but by overinvestments by past



governments. Therefore this bill is really meant to cut up this valuable property, sell the best parts to big business at an outrageously low price, and abandon unprofitable local lines.

Other unions

On the other hand, other unions supported the bill. Tetsuro (Japan Railway Workers' Union) and Zenshiro (National Union of Railway Maintenance Workers), both belong to Domei, a trade union centre under the influence of the Democratic Socialist Party, a right-wing split-off from the Socialist Party.

Even Doro (JNR Motive Power Union), which used to be under the control of an ultra-left sectarian group, reversed their policy and signed the Joint Declaration of Labour and Management.

Just after that, they quit- ted Sohyo (trade union centre under influence of Socialist Party) and formed

the Council of Unions for the Reform of JNR with all the unions other than Kokuro.

Isolated and with its membership receding, the (old) leadership of Kokuro, who were on the right, proposed reversing their policy at the conference in October. This was turned down. The leadership resigned and a new leadership to oppose the bill was elected.

But the situation has been severe for them. Management refuses to negotiate with Kokuro about guaranteed re-employment in the new companies, or assistance to get new jobs.

It is not the only discrimination against them. Management set up centres for "excess workers" called "Human Resource Utilisation Centres" throughout the country, and they are sending mostly Kokuro members and other activists there as "excess workers".

What they call "utilisation" is just another kind of



Japanese workers will be driven to new struggles by the attacks they face at the hands of the big business government of Prime Minister Nakasone (left).

work—like weeding, cleaning, leafletting for some package tour or discount tickets, etc. Skilled workers must do these things once they become blacklisted. Of course, their wages are reduced as well.

Because of these persecutions and anxiety, about 90 JNR workers committed suicide since last year. More than two-thirds were Kokuro members.

Job losses

Yet things will not get better even if they change their attitude, as members of other unions are also threatened with job losses. Management is going to sack 20,000 "excess workers" by the time of privatisation and 41,000 workers at privatisation anyway, so they encourage "voluntary resignation". In fact, lots of workers are persuaded to some remote areas or other departments—under the

name of "cooperation for the reform".

Moreover, even if workers are lucky enough to get into the new companies, management are to cut another 32,000 jobs to carry out the "rationalisation". Workers will be asked to "cooperate" again, regardless of which union they belong to!

Yet, facing daily oppression and anxiety, Kokuro keeps on losing its members. At the beginning of November, membership was only 106,504, while last year it was 165,000. Kokuro is now exceeded by the Council of Unions for the reform of JNR, consisting of 12 unions with 116,734 members.

After electing the new leadership, Kokuro lost 19,000 members. This was a bitter blow. The supporters of the old leadership have begun to talk to the management on their own by areas, ignoring the union leadership. Now they are virtually split.

Not only the railway

workers are under attack. The government is going to cut the welfare for the old; they are imposing a tax on small amounts of savings, which have so far been free of tax; their new plan for the coal industry aims to close down half the collieries, leading to job losses again.

Passbooks

Every foreigner living in Japan is obliged to carry a Registration Certificate all the time (like passbooks in South Africa!) and is forcibly fingerprinted. Amnesty International has claimed that this could lead to torture and abuse of authority by the police.

Conditions such as there will radicalise the Japanese working class and prepare massive movements in the future. But clear and determined leadership will be needed to defeat big business and their government. This is the main lesson of the struggle in JNR.

South Africa

REPORTS HAVE been received from South Africa of the murder at the weekend of Phineas Sibaya, Florence Mngathi, and another shop-steward of the Metal and Allied Workers Union from the BTR Sarmcol plant at Howick in Natal.

Comrade Sibaya was chairman of the Sarmcol shop stewards' committee and a former member of the MAWU executive. MAWU members at the Sarmcol plant have been on strike since May 1985 demanding union recognition from the British owned BTR group.

The workers were abducted, shot and their bodies burned by members of the youth wing of Inkatha, the organisation headed by Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of the Kwazulu "Homeland".

Buthelezi has received much praise from the Tories and British big business for his defence of foreign investment in South Africa. This latest atrocity shows the true

price paid by South African workers for the profits that companies such as BTR reap from South Africa.

Please demand that your union takes up the campaign to force BTR to recognise MAWU at the Howick plant and reinstate all 950 strikers immediately.

Please send resolutions and letters of support to: MAWU, PO Box 9451, Johannesburg, 2000 SA.

copies to: MAWU, 4 Central Court, 125 Gale St, Durban, 4001, SA.

SAWCO, PO Box 156, Howick, 3290, SA.

SALEP, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB.

Hungary

HUNGARIAN WORKERS are threatened with a wage freeze as government and trade union bureaucrats discuss the crisis in the economy. Thousands are likely to lose their jobs as more enterprises are closed by bankruptcy.

While doctors and lawyers get rich, workers are forced

to take second jobs at night, as taxi drivers or cleaners, just to make ends meet.

For years, Hungary has been the showcase of Stalinist "economic reform", going much further than the limited changes so far proposed by Gorbachev in the USSR. Now events are showing that this road, too, is a dead-end.

Root cause

Workers understand the root cause of the problem: the monopoly of power in the hands of an inept and corrupt bureaucracy, making it impossible to run a modern economy effectively.

The bureaucrats realise it too. As one trade union official put it: "If we didn't use the power we have (to push for concessions), there would be a Solidarity situation in Hungary next week."

But what about the week after next? No partial concessions by the bureaucracy can solve the problems in the longer term, or prevent the coming revolutionary struggles by the working class to establish democracy on the basis of the planned economy.

Khomeini's blood-stained regime

100,000 more Iranian youth are being sent to the war fronts in preparation for a new offensive against Iraq. An Iranian socialist describes the conditions facing those who remain behind.

THE REGIME of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran is one of the most repressive and brutal in the world. Arbitrary arrest and summary executions, psychological and physical torture have become well-established state policies.

The working class is denied the most basic rights of association, collective negotiation and industrial action. The so-called Islamic Labour Code gives employers a free hand to sack workers without compensation, lengthen the working day without overtime pay, cut wages and bonuses, employ child labour, etc.

Women face unprecedented oppression as the medieval laws of the regime forbid them to pursue a normal human life. (See *Militant* 825)

All the rights of national minorities are suppressed. The situation is further worsened by the insistence of the clerical rulers to continue their war with Iraq.

It is becoming clearer that the regime considers its very survival to depend on its ability to turn tens of thousands of Iranian youth into cannon fodder. This has caused enormous destruction of human and material



Ayatollah Khomeini

resources in an already crisis-ridden country.

Popular opposition to the atrocities of the regime is on the rise. Workers, peasants, women, students, national minorities have all shown themselves willing to resist the regime's attacks and to fight for their demands, despite the extreme harshness of the state's response.

The treachery of MI5

THE LAST two Labour governments have been under threat from the security services and other sections of the state apparatus, linked up with Tory MPs and businessmen. This is what is emerging from the government's attempt, in an Australian court room, to prevent publication of a book on MI5, by one of its former officers, Peter Wright.

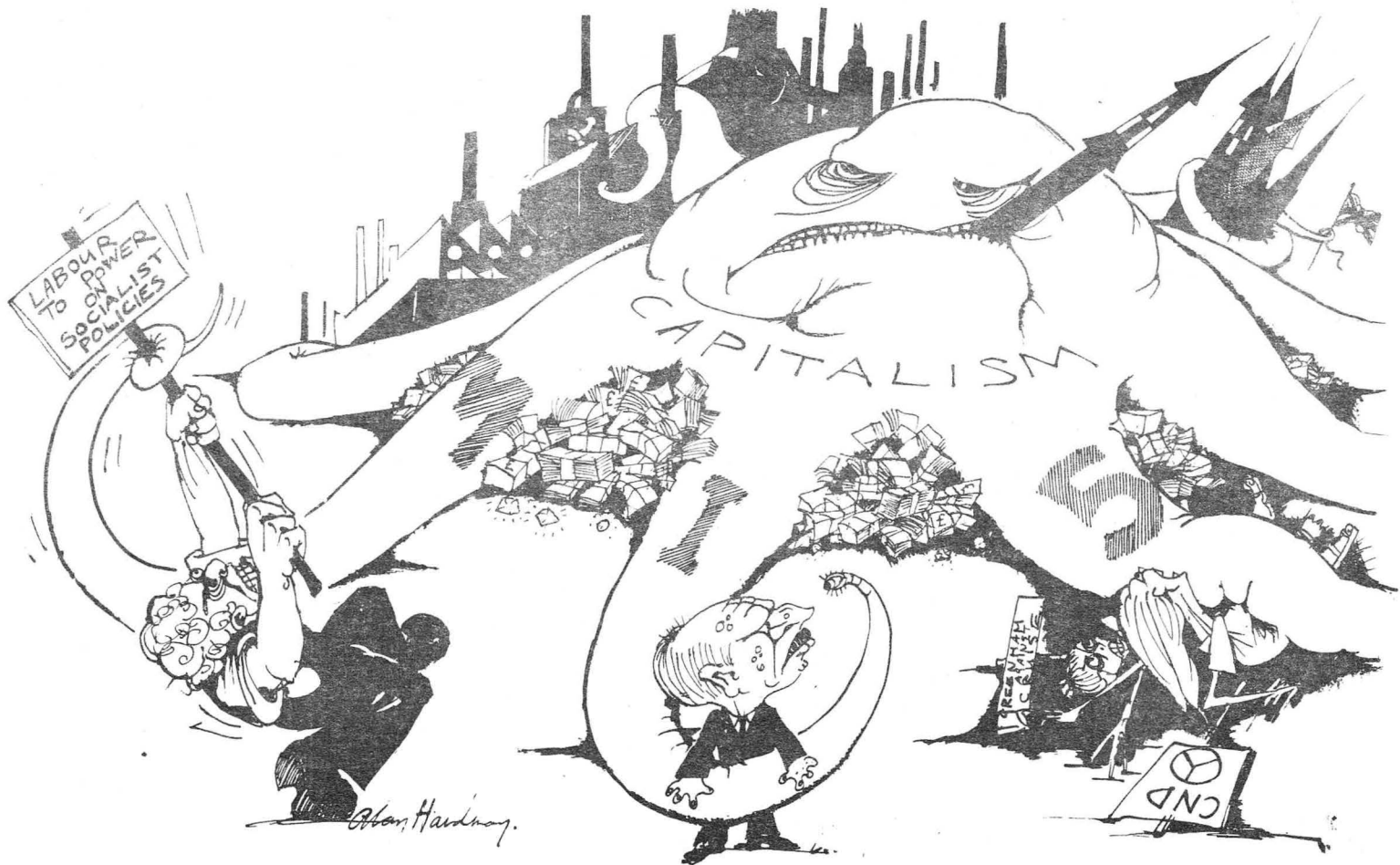
By Jeremy Birch

It has already been well documented that a military coup was being prepared against the Labour government in 1968 by top serving army officers and top businessmen like press tycoon Cecil King, and including Lord Mountbatten.

Now the Cabinet Secretary has admitted in Australia that MI5 plotted against the second Harold Wilson government in 1975. He claims he has no knowledge of anyone being disciplined, for what was treason against a democratically elected government. Imagine how the Tory courts would come down against workers considered to be planning the downfall of a Conservative government.

Tory Ministers are accusing Neil Kinnock of "treachery", for being in contact with Wright's solicitor. But they ignore MI5's treacherous conspiracies against Labour governments. Wright has given evidence that MI5 agents were even organising to prevent Labour winning the 1974 election. This is why Thatcher is so determined to block his book. It is nothing to do with state security or the pledge of secrecy made by security officers. After all they made no attempt to bar a previous book on MI5 by Chapman Pincher, based on Wright's revelations. What the Tories want to keep secret from workers are the dirty deeds of the security services against the labour movement and the threat they pose to workers' rights, which is exposed in more detail than before in Wright's book.

The hypocritical Tory press laud the merits of Britain's democratic institutions, and disgustingly try to paint Marxism and *Militant* as undemocratic. They are ever ready to point to the bugging and arbitrary arrests by the bureaucratic state in Russia. But they hush up the evidence of the real menace to democracy here from the capitalists and their state machine.



Who really runs the country, when the Home Secretary in 1975, Roy Jenkins, to whom the security forces were supposed to be accountable, can tell Parliament as he did last week: "I knew nothing of such an operation involving Lord Wilson. Therefore if it took place it was wholly illegal"?

Utterly reactionary

Peter Wright, who sees Russian agents under his bed, complains that during the seventies, MI5 switched its main attention from KGB spies to the left in Britain. Clive Ponting, the civil servant unfairly charged with leaking information, had to work with MI5 officers, as head of the Ministry of Defence's legal secretariat. He considered senior MI5 staff "utterly reactionary."

Their loyalty, like the tops of the armed forces and police, is not to the government of the day nor to democracy, but to big business and the monopolies. While one arm of

the state intercepts phone calls, another stocks up CS gas, riot shields, rubber bullets and even lead bullets. And it is the labour movement organisations which they have in their sights.

Every Labour worker must be warned of the dangers awaiting future Labour governments from the capitalists and their hiring state. There are no lengths to which they would not go to protect their privileges, their wealth and their domination of society from the majority of the population—the working class. If they plotted against the right wing Wilson governments, what would they be prepared to do, if the Labour government does not act decisively to avert the threat, against a Labour administration that really attempted to take steps against capitalism? And if Wilson was a target, how many left wing Labour activists and shop stewards were under surveillance? According to the *New Statesman*, *Militant* is on MI5's subversive list.

All the democratic rights in

capitalist society—to strike, to free speech and press, to form political parties and to vote them into office—were won over a century or more by the sacrifice and struggles of the labour movement, in the teeth of the bitter opposition of the ruling class. Workers today can rely only upon the strength and solidarity of their organisations to maintain these rights which are still under attack from capitalism. At GCHQ the right to join a union has been attacked, under the Tories' anti-union legislation so has the right to strike and the security services are a direct threat to the freedom to elect a Labour government.

Disband MI5

But the Labour Party leaders have completely failed to bring home to workers the real threats to the labour movement, emerging in the MI5 court case. Only belatedly have they taken up the plots against previous Labour governments, and

then disgracefully only after Jenkins from the SDP raised it, to justify his own actions at the time. Even now Labour Party members should demand the leaders mount a full campaign exposing the operations of MI5, its links with the bosses and the Tories and demanding that those who conspired against Labour governments must be charged with treason.

They must be made to give a commitment that a new Labour government will take serious steps to protect itself, disbanding MI5, the Special Branch and other organs of repression. Workers in the labour movement must understand they can only depend on their own organisations, their own strength and convictions to protect their rights.

But the only guarantee of democratic rights is for Labour to introduce decisive measures to take over the economy, and to place industry and the state under the democratic control of the workers' organisations.

Labour - stand firm on non nuclear defence

JUST BEFORE the launch of the Labour Party's campaign to promote its non-nuclear defence programme, the "left wing" weekly, the *New Statesman* joined the Tory press in demanding that the party "must change its defence policy."

By Pat Craven

Marxists have always argued that disarmament in itself can never bring about peace. The threat of war arises from the class interests of both the Western capitalists and the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union, who seek to protect their power and wealth and have amassed huge nuclear arsenals. Peace can only be achieved through the socialist transformation of society internationally,

which will destroy the root causes of war.

Nevertheless, nuclear disarmament is widely seen by workers and young people as a step forward and a means of saving millions which could be used to finance reforms. It has been consistently supported by the party's Marxists.

To the party's ranks, unilateral nuclear disarmament has been the one conference policy commitment on which Neil Kinnock has appeared to be standing firm. He has faced the most vitriolic attacks from the Tories and the press—*Sunday Telegraph* editor Peregrine Worsthorne has claimed "that Mr Kinnock's defence policy, if ever implemented, could well constitute the first small step towards thermonuclear Armageddon."

The *New Statesman*, under what Peregrine Worsthorne, in the same ar-

ticle, described as "its courageous new editor", John Lloyd, has caved in to the Tory propaganda. Stripped of their radical veneer, its arguments are no better than Worsthorne's—"The two great alliances of NATO and the Warsaw Pact," it says, "have to act coherently and with internal unity; and neither side can afford to send a signal, even from a part of itself, that fear or idealism can give the other a costless advantage."

Bilateral

It tortuously argues that by keeping its share of nuclear warheads, a Labour government will be better able to "scale down the arsenals" by a process of bilateral negotiation. But for forty years such negotiations have been tried and have failed to lead to any significant arms reduction.

The editorial hopes that

by piously proclaiming its commitment to world peace, a Labour government will be able to make more progress in disarmament talks. The Tories also claim that 'multilateral' disarmament is the road to peace, yet the nuclear stockpiles remain. The *New Statesman* proposes nothing different from the present government.

To try to sugar the pill for the Labour ranks, it compounds one bad argument with a worse one. Labour, it says, is falling behind in the opinion polls, "the electorate continue to insist that the nation's defence is the first duty of the government. Radicalism in this area therefore, is likely to be a particularly risky political choice."

Rather than face up to the Tory arguments and the "public opinion" which has been manufactured by a relentless campaign in the media, the *New Statesman*

wants Labour to capitulate, in the forlorn hope that by adopting Tory policies, they can defeat Thatcher at the polls. On the contrary, such tactics invariably damage Labour's chances.

Hattersley

There are signs that the *New Statesman* speaks for more than itself. According to *The Observer*, deputy leader Roy Hattersley, privately "has been heard to say that the only hope of getting the policy on to a sensible basis is at the last minute"—abandoning unilateralism just before the election. The same article alleges that Denis Healey "simply believes that it is inconceivable that a Labour government would be in any position to carry out anything as extreme as its present policy."

Neil Kinnock has not yet gone down this road. But his

statements echo much of the Tories' nationalistic, pro-NATO rhetoric.

Party conference has overwhelmingly voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament. They will not tolerate any retreat, but nor do they want as an alternative a jingoistic, pro-capitalist foreign policy which means as much money poured into vast conventional forces.

In its relations with the rest of the world, the labour movement can support neither the capitalist powers nor the Stalinist bureaucracies, but has to stand for the unity of the workers of all countries who have no interest in war, conventional nor nuclear, but in co-operation in a socialist federation of states. Nuclear disarmament will not in itself solve the underlying causes of war. It has to be part of a socialist internationalist policy. But the movement must fight to prevent any retreat.

Posties disappear for duration

Dear Comrades,

I said cheerio to one of my regular paper buyers this week. He's no dead mind you, just a 'postie' at Christmas. For two weeks he's on a 12-hour day, 9am till 9pm, with a day and a half off. And finally he's expected to 'volunteer' to work the weekend before Christmas without a break.

What's it like? Chaos. With the casuals taken on and the part-timers new to the job, the responsibility for a good job done falls even more on the shoulders of the experienced workers. But mistakes are made; pressure builds up; there are arguments; everybody falls out—hardly the Christmas spirit! And the squabbling is carried on home after the 12-hour shifts.

My mate works on right up to Christmas, getting home to help his wife prepare for Santa and Rudolph. They've no sooner gone to bed, than the kids are up opening the pressies. Then my pal finally hits the hay, waking up for his Christmas dinner, then conking out for the duration.

So spare a thought for your fellow readers who are working extra hard for your Christmas and a guid new year tae ane an' a'!

Yours fraternally
Tam Burke
Edinburgh



Postmen bear the burden of the millions of extra letters and parcels posted over Christmas. Photo: Chris Davies (Report)ll

Promoting 'old wives' tales'

Dear comrades,

One morning last week, when watching breakfast television I was astonished to hear 'problem page' Claire Rayner putting it about that cervical cancer was caused by sleeping around—even if you or your husband did it only once before marriage. To make it worse the following day the writer of a letter protesting at this was told, "very sorry but this is an absolute fact".

I've always regarded cervical cancer as an unrecognised industrial disease and the reason why in men's toilets in engineering factories notices are put up about washing

hands before going to the toilet. Oil and other chemicals can get into the skin and cause cancers in both men and women.

We don't need moralising by middle-class do-gooders mis-leading people and causing untold distress to those with cervical cancer. We can do without the old-wives tales being used to justify the lack of investigations into links between industry and cervical cancer, and the lack of a comprehensive screening system.

Yours fraternally
Jane Hartley
Sheffield

Marxist influence In Memory

Dear Comrades,

As a *Militant* supporter, I have been attacked by the right wing and elements of ignorance in my ward for my Marxist views. Recently we had a debate on privatisation in the health service. I commented on the attacks by the Tories in the last seven years and also mentioned why the leadership of the health service unions had not fought against privatisation on a national level.

The ward was in agreement. One member said how good it was to hear that I had gone from a Marxist to a socialist. I replied that Karl Marx played a leading role in the thinking of socialists and stressed in his works that it was socially necessary to have a free health/education service not based on profit.

Yours fraternally
Mike John
Newport

Dear Comrades,

May I say, through our workers paper, that I am very pleased to read comrade Nick Hewitt's letter in *Militant* issue 825 about "Poppies and Remembrance Day".

Since 1977 I have always worn a red poppy on Remembrance day. It is to the memory of two fellow soldiers and a young 17 year old Irish lad who were killed during my battalion's four month tour of Belfast from June to November of that year.

Yours fraternally
Bob Harker
Gateshead East Labour Party.

The right to die

Dear Comrades,

Recent revelations show that Lord Dawson, doctor to King George V, may have ended the king's life with a lethal injection of morphia and cocaine.

George V lived and died in an age when capital punishment was legal in Britain but abortion wasn't, contraception was frowned upon by the capitalist press and euthanasia and suicide were totally beyond the pale as far as the pillars of bourgeois

society were concerned.

No working class person dying in agony from cancer would have had the slightest hope of receiving euthanasia.

It is my belief that all Marxists should champion the right of the terminally ill to a painless and dignified death. I would be interested to hear what other readers think.

Yours fraternally
Andrew Sinclair
Preston

Starvation

Dear comrades,

While watching TV at a comrade's house yesterday her three year old son changed channels to "4 What It's Worth" on channel four. It was about the diets of pregnant women. All the women complained that they couldn't afford to buy meat regularly.

After one clip of film with a woman saying her staple diet was "Egg chips and beans", the presenter then said not to worry as all the nutrients needed for the developing unborn child are provided from the mother or her reserves. The mothers' diet doesn't affect the unborn child "As babies born in Belsen bear witness!"

What an analogy to make in 1986—If people could starve during the war you must be alright under the Tories now!

Yours fraternally
Phil Cooper
Broadgreen Labour Party

Footing the bill

Dear Comrades,

A recent magistrates' court case in Liverpool really highlighted to me the plight of the unemployed. An unemployed 57 year old man was charged with stealing £1.50 worth of cheese from Kwiksave.

He pleaded guilty and said he was sorry for causing inconvenience. The judge, having heard that there were no previous charges, fined him £20 with £10 costs. He was told he could pay it off

at a rate of £2 a week.

The man's friend asked why fines and costs had increased so much recently and why had the social security not increased at the same rate. The judge replied that that was no business of the court! It is a sick society we live in where unemployed people are forced to steal and are then given extortionate fines.

Yours fraternally
Tom Brown
Mossley Hill LPYS

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Militant,
3-13 Hepscott Road,
London E9 5HB

Britain swamped by debt

Dear Comrades,

When in 1980 all restrictions on bank lending were lifted, the country was swamped with easily available loans, credit card facilities and mortgages on low security.

The *Financial Times* (16 October) showed that "in the year to March 1986, 103,000 households in England and Wales had their electricity cut off for failure to pay bills, a rise of 13 per cent on the previous year.

"Gas disconnections rose by 12 per cent

and there have been cases of water being cut off, previously virtually unheard of.

"The number of houses taken into possession by building societies has increased from 2,500 in 1979 to 16,800 in 1985 and further since then. It is expected that as many as one in 20 householders are two months or more behind in mortgage repayments."

Yours fraternally
Peggy Elliot
Nottingham

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 first post on Friday, the week before publication.

○ Peckham LPYS Christmas disco. 22 December. Peckham Labour Club, 84 Camberwell Church St. 7.30pm to late. £1 waged, 50p unwaged.

○ Steven and Jackie announce the birth of Juliette Yvonne Mulholland, born 23 November 1986.

○ Bumper *Militant* Children's Party. Saturday 3 January 2-6pm John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Rd. Games, shows, food, food, balloons and special feature: **Fancy Dress Parade**. All ages welcome but let us know if you are coming. Write to or phone Clare at the *Militant* offices. Anyone interested in helping with games, food or entertainment—Let us know very soon.

○ Leicester *Militant* Tiny Trots Party. Saturday 13 December, 2pm to 5. The Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Mantle Rd, Leicester. Entertainment, clown etc. Children of all ages welcome.

○ CPSA Broad Left post-election/Christmas disco. Fri 19 December, 8pm. Florence Nightingale Club, Westminster Bridge Rd SE1. £1.50 waged, £1 unwaged. Everyone invited.

○ *Militant* hats £2, and scarves £3. Letters across width or larger down length. Colours yellow lettering on red, or any two or three different colours. All profits to FF. From Mick Fallon, 64 Woodbrook Ave, Mixenden, Halifax, HX2 8PZ.

□ Tyneside *Militant* Readers Meeting. "Rosa Luxemburg" Thursday 18 December. 7.30pm. Speaker Jen Pickard. Venue, committee Room, Newcastle Polytechnic.

□ Joint NSSP/*Militant* meeting. "Social and economic development of Sri Lanka". Thursday 18 December 6.30pm. Speakers Vasudeva Nanayakkara (organising secretary Nava Sama Samaja Party) Sirutunge Jayasuriya (NSSP politburo) K Sivapalan (Trincomalee Citizens Committee) Friends House Room 7 and 8, Euston Rd, London NW1.

Convinced

Dear Comrades,

I have recently finished reading issue 823 of *Militant* and today bought issue 824. I have never read *Militant* before and think it is an excellent paper. I have been unemployed for nearly a year and have done a good deal of thinking. I am convinced that there must be a fundamental change in society. The Tories must be defeated and capitalism replaced by socialism.

Yours fraternally
Tim Bartlett
Exeter

Perfect

Dear Comrades

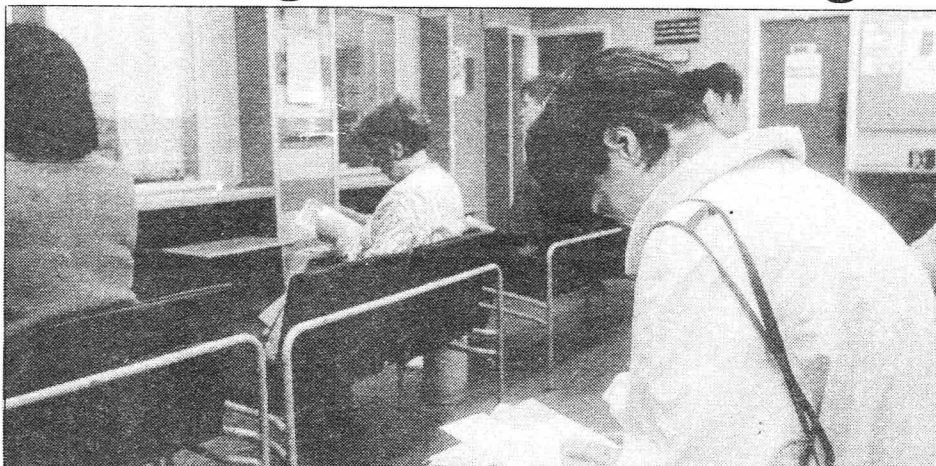
To all the comrades who worked to put on the rally.

Thanks very much, it really was a magnificent day. Last year the sound was awful for us—this year everything was perfect.

The entertainment was fantastic, and just right when you've been listening to (good) political speeches.

We all really enjoyed it! Thanks again
Tim Hales
Bingley

Liberal ignores dole changes



Delays are common enough at the DHSS without the attempts by the Tories to make benefits harder to claim. Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dear Comrades,

When the new questionnaire for people on the dole was introduced, a Radio 4 presenter was reading out letters from listeners. One, from a woman in Devon, said they'd been running a pilot scheme on the new regulations, and a few weeks previously her husband had been interviewed.

Shortly afterwards he had a letter telling him he'd been struck off the unemployed register for not answering some of the questions, re: travelling for work and how much

he was willing to accept in wages.

She had written to her MP David Penhaligon, Liberal spokesman on finance, complaining at the way her husband had been treated. His reply was that her husband had got a bit paranoid over the questions. So much for all the rubbish talked by the Liberal/SDP about being a caring party!

Yours fraternally
Stan Natrass
Littlehampton



The North West has been especially hard hit by bus deregulation. A further feature, including Liverpool (picture above) and Manchester follows next week.

Manchester bus chaos

March against Thatcherism

THERE IS no polite way of expressing the 'greeting' which Thatcher will receive when she visits Manchester on 11 December.

Even the City's Chamber of Commerce will not be too happy. Government directed bus privatisation has resulted in an 8 per cent cut in sales at the big central department stores—people now have less shopping time!

If seven years of Tory rule and capitalist decline have been a nightmare for Manchester then D (for deregulation) day was the apocalypse. All that's rotten in the profit system was spewed onto the streets. Total chaos reigned.

Hundreds surged round the city centre desperate to get out of the mess. Others stood all morning for buses that never arrived. Still more waited for buses that fled past.

Private bits of junk skulked round the streets picking up dazed and confused bus travellers. And the *Evening News* reported a few hiccups in an otherwise uneventful day. Thatcher's throat was slit a thousand times!

This time Thatcher miscalculated, the anger has not gone away. The chaos remains: bus routes with no stops; bus stops with no routes. 72 per

cent of Manchester's households have no use of a car. Reports from the dole and the Low Pay Unit show that over half Manchester's adults live below the poverty line. Unemployment is the lot for one in three in the inner city.

Little wonder only one ward in 32 voted Tory last time around. Manchester has become a no-go area for Thatcher! But to make sure it doesn't become a no-go area for Manchester's workers—even nurses can't get to work on time now—the labour movement is stirring.

The City council has called the demonstration to 'Bring back our buses' for 12am on 14 December. This is a brilliant opportunity to unite all workers in protest. Labour will defend all its social gains. If the call was made the bus drivers would lead the way.

As one driver reported in Wythenshawe: "The mood here is revolutionary. They are just waiting for the call." All workers facing privatisation, cuts, redundancies and benefit cuts would be united to launch the drive to kick the Tories out and bring Labour to power on socialist programme.

By Phil Frampton

- ★ Restore all services and subsidies
- ★ Labour must repeal the 1985 Transport Act
- ★ Municipalise local bus services under democratic ownership and control
- ★ For an integrated national transport system under workers' control and management

Woman canteen worker at Hyde Rd, Bus depot: "Three times last week I was late for work. My bus never showed up. I refused to clock on. Why should I suffer if they can't get me to work on time."

It's not just the Tories, it's the Labour councils who've helped introduce this mess. They were told what would happen by the drivers".

John O'Mara, TGWU Queens Rd depot.

"They gave us three days to learn 22 new routes which they couldn't explain themselves properly. As a result you have drivers doing 300mph and asking passengers the way. At Stockport the drivers walked out after two of them were disciplined for not keeping to their timetables. We now have to do up to 5½ hours before we get a break. Before it was 4½ hours. We've lost our Saturday and Sunday rates and overtime rates have been cut to an extra 5p an hour.

The union leadership is very discredited. The drivers feel they've been led up the garden path. The lead this time will have to come from below.

Driving Wythenshawe wild

CHAOS TOOK over bus services in Greater Manchester on 26 October when the Tories decision to make all bus services profit making concerns or bust came into effect.

After a long and bitter fight Northenden bus depot was closed. It served the biggest housing estate in Europe—Wythenshawe—a city itself. 90 per cent of the drivers who worked from the depot live in Wythenshawe, which already has high unemployment.

Arguments put forward for the closure were large overheads and travelling time for the drivers taking their meal breaks, and taking the buses off Princess Parkway.

The argument on travelling time was disproved by the TGWU and the union was able to show that management's figures were thousands of pounds adrift.

On costs and overheads, Northenden depot is fully illuminated day and night although it is closed and wages have to be found for the caretakers who are looking after the depot.

1,900 staff were made redundant at a cost of £19m to the ratepayers of Manchester. £19m for a poorer service. Already ten district councils are campaigning for the buses to be deregulated.

In Wythenshawe the bus service is a disaster. Buses are going in wrong directions and drivers are asking passengers for directions and the fares.

On Sunday in Piccadilly it was impossible for the drivers to park their buses. Inspectors could not answer most queries and on the routes in Wythenshawe buses were conspicuous by their absence.

It is now impossible to get a bus from Portway to Southern Cemetery, Withington hospital, Moss Side, etc. An Old Age Pensioner is paying an increase of 100 per cent in bus fares as they have to get two buses instead of one.

After years of trying we now have a bus service going down Cornishway. Great news! But

they forgot to put stops in Cornishway so the buses just fly past.

This government said that all pensioners passes, disabled passes, etc. would be honoured by the private bus companies and there would be no increase in fares.

In practice some fares have already gone up and on 25 January any non-profit making service could be taken off the road. And there will be a review of all concessionary fares. So much for Thatcher's promises.

Maintenance and safety is going to suffer. All Greater Manchester Transport Executive buses before 26 October were given a thorough overhaul every twelve months and had a complete overhaul every three years. This is no longer compulsory.

Night after night over the tannoy system in Piccadilly bus station comes the announcement: "The 9.57 100 and the 10.02 106 will not be running because of staff shortage." As they both serve Woodhouse Park, passengers can now wait two hours for a bus from Piccadilly to these points.

A few drivers from Northenden who were too young to take redundancy were transferred to Princess Road depot. Although it is five miles away Princess Road serves Wythenshawe.

Instead of using the Northenden drivers who are now working at Princess Road depot the authorities sent these drivers to Dayhulme, Partington, etc., absolutely new routes. As a result they were lost—and the Princess Road drivers serving Wythenshawe were also lost.

All these drivers are expected to work weekends at normal rates of pay. This means a wage cut. Needless to say most drivers are refusing to work at weekends so there is a shortage of buses on Saturdays and Sundays.

By Walter Hudson
(TGWU 6/57, 24 years on the buses)

Industrial Reports

Lewisham council strike continues

LEWISHAM Nalgo members are in the fourth week of their strike against this Labour council which uses Tory anti-union laws.

The third mass meeting of the dispute showed that strikers were more resolute than ever. 1,200 workers voted last Friday by a five-to-one margin to carry on the strike. Despite the council's threats and the imposition of a ballot by Nalgo's national leadership, the majority for action has grown regularly.

Pickets are stopping essential supplies coming into the borough depots. This dispute is causing real bitterness among Nalgo members.

The original strike over safety screens at a housing advice centre is still unresolved while the council's use of Tory legislation against strikers has angered trade unionists. An 'amnesty' on 2 December saw only 150 return to work.

Miners in Yorkshire and Northumberland who were given facilities by the council and the unions during their strike are writing to council leaders reminding them of their condemnation of MacGregor's tactics two years ago. There have been pithead collections for the strikers. One whip round from 20 miners raised £92 for the hardship fund.

Many other local unions, other

Nalgo branches and trades councils etc have given support. Hangers strikers and printers will be coming on a protest march on 11 December.

The councillors are under attack from local Labour parties. East Lewisham have passed a vote of no confidence in the Labour Group leadership. The councillors are hoping that Christmas and the ballot will weaken our resolve. We will prove them wrong.

Messages of support and donations to Lewisham Nalgo hardship fund, Shop 5, Eros House, Brownhill road, London SE6 2EG.

By Gordon Hull
(Lewisham Nalgo)

Reject teachers' deal and return to action

BY 15 December the National Union of Teachers' ballot on the Nottingham deal will be completed. At the Special Salaries conference at the end of November the vote to recommend the deal was narrowly carried with delegates representing 42.5 per cent of the membership voting against.

Despite the stage management of the conference and the executive's attempts to railroad agreement to the deal through, there was a substantial and vociferous opposition. This included individuals who have previously been devotees of the Broad Alliance leadership of the union.

Many delegates were obviously reading the agreement for the first time and were clearly shocked by some of the content. A substantial number were persuaded by the debate to vote against.

The executive must have found

both the mood of conference and the closeness of the vote extremely worrying. They have no alternative strategy and as one delegate pointed out, they, rather than the membership, have lost the will to fight on.

As a result the union leadership is campaigning vigorously for a 'yes' vote. Through adverts in the national press and via materials sent into schools they are claiming that every 'no' vote plays into Baker's hands.

In the closing stages of the ballot it is vital to stress that the deal with the employers must be voted out and that a return to action would prevent the imposition of any settlement by Baker.

By Bob Sulatycki
(conference delegate, West London NUT)

Black Country lock-out shows up Thatcherism

WORKERS AT a small engineering factory in Smethwick, Joseph Fray Ltd, have been locked out by management for three weeks.

When a work to rule began following a ballot as part of the campaign for decent wages and conditions management replied by suspending two TGWU members who refused to work overtime.

The rest of the workforce downed tools. The next day on 19 November workers who did not agree to management's terms were locked out. Out of a workforce of 160 only 20 went in, mostly staff.

This dispute is the result of built up anger against management's attitude to pay and conditions. The average wage is between £80-£85 a week before any deductions which is below national minimum for the job (they make luxury metal fittings for luxury cars such as Jaguar).

Conditions in the workplace are just as bad. There has been a constant battle to get adequate toilet facilities such as towels, toilet paper and even toilet seats. At one time when the works canteen was closed down one of the managers took the micro-wave oven for himself.

In 1982 the workforce missed out on a pay rise due to management pleading poverty. The next year workers only received 2 per cent. In real terms they have had a pay cut over several years. This year the union were determined to get a decent rise. So in June they put in a claim for 15 per cent for the annual rise in September.

Management flatly refused and offered an initial 3.2 per cent, which works out to an extra 6p per hour. The workers totally rejected—stating it was "an insult".

Management made another offer of 6p for 2 months then 8p for 10 months. This was met with the same response as the first offer. After several variations of the same offer management came up with the most ludicrous one of 10p from 1st December over

14 months forfeiting back pay from 1st September.

This was the last straw and the union called for industrial action to be taken as part of the fight for decent wages. A ballot was taken resulting in 90 in favour and 21 against. The local T&G official advised them not to strike but to work to rule and see what else management were prepared to offer. The workers took this advice which resulted in a lock-out.

Provoked

Months before the dispute stock building was taking place, which means only one thing, management were preparing for conflict and deliberately provoked the dispute when it suited them.

With Christmas not far away they hoped to break the will of the workers. Already management have sent out letters threatening the sack and redundancies. But all this false propaganda has fallen on deaf ears. A well attended picket is outside the factory daily with meetings being held 3 times a week to keep all workers informed of any developments.

Morale is very high because they know the firm has very important orders to get out before Christmas. One of them is to Jaguar, which has an order worth nearly £3 million. The strikers are organising a visit to the Jaguar factories to appeal for support from the workers there.

This is the first ever strike at the factory. Many of the strikers have worked there for over 20 years. They have learnt the hard way what Thatcher's Britain is like.

All the strikers talked to look forward to Labour being elected to end low pay. *Militant's* demands of £120 minimum wage and 35 hour week won overwhelming support. One striker summed up the mood "When Labour get elected and Tories kicked out it will be like VE day."

Messages of support and donations send to:
Sandra Sadler, 46 Oldacre Rd, Oldbury, West Midlands. B68 0RF.



Demonstration outside Liverpool University Senate House on 26 November against the university management's refusal to allow cleaner and union activist Jeannette Herry back to work after taking maternity leave. Cheryl Varley of the Merseyside Area Students Union and expelled Liverpool Labour Party member is speaking.



Picket at Trader Web Offset in Derby (report right)

Derby's would-be Murdoch

PRINTWORKERS are in dispute with Trader Web Offset Limited in Derby after 85 members of the NGA and Sogat were sacked this week.

Instant dismissal notices, 'Sackograms', as the workers called them, were distributed to the homes of the workers last thing Monday. Some workers, having got wind of management's intentions, occupied the factory and were locked in by the bosses.

Ron Sencuak, Father of Chapel, said: "Lionel Pickering (company chairman) wants to kick out the unions and create a docile non-union workforce so he can boost profits. He wants to do a Wapping. He has said he admired Murdoch and what he has done in Fleet Street."

He said the workers have occupied because: "We have to defend our jobs and stop scabs coming into the factory. We have received a lot of messages of support from local trade unions and individual trade unionists. But if we are going to win this strike and we will need to mobilise the trade unions movement in Derby to give us support."

Knowing that the High Court was going to grant an injunction to stop the occupation the workers left the factory peacefully. But they remain defiant: "It has been a successful occupation and has raised the confidence and morale of the workers to extend the strike and fight to win."

CPSA Broad Left Post-election Xmas social. Friday 19 December at Florence Nightingale pub, Westminster Bridge Rd SE1. £1.50 waged, £1 unwaged. Everyone welcome.

Lithorex sacks Swindon printers

A DISPUTE at Lithorex UK Ltd in Swindon has resulted in management sacking all 14 Sogat 82 members.

The dispute started on Friday 28 November when Sogat members walked out after management declared seven of the chapel redundant.

Roger Hearn, a Sogat member, spoke to Derick Johnstone, Deputy Father of Chapel, for *Militant*.

Management had approached the union officials over plans to replace some of the machinery which would involve job losses.

Trying to mislead the union about the time scales involved in buying the machinery they suddenly announced that seven Sogat members would have to go and they would select them. After long discussions the

union offered flexibility over holidays and overtime amounting to savings of £35,000. They even offered to clean the windows to save the company money.

Sacked

But management went ahead with the plans and on 24 November handed out redundancy notices. On the 25th a ballot was held which went in favour of a strike and on the 28th the workers walked out. A 24-hour picket has been staged ever since.

Dave Garbet, Father of Chapel, said that there are NGA members working inside with management who are doing Sogat jobs.

One NGA member, however, Roger Holdman, refused to work with

management scabs. They said they would sack him. He said he would save them the bother and handed in his notice.

The Sogat 82 Chapel in Lithorex is probably the most active chapel in the West. All members have been to Wapping and some have been going every Saturday since the dispute started. During the miners strike they raised £1,500 between 14 of them.

Derick Johnstone pointed to the real reason behind management's actions: "This firm has made good profits but they are not satisfied and want to smash the union in order to make more profit out of us."

Messages of support and donations: Harry Cox, 4 Middleton Close, Walcot, Swindon.

Industrial Reports

Fight now to defeat Rosyth privatisation

LAST WEEK Minister for Defence, George Younger, announced the management contract for Rosyth Naval dock yard would be handed over to the Babcocks Power Thorn EMI consortium.

This is a Christmas bonanza for the likes of Babcocks, a contract worth £400 million annually as a turnover, not a bad return on the £10,000 they gave to the Tory Party last year. Younger promised that he wouldn't announce the decision until the dockyard unions had been adequately consulted and everyone expected a decision next January.

Local Labour MPs Gordon Brown and Dick Douglas along with the national trade union officials and some local ones were taken in by Younger's glibness. He proved yet again that you can never trust the Tories. The tactics of Jack Dromey, TGWU national officer, and the MPs, of fighting the anti-privatisation battle through parliament, enlisting sympathetic Tory support and fighting in the courts, with only token action in the yard itself, has proved a dismal failure. It must be clear to

By Bruce Wallace

everyone now that the only way to stop privatisation is through the action of the workers themselves.

The collapse of the current strategy has thrown many local trade unionists into a state of confusion and panic. After Younger made his announcement many local leaders openly opposed any strike action in protest. This was under instructions from Jack Dromey himself. Just as the first real blows were being struck by Younger, calls for strike action were met by limp arguments that it was the wrong time to move, that the men had to keep their powder dry and so on.

Shop stewards

The mass shop stewards' meeting would have none of this and a large majority voted for immediate strike action. Some leaders openly

urged their members not to strike, even after the decision of the shop stewards was for action. Despite the confusion caused by this equivocation, within the hour 2,000 men downed tools and brought the yard to a standstill. This was a tremendous response considering the national leadership had been calling willy-nilly action for over two years without any coherent strategy behind it and palpably failing to halt the privatisation process.

Younger timed his announcement to create maximum confusion amongst the unions. He succeeded in confusing some leaders but not the men who have most to lose if Babcocks Thorn EMI take over the Rosyth contract. There will be 800 redundancies next year, all apprentices are to have their contracts given over to Babcocks. It is estimated that 150 electricians alone will be 'surplus to requirements' next year. This would include the 40 electrical apprentices who finish training next year. All other trainees face the same threat.

The non-industrial staff will be wiped out. 700 more

management members of IPCS will go and 400 clerical workers, mainly CPSA members, will be hard hit.

Still time

It is not too late however, to win this fight. Lower management, clerical and industrial workers are all under threat now. The basis for a united fight is now there, the fight is not yet lost. The Rosyth dockyard Broad Left has the only worked-out strategy which offers a chance of victory. We demand:

1. No flexibility. Refuse to work with contractors.

2. Guerrilla action. An immediate overtime ban and work to rule.

3. Lightning one-hour protest strikes if the contractors attempt to discipline the workforce.

4. Immediate strike action against victimised workers.

The Ministry of Defence realise the potential threat of a united fight. This is why they have sent the nuclear submarine 'Conqueror' to Devonport for a refit, in order to starve Rosyth of

work and remove a bargaining weapon. This will rebound on them. The Devonport workers have been asked to black the Conqueror and will do so. They realise that their yard is next up for privatisation. This has been in line with the general strategy of the Ministry of Defence.

Over the last few years Rosyth has been starved of work. This has led management to say that there is overmanning at Rosyth, therefore they will use this as an excuse for demanding mass redundancies, then when privatisation is fully implemented next April, the work will suddenly materialise. However, the workforce will be told that in order to get the work, they will have to be 'flexible', that is, take lower wages, work longer hours and work in poorer conditions.

Unfortunately the strategy of the national officers seems to accept the situation as a fait accompli. Jack Dromey says that the only way to really stop privatisation now is to wait until it is introduced and get the next Labour government to

reverse it. This does not stand up to close examination:

1. Clearly, it would not be a priority of a Labour government when it came to power to de-privatise the dockyards.

2. What will happen to the men who have taken redundancy or been sacked during that period?

3. Flexibility and new work practices will remain.

4. A complete new management would have to be found to run the yard who are not interested purely in making large profits.

The Broad Left believe that the only way to save the workers in Rosyth dock yard from massive redundancies and worsening conditions, is to build the campaign around the demands of the Broad Left. But also to carry the campaign to the workers in the Fife area, unite all the workers within Rosyth, lower management, clerical and industrial workers and also link up with the workers in Devonport to fight a successful campaign to oppose the privatisation of the management of the yard.

CPSA

(Continued from back page)

for distributing ballot papers to members desks etc.

Despite this massive state interference, John Macreadie's vote has increased thanks to the brilliant election campaign conducted by the Broad Left. The election has already seen major gains for the Broad Left in building the rank and file organisation.

John Macreadie has said:

Whatever happens, the days of the right-wing are numbered and we are well on our way to constructing a democratic fighting union which will be capable of advancing our members interests".

In the General Treasurer election, Christine Kirk is likely to be re-elected. The defeat of right-wing Raywood (the existing General Treasurer) is a good step forward in the union. The success will be solely due to the principled socialist withdrawal from the election of Eddie Spence and the support given to Chris Kirk by the Broad Left.

The problems facing CPSA members will not go away. Under the Tories, more and more civil servants will be attacked and through their experience, they will understand the need for a strong, fighting trade union organisation. John Macreadie's vote will show that large layers of the CPSA membership already understand this. In these sections who have been bloodied in battle and whose conditions are worst, eg. DHSS and DE, the majority of members voting will have voted for John Macreadie as a fighter at the top of the union.

The coming pay campaign and the need to defend jobs relies above all on the Broad Left. In 1986, the Broad Left can on the whole be satisfied with its work. There is no room for complacency or a pause. The struggle continues.

Austin and Pickersgill shipyard

AUSTIN AND Pickersgill's shipyard on the Wear have been on strike for six days. They voted 19 to 1 in a secret ballot for strike action after being locked out.

Management have completely disregarded the long-term agreement of parity on overtime and have attempted to introduce selective overtime.

All 50 men offered it refused, in line with the union's procedure, and were subsequently laid off without pay thus bringing the union into dispute procedure. BS management at A&P have also been preparing work for sub-contracting without any consultation with the unions.

Management want a further 200 top-ups plus

redundancies in areas where sub-contracting will be used. Outside firms for sub-contracting are non-union, paying below the rate. BS have been attempting to erode A&P working practices established over decades.

Shipyard workers have shown their determination to fight the erosion of their working practices by a management set on breaking effective trade unionism at A&P.

Committees have been established to deal with picketing, DHSS claims and an Appeals Fund. A daily token picket has been organised with a weekly mass picket. A mass picket of over 100 took place on Monday morning, not a single manual

worker crossed the picket.

This attempt by management to force through selective overtime and sub-contracting by intimidating the workforce before Christmas has been stopped dead in its tracks.

These changes in working practices if implemented would see a further reduction in the workforce in an area which in recent years has seen a consistent run-down of shipbuilding. They will not be accepted.

By Pete Marsden

A-One one year

THE STRIKERS at A-One Feeds factory in Bootle are preparing to celebrate one year on strike.

Five of the original eleven remain solid, having been out since 10 January against victimisation for joining a trade union.

Their jobs are being done by scabs from the Yorkshire area who are living on the site, allowed home every other weekend at their own expense.

Director Andrew Simpson, salary £1,800 per week, undoubtedly inspired by Murdoch's union busting

has turned the plant into a fortress with barbed wire, guard dogs and video cameras.

The struggle of these young workers in the face of blatant strike breaking tactics by the police, is nothing short of heroic.

Their courage and determination is an answer to the cynics in the movement who say workers aren't prepared to struggle.

Local activists must step up support on the picket line and ensure these class fighters gain a resounding victory which their fight so clearly deserves.

Bolsover miners' walk-out

BOLSOVER miners struck last Friday morning after a young UDM member was sent home for refusing to clear round the blind side of the belt whilst it was moving.

The whole shift walked

out, to be followed later by the night shift. Management refused to talk to the UDM and a number of their members have applied to join the NUM.

Wath Main miners harried into closure but Kilnhurst campaign must be launched

The changes in the mineworkers redundancy scheme have now had their first casualty. Wath Main pit is to shut after the miners forced a ballot over the issue of closure.

In January 1986 Wath, along with Kilnhurst and Manvers collieries was reorganised into the Manvers complex.

This resulted in redundancies at Kilnhurst and Manvers. But only a few men were made redundant at Wath. As a result the average age of men at Wath was significantly higher.

The NCB plans for the complex meant Wath would close around 1987 when it mined its last three faces in the Newall seam. This would have meant less redundancy payments for all the men.

So in a dirty campaign, including threats to branch officials, a ballot was con-

By Gary Ironmonger
(Kilnhurst NUM)

ducted in which the men voted to close Wath Main. This preempted the reconvened review meeting around the Manvers complex.

At this meeting the Coal Board decided to close Wath on the grounds that they respected the men's wishes. They then put pressure on both Manvers and Kilnhurst to follow Wath and vote to close themselves down. They did this by insisting that the next two faces had to pay and the two faces would be under constant threat of review.

They further put pressure

on Kilnhurst by saying F52's face would be the last face at Kilnhurst and all further reserves would be mined from nearby Silverwood. If this happens Kilnhurst faces closure in the next twelve months.

Men at Kilnhurst responded by voting unanimously to back Yorkshire NUM policy; that all reserves be mined at each pit. This vote was taken on the basis that a campaign be started to save Kilnhurst.

This campaign involves building up a dossier of NCB activities. It must also include a regular newsletter for the men to counteract NCB propaganda. We must also demand the NUM carries out a full geological and economic assessment to give Kilnhurst and Manvers a case to fight closure on.

Militant

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Free jailed printers

THE VICIOUS jail sentence meted out to SOGAT member and print strike activist, Mike Hicks, will outrage not only striking print workers, but workers throughout the trade union and labour movement. Once again print strikers have seen the blatant use of the law in an attempt to intimidate them, by making an example of Mike Hicks.

For 11 months the strikers and their supporters have had to endure beatings, arrests, intimidation and fines. The police have been used, as in the miners' strike and in most disputes today, in an attempt by the Tories to break the unions in the interests of the likes of Murdoch.

The savage sentence on Mike Hicks for allegedly pushing a loudhailer in a policeman's face back in April, is only the latest of the jailings. Three other print workers have been similarly dealt with, and more will follow unless decisive action is taken.

Pentonville 5

When the Pentonville Five were jailed under the Heath Tory government in 1972, the dockers struck immediately, and the rest of the trade union movement responded with a massive strike wave, forcing the Tories to release them. The same response is needed now. But it must start with the printers themselves taking action, and then issuing the call for solidarity action from other workers.

Despite the difficult situation facing every house in Fleet Street, an urgent call to action is vital for all printers. The right to strike and to picket is under threat. If Murdoch wins this battle the very existence of real trade unionism in the print will be

By Bob Faulkes
(EETPU Press Branch,
personal capacity)

in jeopardy.

Outraged speeches and the shaking of fists is not enough. SOGAT has a new, more left executive. A clear call from them for the FOCs/MOCs to meet to plan determined action would meet with an enthusiastic response. The NGA, AEU, NUJ and sympathetic EETPU members can be drawn in as well. But time is short, the mood of anger against the imprisonments will not last indefinitely.

The French events have shown how determined action can defeat a reactionary government. Potentially the power of the British trade union movement is greater. If fully mobilised into action Murdoch and his 'paper boys' could be beaten. If the national print leaders are not prepared to make the call, the FOCs/MOCs must take up the gauntlet, organising and stepping up the action.

- ★ Resolutions to the TUC and print unions demanding action.
- ★ Step up the picket at Wapping and Kinning Park.
- ★ A one day Fleet Street stoppage.
- ★ For national action involving London and provincial printers to free Mike Hicks and other jailed printers.



Mike Hicks at lobby of the TUC in Brighton.

CPSA—Macreadie support growing

VOTING IN the rerun elections for the CPSA General Secretary and General Treasurer has ended. The results are due to be announced on Thursday 18 December.

This will be after *Militant* goes to press. A full report and analysis of the result and its implications will appear in our next issue on 9 January 1987.

The trends emerging are that John Macreadie's vote has increased and there is every possibility of victory. An increased vote is in itself a tremendous achievement when considered against the background of this abnormal election.

John Macreadie has been the subject of over six months of media smears and lies. The campaign by the right wing and their millionaire press baron allies, has tried to paint him as undemocratic and corrupt.

Together with Thatcher, and the capitalist state, they have attempted to frighten members into voting for their preferred right wing candidate Ellis. A massive 70 per cent turnout is expected and therefore, not surpris-

ingly, Ellis' vote as well as John's is also increasing.

The lengths to which the right-wing leadership of the union have gone in this rerun election are unprecedented in the history of the trade union movement.

The right wing President, Marion Chambers, has abused her position, thrown all pretext of impartiality to the wind and unilaterally changed the union's ballot rules. In effect, she gave the green light to desk-top balloting (which is ever more prevalent in some areas this time) and tried to reduce the workplace voting meetings to mere post boxes.

Unconstitutional

She unconstitutionally and unilaterally outlawed branch recommendations. Where branch officers even gave support to John Macreadie in a personal capacity, she has threatened disqualification of the branch vote.

The right wing referred to the Election Communications Room in their own propaganda as "their communications room".

There is increasing evidence that the right-wing

senior officers 'obtained' a print-out of the union's entire computerised membership list. The computer department comes under John Raywood's area of responsibility. Their propaganda has been sent to the union's 140,000 members in individually addressed envelopes. In the case of DHSS Glasgow (and others) all 2,500 envelopes were stamped and sent through the post. This raises the question of the source of the massive funding of the right-wing, as well as the abuse of their positions to obtain the membership list.

On some envelopes, the location number of the member is shown, which could only have come from management. The possibility of collusion exists.

The Treasury, on behalf of the Tories, wrote to government departments, exhorting them to maximise the vote. Six years of attacks on trade union facility time and time off have disappeared overnight, with the Tories bending over backwards to allow the internal mail system to be used

Continued page 15.

Wapping March

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists will be leading a march from Guys Hospital in South London into the main demo on Saturday 13 December. All LPYS members with banners have been asked by the organisers to be at St Thomas Street outside Guys Hospital at 7pm on Saturday with banners etc.

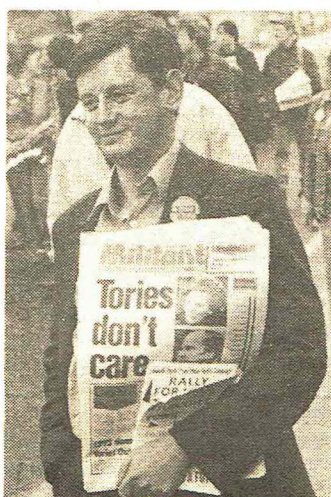
What We Stand for

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss in pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, etc.
- A minimum wage of £120 a week for all, including pensioners, sick and disabled people.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards, housewives and small businessmen.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.
- Workers' management of the nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one-third from the government.
- Opposition to the Tory government's anti-union laws and the reversal of attacks on the trade unions.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.

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